

Issue 228

AUTUMN 2025

ISLE OF WIGHT PC USER GROUP



HOT KEY

OCTOBER 2025

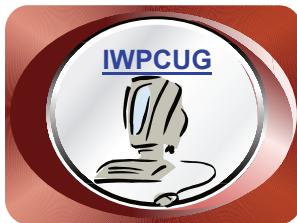


Some attendees at the BBQ in July.

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The Isle of Wight Personal Computer User Group

We welcome anyone who has an interest in computers and related technology and what you can do with them.

We are a group which seeks to exchange ideas and new information.

Membership is £12 per annum

Our meetings are normally held on the first Wednesday of each month from 7.00 to 8:30 pm. Until further notice these will be held online via Zoom.

Visitors are always welcome.

If you would like to know more about us, you are most welcome to attend one of our meetings, or you can contact one of our Committee Members who are listed on page 3.

The Club web site address is www.iwpcug.org

We also have an e-group discussion area on
Groups.io: <https://groups.io/g/iwpcug>
Details of how to join are on page 4.



FUTURE MEETINGS

<u>Date</u>	<u>Subject</u>	<u>Speaker</u>
1 October	TBC	Adam
5 November	Aid to Ukraine	Nigel Watson
3 December	Christmas Meeting	
7 January	TBC	
4 February	AGM & Guru Panel	

ISLE OF WIGHT PC USER GROUP COMMITTEE

Chairman : David Groom

Secretary : position unfilled

Treasurer : Mike Hoar

Membership and Database Secretary : Roger Skidmore

Committee Member : Steve Sutters

Committee Member : Susanne Bone

Treasury Supervisor : Phil Rogers

Note:

Contact details removed prior to publishing on the intrenet.

Suggestions for new events, topics or speakers for talks are always welcome.

Please contact Steve Sutters, or any committee member, with your ideas. If necessary we may be able to find a speaker for your subject.

Chairmans Report

Once again I start with an apology for a missing edition of HotKey. No July issue was produced, partly due to a lack of content, and partly as I was having a slightly disrupted period in my life due to the house being used as a film location.

Thanks go to Roger for allowing us to use his garden, as the setting for our annual BBQ, the presence of film people at Bembridge Lodge made it difficult to have held it there. The weather was good and we had an enjoyable evening, see a fuller report on page 7.

Some years ago Computability received a donation in respect of the project Roger was doing to provide “Laptops for Ukrainians”. It was not possible to spend all the donation on that project, and the committee recently felt the best way to use the money would be to make a donation to Nigel Watson who makes regular trips to Ukraine taking over items which are in short supply. We hope Nigel will be able to speak to us at our November meeting.

The calendar on page 2 shows us with meetings through to the AGM next year.

As mentioned at the AGM, Lloyds Bank had started to charge us £4.25 per month simply for keeping the account open. We attempted to find another bank which offered free banking for not-for-profit organisations, but without much success. There was not much money in the account anyway, and the committee decided to close the account and hold the balance in cash.

David Groom

Joining the Email Discussion Group

Send an email to: iwpcug+subscribe@groups.io, you will receive a confirmation email, follow the instructions in that email, and then wait for your approval request to be approved by one of the moderators.

All members are encouraged to join this group (it's free and private to club members) so you can keep in touch with events and join in with the discussions.

You can also keep in touch by regularly visiting www.iwpcug.org

Removable M.2 Storage

Have you ever tried installing/connecting one of those pesky M.2 NVMe memory sticks into a motherboard? And dropped the tiny screw inside somewhere? Unless this is for a permanent client's computer you may want to make life easier with 40cm remote leads and either a floating bracket for the memory stick or even better a 3.5" front mounting removable caddy.

If you view David's HotKey article <https://www.iwpcug.org/hotkey/HotKey-Summer2018.pdf> pages 5-7 you will learn all about M.2 memory format. This has been used in both laptops and desktops for at least ten years, but in the Computability section we are only now starting to meet it, working as we do with old kit.

