

Britain's biggest small-press PCW magazine

# PCW TODAY



Issue 3 ▶ Autumn 1996

# Windows on your PCW?

Who needs a PC when you've got The Network!

## PLUS:

LocoScript Control Codes  
PCW 16 Guinea Pigs  
Guide to Hard Drives  
MD Greetings Cards



---

**BIG Review. p8 ▶ PCW Directory. p19**

# The PCW Upgrade Option!

## GEM HARD DISK

Gem40	233.50
Gem40 + 512K	263.50
Gem40 + 1024K	283.50
Gem40 + 1536K	303.50
Gem40 II	389.50
Gem40 II + 512K	419.50
Gem40 II + 1024K	439.50
Gem40 II + 1536K	459.50
Parallel Port Option	14.50
DC Power Adaptor	17.63

## ACCESSORIES

USA Interface Convertor (converts USA/German expansion port to a UK PCW connr - bolts on)	14.50
Parallel Printer Adaptor (CPS8256 equivalent Printer port)	26.44
Parallel Printer Cable	5.88

## SPRINTER CPU ACCELERATOR

Sprinter	68.15
Sprinter 512K	99.50
Sprinter 1024K	119.50
Fitting Charge (if req'd)	29.38

## SPEEDPRINT PRINT SPOOLER

SpeedPrint 128K	49.50
SpeedPrint 256K	60.50
SpeedPrint 512K	76.50
SpeedPrint 1024K	98.50
SpeedPrint 1536K	119.00
SpeedPrint 2048K	139.00

## InSyder 9512 internal HARD DISK

InSyder40	189.50
InSyder40 + 512K	219.50
InSyder40 + 1024K	239.50
InSyder40 + 1536K	259.50
Fitting Charge (if req'd)	29.38

Cirtech have products that will improve every part of the PCW system. From the innovative Flash Drive to the legendary Sprinter through to the lightning fast GEM and InSyder Hard Drives! There has never been a better time to upgrade your PCW!

You can dramatically improve the performance of your PCW without a large investment or new software!



**A revolution in storage technology!**

Flash Drive is a brand new type of disk storage device for the PCW. It is a completely silent, solid state disk drive designed to get your favourite PCW programs up and running in a few seconds.

All you need do is copy your existing PCW start of day disks (LocoScript and CP/M) onto Flash Drive (using the easy to use software supplied) and it is ready for immediate use! Flash drive will startup LocoScript and/or CP/M in a fraction of the time of a slow floppy disk drive! And there is more! You can also use Flash Drive to store your most useful phrases, fonts and any other commonly used data files - making them all instantly available any time you need them. Flash Drive is fully compatible with LocoScript (v2.56 and v3.06 onwards), the Network, MicroDesign and all standard CP/M programs (using CP/M v1.15/2.15 or higher). Flash Drive is available with a capacity of 1024K (nearly one and a half times the size of a PCW floppy drive) OR with a massive 2048K for power users!

Flash Drive is a miniature add-on pack that simply plugs onto the expansion port of any PCW model. It is based upon a brand new state of the art nonvolatile memory technology for the ultimate in reliability.

Flash Drive prices start at an amazing £65 for the 1024K model - only £95 for the 2048K model! An optional feed through version for attaching additional expansion packs is £15 extra inc.

## Perfecting the PCW!



CIRTECH (UK) Ltd, Monksford Stables, Newtown St Boswells, MELROSE, TD6 0RU

Tel: 01835 823898 Fax: 01835 822471 email sales@cirtech.co.uk

TO ADVERTISE IN THIS  
MAGAZINE

CALL

**(01642) 816903**

### \*ADVERTISEMENTS\*

It is a condition of acceptance of advertisements that *PCW Today* does not accept liability for mistakes or inaccuracy in the printing or non-appearance of any advertisement. Every effort is made to meet the needs and requests of our advertisers. Although every advertisement is carefully checked, occasionally mistakes may occur.

# THIS ISSUE...

## PCW TODAY

**H**ello and welcome to *PCW Today*, the national PCW magazine! Thanks for all your phone-calls and letters of support. Judging by the response, most of you liked the changes made in the last edition, hopefully we will continue to improve. You may have spotted that the front cover is different again to the summer edition. This is because a number of you noticed that it bore a striking resemblance to the cover of *PCW Plus* - not least the editor of that fine publication himself! So after many hours of thought and design, we've come up with a new cover. Hope you like it!

Also new in this issue is the introduction of advertising. This is mainly to help the magazine grow. If you reply to any adverts that you see in *PCW Today* we'd be grateful if you would mention us. The loss of editorial space will be countered by a page increase to 24 pages next time.

Hands up all of you, who now think that you are our most northerly member! I'm afraid that there will be quite a few. In fact it seems that most new members who joined in the last few months have received a letter telling them that they are the most northerly member of the club. Now, if you live in Cornwall, you may have found this a little odd! The honour actually goes to Miss Elaine Bullard who lives in Orkney. Sorry to disappoint the rest of you!

Several people have shown an interest in us increasing the interaction between members, so what we're planning for future issues is a club page. Here members can print their addresses and possibly make friends with other PCWers around the country. We've got a couple of names already, and if you'd like your name printed, please let us know. Meanwhile, we've begun a new occasional feature - 'My PCW' where members tell of their experiences with their trusty computer. Please do write and tell us about your PCW!

Meanwhile, why not sit back, and enjoy the autumn issue!

*Adrian*

Adrian Braddy.

4

**NEWS**

Amstrad deal is off. Psion and Amstrad have failed to come up with a price for take-over, and Psion have pulled out. Sugar stays on as Chairman.

6

**COVER FEATURE**

We investigate how The Network from Creative Technology rates along-side Windows™. Can it really improve your PCWing power?

8

**REVIEW**

Comsoft have just released the Protex suite of programs. We bring you the first review of the complete package.

10

**TOP TIPS**

More brilliant shortcuts and hints to help you get the most from your PCW.

12

**PCW 16**

Esther Welch describes her struggle with a prototype of the new machine

13

**JARGON FREE ZONE**

Disc drives, hard drives, flash drives. Just exactly how do they work and what can they do? We have the answers.

14

**LOCOSCRIPT TUTORIAL**

Another step by step guide.

15

**MICRODESIGN TUTORIAL**

DIY greetings cards on your DTP.

16

**DR DISC**

More of your PCW problems solved.

17

**MY PCW**

A new series where readers tell about their PCW experiences.

18

**HOLD THE BACK PAGE**

The PCW is getting on a bit now, and throughout it's history there have been some pretty unusual PCW products!

# PCW NEWS

*The most comprehensive PCW news page in Britain*

## Amstrad take-over deal is off Sugar fails to agree on price

The latest news from Sugar Towers is that Amstrad are not about to be taken over by a rival, and Alan Sugar is to remain as Chairman. In dramatic moves over the summer, it was thought that electronics giant, Psion were set to buy up parts of Amstrad, producers of the PCW for over £230 million.

However at the end of July, Psion announced that they had dropped out of the bid. The deal was apparently called off when the two companies failed to agree on a price. Psion was believed to be offering a dowry of 200 pence a share payable in Psion shares. It is not clear whether Amstrad thought that this was too low, or Psion decided that it was too high.

Amstrad Chairman, Alan Sugar, when asked about the new development said: "It is about time I stopped Pussy-footing around with chief executives and got down to running this business.

"The bottom line is that the nasty Mr Sugar knows how to run this business



better than anyone else. I am not going to sell it down the river." This would seem to indicate that rumours about Sugar quitting as Chairman are unfounded.

Amstrad's financial position now seems to be worsening however. Their share price dropped 29 pence after the news. The

electronics company's force in the computer market has been lessening for some time now. Their newest computer has not helped. When the new PC 2000 series was launched, the national computer press and Amstrad's rivals gleefully reported the problems being experienced with the new system.

Amstrad's decision to go 'direct' and sell by telephone only, and the astonishing fact that they have not yet got a website on the internet, are both said to have helped the decline.

So what does all this mean for the humble PCW? Well, it is good news and bad news. Had the Psion deal gone ahead, it looked likely that the Amstrad subsidiary, Viglen who manufacture the PCW, would have been left out on a limb. This should no longer happen. However, by not accepting the deal, Amstrad could have put themselves in financial trouble. It's a case of wait and see. We'll keep you up to date with Amstrad's plans for the future.

## PCW 16 Rumour Mill

Rumours continue to grow about the new PCW 16. Which of them are true, and which pure fantasy? Well we can confirm that several software manufacturers are currently working on software for the machine. They are: Creative Technology, ComSoft, PhiloSoft, SD Microsystems, and Rodesign. So just what software are they going to develop?

ComSoft are busy converting Protext to work with the new machine. We don't expect there to be many changes from the highly popular original PCW version. Meanwhile, it sounds as though Creative Technology may be producing a new version of MicroDesign for the machine. If

they are, and we think they are, it is likely to be a stunning piece of software. As for the others, one can only guess. Are Rodesign working with Creative Technology in producing fonts and graphics for a potential MicroDesign 4? SD Microsystems have been the PCW company of 96, where it comes to new software. Are they developing yet more original software for the PCW 16, or simply new versions of their current software? And what about PhiloSoft? You never hear much about them, yet when they do produce new software, it is always groundbreaking and of extremely high quality. We do know that PhiloSoft were particularly

keen on the new operating system of the PCW 16, and they have been hard at work producing software for it since the beginning of the year. Watch out for something new, and something special from them.

After all these rumours of new software for the new computer, we've got one big problem. How are we going to be able to run new software on the PCW 16. From what we've seen, it looks pretty tricky!

