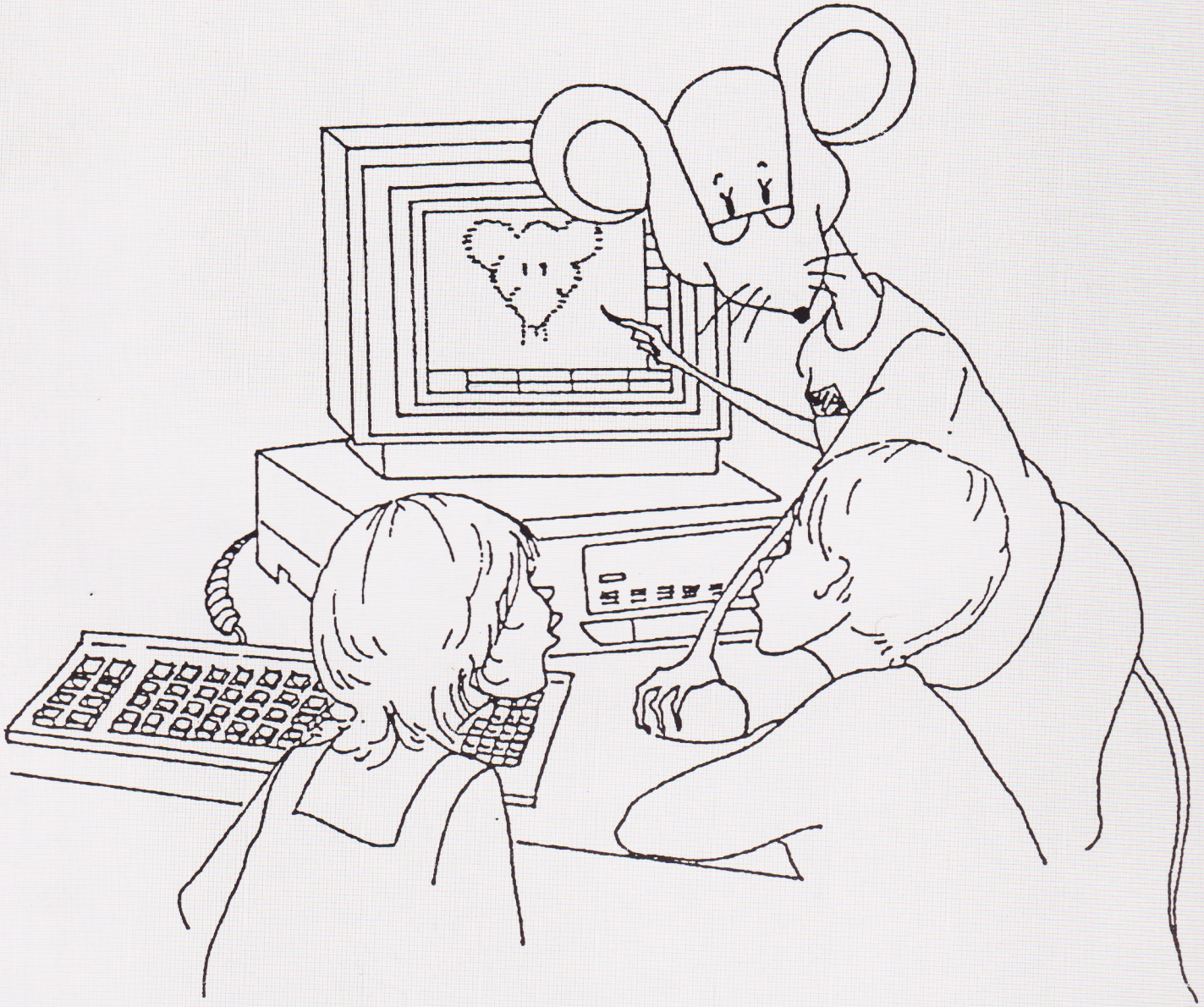
MICROSCOPE

▶ Issue 33 ▶ Summer 1991



- *Grasshopper* with infants
- Dickens and IT
- Logo screens
- News from Australia and Geneva
- *Auntie's Gift Shop* revisited

NEWMAN COLLEGE with MAPE

Contents

MICRO-SCOPE matters *Roger Keeling and Chris Robson* 1
Using *Grasshopper* with infants *Maureen Coleman* 3
'A' stands for Turtles! *Rob Crompton* 6
Dickens and IT *Simon Hill* 8
Logo file: Logo screens revisited *Dave Hollett* 12
Musing on the educational IT scene (3) *Chris Hurrell* 16
Auntie's Gift Shop revisited *Lynn Partridge* 17

Centre pages 19–22:
Information Technology in Schools: Evidence from MAPE to The Education, Science and Arts Committee of the House of Commons

How are you doing at IT? *Geoff Strack* 23
News from the world: Australia – part I *Hock-Neo Syn* 25
MAPE Conference 1992 27
News from the world: Geneva – part 2 *Chris Robson* 28
IT's all no good so far! *David Williams* 30
IT's working for me! – Conference '91 31
Software reviews 34
MAPE regional news 36
MAPE curriculum development fund 38
Forthcoming events 39
MAPE software news 40

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ISSN 0264-3847

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MAPE (Micros And Primary Education) is open to individuals and institutions. The current subscription of £15.00 p.a. UK, £20.00 p.a. overseas, includes direct mailing of **MICRO-SCOPE**.
Application forms from: Mrs G Jones, 'The Old Vicarage', Skegby Road, Normanton on Trent, Notts NG23 6RR.

Published by Castlefield (Publishers) Ltd.

Individual copies from: Castlefield (Publishers) Ltd., Newton Close, Park Farm Industrial Estate, Wellingborough, Northants NN8 3UW. Tel: 0933 679677

MAPE reference for Income and Corporation Tax relief on membership fee: T1644/23/1986/MT
Charity Commission reference: OSP-292898-R Reg. No. 292898
MAPE is grateful for the support received from Acorn, Apple, Commodore, Cumana, Microvitec and Research Machines.

VAT Number: 544 8661 18

Produced by The Castlefield Press, Wellingborough.

MICRO-SCOPE 33

MICRO-SCOPE matters

Editing a magazine of this nature can be a thankless task. The amount of hard work that goes into producing every single copy largely goes unseen, except for the regular plea for articles. Well, the 10th Anniversary Special marks the end of an era. Senga has now passed over the reins to Chris Robson, and the copy you are now reading represents Chris's first edition. I would like to take this opportunity to thank Senga for seven years' unstinting effort that started with number 12 back at the start of 1984 and has involved a number of Specials besides the 21 termly editions. We like to believe that *MICRO-SCOPE* has always been a very readable and well-respected journal with its feet planted firmly in the classroom, This is a measure of Senga's success; her conscientious and thorough approach deserves the thanks of all MAPE members. At the Conference in Glasgow she was presented with a clock, in the style of Charles Rennie Mackintosh, and some gardening vouchers to help her pursue the hobby that will no doubt fill the void.

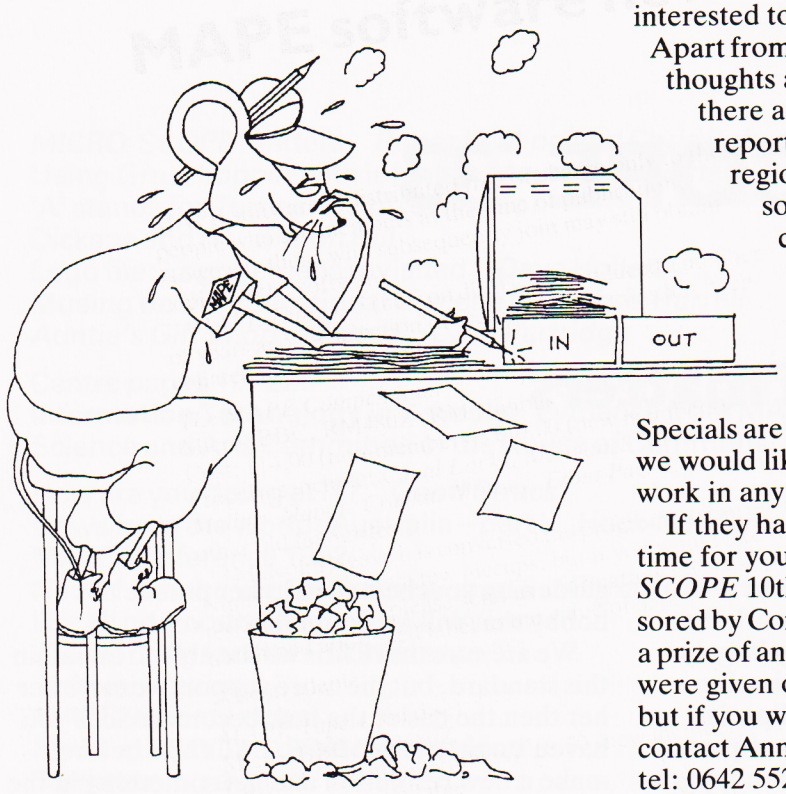
We are sure that Chris will be able to maintain this standard, but the more support we can offer her then the easier the task becomes. So if you haven't written for *MICRO-SCOPE* before, make a new resolution and get something in the post to Chris! Classroom case studies are always welcome. In the meanwhile I would like to thank them both and wish them well in the future.

Roger Keeling

Editorial

Do you ever wake up in the middle of the night in a fit of blind panic, saying to yourself 'Why ever did I say I'd . . . ?' Suddenly realising that you've agreed to edit *MICRO-SCOPE* is a decision which is apt to invoke such early morning . . . er . . . 'panic' again? At this point I realised that any editor worth her salt would not repeat a word twice in two consecutive sentences so I decided to look for an alternative. Determined to make the technology work for me, I referred to the thesaurus in my word processor. The alternatives with which I was presented included: affliction, alarm, anxiety, apprehension, consternation, dismay, dread, fear, fright, horror, ordeal, terror, trepidation, trouble, worry, chaos, frenzy and finally, hysteria, all of which seem to reflect my feelings at various times!*

As Roger has already noted, Senga certainly set a high standard and I shall endeavour to maintain this, but can only do so with a lot of help from you.



This is the regular plea for articles to which Roger referred so don't be modest and don't wait to be asked! This issue contains articles from classroom teachers, advisory teachers, advisers and lecturers in initial teacher education. Some of them were 'persuaded' but others were very welcome voluntary contributors. We have the first of two articles from Hock Neo-Syn, who teaches in the Burwood School for the blind in Australia; her second article, about using *Roamer* with her children, will appear in the next issue. Wearing my overseas representative's hat, I would like to feature articles from other parts of the world in future issues, so please contact me if you think you could contribute. With 1992 only a few months away I would be especially interested to hear from colleagues in Europe.

Apart from accounts of classroom activities and thoughts about the educational IT scene, there are software reviews, Conference reports and notices of a number of regional events. I am sure there must be some area there to which you could contribute in subsequent issues.

Future issues planned are a *Touch Explorer Plus* support pack with a European theme, and Technology, Logo, Humanities and Creative Arts Specials. The Specials are still in the early planning stages and we would like to hear from people involved in work in any of these areas.

If they have not already done so there is still time for your children to enter the *MICRO-SCOPE* 10th Anniversary competition, sponsored by Commodore, who have kindly donated a prize of an Amiga 500 in each category. Details were given on page 68 of *MICRO-SCOPE 32*, but if you would like a last minute reminder, contact Ann Liddle at Pentland Primary School, tel: 0642 552848.

Finally, I would like to echo Roger's appreciation of Senga's work over the last seven years. Having edited a few Specials in the past I had some idea of what I was taking on, but as I put the final touches to my first full *MICRO-SCOPE* I can only admire Senga's resilience, fortitude and unfailing good humour and hope that mine survive as long!

Chris Robson

*Shortly after this, my hard disc crashed, taking with it the entire copy of this edition. Some of it was backed up but not all; when I read the friendly message 'This disc is unreadable. Do you want to initialise it?', frenzy and hysteria seemed quite appropriate! Grateful thanks to my friendly local AppleCentre for rescuing everything!

EDA Southern Summer School at Portsmouth Management Centre

27th July–2nd August

Computers Across the National Curriculum. Tutor: *Rob Crompton*

The course will develop an approach to the core and foundation subjects using cross-curricular topics. There will be plenty of hands-on experience (using BBC B and Master machines) and previous experience is not necessary! This action-packed week takes place in the comfort of a purpose-built conference centre with evening entertainments to suit all tastes and opportunities to visit the Chichester Festival, The Mary Rose, HMS Victory and the Isle of Wight!

For further details, contact Peter Candlin, 17 St Mark's Place, Windsor, Berkshire SL4 3EN, Tel: 0753 861745 (home) or 08628 23523 (business).

Using *Grasshopper* with infants

Maureen Coleman
St Peter's RC Primary School, Shoreham

Can you really use *Grasshopper* with infants? A few years ago I had very little idea of what a spreadsheet was or what it could do, but a spell of helping with the accounts for our local Sports Club proved yet again that motivation is an excellent teacher! I decided to apply the same principle to data-handling work with my Year 2 class.

Sweets

Our topic for the term was Food and so I decided first to use *Data Show* to find out about the class's favourite sweets, and then *Grasshopper* to see which child's favourites were best value for money.

Collecting packet wrappers immediately involved even the least interested members of the class – after all, you can't collect wrappers without first consuming the contents, can you? Eight brands were chosen from the selection of wrappers and the names of all the children in the class were written down. Each was then asked to select their favourite from the eight, which led to a valuable exercise in number as the children checked that everyone had declared one and only one favourite! The information was entered into *Data Show*, sorted alphabetically and numerically and all possible graphs printed out (Figs 1 and 2). These were then discussed, much to the satisfaction of the group, and specially the least able children who found it a real boost to be able to produce work which was appreciated by the whole class.

The first problem we met as we moved on to *Grasshopper* was that only seven varieties had the weights printed on them and our class scales were not sensitive enough to weigh the rest. Undeterred, I entered just these seven items into the spreadsheet and typed in a formula to calculate how much it would cost to buy 100g of each sweet. Although the children were keen to find out which cost least, I felt that only half the class realised what it was all about. Consequently, I was not very happy with the results, but the children were now eager to find out which were the best biscuits and so we moved on to our collection of biscuit packets.

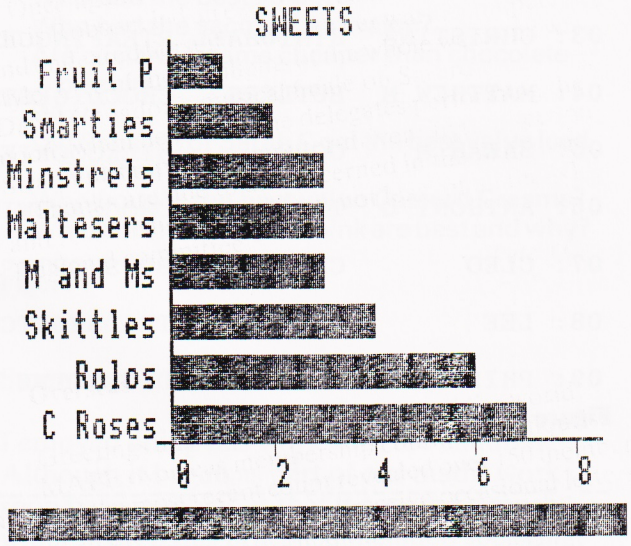


Figure 1

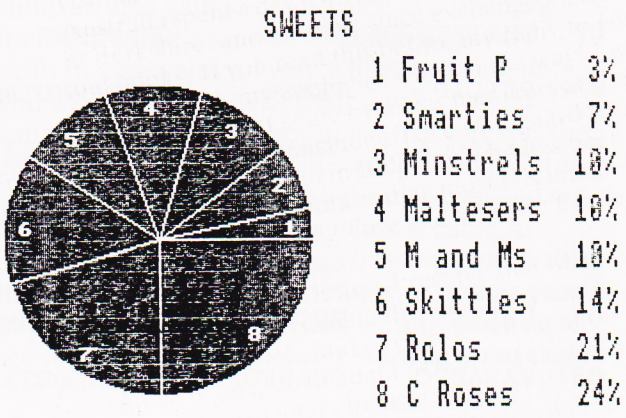


Figure 2

Biscuits

As with the sweets spreadsheet, I again decided not to explain the formula in detail but told the children that I had typed in one formula from which the computer worked out how much weight of biscuit we got for 20p and another which allowed it to calculate the price we would have to pay for 200g of each type.

The class was divided into two groups and with the help of a parent, data was entered into two similar spreadsheets and the results printed out (Figs 3 and 4). Each child was given a copy of these and and after a brief introduction they

:	A	B	C	D	E	F	G
00:	NAME	BRAND	BISCUIT	PRICE	WEIGHT	COST.200G	HOWMUCH20P
01:	CONOR	BAKER	CUSTCREAMS	19	150	25.33	157.89
02:	CHRISTINA	SPAR	JAMRINGS	27	125	43.2	92.59
03:	CHRISTINA	STMICHAEL	RTEAFINGCR	49	200	49	81.63
04:	MATTHEW M	BUTLERS	CHOCDIGEST	69	300	46	86.96
05:	SARAH M	COOP	MILKCOOKIE	29	200	29	137.93
06:	ANTHONY G	TESCO	CHOCSANDWI	35	125	56	71.43
07:	CLEO	CRAWFORDS	BUTSHORTBR	33	125	52.8	75.76
08:	LEE	BUTLERS	TRADSHORTC	22	400	11	363.64
09:	PHILLIP L	BUTLERS	DIGESTIVE	35	500	14	285.71

Figure 3

:	A	B	C	D	E	F	G
00:	NAME	BRAND	BISCUIT	PRICE	WEIGHT	COST.200G	HOWMUCH20P
01:	CHRISTOPHE	COOP	MALTMILK	31	200	31	129.03
02:	CHRISTOPHE	HOVIS	CRACKERS	32	150	42.67	93.75
03:	PHILIP	TESCO	GINGERNUTS	24	200	24	166.67
04:	REBECCA	CRAWFORDS	ICEDSHORTI	23	100	36	86.96
05:	REBECCA	COOP	BOURBCREAM	20	150	26.67	150
06:	JOANNA	CRAWFORDS	JAMRINGS	31	125	49.6	80.65
07:	HELENA	BUTLERS	POPPYSESAM	32	150	42.67	93.75
08:	SARAH C	CRAWFORDS	ICEDSHORTI	24	100	48	83.33
09:	SARAH C	COOP	CUSTCREAMS	20	150	26.67	150
10:	CECELIA	COOP	CUSTCREAMS	37	300	24.67	162.16
11:	JAMIE	TEXCO	CHOCDIGEST	67	400	33.5	119.4
12:	JAMIE	TESCO	ECODIGEST	41	500	16.4	243.5
13:	JESSICA	TESCO	DIGESTIVE	32	400	16	250

Figure 4

were all asking each other questions and using the spreadsheet to find the answers. The level of interest and the easy flow of questions was far beyond my expectations.

