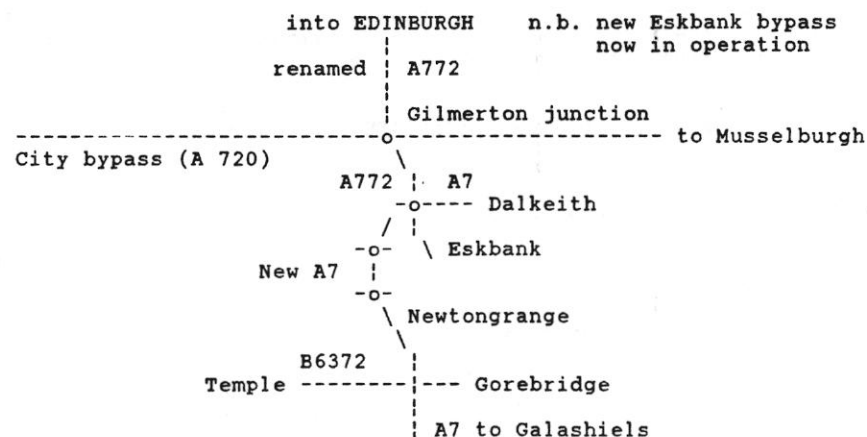


**CONTACTS**

A. E. Alldritt	0479 2811	
Ken Barrie	0698 69737	
Alex Beveridge	0592 860661	
Ronald Bezzant	08772 516	FILE RECOVERY
Robin Blair	3 Inveraray Ave., Glenrothes	
Gerry Boxer	0840 770874	
Alaster Campbell	0698 886587	
Hamish Crockett	0700 811265	
Robert Esselmont	32 Woodhall Bank, Edinburgh	
J. R. Haldane	Gorebridge 21364	QL-SCANNER
Alan Jardine	39 School Rd., Kintore	PRESTEL
Andrew Johnson	South Parkley, Parkley Craigs, Linlithgow	
Robert Johnson	South Parkley, Parkley Craigs, Linlithgow	
Stuart Johnson	0779 813202	
Joe Johnston	13 Kinneddar Park, Saline, Fife	
Graeme Law	2 Elmbank Cottages, Stirling	
Traven McLintock	041 954 7351	traven@uk.ac.gla.v
Colin McPaike	78 Larch Drive, East Kilbride	
Ewan Peat	Rogart Hotel, Sutherland	
Alan Pemberton	031 660 1826	BASIC / QLIB
Crispin Phillips	087 530 230	
Robert Rankin	041 339 2641	R.A.Rankin@uk.ac.gla.vme
Iain Robertson	031 441 2361	LIFE / MANDELBROT PATTERNS
John Sadler	0592 268726	PRESTEL
John Shaw	041 778 4538	
John Skelton	0383 822462	PRESTEL
Alban Smith	10 Dickson St., Edinburgh	
G. Taylor	031 667 5278	
Scott Telford	031 334 1132	s.telford@uk.ac.ed
Robert Thomson	0698 424063	
James Watson	0383 725289	
Alan Wilson	24 Blenheim Place, Larbert	

**GETTING TO TEMPLE (not to scale!)**



Alan Pemberton  
 65 Lingerwood Rd, Newtongrange, Midlothian EH22 4QQ  
 Tel : (031) 660 1826  
 E-MAIL (JANET) pemba@uk.ac.sari.mri

# Scottish QL Users Group

SQLUG NEWSLETTER

NUMBER 32, APRIL 1992

As most of you will also be QUANTA members, you will have noticed the recent plug for the group in the QUANTA magazine. Disappointingly, I have received no response from this at all, despite the "carrot" of the library. Perhaps we have already got the message across to everyone who would be interested in joining. Although this might be taken as evidence that interest in the QL is waning, it is obvious from our own meetings that the enthusiasm of those attending is just as strong as ever, if not stronger. Long may it be so!

There have been no replies in favour of joining the British Association of Computer Clubs, and in view of what it would have cost us, I must say I agree that we should stay out.

**LAST MEETING: COWANE CENTRE, STIRLING, 15th MARCH**

There was quite a reasonable turnout at this meeting, with 11 members attending. We had expected to see some changes at the centre, since it was closed due to some major work last month, but nothing obvious could be seen.

One of the first things to come up was John Skelton's trouble with Taskmaster. He wanted to multitask the CL digitiser program with Dilwyn Jones' Page Designer 2 and Image Processor, but was having no luck. These programs differ from the Psion suite in that they require extensions to be loaded before they can work. Therefore, we needed to transfer the required extensions to the Taskmaster working disk and alter the boot to initialise them. This worked well, so that John now has a very powerful system for capturing images, retouching them, then importing them in into a document - all with just a few keypresses.

While this was going on, I managed to miss Alan Wilson's demonstrations with no chance of a rerun, as he had to leave early. However, a brief recap informed me that the programs under scrutiny included QLC, a download font program for 24-pin printers. This system allows you to use a number of download fonts in your printer, selectable by using certain control codes in a document.

In case you don't know, a download font is a character set which you can prepare on your computer. The data for the character shapes is sent to the printer in a special way, so that the characters subsequently produced by the printer are the ones you defined. In this way, special symbols as used in mathematics and science can be defined. The great thing about download fonts is that they print just as quickly as normal fonts, so the slow alternative of desktop publishing can be avoided.

Alan also demonstrated QDesign, and brought along some printouts to show what the program can achieve. The quality of the output on just one pass was pretty good - more passes would make it excellent. On Alan's machine the program worked perfectly, so last month's glitches

must have been due to ROM incompatibilities. Overall, Alan rates the program very highly.