Incidentally, software companies tend not to appreciate telephone queries about their new software, until it has been fully launched. As we now know to our cost! Don't say you haven't been warned!

## 12 year olds launch PCW company

Two twelve year old entrepreneurs have set up their own company, writing and selling PCW software. RoboSoft was launched by the duo recently, to produce software for old 8 bit computers like the PCW. They now sell their software at reduced prices through a club, aptly named 'The User Group' Among the original software available for the PCW from RoboSoft is a program called Lottery Fever,

which costs just £3, it will apparently help you win the National Lottery! If it works, it's a true bargain! If you join The User Group, you get a monthly newsheet, a quarterly magazine called Format, and free public domain software. All this for just £7.50! If you're interested, contact Robert Nisbet at 1 Silver Birches, Stanton St. John, Oxford OX33 1HH, telephone (01865) 351448.

## Brand new PCW database just out

SD MicroSystems have introduced yet another piece of PCW software. General File 2000 (Not to be confused with Library File 2000) is a brand new database. This easy to use program looks and feels similar to previous SD MicroSystems software, so if you're a fan, you'll like this. The package includes a search facility, and

has the ability to print labels. Formats of fields covered are numeric, dates or alphanumeric. The number of fields available alters according to the size of your M: Drive. General File 2000 costs just £15, from SD Microsystems, PO Box 24, Attleborough, Norfolk NR17 1HL. Tel/Fax (01953) 483750.

# CLUB NEWS

*We take a trip around some of Britain's local clubs*

### Crawley PCW Club

The club now has 25 full members, 6 postal members and a student. At the club's AGM in September, the current secretary, John Fisher also accepted the job of Chairman. The October issue of the club newsletter includes an excellent article on the internet, entitled 'Getting tangled in the Net'. The next meeting of the club is on October 3 1996. Tony Velate will be talking about genealogy. On November 7 1996, there will be a chance for members to have their 3" drive repaired. For details contact John Fisher, Pradines, Four Elms Road, Edenbridge TN8 8AF, (01732) 863062.

### Radstock PCW

This new group meets on the second Friday of each month at the Radstock Methodist Church from 7.30. The club produces a newsletter that they hope will eventually become national. Contact Adrian Hooper at 40 Kilmersdon Road, Haydon, Radstock, Avon BA3 3QN. (01761) 436276.

### Teesside PCW Users Group

There's been a change at the top, and guess who's the new chairman/secretary. None other than the editor of this very publication! The club has seen falling membership and reduced quality of meetings. The aim is to attract new members, and create a theme for each meeting. The next meeting is on September 30 1996, and the theme is LocoScript. Then on October 28 1996, there will be a demonstration of new software. And finally on November 25th, it's a fun and games evening. Meetings start at 7.00pm at the Acklam Library in Middlesbrough. Contact Adrian Braddy on (01642) 816903 for further details.

*If you have any club news for us, send it to Club News, PCW Today, 150 Oxford Road, Middlesbrough, Teesside TS5 5EL.*

## NEWS IN BRIEF

*Live 96, the huge computer fair in Earls Court, London was taking place as we went to press. Did we go? Well we got a couple of free tickets, a map and even a pretty, interactive CD. So we looked down the list of stall holders. No Amstrad, no LocoScript! It's hardly worth going. There were stands from Creative Technology and Advantage, but apparently they're not the PCW companies that we know and love! So we saved the train fare, and stayed home.*

*Derrick Gaskin has introduced an updated version of his LocoFile database, QuickMyth 2. And a completely new disc, called of course QuickMyth 3. The updated version 2, now includes notes on Celtic mythology, whilst the new disc covers Egyptian history and mythology. Costing £10 and £9.50 respectively, QuickMyth 2.1, and QuickMyth 3, are available from Derrick Gaskin, 119 London Road, Brentwood, Essex CM14 4ND, (01277) 226825.*

*Think the PCW's dead? LocoScript Software's latest PCW catalogue went out to an incredible 110,000 people. While it may have been around for years, the PCW is still one of Britain's most popular computers!*

*If you are a member of a bridge club, you may find a new piece of software particularly interesting. The PCW Duplicate Bridge Scoring Compendium is a program written to help organise a bridge tournament. The package includes different versions to cope with the various different systems used. Contact FW Flanders on (01522) 721512.*

*And finally, watch out for the next issue of PCW Today when hopefully, we'll be able to reveal some very exciting PCW news. It's all under wraps at the moment, but I can tell you that it's by far the biggest thing that's happened in the PCW world since the PCW 16!*

# Windows on your PCW?

*There is a friendly alternative to the dreaded A> prompt. It is The Network*

Those of you who have ventured away from the friendly and safe environment of LocoScript, will have encountered the bleak and treacherous world of CP/M. Load it up and you are confronted with the A> prompt and more or less nothing else. This is the PCW's main operating system, and like it's PC counterpart - DOS, it's unfriendly, and not particularly easy to use. On the PC, they solved the problem with Microsoft Windows - a user friendly, icon based system, where you just point and click with a mouse to launch an operation. On the PCW, the problem has also been solved, this time by Creative Technology. The makers of MicroDesign introduced 'The Network' - an ambitious, replacement PCW operating system, about three years ago. You would have thought that a user-friendly alternative to CP/M would be hugely popular, but how many PCWers do you know who own a copy? There's no need to panic though, this software is still around, and there's plenty of time for you to get a copy.

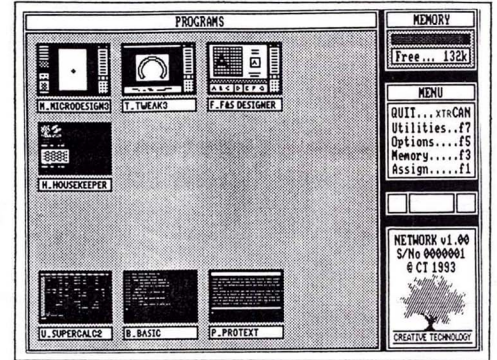
## Exciting feature

The Network has to be one of the most user-friendly PCW programs ever. The Network main screen has up to 16 icons, each assigned to a separate program. Below each icon is the name of the program, and a 'key letter'. To run a program you can either click on the icon with the mouse, or press the 'key letter' on your keyboard. The most exciting feature of The Network is the way that it allows you to switch between programs. If you wish, the programs can be 'resident' in the M drive. This means that they only need to be loaded once, at the beginning of each session, even this is done automatically by The Network. From then on, you don't need to load each program from disc when you need it. Simply click the left mouse button once, over the icon which represents the program that you want to run. Almost immediately the program will appear. Whenever you quit the program, you will be returned back to the main Desktop screen. Obviously, if you wish to

## BEFORE & AFTER



■ The unfriendly face of CP/M



■ The user-friendly face of The Network

make a large number of programs 'resident', you will need a large M drive.

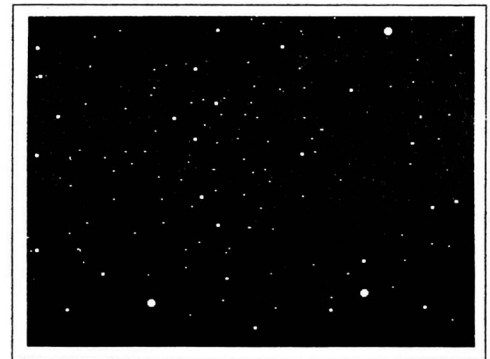
## Network programs

True Network programs are all those in the MicroDesign family - basically MicroDesign 3, Tweak 3, MicroDisplay and the Font and Shade Designer. There were a few other Network programs produced by other companies, which may still be available. They included a drawing package, and a graph making package from DGC. The most exciting program, a MicroDesign spell-checker, produced by Crazy Diamond Design was never launched, despite the fact that I have seen a fully working prototype version! It is with the true Network programs that you see the most sophisticated features. For instance, that once tedious and lengthy task of using Tweak has been speeded up greatly by The Network. Simply select the Tweak option from within MicroDesign, select the area to 'tweak', and you will be moved instantly into the Tweak program, without even having to save the image. When you have completed the 'tweak' you can return straight back to MicroDesign. Other great features include the increased compatibility between Protex and MicroDesign. Write your text in Protex, load up MicroDesign and hey presto! Your text is transferred into the MicroDesign Editor.

## Screen saver

So what else does The Network do? Well like Windows, it provides an excellent

screen saver. Leave your PCW for a few minutes, and when you return, it looks as though you are flying through space. Dots fly towards you, giving the impression of forward motion. You can alter the length of time the PCW is left untouched before the



■ PCW's in space - the PCW screen-saver

screen saver launches into action, from within The Network. The screen saver prevents 'burn in' which occurs when the computer shows the same image for a long time. If you wish to return to your program, simply move the mouse, and it will reappear instantly. The only real utility available within The Network is a fast disc-formatting operation.

## Major downfalls

There are two major downfalls of The Network and both are sadly quite significant. Firstly, it is not compatible with every one's favourite word-processor - LocoScript. This program is quite unique

as far as the PCW is concerned, in that it is not a CP/M program. The only way you can possibly use LocoScript with The Network, is with Flipper 3, which is fully compatible with The Network. This allows you to flip between the two programs. There is of course Protex, but many PCWers don't want to change from the familiar world of LocoScript, and quite

right too! Just about everything else on the PCW is compatible though. The second major downfall is the need for large amounts of memory. The Network can swallow up huge numbers of bytes very quickly. At least 1MB is advisable, and even that is going to restrict you. And course, all this is going to cost money, it would also be advisable to have a mouse to

make the most of the software.

### The ultimate PCW

The ultimate PCW system would incorporate a hard drive, with The Network as the user-friendly disc manager of the drive. You could then use MicroDisplay to 'housekeep' the drive. This system would be good enough to rival a PC, with Windows!

