

6809 USER

Edition 14, January 1990

Editorial

Here we are again how time flies, I hope that you have all sobered up after Christmas, and it was nice to see some of you at the Weston Show including Roland Hewson who I would like to welcome to the team. Those of you who couldn't make it missed a great day and many bargains. I see from the letters that you enjoyed the last issue, I hope that I have laid to rest the ghost writer who was putting spurious characters into the text. David Rothery's last article in issue twelve was so riddled with mistakes as to make it unreadable. It is reprinted this month.

Many of you have written in with queries about New Era, etc. So I have reprinted an interview with Donald Morrison of Dragon Logic on page two. Ken Smith's COMMS blew up this month!

Contrary to the opinion that Paul Grade thinks that I have regarding Simon Jones. I believe that Simon put a lot of effort into the Dragon scene and developed from nothing a fine magazine which is no mean achievement for someone of his tender years. So get your facts right Paul. An apology would be nice as well.

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Telephone Number

(Saturday evenings only)

Editor
Roger Quaintance

Artist/Design
Sotos Mandalos, Roger Quaintance

Features Editor
Ken Smith

Operating Systems
David Rothery

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Subscriptions
UK £7.00 for 6 issues. Overseas (surface)
£12.00 for 6 issues

Editorial Address: Sunnydale Publications,
PO Box 13, Ilfracombe, North Devon, EX34
8PB, United Kingdom.

Typeset and Artset by Sotos Mandalos,
Twyford, Berkshire

Printed & Published
Sunnydale Publications

125p Per issue (add 15p for postage)

It is important to realise that 6809 USER is an amateur magazine. It is not registered anywhere and is purely produced out of interest and affection for the Dragon.

Every effort is made within limits to ensure consistency and readability. Our aim is to keep the readers' interests high in order to get the magazine established among the Dragon users. It is therefore essential that users should be encouraged to provide

articles of general interests and above all articles about the Dragon. If you want to get your article published, please provide copies of the contents in A4 size format. A good printed copy is also preferred. Sunnydale Publications understands that not all readers have a printer or typewriter so the above rules are not strictly essential.

We will try to publish all material. Please note, that in the interest of all readers, make sure that all software submitted for publication is free of bugs.

If you need an advice or indication regarding the above contact the editorial address.

Contributions to 6809 User will ensure our support for the Dragon micro.

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EDITOR'S INTERVIEW

Donald Morrison of Dragon Logic interviews Roger Quaintance

Q. Why did you set up Sunnysoft and what did you hope to achieve by doing so?

A. I have for many years written specialist programs for my own use and also to tutor others, my wife and I run an animal rescue centre and when ways were being sought to finance it the question of selling my software was raised. Enter SUNNYSOFT, the receipts from which go to SUNNYDALE ANIMAL RESCUE.

Q. Why did you make a personal choice to buy a Dragon?

A. I first bought a Dragon when they were being sold off cheaply following the demise of Dragon Data. It was simply the best value for money (as time has proved) around at the time.

Q. What experience did you have with the Dragon prior to setting up SUNNYSOFT?

A. Many years using and programming for my own enjoyment.

Q. How do you rate the Dragon as a games machine.

A. Not being familiar with the facilities and games available on other computers, I can only say that I am surprised that so much has been got out of so little memory. My main interest are utility programs for radio and business, word processors, spreadsheets, graphics packages etc.

Q. What do you like best about the Dragon?

A. The answer to that one is simple apart from being a programmers machine the real winning point is the people who use it.

Q. Do you think that Dragon users are doing enough to keep the Dragon alive?

A. A few people are doing a lot but a lot of people are doing very little, every Dragon owner owes it to himself to contribute something on a regular basis, most people think that just subscribing to a magazine is sufficient, it is NOT, without feedback, in the form of letters/articles no magazine can survive and without them a stalemate situation will soon be reached.

Q. Has your work with the Dragon been an enjoyable experience and what has made it worthwhile?

A. I must have found it enjoyable; to have taken over the 6809 User, as no one would take on that amount of work if they didn't. What really makes it all worthwhile is the wonderful friends that I have made, even if they didn't buy me a drink at Hove.

Q. In the light of the recent takeover of New Era, could you explain the reasoning behind your decision to buy the company?

A. I have not taken over New Era. I have not bought 6809 User. I have taken over the production of 6809 USER, which is a totally different thing. My reason for doing so was simply to continue the magazine and to improve service available to other Dragon users.

Q. What exactly does the deal with Simon Jones involve?

A. There was no "DEAL" as such. A sum of 65p for each outstanding issue was passed over with the membership list. This sum irrespective of what was actually paid by contributors was all that Simon had left. I am now responsible for 6809 USER. All previous debts, if any, and other NEW ERA's products remain the responsibility of SIMON JONES. I did expect to receive the FULL amount paid by contributors, but it will not affect the future of the magazine.

Q. How confident are you that the decision to take control of New Era was the right one?

A. I do NOT control New Era, I am advised by Simon that the company is no longer trading. With regard to 6809 User I have no doubts that the decision was the right one.

Q. How do you respond to critics who describe New Era's literature as being economical with the truth and do you feel the controversy 6809 User has invariably stirred has affected its standing in the Dragon community?

A. I can only assume that the so called critics have not read the magazine lately I am not prepared to print anything that I have not personally checked, I cannot comment on previous policy as I had no control over it. My job is to produce an interesting and informative magazine This I will do my utmost to achieve without rubbishing other publications, or entering into personal backbiting.

Q. How confident are you that you can successfully revitalise 6809 User?

A. How can you revitalise something that is so vibrant and successful what I do intend to do is to increase our overseas coverage, which at present is only five other countries, and to further improve content and presentation.

Q. How do you rate the Dragon as an alternative to the machines available today?

A. As long as I am able to do all of the things that I want to on the Dragon I have no interest in looking at other machines, however many go faster stripes they have.

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6809 user will publish your letters regarding Dragon matters. It is our aim to provide the platform for suggestions, actions, new ideas and communication between our readers. Send your letters to 6809 User, Sunnydale Publications, PO Box 13, Ilfracombe, North Devon, EX34 8PB.

Extra Commands

Excellent! The only way to describe edition 13 of 6809 User. Well done to you all.

Now, I wonder if you would like to include these notes on some extra BASIC facilities that aren't in the Dragon manual.

