

## Research engineer leads the technical team

David Rees, the new Technical Director, describes himself as an engineer and a pragmatist. He would not enlarge on his future with Acorn: "Engineers are trained to keep their mouths shut unless they have something to say, and so I won't talk about my plans and ideas until I've had more time to form an opinion." But he did reveal that he had been Director of Research and Engineering at Fairchild Semiconductors when they were taken over by National Semiconductors at the end of last year. In the re-organisation that followed, the size of his department was dramatically reduced. The offer from Acorn arrived on his desk at just the right moment.

David is looking for a house near Botolphsham (not just because of the swimming pool) with his wife Juliet and 7-year-old son. The family had hoped to live in the centre of Cambridge but were unprepared for the high house prices in the area. "We thought we'd be able to pick up a barracks here for the price of our old home in Reading." Both Reeses are politically



mindful and intend to take an active part in community affairs once they've settled in.

## Family fun, festival fun

For the second year in a row we're sponsoring the fair that kicks the Cambridge Festival off to a flying start. It should cover the whole of Parker's Piece on Saturday 16 July, when the nearby Police and Fire Stations have their open day too. This year's theme is American Connections, and the many stalls and side-shows will be decorated US style.

### Acorn family fun day at the festival

We are erecting a huge marquee opposite Parkside Swimming Pool exclusively for the use of Acorn staff and friends. Take your family for a rest, refreshment and relaxation any time from 1 pm-5 pm and again from 7 pm-9.45 pm, the start of the festival fireworks. Invite friends who have helped Acorn in their work - we'd like to extend our welcome to them also. There'll be food and drink with an American flavour - snacks for the chil-

dren in the afternoon, and delicacies to suit the adults' taste in the evening, with drinks from the bar at unbeatable prices. And pick up your Acorn balloons and hats from the stall nearby.

### Opening parade

One of the highlights of the day is the opening parade, sponsored by the Cambridge Evening News. This procession of colourful floats representing businesses and charities, and led by the Mayor of Cambridge, will start from the Fitzwilliam Museum at 1.30 pm and should reach Parker's Piece at 2 o'clock. The Mayor, the Editor of the Cambridge Evening News and our own Harvey Coleman will be judging the competition for the best float. There is a prize of £100 for the best entry, with £60 and £30 for the runners up.

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Acorn   
The choice of experience.

# Dealer days — 'Who cares, wins'.



Our marketing staff must never forget that Acorn's real customers are not the great British public — the schools, families and businesses that use our products — they are instead the dealers and distributors who sell the machines to the end users.

As part of an initiative to build up the strength of the dealer base and their confidence in us as a reliable supplier, we invited all Acorn approved dealers to attend one of the special events held at six sites around the country during May and June. Starting at 4 pm and continuing through the evening, they were designed to:

- introduce Harvey Coleman,
- improve the flow of information from Acorn to the dealers,
- launch the on-site service scheme,
- review and refresh the way in which sales leads are followed up,
- announce the new distribution arrangement,
- celebrate the success of our first quarter sales.

All those who came were given dealer support packs with hints on how best to take a customer through the key Archimedes software packages, demonstrating the full potential of pack and machine simultaneously. We emphasised that we

already help the dealers on their way to sales by sponsoring national advertising campaigns, setting up the SID on-line database, undertaking extensive PR work, providing point-of-sale materials and other display items. But we want all our dealers to strengthen the supply base by offering post-sales service as well as competitive prices. However, the better the back-up we provide for our dealers, the more Acorn machines they'll supply, and this can only be good for all of us.

The social side of the evening was a rare opportunity for dealers and Acorn staff to exchange news and views, gossip, gripes and gratitude. All the venues (large hotels in Cambridge, Windsor, Preston, Derby, Perth and Bristol) provided pleasant surroundings and good meals - Bristol stood out as exceptional. After-dinner entertainment by Steve White and his band (an Archimedes computer with EMR's musical software) held the audience entranced, and most guests stayed talking and drinking until the small hours. Michael Page kept up with the best of them, obviously to calm his nerves after his role as co-pilot on the flight to Dundee.

