I.O.U.

The voice of the Independent Oric Users' Group

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EDITORIAL

Running a users' group can sometimes be a pain. A few weeks ago, just after issue 3, I was going to do a bit of programming and was looking for inspiration. Then some letters arrived. It turned out that Personal Computing Today had got around to printing my letter in their August issue. In the letter I mentioned that I had set up the I.O.U.G. and had produced some newsletters and that anyone interested should send a s.a.e. . This had two effects. Firstly I had to write masses of letters in reply to letters which, due to P.C.T. being a monthly, arrived over several weeks thus removing any chance of some programming. Secondly about half of the people that replied expected me to return a newsletter even though I had not said I would do that. The s.a.e. was intended for information. At first I was able to oblige since I had quite a few spare issue 2's. This happened because when I was getting issue 3 photocopied I also wanted 3 issue 2's and the woman managed to do all issue 2's. This was rectified the next day without trouble leaving me with a pile of issue 2's which I could distribute free. Eventually these ran out and I had to turn down some people's requests whilst explaining the obvious financial risks involved. I really think that it was only reasonable to expect me to send a newsletter without first receiving payment if you thought that I was running a business (in which case P.C.T. would not have printed my letter).

Still, the happy end result to all this is that the I.O.U.G. has grown once again. There is also publicity from FGC which has my phone no. on its latest price list. In future I shall conduct all publicity via the phone – I am arranging a southern phone no. with another user – since I cannot spare any more time for extensive letter writing.

Before issue 5 I hope to contact Orpheus and, yes at last, Eureka Imformatique. This is a measure of how strong the I.O.U.G. now is.

Gary Ramsay

NEWSFLASH

A firm called Devon Computers wrote to me asking if I could help them to get circuit diagrams and repair manuals for the Oric computers to help them to improve their repair service. I referred them to the Advanced User Guide and suggested that they also try contacting FGC.

John Dibnah of Hull has been in contact with Modular Concept Periphals. They told him that ITL Kathmill's new owners were supposed to bring out an updated version of their Byte Drive system at the end of July but there has been a delay. If you are a good machine-code programmer then MCP may have work for you. MCP, 13 High Street, Clydach, Swansea. SA6 5LF Address your letter to Mr F. Little.

Severn Software seem to have pulled out of Oric software as they have sold some of their titles to FGC.

Cumana Ltd. have released a disk drive system which is Atmos compatible. The complete system, which includes a 3-inch disk drive, costs £235.75 plus carriage. You can also buy the system less drive or the drive only. Address:-
   Cumana Ltd., The Pines Trading Estate, Broad Street,
   Guildford, Surrey. GU3 3BH tel. (0483) 503121
Thanks to Trevor Shaw of Telford for that information.

I've been thinking about bringing out the occasional program supplement to I.O.U. . These would be A4 and cost between 35p and 70p depending upon size. If anyone would like to submit programs then send me a cassette containing fast and slow rate versions along with return postage and packing. If you want me to re-use your padded envelope then keep the address fairly compact. An A4 listing would also be a great help as I don't have a printer but I can get listings for you if necessary. Programs should be a maximum of 3 A4 pages. If you send a listing then please ensure that the print is dark enough to photocopy properly.

Nick Rees of Lewes, E. Sussex sent these tips:-
a) The book 'Companion to the Oric 1' by Ian Adamson
published by Pan is excellent. It covers both ROM versions
and has some useful ROM/RAM locations and a chapter on
interfacing. (ed. This is the book that the Atmos manual is
based upon)
b) NEXT A:NEXT B:NEXT C can be written NEXT A,B,C
He also has a question - INPUT does not allow the user to
enter mathematical expressions. Is there a way around this?.

J. Jelly of London sent this tip for Oric 1/Atmos 48K:- To
print on the STATUS line use DOKE I8,48000 and then print as
normal, terminating with a CLS. The STATUS line remains
protected, to erase use the same method to PRINT the approp-
riate number of spaces. He would also like to know how to get
started on 'Enter the Kong Beast' in Manic Miner. Write to
Mr J. Jelly, Flat 3, 10 Westwell Road, Streatham Common,
London.

R. Hanlon of Bagot, Jersey sent this endless lives routine
for Zorgan's Revenge:- a) get lives down to one man; b) get
on the defender level; c) when large ship appears shoot it
and within seconds kill yourself BEFORE the magic brick
appears.

'In response to P. Browne of Orpington the address of the
publishers of Machine Code for the Oric 1/Atmos is Shiva
Publishing Ltd., 4 Church Lane, Nantwich, Cheshire CW5 5RQ. '
L. Saunders, Lancing, W. Sussex (ed. I think that this
company has liquidated)

'In answer to Ryan Fitzpatrick's question; yes there is a
horse-racing prediction program available - for hire from
Les Wilson's Oric Software Library. It is called 'Horse
Racing Analysis'. I do not know where you can buy such a
program nor the quality of the above one.

Ian Brown of Toddington, Beds. sent this tip - to turn off
auto-run for BASIC programs type POKE £500,1. To run the
program again first type POKE £500,0 (nb for £ read 'hash').
He also recommends O.J. Software.

Ivans Disassembler - Radically Average Software.

This is a machine code disassembler which resides at
#97EC-#9FFF. although the author can relocate it if
required. As a straight disassembler, it performs very well;
with the display consisting of address, hex dump,
instruction and Ascii dump. The listing scrolls very fast -
to stop it you press the space bar, as in Oric Basic. If
you wish to disassemble another location, you must leave the
program and then CALL it again - it would have been nicer
just to have been able to enter a new address. When you
leave the program, the screen still contains the
disassembled listing, and the Basic 'ready' prompt appears
whenever the cursor was on the screen when the program was
called - very untidy! Also, a line of code remains on the
status line. Not important points, maybe, but annoying all
the same.

I don't have a price for this piece of software, but
since it is now possible to get a good disassembler/monitor
for well under a tenner, this program does seem a bit
limiting in what it offers. However, this is the first
product from 'Radically Average' - look out for an arcade
shoot 'em up and an adventure coming soon. (Author James
Eibisch - Radically Average Software, 30 Regent Court, St
Stephens Rd., Cheltenham, Glos., GL51 5BE)

Steve Brunton

As author of Ivans Disassembler, I would like to clear up a
couple of points about the above review. First, all
criticisms of untidy display etc. have been sorted out. Now,
when you leave the program, the status line is cleared, the
display scrolled up a few lines, and the cursor positioned at
the bottom of the screen. You can also enter a new address
without exiting and restarting the program. Secondly,
comparing my program to others on the market costing upwards
of £7.00 will seem slightly unrealistic when you consider
that Ivans Disassembler costs £3.50 .
James Eibisch

(ed. This shows the power of constructive criticism.)