

# The Disc Drive

ISSUE 16

WINTER 1997



The South Essex PCW Club  
Magazine, for all PCW users



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- \* *free printer support for virtually any printer*. You can use your printer's built-in fonts or colour capability without any additional expense
- \* *free user support* is included in the purchase price, and the **Protex** helpline operates (at normal 'phone rates) during evenings and weekends
  
- \* **Protex** handles printing in columns with ease - see them on screen first
- \* **Protex** is simply configured for more advanced purposes
- \* **Protex** can easily produce ASCII files to let you transfer your text between computers, either by software or for e-mail purposes
- \* the *free Protex Users' Club* is available to *all Protex* users for the open exchange of tips, templates, and information

**Protex v2.23** has had 12 years continuous development. Despite being highly developed, above all, it is very fast and the user-friendly 'look and feel' of the program has been maintained throughout it's development. Because of **Protex's** wide range of useful features, it is impossible to cover everything here, but further information is available if you send an A4 SAE to Brian Watson at **Protex Software, Harrowden, 39, High Street, Sutton-in-the-Isle, ELY, Cambridgeshire CB6 2RA.**

**CP/M Protex**, the one-disc word processing solution, costs just £25. It is available on 3" or 3½" disc from **ComSoft, 10 McIntosh Court, Wellpark, GLASGOW G31 2HW**, or Brian Watson at **Protex Software**. All cheques must be payable to **ComSoft**. Orders may be phoned to 0141 554 4735 or 01353 777006, quoting credit card details. Please ensure you give your PCW/PcW type and your drive A: size when ordering.



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Store or display sorted POLYGON/FIGURE/SPRAY  
directory with file size Turtle graphics  
Passwords & Time stamps Raster text plotting  
Direct keyboard access Pattern FILL/FLOOD  
AT/CLS/VPT/VIDE0/ULN Print/copy/move/swap  
File print between zoom/rotate screens or  
statements. image files up to 256k

### Easy to use

Basic98 comes with an integrated editor that can create and read an 'infobase' of up to 100 64k files and 4094 topics. This has been used to create the 532k manual, which can be viewed in the lower half of the screen as you are writing a program, and which is automatically reopened, with the source code position, to explain any compilation or runtime error that occurs.

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# Christmas Greetings



*To all our Members*



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## CONTENTS

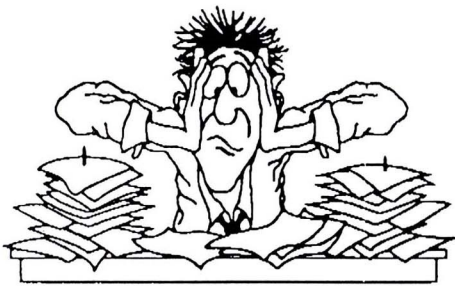
PAGE

Editorial .....	2
<i>By Steve Massam</i>	
Your Comments .....	3
<i>By some of our members</i>	
Just for Starters .....	4
<i>By Steve Massam</i>	
Basic Listing .....	7
<i>By Adrian Hooper</i>	
Fred .....	10
<i>By Mike Elliston</i>	
Simple Mail Merge .....	11
<i>By Anne Attlee</i>	
MicroDesign3 .....	14
<i>By David Lalieu</i>	
Introduction to CP/M: Part Two .....	21
<i>By Mike Elliston</i>	
A Novices Guide to SuperCalc2 .....	29
<i>By Boot Sale Sid</i>	
How far is it to? .....	33
<i>By Monica Dickerson</i>	
Getting a Perspective on Recession .....	36
<i>By Rod Shinkfield</i>	
Using the PcW16 .....	38
<i>by Esther Welch</i>	
Gallery .....	40
<i>By Steve Massam</i>	
Reviewers Guide .....	41
<i>By Peter Rogerson</i>	
Emphasis .....	43
<i>Anon.</i>	
Masterfile Tips .....	44
<i>By Rod Shinkfield</i>	
Data Transfer .....	45
<i>By Joe Bird</i>	
Geometric Design .....	47
<i>By Ken Rouse</i>	
Extra Spacing in Protex .....	48
<i>By Geoff Hayes</i>	

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### Subscriptions

£6.00 per Year + £2.00 per Meeting, payable  
on the door, First Meeting FREE!  
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# EDITORIAL

Thanks to Norman, I think you will agree, we have a stunning front cover. Ram and Rom in full colour, a special Christmas treat.

Creative Technology have a very generous offer for all *South Essex PCW Club* members, knocking a whopping £20 off MicroDesign 3 for a limited period. See advertisement in this issue. If you are at all interested it printing graphics or a combination of text with graphics then there's no better program than MicroDesign 3. Truly number one when it comes to Desk Top Publishing on the PCW. So my advice would have to be *take advantage of Creative Technology's generosity and give*

*yourself an extra special Christmas treat and order your copy NOW!*

In this issue Mike continues his introduction to CP/M, Anne Attlee perseveres with LocoMail, a review of *Comsoft's* latest arrival Route Master for those who are going places and Home Inventory for the PcW16 plus much, much more, including a few comments from our readers.

The release of LocoScript 4, now complete, has to be the biggest event of the year. Although having more than it's fair share of teething problems it's amazing what LocoScript have done for the PCW in a world that nowadays seem to be dominated by PC's. Many of our members have now upgraded, making full use of the colour, column and graphic capabilities LocoScript 4 has to offer. However if you are looking into purchasing a colour printer specifically for use with LocoScript 4 it would be a wise move to have a word with LocoScript before you make your purchase. As the market of colour printers is rapidly growing LocoScript have their work cut out writing printer drivers for all makes and at the moment fully compatible **colour** printers are few and far between, so be warned!

I still hear from time to time rumours of software development to the PcW16 and it will be interesting to see what happens over the forthcoming year, so *all you PcW16 users hang in there.*

Well that's about it for this year. Wishing you all the best.

Steve





# YOUR COMMENTS

I really look forward to getting each new issue of 'The Disc Drive' with or without a stamp. It just keeps getting better and better all of the time. I remember when I first joined South Essex PCW Club, 'The Disc Drive' seemed to be written almost entirely by members of the committee. Now, there are a lot more contributors with lots of different views and ideas I hope that doesn't sound like criticism of the committee because I think they did, and still do, a great job. Its just that a lot of members have taken the secretary's clarion call 'Lets Communicate' to heart and are just doing that and thank goodness for it say I.

K.D (Wirral)

May I take this opportunity to thank you and all of the other officers of the club for all the invaluable and under-appreciated work you are doing.

L.J.M (Burnham-on-Crouch)

I must  
of being v  
short time  
National F

Congratulations on a superb Autumn issue of 'The Disc Drive'. For me, anyway, its the best yet and not just because you included my little item on cataloguing discs and files.

Its full of useful information for users of PCWs. The introduction to CP/M, Just for Starters, Address Lists made Easy, have all been very helpful to me. I hope you can find similar articles for future editions. Please convey my thanks to the appropriate authors, yourself included.

C.A (Isle-of-Wight)

I must s  
of h

Congratulations on the latest 'Disk Drive', it is in every way a professional production, and goes a long way to replacing 'PCW Plus'. More power to your elbow, as the saying goes.

T.W (Nottingham)

of 'The  
quality of  
Sheffield)

# Just for Starters!!

LocoScript

## Paper Types

Having created a document you can select the type/size of the paper by first pressing [f1] Document Set Up, pressing [f5] Paper, selecting Paper Type from the menu and

Paper Type
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> A4
11" Fanfold
2" Labels
AS
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Portrait (Tall)
Landscape (Wide)
<input type="checkbox"/> Use Paper Type
Show Paper Type

another menu will drop down listing the types of paper you have available. By default you will probably have A4, A5, 11" Fanfold and if you are lucky 2" Labels. However,

what if, let's say, you wanted to print on 1½" Labels or DL envelopes? Well you will be happy to hear that you can create your own paper types from within LocoScript.

## Ground Rules

Before we begin, let's get one or two ground rules sorted. First, most of us probably don't think of Labels and envelopes as paper types, but LocoScript thinks they are. Anything from a postage stamp upwards is classed as a paper type (maximum of 16½") and, if your printer can take it, this includes card. Unfortunately most printers don't like card so consult the printer manual if in doubt. Secondly all printers (including lasers) need something to grab hold of when using single sheet stationery, usually at the start and most certainly when printing the last few lines of text. In normal use it is impossible for most printers to print on these areas known by LocoScript as the Top and Bottom Gaps. Different printers needs vary. My Canon BJ10ex requires a Top Gap of 2 and a Bottom Gap of 3 whereas the built in Daisywheel needs a Top Gap of 6 and

a Bottom Gap of 3. By consulting your printer manual, or with a little bit of experimentation, you will soon work out your printer's requirements and this will be the same for any single sheet stationery you put through your printer regardless of it's size.

## Creating a New Paper Type

There follow two examples, the first for (single sheet) DL envelopes and the second for (continuous) 1½" Labels. From the Disk Management screen press [f6] Settings, select New Paper Type and press [ENTER]. A menu will be displayed showing the settings

◆ New Paper Type
Paper Type
New Character Style
Character Styles
For Character Set
England
For Printer
PCW9512
Standard Printer
Printer Defaults
Write SETTINGS.STD
EXIT

for the paper type last used. The first thing to change would be the Name of the paper type. We want this example to be for DL envelopes so just DL\_ENV would suffice. Press [-] to clear the space and type

in the new name. Having done this, cursor down to Single Sheet and make sure this has a tick beside it. If it hasn't press the [+] key. Next comes the tricky bit; you need to measure the Height of an envelope in sixths of an inch. At just under 4½" this works out at 26 sixths - of - an inch so, with your cursor on Height, type 26.

Paper: A4
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Single sheet
Continuous Stationery
Height 70
Width 50
Top gap 6
Bottom gap 3
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Ignore paper sensor
<input type="checkbox"/> Create new Paper Type



Now we need to do the same for the width, this is just over 8½" so 52 sixths-of-an-inch would seem about right; with the cursor highlighting Width type 52. The all-important Top and Bottom Gaps come next. These too are measured in sixths, of an inch and need to be set to your printers requirements as mentioned earlier. As this is single sheet stationery the Paper Sensor should be ignored by placing a tick beside this option. Finally cursor down to Create New Paper Type and press [ENTER]. That's it! Well almost; you will need to insert your Start of Day disk and select the option to Save Settings if you wish to permanently store this new paper type. Do that now!

### 1½" Labels

Now for the 1½" continuous labels. As before, press [F6] Settings and select New Paper Type; change the Name of the paper to 1½" Labels and, this time, select Continuous Stationery by positioning the cursor and pressing the [+] key. Notice how the Width option now changes to Left Offset; more of this in a moment!

With your cursor on Height, measure your labels from the top of one label to the top of the next. It is important that this measurement includes the gap between the labels and it would appear that most labels are manufactured with this in mind. Type 9 as the Height. Now comes that Left Offset option. This obviously refers to the left hand margin or, to be more precise, the point where the printer will start to print. Because continuous stationery comes in various forms and widths you may wish, for example, to have your narrow string of labels running in the centre of your printer by adjusting the tractor. The

<b>Paper: 1½" Labels</b>	
Single sheet	
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Continuous Stationery	
Height	9
Left Offset	0
Top gap	6
Bottom gap	3
Ignore paper sensor	
▶ Create new Paper Type	

Left Offset option allows you to dictate where the printer is to start printing and this is measured in tenths of an inch. Personally I prefer to leave the left tractor wheel where it is, far left, and simply move the right tractor wheel when using wider stationery. In this way my Left Offset is always set to 0. Because in this example we are dealing with continuous stationery you may be forgiven for thinking that the Top and Bottom Gaps don't come into the calculation, but as you see they do (or can do). Think about it. You don't want the printer printing on the Gap, now do you? So it is best to set either the Top or Bottom Gap to at least 1. Alternatively you could get the printer to miss the gap by having a Header or Footer of just one line, in which case you could leave the Top and Bottom Gaps set to 0. With continuous stationery it is a good idea to switch the Paper Sensor on by removing the tick beside Ignore Paper Sensor. This tells the printer to stop when it has run out of paper, otherwise you could come back to your printer and find the last 25 out of 100 address labels have been pounded onto the platen. As before, cursor down to Create New Paper Type and you will be given the opportunity to write to SETTINGS.STD. With your Start of Day disk in drive A: select this option and press [ENTER]. Now.

### Removing a paper Type

You can have a maximum of 10 different paper types saved on your Start of Day disk. If by chance you have filled all ten slots you will not be given the option of creating a New Paper Type until you have removed one. Having pressed [F6] Settings you will need to select

<b>◆ Paper Type</b>
New Character Style Character Styles For Character Set England For Printer PCW9512
Standard Printer Printer Defaults
Write SETTINGS.STD EXIT

Paper Type and press [ENTER]. Cursor down to the paper type you want to remove and press [ENTER]. The list of settings will be displayed and the option you want is right at the bottom, Remove Paper Type. Cursor down to this and press [ENTER]. This has now been removed from the list and having cursor down to [EXIT] and pressed [ENTER] you will now see that you have the opportunity to create a New Paper Type.

### Adjusting a paper type

If you have an existing paper type that almost

<b>Paper: A4</b>	
✓ Single sheet Continuous Stationery	
Height	70
Width	50
Top gap	6
Bottom gap	3
✓ Ignore paper sensor	
Set new details Create new Paper Type ▶ Remove Paper Type	

fits the bill you can adjust it to suit your needs, or use it as a basis to create a New Paper Type. Both these options are carried out by first selecting Paper Type from the [f6] Settings menu, cursoring

down to the paper type that most closely resembles what you are looking for and pressing [ENTER]. When the list of sizes/options appears you can adjust them as previously mentioned and, either select Create New Paper Type, or Set New Settings from the bottom of this menu.

<b>Paper Types</b>	
◆ A4	
1 1/2" Fanfold	
2" Labels	
A5	
<b>EXIT</b>	

### Write to Settings

Whatever you decide, if you want these paper types to be permanently stored you must remember to select Write to Settings to your Start of Day disc when the opportunity arises or you will lose all you have done.

### Layouts

One last important thing I should mention is that creating or selecting a New/Different Paper type doesn't alter the page layout. If, for instance, you go from A4 to 1 1/2" Labels you will need to alter the left and right hand margins via [f2] Layout if you are not to print beyond the label edges.

