

# DISKUSSION

Issue 2

## What price safety?

At Cumana we believe that safety should be the first consideration when designing equipment, especially as the computer peripherals we deal in, often come into contact with children at home and at school. We have invested over £50,000 in manufacturing and test equipment to enable our products to pass the rigorous tests carried out by the British Electro-Technical Approvals Board.

As a result, Cumana disk drives now carry the BEAB approved kite mark which is a guarantee of electrical safety and conform to BS415. This also means that we cannot change or modify designs without having written permission from BEAB.

All our disk drives have no ventilation slots or other spaces where prying fingers can stray. We take the natural curiosity and devilment of children into consideration when designing all our equipment and have even developed extra special safe plugs for use in schools.

We know that electrical accidents can be fatal and must concern everybody. So many products in our field are brought into the marketplace with insufficient research development and testing and are therefore potentially dangerous. We therefore not only want to have a reputation as the best name in memory but also the safest.



**WIN A CUMANA  
DISK DRIVE**

See inside page



Technician Keith Goldsmith at work in Cumana's new development building, with Heather Howell, the sales director.

## Looking to the future

On February 7th it was 'Open House' at Cumana to celebrate our expansion into 10,000 square feet of purpose-built premises on the Pines Trading Estate, Guildford. We are retaining our original 6,800 sq. feet building on the same site as warehouses but we have moved administration and development into the new premises.

A number of journalists and top distributors were taken on a conducted tour of the new buildings and offices. Particular interest was taken in the new development building and a display of Cumana's latest product range. A Touchpad and other equipment was set up for anybody to have a go at. A buffet lunch and drinks were served and a good time was had by all! During the day it was generally discussed how, at Cumana, we have had to react swiftly to rapid changes in the computer marketplace to stay in the forefront of technology. We see 1985 as a year of consolidation. We will diversify and expand further to retain our position in the fierce computer marketplace. We have

signed distributor agreements with Acorn, for the Electron Microcomputer and Torch for the Z80 disk pack and ZEP 100 expansion card which upgrades the BBC model B from a home computer into a business machine.

We intend to increase our market share in Continental Europe. We have an office in Germany and regular visits are made to France and other European countries.





## New Products Manager

We at Cumana are always looking to the future and developing new, user-friendly peripherals for the rapidly-changing computer marketplace. To assist towards this end, we appointed, last November, a New Product Engineering Manager. He is Phil Pirie who is thirty-four and gained his first computer experience with ICL, as a service engineer. From there, Phil progressed to Racal Recorders as part team on a printer product range, which was designed for use with a wide range of computers - from home micros to

business applications. Phil then joined a computer peripherals company, where he became regional manager for their service centre. Here, they repaired and maintained VDU's, intelligent terminals, printers and microcomputers. Following this, and just prior to joining Cumana, Phil was employed by Astec, one of the largest switch-mode power supply manufacturers, who supply to all major computer manufacturers. Here, Phil was product manager on computer-related products.

## CUMANA HELP MOUNTBATTEN PROJECT FOR THE DEAF

Cumana had a call to help research into the sub-titling of programmes which did not fall on "deaf" ears. As a consequence, a disk drive has been donated to help the Mountbatten Research Project.

This project, which is based at Southampton University, arose from work in developing methods of sub-titling programmes for Independent Television. When the original project ended, the Mountbatten Trust funded a new project which concerned itself with subtitling for deaf children of all ages in schools, and the production of a cheap method to enable teachers to do it themselves. David Martin, headmaster of a primary school in Banbury, who asked Cumana to contribute, is working on the most effective ways of placing sub-titles onto video tapes with a BBC micro.

He has been working with the children in the special deaf unit at his school. He hopes that it will be possible for the school to make their own video tapes and subtitle them according to age, understanding and reading ability. They will also have a go at sub-titling T.V. programmes. The problem with this is that on some programmes the speech is very fast. BBC subtitlers have found for instance that on Blue Peter the presenters speak at the rate of 200 words per minute! This may need to be reduced to 60 or less words to be understood by the children. Mr. Martin, who has been field testing in order to help iron out faults in the software, will be on secondment at Oxford Polytechnic from Easter so that he can contribute to the project on a full-time basis.

