Everybody suffers when severe weather comes along and the recent snowfall and frosty spell meant having to cancel out meeting for 22nd January. We did our best to let members know in advance and apologise to any visitors who braved the conditions and were disappointed.

I have recently come across more than one person who uses a home computer, but didn't grow up with computers and consequently spends a lot of time wrestling with even small tasks.

It is a familiar story and was the original impetus for the formation of the club – to help the 'oldies' get a grip on the technology. It has been doing it for twenty years and absorbed much of the associated technologies of digital cameras and telephones, emailing and the Internet.

On the one hand the advances in gadgetry and sophistication are getting more difficult to cope with, yet we find that the original need remains. People are not always comfortable with their computers.

That is understandable for complicated tasks, but it also applies to the basics where a little more familiarity with them would pay enormous dividends in time and effort saved.

The users I mentioned above are quite capable of completing the task they are undertaking. They were, however, totally unaware of the time they could save themselves with a few simple clicks of the mouse or a couple of key-presses. I find it interesting that each user has their own personal blind spots concerning the labour saving tips and I think I know why.

Once people learn one way of doing something, they keep doing it that same way in spite of there being several other ways of achieving the same result, often with fewer or more convenient actions.

A computer user's early sessions may be taught by a friend. Their hand movements can be too fast to follow. Sometimes it is too much to be absorbed. In either case the learner is aware of the problem. If the 'teacher' has inefficient ways, then the inefficiency can be imparted and perpetuated. This is because we are all creatures of habit. I have come across users with years of experience who are still working far too hard to get the results they want and slap their head when shown a better way.

To help all these users we have assembled a document that sets out quite a few pieces of advice. On our website go to DOWNLOADS and click on "hints and tips 2009" to download it. It could be subtitled *"What I wish I had been told when I started"*. It is being improved and updated, but as it stands you might just discover enough to be kicking yourself for not finding out about all this years ago.

Have a look at Format Painter under Press Archive>2010>8th May. Browse for anything on Keyboard Shortcuts.