

TI*MES

Move over Cory Burr
Here's Cory Twyning
demonstrating the
pocket TI !!!

Issue 97
Summer 2007

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Disclaimer

The views expressed in the articles in this magazine are those of the individual author, and not necessarily the view of the magazine or the group.

Email membership terms and conditions! ☺

At this point we would like to give a warning to those who have subscribed with email membership. You have expressed this preference because you want your TI*MES magazine to be delivered by a more reliable medium than the Royal Mail! However, as you must realise, PC file formats these days are bloated beyond belief and the Microsoft Word file of a newsletter could be as big as 18 Megabytes!!!

PDF files do compress the file size down, but they may still be a considerable size!



Receiving large attachments these days is no big deal, as Yahoo.co.uk offer a free email service which gives you a maximum in-box of 100Megabytes!



If you specify an email address for your email membership then you **MUST MAKE SURE** that the email account has **sufficient capacity** to be able to receive these attachments!!!

It's not all doom and gloom though! Trevor and I have been pondering converting the magazine to HTML format and putting it on the web site so that people could read it online. Trevor already has the web code to allow us to make it password protected from non-signed-up visitors! We also need to make sure that it only uses bog-standard HTML and GIF or JPEG images so that it is available to a wider audience. Trevor has the habit of automatically using loads of flash and applets on his websites, but I think we need to make things a bit simpler so it can be accessed by a wider range of web browsers. ☺

Important Information

Membership Renewals

If you have access to the interweb, you are now able to pay your group membership directly from the user group website using your PayPal account.

For those who aren't in the know, PayPal is a web site that allows you to send and receive money internationally. It's excellent, and has recently been purchased by a little company called **ebay!**

The group's web address is **www.ti99ug.co.uk** then just click the "join TI user group" button!

While still on the subject of the website, don't forget the TI picture book where you can see photos from TI events. Check back regularly for updates.

The website now has a passworded zone where you can read or download previous and current issues of TI*MES magazine.





The **skype** Page

Welcome to a new regular page in the magazine. Trevor and I did have our Skype contact details on the committee members page, however I've decided to add a separate page to try and promote Skype since it's free and will enable us to keep in touch with TI'ers around the world much more easily!

Hopefully having this dedicated page will raise the profile of Skype and encourage more members to use it. If we have enough we could have big online conference which is what we've talked about doing in the past.

Name	Skype Username
Richard Twyning	richardtwyning richardtwyningmobile
Trevor Stevens	trevorstevensmegatech
Mark Wills	markrobertwills
Berry Harmsen	berry.harmsen
Tom wills	twills44
Francesco Lama	lamone2

I'm deliberately keeping this page sparse as it's your job to fill it by contacting us on Skype and letting us have your username! Also, read the small print below!!!

Skype will work on most PC's, including Windows 98, but it's also available for Pocket PC's running Windows Mobile and Linux. If you've got the tinternet, there's no excuse not to run it and keep in touch!!!

Please pay careful attention to the usernames as some of them may contain full stops between forename and surname and they won't work unless they are entered correctly!!!

FROM THE CHAIRMAN'S CHAIR BY TREVOR STEVENS



Our Annual General Meeting was some thing of a special. We had two new items on the agenda which even I did not fully appreciate. The first was a new card from the states. Oh no, not another card I hear you sigh. Well this card could bring back your TI from the grave. The card is called CF7+ it is a side car unit that plugs into the expansion port of your TI. With this card installed you can throw away the TI expansion box, all your disks, 32k ram, floppy drives, PIO and ram disks. No more elephant's trunk or wires to get in the way. The card is about the size of a small tub of margarine (see picture below).



How does it work you ask? Well the unit has a PIO port (under the finger in the picture above), 32k, and a CompactFlash card. This can be as big as 1gig. The ram disk is loaded with disk images. This is done via a PC, which loads on disk images of your favourite disks.

Once done, your CompactFlash disk is then your hard drive. This is faster than a TI ram disk.

To give you an idea of the number of disks stored, a

512mb disk would hold about 600 standard DSSD TI disks.

When the card is installed in your trusty TI you will see this on the master screen →

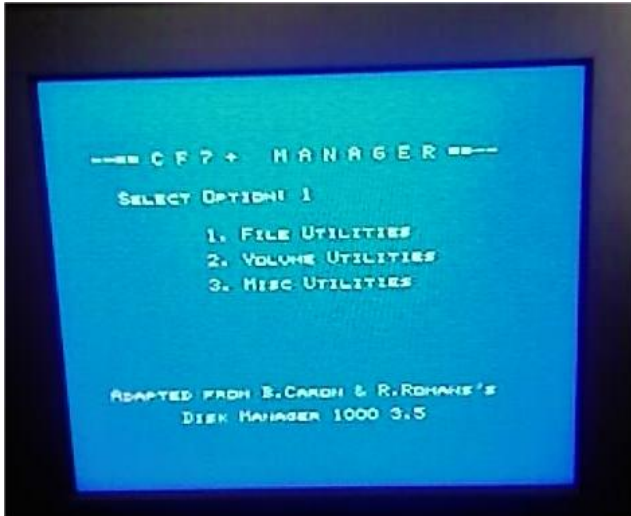
This informs you that the unit is working fine. You can also use the CF7+ ram disk to save your written programs too. You only have to remember one command in basic, which is :- **call mount(drive number, disk number)** i.e. call mount(1,99) this loads on the card disk 99 from drive 1 (However there are other commands). The drive is the card you have installed. There is



talk of multiple card slots. Thus you would get more drives. However we will let you know when this happens.

You can now change to say extended basic, and as long as the disk 99 has the load file it will auto load. We tested is on numerous applications and it worked faultlessly.

Along with the unit comes the CF7+ manager. This allows you to make disk images and copy files much as you do with DM1000 / DM2000 (see picture below)



This utility allows you to create disks up to 1600 sectors (approx) which is equivalent of a 1600 sector disk or DSDD disks.

The only thing it would not work with was my Mechatronic 80 column card.

The screen showed the unit on the main start-up screen (see picture) but when put into basic would not come out of the Mechatronic basic scramble screen even with the basic set button pushed. However this I think is the fault of the Mechatronic card.

Now you say how much is this beast?

Stand back and allow yourself room to fall onto a seat, bed, floor or what have you!

At the time of going to press...

(APPROX) £39 UK pounds, including a 32MB CompactFlash card, power supply, documentation and software. **Postage and packaging is extra.**
ALL profits go to the funds of TI-99/4A User Group U.K.

With this device it makes your TI very portable and easily taken to one of our shows. The group has in fact placed an order for **four** of these units. As of the date of production three have been sold so there is now one spare for purchase.

If you are interested in a purchase then contact me Trevor Stevens for details of the unit. The sale will be on a First come First served basis. However if we get a lot of interest then we will take orders and get some more on order.

