

Issue 146  
6th April 2004

ISLE OF WIGHT PC USER  
GROUP



# HOT KEY

Spring Edition 2004



## In This Issue

## Pages

Future Meetings	2
Committee Members	3
Puzzle Corner	4 & 5
E-Mail Discussion Group	6
Introduction to Spreadsheets	7, 8, 9
Cover Disk	10
The Chairman's Bit	11
Internet Connection for Meetings (Bluetooth)	12,13 & 14
More from the E-mail discussion group	15
Members Notice Board	16

# FUTURE MEETINGS

3rd Mar	Introduction to Spreadsheets	David Broughton
17th Mar	Visit to IOW Observatory at Winford	
7th April	Love Russia and IT Management	Alex Cooke
5th May	Easy Office	Buzz?
2nd June	New Technology	Dennis Parkes
7th Jul	Births, Marriages & Deaths Project	David Broughton
18th Aug	Barbecue at Bob's place	



**Membership is £12 per annum**

**Visitors are welcome.**

A charge of £1 is made per meeting which includes tea or coffee during the break.

**The Isle of Wight PC User Group**

Welcomes all owners and users of IBM Compatible Personal Computers. It is a group which seeks to exchange ideas and new information. Our meetings are on the first Wednesday of each month at **The Riverside Centre, Newport.**  
**At 7.30 - 9.30 pm.**

If you would like to know more about us, either come along to one of our meetings or contact one of our Committee Members listed on page 3.

**Club's Website:-**  
<http://www.iwpcug.org/>

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 \* We also have an e-group discussion area :- \*  
 \* Yahoo iwpcusers: [iwpcusers@yahoogroups.com](mailto:iwpcusers@yahoogroups.com) \*  
 \* \*  
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ISLE OF WIGHT PC USER GROUP  
COMMITTEE MEMBERS



**Honorary President:** Sir Norman Echlin

**Chairman:** David Broughton

**Vice Chairman:** David Groom

**Treasurer:** Bob Groom

**Secretary:** **Vacant**

**Acting Secretary:** David Groom

**Membership Secretary:** Ray Boote

**Hot Key Editor:** **Vacant**

**Acting Editor** Ray Boote

**Committee Member:** Dennis Linzmaier

~~**Committee Member:** Cliff Maidment~~

**Committee Member:** **Vacant**

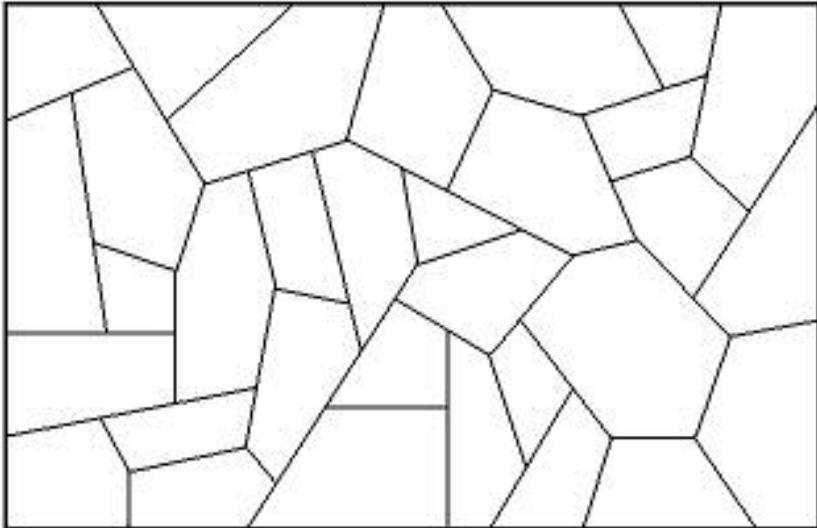
**Disability Resources Co-ordinator:** Roger Skidmore

# PRIZE PUZZLE CORNER

**April 2004**

**By David Broughton**

**PRIZE PUZZLE FOR APRIL 2004 -- ELEVEN SEPARATED AREAS**



Can you select eleven areas from the above diagram such that none have adjacent areas with any other? If so, please send me a copy of your diagram.

