QL 2014 REVIEW

2014 opened with two major topics, the imminent production and final testing of the QL-SD card and the uncertainty over whether or not there a would be a major QLis30 workshop during the year.

The QL-SD was the only major hardware development during 2014 and it had had a lengthy gestation. The card was first mooted by Peter Graf in 2011, but he had to abandon its development because of pressures of work. For a time the work was taken over by Adrian Ives of Memory Lane Computing, but he, in turn, abandoned it when he reluctantly had to leave the QL market. Peter Graf then returned to its development. At the final stages of testing problems arose with the Gold and Super Gold Cards.

The first production model became available in mid January and since then the card has attracted much interest. Dilwyn Jones set up a dedicated page on his website and Just Words! account of the history of the project was one of the most popular items on its website receiving 424 hits during the year.

www.dilwyn.me.uk/qlsd/index.html

www.gwicks.net/indepth/QLSD.pdf

Peter Graf demonstrated other projects, both hardware and software, at the QLis30 workshop making Germany the place to watch during 2015.

Software also made progress during 2014 although less spectacularly. In February QPC2 became freely downloadable together with QPAC2. Although there were some new programs, including some games by Wolfgang Lenerz and regular updates of SMSQmulator and George Gwilt software, the main emphasis was on the re-release of classic software. Several of the re-releases were additions to Dilwyn Jones' website, but the bulk of the work was done by Rich Mellor of RWAP software who has been the main mover in a QL software preservation project. This has involved tracking down former QL commercial authors and asking permission to re-release their work. In October Rich Mellor was able to re-release 18 classic games.

www.sellmyretro.com/search/natural/Search?keyword=ql+box-set

At the beginning of the year Urs König set up a virtual QLis30 website, but the possibility of a physical event remained in doubt.

www.qlis30.org.uk

Traditionally Quanta had celebrated important QL anniversaries with two day shows held in prestige locations, but the cost of holding these had become greater than Quanta's present annual subscription income. There had been a proposal for a Sinclair event in Cambridge with a special QL programme backed by RWAP, but Quanta found this too expensive. Quanta did, however, offer to part finance a QLis30 celebration by matching money raised through other sources up to a maximum of £500.

Discussion centred on whether an alternative should be held either on the continent or in the UK. In early April it was announced that the Scottish QL Users Group (SQLUG) were considering organising an event in Edinburgh with assistance from Just Words! Interest was expressed for the event particularly from German QL-ers and in early May a decision to go ahead was made.

In June Just Words! launched a dedicated webpage for the event and this attracted a total of 1,525 hits. Only 26 people attended the event held in early October but attendees came from Germany, the Netherlands, Finland, Switzerland and the UK making it a truly international workshop. As it was a one day event held in a church hall plus a dinner the night before the cost of the event was only about £350.

Quanta provided valuable assistance in running the event both by allowing payments to be made through their PayPal account and by lending their equipment.

www.gwicks.net/indepth/QLis30workshop.pdf

In April Quanta made QL history by holding its first "virtual" AGM using a new provision in its constitution allowing electronic participation in meetings. It was possible to take part in the AGM either personally, by telephone or voice only Skype.

The greatest gain in 2014 was in the consolidation and updating of QL technical information.

In April Bob Spelten updated the S*Basic keywords list originally compiled by François van Emelen and Dilwyn Jones updated the SMSQ/E manual and released it in various formats including ebook.

www.wlenerz.com/smsqe

www.dilwyn.me.uk/docs/ebooks/index.html

In May Wolfgang Lenerz published an updated QPTR manual.

www.wlenerz.com/smsqe/add1.html

In June all of Dilwyn Jones helpline articles were posted on the Quanta website and in August Rich Mellor published his SBasic/SuperBasic Reference Manual online.

www.quanta.org.uk

www.rwapsoftware.co.uk/SBASIC_reference_manual_online/Foreword.html

In September Dilwyn Jones added a QL magazines webpage to his site and in December Norman Dunbar released an ebook containing all his assembler articles that had appeared in QL Today.

www.dilwyn.me.uk/mags/index.html

http://qdosmsq.dunbar-it.co.uk/downloads/QLToday?QL_Assembly.pdf

The Jewel in the Crown came with the unexpected announcement in November that Jan Jones' classic QL SuperBASIC manual was available as an ebook. This was the result of a Quanta initiative. In the past Quanta had published reprints of the book and John Gilpin had sounded her out about the possibility of an electronic version. She retyped it and sold it via Amazon.

QL SuperBASIC - The Definitive Handbook 1 Nov 2014
by Jan Jones
Kindle Edition
£0.00 kindleunlimited
Subscribers read for £0.00. Learn more.
£5.99 to buy
Available for download now

Finally 2014 proved to be a successful year for the Just Words! website which became a firm part of the QL internet presence. Hits rose from 5,422 in 2013 to 13,133 in 2014. The revamped news page with its occasional in depth articles was especially popular rising from 434 hits in 2013 to 1,250 in 2014.