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MICRO SCOPE

Newman College with MAPE

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MICRO-SCOPE 22

Micros or Sandtrays?

Barry Wake

Advisory Teacher, Educational Computing, Birmingham

More nursery provision?

During the recent election campaign, one of the educational themes that appeared quite high on the political agenda was that of the promise of increased nursery provision. Now, assuming that there will not be unlimited resourcing and bearing in mind the issues raised in Janet Broom's article in *MICRO-SCOPE 20*, it may well be pertinent to ask to what extent should we be considering the use of computers with very young children. How far does such expensive equipment have a place in the nursery? In terms of priority, should they have micros or sandtrays?

Micros in the nursery?

There seems to be a widely held belief that the older the child the greater the educational benefit to be derived from using a micro. Even within primary schools, it is often the case that the micros spend more time with the 4th years than in reception, and no doubt arguably so, depending on your aims. But – in the nursery? Nursery children need all the practical, concrete experience they can get. 'They should get stuck into the sandtray', as one colleague put it.

Mind you, that statement was not made by a nursery teacher. Yet nursery children are also children of the 'hi-tech age', possibly with computers at home and certainly toys and household gadgets containing microprocessors. Moreover, micros may actually be of educational value too, even at that early age. Perhaps we should start introducing micros into the nurseries to explore and assess their educational potential with the very young first. After all, the nursery staff are the ones with the professional expertise,

the knowledge, the experience and the skill. They are the ones who should be given the chance to decide.

One nursery project

At this point, I ought to declare my hand, in that last year I was involved in setting up a small pilot project of three nursery schools with a very open-ended brief of exploring such possibilities.

We began with a RML480Z system plus Concept Keyboard and Electronic Book in each school which seemed to work reasonably well. The teachers and nursery nurses involved were all extremely keen and enthusiastic. However, there was not a great variety of suitable software and recently we were offered the chance of going over to a Nimbus system. Although we are still struggling to get the Concept Keyboard communicating with the Nimbus, the inclusion of the mouse has made an appreciable difference.

The addition of some further MEP Blue File programs as well as some of our own, developed at the Centre, has meant the choice of software is now generally rather more appropriate.

To date, our own initial reactions are very favourable. In fact, in the words of one headteacher: '*We're amazed. We have totally underestimated the children's capabilities.*' To give just two isolated examples: there is Ann who is just over four and when given the opportunity, can spend over an hour using *Paintpot*, an easy-to-use graphics program, concentrating with obvious artistic delight in the visual sensation of the shapes and colours she can continually wash over the screen. Although she cannot 'read', she can operate the menus, clear the screen and start again if necessary – and change the mouse from one hand to the other when her fingers get tired.

There is also Ian who, though intelligent, seemed to be getting things wrong in an odd-man-out type of program called *Faces*. This has a score table of rewards with small colour-coded faces according to whether the children were successful on the first, second, third go or not at all. In fact, the staff soon realised that he was actually producing a sequenced pattern of these little coloured faces by deliberately getting the problem wrong the 'right' number of times in order to get the coloured face he wanted!

What are the benefits?

In general terms, the noticeable benefits are very similar to those available to older children. The micro offers that structured focal point, stimulating and linking with other activities. There are the thinking and problem-solving skills it engenders. It can support spatial awareness as well as number work. In language development, verbal reasoning and explanation there are also identifiable gains. Concentration span and short-term memory skills can be visibly extended too.

With such very young children, there are noticeably marked improvements in hand-eye co-ordination and manipulative skills. They soon find the keys they need on the QWERTY keyboard and, much to our surprise, they seem to

master the mouse very quickly. Then there is the obvious excitement and visible enjoyment, the sheer sensation of sight, sound and movement all under their control which needs to be seen to be believed.

Another great advantage has been in the co-operative activity the micro engenders. The concept of 'watching time', where the less confident are quite free to stand back and just observe what is going on until they want to get more closely involved themselves, means they are all teaching each other. To quote from our first newsletter: *'The "social" value of the computer cannot be ignored . . . It has been particularly pleasing to watch their growing self-confidence as they share their experiences, knowledge and understanding'*.

What now?

As to the future, we plan to continue extending the range of software from that supporting specific skills of, for instance, matching, sequencing and counting to the more open-ended mouse-driven graphic or story-picture programs. We are also hoping to expand the project to reach more nursery schools and classes. One thing we do need to do, especially, is to follow through an in-depth longitudinal study, begun by a local teacher for his MSc, to evaluate



and assess exactly where the micro is most beneficial to our very young children. Its findings would throw light on this curious limbo-like quality the micro has in providing some sort of bridge between the concrete and the abstract.

Final comments

To sum up our initial reactions, however, we are not claiming any major breakthroughs. The micro does not replace nursery activities, it does not do anything that really could not be done in other ways (though perhaps it can do things more easily, more quickly and sometimes more effectively). However, it does have this tremendous power of motivation and it can be used both to support the curriculum as well as extend it in ways that were not hitherto available. Of course, it is still vitally important that the children sort and count physical objects, put the fork beside the knife, experience the physical quality of

sand, draw Mummy with crayons and so on. But the micro provides another powerful resource, 'the most important pedagogical invention since grandmothers' as Tom Stonier puts it in *Children, Computers and Communication*. It can reinforce and enhance the curriculum in so many ways. With today's ever-increasing demands, we surely need to muster the most effective resources we can: from teachers to toys, from sand to silicon chips.

Indeed, as has been said elsewhere, it's not the hardware or the software that matters – it's what we do with it and what the children gain from it. The most important concern above all else is the quality of learning that we can instill in our children. And there is no doubt in our minds that this is precisely where the micro can have its greatest impact.

So the big question is – does it really have to be micros *or* sandtrays? Surely, today's children really need both!

Letters

RE calligrams

Thank you for another *MICRO-SCOPE* which gave me an idea for RE again. (The Christmas Special gave me some too.) I enclose a copy of our work on Calligrams.

Keith Hales
Leighton Middle School
Leighton Buzzard, Beds

J E S U C H R I S T
THE MESSIAH

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A Policy Document for the Use of Computers in a Junior School

Linda Johnson

This policy document was produced as part of a Primary Computing Course run at Bristol Polytechnic. The course is tutored by David Feather and Pat Frawley. Linda also produced a set of evaluations, teacher materials and samples of children's work for the key programs listed in Fig. 1. This and the policy document are to be used by all the staff in the school. The documents will be modified and extended as new packages appear and further experiences dictate.

General statement of aims

'Microcomputers are cheap and very powerful tools; they will get cheaper and more powerful. They are pervading homes, offices, factories and schools. The invention of the cheap computer will probably be as significant as the invention of the printing press, in its effect on the lives of children in our primary schools. Just as books can be used to enhance and extend children's education, so should computers. Just as children need to appreciate the versatility of books, and learn how to use them to fulfil their own needs, so they need to learn how to control computers.

A confidence in using books is an acknowledged necessity for the present century, but we are now preparing children for life in the 21st Century, where everyone will come into contact with micro-electronics in many different forms.' (Anita Straker, former Director MEP Primary Project – Times Educational Supplement, Summer 1986)

With the rapid growth of information technology throughout the world, and the large influence it now has on our everyday lives, we in primary schools have an important rôle to play in awakening and developing children's awareness of computers in the world around them. It is up to us to introduce the concept of the computer as a powerful tool, to help children discover its strengths and its weaknesses by teaching relevant computer skills at a level which the individual child can readily understand.

As a school we should be united in our specific objectives within our classrooms and there should be a consensus of opinion as to our priorities within those specific objectives.

Whilst recognising that availability of hardware is a considerable constraint we should aim to give every child, throughout the school, extended opportunities through micros, to undertake investigations and solve problems, to handle data and text. So long as finance holds the reins on our ambitions we must aim to get the most out of our hardware and especially our software, seeking quality rather than quantity.

Wherever possible, use of the computer should be fully integrated into the curriculum, allowing children to undertake tasks which would otherwise have been impossible. Our use of computers in school should where applicable simulate their use in the real world.

Since computers and information technology are such rapidly moving worlds, we must make a conscious effort to keep abreast of the latest developments by accepting opportunities for in-service training. We must be forward-thinking in our planning of not just our computer time, but also our prospective purchase of hardware and software. For many of us the idea of computers in primary schools is still in its infancy and as their wider use develops we must take a flexible approach towards them.

At this Junior school we accept the rôle that computers play in the world. We realise the great need for children to learn about computers and how to use them in a meaningful way.

We accept the challenge of computers and information technology and will do all that we can to meet it.

Specific objectives

For staff and children

1. The ability of all staff and some older children to set up a system ready for use.
2. The ability to handle and insert discs correctly.

3. Keyboard familiarity – location of letters, appropriate use of function keys and use of some specialised command functions involved in *Dart*, *Logotron* and *Pendown*.
4. The ability to make a copy of information displayed on the monitor – using the printer.
5. To learn a 'working vocabulary' about computers in general, eg 'printout', 'store on disc', 'bug' etc.
6. The ability to store and retrieve data, to interrogate the computer. All children, by the time they leave us at age 11, should be able to competently use the data handling programs *Ourfacts*, *Factfile* and *Picfile*. Some may be able to use the more complex *Grass*.
7. The ability to wordprocess. All children, by the time they leave us at age 11, should be able to competently use the word processing programs *Concept Writer* and *Pendown*.
8. The ability to use, however simply, *Dart*, *Logo*, and if funds allow, have some experience of using the computer for control technology through use of a turtle and/or buffer box, plus Technical Lego.

For Staff

1. Considering the capital investment we have tied up in school computers, we should make full provision for the care and maintenance of our equipment. Hopefully there should be one member of staff responsible for this area, who may also be able to offer some degree of technical advice in the case of any problems, or at least know the correct agencies to contact for help in the case of serious problems.
2. Staff should be allowed the use of the computer at weekends and evenings for the preparation of worksheets, task cards, etc, which require 'hands on' computer time.
3. All members of staff should be encouraged to receive in-service training opportunities if they so wish.
4. Resources, apart from software, should be made available in school which will offer real help to all teachers in their developing use of the computer with children. Such resources should be budgeted for within the allowance set aside for computers.
5. There should be one member of staff with a curriculum area of responsibility for computers. He/she should offer help and guidance to other members of staff when requested and should promote good classroom use of the computer by his/her example.

Staff responsibilities and in-service training

Each member of staff will be responsible for the use of the school computer within his/her classroom, striving to meet our agreed specific objectives and always with our general aims in mind. A copy of this document will be added to each staff member's school file for quick reference and an extra copy of the 'Software School Plan' will be located on the Computer noticeboard.

The member of staff with a post of special responsibility for computers should be able to offer some degree of expertise in this area and be able to offer help, advice, and most importantly encouragement to all other members of staff. He/she should hold regular workshop sessions at regular intervals to introduce new software, present resource materials, deal with problems which staff may be encountering. Although the post holder may be able to advise the head teacher about purchases of computer equipment and peripherals, the choice of software should not be considered his/her preserve. Post holders of other subject areas, such as Mathematics, Language, Music, etc, should be expected, as part of their responsibilities, to recommend good software programs related to their areas.

In-service training

This is of crucial importance *if we are to use our computer equipment to its full potential*. Gone are the days when the teacher can randomly stick a disc in the disc drive and send a couple of children to a corner of the room to 'play on the computer'!

Ideas for the classroom use of computers are developing all the time so we need to encourage and foster the interest of our staff in such developments. Those who attend in-service training, and particularly the computer post holder, should report back to us the good ideas, good practices learned. Where staff express a desire to attend in-service training they should be strongly encouraged to do so.

Students and supply teachers

Help should be offered to any 'visiting teachers' if they join a class timetabled for the computer. Our resource files could be of particular use here. Regular supply teachers may be invited to attend the work-shop sessions if they wish, so that they can acquaint themselves with our approach to computers in school. Our post holder should be prepared to give some time to these extra, valued members of staff.

Technical help

Should there be seemingly unsolvable problems with our computer software in school, the Information Technology Centre (address given) may be contacted. If the problem is with hardware, then a request to Supplies Section, (special request form) via the school secretary, should be made.

Hardware

Our present resources (as at June 1987) are as follows:

1. Two systems,

| | |
|------------------------------|------------------------------|
| <i>Upper school computer</i> | <i>Lower school computer</i> |
| Cumana disc drive | Cumana disc drive |
| Microvitec Cub monitor | Microvitec Cub monitor |
| Computer trolley | Temporary trolley |

2. Epson LX-86 printer

3. Valiant turtle (on order).

Whilst we must consider ourselves very lucky indeed to have recently purchased a printer and turtle through a sponsored scheme, we must face, as soon as possible, the crucial problem posed in school – having only two systems operating between nine classes!

