

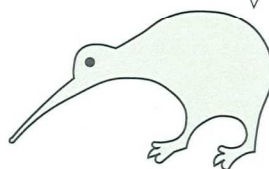
Acorn

ISSUE 15 SUMMER 1990

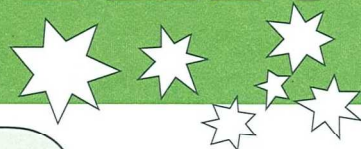


G'Day Australia!

G'Day New Zealand!



NEWS LETTER



Sam and Ken receive warm welcome during visit down under

Sam Wauchope and Ken Parnis recently spent a week in Australia and New Zealand as part of our preparations for the acquisition of the Barson group of companies.

While Sam spent most of the time finalising details with lawyers, reviewing business plans and keeping the local press informed of all developments, Ken met each of our new colleagues individually to explain how Acorn's takeover would affect them and to deal with any specific concerns.

'Everyone seemed very pleased and positive about the takeover', reported Ken Parnis. 'Some personnel have already received excellent support from Cambridge, both from whole departments and from particular individuals and were very enthusiastic and optimistic about the proposed changes.'

Acorn will now have two wholly owned subsidiaries in the area –

one in New Zealand and the other in Australia. Each will be operated as a separate company with its own managing director. Both managing directors will report directly to Sam.

Anticipating that our people in Australia and New Zealand might need more than one line of communication with Cambridge, Sam has asked their management teams to contact Ken who will have general responsibility for our operation in Australia.

Ken looks forward to his additional responsibilities with enthusiasm. 'As soon as both companies are Acorn subsidiaries', he says, 'I expect to build on the good relationship which some of our Cambridge staff already have with them and to make it easier for them to obtain support from the "experts" here and therefore easier for them to sell Acorn products.'



Sydney Office (left to right): Gerri Howe, Michael Eitell, Alvaro Fernandez, Shane Wharton. Inset: Peter Molloy

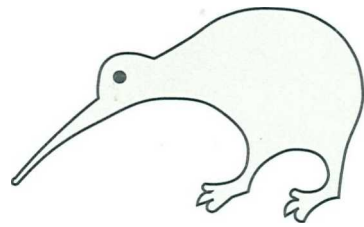


New Zealand Office (left to right, standing): John Buchanan, Ainsley Lewis, Mark Sussex, Peter Revell, David Hunter, Douglas Pauling, Paul Sharp, Mark Spearman, Ken Lee; (seated): Joanna Taylor, Cherie Peri, Annette Stokes



Melbourne Office (left to right, back row): Sam Wauchope (Acorn GB), Michelle Bradley, Carol Harris, Tony Hills, John Howey, Julian Barson; (middle row): Glenda Graham, Laurence Hardwick, Simon Thompson, Annie Butler, Rainer Schroeder; (front row): Bevan Leviston, Kathy Constantinidou, Ros Kaiser, Andrea Simmons

Tony hoping to steer quality



After working for Acorn for some six years in a wide variety of roles, Tony Sumner has had plenty of opportunity to see how efficiently (or not) we carry out many of our tasks. Having read our invitation to employees to get more actively involved in our Quality Edge programme, Tony wasted no time in applying for a position on the steering committee.

Tony started his career with Acorn in the original customer services department as a network support engineer. After a year he was transferred to systems development as a software engineer where he worked on utilities

for the Master and B+.

A year later he joined the custom systems division as a communications product support engineer where he gained valuable experience giving technical advice to clients who wanted us to customise hardware for them.

After a couple of years in custom systems he was promoted to senior software quality assurance engineer in Andrew Cummins' department. Two years later he was promoted to his present post in Phil Smith's quality department.

'Over the years I've gained considerable experience of the company and its cus-

tomers — large and small', says Tony. 'While I'm interested in quality across the board, I've got a particular interest in software. Although software quality has varied in the past, standards are now high. The customer is far more interested in the application than he is in the machine. But if the software falls over he will blame the machine, so we cannot afford to be complacent.'

'We are delighted that Tony has opted to play a leading role in our quality programme', says Phil Smith. 'I have asked him to get involved in a number of quality tasks and will be putting



his name forward in September for election onto the steering committee.'

