

HULLO THERE

I hope you enjoy the forthcoming holiday season. If you have any spare time in the next couple of weeks you'll be wanting to use Einstein so here are a few bits and pieces to help you along the way.

FIRSTLY, advance warning of two major reprinting jobs coming up.

*** The membership list is now in need of a total reprinting and will extend to far more pages than the initial one.... it is a pig of a job but one which is essential to keep our many new members in touch with others. If there are any changes to your address or telephone number etc please let me know. Also if your interests, software needs, hardware etc have changed then you might want to tell me that as well. However, we are considering whether or not it is worth publishing all the data about members level of experience, software most frequently used and interests. What do you think?

*** Another big reprinting job is the FREE SOFTWARE CATALOGUE. The number of volumes has risen from 14 to well over thirty so the new list will describe volumes 914 up to 936 (and possibly more by the time you get the print out). The breadth of work being sent in for the software collection is increasingly wide and generally the quality of the programs are better. But, we are not here to 'knock' your ideas -- we cannot repeat often enough that even 'half-done' programs might be of value to others who are learning or who are trying to solve a problem. We are still interested in straightforward 'letters' on disc (from your word processor) which describe activities, how to do it etc. So if you have anything at all, send it in and leave us to sort it out for you.

*** A very important recent addition is disc 926 which is an Einsteinner written 'Amstrad converter'.... see the Amtat page for details of this.

NOW LET'S SEE WHAT IS ALREADY 'in the bag'. First of all five ways to save your money.

I would suggest to any of our younger members or to older folk who have just got a computer that NOW is the time to learn to type BEFORE you get into bad 'two-finger' habits. It is painful to watch some of todays youngish programming whizz-kids who produce wonderful programming but type with only two fingers -- proficient typing ability is a skill worth getting. There is already the TNT ('Ten not Two') typing tutor which is available for Einstein. It is as good as most typing tutors I have ever seen but was intended for colour users and it is not easy on a black and white monitor to read the words you are supposed to be typing.... I have tried changing the background colours but to no avail. MASTER-TYPE is a brand new complete home typing course on disc.

It was advertised for the first time on page 11 of the December Einstein User at a cost of £19.95. Having spoken to the author I know that a lot of work went into this program and one of the main advantages is that your typing errors are reported immediately they are made and not at the end of an exercise. This is undoubtably an advantage and a better way of learning. EUDB members can save themselves £5 and buy the program direct from the author for only £14.95. Send cheques made payable to Stanley Wood at 54 Scalloway Park, Fraserburgh, Aberdeenshire, Scotland AB4.

The amazing SILICON DISC

0452 - 21884

The SILICON DISC gives you an extra 256k of storage in the form of a plug in board which goes into the back of Einstein. The SILICON DISC has been well received since it appeared about nine months ago and although the recommended price is £89 it is typically on sale at a price of between £85 to £89. EUDB members can now purchase the Silicon Disc direct from the manufacturer at a price of £71.00 including VAT and carriage... a saving of approx £14 to £18. Send your cheques made out to J.A.Brewer, 6 Firwood Drive, Tuffley, Gloucestershire GL4 0AB. I have had a long talk with the manufacturer about this product and he seems very keen to enable EUDB members to get good service. Every disc is sent out with instructions....

although it is straight-forward to use it... but on top of that for anybody who is actually interested in experimenting the manufacturer will supply a nine page documentation manual quoting all the information that you boffin types will need to 'take it to bits' so to speak. But Mr Brewer emphasises that you don't need to know anything at all other than how to shove it in the hole at the back of your computer. Sadly, the promised literature never arrived here for me to peruse so if you want information before you buy then write direct to Mr Brewer (with a stamp) and I'm sure he'll send you a leaflet etc. He is an Einstein user himself and his silicon disc was heralded by Tatung as a break-through and he is going to make it even better in the future for example it will soon work as a print spooler.

BUYING A PRINTER?