Now that we have a staff who are enthusiastic and eager to develop our use of computers, there is a certain level of frustration creeping in as computer time is so limited due to sheer pressure of numbers. We should therefore be striving as a matter of urgency to relieve the pressure upon present hardware by extending our stock by two more complete systems over the coming two years. As everyone's aim, in a technological age, must surely be to see a computer in every classroom, we should aim to see this achieved at this Junior School by the year 1994! – ie the purchase of one system per year until our goal is achieved. Whether or not our finances could stand such a drain remains to be seen, but computers are the future and we owe it to the children in our care to prepare them for that future as best we can.

Other hardware and peripherals for future purchase

1. Trolleys – whilst in a sharing situation, trolleys will be required for systems. They should also be big enough to accommodate a printer.
2. When we reach the position of one computer to two classes, we may find that purchase of a second printer would be highly desirable. (This could be extended to a third or fourth once we are fully equipped.)
3. For the less able and/or younger children a BigTrak or similar programmable toy would be very useful as an easy introduction to *Dart* and *Logotron*.

The considerable amount of capital investment in our hardware means that *we should look after what we have very carefully!* Hence it would perhaps help to have large brightly coloured stickers attached to each trolley stating the 'dos and don'ts' for the handling and care of the system. Children as well as staff should clearly understand how to look after our computer equipment.

As our computer resources grow in number, *storage* could present a problem. It would seem sensible to suggest that a space be kept available in classroom stock cupboards for computers to be wheeled in and locked safely away overnight and at weekends. This should be the responsibility of the class teacher who is allocated the computer on that day. Computers should not be left clearly visible in classrooms overnight.

Timetabling

This must by necessity be a flexible consideration and should be agreed upon through open discussion by the entire staff. Some teachers may wish to use a computer for a short time but regularly, whilst others may wish to tackle certain programs which really demand a longer access, perhaps a week or more. If staff are to use the computer effectively and imaginatively then they must feel happy with timetabling arrangements.

As schools are ever-changing places we must not expect one arrangement, once agreed, to last for ever – it may only work for a term or even half a term. The problem of timetabling, thankfully, should gradually become less of a trial as our stock of computers increases.

One consideration we should look at in the future is the allocation of computer time for Special Needs work in school. Many excellent programs have been produced which the Special Needs Service may wish to bring into school for use with those children in their care.

Software*Choices*

With our limited financial resources the choice of software for use in school is of vital importance. Our purchase of programs must take into account the aims and objectives we state and should reflect quality rather than quantity. Before programs are purchased they should preferably be viewed – the IT Centre do offer this service. All members of staff should feel free to request any particular software and post holders for subject areas of the curriculum should regard it as an integral part of their responsibilities to recommend programs for their areas.

Our present stock of programs which may be classified as 'drill and practice' for Mathematics

and English is fairly comprehensive. We should therefore place a priority on the purchase of 'content free' programs and those which would become resources for our Topic-Based Learning Scheme.

Structure

As children move from 1st to 4th year through our school there must be a structured approach towards our use of programs if they are to develop their skills and understanding. Just as we have a plan of topics, so we must have a plan of computer programs. We may thus ensure that all children, by the time they leave us, will have experienced a chosen number of programs and have developed the skills relevant to those programs. These programs will become our 'core of basic programs'. Staff may, of course, wish to add to these programs, especially in topic work, and should feel free to do so (see Fig. 1, p. 9).

Some children may not develop the skills necessary to move on to the more sophisticated programs such as *Pendown*, *Grass* or *Logotron* so we should not regard the plan as totally rigid, except in the areas of adventure games and simulations – where we wish to avoid the repetition of topics.

Obviously if staff are expected to cover a certain range of programs they must be given ample opportunity to familiarise themselves with those programs. Staff meetings should be set aside for this purpose in which the post holder for computers may take work-shop sessions.

Maintenance

Both staff and children need to handle discs carefully; we must always insist upon this – perhaps a reminder of the 'dos and don'ts' on the lid of the disc box would help.

Protect labels must be used on discs where appropriate, and back-up copies of all our 'basic' programs and others which we value highly should be made.

Storage discs

These should be already formatted and readily accessible to staff – preferably in the teachers' work room. Staff should sign for a disc as they take it; this would help when reordering supplies.

Software catalogue and storage

All software, documentation and resources are stored in the teachers' workroom.

Our software library is grouped in four catalogues:

| | |
|--------------------|--------------------|
| <i>Catalogue A</i> | <i>Catalogue B</i> |
| Drill and practice | Content free |

| | |
|------------------------|--------------------|
| <i>Catalogue C</i> | <i>Catalogue T</i> |
| Adventures/simulations | 'Other' |

Programs are listed on the 'Discdex' disc which is found at the front of the disc box (with the formatter), and there are four written catalogues giving details of the programs on individual discs.

Each disc is number coded within its own catalogue, is labelled with the programs it carries and will be found within its catalogue compartment in the disc box.

Documentation and resource files

Documentation for programs is to be found in the four *blue files* corresponding to the four software catalogues and paperwork is cross-referenced numerically to the discs.

Similarly all resource materials are to be found in the four *red files*.

Programs in demand

At present we have only one set of software, documentation and resources. As our hardware availability improves we shall need to duplicate those materials which are most in demand. Perhaps there should be a 'standard software pack' to travel with each computer.

MAPE (Micros And Primary Education)

Membership of this organisation (£12 per year) is most advantageous. Besides providing us with some excellent, inexpensive programs, we receive *MICRO-SCOPE* magazine, which offers advice and ideas for the use and development of programs in school.

Finance

It would seem appropriate at this point to address the sticky problem of finance!

Extra funds, over and above those available from our capitation allowance, will be necessary if we are to equip our school to the level desired within the target date of 1994.

As in the past, we would be grateful for any financial aid from our Parents' Association. We should also take full advantage of any finance available from the Department of Trade and Industry via our Computer Adviser. A further avenue may be to contact local industries involved in software and computer technology with regard to possible sponsorship – it's worth a try!

Money from the other curriculum subject areas should be directed to software for those areas, thus relieving some of the burden from the computer allowance, but our massive, main investment will be in our hardware.

If we really are to tackle computers and

information technology seriously and effectively, then we must be committed to this investment and do all we can to raise the cash somehow!

Resource material

This is an area of vital importance to all teachers, especially when new programs are to be introduced. We need to see the possibilities and potential of programs, to view them quickly, simply and be forewarned of any difficulties which may arise. Use of software needs to be made as easy as possible – ‘user friendly’ for staff as well as pupils.

A start on our ‘Red Resource Files’ has been made already, to be improved and added to as we develop our computer work. These files include our own assessments of programs tried and tested in our school. Pupils’ work is included and suggestions for further development of programs is made. All members of staff should feel free to contribute to these files, particularly the computer enthusiasts. *We can help in each other’s development if we are prepared to share our experiences and ideas.*

Besides our own assessments and examples of childrens’ work the files should also contain useful articles, from the *IT Newsletters*, *MICRO-SCOPE* magazine and the *Times Educational Supplement*, which relate to any of our programs.

It is to be hoped that all staff would feel willing to contribute any task cards, help cards, work sheets, etc., which they may have made, to be included in the files. In this way we can build up a store of *resources tailor-made for our school.*

Programs which are a good resource for our topic-based learning scheme, eg *Fletcher’s Castle* for Normans, should be added to the topic sheet information in the staff files and the master sheets displayed in the library.

Recording children’s work

This is to be achieved in a variety of ways and needs to be considered at the outset of any programme of work.

Much of the work done on computers using ‘content free’ software is of a highly creative nature. Work may be saved on disc for future display or printed out. Computer work may be displayed on the monitor in the entrance over a lunchtime or at a parents’ evening. *News Bulletin* is a highly creative program offering children the chance to make an electronic magazine for display. It also offers the option for hard copy – so exciting for children.

The printer offers the most obvious means of recording work – either individual children’s work or class work (print their work onto a banda stencil and give everyone a copy!)

Many programs can be developed by a teacher’s work sheet as follow-up – our resource files should help here.

Those programs which stimulate the imagination, probably the adventures and simulations, may produce a mass of art work, poetry, creative writing and drama.

We should add a ‘computer programs’ section to our pupil record files so that the basic programs covered during the year may be listed, just as we record topics covered. Any special difficulties a child has experienced may also be noted here.

Extended use for children, staff and parents

Children

The computer should be available to children in a situation where they may act as initiators and/or further develop skills – a Computer Club may cater for these needs.

Children should not, at present, be left unsupervised in a classroom during a playtime or a lunchtime working on the computer. It should be made clear to all classes that there are no exceptions to this rule. Even though the computer may be left switched on, no-one is to touch it!

Staff

The computer, plus printer, offers teachers a great resource for quick and easy production of worksheets, display labels, trip letters, drama scripts etc. The only problem at present is accessibility. Computers should be available during evenings and weekends for teachers’ use.

Parents

Notices from the PTA may be sent to and displayed by the school electronic magazine – perhaps advertisements for fêtes etc., too. The committee may also wish to make use of the computer for printed material such as program covers. These facilities should only be made available during extra-curricular time, at the discretion of the head teacher.

As a school we wish to encourage parental interest in the way their children work with computers. Where children have their own computers at home we may, through the PTA, forge greater links by organising group purchases of software from *Micro Express* (and possibly raise some extra funds!)

Further developments

Computers and technology are moving so fast that it is hard to envisage where we shall be in ten years' time within the primary sector of education. But already there are indications that computers are to be of tremendous importance. We are at present moving into the world of *information technology* with our word processing and databases, maybe even spreadsheets. With the introduction of modems into some of our county primary schools, which will act as terminals for the rest of us, we shall be able to communicate not only nationwide through computers, but also world-wide. We look forward to this with anticipation and excitement.

Within the next two or three years we shall be developing the curriculum into the area of control technology – through LOGO, which gives children the chance to develop powerful ideas, and Technical Lego – we plan a large investment here from our science budget. Our aim, as always, is to *use computers as they are used in the real world*.

This document has been produced as a starting point in computers for our school. Our vision of computers in our classroom is an ambitious one, but with determination and goodwill on all sides, and with the flexibility that is bound to be required, we shall achieve our aims for the good of our pupils, the adults of the 21st Century.

Fig 1. School plan for basic programs

| | | Text Management | Data Handling | Adventure Games | Simulations | Other |
|--------------|--------|---|----------------------------|-----------------|-----------------------------|--------------------------------|
| Lower School | Year 1 | Concept Writer | Ourfacts | Granny's Garden | Candy and Teashop | *Use of 'Bigtrak' (peripheral) |
| | Year 2 | Tray and Create | Factfile and Picfile | Lost Frog | Locks and Cargo | Dart |
| Upper School | Year 3 | Newsbulletin Front Page Extra Pendown | Branch *Grasshopper | Mallory Manor | *Suburban Fox | |
| | Year 4 | ↓ ↓ ↓ ↓ | ↓ ↓ ↓ ↓ *Grass | Dragon World | Adventure Island and Flight | *Logotron ↓ |

*Proposed purchases

‘My daddy eats shrimps and he’s pink!’

...

a term with a reception class and a computer

Chris Robson
Berkshire LEA

‘You’ll find it very hard, going back to the classroom.’
‘The trouble with being seconded is that you never want to go back into the classroom.’
‘How d’you think you’ll like being with children again?’

These were just a few of the things which I heard with increasing regularity as my secondment drew to an end earlier this year. For two and a half exhilarating, if exhausting years, I’d worked as Deputy Director of the MEP National Primary Project, and under Anita Straker’s inspiring leadership had discovered skills I never knew I had, made many new and enduring friendships, added at least 50,000 miles to my

car's mileometer and an unmentionable amount to my quarterly phone bill!

Easter is not the ideal time of the year to return to school, but with a supportive and sympathetic advisory staff, anything is possible. I heard of a small infants' school which was looking for a teacher for the summer term and who would welcome someone to make use of their BBC micro. With some trepidation and my friends' wise saying echoing in my ears, I made a preliminary visit to the school before Easter. A few minutes were all that was needed to soak in the friendly family atmosphere and I had no hesitation in accepting the offer of a term's appointment to take the place of a teacher on maternity leave.

The school is a delightful Victorian building with arched leaded windows, and consists of one large T-shaped room with a rarely-used sliding partition between the head teacher's upper infant class and my reception class. The BBC micro (with disc drive, I was relieved to see, but no printer) was in a central position.

I certainly wanted to use the computer, but not merely because it was there, and so during the Easter holiday I considered the problem of what software to use. The children had had little experience of using the computer so I had a vague idea that my Concept Keyboard would be a Good Thing. As it also seemed likely that I would only be at the school for a short time, I

wanted to use software which would be easy for everyone to use and available through the normal county channels.

