

GAAC

UNDERCOVER

Jan/Feb

1994

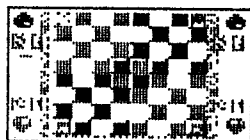
Issue 3

Only 80p

(plus an SAR)

INSIDE

Reviews Galore



Spots gets picked

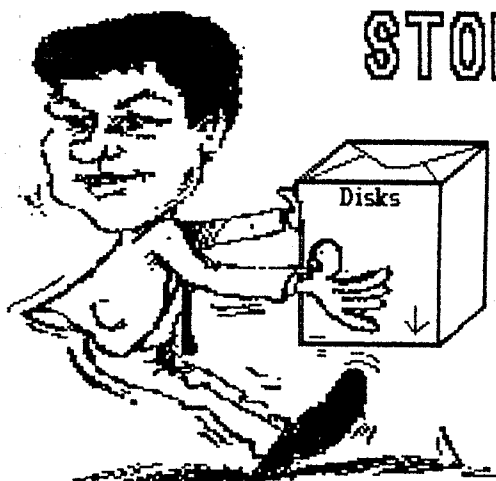
- Spots
- Crystal Mission
- Pro-Print



It's Mr Bl.. err.. Plumpy

- Plumpy

And loads more...



Save those discs from the bin, turn around and see what great software you can fill them with..... INSIDE.

PLUS: a BASIC tutorial, Supertips, Survey results, top features, letters and more

If it's out, it's in

"A lively and interesting read"
-WACCI

Pacific
Publications

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Bob Lean, Jo Wood

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The magazine is produced using Powerpage 128 - a great DTP program written by Richard Fairhurst. The pages are printed on the Star LC-100.

Coverdisc

The main menu is written by the editor and is the copyright of David Crookes and The Pacific Group. However it can be copied freely as it is entered into the Public Domain.

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All letters must be sent to the above address under the rule that any correspondence may be printed. However mark "NOT TO BE PUBLISHED" on your letter if you don't want it to be included.

We cannot guarantee to answer every letter sent but we will try.

Please make all cheques and Postal Orders payable to David Crookes.

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I've had my say (see page 3), now have yours.



Important The copydate for articles and advertisements is 17th Feb 1994

Advertising Rates

Advertising rates in CPC Undercover are very cheap. We charge only 75p per quarter of a page, £1.50 for half a page and £3 for a full page. There are even sponsorship deals. You can sponsor a whole issue for £5 or just one column for £1.

Next Issue

- We promised it for this month, but next month we'll have a driving game special.

- Watch out for a PD bonanza.

- And loads of other unfinished things. Wait and see.

The Editorial

The Editor
with general
chat and
thanks.

Well, slap me in the face with a kipper, we've reached issue three. Unbelievable. Even more unbelievable is the fact we have four new writers entering the CPCU fold. Firstly, Angele Cook who will be occasionally contributing with top features in her own clear style. Secondly, we welcome Paul Fairman, the owner of Sheepsoft. Because he knows what's what in the programming sense, he will be writing a BASIC tutorial for the

foreseeable future. Thirdly, Bob Lean and finally Jo Wood who both wrote a review.

Watch out next month for Melvyn Phillips who will be joining us with some articles. Over to you Melvyn.

Welcome all, I'm new as well!

I've decided to join the group.

I dearly hope my lifes not hell,
And ends up in the soup.

But on a more cheery note,
I'm only too pleased to

write.

With hand on heart, I simply dote,
That you few folk don't fright!

So see you soon, when I'm verbose,
And something new to say,
Typing in the words I've chose,
And waiting for your...
HIP! HIP! HOORAY...!

Finally, thanks to Joe Moulding of Sleepwalker PD. We've teamed up with Sleepwalker to bring you the best ever coverdiscs. Oh, ta to WACCI and AA too.



Sleepwalker PD

9 Meeting House Lane
Balsall Common
Nr. Coventry
CV7 7FX



Top Quality Public Domain Software For The Amazing Price Of 25p Per Disc Side

That's right, 25p gets you a whole disc bulging with the best PD around. Sleepwalker PD have got an impressive catalogue catering for every CPC user. From games to utilities to clip art to demos, Sleepwalker PD have got it all.

What's more, an extensive range of exclusive PD software is available together with the best of the International software around making Sleepwalker PD, a truly innovative library.

Write to above address enclosing a SAE in order to obtain a copy of the catalogue which includes details of how to order. And watch this space for further developments. You know it makes sense.

Bits And Pieces

Avatar Back In Craven's Hands

PHIL Craven has taken control over Avatar, a company which was set up to sell Craven's products after his previous company, Microstyle went bankrupt.

