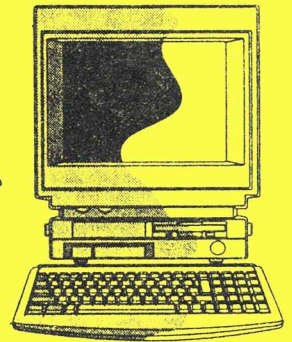
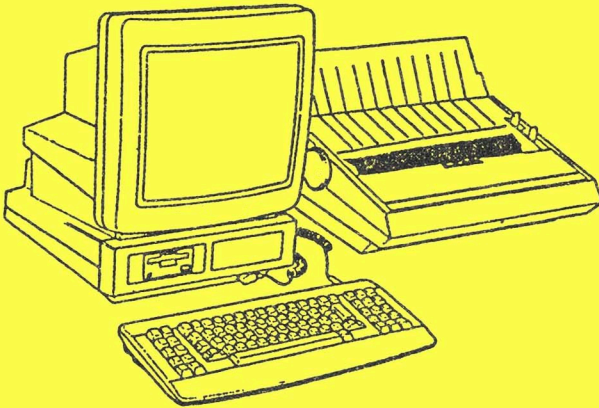
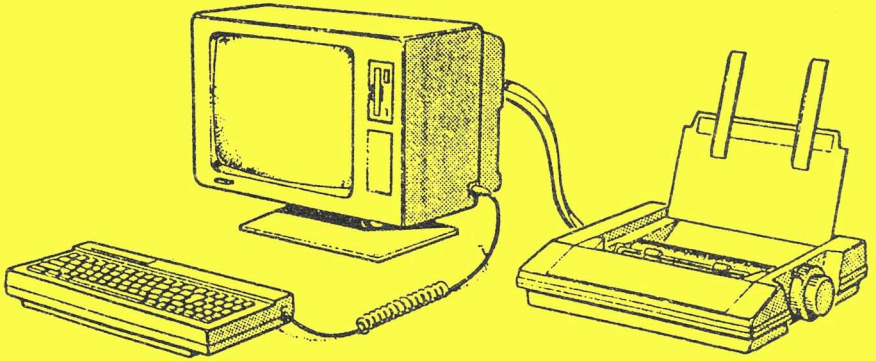


The Disc Drive

Issue 21

Spring 1999



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

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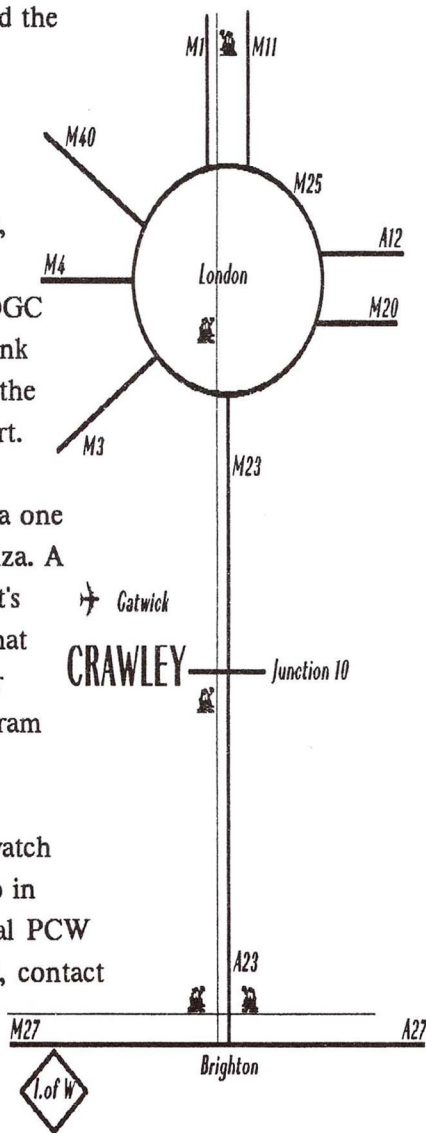
CRAWLEY PCW DAY

In 1994 Microdesigners travelled from around the country to enjoy a fascinating MD Day organised by the Crawley PCW Club. Creative Technology, Crazy Diamond, Crossword Maker, DGC Software and ArtMonk Design were among the companies taking part.

Now, in May 1999, Crawley is planning a one day PCW extravaganza. A chance to learn what's new, how to solve that technical problem or make the latest program work.

For ticket and final programme details watch the PCW press, keep in touch with your local PCW Club or, after Easter, contact John Moon

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MEET: The movers and shakers from the PCW world.

The British Amstrad PCW Club, producers of 'The Disc Drive'. Adrian Braddy, Editor of 'PCW Today'.

Doug Cox and the MDIUG team.

John Elliott.

John Craggs, creator of 'Writer's Desk', the invaluable guide to making your writing pay.

The companies still serving the PCW.

FIND OUT ABOUT: Using the latest LocoScript programs, getting the best from the PcW16, and how to keep your PCW working.

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The Disc Drive

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Writing a Duplicate Bridge Scoring Program

by *F W Manders*

In the August 1994 Issue of *PCW Plus* there was a letter asking if anyone knew of a Duplicate Bridge Scoring Program for the PCW or if anyone would be prepared to write one to the writer's specification.

At that time I didn't know what Duplicate Bridge was but I assumed that it must be in some way related to Rubber Bridge, which I had played a little in the mid 1940s during my wartime service with the RAF. I remembered that the scoring was a bit complicated, but did it really need a computer? Surely, that's like using a sledgehammer to crack a nut, I thought.

Program specification

However, my curiosity was aroused and I wrote to the gentleman in question, who telephoned a few days later and explained in simple terms what he wanted. I said that I was willing to have a go and he promised to send me details of what happened at a Duplicate Bridge Session and a program specification.

For the uninitiated, at Rubber Bridge, four people play as two opposing pairs, scoring points for winning tricks as specified during the bidding, which precedes the actual card play, or, if they score less tricks than their 'Contract', giving points to the opposing pair. One

hundred points is 'Game' and two Games makes a 'Rubber'. If they score two games without the opposing pair scoring one they win a bonus of 700 points, or 500 points if the opposing pair have scored one game. Only points scored for making the Contract go towards Game; bonus points for extra tricks, or stopping opponents making their contract, go 'above the line', to be included in the final score.

Scoring Method

In Duplicate Bridge the cards are pre-shuffled and kept in slots in plastic 'Boards' which are passed from table to table after each 'round' of two or more boards. As they are played the cards are not thrown into the middle of the table, but placed in front of each player in such a way that he or she knows how many tricks they have made or lost. When the hand is finished the cards are replaced in the correct slot in the board. The scoring is a bit different, but it is based on Rubber Bridge scoring.

As each hand is played the points scored are written on a travelling score sheet which stays with the board until the end of the session when they are collected for the final scoring. At the end of the round the boards are passed to the next table and at least one pair from each table

moves to another table. So, for each round, each pair is playing different boards (sets of cards) against a different pair. For convenience the pairs at each table are known as North/South and East/West.

There are two basic types of movements, known as one-winner, where there is one overall winner, and two-winner, where there are separate N/S and E/W winners, but the gentleman didn't tell me that as he was interested only in the 2-winner movements. The most popular of these are known as Mitchell, after their American inventor but, as I found out later, there are many others. During the next two weeks he sent me a number of large envelopes containing all the information he thought I might need and, in the last one, a well thought-out program specification so that I knew exactly what he wanted. By this time I had realised that Duplicate Bridge Scoring was just the sort of task that computers are really useful for.

♥♣ Competition Winner ♦♠

Two or three years earlier I had won a copy of **HiSoft Pascal** in a competition in *PCW User*, so I had experience of programming in Basic, Logo, Pascal and a little Z80 Assembler. It didn't take me long to decide that Pascal would be best for this project, as it runs faster than Basic or Logo, and it produces programs in .COM files, which run straight from CP/M. So I was ready to start on what turned out to be by far the biggest and most interesting PCW project I have ever tackled.

As I have already said, the scores for each board are entered on a score sheet,

which stays with the board until the end of the session. The scoring program needed to be designed so that the scores on these sheets could be copied into the PCW with as few key presses as possible. So the first requirement was for it to know in what order the scores would be on the sheet, so that the operator didn't have to enter the pair numbers, as well as their scores. Secondly, all Bridge scores end with at least one zero, so let the computer add the final zero.

♥♣ Programs for sale ♦♠

By the end of October 1994, after numerous telephone calls and letters, some of which were accompanied by discs containing versions of the program, I had a program which did what he wanted. Publicity in *PCW Plus* enabled me to sell a few copies to bridge playing PCW owners or, more specifically, to PCW owners who also acted as Tournament Directors at Duplicate Bridge Sessions.

The final scoring is quite complicated, as it involves allocating Match Points for each pair on each board (two for each pair with a lower score and one for each pair with an equal score) and adding these up for each pair over the whole session. These are then converted to a percentage of the maximum each pair could have won had they been 'top' for every board, then sorted into order and printed out, starting with the highest scorers at the top. As the players' names have to be included in the list too, the program must include a means of entering these also.

A convenient way to enter the names was in table order, giving the names for the N/S and E/W pairs at each table at the

start of play. My first programs provided no means of editing the names once the space-bar had been pressed to move on to the next table so, apart from the limited editing available as the names were being typed in, it was a case of getting it right first time! Not surprisingly, it wasn't long before someone asked if I could include a name editing facility. This was quite a challenge, but I enjoyed doing it, and it has proved to be a worthwhile addition to the program, particularly for people like me who often hit the wrong key.

♥ ♣ The players named ♦ ♠

Not long after that, someone suggested that it would be useful to have the names in a file so that they could be called up by using some sort of a 'key', perhaps the initials. That sounds OK, but what if there are several people with the same initials? What about a *number* for each person then? That means remembering each person's number: it could work, but mistakes are likely. Then I hit upon the bright idea of using both upper- and lower-case letters in the 'keys'. So, if each person is represented by two letters, it would be possible to have four possible combinations e.g. AB, ab, Ab and aB. I did get this system working but remembering the right combinations was a bit tricky and it still allowed for only four people with the same initials.

