

# MICRO- Newsletter

## MAPE Conference report I: Dundee, 21-23 March 1997

Theresa Mungall

The dilemma of planning workshops and presentations to match with teachers' developmental and curricular needs in diverse situations was quite a daunting task. The Scottish Committee began this by first considering our own members and then taking advice from our colleagues south of the border and across the Irish Sea to select, what we believe was, a wide range of options. In doing so, many of the workshops were kept small, allowing for some individual tuition, differentiation and clever-clogs (nerds), who could go on and do their own thing. Who else but MAPE could supply such value for money?

There were workshops for beginners which, as ever, were well attended, and also ones covering applications such as *Claris Slideshow*, *Hyperstudio* and *WinLogo*. These gave delegates the opportunity to learn and use the programs as well as discover how they could be used effectively in the classroom. Other workshops, for the more experienced, were based on familiar programs but in greater depth and showed how they could be adapted and individualised. These included creating concept keyboard overlays, making *My World* screens and creating comic strips (since



*'Now everybody stand in a circle and hold hands.'*

they were in Dundee, famous for Dennis the Menace and Desperate Dan!). Some had a more thematic slant, e.g. *Roamer*, *The Fragile Island* and *Lego Control*, while others related to specific aspects of the curriculum such as special needs, modern languages, etc. A look at future developments (in the not too distant future!) included opportunities to find out about the internet in primary schools and how it has been used in rural parts of Scotland.



The two themes, judging by responses and smiling faces, were very popular. Brian Richardson and Ian Whittington can always be relied upon to stimulate, motivate and generate enjoyment while the setting of the historic ship Discovery provided the ideal opportunity to develop and share ideas and skills over a longer period.

The presentations were interesting and informative. Again they were varied with some relating to practice and innovations in Scotland, while others

were provided by some of the commercial companies taking part in the exhibition. Troubleshooting from Luke was found to be extremely useful (many MAPE schools will be shortly transforming their old Arcs and rebuilding that old dinosaur – the BBC!).

Many thanks to all our members whose 'brave hearts' brought them North, and we look forward to seeing you next year in Durham.

---

## MAPE Conference report 2: IT's a voyage of discovery

**Rhona Dick**

As delegates arrived at the West Park Centre, Dundee on Friday afternoon they were given a warm welcome by the Scottish committee members, and assured that coffee would be available when they were ready. After a gruelling journey, firstly by train then by taxi, I was ready for coffee!

The evening began with the choice between two presentations. I went to one by Brian Richardson which centred around some of the new developments from Cambridgeshire Software House. Following a Civic Reception, generously provided by Dundee City Council, the conference was opened by Councillor John Kemp. Anne Wilson, Dundee's Education Director and a long-time friend of MAPE, gave the Welcome Address. The Keynote Speaker was Tricia Watterson, a Senior Lecturer in the Faculty of Education at Strathclyde University. Tricia let us accompany her on her own educational 'Voyage of Discovery'. I could not have been alone in recalling many of the technological innovations that Tricia embraced in her teaching career. What an inspirational (and highly entertaining) address! Tricia summed up the philosophy of primary education thus: 'As primary teachers we are more concerned with *how* children learn, and less with *what* they learn, just as we are more concerned with *how* we teach rather than *what* we teach.'

The rest of the evening was, for some of us, a quiet affair, a chance to meet new people or renew old friendships.

On Saturday morning a bus took delegates to the Northern College, on the Eastern side of Dundee. A variety of presentations and workshops had been organised to cater for all interests and needs. The AGM was held at Northern College at the end of the Saturday programme.

The evening entertainment took place at the West Park Centre. It began with 'A Taste of Scotland', a choice of Scottish drinks, malt whisky, liqueur, or Irn Bru, and concluded traditionally, many hours later, with 'Auld Lang Syne'. Between times there was a delicious dinner, an amusing after dinner speech by Gordon Small, (though I felt a little sorry for the sassenach delegates who struggled to comprehend some of the vernacular!) and a Ceilidh. Memories of Scottish Country Dancing flooded back from my school days as the 'Gay Gordons' gave way to 'Strip the Willow' and many more. From my chair I had a wonderful opportunity to observe which other delegates had been born, like me, with two left feet!

I believe some members, having got the taste for adventure, decided to sample the night life that Dundee had to offer.

After breakfast on Sunday morning, at which Tricia was just as amusing as she had been on Friday evening, the concluding sessions at Northern College were relatively subdued. There were fewer delegates, and fewer workshops. Many folk had to leave during the course of the morning to travel home.

Roger Keeling conducted the plenary session, during which he thanked and congratulated the Conference committee. Roger comes to Scotland every other year orienteering, but 'the geography of this building almost defeated me' he said. I know just what he meant!

