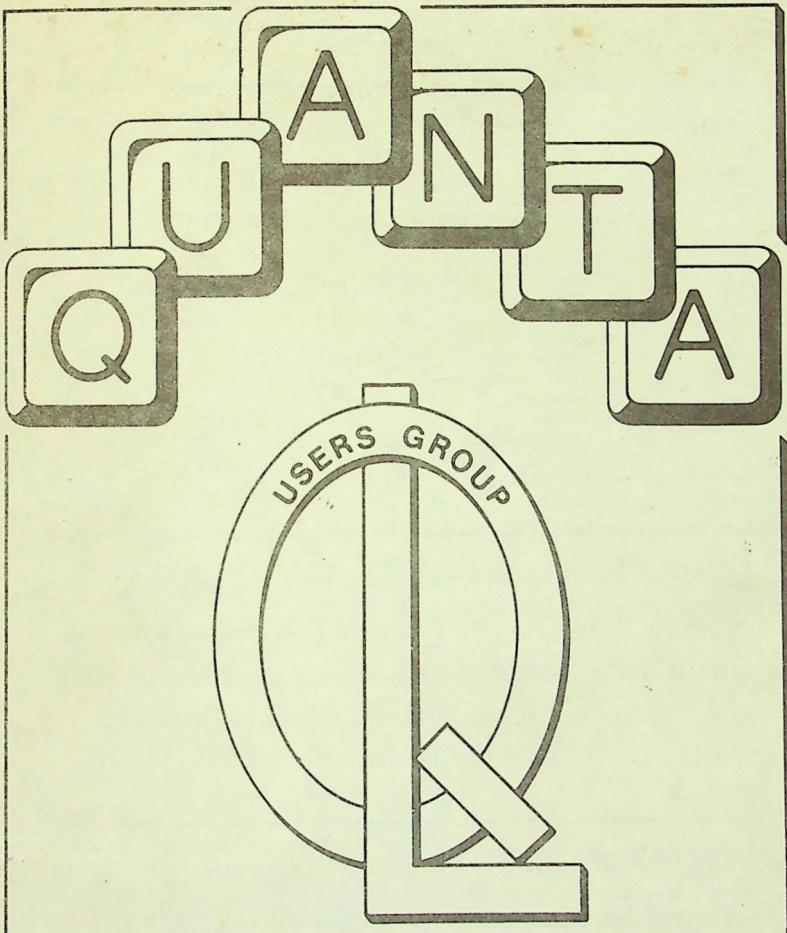

Volume 7 - Issue 12 - January 1991

QUANTA

Volume 7 -- Issue 12 -- January 1991

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Quanta Nominations

Nominations for the QUANTA committee should be submitted as soon as possible to the general secretary (Phil). All nominations should be in writing. Notice of the AGM will follow.

Workshops

March 9–10 – Portishead.

This workshop will be extended with special lectures- more details next month.

QUANTA

- Membership of QUANTA, the indepedent QL user group, is by subscription to the group's monthly newsletter. The membership secretary can supply full details.
- Copies of the group's constitution & annual accounts are available from the general secretary.
- There is an extensive software library.
- There are active national and international subgroups. Details are available and will be published periodically.

Honorary Officers

- **CHAIRMAN** – Sydney Humphreys, Wychwood, The Street, Bramerton, NORWICH, NR14 7DW. Tel 05088-463.
- **GENERAL SECRETARY** – Philip Borman, 1 Newtown Rd, RAUNDS, Northants, NN9 6LX. Tel 0933-460690.
- **TREASURER** – Michael Jackson, 12 Church St, Adlington, CHORLEY, PR7 4EX. Tel 0257-480331.
- **MEMBERSHIP SEC** – David Johnson, The Corner House, Loxley, WARWICK, CV35 9JT. Tel 0789-842543 (Not Sunday).
- **LIBRARIAN** – Roy Brereton, 94 Teignmouth Rd, CLEVEDON, Avon, BS21 6DR. Tel 0272-871917.
- **COMMITTEE MEMBER** – Dennis Briggs, 53 Gilpin Rd, Admaston, TELFORD, TF5 0BG. Tel 0952-255895.
- **NEWSLETTER EDITOR** (Interim) – Bill Fuggle, 20 Widney Ave, Selly Oak, BIRMINGHAM, B29 6QE. Tel 021-4726671.

Newsletter submissions on QL readable magnetic media (Mdv or disk) with accompanying paper copy. Library submissions to James Methley, 4 Parkside, Lea, PRESTON, PR2 1YS. Tel 0772-736713 (SAT/SUN).

The editor & QUANTA committee reserves the right to publish or reject and to edit any material submitted. The opinions expressed are solely those of contributors.

Editorial

I would like to thank Sarah for her hard work over the past year. This included a considerable amount of time and effort for QUANTA in general as well as in her role as editor.

Interim arrangements for contributions is as follows:

- Submissions to Dennis Briggs. This is **NOT** a vetting procedure except he will advise or seek advice as to whether something is libellous etc.
- A new overseeing procedure is being formulated by the committee.
- Between us (largely Dennis) we will attempt to make sure hardware and software queries are answered in the edition the question is asked.
- This will allow me more time to actualy edit and format submissions.
- The result? – Hopefully a stimulating, easy to read and useful newsletter.
- Constructive criticisms are welcomed.

→ Turn to page 30

FELLOW LOONIES 2

I'm writing in reply to Brian Richardson's letter, "Fellow Loonies" in the latest QUANTA. I can't comment on everything, but as I also had to find out things more or less on my own, I'll give my reply from my point of view, OK?

MEMORY UPGRADE:

Because the price differences between small and large RAM expansions isn't really that much, it would be logical to take the "largest" memory expansion one could afford. The more you do with it the more memory you need. Rather like starting off with a Mini, but pretty soon you have wife/husband, kids, a dog and all the shopping to transport around, so need something bigger.

My first memory expansion was an unhoused Medic, bought direct at the firm's premises. Wolfgang Goller and I both bought 256kB versions (cheaper), but we fitted some extra Texas chips and ended up with 512 kB apiece. My husband made me a beautiful, hand-crafted casing for Christmas.

The main advantage of the MEDIC board is/was its built-in Centronics (paral- lel) interface which suited my Epson LQ500. Otherwise I would have had to spend £40 or so for the Epson RS-232 (SER) interface board. The disadvantage of the MEDIC was, that it used a massive amount of memory for itself. Today, I use a MIRACLE Trumpcard, bought o/h from Quanta Subgroup Merseyside and though I don't use all the facilities it offers (Toolkit, more about that later), it's a hell of a lot smaller and lighter and yet has more (896 kB) of extra RAM. *{This should be 896K - 128K(QL's internal memory) Ed}*

The problem of the Centronics connection was solved by connecting the MIRACLE Serial:Centronics interface (the Centronics doo-dah), which arrived in Switzerland within a week of my sending off the order.

TOOLKITS:

Every household has some form of tools: a knife will often do as a screwdriver, a pair of scissors can sometimes double as pliers.. but it's not the real thing. So you go to the d.i.y. and buy yourself a proper toolkit, with which you can do the job properly, simpler, and above all, correctly.

The normal "tools" of a computer are the commands. That's what you use to get things done. But some commands of the QL (and a lot of other computers!) don't always do EXACTLY what you want for the job.

Say you save all your letters onto one or two mdvs or disks under names such as, say Dave1904, John2212, Dave 1112, i.e. the name and date the letter was written. You "dir" the mdv or disk but you're really only interested in the Dave...-letters. Wouldn't it be nice if the standard QL had a command such as "dir mdv2_Dave" or "dir flp2_dave" to get just a list of

the Dave... -letters. Well, that's the sort of thing you can do with a toolkit, in fact, mdv2_Dave is a genuine Toolkit-command. The Toolkit comes with the Miracle Trumpcard memory board, by the way.

DISK DRIVES:

3.5" disks are smaller, safer and usually have a larger capacity than 5.25" disks. 5.25 disks have a permanently open slot which invites sticky fingers, spilt coffee and cat paws. 3.5" disks are almost firm, fully enclosed and are fast becoming the standard. 3" appeared to be just a flash in the pan, and an attempt at world domination by a certain "manufacturer" of computers, who wanted his 3" discs to become a world standard. That, thank God, failed miserably. Keep your fingers off 3" disks, unless you want to start worrying about supplies in a couple of years.

Single sided v. double sided: This is a bit like an LP. It's better if they are cut on two sides – you get more songs that way, but there are some bootleg LPs around, which are cut (grooved) on one side and are completely smooth on the other. So for computer purposes, double sided are better.

Single density v. double density: Rather like an LP compared to a CD. The "grooves" of a CD are so close (denser) together, they are almost invisible. Because of this, you can get more onto a smaller area than an LP. So double density is better.

Speed: Disks are a LOT faster. A Dir is almost instantaneous. Loading a game such as Lost Pharao takes seconds and not minutes.

Power supply: Disk drives need their own power supply. The power (in terms of voltage) supplied by the QL is enough to keep its microdrives whirring but that's about it. The Medic interface and the Mitsubishi drives I bought with it needed a massive (in terms of power AND size) power supply.

Today I use two very smart little 3.5" discs purchased from CARE ELECTRONICS. The power supply is very small and light and now that the Mitsubishis + Medic/disk power supply has gone, I have a lot more room on my desk. I was warned by my mentor, John Norton (may he never spill his Stella Artois), NOT to use the Medic power supply with the Care disk drives as I would surely blow them up. It wouldn't surprise me, as the Medic power supply seems to be the starter motor for a Jumbo jet.

