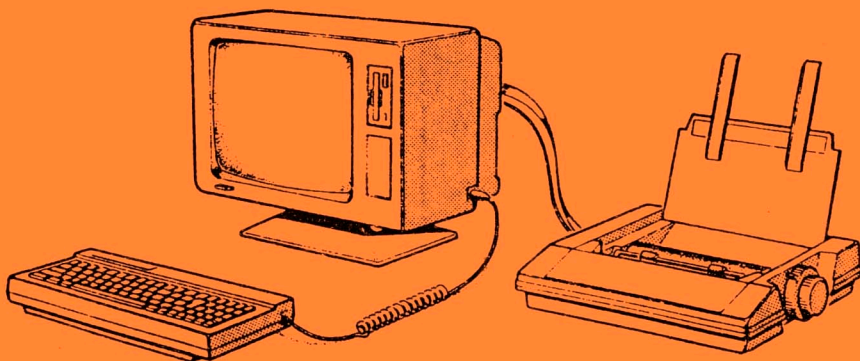


The Disc Drive

Issue 19

Autumn 1998



The British Amstrad PCW Club magazine
for all PCW and PcW users

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Basic98

Basic98

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AMSTRAD PCWs

by R. P. Hill

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Command line parameters Optional line numbers and labels	Direct keyboard access Bitwise string operators AND/OR/XOR etc	All 12 trigonometric functions Preset ARRAY/ITEMs Array SORT/SEEK
Multi-line statements REPEAT/UNTIL CASE/OF/ELSE/CEND	Raster text plotting AT/CLS/VPT/VIDEO/ULN System DAY/DATE/TIME	INSERT\$/REMOVE\$/CHOP\$ PLOT/LINE/ARC/CIRCLE BOX/PLANE/ORB
PROCEDURE/FUNCTION LET/INC/DEC/READ as functions as well as commands	Turtle graphics Store or display sorted directories with optional file sizes	POLYGON/FIGURE/SPRAY Print/move/copy/swap zoom/rotate screens and image files up to 256k
High precision maths up to 187 decimal places	Full support for CP/M+ password & time stamping	Print a file in the background while a program executes

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Please state disk format required...	PCW8256 PCW8512	PCW8512 PCW9512	PcW9256 PcW9512+ PcW10	Send order/enquiry to: R.P.Hill, Wincheap, Canterbury, KENT, CT1 3RS
Disk set	4x3"	2x3"	2x3.5"	Please make P.Orders or cheques payable to:
Format size:	173k	706k	706k	Richard Hill
Set price:	£25.00	£25.00	£25.00	

Contents

Editorial	2
Doodling with Tweak <i>by Dureen Bridge</i>	3
Playing with patterns in MicroDesign3 <i>by Anon</i>	7
A Flipper Tip <i>by Rod Shinkfield</i>	9
Cataloguing LocoScript discs <i>from Harry Carter</i>	10
Memoirs of a Compulsive Gadgeteer <i>by Maureen Jenner</i>	13
PCW16 Forum <i>by Esther Welch</i>	14
BASIC listing: part 8 <i>by Adrian Hooper</i>	16
Sort it out with CP/M <i>by Rod Shinkfield</i>	17
Program your PCW16 <i>by Mike Elliston</i>	19
Right to Reply <i>by Steve Denson</i>	22
The Clip Art Gallery <i>from Nick Chaundy</i>	23
Gissa job, guv	24

The Disc Drive

is printed and published quarterly by the British Amstrad PCW Club, the club for all users of any of the Amstrad range of PCW personal computer/word processors. The Club does not act as an agent for nor represents or is associated with Amstrad plc or its associated companies. Subscriptions are currently £7.50 per year plus £2.00 per meeting but the first meeting is free to all visitors. Postal membership is £9.50 per annum inclusive. The Club also publishes a monthly *Newsletter* which is supplied free to all members. Please contact any member of the Committee for further membership details.

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From the Editor's Desk

I read a letter in the *Daily Mail* only the other day from a reader who was praising Microsoft and Bill Gates and how civilisation could not have progressed so far without his wonderful Windows programs. The letter went on to state that the only place nowadays you would find a machine running CPM (yes, he couldn't even spell it properly) would be in an antique shop! I felt like writing in in Loco 4 with LX fonts and pictures in full colour and telling him how many people still used PCWs ... but knew full well that it would never see the light of day.

The longer evenings are now drawing in, with less time for gardening and golf and more time for you to work on your PCW inside in the warm.

In this issue there are articles to inspire all PCW users, no matter which machine they use. Daren Bridge shows just how powerful the Creative Technology *Tweak* program really is and Anon demonstrates the versatility of MD3. Rod Shinkfield has a useful tip for Flipper users and also uses CP/M to catalogue and organise his discs. Cataloguing LocoScript discs has inspired Harry Carter to write in whilst Maureen Jenner reports on PCW DIY.

Two articles for PcW 16 users also; they are not forgotten. The latter shows how the spreadsheet can be programmed to emulate the conversions that other PCW users can accomplish with Adrian Hooper's Basic Listings (and it should work on other PCWs too.) *Mike Elliston*

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DOODLING WITH TWEAK

by
Dareen Bridge

Norman Bannister's unofficial phone call, just before last Christmas, informing me of my entry success came as a surprise, its real purpose soon becoming apparent, with a request for an article. Uncharacteristically, for me, I only promised to consider the idea.

Whilst not exactly forgetting the conversation, I admit to burying the idea at the bottom of an overflowing pending tray, until the arrival of the Spring *Disc Drive* which pricked my conscience. On more considered reflection, what could I possibly add to that which had already been written? My experience with both Tweak and MD3, being limited to less than three years, made any suggestion I could supply some form of tutorial little more than laughable.

I was not being facetious when advising I produced these images by experimenting with various Tweak commands. Never keeping records of settings, no effect could ever be faithfully reproduced. Not exactly appearing as a blinding flash, in this statement appeared the grain of an idea. Perhaps I could explain how I approach the program, showing how pictures are built from a series of manipulated images.

Initially, after working through the manual, and wishing to gain a wider understanding of this promising piece of software, I embarked on some Herb Jar labels. My first attempt at producing something original was the development of this Basil.MDA file (*Fig. 1a below*)



Fig. 1a

into the more elaborate one (*Fig. 1b overleaf*), which was later incorporated into a suitable label (*Fig. 1c*). More labels followed, but this is hardly exciting stuff, although giving me a greater perception of the various features. At this point more pressing demands meant Tweak was shelved for several months.



Fig. 1b



Fig. 1c

The receipt of requests for an English language version of a lengthy technical article with illustrations, originally published in Russian, encouraged me to have a go at self publication.

Typeset in MD3, an eye-catching cover was required. The subject, detailed the genetics of colour inheritance in the collie; what better design than two collies appearing to come together?