So came to an end the MAPE '97 Conference, an enjoyable and informative weekend. I have already made a note of the dates of next year's conference in my diary.



# MAPE Annual General Meeting

The MAPE AGM was held at Northern College, Dundee, at 5.30pm on Saturday 22nd March 1997.

## Minutes

The minutes of the previous AGM were agreed.

## The Chairperson's report

The MAPE web site is now well established and has been accessed 6755 times although few people have joined through it.

There was a MAPE stand at both the BETT show and the Resource exhibition. Both events generated a number of new members. MAPE's presence was felt to be worthwhile in terms of establishing or maintaining contacts and disseminating information of MAPE activities.

The declining membership gives cause for concern.

During the year MAPE has been involved in several national consultation processes. These included meeting with the Stevenson committee on IT in education, responding to the NCET paper on local IT support groups, and participating in the consultation process regarding the NCET strategic plan.

MAPE continues to play a part in the IT associations liaison group.

At a recent executive committee meeting some time was given to analysing the strengths, weaknesses, threats and opportunities for MAPE. A number of conclusions were drawn from this exercise:

1. Alliances between MAPE and other IT associations were thought to be increasingly important, and that such alliances might be developed to include other educational (non IT) organisations.
2. There is a need to improve links with schools, and in particular identify and target schools which could benefit from the expertise of MAPE.
3. MAPE should seek ways of involving school governors in issues concerning the use of IT in education.

4. MAPE should seek cost-effective ways of involving more practitioners, particularly those at an early stage of their career, in its activities.
5. MAPE has attempted to gather information and opinions from members before, but returns have not been high. The executive committee felt that there is a need for some form of market research which includes, but goes beyond, the current membership.
6. Further analysis and consideration of issues is required.

## Treasurer's Report

In the absence of the treasurer the chairperson reported that the financial situation is good at present.

## Regional Activities Group – Ruth Allanach

Ruth reported that many regions were finding it difficult to attract members to events.

## Publications Group – Rhona Dick

The Early Years and Environmental Specials should be published soon, and an Information Handling Special is in preparation. *MICRO-SCOPE 50* will be published in the Autumn Term.

## Projects and Innovations Group – Roger Keeling

The number of entrants for the art competition was less than for the photo-cd competition. Plans for another competition are in hand.

## Marketing

In the absence of Heather Govier the chairperson reported that contacts had been established with various publications.

The meeting closed at 6.00 p.m.



## Chris Robson Memorial Prize

A couple of issues ago I announced the Chris Robson Memorial Annual Prize, which is awarded for the best piece of writing in *MICRO-SCOPE* reflecting good classroom practice using IT. I am pleased to announce that the first winner of the prize is Yvette Blake of St. Philip's Church and Community School, Westbrook, Warrington, for her article entitled 'I can do IT'. The article appeared in *MICRO-SCOPE* in Autumn 1995 and describes how Yvette decided to ensure that IT skills were developed by as many children in her class as possible through the production of 'I can . . .' sheets for the children to record their successes. The practical nature of this approach and its thorough treatment in the article make it worthwhile reading for any teacher wishing to chart class progress with IT. The £250 prize was presented to Yvette at the recent MAPE Conference at Northern College, Dundee. The photograph shows a delighted Yvette receiving the cheque. If you would like to appear in a future photograph receiving a £250 cheque you can only get there by writing for *MICRO-SCOPE*!

Les Watson  
MAPE Chair

Dear M.A.P.E.

I am writing to thank you for the award you presented to me at the conference. It was a great surprise but also a very welcome one, as I was then able to take advantage of all the tempting software on offer, by the different exhibitors! My pen and cheque book were red hot!

The award is also special for me as I knew Chris and in fact the 'I Can Books' that I wrote about in my article, were inspired as a result of listening to Chris at another M.A.P.E. Conference. Giving her time and expertise to help others was typical of her and many of us have benefitted from her words of wisdom.

I am also delighted to tell you that in a recent Ofsted Inspection, I.T. was described as a 'strength' of the school. This was not because the school is full of the most up to date equipment but because we used all the resources we had - from PCs to BBCs, from old favourites like Picture Builder to new favourites such as Satcom, to their best advantage in supporting and driving the learning of our children. So I would like to take this opportunity to thank all M.A.P.E. members who have given up their time to organise conferences, develop software specials, put on workshops or share their practice by writing articles for *Microscope*. You have certainly influenced the use of I.T. in many schools and inspired teachers like me.

Thank you,

*Yvette Blake*



Yvette receiving her prize from Les Watson.



