

# MICROSCOPE -

► Issue 40

► Autumn 1993



- Multimedia
- Laptops in the classroom
- Dearing and IT
- Conference '94 info
- Tutankhamun
- Software reviews

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# MICRO-SCOPE 40

## How to put a sparkle in your eye!

**Roger Keeling**

How do we begin to satisfy the measurement and control strand in the National Curriculum Technology document (AT5)?

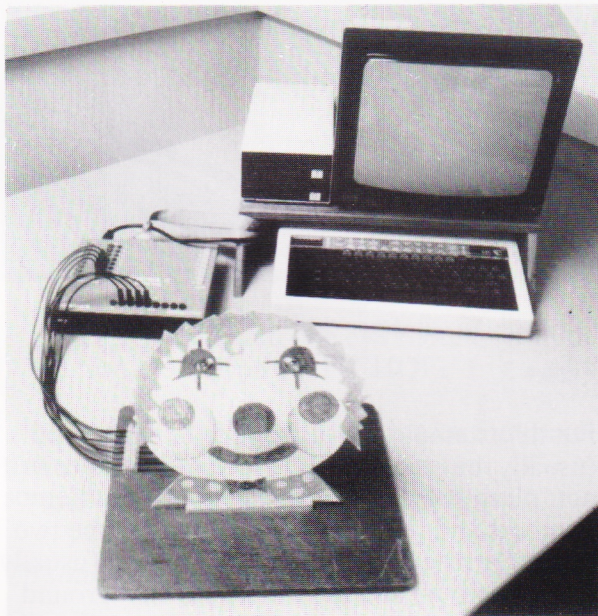
Has your school got one of those 'green boxes' collecting dust?

Does 'control' seem terribly complex?

This article will explain just how to get started by reference to a particular project, namely the clown's face that lights up, with a buzzer that sounds and a bow tie that whizzes round. The activity is suited to pupils at key stage 2 (age 7–11) and is relevant to BBC and Nimbus users.

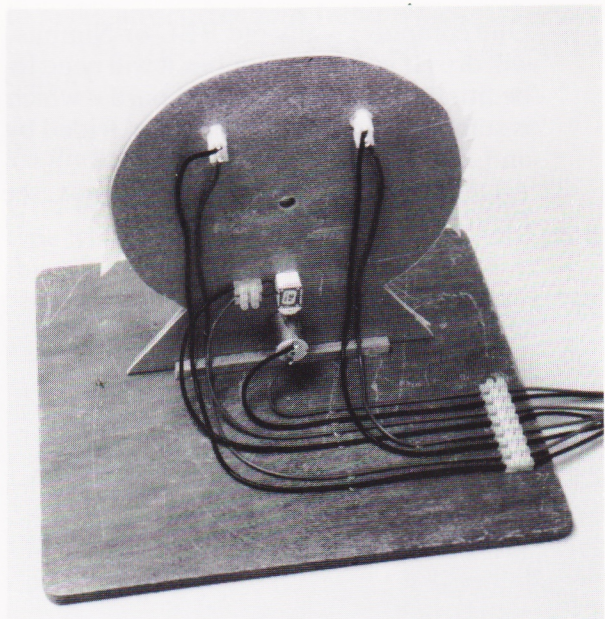
### The clown

The children will need to make a clown's face,



**Figure 1**

with eyes that flash (two light bulbs), a mouth that 'talks' (buzzer) and a bow tie that rotates (motor). This is a design and make activity and it would be counter to the spirit of technology if I gave the plans for how the task should be done. However, the model is best made out of hardboard mounted vertically, with a cardboard mask glued to it. The photographs in Figures 1 and 2 should give you enough of a clue to get started.



**Figure 2**

A kit of parts (light bulbs and holders, buzzer, motor, leads, a bracket to hold the motor, banana plugs – Figure 3) can be purchased from Merlin Educational Supplies at a cost of £7 (£5.95 + VAT) including post and packing.



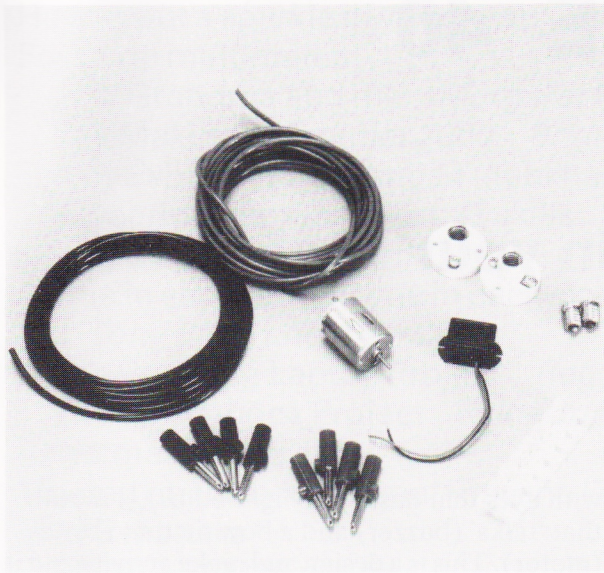


Figure 3

### The control equipment

In order to control your model from the micro you will need:

1. One computer – any old BBC or Nimbus will do. (If you use a Nimbus it will need to be fitted with a parallel I/O board – which is standard on most machines provided by an LEA.)
2. A Deltronics (or similar) interface box, see Figure 4.

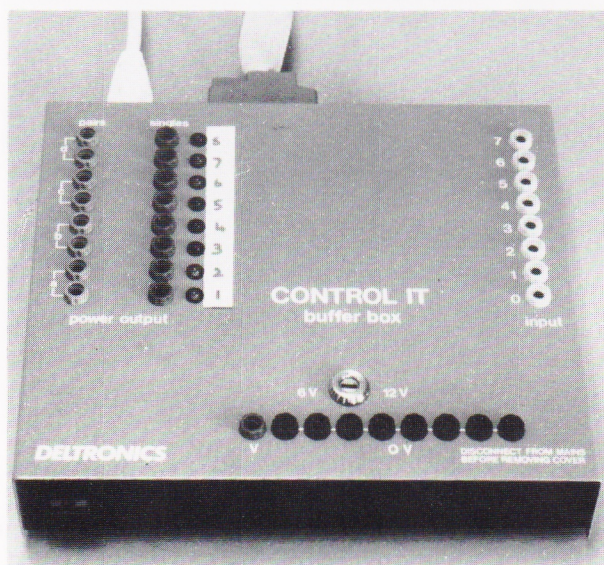


Figure 4

3. Some form of appropriate software. The cheapest way to get started is to use *Contact* (BBC users) or *Controller* (Nimbus users). If you don't have the software it can be purchased from NCET (see end of article).

### How to link it all up

Each component on the model (two light bulbs, one buzzer and one motor) will have two leads coming from it. Make sure that the leads are long enough to reach from your model to the interface box. On the end of each lead, screw a banana plug.

Plug in the micro and connect up the interface box (depending upon which one you have this will either need plugging into the mains, if it has an in-built power supply, or alternatively will need a battery box attached). The leads on the Deltronics box are such that they will only plug into one socket on the micro (hence, you can't go wrong!)

Connect your model as shown in Figure 5.

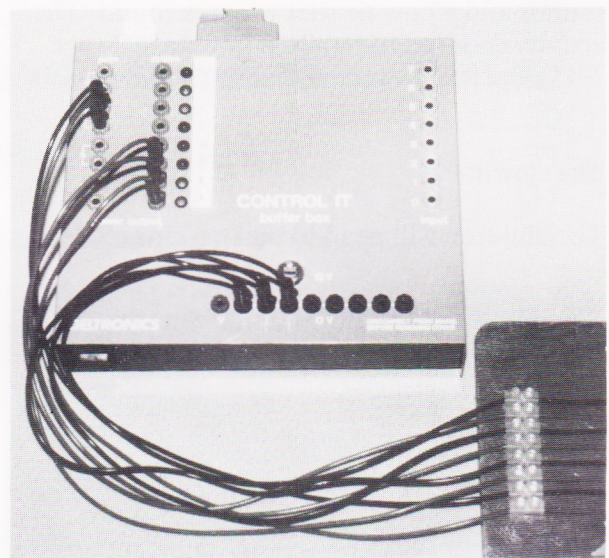


Figure 5

For this example I am assuming that the outputs (usually the blue sockets) are numbered 1 to 8 (if not, place some sticky tape over the existing numbers and renumber them). Plug in the two leads from the left eye, one into socket 1 (usually blue in colour) and the other into any 'ground' socket (usually black in colour). The right eye fits into socket 2 and a ground and the buzzer into socket 3 and a ground. The motor uses the



grey sockets marked as 'C'. In this case the leads are not plugged into the ground socket. Output 5 is, in effect, on/off and output 6 is clockwise/anticlockwise.

Next, load up the software. The screen should look like one of the two alternatives below, depending upon which version you are using (Figures 6 and 7).

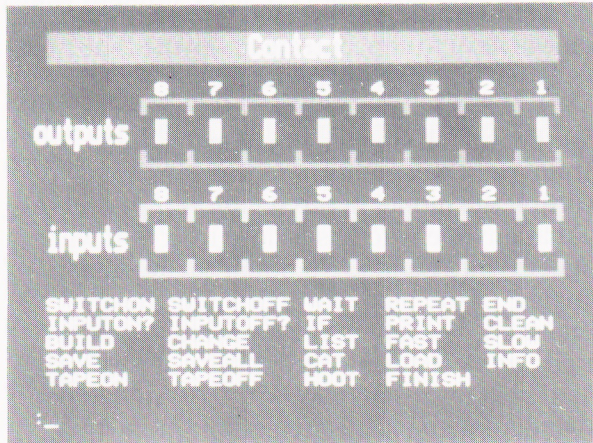


Figure 6

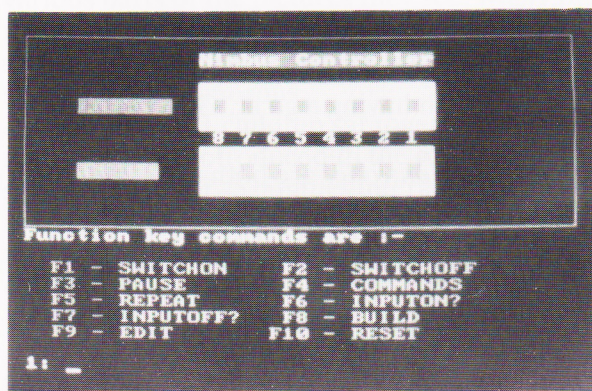


Figure 7

A quick way to test that everything is working is to type the following. The instructions given are for *Contact* (BBC) and *Controller* (Nimbus).

SWITCHON 1 and one eye should light up.  
To turn it off, type SWITCHOFF 1

Now all that you need to do is to write some procedures that cause the clown to do something. Here are some examples.

#### *To sound a buzzer for 4 seconds*

Give the procedure (ie your set of instructions) a name, for example type BUILD BUZZ and this will take you into the editor. In *Controller* you

will need to type BUILD 'BUZZ (note the apostrophe). Then type:

For *Contact* (press RETURN after each line)  
TO BUZZ (the title appears automatically)  
SWITCHON 3  
WAIT 40  
SWITCHOFF 3

For *Controller*:

BUZZ (the title appears automatically)  
SWITCHON 3  
PAUSE 4  
SWITCHOFF 3

Note: as the 40 in WAIT 40 is in tenths of a second, this will result in a pause of 4 seconds. *Controller* uses the command PAUSE and has units of 1 second, therefore the equivalent command to replace WAIT 40 would be PAUSE 4. Do ensure that there are no blank lines in your procedure.

Press Escape when you have finished and this will take you back to the original screen. To make it work, simply type the procedure name, in this case BUZZ (and put your hands over your ears!).

If it doesn't work, and gives an error message, type EDIT BUZZ (or EDIT 'BUZZ for *Controller*) which will take you back and allow you to make any corrections (after which you press Control C (BBC) or Escape (Nimbus) to exit the editor).

#### *To flash an eye 4 times*

Give the procedure a name. For example, type BUILD FLASH (or BUILD 'FLASH) and this will take you into the editor.

Type:

For *Contact*:

TO FLASH  
REPEAT 4  
SWITCHON 1  
WAIT 20  
SWITCHOFF 1  
WAIT 10  
END

For *Controller*:

FLASH  
REPEAT 4 [SWITCHON 1 PAUSE 2  
SWITCHOFF 1 PAUSE 1] (all on one line)

Type FLASH to see the effect after leaving the editor. If you want to flash both eyes simultaneously, then you can type, for example, SWITCHON 1 2 and SWITCHOFF 1 2 respectively. (SWITCHON [1 2] on *Controller*.)



REV  
SWITCHON 5

Merlin Educational Supplies is based at  
Newman College, Bartley Green, Birmingham  
B32 3NT. Tel: 021-476-7279

[illegible]



# Focus on multimedia

## *Just Grandma and Me*

**Margaret Pearson**

*Class teacher Year 1, Downside Lower School, Bedfordshire*

On Tuesday 30th March, pupils at Downside Lower School had an opportunity to use an Apple computer, and a program stored on compact disc called *Just Grandma and Me*.

The opportunity arose as part of an ORT Trust project exploring the emerging compact disc technology. I was asked if I would agree to letting my children and the staff look at the program, and if I would record some observations. A tape recording was made of the children's reactions.

The program is essentially an electronic book. Children can watch the story unfold passively, or they can use a more exciting mode which allows them to point with a mouse and click on various parts of the pictures they see. Many of the items or characters go into an animated sequence when pointed at with the mouse. The story is quite humorous.

Fifteen Year 1 children sat together on the mat, and were introduced to the program. They sat fascinated for 45 minutes interacting with and reacting to the various creatures they encountered along the way. Later on, groups of three children went back and tried things out for themselves.

Several of the children were language disadvantaged, and had difficulty expressing themselves in normal circumstances, but their faces and actions showed total immersion in the story.

One child who was elective/selective mute, and spoke only to the class teacher when alone and occasionally to other children, actually strained to be heard, answered questions, volunteered opinions, and encouraged others to continue with the story. He communicated verbally, physically, voluntarily and spontaneously. The other teacher present commented on how animated he was, considering that normally he does not communicate with strangers, or other teachers in school, unless forced to, and then only in monosyllables almost silently.

The children all wanted to use the mouse and

to find out what happened when things were touched, and then turn the pages. Their excitement was intense.

After lunch, a second group of 15 Year 1 children were given a chance to use the program. They had heard all about it over lunch from their friends so they were quite excited when they came in. Fortunately, they soon settled down, and enjoyed their time immensely. Like the first group, they were eager to have their turn to use the mouse and discover what they could do.

The third group to come in consisted of 22 children from the reception class – four-year-olds – and their teacher. They spent half an hour enthralled watching, listening, using the mouse and guessing what might happen.

In all, some 52 children and six staff saw the program. Not one child or adult commented on the American accent in the material. However one child commented that the ORT Trust presenter sounded different, rather like her class teacher! (The ORT Trust presenter and his wife, the class teacher, are both Welsh.)

The Year 1 children drew pictures from the story the next day, without being asked to, and some wanted to know if the computer could be in class every day.

While it was clear the children enjoyed this material, in today's classroom, links with the National Curriculum have to be clear. In this case, there were clear links with English and Technology Attainment Targets:

|            |   |
|------------|---|
| English    | AT1 Speaking and Listening<br>AT2 Reading |
| Technology | AT5 Work with a computer                  |

This was the first time I had experience of CDROM technology and an electronic book interacting with animated cartoons and speech. Judging by my children's reactions, its potential as a stimulus is enormous, or even **enormouse**?



