

Pebble Mill at One

Well it seems like only yesterday, i was writing my Christmas report for 1999 and here we are into December 2000, how time has passed, at least this year I have become more familiar with computers. I still have a lot to learn about them, as I found when I had another attempt to get the joystick working, what with down loading up dated drivers for it & telephone calls at peak times to logitech & creative, & swopping files around to clear space on the hard drive. I managed to loose files & some of the programmes would not work. After 3 days of trying to rectify the problem without success I had to seek help from the local computer shop, after a day I was informed that files had got corrupted & Win 95 would have to be reloaded. I didn't have a proper authorised disc or certificate so after a thought I left it with the shop. The result I had a bill for nearly £100, it is working ok now.

At least in 2000 I managed to attend most of the rallies, except Stockland Green, which I have found was cancelled because of alterations at the centre, its doubtful if rallies will be held there again. I Also managed to take the 10 ele 2m beam down. I still have not re-erected it, there's all next year. I also re-visited Pebble Mill after 26yrs, that was in November. I tried to arrange the visit for stars members but it was not possible to take large parties round. I was in the gallery while midlands today was going out, there is a lot of preparation that goes into the production & staff to have the programme on air for 30 mins. It takes nearly a day to prepare to fit into the time slot, everything is timed to the last second. It was interesting, I wish some of the club members could have been there, their gallery could only accommodate 2 guests and their 8 staff & 4 camera operators in the studio.

I enjoyed the November sale even though I had to take some of the items back home, and I was not on my own, seems to be the sign of the times money seems tight, it was a good meeting.

Well that seems to be all for the year 2000 see you soon.

All the very best 73s for Christmas & the New year 2001.

Malcolm G8BOP the roving reporter.

RUSH JOB CALENDAR

1. This is a special calendar for handling rush jobs. All rush jobs are wanted yesterday. With this calendar a job can be ordered on the 7th and delivered on the 3rd.
2. Most jobs are required by Friday, so there are three Fridays in every week.
3. Five new days are added to each month to allow for end-of-the-month panic jobs.
4. There is no 1st of the month, thus avoiding late delivery of the previous month's last-minute panic jobs.
5. Monday morning hangovers are abolished, together with non-productive weekends.
6. A new day - Negotiation day, has been introduced, keeping the other days free for uninterrupted panic.

See back page for calendar

electoral chaos

UK experts debate Internet voting in light of US electoral chaos

The uncertainty and controversy surrounding the US presidential election has prompted some UK pundits to suggest a move towards Internet voting.

Others warn however, that such a step could lead the electoral process into even worse problems. "We think it's bound to come," says chief executive of the Electoral Reform Society Ken Ritchie. "It would just be much more efficient"

Ritchie believes that simplicity and efficiency of Internet voting would not only make the electoral process cleaner and more efficient, it would also encourage more people to cast their vote. "Undoubtedly that would be the case," he says.

Online voting was even tried out for the US presidential election by a one Web site, Votehere.net, which ran a pilot scheme in California and Arizona. It claims that all votes were counted in minutes and were split evenly between Democrat candidate Al Gore and Republican George Bush.

It's not just electoral pundits that are interested in the idea of online voting, either. Technology firms are keen to get Internet users to cast their vote over the net. "The technology that allows secure electronic voting is here today," says Tim Dunn, UK business development manager at Irish-based security company Baltimore Technologies. "This would send a great message to the world about Britain being the e-business capital."

There are, however, concerns over the fairness of operating such a system for major political elections, as Alan Duncan, Conservative shadow technology minister, explains. "Personally I am against it," he says. "The most important thing is that not everyone has a laptop or a home computer and any voting system should be equal."

Increased remote voting might have a serious influence on the impartiality of elections,

according to Nicholas Bohm, a member of UK government think-tank Information Policy Research (FIPR). He says that it could have a serious impact on the fairness of an election by removing the protection that anonymity affords to a voter.

There are also more practical concerns concerning the security of online voting, however, as Ritchie concedes. "Our big questions are do we have security in place. How can we be sure that if someone is voting from home we know it's the right person?"