1. I expect that everyone is familiar with the function MID\$, but the manual makes no mention of the STATEMENT MID\$.

MID\$(X\$,m,n)="string"

Try XS="ABCDE"

then MID\$(X\$,3,1)="X"

this will change X\$ to "ABXDE"

2. I think every one knows about &H, used to enter number in HEX form, but how many know about &O (letter O) used to enter OCTAL numbers. Again, no mention of this in the manual.

3. Now for some additional BASIC editing commands.

'L' LIST line as changed, remain in edit mode.

'A' RESTART without incorporating changes so far, a sort of OOPS!

'E' Stop edit session and enter changes. Like pressing ENTER, but line is not displayed.

'Q' QUIT edit without entering changes. An OK prompt is displayed, does this imply a warm start?

SHIFT + UP ARROW leave ANY edit mode, not just INSERT as implied in the manual.

To my eternal shame this was typed on a COMPAQ 286 PC (what's a COMPAQ 286 ? - Ed) compatible. But then I haven't got a WP, or Printer for the Dragon so I hope I'll be excused! (No...Ed)

All the best for now and best wishes for Christmas & the New Year.

David R Marsden, 67 Fourth Avenue, Garston, Watford, WD2 6QH.

Ed - Thanks for the information. Compaq? What is that? How about getting a Centronics cable and Editext from Preston's and get your letters printed via your trustworthy Dragon and printer?

Praise for 6809 User

Received today my copy of Issue 13. I had a shock when I first saw it! I thought it was Dragon User come back to life, the front page is almost identical.

First impressions? WOW! at last we now have a professional style magazine, well laid out, consistent font, and readable. The likes of which have not been seen since the demise of Dragon User. Those who have given up subscriptions do not know what they are now missing. The first problem will be in letting them know and winning them back, the second will be increasing the number of contributors.

I see that Mr Cleghorn has responded to my suggestion re the Terminal Emulation (edition 9). Will he be expanding it on the lines of 'I have an 80 column terminal, now what do I do with it' the obvious will be to reset text screen output to the new 80 column format. But what about M/C programs ie Word Processors etc. Also perhaps could provide a more detailed description on the actual connections, does the second computer need a comms program as well? I did notice that he was selling all his gear as well, hopefully not leaving the Dragon scene altogether! Also the comms listing is at &H600 which is the first graphics page, (except when DOS is fitted) then it is moved up one, can I start the listing from &H0C00 so that I can use the disc drive still. Or use a program which copies DOS to the cartridge area. I look forward eagerly to my next issue.

Frank J Fisher, 29 Thornham Road, Gillingham, Kent, ME8 6RE.

Ed - Thanks Frank. Martin reassures us that he is not leaving the Dragon World.

OS9 News

Some information of interest for all OS9 users:

1. The OS9 user group previously run by Martin Vernon is alive and well, and living in Köln, it's run by Burghard (Butz) Kinzel. Butz's English is very good. I wish my German was up to his standard. You can contact him at Leipziger Ring Ertstadt, West Germany. Phone from UK from Germany. He has already produced a couple of discs, and is looking for more software for the next issue. Butz has a Coco with Level 2, and it is very nice indeed, especially with the hard disc.

2. For people using the 68000 OS9 as well as the 6809 version, there are more goodies. Barry Knapp and Malcolm Cowen have been improving the user interface, and one of the nice bits on offer is an emulator to put a Dragon online to a 68000 system as a second terminal, as well as being used in its own right. It's based on a program from Chris Jolly, and it makes two good systems in their own right into one even better one. If you have a 68000 OS9 System or know of anyone who does, then give Malcolm Cowen a ring in Manchester, or write to 23, Bristol Ave, Levenshulme, Manchester, M19 3NU. If you are interested in improving any OS9 system we want to know you! Malcolm Cowen, Manchester.

Ed - This is good news for OS9 users. The information supplied from Malcolm is welcome. Of course don't forget, our David Rothery's regular column is back this month, in proper order.

David Rothery replied to the letter of Sotos Mandalos regarding the multitasking facilities of 6809E microprocessor. However, it came too late to be included in this edition.



ADVENTURER'S LAIR

Robert Cleminson solves STALAG and gives all the information we need to tackle adventures



Here we are again trying vainly to get something down on paper and sent in before the deadline passes and our illustrious editor sends his hit squad to collect. (You think he's joking? - Ed)

First off, there's Tim Lees down there in Brighton (hope you enjoyed the show Tim), now Tim tells me that he has been stuck inside a sphinx for over a year now and can't get out to go for a pint (at least I think that's what he wants to get out for). Now the said sphinx happens to be found in channel 8's TIME MACHINE. Unfortunately I don't happen to have that adventure as yet, but riding to the rescue on a large brown envelope is TOM WILKINSON who kindly sent me a few maps/solutions, one of which just happens to be said TIME MACHINE. So without further ado here goes:- Assuming you found and took the pistol and flashlight from the house before entering the machine then from outside you should TAKE SHOVEL (required elsewhere) PRESS STONE, GO OPENING (the door now Closes on you, right Tim) LIGHT FLASH, GO NORTH, SOUTH, GET ROCK, GO SOUTH, PULL LEVER, JAM LEVER, (that's what the rock's for), GET SPEAR, GO NORTH, NORTH, GO DOOR, CLIME STATUE, GET PRISM, GO DOWN, SHOOT DOGE GO OPENING, GO SOUTH, GO PORTAL. That should get you back to the machine.

Now having got that out of way, modesty forbids but a few of you may have seen my name as the winner of the quiz the last time around. Well this is just to say that the prize arrived on the doorstep the other day and the lessons have been proceeding apace. (I never knew I could reach notes quite that high. Is that how choirboys do it?). Thanks a bunch lads. The solution this month is STALAG by Dragon Data. The scenario is that you are locked in the hot box (as a punishment (for not writing to this column)) in a prisoner of war camp and must escape, and soon, as the camp has been evacuated prior to an air raid and you just seem to have been forgotten about.



