

HOT KEY

ISLE OF WIGHT PC USER GROUP

MONTHLY JOURNAL

Issue 127- June 2002



Ian Symon and Arthur Johnston at Riverside Centre

Graphics Made Clear

Bob Groom gave the club a talk on graphics on Wednesday 1st May 2002. This was a talk put together at short notice owing to the withdrawal of the original speaker for this evening. Bob had come prepared to answer several questions put to him on the club's e-mail discussion group.

He first dealt with the problem of resizing. The number of picture elements (pixels) horizontally and

vertically does not always relate to file sizes owing to there being various file formats, some of them compressed. Pictures taken with a digital camera typically have a large number of pixels, of the order of 2000 x 1500. For many applications, such as e-mail attachments or for placing on a web site, these sizes are far too large. Using Paint Shop Pro 7, Bob showed how to reduce the size using the "resize" option on the "Image" menu.

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FUTURE MEETINGS

5th June	Internet Connectivity & related subjects	Jonathan Thornton
19th June	File Organisation for Beginners	Dennis Linzmaier
3rd July	Information Structure	Ian Moth
17th July	Making and uploading your first web page	David Broughton & Others
7th August	Taking the Lid off Microsoft Windows	John Harvey
21st August	Annual Barbecue (more details later)	
4th September	A Personal Computing History	Jonathan Burt
18th September	Dreamweaver (A software package for designing web pages)	Sylvia Farley
2nd October	External Speaker	To be arranged
16th October	Installing the operating system and your first software. This is a follow-up from Building Your Own Computer.	Dennis Parkes



Roger, our Chairman, speaking at Riverside Centre recently

**ISLE OF WIGHT PC USER GROUP
COMMITTEE MEMBERS**

Honorary President:
Sir Norman Echlin



Chairman:
Roger Skidmore

Vice Chairman:
David Broughton

Marketing Manager:
Dennis Linzmaier

Treasurer:
Bob Groom

Secretary:
Sylvia Farley

Membership Secretary/Meetings Reception Assistant:
John Atkin

Hot Key Editor:
Brian Sexton

Committee Member:
Cliff Maidment

Committee Member:
Alan Anthony

New Members Co-ordinator:
Zica Calderia Cabral

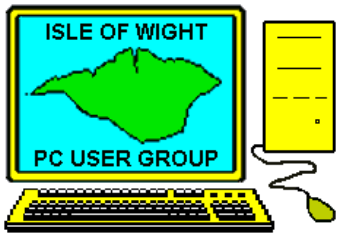
Disability Resources Co-ordinator:
Helen Edom



Owing to the incompatibility of my Umax 3450 USB scanner with Windows XP, I decided to exchange it with a new one that would work with XP. Seeing a **Staples** advertisement in the newspaper, which stated “bring your old scanner or printer into the store and get a £30 reduction on the purchase of a new one”, I promptly did that and obtained a new Canon N1240 USB scanner. This works perfectly and was accepted by Windows XP when inserting the CD-ROM software into my computer. The Canon N1240U doesn't even need a power supply to connect up the hardware, it simply installs directly from the USB connector. In addition to the normal software, a bonus of Photoshop Elements was included in the package by Canon. A worthwhile exchange indeed!

There appears to be more and more computer magazines making their debut in a saturated market but it is encouraging to see the addition of some ‘Help’ magazine in the form of **PC Help Desk** issued by PC Plus, **Tips and Tricks** issued by PC Advisor and **PC Help** issued by Future Publishing. The magazines are accompanied by the usual cover CD disk which contains some useful software and handy tips. These magazines appear to be more practical than the regular monthly issues as these help issues relate the various experiences of normal computer users. My main criticism of these new help magazines is the price particularly PC Help Desk and PC Help which are priced at £4.99 and only run to 98 pages in both magazines. Tips and Tricks is better value at £3.99, although to be fair the inclusion of the cover CD software makes up for the price.

Regarding the most recent meeting at the Riverside Centre, I did find the evening interesting in that we had three of our learned committee members lending their experience on various aspects of computing and would like to see more of this from our members. It is always encouraging and informative when various club members parade their knowledge and illustrate with the projector how software works. Tim Bateman used to arrange an evening whereby members talked and informed our club of their experiences and I would like to suggest more of this type of meeting.



