

RETROGAMES

NEW LOGO SHOCKER!

Well, maybe not a new logo, just a well needed revamp. It's all down to regular reader Luis Troyano who makes a debut this issue with an article on inlay variations. When I recieved the article, I was very impressed with the slick layout and page design, and when I told Luis how much I liked it, he kindly offered to touch up the Retrogames logo. May I take this opportunity to thank him, and if anyone else has any ideas for beefing up the presentation, then please let me know.

BEDROOM BOREDOM

Over the last month, it seems the entire industry has been harking back to days of old, and the evolution of the UK coding scene. It's all down to Sony and their sleek Yarouze playstation development system. Every magazine has had something to say on the project, and why should we be any different. Radio One's computer slot even dragged in Jon Ritman for a comment. Jon held the view that no-one would develop on the system, as you can write games at home for the PC already, but not many people do, so why should an alternative format make any difference.

I think this is a very valid point, but probably the biggest reason that it will not change anything is that you can not create a complete game/program which can be run seperately to the Yarouze system. The thing about coding games on the Spectrum back in 1983 is that you could save them to tape, and then give/sell them to anyone you liked who had a Spectrum. What is the point of producing software on a Yarouze development system, which can only be used by yourself, or someone else with a Yarouze development system! The ability to create a finished product is paramount. The Amiga (and even C64) demo scene still flourishes thanks to it's easy to copy, easy to write to, format, and with second hand Amiga prices now at well under £100, Yarouze will have an extremely tough time trying to replace it as The home coders preferred format.

STAR WARS FEVER

It seems just a bit coincidental that a lost Star Wars game has emerged just at the time that the new versions of the films are hitting the cinemas. The game is a Lucasfilm Atari 2600 prototype called Ewok Adventure, and there is thought to be only one copy in existence. As we all know, Star Wars is a collecting phenomena in itself, so when something like this turns up, you can expect an extraordinary price. Well bidding over the internet began a few weeks ago, and the current top price is around \$2000, making it the most expensive cartridge to ever come up for sale. I think much of the value can be related to the Star Wars licence rather than the cartridge itself, though that is not to say that the game won't be any good. Atari collectors have now got their fingers crossed that whoever buys it will release the rom image so that duplicates can be made, or that it finds its way onto a multi-cart.

For those of you who find this game out of their price range, there are several other options. On the VCS you can find Star Wars, Empire Strikes Back and Jedi Arena quite easily. Domark released the official coin-op conversion on Spectrum, Ams, C64, Amiga and ST in 1988, though the best version of it is on the Atari ST, which plays a near perfect game including the excelent speech. On the Spectrum, even better than the official version is Realtime's 3D StarStrike which while being a complete copy of the game, does have filled polygons. Mastertronic released the Droids game (featuring R2D2 & C3PO) on the major 8-bit formats, and Hit Squad also re-released the Domark originals. The message is, if it's Star Wars related, look after it!

SERVE YOU BETTER

Finally, you can expect a quicker, more efficient ordering service from now on! The Retrogames staff has doubled. You guessed it, there are now two of us! If you have had delays with orders over the past few months I must apologise. The simple reason is that we have just got to successful for our own good, indeed, it was touch and go for a while whether we would continue selling games and machines at all. Anyway, it is all sorted now, and you can now have the efficient service you all deserve.

RETROFACTS

TURKISH DELIGHT

The obscure ALTAIR range of home computers actually found success in Turkey, where 8-bit computers still remain as prized to their owners: as they do to retrogamers over here.

COLECO MOLECO

God to Vectrex owners, creator of Patriots, Vectrex Yaders, and All good things, Jon Donzilla has almost finished his new project. Jon left the Vectrex to write new games for the Colecovision, and the first fruits of his labour are about to come to light. Let's just hope they match the standard of his Vectrex games, or if they don't, that he returns to the Vectrex soon.

LEND US YOUR GAMEMATE

While American collectors shun British games computers and games, they do hanker after our consoles. The Commodore 64GS, Amstrad GX and Acetronic are highly desirable outside the UK. Surprisingly there is one other machine which has particular value. The Cheetah Gamemate was a blatant copy of the Nintendo Gameboy but though pretty unsuccessful over here, wasn't even released in the US, and prices of rare handhelds are rocketing. The Gamemate is a sound investment, and a pretty good machine, we will review it soon.

SHAFTERBURNER

Those of you without a Saturn, buy one now! Sega Ages is fantastic. Out Run, Space Harrier & Afterburner, all arcade perfect. Sega Ages (UK version) remains unreleased in the US, though they have a different Saturn completion with the same title, including older Sega classics like Up & Down. Look out for imminent UK release under the monica Sega Ages 2. On the subject of AfterBurner, did you know the UK Amiga version, released by Activision was a simple ST port, while Activision's US release was nigh on Arcade perfect!

So, Nintendo has finally launched the N64 in the UK, complete with black boards, and as anyone who has an import machine will know, a very noticeable slower speed.

Some would say that since Nintendo's huge US launch, Sony are running scared. Certainly, chopping off seventy quid of the UK retail price was unexpected. Like most gamers, I bought my UK playstation as soon as it came out, paying the full £300 for it. Now it doesn't really bother me that the machine has come down in price so much, as I have had a good two years of play from it. However, I would be more than just a little upset with Sony if I had bought a Playstation at Christmas. The kick in the teeth effect this move has had could be just enough to turn people away from Sony in the future. The press build up, the TV adverts, the in-shop promotions, all directed at selling Playstations at Christmas, even the slightest rumour of a price cut would have put all those sales in jeopardy. Three months later, and they say "Hey, we just sold a million units at £70 dearer than we needed to, just to take advantage of you at Christmas, oh and we are halving the price of games too, just to rub it in!"

It's common knowledge that Sega can't afford that kind of price cut, and was only forced into its current £199 position thanks to Sony's previous cut throat pricing strategy. Some say competition can only help the industry, but the thought of squeezing a major player out of the market is not something most gamers will relish. Cut down on choice and the market may well become dominated again in true Nintendo style.

What I am wondering is what will happen to the 16-bit market now. Is it a case of one major players price cut creating two instant Retro machines? Look in your Argos book and you will see SNES and Megadrives at £99, it doesn't

take much to work out that with a £30 difference, no-one is going to choose either over a Playstation. Perhaps the machines will reside in the previous Mastersystem position, entry level machines priced at around £29.

The problem is the software. Go in your local games shop, and if you can find any, SNES games are selling at £40-£50. Maybe this is a marketing strategy to make N64 cartridges seem more reasonable! Megadrive cartridges still command prices of £30+, and even if you do manage to find some in a shop, there is unlikely to be much of a choice. In our local HMV, they have three (count 'em) SNES titles, Kirby Dream Land at £40, DK Country 3 at £50 and Super Mario World (the first ever SNES game) at £20. It seems that most alternative machines are suffering the same fate in highstreet stores. The best Gameboy selection I could find in the entire shopping centre was six titles, and that included a "Best Resturant Guide", covering a small area in central America! The only thing that this undersupport can do is make the N64 look like it has a good software selection!

I suppose what I am trying to say is that these machines are now as good as Retro. Let's face it, if you collect Gameboy or Megadrive, then you probably pick up your games in second hand shops, exchange shops or car boot sales, exactly the same places you find classic machines and games. Nintendo and Sega have both given up on their older machines, so its about time the high street did too. The possible exception being the Gameboy, which keeps hanging on in there despite everything, though it is strange that the few titles left available for it include retro classics like missile command and Galaga. Maybe its time Nintendo released its handheld SNES rumoured so many years ago, at least we would have three more games to choose from!

COLLECTORS DIRECTORY

Just when you thought that good old Retrogames had defined its format till the millenium, we go and introduce a new feature! Believe it or not, I get many letters asking for lists (of course I don't print those sorts of letters in the letters page as they are often duller than the rantings I scrawl when introducing a new feature) Obviously, filling seventeen pages with lists of games would result in a very dull magazine, so unlike our American rival, Digital Press, I will dedicate just half a page an issue to collating the definitive directory of every software title available for a particular format, and to start we take a look at the Acetronic. The details are taken from a catalogue supplied with the UK machine, and completes the range as of 1981, though I do know of several other cartridges. If anyone out there can fill the gaps, (not Radofin or Prinztronic) I will update the list in a future issue. If we carry on like this with each machine, we will complete the directory by the year 2010!

| CART | TITLE | PUBLISHED DESCRIPTION |
|------|-------------------|---|
| 1 | Olympics | 60 Games including Ping Pong, Tennis, Volleyball, Basketball, Hockey, Breakthroug & Knockout. (supplied with console) |
| 2 | Grand Prix | 10 Action driving games from Grand Prix through Rally and Track Racing. |
| 3 | Black Jack | For 1 or 2 players - Superb graphics - Las Vegas Rules. |
| 4 | Tank/Plane Battle | 26 Action games with planes, tanks, and numerous battle strategies. |
| 5 | Air/Sea Attack | 20 Games of naval warfare using depth-charges, missiles and submarines. |
| 6 | Shooting Gallery | 64 games to test duckshooting and big game hunting prowess. |
| 9 | Challenge | 14 games, super party games where object is to get four noughts or crosses in a row. Compelling action. |
| 10 | CodeBreaker | 24 Games, video tests of logic, superb mental challenges. |
| 11 | Supermaze | 24 games, 16 different mazes through which player(s) have to pass and find an exit in the shortest time. Sub games include Cat & Mouse. |
| 12 | Horse Racing | 16 games, tremendous animation, 16 different steeplechases up to grand national standard |
| 13 | Circus | 14 Skill testing circus acts. |
| 15 | Soccer | All action eleven a side game. |
| 17 | Musical Games | 8 variations, write your own tunes and follow the leader. |
| 18 | Treasure Hunt | 16 Variations on two themes, flag flag capture and concentration. The gripping strategy game. |
| 24 | Othello | 8 Variations of the flipper arcade game. |
| 25 | Pinball | 16 Variations of this pub and arcade game. |
| 27 | Invaders | |

Acetronic Game Owners Club

Your chance to join ~ FREE

The ACETRONIC Game Owners Club is an exclusive club in which membership is restricted solely to ACETRONIC owners and their families. Membership is entirely FREE.

The objects of the Game Owners Club are to:

- provide advance notice of new cartridges.
- give members and their families advice on how to increase their enjoyment of their ACETRONIC TV Entertainment Centre.
- obtain suggestions on how to develop playing skills, in home tournaments etc.
- ensure you get the best possible use out of your ACETRONIC TV Entertainment Centre.

ACETRONIC is completely new. By succeeding in the Game Owners Club now, you will become a Family Member and your children will automatically become Acetronic Members. Hence today, membership is completely FREE!