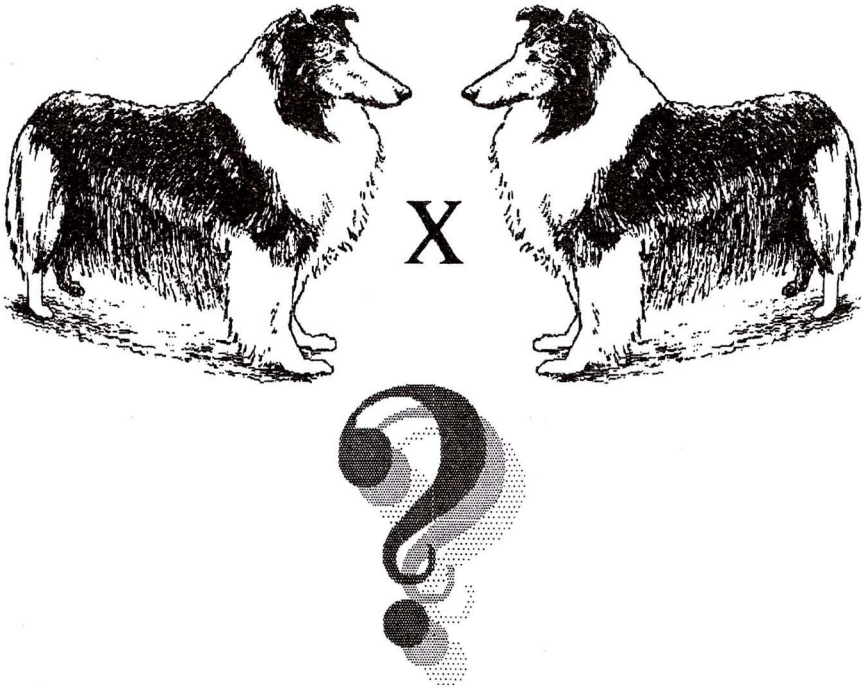


Fig. 2

The printed results of placing them in mirror image with title spaced around, looked flat. So, in the hope of gaining inspiration, this was given a prominent position.

Persisting with the concept, the manipulation of title sections with either Circle or Bend did improve the appearance, although the central portion still did not please. So long did the original retain its position, the paper began to dry out and curl, giving me inspiration.

Manipulating a single collie, saved on one half of a much wider file, bending around a vertical cylinder with a little end rounding, before executing a tapered shear, created the required effect. Reflecting the finished file produced right and left facing versions, leaving only the addition of the X and the question mark to complete the design (Fig. 2).

It was whilst working with this that I began to appreciate both the versatility and the limitations of Tweak.

The last two examples show how I use Tweak to build pictures. Both will be familiar to those of you who receive *The Design Tree*.

The title 'To Russia with MD3' is hardly original, but imitation remains the highest form of flattery. Wishing to introduce a concept of flight or movement, I layered the three commands Bend, Shear and Twist to produce the lift and movement the text required, before rotating to give the desired angle. All aircraft sport a livery; I chose to incorporate the name and logo of the publishing magazine. Bend was the command chosen to give depth to the tail fin emblem, leaving only an airline name.

The hieroglyphs announce 'Collie World' in Cyrillic letters and this small detail proved to be the most demanding. No aircraft is flat, and lettering must follow the contours of the fuselage. Here again Bend was employed to achieved the effect required, on this occasion using both vertical and horizontal cylinders, before rotating to match the aircraft's angle. Only when all components were finished was the heading assembled to produce the results seen below (Fig. 3).

The LocoMail heading also misquotes a well known slogan. On this occasion I



Fig. 3

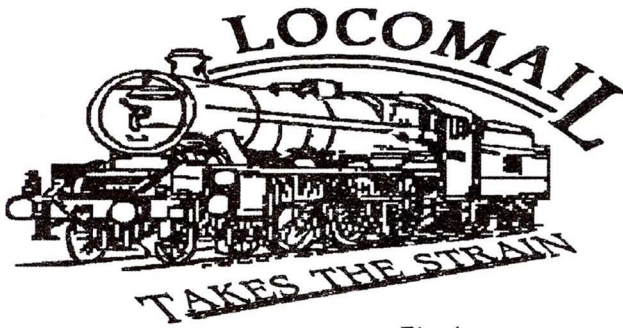


Fig. 4

intended the train to appear as if through a bridge, indicated by the 'LocoMail' title. Much of this file is easy to follow, Circle producing key stones from the main title, whilst taper and parallel Shear produced the prone appearance to the rest of the slogan, followed by Rotate to align with the track lines. Having assembled the three components it became necessary to fit it to the available space (Fig. 4), the consequent squashing producing the oval appearance to the engine's boiler and a shallower more realistic curve to the LocoMail slogan.

That, I think, is sufficient of how I use the program, so I will leave you to consider how the title for this piece was constructed. You too will find the nesting of commands provides interesting effects, providing sufficient time is allowed. Although it will always be found advantageous to have some idea of the desired result, working steadily towards this in small steps, viewing each adjustment objectively before continuing. Trying the same image with only slightly differing commands can frequently improve the overall appearance, this particularly so when using features like Rotate, where one degree either way can produce very different results.

Tweak is an image manipulation utility that cares little whether the image is textual

or pictorial. Many of the program's commands work most effectively on ribbon images; what can be more of a ribbon image than a line of text with the best results achieved with styles that are both bold and simple? Remember,

Tweak multiplies any distortions, so all artwork is improved by very meticulous editing, outlines carefully cleaned using Zoom. When the images are lines of text, this need for perfect clarity is even more important. Further editing is necessary after all operations have been completed and, on occasions, results are improved if some editing is undertaken part way through a long and detailed operation.

The improvement in appearance obtained when flooding areas after manipulation can be just as revealing. I am aware this advice is contrary to that given by others, more experienced than I, but shaded areas of images, filled prior to any changes, will become distorted causing density alterations. Admittedly any flooding will bleed through outline gaps created after almost any Tweak command, but this does not prevent one flooding a solid shape. If an outline is required, this can always be produced after all tidying operations, and pasting over the flooded shape, but my preference is for no apparent hard edge.

Have fun and remember you can do no harm to your original file providing each is saved under slightly differing names, or on different discs. Never be afraid of experimenting by nesting various commands; even if they do not work the time is rarely wasted.

Playing with Patterns in MicroDesign 3

by an Anonymous Reader

After a spell of serious work on the Amstrad I often allow myself a 'play-time' with MicroDesign3. Making patterns, like those shown below, is not only entertaining but surprising at times; just few key-strokes can change a pattern completely.

In the Graphics Screen of MD3 one has access to a selection of 'shades'. All the patterns printed here were produced using the two chevron shades. If you feel like having a go, here's how:

Go into the Graphics 1:1 Screen and make a shape; any shape will do but for simplicity I use a rectangle.

Fill the shape with the selected shade. Copy the shade-filled shape on top of itself but a few pixels to the right or left and up or down – or any mixture of the two. You must leave the original shape in its place and do the copying in 'transparent mode'. I think you will be surprised at the result. If you don't like it then use the 'undo' key to go back to the beginning and try again. That's all there is to it except to suggest that you also try copying in 'EXOR mode' and even 'inverting' a finished pattern.