We have been talking to Berry Harmsen about articles and he has agreed to be our roving international correspondent. He will now be sending us info in the TI world of what is going on. After the workshop Berry came to my caravan (Yes I towed the caravan down to Poole). We had a barbecue and discussed many TI related subjects, including some top secret projects for the TI which we can't yet publish. We will be keeping up speed with these and let you know about them as soon as we are allowed to release the information.

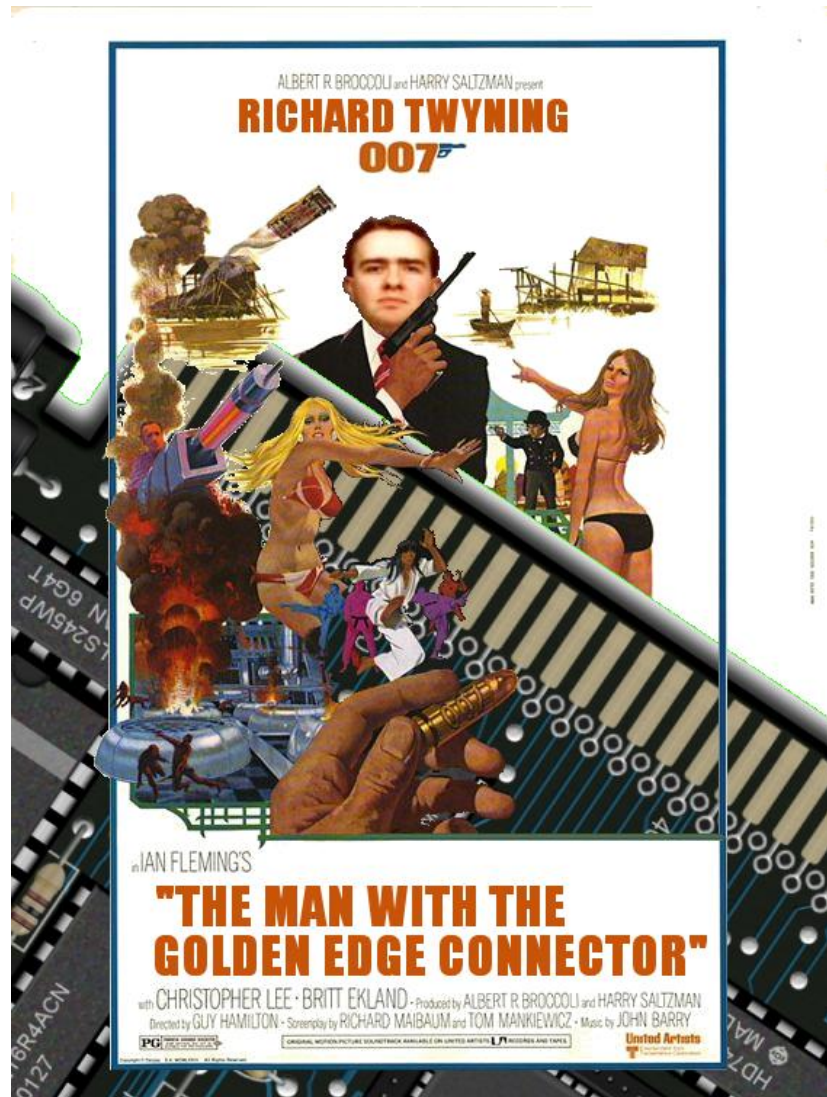
In the next issue we will print the manuals for this device.

THE MAN WITH THE GOLDEN EDGE CONNECTOR – By *Richard Twyning*

Dear TI'er,

I hope you like my title picture this quarter? ☺
We ALL certainly have a "Golden Edge Connector" The TI has "the midas touch" for hardware! It seems that nothing is impossible to create for the TI because of the unique operating system based on the system of DSR's. The CF7+ is the latest example in a long line of remarkable devices!
The edge connector in the image by the way is the edge connector on the large Geneve circuit picture that can be found on the tinternet!

Now, on with the article...



I felt a bit let down over the Poole AGM. I was hoping for a better turnout since we have quite a few members in the south. They're maybe not as enthusiastic for keeping the TI alive as we thought.

Despite there only being a few of us, we had an excellent time and made some amazing discoveries.

As you will already have read, we were impressed with new hardware that potentially does away with the P.E.B. We've seen compact flash card readers before for the TI, but this technically doesn't need any other hardware. I say "technically" because at this moment I've not read Trevor's article and I don't know if he's said that you need a PC with a compact flash reader to format and partition the cards, although this only needs to be done once and if you attend one and if you ask nicely, it can be done at a workshop or AGM!

The other thing that I've been looking forward to announcing is that the age of the pocket TI has arrived!

I'd been pondering such a possibility for a while. I knew the quickest way of reaching my goal would be to use a DOS based TI emulator and run it on a DOS emulator. PCs are of course built around a nasty intel architecture, but Pocket PCs are mostly nowadays built

around a nice ARM (Advanced RISC Machine) architecture. Many of them are very often Texas Instruments OMAP chips which I wrote about a few issues ago. These are ARM cores onto which TI bolt their expertise in the shape of multimedia extensions and all of the support hardware needed to run a mobile device, including wireless internet, all on a single chip.

ARM architectures of course can't run intel assembly language directly, just in the same way that they can't run TI TMS9900 assembly, so because they're called Pocket PC, they can't run normal PC programs.

At the moment Pocket PCs don't have enough power to emulate a PC that could run Windows XP or even Windows 98 (give it another five or six years and they will!) They do have easily enough power to emulate a much simpler machine capable of running DOS!

My idea has been brewing for some time. I've carried a DOS machine with me on a daily basis for ten years! It's almost exactly ten years since I upgraded from a PSION 3a to a PSION 5. The PSION 5 was an excellent machine. It was my first-touch screen device, and although it was only monochrome, it was backlit and the patented keyboard was out of this world! It was the best keyboard that has EVER been incorporated into a PDA and made it like typing on a mini laptop.

It was a little company in Scotland (<http://www.nb-info.co.uk/contact.htm>) that produced an emulator called XTM for the PSION 5 and eventually the NOKIA 9210 Communicator. The PSION EPOC operating system as it appeared on the PSION series 5 was the most stable handheld operating system I have ever owned.

It's unfortunate that PSION stopped making PDA's, but they eventually formed the Symbian Alliance, to bring the renamed Symbian operating system to many mobile phones. The NOKIA 9210 Communicator was the first ever Symbian mobile phone and it should have been like having a PSION Series 5 with a built in phone and colour screen, but I have no idea what NOKIA did to it, but it was very unstable compared to the Series 5.

However, since it was basically the EPOC operating system and an ARM processor, it meant that NB Information were able to easily port the XTM emulator to it, which enabled me to decommission the Series 5 entirely!

Here's a list of benchmarks for XTM. Unfortunately they don't have one for the NOKIA 9210, but on their site they say that it's equivalent to the PSION netBook. You can also see what I said about a pentium machine capable of running Win 98 or XP, it's over a thousand times quicker than an original IBM PC.

