



Iceni Newsletter July 2026

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. 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 15th July An Update on AI

Hopefully this will be quite interesting. Gareth is hoping to demonstrate some use of AI and free models for producing transcriptions and summaries of meeting videos that could be refined and assist with Newsletter production. Peter can talk about his present software attempts.

Our Last Meeting Wednesday 17th June

(held online with Jitsi as usual.)

Raspberry Pi discussing the range of machines.

In the event there was not much directly to the topic but there was a broader discussion of hardware developments.

Gareth said that Raspberry Pi were not immune from the supply line constraints. `They brought out a 3GB Pi5 version. However the Pi6 is probably a long way off. Although they had done a 16GB Pi5.

So they've done a 16 gigabyte one, which bearing in mind was the first one with 512 meg of RAM single core, that's That's very different. I think it was one of the things people had pushed for for a long time. It was they're they're kind of cool for a hobby thing, but if you want to run anything real on them, two GB RAM doesn't cut it, they brought out the 8 GB but the 16 GB that's quite a substantial device really, you know, It like everything else, you know, even Apple who were buying up all the capacity of various manufacturers and having to scale back or availability of some of the lower skews of MacBooks and things have disappeared and Mac minis. The days where on PCs 16 GB was becoming the norm. I think we're going to be back to eight and and again with some manufacturers and the likes of Apple are just deleting some whole areas of the range to protect what supplies they've got.

Paul said but there is a sort of a new Pi out. There's a Carputer Zero So you know the little carputer that I got?

Gareth continued

So it's a slight aside, but one of the fact things I saw recently and I think we've got a topic in the future potentially about it. I kind of have got back to trying to go back to stuff I had on MP3 but CDs and ripping some vinyl and and going back to having a real hardware player for it and I discovered some like 2000 era stuff made with a very custom DSP chip and piece of hardware for it, hi-fi hardware but the company Brennan still exists [It was a system to upload all your music to a machine to act as a media server] and in latter years they moved to using a Raspberry Pi. So you can buy their thing for £800 or whatever and inside it really is just a Raspberry Pi and the latest one is the Pi 5 but it's a modern multi core Pi and it's running Linux and all the rest of it. But their

their first one was using the uh yeah was it the Pi B 1.2B or whatever. So it's still the original 512MB RAM one, but it's the later generation of it and that was all discontinued although you could still get software for it but they've just announced a 2026 version And supposedly what stopped them making it was actually the CD drive they used became unavailable. Uh and they found a new supplier, different vendor, but they can fit it in and they've relaunched that model for 2026 but it's still using the 512 MB Ram Pi. I did a bit of a Google search earlier and apparently for industrial use it's still available and production will run till twenty thirty or something like that. So I can't remember what year they came out, but it was it like twenty fourteen or something like that.

Paul

Yes, 20 uh 2013, 2014, something like that.

Gareth

So that that's a really, really, really long run and they're still making them for industrial use now. The original single ARM core 700 MHz 512 MB Pi , you can still get it essentially because I suppose so many things have embedded it down to RAM.

Paul said there single digits of CD and DVD manufacturers now as well. Only dropped out now.

There is a warehouse in the States which is full of the world supply of floppy disks. But now no one makes machines with a slot loading. Still in use in 747 aircraft for updating aircraft software although 747s are now mainly used for freight operations. Peter said he still had a box full of floppies if that was considered a good investment! Paul said only if you know a lot of people with 747s! Paul said I don't know whether they still do, but definitely five years ago seven class lifeboats were still getting their software on CDs. However they still use paper charts because CD drives don't work reliably in heavy seas. The Tangmar class do use solid state drives.

The cost of storage has rocketed in recent years as Gareth found out when he wanted to replace drives in his NAS.

There was more discussion on the lack of improvement to streamline OSs and needing more RAM and running out of space. That's Peter's problem too.

Gareth new work computer is an M5 Max MacBook Pro with more space than he'll ever need and more memory than you will ever use and more disk than you'll ever use but he is not allowed to install anything on it.

The Iris browser on Discos is Webkit. It is basically the same rendering engine as KDE's browser and Safari uses.

It's an interesting one because you know Safari on the Mac is a little bit controversial in its compatibility with a lot of sites and is often a little bit suspect and why people often install Firefox and Chrome on a Mac. But it is the default one on the Mac and uses the same rendering engine as a lot of Linux which helps I overall I think with compatibility, so I think the demos I've seen of Iris look pretty nice Yeah, pretty good. There's always a difficulty trying to bolt it into RiscOS, particularly you know with regard to , threading when you don't have real threading and things. But uh it always looks like a pretty good job, you know.

Paul

Well they let love run it, I've been quite impressed. At least it's got JavaScript.

Gareth

Well I I remember being a PC guy because of how I grew up and first seeing RISC PC that a friend of mine's brother at school had and seeing the original, you know, Pling Browse, you know, and back then even that was pretty impressive. And the original Java implement, the fact that because they were working on the

network computer that they did a full blown Java implementation while still not having real multitasking was astounding really. No, when you think what came out of Acorn in those days.