All the patterns shown here have been enlarged four times (x4) to make them show up in print. The easiest way to

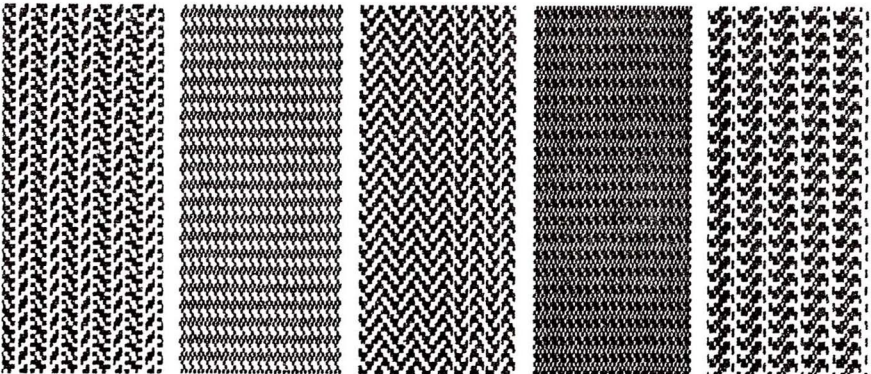
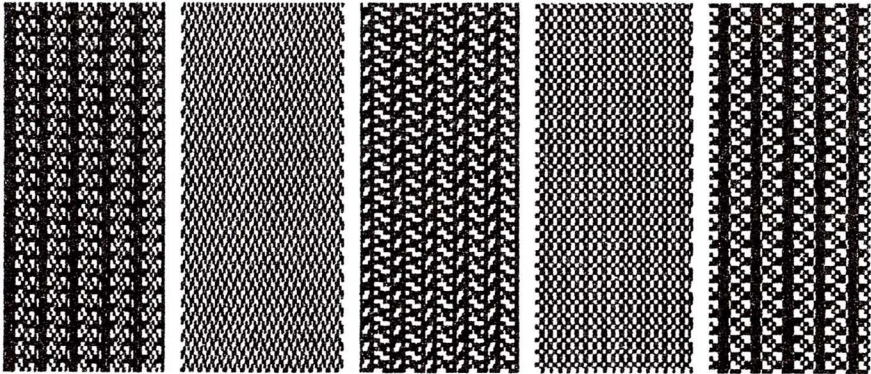
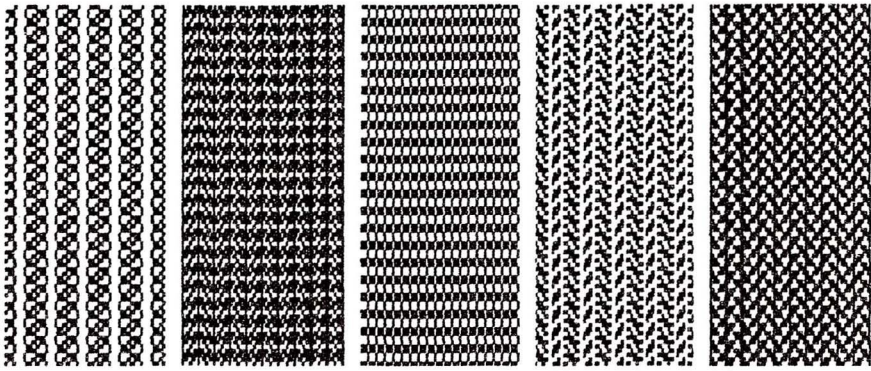
enlarge them is to save the original to disc and then re-load it at x2, save it to disc once more and again re-load it at x2; there you have it.

The above notes are all that you need if you are already proficient in MD3 and there's no point in reading further *except* please read the last paragraph as your expertise could be helpful.

If you are still in the learning stages of MD3 you may find the notes below of some help:

When MD3 is booted up you are presented with the Typeset screen. Press [EXIT] select **Graphics** and press [ENTER] to get into the graphics screen. In the Graphics screen the three columns of keys on the right end of the key-board are known as the **Extra** keys and are used by holding down the [EXTRA] key while tapping one of them. In the bottom right corner of the screen is a menu showing the fifteen Extra keys and their functions; as you can see, in this particular graphics screen only two are in use. They are in the top row and are marked 1:1 and 1:2; they indicate the scale that the screen is in by the square that is drawn around one. We need the screen in the 1:1 scale.

Tap the [S] key, select a shape – any shape will do – and press [ENTER]. The



selected shape will appear on screen. Enlarge the shape but don't fill the entire screen with it as you will need a little bit of manoeuvring room. By tapping the **Space Bar** the cross in the centre of the shape can be moved onto the outline of the shape. (Once takes it up to a corner, twice takes it down to a corner and the third sends it back to the centre.) By using the four arrow keys, while the cross is on the outline of the shape, the shape can be enlarged, reduced or its proportions altered.

Press [RELAY] and a selection of shades appears at the bottom of the screen. The current shade is shown with a square around it which can be moved to another position using the arrow-keys. Select one of the chevron patterns on the lower line. Tap [RELAY] again and the shade menu will disappear. Make sure the cross on the screen is inside the shape, press [F] followed by [ENTER] and the shape will fill with the chosen pattern.

Press the [UNIT] key and a rectangle will appear on screen. Position and adjust its size so that it sits snugly over your filled pattern. Press function key [f3]. Notice that the **Extra** keys now do different things; set them to copy in transparent mode and also to leave the original pattern on the screen along with the copied one. Now tap the right arrow-key twice and the down arrow-key twice and you will see the copying rectangle move slightly. Press [ENTER] and you have an entirely different pattern on the screen. If you don't like it just press the 'undo' key [WORD CHAR] and start again. From now on you are on your own - have fun.

Experts, please read! Is there a way that these new patterns can be used as 'shades' for filling areas?

Flipper tip

If you have **Rocket Plus**, the spreadsheet program that comes combined with **Flipper 3**, you can install **Flipper** and other CP/M based programs without launching **Rocket** first.

Switch on your machine and put your **Rocket Plus** boot disc (start-of-day) into drive A. An alert flag will appear on the screen asking whether to Launch **Rocket** from A:. Instead of pressing [ENTER] and launching **Rocket**, press the right cursor key which cancels the launching of **Rocket**. Press [ENTER] and a small black bar should appear top left of the screen with the word <Nothing> written on it. You are now in **Flipper**. The <Nothing> tells you that **Flipper** is alone and doesn't yet hold another environment.

Put your CP/M boot disc in drive A and press the right cursor key again to reveal a menu whose top item is **Relaunch**. Put the cursor on **Launch** and press [ENTER]. Type CP/M or CPM (either in lower or upper case, it doesn't matter). Put the cursor on tomemory, and use the left and right cursor keys to set the memory at Half the remainder, and then press [ENTER] to launch a CP/M environment on one side of **Flipper**.