And as far as my own experience goes, yes, once you've transferred all your files to disk, you'll never need the microdrives again, unless a game or something absolutely DEMANDS the "original" in mdv1_ or whatever.

HARD DISKS:

I treated myself to a MIRACLE 40 Mb Winchester system this year. (Again, it arrived very quickly after placing the order, which put Miracle firmly at the top of my Top Ten suppliers list.)

A larger memory than standard QL would be an advantage for a Winchester, as of course it's

own "brain" needs a certain amount of memory to work. On a hard disk, you can store masses of information in little groups (subdirectories) of their own e.g. dir win1_games will (if you've saved them as such) will give you a list such as games_patience, games_pharao, games_diamonds and whatever other games you've saved under the subheading win1_games_.

An analogy here would be a (European) regional telephone book. First the book is sectioned into individual towns and then subsectioned into the names of the subscribers. Saving files onto disk or mdv in the normal higgledy- piggledy manner (e.g. save flp1_pharao) is like an English telephone book: Blackpool, Preston, Fleetwood and all the little villages in the area are all mixed up together in the same book. You look for a Smith M. in Preston and you have to wade through ALL Smith Ms in the entire area. Saving a game under a sub-heading is like

Saving files in the normal higgledy- piggledy manner is like an English telephone book.

starting a telephone book just for Preston, which makes things a lot easier.The Miracle Winchester is plugged straight into the back of the computer, leaving the extension port (left hand side) free for your memory expansion, Trump Card, or whatever.

I can't think of any disadvantages of the Miracle Hard Disk. The sound of the fan is pleasantly reassuring. My cat thinks there's a mouse on the desk every time the Winchester "parks" its head (it squeaks), but he can't reach the Winchester, so can't do any damage.

So if you're buying a Winchester, find out first where it plugs in! I have not done away with my floppy disks just because I have a hard disk. I load Taskmaster and Flashback (a thousand blessings on their inventor) from flp1_ and save all my files to flp2_ before resaving them to win1_.

As far as costs go, I paid the following (ex-VAT but including postage to Switzerland) for my little box of tricks: Miracle Trump Card (s/h) with Trump Card £180.00, Miracle Hard Disk 40 Mb £405.00, Care 2 disk drives with power supply £160.00, Miracle Centronics Doo-Dah £ '28.00

Well, hope you can use some of this information. It may help some beginners sort things out.

best wishes to all,

DANE KURTH

LAENGGASSE 51CH-3292 BUSSWILSWITZERLAND

TEL/FAX (0041)-32-842289

5th. September 1990

QUANTA WORKSHOPS - A TRADER'S TALE

THE JOURNEY

Friday the 19th October – time to get into the car and drive down to Worthing on the south coast of England for the latest Quanta workshop in yet another new venue. This was my first ever car journey to that part of England and the prospect of a six hour car journey from North Wales didn't exactly fill me with enthusiasm for the weekend ahead.

My first mistake was to head for Chester then south on the A51. Aargh! Nearly as bad as the M25! If anyone wanted to learn a few Welsh swear words (there aren't as many in Welsh as in English, thankfully!) should have been in the car with me for that part of the journey, which took nearly three hours just to get to Telford. I normally travel down the A5 to the M6 via the

M54 (and I agree with Dennis Briggs that contrary to popular opinion, the M54 is not a motorway but a training area for motorway repair workmen!) but decided against that this time, much to my cost – it would have saved me an hour on the journey.

My next predicament was the M6. I hardly got out of third gear anywhere on this, motorway, err, I mean cone storage area. I finally escaped this awful part of the journey onto the M1, or so I thought. My problem was getting into third gear at all on this one! By now, I was having problems deciding if I was going to fall asleep, turn back, invent new Welsh swear words or just smile pleasantly at the cars either side of me in the same predicament. A police car reversing backwards up the hard shoulder to warn of an accident ahead provided the only break in the monotony.

Eventually, I got to the M25. At last, I could get on with the journey, I thought. But no, my problems were only just beginning. First of all, being so tired by now I got on that in the wrong direction and had to find a way of turning back, although by now I was resigned to everything going wrong and thought to myself continuously – why bother going to this workshop in a place where I'd never been to before in my life. Why not turn back now before things got even worse? After all, traffic was moving at five miles per hour where the warning signs flashed up a 60 mph limit to really turn up the misery. My wife had intended to come with me to this Workshop but had got the hump when she was told she had to work through that weekend – she didn't know how lucky she was.

THE ARRIVAL

Eventually I got to Worthing and after a few wrong turnings in the town centre (were there any Quanta direction signs?) I found my way to the hotel. It was fairly late by now and I had thought of wandering into the bar to listen out for QL-talk and try to spot a few familiar faces. But no, my tiredness got the better of my thirst and I disappeared into my room in the guest house down the road for a well deserved night's sleep. At least it would have been had it not

been for those flaming children setting off fireworks and bangers not far from the window...

I got up bright eyed and bushy tailed next morning (well, that was the theory, anyway) and struggled down for breakfast and discovered Stuart and Jeremy from Miracle Systems and another QL owner whose name I didn't catch were booked into the same guest house. Good start, anyway.

THE MEETING PLACE

From then on, things started getting even better. We set up in the traders' annexe of the systems room (that's Quanta speak for putting the traders stalls out of the way of all the QL's that members bring along...). I met up with Joe Haftke and the familiar routine started to develop (we began to argue over who had how much room on the table - Joe's not as big as me, after all!). Andrew Knights told us all where to set up, pleasantries were exchanged and a seething mass of boxes, cases, QL's with unusual boxes and keyboards, wires all over the place, people speaking in weird tongues (English QL owners!) and all sorts of weird and wonderful QL add-ons grew around us. That's a Quanta workshop - a place where any QL or Thor owning member can come and meet like-minded people. You can be as technical or non-technical as you like -you are sure to meet someone you can talk to at these weekends. Sure enough, there were the regular visitors, some from further afield than the others (in one or two cases, much further!), and even a few who had never been to these workshops before, who didn't bring a QL along and just wandered in to see what was going on. In no time at all, a happy communal spirit had sot itself up and the QL had started to demonstrate that magic that keeps so many QL owners loyal to their machine so long after it ceased to be manufactured in its original form.

THE BUYERS AND SELLERS

Amidst the traders, several well known companies were there such as Miracle, selling their range of hardware for the QL, Care Electronics were there on the Saturday, CGH Services (in the guise of Rich Mellor) sold mainly games, Di-Ren showed their MPC mains controller which was clicking away merrily flashing some rather bright lamps and demonstrated their network checker box and sold their by now famous Fleet Tactical Command software, EEC Ltd offered a variety of products and of course Dennis Briggs was there selling bits and pieces in his own inimitable way as usual. Some of the other well known faces on the QL scene such as Digital Precision, QVIEW, TF Services and Sector Software were not represented this time, unfortunately. Ron Dunning (of QUBBE fame) spent most of Saturday copying his two discs of public domain software in his own corner. The Quanta stall was represented by Sarah and David Johnston, ably assisted by a few white Quanta sweat shirts and Jan Jones books, and I heard several people mention how friendly, patient and helpful they and the rest of the committee who were present had been to the visitors (grovel, grovel). How lucky we are as members to have such a hard working and dedicated committee running our organisation which surely must have contributed so much to the QL's present healthy state over the years (If that isn't worth three months' free subscription, what is?).

THE LECTURE

About lunchtime, things suddenly started to quieten down and I couldn't figure out why, until someone told me that Dennis Briggs was giving a lecture in the small room by reception. I missed that lecture, unfortunately. Dennis is one of the rocks of the QL scene and talks by the likes of Dennis and Freddy Vacha of Digital Precision are always well attended informative and often quite a lot of fun. There was even a discussion on the subject of Perception which by all accounts was interesting and different, although I missed that too. This is a feature of the Quanta workshops - there are usually informal talks or presentations on a variety of subjects and it can be well worth a visit to a workshop just to see these talks, although there is usually so much to see that many members stay for the two days to enjoy what can almost be considered a complete mini break where you can escape from daily routine into pleasant surroundings where you can enjoy your hobby (or whatever your QL is to you) and share your tales and experiences with other people who enjoy their QL's every bit as much as you do. There is always someone on hand who can help with problems, whether it be a monitor on the blink or a dead keyboard or a program that won't do what it's told to do. Even if you know little about anything there'll always be someone there who can help you to learn a little bit about most subjects that are QL related. Very few people who attend these workshops ever go away feeling that it was a complete waste of time and that there was nothing in it for them, although many do go away with their wallets slightly lighter at the end of the day!

THE BAR

Some elected to slip away to the bar and the lounge for the occasional natter, some proceeded to hammer the hell out of their QL's and the lone (boo, hiss!) ST, some performed open heart surgery on precariously perched QL's and one or two were seen to nod off from the excitement! I even saw my dream QL there (no, definitely not a converted ST!), which had been under the surgeon's knife and had the microdrives amputated to make room for a single 3.5" drive where the microdrives used to be! If only all QL's had been born like that...

THE CHEF

The middle of Saturday afternoon came and went. By now, even hotel staff had begun to wander in and have a look at what was going on - seeing a chef and receptionist drooling over the wonders and mysteries of a QL game and a copy of Quill reminded me of that magic moment a few years back when I first got my QL working properly and bought my first game and I began to think what a future the QL and its derivatives might have had with a bit more luck on its side when it was launched. It does have a magic that for me doesn't seem to exist on other computers, although it has to be said that it does have its warts as well, which helped contribute to its bad luck and downfall, probably.

