

## Presenting good results is easy



Probably the most challenging presentations that I have to make as Managing Director are those to the most senior levels of management within Olivetti, our major shareholder. A short while ago I had to go to Ivrea to let Carlo de Benedetti and Vittorio Cassoni, respectively Chairman and Chief Executive Officer of the group, know how Acorn had performed in the early part of the year and what our plans are for the next 12 months.

Well, thanks to your efforts, the message that I took was a very positive one. Your enthusiasm and effort, coupled with the decisions taken by the directors late last year, meant that I was able to report prospects of a very satisfactory level of profitability for the first six months of the year.

People say that money talks. It certainly does in presentations like that. The fact that our trading position is so healthy meant that our plans for the future got a decent hearing. I came away feeling very encouraged by the level of support that Olivetti, at the very highest levels, is ready and willing to offer us.

Both men were pleased to hear how the Archimedes range is being received in our traditional markets as well as the response that it's getting in new markets. They also thought that our new products, based around the ARM chipset and the UNIX operating system, held out exciting opportunities for Acorn. I do as well, and I hope – no, I'm sure – that our work together over the next six months will allow me to present additional successes to Ivrea.

## The Acorn photo album is nearly complete

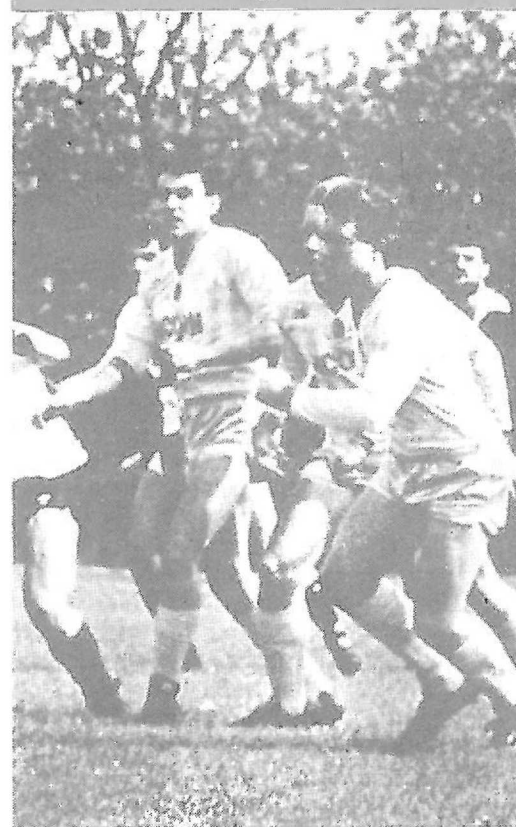
A big thank you to all staff members who braved the bright lights and had their photograph taken for Corporate Communications. Keith Waterton, the photographer from Michael Manni, found the six sessions a pleasant change from the hardware he is accustomed to capturing on film. Since his brief was to show the head and shoulders of his subjects only, he could avoid the curious lower garments worn by some members of staff, but the same tie has appeared in at least a dozen pictures and a rather well-cut jacket was passed around by the directors.

Keith still has a few more staff members to snap, the salesmen in particular being difficult to pin down. Steve White was rounded up to stand in front of a white wall and smile when he took an Archimedes in to



the studio to be photographed; others will have their portraits taken at pre-arranged times.

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New names, new faces

Acorn  
The choice of experience.

# The ordeals of Egyptian orders

When Terry Shurwood flew to Cairo to clinch a deal with the Egyptian Education Department, he little guessed how the trip would send him running back home in agony. The object of the expedition was to conduct the final negotiations and then sign a contract for Acorn to supply 660 Master Compacts for evaluation in Egyptian schools. This shipment may be just the beginning – the French computer manufacturer Leanord is supplying an equivalent amount of equipment in a matching pilot scheme. When the two systems have been piloted, the Egyptian Department of Education will ask either Acorn or Leanord to supply enough equipment to meet the needs of the whole country.