To get out of the box you must first as always take inventory to find out what if anything you have with you. On finding the needle you can pick the lock and start your race against time. The first move is south then up. Here you find a power switch supplying the electrified fence so you might as well push the switch and cut the power to the fence (you might not have time to come back and do it later on). Go down, and west drop the needle and pick up the axe. This is no time to rest so going North then East you find

yourself in the shower hut where you espy a leather jacket, property of one Col Hogan (anyone remember Hogan's Heroes). Marked on the jacket is a serial No 660723, so remembering this number proceed West, South, East and use the combination to open the lock then go South, West, North where you should find a can opener. Taking the can opener proceed South, East, North, West, North, East, East, East, examine the icebox and get the tin open the tins get Ham then drop both tin and opener and go West, South, and drop the ham (this feeds the dog thus preventing it from tasting you). While the dog is otherwise occupied take the football and head for the prison hospital going North, West, West, West, Now examine the football and the lace. Look on the table to find a pair of scissors and use them to cut the lace and release the key which you should now obtain. Drop the football, lace and scissors and go East, North, West, North then examine the locker. Ignoring the belt close the locker and examine it again and you will find a shovel, get the shovel and head South, East, East, East, North open the padlock on the door with the key then open the door and go North. Move the beds and look then lift the tiles and look again. Throw the tiles away and then lift the floorboards and do likewise with them. Go Down, East and dig tunnel, go up, then go home and write your war memoirs and live it up. Now it is a little while since 'I' asked for help, and both Circus and Escape are long finished, however I still don't know whether there is one talisman or two in the altar room or indeed if the mummy in the sarcophagus can be revived (both in waxworks) and to keep the tally up does anyone know how to place the good luck charm on the count in Voodoo Castle. Over to you.

Tips this time round:-

- 1 -Don't bet on the horses unless you can afford to lose
- 2 - KEYS OF THE WIZARD ... to get the scroll you need the rope, and to get the dragons sword you need the lantern.
- 3 - DEATH MINES OF SIRUS ... code for the first adventure is CBLW and for the second is TLL
- 4 - GOLDEN BATON ... to feed the crab, feed it with slugs...to pass the lizard WAVE QUARTZ
- 5 - SORCERER OF CLAYMORGUE CASTLE ... don't use the Sesame Seed Spell to get inside the castle. Go for a watery entrance instead.

Well that's it this time around, slightly shorter, but still jam packed with rubbish. Now to get on with trying to solve the rest of the worlds problems and await the deluge of mail I feel sure the post office is stockpiling somewhere. HAPPY ADVENTURING AND DON'T FORGET TO MAKE THOSE MAPS.

WHO'S THE CRAZY ONE ?

Ken Smith says that the Dragon is all you need

Have you ever had the feeling that either you are going mad or the rest of the world has beaten you to it. I get it more and more these days. I start reading one of the computer magazines and within a couple of pages I start to doubt my sanity. It usually comes on about half way through the hardware reviews where there is bound to be a benchmark of the latest Xenon Gargantubrain. The reviewer will rave about how many megabytes it has and how many million pixels made up the screen display. When he or she gets to the price tag, usually longer than Linda Lusardi's legs, that is usually treated as insignificant. In many cases it would take me three to six months to earn that much money. Why then am I expected to believe that it is great value for money does it fly, mow the lawn, make the dinner, no it is a computer.

As you know I recently attended the alternative Micro Show, I quite enjoyed it but I can understand that anyone expecting a glitzy show would be disappointed. However, the only review I could find in the general computer press had such a taste of sour grapes that I could hardly believe it. After making comments about supposed bargains consisting of old monitors and out of date printers the reviewer went on to say that "some stalls were trying to make out that at just under two hundred pounds the Star LC10 was a bargain price". Now, I scoured that magazine and nowhere could I find the same printer being offered at less than two hundred and ten plus postage and packing. It makes you wonder whether it was written by a junior reportee who was made to cover the show as a punishment for revealing some of the bugs in the latest D.T.P. system. The thing that amazes me is the total lack of comprehension that there are people who cannot commit suicide by jumping off their wallet. After all, if you don't have a printer and can't afford the latest 98 pin, letter quality, superfast, silent model, what is so wrong with buying an older model? Come to that where is the logic in buying a new computer when the old one still does everything you need.

You may have noticed that I am trying to resist the temptation to go off into a tirade of abuse against people who give up their old machines to buy one of the new generation of toys. I resist it because I know that there are often good reasons for a change. Both the Dragon and the CoCo lack the memory and MIDI to link up with musical instruments and their screen display precludes their use for Computer aided Design in any professional way. However, in the domestic

situation there are not many uses to which either machine cannot be put, yet still otherwise logical people go out and spend a fortune on the latest megabrain only to find that it is still only a computer. The pictures may be great, the sounds may be wonderful but the game or program is still limited by the same factor, the imagination of the person who wrote it. In some cases it is actually worse than the original.

I have seen a game running on an Atari ST which, because of the tremendous amount of screen information that needed to be updated all the time, ran slower than the Dragon version. So why are we falling for it? Well, the truth is that a good copy writer can beat logic anytime. New is good, old is bad, we must consume. Rivers of oil and forests of trees must disappear to satisfy our passion and still we go on. The problem is

I don't know why it is that my friends call me when they can't make their new machines perform properly. Maybe I have had my Dragon long enough to learn something.

that the pressure does not end with the advertising. Most of US can write off an advert as being totally biased and one sided. However, the people we trust to give objective opinions are not necessarily giving them. Many of the larger computer magazines are totally dependent on advertising revenue for their survival. This fact is something of which most editors are only too painfully aware, so when Ed is told that Epsilon Beta has just taken two page colour advertising in every issue for the next year; and by the way they would like a review of

their latest printer, is that review really likely to be objective?. On the strength of one such review, my son recently bought an art package for his computer. When he encountered several problems with it he wrote to the publishers who took over a month to reply and even then only referred him to a phone line that they had set up. Eventually the local shop replaced the offending article with a mark 2 version. I don't ever remember such bad service in the 6809 market but that is not the point. The point is that in the afore mentioned review there was no mention of the bugs or the fact that one megabyte of memory was needed in order to perform most of the wonderful tricks that made it attractive. Now, I am not saying that your current eight bit machine can do all the things that the sixteen bit megabrain can do. All I am saying is that you before you make a dash for your cash, you should consider whether or not you really need the extra capabilities. The other thing to remember is that, when compared to machines like PC clones, your Dragon or

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ROLAND'S RAMBLES

Roland Hewson well known from his work on Dragon User talks about the Dragon micro

As David Frost would say, "Hello Good Morning and Welcome" and it is very welcome news indeed that Roger has agreed to continue to run the 6809 User and will improve its format.