*Have Fun. Steve*



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# BASIC Listing

Welcome to the fifth part of my BASIC listing. This part is to be a volume conversion program. It should be quite straightforward to enter all of the data below (I am afraid that a full tutorial is beyond the scope of this article) so I shall just give you a few pointers. Start CP/M as usual and then type BASIC [RETURN]. Now simply enter all of the information exactly as shown below, pressing [RETURN] after each line. (NB a new line starts with a line number). When you have finished insert the disc you have saved the previous parts of this series on, into the drive and type SAVE "VOLUME.CON" [RETURN] and then RUN "VOLUME.CON" [RETURN]. If you don't get quite the expected result check your listing carefully for errors. If you have missed any of the parts, would like some additional help, or wish to acquire a copy of the programs on disc (only 3.5" at present - ONLY WHEN ALL TUTORIAL HAS FINISHED) please contact me on (01761) 436276 (between 6 and 9 pm).

```
10 LET C1$=CHR$(27)+"E"+CHR$(27)+"H"
20 PRINT c1$:t$="Volume Conversion Menu"
30 PRINT TAB(15);t$:PRINT TAB(15);STRING$(LEN(t$),"=")
40 PRINT:PRINT:PRINT "Press the appropriate number to
identify the type"
50 PRINT "of conversion that you wish to carry out."
60 s1$="fluid ounce":s2$="millilitre":s3$="pint":
s4$="litre":s5$="cubic centimetre":s6$="cubic inch":
s7$="cubic decametre":s8$="cubic foot":s9$="gallon":
s10$="cubic metre"
70 p1$="fluid ounces":p2$="millilitres":p3$="pints":
p4$="litres":p5$="cubic centimetres":p6$="cubic
inches":p7$="cubic decametres":p8$="cubic feet":
p9$="gallons":p10$="cubic metres"
80 PRINT:PRINT:FOR i=1 TO 13:READ a$:PRINT i;" ";a$:
NEXT
90 PRINT:PRINT:PRINT "Please type in your chosen type
now: ":INPUT A
100 ON A GOSUB 120,140,160,180,360,380,400,420,440,460,
480,500,110
110 IF A=13 THEN PRINT c1$:RUN "CONVERSE.BAS"
```



```

120 t1s$=s1$:t1p$=p1$:t2s$=s2$:t2p$=p2$:GOSUB 230
130 D=C*28.4:GOSUB 260:GOSUB 200:RETURN
140 t1s$=s2$:t1p$=p2$:t2s$=s1$:t2p$=p1$:GOSUB 230
150 D=C*0.0353:GOSUB 260:GOSUB 200:RETURN
160 t1s$=s3$:t1p$=p3$:t2s$=s4$:t2p$=p4$:GOSUB 230
170 D=(C*586)/1000:GOSUB 260:GOSUB 200:RETURN
180 t1s$=s4$:t1p$=p4$:t2s$=s3$:t2p$=p3$:GOSUB 230
190 D=C*1.76:GOSUB 260:GOSUB 200:RETURN
200 PRINT:PRINT "Press SPACE to return to menu"
210 WHILE INKEY$<>"":PRINT CHR$(7):WEND
220 x$=UPPER$(INPUT$(1)):IF x$=" " THEN RUN ELSE 220
230 PRINT c1$:t$="Program to convert "+t1p$+" to
"+t2p$:PRINT t$
240 l$=STRING$(LEN(t$),"="):PRINT l$:PRINT:PRINT
250 PRINT "Please enter the volume in ";t1p$:PRINT:
INPUT C:RETURN
260 IF D=1 THEN pd$=t2s$ ELSE pd$=t2p$
270 IF C=1 THEN pc$=t1s$ ELSE pc$=t1p$
280 PRINT:PRINT C;pc$;" is equivalent to";D;pd$:RETURN
290 DATA " Fluid ounces to millilitres"," Millilitres
to fluid ounces"
300 DATA " Pint to litres"," Litres to pints"
310 DATA " Cubic centimetres to cubic inches"," Cubic
inches to cubic centimetres"
320 DATA " Cubic decametres to cubic feet"," Cubic
feet to cubic decametres"
330 DATA " Litres to imperial gallons","Imperial
gallons to litres"
340 DATA "Cubic metres to gallons","Gallons to cubic
metres"
350 DATA "Return to conversion menu"
360 t1s$=s5$:t1p$=p5$:t2s$=s6$:t2p$=p6$:GOSUB 230
370 D=C*0.061:GOSUB 260:GOSUB 200:RETURN
380 t1s$=s6$:t1p$=p6$:t2s$=s5$:t2p$=p5$:GOSUB 230
390 D=C*16.38:GOSUB 260:GOSUB 200:RETURN
400 t1s$=s7$:t1p$=p7$:t2s$=s8$:t2p$=p8$:GOSUB 230
410 D=C*0.035:GOSUB 260:GOSUB 200:RETURN
420 t1s$=s8$:t1p$=p8$:t2s$=s7$:t2p$=p7$:GOSUB 230
430 D=C*28.316:GOSUB 260:GOSUB 200:RETURN
440 t1s$=s4$:t1p$=p4$:t2s$=s9$:t2p$=p9$:GOSUB 230
450 D=C*0.22:GOSUB 260:GOSUB 200:RETURN
460 t1s$=s9$:t1p$=p9$:t2s$=s4$:t2p$=p4$:GOSUB 230
470 D=C*4.546:GOSUB 260:GOSUB 200:RETURN

```

```
480 t1s$=s10$:t1p$=p10$:t2s$=s9$:t2p$=p9$:GOSUB 230
490 D=C*220:GOSUB 260:GOSUB 200:RETURN
500 t1s$=s9$:t1p$=p9$:t2s$=s10$:t2p$=p10$:GOSUB 230
510 D=C*0.004545:GOSUB 260:GOSUB 200:RETURN
```

Good luck, Adrian Hooper (RADSTOCK.PCW user group)



## Loco 4 Update

LocoScript 4 (release 2) version 4.08/4.09 is now here! Although now I am informed that version 4.10/4.11 is available with added features like drawing boxes, changing the size and position of pictures you have already positioned, producing mirror images of pictures, LocoSoft say they have even managed to make it faster.

To trade-up to this latest version is going to cost you a fiver. Having purposely held back from upgrading from the first release, avoiding all the too-ing and fro-ing of discs as the various upgrades became available, I found it a little disappointing to receive version 4.08/4.09 two days **after** I received the notification that version 4.10/4.11 was now available. Still we shouldn't knock one of the last remaining software producers who are taking the trouble to support the PCW.

Incidentally, did you know you can include picture codes in a LocoMail routine? Certainly from version 4.08/4.09 onwards this is quite possible and has really got me thinking!

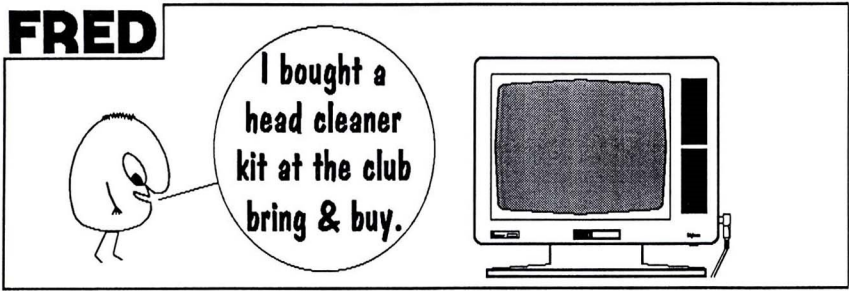
You could, for instance, create a LocoMail Master document that, when merged with a LocoFile datafile produces labels with different pictures alongside the address according to your member's status or position.

Or, what about a Fill document that lists various options to produce a printed illustration tailored to your requirements? For example, you could arrange LocoMail to draw a house, the way a young child would. A square and, according to the on screen prompts, arrange for the roof to be either a triangle or rectangle with sloping sides and have options to vary the number and position of the windows and doors etc. This would produce a list of fixed-position picture codes on screen. Only when printed would you see your design. The mind boggles!

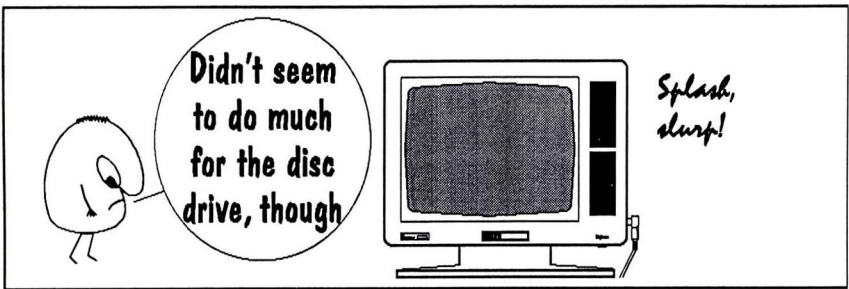
Steve



# FRED

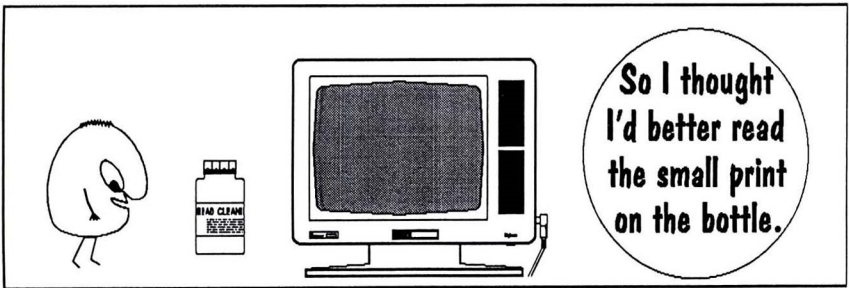


I bought a head cleaner kit at the club bring & buy.

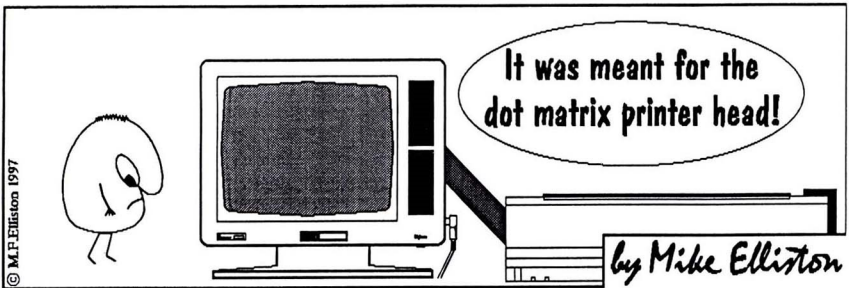


Didn't seem to do much for the disc drive, though

*Splash, slurp!*



So I thought I'd better read the small print on the bottle.



It was meant for the dot matrix printer head!

*by Mike Elliston*

© M.F. Elliston 1997



# Simple Mail Merge

by Anne Attlee

This is perfectly easy to do by any PCW user - as long as you don't look to the manual for help! I cannot get over how simple it turns out to be - and how impossibly difficult the manual makes it.

Let me explain the method I have worked out, with John Harvey's assistance, to send out the same letter to a number of people, with each letter individually addressed. You can also vary each letter if you want to. Once you understand the basic principle in a very simple application, it is much easier to understand the manual to learn more advanced uses. Or maybe this is as much as you will ever need. Here is the sort of personalisation you might want to make:

---

Mr John Smith  
2 The Road  
Anytown,  
Anycounty  
AB1 2CD

1st Jan 1997

Dear John

The next meeting of our club will be on the 24th January 1997.

Yours sincerely

---

## LocoMail lingo explained

An address list is kept in a *Datafile* which works like a card index drawer holding a set of record cards. It seems like a perfectly ordinary LocoScript file but it is actually a LocoMail datafile. When you name it, I suggest you use LST for the last three characters after the dot - eg the filename for the address list for the ABC-ADDR.LST.

It is best to keep separate lists for any

special interest you have. Three shorter lists are better than one long one because LocoMail (and LocoFile) work (rather slowly!) through their lists alphabetically. The details of each person on the address list are held in a separate page in the LocoMail datafile, so that each page is equivalent to a record card in a card index drawer. Eventually each page in turn will be merged with the page holding your circular letter.

What you put on each record is set out according to the *Record Pattern* which you can plan to suit yourself. For this article, we'll stick to the basic, most useful, type of record.

## Preparing your address list

Create a new document in the usual way, using .LST for the last three letters of its name. Using LocoMail is much easier if you show codes. If you don't already do this, press [F8] for Options and confirm you want to show codes.

Now type in the Record Pattern to tell LocoMail what it needs to know in a way it can understand. For example, you could type:

---

Name [RETURN]  
Address [END OF PAGE]

For [END OF PAGE] press [ALT] + [RETURN] together.

A Record Pattern consists of Item Names, Separators, and a Terminator.

# The Item Names tell you the type of information being given. Item Names use the letters A - Z in upper or lower case, figures 0 - 9, and the underline character.

# The Separators are the special characters that separate each Item from the next one. Separators can be anything other than the characters used in Item Names. The handiest are the [RETURN] character and :

# The Terminator tells LocoMail it's at the end of a record. The [END OF PAGE] marker is a very handy Terminator.

Here are some examples of what you might type in your address list, illustrating various points:-

# Using the record pattern above,

---

Mr William Smith[RETURN]  
2, The Road[RETURN]  
Anytown, Anycounty[RETURN]  
AB1 2CD[END OF PAGE]

---

You can use [RETURN] to give new lines in the address because only the first RETURN on this Record Pattern counts as a Separator. After that first Separator, the Record Pattern has programmed LocoMail to seek the Terminator character [END OF PAGE] and to ignore anything else.

# You may want to start your letters (eg) "Dear John" rather than "Dear Member". For that you could use the following Record Pattern:

---

Name[RETURN]  
Address[COLON]Infname[END OF PAGE]

---

Two points here. First, we had to use a different second Separator to indicate the end of the address, because we would be using [RETURN] to make new lines in typing out the addresses in the address list.

Second, "Infname" is a LocoMail Item Name standing for "Informal Name" - whatever you want to write after "Dear —". Always use an Item Name as short as possible because you will be re-typing these words frequently. Now you would type into the datafile:

Mr John Jones[RETURN]  
6 High Valley Road[RETURN]  
Newtown[RETURN]  
SS8 4RT:John[END OF PAGE]

# If you haven't the information to fill in an item, just leave it out, but you must include all the Separators even if the item is blank. For example, if you don't have the Brown's address, you would type:

---

Mr and Mrs Richard Brown[RETURN]  
[COLON]Dick and Sally[END OF PAGE]

---

To try out a Mail Merge, I suggest you type the Record Pattern with the informal name option above and make an address list with the three sample names and address given here, because they ought to work properly provided they are typed in correctly. You will need to amend Mr Smith's entry to read, on the last line:

AB1 2CD: William[END OF PAGE]

One of the big limitations of LocoMail (and also LocoFile) is that it doesn't sort entries for you into alphabetical order as a proper database would do. You can overcome this problem when adding new names by inserting them into the list in the right place to keep an alphabetical sequence by surname. Or you can sort the names and addresses into alphabetical order before you start entering them in the datafile, to save a lot of scrolling back and forth.

A few entries is enough to experiment with. Always check that your Record Pattern, address list, and the LocoMail Master Document work properly together before typing in a long list and then finding it won't perform correctly.

Save your work under "Finish Edit".

### **Creating a LocoMail Master Document —**

Write out a practice letter - for example the one at the beginning of this article - or use your real one if it is not too long. Use your usual template set up for your printer etc, adding the LocoMail commands you need as described below. We can call it very grandly your 'Master' document.

Where you want to put in the formal name of the person your are writing to, press the keys [+] [M] type the *Item Name Name* and press [-] [M]. If you type in [+] [M] quickly enough, LocoMail won't go through the longer process of confirming from a menu that you mean 'Mail'. The screen will now show (+Mail)Name(-Mail).

Use the same process for putting in the address and the informal name or names.

For simplicity just now I suggest you write the date as part of the Master document. Later on you can read up how to insert Today's date in a standard letter.

Your Master document should look something like this:-

```
␣
(RAlign)                Meadow Cottage␣
(RAlign)                Oldtown, Midshire␣
␣
(RAlign)                1st Jan 1997␣
␣
(+Mail)Name(-Mail)␣
(+Mail)Address(-Mail)␣
␣
Dear (+Mail)Name(-Mail)␣
␣
(CEntre)                ABC Club␣
␣
The next meeting of our club will held on
the 24th May, 1997 and I look forward to
seeing you then.␣
␣
␣
Yours sincerely ␣
␣
```

Save your work under 'Finish Edit'

### Carrying out a Merge \_\_\_\_\_

At the Disc Management Screen, move the file cursor to your 'Master' document and press [M] (see merge at the top of the screen). Next move the file cursor to your datafile (the address list) and press [ENTER]. Make the

choices you want from the 'merge documents' menu. I recommend using 'manual' to control the output of the printer. When you hold each letter on 'manual', you can add standard variations from temporary 'Blocks' or permanent 'Phrases', or any other alteration you want in the letter on the screen. Press [ENTER] again. LocoMail should now display on the screen your letter addressed to the first person on your address list.