Up until August 1993, Avatar was owned by Ms Pam Harris who had once claimed that Phil Craven had nothing to do with Avatar other than the supply of his products.

Microstyle was Craven's first company which, like Avatar, dealt with the selling of 3.5" disc drives. The company went into liquidation because, according to Robert Bennet, AA advertising executive, Mr. Phil Craven had had a nervous breakdown.

Phil Craven commented, "Even though I had problems, all those who ordered a drive has had their drive sent or their money back."

However, Mike Lyons claims that Mr. Craven is still in possession of his £80 but Phil Craven explains that he is ignoring Mike on purpose for writing detracting text about Microstyle in WACCI.

Shadey problems

Due to technical problems, Dartsma are unable to copy any CPC/PC PD/Shareware or provide printouts as during the process of updating the library onto a PC, Adam Shade's machine died.

However, he reassures us that as soon as his PC is fixed, he will continue to run the library.

Give Adam a ring on 081 317 1170 for further details.

SD Discount

SD Microsystems have very kindly offered to give CPCU subscribers a 10% discount. See their advert elsewhere in this issue.

Cheap Prints

I was looking through a PC mag at college and noticed that several advertisers were selling printers at absolutely ridiculous prices. Around £100 were being knocked off. I bought my Star

LC-100 for £220 but these ads were selling them for £127 + VAT. Check out the latest issue of PC Format if you want a new printer.

Mal Mit Mir

Rumours suggest that Mal Mit Mir, a package to rival the Advanced Art Studio, has been released. If it has and it's released in the UK, CPC owners are going to go art crazy.

Europe Invades

Well that should be Crown invades because the BENG wizard had brewed up loads of new programs.

Crime v1.8 is the latest in the copying series. Apparently it now caters for 3.5" drive owners and is very fast. It is even said to format discs and be able to wipe directories. Watch out for a review.

SMON v1.4 is another update of the machine code de-bugging utility.

do you want another file transfer program? Well Crown has written

Amiga - MSDOS - CPC which does just that. But look at that title. Amiga? That's not a typing error it's true. Well, as long as you convert the Amiga files onto a PC first, that is.

CPCU News

First up, we've been branching out in an attempt to take over the world - sort of.

You can now buy CPCU from three places. Obviously one of them is the usual address (37 Trimmingham Drive etc.) but you can also purchase a copy at the All Format Computer Fairs (on WACCI's stand - you may as well buy a copy of WACCI too), and from Sleepwalker PD (the address is on page 3). Thanks for your help, lads.

Dragon Mag

Debby Howard is to set up a magazine catering for all computers dealing with the buying and selling of computer software and hardware.

It will be a bi-monthly mag and will cost £1.50. Debby has also taken over Simon Avery's Adventure Finding Service.

Send a SAE to 10 Overton Rd, Abbey Wood, London. SE2 9SD.

Coverdisc 3

Crystal Mission

You can see the review elsewhere in this issue so I won't bore you by printing it twice. Basically you have to collect crystals, avoid aliens and escape through the door at the bottom of the screen.

This is one of PD's



You've guessed it. That's Crystal Mission, that is.

finest games and where better to put it than on one of the CPC's finest coverdiscs?

Ameraph

This nineteen kilobyte wonder is a superb graph creator which features a whole array of options such as bar charts, pie charts and line graphs. Using this program is sooo simple. If you follow the on screen prompts, I assure you that you will not have any trouble whatsoever.

Select the scale and input each number. Then you can select any form of graph you want (within reason of course). Following that you can either print it out or return to the menu.

This is a superb program and so rather than sitting there reading this, why not load it up.

Clip Art

Clip art will become a regular occurrence from now on, so dust off that DTP package.

Desk

Ever dreamed of having an Atari-ST front? You know the sort of thing that all the "best" computers have - that little thing which seems more inviting than a "Ready" prompt.

Well, did you know that David Wild wrote one a few years ago. You did? Ok, then. Did you go out and get a copy? No? Well here it is. Richard Fairhurst has also written one but I think this is better presentation wise. Anyway, instead of going through all the instructions here (it would take up pages and pages), take a look at the ".DOC" files on the disc. This should tell you all you need to know and more besides.

NEXT ISSUE: Watch out for some top software from Sleepwalker PD!

The CPC Undercover Awards and Survey 1993

THE Results

The results came flooding in in their thousands (tens actually but why be accurate?) to result in this the climax to the CPC Undercover awards of 1993.