# THE BIG TWO

## *The Network vs Windows*

OK, perhaps it's stretching the truth just a little to put The Network in the same class as Windows. In fact, most computer experts would probably think we meant

The Microsoft Network - a well known Internet service, as opposed to the PCW operating system. Still we can dream, as can the gang at Creative Technology.

Anyway, on the PCW, it's the nearest thing to Windows you can get, so we thought we'd do our own, biased comparison.

	THE NETWORK	WINDOWS 3.1
Ease of Use:	●●●●●○	●●●●○
Price:	●●●●●○	●●●●○
Speed:	●●●○	●●●●●○
Features:	●●○	●●●●●○
Reliability:	●●●●●○	●●●○
Graphics:	●●●●●○	●●●●●○
Icons:	●●●●●○	●●●○
Available Software:	●●○	●●●●●●●●
Value:	●●●●○	●●●●●○
Support:	●●●●●○	●●●●●○

**THE VERDICT:** Well all-right, we've already said there's no comparison, but The Network has certain advantages over it's 'rival'. Windows has a tendency to crash at the worst possible times, whilst the good old Network is as steady as a rock, like most things PCW. And another thing. We like the graphics better on The Network. The SVGA Windows graphics are obviously superior, but somehow, The Network looks neater. Everything's bigger, and the icons are definitely far superior. The simplicity of The Network makes it a winner for us at *PCW Today*

### Where to go

The Network costs £25 including VAT and postage, and you can get it from Creative Technology, 10 Park Street, Utoxeter ST14 7AG. Telephone (01889) 567160. The Network will not run with the early CP/M

versions 1.4/2.1/2.9. Check your start up screen to check what you are using. CP/M upgrades are available for £12.50 from Creative Technology. Programs that cannot be used with The Network include

MD2, Tweak1 and some sections of Mini Office. LocoScript will not work because it is not a CP/M program, however Flipper is fully compatible with The Network. You'll probably need a free MD3 upgrade.

# Extra Protection

*ComSoft have re-released the alternative PCW wordprocessor, plus a couple of other goodies*

It seems ridiculous reviewing one of the PCW's most popular, and long standing programs, on a page that is meant to be devoted to brand new PCW software. Well I have got an excuse. Prottext was originally marketed by Arnor, a well respected PCW company. Sadly though, in mid 1995 Arnor ceased trading and we all thought that was the end for Prottext. However Brian Watson, a keen user of Prottext felt that he

should try and save the program. Teaming up with the CPC user group WACCI, he purchased the rights to the CPC and PCW versions of all Arnor's programs. WACCO passed their share over to CPC software company, Campursoft. A new partnership was formed known as WACCO, and they released the software trading under the name ComSoft. Complicated, isn't it! ComSoft immediatly re-launched Prottext at

the end of 1995, also introducing ProPrint, which is new to the PCW. Then, during this summer they re-launched Prottext Office, the final part of the jigsaw. This product was made available for the PCW at one time, but no-one seemed to notice. Now all three Prottext programs are again being actively marketed, and I can be excused for calling it 'new software' I hope. So here's a review of the 'new' Prottext suite.

## CP/M PROTEXT

Prottext has always been the only real alternative to LocoScript. Based around the CP/M shell, it is not as attractively presented as it's rival, and the uninteresting screens are now showing their age. However, the layout is clear, and the features are many.

Prottext operates in an entirely different way to LocoScript, so you have to be prepared to learn a new word-processor. There are no user friendly menus, instead logical codes are used for most operations. Don't worry though, you're not expected to learn these off by heart immediatly, there is on screen help available when you ask for it.

As well as it's speed, Prottext triumphs over LocoScript 3 in other ways. There is the ability to produce columns, a facility rare in PCW word-processing. It's not automatic however, you must first switch to 'box mode' then set your markers, and then cut and paste the text. It sounds daunting, but after a bit of practice this operation takes no time at all. Prottext also includes a mail merger and spell-check as part of the software, with no need for additional packages. The mail-merger is nowhere near as sophisticated as LocoMail. But it suffices for the most basic of requirements. Again, it is operated by a series of codes. The spell-check facility,

ProSpell is very versatile, and has an exciting variety of options. There is an anagram finder and crossword solver, for the cheats among us.

scalable fonts, and if you don't have the new ProPrint add-on, there is only the standard font available, not particularly versatile! However, many people use Prottext as an add-on for MicroDesign, and are not bothered about the print quality. Documents are simply typed into Prottext, then converted into MicroDesign. This is made easy because they are both CP/M programs, and it is quicker and easier to swap between them, especially if you've got The Network.

To sum up, it is hard to compare Prottext with LocoScript. There are those who like one, and those who like the other. It is all a matter of taste. Despite the speed of Prottext, if you are a long standing user of LocoScript, you

may well not want such a major change. However, at just £25, it is well worth trying, to see which you prefer. I personally, am sticking with LocoScript.

```

PROTEXT Document openmeet.let 1K Justify Off Word-Wrap
Page 1 Line 1 Col 1 No markers set
>DF DATA.FL
>RU Name surname member subs title a1 a2 a3 a4
&Name& &surname&
&a1&
&a2&
&a3&
&a4&
Dear &title& &surname&,
This is to inform you that a special Open Meeting of the Andy Pandy
Appreciation Society will be held on September 18th. All are invited
- whether members or not. Bring your friends.
>IF member="y"
We would also like to point out that your subs are due - and that
this year that amounts to £&subs&.
>AU extra
>SU total=extrat&subs
In addition, £&extra& is outstanding: making a total of £&total&.
>EL
Please come if you are free!
>EI
Yours,

```

Other features include a calculator, the ability to view two documents at once, an undelete feature, typewriter mode and an extremely comprehensive find and replace feature, which includes the ability to find words in bold and italics.

You can use an external printer with Prottext, but not as easily as with LocoScript. With Prottext you have to create your own printer driver, using information found in your printer manual.

As far as fonts are concerned. Prottext can't touch LocoScript. There is no facility for

### CP/M PROTEXT

Price £25 inclusive Company ComSoft  
Telephone (0141) 554 4735

Ease of use ●●●●○

Features ●●●●○

Documentation ●●○○○

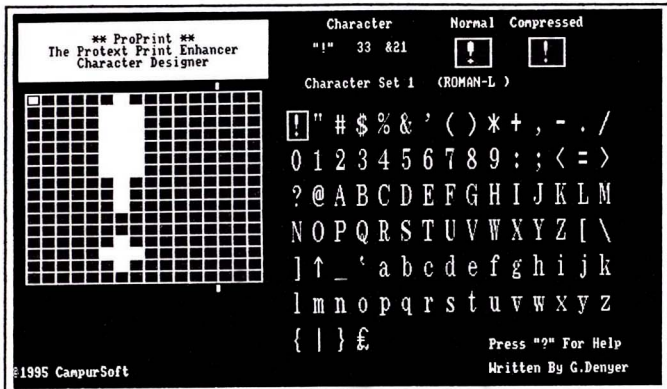
Value for money ●●●●●

PCW Today Rating ●○○○○



# PRO-PRINT PCW

ProPrint was originally only available on the CPC, but now ComSoft have released a version for the PCW. This utility greatly



which will put off some people. The fonts are controlled using the usual Protect control codes. Simply insert the code at the beginning of a piece of text, and when you printed out, that text will be in that chosen font. Like LocoScript, you can't see the difference on the screen. You can use an impressive five fonts at one time. That's more than LocoScript and MicroDesign can do.

enhances Protex, which before had only one font. This utility enables you to print text in a variety of new fonts, there are over forty to choose from, and if you don't like them, you can always design your own in the character designer. There is also the ability to import fonts, designed for the CPC version.

Unfortunately, the fonts are not scaleable,

The disc also includes printer drivers for external printers, so that you don't have to type them in yourself as you had to with the stand alone Protex, it also improves the quality of printing, which was always behind LocoScript before.

The fonts themselves are numerous and of a good quality. Some of the fonts look quite similar, but that's often a problem.

They are mostly designed for general writing, as opposed to display, mainly because their small size dictates. There are also two dingbat fonts with the usual little symbols such as bullets and telephones. Some of these make great borders.

Protex on the PCW has been around for a long time, it was starting to show it's age, and was rapidly falling behind LocoScript. The introduction of ProPrint has rejuvenated this fallen giant, and it's an absolute must for all Protex users. If you haven't already got Protex, you can buy it with ProPrint installed and ready to go for just £35.00. It's a bargain!

PRO-PRINT PCW	
Price	£14.99 inclusive
Company	ComSoft
Telephone	(0141) 554 4735
Ease of use	●●●●○
Features	●●●●●
Documentation	●●●○
Value for money	●●●●●
PCW Today Rating	●●●●●

# PROTEXT OFFICE

This, is the third and probably the final Protex package for the original PCW series, though you never know. ComSoft say that other companies have expressed an interest in using the Protex shell to produce new programs.

The package is made up of three separate programs. An invoicer, a powerful database known as the Protex Filer and a file sorting program. The invoicer enables the user to produce invoices, statements and credit notes. You alter the information to suit your own details. You can also create a customer file including their personal details. This program is useful, and easy to use. However most people and small businesses would be better off buying one of the many accounts packages available instead.

The filer is the most useful of all the programs in this package. It is a database, like LocoFile, which includes the ability to

mail merge the information into letters and forms. It is also good for printing labels, with three templates available for this purpose. The program works in a similar way to most databases and is easy to use.