After a bit more thought I came up with an idea which allows for up to ten people with the same initials, and accepts either upper- or lower-case. As the names need to be entered in pairs the operator just types in the four letters representing the 'keys' and the computer prints the names with an & between them. If there

is more than one name with any pair of initials, all of them are displayed in the lower left of the screen, with a number in the range 0 to 9 to the left of them. The one required is selected by pressing the appropriate number key.

In order to put the names in a file I produced a program which allows the names and their keys to be entered and edited. It will not allow two identical entries, nor will it allow more than ten identical keys; it can also print out a list of the names and keys currently held in the file.

Having got that working I then went on to produce a variation which stores the names of pairs and which can be called up by using a three-letter key. This is probably most useful for husband and wife pairs, such as 'John & Mary Smith', which could have the key 'jms'.

♥ ♣ Automatic program loading ♦ ♠

The Names and Pairs files need to be on the program disk, from where they are automatically read into drive M: as the program is loaded. The scoring program recognises three or four letter entries as 'keys' and looks through the appropriate file in drive M: for any names/pairs with that key or keys. If less than three or more than four, letters are assumed to be names entered straight from the keyboard. If there is no name with a given key a ? is shown. Thus two unidentified name keys, or one unidentified pair key, would produce '? & ?'. These can be replaced by names during the name edit procedure.

By this time I was feeling quite proud of my program, which worked very well for the three widely used versions of the Mitchell movement, one for when there is

an odd number of tables and two for an even number of tables. One of these involves board sharing between two tables; in the other the E/W pairs 'skip' over one table, therefore missing playing with one N/S pair and, if the number of rounds played equals the number of tables, playing against one N/S pair twice. For this reason it is used mainly when it is planned to have one round less than the number of tables.

♥ ♣ Program modifications ♦ ♠

Soon I began to be asked if I could modify the program to cope with other movements, both one- and two-winner. To cope with this wide variation I developed three separate programs, two of which dealt with different types of two-winner movements. The other dealt with all of the one-winner movements. In this the details for each of the many movements, such as Howell and Hesitation Mitchell, were stored in files, with the users specifying the file names during the setting up procedure. Because it would be impractical to supply files for all of the possible movements, even if I had known of them, I included a program for the user to make his own. The programs for the two-winner movements were designed to work out the details from the information about number of tables and boards per round etc., keyed in by the user.

After about 18 months of being in contact with the handful of people to whom I had supplied programs, several of whom had become almost regular 'pen friends', I had become so interested in Duplicate Bridge that I wanted to try my hand at playing it myself. So I contacted

the Lincoln Bridge Club, asking if they had a place for someone who hadn't played Bridge for 50 years. Their reply was "Come to our Tuesday evening 'Improvers Sessions' and see how you get on. We shall be able to fix you up with a partner." So, to prepare myself, I bought a book on the ACOL bidding system, which is the current most popular system in this country, and spent a few hours studying it.

The next Tuesday evening, at the age of 71 and after having last played Bridge when I was 21, I turned up at the Bridge Club feeling just a little nervous. Actually, I was expecting to feel an 'ignorant twit'. But I soon found that, even though the bidding system was unfamiliar to me, I could remember the basics of the game. Anyway, the standard of most of the players was quite low so I fitted in much better than I had expected and really enjoyed it.

"After over three years
I am still playing regularly."

After over three years, I am still playing regularly, but not with the 'improvers'; I now play with the 'all abilities' on Monday evenings and Wednesday afternoons. Over the years I have had a variety of partners, some of whom I have got on with better than others. But, in general, bridge players are a happy and friendly bunch who just enjoy playing and I am happy to be one of them.

My experience of actually playing has given me a better understanding of just what is needed in scoring programs and I have kept on developing them. Now I have two basic programs, one for one-

winner movements and one for two-winner movements, both of which have some movement types available from a menu and details of the more unusual movements kept in files. These latest versions make extensive use of drive M:, so much so that the full versions of them need 512k. But, by reducing the number of movement types available from the menu, I have been able to produce versions for 256k machines. To cater for movements not available from the menu, I supply movement file-making programs, in addition to files for a few of the most popular movements.

From the foregoing you will have deduced that I have four different programs. In fact there are eight, as each of the above programs can be supplied in versions which leave the players' names

and scores in files in drive M: so that they can be read into a database type program, so long as it is run immediately after exiting from the scoring programs. This database type program keeps a record of the players' scores over a period and can produce a list giving average scores over a period of up to six sessions, with a specified minimum of times a member needs to have played to qualify.

So you can see that this project developed into a much bigger job than I at first imagined but I have enjoyed doing it and it has kept me occupied for many thousands of hours. And, as an added bonus, it re-kindled my interest in bridge, so that I started playing again after 50 years. I wonder if I would ever have played bridge again if I had not bought my PCW over eleven years ago?

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Tip for LocoFile users

by Clive Anderson

If you have created a LocoFile database of addresses and telephone numbers and if you have merged the database to produce a text directory, you might consider the following idea. Have you ever found yourself looking at a telephone number that you don't quite remember? Well, try merging a LocoMail document with your database to get a text file with all your telephone numbers first and in **ascending order**. That way, you can quickly look through your list of telephone numbers to see if it was ▶

```
(+Mail)$="Home_phone"↵  
Loop="(Mail)↵  
Home_phone(-Mail), (Mail)Forename(-Mail) (+Mail)Surname(-Mail)↵  
(+Mail)$+(+Mail)"↵  
@Home_phone %Loop(-Mail).↵
```

It took me rather a long time to fathom out the way to enjoy (enjoy?) advanced uses of LocoFile but, once I did, I found it to be very useful indeed. I produce directories of members for some clubs that I help to run and the combination of LocoFile, LocoMail & LocoScript makes the job almost a pleasure.

I must thank Dr Aldyth Scott of the Crawley PCW Club for her kind help. She has the gift of making the impossible seem trivial and as soon as she explained the intricacies of mail-merge with LocoFile, the scales fell from my eyes.

I use a 9512+ with a Panasonic KX-P2135 printer. I can use fan-fold adhesive labels on this printer and recently I churned out over 100 labels in less than

someone you know (or wish you didn't know). Using BT's 1471 can tell you what number tried to contact you but not *who* it was.

Of course it could be a wrong number or someone who's not in your database but think of the sheer relief in rapidly linking a number with a person. In case you don't know how to make the merge document, look on page 72 of your LocoFile manual and adapt the formula to put the telephone field name first. Something like this:

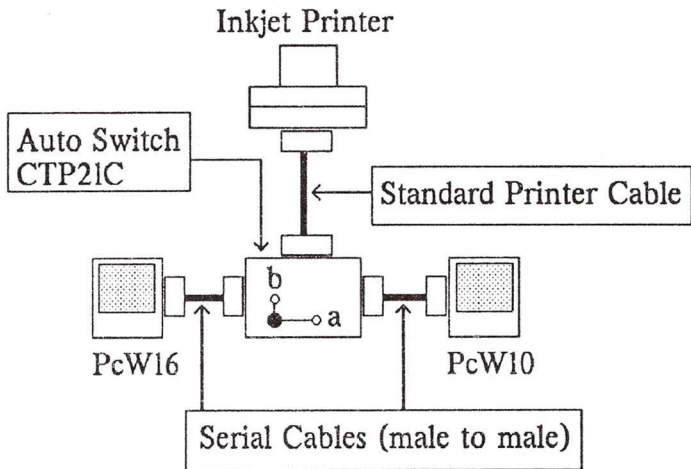
four minutes. The labels were generated from LocoFile with a merge document similar to the one above. After some initial fiddling and fine tuning, the system was up and running faultlessly.

I also produce a Register of Pen Friend Clubs which I sell for a small sum. Again I use LocoFile and LocoScript to store and print over sixty addresses and details which can be easily maintained and updated.

It suits me to do a fresh merge for each application for my register. I don't need a stock of registers on hand, I can just switch on and print out a new register each time. I use draft mode on my 24-pin dot matrix printer which prints out very quickly and its clear enough to read. ●

Linking two PcWs to one printer

by Rod Shinkfield



The diagram shows how I've recently linked my PcW 10 and PcW 16 to my Epson Stylus 820 inkjet printer by using an automatic switch (CTP21C). (Manual switches are also available.) A serial cable with a male plug on each end was plugged into the printer interface (socket) on the back of the PcW 10 and the other end of the cable was then plugged into the socket (marked with an "A") on the side of the automatic switch.

The PcW 16 was linked up in the same way, though plugged into the socket marked "B" on the auto switch. Actually, which machine is plugged into which socket on the auto switch doesn't matter; I simply prefer to have my most often used PcW 10 plugged into the "A" socket, and my least used PcW 16 plugged into the "B" socket.

A standard printer cable was then plugged into the remaining socket on the

auto switch, and the other end of the printer cable was plugged into the printer.

Once certain that all three cables were securely plugged in and all the retaining screws tightened up, I plugged in the main power cables of both machines and printer into a 4-way anti-surge and voltage spikes protection connector and switched on.

After booting up, a text document was created on each machine ready for testing. Both PCW were able to print using the Epson inkjet individually, so all I had to do now was to switch on the printer. Two red lights on the auto switch (shown on the diagram as two white circles) began flashing alternatively, which meant the switch was set to automatic.

The PcW 10 test document was sent to the printer first. Doing this switched off the red light "B", leaving a rapidly flickering red light "A" to tell me which

socket was currently in use. Without waiting for the PcW 10 test document printing to cease, I sent the PcW 16 test document to the printer and it joined the queue.

Once the PcW 10 test document was finished, the PcW 16 test document was automatically loaded into the printer. The red light "A" switched off, while the red light "B" began to rapidly flicker too. Both red lights on the auto switch returned to alternatively flashing even before the printer had finished with the PcW 16 test document.

Pressing the blue button on the auto switch (shown in the diagram as a black circle), will set "A" only, or "B" only, or automatic. Switching off the printer also switches off both red lights.

Using a switch, automatic or manual, is better than pulling out a machine's printer cable from the printer to plug in a second machine. Tugging on cables will soon damage the pins and holes of the plugs and sockets. Also, buying a switch and a pair of serial cables will prove far cheaper than buying another printer just for your second machine.

HINTS & TIPS

from Rod Shinkfield

A LocoFile Tip

Once you've created a LocoFile database (database 1:0, for example) put an *empty* copy (database 0:0) in a safe place.