High tech security companies argue that they could make any electronic system equally, if not more, secure than conventional voting. They say that encryption, which uses secured digital keys to lock and unlock computer data could be used to secured votes in transit to avoid tampering and also used to digital "sign" votes so that they are authenticated. "It is the fairest and most accurate means of voting and it is reliable," counters Dunn. "With digital signature technology, individual users will be armed with a non-refutable 'online identity' to protect their right to vote".

Bohm, however, points out that the security of home computers would also need to be guaranteed. "There are many security issues that need to be reviewed," he says.

Digital signatures technology may also have a darker side. Some concerned about online privacy and freedom believe that the emergence of digital identities could lead to greater government monitoring and control of citizens. "If a government can achieve a system of this kind, its usually very bad at protecting the privacy of it," says Bohm.



An antivirus firm warns of advanced Hybris. Other experts say it's software's equivalent of an overweight platypus

Whiz-bang new features can sell software, but will they make a computer virus spread faster?

Several antivirus firms warned users this week of a new worm that uses encrypted plug-ins to change features, can camouflage itself in an email written in one of four languages, and uses newsgroups to communicate with its brethren.

Called Hybris, the Internet worm is "perhaps the most complex and refined malicious code in the history of virus writing", said Eugene Kaspersky, head of antivirus research firm Kaspersky Lab, in a statement Monday.

That doesn't mean it's more dangerous, said Vincent Gulotto, director of Network Associates' antivirus emergency response team. "We have seen some technically good viruses that don't become successful and poorly written ones that do become successful," he said. "Technology itself won't make the difference between a huge outbreak like Melissa [and a dud] -- social engineering will make the difference."

Both Network Associates and Kaspersky Lab have added protections against the worm to their newest antivirus definitions, said both companies.

Written as a Windows 32-bit application, Hybris appears as in attachment to an email message from someone the victim knows. The email's subject line and body, as well as the name of the attachment, can be written in English, French, Spanish, or Portuguese, and generally refers to sex or pornography. The sender will appear to be "Hahaha".

If the user opens the attachment, Hybris infects the Windows networking software, known as Winsock32.dll, on the host computer, and will store a copy of itself in the Windows system directory. The worm then essentially wiretaps the computers, looking for email messages to which to send itself.

Perhaps the most advanced feature of the worm is its support for up to 32 encrypted plug-ins that it can download from the Internet. With the plug-ins, any of the worm's

attributes can be changed, including how it infects the text it includes in email and from where it downloads new updates. "The components themselves give the virus writer the possibility to modify his creation 'in real time', and in fact allow him to control infected computers worldwide," said the Moscow-based Kaspersky in a statement.

Kaspersky Lab has already identified five plug-ins that

- infect all ZIP and RAR archives on a computer's hard drives
- send messages with encode plug-ins to the virus research newsgroup alt.comp.virus
- find and infect machines that have already been compromised with the well-known SubSeven backdoor
- encrypt copies of itself to avoid detection
- create random subject, body, and file names in four languages.

Last weekend, the alt.comp.virus newsgroup was swamped with almost 3,000 messages from the worm, containing what looked like garbage text. In reality, the mangled text consisted of new features that the worm could download from the Web.

That's analogous to the virus scene at large, said Rob Rosenberger, editor of the Virus Myths home page and a frequent antivirus industry critic. "There is so much trashy virus material out there, this seems to be one that has the A-V industry earning their pay for once," Rosenberger said.

He acknowledged that the worm had some interesting features, but said Kaspersky's warning added up to a shrewd public relations move. "They are not the first to do so, and they definitely won't be the last," Rosenberger said.

Despite the Russian company's warning, the writer of Hybris may have been more interested in creating cool technology than in creating a worm that spreads.

Not all virus and worm writers aim to infect other people's computer, said "Evul", a virus writer and webmaster of Coderz.net, a site where interested programmers can exchange their code. "Some writers are extremely

skilled and do code things which are extremely challenging," Evul said. Other writers "like to see [their viruses] go nuts".

Many writers copy viruses already available, adding little that is original. For that reason, virus writers are generally denigrated as poor programmers.

In many cases, however, it's those poorly programmed viruses and worms that do the most damage, said Fred Cohen, a computer science professor and independent security consultant. "All the viruses that we know about are the big, bold ones," he said. "On the other hand, there are some viruses that are relatively successful, but you don't even know they are there."

