

# Acorn Users flock to Ally Pally



At 4 o'clock on Friday afternoon, as the Acorn fans still streamed into the exhibition hall at Alexandra Palace, Magnus Magnusson declared the BBC Acorn User Show well and truly open. Over 10,000 people forsook the sunshine on the hottest weekend for a decade to get their first glimpse of the Acorn A3000. Twenty-five of the new machines had been sold by the time of the official opening; the young messengers from Bedford and Netherhall Schools carried many more orders to the stock-lorry during the rest of the weekend.

Nearly 1500 games fanatics passed through the popular Acorn 'Archade', aiming to win £1000 by scoring most points at one of four Archimedes games. The eight A3000 machines, each with a mascot teddy on top, were in constant demand and Russell Scott had his work cut out entering the totals into his score-keeping program.

Laser Grafix's laser show, controlled by an Archimedes computer, projected crystal clear messages in Acorn green onto one of the walls. Greater London Radio broadcast from the hall, Simnetts gave out hats and prize draw cards, winning entries from the Blue Peter Poster Competition lined the walls, and crowds swirled from stand to stand in the heat. Some hot bodies changed into something cooler in the middle of the hall — a white t-shirt with the Archimedes logo.



By 6 o'clock on Saturday evening Magnus Magnusson had presented eight A3000 machines to competition winners. In the evening the unofficial prizes were handed over. The award for the best stand overall went to Computer Concepts; We Serve won the 'most precarious stand' category; Steve White won a Kit-Kat for taking the longest break; the prize for the loudest stand went unanimously to Mike Beecher of EMR; and Chris Evans of GLR won the covered Magnus (Pyke, not Magnusson) award.

'We're delighted,' was the considered reaction of Harvey Coleman, recent star of the Mastermind competition that launched the A3000. 'The enthusiasm of the Acorn staff and the other exhibitors, coupled with the appreciation shown by the public for the Acorn products, has made this event an outstanding success.'

**Acorn**   
The choice of experience.



## A first for Acorn at the European UNIX Show

Acorn has had its first stand at a UNIX-only show: the sixth European UNIX User Show at Alexandra Palace. Many of the 7200 visitors came to look round our stand, and showed a lot of interest in the Acorn R140. After strict qualifying by the stand staff, the event generated over one hundred quality leads, and all are now being followed up by our dealers and the Acorn sales force.

The Acorn stand concentrated on four themes. Tim Holland-Smith stalwartly demonstrated office automation with *UNIPLEX* and *INFORMIX*. Staff from distributor Hugh Symons revealed the machine's expansion capabilities by demonstrating a SCSI hard disc and tape streamer, the first in their new range of SCSI peripherals for the R140. Jeremy Newman showed off the new floating point card that makes UNIX graphics fly. The fourth area of the stand focussed on different ways of moving from an MS-DOS environment into UNIX by running programs on the PC-emulator or by using the MS-DOS data files in UNIX programs which emulate popular MS-DOS titles.

Other new products on show included the latest release of the operating system, RISC.iX 1.13, which runs even faster and supports SCSI and the floating point unit, and *Q-calc* from UNIPRESS. This spreadsheet like *Lotus 1-2-3*, with a real-



time update capability that permits the user to import financial and other numeric data into the spreadsheet.

Many software houses bombarded David Winch with enquiries. There are now over 50 packages for the R140 and the number of titles is increasing all the time.

David Slight was very pleased with Acorn's performance among the big boys of the UNIX world. 'There were a great many key people from large companies who must be influenced before Acorn computers are seen as mainstream in the UNIX world. At this show we have

started the process. The event also taught me a lot about UNIX shows in general that I will put to good use at future events - I learned about machines that don't do what you expect, about software that takes a long time to get running, and about nails that have a habit of finding their way through network cables. On the plus side, our machines featured on several other stands at the show: TORCH, IXI, Sea-Change and MPD. This has shown me that Acorn really is regarded as a serious player in a serious market. We hope to build upon our use of this route to visibility at Open Systems '89 in November.'

## News for the world - from our news releases

### Acorn expands R140 dealer base

Hugh Symons Distribution Services has appointed a further seventeen UK dealers for the R140, taking the total number of dealers to 23. The R140 is now sold right across the country, from Jersey in the Channel Islands to Falkirk in Scotland, and from Belfast in the west to Chelmsford in the east.

### Shoppers see Archimedes in action

Berkshire primary school children produced colourful birthday cards on an Archimedes computer during BEAM week (Berkshire Education Achieving More). The aim of the LEA-sponsored event is to promote the high standard of primary education in the county, showing public and local industrialists the progress and achievements of the county's schools. Children from Geoffrey Field Junior School, South Reading, held live 'design-ins' in a busy shopping mall, creating the cards on an Archimedes system with Clare's Artisan package.