LONG LIVE THE QL

As a trader, I had a fairly good, though not exceptional day. Some members were buying, others were waiting until later in the weekend and some were just there to see what was on offer. A lot of people commented on how nice it had been to put faces to tradere they had dealt with in the past and to be able to see exactly what they could buy before committing themselves to parting with their hard earned money. A hotel employee commented that he'd heard someone say that the QL hadn't been in production for a long time and was considered "dead", so how come there was so much activity and so many owners congregating in one spot? That sums it all up for me – the QL is dead. Long live the QL.

THE BEDROOM

As the end of the first day neared, some sad news came our way. We had planned to leave all the computers in the big room that night, but were told that the hotel had a bookings problem and needed the room for diners that night. The community spirit came to the fore and a vacant bedroom was coaxed from the hotel and all the equipment thrown (well, not literally, in most cases anyway) into that overnight. What a state – cardboard boxes, plastic crates, wires and all sorts of QL goodies all over the place and no one too worried about getting things mixed up, although everyone seemed to be treating each other's equipment with due respect.

THE LADY

Just before departing for the evening, time for a quick pint. Joe Haftke and I debated why it was that when one of us switched our machines off, the other always crashed, for some reason. When our QL's are next to each other, it's a foregone conclusion that we have to switch off an on at the same time...Grrr! Two QL's allergic to each other? I'm sure we could have argued about that one all night! Call in Dennis Briggs maybe? No, not this time! Then, while talking to Chris Boutal in reception just before leaving, a lady walks in and asks if she's in time. "The Quanta workshop's in there", we offered, pointing to the systems room, although it was almost deserted by now.

"Quanta workshop?", she replied.

"Oh, sorry, you're not a QL owner", we apologised.

"Yes I am, and a member of Quanta. Why, is there a workshop here today! I didn't know!" she laughed. Some coincidence. She'd booked into the hotel without knowing! The following morning she came and joined us briefly to discuss the problems of adding a hard disk to her system before being dragged off by her husband for the original purpose of their visit to Worthing. That probably reflected the one down point against this workshop, that the advance publicity had been somewhat mistimed and the directions and details were mainly in the September issue, not the October issue which was the current issue at the time of the Workshop. Hopefully this will be better for the Nottingham and other forthcoming workshops around the country.

MEETINGS AND DEPARTURES

Sunday came and went. It was rather sparsely attended during the morning but things had picked up slightly by lunchtime. By the middle of the afternoon, many of the visitors and traders had begun to pack up and depart for home, some traders much richer and some visitors much poorer. I had met many customers whom I had previously only known on the phone or through letters and made some new friends as well as renewing existing ones with QL owners whom I hadn't seen for a while because I live so far away from most. Shame that there isn't a sub group in my area (North Wales) – maybe I'll have to do something about that soon!

THE PUNCHLINE

Anyway, I'd had a happy weekend and the only blight was the M25, the M1, the M6...The number of cars in a given area is inversely proportional to the distance away from Dilwyn's Capri, it seems. Maybe Dennis Briggs was right after all. I lost count of the contraflows, the cones, the lane restrictions and so on all the way back – having taken 2 hours to travel 5 miles at one point I had my doubts as to whether it was all worth it, but I had only to look back at two very enjoyable days and the new friends... All Quanta members who can go to these workshops should consider going, even if they've never been to one before. Nowadays, there are more workshops than ever before and provided you don't live too far North it shouldn't be too long before one comes to you. Workshops are great fun and bring out the best in QL owners, and it's a chance to meet other QL owners and the traders. Above all, it's a fun weekend where you can get what you want out of it and everyone contributes to how it works out. Come along to the next ones – read the details in Quanta.

Dilwyn Jones.

Simple Tips

I claim no originality for the information listed below, but it consists of bits and pieces which I had to search around to find over the past four years or so. I hope they may be helpful to some.

LISTING A DIRECTORY FROM DISC, MDV ETC TO A PRINTER

Open#5,ser1 (You may use other channel #'s but 5 is out of the way of the usual QL screens)
Dir#5,flpn_ (n - drive number, MDV, RAM or other may be used)
Close#5

LISTING FROM BASIC PROGAM LOADED INTO COMPUTER

Open#5,Ser1
List #5
Close#5

PRINTING FROM BASIC

Open#5,ser1
Print #5,"xyzabc" or whatever within quotes.
Close#5

TO READ A FILE FROM DISK ETC

WCOPY Flpn_FILENAME_,scr_, Answer Y to prompt

To stop movement press CTRL & F5, F5 starts movement again.

TO SAVE A DIVIDER ON DISK eg "----------NAME---------"

SAVE "FLPn_------NAME-------" ENTER

TO PRINT MORE THAN ONE COPY OF A DOCUMENT FROM QUILL

Load your document into Quill, or use text already written. Print it to a file. I use RAM, and "A" for the file name, but you can call the file anything you like and use MDV or FLP in place of RAM. The key entries are F3, P. Current? ENTER, Whole? ENTER, Printer? RAM1_A ENTER. This will print a file A_lis to RAM1. Then run the program below. Substitute whatever number you like for 3 in line 100, and you will get that number of copies to your printer. Remember to finish the text at the end of a page, or you will get two or more copies on the same page depending on the length of your document. You can of course at the end of your text insert a Form Feed Code, which will take your printer to the start of the next page. The Form Feed Code for my printer is Decimal 140 sent by CTRL – but see CONTROL CODES BELOW.

```
100 FOR I=1 TO 3
110 COPY RAM1_A_LIS TO SER1
120 PRINT I
130 END FOR I
```

You can tidy up the program or turn it into a procedure if you wish, but it works as it is shown. I load it and run it for a couple of copies to make sure it is doing what I want, and then change the 3 to whatever I need. If you want to stop midway through a print press CTRL and Spacebar.

All the mini programs above can be saved and lrun, if you want to save yourself the trouble of remembering, and typing them in as statements. I give mine names which associate them with their function, eg, the one above is "COPY", but perhaps "COPIES" would be better.

MEMORY EXPANSION & MULTITASKING.

To get anywhere really productive with the QL, you need to have memory expansion, and TRUMPCARD is the best. You may appear to save money in the short term with a smaller memory expansion, but you will eventually want a bigger one so you might as well get it at the start – it will save you money in the long run. I run two QLs one with CST 640K and the other with TRUMPCARD, both have two disc drives. TRUMPCARD is luxurious as you always seem to have enough memory. TOOLKIT II is a must, and comes with TRUMPCARD, but you can get it on EPROM which is the way I use it with my CST QL, it is also available on disc.

I don't know where I would be without Multitasking. I started with QSWITCH, which is economical in memory usage, but doesn't have the facilities offered by TASKMASTER. David Johnson, I believe, uses QPAC. I have QRAM and have thought of upgrading it to QPAC, but I have got very used to TASKMASTER and so have not as yet had reason to consider the change seriously. I have seen some of these programs second hand at very reasonable prices in the QUANTA SMALL ADS SECTION. For those that are on a really tight budget there is Phil Spinks' TASKFORCE which was published in the QL World some time ago, and is available from Richard Alexander – see next paragraph.

TOOLKITS

For those who haven't seen the October 1990 issue of QL World the article on DIY TOOLKITS is well worth a look. Simon Goodwin has, over the past two years or so, published articles on toolkits with programs. He has now put these all on Discs in 12 Volumes. They are £3.00 each, which is very reasonable, with a charge per order of £4.00. So if you buy 1 it will cost you £7, if you buy all 12 volumes it will cost you £40 or £3.33 each. QL World says they can be obtained from DIY Toolkit (Orders), Cwm Gwen Hall, Pencader, Dyfed, Cymru SA39 9HA, or call Richard Alexander at 0559 384574. So for those who do not get QL World a letter or telephone call could well be valuable as the range of subjects covered is enormous and includes Multibasic in volume M, which, as I understand it, provides the ability to multitask basic programs.

SPEED ENHANCMENT

Lightning or Speedscreen are well worth having. I have both but normally use Lightning. I am considering the Special Edition. Minerva – I am still thinking about.

SAVING AND LOADING SCREENS

Some things to do with the QL, like printer drivers, appear difficult and so you stay away from them. Loading and Saving Screens were one such subject for me, but Dilwyn Jones Page Designer got me started on Desk Top Publishing, and I now have Professional Publisher as well. Inevitably, I had to learn more and very much to my surprise I found loading and saving screens a piece of doddle. To save a screen the command is, SBYTES FLP1_SCREEN-NAME_SUFFIX,131072,32768 ENTER (you don't have to have a suffix) – page 51 of the KEYWORDS section of the QL MANUAL. To load a screen is even simpler, LBYTES FLP1_SCREENNAME_SUFFIX,131072 ENTER – page 31 of the MANUAL. What an idiot I was to think it difficult for so long!

If you want to try it with EASEL load a graph, then F3 P S, and you can Screen dump it to the device of your choice. Having done that you can LBYTE it at will. I have found this very useful when I want to check a large number of graphs which I have dumped for import into PROFESSIONAL PUBLISHER – PAGE DESIGNER, I haven't tried yet.

