

Issue 211

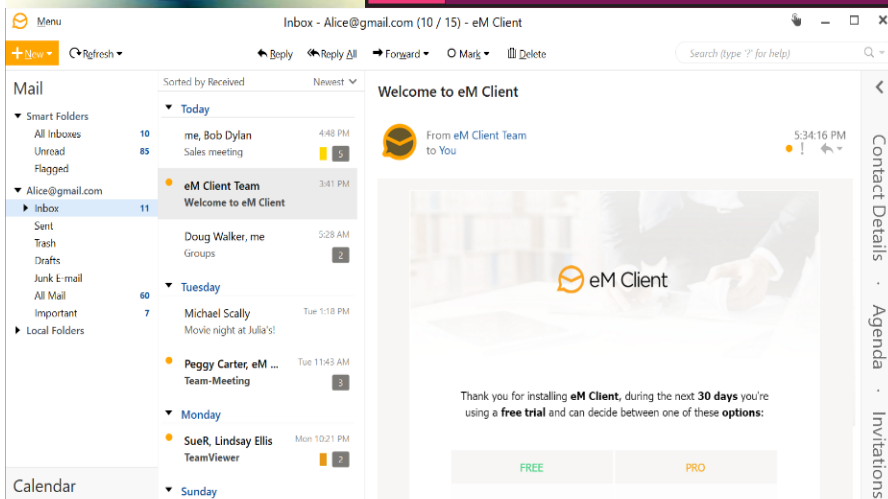
AUTUMN 2020



ISLE OF WIGHT PC USER
GROUP

HOT KEY

OCTOBER 2020



eM Client, an email program which
Roger Skidmore reviews on page 9.

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The Isle of Wight Personal Computer User Group

We welcome anyone who has an interest in computers and related technology and what you can do with them.

We are a group which seeks to exchange ideas and new information.

Membership is £12 per annum

Our meetings are normally held on the first Wednesday of each month from 7.00 to 9.00 pm. Until further notice these will be held online via Zoom.

Visitors are always welcome.

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

The Club web site address is **www.iwpcug.org**

We also have an e-group discussion area on
Yahoo groups: **iwpcusers@yahoo.co.uk**

Details of how to join are on page 4.



FUTURE MEETINGS

<u>Date</u>	<u>Subject</u>	<u>Speaker</u>
7th Oct	Editing wild life video	Mike Hoar
4th Nov	Using Zoom with green screen, etc.	Buzz Austin
2nd Dec	Denny's Christmas Quiz	Denny Linzmaier
6th Jan	Something from Jonathan again	Jonathan Burt
3rd Feb	AGM & Question Time	

ISLE OF WIGHT PC USER GROUP COMMITTEE

Chairman : David Groom

Secretary : Susanne Bone

Treasurer : Mike Hoar

Membership and Database Secretary : Roger Skidmore

Committee Member : Steve Sutters

Treasury Supervisor : Phil Rogers

Note:

Contact details removed prior to publishing on the internet.

Suggestions for new events, topics or speakers for talks are always welcome.

Please contact Steve Sutters, or any committee member, with your ideas. If necessary we may be able to find a speaker for your subject.

Chairman's Report

Hopefully this issue should be with you approximately on time this quarter. It's currently the 4th October and the chairman's report is the last item to be inserted into the magazine before I proof read it and send it to the printers, so I definitely anticipate it being in the post to you by the end of this current week.

We've continued with our meetings via zoom and anticipate doing this for some while.

One consequence of not having physical meetings is that we are not paying hire charges to the Riverside Centre. The committee have made a decision to provisionally waive subscriptions for 2021. Taking into account HotKey production and distribution costs this will lead to an expected loss for the financial year, but there are sufficient funds in our reserves to cover this. Should the situation change and we resume our meetings we will review the situation and may ask members for some form of contribution.

Particular thanks are due to Roger Skidmore, whose contributions fill many pages of this issue. As ever, we welcome articles from anyone on any computing subject, if you want to write an article, but are not sure it's suitable just contact me to discuss it.

David Groom

Joining the Yahoo Group

Send an email to: iwpcusers-subscribe@yahoogroups.com with "join" in the subject line. You will get an email from yahoogroups asking you to confirm your wish to join the group, please follow the instructions in that email.

All members are encouraged to join this group (it's free and private to club members) so you can keep in touch with events and join in with the discussions.