Pssst... I know a man who has a friend who knows somewhere you can get cheap printers.... yes, it's the sort of talk you hear in pubs which can land you in the Magistrates Court. But this is on the level although you have to be careful to get hold of the right Mr Lewis because we have three on the database. Mr Brian Lewis (EUDB 3071) of Staunton Cross, Ledbury Road, Staunton, Glos phone Staunton Court (045 284) 612 has a brother-in-law who works for STAR the producers of top class printers. Brian says that the STAR company usually dispose of their 'demo' models at about 40% discounts. He quoted to me the prices on half a dozen models and the savings are substantial BUT I have to remind you that STAR printers are quality and robust gear and they are not cheap to begin with. I don't want to put anybody off (but I don't want you to waste your time or Brians) but if you want just an 'el cheapo' printer for use at home then these STAR buys are not for you. But if you have need of a well known and reliable quality printer it will be worth talking to Brian Lewis before you decide.

3" DISCS at sensible prices

Many members have been asking me to send them free software on a brand new disc instead of them sending me one of their old discs. This is OK by me and it helps out members who are unable to get discs locally, several members have commented on sudden shortages of discs in their local shops. Now we can all share a price breakthrough. Discs are now available from EUDB at the following prices:

ONE DISK..... at £4.00 including postage
FIVE DISCS.... at £19.50 including postage
TEN DISCS.. at £35.90 including postage

These are Maxell discs complete with outer hard plastic case and the price covers postage to you. The prices you see are those you actually pay, I am getting a bit fed up with dealers who advertise eye-catching low prices but then charge VAT and postage extra. Prices are subject to change. You can reserve discs by telephone -- ACCESS (sorry not VISA) cards can be used for same day despatch or you can send a cheque but I will set discs to one side for you if you telephone me first. Most important of all you can have the number you actually need, you don't have to buy a whole box.

HARD DISC PRICES TUMBLE

I have been using an ACC ten megabyte hard disc for about a month now. The prices have tumbled since the hard disc was introduced and Brian Thomas at B&H Computers (0422 52905) can now supply them at £574 including VAT and carriage. Not an item to rush out and buy but one worthy of consideration if you are a serious user with lots of data to process. The Karl Dallas review in Einstein User is glowingly skimpy and I feel that members should consider the effects such a device would have --- many blessings but you do need to take precautions against data-loss and consider any program re-writing implications. Any member is welcome to call me for a discussion and even a demo.

Anthony Hopkins (EUIDB 3179) of The Dene, Woodside, Wroot, Doncaster DN9 2BP (tel 0302 771881) is looking for software to assist in farm accounting and keeping records of each crop field. He uses the Cracker, but it doesn't seem ideal for him, anybody got any ideas?

Steve Carter (from Saffron Walden) tells me that he bought some Infocom adventure games only to discover that they hadn't been installed for Einstein. Here's a tip which I got from an Amstrad user which gets round such difficulties. Imagine you've bought Zork but find it isn't the Einstein version. Fortunately you already own some other Infocom game, say HitchHikers Guide to Universe which is installed for Einstein. This is what you do. Transfer the HHGU .com file to a new disc. Rename the HHGU . com file and call it ZORK.COM. Copy the Zork data file onto the disc and then rename the Zork data file to the HHGU data file name. Now when you call up Zork you are really calling up HHGU but it doesn't matter because it goes straight on to load and access and relate to the Zork data which you have got on the disk but under the name of HHGU data. Sounds crazy but apparently it works.....

EINSTEIN USER MAGAZINE (issued once a quarter by the Tatung team) is evidently going to appear on book stalls next year.... must be a good thing getting the Einstein name put in front of potential users. Tatung have already announced that it is going to rise in price from £5 per year.

For those living in the AVON area a new Avon Einstein User Group (AEUG) has been formed. Primarily for those living in Avon, they will be pleased to sign up members from any part of Britain. Membership is free. Contact (with SAE please) Stephen Ford, AEUG, 74 Great Hayles Road, Whitchurch, Bristol BS14 0SJ

We tried to organise an Einstein Show last April but with no way of letting all Einsteinners know about it we couldn't get our act together but the recent Einstein Show organised by the National User Group was a great success. Congratulations to them for running the event and demonstrating to Tatung that they are worthwhile. Tatung are now talking about another 'event' in the Spring somewhere near Telford -- if only they would open the factory for a conducted tour it would make a very good day out.

Paul Hall from Eastbourne asks about the manual for BRADFORD. Yes, direct from USA the manual was costing about £17 but we are now authorised to distribute photocopies of the Bradford manual for £9.95. (The author gets £7.00 of it). The program itself is of course still available on the free software collection and we remind members that you can in fact use Bradford without the manual (there are instructions on the disc itself) although a manual is essential to do really serious work.