GRAPHICS CODE FOR WRITE TURN PROFESSIONAL PUBLISHER ETC

I bought WRITE TURN about 18 months ago as I thought it would be useful for printouts of large spreadsheets which were 52 lines deep. I could only get 48 lines, none of the other options worked, in spite of correspondence with David Batty of Sector Software. He did

however provide me with a new printer driver for WT which removed end of line and other unwanted codes. I wanted the 64 line option and had told him that I used a MANNESMANN TALLY printer. I had given up hope of getting more than 48 lines when, recently, I was playing with the configuration options and had my printer manual out. My printer only supports 960 and 1280 dots per line, and as an experiment I altered the configuration in WT to set the code for this against 960. It worked, and I can now print out sideways with 48 and 64 lines. It is now an excellent program and does all I want. I had the same trouble with Professional Publisher, and it responded to the same solution.

Peter Hamill,
Lynncot, Back Lane,-Elton, Peterborough, PE8 6RW
Tel: Oundle (0832) 280342

Psion Tips

USE OF RAMDISCS.

I use RAMDISCS a lot to store temporary information, or programs in development. This saves wear on the moving parts of other storage devices, and presumably will extend their life. If you have TOOLKIT II or the CST interface you have dynamic RAM, which will expand or reduce to whatever memory is needed. You can format them but they will still make more memory available if they need it. ICE users have to format their RAM and will be stuck with whatever memory they have formatted to.

I also copy _dbf, _prg, _pro & _scn files to RAM when using ARCHIVE. This not only gives quicker access, but also all is not lost if you forget to close a file. If you do follow this routine you do, of course, have to configure ARCHIVE to look for things in one of the RAMs, I usually use RAM1_ or RAM2_. BUT REMEMBER TO CLOSE AND COPY YOUR _DBF FILES TO FLP OR MDV AT THE END OF A SESSION IF YOU HAVE ALTERED THEM, OTHERWISE YOUR ALTERATIONS WILL BE LOST EVEN THOUGH THE INFORMATION YOU STARTED WITH IS SAFE. When using the QUANTA library guide I use this method and it works well. For those who do not want to do this there may be, I think, a program in the QUANTA library which backs up for you every so often, but you'll have to look for yourself and it may only be for QUILL.

TRANSFERRING PARTS OF DOCUMENTS IN QUILL

Place Page Markers top and bottom of the text to be transferred (F3 O P), you move the cursor to the start position and press P, then move the cursor to where you want the marked text to end and then press P again. Press ENTER to end Pagemarking. Print the desired part of the text to a file using F3 P. When prompted with "Whole" type in the page number of the text to be transferred. If the text is only one page type in the page number as the first and last page. REMOVE THE PRINTER DRIVER DISC which is normally in drive 1. When prompted with printer, type in the file name and add the extension _exp (RAM2_A_EXP) to prevent Quill adding _lis. The file can then be imported into Quill. To Merge the desired text use the IMPORT command (F3 O F I RAM2_A_EXP) placing the cursor at the point where the

imported text is to be inserted. To remove a FORCED page break, place the cursor on the break line and use CTRL <– (Cursor arrow).

If you find you have made a booboo over the _exp when printing the file then just rename it replacing the _lis with _exp.

You can, of course use this same system of marking pages, to print selected parts of your document to your printer using the normal QUILL system – you may want hard copy of a bit of a long document.

I use RAM to store files temporarily until I have the document exactly the way I want it, then save the final definitive edition (which invariably I want to alter after it is saved!!) to FLP.

PRINTER DRIVERS FOR THE PSION QUARTET

I have had my QLs for about four years and I have always been a bit twitchy about fiddling with the printer drivers, however, a long time ago I managed to get a printer driver to print condensed. This was very useful when I wanted a printout from ABACUS, or a wide document from QUILL – you could get much more on the sheet. So for three years or so I have had two printer drivers the first Standard for EPSON FX80 – my printer is a MANNESMANN TALLY MT80 which is similar to the ESPON in most respects – and the second condensed. The standard I keep for use on flp1_ with QUILL, & ARCHIVE, the second on flp2_ with my ABACUS data. QUILL AND ARCHIVE read the driver from Flp1_, but I have configured ABACUS to read its driver from Flp2_.

So ABACUS normally gives me a condensed printout, and I can get condensed from QUILL and ARCHIVE by putting my ABACUS data disc in drive 1. You can of course get ABACUS to print in standard size by putting the disc with the normal size Printer Driver in drive 2.

You can get ABACUS to tell how many columns you are using in your spreadsheet by WIDTH() in Column A at the bottom, ECHO A across all the cells you have used in your spreadsheet, eg so if you are at line 52, A52 has WIDTH(), ECHO A52 from B52 to L52. Then in A Column a line below SUM(A52:L52) and you will have the total columns used. With my printer as long as this figure is 125 or less I am OK to print across one standard fanfold page, but don't forget to delete the last two lines or you will get a print of the columns widths as well.

Configuring the programs is well covered in the QL Manual, but it may help if I describe how to alter the printer_dat for condensed. LRUN INSTALL_BAS from the PSION four, and make sure you have INSTALL_DAT on the same disc. Select the printer that you use, and press F2 to edit. See the table on page 6 of the information section of the QL MANUAL for an example – the EPSON FX80 is similar to the right hand column "other options". Edit the PREAMBLE CODE to ESC,@,ESC,R,NUL,SI. See the top of page 7 on how to do it, but I found ESC,"@,ESC,"R,NUL,SI worked – ALL THE COMMAS, AND "s are essential in the places shown. Save the printer driver, which is a new printer program from Install_Bas and Install_dat, and you are home and dry and ready to go. You can us the TO SAVE A DIVIDER ON DISK eg "————————NAME————————" above to remind yourself which printer driver you have on each disc. You can, of course copy your new Printer_dat from one disc to another.

Don't forget though that if you want the full width of your printing to come out, to extend the margins in QUILL (I take the right to 125 columns), or through the design command in ABACUS (I use 145 columns, I think my printer goes to 135 in condensed, but 145 works OK). When you save a spreadsheet you will also save the design parameters, so you don't have to do it each time. In ARCHIVE you have to design your printout procedure to cover condensed by using appropriate PRINT AT statements to allow for the extra columns available in your printout procedure. I have two procedures in my database program one for normal sized print and the other for condensed.

CONTROL CODES

Various articles over the past 18 months or so in QL WORLD and QUANTA have indicated that one can do much more with the PSION 4, but it was only in the October issue of QL WORLD that I found real breakthrough when an article by Brian Davies told me that one could introduce the ESC command to your printer by CTRL; pressed together. This opened up a new world as I found that I could now put codes into my documents in QUILL to, for example print in Double Width CTRL;W1 switches it on and CTRL;W0 (the 0 is zero) switches it off. For those codes which are not preceded by ESC you can get the correct keying by looking at pages 5 – 9 in the QL MANUAL Concepts Section. For example for compressed, the code for my printer in Decimal 143 for ON and 146 for OFF. Page 7 of the MANUAL telle me that 143 is CTRL/ and 146 CTRL2. So if I wanted to print "MANUAL" in compressed in QUILL I would type in "MANUAL" and then immediately precede it with CTRL/ and place CTRL2 Immediately after it. You use Double Width and others preceded with ESC in the same way. They also work with EDITOR, and it was only today that I found I could also underline in ABACUS, however, if you place the code on the same line that you want underlined you will probably find your justification goes for a ball of chalk, so put it somewhere else. Freddy Vaccha of DP gave me a good tip for Word Processing, namely to type and justify your documents before adding the control codes. DON'T FORGET if you are in DOUBLE WIDTH you have only got about half the page available and need to adjust your margins accordingly. The Control Codes also work with TASKMASTER's NOTEPAD, which I have found useful for adding short notes to the bottom of Graphs etc, like a sixth month print out from "BIOGRAPH".

You will need to experiment, but I hope you find something of value, and don't forget that study of your printer manual will pay off. I have had my printer for four years or more, and I am still coming to grips with it – you suddenly find that it begins to make sense.

WORDPROCESSING

I have used QUILL V2.35 and still do. I would like to have TEXT 87, but cannot really justify the expense for the amount of WPing I do. Also with the ability to use Control Codes as I have described above, QUILL has taken on a new lease of life. However, having read the article about Turboquill + I decided it was worth having a go at under £20.00. I have not been disappointed. It is faster but its most useful feature is its Glossary function. This is very easy to use, and you can assign addresses or what you like to CTRL plus all the letters in the alphabet except C,I,J,O, and S. To use it you press F5, switch the learn mode on with the space bar, assign a letter, and all your key strokes are recorded to disc until you come out of

Learn Mode. These key strokes are repeated whenever you press CTRL and the letter you have assigned. CTRL S is sent to Quill on Start up, and I use it to set my standard page. To do this I pressed F5, selected S, pressed the space bar, then took out the prompts at the head of the page, set the margins to what I wanted, justified right, and set the footer to none. Pressing F5 and ESC then saved this as S_Keydef, and this is automatically performed each time I boot up. Pressing CTRL H, prints my address at the top of the page, justifies centre, and moves the cursor to wait for the date, which I get automatically by ALT d, courtesy of the program published in October's QUANTA.

I move the cursor to where I want the Addressee's address and press CTRL plus the appropriate Key, and my letter is ready to begin with all ref nos etc already in place. For addresses that you normally use, it is quicker than loading the information from a _doc file.

