

PCW TODAY

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Issue 6 ► Summer 1997

THE FUTURE

It's bye bye Amstrad, so where does that leave the PCW?



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The top '16 coverage

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BACK ISSUES

PCW Today would like to apologise as we have now completely sold out of all back issues.

If there is enough demand we may consider re-printing some editions.

It is for that reason that we would be grateful if anyone with a copy of Issue 2 could send us it. Our last copy was claimed by The British Library. We will give a free year's subscription to the first person to return a copy.

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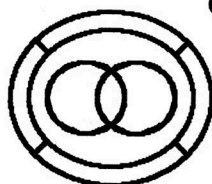
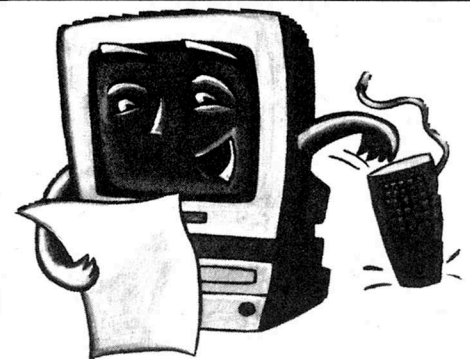
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THIS ISSUE...

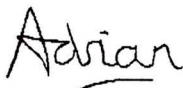
PCW TODAY

SO AMSTRAD is no more. Is it a bad thing, will it damage the future of the PCW? I think not. In fact I believe that Alan Sugar has played a master-stroke once again. Rising from the ashes of Amstrad comes Betacom - a small company with massive potential. This relatively new business is almost an exact replica of Amstrad back in the eighties. Sugar has taken his beloved Amstrad as far as it will go. Now he is starting all over again with Betacom with plans to rock the computer industry once more. And you can bet that he will.

Who knows what the future holds? But it looks rosy from where I'm sitting. The PCW was an important part of the Amstrad jigsaw, that situation will not change with Betacom. The high-street has not seen the last of the PCW - by a long way.

Now to dismiss a rumour. PCW Today is not and never has been produced by the Teesside PCW Users' Group. As that group has now sadly shut-up-shop, some people had assumed that this would also mean the end for PCW Today. I would like to make it clear that PCW Today is in fact published by STRAD, a national user-group, independent of any local clubs. Therefore the closure of the Teesside group does not affect the future of this magazine whatsoever. Thankfully we are in a sound state and continue to grow at a pace that shows no signs of abating. So don't worry, PCW Today is here to stay.

Yours as ever,



Adrian Braddy, Editor.

EDITORIAL AND ADVERTISING

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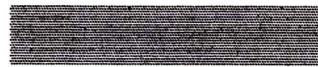
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4 NEWS SPECIAL Two major exclusive interviews on the future of the PCW



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10 REVIEW The Crossword Maker is among software coming under the spotlight



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NEWS SPECIAL

- The Questions
- The Answers
- The Future

Farewell to Amstrad

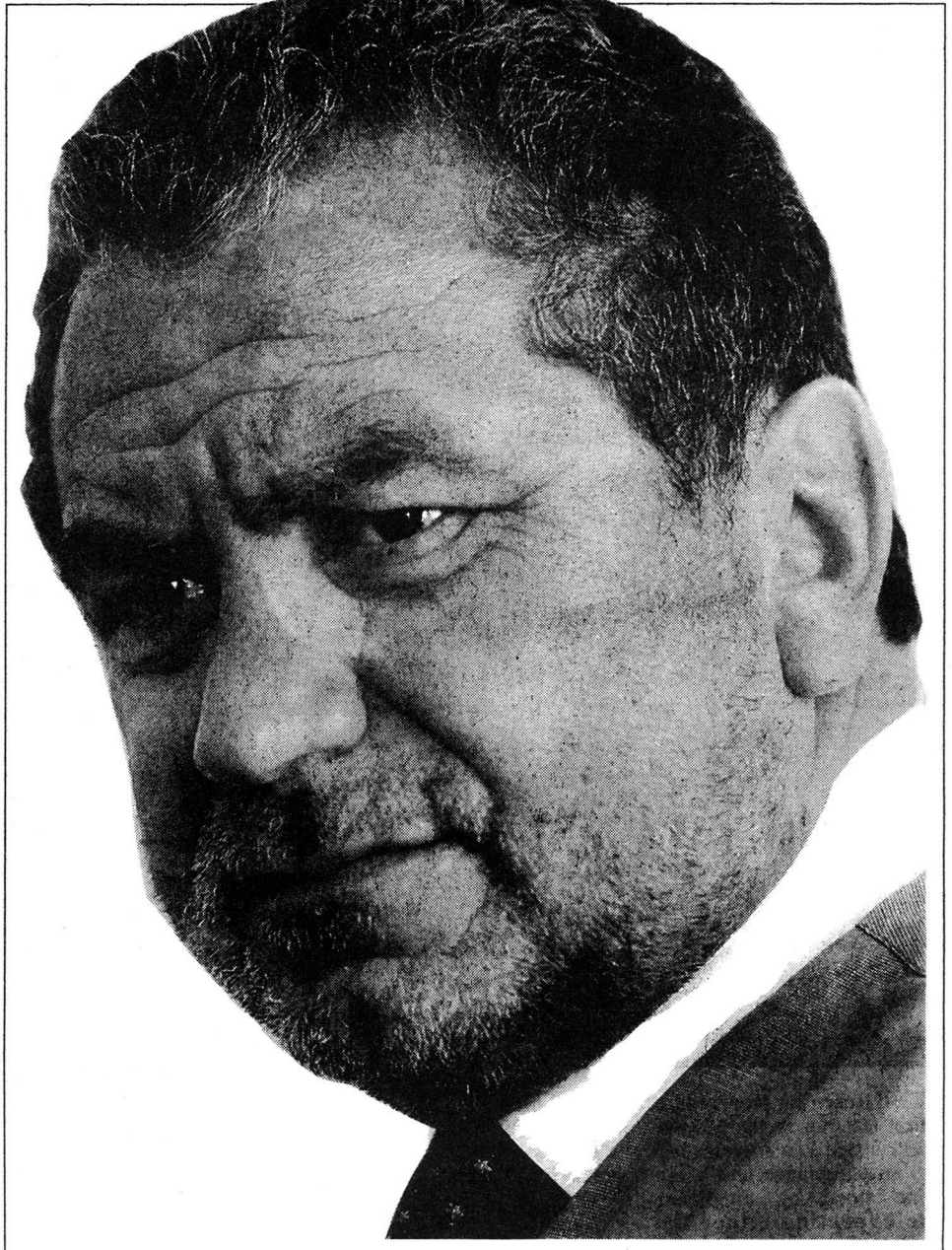
Exclusive: The Alan Sugar Interview

AMSTRAD was a company best known for its incredibly successful budget word processors for the masses. In the mid eighties, Amstrad was seen as the saviour of the European electronics industry - the one company to hold its own against powerful Far-Eastern and American rivals. Alan Sugar's empire was a symbol of the Thatcher years, Sugar was the stereotypical Cockney barrow-boy come good and his company was the role model for many British businesses.

Into the nineties, Amstrad began to fall back in the world market. The value of the company dropped dramatically. At its peak, Amstrad was valued at £1.2 billion, that figure fell to £200 million in less than a decade.

Sugar offered to take it private but investors rejected the idea. Next he hired a chief executive, describing the experience as "like watching the mother-in-law drive your brand new Ferrari over the cliff." Then came the doomed take-over bid from rivals Psion - Sugar's own idea. It fell through. Unmoved, the Amstrad chairman, was willing to try again to save his company. In June this year, the company formerly known as Amstrad was literally split in two. The newspapers screamed: "It's the end of the road for Amstrad!"; share prices soared and the majority of the general public were left bewildered by it all.

The details of the shake-up are really very simple. In essence, the company known as



Amstrad is to be brought to a close. Shareholders in Amstrad are being given back a mixture of cash, and shares in Amstrad's two remaining businesses Viglen and Betacom. All former Amstrad staff now work for Betacom, while Viglen has become a separate company. Alan Sugar himself has kept large stakes in both companies and also picked up a mere £140 million from the deal.

Technically, the company is now finished, but that is not the last the world will hear of Mr Sugar.

"It would be a terrible shock emotionally if I thought Amstrad was gone," he explains.

"From a corporate point of view, that is obviously the case. But in my mind it will not be gone at all. This is not the end of Amstrad, it is the rebirth."

Sugar is very excited by the changes to his empire. Amstrad has had a troubled time throughout the nineties and he wants to start again, back at the beginning.

"Betacom is where I will concentrate my efforts. It is like Amstrad was in 1983. It is time for me to start waking up the electronics industry again."

"Electronics is about innovation. From the PCW to the palm-top computer, there will

always be a new gadget that will catch on. If the Japanese Cyber Pets can be such a hit, then there is hope for us all. I have no problem with creating something innovative, it is just that I have been off the case for

“ This is not the end of Amstrad, it is the rebirth. ”

far too long. Those who think there is no life in the electronics business have got it all wrong."

And who's to argue with the inventor of the PCW? The message from Alan Sugar is loud and clear. He is back and he means business. The name to look out for in the future is Betacom, and it will have all the weight of a certain Mr Sugar behind it.

Perhaps surprisingly, the splitting up of Amstrad may be more beneficial to the

PCW market than it seems from the outset. The sales of the PCW 16 had already been passed on to Betacom some months ago.

Although Betacom had said that they have no immediate plans to develop a new PCW, there may be a change of heart as a result of the shake-up. With the sound base of the modern PCW 16, new models could be developed around it with only minimal financial outlay. There is certainly every chance that Betacom will continue to actively market and promote the '16 well into the foreseeable future.

And what of the Amstrad name itself? Well it seems extremely likely that Betacom will choose to stick with it. The clout of a household name means a lot and you will not be seeing PCWs in Dixons with the Betacom badge in the future.

Despite seeming very dramatic, the changes at Amstrad will effect the consumer very little. They are merely an effort by Alan Sugar and other board members to shake-off the problems of the past and to make some extra cash from the business. Sugar, whatever you may say about him, is a superb businessman. It was the Amstrad PCW that made his millions and he will not forget it in a hurry. This is not the end. It is just the beginning. May we be the first to wish Alan and Betacom all the best for the future. Good luck!

Creative say NO to MicroDesign for the '16

USERS of the PCW 16 have been dealt a blow by the news that Creative Technology will not be producing MicroDesign for the new computer.

Many owners had been pinning their hopes on Creative introducing a desktop publisher for the machine, but that is not going to happen. Nik Holmes of Creative said: "We are not developing any PCW 16 software ourselves and we have no intention at this stage of producing any PCW 16 DTP software or any other MicroDesign-type products.

