



NEWSLETTER

Issue No 77

News and coming events

This issue of the Club's *Newsletter* looks slightly different from usual because I've taken over the editorship from David who has resigned from the Committee. We will let you know who is taking over and what the new Committee structure will be in the next issue. As you may have noticed from the various editions of *The Disc Drive* I produced while Steve was off galavanting about north of the border, I prefer LocoScript to MicroDesign where there is a lot of text matter, as in a newsheet. LS4 has the advantage that you can import pictures created in MD3. It has a variety of LX fonts and you can print in a columns as on the back page. Yes, I know that MD3 allows columns too, but I still prefer to use LocoScript. *Mike*

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For those able to attend, the next few Club meetings are as follows:

Thursday 3rd February:

Part Two of the introduction to LocoScript for beginners. This will probably include a discussion on LocoFile and LocoMail if time permits. (That depends on how many questions we get in the first half!)

Thursday 2nd March:

Introduction to CP/M: Part One.

Thursday 6th April:

Introduction to CP/M: Part Two.

These meetings organised by the Club are held from 7.30pm to 10.30pm in the Basildon Centre, St. Martins Square, Basildon, Essex and, for the next few months at least, will be in Committee Room *Four* (rather than Room Two as before). The Basildon Centre is very close to Basildon Station on the London, Tilbury & Southend railway line, and only a short distance from the main Bus Station. There is extensive secure parking in the underground car park beneath, accessed from Broadmayne/Great Oaks. (Follow the Council Offices signs.)

However, there is no reason why our members in other parts of the country cannot meet together and exchange ideas and information. Whilst we cannot give out other members names and addresses without their permission we can advise you if there are others nearby and pass on your letters to them. It is up to them whether they wish or are able to meet locally but you can only ask. Drop a line to the membership secretary and he will let you know how many members live in the post code areas you specify.

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Please note that officers of the Club and members of the Committee cannot be expected to reply to letters unless a self-addressed stamped envelope is enclosed with your query.

Chairman's Chatterings

Earlier this month I had great pleasure in writing to Sir Alan Sugar to congratulate him on his award of a knighthood in the New Year's Honours List for "services to the home computer and electronics industry". Alan Sugar started selling aerials and other electrical components from the back of a van in east London markets in the 1960s.

This venture was so successful that he went on to set up Amstrad Ltd, the name being formed from his initials (from Alan Michael Sugar) plus the first part of the word Trading. His initial direct dealings with the public led him to recognise what was needed by the man in the street.

Alan Sugar dreamed up the idea of a cheap "glass typewriter" for the small office and home office (SoHo), an all-in-one electronic follow-up to the manual and electric typewriters, which came complete with monitor, keyboard *and* printer, all delivered in one large box and ready to go (although a few spare 3" CF2 discs would come in handy, too).

He was directly involved in the basic design of the first Amstrad Personal Computer Wordprocessor, the PCW 8256 (upon one of which this very document is being typed). The machine was given the codename 'Joyce' after Joyce Cayley, his secretary at the time, and you will still see this reflected today in such LocoScript Hidden files as Keyboard.Joy or DiscMan.Joy. I thanked him for all the great pleasure and productivity he had made possible for so many of the owners of his "baby" and reminded him that thousands of PCWs are still going strong some fifteen years later.

August is the "silly season" in the newspaper industry but for the computer press *it's* silly season is in the first week of January. Results of the sales of computers, games machines and other electronic toys over the Christmas period are not yet to hand and, because of the Christmas break, few new products have been announced in the previous fortnight. *The Times* has a computer supplement on Mondays and *The Guardian* and *The Daily Telegraph* on Thursdays. All three are interesting reading and, I find, far more useful in terms of real news than the myriad of glossy magazines (invariably 98% advertisements) available on the newsstands.

The January 6th edition of *Connected*, the *Telegraph's* own tabloid supplement, included *four* pages on the PCW. The first pair of pages gave a potted history of the PCW ranges of machines; would you believe that 1,500,000 machines were built and that it is estimated that there are over 100,000 still in regular use. The PCW is compared to a modern Pentium III PC but although it is much slower and lacks colour I'm sure that many of our members find the PCW to be perfectly adequate for their needs.

The second pair of pages give a very good summary of the progress of the PCW from its inception to the present situation with LocoScript 4 and MicroDesign 3, with notes on 3½" drives, memory packs, hard discs, scanners etc. Four regular users of the PCW, three of whom are members of the Club, are featured with details of how they use and maintain their machines. Alan Birt from Bury St. Edmonds is cataloguing a library of books, David Landers in

Erratum

The bottom of column one on page one of *Newsletter* No. 77 should read:

For those able to attend, the next few Club meetings are as follows:

Thursday 3rd February:

Part Two of the introduction to LocoScript for beginners.

Thursday 2nd March:

Labels using LocoFile and LocoMail

Thursday 6th April:

Introduction to CP/M: Part One.

Thursday 11th May:

Introduction to CP/M: Part Two.

Please note that the May meeting is on Thursday 11th May.

Northumberland is working on a revision of Instant Recall and Dorothy Featherstone runs PCW word processing classes in Bromley.

