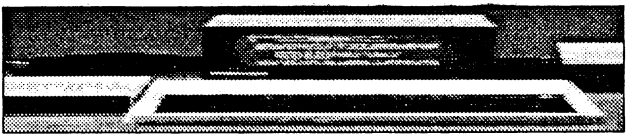
BYTE BACK

"ByteBack"

ISSUE 1 • JULY/AUGUST 1993

75p

ISSUE NUMBER ONE !

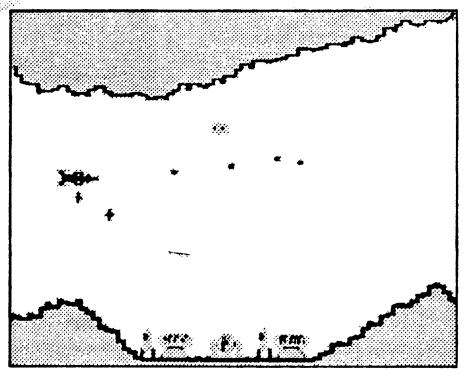


The BBC Micro is Dead.

PAGE 1

BLAST FROM THE PAST

STEP BACK IN TIME WITH THE FIRST IN A SERIES ABOUT THE 'CLASSIC' GAMES OF YESTERYEAR



PLUS:

- **YOUR LETTERS SHARED AND VIEWS AIRED**
- **SOFTWARE IN SCHOOLS**
- **PUBLIC DOMAIN AND SHAREWARE SELECTION**
- **NEW USERS - LET YOUR MICRO EXPRESS ITSELF THROUGH SOUND**

A new experience in BBC computing!

PAGE 1...

THE DAWN OF A NEW ERA OR THE END OF AN AGE

The BBC Micro at ten years old is far from being a spring chicken – it may not win any prizes for being the new super computer either, but perhaps there's still a lot of life left in the machine yet. Can we really view this milestone of computer history in a new and fresh light? Hopefully this magazine will allow users to do just that.

As 8-bit micro owners, we must come to accept – if we haven't already – that any company previously supporting the BEEB will find it difficult to continue to support 'old' technology , while still maintaining a viable business. It's obviously more attractive – and sensible – to move with technology and cover new machines.

CONTINUED SUPPORT

One magazine that tries to continue to support all of Acorns range, from the Electron up to the super speedy A5000, is Acorn User. If you've flicked through their pages recently you will probably notice that coverage of Acorns 8-bit machines is there, but it's in short supply. Who do we blame? Is it the fault of Acorn User for leaving us behind, or is it something else? Mark Moxon, Acorn Users' Technical Editor explained that there just isn't the support by users for the BBC anymore; "We only have 12 BBC Compact users in our subscription base, and only about eight percent of our subscribers want the 8-bit disc..." It's not the case of Acorn User neglecting BBC owners, but of BEEB owners moving on to new things, leaving their trusty 8-bits behind. Many BBC users will view this as the final chapter in the Encyclopedia-A-la-BEEB story, yet a few will shrug off the continuing decline of coverage, sure in the knowledge that their machine is the same as it's always been and still able to perform and to be enjoyed.

DIY USER GROUPS?

Major support may now be drawing to a close for the BBC Micro, but keen users will always be in their numbers, to keep the flame from finally going out, which may still be a long time coming.

An independent survey of schools in North London shows that BBC Micros in use still outnumber the next most popular machines, the Archimedes range by approximately 2-1, ensuring some sort of long term requirement for support. User groups, pen pal contacts and other 'amateur' set-ups will remain, as long as there is any subject for people to get involved in.

As interested supporters of the BBC, I think we need to view the situation as inevitable, but not terminal. Those of us who enjoy the BEEB should continue to share that enthusiasm with other like minded users and let the big guns concentrate on newer, faster machines.

"...only about eight percent of our subscribers want the 8-bit disc..."

Who knows, perhaps we'll all be able to own an Archimedes A5000 and we can join the club with the rest of them (but by the time we get one of these super computers, they'll all be shouting the praises of the new '256-bit Archimedes A600,000' and we'll be right back where we started... BB

The machine that started this whole thing going, your friend and mine, who needs no introductions: take it away please...

ByteBack is a magazine produced exclusively for and on behalf of all users of the BBC Micro. ByteBack does not claim to be the definitive publication for the BEEB, but hopefully fills a gap providing support for its users. Please send any thoughts, ideas and anything BBC related to ByteBack, 33 King Henrys Mews, Enfield Lock, Middlesex, EN3 6JS. Your support is important.

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EDITOR'S NOTE

WELCOME TO BYTEBACK!

This is the section of the magazine where I get the chance to voice my opinion – Ah, what freedom! I hope that you find this magazine interesting, and perhaps even useful and encouraging. There's absolutely no reason why the age of any activity or hobby should stop it from being successful; are you telling me that Vintage Cars are new?! Yet people start clubs, magazines, societies, rallys, supermarket chains, in fact almost anything they can to further indulge in their pursuits. Take a look at any enthusiasts group – you'll no doubt find that they're involved in all of the above listed activities (maybe not leaning too heavily on the supermarket bit) and perhaps a few I didn't mention. The success of any subject depends on the people who want to be involved in it, not on things such as age, cost, location or anything else directly related to the actual interest. Many schools still use BBC's in large quantities, normally attached to lot of additional hardware, such as Robot Arms, and 'Turtles', and of course there is still an enormous educational software base, probably the largest, second only to Acorn's newer Archimedes range. The BBC may not be able to stand up to more modern computers in terms of processing power or in the area of graphics but which other machine is so expandable or interface-able without a lot of additional cost? It's no wonder so many schools opted for it when they did, and why so many still find them useful today. I can't think of any other computer with such a great heritage, that still has such a successful future. Here's to many more years of learning and enjoyment with the BBC! BB