### Acorn swings into the music industry

Acorn has become the first computer manufacturer to join the Music Industry Association. This reflects the company's continued commitment to the music business, where professional musicians are pushing established computers in the industry to their limits. Acorn's stand at the British Music Fair this year featured the BBC A3000, new MIDI products from Pandora, EMR's latest additions to its *Arpeggio Music System*, Armadillo's range of sound-sampling packages and Clare's *Armadeus*, in addition to Acorn's own *Maestro*. Archimedes computers were also on show on the Roland, Casio and Technics stands.

### Jungle testing of micros continues

In what is probably the longest and most exhaustive environmental exercise ever set for a computer, BBC Model B computers are being carried round the world by teams of young explorers more than five years after Acorn first gave them to



the Operation Raleigh expedition. Although operating in extreme and unconventional circumstances, such as on safari in Kenya and over mountainous terrain in Indonesia, the Beebs have coped admirably. David Hopkins, Operation Raleigh's computer coordinator, confirmed their robustness: 'The BBC micros have been indispensable. No expedition sets off without one.'



# Vive Acorn! Encore, encore!

As the sun blazed down on the crowds at the festival fair, thousands of white balloons with the Acorn logo floated off into the distance. Filled by a relay of hard-working Acorn volunteers (and sometimes their families, too), the free balloons were a high point of the afternoon for many children. Some, helped by their fathers, tied three or four balloons to an empty drinks can and tracked the UFO as it headed off towards Grantchester. Jill Osler, who filled balloons so fast she hardly had time to speak, described the demand afterwards: 'When I'd handed over a balloon to the lad at the front, there were always six little darlings waiting to take his place.' The balloon stall collected £250 for the Cambridge Children's Hospice.

After judging the Carnival Procession the Mayor valiantly wandered amongst the swingboats, bands and charity stalls in full regalia, looking decidedly hot in his fur and chain. The parachuting Flying Dragons landed with deft precision on Parker's Piece, drawing almost as large a crowd as the Suffolk Can Can Girls who provided the grand finale of the afternoon.



Cheery grins from Jo Russell, Mike Hardy, Rachel Warren and Steven Cormie from the comparative cool of the Acorn marquee.



Triumphant grins as Michael Page, flanked by the Mayor and his wife, presents the prize to a winning float in the carnival parade.

Harvey entertains the Mayor, Councillor John Woodhouse, while he escapes from the sunshine (and his heavy robes).



A mass of Acorn staff and their families arrived for the evening's entertainment in the Acorn marquee. They listened to the Chris Wong Quartet and feasted off Keely's barbecue; the children danced, the grown-ups talked and everyone, whether as young as 9 weeks or as ancient as 49 years old, enjoyed themselves

tremendously. After last year's deluge it was doubly pleasing that so many people flocked to see the dramatic fireworks, sponsored again by Acorn. The 'oohs' and 'aahs' were nearly as loud as the fireworks themselves. As the fireworks said in white and green flames: 'Thank you Acorn.'

## Breakfast in Luton, lunch in Dublin, baggage blown up in Southend?

Alastair France has been causing trouble again, or at least his briefcase has. Alastair set off for Ireland with Bob Rogers to visit Irish distributor Cemtek. The demo discs were stored safely in Alastair's briefcase and loaded into the hold of the ageing Virgin Airways' Viscount. But in Dublin's baggage reclaim there was no sign of the case or the demo discs. In spite of this mishap the visit was fruitful and Cemtek was impressed by the A3000.

The following Tuesday Kate Mitchell's

sister was driving through Essex, searching for the travel news on her car radio. On a local broadcast she heard that Southend airport had been closed because of a bomb scare. Officials had found a briefcase belonging to an Irishman called France, and nobody knew what it contained. They had cordoned off the area and were pursuing their enquiries.

On Wednesday Alastair was questioned by Special Branch. Was this his briefcase? What had he been doing in Ireland?

Visiting Cemtek!!! Was he a dangerous terrorist? What was in the case? Only floppy discs? Sure? No, they didn't want to open the case to check his story, he might not be telling the truth. They would prefer to blow it up.

With his forceful personality, Alastair talked them out of these desperate measures. The briefcase and its contents have now been returned to their owner, with only a bright pink label to give a clue to their adventures.