The file sorter is the final program, and the least user friendly. It has no menu screen, so lots of glances at the manual are essential. This program, as its name says is simply for sorting files. It has seven methods of sorting. Alphabetic sort, reverse alphabetic sort, personal name sort, first word sort, last word sort, numeric sort and decreasing numeric sort. Potential duplicates in the lists are easy to spot, as the program has an option to deal with them. This program does not only work from within Protex, it can be run as an independent program from within CP/M.

This package is a useful, if not essential addition to Protex. If you are wanting a

change from LocoScript, this now gives Protex the powers of LocoFile, plus a bit more. It sadly suffers from not being the easiest of programs to use. The manual doesn't help, it comes with instructions for a whole range of computers, not just the PCW. It comes on a whopping sixty pages, which can be a little daunting for the beginner. However in general, it is a good buy, and an excellent extension to Protex, but if you're happy with LocoFile or Mini Office, I'd stick with them.

PROTEXT OFFICE	
Price	£19.99 inclusive
Company	ComSoft
Telephone	(0141) 554 4735
Ease of use	●●○○○
Features	●●●●○
Documentation	●●○○○
Value for money	●●●●○
PCW Today Rating	●●●●○

# TOP TIPS

Send your PCW tips and hints to *Top Tips*, PCW Today, Middlesbrough TS5 5EL.

## Columns in LocoScript

I have read many long and complicated methods of printing out text in two columns from LocoScript, but I am sure that the following method is the simplest and the most effective.

Firstly, you need to create a layout, half a page wide. You will write the whole document in this layout. I use the left margin set at 10 and the right margin set at 47. It is then just a case of printing two pages onto one sheet of paper beside each other. It's simply a case of tricking the printer.

Firstly create a document. Then press [F2] to Change the Layout. Insert tabs with the

[+] key and then, using [F1] set the left margin at 10, and the right margin at 47. Press [EXIT] and [ENTER], and then [EXIT] back to the main document.

Now write the text, you want to be printed in two columns. The two columns should be written on page one and page two of the document respectively. Try and keep the same number of lines in each page. You can choose to justify the text if you wish.

Exit the file, and save without printing. In the disc manager, position the cursor over the columns file and press [P]. Choose to 'Print some pages' and press [ENTER]. In

the next menu select to print page 1 only to print the left column first, and press [ENTER]. Put some paper into the printer and before commencing with the printing, do the following:

Press [F6] and set the left offset. An offset of 0 prints the left side of the page. Then press [ENTER] to return to the disc manager, and then [EXIT] to begin printing. When it's finished, choose to print page 2, alter the offset to 40, for the right hand column, feed the paper back through the printer and print as before.

*James Bell,  
Leicester*

## Typing Technique

The PCW keyboard is as you know, very cramped, I often hit the wrong key by mistake, sometimes with disastrous results. I was considering moving to a PC, which has a much better keyboard layout, with the keys spread out. However, about a year ago, I came across a PC keyboard for the PCW. It is called the Technique 102, and I purchased it for about £30 from a company called Silicon City. It really has made a big difference, and I have decided not to move to a PC.

*Deborah Winger,  
Gateshead.*

**PCW Today: We've been in touch with Silicon City, who tell us that they have sold out of Technique keyboards. Apparently they are no longer being produced, and most of the major companies have run out of stock. Does anyone know of a company that sells these keyboards? We'd love to know!**

## Speedy LocoScript!

It can sometimes take some time to move around LocoScript, but if you use the following key combinations, it will certainly speed things up:

[ALT][PAGE] cursor moves to the top of the page

[ALT][SHIFT][PAGE] cursor moves to the top of the document

[ALT][PARA] cursor moves to the top of the paragraph

[ALT][SHIFT][PARA] cursor moves to the preceding unit marker

[ALT][EOL] cursor moves to the end of the preceding line

[ALT][SHIFT][EOL] cursor moves to the beginning of the line

[ALT][CHAR] cursor moves back one character

[ALT][SHIFT][CHAR] cursor moves back one word

[SHIFT][EOL] cursor moves to the beginning of the next line

[SHIFT][ARROW] cursor moves 20 spaces in the direction of the arrow

## MicroDesign Housekeeping

There's no need to waste time loading and resaving MDA and TXT MicroDesign files in order to copy them from one disc to another. Simply use the LocoScript disc manager. This is an excellent housekeeper for MicroDesign, and you can use it to copy, move and erase files. The only problem is with erasing. You should delete the limbo file, to completely get rid of it.

## Big Mistake!

As a regular user of LocoMail, one tip that I have is that you must remember to select **Save Result** then [ENTER]; and not **Save and Print**, when you finish. If the printer needs to be reset, as often happens on the bubblejet printer, or (like I have just experienced) you inadvertently press [CAN] before pressing [ENTER], you will lose all your work.

*Pat Creighton,  
Chester*

## Switch the Phrases

One little used feature of LocoScript are the phrases. These are supposedly a selection of commonly used phrases, each given a key letter, so that you can save time by not having to type them in. The standard selection of phrases on your Start of Day disc are not exactly what most people would call common. In fact you'll be lucky if you ever use some of the phrases. There is another set of phrases on your disc, you'll find them in the group - TEMPLATES. In the file named PHRASES.LET. They are definitely a bit more useful than the standard set. They are

A: For the attention of  
 B: By return of post  
 C: With Compliments  
 D: Dear Sir/Madam  
 E: Please find enclosed  
 F: Yours faithfully  
 L: Thank you for your letter of  
 M: Please mark the envelope for the attention of  
 O: Our Ref:  
 P: Private and Confidential  
 R: We look forward to your reply  
 T: Thank you  
 V: R.S.V.P.  
 W: With reference to your  
 Y: Your Ref:

To use these, put your S.O.D. disc in the drive, press [F5] and rename PHRASES.STD as PHRASES.OLD. Now press [F4] and move PHRASES.LET to the first group. Press [F5] and rename it PHRASES.STD. There is still room for you to add some phrases of your own.

## 3" Storage

I have heard many people bemoan the fact that you can't buy boxes for 3" discs any more. However, I find that boxes intended for 3.5" discs more than suffice. Cheaper versions include small ice-cream boxes and card index boxes. If you look around there are many cheap means of storing your discs. One I have come across is those little plastic cress boxes.

*G. Rowan  
 Birmingham*

## Spring clean your printer

Every couple of years it is a good idea to clean the printer roller on your dot matrix PCW printer. After a while, the roller becomes too shiny. This results in the printer losing traction, and the paper beginning to slip as it is fed in. The solution is simple. Using a cloth and a little methylated spirits, and carefully rub it over the roller that you can see. When that section is dry, turn the roller again, and clean the next section. You will find that the roller is remarkably inky.

## Scroll Happy!

If you get sick of waiting for a LocoScript to scroll through a document, just press [PASTE] a couple of times, and leave the PCW to happily scroll away. It will beep in annoyance when it's finished.

*D. White*

## Mystery Solved

Have you ever wondered what that key does in the middle of the cursor keys, that has a number two, and a grid printed on it. This is the 'Hash' key. Press this to get rid of menus that appear on screen within LocoScript. They disappear pretty quickly anyway, but it prevents annoying pauses which occur while you wait.

## Stop printing

If, during printing in LocoScript you realise that you have made a mistake, there is a way of stopping the printer from spending ages printing, and wasting the ribbon. Press [PTR] to put you into printer control state. Then press [F7] and you are given a number of options. Choose to abandon printing, and your printer will neatly stop.

*G. N. Forest,  
 Washington*

## Word count sections of text

The LocoScript word counter will only count the words in a complete document, and this can prove time consuming if your document is made up of several pages. There is no option to count the number of words in just a small part of the document. However, it is possible if you have LocoSpell. At the place where you wish to stop the count, type a short word that the dictionary won't recognise, such as 'xyz'. Then move the cursor to the beginning of the section to be counted, and choose to spell check part of the document. The PCW will spellcheck through to the unrecognisable word. Now press [CAN], and a message will appear telling you the number of words counted. Now just delete the word.

*Mike Parry,  
 Hereford*

## MD Essentials

Everybody probably already knows this, but I've just discovered it, and it's saved me a lot of unnecessary grief. When in MicroDesign, a lot of operations such as erasing images, and typesetting can be cancelled, even after the operation is finished, just by pressing [WORD CHAR]. This means that, if you make a mistake, all is not lost!

*Margaret Baxter,  
 Middlesbrough*

## CUTs in Limbo

I'm afraid you are wrong. In the LocoScript Tutorial (issue 2, page 14) it says on a [CUT][CUT] operation: "Sadly however, all the text deleted before has gone for good." The text can be found intact, and recovered from LIMBO.