Both hosts and guests felt the events had been well worthwhile and enjoyable, they had all learned more about each other's problems, prospects and plans. It should be the start of a beautiful relationship!

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We have kindly been lent four trucks to deck out for the event. So we need volunteer teams to stand forward, please. Decide on your favourite good cause, and create the most fabulous, fantastic fabrication to stun the judges with your artistry, industry and inventiveness and carry off the prize. If you'd like to have a go get on the phone to Kristin Willoughby (extension 5349).

## Acorn's name in lights

As usual, the fun-filled day is rounded off by a dazzling firework display on Parker's Piece, mounted by Jack Lang, firework fanatic and Chairman of Perihelion Ltd. Acorn is sponsoring the show again this year. Last year's spectacular ended with the message "Good Night from Acorn" and the Acorn logo composed of thousands of pinpoints of flame. Jack Lang was pleased to hear of Acorn's continued involvement. "Luckily Acorn's green is quite easy to reproduce in fire: it appears when a copper salt burns in an excess of chlorine. If the sponsor's corporate colours were purple or a rich blue, my task would be much more complicated."

## Sales News

### Q1 successes

In the first quarter of 1988 Acorn exceeded its targets for both budget and total revenue; sales are still looking good.

### Two new distributors of Acorn products

We have appointed AB First, the distribution arm of AB European, as distributors on a national scale. AB are suppliers primarily to educational users, complementing the activities of Kelator. A third distributor, the Hugh Symons Group, has also been added to the force. Their subsidiary, Lansdowne UK, has recently been awarded a contract to supply computer equipment to the National Health Service.

### More Archimedes systems for schools, thanks to the DTI

The DTI scheme, announced in February, that provides end-of-year money for

LEAs to spend on packages of computer equipment — in the areas of word processing, languages, art, design and technology, and business — has resulted in orders for nearly 600 of the packs that are based on Acorn equipment. All these packs include an Archimedes system.

### Order, order, order

- Berkshire LEA has ordered 225 Archimedes 310 personal workstations.
- 54 Archimedes 310 colour systems and 54 BBC Master Microcomputers are just part of an order from Hampshire LEA.
- We have secured orders from Olivetti for the RISC based LaserCard amounting to £500,000. This was a result of the very successful launch of the ETV 5000 System (an integrated DTP).

# Snaps and snippets

## A date for your diary

The well tested format of our Christmas party will be repeated again this year. Donations made by revellers at last year's bash raised £250 for the Special Care Baby Unit at Addenbrookes and £250 for the Cambridge Children's Hospice. Keep the evening of Friday 16 December free, and start planning your outrageous party outfit now!

## Ian, Adieu

Company Secretary Ian Tibbs took just one day to tidy his desk and pack up his pens after singing his swansong at the 1988 Annual General Meeting. After nearly five years with Acorn (he joined the company on 5 August 1983), Ian can no longer resist the lure of working in the City, although he likes Cambridge well enough to go on living here.

## Don't believe everything you read in the papers . . .

On 7 April a printing error in Computer Weekly stated that Olivetti UK plans to hire 200 staff from Acorn. Before you open the post with shaking hands, waiting to see whether your name is on the list, please note that this sentence should have read ". . . there are no plans to hire staff from Olivetti-controlled Acorn." This was confirmed by an apology in Computer Weekly on 14 April.

## Charity begins at home

A 512 Upgrade Board and a Universal Second Processor have been given to

Co-operation for Development (CD), a registered charity which sends funds from the EEC to developing countries so that they can set up vocational training projects. On the strength of their own experience with the equipment CD will recommend that a similar system is installed in a school in Grenada in the Eastern Caribbean. The school, which is equipped with three Master 128s, must educate the students to use the PCs that are found in the businesses they will eventually work in. The 512 Upgrade Board is the ideal stepping stone with an added advantage: it can be carried into the country in a suitcase, unlike a full-blown PC.