# The making of Frontier 2000

**Brian Richardson**

*Cambridgeshire Software House*

## **Editor's Introduction**

*Good simulation programs have always been hard to find, but in 12 years of software publishing one company, Cambridgeshire Software House, has produced a steady stream of such packages. Those of us who have 'been around' for all of those 12 years will remember CSH's Expedition to Saqqara. Published in 1980 and based on the history of this world archaeological site, it brought Egyptology right into the classroom in the context of an actual dig. Then, in October 1982, came The Mary Rose. This program was produced by CSH in conjunction with the Mary Rose Trust and in particular, Margaret Rule, the eminent marine archaeologist. Suddenly, through the medium of a computer, children could go diving on a wreck and experience the hazards and joys involved in bringing the many artefacts to the surface for all to see! This was a real first in educational computing terms and, however strange it may seem, the Tudor Warship gave one of the links to Frontier 2000. Frontier 2000 is a cross-curricular simulation, for children in the 8-16 age range and comes complete with a substantial resource pack, worksheets and support material. When it was launched at BETT '92, it was the only truly cross-curricular simulation for the Acorn RISC OS micros (A3000, Archimedes etc) available. After much persuasion, Brian Richardson of Cambridgeshire Software House has agreed to write the story of how this major simulation was conceived, developed and published and to give you an idea of the risks and development costs involved in producing a package of this kind.*

'Do you know what Border Reivers are?' This was the question that started what were to become two of the most interesting and exciting years of my life. Little did I know it, but it also meant that the 'Frontier 2000' project had started. In late August 1990 I had just returned from my summer holiday to find a message on my desk that read 'Please telephone Mike Taylor - Urgent - 0228 347811'. In the course of publishing the *Mary Rose* program in 1982 and its update, *The Anatomy of a Tudor Warship* in 1988, I had got to know Mike Taylor quite well.

He was the Commercial Director at the Mary Rose Museum in Portsmouth and was our first line of contact when resource materials were needed. He was (and still is) one of the most enthusiastic people that I have ever met. From the telephone number I knew that it was not Portsmouth I was telephoning but I really had no idea where it was. When a voice answered 'Tullie House', I gave my name and asked for Mike Taylor, but before any pleasantries could be exchanged he asked me 'Do you know what Border Reivers are?' When I told Mike that I had no idea what he was talking about, he suggested that I might like to go up to Carlisle, where he was, and find out. He explained that he was no longer with the Mary Rose Trust but was now the Commercial Manager in a new Museum building project at Tullie House, Carlisle. 'It'll be just opposite the Castle main entrance when it's built' he said, guessing correctly that I had never been to Carlisle in my life. I asked Mike what he was talking about and his reply went something like 'I'm talking about the location of your next educational simulation program. When are you coming up to sort it out?' Never being one to argue, I presented myself in Mike's office one week later!

He showed me around the building site that was to become the Tullie House Museum and told me where every exhibit was going to be. For an outsider this was hard to imagine because there were only four walls and the roof to look at. He told me that there was such a wealth of historical information available in Carlisle and the surrounding area that he was sure that we could produce from it a 'unique educational software package'. Without dampening Mike's enthusiasm too much I remember telling him that 'unique educational software packages' didn't grow on trees and that the sort of ideas he was talking about would mean us taking a substantial financial risk. 'How much do you need?' came the reply.

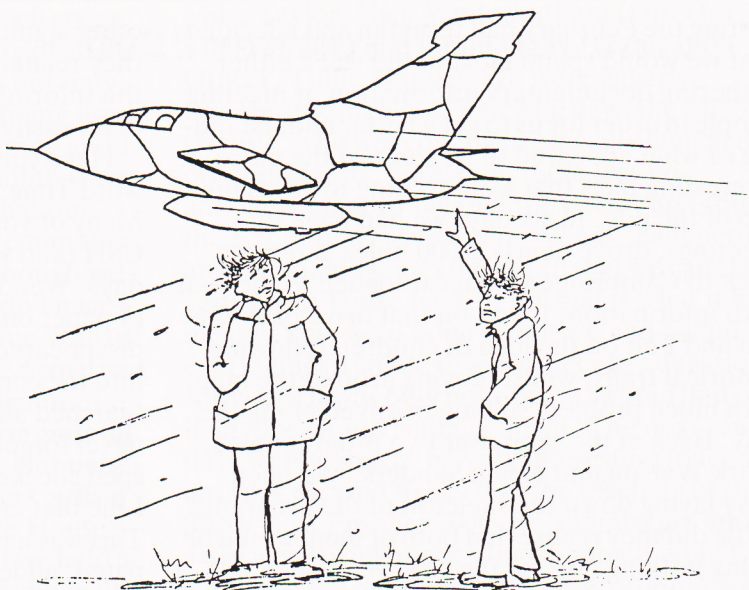
On the drive back to Cambridgeshire I think the enormity of what was being suggested hit me for the first time. Here we were, just five people running a small software company and here was an opportunity to create something really special. At the same time, if we got it wrong it would put us out of business for ever! It was too



great a risk for us to take ourselves. Or was it? I felt both excited and depressed but I remember thinking that at least I had met an old friend, had discovered that Border Reivers were the families that lived in an area between England and Scotland in the 16th Century, that they were totally lawless and that Tullie House was to have a light and sound experience all about them! Back in the office we sat down and discussed the project, and its financial implications, at great length. The idea of doing another big simulation certainly attracted us but there was always the risk element whichever way we looked at it. We came up with three

alternative suggestions: Option A would cost around £20,000 and be a game about Carlisle; Option B would cost around £35,000 and would be Option A plus a few 'bells and whistles'; Option C would cost a massive £80–100,000 and was a full blown simulation. Following discussions with our Bankers, it was decided that we could go 50:50 with Carlisle City Council on the development costs. I reported this fact back to Mike Taylor. Four months passed and I can only guess at the number of meetings that must have taken place in Carlisle from the number of telephone calls and visits that I had to make. Just before Christmas 1990 Mike telephoned to say that the part funding had finally been approved. It was to be Option C; the simulation was really on!

While these financial discussions were taking place, I had approached Ian Whittington, who is Head at Great Gidding Primary School, near Huntingdon. Ian and I have worked very closely since CSH was formed. He has had a tremendous input on programs like *Saqqara*, *Mary Rose*, *Cars – Maths in Motion* and many more, but most importantly of all he knows how large simulation packages are developed and subsequently used in the classroom. Even before the financial side had been sorted, Ian and I had two trips to Carlisle and started to gather some of the initial information that was needed. It was during the second of these trips that we visited Birdoswald, a large Roman Fort on Hadrian's Wall. As it was wintertime the Museum was closed and we were waiting for the Curator to arrive to talk to us. Those of you who know Birdoswald will also know that the car park is 400 metres away from the Museum. The wind was blowing a gale, the rain was driving horizontally and it was freezing cold. It's good



being a software publisher, I thought! We were both soaked to the skin and had nowhere to shelter. We were on the point of giving the Warden up for lost when a Tornado jet fighter came screaming over our heads at around 300 feet. For those of you who do not know, Ian has a great love of aircraft and to the day I die I will never forget his words when this happened. . . . '\*\*\*\*! Did you see that? We're going to war!' I could only just see my feet in the puddles but he had spotted that the Tornado was in desert camouflage and was on its way back to its base in Spadeadam Forest. It was a very sobering silence that followed, broken only by the arrival of the Curator; the Gulf War was now only a matter of weeks away.

During one of these trips we visited virtually every Tourist Information Office within a 30 mile radius of Carlisle. We told the staff of the project and listened to many a favourite tale about their town or village. At this point, of course, we had open minds about what shape the software was to take but the one thing that was clear was that we were going to need as much factual information as we could get. We had many, many meetings with the staff at Tullie House including the historians and the archaeologists and soon began to get a good idea of what was and was not going to be available to us. I should perhaps say here that all the people we met in those early meetings were every bit as enthusiastic as us and had it not been for their tremendous cooperation the project would have fallen at the first hurdle. It was now January 1991, and we set ourselves the target of publishing the project in January 1992 at the BETT Exhibition in London. At this point we were still making ourselves known to many specialists from whom we were to need help.



During the February half term Ian and I decided that we would spend most of the week either gathering documentary information or meeting people in order for us to get a better understanding of what appeared to be some of the more interesting facts that were coming towards the top of the pile. In six days we had over 70 meetings, drove nearly 2,000 miles and came back to Cambridge with a car loaded to the roof with information. It was on that drive back that Ian and I hit on the idea of children following historical trails, whilst moving around the map, with much problem solving involved along the way. Back at the shop, our two programmers, Mark Watson and Kevin Sanders, had been busy laying down the skeleton of the program. Little did they realise that both of them would be doing nothing else for the next year, such was the enormity of what we were to do!

The map and coordinates were the first to be encoded and this took longer than anticipated which, of course, put us behind schedule. Eventually the map was finished which meant that we could flesh it out with one historical trail so that we could get the concept of the program into the classroom as soon as possible. The first trail was to be about the Border Reivers. Ian had been reading about little else but the Reivers, such was the fascination of these families. The trail was put together and children were then asked to try and work through it as best they could. The work that came out of this one trail was incredible but, and perhaps more importantly, the children really enjoyed using the software. They even started to send requests in for more trails! Ian was now heavily into the research for the 11 trails we had chosen and was generating all kinds of questions which needed answers fast. We had gone for as wide a spectrum as we realistically could and had subjects ranging from Religious Beliefs to Hadrian's Wall and from the Victorians to the Environment. By the time Railways, the Civil War and Mary Queen of Scots had been added to the list we were well on the way. At this time many faxes and telephone calls were made to make sure that what we were producing was as accurate as possible. One lesson I quickly learnt was never to rely on just one source of information. History in this part of the world is certainly coloured by which flag you carried at Bannockburn! This was evidenced when we started to produce the Time Line. The City Historian, Rosalind Gee, had given us a chronology of Carlisle's history as part of the research documentation we had asked for. We decided that if this could be expanded to cover different towns and villages as well as including

other significant historical facts, whether or not they related to Carlisle, then we would make this information available to children in the form of an easily searchable Time Line.

Have you ever considered producing a 25,000-word Time Line? Take my advice, and don't! Many of you will know Wendy, my co-partner in CSH (and wife!) from her MAPE secretariat days. Wendy took one look at the various pieces of paper on which this Time Line existed and disappeared for over a week while she typed it into the computer in a form that could then be searched and understood by children. I shall never forget watching her run her work through a spell checker, especially the parts of the Time Line that are in Latin, Old English and Lalland! This was a nightmare that nobody had anticipated, added to which two historians could not agree on some of the contents, and it took well over a month to get this sorted and checked.

In May 1991 I, together with 20 or so other software publishers, went on Acorn's Software Roadshow to Scotland. At that time I had just six of the screens from *Frontier 2000* that had been saved as 'stills'. However, I was determined to let some of the advisers in Scotland have a look at what we were doing and so it was that Dundee saw the first 'showing' outside our office. By the time the Roadshow reached Glasgow two days later I knew we were on the right lines. The massive volume of information now being generated was becoming a problem. We had set ourselves a limit of two floppy discs and no more! Our problem for once was not what to put in but what to leave out! During the May half term, Ian and I had decided that another trip was called for so that we could put the finishing touches to some of the trails. I distinctly remember trying to find the Capon Tree Memorial near Brampton. We really wanted a photograph of this to illustrate part of the Bonnie Prince Charlie Trail. Ian and I, following a sign, walked miles across open countryside and at times were fairly deeply involved with copious quantities of cow dung and mud! We simply could not find this Memorial and as it was getting late we decided to turn back before it got dark. Two hours later we got back to my car determined to get back to Carlisle in record time to get out of our smelly clothes. After 10 minutes or so, Ian recognised an avenue of trees through which we had been walking so out of curiosity we turned up a side road to have a look. Yes you've guessed! There was the Capon Tree Memorial no more than 40 metres from the place where we had turned to go back! We came back from this trip with very sore feet and another car boot full of information.



The summer of 1991 was pretty much spent getting the program ready for the entry of all the data we had collected. This data was not only text but also photographs that were being used to illustrate the trails. In August, Wendy and I decided to go to France for a short holiday and when we came back we discovered that our offices had been burgled and that the computers we program on had been stolen. Although we had copies of the programming we didn't have a computer on which to load it! Enter Sue Wall of Acorn Computers. Within three days Acorn had lent us sufficient kit to get us going again; something for which we will always be grateful. Pressure was now starting to mount. Not only was BETT 92 getting ever nearer, the Carlisle City Council and our friends at Tullie House decided that it would be a good idea if we held a 'behind closed doors' showing in December. We thought that this was a brilliant move. The program still had no title (*Luguvalium* and *Over the Wall* having been deemed totally unsuitable) and our finish date had just been brought forward by five weeks! However, the team spirit within CSH and Tullie House was now running so high that weekends and evenings became a thing of the past and on December 9th 1991 *Frontier 2000* (complete with a few bugs!) was given a pre-release showing in Tullie House for the City Council and invited guests. These guests included six children from Great Gidding Primary School who, apart from showing the various local dignitaries how easy the program was to use, finished up the day by giving live interviews to Radio Cumbria.

The mechanics of actual publication were now uppermost in our minds. The boxes in which the pack is sold had been designed and ordered but Christmas was fast approaching and delivery could not be guaranteed. The manual had been written and would be printed during the first week of 1992. The resource materials, videos and audio cassettes to accompany the program were all received just before Christmas so we were looking good although the boxes were a slight worry. It was just three weeks to go to the BETT launch and selling *Frontier 2000* in a plastic bag did not seem at all attractive. The boxes arrived the week before BETT and we quickly made up our initial stock to take to the Show. Press releases were sent to every computer/educational magazine in the UK, and Border TV even carried an item on its local news. The program was even finished and had undergone final testing. On Wednesday 22nd January at 10 o'clock, our Stand at BETT was full. There were the five of us, Ian Whittington,

Mike Taylor, Nick Winterbotham (Director, Tullie House) and Grant Ogilvy (Education Officer, Tullie House). We were eagerly awaiting the arrival of Eric Martlew, the MP for Carlisle, who was coming to officially launch the program for us. Suddenly, there was an announcement to say that the doors, and thus the Exhibition, were open. Wendy leant across and whispered 'Does this mean that we can start getting our house back?', for that is what it had meant. Yes, we'd done it, but we had risked everything to create this one piece of educational software. It was only now that we would find out if anyone would actually buy it. The next four days were going to be very interesting indeed! I am very pleased to say that the teachers at the Show gave *Frontier 2000* the 'thumbs up' and sales were being made almost immediately. Then, on the Saturday, one LEA ordered 300 copies and *Frontier 2000* was really on its way. It had taken us over two years, around 1000 meetings, had meant over 100 nights away from home and had eventually cost over £100,000 to produce. Since launching the disc version, we have spent a further eight months expanding it onto CD ROM. This version has meant researching more trails, digitising around 2000 full colour photographs and finding 20 or so relevant video clips to digitise. These came after extensive searches being made in the Border Television film archives. The Time Line has been increased to over 35,000 words and we have included some speech in the simulation. The CD ROM has enough information on it to fill over 300 floppy discs. If, three years ago, when we started this project, someone had told me that I would sit down with a group of nine-year-old children to watch a video clip of a barn owl in flight, would listen to a commentary about its conservation, would watch the Nigel Gresley steam across the Ribbleshead Viaduct, and that this would all happen on the computer screen from within a program that we were going to design and write, I would have had a great deal of serious thought about their sanity. However, we did it and, if nothing else, many children may now know the answer to Mike Taylor's question. I certainly do!