THIS IS THE BBC...
NEWS

IS THERE REALLY LIFE OUT THERE IN 8-BIT LAND? HOPEFULLY WE CAN TELL YOU

PASS THE HAT FOR OUR FRIEND ACORN

With its share price falling faster than the pound against the dollar, Acorn battened down the hatches last week and ran for cover. The country's number two micro maker badly needs a confidence booster, but it's hard to see where that might come from. The confidence of the men who matter in the City of London has been draining away since the turn of the year, when it became apparent that Acorn's Christmas sales had been disappointing. The city was impressed enough with Acorn in late 1983, when the company issued shares at a price of 120p each. Later the price rose to 193p; last week it fell to 23p at one stage. In late 1983 the BBC Micro wasn't two years old and the Electron had only just been announced. Acorn's financial results for the year up to July 1983 gave it profits of £8,632,000 on turnover of more than £42 million. Apparently a reputation for late product launches, delayed development projects, and almost complete deafness didn't trouble the City. Until the middle of 1983 it was close to impossible to get anything out of Acorn – its telephone was perpetually engaged. Its planned expansion of the BBC system proceeded very slowly, and third party suppliers regularly beat it to the punch with BBC add-ons. But the company continued to prosper, thanks largely to the BBC contract. Then 1984 saw the Electron revealed as inadequate in the face of strong competition. Acorn stayed aloof from the price-cutting fever that swept the home computer business. The fact that the BBC Micro's price was steady looked like a sign of stability and good health at Acorn – but it didn't help sales overseas, and led eventually to the US debacle. Between January 1983 and December 1984 Acorn flirted with the US market but it made little impression as the battles involving Apple, IBM, Commodore and Atari brushed it aside. A staff of five was left from the peak of 40. Back home in the same period some traditional Acorn problems – shortages of ROM chips and disk interface components, late arrival of second processors, indecision over pricing – refused to go away. The prospect of a contraction in its education business also loomed. But the company expanded on the home front as well as abroad. It took over a networking company called Torus, and made the first move towards buying Torch. It's Plan for growth up to 1990 included a 12 acre expansion of its base at Cherry Hinton, near Cambridge, and the recruitment of 500 extra staff. As Christmas 1984 approached, Acorn was buoyant. 'We did not turn the production tap off over the summer period', said a spokesman, referring to the steps the company had taken to avoid a repetition of the previous year's shortages. It got a shot in the arm at the same time from a well-publicised survey – Acorn systems, the survey showed, were among the most reliable on the market. Since the survey had been carried out on behalf of Acorn's advertising agency, it wasn't surprising to find the results presented in pre-Christmas ads, to go with the expensive television campaign. Indirectly this led to the fracas between Sir Clive Sinclair and Chris Curry in a Cambridge wine bar at the end of the year. Sir Clive stuck the boot in with more effect when he chopped the price of the Spectrum Plus. Acorn responded by lopping £70 off the price of the Electron. As its dealers complained, it trimmed the number of its distributors from 17 to six in the interests of efficiency. Alex Reid, ex-British Telecom, was appointed chief executive – perhaps to persuade the City that experienced hands were in control at Acorn. But Reid had no time to make an impact – within days of his appointment, and with the share price tumbling, Acorn dropped its bankers and financial advisor, lost its brokers, saw the Torch deal slip away, and finally asked the Stock Exchange to suspend trading in its shares. Having chosen to go to the City for funding on 1983, Acorn can only survive on the City's terms. That means restoring confidence – and that means finding a lot of money. Will anybody pass the hat round for a beleaguered computer company? If you haven't a penny, a ha'penny will do...

This article was taken from February's issue of Personal Computer News – 1985!! BB

YOUR LETTERS

YOUR VIEWS ON LIFE IN THE 8-BIT FAST LANE.

This is the part of the magazine where your ideas, tips and problems will hopefully be well represented. Most people find this section the one they turn to first so put pen to paper and share with the world all your 8-bit nigglies.

I have had my BBC micro for six years and I have a slight problem. I don't know how to switch it on. I've read the manual from cover to cover but can't find what I need to help me. As you can probably appreciate this is a frustration to me as I cannot use the software that I also purchased with the computer, and I've yet to find out what all the hype has been with this Repton chappie.

Yours, Mr. Bean, Devon

● **The solution to your problem may lie with more than one option: First, try looking at the User Guide on page 7. Half way down the page the paragraph reads, "Next, plug your computer into the mains and switch on...." If that is not explanation enough then the second option may be more appropriate: pack up all your equipment, sell it to some other needy ByteBack subscriber and with the money buy the Ladybird range of ABC books and call us in a couple of years... (Ed.)**

As a proud BBC 'B' owner for three years (along with several other computers, a food blender, a home made atomic power station and other knick-knacks) I have been looking around for a decent magazine to support it, when I happened upon this issue of ByteBack (How I got this letter into it is part of a project I'm working on regarding matter transfer – more about that another time). I would just like to say what a breath of fresh air for all aspiring BBC users. Your magazine supports an intelligent view of the BBC, and is thoroughly entertaining as well. I would just like to recommend that all BBC owners everywhere should immediately turn to page 12, fill in the coupon and send it on its way to you at once. Thank you for making my life complete.