His aim is to prove this system works and can be used by teachers all over the Country and even by older pupils themselves. In this way television programmes can become more meaningful for many deaf children. However, because of lack of funds Mr. Martin has had to put together a 'shopping list' of computer hardware that he and his teacher colleagues need for the research and has called upon U.K. companies to contribute with donations - hence the call to Cumana.

We wish them well and look forward to hearing about developments.

## What the papers say...

The East Kilbride News in their Computer Review section on January 18th had these kind words to say about our after sales service . . .

"We often hear about horror stories regarding manufacturers of computer equipment after the equipment has been purchased and by this I mean a dreadful after-sales service. One company of which I had experience would certainly not come into this category. I had a slight problem with my Cumana disk drive and

on contacting the company I have never seen a company more eager to rectify the problem even to the point of phone calls in the evening from employees with helpful advice until the problem had been sorted.

In my book they most certainly rate as the company of the year for after-sales service. On the other hand, our Commodore 64 was sent for repair in the middle of December and at the present moment we're still trying to get it back."

## Bringing Computers into the

Last summer 100 Community Computer Camps took place in Britain. Each one was local and independently run but with guidance from Community Computers UK, a branch of Inter-Action Trust. The Trust hope that this figure will increase to 500 by the end of 1987, involving up to 100,000 young people. Community Computers UK also help people set up clubs, playschemes and other educational computer projects. The aim of a Community Computer project is to bring the world of computers to young people in a "learning-through-fun" approach. The emphasis is on disadvantaged young people who might not otherwise enter the world of computers except through games. Ed Berman MBE, founder of Inter-Action, maintains that only with projects like this "can the nation ensure that

computers do not inadvertently widen the social and opportunity gap that exists between young people of different backgrounds."

The non-residential camps are run from local community centres or schools by neighbourhood volunteers with grants from local authorities and equipment from computer manufacturers. Groups wishing to set up a camp can apply for an Urban Aid grant funded jointly by their local authority and the Department of Environment. Inter-Action Trust have set up a service to give free advice to those wanting to create their own Camp or other Community Computer project. They would eventually like to form a National Federation of Community Computer Camps.

Cumana were asked to contribute to this worthwhile scheme, which has already helped over 10,000 young people, including large numbers of girls, ethnic minority youngsters and the handicapped. Our immediate response to this request was an unreserved YES. Any project which can potentially help thousands of disadvantaged youngsters into areas of employment and learning must be a good thing.

We have therefore donated a number of disk drives, interfaces and peripherals, such as the versatile and novel graphic plotting aid, the Touchpad, which is now compatible on ICL one per desk, Sinclair





## COVER-UP!

We have recently expanded our operation to include a new range of equipment covers. Initially, the range comprises covers for Cumana's single and dual 5 1/4" disk drives, and a keyboard cover for the BBC micro. Manufactured from hard-wearing translucent PVC, the covers are of stitched construction, with all seams and edges taped.

Cumana also supplies a range of other accessories, including diskette head cleaners and anti-static sprays.

## Cumana Disk Drive spends weekend in ditch and survives

A special school for children with learning difficulties, in Brighton, suffered a severe blow when they learnt of the disappearance of their Acorn BBC computer, a Cumana disk drive, a cassette recorder, 15 specially-prepared teaching disks and two computer trucks which are educational toys to help with maths studies, after a break-in in February.

Children and staff were devastated as they had spent two terms furiously raising £800 for the equipment. They have had the computer for less than a year and already it was in full use and proving invaluable to their studies.

However, an appeal in the local paper and radio by the school's headmistress, and a warning that the equipment had been treated with bright yellow security paint which cannot be removed without

ruining the equipment, paid dividends. The thieves dumped the computer on the school's back doorstep, muddy and damaged beyond repair, a few days later.

Then, after a wet weekend, the Cumana disk drive and teaching disks turned up in a ditch. The cover was removed from the disk drive and it was found to be dry and in perfect working order!

The school know that the drive is working because a company in Brighton kindly lent them another computer until funds are available to the school to buy their own. They are hoping to get the money from their insurance.

So, with the replacement of a few bits and pieces, (Cumana replaced a format disk), the Downs School, Portslade, are now all systems go for computerised learning.