You can also keep in touch by regularly visiting www.iwpcug.org

CLUBTALK by Buzz, Nostalgia From 20 Years Ago!

The following article is based on a talk given by Buzz to the IWPCUG 20 years ago, references to the present tense relate to that time period.

The club's collection of computers started off as an idea from the members several years ago, it was felt that computing was changing so quickly, there was a new machine, operating system or killer application being marketed every month, and things were becoming obsolete before our eyes. As part of the club's "mission" to educate people about computers it seemed to be a good idea to collect the old ones before they ended up as scrap and use them as a resource. Peter Sprack (who was one of the founder members of the club) started to collect one or two machines that came his way. Sadly, Peter died after a long illness and I was asked if I would continue the collecting.

I felt that if the collection was to mean anything it should form the basis of a Museum of Computing or at least the nucleus of a future museum. The fact that the collection only comes out during the annual show is matter for personal regret. The fact that the collection lives in my house is my wife's personal regret, not to say a source of friction. Using some of my natural abilities as a magpie (I do hate to throw things away) I embarked on "collecting computers".

Initially I had only a couple of Speccy's and a few oddball Sinclair add-ons, then Peter Sprack's son donated the machines that he had collected, mostly Commodores. I talked a local builder into buying an IBM clone so that I could have his old ACT Sirius. I acquired an old Apricot286 from work after I proved that it was not working. The prison thought it was an IBM compatible machine because it ran DOS and Windows; the problem is that it wasn't a clone and I was the only one who knew how to get it started.

Getting information on the old machines has proved dif cult, I bought a couple of books at boot sales and a stack of PCW magazines dating from 1979-85, I also try to get hold of the manuals for old computers. This has proved to be a great help in f nding out details of specif cations, prices and the secrets of how to load the software.

It seems that everyone wants to know the price of these machines rather than what they were or in some cases still able to do. The next question is "what are they worth today as collectors' items", and I have to confess that I have no idea, make me an of er!!! As far as I can see there is no computer collectors' market, I know of other collectors but with one exception (a ZX80) no old computers seem to come up for auction that I have heard about.

Because of the way the club works there is no budget for collecting these computers - this is to prevent problems if the club ever folds about who owns what and having to auction off bits and pieces. Most of the computers can be considered as donations to the club, those that I have had to pay for are on permanent loan to the collection. (If I die, someone who has annoyed me will inherit them so look after me and humour me or your house could be full of computers too!!) Apart from the donations and the odd purchase at a boot sale I also swap bits that are duplicates, I have a good side-line in used 5.25-inch drives and the 20 Meg MFM hard drives.

At the moment the collection amounts to about 65 machines, I say about because most are in the loft and I have not seen them for ages. For most of the working machines there is software and "bits". There is also a collection of drives, cards and add-ons to allow for repairs etc. I have tried to obtain the appropriate software to run with each machine but to be honest some will never run again.

What the collection needs at the moment are an original Apple Mac, Atari ST and an original Altair (which is the computer that started the home computer market in 1975). That's my "wish list" at the moment for expanding the collection. I am also trying to find details of Soviet computers and other non-US and UK systems for home use.

Buzz Austin

Magic DVD

Copy your DVD movies to blank DVD with ease!

Magic DVD Copier is a very easy and powerful DVD copy software tool, which can copy any DVD movie to computer hard drive without any loss of quality, burn DVD to blank DVD or compress a DVD9 movie to fit on a 4.7 GB DVD. You need only insert a DVD and a blank DVD then press "Start", everything will happen automatically and complete within 20-60 minutes. Then you can enjoy the new DVD on any PC or Home DVD Player.

Magic DVD Copier can copy DVD disc/movie to hard drive and burn DVD to a blank DVD without other decrypting tool or burning program. Can copy or rip these protected DVDs (Continuously update).

Yep, it's simple and it really works. It can also strip region codes. Costs about \$35 and you can buy a lifetime upgrade.

<http://www.magicdvdripper.com/dvd-copier.htm>

Programs I would not wish to be without -and neither should you!

Apart from the basic office stuff, email and Internet programs there are some lesser known ones which I would not want to be without. This is either because the ones which come with Windows are not really adequate or there is no built-in such program anyway.

