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**NEWSLETTER  
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**PD LIBRARIAN**

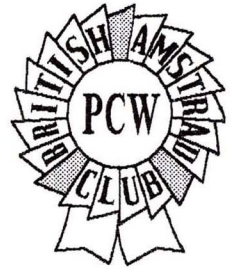
***The PD Library  
is suspended  
until further  
notice.***

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**BRITISH AMSTRAD PCW CLUB**

# NEWSLETTER



Issue No: 75

October 1999



## Next Club

## Night Brains Trust

### From the Secretary's Desk

The AGM became the longest in the club's history. This was because of the problems associated with replacing committee members and discussing the club's finances.

The outgoing Treasurer, Martin Blackman, has held the position for two years and is to be commended for his efforts and his support. We were unable to persuade a member to take on this important role and eventually the situation was resolved by Nick Chaundy agreeing to exchange the position he holds as PD Officer to Treasurer. As a result the PD Library will not be available to members until another member can take on this job.

The club is finding it very difficult to operate within the confines of the budget and will introduce cost saving and fund raising measures to improve this situation. The first of these is to request all members contacting the club and looking for a formal reply to ensure they furnish a stamp addressed envelope with their letter. Attending members will find the newsletter will be made available at the meetings, we will post the newsletter to all other members after the meeting.

Many members will remember the sad state of affairs with the Eastbourne and Hastings Club, who were forced to discontinue because of lack of support from the membership. The club is only as good as the support it gets from its members, and this goes beyond the hard working committee members.

The chairman supported a comment made by the Secretary about the falling numbers for club nights. He asked the audience for details of subjects they would like for club nights, I am afraid the response was not very informative. Without this type of feed-back we are unable to arrange subjects that will encourage members to attend. Drop me a line if you have any comments to make.

David Lalieu.

# Chairman's Chatterings

In Chairman's Chatterings in the last *Newsletter* I ended the section about the addition of the MicroDesign Euro.MDF to the Club's Public Domain library with the comment "If you only use LocoScript I'm afraid that you will have to resort to typing the word "Euro" – there will not be a Euro symbol for LocoScript". Well, I was wrong, at least if you still use an 8000 with the built-in dot matrix printer (or any PCW and an external 24-pin matrix printer).

Edward Heron wrote from Morden in Surrey with the suggestion that the problem could be solved by the use of the **LocoChar** program produced by Locomotive sometime back for use with LocoScript 1 or 2, before LocoScript 3 enabled the use of far more fancy LX fonts. LocoChar allowed you to redesign some of the characters available from the dot-matrix printer. In the process you produced a revised version

	Title	Yr	Mo	Pg
LocoChar	8000+	88	02	25
LocoChar tips	8000+	88	03	64
Chemical formulae (using LocoChar)	8000+	88	05	64
LocoChar tips	8000+	88	05	64
Printing out grids for LocoChar in LocoScript	8000+	90	06	72
Boxes drawn using LocoChar	PCW+	92	08	58
Creating new characters with LocoChar	PCW+	92	11	48
Characters re-defined using LocoChar	PCW+	94	03	38

In addition there a section on the subject on page 54 of Rob Ainsley's *PCW Plus – The Tips Collection* (April 1992) and a booklet *PCW 8256/8512 Designing your own characters* (June 1989) by Locomotive Software, both of which Edward found for me. Note that this latter refers to a revised version of the program which only works with LocoScript v2.20 and later; if you have an old copy of LocoChar you may need to get it upgraded.

For those of you lucky enough to have subscribed to the *Script* newsletter produced by Locomotive Software between 1987 and 1992

of the *Matrix.#* file on the start of day disc. Edward demonstrated his own use of the program with a delightful telephone symbol created specially for his letterheads.

To be honest, I had forgotten all about LocoChar because of the advent of LocoScript 3 and 4 and because I use a laser printer most of the time, which allows the use of fonts built into the laser printer itself. However, there is no reason at all why you can not use LocoChar to prepare an alternative copy of the *Matrix.#* file and use this revision of the file with any later version of LocoScript, provided that you still use the built-in dot matrix printer.

Edward stated that he had had difficulty in finding mention of LocoChar in David Lalieu's excellent *Index* to the PCW magazines. I suspect that this may be because the topic keyword is spelled as "LocoChar" rather than "Locochar" in the index. In undertaking a search myself I found the following references which may be of use to interested readers:

there are articles on the early version of LocoChar in Issues 2 (Jan 1988), 3 (Mar 1988), 4 (May 1988), 5 (July 1988) and the improved version (v2.20 on) in 10 (May 1989), 11 (July 1989) and 20 (1991) (in particular, on making large characters over several lines in depth).

If you have an external 24-pin matrix printer Issue 9 (Mar 1989) has an excellent article on the LocoChar24 program which comes with the LocoFont24 printers suite, so you are not limited to just the built-in dot matrix printer if you want a Euro symbol after all.

*Mike Elliston*



# BRITISH AMSTRAD PCW CLUB

## LATE NEWS



Supplement to British Amstrad PCW Club *Newsletter* No. 75, Oct 1999

# The future of LocoScript Software

LocoScript Software went into voluntary liquidation early in September 1999 but the news is not as bad as it first may appear. All of LocoScript Software's stock has been sold on to SD MicroSystems in Norfolk, together with all the software licences and trademarks.

LocoScript is most famously known for its leading PCW word processor *LocoScript* but it also owned the rights to *Mallard BASIC* and many other programs for both CP/M and DOS, including a number from the Moonstone catalogue.

The name LocoScript, and its legendary green locomotive wheels logo, will live on, now operated from Norfolk and all mail and phone calls are already being automatically diverted to the new address. Steve Denson, director of SD MicroSystems and new owner of LocoScript Software, states that he intends to take over where the former company left off and keep the range of LocoScript products available alongside those from SD Micros.