Not to be out - done, he has prevailed upon me to write something; sartorial, elegant or anything that I can think of in relation to the Dragon. In the past I have always attempted to express myself in Reviews of Programs etc. not given free reign to write as I please. It's a little like saying "if only I had a thousand pounds to spend" and then somebody gives you a million ----- if only!

Well for the first attempt I'd like to refresh everybody's memory to Happier Days - Do you remember the First Edition of Dragon World in December 1983? It's aims and objectives were simple; "to help Dragon Users with information and also to help them contact other users to meet and exchange ideas". Unfortunately the wrong things began to happen and we all hoped that when GEC Mc Michael took on the Marketing of Dragon Data's products, accompanied by it's fanfare for OS9 and a new professional machine, we were all 'saved'. Not so, as in November 1984, less than one year after the launch of Dragon World we found that GEC had negotiated cut price deals with Boots and Dixons. Machines that had cost £200 plus back at it's launch in August 1982 were now to cost £48 and Dragon 64's £75. We were told by GEC that it had an agreement with Eurohard to sell their products. Yes you heard --- Eurohard. What products? At the 6809 colour show Saturday 17th. November, whilst trying out the new professional machine with it's built - in disc drives etc. etc., the news came of the demise of Dragon in the U.K. and that it had actually been sold to Eurohard. The year 1984 saw the disappearance of Tycom and Computers, however Amstrad came out and so did the Japanese launched MSX. (what - ever happened to that?) George Orwell wrote about 1984 and Big Brother, but he did not foresee the shakeout of computer and software companies and the subsequent emergence of IBM compatibles. Nevertheless, Dra-

gons are hard to kill, even St. George discovered this, but the writing was on the wall for national availability of programs in the shops and in July 1986 the excellent Dragon User went subscription only. To it's credit and those who predicted it wouldn't last six months, Dragon User continued until January 1989. A tribute to it's valiant editor Helen Armstrong and to the Dragon Owners who supported it. Well here we are in 1990 and by virtue of the fact that you are reading this, you still own, operate and show interest in the Dragon. It has now become a "cult" machine, unlike the Electron, the Oric or the Atmos, the Dragon still continues proving that at the time of it's launch it was way ahead of the opposition and the oft - told excuse for incorrect billing incorrect spelling of "Oh it's the computer!" definitely points to "Oh it's the human factor".

Following this story of doom and gloom, Dragon Owners are told "Your machine's dead but it won't lie down!" Well why should it? I have yet to find something that with ingenuity it will not overcome. I can still produce pictures on my Micro Robotics camera - but true I haven't got a mouse - (where's that squeak coming from?). I remember reading somewhere that somebody was working on this - so if that somebody is reading this

Well let's be positive, the Dragon is still with us five years after it's supposed not to be, so reverting back to 1983, "to help Dragon users with information and to help them contact others --- etc. etc." has worked, we are still here, we are still using the machine and we still want more. However, we have to help ourselves and that's what we are doing. There is still a mass of material around, new ideas are still being born and the Dragon still has fire in its belly. The one day wonders have been and gone and the old die - hards like us are still here. Good for us and long may it continue - see you next issue.

Roland Hewson

WHO'S THE CRAZY ONE ? *continued from page 7*

CoCo is positively friendly. Yes I do know about the Gem systems etc, but what they do not tell you is that the machine does not boot up with that system and if you want to use it then you will have to compile your own disc to operate as a turnkey system. Perhaps you may be influenced by the so called wealth of software available, if so you may be disappointed. It never ceases to amaze me just how many of these programs do exactly the same thing. If you have a particular purpose for your machine then why not write to the software house to see if it can be done on your current machine. Alternatively you could always write it yourself or failing that get someone else to write it for you, you will find no shortage of people willing to help and

it is a darn sight cheaper than a new machine. As I said before, perhaps it is me who is crazy.

Perhaps we were born to consume or perhaps we just go on doing it because we are too frightened to stop.

The fact is I don't know the answer. But I do know that I can't justify spending several hundred pounds just because something new is on the market. I do not know why it is that my friends call me when they can't make their new machines perform properly.

Maybe I have had my Dragon long enough to learn something.

Feature written by Ken Smith.

FLEX - OS9

David Rothery gives more information on these two popular Operating Systems

You will not have failed to notice that my last article was liberally sprinkled with parenthetic comments with the initials 'sot'. Now what silly sot would do a thing like that? (Answer - a drunken sot!). See here, Sotos, you caused a lot of confusion with your interjections! (If you think I am using quite a lot long words it's just to see if he gets the spelling right). First, a filter is a utility, but a special kind, as its name implies. Using one of the most interesting features of OS9, its ability to 'pipe', you can link utilities together so that the output of one goes to the input of the next. Thus:

```
d ! sort ! col 6
```

gives a sorted directory arranged in 6 columns. 'd' is a directory utility which outputs one word per line. This goes into 'sort', which puts it into alphabetical order, and the output from 'sort' goes into 'col' which puts it into however many columns you specify. So 'sort' and 'col' are filters with an input and an output, just like your coffee filters! And if you can't find any of the above programs on your OS9 disk, you obviously haven't sent for PD1, one of the two disks I was offering last time.

You will remember 'sot' also offered to walk to the Hove show it could multitask on a 6809. He knows he was safe, as the show was only a day or so after publication, but if you care to walk to Glossop instead, Sotos, I will happily demonstrate 'mailmerge' printing a mailshot (i.e. multiple printings of a letter where the names of different recipients are inserted from a previously prepared file) at the same time as I am writing a new letter with 'Stylo'. Granted, memory limitations mean I can't write the Great English Novel on it, but there is enough memory to be useful. The 6809 is so fast you don't notice it is doing two jobs except during disk accesses. Also I am told you can link two Dragons or CoCos and both of them can use the same program at the same time, since OS9 programs are reentrant. I haven't done this myself, but have no reason to believe that leading persons on the OS9 scene like Dale Puckett are liars! So get yer boots on, Sotos!

The big OS9 news of the month is that I received Newdisk19 from the OS9 User Group. This is the first since Burghard Kinzel took over with Martin Verno's blessing. Most of you will know that Martin got himself snowed under and stopped sending regular issues about twelve months ago. The Newdisk follows the usual pattern, with a few letters and a number of utilities mostly contributed by R. J. Telkman. These are mostly updates of the normal OS9 commands such as dir, copy etc., but with extra facilities or improved effi-

ciency. There are no long articles, but instructions are provided for all the new commands and also the sources for you to play around with. A bit thinner on material than some of the earlier disks, but a very worthwhile acquisition for any OS9 owner. So do join the group, and give Burghard as much support as possible, both morally and also by contributing material if you can. Burghard's address is: Burghard Kinzel, Leipziger Ring 22a, D-5042 Erstadt, West Germany.