Stickies v4.5 These are pop-up yellow sticky notes which act as a sort of visible text clip-board. Web links are, however, active and that can be very useful. Stickies will also accept formatted text but being text-based will usefully strip of all formatting - which is sometimes just what you want. Available freeware from Zhorn software. Version 9 is available but I recommend you download older version 4.5 as it is much less bloated.

xPlorer2 A dual-pane file manager plus view of root structure. Absolute no-brainer and couldn't live without it and neither should you. Forget Windows Explorer.

FastStone Viewer - hugely versatile image viewer and manager. Everything you need and very little you don't. When set as default viewer works really nicely hand-in-hand with xPlorer2.

Filezilla - simply the best FTP program.

Mailwasher - check your email before downloading or opening. Like a spyhole in your front door. Evaluates incoming emails for spam etc. Why let anyone in your house until you're sure?

SyncBack - set backup routines. You can set it to copy only new and changed files to USB drive etc. So, My Documents, My Pictures etc. and save the backup routines as a Group. I can back up all my data with one Group setting very quickly. Because it is so easy I do this frequently. Lots of other options I don't understand.

Avery Design Pro - available from Avery web site. Either as an on-line label program or preferably the download hard disk version. It will merge labels from popular databases with sort and select. You can print individual labels to any assigned space left on your label sheet. Use it for one-off envelopes or even desk-top publish a single A4 size label. It will even convert numbers into bar codes. It lives very happily with dBase and Access data files or will create its own list for you.

Protopage – design your own home page with all your favourite links, e.g. www.protopage.com/rogerdemo

Hard Disk Clone - I use paid-for Acronis to do whole hard disk backup - maybe every two weeks, but also recommended is EaseUS disk cloning utility which seems to have a free version on the "Major Geeks" website. There's no backup like a complete hard disk clone.

Two more paid-for programs - Firetrust's Fineprint and pdfFactory. Manage printer behaviour, water marks, booklets etc. and print to PDF. Many printers now of er print management software but if you don't have this luxury this pair of programs are to die for.

All these are searchable on Google and all but the last few are free.

Roger Skidmore

Two Old Favourites

These are two home-grown software companies I have used over the years. I suppose all software companies start in the garage, living room, etc., and then grow, or disappear, or merge etc. They don't just emerge fully formed, that's for sure.

I remember Ashampoo being a disk clean-up (Shampoo?) program which was either free or cheap, and didn't seem to do any harm. Now they produce a whole stable of affordable software. I mostly use their CD burning software which is up to version 21. I think version 6 is still free and does most everything one would need (and take up a lot less disc space).

One great thing about Ashampoo is that they have a good website and keep a list of software you have bought, together with your product keys and download links (where software still available). Very organised, very German. And for compulsive software hoarders you can get a DVD with all your software on for £7.95. Just ordered one.

So, as they say, head on over to <https://www.ashampoo.com/> or visit <https://www.ashampoo.com/en/usd/who> to learn about the company and its ethos.

The other old favourite is Cof eeCup software at <https://www.coffeeCup.com/>

They have evolved into a professional web creation team who mostly want money (fair enough) but you can still get their HTML and Web Form software free. I still have a physical CD of a lot of their early software as a jumbo package. And I still use their early HTML editor - occasionally, these days.

Roger Skidmore

P.S. I keep on about free xPlorer2 file manager - if you haven't tried it you are missing out!

eM Client – A Traditional Looking Email Program

Years ago I used Outlook Express for my email. David Broughton showed me how to relocate the folder containing data and settings to "My Documents" for inclusive backup. The same trick worked with OE's successor, Live Mail 2012 while under Windows 7. Of course, it didn't work when Windows 10 came along - you were stuck in the event of a reinstall. Endlessly it seems, I sought a replacement email client.

Then ComputerActive recommended eM Client. Success! eM Client is not too far removed in terms of look and feel but you can scoop up your data and settings folder and put it where you like - preferably under "My Documents" so that it gets backed up with everything else. With a new installation of eM Client you would just point the Storage folder to wherever you located your email data and settings.

eM Client is free for up to two email accounts while retaining almost all of its functionality. Paid for version gives you more email accounts, Mass email merge and various other bells and whistles you probably don't need.

It didn't make a very good job of importing my Live Mail 2012 email folders but they were mostly imported from Outlook Express so that was a tough call. It did import my email addresses via a CSV export intermediary, but when I introduced it to my Gmail account it snapped up my Gmail addresses and linked to my Gmail calendar which was all a bit of a bonus.

eM Client is highly configurable and has a 430 page PDF download manual for the truly dedicated. A simple Google search referencing eMClient is still the simplest way of finding answers; and so far, every question has found an answer.