You can make several copies to work on by downloading the small .GIF file from the club's web site at [www.iwpcug.org/davidbro/](http://www.iwpcug.org/davidbro/)

## ANSWER TO THE BULL'S EYE PROBLEM

To get even chances in the game, Ben must be able to get a bull's eye on his first throw such that he has a probability the same as Bill's on his first go, which is a probability of 10% after Bill has thrown and missed. Bill misses on his first throw with probability 90%. So Ben's probability multiplied by 90% must equal 10%; in other words, Ben must be able to get a Bull's eye once every 9 throws. That is the answer. If there were three or more players where each player was to have an equal chance of winning, subsequent players would have to be able to hit a bull's eye once every  $11-n$  throws where  $n$  is the number of players, for  $n < 11$ . Where  $n = 10$ , therefore, the last player must get a bull's eye every time without fail!

No one got the right answer. John Stafford did an excellent mathematical analysis which added up the sequence of probabilities to infinity to prove the result but mixed up who went first so got the wrong answer of 1 in 11. John Bownas did a Monte-Carlo simulation (using a random number generator and applying statistical analysis on the results) but as a consequence only got the approximate answer of 11 in 100 which was almost right.

John Stafford proved that the average length of a game was 5 throws each.

Many thanks for your efforts.

David Broughton.

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At a previous meeting, I can't remember which one Dennis Linzmaier introduced us to a new gadget on the market. The USB 2.0 IDE Adapter, this enables you to connect an additional hard drive to your computer via a USB port. I was unable to find one on the island but I managed to purchase one for £25.00 on a recent visit to London. It came with a Power Adapter, Ultra DMA 33 cable, driver and small user manual. This is a very useful tool for anybody and easy to use. We would be pleased to hear about any new items which members have purchased with a little review for inclusion in the Journal.

ED

# E-mail discussion Group

Compiled by Ray Boote

Items from the IWPCUP E-mail discussion group recently:-

**Jerry Tepper** raised the question, is it best to leave your computer switched on all the time as frequent loading causes wear on the hard disc or just switch it on and off as you require to use it. Jerry's practice is to switch it on in the morning if required and after use just switch off the monitor if he is likely to need it that day, then switch the whole thing off before going to bed. He asks what other members do and what is the best practice?

**Roger Brown** responded that it is better to leave the computer on if it is going to be used intermittently during the day. Turning on and off is not good for the components. Roger mentioned that it is important to have your PC well ventilated with fans on your hard drives. Roger's practice is to switch on in the morning and off before going to bed. The monitors switch off after 30 mins if not being used.

**David Broughton** replied - my practice is to switch off if I do not intend to use it within the next hour. David thinks that the energy saving and reducing wear to the rotating bits inside more important.

I seem to remember Denny saying something about this subject during one of his talks, I wonder what the practice is in IOW Council Offices. I must say I agree with David but I'm no authority.

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**Maureen Whitaker** has recently acquired a PC running XP and was asking which anti-virus package would members recommend.

**David Groom** says Norton AntiVirus 2004 is the PCPro recommended anti-virus software. It was reviewed in the January edition of the magazine, but the review didn't say why it was preferred over other products.

**John Atkin** found McAfee less than user friendly and settled on Norton's, which is easier to set up and maintain.

**Rosemary West** finds AVG anti-virus very effective and free.

**Jerry Tepper** agrees with John's opinion about McAfee not being user friendly and like Rosemary has settled for AVG.

**Gwynn White** provided some useful advice regarding the installation of Norton Internet Security software.

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That's just a sample of the items appearing on the discussion groups site. There are some really knowledgeable people out there who can help you with your problems. If you want to join the group contact **David Broughton**.

# An Introduction to Spreadsheets

Talk by

David Broughton on 3rd March 2004

This was the title of a talk and demonstration given by David Broughton on 3rd March 2004. A spreadsheet is made up of cells referenced with a letter and number into which many different kinds of data can be stored and manipulated. It differs from a database by being more flexible in the use of rows and columns. A database generally contains a number of similar records with each item of data referred to by a field name. Keeping information this way is suitable when you have many items of data all structured the same way such as a list of club members. A spreadsheet, on the other hand, is more suitable when the data is more fragmented and operations are to be made on the different parts. The typical application is keeping accounts.

A simple bank account was shown containing columns of date transaction, cheque number, credit, debit and balance, showing how the balance is computed. But it was pointed out that this simple approach to keeping tabs on a personal bank account has many drawbacks. To be really useful the spreadsheet needs to be able to handle future debits and credits, and not just when you remember to include them. The spreadsheet should be able to help you plan your money transactions. To do this it needs to be fed future payment and credits and to include them in the balance only when appropriate. David's personal bank account was shown and in this case debits were included up to 7 days ahead but credits were not included until 3 days after the current date. In this way, the spreadsheet is doing real service keeping one out of expensive overdrafts.