Swap boot discs, or leave the CP/M boot disc in the drive if you want CP/M on both sides of **Flipper**. You will now need to set the memory to All of remainder this time before launching a second environment. Two program environments will be about the limit if your machine only has 512k of memory. Try various combinations - **Flipper** will soon let you know if there's not enough memory.

Rod Shinkfield

Chorley, Lancs

Cataloguing LocoScript discs

from Harry Carter

I read with interest your article in the October *Newsletter* about producing a printed list of LocoScript files. Some years ago one of the Basic listings published in *8000Plus* was called **CatLoco.Bas** which did exactly that, in great detail. I use CatLoco.Bas quite a lot to help me keep track of my work; I feel sure it would be of interest to a lot of our members and attach a copy of the listing.

Anyone using the *matrix* printer on the 8000 machines should be warned to have the printer set up with paper *at the ready* as with those printers it goes into action as soon as the 'Y' key is pressed (when asked) and it will quite happily print onto the platen!

This gives me the chance to say 'thank you' to you and all the others who run the club for our common good. Well done!

```
10 ON ERROR GOTO 900:GOTO 110
20 'version 3g, Locoscript docs & descriptions; LS1 or LS2
30 '.....
40 ON ERROR GOTO 70' for nothing to KILL
45 OPTION FILES "Ca"
50 a$= "catloco":PRINT"saving ";a$
60 KILL a$+".bak":NAME a$+".bas" AS a$+".bak":SAVE a$:STOP
70 IF ERR = 53 AND ERL = 50 THEN RESUME NEXT ELSE STOP
100 '.....
110 DEFINT a-z:id$="JOY"+CHR$(1)'
120 maxfil=200:DIM finfo$(maxfil,5),ix(maxfil): filect=0
130 PRINT:PRINT:INPUT "include TEMPLATE.STD (default 'y')";opt1$
140 IF LOWER$(opt1$)="n" THEN opt1$="n" ELSE opt1$="y"
150 INPUT "include limbo files (default 'n')";opt2$
160 IF LOWER$(opt2$)="y" THEN opt2$="y":maxuser=15 ELSE opt2$="n":maxuser=7
170 ls1=0 'whether any non-Locoscript 2 versions
171 PRINT
175 PRINT "You may change drive by including:--"
176 PRINT "a: or b: or m: in front of"
177 PRINT "the disc name."
178 PRINT
180 '..... main loop .....
190 PRINT
200 INPUT "disc name (1-8 chars, 'end' = finish program): ";dn$
210 IF dn$="" THEN 190
220 IF dn$="end" THEN 650
225 IF MID$(dn$,2,1)=":" THEN OPTION FILES LEFT$(dn$,1): dn$=MID$(dn$,3)
```

```

230 dn$=LEFT$(dn$,8):user = 0: locfiles=0
240 WHILE user<= maxuser
250 OPTION RUN:OPTION FILES STR$(user)
260 fl=1:fln$=FIND$("*.*",1)
270 IF fln$="" THEN GOTO 590 'empty disk/user
280 IF user <=7 THEN grp$ = LEFT$(FIND$("*.grp"),8)
290 IF user >=8 THEN OPTION FILES(STR$(user-8)): grp$=LEFT$(FIND$("*.grp"),8)+"
    limbo": OPTION FILES STR$(user)
300 WHILE fln$>""
310 PRINT".";
320 IF opt1$="n" THEN IF fln$="TEMPLATE.STD" THEN GOTO 570
330 IF RIGHT$(fln$,3)="GRP" THEN GOTO 570
340 OPEN "i",1,fln$
350 IF INPUT$(4,#1) <> id$ THEN 560 'not locoscript
360 IF filect = maxfil THEN PRINT"sorry, memory full": GOTO 650
370 filect=filect+1
380 IF RIGHT$(fln$,4)="." THEN fln$=LEFT$(fln$,8)
390 finfo$(filect,1)=fln$
400 finfo$(filect,2)=grp$
410 finfo$(filect,3)=dn$
420 finfo$(filect,4)=CHR$(48+ASC(INPUT$(1,#1))) 'LScript 1 or 2
430 IF finfo$(filect,4)<>"2" THEN ls1 = 1
440 locfiles=locfiles+1 'count Loco files found
450 t$=INPUT$(90,#1):w$=""
460 IF MID$(t$,60,1)<>" " THEN t$=LEFT$(t$,60)+"          "+MID$(t$,61)
470 IF MID$(t$,30,1)<>" " THEN t$=LEFT$(t$,30)+" "+MID$(t$,31)
480 FOR x=1 TO LEN(t$):x$=MID$(t$,x,1)
490 IF x$<>" " OR RIGHT$(w$,1)<>" " THEN w$=w$+x$
500 NEXT x
510 finfo$(filect,5)=w$
520 ptr=ix(0):old=0
530 WHILE finfo$(ptr,1)<=fln$ AND ptr>0:old=ptr:ptr=ix(ptr)
540 WEND
550 ix(filect)=ptr:ix(old)=filect
560 CLOSE 1
570 fl=fl+1:fln$=FIND$("*.*",fl)
580 WEND
590 user=user+1
600 WEND
610 OPTION FILES "0a"
620 OPTION STOP
630 IF locfiles=0 THEN PRINT"no Locoscript documents";
640 GOTO 190

```

```

650 '..... now print .....
660 PRINT
670 OPTION FILES "0a"
680 IF filect=0 THEN PRINT"no files found":GOTO 890
690 INPUT "print results [y/n]";yn$
700 IF LOWER$(LEFT$(yn$,1))<>"y"THEN 880
710 INPUT "date:";dt$:INPUT "time:";tm$
720 INPUT "any comment for top:";com$
730 LPRINT CHR$(27);"@'"resets to top of form
740 LPRINT CHR$(15);"Program Catloco:";TAB(50);dt$;TAB(60);tm$
750 LPRINT "Catalogue of Locoscript files"
760 IF com$>" " THEN LPRINT com$
770 IF lsl > 0 THEN LPRINT
780 LPRINT"Names in lower case are duplicates.":LPRINT
790 LPRINT"Name";TAB(17);"Group";TAB(30);"Disc":LPRINT
800 x=ix(0):WHILE x>0
810 IF finfo$(x,1)=old$ THEN finfo$(x,1)=LOWER$(finfo$(x,1))
820 IF finfo$(x,4) = "2" THEN LPRINT" "; ELSE LPRINT"*";
830 LPRINT finfo$(x,1);TAB(17);finfo$(x,2);TAB(32);
840 LPRINT finfo$(x,3);TAB(42);finfo$(x,5)
850 old$=finfo$(x,1):x=ix(x):WEND
860 LPRINT:LPRINT filect"files"
870 LPRINT CHR$(27);"@'"
880 PRINT"end of run"
890 END
900 '.....
910 IF ERR = 62 AND ERL = 450 THEN RESUME NEXT
920 IF ERR = 62 AND ERL = 350 THEN RESUME 560
930 OPTION FILES "0a"
940 ON ERROR GOTO 0

```

The program produces a printed record of *all* the files on a LocoScript data disc in alphabetical order in four columns: Filename; Group; Discname; Comments where the Comments column contains the contents of the Identity Text of the file. (Now perhaps you will start to use the Identity Text to describe the contents of your files more appropriately?)

