

JANUARY 2000

Issue 97

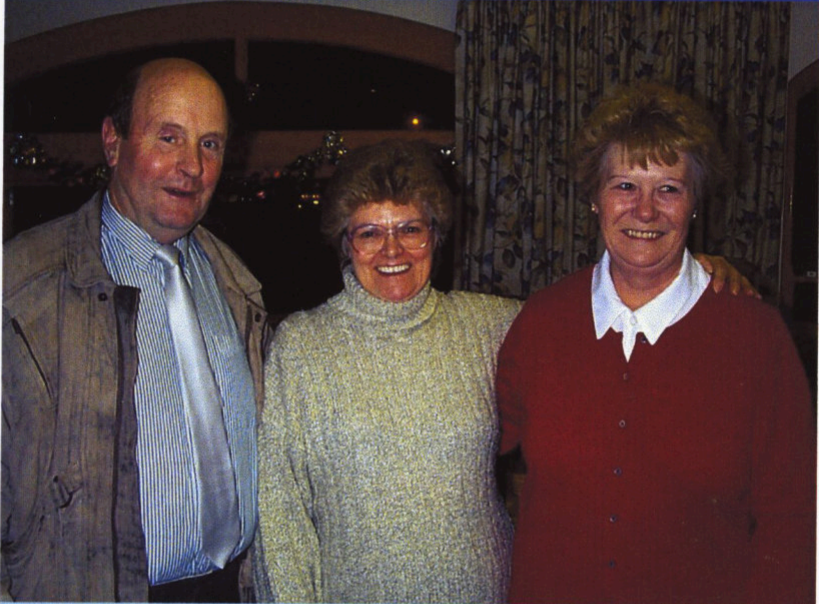
I
O
W

P
C

U
S
E
R

G
R
O
U
P

Members enjoying Party at Riverside Centre



Richard Mills, Kathy Saul and Molly Mills

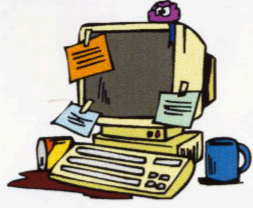
Our Annual Christmas Party was a fun filled event and Tim Bateman and Dennis Linzmaier had us all outwitted with their challenging quizzes on the big monitor and overhead projector, which added to an interesting evening. Tim's talk on DVD and the subsequent quiz on his special clip from "The Matrix" movie, was up to his usual high standard and Denny, our Chairman, had us in fits of laughter as he outfoxed us with his logical and illogical questions. There was plenty of eats and drinks and a time of sharing news and chatting about computer topics. This annual event at the Riverside Centre provides an opportunity to enjoy the usual Christmas festivity, and all that were present seemed to have a good time.

Thank you to all that participated in organising and preparing this special once-a-year meeting.

Inside this issue:

| | |
|-------------------|-------|
| Future Meetings | 2 |
| Committee Members | 3 |
| Editorial | 4 |
| Humour | 5 |
| DVD | 6-7 |
| Winzip | 8-9 |
| Club's Webpage | 10-11 |
| DOS Tutorial | 12-13 |
| Puzzle Corner | 14-15 |
| Notice Board | 16 |

FUTURE MEETINGS



| | | |
|----------------------|---|-------------------------|
| 5th January | Question & Answer Session Windows Tutorial | Dennis Linzmaier |
| 19th January | Current Hardware | Steve Bogacz |
| 2nd February | AGM/Windows 2000 | Dennis Linzmaier |
| 16th February | Building a Website | Colin Trigg |
| 1st March | Linux for Beginners | To be arranged |
| 15th March | Question & Answer Session Windows Tutorial | Dennis Linzmaier |



Michael Heath and Andy Kind at a recent meeting at Riverside Centre

ISLE OF WIGHT PC USER GROUP- COMMITTEE MEMBERS

3

**Honorary President/Outside Speaker Organiser:**

Sir Norman Echlin,

Chairman:

Dennis Linzmaier,

Treasurer:

Bob Groom,

Secretary:**Vacancy****Membership Secretary/Marketing Manager:**

Douglas Rankin

Hot Key Distribution & Refreshments:

Peter & Dorothy Wolletron:

Hot Key Editor:

Brian Sexton

New Members Co-ordinator:

Maggie Butler

Hot Key Cover Disk Compiler

Mike Bayliss

Disability Resources Co-ordinator

Helen Edom

Committee Member:

Dennis Lambeth

Show Organiser:

Cliff Maidment

We're on the Web:- <http://www.ddina.demon.co.uk/iwpcug/>

EDITORIAL

A very happy New Millennium and prosperous New Year to you all.