The next example shown was how to keep moving averages and the example case was car mileage. By recording the car's odometer reading on the first day of each month, the spreadsheet can keep a year's moving average, which is an average over the previous 12 months every month. To start this off, of course, you need 12 months of readings. A yearly moving average is suitable in this case because motoring tends to be seasonal. What one can put into a spreadsheet cell was explained at the start of the talk: text, numbers, dates, times and formulas containing references to other cells; for example, "D12". It was explained that dates and times in the Works and Excel spreadsheets are actually just numbers formatted in a specific way. The units are days so that the difference between dates and times will be in units of days. But only dates in the 20th and 21st centuries provided for in this way.

There are many ways each kind of cell entry can be formatted and the cell sizes can be altered to suit the data. Text can be formatted almost as well as it can

be in a word processor, with different fonts and colours plus cell shading and borders. A well-designed spreadsheet can be made to look quite professional. Some of the important features of a spreadsheet were demonstrated. Copying from one cell to adjacent cells down or to the right was made very easy with the appropriate tools on the tool bar. When a cell refers to other cells in this copying process, the copies that are made reflect the relative position of the cell. This enables tables to be constructed in a very easy way. However, occasionally one needs to refer to a specific cell with an absolute reference and one must then use the dollar character; for example,  $\$D\$12$  for D12 as an absolute reference. Another useful feature is to set up a series of numbers in an arithmetic series and for this there is a tool that allows you to specify the interval between successive terms.

In a Mortgage demonstration, it was shown how one can find what repayment is appropriate to reduce the outstanding balance with various regular repayments at various interest rates. Although this can be done on a trial and error basis, there is a function called PMT that allows one to calculate the repayment directly. Although the demonstration showed a yearly repayment for simplicity (over a period of ten years) in practice one would pay monthly and in this case it was necessary not to be bamboozled into thinking that the monthly interest is one twelfth the yearly interest rate. You would be paying back too much that way as your payments start to reduce the balance outstanding within the year, not at the year end.

A demonstration to compute the area of a triangle from three sides showed how one can refer to cells by means of a name rather than a letter and number, making formulas look more like the mathematics of algebra. Also it was shown how to provide a formula in a cell as text and then to use this by 'copy & paste' into another cell as a formula for the spreadsheet to operate on.

The mathematics of chaos was used to demonstrate how to fill a rectangular array of a number sequence computed by a recurrence relation and how the spreadsheet will do these hundreds of computations almost instantly every time a cell is changed. An interesting question was asked at this point regarding the nature of the chaotic numbers produced and this enabled David to show how one can view a series of numbers as a graph, plotted very quickly and accurately by the spreadsheet.

Sorting is an important function and in a spreadsheet there are two kinds: one like you get in a database where all the data follows the sorted field; the second kind is where only the highlighted data is sorted. If one fills a column of cells with random numbers (one of the provided functions will do this) and a random choice is to be made from a list of people, a spreadsheet can be made to do this

job elegantly by sorting the random numbers into order (with the names) and choosing the person at the top of the list. David used Microsoft Excel in this case because it has a macro facility where a number of operations can be assigned to one key. In future, the club's puzzle competition winner will be chosen this way.

Various other demonstrations were shown to make the point that a spreadsheet can be used in many more applications than one might at first think. For example, equation solving; optimisations; conversion of units; probability problems. David had many more applications to show than there was time for but he hoped the audience was suitably convinced of the versatility of spreadsheets.

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## HOW TO JOIN THE E-GROUP

Send an e-mail to: **iwpcusers-  
subscribe@yahoo.com**

All members are urged to join this e-group (which costs nothing and is private to club members) in order to keep in touch with events and join in discussions. You can also keep in touch by regularly visiting

## **Note from Roger Skidmore about his offering of a Spring PCUG Cover Disk**

I use a variety of software in my computing activities which has been collected from cover disks, scouring the Internet, tips from friends and wherever else we learn about available software. Some time ago I went to "sort out" a friend's computer and I was horrified when I found he only had the basic operating system and what had been provided with his purchase. No proprietary file manager, no WinZip, no disk housekeeping utilities, no label programme, no nuffink - it was like being outdoors without any clothes on. I made a second trip having assembled a bag of useful software goodies but still had to go and look at what was in the bag and run the setup files and still found I'd forgotten some.

I know I had a programme for auto-creating HTML tables from database files which would also include HTML links. So I thought that if I assembled a description of my bag of software in a database I could then create an HTML table which could run on a CD and execute the setup files for me. I could then take this round to my friend's and peruse the table and pick which programmes I wanted to install. Neat.