## Seen at Dundee

### Research Machine's *Detector*

Ruth Allanach demonstrated this new sensing program which uses *Excel*. No interface box is required, it simply plugs into the joystick port. It can also be used with a laptop, which means it can be used outside the classroom. The two jacks are clearly differentiated, red and blue, and it comes complete with light and temperature sensors. From *Starting Grid* the program can be accessed from all but the yellow level, which gives an idea of its simplicity. The display is clear and simple, and graphs of results can be printed or imported into a word processor, and naturally, the powerful features of *Excel* are also available. As with any piece of software there are a few improvements that could be made, but it's certainly worth considering as an introduction to sensing.

### The SCET Net Classroom Collection

This is a set of CD-Roms containing information downloaded from the WWW. It has been assembled into curriculum files that can be read off line. This 'virtual surfing' gives schools the opportunity to introduce their children to the resources available, while developing the skills necessary to take full advantage of the wealth of information on the Internet. Apart from the original collection covering a variety of topics, two new ones are now available, The Egyptians, and The Romans. These CD-Roms are priced at £10 each + VAT or £27.50 + VAT for the set of three.

Further information from Scottish Council for Educational Technology, 74 Victoria Crescent Road, Glasgow G12 9JN; Tel: 0141 337 5000; e-mail [enquiries@scet.org.uk](mailto:enquiries@scet.org.uk)

### eMate 300 Presentation by Xemplar

On the Saturday morning I got my hands on an e-Mate! I had heard of it at Resource, seen it at BETT, read about it on the Web and in TES. There it was, one of very few in this country (and just about to be released in America) being presented and made available to MAPE members at their conference in Dundee.

The e-Mate is a small portable computer developed by Apple for use in schools. Xemplar have brought it to the UK. On the outside it is smooth, rounded and robust, made of polypropylene, dark green in colour, about 30 cm. long, 1.8 kg, with a handle to carry it around. It has been accused of being a handbag!

Open it up and it can sit on the desk with a back-lit, gray-scale LCD screen which can display the full width of a page, a keyboard and a stylus instead of a mouse! This adult did not take too long in becoming accustomed to using a stylus instead of a mouse. The stylus is not attached to the computer but, if lost, a pencil or other pointer could be used. It can be set up to give each user their own work area. It can also be used 'sideways' like a book, the screen display reorientated to be read easily by a left- or right-handed person.

It has, amongst other applications, a word processor with spellchecker, a graphing calculator and a drawing package with most of the usual facilities. As yet there is no database, but other applications are being developed. It has an infrared port for transferring work from one e-mate to another and for sending work directly to a printer (only to printers with an infrared port to receive it!). There is also a port to enable printing via cable. Work can be transferred to stand-alone PCs and Macs (Xemplar are working on transferring to Acorn machines) to be edited and added to.

It can be expanded and has space for a modem card, hard disc card and upgrading everything. It has 3MB of RAM, two of which are 'flash memory'. This means that if it crashes all is not lost. It has a battery life of up to 24 hours before recharging. If you are interested in all the really technical specifications go to Xemplar's web page <http://www.xemplar.co.uk/> There is information in the News Section which has a link to the Apple eMate 300 page.

So it looks exciting and interesting but needs to be used effectively if it is to be worth buying rather than the other small portable machines already in many schools. During the Summer term 1997 some UK schools are trying out these little computers. It will be interesting to see the results. Perhaps if any MAPE members are involved in this they could let us all know how they get on.

Tricia Neal



### ***King Arthur* from Cambridgeshire Software House**

This latest product should be available by the time you read this. The story of its development from conception is fascinating. The resources which have been made available are breathtaking, including photos of some of the treasures in the Palace of Westminster.

There are several quests for the pupils to undertake across both Britain and France. Myths and legends abound, there is information about heraldry, a useful timeline, glossary, pictures and moving video.

I got really enthusiastic about this, and was ready to get my credit card out on the spot, until I discovered that it is available for Acorn users only at present.

### ***Cartoons* – Nina Fugaccia**

Knowing very little about the Archimedes, (I only ever use one at Conference), I imagined I would spend most of the session waiting for assistance. This was not the case, with the clear handouts and Nina's helpful suggestions, in no time every one was creating cartoons. My partner and I managed to import characters and attach speech bubbles with speech, the 'whizz kids' ungrouped and regrouped, flipped and transformed until the characters looked completely new. It was satisfying to produce a professional type comic strip; unfortunately we were not able to print our efforts (no printer driver) but perhaps that was just as well. We used the Royal Family and it could have proved libellous. Children would find this approach exciting; the technology was simple and would then be able to devote all their attention to the content and composition.