### Software information

The disc-based version of *Frontier 2000* costs £95 and the CD ROM £175 (both prices exclude carriage and VAT). If you would like more information please write to Cambridgeshire Software House, The Computer Centre, 8 Bramley Road, St Ives, Cambridgeshire, PE17 4WS or telephone on 0480-467945.



# Touch Explorer Plus brings Tutankhamun to life

**Chris Romain**

*Northview Primary School, Highworth*

'Our next topic is about the Ancient Egyptians', said my colleague. 'I'm really looking forward to it because of all the art work we can do.' With that she produced a long list of all the wonderfully creative ideas she had.

'It's all very well for her,' I thought, 'she likes art, but I'm an IT person. How can I get inspired?'

So the scene was set; either I adopted her artistic starting points or accepted the challenge to find something equally rewarding and creative using IT on the BBC. I don't like to give in easily, so as she set off with her art ideas, I set off on the computer trail.

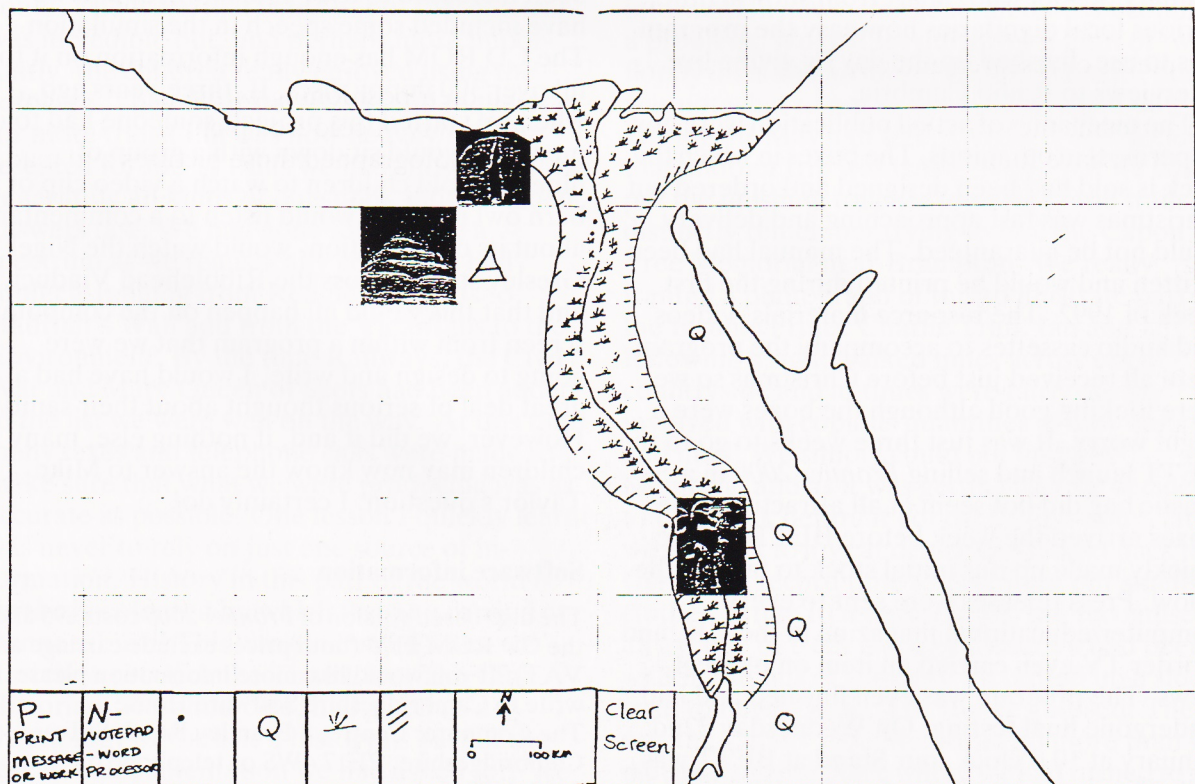
*Touch... Touch Explorer... Touch Explorer Plus...* it kept niggling in the back of my mind. I hadn't used it, only heard about it. I was sure it *could* be the answer, so I began to find out more.

I made an overlay of a map of Egypt (Figure 1),

incorporating messages of information and questions at pertinent places, for example, the Step Pyramid and Alexandria. Meanwhile the children (in pairs) drew their own maps onto which they marked their proposed route of exploration (Figure 2), with the previous knowledge that they were ultimately looking for Tutankhamun's tomb.

They then followed their routes across the overlay map. Different routes meant they found the questions in different orders; sometimes there were long periods of pushing the overlay with no questions. Then suddenly a squeal from the corner, 'Hoorah, we've found a question!' – not a response you often hear before a pair of children embark on a piece of research.

It was necessary to keep a close check on which children had completed each task – and to ensure that they had sufficient reference books available for investigation away from the computer.



**Figure 1** Overlay Filename: Egypt.



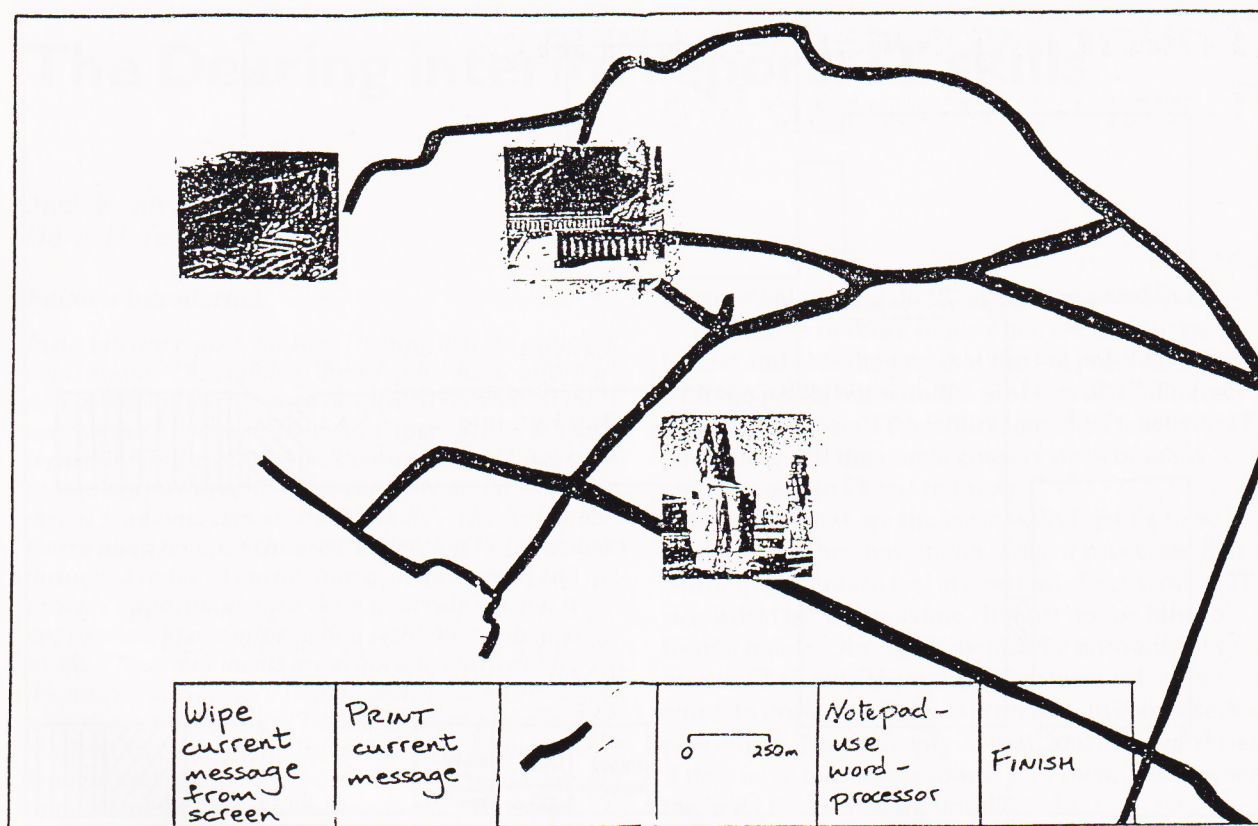


Figure 2 Overlay Filename: Valley.

It seemed appropriate for the next stage to make a 'close up' of one of the 'squares' – the Valley of the Kings. There was lots of information, lots of temples and tombs to find, but only two pieces of research and one piece of creative writing.

Then came the words they had been searching for, 'You have found the possible entrance'. Again the children had to plan their route first.

Finally – the big one – Tutankhamun's Tomb itself. By using lots of reference materials I had selected 25 artefacts which I felt would give the children a good idea about what would have been found in the tomb. Selection criteria also included their positioning within the tomb and the availability of coloured pictures of them.

I then photographed those pictures and made an information card for each artefact. These

cards were kept in an adjacent room. The tomb itself was drawn to scale as the third overlay (Figure 3), but the children actually recorded their movements, messages and location of artefacts on their blank map.

In the meantime, the artwork had been completed, but none of it was in the classroom.

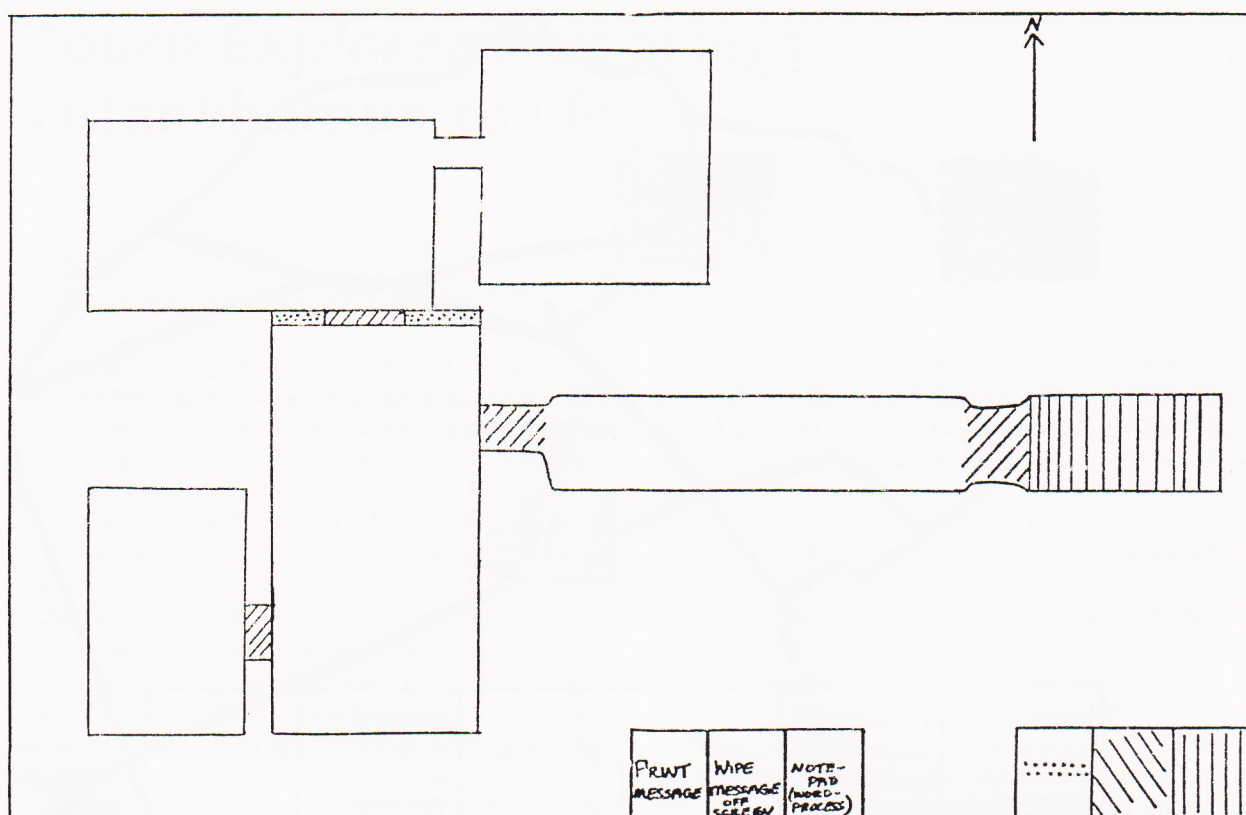
'Where's our art work gone?'

'Why can't we go into the quiet room?'

Tension mounted as the days passed, until







**Figure 3** *Overlay Filename: Tomb.*

group by group, as they found their artefacts, the children were allowed into the quiet room. Unknown to them, my colleague and I had transformed it into the tomb: the walls were covered with tomb paintings and hieroglyphics. In the room were the artefacts and in the middle, the tomb itself. When the children finally entered the room, their excitement was akin to that which

Howard Carter and Lord Carnarvon must have felt! They were only allowed in when they had found the tomb on the overlay, but fortunately, by the end of the topic, all had been successful.

My colleague's wonderfully creative ideas were certainly attractive, but the computer had been equally effective – in helping to build up and maintain the excitement.





# The Dearing interim report: IT skills

**Jack Kenny**  
Herts IT Team

## Editor's Introduction

*In his interim report, Sir Ron Dearing lists ten principal conclusions. The eighth of these reads: 'Basic information technology skills must be located securely at the heart of the National Curriculum' (para 3.15). Whilst it is encouraging to see that the importance of IT has been recognised, we need to think carefully about what is meant (and understood) by 'IT skills'. The National Curriculum requires children 'to develop IT capabilities through a range of curriculum activities which will . . . provide opportunities for them to decide when it is appropriate to use information technology' in their work. These sentiments are echoed in curriculum documents in Northern Ireland and Scotland and imply a more extensive use of IT than the mere practising of 'basic skills'. The following article gives us food for thought and is reprinted from IT News, the IT journal of the Herts IT Team, with the editor's permission.*

**Sir Ron Dearing's interim report**<sup>1</sup> stresses the importance of IT as never before. The information office at SEAC assured me that: 'These are his first thoughts and they are his own.' If that is true, and there is no reason to doubt it, then this is an impressive document that has emerged at the end of a difficult task.

Obviously, as Sir Ron indicates, we are going to find out more about the thinking on Information Technology soon. However, it is probably useful to identify some concerns about the apparent emphases detectable in the interim document. The words 'basic skills' are used practically every time that information technology is mentioned. It is difficult to envisage how basic skills can be taught for eleven years whilst retaining the interest of many of the pupils. Regrettably the concept of IT capability is not used and that was the key idea in the previous document.

You cannot look for certainties in an interim document but Sir Ron does say with real emphasis when discussing basic IT skills, 'It is not envisaged that they should be developed hierarchically in a ten level scale.' He does not say that about anything else. How will they be developed? How will they be assessed?

How will progression be achieved if the basics are reiterated year after year? Are we going back to those dreary IT lessons where children are taught for hours how to indent a paragraph in *Word*? Are the skills going to be taught by specialists hermetically sealed off from the rest of the curriculum or are we going to ensure that every teacher takes on IT

because unless they do IT will not be pervasive.

This is one of those times when we have to be honest and face the fact that the big problem is not with the pupils but with the problem of IT illiteracy, and in some cases IT hostility, amongst teachers. IT has challenged the innate conservatism of many teachers and so IT has not won.

Defining what are the basic skills is going to be interesting. They have to be skills or processes that will help students to feel at ease and effective in an IT rich world in 20 years time. It must not be how to format a disc. Our children must be encouraged to turn to IT to help them think, problem solve, to write, to draw, to manipulate images, to compose, to play music. They can only do that, and they will do it, if they have teachers who will give them access when the need for IT arises naturally.