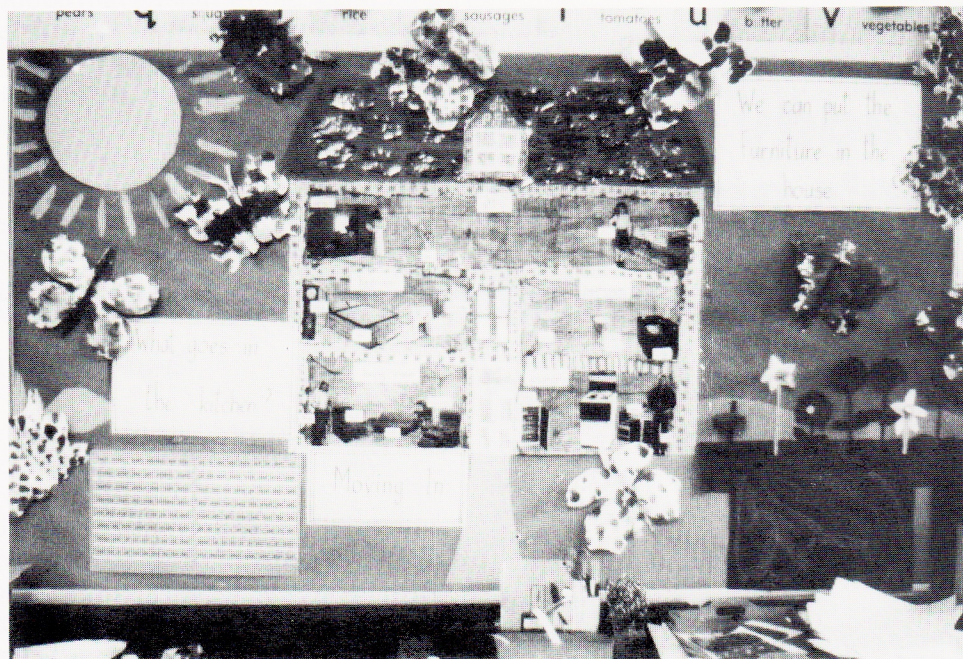
Then, just as the holidays were drawing relentlessly to a close, and the moment of truth was nearly upon me, I discovered *Moving In!* A background story sets the scene and tells of a family who have moved to a new house. The screen shows a cross-section of a house with kitchen, living room, bathroom, bedroom and attic, and the message:

'Tell me what to do.'

Using either a Concept Keyboard or typing at the conventional keyboard, the children can arrange various items of furniture in the house, for example:

'put a bath in the bathroom'
'put a cooker in the kitchen'
'put a piano in the living room'
'put Jim in the attic'.

Even though most of the children are at the earliest stages of learning to read, motivation proved to be an excellent teacher, as is so often the case. We made a large wall frieze of the house with furniture cut from catalogues and captions added, which also helped with the matching of unfamiliar words. Before long, the children were all confidently arranging the furniture in various



Wall frieze of *Moving In*.

ways. As the program allows any item to be put in any room, they have delighted in 'unconventional' arrangements. We've had fires in every room '... because it's a cold day; a cooker, fridge, bed and sink in the attic '... 'cos there's a lodger'; and the cat, a ball, a piano and a television in the attic 'because we play up there'.

The weather can be changed with commands such as 'make it snowy' or 'make it dark'. You can make Jane 'have a bath' (but not 'go to the toilet' as my children soon found out!), and everyone's favourite – 'make Jim play the piano'. The words are arranged on the overlay in a way which encourages sentence construction and sequencing from left to right. The screen can be printed out at any point, but as we had no printer in school, I made a screen dump of the empty house at home and made enough photocopies for all the children. They put in their own arrangements of furniture, wrote sentences to describe their houses, and the pages were then made into a class *Moving In* book.

During this first half term, we also used *Puzzle Farm*, *Jumbo*, *Treasure Hunt* and *Bricks* from the MEP Primary Project Infant pack, but *Moving In* was undoubtedly the most popular program, and the one which the children requested time and time again. Even so, it was time for a change, but what next? As the children were now very confident, there were quite a few possibilities, but I decided that word processing was one route I would like to follow, and one that would also fit in well with the school's way of working.

No, I wasn't about to launch into word processing without a printer – I arranged to borrow one 'on approval' from our Computer Centre! Armed with *Prompt/Writer*, and a simple overlay based on the words in Break-through to Literacy, I briefly showed the children how to use the program and watched their delighted faces as the new printer sprang into life. *Prompt/Writer* allows you to select from four different print sizes, all of which are clear and easy to read, with the 'correct' letters 'a' and 'g'. By lunchtime that day, each child had completed a short piece of writing, the mum who had been helping was considerably less apprehensive than she had been at 9.15 and the head teacher was arranging to buy the printer! Having satisfied everyone's desire to have a piece of writing to take home, we then set about making a class story book. Each child composed a few sentences, the page was glued into a book and then illustrated, and covered with a sheet of Winnie the Pooh wrapping paper. The book just fits into a zip-up bag and so every evening we perform the ritual of deciding 'whose turn it is to take the book home'. I close my eyes and tension mounts as my finger hovers over a printed list of

names stuck to the front of the book. It's by far the quietest time of the day!

The *Moving In* book and 'Our Story Book' are already well travelled, and have been with me on a number of local in-service courses. The children delight in being told how other teachers enjoy looking at their books and almost burst with pride when I came back from a day at our Computer Centre and told them that their books were on the way to Jersey! They were borrowed by our Special Education Adviser and came back with a postcard thanking the children, and explaining that 'the cows in the picture wear coats in the winter'. The postcard is now proudly taken home with the book, and I think we've *just* got time for everyone to take it home before the end of term.

At the beginning of July we went on our school outing to the Child Beale Wildlife Trust, only twenty minutes away – an ideal distance to travel with a school of 5–7 year-olds. The 'Peacock Farm', as the children call it, is on the Thames near Pangbourne and as well as a wide variety of birds and small animals, has a paddling pool. As the temperature had just soared up into the 70s, we asked the parents to send the children equipped 'to paddle' and after an 'educational' morning and a picnic on the grass, the day was completed with a gloriously splashy session in the paddling pool.

Next day, we wrote about it. Well, you always do, don't you?! With a new overlay called 'outing' the children wrote a combined account of the visit:

'... on Tuesday the school went to a peacock farm and we saw some peacocks ...'

'... the peacocks did not open their tails ...' (it was too hot!)

'... and Mrs Robson had a little paddle ...'

'... we saw some flamingoes and Mrs Robson said flamingoes eat shrimps to make them pink, and my daddy eats shrimps and he's pink ...'

I load *Prompt/Writer* every morning as soon as I come into school, and I can guarantee that the first three children in will have written something by the time the morning session begins.

But it's not all language work; practical maths is an essential part of any primary classroom, enjoyed by all the children, but there is always a moment when you have to consider ways of recording things such as:

'Who can build the most towers of 5 bricks whilst the sand runs through the timer?'

'How many cotton reels can you thread whilst ...' etc (Fig. 1)

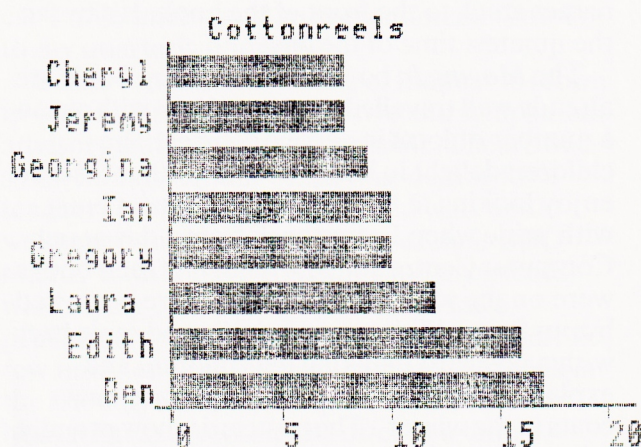


Fig. 1.

DataShow is just the program for this sort of activity. A number of children carried out the activities and the results were noted on paper. By the second half of the term, the children's keyboard skills were more than adequate to cope with the program and pairs of children enthusiastically typed in their data and printed it out as bar charts and pie charts. They found this latter form of display particularly appealing and looked eagerly to see who had '... the largest slice of pie'. (The pie chart also displays percentages, but these were confusing to five-year-olds, so I cut them off!)

We have two weeks until the end of term, and my problem now is not what software to use, but what to miss out. We've used *Compose* today, and even now, I have to admit some surprise at the speed with which the children learned to handle the program, printing out their completed tunes. Later this week will shall be using

Toy Cupboard; this is similar to *Moving In*, but toys can be put on one of three shelves in a toy cupboard. The children soon discovered that 'the *Moving In* house' could be printed merely by typing PRINT, and I have no doubt that this is one of the first things they'll try with *Toy Cupboard*. Then there's *Moving In 2*, and *Fantasy That ...*, and we haven't begun to look at adventure games, information handling, drawing programs. ...

I could say many erudite things about the place of computers in the infant classroom, but I won't. A Concept Keyboard and a printer are, I believe, essential if you are to make the most of the computer with younger children. A few years ago the cry from infant teachers was '... but there's no software for infants!', and indeed there was very little—at least, very little of value. But that isn't the case now; there is plenty of good and exciting software; if you visit your Computer Centre to look for software for the early years, don't neglect that which has been developed for children with special needs; much of it is equally relevant to the infant classroom and available at little or no cost.

So if people are saying to you:

'You'll find it very hard, going back to the classroom.'

'The trouble with being seconded is that you never want to back into the classroom.'

'How d'you think you'll like being with children again?'

take it all with a large pinch of salt, and expect to enjoy it. You won't be disappointed!



'How many towers of five bricks can you build ... ?'

References

Moving In, together with *Moving In 2*, *Toy Cupboard* and *Fantasy That!* have been developed by the MESU Special Needs Software Centre, and are obtainable from SEMERCs. They are freely copiable for educational use.

Prompt/Writer is a combined and updated version of *Prompt3*, and *Writer* from the Primary Project Infant pack. It too has been developed by the MESU Special Needs Software Centre, and will be distributed by MESU in Autumn 1987, priced between £4 and £8.

Making Music with a Micro 1 – Compose is from the Shell Centre, University of Nottingham.

DataShow is from the MEP Primary Project Maths pack, available from your LEA computer adviser.



'We didn't actually use an architect; we left the design of the house to Prunella.'

More about *Moving In*

Reg Eyre

College of St Paul and St Mary, Cheltenham

These reviews were written by some junior children who had tried *Moving In* during a Maths Day at the College of St Paul and St Mary, Cheltenham. The pictures were drawn by another class, this time of reception children, who had also enjoyed using the program.