Another program Alan briefly demonstrated was QConnect, a terminal program, and he intends to show us more at a future meeting.

I was pleased to see that Robert Thomson could come along to the meeting (and join the group!). He had met John Shaw at the All Formats show the week before, and they arranged to travel to Stirling together. Robert was quick to point out an error in his QIMI mouse tip that I printed last month - the smaller IC socket should have 28 pins, not 24. John had followed that advice and discovered that one and a bit 24-pin sockets, when butted together, would do the job just as well! So he now has a fully functional mouse at last.

John Sadler explained how his mouse problem was also solved at the All Formats fair - by taking his QL and ill-fitting interface along to the QUANTA stand. He told us how Phil Borman had positioned the interface just above the sockets, then came down on the QL with enough force to temporarily bend it into an arc! Apparently the QL circuit board is made of sturdy stuff, because John's QL is working fine now, with the QIMI stuck firmly in place.

Although the mouse saga has eventually come to a happy conclusion, there were hardware failures elsewhere. Jim Haldane brought along a QL which refused to work with Gold Card attached. He believes the fault arose due to a faulty printer connection. Another of his QLs had to be sent for repair after hearing sparking in the printer connection, so Jim suspects the lead. After some experimentation, Jim came to the conclusion that the Gold Card was faulty, and he has no option but to send it off for a Miracle cure. John Shaw very kindly offered Jim the use of a spare interface to keep him working in the meantime.

Later in the afternoon, Robert Thomson explained how he used the QL to help in his work as an artist. Robert uses packages such as The Painter as a sort of sketchpad to give ideas and inspiration. It is very easy to chop and change shapes with a computer, and this is what Robert does until he finds something interesting. This is then refined further until the idea gels and he can transfer it to canvas.

Robert reckons that The Painter is the best QL paint program, although QL Paint (also sold as GraphiQL+) still handles some of the options better. I then demonstrated Graphiste from the PD library, which Robert found quite interesting and took a copy to try out at home.

As usual, the library was in demand, and the Archive index program put to good use. Since last month, I had written a SuperBASIC indexing program for disks - initially for my own use, but then it occurred to me that it would be useful for the library also. Called Disktidy (until someone tells me there is already a program of that name), it stores a directory for each disk in your collection, along with file size and date information. Also, for each disk, a description of up to 40 characters is allowed, which could be what you have written on the label. Disks can be added and updated very easily, which is really the main advantage over John Sadler's Archive program. Individual directories are viewed in a scrolling window, and the information can be searched to find files, which is slightly faster than in Archive.

I just need to write a document and an appropriate boot file, and this can be added to our library. A cut-down version was also written for microdrive users - directories for 55 of our 60 disks can be stored on one microdrive cartridge, though a second cartridge would be

required for the searching program. As far as I can tell, this program will work on an unexpanded QL without the need for any toolkits. However, the speed of searching the microdrive version is approximately one hundredth that of a Gold Card QL with disks. For a massive performance increase, microdrive users with expanded memory would be advised to transfer the data to ram disk!!!

I also brought along 3 disks which make up the "World Factbook", compiled by the CIA and available on the PC public domain. I got hold of the PC disks and transferred the files to QL format using IBMdisk2. There are 6 files, spanning all the countries of the world, in alphabetical order. For each country there is a mass of information, such as size, population, terrain, climate, birth/death rates, literacy, defence, number of known communists, political parties, disputes with other countries... the list is enormous! Consequently, the size of these files is also enormous - on average about 300K each. This can cause problems in reading the files. Importing into Quill doesn't work - the file is just too big, giving a negative word count!!! For a PD option, MicroEMACS works, though you need to specify the large dataspace requirement in the EXEC command, otherwise the program will give an "out of memory" error. I found that QD gave no problems, and you don't need to specify dataspace.

During the meeting, Scott Telford had some surplus programs for sale at sensible prices. He sold most of them, but the following two are still up for grabs:-

Supercharge Special Edition (no Lenslok, 3.5")	£6.00
Assembler Workbench (mdv)	£5.00

One of Scott's programs to be sold was The Wanderer, the 3D wireframe graphics game. Once (if!) the 3D glasses are mastered, the effect is quite impressive, with all manner of shapes drifting and tumbling in and out of the screen. Scott assured us that the graphics are smooth on a standard QL, but combined with the extra speed of Gold Card, the effect was extremely watchable.

Finally, as we were packing up, I managed accidentally to unplug Jim Haldane's computer as it was printing the final copy of an unsaved document. Oops - sorry Jim, but perhaps a reminder that it is risky to carry on computing after the 5pm deadline!

#### SPECIAL EDITION NEWSLETTER / QUESTIONNAIRE

It is time to start thinking about getting submissions and questionnaire information ready for the S.E. Newsletter. The bank balance is fairly healthy, so we can afford it.

I will be sending out a questionnaire this year - if not with this issue, then with the next one. There will be an incentive to send them back - a disk or mdv (limited amount) from the library. See the questionnaire for more details.

#### NEXT MEETING: TEMPLE SMALL HALL, SUNDAY 26th APRIL, 11am-5pm

IMPORTANT - Please note the change in date from that agreed at the last meeting - I hadn't realised at the time that 19th April was Easter Sunday. Because there will only now be 3 weeks between this and the next planned meeting, the next newsletter may not get to you in time. Therefore, please put these (provisional) dates in your diary:- Sunday 17th May, Sunday 21st June - both at Mayfield Centre, Stirling. For up-to-date information near the event, phone me (or Ronald or Alex).