To celebrate the conclusion of negotiations and the signing of the contract, the Chair-

man of Benha General Hassan, Terry, Acorn's agent in Cairo Hani el Sharkawi, Claude Stach of Leanord and the French company's agent all went to an exotic dinner in the best restaurant in Cairo. They ate the speciality of the house – a memorable concoction based on fish. Terry didn't notice anything amiss until he was sitting it out in Rome airport during a six-hour delay, but then he really began to feel terrible.

He arrived in England in a feeble state and collapsed into bed with violent food poisoning. Three days later he rather shakily emerged, naturally hoping that Acorn's equipment is preferred to Leanord's, but wishing that the next contract can be celebrated in Cambridge.

## Jamie is the first winner of the Comment Award

Jamie Urquhart's idea for increasing the perception of the Archimedes range by 'encouraging dealers to demonstrate complete packages' has won him a long weekend for two by the sea. He and his wife, a teacher, are planning to spend it on the south coast during the school holidays – if Jamie can get the time off himself!

The Comments scheme was introduced to open channels of communication to and from the Board. Anyone can write down their suggestions and comments on one of the forms, and all will be responded to by a director.

In the early days of the scheme the Board were surprised to find that many of the suggestions reinforced ideas that were already under consideration, highlighting the disturbing fact that it was not always clear to the staff what was going on in the firm. As a result, there has been a determined effort to improve communication both to and from management. Its success is obvious: the number of comment forms which duplicate ideas has dropped.

Please continue to use this direct line to the directors. Send your ideas (on a Comment form) to Chris Seaman, who will pass them on to the Board Member concerned. Keep them rolling in – you may be the next winner of the Comment Award.

## Bowled out by finance

On 14 June fanatics from the Finance Division descended on Peterborough's bowling alley for a four-team knockout match – and the balls had to stay on the ground. At the end of the evening, after a hard-fought match, it seemed that Marion Sammons-King's team had won, but she had brought her creative accounting skills into play and persuaded the bowling alley's scorer to change the figures shown on the monitor (lets hope she doesn't do the same with the books). Her team was disqualified, revealing Pauline Bethell's team as the true victors.



Acorn bowlers anxiously watch the scoreboard to see who's going to buy the next round of drinks.



**Mystery picture:** Who's the demon bowler? **Clue:** The trousers are NOT part of a Securicor uniform.

## Acorn's new Chairman... Elserino Piol



Elserino Piol, Olivetti's Executive Vice-president for Strategy and Development, has been elected Chairman of Acorn Computers. An executive vice-president in Olivetti since 1984 and a member of Acorn's Board of Directors since March 1985, his breadth of management, understanding of the IT business and experience of defining long-term strategies will prove extremely valuable to the company.

## A bulls eye on Target One

It took the directors a very long time to pick the winners of the 1988 Target One award because so many people have worked so hard to make the company achieve its first quarter targets.

After long deliberations they selected **John O'Neill** and **Roger Cranville**, in the Marketing Department, who, according to Ian Laurence, 'organised an incredible number of promotional events and publications in a marvellously short time', and the **Procurement Department**, headed by Barbara Cole, which managed to bring in an extra 2,400 Master computers over just four weeks to meet an unexpected rush of orders.

The eleven members of the Procurement Department are spending their prize money on a trip to London to see the hit musical *Cats*, with a stop-off for a meal on the way back. With their organisational ability, the outing should go like clockwork and delight all concerned.

# News for the world: from our news releases

## Half-million pound order for Acorn laser card

The laser card, which lets an ordinary desk-top PC drive a dumb laser printer, is being incorporated into Olivetti's ETV range, and the first order has already been delivered. Parent Olivetti should not be the only taker – Jim Merriman and friends are already discussing the product with other potential purchasers.

## Full IEEE 488 control for Archimedes computers

Intelligent Interfaces, new IEEE 488 interface expansion card for the Archimedes 400 Series machines lets the computer run complex control and monitoring systems.

## Acorn supports young oaks

Ian Pumfrey, aged 10, won the Acorn Computers 'Find a Slogan' competition for schoolchildren in the Colchester area. His winning words 'A little Acorn today a great oak tomorrow' – won him a cheque

for £50, presented during school assembly on 15 July by Peter Howes.