The last couple of weeks normally means gift time and the addition of new computer equipment and upgrades to our existing systems. I have been particularly blessed with the acquisition of a new scanner, external modem and a wireless scroll mouse.

Scanner

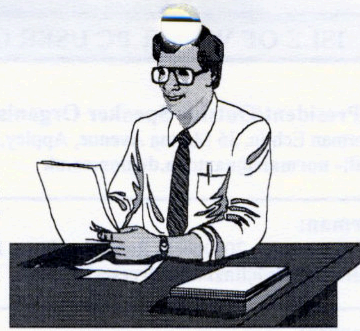
This is an Agfa Snapscan 1212U, which is the USB version, and comes with some interesting software in the shape of Agfa ScanWise, Corel Print House Magic and Caere Omni Page OCR together with PageKeeper, a document management piece of software. The installation is a pleasure and the operation of the scanner, a delight.

Modem

I have upgraded my previous Diamond Supra Express 56K internal modem with an external Premier 56K V90 modem made by Euro-Tech, which received good reviews in the computer press. My main reason for the upgrade is in order to use the external modem for LINUX, as my previous internal modem, being a type of Winmodem, was not compatible with the LINUX operating system in the form of Red Hat, SuSE or Caldera software.

Mouse

In keeping with the latest technology in the mouse field, I decided that I would like to update my old Microsoft PS2 mouse with a Trust Ami Wireless Scroll Mouse, which comes in the form of an RF receiver, 2xAAA 1.5v batteries, CD-ROM containing the drivers and manuals and a quick installation manual. This particular Ami Mouse has the normal two buttons together with the centre scroll but has a side button, which is a zooming lens. This mouse itself is free of the usual PS2 cable as the receiver has an attachment which plugs in to the PS2 attachment on the computer.



Corel LINUX

The February 2000 issue of PC Plus magazine has a cover CD with a free version of the new Corel LINUX operating system. It is by far the easiest to install of all the various Linux versions and does not interfere with Windows 95/98, as it happily resides alongside Windows on the same drive in an empty space on your hard drive. Corel LINUX OS eliminates all the complexity, lack of drivers and other installation hassles and is based on the Debian version and KDE interface.

The Isle of Wight PC User Group

welcomes all owners and users of IBM Compatible Personal Computers.

It is a group which seeks to exchange ideas and seek new information. Our meetings are informal on the **first and third Wednesdays of each month at The Riverside Centre in Newport, 7.30 to 9.30 pm**

The first Wednesday has usually a formal talk whilst the third Wednesday is more informal, geared to the new user and aims to help out members with specific problems.

Membership is £12 per year.

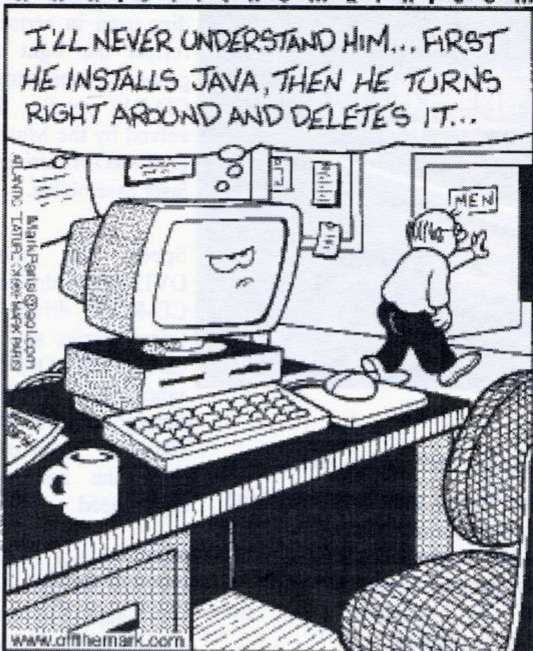
This journal, "**HOTKEY**", is produced every month and a "cover disk" of popular software is distributed three times a year

Visitors are welcome.

