

## QL2K

by Dilwyn Jones

David Denham wrote about the QLay2 emulator for Windows machines in issue 2. In the same issue, Jimmy Montesinos gave us news of the latest version of the QL2K emulator.

QLay2 was a straightforward and free development of the original QLay emulator.

QL2K takes the emulator into a new direction. This version is now described as Postcardware or Registerware. Basically, it is also a free QL emulator, but if you use it, you should register with the author so that you can receive news about updates, be a part of a QL2K "community" and so on.

QL2K is intended for use on newer versions of Windows: Windows 2000 and Windows XP for example. The author suggests that it has been successfully tested on Windows Me (Millennium edition) too.

The QL2K emulator is described as still being in the alpha-release stage of development. Version 0.98a is the latest version available at the time of writing - you have to download version 0.96a from <http://www.jadium.org/QL> and then download the version 0.98a patch to update it. 0.96 is a download of about 467K, while the 0.98a update is about 180K in size. You have to run the setup program for v0.96a, then apply the patch to update to 0.98a

Once you have installed all the files, the emulator is started using a shortcut to QL2K.EXE and the configuration screen (see figure 1) pops up. Here you can select a language for the prompts by clicking on one of the flags at the bottom, memory size (from 128K, 640K, 1M, 2M, 4M or 8M), the display size (always QL 512x256, but this can be mapped onto any of 8 PC resolutions to allow it to look bigger on high resolution PC displays), Keyboard country, Clock Multiplier, Fast Microdrives, any of up to 6 add-on ROMs, use DirectDraw, Full Screen GDI, No mouse, and Autostart. An additional button at the bottom leads you to a second configuration screen where you can assign path names to up to 8 WIN and 8 MDV drives.

The main difference between this and QLay 2 is in the field of execution timing. You should find that QL2K does not "slug" your PC any more - the problems David reported don't seem to exist on QL2K (slow screen update, hogging PC resources). Now, a QL set at original QL speed uses very few percent of CPU time in both DirectX and what it calls "GDI mode". There is a clock multiplier function, so if you are running QL2K on a reasonably fast PC, it can be set to run at, say, twice the speed of a QL. This seems to be a true speedup too, which doesn't seem to speed up a PAUSE delay for example, as older versions of QLay used to tend to do when coaxed into speeding up. Certainly, entering something like `d=DATE:PAUSE 3000:PRINT date-d` prints the correct value of 60 seconds. You can set the speedup in the configuration screen (Clock Multiplier) or via a command line switch, where the command to start QL2K.EXE has the switch `-P x` appended (where x is 1 for original QL speed, 2 for twice normal speed and so on). This is very useful - games can be run at original QL speed to prevent them running too fast to be playable, whereas you can make the emulator run faster for time consuming tasks.

There is now an option to set the microdrive delay from 31ms down to 1ms. As I don't use the MDV emulations I can't comment on this.

A debugger is now available from the COMMANDS menu. I haven't tried to use, other than to start it and quit from it using ESC.

One of the things which still doesn't work is sound. Enter a BEEP command and nothing happens - the command is ignored. And there's still no floppy disk driver - you still have to use the supplied tools programs to copy files to or from QL disks. The available 8 WIN drives should mean that this won't be too big a problem, as you will be using the WIN drives on your PC's hard disk most of the time, only resorting to QL floppy disks if you wish to copy files between the emulator and another machine. It is still necessary to

fiddle with the Tools programs to update the WIN directories if files are copied to or from the PC side of things.

There is a Help command available, but it needs an active internet connection to take you to online QL2K documentation at the Jadium website. You can download some documentation and a personal copy of Simon Goodwin's Speedscreen+ ROM for use with QL2K (see figure 6).

The requirements that QL2K makes of your PC are fairly modest - minimum of Windows 2000 (although claimed to work with the older Windows Me), 9MB free RAM, 3MB hard disk space and DirectX 8.0 or later.