Combining work with a degree of fun

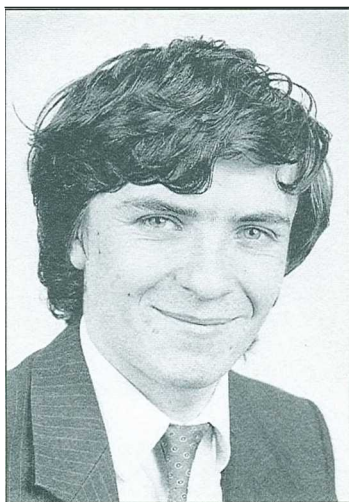
If you think studying for an Open University degree while doing a full-time job sounds like hard work, you should hear what Andy Smith has to say about it.

Andy left school to join the RAF because he was fed up with the classroom environment and couldn't face more studying at University. Much to his disappointment, the RAF put him

straight back into a classroom, so he left to get a job in the computing industry. Soon after joining Acorn, he discovered that most of his colleagues were educated to degree standard and, being ambitious, felt that he too should have a degree.

He started his OU degree course about three years ago and hopes to earn his BA (Hons) Technology in another two. 'I'm really getting the best of both worlds', says Andy. 'I'm able to study for my degree while earning in a good job. Acorn reimburse my OU fees and I'm working alongside well-qualified, experienced people who can give me all the help I need.'

'It's not hard work if you treat it like a hobby, as I do', he claims. 'I do all my reading late at night and then come in for a full day every other weekend to do my assignments. Once a year I spend a week or two at Summer School. It's good fun and a really cheap hobby!'



Acorn well prepared for first major exhibition presence in the Antipodes

With our takeover of Barsons settled just a few days before the start of WCCE 90 (World Conference on Computers in Education), there was little time to plan how best to launch Acorn's presence in Australia at this important event.

Yet, when the exhibition opened on 9 July, visitors were able to see a highly professional, well-equipped stand, proudly bearing the Acorn logo and manned by people from Cambridge and Sydney. How was this possible?

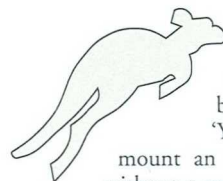
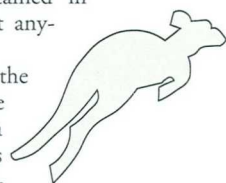
Work on any exhibition starts long before the event — and when the exhibition is taking place on the other side of the world, planning is more important than ever. The stand visitors saw in Sydney is the same stand visitors to Which? in Birmingham saw, and was sent to Australia on 11 May by sea-freight.

Roger Cranville's bulging WCCE file gives some indication of the amount of effort that goes into planning an event of this significance. 'This is full of faxes to and from Sydney', says Roger. 'We had to start by finding out who supplies

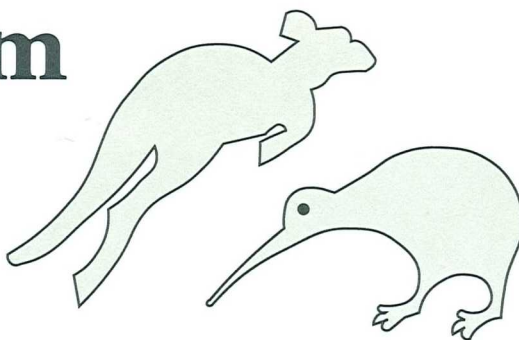
software to Australia, or is prepared to supply it in the future. Then we've had to decide on exhibits, find out what can be obtained in Australia, and ship out anything that can't.

'In addition to the actual stand and all the things on it, there are a great many other things to consider. For example, we have to draw up guest lists and sort out who's been invited to what; who's coming to this dinner or that cocktail party. And organise their travel arrangements if appropriate. And organise the meetings that take place before, during and after the exhibition.'

'You couldn't mount an event like this without a great deal of help from the people on the spot. I'd especially like to thank Ros Kaiser of Barsons in Sydney who has been tremendously helpful and has been happy to do anything we've asked her to do.'



Postcard from down under



Dear All.