If you would like to know more about us, either come along to one of our meetings or contact one of our Committee Members on one of the numbers on page 3.



H
U
M
O
U
R





OSTA

The Optical Storage Technology Association is an association—not a standards body—and its members account for more than 80 percent of all worldwide writable optical product shipments. Its specifications represent a consensus of its members, not the proclamation of a committee.

The MultiRead specification defines the requirements that must be met in order for a drive to play or read all four principal types of CD disks: CD-Digital Audio (CD-DA), CD-ROM, CD-Recordable (CD-R), and CD-Rewritable (CD-RW). A MultiRead logo will appear on any drives that support the MultiRead specification.

Other Rewritable formats

A couple of alternative rewritable formats have also been proposed:

DVD-R/W is Pioneer's format which is an evolutionary development based on existing CD-RW technology and with a capacity of 3.95GB, i.e. the same as DVD-R discs.

MMVF (Multimedia Video File) format from NEC offers a 5.2GB capacity on one side and is more suitable than the other formats for a video recording format.

Compatibility issues

Incompatibility with some CD-R and

CD-RW discs was an early problem. The dies used in certain of these discs will not reflect the light from DVD-ROM drives properly, rendering them unreadable. For CD-RW media, this problem was easily solved by the MultiRead standard and fitting DVD-ROM drives with dual-wavelength laser assemblies.

Speed was another issue for early DVD-ROM drives. By mid-1997 the best CD-ROM drives were producing higher transfer rates and lower vibration. Initially, early DVD-ROM drives were not plagued by vibration problems because their high density allows slower rotational speeds. However, when used for reading CD-ROM discs the speed had to be capped at eight-speed.

This resulted in a rather slow turn-out of DVD-ROM drives during 1997, and there was a gap of six months between the first and second drives to come to market. However, by early 1998 second-generation drives were on the market that were capable of reading CD-R and CD-RW discs and with DVD performance rated at double-speed and CD-ROM performance equivalent to that of a 20-speed CD-ROM drive.

With the early problems solved, the initial trickle of both discs and drives was expected to become a flood since the manufacture of DVD discs is relatively straightforward and titles from games and other image-intensive applications are expected to appear with increasing regularity. However, in 1998 progress was again hampered by the appearance of an alternative to DVD known as Divx. DIVX was called Pay-Per-View because after paying a nominal fee for the disk you paid an additional fee every time you watched the disc. Despite some consumers balking at the idea of having two different standards for digital discs, and others objecting to the idea that they would have to keep paying for something they had already purchased, Divx appeared to be gaining acceptance amongst

consumers - with sales of the enhanced players reportedly matching those of standard DVD units - when its backers pulled the plug on the format in mid-1999, blaming inadequate support from studios and other retailers for the format's demise. Its fate was effectively sealed once companies - including US retail chain Blockbuster - announced plans to rent DVD'S to consumers instead of Divx discs.

DVD ON TV

One of the reasons why DVD is so much better than VHS is the picture resolution. A British TV has 625 horizontal lines of resolution but some of these are taken up with teletext and can't be seen. VHS can only manage 250 lines and Long Play mode has even less. That's why VHS pictures look blurry - they are being blown up to fill the screen. However, DVD uses 500 lines so the picture is almost as good as live TV and it does not suffer from bad reception. In a way DVD is its own worst enemy. The visual quality is so high that in some cases it can show flaws that you do not necessarily want to see. For example, some special effects can look extremely real on VHS, but when you watch the same sequence on DVD the effect can look more obviously false so any flaws have to be cleaned up.

Another reason is the lifespan of a VHS tape. The magnetic coating that holds the video information is degraded each time it passes through your video's read heads. The more often you watch a tape, the worse the picture gets. Even if you do not watch tapes on a daily basis, they will degrade anyway because of the electrical fields from your house's mains and even the planet's magnetic field slowly scrambles the tape. None of these things affect DVD so the picture is perfect every time. DVD's will suffer from "laser rot" as air seeps through the outer layer but by the time that happens none of us will be around to care.