In our next session the children wrote about what the spreadsheet was all about and what it could tell them, some using *Stylus* for this work (Figs 5 and 6). The children and I then made up a question sheet which was copied and filled in by all of them (Fig. 7):

Our Biscuit Survey
We are collecting biscuits wrappers and we are trying to see who is the best value out of the class. I think Lee is going to be the best value and I think cheapest of price is Conor. The dearest is 69 price. The computer had to work it out who has the bigist value. If I went to shop I would buy choc biscuits just like Lee and Jamie they would be my favourite. I like bourbcream as well as choc biscuits.

Figure 5

Our Biscuit Survey
We were doing things about biscuits. We were collecting biscuit wrappers. We were trying to find out wich biscuits were the best in value. The computer had to work it out. My mum had come to work with us on the computer. Lees biscuits were the best in value. We found out how to find out how to get the best value. We have to have the prices and the weight. Phiilip L had the second best in value. Next time we do something like this I am going to have short cake because it is the best in value. If I didnt like it I would have had Phillip Ls biscuits. Jamie had the same biscuits as Matthew M. But Jamie had the beter valued biscuits

Figure 6

Biscuit Survey

Who had the biggest packet of biscuits?
Who had the smallest packet of biscuits?
Who paid the most money?
Who got the largest amount for 20p?
Who had the most expensive biscuits?
Who had the heaviest packet of biscuits?
Who had the most for 20p?
Who had the best value?
Who had the second best value?
Are custard creams cheaper than chocolate biscuits?
Why?
Did Rebecca or Sarah C get the best value Iced Shorties?
Who bought the best value Custard Creams?
Which biscuits do you think are best and why?

Figure 7

Summary

I enjoyed doing this work with the children. Although it began as part of our maths work it soon became obvious that it covered a much wider area. Skills practised included speaking, listening, recording, writing, number values (including the decimal point), the use of number vocabulary such as more, less, greater than. The children also gained confidence in correcting their work and acquired valuable keyboard skills in a meaningful way whilst entering data and writing accounts of their work. The advantage of recording the data in this way was the ease with which one could switch from records to graphs. In previous work the children had not found *Our Facts* very easy when it came to asking questions, but using *Grasshopper* for this purpose presented no problems. Another year I hope to use a similar idea as an introduction to see if it *does* make an easier starting point than *Our Facts*.

Early Years Group

At the National Conference in Glasgow it was suggested that there was a need for a group of people to get together to look at issues specifically related to the Early Years (children from nursery age to Key Stage 2). It is hoped that this group will explore ways of supporting early years teachers through the development and dissemination of ideas and materials.

If you have been involved in an Early Years MAPE activity in your region or are interested in any way, please contact your own regional MAPE representative, or Anne Farr and Barry Wake at West Midlands MAPE, Newman College.

'A' stands for Turtles!

Rob Crompton
Faculty of Education and Community Studies, University of Reading

There's no such thing as a free lunch – and I suppose there's no such thing as a free disc either – but how MAPE continues to provide 5.25" goodies at frequent intervals I cannot imagine. The latest freebie arrived shortly before I was due for R and R. No, not the latest in rest and recreation, but 'recent and relevant' which is what CATE (The Council for the Accreditation of Teacher Education) insists that all tutors of student teachers should have – recent and relevant experience of teaching that is. '*And quite right too*' I hear you cry!

Although I've enthused about *Data Show* to various groups of initial training and in-service students there were always the questions starting with the immortal words 'Why can't it . . . ?' It's funny that however sophisticated the software is, these questions always seem to come up. My frequent response tends to be 'What do you want for thirty bob?' Anyway, back to the script . . .

Graph-It appears to answer many of those questions and to do everything one could possibly want when working with infants (sorry, I just can't yet bring myself to refer to them as 'keystageoners'). The lower infants at Calcot Infants School in Reading, who were lucky enough to be on the receiving end of my spell of R & R, were working around the theme of Toys. The children had brought in numerous toys which were displayed and labelled with

Figure 1 Children sorting their toys.

appropriate leading questions. The toys were sorted in different ways using hoops, with all the children sitting on the floor and placing their toys according to agreed criteria (Fig. 1). Such criteria included 'made mainly from . . .', 'powered by . . .', 'noisy/quiet' and so on. The inevitable 'favourite toy' issue was raised and the data recorded by the children on a tally chart (Fig. 2). Each child then drew their favourite toy

Figure 2 A tally chart of favourite toys.

on a piece of sugar paper and a makeshift bar chart was constructed on the carpet. This chart was later tidied up and displayed on the wall with the children's pictures stuck in the appropriate places (Fig. 3).

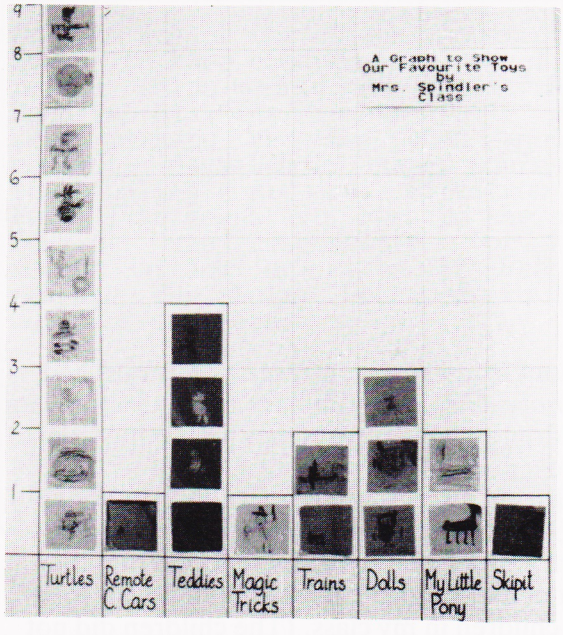


Figure 3 The children's bar chart of favourite toys.

The children were then encouraged to generate questions for each other. These tended to be of the 'how many' variety so the class teacher and I extended these a little by asking 'why' and 'what if' questions, such as 'Why do you think Turtles are the most popular?' and 'What do you think the results would be if we asked the class next door?'

At this point the children were gathered round the computer and introduced to *Graph-It*. They helped to select the options from the menu, decided to save and print, and were delighted when the graph produced exactly matched their own chart. There was a little confusion, given the stage of reading development the children were at, about the labelling of the columns and the key which appears to the right of the graph. There is apparently quite a conceptual leap from 'A is for apple' to 'A stands for Turtles' but this problem was soon overcome! (Fig. 4). The printout was photocopied and each child then coloured in the histogram and wrote statements and questions for their neighbours. (Incidentally, I spotted some lovely coloured printouts of histograms and pie charts whilst visiting another school where the teacher had used *Snatch* to great effect.)

When they become upper infants these children will begin to use *Our Facts*. The school has an IT policy which closely follows the advice in the Non-Statutory Guidance (Information Technology) and has sensibly constructed a programme of IT activities which permeates their two-year sequence of topics. Thus, most of the skills and concepts associated with *Graph-It* will be revisited and reinforced with *Our Facts* and a firm base will be established for future data-handling activities. Oh dear, I'm beginning to sound like a lecturer again – now, where's that new version of *Wordplay* . . . ?

Software information

Data Show and *Our Facts*, NCET Information Handling Pack.
Graph-It and *Wordplay*, MAPE *Christmas Special*, 1990.
Snatch, 4Mation software.

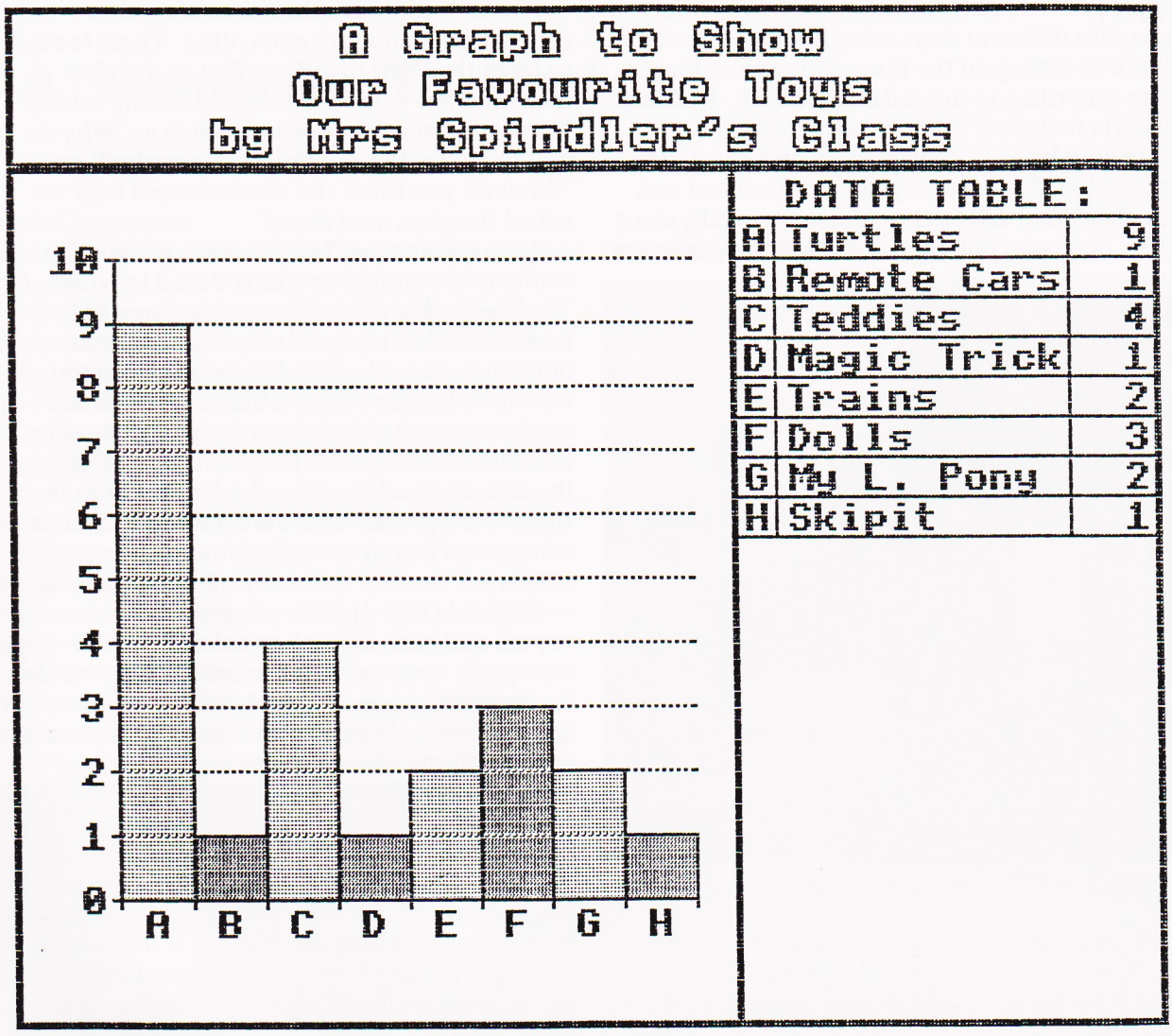


Figure 4

Dickens and IT

Simon Hill
IT Coordinator, Northaw School, Hampshire

When thinking of ways to use computers to support and enhance children's learning, the works of Charles Dickens do not at first appear to be ideal candidates for 'the IT treatment'. However, when I cast my mind back over *Pond Dipping*, *The Owl Pack* and the *Orb of Zalibar* programs, I wondered whether computers could in fact make accessible to children of primary age the novels of Charles Dickens, which must surely be some of the greatest works of English fiction. In particular, *Great Expectations* and *Nicholas Nickleby* both have a strong appeal for children as in many ways they look at life from a child's point of view.

Having rescued some marvellous old videos of *Great Expectations* and *Nicholas Nickleby* from a dusty cupboard, I also found that the school had enough copies of both novels for all the children in my class. (The children did not read the entire novels, but they *did* read

THE DICKENS DAILY

Mrs Joe brutally attacked

Yesterday there was a brutal and vicious attack upon Mrs Joe Gargery, the wife of the village blacksmith.Her husband had gone into town for the afternoon, leaving his poor wife alone, when an intruder broke into the Gargerys' home and assaulted Mrs Gargery, leaving her with severe head injuries that have left her paralysed.

Mr Joe suspected

At first it was thought that Mr Joe himself may have had some disagreement with his wife, who was not always as kind to him as she could have been. (Some of her favourite nicknames for her husband had been "you staring great stuck pig", "Noodle" and "Mooncalf".) However, the discovery of a piece of chain and part of a convict's leg-iron, together with Mr Joe's genuine grief at the attack, soon led the authorities to believe that he was completely innocent.

Escaped convict

On the day of the attack a convict is known to have escaped from one of the prison ships moored near the marshes. Readers of "The Dickens Daily" will also perhaps remember when another convict, Magwitch by name, confessed to stealing a pie and a file from the Forge five years ago. Perhaps the same convict was responsible for this recent attack or maybe it was his revenge for being betrayed to the squad of soldiers.

Is Pip guilty?

It is common knowledge that Pip Pirrip, Mrs Joe's brother, was not grateful to her for bringing him up.

IS PIP GUILTY? (Continued)

Whenever Pip was naughty, Mrs Joe used to beat him with the hated "Tickler". She also used to make him drink Tar-water, saying that it was good for him. Mrs Joe often boasted that she had brought up Pip "by hand" and she allowed Mr Pumblechook to bully him. Did Pip attack Mrs Joe?

Miss Estella

When we interviewed Miss Estella, at whose house Pip used to play, she told us that she thought Pip was probably responsible for the appalling attack upon Mrs Joe. "He has not come to Satis House for several years now. When he used to come to play, he was nothing but a stupid, clumsy labouring-boy", Miss Estella told our reporters. "I remember that he had very coarse hands and thick boots. I used to beat him at cards." When we asked to see Miss Havisham herself, Miss Estella told us that Miss Havisham did not want any visitors.

Gone "up town"

Orlick, Mr Joe's workman, was not at the Forge at the time of the attack. "Mr Joe, 'ee says that Master Pip could go a-visitin' up town, so I says that it ain't right for him to be favourin' one of us. Then 'ee says that it be a 'alf 'oliday for all, so I goes up town too", said Orlick. "I weren't nowhere near the Forge when it 'appened. I never 'ave no quarrel with 'er, nor with 'er 'usband, Mr Joe. 'Ee been a good master at the Forge, 'cept 'ee is always a-favourin' Master Pip. OLd Orlick don't like that."

Figure 1 The Dickens Daily.

substantial chunks of the most exciting episodes.) Then I started looking for suitable computer programs to support the children's work.

We started off with *Infant Tray*, using passages from the earlier chapters of *Great Expectations* and then went on to Topologika's *Punctuate!* program. In a nutshell, *Punctuate!* does for punctuation what *Infant Tray* does for words. A passage of text, double height, mode 7, appears on the screen and the children type in capital letters, full stops and any other marks of punctuation. There are also sound effects and the computer keeps the score. Whilst not teaching punctuation, this program *does* focus the children's attention upon its important functions in writing and gives them plenty of practice in its use.

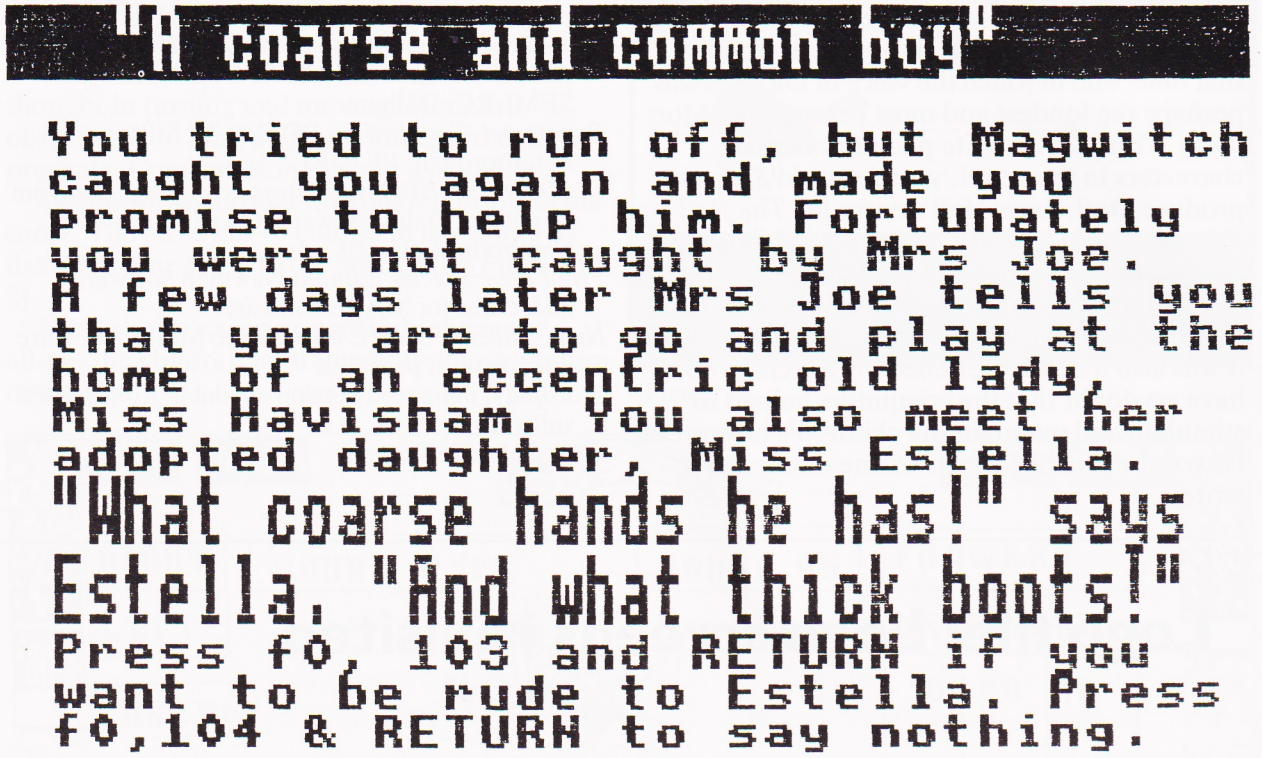
I was very impressed by *Punctuate!*, partly because it is so flexible (a secret 'Teacher's Menu' allows you to type in your own passages) and partly because the children found it so motivating and enjoyable. There was plenty of purposeful, and at times quite heated discussion and at the end there was a general consensus that this was a very worthwhile program. 'Absolutely brill!' are not words one normally associates with those funny little squiggles that so many children find confusing.

