One of the longest-lived GUI operating systems in the world has its origins as an emergency project — specifically the means by which Acorn planned to rescue the original Archimedes operating system.

This is according to the original Acorn Arthur project lead, Paul Fellows, who spoke about the creation of RISC OS at the RISC OS User Group Of London, ROUGOL [after some helpful arrangements made by Liam Proven — Ed].

On Monday, your correspondent hosted and moderated a reunion of four of the original developers of Acorn's RISC OS.

Fellows explained that participating were "Paul Fellows (VidC controller, Palette, I2C interface, Real Time Clock and EEPROM), Tim Dobson (Fonts, Audio and Utilities), Richard Manby (Graphics and Desktop), and Stuart Swales (Fileswitch and Heap Manager)."

Today, RISC OS is still rumbling along, and version 5 is now open source. But it wasn't the original, planned operating system for Acorn's Archimedes computer. That was going to be ARX, of which almost no trace exists today apart from a few Usenet posts. What information survives has been compiled into the Wikipedia article.