This is why DVD has the potential to replace VHS as well as CD-ROM, Audio CD and LaserDisc. DVD films are already a hit in the

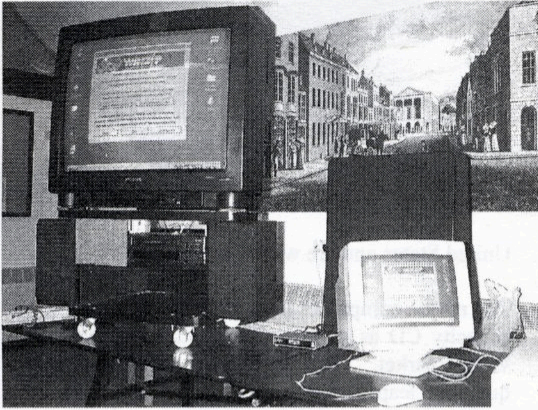


United States and are widely available here.

The movie companies immediately saw a big-capacity CD as a way of revolutionising the video market. This is because DVD is a quantum leap forward, in picture and sound quality, from VHS. DVD produces rock-steady image quality, Dolby Digital sound, costs less to produce than a VHS tape and DVD'S won't suffer wear and tear the way VHS does. So, goodbye tracking control. Using MPEG-2 video compression it is quite possible to fit a full-length movie onto one side of a DVD disc so when a reasonably priced DVD-Rewritable drive becomes available, the case for DVD in the home will become compelling. Already, some major film companies are releasing their films on DVD. Warner alone has released 270 titles and they are being followed by Disney, Columbia, Universal, Fox, Paramount and Touchstone. Even the BBC are considering releasing their back catalogue on DVD so we would see "Red Dwarf", "Pride and Prejudice" and their huge collection of natural history programmes all becoming available on DVD. Carlton Television have already released "Inspector Morse" on DVD. "South Park" DVD's are already available with four episodes on each disc and "Friends" will shortly be available with a massive eight episodes per disc (with four episodes on VHS). Or you can wait until November and see just how yellow the Yellow Brick Road is. On the other hand, LucasFilm are not planning to release the StarWars Trilogy until 2005.

To be continued

WINZIP



John "Buzz" Austin gave an accomplished talk, recently at the Riverside Centre on a subject that affects most computer users, namely Winzip. This useful utility is usually encountered when downloading files from the Internet, as it means the files involved are compacted for a smaller download time. Once the Winzip files are downloaded, you can extract the files, without leaving the area where you have downloaded the files to. Just right click on the zipped files and choose "extract to" from the context menu. To add files to a ZIP, just select one or more files and drag and drop them on a zip file in the active Explorer window, in another Explorer window or to a zip file on the desktop. Note that you can create zip files in the Explorer by selecting New-Winzip file, if you right click in the Explorer.

WinZip makes it easy to create Zip files that "span" multiple disks. This is useful if the files you are working with will not fit on one disk.

Spanning

To make a Zip file that spans multiple disks, simply create a Zip file on a removable disk, then add files to the Zip as you normally would. If the disk fills during Add operation, you will be prompted for another disk. Simply insert the next disk and click the OK button.

Important: disk spanning is not available when adding files to an existing archive; it is only available while creating a new archive. Also note that you cannot add or remove files from a Zip file that spans disks. WinZip requires pre-formatted disks (you can format disks using My Computer or the Windows Explorer).

Example:

To zip the files in your c:\data folder to a Zip file called A:\DATA.ZIP:

1. Start WinZip.
2. Drag and drop the c:\data folder from My Computer or the Windows Explorer to the WinZip window.
3. In the Drop dialog box, type the filename of the Zip file (A:\DATA.ZIP).
4. Click the Add button.

If more than one disk is needed, you will be prompted for additional disks.

CheckOut

The CheckOut feature makes it easy to examine and/or run files in an archive. It creates a temporary folder, extracts all files from the archive into the folder, and opens a "My Computer"-style window showing files in the folder. Double click any item in the window to perform the action normally associated with the document or program. WinZip will optionally close the window and delete the temporary folder (and the extracted files) when you close the archive or close WinZip.