Relative Benchmark Performance							
	IBM PC/XT	HP 200LX	IBM PC/AT	Pentium PC	XTM Psion 5	XTM 5mx	XTM netBook
Sieve	1.0	2.2	3.5	480	0.64	1.43	9.65
Integer Math	1.0	4.1	7.7	1050	1.28	2.72	21.73

This does all lead me back to running a TI emulator! Since I know that I wouldn't get much help elsewhere, I knew that I must find another way to get a TI emulator running on my phone.

I've known the problem for quite a few years. XTM is an excellent little emulator, but the downfall is what it emulates. An IBM XT! These had an 8086 processor, and to start doing anything serious you need to emulate at least a 286. XTM wasn't even intended for general release, it was a project commissioned by another company, but for some reason they either didn't want it in the end, or couldn't afford it, so NB information decided to release it themselves and make a bit of money on their efforts.

A couple of years ago, I had this project on my mind and was looking for a better emulator. I found one quite easily. Pocket DOS. This is a very popular emulator, but it is for Pocket PC and they had nothing for Symbian. I contacted them, and joined their forum. There were loads of requests from NOKIA 9210 owners asking for a Symbian version and their website even said "coming soon", but nothing has ever materialized to this day!

With the constant problems of the NOKIA Communicators having severe software flaws and even hardware flaws in the 9500 (you can't use wi-fi if Bluetooth is turned on), I rejected the 9500 and sent it back to Vodafone. I had never ever considered Pocket PCs because I knew I would miss having a proper keyboard. One magical evening I saw my current phone on the gadget show. You open it up and it looks like a little laptop with a full keyboard, but twist the screen round and fold it back down onto the keyboard and it's a traditional Pocket PC with a large touch screen. Andrew Cornforth had the same device at last years AGM at Newstead station, so if he's still got it, this article will appeal to him especially!

Of course it's Windows Mobile. The dreaded Microsoft! Therefore it does have problems. Somehow the phone functions don't seem as polished as they did on the 9210 and 9500, and it does have its share of lock-ups, but the synchronization just "works". No questions asked, no hair pulled, it works!

Trevor will know about NOKIA synchronisation with the problems trying to synch his 6600! The connection is up and down like a whore's draws!

Finally having a Pocket PC meant that I could finally use Pocket DOS and give it a test. Unfortunately V9T9 didn't work! It comes up with the following message...

ERROR:

This doesn't appear to be an AT or PS/2 system.

Unfortunately for some reason, Pocket DOS refuses to be screen dumped! All I get is my Windows Mobile "Today" screen! I think that Pocket DOS is somehow optimised and using a completely different area of memory to buffer the screen to where the screen capture program is looking!

After all that waiting I thought I was defeated at the final hurdle! Of course, the TI'ers motto is "Nothing is Impossible" and if that isn't the motto then it should be!!!

I wasn't going to be defeated that easily and the idea has been constantly gathering steam. I had recently tried contacting Cory Burr to see if he had any source code that could be ported from the Win994A to Windows Mobile, since WM5.0 uses Visual Studio.NET 2005 for its development.

I've had a bit of a dig at him on the cover as I posted a message on the 99er.net forum at the beginning of May, and at the time of writing it is June 20th and he still hasn't replied!!

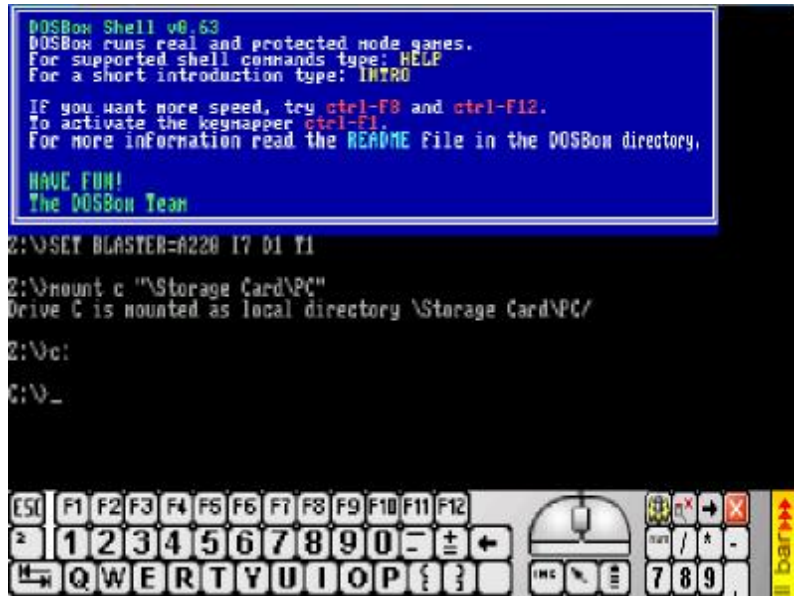
The success of this stage of the Pocket TI is down to Trevor really. We were having one of our weekly meetings and he was using one of our websites of choice.

www.freewarepocketpc.net. The name is fairly self explanatory. It is one of the best collections of freeware for Pocket PC. Up to that point Trevor had not got a DOS emulator on his device and for some reason we decided to check out what they had on [freewarepocketpc](http://www.freewarepocketpc.net).

There were a few and Trevor downloaded a couple of them.

I remember that we didn't do anything with them on that night, but it was still on my mind a few days later and I decided to check out the site again and had a look at them.

I downloaded an emulator called DOSbox and couldn't believe it when it said it emulated a 286 processor. It was written by someone who had a similar problem. He had been trying to run a DOS app that only worked on something greater than a 286, and Pocket DOS for some reason just doesn't cut it!



For probably similar reasons to Pocket DOS, because of the location of the screen buffer, I haven't been able to satisfactorily grab the screen whilst V9T9 was fully up and running, but in the photo on the front cover, that is a genuine TI title screen generated by 28 year old

9900 source code running on V9T9.

However, to prove it does run, here's the V9T9 cartridge menu running on DOSbox →

On the day of writing this, however, I think I've made another breakthrough. I decided to have a look at freeware pocketpc again and see what other emulators they had there.



The discovery I made is that someone took DOSbox and has tweaked it more than slightly! It's claimed to be five times faster than DOSbox!

I tried it and made sure V9T9 runs on it and was amazed. The new version is called pDOSbox and there is a Beta2.0 version. It makes the emulator quite usable and it's quick enough to go into Extended BASIC and start tapping keys and entering a little program!

The first routine I typed was this...

```
10 PRINT A :: A=A+0.001 :: IF A > 10 THEN END  
ELSE GOTO 10
```

It was quite reasonably fast compared to DOSbox. There is a drawback however! pDOSbox is no longer supported and it took quite a while to track down Beta 2.0 as the first link from freewarepocketpc was dead! The major problem with this Beta is that it expired at the end of 2006! The only reason I was able to get it working was because I set my phones calendar back to June 2006 and the program was therefore able to run. This is not a practical solution though, because it started messing with my phones event queue, and I'm not wanting to risk using this method again to run the program!