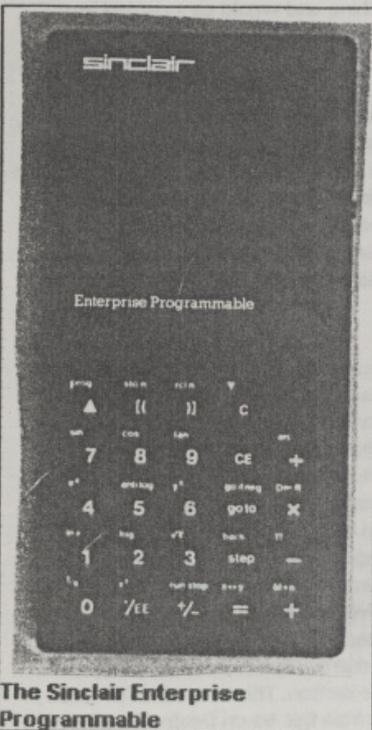
To take advantage of this unique opportunity complete the form below and forward to:

The Secretary, Acetronic Game Owners Club, P.O. Box 83, Wrexham, CH1 2JH.

RETROFACTS

FORMAT TO WRITE FOR

It says something about the state of today's market when a major Japanese games producer chose to write for a UK format. Hudson are probably more famous for the Bomber Man series rather than their excellent range of PC Engine games, but the veteran Japanese games company started out writing for the good old Spectrum. Imported titles like Bubble Busters and Stop the Express were released through Sinclair's own software label, with Stop the Express achieving considerable sales. The super tough arcade game has you leaping from carriage to carriage dodging oncoming obstacles and defeating tricky enemies. A highly addictive and innovative product which can now be seen as an early indication of the great games Hudson went on to create.



The Sinclair Enterprise Programmable

SINCLAIR HERITAGE

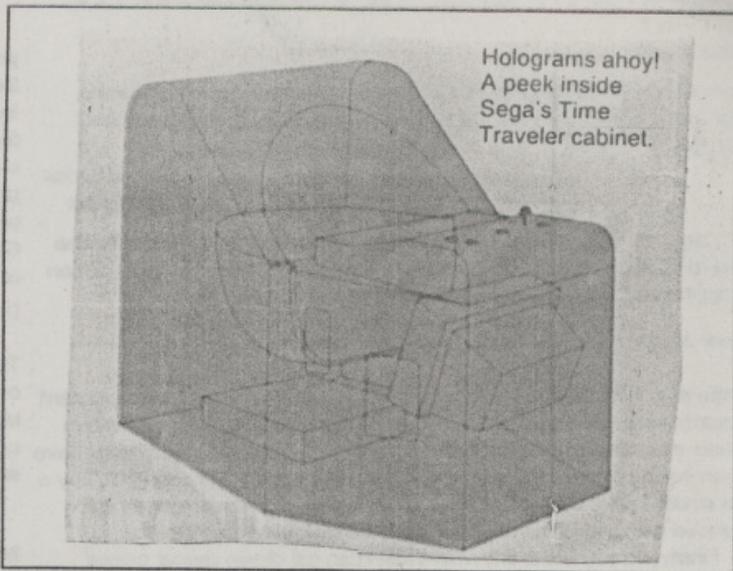
This little beauty is one of many prequels to the highly desirable ZX80. While it may look like an ordinary calculator, it is in fact a highly intelligent mini computer, capable of giving information on a variety of subjects from Physics, Engineering and Electronics to Statistics and Finance. The machine comes in a package along with three very thick manuals, a power supply, and even your very own Sinclair felt tipped pen. Released at the bargain price of £25, the machine is now one of the most desirable Sinclair collectables available.

CDTV BEATER

Commodore arch rival Atari did not take the threat of the CDTV lying down. The CDST was announced on the same day Commodore released their ill-fated machine. The CDST was to halve the price of the CDTV, while retaining ST compatibility. When the CDTV crashed, the CDST was quickly dropped, but it is believed that two finished CD games still exist for this super rare prototype machine.

JAPANESE SUPER-AMIGA

You guessed it, yet another Amiga story, this time courtesy of Thomas Holzer. Back in August 1989, Japanese electronics manufacturer, Sanyo, began work on a prototype of the world's first Amiga, with a CD Rom drive. The machine resembles an Amiga 2000, with the obvious addition of the drive. It is thought that the machine was developed to help push the Amiga into the Japanese games market. At the time, NEC's PC Engine was relying on CDs for its greatest software titles, and it made sense for the Amiga to go the same way. However, rather than change the operating system, and doctoring existing software, a la CDTV, Sanyo simply added a CD drive to the existing system, creating an instant new format, one that Japanese games companies like Konami and Capcom would be used to. Unfortunately, the machine never got past the prototype stage, but for CBM, success in Japan was a good dream while it lasted.



Holograms ahoy! A peek inside Sega's Time Traveller cabinet.

THE FUTURE IS DEAD

Hands up who remembers Sega's hologramatic arcade machine, Time Traveller. Ok, you can put your hands down now because I am going to tell you about it anyway. The most interesting fact about the machine was that it did not use holograms at all. Instead, images are beamed onto a Parabolic mirror, which while sounding like a cop out, actually gives a fantastic impression of solid objects walking around in thin air.

The game, Time Traveller, was not so revolutionary, being a typical "Dragons Lair" style interactive adventure, not a type of game Sega would usually develop, and the eventual downfall of the entire system.

As all gamers know, it takes more than a gimmick to make a good game, and Time Traveller's shoddy game framework becomes apparent after only a couple of plays. Thanks to this lack of gameplay and the cabinet's high price, the machine was a major flop, putting pay to any future developments for the format. There is no doubt that if Sega had used the technique to produce even a simple interactive experience, maybe a hologramatic updated version of Space Invaders, or even a block related puzzle game like Klax, then it would have rocked the arcade world.

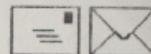
I recently found a machine in an aging arcade, and after playing one game for old times sake, stood back to watch. It was amazing how many people came over to the machine and put their hand into the screen, trying to grab the game characters. That kind of attraction to a machine is something Sega should never have decided to ignore.



A+CD-ROMの超マシン 開発されていたのだ!!

DIGAMEで海外のゲームを紹介してけど、そのほか、A+CD-ROMのゲームなんだよね。このAMIGAは、ハードウェアも素晴らしいし、それ用に発売されるソフトもゲームとしても面白いものばかりっていうモニターマシン! AMIGAには、セガ、タイトー、コナミ、カプコンなどのメーカーが様々なアーケード機を移植してるのだ。そのAMIGAをベースにCD-ROMを移植したスーパー3本で作られているっていう情報が入ってきた。さっさと見てもらったのが、この「CD-X Viewer」だ! ROMを作ったというセンチュリサーチセンタの。このマシンは、ここで作っているCD-ROMを移植している機種として作られたもので、例えばデパートのプレイステーションなんかにも使えるように開発されたものなのだ。おとうさんがいらした中村さんも、親自身がアメリカ駐在中かIAファン。始めは、中村さんを中心とするスタッフの方がかんたんで作っていたところ、三洋電機が製作協力、また、AMIGAの開発者、米コモドール社も、このマシンを見て全面的に協力して、とになったんだって。

Dear Retrogames



Dear Jason,

I have been unable to get any colour or mono printer cartridges for the Commodore IP3300 Printer. Do you know of anyone or anywhere that I can get them from.

David Parker
Middlesex

Ok, so its a dull letter to start off with, I can't help who get to the top of the pile. If anyone has any spare cartridges for sale, or can help, let me know and I will pass on your details.

Dear Jason,

Hope all is well, the retro-scene seems to be holding steady. You just can't seem to keep good games down, regardless of their age! I have written some more articles and will be sending them soon, as the main thing I have been making plenty of time for is my N64. No, I wasn't daft enough to buy a UK model, I got a US version back in November. I have never been so pleased with a machine as I have with the N64, Long Live Nintendo!

Finally, do you know anywhere that I can get cheap Jaguar games from? They are getting harder to find all the time.

B Cassidy
Cheshire

You don't have to tell me how good the N64 is, I am a dedicated Nintendo fan already. As for Jag carts, I think we could be in the middle of a very special happening. With the machine's swift switch from state of the art to retro collectible, we have two markets fighting for the same software. Normal gamers who got stung by Atari, and are desperately trying to find games to play on their new white elephant, and Atari fans hoping to complete their collection in record time. The result of all this leaves the Jaguar with some of the rarist and most valuable cartridges while still in its comparative infancy. The only oasis in the software drought is Telegames, but as the only retailer left carrying Jaguar cartridges they are taking full advantage of the situation. Jaguar cartridges dearer than N64 carts, who would have thought it. Let's hope I manage to secure some Jaguar stock for Retrogames before too long.

Dear Retrogames,

I have just finished reading your Issue 8 (the first issue I have seen) and I must tell you that I wish I had read every issue from number one.

Anyway, I thought I would let you know why I decided to have a look at one of your issues after seeing the advert. I am 30 years old and I was not a "Speccy" in the eighties, though I did have a ZX81, and I did not have an Atari when they first hit, but since the Megadrive first arrived, I suddenly found myself drawn towards GAMES. I bought a Megadrive, Mega CD, and loved them. I went on to buy an Amiga CD32 and was totally hooked. Since then I have got a MD 1&2, CD2, Sega 32X, SNES, NES MS 1&2, 3DO, Jag, PSX, Saturn, N64, as well as my handhelds, Lynx, Game Gear and GB. The list does not include the Retromachines that I have been gathering for the last two years that now exceeds 60 machines and is still growing. My latest addition being an MSX which I bought yesterday from a boot sale. The full list also includes some Pong Variants, some weird and wonderful.

I would also like to say that I have had a lot of help from the gaming companies, Namco sent me load of Promo gear, so did Sega and EA. Also my local Electronics Boutique stores.

Well, my ambition is to create a "Games Museum" which will be in a brick outbuilding I have in my garden. The first photos should be ready in about two or three months time. Naturally I will send you some pictures, and a list of my full collection once I have compiled it. Have you any ideas on insurance? This is my next worry.

Anyway, I just thought that I would drop you a line and let you know that Retro lives, and keep up the good work.

Steve Lucas
Farnborough

No doubt many of your friends and family think you are mad. If I was down the pub and told my mates that I was opening a museum in my garden they would twist my happy sacks till I couldn't breath. Unlike those people, I think it is a brilliant idea, and would be grateful if you could keep us up to date with your

progress. Be careful though, you could end up with three hundred hungry retro fans knocking on your door. As for insurance, being solely responsible for pushing Vectrex prices from a tenner to £400, I am not the best person to ask. In reality, classic machines are only really worth what an individual is prepared to pay for them. The only guide is availability, ie: it would be a lot harder to replace a Colecovision than a Spectrum. Good luck with the project, and I am sure I speak for the majority of the readers when I say that I can't wait for your photos.

Dear Jason,

The reason for this letter is to ask you or your readers if they have heard of a particular console that I have acquired. Its an Optima 600 licensed by Magnavox (Japanese?). I have no instructions and no cartridge. I have completely no knowledge of this machine and would be indebted to anyone who has any information on this machine.

Mark Hula
Bristol

Magnavox are famous for releasing the first ever home console, the Odyssey in 1972. The American company went on to release the the sequel, Odyssey 2 in the States, which was rebadged the Videopac by Philips for release in Europe. To be honest, I have no knowledge of any related machines released in either the UK or the US. If anyone can help, please write to the usual address. (How about a photo in the meantime Mark)

Dear Jason,

I have just read my first issue of Retrogames, and it's exactly what I was after, a fascinating, unpretentious read. You have good taste as well! Forbidden Forest is a brilliant game for the C64 is a brilliant game on the C64, and anyone who rates Space Duel has my video game respect.