Arrived in Melbourne on Sunday, 3 June, at five in the morning. Short time to settle into hotel before 1 lam meeting. Several coffees later our first meeting finished at 5pm. Sam and I decided to review progress and finally, at 6pm, opened a few stubbier and thought it had been a XXXX long day.

Left the hotel to grab some fresh air and a bite to eat at the local BYO (bring your own bottle) restaurant. Called into a wine warehouse full of excellent Australian and New Zealand wines to select a bottle. At dinner, inspected the label carefully to assess our selection and discovered it was a French wine!

Next morning in the office at Barson Computers and first meeting with the management and all the staff. Sam outlined the bid proposal and the business objectives of Acorn in Australia; spent nearly four days discussing opportunities and issues with each member of Barson's staff in the Melbourne and Sydney offices.

Flew to Sydney on Wednesday afternoon to speak to the staff in the Sydney office. Harbour and Opera House breathtaking. Only five people in our Sydney office, but they're all very highly motivated, pro-Acorn and its products. Also very exciting about WCCE and Econet conference (see

article on page 2). Back to Melbourne late evening.

After further discussions and the completion of the business plan review set off for airport on Thursday evening. Flight was delayed by 4½ hours, therefore didn't arrive in Auckland until 3am.

First meeting in Auckland at 9am. Friday: Spent Friday and Saturday talking to staff in the Auckland office and reviewing the business plan with their managers. Working lunch with some dealers who do seem to be very pro-Acorn and are looking forward to receiving new products.

Saturday: Business plan review day,

also Scotland playing provincial side, but unfortunately for Sam, not in Auckland. Winter here, people off skiing but some roads apparently blocked because of heavy snowfalls.

Left Auckland for London at midnight on Saturday. At end of our trip I'm most impressed with the quality of our future colleagues both in Australia and in New Zealand. I am told that both Auckland and Melbourne are very attractive cities – maybe I'll see them next time!

KEM

Win a bottle of champagne

There's a bottle of champagne waiting for the best cartoonist in the company. Simply use your drawing talent and sense of humour to create a cartoon based upon an Acorn theme. The rules are straightforward:

- You must be an employee of Acorn
- The cartoon must be suitable for publication in Acorn Newsletter
- You must get your entry in by 24 August 1990

BRAIN TEASER

Unscramble the following anagrams to reveal names or words familiar to you all.

READ CHIMES
COME A WASH UP
TEMPER MY SCOUTS
FOR WASTE
IN SPANKER
CROP TOOL
QUIT DYE GALE
BASTE BOCO

Closing date for entries:

24 August 1990. First correct entry opened wins a £10 token.

Send your cartoons and/or brain teaser answers to:

Ken Parnis, Fulbourn Road, Cherry Hinton.

New names, new faces

We welcome the following people who have joined Acorn since May 1990

Name	Job Title
Teresa Bryden	Customer Service Support Assistant
Michael Collett	Regional Accounts Manager, Schools
Ian Munro	Retail Sales Manager

Joined Acorn since July 1990

Sydney Office	Douglas Pauling
Gerri Howe	Annette Stokes
Michael Etccl	
Alvaro Fernandez	Melbourne Office
Shane Wharton	Michelle Bradley
Peter Molloy	Carol Harris
	Tony Hills
New Zealand Office	John Howey
John Buchanan	Bob Moir
Ainsley Lewis	Glenda Graham
Mark Sussex	Laurence Hardwick
Peter Revell	Simon Thompson
David Hunter	Annie Butler
Paul Sharp	Rainer Schroeder
Mark Spearman	Bevan Leviston
Ken Lee	Kathy Constantinidou
Joanna Taylor	Ros Kaiser
Cherie Peri	Andrea Simmons