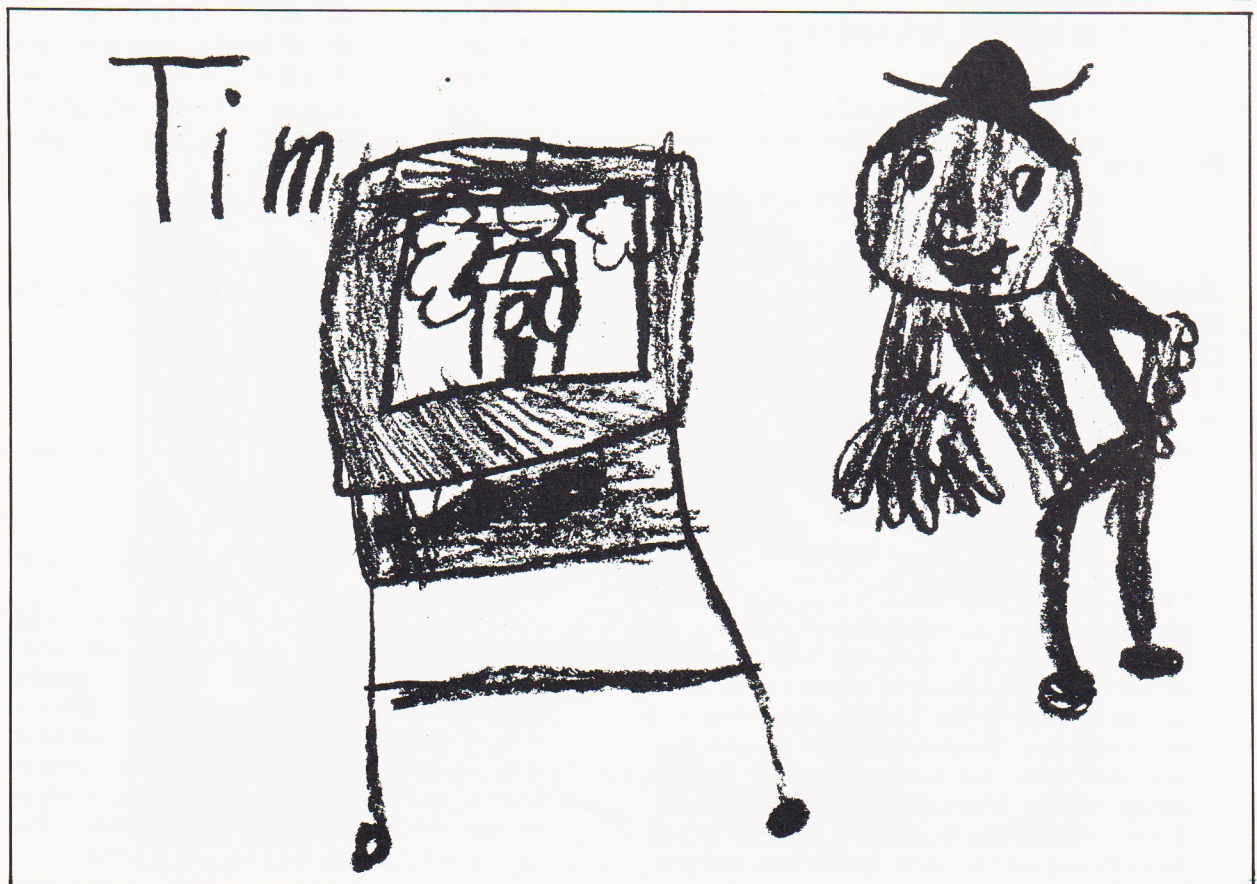
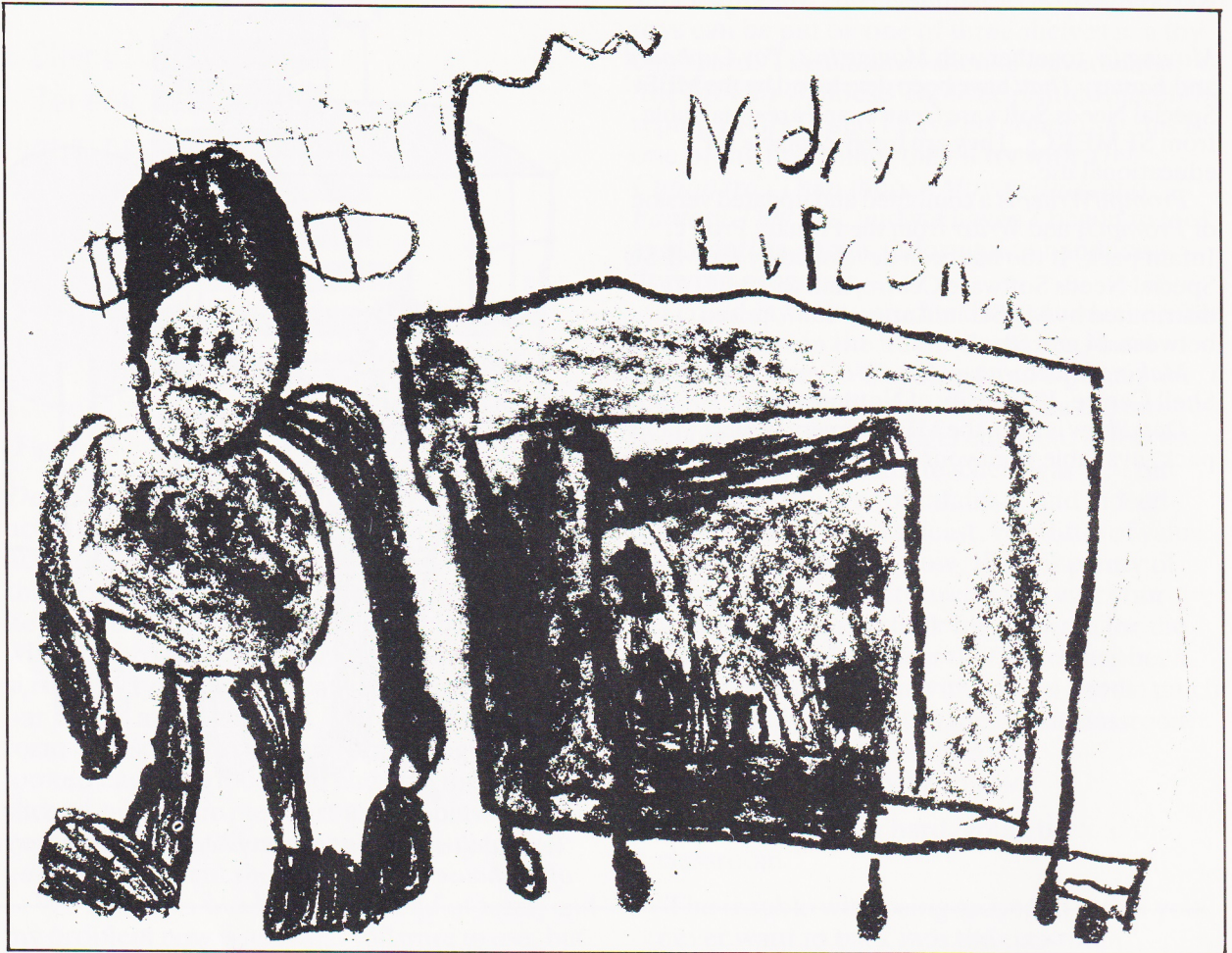
Moving In by Jeremy Bath

I think this new program is excellent. It really is just like moving in and deciding where all the furniture has to go. I went with William and we decided to make it funny so we put a toilet in the lounge, a bath in the kitchen and a sink in a bedroom! You can also change the weather outside the house and make it dark or light by giving simple instructions to the computer. There are two people, Jane and Jim, and you make them play the piano, have a bath and go to bed. You give the computer instructions by

using ordinary English and typing it in like: Put a bath in the bedroom.

Moving In by Matthew Rose

I think this new program is brilliant. It is an excellent idea, it is just like moving in. What's good about the game is that you can put what you want in any room. I went on my own and I put the toilet in the kitchen. As well as putting objects in rooms you can also put two children in the rooms and their names are Jim and Jane. You can make them have a bath, make them go to bed, and they can play the piano. You can change the weather from light to dark, from cold to hot. Overall the program is good.





JUNIOR MIKE CROW

We don't know about you, but we've always wanted to be able to predict the future. Wouldn't it be good to know which team was going to win an important football match, which exam questions you'd get or whether next weekend really would be sunny? Doing the pools would be a doddle, though I suppose someone might get suspicious after our fourth million pound win of the month! Since we're writing this in June, we could try a bit of crystal ball gazing now, but we know we'd just get it all wrong and look daft . . . you just can't win sometimes.

Well, you CAN win, if you enter one of our super competitions. You've got to cast your minds back to the Spring issue of Junior Mike Crow to recall that we asked you to draw a cartoon to show us where you think Mike Crow came from and to tell us about his adventures. We're afraid that we received entries from just THREE schools, so they're the only ones that stood a chance of winning the prizes – *Image*, *Hunt*, *Tile Mosaic* and *Doodle*. If your school didn't enter then you're too late now! Still, there's a new competition in this issue. Go on, have a go. If you don't enter you can't possibly win. If you do, then there's every chance of success.

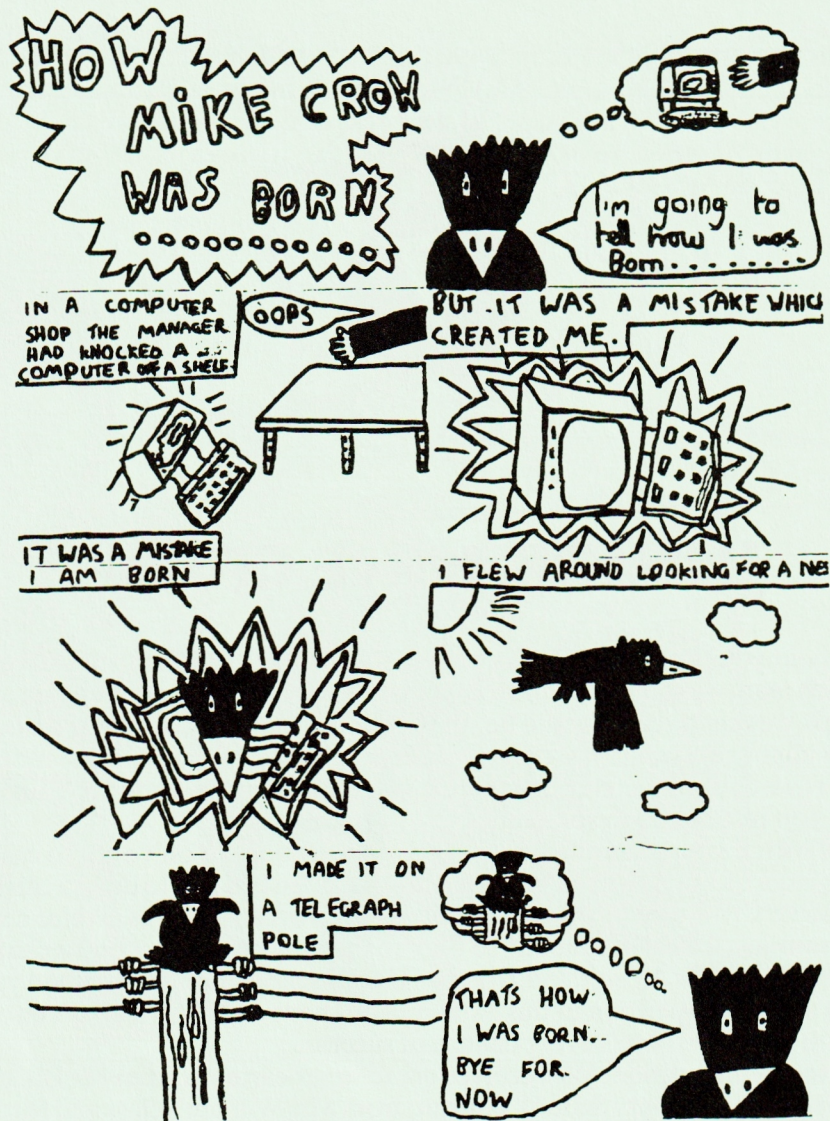
Back to the cartoon competition. We received some super cartoons from Mr Blair's class and Mr Logue's class at Greystone Primary School, Antrim; from Mrs William's class and Mr Johnson's class at Eppleton Primary, Hetton-Le-Hole, Tyne and Wear; and from Mrs Preece's class at Gaer Junior, Newport, Gwent.

There were some splendid ideas. Carey Dunlop from Greystone Primary drew a picture of EBC (Earth Before Crow) and invented a friend 'Sid Vid'. Pippa White from the same school drew a cartoon about 'the masked crow'! There were several new friends for our Mike – 'Keyboard Bert' (Thomas Campbell), his teddy called Fred (Alex Postle), the 'Red Micros' aerobatic team (Jason Sylvester) . . . Scott Taylor even had Mike getting married! I'm sure Mike is far too young for that yet!

Our winner was Alex Postle from Gaer Junior who not only sent a cartoon, but also sent us a Front Page. A close second was David Holliday from Eppleton Primary with his very long and amusing cartoon adventure. Very well done to both of you; your prizes are on their way. Alex's school will be sent the software and he will be receiving a badge, a T-shirt and a pen; David will receive a badge and a pen too. As you can see we've printed the winning entry overleaf. We'd like a new cartoon each issue so we hope they've given you some ideas.

competitioncompetitioncomp**COMPETITION**competitioncompetitioncomp
sponsored by Longman

Do you like computer games? We do. Why, we spend hours looking for lost frogs, hunting dragons' teeth and even ringing magic telephones. Our new competition is really easy. We want you to design a board game based on a computer program you use at school. The game can be for one person or however many you wish. It may use dice or there may be cards that you pick up that tell you what to do. When you've designed your games, send them to us and we'll sit down and play them. The best game we play will be printed as a special double-page spread in *MICRO-SCOPE 24*, so you can all play it. The school that wins will receive a selection of software donated by Longman. On page three you can see an example of what we're after.



MICRO NEWS

27 MARCH 1987

MIKE CROW HAS LANDED

HOW HE WAS BORN

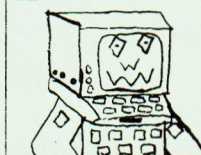
Crash boom. At this very moment in an electrical appliance store a computer was having a chain reaction. The manager had knocked it off a shelf. Then I popped out, oh by the way I'm Mike Crow. Let me finish my dinner of Micro Chips and Chicken Bytes. That's better now to tell you about myself.

ABOUT MIKE CROW

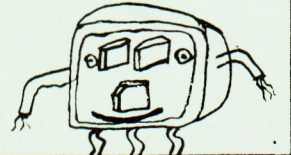


I enjoy flying about it's one of my hobbies. CRASH Caw whats that noise "Help someone's robbed the bank" Caw it's a video meanie robbing the bank. A video meanie looks like this.

A VIDEO MEANIE



PLUGGY



I also have a pal called Pluggy. I hope we can meet again but for now let everyone know that MIKE CROW HAS LANDED.

BUY MICRO CHIPS AND CHICKEN BYTES

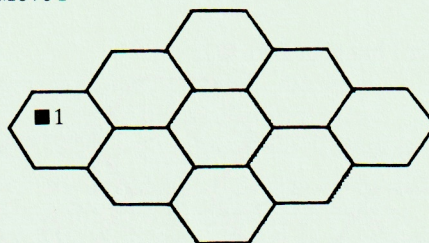
Children at De Lucy Junior School in London have made some games based on *Colony*. You must have used *Colony* in your school . . . ? No? Goodness me, it's freely available as part of a pack of problem-solving programs so if you ask your teacher very politely, perhaps he or she can get a copy from your local Teachers' Centre. Anyway, you can see a copy of one of the board games and the rules devised by children in Mr Collen's class at De Lucy.

