

# Computers in the Home

Today, many households have small pocket calculators which are used for the solving of simple day to day arithmetic problems, usually involving money. Not too long ago these machines, doing exactly the same sort of sums for industry and business people, cost upward of \$1 000 each. Now, because of miniaturisation and mass production they are available to all of us at a fraction of this cost.

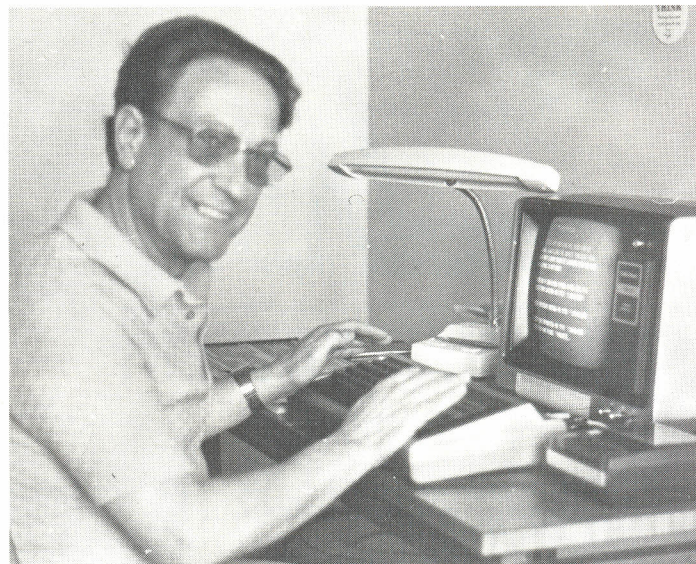
The stage is now set for the expansion of the next generation of calculating machines — the computer. The computer can be differentiated from a calculator in that it has a capacity to reason — within the parameters of a pre-determined set of instructions. Computers are now spreading into the home just as the calculator has done. Any one of us who has purchased a TV game has actually obtained a lower order computer. These units are programmed to behave in a given, or set, manner. In higher order computers this behaviour can be altered by modifying the instructions, which we have come to know as a program.

We're told that in the United States the use of a computer in the home is not uncommon whilst in Australia it is in the pioneering stage and one of the leaders in the field is Acid Plant Operator Gerry Wentscher. Early this year Gerry purchased a Tandy TRS-80 unit consisting of keyboard, visual display unit (simply a screen called a VDU) and cassette-recorder. This unit can store approximately 16 000 characters in its memory which allows reasonably sized programs to be operated on the computer. For safe storage programs are recorded onto cassette tape. When required at a later date they are played back into the computer's memory in readiness for further use.

At present Gerry is confined to visual readout from the TV type screen. However, he is planning to expand the unit's capabilities with an additional interface which will provide for a total of 32 000 characters, a print-out, and later, mini discs for data storage. The mini discs replace the cassette-recorder, but provide almost instantaneous access to information in storage.

Purchased as an educational hobby Gerry has learnt to make up his own programs using BASIC II computer language. He has devised several computer games (similar to TV games) a bio-rhythm chart, and is currently engaged in a program for a club of which he is a member.

Gerry's latest effort of the club program will enable officials to obtain a breakdown of membership by age



Gerry Wentscher at the keyboard of his TRS-80 computer, with visual display unit and tape deck on the right.

group, the area in which they live, number of children etc. and will assist in organising functions and other club activities.

For example when organising a picnic or Christmas function the computer can quickly isolate families with children under the age of, say, 15 years. This assists in canvassing to see who is likely to go and enables early ordering of provisions, entertainment and other requirements.

People are using home installations of computers for a wide range of purposes, such as TV games, recording of financial transactions, including banking, household accounts, loans, budgets, and for cooking recipes. For recipes not only does it provide a list of ingredients and the method, but the quantities required for a given number of people.

It is possible to buy programs for most household requirements, but apparently most hobbyists prefer to write their own even though a reasonable mathematical ability is necessary. Gerry would be pleased to hear from other enthusiasts or interested persons who can contact him at home — Phone 54 7591.

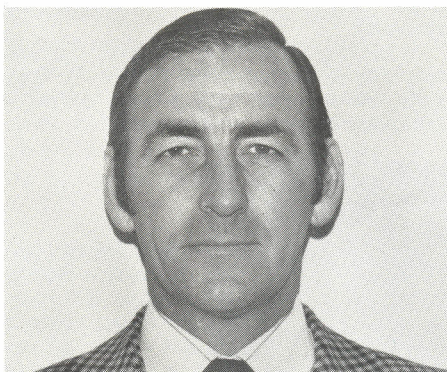
## TRANSFER

The transfer of Production Manager, Brian Tozer, to CRA Melbourne was recently announced. Brian will become CRA's Manager — Staff Resources and Development and in this capacity will have a close co-ordinating role with line Managers of various operating companies in matters relating to planning and development of the Group's staff requirements to meet future needs. In this position he will report to Hamish Black who was at Cockle Creek from 1949 to 1971, the last 2½ years as General Manager.

Originally from Ballarat, Brian came to Sulphide in 1960 after having worked for several years with North Broken Hill Ltd., at Broken Hill. With several months of training in ISF technology at Avonmouth, Brian became one of the original Shift Supervisors when the Plant started in August 1961. Appointed to ISF Superintendent in 1967, he also occupied the position of Refinery Superintendent when that Plant was commissioned in 1968, and became Works Superintendent — Smelting, in 1971.

Brian was then seconded to Commonwealth Smelting Ltd. at Avonmouth for a period of 3 years and returned to Cockle Creek in December 1975 as Senior Superintendent Smelting and became Production Manager in July 1976.

Being from Victoria he is naturally an Aussie Rules fan and during his stay in Broken Hill played several seasons



Brian Tozer.



Andy Thomson.

with the North team. However, these days sporting activities are limited to the occasional game of golf.

## RETIREMENT

Our previous General Manager, Andy Thomson, who is currently Managing Director of our Group sister company in the United Kingdom has decided on early retirement and will be returning to live in Newcastle shortly.

Andy, who came to Sulphide in August 1948 as an Engineering Draughtsman, became Maintenance Engineer in January 1961, and Production Manager in 1966. In March 1970 he was transferred to Hamersley Iron, at Dampier, as Production Manager and returned to Sulphide in May 1971 as General Manager. After a further 5 years at Cockle Creek he transferred to Bristol in the UK as Managing Director of Australian Mining & Smelting Limited's European operations.

Andy's successor at Avonmouth will be R. P. (Bob) Wilson who has spent the past few months in Australia becoming familiar with the Group organisation in the antipodes. During the latter part of his stay he spent approximately 5 weeks at Sulphide.

Bob joined the Rio Tinto-Zinc group of companies in England during 1970 and transferred to Australian Mining & Smelting (Europe) during 1972, and since 1974 has been Commercial Director.