Cohen believes that the only way to stop computer viruses is to put an end to "mobile code" such as script and macros. "We can't do much to stop people from writing viruses, but we do have control over the environment," he said.

Who made these up?

The following dumb laws are actually true in England. They were found on the Internet, web address: www.dumblaws.com/countries/england.html

- With the exception of carrots, most goods may not be sold on Sunday. **(Repealed)**
- All English males over the age 14 are to carry out 2 or so hours of longbow practice a week supervised by the local clergy.
- London Hackney Carriages (taxis/cabs) must carry a bale of hay and a sack of oats.
- It is illegal to be drunk on Licensed Premises (in a pub or bar).
- It is illegal for two adult men to have sex in the same house as a third person.
- Chelsea Pensioner may not be impersonated.
- A bed may not be hung out of a window.
- It is illegal for a lady to eat chocolates on a public conveyance.
- Mince pies are not to be eaten on Christmas Day.
- Any boy under the age of 10 may not see a naked manequin.
- It is illegal to leave baggage unattended.
- Picking up abandoned baggage is an act of terrorism.
- Those wishing to use a television must buy a license.
- It is illegal for a Member of Parliament to enter the House of Commons wearing a full suit of armour.
- If a steam locomotive is driven on roads, a man must walk in front of the vehicle with a red flag during the day and a red lantern at night to warn passers by.
- All steam locomotives are limited to 4mph on roads.
- You may not make out in public.
- It is legal for a male to urinate in public, as long it is on the rear wheel of his motor vehicle and his right hand is on the vehicle.
- Committing suicide is classified as a capital crime. **(Repealed)**
- Interfering with the mail or sleeping with the consort of the Queen is classed as treason, and as such, carries a maximum penalty of death. **(Repealed 1998)**
- Placing a postage stamp that bears the Queen (or King) upside down is considered treason.

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RULES OF THE AIR

1. Every takeoff is optional. Every landing is mandatory.
2. If you push the stick forward, the houses get bigger. If you pull the stick back, they get smaller. That is, unless you keep pulling the stick all the way back, then they get bigger again.
3. Flying isn't dangerous. Crashing is what's dangerous-
4. It's always better to be down here wishing you were up there than up there wishing you were down here.
5. The ONLY time you have too much fuel is when you're on fire.
6. The propeller is just a big fan in front of the plane used to keep the pilot cool. When it stops, you can actually watch the pilot start sweating.
7. When in doubt, hold on to your altitude. No one has ever collided with the sky.
8. A 'good' landing is one from which you can walk away- A 'great' landing is one after which they can use the plane again-
9. Learn from the mistakes of others. You won't live long enough to make all of them yourself.
10. You know you've landed with the wheels up if it takes full power to taxi to the ramp.
11. The probability of survival is inversely proportional to the angle of arrival. Large angle of arrival, small probability of survival and vice versa.
12. Never let an aircraft take you somewhere your brain didn't get to five minutes earlier
3. Stay out of clouds. The silver lining everyone keeps talking about might be another air plane going in the opposite direction. Reliable sources also report that mountains have been known to hide out in clouds.
14. Always try to keep the number of landings you make equal to the number of take offs you've made.
15. There are three simple rules for making a smooth landing. Unfortunately no one knows what they are.
16. You start with a bag full of luck and an empty bag of experience. The trick is to fill the bag of experience before you empty the bag of luck.
17. Helicopters can't fly: they're just so ugly the earth repels them.
18. If all you can see out of the window is ground that's going round and round and all you can hear is commotion coming from the passenger compartment, things are not at all as they should be.
19. In the ongoing battle between objects made of aluminium going hundreds of miles per hour and the ground going zero miles per hour, the ground has yet to lose.
20. Good judgement comes from experience. Unfortunately the experience usually comes from bad judgement.
21. It's always a good idea to keep the pointy end going forward as much as possible.
22. Keep looking around. There's always something you've missed.
23. Remember, gravity is not just a good idea. It's the law And it's not subject to repeal.
24. The three most useless things to a pilot are the altitude above you, runway behind you, and a tenth of a second ago.