IT will never be at the heart of the National Curriculum until it is part of the way that teachers think about learning, until all teachers can see the way that it will enhance their teaching and enhance the learning of the pupils. Sir Ron should not put in opt out clauses like expecting IT to be taught 'in so far as facilities allow' because weasel words like that stand out in a report that is so honest and fair. The cost in terms of in-service training is high and in terms of making sure that schools have the hardware and software.

IT is already at the core of another curriculum, the GNVQ. Perhaps Sir Ron can look at the way that is organised. IT and the other core skills must be integrated into one of the modules and will be taught and assessed in that module. In other words, taught in a real context.

It is good that the importance of IT has been recognised and will be placed in such a crucial position in the core. It will be bad if all we do is to set our pupils tedious exercises on spreadsheets or databases. That will not equip them for the 21st Century; it will not do much for them in this one either. IT constantly presented at a mundane level and out of a curriculum context is austere, deadening and devoid of meaning and will not produce the kind of people, that Sir Ron wants to see and we want to see, people who can apply their IT thinking with panache, imagination, perception and discrimination.

## Reference

1. *The National Curriculum and its Assessment: an Interim Report*, Ron Dearing, July 1993. ISBN 1 85838 020 0.



# Laptops in the classroom

## One in each school, one in each classroom; where now?

### Classroom organisation and computers

**Tony Birch and Alan Cross**

From the early days of primary computing, when schools had only one or two machines, and when not every teacher could use the computer regularly even if they wanted to, we have reached a stage where many primary schools have reached a ratio of one computer per class (or even better).

A small group of pupils gathered around a single computer is a common feature in classrooms around the country. The vertical monitor seems to facilitate the discussion which is often an outcome of this phenomenon. This picture of computer use seems to be achieving the status of a 'tradition' in primary education, indeed, is almost a characteristic! Additionally teachers have been asked to think of the computer as a tool to be integrated into and developed through the whole curriculum. Often a rota system operates to allocate computers to particular classes; usually on the basis of 'one per class'.

But is this the ideal way to organise computers? It would be churlish to deny that the one per class approach has brought its successes. In a recent case study of one primary school our evidence clearly showed that regular access to reliable computers brought increases in teachers' confidence and apparently more effective computer experiences for children. However, the one per class approach inevitably presents some difficulties. The single machine standing alone may also be out of use for varying lengths of time; during PE, television, whole class teaching, story time and assembly. Sometimes teachers don't want a computer; sometimes they might like to have several. The more computers schools have, the more options will be available for organising them to support the curriculum.

What happens when a teacher is working on angle and rotation using Logo and the children are finding the computer a particularly helpful learning medium? Might the children not benefit from intensive access made possible by several computers in the classroom? Is not the impetus

lost when refamiliarisation has to occur once a fortnight? Dealing with a database may be another situation where children might require prolonged access to a computer; time which is limited may create tension as other children keen to access the computer are hindered by another equally motivated group. The availability of several computers would make the resource much more freely accessible with groups also able to compare and contrast their experiences on task.

The National Curriculum reinforced the rota system by effectively demanding that all teachers used computers as part of a child's entitlement, placing computers on the agenda through the IT profile component of Technology. More recent challenges bring new organisational questions. Perhaps now is the beginning of another important phase in the organisation of computers in the primary school.

The publication of the discussion paper on classroom organisation by Alexander, Rose and Woodhead<sup>1</sup> and subsequent Ofsted and NCC documents has placed, very seriously, more general issues of organisation onto the primary curriculum agenda at school and classroom level. We cannot and should not offer definitive answers but we would argue that as part of the questioning of the organisation of the curriculum generally, computers should be considered by those who wish to see their role grow.

We have already touched upon strengths and weaknesses of current organisational patterns, primarily the 'one per class' rota system. One of its strengths is clearly in ensuring access but it might become an inflexible approach if more general curricular organisational practises shift.

To further evaluate this argument for several computers being timetabled together we can explore Alexander, Rose and Woodhead's concern about 'excessively complex classroom practice'. The number of groups of activities operating should be limited, it is argued. What does this mean in relation to IT? If two children are using a computer in the corner of the



classroom to compose a poem does this count as one activity? How do we view a computer activity such as Logo which is accessed by pairs of children from a larger group?

One teacher in the case study argued that sometimes children have to be removed from what their class or group are doing to go and use the computer. Teachers might regard an activity involving only two or three children as unprofitable in terms of their time! Thus a slightly larger group using say three computers might constitute a more viable teaching group. We can argue that if classroom organisation is to be computer friendly then the organisation of computers has to be classroom friendly. Possibly with the growing focus upon teaching through subjects, especially with older primary children, the implications for computer organisation becomes particularly significant at Key Stage 2.

One of the other issues emerging from Alexander, Rose and Woodhead's report is that of subject specialism for which a number of potential models are proposed. Within even the most healthy budget statements there is unlikely to be opportunity for a specialist solely responsible for IT. Coordinators performing the generalist/consultant role suggested by Alexander following the PRINDEP evaluation seems most likely to us. This probably means that the integrationist approach to computing is set to continue, the coordinator encouraging teachers to find opportunities to use computers throughout the curriculum. However, if subject specialist teaching were to increase in primary schools then opportunities might demand challenging the 'one per class' approach. The science specialist might become proficient in data logging and databases, thus enabling some of the more complex work required in IT at levels 4 and above to be tackled by a teacher with subject and IT knowledge in the particular area. Such teachers with limited time with a class would require several computers in order to give all children a practical hands-on experience and organisation would once again favour the flexible.

Essentially the idea proposed thus far of clustering computers seems to have some merit and would warrant further exploration. We are not suggesting that the 'one per class' approach is inappropriate; rather we seek to challenge the status quo. Clustering computers will also raise practical issues; IT coordinators can undoubtedly manage the rotas and timetabling necessary but they cannot do anything about

classroom size or the placing of plugs within classrooms. Many of today's schools were built when the idea of computers in classrooms was a long, long time away.

One suggestion to overcome this is the computer laboratory. Obviously expensive and with security and spatial implications, it could also be seen as moving against the spirit of primary IT which is founded on cross-curricular integration developed through the five National Curriculum strands. The computer, the argument goes, should support the learners and their curriculum rather than the other way around. The computer in the primary classroom perhaps mirrors the computer in the workplace: it is on site, close to the focus of effort and acting as a tool to support everyday endeavour.

Possibly the emergence of the laptop will prove a significant development in primary IT. The laptop brings flexibility, ease of transit and requires less security space. Their size means they can fit on desk top without valuable space being lost and, if funds allow, every child in the class could use one simultaneously! It has serious possibilities as an avenue to developing computer organisation in a flexible manner.

This article has not intended to state what will happen; rather it aims to serve to fuel the IT debate. It asks questions about current practice and contemplates possibilities for the future use of IT. We would argue that computers have continued to develop since their inception on a large scale in the early 1980s. Flexibility in exploring alternatives will help to give them a 'fitness for purpose' and place in the primary curriculum as it continues to be challenged, changed and shaped at seemingly breakneck pace. By organising computers effectively in schools according to the needs of pupils and teachers they will contribute to a child's experience and emergence into a world where computers and IT continue to proliferate.

**Tony Birch** is Deputy Headteacher of Victoria Avenue Primary School, Manchester.

**Alan Cross** is a Lecturer in Education at the University of Manchester.

Readers are welcome to get in touch should they wish to discuss any of the issues or topics we have raised.

## References

- <sup>1</sup>Curriculum Organisation and Classroom Practice; Alexander, Rose and Woodhead. DES, 1992.



looking forward looking forward looking forward looking forward looking forward looking forward looking forward looking forward looking forward looking forward looking forward

### 10 years on . . .

I think that the new emphasis will concern information collection, handling and retrieval, word processing and control technology. The ability to manipulate, sort and retrieve vast quantities of information will mean a fundamental shift away from learning facts to understanding and interpreting the reasons for the original collection of such information.

*MICRO-SCOPE 10, Autumn 1983*

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## The Wiltshire Laptop Project

**Reg Eyre**

*Curriculum Support Teacher for Information Technology, Wiltshire LEA*

The Wiltshire IT Advisory Team wanted to set up a laptop project specifically to look at the developments in children's language. Together with Gill Clarkson, the Advisory Teacher for Language in the Curriculum, we selected Rushall School, a three-teacher school east of Devizes known for good standards of work in this area. We decided to give every child of Year 2 and above, and their teachers, a Tandy WP2 word processor with mains rechargeable batteries and a battery charger. This amounted to 50 machines in total.

We started with training sessions for the teachers followed by an evening session for the parents. We then let the teachers involved hand out the machines to their classes in their own way. The official start of the project was Christmas 1991 and it is designed to run for five terms.

My task is that I have to write up the project and present all the collected subjective evidence. I had a routine visit planned for mid March and decided that I would ask the children to help me present their view of the project.

The teachers were very forgiving and allowed me to disrupt their routine with this idea. I asked the top class what we might present, what it might say, who might want to read it and what it might look like. Certain misgivings began to arise when it was realised that I had no fixed idea about the answers to these issues.

After a discussion session the class had decided that this would be a publication primarily for themselves and their parents after

which, if it turned out well, we might consider a wider circulation. The publication would contain various sections such as information about Rushall School, how the laptops were used as a natural part of their day-to-day curriculum work, some drawings about laptops and some examples of their work. They were also interested in using their laptops to interview parents, brothers and sisters, other children, teachers and each other.

My aim was to show the children how their work could be communicated to a larger computer and desk-top published within one day. That day was to be two weeks from the discussion day!

Two weeks later I returned with my colleague Angela Burge who offered to help me with the layout and editing of the publication. The children had provided printouts of all their work and a selection of cartoons. We set up the editing area and produced rough paste-up sheets of the four pages (Figure 1).

We used my Apple Mac as the host machine for the work. The children then brought up their laptops, connected them to the Mac and uploaded their writing which was then saved. Drawings were scanned in using a hand scanner and saved.

I laid out the page design the children had decided upon and started to place their work in the agreed positions. Because Angela had already read the children's writing and suggested changes, the main part of the editing had been done before the work was transferred to the Mac.





**Figure 1** *Laying down the rough paste-up.*

As each page was nearly finished, it was pinned up on the editing board and we listened to the comments about possible improvements or alterations.

Unfortunately we had only finished two pages completely by the end of the school day with the other two pages in a very rough state. The two teachers then helped with detailed editing and looked out for obvious spelling mistakes, layout problems and inconsistencies. By 5.00 pm we had a nearly finished publication which I took home and fiddled with to achieve

the publication you see here.

Several schools in Wiltshire are considering the use of newsletters, written and produced by children, as a means of keeping the local population in touch with events happening in the school. The above experience shows that if schools use relatively cheap keyboards for the children to produce articles for such publications, they can then desk-top publish the finished product on the larger, more sophisticated computers over a reasonable period of time.



**Figure 2** *Making corrections on the laptop.*



**Figure 3** *Checking the final printout.*



# LAPTOPS AT RUSHALL SCHOOL

"Using my laptop makes me feel like a real writer!"

## About the School

Rushall School is a small school in the countryside with a river near the bottom of the playing field. We have three classrooms and an office. There are sixty-four pupils in our school. The head is very nice and she likes telling lots of jokes while reading stories. We have two other teachers called Mrs. Fawcett and Mrs. Ballentine. We have a music teacher called Adrian. We have Mrs. Cook who is our secretary and comes in on Fridays and Mondays. Mrs. Fawcett is very nice and she teaches the middle class. She also teaches the girls' netball. Mrs. Ballentine teaches the infants. She is also very nice. It is a Church of England school. We have Reverend Chitham who comes in occasionally and his wife also comes in because she is a child psychologist and she wants to see how we learn. We go to church every term. Father Don comes in and does an assembly on Mondays. We have researched some history about our school. There was a school next door where Mrs. Spreadbury lives now, but it burnt down. The school was built in 1874. There were no games at all and the children worked all day. They worked from 9am to 3pm. The boys got caned straight across the knuckles for doing wrong.



Gemma Brown Year 6

We like to help with all kinds of things because we enjoy it. We think we are a different school because we have laptops and we do lots of different things. Princess Anne came to visit our school when people had just moved into the houses opposite us. She had tea here and then talked to a few people and left in her Bentley.

We go on exciting adventure trips to help us with our topics. We go to Oxenwood every four years and stay there for a week and we learn about the village. We have a barbeque and do really exciting things. We also do some charity fund raising every year. We have raised money for Doctor Barnardos and we have also done a tiring fun run to raise money for Great Ormond Street Hospital.

Every Thursday we do sport. We normally do football and netball in the winter and in the summer we do rounders and speed cricket. We also have a sports day. There is a big and a little cup for the people who run the best. We take part in an Area Sports Day where we race against seven other schools in our catchment area. We do a lot of plays as well. We have our Christmas play which we all join in. Then we have the adults' one which the P.T.F.A. do and our Headteacher organises. Alison Abbott Year 6 and Gemma Brown Year 5

## Us As Writers

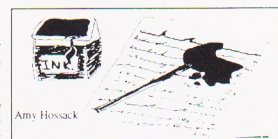
In Rushall school the top class and the middle class have the excitement of using the new portable wordprocessors. We can write longer stories with the laptops because it is quicker. We feel that we enjoy using the laptops. We have many projects in our school and we write using our laptops. We like writing with them because it's fun to have them but mainly because it makes our work easier. We have written some Victorian stories which are quite hard because we had to research all about them. We also did some Saxon stories which we then made into a Saxons drama day.

Lucy and I enjoy writing because it's always exciting and I like researching to find out what things are really like, then typing it up so I can show all my knowledge. Lucy likes writing stories best because she likes inventing really interesting characters.

We also write poems, reports on books, science work, like the things we did on making paper, assemblies and records of things happening like the new houses being built. We also wrote about our feelings about the changes in the view and also when Princess Anne came to our school. Lucy thinks she is a good writer if her work looks nice and she likes it to have lots of interesting bits and she likes to use lots of good descriptive words.

I think I'm best at writing when I know quite a lot about it and then I start to get this feeling that makes you glow.

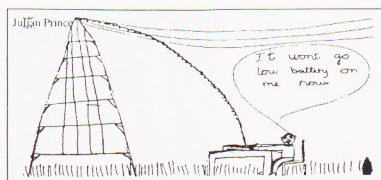
By Amy Hossack Year 6 and Lucy Holden Year 5



Amy Hossack

## Getting a lap top

I am writing this on a portable word processor. I didn't have one of these at my old school. I really like using it. It helps me with my spellings. I am glad I have it because it will help me to get a good job when I grow up. Paper can get lost and also get dirty but with a laptop you can keep your work on files. You can use a laptop anywhere and at anytime unlike a computer that you can't carry around. A laptop is quick and as soon as you press the keys the writing comes up so you get your work done more quickly than using paper and pencil. By Lennie Patel Year 3



## Paper Making.

The pupils of Rushall School did a short topic on paper. We thought it would be a good idea to do experiments with different kinds of sawdust. We also had different items to help the sawdust pulp like sugar, coke, lemonade, soda, horse dung, water and vinegar. Then we all wrote a report and drew pictures and put them all together in a book. Every week we had to come back to see how the experiment was getting on. We found that the soda was the best chemical to make pulp.

One Friday a kind lady brought us a book on how to recycle your own paper. We thought it would be a good idea to recycle paper and we would be doing a bit for the environment. We used old newspapers which were no longer wanted by anyone. We also used water and different food colouring to make the paper go different colours.

We tore the newspaper up into little pieces the size of your finger nail, and slowly dropped them into an orange plastic bucket and poured water into the bucket as explained in the book. We then had to make sure it was mixed thoroughly. We found a bright orange blanket and cut it into squares for soaking up the water. Some of the class brought in plastic frames. They used them to make the shape of the paper. They put them on top of the blanket and poured the pulp into the frame. They then pulled the frame away but the shape of the frame was still on the blanket. But they had to wait for it to go dry and hard. They waited for a long week to see what would happen. When a week had gone they discovered that it had worked.