## EXPANSION OF DISK DRIVE COMPATIBILITY

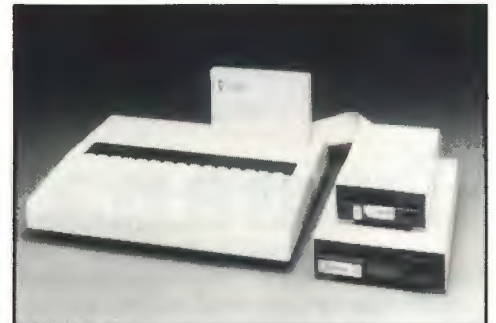
Owners of the Acorn Electron Micro-computer and the popular Spectrum and Spectrum Plus Microcomputers can now up-grade their machines to take full advantage of the speed and convenience of floppy disks by using Cumana disk drive interfaces.

Cumana's Electron interface is a powerful alternative to Acorn's own system. Amongst its many advantages is the fact that it is designed for double density recording and therefore gives 1.8 times the storage capacity of a single density system with the same disk drive, and twice the data transfer rate.

The Beta Spectrum disk interface, as well as the Electron interface is fully compatible with Cumana's 5 1/4" and 3 1/2", 40 or 80 track, single or double-sided disk drives.

The new Beta disk interface uses only 128 bytes of the Spectrum's memory, leaving plenty of capacity available for normal programming functions.

Using the Electron interface up to 89 file names are available on each disk and



the interface includes a real time clock/calendar with battery back-up, which allows time and date stamping of saved files. The menu allows rapid and easy selection of programmes on the utility disk.

The interfaces are simple to install. In the case of the Acorn Electron Microcomputer, it just plugs into the Electron's Plus-One expansion. Cumana's disk drives are also compatible with Tandy models I, III and 4, Oric, Dragon, Video Genie, Amstrad and Apple II, IIE, IIC microcomputers.

## WIN A CUMANA DISK DRIVE

If you own any one of the microcomputers mentioned above that are now compatible with Cumana disk drives, now is the chance to win a drive and upgrade your system. Simply make up an anagram from the slogan -

### CUMANA THE BEST NAME IN MEMORY

You don't have to use all the letters but the judges are looking for the best and

most original use of as many letters as possible.

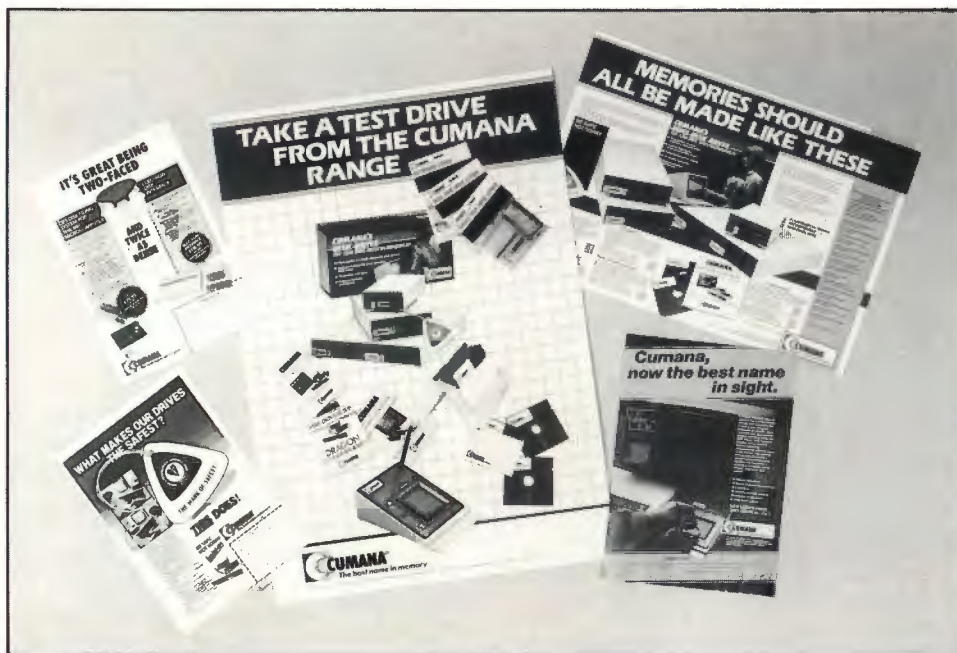
Send your answers together with your name and address to ANAGRAM Competition, Cumana Ltd, Pines Trading Estate, Broad Street, Guildford, GU3 3BH to arrive not later than September 30th 1985. The winning anagram will be published in Issue 3 of Diskussion and the winner will be notified by post. The prize has no cash alternative and the judges' decision is final.