"The problem is that there is not really enough Flash or RAM memory for a package such as MD3 and expanding these resources, although possible, is a good deal more difficult than it was with the old PCW family. We may be able to offer Flash-ROM upgrades, but they will be expensive."

There is some consolation however, turn to page seven for some exclusive news of alternative software currently under development for the '16, including some graphics software and a hand-scanner.

Creative Technology may not be producing software, but they are still strongly involved with the PCW 16. Nik explained: "We are acting as a single point of contact for anyone who needs technical information about the machine or needs an effective retail outlet for software."

The company have begun a regular newsletter which will be sent to all registered PCW 16 users. This includes tips and news of all new software. Most of the packages will be available through Creative Technology.

The truth is out there

Exclusive: The Cliff Lawson Interview

CLIFF Lawson is one of the top programmers at Amstrad (now Betacom) and one of the men behind the PCW 16. In his most in-depth interview to date, Cliff exclusively gave PCW Today his forthright views on the future of the PCW.

PT: You may have read the rumours in the PCW press surrounding the so called "Super PCW". Is there any truth to these stories?

CL: There is absolutely no truth in them whatsoever. I've just spent two years sweating blood to try and finish the PCW 16 and if I never see another Z80 based computer in my life I will be happy.

PT: So why did you decide to develop a new PCW in the first place?

CL: When the replacement parts for the old PCW started to become unavailable we decided to make a new model. And because Creative Technology suggested it would be a good idea, we based the new machine on a Z80 processor, like the older PCWs, only with 16mhz rather than four, to give enough 'oomph' for WYSIWYG (What you see is what you get).

As it turned out, almost no code from MicroDesign was reusable for the PCW 16, so we would have been far better choosing one of the decent modern micros such as a 68xxx or some sort of RISC. If I had my way, the PCW 16 would have become a "Super PCW" based on a decent 16 or 32 bit processor, running at 100MHz and benefiting from stuff like PWM sound that you get in these modern processors.

PT: Surely then it would have been just another PC?

CL: No, it would still be a unique machine, running with its own operating system. Just a very powerful one.

PT: So will we not see such a PCW being developed in the future?

CL: As it stands the PCW 16, is at least

for the foreseeable future, our final statement in the PCW range. Obviously the operating system is flash-upgradeable so if there was enough demand we might be cajoled into developing the software further. All existing users could easily upgrade to this.

The fact is that the PCW 16 as it stands represents about 10 man years of software effort and if you conservatively price software development at £40,000 per man-year, that adds up to £400,000 of development effort. Assume that we make £10 per unit towards the development cost, which is optimistic, that means we have to sell 40,000 units before the initial development is paid for. So far, since November last year, there have been about 12,000 sold to Dixons. It's going to be a long time before even the initial development is paid for, let alone considering making it "Super" in any way.

PT: What about new software for the PCW 16. In the rescue disc, you suggested up to 30 titles were being produced. Was this an optimistic guess?

CL: Not when I wrote it, as at the time that's what I was being told by Creative Technology. However I do think that Creative have two or three things in the pipeline besides Account Manager, while Peter at Comsoft is supposed to have a number of people working on things. Rob Buckley may be doing an art program and I know that PhiloSoft are working on a BASIC interpreter. However, I cannot see how these people can hope to make any money. Presumably they do it through philanthropic altruism but I haven't quite worked out how that pays one's mortgage.

PT: Most '16 users want to see desktop publishing and graphics packages but instead they are getting databases.

CL: Ah but it's about a million times easier to write a simple text list programming program such as accounts or inventory programs than it is to write something graphical. I know, because I have just

written a considerable chunk of a graphic word processor.

PT: Creative Technology say they are not producing MicroDesign for the machine because of the lack of space on the flash drive. Is there any chance of an upgrade?

CL: The problem is not with the MicroDesign program itself but that there is not really enough flash memory to hold all the font files it would require. A typical font in 10 sizes takes up about 100k of data and that's where the problem lies, because even if they don't do MicroDesign there are loads of people hoping that they will convert the MicroDesign fonts for use in the PCW 16 word processor. This comes back to the argument that there is not enough flash on a standard machine to host the additional fonts.

With this in mind, I understand that Creative have been thinking of getting a hardware company to offer a flash upgrading service. It's actually a really easy upgrade because the empty site for a one megabyte flash is already there on the board. There's also an empty site for another one megabyte of DRAM as well. Anyone armed with a soldering iron could do the upgrade but it's not something that Joe Punter could attempt at home. It will therefore involve sending the whole PCW 16 off to somewhere. This will mean that although there's probably only £20 of components and £10 of engineering time, the job is going to have to sell for £100 to cover all costs and make a very minimal profit. The question is whether anyone would pay. I think not.

I think that Creative's main reason for not doing MicroDesign for the '16 is the economic argument that I've already mentioned. Even with a huge uptake and Betacom having shipped far more PCWs by the time it appeared, it is still questionable whether the program would ever return a profit. There's got to be a whole lot more than one-man-year of work in MicroDesign. The job would be far from a straightforward transfer from CP/M to Roseanne.

EXCLUSIVE: Graphics software for the '16

PCW 16 users could soon be getting all arty when a new graphics package is completed.

Comsoft programmer Rob Buckley is working on a brand new graphics package for the '16. The project which is currently around 20 pc complete, is likely to be marketed through both Comsoft and Creative Technology. Few details are known as yet, but it is hoped that the software will be able to cope with pictures as well as simple line-drawings. If it can, Creative Technology may produce a hand-scanner for use with the package. Nik Holmes of Creative revealed: "A hand-scanner for the machine is a possibility if anyone writes the graphics software for dealing with the images."

However Rob has put the graphics project on a back-burner while he works on another major '16 development. He is currently writing PCW 16 BASIC to make producing software for the '16 much easier. Unlike PhiloSoft's BASIC, this language will only be made available to the developing fraternity. It includes all the OS features such as drop-down menus and dialogue boxes and will be used to write future 16 programs.

Software for the PCW 16 is currently written using a unique compiler that is notoriously hard to use - which is why writers are taking so long to develop programs. With the new BASIC compiler, developing software will become much easier. All Comsoft writers will be given access to the language - which runs on a PC - and in future it may be made available to other programmers. At a later stage Rob aims to convert the new compiler to PCW 16 format so all PCWers can take advantage.

Meanwhile Creative Technology have launched the first '16 software. Account Manager was written by an Amstrad programmer and is a promising start to the new range. It is designed to look and work like the built-in '16 software and can be run either from disc or from the cabinet. Account Manager costs £24.95 and includes a manual. Contact Creative Technology on (01889) 567160.

Also in the pipeline are: Home Inventory, Chess, a communications program for using the internet, Route Planner and a version of Mallard BASIC. Many of these programs are nearing completion, so look out for more news pretty soon.

New BASIC add-on for PCW programmers

A KENT software developer has introduced a major new package, that aims to greatly enhance your Mallard BASIC programs.

BASIC 98 by R.P. Hill is described as an extended BASIC compiler for the Amstrad series. It is in fact, three languages in one. Firstly, it compiles Mallard BASIC programs into executable .COM files that run faster and allow more room for data. It is also an assembler supporting the full Z80 instruction set, including un-published commands. Thirdly, BASIC 98 adds 185 extra commands, functions and commands to the language, giving new features such as improved graphics, direct keyboard access and indexed filing.

The compiler comes with an integrated user-friendly editor, similar in style to LocoScript. There is also a 532k on-disc manual. It is possible to develop the program with the manual on display in the lower half of the screen for easy reference. The editor can edit a file up to 46k in size which it holds in the TPA, making it one of the fastest PCW editors around.

It all adds up to a superb product, available for all PCWs except the '16. The BASIC 98 compiler costs £30 and the BASIC 98 library is £10. For more information or to order, write to R.P. Hill, 84 Wincheap, Canterbury Kent CT1 3RS, tel (01227) 464321. Cheques are payable to: 'Richard Hill'.

NEWS IN BRIEF

Comsoft apologise for RoutePlanner delay

ROUTE Planner for all PCWs has been dogged by massive delays. The programmer involved did not account for the complexity of converting from the CPC version of CP/M. This exciting new product, when it is finally ready should prove to be an invaluable tool for all motorists.

If you have sent a cheque for Route Planner, Comsoft urge you to be patient, a copy of the software will be sent as soon as it is finished. Pestering them with telephone calls does not help.

Repair network swings into action

SD MICROSYSTEMS has launched NARN, the National Amstrad Repair Network. This will be similar to the old Amstrad network of recommended companies. There are already several in the network, but SD Micro would love to have one in each county. For more details, or to recommend a repairer in your area, contact (01953) 483750.

New budget database launched

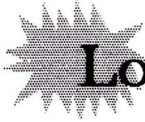
P.D. BLAKE has just launched MasterBase 1, a brand new database in BASIC for the PCW. The program includes a wide selection of databases including a home-inventory and a handy fact-file. And here's the best bit. It costs just £4! For further details contact (01482) 864230 or check-out the review in this issue.

LocoScript 4 is finished at last

LOCOSCRIPT 4 is finally finished. The new word-processor including graphics capabilities has passed the de-bugging process and is on sale now. If you bought an earlier version, you can upgrade for free by returning your master-discs now. Contact (01306) 747757. Watch out for a full review next time.

PCW CLUB NEWS

Find out what's on at your local PCW group



Local Clubs

•Berkshire PCW Users Club

They claim to be the fastest growing PCW club in Britain today, and who's to argue? For £12 a year you get access to an unbeatable range of benefits. The latest edition of PCW-LINK is as usual full of hints and tips, all written in Ed's unique style. Members from anywhere can join as the club welcomes postal members. For further details, contact Ed Harris, 121 Bullbrook Drive, Bracknell, Berks RG12 2QR (01344) 428938.

•Birmingham and West Midlands PCW Club

This thriving club makes no charge for membership, so attendances of 70 or more are not unknown. Each monthly meeting contains talks and software demonstrations, so it's well worth a visit. Contact John Bell on (0121) 4343078.

•Cornwall PCW Club

This strong group produce an excellent newsletter which always contains a tutorial along with club news. The latest edition contains a good guide to templates and stock layouts in LocoScript. Monthly meetings are held on a Saturday. On September 13th, the meeting is entitled "Frightened of CP/M" - John Shipcott will be explaining why you shouldn't be. Then on October 11th, the subject will be word-processing, with all the main packages investigated. For further information, contact John Walker on (01752) 706266

•Crawley PCW Club

Highlight of the July newsletter - which becomes more like a magazine every month - was a quite superb guide entitled "Using the PCW 16". Esther Welch's 12 page tutorial tells you more about the '16 than the entire manual does! The group are currently planning to expand their public domain library and are asking members to share their own software. On September 4th, the group are holding their AGM, when there is a proposed change to the constitution to discuss.