They then typed a detailed report on their laptops about the paper they had recycled. They were glad they had their laptops so they wouldn't have to do pages of editing about their paper making. Instead they only had to do one session of cutting and pasting. They found it was easier than writing with pen and paper.

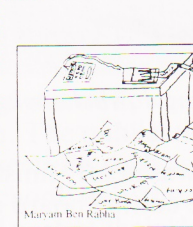
By Crisp Papp and Christopher Norman Year 6

## Crafts

Two multi-skilled R.A.F. wives share their wonderful skills with the pupils at Rushall School.

Every Tuesday, Mrs. Smith a tall, fair haired mother of two comes in. Every Tuesday and Friday Mrs. Clifford, a tall ginger haired lady, comes to the school. Together Mrs. Smith and Mrs. Clifford help the pupils to create masterpieces out of ordinary school materials. These materials are paints, paper, charcoal, plasticine and other interesting things. Their talented skills help the children to create wonderful collages, clay figures and colourful Victorian samplers as well as other exciting things. The teachers are comical and chatter with the children which creates a friendly atmosphere. They also help with drama days and Mrs. Clifford helps with teaching recorders to the top class on Tuesdays. Everyone enjoys crafts because it is a big change from the usual Maths and Language. Mrs. Clifford is talented and nice and chatty especially to Samantha as she shares the same horse interests but the samples we do with Mrs. Smith are so nice we wouldn't choose a favourite teacher out of the two.

Adam Ben Rabha and Samantha Rose Year 6



Maryam Ben Rabha

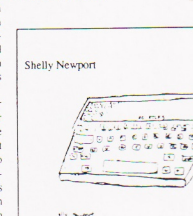
## Fantastic Fun Run

It was the middle of July 1988 and the excited children of Rushall got ready to start a fun run to raise money for Great Ormond Street Hospital. We got into lines on the playing field and went, class by class, running round the pitch. Mrs. Gale handed out the drinks. As we went round we were handed straws by the mums so we would know how many laps we had completed when we finished. Only a couple of people fell ill at the end. We each got certificates with how many laps we did and our names on them. The highest number of laps that anyone did was 86. We raised £1400. We have also taken part in many other charities because we like helping other people. For example:-

Children's Society Smile Canal Walk £1200  
Dr. Barnardos Bean Growing £570  
Save the Children Somalia Appeal  
Collection of Spences £400  
Romanian Appeal Bring & Buy £350

Most people liked the fun run and the bean growing best. We nearly always end up with over £400 each year for charity. This makes us feel proud of ourselves.

Kurt Hornbom Year 6  
Darren Carter Year 5



Shelly Newport

## My Laptop

When I was at Rushall School we were given a laptop. I enjoyed my laptop a lot. When I wanted to write I went to my laptop and wrote. I did not stay at Rushall for long. I went to a boarding school and I now miss it. It is not the same as my dad's computer which is bigger. I felt confident when I was with the laptop. I was very well quite good at typing. My spelling got better and I am now much faster with writing which helps my grades at school. My work got much better and I can still write easily on the laptop.

Laura Smith (Lower Juniors, 1991-2)

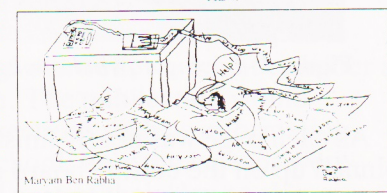
## McDonalds Mayhem

McDonalds mayhem is definitely not what Mr. Hope wants in the peaceful village of Oxenwood!!! On Monday 6th April 1992 we arrived in Oxenwood. We were warmly greeted by the cheerful warden. Mr. Hope clearly explained the rules. "We all share this building together, so everybody does their bit. I do not want any McDonalds mayhem. Chips squashed on the table, tomato ketchup all over the floor and the odd nugget here and there!" We decided it would be best to stick to the rules so that we could enjoy a week of pleasure in the beautiful countryside.

Mr. Hope led us to the small and interesting school room, where we found our places and started to type up our diaries on our laptops. We knew we were extremely lucky to have the wordprocessors, so we used them carefully and packed them away after each session. The diaries were very basic and simple with a date and the occasion of the day underneath. We knew about different ways of presenting the work and they are all easy to learn. People who were more experienced in using laptops helped others with their work. We all know the laptops helped a great deal during our visit to Oxenwood and we are grateful for the diaries so we can remember the wonderful time we had there.

Over the next five days we did many exciting activities but our favourites were a Problem Solving Course and the trip to Fosbury Camp. The Problem Solving Course contained lots of challenging tasks. It was set up in the extensive grounds of the school. The children were in fairly small groups. They took it in turns on each obstacle. Fosbury Camp was a large area of woodland just outside Oxenwood. The main attraction of Fosbury Camp was the deep ditch which was once a Celtic barrier.

Helen Wallace Year 6 and Kirsty Rose Year 4



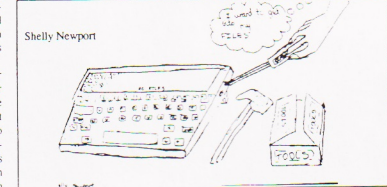
Maryam Ben Rabha

## Learning Music with Adrian.

We are going to tell you about what we get up to in music, on Thursdays with Adrian. Adrian is tall and friendly with a beard and glasses. He wears a coloured waistcoat with shiny threads, big brown boots and a snake-skin jacket. He is an amazing musician and he likes to play songs with a rock beat in them. He likes the music to go quicker and softer and louder again. He likes to make up songs and he made up a musical play for the school to act out to entertain the parents at Christmas.

On Thursdays the whole school meets up for hymn practice with Adrian. We sing some songs in harmony which are quiet and soft, spirituals and some in different languages. My favourite is Siya Humba which is an African one we sing with tambourines, shakers and a tappy beat on the keyboard. Adrian likes to play the guitar and keyboard. Also I like a Spanish one called Santo because it is nice and quiet and gentle. I think that the school does some songs better than others. The best one is Spirit which has a chorus that gets louder and it has a gentle rhythm. The instruments we use are claves, drums, tambours, shakers and bongos and we play these to rhythms on the keyboards. Every Tuesday and Thursday groups of us have recorder lessons then we play them in church, at concerts and at school.

David Cook and Simon Perry Year 5



Shelly Newport

## Endpiece

As editors, we would like to thank everyone at Rushall School for making this publication possible. The children wrote their articles on Tandy WP2 word processors and the text was imported into a larger computer with Desk Top Publishing features while the children watched. There are still articles which could not be fitted in this edition but will appear in the final report of the Laptop Project in the Autumn Term 1993.

Reg Eyre and Angela Burge  
IT Advisory Support Teachers

## Pantos in Action!

Every year all of the pupils at Rushall School entertain the parents with a play. Mrs. Harris, the head teacher, usually writes the amusing and enjoyable scripts but in 1992 Mr. Adrian Brooks wrote a musical for us to act. The play usually lasts 45 minutes. It takes place inside the school in the Top Class where the stage blocks are set up by the older children. When we perform the play Adrian plays the music. The plays are usually comedies. For the pantomimes our parents make costumes for us but the teachers tell the children what they have to wear.

When the stage is up we have to have school dinners in the Middle Class, and those who have packed lunch have to have it in the Infants Class, so it is really chaotic the first few weeks of the pantomime.

We usually learn and perform it brilliantly. One year when we were doing the final song Matthew Spanewick fell off the stage but everyone thought it was meant to happen so they all laughed. The play that I liked best was the one with all the frogs in it. Some of us had to exterminate them all.

Rebecca Lang Year 6



## Seven Schools Drama Day

Seven excited schools including Rushall took part in a Saxon drama day last summer.

We did the drama day because that was our topic. As the day got near we were doing a lot of research on the Saxons. We used the laptops to do a daily timetable about our village. They also helped us to record our information and details of our families.

We used the word processors to sort out the people and jobs that we might have had in Saxon Rushall. We drew a map of the village, chose our names and got into family groups. Each family had jobs and some were the leaders of the village. Seb was the Thane and Peter was the Earl. My family were slaves.

At school we made the costumes out of old bits of leather from our homes.

On the day, we met on Woodborough Hill, where a lady met us. She was really Mrs. Harris but she acted the part so well that I didn't know it was her. We took a Saxon type of packed lunch. We did lots of fun things like cooking sweet biscuits and acting out a trial. One school acted as Vikings and we made a truce. There were lots of exciting stalls and some beautiful horses. It was very hilly. It was very hot and dusty and sweaty and we had to walk there along the dusty track that leads up to Woodborough Hill. It was the best day ever and I like looking at the book we made about it because it reminds me of everything.

Mark Bezzant Year 5

Henry Bailey Year 6



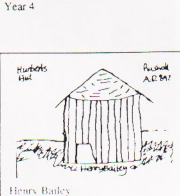
Mark Bezzant

## Poem

cat  
a big cat  
a big fat cat  
a very small cat  
a skinny cat  
a tom cat

a nice dog  
a very big dog  
a very small dog  
a large hairy dog  
a long sausage dog

By Graeme Jarman Year 4



Henry Bailey

## Laptops

Fabulous,  
Furious,  
Fast!

Problems you think  
But with a laptop  
They're all sorted out.

Brilliant,  
Beautiful,  
Best!

So don't mess about,  
Just give us a shout  
And  
You  
can have a laptop  
To put to the test  
Just like the rest

By Shelly Newport Year 4

## Emergency Service

Six young pupils from Rushall School are learning safety and how to treat wounds in their first aid lessons after school on Tuesdays. The lessons last for three quarters of an hour and a policeman called P.C. Williams teaches the children with the help of the middle class teacher, Mrs. Fawcett.

During the lessons we learn to make up our own mini first aid kit with things from our own home. We also learn how to bandage up wounds and have learnt how to put people in the recovery position and how to treat burns. We have also used a Resuscite-Annie which is a big doll which shows lights when you are doing resuscitation properly. We practise bandaging on each other and are longing for an accident so that we can try things out.

We have been doing this for about five months and are going to take a test soon. We all really enjoy it. Katie and Gemma want to be doctors so they hope this course will help them.

Katie Sands Year 5

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Figure 4 The finished publication (reduced from four A4 pages).



# The Pocketbook Project

**Anne Jones**

*Aldryngton Primary School*

I had two enjoyable terms working (part time) for the Berkshire IT Team and it was at the Christmas lunch that the adviser presented me with a package.

'Your Christmas present,' she said.

As I opened the parcel I was intrigued to discover that it contained an Acorn Pocket Book Computer. Chris then went on to explain that she would like me to trial these computers with my class and write an article about my experiences for *MICRO-SCOPE*.

I spent some time during the Christmas holiday familiarising myself with the Pocket Book and all its applications and functions, and trying to decide how best to use it with my class of Year 5 and 6 children.

From the beginning I was impressed with the computer and felt confident that the children would benefit from using it.

For those of you who have not yet seen a Pocket Book, it is a black, flattish, rectangular unit, slightly larger than a pocket diary and fits easily into a (largish) handbag but less easily into a pocket! The power comes from two AA batteries which are supposed to give 80 hours of use and there is a lithium battery which acts as a back up.

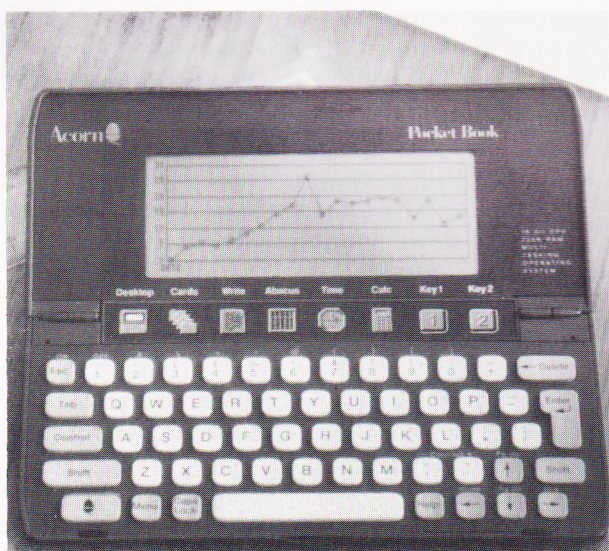
It opens up to reveal a keyboard and a screen, both of which are, of course, small. Adults have complained that the keyboard is too small and they found it difficult to type. Since I am still

only a two-finger typist I don't find this a problem and nor do the children; in fact some prefer it to the main computer.

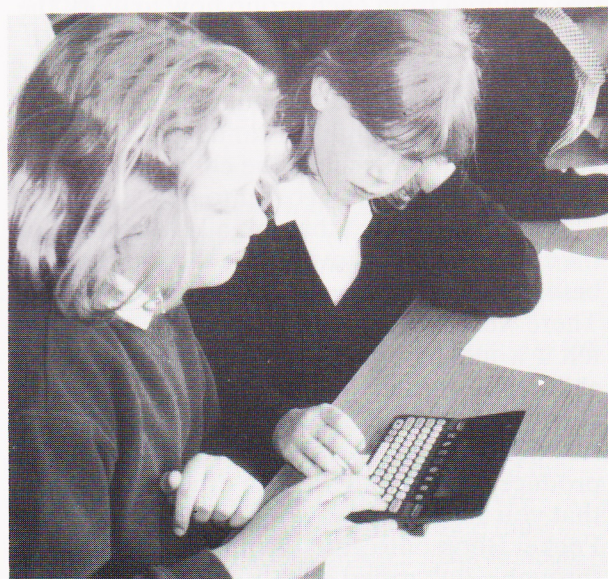


**Figure 2** *Two fingers? No problem!*

The screen display is very clear and the children have found no problems in working in twos and even threes at times.



**Figure 1** *The Acorn Pocket Book.*



**Figure 3** *Cooperating as a pair.*



The applications available are:

1. CARDS – a card index which is set up for names and addresses but the headings can be changed
2. WRITE – a word processor
3. ABACUS – a spreadsheet
4. TIME – a clock and alarm
5. CALC – a calculator
6. SPELL – a dictionary and spell check

These applications are reached via the computer's desk top. There is a menu button on the keyboard which allows you to operate different functions both on the desk top and on each application.

Other members of the BIT Team were 'playing' with the Pocket Books over Christmas so it took me a couple of weeks to retrieve them all. I had been promised seven and I proposed to have one for each of the six working groups in my class, plus one for me (was this my answer to all those last minute work sheets?).

When I talked to my class at the beginning of term there was no doubt about the interest generated and they looked forward each week to me arriving back from my days with the BIT team to see if I had managed to acquire any more.

Each group was to be responsible for their own Pocket Book; the computers were numbered and the children took it in turns to put them away in the cupboard so that they could be locked up each night.

I decided to introduce them to the children in a limited way as I was interested to see how quickly and easily they would discover the functions for themselves. I began by showing two children from each group how to work the alarm and the wordprocessor and how to save their work, and then sent them off to show the others in their group. As you can imagine, during the cold months of January it became very difficult to persuade the children to leave the Pocket Books and go out to play!

I had also decided that initially I would allow the children time to investigate the Pocket Book before embarking on structured activities. There were two reasons for this: one was that I felt it would be a good opportunity for all children, especially the less 'computer confident', to have a chance to explore the functions without the pressure of having to produce a piece of work; the other reason was that you are able to down-load files from the Pocket Book onto any Archimedes machine through a link called an A-Link, which we did not have at the beginning of term and so could not retrieve anything we had done. As things

transpired this was to be the most problematical area of the whole trial. When the A-Link did arrive we discovered that the software would only work on RISC OS 3.1 which I did not have. My machines were finally upgraded at Easter (which inevitably caused problems!). We did however borrow an Acorn A4 Laptop for a few days so were able to retrieve valuable files. We also now have a printer link which allows you to print straight from the Pocket Book to a variety of printers.

