

THE QL TODAY STORY

QL Today was first published in 1966 at a time when QL magazines were in serious trouble.

The last surviving commercial magazine, QL World, had ceased publication in 1994 and QL publications had become, through necessity, a cottage industry produced by QL-ers for QL-ers. Initially it was a cottage industry that did not thrive. There were two publications, Qreview in the UK and IQLR in America. Qreview was taken over by IQLR, but the latter collapsed in 1996 when the publisher had a serious heart attack.

The future looked grim for QL publications. The collapse of IQLR occurred at the start of a new volume and traders who had paid for a year's advertising lost their money. There was also a risk that readers who had just renewed their subscription would also lose theirs.

Two traders, Jochen Merz in Germany and Stuart Honeyball in the UK, launched a rescue operation for QL magazines and took over the IQLR subscription list including responsibility for subscriber debts. They secured a well known QL-er, Dilwyn Jones, as editor.



The first issue with a cover proclaiming "The Race Must Go On" was produced in just 6 days - no mean achievement in the days before universal email and other electronic communications.

Some idea of the uncertainty of the two founders can be seen from extracts from their first editorials:

"The current issue you're reading at the moment was done in a real hurry, so please excuse the mistakes. Remember it's the first try - but we hope bearing this in mind you find it acceptable."

and:

"Please help us. It is always a mystery as to exactly why some people do not take out a follow-on subscription to the magazine when their current subscription runs out. Indeed it is equally mystifying as to why others actually do resubscribe! What we would really like to do, of course, is produce the perfect magazine but in order to be able to aim in this direction we need to hear your views about what we're doing."

QL Today went on to become the longest surviving QL publication with the exception of the Quanta Magazine.

The staffing of the magazine has been very stable. Stuart Honeyball left the magazine after the first year and his place as UK representative was taken over by QBranch. This arrangement ended in 2009 when Quo Vadis Design took over as UK agent. During the life of the magazine there have only been two editors - Dilwyn Jones from 1996 to 2005 and Geoff Wicks from 2005 to 2013. A UK reader, Brian Kemmett has indexed all the English language editions of the magazine.

During the life of QL Today the QL community has diminished in size and this has had its effect on the magazine. Initially a German language supplement was published, but this ceased in 2002. In 2005 the frequency of publication was reduced from 6 to 5 issues per year and from 2007 the magazine has been published quarterly.

Two factors led to the closure of the magazine. One was an unexpected sharp rise in postal charges and the other was a shortage of regular writers. Postage costs have often been a problem because the QL community is spread over the whole world and became more severe when the German postal service abolished some bulk postage rates. The number of writers has been steadily falling and during a recent 12 month period a total of only 11 people, other than Quanta committee members writing specifically on Quanta matters, had written for either QL Today or the Quanta Magazine.



The publisher and editor decided to go out with a bang rather than let the magazine die of slow attrition. The final issue had a bumper 48 pages.



The final issue came with a free DVD containing, among other material, a complete archive of QL Today. As a bonus was the public release of the first non commercial version of QPC.