

INTRODUCTION

1.1 LOADING PROBLEMS

With the influx of large memory software on the market today and with most software houses developing their fast loaders, program loading reliability suffers. This is due to the loading systems increasing the baud rate in which the program is put onto the tape. This in itself calls for a much more critical setting of the tape head on the cassette deck.

1.2 HAVE YOU EVER RETURNED A FAULTY TAPE?

Many owners who return tapes to retailers are in fact returning perfectly good recordings. The problems lie with the tape recorder. The common answer by many is "Well all my other tapes work". This may be so, but from experience, as you will see when you set up your alignment, the tolerance can be more than a 360° turn of the adjustment screw to obtain a "Possible load setting". This package is designed for you to carry out this adjustment yourself and is explained stage by stage. Once you have carried it out you will realise the simplicity of the operation and will be able to use the package when required.

2.1 WHAT IS THE AZIMUTH ANGLE?

A tape head basically consists of two magnetic poles with a gap between them. The gap should ideally be perfectly perpendicular to the direction of tape travel. The difference between this gap and the perpendicular is called the Azimuth angle.

2.2 WHY SHOULD WE SET THIS ANGLE CORRECTLY?

If a magnetic pulse on the tape goes past a perfectly aligned head, then the electrical signal received from the head is very clear to the computer and the program will load without error. If the head is slightly unadjusted (out of alignment), the signal received from the head is not clear and appears "smudged" over a longer time interval. The computer will be unsure as to exactly when the signal occurred and so timing errors will be introduced. This can result in data being read incorrectly from the cassette (loading errors). If the head is a long way out, pulses may appear "smudged" together and data will be lost (the program will never be recognised, the tape will appear blank, but it is not). Both these problems are more critical at a high speed rather than at low speed and a tape recorder that normally copes with loading programs at the Amstrad speed of 1000 baud (speed write 0) may have difficulty with programs saved at 2000 baud (speed write).

2.3 WHY SHOULD I USE THIS TAPE?

The Azimuth angle varies by a small amount from tape to tape due to differences in cassette casing. This cassette is designed to be as accurate as possible in this respect and will be only slightly different from other good quality tapes. It has been professionally recorded to the very highest standard. Imitations or copies will not give the same result.

2.4 THE AZIMUTH ALIGNMENT TAPE

This special tape has a standard baud rate loader, but its special feature is a counter 0-1000 written at 2000 baud rate, which is continued on the alignment side of the tape. On the reverse is a game called 'JOE BLADE' which will act as a test to see if you have carried out the adjustment correctly.

3.1 CLEANING THE HEAD PRIOR TO ADJUSTMENT

Before carrying out the adjustment, one should ensure that the head is cleaned. This is best done with the use of a cotton bud and Isopropyl Alcohol (available from any good chemist). This is best done with the tape recorder's play button depressed, consequently revealing the tape head.

At this point identify the screw to be adjusted with the play button depressed. The adjusting screw on the head is aligned with the adjustment aperture in the casing.

3.2 LOADING THE AZIMUTH TAPE

WARNING

The screwdriver may only be inserted into the adjustment screw head with the cassette deck in play position.

Load the Azimuth tape by pressing and holding down the CTRL key and then pressing the small ENTER key, then follow the instructions displayed on screen. The tape will now load. Ensure that the sound is turned up when the counter appears to start counting. Insert the special screwdriver, with pointer mounted as per diagram, into the adjustment hole and gently turn it clockwise until you hear a bleep from the computer. At this point turn the screwdriver slowly anti-clockwise to stop the bleeping and the counter should start counting up to 1000. Should it stop/start, turn the screwdriver slightly more anti-clockwise until it counts up to 1000. Once this has been achieved, note the point at which it happened. It is suggested that you use a matchstick as in the example.

3.3 NEXT STAGE

To start the counter again press the space bar then carry out the same procedure turning the screwdriver slowly anti-clockwise to obtain a bleeping sound. Then bring it back clockwise to obtain the counter reading up to 1000 and make note again using a matchstick.

3.4 FINAL SETTING

The screwdriver should have remained inserted throughout this operation. You will now note the angle between the markers. To obtain the optimum setting you will need to halve the angle between the markers, (note the angle is over 360°), therefore turn the screwdriver clockwise until the back of the pointer is in the centre of the two markers. This will ensure the head is ideally aligned.