*Rod Shinkfield,  
 Chorley*

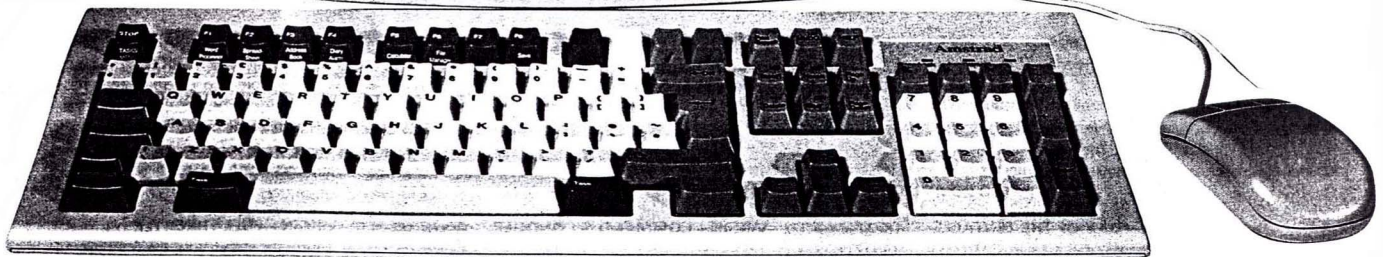
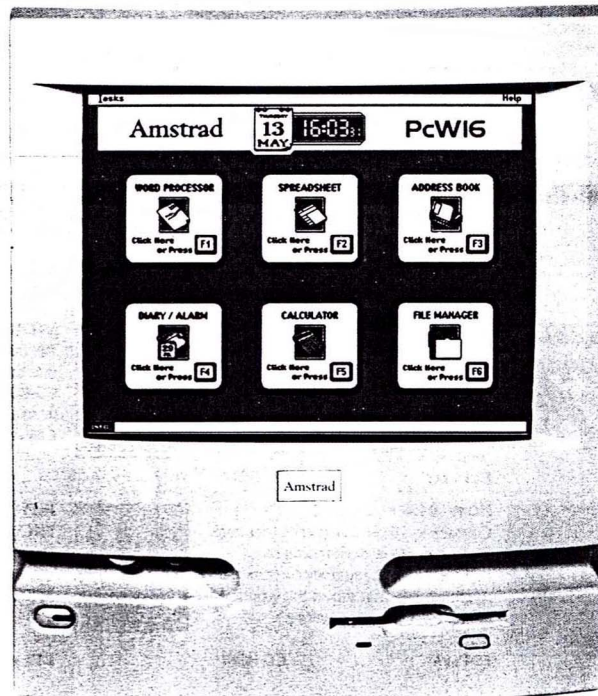
**PCW Today: Sorry!**

# The Future is Here?

*Amstrad needed 'guinea pigs' to test their new computer. Esther Welch was one of the lucky few*

How was it for you - the summer of '96? Olympic obsessed or a football frenzy? For me it was **'The summer of the 16'** - frustrating, frightening and fun. Determined to get their hands on the new PCW 16, a number of clubs persuaded Amstrad to use their members as 'guinea pig' testers and somehow my name went on the list. In the middle of May, the machine arrived, was quickly installed in my home office and linked to the Canon BJ-10ex printer, normally attached to my faithful PCW 9512+.

The machine is a neat work-horse with a screen slightly smaller than the 9512, the user friendly colour coordinated keyboard, which incorporates a numeric pad from which calculations can be imported into documents. An innovation, which can be quickly adapted for the 9512, is the ability to raise the keyboard by about half an inch at the back, this makes a very comfortable typing position. Times and Swiss typefaces are installed, each in ten sizes ranging from the minute 6pt to the large 72pt. The comprehensive character set includes a wide range of accents, signs and symbols such as ☘✓●.



Speed is notably improved from the original PCWs. Maintained on standby - like your television - touch the on button and all six installed programs load in an impressive eight seconds. Word and line counts are equally fast, whilst adding words to the user dictionary requires only one single keystroke.

Initially there was no manual. Knowing that the software has been written by Creative Technology helped, and onscreen instructions provided a useful guide. Still, unexpected crashes and weird effects occurred. My incompetence or major program faults? Almost weekly a new 'Rescue Disc' arrived from Amstrad and was loaded into the machine, re-programming the main memory, and incidentally wiping any files entered by me. Sometimes the new

disc cured old faults but added new ones - guinea pigs need a sense of humour. Once entered, the Address Book file was quickly exported and saved to floppy disc - at least that was one long entry which did not have to be re-typed each time. I found the Address Book program useful and simple to operate. As with LocoFile, it

pays to spend time thinking about how you will use the various fields offered before starting to type in the details. There is a versatile 'Notes' field which could, for example sort by the date a club subscription should be paid. Creating a mail-merge program is simplicity itself.

Frustration was common in the early weeks. It was obvious that use of the mysterious [Ctrl] key plus other keys, would provide short cuts to various tasks. But which additional keys, and which tasks? Clues were provided when the manual eventually arrived, but alas, it lacks a comprehensive appendix of the control codes.

It is possible to load existing LocoScript and ASCII files into the PCW 16 but with the second-hand value of an 8 or 9000 standing currently at around £25 in local car boot fairs, why bother? I hope to keep both my machines in use. The 9512+ for MicroDesign 3 and the 16 for whatever comes along - hopefully MicroDesign 4. We know that Creative Technology, Rodesign, ComSoft, PhiloSoft and SD Micro-Systems are already working on new programs. Maybe the summer of 1997 will be even more exciting.

You can buy an Amstrad PCW 16 for yourself now the lengthy tests have finished. The computer is not available through the shops, but you can buy it from Amstrad Direct, Freeport, Brentwood, Essex CM14 4YW. Telephone 0990 944 944. The stand alone version costs £299 +VAT. The PCW with Canon Printer costs £399 +VAT and with an OKI Printer it costs £499 +VAT.

# DRIVES ALIVE!

*You may have heard about hard and flash drives, but what do they do?*

There are many add-ons available for the PCW, most will help speed it up, increase it's power, and make it easier to use, but there are few as versatile as hard drives and the flash drive. Both products are now only available for the PCW from hardware experts, Cirtech UK. There were several hard drives produced by other companies, most notably the Vortex drive, but these are now only available second-hand. The hard drive and flash drive can revolutionise the way you approach computing, and yet very few people actually own one. Probably, the main reason for this is a lack of awareness from many PCWers, who do not realise what these products can actually do. So here's our jargon-free guide to drives...

## THE HARD DRIVE

The basic PCW hard drive is called the GEM hard disc, and is produced by Cirtech UK, of Scotland. There are several versions, including the 'Insyder', an internal version for the 9512. However, all hard discs do much the same thing. They are really just a giant floppy disc in a large metal box. The hard disc works in exactly the same way as a floppy disc, only a lot more information can be stored onto it. The hard discs come in just one size - 40mega bytes. Mega bytes are a measurement of the amount of memory a disc can hold. 1024k makes up one mega byte, and a standard 3" PCW disc can store just 173k of information. In plain English, a 40 mega byte hard disc can hold the equivalent amount of information of almost 250 3" floppy discs, or 60 3.5" floppy discs.

What this means is that you can hold all your favourite programs on the one hard disc, and each of them can be loaded direct from that drive, without you having to put a floppy disc in, as you would normally. On top of that, all your files normally saved onto floppy discs, can be saved onto the hard disc. No more tedious changing of discs! Not only can files and programs be saved to the hard disc, but they can also be loaded noticeably faster. Many are loaded more than 50% faster than they would be

from a floppy disc.

When you first start using the hard drive, you are given the option of whether LocoScript or CP/M should be automatically loaded when you start up the computer. If you choose LocoScript, but wish to load CP/M from the start-up, then just press the [ALT] key when you switch your PCW on, and CP/M will load instead.

So why hasn't everyone got a hard disc? The PC won't operate without one, and it is the ultimate PCW time saver. However, the hard discs are pricey. Cirtech's cheapest external GEM hard disc costs £233.50. Another problem is one of housekeeping. All your files and programs are stored on one big disc, as opposed to them being on individual labelled, colour coordinated floppy discs. Therefore, it makes sense that it will be more difficult to find a particular file on your hard disc. To make it easier, the hard disc is split into four 10 mega byte sections, essentially, four different disc drives. These are drives A:, B:, E: and F:. It is dead simple to move between these drives, simply type the letter followed by ':', and you will switch. This enables you to keep all your program files on one drive, all your LocoScript documents on another and so on. To help you sort out your files further, there is software provided with GEM. Programs such as MicroDisplay can also be a great help. This program helps you to 'tag' files, and sort, erase and move files very simply.

As I said before, the hard disc, uses the drives called A: and B:. You will be aware that these are the names usually given to the normal floppy disc drives. With the hard disc, the normal A: drive becomes the C: drive, and the B: drive becomes the D: drive. This is simply to let the software work.

If you buy the standard GEM hard disc, there is no complicated fitting needed, it simply plugs into the expansion port at the back of your PCW. If you own a 9512, a version can be fitted internally. Also,

beware, the drive has a fan, and is quite noisy. PC users have had to put up with it for years, but it can be annoying.

## THE FLASH DRIVE

Another type of PCW drive is available from Cirtech. The Flash Drive hasn't been around for long, simply because the technology inside it hasn't been around for too long either. This drive is much smaller than a hard drive. It fixes directly on to the back of your PCW, and you'll never notice it's there.

The Flash Drive has no moving parts, it makes no noise, and runs off the PCW's own power source, but here's the great bit. It will load up LocoScript or CP/M for you in just a couple of seconds. When you switch on your PCW, you can load most versions of LocoScript almost instantly. Not only that, but other data files can be stored in the drive too! Loading a font into MicroDesign couldn't be quicker, no more hanging around! What this innovative hardware basically does is act like a permanent Start of Day disc, instantly accessible. It is known as a 'non volatile ROM drive', which is beautiful jargon! What it really means is, once the information is stored on the disc, nothing can affect it. You install your software onto the drive the first time you use it, after that, there's no need to touch it. The make-up of the drive is highly advanced, so you won't accidentally wipe it clean!

When you receive the drive, it comes with easy to use software, which will help you to install the Start of Day discs. You can choose to just install CP/M or LocoScript, or as with the hard disc, you can have both.

Both hard drives and the Flash Drives are worthwhile investments. They both serve a slightly different purpose, but will both also save you huge amounts of time. If you can afford it, get one. If you use your PCW a lot, a hard drive would be well worth while. And all PCW users would see the benefit in a Flash Drive. Contact Cirtech on (01835) 823898, Fax (01835) 822471.

