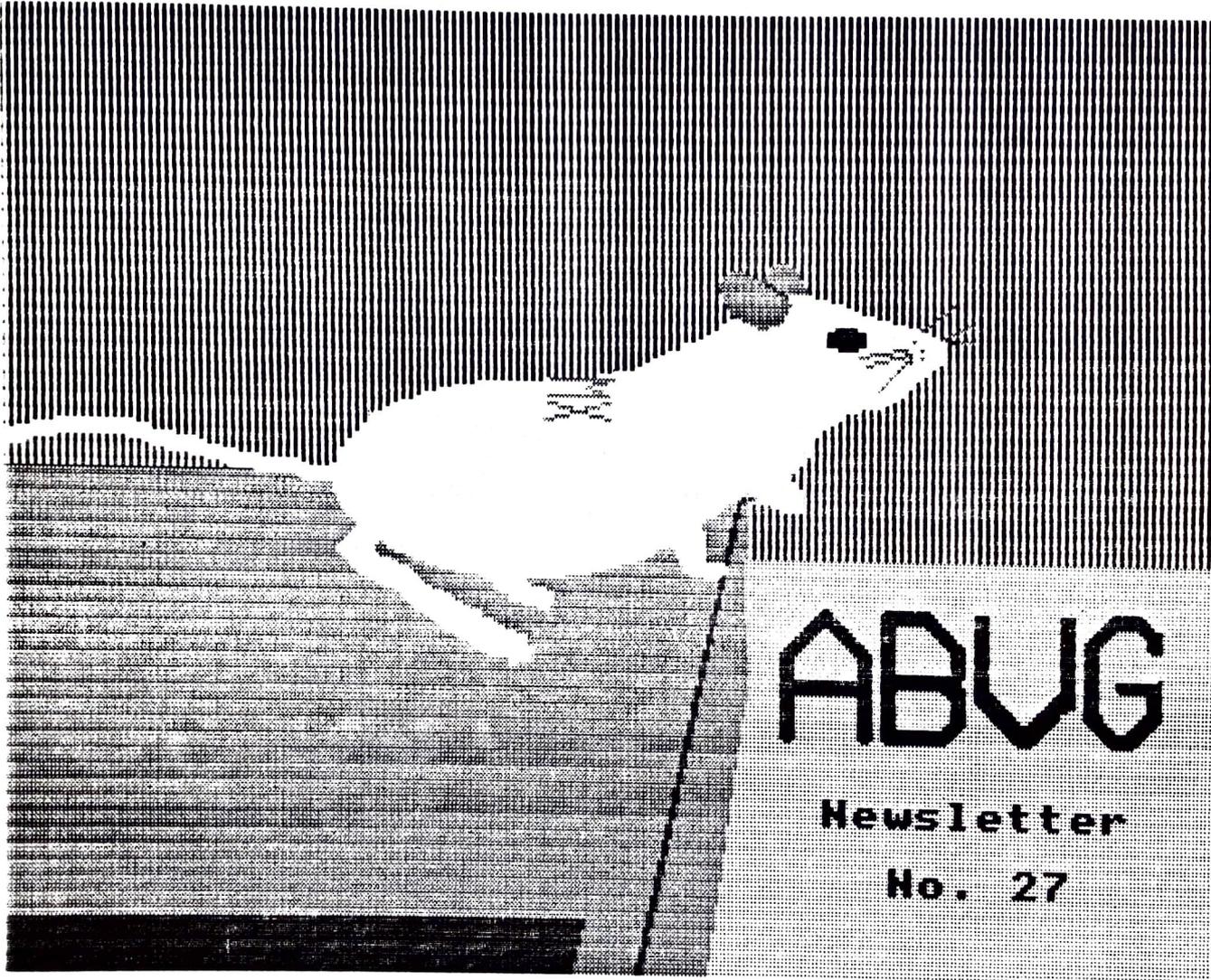


ABUG



ACORN & BBC
microcomputers
USER GROUP
Sheffield



ABUG

Newsletter

No. 27

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DIARY

August 7	R & B's	Social
August 21	Watnall	Visit to Weather Station
September 4	R & B's	Social
September 18	Park Baths	To be arranged

Please note that there is a THREE WEEK gap until the next meeting.

CHAIRMAN'S LETTER

CAVEAT EMPTOR
(Let the buyer beware)

A timely reminder to would-be purchasers in these times of uncertainty in the home computer market.

The Supply of Goods (Implied Terms) Act 1973 offers some protection to the unwary purchaser, as does remedial action through the Small Claims Court, BUT these actions will certainly be time consuming, tiresome and troublesome to operate.

Most of us have at some time made purchases by mail order. If, like myself, from a once only advertment in a popular computer magazine or, also like myself, you were foolish enough to attempt to buy goods (unsuccessfully) from a once only exhibitor (a fact found out after the event) at a computer exhibition, then you will begin to understand the need for this reminder.