•Devon PCW Club

Another group with a regular newsletter, this South-West group also have an extensive library of books and software available to members. For further details, contact Edward Pooley, Kew Cottage, Birch Lane, Rounswell, Barnstaple, Devon EX31 3RQ, (01271) 327056.

•Hastings and Eastbourne PCW Club

Meetings are held in the Bell Room at St. Peter's Community Centre in Bexhill. There are regular talks and demonstrations, as well as a newsletter. This group has a healthy membership of 30. Contact George Magee on (01323) 833969.

•Hereford Computer Club

This group has various branches each catering for a different computer. Of course the PCW section is a strong one. Membership costs £15 and includes a subscription to Keyboard - the club's multi-format monthly magazine. Meetings are held on the first Wednesday of each month at The Cellar, 41 Widemarsh Street, Hereford. Meetings start at 7pm.

•Kentish PCW Club

Meetings are held on the first Wednesday of each month in the Chapel Hall on Bush Road, Cuxton. Postal members are welcome. Contact Leslie Merchant, 14 Mill Road, Northfleet, Gravesend, (01474) 335882.

•Leeds Amstrad PCW Club

The monthly meetings have a practical basis with demonstrations of various hardware and software. Organiser, Paul Newmark, likes the magazine, but thinks we should use a spell-check a little more liberally - well observed there! For further details, contact Paul Newmark, 18 Claythorpe Road, Leeds LS16 5HW, (0113) 2755576.

•Morley Amstrad PCWers

This club meets in Morley Public Library at 7.30pm on the second Tuesday of every month. Subscription costs £10. The group has a software library and regular newsletter. PC users are welcomed. What!! Contact Frank King on (01924) 430319.

•North Wales Computer Club

New to these listings, the group are strengthening the PCW side of things through a regular newsletter and meetings. For more information, contact Leslie Simpson, Ty Ceiriog, 9 Bryn Rhosyn, Abergele, Conwy LL22 8EZ.

•Perthshire PCW Club

To find out more about Perth's finest, Contact David Paterson, 26 Moulin Crescent, Perth PH1 2EA (01738) 621346.

•RADSTOCK.PCW

One of the newest PCW clubs around, this one was founded by student, Adrian Hooper after his postman queried him on a PCW problem. Meetings are held on the second Friday of each month at the Radstock Methodist Church from 7.30pm. Contact Adrian Hooper, 40 Kilmersdon Road, Haydon, Radstock, Avon BA3 3QN, (01761) 436276.

•Rotherham PCW Club

Another fairly new entry onto the PCW club scene, this group meets on the first Monday of each month at 7.30pm in the Rotherham Transport Club, Union Street, Masborough. New members are very welcome to drop in. Contact E. Chipchase on (01709) 361156.

•SCOTWEST.pcw

The August issue of the strangely named CHR\$(7) newsletter suggests that all may not be well at PCW Today. Apparently it hasn't surfaced since the spring issue!! The newsletter also contains a useful small-ads feature and a free helpline. The group now meet at a new venue - the Eastwood Community Centre. At the meeting on August 9th, there will be a demonstration of Find and Exchange in LocoScript. Contact David Williams on (01698) 732403.

•Somerset PCW Club

The group now welcome PC users as well as PCWers but they are concerned about a falling membership. They also produce a quarterly newsletter. Contact Elsa Turner on (01935) 823618 for further details.

•South Essex PCW Club

The club are getting frustrated that their attempts to form a network of PCW groups are failing in many cases. They have been sending copies of their newsletter to every PCW club in existence. Of those, only 10 reply back with their own newsletter. Membership is now hovering around the 160 mark, with some members dropping out, finding the lure of PCs too strong. On 4th September, this year's AGM takes place, all members are urged to attend. For more details, contact David Lalieu, 10 Sheridan Avenue, Thundersley, Essex SS7 1RD, (01702) 551618.

•Teesside PCW Users Group

It is with great sadness, that members have decided that the group should be brought to an end after seven good years. Subject to a postal vote by all members, the group will be formally closed at the AGM in October. All finances will be given to charity. The club which was formed in 1990 by Gladys Baker has seen the highs and lows of PCWing and it was with much regret that members decided at the last meeting that support was now so low, it is no longer worthwhile continuing. Members have vowed to stick with their PCWs however.

•Thornton PCW Club

The club meets every second Tuesday of the month at the Clevelys Community Centre, Blackpool. Contact Steve at 5 Carlisle Grove, Thornton-Cleveleys, Lancashire FY5 4BY.

•Widmore PCW Club

This group, affiliated to the Bromley Adult Education College may be forced to meet on Saturday mornings, as their usual meeting place will no longer be available following a college re-organisation. A new room must be found elsewhere. Contact Dorothy Featherstone on (01689) 858105.

National Clubs

•Amstrad PCW MicroDesign Club

This is a correspondence based club, formed from the old MicroDesign Essex group. Membership includes a monthly newsletter - MicroDesigner UK which is jammed full of MicroDesign news and features. Members also have access to a clip-art catalogue. Anybody from anywhere is welcome to join. Contact Graham Arnold on (01392) 213250 for further details.

•Independent 8 Bit Association

This national user group has just been relaunched to provide a contact and support group for users of all 8 Bit computers, including of course the PCW. IEBA works to publicise the practical and economical advantages of using the classic computers. The association is to be publicised through local and national media and negotiations are underway for a regular radio spot for users in the South-East. The first project is a regular 8 Bit directory. Registration costs £5. Contact Brian Watson, "Harrowden", 39 High Street, Sutton-in-the-Isle, Ely CB6 2RA.

•National PCW Teachers Helpline

Teachers with PCWing problems should call Steve Garrill on (01253) 343029. This group no-longer run a newsletter.

•MicroDesign International User Group

It only costs £8 to subscribe for a year. Members receive the regular Design Tree magazine which includes items of general PCW interest is not entirely DTP dominated. There is also a huge clip-art and fonts library available to members, plus a 10 pc discount on MD3. Contact Doug Cox, 132 Adelaide Grove, East Cowes, Isle of Wight PO32 6DF (01983) 296366.

Magazines

•The Disc Drive

Not a sign of the Summer issue anywhere - yet I know it has come out. Was it something we said? Still I understand that as usual there are over 30 pages of top quality content, written by a variety of writers. The magazine is now firmly established as one of the top PCW magazines around. For a subscription form or further details, contact secretary - David Lalieu at: 10 Sheridan Avenue, Thundersley, Essex SS7 1RD, (01702) 551618.

•PC Mart

What! A PC Magazine covering PCWs, surely not! Yet it is true, PC Mart, a fortnightly news-stand publication now has

a Classic Computer Column and over the past months the PCW has featured fairly heavily. We've seen reviews of Instant Recall and some SD MicroSystems products. There was even a feature on Amstrad magazines, including this one. A good policy is to flick through the mag at the newsagents, to see if there is anything PCW related, before you buy a copy, although it does just cost 95p an issue.

•8 Bit

Issue 17 is a no-ads special and is therefore absolutely crammed with features. On the PCW side, there are two reviews of LocoScript 4. There's also an exclusive interview with Cliff Lawson of Amstrad - Wait a minute, doesn't that sound a little familiar! Other articles include the history

of 8 Bit and an introduction to CP/M Plus. As always it's a good buy, but be warned this magazine is for all 8-Bit users, not just PCWers. Contact Brian Watson, "Harrowden", 39 High Street, Sutton-in-the-Isle, Ely, Cambs CB6 2RA (01353) 777006.

If you have any club news, we would be grateful if you would send us it. Increasing the interaction between clubs will help to keep the clubs alive and of course, prolong the life of the PCW. Also, if there is any group we have missed, please let us know. Drop us a line at: Club News, PCW Today, 150 Oxford Road, Middlesbrough, Teesside TS5 5EL. Or e-mail us at: pcwtoday@hotmail.com

Multi-coloured labels

Monica Dickerson puts SD MicroSystem's Super Labeller to the test

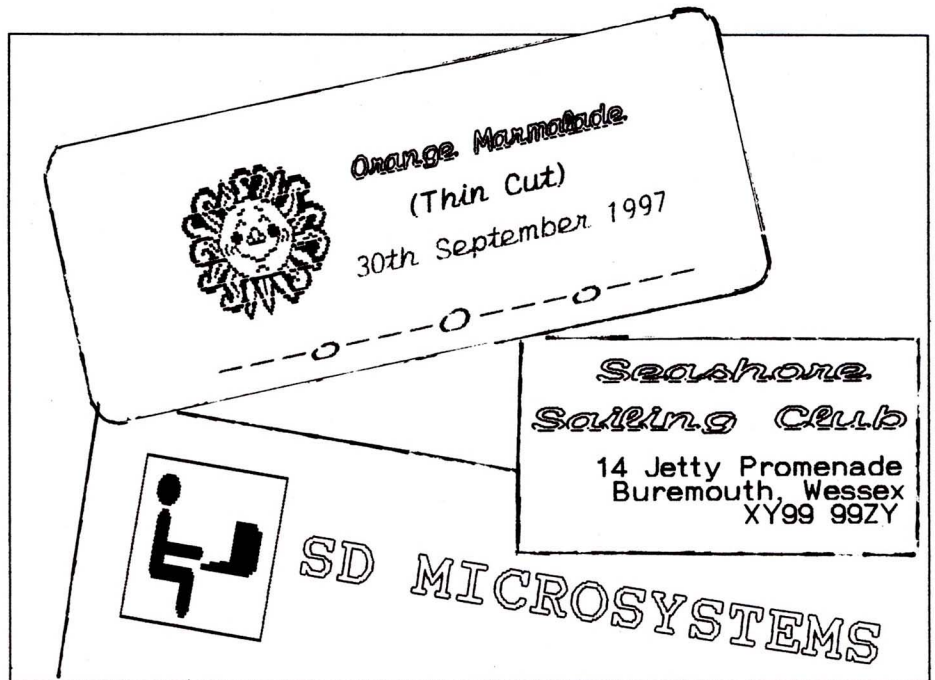
THE PCW has come a long way since it was first marketed as a replacement typewriter, and the graphics capabilities are recognised in a variety of programs. Super Labeller is a gem of a program which utilises both aspects in a special way. A basic PCW with monochrome printer cannot do it full justice, but even so, the output of a label with a chosen picture is exciting.

The print-outs of small pictures and up to ten lines of text alongside - in mixed colours if required when a colour printer is available - are worth the travail of coming to grips with the program. As a seasoned LocoScript user, I probably found it more difficult to obtain quickly the results I sought, but I did achieve very satisfactory output.