The nominations for some of these categories were quite unexpected. Quite a few people put Ocean as the worst software house even though they have produced some amazing games like Puzznic and Chase HQ. One person put Plumpy down as the best PD game. Either he was joking (which is highly probable - see the review in this issue) or else he has just pulled down the entire PD world. Apart from that though, everything was as expected. So here is the full, uncut version of the results. Rated PG.

Best PD library
Sheepsoft/WACCI

Worst PD library
Presto PD

Best Software house
Sentinel/Campersoft

Worst Software House
Ocean

Most Helpful Person
Clive Bellaby

Least Helpful Person
Rob Scott

Best Mail Order Firm
Siren

Worst Mail Order Firm
Avatar / Wave

Best Mag / Fanzine
AA/ WACCI/ CPCU

Worst Mag/Fanzine
Rundschlag

Best Game Of 1993
Lemmings

Worst Game Of 1993
Final Fight

Best PD Game
Puzznic

Worst PD game
AA Tetris

Best PD Utility
Powerpage 64

Worst PD Utility
No nominations

Best Commercial Offering
Proprint

Worst Commercial Offering
Tasword

So there you have it!

Survey

Firstly, thank you to all those who returned their answers for the survey and awards. Secondly, congratulations to Chris Read, the winner of the fabulous copy of Nigel Mansell which was the prize



up for grabs for those who returned the survey. Thirdly, eyes down for a summary of the survey results.

64% of you want the mag to keep its present format of A5 - the rest wanted A4, so A5 is here to stay.

All of you wanted as many pages as possible

and thought the price was just right. Nobody was unhappy with the coverdisc either.

More PD coverage, news, tutorials, interviews and reviews is what you want. You don't want cheats, it seems.

One person wanted staples another wanted step by step instructions. We'll try.

Driving About



If you haven't already got a 3.5" disc drive and are looking for one, then you will be faced with a dilemma - what package do you go for? Do you go for those with MS800 or Sirens ROMDOS offer? David Crookes tries to help.

MS800 is said to be the standard high capacity 800k disc formatter which is probably true seeing as most owners of 3.5" drives will have this - after all, it is given away by the majority of companies. But being the standard doesn't necessarily mean it's the best so lets delve a little deeper.

MS800's main selling point is that to access the higher capacity, you don't have to load up the operating system time and time again. This is because the operating system is saved onto the disc when it is formatted. This, according to the instructions, doesn't even take up any disc space at all - a small lie, though, because it does. The only difference is that MS800 makes the disc think it hasn't - very clever.

What all this means is that whenever you want to use a MS800 formatted disc, you

must first initialise it by typing `ib:RUN"DISC`. The disc then acknowledges, with a message, the fact that you have introduced a new format and produces a catalogue - the disc is now ready.

```
MS800 is initialised
Drive A: User 0
MS800.BAS 1K
355K Free
```

It's all done - honest

Thankfully, MS800 is compatible with almost every single program made on the Amstrad - including CPM. This makes MS800 ideal for every serious user and game players because MS800 will work with the Multiface 2. In fact, a format has been developed for the Multiface (and other troublesome programs) which splits the disc into four parts allowing the user to use every single bit of disc space. You see, the Multiface resets the disc parameters so that only DATA format discs can be saved onto. The special format creates four DATA format sides

so that it remains fully compatible.

Other than that though, MS800 discs behave like normal, utilising the normal AMSDOS functions should as Iera and Iren, making MS800 discs a doddle to use. MS800 itself though, is just a basic formatting program - no little extras have been written onto it, except, of course, a file copier.

Now this is slow, especially when compared to programs like JL-COPY. It is also limited in that it can only handle ten files at a time, no disc copying here. Unfortunately, its a real downer. A fully featured disc copier would have been nice, especially one which doesn't corrupt your Protext files (which MSCOPY does - the cad). On the plus side, though, you are permitted to copy the copier onto your MS800 discs and pass it round.

Overall then, MS800 isn't too bad as it does what it sets out to do. Other than that though, a limited package is all that's left.

71%

G.D.P.D

An Interview with Dave Lawson, one half of GDPD

GDPD is run by two brothers, Dave and Ged Lawson. CPC Undercover spoke to one of them, Dave, to discover their innermost secrets.

Amstrad Action have billed GDPD as a new, small library in their Amscene Directory. But having been around for many months GDPD are certainly not new and neither are they small with over 100 sides of PD.

As stated in the intro, GDPD is owned by two people. But why did they start up a library; what was their motivation?

"The reason GDPD was started some two years ago is because there were very few libraries about that gave a good, fast service and still had the quality. I'm not saying that GDPD is the best library ever but I do my best to keep things up to date and that means dedication."