I believe two more disks are already being prepared.

There seems to be some demand for basic information from those who have either just started with OS9 or who dipped into it and couldn't make much sense of the manual. So I hope the OS9 'freaks' will bear with

me while I write a bit about directories. (Who knows - you might even learn something!)

The standard version of OS9 uses a core program called 'shell' to interpret your commands to access files etc. It gives automatic access to two directories. The execution directory is set to /d0/CMDS when you boot up so that when you type a command name it looks it up in the directory. When you want to access a file it looks to the working directory, which is /d0 to start with. So

Stylo letter

calls the Stylo program from /d0/CMDS and then loads in the file 'letter' from /d0. Note that directory names are usually in capital letters, but don't have to be. Think of a directory as a general heading under which filenames are grouped. Although when organising the disk OS9 treats the disk entry for CMDS just like any other filename all attempts to access CMDS using list, del, copy etc. will fail, giving a 'no access permission' error. This is because the directory entry has a special 'd' attribute set. All this means in practice is that you can only create a directory with the Mkdir command and delete it using the Deldir command, and then only if it is empty. You could, in fact delete it by removing the 'd' attribute

```
attr -d
```

and then using Del, but it is safer to use Deldir. Quite a few people have been puzzled when receiving user-group disks and typing Dir to get something like

```
LETTERS LIBRARY CMDS NEWS ARTS
```

and then find that when they type 'list news' they get an error. That is because NEWS is a directory, not a file.

The 6809 is so fast you don't notice it is doing two jobs except during disk access.

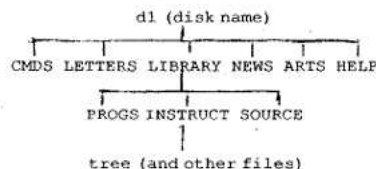
Now many people tend to type long pathlists to access files, so that with the Newdisk they type

```
list /d1/library/instruct/tree
```

to get information about 'tree' if you are wanting a lot of instructions it is easier to type

```
'cmd /d1/library/instruct'
```

which sets the working directory to INSTRUCT, and then 'list tree'. You can then list any other files which are in the library under the heading 'instruct'.



If all this makes little sense to you the diagram should help. It omits all actual files except the one in which we are interested, and shows how the pathname is traced by OS9.

Now suppose you get this Usergroup disk and have no idea what is on it. I will show you a system which few people seem to make good use of which is incredibly convenient once you get the hang of it. First do a 'chd /d1'. Now type 'dir' and you will get a list of the directories on the FIRST row from CMDS to HELP. Now to get further down the LIBRARY path type 'chd /library' followed by 'dir'.

Why the dot? This stands for the directory you are in at the moment. So you will now see

```
PROGS INSTRUCT SOURCE
```

and by typing 'chd /instruct' followed by 'dir' we at last see the files like 'tree' in lowercase letters. But suppose after listing 'tree' we want to read the assembly language source file of 'tree'? Most people would type:

```
'list /d1/library/source/tree', assuming the original source file of 'tree' is in the SOURCE directory. Instead, try:
```

```
'list ../source/tree' (the two dots mean "go back one directory level").
```

You can even use 'list ../help/helpfile' assuming 'helpfile' was a file in the HELP directory. So each dot takes you back to the next higher directory. If you lose track and want to get back to the root directory of the disk, use 'chd ..'. Just give a load of dots, as if there are too many it won't give an error. You will now be back to /d1.

The dot system is very useful in a situation I described last time when a programmer has hard-coded a reference to a particular disk drive in his program. Thus Stylo picks up help files from directory /d0/STY each time you press CONTROL A and the C compiler looks for a LIB directory etc. on drive /d1. Too bad if you are

using a hard disk or have put all your files on one 80 track disk and have only a single drive and have no d!! I suggested using 'dump' to find where the programmer had written /d1 and changing it to /d0 or whatever. A more sophisticated method is to change /d1 to ... This means that WHATEVER drive you are using, the program will always go to the root directory on that disk (unless you are well down the tree!) The dot system is certainly useful!

One last point. Microware in the States have available a new shell called Kshell which is a direct replacement for shell. By typing

```
path=/d1/cmds: /d0/cmds: /d1/library/progs
```

you create THREE more execution directories! If you now type 'grep', where grep is a command somewhere in your drives, the kshell will try your normal execution directory first, followed by all the others you have specified, in that order. Cool! Also, Kshell takes wildcards, so if you have saved a letter under the name 'Marks_and_Spencer1', you can list it, delete it etc by using a command such as

```
list mar*
```

assuming it is the only file beginning with 'mar'. Or you can delete all your backup files using 'del *.bak'. The asterisk stands for any number of letters, so it will delete all files ending in '.bak'. But that's not all! Up to four macros can be specified, so that if you type

```
$1=list /d1/LETTERS
```

then every time you type something like

```
$1/Fred
```

it is equivalent to typing 'list /d1/letters/Fred' - a great time saver! The only penalty is that the shell takes rather more memory, but this is offset by the fact that you no longer need to keep Printer in memory, as Kshell has its own error message device built in.

I have waffled on so long about OS9 that FLEX users will be tearing their hair out! (Or should it be 'hairs', since they presumably have more than one?) I promise that next time FLEX will have the lion's share with a review of FLEX COBOL. I also promise to be nice to Sotos (no-one would be daft enough to offend someone who has to typeset this lot!).



LOOKING TO THE FUTURE

K Redhead puts the Dragon first among equals and looks in the future.

I believe I speak for all my fellow Dragon and Tandy enthusiasts then I ask all the Editorial Team at 6809 User to accept our thanks and congratulations of their efforts to produce a magazine for us in the vacuum left by the demise of Dragon User. I am certain that given the right impetus, there is every reason to suppose that 6809 User will eventually replace and perhaps even surpass Dragon User in terms of quality and content - not to mention subscriber levels.

