



NEWSLETTER

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From the Secretary's Desk

Here we are at the start of a New Year. Let us start as we intend to go on with a very positive attitude to the diminishing world of the PCW, and a happy new year to all of our readers. Steve Massam and a colleague have successfully achieved a contract that will unfortunately take him away from PCWing for several months (he will be missed) Good Luck Steve! Whilst Steve is away I will be attempting to act as temporary Newsletter Editor; please send your articles and tips to me (preferably on returnable discs) and the temporary

editor for the Disc Drive is our chairman Mike Elliston who would appreciate the same arrangement for Disc Drive items.

We understand PCW Today may be going into the Big-Time, we wish them every success. We are content with the slowly growing number of our organisation at present hovering about 200; too many more and we would start to verge on the unmanageable. As it is, you can finish with a very dry tongue after stamping Newsletters and Disc Drives envelopes.

David Lalieu

Christmas Competition Results

Subject: Colour (Anything)	
Winner:	Highly Commended:
Bill Heilbronn Lemington Spa	Monica Dickerson Surlingham (Norwich)
Subject: Cards, H/Bills & Posters	
Winner:	Highly Commended:
Steve Massam Southend (Essex)	Ernie Ruddick Yarm (Teeside)
Subject: Business Stationery	
Winner:	Highly Commended:
Dareen Bridge Huddersfield	Mark Carter Isle of Wight
Subject: Calendars & Newsletters	
Winner:	Highly Commended:
Daniel French Roehampton (London)	Steve Massam Southend (Essex)

Chairman's Chatterings

Last month I was going on about how there is no need to keep your LocoScript Start-of-Day disc in the A: drive once you've loaded the program when I was phoned by someone who claimed that you *had* to leave the disc in *his* machine or it would stop working properly.

I asked if he was anywhere near the PCW; he was. Would he please turn the computer on and load LocoScript while I waited? *Then*, would he please take the disc out of the drive? Only if I agreed to pay for all the damage this would cause! Ok, I agreed.

He duly took the Start-of Day disc out of the drive. Lo and behold, nothing untoward occurred. Would he then put *another* disc, preferably a *blank* one, into the drive? Are you sure it'll be alright? Yes, I assured him. The fresh disc was put into the drive. Now press f7=Disc change, please.

Now you've done it, I was told; there's an error message come up on the screen. That's what happened when I did that once before. What did the error message say? "Error in Drive A: Disc format not recognised. Retry, Cancel, Ignore?" No problem there, just press C for cancel. Now it says that the drive is empty but there *is* a disc in that drive. I told you it would break something!

I reassured him that the drive was not broken yet. Please press f2=Disc and cursor down to Format disc. I've never done that before; what does it do? So I talked him through the procedure for formatting a disc and then verifying it before it was put to use. I explained how this prepared a new disc for use in the PCW and how it was a good idea

to reformat discs every so often to clear out old unwanted files and to wipe the slate clean again, so as to speak.

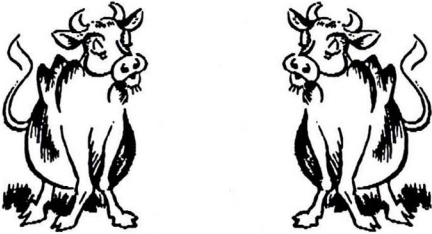
This was magic to him. He had never formatted a disc in his life. When he first bought the PCW he simply wrote files straight onto the start-up disc. When he had filled up that floppy he deleted some of the files which were on the disc but were not his. After a while this disc wouldn't start the machine because he had deleted some of the program files. (Fortunately this was a 9512 or he would have filled up a CF2 a lot more quickly than a CF2DD.)

He had then found someone who was selling LocoScript2 master discs and bought half a dozen of these; he continued to use LocoScript but starting the machine with a disc from this new supply, filling the disc up, deleting some old files, etc, as before. He had two more LS2 discs left and wasn't at all sure what he was going to do when he had used those up as his source of supply had left the PCW market last year and he wouldn't be able to get any more. He didn't want to have to switch to a PC because he couldn't use the PCW any more.