CheckOut Dialog Box

Use the CheckOut toolbar button or the CheckOut entry in the Actions pull-down menu to activate the CheckOut dialog box. This dialog box lets you configure these aspects of the operation:

- Use the Folder edit field to specify the temporary CheckOut folder name. The folder will be created if it does not already exist. The suggested folder depends on the setting of the CheckOut base folder in the Configuration Folders dialog box.

- Use the Group name edit field to specify the name to use for the CheckOut window.
- Use the Maximum Icons edit field to specify the maximum number of items to be placed in the CheckOut window.

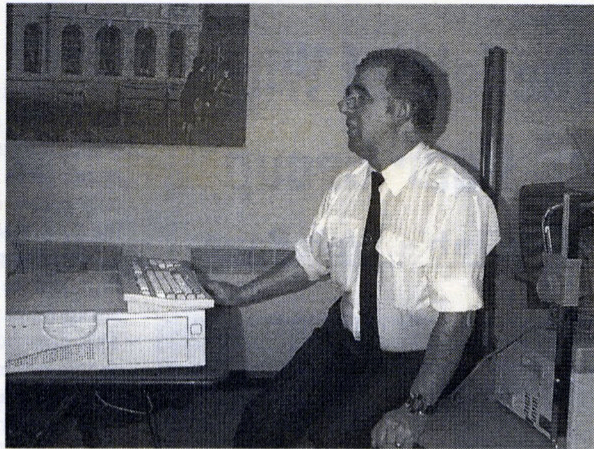
The *Create icons for programs and documents* only check box lets you control whether WinZip creates icons for all files in the archive or only for the specified files. When this option is selected, icons are created for executable files and files with associations. Icons are also created for any files with names starting with "read" (in order to catch files with names like "readme.1st", "read.me", etc.).

The Run virus scanner check box lets you specify whether WinZip will run a virus scanner on the files in the archive. This option is disabled unless a virus scan utility is installed in the Configuration | Program Locations dialog box.

Operations performed by CheckOut feature:

When you click on the OK button in the CheckOut dialog box, WinZip performs the following operations:

1. If the specified folder does not already exist, WinZip will create it. If it already exists and contains files, WinZip will delete the files (after asking your permission, of course). This ensures that the folder will contain only files from the current archive.
2. The "CheckOut window" is actually a second folder, located in \Windows\Start Menu\Programs, that contains shortcuts to the extracted files. If a folder with the specified name already exists, WinZip will delete it after getting your permission. This ensures that the folder will contain only icons for files in the current archive.
3. WinZip extracts files in the current



archive to the specified folder.

4. If the Run virus scanner check box is selected your virus scanner is run against all files in the specified folder. If the virus scan utility returns a non-zero error level, the CheckOut operation is cancelled and messages from the scanner are displayed.
5. WinZip creates the CheckOut folder and window containing the appropriate icons.

Using the CheckOut window:

The window created by CheckOut is a My Computer-style view of the checkout folder and works like any similar window. WinZip creates shortcuts in this folder for each extracted file so that you can use them as follows:

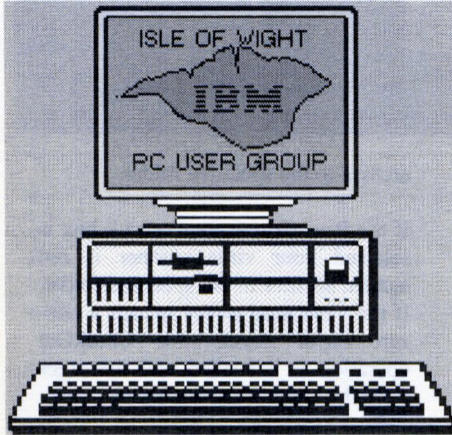
- If a file is executable, double clicking on the icon runs the program.
- If a file has an association, double clicking on the icon loads the file in the associated program so you can view the file.
- Otherwise, double clicking on the icon loads the file in the WinZip Default association program specified in the Configuration | Program Locations dialog box.