I'm also lucky enough to work with old and new video games and computers. I work in a special care centre for adults with profound physical and/or mental disabilities. I've built a few adaptors for Atari Joystick port machines (and a Playstation), allowing people to play video games, create computer art/music, run light shows, control a music CD, even if they can only operate one switch at a time.

On Atari VCS Combat bi-planes, I may put one switch to steer the rudder down with fore locked on for one person (3 small planes), and a joystick (but fat plane) for a more able person. This sets up a fair game, and people have gained as much fun from this as on Destruction Derby on the Playstation.

A Boast? Have you seen the excellent Microsoft Arcade for PC Windows? The history of the games documents are worth reading but I was amazed at the Battle Zone text. The programmer mentions recieving a letter from a fan, saying that his friend kept going in one direction towards the volcano and finally reached it, and found a castle inside. I am 99% that this was my letter, although I can't prove it. I remember writing a lot to Atari in the early 80s when the VCS has an official fan club, and I do remember writing such a letter (83 or 84). Yes it was bullshit, I was very young.

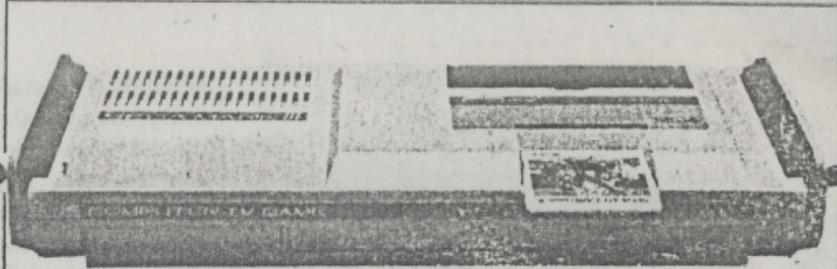
I have colourspace for the Atari 800, and very good it is too. It was tape only, but my copy is on disk (I made a donation to Llamasoft for the instructions). It is miles better than the C64 version (psychedelia) with much better colour and effects and you can have two people using it at once. Co-incidentally, last week I set up 8-bit colourspace with a control splitter for a severely disabled man, as a joystick trainer. The home asked me if I could help this man learn how to control an electric wheelchair, before they could get the go ahead to buy one, so all this stuff gets used somewhere.

Barrie Ellis
Essex

It must be very rewarding to give people the ability to interact with games for the first time. It's amazing to think that there are still such ideal applications for classic machines and games. Thanks for your letter, but next time you write, can you make it a cheeky one like the one you sent to Atari. I remember on Pole Position, if you took a turn onto the grass after the seventh Namco sign, the track turned to mud, and after around two minutes you could see a small town coming over the horizon....

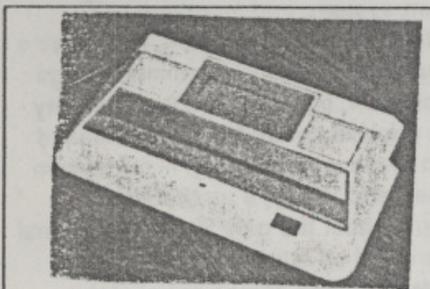
SEGA AGES!

One thing that gets harder with each issue, is finding decent research on rare machines. Sega's early consoles were briefly covered in last issue's Super Rare, but the pictures left most of us (including me) hungry for more. Enter regular Japanese reader (and top man at Namco), Yasayoshi Machida. Thanks to his brilliant research, I can now help put together some of the pieces, and shed more light on Segas early series of innovative, but highly unsuccessful consoles.



SEGA MARK 3

It all started with the SG 1000, Sega's first stab at the console market in 1982. Atari were at the height of their reign over the console market, and with the VCS and its competition threatening to take over the market, Sega acted quickly to get a machine into the shops. The result was an under-powered, under supported console, which did little to impress the Japanese games player. With its central cartridge slot, and simple button lay out, it is not difficult to see which console Sega were trying to imitate. Details of the games released are sketchy, but it seems Sega did not cash in on their own hot licences (Zaxxon, Carnival), but still continued converting them to rival machines. While the SG 1000 did little to impress Japanese gamers, Sega were determined not to let the machine die.



SG - 1000

In 1984 the SG-1000 spawned a bigger and better sequel. The SC-3000 had a faster processor, more colours, better sound, and a more stylish look. According to two sources, the SC-3000 remained backwards compatible with the SG-1000, meaning that the few loyal fans Sega had made could still play their older games on the machine. The cartridges are similar to VCS carts, and thought to hold games of 4k - 8k in size. Software was still not Sega's priority. With shoddy ports of VCS style arcade classics, Sega failed to cash in on their biggest asset, and Sega classics like Zaxxon and Carnival failed to make it onto the 3000, despite Sega converting them to the machines rivals. On the brighter side, the machine had a very impressive range of peripherals. Considering Sega helped design, and released the only game for Coleco's Steering Wheel module, it is perhaps unsurprising that the 3000 version looks almost identical. The same can be said of the similarities between Coleco's Supersketch and Sega's own "Graphics Board". There were more innovative peripherals however, namely the BH-400 Yolk, and SJ-300 arcade style joystick which more than resembles Sega's later Megadrive efforts. Even at this point it is clear that Sega had very little faith in the success of their new console. Their range of peripherals were made to be MSX compatible, which while highlighting the success of the MSX range in Japan at the time, also represents a desperate attempt to guarantee sales of Sega hardware. While the SC-3000 compared well with the Colecovision, it's lack of power and software support was to become evident when Nintendo's fledgling Famicom started to gain momentum. It would take more than a steering wheel and a handful of average games to halt Nintendo's imminent market domination.

SC-3000



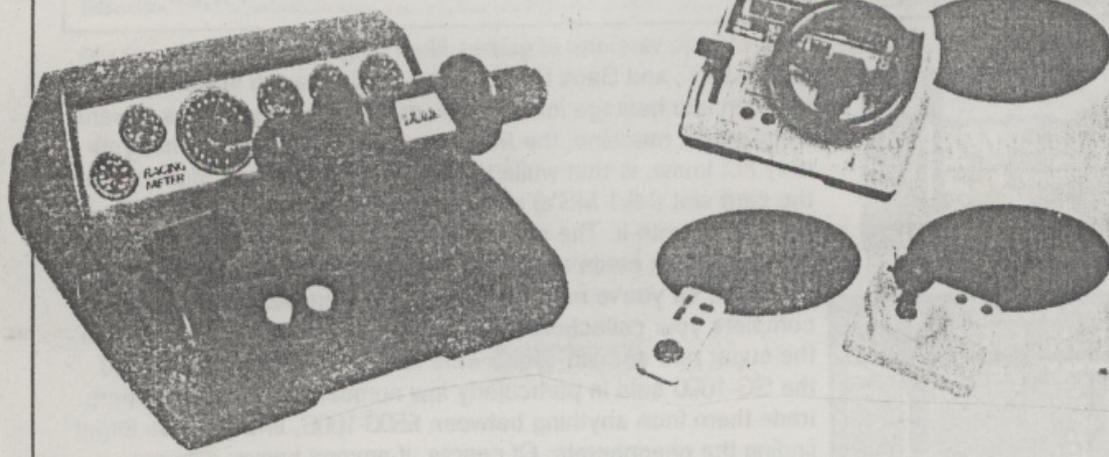
Only months after the 3000s release, Sega released the Mark 3. The mark three may look very similar to the 3000, but marked a whole new direction in Sega's marketing strategy.

In design terms the Mark 3 was hardly a huge step forward. Joystick ports were moved from the side to the front, additional venting and a raised ledge above the expansion port complete the aesthetic alterations.

The notable addition is a simple slot. Sega produced the first ever console capable of holding its software on wafer thin cards. At this time in history, the thought of having your games on thin slithers of plastic was remarkable in itself. Cards could hold an impressive 32k of memory, and Sega even released games with shared memory, 32k for the game, and 2k of writable RAM for keeping scores or game

SC-3000 PHERIPHERALS

ジョイスティックシリーズ



SEGA AGES!

SEGA'S ORIGINAL FULL PAGE MK3 ADVERTISEMENT

ソクソクするね、未体験ワールド。

コンピュータ、テレビゲーム

自慢の機能でグッと興奮
先進のゲームマシン

セガ マーク III

positions. The mark three also continued the backwards compatible ability, meaning that all 3000 cartridges were not redundant despite the machines very short life. Though technically the 3000 and Mark 3 were the same, Sega had been carefully judging the rest of the competition, and in line with the booming Japanese MSX market, and similar efforts in the US, the Mk3 was the first Japanese console - computer hybrid. The SK-1100 was Sega's ultimate peripheral. A computer keyboard, expanding the machine in a similar way to the Intellivision Keyboard, Coleco Adam system, and prototype VCS keyboard. The range of add-ons didn't stop at a keyboard, there was a printer and tape recorder. The thought of loading a game into a Sega console by tape is almost laughable now, but in 1984 it was a reality. To maintain the Mk3's image as a credible computer, Sega released Home Basic, a simple language to teach programming. A full version of Basic for the more advanced user, and Study, a maths/stats homework helper, destined to be just about the only Sega educational title to ever be released. Programs could be stored on tape, or even on blank "Epmycard" ram cards. At this point, things get sketchy again. We know that Sega released it's peripherals to work with the MSX, but it is also possible that the Mk3 was also an MSX compatible. Where's your proof I hear you cry! Well, one of the first games available for the Mk3 was Konami's Track & Field, and judging by the screenshot, it looks pretty accurate and almost identical to Konami's MSX version. Konami were also well known for sticking with the MSX format, and not supporting other machines. Either they converted the game as a one off tester, or the machines, if not compatible, are remarkably similar allowing for very easy conversion.

There is another rather strange peripheral for the Mk3, the

telecon pack is a mini radar disk that sits on top of your television, beaming an infra-red signal into a unit which plugs into the console, allowing you to use the machine without connecting it to the TV. The downpoint is that it looks absolutely awful.

With the Mk3 Sega started to invest more effort into its games, while being aimed as an all round family computer, Sega did not want people to forget that underneath it was a games machine.

TELECON PACK
テレコンパック (別売 ¥4,000)

DREAM SET UP, OR WHAT!

家庭用テレビ

SJ-300M
ジョイスティック
¥3,000

セガ マーク III

R-1000
テープレコーダ
¥9,800

SK-1100 ¥13,800

SH-400
ハンドルコントローラ
¥4,000

SP-400
4カラープロットプリン
¥39,800

With classic versions of games like Hang On, Choplifter, Zaxxon, Bomb Jack, and Bank Panic, Sega finally started investing some of its arcade heritage into it's new machine. The progress towards Sega's next machine, the Mastersystem, is obvious. What you may not know, is that while the MS returns to a cartridge format, the card slot (Mk1 MS's) means that Mk3 games are actually compatible with it. The reverse however is not true, and Mastersystem cards are incompatible with the Mark 3.

Right, so you've read the article, and you want one of each to complete your collection! Well I am afraid that all three remain in the super rare domain. None were released outside Japan, and the SG-1000 sold in particularly low numbers. Japanese gamers trade them from anything between £500-1000, and you can forget finding the peripherals. Of course, if anyone knows different.....

