

LUGS ON TOUR

Blackpool LUG

Our Lancashire correspondent **Les Pounder** reports from Blackpool LUG & Makerspace.

Blackpool LUG meets once a week, making it a rarity, as most groups meet monthly. The venue is the business premises of Mike Hewitt, the LUG's organiser, and just happens to be a PC recycling centre full of old kit that they can use for projects. A typical LUG meet involves brioche and coffee, oh and quite a lot of hacking and making. Past projects include repurposing thin client computers (using Puppy Linux) for Oggcamp signage, and a step-by-step video guide on how to dismantle and rebuild a desktop computer.

Blackpool LUG recently became a makerspace, growing with the group's interests in maker culture and hardware hacking. It now has lots of great facilities, such as a soldering room with extractor fan and data sheets for all of the different microcontrollers that they tinker with. They especially enjoy hacking with Arduinos, and now everyone has an-Arduino compatible device called "The Shrimp", which is a barebones

Arduino, but fully compatible with the Uno range of Arduinos.

Every week, there will be three or four different projects on the go. For example, the youngest member, Kieran, has been learning Python to augment his computing lessons at school. His skill has grown each week and now he is readily creating his own programs such as a lottery number generator. Blackpool LUG's most senior member, Elizabeth, has been learning Grub and how to configure it to maximise her workflow, while Mike and Donald, our two electrical experts, have recently repaired an old LCD TV to full working order, enabling the LUG to have a purpose-built Google Hangout device on the main wall.

BLUG on the road

Members of Blackpool LUG have done many great things, both inside and outside of their meetings. They have travelled the UK providing logistical and technical support for many high profile events, you might know of one, the mighty Oggcamp



Photo credit: Les Pounder CC-BY-SA

The members working on their individual projects around the communal table notice the coffee pot is empty.

unconference. Blackpool LUG have supported Oggcamp since 2011 and can be found working in the crew along with the other magnificent volunteers.

Linux is a community, and what makes a LUG so special are the people, who all have a shared interest in Linux and that bonds us together. But the friendships created are more than this. I'd like to say thanks to Mike Hewitt, for keeping the LUG open over the years and giving us a great home.

If you have yet to find your local UK Linux user group, head over to <http://lug.org.uk> and sign up to your nearest meetings mailing list. Drop them a line and say hi.

If there isn't a LUG in your area, why don't you start your own? For a venue, why not try a coffee shop or local pub? Start small and build upon each success – that's what Blackpool LUG have done.

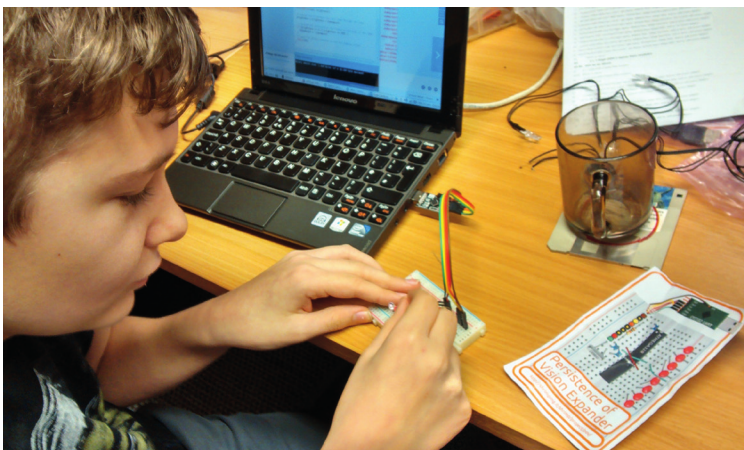


Photo credit: Les Pounder CC-BY-SA

Kieran learning more about The Shrimp by building a Persistence of Vision kit.

TELL US ABOUT YOUR LUG!

Chances are that you are already a member of a Linux User Group (LUG). LUGs are all over the world and each one has its own unique selling point, which draws its members to meet and discuss their favourite topic. We want to know more about your LUG or hackerspace, so please write to us at lugs@linuxvoice.com and we might send one of our roving reporters to your next LUG meeting

Sheffield LUG

Richard Ibbotson on the history of ShefLUG.