## The Acorn logo appears all over

The Acorn-branded goodies on sale at the Acorn User Show are, like the teddies and ties given to dealers at the Premier League event, produced by Coach House Promotions. A sister company to Banaman, Cambridge's 'one-stop promotion shop', this new venture is also run by Banaman boss Roy Dowsing. Coach House Promotions has the exclusive right to use the Acorn logo on promotional items. Their four-page brochure showing the full range of mugs, teddies, badges and practical equipment such as disc wallets and dust covers will be included in product boxes and mail-



ings of Acorn leaflets. Staff will be able to purchase the goods at discount prices by sending an order to Russell Jones, Accounts Department or directly to Coach House Promotions at PO Box 52, Bury St Edmunds, Suffolk, IP31 1SQ.

Roy Dowsing, in his own words 'old, bald and getting fat,' set up Banaman two years ago with his daughter, a graphic designer. Roy has thirty years in sales and marketing under his belt. It was while he was in the weighing machine industry that he became aware of how difficult it was to get hold of the variety of freebies and gimmicks he wanted to give away at exhibitions. Having found this 'niche in the market', he promptly set about filling it.

The company now sells anything that can be printed on, and the staff of six print most of the merchandise themselves. The studio off Newmarket Road produces the designs that are ordered at the King Street showroom in the centre of town. Commissions range from finding 100 six-foot long balloons to printing a logo on a batch of 'call-timers' – like egg-timers but for timing phone calls so you don't spend too long chatting. Roy is currently working on the Acorn winter catalogue, which will feature lambswool sweaters and Christmas specials alongside the sportswear and t-shirts.

## Premier League Event enjoyed by all

On the weekend of 9th June the Ettington Park Hotel near Stratford-upon-Avon was filled with Acorn Premier League dealers, and their wives, invited to preview the Acorn A3000. This was the third of the Premier League events, and everyone was determined to make it the best yet – a weekend to match the quality of the product it was launching.

A trip to see Hamlet at the Royal Shakespeare Theatre on Friday evening prepared dealers for the launch of the A3000 on the following day. They were all very excited by the new machine, and were thoroughly impressed by its performance, price and marketability. Chris and Marilyn Came of Calancraft confirmed the strong feelings generated by the event: 'After years of being loyal to the product in spite of the company, it is great that over the past year we have come to feel loyalty to both, and now have tremendous enthusiasm for the future.' The thank-you letters from many other dealers were equally complimentary.

Linda Storr had planned a full afternoon's entertainment with ascents in a hot air balloon, clay pigeon shooting, archery and tennis. Adverse air currents prevented the balloon from getting off the



ground but Roger Cranville, with his genius for improvisation and organisation, amply filled the gap by arranging helicopter rides over the surrounding countryside.

Before the evening's entertainment got into full swing, Sam Wauchope presented prizes to three top dealers. Beebug was judged to have had the best promotional idea; 3SL had sold the most Archimedes computers; and Digital Services of Portsmouth recorded the biggest uplift in turnover. After a splendid dinner a pianist/singer and an electronic harpist provided the music while the dancers took to the floor.

## Quality Update

As the Quality Edge process steams ahead, the attitudes it instills are percolating through the company. Four groups have already had their induction sessions – the directors, the MD's office, including personnel and facilities, marketing and finance; twenty-two groups will have attended a training session by the end of the year. The results of the Organisational Climate Survey have been presented to the directors, and a summary of the findings will be circulated to all staff in the near future.





## New software company meets its targets

Software Solutions, the third-party supplier recently started by two ex-Acorn employees, launched its first product in June. *RISC OS Companion Volume 1* is a set of utilities that expands and enhances the RISC OS operating system.

David Tee, formerly of International Sales, and Gary Stephenson, once Acorn's Office Automation Project Leader, set up Software Solutions at the beginning of May. Once they had impressed both their understanding bank manager and the Cambridge Enterprise Agency with their business plan, they were ready to venture into the choppy waters of self-employment. 'Acorn has been very encouraging' says Gary, with enthusiasm. 'Working on our own is very different from operating with the backing of an established operation like Acorn. We have to make our own decisions and live by them.'

David and Gary have both sunk their life savings into the business, which started up in the cramped conditions of David's flat. After a month they moved into a purpose-built office block in Hardwick, next door to Colton Software, another of Acorn's third-party suppliers. Equipped with second-hand office furniture, a telephone and two Archimedes computers, they are already developing a Volume 2 of their *RISC OS Companion*. Paul Fellows, who left Acorn to join Sinclair and has since developed *ABC* the Archimedes BASIC compiler marketed by Dabs Press, is now working with them.