Although the listing was designed for use with earlier versions of LocoScript it also works perfectly with LocoScript 4.

Full acknowledgement is made to John Gledhill, the author of the original listing and to *8000Plus*. Certain lines have been added by Harry Carter to make the program easier to use. Lines which do not have a line number *must* be typed as a continuation of the line above.

Some readers may balk at the idea of typing in the full listing and, by the time you read this issue, a copy of the program should be available on disc from Nick Chandy, the public domain librarian.

Memoirs of a Compulsive Gadgeteer

by Maureen Jenner

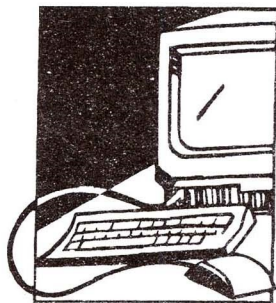
I have always loved gadgets. Indeed, my father called me Marconi Joe because I could not resist twiddling with anything electrical or mechanical so I suppose it was only a matter of time before I considered updating my faithful Amstrad 8256. The problem was that I had been living in Cyprus since 1988 and although *PCW Plus* arrived faithfully every month, some four thousand miles lay between me and the necessary parts: an SCA Twin Drive and a Cirtech Hard Disc.

I had been thinking about those tantalising possibilities and updates after reading *PCW Plus* when I found that the husband of one of my friends was a fellow enthusiast. An ex-patriot from Norfolk, David not only knew his machine inside out but wrote his own programs. He inspired me to 'have a go' and update my 8256.

Paying a visit to my family in Sussex soon had me on the end of a telephone making arrangements to collect parts from Silicon City, then based in Suffolk. I was delighted to be shown just what I had to do to fit the Twin Drive and saw, for the first time, the mysterious inside of a computer. In that loft workshop/studio, all the mystique was removed as I was given practical advice and hands-on experience of what to do and how to do it plus the reassurance that the team were only a phone call away.

I returned to Cyprus with the Twin Drive and the Cirtech Hard Disc as well as a couple of boxes of 3.5" floppies and an update to Locoscript 2.

I was itching to 'have a go' and armed with my copy of *PCW Plus* and its then current "Step by Step DIY" article on how to replace your old drive for new, plus all the recommended basic tools etc., I went to work. No, I did not manage entirely alone by the sweat of my brow, although the temperature was a lobstering 90°F in the shade at the time, but I did have a speaker phone to hand and was talked through one tricky, sticky breath-holding moment: the voice on the other end of the line was reassuring and, eventually, I had the thrill of seeing the screen light up anew with the Cirtech logo and ultimately the familiar disc management screen.



The recent acquisition of a new ink jet printer and LocoScript 4 gave me a few initial hiccups but has given my old faithful a new and speedier lease of life. So I suppose, if an enthusiastic grandmother can do it, *anyone can*. My PCW has seen me churn out many a printed page; it keeps my accounts in meticulous order and will, I hope, continue to do so for a very long time to come.

PcW16 FORUM

Judging by my incoming post and telephone calls there are some very interesting people experimenting with the 16. My thanks to everyone who has been in touch.

To those who simply want to know how to get the best from the machine I can only say, 'Use it, exploring the menus to see what happens. The worst that can happen is that you have to reload the original rescue disc, but for safety's sake do export your Address file and Diary to disc before disaster strikes.'

Believing that new programs will continue to be written, or that an emulator will permit some CP/M programs to be used, I keep the Cabinet memory free for future additions and always 'work' on HD Discs.

TWELVE PLUS

Have you discovered the two additional programs included with Rescue Disc vl.12?

Switch on, insert the Rescue Disc, pull down the TASK menu and Run External Programs [F7]. Move to 'disc' and you will find **Shopping List** and **Word Match**. The latter has been described as 'a great little package for solving anagrams'.

Shopping List initially offers a long list of everyday household items, from Bags - bin, to Vitamins. Work through the list, customizing it to suit your taste in beans, bread, cereals, fruit, soap powders, vegetables etc and add extra items as necessary. You can maintain a stock record and note how many you need to buy this trip. Using the File menu you can Import and Export lists, View and then Print the complete list or just the Needed items.

The finished result would certainly be more legible than the scribbled scrap of paper I take to the supermarket, and provide a useful checklist if your shopping is done for you.

FORMATTING

First time PcW users may wonder why the HD discs bought to back-up the Cabinet memory cannot be used immediately. As bought the disc is like a very large car park with no lines painted on the tarmac. With nothing to guide you finding your car again is a hazardous nightmare. However, we all know that if the car is in space 46, level 4 West, it will be easy to locate.

It is the same with discs.

'Formatting' the disc sets down magnetic markers so that the PcW knows where to look to find the required file.

To format a blank disc, select F6 File Manager, then Disc from the list at the top of the screen, and follow the instructions to Format Disc.

Good practice is to format a complete box of discs, adding a blank label (supplied with the discs) as each becomes ready for use. Large files and important files like address lists should always be backed up on a disc. Simple filing by type, with separate discs for different subjects e.g. Spreadsheets, family letters, business correspondence, can save a lot of time.

MYSTERIOUS DEATH

My own original PcW16 died during my absence on holiday. All attempts at resuscitation failed, even the ultimate test of a 'Factory Reset Stage' For this you must switch off at the main, press and keep down for half a minute the Task, Control, Shift and Red keys at the right hand side of the letter keyboard and then (with your third hand?) turn on at the main. If this works it will wipe out the Cabinet memory and you will need to reload the Rescue Disc.

As my machine was originally provided free by Amstrad, has had three major operations by their representative and something like ten versions of the program installed, plus two and a half years of serious use, it didn't seem likely that I could claim a replacement.

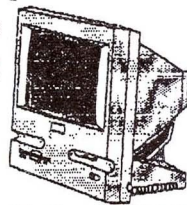
Being Yorkshire born and bred I was reluctant to lash out real money on replacing something that was initially free, but I missed the ability to write letters at a moment's notice and there was always the matter of this column to write. so I lashed out £55 and bought one, new, boxed, off a market stall! But I will tell you how I get on with that another time.

TOM'S TALE

Tom, a 8512 user, bought a PcW16. Alas several functions failed and the machine siezed up. A second machine also locked up! The next replacement swallowed the Rescue Disc! The reputable retailer refunded Tom's money. Has anyone experienced similar problems?

You can contact me on ☎ 01273 480582 or write to:

81b Western Road
LEWES BN7 IRS.