As I said previously, Windows Mobile is still Microsoft and not to be completely trusted!!! The last time I had problems with my event queue my calendar alarms stopped working and I overlaid one day! It took several reformats and reinstalls and a third party program to fix the event queue before I got everything going again. Very poor in comparison to Symbian!

Fear not though!!! I think I've already found a solution to this too! I managed to track down an email address for the author! I've had circumstances like this before where I'm trying to fix something on old software and I've got an email address. Mostly it ends in failure when I found that the email address is long since dead, after waiting for days or weeks in anti-

pation waiting for the shocker to email me back! On this occasion though, our luck seems to be with us! I got a reply almost instantly and because of a chance coincidence whereby Mozilla Thunderbird lost my Yahoo password I logged in via the Yahoo web page to check my mail. This meant that it informed me that the chap was actually online and we had quite a long chat. He's based in Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia, and unfortunately a couple of years ago two of his family passed away and he lost his full time job and this forced him to shelve the project and he unfortunately left the Beta version so that it still expired!

At the end of our chat though, he said that he would re-visit the application and remove the time-out so that we can run it, and trust me, it does make V9T9 quite usable. I've been toying with the idea of writing a game and I mentioned it in the last issue. I'm not an assembly guru like Mark Wills though, so it will most likely be in Extended BASIC and it won't be really time critical, so the slow speed of the emulation shouldn't affect it really, so if we do get the latest version of pDOSbox working, then I can develop TI software on my phone. I suppose it isn't just Extended BASIC. There really isn't any reason why I can't develop other software. It's not a new unknown TI emulator that I'll be using. It's tried and tested V9T9! Anything that is known to run on V9T9 WILL STILL RUN ON IT. It's just V9T9 that doesn't know it's running on an emulated DOS PC running on a phone!

Watch this space for more information!

I now need to do my duties as group General Secretary and Treasurer. On the next page are the minutes of the meeting...

AGM 2007 meeting minutes

Trevor called the meeting at 2pm and we worked to the following agenda...

I. Comments from committee members.

Trevor was first with his comments.

He commented on the situation of when we were accused of pirating PC99 at the last Nottingham Treff in 2002. At the time Trevor said it wasn't worth wasting much time on, as it's not worth wasting much time writing it up now. I will say that our sympathy goes to Mike Wright who is ill and has suffered mental problems and I think some memory loss.

Trevor also commented that we have recently had another couple of members join the group.

He next commented that he was pleased with the new direction that things are going with the release of new hardware for the TI, particularly the CF7+ Compact Flash system. This is an amazing piece of kit and it is remarkable that someone has dedicated the time to generating the time to develop both the hardware and software.

He finally commented that it is getting quite difficult to find articles for the magazine. We do get some off the internet, but it would be good to get new original articles from our members.

I was next to comment and I'm suffering now because I wasn't able to make any notes while was talking, so I'll have to work from memory.

I remember saying that I'm still working on the group database software for some time and eventually when it is completed it will allow me to keep track of existing members, and it will also automatically produce reminder letters to tell members when they need to renew their subscriptions.

The final member was Francesco Lama, the media librarian.

He has been working for months to get the BBS back online for us. The problem is that the world has become a nasty place of cheap manufacturing. The proper RS232 standard should be a 25-way D connector, despite what is found on desktop PC's these days. It was laptops that started the downward spiral. They first used 9-way serial ports to save space, but cheap manufacturing has led to the same thing being used on desktop machines, and also external modems. This is why Francesco is having trouble getting a modem with a 9-way port to work with the TI. Michael Becker has said that there is a signal that the TI requires that is missing on 9-way ports, but there might be a creative cabling solution that can solve the problem.

Francesco is also of course the media librarian and he commented on the module library. I have included the same module library listing later in the magazine, but I don't know how accurate it is because Francesco commented that he had sold £30 worth of cartridges.

2. Next we had a general discussion about the state of the group and TI*MES newsletter.

We suffer a lack of feedback to requests we have made in TI*MES for help with problems, or requests for articles. It makes me wonder sometimes how many people out there read and enjoy their TI*MES?

There was also the suggestion that in TI*MES we should try and have a supply of interesting routines for BASIC or Extended BASIC that can be typed in, accompanied by a screenshot of the routine running which can be achieved by using a TI-emulator.

We all voted that the membership prices were OK as they are for another year.

The next point of discussion was to create an important role within the group. Berry Harmsen has been appointed as our International Correspondant as he already performs the valuable task of keeping us in contact with both the United States and mainland Europe.

So I will take this opportunity to welcome him into this position.

3. Workshops.

We decided to include a survey in TI*MES to show where our members would prefer us to hold a workshop. We have decided to post out the surveys with TI*MES so that members can make their suggestions.

Preferred method of advertising.

We decided that we need more advertising for the group and we discussed where to advertise and what the best form of advertising would be.

We decided that it might be good to have a My Space page to generate publicity for the group. Lilly Allen managed to launch her pop career from the publicity she got on My Space, so I'm sure it could generate some new members for us.

We also discussed searching for retro computing sites to have possible link-ups with other groups so we can help sustain our groups.

Finally Berry Harmsen gave us some information on the upcoming TI-Treff in Hilversum, which is our next big event in our diary as we have to make up for the fiasco of last year when we were completely screwed over by the amateurs who mis-manage Stanstead Airport!!!

I'll include Berry's information again following my article, but for now. I think I've exhausted my brain and my fingers for another quarter!!!

THE END

BUT...

RICHARD TWYNING WILL RETURN IN...

On Her MajesTI's Secret Service!!!

Berry Harmsen's Treff 2007 Invitation

Invitation for ALL TI users to the 22ND TI Treffen At the TULIP INN Hotel, HILVERSUM

The 22nd edition of the TI Treffen is scheduled for the weekend of September 28th, 29th and 30th, 2007 at hotel Tulip Inn in Hilversum.

At this hotel we will eat, sleep, compute and drink: everything under one roof. The TI Treffen starts at Friday afternoon and will be closed at Sunday noon.

The timetable of the 22nd European TI Treffen:

Friday September 28th

14.00 - 15.00 Arrival of the guests. Rooms will be available and computers can be installed.

16.00 Opening of the 22nd European TI Treffen by the chairman of the TI-GG

18.00 - 24.00 Computing for the real fanatics or... a visit to the city of Amsterdam by train with dinner.

Saturday September 29th

08.00 - 09.00 Breakfast in the hotel

09.00 - 12.30 Computing and demonstrations of the latest TI and Geneve soft- and hardware.

12.30 - 13.30 Lunchtime (meeting of the TI group representatives)

13.30 - 18.00 More TI computing, seminars and an auction sale in a separate room.

18.30 - 20.00 The Treffen dinner in the hotel. Presentation of the Edgar Mauk Awards 2007.

20.00 - 24.00 TI talk in the meeting room or at the bar.