Another great idea from a MAPE Conference. Thanks Nina.

*Betty Lumley*

### ***Hyperstudio* on the Mac**

Jim Elder gave a useful and balanced introduction to this authoring program. He showed us a multimedia presentation made by some primary children after a residential course in the Cairngorms. Like many people I had got an evaluation version of the CD at BETT, but had never really been able to do much with it. After just an hour Tricia Neal and myself were thoroughly enjoying ourselves, and now feel confident enough to use the program (and Macs which were also new to us).

### **Logo Starting Points**

Roger Keeling was using *WinLogo*! This was my chance; I'd bought a copy from MAPE last year (I can never resist a bargain) and had not got to grips with it.

For some of the delegates who attended this workshop it was their first encounter with Logo; others were fairly familiar with the concept of turtle graphics. Roger led us through the basics and then distributed some tasks. It wasn't long before the screens were full of tessellating polygons and houses with, or without, correctly positioned roofs! Brains ached as geometry long forgotten had to be recalled. We didn't get onto the higher concepts, recursion and variables – next year perhaps.

### **Internet in the Primary Curriculum**

Peter Cowlshaw demonstrated some of the range of materials available to teachers on the Internet. delegates then had the opportunity to try for themselves. Some found pictures of the comet, Hale Bopp, others located pages devoted to history, the Tudors, or the Vikings. Peter also showed us how to copy small images. If this workshop lacked something it was more time. I could have surfed for hours!

---

## **From the Treasurer**

The subscriptions are currently set at £15 in the UK. Although this is still quite a small amount it should be remembered that those of you who are individual members are entitled to claim tax relief in the same way that you claim for your professional associations. It should be sufficient to quote our title and/or acronym but the MAPE reference for Income and Corporation Tax relief on the membership fee is T1644/23/1968/MT.

You can also pay your subscriptions by direct debit which saves time and effort all round, or use the new credit card facility at the membership office, telephone 01248 602655.

*Keith Whiting*



## Regional news

### Chiltern Region

Our session on 8 February when John Kenney demonstrated his *Alban Wood Logo* went very well, and all the participants went away fired with a new interest in Logo. After coffee every one beavered away at producing pictures and, as in the classroom, most problems were solved by joint efforts. This must surely be one of the advantages of using Logo, that it promotes co-operative learning and the sharing of expertise, and with John's program it's hassle free.

Our next event on 5 July will be run by Ros Chapman, an Advisory Teacher for Special Needs and IT, and is entitled 'Encouraging children to write creatively using a computer'.

Our termly events are friendly and informal; we hold them at: The Advisory Unit for Computers in Education, 126 Great North Road, Hatfield.

Why not come along and join us? The charge is £4 per person, or bring a friend and two get in for £5; three people pay only £6, more than that and we will negotiate on the day! Certificates of attendance will be available.

For further information on this event, or if you have a request for a specific topic to be covered at one of our termly meetings please ring me, Betty Lumley on 01923 823411.

*Betty Lumley*

### Northern Region 1995-1997

Things in the Northern region have been so busy that no one has had time to submit any reports! Apologies to our members but we have had three excellent regional conference days, all held at Newcastle. They were held on Saturdays and lasted all day.

The first, which covered a range of IT applications for First, Middle and Special schools, was attended by over 40 members, and was held at the University of Northumbria (NORIC that was). Some of the activities were Christmas based.

The next one was in April 1996. This was held at the same venue and focused on Measurement and Control. This was also well attended and we had great fun chasing Roamers and Pips, and using sensors for all sorts of things! Thanks go to Bill Gibbons for his help in running these days.

The venue for the third one-day conference, held

in October 1996, was Newcastle University. This was a Language and Literacy Day, and covered everything from talking word processors to talking books. Twenty members had great fun getting to grips with these. Many thanks to Steve Higgins at the university for help with the organisation.

Our committee is now in the throes of putting together the MAPE National Conference for 1998, to be held in Durham, so there will be no regional conferences until after that.

*Fiona Sanderson*

### Southern Region

On Saturday March 8th the Dorset group organised an event entitled 'Multimedia and CD-Rom'.

Unfortunately only the local committee members attended! We realise that many teachers are very committed during the week and like to have their weekends for relaxation. The Dorset committee is coming to the conclusion that perhaps the time has come to stop organising events. If you have any views on this please write to: John Bennett, Southern Rep, 11 Randall Close, Weymouth, Dorset DT3 4AS.

We shall probably go ahead with the next event, which is on Saturday 14 June at Malmesbury Park Primary School, Ascham Road, Bournemouth.

