

The Newsletter of the Independent Oric Users' Group

ISSUE No. 19 - early March 1988.

EDITORIAL

This is probably the latest an issue has ever been. I can't offer any appropriate excuse, it has simply been the case that I haven't been able to bring myself to prepare the issue after a day's or a week's work. This is a reflection of my lack of enthusiasm for the task which was so correctly implied by Arthur Jackson's editorial in the last issue. It is actually months since I last switched on my Atmos for any other purpose than the printing of some more of my standard reply letters.

There are numerous reasons for my decline in interest. The most important has been the decline in interest from the membership itself. This has been typified by two main factors: a) the inability to raise membership above the 75 mark for any significant length of time; and b) the reduction of both contributions and questions and views from those people still receiving the newsletter. This has made it increasingly difficult for me and the other editors to prepare our issues on time and has also made it harder for me to make the time to have each issue copied and then to distribute it.

There has also been the steady decline of support for the Oric to the point where I no longer know of any U.K. companies producing software for them and the retailers are now dwindling in numbers. In my opinion the situation has only been made worse by some of the companies insisting on charging exorbitant prices for software and hardware, especially in the case of software which is usually nowhere near as good as that available for other machines. This has surely made the case for switching machines even more attractive to many users.

Finally there is the fact that I haven't made much use of my computer for a long time. This has been caused by a combination of my time spent studying or trying to study, my time spent on I.O.U.G. matters, my other interests, the fact that I've used computers in my studies and now my work, and, I suppose, changes in my attitudes over time.

The truth of the matter is that I seriously considered not distributing issue 19 at all but instead ending my involvement immediately, seeking someone to take over and returning funds plus envelopes to those people who didn't want to wait to see if a relaunch would be successful. However I received a number of letters in response to Arthur's editorial and their tone made me feel that I would be letting a lot of people down by rushing into such action. I am therefore initiating a process through which I hope to see the I.O.U.G. become revitalised. I envisage that this will require the regular commitment of a number of people to help in the running of the group and the distribution of its publications and conduct of its activities. Whether this will involve myself or not I am uncertain but your opinions will be important in deciding the new structure.

Gary Ramsay

NEWSFLASH

Back Issues

Matthew Shakeshaft has offered to supply back issues for a fee of 50p

per copy plus the appropriate postage in stamps. One copy weighs about 25g so with the aid of the Post Offices leaflet detailing postal rates you should be able to work out the appropriate postage, not forgetting the weight of an envelope, which Matthew will supply.

In view of this and the factors already mentioned I have suspended my plans to produce a compilation issue. Having looked through issues 1 - 18, the ones that I would say are of the most current interest are numbers 6,9,10,11,15 and 16. The address is:-

47 Newton Road, Ashton-on-Ribble, Preston, Lancs. PR2 1DY

Software

Mr L.K. Ward has written 'an icon-driven graphics program for the Oric Atmos 48K with 3" disk drive (minimum), and an optional Oric printer.' He says that the program contains features for manipulating the HIRES screen with that he has not seen on any other such package.

The program comes with documentation, both on paper and on disk and runs under ROMDOS, RANDOS or Oric DOS. It can be obtained by sending a blank 3" disk plus a cheque or postal order for £5.00 to:-

2 Tollgate Terrace, Catchgate, Stanley, County Durham DH9 8EG

Every tenth order will receive a free copy of Mr Ward's FONT DESIGNER utility.

I can't vouch for the quality of this software but Mr Ward has offered to supply a review copy and so I hope to see a review in issue 20.

Tim Linnell has produced a 'full two pass 6502 assembler that uses source code produced by the BASIC editor.' for the Oric-1. He reckons that it should be adaptable for the Atmos or indeed for most 6502 machines.

Tim proposes that the assembler be viewed as shareware and thus be available for a nominal registration fee for which he would provide an upgrade service. This brings me onto ...

Software Libraries

A number of members have suggested the setting up a user group software library for the distribution of Public Domain and Shareware software for the Oric computers. In particular I am grateful to Philip Dunstall for providing some useful information on this matter. Let me know if you feel that you would use and possibly contribute to such a service and if you would be prepared to help with copying/distribution.

Contact between Oric users

Some people have expressed a feeling of relative isolation insofar as they are Oric users. They have suggested that members names and addresses be distributed to enable contact. These people may not have been aware that I.O.U. has always been a medium through which such people could publicise their wish to contact like-minded Oric owners. I obviously cannot distribute a list of members names and addresses without permission. I would however be pleased to distribute a list of those people who wish to contact other Oric users. If you wish to be included on the list and to receive a copy then send 10p plus a s.s.a.e. plus a brief list of any specific interests to me, Gary Ramsay at the address given later.