## How much longer will we wait for our flight?

As the busy holiday season gets underway and delayed flights cause chaos and confusion, passengers flying from Norwich Airport can view up-to-the-minute travel information on an automated timetable system run by a Master 128. Similar low-cost systems have been installed at several British Rail stations.

## Nurses learn from their Masters

Teachers of nurses and midwives will be trained in IT using Acorn Master 128s in a 3-year computer-assisted learning project requiring around £180,000 of computing equipment. The contract to supply the equipment during the first year of the project was won by two Acorn dealers: Simnetts of Kingston-upon-Thames and 3SL of Cheshire.

## Get the facts right for Micronet

Ray Potheary from Purley, one of the 1224 entrants for Micronet's Log-on competition, has won first prize of an Archimedes 310 system. Ray gave correct answers to five technical questions on the Archimedes computer which appeared in Micronet's members magazine. He received his prize from Harvey Coleman and John Tomany, MD of the Telemap Group, in the Acorn Training Centre on 28 June.

## Archimedes rewards safety in the home

An Archimedes computer featured as the top prize in a home safety competition for Schools organised by North Cornwall District Council as part of their drive to promote safety in the home. The system was presented to pupils from Wadebridge Junior Girls and Infants School by Craig Rich, the local BBC weatherman, at the Royal Cornwall Show.

## Sales News

### It's all going according to plan

Acorn has achieved its sales targets for the first half-year of 1988. Congratulations to the sales force, all those working in the warehouse, manufacturing, order processing . . . in fact, the whole team.

### Sales Manager splashes out

Sam Wauchope, shouldering his new responsibilities as Commercial Director, held a sales meeting for the entire sales team and other relevant work colleagues, at Down Hall on 19 July. After applauding their performance over the first six months of the year, he led an open discussion on opportunities and strategies for the next six months.

This was followed by a dinner and a questions and answers session with the Directors. The finale of the evening was a fully clothed swim by departing sales manager Ian Goodall (assisted by his friends!) followed by an unplanned back pike and flick from Marion Sammons-King.

### Computers re-train refugees

Lindis International has won a tender for 60 microcomputers put out by the UN High Commission for Refugees. The 60 Archimedes 310M systems, all with colour monitors, are already on their way to Limasol, where they will be used in the re-education and training program for

refugees in North Cyprus. Lindis are also quoting prices for standard business software packages, and hope to persuade the Commission to take some of the outstanding packages that exploit the Archimedes' speed and power.

### Cambridgeshire school-children work with Archimedes

Brian Everett, Business Manager for Cambridgeshire Technology Centre, handed a cheque for almost £300,000 to Ian Laurence in payment for 330 Archimedes 310 systems which will be installed in schools around the county.

### Around the counties

- Hampshire Education Authority has ordered 396 networked Archimedes systems, both 310s and 310Ms.
- Nottinghamshire Education Authority has tendered for 300 Archimedes systems and 400 Master computers. One hundred of each have been supplied so far.
- ME Electronics has supplied 280 Master computers to Dudley LEA.
- West Glamorgan Education Authority has purchased 27 Archimedes 310s from dealers Bucon.

## The festive score: balloons 3000, fireworks 0

For the first time in 14 years the Cambridge Festival fireworks had to be postponed because of bad weather. A prolonged downpour swamped Parker's Piece on the opening evening and although jazz enthusiasts cheerfully listened to the bands under their umbrellas, the firework display would have been no more than a fizzle.

The weather stayed fair earlier in the day, however, and the annual Carnival procession got the afternoon off to a grand start. Jim Merriman was on hand to judge the best float and open the Festival Fair. The theme 'American Connections' brought cowboy shows, square dancing, the USAAF Police Dog Display, American foods and many other delights from across the Atlantic.

Acorn's hospitality marquee provided a haven of quiet among the crowds, stalls and bands, dispensing sandwiches and



drinks to staff, their families and guests. The major obstacle was getting to the tent – the crush of people at the entrance clamouring for Acorn's white gas-filled balloons did not let up for the whole afternoon.