Contributions to 'Comment' via E-mail

Produced by DCN Advertising, Bury St Edmunds, Suffolk

FORTHCOMING EVENTS

Channels Business Unit

8 September:
Premier League

Education Business Unit

September:
Scottish IT Conference

5 September:
Polytechnics and Colleges Computing Conference

10 October:
N Ireland Academic Advice Roadshow (Queen's and Ulster)

18 October:
Academic Advice Roadshow (Teesside, Leeds, Manchester, Liverpool and Sheffield)

23 October:
AGI 90

24 October:
IT in Further Education

25 October:
Design and Technology

VAR Business Unit

25 September:
Military Computer Graphics and Software Exhibition

9 October:
Image Processing Exhibition

October:
Dataflex Day

October:
Training System Launch

Consumer Business Unit

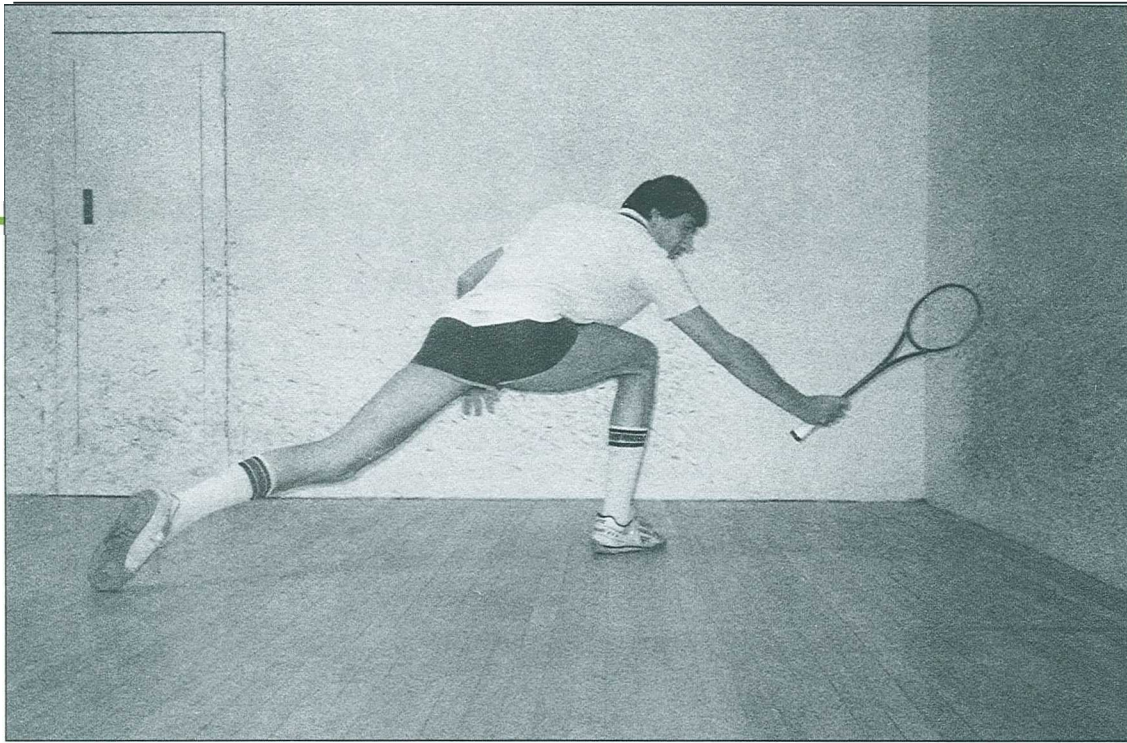
9 October:
North West Special Education Microelectronic Resource Centre Exhibition

17 October:
Naidex '90

Here comes the Raine again!

After nearly three months nursing an ankle injury, Acorn's squash star Neil Raine is concentrating on getting fit for the new season which starts in September. Earlier in the year Neil organised a total of five social matches between Newmarket Road and Fulbourn Road — all of which were decisively won by Newmarket Road!

Now he has little time for such lighthearted events. He plays up to seven times a week at Cambridge Squash Club and has recently completed a gruelling 90-mile cycle trip. Neil is too modest to say where he thinks all this hard work will get him, but 'hopes to be selected for the County second team'.



Great minds think alike

During a recent visit to Cambridge, Olivetti Office Director of Quality, Gianni Orlandini, and his colleague Roberto Bergoglio were delighted to discover that their ideas on quality are almost identical to our own!

The visit was suggested by Olivetti Office's MD Dr Franco Tato and took place during June.

After a meeting with Sam and a product demonstration, Messrs Orlandini and Bergoglio were given a series of presentations on our Quality Edge programme before presenting their own programme to us. We plan to continue to exchange ideas and will be arranging further meetings in the future.

DIY Development

A new workshop, called Managing Personal Growth, was run in Acorn for the first time during June.