The latest version, namely **Winzip7.0**, is shareware and is available online at:

<http://www.winzip.com>

The Isle of Wight PC User Group

The Club's Web Page



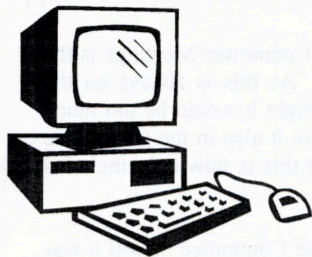
I have been keeping the club's web page (<http://www.ddina.demon.co.uk/iwpcug/>) going now for more than two years and thought members might like to benefit from my experiences as more members are now considering having their own home pages.

Not everyone will agree with me on this, but I decided from the start to work directly with the HTML markup language rather than relying on third party software that attempts to make it easy for you. By obscuring the realities of HTML, instead of learning HTML you have to learn how to operate the software and if you are not aware of the underlying HTML code, you cannot make efficient and effective pages. Hot Key has recently been running a series of articles on HTML so some members may be keen to get started. You can start in very small ways and build up your expertise in stages.

Many first time creators of home pages make the mistake of adding large files of fancy graphics to impress. For users using ordinary phone lines and lower grade modems, this only causes irritation as they have to wait for the download before they can start to read the accompanying text. Having a small logo is fine, but to swamp the page with a large background picture, for example, is not wise. This does not mean to say that such graphics should not be used at all. In fact, the internet is a great way to store your family photos and other pictorial material, but such pictures should not be on the first index page. The first page should be of simple design that leads the reader to select what he or she is interested in. In other words, the index page should be a simple contents list of what can be found at that site.

My experiences of browsing the web show that the majority of home pages, even of large institutions like National Savings, give scant regard to these considerations. In consequence I have started an award system called HIWEB. A HIWEB page has to meet certain design criteria to qualify. Needless to say, the club's page is one that qualifies as can be seen by a small printed region near the start that says "This is a HIWEB page" with the word "HIWEB" underlined as a hyperlink. Clicking on this link will take you to a page that outlines these principles in more detail.

The club's web pages have grown over the past two years to incorporate the disability section's data base of useful organisations. These include many hyperlinks and cross links to make navigation easy. Checking these out is quite a problem but I have recently discovered an organisation (SEVENTwentyfour) that will do this for you every week and send you an e-mail report. The cost is \$49 per year but they will find any link that has changed or ceased or has been incorrectly specified.



D O S Tutorial

Part 4

(some systems call this a "text" file), in a wordprocessor, leaving a certain amount of editing to be done to achieve the original page format, and type formats (italic, bold, gothic, etc.) Often such ASCII files have a .ASC or a .txt extension.

ASCII and IBM codes.

A picture or diagram may have to be stored in a file as a listing of the individual Pixels - the smallest dot that can be marked on the screen.

Since the characters in writing and numbers are used very frequently, a system has been devised for listing the characters by standard codes. This dates from ticker-tape days, and the first thirty or so of these codes were "Control Codes" which may be remembered by those who prepared punched paper tapes for the early NC machines. Nowadays these codes are known as ASCII codes.

(American Standard Codes for Information Interchange).

ASCII codes are universally used, and in wordprocessors the files of, say, letters produced, consist of ASCII codes plus certain codes, SPECIAL TO THAT WORDPROCESSOR, which control such things as printer codes, page format, codes to choose the various typefaces etc.

These wordprocessor control codes mean that wordprocessor files are, in general, not transferable between wordprocessors. However it is usually possible to save an ASCII version of the file,

One further complication was introduced by IBM. The basic unit of information on a computer is a BIT, which can have one of two possible conditions (hence it is BINARY). It can be SET (on, high, one) or RESET (off, low, zero). Using two bits there are four possible combinations, using three, eight; four gives sixteen and so on, each digit allowing a further power of two.

The usual unit of information is a BYTE. This is a unit of eight bits, giving a possible 256 combinations, or codes.

However the original ASCII only used the first seven bits, giving 128 possible codes, which are quite adequate for the upper and lower case alphabets, numbers and symbols found on the keyboard.

IBM introduced a greater number of codes by using all 8 bits. Apart from some extra letters needed for Swedish, French, German text, and some symbols for maths, this also allowed symbols which enabled single or double lined boxes to be drawn.

