



Iceni Newsletter January 2026

Wishing Everyone a Very Happy New Year for 2026

If you wish to join us just follow the link or paste into your browser:-

ClubMeeting <https://meet.jit.si/IceniComputerClubMeeting>

and follow instructions to allow camera and microphone access. There is nothing to download or install. We still meet on the third Wednesday of the month at 7:30 p.m. via Jitsi.org Video Conferencing.

Our Next Meeting Wednesday January 21st 2026

RISCOS Developments – Paul and Duncan

There had been quite a few exciting developments in RISCOS this year and we were all keen to find out what they were. It is still a well supported operating system.

Our Last Meeting Wednesday December 17th 2025

Gadgets and Party Evening – All

There were more gadgets than expected this year. Paul began the meeting with his gadgets.

Gadgets

1) Paul began with his replacement for the Cloner Alliance box on which you could record Videos. This is a portable version of it. Runs on battery. Still got a remote control as well. So that you don't have to be near a power supply. So if you're recording something and you've only got the one power supply that's powering whatever you're recording from you can use this on battery to record it, and it works just as well. So that's that's his first gadget that looks suspiciously like a Sony pattern battery. It goes to 1080P. It lasts long enough to record the video and you can run it from the mains too.

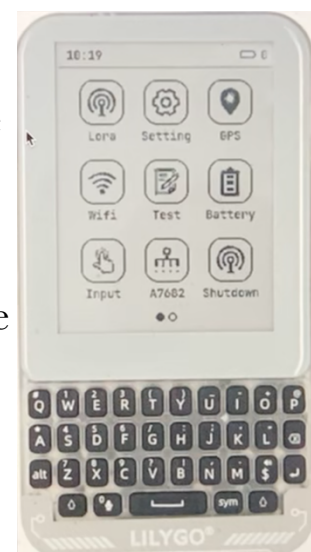


If the input is from HDMI it can use power from whatever's supplying the HDMI. You can put it between a gadget and a projector, although Paul only records from it. This version also has a screen so you can see what you're doing. It will record all the stuff they try and stop you recording like YouTube etc. Amazon have them for £266.

2) Paul finds he sometimes has trouble reading, small print and his second gadget was a set of 'pince nez' glasses which are quite flexible so you can keep them in your wallet without breaking them. So if he is out and about and needs glasses he always has a pair to hand. He also has a tiny pen again in his wallet.

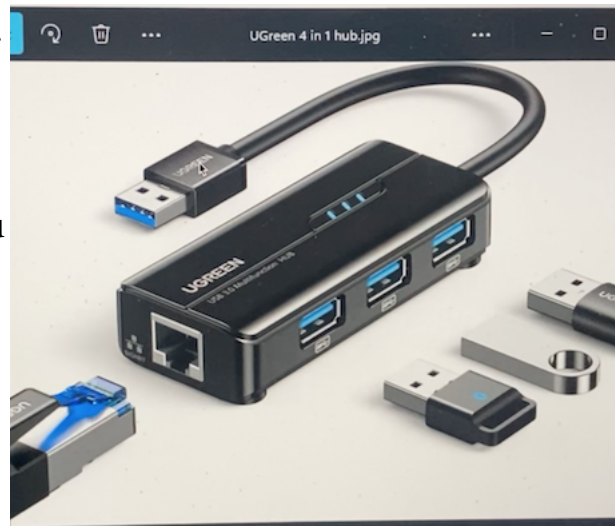


3) The third gadget is a T Deck Pro. It's a long range radio receiver. A low-bar receiver. he uses it for a service called Meshcore. which uses long-range radio to send text over. So if suddenly the internet went down completely. You can still contact people over text over the radio. Top left there is L-O-R-A, long range. Paul's doesn't look like that now because he has wiped that software and put the mesh core software on instead. There are quite a few users in Ipswich. He has chatted to a few of them, but it's purely text. But he just saw it and thought "that sounds interesting, let's try it." There's a few