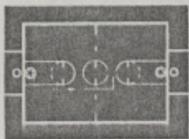
KING OF HANDHELDS

The cartridge based handheld is something that gamers of today take for granted. The majority of us have either a Gameboy or a Lynx tucked away for long journeys or those dull Christmas family gatherings. Well despite the format's rise in popularity in the late eighties, the cartridge handheld stems back to the very roots of the gaming revolution.

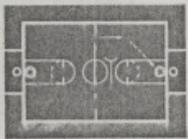
The year is 1979, and Japanese toy giant Tomy, inspired by the huge success of cartridge based home console systems, decide to experiment with a cartridge based handheld. The result was a shoddy LED sports game with an interchangeable screen, letting you play either Tennis or Football. Though this machine was not exactly going to set the world on fire, it was enough to get many major players starting work on the ultimate cartridge based handheld. In Europe, Grandstand modified Tomy's machine,



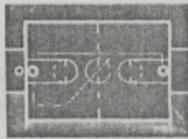
BASKETBALL



Knock the ball loose...



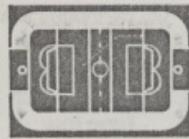
...set picks...



...fast break and lay-up to score!

SCORE

HOCKEY



Rebound off the boards
...loose puck...



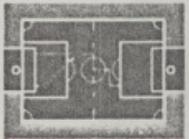
...pass it behind the goal...



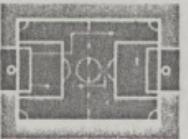
...slap in the puck to score a hat trick!

SCORE

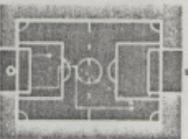
SOCCER



Lead pass...work the ball downfield...



...defend man-to-man...



...breakaway to score!

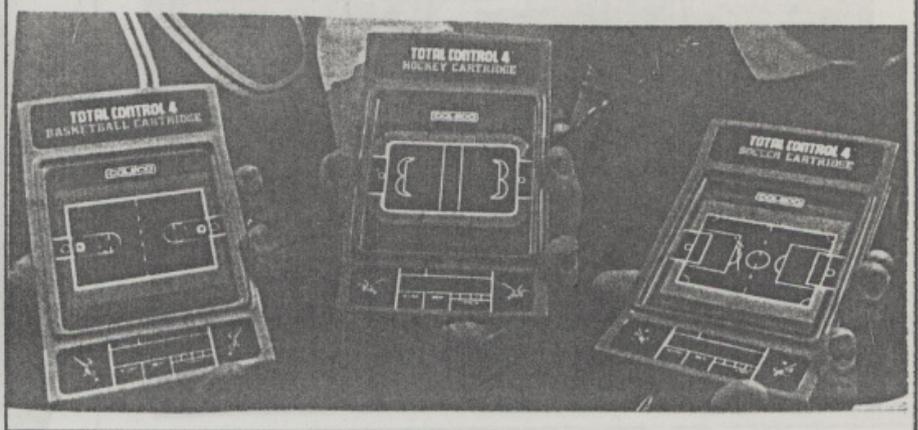
SCORE

Mattel made their own version, and even Tandy released one, which neatly stored the spare screens in its casing. The best of the LED bunch however was to come from Coleco. Enter the Total Control 4. Coleco obviously realised the benefit of an exclusive cartridge market, and were the first manufacturer to release their games separately from the machine itself. As you can see from the picture above, the TC4 is a smart looking unit. Realising that computer AI of the time left little to challenge, the machine was aimed as a two player sports simulator. The problem with LED is that any detailed graphics have to be etched into the screen itself, so the TC4 uses simple red dots to make up its image.

The additional cartridges were all released in a pack together, and though they look to be simple screen overlays, there is a connecting strip on the under side which interfaces the new game code. To be honest, the games offer very little variety.

The joystick offers pretty unresponsive play, and action is far from hectic. Each game offers simple variations on the ball and tackle theme, with tackling serving only to bounce the ball in the opposite direction. It doesn't take much to realise that you need more than different artwork overlaying the screen to produce a different game. That is not to say that the TC4 wasn't an important development. Machines preceding it had not altered the specification of each game at all, simply overlaying new play area features.

The problem was technology. LED simply could not handle the intricate detail required to produce different games. The result meant that the only way a company could market the games its system was capable of, was to call them sports. By the end of 1979, technology had moved on a level, and one of the games industry's true innovators prepared to shock the handheld market.



KING OF HANDHELDS



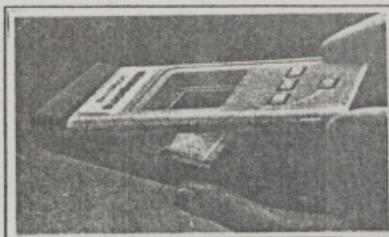
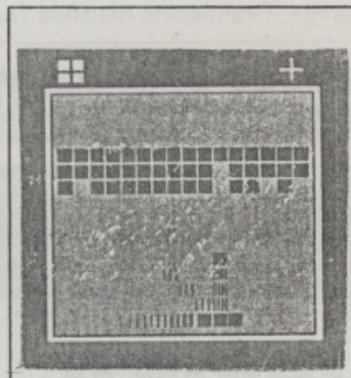
The Original US Microvision

The MB Microvision represented as much of a leap forward as the Atari Lynx eight years later. MB had created the first ever LCD pixelated screen cartridge handheld, and were set to take over the market.

Microvision cartridges make up the entire front of the machine, complete with overlaid perspex screen and game controls. Another revolutionary development was the machines unique analogue paddle controller, allowing for accurate control over game sprites, and once mastered gives a tremendous feeling of ability. The supplied Blockbuster game is a simple, but addictive, breakout clone, but with practise you can place the bat with pin point accuracy. For me, handheld games should always be difficult. Most LCD games require simple learning of set enemy routines, or precise button press timing to complete, or reach the maximum score. Thanks to the remarkable speed of the microvision, along with its vital analogue ingredient, Blockbuster remains one of the most nerve jangling, unforgiving, and ultimately highly rewarding handhelds ever available.

There was around a year between the release of the machine in the US, and its release in Europe. MB had plenty of time to refine the machine, and unlike many other companies, they actually did.

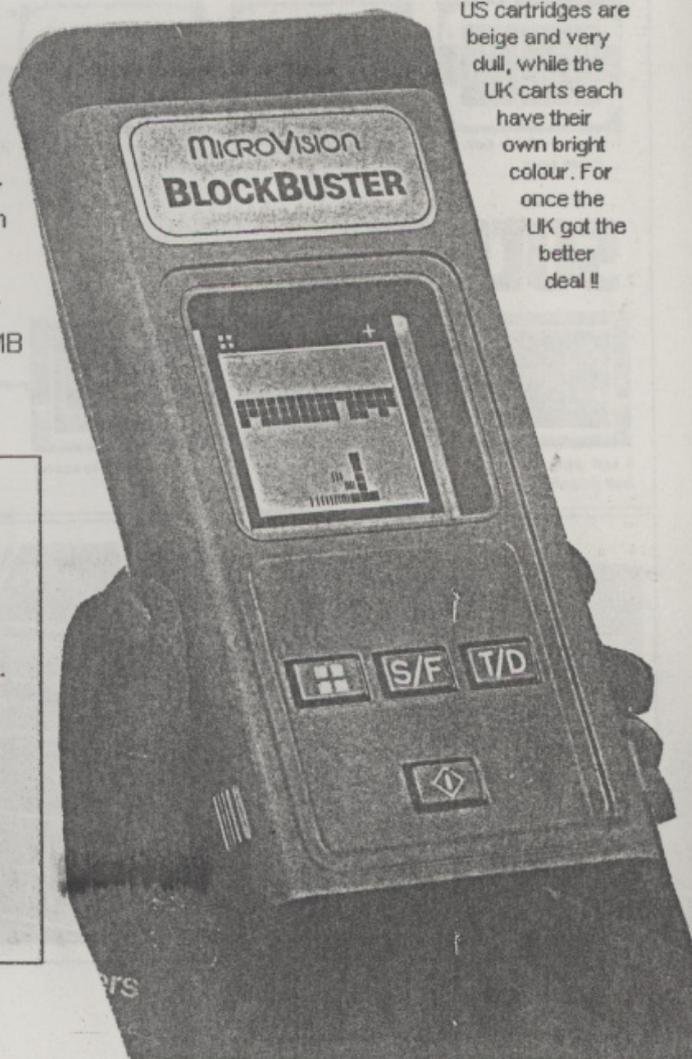
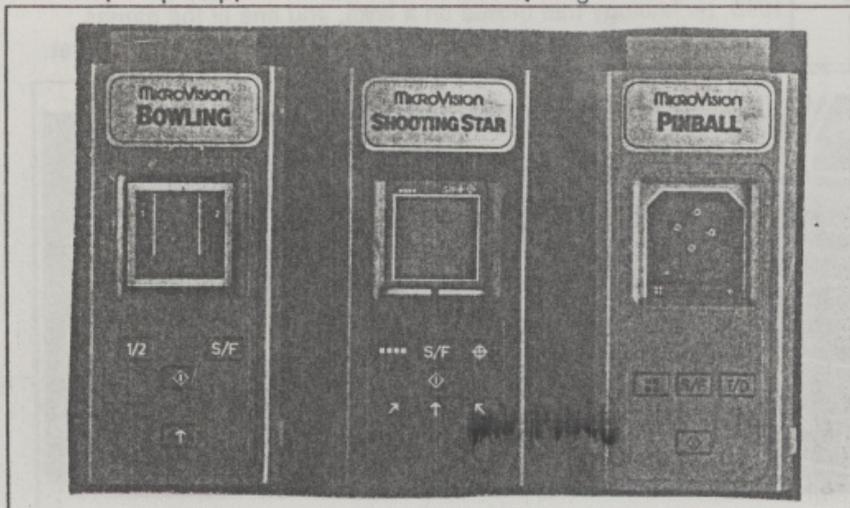
The UK Microvision's main improvement is the removal of the touch sensitive game buttons, replaced with proper plastic levers. While these are far more responsive, they were prone to being snapped out of the cartridge when not in use on the machine. Other improvements include shiny metallic name badges on the games, instead of rather tacky plastic transfers, and a filled paddle knob, with better grip. The machine was also supplied with a rather tacky leatherette pouch, which when used tends to make the machine look quite seedy. The machines screen is made up of a 16x16 grid of pixels, which while incomparable with the screen clarity of a Gameboy, is still perfectly adequate for simple arcade games, and simple arcade games was exactly what the multivision had! In total MB released ten cartridges for its machine, though many of them did not make it over to the UK. In 1979 they released Bowling, Mindbuster, Pinball, Connect 4, Vegas Slots, and the machines only licenced cartridge, Star Trek Phaser Strike. 1980 saw the release of Baseball and Sea Duel, with the machines final releases, Cosmic Hunter and Alien Raiders coming out in 1981. Titles which were definitely