When database 1:0 becomes over large or the disc becomes full, take a copy of the empty database (database 0:0) from its safe place and rename it, possibly database 1:1, and so begin a new one.

Name That Group

If you want to name a LocoScript group, you must first hold down [SHIFT] and use the cursor keys to move the group cursor onto the group chosen for naming.

But what if you want to *unname* a previously named group? (e.g., to turn the LETTERS group back to group 0.)

First you must highlight the group named LETTERS, then press f3, choose

'Erase file' and press [ENTER]. On the panel that appears type LETTERS (the current name of the group) and in the three spaces to the right of the dot, type GRP.

On pressing [ENTER] you will discover that the LETTERS group will be renamed as Group 0 (or to which ever group (0-7) it had originally been).

A BASIC Tip

If you have been copying and saving Adrian Hooper's BASIC Listings can I recommend that you save all the listings onto a special disc (*and* on a back-up disc too). Label the special disc something like **Disc Drive Listings**. Also, add an extra line to each listing, such as:

```
5 REM BASIC listing: 9, Disc  
Drive, issue 20, page 26.
```

The REM tells BASIC to ignore and the characters appearing on the remainder of line number 5. Also, this extra line makes it easier to turn up the *Disc Drive* listing and, should you wish to use one of the files, to find them on the special disc.

Printing Video Cassette Labels

by Arthur W Pigott

Films at Christmas time, and now the BBC Learning Zone, have compelled me to video-tape certain programmes, including maths and French. They are recorded off-air and, since the cassettes are retained indefinitely, they should be clearly labelled, especially as the cassettes seem to grow in number, so the need for a proper identity is essential. I decided that I might be able to produce "one-off" labels, without cost, on the PCW.

I spent many hours trying to work out a simple typographic format that fits the label space on the top side of a standard video cassette, using simple good old LocoScript 1 and came up with the example shown in Figure 1 below.

```

* * * * *
* BBC 2                               December 1998 *
*
*           APOLLO 13                    *
*
* Directed by Ron Howard    (1995) *
* with Tom Hanks, Kevin Bacon, Bill *
* Paxton. The 1970 Apollo mission *
* is endangered by onboard explo- *
* sion. (2hrs 15min) *
* * * * *
  
```

Figure 1

A format suitable for the purpose can be contained in an oblong box 33 characters long and 11 lines deep when set in 12 pitch type.

The Title Line is set in (+Pitch12D) in Bold and thus it contains only sixteen

characters. The spacing each side to centre the title is easily calculated when keying the letters to save time.

As can be seen the (+Bold), (+SuB), (+SR) and (+UL) codes are used to great effect. If more characters are required within the text portion then (+Pitch15) or (Pitch17) characters can be resorted to. Figure 1 shows a typical example used for films. To achieve this requires quite a number of extra key strokes and these appear on the screen as in Figure 2 overleaf.

I showed the labels to an actor friend who possesses his own digital camera and complex editing equipment. He produces many short videos for charities and often

requires three or four labels, preferably at no cost but look respectable and contain promotional details too. After many trials, the final designs I came up with are as shown in Figure 3 overleaf. Figure 4 shows how the codes appear on the PCW screen (when Codes are ticked as to be shown on the f8 options menu). Of course, better labels can be produced with software containing proper

type faces but the above examples show what can be achieved using what are essentially only typewriter characters.

When cut and pasted onto the video cassette panel provided, and with the border tinted in with a coloured felt tip marker, the label looks quite attractive,

```

(*)
*****
* (xSuper)BBC 2          December 1998(=Super) *
*
* (xBold)(xPitch12D)  APOLLO 13  (xPitch12)(=Bold)*
*
* Directed by Ron Howard (1995) *
* with Tom Hanks, Kevin Bacon, Bill *
* Paxton, (i)The 1970 Apollo mission(i) *
* (i)is endangered by onboard explo-(i) *
* (i)sion, (i) (2hrs 15min) *
*****
(*)

```

Figure 2

and it fulfils the important purpose of identifying the contents of the cassette. I do hope that this novel way of producing speedy, low cost video cassette labels will spur some of our members to improve the technique still further.

```

*****
*
* TITLE LINE
*
* Produced and Directed by
* BILL EVERETT FRSA RTS
* Length 40 mins 1999
*-----*
* KAVALA PRODUCTIONS
* 243 Harrow Road London E11 3QA
*-----*
*****

```

Figure 3

Example of video cassette label produced for short-run commercial use.

Figure 4

Screen dump showing how above commercial label appears on-screen

```

(*)
*****
* (xBold)(xPitch12D)  TITLE LINE  (xPitch12)(=Bold)*
*
* Produced and Directed by
* (xBold)BILL EVERETT (=Bold)(xSuB)FRSA RTS(=SuB) *
* (xSuB) Length 40 mins 1999(=SuB) *
* (xUL)----- (xUL) *
* (xBold)(xSuB)KAVALA PRODUCTIONS(=SuB)(=Bold) *
* (xSuper)243 Harrow Road London E11 3QA(=Super) *
*****
(*)

```

```

*****
* 1999 Length 40 mins
*
* TITLE LINE
*
* Produced and Directed by
* BILL EVERETT FRSA RTS
*
* KAVALA PRODUCTIONS
* 243 Harrow Road London E11 3QA
*-----*
*****

```

Figure 5

A variation on the design of the commercial label shown in Figure 3.

Desk Top Publishing

with LocoScript4, Release 2:

Converting .MDP files to .MDA files

by Bill Heilbron

I had completed the publication of my latest book, which included a large number of illustrations created on Microdesign, just before LocoScript 4, Release 2 became available.

Immediately, it became apparent that it would have been much easier if I could have used the Release 2 facilities in the first place.

The original technique involved double passing of pages through the printer, once for the .MDP files and once for the LocoScript files. This was very time consuming. ▶

In preparation for the second edition, I have upgraded all the files to the Release 2 standard so that they will be ready to incorporate the corrections that have to be made for the revised edition. **Note:** A Hewlett Packard Deskjet printer was used with this procedure. It cannot be guaranteed that the parameters used below would be correct for a different printer and some trial and error would be necessary in such a case: see the footnote at the end of this article. All pages are on A5 format and have been designed using the following parameters:

LocoScript

Margins (Scale Pitch set to 10):		
Left	6	A
Right	51	B
- giving:		
Working width	45	C
Page Layout:		
Top gap	2	D
Header zone	2	E
Page body	41	F
Footer zone	2	
Bottom gap	3	
Page length	50	

Microdesign3

Set the top left corner of screen	
to x,y = 0,0 using Extra+0.	
Window:	
- designed specifically to match the	
LocoScript page body and margins:	
Top Right	x,y = 5.70", 0.42"
Bottom Left	x,y = 1.17", 7.36"
- giving:	
Working width	4.53"
	≈ 45 tenths of an inch (C)
Working height	6.94"
	≈ 41 sixths of an inch (F)

Preparation of the .MDA Files

To convert the existing .MDP (page) files to .MDA (area) files for incorporation into LocoScript 4 – Release 2, MicroDesign is started up and the window set as specified in the table above.

Each .MDP file is loaded in turn and saved again as an .MDA file with the area to be saved precisely set over the window. The files are saved into the same group on the disc as the text files that they are intended to accompany.

Incorporation of the pictures into Locoscript 4, Release 2

Locoscript 4, Release 2 is then started up. The text files are edited in turn, each page in which a picture is to be included is called onto the editing screen and, for each, the following procedure is adopted, noting that it does not matter on which line of the page the 'Picture' is entered:

Tap f2 and cursor down to 'New Picture' and press [ENTER].

Cursor to the appropriate .MDA file and press [ENTER].

On the menu, fill in as follows:

Picture		
Name	Filled automatically - ???MDA	Confirm correct
Picture Width	Filled automatically - 46 (C)	
Picture Height	Filled automatically - 21 ½(F)	* see note below
Fixed Position	Set with [+] key	
Horizontal Position	5 (A) minus 1	
Vertical Position	4 (D) plus (E)	
Horizontal Scaling	1	
Vertical Scaling	2	* see note below

and press [ENTER].

Repeat this procedure for all pictures, then print in the normal manner.

NOTE:

The multiplication factors of ½x for Picture Height and of 2x for Vertical Scaling are factors specific to the Hewlett Packard Deskjet printers. They may not apply in other cases and you may have to experiment with these for your type of printer (which is why a variety of options is available).