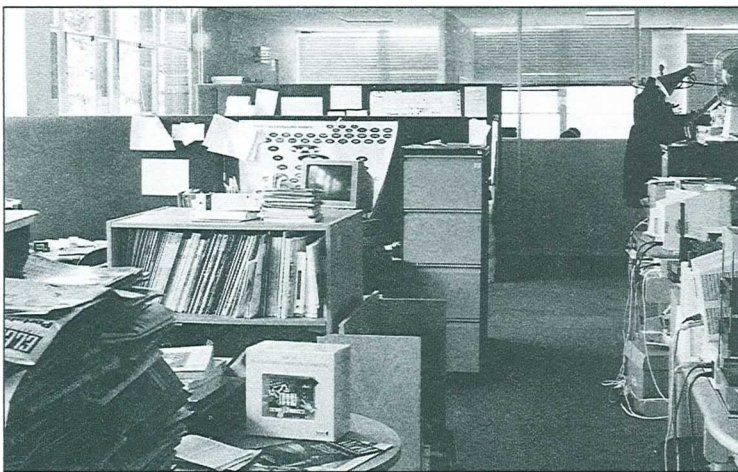
During the two-day programme, attendees are encouraged to think about the specific skills and qualities they have in relation to their own aspirations and the particular demands of the jobs they are doing. Before the start of the workshop, both attendees and their managers are asked independently to draw up a list of skills, qualities, etc.

'We were all surprised by how closely our own perceptions of our strengths, skills and aspirations

matched with those identified by our managers', says Michael Page. 'The programme encourages you to take more responsibility for your own career development by managing your own growth within the job you are doing — even if that means changing your job responsibilities to match your strengths.'

Everybody enjoyed the workshop and found the analysis useful. A further two sessions are planned for September and October, and if these are as successful as the first, we may adopt MPG as a standard programme for next year.

Acorn cleans up



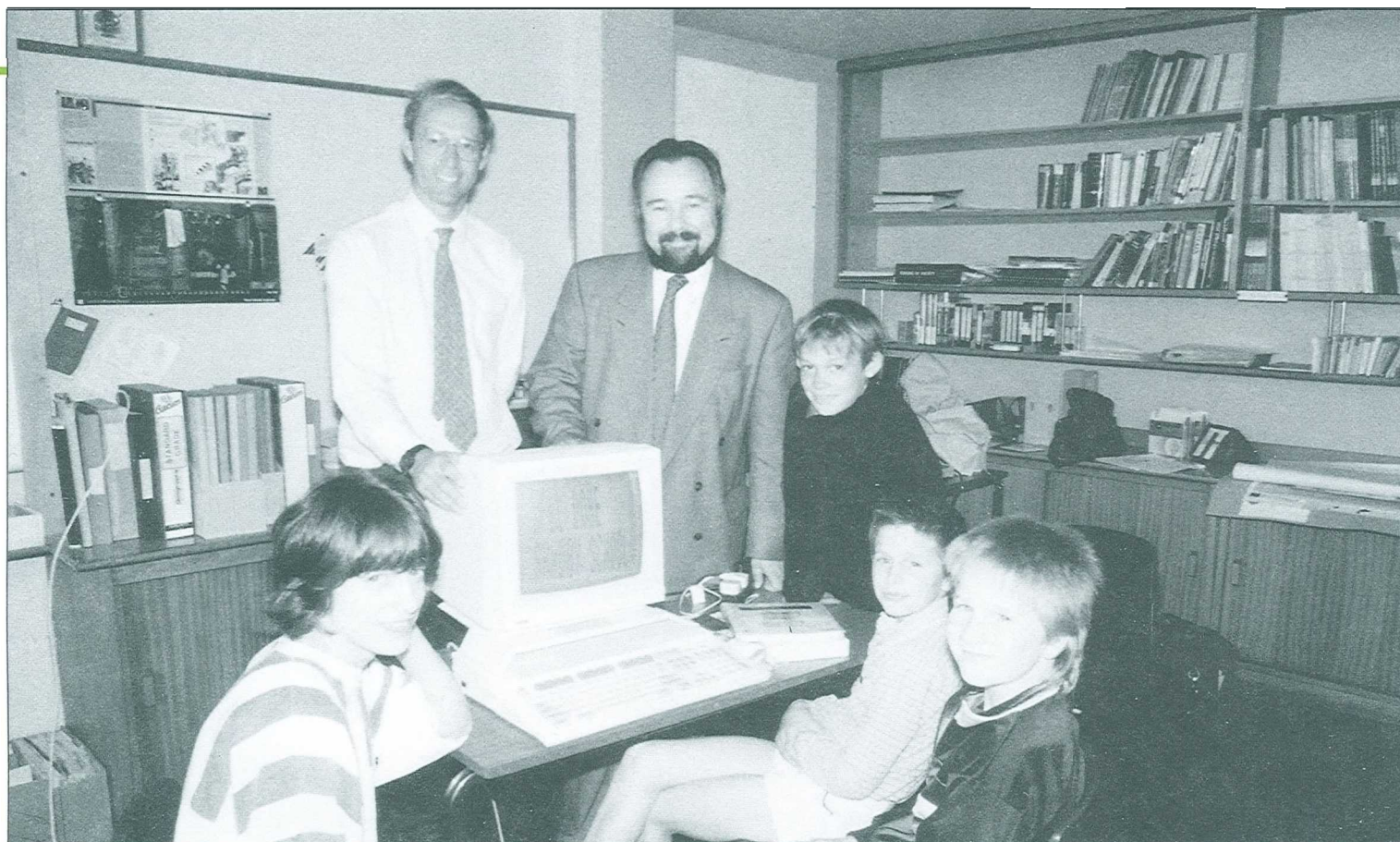
Are visitors to Acorn impressed by untidy piles of empty cardboard boxes? We don't think so! Within a few weeks someone from the Quality Edge steering committee will be inspecting all offices, reception areas, gangways, etc, to see which areas are being spoilt by thoughtless untidiness or which could constitute