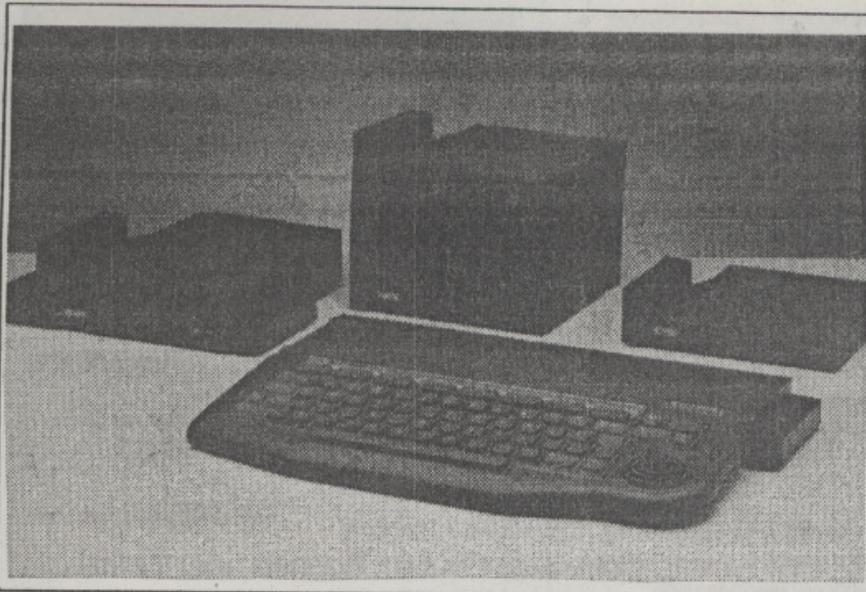
released in the UK were, connect 4, Pinball and Bowling. Star Trek was released here, but renamed Shooting Star. (some thing MB would repeat on the Vectrex, with the Star Trek/Star Ship name change). I know that other games were released into the UK but suspect that they also suffered name changes. In particular

I remember a completely silver cartridge named Space Docking, though it is no doubt the US Cosmic Hunter or Alien Raiders. Of the games I have played, few of the cartridges match the gameplay of the original Blockbuster, though Pinball (which uses the same bat at the bottom of the screen) is excelent. Sadly the MV became undersupported when MB began working on the Vectrex, eventually being pulled from the market years before it should have been dropped. If you ever get the chance to own one, snap it up, as for me it still remains, King of Handhelds.

US cartridges are beige and very dull, while the UK carts each have their own bright colour. For once the UK got the better deal !!



ENTERPRISE ALLOWANCE



Over time the machine became a celebrated piece of "vapourware" and its launch date was put back and back, here is the development story of the Elan/Flan/Samauri/Enterprise:

Following the world wide home computer boom, started in the UK by Sinclair's groundbreaking ZX Spectrum, a giant Hong Kong based trading company called Locumals decided to jump onto the bandwagon. Their plan was shrewd, they knew that in the home computer industry, no-one at the time was more innovative than the British, and so they decided to use this pool of talent, rather than develop it themselves. Anonymously, through the United Commercial Bank, they approached Intelligent Software and commissioned them with the task of developing a totally new home computer.

Within a month, I.S had project D.P.C underway - The D.P.C referred to Damp Proofing Course, a "nom de plume" which was used to side track the curious, in the event of any snoopers having a peek.

Whilst I.S was formulating the innards, Geoff Hollington and Nick Oakley were appointed to create the outward appearance to the machine, and by February 1983 had produced a strikingly different shape. Unfortunately, a lot of the design team's forward thinking was compromised when, later on, I.S. decided on a separate graphic design consultant who dismissed their two-tone grey format in favour of a primary colour coded scheme. Not only did this short sighted decision fly in the face of the growing trend towards more professional-looking computers, but also lead on to an unfortunate set of circumstances when it reached the shops later on.

Although the exterior was suffering from too many cooks, the internals were bubbling away happily. Nick Toop was busy designing a revolutionary "soft" Uncommitted Logic Array (ULA) chip. The square, custom built 72-pin chip was to allow the most flexible colour display of any 8-bit home computer ever made. In unison with the development of the "Nick" video chip, Dave Woodfield was creating a similar square ULA chip, "Dave", giving full stereo sound and the ability to address up to four megabytes of Ram and Rom.

For reasons of costs it was decided to use a rubber mat in place of an individual sprung keyboard, edge connector ports as opposed to sockets and the Zilog Z80A central processor rather than the faster Z80B. Cost was also a reason for the exclusion of an extra ROM chip from the circuit board, which could have allowed the computer a built-in assembler and a more professional word processor.

The marketing wing of the operation was set up at the London office of Domicrest, and Anglo-Indian trading company, which was also involved in the venture by this stage. The first task was to decide upon a name for the company who were to produce this world beating machine and no doubt with an eye to its Far-East origins, the name "Samurai" was arrived at. However, Hitachi started producing a series of computers with that name, so it was back to the drawing board. For a while it was known as "Oscar" but no-one really liked that, and so "Elan" was the name the pre-launch publicity machine centered around. This proved to be the biggest mistake of all, for a software company of the same name took them to court. Whilst all this was going on during 1984, the newly-formed company decided to hedge its bets by naming the computer itself the

Enterprise. Elan Software won the legal wrangle and after a desperate attempt not to lose all the benefits of the previous publicity by calling the company "Flan" (which looked and sounded like Elan) they decided to finally admit defeat dropping this silly name and calling themselves, Enterprise Computers.

Entersoft, the software marketing arm of Enterprise Computers, was set up soon afterwards to ensure (in theory) a free flow of programs from independent software houses and to promote the development of high quality programs designed to fully exploit the enormous potential of the machine.

Before the company's infrastructure had been decided upon, a decision was made to press launch the machine in September 1983, in an attempt to drum up publicity and dissuade possible customers from buying other machines. The computer was launched despite the fact that the IS-Basic language, which had been under development for two years, had yet to be finalised and that the production of specialised chips and manufacture by Crystalate Holdings had not yet been sorted out.

The Enterprise was to go on sale during April 1984, the press and public were so impressed with the specification and the value for money that the then "Elan" computers announced that by early 1984 pre-production orders for over 80,000 machines, worth £20m, had been made. Entersoft planned to have around a dozen programs ready for sale at the same time, and everyone waited with baited breath, which by July 1984 became a sigh, and by December 1984 a yawn - it was late.

Pre-launch publicity is a dangerous business, one must take all things into account before committing oneself to a date, the media was rightfully sceptical of Enterprise Computers' far too optimistic target date and were now busy telling the public "I told you so". Untold damage had been done to the company's image, much of the previous interest had evaporated along with the pre-production orders, by the time the Enterprise finally arrived in any numbers, it was nine months later, January 1985.

The world that the Enterprise launched into was far more hostile than it would have been back in April 1984, the public was far more conservative, critical, cynical and price conscious: the golden years of home computer sales were over. The rival competition was keener also, and although the Enterprise still stood head and shoulders above the rest, it would have proved itself.

Now was the time for the marketing arm to show its true colours - unfortunately these colours were green and yellow. Green because they hadn't put the wasted time to good use. Of the software originally intended at launch date (12 in number), they produced a pathetic third of that figure (4) and instead of an eye-catching machine code point-of-sale display they had only the awful IS-Basic introductory cassette, and yellow because they chickened out of a massive £2.5m advertising campaign through Low Howard-Spink which was planned to start with an initial phase costing £50,000 in late February.

Probably, it was decided during the delay to low-key launch the 64k model and bring forward the 128k model launch. This machine would be more instantly competitive in the market place than the 64k, and the advertising was to be delayed to coincide with its introduction.

Those faithful few who waited from the original launch announcement

Back in the summer of 1983, a battle raged, no doubt it raged in schools across the UK. A battle more fierce than any other before, it made the first world war look like a mild dispute between two apologetic priests.

Which Is Best : Commodore 64 Or Spectrum?

This was certainly happening at my school, and as sad as it seems, friendships were forged or severed depending on what side of the fence you were entrenched. This situation continued for some months, but slowly the battle focus changed to what machine you were going to upgrade to. It was like the old, my Dads bigger than yours. I'll never forget it.....

We were all happily going to spend about £400 of our parents' money on these mythical machines. Me, I was having a Sinclair QL, a couple of my friends were having BBC micros, and one oddball said he was going to have an Elan Enterprise.

He reeled off the specs, 64k, Z80, Built-in joystick. I was impressed. He showed me the first pre-launch photos of the machine. Unfortunately, that sealed it for me, I wouldn't ever buy a computer that looked like a lump of melted plastic!

ENTERPRISE ALLOWANCE

of the 64k machine's arrival were met by an unnecessary 25% price increase (when the competition were lowering theirs) that only helped damn its name even more in the media, who by now were going off the management of the company rather fast.

The folly of this price rise came home to roost when it was admitted that prices had to come down. This coincided with the bungled changeover from high volume manufacture at Welwyn to low volume production at GRI of Perth, Scotland. The result of these two factors was that the trade saw prices drop in the shops whilst manufacturing had, as far as they knew, come to a halt. Everyone presumed Enterprise Computers were going under, all because they charged an unrealistic price to start with and didn't inform the press of the change in production early enough.

Another nail in the Enterprise coffin was the fact that the general public could not tell the Enterprise 64 from the Amstrad CPC464, which arrived (on time) three months earlier. The reason for this takes us back to the colour scheme chosen by Enterprise - if it was a coincidence that both machines looked similar, it was a most welcome one for Amstrad who benefited from most of the Enterprise's pre-launch publicity. If, however, it was by design that the CPC464 was coloured to mimic the Enterprise, shown to the press six months earlier, then Alan Sugar must be given due credit for a marketing masterstroke. Not only did Amstrad gain, but the Enterprise when it arrived seemed from the outside nothing more than a spartan imitation of the Amstrad.

By the time the 128k model was ready for introduction, Enterprise were committed to their colour scheme, far too many 64k machines had been produced by Welwyn Electronics in anticipation of the original demand, and Enterprise were frantically modifying 64k machines for sale as 128ks outwardly changing only the name panel and the joystick knob from green to grey.

The media advertising, when it arrived was a shadow of that first envisaged, during May only £250,00 was spent on press ads promoting the expansion system that didn't exist, and the T.V. commercials promoting the stereo sound when there was no software available to adequately demonstrate it. This sad comedy of errors put the trade right off the Enterprise.

By this time the money was running out, the disastrous launch, legal battles and production delays had all taken their toll. Despite the fact that Enterprise were operating at this stage in 15 different countries, including Eire, France, Germany, Scandinavia, South Africa, and Australia, it was England that accounted for the bulk of all home computer sales outside the U.S. and there was no software there to entice people to buy the computer.

Promise after promise of software never matched the reality - "Forty programs by 1985", "A hundred programs by January 1986".... Unable to persuade software houses to produce dedicated Enterprise programs without the incentive of huge commissions, Enterprise concentrated upon the EXDOS unit which would allow CP/M compatibility and thus, software availability.

By the time EXDOS arrived (February 1986) Enterprise was in distribution difficulties and had to generate sales through mail order and small ads. In a last-ditch attempt to get out of the doldrums, Enterprise approached Dixons with a new machine, the PW360, designed to compete directly with the Amstrad 8256 in the crucial pre-Christmas sales period. For reasons best known to Dixons, the deal dissolved and the decision to liquidate Enterprise Computer Ltd was taken by the United Commercial Bank on June the 18th, 1986, leaving a debt of approximately £8m and were put in the hands of Grant Thornton receivers.