Yours, Paul Harvey (Editor)

● **Thank you for your (Ehem) unbiased views. Please accept a year's free subscription to this jam-packed magazine for submitting this month's star letter. (Ed.)**

I am replying to your letter which I received today. I have passed on the details of your magazine to a few friends, who are keen BBC users, just like me. Personally I have some ideas for magazine content, and abilities that may interest or be helpful to you, when devising your magazine. It has been quite a while since a a magazine for the BBC micro has been produced. Far to many 'BBC magazines' cater for the Archimedes and leave the BBC owners with nothing. I think a great need for BBC owners is a section of classified ads. This will allow users to buy more parts for their computer, keeping their machine alive. A great problem today is that items such as disc drives, monitor cables etc are very difficult to obtain. Another idea is reviews of software. The old 'classics' and the newer games could be reviewed, giving people a chance to see how good a particular game is. A person could write in and ask what games they would like to see reviewed. However I feel that not only games should be reviewed, as items such as Mini office and Mini office 2 would be ideal review possibilities. Personally I would like to see a small sections of the magazine, sold to home based computer firms. For instance people selling second hand BBC hardware and software from home, having their own section in the magazine. Not only basic BBC B owners should be catered for, as there are a great many people who use the BBC MASTER, 6502 and Z80 processors, and SIDEWAYS RAM. Each of these could have their own section, and this would attract more BBC owners to buy the magazine. I personally own a MASTER computer and would like to see a section dedicated to the machine. In my mind a problem page is vital, as many people have problems which could be answered quite easily. Therefore this service would offer for the first time in three or so years, the chance for BBC owners to have their

MORE OF YOUR LETTERS

CONTINUED FROM PREVIOUS PAGE...

problems solved. BBC information is becoming hard to find and very expensive. Therefore a problem page would cost the person nothing and be very helpful. Another thought is special run-downs on hardware, giving an overall view of some of the BBC products available through second hand dealers. For instance the BBC BUGGY or the AMX MOUSE could be analysed and criticised. Something that really is necessary in the magazine is a CHIPSHOP section. This would be a place where people could buy and sell microchips for the BBC. Far too often have BBC machines been rendered useless because of a missing or broken microchip. I, like many others have quite a wide variety of ROMS but little processing chips. Therefore ROMS could also be bought and sold.

E.Clayson
Salisbury, Wiltshire

● **It's nice to hear of your suggestions. You'll notice, if you glance through this first issue, that most of what you've asked for has been implemented. As with any publication, it's difficult to expect the early issues to reach 'maturity' instantly: I am already contacting whoever I can to find out if they are still supporting the BBC with equipment, spares or software. If anyone knows of any supplier please send us the details and we'll make sure it's included in the next issue. As for sections on Second Processors and Sideways RAM etc, what do other readers think?**
(Ed.)

I was pleased to receive your letter and find the intentions of the magazine excellent. Providing you with material for No.1 of 'the new era to come', I have been in touch with two BBC PD firms (?), I imagine they are fellow enthusiasts working from their garage, shed or back bedroom. One disk I think is up your street. Some chap, gives his name, admits to owning as Archimedes but he rewrote an Archimedes demo for an 8-bit just to show that a BBC could do as well. I can send you this PD software for you to look at.

F.Jones
Thirsk, North Yorkshire

● **Thank you for the disks which I received and have spent time studying. A couple of these have been reviewed on page 9, with more reviews to come. I have also contacted the PD libraries in question, namely BBC PD, APDL, and Headfirst PD regarding this magazine – I'll let you know the outcome.**
(Ed.)

Thanks very much for your recent letter that gave a few clues about your proposed 'ByteBack'. I perused through the contents with great interest. Although I have a MASTER (I had a BBC B previously, before that, a £175 Speccy), I do appreciate its improvements over a model B, but I think the 'B' still has a lot going for it. The biggest advantage (I think) with the MASTER is having PAGE at &E00. You ask about my abilities and ideas etc. Well, to tell you the honest truth I am not much good at much at all, my only plus is that I am a very keen user, hampered only by a not very keen wife. Until I stopped recently, I have all the Acorn User and Micro User magazines. I also have, and will continue with the Beebug magazine. I will never get any other make of computer, if and when all the 8-bit Acorn machines are finished, I shall have to go back to Gardening and/or Decorating etc. Will the proposed 'ByteBack' be on disc similar in layout to '8 Bit Software' or 'Solinet', or in booklet form and how much do you expect it to cost? Best of luck in your proposed venture, I hope you have a lot of enquiries from people who can offer more than myself?

T.Parsons
Flitwick, Bedfordshire

● **Well, to answer the easiest question first, the format for the magazine will be in booklet form. My personal opinion about disk "magazines' is that they're harder to read, and in some ways more limited in the aesthetic content. That aside, there's also the consideration of different people owning different DFS's and some not owning a Disk Drive at all! As for you comments on your abilities: the most important criteria is ENTHUSIASM! If you've got that, then all the rest can easily be**

MORE OF YOUR LETTERS

CONTINUED FROM PREVIOUS PAGE...

picked up. If we have readers keen to be involved in ByteBack, projects and ideas will be forthcoming.
(Ed.)

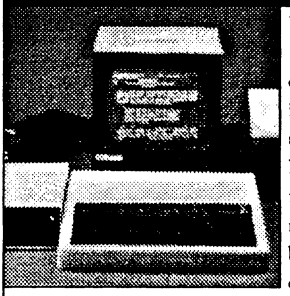
Thank you for your reply to my enquiry. At present my equipment includes three BBC micros, a BBC MASTER, a Z88 and a Mac LCII which is connected to the BBC-B-with-the-four-inch-fan and keeps Kermit busy. Regarding your plans for ByteBack, if you want a hobby which will occupy every waking hour, then you are on to a winner. Most BBC micro owners are new, proud owners of machines they picked up for twenty quid at a car boot sale and, frankly don't understand what to do with it. I have been selling unwanted bits and pieces from my more active BEEB days and my (so far) six customers have kept me busy day and night in trying to answer their questions such as, "Now that I have my ROM board, what do I plug into it?..." Sustaining the magazine will be your biggest problem. I have personal experience of this from my days of publishing a CB Radio-Repairers' newsletter every *three months*. Everybody wants to buy but nobody wants to contribute. It lasted a year then I ran out of things to write about. One thing that will help sustain it is buy/sell adverts specifically for the BBC micro. MicroMart is OK but has very little BBC stuff, compared with IBM PC.