a safety or fire hazard. So we are not just looking for empty boxes, but tangles of power cables, loose carpet tiles, blocked emergency exits — get the picture? A report will then be given to each departmental manager who will be asked to smarten up any offending areas. You have been - warned!



Back row, left to right: Peter Howes, Michael Page, Terry Barge (trainer), David Howarth, Paul Pedder. Seated, left to right: Roger Cranville, Rachael Pullen, Lorraine Buckman, Steve White

Michael Page presents prize to remote island school



Michael Page presents head teacher and children with their BBC A3000

At a prizegiving ceremony in May, Michael Page asked the assembled children which one of them lived furthest from the sea. After some discussion, it was decided that it was the child whose home was located some 400 metres from the shore!

The school is on Sanday, one of the Orkney Islands. In spite of its remote location and small number of pupils, Sanday School has embraced computer technology with enthusiasm. The school has 12 machines — all Acorn — which are shared amongst 80 pupils.

Michael was therefore delighted to award a BBC A3000 to the school. One of 20 finalists in the Excellence 89 competition, Sanday had just missed out on a top prize, but succeeded in the subsequent competition to find the best 'runner-up'.

To win the BBC A3000, the pupils had to write an essay on how they use IT in their school. Sanday uses computer technology to produce a natural history magazine. This incorporates statistics, environmental studies and information on local fauna and flora. The magazine, called *Word of the Wild*, is compiled using IT and distributed to interested parties in both printed and electronic form.

We make a large number of presentations to schools each year, but rarely visit locations as remote as Sanday. 'But it was well worth the effort', says Michael Page; 'the head teacher and pupils really appreciated the fact I'd taken the trouble to present their prize in person. And it's important for us to remember that our customers are literally all over the place.'



The small plane which took Michael off the island. It made three attempts to land before touching down on the tiny airfield. 'Really just a field and a shed,' said Michael



Not much different from any other school, except that this one overlooks, and is a few yards from, the sea

Malcolm to sit on Italian R & D committee

Following Sam's announcement at the recent company meeting that Acorn now reports to Olivetti Office instead of Systems and Networks, there have been significant developments designed to bring our two companies closer together.

A number of top-level meetings have already taken place and, as a result, Sam has obtained an assurance from Olivetti Office's managing director, Dr Franco Tato, that there should be no immediate changes either to our corporate strategy or our main priorities.

