postcodenews

It's Official!

AFD recruited more new users of Postcode software than any other reseller in 1995. Careful market research has confirmed AFD's place as Europe's leading supplier of affordable PAF-based software.

John Dolman, AFD's Marketing Manager, was thrilled with the news: 'We always knew that thousands could benefit from the Postcode Address File data, providing it was priced realistically, and easy to use'. John's team is already looking forward to even better results this year. These customer-friendly benefits of using AFD Software, are sure to win again in 1996:

- **Free, unlimited technical support** on all Postcode products.
- **An outstanding range of software** – from rapid addressing to batch address-list cleaning.
- **Unbeatable pricing and economy.**
- **Extra features, extra data** – free of charge.
- **Flexible and economical data update plans** – to suit your needs.
- **Free source code and examples for dozens of programs and macros.**
- **Fast and friendly personal service.**

Catch an AFD Bus

During the Spring, AFD is catching the odd London bus or fifty, to bring home the message that typing addresses is slow and rather old fashioned now. Captioned with the slogan 'Are you still t – y – p – i – n – g addresses?', the buses will be circulating on the routes around the exhibition sites at Wembley, Earls Court and Olympia.

Welcome Back!

After one of our most successful periods ever, we are back with more news about AFD's Address Management Software. Postcode Plus has been improved to offer even more features – including the new batch processor (Postcode Provider) everyone has been waiting for! Postcode has been upgraded and improved and we're on the Web. Full details are on the inside pages.

That's kept us busy. Our users have been busy as well. In this issue we ring the changes with OFTEL and house hunt with City Mortgage.

Our staff profile this month is AFD herself, Ann F Dorricott.

Please continue sending in your comments, technical tips and letters about Postcode News to our editor, Jo Lloyd. Jo can be reached at `jo@afd.co.uk`.

Mickey at Address '95

Did you see that our company hero 'Mickey the Mail Van' was actually at Address '95? The die-cast collector's model that was given to buyers of AFD software at Address '95 had the registration number LUL 794. And what was the registration of the actual full sized Morris Z mail van at Address '95 ? LUL 794. The picture shows Jean, David and John posing with AFD's own hero 'Mickey the Mail Van'.

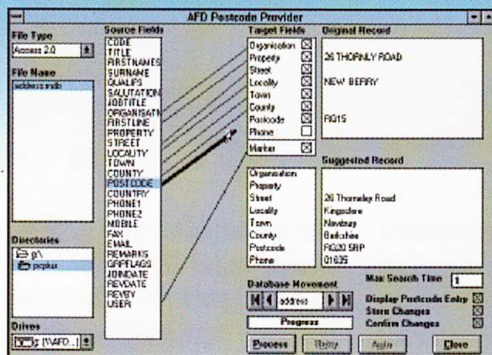# Program News

Postcode Provider

Hottest News this issue is the release of Postcode Provider to deal with existing databases directly.

In addition to all the Postcode Plus benefits, Provider can attach to an existing database – including the most common file types (Access, dBase, Paradox, etc). This allows automatic or interactive cleaning to be carried out – with NO PROGRAMMING!

Provider uses Drag & Drop techniques to attach existing field names to those recognised by PAF. Drag and drop also allows you to make full use of Postcode Plus' normal searching methods in interactive mode – which combines the maximum benefits of operator common sense and fast computer logic.

In the automatic mode, information from the PAF file is returned to the linked fields in the original database – and you can determine exactly which fields may be updated.

Postcode Provider costs £1116.25 (£950+VAT) and was launched at the beginning of January.
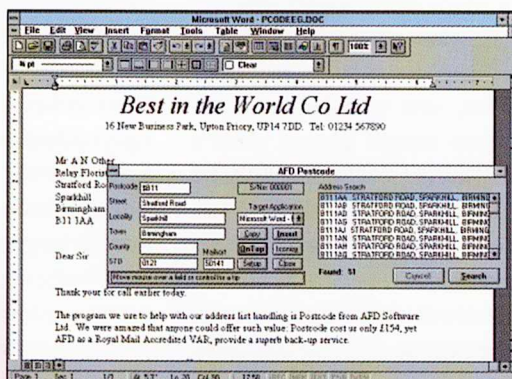

Postcode Release 3.5

Postcode is now even better value for money. Still at £180.95 (£154+VAT), it has had a major re-working and has a much improved data engine. The program now provides Mailsort codes: assisting larger users to make substantial savings on postage costs through the Royal Mail's discount scheme.

For programmers, the interface has been improved so that DLL users can extract data in a similar manner to that used in Postcode Plus. The brand new DLL provides mailsort codes to other programs. A new iconised mode allows Postcode to simulate an icon in the toolbar of loads of contact manager and word processor programs. Click that button now!