The topic will be 'Laptops and Pocketbooks'. We shall be there from 10.00 a.m. to 1.00 p.m. If any teachers wish to see the CD-Roms, which were on display in March, they will also be available.

*John Bennett*

### West Midlands Region

*Internet Morning 25th January 1997*

After welcoming delegates, Roger Keeling posed the question 'What is the Internet?' His introduction explained both the working of the World Wide Web and the actual hardware needed for using the Internet. This was followed by 'A Case Study of the Use of the Internet in a Primary Classroom' by Geoff Turrell. He described how he had used the Internet in schools with pupils of various ages and abilities. Both of these talks were very informative.

During the practical session, led by Angella Streluk and Alan Rodgers, delegates were able to



work at computers with a direct connection to a university campus. This meant that pages loaded up quickly and they could try out the various search skills and look at recommended sites. A handout listed sites to visit and methods of searching for the required information.

The concluding session was led by Barry Wake

and was entitled 'Getting Started'. This dealt with the hardware needs, the software needed and running costs.

Further details of this session and a review of *Alban Wood Logo* can be seen below.

*Alan Rodgers*

## Reviews

### *Alban Wood Logo* used at Chiltern MAPE session

This version of Logo is attractive, colourful, very easy to use, and ideal for the primary classroom. It is limited to turtle graphics, but few teachers use, or see the need for, text handling and the other complicated aspects of more sophisticated Logo programs.

Children will be able to use this program with minimal adult intervention. The error messages are helpful, telling the user what is expected rather than the more usual 'Logo can't do . . . '.

This hassle-free program was written by John Kenney, a retired Maths teacher. He has worked within the 'spirit' of Logo to produce an authentic programming language, whilst bearing in mind the needs of primary teachers.

A summary of all the commands, explanations and hints are printed on just two sides of A4 paper.

To receive Arch and BBC discs, keyboard strips, a photocopiable manual and a site licence, send £10 to: John Kenney, 40 Orchard Avenue, Garston, Watford WD2 7JG, giving the name of your school, which will then be included on the discs.

All proceeds go to Alban Wood Junior School, to whom cheques should be made payable.

*Betty Lumley*

### Sites on the Internet

Recommending sites is very difficult. We all have different tastes and needs. This 'guide' may help you to get some idea of what you might like to search for. Some of the addresses may also lead to something more suitable for you. The various ways of getting to the information are as useful as the pages eventually reached. The main thing is not to give up, to be patient, and if you have time, allow yourself to surf and follow your own whims.

### *Particular sites/pages*

MAPE itself has a page at <http://www.chelt.ac.uk/guests/mape/> This page is well presented and keeps you up to date with what is happening and who can be contacted to help you. You can even click on people's names, ready to E-Mail them. It also gives ideas for other useful IT pages to visit.

An Educational Search Tool recommended on the MAPE page was Yahoo Top: Education K-12 on [http://www.yahoo.com/Education/K\\_12](http://www.yahoo.com/Education/K_12) Here there were lots of categories of interest to people in the education field. Using this I found <http://porky.as.utexas.edu/lara/tudor/tudor.html> This was a charming page all about Tudor times and monarchs. It included pictures and text. I really enjoyed this, especially as my class is studying the Tudors this term.

Another link from the MAPE page is that of the DfEE at <http://www.dfes.gov.uk> The home page directs you to Press Releases and even the whole National Curriculum which can be copied. I did find this site very interesting. (The league tables for Primary Schools were laid out in a good interactive way!)

Schools on Line was another page recommended by MAPE. When I tried this at <http://www.sbu.ac.uk/~chensr/lists/ukschools.html> I was not successful in getting to any of their information. Perhaps the lines were busy.

NCET can be found on <http://www.ncet.org.uk/> This gives up-to-date information on all issues of IT in education. I looked at a report on 'The Satellites in Schools Initiative'. This gave references of where to find more information and was written in a very scholarly way. The CD-Rom reviews were very helpful. Each one has a page with all the details you need to know. I found one (only one) with a sample page. The *Kingfisher Micropaedia* review included an illustration. I also found out that the much-loved *Granny's Garden* is



now upgraded into multimedia format! The A-Z Index is a very good way to locate what you want and to see what is available.

The BBC have an Education page – [www.BBC.co.uk/education/](http://www.BBC.co.uk/education/) From this I accessed Teaching Today. It had interesting pages including, of course details of TV programmes on subjects such as science, technology and geography. Teaching Today also had sections called Order, Inset, Feedback, Bulletin Board and new programmes. I did not find enough to occupy me here, but if you were lucky enough to drop in on a subject you needed I am sure it would help a lot.