But not yet. The impetus I referred to above will be generated and sustained only by the overall level of professionalism displayed by the magazine and the equally critical level of response to it in the form of subscriber numbers and participation. Unfortunately, this is the classic, "chicken and egg" dilemma; a quality magazine of necessity incurs significant overheads in terms of time and production costs, which in turn require a sufficiently large subscriber base to justify and support them. On the other hand, potential subscribers will not be willing to part with their cash in exchange for a magazine which is not of a sufficiently high standard, and thus a self-defeating downward spiral is formed.

In my view, therefore, the future success and continuation of 6809 User is essentially dependent upon preventing such a downward spiral developing for, once allowed to do so, the resulting apathy will feed upon itself until the magazine is eventually forced to cease publication.

As far as the magazine itself is concerned, it's good and improving steadily, but it can be better still. I welcome the impending change to A4 format, as this will not only give greater scope for layout and design, but will also bring it into line with publications devoted to other computers. In addition, may I present the following points for consideration:

- a) An increased use of colour and pictures.
- b) Having the magazine professionally printed on high quality gloss or semi-gloss paper.
- c) Investigating the possibility of persuading erstwhile contributors to Dragon User, such as Gordon Lee and Brian Cadge, to resume their columns in 6809 User on a regular paid basis.
- d) Encouraging contributions from readers, whether letters, articles, queries or programs, again paying appropriate fees.
- e) Resuming monthly as opposed to by-monthly publication.
- f) Bringing the existence of the magazine to the other as wide a potential readership as possible by advertising in other publications, such as Computer Mart.

g) Finally, care must be taken with editing and proof-reading so that printing errors and spelling mistakes are reduced to an absolute minimum, as these are irritating and detract from the overall impression.

I am aware that all this is asking a great deal, and would entail 6809 User developing from a semi- into a fully professional magazine. Well why not? If the stated intention to replace Dragon User is to be taken seriously, then it is my contention that editorial policy ought to be developed along these lines. If subscriptions need to be increased to provide the required finance, so be it. I for one would be willing to pay more in return for receiving a quality magazine in the style of Dragon User in its early days, and I'm sure that other readers feel the same way. As for producing the magazine in tape or disc form, I must confess I find myself in two minds on the subject. I accept the points made in the Sept/Oct issue in favour of the idea but? on the other hand, having it in printed form makes it far easier to sit back, relax and enjoy a good read. Personally, I would prefer the continuation of the printed version, with perhaps an occasional tape or disc included by way of supplement. At this point, it becomes appropriate to look at the Dragon scene in general. The user-base is declining, both as a result of Software Houses and hardware suppliers discontinuing their products and through the users themselves gradually abandoning the Dragon in favour of more modern computers. We may question the wisdom or necessity of this in many cases, but we are constrained to recognise hard facts. It seems to me, therefore, that attempting to produce and sell anything to such a market, be it software, magazines or anything else, cannot be regarded as a realistic or sustainable venture. The necessity of halting and reversing this decline naturally follows, more especially now that Eurohard seems to have disappeared into the Bermuda Triangle, or wherever. and so, pursuing the thought to its logical conclusion, it becomes apparent that what is needed is a new computer, capable of running existing Dragon/Tandy software, and able to rival, for example, anything being produced by Amstrad or Atari.

With this in mind, I was much encouraged to read in the Sept/Oct. edition of 6809 User that such a machine, the Dragon Tangent, has been developed by Protech Systems, albeit still in prototype form. Its specification sounds impressive and provided it meets modern design and operating criteria (eg., 80 column screen and built-in drives), it may well prove to be the lifeline the Dragon World is so desperately in need of. Moreover, if it incorporates the modification mentioned on page 28 of the April/May edition, thus allowing it to

continued next page

We will publish all your adverts in the 6809 User. Please make sure that the information given is correct. On the envelope please mark "Advertisement", so that it can be processed accordingly.

WANTED

Dragon 64/32 contact Roy Toft

Screditor 111, Dynastar+Pascal for flex originals preferred phone Tony Clarke

40/80 switchable 5 1/4 drive also original copy of Stylograph with documentation. Phone Andrew Oakes

PC Convert (to read Dragon/Dos disks on a PC) to help with the production of this magazine contact Editor

Working! D/Drive for Dragon 32. With/without Dos. Write with details to Ron Warren North Yeo, Marine Parade, Instow, N. Devon EX39-4JJ

Wanted the following software on cassette:- Brewmaster, Jet set willy, The trial of Arnold Blackwood, Franklin in wonderland, Shernanigans and various titles in the channel 8 or Adventure International series. J. Tims Tel

FOR SALE

Tape software no longer used available for just 30p per tape to cover postage send SAE for list Ian Burford 79 Hertford Road, Stevenage, SG2-8SE.

Top quality "DX" CB Radio equipment, talk to the four corners of the earth, LITERALLY. SAE for full

details E. Sampson PO Box 13, ILFRACOMBE, North Devon. EX34-8PB.

Dragon 32 upgraded to 64k runs OS9/Flex fully working £48 + p.p.

Dragonodos cartridge with your choice of Dos. Cumana 40 track drive with power supply. £88 complete with leads. Contact David Rothery

Modem - PRISM 2000, data rate 1200/75 & 1200/1200 never been used £15-00 + post and packing. P. Rogers

Next Issue ... BBC style shorthand BASIC, Speed-up your programs with this utility from PAUL BURGIN.

Send all your classified ads to 6809 User!!

Redhead looks to the future

continued from previous page

run BBC software also, its potential would be even further enhanced, making it an attractive proposition for schools? business and home use.

So let's take the proverbial bull by the horns, and think positively about seizing what may well be the Dragon's last chance of survival. Faint-hearts, and scoffers can stop reading at this point. But to those of you who, like myself, want to see the decline in the Dragon's fortunes reversed, I put the following suggestion, namely, that the Dragon Tangent should be developed and put into production as soon as possible, supported by a vigorous marketing and publicity campaign to bring it to the attention of as wide a public as possible, and thus give retailers an incentive to stock it and Software Houses to take a renewed interest in supplying good programs for it.

Clearly, the technical expertise necessary to achieve this already exists within our ranks. Two further ingredients are required. The first is, obviously, working capital. I don't know whether or not PROTECH is financially capable of setting up and maintaining the bulk production and marketing of the TANGENT that I am advocating. If it is, well and good but, if not, maybe

the Enterprise Initiative Scheme could provide the assistance needed. But what about as ordinary Dragoners, why should don't we put our money where our mouths are? Say we all contributed £10 to the venture; even taking or depleted numbers into consideration, this would raise a respectable sum.