# SECRET CODES

*This month's LocoScript Tutorial is a guide to those handy control codes*

Here is the *PCW Today* definitive guide to LocoScript control codes. Most people find it difficult to remember anything but the basic codes, so here's a list of them and what they do. Keep this page next to you for quick reference.

**Bold [+]b**  
Makes text bolder.

**CEntre [+]ce**  
Centres the text between the margins. There's no need to stop this with the [-] key, it cancels automatically when you press [RETURN].

**CR extra [+]cr**  
Carriage Return extra. This is for those people who wish to indent paragraphs instead of leaving a space. This option enables you to select the gap. If you set Carriage Return extra to a half, you will get a space of half a line, whenever you press [RETURN]. This code needs a number after it. Type either 1½, 1, ½, or 0, depending on how big a gap you want.

**Double [+]d**  
This is short for double strike, and gives an effect rather like Bold. The printer runs over the same part of the paper twice.

**Font [+]f**  
This is used to select your font. You have room for four fonts, you need to type the number of the font wanted after the code.

**Italic [+]i**  
Makes sloping or italicised text.

**Justify [+]j**  
Right justifies the the text, from the point of the code, reorganising the text so that there is a straight edge of text down the right hand margin, as well as the left.

**Keep [+]k**  
Keeps a number of lines together at the top or bottom of the page. Type a number after the code. Of limited use really

**LayouT [+]lt**  
Calls up a layout from your own stock layouts. Type the number of the required layout after the code.

**Line Pitch [+]lp**  
Alters the line pitch, or the number of lines printed per inch, key in the number after the code.

**Line Spacing [+]ls**  
Alters the number of spaces left blank between every printed line. Simply type the code, and then a number. You can use half spacing by typing ½.

**LastLine [+]ll**  
This makes the current line where the code is going, the last line of the page. Unlike End Page Here, this option allows you to type in further lines before the code.

**Last Page Number [+]lpn**  
LocoScript allows you to number pages as page 2 of 5' for example. If these pages are split between documents, LocoScript can't tell how many pages there are. So, with this code, you tell LocoScript how many pages there are. This code should be placed in the header or footer.

**Mail [+]m**  
Indicates the beginning of a mailmerge command.

**Pitch [+]p**  
Alters the pitch, or number of characters per inch. Therefore p12 = 12 characters per inch on the printout.

**Page Number [+]pn**  
Adds page numbers to the document. You would put this code in the header or footer usually. You are also able to tell the computer what the first page number should be, in case it is split into sections.

**PoinT size [+]pt**  
Alters the size of scalable fonts in Loco3, follow the code with the number for the wanted point size.

**ReVerse [+]rv**  
Prints inverted characters on your screen, not the printout. This helps to highlight changes such as letters in italics.

**Right Align [+]ra**  
This aligns the text to the right hand margin, as opposed to the left. Mostly for addresses.

**SiC [+]sc**  
Tells LocoSpell that the following word is spelt correctly, ie a surname, which it won't normally recognise.

**SuBscript [+]sb**  
Prints half size characters, dropped half a line, as in scientific phrases such as H<sub>2</sub>O.

**SupeRscript [+]sr**  
As subscript, but this prints half size characters raised half a line, as in LocoScript™.

**UnderLine [+]ul**  
Underlines everything including words and the spaces between.

**Word underline [+]w**  
Underlines only the words, not the spaces. Note that when cancelling press [-]ul, not [-]w as you might think.

**UniT [+]ut**  
Places a marker in the text, that you can jump to using the [UNIT] key.

**hard space [+][SPACE]**  
A hard space won't leave a break in the line at that point.

**hard hyphen [+]-**  
As above only for hyphens. This feature is ideal for writing double barrelled names.

Most of the control codes in LocoScript are switched on by pressing [+], followed by the code and switched off by pressing [-], followed by the code. Some options such as CEntre, switch themselves off when [RETURN] is pressed. Some of the features will not apply to you if you don't have LocoMail, LocoSpell and LocoScript 3, or if you use a daisywheel printer.

If you are unsure of the codes, just press [+], wait a couple of seconds, and a list of the control codes will appear.

If you have an idea for a LocoScript tutorial, or would like to write one yourself, please let us know. The address is: PCW Today, 150 Oxford Road, Linthorpe, Middlesbrough, Teesside TS5 5EL.

# Greetings from MD!

*Create your own greetings cards in MicroDesign*

There is always a need for greetings cards, whether it's for Christmas, a birthday or wedding anniversary, or one of the many other occasions. It is always a nice, personalised touch if you can make your own cards. OK, so we're not all exactly brilliant artists, but you can design excellent greetings cards in MicroDesign, both quickly and easily. Here's the *PCW Today* step by step guide to creating your own cards.

1: Firstly we need to split the page into four quarters. In the Layout screen, create a box, drag one corner of the box right into the bottom left corner of the page. Then, using the spacebar, switch the cursor to the opposite corner of the box. press [DOC PAGE], press [ENTER] and you will have drawn a rectangle, that takes up the bottom left quarter of the screen. Using [UNIT PARA], copy this rectangle into the remaining three quarters of the screen. What you will be left with is a frame, rather like the traditional window frame. These indicate where the folds will go, when the card is finished. We will delete these later.

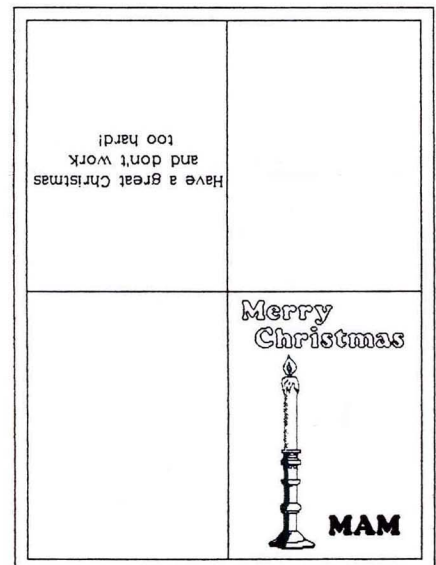
2: The next task is to write the greeting on the front of the card. In the Typeset screen, press **W** to edit the window. Press [RELAY], and a menu will appear at the bottom of the screen. Alter the number of columns to '2', and press [ENTER] to accept the change. Now load the font of your choice. It should be a large, bold font, but choose the one that suits the theme of your card. Once the font is installed, press **T**, and enter Typeset mode. Press [F1] to enter the editing screen, and type your message. Write what you like, if you want your message on two lines, press [RETURN] where you want the first line to end. Make sure that the text is written white on black, if it is not, go to the beginning and press [+][ALT]. Once the text is ready to be typeset, press [F3], and move the cursor over Line Format, and change it to CENTRE. Press [ENTER] to accept it, then move the typeset cursor (shaped like a letter L) into the bottom, right hand rectangle on your page. Position the cursor close to the left

hand side of this square, and move it up or down to the position where you want to place the message. It wants to be either near the top or bottom of the square. Once you are satisfied with the positioning, press [PASTE], and your message should print across the area that you want it to. If it doesn't, don't worry. Simply press [WORD CHAR], then [ENTER] and the text will disappear. Now just reposition the cursor and try again.

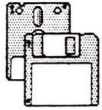
3: Next, we want to put the picture in place on the front of the card. You can use a scanned image, or if you are really ambitious, you could draw one with the mouse. However, the simplest method is to load a picture from a clipart disc. Put the disc in the drive, and press [F1] to load an area. Your file will be either a CUT or an MDA, so press [F1] again, and move the cursor over the correct format. Press [ENTER] and then [ENTER] again. The computer will bring up a list of all the pictures on that disc, move the cursor to the one that you want, and press [ENTER]. A box will appear in the centre of the screen, this indicates the size of the picture. If you are unhappy with the size, you can rescale it by pressing the space bar once, and then moving the cursor keys, until the box takes the desired size. Move the box to the bottom right rectangle, where you have written the message, position it in the centre of the rectangle, making sure that the box does not overlap over the writing. When you are happy, press [ENTER], and the picture will load, you can't see it in any detail, and it will probably just look like a black featureless shape. If you want to check it press **G**, and position the box over the picture. Press [ENTER], and a magnified image will appear. If all is satisfactory, press [EXIT] and then [ENTER].

4: It is now time for the message inside the card. First load a suitable font, it should be smaller than the previous font. Around 18 points should be about right. Press **T** to re-enter typeset mode and press [F1]. The text that you wrote before will be there. Delete it and write the new message for the inside of the card. You

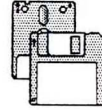
could write a rhyme or whatever. Once you've finished to your satisfaction, press [ENTER]. Now you need to position the cursor into the top left hand rectangle on the page. Again it should be near the left hand side, and a little above centre of the rectangle. Once you are satisfied, press [PASTE] and your new message will appear. As before, if you make a mistake, press [WORD CHAR] and reposition the cursor. Now, this writing is of course upside down, or it will be when the card is folded. So press **G** for graphics, and position the box over the text, then press [ENTER]. Once in graphics mode, press [UNIT PARA] and then the spacebar. Using the cursor keys, surround the text with the box. (If there is too much text, you will need to do it in bits) press [ENTER] to accept the box, and then move the cursor down the menu in the top corner and select COPY, confirm by pressing [ENTER]. Now press [+][DO PAGE] and then [ENTER]. Hopefully the writing will turn upside down. If it doesn't, press [WORD CHAR] and try again.



5: The card is now nearly finished. Return to the Typeset screen, and delete the now unwanted lines in the frames using [UNIT PARA]. You can if you wish add any other details now, but as it stands, it is already an excellent card. Print it out on coloured paper, and colour in with pens if you like. Then fold it into four, and there it is, your very own MicroDesigned card.