A Classic Program

by Bill Jennings

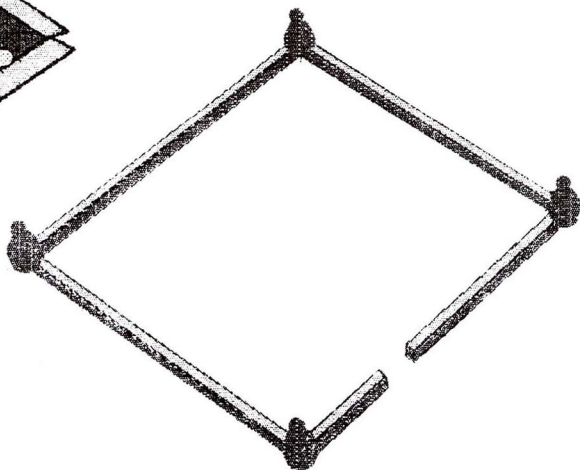
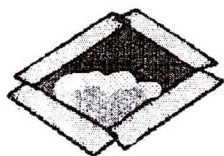
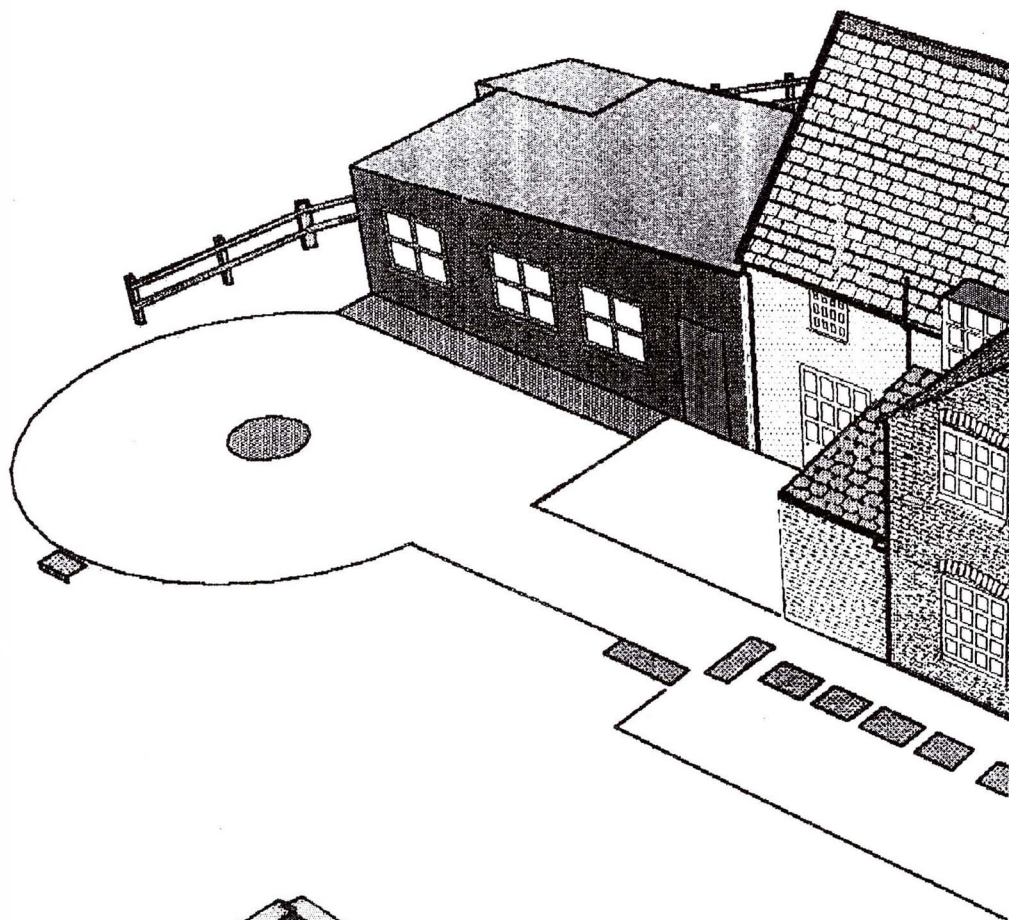
Some readers may remember, or even possess, an intriguing program called DRAWMON created by Dr. Robert Gilmore and reviewed extensively in his series of articles in the old *PCW User* magazine. He also issued a fascinating book entitled *Picture Processing on the Amstrad PCW 8256/8512* and published by Sigma Press. This gives insight into the structure and use of the program in a very explanatory form. Readers may be interested in one use made of the program which although requiring some effort has been very satisfying.

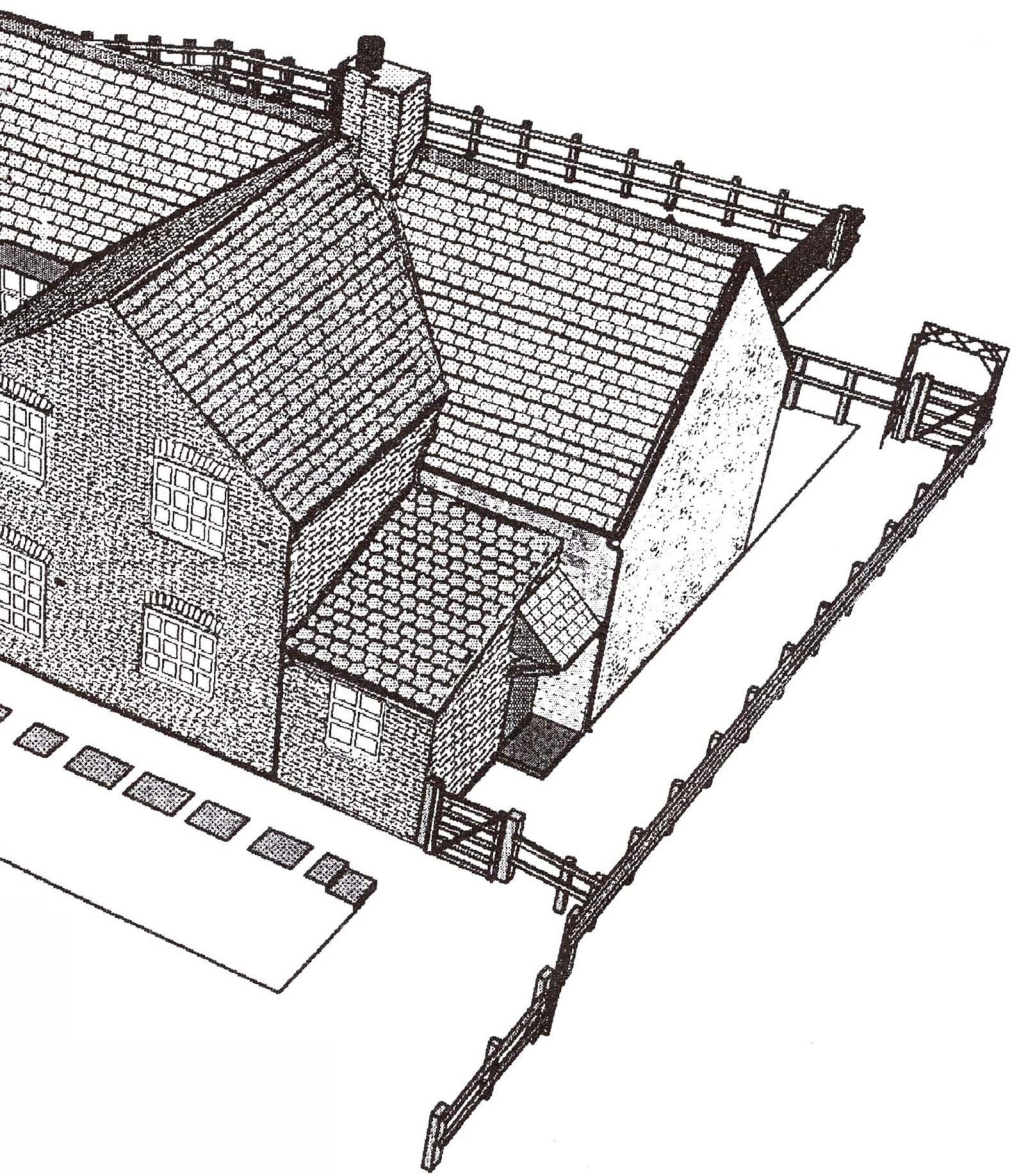
On opening the package I was surprised, but delighted, to find that DRAWMON is written in unprotected BASIC which means that it is easy to adapt for one's own requirements. The second surprise was that it refused to run initially due to a BASIC syntax error at a vital point! This proved to be easily edited out and I am still delighted today with the purchase even if it is very slow in operation, fairly easily "locked up" and the routines can be infuriating to follow! It is, for all that, superb!

Apart from straightforward two-dimensional drawing, either by movement of the cursor or input of the x,y co-ordinates, one is given the option of three-dimensional construction (x,y,z co-ordinates) and the subsequent ability to view the structure from any chosen position (subject to some restrictions – e.g., it does not like negative values). After experimenting with simple solid structures such as a cross, groups of

crosses, etc., I began to wonder how our house would appear from various aerial viewpoints. I had already been using Tweak to produce perspective drawings of architectural subjects but the complicated roof structure made it impossible to accurately visualise the appearance of the house from the air. Taking measurements and utilising an architect's drawing of the property enabled input of the necessary x,y,z co-ordinates to give DRAWMON complete details of the whole structure down to the corners of the windowpanes, corners of the fence-posts, etc. Fortunately the 8512 had already been upgraded to 2Mb of memory as the final projections involved calculations with many thousands of co-ordinates.

DRAWMON uses the supplied PCW utility programs centred on GSX.COM by Digital Research, producing an extremely reasonable printed quality on the 8512 dot matrix printer. I found that switching to a bubblejet gave brilliant results although the 9-pin information gave a distortion in the proportions of the picture. Scanning such a complicated drawing into MicroDesign3 involved such extensive "cleaning-up" as to make the process impractical and I began to look for a way around this. Enter The Network from Creative Technology and Microdraw from DGC! Microdraw enables the composition of ".DSF" files which can be read by the program to create structures on the Microdraw screen which are then transferred into





Pound House from the South East

© W T Jennings, 1997.

MicroDesign3 at the press of a key when in The Network. DRAWMON creates various co-ordinate files when compiling a structure and uses these to recreate drawings. I added a few extra lines into DRAWMON to copy the vital co-ordinates it creates into a file which was then saved to disk.

This file is then used with another Basic routine, concocted after many trials and errors, to produce the necessary .DSF files which are read by Microdraw to create the completed picture on its screen. One small snag appeared here and I realised that about 70 lines is the maximum length for DSF file details of this type. This necessitated using "Chain x.DSF" commands for stepping on to the next file but I was unable to prevent Basic from creating an extra space between the number and the full stop, resulting in a missing file error message. This was solved in my usual Philistine Basic manner by creating the files using another name and then renaming them *en masse!*

Having obtained the unfilled outlines of the surfaces on the MicroDesign3 screen the next improvement to be considered was the addition of textured roofs, walls and so on. DRAWMON is not really up to including hundreds of slates and bricks (bear in mind its low price) although it did manage a detailed projection of the large rear brick walls albeit after several hours silent labouring (and that in memory). Tweak came to the rescue and after some experimentation I found it possible to create the correctly angled infills.

In a perspective projection, DRAWMON sorts the picture into its various planes and removes items and

planes invisible from the chosen viewpoint but often manages to place some in the wrong order. This can be edited into correct sequence but herein lies the final snag which I have yet to overcome if use of the Erase process is to be avoided. When Calling GSX from DRAWMON in order to *print* a picture, a command of the form

```
"CONTROL%(0)=4"
```

is used which is the Output Graphic Buffer command. This causes GSX to store the information and sort it into plane order before finally getting it printed. This function is unavailable when drawing on the *screen* and it is from the screen routine that I extract the co-ordinate information required. True, printer information can be obtained as it is sent but the results are not in the form of intelligible co-ordinates.

