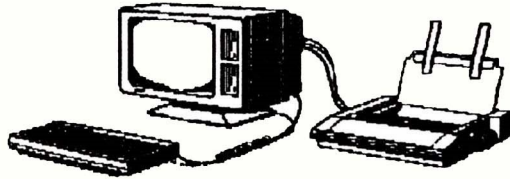


MONTHLY NEWSLETTER

OCTOBER 95

HEADS OF THE VALLEYS PCW USERS GROUP



Club meetings are held on the first Friday of each month at 7.30pm at the address below-

BIRCHACRE
CROES BYCHAN
LLWYDCOED
ABERDARE
MID. GLAM.
CF44 0EJ.

Tel.01685-874972

Further details can be obtained by contacting either ROY UNDERWOOD on ABERDARE 01685-874972 or ANTHONY HILL on CARDIFF 01222-618012

The aim of the club is to further the knowledge of PCW users, so that they can derive the full benefit from their computer.

Help and advice can be given on most software, this includes such programmes as LocoScript, Masterfile, MicroDesign, ProScan, SuperCalc, Mini Office, Comms. The club also has a large library of Public Domain files.

A file transfer facility is available, i.e. copy files from 3" disk onto a 3.5" disk, also CP/M files can be copied to MS-DOS formatted disk's, and MS-DOS files copied to CP/M formatted disk's.

EDITORIAL

The South West PCW clubs are holding their "MicroDesign Event" day on 4 November 1995, 12 noon to 5pm, at the Women's Institute Hut, Thorverton, Nr. Exeter, Devon. There will be demo's, sales, and a problem corner, and refreshments will be available throughout the day. Also in attendance will be companies such as LuxSoft, DGC Software, Crazy Diamond, Rod Design, Artmonk, and MDIUG. Admission is £2.00 for any PCW club member and £3.00 for non members. For further details and advanced bookings contact:-

Andy Young, Tel or Fax 01395-577972.

A publication just released entitled "ALAN SUGAR-The Amstrad Story" by David Thomas, is a well written and readable account of the man and the company behind the PCW.

It is published by Pan at £6.99,. ISBN 0-330-31900-0.

The club has now received the 1996 electronics components catalogue from CPC (Combined Precision Components plc) Preston. The catalogue is available to all club members. If you borrow the catalogue, please return it to Roy as soon as you have finished with it.

Apologies are offered on the quality of this editorial, for the first time in over 30 years Roy has been persuaded, by his wife Val, to go on holiday to Malta. I have received a card from them which shows they are both enjoying the break and the warm weather. He has therefore left me to fill in the last few lines of the editorial and print it. Whilst in the past I have contributed or edited this page, it is a whole different thing to be responsible for the production of it together with the other half ie page 7. It also reminds us of the heavy commitment it takes to produce the other pages of this newsletter each month. The plea for YOUR articles is repeated.

ALL FORMATS COMPUTER FAIRS

28 October University of the West of England, Bristol. J1/M32.

29 October NAC (Royal Showground) Stoneleigh.

AUCTIONS

No local auctions in October.

Next meeting 6 October 1995 7.30pm.

FIFTEEN TO ONE

- 1) How do the QWERTY and DVORAK keyboards derive their names?
- 2) What is a BBS?
- 3) In Basic how would you recall the last command typed?
- 4) At what speed does the PCW/PcW run?
- 5) If you typed in [Exit]E[Exit]H in CP/M, what would happen?
- 6) What is an IC?
- 7) What is the maximum number of characters you can use in a filename?
- 8) What is the maximum number of characters you can use in a filetype?
- 9) What is a bit?
- 10) What is ergonomics?
- 11) Without looking, how many keys are there on a PCW8512/9512 keyboard?
- 12) What does a 'SYSOP' do?
- 13) What is a system disk?
- 14) What does EOF and EOL stand for?
- 15) You have all seen the film Zulu, but do you know the name of the first Zulu killed at Rork's Drift? This has nothing to do with the PCW.

Answers next month

If any member would like to compile a short quiz for the newsletter, either on the PCW/PcW or on general knowledge please send it in to Roy on a disk, and don't forget to include the answers as well.

PUBLISHING FROM A DESK TOP

If you have run a typewritten memorandum through a photocopier for distribution to several people, you have indulged in a simple form of desktop publishing. Since dropping your type-writer into an Amstrad skip you will probably have used PCW printouts for the same purpose. LocoScript is capable of producing excellent desktop publications according to any common-sense definition of that term.

Narrower definitions of the term desk-top publishing have only recently come into vogue, and tend to vary according to the capabilities of particular computer programs.

Thus the manual for a DTP program loosely defines electronic desktop publishing in terms of the integrated layout of drawings and text, whereas the documentation for a typical Apple Macintosh program might offer a very complex definition covering advanced typesetting techniques far beyond the reach of any PCW software.