ARTICLE BY KEITH ADAMS - BLACKPOOL



This shot shows just how well endowed with expansion slots the Enterprise 64 was:

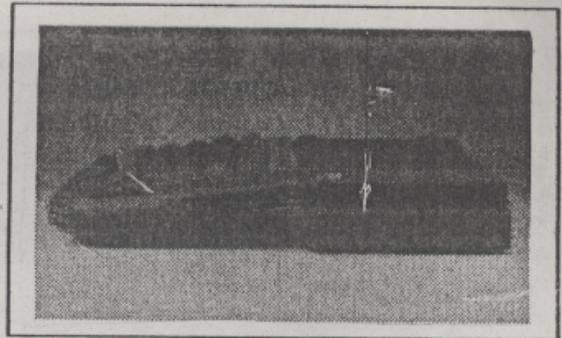
System Reset, 2 joystick ports, Printer, Network slot, Tape deck ports, Monitor output, TV and Power
On the left hand side is a cartridge slot, labelled "ROM Bay" and on the right is an edge connector.

Final note from Keith,

I actually own one of these machines and am intrigued by it. I picked it up in a second hand shop for £1.50 minus the power supply unit. I would dearly love to get the thing working but have no spec details for the PSU. and would like to find some. If you or you know of anyone who can help, please pass the details on to Retrogames, who will pass them on to me.

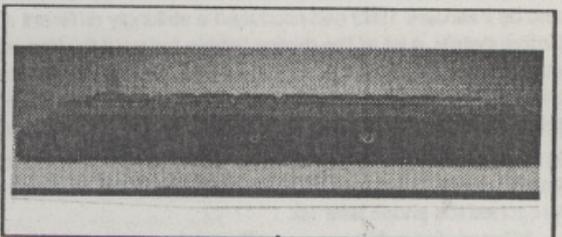
It only remains for me to thank Keith for his excellent debut article, and if anyone has anything to add, then please write to the usual address.

Next issue, Keith delves into the history of the Oric, a machine I recently described as a useless lump of plastic, which I have received several complaints about, so I will rephrase that, "almost useless lump of plastic"



ENTERPRISE SPECIFICATIONS

- Z80 Processor running at 4Mhz
- 64k or 128k RAM Expandable to 3900k
- 256 Colours
- 3 Sound Channels, inc. White Noise Generator
- 84x28 Character display - 672x256
- Typewriter Keyboard
- Parallel Centronics
- RS 423 Port
- Joystick Port
- Monitor Port
- Input Cassette Remote Control
- Output Cassette Remote Control
- Stereo Sound
- Power Supply Connector
- PAL/TV Modulator



the Variation factor

by Luis Troyano



Whilst reading through a recent issue of the Retrogames fanzine I suddenly felt inspired to write an article. But what could I write about? I've been playing and collecting games since the late seventies, yet have no programming or circuit making knowledge. Writing about these subjects are out of the question. It was whilst I was looking through my collection of Spectrum and Commodore games one Saturday afternoon that inspiration hit me. One of the things I love about retrogaming is the pleasure I get from finding a game that I already own - yet it has a subtle difference to the cover design, completely different packaging or even a change to the game code itself. I have no explanation, just theories, to these factors, but would like to tell you about a few of these variations I have in my collection. Let the article begin.....



I'll start off with that old classic Manic Miner for the Spectrum. To date I have four different cover designs, two by Bug Byte, one Software Projects and one as a Mastertronic budget re-release. Granted the latter two are different company releases, but why did Bug Byte have two different cover designs for the same game? Gunship and Solo Flight by Micropose for the C64 also fall into this category, both being released in different packagings on, as far as I know, two occasions. The two versions of Gunship I have are both in large card boxes, the difference being different cover designs (interior manuals are the same). Whereas Solo Flight comes in a large card box as one version released by Micropose and a plastic case issue with a US Gold/Micropose badge on the front in another. The card box is the more elaborate of the two having very similar design and packaging to Gunship. Other releases



ones described are Booty by Firebird (C64), Sprite Man by Interceptor Software (C64) and Football Manager by Addictive (Spectrum). Most are illustrated on this page.



Now onto some more slightly more unusual variations in packaging. I have two variations of Everyone's a Wally by Mikro-Gen. The more traditional of the two comes in a standard cassette box with Hyperload printed in white on the cassette box outer, whilst the other version comes in quite a large cardboard and plastic type affair. The cover designs are identical yet there is no mention of hyperload on the cardboard version. Alchemist by Imagine for the Spectrum was another big hit in the eighties and I have a rather unusual release of it which comes in a standard cassette box - but it is all in metallic Gold including the tape itself (and no it hasn't been sprayed as an afterthought!).



the variation factor continued

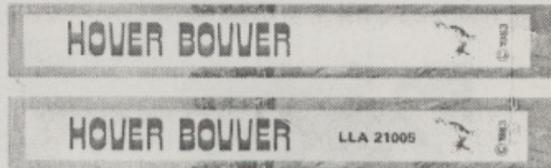
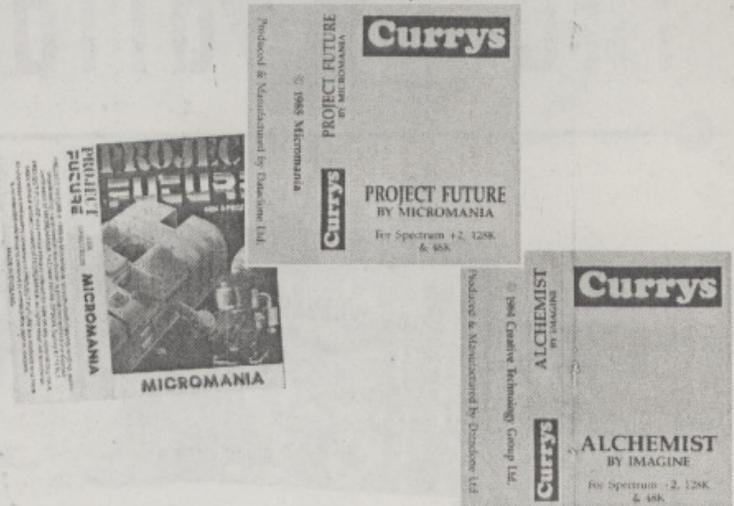
I am sure we all remember the boom of the Spectrum in the eighties and retailers decided to take it upon themselves to sell bundle sets which included games. Unlike today where bundles are merely a console and a few games thrown in, retailers seemed to go to more trouble in the early days. Two examples I have are Alchemist by Imagine and Project Future by Micromania which were repackaged by Currys and from what I can tell were sold with Spectrums at the time. Both are very cheap looking with simplified single colour packaging and bare minimum instructions.

But how far do we take the variation factor? Well, if you are as manic a collector as myself you'll be looking more closely than what I have talked about already. Cassette labels seem to change for the same game and although it didn't seem to happen that

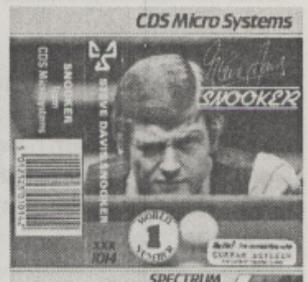


much I have two different examples, which strangely enough are Donkey Kong games by Ocean for the Spectrum. The first is just Kong, one has a white label and the other has a silver one. The second is Donkey Kong, both labels are identical apart from the fact that one tape is labeled Spectrum 48K.128K and the other Spectrum +2. Another slight difference I have noticed is on the sleeve for Hover Bower by Llamasoft for the C64.

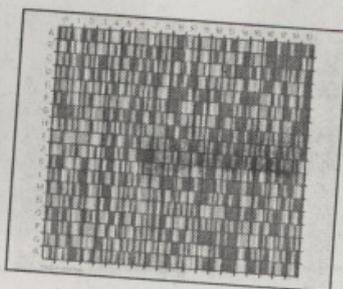
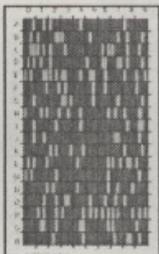
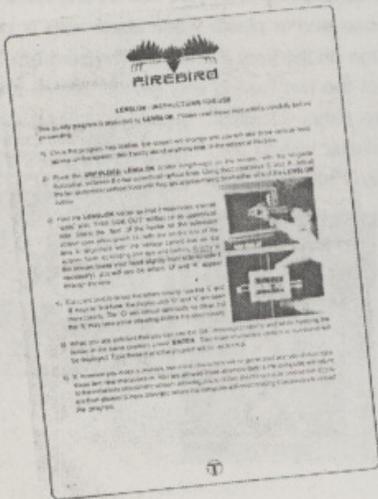
I am quite a big Jeff Minter fan and have most of his games in my collection so I know that most of his C64 games have a code printed on the spine, the one for Hover Bower being LLA21005. Yet I also have a version with no code on it, strange.



Spotting variations in coding itself is slightly more difficult. To date I have only spotted four. The first I'll tell you about is Elite by Firebird for the Spectrum. I currently have two versions of this game, both are in the standard Firebird Elite card box packaging, yet one comes with a dreaded lenslok and one doesn't. The one without loads and runs perfectly well without it, and the one with it has the lenslok coding built-in. I would be very interested in finding out which came first. Was the Lenslok introduced to stop the escalating pirating of this era or was it withdrawn because of its impracticality and cost? Another unusual variation I have is Paradroid (the best game of all time??) by Hewson for the C64. I acquired a tape to taped version of it which labels itself as the Competition Edition once it has loaded and the startup screen appears, there is no sign of this on the original. Does anyone know where this came from? Was it a special edition released on a magazine cover tape as a competition version? I'm sure you all remember the Currah Speech cartridge for the Spectrum, but how many games actually took advantage of it? The only one I have is Steve Davis Snooker by CDS Micro Systems, which has a small sticker on the cover promoting the fact it's compatible with the Currah. Yet I also have a version which doesn't have the coding for the speech unit built-in. Both were released in 1984 and the other difference between them is different coloured tape labels. The last variation I suppose doesn't really count but it's interesting to see that Software Projects decided to put a much larger anti-pirate code system for the C64 version of Jet Set Willy in comparison to the Spectrum version.



So that's about it as far as this article is concerned, I hope you enjoyed reading it and realise what a never ending quest collecting retrogames is. Just when you think a collection is becoming complete variations start turning up. If you do come across any interesting or unusual variations then please let the rest of the Retrogames community know.



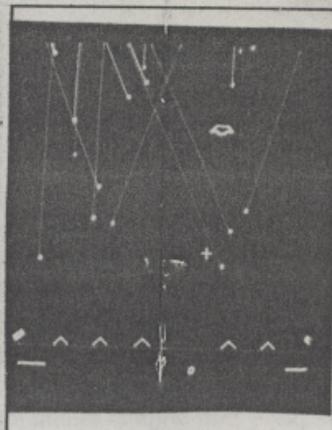
Just when you thought it was safe to go back in the water, Vectrex Crazy returns with reviews of all the latest Vectrex titles. All you Vecy fans will be pleased to hear that this is the first in a three part series, which apart from reviewing the new games, will also reveal yet more unknown facts about the indisputed king of retro machines.