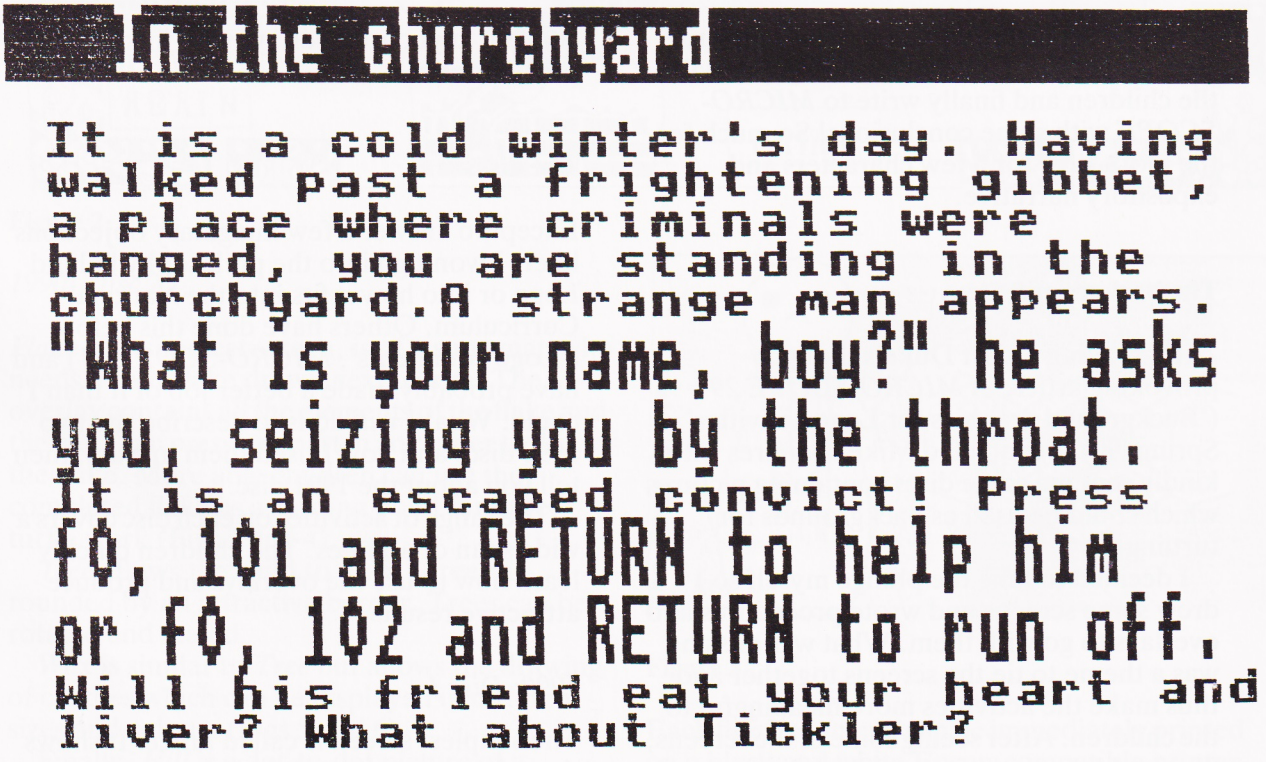
By this stage we had finished the work associated with the first part of *Great Expectations*. The class had designed a Dickensian advertisement 'Wear a Havisham wedding dress. You'll never want to take it off!' and had used *PenDown* to write letters from one character in the novel to another: 'Dear Estella, Why were you so horrible the other day?' Next a newspaper, *The Dickens Daily*, (Fig. 1) was produced, using *Front Page Extra Special Edition*. The attempted murder of Mrs. Joe was the focus of interest and this led to a deeper understanding of the characters involved and discussion of their motives. Could Pip or Joe himself have been responsible? Given Miss Havisham's eccentricity and Magwitch's threats to eat Pip's innards, could either of them have been involved in the crime in some way?

After a visit to the Dickens Birthplace Museum in Portsmouth (Fig. 2) the class finished their work on *Great Expectations* with an adventure game based on *News Bulletin*. As well as the facility to create pages of teletext on a cycling newsreel, *News Bulletin* allows the user to call up a particular page by pressing f0, typing the page number and then pressing RETURN. With the twists and coincidences that are such noticeable features of Dickens' fiction, this program was an excellent vehicle for exploring how a novelist shapes his plot. What would have happened if Pip had not brought the convict food? How would the story have been different if Herbert Pocket had won the fight in the

Figure 2 Children from Northaw School outside the Dickens Birthplace Museum in Portsmouth.

garden at Satis House? These were some of the questions the children asked and which together we tried to answer by writing this adventure game (Figs 3 and 4).





Figures 3 & 4 Pages from the *Great Expectations* adventure game in *News Bulletin*.

With its stark and at times grotesque portrait of early Victorian schools, *Nicholas Nickleby* appealed to the children enormously. As their school was founded in 1837 the children saw that their own education owed a great deal to the clamour for educational reform that arose at that time, and in which the voice of Dickens was perhaps the loudest and most persuasive. After using *Wordplay* to write poems about the characters in the novel, we then used *Stylus* to produce Dotheboys Hall's entry for *The Bad Schools Guide*. We also created a database of the characters in *Nicholas Nickleby*.

To some extent, giving the works of Dickens 'the IT treatment' was an experiment for me and it was also a new experience for the children. I have no doubt that the computers helped to stimulate and maintain the children's interest in two of the greatest works of one of our finest writers.

Software details

Infant Tray was first published as part of the *MEP Infant and First Schools' Pack*. *Intro Tray*, an enhanced version which supports the use of the concept keyboard and allows partially completed texts to be saved is available from North West SEMERC, Oldham.
Punctuate!, Topologika, PO Box 39, Stilton, Peterborough, PE7 3RL.
PenDown, for BBC B, Master and Archimedes from Logotron, Dales Brewery, Gwydir Street, Cambridge CB1 2LJ.
Front Page Special Edition, Newman Software, address as for MAPE software.
News Bulletin, MAPE Tape 4 (see MAPE software information, page 40).
Wordplay, enhanced version available from MAPE software.
Stylus, MAPE Tape 6.

Logo file: Logo screens revisited

Dave Hollett
Cadishead Junior School, Salford

Read the article, draw the screens and write the procedures. Use the finished goods with the children and finally write to *MICRO-SCOPE* with some conclusions! So much for the plot – now for a few characters and expository narrative.

The background

After reading Stuart Duke's thought-provoking article in *MICRO-SCOPE 29* ('Background graphics for Logo activities', Spring '90), I contacted Mike Blamires who kindly sent me some discs containing pictures which could be used as backgrounds for turtling.

I decided to take the plunge myself so I drew some screens and wrote procedures and overlays to go with them. What was missing was a theme to tie the screens together and thus make the activities more meaningful to the children. After seeing some of the screens, Sheron Meloney (primary IT adviser in Salford) suggested the theme of Christmas, so I drew eight seasonal pictures and made concept keyboard overlays with linked Logo procedures.

The discs

Except to answer a few imaginary objections later, I won't go into the philosophy behind Logo or into how it fits into the National Curriculum. Others have done this before ('Logo comments', *MICRO-SCOPE 31*) and have probably made a better job of it than I could. What I *will* do is to describe the two 1990 discs and how I used them in class, then tell you about the 1991 disc.

The range of activities on each disc covers a wide span of abilities. The children quickly learn how to use the overlays and produce attractive results.

1990: Disc 1

The simplest screen is called *Maze*. It shows three houses and the child has to guide the turtle to each house by negotiating a maze. Simple LEFT and RIGHT commands are

used along with FORWARD and BACKWARD. When the turtle reaches a house to deliver the Christmas post the child is rewarded with a simple message and the total number of moves taken to visit all three houses is given at the end of the exercise.

Roof is similar to *Maze* but requires more thought in turning and moving. Here the objective is to land on the chimneys to deliver presents. Confirmation is given as in *Maze*.

Robins shows a robin who has left prints in the snow. The child has to complete the prints by drawing a line at 45° to the horizontal (Figs 1 and 2).

Night shows a scene over Bethlehem and allows the children to draw multi-coloured stars in the sky.

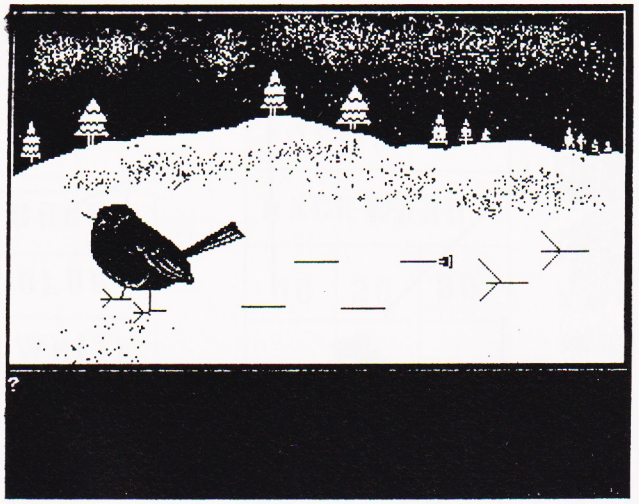


Figure 1

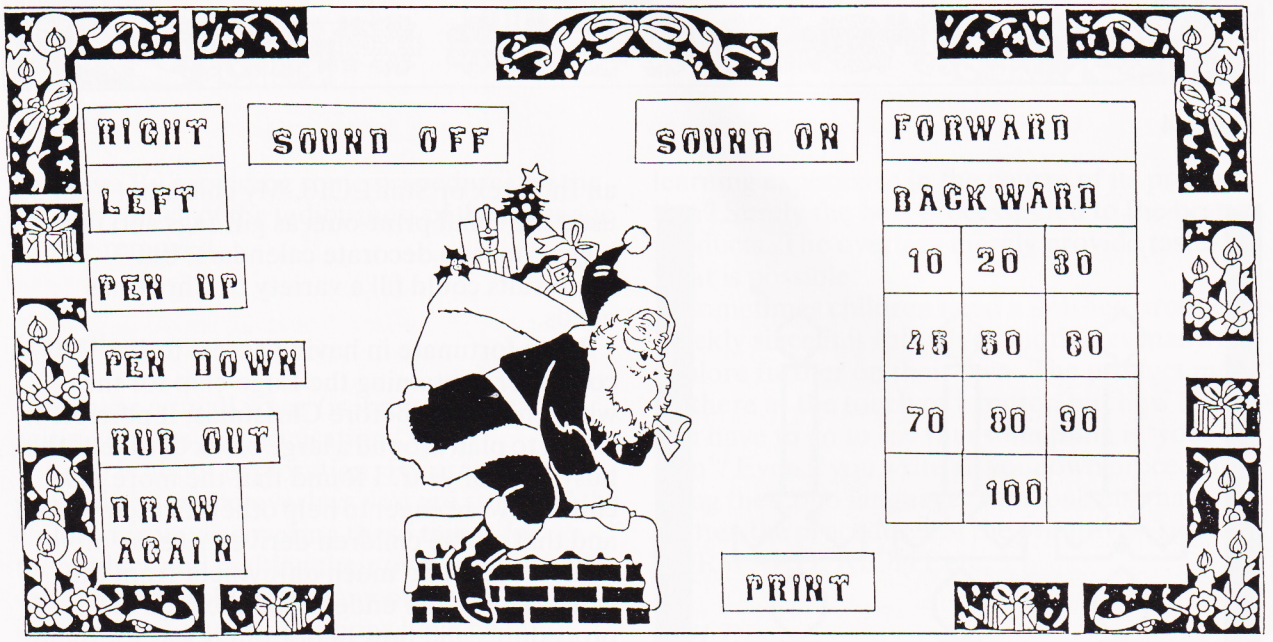


Figure 2

1990: Disc 2

Flake, the simplest screen, is of a snowman who needs a snowflake drawn next to him. The overlay contains all the elements of the flake and the child can press any part in any order to draw the flake. More able children can use the completed flake as a starting point for other turtle work (Figs 3 and 4).

Tree allows the child to draw a tree surrounded by an attractive border. Trees can be rotated and scaled.

Wax is similar to *Tree* but allows the drawing of candles which can be displayed in different sizes and colours (Figs 5 and 6).

Finally, *Hill* is a dot-to-dot picture of a snow-covered hillside on which the child has to draw the church steeple.

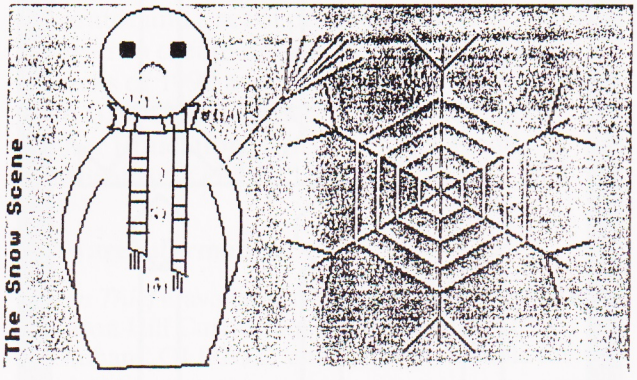


Figure 3

Each finished screen can be immediately printed on a black and white Epson-compatible printer (and coloured in afterwards if required), or saved onto *ScreenThief* and printed in colour on

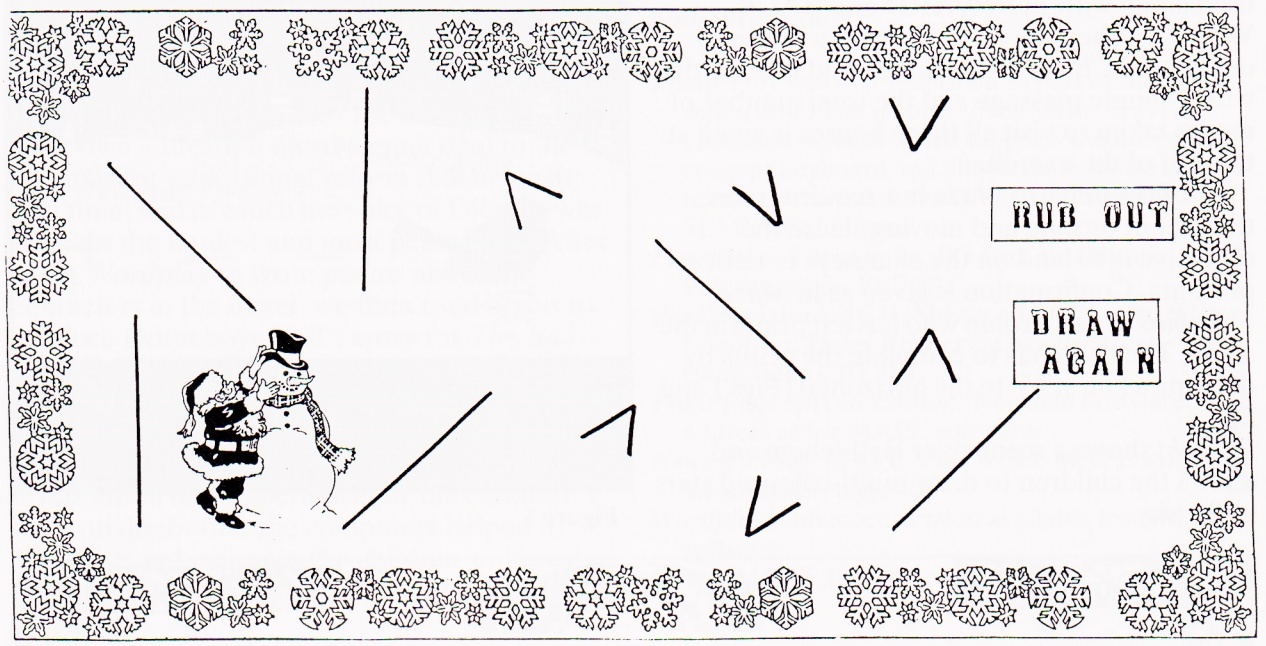


Figure 4

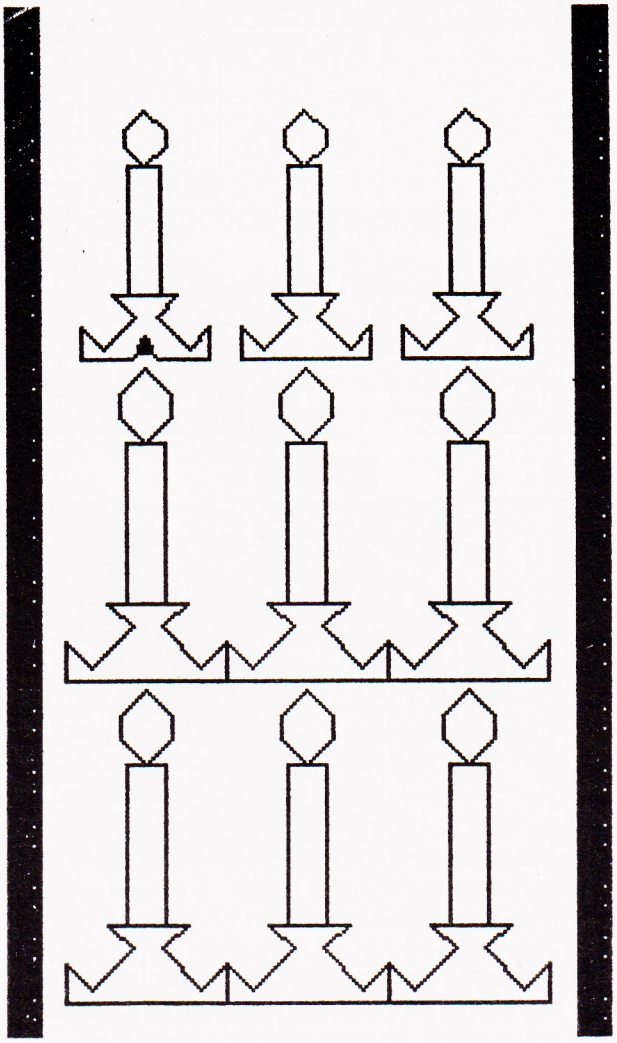


Figure 5

an Integrex or Star LC10. My children (Year 5) used the small print-outs as gift tags and the bigger ones to decorate calendars, but the results could fill a variety of Christmas needs.