If anyone out there can suggest a method of making GSX.COM sort the data when screening in the same fashion as when printing I shall be eternally grateful to you!

I recently asked a professional friend's advice concerning possible PC methods (Sorry! I'll wash my mouth out!) of producing such projections. No problem! I was pointed in the direction of a suitable program. This would do all that was required including full-colour moving sequences of simulated flights in and around structures, patterning, etc., to your heart's content. The software price alone? £4,500! One day, maybe! ●

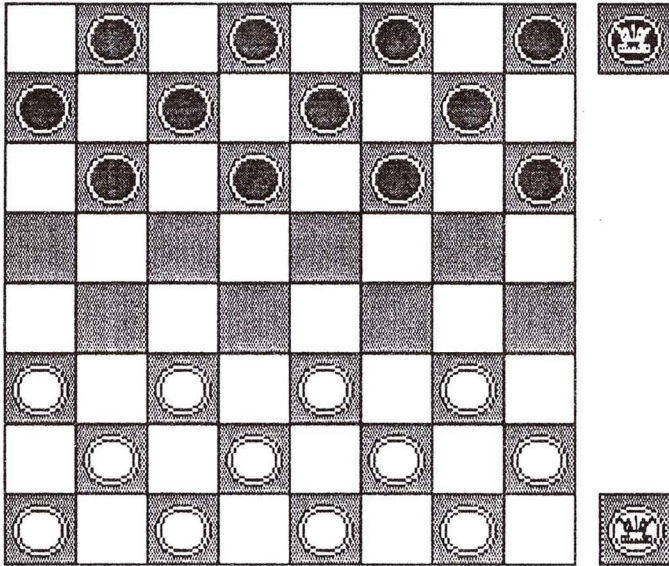
—
Sadly, DRAWMON is no longer available commercially but DGC Software (01274 773624) still markets Microdraw which costs £29.95. Bill Jennings.

MicroDesign Graphic Draughts

by Rod Shinkfield

NB: You must have the MicroDesign3 program before you can play this version of MicroDesign Graphic Draughts.

Creating the chess/draughts board



Set the MicroDesign Graphics screen to 1:1 view-scale and press the [R] key to put the frame of a rectangular shape on the screen. Use the spacebar and cursor keys to alter the shape until the read-out shown lower right of screen reads W: 5.5 H: 6.0. This should give the shape a square-like appearance. Press [ENTER] to set the square.

Press the [UNIT] key to reveal the block operation menu (BLOCK OPS) on the extra keys panel shown on the right of

the screen. If the cursor keys haven't been touched since setting the square, the block operation frame should still be W: 5.5 H: 6.0 and exactly match the square.

Press [1] to store the square under the number One key. The store operation can only be carried out in 1:1 view-scale.

Press [1] to recall the stored square, and then press the right cursor key (the cursor is in the centre of the square) to move a copy of the first square towards the right. Join the second square to the first square and press [ENTER] to set it. You must ensure that the

three vertical lines of the two joined squares are of equal thickness. If the middle line doesn't look right, press the [WORD] key to undo the last operation. Use the cursor keys to nudge the second square until all three vertical lines are equal. Then press [ENTER] to re-set the second square. You now have a horizontal row of two squares.

Press [1] again, and then press the right cursor key as before, to move square number three towards the right. Again,

you must ensure that all vertical lines are of equal thickness before moving on. A line that looks bold compared to the others is not in the exact position and will need undoing by pressing the [WORD] key and nudging it with the cursor keys before pressing [ENTER] to set the latest square. It is important that all vertical lines are of equal thickness. You can use ZOOM to check that this but note that once you use Zoom you cannot later use [WORD] to undo the last operation.



Add a forth square to the row, then stretch the block operations frame to match exactly the outline of the four squares and store them under the [1] key. Press [1] and use the right cursor key to move a copy towards the right, which will then leave you with a horizontal row of eight squares. Copy all eight squares and store them under the [1] key.

Press [1] and, this time, move a copy of the horizontal row of eight squares upwards. You must now ensure that the second row of eight squares join the first row exactly and that the joining line between the first and second horizontal rows is equal in thickness to the other horizontal lines.

Copy the two rows by storing them using the [1] key and move a copy of the two rows upwards until you have a block of eight squares horizontally and four rows vertically, giving you a total of 32 squares. In other words, you should now have half a blank chess/draughts board on the screen. Before you go any further, shade in alternate squares by first putting

the cursor in the first square in the bottom left-hand corner of your half board. Then press [RELAY] to reveal the choice of shades. Choose a very fine grey shade which doesn't show the pixels and the spaces between the pixels too clearly. With the shade chosen, press the [F] key and [ENTER] to flood the first square. Don't flood with black or you won't be able to see the black draught pieces later! The left-hand corner square on a chess/draughts board should always be shaded (usually black on a real board). Move the cursor to the next but one square and flood this square also. Keep flooding alternate squares until you have a chequered pattern half board.

Store the half board under [1], a store operation you have now done several times. Move a copy upwards and join both halves together (ensuring that the join is equal in thickness). You should now have a full board of 64 alternately shaded squares. Save the chess/draughts board as BOARD.CUT (and save it also to another disc for safety).

Creating the draughts

Create the draughts by using Micro-Design shapes and flood operations. Form a square measuring 4mm x 4mm and then press [C] for a circle in shapes. Reduce the circle by using the spacebar and cursor keys until the circle fits inside the square (the circle should touch the square at four points giving the circle a diameter of 4mm). Move the circle *outside* the square before pressing [ENTER] to set the circle. Put another circle inside the first circle, forming a ring to add contrast. Surround the circle with a square measuring W: 5.0mm H: 5.6mm.

Flood around the circle with the shade used in originally creating the chess/draughts board.

Save the W: 5.0 H: 5.6 shaded square and circle as DISC-W.CUT and you have made a white draught. Now for the black. Flood the centre of the circle with black and then save this second draught as DISC-B.CUT, which takes care of the black draught.



Create a small crown by using shapes and line and place two crowns on the screen. Flood one crown in black, leaving the other crown white. Use f1 for re-scale to reduce both crowns until they are small enough to fit in the centres of both a white and a black draught. The black crown goes on the white draught while the white crown goes on the black draught; you have now created a pair of crowned draughts. Save the black one as CROWN-B.CUT and the white crown as CROWN-W.CUT.

Loading the board

Beginning with the shaded square in the bottom left-hand corner, load DISC-W.CUT and put a white draught on this corner square. Press the [UNIT] key and make sure the frame measures W: 5.0 H: 5.6, which matches the DISC-W.CUT, and press [1] to store a white draught. Press [1] again and move the store frame to the next shaded square along and press [ENTER] to put another white draught on the second shaded square.

Keep pressing [1] and putting a stored white draught on a shaded square until twelve white draughts occupy three rows.

Moving to the top of the draught board load a DISC-B.CUT onto a shaded square on the top row. Store this square with the black draught and put a black draught onto the shaded square of the top three rows until you have twelve white draughts on the bottom three rows and twelve black draughts on the top three rows. Save the whole board as DRAUGHTS.CUT.

Creating the crowned draughts

Put a black crowned draught (CROWN-B.CUT) near the top right-hand corner, but outside the draught board, and a white crowned draught outside the bottom right-hand side of the board. Re-save the whole board, enlarging the save frame to include the two crowned draughts, and over-write DRAUGHTS.CUT. The draught board and draughts will be ready for you to begin a game when DRAUGHTS.CUT is loaded.

Getting ready to play

Load DRAUGHTS.CUT onto the MicroDesign Graphics 1:1 view-screen. Press [RELAY] and select the same shade pattern as was used when creating the chess/draughts board. Press [UNIT] and alter the block operation frame to W: 5.0 H: 5.6; also select the shade mode in EXTRA KEYS. Then press [UNIT] and [3] (copy mode) and change the ink to Opaque in EXTRA KEYS before pressing [STOP] to escape.

Storing the draughts

Press [UNIT] and make sure the block operations frame measures W: 5.0 H: 5.6. Move the frame until it fits snugly inside a square on which stands a white draught. Press [1] and store the white draught and the square under the [1] key. Store a black draught under the [9] key. Then store a white crown by copying the white crown on the right-hand side of the board, storing it under [2]. Store an empty shaded square under a middle number, say [5]. And, finally, store a black crowned draught under the [8] key.

Playing MicroDesign Graphic Draughts

The white draughts always move first. Press [1] and move the store frame onto the square the white draught is to move onto and press [ENTER]. The white draught stored under the [1] will appear on a new square. Press [5] and move the store frame onto the square whose white draught is still on the old square and press

[ENTER]. The white draught will be over-written and become an empty shaded square.

The black draughts can now make a move. Press [9] and a black draught can be loaded onto a new square on pressing [ENTER]. The black draught on the old square is over-written by using [5] to load the stored empty shaded square. The black draught has now also been moved to a new square.

It is easier to remember positions if the draught is moved onto the new square before the old position is erased. To take an opponent's draught simply press [5] and load an empty shaded square on top of your opponent's draught.

When a draught reaches an opponent's back row it becomes crowned and can then be moved forwards and backwards. Simply load the crowned draught of the appropriate colour by using either [2] (for white) or [8] (for black) which, if you remember, are the two numbers under which the crowned draughts have been stored.

On the Internet?

I had a strange telephone call last week from a chap who rang and asked for me by name. He stated that he had obtained my details via COMPUSERVE and could I please give him details of the Club plus anything else that I felt might interest him regarding the PCW.

I was of course only too happy to do so but the odd thing is I did not know my details were on the Internet and wonder who has posted them there? Any further information would be welcomed.

John King, Rainham, Essex

Fax Preference Service

If you have a private fax machine at home and are bothered by junk fax mail then contact the Fax Preference Service, Acxion, Hendon Road, Sunderland, Tyne & Wear SR9 9XZ or Tel: 0541 554555.

The service does not apply to business phones. It does not work immediately you register but the number of junk faxes reduces over two or three months. It may not cut out *all* unwanted faxes but it does give further information how to contact the companies that distribute faxes and request them to stop. *Mike Elliston*

Screen Dumps on a 9512+

by Tony Dimond

There was some discussion at a club meeting late last year concerning methods of getting a screen dump from the various models of the PCW range. The consensus of opinion was that the only reliable method was the use of [Extra]+[Ptr] with the PCW 8256 or 8512 *and* only when fitted with the original dot matrix printer.

