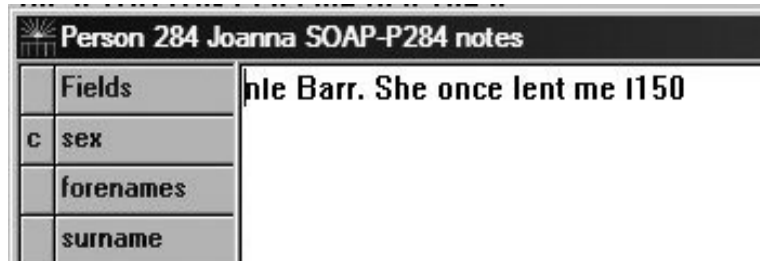


## Extended Characters in Pedigree and PediTree

There's one issue that can arise when moving from *Pedigree for DOS* to *PediTree* and that is the appearance of extended characters. (Now what's he talking about?) By "extended characters" is meant text-characters other than A-Z, a-z and common punctuation marks. The most-frequently encountered such is the British pound-sign £, but accented characters also turn up, for example, in "née" or foreign names. If your database created in *Pedigree* has these characters in the text, then when you use *PediTree*, they appear unhelpfully as black blobs or odd characters. Here is a contrived example, shown in *PediTree*'s long-text edit display. That should read "née Barr. She once lent me £150".



The reason is a technical one to do with *code pages*. All characters are actually stored as small numbers (0-255). The relationship between the number and what is displayed depends upon the code page (and font) in use, particularly in the range 128-255. The code pages used by DOS and Windows are different, hence the wrong display. For example, £ is number 156 in DOS, but number 163 in Windows. (Modern practice is to use a wider range of numbers in a scheme called Unicode, to accommodate world-wide character sets. That's beyond *PediTree*'s capabilities.)

There's no easy solution to this, as has been discussed in the past in the PUG-L mailing list. One discussion is reported in the Newsletter Volume 14 No 4 pp.16-17.

If these accented characters appear in personal names and you are new to *PediTree*, then you may find that they are correctly shown in the Family display, but not elsewhere. This is because a font called *Terminal* is used for this display when *PediTree* is first installed. This font, alone of those available, shows most DOS extended characters correctly.

The *Terminal* font was chosen to show correctly the right- and left-facing triangles (◀ ▶), used in the Family display to indicate the presence of children or ancestors in boxes at the edges of this display. If you decide to change the extended characters in your database to display correctly elsewhere, then you will need to change the font from *Terminal* to another. This can be done in the Fonts dialogue, obtained from the main menu **Print > Fonts**. Any such change is remembered for all subsequent use of *PediTree*. If the chosen font for the family display is *not* *Terminal*, then two picture scripts in any database opened are modified to replace the two triangle symbols (if present) by < and >, which display correctly in non-*Terminal* fonts.

One way of showing the extended characters correctly might seem to be to alter other fonts used by *PediTree* to *Terminal*. However, you can't change all the fonts used and printing using *Terminal* won't be very pretty. If you decide to move over to *PediTree* from *Pedigree*, you will need to alter the offending characters in your database. Of course, if you then use *Pedigree for DOS* to view the database, your changed extended characters have become blobs! Making this change is appropriate only if you are moving to *PediTree* and don't intend to go back to *Pedigree*.

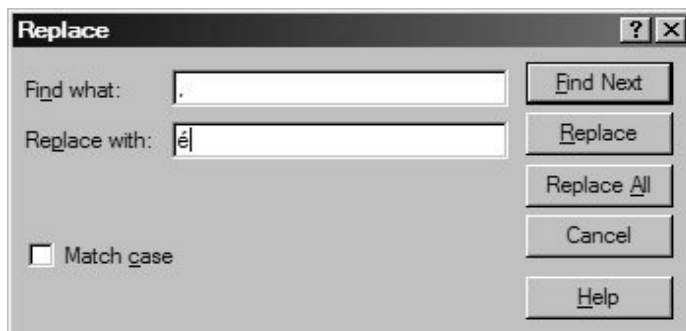
It seems that I once promised a conversion utility to make this change, but as there hasn't been much demand, this utility hasn't appeared. Recently I was reminded of this promise by a user who was moving from *Pedigree* to *PediTree* and had used a lot of accented characters in her database. Being caught by my own promise, I looked for a quick fix.

It occurred to me that *PediTree*'s replace text function could be used to correct an existing database that had been constructed in *Pedigree*. I tried and it did the trick. You need to use it once for each different extended character present in the database. If, for example, you have only used £, then one use of the replace function will correct it throughout the database.

First, make sure you have a back-up copy! Any changes made by the replace function cannot easily be reversed. (I recently saw an example of unintended side-effects from a replace function. This was in a database (not in PediTree!) of photographs of local street and shop names. An attempt to change all occurrences of “St” to “Street” had also changed the well-known estate agent Strutt & Parker to “Streetutt & Parker”. Several similar accidents were present. Oops!)

Next, switch to update (edit) mode, find a record that has one of the wrong characters and bring it up in the edit display. Carefully highlight the wrong character blob, then press Ctrl+C to copy it to the clipboard.

Now choose **Edit > Replace text** from the main menu, put the cursor in the **Find what** box and press Ctrl+V to paste in the blob. Move to the **Replace with** box and type the correct replacement character. Here’s the result for the character é.



Now click on **Replace All** (the only permitted choice here). After a back-up warning message, all occurrences of this blob will be changed to the replacement character and a list of the changed records is displayed. You can click on each record in this list to verify the change; double-click to see it in the Edit display. Repeat for all your blobs (extended characters) and the job is done.

Colin Liebenrood 29 August 2011