

THE PRICE **IS RIGHT!**

**SINCLAIR USER'S SMART
GUIDE TO CHRISTMAS**

Seventy buys
—our TOP
10 choices
for...



UNDER £1
UNDER £5
UNDER £10
UNDER £50
UNDER £150

£1
(are we joking?)

Eeh, things ain't what they used to be. Ah mean, a quid don't buy you anything these days, not like when ah were a lad ... **WRONGGGGG!**

For a start, what about a copy of **SINCLAIR USER**? You've had the good taste to buy this issue, and don't you feel better for it? What with all the news, reviews, features and competitions, your Spectrum would never forgive you if you missed a single issue.



Want more suggestions for ways to get rid of those nasty pound coins (other than sending them to the Ed)? Hows about a packet of **Q-TIPS**? Not to clean out your ears (although that wouldn't do any harm) but to treat your tape recorder heads. A clean tape head is an efficient tape head — so 'head' down to Boots today.



On the subject of tape, what do recorders eat for breakfast? That's it — cassettes. Try some of the dead sexy **SHADO** "open-reel" type C15's to make your own programs look like hi-tech marvels.



If you're fed up of forking out for adventure games with 200-page booklets, Posters, guides to the Pixie language and 'Grandfroth the Barbarian' articulated dolls, get back to basics with the **CENTRAL SOLUTIONS** adventures. They're written with The Quill, come in nice simple boxes, and cost — wait for it — 99p each.



Too mean even to buy your own games? Try hiring; lots of outfits like **MIDLAND COMPUTER LIBRARY** will provide a choice from thousands of original titles from as little as 75p. That includes the postage and packing, fact fans.



Blam! Zoom! Bleep! Wobble! Wobble? Sounds like an unsteady Spectrum to me. What you need is a new set of feet, my son.

Did you know that you can get four **STICKY FEET** for £1 from Video Vault? Well, you can, so there.



If you're lost in an adventure or getting zapped in an arcade classic, for just £1 (each, dummy) you can get hold of the helpful **SPECTRUM ADVENTURER'S HANDBOOK** or **ARCADE HANDBOOK** from H&D. Who said the world was cold and uncaring?

Sufferers from Boritis Sinclairien-sis — the feeling that your Spectrum is just a bit too dull in appearance — can jazz it up with transfers from **EDDING**. Try your local stationers for lots of great designs with which to splatter your Speccy.





Did all you non-**MICRONET** subscribers know that you can log on to that scintillating service for four-and-a-bit days for around a pound? We didn't, akchelo!



If those aren't enough ideas for you, there's always **100 PENNY CHEWS** for that "Rambo" look while playing your favourite shoot-'em-up . . .

(sneaky budget software)

< £5



A whole fiver? Now we're talking. £2 spent on a **SINCLAIR ZX MICROFAIR** ticket — the next one is in December — would leave you with enough to splash out on some cheapo software too.



And what a choice! Mastertronic's Prison Planet adventure **TERMINUS**, the witty darts simulation **180**, and the indescribable **ZEB**; Firebird's **MAD NURSE**; the **£2.99 Classics** series. Pick any two and get playing.



Now you'll want somewhere to keep them all. Boogie down to Woolies and check out the Quillgold **CASSETTE BANK**, the all-singing, all-dancing hi-tech storage unit at a mere £4.99. But it only stores ten cassettes — I'd have to buy 50 of them . . .





Dusty Spectrum problems? Put things right with a superiffic £4.95 **DUST COVER** from Saga Systems. 'Course, it will only fit if you own a Saga keyboard — but we'll come to that later . . .



Speaking of coming to things later, how dare you own a Cheetah SpecDrum, (the digital doobrie which gives you perfect percussion at pocket money prices), without getting the extra Latin and Electro **DRUM SOUND SETS** on cassette? They're only £3.99 and £4.99.



Wait a minute, my print-out is getting fainter and fainter . . . if only ribbons weren't so expensive. I know, I'll send my ribbon, be it Epson, Brother, Seikosha or whatever, to **ALLADINK**, and for a pittance (that's two bagatelles, or well under a fiver) they'll re-ink it and send it back, saving me a fortune. (Runs to post office — sends parcel — not long after . . .) Whew! That's better!

Dear Marge,
I have just bought a Sinclair Spectrum 128K+2, and find that the joystick port doesn't work with my existing joystick.
Yours sincerely,
Worried of South London.