If all has gone well you should see a menu drop down in the top right hand corner of your screen showing the various options 'Print Result' being one of them. If you wish to edit the result before printing press [ENTER] and carry out any alterations, pressing [EXIT] to return to the print menu. If, for what ever reason you don't want to print the result, cursor down to 'Discard Result' and press [ENTER], the next record on the datafile will automatically be processed. Printing the result is carried out by moving the cursor onto the option 'Print Result' or 'Save and Print' and pressing [ENTER].

If LocoMail says 'error', check back carefully on what you have done, until you find the fault.

### You've done it \_\_\_\_\_

When you get LocoMail to 'deliver the goods' it is a fantastic sensation. Well worth the trouble it takes to learn it - which for simple mail-merging is very little.

LocoFile or MasterFile databases have more features and flexibility, but they take a lot more learning and they cost more to buy. If all you want is this simple mail-merging application, LocoScript and LocoMail takes a lot of beating, and it came at no extra cost, as part of my LocoScript 3 package.





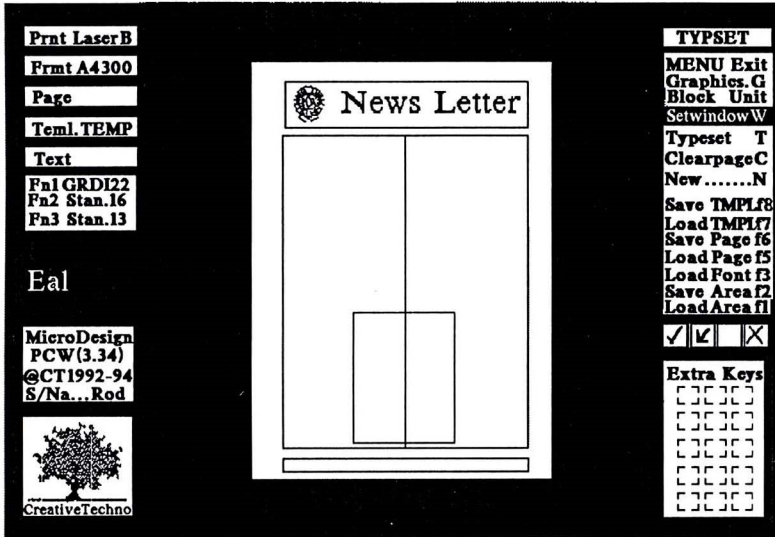
# MicroDesign3

During the year 1990, I and the rest of the management team of the company I was working for were unfairly dismissed (this was the conclusion of an Industrial Tribunal to which we took the company).

As the result of a discussion with the other managers, it was agreed that because none of

portable typewriter were abysmal and so I visited a local auction and purchased an Amstrad 8256. I then had to learn how to use it and became involved with the club as a starting point.

It took several visits to the club before I began to understand this strange language



● Centre the contents panel like this for a more professional look.

us was in a position to fund professional representation we would attempt to represent ourselves, with me undertaking the formalities of collating the evidence and writing to countless witnesses and the court itself. At the conclusion of this episode of approximately 9 months I had produced 109 documents. These were letters and statements and I found we were up against a pretty sharp and ruthless solicitor on behalf of the company.

In the cold light of dawn, I became aware of my deficiencies as a producer of words; until this point in my career this was the work of a secretary. My attempts at using my wife's

they were conversing in; even now I wonder on occasions what the hell is that?

At an early stage I believed the PCW was no more than a very good tool to produce script, when one club night Creative Technology arrived to demonstrate some software called MicroDesign 3.

The presentation was very professional and the audience was enraptured; here was an aspect of PCWing that was completely new to most of us. I was totally smitten.

This was something that you could really get your teeth into, a feature that was most enjoyable. The product allows you to design

work and with many other PCW products including *Foreign* keyboard layouts covering German, French, Italian, Portuguese and so on. The only omission seems to be the *Techniche* keyboard which has a nonstandard layout.

Subsequently I have found the use of a mouse enhances the operation of MicroDesign greatly; Creative's Keymouse is preferable to Kempston's. As time has passed I have accumulated additional add-ons such as *Tweak*, a *Scanner* and similar programs that you can use in conjunction with MicroDesign such as *MicroDraw*.

When you are storing your work the program is happy to use any combination of additional disc drives; this includes hard drives although on boot up you do need to have a 'key' disc in a floppy drive.

When I purchased my PCW 9512 I was advised to consider fitting Cirtech's *Sprinter* to improve the machines performance and with MicroDesign it shows!

MicroDesign 3, commonly known as MD3,

additional memory is needed to satisfactorily operate MD3. If possible go for 1.5 Mb Ram-port; this is one with a through port that will allow you to further add on.

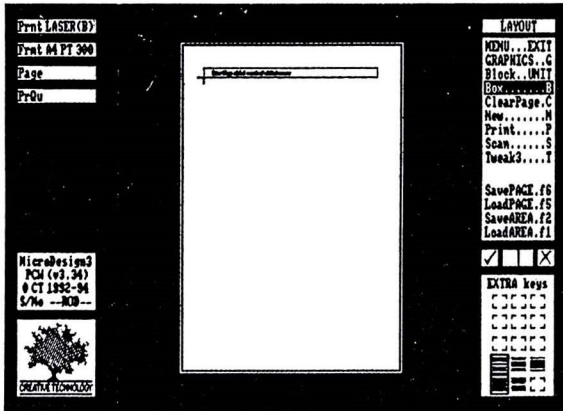
MD3 uses a system called *Whizz Printing* and I am given to understand there was initially a problem with a product called *Ram Pack Plus* manufactured by SCA but this has been resolved subsequently.

Complicated documents produced in *LocoScript* or other word processing software, with lots of control codes, tabs and different text sizes with spaces left for illustrations made you wish for a desk top publishing programme. Well, MD3 certainly resolves many of these frustrating problems. The recently launched *LocoScript 4* has made some inroads to improving the production of professional documents that include graphics but it has a long way to go before it becomes serious competition for MD3.

Colloquially known as the *Big Two*, that is MD3 and *LocoScript3*, they are very good

stable mates each with its part to play for the serious PCW user. If you are a user of *Protext*, which is a CP/M based program, then you can switch between word processing and MD3 via the *Network* with the advantage of having a spell checker at your disposal in word processing.

You are able to arrive at the same situation using *LocoScript* but you will have to either export your file to ASCII or preferably give it the suffix *TXT*. Then in the MD3 editor you can load the text; carefully check the result as a few obscure characters



- Sizing the Box – just drag the corners appropriately with the mouse

supports a very wide range of printers, starting with the original nine-pin Dot-Matrix to bubble and desk jets, multiple pin and laser; with the latter you will need extra memory. On this point it is important to understand

are not loaded identically.

If you are producing an article for our newsletter or magazine all you have to do is produce it as text on disc and the editorial team will do the rest. On odd occasions it is

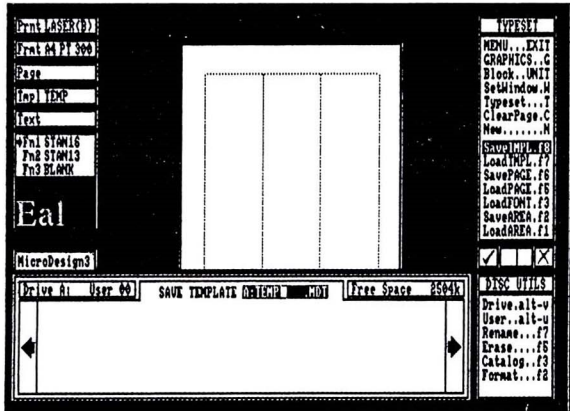
necessary to either produce our own adverts or to revamp an existing one. A good supply of fonts is very helpful in this case, particularly if you are trying to match existing text or getting text to fit into a set space. It is possible to adjust the default settings to achieve the desired result.

The club's newsletters and magazine are produced almost exclusively using MD3. As time has gone by since Steve took over the editorship of the magazine, he has developed his own particular way of laying out the pages and so on. This would be referred to as the *House Style* by the professionals. It incorporates the use of templates that he has developed and preferences for particular font sizes and styles.

MD3 has the facility for Saving Templates; you certainly need two, for right and left facing pages. Then, usually, one for the front page and another for the back page, unless this is left blank. We usually work in an A5 format and the final product of our newsletters and magazine are this size, but you may want to consider A4 particularly if the output of your printer is not good. You then have the option of reducing this to A5 during the photocopying and this will improve the quality of the final product.

Let's go through the basics of setting up a page. The first thing we have to do is select Typeset and then Set Window by pressing the [W] key. Using the spacebar and the cursor keys you adjust the rectangular frame giving yourself say ½" margins on both sides and 1" spaces top and bottom. Then you decide how many columns you want; this is achieved by pressing the Relay key which will bring up the Set Window Menu. I would suggest two columns for an A5 page and three

or more for an A4. At this point you can set the dividers; these are vertical lines between the columns. The choice is yours; they are not essential. Then you set the column margin and gutter to, say, 4. This is so the type



● Saving the Template is quick and easy, and will save time later

setting will have a sensible gap between columns and around graphics. Press the Relay key to remove the Set Window Menu and press Enter to complete the operation. As a precaution it is a good idea to again save the template on the [F8] key.

Having decided which fonts and point sizes you want, now is the time to load them. The default fonts Stan 16 and Stan 13 are usually very good for general text, but you will probably want a larger eye-catching font for headings. Once again these could be saved by over-writing the previously saved Template. MDT file.

The Format Menu Settings can now be made. Press [T] to launch the Typeset operation and then [F3] and the Format Menu will appear at the bottom of the screen. Use the cursor keys to set ruled lines to font 1; this is so the body of the text (Stan 13) has overall control of the ruled lines. Set line format to Justify so that the columns of text will be right justified. Set Justify to Words;-



if you set it to Char the micro-spacing used to justify the text will be inserted between each letter giving the text a strange stretched appearance. In order to avoid the text flowing across any graphics you may want to change Auto-Flow to Auto. As you will be setting the text to fairly narrow columns, set Soft-Hyphens to on. The reason is obvious; long words may be forced onto a new line causing excessive white areas. *Soft hyphens are inserted into long words using [Extra] [-].* Again at this point it will not be a bad idea to save the Template. MDT once more by over-writing the original. The reason for setting up your template in this manner for column work is that you will have columns of text that are horizontally in-line with each other, even when you change the point size for say another heading in the column.

To simplify the layout we will introduce two boxes, one for the heading and the other for the footers. In this way you can at least see the areas that you have selected for this part of the layout. Invariably you will have a

the name, date, issue number, etc. This box is normally referred to as the masthead and the width of the box is usually the same as the window.

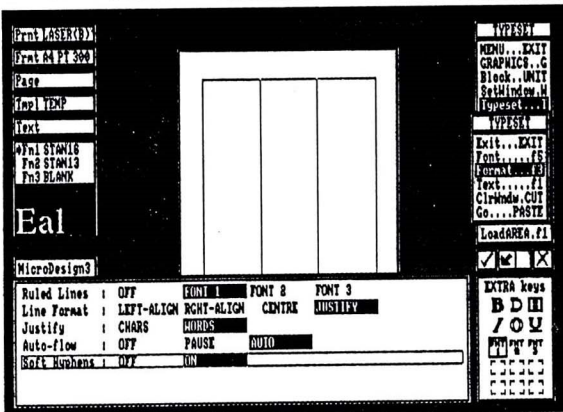
The footer box is created in the same way, but its width need only be sufficient to encompass the font size you have decided on for page numbering, etc.

So far I guess you would call the template we have devised as a General Template. So let us load the General Template and we will set the parameters of a pair of templates for left and right facing pages. As with the General Template we shall save the template by over-writing the previously saved template as we go.

Because this is not the front page the box at the head of the paper can be identical in size to that at the bottom; it is a simple matter of using the block operation to reproduce it.

Having established the boxes, now is the time to insert some words. Press [G] to select the Graphics section and position the frame over the top box. Press Enter and the screen

will show a 2:1 magnification. Next press [W] to select Write and, making sure you have the correct font selected, (shown in the Extra keys menu) type in your header which in our case would be "South Essex PCW Club News - October 1997 Issue 13". For this particular template we have left-aligned the text in the box and it is therefore the template for the left page. With this done we will scroll down to the bottom box and enter the page number in the footer area. Then, yes you have guessed it, we save the



● The Typeset Format menu, with the settings you need graphic, image, or maybe a logo, that will determine the space you will require for the height of the header box; the remaining space in this area will probably give details such as

template. If you save the whole of this area as an MDT calling it, say, PAGE-L.MDT and then clear the screen and reload it, you can remove

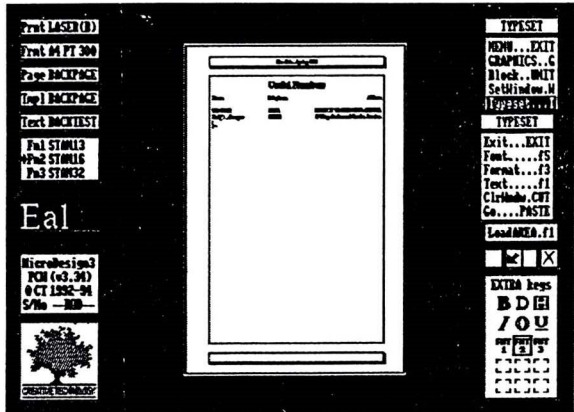
the text with the block operation and replace it with text that is right aligned and, again, save it as PAGE-R.MDT and you have a pair of templates for right and left facing pages.

Clear the page and load the General Template. We are now going to produce the cover for our newsletter which will include the previously mentioned 'Masthead'. This is the header panel containing the publication name and so on. The publication name will usually be in an eye-catching style of font of a large size. You can spend a lot of time designing this and it should contain the issue number, date, price and so on.

The footer can contain almost anything; ours, for instance, contains details of the editor and the club. Some newsletters show the same details as that carried by the internal pages including the page numbering but that is not my choice. You may want to reserve a panel to display the contents; this is perhaps more the case with a magazine rather than a newsletter. Having completed this layout save it by over-writing and call it COVER.MDT. The contents panel can be positioned anywhere in the window but bear in mind that text will be flowing around it so care has to be taken that the remaining text area is not reduced so that it contains only one or two words. Its not a bad idea from this

point of view to place it over a line separating two columns.

At this stage it becomes very straightforward. Your text is written into the Editor

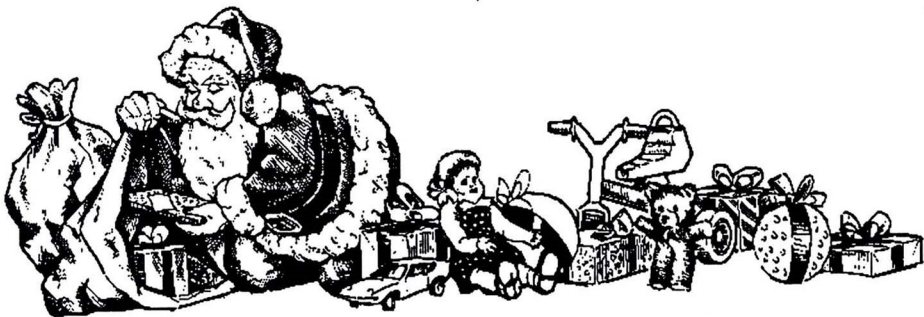


● ...the program laid out the text exactly as you wanted it

section or a file loaded then pasted onto the page in the Typeset section. The beauty of this particular feature is that if you are not happy with the result you can UNDO it with the Word/Char key. This removes the text and allows you to make changes such as another font or point size and then re-paste it.