In the Computability workshop we tend to develop a hard disk configuration working on the workhorse desktop machine and when that is perfected, to "mass produce" transferable clones – either SSD or the forthcoming NVMe M.2 drives, so accessibility is key, hence the following:

It has always bothered me that these are fiddly things to have to screw directly in to the motherboard because they connect direct to the bus rather than to the intermediate SATA interface as per normal (I always use an IcyDock front-mounted caddy for 2.5" SSD's).

This is a bit like delicate brain surgery, so to get round this you need a dummy M.2 adapter to screw onto the motherboard - once only - and then plug in a 40cm long "SFF-8654" connector adapter which can plug into the IcyDock unit described below or else a free-floating panel to carry the actual NVMe memory unit.

IcyDock have always been the leader in hard disk caddies so I wondered if they had created a 3.5" front mounted M.2 caddy. Well they have created a number of them, see <https://global.icydock.com/products-c5-s48-i0.html>

I have taken the plunge and bought one from Scan Computers, it is called "[Tough Armor MB834MK-BV2](#)" (for two NVMe's but a single one is cheaper). Not cheap, but that's progress. Also had to buy a 5.25" to 3.5" converter frame to fit it in to my computer, and SFF-8654 leads and adapter cards for the caddy - which don't come included.



The other discoveries are that UEFI extension boot devices tend to take priority in the boot sequence and deploying an NVMe can disable one or more SATA channels, i.e. your DVD drive.

Eventually I imagine that 2.5" SSD's will follow the path of their predecessors into history and we will all be using M.2 format memory, so this will be the way ahead. For us nerds and fiddlers life can be a lot simpler with either mode of extension adapter.

As a reminder, with Linux to clone multiple copies of the perfect installation we use "RescueZilla", and for Windows, Macrium "Reflect" free version 7. (To actually install Windows 11 on an old computer use "Rufus" conversion tool using the setting to remove Window's restrictions on installing to old computers - see the article on Rufus page 8).

I will keep you posted!

Roger Skidmore

P.S. you can also get [PCIE rear mounted M.2 cards](#) – but why would you?

M.2 Roles – SATA and NVMe

Some motherboards have two M.2 slots, others just one. Some M.2 slots are just for NVMe function, others SSD plus NVMe function. If working with SSD then they usually disable one or two of the SATA ports (i.e. for DVD etc), but if for NVMe only then they probably don't disable the SATA function. Most boards have six SATA ports, so keep your hard disks and DVDs plugged into the lower SATA numbers. Does anybody use DVD's these days?

The good news is that you can certainly clone between NVMe and SATA drives, both Windows and Linux.

According to Google you should be able to read/write between NVMe and SATA drives, but I've tried this and it doesn't always seem to be the case. It works on my office PC but not on my Lenovo laptop.

Roger Skidmore

IWPCUG Computer Club Barbecue **Wednesday 2nd July 2025**

Last night we held our annual club barbecue, this time at Roger's house in Newport, IW, as earlier in the month David was unable to determine if the grounds of Bembridge Lodge would be available.

We had a perfect evening and the event was attended by David Groom, chairman and chief cook; Nigel Watson, our Ukrainian representative and honoured guest, and then Roger Skidmore, host, and Su, and Alan and Joy, Alec and Val, Sven, Mike (Treasurer), Jonathan Burt (Guru), Steve and his friend and guest Adam (13 in all).

The fare was mostly burgers and salad followed by Pavlova Roulade, vegetarian options as required.

During the evening Nigel circulated freely, discussing his experiences of travelling to Ukraine, mainly Odessa, plus a few other cities, delivering items collected by benefactors during his stay on the Island. Last evening he collected a number of computers, tablets, printers and oddments, all working stock from the club's Computability section. We also presented him with a club cheque for £150 towards travelling and out of pocket expenses (see page 15). Further private donations were also made.

Nigel has kindly agreed to host a Zoom Q&A session on Wednesday 5th November, which may in fact be from Odessa.

The evening was enjoyed by all and with David and Su's help all was cleared up and away by 9.30 pm.