During the investigation period I was pleased with how quickly the children found their way around the applications. They were very impressed with the Calculator which is much better than a conventional one because the calculations stay on the screen and can be edited. The Time application was very popular and I knew the children were on their way when after about a week of having all the Pocket Books six alarms sounded simultaneously at 1.30 pm right in the middle of silent reading! They have also found the spell check invaluable (so have I!). You can access it straight from the desk top to check individual words, as well as using it with the wordprocessor.

We have, as would be expected, found the wordprocessor the most useful application and during the second half of the Spring term the children produced their own newspapers. Articles were written on the Pocket Book and then transferred to the A3000 and dropped into *Junior Impression* where the children were able to organise the text to produce pages of their newspapers.

We used *Abacus*, the spreadsheet, which is the most difficult of the applications for primary children to use, to gather information about the weather conditions during March. We later downloaded these into *Pipedream* and managed to produce graphs that showed the temperature changes during the month. We found this quite difficult but probably because I am not very familiar with *Pipedream*.

At the BETT exhibition in January I went to the Acorn stand to enquire about the Pocket Books and to look at the 'A-Link' (which hadn't arrived at the time). They were very helpful and in turn were interested to hear that a primary school was about to use the Pocket Book. As a result we became part of the pilot scheme that they were running and were visited each term so that they could evaluate how well the machines were handled by younger children. It was valuable to have this kind of contact with Acorn as they were able to help and advise.



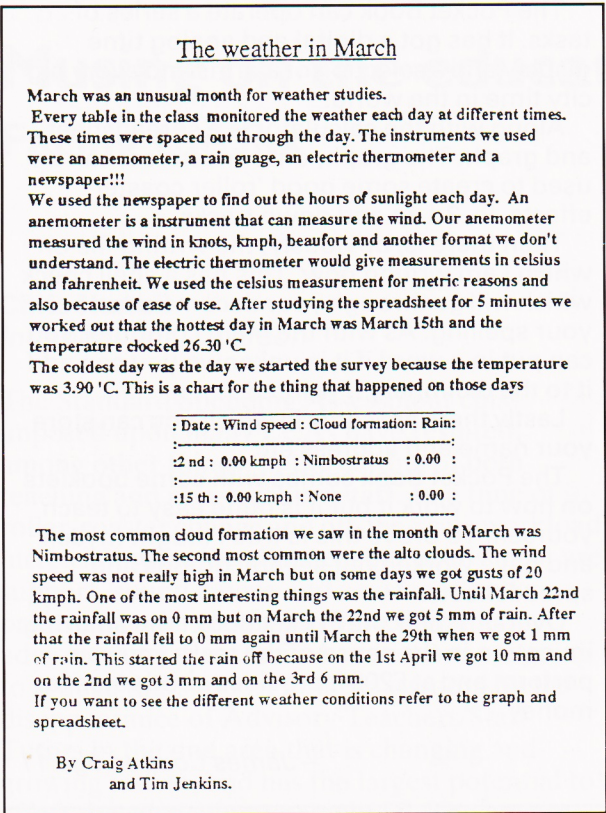


Figure 4 Write-up about information gathered on Weather in March.

| DATE     | TEMPERATURE | WIND SPEED (KM/H) | CLOUD         | RAINFALL (MM) | HOURS OF SUN |
|----------|-------------|-------------------|---------------|---------------|--------------|
| MARCH 2  | 3.90        | 0.00              | NIMBOSTRATUS  | 0.00          | 0.00         |
| MARCH 3  | 5.10        | 1.00              | NIMBOSTRATUS  | 0.00          | 0.20         |
| MARCH 4  | 4.40        | 1.00              | NIMBOSTRATUS  | 0.00          | 0.00         |
| MARCH 5  | 6.30        | 0.00              | NIMBOSTRATUS  | 0.00          | 0.00         |
| MARCH 8  | 15.30       | 0.00              | ALTO-CUMULUS  | 0.00          | 9.60         |
| MARCH 9  | 14.40       | 1.00              | NONE          | 0.00          | 9.70         |
| MARCH 10 | 10.10       | 0.00              | NIMBOSTRATUS  | 0.00          | 0.20         |
| MARCH 11 | 22.00       | 0.00              | STRATOCUMULUS | 0.00          | 0.00         |
| MARCH 12 | 21.00       | 0.00              | ALTO-STRATUS  | 0.00          | 6.00         |
| MARCH 15 | 26.30       | 0.00              | NONE          | 0.00          | 8.00         |
| MARCH 16 | 20.20       | 6.00              | NIMBOSTRATUS  | 0.00          | 0.10         |
| MARCH 17 | 17.00       | 15.00             | CIRRUS        | 0.00          | 3.10         |
| MARCH 18 | 17.00       | 20.00             | STRATOCUMULUS | 0.00          | 0.00         |
| MARCH 19 | 19.20       | 0.00              | ALTO-CUMULUS  | 0.00          | 0.00         |
| MARCH 22 | 14.20       | 0.00              | NIMBOSTRATUS  | 5.00          | 3.90         |
| MARCH 23 | 15.40       | 2.00              | ALTO-CUMULUS  | 0.00          | 7.90         |
| MARCH 24 | 20.00       | 0.00              | ALTO-CUMULUS  | 0.00          | 0.00         |
| MARCH 25 | 11.40       | 0.00              | CUMULUS       | 0.00          | 0.00         |
| MARCH 26 | 13.00       | 1.00              | STRATOCUMULUS | 0.00          | 5.50         |
| MARCH 27 | 10.00       | 12.00             | NONE          | 0.00          | 3.90         |
| MARCH 28 | 12.60       | 1.00              | NIMBOSTRATUS  | 0.00          | 0.00         |
| MARCH 29 | 10.00       | 0.00              | NIMBOSTRATUS  | 1.00          | 0.00         |
| APRIL 1  | 5.00        | 0.00              | NIMBOSTRATUS  | 10.00         | 0.00         |
| APRIL 2  | 18.90       | 0.00              | NONE          | 3.00          | 0.00         |
| APRIL 3  | 10.60       | 0.00              | NIMBOSTRATUS  | 6.00          | 0.00         |

Figure 5 The spreadsheet from the Pocket Book has been downloaded into Pipedream.

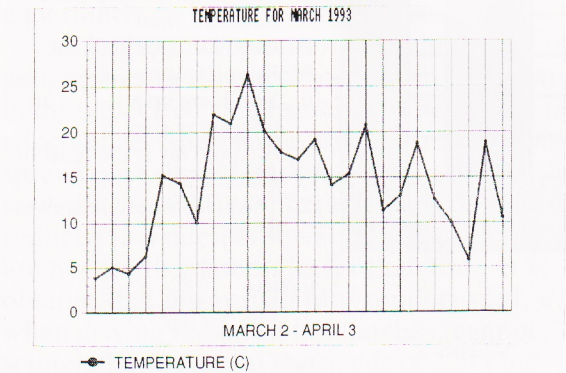


Figure 6 Graph from Pipedream.

During the very busy Summer term we continued to use the Pocket Books primarily for wordprocessing, but the children did spend some time investigating the various functions of the spreadsheet and were able to process their own data and make graphs.

We have all enjoyed working with these machines and I have no doubt of the value of having them in the classroom. With a class of 34 children and one desk-top computer it has always been very difficult to ensure that each child has sufficient time to reach their full potential and the required levels of achievement. The Pocket Book allows more children access to computer time. They are a new development and I am sure they will improve and develop to suit the needs of younger children in the future.

The final piece of writing we did was the children's feelings about the Pocket Books, and below are some of their comments which I have included in this article mainly because they knew I had to write it and will be thrilled to see some of their names in print!

I really like the Pocket Book. It has a great memory and is very easy to use. . . . Mrs Jones gets them from a lady called Mrs Robson, she comes into our class sometimes and we show her the things we have done. . . . I'd give the Acorn Pocket Book 9/10 but I reckon it should have windows.

— James Ewers Y6

. . . It has lots of functions, Like spell check and time, (They both work fine) There's also writing, And cards, To keep guard Of names and addresses, It works fine, (I wish it was mine).

— Victoria Passmore Y6

. . . I think the pocket books are excellent and I might be getting one for my birthday!! I keep one on my desk all the time ready to use it for something or other, in this case the speller was very useful for this report!

— Lucy Craig Y6

We had great fun with the pocket book. We found the spell check really useful especially for Writers Workshop and English. We found the calculator got used a bit during Maths. We enjoyed winding Mrs Jones by putting the alarm on during reading time! . . . The Abacus proved to be useful when we did our Weather project. We have enjoyed using the Pocket Book and it will be sad to say goodbye to it.

— Louise Atkinson and Carys Bates Y6



The pocket book has become very useful to us, it is also great fun. . . . The spell check has helped us with writing stories. . . . They are really good because you can take them everywhere. It has been really good having them in the class and we really have enjoyed using them.

— Joanne Clunie and Jenny Gordon Y5

The last comment, in its entirety, is from James who became the class expert, and I am sure it will not surprise you to know that by the end of the year his knowledge of the Pocket Book and its functions was superior to mine – thank goodness he has moved on and I, hopefully, will have time to improve my skills during the summer holiday.

### Verdict on the Pocket Book

In January of this year Mrs Jones' class of Aldryngton Primary School were lent 7 Acorn Pocket Books, 16 bit mini computers measuring about 16 and a half centimetres (6 and a half inches) long. It weighs around 8 oz. The screen has a breadth of 9 centimetres, 4 millimetres and a length of 3 centimetres, 8 millimetres.

The Pocket Book can operate a series of tasks. It has got a digital and analog time display and a selection of alarms and every big city time in the world.

Along with the calculator is a spreadsheet and graph. The graph, once mastered, can be used to create some good 'roller coaster' effects, ie, 3d up and down tracks.

Then there is, obviously, the writing file on which I am writing now. This has a spell check which will go through your document to check your spelling. As with the main computer you can put in a word if it is unknown you can add it to the dictionary if wanted.

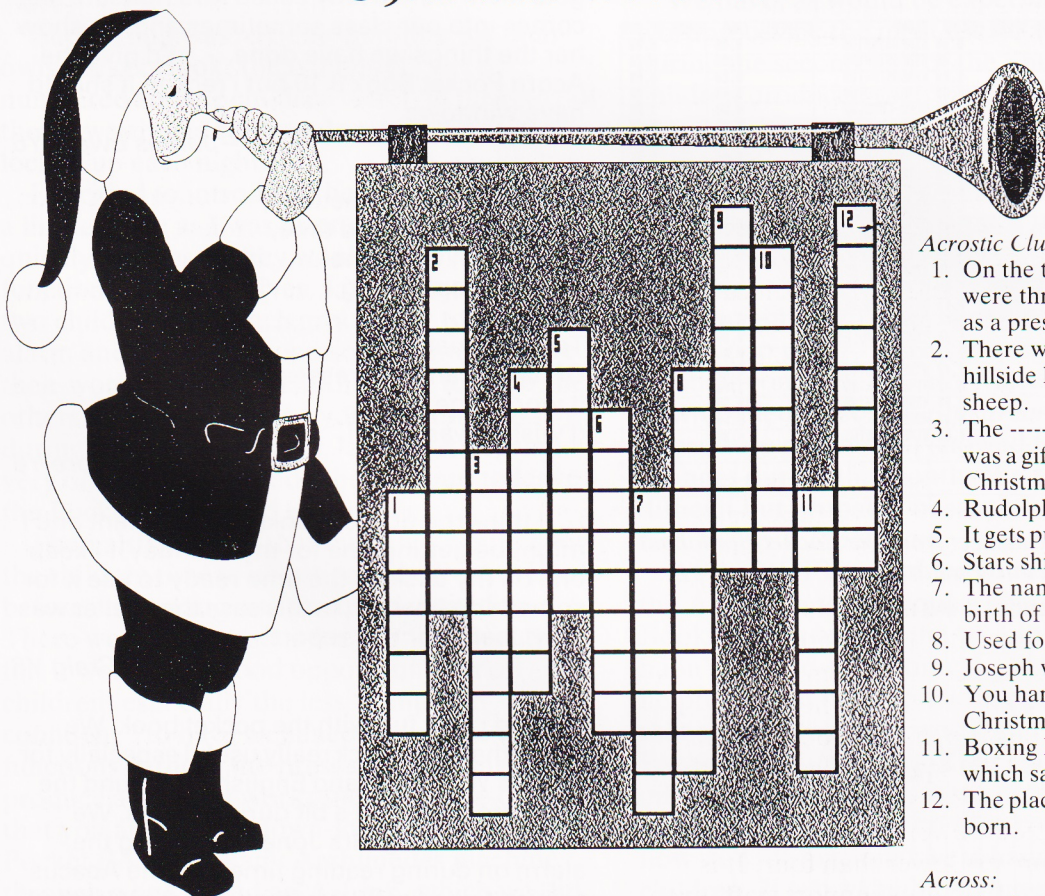
Lastly there are cards in which you can store your name and address etc.

The Pocket Book comes with some booklets on how to work it but it is quite easy to teach yourself. To prove this is true I taught myself and have worked out several graphs and spreadsheets.

Overall, I think the Pocket Book is an amazing invention in the sense of the tasks you can perform and at £200 it provides good value for money.

— James Cooper, age 11

## Christmas crossword



### Across:

1. On the third day there were three ----- hens sent as a present.
2. There were ----- on the hillside looking after their sheep.
3. The ----- in a pear tree was a gift on the first day of Christmas.
4. Rudolph was one.
5. It gets pulled at Christmas.
6. Stars shine -----.
7. The name we give to the birth of Christ.
8. Used for opening nuts.
9. Joseph was a -----.
10. You hang up a ----- on Christmas Eve.
11. Boxing Day is the feast of which saint?
12. The place where Jesus was born.

### Across:

1. The keyword is . . .

Answers are on page 26.

Compiled by Des Thomas



# Musing on the educational IT scene (7)

## Facing the fax

**Chris Hurrell**

*Independent IT person*

The Standard Spending Assessment cuts imposed upon many LEAs have resulted, among other things, in the cutting of both teaching and non-teaching staff. In a time of roller-coaster change and off-the-scale workload increases, what the class teacher needs most are support, sound advice and assistance and a presence in the classroom of well-trained advisory staff. But the SSA reductions are going to reduce this support in the classroom by the disappearance of Advisory Teachers/Staff Tutors in the one area that is changing and growing fastest, and has the largest potential to affect the curriculum: namely IT. The government, having encouraged the IT genie out of the bottle, cannot put it back. IT has to have a special place in the curriculum because it is part of everything.

I believe that whatever support is given, it is best given at the point of need, ie in the school. Whole school support and development can best take place with all the staff involved, including those indispensable wonders, the voluntary parent helpers. From this type of support a sense of shared involvement and enthusiasm can be engendered and the IT equipment can then fulfil its educational potential. This is in contrast to the growing practice of bringing together 25 or so individuals from all over the LEA for a day's training. Following the training they return to their schools and try to spread the word on whatever subject the course may have been about. Result – the cascade system doesn't cascade; it barely reaches a trickle. No shared experience, no shared enthusiasms.

The large County authorities with their geographically distant schools seem to fare worst in the service cutting exercises. The county in which I live, Shropshire, has 300 odd schools spread over some 1300 square miles currently served by four IT support staff, but this is to be reduced to a number lower than four, and there are not many numbers lower than four. It is obvious that fewer than four support staff, even when driving the latest hot hatches, cannot scratch the surface of the needs of 300-plus

schools, and do all the other work needed to run a high quality IT centre. Something has to give, and sadly it seems to be the support.