Typesetting is an art that will probably improve with experience; a little care is required in the way you lay out the text and graphics to achieve very professional results.

David Lalieu



# HOW TO REPLACE A FILM RIBBON IN A PCW DAISYWHEEL CASSETTE

1. Place used cassette on flat surface & prise open with blade.

2. Lift two holding springs and tension spring and pull them out of the way.

3. Remove and discard the empty spool of ribbon.

4. Place a spool of new ribbon in the right side of the cassette case & drop roller inside it.

5. Thread ribbon out of cassette and across to take-up spool & fix with the self-adhesive tape.

6. Replace springs and then the cassette case lid.

7. Use winder to tighten ribbon. Replace holding clip if storing or transporting elsewhere.

## Process times:

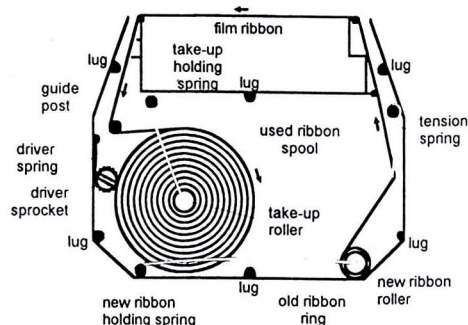
First time, following instructions, about ten minutes.

After practice: approx. 3 mins.

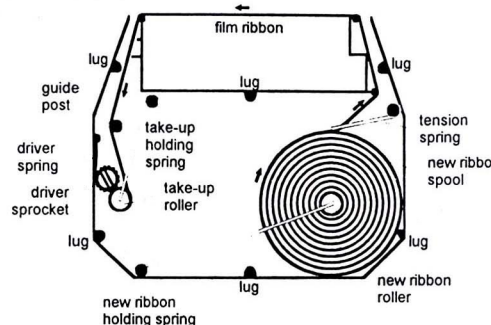
Does all this seem a bit too tricky or time-consuming for you? Never mind, in that case simply send your used cassettes to us and we'll do them for you (see We Refill).

Different printer? We re-ink a whole range. Please telephone.

## USED RIBBON



## NEW RIBBON



## PRICES

Daisy

Dot Matrix

Starter Kit

£11.50

£11.75

DIY Refills

£ 1.60

£ 1.90

We Refill

£ 2.35

£ 2.35

We Re-ink

£ 2.35

£ 2.35

Plus £1.75 p&p per order

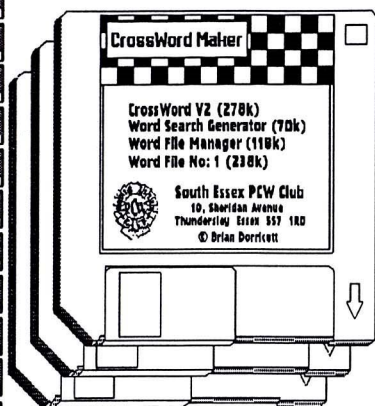
Please enclose cheque/PO (no cards)

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43 High Street, Eyemouth,  
Berwickshire, TD14 5EY

Tel: 018907 50965





## CrossWord Maker

Brian Dorricott's acclaimed software now at radically reduced prices. Normally available on 3.5" DSDD (720k) discs (3.0; you supply your own identified and formatted disc) Control disk contains Crossword V2, Word Search Generator, Word File Manager and Word File No:1. Price: £25:00. (Price includes a set of manuals.) Four other Word Files including one in German and French. Price £5:00 each.

South Essex PCW Club.

"Four Winds", 10 Sheridan Avenue, Thundersley, Essex  
SS7 1RD. Tele: (01702) 551618.



"FREEWARD"

132, ADELAIDE GROVE

EAST COWES ISLE of WIGHT  
PO32 2TU Tel: 01983 296366



# 8BIT

The magazine for all 8-bit computer users.

Yes, if you have a SAM or a Spectrum, a CPC or a PCW, an Einstein or an Osborne, a Sharp or an NCI00/200, a C64 or a ZX...if it has a 8-bit 'heart', **8BIT** is for you.

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# Introduction to CP/M: Part Two

On the last occasion we looked at just CP/M itself and the commands built into that program as an operating system. Those built-in (or internal) commands were simple versions of DIR, DIRS, TYPE, ERASE, RENAME and USER allowing you to find what files were on a disk in one or more user groups and to view, erase or rename them. These are fairly limited functions and there are other associated programs on your master disc/s (known as external commands) which enhance those listed above. If you are at all unclear about these built-in commands it might be worth while running through the last article again before you continue here.

Once you have started (or booted up) your machine with CP/M, the operating system and the internal commands are loaded into a reserved part of the memory and are available at all times until the computer is turned off or the power is cut. You can re-boot your machine by inserting a *copy* of your CP/M master disc in the A: drive and by pressing the Shift, Extra and Exit keys simultaneously. (Make the *copy* with Diskit.Com as detailed later on.)

If you wish to use some of the external commands listed below they must be available to the system before they can be called upon. In general this means that they should be on the disk in the default drive. (It is possible to load them into memory automatically when you boot up the machine but let us leave that refinement until later.) Ignoring hard disk machines, the A: drive is the default drive when you start up and this is where the external programs would be held. Once CP/M is up and running and you

have the A: prompt on the screen you may remove the Start of Day disc (when the drive has stopped running and the light is off!) and replace it with another disk holding the other command program files you wish to use. Alternatively you could insert a second disc in the B: drive, if you have one, and switch to it by entering B: (key in B: and press the Enter key). However, let's keep it simple and stick to using the A: drive for now.

There are about forty additional external command files provided with your CP/M master disc. It is important to note that a number of these will only work properly with the version of CP/M with which they were originally supplied. It is advisable not to use commands supplied with someone else's machine and you should NEVER start your machine up with a version of CP/M not supplied with your PCW unless it is an upgrade to your original version.

Let us look briefly at the external commands supplied with CP/M version 1.4 which comes with the earliest PCW 8256 and 8512 machines. I found it very useful to copy all the CP/M utilities files onto one high density CF2DD disk on my 8512 making any of them accessible from the B: drive (but, of course, you cannot *start* the PCW from this disc in the B: drive). On the 9512 they are all on a single high density disc already. Let's see what a listing from DIR will give us. The following are in order of popularity or usefulness, not as they appear on the disc, with a simple comment on how you may use them. Many will be explained far more fully at a later point and are much more versatile than appears from this brief comment:

DISCKIT	Essential to format and verify discs. Can also copy whole discs;
DIR	Displays names and characteristics of files; an enhancement of CP/M;
HELP	Used in conjunction with the file Help.Hlp to provide on-line assistance. (Both Help.Com and Help.Hlp must be on the same disc for them to work together);
ERASE	Removes one or more files from the directory of a disc;
PIP	Nowadays this would have been called COPY! Extremely useful and very versatile;
RENAME	Enables renaming of one or more files at once: an enhancement to the built-in CP/M command;
SHOW	Shows the amount of space left on the disk, the name of the disk label, certain directory information, etc.;
TYPE	An enhanced version of the CP/M TYPE command with paging options;
SUBMIT	Lets you execute a batch of routine commands in a .SUB file with one command;
DEVICE	Enables selection of other printers or communications devices;
SETDEF	Sets the default order in which drives are searched for a file;
DATE	Lets you enter and display the date and time of day;
SETKEYS	Reconfigures the keyboard to work with specific programs (but <i>not</i> in LocoScript);
SET	Enables the use of passwords, time and date stamping of files, file protection, disc label names, etc.;
SET24X80	The PCW has a 32x90 character screen; some programs prefer a 24x80 screen.
PAPER	Assists in setting up <i>built-in</i> printer to various paper sizes, etc.;
LANGUAGE	Used mostly to show the pound sterling £ sign on the screen (but not necessarily on your printer!);
PALETTE	Enables reversal of screen lettering and background colours;
SETLST	Enables printer initialization, e.g. switch to condensed type, etc.;
INITDIR	Enables files to be date and time-stamped (but not Loco files);
PUT	Enables printer output to be stored into a file on disc instead;
GET	The system takes the next command as output from a file: see Put. Put and Get used together can be very powerful;
SETSIO	Sets or changes Serial Input/Output options for communications use;

DUMP, ED, GENCOM, HEXCOM, LIB, LINK, MAC, PATCH, RMAC, SAVE, SID and XREF are considered to be far too advanced for any introduction to CP/M and will not be discussed further.

There are a couple of other utilities on your disc which come from Amstrad and not Digital Research. These include RPED, a simple (and limited) line editor written by Roland Perry which runs from BASIC;



Mallard BASIC (Beginners All-purpose Symbolic Instruction Code) from the Locomotive stable [Mallard was, and still is, a rather nifty steam locomotive] and Mail232, a simple serial input/output controller if you have the Amstrad CPS8256 interface (or similar) fitted on the back of your machine. The latter also has a copy of the game of *Life* program hidden away in its depths, the only free game that comes with a PCW!

## DISCKIT

I have chosen DISCKIT.COM as the first candidate for discussion because it is used for formatting, verifying and copying discs and it is essential that you make copies of your original or master discs before you use the PCW further. Under no circumstances should you use your master discs on a daily basis. You *must* make copies of the masters and use these *copies* for regular use. The masters should be stored in their boxes, away from phones, loudspeakers, electric motors or any other source of magnetic interference. That way you have the masters to fall back on to use to make another copy when one of your daily working discs gets damaged.

All floppy discs need to be formatted before you can use them to store files. Whilst it is possible to format *data* discs in other programs like *MicroDesign* or *2 in 1* you can *not* format a disc with one of these programs and then simply copy an .EMS or .EMT file onto it. These programs will format discs for storing data, documents, your own files, etc., but you *must* use Disckit (or LocoScript), which prepares the disc in a slightly different fashion (with a system track), if the disc is to be *self-starting*, a *boot-up disc*, a *Start of Day disc*.

Without being too technical, formatting a disc is rather like drawing faint ruled lines on a sheet of blank paper before you write on it. *Verifying* a disc is a means of checking that the formatting process has taken place correctly. (Are all the faint lines visible and in the right place? Are there any holes in the sheet of paper?)

You should *always* verify a disc after you have formatted it, otherwise you could be wasting your time. Its a lot safer to check that a disc is reliable before you start to use it than find it is rather suspect once you've written your first novel on it!

Disckit.Com is used to copy the *whole* contents of one disc to another. It can *not* be used to copy just a single file! (Yes, it will copy across the one file *but* it will also overwrite everything on the destination disc, too!) The two discs can be of different sizes but they must both be of the same capacity, i.e. both 180k (173k formatted) or both 720k (706k).

If you have fitted additional 3½" drives to your machine and have problems when trying to copy discs, in that Disckit will not allow you to copy from a 3" disc to a 3½" disc or *vice versa* (or it insists that you must format a 3½" disc in a 3" drive!) this is because you have not added the correct .FIB file/s to your start-up disc/s.

Disckit uses .FIB files to know whether a drive is a 3" or a 3½"; adding the *correct* .FIB files will give you the required options for *your* system. The appropriate .FIB files should have been provided on disc by the supplier of your additional drives. Again, it is inadvisable to simply use someone else's .FIB files; their drive/s may have different characteristics from your own.

The copying process within Disckit is such that the copy will be identical to the

original disc (byte for byte). The files will be in exactly the same order and, indeed, any errors on the original will also be duplicated on the copy (just like on a photocopy). [Yes, we have all heard the story of the typist who put the floppy in the Xerox machine when told to get a copy of it!]. Diskit copies are primarily used as a back-up process. If you want a copy of one or more individual files then you would use PIP.COM which we'll come to later.

One of the most frequent reasons for the loss of data on PCW machines is caused by putting 3" discs into the drives round the wrong way. Whenever you use Diskit be extremely careful about which side of the disc you are working with. All good 3" discs come stamped with an A or a B on each side. It is good practice to leave the labels off your discs until they are both formatted *and* verified. When formatting, verifying or copying a low density CF2 disc in the A: drive of an 8000 series PCW you are processing only one side of the disc at a time, that nearest to the screen. However on the 9000 series the drives are double sided and you will be processing the whole disc, both sides, in one go. Under no circumstances should you ever try to format or copy the "other side" of a 3" CF2DD on a 9000 series PCW (it is not possible with a 3½" drive). If you do this then you will ruin any data on that disc completely—it can not be rescued (not even by Dr. Dave). It is advisable to use two sided labels printed with both an A and a B on CF2 disks, but one sided labels (as used for 3½" discs) on CF2DD discs. When you put the labels on the disc after verification ensure that the printed letters on the label match the stamped letters on the disc casing. On the built-in drives the side in use is always that nearest to the screen.

Having made back up copies of your master disks and any other software you have purchased as well it would be useful to see what is on the discs. One of the major failings of discs compared with books is that you need a computer to read them whereas most people can read a book unaided.

To assist in the use of the software you will frequently find a text file on the disc which you should read before trying to run the program on it. These files are usually named something like Read\_Mc.Doc, ReadMe.Txt, Read.Me or ReadMe.Asc (the latter referring to an ASCII file). Occasionally you may find that, for example, the file regarding SuperCalc2 is named ReadMe.Sc2, or ReadMe.Ptx for Protex. (LocoScript Read Me files can usually only be read by LocoScript.)

## **DIR**

How do you know if there is a ReadMe file on your latest disc? Put the copy you have made into the A: drive, type DIR A: and touch the Enter key. Browse through the listed files and see if such a name appears. Of course, if the manual tells you to look for a file called READ.ME then you can simply enter DIR A:Read.Me. If it is not on that disc you will get the message "NO FILE". Similarly you can list all the Basic files with DIR \*.BAS or all the 2in1 files with DIR 2IN1\*.\*. You will remember the use of the \* and ? wildcards from last time, I hope. (You do not have to type the A: if the prompt is A>. You could simply enter DIR Read.Me but it is good practise to include the drive letter when reading DIRectories. That way you won't make a mistake when switching to B: with DIR B: later.)



So far these DIRectory commands have been those built into CP/M itself. However DIR is available with other options as well. How do you know how big a file is? The [Size] option is what you need. So enter DIR A: [SIZE]. (You will recall that to Enter a command you type the command and then press the Enter key). Note the [square] brackets around the word Size. If the disc you are viewing is your copy of SuperCalc or Protext or MasterFile or similar the chances are that you will get the message "DIR.COM required" because DIR.COM is not on that disc in the A: drive.

To keep it simple for the moment put your copy of your CP/M side one disc in the A: drive, for we know that DIR.COM should be on that. CP/M on its own will give you a simple directory but DIR.COM is needed for the options. With the CP/M disc in A: enter DIR [SIZE] and all the files in Group 0 will be listed in alphabetical order with their sizes in k (kilobytes). The listing will also show the number of files on the disc and the total number of kilobytes used.

Another option to DIR is DIR [FULL]. This lists all the files and their sizes but it also tells you the file attributes. Whilst we will discuss file attributes more fully later you will recall the use of DIRS to list the Sys files. (Do any of the files listed have a Sys attribute or are they all Dir?)

Both the [Size] and [Full] options give one other important piece of information about the files on the disc. The listing of my CP/M version 1.4 master using either [Size] or [Full] includes the final line "Used/Max Dir Entries for Drive A: 29/64". This answers the question as to why you sometimes get the message "Disk Full" when you've only got a few dozen

small files on it. A low density disc of 180k (173k) used in the A: drive of an 8000 series PCW can only hold the maximum of 64 files in its directory. A high density disc of 720k (706k) [used in the B: drive on an 8000 or the A: drive on a 9000] can hold a maximum of 256 entries in its contents list. *But*, rather large files (over 16k) take up more than one compartment in the directory entries area (in the same fashion as a very popular topic can occupy more than one line in the index to a book). This is why 26 files occupy 29 directory entries. One is Basic.Com at 28k taking two lines and another is the .EMS file at 40k taking three lines.