M.Pickering
Sandbach, Cheshire

● **Sobering thoughts indeed! It's important to consider the 'negative' side of all of this as well as the positive. I obviously hope that there will be too much material for each issue, and we have to go monthly. That will be down to everyone involved who wants to keep ByteBack running. If you have any friends who have BBC Micros, why not introduce them to this mag? (Ed.)**

Well that's it for this month. If you have any thoughts like these (or completely different), then pop them in the post, along with a big fat cheque, to the usual address...BB

"ME & MY MICRO" — Paul Harvey



I have written a program that allows me to enter details of each job I have invoiced in the graphic design company I work with. Each invoice is entered as it is raised, with company name, invoice number, brief job description, total cost and the date of the invoice. Once entered into the 'database', these records can be scanned, searched by any string or specific field and can be displayed grouped by client to give me a client breakdown. This shows me all the jobs we have done for that client, the dates of payment, the average number of days to pay, the amount earned and the amount owed. We work on the standard '30 days to pay' basis, so all dates are set around that. Unpaid invoices can be called up and displayed together with the number of days since issue, over and above the 30 allowed if overdue, or the number of days remaining until the invoice becomes overdue, at which time we can send out a reminder letter to the client. The program also allows me to list the names of all different clients we actually deal with, as opposed to the total number of jobs we've ever completed, or display the total of sales for every month the database has entries, including how much is still owed for any month and totals for the amount of turnover and the amount still outstanding.

WHAT IS THE POINT OF IT ALL?

The program was written in BASIC, just as an exercise to ease me back into the world of the BBC Micro (I lovingly owned a BEEB way back in 1983/4/5 but moved on to 'better' things. A few months back I got hold of a BBC cheap and have been rediscovering lost childhood!)

What do you use your BBC for? Is it a 'games machine' or workhorse? Write in with details of your 'relationship'..! BB

BBC MICROS IN EDUCATION

THIS ISSUE, WE TAKE A LITTLE LOOK AT COMPUTERS FOR THE NEW GENERATION, DISCOVERING COMPUTERS FOR THE FIRST TIME.

To this day, the BBC Micro is still strongly supported with continuing new releases of quality education software.

Programs are available to teach kids of all ages, from pre-school and early learning (approximately 2-9 years) through to teenagers and even beyond – let's face it, you're never too young or old to learn. I fact it's difficult not to find at least one program that teaches you what you want to study.

STARTING YOUNG

With the young age group, – toddlers and primary school children – educational software leans very heavily towards teaching the child basic skills that we, as adults, take for granted: shape and pattern recognition, word and picture association, hand to eye co-ordination. It's these qualities that help us interact more effectively with the world and people around us as we grow older. Colour is virtually always used extensively in any educational package, to attract the child's attention and create interest; sometimes there are added sound effects or speech to further enhance the child's experience, and that's what this learning becomes: an experience of colour, sound and interaction which provokes the learning process. It's easy to forget that 'Learning' and 'Fun' can go hand in hand, and normally have to if learning is to be most effective – you can teach anybody anything if they have the enthusiasm to learn the subject in the first place.

SO WHAT'S EARLY LEARNING?

Normally in any early learning program, a task is set for the child to accomplish, perhaps finding the pair to a picture amongst a lot of different choices. The child will be searching for the other picture that looks the same and will indicate the match by selecting the chosen picture with one key and saying 'accept' with another – actual computer use is kept to a minimum for the youngest students as it's not necessary to understand a lot about computers when so young: it's enough for the child to overcome 'techno-phobia' (the fear or computers, something a lot of the older generation experience because of a lack of exposure to computer technology when they were younger). Other 'lessons' involve simple counting of groups of objects, normally represented by the number alongside a pictorial representation, ie three umbrellas next to the number three, and so on. Spelling words is done in a similar way: display an object next to its name, then later, by hiding a few letters at a time, the child has to work out which ones are missing. They learn names of objects and ultimately the spelling and eventyually become familiar with the way words are put together.

FOR FURTHER INFORMATION

All of the programs listed in the table below were taken from *'Educational Software – a parents' guide'* magazine. BB

EARLY LEARNING SOFTWARE - A FEW EXAMPLES

TITLE	PUBLISHER	AGEGROUP	PRICE
Picture Book	Triple R Education	2-5 years	Tape £12.94 Disc £14.95
First Steps Collection	ESS Software	2-7 years	Disc £44.06
Words and Pictures	Chalksoft	3-7 years	Disc £27.02
Teddy Bear's Pic-Nic	Sherston Software	4-7 years	Disc £29.37

To order any of the extensive range of software available or their catalogue, contact 'Education Software' on 0460 57152 between 9am and 5pm, Monday to Friday (10am to 4pm on Saturday)

PARENTS, TEACHERS..!

Do your children use BBC Micros at home or at school? If so, has the software been of educational benefit? Have you found it to be difficult and not up to its claims or is there a program that no BBC user should be without? Then why not send in your personal review of a program that you use. Please include details such as Software title, Publisher, the agegroup it appeals to, the subject area it covers and what you think of it. Please include details of the media, ie 80 track disc, and its price. If you have any additional hardware, ie a mouse, a turtle, etc then why not send in your view of that too. BB

SOFTWARE & HARDWARE REVIEWS

FROM OLD SOFTWARE TO NEW, ROMS, KEYBOARDS, OR WHATEVER. WE HOPE TO FIND OUT WHAT TO AVOID AND WHAT YOU NEED!

