

# British Amstrad PCW Club

# NEWSLETTER

Issue No 85

## Peter A Clark

It is with deep regret that I must inform you of the death of our General Secretary, Peter A Clark, on Monday 9th July 2001 from complications arising from cancer. He died in his own bed surrounded by family and friends. A group of club members from Essex attended his funeral service at St Andrew's Church in Hornchurch and his cremation at Corbets Tey on Friday 20th.

Peter had been a member of the Club for some ten years and, indeed, had attended some of the earlier informal gatherings at Jim French's house which led to the club being formed.

Peter had suffered from a variety of illnesses over the years including a heart bypass operation some ten years ago and a heart attack a couple of years back. But he was determined and always fought back. He was a keen sea kayaker and was very much involved with a number of sea canoe and camping associations. He founded his own group, Paddlers International, and ran this almost single-handedly for many years – this explained the rather unusual e-mail address: [padint4u@aol.com](mailto:padint4u@aol.com)!

He ran a PCW9512 fitted with various external printers almost until the end and used both MicroDesign and LocoScript 3 to produce sixty or eighty page magazines for Paddlers International, often with illustrations scanned from photos taken by Peter at sea.

He was volunteered into taking over as Secretary of the Club early in 1999 when the previous Secretary resigned at short notice. He took on this job with enthusiasm and reorganised all the previous Club correspondence into lever arch files within a few days. He produced printed minutes and agendas and ensured the Committee ran to order!

He took over as Membership Secretary from Steve last September and the new individually encapsulated Membership Cards were his innovation.

He developed a mouth infection which was diagnosed as cancer and had part of his jaw and throat removed at Guy's. Further treatment bought only short remission and he returned to Guy's for another investigation earlier this year. He had a tumour on the brain which was inoperable.

Various members of the Committee visited him in Patience Ward at Guy's and later at St Francis Hospice, Havering-atte-Bower near Romford where he received palliative care.

Peter originally came from Poplar in the East End of London and organised almost all the funeral service himself before he died. The Victorian-style glazed hearse, drawn by two black horses complete with black feather plumes, was a beautiful sight.

The Club has made a donation to the St Francis Hospice in lieu of a wreath at the request of the family. Peter will be sadly missed by all who knew him.

# Subscriptions

Subscriptions for the coming year become due on 1st September. Members who have not renewed by the end of September will not be sent the next copy of *The Disc Drive*.

The subscription will be reduced to £10 (Ten Pounds) and cheques for this amount should be made payable to **The British Amstrad PCW Club**. Cheques must be in Sterling drawn on a British Bank. I'm sorry but we can not accept Postal Orders – the bank will not accept them. It's not a case of they will charge to encash them – they simply won't handle them.

Members who have joined or renewed since April 2001 will have their present membership run through until September 2002 at no extra cost but *please* return the enclosed application form regardless – we need to check members' address details.

This may mean that some members who renewed late have missed a copy of *The Disc Drive*. Back numbers of the Club magazine are available at £2.00 per copy including postage.

## Printer Survey

Graham Swepson writes to remind me that, as stated in the last *Disc Drive*, more printers are being made for *Windows* on PCs and are unsuitable for use with a PCW. However some modern printers *will* still work with LocoScript on a PCW and we would like to be able to publish a list of those that *are* PCW compatible.

If you successfully use an *external* printer with your PCW will you please write the make and model number on the back of your renewal form before you send it back. It doesn't matter how old it is – we

want to know if it works with a PCW. If you use it with LocoScript it is possible that you had to set it up as another, similar, printer, e.g. using the printer driver for an Epson Stylus 800 with a Stylus 600. Does it work correctly or, for example can you not print all the fonts? If you have an Amstrad e-mailer what printer do you use with that as well?

We would also like to know which version of LocoScript you *mainly* use. If you have everything from 1.00 to 4.11 but still regularly use 3.06 then that is what we want to know: 3.06. There is a tendency for magazine article authors to assume that most members have upgraded from the version that came with the machine but this is not always the case. (I recently picked up a second-hand PCW8256 which was literally being thrown out; it had been used for fifteen years with five 3" data discs and LocoScript version 1.00. No spell-checker and the whole program ran in 48k!)

We would also like to know if you have any unusual skills or accessories, for example a 5¼" drive or an unusual printer. This is so that we can develop a database of who to ask when some of the most obtuse enquiries arise. Would you be prepared to advise a member if his LQ2500 starts to play up? Could you rescue data from a 5¼" disc in an emergency? We would not be on your back all the time but it is useful to know on whom we can fall back when some of the tricky questions come in.