FILTERING DOWN

Commercial typesetting firms have been in the front line of the new industrial revolution for more than a decade, and it is thanks to the rapid advance of computerization at this level that the benefits of high-technology publishing have begun to filter down to the home micro user.

Because of disparities in hardware costs, access to professional input techniques has developed much faster than access to output techniques and the typesetting industry is now processing a growing volume of disc input from customers who would previously have supplied typed copy for re-keying.

Although it cannot fully emulate industrial print quality, a standalone desktop publishing system, based on a fairly sophisticated micro and a laser printer, can now produce excellent results in skilled hands.

When used without a good working knowledge of established typesetting and editing procedures, these \$10,000 systems can (and all too often do) produce some spectacularly unreadable pages.

Equipped with the modest resources of an 8-bit micro and a basic dot-matrix printer, an unskilled PCW publisher will find it even easier to produce poor pages. But if these simple tools are used with care the results can compare very favourably with badly designed output from state-of-the-art machines. All typesetting facilities function in strict accordance with the "garbage in, garbage out" principle.

THEORY AND PRACTICE

Electronic desktop publishing holds enormous potential. It can open up new channels of communication for individuals who have been unable to publish through traditional outlets, and it can transform the financial viability of commercial applications. Direct input newspaper journalism is a form of networked desktop publishing, organized on an industrial scale.

By tilting the balance of craft skills towards the editorial phase of the print production cycle, the new publishing technology gives the originators of the printed page much greater control over its final form. At the traditional "craft" end of the cycle, restrictive practices are eroded and some outdated mystiques are exposed for what they are.

Such is the theory; some of today's practitioners have much to learn before it can be properly implemented. Average publishing standards have, if anything, gone downhill during the first phase of the transition. Some badly produced work is being distributed by newcomers who don't know any better (but are very proud of their hardware). Some is being distributed by experienced publishers who should know better (but are more concerned to make financial savings).

The odd technical foul-up must be expected when new systems are first installed, but once equipment is fully operational mediocre output can only be attributed to sloppy working practices.

By running a Desktop Publisher (DTP) programme on an Amstrad PCW, you have entered the ground floor (not to say the bargain basement) of modern desktop publishing. The DTP manual is presumably making a comparison with the requirements of higher-level systems when it suggests that "professional" results will be obtained by a user armed with "a minimum of skill and expertise". In practice, a lot of careful planning is needed to get the best out of the program's limited range of facilities.

Once mastered, DTP does indeed provide a viable environment for serious publishing applications. At the same time it can provide an excellent technical grounding for later work using a state-of-the-art system.

Written by the copyright owner:

John Evans
20 Grosvenor Place
Bath BA1 6AX

WHEN THE BUG BITES

I first bought my PcW9256 as an upgraded typewriter in order that I could store some of my writings on disc, but the more I used the thing the more addicted I became. Now anyone who has been in my small box bedroom knows the amount of hard copy that has gathered over the years. There are shelves on every wall, my desk overflows, and I have to climb into my chair over boxes of stored paper work, but since my PcW took over my life things are getting better. I have started to put onto disc all of my records, and now my neighbours are complaining about my bonfires as I burn the now unwanted paper records that have been transferred to disc. I don't know for how much longer club members will be seeing my wife Caryl who comes to club meetings with me as she has threatened to divorce me naming my PcW as co-respondent. Once I switch the thing on I am lost for hours Caryl claims that she might as well be living on her own as the only time she sees me for longer than an hour is at the monthly club meeting .

I have lost all track of the story lines on all the T/V soaps so maybe there is a good thing to come out of it after all. I use the PcW for all sorts of things that I never dreamt possible. I do research on my family name, and all my records are now on disc. I use LocoScript3 and Mini Office. I also use MicroDesign3, and with this I have drawn family tree charts and scanned family photos into my records. In the local elections I was a candidate and by using LS3 and MD3 I made up some very good posters and newsletters. I have to say that the PcW really paid dividends in my election bid, pity was that it could not vote, as I lost. I am an activist in my local ward Labour Party and a great deal of work is turned out on my PcW reports, letters and newsletters. I am the chairman of the management committee of a boys and girls club that we are starting in the town. I took over a derelict building and with a grant of £50.000 the building is now going to be a very useful meeting place for our local young people. Again my PcW was used a great deal in letter writing and record keeping for this club. I made up letter heads with graphics using MD3 and LS3 and temp. membership cards these might be used as permanent. I also use my PcW to do my homework as I do a course for adult education under Swansea University, and it has proved a great help to me in this course. (It's not a computing course). The other thing that I do is write short animal stories for my grandchildren and with my PcW I can make up A5 books with stories and graphics. I am forever looking for animal photos in the papers to scan for my books has anyone got animal graphics to donate?.