I explained how fortunate he was that the LocoScript2 discs he had acquired were intended for the 9512 and not the 8512 or he *would* have been in trouble. I explained how to format the box of ten unused 3" discs he had bought (but couldn't use because they wouldn't start the PCW), how to start up LocoScript with the Start-of-Day and replace it with a freshly formatted disc, and how to save his files on this blank data disc. He wasn't too sure about this but he would give it a go!

LocoScript 4 Update

The latest version of LocoScript 4.10,4.11 has some fascinating new features. Now, not only are you able to reposition pictures after you have loaded them into your document, but also to display them in a number of alternative ways, the most useful being Horizontally Reversed so that you can have the same illustration facing left or right.



Ideal for headings on stationery.

There are two further options available and they are Inverse Picture and Picture Outline.

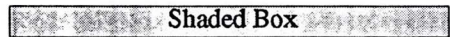
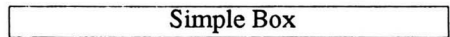


All three options are available after having selected the image from the Disc Management Screen and pressed [ENTER] to confirm your selection. The three new options are tacked onto the bottom of the menu that follows and are put into action by cursoring down to the required option and pressing the [+] key. More than one option can be selected, so for instance you could choose Horizontal Reverse *and* Picture Outline.

Picture Outline should not be confused with the Outline feature from within MicroDesign3 or TWEAK. This feature within LocoScript 4 simply outlines your image with a box, the size being determined by the maximum dimensions of the MicroDesign3 Area file. Invariably these will be tight to the image as it is general practice to save an image in as small an area as possible to save disc space. If however you own MicroDesign3 you will be able to re-save the image in a larger area so giving it a bit more breathing space.

Another new addition is the option to scale up to eight times, handy if you have one of the higher resolution printers.

You now also have the option to produce Boxes or even Shaded Boxes. The Box options has been added to the bottom of the [F2] Layout menu and boxes can be inserted at a fixed position or as a character in a similar way to images.



However boxes inserted as characters cannot, I found, be successfully right aligned or centred (*this could be a bug and may be corrected?*).

In the first announcement of this latest release LocoScript Software claimed that it has made it even faster and this is probably correct.

Route Planner...continued

Monica Dickerson's article in the recent edition of the 'Disc Drive' left me with very little to say by way of description of Route Planner, and I wholly agree with her views on the program. Following on my own brief and impromptu presentation at the December meeting, I am now able to report further progress. Those present will recall that I described my inability to operate using my Teqniche keyboard; this was coupled with a similar failure to operate with any keyboard which had my Keymouse coupled in to the circuit. Thus I was reduced to bypassing the Keymouse, and also reverting to using the Amstrad 9512 keyboard-successful as it was to the ultimate operation. Having heard of my difficulty, Peter Campbell, of Comsoft, the producers of the program telephoned me. After a long and helpful conversation, he invited me to return my original disc in exchange for the latest issue. This appeared in my mail after a mere three days. To my delight, I found that I was able to use the Teqniche, and also, even more delightful, to leave the Keymouse connected AND TO USE THE MOUSE IN ITS FULL ROLE. Therefore I am able to use Route Planner to its full potential, as described in Monica's article - in fact, even a little beyond!

Monica describes a situation where on

occasions, perhaps exiting to print or write to disc, she receives the message 'Disc Drive not ready', and giving the option to Retry. I find the same, but it's just a matter of pressing 'R' to be able to go ahead.

A small point for users of added printers. The program seems to have been written for the dedicated Amstrad printer with either the 8000 or 9000 series. In case of other added printers, it is wise to study the printer operation vis-a-vis the program. If in doubt, it is simpler to save the text to disc (as Locoscript) or the map/diagram also to disc (as Microdesign area, which the program does automatically).