The best years of the BBC Micro have passed. Therefore, throughout this series of reviews, a large portion will be given over to the software and hardware of the past rather than the present, most of which can still be got hold of if you look in the right places. There should be enough quality equipment from yesteryear to keep us occupied. Right, how about a little bit of nostalgia...?

A BIT OF HISTORY

I can't believe that there is a computer enthusiast anywhere (who's over the age of 16) who doesn't remember the early days of home games consoles, y'know, the ones with a twisty knob for a paddle, and you had to move this 'bat' up or down on the screen to deflect the 'ball'. Somehow then, our imaginations allowed us more grace to see a lot more than a square for a ball and an oblong for a bat. (I'm sure my old machine had the sound of the crowd cheering as I scored yet another goal against the 'computer', or maybe that was my imagination too...) Anyway, if you remember that era, then you'll remember the thrill of Space Invaders, complete with coloured graphics, courtesy of a few strips of coloured acetate and some glue. Then there was the advent of Vector graphics, as used in Asteroids, and the home console called Vectronix or something like that, which came as a complete unit including a vector screen especially built for that purpose only. Each of these original game concepts cloned any number of copies (with only slight modifications) along the way as technology improved, yet very few were able to capture the magic of their role models. Shortly after Space Invaders, etc came the advent of true colour graphics, among other things, and further original concepts in such games as Pacman, Donkey Kong, Donkey Kong Jnr, Dig-Dug, Crystal Castle, No Man's Land, Mr.Do, Mr. Do's Castle, Mr. Do's something else ad infinitum...

THE SAME OLD STORY

Somehow nearly every new release was an original theme. Now it seems like the computer games market is virtually saturated with ideas: "what sort of game shall we write now? How about a space game where aliens descend on the earth and...oh no, that one's been done before. Oh well, how about another 3-dimensional dungeon RPG adventure..."

LESS IS MORE?

Is it only me that prefers TEXT ONLY adventures? Somehow computers just can't create a better image than I can *see* with a page of well written story and a clever plot. And the storys behind the adventures seemed so much more believable then too.

WHAT HAPPENED?

Perhaps the single, most destructive influence on the creativity of computer programmers was and still is commercialism. When 'hackers' worked from their bedrooms, or formed 'companies' of two or three to crash out a game or two, their imaginations went wild. The biggest variety of computer games existed for about ten years, 1980-1990. But programmers turning professional had to support themselves with their skills, and the type of program they wrote became the one that people would buy in quantity, not necessarily the one they wanted to create. At the moment there appears to be three or four types of game available on any platform: Shoot-em-ups, Beat-em-ups, Run-jump-and-beat-em-ups, and of course Run-jump-shoot-and-beat-em-ups. It seems we're given the choice these days of being a space pilot on some obscure mission, a karate expert chopping everything that moves, or a hedgehog wearing trainers – some choice...!

SANCTUARY

Thankfully I have my BBC Micro, born in the '80s and with a strong history and upbringing, and I've got my pile of quality 'original' games to amuse me. Today, I'm running around a coldroom, shoving ice blocks in the face of [illegible]ez, then I'm riding my [illegible] on the moon, then I'm climbing ladders, avoiding ostriches and collecting eggs and who can forget bombing around a set of mazes, shoving rocks and collecting diamonds.

ULTIMATUM

You can keep your Amoebas and your GigaDrives, your Cronic-the-roadhog and your Marylin Bros, give me back my good 'ole fashioned days...

Next Issue: 'Classic Reviews – Chapter 1' BB

PUBLIC DOMAIN & SHAREWARE

WHERE DO YOU GET SOFTWARE THAT'S FREE, OR VERY NEARLY FREE AND USUALLY OF HIGH QUALITY?

There's a lot more to the Public Domain scene than we probably give credit for. If you need some obscure program or utility then more likely than not, you'll find it in the Public Domain.

We are going to christen this series with reviews of a couple of Public Domain disks, to give you some idea of what PD is all about.

PLAY THAT FUNKY MUSIC
DISK B007
HEADFIRST PD

First up, an interesting collection of well known (to those who would admit it) songs from all walks of life, from the likes of the Bee Gees to more recent Kylie Minogue-type hits (I think she had one).

The 13 'tracks' on the disk are driven from a basic menu initiated by SHIFT-BREAK (I had to use *EXEC !MENU), or each song can be CHAINed (oh yes, they're all written - very cleverly - in BBC BASIC so you can list them and see how it's done). As an added bonus, for those of you who missed the Kylie albums (I've got every one), many of the songs come with Kareoke style lyrics which pop up on the screen along with the tune. Now there's no excuse for not joining in on "Love In The First Degree" with everyone else at the next Bananarama fan-club disco reunion party enthusiast get-together annual knees-up meeting 'Do'.

There are songs from Level 42, Aswad, (Michael Jackson even makes an appearance with Bad, but I'm sure it's only a cover), Pet Shop Boys (who?) and Madonna. I had an enjoyable time listening to these very clever creations. This disk is a good example of what the BBC is capable of, in terms of musical ability - great fun!

A LITTLE BIT OF KNOWLEDGE IS A GOOD THING
DISC NO.147
BBC PD

I don't know. Is it just me? I spend literally years learning to program. A good deal of that time was spent with my BBC and I amassed a great deal of knowledge of BBC BASIC, and along the way, I picked up loads of clever 'tricks', like speeding up the key repeat rate, altering the character set, getting rid of the flashing text cursor in one of my programs, etc. Yet a few months of BEEB isolation and I can't even remember where Acorn fitted the ON/OFF switch.