The manual explains how to create the essential working copy disc. On booting-up the program, the next step is to check that your printer is going to cooperate. Again this is explained, although I was thrown by the implied menu selection from <1-0> when there was only <1> and <2> on screen. Because I was not using the bundled 9-pin printer I saved my chosen Printer driver, so now my disc is self-booting to my system and printer.

There are a number of sample labels on the supplied disc and it is worthwhile loading and looking at two or three of these in turn. Printing each one out (use scrap paper) to get the feel of the program involves going through the intermediate stages. First, choose and load a graphic <3>. The graphic indicates what has been chosen before and offers the option to change this - otherwise just type the name shown.

Now enter the Edit Label option <2> and with the text of the label displayed press [EXIT] for "no change". You are then into the part where you can alter the printer codes. Press [ENTER] ten times to keep the codes as set. You are returned to the opening menu. Now, to print the label, choose <4>.



The first time round it may be necessary to check that the printing choices are what you want, particularly whether you are using a 9 or 24 pin printer. After that, pressing [COPY] after <4> is a handy shortcut.

A visual impression of what appears on screen compared with what comes out on paper is worth several pages of instructions, and there is a range of labels to get you started. The program is not really designed, I suspect, for one-off labels, but I used it for some jam labels - where the colour facility was most impressive. It may have even helped sales at our village fund-raising. I am hoping that SD MicroSystems will soon produce some graphics more suitable for jam and marmalade! I have other labels set up for a letter-heading and return-address for the back of envelopes (which should please the Post Office).

The graphics, even in monochrome, are an attractive distinction, but in colour yet more so.

Called "Super Labeller", with a limit of ten close lines of print, it is none the less possible to stretch the width of text beyond the 3½" standard label - though this ambition does require several in-roads into

that pile of scrap paper. There is also a useful screen-saver built in, which in my case worked when I was looking-up specific codes in the manual.

The inexpensive price of Super Labeller also includes helpful support from the suppliers. Verdict: A super program that lives up to its name

Super Labeller is available from - SD MicroSystems, PO Box 24, Attleborough, Norfolk NR17 1HL, (01953) 483750 - it comes on 3" or 3.5" disc for all PCWs except the '16. The good news is that the price has just been reduced to a bargain £15.95 all inclusive. There is also a new bundle deal available which includes the Citizen ABC 24 pin printer. Give them a ring for more information.

Super Labeller

Price £15.95 Company SD MicroSystems
Telephone (01953) 483750

Ease of use	●●●●○
Features	●●●●○
Documentation	●●●●○
Value for money	●●●●○
PCW Today Rating	○●●●○

No cross words here

THE VERY fact that Brian Dorricott was one of the programmers on the PCW 16 project should be enough to convince you that he is a highly accomplished writer. Should you require further evidence, one glance at Crossword Maker will wash away any doubts.

Crossword Maker and its sister, Word Search Maker are two superb products. Within half an hour you will be producing your own puzzles. Perhaps not quite up to the standard of The Times, but the fact that they are your own make them all the more appealing.

So down to the basics. Crossword Maker cuts dramatically the time it takes to produce a crossword. Any of you who produce puzzles for a local magazine may have tried it before by hand and given it up as a bad job.

This package gives you two different ways to produce your crossword. You can either produce a professional looking puzzle, where you select words to fit a template, or if you are lazy, or in a rush, you can use the quick way. I would definitely choose the slightly trickier professional option. This gives the diagonally symmetrical effect you find in newspapers.

You can create crosswords that are up to 28 by 28 squares in size. You have complete control over the development of the crossword, designing the template and the clues. These can be written in a word-processor and imported if you don't trust your spelling. If you don't want to have a go at designing a template, there are 20 provided to be going on with.

User friendly 'context help' gives details when they are needed, if the comprehensive manual cannot assist. There are so many little touches included and they are what make the program so good. For instance, the words and clues are automatically numbered, partially completed puzzles can be saved so that you can return to them later and Crossword Maker automatically keeps track of clues.

The package is fully Network compatible, and when used with this, it is incredibly easy to drop the finished crosswords into MicroDesign. If you wish, the crosswords can also be saved as a LocoScript file and printed out from there. Or of course, you can print straight from Crossword Maker. Undoubtedly, the best results are achieved when printed in MicroDesign.

Crossword Maker also includes an

anagram generator, which will produce partial or true anagrams. Also included is a huge word-file just in case you are stuck for a word to put in a specific place. The words in the file have been compressed to about 35 pc of their original size, hence saving a huge amount of space.

Now that the South Essex PCW Club hold the rights to produce Brian Dorricott's PCW software, they have decided to throw Word Search Maker on to the same disc. However it is far from being a freebie thrown in as an after-thought. This is an entirely separate piece of software, coming with its own manual. Obviously, the program is not as complex, basically because word-searches are not as difficult to produce.

There is on-line help and puzzles can again be imported into MicroDesign. Up to 58 words can be entered into each puzzle.

Together, the two programs make an amazing deal. At a dramatically reduced price of £25, you can't go wrong. Verdict: An excellent product that's good fun too.

Contact: "Four Winds", 10 Sheridan Avenue, Thundersley, Essex SS7 1RD, (01702) 551618. For 3" discs, provide your own.

A database for £4!

MASTERBASE is the latest addition to P.D. Blake's software collection and his first departure from adventure games. It is an unusual piece of software in that it is incredibly comprehensive in some areas, but remarkably skimpy in others. However with the promise of a second version soon, hopefully the holes will be filled. And if they are, this could become one of the best budget databases around.

The thing that immediately strikes you about MasterBase, is the immense variety of databases. In fact 18 in all, including diaries, address books, a notepad, a home inventory, a factfile and three multi-

purpose databases. These are fairly self explanatory except for the factfile. This contains facts and useful information on a variety of subjects. Extra factfiles should be made available in the future on subjects as diverse as history and MicroDesign.

Another strength of MasterBase are the screen savers, all 19 of them! Each menu has a different one built in with a variety of scrolling pretty patterns, which do get a bit irritating after a while.

The actual databases are very easy to use and considering the program is written in BASIC, they are surprisingly fast too. Once you have installed BASIC onto the disc (CP/M is already there) MasterBase

will auto-boot. It is then just a case of following the menus and instructions on screen. There is a limited manual on disc, but it is not really needed. You can print out any entry you select, to produce labels and the like.

So what are the downfalls of the program? Well it is not currently possible to scroll through entries in a list. Instead, you must type exactly the correct keyword, to access each file. You cannot sort them alphabetically, or print them out one after the other.

MasterBase costs just £4 plus a 3.5" disc. Contact P.D. Blake, 32 Sample Avenue, Beverley HU17 9DW, (01482) 864230.

Keyboard quick-steps

Speed up your PCWing with our guide to keyboard short cuts

A LARGE number of computer users have learnt that the mouse is a gimmick, put on your desk-top to slow you down. Many people hardly ever use their mouse, preferring instead to use the good-old keyboard. For some inexplicable reason, the writers of the PCW 16 manual failed to print listings of all the short-cut key-combinations in one place but instead

scattered them in what is seemingly an illogical order throughout the full length and breadth of the volume.

This predictably leads to repeated and frantic thumbing through that already worn pages to try and find the correct time-saving combination, wasting more time and defeating the object.

Well, in order to save you all that hassle, here's our guide to some of the most useful key combinations in the word processor. We've even stuck in a couple that did not make the manual. It may be a good idea to keep this page close at hand, when typing. You could even pin it on the wall next to the computer for easy reference. Or of course, you could learn it all off-by-heart!

STYLE AND FORMAT

[F1]	Left Aligned
[F2]	Centred
[F3]	Right Aligned
[F4]	Justified
[F5] or [CTRL]+[B]	Bold
[F6] or [CTRL]+[I]	Italic
[F7] or [CTRL]+[U]	Underline

SELECTING TEXT

[CTRL]+[M]	Marks start
[CTRL]+[D]	Marks end
[CTRL]+[W]	Selects whole document
[CTRL]+[X]	Cut selection to scratch-pad
[CTRL]+[C]	Copy selection to scratch-pad
[CTRL]+[V]	Paste from scratch-pad
[CTRL]+[DEL]	Delete from scratch-pad
[CTRL]+[F]	Find text
[CTRL]+[R]	Find and replace text

PRINTING

[CTRL]+[P]	Print document
[TASK]+[D]then[V]	Print preview
[PRINT SCREEN]	Grabs a screen shot
[SHIFT]+[PRINT SCREEN]	As above but works when computer has crashed

MOVING AROUND DOCUMENT

[PAGE DOWN]	Moves down one screen
[PAGE UP]	Moves up one screen
[CTRL]+[PAGE DOWN]	Moves down one page
[CTRL]+[PAGE UP]	Moves up one page
[HOME]	Moves to beginning of line
[END]	Moves to end of line
[CTRL]+[HOME]	Moves to beginning of document
[CTRL]+[END]	Moves to end of document

GENERAL

[INSERT]	Deletes as you write
[CTRL]+[O]	A temporary version of the above
[TASK]+[D]then[W]	Word count
[TASK]+[I]then[P]	End page
[TASK]+[S]then[L]	Larger font
[TASK]+[S]then[S]	Smaller font

SAVING AND QUITTING

[F8]	Save and Continue
[BLUE] or [CTRL]+[S]	Start new doc
[YELLOW] or [CTRL]+[E]	Edit existing doc
[RED]	Quit to main menu without saving

FILE MANAGER

[TASK]+[X]	Turns off system-folder protection so you can erase individual important files. Use with caution
[TASK]+[#]	Categorises file types, grouping matches
[TASK]+[M]	Switches off the PCW disc directory reverting to the standard DOS
[TASK]+[R]	Reveals the hidden suffix to files
[TASK]+[UNDO]	This will format the cabinet!
[TASK]+[P]	This removes all temporary files
[TASK]+[H]	This reveals the hidden files, however beware, they are hidden for a reason.

AND FINALLY

If you would like to find out the names of those people behind your PCW, they have hidden a credits message on your help screen, there is also a nice bit of PCW sound, that you will not hear anywhere else.

Press [HELP] to enter the help screen, then type:

ANNE TEAM

The writing will not appear on your screen, so make sure you spell it correctly. Interestingly, Alan Sugar is listed as a Designer! So even the big boss was involved in the creation of your PCW!



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CrossWord Maker

Brian Dorricott's acclaimed software now at radically reduced prices. Normally available on 3.5" DSDD (720k) discs (3.0: you supply your own identified and formatted disc) Control disk contains Crossword V2, Word Search Generator, Word File Manager and Word File No:1. Price: £25:00. (Price includes a set of manuals.) Four other Word Files including one in German and French. Price £5:00 each.

South Essex PCW Club.
"Four Winds", 10 Sheridan Avenue, Thundersley, Essex
SS7 1RD. Tele: (01702) 551618.