Why else did GDPD come top of our survey? Our readers surely know a good thing when they see it and most are obviously loyal to the library. Perhaps they should expand.

"I haven't thought about expanding the library due to the time constraints involved," explains Dave. "I am running at full capacity as it is. You see, I already work full time and I simply don't have the time for any more."

So a PD Library it remains. Lets get down to the little "Sun Exclusive" stuff though and pop the question, "What do you hate the most about running a PD Library?"

"The most annoying thing about running a PD library is when some

customers don't send postage when they should. Usually this doesn't happen but there always seems to be the odd person who thinks that I can afford to supply stamps willy nilly."

I think Dave would agree that not only does a SAE help out financially but it also saves a lot of time. Nipping down to the Post Office every day and buying stamps and writing out the name and address of a customer on an envelope is very time consuming. Don't forget that the library is a hobby and not a full time business. Anyway, GDPD's address is: 49 Woodville, Barnstaple, N. Devon, EX31 2HL. Each selection costs 35p and can be supplied on both 3" and 3.5" discs.

We'll have another interview next issue.

The Pick Of The Bunch

So what software have GDPD got that you should have?

Adventures 4: Eve Of Shadows (a brilliant adventure by Bob Buckley)

Games 1, 2, 12, 13, 15,

16, 17, 18: GDPD's best game discs. Too many to list here but Games 17 and 18 are the supreme best.

Utilities 9: Alysse v1.6. (Australian database)

Utilities 12, 13: Print Enhancer.

Serious 14: PD Planner (Spreadsheet)

CP/M 3.4: Print Master (Needs b drive - CP/M+)

Demo 7: The Demo (best one)

Pro-print v1.5

Campersoft
£15.99 disc
Rating: 88%

After so many different print enhancer reviews in the CPC press lately, finding an intro which wont bore you to death is quite a difficult task so I wont bother. Here's Bob Lean with a review.

Proprint didn't come in a box or package, just an A4 envelope with a manual of approximately twenty pages and the disc. But once the package loaded and presented itself on the screen, you could tell that this was indeed a well thought out program.

The loading screen informs the user as to what printer port they have attached to the computer which really is paying attention to detail. Fortunately, this attention is not least in the actual package.

Both 9-pin and 24-pin printers are catered for when loading up Pro-Print but you must state which one you have right from the start by loading in the respective file (either 9pin or 24pin). The actual loading of Proprint takes place within Protex so you must make sure you have Protex before shelling out your hard earned cash on non-compatible software otherwise you would be left with

a useless disc.

The actual fonts (of which there are many) are drawn up as Quad density graphics. This also means the output is going to be quite slow, which it is. A full A4 page of text took over five minutes to print but the results are well worth the wait, looking similar to a 24-pin output if not an ink-jet one.

One of Pro-prints downfalls is the fact that it takes up too much memory especially when using the disc version of Protex. In fact you are only left with around 12,000 characters to play around with. Of course, the problem isn't so great when using the ROM version where you'll find 29,000 characters left.

Using Pro-print is quite easy as long as you carefully read the

manual and the example files on the disc (which are also included in the manual). The example files provide the best way of learning the package.

Over forty fonts are provided on side two of the disc. If you make a copy of these and add your programmes on the same side (eg. LETTER.DOC), there's no need to keep swapping the disc. But if you get fed up of these fonts then design your own using the font designer included in the program. The designer is a breeze to use. It even has a disc management system.

All in all, Pro-print is one of the best packages to buy for the CPC. Campersoft have really done a tremendous job on this one.

(NB. Campersoft have released a ROM version of Pro-print for only £30, too).

This is an example of the different fonts that Pro-Print can use. Quite impressive really.

Back To BASIC's

Live from Wales, Paul Fairman, the Sheepsoft PD maestro, introduces a packed program (err..a BASIC program) from the heart of his bedroom.

Firsly, let me tell you tell you exactly what BASIC stands for, Beginners All-purpose Symbolic Instruction Code. It is a language that was designed for designed for beginners in computer programming to give them an introduction and prepare them for the world of "real" programming. To the surprise of many BASIC has survived until today and is still in popular use. The problem with all BASIC's (there are many different versions on different computers) is it is really very slow. Painfully slow. Therefore BASIC can only be used effectively where mega speed is NOT demanded from the program. Another, much more complex language called Assembly Language is used to develop such speed critical for programs like arcade style computer games. Basically what I am really trying to get over to you is



that if you are expecting the sort of games that you are used to playing at home from BASIC, then you can just forget it, but learning BASIC is a great help if you should come to learn assembly language one day. Throughout any computer book that teaches you programming you should never just read it. Always practice every little detail and even if it performs something pretty pathetic which bores you to death, just continue reading, and at the same time think about how YOU could modify the "code" to do something different.

