

NEWSLETTER

Issue 4 September 1996



Welcome!

Welcome to the fourth issue of the Newsletter, I am still managing to write the majority of it by myself! I would once again like to thank Gwen Hoskins for her contribution last month, and Mike Bath for his article this month, in an attempt to make some more people feel guilty and write something for me - it doesn't have to be very much, anything will do.

Anyway back to this month. It has been another good month for me - even though I have really managed to invalidate any warranty that could possibly ever have been on my 9256. As those of you attending the meetings will know, I have been having problems with the DIN connector for the keyboard, with the result that it would not work for much of the time. Most companies would not admit that this was possible, those that would wanted a lot of money to sort it out. I kept using the PcW like this for several months, with it working sometimes and not others, and normally using another members 9256 for meetings (thanks Frank!), until finally I had had enough.

I purchased a replacement part myself, and one evening my Dad and I took the PcW apart (well, actually I did that by myself - I only needed help with the soldering later on), following the instructions on how to strip down this machine for cleaning in the July 1993 issue of PCW Plus, and a little knowledge I had gained on the previous occasions that I had taken it apart (once for cleaning, and once to fit extra RAM - I had also done this to Frank's machine used at the meetings). I had now problems until I came to the actual socket itself, and only then because it was soldered to a circuit board and the replacement I had purchased had to be mounted with screws, but I removed the PCB anyway. Next came a small problem, it was impossible to remove the wires from the existing socket without cutting, so eventually we decided to do just that - and immediately wished we hadn't because we know had five wires and were only sure what to do with one of them, not for the people with a nervous disposition!

The first time the wires were soldered on, and the machine re-assembled was a disaster because nothing on the keyboard would do anything, the next couple of attempts were a little better because we could be sure that there was some power getting through because the light on the shift lock key would work when pressed, though nothing else would do anything. Finally, three and a half hours into this bout of brain surgery we had success - and it has worked well ever since. This at first seemed a bit of a risky exercise, but I have saved myself quite a lot of money, the whole operation only cost one evening, a very

small quantity of electricity for the soldering iron, a few inches of solder and 44p for the part - that's 44p well spent! I only wish all things could be sorted so easily (and the socket screwed to the case of the computer makes it very easy to identify).

Hopefully I won't need to take the computer apart for anything like this before next month, which is a shame really as it was easy for me to find something to talk about here. See you next time - I hope!

Software News

I am not aware of any new releases this month, so I thought I would say how wonderful the LocoMail program is - I purchased it at Christmas, but have only just had time to experiment with it (I have too much homework to do during school time, so I probably won't get to experiment with MicroDisplay until Christmas, six months after that was purchased!), but now that I have I won't look back.

So far I have produced several order forms that will insert the relevant addresses automatically, add up the cost of items, add postage and packaging and then add VAT - which makes life a lot easier for me. I have also written a procedure to help produce a catalogue for some choir music I have been sorting over the holiday (I stored all of the information in a LocoFile datafile), this has now been printed and comes out at over 140 pages - most of which was taken directly from the datafile, it even produced alphabetical indexes by title and first line - which would have taken my hours otherwise.

Hardware News

Again, I have not yet heard of any major releases this month, and so I am very pleased to be able to include this article by Mike Bath, who I would now like to take the opportunity to thank, not just for producing this article, but for his help at the meetings, and photocopying the Newsletter free of charge. I couldn't keep the newsletter going without him (unless that is I started charging for it), Mike owns a PcW9256 with 2Mb RAM, 2Mb Flash Drive and an Hewlett Packard Deskjet 540 printer. This article is exactly as written, the meeting referred to in the text was actually the July meeting.

I have recently fitted an internal B: drive to my 9256, this is an upgrade I first decided to do approx 1½ years ago but found that the internal upgrade had been discontinued, not wishing to have an external drive I put this project on a back burner.

However at the last meeting I noticed a handout from Silicon City broadcasting to the world and everyone that they had an internal drive for every PCW/PcW including the 9256 & 10. I therefore rang them up the following week and by that weekend it was fitted and working.

In total it took just 29 minutes to fit and switch the computer back on, the first thing to note is the loading screen to make sure that the computer has recognised the extra drive (*no problem*), a point to note here is that the drive will not be recognised if there is a disc with