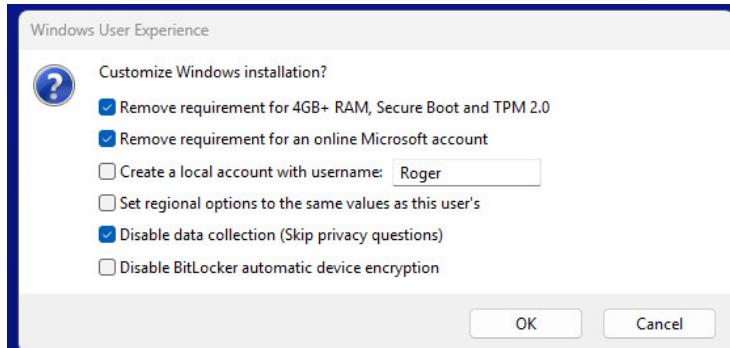
Roger Skidmore

Plop and Rufus Revisited

The IWPCUG has an excellent HotKey search facility [here](#). I had to look up “Rufus” and I found my Spring 2021 article on “Plop and Rufus”. I think I used Plop once and cannot remember what for, but the [owner’s website](#) is totally fascinating as a source of things I don’t understand.

Rufus will help you create a bootable USB stick from a downloaded “ISO” file, e.g. Windows, Linux or any of a number of utilities which like to boot from a USB stick. (I don’t think anybody creates bootable CD’s anymore).

If you have downloaded this Windows installation file: *Win11_24H2_EnglishInternational_x64.iso* then you may be wanting to create a bootable USB stick to install Windows 11. Rufus will do this for you, but Rufus will also deliver a Windows installation with these features:



Which might appeal if you have an old computer which allegedly won’t run Windows 11 or happen not to have a TPM module. I have tried this on a number of such computers and it seems to deliver a very clean installation, so far all apparently “activated”.

I would recommend downloading Chrome, Firefox and LibreOffice installation files to a separate USB stick first so as to avoid having to use Edge, Bing, etc. I like [xPlorer lite](#) instead of File Manager (remember to opt in to showing file extensions, of course).

Also remember you do not **have** to enter anything in the password field!

Roger Skidmore

Last issue I introduced “[**Libib**](#)” on-line cataloguing system for DVDs, CDs, books, etc. This is available either free (basic) or paid-for with more functionality. One of the items missing in the free version is reporting, but it does allow data export in CSV.

I have shared Libib with a friend who has listed a separate set of DVD’s and we wanted a combined hard-copy report.

This was fairly easily achieved as follows: download the two separate CSV data exports; view each in Excel (etc) and add a column to each called “Owner” and populate this column with appropriate name or initial; copy and paste one data set into the other then save as Excel spreadsheet format; import into MS Access (or LibreOffice Base); create standard report and print out.

The publicly view-able Libib site is very basic, not doing much more than listing your content with thumbnails, but it does suffice to let a friend see what DVDs, etc., you have to view of an evening or to borrow. You would do this by email so you could also send PDF of the report you have just created.

Another advantage of importing the data into spreadsheet, or preferably, subsequently into Access or Base, is that in a database form it is easy to do searches. For instance, searching for the string “choc” revealed that between us we had three movies containing the word “chocolate”.

The combined public facing catalogue is [here](#).

Roger Skidmore

PC Consultants Featured in Style of Wight Magazine

We mentioned in the last Issue of HotKey that PC Consultants had been awarded The King’s Award for Enterprise. Following that award the company is featured in the current issue of *Style of Wight* magazine, and I would highly recommend you read the article.

If you can’t find a hard copy, usually available for free in many locations across the island, it can be read online at https://issuu.com/styleofwright/docs/sow_96_sept_oct_2025_digital.

David Groom

Weidian Woes

It was all looking so rosy. I had finally reached the holy grail of desktop computing. My new mini PC was reasonably fast, very energy efficient, small, had a generous number of ports (including 8 USB, a type 'C') and totally silent! One thing to watch out for with mini PC's is the lack of ports (especially with the tiny 'cube' PC's). For the equivalent cost of a new silent power supply for my old desktop PC (£200 ish) I had a PC that was better in every way.