David is the company's sales and marketing manager. He has visited many local education authorities and educational establishments interested in the Archimedes system and other Acorn products, and has found tremendous confidence in the potential of the Archimedes series for supplying the machines of the future. Gary and Paul are also working on Econet products that allow other machines on the network to use the Archimedes computer's hard disc and printer. They say they have 'lots of other software goodies in the pipeline.'

Software Solutions has negotiated a bundling deal with Kelator, in which every purchaser of an A3000 gets a free copy of *RISC OS Companion Vol. 1*. Lindis International, run by another ex-Acorn employee Jonathan Thomson, will market the product overseas. If the company continues to keep to its business plan, it should make a small profit by the end of the first year. From then on, the sky's the limit.

## New names, new faces

We welcome the following people who have joined Acorn since the last issue of the newsletter:

Name	Department	Job Title
Russell Scott	Marketing	Marketing Support Assistant
Elaine Warren	Marketing	Secretary
Simon Lovesey	Marketing	Marketing Manager, Home Markets
Bernard Siddle	Hardware	Peripherals Development Manager
Amanda Gilbey	Technical	Clerk
Aidan McConville	Technical	Programmer
Sarah Heywood	Finance	Secretary
Martina Horstman	Finance	Data Entry Clerk
Marie-Therese Hartley	Legal	Secretary
Susan Barton	Group Products	Secretary
Richard Sumner	Sales	International Market Development Manager
Ian Thomas	Sales	Area Sales Manager
Mike Friedman	Sales	Area Sales Manager
Wendy Bloom	Projects and Planning	Project Assistant
Jane Astley	Customer Services	UNIX Support Specialist
Nichole Harris	Office of the MD	Secretary
Chris Dorman	AR&D	Programmer
Lorraine Parry	Personnel	Secretary
Thomas Rochford	Manufacturing	Clerical Administrator

We also welcome the following temporary staff – students on industrial placements or working at Acorn during the vacation.

J. Hickson	Technical	Sean Sollé	Support Services
Owain Griffiths	Publications	Frederic Desprez	Marketing
William Tunstall-Pedoe	Support Services	Tracy Stewart	Personnel
		Francoise Roche	Marketing

## Facilities fights for a fair rent

A determined piece of negotiation by Gill Allan in Facilities has helped keep Acorn's bank balance in the black. In June 1988 the lease of Units 8 and 9 Newmarket Road was due for its five-year review. Gill was aghast when in March she received notice of the new rental: the owner was demanding a rent increase of nearly 130%. She appointed a firm of land agents to negotiate with the owner on Acorn's behalf.

Three months later a second letter from the owner arrived. This time the figure for the new rent was £90,000 higher still. When Gill wrote to ask if there had been a typing error, she was stunned to hear that yes, there was an error and it had been in the original letter. The higher figure was correct. The owner would like to apologise for this mistake.

But Gill was not amused. She instructed the agent to send in a counter offer of just less than double the current rent. To the agent's surprise the owner refused even to discuss the offer. The only avenue that remained was to go to arbitration. Both Acorn and the owner submitted their

cases in writing, and an independent arbitrator from the Royal Society of Chartered Surveyors studied the papers and visited the site.

The submissions showed that the owner was using city centre rates as the basis for its calculations on the office space. Moreover, it was assessing the value of each parking space at £750 per year. Since there are more than 100 spaces on the site, this dramatically increased the total rent. To counter this assessment, Acorn provided an example of local market rates by revealing that it rented the whole car park across the road, with space for 30 cars, at an annual rent well below £750.

In March 1989, a year after the original letter, the independent arbitrator delivered his judgement. He set the increase in rent at 115%, a sum well below the owner's first figure. He also asked the owner to pay most of the costs of arbitration. By backing her judgement and not accepting the owner's valuation, Gill and her department have saved the company well over half a million pounds.



## MD promises an even brighter future with Quality Edge

With Fairground Attraction's 'It's Got to be Perfect' ringing in their ears, Acorn staff left the auditorium at the Welding Institute on 4 July to consider Harvey Coleman's fact-packed speech. The hall had seemed much fuller than the year before, a sign that Acorn's staff numbers are increasing in line with its expanding activities. The buffet of cold food was cleared in record time as staff milled around the A3000s running the DTP package and spilled out onto the terrace to enjoy the evening sunshine.

### Key points from the speech

#### Sales figures

Sales of the Master 128 and Archimedes 400 Series were well up on last year. Sales of the new Beeb, the recently announced A3000, were already looking good and advance orders promised better things for the future. Net results at the end of the first six months were very positive, although it was too early to give precise details.