After learning about the control codes which could be sent to QUILL etc, I started by assigning these to T'QUILL + CTRL keys, but then QUANTA published its automatic date procedure last month. This made me think that if I used ALTKEYs out of the Toolkit II for control codes I would have about fifty single keypresses to perform functions for me.

To my surprise everything worked first time, and I show below the program I use, which, of course, you can modify in any way you choose. It is, however, easier to keep the T'QUILL + glossary for addresses and the ALTKEYs for control codes or such, as less work is involved.

```
90 REMark PROGRAM DATE
100 DEFine PROCedure datekey
110 dt$=DATE$:RESTORE 130
120 FOR f=1 TO 12:READ month$:IF dt$(6 TO 8)=month$(1 TO 3):EXIT f
130  DATA  "January","February","March","April","May","June","July","August","Septem-
ber","October","November","December"
140 dy$=dt$(10 TO 11):f=dy$(2):IF dy$(1)="0" THEN dy$=dy$(2)
150 SELect ON f
160 =1:add$="st"
170 =2:add$="nd"
180 =3:add$="rd"
190 =REMAINDER :add$="th"
200 END SELect
210 IF dy$(1)="1" AND LEN(dy$)=2 THEN add$="th"
220 yr$=dt$(1 TO 5):dt$=dy$&add$&" "&month$&" "&yr$
230 ALTKEY "d",dt$
240 END DEFine
250 ALTKEY"f","CTRL," REM FORMFEED
260 ALTKEY"n","CTRL;E" REM EMPHASISED ON
270 ALTKEY"o","CTRL;F" REM EMPHASISED OFF
280 ALTKEY"g","CTRL;G" REM DOUBLE STRIKE ON
290 ALTKEY"h","CTRL;H" REM DOUBLE STRIKE OFF
300 ALTKEY"i","CTRL;W1" REM DOUBLE WIDTH ON
310 ALTKEY"j","CTRL;W0" REM DOUBLE WIDTH OFF
320 ALTKEY"k","CTRL/" REM COMPRESSED ON
```

```
330 ALTKEY"l","CTRL2" REM COMPRESSED OFF
340 ALTKEY"m","CTRL;@" REM RESET TO POWER UP STATE
350 ALTKEY"b","CTRL"' REM SOUND BELL
```

Lines 100 to 240 are courtesy of Tony Pearson October issue of QUANTA, and it works a treat. To get this program to do its stuff you have to lrun it and then enter "DATEKEY" to activate the procedure.

With TASKMASTER I load T'QUILL + then use the command file function in TASKMASTER to store the following keypresses to move to superbasic, LRUN the program above which you will note I have called DATE, and call the procedure DATEKEY and then return to TQUILL. Having saved this as a command file all I have to do is to run it through TASKMASTER (F4 8) and I have all the ALTKEY functions available.

If you don't have MULTITASKING, but have TOOLKIT II, LRUN DATE, type DATEKEY and ENTER, EW QUILL, and you will get all the functions I have described. The instructions with Turboquill + say that it will only work with up to 80 columns, but I have not tried it yet with more.

EASEL

I use EASEL a lot for Stockmarket analysis, analysis of energy consumption in the home etc. My bread and butter graphs are 52 weeks long with data added at the end of each week. Recently I wanted to convert the graphs to four years long for use in Professional Publisher. It was going to be a long chore to get all the information from old Spreadsheets. So I tried Exporting the data which was in 52 week entries in EASEL to Abacus. To my surprise I found I had four columns with all the data each nicely labelled for each year. It was a simple job to join all the data into one column, delete all the headings apart from one at the top and the export it to EASEL, which immediately drew a four year graph on one line. I include an example of the sort of thing I mean for the graph with most data on it, namely the Financial Times Ordinary Share Index from 1982 to 6 October, 1990.

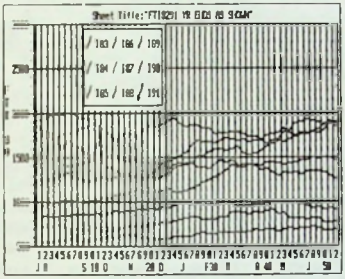
CONCLUSION

I have written this using Turboquill + and SPELLBOUND and will check it with QSPELL. I am thinking of the new SPELLBOUND version 2. I shall also check it with Dilwyn Jones Wordscheck (an excellent program) to see if I have used the same words too many times.

I would like to end with thanks to QUANTA, especially David Johnson and Phil Borman, it is an invaluable magazine, even if some of it is above my head, and to say that I have had excellent service from DIGITAL PRECISION, MIRACLE, DILWYN JONES, AND MANOR COURT SUPPLIES, whose address is GLEN CELYN HOUSE, PENYBONT, LLANDRINDOD WELLS, POWYS LD1 5SY. They supplied my switching box and cable to interconnect my two QLs to one printer at a cost of about £20.00, and they give very good deals for things from discs and disc boxes to computers. They have always responded by return of post to my orders and have been helpful in giving me advice about, for example, the switching box. Sector Software I have found to be a bit slow, and one has to expect to wait about 28 days before getting one's order.

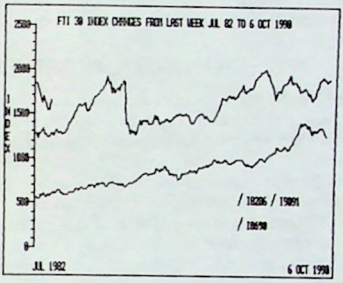
Peter Hamill, Lynncot, Back Lane, Elton, Peterborough, PE8 6RW Tel: Oundle (0832) 280342

Peter's Easel graphs



GRAPH AS IT WAS ORIGINALLY IN EASEL

GRAPH AS CHANGED EACH LINE SHOWING FOUR YEARS



GENERAL ELECTION

As I am writing this, exiled in the Netherlands, even the Dutch press is full of speculation as to who will become the Prime Minister Britain and a reminder that a General Election is due within the next 18 months. This could be one of the closest, devious and most exciting in recent British history. For those members who have an interest in psephology, (or for those who would just like to make their PC possesing friends jealous when the time comes), there is now a programme in the library on the Specials_2 disc which allows them to enter the result of almost any opinion poll into the QL and translate this into seats won by the main political parties. The result can be analysed in detail and displayed as a full colour interactive political map of the British mainland, which in turn can be dumped to a printer.

At present, the programme is only available to disc drive users, but I have now submitted a microdrive version (2 cartridges are necessary) to the quality controller. This new version also contains a configuration programme which always you to change the medium from which the programme will run. At least 256K memory is essential and to get the best out of the graphics, a colour monitor is advisable.

Present users will know that I highly recommend the use of Lightning with the programme. When I wrote it I had not upgraded from standard Lightning to Lightning Special Edition. To my horror I discovered that, with Lightning SE installed, my map had an attack of the measles with nasty spots. The solution to this can be found in section 3.1 of the Lightning SE

manual. Lightning SE users should add an extra line to the boot programme:_ _lngLINEWANGLE 1.

I do not possess Speedscreen and cannot fit Minerva as I use an ABC keyboard interface (Hint, hint, QView!) and would be interested to hear if there are similar problems with these and even better if there is a solution. I would be pleased to help any user who has a problem with the programme and in this connection users. From Feb/March 1991 my address is: 22 Bertrand Russelstraat, 1097 HL Amsterdam.

PROFESSIONAL PUBLISHER

May I echo Mark Knight's comments on Professional Publisher (November 1990 page 24). I am surprised to see how many dtp documents produced on a QL still use low resolution QL fonts although the Digital Precision desk top publishing programmes all allow the use of high resolution fonts for text as well as display purposes. It is a fact of life that the resolution of a dtp document is only as good as the size of the matrix on which the font is produced and high resolution fonts give a better quality. I am also surprised that very little mention has been made in articles of Professional Publisher's "fingerprinting" feature. This allows a page to be printed out at a quarter of its original size greatly improving the resolution. Using this technique text can be printed out with a resolution that is 7 times better than using a standard QL font even if, like me, you only possess a nine pin printer. Try it using Professional Publisher's Times font. One of my problems with Professional Publisher is to find a font that looks as near to a typeset font as possible and which reproduces well when photocopied. Photocopying tends to increase the contrast in a document and I find the better fonts as far as appearance is concerned give a dark and glaring page when copied which is not easy to read. I would be interested to hear Mark Knight's ideas on this problem.

QUILL EXPORT:

M.J. Simms asked about the Export Command in Quill (October 1990 page 9). I too needed this command to facilitate importing files via Xover into Word Perfect. By a coincidence the same day as I read his request, I came across a suggestion from David McCann in Quanta Newsletter October 1989 (page 9) of mimicing the export command by using a printer driver to create a _lis file. The main characteristics of the driver are:

- lines/page 0 characters/line 255 continuous forms YES end of line code LF
- All other codes (Preamble to Translate10) NONE

This seems to work for Word Perfect, maybe for other uses as well.

ABC KEYBOARD INTERFACE

As mentioned above I use the ABC interface with an IBM style keyboard. I am very satisfied with this, although not all the extra keys work as suggested in the manual. Ctrl + and Ctrl – should speed up or slow down programmes, sysreq should generate Ctrl C and Ctrl Prtsc should toggle modes, but none of these keys work for me. Quite by accident when editing fonts in Professional Publisher I discovered that pressing "5" on the numeric pad with the

numlock off generates Ctrl C and this allows me to change tasks with a single key press. Are there any members who have similar experiences with this keyboard interface?