In summary, I am very pleased to have Route Planner, and already to make good use of it, either for myself or at the request of my travelling friends. The recent version is obtainable from:-

Comsoft
10 McIntosh Court
Wellpark
GLASGOW
G31 2HW
Tel. 0141 554 4735

at a price of £24.95, plus £1 postage. The product is also distributed by SD Microsystems and by Locosoft, both of whom advertise in the 'Disc Drive'.

Joe Bird



5th February 1998

A look at Font and Shade Designer a program from the Creative Technology Stable that makes MicroDesign 3 even more creative.

5th March 1998

Looking good in print.

2nd April 1998

The Network and other Programs.

A week later he phone me back and made my day: This new method of using LocoScript worked perfectly. Indeed, it was a lot better than his old system because it saved so much faster! He could now put different letters in different groups (as I had explained) and, not only were they now separated out a bit more tidily, but he could get a lot more of his letters on a disc (because there weren't all those unwanted *hidden* files filling up the space!

Would he now like to try it with the CP/M disc? Ooh, no; tried that once and couldn't get the hang of it at all! I thought that was best left left alone at this stage; he was happy that he could continue to use his

PCW into the next century. I did suggest that he might invest in a 3.5" disc drive before too long, while they were still available, but... Ooh, no; I'll have to buy some 3.5" discs then, wouldn't I?

A tip for the New Year: Go through your cheque book/s and write **1998** on the date line for the next dozen or so cheques in each book. It won't take a few moments but it does save the embarrassing occasion when the cheque you've just sent to pay a bill is returned because it was dated '97.

Mike Elliston

Satisfied Crossworder

Letter to Secretary of South Essex PCW Club
Dear David,

Thank you very much indeed for the copy of Brian Dorricott's Crossword Puzzle Maker program recently supplied. I'm not very good with this CP/M but I found that it loaded perfectly on my 8256 with a RamPack and a (replacement) 3.5" A: drive. Making the boot disc was easy and I was very impressed with the program itself-it's very powerful considering it's running on a PCW. (I've seen a professional version running on a PC and it needed a hard disc to load all the files!) I shall not be buying any of the extra word files because I discovered that you can load in the



dictionaries from Protext and/or NewWord, although you do then have to write your own puzzle clues!

The copy of the Word Square Maker that comes with it was very good too. Again I was impressed with how easy it was to use and how powerful a program it is for a PCW. Congratulations and thanks to the Club for keeping PCW software available on the market especially when so many programmers have defected to the PC!

Yours,

Frederick Eagles, Epping, Essex.

Computer Desk

Good home wanted for Rosewood finish computer desk with an adjustable shelf. It can be dismantled very easily if required. Bargain at only £15:00. I'll even deliver it free within a 5 mile radius of Basildon.

Contact Nick 01268 454917

Amstrad PCW 9512

Complete with B/W Monitor, Teqniche keyboard, fitted with a Cirtech Sprinter and Gem 40 Mb hard drive. Software and manuals for LocoScript 4 and Money Manager. Private owner from new, limited use. Price £250:00. View by appointment. Andrew Bennett Tel/Fax 01844 292817 Aylesbury.

Various PCW Items

MicroDesign 2 Manual £5:50

Tweak 3 3½" £15:00

2 in 1 3½" £10:00

PCW Plus Magazines 1993/96 (Buyer collects) Offers?

G.Betts 01245 268303 (Chelmsford)

The Independent Eight Bit Association

The forth edition of the IEBA Directory of Eight Bit Services has just been published. IEBA is a voluntary organisation that promotes the benefits of 8-bit computing and puts users in touch with sources of support. Membership is a once only cost of £5:00 this includes a copy of the latest Directory. Contact Brian Watson. Tel: 01355 777 006 Fax: 01355 77 77 66

PCW Plus & 8000 Plus Magazines Index

A database that takes all of the hard work out of searching for that elusive article or tip in your magazine library, available in LocoFile. One or three files, LocoScript, ASCII,dBaseII or Hardcopy. On 3½"discs @ £8:00. The hardcopy @ £10:00. Cheques payable to:- D.C. Lalieu. 10, Sheridan Avenue, Thundersley, Essex, SS7 1RD.

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