Now I use a PCW9512+ fitted with a Canon BJ30 and I thought I would experiment with that combination, particularly as it is so useful to be able to see the LocoScript codes (when set On with f8 Options) when writing LocoMail routines.

Below is a screen dump from a PCW9512+ and a Canon BJ30 which illustrates the instructions on how to do it for yourself.

Perhaps other members would like to experiment with their combinations of PCW and printer/s. It may work, it may not, but it was fun trying. One tip I would pass on: The built-in printer that comes with the 8256/8512 emulates an Epson FX80 so, if you have the option on your printer, it may be worth setting the dip switches so that the printer emulates an Epson 9-pin (or 24-pin) if you have the choice. Good Luck!

```
B:PRINTOUT/SCRNDUMP.      Editing text.      Printer idle. Using B:
Layout  1  P110  L51  CR+0  LP6  LS Newslette 10pt      Page  1  line 11/60
f1=Actions  f2=Layout  f3=Style  f4=Size  f5=Page  f7=Spell  f8=Options  EXIT
.....1.....2.....3.....4.....5.....6.....7.....8.....9.....10.....11.....12.....
φ
.....To obtain a screen dump, which can be extremely useful, say, to have
.....a hard copy of a LocoMail application including the (+Mail) and (-Mail),
.....(+UL) and (-UL) layout codes, Page End codes, etc., the Tab, → arrows,
.....the φ symbols for Carriage Return/Line Feeds, then follow these steps:φ
φ
.....(+UL) BEFORE ANYTHING ELSE (-UL) press f8=Options and turn on all the Codes,
.....Rulers, Blanks, Spaces and →, φ symbols you want to appear on your
.....printout, using the [+].Set key. They should show a tick ✓ alongside.φ
φ
.....Press the [PTR] printer key and the message 24INKJET or INKJET should
.....flash at the top left of the Disc Manager Screen.φ
φ
.....Press f5 for PRINTER and then [ENTER] when drop down menu appears.φ
φ
.....Use the Space Bar or the [+].Set key to select INKJET (or to return
.....to 24INKJET after producing a screen dump).φ
φ
.....Press [ENTER], [EXIT] and [ENTER] to confirm your choice and then [EXIT]
.....again to cancel the flashing Disc Manager message.φ
φ
.....Now hold down [EXTRA] and press the [PTR] key to get a screen dump.φ
φ
.....Repeat the above steps to return to 24INKJET for normal use or simply
.....accept the offer to CHANGE TO PRINTER/PAPER INTENDED in LocoScript.....
```

I apologise for referring to Tony Dimond as Tony Sheridan in the Winter issue of DD! Ed