Then 6 months after purchase it stopped working. I was just surfing the internet when the screen went dead and the power button light went off. I tested the voltage of the power brick and it was fine. There aren't many easy to replace parts in a mini PC. I re-seated its one ram stick which did nothing. Took it down to Frankies PC services in Ryde Arcade. He tried it with another power supply and still no joy. Sent 2 emails to the eBay seller asking for a repair or refund. Took 5 weeks to get a reply from him (better late than never I guess). He said he had no receipts for it. eBay would not refund anything as they only help up to a month after a sale and Weidian do give a 3 year warranty but only if bought directly from the factory they said. Took it down to iFix Local Ltd. Ryde. They diagnosed the fault which was a surface mount component had blown and caused a short circuit. The repairer said the faulty component had a 10% failure rate so guess I was unlucky. They replaced it and for a cost of £90 it is now working as well as ever. They guarantee their work but not the rest of the PC but did assure me it was not 'good money after bad' as the PC seemed well made.

The price of my one from Hystou is £560 ish with postage. If I don't get any more problems for the next 2 1/2 years I will be very glad with my purchase even with the repair. This fault did remind me of my media centre PC which developed a fault on the motherboard shortly after purchase. I bought it from Maplins who sent off for another one under guarantee. See below for link for my mini PC which came with 16 Gb of ram and a 512Gb SSD

<https://www.hystou.com/fanless-mini-box-pc-with-intel-10th-gen-8-usb-6-com-industrial-computer.html>

To sum up, mini PX's with a decent spec are great for non demanding tasks and I'm a convert!

Stephen Sutters

Affinity Photo Gets AI

Back in 2017 (I hadn't realised it was so long ago) I gave a couple of short presentations on Affinity Photo, the photo editing product similar to Adobe Photoshop, but which is much cheaper. I've continued to use it as my main photo and image editor, and upgraded to version 2 shortly after it came out.

Quite often when working with images for design purposes it is necessary to select and copy only part of an image, maybe to incorporate it in another image. Earlier this year Affinity introduced an AI powered selection tool to the product. Adobe introduced a similar feature to Photoshop last year.

I clicked the object selection tool, and initially thought the program had crashed as nothing appeared to be happening apart from the cursor had changed to a “clock” icon, and a YouTube video I was also playing slowed to a crawl. It turned out that the reason why I thought the program had crashed was that the AI analysis of the image was taking place on my computer and it was using up all of my processor resources. Note that my computer is quite old, and so it is perhaps not surprising that it struggled with this task.

However after 1 minute 40 seconds the cursor returned to a pointer icon, and as I moved the cursor across the image various parts of the image were shaded to show they had been selected. I was very impressed with the AI selection. It had done a very good job of identifying the various parts of the image, and then enabling me to select them. The selection may have needed a bit of refinement in places, but it was much quicker than had I tried to manually select it. Overall I was most impressed.

This is the first time I have used a product which uses AI on the computer as opposed to the cloud, and I wonder what else we may be seeing soon.

David Groom

What is Microsoft Copilot+?

Microsoft Copilot+ is the company's latest evolution of artificial intelligence (AI) integration across Windows PCs, apps, and services. Announced in 2024, Copilot+ is designed to transform how people work, create, and collaborate by placing AI tools at the center of the Windows experience. Unlike earlier versions of Copilot, which lived primarily in Microsoft 365 apps such as Word, Excel, and Outlook, Copilot+ goes deeper by being embedded directly into the operating system and running on a new class of “Copilot+ PCs.”

At its core, Copilot+ is about combining powerful AI models with everyday computing tasks. These new PCs are equipped with specialised hardware built to handle AI workloads efficiently. A key feature is the inclusion of NPUs (Neural Processing Units) alongside traditional CPUs and GPUs. NPUs are dedicated chips designed to accelerate machine learning tasks such as image generation, speech recognition, and real-time translation. By handling these processes locally, Copilot+ PCs deliver faster performance, lower energy use, and improved privacy compared to cloud-only AI solutions.