However, there have been a number of important developments which illustrate Olivetti Office's willingness and enthusiasm to find ways of closer collaboration. Malcolm Bird, our technical director, has been invited to participate as a key member of the Olivetti Office R & D Committee. In this new

of presentations outlining the potential of Acorn's technology, not only for use in computers but as controllers within other products such as printers.

In addition, Olivetti Office's most senior sales and production management staff have visited us here in Cambridge and were said to be 'greatly impressed by our product range'. Furthermore, Dr Tato has been 'encouraging' Olivetti subsidiaries who have worked with Acorn in the past, to investigate opportunities of doing more business with us in the future.

We're already getting full support from Olivetti Office Canada for our project with the Ontario education authorities, and Sam is hopeful that we will get similar help from other parts of the world. He has already visited Olivetti Office in Singapore and Malaysia to discuss potential - our products in the Far East.



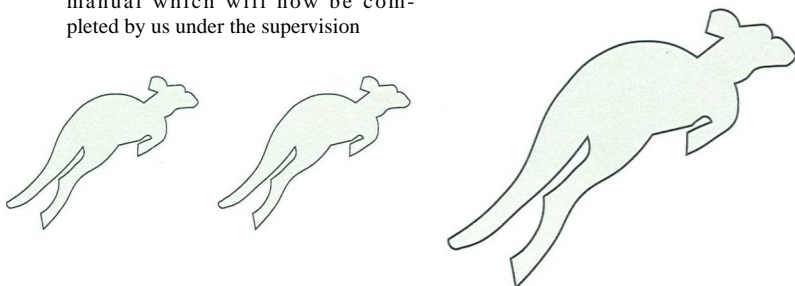
Giving quality the master's touch

Three Cambridge University students have just spent six weeks with us to gain the experience they need for their Master's degrees (Engineering). We participate in schemes such as these because they give us an opportunity to look at specific problems through other people's fresher, more objective eyes. It also enables us to get unique tasks done relatively quickly without taking Acorn personnel away from their routine work.

Jo Snashall was asked to formulate the content and structure of a quality manual conforming to BS.5750. After interviewing all our first-line managers and explaining the requirements of BS.5750 to them, she identified a large number of specific policies and procedures which should be included in the manual which will now be completed by us under the supervision

of the Quality Edge steering committee. Jo has now taken up a manufacturing post in Slough with Mars.

The second task was undertaken by Michael Ledzion and Chris Thornton. One of the students concentrated on finding out how we could improve the accuracy of our sales and marketing forecasts while the other looked at ways of improving our manufacturing flexibility and reducing lead times. Their report has now been taken up by Jeff Gorton who will define all the processes and procedures necessary to put the students' recommendations into action. Both Michael and Chris have now taken up appointments in management consultancy.



Stop press . . .

Re: Roger Cranville's Report

Acorn at the WCCE 90 conference in Sydney, Australia; for those asking the obvious it's 'The World Conference for Computers in Education', held every five years. 1995 is to be hosted by Birmingham (England).

The company rolled out its red carpet again at the exhibition for the 2200 delegates and day visitors. Delegates from the world of education gathered in Sydney on 8 July for the week-long conference. The exhibition comprised about 150 exhibitors from major hardware manufacturers to small software houses.

Without blowing our own trumpet too loudly, the Acorn stand was amongst the busiest at the show — not an unusual experience these days. The strong Acorn presence has strengthened our foothold in Australia and New Zealand, launched Acorn's arrival and cemented relations between Acorn UK and Acorn Australia.

The now well-known exhibition stand was loaded into a container in England and withstood six weeks on the high seas, to arrive in Melbourne (less prone to dock strikes than Sydney), ten days before the exhibition was due to open. The container continued its journey by rail to Sydney and then by road to the Exhibition Centre at Darling Harbour. Build-up started at midnight, Friday 6 July, and as always we were ready and waiting for the visitors when the exhibition opened at 8am on Monday, 9 July.

The national press (in OZ!) delighted in the turbulent journey that some of the UK contingent experienced, one of whom did not relish his medical treatment in Bangkok, dressing stitched to scalp did nothing to allay his fears; stitches were removed in Sydney!