'The object of the game *Sweet Bee* is to become the king or queen of Bee City.

Sweet Bee is a game for 2 players or 2 teams of players. We played a game on the computer called *Colony*. We did not have a clue how to play the game at first because there were no rules. First of all we played against the computer and we always lost. After a lot of discussion we actually worked out how to play it. We decided to make up our own board game for us and the class to play. We called it *Sweet Bee* because the board looked like a honeycomb made of tessellating hexagons. We have experimented with other shapes that tessellate such as triangles and squares, but we prefer playing with the hexagons. We have even tried mixing triangles and squares to make a different board shape.

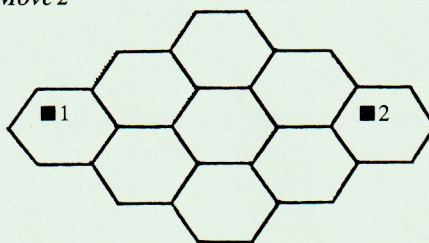
On this page is a short example of how to play the game. There is only one rule. You cannot play in your opponent's hexagon.'

Move 1



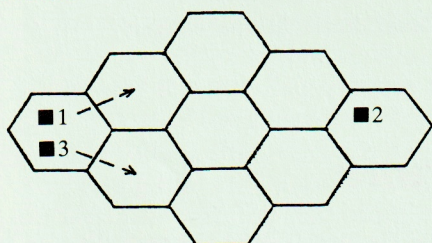
Player 1 has put his first counter here ■ 1.

Move 2



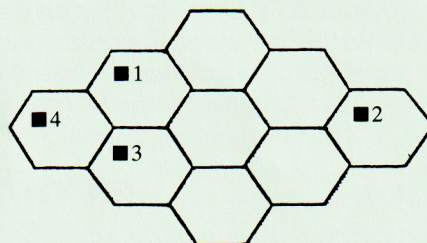
Player 2 has responded and put his here ■ 2.

Move 3



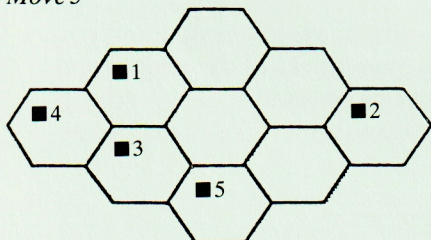
Player 1 has gone in the same hexagon ■ 3 as last time. Therefore he can move to the two attached hexagons.

Move 4



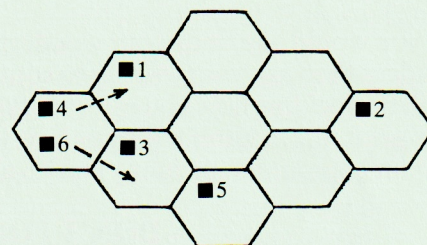
Player 2 has made a very good move and gone here ■ 4.

Move 5



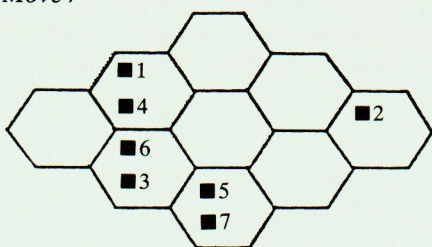
Player 1 has gone here ■ 5.

Move 6

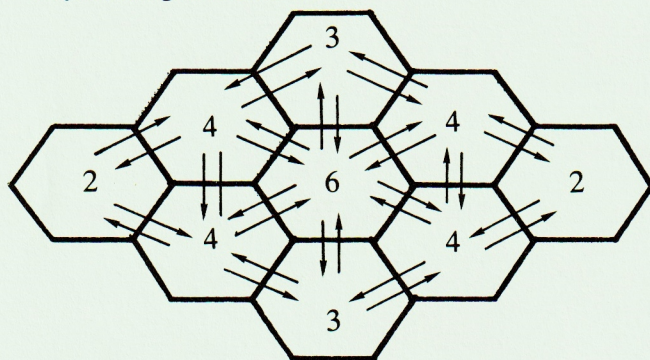


Player 2 has gone here ■ 6, and now he can also move out, but he can take over player 1's 2 counters and they will become his.

Move 7



Player 1 has gone here ■ 7.



How to enter

Draw your design for the playing board on a sheet of paper (A4 or A3 size) and write the rules on the back.

Rules

- 1 Schools can send in as many entries as they wish.
- 2 All entries must be printed in **BLACK**, drawings in black felt-tip pen.
- 3 All entries must have clearly written on them in capitals the name of your class, the name of your teacher, the name and address of your school, and the school's MAPE membership number (if known).
- 4 Sorry — **NO ENTRIES CAN BE RETURNED.**
- 5 Entries for the competition must arrive no later than 10th December 1987 and should be addressed to:
MAPE Competitions, Diane Wailing,
Sylvan High School, Maberley Road, London SE19 2JL.

EXTRA QUICKY COMPETITION!

If anyone can tell us who De Lucy was then we'll send them a MAPE T-shirt! (Clue: the initially 'murderous' key under the ESCAPE key on a BBC micro?) You can send your answer along with your entry for the competition.

MIKE CROW BADGES

If you would like one of our wonderful, exclusive, brilliant, amazing, splendiferous, cool Mike Crow badges then ask your teacher to contact the MAPE regional rep. They have stocks of the badges and will be deciding how you can earn them. Also, we'll send a badge to anyone who sends us something we print, e.g. a letter telling us how you use your micro at school, a cartoon about Mike Crow, jokes about computers, or funny stories about computers.

DON'T FORGET THE GAME COMPETITION!

Byee

Di & Charles . . . and Mike.

— PAGE FOUR —

'The game will carry on in this way until one of the players has taken over and there are none of his opponent's counters left on the board.

As you can see, the main rule is that you can only take over an attached hexagon if you have the same number of counters in your hexagon as the number of hexagons you are joined to.

The last diagram shows the number of counters you will need in each hexagon to be able to move out for this particular size paper board.

We have tried different sized grids. This size grid (3 by 3) was most successful because the games were quicker.

We hope you like the game. We have explained it as best we can. We hope you can follow it.

Have good fun,
Fondest regards,
from Sarah Ward, Marc Randall and
Louise Rose.'

Everyone – back to the classroom!

Barry Wake

Advisory Teacher, Educational Computing, Birmingham

Whoever said 'A change is as good as a rest' was not a teacher. I recently attended an international conference in Lancaster on 'Teachers' Professional Learning' run by BERA, the British Educational Research Association¹. Having been away from this kind of leading-edge academia for many years now, two days solid of lectures and questions certainly made it a change for me – oh, for a MAPE day 'hands-on' activity session – but it was not a rest!

However, the conference was extremely stimulating and informative. It focused on three main themes: the processes of learning to teach, the nature of expertise in teaching, and finally the nature of in-service professional development.

One constant concern in teaching is the tension between theory and practice, as exemplified by such statements as 'Education Departments don't teach you *how* to teach', and 'you can't *make* a teacher'. Tom Russell (from Kingston, Canada) pointed out in the very first lecture that today's teachers also have to bridge that very daunting gap between modern demands and traditional methods – or is it between traditional demands and modern methods? It is amazing that any teachers survive the rigours of the classroom, but many do, and successfully at that. Perhaps it is hardly surprising that educational research has turned to the teacher in the classroom in an attempt to analyse and illuminate how he or she actually makes decisions, solves the constant puzzles and problems, and manages to 'reflect-in-action' as well as 'reflect-on-action'.

Evidently the most used method of such research nowadays is to video teachers operating in the classroom and making their own pre- and post-task comments, all of which are subsequently analysed in great detail. After seeing their video, one of the most common assertions made by teachers is that 'teachers talk too much'. This can be a useful eye-opener in itself, but there remains the question of the nature of the language they use in talking about what they are doing and about their theories of learning. (Piaget tends to be the only name ever quoted by teachers in terms of pedagogic theory. Even then, how much child-centred curriculum

is teacher-centred bias?) Angela Anning (Rippon and York St John) contends that teachers need help in acquiring the confidence and skills to articulate their theories about how children learn and the consequent strategies adopted in the classroom. Indeed, such theory generated by teachers in a language familiar to them is much more likely to be translated into practice. In another study, Fred Korthagen (Amsterdam) suggests that different learning styles can be a real barrier in educational departments, since teacher-educators are more attuned to active and reflective students and that dropping out may be more a function of the clash of learning perceptions than anything else.

But then, how do teachers acquire their theoretical framework? A constantly refined, cyclical model of *reflection-in-action*, a 'continual interweaving of thinking and doing' as identified by Schon seems to provide the conceptual foundation for a great deal of current research². Another concept suggested by James Calderhead (Lancaster), was that of the '*images*', often subjective, which teachers possess of what teaching should be about. It may be the image of the classroom as 'home' or an idea planted from a conversation with a colleague. These images, or snapshots of examples, can be culled from any source, from teachers' own experience and others', as well as from theory. They are accumulated haphazardly and at different levels but nonetheless can exert a very powerful influence on teacher actions.

Clearly, practical knowledge differs in great detail from formal academic knowledge, and one aspect that identifies the expert teacher is the use made of what Gaea Leinhardt (Pittsburgh, USA) terms 'situated knowledge'. This is a form of expertise allowing large amounts of knowledge to be accessed very quickly to solve a specific problem. Unlike theory, situated knowledge is very much glued to the situation and not context-free. However, since such knowledge is found to be successful for those given situations, teachers may tend to drift towards routinisation and also be more resistant to change.

That is not to say that change is necessarily equal to professional development. As Jean

Ruddock (Sheffield) pointed out, owning the problem of change means you must confront it and understand it as an individual, otherwise there is a danger that teachers could become just the 'technicians of change' manipulated by others. Change may well involve a sense of loss, robbing teachers of previously successful skills and orientation. To counter this, teachers need to commit themselves to an agenda of change, to bring about 'a motivation towards change that is personally founded', and to take on the characteristics of 'intellectuals' rather than 'technicians'.

Could a computer help? Sharon Wood (Sussex) is currently engaged in setting up an expert system, using PROLOG, which will hopefully act as a computer-based advisory system and as a tool for prompting reflective teaching. This again entails getting expert teachers to make their knowledge of the processes that underly classroom events explicit.

On looking back, one of the most striking themes to me was this concept of the *reflective*

teacher, but that the action of reflection needs guidance and purpose, and above all, takes time, a great deal of time. I shall look forward with great interest to the publication of all the papers presented at this conference, some of which I have not mentioned here. This will not be an easy book but it will deserve being closely read by anyone concerned with teacher education and also by practising teachers themselves – especially if you can get it under directed time – because the other striking theme to me was the increasing importance of closely watching and understanding real teachers at work in real classrooms! Isn't that where educational theory should start from?

Notes

1. The conference proceedings will be published by Falmer Press in 1988 under the title of *Teachers' Professional Learning*.
2. Schon, D.A. *Educating the Reflective Practitioner*, Jossey Bass, San Francisco (1987).

Hold the Front Page!

Jetta Megarry

Editor, British Journal of Educational Technology

Note from the Editor of MICRO-SCOPE:

Jetta contacted me and offered to write up her experiences in using Front Page Extra with all the children from a whole school. I accepted the offer and waited for the article to arrive. When it came it was accompanied by a letter. I am publishing both the letter and the article because I think it will prove to be interesting and informative to those who might be harbouring hopes about running similar activities. I am also including some advice about avoiding the 'Can't extend' problem. Read and learn!

(The letter was written after the event; the article was written prior to the event.)

The letter (written afterwards)

We all know about pride going before a fall, and you may get a smile from reading this article in the form it was written in at the weekend. Alas, everything came unstuck on the day, and I'm no longer sure in what revised form the article

should be published, or indeed where. (Yesterday afternoon, surrounded by milling children and unrecoverable errors my feelings about *Front Page Extra* wouldn't have been printable in a MAPE journal!) Today I'm trying to be philosophical . . . such hubris to draft an article and letter in advance. The hope had been to slot in a final paragraph, put a couple of samples in the envelope and have it reach you by tomorrow in publishable form.

In the event, the page construction went smoothly until the first save (after the report, before editing) when we hit the dreaded 'Can't extend' and were bumped out of the program. Knowing no way of retrieving the children's painstaking typing (and having tried copying it all out on the backup machine using the other disc in the hope of rescuing the situation – which failed miserably and got us even more behind) there was nothing for it but to cut our losses after two groups had lost everything. (For the rest of the afternoon, I put *The Mr Men* on one machine for juniors and word games for seniors on the other!)