The damp evening session was enlivened by beer at 50p a pint, a disco featuring frustrated Red Coat Jill Osler leading a gang of children in the funky chicken, and glimpses of the barbecue chef rushing in out of the rain with plates of sizzling food.

## They're football crazy-and there should be more like them



Quality engineer Barry Carter has been trying for the last nine months to instill some quality and consistency into the varied volunteers that make up the redoubtable Acorn Computers football team. His task as player-manager of this rising club is made easier by the level of enthusiasm and commitment displayed by the team members, on the pitch as well as in the pub after a game.

The ACFC was formally launched after Barry presented the Personnel Department with an analysis of the costs and benefits of an in-house football club. Ken Parnis readily agreed to supply the team with kit and contribute to the hire of pitches, the laundry bill, transport costs, and general running expenses. The Acorn Computer Football Club was off the ground!

Of the fifteen games played last season, some were against Acorn sub-contractors, others were tussles with local teams. The software house Loadplan enjoyed their outing so much they challenged Acorn to a return match, while Stanley Precision, makers of the case for Archimedes, held the home team to a 2-2 draw. We just

Kristin Willoughby, who, with Michael Page, put an enormous amount of work into organising Acorn's presence, was delighted with the day's events.

'Around three hundred people visited the marquee during the fair, and there were nearly as many in the evening. It was certainly appreciated by the staff.'

hope the computer case is as tough as their game.

There are also regular matches between Newmarket Road and Fulbourn Road, with players from Coral Park sportingly joining the weaker side. (The balance of the sides has been upset by the February reorganisation. Gill Allan will be formally requested to consider the needs of the football team more carefully next time she moves the departments around.)

The culmination of the 1987/88 season was the team's outstanding performance in the Hunter Fen Invitational Cup, sponsored by Country Boy Ice Cream. They thrashed the favourites Longstowe Reserves by an impressive 3-0, but fell to the White Horse Pub in the final.

In spite of the team's proven success, it does need more players. Holidays, weddings and family outings all help to stretch the reserves to breaking point. Strongest in midfield, there is space on the pitch for another good striker and some more good defenders. There is no age limit – current players are in the 18-45 range and getting older daily – and no test of skill. The only requirements are that you enjoy a good game on a Sunday morning, and are prepared to do your bit on the social side in the pub afterwards.

If you are interested in joining (or supporting) this up-and-coming team, please contact Barry Carter on extension 547.

## Acorn Good Morning- Thank You. Yours will be the next call through.



Ace receptionist, Wendy 'the Oracle' Bradford, has left after four years with Acorn to work for David Reed Homes, builders of 'prestigious dwellings', including Harvey Coleman's new house. They are nearer to her home in Shelford and so will be more convenient to work for. Wendy claims she will be fitter after the move since she'll cycle the few hundred yards to the office every day on her racing bike, except when it's cold or wet, of course.

In her time at Acorn she has dealt with millions of calls, a good few of them for Radio Cambridgeshire. One old lady kept shouting 'I know who it is – its David Bowie', pleased as punch that for once she could recognise the mystery voice. She was very upset when Wendy explained that the radio station's calls sometimes came through to Acorn by mistake; otherwise she must have won the quiz.

The only celebrities Wendy encountered while working at Fulbourn Road were Shirley Williams, who wanted directions to the ladies loo, and Hermann Hauser, who knew his way about already. However, she has had to redirect enquirers who have drifted in from Fulbourn Hospital. One in particular made a habit of asking for a fictitious employee and could be both persistent and difficult to deal with.

But on the whole, Wendy says, she has spent a happy time on the Acorn switchboard. 'What I really like doing best is talking, so this is my ideal job. I'm older than most of the directors here, so they have always treated me with respect. I'll miss the whole bunch terribly, but with Joanne working here full-time, and my other daughter coming in as a temp, I'll keep up with the gossip and won't lose touch.'

## New names, new faces

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

Name	Job Title	Department
Peter Harrod	Senior Software Engineer	AR&D
Sandra Brooks	General Ledger Controller	Financial Accounting
Julie Dalleywater	Sales Secretary	International
Eileen Prangley	Receptionist (Fulbourn Road)	Facilities