WOULD SOMEBODY PLEASE HELP ME.!

Well, I'm here to say, and with some degree of satisfaction that it's not only me who's affected by this strange phenomena; it appears to be a 'feature' of mankind as a whole. Well some dear soul saw fit to put us all right by releasing a floppy disk crammed to the write-protect notch with absolute 'gems' of BBC treasures. The disk contains a little over 200 different tips, routines, short cuts and ideas that no self-respecting BEEBer should be without. For example, most people know how to change the VDU 7 'Bell' to a different note and a different duration (If you don't know that, order this disk NOW...!). But, do you know how to disable sideways ROMs? How about plotting elipses, using multiple windows, splitting large files, finding the last line in a BASIC program, using a timed input routine...

By now, you will have an idea of the content and usefulness of this compendium. Throughout issues of ByteBack, we will be featuring a selection of these tips to refresh the memories of long time BBC users. My opinion is BUY IT NOW! Unless you don't use your BBC to program. BB

WHAT'S IT ALL ABOUT?

PUBLIC DOMAIN: Written by somebody with a big heart and plenty of money. Distributed Copyright free to all and sundry. The software is also free, but to get it, you need a a Public Domain library who will charge a nominal fee to cover their costs, etc. If the programs include the authors name and address details, this information should remain unchanged (that means you don't go hacking your name in as the author!). You can make as many copies as you like and give them to as many people as you like.

SHAREWARE: Like PD software in two respects: you get it through a PD library, and you can make as many copies as you like. However, each program will contain information about the author, and a suggested price for the software. Idea: obtain this software by some fair means and try it out. If you don't like it, pass it on or erase it. If you find you use it 'regularly', get out your cheque book and send the author their well earned money There are no guides to what level of use is 'regular' BB

WHAT ON EARTH IS THIS PAGE?

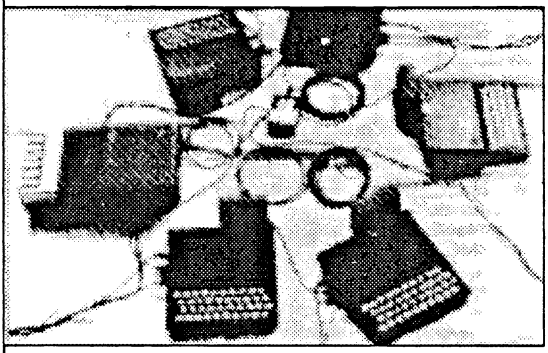
WELL, I HAD TO HAVE SOMEWHERE TO PUT THE 'MISFITS'.

'GOT ANY IDEAS FOR A NAME FOR THIS PAGE?

REMEMBER...YOU SAW IT HERE FIRST

GOVERNMENT TO GET WIRED

With the ever increasing complexity of running a government, John Major confirmed yesterday that the old traditions at Number 10 were to make way for a new system of office – aided by the latest in computer technology.



The Computer System to lead UK Politics into the next century...

NO.10 TO BECOME HOME FOR COMPUTERS

The entire political system of information will be held on magnetic media, and all MP's at board meetings will have access to, and be able to update any record,law or speech simultaneously through individual computers which will be networked for fast database retrieval. State-of-the-art equipment has been picked by the Cabinet, based on a large number of criteria, including speed, efficiency, and price. The Prime Minister, when asked whether this was the way forward spoke in defence of the new system, saying it would shorten the time spent on repetitive tasks allowing more time to be able to concentrate on the more important issues of government... BB

PUZZLE CORNER

GET YOUR LOGICAL HEAD INTO GEAR WITH THIS PROBLEM

Every month we hope to provide you with a puzzle. The solution will usually require a software program to be written for your BEEB to produce the required answer.

Your mission, therefore, will be to write the neatest, most efficient program that gives the required answer(s) in the quickest time. The best solutions will be printed in the next issue.

The challenge awaits you!

"The other day, I went to the bank to cash a cheque. With the money, I bought a newspaper costing 20p. When I examined the change, I realised that I had exactly twice the amount left than was originally drawn on the cheque, yet there was no other money in my pocket when I left home. I realised then that the bank cashier must have given me the wrong money for my cheque and transposed pounds for pence and pence for pounds..."

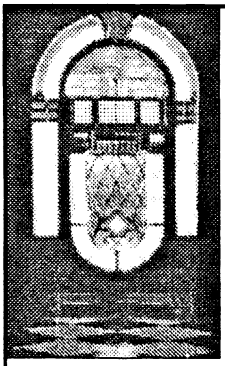
Question: How much was my cheque for?

Unfortunately, there are no clues! But I'm sure that you don't need any help as the solution can be programmed into seven lines of BASIC (and only one command per line too!). If this problem proves too easy, then BE WARNED! Next time things will be more difficult.

If you have any puzzles that you think are worthy of brainstorming then please send them to us at the address shown on the front cover of this magazine. BB

THE NEW MICRO USER

SOUNDING OFF WITH THE BBC MICRO. STARTING WITH A FEW EXAMPLES...



The idea of this section is to help those BBC owners who are not as familiar with their machines as they would like. You may be attending school, or you may be retired, it makes no bearing on how much you *ought* to know about a computer, or how far you can take things.

Perhaps there isn't ANYBODY who needs this level of learning, but in case there is, we'll pick a few basic points up each issue. If you would like us to deal with any particular area of the BBC, or if you would like us to increase/decrease the level at which we are working, let us know. In the meantime, just for those of us who like to mess about a bit from time to time, here are a few sound effects that the BBC can imitate. Next issue, we'll talk a little more about SOUND...