#### Hardware

All Acorn products are under constant in-house development. Even a well-established machine such as the Master 128 will see minor adjustments to its specification in the coming year. A lot of developmental effort will be directed towards the Archimedes 400 Series, and new software that takes advantage of these developments will be released under the Acorn banner. More machines in the UNIX range will be unveiled in the next couple of years.

Communications products are a very important enabler in the marketplace, and around one fifth of all Acorn products sold are networked. Acorn is expanding this area of its operations.

#### Software

Amongst other developments the company will produce horizontal software packages such as DTP, personal productivity tools and languages, that take advantage of the RISC OS environment. And naturally, RISC OS itself will be enhanced regularly.

#### Acorn's policy on quality

Quality in all areas is the foundation on which Acorn's business is built.

Quality is listening effectively to customers and supplying product and service excellence which meets their requirements. These essential principles give us The Quality Edge.

The targets are:

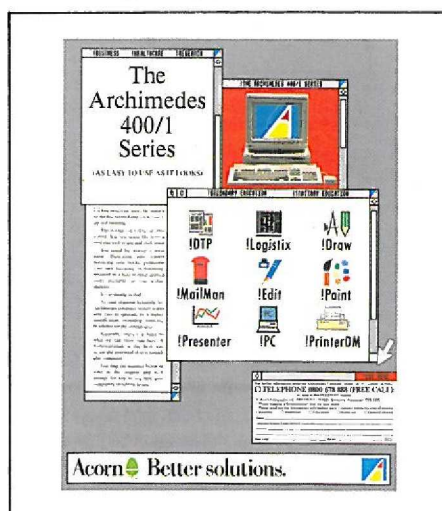
- No defects, errors or mistakes.
- Right first time, on time, every time.

### Quality Edge programme

The Quality Edge programme is now well under way, and is already producing results. Harvey read with pride from two letters that commended Acorn's changed approach. Acorn's business is being built on the strong foundations of quality in all areas. We should all take pride in our jobs and Acorn, he added.

### Promotions

Acorn's advertising and promotional activities are proving extremely successful.



The latest advertising campaign uses the RISC OS windows as a feature, demonstrating directly what can be achieved on an Archimedes' screen. Harvey thanked Roger Cranville for his tremendous efforts in taking the Acorn stands to an average of at least one promotional event every week.

### The A3000 takes off

Advance orders for the A3000 are extremely encouraging, and a feeling of excitement is rippling through the dealers. Six local education authorities have already ordered the machine, with one ordering more than 500.

### Staff offer

From August the A3000 will be available to staff at a special price. Details available from the personnel department.

### Finance Director takes up post

The appointment of John Barr, who comes to Acorn from Rank Xerox at the end of July, frees Sam Wauchope to concentrate on sales. Harvey thanked Sam for his tremendous efforts while looking after both departments.

### As featured on TV...

Even though Billy Graham had cornered all the best video projectors on that day, the Archimedes computers were clearly visible in the excerpts from *Tomorrow's*

*World* and children's long-running chart-topper *Blue Peter*. Harvey emphasised the value of this type of unsolicited advertising, and thanked everyone for their efforts.

## Charity at work & play

### Pub games raise £400

In the wake of the Hillsborough disaster, Acorn staff held a charity 'games evening' at the Kings Head pub in Fen Ditton. Staff and pub regulars competed in friendly matches, and raffled a variety of prizes, all donated by the Acorn Football Club, the pub and its customers. This enjoyable evening raised £206.50, and the total was made up to £400 by Acorn. All proceeds were sent to the Hillsborough Disaster Fund.

### Keep collecting those stamps and coins

David Bunn, a theatre assistant at the Norfolk and Norwich Hospital, has thanked Acorn staff for sending him their foreign stamps and left-over foreign coins. He uses them to raise money for the charity Children's Cancer and Leukaemia Care, and has already collected more than £33,000. Please pass all stamps from used envelopes, and any small change or notes that are left over after your holidays abroad, to Katherine Pierpoint.

### A run for their money

Four lads from Acorn made up one of the 90 teams competing in a commando run in aid of the Red Cross. On 11 June Barry Carter, David Lumley, Jim Fallon and Tim Beeby donned their white Acorn tracksuits and set off to Oakington Barracks in Longstanton. The assault course was tough, and the weather was hot. The net, an upturned vee of slippery rope was voted the team's worst obstacle, but Tim had most problems swinging over a stream on a rope. Unable to let go when he reached the other side, he swung back to the centre and slipped ignominiously into the water.

Although the team was not placed, David came second with his individual score. The four raised a magnificent total of £170 in sponsorship.

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In this leaflet, the initials BBC refer to the British Broadcasting Corporation.