Introduction

AcornPipe has for many years supported the use of the cordless Videx Laserlite barcode reader, which stores the scan information in the reader and is downloaded periodically. Because this reader has become difficult to source, in September 2015 support was added for a generic reader connected to the computer. This document describes the use of a generic reader.

Equipment

An example of a basic handheld 1D contact barcode reader is the Unitech AS10-U, available online for about $50. It comes with a sheet of barcodes for setup purposes. No driver is required because the barcode reader is used in keyboard mode. The Unitech AS10 is a short-range scanner suitable for use with good-quality bar codes printed on paper. Other, higher-end scanners may allow faster scanning, better recognition of damaged barcodes, wireless operation, etc.

These instructions assume the use of the AS10, but in principle, almost any barcode reader that can be set to operate in keyboard mode should work.

Setting up the Barcode Reader

To set up the AS10, you need an available USB port on your computer, and the Programming Quick Guide that came with the reader. If you cannot locate the guide, you can download it from www.unitechscanners.com. The reader will probably work in the default configuration, but in case it does not, try the settings below:

Plug the reader in to a USB port. Then use it to scan the following, in order:

> Start Configuration
>
> Set All Defaults
>
> Interface Selection – USB
>
> Select Terminator – CR+LF
>
> Symbologies Selection – Code 39<ON> (turn all the other code types off)
>
> End Configuration
>
> Save Parameters

Drawing Layout

To use AcornPipe's built-in scanning system, the drawings must include a Code 39 barcode which starts with the letter K, followed by the Job Number, followed by the six-digit Control Number. For example, drawing 1 of job 4567 would need to include the barcode   K4567000001 . If barcodes appear on your drawings and you have not specially customized the barcodes, they will probably be in this format. If there are no barcodes on your drawings, you can add them by a simple edit to the layout.

Using the Barcode Reader

Start AcornPipe and select Help/Enter Spool Status using Barcode Reader. If you have not used the scanner before, the Stage will default to Chk date, as shown below.
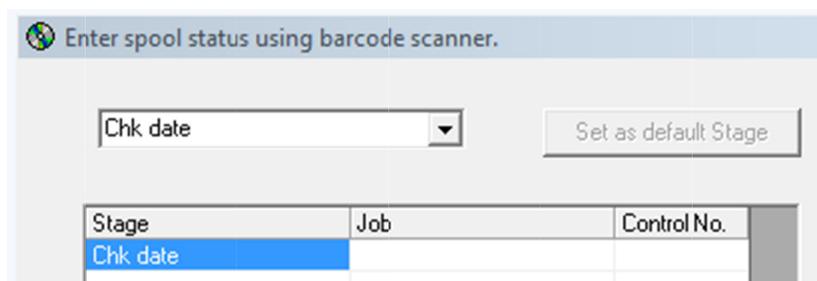
 Let us assume you have just checked some drawings (so the Chk date is the correct Stage) and want to update the status table accordingly. Scan the barcode on each of the ten drawings. The job number and control number will appear on the form. When all the drawings have been scanned, click Update Status Tables and the tables will be updated to show that this group of drawings was checked on today's date.

When asked "Ok to kill data.txt?", allow the deletion unless you have a special reason not to.

If the update is successful, you will see a list of jobs on which one or more spools have had their status updated.

To use a different stage than Chk date, choose it from the dropdown list, before scanning any spools.

How it Works

The first five stages available in the list box are always the same:

 Chk date

 InFab date

 Hydro date

 PWHT date

 Complete date

The remaining stages are taken from the Fabrication Status Headers entered in the Master Files, and can be customized. Only headers that contain "Date" (not case sensitive) are recognized as stages.

When you press Update Status Tables, the file Data.txt is written to the Application folder, which is generally Program Files (x86)\AcornPipe. This folder is used for backward compatibility with the Videx Laserlite scanner. A typical Data.txt file looks like this:

 "YA","Fit Date","K3180123-B000004","03-21-2014"

 "YA","Cut Date","K3170000004","03-21-2014"

 "YA","Fab Comp. Date","K3170000007","03-21-2014"

 "YA","Fab Comp. Date","K3170000004","03-21-2014"

This Data.txt file is then used as the basis for updating the status table of each job.

Differing Status Headers

If you use the same Data folder, AcornPipe/Data, for all clients, you don't need to worry about differing status headers. But if you have some clients with separate Data folders, you need to know that the Stage choices shown on the input form are always read from the general Data folder, AcornClients/Data. So you will only be able to scan for stages based on the status headers in that folder. However, if a stage is duplicated between the general Data folder and the Data folder for a specific client, the system will still update the correct column provided the spelling is duplicated exactly.

For example, if the 20th header in the general Data folder is "Visual Date" and the 25th header in the data folder AcornClients/Client1/Data is also "Visual Date", the dates will be placed in the correct columns.

Other Barcode Readers

The choice of barcode readers is by no means limited to the Unitech AS10. Other scanners we have seen used include the corded Symbol LS 2206 and the Zebra Symbol LS2208, but many others should work.

With the Zebra Symbol LS2208 specifically, the quickest way to get started is to initially use the scanner in its default mode. With the scanner connected to a USB port, bring up a NotePad window. Using the keyboard, type a few characters into NotePad to be sure it has the focus. Then point the scanner at the code on a printed drawing and press the scan button. About 10 to 15 characters should appear in the NotePad window.

Press the button again to make more scans. The additional scans will probably appear on the same line. What you want is for each new group of scanned characters to appear on a new line. To do this you need to have the scanner add a carriage return/enter after each scanned code.

You will need the quick start sheet that came with the scanner. If this is not available, find the quick start sheet online and print it out. Then scan the following codes:

1. Scan Options
2. <DATA><SUFFIX>
3. 3. Enter

Once the scanner is placing each scan on a new line in NotePad, you should be able to start using it with AcornPipe as described above.