It is usually necessary to run a short program for these extra symbols to be printed, to screen or printer.

In DOS, hold down the ALT key whilst entering the ASCII code number ON THE NUMERIC KEYPAD and release the alt key to give the letter on screen. Thus ALT 65 will give A. Numbers above 128 may give the extra symbols mentioned. If not, it may be a matter of how the computer is set up (by CONFIG.SYS) as to the symbols it recognises.

If the computer or printer is not set up to take account of this eighth bit then the output will tend to be a series of letters instead of the expected lines. (33333 for horizontal, DDDDD for vertical lines, is common).

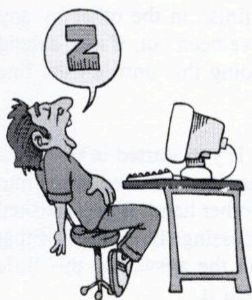
PRINTER CODES - The original Epson printer had an excellent series of control codes. IBM and Hewlett Packard had different sets. These codes, sent to the printer before or during printing, could call up Italic, Bold, New Page, etc. If your printer is not on the list of covered printers, try calling up a similar style printer (Pin-dot, Inkjet, Laser) of another make.



To be continued

LEARNING HTML –Part 3

Finishing Off Your Web Page



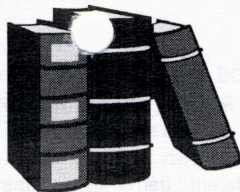
- Position the cursor on a fresh line after your lists. Add a <P> tag and then a <HR> to draw a line across the page.
- Now you need to make a note of the time and date of this 'version' of the page and you should specify who you are, together with your email address. Type 'Last updated' and then select 'Time/Date' from the Edit menu in Notepad. If you are not using Notepad, simply type the current time and date.
- Enter your name and your email address. You can make it easy for people to email you by turning the email address into a link. For example, if you are george@goat.com, then this is done with the HTML code george@goat.com. Now the browser will highlight your email address. When it is clicked on, a new email window will appear and your address will be entered in the right place.
- Save the page and take a final look at it in your Web browser.

This concludes the teaching on learning HTML and is only a starter. For more information refer to David Broughton's article on page 10 and buy a good book on HTML to supplement this teaching. Parts 1 and 2 of this article can be found in the November and December issues of Hot Key.

Ed

PRIZE PUZZLE for JANUARY 2000

By David Broughton



It takes a motor boat 5 minutes to travel 5 km when going with the current. When the boat is going against the same current, it takes 7 minutes. How long would it take the boat to do the same journey in slack water, when there is no current at all?

Send your answer to me, David Broughton, Westwards, Hulverstone, NEWPORT, PO30 4EH (e-mail david@ddina.demon.co.uk) to arrive for the meeting on 2nd February 2000.

ANSWER TO THE NOVEMBER PUZZLES

ANSWER TO THE NOVEMBER PUZZLES

If you have to go in and out of a room through different doors there must be an even number of doors to the room. The same applies to a diagram where you have to cut boundary lines to areas with a continuous unbroken line -- there must be an even number of line segments surrounding each area, except, of course, the area where you start and the area where you finish.

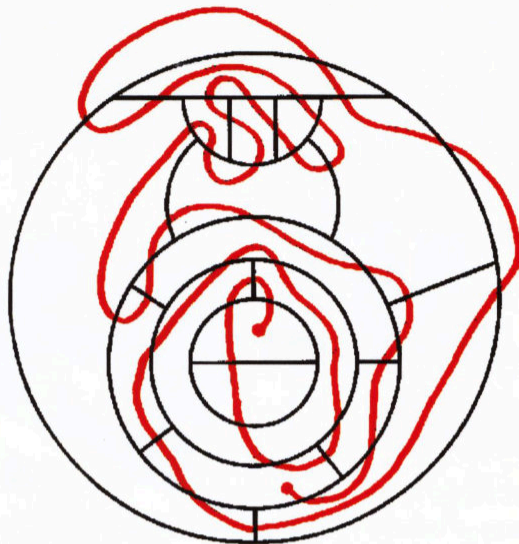
I would solve this problem by checking first of all to see if it was solvable. Clearly, if there are more than two odd areas (i.e. areas bounded by an odd number of line segments) then the puzzle cannot be solved with one line. If there are no such areas, the start and finish could join up in the same area. Identifying the odd areas is the first job (note that the area that surrounds the whole diagram also has to be examined).