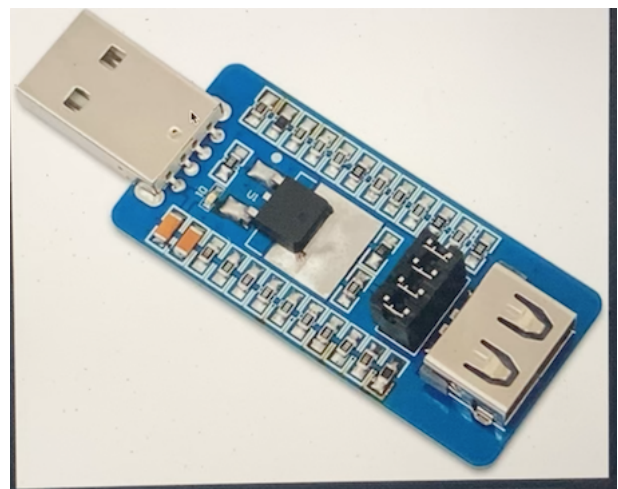


repeaters so it gets its range by using repeaters every so often. Apparently they're getting close to having it so you can communicate Lands End to John O'Groats now. There's enough repeaters up and down the country. It's based on an American thing called "Meshtastic". But that's bigger in America. A mesh core is bigger in this country. We were intrigued to know how it worked and apparently it uses the PMR band (Private Mobile Radio) set up for Wi-Fi band one time allocated for emergency use. You don't need a licence to use it. You can only send short messages. Duncan said there was a band at 446 MHz which he thought was the one. [Ed. Yes it is!] Just look up mesh core which uses 868MHz. Meshcore seems to have the edge on Meshtastic. You can use both. [Ed. See YouTube demo.]

4) Paul's next gadget was a USB hub. It's just a handy little hub. USB hub with an Ethernet socket in it. Laptops tend not to come with Ethernet sockets nowadays. So if you want to fix them up hardwired you need something like this It is purely plug and play and the benefit of this one is you get three USB port USB 3 ports as well. So far it's worked really well.



His last was one is a USB dummy load module which puts a load on a power pack. Because you try and power something like a Raspberry Pi Pico off of a power pack it draws so little electricity the power pack says "I'm not supplying anything" and shuts itself down. So this puts a dummy load on it just enough so that it will keep supplying power to whatever you want to power.



Underneath it's got some jumpers there to change how much it draws. Which Paul hadn't really messed with since it does work quite well.

[Ed. Yes a very handy device and a great set of gadgets from Paul as usual.]

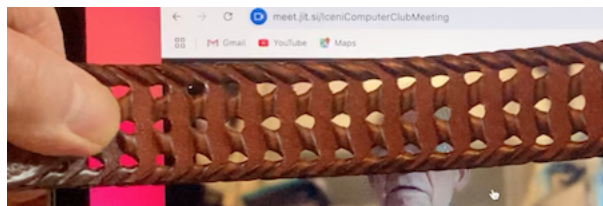
Steve then joined us apologising for being late as he had computer problems.

We were still expecting Gareth at this stage who had had to go to London for work today.

Steve had a problem with trouser belts, having lost weight, and needed a more precisely adjustable one. He had found one with magnetic grips which seemed to solve his weight loss problem. He thinks it is called a groove belt.

From Texas gas station. [Ed. i.e a gas station in Texas USA!]. There was a lot of chat about belts.

Peter said he could show him an alternative and produced a sprocketed belt with fine variation design. [Ed. Could that be a gadget?]



Peter remembered he might have another gadget in the form of some USB -C /USB- A adaptors so that he could plug his older USB printer into a newly acquired MacBook M1.

Gareth had now arrived.

Gareth had recently been to a parent's evening for Aidan's school and noted that in the old days it was all windows and PCs but now it is all Chromebooks and Google. Aidan has taken to using Gareth's old iPad taking it in his stride, much to his Granny's concern.

[Ed. Not bad for a six year old!]

Apparently they start coding games next year!

- 1) Gareth's first gadget was a tack remover.
- 2) One of the things he got this year was a device that he couldn't enable any kind of remote desktop on, but wanted to be able to get to wherever he was. GLINET are a company that do travel routers mainly. In particular little Wi-Fi routers you can carry around and he has got one of those that he's had for a while that he takes with him when he goes

away for work. But then about a year ago, or just less than a year ago they produced a tiny little KVM which literally will fit in the palm of your hand. You can see the examples of how small it is kind here but basically it's got a HDMI port, a network port and a USB port. You connect an HDMI from your device in to the video port obviously and you use the USB port to plug into your device. So that you're plugging essentially a keyboard and mouse in and it gives you a remote KVM onto the desktop. You can set it up either with their cloud, so you can just start their app up wherever you are and log into it or only have it available on your local network and it does interesting little things, like you can paste, copy and paste into it so you can copy files to and from the remote device using it and it was only about 80 pounds or something like that. They've since bought out a Wi-Fi one and they have in the last couple of weeks brought out one with actual pass-through so you can plug your device into it and then your monitor into it and still use the computer locally or whatever it is with a local display but still have that kind of physical kind of remote access to it as well