Dear Worried, there is a simple solution; just give those nice Cheetah people £2.99. And they'll supply you an **ADAPTOR LEAD** which will convert your old joystick to the new format. Then you won't have to bother with that nasty Amstrad SJS-1 joystick.



*Fancy a night at the movies? Seen **ALIENS** yet? Electric Dreams will be producing the game of that; while Ocean are doing **HIGHLANDER** and Activision are having a bash at **HOWARD THE DUCK** — or should that be turkey? Still, if you can stand sitting through the ads (" 'ere Bert ... this is the place! Kwon-Do Chinese Restaurant for authentic cuisine served in Oriental surroundings — just five minutes walk from this cinema!") then a visit to the cinema might whet your appetite for some Christmas games-playing.*

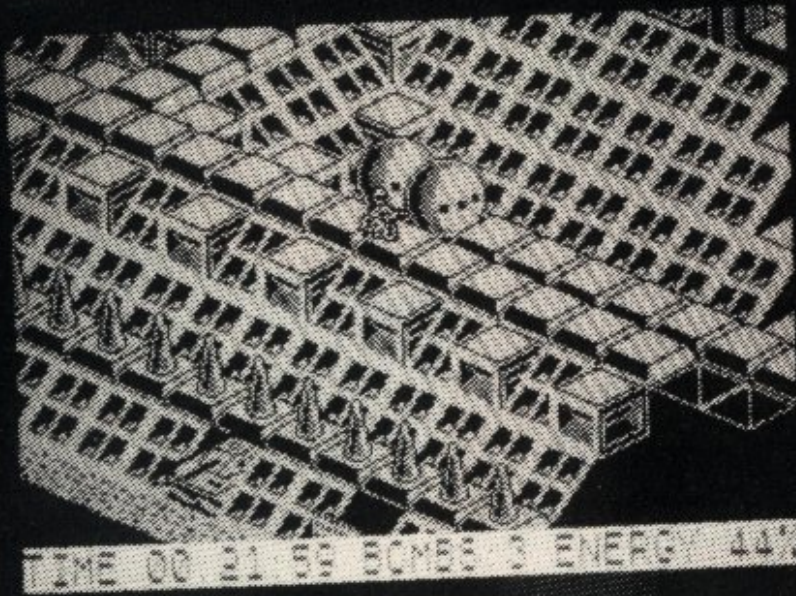
Alternatively, if your Spectrum suffers from a shakey power connector, try fitting a **RESET SWITCH**; only £3.49 from Central Electronics, and saves you having to pull out the cord all the time. Smart Spectrum+/128/Plus 2 owners have it built-in, of course.



Blimey. I'm running out of computer-related under-a-fiver gift ideas. I know, the calendar of the game The **SAM FOX 1987 CALENDAR** is only £3.99 from Culture Shock, and you can pretend that you've only bought it to encourage you to beat Sam Fox Poker.