He has taken on Howard Fisher, who was Commercial Director of Locomotive Software (which first produced LocoScript for the Amstrad PCW 8256) and latterly Managing Director of LocoScript Software, as a consultant to ensure a smooth transition and product continuity from Dorking to Norfolk.

Although LocoScript Software did not produce any programs for the PcW16 SD Micros has already converted a number of CP/M programs to run on the PcW16 (using John Elliott's brilliant emulator program) so now the company can supply software for the whole range of Amstrad PCWs, from the earliest 8256 to the most recent '16.

*Mike Elliston*

LocoScript Software and SD MicroSystems can both be contacted at:

PO Box 99, Thetford, Norfolk IP24 1NA

Phone: 07000 736427 (Personal Number Rate) 08700 736427 (National Rate)

e-mail: [sdmicro@aol.com](mailto:sdmicro@aol.com)

web site: [members.aol.com/sdmicro](http://members.aol.com/sdmicro)





## MODIFYING PCW MACHINES

Many users are becoming aware that the 3.0" drive fitted to both the 8000 and the 9000 PCW machines have reached the end of their working life. If they are modified to have a 3.5" replacement drive fitted either internally or externally they will give many more years of satisfactory life. Do-it-yourself modifiers should take into account the following comments.

You may believe, because of your past work experience with electronics this change is a doddle and for many this may be so. You should not assume this is the case; you need a reasonable understanding of the PCW's circuitry and the precautions you must take to safeguard yourself and the machine. When the covers are off there is high voltage inside that can kill. Never work inside a machine without it being completely unplugged.

The other aspect is of course the safety of the machine, you could finish up destroying the machine or the new drives you are attempting to fit. You must make sure you have all of the information available before you start the change, it is very silly not to do so.

One of the most important differences you should be aware of is the operating voltage for the original 3.0" drive is 12.0 volts dc whilst the operating voltage for 3.5" drives is only 5.0 volts dc. If you just plug it in you will almost certainly destroy it.

The existing power leads are terminated with a small 4 way plastic plug. There are two black

wires and one of each red and orange. The simplest way of accommodating the voltage change is to switch the red and orange leads. The end wire terminals are retained in the plug moulding with small tags. If you carefully depress these you can separate the leads from the moulding, and then just reinsert them into the switched position.

Suppliers of some drives, more particularly the slimline fitted to the 9512+, 9256 and the PCW 10, have another way of overcoming this changed voltage situation. They supply a small printed circuit board which reduces the voltage. Incidentally there is another difference with slimline drives you must take into account; power to the drive is via the ribbon cable not a separate plug as with all other *industry standard* 3.5" drives. Many suppliers will insist the liability for installing an alternative drive of similar device is with the installer. In other words if it goes BANG its your problem.

Fitting inside 3.5" drives means modifying the PCW's case as this drive is invariably wider than the 3.0" drive. You will have to be inventive to utilise the old drives mounting feature but this can be achieved without too much of a problem.

With care your finished job will return your PCW machine into a *good-as-new* machine that will be a joy to use for many years to come.

**David Lalicu.**



### OBITUARY

It is with much sadness that I have to advise the members of the sudden death of Dorene Cox. Dorene died unexpectedly at home on the 24th of August.

Dorene became a member of the club in 1993, she contributed to the Disc Drive on occasions and when her health permitted was most supportive. She will be sadly missed. I am sure members will join me in offering her surviving relatives our condolences.



## SMALL ADS.

For Sale - Rev'd P.Dixon  
Telephone: (01874) 711200

*Two complete PCW 9512 systems (one printer needs attention) one with 3½" B drive, plus several daisy wheels, plus about 20off 3" discs, plus MD3 hand scanner, plus keymouse and extra 1.5mb of RAM. £150 o.n.o*

### PCW Machines

8256 Standard Machine (Drive Overhauled)	£35:00
8256 Modified Machine (Alternative Drive Fitted)	£45:00
8512 Standard Machine (Drives Overhauled)	£40:00
9512 Standard Machine (Drive Overhauled)	£50:00
9512 Modified Machine (Fitted with 3½" Drive)	£75:00
9512+ Standard Machine (Drive Overhauled)	£80:00

A small number of NEW alternative 3.0" A drives for 8000 machines. These drives can be fitted internally with a small modification to the machines casing, and they do not detract from the machines appearance. The connections are different but full instructions and a conversion lead are supplied with the drive. £30:00

All machines are with standard keyboards and printers and carriage and packing is extra.

### Books and Manuals

Amstrad Book 1 CP/M Logo and Word Processing Manual	£5:00
Amstrad Book 2 Basic Manual	£5:00
Amstrad LQ 5000di 24pin printer Manual	£5:00
Amstrad PCW 9512 Manual	£5:00
User's Guide MicroSoft Windows 3.1	£5:00
Programming the Z80 (ZACS)	£8:00
The Amstrad CP/M (Powys-Lybbe)	£8:00
Programme you PCW (I Sinclair)	£5:00
All in one Business Computing (J. Hughes)	£5:00
User's Guide to the Amstrad 8256/8512 (D Thompson)	£5:00
Amstrad Word Processing (I Sinclair)	£5:00
Hitch Hikers Guide to Artificial Intelligence (Forsythe & Naylor)	£5:00
A Guide to Playing Hobbit	£5:00

Post and Packing on all items. Please make your cheques payable to D.C.Lalieu  
10, Sheridan Avenue, Thundersley, Essex, SS7 1RD Telephone (01702) 551618

### Future Club Night Program.

Oct. 99	Brains Trust	Dec. 99	Competition & Quiz
Nov. 99	Your W/P Queries	Jan. 00	Competition Results & PD Entertains