Geoff Wicks, Wakkerstraat 15 – III, 1097 CB Amsterdam. 18/11/1990.

{To find out what key is being pressed just get the QL to print CODE(INKEY$(-1)) in a loop. I think that QL ROM can popped on an EPROM and put on the ABC interface. I have Minerva plus TK 2 on an EPROM card in the ROM port. HDB}

School Work

15 BLACK "BEASTIES" NETTED AT SCHOOL!!

Last May/June I recommended that the school I teach at set itself up with a room full of QL's. This went against "official" Local Education Authority Policy and did not quite fit in with most of the "experts" thoughts on the type of machine to go for.

Why do it then? Well, having used the QL myself for about five years for school related work, Yorkshire & national badminton newsletters, programmes, official School re–organisation databases & publications, and my own personal enjoyment, I knew that it was an excellent machine, and the present price made it a bargain. Then there was the pressure of the demands of the National Curriculum, the lack of cash to go the LEA "official" way with Nimbus machines, and the reneging on promised supplies by the LEA that brought things to a head.

I won't bore you with all the details of the monsterous carbuncle that details the "education" other peoples children should have, but, briefly it seemed to assume:

- That there were plenty of computers available
- ALL teaching staff could, at the drop of a hat, become competent with computers
- There was endless time available
- That ALL pupils learn very quickly!!

I don't mind fairy stories but....

Now I don't mind fairy stories, provided they are for entertainment and people don't take them seriously, but these fantasies went too far. You only need some simple arithmetic to work out how long each of 400 pupils, in each of the subject areas, would have sharing 4 (that's right FOUR) school computers. There was no way we could get even near fulfilling the National Curriculum for I.T. – unless we did it through pen & paper!!! and spent a couple of years "training the teachers. Not a good idea.

So the proposal was priced up and presented, enlisting the support of a fellow teacher who also used a QL at school. Things were made a bit easier due to us both having dealt with

tests, results, records, individual letters home etc. etc. for a number of years with our own QL's – people knew it could do the job. Even so we could not have done it without the support from EEC Ltd. & Care Electronics. They gave us a very good price for the equipment we wanted, and Felix Fonteyn has provided encouragement & support from the first. Their pricing tempted the committee into getting 15 QL's, instead of the 12 I had originally put in for – so that, even with our largest class, there would never be more than 2 pupils per machine. We were on our way.

Fortunately we had a spare room that used to be a physics lab, so no rewiring for plug sockets was needed. With the addition of Philips green screen monitors from ELTEC we were up and running. Each of our year 6 pupils (NCese for 10/11 year olds) get one hour a week on the QL's and our year 7 (11/12yo) get an average of half an hour a week through out the year. That is for ALL pupils in those year groups – no exceptions. The older pupils will get an "odd" hour here or there, depending on what timetable swaps can be arranged and various subject needs.

What do we do? Well we started off going through each of the Psion programmes in turn to give them all a basic idea of what is possible. As they build up a basic competence, "work" from other subject areas is being used within the I.T. lesson. For example the use of Easel to graphically illustrate their performance improvement (or otherwise) in Games; Quill for stories / poems / letters; Archive Gazette for Geography; Abacus to develop problem solving frameworks and play about with number.

How do the basic Psion programmes stand up in this sort of situation? Very well indeed. Easel has proved to be very popular, its ease of use and impressive handling of data has made it a winner. Quill, although I rarely use it these days, has gone down well and I've been surprised, and pleased, at how some of the pupils have seen the advantages of using Abacus and Archive.

Cover most areas for National Curriculum

These four programmes cover most of the areas demanded by the National Curriculum. The only extra one needed is a DTP type of programme that fits into a basic 128k machine – a use for my very old copy of Front Page perhaps.

How do the QL's themselves stand up to school use? Again very well indeed. The pupils do treat them with respect, and even the odd "knowledgeable" pupil with an Atari/Amiga/IBM compatible at home, who may have been a little disparaging at the start, have found themselves liking it (due in part to the very positive reception it has received from the vast majority of pupils, there's nothing like peer pressure to make you re-think when you are at school).

The QL is very firmly part of the school scene and its future uses and developments have been enhanced greatly by the generosity of QUANTA. Their help and response to our request to use the QUANTA library has given us a great boost and made a greater variety of experience possible for our pupils. Having found myself up to all hours in the morning going through the library just trying out one more programme on many occasions, I know it is

going to be very popular. Just what they like about the machine and programmes you will find out, from the pupils themselves, later in the year.

We have agreed to keep QUANTA posted on how things are going with a "pupils eye" view.

Just what does the school have in this QL room? We have 15 basic QL's with JS roms, TK2 roms for them all, and Philips green screen monitors. My own machine is also used, as that has a single 3 1/2" CST disk drive & interface with 512k expanderam, though at the moment we are mainly using microdrives. We have a 24 pin printer to come, to go with the 9 pin Epson already in use.

Now that we are up and running as a going concern I've started to network the lot! That's why we bought the TK2 roms. So far we have broadcast / received / & "lrun" a SuperBasic programme and accessed remote microdrives, it works! The next job is to prove it with the Psion quartet and set up the network routines to allow "friendlier" messaging, perhaps using S. Goodwins Netpal from QL WORLD. To run the network I'm hoping to get a Trump Card & twin Disks / and or a Winchester in the near future – but that's a little way off at the moment I've got to prove the network first.

The whole QL room cost less than 1 Nimbus

On cost comparisons with the Nimbus the difference is incredible. The whole QL room set up (excluding my machine) cost less than 1 (one) Nimbus 20mb File Server machine (£2,595) – add to that the cost of Nimbus workstations at about £720 each, AND the cost of the software, and I think you can see why most schools do not have enough computers for ALL pupils to have reasonable access in school. QL's 15 – Nimbii 1

I think I've given everyone a rough idea of what we are doing and I've certainly rambled on enough for the moment. I'd like to thank, once again, ALL those in QUANTA and the QL "network" who have helped to make this possible. To teachers – if you teach and are suffering from the impossibility of delivering the I.T. National Curriculum I'd definitely recommend you re-examine the possible use of the QL. I'm willing to provide any help / advice / support I can to anyone with similar ideas and I can be contacted at school on 0274 (Bradford) 542992, write St. Edmund Campion School, Fairweather Green, Bradford 8 OR home 0535 274160, write 13, Effingham Rd., Harden, Bingley, West Yorkshire, BD16 1LQ. If you want to "pop" in to see it in action give me a ring – offer open to all quanta members and no security guards or protective clothing needed.

P.S. We only use programmes we have bought or have been given and we do not pirate extra copies – so if any QUANTA members have programmes they no longer require / need / use etc. any offerings will be greatly appreciated. Also, if there are any software developers who wish for a "trial by fire" of their software, we can certainly provide massive testing – with a video of the results if required.

John B. Parkin – 13, Effingham Rd. – Harden – West Yorkshire – BD16 1LQ 0535 274160

{The Quanta committee strongly support this project - PLEASE HELP - ED}

QUANTA HARDWARE SECTION

One of the purposes of QUANTA is to encourage members to produce hardware that will enhance the performance of the QL by using add-ons or modifications from the very simple to complex. The obvious forum for the distribution of such information is the pages of this magazine which may appear at first glance to be nothing new. What Is new, however, is that I have been given the task of looking at all the submissions and trying to act as some sort of focal point so that the projects do eventually become available and are not dreams which exists only in someones imagination.

As you all appreciate, there are many levels of hardware expertise amongst members when it comes to all aspects of the machine whether it is wielding a soldering iron or just simply plugging bits. I therefore propose that a star type of rating will appear on the submissions so that you will be able to see at a glance if it is within your capabilities or if you will need some assistance.

FORMAT FOR SUBMISSIONS.

- Send in, preferably to me, a print out and disc or cartridge with what you have done or built. Circuit diagrams are essential and this is where the software experts could help because there is not a good software package for this purpose on the QL. Yes, I have looked in the library also have a plotter but no luck.
- Include a photocopy of the board layout as a breadboard or something more advanced.
- Confirm that this is original work or at least be polite enough to acknowlege the sources you have consulted or referred to.
- Include a list of components avoiding where-ever possible the more remote sources which are perhaps only availble to the trade. I am not going to be too pedantic over this aspect as if the project is a good one the parts can be sourced quite easily.
- Try to avoid surface mounted technology and boards needing through plated holes if possible unless you can provide the manufacturing and service facilties for this type of venture. Bear in mind that we have members in the middle of Africa who will want to keep their bits working. Also more importantly, bear in mind that the cost escalates tremndously in getting the first protypes for proving.
- Let me have sight of the the working bits then I can report on what is happening via these columns. Non-working or half finished projects may not be reported to the same extent but behind the scenes these will receive active encouragement. If you are short of software then QUANTA Is the vehicle for your request.
- Funding or simply who is going to pay? The committee will consider all projects on their merits very sympathetically, provided they are not just pipe dreams or copies. E.G. Recently someone suggested using some super-wizzo chip tacked on to the QL at a cost of over £100.00 just for the chip. Obviously he had just read the blurb sheet. In the space of 8 months, this chip had not only been announced but has gone obsolete. A definite non-starter. On the other hand one member

Who will pay?

who is not an electronics person has gone from idea to a hard wired prototype then to a finished working pcb in 4 weeks. The second approach is the only one possible. Half finished projects will not be rejected outright as it may be possible to bring them to a successful conclusion provided they are in fact feasible.