On Saturday there will be a ladies program with a visit to Amsterdam. Details will follow!

Sunday September 30th

08.00 - 09.00 Breakfast in the hotel

09.00 - 12.00 More computing and demonstrations of TI and Geneve soft- and hardware

12.00 End of the 22nd European TI Treffen.

Our Hotel: The TULIP INN Hilversum

Tulip Inn Hilversum is a three star hotel, situated in a tranquil villa area just outside the city centre of Hilversum near the Media Park and the central station of Hilversum. The hotel is reachable from main highway A1 and A27 and has its own parking facilities. The NS railway station is only seven minutes away by foot.

Tulip Inn Hilversum offers 46 comfortable hotel rooms and restaurant Richard with a cosy bar and lounge. There is a business corner with free internet-access. All the rooms offer shower, toilet, television and telephone. The rooms have free access to wireless Internet. The main hall for the Treffen is 122 m² large. On Saturday we'll have an extra room for seminars and demonstrations.

For this TI Treffen we agreed an arrangement (3 days/2 nights) with Two nights bed and breakfast (grand buffet)

On Saturday night: a three course dinner

Information package of Hilversum and Amsterdam

The total price for this arrangement is €89 (about £60) per person in a double room and €119 (about £75) in a single room. The admission for the Treffen is free; a contribution in the cost is rather welcomed. The address of the hotel is...

Tulip Inn Hilversum, Koninginneweg 30, 1217LA Hilversum, tel: +31(0)35 6232444

Internet Information of the hotel: <http://www.tulipinnhilversum.nl>

Information for the 22nd TI Treffen: <http://www.ti-99.nl>

Bookings for the Treffen can be made at: berry.harmsen@wxs.nl or ronald@kalwij.nl

Francesco Lama – Media Librarian

Many thanks to Francesco for supplying us with a new updated module library listing.

MODULE LIBRARY

TITLE	QTY IN STOCK	PRICE (POUNDS)
32k SUPERSPACE (MODIFIED ROMOX)	1	25.00
ADDITION & SUBTRACTION 1	1	3.00
ADVENTURE + PIRATE TAPE (OTHERS TOO)	5	5.00
ADVENTURE MODULE ONLY	4	3.50
ALPINE	3	8.00
A-MAZING	10	3.00
BEGINNING GRAMMAR	4	3.00
BIG FOOT	0	3.50
BLASTO	1	5.00
CAR WARS	1	4.00
CHISHOLM TRAIL	1	3.50
DISK MANAGER	4	2.00
DISK MANAGER 2	1	4.50
DIVISION 1	1	3.00
EDITOR ASSEMBLER + MANUALS & DISKS	4	25.00
EXTENDED BASIC + MANUAL	4	22.50
EXTENDED BASIC MODULE	5	15.00
HOUSEHOLD BUDGET MANAGEMENT	3	3.50
HUNT THE WUMPUS	1	4.00
HUSTLE (EA VERSION ONLY)		2.00
INDOOR SOCCER	1	4.00
JAWBREAKER 2	1	4.00
MINI MEMORY + LINE BY LINE ASS.	3	15.00
MINI MEMORY AS ABOVE + MINI WRITER	2	18.00
MULTIPLAN + SOFTWARE + MANUAL	2	30.00
MULTIPLICATION 1	1	3.00
MUNCHMAN	1	3.50
PARSEC	1	4.00
PERSONAL RECORD KEEPING	4	3.50
PERSONAL REPORT GENERATOR	1	5.50
PHYSICAL FITNESS	1	4.00
PROTECTOR (NOT MK 2 CONSOLES)	3	5.00
PROTYPER	1	20.00
SHAMUS (NOT MK 2 CONSOLES)	2	3.50
SPEECH EDITOR	1	3.50
SUPER EXTENDED BASIC	1	30.00
TERMINAL EMULATOR 2	5	5.00
THE ATTACK	1	4.00
TI INVADERS	1	4.00

MODULE LIBRARY continued...

TI LOGO + FOLDER & MANUAL	1	15.00
TI WRITER MODULE	1	8.00
TOMBSTONE CITY	3	4.00
VIDEO CHESS	1	5.00
VIDEO GAMES 1	1	3.50
YAHTZEE	2	3.00

More information on the CF7+ Supplied by Berry Harmsen...

Compact Flash Drive, Controller and Printer Port to the TI-99/4a

- Emulates three floppy disks at a time (using TI-99/4a file mangement)
- Number of disks only limited by Compact Flash size (up to 1GB)
- Works with Disk Manager 2 and Extended Basic
- Works with Editor/Assembler (requires 32K RAM option)
- Has parallel printer port.
- Power LED plus LEDs for Compact Flash and printer access.
- Requires a 7.5v to 12v DC power supply with 2.1mm barrel connector (center positive).
- **** New **** Power switch allows unit to be turned off with unplugging power supply
- Manual and DOS utilities to move files to/from PC will be e-mailed to winner.
- Includes CFMGR, a disk manager tool written in TI-99/4a assembler.
- Options:
 - 32K RAM - \$7.00
 - Upgrade CF from 32mb to 256 - \$5.00
 - Upgrade CF from 32mb to 512mb - \$10.00
 - New heavy duty power supply (USA only) - \$8.50

Please note no case is offered. Due to TI-99/4a sector size only half of the space on the compact flash is available for use. Item may vary slightly from one pictured. TI console and printer cable are not included.



Supporting the **TI-99/4** and **/4A**, the MYARC GENEVE 9640, Michael Becker SGCPU card, And any other compatible machine.

Eamon Doran – A vintage article followed by an important question

Everyday News

COMPUTER THAT TALKS

A LEADING micro-chip manufacturer, Texas Instruments, announced recently the availability in the UK of a new computer called the TI-99/4 Home Computer. The system is based on the 9900 Family microprocessor, and is the first 16-bit machine to be aimed at the UK domestic market.

Primarily intended for use in the home by *all* the family, this powerful and versatile device will also find many uses and applications in the office, at schools and colleges and in the laboratory.

The brain of the unit is located in a streamlined main Console fitted with a staggered Qwerty keyboard. Total on-board memory supplied is 42 kbytes divided up as 16 kbytes of RAM and 26 kbytes of ROM; 14 kbytes of the latter are devoted to an extremely powerful TI BASIC interpreter. Additional memory can be added.

Basic/Graphics

The in-built TI-BASIC has full floating point 13-digit expanded BASIC fully compatible with ASCII and the basic specifications of ANSI, has 33 statements, 19 system functions and 14 commands. There are powerful editing facilities incorporated, colour graphics, sound and music, and an equation calculator for maths and complex scientific calculations.

The graphical capabilities need to be seen to be believed. The user is able to specify the colour of graphic characters and screen background from a choice of 16 different colours. All 16 colours can be used on the screen at one time. Video resolution is 192 x 256 producing very clearcut displays and this with the colour abilities makes charts and graphs much easier to read and games more exciting and realistic.