Esther Welch

BASIC Listing: 8

by Adrian Hooper

Welcome to the eighth part of my BASIC listing; this part is to be a force 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 and press [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 "FORCE.CON" [RETURN] and then RUN "FORCE.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 the 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$="Force Conversion Menu"
30 PRINT TAB(15);t$: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$="lbf":s2$="N"
70 p1$="lbf":p2$="N"
80 PRINT:PRINT:FOR i=1 TO 3:READ a$:PRINT i;" ";a$:NEXT
90 PRINT:PRINT:PRINT "Please type in your chosen type now: ":INPUT A
100 ON A GOSUB 120,140,110
110 IF A=3 THEN PRINT c1$:RUN "CONVERSE.BAS"
120 t1s$=s1$:t1p$=p1$:t2s$=s2$:t2p$=p2$:GOSUB 230
130 D=C*4.45:GOSUB 260:GOSUB 200:RETURN
140 t1s$=s2$:t1p$=p2$:t2s$=s1$:t2p$=p1$:GOSUB 230
150 D=C*0.225:GOSUB 260:GOSUB 200:RETURN
200 PRINT:PRINT:PRINT "Press SPACE to return to menu"
210 WHILE INKEY$<>" ":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 force in ";t1p$:PRINT:INPUT C:RETURN
260 IF C=1 THEN pc$=t1s$ ELSE pc$=t1p$
270 IF D=1 THEN pd$=t2s$ ELSE pd$=t2p$
280 PRINT:PRINT C;pc$;" is equivalent to";D;pd$:RETURN
290 DATA "lbf (pound force) to N (Newtons)", "N (newtons) to lbf
(pound force)", "Return to conversion menu"
```

END

Sort it out with CP/M

by Rod Shinkfield

If, on one CP/M formatted data disc you've saved a hodge-podge of BASIC and CP/M listings, programs and utilities copied from magazines, plus programs you've created yourself, you will at least know where all the files are – they being on the one data disc.

Some of the files may not work, for even listings copied from magazines may not work properly due possibly to typos you've unwittingly keyed in, or bugs in the original listing. Some of the files will work: some will deal primarily with numbers, some will deal mainly with text, some will offer little more than a screen display or screensaver, or maybe offer a means of controlling the screen, printer, and so on.

But what about when your data disc collection of such listings and programs grows – which it will – alarmingly? Let's assume, for example, you now have ten data discs (and ten back-up discs too). It's now not so easy to recover that useful BASIC program which you vaguely remember copying in some time ago – what was it's filename, and probably more importantly, where on your ten data discs did you put it?

You need to get some order into your life, in other words – *sort it out*. Boot into CP/M and put the first of your ten supposed data discs into your machine's disc drive A (assuming your machine only has a single disc drive like my PeW 10). With your printer switched on and ready to print, press [ALT] and [P].

You should hear a beep telling you a line has been opened to your printer. Now type DIR [ENTER] and a list of files will be printed onto paper while also appearing on your screen. (I will assume all your files are saved in CP/M's user group 0 on your data discs – group 0 in LocoScript – the root directory in DOS.) Once the DIR operation is complete and the A> prompt has returned, press [ALT] and [P] again (no beep this time) to close the line to your printer.

With the data disc still in drive A, try out all the CP/M files and see which ones work: with numbers, with text, with the screen, printer, etc. and which ones don't work at all. Mark the results against the filenames shown on your paper. Put your CP/M boot disc back into drive A and type BASIC [ENTER] to enter BASIC. Now try all the BASIC programs on your data disc and categorise them as you did with the CP/M programs.

A copy of PIP should have been put into the memory drive when CP/M was first booted up. If it wasn't then add PIP to the list of instructions in the file PROFILE.SUB (using CP/M's very useful small ASCII editor program RPED) and saved on your CP/M master disc (the copy you normally use to boot up CP/M with – not the original CP/M Master Disc that came with your machine (or updated since). Your *original* CP/M Master Disc, once a spare copy and a Start-of-Day disc have been made, should be stored somewhere safe.

With the data disc in drive A, type
PIP [ENTER].

When PIP's * appears type

M:=A:*.BAS [ENTER]

(if you wish to copy all files ending with the suffix .BAS into memory) or work down your directory list and type

M:=A:filename.suffix [ENTER]

which will copy individual files to your memory drive.

Take a blank CP/M formatted disc and label it BASIC. (I also number my discs 1:0, 2:0, 3:0, and so on). Type

A:=M:*.BAS [ENTER]

and all the files ending with .BAS will be copied onto the new data disc's user group 0.

To empty the .BAS files and make space on the memory drive for further files, type **M: [ENTER]** and **A>** will change to **M>**; you are now able to work in memory. Type

ERA *.BAS [ENTER]

and you will be asked:

ERASE *.BAS (Y/N)?

Type **[Y]** and all the files ending with .BAS will be erased from memory. Type **A: [ENTER]** to return to drive A.

To import the other mixed bag of files, which you may have copied into **M>** individually, you must put different category discs into drive A, and type

A:=M:filename.suffix [ENTER]

to copy each individual file onto the data discs which could, for example, be named as **CPMSCREENS**, **CPMPRINT**, **CPMBIN**, **CPMSUMS**, **CPMWORDS**, and so on. (The 'bin' disc can be for listings than won't work at the moment, but which you *mean* to debug and get working, one day.) Repeat the same for your BASIC files.

Use **CPMMIXED** for files not falling readily into categories and put all your **COM** file listings on a data disc named **CPMCOM**.

In future, to find a text **BASIC** program, search on your **BASWORD** disc, or **BASSUM** for numbers.

Another method to copy files is to type **PIP** and, at PIP's *, type

M:=A:*. *[C] [ENTER].

You must confirm each file by pressing **[Y]** or **[N]** before it is copied. This method is handy for a mixed bag of files, but slower than ***.*** or ***.BAS**, etc.

Remember that if you press the **[PASTE]** key the last instruction typed will reappear and save you typing it out again. For instance: having typed **M:=A:*.BAS [ENTER]** to copy all files ending with **BAS** to memory, swop data discs, press **[PASTE]** and **M:=A:*.BAS** will re-appear. Cursor back and change the drive letters to read **A:=M:*.BAS** and press **[ENTER]** to copy the files onto the data disc in drive A.

When copying a lot of files you may find there's not enough memory available to hold them all and the operation will stop. Either split the files into smaller batches by using wild cards; type **C*.BAS**, for instance, to copy only those **BASIC** files beginning with a **C**; or make more memory space by erasing all the **COM** files normally copied onto the memory drive on booting up.

To do this type **M: [ENTER]**, then **ERA *.* [ENTER]**, pressing **[Y]** to confirm erasure. With your CP/M boot disc in drive A, type **A: [ENTER]**; once **M>** becomes **A>**, type **PIP [ENTER]**. At PIP's * change back to data discs and resume copying the files.

Program your PcW16

by Mike Elliston

Readers with only the PcW16 may be envious of the Basic programs which appear elsewhere in the *Disc Drive*, particularly the suite of conversion programs being produced in each issue by Adrian Hooper. However, as the figure reproduced overleaf will show, preparing a Conversions Table on the PcW16, using the built-in spreadsheet, is quite a simple task.

Incidentally, the following routines apply to most spreadsheets that run on the PCW, such as SuperCalc II or Rocket, although there will be slight differences in the way in which text and/or numbers are entered depending on the program you choose to use: nevertheless, the basic principles remain the same