PLEASE, know exactly what you wish to purchase, and buy from known, reputable, large, regular advertisers, suppliers; but BEWARE of the risk such purchases may incur.

Frank Webster

ISIT TO WATNALL WEATHER STATION

A visit has been arranged to the Nottingham Weather Station at Watnall. This will take place on Wednesday 21 August, and will depart from outside the Park Baths at 6:30 pm. The size of the party will be limited to 20, so we would appreciate it if you could let any member of the committee know before hand if you wish to come. We will go in private cars, and we would like volunteers to take other members in their cars. The club will re-imburse the cost of petrol.

COMPETITION

A prize will be given for the best program, written in BASIC, of not more than 50 lines (multi-statement lines are allowed), on the subject of health and/or safety. The closing date is 30 November, and the program may be submitted on tape or disc, and should be accompanied by your name and age.

The program can take any form you like - a game, a quiz, an instruction manual, etc, etc. It can deal with safety in the home, eg the kitchen or the garage, or at work, eg in the factory, the workshop or the office, or safety on the roads, in the playground, in the school, or anywhere else you can think of.

So, let's have lots of entries. Age will be taken into consideration, so just because you're over 16, it doesn't mean you don't have a chance! Entries can be made to any member of the committee at any club meeting up to the end of November, and the more entries we receive, the better the prize will be.

DFS 2.10

The new BBC B+ has, among its other new features, a new DFS. This is similar to the latest release for the BBC B, the 1.20, which is available on the DNFS chip, but with some added commands:

*CLOSE

This closes all sequential files, and all the file data held in the output buffers is copied to disc.

*EX (<dir>)

Displays information about the specified directory in the *INFO format.

*FORM <40/80> (<drive>) (<drive>) ...

At long last, a format command in an Acorn DFS! Both sides of a disc can be formatted, or all four sides if you have dual drives. It will NOT format discs for a 40 track drive if you only have an (unswitchable) 80 track drive.

*FREE (<drive>)

Also at long last, displays the number of files that can be added (the DFS still only allows 31 per surface), and the number of free sectors.

*ROMS (<rom id>)

Produces a list of ROMs and their socket numbers.

*VERIFY (<drive>) (<drive>) ...

Verifies the disc.

Acorn seem to have no plans to release this version for use with a standard BBC computer, but that could possibly come in the future. The added facilities are very welcome, but it's a pity they couldn't have allowed more than 31 files!

It has been recently reported, by the way, that the price of the B+ has been reduced to £449 or £469 (depending on which magazine you read), a reduction of £30 or £50. Hardly enough to help Acorn with its latest financial problems, I fear!

OPEN FORUM - JUNE 19

We had an open forum for our June 19 meeting, with a discussion on a number of topics, including the advantages and disadvantages of various disc operating systems and disc drives, and the value of teletext.

Members with various double density systems felt that their main problem was incompatibility, both amongst themselves and with 'standard' single density systems. It was felt that the Watford DFS was probably the best single density on the market, although if you wish to be certain that all protected software will run, you have to go for the Acorn. The Solidisk DFS looks good on paper, but it is not certain whether all the bugs are out of it yet.

As regards single versus dual drives, opinions seemed to be more divided. Although dual drives are very useful, allowing easy backup, for example, which may be important if you do a lot of word processing, most members who use discs seem to be able to 'make do' with a single drive quite easily.

Teletext was regarded by those members who had it as being of limited use to the private individual. The programs are heavily biased to the education sector, and recently information has been published on items such as the Domesday Project. The volume of this material is such that a disc drive is becoming almost essential. Having said this, some useful utility programs are published from time to time, the most recent being a disc cataloguer.

PUZZLE CORNER

Read the clue and de-code the following sentence:

ODL IPIGO OJ JAPJP FHPI KN A TOIJA PHPOEPL

The Clue:

My first is in JACOB and also in JOSEPH
My second is in BASIC but not in LISP
My third is in REALS but not in REEL
My fourth ONE is in; and also in TWO
My fifth is the FINAL and also the END
The name of the year, you must find, my friend
Along with the divisor and the dividend
Be absolutely sure it sounds like to key you have taken
The letters resulting must be stirred and not shaken.

Frank Webster

FOR SALE

6502 Second Processor, with Hi-BASIC and DFS/Net roms and manual.
Hardly used. £135. Contact S Tindall or phone Rotherham 378848.

Nightingale mdem and Commstar rom package. As new, complete with
manuals and leads for BBC. £100. Contact Neil Odell or phone Sheffield
745027.

32K Solidisk sideways ram board.
Contact John Bramwell.

MCP40 Printer/Plotter with leads. £40. 40 Track disk drive with leads.
£80. Grafpad with lead & software. £70. All O.N.O.
Contact Pete Frith on Sheffield 389165

Penman plotter with leads & Software. £240 O.N.O.
Contact Mike Robinson on Sheffield 342870

COVER

This month's cover was designed by Ian Brown.