Research Machines has an Education News Page

at <http://www.rmpic.co.uk/news/education.html/> This has interesting pages but lacks useful links to other pages likely to be of interest to teachers.

Since the course I have located a possible useful tool for the classroom – from the Excite Home Page. If you select Tours and then the topic of interest (e.g. Travel) and then make a further selection from the subsequent list (e.g. Touring the Greek Islands) you come to a page of text on the chosen topic with hot links to other web sites. This may be a good way of making the initial selection for pupils and then leaving them to explore the relevant linked sites.

*Alan Rodgers and Angella Streluck*

## MAPE's advisory role

### Heather Govier

One aspect of the activities of MAPE which is not always apparent to members is our work in offering advice to government agencies to help influence future policy.

The Teacher Training Agency (TTA) is currently consulting with a wide range of bodies over plans for the development of teacher education, both initial training and continuing professional development. In March I attended (on behalf of MAPE) a meeting at which the TTA were seeking advice from a variety of organisations with an interest in IT in education. We looked at proposals for the National Professional Qualification for Subject Leaders, for development and qualifications for Headteachers and for the Training Curriculum and Standards for New Teachers.

It must be stressed that we were working with consultation documents and not final drafts and so any of the following proposals may be subject to change. However, it is clear that the TTA gives high priority to the inclusion of demanding requirements for IT at all stages of teacher education, an approach which MAPE supports and welcomes.

It is proposed that, in order to attain Qualified Teacher Status (QTS), new entrants to the profession will be required to demonstrate that they have a sound knowledge of IT to a standard equivalent to Level 8 in the pupils' National Curriculum and understand the contribution that

IT makes to core and specialist subjects. They must also be able to select and make 'good use of IT and other learning resources which enable teaching objectives to be met' and to exploit 'opportunities to improve pupils' basic skills in literacy, numeracy and IT'. To spell out these requirements in more detail, the possibility of a specific Initial Teacher Training National Curriculum for IT is under consideration.

Although it may be difficult for some teacher training institutions (and schools in training partnerships) to provide the resources needed for attainment of these targets, it is surely right to ask that new entrants to the profession should be able to meet these basic requirements.

At Subject Leader and Headteacher level it is proposed that these curriculum leaders should have a knowledge and understanding of 'effective teaching and assessment methods, including the use of educational technology' and be able to 'maximise the use of IT for curriculum and administrative purposes'.

It is clear that the TTA understands many of the factors which limit progress in the development of effective use of IT in schools and are concerned to address the problems in their standard requirements. MAPE, along with other interested organisations, will continue to work with the TTA to help them provide the strongest possible frameworks for progress.



# The Primary IT Forum

The Primary IT Forum is an e-mail based discussion group which is run by Helen Constable, a former LEA IT Team Leader who now works as an independent advisor. Helen told MAPE:

'we now have over two hundred members of the Forum, including classroom teachers, advisors, lecturers, computer dealers, software developers, governors and Ofsted inspectors. Our membership is not just restricted to England – we have a large contingent of Scottish schools, plus members in South Africa, Hong Kong and Northern Ireland. Having such a broad membership base means that any topic which comes up for discussion is approached from a variety of perspectives.

In the past we have discussed the value of using CD-Rom at key stage one, uses of the Internet, (we have managed to put several schools in touch with each other to form e-links) software for a variety of subjects, computer security, training teachers, the difficulties some schools have in enduring the Ofsted experience, and that

old chestnut, the platform debate. The Forum also has a panel of 'techies' to which members can put their technical queries if they need help on a hardware or software problem. However, all members are naturally keen to help each other, share ideas and offer concrete strategies for dealing with issues, and this has been one of the strengths of the 'closed community' atmosphere of the Forum.

We are lucky enough to have our own Website, which is hosted by Brian Kerslake at Topologika. The URL is [www.topolgka.demon.co.uk](http://www.topolgka.demon.co.uk). Currently the site contains some of our members' favourite IT activities. We are shortly to publish a list of members who provide In-Service training and links to members' own Websites. Anyone who is interested in joining the Forum needs to e-mail me on [helencon@argonet.co.uk](mailto:helencon@argonet.co.uk) and I'll add your name to the list. You do not need to be an IT expert, just involved in some way with IT at primary level. I look forward to hearing from you!

## News from MAPE members

### John Raybould

*John Raybould taught at Norwich Road School, Thetford, Norfolk for 23 years until retiring in March 1997 as head of IT, D&T and Science. He previously taught in the Solomon Islands, Zambia and Uganda. John is a member of the MAPE PIG (Projects and Innovations) Group.*

### Bosnia

After returning from East Africa in 1972 I joined the staff at Norwich Road School in Thetford, Norfolk. On my first Wednesday with a class at the swimming pool I spotted a notice advertising a new Territorial Army Platoon being formed. From previous service in Central Africa I knew one end of a Bren gun from a grenade, so I applied and was assigned Platoon Commander.