Thus a low density 173k disc with 64 small files (or a high density 706k disc with 256 files) is still full up! This limitation can be particularly important if you have a hard disc. It is normal for a hard disc to be partitioned into four drives (usually C:, D:, E: and F:). But each of these partitions, which on a 40Mb hard disc will be 10Mb or 1000k each, can only hold a maximum of 512 files or a total of 2048 on the whole disc! Therefore you should seriously consider backing up and storing all those short letters you've written over the past year or so onto a few floppies or you may find you get the "Disk Full" message when there's still 5Mb left.

Perhaps you are wondering why I quote both 180k and 173k as the capacity of a CF2 low density disc (or 720k and 706k for a CF2DD). In the simplest of terms, whilst a formatted CF2 disc can store 180k some 7k of this is used for storing the directory entries and other information about the disc. You have only 173k available for your files on a CF2. Similarly a 14k system area on a 720k CF2DD disc leaves you with 706k for storage.



There are a number of other options available to DIR and in all cases the option is typed in square brackets. It will be →

simpler to list these, again in order of usefulness, and for you to experiment with each of them in your own time:

DIR [DRIVE=ALL]	displays all files on all available Drives;
DIR [USER=ALL]	displays all files on all User Groups on the disc;
DIR [DRIVE=(A,B,..)]	displays all files on the specified drives;
DIR [EXCLUDE]	displays all files EXCEPT those specified, e.g. DIR [EXCLUDE] *.COM will list everything except the .COM files (very useful on a full disc);
DIR [DATE]	displays time and date stamps (but only if set for use);
DIR [ATT]	displays the various file attributes;

In addition the options [DIR], [SYS], [RO] and [RW] display only the files with the Dir, Sys, Read-Only or Read-Write attributes, [NOSORT] displays the files in the order they are stored on the disc and [MESSAGE] tells you what DIR is doing during a lengthy search. [LENGTH] and [FF] (meaning Form Feed) are used when you are listing the directory to a printer. You do remember how to send the output to the printer, don't you? (Try Alt+P).

It is possible to spend a lot more time on just the DIR command but we have a long way to go yet with CP/M so we will go on to the next utility on the list. This will tell you how to discover more for yourself about DIR and most of the other programs on your master disc too, at least the ones from Digital Research.

## HELP

HELP.COM is unusual in that it works in conjunction with another file called HELP.HLP which must be on the same drive as Help.Com for it to function properly. On the 8000 series it's on Side 4; on the 9000 series it's on the CP/M disc.

Put the appropriate side of disc in the A: drive and type HELP. You will be presented with a list of about forty topics which you can interrogate. Most of these have subtopics too. (The original Help.Hlp file is about 76k in size and will occupy over 50 pages if printed out so, as you may imagine, it is fairly comprehensive). If you type "DIR" at the HELP> prompt you will get a second-level of topics or references about DIR, DIRS and DIR with Options.

It is worth noting that whilst I have typed commands in all-capitals to help identify them, CP/M is not case sensitive and commands may be typed in either uppercase or lowercase as you wish. However, it is much fussier about its punctuation. A parenthesis "(" can't be used for a bracket "[", nor a semicolon ";" where a colon ":" is required. Periods and commas cannot be interchanged and if they are called for they are needed! I say this for some users fail to get CP/M Help to work properly because they do not read what is on the screen in front of them. When Help gives the message "Enter .subtopic for information on the following subtopics:" that initial period is important.

At the bottom of the Help screen on DIR there are two subtopics available, "Built-In" and "WithOptions". If you simply enter "Built-In" at the HELP> prompt you will get the message "Not found". (If you have done this enter DIR again). Instead, enter ".Built-In" with the *period* first and a third-level menu appears with more on the version of DIR built-in to CP/M (as explained last time) but with another *.subtopic* available, namely Examples. Entering ".examples" (with the *period*!) will give you several screens of examples of DIR in use.

Again, learn to read the screen properly. At the bottom of the first screen there is the message "Press RETURN to continue ". If you press anything else except the Return key (or the Enter key) you will jump out to the HELP> prompt again. If this is what has happened enter "DIR BUI EX" and you'll be back in the examples again.

There are two points to note here:

- a You only need to type in the first few letters of the command, provided that they are unique, not the whole word, e.g. BUI instead of Built-In; and
- b If you enter the menus one level at a time then the periods in front of the *.subtopics* are essential.

However, if you enter a string of menu levels in one line, e.g. DIR BUI EX, then not only do you *not* need the periods but in fact it won't work with them. (Don't ask me why!) Remember also the additional function of the Paste and Copy keys which will recall the last command you typed; useful when searching through Help.

I imported the Help.Hlp file into a word processor to have a printed copy for later reference; much more value than the oft repeated "This utility is not covered any further in this manual". which you may

have met elsewhere! I had no problem with the 76k file which comes with CP/M v1.4 on the 8000 series but advise that you will have difficulties with the 96k version on the 9000s. (It contains two hidden EOF codes which must be removed first.) If you try it remember that it is a large file and will take a long time to import. Also make sure that you have sufficient space on the M: drive before you start.

If you replace all instances of "///1" with a new page code you will isolate each topic onto a page of its own. The ///2 and ///3 markers denote the second and third levels in the menu structure so don't delete these until you've got an acceptable pagination sorted out. An A5 page on the built-in dot matrix in 17 pitch came to 55 pages so use page numbering in either the header or footer. Also, if you use Loco you'll have to exchange all the '£' signs back to the '#' marks that they should be.

## **ERAsE**

Many programs will keep a back-up copy of the file you are currently editing with the extension .BAK. Whilst this can be useful if you corrupt the latest copy or if the mains fail while you are working (just REN Myfile.Doc=Myfile.Bak and edit it again) it can mean that your discs end up full of old .BAK files that you really don't want any more.

These redundant files can be removed with ERAsE to free up more disc space. If you know the name of the file you wish to delete, say Myfile.Old, then you can simply enter ERA MYFILE.OLD and the internal ERAsE command within CP/M will delete the file, but you must have specified the drive and name exactly. For a more general use of the ERAsE command

ERASE.COM needs to be on one of the drives on the machine, which can, of course, include the M: drive.

At this point I am going to ask you to do a bit of file copying without explaining exactly what we are doing until a little later. Put your copy of your CP/M disc into the A: drive and enter the following command:

```
PIP M:=A:ERA.COM
```

This will have copied the ERASE utility onto your M: drive from where we can use it to operate on discs in either drive A: or B: (if fitted). Enter M: (remember the colon) to switch to the M: drive and the prompt will change from A> to M>.

At this stage please make sure that you are working on a *copy* of a disc which either doesn't have any files on that really matter or that you have a back up copy of elsewhere. Remove the CP/M disc from the A: drive and insert the disc from which files may safely be erased. Press STOP (change of disc) and enter DIR A: to make sure that you know what is on that disc in A:. Pick one of the files for erasure, say MyFile.Old. At this point you could just enter ERA A:Myfile.Old as before and Myfile.Old would be removed from the disc. Note that since you are working from M: where Erase.Com is stored you must include the drive letter A: in front of Myfile.Old (otherwise Erase.Com will look for Myfile.Old on the default M: drive and return the message "No File").

Let us assume that the DIR A: command listed a number of .BAK files. The easiest way to delete them all is to enter ERA A:\*.BAK. You will be asked to confirm this with "Confirm (Y/N)?" and if you press Y they will all be erased.

However, Erase.Com has one option available, the [CONFIRM] option which may be abbreviated to [C]. So if there are some .BAK files you do wish to retain then enter ERA A:\*.BAK [C] instead. This time each filename is displayed with a (Y/N)? message for confirmation. Y will delete the file, N will skip to the next entry. (If you are really unsure then you can always press the Stop key to abort from Erase.) Equally you can delete all the files beginning with MY from the disc with ERA A:MY\*.\* or *all* the files from the disc with ERA A:\*.\*. Isn't that a lot simpler than f3, E, over and over again as in LocoScript?

To be absolutely precise you are only deleting the files from User Group 0 on the disc in the A: drive. If there are files in Group 1 on the A: drive to be deleted you would need to switch to User Group 1 on the M: (since Erase.Com will only work on one User Group at a time to stop you deleting other people's files). Switch to user 1 on the M: drive (do you remember how?) by entering M1:. However, if you now enter ERA A:\*.BAK you will get the message "ERASE COM required". This is because you do not have a copy of Erase.Com in User 1 on the M: drive (as well as in User Group 0). You could copy Erase.Com to User 1 on M: with PIP but a much more satisfactory method is to make ERASE.COM a "System" (or Hidden) file:

```
SET M:ERASE.COM [SYS]
```

so that Erase will now work across all user groups on a disc.

Both PIP.COM and SET.COM will be explained later but I think that we've done enough with Disckit, Dir, Help and Erase for this session.

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# *A Novices Guide To SuperCalc2*

By Boot sale Sid

I was lucky enough to obtain SuperCalc 2, after Mike Elliston's excellent demonstration and lecture earlier this year. I have, for many years, used a BASIC generated spreadsheet program to carry out several procedures. Unfortunately, since it was written, things have progressed somewhat and I have been unable to make any changes to the program or print out the formulae. So on seeing the far greater flexibility of SuperCalc 2 my brain, small as it is, sprang into action. Well, it really took me several months to get the blasted thing going again but eventually understanding the new program just happened. I must explain that I do not have the manual for SuperCalc 2; I was informed it had long since turned to dust. However, vague memories of what Mike told us in his lecture gradually returned - not everything, I must add.

The first use of SuperCalc 2 was a checker for my gas bill, then my electricity bill and finally procedures for the annual costing of running my car, plus working out the cost of long journeys. First I have set out the formulae of what I call my GAS BILL CHECKER. I have two disk drives, so, the Start of Day is run in drive A, and the work is saved on a disk in drive B - seems logical. Now, I'm not a mathematician and my logic is questionable, so please keep any criticism to a minimum, as I'm also very sensitive.

First switch on the PCW and boot up SuperCalc 2; mine self boots. I haven't a clue how else one would boot it up, except possibly booting CP/M and typing SC2, or something similar at the A> prompt. The screen then shows the program has been loaded, but one has to press a key to continue. On screen appears a spreadsheet

layout, letters along the top and figures down the left hand edge of the screen, with some gumf along the base. At the top left of the screen should appear a highlighted oblong; this is the first cell to accept information. The oblong is actually the cursor and can be moved around the screen to wherever it is required. The top left is Column A row 1. Move the cursor to the right and it is now in column B row 1. This is important to appreciate especially when inserting formulae for the calculations.

Anything that is typed appears at the base of the screen and is transferred to the cell when either the Return or Enter keys are depressed. All this is for people who haven't used SuperCalc 2; the clever clogs are most likely miles ahead by now and becoming very bored. So I'll move along to the actual Gas Bill Checker procedure.

With the cursor at A1, type: "Present. Then press either return or enter; the word Present will appear at the top left of the screen and the cursor will automatically move across to column B. However, using the arrow (cursor) keys, move the cursor to position A2 then type "Previous. Now I'm sure you have the hang of things so I'll move on even quicker. Text to be inserted must always start with opening double quotes " (as found on shifted 2). Formulae has to be encompassed in open and closed parenthesis, as this example formula (B1-B2), see later. Numbers and decimals are typed directly and will appear at the cursor as typed - no parenthesis.

Now type in at cells A1 through to A17 the following, exactly as shown below. Do not type anything that appears in italics, just

what follows the italics. After typing each entry, press either the return or enter key; this transfers the message you typed in to the cell where the cursor is displayed.

- Position A1* "Present
- Position A2* "Previous
- Position A3* "Units
- Position A4* "Multiply
- Position A5* "Metres
- Position A6* "Vol Con *This stands for volume control which you should find on your gas suppliers bill.*
- Position A7* "MJ/m3
- Position A8* "Divide
- Position A9* "kWh
- Position A10* "Price
- Position A11* "Charge
- Position A12* "Sub total
- Position A13* "Credit
- Position A14* "Total
- Position A15* "VAT 5%
- Position A16* "+ VAT
- Position A17* "Payment

Should the VAT be reduced still further, one just places the cursor over cell B15 to be changed and then type in the new information.

Right, we now move on to the interesting part where all the calculations are carried out. Some of the figures that are entered rarely change, but gas suppliers are canny folk and do change certain parameters without ever informing the public what they are up to. Actually, they are adjusting the figures up or down, which in most cases affects the price very slightly, and on occasions, quite considerably. So it is important to check the program with your gas bill and see if you can spot what has been changed by your ever astute con' merchant, ahem! gas supplier.

Now, as with everything that was typed for column A, it is time to type instructions for column B, so move the cursor to the top of

the screen and place it under the letter B. As above, do not retype anything shown in italics. As always the signs for mathematical calculations are: plus + using the + and = key for addition, dash - for subtraction using the underscore and dash key next to the plus and equals key, asterisk \* figure eight shifted, for multiplication and the slash key / for division. After typing each entry, press either the return or enter key; this transfers the message you typed in to the cell where the cursor is displayed.

*Position B1*, type in the current gas meter reading at this cell

*Position B2*, type in the previous meter reading at this cell. *This can be obtained from a previous gas bill.*

*Position B3* (B1-B2)

*Position B4* 2.83

*Position B5* (B3\*B4)

*Position B6* 1.02264 *This figure is the volume control figure supplied by the gas company, I've no idea how they work it out.*

*Position B7* 38.5 *This figure is sometimes changed by your supplier.*

*Position B8* 3.6

*Position B9* (B5\*B6\*B7/B8)

*Position B10* .01486 *This is the unit price and is another means of hiking up prices.*

*Position B11* 8.94

*Position B12* (B9\*B10+B11)

*Position B13* 2 *This is an arbitrary figure the supplier allows as credit to encourage prompt payment.*

*Position B14* (B12-B13)

*Position B15* .05

*Position B16* (B14\*B15)

*Position B17* (B14+B16)

Variables are cell numbers B1, B2, B6, B7, B10, B11, B13 and B15. To change any of the numbers in these cells, just place the cursor over the cell and type in the new figure. Should you wish to delete the contents of a

particular cell or cells, then, type /. A string of alpha characters will be displayed on the line above. Where you have just typed / at the base of the screen, type B. The screen above where you have typed B will change requesting range. Type in the column letter A, B or whatever immediately followed by the row number 1, 2, 3 etc., then press either the return or enter key, and everything in that particular cell will be blanked out.

It all looks very complicated but, be assured, it's not.

Now, how to save the file. I place everything of my working disk on drive B, obviously on a formatted disk. Remember whenever one formats a disk then everything previously saved will be lost. The method I use for saving is as follows. Type / followed by a capital **S**. The screen changes to display, at the base, **Save**, which as you can see, is followed by a comma. You are then prompted from the line above to type in the filename. Hold on, as this can be very misleading if you just type the filename. So, after **Save**, type in the drive like so, **B:**, don't forget the colon, followed by the filename. Personally, I use **G'1197.CAL**. The **G** obviously, stands for gas, the first two figures stand for the month, the last two for the year, then a full point followed by the extension, **CAL**. Should you not type **CAL** as the extension after the filename, then when you recall the file to work on it, you'll find things don't happen as expected. The base line changes after typing in all that information, which should to read: **Save,B:G'1197.CAL**. The line above now offers several alternative actions. **A** All, **V** Values only, and **P** Part. Type in **A** and hey presto! the file will be saved on to disk **B**, which now becomes the working disk.