Microsoft has partnered with hardware makers like Qualcomm, AMD, and Intel to produce these Copilot+ PCs. The first wave includes devices powered by Qualcomm's Snapdragon X Elite processors, which promise long battery life and optimised AI performance. Future models will expand to Intel's Lunar Lake and AMD's next-generation chips, ensuring broad adoption across different PC lines.

One of the standout features enabled by this hardware is Recall, an AI-powered memory that helps users find anything they've seen or done on their PC. Instead of searching through files or browser histories manually, Recall allows users to describe what they remember—such as “the recipe I looked at last Thursday”—and the AI retrieves it instantly. Other innovations include Cocreator in Paint, which uses the NPU to generate or edit images on demand, and real-time captioning and translation for video calls powered by on-device AI.

For businesses and professionals, Copilot+ represents a major shift toward AI-driven workflows. Tasks like drafting documents, analysing data, or summarising long emails can now be completed in seconds with AI assistance. Meanwhile, creative users benefit from faster rendering, enhanced media editing, and tools that help turn ideas into polished outputs almost instantly.

Ultimately, Microsoft Copilot+ is not just a single product but an ecosystem. By combining cutting-edge hardware with integrated AI, Microsoft is aiming to make everyday computing more intuitive, personal, and efficient. Copilot+ signals the company's belief that AI acceleration at the hardware level will define the next generation of PCs.

David Groom assisted by ChatGPT

AI Video Creation

At the July meeting I gave a talk on the capabilities of current AI. Subsequently I found out about Lightricks <https://www.lightricks.com>. There are a number of products the company have, all to do with AI and visual content creation. LTX-Video can generate high-quality videos at 30 FPS videos and 1216×704 resolution. The AI model is trained on a large-scale dataset of diverse videos and can generate high-resolution videos with realistic and diverse content.

LTX Studio ltx.studio is a web interface to the LTX-Video AI model. There are a number of things LTX Studio can do, among them are:

- Creating your own storyboard
- Transform an image into video
- Turn text to video in minutes
- Turn a script to video

There is a limited free trial, and I decided to try to create a short video from an image and a short text prompt. Using the photo below and the text prompt: *“the man on the right bites into the burger. The man on the left puts his hands down. An elegantly dressed woman walks in from the left and puts her arm around the man on the left”* I created a nine second video clip which can be seen at <https://youtu.be/Wn6Grg1BIgU>



The first frame of the video clip is the image I uploaded, the rest of the video never happened in real life. I showed the video to a number of my friends, not telling them before it was AI generated, and none of them thought there was anything odd about it, except for the way the food was eaten. If however you slow the video down you do start to notice a few oddities. However

overall I was quite amazed at what could be created.

I might start to pay the monthly fee so that I can play around a bit more with what LTX Studio can do.

David Groom

DiskGenius Free

I recently needed to clone my existing hard drive (a 500Gb mechanical drive) to a new hard drive (a 480Gb solid state drive). In the April 2022 edition of HotKey I wrote about two tools that could clone hard drives, but sadly neither of these would clone to a smaller drive. I believe that Macrium Reflect can do this, but it is no longer available as a free edition. After some searching I came across DiskGenius Free (<https://www.diskgenius.com/free.php>). Among the many things this program said it could do was *“Easily clone your hard drive to a new SSD, whether it's larger or smaller. This process makes the upgrading to a faster storage solution simple and helps enhance the overall system performance”* It sounded just what I needed.

Other things the program can do are: Partition HDDs/SSDs; Wipe HDDs/Partitions; Migrate Windows OS; Image Hard Drives; Check HDD/SSD Health; Resize Partition; Permanently Delete Files; Read EXT4/3/2 Drives.

Although I was unsuccessful on the first computer I was trying to clone (see article below) I did successfully use the “Migrate OS” feature of DiskGenius on a different computer (which only had Windows 10 on it). This allowed me to copy the OS and all other programs to a second hard drive, and most importantly I could copy the files to a slightly smaller drive than the original.

A screenshot of the program can be seen on the back cover.