## Archimedes computer graphics are ahead of the game

Four Square, a new series of sixteen daytime quiz shows on BBC1, depends on graphics generated by an Archimedes System with a plug-in Genlock card. The game's two contestants try to gain control of four squares on a 36-square grid by giving the right answer to the general knowledge question associated with each square; the winner of a bout can collect more points by negotiating a maze against the clock. Both the grid and the maze were produced and co-ordinated on an Archimedes system in the BBC's Pebble Mill studio.

# Lansdowne sells Acorn equipment to the NHS

Lansdowne UK, a well established Acorn dealer, has recently been appointed as one of two companies with a contract to supply Acorn equipment to the National Health Service. Lansdowne UK's Managing Director, John Jones, commented, "We are delighted to have got the NHS contract. We see a tremendous future for the Archimedes range of computers in the NHS, where its power as a number-cruncher, its graphics capability and its cost-effectiveness will be greatly appreciated."

Lansdowne specialises in the specific marketplaces of health care, education and general business computing, and has always seen itself as selling a service as well as a product. Whenever they install a computer system, they provide one day's training free of charge and then offer a telephone 'hot-line' support service to help any of their end users who have subsequent difficulties with the installation. The hot-lines are staffed by qualified engineers who can answer technical questions and should provide fast solutions to the caller's problem. Lansdowne will also put together additional training packages together to suit a user's needs at any level of computer literacy.

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# Hi-Tech heightens Acorn's profile

At the beginning of February Acorn appointed Hi-Tech Public Relations as its new PR agency. The Archimedes personal workstations should appeal to a broader range of customers than the Master Series computers, so Hi-Tech's most important task is to make the Acorn and Archimedes names well known outside education – in, for example, the business and medical markets.

Two people at Hi-Tech have special responsibility for Acorn's image. Senior Account Executive Peter Rennison controls the long term plans, while Jane King, the Account Executive, manages the day-to-day promotional work. This involves organising local and national events and tempting the media to give them wider coverage on TV, radio and in the papers; writing news releases on

Acorn's new products and successes; fostering relationships with the journalists who might use her copy; and thinking up new ways of making Acorn's name glow. Deciding who should receive each news release is a crucial part of Jane's work – if, say, she sends a flood of stories on education to an electronics journal they'll throw her next batch of releases straight in the bin, which won't help at all.

Jane posts around fifty copies of each release. Some go to news editors of titles ranging from specialist electronics magazines to the tabloid newspapers, according to the story that is being promoted. Others are sent to Acorn dealers and Local Education Authority advisers. She may rewrite a release, presenting the story from a different angle so it is relevant to a wider audience.

But it is no good sending out release after release if they are all ignored. A large press-cutting bureau monitors the number of times each news item generates press coverage for Acorn, and editors are canvassed to discover just what type of information they are looking for.

Hi-Tech specialises, as its name suggests, in promoting the products and corporate image of clients from the worlds of electronics, computers and automation: their other clients include Ardent Computers, General Automation, Intergraph and Schenck, one of Europe's largest engineering companies.

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## Terry and Bob go the distance

On 17 April Terry Owen (Technical Department) and Bob Moore (Purchasing) completed the 26 miles and 385 yards of the 1988 London Marathon and raised £900 for the Multiple Sclerosis Society. Acorn matched the money Bob and Terry collected from their sponsors. The photo shows the two marathon men, in newly washed Acorn sweatshirts, receiving Acorn's contribution from Harvey Coleman.

Bob is an old hand at marathons, having run the London Marathon in 1985 and travelled to Belgium in 1986 to complete the Brussels Marathon in under four hours; he now prefers the half-marathon distance. He and his large black retriever train together every evening; this dog must be the fittest in the county!