One of the problems of perusing a web site is that it can be slow if you're on line, and you tend to run out of brain cells very quickly and would rather go and watch East Enders. If the web site were captured on CD it would make life easier - none of this dial-up hassle, and it's right there in front of you. David's IWPCUG website is fast in any case, and in addition there is a lot of good stuff on it. The same can be said for my Computability web site (although the HTML code is much less elegant). So just to make life easier for you all, both sites are on the disk.

I have for a long time wanted to produce a "doctor's bag" of computability software and this has now also appeared on this CD. Not all these programmes have been fully tested but they are there, they look promising and they do represent the sort of thing that can make life easier for people with various disabilities. Please try them and report back.

Most of the software on this disk is free; some of it you should pay for and some of it you eventually have to pay for. All of it is worthwhile and none of it is expensive. The winning prize has got to be divided between dBQuikSite and Avery Design Pro (both free), although I'd cry if you took any of the others away from me. Magazine cover disks have to be produced every month; this is a one off so it is the cream.

I used to be in awe of cover disk productions, but with dBQuikSite the whole thing is a breeze. Any volunteers for the next one?

## THE CHAIRMAN'S BIT

We have to thank Ray Boote for this edition of Hot Key. Ray has not volunteered to be the permanent editor as he already has an important and useful job as Membership Secretary. If we can't find a permanent editor it will be necessary to rotate the job of "Temporary Editor" among members. We are only planning to produce the magazine every three months so if anyone would be prepared to do the July edition please send me an email.

Also this month there should be a Cover Disk, ably put together by Roger Skidmore and John ("Buzz") Austin. It contains a lot of useful software, both generally and specifically for those with various disabilities. The virtue of having it on a Cover Disk is that you know it has been vetted to some extent and whilst no guarantees can be given, you should have more confidence in this software than the general run of Internet downloads. Keep it safe -- you never know when you may need one of the programs it contains.

It is only through the Hot Key magazine that I can get to talk to all members. Only half the membership subscribes to the Yahoo e-group where I give a "Chairman's Report" monthly after each Committee Meeting. I also put this on the web site in the News section so I say to all those who are not on the e-group, please consider joining -- it costs nothing and you can keep in touch with other members and share experiences; and if you don't get my monthly reports they are at [www.iwpcug.org](http://www.iwpcug.org).

The club still needs a Secretary and there are vacancies for Committee members. There are many current important issues that need to be dealt with such as Internet Access at meetings (the Riverside Centre seems unable to provide us with a phone line); perhaps a change of venue; and recently there has been a discussion on a possible change of name for the club. We are also making an effort to get the club known more by the distribution of leaflets which members could assist with. We will be placing notices of our meetings in the County Press again this year.

The minutes of general and committee meetings and the club accounts are now on the web site in a "secure" area open to members only by using the password "rosewood". This will be changed after April 2004 to another that will be announced on the e-group. See page 9 for how to join the e-group.

David Broughton.  
Chairman.



By David Groom

## Background

Firstly - What is Bluetooth? Bluetooth is a standard for a small, cheap radio chip to be plugged into computers, printers, mobile phones, etc. It allows wireless connections between any two Bluetooth enabled devices, (for the technically curious it operates in the 2.4 GHz frequency band).

What sort of products currently are Bluetooth enabled? At present it is possible to buy keyboards, mice, some laptops, USB adapters, parallel port print adapters, mobile phones, wireless headsets, all with Bluetooth capability. It is therefore entirely feasible that apart from the power and monitor leads to your computer you could do away with all the other cabling that so often gets tangled round the back of many PCs.

To allow a connection, two devices with Bluetooth wireless technology simply have to come within range of each other. Because Bluetooth technology utilizes a radio-based link, it does not even require a line-of-sight connection in order to communicate, unlike infra-red links. The range over which a connection can be established varies from 10cm, 10m, or 100m depending upon the output power of the device.

## Actual Experience

I wanted to be able to use my mobile phone to connect my computer to the internet.

My computer did not have a Bluetooth connector already, so I purchased a USB Bluetooth adapter for £23.99.

I plugged in the USB adapter and, as with any new device, Windows recognised the new hardware and asked for the software installation disk. Once installed there was a new item in the program menu called "my bluetooth places". Clicking on this item for the first time I was asked to give a name to this device, this allows the computer to be identified to

other Bluetooth devices. That concluded the basic setup which would be needed to allow any other Bluetooth device to connect to my computer.