Right, so now let's get down to business. First of all let's show a command that is always totally ignored by the computer when the program is actually run. The REM command. Eg: 10 A mega proggie
20 Created in BASIC

Now the above tiny program has the following: Line Numbers - these are numbers ten and

twenty in the example and are used by the computer to understand in which order all of the instructions will be carried out. This is a massive advantage of BASIC, because you can always go back and stick little bits in if you want to improve, and more importantly, de-bug the program. As you can see, I have gone up in multiples of ten which is the normal thing to do, leaving plenty of space to add lines afterwards. The next thing that BASIC expects AFTER the line number, is a command. In this actual case I have used REM which stands for REMark which means WHAT EVER is after the REM is not read by BASIC, so you can type anything that you want. The point of this command is to put REM commands throughout the program so that you can easily follow the program through and identify the different parts or ROUTINES without trouble. This should be done for STRUCTURED programming, when large programs are being worked upon. As

shown the rubbish that follows the REM simply doesn't make sense to the computer. Use REM's for whatever you want.

Well there we have one programming command, pretty useless, but there you go. It has shown the line numbers at least. Now to more of what is called the SYNTAX of BASIC. Those experienced with BASIC may be already used to the error messages that BASIC produces, one of which is SYNTAX error. This is quite an easy error to find and de-bug because it has something obviously wrong with it. It may be just a mis-spelt/mis-typed word or anything really. Just follow the line through character by character and the error should pop up eventually. All error messages produced by BASIC will be shown in a later issue.

Okay, now for another little proggy for your examination:
10 MODE 1:INK 0,0:INK 1,26:BOARDER 0
20 PRINT"HI THERE ME OLD KIPPER! WHAT'S YOUR NAME ";

Once the program is ready type RUN and press RETURN to run the program.

Some more points before beginning properly. You will notice that everything after the line number is in capital letters AND they are the programming commands, often called keywords. Even though they are printed in caps doesn't mean they must be typed in in caps. The computer converts all keywords in caps whenever you list the program. In fact this makes it easy to find bugs. The colon (:) is another important point as it divides the line into several parts, giving BASIC more than

one instruction. This has been done in line 10.

The first command in line 10 is MODE. The box below shows you the advantages and disadvantages of each MODE. Try using the different modes and study the size of the characters.

The next three instructions set the colours that I personally like. You don't have to use these at all. If you have a CPC6128 then on the disc drive will be a list of all 27 colours. The first command INK 0,0 refers to the background (INK 0) and sets it to 0 which is black. The second ink used is INK 1 which is set to 26 (bright white). The last instruction in line 10 sets the area called the border to black, code 0. Paul



Cycling through the Modes

Mode	Advantage	Disadvantage
0	Up to 16 colours may be used on the screen at the same time.	Dots on the screen are larger and so graphics are not good.
1	Graphics better due to pixels being half the size of mode 0.	Only four colours available.
2	80 columns of text can be used and graphics are excellent.	Just two colours at the same time.

Fanzine City

DTP - A Rough
Guide

Special

Running a fanzine is a doddle or so they say. Well to tell you the truth it's a lot of hard work for what could be buttons at the beginning. But become established and famous and you'll think, "Yes it was worth it." So how do you start a fanzine and what qualifications do you need?

I think it is safe to assume that everybody reading this is quite au fait with the definition of a fanzine so lets get stuck in.

The basic requirements of a fanzine are as follows so listen carefully. You obviously need a computer (a CPC will do) and a DTP package. However you will probably need to buy a printer to print out the pages too. Of course if you are doing a disc magazine you don't need a DTP package or a printer, just a bit of programming knowledge and a word processor plus a disc copier. A disczine is the cheapest option of all and it takes up less time but most people favour a mag on paper and a disczine is only feasible for computer mags.

So get your ideas together and make a note of them on a piece of paper and have an idea of the size of the mag too.

Turn on your computer load up the DTP package or word processor and type away. Save it then print it or copy it. Printing it out solely on a printer is going to be extremely costly though as well as

being a really stupid thing to do. What you need is access to a photocopier to mass produce your mag from the originals taken from your printer. Unless you know somebody who can do them for free, you will have to speculate here on how much you are willing to spend.

You could always use a professional printer but again these can be expensive so shop around a bit before committing yourself.

It's all work, work, work

Now writing a magazine solely by yourself means you should be prepared to put in some work. Try and get others to help you if you can by advertising in the pages of your magazine like I do (hint, hint) for people to help.