And of course, for backups I use my trusty "Syncback" to copy and paste only new and changed files to my backup external hard disk. Very fast.

Roger Skidmore

I've been using eM Client for a number of years, having investigated all the alternatives. The only problem that I have found is that recently where I have automatic rules to move incoming mail into specific folders it now moves the mail before it has finished downloading. It is possible this is a problem due to my mail host, but in the meantime I've disabled all the automatic rules.

David Groom

Notepad++

Windows comes with a basic text editor called Notepad which allows for basic text entry, but without any additional features such as formatting for bold or underlining, font-size or font styles. For a number of years I have also installed a free program called Notepad++ (www.notepad-plus-plus.org), at its very basic this is similar to Notepad in that essentially only text can be entered without any formatting, however that is where the similarity ends. I can't remember why I initially downloaded and started to use this program but one of the things I found most useful was its behaviour when I used it to edit system files. These files are normally only editable with administrator privileges - so that if in Windows Notepad you edit the file and then try to save it you will find that this is not allowed. However with Notepad++ when you try to save a system file that you have edited you get a warning and then are asked whether you want Notepad++ restarted in administrator mode where upon you can save the file.

If I'm honest this was the only thing that I had been using Notepad++ for many years but earlier this year I decided to explore it further and was surprised at how versatile a tool it was.

Primarily it is designed as a source code editor and supports around 80 programming languages with syntax highlighting and code folding. It allows working with multiple open files in a single window as it has a tabbed editing interface.

There is a much more advanced search and replace facility than you find in many other text editors, and this alone probably will take a number of hours to fully understand to get maximum benefit from.

What prompted me to write this article however was the discovery that the program can be extended by the installation of plugins. The first plug-in that I installed was one which highlighted differences between two files. Someone had sent me a document for inclusion in HotKey, which I had read and made some minor edits to and then inserted into Af nity Publisher, they later sent me another version merely telling me they had made a few changes. By opening both versions in Notepad++ and using the 'difference plugin' I could immediately see where the author had made his edits and incorporate those into HotKey.


There are around 150 plugins and I will be looking through the list in detail to see if there are any more more that appear useful.

David Groom

Virtual Desktops in Windows 10

If you regularly find yourself having lots of programs or windows open, or if you might be performing two or more distinct tasks at your computer (for instance (i) researching and editing an article for HotKey whilst also (ii) doing web design work) then virtual desktops should make your life easier.

A virtual desktop is a collection of open applications, and each virtual desktop can have a separate group of programs open on it. So one virtual desktop might be used for web design with web design software and a web browser open on it, whilst a different virtual desktop might be used for researching an article for HotKey and would have another internet browser open with a collection of tabs relating to the research and also LibreOffice writer open for actually writing the article.

To start using this feature you first have to add a new virtual desktop and this is easy. On the taskbar click the “Task View” icon , which should be the first icon to the right of the Cortana or search box (If you don't see the Task View button it is possibly hidden; right-click the taskbar and ensure that the "show task view button" option is ticked.).

The screen which now opens is called the “Task View”. Next click the “New desktop” button at the top left of the screen; you should now get a ribbon bar at the top of the screen with “Desktop 1”, “Desktop 2” and “New desktop” icons along it, (Desktop 1 is the original desktop you were using with any applications that were open in it). Below the ribbon bar you will see some large thumbnails of the applications that are open on the desktop. A screenshot of a Task View window is shown on the back cover.

If we have just created a second desktop and we move the mouse over the Desktop 2 icon (don't click it) then we see that there are no open applications, similarly moving the mouse back over the Desktop 1 icon shows any applications that were originally open.

With the Task View window open clicking on one or other of the desktop icons in the ribbon bar will take you to that desktop. Any applications that were open will still be open and any applications that you start will only appear on that desktop.

When we have the Task View window open we can move any application to a new desktop by right clicking the applications window icon, then clicking “move to” and choosing which desktop you want the application to appear on. Alternatively you can drag the applications window icon onto one of the

desktop icons in the ribbon bar.

You can easily switch between desktops by using the combination of CTRL+ Windows Key + the left or right arrows. If you think of the order that the desktops were showing in the ribbon bar, the right and left arrows move you along that bar to the next desktop.