BASIC Listing: 10

by Adrian Hooper, Radstock PCW User Group

Welcome to the tenth part of my BASIC listing; this part is to be an energy 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 "ENERGY.CON" [RETURN] and then RUN "ENERGY.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 and *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$="Energy Conversion Menu"
30 PRINT TAB(15);t$:PRINT TAB(15);STRING$(LEN(t$), "=")
40 PRINT:PRINT:PRINT "Press the appropriate number to identify the"
50 PRINT "type of conversion that you wish to carry out."
60 s1$="Btu":s2$="KJ"
70 p1$="Btu":p2$="KJ"
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$:GOSUB 230
130 D=C*1.06:GOSUB 260:GOSUB 200:RETURN
140 t1s$=s2$:t1p$=p2$:t2s$=s1$:t2p$=p1$:GOSUB 230
150 D=C*0.948:GOSUB 260:GOSUB 200:RETURN
200 PRINT:PRINT:PRINT "Press SPACE to return to menu"
210 WHILE INKEY$<>" ":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 energy 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 "Btu (British thermal units) to KJ (Kilo-Joules)","KJ (Kilo-
Joules) to Btu (British thermal units)","Return to conversion menu"
```

PcW16 FORUM

The basic word processing program which comes with the PcW16 is excellent if all you want is simple, straightforward text. Using it to produce more complicated layouts, columns and labels, requires wider skills. Although I haven't tried it myself the assistance available on disc, £8 from Don Moody, 28 Rectory Road, SOUTHPORT, Merseyside PR9 7PU, has received very favourable comment from some of my correspondents. This is not a new program but offers 'sophisticated editing processes'.

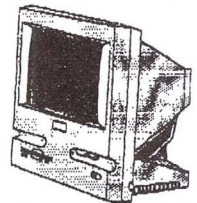
'The biggest PCW event in years' is how 'PCW Today' describes the Amstrad PCW Day the Crawley PCW Club is organising on Saturday 15th May. The club is planning to have PcW16s running all the available programs, plus John Elliott demonstrating links between the 16, other PCWs and PCs.

Alas, this is the last Forum I shall be writing for 'The Disc Drive'. A need to use e-mail has meant additional equipment and with the limited space available 'something had to go'. Detaching me from MicroDesign (in which this is

created) would probably require major surgery so the 16 has already gone to an appreciative home.

There is no doubt I shall miss it. The ease with which it sprang into life meant that both business and private correspondence were always up-to-date.

The new equipment promises a much slower and longer learning curve. Already it is apparent that it lacks the widespread helpful club network that has been such a feature of the Amstrad PCW series. Although it does have a dedicated magazine from the Future Publishing stable showing many of the quirky hallmarks of the much missed 'PCW Plus'. Maybe the Editor will allow me to write an article which will 'Compare and Contrast' (as the old examination questions used to say).



Esther Welch

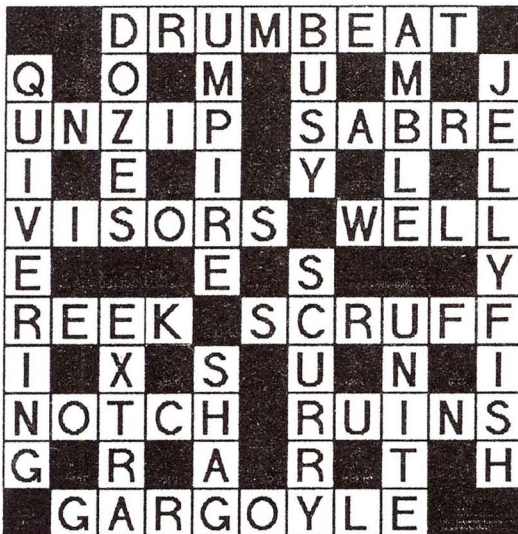
Are you Snowed Under?

The introduction of computers was supposed to herald the paper-less office. Moving my study from one room to another recently brought home how far reality falls behind the concept. As I consider myself a ruthless chucker-out by nature it was a sad revelation of how good intentions get lost in the daily routine. So my rather overdue new year's resolution is to keep the paper mountain at bay by:

1. Re-cycling part used sheets whether they arrive by post or are created in-house. Each of our four telephones now has an A5 message pad created from waste paper. A similar shopping list sits in the kitchen.
2. Writing first drafts of articles on waste paper rather than on virgin lined pads. (I seldom compose initially directly at the keyboard.)
3. Resisting the temptation to make an extra couple of photo copies 'just in case'.
4. Honing my proof-reading on-screen skills to reduce the need for draft print-outs.
5. Having more faith in my computer system storing information on disc rather than making print-outs for reference.
6. Get to grips with e-mail, saving paper, envelopes and postage.

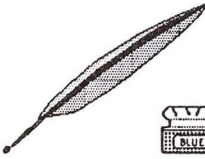
Esther Welch

Codeword Puzzle Solution



If you read through the text of the article in the last *Disc Drive* on how to produce a codeword puzzle on a PCW you will have seen that in the example being created two letters were given, namely [22] was C and [23] was F. The solution to the puzzle is given alongside. We hope you enjoyed solving it. Thanks again to Frederick Eagles for writing and illustrating the article.

Readers Write...



Continued support for the PCW

Well you asked for it and having read of the dearth of readers' letters, I thought I'd present my appreciation of a PCW 8256, equipped with a 3.5" internal drive, used as the A: drive, fitted by my son, who passed on the PCW to me about ten years ago. I am now eighty three and frankly, when I lost my wife some six years ago, I would have been lost without it. A couple of years ago, said son wanted to buy me a PC for Christmas, which I refused but was happy to accept a Canon BJ200 instead.

Among the uses that have proved successful are large print address lists, recipes and telephone lists in large type, for my neighbour, older than I but suffering with macular disease and registered as partially sighted. Letters to my sister in law, printed in 32 point type are greatly appreciated, she having cataracts. I also print address labels for us both, ready for the cards at Christmas time. For this, I use my old matrix printer and continuous labels, not having found the time to master LocoMail, though I do use LocoFile a lot.

As for CP/M, over the years I must have copied around fifty 'Listings' from *PCW Plus* and the earlier *8000 Plus* magazines from Future Publishing, some of which I still find useful. In particular, I still use Faxcal.Bas and Calshad.Bas, with no worries about the Millennium

Bug! On occasions, just for amusement, I play Othello and mostly win!

May I say, I am amazed and so pleased at the continuing support of the PCW, both from clubs and manufacturers. I admit to not getting all that is possible from my PCW and only wish there was more time in the day to try LocoMail and Microdesign, which appears to be the thing these days. However, I am satisfied with what I can manage and bless the day my PCW was presented to me. I would be completely lost without it and the arthritis in fingers wouldn't at all like my old typewriter, now gathering dust.

Best wishes to *Disc Drive* and it's officers and long may you thrive.

Reg V J Hunt, Selsey, E Sussex

On the Internet

I know that a number of your members also operate PCs or have other access to the Internet, perhaps at the local library. There is a fair amount of information about the PCW and/or CP/M on the Net and some may find the following useful. One of the most active PCW clubs is the Joyce Computer Club from Holland and, although based in Amsterdam, their Internet site appears in English because of the need to interchange information with PCW users in the States. The Joyce web site is at: <http://www.euronet.nl/users/fvempel/index/html>.

J C Penny, London

MicroDesign on a PC?

Sin of Sins, I recently equipped myself with a brand new computer using Windows 98 and a frightening number of Gigabytes, etc. I more or less had to, because the clubs I help to run benefit greatly from e-mail and from having fully compatible word processors and data-bases. Some of our members are blind but have screen speakers and voice recognition software. That way I can send them lots of structured information and they can do the same for me.

However I slowly and painfully discovered that there does not seem to be a DTP program as flexible and simple as MicroDesign 3. A number of my colleagues had been laughing at my Amstrad for years and telling me how much faster and better they were with MicroSoft and Windows thingummyjigs. Their caustic remarks actually made me believe I could expect miracles to cascade from the colour monitor.

In fact I became seriously annoyed at the very limited facility of MS Works 4.5. Other programs all had a variety of limitations and, when I explained how good MD3 was, I was not believed. After a few weeks, one of these Doubting Thomas's admitted that I could be right. His colleague in our local Technical College had assured him of the same thing.

I live in hopes that I will find something like MD3 as Freeware to be downloaded from the Internet. I'm certainly not going to fork out hundreds of pounds trying scores of DTP programs that look fantastic in the pages of software catalogues but which fail to do what I can do with MD3. I wonder, is

there some way of running MD3 on a PC? If there is, please let me know !

Clive Anderson, Isle of Wight

● John Elliot from Haywards Heath will be demonstrating Joyce, his CP/M emulator for the PC at the PCW Day at Crawley on 15th May. This is available on the Internet at:

www.seasip.demon.co.uk/cpm/index.html (or something very similar). The latest version (at the time of writing this) is Joyce130. It comes in the form of a Zip file and please read the instructions on how to unzip it properly or it won't run.

John has already demonstrated this at a Crawley club meeting running LocoScript and, *wait for it*, MicroDesign on a PC. You will need to have 3½" LocoScript, CP/M and MicroDesign start of day discs to get started.

John says that these should preferably be for an 8000, but some 9000 versions seem to work ok. It runs all the Creative Technology suite of programs, the Network, Tweak, MDY, FSD, etc. It seems to run almost any PCW program, provided you have the appropriate disc, and it runs several times as fast as a PCW as well. *Ed*

Crazy Diamond Designs

I was delighted to be sent some new advertising material from Crazy Diamond Design who seemed to have disappeared off the market after having produced the Literatus range of products, fonts, etc., for MicroDesign on the PCW. They've moved to new premises in Manchester but, strangely enough, use a London telephone number.

However, my heart began to drop as I read further into the letter (inexplicably printed on tracing paper): "As time has gone by, the PCW has gradually receded into fond (?) memory... We have spent a long time working to produce new fonts for Mac and PC..."

Sorry, lads, but if it won't run on my fondly cherished PCW, then I shan't be placing an order for any new fonts, thanks all the same!

George Inch, Loughton

Thanks, too!

Thank you for producing such an interesting and useful magazine. Between the *Disc Drive* and *PCW Today* we PCW owners are almost as well catered for as in the days of *PCW User* and *PCW Plus*.

F W Manders, Lincoln

And thank you, Mr Manders, for writing that most excellent leading article on creating bridge scoring programs for the PCW in this edition of the *Disc Drive*.

The PCW was designed as a replacement for the typewriter and to appeal to writers; indeed, the early advertisements for the PCW 8256 offered a £50 discount if you traded in your old upright when you bought one of these new "glass typewriters". What is unfortunate is that, nowadays, a new PC can be had for a similar price to those early PCWs.

Your article only goes to show what a wealth of talent there is amongst our members and what excellent material can be created on "the fondly forgotten" PCW.

Many thanks for the tribute.

Editor

Spell-checking MD3 text

I hope you do not mind me writing to you regarding a comment you made on page two of the February *Newsletter*.

You were talking about using the MD3 Editor and then transferring the text to LocoScript for checking before sending it back to MD3.

Now I know that with LocoScript 4 you can convert this to LocoScript 3 and then transfer it to MD3 – no problem. I have never been able, however, to take MD3 text and have it accepted by LocoScript. When I try to do this I just get the message to the effect that this is not a LocoScript document.!

Obviously there is something I am missing somewhere. It cannot have anything to do with ASCII files since, as far as I know, these are not readable by MD3 anyway. Can you help?

John M Graham, Perth

● Load MicroDesign3 as usual, Exit and press E to select the Editor. After typing your document you have the options of either f8 Save as Ascii or f6 Save as Text. Either will do (but see the comments below). Save your document as either MyFile.Asc or MyFile.Txt to a disc and load LocoScript (obviously with LocoSpell installed).

When LocoScript appears, remove the Loco start of day disc, insert the disc with the MD3 document file/s and press f7 for a disc change. Select the same group as the MD3 files and press C for Create new document. (As you have discovered you can *not* edit the MD3 files directly.)

LocoScript will offer the default name for the new file as Document.000.

Change the name to MyFile.LS3 (to distinguish it from MyFile.Asc or .Txt). Don't worry about the layout or printer defaults, for you are only going to use LocoScript to check the spelling, nothing else. (However if your default template includes your name and address then you will have to delete these or they will be transferred back to MD3 later.)

When the empty LocoScript document has opened press f1 and select Insert Text. Put the cursor on MyFile.Asc or .Txt and press [Enter]. Your MD3 Editor text will flow into the LocoScript document.

Note that if you insert the .Txt version (saved in MD3 with f6) then the serial number of your copy of MD3 will appear at the beginning of the text. If you used the Ascii Save (f8) the text is plain *with no formatting codes such as bold or Change Font* and that there is likely to be a sigma Σ at the beginning of each line. In both cases there will be a carriage return at the end of every line.

Spell check the document as you would normally and, when done, save the corrected file as MyFile.LS3 (or .LS). Remove the data disc, insert your MD3 key disc and Load MD3 again. Open up the Editor and insert your data disc in the floppy disc drive.