Graphic "priority" facility allows graphics to pass behind or in front of others. Most effective for games.

If your graphical requirements are not met by those contained in in-built ROM, you can easily "paint" your own shapes, drawings, pictures and gameboards by calling a special in-built sub-program.

The in-built sound generator permits tunes to be

"composed" when a CALL SOUND program is called up. The notes can cover a five octave range (within 110Hz to 40kHz) with simultaneous 3-note generation to allow chords. A noise source is also included to produce sound effects. All these sounds can be heard through the speaker in the Console.

Even those without programming experience can immediately use the computer to solve problems, use it for personal finance, record keeping, education for the children and entertainment for all the family by using the TI Solid State Software Command Modules. These contain programs in ROM (up to 30 kbytes) and are contained in a cassette-like box which plugs into a slot on the Console. This is not a tape and has no moving parts. The program is available immediately the module is inserted and instructs you what to do. Modules are available for Personal Record Keeping, Statistics, Household Money Management, Pre-school Early Learning Fun, Number Magic, Beginning Grammar, Video Games, and Video Chess. TI are committed to continuing development of "module" programs to meet many needs and interests.

Audio/Visual

The Educational programs for children are of particular interest, where colourful displays are supplemented by sounds and tunes. Even young children after initial instruction can use the machine for learning number, the alphabet and grammar by an audio/visual method.

Accessories for the 99/4 are a pair of 8-position joysticks with action button—ideal for games; a 32-column



Shown here is the first talking computer for the home. Designed by Texas Instruments, it brings push-button computing power into the home for education, personal finance, record keeping and entertainment.



thermal printer with upper and lower case characters, graphics including user defined; floppy disc storage system; a peripheral adaptor for industry standard printers, remote keyboards, acoustic couplers etc; and last but by no means least, a speech synthesizer.

Speech

The speech synthesiser allows your computer to literally speak by simulating the human voice, in a very clear and precise manner. It has a vocabulary of 373 words which can be used as verbal instructions and prompts within programs, and for message purposes, from typed in material. Plug-in

word modules will allow, e.g., medical, legal, technical and other specialised vocabularies to be handled as well as foreign languages.

A noteworthy design feature of the TI peripherals is the elimination of interconnecting cables. Peripherals simply plug into the side of an adjoining one.

The computer can be connected to a video colour monitor or a colour TV set equipped with an NTSC video input connector. These will be available from 99/4 stockists.

The Home Computer Console is guaranteed for a period of 12 months and will cost from £990 including the TV set. The unit can be purchased separately for £650.

Eamons Question...

When a program is saved on disk what format is used. For example I know if a program is listed via the rs232 it is in DV80 format and it cannot be loaded back as a program which you can run so it has to be typed in again. Is there a way to do this without re-typing the program?

Richard Twyning's answer...

Somebody will have to shout at me if I get the first bit of this answer wrong! However, the way I understand it is that when a normal BASIC or Extended BASIC program is saved on disk it actually uses the "PROGRAM" format which is also used by Editor Assembler for storing what we call Option 5 programs, simply because option five in the Editor Assembler is for loading assembly programs that are saved in the PROGRAM format.

I read up on the PROGRAM format once. It seems to be a very quick way of loading data or programs. I say data because GRAPHX actually stores its images in PROGRAM format too! It's not just for executable programs.

The PROGRAM format relies on an operation built into the disk controller DSR. It is a special routine, and correctly me, because I probably will be wrong, but you supply the routine with some basic information such as the name of the file, the starting sector on disk and the number of bytes to write or load and then branch to the routine (with a standard BLWP I think) and the DSR LOAD or SAVE routine will then do all the hard work for you and do a very fast transfer of the data to or from the disk.

For those out there who aren't Mark Wills, a BLWP is what makes our 9900 processor better than other machines. Branch and Load Workspace Pointer is what it means and it points to a thing called a "Transfer Vector" which is simply two words of memory that contain the address of a new workspace and the new program counter address. Therefore the DSR routine has its very own set of registers to play with in a different part of memory and when it returns (RTWP) and passes control back to our calling routine, our registers are completely untouched and we've not had to shove loads of data about into ludicrous locations called "stack". Not having stack is what gives the TI a lot of its speed and it also annoys me that the TMS9900 was overlooked as it was, because it is the best architecture ever designed for handling multi-tasking.

Converting Text back into an executable program...

This is impossible! ☺ Not the answer you were expecting? Don't worry, we're talking about the TI and as we know, very few things are impossible! You cannot convert text listing into a PROGRAM format Extended BASIC program that can be loaded in. However, I KNOW there IS a utility (because I remember using it years ago) that will convert a D/V80 text file into a MERGE format file that can be

MERGED into Extended BASIC. I can't remember what format MERGE uses, but it's readable and writable by Extended BASIC and I believe that the utility is actually written in Extended BASIC.

Once you have run the D/V80 listing through the utility and you have a MERGE file on disk, you will have to type NEW to erase any existing code from memory and then MERGE in the new merge file.

If everything has worked correctly and the program has converted OK, then you can SAVE it out as normal and it will become a PROGRAM format file.

For some reason this rule breaks down if your Extended BASIC program is so large that it takes up some of the actual 32K card. In this case I think it creates something like an INT/VAR 254 file. It is so sad that I've not used a TI enough over the last few years to remember this, so somebody out there who knows what they're doing can correct me on this! ☺

Berry Harmsen our International Correspondent reports on the Poole Meeting. Hopefully a wake-up call for our illusive members!

A weekend in Poole.

The UK TI group still exists. And I am very glad of that, because I have been a group member for several years and have many friends there. But the group has had some difficulties.

Three years ago the TI-UG-UK (Texas instruments Users Group of the United Kingdom) nearly passed away.

Then the chairman (Trevor Stevens) and the secretary (Richard Twynning) made a successful attempt to give the group new life. Meanwhile the club's magazine **TI*MES** is regular again and several **meetings are organised. But these meetings are unfortunately poorly visited.** Still enough users in the United Kingdom remained on the members list, but **they do not show up at the club meetings.** In Poole there were but about nine persons present (including me). We met in Poole Sports Centre. A little bit of a dirty place, but room enough and easy to reach. After all I had a nice weekend and also a useful weekend. These are the main issues of this workshop:

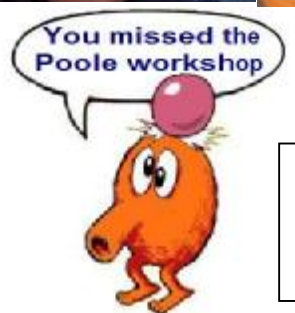
- Richard and Trevor have been busy installing the emulator V9T9 on their mobile phones. After many attempts Richard succeeded by installing using a DOS emulator. The TI system works fine, but unfortunately terribly slowly!
- In Poole I have demonstrated the possibilities of Compact Flash cards on the TI-99. First in combination with the CF7+ sidecar peripheral of Jaime Malilong and after that with the IDE card of Thierry Nospikel and the software of Fred Kaal.
- The group has an enormous program library. The committee of TI-UG-UK made an agreement to convert this information to the DSK format and spread it in CD form. Francesco Lama will take care of those activities.
- The magazine TI*MES has a large need for articles (just like the Dutch group). For that reason we will exchange articles with our English sister association. Also software will be exchanged.

