NEWSLETTER

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Membership Secretary's Report

As Membership Secretary I thought it would be useful to give a summary of the proceedings at the club night each month. Most members, now, come from even further away from the club than I do and are unable to attend the monthly meetings. It seems a shame that you cannot share in a large part of the club's activities. Receiving the Disc Drive and having access to phone line help with the use of your PCW are just two of the benefits of belonging to the South Essex PCW Club.

The club had another successful meeting last month. There was a turnout of 20 members and 2 first timers to see the presentation given by Mike Elliston and Steve Massam. The topic this time was graphics. In particular importing graphics into Locoscript 4 documents. Graphic files such as Microdesign area (.MDA) files and CUT files may be imported into documents to improve the presentation dramatically.
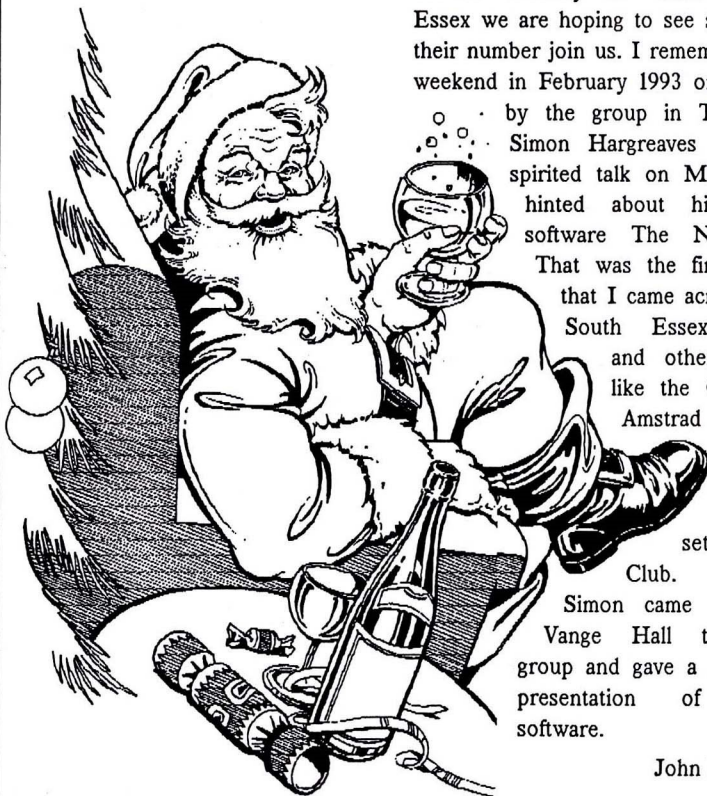
The club is gaining members steadily at the moment. With the sad demise recently of MicroDesign Essex we are hoping to see some of their number join us. I remember the weekend in February 1993 organised by the group in Torquay. Simon Hargreaves gave a spirited talk on MD3 and hinted about his new software The Network. That was the first time that I came across the South Essex Club and other clubs like the Crawley Amstrad PCW and the Somerset PCW Club. Later Simon came to the Vange Hall to our group and gave a detailed presentation of that software.

John Harvey

Chairman's Chatterings

David and I have both been called upon by members keen to install their latest upgrade to LocoScript only to find that for various reasons they cannot get it to work properly. Excluding the example of a faulty installation disc, which was rapidly changed by the company, the problem has usually been a case of failure to read the instructions properly.

The most common mistake has been to try and run the installation disc by simply putting it in the drive and switching on the machine. However you must first start the PCW with a start of day disc and then "re-boot" from the installation disc *but* by using the Shift, Extra and RELAY keys. The *usual* combination of Shift, Extra and Exit does not work. Incidentally, you are normally sent an up-to-date Start of Day disc with the package. If you are using the built-in printer you can just make some back-up copies of this and use these as start up discs. This Start of Day disc can also be used to start the machine before you re-boot with the installation disc if you wish.

The chances are that if you are upgrading to LocoScript4 it is because you wish to use the multi-column, colour printing or graphics features and that you intend to use an external printer instead of the built-in printer. However the installation process assumes that the default is for the built-in printer and you *must* change the f6 Settings (from the Disc Management screen) once you have completed the installation routine otherwise LocoScript will still try and send data to the built-in printer. If you need to use the "Sticky keys" or other options it is wise to select these from the f8 Options before you make the f6 Settings for the printer.