NOTE: The angle is the turning distance between the two extremes when the counter was reading 1000, and this could be more than 360° .

3.5 TEST

Turn over the tape and load the test game JOE BLADE. This has been recorded at 2000 baud so if it loads you shouldn't have any problems with other fast loaders. To load JOE BLADE hold down CTRL and tap the small ENTER key.

3.6 CASSETTE CARE

Having now carried out this adjustment you will appreciate the tolerance of the alignment and you will keep this tape for future use to minimise the frustration of the past. Keep your Azimuth cassette stored in its box at all times and do not expose it to excessively high or low temperatures. Do not store in a dusty environment.

YOUR STEP BY STEP GUIDE

THIS IS AN AMSTRAD CASSETTE DECK



THIS IS THE HOLE FOR THE AZIMUTH ADJUSTMENT.



HOUSING



ADJUSTMENT SCREW



POSITIVE DRIVE (PHILIPS)

These diagrams show the rotation of the screw to the adjustment hole and the Amstrad housing.

SETTING YOUR AZIMUTH

1 Insert the screwdriver into the adjustment hole as shown with the cassette deck in the play position, making sure that the screwdriver sits firmly into the screw head.

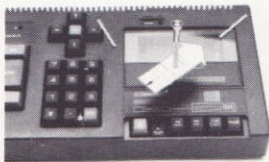


2 First rotate the screwdriver clockwise until the counter reset chimes. Then gently turn the screw anti-clockwise until the counter goes up to 1000 without resetting. This is one of the extremes within the tolerance. Mark this position with a match stick as shown. Do not remove the screwdriver and keep the pointer facing this position.



3 To start the counter press the space bar. Now rotate the screwdriver anti-clockwise until the counter chimes, then gently clockwise until the counter goes up to 1000 without resetting. You now have the other extreme. Now mark the position with another matchstick.

4 Now divide the angle between the two extremes remembering which direction the extremes are in e.g.



FIRST ANGLE

SECOND ANGLE

NOW HALVE THE ANGLE

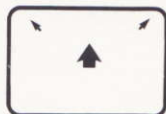
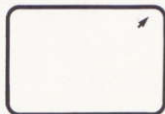
1ST EXTREME

2ND EXTREME

1ST EXTREME

2ND EXTREME

1ST EXTREME



THE ANGLE TO BE HALVED
MAY BE UP TO 360°

NOTE: These diagrams are only for guidance as the actual angles and the position of the screwdriver pointer at the start of the operation will vary from one cassette deck to another. However it is important you halve the two extremes in the right direction when turning the screwdriver pointer for the final optimum setting.

Now if the sequence has been carried out correctly your head should be aligned to the accuracy of 2000 baud which should handle all commercially available cassette programs. To check this you should flip the cassette over and load the 'B' side, which is a free test game recorded at 2000 baud. If you experience loading problems you should clean the tape heads or carry out the alignment process again in case of an error on your first attempt.

JOE BLADE

LOADING INSTRUCTIONS

464; Hold down CTRL and tap the small ENTER key.

664/6128 owners; Type | (shifted @) TAPE (ENTER) then type RUN" ENTER.

Controls;

A - Through door or jump

/ - Left

Space - Fire

Z - Through door

\ - Right

Or Joystick

Terrorists have captured six world leaders, and its up to you, Joe Blade, to rescue them. Armed with only a light machine gun you must infiltrate the terrorists HQ. The base is heavily defended by underworld henchmen, contact with which will drain your strength. The stronghold is also protected by six explosive devices, which must be activated, giving you twenty minutes to rescue all the hostages and escape.

To activate these explosives you must rearrange the access code into alphabetical order using left, right and fire to swap the two highlighted letters. You will also find many useful objects in the fortress, these may help you in your mission.

Original design, code and graphics; Colin Swinbourne

Amstrad code; Kevin Parker

Textuals and story; Simon Daniels



Warranty

If you damage the screwdriver then a good hardware shop or a specialist tool centre should be able to supply you with another. If you have any difficulty obtaining a replacement then contact Interceptor Software direct at Mercury House, Calleva Park, Aldermaston, Berks.

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ANGLE CAN
BE OVER
360°



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CPC

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