I was fortunate in having access to the computer containing the Logo chip for the whole half term before Christmas; if possible it is best to plan around a large block of time at this busy time of year. I found that the more able children were eager to help others in their group and that all the children derived a sense of achievement and much enjoyment from the work. They soon understood the idea of procedures and how important it was for them to enter the commands in the correct sequences; for example, some commands need numbers after them and object to words being used.

One child came up with the clever idea of putting the turtle's pen up before drawing near the edge of the screen to test if the drawing would stay on screen and so prevent lines appearing everywhere. This was something I had never even considered! Many other shortcuts arose to ease moving the turtle across the screen.

Some of the overlays can be used as part of a topic on shape and space and don't even have to be kept until Christmas and used only once a year!

Before I met with the idea of background screens my Logo work was dull and fragmented. No longer will the children be put in front of a blank screen and endure a set of explorations whose outcome is not very meaningful or useful

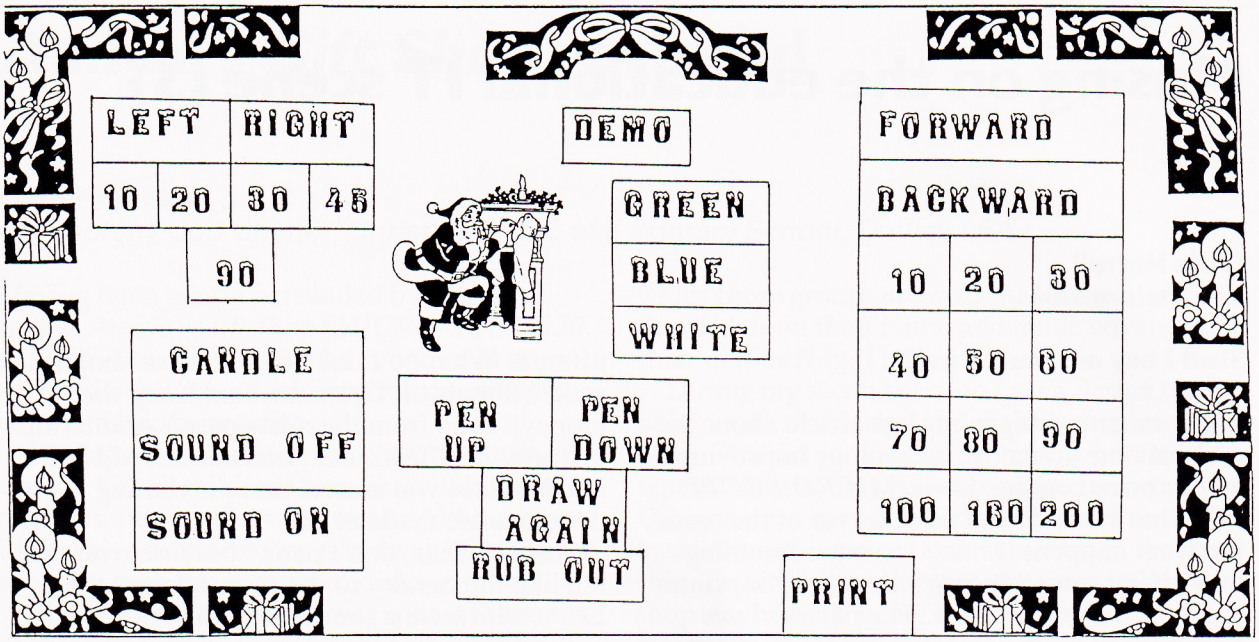


Figure 6

to them. By providing some procedures on the overlay, much of the tediousness of the language can be removed.

Objections

I can hear a small voice (is it my conscience?) raising doubts and accusations.

Logo is about exploration. By providing procedures on the overlays you are stopping the children from discovering these things for themselves and making their own solutions to self-defined problems. Many of the processes involved in Logo explorations have been removed and you have turned Logo into nothing more than a hybrid part-language and part-graphics package. Everything is there at the touch of a button.

Self-defined problems to which children devise their own solutions may well be the ideal situation: however, using graphics screens in conjunction with a concept keyboard still leaves room for exploration, but the power of the language is put at the disposal of the children straight away. The procedures can be looked at, altered and extended by the more able children and there *are* problems to be solved even within the context of using prepared screens. I know that some say it is the process and not the product that is important, but would you accept a book whose pages fell out on the basis that the manufacturer went through a meaningful learning experience in the course of its production? Surely the best processes led to the best products. The overlays merely provide tastes of what is possible.

Sometimes children need a finished product quickly since it is this which motivates many to explore further on their own. The product *may* be there at the touch of a button but how far do you have to go to say that something is 'your own'? Even if you write all your own procedures using the Logo language, someone else has written the procedures of the primitives, such as FORWARD, RIGHT etc.

1991 Disc

My 1991 disc includes a tessellating snowflake generator and a set of procedures which enables the user to create designs based on crackers.

Packs of 1990 and 1991 discs can be obtained from BLUG, c/o Christ Church College of Higher Education, North Holmes Road, Canterbury, Kent CT1 1QU.

Software information

Screen Thief is available from North West SEMERC, Fitton Hill Curriculum Centre, Rosary Road, Oldham, OL8 2QE, and is freely copiable for education use.

You are advised however to exercise caution in capturing screens from copyright software for use as backgrounds in Logo work as this may well infringe copyright.

Musing on the educational IT scene (3)

Chris Hurrell
Shropshire LEA

Shall I buy or should I wait?

I remember writing in my last article about the cycle of time going by, technology improving and its price coming down (*MICRO-SCOPE 31*). That's fine if I am an observer of the scene, but what happens if I need to buy something now? If it is something such as a micro or printer then it is rather different. The parents have raised the cash, the governors want to see this cash spent well, wisely and yesterday but I don't know what to buy. If I wait the price might drop; if I wait the product might improve; if I wait there will be something new round the corner; if I wait much longer the governors/parents/teachers will start making louder rumbling noises than they are making at the moment. So at some time or another I have got to break into this waiting and watching cycle and buy something to put in front of children. But what do I buy and when do I buy it? The answers to these questions depend on what you are proposing to buy and how much you want to spend. (Shades of 'how long is a piece of string?' and, '. . . If I were you guv'nor I wouldn't start from here.')

Take software as an example of the problem. Do I buy 'Advanced Mega Page Printer' at £85 for the A3000 or wait a bit and get twice the package for another £20 or so later in the year? If I do wait, what am I going to use in the meantime? At the same time that this is going on, the question lurks somewhere at the back of my mind . . . 'Is there a software package out there that will answer all my problems at half the cost but I just don't know about it?'

If you think software is difficult, don't wander into the hardware field unless you want to become a gibbering wreck within a few short weeks.

Now just hang on a minute – if all the previous stuff is correct, and things are changing that quickly then advice is out of date as soon as it is uttered. What do I do? Shall I buy or should I wait? (Shouts of 'Open the box! Keep the money!' echo from the misty past.) Add to this mixture the effects and ramifications of LMS and it makes you marvel that purchasing decisions are made at all.

Have no fear, don't panic, because over the hill like the cavalry to the rescue comes the LEA, who have a sound, well-thought-out policy for IT development; a good purchasing policy for both hardware and software, and support both with a growing team of excellent advisory teachers. Their job is to advise you on all the problems you have ever had, and some you didn't know you had and wish you'd never been told about. But how long can their good advice last in this fast-changing world of IT, I hear you say? Are you in danger of being talked up a blind alley that at the moment looks like a motorway?

The only advice to a person drowning in a sea of conflicting advice is:

1. don't jump on bandwagons until you've spoken to the other passengers and seen the the driver's credentials;
2. don't always listen to those who shout the loudest;
3. don't be seduced by the adage: 'If it costs that much it must be good!';
4. a 1000 in the bank is worth a 3000 in the classroom;
5. don't cast a clout till May be out;
6. clutching at straws seemed like a good idea at the time;
7. not waving but drowning;

and finally, if you make a decision, 'You're a better man than I am Gunga Din!'

The views expressed in this article are personal and are not necessarily those of Shropshire LEA.

Auntie's Gift Shop revisited

Lynn Partridge
Technology Coordinator, Christ Church C of E Primary School, Dudley LEA

Having been gently persuaded by Senga to review *Auntie's Gift Shop* (*MICRO-SCOPE 30*, page 26) I decided to try the program in school and find out if my initial impressions would be substantiated in practice.

During the Autumn term 1990 I 'borrowed' a class of Year 5 children (nine years old) for three thirty-minute sessions per week. Although not ideal, this was the only possible way of trying the program with the recommended age group.

The class of 31 children was split into groups of three or four by their teacher. In my first session with the children I explained the background to the program and then demonstrated Act 1. Each group was given a copy of *Auntie's Gift Shop* Diary, included in the package, and I emphasised how important it would be for successful completion of the program to keep this diary up to date. The first group of children then started on the program whilst those groups *not* working on the computer decided upon their name and made covers for their diaries (Fig. 1).

Figure 1 The Gift Box Group's diary cover.

During my second session I set a design technology task: 'to design and make a shop of your own'. This did not necessarily have to be the same type of shop as they had chosen for the program. Designs were very detailed and colourful – but basically nothing more than a picture of the shop (Fig. 2). Little or no thought was given to how the shop was actually going to be made or from what materials; the children tackled these problems as they arose! This is an aspect of the design technology process that obviously needs addressing as far as these children are concerned.

During subsequent sessions children worked either on the program or on making their shops. At appropriate points, when all the groups had completed an Act, I drew the class together and demonstrated the next Act, leaving them to work on the program between my visits.

The children worked their way through Acts 1–4 without too much difficulty but nearly all of them found Act 5 hard going. They did not give enough thought to the planning stage, nor did they take careful enough notes of costs and of how much money had been spent, with the inevitable result that no group was able to resolve the situation completely satisfactorily. The Evaluation in Act 6 showed average marks in most cases, which did not on the whole reflect the degree of effort put in by the children. This did not, however, appear to deter them too much, the consensus of opinion being that *Auntie's Gift Shop* was 'great', 'good' and 'brill.'

Having completed the program the children were asked to write their own evaluation. Here are some of their comments.

'I liked the program because it's interesting.' *Amanda*
'I think the program was good because there was lots to do. We had to plan what to do.' *Mark S.*
'I liked *Auntie's Gift Shop* because it was complicated and you learnt from it.' *Simon*
'I didn't like the bit when we had to start making decisions.' *Darrel*
'. . . it is good how the computer helps you.' *David*

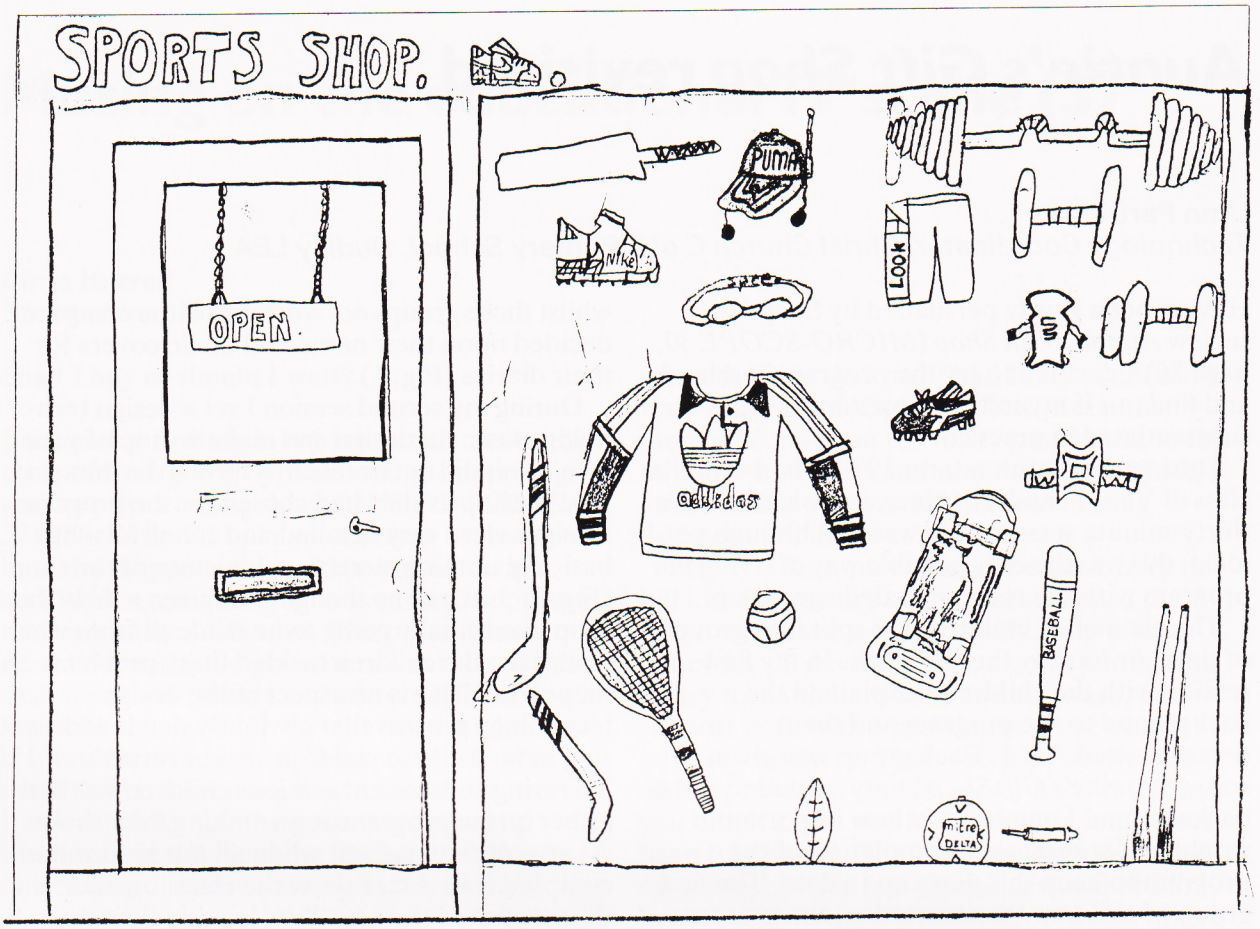


Figure 2 'Design and make a shop of your own'.

'I thought *Auntie's Gift Shop* was a good program because you could make things in it and design things on the screen.' *Katie*
'I thought *Auntie's Gift Shop* was a good program because you had fun deciding things and it learnt us to budget our money.' *Heidi*
'I think the program was good because it showed you pictures as well as writing.' *Joanne*

All the children completed the program in less than half a term and having observed them working I feel my initial impressions of the program *were* the right ones. The program could easily lead to a full term's work on the theme of shops, covering aspects of attainment targets in English, maths and technology.

Auntie's Gift Shop offers a structured approach to problem solving in that there is a single logical linear pathway through the program. Clear messages of help and guidance are given and data is made available in such a way that none can be bypassed. Evaluation is given at the end of an Act where appropriate as well as at the end of the final Act. Allow your children to work their way through *Auntie's Gift Shop* and you will be fostering and developing social awareness, communication skills, decision making skills, recording skills and planning.

I have no hesitation in recommending *Auntie's Gift Shop* as a general introduction to information handling with Year 4 and 5 children.

Finally, for an overall view of the program, I leave you with a comment from Natalie:

'*Auntie's Gift Shop* I thought was a good program because it had pictures to go with every stage and it made sense, but some bits were boring because you had to keep pressing C to turn to the next page. I think it should have just changed when you had finished writing but it didn't. It is quite alright for my age group but I think it should be more for ages 7–8 age group. The most exciting bit of all was making the shop. I think it was exciting for the program and us because other programs don't usually have making activities in them. I liked writing in the booklet. I thought it was not too little and not too big. I also like how the book was printed. And how you had to decide things because I like deciding things.'

Software information

Auntie's Gift Shop: for BBC B, B+ and Master 128, from Fernleaf Educational Software, Fernleaf House, 31 Old Road West, Gravesend, Kent DA11 0LH.

Information Technology in Schools
Evidence from MAPE to The Education, Science and Arts Committee of the House of Commons

Roger Keeling and **Senga Whiteman**
on behalf of the MAPE National Council
February, 1991

The Education, Science and Arts Committee of the House of Commons has decided to carry out a short enquiry into Information Technology in Schools. Below is an abridged version of the evidence MAPE submitted at the beginning of February. The headings in bold represent specific questions that we were asked to address. We will be pleased to print responses from members to the points raised in the evidence submitted.

The level of provision of IT equipment in primary and secondary schools

As MAPE is concerned mainly with primary education, the comments that follow are restricted to the primary sector of education.

MAPE supports the view that 'the average levels of provision in England and Wales conceal considerable variations from school to school'[1]. In '*Trends in Hardware Purchases*', a survey carried out in 1990 (Keeling), it is reported that the intention of most LEAs is to ensure that 'The average figure for secondary schools is one micro for every 16 pupils and for primary one micro for every 30' (p. 6). We are concerned about the difference in provision between the primary and secondary sectors; there is nothing in the National Curriculum documents that hints that the level of provision for microcomputers should vary according to age phase.

The Parliamentary Office of Science and Technology (POST) Report comments 'Today's classrooms typically resemble those of 30 years ago more closely than in the case of industry or business offices, where the computer and related technologies have transformed productivity and capability.'[2] MAPE believes that one micro per class is inadequate to fulfil the demands of the National Curriculum let alone provide children with a range of opportunities which parallel those available in other sectors.

MAPE believes that new technologies extend beyond the latest range of microcomputers. New and relevant developments include access to interactive video, music technology, facsimile communications, CD-ROMS and satellite images. Currently, hardly any primary schools have access to this type of technology, but such access would support the acquisition of a range of skills as identified in the National Curriculum. An equally important development with reference to educational resources will be the availability of full-function laptop computers. These have the power to radically change teaching and learning styles (which may involve children continuing their computer-based work at home), but their adoption by primary schools will have major cost implications.