Now all this could not have been achieved without the help and support of members of the Heads of the Valleys PCW User Group. When I bought my PcW I was not used to computers and when I started to push the

buttons the thing did everything but what it was meant to do. The instruction book was useless as they did not design it to be read by anyone that did not have a degree in computers so the only thing I did with it was write letters. Then I bought the PcW Plus magazine and read of the Heads of the Valley PcW User Group and phoned Roy and was invited to a meeting, since then I have not looked back. Roy, Anthony, Gareth, and a past member Peter and others have given me hours of tuition in the art of computing and for this I am very grateful. The computing bug has really got me now as I have bought myself a IBM computer with extra hard disc and extra memory, and to my wife's horror a laptop computer so that when we go away for a break I can carry on computing and not suffer withdrawal symptoms. I also Surf the airways as I have a modem. Now this is a wonderful toy, but you do have to keep your eye on the clock, well at least Caryl does. While I am Surfing I can feel her eyes boring into my back and when she thinks I have spent enough on the phone bill she calls time. WOW! is that my little Dove screaming at me from down stairs. Well just in case she blows a gasket I had better end this missive here.

Carry on computing

John Sparks

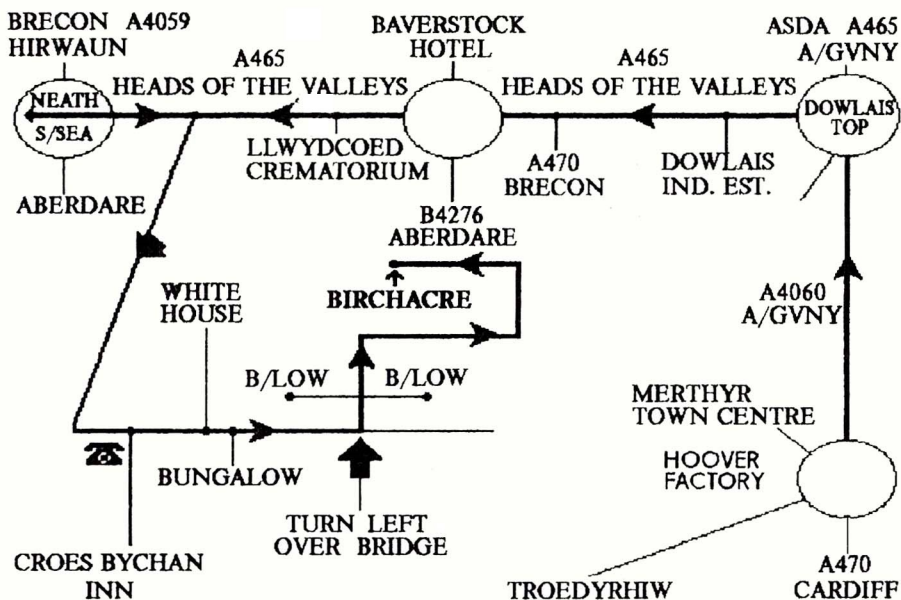
One of the few reasons I was persuaded to purchase a secondhand AMSTRAD PCW was the ability to type all my letters, to improve my computing and to communicate over modem lines with my brother in Scotland.

That was in 1988. My original machine was sold to my mother who lent it to my nephew, who is still using it. I bought another which has become less reliable due to the capacitor in the main board taking a long time to charge. A new board would be more expensive than a new machine so that's what I bought. The other does sterling service as the moving message screen at shows which the club attends.

My current machine is now four years old. I run off it a modem, a mouse, a serial daisywheel printer, a bubblejet, a scanner, a lightpen, a 3.5 inch drive and a megabyte of memory.

I Have access to a whole host of PC's in work, I see little point in changing for a machine ten times as expensive, with software at ten times the price for fancy colours and games (which do not interest me)

Anthony Hill



Go to the last roundabout on the A470 Merthyr/Cardiff road and take the third turning left A4060/Abergavenny. Follow this road for approx. three miles to the roundabout on the A465 Heads of the Valleys road, take the 2nd turning left A465 Neath/Swansea road. Follow this road for approx. 6 miles until you come to the Baverstock Hotel on your right hand side, the next turn on the left (opp. hotel) is the B4276/Aberdare, ignore this turn. 100 yards further on is another left turn sign-posted Llwydcoed Crematorium, ignore this turn also. Carry on for another mile until you come to cheverons painted on the road indicating a right and left turn. Turn left here and [*] follow the road for 300yds. you will come to a pub on your left and a telephone box on your right (the pub is called the CROES BYCHAN INN) next to the pub is a large white house, then a bungalow, turn left after the bungalow across a small river bridge into a lane. Follow this lane for 30yds. (ignore the turnings into the bungalows on your left and right) until you come to a "T" junction in the lane, turn right here and follow this lane for 200yds. This will bring you into BIRCHACRE. If you get lost, phone (874972) from phone box opposite the pub, and someone will come and meet you.

The distance from the Dowlais Top roundabout to the turn off the Heads of the Valleys road is about 8 miles.

From Neath/Swansea take the A465/Abergavenny road for half a mile until you come to the cheverons painted on the road, turn right (sign-posted Llwydcoed) follow as from [*] above.