I remember back in the 1990s helping Manchester LUG to come into existence. Dr Owen le Blanc, David Clark, Dr Dave Gilbert, Professor Ted Harding and some other notables used to get together on Saturday afternoons to create the first LUG meeting in the UK. It was at about this time (1992 to 1997) when the people at Manchester Computing Centre were working together with Linus Torvalds that Dr Owen le Blanc created MCC Interim Linux. A Dr Rüdiger Berlich arrived from Germany. I helped him to start SUSE Linux Ltd in London and also helped him with the same thing in California. The SUSE ethic at that time was "SUSE Linux. Have a lot of fun".

Since I am from Sheffield originally I thought that creating ShefLUG was the next logical

step. In Sheffield at that time there were a few historians and other academic people who had realised that open source and free software based on the General Public Licence was going to be something more than a music hall joke. Although, they hadn't really understood what I understood. Which was? That open source software is the future.

Gradual improvement

When I first started ShefLUG in 1999 we had a really nasty website. This is much improved in the present day. People didn't really know what they were doing at meetings. We had to slowly evolve a venue for meetings. Eventually we had a solid core of followers. Some of them are still around today. Times have changed. The Android GNU/Linux



Rüdiger Berlich demonstrating SUSE 7.1 in front of Sheffield LUG. Released in 2001, SUSE 7.1 was the first release to feature the Yast package manager/configuration centre.

based operating system and other things like tablets have come along. Recently people at the Linuxcon in Edinburgh were saying "We won": GNU/Linux has taken over the world. Whatever the truth might be I find it best to remember one thing throughout the FUD and fog that is out there. Which is? GNU/Linux. Have a lot of fun."

Bradford LUG

John McLear and Shi Hussaini on a hive of activity.

Shi Hussaini got in touch with us from Bradford LUG to tell us about what they're up to in the land of dark satanic mills:

"My husband and I have been working on Swanky Paint, a Deluxe Paint clone (old school pixel editor used in the games industry since the 80s) targeting the Raspberry Pi natively, as well as Linux, Android, NaCl etc. but the Pi is our minimum spec. So far we have basic editing and animated gif support so it's actually usable!"

One ring to rule them all

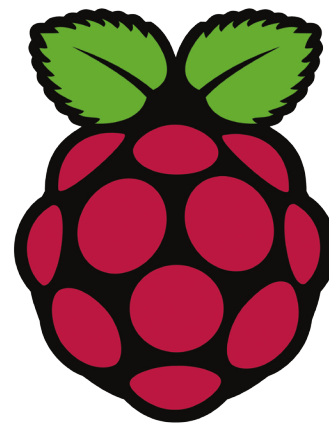
John McLear wrote to tell us about a cryptic Raspberry Pi/XBMC project. "I have been hacking on Pi/NXP Explore so I can use an NFC Ring to pause/play VLC/XBMC videos by touching a panel under a TV. Next step is so each person in my house can have a profile GUID



Wallow in the retrostalgia.

stored on their ring and when they touch the TV it plays from a list of tv shows recommended/streamed for them."

We'll admit that we didn't really understand this until we realised the NFC ring is a project that John funded on Kickstarter, raising almost a quarter of a million pounds to develop a ring that can be worn on your finger, and which transmits data to nearby devices.



The Pi is thriving in its homeland of South Wales.

Pi Cymru

Doug Gore reports from South Wales.

Pi Cymru, the Raspberry Pi community for Wales, is hosting their first event - a Raspberry Jam at TechHub in Swansea city centre on Saturday 8 March from 1.30 to 5.30pm. The event brings Raspberry Pi users in the area together to meet in person, learn from each other and find out how they

can put their Raspberry Pi to good use. There will be talks, project demonstrations and open discussions on the Raspberry Pi. The event is free and open to everybody including families and children. You can register for the event at swanseajam.eventbrite.co.uk, and find out more on our website at www.picymru.com.