Given the range of hardware which is becoming available, MAPE would recommend a target of one micro per eight pupils in primary schools to be achieved during the next three to five years, with the flexibility to move to a higher ratio or lower ratio for specific curricular activities when necessary. At this level we will see pupils making real progress in their learning, and this will include acquiring those skills necessary for deciding whether or not

IT use is appropriate. This will only be meaningful when such a decision can be implemented; that is to say, when use is deemed to be appropriate, access must be possible. We also recognise that much of the present hardware is sadly dated. Although it is still useful for a limited number of tasks (eg. control technology), it does not allow children the opportunity to benefit from the latest developments, whether software or hardware (including peripherals). The ease of use, combined with the power, of the latest educational software developments clearly demonstrate the way ahead and we believe that children should have access to the best that is available.

MAPE would like to point out that the provision of appropriate and relevant hardware, software and peripherals is an on-going budgetary commitment for every school. It is particularly important that equality of opportunity is ensured for all children. The disparity in the levels of current provision leads to inequalities of opportunity, and this is often in areas where children are already disadvantaged. It must be noted that as there is an increase in hardware provision there is a parallel increase in costs relating to repair, maintenance, replacement and upgrading.

MAPE believes that hardware manufacturers should be encouraged to take account of the needs of education in their initial design briefs. Hardware used by education should not be marginalised from hardware developments in other sectors. In addition, software standards should apply to programs designed for education. The proliferation of types of micros currently in use in primary education has led to a range of problems relating to the lack of transferability of software. These have implications in terms of cost (constantly purchasing new versions of software) and training (each new micro is operated differently from the last).

The extent to which teachers are trained to use IT equipment

While we accept that the National Curriculum Orders have put IT on the agenda for every school, MAPE believes that there is a widening gap between those teachers who have become IT literate and those who have still to make a start on integrating IT into their teaching. This is due to two main factors:

1. Inadequacy of opportunity to become involved in personal professional development due to financial restrictions which have arisen as the result of the underfunded introduction of Local Management of Schools.
2. The pressures involved in implementing a series of fundamental changes in educational practice relating to the Education Reform Act (1988).

These two factors have led to:

- limited time available for preparation and for professional development;
- limited time available for updating IT skills and acquiring new skills (IT is subject to constant changes and training must be an on-going process);
- lack of equipment/difficulty of access;
- access to equipment which is difficult to use or behaves erratically due to age etc.;
- restriction on attending courses/conferences etc. offered by external bodies because of the high costs involved in both fees and supply cover. This is exacerbated by the current financial problems which certain LEAs are facing due to rate-capping.

Many of these problems have been overcome by the Education Support Grant (ESG) scheme which has been a great success in terms of effecting change within a number of classrooms. It is generally believed that such change is best effected by colleagues working together on issues of concern. MAPE believes that more teachers should be given the opportunity to benefit from the ESG scheme which should be recognised by the DES as an ongoing commitment.

It has been the practice in primary schools to allocate specific responsibility for managing IT to an IT coordinator; this is often in addition to an existing area of responsibility for a curricular area such as Maths or English. While there is much to commend in the appointment of an IT coordinator it must be accepted that every primary teacher needs to acquire those IT skills demanded by the implementation of the National Curriculum especially AT5 of the Technology Orders. The Chief Primary Inspector has expressed a view that all primary teachers should have 10 per cent of their working week as non-contact time. This has yet to be implemented but MAPE fully endorses this recommendation.

As was alluded to earlier, IT applications are constantly changing; educationalists are only just beginning to address issues relating to the way in which the use of IT can change the nature of teaching and learning. If this crucial debate is to continue and to expand then teachers are always going to need access to professional development relating to IT.

Evidence suggests that newly qualified teachers are, at present, not currently leaving initial training institutions with a high degree of confidence and competence in the use of IT. The reasons for this are many and varied and have been described in *Information Technology in Initial Teacher Training* (DES, HMSO, 1989). The DES criteria for teacher training (CATE '88) should ensure that the IT literacy level of new entrants to the profession will be higher in future. Nevertheless, initial training is only the beginning of a programme of professional development, and it is inevitable that new entrants will always need further support. This will begin with a programme of induction which includes reference to the IT practice of the LEA or employing school. There are high expectations for new entrants to the profession and it is right that this should be so, but we also need to be realistic about what can be covered in a programme of initial training. Because of the developing nature of the technology the need for support for all teachers will be always be on-going.

The cost of bringing every school up to an appropriate level of equipment and training

The costs of integrating IT into the primary curriculum are an ongoing budgetary commitment because, as provision increases, so do associated costs. MAPE does not feel it is able to give precise details of the actual costs under this heading. However the cost factors to be considered are listed below:

Most primary schools are presently using a floppy-disc-based colour system which currently costs on average £1,000.

MAPE recommends that using a hard disc system could decrease technical problems both within schools and Local Education Authorities and is a step to be encouraged and supported. MAPE also believes that, given adequate software standards and the transferability of software, schools should select a range of computers which are appropriate for different uses.

Peripherals (eg. overlay keyboards and printers) are now perceived as essential equipment for use in the classroom and as such must be included in any costings.

Funding for a wide range of quality software must be considered to match the range of hardware that is used in schools.

Training: advisory teacher

We recommend that not only should the existing ESG scheme be continued but also expanded to ensure that opportunities continue for advisory teachers to address classroom-based in-service needs. Although this is the most expensive form of professional development it has proved to be the most effective in terms of improving classroom practice.

Training: the IT coordinator

MAPE believes this should be seen as a post of senior responsibility and the post-holder given an appropriate incentive allowance. This will also necessitate providing a range of training opportunities. MAPE also believes that as schools increase their IT provision they should evaluate whether or not certain tasks would be better covered by a technician rather than a teacher.

A reasonable amount of non-contact time must be allowed for the coordinator to work alongside colleagues to develop staff expertise so that Information Technology can be integrated across the curriculum. We would suggest one day a week.

Training : classroom teacher

In order for all classroom teachers to become sufficiently familiar with IT to support the National Curriculum the POST report cites a suggestion that every teacher needs an absolute minimum of seven two-day INSET courses, while 'gaining an understanding of the education potential would take longer' (p. 8). To meet the total training needs over the next five years the POST report suggests that every year one-sixth of the teachers in every primary school would need an average of nine days' training. This is estimated as costing £37.7 million annually (p. 9).

Software

MAPE believes that in the future primary children will benefit most if given access to open-ended software that can be fitted to their particular needs and the school curriculum. The use of these programs makes particular demands on staff time, both in preparatory work for the classroom and also in the training required in order for all teachers to be able to use such programs appropriately and successfully.

Conclusion

Teachers now recognise that IT is not the prerogative of any particular subject area, but a powerful tool to be used by all, as and when appropriate. We have now to ensure that pupils have the necessary access to new technologies if and when they decide it is relevant to their needs.

References

1. *Technologies for Teaching*, Parliamentary Office of Science and Technology, January 1991.
2. *Trends in Hardware Purchases*, by R. Keeling, Newman College, Birmingham, November 1990.

How are you doing at IT?

Geoff Strack
General Adviser for Information Technology, London Borough of Hackney

As teachers we all like to feel that children's work involving IT is good and is having a significant impact on their education. But how can we know this? Furthermore, how can we be sure?

It is not easy to determine what constitutes those practices which can produce a value-added effect. But if quality is to improve, as it must, then we need to first identify those performance indicators and use them.

The IT policy

An important first step in a school is a policy or mission statement. Initially it is not the quality of the statement which is important but the fact that one exists. In the process of developing it, processes will have been set up and a number of questions will have been answered.

Issues such as who has produced the statement, how much consultation there has been and plans for keeping it up to date will have set the school on the right track. The more people who feel that it belongs to them, the greater are its chances of success. Information technology is a dynamic, rapidly changing area and no-one involved in it can afford to stand still. Future developments must be mapped out and thought given to where the school will be in two years and in five years.

How the IT document looks gives an important message. As users of IT we have access to the technology and must be using it if we are to convince others of its importance. Ideally it should be laser printed, well set out and easy to read. It should not be an essay.

No IT policy today can ignore the demands of the National Curriculum, yet the whole thing could be significantly impoverished if in addressing the National Curriculum it ignored the much wider curriculum. The HMI document *Information Technology from 5 to 16* provides useful guidance and any policy needs to consider the recommendations made by it[1].

The IT policy in action

Quality itself can be determined by the way in which issues are addressed. To begin with, teachers should be able to perceive the broader aspects of IT with an emphasis on process rather than content. For example, children must be developing familiarity with the potential of word processors in general. It is not enough to just be able to use *PenDown, Folio, Oxfordshire Write* or *WriteOn*. It is the appreciation of the enabling power provided by *any* word processor which is much more important. Our children develop specific expectations of the word processors that they most often use, but the skills that they develop must be transferable to other systems. At one time this was confined to simple editing and the glorious opportunity to right-justify everything. Today the questions that children are asking are much more sophisticated, such as: *What fonts does it support? Can you do columns?* and *Where are the spell-check and thesaurus?*

Cross-curricular work must be developed and innovative uses encouraged. Social issues must not be ignored, since technology will increase the gap between different groups in society unless equity in all its manifestations is given a high profile. The gender issue is one area over which we must be most vigilant with regard to IT. Strategies for dealing with it must be tackled within the policy statement.

When *Granny's Garden* first appeared, it was used in some primary schools by every year from reception to top juniors. Hopefully we have moved on from there, but this has meant that schools have had to look closely at programs and decide which year groups they can benefit the most.

One of the major advantages of both word processing and Logo is that they are excellent ways of facilitating differentiated work. Both enable children of all abilities to achieve success at their own level. But the raising of the self esteem and the encouragement that IT gives to poor writers by word processing makes it well worth while on its own. On the other hand, through Logo more able children can also test out ideas and stretch themselves, and their teachers, to their limits.

No one word processor will suit pupils throughout their school careers so careful consideration needs to be given to what is most suitable for the different phases. Those people

who use the Apple Macintosh will claim that something like Microsoft *Works* is appropriate for pupils of all ages, but generally teachers in primary and secondary schools need to talk to each other and ensure continuity in the development of word processing skills by deciding what each is going to use. The same considerations can be extended to other sofware applications, such as spreadsheets, data handling and control packages. Cross phase dialogue and the consequent cross fertilisation is vital.

Gathering the evidence

Management By Walking About will provide other indications, some of which are numeric. These will include the proportion of children using generic software and the proportion of children working collaboratively. The most obvious sign of the presence of IT in a school is wall displays, yet many schools do not take advantage of this. In addition to providing information about the quality of the work, the displays tell us other things such as cross-curricular applications, creativity, how many classes are using IT and the presence of a colour printer.

Further evidence can be gathered by asking quite simple questions:

- What is the proportion of printers to computers?
- What is the proportion of mice to computers?
- What proportion of computers are on moveable trolleys?
- What proportion of computers are still in boxes?
- How does security affect computer usage?
- What proportion of computers are not working?
- What proportion of the computers are being used today?

Useful information and an indication of performance can be obtained by talking to the children about their work. Questions may include: *What are you doing? Why are you doing it? What preparation took place off the computer?* Children (and teachers!) should appreciate the enabling facility of the technology rather than being besotted by its whizz-bang effect.

One of the best indicators that I have found is the degree to which the children are self-sufficient in the use of the hardware and software. For a primary school there are a number of key activities that every child should be able to do. I would suggest that these would include starting up the computer system, fetching a program, using it, obtaining a print-out if appropriate, saving a copy and then quitting properly.

The traditional medium for communication within schools is pen and paper yet almost everything that we read has been word-processed. In how many schools are the children provided with or even encouraged to have their own discs? By providing children with discs a message is conveyed regarding the significance that we attach to IT. There is also a further degree of self-sufficiency implied which some teachers may be reluctant to relinquish.

How teachers themselves are coping with IT is crucial. Useful data includes the proportion of staff who regularly use computers with their classes, for themselves, have their own computers and have had some training. More important though is the amount of use by senior management. If the head teacher and senior members of staff are regular and committed users then the use of IT in the school will be well established and cannot fail.

For maximum efficiency the resources must be well utilised and note should be taken of what is happening outside lesson time. If there is interest and real enthusiasm, teachers and children will all be clamouring for access. Attention must then be paid to the purpose for which access is sought.

Many schools do not make good use of their ancillary workers for supporting IT. With this group of people there is the added advantage that it costs less to train them and it is easier for them to be released for training during the day. There are a number of local authorities where the provision of computers in secondary school libraries and the training of the librarians in IT has made a significant contribution to the schools' development of cross-curricular uses. The extent to which schools have made use of the potential of ancillary workers in this way gives some indication as to how far ahead they are in using IT. The contribution that such people can make is as great in infant schools as in secondary schools and colleges.

The integration of IT into other classroom activities is extremely important. Unfortunately it is still common to come across a situation where children are working together on some work away from the computer and when 'their turn' comes they will do something totally unconnected such as using a maths game. When they are finished they then go back and carry on with what they were doing previously.

Activities on the computer which really enhance children's learning only take place when the work that they are doing on the computer is set in the context of other activities taking place in the classroom. There are many ways in which this can happen. As part of a science topic, for example, they could be

entering on a spreadsheet the distance that a trolley has travelled or they could be testing out a Logo procedure that they have written away from the computer.

An important question that can cause concern for head teachers is 'For the total period of time that a child is in this school, how many hours will they have spent working at a computer?' Not surprisingly it is very little for many schools. If we were also able to determine by a simple question how much of that time was spent using programs that enhanced the learning process, it would be even less. Not least because of the National Curriculum, this must change.

Conclusion

There are rapid developments in computer technology bringing more and more sophisticated computers into our classrooms. In 1985 I recall supporting the use of Logo on Commodore 64 computers, quite happy with 5.25" floppy discs and 32K of memory. In 1988 I struggled with MS DOS, recognised the importance of a mouse and that 1.5 Megabytes would be useful when we had some software to make use of it. Today the Apple Macintosh series of computers meets almost all my needs, but in the next few years I believe that laptop computers will become increasingly prominent. There is also a rising tide in the number of computer users and an absolute flood of software. None of these things necessarily equates with the high quality that we must aim for. If schools are going to make real progress and provide value for money in the use of IT, then they must stand back and closely examine their practices.

1. *Information technology from 5 to 16: HMI Curriculum Matters 15*, HMSO 1989.

News from the world: Australia – part 1

Using voice-synthesized programs with visually impaired children

Hock-Neo Syn
Burwood School, Royal Victoria Institute for the Blind, Australia

Although Burwood School is attached to the Royal Victoria Institute for the Blind, it has a unique policy of Reverse Integration; a carefully selected group of children from a mainstream school also participate in our program on a full-time basis.

Introduction: why use the microcomputer for visually impaired children?

There are many problems which can impede the learning of young visually-impaired children. These range from emotional loss to other learning problems accompanying their visual loss, hence it is important to use a wide range of learning experiences to arouse the children's interest in both formal and informal learning situations. The microcomputer can be a specific and vital motivational tool for our children whose learning problems include:

- passivity: a learning style that tends to be dependent upon adult interaction;
- spatial difficulties: at the gross motor level this refers to disorientation in the environment; at table-top level, to problems with the use of hands to track and locate objects effectively;
- reduced hand and finger strength or poor fine-motor coordination;
- auditory and language processing difficulties;
- immature and delayed speech.

Often our children need extra encouragement and drive to make their learning relevant and purposeful. The following reasons demonstrate the usefulness of the microcomputer:

- light emitting from the computer monitor cannot be blocked as opposed to the conventional paper and pencil task which may prove to be a difficult visual-motor and visual discrimination task for the low vision child;
- the bright colours and rapid, abrupt movement on the computer screen can provide visual stimulation for those with functioning retinas but who have problems with the lens or cornea;

- computer activities help visually impaired children relate to their sighted peers in a technological world;
- computers, and computer games in particular, can help develop a leisure-time interest in which the children have an active role to play instead of relying on others for constant help.

Why voice-synthesized programs?

- They appeal to most children;
- they have a novelty which appeals to the children's often acute sense of hearing;
- they help extend concentration and enable good working habits to emerge;
- through the accompanying use of braille or tactual overlays, non-readers or poor readers are aided by verbal cues and systematic, methodical hand-skills are reinforced;
- children are encouraged to work more independently on specific learning tasks.

Modified talking programs

A dearth of talking programs both from the UK and in Australia led us at Burwood School to modify some commercial and Blue File programs for use with a speech synthesiser. The list includes *All About Me, Podd, Granny's Garden, Albert's House* and *Beans on Toast*. Some of these programs are already available through various sources whilst others are awaiting further assessment by the UK organisations concerned. It is our hope that they will be made freely available for use in education and in particular, in special schools.

Other voiced programs

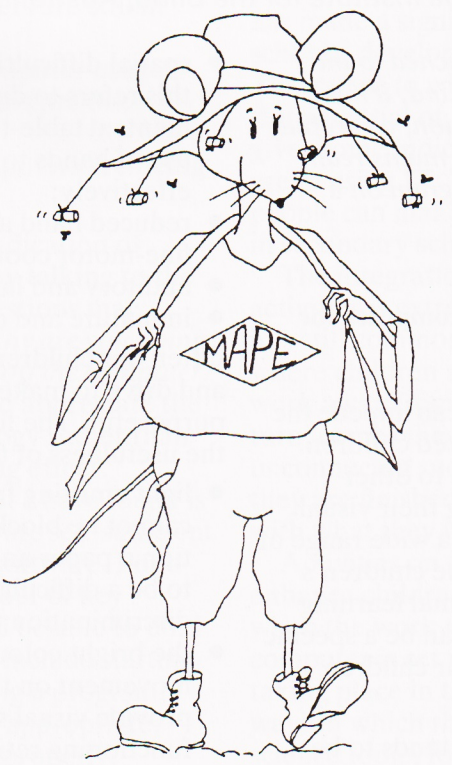
Programs which have a speech facility or support speech synthesizers include *Stylus* (of course!), the *FuzzBuzz* pack, *Touch Explorer Plus*, and *Hot and Cold*, a program which uses simple temperature probes in conjunction with a concept keyboard.

The *FuzzBuzz* pack is based on the popular reading scheme and provides support materials using files and concept keyboard overlays, 12 overlays for each book. An interesting aspect of the *FuzzBuzz* scheme is that it adopts a similar approach to one which I had previously used in teaching prereading skills to young visually impaired children. Practices such as initially omitting capital letters and full stops are adopted, and there are activities to develop word recognition and early comprehension tasks.