When volunteers were sought to serve with the UNHCR Operation in FRY (Former Republic of Yugoslavia) and then with IFOR (Implementation Force), the opportunity was grasped. In three years I was due to retire from the TA at the age of 55 and so this was my last chance to 'get some in.'

Just after the signing of the Dayton Peace Accord, with 500 other TA men and women I was mobilised in December 1995 and after passing tests on fitness, NBC (Nuclear, Biological and Chemical Defence), signals, shooting and First Aid I was transferred on Permanent Service to the Regular Army.

We flew to Sarajevo and I worked as a Staff Officer in the Logistics HQ in the 400-bed Dalmacija Hotel in Kiseljak on the northern slope of the Kiseljak valley, looking down on the road between Vitez and Sarajevo. Major Mike Vokes



and I shared a room with an en-suite bathroom. Built for the 1984 Winter Olympics, Jayne Torville and Christopher Dean stayed at the hotel. We could not see out of our room due to thick brown 'urban camouflage' covering the windows on the inside behind the curtains. It was not considered safe to open the curtains and roll up the brown material in order to look out with the light on. The windows were criss-crossed with tape to help stop the glass flying in from action by any unfriendly types with weapons! Neither the Sarajevo Zetra Ice Stadium nor the Hotel had paying guests! Sandbags, a razor wire fence and armed Gurkha sentries were some of the discouragements. Sandbags and a weapon unloading bay dominated the hotel entrance. A 'Wanted – War Criminals' poster and a notice on the one remaining sagging glass door set the tone, proclaiming, 'This is a military Headquarters not a hotel.' In case you think this was luxurious, lighting circuit power cuts occurred regularly, the water was undrinkable, the taps often ran dry, rats, ants and snakes (indoors!) were a problem, the bare concrete stairs were gradually being swept away, the lifts had ceased working long ago and we could not leave the compound! To walk outside, within the wire, a beret and jacket were worn. Beyond the gate a helmet, body armour and the carriage of a loaded weapon were mandatory. The exception was when going for a run on one of the authorised routes – but only in a group, one member of which had to be armed.

Mike and I worked in LOG OPS (Logistic Operations). There were 16 computer terminals in the OPS Room and many more in other rooms in the HQ, all linked by fibre optic cable. There are no secretaries and these days all Staff Officers have to be computer literate and produce their own letters, e-mail, signals, charts, tables and annotated maps. A vital part of my job was e-mail, signals and Faxes from UK, US, Germany, Italy, Croatia and units in Bosnia. Mike generally did the day shift while I took the night shift.

The British service families in Rheindahlen always donate their Christmas Draw profits to a worthy cause and the local school here was nominated. A visit identified the need for Croat language poetry and story books, a list was produced and the books purchased in Croatia. My Watchkeeper colleague and I were invited to the presentation ceremony. We had been in Bosnia a month and had not been further than 50 metres from the hotel entrance. Having donned body armour and helmet, there were some formalities to complete at the former Hall Porter's cupboard, now the Guard Room. Check that pistol was in holster (and not still under pillow!) and sign out ten rounds of ammunition, book out – name, rank,

blood group, destination and expected time of return. We left the two armed drivers guarding the vehicles and our party entered the school. It had not been shelled or suffered shrapnel damage but was sadly neglected. The children looked apprehensive as we entered with Hikmeta, our interpreter, all in uniform. We left our helmets in the vehicles and put on berets and I remember intentionally having my holster and pistol out of sight under my jacket. I kept on my body armour!

The Headmaster and several members of staff who received us, expressed their gratitude through our interpreter. They have 1400 pupils aged 5 to 14 who come in two shifts, changing over at noon. It was February 13th and the corridors displayed Valentine's Day cards!

We asked the Headmaster if there was any material that our contacts in England could, perhaps, supply. Exercise books, paper, ball point pens, coloured pencils and school bags 'they do not have to be new' were listed. When we returned from two weeks leave in the UK Mike and I had collected a great number of bags and items of stationery. When we delivered them I noticed that in two classrooms – apart from a few of the pupils' own Easter egg drawings on the walls (it was primarily a Croat and therefore Catholic school) – there was not a single visual aid, poster or book apart from the textbooks the children were working from. There was nothing at all in the music room, nor on the classroom shelves. One teacher had a solitary stick of chalk. The science room was empty. All the kit had been stolen by refugees – presumably to sell!

