There are some golden rules when using a computer that will give you a better computing experience. Howard explained what they were and how they could help at different stages of familiarity with a computer.

'Never answer yes to a question that you do not understand.' is vital when the computer asks a question in a dialogue box. If you understand the question you are safe to choose an answer. If you do not understand the question say 'no' or 'cancel'.

With a remarkable degree of consistency 'no' is the fail-safe option. A 'yes' answer might agree to an action the computer is about to take – and if you don't know what it did, you will have a hard time reversing the action if it later becomes clear that you were wrong to say yes.

Be especially careful if a 'yes' answer prompts another question that asks "Are you sure?" This question means that the action about to be taken is more serious, perhaps even irreversible, and you really should be sure. If in doubt ask a friend.

The second golden rule is *"Back up your files."* The only people who do not back up their files are those who have not lost any – yet! What to back up is a matter of personal choice and depends upon the importance of the files to you personally.

To make the process simpler it is useful to keep all data files in sub-folders under one main folder named, say, 'My Documents', rather than allow applications to store them at their discretion.

The What, Why, When, Where and How of backing up files will be dealt with in greater detail at our next meeting.

"Keep on Learning" is the third golden rule. Everyone absorbs skills at their own pace, but many stop learning once they are able to do barely what they need to do, without having learned the most efficient way to do things. There are usually at least three different ways of doing anything on a computer. It pays to continue honing one's knowledge.

Howard showed some of the most useful keyboard shortcuts and the various ways of controlling the arrangements of windows on the screen.

At this point Steve fired up Windows 7 and showed a few of the new refinements such as 'Edge' which snaps a window to fill half the screen when it is dragged to the side; making it easier to have side-by-side windows for comparing documents and such.

Questions 'from the floor' gave rise to some interesting inter-action and resulted in several mini-demonstrations of other useful tips.

Consequently the talk rather over-ran without being able to cover everything. However, all is not lost as a selection of best Hints and Tips can be downloaded from our web site: *penarthcomputerclub.co.uk.*

The next meeting is on Tuesday 26th October at All Saints Lesser Hall, Victoria Square, Penarth. 7.30 pm for 8.00. Kevin will talk about backing up files. Visitors welcome. For more information ring Howard on 029 20708439.

In Brief

Computer Club

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