The overlays can easily be adapted to suit the needs of the individual child and as braille reading involves complex spatial skills I have also double spaced words when creating the overlays in order to give children a clearer understanding of *word* concepts. The use of the voice synthesizer has added an exciting dimension to the pack, sustaining the children's interest and concentration and enabling them to work on specific learning tasks either independently or with a sighted peer, thus freeing the teacher to attend to another group.

Care is taken that a child is not overwhelmed by an excessive amount of material on each overlay; the amount is determined by the reading level of each child.

One totally blind eight-year-old boy has not yet understood that there is a correlation between the written word (braille dots) and the spoken word. The overlay he uses consists simply of embossed lines upon which he can guide his fingers to 'look' for tactile markings positioned along the lines. When his fingers arrive at a tactile marker, he presses it, causing an encoded word or phrase to be spoken. This not only teaches him the fine motor skill of tracking but the novelty of this 'talking' concept keyboard has also motivated him to use his fingers more purposefully as he enjoys hearing the words spoken repeatedly. On the other hand, another totally blind six-year-old who functions at a higher level is able to use verbal cues spoken by the computer to help him decode the braille dots.



The pack has been developed with thanks to the author Colin Harris, Oxford University Press and Jean Johnston from Bristol SEMERC and its success leads me to hope that similar packs to complement other reading schemes might be developed.

Touch Explorer Plus

I further extended the concept of the *FuzzBuzz* scheme by using *Touch Explorer Plus*. The program allows for speech control in the Start up conditions at the beginning and its open-endedness enables the teacher to tailor both the overlays and the messages to the individual needs of the children. A visiting eight-year-old girl with moderate learning difficulties used the program to reinforce her number work and coin recognition. She could not wait to tell her teacher on her return to her school that 'the computer talks to me!'. The personalised message to an incorrect response which caught her fancy was 'No, silly billy!'

I asked the children to imagine that they were to take *FuzzBuzz* back to their homes for the night. This stimulated some animated, thought-provoking discussions!

I noted the children's ideas and incorporated them onto overlays, using statements such as 'Oh, oh! FuzzBuzz is jumping up and down on mum's bed. The spring is broken. What will mum say?' Two humorous, totally blind six-year-olds used the overlay amidst much laughter. Their fingers looked repeatedly for the speech function key. They were thrilled and listened to these provocative statements over and over again.

We noted that when visually impaired children with learning problems used speech-synthesized equipped computers, there was an improvement in their attitude, performance and concentration level. The use of such computers seems to take the drudgery out of learning and, in addition, adds an element of fun that is so effective in the learning process.

Acknowledgements

My grateful thanks to my Headmaster, Mr Geoffrey Treloar, who has been a source of encouragement and help in setting up the computer resource for the school. And to Mrs Pat Minton, freelance BBC consultant, who has shared her knowledge and expertise unstintingly.

Editor's comment: A longer version of this article was first presented as a paper at the '*Paper Clips to Silicon Chips*' Conference in Hobart, Tasmania, from 18–21 November 1990. The conference focused on technology and disability issues. A second article, in which Hoc Syn talks about using *Roamer* with her children, will appear in the next issue of *MICRO-SCOPE*.

References

FuzzBuzz Reading scheme, Colin Harris, OUP.

FuzzBuzz Support pack, Bristol SEMERC, Department of Education, Bristol Polytechnic, Redland Hill, Bristol BS6 6UZ.

Touch Explorer Plus, NCET, Sir William Lyons Road, Science Park, University of Warwick, Coventry CV4 7EZ.

For further details about *Hot and Cold* and other programs which support the use of speech synthesizers, contact North West SEMERC, Fitton Hill Curriculum Centre, Rosary Road, Oldham OL8 2QE.

MAPE Conference 1992: IT enhancing the primary curriculum

The 1992 MAPE Conference will take place from Saturday 11th–Monday 13th April and will be held at The Normal College, Bangor, North Wales. The focus of the conference will be 'The role that IT can play in enhancing the primary curriculum'. The conference structure will provide delegates with the opportunity to concentrate on a single theme, or to follow a mixture of 90-minute presentations and/or three hour practical workshops.

Because of the need for forward planning and the expected demand for places, delegates can book early with a non-returnable deposit of £10.00. Booking forms can be obtained from: MAPE Conference 92, Cilgeraint Farm, St Anns, Bethesda, Gwynedd LL57 4AX.

Themes and workshops: can you help?

Submissions are now being invited from colleagues who wish to offer either a theme or a workshop which will contribute to the overall theme of the conference.

Themes will last for approximately nine hours spread over the three days of the conference and will give delegates an opportunity to explore a particular aspect of IT in some detail. We anticipate that they will be task based and involve a mixture of theoretical and practical work. Workshops will last for three hours and as they are expected to focus on skill development, will be of a practical, hands-on nature.

Both themes and workshops will require a high level of resourcing which it is hoped can be met by the conference organisers. Theme leaders are offered up to a maximum of three free places together with an honorarium of £150 per theme and reasonable out of pocket expenses. Workshop leaders are offered an honorarium of £100 per workshop plus reasonable out of pocket expenses.

Anyone wishing to offer either a theme or workshop is asked to contact: Stan Norman , 70 Mount Pleasant, Keyworth, Notts NG12 5EH. Tel: 06077 5540 (home) 0602 282261 (work) for further details.

News from the world: Geneva – part 2

Chris Robson
Overseas Representative

It is never easy to evaluate the effectiveness of in-service provision but returning to work with a group of teachers seven months after a course can give some indication of the impact which the initial input may (or may not!) have had. Last August I had left the staff of the Geneva English School full of confidence and enthusiasm, ready to tackle some of the programs they had tried out in the peaceful surroundings of an in-service course in the hurly-burly of the classroom. The BBC Master which had steadfastly refused to work the moment I arrived was about to be sent off for repair and the two reception teachers were trying to persuade the Head to buy a concept keyboard. What would I find, I wondered, when I returned at the end of March?

With excellent timing, my pre-release copy of *MICRO-SCOPE 32* with the account of our August course (pages 54–59) arrived the day before I was due to fly out and was packed along with my concept keyboard, some of the same software as before and a few new programs too.

When I arrived at the school there were enthusiastic greetings all round (Tasha the dog was there to meet me as well), and the duty-free Cadbury's chocolates I had bought at Gatwick were eagerly devoured by all. I had thought when buying them that it smacked of carrying coals to Newcastle, but inconceivable though it may seem, the richness of Swiss chocolate does eventually pall and the English palates appreciated the taste of 'real English chocolate' again.

I was delighted to see that the Head *had* been persuaded to buy a concept keyboard and anticipated being able to make overlays using both BBCs, but some things never change, do they? The BBC Master had duly been repaired, but had not, I was told, worked effectively since it had been returned. I switched it on, tried everything I could think of on the spur of the moment, gave up and switched off! (. . . but more of this later).

One of the first things I noticed was that the confidence and expertise which everyone had acquired during August were undiminished. True, some of the good intentions had foundered in the face of other pressures, but there *was* that concept keyboard, plenty of computer-related children's work on display and progress *had* been made.

We began by looking at *Data Collector* on the BBC. This is a program which allows information to be collected by pressing on the concept keyboard and then displays it using the graphing facilities of *Data Show*. Overlays can be prepared using the *Prompt Writer* utility disc or data items typed straight in, making it an ideal way of introducing data handling concepts at Key Stage 1. This program is a firm favourite with infant teachers in Berkshire, Somerset and other authorities and seems set to become equally popular in Europe – well, in Geneva, at least!

We then looked at *All About Me, More About Me* and *Pip Goes to the Moon*. These NORICC programs are well liked by many teachers since they are easy to operate, produce clear printouts with no complicated printing instructions needed, and can be used with children who are beginning to develop early reading skills by teachers who are developing early computer skills! I had taken several copies of each disc with me which was just as well; it was then that we discovered the disc drive had developed one of the most annoying faults; it was wiping all my discs! Undeterred, we removed the drive from the apparently defunct Master and continued with my spare copies. (This incident reminded me of a booklet I read recently: NCET have just published *Managing Information Technology in Schools*, the third of their Field Report Series. When discussing the financial implications of resourcing IT, a primary head is quoted as saying 'We had two computers, we bought two more, and we now have three working computers. Who says 2 + 2 = 4?' I know that this sentiment will be shared by many readers!)

A concept keyboard only becomes really useful when you have a good selection of overlays; making overlays is really easy as anyone who has ever done so will know, but everyone needs to make a few before they can be convinced of this! After an introduction to the basic procedures, I left the infant teachers making their first overlays using *Prompt Writer* and turned my attention to the A3000 users.

Some of the time was spent in consolidating earlier work on *Phases, Droom* and *Desk Top Tales*, but there were two new programs which scored an immediate hit. 4Mation's *Poster*, although it takes some time to become acquainted with its many features, really does have a lot to offer primary schools who want to produce effective posters, notices and news-sheets. After two days the staff were proud to present the Head with a Certificate of Excellence in recognition of his hard work during the course.

DELTA is a powerful turtle graphics program written originally for the BBC and now rewritten

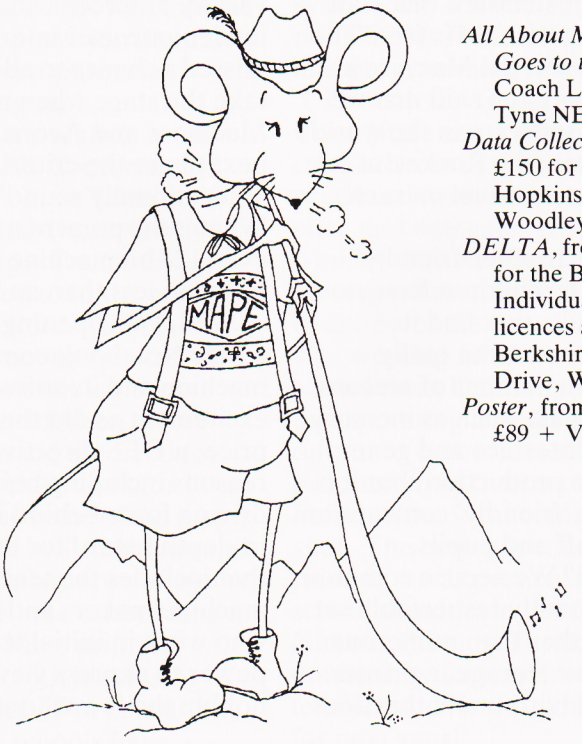
for the Archimedes. Thirty-two turtles, in a variety of colours, can be used simultaneously and the program comes with a friendly Walk Through Guide to support both teachers and pupils. Staff at the school had been looking for a turtle graphics program and felt that this one more than fulfilled their needs.

At lunchtime on the second day I decided to take another look at the Master. My technical expertise is minimal, performed entirely with the aid of two screwdrivers and limited to inserting new chips in BBCs, removing Econet chips which prevent some programs from running properly and changing dip switches on printers! But in the early days of the IT Team my colleagues and I had noticed that one of the frequent problems with Masters was caused by incorrect configuration. This often arose in schools where helpful parents who 'knew something about computers' (we have a lot of those down here in Silicon Valley!) had kindly 'set up' the new computer by changing every parameter they could find! When I eventually got the errant Master to display an asterisk, I typed *STATUS and lo and behold! – everything that could be wrong was wrong; it was configured to use a hard disc, to start in Mode 15, automatically to !BOOT, not to print etc. While everyone started lunch I changed the status of the machine to 'turn it into a BBC' and thereafter everything worked perfectly (apart from the disc drive, but that's another story). This sounds impressively knowledgeable. It isn't. In common with the rest of our team, I have the standard configuration for a BBC Master noted in my diary and have found it extremely useful on numerous occasions. If, like me, you are non-technical but sometimes need to appear otherwise, this is one wrinkle it's worth remembering; it certainly earned me an extra glass of wine with my lunch! In this case the problem had been caused not by helpful parents but by the firm who had repaired it; their repair had been first-rate but during the course of the work the machine had lost its original configuration, perhaps by having its battery temporarily removed. The original status had not been restored and unfortunately there are many commercial firms who simply do not realise that schools, especially primary schools, are staffed by teachers, not by computer scientists! The relevant information *may* be in the Users' Guide but how many teachers have either the time or the necessary knowledge to steer their way through it?

After this moment of glory, the rest of the afternoon passed quickly. We all admired the collection of new overlays which had been produced with many triumphant cries – 'Look, I've written a *program*!', and 'It really *is* as easy as she said it was!' I collected up my discs, took orders for software to send out and also agreed to buy a new disc drive on their behalf. This was sent out two weeks later, carefully packed round with MAPE 10th Anniversary mouse mats (only £3.50 each and essential for MAPE mousers – see the advert elsewhere in this issue!)

There's no doubt about it, teachers *do* learn better when they can spend extended periods of time, on task, away from the children. Twilight courses can make a valuable contribution to in-service activities but these have to be balanced with daytime courses when teachers are fresh, unharassed and relaxed, and can spend longer on trying things with help at hand if necessary.

Once again I thoroughly enjoyed my time in Geneva and would like to thank my hosts for their generous hospitality which included excellent hotel accommodation and dinner in France. (My husband was singularly unimpressed when I told him about dinner; after all, it *was* only 5 miles from the school, but I enjoyed it nevertheless!) I feel confident that the next time I go, I shall be able to report on two working BBCs! I'm also hoping that *News from the world: Geneva – part 3* will be written by the staff of the school, as well as by me, so watch this space!



Software information

All About Me, More About Me and *Pip Goes to the Moon*, from NORICC, Coach Lane Campus, Newcastle upon Tyne NE7 7XA.

Data Collector, by Chris Hopkins, £15 or £150 for an LEA licence. Contact Chris Hopkins, at 156 Reading Road, Woodley, Reading, Berkshire.

DELTA, from Berkshire LEA, is available for the BBC or Archimedes micros. Individual copies cost £25 and LEA licences are available. Contact the Berkshire Computer Centre, Fairwater Drive, Woodley, Reading RG5 3JE.

Poster, from 4mation Software, is £89 + VAT. 4mation Software, Linden Lea, Rock Park, Barnstaple, Devon EX32 9AQ, but contact your LEA Computer Centre first to see if they can supply it at a reduced price through their bulk purchasing facilities.

Managing Information Technology in Schools, approximately £4.50, through NCET.

IT's all no good so far!

David Williams
IT Co-ordinator, Cartrefle College, North East Wales Institute of Higher Education

The box eventually arrived and we pulled out one of the very first Macs to be seen in this country. We needed a converter for the American voltage but finally *MacPaint* appeared on the screen. There was wonder and amazement on everyone's face and a rush to have a go. It was friendly. That was eight years ago.

This machine today is still by far the most popular in our Open Access Centre. There are often people waiting to use one of the ten Mac machines. They are used throughout the college mainly for word processing, but also for some database, spreadsheet and desk-top publishing work. The staff and students use them for their own personal work.

What about the use of IT in the classroom? This often has little interest for students and staff unless there is a specific assignment or it is required on teaching practice. The children in the classroom can be highly motivated but why not the lecturers, the student teachers and the qualified teachers?

I would like to suggest that the equipment and software are of such a poor standard that staff and students are answering with their feet. The BBC, A3000, Nimbus and yes, the Mac, are not yet 'teacher friendly'. It has been said that we have the best educational software in the world, but we also had the best train, the Rocket, at one time. We would not expect to travel on such a thing today!

At present there are no 'teacher-friendly' machines. 'Don't worry, the children have no problems; it's only the adults that find it difficult.' This type of comment can really alienate staff. There were a number of reasons for such difficulties in the past, such as memory size, portability, the user interface and general knowledge about software production, but it is now possible to produce a 'friendly' contraption that would really assist staff and pupils.

OK, so what do we need? We need: a common user interface; an educationally respectable set of software; portability rather than numerous plugs; adaptability; massive storage; a printer that works; and a no-fuss environment that does not require specialists. Excitement is important too. When the Mac first arrived it took our breath away and new machines must do the same.

The student teacher can eventually manage the complexity of the various machines and software, but often only away from the classroom situation. Suddenly there are 27 other beings needing attention as well as the three children at the machine. The teacher's management powers are stretched to the full if all goes well, but oh dear, the printer is jammed, the disc has a fault – 'Put it back in the cupboard, children.'

Children and students will ask simple questions: 'Why can't I move one area of the screen quickly to another?', 'Why can I only have one pie chart?' 'Can the words go sideways?' The software at present is very limited and full of horrible anomalies such as using the spacebar to select in one program and RETURN to select in another. The so called 'expert' will relish this but it is a waste of valuable teacher time and energy.

At present, educational software houses are struggling with strange operating systems, a variety of screens and input/output ports, inadequate user interfaces and so on. The DES missed a chance to allow other manufacturers to take the stage when they promoted Research Machines and Acorn. Let us hope that in the next phase the criteria for determining what is 'educationally sound' will be much stricter. What is the point of a more powerful 16 or 32 or even 128 bit machine if it has nothing worthwhile to say in less than an hour?

Well, I am opening a small new box containing a Mac Notebook computer. I wonder if this machine and its software will cause a flush of excitement as did the original Mac? Will the price, a DES directive or hopefully educational reasons including being 'teacher friendly' be the driving force behind its acceptance? Will an in-depth regard for the psychology of learning that includes the teacher be used to assist machine makers and software writers? Those who work in initial teacher education have the power to express views clearly and generally nobble the few who make decisions. Let's do it!

IT's working for me! – Conference '91

The MAPE 1991 Conference took place at Jordanhill College in Glasgow from Wednesday 3 April to Friday 5 April 1991 and as you would expect, had a distinctly Scottish flavour. Many of the lectures, themes and presentations were based on work in Scottish schools and the now traditional last night Barn Dance was translated into a ceilidh! The following impressions of the Conference have been hastily put together with contributions from some of the people whose arms I managed to twist when they weren't looking!