For end users a stunning new development has been included in the Rapid Address Mode for Word Processing. Enter an address like '51,KA239BU' in the word processor. Wipe it to the clipboard then simply pass the mouse pointer over Postcode to have the correct address written in place of the short form. Absolute bliss for poor typists.

The new release of Postcode also has improved configurable DDE (Dynamic Data Exchange) links. This release was originally designed for use with Symantec's ACT! contact manger program – but you can easily set it up for most DDE aware applications.

Postcode for Time & Chaos

A new front end is available for the award winning Time & Chaos PIM. It is basically a fast entry address program that writes records to Time & Chaos via DDE links. This allows Time & Chaos users to easily and quickly enter data into the program. Mike Springfield of Springsoft, the European distributors of Time & Chaos, said 'potential users of the program were daunted by the amount of data that had to be entered initially if one was to use the program effectively. Linking Postcode to Time & Chaos allows users to quickly and easily enter all the data they require and so encourages use.' Time and Chaos can be contacted at Springsoft on 01352 770049.

AFD is a member of the Royal Mail's VAR scheme. The scheme is designed to recognise the close relationship between the RM's Address Management Centre and innovative software houses like AFD, who provide access to the data in the PAF

Diary Dates

Come along and meet the AFD team at the following events in the first quarter of 1996. Tickets for all these events are available from **margaret@afd.co.uk** telephone: **01294 823221**

✎ **Windows '96**, 27 February – 1 March.

David will be presenting his 'Can Your Software do THIS?' seminar, on 1 March at 10.45am, at the show.

Mike Solomon of MSC Systems will be on the AFD stand at Windows to demonstrate Postcode & Postcode Plus working with a wide range of SAGE software.

✎ **Direct Marketing Fair**, Wembley, 12 – 14th March.

✎ **Comdex**, Earl's Court, 23-26 April.

Using Postcode with...

City Mortgage has a lending line in excess of 1 billion and specialises in providing commercial and residential mortgages through independent financial advisers and 'high street' insurance and mortgage brokers.

Richard Davis, City Mortgage's MIS Manager explained, 'For each mortgage application that we get, we have to make various searches related to the property in question. We'll check the Land Registry, legal records, mineral rights as well as carrying out credit searches to make sure that the property can be legally sold. All of these searches are dependent on having an accurate postcode from the client'

Using Postcode helps to ensure that accurate address data is entered into City's Corporate Database. This speeds up the process of approving mortgage applications. Clients appreciate the rapid response from City, which helps them, and City secure more business.

Richard has integrated Postcode into City's Corporate Database: City run Blyth's Omnis 7.3 on a Netware 4.1 network, with Omnis accessed by the end-user through a WFW or Windows 95 PC via the Postcode DLL. City will also be using the Clipper development package running in DOS to integrate with their Account Servicing database via the DOS version of Postcode.

'The accuracy of the database, the ease of getting developer support and the DDE linkages were significant factors in our choice of Postcode. We have now bought Postcode Plus and will be using it to make our systems run even more efficiently,' said Richard.

In a future issue of Postcode News, we will be covering a new product being developed by City Mortgage, which incorporates Postcode Plus into a special on-line application for external users. Watch this space!

OFTEL, the regulatory body for the UK's telecommunications industry has a duty to consider consumer complaints and enquiries made about telecommunications services or apparatus. The body receives in the region of 30-40,000 contacts a year from both business and residential users.

OFTEL uses a windows-based system to log and track consumer contacts. Postcode is used to speed up initial contact with the consumer on telephone contacts by making the taking of consumer details easier. This allows OFTEL staff to get to the nature of the call that much faster. OFTEL also uses Postcode information to identify any possible localised problems affecting consumers.

OFTEL is committed to securing the best possible deal for consumers and Postcode assists in their aim of providing an efficient, professional and effective service to those seeking help or advice.

Are they talking about us?

Steve Baxter in Computer Shopper did something very unusual for him. He gave us a second good review in the space of two months. Here are just some of his comments about Postcode Plus:

'Experienced programmers will find converting AFD's code to fit into their own address management programs a simple task'.

'The second way of using Postcode Plus is to incorporate it into your own home-developed programs. Sample code exists for accessing Postcode Plus from Visual Basic, Access, Delphi and a range of word processors. Using Postcode Plus in this way is obviously the most effective course to follow'.

'Postcode Plus is significantly more expensive than Postcode. However it does have two important advantages. Firstly it provides more information. The cost difference could be recouped from using Mailsort codes alone if the user sends a lot of mailshots. Secondly, its enhanced search capabilities (that generate a postcode based on a partial address) add an extra dimension to its usefulness. It is an address database cleaner as well as builder'.