Press f5 to Load Text and use Alt+the drive letter and Alt+the user group number to select where the .LS3 file is located. *But* before you press [Enter] use the [<Del] key to remove the letters TXT. Instead press the asterisk * so that it now reads LOAD TEXT A:*. Now you will find that when you press [Enter] the program will read *all* the files in that group on the disc, not just the .Txt files. (*Don't* leave it just as .Txt or .Asc or you

will not be able to access the .LS3 file.)

Put the cursor over MyFile.LS3 and it will flow into the MD3 Editor, even though it is a LocoScript file. MD3 will read and interpret *most*, but not all, of any LocoScript formatting codes you inserted whilst in LocoScript. Note that the carriage returns at the end of every line will come across too but these can easily be removed with Find & Exch.

Strangely enough, if you use f1 Make Ascii File while still in LocoScript to export your corrected document back as an Ascii file, even if you select Simple Text the MD3 carriage returns will *still* appear in the converted document (because they were embedded by MD3 in the first place).

If you do decide, for any reason to export the LocoScript document out as an Ascii file then be sure to use the .ASC extension. If you export it to Ascii and select the file extension .TXT (because that is what MD3 will ask for) you will find that when you load back it into the MD3 Editor, with f5 Load Text, Micro-Design will abandon the first few lines of your file (because it assumes it is the 'file header' with your serial number hidden in it!) *Weird*.

Note for LocoScript 4 users

If you have upgraded to LocoScript 4 you can still follow the above procedure to spell check your MD3 documents but with one caveat. MD3 will only read LS3 documents, so simply use f1 Make LocoScript 3 document while still in Loco4 and save *this* converted file as MyFile.LS3. Then MD3 will read it with no problems.

Mike Elliston, Editor

EDITORIAL

This is the last edition of the *Disc Drive* for which I shall be temporary editor. Each issue takes about five man-weeks and that is too much for just one person to continue undertaking for very long. Future editions are to be produced by an editorial *team* where the various tasks are passed down to individuals to tackle: finding advertising, collecting editorial copy, providing illustrations, cut and paste, etc. I shall continue to write articles of a technical nature and would welcome ideas from readers for the topics they would wish to see discussed.

I have enjoyed producing the *Disc Drive* over the past five editions. I use the word 'producing' advisedly; the 'Editor' does far more than check the spelling and grammar and make the copy fit the space available, at least on the *Disc Drive*! It is currently prepared on a collection of PCWs: 8256s with both 3" and 3½" A: drives and 9512s with both sizes of drive too, for people submit discs in all sorts of formats. There have been 173k, 178k, 208k and 713k 3" disc *and* 3½" discs formatted to 173k, 713k *and* as 706k DOS discs!

All of these I can cope with *except* those 3½" HD discs which have been formatted on a PCW as CF2DD; *sometimes* I can copy from these but usually they fail. In addition there has been the odd PCW16 disc which I can now copy, having bought a 16 for the purpose! I promptly transfer those out to a 720k DOS disc and use 2in1 to copy the text onto a CF2DD for the PCW.

When I took over as editor I decided to use LocoScript rather than MicroDesign3. Don't get me wrong: MD3 is a brilliant *graphics* program but I find LocoScript to be far more versatile. Loco4 has the best of both worlds for it can now import MDAs to print pictures too.

Copies of articles, letters, tips, etc., are imported from Loco1, 2 or 3 into Loco3. (Never work on original files on the supplied disc – you may find that you can read *from* someone else's disc but not save back to it successfully, especially if their drive is failing to format properly.) Documents supplied in Ascii, Protex or MicroDesign texts are also imported into Loco3. Anything submitted in Loco4 is converted to Loco3 *first*. That way everything is in the one common Loco3 format making it simpler to edit, spell check and compare sizes of files all set to the same standard.

If you normally use Loco4, *please* convert your article to Loco3 before sending it in for publication (saved as MyFile.LS3 so it's easy to recognise); it makes life so much simpler. Also, please send letters, etc., in *on disc* (but not on HD discs). We will return your disc and it does save a lot of retyping – thanks.

The final pages are made up in Loco4: it enables both two column layout *and* the importation of graphics from MD3. I use the *pica* as the standard measurement for page layout (where a pica is one sixth of an inch). My line depth is 6 lines to the inch, never automatic. The scale pitch is 12 which means that every two units of screen layout width equals one sixth of an inch also. For all practical purposes a sheet of A4 is 50 picas wide by 70 picas deep, and A5 is 35 wide by 50 deep. Thus everything is measured in the same unit.

Although the finished pages are A5 I set them in the middle of A4 sheets; this gives space around the edge for handling, annotations and correction marks. It also means that the printer fonts are generated upright (portrait), rather than sideways (landscape). Believe it or not, this can make quite a difference in the time it takes to print out a complicated sheet full of font changes, symbols and graphics!

I have all the LocoScript LX extra fonts and these are frequently used for headlines and subheadings. I also have all the MD3 fonts (and a few that have never been released) so some headlines are set in MD3, saved as an MDA and printed in Loco4, Release 2.

Esther's pages are printed on the laser from MD3. My own article on a PcW16 database in the Summer 1998 edition was set *in two columns* on a PcW16 – yes, it can be done! – and printed on the laser.

Some lessons I've learned. Don't change the printer halfway through a production even though it would appear to be very similar! For technical reasons I had to switch from a Hewlett Packard LaserJet IIIp (the personal home use model) to an HP III (the heavier duty office model) between issues 20 and this 21. Both printers are allegedly 300 d.p.i. and both use PCL5 (the printing layout language). But on the III the same Template.Std gives a *Disc Drive* page, set up as 30 picas wide, about 1mm narrower than the same template on the IIIp! One millimetre shouldn't make that much difference, you might say, but just try it for yourself.

Read what has been written and check the spelling as you go along! There's nothing so frustrating as getting a page to fit right down to the last word, to find

that when you check the spelling, the corrected copy is now one line longer and runs over the page. If you type too quickly *now* becomes *no*, or *but* becomes *bu*. Again, when these are corrected, the copy is sure to flow onto a new page.

Beware allowing LocoSpell to *automatically* make changes for you! In one example of an exactly 8-page document I ran LocoSpell at the last minute. It insisted on adding a full stop after the word *etc* in the penultimate paragraph. That made the next word after *etc* drop onto another line which in turn heaved the following paragraph onto the next page. When I sent it to the printer I suddenly had a nine page document, all for the sake of a full stop!

You may notice one subtle layout change on this my last page? I'm told that the one thing that MD3 can do that Loco4 can't is a vertical rule down the gutter between two columns. Well this is simply the vertical line MDA supplied with Loco4 (edited in MD3 to the required length) and printed as a Picture in a *fixed* position on the page. I've also been told that it's only in MD3 that you can make the words appear to flow around the edge of a picture. Perhaps I had better *keep quiet* about how this effect was printed here using LocoScript4 then!



May I, in conclusion, say a big *Thank You* to all those who have responded to the call for letters and articles for this edition of the *Disc Drive* and who have helped to make this one of the best issues ever. However, please don't stop now; keep your items coming in and make the next edition even better. What do *you* use your PCW for? Let us all know.

Mike Elliston

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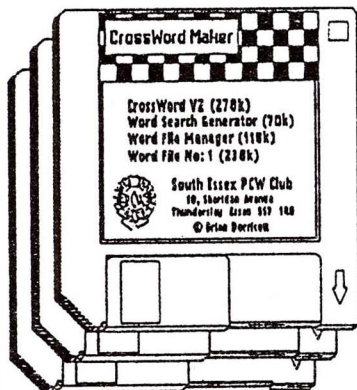
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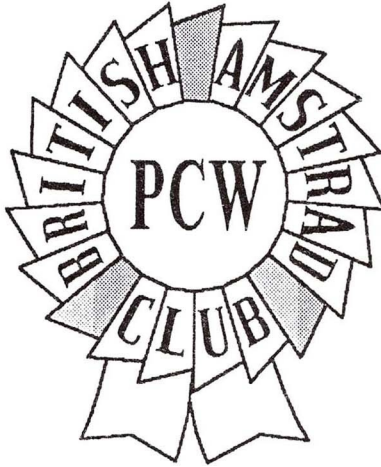
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PCW Directory

April 1999

The purpose of this directory is to provide a means of contact between users, suppliers and clubs for all Amstrad PCW software and hardware, including the PcW16. If you've been left out, if the details are wrong, or you know of a club or supplier omitted from this directory, please let us know, *in writing!* Equally we wish to be advised of suppliers or clubs that have 'Gone away' or appear to no longer exist; there's no point in listing them.

Remember: the only way for us to keep in touch is by regular communication.

Alladink, Nick Godwin, 16 Springwood Park, Edinburgh, EH16 6JL 0131 270 0538
Ribbon recycling and reinking

Amstrad Consumer Electronics Ltd,
169 Kings Road, Brentwood, Essex CM14 4EF 01227 228888
PCW16 Support 0891 515715

Anlaby Computer Services, Trevor Laycock, 7 North Street, Anlaby, Hull HU10 7DD
Disc drive repairs (local) and disc conversion 01482 650648

Ansible Information, 94 London Road, Reading, Berkshire RG1 5AU 01424 720457
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Artmonk Design, R Thorndycroft, 1 Kinross Cres, Cosham, Portsmouth, Hants PO6 2NP
Additional MicroDesign fonts

C Austin, 4 St Sulyen, Luxulyan, Bodmin, Cornwall PL30 5EB
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PCW repairs and spares

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Repairs to all Amstrad machines plus PCW disc conversions

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Comsoft, 10 McIntosh Court, Wellpark, Glasgow G31 2HW 01415 544735
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John Shipcott, 11 Tremane Rd, Camborne, Cornwall TR14 7NT 01209 713997

John Craggs, 60 Belmont Road, Chandlers Ford, Eastleigh, Hants SO53 3FJ
Writers Desk software for the PCW user 01703 364821

Costa del Sol PCW Club: Ken Tether 00 34 95 293 2096

Crawley PCW Club:
J Brooks, 6 Downsview Crescent, Uckfield TN22 1TG 01825 763563

Crazy Diamond Design, 5 Viceroy Ct, Wilmslow Road, Didsbury, Manchester M20 2RJ
Literatus; illustrations, borders and fonts for use with MicroDesign 0171 681 3849

Creative Technology (MicroDesign) Ltd, 10 Park Street, Uttoxeter, Staffs ST14 7AG
The Network, MicroDesign. Tweak, Font & Shade Designer 01889 567160

DanSoft, 44 Charcot House, Highcliff Drive, London SW15 4PT 0181 876 9251
Direct, user friendly software for the PCW

Dave's Disk Doctor Service Ltd 01892 835974
D Smith, 41 Tutsham Way, Paddock Wood, Kent TN12 6US
The floppy disc data rescue service <http://www.diskdoctor.co.uk/>

Devon PCW Club:
Peter Goodridge, 38 Widgey Road, Exeter, Devon EX4 8BA 01392 210269

Directory of PCW User Groups:
Clive Read, 19 Portsfield Close, Bexhill on Sea, E Sussex TN40 2FR

W P Ford, Sarsden, Blackboys, Uckfield, East Sussex, TN22 5JU 01825 890688
Roots PCW genealogy program for the PCW

Garrison Computers, 191 Watling Street Rd, Fulwood, Preston PR2 4AE 01772 701248
Formerly known as MicroForm, suppliers of PCW disc drives and spares

Derrick Gaskin, 119 London Road, Brentwood, Essex CM14 4NP
The Quickmyth range of mythology discs for use with LocoFile

Hastings & Eastbourne PCW Club:
George McGee, 15 Pippin Cl, Herstmonceux, E Sussex TN39 5DL... 01323 833969

Heads of the Valley Group: Roy Underwood,
Birchacre, Croes Bynan, LLwydcoed, Aberdare, Mid Glamorgan .. 01685 874972

Hereford Computer Club, PCW Group:
Maurice Knight, 2 The Lodge, Kingston, Hereford HR2 9HN 01981 250886

Richard P Hill, 84 Wincheap, Canterbury, Kent CT1 3RS
BASIC 98 for the PCW

Ideal Value Products, 10 Sheridan Avenue, Benfleet, Essex SS7 1RD .. 01702 551618
Magazine Index for PCWPlus, 1986-1996 and agents for the Crossword Maker kit

Independent Eight Bit Association: Brian Watson,
39 High Street, Sutton in the Isle, Ely, Cambs CB66 2RA..... 01353 777006

Ink King, Crendon House, Crookhorn Lane, Soberton, Southampton, Hants SO3 1RD
Ink cartridges and refill kits 01489 877818

Javea Computer Club, Alicante: Tom Hughes 00 34 96 558 3508

Joyce Computer Club: F Van Empel, Leksmondhof 8, NL-1108, Amsterdam, Nederlands
<http://www.euronet.nl/users/fvempel/index/html> (in English)

JR Inkjet Ltd, Unit 7, Dover Corner Industrial Estate, Rainham, Essex RM13 8QT

Kentish PCW Club:
Leslie Merchant, 14 Hill Road, Northfleet, Gravesend, Kent ... 01474 335882

David Landers, Brinkburn Gardens Cottage, Longframlington, Morpeth NE65 8AR
Instant Recall: calculator, calendar, converter, etc., for LocoMail 01665 570662

Leeds Amstrad PCW Club:
Paul Newmark, 18 Laythorpe Road, Leeds LS16 5HW 0113 275 5576

LocoScript Software, 10 Vincent Works, Dorking, Surrey RH4 3HJ 01306 747757
LocoScript, LocoMail, LocoSpell, LocoFile, LX fonts, etc, etc

Mapej, Meadow View, Quinta Cres, Weston Rhyn, Oswestry, Shropshire SY10 7RN
PCW disc conversions 01691 778659

MicroDesign International User Group:
Doug Cox, 132 Adelaide Gr, East Cowes, Isle of Wight PO32 6DF 01983 296366
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Morley Amstrad PCW Users: Frank King,
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National PCW User Group: R Harper, 25 Pycroft Road, Great Sankey, WA5 3NF

North Wales Computer Club,
L J Simpson, Ty Ceiriog, 9 Bryn Rhosyn, Abergele, Clydd LL22 8EZ

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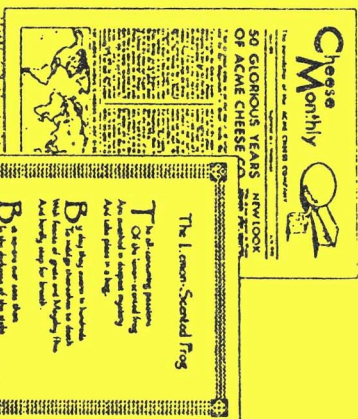
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