If you are not going to use the built-in printer it is best to remove this from your PCW as it is only loading up the system but *do not connect or disconnect the printer (or a memory pack) while the machine is switched*

on! You can do very serious damage to the computer and will it probably need a new motherboard. Also, if you are not using the built-in printer there is no reason why you should not remove the built-in printer drivers during the installation program-they are not necessary and only add redundant files to your start of day disc.

While you are changing the printer within f6 Settings remember that you will also have to note whether the printer has a sheet feeder or not and, in particular, by what means, which port, you are using to connect the new printer to your PCW. The install program assumes you have a CPS8256 interface even though you may well be using the parallel port on a 9512. These changes are made at Printer Options under Default Printer. Once you've made these changes to the Settings *save them to your start up disc* or you have wasted all the effort in making the changes; next time you start up it will simply go back to the defaults for the built-in printer.

As you have changed the printer you must now edit the Template.Std (or create a new one) on your start up disc otherwise, again, the computer will try and send data to the wrong printer. Edit (or create) the Template. Std in group 0 on your start up disc, f1 Document setup, f6 Printing; select your printer before you select the fonts to use for some fonts are printer dependant. If you find some odd printers on the list with a question mark behind them use the CUT key to remove them from the list; yours may now appear correctly. You cannot have more than four printers at a time but you are strongly advised to make one start of day disc for each different printer if you have several; you will only fill up the start up disc with more redundant files.

Finally, whichever version of LocoScript you are using *please* take out your Start of Day disc once you have commenced using

LocoScript and replace it with a data disc for your files. You should NOT write letters, documents, reports, files, etc on your LocoScript Program disc. You will wear it out more quickly making it unreliable. You will slow the program down and fill your memory up with unnecessary files. You can delete parts of the program without realising it and then it won't work at all.

One user had bought a PCW from new and a few weeks later he phoned to complain that he could not longer get LocoScript to print any of his letters. After some questioning it transpired that he had never bought *any* discs; he simply used the two master discs that came with the machine. He had typed all his letters onto the master disc and when it filled up he then started to delete any files that he had not created! When he deleted the printer driver files it would no longer print. The only solution was to buy a new set of master disc from LocoScript.

So remember: once you have started up LocoScript *remove* the program disc and save your files on a separate data disc; it will make life a lot easier and safer.

Mike

From the Secretary's Desk

Congratulations must be accorded to our postal member Ken Tether who resides in the sunny climes of Spain. Well done Ken. After considerable effort he reports he has managed to form a body to support the humble PCW. It takes the form of a discussion group under the umbrella of U3A International (University of the Third Age) and initially consists of eight members. The first meeting will take place in Marbella at Marbella 2000 Community Centre from 11.00am to 1.00pm on Monday the 1st December. Subsequent meetings will be fortnightly at the same time and place. If your in the nieghbourhood why not go along, I am sure you will be made welcome.

Note: U3A is a body dedicated to creating study groups on a variety of subjects and presently in this part of Spain. They cover: Photography, Film Appreciation, Painting for Pleasure, Philsophy, Writers Group, Influential 20th Century Novels and now **Understanding Amstrad PCW Micro-computers**. Wow!

Apparently there are 200 PCWs on the Costa del Sol and by far the majority are 9512s.

On another subject, many of our stalwart members are not retired when you can make your own choice about how you put your day together. Myself, I usually start the day with an early morning round of golf, then spend an hour recovering and then PCWing.

One of our busiest members, Steve Massam, is a working stiff and finding it more and more difficult to cope with day time telephone enquires and articles submitted by members as hardcopy. Please take this into account and where possible ring him in the evening.

Send your copy on disc/s (these will be returned to you). He is not concerned about the format; it can be LocoScript, ASCII or any thing similar; he says he can import it.

This is the last newsletter before Christmas so I would like to thank the committee members who have been supportive of the secretary over the last year and wish all of our members a happy Christmas and a New Year that brings you all you desire.

David Lalieu.

For Your Diary

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 CP/M Programs.

8th January 1998
Prize Giving for last months competition followed by a look at BASIC.