Start up the PcW16 and select the Spreadsheet option with f2. Create a new spreadsheet and give it the name **Convert** or something similar. Accept the default column width settings and, for the time being, leave the grid-lines showing: it makes it much easier to insert the various formulae in the correct cells.

In cell F1 type the words **Conversions Table** and set it to bold type using the Format option so that it forms a title on the page. Move to B1 and type the words **Enter below**. Whenever I start up a new spreadsheet, regardless of the program being used, I invariably leave column A empty. The width of this empty first column can then be adjusted to give the required left hand margin on the paper when it comes to printing out the spreadsheet later on. (Users of other programs

may also find that leaving the top six rows unused gives a valuable one inch top margin if the printer insists on starting at the very top edge of the sheet of paper.)

In B3 (=cell B003) enter, for the moment, the numeral 1. In general all cells containing numbers should be set to the Number left (2 Dec. places) format and text cells should be set to TEXT: Left aligned, normal. You can readjust these as you wish at a later date but two places of decimals should be accurate enough for most purposes. (Other programs may refer to two decimal places as currency or \$ settings.)

In C3 type °Fahrenheit= and in cell E3 °Centigrade. On the PcW16 use Shift+Ctrl+# to get the ° degree symbol. Now, in D3 type:

$$+(B3-32) \times 5 \div 9.$$

The \times is obtained by using the asterisk * (shift 8) and the \div with the / solidus or forward slash on the ? key. This formula simply means: take the contents of cell B3, deduct 32, multiply by 5 and divide that by 9. The answer should appear as a numeric value in cell D3 with the formula displayed in the Contents box at the top.

Let's test this formula. Change the number in B3 to read 212 and the answer 100 should appear in D3 (since 100°C is the same as 212°F). If you don't get this answer check your typing of the formula and correct it as required. It would be a good idea to save and continue (with Task S, Save As, *not* Stop) at this point, once you've got it right.

STOP Spreadsheet: **Conversions** Cut Copy Paste

Cell: B1 Contents: Enter below Format: TEXT: Left aligned, normal

	A	B	C	D	E	F	G	H
001		Enter below				Conversions Table		
002								
003		212.00	°Fahrenheit=	100.00	°Centigrade			
004		100.00	°Centigrade=	212.00	°Fahrenheit			
005								
006		25.4	Millimetres=	1	Ins			
007		1	Inches=	25.4	mm			
008								
009		1	Metres=	3	Feet &	3.37	Inches	
010		1	Feet &	1	Inches =	0.33	Metres	
011								
012		1	Ounces =	28.35	Grammes			
013		1	Pounds =	0.45	Kilograms			
014								
015		1	Gallons =	4.55	Litres			
016		1	Litres =	0.22	Gallons or	1.76	Pints	
017								

Type a number or some text into the current cell, or change cells using the arrow keys or the mouse.

The conversion of degrees Centigrade to Fahrenheit is set up in a similar manner. Enter a numeral **1** in B4, **°Centigrade=** in C4 and **°Fahrenheit** in E4. In D4 enter:

$$+(B4 \times 9 \div 5) + 32.$$

If you now put **100** in B4 the result **212** should appear in D4. If not check your typing again.

Another useful day to day conversion is millimetres to inches and *vice versa*, so we shall set that up next. As before, we will start with a numeral **1**, this time in B6, **Millimetres=** in C6 and **Ins** in E6. In D6 enter the simple formula:

$$+B6 \div 25.40.$$

Change the value **1** in B6 to **25.4** and you should be told **25.4 mm = 1 inch** (in D6).

Following the above pattern copy the text items from the figure into C7 and E7 and type this formula into D7:

$$+B7 \times 25.40.$$

Entering the value of **1** into B7 should give you **25.4** in D7. Does it? Good.

So far this table has been laid out so that all you have to do is type the required number into column B and the answer will appear in column D. We will have to amend the layout a little if we wish to convert metres to feet *and* inches; the feet value will appear in column D but the inches value will be placed in F.

Enter a **1** in B9, **Metres=** in C9, **Feet &** in E9 and **Inches** in G9. On this occasion we need *two* formulae; one for the *feet* integer part of the answer and one

for the *inches* fractional part. (On the PcW16 there are three ways of separating the integer part of a number from the fractional part: *Floor*, *Ceiling* and *Int*. Without getting too technical, we need to use the *Floor* expression (rather than the *Int* alternative) as we need the *whole* number of feet and not the *nearest* number of feet in the answer. Even if you are not clear what I mean just accept the formulae below. In D9 enter:

+Floor(B9 × 3.2808)

and in F9 enter (*all in one line*):

+((B9 × 3.2808)-

Floor(B9 × 3.2808)) × 12

This latter line takes the fractional part of the feet and multiplies it by twelve to turn it into inches.

The next conversion, feet *and* inches to metres is the only occasion when you have to enter a value (for feet) into column B *and* a value (for inches) into column D (in cell D10). The text items should be familiar by now using the wording in the figure for row 10. Insert the number 1 initially in *both* B10 *and* D10 and type the following into F10:

+(12 × B10 + D10) × 0.0254

In this instance only you enter your required values (of feet *and* inches) into *two* cells: feet in B10 and inches in D10. Try it and see if you get the right answer.

The next three or four conversions are quite straightforward and if you've got this far you should be able to insert your own conversion factors into the formulae for the calculations you want. Copy the text items for ounces to grammes, pounds to kilograms, gallons to litres and litres to gallons *and/or* pints as shown in the figure.

The formulae to insert into cells D12, D13, D15, D16 *and* F16 are, in order:

+B12 × 28.3495 [D12

+B13 × 0.45359 [D13

+B15 × 4.5461 [D15

+B16 × 0.21997 [D16

+B16 × 1.7598 [F16

Check all the results by comparison with the values in the figure and edit as necessary. Once you are happy with the spreadsheet widen or narrow the various columns to your taste. If you get a result which appears as "#####" it means that the number is too wide for the column, probably because you have forgotten to set its format to only two places of decimals. Finally remove the grid-lines with Options, Gridlines and then Save As to both the cabinet *and* to a disc.

You use the conversion table by typing the value to be converted, for example millimetres, in column B (cell B6) and read the answer in inches in D6. When you having finished using the table (or a similar one you have made for yourself *do not save it*. Instead Abandon Edit via Task+Spreadsheet, otherwise you will overwrite the correct version with the one you have been using most recently. In general leave the initial values as 1 (except for the temperature conversions) so that you can check that the default values are the same and the formulae have not been amended in error.

If you do, by some mischance, manage to overwrite the standard conversion spreadsheet stored in your cabinet use the File Manager to copy the good version from the back-up disc copy into the cabinet again. Don't forget that your conversions table doesn't just have to appear on the screen before you – it can extend onto the many rows below as well.

Auto Discat

I was disappointed with the review of Auto Discat as it contained factual errors about the program's performance and what I regard as unjust criticisms.