THE Tipsters

A BASIC SCREEN-SAVER FOR CP/M?

THE FOLLOWING BASIC listing may be of interest to some of your readers. It completely blanks out the screen while the operator goes for a coffee break or something and avoids the dreaded 'screen burn'. It can be incorporated into a main menu for a larger program or it will stand alone.

Line 15 sets up the cursor ready to print at point a,b and line 16 enables the cursor and status line. If the routine is incorporated in a larger program, line 90 can be amended to read RUN "menu", which will take it back to the main program menu.

Peter Evans, Alnwick

```

5 REM Routine to clear Basic screen
10 c$=CHR$(27)+"E"+CHR$(27)+"H"
15 m$=CHR$(27)+"H"+CHR$(27)+"Y"
16 PRINT CHR$(27)+"I"+CHR$(27)+"e"
40 PRINT c$:a=10:b=30:GOSUB 100:PRINT"To return to main menu press any key"
50 FOR i=1 TO 3000:NEXT
60 PRINT c$:a=10:b=40:GOSUB 100:PRINT"GOODBYE"
70 FO i=1 TO 3000:NEXT:PRINT CHR$(27)+"Q"+CHR$(27)+"f"+c$
80 q$=INPUT$(1):WHILE q$="" :WEND
90 RUN
100 PRINT m$;CHR$(32+a);CHR$(32+b);:RETURN
    
```

DISC SOLUTIONS

IN ISSUE five, I noted that your correspondent Geoffrey Hayes of Cheshire asked for a source of single disc cases. CLP Computer Supplies have such a thing in their catalogue priced at £4.99 for 10. Their address is: Unit 7/8 Holland Way, Blandford, Dorset DT11 7TA (01258) 459544.

Peter Gough, Cardiff

To Geoffrey Hayes: The 3½" Diskette Protectors you seek are available from: Viking Direct, Bursom Industrial Park, Tollwell Road, Leicester LE4 1BR. Freephone 0800 424445. The part number is G33-PROTECTOR and they are sold in packs of 10 at £7.70 per pack. BUT they charge a handing/delivery cost of £2.90 for orders less than £30.

Keith J Bull, Westcliff-on-Sea

On your Doctor Disc page, Geoffrey Hayes of Cheshire asks about single disc cases. They are available from WH Smith and I find them to be very satisfactory although in 12 months the price has jumped from about 50p to just over £1.

Ronald Shadbolt, Waltham Abbey

WINDOWS IN CP/M

IT IS possible to have text windows in CP/M (PCW Plus, Jan 96, p23 said you couldn't). The method is simple - type the following in Mallard BASIC:

```
PRINT chr$(27)+"X"+chr$(32+T)+chr$(32+L)+chr$(31+H)+chr$(31+W)
```

T is the top row (0-32)
L is the left column (0-90)

H is the height (1-32)
W is the width (1-90)

Alternatively you could try:

```
PRINT chr$(27)+"X"+chr$(32+10)+chr$(32+40)+chr$(31+10)+chr$(31+10)
```

To reset the screen to it's normal window just type

```
PRINT chr$(27)+"y"
```

Kit McKenzie, Congleton

LOCOSCRIPT HELPLINE BEATEN!

IF ANY of your readers have fitted a rampac with a centronic interface and found that LocoScript 4 doesn't recognise the centronic port - try ticking the CPS 8256 option in the Setting Standard.

Even the LocoScript helpline doesn't know this one. They insisted my rampac was faulty, even though MD3 was printing out through the centronic port OK.

Ron Briggs, Sidcup

BEGINNER'S BASIC

TO THOSE who are trying BASIC programming for the first time, apart from recommending they also buy the Mallard Basic manual from LocoScript Software, I would like to offer the following tips:

- a) Before typing some of the larger example programs published in the manual, check the program listing doesn't already exist as a file on the working copy of your CP/M Plus master disc.
- b) Save any exercises, trials and saved programs on CP/M formatted discs kept especially for Mallard BASIC programming. Pressing ALT and P will send anything you type to the printer (remember to press ALT and P again when finished), this saves laboriously writing notes and listings - they will all be printed out for you.
- c) Remember to jot down details such as the file-names, function, disc numbers and where in the manual (or other source) the listings and notes relate to. You could even add a REM line to each listing to remind you where further details can be found. Save these notes together in a folder. Add to the folder any screen-dumps taken (press EXTRA and tap PTR - first making certain there is paper in the printer).
- d) Saving systematically and cross-referencing carefully while working through the manual will make it easier to understand BASIC programming and soon you will be creating your own BASIC programs. Such folders should prove very useful to refer back to in future programming.

Rod Shinkfield, Chorley

MULTI-DRIVE SWITCH

JUST a note on Rod Shinkfield's tip on LocoScript group switching (spring issue). Rod's method is fine if you have only an A: and M: drive. However, if you have several, for example a B: drive and a Flash drive in addition to the A: and M:, then you might care to try the following:

Cursor to File and press [f3], [ENTER], [ENTER]. Cursor down one dialogue box and if necessary change the name of the group. Cursor down one more and change the drive letter, then [ENTER]. If you get an error message that there is an existing file of that name, then you should press [ENTER] again to over-write.

Bill Heilbronn, Leamington Spa

STACKING UP THOSE PHRASES

TWO FILES with the same name cannot occupy the same group. One file will have to be re-named. Rather than change the whole file-name, which may need typing in again, deleting the initial letter will be enough, ie, TEMPLATE.STD, EMLATE.STD.

Why? Well, to move a TEMPLATE.STD to another disc it must first be moved onto drive M:. If a TEMPLATE.STD already occupies drive M: overwriting will occur. Deleting the initial letter prevents this from happening. Simply replace the 'T' before removing the EMLATE.STD onto the new disc.

If the initial letter 'T' was changed to an A, B, C, etc. you could stack as many nEMPLATE.STDs as you wish in the same group, though this would not be very practical - or would it?

PHRASES.STD is another standard file which could be used in this 'stacking' way. For instance, adding a letter A to PHRASES.STD (making it read

APHRASES.STD) could have a particular address saved to each phrase-code letter. BPHRASES.STD could have scientific notations and signs. CPHRASES.STD could have LocoScript styling codes and so on. Such a collection of nPHRASES.STD could be kept on a special disc and called up by the loading phrases operation. For, despite adding another initial letter, the loading of each PHRASE.STD is unaffected. When APHRASES.STD was tried, LocoScript was happy to load it up as though it was a normal PHRASES.STD.

Loading phrases in this way would overwrite any PHRASES.STD previously loaded on booting up, or any nPHRASES.STD previously in use, yet all will sit happily together in the same group, provided the initial letter is different.

By keeping a printed list of which nPHRASES.STD holds what phrases, it would be easy to choose the right one to load and so cover any permutation of phrases you are ever likely to

ASCII WIPE-OUT

CHANGING a LocoScript document to ASCII and inserting it back again, wipes out all styling codes, and clears out

headers and footers too. A quick way to wipe-out unwanted styling codes before re-styling a long document.

HACKING INTO LOCO 4 (TUT TUT!)

HAVING recently taken delivery of LocoScript 4 and using Flipper most of the time, I have reduced the motor run-time by hacking into the .EMS file. 'Run

on' is reduced from 10 to about 4 seconds as a result. If any reader is interested in doing the same as me, addresses to look for are:

J404LOCO.EMS

0A 32 AF 0F using SUPERZAP at sector 4D - Address 26D5 Change the 42 to 14 Using SID the address will &H100 higher at 36D5

Others are:

J302LOCO.EMS

**S/Zap
SID**

**Sector 80 -Address 4066
Address 4166**

J15CPM3.EMS

**S/Zap
SID**

**Sector S4D - Address 26D5
Address 36D5**

J14CPM3.EMS

**The string is
S/Zap
SID**

**0A 32 AF 1E
Sector 18 - Address 0C40
Address 0D40**

In all cases change 30 to 14 but make sure you work with a copy! the changes are easily made using SUPERZAP.CPM (public domain) which has an excellent search facility, or SID.COM, which is a

little more difficult to use.

Only give this a go if you are relatively experienced. Any problems, give me a ring, evenings at (0151) 2261163.

John Magee, Liverpool

The PCW Awards 1997

The second annual PCW Today awards is this year voted by you

THE TROPHIES have been polished, the champagne is chilling in the icebox, the votes are in and the counting is over. Now we can reveal your verdict on the PCW players of the year.

For the first time, you have had your say and over the last couple of months we've had the pleasure of sifting through your nominations. While we could have sat here and given a high and mighty verdict, it's

you, the readers, who actually have to go out and buy from the companies and it is you who has to live with what you buy. That's why your opinion is so important and why we are so delighted that so many of you responded to our call to vote in the PCW Today Awards 1997.

Last issue, we published a nominations form, where you could judge a winner in each of our seven different categories. All

these forms have been processed by our millennium super-computer, well an 8256 actually, and we have the results.

Remember, these are the only PCW awards, and the first ever PCW magazine awards to be voted by the public. And you can be sure the industry really do care what you think. So sit back and find out who's won. If you disagree, you'll have a chance to make your vote heard next year.



PCW TODAY



Best Customer Service

Winner: SD MicroSystems
Last year: Creative Technology

"Very friendly" is how one reader described winners, SD MicroSystems, and most of you seemed to agree. Almost two times as many people voted for Steve Denson's Norfolk company as voted for its nearest rival, LocoScript Software.

SD MicroSystems operate a unique PCW user support group, which immediately puts it a rung higher up the ladder than the rest. Members of the group receive a regular newsletter, software support, discounts and a subscription to PCW Today.

People who buy from SD MicroSystems also receive unbeatable after-sales support, the company is always willing to give friendly advice over the 'phone.

There is a policy of constantly developing products and services. Prices are often cut and new deals introduced. The company also continue to add to their already extensive range. Throughout last year, they were producing more new software than any other PCW company.

For a catalogue, contact: SD MicroSystems, PO Box 24, Attleborough, Norfolk NR17 1HL, (01953) 483750.

Best New Product

Winner: LocoScript 4
Last year: Insight 1

You could say that LocoScript's latest word-processor had an easy ride to victory in the best new product award, as the only other real contender - Route Planner - is still not finished.

Amazingly though, just our preview was enough for many people and Route Planner still put up a strong fight, with plenty of votes.

In the end though, LocoScript 4 walked away with a huge lead and deservedly so. The software is a result of some massive development and LocoScript Software can only be commended for taking what was probably something of a risk. It paid off in a major way and thousands of copies have been snapped up. In fact, Loco 4 has been such a success that there is already talk of a fifth version.

It took some skilled programming to yet more features into a product that many had thought was already stretching the PCW to its limits. How they did it, we don't know, but the finished product is sheer brilliance.