Right, that's the days work finished, and now to overcome the stress you require a slug of whisky or a cup of some other relaxing

beverage. So let's close down the program, after everything is safely saved. Type **/Q**, you are offered options on the line above: **(Y)** Yes, **(N)** No and **(T)** To erase all and run another program - program filename. Type **Y**, and the screen returns to **A>**.

Well that was really simple! Time has now passed and you want to work on your disk, because the gas bill has come in at a measly £650 for the quarter. Obviously, you are concerned as it has never been so cheap! Before you start paying interest on the bill, quickly boot up your SuperCalc 2 **S.O.D.** disk; don't forget to press a key to initiate the program fully, then type **/L**. Now what was the name of that file and where was it? Well it was saved on drive B. Hold on, read the line above where you typed **/L**. You are advised to type a character to continue, or depress the **Return** key. Depress **Return**; a menu is shown on the screen. Select **C**, the message changes, type **B**, followed by **D**, the screen changes again and the directory for the disk in drive **B** appears. Make a note of the filename before proceeding further. Then press the **ALT** key and **Z** together. The PCW should now display the spreadsheet screen. Type **/L** - the line changes to read **Load**, and you are again prompted, on the line above, to give the **filename**. It is important to think of which drive the file is coming from, so type in the drive letter, in this case **B:** (always followed by the dreaded colon), then **G'1197.CAL**. The base line changes to read, **Load,B:G'1197.CAL**, now the upper line prompts with, **(A)** all, **(P)** part - from range, - to upper/left cell, alternatively the option **C** consolidate. Choose **A**. The base line changes to read: **Load,B:G'1197.CAL,All**. The PCW whirrs and your working file appears on the screen.

Now that's really everything. One can tweak the program further to ensure that only two decimal points are displayed in some cells.



How do you do that? You may ask. Well providing you're not too weary after ploughing through all this stuff, you can proceed as follows. With your program loaded on to the screen, move the cursor to cell B5. Type /F, the line above the base line displays, (G) global - (C) column range - (R) row - (E) range - (D) define format table. Type E. The upper line now displays a series of mysterious characters such as:

- (I) integer no decimals
- (G) general for numbers with best fit
- (E) exponential numbers only
- (\$) for two decimal places
- (R) right numeric justification
- (L) left numeric justification
- (TR) text right justification
- (TL) text left justification
- (\*) bar gap
- (U) user defined format table - (1-8)
- (H) hide values
- (D) default settings (G,R,TL,9)
- (0.127) column width

Select \$. The contents of the cell change to two decimal figures. Now place the cursor on cell B12 and follow exactly the above procedure as for cell B5, continue moving the cursor to each of cells B14, B16 and finally B17 following B5's procedure. All

those cells will now display figures with two decimal places. To finish off this section, place the cursor over cell B9 and type /F once again. Follow the above procedure, except, when the above table is shown type I. The contents of cell B9 will be displayed as integers - without decimal places. By carrying out this procedure the file should now look much tidier without all those decimal places displayed.

One must accept that the gas supplier has several ways of adjusting the price of gas, up or down. The variable cells which can be changed are: B8, B10, B11, B13 which is an arbitrary figure anyway, and B15 should a government decide to increase or decrease VAT. To change cell contents one just places the cursor over the cell to be revised and type in the new figures, then press either return or enter.

You may applaud now, if you wish. Should you wish to read yet another boring bedtime story, then contact Steve Massam, who may be able to persuade me to set out my other confusing spreadsheet procedures. Should anyone be able to understand or even modify/simplify the above logic then, please advise Steve Massam. He alone can contact me with your derisory remarks.

THE END

Before

```

1  A  B  C  D  E  F  G  H  I  J
2  Present
3  Previous
4  Units
5  Multiply
6  Interest
7  Unit Con
8  Adj/Adj
9  Divide
10 $G0
11 Price
12 Charge
13 Sub total
14 Credit
15 VAT
16 VAT
17 Payment
18
19
20
21
22
23
24
25
26
27
28
29
30
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32
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84
85
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91
92
93
94
95
96
97
98
99
100
Width: 8 Memory: 31 Last Col/Row: A1  ? for HELP
D11

```

After

```

1  A  B  C  D  E  F  G  H  I  J
2  Present
3  Previous
4  Units      (B1-B2)
5  Multiply   6.53
6  Interest   (B3*B4)
7  Unit Con   1.42254
8  Adj/Adj    34.5
9  Divide     2.5
10 $G0        (B5*B6*B7/B8)
11 Price      0.466
12 Charge     0.54
13 Sub total  (B9*B10+B11)
14 Credit     2
15 VAT        (B12-B13)
16 VAT        0.6
17 VAT        (B14*B15)
18 Payment   (B14+B15)
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96
97
98
99
100
Width: 8 Memory: 31 Last Col/Row: A1  ? for HELP
D11

```

# How Far Is It to...?

A brief run out with *RoutePlanner PCW*



I do not advocate buying a new gadget hoping to find a use for it later, but I have to admit that I did just that with the *RoutePlanner PCW* program. I am very much a stay-at-home geriatric, content to watch the globe-trottings of other folk. So why buy *RoutePlanner*?

It is a super program which delights me. It comes with very straightforward instruction sheets, giving away no hint of the fun in store. The advertising blurbs are truthful - it does all that is claimed for it. It will produce mileage and time charts for any trip chosen between any two of the 3,000 towns in England, Scotland or Wales (though I have not counted).

The concept is, obviously, based on a road map of the three countries. Loading up from CP/M and typing "Route" introduces the user to a graphics screen with various boxes and a pointer. The pointer is moved around the screen with the cursor keys and "clicking" is achieved by touching the grid key in the middle of the cursor keys. And note

the word "touch" - I found the program very responsive. There is a small outline map of the three countries, and a larger one with six cities and a few roads indicated. In addition there are shaded bars - always vertical and sometimes horizontal - with arrowheads at each end, and on the initial screen a box at the bottom labelled "x1". Clicking on this and keying a letter brings up a window with a box of names. In the window are three further boxes: "From", "To" and "Ok". Pointing to the lower shaded area and clicking brings up more names; when the placename required is in the box, the pointer has to be moved and clicked on the name, then on "From" and another letter touched. Again the second name is chosen and clicked followed by "To", click, "Ok", click. The termini are now indicated in a box upper right on the screen; pointing and clicking "Fastest" or "Shortest" sets up appropriate calculations, and clicking again brings up the details, with options to Save or Print.

----- Here's the suggested *Fastest* route for Norwich to Preston -----

At	Take the	For	Total
Norwich	A1067	25m	25m (00:41:30)
A1067/A148 junction	A148	18m	43m (01:05:45)
A149/A148 junction	A149	4m	47m (01:11:00)
King's Lynn	A47	2m	49m (01:13:15)
A47/A17 junction	A17	60m	109m (02:29:45)
Newark-On-Trent	A1	27m	136m (02:58:15)
A1(M) j34	A1(M)	15m	151m (03:12:00)
A1(M) j38	A1	9m	160m (03:21:00)
M62 j33	M62	52m	212m (04:09:00)
M61 j1	M61	21m	233m (04:28:45)
M61 j9	M65	1m	234m (04:29:45)
M6 j29	A6	4m	238m (04:35:45)
Preston	arrive		

The suggested *Shortest* Route back

At	Take the	For	Total
Preston	A675	19m	19m (00:29:30)
Bolton	A666	3m	22m (00:33:30)
M61 j3	M61	1m	23m (00:34:30)
M61 j1	M62	1m	24m (00:35:30)
M62 j15	A666	2m	26m (00:38:30)
A6/A580 junction	A6	3m	29m (00:43:00)
Manchester	A635	8m	37m (00:56:00)
Stalybridge	A6018	3m	40m (01:00:30)
A628/A57 junction	A57	27m	67m (01:42:45)
Sheffield	A616	12m	79m (02:02:45)
M1 j30	A619	1m	80m (02:04:00)
Clowne	A616	25m	105m (02:39:15)
Newark-On-Trent	A17	60m	165m (03:55:45)
A47/A17 junction	A47	40m	205m (04:50:00)
A1074/A47 junction	A1074	5m	210m (04:58:00)
Norwich	arrive		

These charts are based on "default" speeds, but timing will be amended if you choose to change the defaults. For example, the program's own default speed of 65-mph on motorways is not an *average* I would even want to achieve, but this figure and others can be altered very simply within the program.

Clicking "Ok" recalls the initial screen but now with the route cross-country indicated, though neither Norwich nor Preston is named. However, point to Manchester and press [+] twice, and Preston will appear. The area has been magnified x 8; another [+] and the road numbers will appear.

The beauty of this program is that not only can speeds be varied but obstacles avoided all very simply, and all stages can be saved or exported to MDA, thus giving the potential for adding one's own details as well as for enlarging. It is also simple to find a place if, for example, one is uncertain of just where it is a friend has moved to. One of my own uses is for the preparation of maps to accompany historical essays, the maps perhaps showing only the places required in relation to each other.

Not being a computer literate, at first I found one or two "snags" - but these may have been my printer or my ignorance. When I chose to "Export" to MDA I got the message "Re-try, Ignore or Cancel", but simply pressing "R" solved *that* one; trying to import the MDA file into LocoScript4 brought up the message "Not a MicroDesign 3 file". By going into MD3, loading the file and re-saving it enabled LocoScript4 to accept it.

The program is suitable for any PCW except the 16 (though obviously graphics cannot be printed on the basic PCW 9512), and is available at £24.95 on 3" or 3½" discs from SD MicroSystems, PO Box 24, Attleborough, NR17 IHL, telephone (01953) 483750.

Monica Dickerson

**SD MicroSystems**

PO Box 24

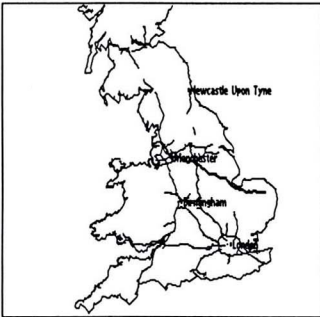
Attleborough

NR17 IHL

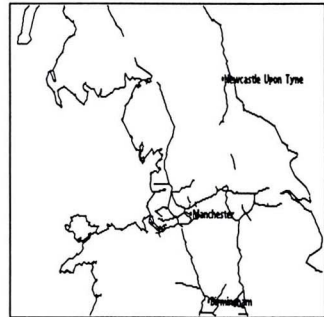
Tel: (01953) 483750.



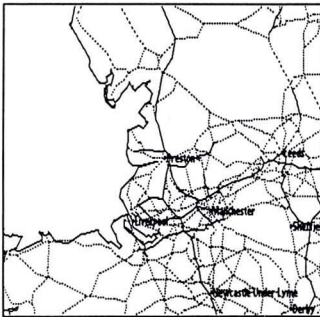
# Examples of Maps produced by Route Planner



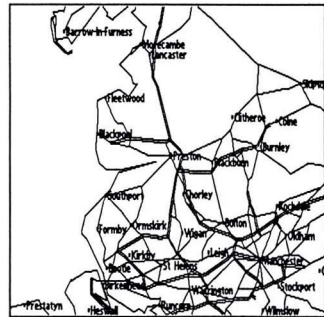
Norwich to Preston



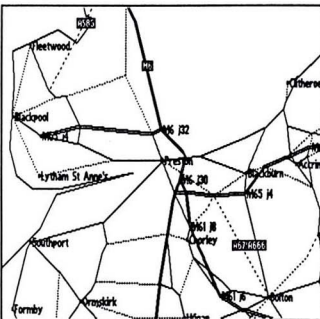
Preston x 2



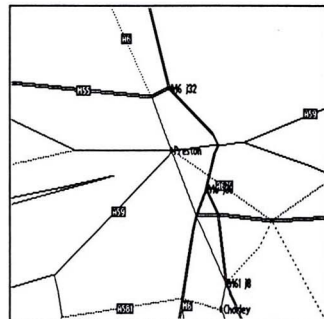
Preston x 4



Preston x 8



Preston x 16



Preston x 32

I must say that the South Essex PCW Club gives the impression of being very friendly and helpful, I have achieved so much in such a short time. The magazine is so much more interesting than the National PCW Magazine that was!

G.S (North Yorkshire)

## Getting a Perspective on Recession

To establish the Perspective Recession of a line of telegraph poles or a panelled fence, or indeed, any receding regularly placed feature, first establish the line x-y horizontally drawn across the MicroDesign3 Graphics 1:1 screen. The x-y line marks the horizon or, as is often the case, marks the viewer's eyeline. Now draw a telegraph pole as shown in in fig.1, placing the middle of the telegraph pole on the x-y line. Next mark the Centre View point (cv) near to the y.

Moving onto fig.2, place a box around the telegraph pole as shown, and then draw the three lines b, c and d. Next, draw a straight line from the cv point near the bottom of the 1:1 screen marked here as View Point (vp). Draw a line from the top of the telegraph pole to meet vp, shown as the left-hand sloping line e, where line e crosses the position of the second telegraph pole.

Using the block copy facility, frame the box and its contents and press fl for rescale. Rescale the second telegraph pole as shown in fig.3. You may have to play about with the frame before it is positioned and rescaled properly.

Draw the second line e from the top of the

second telegraph pole to meet vp, and rescale in the the third telegraph pole where the second line e crosses line d. Repeat drawing in e lines from the top of each telegraph pole to the point marked vp, and then rescaling a copy of the latest telegraph pole, until you find it has become too cluttered to go on putting in any more telegraph poles.

After erasing unwanted guidelines, a line of telegraph poles is shown receding in proportion into the distance. Zoom is used to clean up some of the fine detail on the far telegraph poles. Keep in mind the poor resolution of your machine, and remember that the smallest unit possible is half a pixel (half in width, but the same height as a full pixel). So the details of crossmembers shown at the top of the far telegraph poles must become the merest of hints compared with those crossmembers nearest to you.

If you haven't a mouse, draw the lines in free-hand after the telegraph poles have been printed out on paper. Though, do remember, the thickness of the wire (or drawn line used) must show recession too.