Firstly, it is true that the program reads only one user area at a time, as a matter of fact so do virtually all disc utilities. For most CP/M discs this will be User 0 (zero) although Locoscript data discs can be divided into 8 groups (0 to 7). However, since the program has to allow for up to 128 files in EACH group this would equate to a maximum 2048 files in total, an impractical number for it too handle, and potentially confusing for users. In the case of well-populated Locoscript document discs it is probably best to use the LIST options of the Disc File Save routine to build up a detailed dossier rather than printing a single label.

Secondly, the print routine allows for 'only' 64 files to be printed on a LABEL because this is the number of names a disc label can accommodate even using condensed format as Discat does. We offer no less than THREE different popular label sizes and the number of files printed relates to the maximum that can be physically fitted on each type. No doubt Mr Elliston would be the first to complain if the names started spilling off the end of the label. I would think the LABEL limit of 64 would be more than adequate for most users and, if this number is exceeded, then one can select either of the two LIST routines instead, intended for print out on plain paper where space is not a problem.

Thirdly, Mr Elliston claims that there is no facility to back out of the print option if one makes a mistake. Has he not heard of the <EXIT> key? Pressing this will return the user to the main menu from virtually any corner of the program and is surely a fairly logical choice for so doing.

Fourthly, Mr Elliston complains that the search/select option is not specific enough. He sites an example where he wanted to select all the 'com' files for inclusion in a printed report and that if he entered 'com' as the search string, the program would also select a file called 'comic.bas'. True enough because the program uses an 'instring' formula but if he wanted to select only files ending in '.com' then all he needed to enter was a full stop and 'com' as the search string. 'Comic.bas' would then not have been included. Again, I would say, a fairly logical assumption.

Fifthly, I believe that all the above points and more were covered in telephone and postal communications between the publisher and the reviewer long before the article went to print. After all, it is sensible for both parties to discuss the product in case any misinterpretations occur. Why then did such inaccuracies still appear in the finished review? It is hardly encouraging for those of us still taking the time and trouble to write software for the PCW to receive such shoddy treatment in one of the remaining Amstrad Journals.

Finally, I would like to point out that we do not regard our products as being perfect and we welcome suggestions for the inclusion of new or improved features where practical in future updates. For example, we have already included support for hard drive users in Auto Discat so that the program can read files from any drive in the range A-F and more updates will follow. Yet in the case of this review it occurs to me that the article was written based on initial impressions and then not subsequently amended. The usefulness of the program was lost in a morass of nit-picking and I think a more objective approach to reviewing is called for.

*Steve Denson,
SD Microsystems*

Thetford, Norfolk

The Clip Art Gallery



A selection of Christmas clip art available from Nick Chaundy, the Club's Public Domain Librarian, just in time for your Christmas cards, etc. You should note that the size of printed illustrations depends on the resolution of your printer; you may have to rescale these images to fit your finished designs.

Gissa job, guv!

The following was seen in the pages of the *Lanzarotte Gazette & Tourist Guide* by one of our readers and is, apparently, a true story. It is the actual dialogue of a, now unemployed, former WordPerfect Customer Support employee:

Ridge Hall computer assistant: may I help you?

Yes, well, I'm having trouble with WordPerfect.

What sort of trouble?

Well, I was just typing along and all of a sudden the words went away.

Went away?

They disappeared.

Hmm. So what does your screen look like now?

Nothing.

Nothing?

It's blank; it won't accept anything when I type.

Are you still in WordPerfect or did you get out?

How do I tell?

Can you see the C:\prompt on the screen?

What's a sea-prompt?

Never mind. Can you move the cursor around on the screen?

There isn't any cursor. I told you, it won't accept anything I type.

Does you monitor have a power indicator?

What's a monitor?

It's the thing with the screen on it that looks like a TV. Does it have a little light that tells you when it's on?

I don't know.

Well then, look on the back of the monitor and find where the power cord goes into it. Can you see that?

Yes, I think so.

Great! Follow the cord to the plug and tell me if it's plugged into the wall.

Yes, it is.

When you were behind the monitor, did you notice if there were two cables plugged into the back of it, not just one?

No.

Well there are. I need you to look back there again and find the other cable.

Okay, here it is.

Follow it for me and tell me if it's plugged securely into the back of your computer.

I can't reach.

Uh huh. Well can you see if it is?

No.

Even if you put your knee on something and lean way over?

Oh, it's not because I don't have the right angle – it's because it's dark.

Dark?

Yes – the office light is off and the only light is coming from the window.

Well, turn on the office light then.

I can't.

No? Why not?

Because there's a power cut.

A power cut... A power cut? Aha! Okay, we've got it licked now. Do you still have the boxes and manuals and packing stuff your computer came with?

Well, yes. I keep them in the closet.

Good! Go get them. Unplug your computer system and pack it up just like it was when you got it. Then take it back to the store where you bought it from.

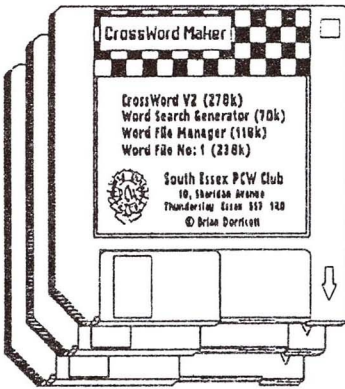
Really, it is that bad?

Yes, I'm afraid it is.

Well, all right then, I suppose. What do I tell them?

Tell them you're too stupid to own a computer...

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As a writer, you already know that your Amstrad word-processor can create and print text documents. But did you know that you can also use it for Desktop-Publishing - to mix your text with pictures, to design letterheads and business cards, and to print newsletters and brochures? Most people think that Desktop-Publishing can only be done on an expensive computer such as a Macintosh, but you can produce high-quality DTP work on your humble Amstrad - all you need is the right software program. That program is called **MICRODESIGN3**.

What do I need?

MicroDesign3 comes complete with all you need to start Desktop Publishing on any Amstrad PCW. (The program requires 512K of memory, but memory upgrades are available.) The package also includes an extensive library of typeface designs, and can print using dot-matrix, inkjet and laser printers.



Is it easy to learn?

MicroDesign3 is controlled using on-screen menus, so it is simple to operate using the keyboard or a mouse: in PCW-Plus Magazine's review of MicroDesign3, the program scored five marks out of five for ease of use. The package includes a fully illustrated key-by-key tutorial to help you get started, and we also provide a free technical support service, by letter or telephone, available Monday to Friday 4-7pm.

If you would like to know more about Desktop Publishing on your Amstrad PCW, please write to us, or give us a call!



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