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, Newport, 7.30 - 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.

Visitors are welcome.

This journal, “HOTKEY”, is produced every month.

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.

Club's Website - <http://www.iwpcug.org/>

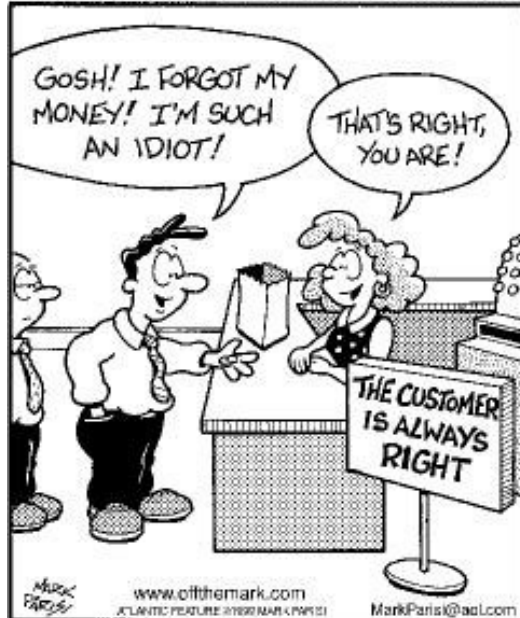
H U M O U R

off the mark by Mark Parisi
www.offthemark.com

5



off the mark by Mark Parisi
www.offthemark.com



BEREAVEMENT

The Chairman and fellow committee members would like to extend their condolences to our Treasurer, Bob Groom, on the recent loss of his wife, June. Our commiserations go to Bob and his sons on this sad occasion.

continued from page 1



One can specify the new size either in terms of pixels or percent of the original, remembering to tick the box that keeps the aspect ratio the same. Increasing the size is also possible but, of course, the picture quality would suffer. For printing, Bob pointed out that the number of pixels in the computer image needs to be at least twice the number of pixels resolution one expects in the print in order to get good quality reproduction. For a deskjet colour printer, the maximum resolution one can get is about 200 pixels per inch.

Bob then demonstrated how to produce an oval picture with blurred or "feathered" edges. He first made an elliptical selection on a picture with a feathering parameter of some 20 or so pixels, then inverted the selection to select all outside the oval. With a white background setting, this was then set to white using "Clear" on the edit menu.

Another question was how to combine parts of more than one picture, such as placing a sky from one picture onto another. This could be done in several ways. He demonstrated one method using the "magic wand" tool to select the area to be replaced. Bob also talked about layers, masks, gamma and fielded a host of questions from the audience.

Our sympathy goes out to Bob on the death of his wife in the previous week and we appreciate that he still made the effort to give us this talk so as not to let people down. Many thanks, Bob, for a brave effort and a very interesting and informative talk.

David Broughton



Further to Roger Skidmore's informative talk on Power Desk, Ontrack have released a newer version **PowerDesk 5**, which is available as a **free** download with no time or usage limits. Go to:

<http://www.ontrack.com/powerdesk/guide.asp>

You can view over 200 different file formats using either a "docked" or "floating" viewer pane with the PowerDesk 5

- Fast access with the "Coolbar"
- Add your favourite programs and files to the customisable "Coolbar". Get one-click access to favourite applications, functions, shortcuts and more.

Easy FTP

PowerDesk 5 includes Easy FTP downloading - the simple and easy way to get files from FTP sites on the Internet!

Quick graphics conversion

You can convert over 20 different graphics formats quickly and easily. You can even perform "Batch" conversions that support large-scale multi-format conversions.

Find the space hogs

Size Manager helps you hunt down wasted space by providing an instant, graphic view of how much space is used by each folder on your system.

Sync up your folders

The Folder Synchronizer makes quick work of comparing and updating folders. Use it for keeping your folders in tune and up-to-date. Perfect for keeping your laptop and desktop in sync!

Our thanks to Roger for introducing this useful and interesting utility

WINDOWS TIPS



Clear your Temp folder

The Temp folder quickly fills up with folders that are no longer necessary for Windows to function. Files in these directories include leftover .dll files from installs and .tmp files, and can hog a large chunk of hard disk space. These directories can be emptied every time you boot Windows by adding this command line to autoexec.bat:

```
@C:\WINDOWS\COMMAND\DelTree /Y C:\WINDOWS\Temp\
```

Open with...