Phaser Fire
ENVELOPE 1,3,-17,61,9,4,0,0,126,0,0,-126,126,126 : SOUND 1,1,157,129

Hangover
ENVELOPE 3,1,-36,-93,-9,11,0,0,126,0,0,-126,126,126 : SOUND 1,3,148,222

Lost!
ENVELOPE 3,3,-46,2,-10,0,0,0,126,0,0,-126,126,126 :
SOUND 0,3,27,27

Parachute Descending
ENVELOPE 2,100,-16,99,-86,141,0,0,126,0,0,-126,126,126 :
SOUND 1,2,163,120

Telephone Cut Off
ENVELOPE 1,4,14,7,-3,0,0,0,126,0,0,-126,126,126 :
SOUND 1,1,167,45

More Money (Telephone)
ENVELOPE 1,6,-58,33,6,2,0,0,126,0,0,126,126,126 :
SOUND 1,1,173,227

Pinball Tilt
ENVELOPE 3,2,-15,-80,-6,15,0,0,126,0,0,-126,126,126 :
SOUND 1,3,156,27

Think you can do better than this? Do you have any sounds, short routines, or useful utilities that you've written? Why not share them with the world? (Presently a small portion of the world actually). Who knows, you may even become famous!

THE NOTICEBOARD

...NEXT ISSUE...

THE START OF A SERIES OF REVIEWS OF EARLY GAMES. WHICH ONES ARE WORTH TRACKING DOWN AT CAR BOOT FAIRS...

PERHAPS THE INCLUSION OF A PROGRAM OR TWO WOULDN'T GO AMISS - THIS IS A COMPUTER MAGAZINE AFTER ALL...

WE CONTINUE OUR SERIES ON SOUND. WHAT CAN THE BEEB ACTUALLY DO? WE'LL DELVE DEEPER INTO THE SOUND CHIP AND PAINLESSLY EXTRACT IMPERSONATIONS GALORE...

THERE'S MORE PUBLIC DOMAIN AND EDUCATION SOFTWARE REVIEWS, MORE NEWS FROM A GONE BUT NOT FORGOTTEN ERA BUT MOSTLY THERE'S JUST MORE MORE MORE...

DOES ANYBODY ELSE SUPPORT THE BBC?

- SOLINET – DFS Disc based magazine. Ron Marshall, 41 Westbrook Drive, Rainworth, Mansfield, Nottingham, NG21 0FB

- ELECTRON USER GROUP – magazine aimed at the Electron, but has some relevance to BEEB users. Will Watts, "EUG", 134 Great Knightleys, Basildon, Essex, SS15 5HQ

FURTHER READING

- ACORN USER – Monthly magazine. Covers mostly Archimedes, but some BBC stuff still in there, including the Classified Ads section.

CAN YOU HELP?...

This was the first issue of ByteBack. How was it? Was there something(s) missing that you would like to see? Is there enough of what you liked? This publication will only succeed if its readers contribute, so here and now I give you permission to criticise (but please be constructive!). Send your views to the address supplied, or you can fax us on 081-292-6594, and we will try to make this what you want it to be. The address is on page 1.

ACORN WORLD '93 OCTOBER 29-31

COMING TO A WEMBLEY CONFERENCE CENTRE NEAR YOU!

check out issue 2 of ByteBack for more details

HOW CAN I GET THIS MAGAZINE?

It should be obvious that you can't walk into your local WHSmith and pick up a copy of ByteBack, therefore the most logical conclusion is to get it by subscription. The cost of this will be to cover materials, postage and time. Because the future is unknown, subscription will only extend to the proceeding two issues. In a few months we should know better what's happening. Presently, 75pence should cover the cost of production (with 25p for postage) – I hope you don't think that's too excessive. Just return the form here (or a note to that effect) to our address, with a cheque (or P.O) made out to P.Harvey – we don't accept VISA...YET!

Name: _____

Address: _____

_____

Please send me ___ set(s) of the next two issues of ByteBack. I enclose:

☐ Cheque

☐ Postal Order

for £2.00 per pair (including postage) payable to P.Harvey

Total £_____

CLASSIFIED ADVERTS

FOR SALE

◆ **All manner of BBC ROMS** including Disc Doctor, Spellmaster, Wordwise Plus, etc. Also some books from beginners to experienced, BASIC and Assembly Language and program manuals. For further information, please call M.Pickering, 0270-761928 between 8pm and 9pm.

◆ **BBC B,** disc drive, mono monitor, Panasonic printer, joystick, software – £250. Contact Mr J Gayner, London. 081-946-4193

◆ **BBC B,** 3.5in disc drive, Plinth, 20 odd discs, manual – £95 ono. Contact A Strange, Somerset. 0823-672893

◆ **Watford 32K Shadow RAM,** as new, original box, full instructions – £25, BBC disc games, Pipeline, Sam 2, SpellBinder, Quest, Citadel, Castle Quest – all £5. Contact Mr. T Warner, Clwyd. 0978-751673

◆ **BBC B with DFS,** as new, original box and manual – £75, Cumana 40/80TK power supply unit disc drive – £75. Contact Mr. R Emmerson, Tyne & Wear. 091-417-1324

◆ **Master 128,** colour monitor, double 40/80TK double-sided disc drive, printer, games and utilities – £350 ono, BBC B+ 32K, tape recorder, modem, joystick, games – £120 ono. Contact Mr. D Beales, Newcastle Upon Tyne. 091-286-3668

◆ **BBC B,** Opus DDos, disc drive, cassette recorder, 1200/75, Modem, Rom board c/w Wordwise+, Intersheet, Quest, Paint, Toolkit, printer Rom, manuals, mouse, joystick – £200. Contact M Woodham, Middlesex. 081-868-5695