At first I assumed that my carefully prepared

discs were unusable because of an over-ambitious attempt to put too many files on the disc. But in my post-mortem, I tried deleting them one at a time and found the problem remained even with only two files on the disc. My current hypothesis is that the program has failed to reserve enough disc space to allow each file to be extended within the DFS constraints, and that in reality the *only* file that is definitely safe is the last to be saved. The others are all vulnerable to any extension that takes them across a sector boundary, so that there's a 50 per cent chance of 127 characters (a mere 20 words) landing you in dead trouble. That would explain why none of my dry runs revealed the problem, as I had used file R for testing, so although I had inserted realistic quantities of text, I was un-

wittingly using the only safe file . . . if this is true, I'd say the program is in practice as user-friendly as a kick in the teeth! After all, it does explicitly provide for the continuation of work as a menu option . . . I was unable to delete all text from a file as a way round the problem. Why doesn't the program reserve the maximum space for each filename? You'd get fewer files per disc, but at least you'd be able to count on extending them.

Organising *Front Page Extra* for a whole school

Jetta Megarry and Jean Campbell

1. Introduction/Summary

Front Page Extra is a simple and rewarding page design program from MAPE. Unlike *Front Page*, it lets you save partly-completed work, giving more flexible classroom use. This article explains how the program was used one afternoon in Glendale Primary School, Glasgow, by every pupil in the school working in mixed-age teams (5 to 12 years). The event was an end-of-term Fun Day, where *Front Page Extra* was one among many activities – including a bouncy castle – that each team spent 5–10 minutes with. However, a similar technique could be useful in classroom work wherever there is any time pressure and/or range of abilities.

We needed to organise the disc so that each of a number of groups could load and complete the same *Front Page* 'template'. We wrote step-by-step instruction cards to guide the pupils through every stage from loading to final printout.

2. Background

In contrast to the type of competitive sports day that many schools regard as traditional, Glendale Primary School decided to have a Fun Day at the end of the 1987 summer term. The idea was to involve the whole school in activities that were co-operative rather than competitive, using mixed-age teams ranging from primary one to primary seven (ages 5 to 12 years). About 15 teams participated in the same number of activities in rotation, ranging from a treasure hunt to a bouncy castle. The time on each activity was 5 to 10 minutes, to allow the whole event to fit between 1.15 and 3.30 pm. It was suggested that computers (the school has seven BBC Micros) might be the basis for one attraction.

Given the unreliability of Glasgow weather, it seemed wise to have some indoor activities, and the children generally find working at the computer both rewarding and educational.

3. Why *Front Page Extra*?

Glasgow division schools have a licence for *Front Page* and *Front Page Extra*, and Glendale already uses this program within regular class activities. We thought it would be suitable for the Fun Day because the children could join forces for the design, yet each could take home a copy. Because completing a front page involves talking, listening, reading instructions and typing in 'stories', it is an educational activity as well as good fun.

We anticipated various sorts of problems. First, the time needed to complete a page from scratch would not only be longer than ten minutes, but would also be highly variable between groups, leading to frustrating queues and other problems. Second, the process of printing out a page is fairly slow; we timed a sample at 2.5 minutes, which ruled out doing printouts of each of 10–12 group members. Third, we knew that supervision could be a problem, and decided – because of the shortage of spare adult helpers – to confine activities to a single microcomputer system, with a back-up system to transfer the printing to if another group was waiting.

To reduce the creation time, we decided to use *Front Page Extra* and give the teams a start by providing a 'template' – a partly filled-in front page to which they could add their own names, a team name, and a sentence or two about the day, with space for a drawing to be added afterwards. The printout problem was solved by the combin-

| | |
|---|--|
| The Funday Times No 1 <small>22 June 1987</small> | |
| Fun and games at Glendale | |
| From our reporters: | |
| Report | |
| | |

ation of having a backup system (to free the micro for the next group) and photocopying each printout for every team member.

A final concern was how to involve each team member in the wide range of activities – demanding different levels of skill and reading ability. We wrote step-by-step instruction cards and allocated each to an age level. The result was the set of instruction cards which are reproduced opposite. We added a master card intended for the adult in charge.

4. Preparation

4.1 Preparing the template

The first step was straightforward: using the Create a Front Page option in the program, we set up a headline (Funday Times), a 'price' (No1), filled in the date, inserted 2 sub-headings (Reporters and Report), and filled in the right hand column with a frame for the pupils' drawings. Because we wanted the team to insert its team name in place of the 'advertisement', we had to 'complete' that section with spaces, ie to overwrite the row of dots with spaces. On exit, the whole template was saved to the file name A.

4.2 Creating copy files of the template

Unfortunately, *Front Page Extra* does not cater for storing multiple incomplete front pages on a single disc. The problem is that after the first team had loaded file A and completed it, their work would automatically be resaved to that filename, thus wiping out the template and leaving no way to empty their front page ready for the next team. (Oddly enough, the program gives no warning if a user chooses a filename that already exists on the disc, so that overwriting is all too easy.)

We had no desire to copy a disc 15 times over, let alone to keep track of 16 different discs on the day. Our goal was to create 16 identical template files, each with a different file name (A to P). We couldn't see how to do this within *Front Page*

Extra, but luckily we had access to a dual disc drive. This allows us to copy the file A from one disc to another, and to use *RENAME A B to create an identical file B which could then be copied back to the original disc. Similarly, using *RENAME repeatedly, we were able to replicate the remaining files.

If you have to do this, it is well worth redefining red keys to avoid having to type the same commands repeatedly. Here are the commands we used:

```
*KEY0 *COPY 1 0 A:M
*KEY1 *RENAME A
*KEY2 *COPY 0 1
```

With the definitions above, here are the key-presses to create each copy file:

```
f0
f1 B RETURN
f2 B RETURN
```

For the next copy file, press:

```
f0
f1 C RETURN
f2 C RETURN
```

... and so on for each letter up to the number you need – in our case 16 (letter P), though we soon discovered the need for a spare file (R) for testing purposes.

Even with these shortcuts, making 16 copies took over half an hour and required intense concentration; with only a single disc drive – as most primary schools would have – it would have been a nightmare. After every group of seven files or so, the host disc gave a disc fault and Bad Program message and had to be wiped clean to start again. (The system seemed to behave as if a file had been left open.) All in all, we concluded that there must be a friendlier way of solving the problem than this!

We had hoped to use one disc as the single source of the template file and replace it with a second disc for all the pupils' creations to be saved onto. That would have saved all the multiple file creation and renaming. However, the program unfortunately detects a disc change, produces an error message and bounces you out. Fortunately we discovered this in advance, but it is a real nuisance when you want to test your template file, as it means you need to set up the disc afresh for every test.

4.3 Instruction cards

We wanted to make sure that all team members could make a contribution, and we didn't want constant adult intervention. We grouped the tasks according to difficulty, and tried to make the instructions concise; we knew that too much reading would be both off-putting and time-

A

Press RETURN twice.

E

Type your name.
Press space bar.

Ask everyone else to type in
their names.

B

Press 6 (print page).

Then press your team's
letter.

F

Correct any mistakes, using
arrow keys and DELETE.

When finished, press
RETURN.

Then press Y to confirm.

C

Press 4.

Press your team's letter
(on your badge).

Press RETURN.

G

Press RETURN until cursor
is below Report.

Write a sentence about the
Fun Day.

When finished, press
RETURN.

Then press red f0 key.

D

When asked for an
advertisement, type your
team's name.

Then press RETURN.

consuming. The cards were lettered according to difficulty level, with A the easiest and G the hardest, intended for primary 1 to primary 7 respectively. We made minor changes to the cards after a dry run, mostly removing details about DELETE and CAPS LOCK from the cards to the master card.

5. On the day

(This section remains unwritten.)

6. Conclusion

An example of a completed front page is shown in the illustration. (*Ed: no pages were completed.*) Although our particular instructions were geared to the mixture of ages we had, we feel that the idea of having groups work on partly completed front pages may be of interest to other teachers who have to work within close time constraints. We also think that the instruction card approach is helpful where there is a range of abilities and levels of familiarity with the computer keyboard. If this style of use is popular, perhaps any future release of *Front Page Extra* could take on board the following points:

1. At the stage where you must choose a name for your front page, you should have access to the disc catalogue showing existing pages.
2. If the filename you choose already exists, you should be alerted to the fact, and prompted to choose a different name

unless you intend to overwrite the file.

3. At some stage – even if it were a ‘hidden’ teacher option – it should be possible to alter the filename to which a partly completed page is saved. This would avoid the need for a dual disc drive and extensive renaming in order to achieve simple disc organisation for classroom use.
4. We had to insert *BASIC into the !boot file since our BBC Micro is set to switch on in *Wordwise Plus*.

The whole exercise took so much time and energy that we thought we should share what we did in the hope of saving time for any *MICRO-SCOPE* readers who want to do likewise. We would like to hear from anyone who has used this delightful program in this or other ways. There are sure to be shortcuts and organisational ideas that we have missed.

Jean Campbell is the headteacher of Glendale Primary School; Jetta Megarry is a parent.

Front Page Extra and the ‘Can’t extend’ problem

Roger Keeling

The problem arises as follows

1. a page is created
2. another page is created
3. the first page is edited with the ‘Continue constructing a page’ option and more text is added. When f0 is pressed to finish off, the program crashes with a ‘Can’t extend’ message and the page is lost.

The reason is that even though the first page has been made longer, the BBC’s disc filing system still tries to fit it into the same position on the disc, and because a further page has been placed immediately after it, the space is no longer large enough, giving the ‘Can’t extend’ error.

To get round the problem, make the following changes to the program called CHECK

Change line 105 to:

```
105 DIMpg$(30),b%30
```

Add these lines:

```
129 IF N%=4:PROCcopy
```

```
25000 DEFPROCcopy:LOCALX%,Y%,A%,L
```

```
25010 PROCos('SAVE !!!temp 0+7D0')
:X%=b%:Y%=b%DIV256:~X%=M%:A%
=5:CALL&FFDD:L=X%!10:PROCos('L
OAD '+$M+' 3000'):PROCos('SAVE
!!!temp 3000+'+STR$~L+' 0 0'):PRO
```

```
Cos('DELETE '+$M%):PROCos('REN
AME !!!temp '+$M%):ENDPROC
```

```
29000 DEFPROCos($b%):LOCALX%,Y%
:X%=b%MOD256:Y%=b%DIV256:CALL
&FFF7:ENDPROC
```

What the solution does

When an existing page is edited, the program *SAVES a temporary file (called ‘!!!temp’) on the disc and the old contents of the page are copied to this file. The old copy of the page is then deleted and the temporary file renamed the page name. The temporary file is created with a slightly larger length than will ever be needed for a page, and since *SAVE will *only* position a file on the disc where there is room for it, the ‘Can’t extend’ error is avoided.

Note

The solution does mean that small ‘gaps’ will be left on the disc, and eventually a ‘Disc full’ message may appear. Therefore, it will be necessary to periodically *COMPACT the disc:

1. Put the *Front Page Extra* disc in the drive.
2. Make sure you *do not* have anything important loaded, eg a BASIC program, since the next operation is likely to corrupt it in memory.
3. Instead of starting up the program, type *COMPACT (Return) and wait for the > prompt to reappear.

Story-based Investigations for Teachers

Bob Sheed

Advisory Teacher for Computer Education, Ealing

The following three short (very short!) stories were written recently for an INSET course on databases using Newman College's *Grass*. They each contain clues which are to be used to search

Grass datafiles to find the answer, or probable answer, to a puzzle. One of them actually uses a *Quest* file (Horses) which was converted for use with *Grass*.

THE KITTEN AND THE 'not-so-much-a-canary-more-a' ??????

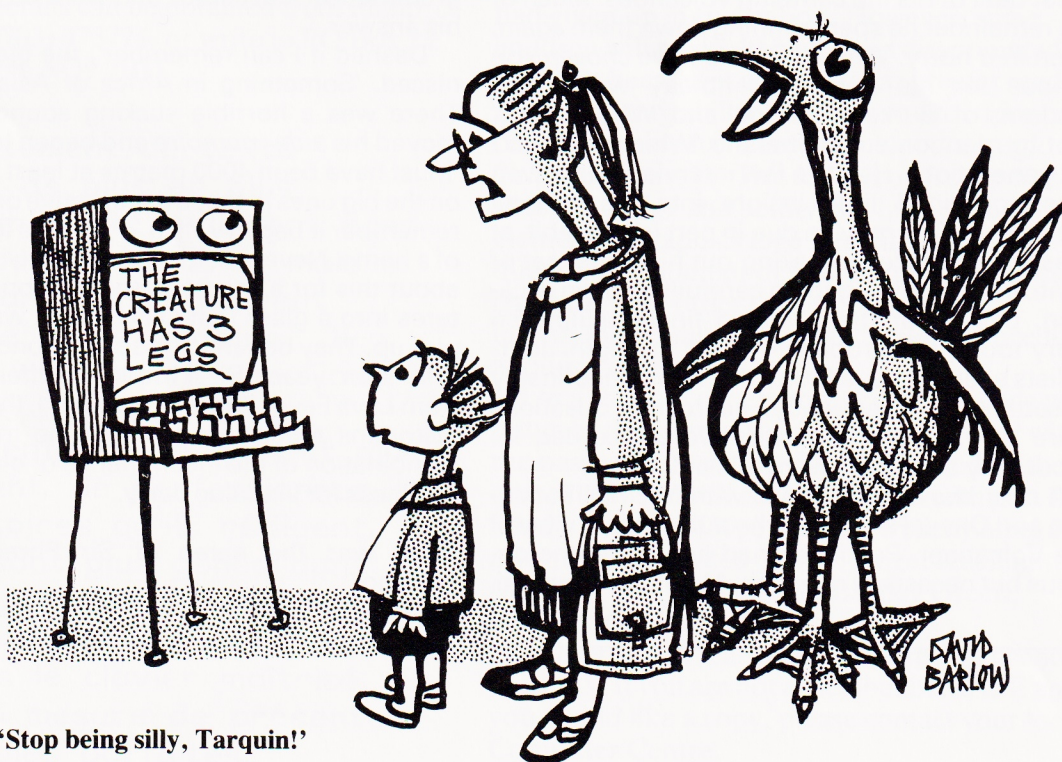
Molly Bindweed's new kitten has just had a narrow escape! The idea of going into the garden to do something that can be done much more comfortably in a slipper had never appealed strongly to the animal anyway and the events of this morning have reinforced its determination to resist the rest of the training programme.