## e Community



QL and the Amstrad as well as the BBC micro.

Molly Lowell, the director of Community Computers UK, points out that these projects which they help others set up and run "aim to utilise resources that already exist, especially at holiday times, to provide basic computer knowledge at minimal cost to participants." Anyone interested in helping should contact Inter-Action Trust Community Computers UK, Royal Victoria Dock, London E16 1BT (01-511-0413) as the key resource needed is people.



## Result of Photo Caption competition

Thank you for the enthusiastic and witty response to the caption competition featured in the last issue of *Diskussion*. The judges enjoyed reading your replies and had a difficult job to find a winner. Eventually after great 'diskussions', it was decided that the prize of a Cumana disk drive for an Acorn Electron should go to G.H. Goodwin of Dunbartonshire, Scotland. His winning caption is below:

When Georgio said "Cumana see de new drive", I thought he meant a Ferrari.



## WHAT IS SEEN IN THE PRESS

Cumana has become a leading name in disk drives in the last few years, aided by an aggressive publicity campaign. Point-of-sale material in the high street and distinctive packaging has been one way of bringing about public awareness. Another method is through regular advertising in various relevant publications. Not only do we advertise in the leading consumer computer magazines but also in the computer trade and educational press. Recently, the advertising has been

underlining the fact that our drives have been awarded the prestigious British Standards kite mark for safety (see front page). We are very conscious of safety because so much of our equipment is used by children, at home or school. Advertising is one very effective way of getting our message across. The photograph above shows some examples of recent advertising. The large poster in the background is used at retail outlets and given away to schools and at exhibitions.

## Upgrading the Dragon

Owners of Dragon 32 and 64 microcomputers now have the chance to upgrade the efficiency of their systems by adding a Cumana disk drive unit. Drives, 40 or 80 track, in both single and dual versions can interface with the Dragon by means of a disk controller which is supplied with Cumana DOS which is a Dragon compatible operating system in ROM. Upgrading the Dragon's system is easy. Not only can you add up to four disk drives without any modification, there is also an on board ROM socket for future expansion.

The compact disk drive unit plugs into the cartridge socket of the Dragon 32 or 64 and is then ready for use.



## Cumana Overseas

As the European market increased and became particularly buoyant for Cumana, extra support overseas was needed. This has been achieved by the recent opening of a German Distributorship, Microware Gmbh, which gives sales, technical support and a first line repair organisation on the mainland of Europe.

Microware Gmbh is based in Munich, one of the most beautiful parts of Germany, within sight of the Bavarian mountains and in Europe's silicon valley. The distributorship is run by Bob Jennings who is ably assisted by Renata. Bob is a german-speaking Englishman who has worked in the computer market for many years in Europe. He has boundless enthusiasm for the business and his favourite form of travel is by plane.

Flying is also Bob's hobby, so much so, that he holds a commercial licence, is still taking navigation exams and helps out a volunteer air ambulance service.

Microware Gmbh hold stock so that Cumana Disk Drives are now within easy reach for the rest of Europe. An advertising campaign is just about to be launched in Germany to establish the Cumana name. We are sure that by establishing this Distributorship some of the headaches of the past – the delayed delivery times, support problems, telephone bills, language barriers will disappear and our progress as one of Europe's largest suppliers of disk drives will continue and flourish.



**Area distributors:** Eltec Home & Business Computers (Bradford) 0274 722612. HCCS Associates (Gateshead) 091-482 1924. Hugh-Symons Distribution Services Ltd (Bournemouth) 0202 28535. Kingdom Design (Belfast) 0232 643720. Microworld (Edinburgh) 031 288 1111. National Micro Centre (Stockport) 061 429 8080. J. S. Simnett Computers (Kingston-upon-Thames) 01 541 1495. + National Dealer Network.