PATRIOTS

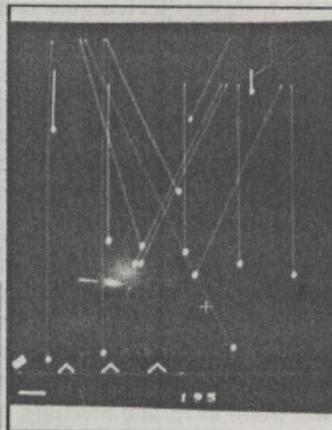
The Vectrex back catalogue is something of a wonder. Official arcade licenses, blatant copies of arcade games, and a handful of original titles thrown in for good measure. Berzerk, Scramble, Asteroids, Pac Man, to name but a few, it is little wonder that the machine is so popular with collectors, as the games often offer the most playable version of the original arcade machine on any home format. Despite this stunning software range, there are a few gaps. One was the lack of a Space Invaders game, which was filled nicely with Vectrex Vaders in 1995. Patriots fills in another important gap, Missile Command.

If there are any readers unaware of the game (Impossible?), this Vectrex version places two missile launchers in the bottom two corners of the screen. In between there is a line of six bases which you must protect. Missiles come in from the top of the screen, represented by a bright pixel and leaving a line trail behind it. Each of your launchers has a set amount of ammo at the beginning of each level, and each fires with separate corresponding joystick buttons. You must guide a cross-hair with the joystick and try to pre-empt the position of the incoming missiles. Press fire to shoot from the nearest launcher, and when your missile reaches its destination, a large ball of fire destroys any enemy missiles in the vicinity. The further into the level, the faster the enemy missiles, the higher the level, the more missiles are dropped on you. Strategy is often required to reserve missiles in each gun, and it is important to retain a high level of accuracy. In addition to all this, enemy space ships come down during levels, dropping more missiles from lower levels. It is also possible to have one of your launchers destroyed, making it very difficult (but possible) to continue.

So, that's what you do, but what's it like? Fans of the genre will find this one of the best available. Blistering pace, frantic action, even the sound effects hail back to the arcade original. There is no doubt that if this had been in the original MB line up, it would have been one of the games to buy the system for. More than just a gap filler, one of the greatest Vectrex games available.

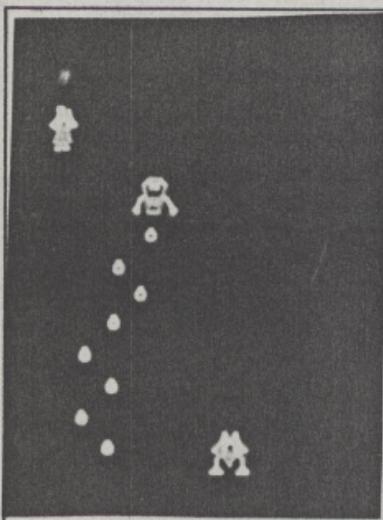


One base gone, it's getting tricky!



Missiles coming from every direction. Time to get busy.

| PATRIOTS | |
|--------------|-----|
| Gameplay: | 91% |
| Originality: | 10% |
| Packaging: | 10% |
| Retrofactor: | 93% |
| OVERALL: | 90% |



SPIKE'S WATER BALLOONS

So the Spectrum has Willy, Coleco has the Smurfs and Atari has Pac Man, the poor old Vectrex got lumbered with Spike. Yes, the character with a voice like Madge Bishop on steroids is back! Spike's water balloons is included on the four game, ALL GOOD THINGS pack. The problem is, Spike's not all good.

This game is very, and I mean very, simple. You are placed at the bottom of the screen, and once again have to rescue your girlfriend. To do this you must catch a load of water balloons being thrown down the screen at you by a nasty monster. To begin with the balloons are thrown in a line formation making it easy to catch them one after another. However, as the levels progress things get more difficult, and you have

to run from one side of the screen to the other, often in some almost impossible attempts to catch the oncoming balloons. If things get too tricky, you can put your hands in the air and bounce off balloons from the side, but this simply flings them back to the top of the screen and makes it even harder when they come back down. If you miss one balloon then you have to start the level again, and there is an annoying pause while the level resets itself. Now if you thought I was going to carry on and tell you more about the game, your wrong, that is it. Admittedly there wasn't much to do in the original spike game, but this psuedo sequel does little to push Spike closer to being the Vectrex hero we all want him to be.

The game is actually smooth and the graphics are detailed, and thanks to the fast speed on later levels there is a degree of challenge. Overall, a very simple game, more like a Game & Watch than a Vectrex classic.

| SPIKE'S BALLOONS | |
|------------------|-----|
| Gameplay: | 36% |
| Originality: | 12% |
| Packaging: | 10% |
| Retrofactor: | 62% |
| OVERALL: | 33% |

WHERE DO THEY COME FROM?

Vectrex fans across the world owe a great deal to legendary games creator, John Dondzila. John's first creation, Vectrex Vaders rocked the retro scene, the news of a new Vectrex title not only did much to aid the machine's rise in popularity, but also filled in a vital omission in the Vectrex library. Riding on this success, John went on to create the phenomenal Patriots, and in the same year completed All Good Things. This four game compilation includes Vectris, a version of Tetris which we will review next issue.

John has now left the Vectrex and moved on to convert more classic games, this time onto the Colecovision. It is not certain whether John will return to the Vectrex, or whether anyone else will start writing software for the machine. One thing is for sure, we should all be very thankful for the six new games he has given us.

The new titles are available on the latest version of Sean Kelly's multi-cart, which includes every other Vectrex title released.

VECFAX

Jeff Woolsey makes a Vectrex interface, allowing connection with your PC. Games can then be coded on the PC and downloaded into a blank cartridge, and run on the machine. New versions of the system are being worked on at the moment, so it shouldn't be long until we get a deluge of new Vectrex titles.

FUTURE BOY

There are two things I get more calls about than any other, first is PC Engine, which we have yet to cover, and second is the Virtual Boy, not even a retro machine yet ?! or is it. Withdrawn in the US and Japan, the VB now joins ranks with the Jaguar, 32X and 3DO. A new breed of retro machines, and even a few games to die for.....

SPACE INVADERS (released in Japan only)

While we are all used to finding Space Invaders games on extinct machines, the game makes a surprising addition to the VB's otherwise "retro-free" software catalogue.

Now if your hoping for a no frills version of the Taito original, you are in luck, and if you are after a super new 3D version your in luck too. This game features in effect, four games. Standard 2D versions of Space Invaders and Space Invaders 2, complete with original sound effects, and identical gameplay. Meanwhile, Virtual Space Invaders and Virtual Space Invaders 2 offer fantastic 3D backdrops and an altered angle of play. The enemy is layed out in a similar way to a typical 3D chess game, invaders moving towards you as well as down the screen. Bonus flying saucers fly across the screen, and then fly towards you in a spiralling 3D motion. The stereo sound also helps to convey the ships movement.

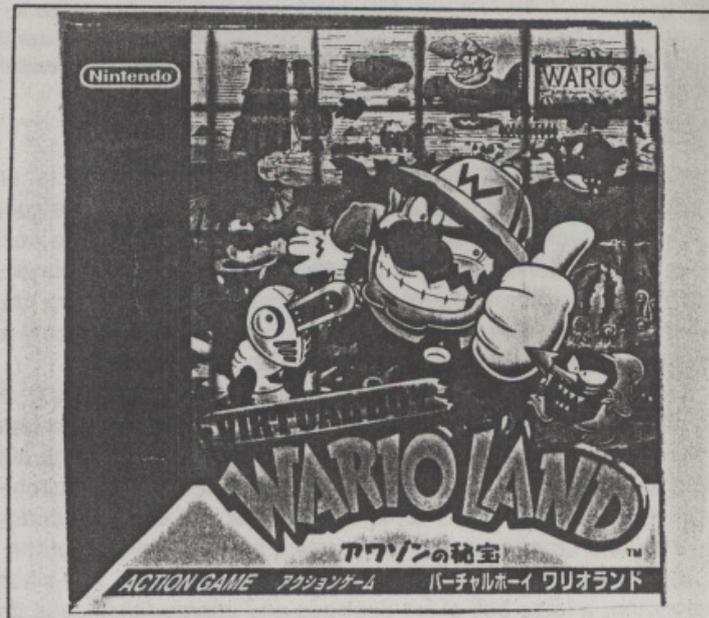
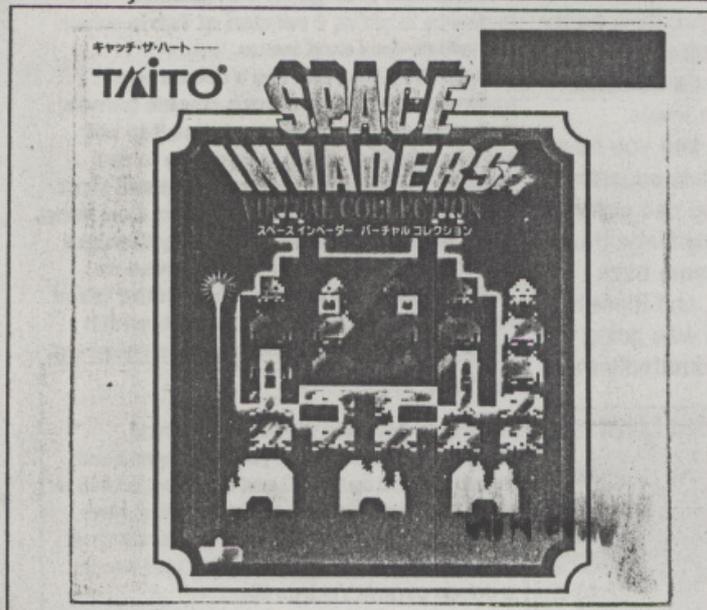
To add an extra element to the classic gameplay, there are two new modes, score attack and time attack, where you play to achieve set targets in strict time limits.

An original Space Invaders game, complete with different scoring modes, 3D enhanced versions, written by the arcade manufacturers and remaining faithful to the original, what could possible be wrong? In a word, the score board. The whole point of Space Invaders in the arcade, was to beat the top score, and that is exactly how you feel playing the VB version. The scores already on the table are high, and it takes dedicated hours to reach the top. Once you manage it, you will have wasted your time. Just like so many classic retrogames, there is no score save. Turn it off and your high scoring efforts are forgotten. This is surprising considering not only the nature of the game, but the vast majority of VB carts which are battery backed.

Despite this flaw, this is the best version of Space Invaders available on any machine, in my view even better than the arcade original (not that I wouldn't love one) and a vital reason to get a Virtual Boy ASAP.

SPACE INVADERS

| | |
|---------------------|------------|
| Gameplay: | 86% |
| Originality: | 54% |
| Packaging: | 78% |
| Retrofactor: | 92% |
| OVERALL: | 91% |



WARIO LAND

Most computer related publications have related the Virtual Boy's lack of success with a lack of quality Nintendo software, the blame being put on the company concentrating its efforts on the N64.