Having found that there are only two odd areas, just start in one and finish in the other by any route you wish that does not cross. Check that all the line segments have been cut; if not, extend the line you already have in an area to cut the other lines and keep doing this until all the line segments are cut.

Now suppose that you were given a diagram that had just one odd area. If you started in this area, where would you finish? If you finished in an even area you would either have crossed a line into or out of this area more than once or left a line out of your route. On the other hand, if you finished in the area where you started you would have made an even number of crossings into or out of that area when it only had an odd number of ways in and out. I will leave the answer to this little paradox to next month but if you know the answer, I will be pleased to hear it.

PUZZLE IN THE SHOW EDITION

For the first time this year I included a puzzle in the Show edition of the Hot Key and invited anyone who attended the Show to enter (and that included members, of course). The puzzle was a slight variation of the November Hot Key diagram, sufficient to make the solution different but sufficiently similar to make a cursory glance make you think it was the same puzzle. (Yes, I'm a tease, as my family is always telling me.) For this one occasion, the prize was increased from £5 to £20. I expected a flood of answers. So did Dennis Linzmaier who was the only person to correctly do the puzzle (I had two other incorrect entries). So out of some 450 paying visitors to the Show and many children (who I thought would enjoy doing this puzzle) only three persons sent in a solution. So no random draw was necessary and Dennis won the £20 book token. I think a lot of members missed a good opportunity here to win a substantial prize. It was so easy I felt it was on the border of being too trivial.

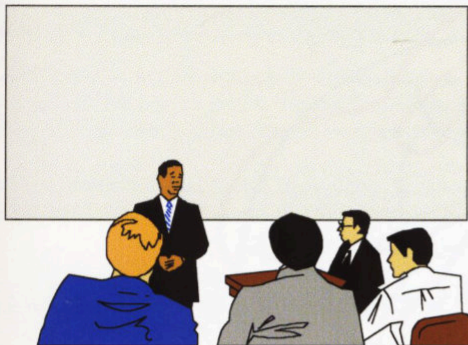
ANSWER TO THE PUZZLE IN THE NOVEMBER HOT KEY

An example solution (and of course there are hundreds of correct answers) is shown in the diagram. I received four correct answers: from Rosemary West, John Bownas, Peter Wreford and Dennis Linzmaier. Rosemary West won the draw and the £5 book token.



Maureen Whitaker, Andrew Price, June Clarke and Vickie Clarke pictured at a recent meeting

MEMBERS NOTICE BOARD



**This Board is FREE to members
Please use it!**



FOR SALE

EPSON FX85
wide carriage printer
& manual, free to a good home.

Intel Pentium 166MHz CPU
(non MMX), socket 5/7,
cheap upgrade for older PCs,
bargain at £25;
a simple exchange fitting can be arranged.

Lotus 1-2-3 ver. 2.2
for DOS 2.00 onwards,
on 3.5 floppy disks,
all original classic,
at the bargain price of £1.

Serif Page Plus ver. 3
Win 3.xx and Win 95 with manuals,
for all DTP,
a good starter system,
bargain price of £5.

contact Colin Boon on

office

MEMBERSHIP RENEWALS

As usual, at this time of the year, we have to remind some of last year's members to renew their membership.

The Hot Key is only distributed to the previous year's members up to the February edition. Therefore, if you receive this copy by post with a reminder slip, please consider rejoining.

The 2000 membership is at present:

| | |
|--------------------|-----|
| Current Membership | 111 |
| Renewed for 2000 | 71 |

Please contact Doug Rankine - see page 3

Hot Key is published on the first Wednesday of every month. This edition was compiled using Microsoft Publisher 2000 and reproduced on an Epson Stylus Colour ink jet printer and a Brother HL-1250 laser printer.

The views and opinions expressed here are those of the contributors alone. No responsibility can be accepted with respect to advice or suggestions made in this journal.