Of course getting a team together before you start the magazine would be the best option. I tried this but failed unfortunately.

The key is advertising

Advertise the fanzine in Amstrad Action using their free small ad service and send copies of the mag to other fanzines (such as WACCI and CPC User) as well as AA and of course, CPC Undercover. These may give you a review (we will always review it)

and therefore a bit of free publicity. Be careful though as an unfavourable review is worse than no review at all.

The best bit of all

The orders should start to flood in now and all you have to do is keep up with them, making sure you have enough copies to send out. You'll probably have to sort out a few problems as well such as no SAE's but that's part and parcel to the whole shebang.

If you're still not too sure about the whole thing, then the best advice I can give is to write for an existing fanzine like us. This way you can gain experience and see how long a full mag would take you. I started off with Presto News.

So that's about all there is to it. Just use the computer to knock up the pages, print them out and get them mass produced. Then advertise in the computer press. It's as simple as that.

A Few Tips

1. Give your magazine a balance between reviews and features.
2. Lay out the pages well and follow our DTP guide.
3. Keep the reviews free from bias and try not to use I too many times.



Publically Speaking

Sponsored by Sleepwalker PD



PD? What is it, some of you have asked. Well to put it briefly, PD is software which you can copy and distribute to your hearts content just as long as you don't alter the copyright or anything sinister like that. Oh, the actual software is free - you just pay for the copy charge. But enough of all this, just look at the super stuff available.

Print Master

PRINTMASTER is a PD programme that runs from cp/m. Most PD libraries have it and most copies will boot up from basic. It is a brilliant utility for printing greeting cards, headed notepaper, A4 posters, banners and calendars.

All options are based on an A4 sheet. The programme consists of over 100 pieces of clipart, 11 different borders and 8 different fonts with 5 styles available. It is easy to get the hang of as when you decide which option you want to do you are taken through various menus where you make choices - though you don't see the page as it will look until it is actually printed. I did a birthday card for my brother using it - it is printed so that an A4 page folds down into an A6 size

card and on coloured paper looks pretty effective. I imagine most people will use the programme for letter headed notepaper and it is worth noting that the number of lines you have to write your address on is affected by the font you choose to use for the first line (Deville and Scribe will give you two lines in total whereas all the other fonts will give you three lines). The calendar option gives you a week to a page or a month to a page, and you can enter text into any of the dates which I find a very useful option!

If you would like a manual that has a step by step guide to using Printmaster and has a printout of all the clipart, borders and fonts, one can be obtained for £1.50 from Steve Bonham, 71 Orwell Drive, Aylesbury, Bucks, HP21 9UE. I found it well worth the money. Joe Wood

Doscopy

What is it with PD software? As soon as something is released, loads of other efforts are released to. Take DTP for instance. Scully wrote Pagemaker and the world saw around ten other DTP releases. This is the same. First came 22Disc and now this. Others are also in the pipeline.

Doscopy transfers PC software onto your Amstrad using a series of menus two of which are the ones you'd use the most. Copy being one of them.

Using the program is very easy. A menu is used which contains various options. Using the cursor keys and return, you can select any one of them. Copying files is done in much the same way only using space or copy to select then return to copy. Easy.

I've used 22Disc before but this program seems more friendly in use and is definitely my favourite. You can even copy BAS and BIN files. Great. 88X

Cheap Thrills

Publically
Speaking
Special

Fed up of paying over the odds for a game? Want to save a few bob? Well blow me down with a tin of pot noodles, because this is what this is all about. Spooky, eh?

Not too long ago, I used to buy a lot of games. However, I soon discovered that I got bored of them pretty quickly and so the four pounds or even fifteen pounds that I had spent seemed wasted, especially as the game just gathered dust on the shelf in my room.

So when I saw a feature in Amstrad Action which highlighted the best of the PD crop, I became quite enticed on the games section. Croco Magneto, they said, was a superb PD French game. What's more, they put it on the very next covertape.

I was hooked. I decided to send a few pennies to my favourite PD library for some more of the same. Space Froggy, Drehdriss - the gameplay seemed too good to be true. But true it was and I soon became enthralled in the fact that I could buy games with good graphics and in most cases, blistering gameplay for only

around 25p. What's more, when I finally got bored of them, I was happy in the knowledge that they didn't cost much so I didn't really lose anything. Another disc, another 20p and I had another collection of games.