if you like. So he bought it because he wanted to have a work device that he could access remotely since he's not allowed to run a remote desktop on. And it's been working really well. It does audio as well, so the audio from the HDMI connection comes through and it sends a USB microphone back the other way so you can actually have both audio coming through to where you are remotely and use the microphone if you want to do any thing like video conferencing with it and you can kind of see on these pictures just how kind of small it is. Shown here with the four plugged in and so he found it really really useful. You can you can install Windows app, a Mac app , and there's an iOS app for mobile on Apple. Also there's an Android app or you can just get to it in a web browser as well. So if you've got a suite of them, there's kind of a cloud thing where you can see all your devices. That is it and he was hopefully going to demo it. Gareth then did a demonstration of the capabilities of the device. He's just going locally to it on his local network. He has the

cloud bit disabled currently given it's using it for a kind of a work device but if you go and log in hopefully it will work ... and that is an Ubuntu desktop. That is essentially my work laptop and he can access it from his Mac and his iPad and his Chrome tablet. But as you can see, if you want to, the clipboard is a little bit little bit tricky in that, you know, if you paste some text into it it goes into the box. But you can also do virtual media where it's not quite as seamless as your local machine mounts a network drive, it actually mounts a drive from the device itself and then you upload files to it, but it actually is still quite useful. However you must make sure it is in the right mode so that it captures the mouse. You can have it kind of seamless in and out of the window, but I don't know whether we could just go to YouTube and try and play something. There's lots of settings as well for the encoding and the quality. In doing the demo you need to know what mode it is in. He had it in smart mode at the moment which stopped him changing the quality, but if you put it in normal you can then choose kind of what quality. The smart one is kind of more dynamic, but it can do everything anything from work on quite low bandwidth connections up to quite a lot of bandwidth if you're you're relatively local. As you can see he's running the desktop at quite high resolution. It's a 3840 by 2160 inch of them to itself. Looks actually like the remote computer is having network issues there. So maybe he had VPN connected. However he wasn't able to get YouTube to load on his work computer. As you can kind of see for kind of scrolling things, it's quite fluid. And he hadn't actually got the sound turned on the moons. He also had the microphone turned off as well but Over the Jitsi Meets it might not be as quite as smooth, but you you can't tell he wasn't locally connected there and it's using kind of just over a you know just over a megabit, so not much bandwidth at all really. Yeah. But as I say, his was the original one. They have brought out since then. This pro version which they're still showing as as as on preview here, but it actually has as far as I'm aware kind of KVM it's got pass through so it's got a HDI HDMI in and a HDMI out so you can still have a local display while still having a remote connection to the HDMI port. So he still found it very useful, essentially with his desk behind him that you can't quite see because it's up there has only got a Mac Mini and two displays connected and when he's at work one one screen is just that full screen. So he didn't have too much stuff on his desk and his actual work laptop is plugged into that and it's all underneath the desk on a little shelf. But when he was in London today it was kind of logging into that to kind of

view things as well and found it really useful given it was quite inexpensive. He thought they came up for a little bit of flack because it is a slightly custom firmware and it's definitely not a Raspberry Pi inside it, but he believes the actual software they're using use is modified Pi Pi KVM so that there is an open source project where you can use a Raspberry Pi with a hat on it to make a remote KVM and they they're essentially using the software from that and these Chinese companies are not always great at contributing it all back, although they do seem to have started doing that. But he found it as a little device really reliable and you know quite cheap so he found it really good.

The other thing from me that he spied in the office today, from a guy in his London office who does a lot of stuff with random kind of IoT type devices. He obviously has a lot of things he needs to plug in with with USB C and power them. And Gareth just thought this was really quite cool. It's got eight ports USB C ports and this is a 300 watt power device and shows you the kind of power out that's on all the ports it's got two really high power ones. He thinks they're 140 watt at the top and the rest of them 65 , but like a 10-port wireless charging station. It is called mechanic or something like that. He thinks it said it it's "mechanic "or something like that obviously something from China, could be quite useful. Those those were Gareth's only gadgets.