So what happens? The service is run down the massive potential for education is lost. Without the support, this wonderful flower that is IT is going to be reduced to an endangered species kept alive and flourishing by the dedicated, committed visionary, while in other areas it may become a stunted runt of a plant with no joy in it at all.

But it is not all doom and gloom, far from it. I have seen some wonderful work going on in a very rural part of my county where a small primary school was connected to the local playgroup by fax machines, courtesy of the BT Gemini Project\*. Wonderful language opportunities were created and used and excellent links forged with the playgroup to help with smooth transition from one to the other. Also outside agencies became involved by playing the role of the 'Fax Fairy' and sending information, stories and messages to the children. The best thing about fax is that the children can be in control, with messages in their own handwriting and their own drawings being sent and received by themselves. Any age of child can press the buttons for the fax number. Fax is getting nearer to the concept that the use of IT should be transparent to the user; it should not be obtrusive, problematic or obvious. The focus should be on the task and not on the tool. Fax gets nearer to this than other forms of electronic communication.

Fax is fun; fax is fast; fax is feasible.

And finally – 'Keep the faith, brothers and sisters, IT's worth it.'

*The views and opinions expressed in this article are personal and in no way represent the views and opinions of MAPE or any other organisation or authority.*

*\*Editor's comment: I would be interested to hear from any schools involved in the BT Gemini Project.*



## MAPE matters

### Chairperson's news

It's time to think about MAPE Conference 1994, which will be held in Nottingham from 25–27 March. It will be an interesting and exciting event. If you're a MAPE Conference regular, I'm sure you will be looking forward to the next one; if you haven't been to a MAPE Conference before, then please consider coming. You'll be among friends and will quickly feel the benefits of belonging to such a welcoming organisation as MAPE. You should find a Conference booklet in this issue, so send off your application now!

Earlier this year MAPE joined NCET's Link-IT scheme. This aims to provide a network through which IT support agencies can collaborate on projects and events and offer a comprehensive programme of support for everyone involved in IT and education. LINK-IT members also receive regular updates about NCET's activities and publications. In future issues of *MICRO-SCOPE*, this information will be summarised for MAPE members.

We were all saddened to hear of the death of Eileen Jaques. She was an active member of MAPE for a number of years. She was a hardworking regional representative for the London and South East region and her commitment to IT and education

was clear to everyone; she was a generous person, always ready to support those who needed help. Eileen was an active member of MAPE's National Council where her contribution was always welcome. We extend our sympathy to her family.

*Senga Whiteman*

### MAPE AGM

The MAPE AGM will be held during the annual Conference at Nottingham University, on Saturday 26 March 1994, at 5.30 pm.

### MAPE subscriptions

**POSTCODES:** We are now using *Mailsort* to send out *MICRO-SCOPE*, but to do this effectively, we need your correct postcode. It would be most helpful if you would check that the postcode on the envelope in which this issue was delivered, or any other correspondence you have had from me, is correct. If your postcode is incorrect, or missing, please let me know either by letter or phone (0248 602655).

*Val Siviter*

## MICRO-SCOPE matters

### Articles needed!

looking forward looking forward looking forward looking forward looking

### 10 years on . . .

*MICRO-SCOPE* has so far been a fairly low key affair. MAPE members deserve a thicker and better quality magazine, one which can rival *Educational Computing*. That means more features, a greater variety of contributions, software reviews, advice, letters, advertising revenue, and inevitably a full-time editorial staff.'

***MICRO-SCOPE 10, Autumn 1983***

looking forward looking forward looking forward looking forward looking

In the ten years since that was written, many things have changed; although we have so far resisted seeking advertising revenue and the full-time editorial staff has never materialised, we are trying constantly to expand the variety of contributions, reviews, advice and letters in *MICRO-SCOPE* and to give you a thicker and better quality magazine. However, we rely on *you* to supply the bulk of the content and so this is another appeal for your contributions. I would be interested to hear from anyone who feels they could contribute an article (short, medium or long!) on any aspect of IT in education, a review of software or hardware, or would like to invite correspondence from other members on any IT-related issue.



Coming in the next issue . . .

- 'Focus on multimedia' moves to Australia;
- comprehensive case study from Sheffield about IT, topic work and assessment in the infant classroom;
- an invitation to contribute to MAPE's newly structured working groups.

*Chris Robson*

### World Conference Computers in Education 1995

This Conference takes place every five years; the sixth conference will be held at the International Convention Centre in Birmingham, from 23–28 July 1995. MAPE is planning an active role in this conference, so for further information about how you can take part, please turn to the back cover.

## Regional news

### Chiltern

Thanks to Sheila Wilson, we had a very successful session on Concept Keyboard Overlays on 19 June. Her hard work and novel ways of using overlays proved useful and interesting to all the 30 members attending.

After several 'lean' years, we now have a nucleus of members who come regularly to our termly events and so we are able to plan with confidence. Our next event is 'Making the most of your black and white printer', at 8.30 pm on Saturday 16 October at Hertfordshire University (Wall Hall site). Come along and listen to Eve Porteous talking about 'printing with a difference'. I would be delighted to hear from anyone in the Chiltern region who would like to suggest a session which would interest you or a group of schools.

*Betty Lumley*

### Eire

East Cork Teachers' Computer Group meet every second Wednesday night at Scoil Chlochar Mhuire, Carrigtwohill. An extensive autumn programme has been drawn up, including a study of 'The Writing Process' and software demonstrations. Further details from Luke McAuliffe.

CESI (Computer Education Society of Ireland) is holding its conference on St Patrick's College of Education, Drumcondra, Dublin, on 5 and 6 November 1993. Information from the Secretary, NITEC, Dublin City University.

*Luke McAuliffe*

### Northern

Our Conference has been rearranged for

Saturday 6 November. It will have a Christmas theme, looking at Christmas programs and activities based on the MAPE *Christmas Special*. Plans are in the pipeline for the spring and summer terms and members will receive details of these when they are finalised. In the meantime, please contact me if you are interested in attending or helping with any events in the Northern region.

*Elizabeth Freeman*

### Overseas region

Our next issue will feature an article about Multi media from Mick Kermin, Australia, and I would be interested to hear from any members overseas about their IT activities in school. On the back cover, Roger Keeling gives some preliminary information about the World Conference Computers in Education which comes to Birmingham in 1995. If any overseas members are thinking of coming to the Conference and want help or advice, or any 'local' information in advance of the event, do please get in touch.

*Chris Robson*

### Scotland

The Annual Scottish Conference will be held on Saturday 27 November. Entitled 'IT's in the Ayr', it will take place at the Craigie Campus, Ayr. Workshops will cover many of the 5–14 strands at all levels, including special needs. There are many local MAPE groups throughout the Scottish region, providing a variety of activities. Contact your regional representatives for further information.



**South Eastern**

See Chairperson's news.

**South West**

*Making Databases* at 4.30 on Wednesday 20 October at Eden Park Junior School, Brixham. The entry charge of £4.00 to MAPE members, £5.00 non-members, includes a data disc for A3000 or BBC.

*Beyond Primary Art*: how to import pictures from a scanner or digital camera – bring your own picture! 3 November at 4.30 at the University of Exeter School of Education. The entry charge of £4.00 to MAPE members, £5.00 non-members, includes a disc of images of Exeter.

*Talking PenDown* and *Optima* will look at how to create your own talking books using these two packages. This session is on Wednesday 26 January at the University of Exeter School of Education, and entry is free.

*An Introduction to Hard Discs* will look at hard disc machines in the classroom, and cover issues such as installing software, creating and deleting directories and protection from viruses. This session is on Wednesday 23 February at the University of Exeter School of Education; entry charge of £4.00 to MAPE members, £5.00 non-members, includes a disc of public domain software.

Two MAPE events have been organised in Cornwall, to give you a chance to look at inexpensive portable computers (from around £100 each). This is your chance to kit out the class with a set of 10 machines for the cost of one standard PC workstation! Two first schools in Devon are currently conducting an evaluation of the use of these machines and the interim results, plus video of the machines in use in the classroom, will be presented on 2 November in the Truro area, and 24 November in east Cornwall. For further details, contact Peter Crumpler on 0726 75751 or Chris Taylor, 0392 264989.

**West Midlands**

Our next event is a day course entitled 'Models, Movement and Micros', at Newman College on Saturday 27 November. For further details, contact Mick Harwood on 021 449 8224, or Yvonne Peers on 021 476 1181.

**MAPE software news**

After an unavoidable delay, the *MAPE Archimedes Clip Art Collection* will be available from 15 November. This pack, comprising three discs of Archimedes clip art and a catalogue of currently available clip art, is categorised by topic and costs just £6.00 from MAPE Software. For full details of other MAPE software, see page 32 of *MICRO-SCOPE 39* or contact MAPE Software, Newman College, Bartley Green, Birmingham B32 3NT.

Coming early in 1994, the next MAPE Software Special!

**Christmas wordsearch**

S  
Z S  
O G L  
K J W P  
A D F K S  
J O S E P H  
B N Y T D Z F  
Y S U I N N E L  
R R I T C S E S V  
A W D E C X R A R K  
M Y U P R R T M A Q H  
K B E L L S A X T U K Q  
J N G J Q L C S Q O Y  
F C A R D S K J H E  
H C H I M N E Y K  
W H W Z I T R R  
R P T H X A U  
T L E R K T  
T O L R X  
P D A N  
E U Z  
P R  
Y

(Answers on page 29.)

**Answers to Christmas Crossword on page 21**

Keyword: FRANKINCENSE

Answers:

- |              |               |
|--------------|---------------|
| 1. FRENCH    | 7. NATIVITY   |
| 2. SHEPHERDS | 8. NUTCRACKER |
| 3. PARTRIDGE | 9. CARPENTER  |
| 4. REINDEER  | 10. STOCKING  |
| 5. CRACKER   | 11. STEPHEN   |
| 6. BRIGHTLY  | 12. BETHLEHEM |



# More about Conference '93

## Excavating in York

**Brian Jackson**

*Abbey Lane Primary School, Sheffield*

Where else would you go in North Yorkshire for Roman excavations but to York? That's exactly where I went at the beginning of April. Without getting wet or muddy, or having to bend my back, I found out about the Romans in Britain. How? At the 1993 MAPE Conference, of course. Where else can you be transported around the world and find out what is happening in primary education as far as IT is concerned? (And *that* reminds me of the Saturday after-dinner speaker – more of that later perhaps.) As usual, there was the heady mixture of meeting others with the same interests as yourself, valuable and interesting presentations, and fantastic food.

A MAPE Conference is a special occasion when the best of organisation combines with informative themes, and for the newcomer this is enhanced by a friendly welcome and useful advice. This year the 'Red Shirts' (Figure 1) ensured that all of these were excellent. In fact, the red shirts were definitely collectors' items – even the extra, extra large ones! Thanks to every single one of them for a great weekend. For the returning delegates, there is the sense of returning to good ideas after the isolation of one's own situation, the chance of renewing old acquaintances, and the opportunity for recharging the batteries. Everyone benefits from airing views, hearing opinions and seeing what's new on the scene.



**Figure 1** *Our thanks to the 'Red Shirts'.*



**Figure 2** *'The Spirit of IT Past'.*

The theme of digging up the past obviously wasn't far from Senga Whiteman's mind in her welcoming speech: the memory of Roger Keeling sitting there as 'the spirit of IT past' will stay in my mind for a long time. However, what Senga had to say was very important when you consider how far things have progressed in the world of computers in such a short time. 'Are we matching up to the challenge?' was perhaps the underlying question. This then started off the weekend in fine style. One thing about the MAPE conferences is that although you know that you cannot be everywhere all the time, you

do know that whatever you see and learn will be of use to you. That is why a short piece like this cannot give a full account of the conference.

This year we saw a new option of half-day themes. This is the one I took up and the one that allowed me to do my bit of excavating. On the Saturday morning I took a look at some software aimed at helping children with learning difficulties. Even though the machines were not the same as those that I use in school, there was much food for thought. The afternoon saw me 'taking a brief journey back in time' to do my excavating in a Roman villa and



trying out a simulation from Sherston Software for the Archimedes. I feel that the half-day themes give a useful and excellent overview to a variety of techniques, programmes and ideas, whereas the full day themes obviously give an in-depth treatment to a topic. Both of them have their benefits which are difficult to compare. Our Saturday evening after-dinner speaker, Dr Jon Coupland, gave us a short but terrific discourse on 'The Mystique of the Micro'. It was Dr Coupland who opened our eyes to how many people are involved in IT. Apparently, he told us, miners do IT underground, and farmers do IT in wellingtons! He was followed by what initially seemed as though it was going to be carpet laying as we were to be entertained by Shagpile, but they turned out to be a very versatile group.

On Sunday there were another dozen presentations to choose from ranging from organisational and planning themes to making music or moving a screen-beastie around. The problem

here was that there never is enough time to get round them all, but again whatever your choice, you know that it will be good. Chris Schenk, the final Keynote Speaker, gave us an excellent snapshot of his time in America. This speech again gave us a lot to think about, but also reminded us all that we *are* achieving a great deal.

In conclusion, I think the message of this year's conference could be summed up as reminding us to be forward looking in what we do in IT, because the future is upon us and is changing fast, but that we should not forget the old and tested as we can find much of extremely good value there. Not only that, many of us, due to the constraints laid upon us, still have to deal almost exclusively with the older systems. If I was selling the MAPE conferences, to use Dr Coupland's metaphor again, I think I would say, 'Try IT, you might like IT, so why not do IT?' I'm sold on the conferences and IT and I hope to be there again next year at Nottingham. Why don't you try IT?

## MAPE Conference '93

### Trevor Wright

#### Friday

##### ESP – *Compose World* Presentation

After arriving somewhat later than planned I had already missed the pre-dinner presentations, but after dinner I took in the commercial presentation by ESP with *Compose World*. This is a piece of software based loosely on *Compose*, that excellent piece of music software for the original BBC machines; even the tree, teapot etc were still there! To say I was impressed by this piece of software would be an understatement. It was wonderful! Unfortunately it was only for the Archimedes series of machines. I say unfortunately because I am a Nimbus user and they have no plans to do a Nimbus version, but I shall keep nattering away at them until they do. If you have an Archimedes go out and get it! I'm seriously considering buying an Arc just to use this program!

#### Saturday

I had chosen to attend two half-day themes on the Saturday and the first of these was the Newspaper Day organised by Brian Robinson of

the Cleveland Education Computing Centre. DTP has always been my greatest interest on the micro even though it may not be my best! We had to produce in a few hours an historical newspaper for Tuesday 25th September, 1066. We were given a sheet telling us the articles that were needed and had to organise ourselves into groups to produce them. We did not use a DTP package but a wordprocessor with the margins set to a narrow width, and then the paper cutter and the Pritt stick – a real cut and paste job, with the help of a backing sheet laid out in columns. We also had selection of resources to use. To say we had a few hours to do this would not be very accurate. I think it was about an hour and half! Somehow we managed it with very little organisation on our part – there just wasn't time.

The reason for the lack of time was because Brian had been talking about the organisation of newspaper days both locally and nationally. We had also taken time out to look at a scanner and an ion camera, both of which in their own ways allowed you to get pictures into your newspaper. I had used a scanner before but the ion camera had to be seen to be believed. It is in fact a still video camera which records your pictures onto a



# MAPE Conference '94

Nottingham University

25–27 March

For further information, see the leaflet enclosed with this issue of *MICRO-SCOPE*, or contact:

MAPE Conference '94, College House Junior School,  
Cator Lane, Chilwell, Nottingham NG9 4BB.  
Tel: 0602 257458

small computer disc. Once on the disc you can then import a picture into a graphics package and do all sorts of wonderful things with it. The camera can lie!