Chris Robson

Conference round-up
Les Watson

The Conference was opened by Roger Keeling who looked back at the use of IT in education over the last ten years in order to remind delegates of the tremendous changes that have taken place, particularly in the power of the hardware available to schools. The first keynote lecture was from Frank Pignatelli, Director of Education for Strathclyde. Mr. Pignatelli, who is in charge of the largest LEA in western Europe, presented the results of an analysis of hardware in schools in Strathclyde. Not only did this reveal a £10 million shortfall in the hardware available to the schools, but also showed that the balance of current hardware provision is unfairly weighted towards rooms of computers in secondary schools. Admitting such under-resourcing of IT in the primary schools in his authority to the annual MAPE Conference is either very brave or foolish – I can't decide which! (The findings of the hardware survey carried out by Roger Keeling – *Trends in Hardware Purchases*, referred to in the centre pages of this edition of *MICRO-SCOPE* – showed that the situation is not unique to Strathclyde. IT in primary schools is under-resourced in most LEAs.) In addition to hardware Mr. Pignatelli stressed the need for improved INSET and support services for IT in schools. He went on to outline some of the major successes with IT in education in Strathclyde and was particularly enthusiastic about two projects, one based on the use of DTP, the other being a whole-school Logo project. Most primary teachers will probably agree with his closing remarks concerning the use of IT in education when he said that secondary schools have hijacked the issues. It was encouraging that the Director was aware of this and indicated that this may well change – at least in Strathclyde.

Conference delegates then had the choice of attending a range of themes, workshops and presentations. All the themes were led by primary school teachers and were designed to show the planning, preparation and processes involved in helping children benefit from an educational visit and its follow-up using information technology. Consequently delegates who had chosen to take part in themes were involved in visits to museums and places of interest in Glasgow. For many people (including past and present editors of *MICRO-SCOPE*) Conference '91 will long be remembered as the Charles Rennie Mackintosh experience. The group of seven delegates following the Mackintosh theme remarkably grew to seventeen for the visit to the Mackintosh House in Glasgow and Hill House at Helensburgh. The 'outing' also incorporated a visit to the Willow tea rooms in Sauchiehall Street which provided inspiration for design ideas, a present of a Mackintosh-style clock for Senga Whiteman, the retiring editor of *MICRO-SCOPE*, and some delicious light refreshments!

Workshops and presentations included using the concept keyboard, the RM Primary Turnkey system, the A3000, using the Macintosh (Apple, not Charles Rennie!), control, Logo, laptops and programming in hypertalk.

Prior to the Conference, the local MAPE Committee ran a competition for local schools on the theme of 'IT's working for me'. The work produced was exhibited throughout the Conference and delegates cast votes to decide the winner. The standard of work shown varied from good to excellent and served to give an overview of the use of IT in education nationally. The winning school was Abernyte primary school from Dundee, who produced a display incorporating a range of materials from printer output to embroidered collage showing the production of their newspaper which is distributed to the local community several times a year. The newspaper is run as a business enterprise so it was particularly appropriate that the school should win the first prize of an RM Nimbus Primary Turnkey system which was donated by Research Machines. As the head teacher said 'It should help balance the books for next year!'

There was also an exhibition of hardware and software throughout the three days of the Conference with most of the major players being present. Research Machines had the most obvious presence, with the largest stand and a contingent of enthusiastic staff whose dedication to the cause of IT in primary education even extended to spirited participation in the ceilidh on the Thursday evening! Acorn and Commodore also made a significant effort to show their commitment to IT in primary education by being present in force, as did many software producers and manufacturers of peripherals. It is a tribute to the considerable efforts of the organisers that the Conference went very smoothly. The only last-minute problem was caused by one of the keynote speakers, David Walker of Apple Europe, pulling out at very short notice. Fortunately NCET had several delegates at the Conference who were able to step in to save the day. The Conference closed with a talk by Ann Genese, Head teacher of Callander Primary School. This was a fitting way to end the Conference with Ann highlighting the enthusiasm and excitement of the use of IT in primary schools and illustrating this with a short video of children of various ages making use of IT.

Post-Conference thoughts

Reg Eyre

Did I enjoy the Conference?

Yes!

What were the best things about it?

Meeting old friends and finding out more about the current scene. This includes hardware and software as well as finding out how other teachers are coping with all the changes in education.

Did I learn anything new?

Not really. I went with the aim of becoming as proficient using the A3000 as I am with other machines and reducing my irrational dislike of this machine. I shall just have to continue using it and appear enthusiastic even though I prefer the machines I have bought for myself. I *did* re-awaken an interest in the work of Charles Rennie Mackintosh and cannot stop myself doodling in Mack-Writing!

What did I miss?

Where were all the other members of MAPE? I felt that a lot of 'new', first-time Conference-goers were not there. Was this because of the 'distant' venue or a result of the reduction in funding for attendance at such events from LEAs? Where were the other IT advisers? I counted two from the whole of the UK. Where were the initial teacher trainers from Colleges of Higher Education? There were a few regulars but how do the rest manage to keep in touch with what is going on? I missed some of the presentations because I was following a theme. I know this is a choice to be made but I wonder if a change in conference format is due? I also missed the talk by the man from Apple. So did everyone else since he cancelled on the day before the Conference started!

What suggestions could I make for next year's Conference?

How about a short presentation (less than 15 minutes), from each of the commercial people to all the delegates, to show or tell us briefly about their products, so that we could then go to their stands to place more closely-focused requests for further information or to watch presentations by their 'experts'.

Acorn presentation with a difference

Dave Siviter

In somewhat of a rush and with some difficulty I found the room in Jordanhill College for one of the presentations. I felt I had to attend because it was being put on by Acorn, and as organiser for next year's Conference I wanted to see what they had to offer. I wasn't particularly looking forward to it. I have been to many of the trade presentations and quite honestly I didn't want to be 'bored to death' listening to an endless and repetitive sales 'hype', extolling the virtues and covering up the defects of a machine I know pretty well already.

Wow! Was I in for a surprise!

The scene as I entered the room was much as I expected, and the besuited Acorn reps were busying themselves with the final adjustments to the 'stands', though these looked rather different from what I had envisaged. I made a mental note to look at the brightly-coloured examples of children's work that attracted my attention on display boards round the room. I sat waiting with about 15 others while an attractive super slimline blonde version of what I assumed to be the 'token' female Acorn rep sorted out an overhead projector. There being no micros in sight, I imagined we were in for a long wait. At this point one of the Acorn men addressed the audience and introduced Hilary Jones, a practising classroom teacher. She was to give a presentation of her use of the Archimedes computer in the development of a cross-curricular theme on 'Travellers' with a class of 6–7 year olds.

By this time I was a little nervous and apprehensive, having realised by now that I had completely misinterpreted the role of the young woman about to talk to us. There was an

overhead projector and a video recorder available, but still no micro. I wondered if Acorn had let this poor teacher down and omitted to provide the relevant resources.

But this was no ordinary 'trade presentation', and several times a tear of emotion welled up during this inspired, refreshing talk so well presented by the eloquent Miss Jones. Some of the work was stunning, and video sequences showed her class thoroughly engrossed in the processes and decisions involved in the theme of travellers. Wonderful magic carpets traversed galactic highways and elf-like characters rode massive bees, but it was the visual and spoken reactions of the children that touched me most as they made collaborative decisions whilst editing their designs. Real experiences from an enthusiastic, dedicated teacher were amply illustrated by the use of slides and original examples of children's work resulting from the use of *Artisan II* and an Acorn Archimedes.

Not all the aspects of the use of a micro in the primary classroom were covered, but the important issue of how to integrate work when there is only one micro available for a whole class *was* addressed. Hilary Jones was, it turned out, new to IT, and was undergoing in-service training at the same time as running the project with her class. The audience at this seminar was treated to a mixture of natural humour and pathos as numerous anecdotes of life in the class unfolded. Genuine naivete of the workings of the software and the resulting solutions to the problems encountered were described by Hilary, with pertinent illustration from the brilliant colour examples of class work which had caught my eye as I had entered. Much emphasis was placed on the development of the design process and the editing facilities afforded by the micro, particularly saving, adjusting, combining, resizing, discarding and reproducing.

Well done Acorn and particularly well done Hilary Jones! If trade exhibitors want to impress real teachers, and convince them that IT can work as a tool, enhancing the primary curriculum, then this is the way to do it. As the focus of the Conference next year at Bangor, I am looking forward to seeing the results of Hilary's next project.

Charles Rennie Mackintosh and Glasgow

Reflections by Carol Pointer

I thought it was an excellent idea to base themes on people and place of local interest. Starting the theme with a visit not only provided a creative stimulus but also gave people an opportunity to see something of the region. It gave the Conference a real Scottish flavour for those of us from south of the border!

The Mackintosh theme also reflected good primary practice! – a creative stimulus, a chance to experiment with a variety of media and freedom to explore and develop new ideas and skills – with help and advice always available.

I appreciated the chance to see something of Glasgow and to have the opportunity of sharing and swapping news and ideas with a friendly bunch of people. Many thanks to Nina and Ann for organising such an interesting theme and for being flexible in their plans to meet the needs and requests of the group. Personally, from knowing nothing of CRM I am now one of his greatest fans! I'd also like to recommend the cheese muffins at the Willow Tea Rooms and to thank Ann Foster for taking her courage (and the steering wheel!) in both hands to become our chauffeur for the day!

Memories by Jo Addison

When I heard that we were to visit the Mackintosh House I wasn't sure what to expect, although a friend had told me that I mustn't miss it. I knew that he designed furniture and had in my mind a picture of low, high-backed chairs and of art nouveau motifs. (I didn't know then that he did not like being associated with the movement.) What I had not expected was to see examples of such complete overall design, where the light, layout and furniture were manipulated to complement each other whilst still bearing in mind the need to be functional. Nina and Ann had really done their homework in preparing the theme and helped us to get a great deal from our day of gallivanting around Glasgow! Their ability to change their carefully prepared programme in order to 'go with the class' should be an inspiration to us all.

I am, as yet, still a mousophobic, so I certainly gained a lot from the help that other members of the group were able to give me with using the A3000 and was quite pleased with the results. Since Glasgow, I am pleased to report that I have taken my first tentative steps towards exploring the A3000 software we have in school – thanks to everyone who helped.

Software reviews

Title: **Archimedes PenDown**
Supplier: Longman Logotron
Price: £54.00 + VAT
Registered user extra discs £20.00 + VAT
Availability: Archimedes

Written by Peter Hunter, the author of BBC *PenDown*, this program resembles its predecessor only in name and in the shape of some of its fonts. *PenDown* for the Archimedes is a powerful package with some features not even available in much more expensive programs.

Like all good Archimedes programs *PenDown* installs itself on the icon bar and because it is written in hand-crafted assembler it is a very small program in memory terms, and can easily be run alongside others such as *Artisan 2* or *Revelation*. Clicking on the *PenDown* icon sets up a *PenDown* window with an icon bar at the top, from which the user has access to a wide range of features. *PenDown* uses Acorn's outline Font Manager, thus allowing access to the large and growing library of fonts available for the Archimedes in a variety of sizes. *PenDown* is, of course, completely WYSIWYG; different fonts are seen on screen and text can be written in any of 16 colours (and printed in those colours if you have an Integrex colour printer). Vertical and horizontal margins and tab stops are available; a ruler is always visible at the top of the page and one can also be added on the left. The page size can be adjusted to anything from A3 to A6 landscape and any of these sizes viewed at 50–150 per cent of actual size.

PenDown is aimed at the whole age range and because some of its features are quite sophisticated, a special menu allows the teacher either to simplify or to turn features on or off and thus 'customise' the program for use by particular groups of children. For example, the **Search and Replace** menu can be very basic, with the only options being whether to look for whole words only and whether to replace all examples found or only chosen ones. A more complex menu allows wildcards, case sensitivity, searching only from the current caret position and a 'count only' – very useful to discover how often a child uses 'and' or 'then'! One of the most useful features I have found is **Autosave** which can be set to save files automatically at whatever interval (in minutes) you specify. Function keys can also be defined in a wide variety of ways to access most features, including things such as inserting the current date or changing fonts.

Children find the spelling checker very useful. It searches through a document for words it doesn't know and then the child has several options. If the child is sure the word is correct but not in the dictionary it can be added. If the child is not sure a number of options are presented. The word can also be changed without adding it to the dictionary. Teachers can easily add words to the dictionary through a stand-alone program called **!Wordlist**, which will also turn any text file into a database of words which can be searched, listed according to frequency, sorted and will also do anagrams and subgrams.

Another useful little program **!Cloze**, will accept a text file and produce a new file with every nth word replaced by an underlined space. Although *PenDown* is not a DTP package it does accept sprite files. (The next version will also accept *!Draw* files.) These can easily be dragged around the screen and resized or deleted. Text does not flow round graphics but can be written over them.

This program is excellent value for money and one I would recommend for any age range, including adults, although I would probably not use it with special needs children, preferring the less expensive *Phases* from North West SEMERC.

Title: **Magpie**
Supplier: Longman Logotron
Price: £54 + VAT
Availability: Archimedes

The newly merged Longman Logotron has begun to supply some top quality software for the Archimedes. Close on the heels of the excellent word processor *PenDown* comes their latest Archimedes release, *Magpie*. Like *Genesis*, reviewed in *MICRO-SCOPE 29*, *Magpie* falls into the category of 'hyper' programs, allowing you to create pages of information, text, graphics and music and link them in different ways. The uses of *Magpie* too are only 'limited by the user's imagination'.

Magpie is designed to allow children easily to create screen-based project 'ring binders' and presentations. Its power lies not only in the ability to create screen-based folders, but also in its dual function as a fast and powerful desk-top publisher for leaflets, pamphlets and school newspapers.

When you first open a new *Magpie* binder you see a window which is, in effect, your table of contents page. You are given a choice of page size (A5, A4 or screen), a default page colour and must decide whether you wish to auto play sounds whenever a new page opens. You can then set up your first 'section' or chapter and create pages within it. This structure allows children to design a *Magpie* binder in the same way that they would prepare a project folder, with a title page, table of contents, and pages of text and illustrations.

Each page can hold re-sizable and movable frames containing text (in various colours using Acorn Outline fonts), *!Draw* or sprite files, *Maestro* files, or sound samples. A page can be linked to any other by means of 'buttons'. These can be small icons showing arrows or turned page corners to take you to the next or to the previous page when you point and click on them. Alternatively, any area of text or of a picture can be set up so that clicking on it takes you to any other page. For instance, in a binder about the History Study Unit on Invaders, clicking on the word 'Villa' might take you to a page with illustrations and text about Roman villas.

Magpie also has a feature which allows words or pictures to be either hidden or revealed by a clicking the mouse or pressing a specified key. One of the examples provided, a teaching binder on magnets, has a page where clicking on a question mark makes the question mark disappear and a picture appear. This feature makes it possible to create a project-based adventure game as an alternative to a project 'binder'.

Graphics from *Magpie* can be produced by any of the standard art packages or the free applications *!Draw* and *!Paint*. Additionally, schools with access to a scanner can use scanned pictures. My experience is that many secondary schools are acquiring scanners which they will let primary schools use. Don't despair if you discover that your secondary school has a scanner but it is on an IBM-compatible machine. Free (public domain) programs exist that allow your Archimedes to transfer MS-DOS files to Archimedes discs and then to transfer the scanned picture into Archimedes format.

Magpie comes with 11 prepared sound samples: a cat, dog, explosion, geese, gunfire, laughter, lion, scream, sea, sheep and Nixon(!). It also includes software that can be used with the sound sampler hardware from Clare's and with *Armadillo*. Binders can be set up so that samples play either when the page is open or when clicked upon. My ten-year-old daughter created an adventure game which played the sea sound sample when a page was opened containing a picture of a boat at sea.

Text, *!Draw* files, *Maestro* files, sprite files and sound samples are compressed and embedded into a single file, making a a much more compact file than *Genesis 1*. Printing is also relatively fast for a graphics/outline font program; indeed, *Magpie* makes a very acceptable mini-DTP package. Not only does it use outline fonts, graphics and re-sizable frames with borders, but it also has an arrow-drawing facility and could easily be used to design teaching packages for other software programs. Logotron is doing this with its new art package *Revelation*, providing a *Magpie* file with curriculum materials including images, experiments, ideas and resources, many of which users will be able to extract from the file and use in *Revelation*. By using *!Paint*'s screen-grabbing facility with any multi-tasking program one could include menus, examples of windows etc.

Magpie comes with a miniature read-only version (like *Genesis*'s *Browser*) which you can use to allow people to read but not change *Magpie* files. This can be given away freely so long as there is no charge for the work or for its distribution. I am not altogether happy about this restriction since allowing a small charge might encourage people to write *Magpie* applications for schools. Even suppliers of free (public domain) software have to charge for discs and postage!

Summary

Magpie is a hypermedia package aimed specifically at schools, accepting sprite, *!Draw, Maestro* files and sound samples. Its main competitor as a hypermedia package is *Genesis. Magpie* lacks the capability to accept *Mogul* and *Euclid* files that *Genesis* has but is much cheaper, takes up less room on disc and in memory, accepts sounds samples (which *Genesis II* also does) and has facilities to draw arrows and prepare a table of contents. It also lacks some of *Genesis*'s advanced features such as the ability to be used with CD-ROM. My own feeling however is that primary schools will find *Magpie* better value for money and easier to use.

Doug Weller

STOP PRESS!

Longman Logotron have just released two new programs in their BBC Series. These are for the Landmarks programs covering Egypt and the Second World War. These interactive programs, including both text and pictures, allow children to visit a child from the past, talk to them and experience how they lived. They come with both teacher's notes and a pupil booklet with a number of activities. Longman's describes these programs as 'Computer-stimulated learning' as opposed to 'Computer-aided learning', and they justify the claim. I hope to write a fuller review for the next issue of *MICRO-SCOPE*, but a quick look (and the price) has convinced me that these programs are a must if you are teaching about either ancient Egypt or WWII, whether or not you use the associated TV programmes.

Landmarks: Project Egypt and *Landmarks: World War II* are available for the Archimedes and the RM Nimbus at £19.95 + VAT.

MAPE regional news

East Midlands

Hi, is anyone there? I often feel quite lonely when writing this column. Although I meet members if I am at the local events, my phone doesn't ring, the postman never posts letters from you through my letterbox (no, not even one!) Please, please, PLEASE, your representatives in Derbyshire and Lincolnshire would love to hear from you with any ideas about local events, or requests for workshops or conferences for your part of the region. They are only a phone call away!

Lincolnshire members should contact: Graham Keeling, Earlesfield County Primary School Dysart Road, Grantham Tel: 0476 62091.

Derbyshire members contact: Jo Scothern, Kilburn Junior School, The Flat Kilburn, Derbyshire Tel: 0332 661890.

This term's event, *Data Logging Experiences* with Keith Hemsley, will have taken place by the time you receive this, but a *Control Technology Experience* is being planned for the Autumn term. You can contact me at Gedling All Hallows Primary School Priory Road, Nottingham NG4 3JZ, Tel: 0602 612002 for more details of this, or just to have a chat or make suggestions for future activities. I look forward to hearing from you!