Changing a file type's association and the program in which it would open by default, is relatively simple. Right-click on the file and select **Open With**. Choose **Program** (You may need to hold down Shift when right-clicking the folder in older versions of Windows). Select the program with which you wish to associate the file type and check the 'Always use this program to open this file' box.

Know your IP address

From time to time, you may need to know the IP address you are currently assigned to. This normally changes every time you log on to the server, and is therefore known as a dynamic IP address. To find out what your IP address is, Open the **Run** menu in **Start**, enter **winiipcfg** and click **OK**.

Remove Windows Task Scheduler

Windows Task Scheduler can be more annoying than useful, and it hogs processor and memory space. Unfortunately it cannot be removed, but it can be disabled. Open the Registry Editor (type **Regedit** into the **Run** screen in your **Start** menu) and navigate to:-

HKEY_LOCAL_MACHINE\Software\Microsoft\Windows\CurrentVersion\RunServices branch. Find the Scheduling Agent string, which should be set to 'mstask.exe'. Delete this value and reboot your system. Task scheduler will no longer automatically load.

Remove Control Panel icons

Uninstalling a piece of hardware or software can render some icons in the Control Panel useless, and they merely sit there taking up space. These icons are .cpl files, a full list of which can be found by typing **.cpl** into the **Find Files or folders** option in Start menu. To remove them, open the **%Windir%\control.ini** file through the Run screen. Then create a line at the top called '[don't load]' and enter the names of the icons you want removed, for example: **Joystick.cpl=no**.

Remove startup programs

Many unwanted programs lodge themselves into the startup folder on installation, but removing these from the system tray, where they are typically found, can really speed up bootup time. Some can be removed from the **Start>Programs>Startup** folder, but you will find others remain hidden. The best way to remove these, though is to execute **Mscconfig** from the Run dialogue on the Start menu. This allows you to toggle between having them in the startup folder or not. However Windows 95 does not have this utility.

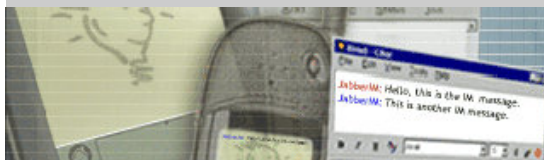
TOP 10 WINDOWS-ENHANCING UTILITIES



- **Ad Aware** - <http://tomcoyote.com/l/downloads.html>
 Lavasoft's Ad Aware scans your Registry and hard drives for known spyware and lets you remove it safely.
- **Bios** - www.geocities.com/mbockelkamp
 This program displays information about your Bios, including Bios extensions and beep codes; lets you find Bios passwords (Award and AMI) and discover Award Bios universal passwords. This Dos-based command-line utility can also switch the first and second-level caches on or off, and turn off your PC (requires APM 1.2 or later). It can also save your Bios settings to disk and restore them, though this feature seems to be unreliable
- **Motherboard Monitor** - <http://mbm.livewiredev.com>
 Motherboard Monitor tracks CPU and system temperature plus fan speed and can pop up or transmit an alert if the CPU starts to overheat or a fan fails. Monitor supports a vast range of motherboards and sensors, so do refer to the guide on the Motherboard Monitor home page to choose correct sensors. It takes a little getting used to, but is by far the best of its kind and infinitely more versatile than the monitor that ships with Via motherboards.
- **Regcleaner** - www.vtoy.fi/jy16/index.shtml
 Regcleaner prunes the Windows Registry - with a twist, seeking out the parts other Registry cleaners don't reach. Regcleaner displays a list of all the programs referenced in the Registry and allows you to delete their Registry entries. It is enormously useful if you frequently install shareware utilities and games demos. These don't always uninstall cleanly and have been known to leave detritus in the Registry that gradually builds up, slowing down Registry access. An essential tool for Windows users - easy to use but employ with care.
- **Sisoft Sandra** - www.sisoftware.demon.co.uk/sandra
 Sandra is a system analysis and troubleshooting utility. Modules cover everything from CPU and Bios analysis to OpenGL and DirectX. In every case, Sandra reports valuable performance data, reveals what features are or not supported and even offers tips on tweaks you can make to improve the system.
- **Xteq Systems X-Setup** - www.xteq.com/downloads/index.html
 X-Setup lets you change hundreds of hidden settings for Windows and a multitude of programs and games. It provides an Explorer-like tree display so you can navigate to the settings you want. In Wizard mode you can pick a topic from the menu and X-Setup runs the appropriate wizard to help you change settings step by step.
- **WCPUID** - www.h-oda.com
 The current version 3 will report everything you ever wanted to know (and more) about your CPU and its chipset. WCPUID is very useful if you need to confirm the version of your motherboard chipset.