Steve

The charging thing has reminded Steve that Sue actually bought an anchor battery which is quite a large one and was able to run Starlink off it while the electric had cut the power off. So it it was think the Starlink only lasted two or three hours. So it was a sort of short morning before the battery expired. But quite like the idea that if there was a power cut we might at least have an internet even if the sole towers down the yes you know the A DSL.

Gareth comments

I have to admit for big because I'd done the rig for camping with the Gen two or whichever one it was dished the big pole I did actually swap it for a mini just because it was much easier to power. And actually got a suction back with the roof light inside the camper. But what I discovered is the USB-C port which is on the camper still can't power it, but I've got a little power bank and I've loaded the Starlink into that and that into the camper. And the battery takes the boot up load of the Starlink,

and once it produce steady states, the camper can charge the battery up and keep it all at 100%. So it was just that the port on the camper can't take the startup load of it. And I've done the magic thing and log in my and zoomed myself out again. You can actually see my desk now that it it's only got two monitors and a Mac mini.

Since Duncan had spent most of his time decorating it is not surprising that several of his gadgets were tools.

The tools are :-

1) a set of ten plastic pyramids that can be used to support newly painted objects while they dry.

2) A paint scraper with a very small head. It's just 25mm on each face and the blade can be turned if it gets blunt. The blade is replaceable and there are other shapes available. It comes with a belt holster and is suitable for

stripping paint from detailed areas where a full size scraper won't fit.

3) A tack lifter. Useful for removing small tacks and pins when a claw hammer is too big.



4) The sander - A sanding pad is a normal DIY item, but this one uses perforated sanding sheets and can be attached by hose to a vacuum cleaner. The result is much tidier than ordinary manual sanding, and gentler than a power sander. The only disadvantage is that the hose can fall off the vacuum easily, and that the fine dust tends to block the filter. Available from MARKA £45.48

5) An ATS-20+ radio. It covers long wave to 30MHz, plus band 2 FM. AM, FM, SSB and hence it can hear CW. Earlier models contained an Arduino as a carrier board, but this has a simpler circuit board. There are no obvious tuned circuits on the board, hence it tends to overload and receive spurious signals. It has variable tuning step rates of 1,5, and 10 kHz, which means the European medium wave spacing is ignored. Evidently of Chinese manufacture, it is unbranded and the audio quality a bit rough. However, for under £20 it's still better than could be expected and a remarkable manufacturing achievement.

Thank you Duncan for the pictures and write up.

A good evening all round.



ICENI Future programme

2025	Subject	Speaker(s)

17 December	Gadgets and Party Evening	All
2026		
21 January	RISCOS developments	Paul and Duncan
18 February	TBA	
18 March	TBA	
15 April	TBA	
20 May	AGM + Extras	
17 June	TBA	

We shall need to discuss the future programme as our topics are not defined after from January. Anyone any ideas in addition to those mentioned below.

Future topics may be Open AI and Pi HAT Radio Transmitter /Receiver Beacon (Licence needed) Peter said it was a bit like WhisperNet which works in the background which a friend of his who is a Radio Amateur uses.

Other topics were Crypto currency – PIN board 2.0 of RISCOS.

A RISCOS new browser out of RISCOS Direct.

The programme is open to changes as the year unfolds and topics may become more detailed.

MEETINGS WILL NOW BE HELD ONLINE BUT STILL ON THE THIRD WEDNESDAY UNTIL FURTHER NOTICE UNLESS OTHERWISE STATED..

Our Website and Email and Jitsi meetings

Our website URL is

<http://icenicomputerclub.org.uk>

Email to: iceni@woolridge.org.uk

The website is where you will find copies of the Newsletter from Previous years and also where you will find our Committee Members and future programme.

I am open to suggestions on what people would like to have included in the website.

JITSI Meetings

I am repeating this here from the top of the document.

If you wish to join us just follow the link or paste into your browser:-

<https://meet.jit.si/IceniComputerClubMeeting> and follow instructions to allow camera and microphone access. We have found some problems with screen sharing on the Mac if using Firefox, but using Safari or Chrome is ok as is using Windows.

There is nothing to download or install. We still meet on the third Wednesday of the month at 7:30 p.m. via Jitsi.org Video conferencing.

End