LocoScript 4 costs £39.95 and is available from LocoScript Software, 10 Vincent Works, Dorking RH4 3HJ, (01306) 747757.

Best Word Processor

Winner: LocoScript 4
Last year: Protex/Loco 3 joint winners

In last year's awards we said: "For the first time in the history of the PCW it has become impossible to separate the big two word processors." Well sadly for Comsoft, the launch of LocoScript 4 means that Protex has been left behind once again.

Who would have thought that we would have a version of LocoScript for the PCW that at last prints in columns, can produce multi-coloured documents and can cope even cope with scaleable graphics and fonts.

Loco 4 has been a knock-out success, it has even beaten the expectations of LocoScript themselves. At an upgrade price of just £19.95, the word processor is not only a triumph of programming, it is also excellent value.

This year's award saw an intriguing battle between LocoScript 3 and LocoScript 4. Protex, in truth, was no-where to be seen. Next year we are predicting that almost all PCWers will have opted for Loco 4 and LocoScript 3 will probably have been more or less forgotten, such is the way of the computer world.

Contact: LocoScript Software, 10 Vincent Works, Dorking RH4 3HJ, (01306) 747757.

Best Hardware Product Top PCW Company

Winner: Cirtech Flash Drive
Last year: CT Keymouse

The innovative modern technology that makes up Cirtech's unique Flash Drive helped it to beat off some stiff competition from the Pinboard disc drives.

When it was launched a couple of years back, the Flash Drive caused a sensation and it is still changing the PCWing habits of people discovering its benefits for the first time.

This amazing piece of hardware comes in a box that is plugged directly into the expansion port at the back of the PCW. It is deceptively small, considering the power of the thing. LocoScript and CP/M start-up discs can be stored on the drive and then accessed almost instantly. It is also possible to store fonts, templates, phrases and any other commonly used files on the disc for quick access.

The Flash Drive is silent, comes with either one or two mega-bytes of memory and is superb value for money too. In fact it will be hard to beat.

The full product costs just £65 or £95 and is available from Cirtech, Monksford Stables, Newtown St Boswells, Melrose TD6 0RU, (01835) 823898.

Best Value for Money

Winner: MicroDesign 3
Last year: Protext

MicroDesign ran away with this one, despite being one of the most expensive pieces of PCW software around. This probably tells you something about the quality of the desktop publisher. Creative charged £75 for it when it first came out and got away with it. MicroDesign is quite simply stunning value for money.

Just how Creative Technology's programmers stuffed so much onto one disc is a mystery. The equivalent PC programs often cost 10 times as much, so £49.95 does not sound too much!

MicroDesign 3 is on sale from Creative Technology, 10 Park Street, Uttoxeter, Staffs ST14 7AG, (01889) 567160.

Winner: LocoScript Software
Last year: N/A

Quite simply they are the biggest, they sell the most software, have been around the longest and make the most money. To many people, LocoScript are as much a part of the PCW as Amstrad are. However, they had to fight to win this award. Both Creative Technology and SD MicroSystems came extremely close, but LocoScript pipped them at the post.

LocoScript now sell the widest range of PCW produce through the pages of their impressive glossy catalogues. With the recent launch of the fourth version of LocoScript, they are big on the development front too. The company are also helping out with the PCW 16 too, providing the helpline for users of the new computer. They simply had to win!

LocoScript can be found at 10 Vincent Works, Dorking RH4 3HJ, (01306) 747757.

No. 1 PCW Product

Winner: MicroDesign 3
Last year: MicroDesign 3

Numerous nominations flooded in for this, the premier PCW award. The PCW 16 was a popular choice, as was the Flash Drive and LocoScript 4. The Network, a brilliant piece of software that never really took off, also attracted some votes. But in the end, there could be no other winner. As yet, no-one has managed to match the sheer brilliance of MicroDesign 3.

It is truly the ultimate PCW product and there are few, if any faults. Many PC users stick with their PCW

simply because of MicroDesign. Here at PCW Today, we prefer to use MicroDesign to the pricey PC alternatives when producing the magazine. In many ways it is more versatile and better written.

If you ever need a reason to stick with the PCW, let it be MicroDesign, software that was way ahead of its time in user-friendly publishing. If you haven't got it. Why?

MicroDesign 3 costs £49.95 from Creative Technology, 10 Park Street, Uttoxeter, Staffs ST14 7AG, (01889) 567160.

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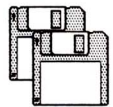
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PD Blake, 32 Sample Avenue, Beverly, E. Yorks HU17 9DW. Tel: 01482 864230

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*"If you are really serious about LocoScript, take a look at Instant Recall." PCW Plus
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COMPETITION

We have gathered together a collection of great software - you could win the lot

FOR THE summer we are bringing you our best-ever competition. You have the chance to win some superb top software titles for all models of PCW including the '16!

Our bundle includes MasterBase, the newest PCW database and you can find out all about it in the review in this issue, you can be one of the very first people to own a copy.

Then we've got a selection of games

including Trivia Quiz, a brilliant multiple choice challenge. We've also got Quattris, an excellent implementation of the classic game - Tetris, and Post Haste, an hilarious platform game. To round off the amazing selection, we've got a disc full of MicroDesign graphics.

For PCW 16 users, we have a copy of Finance Manager from Creative Technology. Sort out your money-problems with this superb package, worth almost £25.

To enter, simply answer the following question: Why is the PCW 16 so called? Send your answer on the back of a postcard to the usual address, stating your model of computer and disc size. In the case of a tie, a draw will be held.

The winner of the Winter internet book competition was Paul French of Essex. And lucky Pat Hill of Preston won £20 of cash in the Spring PCW awards competition for correctly predicting all the winners - shown on page 16 of this issue.

Searchin' The Coasters did it, the Hollies did it ...and so can you.

Music-mad David Landers goes on the search of easier LocoScripting

THE ABILITY to search for a piece of text, and replace it, (if required) with something else, is fundamental to any word processing program. Here's a guide to exploiting the powerful 'Find' and 'Exchange' facilities offered by LocoScript 2, 3 and 4.

The simpler process is initiated at any point in an edit by pressing [FIND]. A menu drops down with its top line highlighted, and a cursor in place, ready for a 'search string' of up to 30 characters to be typed in. This can be any combination of letters, numbers, spaces and punctuation marks - including [RETURN], [TAB] and the [ALT] versions of both these. Once the search is set in motion, the edit text - forwards from the position where [FIND] was pressed - will be scanned for that pattern.

Don't Leave Me This Way

Hitting [ENTER] after completing the <Find> line confirms the entire menu and starts the search off on its default settings - which may not be what you want. So press the down-cursor key instead to drop the highlighted bar into the central box. This part of the menu offers three options which together specify the precise search conditions.

The first option, "Ignore case" is already ticked as a default. This means that a match will be signalled even when the edit text has a different mix of upper/lower case letters to that of the search string. Thus, any variation on abba in the search string, (abba Abba ABBA etc.) would find any abba variation in the text - but the real intention is to find a word regardless of whether or not it is starting a sentence.

All I Want Is You

On the other hand, if case is critical the search string must feature the exact characters that are to be located, and the tick alongside "Ignore case" has to be

removed. Continuing the pop music theme, try finding Van Morrison's old band - Them. On default setting - even if you type the search string with an initial capital letter - LocoScript disregards this and stops each time it encounters the pronoun - them. In this instance, clearing "Ignore case" guarantees success, because an objective pronoun cannot be the first word of a sentence.

Options are set and cleared officially by pressing the [+] and [-] set/clear keys but the space-bar toggles the selection and is far more convenient. You can move between lines within the central box by pressing I, L or U (although with only three options, this is not much faster than the cursor keys).

"Look for whole words", the second option sounds self-explanatory. No tick here and Jam in the top line would also find

“ Press F and ...oops, back to the top line of the menu. ”

the Jammers and the RamJam Band; but by setting this option, Wilson Pickett won't be confused with Pickettywitch. Pickett, Pickett, Pickett. Pickett! Pickett? and Pickett' are all found by the Pickett string as "whole words" - yet 'Pickett' would be missed because of that initial inverted comma. Pickett's would also be ignored. So looking for whole words turns out to be less obvious than it might seem at first sight.

Wild Thing

"Wild cards" are authorised by the final option. The idea of certain characters

standing in for other characters may already be familiar from some CP/M programs, but only one wildcard type is recognised here. ? stands for any single character, space or punctuation mark (including a [RETURN] etc.). It can be used more than once in the search string, however.

Looking for Streisand and not sure if you always spelled the name correctly? Str??sand would find her, whether the text read Streisand or Striesand - but it would not find Strisand. When wild cards are used in the search string always remember to tick the option - otherwise the question marks are taken literally and a lengthy, fruitless search will ensue.

Options set and ready to go. Press F for "Find next" and... oops, back to the top line of the menu! In fact, this is a handy jump when the search string needs amending - there is never actually any need to move down to "Find next", as this is permanently set: [ENTER] commences the search from any menu position.

If necessary, leave the menu by pressing [CAN]. This puts everything on hold and allows the document's edit cursor to be moved. [FIND], [ENTER] then triggers the search with the chosen menu setup still intact.

Start Me Up

[ENTER] is not the only trigger key. [PAGE] and [PARA] can also be used and will limit the search to those specific sections of the text; the exact length of the search can be fine-tuned by pressing [PAGE] and/or [PARA] the required number of times. A page-by-page search is worth considering - it lets you check the text for incorrectly typed words that might be missed by the search string.

To resume the search after stopping - or after LocoScript finds a match - just press [FIND], [ENTER] (or [FIND], [PAGE] etc. as appropriate). Provided they are not

deliberately changed, all menu details remain valid until the end of the edit - unless you "Save and Continue" part way through. This wipes everything clean, unfortunately.

Once the search is finished, there is no built-in facility for returning to the edit point from which you started. So memorise the page number and jump back via [f5]. Or if the exact position is important, type in a unique character sequence (like \$\$\$) beforehand, go back to the start of the document with [ALT] + [DOC], then search forward for \$\$\$.

Unique characters have other uses. They can be put into the edit text as an alternative to (UniT) markers and 'Find' then becomes a rapid method of locating particular passages at a later time. The ALT keyboard gives a wide range of characters that are unlikely to feature elsewhere and the search string accepts these 9plus EXTRA and 'Keyboard Supershift' characters) but do not forget to remove them before printing. How? By using 'Exchange' of course.

From A Jack to A King

The 'Exchange' menu (press [SHIFT] + [FIND] to access it) is essentially an expanded version of 'Find'. In fact, the first line actually is 'Find', and will display the last search time when a match is found, the search string pattern is stripped from the edit text. Its place will be taken by whatever appears in the second line: the

“ memorise the page number and jump back... ”

replacement string. So to remove a word (or words) from the document, type those characters into the <Find:> slot and leave <Exch:> empty. Bear in mind that you will normally need to remove a [SPACE] along with the word itself.