# DOCTOR DISC



*More of your PCW problems solved*

## Font Frolics

**Thanks for the excellent magazine, I have just one question. Where did you get those big fonts from on the front cover?**

*Andrew White, Southampton*

We've had several people asking this same question, and it's no big secret. The *PCW Today* logo is designed on a PCW in MicroDesign 3. It started life as GRDIAN66 in italics. From then on, it was a simple case of using an awful lot of patience, and sore eyes. The words were saved as an area, then loaded up, and expanded using the scaling option. Once the letters were the correct size, they were obviously very jagged and distorted. Each letter had to be painstakingly smoothed from within GRAPHICS, using the ZOOM facility. It is a major operation, and not for the faint hearted. Sadly, this is one of the few faults with MicroDesign - the fonts are simply not big enough! If you really want a large logo, and you want it desperately enough, wait until you get a free afternoon sometime, and give it a bash. We managed!

## LocoTheasaurus

**My son uses a PC with Ami Pro, which has a dictionary and a thesaurus. I have the dictionary for LocoScript, and wondered if there was a thesaurus available for the same wordprocessor. I have not heard of one, so it's probably a long shot.**

*Steve Hartwell, Glasgow*

It's not such a long shot, surprisingly enough there is one available, but you'll need LocoFile as well as LocoScript. Made by Three Inch Software, it is called The Three Inch Theasaurus, it has 12,000 words in a 780k file, and costs £14.95. Contact 'Three Inch' on (01908) 690704. Despite it's slightly deceiving name, this program is available on both 3" and 3.5" discs.

## Clip Art Search

**Can you tell me where I can get clip art for MicroDesign?**

*Katie Whale, Devon*

Try Rodesign on (01297) 444313, Mick Harrison on (01332) 381210, PCW PD on (01562) 822243, SD MicroSystems on (01953) 483750 and Christian Computer Art on (01222) 758484. All of these companies will supply you clipart of a varying quality, some will provide catalogues with samples - shop around. Also, some PCW clubs such as The MicroDesign International User Group, and South Essex have vast libraries of clipart available to their members.

## Page Count

**I wonder if you can help me, I've been trying to work out if there's any way of checking the number of pages in a document in LocoScript 3, without actually editing the document. At the moment I have to guess by the amount of memory it takes up?**

*Geoff O'Neil, County Durham*

When in the disc management screen of LocoScript, press **F5** 'Inspect Document', and information about that document will appear, including the number of pages. Incidentally, you can also write in here brief details about the document. Then it makes it easy if you want to find a certain document in a hurry, but can't remember it's name.

## No Address

**I am having trouble with a 3" disc, a LocoScript error message tells me that the disc address mark is missing**

Bad News! Send your disc to Dave the Disc Doctor - not me! He may be able to salvage your disc for you. Contact him on (01892) 835974.

## Gone Dotty!

**As my letter bears testament, I am having trouble with my printer, which persists in printing dots beneath every word. I have an 8512, with it's native dot matrix printer, and I have tried everything to solve the problem, from changing the ribbon, to hitting the printer.**

*M Tyler, Kingston upon Hull*

Well, I wouldn't advise hitting it! I'm not a printer expert, having failed to solve a printer problem in the last edition. However, in this case, I've asked our technical wizard - Steve, who says that it could be a problem with the cable. Take it to a repair centre, and they should fix it for you. However it could be cheaper to buy a secondhand PCW from the newspaper, and swap printers. There's always a cheap one, where the advert says 'disc drive needs attention' or something similar.

## CP/M Directory

**I have an 8256, with the standard single drive. I am wondering how it is possible to get a detailed directory of a disc in CP/M using DIR.COM, without copying DIR.COM onto the disc. Just typing DIR lists only the names of the files, but I want to be able to see their size and other information only available by using DIR.COM.**

*P French, Somerset*

Although there is no visible B: drive on your machine, it still exists. Type DIR[FULL]B: then press [RETURN]. A prompt will appear asking you to put the disc for B: into the drive. DIR.COM will now work, just as it would in a two drive machine. Next time you need to use the A: drive again, you'll be asked to put the disc for A: into the drive, and press a key.

Send your PCW problems to PCW Today, 150 Oxford Road, Middlesbrough TS5 5EL.



# Swap my PCW for a PC? Never!

*Pat Creighton tried a PC for a fortnight but wasn't impressed*

My PCW 9512 was a seventieth birthday present to myself. It replaced an ancient portable typewriter on which I used to do a considerable amount of work, as secretary to a fishing club. I was delighted with the new machine, especially the output from the daisywheel printer. I had soon acquired several print wheels and was getting on fine with LocoScript. Within a few weeks I discovered there were PCW magazines, and from then on I have never looked back. In the past five years I have made progress with LocoScript and MicroDesign, as well as Mini Office and Flipper 3. I acquired a Locomotive Power Pack, a Canon bubblejet printer and everything was going fine.

Sadly, it was not all plain sailing. I saw the PCW 9512+ come on to the market a week after I'd bought my machine. (The salesman forgot to mention the new model) It then became difficult obtaining 3" discs - I had over fifty in use. What was the next step? There were rumours about the new PCW 16, but first reports were not very encouraging, particularly as it would seem that LocoScript and MicroDesign could not be loaded. The thoughts of upgrading to a PC were daunting, and the idea of laying out over £1000 was somewhat off-putting.

A while later I was spending a fortnight at my son's house, while he was away on holiday. He has just upgraded to a multimedia PC with Windows 95 and the works. On leaving he said "Here Dad, have a go on this, and I bet when we come back, you'll discard your old PCW and get yourself a PC. Just click on [HELP] if

you get stuck and you'll be fine" Well yes, I admit there is no comparison. Comparing a PCW with a PC, is like comparing a bicycle to a formula 1 racing car! Even so, he has lost his bet - I still prefer my PCW. I know I was thrown in at the deep end, with only [HELP] to act as a lifebelt. I realise it would take me some time to learn how to use the new programs, but why should I? My faithful PCW does everything I want to - and more. Anyway, the PC's white screen is too harsh for my old eyes. I can sit longer in front of my PCW without getting eyestrain.

I decided to upgrade my PCW, and bought an external 3.5" drive from Pinboard. At the same time, I fitted a new armature for my daisywheel printer which was on the blink. I have just purchased a KeyMouse, which has speeded up my work in MicroDesign. Now I am thinking about The Network and Tweak 3, and looking forward to the next five years. Who knows what I will treat myself to for my 80th birthday! Yes, I know it could be a new harp, but I am forever optimistic.

Long live the PCW!

Why not write and tell us about your experiences with the PCW. Have you had any humorous incidents with the machine, or even any disasters? Do you use your PCW for an unusual purpose? Just write an article of around 1000 words, and send it to us at PCW Today, 150 Oxford Road, Middlesbrough, Teesside TS5 5EL.

## Write for us and win THE NETWORK™

We need original material to help make PCW Today a top-class magazine, and you can help. If you write articles, tips or letters for us, you stand a chance of winning a copy of The Network, worth

£25. Articles should be around 800-1000 words plus. We want anything PCW related, so get thinking, the best piece wins. PCW Today withholds the right to edit any material submitted.

## NEXT ISSUE

It's the Christmas Special, a good excuse for fun and frivolity. Don't worry though, all our regular news, tips and tutorials will still be here, as sane as ever!

### Game On!

'Tis the season to be merry! Give that wordprocessor a rest and take a look at some great PCW games. We've got the top twenty of games still available for your Amstrad, plus a look at some old favourites, now only available second-hand.

### That was the year that was

1996 is almost up, and what a year it's been, we review the year that saw a new PCW, and many other surprises. We also dust down the crystal ball, and look to see what 1997 may bring.

### The Big Review

The Big Review this time looks at: Well actually we don't know yet. No nice, kind software company had sent us anything new to review when we went to press. Don't worry, we'll find something, even if we actually have to buy it ourselves - Shock Horror!

### And that's not all

And finally, a nice Christmas present for all our readers: An extra four pages! That's right, we're bigger than ever with 24 pages, and we'll keep growing, as long as finances allow.

### When's it Out?

The winter issue should land on your doormat sometime in December - we hope!

*Please note that these details may be subject to last minute change.*

# Down Memory Lane

*In it's heyday, the PCW witnessed some pretty unusual products that never really caught on!*

Over the years, many companies have latched on to the amazing success of the PCW, by bringing out products for use with the computer. Sadly though, most PCW users seemed happy enough just churning out letters in LocoScript 1. These types of people were not very interested in gimmicks. Most of the new products disappeared as soon as they were launched. Still, it is well worth a look back at what could have been, even if it's just for the novelty value.

Back in 1989, some bright spark invented a real-time clock for the PCW, just like the one you now find inside every PC! This clever device kept the internal PCW clock at the correct time, even when the computer was switched off. It was a total failure. Why didn't Amstrad install it in later models? Who knows.

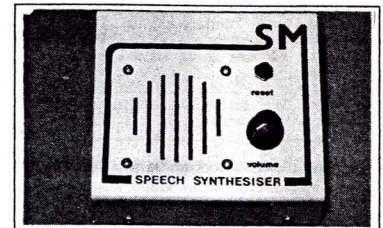
Another great PCW invention, that is now popular on the PC was 'Vidi-PCW' from Rombo Productions. Basically the package enabled you to grab any picture from a video tape and convert it into clip-art for use in one of the three PCW Desktop Publishers available at that time. On top of this, it was possible to do the reverse. Writing and pictures from the PCW could be transferred onto video tape. Clever eh? You could make your own films, with titles and credits. The £99.95 price tag was probably why it never caught on.

