

Updated March 17, 1988

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Sorry Customers, I can only tell it the way it is. Dynamic ram prices have gone through the roof, and availability dates of new stocks being quoted to me currently run into August and September. I have been able to source a quantity of second hand 4164's and 41256's and I am frantically searching for more. As my PBUFF project depends entirely on these types of Dynamic rams being available, I can only sell to my PBUFF customers until further notice. Every set I sell will be going into a PBUFF board, and I don't know how long I can keep this up before my own stocks run out. Latest wholesale prices quoted to me in a HUNDRED off quantities including sales tax are 4164's @ \$3.84 each, and 41256's @ \$16.60 each. If by chance you don't accept this, try ringing around yourself. You are in for quite a shock. I don't know what this really means to the computer industry, let alone my own little business, but I hope to survive for three or four months in the expectation that the drought will break. And when it does, what will the prices look like? I have a few sets of new 4164's and 41256's, a lot of second hand 4164's and a limited quantity of second hand 41256's. My prices are the same for new and second hand. I am selling the used chips on the same basis as a new chip. New chips will be shipped until stocks run out, then used chips will be shipped, so I can't guarantee availability of new chips. For the purpose of any order, I will refer to all chips at this stage as used. All chips are in reasonable physical condition, that is, you will be able to fit them into a socket without any major surgery as all pins are in a fair condition, no legs have solder blobs hanging onto them.

As I have a larger quantity of 4164's than 41256's, might I suggest that you build a 64K buffer now, and upgrade at a later stage when perhaps prices and stocks return to a more normal situation. All of my EPROM's supplied now support both types of Dynamic rams. I would appreciate any ideas from anyone who can assist me in overcoming this unprecedented semiconductor pricing hike.

Here is the only deal I can make at this stage:-

All Dynamic rams ordered must be for the PBUFF project. I will accept orders for users wishing to upgrade from 64K to 256K, but proof of original purchase may be required. Maximum of eight chips for one PBUFF.

USED DYNAMIC RAM PRICES:-

	EACH
OLD4164	\$ 2.50
OLD41256	\$10.00

SET OF EIGHT

SET4164	\$20.00
SET41256	\$80.00

LATEST PBUFF NEWS.....

I am developing a new board that plugs into the Rev G PBUFF board.

C3P1..... COMPUTERS THREE, PRINTER ONE.

Plugs into the 40 pin male header of J1 and allows for two additional computer inputs. The total of three computers in are auto "POLLED". Three data LEDs are now fitted to the front panel. More extensive kit builders diagnostics, real HEX dump which includes Address, data in hex, data in Ascii, Last byte in file count, End of file auto flush of buffer.

Hardware form feed enable/disable between computer selection, which also formats Hex dumps. Another new board is used for the C3P1 board. The C2INPUT board is similar to my BP10 board, except that it allows for two 36 pin Centronics type female connectors. It uses the PBUFF bus cable system to connect it to the C3P1 board. An additional 40 pin header appears on the C3P1 board for future expansion.

The hardware is available now, but it may take me about 2-3 months before I can release this board as I am still writing the software.

Dearth of Drams to hit pc pricing

United States: First, a shortage of microprocessors caused a lag in 80386-based pc production. Now, a shortage of Dram memory chips could lead to a wave of pc price hikes.

AST Research said it would raise desktop computer and printer prices 10 to 15% immediately as a result of the Dram chips shortage. Larger increases would be applied to Dram-intensive memory upgrades.

The California-based clone maker said it had to raise its prices because of recent 100 to 300% price increases in the cost of 256 Kbyte and 1 Mbyte chips.

AST is likely to be only the first in a wave of pc makers forced to raise prices, analysts say.

"I wouldn't be surprised to see other companies follow suit," says Bill Lempesis, pc industry analyst at San Jose-based market research specialist Dataquest. "Ram prices

have shot up dramatically in the past month."

Three more pc makers have told Intel marketing manager Claude Lempesis they would make more 80386-based pcs if they could buy a more Dram chips.

Last northern autumn, a shortage of 80386 microprocessors from Intel was cited as the cause for lagging 80386 pc production.

In the UK, Amstrad has already raised its prices, and Atari is rumoured to be next.

The price hikes threaten to reverse a historical trend to lower system prices, says Lempesis.

"Manufacturing and component costs have been dropping," he explained. "System prices have gone down about 20% a year."

Lempesis says the large pc makers should be able to cushion the worst effects of the memory chip price increases.

"There are all sorts of games you can play to



make a price increase easier to take, like including larger disk drives," he says.

The pc price hike could be short-lived if US chip makers begin manufacturing Dram chips again. Japanese and South Korean chip makers drove US companies out of the Dram market in 1985.

But US semiconductor manufacturers appear reluctant to invest millions in new factory capacity.

"Memories of 1985 run very deep," says Dataquest chip analyst Victor DeDios, referring to the recent semiconductor industry slump that saw factories idle for nearly two years.

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PBUFF MAIN BOARD REPAIR SERVICE.....

So, you have assembled your printer buffer kit, but it doesn't work. I will get it going for a total cost of \$40 which includes insured return postage, however the following conditions apply:-

Sockets must be used for all chips.

A 26 pin male header must be used for the parallel input/output Centronics port.

Preferably a 16 pin header should be used for the control connection to the front panel switches and Led.

The power in wiring can be left connected, but cut off at about six inches from the board so that I can easily power the board up.

This means that you only need to send me the main board.

The total repair cost includes the replacement of any main board component with the exception of the dynamic rams. There is no need to send the rams to me, as I can fully test the unit with a spare set. If you do suspect the rams as being faulty, it may be wise to include them in your parcel.

If you are getting +5 volts to the board, and are satisfied that no power supply problem exists, then there is no need to send me your plug pack or transformer as this only adds to the postage charges for you and me, and there is the possibility that this heavy item could damage your main board if not packaged securely.

I will supply dynamic rams at my going rates if requested.

A short report of all faults found is included in this repair service.

Finally, I reserve the right to refuse to repair any board that I consider is either beyond repair, or requires a massive amount of work to correct it, and will advise you before any charge is incurred. A bottom line alternative is available for any kit found in this condition. A complete main board rebuild can be done at a total cost of \$70 by using a new board and any components that can be salvaged from your old board. This price once again doesn't include dynamic ram chips. If you wish to attempt a rebuild yourself, a replacement board is available at \$25

The preferred packaging for the main board only, is the Australian post POSTPAK Video cassette box size. Use foam, newspaper, that plastic bubble stuff, or any other suitable material to protect your board with so that it doesn't rattle around inside the box.

If you really need to send front panels, transformers etc., that can't be accommodated with the above box, use a POSTPAK size BM. You will be able to fit the full standard case plus plug pack into the BM box.

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FP10..... FRONT PANEL INPUT OUTPUT.

Small front panel board that has provision for two seven segment LED displays and six PCB mount type switches. Will display in direct percentage (00-99) of buffer full. Ability to dial up 1 to 99 copies, and many other features. Connects to PBUFF or C3P1 via a 40 pin header system and flat ribbon cable. Software is being written in conjunction with the C3P1 board.

One prototype working, could be 5 to 6 months away.

MEGABUFF..... Rev H board under development using new 1 MEG 18 pin DRAMS. Have had prototype working since August 87. New Dram prices could affect its expected release of about six months.