Journalist Rick Maybury is to be congratulated on an excellent piece of research on the Amstrad PCW and its users. It is unfortunate that no mention was made of the British Amstrad PCW Club,

the largest in the field, but I have forwarded details which, hopefully, will be published in a future issue. I was amused to see mention of *PCW Today* in a *Telegraph* supplement titled *The Obsolete Issue* – when did you last see a copy of *PCW Today*? (Only joshing, Adrian. How about a news item for our readers on how the move is going?)
Mike

Public Domain Library

The Club's Public Domain Library is now held, on behalf of the Club, by Daniel French, 44 Charcot Hse, Highcliffe Drive, Roehampton, London SW15 4PT. The Library consists of nearly 200 discs of software which you are able to use freely on your PCW. Much of it is clip art for use in conjunction with MicroDesign or some of the other graphics packages that run on the PCW, but there are also some useful programs, spreadsheets, databases, editors, calendar makers, label makers, etc., some of which run under Basic and some of which run straight from CP/M.

If you would like to send Daniel a stamped self-addressed envelope he will let you have a copy of the current catalogue and an order form. Please note that neither the Club nor the PD Library can provide you with copies of copyright programs such as SuperCalc, MicroDesign, dBase II, LocoScript, etc. These programs are not in the public domain and are not in the Library; you will have to buy these new or second-hand.

When you know what disc/s you require send Daniel the appropriate number of identified, formatted *and verified* discs, a self addressed *padded* envelope (large enough to hold a quantity of discs) and £1.00 per disc to cover copying. The fee is £2.00 per disc for non-members or those members who have not paid the current year's subscription.

It is much better if your disc/s are formatted on the machine upon which they are to be used and there is no point at all in using a disc unless you have verified that it is correctly formatted. Identified means that the disc is marked with your name and whether it is CF2 (173k) or CF2DD (706k). Please use either LocoScript or DiscKit in CP/M to format and verify your discs.

At the moment PD discs are available in 3" CF2 or 3½" CF2DD formats but it is hoped that 3" CF2DD will be available before too long. You can, of course use a CF2 3" disc on a standard 9512: simply copy the contents onto a regular 3" CF2DD by using the 8000COPY.COM program on your CP/M disc.
Mike

British Amstrad PCW Club - Membership Secretary
S R Massam, 27 St. Marks Road, Benfleet, Essex SS7 2PY

PCW Contact Point

In response to the recent article in the *Daily Telegraph* computer supplement *Connected* the following people contacted the Club asking if our members would be interested in their PCWs. In most cases additional related items are on offer as well. You are invited to make contact directly with the advertiser and make mutual arrangements for delivery.

Mrs T Odell,
7 Ham Farm Road,
Ham Common, Richmond,
Surrey TW10 5ND
0208 546 6029
Free PCW 9512 in good
condition but the printer is
faulty.

Mr M Press,
41 Croham Valley Rd,
South Croydon,
Surrey CR2 7JG
0208 657 2458
"Amstrad package".

Mr D Rogers,
19 Muren Avenue,
Malvern,
Worcs WR14 3QB
01684 573246
Free PCW 9512 in good
working order.

Mr D E Burgoyne,
Abbotsbury,
Easton,
Woodbridge,
Suffolk IP13 0EF
Box of 3" discs, one
printwheel, 2 x multistrike
ribbons, master disc
LocoScript v2.16 and
CP/M+ (for 9512 only).

Mrs A Walker
31 School Road,
Charlton Kings,
Cheltenham GL53 8BQ
01242 517258
Various PCW books and
software.

Mr N V Ollis,
3 Elizabeth Avenue,
Bagshot GU19 5NX
01276 45217
PCW 8256 with 512k in full
working order.

Mr G R N Naish,
19 Denmark Road,
Reading RG1 5PA
0118 987 2166
PCW 9512, 3½" drive, in
working order.

Mr S Phillips,
44 Hafod Road,
Hereford HR1 1SG
01432 356183
PCW 9512 with dust
covers.

Mr B J Mortley,
180 Grove Park,
Knutsford,
Cheshire WA16 8QE
PCW 8256 in perfect
working order.

Mr D J Whiteway,
4 Jessop Walk,
Hythe,
Hampshire SO45 6DH
023 8048 8088
CPC 6128.

Mr L E Carr,
22 Weatley Way,
Chalfont St Peter,
Bucks SL9 0JE
PCW 9512 needs a new
drive belt.

Mr A G Green,
Waterstones,
5 Copperfields,
Tarpoley,
Cheshire CW6 0UP
01829 732629
PCW 8256 needs a new
drive belt.

Miss M McPherson,
8 Penn Crescent,
Ringmer,
Sussex BN8 5HQ
01273 812797
PCW 8512 in excellent
working order.

Mrs A M Pryme,
Tourmaline,
20 Fairby Land,
Hartley,
Longfield,
Kent DA3 8DA
01474 704516
PCW 9512 in good
working order £50.

P J Brendon,
10 Green Lane,
Grendon,
Arthurstone,
Warks CV9 2PL
01827 715830
Free PCW 8512 in good
working order.

*The above information is
printed as provided. The Club
can not be held responsible
for the condition of any of the
goods offered.*