- The Treffen in Hilversum is partly financed by the TI-UG-UK. The money for the Treffen was officially handed over to me during the AGM. This made the organisation of Hilversum a safe affair.
- The group will organise another workshop next year. There will be an inquiry under the members to find out how much members are interested and what the best location is. The expectation is that the next workshop will be in the neighbourhood of Crewe; an important railway centre.

Between the computer sessions we visited a couple of nice pubs and restaurants. The board members of the TI-UG-UK will be present (with spouse) in Hilversum. There we will look back on this nice weekend in Poole.

BH

Photos of the event...



VISIT HOLLAND
FOR THE DYKES ;-)

Comparison of available TI-99/4A emulators/simulators Courtesy of Eric Bray

	Classic 99	M.E.S.S.	PC99	TI994w	V9T9	Win994a
Version		.094b	Stage 6	2.1a	v6.0	3.008
Supported TI-99/4A console features						
TMS9900	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes		Yes
TMS9918A	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes		Yes
V9938		Yes				
Memory		Yes	Yes			Yes
Write-only registers		Yes	Yes			Yes
Display modes		Yes	Yes			Yes
Colors		Yes	Yes			Yes
Sprites		Yes	Yes			Yes
TMS9901 Programmable Systems Interface			Yes			Yes
TMS9919 Sound Processor	Yes	Yes		Yes		Yes
Standard PC			Note 1			
PC with Sound Blaster			Yes			Yes
TI console joystick port			Note 2			
Standard PC			Note 2			Yes
PC with game port	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes		Yes
TI console cassette port		Yes	Note 3			Yes
TI console command module port		Yes	Yes			Yes
TI command module bank switching		Yes	Yes			Yes
TI GROMs		Yes	Yes			Yes
TI console keyboard		Yes	Note 4	Yes		Yes
TI memory map		Yes	Yes			Yes
Supported Peripheral features						
TI 32K memory expansion card		Yes	Yes			Yes
Myarc 512K memory expansion card		Yes	Yes			
AMS memory card		Yes	Yes			
HSGPL GROM/GRAM card		Yes				
Super Space II			Yes			
TI disk controller card		Yes	Yes			Yes
Guion disk controller			Yes			
BwG floppy disk controller card		Note 8				
Myarc disk controller card			Yes			
TI hard disk controller card					Note 7	
Myarc hard/floppy disk controller card		Yes				
IDE controller card		Yes				
SCSI card						
TI RS232 primary card		Yes	Yes			Yes
TI RS232 secondary card			Yes			
Guion RS232 card			Yes			

Supporting the **TI-99/4** and **/4A**, the MYARC GENEVE 9640, Michael Becker SGCPU card,
And any other compatible machine.

Emulator Table Continued

	Classic 99	M.E.S.S.	PC99	TI994w	V9T9	Win994a
Version		.094b	Stage 6	2.1a	v6.0	3.008
PC99 "card"			Note 5			
TI p-Code card			Yes			
TI Speech Synthesizer		Yes	Note 6			Yes
Minimum required PC setup						
Windows 98	Yes	Yes				Yes
ME 2000	Yes	Yes				Yes
XP	Yes	Yes				Yes
Direct X 8	Yes	Yes				Yes
Ease of Installation						Yes

Notes

- 1 - PC99 only emulates sound channel 1 with standard PC.
- 2 - Emulated using PC ALT function keys (<F1>-<F10>).
- 4 - PC99 does not support TI multiples shift modes.
- 5 - Software only "card" which emulates the CorComp Triple Tech clock.
- 6 - Software functions of the TMS5200 are fully emulated but no audible sound is generated.
- 7 - Modified hard disk controller card
- 8 - BwG has opt for hard clock & file stamping

The best 25 programs for the TI – by Berry Harmsen



THE BEST TI-99/4A PROGRAMS

On the occasion of the last Chicago TI faire Ernie Pergrem has taken the initiative to organise a poll for voting the 25 bests TI-99/4A programs. Mike Wright had already published in the magazine Compute!

Magazine in July 1986 the election of "The top five freeware programs for your 99/4A". As best five the following program were voted:

Fast-Term, Disk manager 1000, Funlwriter, Neatlist, and Mass Copy

In November 2006 there were in total 32 reactions, each with on average 22 programs. That brings the total on 710 votes. There were 319 different programs. About 30% of the votes were for games. The list of the top 25 favourite programs for TI-99/4 was the following, classified towards popularity.

- | | | | | | |
|----|---------------------|----|-------------------|----|-------------------|
| 1 | Parsec | 2 | Funnelweb | 3 | TI Extended Basic |
| 4 | Archiver | 5 | Disk Utilities | 6 | TI Invaders |
| 7 | Editor/Assembler | 8 | Disk Manager 1000 | 9 | Telco |
| 10 | Microsoft Multiplan | 11 | Tunnels of Doom | 12 | Munchman |

13	TI Base	14	TI Writer	15	Menu
16	Magic File Manipulator	17	DM2K	18	Adventure
19	C-99	20	TI Artist	21	RAG Assembler
22	Boot	23	Donkey Kong	24	Advanced Diagnostics
25	MG Explorer				

If the votes on all versions of Extended Basic would be added up, then this programme would become second. You could state that the programs BOOT and MENU are varieties of the same programme. They however have been processed in the final score as separate programs.

Ernie Pergrem is on the right in this picture...



ROB TEMPELMANS PLAT AWARD 2006

The Rob Tempelmans Plat Award is a combined initiative of the Chicago TI Users Group and the Dutch TI Gebruikersgroep. The purpose of this award is to honour the TI-er who has produced the best internet site for the TI community. This award is named after the Dutch employee of Texas Instruments, Rob Tempelmans Plat, who, in 1983, wrote the first assembler program to allow the TI-99/4A to access VIDITEL, a preliminary version of the web.



The winner of the Rob Tempelmans Plat Award for the year 2006 was the site TI-99/4A Videogame House of the American Bryan Roppolo from Boulder, Colorado . The site was chosen from a shortlist of six TI sites. A jury of six visitors to the Chicago TI Faire preferred this site above the five other. You can find the site on the following URL:

<http://www.videogamehouse.net/about.html>

Here are the main characteristics of this site:

- The site TI-99/4A Videogame House occupy themselves with the game modules, which have been produced in the course of time for the TI-



99/4A. You find there information concerning the TI modules and those of third parties. And attention is exhaustively given on the game modules for the TI-99/4A and MBX Games system. This system of Milton Bradley is connected on the joystick port and cassette port of the TI and has voice recognition and 360° analogue joystick.