I already owned a mobile phone which had Bluetooth capabilities. This phone was also GPRS (General Packet Radio System) capable which meant I would get a relatively high speed connection (I believe the theoretical maximum is 57.6kbps) compared with a non-GPRS phone which has a speed of only 9kbps. One further advantage of the GPRS connection is that while you are connected you are still able to make and receive phone calls and text messages.

The next step was to get the computer to search for the phone, right clicking on the Bluetooth icon which was in the system tray I chose the option to 'find Bluetooth devices', after a few seconds the computer found my phone and I was asked which services I wanted to use. Choosing 'dial-up networking' I was asked to put in the phone number to dial - this is available from the phone network operator (in my case Vodafone).

Now I was ready to connect. Again right clicking on the Bluetooth icon this time I chose 'quick connect' and then 'dial up networking'. As this was the first time the phone and computer had tried to communicate with each other they had to go through a simple routine whereby the computer asked me to type in a pin number and then I had to repeat this process on the phone, the devices were then known as "paired". I then had to put in a password and user name for the dial up connection - again these are available from the phone network operator, and then I was connected to the internet.

Subsequently I made a few adjustments to the default settings on both the phone and the computer. On the computer I chose the option to

store the password and user name rather than to prompt me for these each time I tried to connect. On the phone I chose to allow the computer to connect to my phone automatically, the default was that I had to agree to the connection by pressing a key on my phone. Now connecting to the internet simply involves clicking on the Bluetooth icon, choosing 'quick connect', then 'dial up networking' and selecting the phone, everything else is now automatic.

On a GPRS connection you are charged by the amount of data transferred, not by the length of time you are connected. My current Vodafone tariff charges £7.50 per Mb, on Orange you seem to be able to get 3Mb per month for £3.00. Orange estimate that 1Mb is roughly equivalent to 20 web pages.

Further information can be found on the following web sites:

[www.bluetooth.com](http://www.bluetooth.com)

<http://electronics.howstuffworks.com/bluetooth.htm>

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## More from the IWPCUG discussion group

There has been plenty of discussion in the group regarding an item in the Chairman's notes suggesting that the name of the club should be changed. The new name put forward is "**Isle of Wight Computer Club**" Some of the committee were favourably impressed with the idea. The Chairman asked "What do other members think?"

There was no shortage of replies and here are some:-

**Michael Hodge** replied - I disagree "**Isle of Wight Computer Club**" is too similar to Douglas Rankine's "Computer Club" It would cause confusion as many folk belong to both.

**Roger Brown** says that "**Isle of Wight Computer Club**" sounds much better.

**Gwynn White** agrees with Michael and says "if it works, don't fix it. If it ain't working, it would need more than a new name to fix it"

**David Broughton** how about "**Vectis Computer Club**"

**Island Webservices** - Is there any need for change? Why not call it Brian.

**David Broughton** replies "No pressing need, we thought the club needed a new image. The argument was that **User Group** sounded a bit fuddy-duddy"

**Michael Hodge** suggests "**Vectis Computer Group**" and prefers to keep the word "Group" rather than "Club"

**Roger Skidmore** - What people call things on the Island when they can't call them "... Wight" is "...Vectis" So maybe "**Vectis Computer Club**"

**Michael Hodge** - I fear that the initials are inappropriate for "The Wight Information Technology Society"

**Christine Jenkins** - The real issue is not in a name ! It is in the bringing together of two club that were once united. Also the moving away from Riverside with all its problems.

**Maureen Whitaker**- totally agrees with Christine's remarks and the idea of merging the two clubs. We are all pursuing similar objectives and some of us belong to both clubs.

**Bwana** - Supports the two clubs getting together and a move from Riverside as soon as possible. Has anyone approached Dougie yet?

**Ingrid Grice** - Agrees with everything that's been said about re-joining the two clubs and maybe start afresh with a new venue and a new name.

**David Broughton** - Why move away from Riverside, other than a lack of an internet connection I am not aware of any reason for a move.

The discussion goes on, if you are not a member of the e-group and want to take part, see page 9 "**HOW TO JOIN THE E-GROUP**" it's easy.

## MEMBERS NOTICE BOARD

### FOR SALE

Hewlett Packard ScanJet

flatbed A4 scanner,

Type 5100C.

Price negotiable

Phone David Broughton

for details.

### FOR SALE

HP Laser Printer

Type 6L

Make me an offer

All offers considered

Phone David Broughton

Have you anything for sale?

If so, why not use the members

notice board.

It's free.

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