Rod Shinkfield

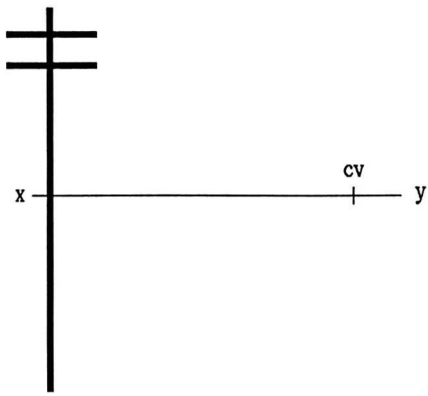


Fig.1

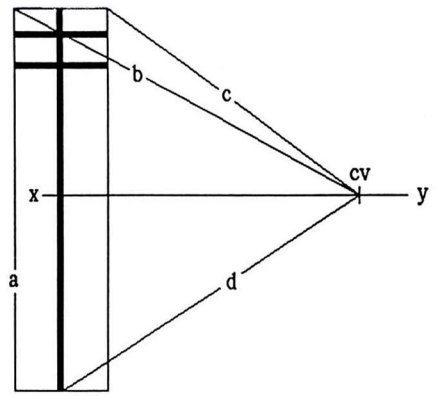


Fig.2

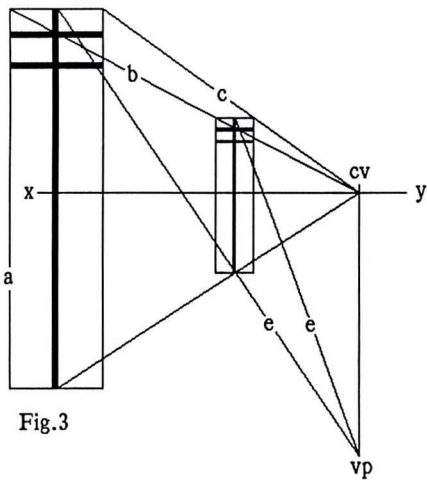


Fig.3

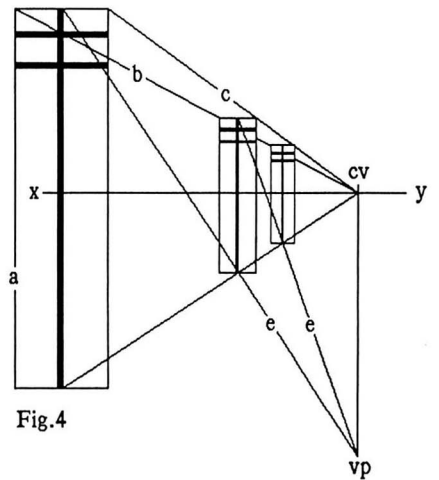


Fig.4

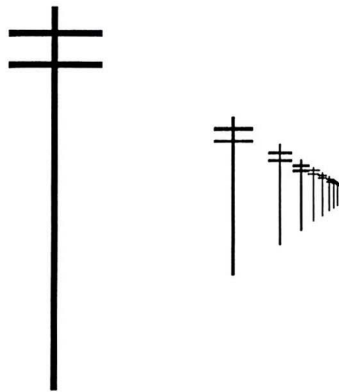


Fig.5



# USING THE PCW 16

*Testing . . Testing . . Testing . . Testing . .*

One of the rewards for editing a club newsletter is a network of useful contacts. It was the Hastings & Eastbourne Club's Editor who got me involved with testing the PCW 16 and it was Adrian Braddy, Editor of 'PCW Today', who put my name forward to Beta-Test Comsoft's **'Inventory Master'**.

If you have ever been burgled, suffered storm damage or involved in a car accident, you know that, just as you are in a state of shock, barely able to remember what day of the week it is, the police and insurance assessors want details of your goods and chattels. This program, which records your possessions room by room including details of original and replacement cost, could save the day.

The program comes with a simple, well laid out manual, and one disc. Installation is simple. Press [Task]+[F7] to Run External Program, insert the disc and seconds later the program is safely in the Cabinet Memory and can be called up at any time.

The first task is to list your insurance policies. Provision is made for three - Home, Motor and Undefined - which would be adequate for most households. Just type in the company name, address, policy number and cover in the boxes.

Then [Task]+[O] brings up a list of locations within an imaginary home. Add, Edit or Delete to make the list fit your particular house. When it comes to listing the items in a room there is an absolute limit of 250 items so if you want to include a detailed listing of your CD collection it might be sensible to create an imaginary Music Room (or even a Top Shelf room) to accommodate them. I created a Computer Room for this purpose.

Next comes the crunch task. Listing the contents of each room with a description, serial number (where appropriate), where and when purchased, original cost, replacement cost and resale value. Rather than create a paper list to transfer to disc it is probably quicker to move the computer into each room in turn.

Much enjoyable nostalgic family discussion may ensue when the origin and price of items is calculated. Hoarders of old receipts, bank and credit card statements or well maintained spreadsheet accounts will have the advantage here. Be warned, putting in the replacement cost will give you a nasty shock. As each item is entered the room value is recalculated.

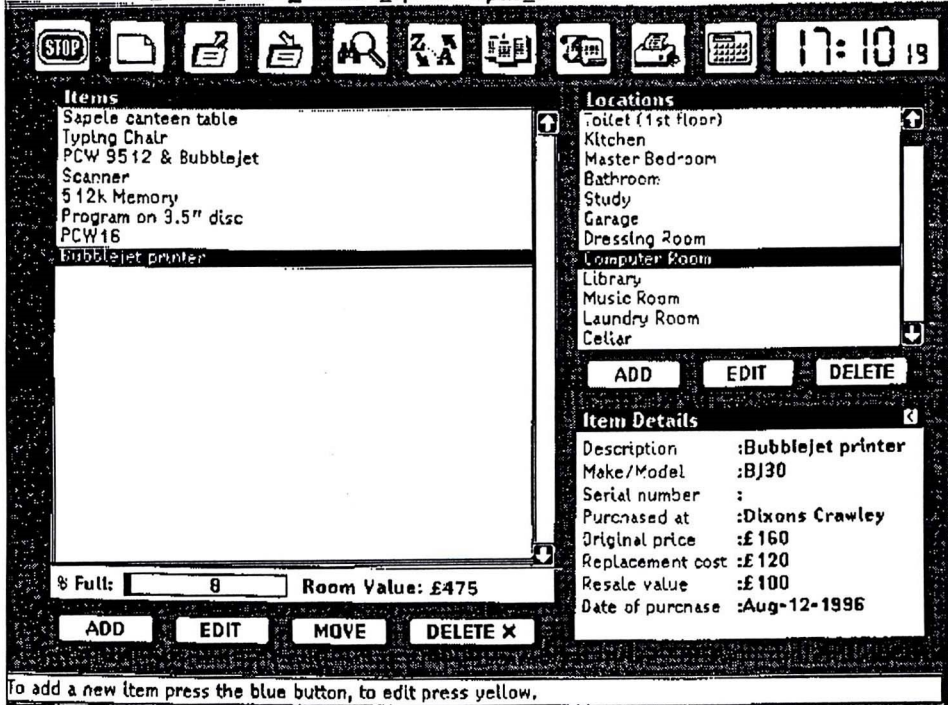
Finally you will have a complete inventory of all your possessions including, if you are wise, the contents of your shed and car boot.

Using the program is simple, just follow the clear instructions in the handbook. The screen layout is easy to read and understand. When you press [STOP] you will be asked to save and name the file you have created. A simple 'Our House' or something more secretive can be used. Take a printout and keep it safe, along with a disc copy, outside your home. A thief may take only selected items but a fire could wipe out the lot.

I was using a test version, but the only snag encountered was an inability to print out reports or a full inventory. No doubt the boffins are sorting out the problem, which may be relevant only to my particular printer. Otherwise I can thoroughly recommend the program.

**'Inventory Master'** is available from  
**Comsoft Tel: 0141 554 4735**

*Esther Welch*



**Items**

- Sapele canteen table
- Typing Chair
- PCW 9512 & BubbleJet
- Scanner
- 512k Memory
- Program on 3.5" disc
- PCW16
- Bubblejet printer

**Locations**

- Toilet (1st floor)
- Kitchen
- Master Bedroom
- Bathroom
- Study
- Garage
- Dressing Room
- Computer Room
- Library
- Music Room
- Laundry Room
- Cellar

**Item Details**

Description :Bubblejet printer  
 Make/Model :BJ30  
 Serial number :  
 Purchased at :Dixons Crawley  
 Original price :£160  
 Replacement cost :£120  
 Resale value :£100  
 Date of purchase :Aug-12-1996

% Full: 8 Room Value: £475

ADD EDIT MOVE DELETE X

To add a new item press the blue button, to edit press yellow.

## STOP PRESS!

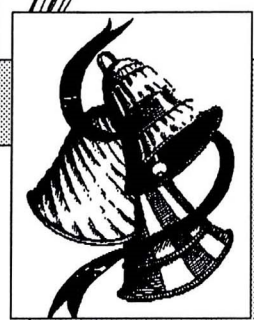
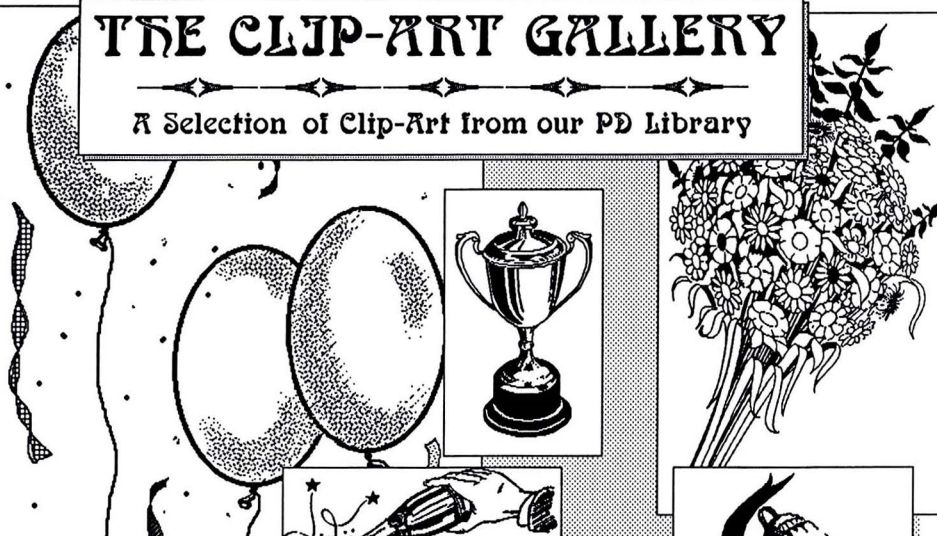
Esther informs me that she has since received the latest version and assures me that there is no problem in printing out reports or a full inventory with the latest version. E D

I have just been lent a copy of the Autumn issue of 'The Disc Drive' and would like to compliment you on its quality of both presentation and content.

C.D (Sheffield)

# THE CLIP-ART GALLERY

A Selection of Clip-Art from our PD Library





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# REVIEWERS' GUIDE

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I suppose there are skills we need to use when we are reviewing a piece of software or writing an article about an aspect of our hobby, so here goes.

Before you begin, first of all have a clear idea about what you want to say. That might sound obvious but the fact that the writer doesn't know at the beginning what he's going to end with can stick out like a sore thumb.

Second, jot down a few ideas, paragraph headings or notes on the general progression of your work. If it's a software review the notes might be along the lines of:

1. Description of software, what it does, etc
2. Is it easy to use?
3. Is it well implemented?
4. Any obvious bugs, etc.
5. Does it do what it set out to do?
6. Compared with similar products, is it good, mediocre or rotten?
7. How does it perform?

Do any research necessary, rather than depend on already published statistics, if there are any. Be precise with the research; accuracy is important. If you're timing something, use a stop-watch; it's so much easier than the alternatives (egg-timer, sun-dial, grandfather clock, etc).

It helps to be slightly humorous but, you're not writing a new series of BlackAdder, so don't imagine you are, but a chuckle here and there never hurt anyone and, if it's good enough, helps the reader along.

Write as much about each of your headings or notes as you feel comfortable with. Don't pad anything out with unnecessary words to make it look longer. Padding is a) obvious and b) boring.

If you are reviewing the kind of software that produces an image on paper, DTP, Art

package, that kind of thing, then use it and include an example of it in your review - an illustration, piece of clip-art, graph, whatever the package produces. Describe how you arrived at your finished product in reasonable detail, unless it's something we all do every day, like switch the PCW on. Spend some time with the program even if you think you know it like the back of your hand already. Try to look at it through the eyes of a stranger.

Be objective, critical and, above all, don't be swayed by where the software came from. It's the code that you're judging, not its author. And of course, the opposite's true too. Just because someone you can't stand the sight of wrote a brilliant piece of code doesn't mean it's rubbish.

Remember that any software is going to be limited by the machine it's been written for. I know we don't like thinking that the PCW has limitations, but it has. It's a great little 8-bit with still undiscovered heights of performance, but it'll never be a top-of-the-range PC running a really expensive processor at supersonic speeds. But it didn't cost as much and, hey, it's as good a word processor and more, as any of those 16, 32 or even 64-bit machines will ever be, when it's running your favourite word processor, with a few fragrant additions, like Mailmerge and so on, so don't use comparisons that are absurd. After all, you wouldn't complain to the landlord of your local drinking house because a pint of his very best bitter had less effect on your head than the pint of whisky you foolishly swallowed last week had, would you?

If your article includes a great deal of technical gobbledegook, then make it digestible. Remember that your friendly PCW club has become a sanctuary for a considerably wider range of people than tech-

heads. Try to use as few technical terms as possible and, if you need to use a lot, try and space them out with a glossary at the end to help us lesser mortals.

Finished your article? No you haven't! Read it through; aloud's a good idea if there's nobody in earshot. Reading your stuff aloud draws your attention to the odd clumsy grouping of words, the repetition of the same word too often, all kinds of weaknesses that you can correct quite easily. Get someone else to read it through if you can (though it's not easy; most folks think that matters pertaining to the PCW are faintly ridiculous and don't appreciate being associated with them. The fault's their's, a personality defect, but you'll gain nothing by insisting).

Be ruthless if you feel you need to be ruthless. Chop things out, move them about, add new sentences at the least whim. Depend on instinct because instinct can be a pretty friendly fellow.

Use a spell-checker, but don't depend on it. There are goodness-knows how many errors you can make that a spell-checker won't even sniff at. But don't get paranoid about your

spelling. Most mistakes that you don't notice will be edited out somewhere along the line.

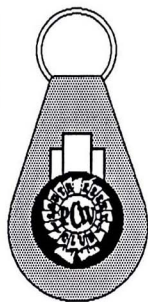
When it comes to submitting it don't forget you don't need a printer. You should send a disc to the editor or whoever is meant to be on the receiving end. Just mention which WP you used, and if it's not Protext or Locoscript it might be wise to send both ASCII as well as the files of your particular WP, just to be on the safe side.

Right. There we have it. The definitive guide to reviewing serious software, hardware, PCW-related activities and wild, wild women. Allegedly.

Peter Rogerson 1997

#### Editors Note:

This article has been sent to me via Ernie Rudick. The author and Ernie are both members of a CPC club and this article was first published in their magazine WACCI earlier this year. If you use a CPC it wouldn't be a bad idea to contact Ernie on: 01642 898091 to see what their club has to offer.



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BOB WOODFORD



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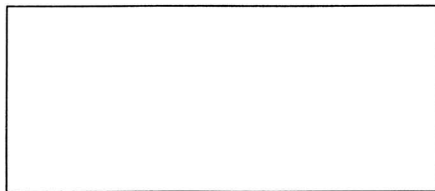
### South Essex PCW Club Badges

Each of these articles shown opposite can be obtained from Mr R. Woodford. 22 Merryfield Approach Leigh-on-Sea Essex SS9 4HJ.

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# To Emphasise Lettering on a Patterned Background using MicroDesign3

by an anonymous reader



Set out a panel to the required size, this is accomplished using the BOX facility from Layout.



Flood the panel from the Graphics screen with the desired pattern.

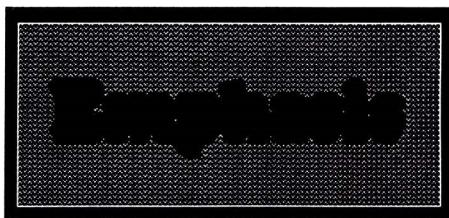
## Emphasis

Set out the lettering as required.

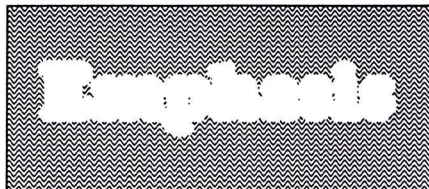
## Emphasis

Fatten the lettering using Block/Rescale from the Graphics screen or use Tweak.

Invert the panel using Block/Invert and copy the fattened lettering onto the inverted panel in transparent.



Having positioned the lettering invert the panel once again to bring it back to its original colour.



Copy the original lettering exactly into the white lettering, using the undo [WORD/CHAR] key if you get it wrong first time.