INSTANT MESSAGING



by Kyle MacRae

There are many big players in the instant messaging arena today, notably AIM, Microsoft's MSN Messenger and Windows Messenger, Yahoo Messenger, ICQ and PalTalk. No two programs offer quite the same features but they're all completely free and they all handle basic two-way text chat with ease.

The great buzzword of instant messaging is interoperability. This means that somebody using, say, Yahoo Messenger should be able to chat to somebody on the MSN Messenger or AIM network. Unfortunately, it doesn't quite work that way.

AOL is generally painted as the great enemy here, as for years it has systematically and aggressively blocked access to its network to those who choose to use other instant messaging clients.

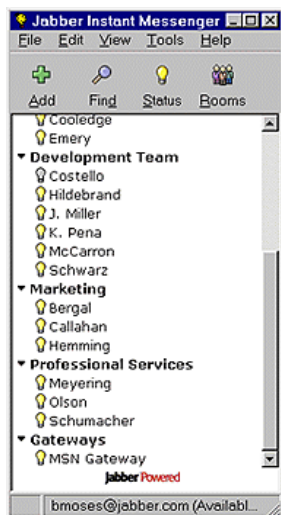
Meanwhile, NetMeeting - Microsoft's souped-up messenger software that includes video chat - has been merged with the more basic MSN Messenger program to make up the new instant messaging service called Windows Messenger, which can be found in Windows XP.

Building Bridges

However, there is nothing to stop you running several instant messaging clients on your computer at the same time.

Alternatively, some companies have developed tools to bridge the interoperability divide.

Hero of the hour is Jabber, available from: www.jabber.com



Download its instant messaging client and you should be able to talk to friends and family on MSN, Yahoo, ICQ and other networks from within a single program and on a good day, perhaps with AIM users as well

Features include:

- Chat
- Invite Only Rooms
- Hidden Rooms
- Roster Management
- Profiles
- MSN Gateway
- Subscription Control
- Message Logs
- File/URL Transfers
- Text Conferencing
- Persistent Rooms
- Password Protected Rooms
- Resource Management
- Message Encryption
- User Search
- Offline Message Delivery
- Blocking

continued on page 11

- You can keep in constant touch with your friends and family every minute you're online.
- Instant messaging allows you to share files without any of the size restrictions of email.
- Once online, you can use it as a free alternative to the telephone.
- Group chats let you share your thoughts with several friends simultaneously.

CONTACTS



AOL Instant Messenger - www.aol.co.uk/aim

ICQ - www.icq.com

MSN Messenger - www.msn.co.uk

PalTalk - www.paltalk.com

Yahoo Messenger - <http://uk.messenger.yahoo.com>

INSTANT MESSAGING TIPS

- Unlike email, instant messaging chats are gone as soon as you close the chat window. However, most instant messaging clients offer an option to save a chat as a file. If chat is important, save it as you go along just as you would save an open document or email.
- When you don't want to be disturbed, use the 'away message' option to signal that you're not available. Likewise, always respect a friend's away message before barging in to offer the latest info.
- Don't expect a friend or family member to hook up with you in a voice or video chat on a whim. It takes effort and patience to set these things up, so stick to basic text unless there's a good reason to bring out the bells and whistles.