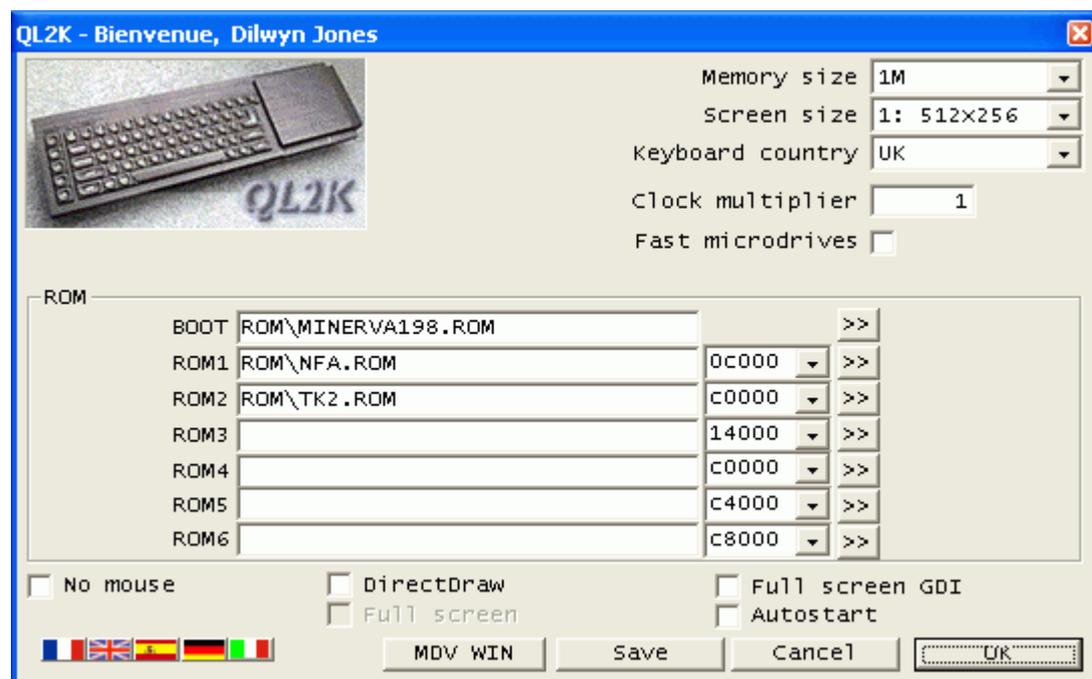
The startup screen ROM titles claim that PAR and SER is emulated in the NFA ROM title. As my printer is connected to my PC via USB, I can't use my printer it would seem, though it may be possible to use a parallel printer.

QL2K can use most versions of the QL ROM, including Minerva, so if you have an awkward program which only works on one particular QL ROM, it is quite easy to boot the emulator with a copy of that ROM image to run the program in question. Compatibility

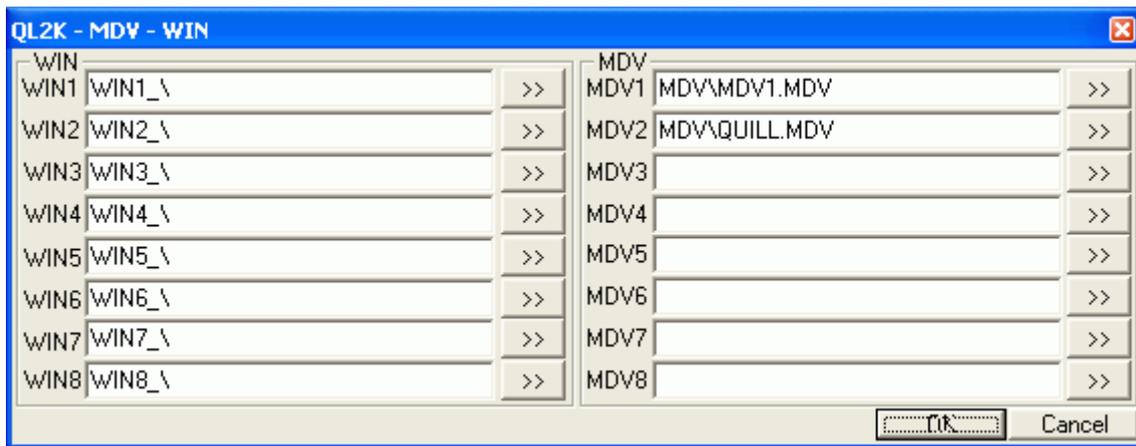
In summary, this is a very worthwhile progression to the earlier QLayer emulators. The fact that the emulator doesn't slug the PC any more is great - I can now have the TV tuner running on the PC at the same time as QLing on QL2K without one or the other struggling. The 'clock multiplier' facility is very useful too, as it lets you choose between running older games at standard QL speed or taking advantage of the higher processing speeds possible on modern PCs.