Of course, not all PCW flops were flops because of the price, some were just downright useless. Take the ludicrously named 'Tracey' for example. This was a small piece of clear plastic, that you stuck to the side of your mouse with a strip of velcro. There was a cross in the centre, which supposedly helped you to trace. The blurb which came with it, said 'turn your mouse into a digitiser' - hardly! The picture on the screen usually looked more like a tangled ball of wool than a digitised picture. Mine went in the bin the day I bought it!

Which idiot said that the PCW was just a word-processor? Did you know that your PCW could be used as a recording studio? DHCP launched the 12 Track MIDI Sequencer to a largely unenthusiastic market in the eighties. Along with it's rival Pro-Performer from Electromusic Research it was a well written and surprisingly powerful program. Both packages enabled budding composers to mix tracks and instruments and to record their compositions on disc. Beethoven would have loved it!

Now, not only could the PCW play music, but it could talk as well! The Speech Synthesiser from SM Engineering was controlled by the use of Basic listings. Simply type in a listing, and shock your friends when the PCW talks back. This was

a true gimmick in every sense of the word. It can hardly have any practical uses - can it?



■ Making the PCW Talk!

Hard Discs have been around since the start of the PCW, but the very first, didn't exactly set the world alight! The gigantic Winchester Disc was put on sale in 1986 for a mere £650. Did anyone actually buy one?

And finally the most weird and wonderful PCW product of them all, was the mysteriously named 'Black Stripe'. Made by Isenstein of Wales. This was basically a PCW on it's side, painted entirely in black. It was the PCW that Amstrad never made. Coming with two three inch drives, a 20MB Hard Disc, 1MB of RAM and a 24 pin printer, all within the PCW casings and all as standard, it was a dream machine that sadly never took off. I want one!

Unfortunately that's all I've got space for (my editor won't even give me a full page!) and I've hardly scraped the surface. I haven't even got space to mention the hand held printa-pen. Anyway, bye for now.

**PCW TODAY,**  
150 OXFORD ROAD,  
MIDDLESBROUGH,  
TEESSIDE TS5 5EL  
TEL (01642) 816903

EDITOR Adrian Braddy  
ART EDITOR Steven Ovington  
TECHNICAL CONSULTANT Steve Peacock  
WRITING TEAM Adrian Braddy, Peter Sutton  
OTHER CONTRIBUTORS Esther Welch,  
Pat Creighton  
CONSULTANT PCW EXPERTS Teesside  
PCW Users' Group  
PRINTED BY Staples, Stockton on Tees  
THANKS TO PCW Plus, Computer Shopper,  
PC Plus, Computer Buyer, LocoScript Software,  
Creative Technology, ComSoft, Amstrad plc.

PCW Today is an independent publication. The Big 2 PCW Club has no link with Amstrad plc, LocoScript Software or Creative Technology. The opinions expressed in this publication are not necessarily those of the Editor or The Big 2 PCW Club.

The greatest care is taken to ensure that all we print is accurate. However we cannot accept liability for mistakes or misprints. Contributions are welcomed, but no form of payment can be made. They are accepted only on the basis of the full assignment of copyright to The Big 2 PCW Club for a period of six months. After this time, copyright will revert back to the author.

All trade-marks, registered or otherwise are acknowledged.

The Big 2 PCW Club is a non-profit making club, PCW Today is a small press magazine, published quarterly, and available only to club members.



© Copyright The Big 2 PCW Club 1996

# PCW Company Locator

*The essential guide to companies selling PCW products and services*

**A4 Ideas (01249) 815082**  
LocoFile Databases

**Advantage (01274) 636475**  
PD/Shareware/Cornix Software

**AIM (0191) 5108787**  
Educational Software

**Aladdink (018907) 50965**  
Ribbon re-inking

**Ambersoft (0143) 532782**  
Variety of games

**Amstrad Direct (0990) 944944**  
PCW 16

**Anglia Translations (01480) 861224**  
Various games from O.M.K.

**Ansible Information (01424) 719739**  
Ansible Index for LocoScript

**A-Z Computers (0181) 7441834/2354**  
Most PCW products available

**Cavalier Software (0149) 2641548**  
Business software

**Christian Computer Art (01954) 210009**  
MDA clipart for church magazines

**Cirtech (01835) 823898**  
Flash drive/Hard drives/Sprinter etc

**City Systems (0121) 3273167**  
PCW World ex stock

**Comsoft (0141) 5544735**  
Protext/ProPrint/Protext Office etc

**Connect Software (0181) 7439792**  
Money Manager and more

**Crazy Diamond Design (01283) 840854**  
Fancy fonts for MicroDesign

**Creative Technology (01889) 567160**  
MD family/keymouse/scanner/add-ons

**Data Box (0121) 7053465**  
Discs/ribbons etc

**Data-X-Change (0161) 4567515**  
PD software/data transfer

**David Landers Software (01665) 570662**  
Instant Recall for LocoMail

**Derek Rogers Software (0141) 3348902**  
Business Software

**DGC (01274) 636475**  
MicroDraw/MicroChart & much more

**Encyclosoft (01270) 811890**  
PCW SuperDos CP/M replacement

**Festival Computing (01274) 613300**  
Super Lindex indexer for LocoScript

**Goldmark Systems (01707) 321711**  
Over 14,000 pieces of MD clipart

**HiSoft (01525) 718181**  
Programming software - Modula2 etc

**HTB Computers (01794) 516279**  
PCW Draw and more

**J.M. Software (01224) 741305**  
Life 2 - classic game

**LocoScript Software (01306) 747757**  
Wide range including LocoScript family

**Lux-Soft (01726) 850820**  
Mallard Basic add-ons

**Mapej (01691) 778659**  
Data transfer

**Margolis & Company (0181) 8897755**  
Fax/internet software

**Meta Software (01935) 72186**  
Prediction software

**Mick Harrison (01332) 381210**  
Graphics for all major PCW DTPs

**MicroForm (01772) 701248**  
Disc drives and spares

**Norman Barrington (01772) 701248**  
Various games

**Oxford Software House (01865) 53836**  
Mallard Basic Add-ons

**Paul Robshaw (01257) 464192**  
Mailshot Suite for LocoMail

**PC Microfix (0181) 8405343**  
PCW systems and spare parts

**PCW File (01432) 761860**  
Public Domain & Shareware

**PCW PD (01562) 822243**  
Public Domain software

**P.E.P. (01892) 783652**  
LocoFile databases

**Philosoft (01685) 813978**  
Graflink and Insight OCR software

**Pinboard Computers (01462) 894460**  
Disk drives/spares/repairs

**Rodesign (01279) 444313**  
Top quality clipart for MicroDesign

**SCA (01903) 821128**  
Add-ons/Rocket spreadsheet

**SCS (01964) 535933**  
Data transfer/consumables

**SD Microsystems (01953) 483750**  
Wide variety of products

**Silicon City (01539) 448118**  
Disc drives/memory upgrades etc

**Soft-Touch Software (0181) 2485642**  
Educational/business software

**Solent PCW Services (01705) 268780**  
Spares and repairs

**Tasman Software (0113) 2438301**  
Tasword wordprocessor

**Three Inch Software (01908) 690704**  
Theasuarus for LocoScript

**Topologika (01395) 277496**  
Adventure games

**Tudor Systems (01622) 861775**  
LocoFile/Mail add-ons

**Ultra Software (01295) 730060**  
Budget software

**WACCO (01353) 777006**  
Protext

**W. Ford (01825) 890688**  
Geanealogy software

Do you know of a company or product that we have not mentioned in the directory? If you do, please let us know so that the lists can be amended. Every effort is made to keep the directory accurate and up to date. However, some of the details may have changed, whilst some of the companies may have ceased selling PCW products. If you cannot find a PCW product or company, please contact *PCW Today*, and we'll try to help you.

Renew your subscription today for just

**£4.00\***

If you renew your subscription to PCW Today before the end of 1996,  
we are able to make you this unbeatable offer.

4 issues of this magazine for just £4!

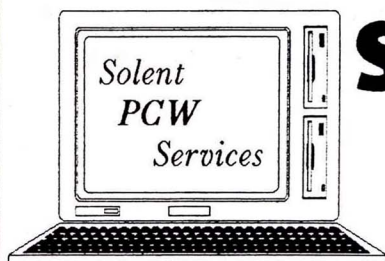
Apply now, and when your subscription runs out next year, it will be  
automatically renewed for a further year.

Not only will you save money, but you will also help safeguard the future  
of this publication.

To take up this offer, send a cheque for £4.00 (payable to Adrian Braddy) to: PCW Today  
Subscription Offer, 150 Oxford Road, Middlesbrough, Teesside TS5 5EL

\*This offer is only open to those people who are already members of The Big 2 PCW Club. Annual Subscriptions are normally £5.  
The offer lasts until December 31 1996. When your subscription runs out, it will automatically be renewed for one year.

ADVERTISEMENT



## **SOLENT PCW SERVICES**

Repairs/upgrades/customisation to all PCW models  
(Also Amstrad PC's 1512/1640/2086)

Disk/data recovery and transfer service

Qualified electronics engineer - 21 years experience

Complete systems/separates bought and sold - part exchange welcome

Second-hand PCW and PC software/hardware available including  
printer/RAM interfaces. Sprinter CPU Boards

Phone or S.A.E. for latest details

Large stocks of spares always available

Approved dealer/technical support for Pinboard Computers 3.5" drives,  
Cirtech GEM Hard Drives/Sprinters,

Creative Technology and LocoScript Software products.

All work warranted - highly reliable service assured

**Cheques & Postal Orders payable to  
K.J. Matthews**

**20 Masefield Crescent, Waterlooville, Hants PO8 8JS**

**Fax/Tel: (01705) 268780 8am - 6pm all week**