So in the next three issues, we will hopefully uncover every single worthy game in the PD archives. Note worthy, though, as there won't be any AA type-in sort of things - they just aren't worth printing and besides we would be here until the year 2000 before we finally reviewed them all. But eyes peeled and heads down because here is the definite guide to PD games and PD game demos. **David**

Spots

Spots are horrible little things aren't they? They seem to congregate on mirrors in every house. Eugh..

This game is different, though.



If I can just.. eugh.. squeeze this.. spot..

What you have to do is move your spot into any space you want providing it is within two squares. Then all the surrounding spots change to your colour. The winner is the one with the most spots in this super game with great sound and graphics. **95X**

Plumpy

Plumpy is a re-mixed effort of Bubble Bobble. Now Bubble Bobble was good but Plumpy defines rubbish. You see, there isn't much variety between the over easy levels and it is really frustrating to say the least. The baddies although fast, always follow the same pattern

so once you've mastered the first level the rest are simple. All graphics and no gameplay. **2X**



The best bit of the game

Crystal Mission

In Crystal Mission, you are presented with a mission to collect crystals - hence the name.

Taking control of a kind of spacecraft, you have to bump into crystals which then disappear. Get rid of every crystal and a little barrier at the bottom of the screen is removed. On the first level, this is the biggest challenge, because you need to float your way into

this gap without touching the sides. Do this and you reach level two and so on.

As you progress, you'll meet other challenges such as bombs and aliens which you must manoeuvre around in this fun, well presented game - just see that intro screen. Good fun. **90%**



Driller

Here's another one of those collection games - this time jewels and not crystals are involved.

It's a difficult game and there's no getting away from the fact as you guide your drill around the maze picking things up and avoiding the moving balls. However even if the drill itself avoids the balls, the trail you leave behind will get caught instead.

It's a bit of a cat and mouse game with the player having to watch not only the object but the trail. A challenge? You bet! An extremely enjoyable game? Well let's not get too carried away, after all it is too damn hard. **52%**

Power Tetris

The article does state a round up of every major PD release and even though this game was reviewed in the last issue, it was felt that it should be reviewed again.

Everybody should know what Tetris is all about by now (form complete lines and watch them disappear) and all those who bought CPCU last issue will know that Power Tetris is the best there is with an option for a four player game, fluid movement and extra features. In other words **GET THIS GAME**. It really is the best. **85%**



Puzznix

This game was put on last month's coverdisc, so those who have already got it should look away. However, as only 55% of you sent a disc for the coverdisc, here's a review of Puzznix.

This is a re-written, PD version of Ocean's Puzznic game. What you have to do is match up the shapes on small boxes. Once done, the boxes disappear. The object of the game is to clear each level of every box.

But things aren't so simple because in the later levels things start getting complicated and you have to put on your thinking caps to solve them.

This makes Puzznix a superb buy, not least for the saving you'll be making over the full price version. It's blistering gameplay coupled with great graphics make this game an all time PD great.

Sheepsoft include this on one of their game selections together with Power Tetris and Spots and all for only 20p. At this price, you'd be silly to buy anything else. **92%**

Next issue: Loads more game reviews.

Striking a deal

If somebody says, "Hey, I'll tell you what, have this for £5 o.n.o.", then you'll soon know what to do. Honest, you will. Angela Cook informs.

When buying things second hand, DO be CAREFULL. You cannot always trust people. Make sure you keep a copy of the name and address of the person

When you want software or hardware for your computer but you just cannot pay the full price what do you do? Well you could go to a mail order catalogue where the prices are cheaper, but not cheap. You could go to a market, or go to a computer fair, or you could buy things second hand.

A mail order catalogue is often cheaper than a shop but it is still not brilliantly cheap. Markets often have cheap stuff, but not always for your format. A computer fair is a good answer, things are more or less cheap, usually new or in good condition. But again there are not always stalls there for your format.

Although there are drawbacks, I think that buying things second hand is the best idea.

If you want to buy anything, get a copy of Computer Mart or Micro Mart. These are magazines for all computer formats in

which people advertise things for sale, to buy or swap.

If you are the buyer

1. If you see something that you want DO NOT phone up straight away. Look through the rest of the magazine and others to see if the same thing is any cheaper or whether or not you can get it any more locally (which would save you postage).
2. If in the advertisement it says, o.n.o., always offer less. You can go up to the listed price but don't go higher. Nine out of ten times the seller will agree.
3. If you have a young person about the house, get them to phone and say, "I am at school and I haven't got a lot of money."
4. Try and see if what you are buying is in good condition and if you can't afford something try to swap things.