QL2K is a completely free emulator at the moment, apart from the need to register with the author Jimmy Montesinos (registration is free - just fill in a form on his website).

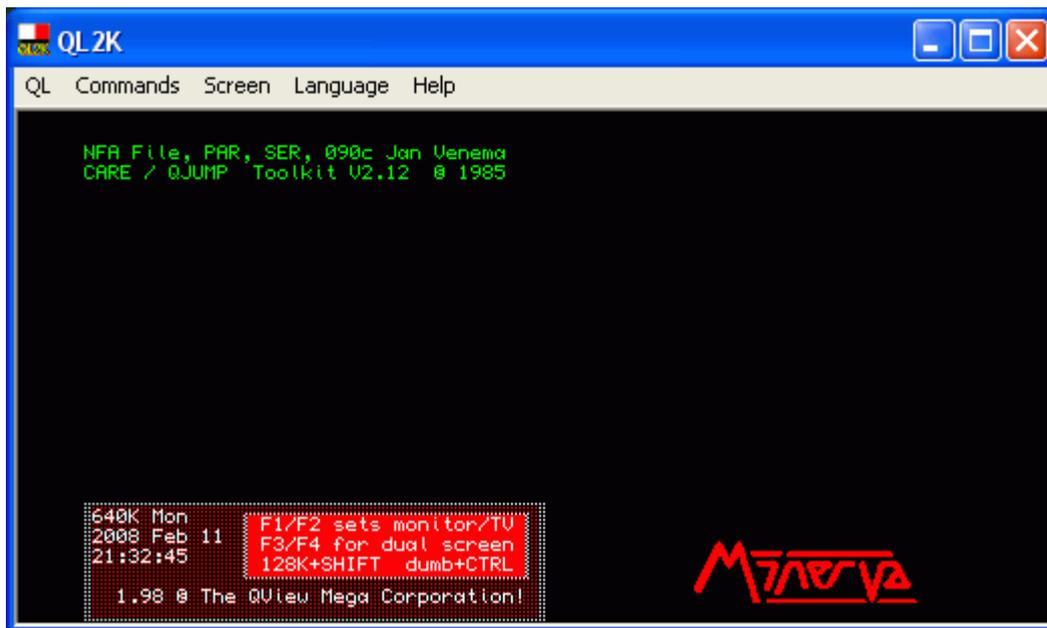
[www.jadium.org/QL](http://www.jadium.org/QL)



