

Expansion Port
This is used by cartridge software and by a 'fast' disk drive

Function Keys
commodore plus/4
F1/F4 F2/F5 F3/F6 HELP/F7
! " # \$ % & / ()

Cursor Cluster
[Up] [Down] [Left] [Right]

Reset Button
[Reset]

Expansion Port / User Port
[Expansion Port] [User Port]

New Features
Old Commodore hands will be interested to learn that the Plus/4 has both Escape and Reset keys. Other encouraging signs are the cursor keys cluster, the function keys (programmable from BASIC), and the Help key. The power supply, cassette and joystick sockets are all different from the Commodore 64 and Vic-20 standard, as are the expansion and user ports

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COMMODORE PLUS/4

PRICE
£300

DIMENSIONS
67 × 203 × 338 mm

CPU
7501, 0.9 or 1.8 MHz

MEMORY
64K RAM, 64K ROM

SCREEN
Text: 40 by 25. Graphics: 320 by 200 in 121 colours

INTERFACES
2 joystick sockets, serial interface, cassette interface, cartridge/parallel port

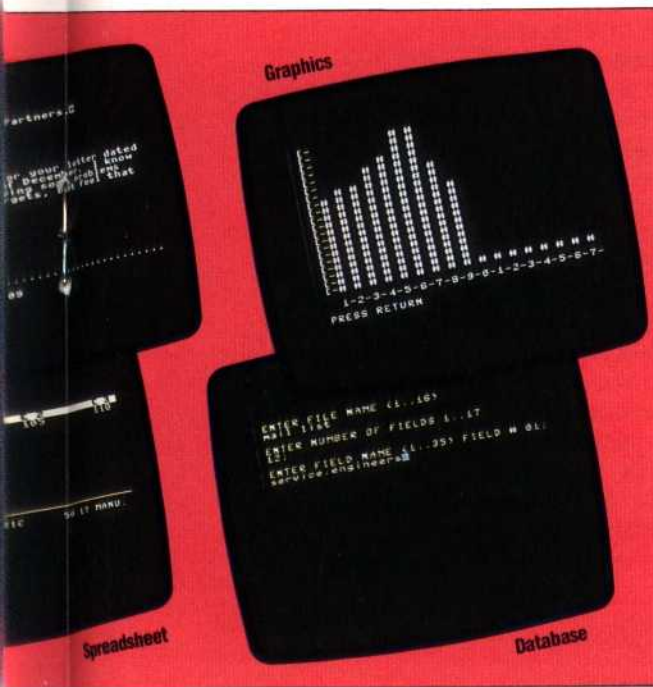
LANGUAGES AVAILABLE
BASIC

KEYBOARD
Typewriter-style with 67 keys, including four function keys

DOCUMENTATION
Reasonable manuals that teach how to program and how to use the built-in software. Badly phrased in places

STRENGTHS
Particularly good version of BASIC with good graphics and structuring commands. Full 64K of memory

WEAKNESSES
Needs dedicated cassette recorder and non-standard joysticks. Built-in software is poor and cannot be used fully without a disk drive



Hidden Cost

The Plus/4's ROM-based software comprises a word processor, spreadsheet, database and graphics utility. The packages' chief strengths are the fact that they are integrated; they are not, however, usable without a disk drive, which effectively increases the cost of the machine by £200

It uses a different cassette plug to the older Commodores so a different recorder has to be bought. The price is the same, though — £45. The Plus/4 also uses a different socket for joysticks.

A slightly updated version of the slow Commodore disk drive is being offered for the machine. Commodore is also developing a 'fast' disk drive that will plug into the machine's cartridge port to give speeds closer to normal disk drives. No less than five Commodore printers will work with the micro: a daisy wheel, two ordinary dot matrix printers, a colour dot matrix printer and a four-pen printer/plotter.

The Commodore Plus/4 is selling for approximately £70 more than the Commodore 64, but its improved BASIC and extra memory space make it a good buy. In a future article we shall be looking in detail at how this new version of Commodore BASIC works. Lack of software will remain a problem until the machine has established itself on the market. But a company with Commodore's record of sales should have little trouble gaining software support.

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