In the afternoon I was having a Brief Journey Back in Time with the Barnet IT team of Chris May and Sharon Harrison. We were asked to suspend reality, which you must do as well for a few lines, and become Derwent Class of '93 with Miss Prendergast our teacher. She asked us if we had seen a strange visitor around the school. We were suggesting people to her when in walked this tall man wearing armour, a short skirt, a helmet and sandals. I think he was a Roman soldier! He gave Miss Prendergast a wooden chest. When he had gone we talked about our visitor and then opened the box. Inside was a map of a Roman villa which he had to explore using a computer and concept keyboard.

But back to reality. The purpose of the session was to see how IT could support a subject-focused topic; in this case, as you might have gathered, a topic on the Romans. We used software which has been around a long time and which I found was still useful! We were using *Touch Explorer*, *Developing Tray*, Logo (floor and screen turtle), *Noticeboard*, *Mosaic* and a wordprocessor.

The session was excellent. I came away with a superb booklet about the session which could be used and adapted for other topics, other computers and other software.

## Solution to Christmas wordsearch on page 26

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    . .
  . . .
. . . .
. . . . .
J O S E P H
. N . . . . .
Y . U I N N E .
R . . T . . E S .
A . . . C . R A R .
M . . . . R T M A . .
. B E L L S A X T . . .
. . . . . C S . . Y
. C A R D S K . . E
. C H I M N E Y K
. H . . . . R R
. P . . . . U
. L . . . . T
. O . . .
. D . .
. U .
. R
.

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## Software reviews

### Title: **Viewpoints**

Publisher: Sherston Software, Swan Barton,  
Sherston, Malmesbury, Wilts SN16 0LM  
Micro: Archimedes  
Price: £39.95

*Viewpoints* is a very good program and great fun for children of all ages.

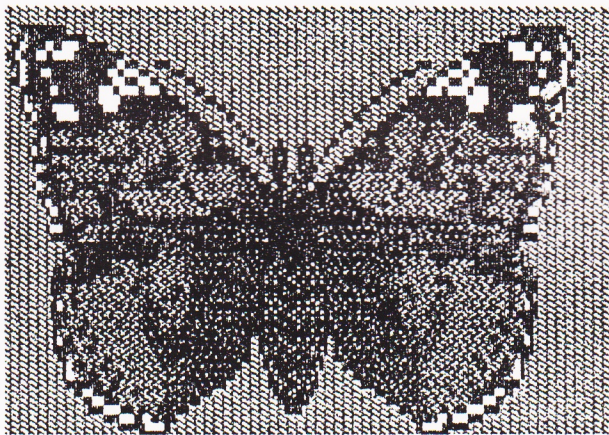
The program teaches children about all the different kinds of animals and also the program helps children who are not sure on computing.

*Viewpoints* is a very colourful program with many different kinds of pictures. The program is very easy to use.

*Viewpoints* takes you around the English countryside, where you take photographs of the animals. Some of the investigation places are in the woods, on the shore, by the river and in the garden.

There is also a Database to store all the photographs and the information that you have collected. Details about the size and the habitats of an animal are put onto pages called 'cards'. You can then print the 'cards' out.

Sarah King



*Viewpoints* is a very good program. It enables you to learn about British wildlife. Extra information is printed on sheets that come with the *Viewpoints* package.

In *Viewpoints* you have to find wildlife and take pictures. These are incorporated onto pages which are called cards. The cards you place into the database and then you write the information on them. Then you can print out your cards in colour.

You do use Maths in this program, especially angles, measurement and algebra, and there is plenty of English too. *Viewpoints* is quite educational, but it is frustrating at times. There are about fifty different animals to choose from.

You start your database with eight cards with animals on them. There is information showing how

big they are and where you would find them. The cards that you add will not have the information, so you will have to add that.

This is a brilliant game, made by Sherston Software.

John Wolfenden

### Title: **Compose World**

Publisher: ESP, Holly Tree Cottage, Main Street,  
Strelley Village, Nottingham NG8 6PD.  
Tel. 0602 295019

Micro: Archimedes

Price: approx. £48 + VAT

I first came across *Compose World* at the MAPE Conference in York. Andy Pierson gave a fine demonstration of its capabilities and I found myself sitting on the back row of the lecture room along with several other men of a certain age mumbling 'I want one!'

Why is it that non-musical, male teachers, over the age of 35, seem to think that somewhere out there is a computer program that is going to turn them into creative musicians?

That question apart, *Compose World* is a really good piece of software that will enable many of our children to experiment with musical ideas and eventually compose pieces of their own.

The basic principle is that used by the old 'Compose' program. A set of pictures on the screen is used to denote a set of musical phrases. These phrases can then be arranged in any sequence chosen by the child. Phrases can be repeated or totally ignored and the finished piece of music saved as a composition in its own right. Some groups of phrases actually make up a well known tune such as the teddy bear's picnic. In that case there will be a correct answer that the child is searching for. Other groups have no set answer and the child is invited to create their own composition from the building blocks available.

Once familiar with this part of the program one can move on to develop one's own pictures and musical phrases. This is simplicity itself and I must confess to many hours sat at my own A4000 working on my own creative masterpieces. Children also find this part of the program very easy to handle and my own children aged 7 and 10 have had great fun making their own tune files.

In school I would recommend the use of headphones as the whole class will soon be offering advice to any would-be composers. *Compose World* comes with tune files and instrument voices while further tune files and instruments are available from the publishers. It is an excellent package and one that I have no hesitation in recommending.

Graham Keeling



**Title: The Worst Witch**

Publisher: Sherston Software

Swan Barton, Sherston, Malmesbury,  
Wilts SN16 0LM

Micros: BBC, Archimedes, Nimbus

Price: £26.95

*The Worst Witch* is a computer program and it is an adventure game. The whole idea of it is you have to save the Young Witches Academy from a group of evil witches. The story is about a girl called Mildred who just can't do anything right. There is another girl named Ethel who thinks she is the best at everything. The story has been written by Jill Murphy, and was then put into a computer program. I have completed the computer program using writing and graphics. I couldn't have done it without knowing the story. You have to mix potions, find trapdoors, look in rooms and collect things that you might need later. You have to fly to the forest and turn the evil witches to snails. The computer program isn't the same as the audio cassette or the video because the cassette and video are brought to life.

Kamaira Jones  
Blakenhale Junior School

*The Worst Witch* has one aim to the game, it is to save the school. The computer screen is split into two parts, the bottom half is text, the top half is graphics. I liked the game because it was not too easy and not too hard. The only thing that I didn't like was there were too many rooms. One of the parts in the game is where you have to find two pieces of a broken broom. One part is in a box in a trap door and the other is some place else. You have to mend the broom but there is a certain time when you have to do that. When I first played it, I thought it would be easy but it's not so I like that. I myself have watched the video, read the book and listened to the tape. The game is not the best. The best is the video then the tape then the game and lastly the book.

Rachel Christie  
Blakenhale Junior School

**Picture Builder: RM Nimbus version**

The name *Picture Builder* may already be familiar to users of BBC, Archimedes and 480Z computers. The program now available for the Nimbus is an enhanced version which is very easy to use and is mouse driven.

As its name implies, *Picture Builder* enables pictures and patterns to be built up using five regular, two-dimensional shapes. Drawing choices are made by clicking a mouse button on icons. These appear along the top of the screen leaving a large area for the picture.

After a shape is chosen it can be manipulated in a variety of ways. It can be enlarged or reduced in two dimensions or just one. This operation is very easy for young children. To enlarge a shape, repeat clicks are made on the appropriate icon until the shape is the required size. A shape can be rotated, flipped upside down or left-right. It can be dragged to a new position then coloured before it is fixed in place. Clicking the right button cancels the chosen shape, but this has to be done before it is fixed.

The shapes chosen have a fill option, but there is no general fill for the rest of the screen so if a background is required it must be done by stretching, overlapping and filling shapes, before other shapes, for the foreground, are placed on top. As with many other drawing programs, part(s) of the screen or picture can be copied or moved to a new place. Labels can be added to pictures and the chosen text can be enlarged before fixing it in its place. Once a picture is complete, pressing the F1 key takes you to the Option menu where you can save, print or wipe your picture. Pictures can be printed across the paper or down it, which gives a slightly larger size.

The program is very easy to use as most options are chosen by pointing and clicking with the mouse and can be operated by children who have not yet developed any reading skills.

After a 20-minute session two children from a reception class were able to make a simple picture of a house with windows, door, chimney and a flower in the garden. They used only two of the shapes, square and circle, but enjoyed stretching and shrinking then filling them with different colours.

After a little help in choosing printing options, they were fairly excited watching their picture being printed, though they did say it took quite a long time. When asked if they had used the computer before, Rea (age 5), said 'Yes, but this one is gooder!'

With a little initial help, children at nursery or reception level should manage to have fun building pictures or making many different patterns from just a few basic shapes, and developing their mathematical language at the same time.

Jean Bahal  
Curriculum Support, ILECC

This review first appeared in *Share It*, ILECC's magazine, and is reprinted with permission of the editor.

**Software information**

The Nimbus version of *Picture Builder* will be available FREE to MAPE members early in 1994. Further information about this is included separately with this issue. The Archimedes version is available from Newman Software.



# ClarisWorks templates for primary years

**Jack Kenny**  
Herts IT Team

Just suppose you are a teacher who is not yet happy with computers. Just suppose you have made your first tentative steps towards the machines. Maybe you have written a few things and printed them out but cannot see clearly how you are going to integrate spreadsheets, graphics and databases into your work to develop the IT Capability of your pupils. Now suppose someone comes along with ways of opening up the possibilities, giving glimpses into the learning opportunities that information technology can provide. *ClarisWorks Templates for Primary Years* claims to do just that with both Apple and PC machines.

Claris is part of the Apple corporation but they also produce software for the PC range. The integrated package *ClarisWorks*, which is the basis of the templates, has spreadsheet, database, graphics and word processor knitted seamlessly together so that all the functions are available all the time. *ClarisWorks Templates for Primary Years* is an important development for many reasons. It is an initiative from one of the major software companies working in conjunction with education. TAG Developments, the Technology Educational Research Unit (TERU) at Goldsmiths College and teachers from Lewisham LEA have all been involved. The templates are inexpensive and in harmony with current primary work.

Fiona Bratt and Lynne Heavens from Lewisham LEA and Tom Baird at Goldsmiths have developed the 30 templates in the initial release. At the back of the templates is *ClarisWorks*. Completely unlike any other integrated package I have used, the links between the spreadsheet, the graphics package, the database and the word processor are invisible; all the functions are available all the time. The templates make use of this integration and overlay the package.

One of the templates, *Graph Maker*, lies over the spreadsheet. When you go into it you will find a graph and data about rainfall over the period of a week. As soon as you alter the figures the graph changes immediately. You can easily change the graph into another subject, say the hours of sunshined. Pupils can see clearly the link between the numbers and the graphical representation. You can change from bar graph to pie chart, and place them side by side. The child using the package does not need to know that they are using a spreadsheet. All that they will know is that they are using a computer to solve or investigate or manipulate. There are templates for investigating fractions, percentages, graphs, life cycles, science, weather, history, area and surveys.

Subject areas covered include Maths, English,

Science, Geography, History. Claris promise some secondary templates in the near future.

You will not like all the templates that are provided. You will quarrel violently with some of the ideas that are offered, scoff at others. What you will be able to see are ways of making them better or how to develop new ideas.

What will you need to run all this? If you have a PC it will have to be at least a 386 with *Windows*. If you have a Macintosh you will need system software 6.0.5 or later or System 7. On both machines you will need to have *ClarisWorks* installed.

This is a refreshing approach. Each template is an idea that can be used in the classroom as it stands but is also capable of development by the teacher who cares to do so. It is a pointer to a way that the template can be used to increase the scope of learning with generic software tools. For the busy teacher here are ways of getting away from the headache of the empty screen. For the imaginative teacher here are ways of sparking off new ideas. For the beginner here is a way of getting to the power of the computer without being overwhelmed by the complexities.

This inexpensive resource, using an integrated package to create integrated learning, is one of the most exciting developments that I have encountered this year. It is completely in harmony with the ways that we have developed IT in this country. The concept should change the way that IT is approached in many classrooms and could make a measurable difference to the amount of in-service training a teacher needs before they can start to use IT in a useful way in the classroom.

The templates are available for £19.95 excluding VAT, post and packing, from:

TAG Developments  
19 High Street,  
Gravesend,  
Kent DA11 0BA  
Freephone: 0800 591262

Information on *ClarisWorks* is available from:

Frontline Distribution,  
Intec-1,  
Wade Road,  
Basingstoke,  
Hampshire RG24 0NE  
Tel. 0256 463344

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West Glamorgan

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#### *SOUTH WEST*

Chris Taylor, St Luke's College,  
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Birmingham, Coventry, Dudley,  
Hereford/ Worcester, Sandwell,  
Shropshire, Solihull, Staffordshire,  
Walsall, Warwickshire, Wolverhampton

#### **Code 02**

#### *YORKSHIRE & HUMBERSIDE*

To be appointed

#### *LEAs*

Humberside, North Yorkshire,  
South Yorkshire, West Yorkshire

#### **Code 06**

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# MICROSCOPE

## World Conference Computers in Education 1995

### Your chance to take part!

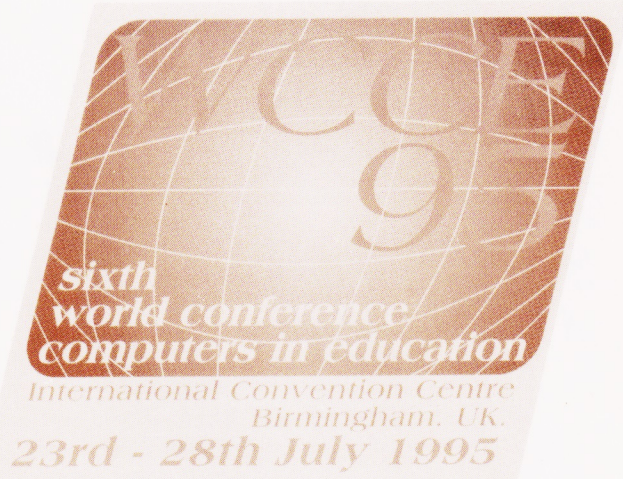
This conference will take place at the Birmingham International Convention Centre from 23rd to 28th July 1995. This conference takes place only once every five years. There will be more than 3000 participants following a range of themes.

The conference will represent the best practice internationally with regard to the application of computers to the education of children and adults. The UK has a worldwide reputation for promoting the use of computers in the education of young children and MAPE is very keen to ensure that developments in this area are given a high profile; through the presentation of papers, workshops etc. One of the conference themes of particular interest to MAPE members is 'Learner centred learning and lessons from primary education'.

The World Conference is run on fairly formal lines; papers are submitted and read by a group of referees, and, if approved, these papers are then presented at the conference. MAPE recognises that this might seem a daunting proposition although we believe that our members have a lot to be proud of in their uses of IT in education. We would like our members to participate fully in the conference and in order to support you we are offering a one day work-shop which will focus on writing papers for WCCE '95.

If you are interested in talking to conference delegates about your work, which can be formal research but which can also focus on aspects of your everyday practice, please write to me to indicate your interest. This will not imply any binding commitment on your behalf; you will be sent further information and can decide whether or not you wish to continue. (It is possible for papers to be produced collaboratively, so if you and a colleague wish to present a paper, that will be possible.) Please write or telephone to indicate your interest before 10th December 1993.

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