If you right click one of the desktop thumbnails in the ribbon bar you have the option to rename the desktop from something more meaningful than Desktop 1 and Desktop 2. Note that the new names last not only for the current Windows session but stay each time you log on on untill you rename them something dif erent.

You can remove a desktop by clicking “X” which appears when you hover the mouse over the desktop icon in Task View. Any applications that you had open on a virtual desktop that you delete will automatically be moved to the desktop to the left of the one you closed.

Here are some of the most popular keyboard shortcuts which may make the use of virtual desktops even easier:

- Windows key + Tab: opens Task View.
- Windows key + Ctrl + Left or Windows key + Ctrl + Right allows you to move quickly between multiple desktops.
- Windows key + Ctrl + D : to create a new virtual desktop without using the Task View.

I have to admit that virtual desktops is a feature which I have never used but which I suspect that now when I start to use it I will fnd it it so useful I wonder how I ever had done without it.

David Groom

A Quick Tip

A quick tip from Roger Skidmore, if you press the Windows key plus semi-colon it gives access to a load of special characters which can be pasted into some, but not all programs. If you look at the back cover you will see a small selection of the many special characters which can be inserted.

Three Often Underused Windows 10 Features

Windows 10 is such a complex operating system that it's sometimes easy to forget some of its features. In this article I want to explore three such features.

Show Desktop Button

Windows 7 and Windows 8 used to have on the far right of the taskbar an obvious button to click which minimised all of the open windows and showed you your desktop. In Windows 10 this button has been replaced by a very small sliver of grey or silver shown at the bottom right of the taskbar, it's such a small sliver that it's easy to miss the fact that is there. If you've got a number of windows and programs open clicking this button can be a time saver when you want to have a look at the desktop, as it stops you having to minimise many windows in order to see the desktop.

Dictation

Those of you who, perhaps like me, are not the speediest of typists may well find the speech recognition and dictation feature useful. Of course in order to use this you do have to have a microphone attached to your computer but since most webcams include microphone, and we've all been webcamming much more the last few months, it's now more likely you will have a microphone available.

Any time that you would normally be entering text through the keyboard such as writing a letter, composing an email, filling in a web form, you can instead use speech recognition. All you have to do is press the Windows Key together with H, and a pop-up box will appear enabling dictation. Unfortunately it doesn't recognise punctuation so you can't pronounce the commands "comma", "full stop", "new paragraph" etc and get these automatically inserted into your text, but it may well be a time saver.

Sticky Notes

Sticky Notes is a built-in app for Windows 10 users. To launch it, click the Start button or press the Windows key to open the Start menu. There, type "sticky notes" and select the Sticky Notes entry that appears. This will open the program with one blank sticky note. You can use sticky notes as a quick memo list of things to do, which would have been useful for me when writing this article as originally I was going to explore four features, but I've forgotten what the last one was.

David Groom

My Black Screen of Woe

I built my desktop computer in 2008. It has had an upgraded AMD CPU, a fanless power supply, SSD, double the amount of RAM and new big lightweight aluminium case, all in the quest for more working space, lighter weight, silence and speed. In fact only the motherboard is original. The configuration ended up with this lot:

GIGABYTE GA-MA78GM-S2H - SOCKET AM2 motherboard

AMD Athlon II X4-615E 2.5 GHz cpu

Crucial CT25664AA1067 2 GB DDR2 1066 MHz (PC2-8500) CL7
Unbuffered UDIMM 240-Pin RAM Memory X 4 sticks

Samsung EVO SSD 120 GB

ATX XFX XTS 460W Fanless Full Modular Power Supply

120 cm slow moving case fan

ATX aluminium pc case

It was built as a media centre and has done a great job of recording and playing music, CD's DVD's (inc. Blu Ray) TV, radio, video editing, viewing photos as well as the normal email and web surfing tasks. It has worked perfectly since new until early June this year when disaster struck. I turned the power on and was met with a black screen on both monitors. So I unplugged everything from the ports and took the cards out. Still nothing.

Fault finding is largely a matter of substituting components till the offender is exposed so I tried another another psu, my earlier cpu (AMD Athlon™ II X2 250e 3 Ghz dual core), swapped memory and monitors around. Still nothing appeared on the screen. It was as if the monitors were plugged into a brick wall.