And the second requirement? Simply the will to succeed, the determination to do all we can to halt and reverse the Dragon's decline and present a modern, marketable computer to the public once again. Provided that the mistakes made by Dragon Data, G.E.C. and Eurohard are carefully analysed and learnt from, I for one have faith that it can be done.

Tell me I'm not alone!

This then, in brief, my vision for the future of 6809 User and the computer it supports. I see a first-rate professional magazine dedicated to a new, first-rate machine, capable of meeting and beating the challenges posed by the likes of Commodore, Atari or the Archimedes. Working in mutually supportive partnership, PROTECH, 6809 User and Dragoners in general can, I believe, make this possible.

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SOFTWARE REVIEW

Program: Filing System (Tape)
Supplier: R & AJ Preston
Price: £1.99
Reviewer: Roland Hewson

Sometimes when you receive a "new" program to review one is anxious to dash to the computer and try it immediately - other times one just doesn't feel like it. This was one of those times; compounded by the fact that the labels on the tape were stuck on the wrong way round, side 1 on side 2 and vice versa - or perhaps, both labels were printed wrongly. Having sorted out this basic problem (the program is in machine code I used the word BASIC in its literal sense). I heaved a sigh and tried again. This time I got an OM Error - then I realised I still had the Dos plugged in, so third time lucky it was! Once loaded a screen displayed menu gives a choice (there are no instructions with the inlay) if one selects Display Edit the response is Edit What? How tiresome! clearly then one had to enter the records but there were no fields defined, Ah well, lets start again on the other side with the create program. Yes that's much better this reveals a screen thus:-

Create Database

Maths function

A Add new Field

Input

Output

Q Quit

Your choice?

Once into creating the database, the information you wish to insert has to be thought out beforehand because it saks for a field name and then a character length. With an address therefor it has to be broken down over a number of fields because it would not accept in one field sufficient characters to take a complete address.

The maths function was more helpful and enabled a change within a record through records or to change records by a percentage.

Regretably although perhaps unfair as there are databases in a similar vein I felt that the setting up although simple was cumbersome and as the program is competing with programs such as

Filemaster and DRS compared somewhat unfavourably. Nevertheless as an absolute beginner to this program which is fairly sophisticated despite it's limited capacity it is surprisingly adaptable very easy to use and would if other alternatives were not in use prove extremely useful. If it were available on disk it might perhaps find more favour with me.

SOFTWARE UPDATE

New release from NDUg, Hitchhikers Guide to the Galaxy a new adventure with an excellent parser that allows full sentences and atmospheric text. Full details to follow. (Always assuming that we get sent a review copy. Ed)

Slow but Sure, a new screen dump in BASIC so that you can alter the control codes to suit your printer. From DRAGSOFT, Mike Townsend's latest release, full details and review to follow.

Dragonfire Services have split into two companies, Dragonfire services incorporating all of the software and PD Library has been taken over by programmer Robin Hemmings, 8 Ingleby Road, Wigston, Leicester, LE8-1DQ. Andrew Hill, now to be known as AM Enterprises will still be running Dragon magazine and is still at his Gwent address.

Although the Dragon's world is small, there are a good number of Software houses still supporting the Dragon. When Microdeal was around there was heavy advertising and marketing in order to get the people know what the company offered in terms of programs. Often there was repetitive information, but that was good. The reader did not have to look at previous magazines to find what was available.

Also Dragon User mentioned in its NEWS Column that companies should advertise through the magazine in so that people will know that they still exist and also to list their programs. However, this is not done at the moment. The only magazines to advertise are the 6809 User, the NDUg Update and possibly the Dragonfire and Dragon Logic magazines. Pam D'Arcy mentioned that advertising in Dragon User was good despite a reader's criticism that there were too many adverts!

It is obvious that we need to know by the companies what they have to offer.



THE LIFE OF MICKEY

Martin Cleghorn is back again with more Hardware for the Dragon

To explain the advantages of a pointing system to someone who has not used one, is a bit like explaining the beauty of an English garden to someone who is colour blind. Until you have used a WIMP system and mouse you just don't know what you are missing.

There are a number of pointing systems: digitising tablets, trackballs, lightpens, touch sensitive screens, the list goes each year but by far the most popular is the good ol mouse. Even the humble mouse comes in dozens of varieties but basically they come in two groups, serial and bus. The bus mouse connects to a parallel fashion passing data direct to the computers bus, the serial mouse (no, no, not TV'S DM) passes data to the computer using an RS232 serial port. I have not come across a buss mouse that would easily interface with a Dragon but serial mice will work on any computer as long as you have a spare serial port.

its power from the data line (Wot no batteries!). To connect the mouse up to your computer, you will need an RS232 Port running at 1200 baud set for 8 bits, no parity, 1 stop bit.

COMPUTER MOUSE

GND	GND
TX DATA	RX DATA
RX DATA	TX DATA
CTS)	RST)
RST)	DTR)

On my system I also linked CTS to RTS.

THE SOFTWARE

Having connected mickey to Doris, peeking at the serial ports data register will show 3 bytes of information everytime the mouse moves or a button is pressed or released. With all three bytes, only the first 6 bits are relevant.

byte 1 is the status byte where HH=00 for left movement and HH=11 for right movement. VV=00 for upwards and VV=11 for downwards. The buttons B1 & B2=1 when pressed or 0 when not.

0 1 2 3 4 5

H H V V B1 B2

Byte 2 is the horizontal movement (0 to 63), if the movement is left (HH=00) the the 6 bit number is positive, if it is right (HH=11) then the 6 bit number is negative i.e. movement = 63-x.

Byte 3 is the vertical movement, up (VV=00) is positive and down (VV=11) is negative.

The mouse software or "driver" needs to be placed in an interrupt

routine linked with the IRQ of the serial port. This way, anytime the mouse moves, its X,Y position and button status is updated.

I'll not take up any more room here with listings for the drive program, but if you would like a copy then send a SAE to 37 Westgarth Road, Kirkby Stephen, Cumbria.

THE WORKINGS

The most common mouse workings is a rubber coated ball which moves two detectors (X,Y) as the mouse moves. This information is passed to the computer in 3 bytes everytime there is movement or a button is pressed.