◆ **Cumana 80TK 5.25in disc drive** – £30, good condition. Contact A Chilinski, Northampton. 0604-413792

◆ **BBC B,** 80TK double disc drive, Speech, DFS, data recorder, games and hundreds of cassettes/discs, cost £320, sell for – £160 ono. Contact P Pankin. 0440-61318 after 3pm

◆ **Two BBC B's,** one with Interword etc, twin drive DDFS, green screen, daisy wheel, dot matrix c/o switch – £200 the lot. Contact M Dunmore, Oxon. 0608 810002

◆ **Master 128** – £150, 3.5/5.25in dual drive in plinth – £50, Master Modem – £40, Master 512 with mouse, Dabs books and Shareware collection – £100, manuals, software. Contact Mr. G Henderson, St Albans. 0727 8736063

◆ **BBC Master Compact 128,** disc drive, RGB colour monitor, Citizen 180E printer, joystick, games, View, wordprocessor, complete as new – £425 ono. Contact Mr.J Harris, Kent. 0304 367808

WANTED

◆ **BBC Acorn User** issue numbers 1-41, 43, 45, 47-50, 52, 84, 85, 99 – £10 ono, for sale or swap, issue 53. Contact Mr. E Ross, Cheltenham. 0242 231988

SWAP

◆ **This empty space** for your advert. Have you got anything BEEB-y that could go to a better home? What about exchanging your ROM board for a pile of software? Just fill in this little form and pop it in the post to us – it's just that simple!

Name: _____

Address: _____

_____

Signature: _____

In no more than 25 words, describe your ad below. **Private Advert**

Classified Adverts are private ads and they are free. Please make sure that everything you are offering is legitimate, eg non-pirated software.

PRODUCTS AND SERVICES

WE TRY TO GIVE YOU INFORMATION ON WHO IS DEALING WITH ANYTHING BBC RELATED. IF YOU KNOW OF SOMEONE WHO LOOKS AFTER OUR BEST INTERESTS BUT ISN'T REPRESENTED HERE, WHY NOT LET US KNOW. WRITE TO THE ADDRESS GIVEN ON PAGE 1, OR FAX DETAILS ON 081-292-6594

● **BBC PD**
18 Carlton Close, Blackrod, Bolton, BL6 5DL
A BBC Micro Public Domain software library.

● **HEADFIRST PUBLIC DOMAIN**
97 Chester road, SouthPort, PR9 7HH
Supporter of BBC, Electron and Archimedes computers through Shareware and Public Domain software.

● **ADVENTURE SOFT (UK) LTD**
PO Box 786, Sutton Coldfield, West Midlands, B74 4HG
A large choice of Adventure software.

● **WATFORD ELECTRONICS**
0582 487 777
About the biggest suppliers of hardware and software around.

● **SOFTWARE BARGAINS & MERCURY GAMES**
C/O Northwood House, North Street, Leeds, LS7 2AA
Plenty of Games and Educational Software.

● **C.J. COMPUTING**
57 Westbury Hill, Westbury-on-Trym, Bristol

● **DIXON & DIXON**
Mail Order Dept., 35 Rokeby Drive, Kenton, Newcastle upon Tyne, NE3 4JY

A PICTURE TELLS A THOUSAND STORIES...

DON'T FORGET TO ORDER YOUR COPIES OF BYTEBACK - OR YOU COULD BE LEFT FEELING LIKE A 'NANA...

You will be aware of the facility we have to 'scan' pictures into this magazine. Having suddenly thought of a way in which we can 'exploit' this facility to its fullest potential, I have come up with an idea, not entirely original in concept, but what the heck, who ever had an original thought in their life? Before we get into a heavy debate, here is the plan: can you put a humorous caption to a supplied picture, a sort of 'captions' competition? We'll have to sort something out as a prize. I'll decide whether I think any of the *numerous* entries are good enough to warrant one. To start the ball rolling, take the picture shown here (of a well known comic) as an example. You've seen my effort, now let's see yours! Answers on a postcard...

● **BRILLIANT COMPUTING**
FREEPOST, Box 142, Bradford, BD9 4BR. (No stamp required)
0274 497617/578239
Quality software for Special Needs, Nursery and Infant Education.

● **FILL THIS SPACE**
Do you trade with BBC equipment? Then contact ByteBack to fill this space with your company details.

Companies are listed here because they support the BBC in some form. It does not mean that they are recommended by us. Most of these we may never have contacted. If you can recommend a supplier, why not let us know?

AND FINALLY...

BYTEBACK IS, AND WILL BE CONSTANTLY ON THE LOOKOUT FOR THE PRODUCTS OF ITS READERS MANY TALENTS. EVERY MICRO USER HAS THE ABILITY TO OFFER SOMETHING WORTHY OF PRINTING IN THIS MAGAZINE, SO WHAT ARE YOU WAITING FOR? WE'VE GOT QUITE A FEW PLANS FOR FUTURE ISSUES, DIFFERENT TOPICS THAT WILL INVOLVE ALL OF YOU CLUBBING TOGETHER FOR A COMMON END - I'LL SAY NO MORE HERE, YOU'LL JUST HAVE TO SUBSCRIBE TO FIND OUT!

BYTEBACK NEEDS:

YOUR THOUGHTS, IDEAS, MOANS AND LIFESTORIES (TO BE EDITED INTO A MINI-SERIES)

YOUR PROGRAMS, HOWEVER LARGE OR SMALL, PROFESSIONAL OR OTHERWISE

YOUR TIPS, PROBLEMS, ADVICE, SECRETS

YOUR AIMS AND ASPIRATIONS

BUT MOST OF ALL

YOU!

BB