Hardly had the unfortunate creature adopted a defecatory posture than 'WHOOSH!'. Out of the blue, a wallop great brown thing with wings and feathers dropped upon him. Now, wings and feathers are one thing, or perhaps two, and Simon (for such was his name) would in other circumstances probably have given them the run of his digestive system. But this was no canary.

To the kitten its beak looked savagely hooked, though Molly, a sensible child not given to hysteria, later described it as 'curved'. They were, however, agreed that its interest in Simon was measured purely in calories.

Luckily, Molly's mother was hosing down her motor bike at the time and was able to direct a sharp jet of icy water at the marauder. The bird froze in mid grasp, drew up its tackle and soared away. Later, Molly's mother's boyfriend Sigmund brought round a copy of a computer data file about birds. On their home computer they pieced the clues together and came up with the probable identity of the attacker. See if you can do the same.

(Filename: Birds)



'Stop being silly, Tarquin!'

A HORSE, A HORSE

'Hello. Is that Ringworm Riding Stables?'

Brian waited a few seconds for a reply, then repeated the question. A gruff and irritable voice at the other end of the telephone confirmed that it was, while making Brian feel apologetic for asking.

'I wonder if you could help me', he went on bravely. 'I'm looking for a horse'.

There was a dry laugh, followed by a cough. Whether these were human or equine was difficult to tell. Then the voice went on.

'You're in luck', it said, 'we seem to have a few of those at the moment. Aardvarks and sea-lions are completely out, don't know where the next one's coming from, but horses yes, horses we have got a few of.' The voice was sexless, difficult to put an age to and clearly not too upset at the idea of insulting the odd customer, now and again.

Brian was not at all sure how to continue. Someone had told him this was the place to go for the information he wanted, but no-one had warned him about the staff. He tried again.

'Look, this is Brian Creamtea. One of the Devon-

shire Creamteas. I'm looking for some advice. I've bought this little place in Cumbria. Just a few acres. I thought a horse that could pull a bit of weight might come in handy for some of the farm work. It'd be nice if the kids could ride it, too, so I don't want anything over fifteen hands.' He paused, then added, 'something suitable for agricultural work and riding, really.'

The voice at the other end groaned.

'Not another self-sufficiency nut.' It was neither a question nor a statement; more of an exercise in growling such as might once have been heard in Somerset dog-fighting circles.

'I suppose you'll want an English breed?'

Brian confirmed that he did. 'Better for the spare parts', he joked, to little effect.

'Strong, hard working?'

'Oh yes, certainly.' Brian was beginning to feel that he was getting somewhere.

'Best of luck', said the voice.

Some time passed before Brian realised that the phone had gone dead.

See if you can help him.

THE VOLCANEEER

Sir Pheredode Mandrill, 'Phreddh' to friends and others with a fondness for Hindi literature, spent a great deal of his life climbing volcanoes. Much of the remainder he spent running down them again, often in a hurry. Why he should have chosen volcanoes for his noble eccentricity will puzzle students of 'Burke's Peerage' and 'Who's Who?' (not to mention subscribers to 'Which Volcano') for generations. He gave few interviews and even these provided little insight into his strange behaviour. This may be due in part to his habit, at press conferences, of taking out his upper set of dentures, examining them carefully and, on occasion, picking at them with a finely sculptured ivory toothpick, probably Kikuyu in origin. Journalists seem to have found this habit undefinably unsettling. Consequently, searching questions were never asked, answers were recorded inaccurately and notes were mislaid.

A chat show appearance with Michael Parkinson and Oliver Reed gave the public a rare view of the Volcaneeer. Parkinson had just asked the obvious but necessary question, 'What, Sir Phreddhi,

was the first volcano you ever climbed?'

Sir Pheredode, never a pedant, ignored the grammatical inaccuracy and went on to consider his answer.

'Dashed if I can remember', the old boy reminisced. 'Something in Africa or Asia, I expect.' There was a horrible sucking sound as he removed his *aide-memoire* and began to poke at it. 'Must have been 4000 metres at least. I only took on the big ones in those days; active ones at that. I remember it began with a 'c'; or was it a 'k'? Devil of a name. Never could pronounce it.' He thought about this for a moment, then dropped his dentures into a glass that Oliver Reed was about to pick up. They began to dissolve at once.

In later years Sir Phreddhi suffered terribly from Lava Fever ('Etna's Revenge'), though some historians argue that this was no more than a combination of the incontinence of old age and a fondness for vindaloo curry.

What was the name of Sir Phreddhi's first volcano?

(Filename: Volcano)

Software News

Word Processing for Modern Languages

Tedimen Software have announced European versions of the popular educational word processor, *Folio*, which runs on the BBC Model B computer (a version for the Master 128 with enhanced features will be available in the third quarter of 1987).

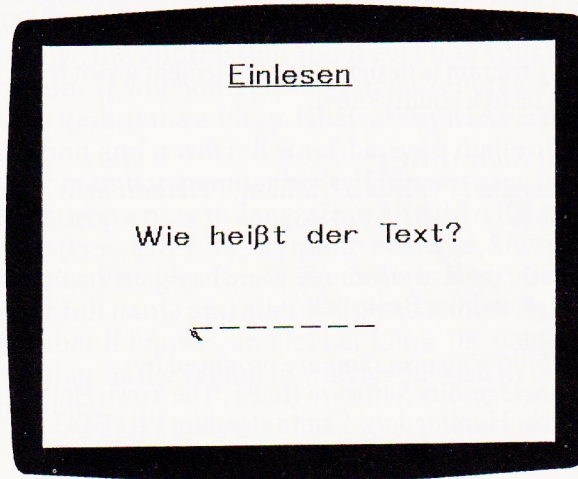
Three systems are available: French, German and a European Language Development Pack (ELDeP). The ELDeP is designed for the more ambitious user wishing to write in a language not yet supported by Tedimen Software, such as Greek or Russian. In fact all three packages include a character editor to allow confident users to change the character shapes, spacing and key assignments.

As with the original English version, which now has over 2,000,000 licensed users worldwide, a wide range of fonts are provided with very flexible printing options. This allows *Folio* to be used for all kinds of classroom projects.

The word processor is controlled from a simple menu system which has been translated for the French and German versions in collaboration with the Luxembourg government. For example, 'What is the text called?' becomes 'Comment s'appelle le texte?', and 'Wie heißt der Text?', etc.

Further details can be obtained from Philip Smith on (0703) 473774, or write to PO Box 23, Southampton, SO9 7BD.

Le traitement de texte devient de plus en plus important, non seulement dans le monde des affaires mais aussi dans l'enseignement primaire et secondaire. Il permet aux enfants de "jouer" avec les idées qu'ils conçoivent, et, ce qui est plus important, de perfectionner les histoires qu'ils rédigent. Ils ne sont plus gênés dans leurs activités créatrices par le besoin physique d'écrire - une fois le clavier maîtrisé, ils sont en mesure de présenter des copies parfaites.



Magic Telephone

Special offer for MAPE members

We have been very encouraged by the response to this program since its publication on *MAPE Tape 4*. Over the last two terms we have received a regular postbag of letters asking for part two of the program. Some of the letters are written by the children, others by the teachers - the latter very often admitting that the children had persevered and solved the problem after the teacher had given up in frustration. However, some children will no doubt have been disappointed by part two because it assumes a far greater reading and reasoning ability than that required for part one. Hence we have now developed a *Magic Telephone* part 1b. This follows on from part one in terms of age and ability and includes an element of graphics together with the introduction of a number of familiar nursery rhyme characters. In order to get a copy of this intermediate stage program, the same procedure applies as before.

On a sheet of paper write the 4-digit code you put in at the start of the program, together with the password you were given at the end. If these do not tally you will not be supplied with part 1b. Send a stamped (30p) addressed sticky label and a 40-track formatted disc to: Roger Keeling (MTB), Newman College, Bartley Green, Birmingham B32 3NT.

This program is also being offered on licence to LEAs. If you are not a member of MAPE and you would like a copy, please contact your local Computer Centre.

Items Received for Review

Farmer Giles (BBC)

Magnolia Soft, 24 Elliott Close, Exeter,
EX4 5ED. Tel: 0392 213724

Price: £10.95

This program is designed to supplement a visit to a farm or to a county show.

Giant Killer (BBC)

Topologika, PO Box 39, Stilton, Peterborough,
PE7 3RL. Tel: 0733 244682

Price: £18.40

A mathematical adventure game based on the theme of Jack and the Beanstalk.

The following programs are produced by

Cambridgeshire Software House, The Town Hall,
St Ives, Huntingdon, Cambridgeshire PE17 4AL.
Tel: 0480 66805

Pathfinder (BBC, Nimbus)

A large scale simulation based around aviation.

The Princess and the Ring (BBC, 480Z, Nimbus)

An adventure game designed with the very young in mind.

Water Manager (BBC, Spectrum)

Designed and put together as a joint venture between CSH and Anglian Water. Includes a simulation

program which involves attempting to manage a Water Authority.

Can You Find It? (BBC, Nimbus)

A content-free simulation which comes complete with a database on Brownsea Island and another on fossils.

The following two programs are produced by

Fisher-Marriott, Forest Hermitage, Lower
Fulbrook, Warwick CV35 8AS. Tel: 0926 624385

Starspell Plus (BBC)

Price: £11.38

Integrated approach to spelling.

NumbersCope and Timeshare (BBC)

Price: £16.00

A range of programs involving multiplication, division, addition and subtraction.

And the last program is from **CWDE**,

Regents College, Inner Circle, Regents Park,
London NW1 4NS. Tel: 01-487-5438

What do we eat? (BBC)

Price: £12.50

Analyse and compare your food intake with those in another country.

New MAPE Regions

Roger Keeling

MAPE Chairman

When MAPE was originally established the basis of the regional structure was that defined by the MEP. The National Council have spent some time considering whether or not the existing regions best serve the interest of members. In many cases it was felt that most of the existing regions were satisfactory with one or two modifications being necessary. These are itemised below:

01 South Eastern (originally Capital).

This now includes Kent, East Sussex, Surrey, Essex and the Greater London boroughs excluding those mentioned under region 12.

02 West Midlands – no change.

03 Eastern – Cambridgeshire, Norfolk and Suffolk.

04 South West. This is a new region consisting of Devon and Cornwall. It was originally part of a much larger region stretching from Lands End to the Malverns.

05 North West (originally Greater Manchester). This expanded region now includes Cheshire, Wirral, Isle of Man, Lancashire and all the LEAs in Merseyside and Greater Manchester.

06 Yorkshire and Humberside. This is an amalgamation of two previous regions and includes all the LEAs in the three Ridings of Yorkshire plus Humberside.

07 Northern – no change.

08 Great Western. This region (originally part of South West) consists of Gloucestershire, Avon, Somerset and Wiltshire.

09 North Wales. Gwynedd, Clwyd and the northern part of Powys (Montgomery).

10 East Midlands – Derbyshire, Nottinghamshire, Lincolnshire, Leicestershire.

11 Southern. This is now Dorset, Hampshire, Berkshire, West Sussex, Isle of Wight and Channel Islands.

12 Chiltern. This is now Northamptonshire, Bedfordshire, Oxfordshire, Buckinghamshire, Hertfordshire, plus the London boroughs of Hillingdon, Harrow, Ealing, Hounslow, Brent, Barnet, Haringay and Enfield.