A short note on the back of the renewal form would be most welcome.

Please note that under no circumstances will the Club give out personal details such as address or telephone of another member, no matter how desperate your problem, without that member giving permission first.

## Annual General Meeting

Just a quick reminder to all those able to attend that the AGM is to be held in Room 2 of the Basildon Centre, St. Martins Square, Basildon, Essex at 7.30 pm on Thursday 6th September 2001. All paid-up members of the club are entitled to attend free of charge and are welcome. Fuller details were given in the last *Newsletter*.

## PCW 8000 Ribbons

John King writes to say that he has discovered a company that can still supply ribbons for the various PCW built-in dot matrix printers:

Messrs Computer Solutions,  
9 Connaught Avenue.  
Mutley, PLYMOUTH,  
Devon PL4 7BT

The above company offers PCW8256 ribbons, which will also suit the PCW8512, the PCW9256 and the PCW10 at the very reasonable price of £1.58 each including VAT. Postage is £2.34 per order regardless of quantity (so it would be sensible to order a few at the same time.) This information is correct as of 27th July 2001. You can also order via their web site: [www.comsol.org.uk](http://www.comsol.org.uk) or  
Tel: 01752 204258 (7 days 10am-8pm)  
Fax: 08701 640269.  
The e-mail address is:  
[sales@computing-solutions.org.uk](mailto:sales@computing-solutions.org.uk)

Please note that John has no connection with this company and the details are published as a service to fellow PCW users. *Please mention the Club when replying to advertisers. etc.*

## Amstrad FX9600AT Fax

Harry Sauderson writes to say that he has acquired an Amstrad FX9600AT personal fax machine. Please can someone tell him how to connect this to his PcW9512+ in order to scan pages into MicroDesign3? He wishes to purchase, or at least borrow, a copy of this fax machine instruction booklet if another member has a copy.

Harry can be reached on 020 8979 4821 but it would be useful if someone could pass on their comments to me or Steve too so that it can be published in either the magazine or the newsletter as well.

I know that Peter had this model of fax machine and used it for scanning but he had disposed of it before he died.

Appendix 2 of the MicroDesign manual states: "As well as using the hand-held (scanner) head, MD3 can also scan a full A4 sheet at 200 dpi using an Amstrad FX9600T or FX9600AT fax machine. If you are using an Amstrad fax scanner you should have been supplied with a special cable to allow you to connect the scanner output socket on the back of the fax to the scanner interface."

Perhaps someone could provide a pin-out diagram of this cable if Harry did not get one with the machine?. Maybe he can get one from Maplin or CPC?

There are mentions in *8000Plus* and/or *PCWPlus* on the 9600 faxes as follows:

February 1990, page 42  
July 1990, page 18  
August 1991, page 10  
April 1992, page 61 and  
June 1996, page 24 and on *faxing*:  
October 1991, page 10,  
December 1992, page 10 and  
March 1996, page 40.

## Joyce Emulator

There was no club night meeting in Basildon in July. Instead about eight of our members visited the Crawley Computer Club to see a demonstration by John Elliott of his amazing *Joyce* PCW emulator program for a PC.

Yes, I know this is a PCW club and we only deal with PCW programs or problems but the point is going to come at some time in the future when your beloved PCW gives up the ghost. John's program enables you to run programs like MicroDesign 3 or LocoScript or even Foreword on a PC (but you must have made preparations before your machine dies).

The program is available as a free download from John's website or can be obtained from Nick, our PD Librarian, when he is up and running properly. The latest version is 1.36 and that is what John demonstrated although he is working on an upgrade which will be announced at some point in the future.

The program arrives as a large zip (compressed) file which has to be expanded onto your PC. Follow the instructions in the Read Me file! The program includes lots of utilities and a full manual (which you should take time to read before continuing).

It is fascinating to watch the familiar lines appear down the screen, just as on a PCW, as the program loads. On the first occasion you run it you need to install your LocoScript and/or CP/M start-of-day discs (3½" discs only) and these must be set up as you would have them for your PCW, including the required printer selection. You need to run a special routine once to install your MicroDesign or Network discs but it is quite straightforward.