Paul also reminds me of that wonderful cheat facility on TIME TRAP and SPACETRAP. At the start you hold down (all at one time, mind you) CONTROL+SHIFT+GRAPH+G+E+M. Immortality is now assured and Paul tells me he has completed both games without cheating.

John Bothams tells me that the fantastic Surrey Software wordprocessor called WP80 has been renamed 'SAPPHIRE' by Peter Hampton who wrote it. Peter is now selling it to Amstrad users and Einsteinners can contact him direct or go through John Bothams (0670 55499) who continues to supply the program on Peters behalf and is also an expert in its use on Einstein and Amstrad. Jim Ellacott recently sent a one page appraisal of the program and it can only be described as 'excellent'. If you're thinking of getting a word processor which betters wordstar in every way then speak to John Bothams. Meanwhile Peter continues to upgrade the program to suit individual requirements - but don't jump to the conclusion that there is anything wrong with its 'off the shelf' state.

EINSTEIN FOR SALE

Robert Finegan (EUDB Number 3061) of 6 Woodcombe, Melksham, Wiltshire SN12 7SD Tel: 0225 709951 has decided to go for the new Amstrad PC (that's the IBM compatible machine recently launched) and consequently he has the following original and manualled software for sale; The Cracker at £20 and Infostar at £50. Then he wants to sell his Einstein as well, with two internal drives and 80 column card and he's starting at £350 although you might be able to beat him down a little. Please contact Robert direct.

EXTRA DRIVES GOING CHEAP

George Longden from Darwen is an indefatigable reporter and he gives top marks to a firm in Manchester called MATCO. MATCO are not Einstein dealers but they are selling a double density / double headed drive at a price of £48 without PSU or leads or case. I don't normally rate such deals very highly but George has fitted one of these as a THIRD drive -- using Xtal DOS Version 2 (or System 5 it's the same package) to format the discs and configure the drive. One problem with buying such cheap gear is getting hold of the screening cans, leads, wiring harnesses, etc. But MATCO send out their bargain drives along with details of a firm in Trafford Park who run an Einstein themselves and have no difficulty in supplying all the missing bits. I don't know what the finished price was but it was less than half the £200 you'd normally pay for such a set up. The only problem is that George assumes I know who 'those wonderful MATCO people' are --- and I don't. I ran down one Manchester firm called MATCO who were very helpful but said they sold cars not computer bits..... so if you're into saving money on this sort of configuration it really needs an SAE to our friend George at 119 Cemetery Road, Darwen, BB3 2LZ.

If you're considering a conventional SECOND INTERNAL DISC DRIVE then they are now on offer through Screens, Mike Bayliss and Blagbrough & Hebblethwaite at prices under £50 -- the trouble is nobody can predict price falls but this surely must be a good time to upgrade to a double drive.

A programme listing for you;

George Longden (see above) sent this in and castigated me (look it up in the dictionary) me for once saying I won't be publishing any listings. The trouble with magazine and newsletter listings is that the quality of the print is so poor that inevitably they get typed into the computer incorrectly and take weeks to debug. Even if they do run first time, the author usually assumes that the reader knows exactly what the program is for..... enough of this let's see what George sent in. George says ' I often find that the cause of failure in some BASIC programs is due to an error whilst typing in data. The only answer is to check each line methodically and this is easier if the line is displayed on its own and not surrounded by other distracting data statements. A simple prog to do this is shown below. First make sure that all lines are numbered to the same multiple i.e. 10,20,30 etc. With some magazine progs this isn't always the case so make a copy and do a 'renumber'.

X = the first line of the block you wish to check. Y = the last.

```
1 CLS:FOR A=X to Y STEP 10
2 PRINT@ 0,20:REM or wherever you wish to place the line
3 LIST A,,A:REM don't forget TWO commas
4 I=INCH: IF I=32 THEN CLS:NEXT
5 END
```

Thanks George, I'm glad it was short. If other folk have progs which are accurately described then by all means send them in BUT they will only be published if they are accompanied by a good BLACK copy which I can 'photocopy' and preferably if they are also sent on a disc to go into the software collection at the same time. (You get freebies out of the collection for items you have put in anyway, so you cannot lose)