Our thanks to Computer Active Magazine for the extracts

How To Set Up a Newsgroup in Outlook Express

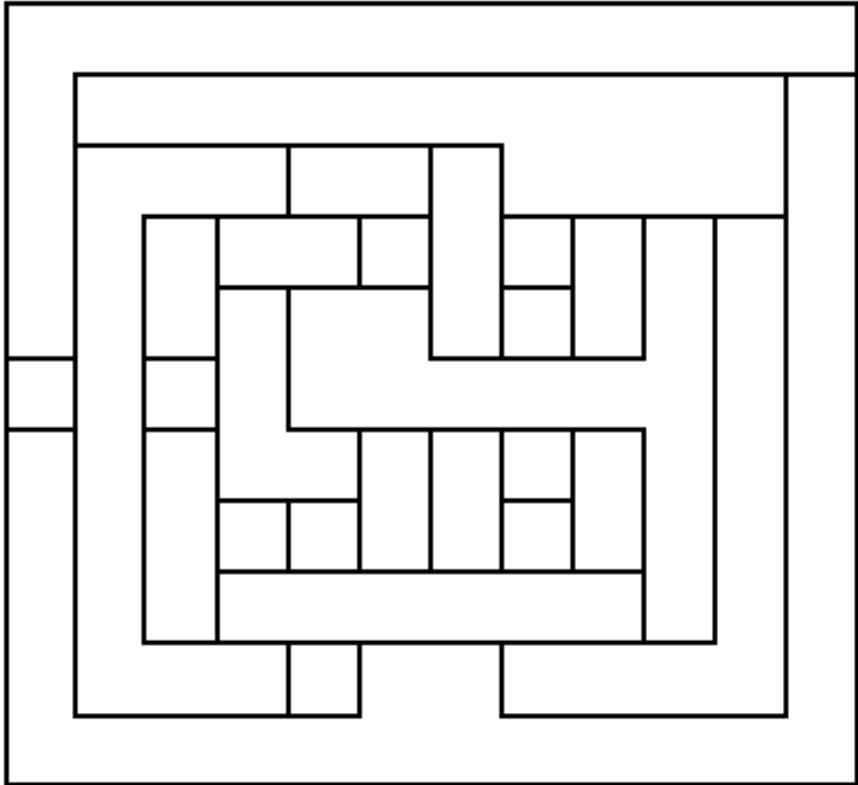


1. First, get online with your ISP and start Outlook Express. Click the Tools button, then Accounts and select the News tab. Click Add. The name you enter now is how you will appear to others every time you post a message. Use a nickname if you'd rather stay (more or less) anonymous.
2. Email addresses are routinely harvested from Usenet to compile spam lists, so it's best to enter an email address that you seldom use. Hotmail (www.hotmail.com) is always a favourite. Click next to continue.
3. Now enter your ISP's news server address, details of which you can generally find on its website. It should look something like news.clara.net. When you click on Finish, the final dialogue box, Outlook Express should prompt you to download a list of available newsgroups. Say yes - then go and have a cup of tea while you wait.
4. You should now have a complete list of all the newsgroups carried by your ISP. Search by keyword or just browse the list for any that interest you, then highlight them and click Subscribe.
5. When you've finished, all your subscribed groups appear in a list. Click on one and Outlook Express finds and downloads the most recent message headers (titles). To read a message, just click on its header and the text will duly appear in the preview window. Note that a + symbol next to a message denotes that it's part of a thread (a discussion comprising one or more responses to an original post). Just click the only retain messages for a few days, so you may have to use the Google Groups archive to find older messages.
6. To post a reply, highlight the message in question, click the Reply to Group button, type away and click Send. That's it - you're now an active part of Usenet. Your message will appear in the group in minutes, hours or perhaps days - the rate at which news servers pick up new posts varies considerably.
7. Binary files warrant a little special attention. In many cases, images are posted as single file attachments, in which case all you have to do is click the header to download the picture into Outlook Express, preview pane. The larger the file size, the longer this takes. If you click the paperclip icon, you can also save it to the hard disk.

Our thanks to Computer Active Magazine for the above extract



PRIZE PUZZLE CORNER
JUNE 2002
 by David Broughton



The problem this month is to colour the diagram above with just four colours so that no two adjacent areas have the same colour. I suggest you use red, green, blue and yellow. But you don't necessarily have to have paints or crayons: you can, if you wish, just place the letters R, G, B & Y in the areas. However, if you do this the diagram is more difficult to check so I cannot accept solutions shown this way unless I receive them **before** the meeting of 3rd July. Fully coloured diagrams will be acceptable up to and including 3rd July.

