

The U.K. ATARI Computer Owners Club Issue 9 Price £1.00

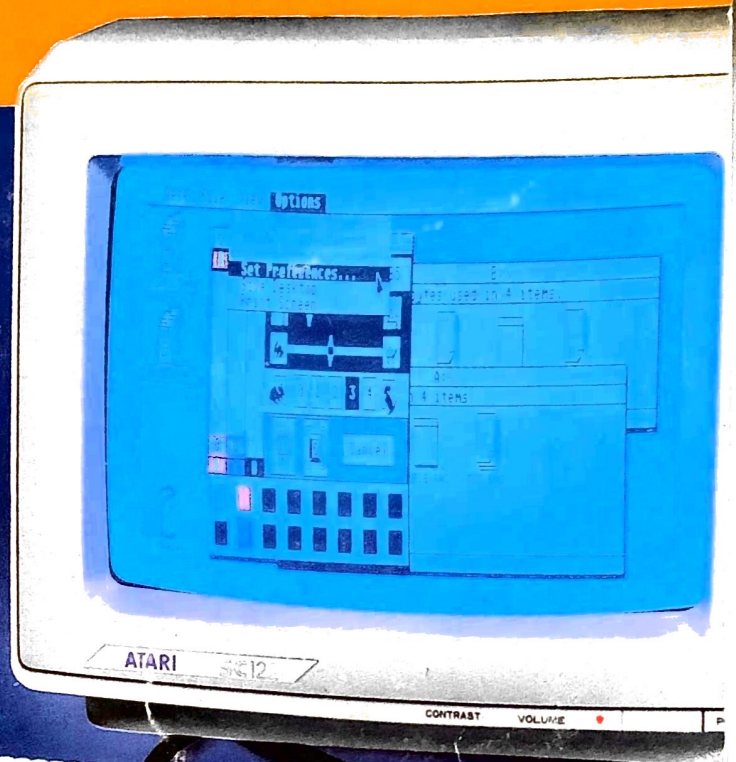
Independent User Group

Monitor



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**Much more in this issue
including:
Fast Fill Routine
KEYO typing checker
Binary loads from Basic**

**HAPPY TYPER
Reviewed: TopDOS
and Homeword
Profile on Lea Valley Club
Go FORTH**

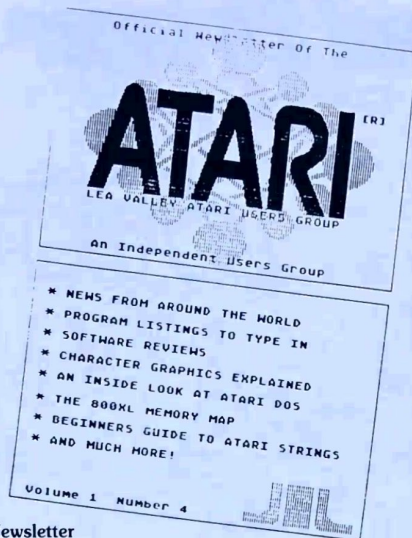
PROFILE ON LEA VALLEY

by Matthew Tydeman.

In 1980 I purchased a 16K Atari 400 for £349, (your not the only one who paid a fortune in those early days) with a 410 cassette player and, of course, the Star Raiders cartridge, the 8K wonder of Atari! Within 6 months I was totally bored with game playing and I began to dig deeper into the possibilities of my computer. Finding out how it worked, and how I could achieve graphics as good as Star Raiders, (great ambition, eh!). Yes, you guessed it, I couldn't! So, where was I to turn? Other users seemed to be my only hope, they must be having the same problems as me I thought. I rushed back to the shop where I had bought my machine and I had a long talk with the proprietor. He gave me the phone number of a man who had asked the same questions only hours before me. I rang, and within 2 months the 'Atari Users Group' was set up, with a member list of 5, including the officials!

At the beginning, Nigel Fowler was the President and I was made Vice-President. This may seem a little odd, but in those early days (before Atari (UK)) instructions on how to form a users group came from the USA, so it is no surprise that the clubs were modelled on the American Presidential system. At the start we could give little help to our members except to discuss games and new releases, (at that time Caverns of Mars was considered to be great!).

Slowly we got it together and since then we have gone from strength to strength. We advertised in local shops and newspapers in order to increase our



Newsletter

numbers. We did naughty things too, like looking up owners names in shop sales lists, but all in a good cause we feel. Soon, meetings in our homes became too crowded and our only choice was to hire a hall and this is what we did. We rented a small Church Hall and we still hold meetings there to this day.

At the meetings, most members were keen to see what software was around and so we had to have 3 or 4 machines constantly running with all the latest on display. Unfortunately, at this point, Nigel Fowler had to leave us, (pressure of work) and this meant a new President had to be found. As often happens, nobody wanted the job at the time, but we managed to muddle through with yours truly at the helm for the next six months. Then one night we had a meeting in a local pub (I assure you that this was a one off, Hic!)

and Ken Hewitt was voted in as our new President.

From here on it was all uphill, our newsletter got bigger and bigger, (and better and better we hope) increasing from 4 to 20 pages. Our meetings became more regular and our attendance grew by 50%, well almost! We started to give demonstrations of new software of all types; arcade, utilities and educational. We gave help to people with programming problems in Basic and Machine Code, and we now include Logo (Pilot is not supported though, but then its not that popular in the U.K.).

We cater for everyone including youngsters with no knowledge except how to play games, and adults with no knowledge except how to play games (!). We have an age span from 10 to 60, but sadly only 2 lady members. We have members all over the country, and indeed, all over the world, so anything is possible. If you would like to join in the clubs activities and are within attendance distance (London to Hertford) why not call in on us? If you live elsewhere we can arrange a special membership deal (write for details).

Meetings are held at the Church Hall, Church Lane, Wormley (near A10/M25). They are fortnightly, commencing at 7.00 pm until 10.00 pm. Please send a large SAE for details, or phone Waltham Cross 28168 (evenings only), we will be very glad to hear from you. We would also like to hear from other nearby Atari Users Groups so that we could organise a 'Mega-meeting', how about it?

Atari night at the Lea Valley Club