- The aim of the site is to not only give details of what is available for the TI-99/4A, but also gives information on the programmers of the game. There are for example e-mail addresses of a number of programmers with which you can make contact.
- On the site you find the poll result for the top 10 TI-99/4A games 2006. Here too, the winner was the module PARSEC, just like in the election of 25 of the best TI-99 program. The module "Hunt the Wumpus" was second. On the first ten games 13,621 votes were cast! Are there still so many TI games fanatics?!?!?
- People of Videogame house work rapidly behind the baffles to find new games and get them on the site. The last discoveries concerned the games of Funware, which had not previously been released. It concerned the modules Lobster Bay, Ant Colony, and Schnoz-Ola. As more are rediscovered you can expect more in the future



- The site brings BREAKING NEWS regularly to announce unknown games modules for the TI. The last time much information came out on the modules of Milton Bradley, Funware and had unknown information on

● TOP 10 TI-99/4A GAMES 2006 ●	
Game	Votes
1. Parsec	4256
2. Hunt The Wumpus	2820
3. Munch Man	1540
4. Tunnels of Doom	1443
5. Donkey Kong	1001
6. Alpiner	965
7. Pac-Man/Tombstone City	648
8. Burgertime	458
9. Popeye	280
10. TI Invaders	210

MBX modules. You find also files of older TI modules such as video games 1. this module contains three simple videos games: Pot-Shot, Pinball, and Doodle.

With the site TI Mainbyte of Ron Reuter (RTPA-2004) and the TI Tech site of Thierry Nospikel (RTPA-2005) and now the site TI-99/4A Videogame house (RTPA-2006) there are three excellent sites with much information for the TI-99/4A and related hardware. This year will be the fourth distribution of the Rob Tempelmans plat Award. I am excited to see who the winner will be! BH

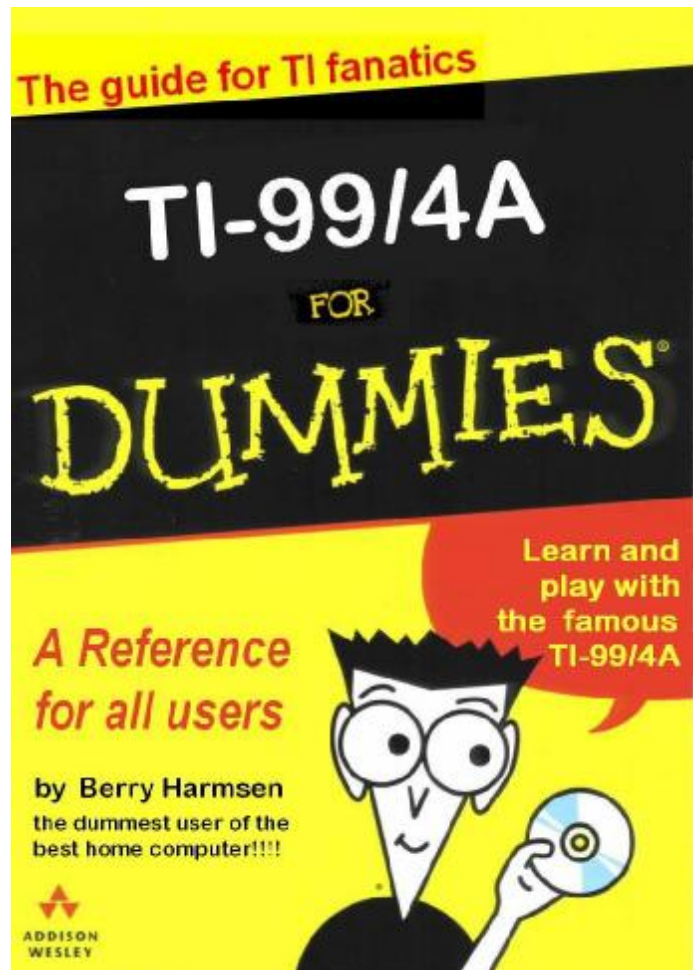
Current state of room bookings for Hilversum. Come on, we need more representatives of the UK group!!!

	Single rooms	Double rooms
1	Wout Verhey	Wolfgang Bertsch
2	Peter v Kleunen	Ronald Kalwij
3	Bern Laboranowitsch	Marcel de Gier
4	J-E Hartwig	Stulen/vd Boor
5	Fred Kaal	Francesco Lama
6	Berry Harmsen*	Richard Twynning*
7	Gerard Meekers	Trevor Stevens*
8	Philip vd Vliet	Michael Becker
9	Martin Zeddies	Oliver Arnold
10	Goetz Feuerstein	
11		

* arrives on
September, 27th

Berry Harmsen will also
return...

There will certainly be more
from Berry Harmsen in the next
issue of TI*MES. 😊



Clive Scally has TI equipment available

Clive recently wrote to me to tell me that he still has LOTS of TI equipment available. And by the sounds of it, it IS LOTS!!!!

We need a willing volunteer who could maybe collect the equipment and even store it while it is distributed. Clive is happy to donate the equipment for the benefit of the group and the main thing that we require is an expanded system with a PEB box for Thierry Nospikel so that he has some real hardware to use to develop his USB card.

We would be very grateful if there is anyone out there who can help us collect the equipment from Clive.

Here's Clive's message...

Dear Richard

How are you?

Thanks for keeping me informed and sending out the TI*MES which is getting more colourful with every issue.

I would have liked to join you at Poole AGM as I have an in law who lives in Bournemouth. However due to health reasons I will be giving it a miss. I will look forward to the next TI*MES with a report on the event.

Can you please tell all those who attend POOLE that I have still got in storage lots of TI99/4a gear, so if any one wants to collect this from my shop located in Birkenhead Wirral a word of warning, it will fill a couple of car boots. I am happy to donate this to for the benefit of TI99 User Group.

PLEASE NOTE MY CHANGE OF HOME ADDRESS

I have Moved From 56 West Vale Neston (trying to move on in my life due to the loss of Audrey RIP)

Tel 01244 880 580

Very Best wishes and regards to you and all

Thomas CLIVE SCALLY

**If anyone wants to contact Clive by email,
his address is: thomas@promshop.wanadoo.co.uk**

Your help is greatly appreciated.

Coming next issue...

Mark Wills will have a sprite designing program to type in, with an accompanying article.

There will be full documentation for the CF7+.

There is a PC utility called CS1er which is a TI-99/4A tape converter written by Dean Corcoran.

Also, there will be a report on the Hilversum TI-Treff, but as so many of you "WILL" be joining us there, you can tell us what happened! ;-)



We decided to revamp our back cover lady. I couldn't decide, so for this issue there's two ;-)

Why have one when you can have two at twice the price!!!

The lady on the left is a character from the most excellent game Resident Evil 4 for the Nintendo Gamecube and Wii. It deserves a mention here because Nintendo are killing Microsoft in the video game market with their excellent Wii console! **THE END!** 😊