welcome to taiwan

The computers and peripherals *PC Advisor* writes about, and which you use every day, may come from a UK supplier, but it's odds on that some (or even all) of the hardware components in your PC came from a tiny island just off the coast of China – Taiwan.

Last year Taiwan generated £30bn worth of hardware, of which half was produced domestically and the other half offshore (principally in China). Taiwan is the 14th largest economy in the world in terms of GDP (gross domestic product), with a growth rate of eight percent over the past 30 years. Not bad for an island that measures only 35,961 square kilometres.

Although traditionally known for semiconductor manufacture, nearly every computer component, and even whole systems, are built in bulk in Taiwan. If you have ever wondered why two notebooks from different manufacturers look strikingly similar (or in many cases identical, bar the logo), it's because they have been produced side-by-side in the same factory before being labelled with different company badges.

To show off all its wonderful technology, the Taipei Computer Association set up Computex, an IT tradeshow. Now in its 21st year, this year's event sees 1,108 exhibitors covering 2,306 booths with over 50,000 products on show. The exhibition takes place in three halls, although it is outgrowing this area and looks set to expand even further in coming years.

Whether you're looking for integrated circuits, memory cards, CD-RWs (CD rewritables), processors, RAM, cases, ADSL (asymmetric digital subscriber line, aka broadband) routers, USB (universal serial bus) hubs, flat-panel or plasma displays, projectors, cables, multimedia players, keyboards, joysticks, scanners, digital cameras, MP3 players or various combinations of the above, Computex has what you are looking for.

So this month, *PC Advisor* decided to celebrate the huge contribution Taiwan has made to the world of technology over the past couple of decades with a special section devoted to Computex and some of the important Taiwanese players that exhibit there.

Over the next few pages we have news about all the new products that were on show at Computex, plus profiles of two of the key companies shaping the future of the Taiwan technology industry. And our main feature, on page 62, reveals just how important this tiny island is to all the products and companies you read about every month in *PC Advisor.*