Once you have installed your LocoScript or CP/M or MicroDesign discs, the next time you start the program you get a short menu listing the program options, for example, press 1 for LocoScript, 2 for CP/M or 3 for MicroDesign in this case. Press your selected number and that program loads as it would on your PCW, black on white at first, but you can opt to have the more familiar green PCW8000 screen if you wish!

The faster your PC the quick the program runs but don't expect magic. This is an emulator and every command has to be translated from CP/M to DOS which does slow down the action. The minimum recommended processor is 75 MHz. At 200 MHz it runs at roughly the same rate as a PCW but used on a 550 MHz PC the speed is noticeably faster.

The two keys you need to remember are f9 which brings up a menu and f10 which quits the program. The keyboard layout is obviously slightly different but f9, K will provide a keyboard layout on screen. I have very successfully produced a keyboard layout map in MicroDesign3 running on a PC under the Joyce emulator. MicroDesign runs perfectly although you do have to be gentle with the cursor keys (but I have had this same problem on a PCW).

The faster your processor the faster the program may apply to the emulator but, unfortunately, not the printer. Be advised that the above Keyboard.MDA file, a full A4 image destined for a laser printer, took nearly an hour to print, so plan ahead and check your work before you take a print. Whether this applies to LocoScript as well I can not comment for I would rather use LocoScript Professional on a PC. A fuller article on *Joyce* will appear in a future issue of the *Disc Drive*.

# *ANNUAL APPEAL!*

## WANTED BY CLUB MEMBER

Turn those unwanted items into cash!

1.5Mb Rampart and Printer Interface  
for PcW9256 as SCA Rampac Plus  
or MiniRam (even CT with "dongle")

Details please, including post and secure packing charge to  
Keith Bull 01702 339894 (Southend)

## **British Amstrad PCW Club** *Committee Members*

August 2001

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96 Sparrows Herne, Basildon, Essex SS16 5EX  
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**Peter Hathaway, Ordinary Member,**  
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SS17 9DP  
Telephone 01375 672759

## **Small Ads**

Small advertisements should be sent to the *Newsletter* editor, by either post or e-mail, and are published free as a service to Club members. The Club will not be a party to any transaction and can not be held responsible for the quality of goods or services provided by the advertisers.

A copy of the *Newsletter* in which the announcement is published will be sent to any advertiser on request if a stamp or SAE is included with the advertisement.

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Basildon, Essex SS16 5EX.  
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# LOCOSCRIPT SPECIALS

We are pleased to announce the following offers on LocoScript Software PCW products, commencing now:

● Purchase LocoScript 4 @ £29.95 and add any of the following for just £10.00 each (normally £19.95 each):

▶ 256K Ram Upgrade for PCW 8256/ PcW 9256 - the ideal time to upgrade a basic PCW allowing use of LS4. \* While stocks last \*

- ▶ LocoSpell
- ▶ LocoMail
- ▶ LocoFile

Any of the LX Font Packs including:

- ▶ Business
- ▶ Decorative
- ▶ Display
- ▶ Symbols
- ▶ Size
- ▶ Style
- ▶ The LocoScript 4 Clip Art collection - also OK for Micro Design 3 users.

● As a second offer, those who already own LS4 can purchase any two of the above and/or the Printer Support Pack for £19.95 each and then choose a third package *FREE!*

● As a third offer, which applies across the board in our current catalogue, PCW owners can purchase any two packages costing £19.95 or more and then claim a third package up to the value of £19.95 *FREE!*

These offers are valid until further notice

(but may be withdrawn after a limited period) and all prices include VAT. Please add £2.00 post/packing per order (any quantity).

Free catalogues sent on request. Contact: Steve Denson, MD, SD Microsystems Ltd & LocoScript Software.

PO Box 99,  
Thetford IP24 1NA.  
Tel: 98700 736427

Email: [sales@locoscript.com](mailto:sales@locoscript.com)  
Web Site: [www.locoscript.com](http://www.locoscript.com)

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## LOCOSCRIPT NEWS

We have recently opened a Telephone Support Line on: **07005 300404**.

This is generally attended by experienced staff between 10am-4pm Monday-Friday and calls are charged at 25p+VAT per minute which partly helps to fund the service.

This is half the cost of the old LocoScript Helpline which closed two years ago. Most LocoScript-related matters can be dealt with in real time although complex problems may need to be researched off-line.

Our Telephone Sales line remains on: **08700 736427** with calls charged at National Rate.

Please only use this to place orders or make sales-related enquiries. We can no longer afford to allow our sales lines to be blocked by technical queries.