If you are the seller

1. Put you advert in at, say, £10 more than you want and put o.n.o.. If people get things for less they think they are wonderful.
2. Put things together like, package A is £20, package B is £20, both together is £35.
3. Do things like "Mystery gift if you spend over £50". You can get rid of so much stuff.
4. Try and make sure that on heavy stuff you do not pay the postage.
5. Write down the name and addresses of the people who you sell stuff to. Every four months or so send them an updated list and finally, ALWAYS be polite and understanding.

you sent your money to. If you do not get your package within a week, unless there is a reason you know of beforehand, phone and find out why there is a delay.

ALWAYS send parcels and packages, no matter how much they cost. Use insured parcel post or recorded delivery. It is true that they have the power to deliver, but when, where and in what state is up to them. (Please note that the views of our contributors, no matter how true they may be, are not necessarily those of CPCU, so there. - ed.) Always make sure you are insured for loss or breakages. If you do have an upset with Parcel Force or your chosen delivery firm, keep battling to the end, they have to give in!!!

So hopefully by following these simple rules you can ensure trouble free, cost effective buying and a bit more cash in your pocket if you are selling things.

If you have any more problems then contact your local Citizens Advice Bureau for free and friendly advice, but above all be safe in the knowledge that your money is saved.

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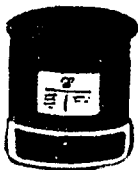
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Sounding Off

Write to the usual address with your views and problems!!

Desk Trouble

Dear David,

Thankyou for issue number one and two of CPCU. I found it quite interesting.

I have not had a lot of PD software but I did get something called Desk which has a really good program called Oops which unerases files. The rest of it is a whole load of icons that I don't know what to do with. I always use Brunword so all my files tend to be letters but I can't see any point in Desk as it doesn't load Brunword files as far as I can see. I wonder if any of your readers have used this programme, and if so, what for?

A useful programme that I have acquired translates STD dialling codes into places - really handy for small ads when working out how far away the place is. I think I had that one from UAUG.

I have been trying to use Prottext but can't get on with it. I have the PCW/CPC version,

but find it tedious to have to go through loading the CP/M disc first to get into Prottext. Other people seem to think its great, but apart from missing a word count, I like Brunword.

Good luck with the magazine - its good to see that there is still life in the CPC world, even though the PCs seem to be taking over as they come down in price. If only my CPC could talk to a PC easily.

Yours sincerely,
Clare Jenkins
Newtown

Desk is basically a front end not unlike the Atari one. What it does is provide a more user-friendly way of loading up programs rather than using the tiresome RUN"DISC or whatever. But if any of our readers have a different use for it then by all means write in and we'll print it in

these hallowed pages.

If you think that Prottext CP/M is tiresome then try it on ROM or disc. I use Prottext all the time and I think that loading up CP/M is only a small price to pay for a superb package. David

Power Probs

Dear David,
I have a problem with Powerpage 128. I create pages in Tasword but when I load the Tasword ASCII files into Powerpage or Stop Press, even, they come out messy as per the sample. Please help.

A. Sheldon
Nottingham
The page came out like: Nottingham
cinema

~~CLOSED~~

—ABC...see CARLTON
If you have had a similar problem, then write in with a remedy. David

What an absolute con

I enjoy reading your mag but looking through AA I noticed that you were selling a disc of PD for 50p+DISC+SAE. I think that this is not fair as you are making money on the back of

others.
Tim Wild
Bradford



That is the very nature of PD, Tim, but all the money goes on the fanzine.

It's Clare Again

Dear David,

I was interested to see the PD Zap 'T' Balls, as I had just purchased the upgraded non PD version, which is a bit heavy on the special effects but otherwise pretty good, although you need a pretty accurate joystick at times. The only problem we have had with the commercial version has been the tendency for the person to lose movement, when played on one of our CPCs. As this is the one with the Multiface I

The Office Disc

A few people have asked about the best wordprocessors databases etc. Comments ranged from "where can I get them from" and "how much do they cost". Well I use the Protex demo, Rambase 3, PD Planner, an American label printer, Gpaint and Catedit as well as a few utilities such as Crume and Crunch. All these sit on one disc which I have now decided to sell. Every title is PD and can be passed around freely so I don't want to make any profit. Therefore I will only charge £2.20 which includes p&p as well as the disc. Cheques payable to David Crookes.

The Entertainment Disc

This is another disc that I've put together. It is packed with the cream of PD games such as Power Tetris, Puzzlix, Spots and Crystal Mission. Again it's only £2.20 including disc and P&P. Cheques payable to David Crookes.

blamed that, and disconnected it, which means we can't cheat and do a "save" before the tricky bits. However, the freezing still happens. Please

explain.

Clare Jenkins

Zap 'T' Balls is unfortunately, bugged in places. David

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