This is a complete load of rubbish. Sure, early Nintendo sourced games like Mario Tennis offered little out of the ordinary and did little to push the VB in the new directions everyone expected. That is not to say that Nintendo were not going to put the record straight....

Wario Land demonstrates what Nintendo do best, platform games. Be it Nes, Snes or N64, it is the genre that sells Nintendo machines. Wario Land continues the exploits of the Gameboy's Wario character, which I have always thought an incredibly uninspired Mario relative. Who's next, Leisure Suit Lario!!! None the less, Wario Land offers typical Mario style platform action, though with far larger and more detailed characters than on the SNES or Gameboy.

The VB offers a brilliant opportunity for games programmers to show off, and Wario Land features a fantastic introduction sequence, complete with 3D special effects.

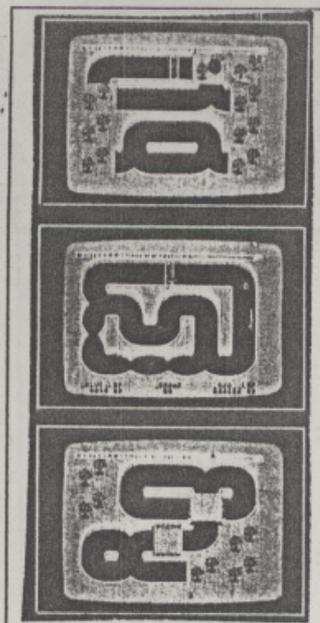
The VB element also comes into play during the game itself. Instead of simply jumping and running along in a straight line, you can change lanes by jumping into the foreground, or into the background. The high resolution means that Wario remains detailed despite being in the distance. The levels are inventive in typical Nintendo fashion. Loads of secret levels and bonus waves, also lots of interesting weapons, mainly taking the form of different style hats, each giving you different magic powers. After finishing a level, you can save your position, choose to play the gambling bonus games, or move on. After completing several stages you are faced with a boss level, these often involve negating an enemy head on in a sort of Space Harrier perspective.

Its not only graphics which impress, the sound is also excelent, with lots of stereo effects. The game is also very long, giving you hours of play, though I have only got to level 7.

Overall, an essential Nintendo classic. If this game had been in the initial VB line up, the machine may well of still been in the shops today.

WARIO LAND

| | |
|---------------------|------------|
| Gameplay: | 87% |
| Originality: | 63% |
| Packaging: | 79% |
| Retrofactor: | 84% |
| OVERALL: | 88% |



CHAMPIONSHIP SPRINT

Super Sprint was always one of my favourite arcade machines, it was kind of a wrist flicking exercise machine. The only way to make those corners was to spin the steering wheel, then grab it at the precise moment when your car was facing the right way. It's sequel, championship sprint was not very common, but featured better power ups, and new tracks. The C64 conversion by Electric Dreams, lacks the essential steering wheel, and therefore plays quite a different game. As a multi-player racing game it seems dated, and as an arcade conversion, the lack of colour

and unresponsive controls leaves the game feeling far from related to its parent. One interesting addition is a track designer, which I remember being very excited about when the game was originally released. These days I have not got the effort to create my own track, and the feature's addition only highlights the lack of any really good tracks in the game.

Overall, a game distinctive only as a bench mark of how quickly some games age.

CHAMP SPRINT

| | |
|---------------------|-----|
| Gameplay: | 29% |
| Originality: | 37% |
| Packaging: | 41% |
| Retrofactor: | 42% |
| OVERALL: | 38% |

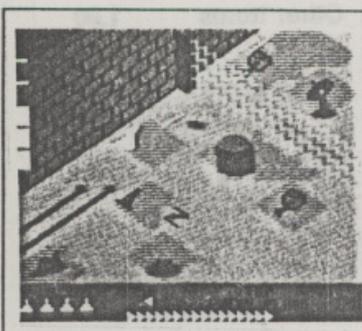
ZAXXON

Zaxxon was absolutely massive in the arcades when released, one of Sega's earliest major successes, and converted to many machines, from Atari 800 and 2600, to C64 and board game, not forgetting the many Spectrum, Oric and Dragon copies. (anyone for a game of Zacksoon?)

The C64 version was programmed by American Synsoft and released in the UK by US Gold. For anyone who doesn't know, Zaxxon is an Isometric 3D shoot em up, similar in style to Scramble, but played from this angle, you have another dimension of freedom to dodge on-coming enemies.

Synsoft's conversion is quite early, written in 1984, and unfortunately it shows. Even the arcade machine isn't particularly speedy, but the 64 version chugs along at a snails pace, often leaving it unplayable. The graphics are colourful, and relatively accurate to the original, and sound is also adequate. As quite often with old games, it comes down to speed, and thanks to poor programming, C64 Zaxxon looks feeble in comparison to the excelent Colecovision version.

Those of you desperate for a decent version of the game



should wait for an official Saturn re-release, which I recently heard rumoured. Till then, keep on chugging!

ZAXXON

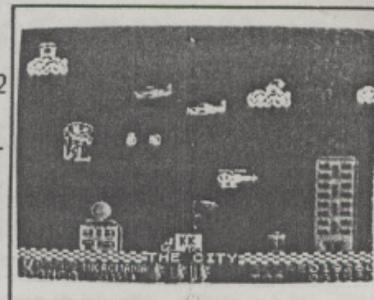
| | |
|---------------------|-----|
| Gameplay: | 29% |
| Originality: | 21% |
| Packaging: | 58% |
| Retrofactor: | 77% |
| OVERALL: | 42% |

KOSMIC KANGA

You've got Kangaroo on the Atari VCS, Roger in Tekken 2 and Kosmic Kanga on the Spectrum. How many Kanga-roo games could you want?

This relatively rare game is one of only two hits by UK software house, Micro-Mania. (the other being Project Future). Despite it's platform game styling, and cute character, the game is in fact a shoot em up. You bounce along the scrolling floor, jumping on buildings, cars, and people, while shooting on coming planes and helicopters. The idea of the game is to reach the end of all of the levels to find your spaceship and fly home.

Released in 1984, the graphics were big bold and colourful and quite ahead of their time. Extra points are awarded for collecting items on clouds, though when playing, you concentrate more on reaching the end of the level than on your score. Instead of the usual missiles or bullets, you fire spinning boxing gloves, which luckily are big enough to take out an aeroplane! Overall the game offers quite a good challenge, decievingly easy at first. Ok, so it's a simple variation on the shoot-em-up theme, with cute graphics, and average scrolling, but I don't care, it's got a Kangaroo twice the size of a double decker bus as its hero, and I like it!



KOSMIC KANGA

| | |
|---------------------|-----|
| Gameplay: | 71% |
| Originality: | 44% |
| Packaging: | 62% |
| Retrofactor: | 77% |
| OVERALL: | 63% |

FAT WORM BLOWS A SPARKY

I have had a half written article on Durell since around issue two, and still haven't finished it. I thought they have been ignored too long, enter one of the craziest titled games in the history of gaming, FWBAS. Firstly, and most important, is the games final tag line on the back of the box, "This game is like, Well Crucial Man", now you can't beat that for hard-sell!

Fat Worm, despite it's title, is a revolutionary game. I am going to stick my neck out and say that this was the first ever top down 3D game. Released in 1985, the game uses filled vectors to produce a detailed 3D area. When you move around, the graphics move with you, giving a 3D effect similar to that found in the new Playstation game, Micro Machines V3. In the game you play the part of a worm, and the game arena is actually the inside of a spectrum. You navigate crucial components like the CPU and Data bus, blasting bugs and searching for the infamous Spectrum Disk Drive so that you can clone yourself, and finally de-bug the system.

When released, this game was so revolutionary that it won countless accolades. Despite this, the games theme and content meant it sold very few copies. Today the game seems very slow, and rather pointless. That is not to say that it is not an important title to add to your collection, it's just not, "Well Crucial Man"



FAT WORM

| | |
|---------------------|-----|
| Gameplay: | 47% |
| Originality: | 92% |
| Packaging: | 78% |
| Retrofactor: | 87% |
| OVERALL: | 83% |

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IF THEY DONT MAKE IT - WE STOCK IT

So, what is hot for collectors this month. Well, I must say that I am staggered by the amount of Atari 2600 software being traded and bought. It highlights a possible change in UK collecting habits, or a change in the kind of readers Retrogames is getting. Back at the beginning, when issue one didn't even list the actual stock, it was Spectrum games that sold like hot cakes, also, many Vectrex machines were sold, and so with them were sold many Vectrex cartridges. By issue four, the situation had changed, C64 became the key collectable format and I had difficulty getting enough stock to match the demand. Almost a year later and things have changed again, C64 sales are slowing down, and this month sees the biggest ever selection. The new hot format is Atari, which has ruled the US collecting scene for many years. In some ways I find this rather sad, I have never made any secret of being proud of UK games, and the formats they were released on. Maybe it is too early to predict the state of the UK market at this stage, you never know, in a couple of months time ZX81 games might be all the rage.

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Where is the Konix Multisystem? Who is Kevin Toms? No1 includes full features on both of them as well as a full hardware analysis on the Vectrex and Colecovision, reviews and retrofacts, the ugly machine hall of fame, and lots more.

RETROGAMES ISSUE 3

Our first serious look at handhelds brings a three page feature on the world of Nintendo Game & Watch, as well as Palitoy's early analogue machines. The first guest article on computer music. Extended C64 heaven and all the usual retrofacts and reviews.

RETROGAMES ISSUE 5

The Acetronic, Radofin and Printronix consoles make their Retrogames debut, and we take our first serious look at the Mattel Intellivision. Most exciting is a three page feature on the ultra rare Vectrex 3D headset, and lightpen. Handheld heaven looks at the official Pac-Man and more Nintendo G&W. + all the regulars.

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RETROGAMES ISSUE 2

Features include - MSX - 3DO of the eighties?, a look at some of the best games on the Vectrex, an in depth study of classic software house Automata, as well as all the usual news, retrofacts, reviews, and our one and only letters page

RETROGAMES ISSUE 4

The worlds first review of the unbelievable Vectrex multi-cart. We also look at games never released in the UK, as well as Tomytronic's 3D handhelds. There are guest MSX reviews, a look at formidable programming house Denton Designs aswell as the usual Retrofacts and news.

RETROGAMES ISSUE 6

Our first look at the Coleco Adam system, and some classic coin-ops. There is a double helping of C64 Heaven and our usual look at classic handhelds. We also take a look at the Lynx and some future rarities like the Sega Nomad and Nintendo Virtua-boy. Specview and Retrofacts complete the issue.

RETROGAMES ISSUE 7

Our biggest ever issue, first part of double feature, Super Rare, including the handheld NES and Vectrex Keyboard. Three page article on Wristwatch games. Full feature on the huge Retrogames Exhibition. First guest US article from the creator of the multi-carts, MSX-Xtra, Lynx reviews, and all the regulars.

RETROGAMES ISSUE 8

Our first feature on the Atari 2600, another look at classic Konami carts in MSX-XTRA, an extended handheld heaven, part 2 of Super Rare includes the infra-red Atari VCS prototype, Intellivision Keyboard, Grundig Interton, and Sega SG3000 consoles, C64 Superstore, Specview, and all the regulars.

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