Peter

Yes Oh yes. Acorn was really very good. It's just a shame it was pushed out of the market by the government really. So they wanted to buy American, didn't they? And it's that weird thing, you know, 'cause because schools are Chromebooks now and Chromebooks are just a web browser really.

Gareth

So I've been playing around with Google Chrome well, it's quite handy for the new job because We give certain groups of people Chromebooks, not Macs where they're just temporary, but I need to know how to admin them as as it were, but Aidan not next year, but I think the year after we have to buy him a Chromebook and obviously you sign it into the school's Google Workspace. It locked it down to how they want it locked down even though you own it essentially. So I've been playing around with them a little bit just to understand, you know, before he has one essentially. Because you know back where schools were either Windows or Acorn in the day they're they're all Google Chrome OS now. On the one hand they've got away from teaching Microsoft.

Peter

But you're teaching the Chrome web browser and nothing else really now, you know, it's Well, I mean, do they not still have any office applications?

Gareth

So on a Chromebook you can use Google Docs when you're online and you can use it offline but it's just the web-based Google Docs. You can run applications but they they run an emulator to to run a copy of Android essentially. So they are working on a

completely new thing coming out later this year called Google Books to replace the Chromebook. That is actually basically desktop Android. So the Android that you run on your phone or your tablet if you're not an Apple user is coming to the full desktop later this year and basically you know the Chromebooks and things you can buy will be replaced by that .And it will run all the applications that are available for Android in theory a lot better because it's not emulating them anymore. It's the native, you know, because Android is Linux-based, it's much more seamless, but it still requires all the app manufacturers to support real screens, not fixed size smaller screens and things like that. Like that, you know, so it'll be interesting to see how it goes.

Paul

Well even on my Android tablet, I mean things like Facebook and Instagram obviously Meta have not bothered to alter the host No, no, no.

Gareth

The Android tablets have been around for a long time, haven't they? I remember getting uh a a Google one as a treat to myself just after I joined Canonical to play with them to to use on the planes and things I was on at the time. And that was Android on a tablet, back in very early 2013.

Paul

I mean most things I do are will go into sort of portrait mode on a landscape screen but like I say Instagram I always have to turn the screen round and Facebook. Yeah.

Gareth

So I mean hopefully that initiative will help some of that. If developers have got to do resizable windows and a real desktop

environment because the apps will still come from the Play Store and hopefully they'll they'll improve the tablet experience too

Peter

Hmm. Well at the moment of course they won't be allowed to use Facebook or Instagram, will they? If they're youngsters at school

Paul

Well true true. Well they're the only ones who can use it because they know that they'll know the workarounds that the government imposed.

Peter

Yes, well there's always going to be some of those. Yes. Yes. I mean um that's an interesting point isn't it uh Yeah.

Gareth

Yes, we we originally got Aidan an Amazon Fire tablet, fire kids one. It was fine, but you know they they're cheap a little bit clunky really like the fire kits and because we all use ,like iPads and things well I didn't go out and spend a load of money but just before Christmas for his Christmas presents I bought for £80 on eBayAN iPad that still had some support life left on it and kind of tried to set it up with all the lockdowns and stuff for kids but the things that you can actually do on it that I disable. But he just worked out ways around it. And usually it's silly things like, well, we allowed him to have this app or this game, which has got an in-app browser, which means Safari on his tablet won't let him go to these websites but there's an in-app browser in a game where you can get to things that I blocked you know and he'll quite happily show you how he's worked around these things. On the one hand I want to be annoyed by that, but my God you're clever, you know.

Peter

Well he is your son after all. You don't expect him not to be bright, do you?

Gareth

But the way he's done that is impressive, you know.

Peter

It is Yes. Yes.

Paul

I had a fire tablet and it was just it just getting worse and worse as time went on. So I've got myself a Lenovo ideas tab. Right. 230 pounds and it is fantastic. 10 inch screen. We're learning screen, I think. Yeah. And it is fantastic.

Paul

For one of the cheap I mean it's a known brand and for one of the cheaper tablets You know it's it's really good.

Gareth

Particularly with Lenovo and things like that, if you don't want all the consumer bells and whistles because they target somewhat the business space you can get some really good stuff can't you? If you don't if you don't necessarily want the the the shiny looks they're very very solid

Peter

Yeah.

Paul

And this came with a case and stylus as well.

Which took quadruple A batteries which I didn't even know existed

Gareth

I think I've got a Lenovo Chrome OS tablet that I've probably got the same the same pen with it and I gather it lasts a really long time as well you know.

Paul

I was using it on holiday and it is fantastic Only thing is I couldn't view my photos on it because I didn't have an SD card reader. So yesterday I thanks to Amazon I've got an SD card reader that plugs in the USB C port and I can now take the card out of my camera and view all my photographs.

ICENI Future programme

2026

20 May	AGM + Ubuntu 26.4 “Resolute Racoon”	All
17 June	Raspberry Pi – discussing the range of machines	All
15 July	Update on AI	Steve and Sue et al
19 August	Social Evening TBA	All
16 September	Retro systems- FreeDOS	All
21 October	Computer Security – Certificates and Secure boot	All
18 November	Photo and Video evening	All
16 December	Gadgets and Party evening	All

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.

The new RISCOS browser; this already had a mention in Duncan and Paul's meeting.

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