Terry, who had never before run more than 20 miles, was elated by his achievement; the more so because a few weeks before the race a catalogue of disasters made success seem an impossibility. In early February he tore a muscle in his calf and had to stop training for three weeks

while he visited the physiotherapist. Then the festering case of athlete's foot between his left toes went septic, and he could do no more than hobble round the room – athletics were out! A visit to the doctor for some antibiotics should have cleared the infection, but an unsuspected allergy to penicillin brought him out in angry red blotches from bald top to septic toe. Terry had to take another two weeks out of this crucial training period. He was just getting his wasted muscles back into shape, upping the distance he ran every day, when, with only three weeks to go, he was laid low by a throat virus. So Terry was almost as pleased to have started the Marathon as he was to finish it. He was so exhausted by his exertions that, once he had collected his medal and eaten his Mars bar, he wrapped himself up in three of the silver space blankets and slept on the grass by the Embankment until his wife eventually discovered him.

Well done, marathon men!



## New names — new faces

Since the last issue of the Newsletter we welcome the following people to Acorn:

| Name               | Job Title               | Department               |
|--------------------|-------------------------|--------------------------|
| Stephen Hunt       | Programmer              | Unix Graphics            |
| Ray Pinchard       | Field Sales Manager     | UK Sales                 |
| David Rees         | Technical Director      | Technical                |
| John Redford       | Snr Software Engineer   | Special Projects Group   |
| David Slight       | Group Product Manager   | Unix Workstations        |
| Kristin Willoughby | Sandwich Student        | Corporate Communications |
| Fiona Roberts      | Sandwich Student        | Financial Accounting     |
| Joanne Welsh       | Administrator           | External Peripherals     |
| Stephen Le Pla     | Technical Author        | Technical Publications   |
| Alison Buck        | Departmental Secretary  | Finance                  |
| Philip Leslie      | Stock Ledger Controller | Financial Accounting     |
| Owain Griffiths    | Vacational Student      | Technical Publications   |
| Andrew Sloss       | Vacational Student      | Software Q/A             |

## Technical wizardry

After seven years with Acorn, Jim Merriman, one of the few survivors of the team that built the first BBC Micro, has been appointed Chief Operating Officer in charge of the whole of the technical and manufacturing group. He is excited by this development. "This new responsibility allows me to concentrate my years of experience inside Acorn in an area where I can contribute most to the group." His new role involves constant liaison with colleagues at Olivetti, and a lot of to-ing and fro-ing between Cambridge and Italy.

The Manufacturing Group, with its concern for quality control, remains closely under Jim's care. Every computer that leaves the manufacturing site is quality audited to the British Standard level; an auditor from the BBC works permanently in our warehouse, independently checking the contents of each order. Our suppliers also have to show that they produce quality products: in 1987 Xerox won the British Quality Award, and this was taken into account when we decided to use their components.

The Technical Group is headed up by David Rees (featured on front page). The Technical Division is responsible for designing and developing the products that will secure Acorn's profitability in the future. It is extremely important that nothing interrupts the flow that takes an idea from conception to finished product by a set date, and produces a piece of equipment that meets its original specifications.

The Special Project Group is Jim's latest responsibility. This small group will develop versions of Acorn's mainstream products in response to strong demand, and a firm order. A typical example of their products is the LaserCard based on RISC technology (see page 2 on 'Sales news'). This slots into a PC and interfaces with a dumb laserprinter. The SPG exists outside the Technical Division so that its work does not interfere with the main business of getting out the new products.

## Debbie says "I do"

Debbie Holliday won't be at the festival fair – she has a date she can't break on 16 July. She'll be getting married in the delightful setting of Christ's College Chapel, surrounded by a bevy of five bridesmaids. She met her husband-to-be, butler Paul Davis, at a local disco. "It wasn't very romantic" she says, but romance obviously blossomed in the two years that followed. Have a lovely wedding, Debbie, and don't forget to show us all the photos of your special day.