There is an extra option now of 'Preserve Case'. Whereas 'Ignore case' meant that the

search-string and the edit text need not have the same upper/lower case pattern to form a match, 'Preserve case' means that (with certain provisos) the case of the replacement string will be altered to match that of the edit. In other words, LocoScript tries to preserve the case of the edit text - NOT that of the strings in the menu slots. This, again is to cover any start-of-sentence situations.

Bend Me Shape Me

With 'Ignore case' and 'Preserve case' both set (as per default), <Find: Police> and <Exch: Specials> gives these results according to the text's case:

The case of first and last letters is always preserved. However, as the final substitutions demonstrate, middle letters of the inserted word won't be upper case unless the word found in the text was entirely upper case.

In practice, there are not many occasions when a word contains mixed case middle letters. But if we were changing the Poni-Tails to the Shangri-Las, it would be done by clearing the 'Preserve case' option and typing precisely the correct characters into the lower slot. Since it is possible that the Poni-Tails might have been mis-typed in the text as Poni-tails, leaving 'Ignore case' set would give the required substitution in either instance.

What'd I Say

Exchanging multi-word strings can be used as a kind of short-hand, in a process that is analogous to pasting phrases. Rather than interrupt the creative flow to check the exact wording of, say, a song title, just use an abbreviated for. Cannot remember the Seeker's first hit? Never mind - call it Seek1 for the time being. As long as you are consistent about it, Seek1 can later be changed to 'I'll Never Find Another You' throughout the entire document. (This lengthy title, even including the inverted commas, will fit within the 30 character limit.) 'Automatic' is best for fast, repetitive exchange of this kind.

I Can See Clearly Now

On its default setting of 'Manual exchange', the program pauses at each match to let the proposed exchange be accepted with

the [+] key, or rejected by pressing [-]. One problem is that the entire screen 'Match found' message may obliterate the text cursor, making a considered decision impossible. Wait a few moments and the message will disappear - but it can be removed instantly by pressing the 'grid' key (marked SP.CHK) on the 9512 keyboard). Do not use [CAN], as that will abandon the entire operation and be careful not to hit [ENTER] when you go for the grid key, because [ENTER] duplicates the action of [+]. Once [+] ([ENTER]) or [-] has been pressed, LocoScript moves on, looking for the next match.

'Automatic exchange' offers no choice in the matter - but it is a far quicker process, naturally. Just like 'Find', an exchange pass

“ The case of the first and last letters is always preserved ”

can be halted with [STOP] and its territory can be predefined by using [PAGE] and/or [PARA] as the trigger. 'Automatic' on a page-by-page basis gives a fair compromise between speed and supervision, which is essential when changes are being made to the shape of the text... yes, 'Exchange' can do this. Carriage-returns and tabs in the menu slots allow a document's format to be altered very rapidly indeed - by changing every [RETURN] [TAB] to [RETURN] [RETURN], for instance.

Speedy Gonzales

With four choices in the central box, 'quick keys' now become viable (move between options with I, P and U). Also pressing A from anywhere within that box will take the highlight bar straight down to 'Automatic Exchange' - and set it at the same time. So once the Find and Exchange strings have been typed in, activating an automatic exchange on default settings takes just three key-presses: down-cursor, A, [ENTER].

Get yourself sorted

Rod Shinkfield continues his quest to make your LocoScripting more organised

THE SYSTEM I described in the last issue will help you to easily track-down any letter you have previously written and saved to disc. Now take your eight LocoScript-formatted blank discs, (We'll use four now and put four aside to use as back-ups). Each disc has eight groups numbered 0 to 7 and will be used solely for your letters. My four 'letter' discs happen to be numbered and indexed as 5:0 A to H, 6:0 I to P, 7:0 Q to Z, and 8:0 Hold/Family (your 'letter' disc's numbers will naturally depend on where they are kept in your disc box.

Although your 'letter' disc's numbering may be different to mine, the lettering on each disc - A to H, I to P, Hold/Family - should be the same. Each group is named by a triple letter - AAA, BBB, CCC and so on - the less used X, Y and Z share a group. In case you were wondering why I have used triple letters for naming the groups, it is simply because triple letters stand-out and are easier to see on the disc-management screen than a single letter would be.

Before filing away a reply letter, write on it the date it was received and include the original letter's file-name. The file-name, noted on the reply letter, will even years later, tell you instantly where to find your copy of the original document.

Let us assume, for example, you have received a reply to a letter that you sent to PCW Today. Any letter you send to the magazine would have been written and saved on 'letter' disc 6:0 I to P, in group PPP, possibly using the code letters PCW. You, of course, can use any three-letter codes you wish.

The file-name we will use for our original example letter will be PCWAPR12.96- (See graphic). The first three of the eight spaces allowed in a LocoScript file-name are occupied by the code letters - in this case PCW. APR represents the month, 12 is the day and the three-space suffix of the file-

name is taken-up by the year - 96. That still leaves one free space - but more about that later.

The file-names shown on the graphic are saved by LocoScript in alphabetical order, based on the letter code PCW. If I had given the example letter - PCWAPR12.96 a file-name of PCW12APR instead, putting

for published could be used instead. If, on the other hand, the letter had failed, maybe it was a covering letter for an article submission posted to another magazine, an X could take the last space in our example letter's file-name.

There are times when several letters may be written on the same day to the same

Disc management				Printer idle				Using none.																							
C=Create new document				E=Edit document				P=Print document				D=Direct printing																			
f1=Actions				f2=Disc				f3=File				f4=Group				f5=Document				f6=Settings				f7=Disc change				f8=Options			
Drive A: Letters .6 0				Drive B: not fitted				Drive M:																							
460k used 246k free 148 Files				0k used 0k free 0 files				18k used 290k free 4 files																							
III	46k	MMN	8k					INDEX	18k	group 4	0k																				
JJJ	88k	NNN	44k					group 1	0k	group 5	0k																				
KKK	10k	OOO	4k					group 2	0k	group 6	0k																				
LLL	6k	PPP	22k					group 3	0k	group 7	0k																				
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OETDEC	03.94	4k		PATDEC	12.96	2k	BRJAPR	12.96X	4k																						
OETDEC	07.94R	2k		PATJAN	05.97	2k	BRJAPR	12.96	2k																						
ONEJUN	27.96X	2k		PCWMAR	12.96	2k	BRJANU	10.96	2k																						
ORRMAY	21.95	4k		PCWMAY	17.96R	4k	BTTFEB	09.97H	4k																						
ORRMAY	12.95	2k		PCWAPR	12.96	2k	BTTFEB	23.96A	2k																						
OSHJUN	14.96P	4k		PCMAUG	10.96	6k	BTTFEB	23.96B	3k																						
OSHSEP	23.96X	4k		PCWFEB	09.97	2k																									
TEMPLATE	.STD	2k		PCWJUL	20.96R	2k																									

■ How a typical organised disc should look in LocoScript's management screen

the day before the month (as one would expect) - the order of the letters in their months would become disrupted. So if you want all the letters written in, let's say, the month of MAY to stay in alphabetical-order, put the day's number *after* the month.

Looking down the file-names listed in group PPP (remember, that is the group where my letters to PCW Today are stored), the saved copy of your original letter can be quickly found and put on display.

Once satisfied with the reply to your letter, the spare suffix space at the end of the file-name now comes into use. A reply to your original letter could be indicated by putting an R - for reply - into the suffix space (so changing our example letter's file-name to PCWAPR12.96R). If the original letter had appeared on the pages of PCW Today, a P

address. These are therefore given the same file-name. To avoid these letters 'over-writing', the second letter (and any more following) could have A,B,C, etc. placed in the spare suffix-space at the end of the file-name.

The final letter you might use is H, which I use to stand for Hold/Family. H indicates a letter written, but for some reason not yet posted-off. It can also show letters that have been written to close relatives, keeping them all conveniently together in one place.

The more letters you write, the more the letter discs will fill-up. Looking at a screen full of anonymous letter file-names will not tell you much about their contents. In the next article I will show you how to create an index of all those letter file-names which should solve that particular problem.

Is it compatible?

P.D. Blake gets irritable with Creative Technology as he asks that age-old question

IT HAS come to my attention that a certain PCW PD - providers of MicroDesign clip-art and public domain software - has been letting down virtually all of its customers. They are failing to deliver discs, return cheques and are very difficult to track down. In fact I think that the person running PCW PD, who shall remain nameless, has probably fallen off the end of the earth, (good riddance many of you may think).

I would like to take the opportunity to point out that most suppliers of clip-art are very reliable and I personally find the way PCW PD has been acting absolutely disgusting. Hopefully the person who runs it will mend his ways, if he doesn't, I believe the men in black from the Trading Standards will probably mend them for him. (We tried to contact PCW PD to get their response - and like everybody else we failed. Trading Standards succeeded however after one customer complained to them. Ed.)

Now on with the article. This time I'm going to let you into a few secrets that Creative Technology did not tell you in the MD3 manual. Yes, MicroDesign is compatible with other programs.

For a start, the obvious first. LocoScript, Protext, RPED or anything else that can make an ASCII file can be used to write text for MD. If you save text in ASCII format it will transfer as plain text and you will lose the style codes. The pound sign will also appear as a # so you must check through and change it afterwards. Standard format documents from all versions of LocoScript and Protext can also be imported into MD3 without you losing the style codes in the move. With Loco 4 you will need the latest version which includes an 'export to Loco 3' option. I personally use LocoScript as my MD text editor, but the choice is yours. You could always use MD's own rather clumsy editor.

MicroDesign graphics are also compatible with many other programs. The Desktop

Publisher and Stop Press are two such packages. Some public domain programs will actually take images saved in SCR format. Dprint and PCWDraw are just two of them. Dshow will display SCR files on screen for you in CP/M - though you may find that the files may need a little data added to them in order to avoid a 'picture too short' message. Creative Technology has seen fit to knock-off the bottom line of the image in SCR format so that it does not quite work with everything. Why is anyone's guess.

Speaking of SCR format, in your manual you may have noticed a reference to their



■ Can you use MD graphics in BASIC?

use with BASIC. I didn't know how to do this so I tinkered around with GSX for a while and drew a blank. Then, taking the obvious step, I rang Creative Technology for advice. I again drew a blank, being told in answer to my disgruntled comment about misleading references that, I quote "Just because we don't know how to do it doesn't mean it can't be done."

I was then told that there were articles on machine code in back-issues of some PCW magazines with titles that I had never heard of. Also that there was a book on the subject, whose name could not be brought to mind at the moment, but might be found in a couple of days time. Now I do not have an answer machine (damned obnoxious, ignorant things) so I may have missed the call they promised me, though they have had several weeks to try again.