Roger Skidmore advised me to take the motherboard out of the case in case it was shorting, this also has the advantage of being easier to plug in components and get to everything. Cardboard makes a good base as it does not store static. Roger double checked the motherboard with different RAM, psu, monitor and also had the black screen of death. I was certain the motherboard was faulty so bought a second hand one I saw on eBay from IXTHLON-MEDIA a firm in Germany and connected everything up. Still a

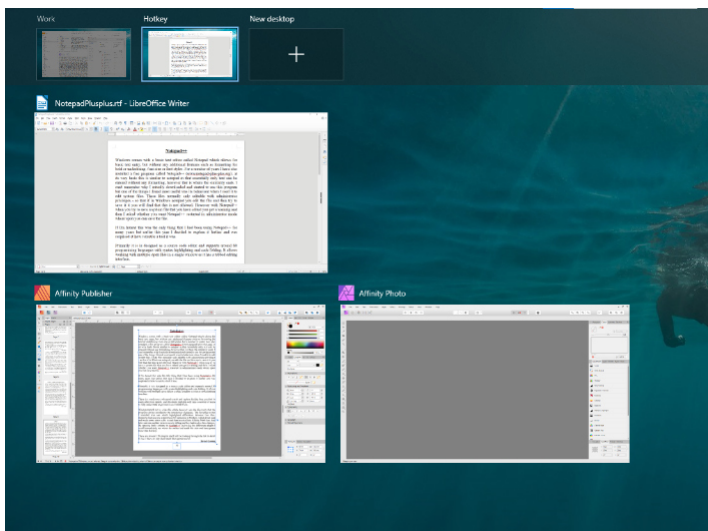
black screen AAAAH! It seemed that the motherboard I had been sent was faulty too. Was about to go over to Newport so Roger could try out the new(er) motherboard too, but before going thought I'd try it with my spare Dual core cpu and suddenly the screen came to life as the computer booted into BIOS. A light bulb came on in my head as I then realised it was not just the motherboard but the quad core processor that had blown too. It was only when I used the new (working) mb with the old dual core (working) cpu that the computer worked. So after installing everything in the case everything seemed to work until I tried to watch some TV and nothing happened. After examining the tuner card I noticed something burned and cracked on its circuit board. So another lesson is that several computer parts can blow up at once.

The cause of the fault may never be known. I can't recall power surges that day, didn't make any changes to the computer, drop or bang it. The only visual change may have been a black square component with R60 on it with a pimply, possibly burnt top which Roger spotted. According to 'Toms Harware' it's a ferrite inductor (choke). It's part of the DC-to-DC Step-Down Converter in the power VRM circuit that is used to supply power to various components like the CPU or motherboard chipset etc. No other burn marks and cpu looked the same.

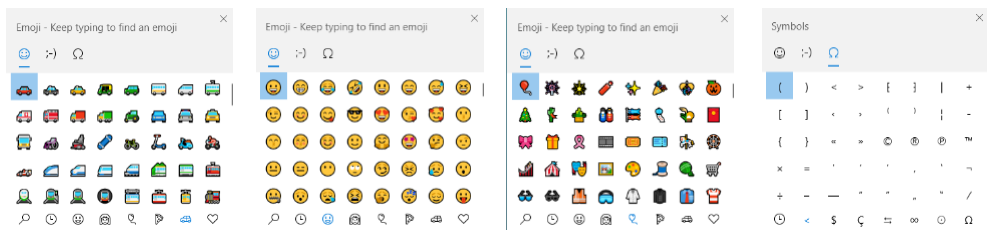
The rebuilt machine has never worked better and I can't tell the difference in the performance of the 2 processors so won't bother buying a new quad core cpu. The total cost has been £62 for the replacement motherboard. Time will tell how long the computer will last. If the motherboard blows anytime soon I will upgrade to one of the new AMD Ryzen cpu's, DDR4 or DDR5 RAM and a cool running motherboard probably supplied by 'Quiet PC' who specialise in - you guessed it quiet pc's. Some have said why not upgrade instead of risking using a second hand motherboard but then I would lose the PCI slot I use for my soundcard and I still find the pc reasonably fast. Cold boots in a minute and satisfies my meagre needs. How many times can you walk into a room with a desktop pc in and not hear if it is on or off. You can't with mine.

Many thanks to Roger Skidmore who helped with the repair and lent me a desktop PC while mine was being fixed.

By Stephen Sutters



The Task View Window, with the second desktop (named “HotKey”) in focus, showing the three programs which are open in that desktop. See page 11.



A selection of the special characters available, see page 15

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