PICKING YOUR MOUSE

All mice are not equal!!!! some have two buttons, some have three or four or even a complete numeric pad. Some are more sensitive than others (no I don't mean that way). Sensitivity is measured in DPI that is dots per inch, the higher the DPI the more sensitive the mouse. Sensitivity ranges from 20 to 600 DPI the standard (if there is one) is 200 DPI which is plenty sensitive for the 256*200 resolution of the Dragon. Clever software can be used to make a mouse more sensitive the slower it is moved. A working area of 5** 4" is plenty for even the most detailed work. The mouse I invested my hard earned cash in is a Tandy make rodent (cat no. 25-1040) which is listed at £45 but as with most Tandy goods there is always a sale! This wee beastie comes in nice shade of grey (wot else!), two buttons and a sensitivity of 200 DPI.

CONNECTING IT UP

The Tandy mouse comes with a metre long tail in a 9 pin "D" socket but only 5 are connected: 2-RX data, 3-TX data, 4-DTR, 5- GND, 6-RTS. The mouse takes

If you have constructed any hardware for the Dragon then get in contact with 6809 USER, so that we can publish it.

Editor's Interview

continued from page 2

Q. How serious a setback do you feel the demise of Dragon User has proved to one ?

A. What came first the chicken or the egg, the decline of interest and support resulted in the demise of Dragon User. That is a fact. The setback to the Dragon world as a whole is rather more difficult question to answer, it is greatly missed, but many other publications are trying to fill the gap, between them I am sure that they will.

Q. Have you any new software titles nearing completion ?

A. I very much doubt that I shall have time to write any more programs for the foreseeable future as my time is taken up with the 6809 USER.

Q. What does the future hold for the few remaining Dragon Amateurs magazines, in view of Dragon Users demise ?

A. The main reason for the demise of Dragon User was the high overheads compared to their income. Amateur magazines do not have high wage bills, accommodation costs or other associated overheads, and are therefore in a much better position to thrive.

Q. To What extent do you attribute the continued survival of the Dragon to the efforts of the media.

A. Without the efforts of a few enthusiasts producing mags, newsletters, etc software houses would have next to no contact with their customers, show organisers would be unable to let everyone know the details of a show, in short the Dragon scene would rapidly shrink into obscurity.

Q. To date what has been your most successful program ?

A. RAE Maths Tester and Logic Trainer are about the same.

Q. On average how many units of a particular program ran you hope to sell ?

A. One more than I get paid for and one less than I have in stock; but seriously, I am not the person to ask that question as my programs are very specialised with a very small market, I certainly have not sold sufficient to cover development costs.

Q. with Dragon support falling how long can you see the need for SUNNYSOFT/SUNNYDALE PUBLICATIONS ?

A. Although the overall support may be falling our subscription list is growing all the time, many people leave the Dragon scene, but that only means more new users taking over their machines, many users are unaware of the existence of the various publications and can be brought into the fold by careful advertising.

Q. As a programmer do you find it difficult to devise new titles for the Dragon ?

A. As I only write utility or specialist programs there is no problem.

Q. To what extent do your own programs span from your own requirements as a user ?

A. I only write what I personally need, if it appears to be of use to others then I market it.

Q. How have the Dragon community responded to Sunnysoft since it's launch ?

A. After a quiet start much interest has been shown by the amateur radio fraternity, at whom most of my programs are aimed.

Q. Have you ever been tempted to move onto more profitable machines in order to make a living ?

A. No. And I cannot foresee the time when I will.

Q. What is your favourite game ?

A. An easy one that if you don't count adventures. RETURN OF THE ALIEN BONGO BEAST IN THE CRISSY CRISSY LINES DIMENTION.

Redhead looks to the future

continued from page 12

Consider this; the Dragon is not alone in its decline. Other computers too are in the same situation, and many have disappeared altogether. At the moment, therefore, we face the same problems as do the owners of Einsteins, Memotechs, Spectravideos etc. And is it not reasonable to suppose that they also regret what has happened to their machines and equally reasonable to suppose that some, at least, are trying to do something about it? Meanwhile, a new generation of potential users is making its appearance, looking for affordable computers running sophisticated software. The prize will go to the computer that captures their imagination and fulfills their expectations. The Dragon Tangent could be the one.

What else can I say ? The issue boils down to this, that either we are all content to let a damn good computer continue its inexorable slide into oblivion, or, past failures and disappointments notwithstanding, to do something about it.

Who's for giving it a damn good try ?

Some strong views have been expressed by K Redhead. We are sure that some of you will have their own opinion about the Dragon's future. If you agree or disagree then drop 6809 User a line. How would you like 6809 User to be published ? Do you think that if we do advertise and market the magazine the Dragon will again appear in the Headlines? How about Bob Harris, don't you think that he had the same views with K Redhead. Do you know that there is a vast market out there making lots of money? Is this market suitable for the Dragon?

PRESTON COMPUTER GAMES

Kings Hall Court, St Brides Major, Mid Glamorgan
Telephone Southerndown 24hrs
Distributors of computer hardware and software

SPECIAL OFFER

Citizen LSP 100 dot matrix printer, 150 CPsec
£149.95 with free printer cable.

NEW GAMES

ZOTOKA - a graphic adventure - do you think that you could rule an island? has a good review in Dragon magazine. £1.99

ROLA-BALL - has had rave reviews in all the magazines. Clear the planet of the cubes and save the Rola-balls. £3.99

MUSIC MAESTRO - Write your own music with this programme, one critic said it was the best music programme for the Dragon that he had seen, it enables you to compare music already on to the staff then play it independently of the program. £1.99

FILING SYSTEM - (reviewed this issue) A card index for addresses, phone numbers etc. In fact a database. £1.99

AUTORUN 11 - With this you can design 8 colour Text/block graphic loading screens and autorun your programs, both Basic and machine code. £2.99

EDITEXT - At last a powerful and versatile word processor including disc or tape operation, normal or justified printing, automatic wordwrap, full editing facilities, find and replace words and phrases, move lines and paragraphs, upper and lower case printing, print formatting. All of these operations for only £6.95

NEW ITEMS

Cassette leads £3.00

Dragon 32 covers £2.00

Seal or type keyboard type through cover keeps out dust etc. £5.95

Dragon Data joysticks £9.95 pair

Chess £1.99

Domino £1.99

Invader cube £1.99

Hungry Horace £2.99

Horace goes skiing £2.99

Reversi £1.99

THE NEXT OSSETT DRAGON SHOW IS ON SATURDAY 21st April 1990

Full details in the next issue

See you at the show, may we wish you all a belated HAPPY NEW YEAR