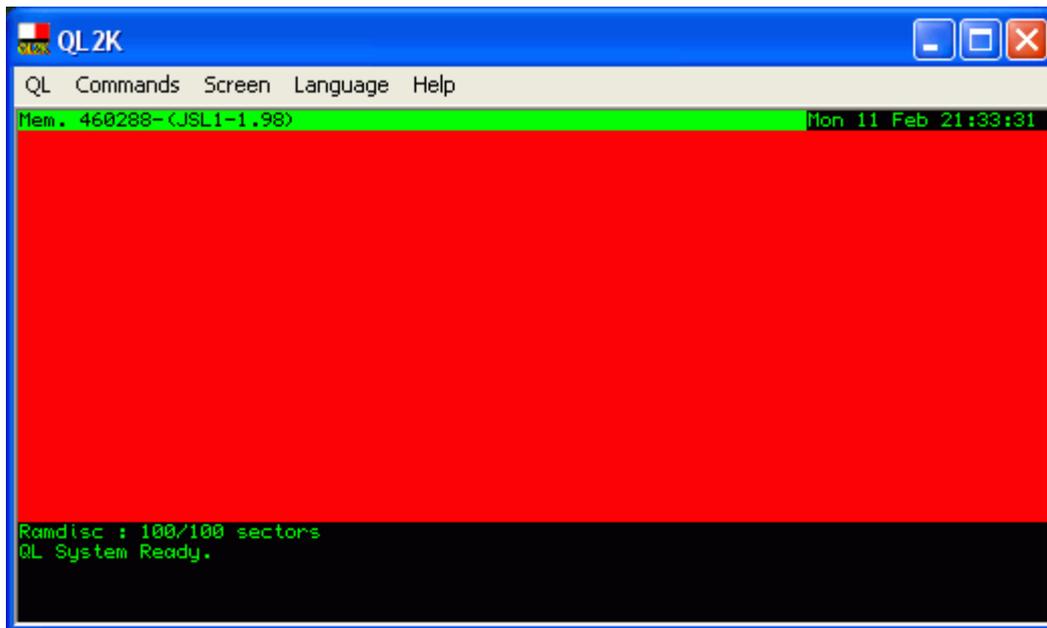
ql2k1.gif The QL2K configuration screen



ql2k2.gif The WIN and MDV device assignments screen



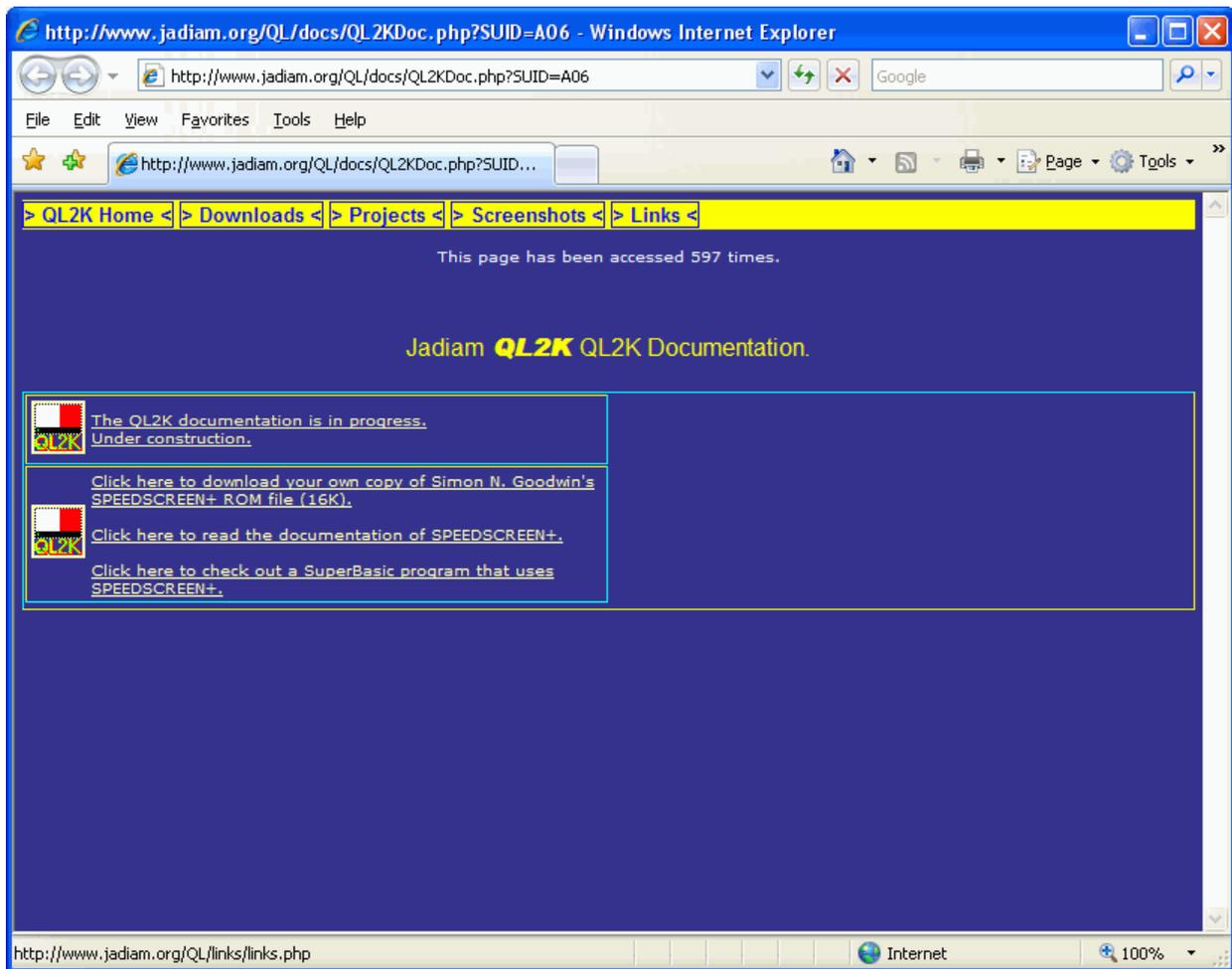
ql2k3.gif Startup, using a Minerva 1.98 ROM image



ql2k4.gif Note the display of free memory, versions and a digital clock at the top of the display



ql2k5.gif The copyright screen



ql2k6.gif The Help screen takes you to the Jadium website