You may not wish to colour and cut out your page from Hot Key. There are several ways round this. You could photocopy the page or you could download an image from the club's web site. This latter method has the big advantage that it can become quite a fun activity for children as well as adults to use the flood fill tool of Paint Shop Pro or the Windows Paint program which has the advantage that you can make corrections as easily as you can colour the area in the first place -- and it is "pixel perfect"! The completely coloured diagram is then quite a beautiful image.

The web site address is www.iwpcug.org where you should click on "Free Downloads" from the left hand menu list, then "David Broughton". This will take you to my area of the club's web site. Click "List of files" and there you will see the file called FOURCOLW.GIF. It is only 4450 bytes so downloads in a gif(fy).

There are three ways of sending me your answer: 1: A hand-coloured (or lettered) image by post. 2: A computer-coloured printout. 3: An e-mail attachment of the coloured diagram. However it is important not to send an uncompressed version (such as a BMP format file) this way as it is too big. Convert it to GIF or ZIP it first. I will not accept large attachments. See page 3 for addresses. Happy colouring.

Solution to the April Puzzle

(about having two coins change out of £10)

Several competitors found more than one answer to this problem. The answer I expected was £7.50 making the two coins change from £10 as £2 and 50p with a discount price of £6 with two £2 coins change. The other solution was £9.75 having a 20p and 5p coin change and a discount price of £7.80 with a £2 and 20p coin change. Peter Wreford found a third, slightly dubious, answer of £9.98 with 2 x 1p coins change and a discount price (rounded up!) of £7.99 requiring a £2 coin and a 1p coin change. Five members gave correct answers: Michael Hodge, Rosemary West, Peter Wreford, Peter Woollerton and Ken Cameron. Peter Woollerton won the draw and a £5 book token. Well done all.

To avoid too many regular solvers winning too often, I am now leaving out of the draw the winner of the previous month, but they are welcome to send in answers and will be mentioned in Hot Key if correct.

SPECIAL THANKS

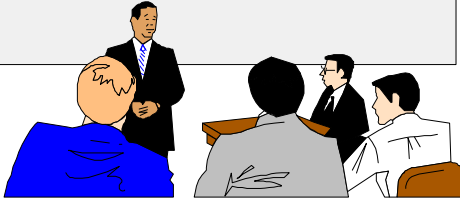
The committee and members of the IW PC User Group would like to thank David Broughton very much indeed for the kind donation of the portable VGA projector now in use at the meetings.

The VGA splitter device enabling the signal to be sent to the projector was kindly donated by Bob Groom. Appreciation is particularly applicable because of the confidence this expresses in the group and its activities.

Roger Skidmore, Chairman.

MEMBERS NOTICE BOARD

Please use this Notice Board to benefit other members.



FOR SALE

COMPUTER

Duron 1Gb Processor
128Mb RAM, 20Gb Hard Drive
17" Monitor
Windows 98
£500

Upgrade to 256Mb RAM
40Gb Hard Drive
16xDVD Player and Windows XP
£50

Also available
32xCD-RW Drive - **£80** 16xDVD
Player—**£50**

Contact: Dennis Parkes
#####

FOR SALE

HYPHER Pen (Boxed)

Draw & Write on your desktop
for Windows 95/98 - **£10**
Contact: The Editor
#####

FOR SALE

Hardware

Boxed USB Diamond Modem
56k/V90
£25

**New Boxed Parallel to USB Printer
Adaptor**
with CD driver - Win98 - (useful for
scanner and printer)
£10

**EpoX Pentium 2 Motherboard
and
Pentium 2 400MHz Chip**
£50 for both
1.2Gb Seagate Hard Drive
£10

Contact: Roy Hollis
Tel. #####

FOR SALE

- **HP83 Computer**, with tape drive and external 5¼" dual disk drive
Free to a good home
- **Betacom Solo Answer phone - £5**
- **Btech Headphone Pro-Amp Amplifier**
£5
- **SVGA Tatung 14" monitor - £10**
- **Diamond Supra Express Modem**
336V external
with power supply and manual
£10
- **Accodata Data Switch**
(switches printer between the parallel
ports of 2 computers)
£5

Contact: Tony Maine
Tel. #####

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