David Groom

My Hard Drive Cloning Woes

As noted above I recently needed to clone my existing hard drive (a 500Gb mechanical drive) to a new hard drive (a 480Gb solid state drive). The hard drive has two operating systems on it, Ubuntu and Windows 10, and uses GRUB (“GNU GRand Unified Bootloader”) at boot time to allow me to choose which OS I wish to use. The Windows 10 installation is not one I really use, but I thought it would be nice to keep it on the cloned hard drive anyway.

Using DiskGenius Free I cloned the mechanical drive to the SSD, a very simple process involving only about 3 clicks of a mouse. I shutdown the computer, disconnected the mechanical drive, rebooted and was pleased to see the GRUB menu with the choice of OSes. I booted into Ubuntu, and all looked fine, so I rebooted the computer and this time choose to boot to Windows.

A blue screen appeared telling me there was a problem and I could attempt to repair the system, I tried but to no avail. The next step was to go back to using the mechanical drive and create a system repair suite on a USB stick. I did this, rebooted to the SSD, but even with the repair suite nothing worked.

Maybe DiskGenius Free wasn't as good as I had thought! I noted that Macrium Reflect (Roger Skidmore's preferred cloning software) offered a 30 day trial. So downloaded that and used it to clone the hard drive, sadly I had exactly the same issue as I had with DiskGenius, which I could not get round.

I noted that the system repair suite on the USB stick offered clean installation of Windows 10, so I decided to try that (as I mentioned earlier I hadn't really used Win 10 on this computer, so wouldn't lose much by having a fresh installation). The installation from the USB stick went OK, but I had forgotten that this would wipe the whole drive including the Ubuntu installation! So I now had a completely fresh installation of Windows 10, but nothing else on the SSD.

I had also noted that the repair suite also offered the ability to install from a system image (this is a single file which contains all the file required to restore an existing windows installation). I thought that maybe I could go back and clone the hard drives, and then restore from a system image into the windows partition on the SSD.

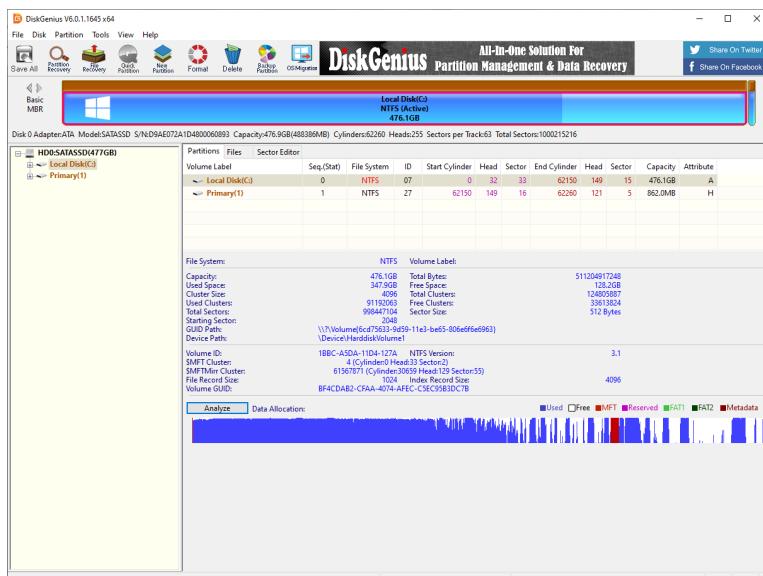
So I created an image of my existing installation, saving it to my NAS. And once again used Macrium Reflect to clone the hard drive. I then shut down the computer, disconnected the mechanical drive and booted to the SSD choosing the Windows OS, fully expecting the blue screen which I had experienced twice before. Imagine my surprise when the computer booted into Windows, without me needing to restore from the system image. I rebooted to check that the Ubuntu installation worked – it did. I now had exactly what I wanted, but not understanding why this last time it worked and the other two times had failed.

The only moral is “If at first you don't succeed, try try again”.

David Groom



David presenting a cheque to Nigel, see page 7.



Screenshot showing the DiskGenius program, see page14.

We try to publish HOTKEY quarterly in April, July, October and January
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No responsibility can be accepted with respect to any advice or suggestions
 in this journal, and the views expressed are those of the contributors.