In all fairness to Creative Technology this behaviour is surprising of a normally professional company who in the past have always proved to be exceptionally reliable and extremely helpful.

Compatibility with MD2 is pretty much along the same lines as MD3 except that you are able to import a greater variety of graphics into the earlier version. This is the reason, I am told, why Creative Technology allowed those using MD2 to keep their master discs when upgrading to MD3, (a thoughtful gesture). It would have been nicer if they had passed the ability along to MD3 in the first place methinks.

What about fonts? Well fonts are a whole different kettle of fish and as yet I have still to find anything else that they are compatible with. Nor any other kind of font that will work with MicroDesign. In future a way may be found but I seriously doubt it.

That's all for this time I'm afraid, though next time I really do intend to write about something you want to read. So put pen to paper, or fingers to keyboard and let me know just what it is all you MicroDesigners really want to know about.

Finally, if anyone out there in PCW-land does know how to use SCR files in BASIC, and would like to let me in on the secret, I may do an article on the subject and try to clear-up the mystery once and for all.

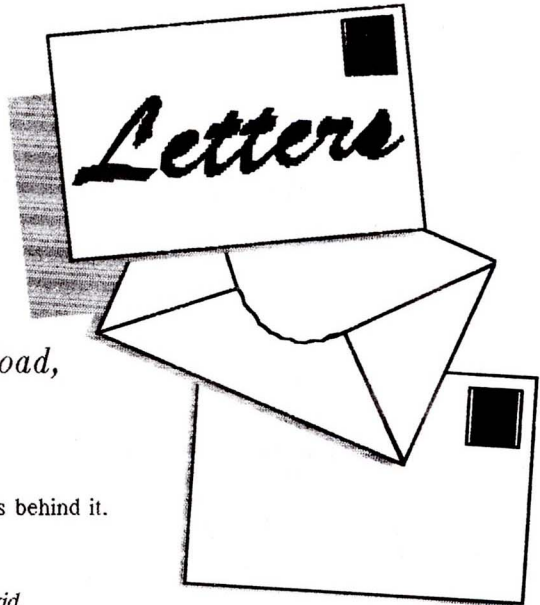
And just one last word, don't forget that with the second release of LocoScript 4 - out now - comes the long awaited graphics facility. Guess what? Yes, MD3 areas are compatible with that too.

Until next time.....

*Yours faithfully
P.D. Blake*

Letters from the Mailbag

Write your letters to us at: *The Mailbag, 150 Oxford Road, Middlesbrough, Teesside. TS5 5EL*



MONEY TALKS

Dear Editor: Brian Pratt of Hampshire (Mailbag, issue 5) described how a Dixons salesman had told him that the PCW 16 was not very good as it was only a jumped-up typewriter. Interestingly I have just come across a letter which put precisely the opposite case.

In the course of research, I've been looking through some three-year-old Practical PC magazines. In one of these a reader complained bitterly that he had bought a PCW 9512+ from a high street outlet (presumably Dixons) on the strength of the salesman telling him that it was a good general purpose computer. This buyer now felt he had been sold a pup because (he claimed) it was not possible to do anything more than write letters with it! The tasks he wanted to carry out were actually very simple - household accounts, spreadsheet work and so on. But the editorial response was basically - hard luck, cut your losses, get rid of the thing and buy a proper PC. Anyone reading this would have been left with the impression that the PCW was a useless lump with no applications available. As we all know, nothing could be further from the truth. Misinformation seems endemic within the world of computing. This can undoubtedly occur as a result of ignorance but there are powerful commercial forces at work, marketing expensive machines to people who only need a tiny fraction of their true potential. For instance an acquaintance of mine was genuinely surprised to learn that I still use an "obsolete" PCW. He'd given way and spent £1500 on a Pentium PC. He thought he had to in order to administer his new business. The irony is that I have seen high-turnover, multi-employee businesses operated via a PCW - handling all stock, invoicing, tax and PAYE - yet this particular chap is a sole-trader who is not even large enough to be VAT registered.

Brain-washing can be very effective when

it has massive advertising budgets behind it.

David Landers, Morpeth

PCW Today: *Got it in one David.*

However we do seem to be witnessing something of a backlash against Windows PCs at the moment. They are notoriously unreliable and hard to use. Perhaps that is why the PCW 16 is doing so well despite the attempts of the salesmen.

BAD PUBLICITY

Dear Editor: Having just read my first copy of PCW Today I can say it's: brilliant, interesting and the best magazine since PCW Plus.

BUT!! If PCW Today has been going for 12 months why didn't someone say something before PCW Plus finally died. I have now missed three issues of the magazine through lack of advertising. Why didn't Rod Shinkfield who now writes for PCW Today say something in PCW Plus of which he was a regular writer?

Harvey Clayworth, Mansfield

PCW Today: *To be fair to Rod, he did not write for PCW Today while our predecessor was still around. Also, if you check the club pages of the very last issue of Plus, we did get a very complimentary mention. Had we been given a little more notice, we would probably have splashed out and bought a bit of advertising space. Letting people know we exist is certainly a problem but we do our best.*

GOOD ALTERNATIVE

Dear Editor: When PCW Plus packed-up and I read the editor, Andrew Chapman's letter I did reply to his request for readers interested in an alternative but could only give qualified support to his proposals.

Although I learned everything I know about the PCW from PCW Plus I was just beginning to find I'd get copies with very

little that was helpful to me (at my age I have no intention of learning BASIC and the like) and I could not afford to pay for what I did not need.

On the other hand I am finding that I could do with PCW Today SIX times a year at £1.50 especially as you are covering MORE adverts (however modestly) than PCW Plus was in its last year. I suppose there's never been any suggestion of you getting together? About some of the alternatives you suggest. I did make an attempt at 8 Bit but was put off by their quite aggressive anti-LoCoScript attitude. Very best wishes, thank goodness I found you in time!

Elaine Bullard MBE, Orkney

PCW Today: *No, although it would have been great, there has never been any link between ourselves and the Plus team. I still believe that a professional PCW magazine could be sustained as many news-stand mags have a readership far lower than 7,000. However, I fear we will never see such a publication. A new classic computer magazine is a far brighter prospect.*

GET IT RIGHT

Dear Editor: Good to see that you are sticking so close to the PCW Plus mould. Perhaps following their trait of horrendous spelling and grammar is taking it a bit too far however. For a magazine about a word-processor, of all things, you would have thought you could at least get that right!

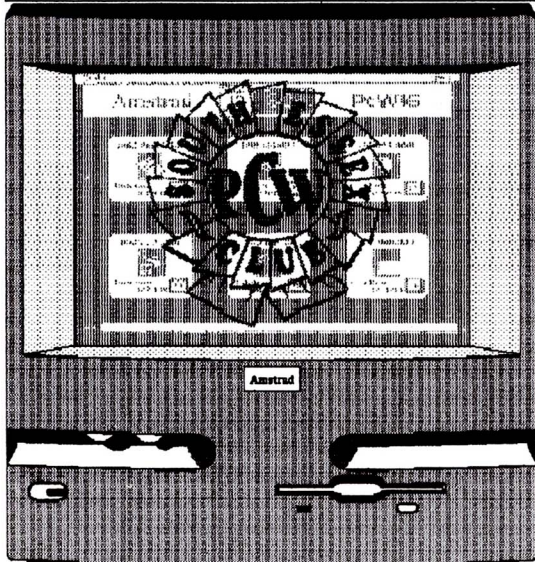
David Brown, Lancashire

PCW Today: *Point taken. Hopefully things are improving - this issue is the first to be spell-checked and copy-read.*

THE DISC DRIVE

ISSUE 8

AUTUMN 95



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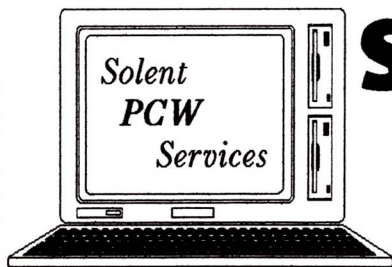
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My drive nightmare

Kathleen Thorpe highlights some of the pit-falls of fitting a new disc drive

MY HORROR story began when I decided to fit an internal second disc drive to my single-drive PCW 10.

I contacted a reputable PCW supply company (which will remain nameless) about fitting a B: drive. They told me over the phone that fitting one would be pretty easy and that the drive would come with full installation instructions. So I went ahead and bought one.

It was delivered two days later, which I thought was excellent service. I immediately read through the instructions which said that the drive was originally intended for a PC but had been configured to work in a PCW. I then began to dismantle my precious PCW. All seemed to go well although it was a bit fiddly at times. Finally, the job was completed and I put the PCW back together again.

The computer was switched back on, and I expected to see that it had recognised the two drives, however all we got was a blank screen with a white dot in the middle. After switching the PCW off again, the back came off once more so that we could make sure everything had been connected-up and pushed-in properly. One connection was a bit loose, so it was pushed firmly home and I assumed that would have solved the problem. How wrong can you be! Still no joy, same black screen, same white dot.

After a brief period of panic and unrepeatable language, we phoned the PCW company back and explained the situation. They reassured us that it was the correct drive and if everything had been put back according to the instructions there should not be a problem.

The next step was to contact a computer repair company, as the PCW was under warranty with my insurance company. They arranged a courier to collect the PCW next day to be serviced. After two days it was returned and we set it up and switched it on. HOORAY! It seemed to be working and both drives were accepted by the PCW. I tried copying files, moving files and printing

we had fitted was not a PCW drive and would therefore not work properly. It was also affecting the original A: drive. They explained that had they known the drives would not format they would have replaced the drive there and then. I told them that the drive was for a PC and it had been made compatible with a PCW so it should work.

On their suggestion I returned the PCW once again to the repair company. When it returned a few days later it had a different B: drive that, unlike the last one, actually looked like an original PCW drive. We tried it and it seems to be working perfectly - thank goodness!

So now I have a two-drive machine, which makes life easier for file copying in LocoScript. Now though I have another problem, do I get back to the PCW company where I originally purchased the B: drive and tell them what happened, or do I just leave it there? Because I do have a second drive when all's said and done.

(Readers should note that Kathleen's problem was a rare one and her story is simply here to act as a warning to you to be extra-careful when undertaking your own PCW DIY. In most cases, the PCW hardware companies provide an excellent service and there are no problems. Ed.)

“...all we got was a blank screen...”

one out - no problem. Then I tried to format a disc in the new B: drive. Horror of horrors - it would not do it and neither would the original A: drive. It whirred continually but nothing happened. I tried Diskit, LocoScript 3 and DU53 but nothing worked.

The repair company said that the B: drive

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PCW Company Locator

The new and improved directory of PCW companies and products

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Ansible Index for LocoScript

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