### *Can you help?*

The need remains for common expendable necessities in Bosnian schools. Does your school have odd copies of obsolete exercise books or any surplus drawing paper donated from the local printer? Could you organise a cash appeal through your local church, school or MAPE group to buy some packs of coloured pencils?

I will be returning to Bosnia in the autumn and would be pleased to distribute the items to local schools and orphanages. Small packages up to 20 kg can be posted at UK inland rates to my BFPO, omitting my name, addressed simply :

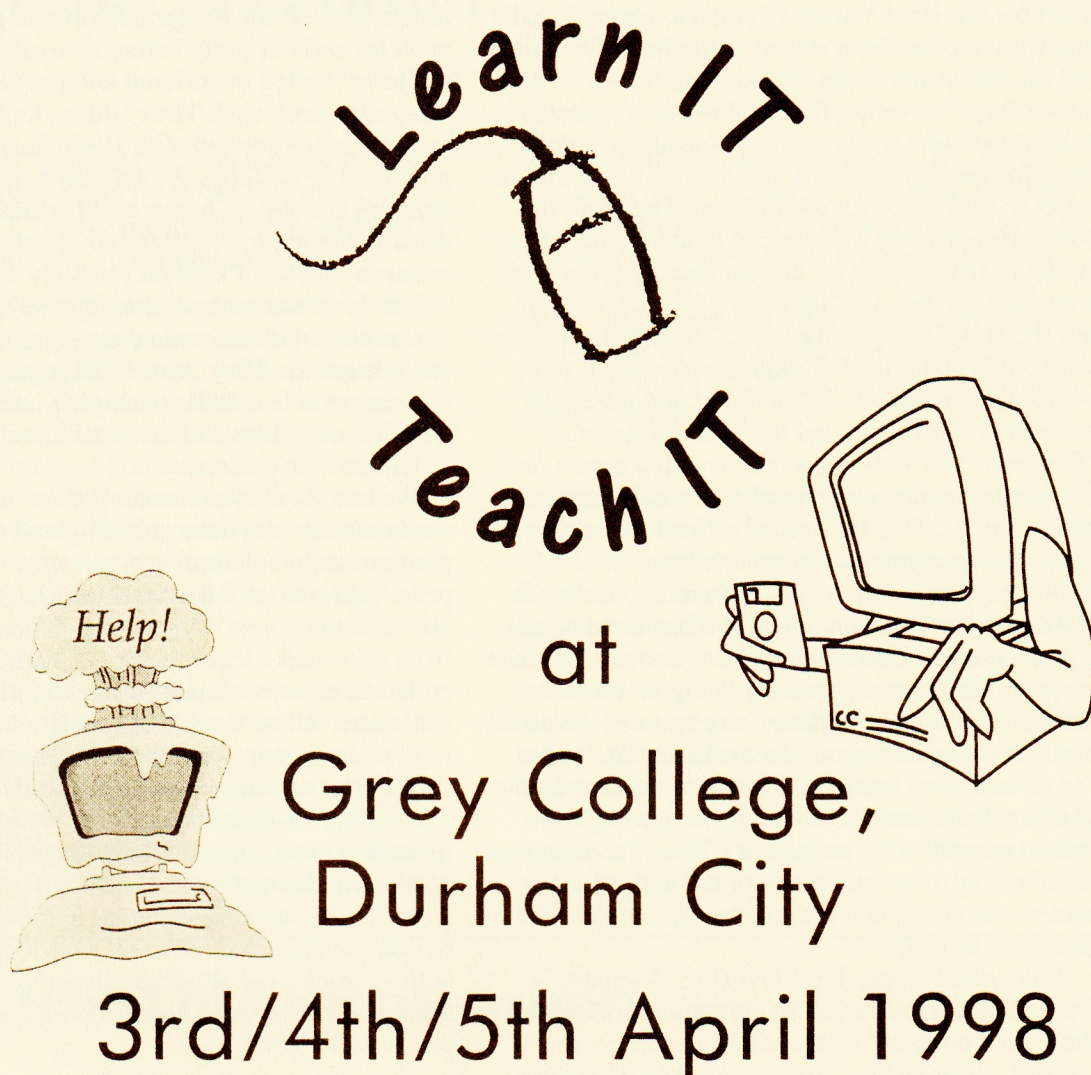
UK Brigade HQ  
BFPO 553  
BOSNIA

A letter enclosed, perhaps with a postcard of your locality and photograph of the contributors, would ensure a reply from the receiving school.

Thanks, in anticipation.



# National MAPE Conference 1998



Featuring a wide range of  
IT Curriculum Activities

For further details contact:  
Fiona Sanderson Tel. (01434) 240489

*Land of the Prince Bishops*