13 South Wales. Gwent, the three Glamorgans, Dyfed and the southern part of Powys (Brecknock and Radnor).

14 Ireland.

20 Scotland.

21 Overseas.

We have attempted to include members in the right region according to their subscription address. However, you are entitled to be registered against whichever region you would prefer. It is important that this information is accurate as, in the future, local regional events will be advertised on loose-leaf sheets included with *MICRO-SCOPE* publications. You will only receive the information about events in your own region. If you don't know your current region, then look at the address label on any MAPE publication and it will tell you (the last 2 digits of your membership number). If it is not accurate then drop a note to Janet Crawford, MAPE subscriptions, BKT Subscription Services, Dowgate Works, Douglas Road, Tonbridge, Kent. Send your full name and address, plus membership number if known, and let her know the name or number of the region in which you wish to be included.



European Conference on Computers in Education – July 1988

It is not often that teachers have the opportunity to meet and discuss their work with colleagues overseas, let alone hear about the work being done by those at the forefront of curriculum development. When this is in the area of information technology one can be excused for considering such thoughts as attending an international conference outside the UK.

Before you dismiss such an idea out of hand note that:

1. It is not until July 1988;
2. it could be combined with your summer holiday;
3. there are many camp-sites around Lausanne and Lake Geneva;
4. beautiful swimming pools and grass beaches are available for your companions.

Below is the current press release on the conference, though further details will be available in the new year.

COMPUTERS IN EDUCATION – A CHALLENGE FOR TOMORROW?

*Europe in Lausanne in 1988 –
a pedagogical event*

Every day we are delivered an increasing quantity of information – twice as much in every seven years –

and we may wonder how our school system will cope with such a problem in the near future. Will the teachers ask their pupils to widen their knowledge in the same proportion? Naturally not. To remain efficient shouldn't they teach them how to use the information? How will the computer help them in such a difficult task?

The European Conference on Computers in Education will take place in Lausanne from July 24 to July 28 1988. More than one thousand participants will join this international meeting organised by the Swiss Federation of Informatics for IFIP (International Federation for Information Processing). The participants will be offered the chance to hear the various experiences of different countries and will discuss the part played by 'information technology' in primary and secondary schools as well as at professional and university levels.

The Conference – in short ECCE 88 – will be an opportunity for teachers and representatives of public and private departments to ponder and discuss, in connection with the growing importance of the new technologies in teaching methods, the different experiences and expectations.

The papers will deal with the social and psychological aspects of the introduction of informatics in education, (local, regional and international schemes), the development of the programmes and the packages and equipment used. In this last respect an international exhibition will show the main developments of our time, including the latest technical inventions and pedagogical practice.

MAPE News

Southern Region

The regeneration of the MAPE Southern Region continues thanks to the interest, enthusiasm and hard work of the membership. After the long period of inactivity it seems as though there is a real desire to see MAPE promoted in the region as a forum and a focus, independent of the LEA in some parts but very much in partnership with it in others. It is an interesting and exciting (and exhausting) period. Much is happening – but there is much to do.

There is a growing body of people, some from each county, that will form the foundation of a regional committee that will meet formally in the Autumn term.

Briefly, since *MICRO-SCOPE 21*, several things have happened.

The Solent MAPE Group travelling exhibition is well in hand and the first presentation will take place at the Southampton CDC (Teachers' Centre) on Saturday 17 October, with the exhibition on show for the week following. The second presentation will be at Chichester Teachers' Centre on a Saturday in late November. If you live in Hampshire or West Sussex and would like to help in any way, please contact me. It is hoped to visit other venues in the New Year – any suggestions?

In Dorset (welcome to all Dorset MAPE members to the Southern Region) the very first meeting of the Dorset MAPE Group was held on 20 June in Dorchester. The guest was Peter Hunter of *Pendown* fame, who entertained and delighted about 40 members and others with the mysteries of word processing. The Dorset Group

plan to hold a MAPE meeting once a term; future plans will be available later.

In Sussex (goodbye to East Sussex, Kent and Surrey; best wishes to the new MAPE SE Region) Chris Robson introduced a small group of MAPE members to the world of 'control'. On a miserable day of mist, drizzle, wind and cold at the end of June, she drove her truck full of MESU input/output boxes, wires, Lego, gadgets etc. to Sussex University (thank you, David), and spread them about the Educational Computer Lab for all to explore during an interesting morning. We each learned much about 'control' and its possibilities in the classroom. I learned how not to make a Lego car, while my partner, Barbara, shamed me by making a gear box in no time at all. It was a small group, but there is the possibility of some more MAPE activities in West Sussex.

In Berkshire (thanks for staying loyal to the South) the energetic Chris Robson is attempting to create a MAPE interest. As I write, the meeting is in two days' time. Andy Pierson (*Compose*) is due to speak to 21 members. It is hoped to organise regular MAPE meetings in the county.

In the Autumn term I hope to have two other MAPE meetings: one in the Northern part of Hampshire, and another on the Isle of Wight. The planning of these is still in early stages – details later.

We welcome also the Channel Islands to the Southern Region – how can MAPE South help you?

Concept Writer was sent out to 30–40 members. How are you using it? Does it work? Drop me a short note if you have time; it would be most welcomed. Ideas, offers of help etc. are always wanted and appreciated.

The region has changed and the region is growing – let's work together to keep it moving.

Dave Kitching

South West Region

Adventure Software Workshop

On 21st March the College of St Paul and St Mary in Cheltenham once again provided MAPE members with the opportunity to spend a day viewing adventure games. The workshop was organised by the new committee and they had invited three software firms, Sherston, LTS and 4Mation to bring a selection of games for us to use. Sherston, moreover, allowed us to borrow discs for a 28-day period so that they could be assessed during their use in the classroom. Many members felt that this was particularly valuable, and I suspect that quite a number of teachers ended the month by buying the discs. I did!

The reps from the three firms were helpful in many ways: explaining how to get through programs (not always easy in the short time available!), and demonstrating their potential in the classroom, sometimes with the benefit of their personal experience with children. At no time did we feel under pressure to buy.

Few firms seem to be willing to allow schools to borrow discs, so the next best way of assessing programs is to use them at a workshop. I particularly liked *Circus* and *Wizard's Kingdom* by Sherston, *Flowers of Crystal* by 4Mation, and *The Last Adventure* by LTS.

I'm sure more workshops of this type would be very welcome, perhaps annually?

Sheila Duffill

South West Region and Great Western Region

Further to my aim of localising MAPE activities, I can now report that Devon and Cornwall, the new South West Region, are about to form a local committee and begin planning events there. Any other members willing to be part of this new committee should write to me straight away and I will make sure that they will be contacted.

The new Great Western Region (Avon, Somerset, Gloucestershire and Wiltshire) are each aiming for local LEA-based groups. Avon will start working once the new IT Unit has found a home and can offer MAPE a back room to plan and implement their activities. Wiltshire are planning 'a biggie', and news about this will follow when more details are finalised.

Somerset section open the new season with 'Musing on MAPE' on 17 October, and have Anita Straker, Jon Coupland and Peter Hunte as the main attractions. Another meeting is planned for 13 February 1988 which is an 'Allsorts Workshop'. Further details can be obtained from Pat Fox, 74 Ilchester Road, Yeovil, Somerset.

Gloucestershire have gone for mid-week fixtures: Thursdays, 4.00–6.00 pm at the College of St Paul and St Mary. 1 October is 'Good Maths Software'; 15 October 'Beginners' Evening'; 18 February 1988 'Concept Keyboards'; 3 March 'Problem Solving'. Saturday events also take place at the College from 9.30 am onwards: 14 November 'Talking about Topic Work'; 14 May 1988 'LOGO Workshop' and AGM; and hopefully 11 June 'Art/Music Day'.

Further details will be sent via *MICRO-SCOPE* mailings as well as LEA postbags.

Reg Eyre
Chief Station Master

The Beginnings of Berkshire MAPE?

Berkshire is part of the MAPE Southern Region, and will continue to be so, now that we've resisted Reg's best efforts to attach us elsewhere!

Bearing in mind the reluctance of many people to travel too far, we are hoping to establish a Berkshire group, and our first meeting was held on 4 July. The theme was 'Making Music with a Micro is Fun!', and 25 teachers assembled at Radstock Primary School in Reading, to take part in a day of music-making, led by Andy Pierson, of the Shell Centre, Nottingham University. Andy used the program *Compose*, linking the micro to a synthesizer, and very quickly had the audience composing songs, to their own percussion accompaniment. We then had a tantalising glimpse of some other forthcoming music programs, and followed this with lunch at a local hostelry.

The afternoon session was comprised of informal workshops using *Compose*, and also looking at some of the wide range of software available to local teachers at the Berkshire Centre for Computers in Education. Those people who were already MAPE members agreed to arrange a further meeting in the Autumn term and many of those who weren't were 'persuaded' to join!

We would like to thank the head and staff of the school for their invaluable contributions to a successful day, and Colin Monson, the computer adviser for Berkshire, for his practical support.

I'd also like to express my personal thanks to Dave Kitching for making the journey from the Isle of Wight to Reading, complete with his two youngsters, on the hottest Saturday of the year. Enthusiasm such as that is the very stuff of regional MAPE activities!

Chris Robson

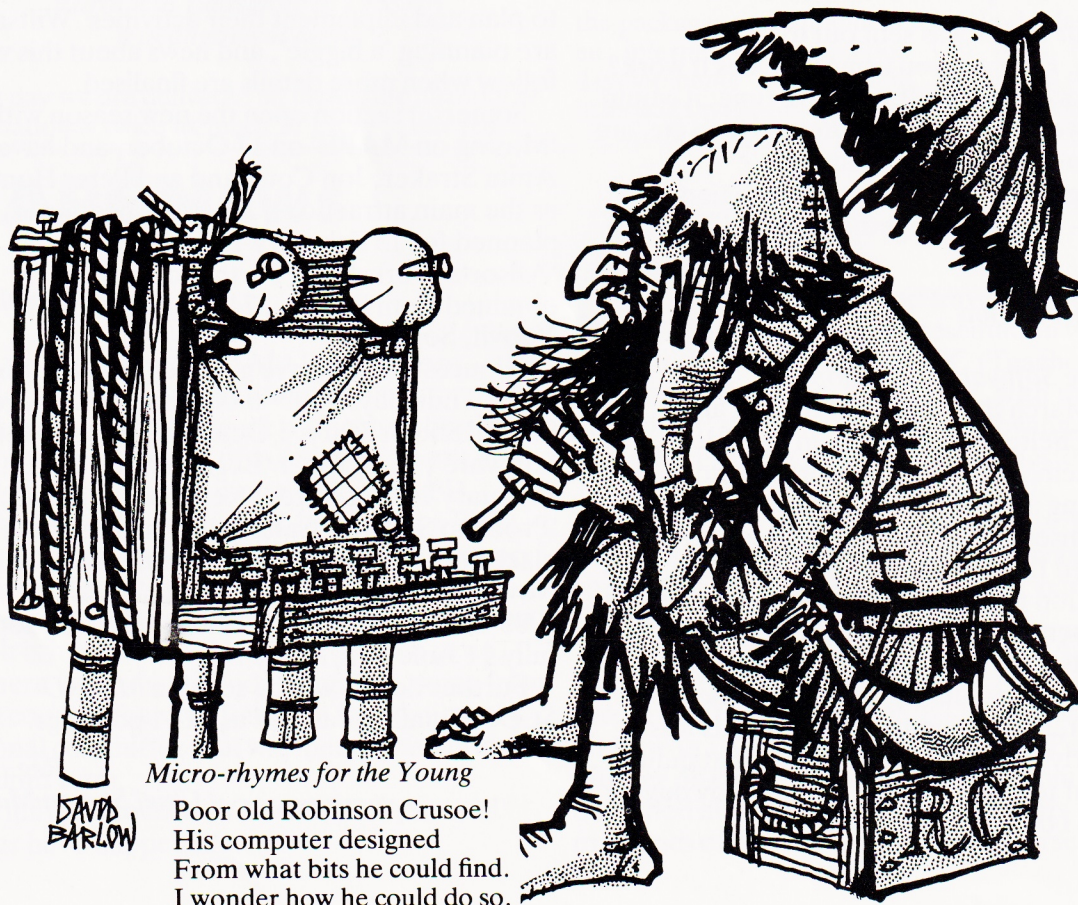
Eastern Region

An entertaining evening spent at Odessa Infant School, Newham, on 17 March did much to show what can be done using micros in education. *Granny's Garden* had come to life within the school showing great dedication by all concerned. With the travelling display of adventure games an enjoyable time was spent revealing the secrets of the *Magic Telephone* and other programs.

The Roadshow continued at Colchester on 11 May with what seemed like an army of local teachers who had kindly brought in micros for the event, thus saving the elongated arms of those presenting work.

The next theme for the Eastern Region is 'Micros in Print', scheduled for 3 November at Redbridge Teachers' Centre, Ilford, and 1 March at Havering Educational Computing Centre, Harold Hill. Contact Liz Evans for further details.

*John Bowers
Somers Heath School
South Ockendon, Essex*



Micro-rhymes for the Young

Poor old Robinson Crusoe!
His computer designed
From what bits he could find.
I wonder how he could do so.

MAPE National Committee Members 1987

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