

I.O.U.

The Voice of the Independent Oric Users' Group

Issue 9 - mid May 1986

EDITORIAL

Hi, my name's Dave Cheeseman and, as I'm sure you're aware, I'm producing this issue to give Gary a break. Thank's to everyone who sent me contributions, don't worry if they're not all used in this issue, they will be kept over for a later one. I've had a very busy month hardware-wise, and you may find these tales interesting:

Firstly, I purchased a Tandy CGP-115 'colour graphic printer' which is identical to the Oric 4-pen plotter in every aspect except buter casing. I do have a dot-matrix printer, but the main reason for the additional purchase was the price - Tandy are currently selling it at £49.95!! Seems too good to miss, but hurry if you're interested because they're apparently selling like hot cakes. They use a standard Centronics cable, ie any Oric printer cable should work.

Secondly, I have followed John Haly's lead in adding a second disk drive to my system; I opted for a Cumana 3" drive, as offered for use with the Cumana Oric Disk Interface (I use the standard Oric Microdisc). I obtained it via my local Cumana dealer who had never seen an Oric, and he managed to get it in a couple of weeks; it would have been days, but Cumana have production problems - some things never change, do they? Having removed the outer case to change the drive number from 0 to 1, the new drive plugged straight into the back of the microdisc (and the shop's BBC B) and worked first time! The joys of real disk-to-disk backups!! However, the inbuilt power supply proved noisy and caused the whole case to vibrate so I returned it via the same dealer, and there the trouble began! A replacement drive arrived within three days (we had phoned Cumana telling them of the return) and didn't work, either on my Oric or the shop's BBC so back it went. Cumana claimed not to have any more, and attempted to produce one good drive out of them. This arrived a week later, having been 'exhaustively tested', and didn't work! A phone call to the engineer revealed the problem - he said that the cable needs to be 'turned upside down' for the Oric drive to work on the BBC. What rubbish! We opened the drive, turned the cable over, and hey presto it worked on BBC and ORIC. It would seem that in the case of both replacements, Cumana had tested the drives on a BBC and then reversed the cables!!! Ho hum, so be warned if you buy one that fails to respond at all! I must say, though, that Cumana were extremely helpful, as was my local shop (DEPSON COMPUTER SYSTEMS, BLETCHLEY, BUCKS), and that the drive now works perfectly.

Still, enough from me, on with the magazine.

Dave Cheeseman

NEWSFLASH

Amongst several contributions from Allan Whitaker were some very interesting bits from Eureka Informatique, the new French owners of Oric. These were a brochure on the new TELESTRAT machine (their version of the STRATOS), price lists and descriptions of their other Oric products, and a copied review of their new Oric DOS called SEDORIC. They were provided by Ian Macpherson of EI, and, apart from his letter, are all in French though they are reasonably easy to understand even for a non-linguist like myself because of their technical content. I'm busy trying to translate the main details, perhaps for a later issue, but in the meantime here are some details from Ian Macpherson's letter about the TELESTRAT, included by kind permission:

"It's basic is extremely powerful & rapid (compiled as it is entered) ... it plugs directly into our French MINITEL (system - I think it's like our PRESTEL Ed.) and allows people to create their own database centre - all for £400 with a 3" double sided disk included."

viously it uses the modem (for use) in the Minitel (system) & this would
ve to be modified for England. The first shipments have just started
appearing & people seem very enthusiastic."

I'm not surprised! The system seems excellent value for money. It's a shame
that EI haven't been active in the UK market, but apparently they have more
than enough business satisfying the French market - that can't be too bad news
for us, at least they're unlikely to go bust! They intend to market it in the
UK once they have the modem sorted out. Perhaps if more of us write they may
offer us more support. Also of interest is SEDORIC, a new DOS that appears to
run on the standard Oric1/ATMOS Microdisc, but being more than just an
improved Oric DOS. I shall try to obtain more details about this.

If anyone wants a copy of the specs and review, send me a stamped addressed
envelope and I will oblige, but remember it's in French - please don't write
unless you really want to see it, otherwise I'll be spending a fortune
photocopying - the important details will appear in IOU (eventually!).

News from OPEL: details are being formulated of a disc drive which provides
not only Oric microdrive compatability but 80-column text and CP/M capability
(on a 6502? Ed.). Watch this space!

Apparently OPEL have a thriving overseas market ("5,000 Atmos computers in
Yugoslavia") and are actively developing new products for the Oric computers.
Can't be bad!!

News from Gary: there are currently 60 subscribers to IOU, and about 75 copies
of issue 9 will be sold. There are 2 members in Ireland, and one each in
Sweden, Netherlands and Australia! All the used stamps from your letters to
him are collected for a medical research charity. Nice one!

HIRESOFT run a Oric/Atmos library with over 150 titles on their current list.
The hire charge is £1.20 for 14 days per tape, plus 24p P&P. Their address is:

113 Broomfield Road, Marsh, Huddersfield, HD1 4QJ

RESPONSE

Ronald Croft writes with several queries about cassette handling, prompted by
dealers claiming that cassette problems are always the fault of the Oric and
never the cassette player - yeh, I've been told that too; don't you believe
it!

Ronald wants to know what the nominal cassette input and output impedances and
voltages are, and also the frequencies and waveforms used for recording. He
also disputes the claimed nominal baud rates of 300 and 2400, saying that his
tests show values nearer 274 and 1778. Any comments?

Also from Ronald, details of an alternative Oric Atmos ROM from that
disassembled in the Advanced User Guide. The ROMs are marked MEXICO A (the
originals are JAPAN ORIC BASIC V1.1) and the PCBs Oric 1 Issue 3, and appear
in serial numbers about 230000. The changes are mainly in the header section,
and are as follows:

E4B6	8E B1 02	STX #02B1	E4CD	9D 93 02	STA #0293,X
E4B9	A2 09	LDX #09	E4D0	EB	INX
E4BB	20 C9 E6	JSR #E6C9	E4D1	D0 F1	BNE #E4C4
E4BE	9D A7 02	STA #02A7,X			
E4C1	CA	DEX	E8E3	EA	NOP
E4C2	D0 F7	BNE #E4BB	E8E4	EA	NOP
E4C4	20 C9 E6	JSR #E6C9			
E4C7	F0 0A	BEQ #E4D3	E8FE	EA	NOP
E4C9	E0 10	CPX #10	E8FF	EA	NOP
E4CB	B0 F7	BCS #E4C4			

Allan Whitaker asks if anyone else suffers from cursor images being left on
the Author screen when moving the cursor around, or if anyone knows a fix for