Barbara Moore

Chiltern Region

Although the Chiltern Region aims to hold one event per term, our efforts were defeated in the spring term, first by ill-health and then by adverse weather conditions which prevented the committee meeting from taking place.

However, we hope to hold the postponed event, *A cross curricular approach to adventure games*, during the Summer term. If you would like details of this, have any suggestions for future activities, or would like to join our committee (we meet informally only once a term and serve excellent refreshments at our meetings!), please ring me on 081 866 0827.

Hope to hear from you!

Betty Lumley

South East Region

The South Eastern region of MAPE is re-forming! A London group started meeting last year and the overall SE region is being coordinated by Chris Price at Merton Court School, Knoll Road, Sidcup, Kent. At present we see no reason why the London group should not continue as a sub-group of the SE region and news of its meetings will be circulate to anyone who wishes to be put on its mailing list.

The meeting of the London group on February 2 at ILECC was a fascinating demonstration and explanation of using *Touch Explorer Plus* in cross-curricular themes.

Adventure games and simulations have already been used as starting points for topic work, but *TE+* offers more. The several 'layers' of overlay files can make a lot of information available, and unlike a book, it is not difficult to edit an information file to suit the circumstances.

The program can also be used to store information collected during a topic (as could *Revolver, News Bulletin* or *Display*).

Our visitor, Lynn Wright, who is working as a part time advisory teacher in Harrow whilst teaching in a middle school, has also worked on the development of materials for use with the program. She showed us *Midnight Town*, a series of overlays which go through the happenings in a town between 10pm and 6am and which comes with the program as a demonstration file. We also saw some of the files which are begin developed, on coal mining in four different ages, pollution and the environment.

Also on show were the *Planets* demonstration file with the BECC program, *Display*, and the *TE+* file from the National Maritime Museum, about the steam paddle tug *Reliant*. Various other concept keyboard programs were in the capable hands of David Jordan from Croydon on the BBC whilst Ruth Allanach of the London Docklands team demonstrated ILECC's *Concept* on the RM Nimbus.

Details of this term's meeting should have been circulated to everyone on the mailing list, but if you would like to make contact with SE Region, write to Chris Price at Merton Court School or to me at ILECC, John Ruskin Street, London, SE5 0PQ.

Eileen Jacques

South Wales

Following the Caerleon Conference MAPE matters went very quiet in the region. Many active members at Committee level moved on to higher things in their careers, leaving them less time to organise MAPE events, but that only goes to show what MAPE can do for your career!

At present South Glamorgan are working hard to

revive a flagging membership and to this end we hope to organise a day on behalf of the region in the autumn term. If you would like help restore South Wales MAPE to the glory of its halcyon days, do contact me on 0446 747970.

Chris Britten

West Midlands

The Spring term's event was 'IT Toolbox', a Saturday morning event at Newman College for teachers wanting to use IT to support their work in the classroom. Programs and activities included using spreadsheets for requisitions, *A4 Forms Designer* for producing data collection sheets and class lists etc., *Signwriter* with a colour printer used for banners and label printing with *GrassBank*, with other activities tailored to teachers' needs. This particular Saturday was in the middle of the spell of bad weather so those hardy souls who did turn up had individual attention on the topic of their choice, and in-service on a wide range of topics not on the menu!

The Summer term's event will be held at Newman College on June 8th and will be a full day's conference entitled 'Electronic Arts'. National speakers will include Dave Corbett of the BBC Music in Education Workshop and Geoff Turrell of Birmingham demonstrating various painting packages and the learning opportunities they present. There will be other workshops and presentations on sound and movement, drama and IT, animation and music. The day will also include the regional AGM and lunchtime INSET on juggling from a group of itinerants and ne'er-do-wells. (For more details on the juggling contact the West Midlands regional chairman, Mick Harwood.)

Chris Hurrell

Ireland

This year's MAPE Northern Ireland Regional Primary IT Conference took place at Stranmillis College, Belfast on 8–9 March. Around 100 delegates spent an enjoyable Friday and Saturday delving into the latest in primary IT. This Conference is now in its third year at Stranmillis and the event has become the major primary IT INSET event in the Northern Ireland calendar.

We began with an amusing but thought-provoking keynote speech entitled 'Ten Years back, Ten years on'. This was delivered by Roger Keeling who entertained an enthralled audience with a collection of hopelessly conservative predictions about the future development of primary IT from the first edition of *MICRO-SCOPE*, ten years ago. The hall burst into laughter when Roger confessed that he in fact had been the author. Thus began a fascinating talk about the past, present and future of primary IT which established a totally relaxed, friendly collegiate spirit which pervaded the whole conference.

Delegates could view a wide variety of presentations or choose to follow one of our workshops themes ranging from a control technology project to a toolkit for raw beginners.

Once again, MAPE's own Fairy Godmother, Chris Robson, led an experienced team of presenters and endeared herself to all with her warm, competent style. One of the highlights of the whole weekend was David Congdon's musical finale on Saturday afternoon, when he had all the delegates performing the Stranmillis rap to a computer-driven rhythm section.

Thanks are due to all concerned in the planning and resourcing of this event, not least of all the NI Regional committee.

Pete Young

Overseas

Greetings again to colleagues around the world! MAPE overseas membership continues to flourish, and the most recent count revealed over 150 members in 40 different countries. I receive occasional letters and requests for information which I am happy to answer if I can, and in the last year, have been particularly pleased to meet overseas members visiting England. Last October, Pat Minton from Australia spent a day with us at our Computer Centre in Berkshire, and we have since exchanged letters and books. If you read this before my reply to your last letter Pat, my apologies – it's on the way! I was delighted to meet some overseas members at the Conference; these included Tove Midtgaard from the European School in Belgium, who has been to more MAPE Conferences than most UK members! I look forward to seeing Tove and others at Conference '92 in Bangor.

I know from the letters I receive that MAPE overseas members value the ideas they find in *MICRO-SCOPE*, and so please, tell me more. If you've been able to adapt *MICRO-SCOPE* ideas to suit your particular circumstances, or if they have generated new ideas, please drop me a line. It doesn't have to be a long article – any contribution, however short, will be welcome, and if you have any samples of children's work that would be even better!

Finally, a request from our Treasurer; many overseas members renew their membership or pay for additional MAPE items by sending a cheque. If you do, could you please ensure that the letters **STG** are added after both the words and the figures of the sum payable, and that the cheque is drawn on a bank which has a branch in London, as this speeds up the transaction. Many thanks.

I look forward to hearing from as many of you as possible in the next few months.

Chris Robson

MAPE curriculum development fund

In *MICRO-SCOPE 31* MAPE members were invited to bid for funding from the Curriculum Development Fund, set up to mark our 10th anniversary. The aim of this initiative was to help individuals or groups of teachers develop activities or materials to support the use of IT across the curriculum and to make these available to MAPE members.

We received a good response and the sub-committee considered the bids at the committee meeting in January. Some proposals, whilst they would have benefited the schools making them, had too narrow a focus and the expected results could not have been satisfactorily disseminated to other MAPE members.

Five projects were eventually selected and those involved have been contacted by committee members who will be offering help and support:

- Teachers in Avon are developing *Touch Explorer Plus* materials with a conservation/environmental theme. We hope that these will be available to members either separately or as part of the *Touch Explorer Plus* Support pack being planned for 1992.
- The concept keyboard also features in projects from Chelmsford and the Isle of Wight where the materials will later be adapted for use on Nimbus and Archimedes machines.
- Many members will be familiar with the *Titanic* pack which was produced in Northern Ireland and is now marketed by esm. On a slightly smaller scale, a group from Northern Ireland is developing a range of resources concerning the Spanish Armada and MAPE will be contributing to the costs of this.
- The final project is looking at the use of art packages at Key Stage 2. Together with her class of Y5/6 children a Leicestershire teacher is preparing a video and other in-service materials. Her case study will, we hope, feature in the Creative Arts Special late in 1992.

In *MICRO-SCOPE 34* there will be an opportunity for you to bid for support for projects in 1992 so now is the time to talk to your fellow MAPE members about *your* ideas!

Chris Robson

Forthcoming MAPE regional events

Letting MAPE members know about regional events through *MICRO-SCOPE* has always been difficult; final copy has to be prepared several months before *MICRO-SCOPE* is distributed and most regional events are organised by busy teachers who have neither the time nor the facilities to plan so far ahead. Although many of the dates and venues listed here have not been finalised we hope that this will nevertheless give you an indication of some of the events likely to be taking place in your region. More are, however, being organised as this goes to print, so do contact your regional representative (listed inside the back cover) for further details. Alternatively, if you have an idea for a local event and could help with a venue or with the organisation in any way, your representative would be delighted to hear from you!

Chiltern region

An Autumn term event is now being planned, although at the time of going to print, the date, subject and venue are undecided! Look out for notices in schools, teachers' centres and papers, or contact Betty Lumley, on 081 866 0827.

East Midlands

12th October: 'Control', Leicestershire.
November: 'Humanities and IT', Nottinghamshire.
Spring 1992: 'English and IT', Derbyshire.
Summer 1992: 'Creative Arts', Leicestershire; 'MAPE Roadshow', Lincolnshire.
Easter 1994: MAPE National Conference returns to Nottingham!

Great Western Region: Gloucestershire

June 25th: 'Know Your Control Box', Swindon Village Primary School, 4.15 pm.
September 24th: 'Good maths software', run jointly with ATM, at Benton House, The Park, Cheltenham and Gloucester College of HE.
Autumn Term: Beginners' Courses.
Late November: 'Christmas Ideas'.
Details from Sue Marlow, St James' Primary School Cheltenham Tel: 0242 516836.

Great Western Region: Somerset

Autumn Term: 'Get to know your Archimedes', sessions will take place in Bridgwater, Wells and Frome.
Further details will be sent to schools in September.

Great Western Region: Avon

June 13th: 'Logo', Avon IT Centre
Unfortunately, the IT Centre is due to close in August 1992 so venues for future MAPE events will be more difficult to find. If *you* use the centre we feel sure that you too will mourn its passing, so please make your feelings known to the powers-that-be.

North West Region

Autumn workshops 1991, at the Dialstone Centre, Lisburne Lane, Stockport:
October 9th: 'A3000 and Data Logging'.
November 13th: AGM and 'Christmas Drop In'.
December 11th: 'Science and IT'.
All workshops start at 7.30pm.

Scotland

Notwithstanding their exhaustion following the National Conference in Glasgow, Scottish MAPE members are planning a St Andrew's Day Conference on November 30th, somewhere in Stirling.

Southern

June 15th 1991: 'Control Technology', Bovington First School.
Autumn 1991: 'Databases', Weymouth Professional Centre.
February 29th 1992: 'Graphics', Malmesbury Park First School, Bournemouth.

South West

June 20th: 'An Afternoon of Floor Robots', with Swallow systems and Pip.
June 29th: 'Data Handling'.
September 21st: AGM with guest speaker.
Autumn term: One day music workshop; One day Special Needs workshop; Drop in sessions on Christmas ideas, DTP and maths software.

Special Offer for MAPE members!

The Cambridgeshire Centre for IT has published two books which MAPE members may buy at half the usual price.

The **Beginners Guides to the A3000 and Archimedes** (a joint publication) is now £3.50 including post and packing.

Although the book may not be photocopied, photocopy masters are available. The price is set according to the number of pupils in the school: 500 pupils – £20, between 501 and 1000 pupils – £40. This is a tremendous bargain.

Free Desktop Publishing (!Draw !Edit) for the A3000 and Archimedes is £2.50 including post and packing.

Send your cheque, made payable to **Cambridgeshire County Council (CITE)**, to CITE (MAPE Offer), The Green, Brampton, Huntingdon, Cambridgeshire PE18 8RF; Tel: 0480 52128.

MAPE software news

MAPE software is distributed free of charge only to those people who are members at the time of publication. However, those who subsequently join may still obtain copies of the software.

MAPE Tapes 1–3 (now on disc) were produced a number of years ago. A selection of the better programs has been collated in order to produce:

The MAPE Compendium
Micro: BBC, RM480Z, RM Nimbus*
Cost: £14.00 (non-members); £10.00 (new members)
Programs include: *Canal Locks, Mangonel, Marsh, Mallory Manor, Crackit, Mousey, Front Page Extra* and other old favourites.

*Malcolm Neave has converted the programs to run on a Nimbus. There are a few hiccups, but if you would like to test the programs please send us a formatted 3.5″ disc plus a stamped addressed label to the value of 35p.

Also available:

MAPE Tape 4 (on disc)
Micro: BBC, RM480Z
Cost: £12.50 (non-members); £8.50 (new members)
LEA licences available
This includes:
BBC: *Pond Dipping, Magic Telephone, News Bulletin* and *Topol.*
RM480Z: *Adventure Story* and *Adventure Editor, Picasso.*

MAPE Tape 5: The Owl Pack (software and resources)
Micro: BBC, RM Nimbus
Cost: £14.50 (non-members); £9.50 (new members)
LEA licences available for the software.
A3000 version from Newman Software.

MAPE Tape 6
Micro: BBC B and Master, RM480Z (*Orb of Zalibar* only), RM Nimbus
Cost: £14.50 (non-members); £9.50 (new members)
LEA licences available.

MAPE 6 includes *Stylus* (an update of *Concept Writer*) and *The Orb of Zalibar* adventure game.

The A3000 version is available from NORICC, Coach Lane Campus, Coach Lane, Newcastle Upon Tyne, NE7 7XA.

Stylus Plus is now available for the BBC micro. This is a modification to the original version of the program, in which the Talk option has been removed and replaced by the facility to block move text. Anyone who would like this version in addition to their existing one can acquire a copy by sending a blank 5.25″ disc together with a cheque for £5.75 and a 9″ × 6″ sae (40p postage).

MICRO-SCOPE

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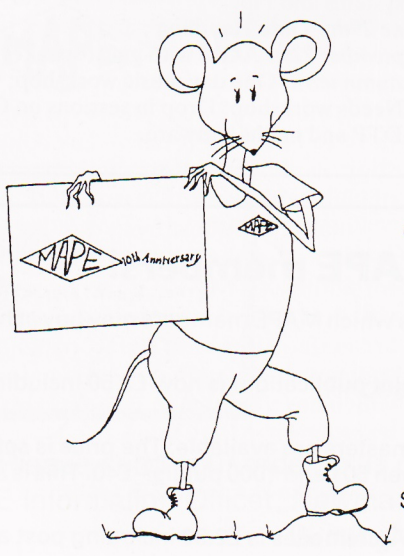

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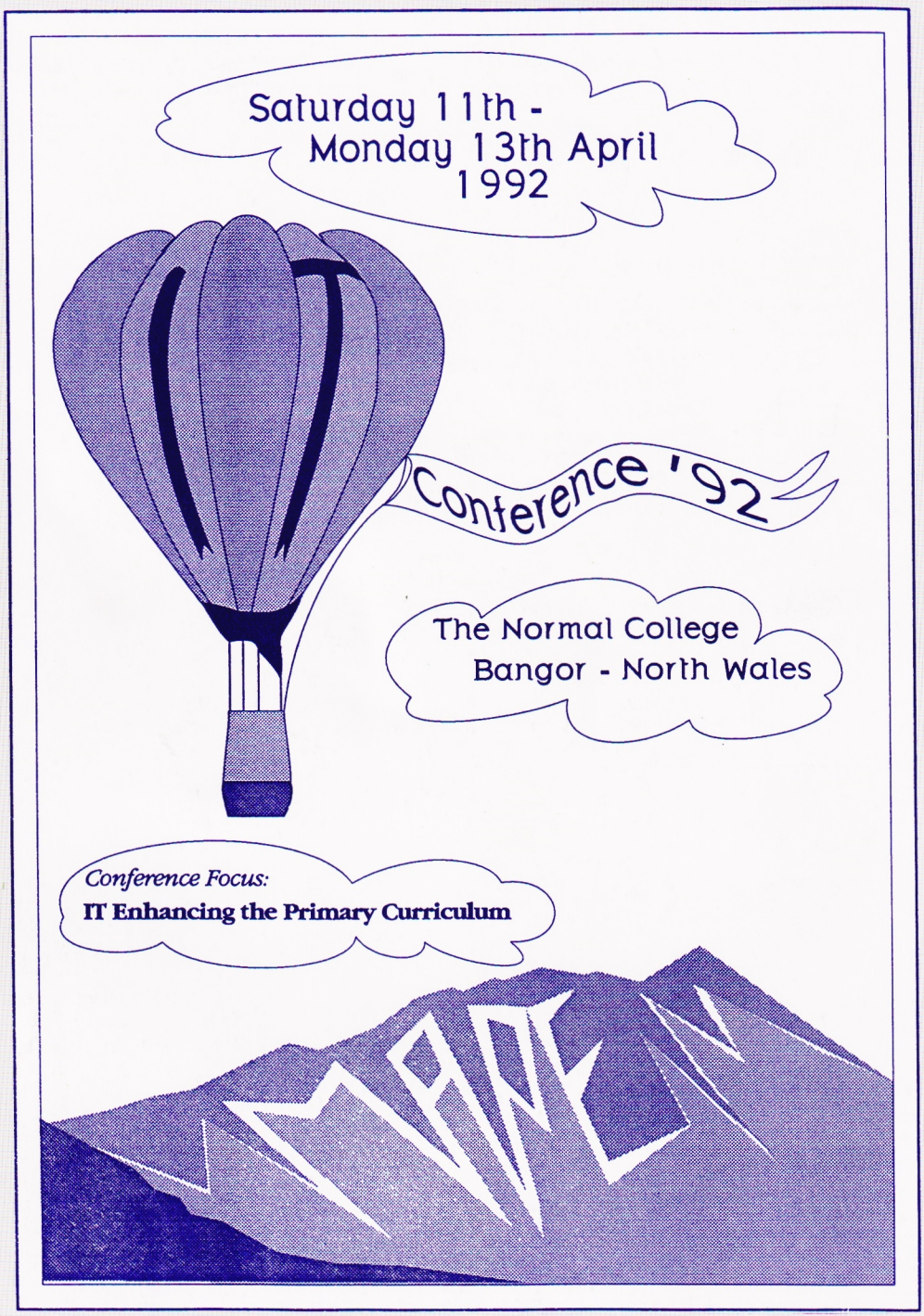

Published by Castlefield (Publishers) Ltd,
Newton Close, Park Farm Industrial Estate,
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