'Every company should have one of these programs; which one depends on how much time is currently spent managing address databases'.

Postcode has also been getting some widespread coverage. Nigel Cole, writing in **MicroMart** –

'Automation of this type was once beyond the reach of the small business with a limited budget. Nowadays this is no longer true'.

'I found Postcode to be really easy to use'.

'Overall I found Postcode to be an excellent product. It is ideally suited to the small business wanting to increase either productivity or competitive advantage when entering address and telephone data onto their PC whilst the customer is waiting'.

Management Services have been getting in on the Postcode act as well. Their January issue reported that 'Its makers, AFD Software, describe it as a "nifty little piece of software" which seemed to sum it up nicely when we tried it.'

'Plenty of companies use the technique but this happens to be available off the shelf.'

...and finally even our local paper, **The Ardrossan and Saltcoats Herald**, has recognised our skills and expertise. We were featured as a successful local company after our performance at the Royal Mail's Address '95 exhibition at the NEC.

In the Hotseat

This issue, AFD herself
Ann F Dorricott

Age
Ladies never reveal their ages – ever! But Ann does know exactly how old everyone else on the AFD team is.

Original career choice
Ann was a nursery nurse who capably looked after a significant number of children. Once she discovered that the average computer didn't spill Ribena down your skirt or get covered in mud, she gave up looking after children to co-found AFD in 1983. This means she only has to deal with computer tantrums and inexplicable behaviour. 'Far easier than children' commented Ann – though the technical lads are not so sure.

Sports and Hobbies
Ann goes sailing with David and the family. She also enjoys swimming, but not whilst sailing.

Joined AFD in
Founded AFD in 1983.

Favourite food and drink
Ann adores Pork Pies and is a connoisseur of them. Family legend has it that she can spot a good Pork Pie at 100 metres.

Family
Stephen and Philip, who are now old enough not to pour Ribena down your skirt.

Net Surfers

Our WWW site is up and running. Here you'll find all the information you need about the full range of AFD products.

Our home-page address is `http://www.afd.co.uk`. From here you can move around to pages that contain:

Postcode Information
Postcode Plus Information
Programmers Dream
What the Press Say
Email AFD page
Order Form Page

Addview page
Mailcode Information
Postcode News
Our web site will be updated regularly and new items added when they are available.

FTP Site
Together with the WWW site we also have an ftp site (File Transfer Protocol). To access this site you can enter through your web browser as above or point an ftp client program at: `ftp.afd.co.uk`

Most of the support and evaluation files from our BBS are available on these sites.

No need to steal…

The lengths that some people will go to to get hold of AFD products were illustrated when David was leaving Olympia after a very successful show at the Software Developers Forum.

Two young men grabbed David's PC, wrenched it off his back and made off across Hammersmith Road. Tony Kiely of Metrologie showed quick thinking and pursued

them in his car whilst David gave chase on foot.

The Police were there in minutes, and Tony heard the villains throw the PC in to bushes in a landscaped area, from whence it was recovered a few minutes later.

A panting David was quoted as saying, *'at AFD prices, anyone who needs a copy of Postcode can order it by phone – there's no need to steal it!'*

To Contact AFD

We can be contacted in many ways. Phone on **01294 823221**

or fax on **01294 822905**

Our new World Wide Web site can be accessed by pointing your web browser at `http://www.afd.co.uk` and our ftp site is addressed `ftp.afd.co.uk`.

The AFD Bulletin Board is a two way service – it gives you all the applications that Postcode and Postcode Plus work with and is a forum for

Data News

To improve the quality of Postcode and Postcode Plus data, and to provide data that is as up-to-date as possible, AFD have now arranged to obtain PAF data direct from the Royal Mail mainframe on computer tape.

This should mean that our data is 3-4 months more up-to-date, and enable us to resolve some aberrations discovered in the previous Royal Mail data.

Existing Postcode users can get their copy of this data update at the nominal cost of £35.25 (£30+VAT). The Postcode Plus data update is £88.13 (£75+VAT).

To order your update, simply call or fax Margaret with your Postcode serial number and your credit card details. Alternatively you can order by post or e.mail.

users to exchange views and information. The Bulletin Board can be accessed by dialling **01294 829327**.

Our e.mail address is `postcode@afd.co.uk` or if you want to reach John (etc.) then type `john@afd.co.uk`

And finally the Royal Mail approved postal address is – 51 Meadowfoot Road, West Kilbride, KA23 9BU.

Competition — Congratulations to all the winners of our Postcode News competition. All the winners should have received their prizes by now.