

Happy New Year. “Live Long and Prosper” as Star Trek’s Mr Spock would say.

I grew up enjoying science fiction and longed for the wonderful gadgets to arrive. Flying cars (apart from some odd-ball experiments) won’t arrive for some time, but there are compensations. I read that some big companies are trying to develop a walkie-talkie wrist watch to which, no doubt they will try to add web access and video.

At family gatherings over the holiday it seemed that everybody over the age of 5 had a mobile phone and teenagers and adults had smart phones. Most had touch sensitive screens and operated them deftly at high speed.

The continuing improvements of speed and capacity of all our gadgets is staggering. 2012 saw the introduction of Windows 8 touch-screens and the iPad Retina display for superb picture quality. Some people I know no longer feel the need to have a land-line phone as their mobile is so convenient.

Cloud computing, (where you need not have programmes on your computer, but simply download them for use as required; thus getting the most up-to-date version every time) is growing.

It can be a bit daunting even to keep up, but there are those who are prepared to forecast what is coming. It is fun to read the predictions and in twelve months we will be able to laugh at the ones that turned out to be hilariously off the mark. Nevertheless these bold thinkers are essential for progress to be achieved, whether they are driven by the love of technology or ambition for wealth.

I was encouraged by one snippet of news from China regarding the simple power plug. We are all familiar with the variety of sockets in different countries and the need to carry adapters if travelling. When Hong Kong was returned to China all the sockets were UK 3 pin ones and to facilitate ease of use throughout China and to simplify the travel problems, they are now installing a universal socket in new developments. Let’s hope the idea spreads.

Windows 8 is designed to provide a similar user interface on desktops, laptops, tablets, notebooks and mobile phones. If you can drive one, you can drive all. It’s a start.

Home users do have one advantage over large companies in that home users can adapt relatively quickly and inexpensively to new technology whereas large outfits tend to wait until they have extracted all the value they can get out of the last expensive upgrade of equipment.

Maybe club members will want to discuss what they should be buying in future. Some might want to get more out of what they have. Home networks are topical. Our AGM will give them the chance to help determine the programme for 2013.

*Our brief AGM is on Tuesday 8<sup>th</sup> January at All Saints Lesser Hall, Victoria Square, Penarth. 7.30 pm for 8.00. It will be followed by a discussion on programmes and some Q & A, as time permits. See [penarthcomputerclub.co.uk](http://penarthcomputerclub.co.uk).*