ALTERNATIVES

Send in circuit diagrams with a little explanation in the form of Tech Tips from whatever source you can lay your hands on and again acknowlege the source as most of these are copyright. This can then form the basis of a 'library' that members can draw on with the proviso that they are not tried and tested. E.G.s are how to use an ATARI computer to drive a Microvitec Cub monitor. Interface between a QL and a pc CGA or mono monitor. Programming the 8749 with QEP III. Using a Trump card and QEP III together. Using ten disc drives witn a standard interface, a FAX or MIDIinterface etc.

Now for some news.. A multi-rom board is finished, a QIMI style mouse interface is at the pcb prototype stage, a serial EPROM programmer with software is at the paper stage waiting for a worker, a hard-disc interface is working as a hard wired prototype. Nothing in this little lot is expensive or complicated but all are proven workers not pipe dreams. Finally all the material will be acknowleged by postcard with a big THANK YOU when received also the postage etc. refunded if you so wish as an absolute minimum.

Dennis Briggs

Appeal for help

For sometime I have been associated with the Roundabout Playgroup, so called because we meet in a building situated on a roundabout. On our posters we use a drawing of a roundabout of the fairground type, in an effort to make them more appealing to the eye. Unfortunately I only have the skill to produce a crude graphic screen. Is there any member who, either has a graphic screen of a roundabout or, is prepared to use his computer skills to produce one for us. We would be very grateful for his/her help.

Thank you.

Tommy Thompson. 15 Thrasher Road Aylesbury Bucks HP21 8DZ 0296 431173

Microemacs

TIPS YOU'LL FIND IN THE MANUAL . . . EVENTUALLY

The MicroEmacs text editor in the library has a vast and immensely powerful set of commands and functions (and all for 50p). Although you can get it up-and-running immediately, some of its features can be confusing at first, as with all sophisticated programs. Here are a few things it took me a little while to find, to save time for anyone just starting out. In case you missed it there's an extra mode buried in the huge _mss file (user manual) that

isn't documented elsewhere – ASAVE. When it's on (key-in ‹ESC M› ‹ASAVE› ‹ENTER›), your buffer is automatically saved after every 256 characters typed into the file. You can change the number of chrs by setting the variable $asave – key in ‹CTRL X A› and enter $asave at the prompt. Then at the next prompt enter the new value, eg 512.

The help screens also miss out one of the MAGIC mode special search-and-replace characters, "&". Emacs_mss says: "The character & (ampersand) is a replacement character, and represents the characters which matched the search string. When used in the ESC-R (replace-string) or the ESC-CTRL R (query-replace-string) commands, the & will be substituted for the search string. " (I think that should read 'the search string will be substituted for the &').

So, if you do a MAGIC search for "Bloggs" and replace with "Fred &", you end up with "Fred Bloggs". This didn't sound very exciting until I needed to use it – then it was indispensable.

I don't know why ‹CTRL Z› fails to scroll-up the screen for George Dale (July Quanta), let alone why it works OK for Jonathan Hudson (August Quanta). Mine doesn't work properly either, though if you key ‹CTRL L› to refresh the screen you find it HAS sort-of worked, in the sense that the correct bit of your file is displayed. Somehow the file pointer goes to the right place but the screen display is mucked up.

Similarly the shrink-current-window command ‹CTRL X› ‹CTRL Z› needs ‹CTRL L› afterwards too. On the QL ‹ALT-CURSOR-UP› does what ‹CTRL Z› is supposed to do, as George pointed out, but it doesn't work with the shrink-window command.

More MicroEmacs bits & pieces:

‹CTRL K› deletes from the cursor to the end of the line in MicroEmacs V3.9p, but leaves the newline at the end intact. You have to ‹CTRL K› again to delete it. In V3.8b ‹CTRL K› zapped the whole line. If you start a line with an indent and then press ENTER while still on the same line, you will get another indent. If you don't want one, use ‹CTRL M› instead of ENTER.

The asterisk that sometimes appears on the red information line –" -*-- " – means that your text has been changed since it was last backed up. If there's no asterisk, ‹CTRL X› ‹CTRL S› won't save the buffer to disc since it's already there in identical form.

MicroEmacs treats a line starting with one or more spaces as the beginning of new paragraph – worth remembering if your attempts to reformat paragraphs don't come out as you intended.

‹CTRL X› ‹CTRL O› will delete blank lines around the cursor, but not if the 'blank' lines contain spaces. Lines with just spaces in them are not blank, says MicroEmacs. My version documents the following MODES but says they are not (yet) available in the QL version:

- WHITE/CYAN/MAGENTA/YELLOW/BLUE/RED/GREEN/BLACK Sets foreground colour.
- white/cyan/magenta/yellow/blue/red/green/black Sets background colour.

However, Jon Hudson's letter in August Quanta gave us some example macros, one of which contains the line: add-mode "GREEN". What version are you using, Jon?

Fill-column gave me trouble until I got the hang of it. If you just type ‹CTRL X F› you'll set the screen width by default to just 1 column – not a lot of use. You first have to supply an 'argument' with the ‹ESC› key, eg: ‹ESC› 72 ‹CTRL X F› will set screen width to 72.

Thanks to Quanta member Hilary Snaden for the next few tips (any errors are mine):

- ‹CTRL X› ‹CTRL E› changes multiple spaces to tabs-and-spaces, which can save a lot of file space with long documents.
- ‹CTRL X› ‹CTRL D› does the reverse.
- To entab a complete file, find out how many lines there are with ‹ CTRL X - › and then (for example) put the cursor at the top of the file and do ‹ESC› 200 ‹CTRL X› ‹CTRL E› – entab line 200 times.
- At the MicroEmacs command prompt, entering ‹space› will fill in from any unambiguous part of a command to the next ambiguity. Hence: exe‹space› will bring up ... execute- and continuing with c‹space› makes it ... execute-command-line.

The MicroEmacs count-words command on ‹ESC CTRL C› isn't available because QDOS has its own use for CTRL C. However, there's a way of making it available. ‹ESC K› brings the bind-to-key prompt. Then key: count-words ‹ENTER› ‹ESC H› . . . and you've now got count-words on ‹ESC H›, normally an unused key combination. The command works on a 'region' of text, so you'll have to define one first. Any command can be bound to a key this way, and there are plenty of unused key combinations.

SCREEN PANNING can be made zippier by setting either (or both) of these variables:

- $hscroll = FALSE (so that only the cursor line pans)
- $hjump = 8 (or so – number of characters panned at a time)

Remember you can set variables from the keyboard with ‹CTRL X A› as well as doing it via a macro or the start-up emacs_rc file.

A useful bit in the manual about mode flags is easily missed and might bear repeating:

"Two environment variables, $cmode and $gmode, contain a number which corresponds to the modes set for the current buffer and the editor as a whole (global). These are encoded as the sum of the following numbers for each of the possible modes:

- wrap 1 word wrap
- cmode 2 c indentation and fence match
- spell 4 interactive spell checking (not implemented yet)
- exact 8 exact matching for searches
- view 16 read-only buffer
- over 32 overwrite mode
- magic 64 regular expressions in search
- crypt 128 encryption mode active
- asave 256 auto-save mode

So, if you wished to set the current buffer to have cmode, exact, and magic on, and all the others off, you would add up the values for those three, cmode 2 + exact 8 + magic 64 – 74, and use a statement like: set $cmode 74. "

From the keyboard do it with ‹CTRL X A› $cmode ‹ENTER› 74 ‹ENTER›.

Well that's enough about MicroEmacs – 1,208 words, 6,866 characters, 140 lines, with an average 5.68 characters per word!

There's a MicroEMACS discussion area on the Bristol-based QBUG bulletin board – see your smart new QUANTA welcome pack for its number.

Chris Adams, 10 Godrich House, 6 Highfield Road, BIRMINGHAM B13 9HR.

Tel: 021-449 1194 September 3, 1990

QUILL, ARCHIVE, ABACUS, QPAC2

Here are a few more notes from my "QL Ideas" Notebook as promised:

QUILL

I like QUILL (modified by TURBO QUILL+, and by GRABBER which limits the space taken by QUILL) and use it frequently. My translate file is always present (it is boot loaded) so I can use any useful QL character such as French accented characters and they will be printed correctly. TQ+ has a Glossary function which allows the use of CTRL+key to define a QUILL command or series of commands or text. This avoids a clash with keys defined using ALT (such as TKII or QRAM or QPAC2). Sometimes my printer refuses to print the last line of a QUILL text – now I (nearly always!) add one or two blank lines at the end to fool the printer. Probably somebody knows why this problem occurs.

{You can also print the last line by pressing the off-line button on your printer Ed}

ARCHIVE

If you do not close an ARCHIVE data-base file correctly with QUIT or CLOSE (for example – by switching off the computer, or whatever), you are in big trouble next time you try to open the file. It is easy to correct this nuisance. What seems to happen is that the third character on the file, which should be v has been changed. If you have Toolkit or equivalent you can remedy the horror by the following :

```
open#3,flp2_name_dbf:bput#3\2,118:close#3:rem "name" = your file name
```

This opens your ARCHIVE file, finds the third character (0,1,2,...) and puts v = chr$(118) in that place.If you do not have "bput" command, then use the following:

```
100 open#3,flp2_name_dbf
110 a$=inkey$(#3):b$=inkey$(#3): rem moves pointer to third byte
120 print#3,chr$(118): rem third byte becomes v
130 close#3
```

You can also do this with a MONITOR but it is more cumbersome. Also see p40 of "Welcome to QUANTA" ,program DBF_CLOSE_BAS.