# MasterFile Tips

## External Printing \_\_\_\_\_

Adding DEVICE.COM, and a PROFILE.SUB containing the instruction DEVICE LST:=CEN (or DEVICE LST:=PAR if using the built-in port on the 9000 series), to my MasterFile 8000 SoD means I can print on my Epson Stylus 820 inkjet. Without the above instructions I can only use my Amstrad PcW10's dot-matrix printer.

## Globe Trotting \_\_\_\_\_

The GLOBAL SCAN (ie, \*= ) to look through all the fields in a file is very handy when searching and sorting through MasterFile databases. It saves having to be so precise when typing in a find string.

## Correct Data \_\_\_\_\_

If much field data needs altering or correcting, create a new format to put the fields for altering into one-liners down the screen. Altering each line in turn will automatically alter each record in the file. Saves time, but remember to resave the file before turning off your machine.

## MasterFile to LocoFile \_\_\_\_\_

It is easy to import from MasterFile to LocoScript using ASCII, so I assume you should not have much difficulty importing into LocoFile. As I don't have LocoFile I can't try this out for myself, but would be interested in reading the outcome in a future Disc Drive.

### *Editors Note:*

Having used both LocoFile and MasterFile systems I can confirm Rod's suspicions and say converting a LocoScript ASCII file so that it can be sucked into LocoFile is relatively simple. You will need to create a Record Pattern at the start of the file that defines the Item Names, Separators and

Record Terminator. Then, using LocoScript's find and exchange, change the field separators and terminators in the following records to match those used in the Record Pattern. This file can then be imported into a LocoFile Datafile.

## Avoid Tedious Typing \_\_\_\_\_

If you are adding many new records to a MasterFile 8000 file, avoid the tedium of repeatedly typing in repetitious field data by first making use of LocoScript's block copying utility (a utility MasterFile lacks). Let's say that each record in your MasterFile file has five fields, and each fourth field of the new records to be added to your MasterFile file have the same date (or any other repetitious data), then do the following in LocoScript:

Put a vertical line of five return markers and one hash marker (#) in a blank LocoScript document. Each return marker represents one empty MasterFile field. The hash mark is simply there to divide one record from the next (so you don't get confused). With the cursor on the fourth return, type in the repeated data. Now put the cursor on the first return and press [COPY], move the cursor to below the hash and press [COPY] again, tapping a number key to identify the block.

Press [PASTE] and the number key to add a further five returns and another hash (plus the repeated data, of course). You now have two records suitable for importing into your MasterFile file. Repeat adding the block until sufficient records are in the LocoScript document. Save and continue before going further.

Use [FIND] & [EXCHANGE] to remove the now unwanted hash markers. Save the document once more and change it into a

simple text ASCII file, moving it first onto DRIVE M: and then onto a MasterFile disc. You have now finished with LocoScript. Boot into MasterFile 8000 – but don't load the file in which the new records are to be added. If one return marker has been mistakenly put in the wrong place, or even the repeated data has been wrongly positioned, importing the new ASCII file into your existing MasterFile file could disrupt the whole database. Correcting such a fault is time

consuming. Instead, create a special MasterFile file of five empty fields and call it TEST.MFP. Import your new ASCII file into TEST.MFP and, once the file has been checked and found correct, it can safely be imported into your main MasterFile 8000 database file. Empty all the fields in TEST.MFP and save it ready should more records need creating in LocoScript.

Rod Shinkfield

# Data Transfer

In a previous issue, our editor Steve described the transfer of data from the PCW 16 into Locoscript, and this current article is a follow-on in the more general field.

There must be loads of PCW users who cheerfully interchange data between Locoscript (CF2DD format) and a PC (MS/DOS format) - either way. There are probably those who sometimes wish that that they could do so, but haven't yet grasped the nettle. By way of example, how nice it is when talking or writing to a friend who only has a PC to be able to offer him/her a disc of much needed text. It is equally splendid to accept a MS/DOS disc from the said friend and in due course display it in Locoscript on one's own PCW. A small personal illustration; this article is being written on an Amstrad NC 200 laptop notebook, in MS/DOS format. When it is complete, it will be transferred to Locoscript 3 or 4, and the latter disc will be handed to the Disc Drive editor for consideration of publication.

At the (almost) outset, I must say that this is not a detailed guide to transfer; that is only attained by following the user instructions for whichever software you ultimately decide to use. If you have a satisfactory transfer system

in being, stop here, and find a more productive article. LIKEWISE, IF YOU HAVEN'T GOT A 3½" DRIVE CAPABILITY, then you will not be able to transfer without the assistance of a friend who has such a facility.

If everything is in your favour, let's go on a little further. What do we need to achieve this sleight of hand? Basically, we need (obviously) a PCW: the ability to format a disc in the medium to which it will be transferred (ie. MS/DOS or CF2 or CF2DD) and the ability to transfer files from a disc in one format to a disc in another. Also, as I have already said, a 3½" drive somewhere in the set-up. Transfer is achieved by use of the right software. I tend to alternate between two. The first is 2in1, originally produced by Moonstone Computing, but now retailed by LocoScript Software at a price of £39.95. The second is PCWDOS, prepared and retailed by SCA, although I don't know whether it is still available. 2in1 offers an ability to format in MS/DOS or CF2, whilst PCWDOS limits its formatting role to MS/DOS (perhaps on the premise that the user will be preparing PCW material for transfer to a PC - hence its name).

Let's pause for a second and digress onto ASCII (the American Standard Code for Information Interchange). If you haven't strayed to that pasture before, it's worth spending a few minutes on viewing its virtues as describe in the User Handbook for your PCW. My own crude explanation is to say that it is a system of reducing text to a format which can be transferred between systems. The transfer is pretty raw, with only the basic codes being retained, but at the end of the exercise, it reaches its destination as true text, which can be "prettied up" using whatever facilities the new, receiving, program may possess - **WITHOUT THE NECESSITY OF HAVING TO RE-TYPE THE TEXT ITSELF.** This is highly useful in the case of ultra long documents.

SO, let's go! Imagine that we're going to send a Locoscript document on disc to out friend in Tomintoul (or wherever). Firstly, using the the Locoscript facility, create an ASCII file (or

files) on your Locoscript disc. Then, using your new acquired 2in1 or PCWDOS, format a disc in MS/DOS. Then follow the manufacturer's instructions for moving your ASCII file(s) from the Locoscript disc to the newly-formatted MS/DOS one.

That's all there is to it! As I said at the beginning, there is no purpose to be served in going through a detailed routine in a short article such as this; the main part of the routine is shown in the software instructions, as well as in the ASCII preparation chapter in the user handbook.

However, if you want to discuss any problems on this score, I am only too willing to talk or correspond. My address is 29 New Road, Hadleigh, Benfleet, Essex SS7 2RL, and the 'phone number is 01702 553911 (calls preferably in the mornings, or at weekends - I do have other commitments!)

Joe Bird

### Follow the rules: MD3 Tip

When typesetting text into columns you can automatically keep the lines of text in one column, in line with another, by making use of the Ruled Lines option. With your fonts and text loaded, go to the Typeset page and adjust your window accordingly. Press [T] Typeset and from here press [f3] Format. Ruled Lines is selected for you and all you have to do is cursor over to Font 1, 2 or 3 and press [ENTER]. Now press [ALT] [SHIFT] [DOC] and the cursor will home itself, top left of the window. Press [PASTE] and you will see your text flow into your columns all nicely aligned. There's more to Ruled Lines than first meets the eye. Try setting Ruled Lines to an alternative font and see what happens! Have Fun.

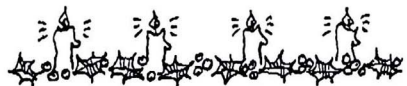
Steve

### Count the Cubes

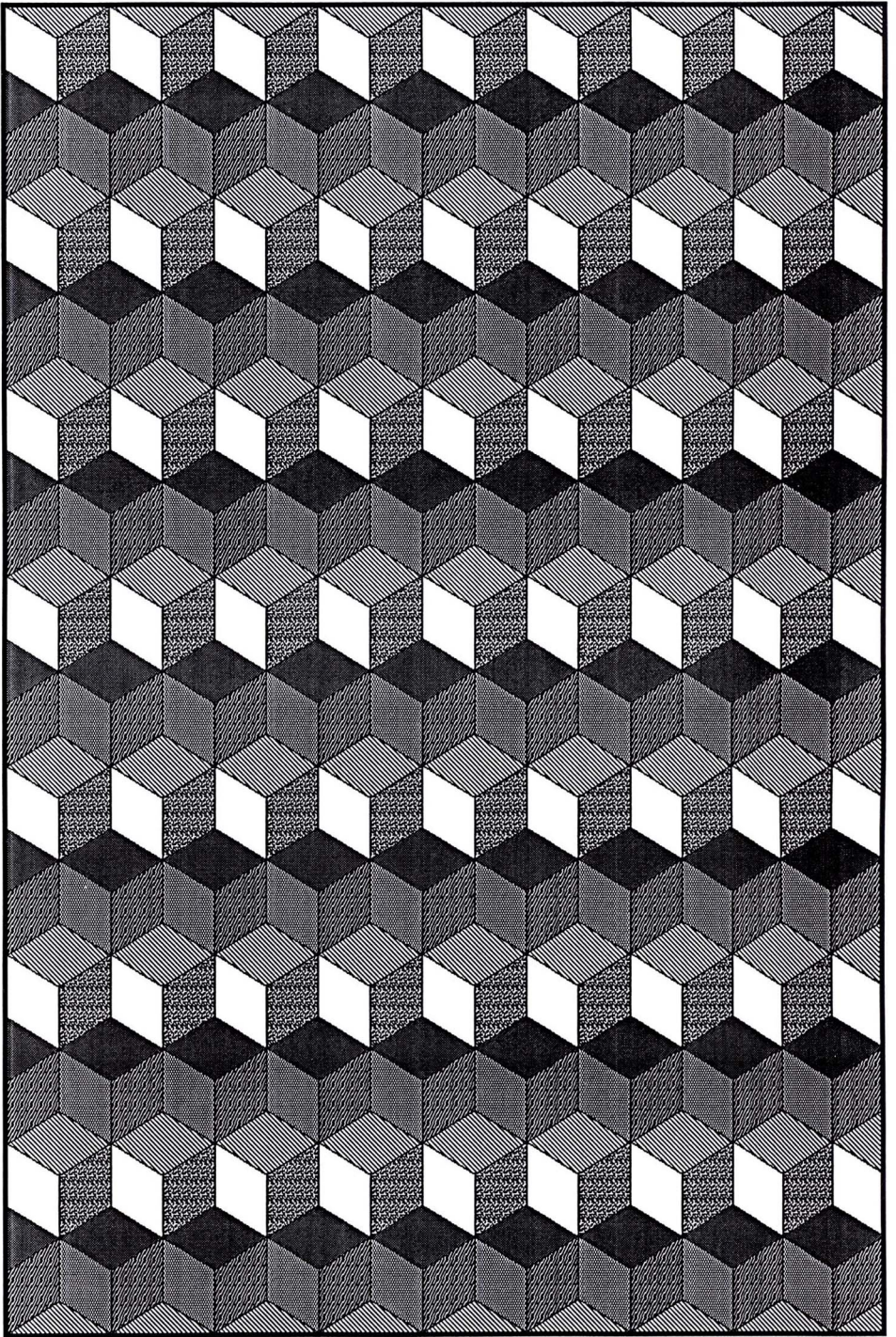


I dread to think how long it must have taken Ken to produce the geometric design opposite. Apparently the idea came about when Ken was following Rod Shinkfield's article on producing the Isometric Drawing grid and obviously got a little carried away. Ken Rouse supplied me with a number of variations on the same theme with the suggestion that members try to count the number of cubes that can be seen from all angles. Rather you than me. It would send me dotty! However if you do come up with an answer, let me know! Thanks Ken.

Steve









# Carriage Return Extra Spacing in Protext.

The book 'Prottext: a PCW User's Guide' by Rob Ainsley contains a number of printing errors, but one of the most frustrating is the Tip on Page 211 which purports to allow Prottext to emulate the  $CR + \frac{1}{2}$  available as standard in LocoScript.

Despite hours and hours of experimenting, I couldn't get it to work, and even worse, it upset the Prottext line counter so that the footer floats at various distances from the bottom of the page.

The Prottext Manual is not for faint-hearts, so I am happy to give credit to our new Membership Secretary for pointing me in the right direction. It was whilst looking for a line which brought me up with a jerk. The Manual (APPEN 2-4) states that Prottext will accept a half-line Line Space increment - specified as  $\rangle LS .5$  or  $\rangle LS \frac{1}{2}$  in the Embedded Commands.

In the Ainsley Tip, this Line Space is printed as  $\rangle LS 0.5$  - which is mathematically the same as  $.5$ , but clearly Prottext reads the leading zero as an extra instruction - which it can't make sense of - hence the Line Counter is thrown into confusion.

Modifying the Tip to take account of this solved the problem of the floating footer, but *still* the Tip doesn't put an Extra half-line space in a *Carriage Return Extra*.

It seems to me that although the Tip *should* work, like LocoScript, you cannot see its effect on screen as you type your document out; in fact, it looks rather ungainly compared with LocoScript - and you can't judge from running Prottext's Print Screen command just how wide the gap between paragraphs actually is.

The solution seems to be that one must send a specific Output Code to the Printer by means of an Embedded Command  $\rangle OC \langle code \rangle$

$\langle code \rangle$ ], but I need some help on this one. If any reader knows how to set this out properly - please contact me. My Fax/phone number is 01606-888003.

In the meantime, I must say that Rob Ainsley's proof-reading of his book leaves a lot to be desired - because there is at least one other technical error in it which would bring a novice Prottext user close to tears. I've spoken by phone to Rob at Future Publishing about these errors, but he wasn't feeling bashful about them I can assure readers!

Waiting to hear from someone out there!

Geoff Hayes.

## Editors Note: \_\_\_\_\_

LocoScript is by far the most popular word processing software package used by our members. However, I have often heard it said that Prottext is superior in a number of ways, but not, *Judging by Geoff's article*, it appears on extra spacing. I know we have one or two avid Prottext users within the Club and wonder if *as Geoff suggests* you would care to jot down the answers to this and any other problems the novice Prottext user might encounter and send them to me for publication in The Disc Drive.

Steve



# PCW TODAY

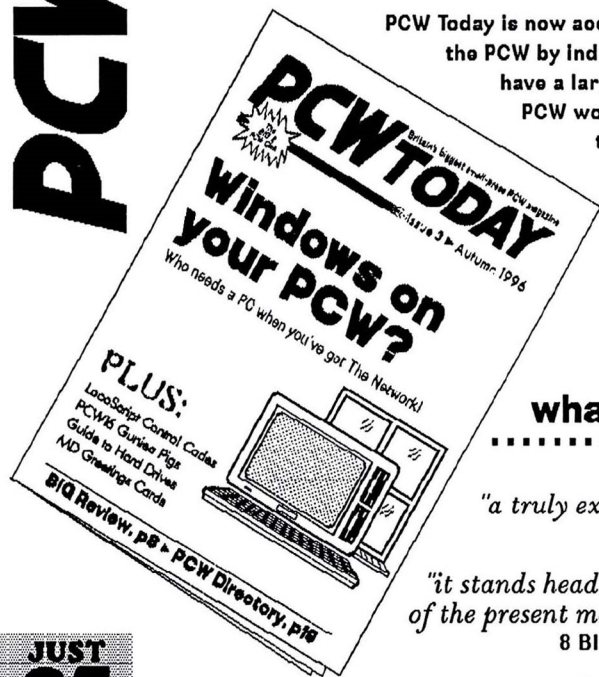
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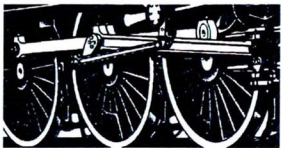
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