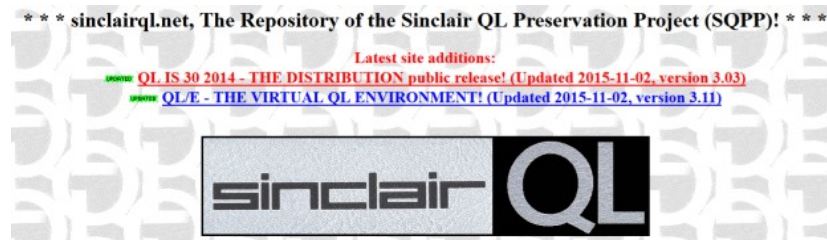# QL 2015 REVIEW

2015 was a quiet QL year with no major innovations, few discussions on the QL-Users email group and possibly fewer new topics on the QL Forum. Just Words! has found it increasingly difficult to regularly update its QL news page.

Perhaps the most worrying question is what is happening on the UK scene. UK hits on the Just Words! website have more than halved in comparison with 2014 even though total hits to the site increased by a third. It is not known if other QL websites had a similar experience.

The high spot of the year was the continuation of the trend started in 2014 of consolidating QL technical and other information. In the spring Urs König released a new edition of his QL information "DVD" called "The Distribution". Weighing in at 4.7 gigabytes it was now too large to fit on a DVD and had to be downloaded as a 3.5 gigabyte zipped file. Among other things it contained general QL information; an image of Dilwyn Jones' website; technical information; many programs; QL images; the complete QL Today archive; and the Quanta Magazine archive from 2005 to 2011.

www.sinclairql.net

Among other info gains was a readable version of **DATAdesign programming API** and manuals for **GIGA-BASIC** and **E.A.S.E**. There was also an update to Norman Dunbar's assembly language ebook.

Data Design: www.wlenerz.com/qlstuff

GIGA-BASIC: www.dilwyn.me.uk/program/index.html

E.A.S.E: www.dilwyn.me.uk/frontend/index.html

Dunbar: http//qdosmsq.dunbar.it.co.uk/downloads/AssemblyLanguage/Issue_002
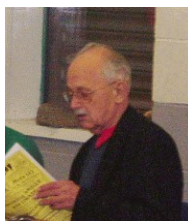

The main software news was that RWAP had obtained permission from the former Pyramide software house for re-release of some of their programs. These included QL Peintre (an art program); Trail (adventure game); Graphic Toolkit (graphics programming aid); Designer (CAD package); and Bag of Tricks (a collection of programs, extensions and tips).

www.dilwyn.me.uk/history.html

Wolfgang Lenerz regularly updated his SMSQmulator.

www.wlenerz.com/SMSQmulator

Two deaths of prominent QLers were reported.

In January Quanta reported the death of its former chairman, John Mason, who was well into his eighties. John had been a loyal member of Quanta over many years and had sat on the committee as both an ordinary member and an officer. He brought years of experience of organisations to Quanta and was the inspiration and first compiler of Quanta's welcome booklet. He could, however, be bureaucratic and rigid. When he became chairman in 2004 he was genuinely distressed by the decline in Quanta over the previous 2 years. The previous chairman and secretary had frequently been abroad for their day jobs and had inevitably neglected Quanta duties allowing the organisation to drift. He was determined to restore the fortunes of Quanta, but probably made the mistake of attempting to restore it to its former glories when he had neither the membership nor finance to achieve this. He took Quanta backwards rather than forwards.

In October the death was announced at a relatively young age of Dutch programmer, Carlo Delhez. He was probably not so well known outside the Netherlands, but was the author of several freeware programs including various utilities and tookits, graphics applications, Spectrum and ZX81 emulators and a word game.

During 2015 a new version of Windows, Windows 10, was released. Early reports indicated that it was compatible with QPC2. Marcel Kilgus commented that Windows 10 was still DirectX 3 compatible and he expected the new QPC keyboard driver to remain future proof although DirectDraw support had probably deteriorated. Later reports indicate that some users were having technical problems.

The QL Forum reached an important milestone during 2015 with its 300th member. By the end of the year the membership had further grown to 339. However based on the number of new topics traffic on the site appears to have been lower in the second half of the year than in the first half.

www.qlforum.co.uk

Quanta appears to have had a quiet year. Unlike 2014 when there were two significant contributions to the wider QL community, the support for QLis30 event and the electronic edition of Jan Jones' SuperBasic manual, Quanta made no significant contribution in 2015. At times Quanta gives the impression of being more secretive than the Exclusive Brethren and it seems to have become more inward looking in 2015.

The one Quanta event that was publicised during the year was a workshop in Manchester. This had a low attendance but it was seen as a worthwhile event for the QLers who were present. In recent years most Quanta workshops have been held in large halls with tables against the walls and a large empty space in the middle inhibiting

social contacts. On this occasion they rearranged the tables to encourage social contacts and this tactic was successful (photo Dilwyn Jones). It is probably something that Quanta should have tried 5 or 6 years ago.

The Just Words! website had a good 2015 with the number of hits increasing from 13,133 in 2014 to 17,563 in 2015. It is difficult to estimate how many of these hits came from QLers, but it is perhaps significant that there were more Firefox than Internet Explorer users visiting the site. One unexpected surprise was that the number of hits on the dictionaries page increased from 190 to 577, which could be due to non-QLers accessing the text word lists. There was also a small increase in visits to the QL maps page after Geoff Wicks had used the QL software to draw maps illustrating an article in a family history magazine.

Just Words! Is the only website attempting to run up to date QL news, and the QL community would benefit from a second news source.

www.gwicks.net/justwords.html

A urgent priority for 2016 is an examination of the UK QL scene. During 2015 the Just Words! website had just 424 UK hits, which compares unfavourably with lands having a much smaller QL communities:- Germany 1276; Belgium 69; Netherlands 126; France 306; and Italy 155. Other QL websites could perhaps investigate their own statistics to determine how far this is happening on their site.

At the moment from the outside the UK QL community appears moribund with very little information about UK QL activity. Could this mean the UK community is slowly dying? Or are UK QLers becoming more lone QLers? Tinkerers more than developers? We need answers to these questions.