{This only works if you have not altered records Ed}

When you CREATE a new database I have found it wise to have one or two extra fields in the records which can be used if you find it necessary later on. For example: they can be used as tags for selecting particular records by program. It is always possible to add more fields to records later but is somewhat complicated. I have created such a program to add fields and there is one in your User Guide page 31 in the ARCHIVE section. The programming language of ARCHIVE is powerful and allows you do exactly what you want if you persevere.

ABACUS

You can type chr(0)+chr(..) etc. into a cell (the cell then appears blank or shows a character corresponding to a code > 32), so your printer receives the desired control characters before printing the cells which follow.

For example: if I type chr(0)+chr(15) in cell A1, printing is done in condensed mode. My Brother M1009 printer can then print 132 characters on a line or my DICONIX 150 can print 136, thus I can just print my whole spreadsheet across a page. It is necessary to change the Design(F3,D) to tell ABACUS to send 132 or 136 characters per line.

I use the program KEYDEFINE (by Pslentific Software) to define keys using ALT, but I choose F1 to F5 to avoid characters which can be used by QPAC2.

QPAC2

I had used QRAM for some time and found it very useful. When I installed QPAC2 I had considerable difficulty understanding what it was all about. The authors have spent much effort to explain the facilities but even so it was not easy to follow. With such a comprehensive program I suppose this is inevitable. However with perseverance I got the hang of it and it is very worth while although there are still a few facilities I have not come to terms with. You cannot print a screen (as in QRAM) but it has been said that it is possible to load QRAM as well and so print screens. I have not been able to do that. The keydefine facility is powerful and useful (most of my defined keys use CMD to issue commands) and the handling of files is excellent and fool-proof (I was able to do disastrous things occasionally with QRAM).

****

ERROR in QUANTA Nov.90 p21.At EOF, program ends with channel #5 still open. So you should then close #5. For punty line 17 should be END DEFine bsearch.

from Ian Pizer, 49 Ch.Machery, 1292 Geneva, Switzerland. Telephone 22.758.14.10

NEW VERSION OF ARCHIVE

"Archive is about to live again!" according to the August 1 issue of the Xchange User Group newsletter. James McCosh of Somerset is apparently making "speedy progress" rewriting the Archive code.

Here's a summary of an article by Dinah Molloy for interested parties. It concerns the

Xchange/PC Four version of Archive.

McCosh's first version will concentrate on optimising the code to speed up execution. All the existing commands/functions are being retained, and most have already been rewritten. There will be some "extras" immediately, with more to follow in later versions.

Some new functions are being tested: BOF() - beginning of file; SLEEP() - pause for n seconds; ERR raises an error for testing or to set ERRNUM() to 0; ERRTXT() returns current error number as text. Other functions are planned.

As for commands, SPOOLON will have "an append parameter to allow background files to have data added". The new command MATCH will be similar to LOCATE but allow parts of the key fields to be used or skipped. Other possibilities include reading and writing ASCII files into variables, and reading and writing binary files byte by byte -giving access to any type of file structure.

The number of indices allowed is being raised to 10, the length of an index increased to 64, and the number of records and fields is not restricted. Variable length fields are still being used. Integer variables have been introduced.

A simple WHILE loop that took 40 seconds under the old Archive took 2 seconds with the new version, which will run under DOS or UNIX. Once version one is ready, extra functions like report-writers and data dictionaries will be considered.

Whether any of this will trickle down to the QL is another matter. Perhaps lightning will strike twice.

A plug for XUA, since they supplied the above info: XUA, Freepost, Beckenham, Kent, BR3 2BR. Secretary Alan Essex Tel 0883 722227. Membership £25 a year.

I have no special knowledge about any of this, so queries should go to XUA.

Chris Adams, 10 Godrich House, 6 Highfield Road, BIRMINGHAM B13 9HR.

Tel: 021-449 1194 September 3, 1990

Small Ads

French Psion Progs Conqueror

Just a few lines for the news letter that some people might find of some use :- I have thirteen copies of Easel, eight copies of Archive and three copies of Abacus, ALL IN FRENCH ! If anybody is interested in a copy, then send a stamped addressed jiffy bag to me and you are welcome to copies. As to the quality, well I don't speak French, and the few I have tried boot ok . Please phone first ! As I have now an IBM PC XT, there is my copy of PC Conqueror up for grabs with manual of course, no reasonable offer refused ! And finally the response was very good to my last letter in Quanta ref the transfer of data from one programme to another and the export facility for Quill. Many people replied with some very useful tips and comments to think about. I would like to apologise to one kind

gent to whom I spent a fairly long time on the phone to, this gent offered me help with the Psion Xchange package, Alas I have mislaid your name, address and telephone number. I would be very grateful if you would contact me again. M.J.Simms 56 Michelmore Road Yeovil Somerset BA21 4BA Tel:0935 79954 19-11-90

Heavyweight Printer Bits & Pieces

For Sale; Newbury 8000 series dot matrix printer, 12 pin, 240 cps draft, 120cps NLQ, 13.2in max print width, tractor feed, 20 fonts plus block graphics, 7 national character sets, RS232C serial i/f, 110-240Vac. Dimensions 254mm high, 660mm wide, 578mm deep. Weight 79lbs (36kg). Complete with floor stand, paper feed trays, cables & manuals. A top quality industrial duty printer with its own built-in sound-proof enclosure. £150.00 o.n.o.

Also, (bought as part of a surplus job lot), approx 20 circuit boards each containing; Z80A or B CPU, Z80ADART, Z80ACTC, 2128-15 ram, 2764 eprom + various other chips (all on sockets) & modular LEDs & switches. 2 x Winchester Hard disk units in cast alloy chassis' (very heavy). 2 x 8" SS drives & 1 x 8" DS drive, all require 5v + 24v power supply & SCSI interface, sorry but I do not have any other details. No reasonable offer refused, will separate if required.

Telephone Geoff on 0742-700456 after 7.00pm (answering machine if not available).

Hardware QL computor 128K JM ROM unused, QL computor 640K JS ROM (internal expansion), 2x Microperipheral disk drives with interface, Microvitec med res colour monitor, 2x joysticks, Tandata modem & s/ware, Miracle serial/parallel I/F, Canon PW1080A printer (parallel/serial) 160 cps draft, 27 nlq.

Software Toolkit 2, Taskmaster, Editor, Utilities, Chess, Matchpoint, Bridge, Fictionary, & other games.

Books 2x Blueprint, 6x Sunshine, Wordprocessing with the QL, Database mgt on the QL, Loads of QUANTAs & QL WORLDS.

Sundries At least 45x 3.5 disks, Quite a lot of mdv cartridges, spare ribbons for printer.

- £500 the lot

☎Brian Lasham 0438-358725

For Sale

MicroAPL with APL character set	£50
Prospero FORTRAN (with some source for plotting	£40
QSPELL spelling checker	£10
Talent Cartridge Doctor	£8
PSION chess	£8
PSION ZKUL text adventure	£8
Microdeal Land of Havoc graphic adventure	£8
Flashback Special Edition database	£20 (Disk)

Wanted Lattice C Compiler for QL (Please ring).

John Williams, Hobbacott Farm, Marhamchurch, Bude, EX23 0EX
☎0288-81273

Editorial contd

☎ Short messages can be left on my fax machine on 021 5531831 ext 3614 24 hours per day. As contact has to made via my hospital switchboard you must know how to use your fax manually and tell my switchboard to give **4 long** rings.

— Next month we will have several items on Professional Publisher and DTP. Please send in your letters. (I have no knowledge of PP and do not have the program).

Library Corner

Well, it never rains but it pours!!
Unfortunately James Methley, through an increased work load and extra responsibility has had to give up the post of Quality Controller and Sub-Librarian.

From January 1st the new sub-librarian for the North West will be: Stephen Johnson, 36 Eldwick Street, Burnley, Lancashire. BB10 3DZ
☎ 0282 51854

Stephen will be available Monday to Thursday, but he works nightshift from Thursday to Sunday. Stephen can copy 3.5" & 5.25" disks.

Quality Controller

I am now inviting applications for the post of Quality Controller. For those who are interested, will they please write to myself in the first instance. Following on, I will then send a short resume' of what the post entails, and believe me it ain't easy! Ideally, the position would be ideal for someone who is fairly good at software in relation to the various roms' and other add-ons, ie TK11 etc, and who has a fair amount of spare time available.

DISKS / CARTRIDGES

There appears to be some confusion regarding disks and cartridges that can be obtained from the Library. The ONLY charges now to members are the charges for BLANK disks and cartridges, and they are as follows:

- 3.5" disks - £0.50
- 5.25" disks - £0.25
- cartridges - £2-00

Cartridge Copying

Stephen Hewitt has asked me to tell members that he does NOT copy programs from the

library list contained in the Welcome booklet. These are only for disk drive owners. Cartridge users can only obtain copies of programs that are in the current Cartridge Guide. Stephen will also be able to supply blank cartridges from January 1st, price £2-00.

Disk Copying

I would be grateful if members, as a general rule, could use the sub-librarian nearest to them in the first instance for copying. This is mainly because I personally am suffering from a surfeit of copyitis! Your cooperation in this matter would be greatly appreciated.

Anyway, a Happy New Year to one and all, and I look forward to meeting more of you at workshops etc. in 1991.

Roy

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