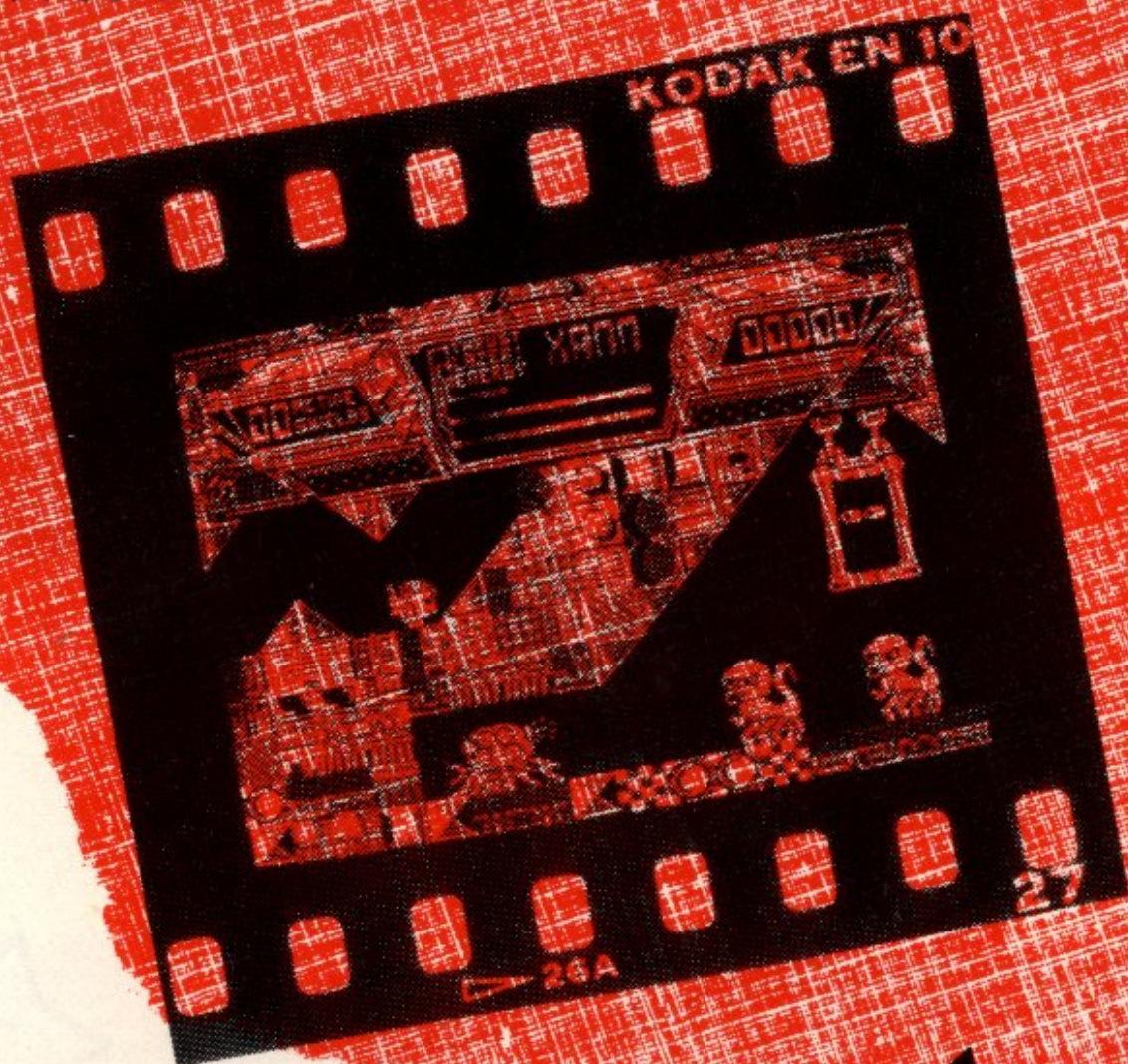
≤ £10
(the software selection)



GLIDER RIDER is another sure-fire hit, from Quicksilver. Zap that synthetic island using your hang-glider, motorbike and supply of handgrenades; watch out for the laser bases and don't let the funky Spectrum 128 music score put you off while you're trying for a tricky take-off.

From the £10 mark we're getting into some serious games. This Christmas looks like a feast for arcade fanatics. Check out **URIDIUM** from Hewson; detailed graphics, challenging gameplay and the kind of fast action which made it a number one on the Commodore 64.

XEVIOUS is the official conversion of the arcade classic from US Gold; only you and your Solvalou fighter can liberate the Earth from the invaders.



DANDY is the original Atari game on which Gauntlet was based. As presented by Electric Dreams, it bears a stunning resemblance to the original game; multi-player battles in an endless maze populated by ferocious meanies. If not try US Gold's **GAUNTLET**. Two to look out for.

FROST BYTE

Microgen's FROST BYTE casts you as a Kreezer struggling to free your fellows from hideous crater-dwelling monsters. A good bet if you like a little strategy mixed in with your arcade action.



Now, you're going to need a good joystick for all this lot, aren't you? Which one do you think is compatible with all Spectrums, including the naughty 128K+2 with its non-standard 'standard' joystick ports? It's the CHEETAH 125+, with its four firing buttons, suckers on the base, pistol grip and the all important adaptor connection. £8.95 and it's yours.

I bet those Cheetah people are offering some other goodies in the £10 price bracket. Oh yes, all you budding composers wondering how to connect the Telecom-style 'Midi' socket on your 128 or 128K+2 to a Midi synthesizer. Wonder no more. Cheetah will do you a **128-MIDI LEAD** for just £9.75.



Yerk! What's that **THING!** stuck to my monitor? It's just that — Thing! copy-holder. Stick it in any convenient place, and it holds listings or text in plain view while you type. Brilliant but simple, and only £6.99 from Overbase.



If you plug in your Spectrum, connect it to the monitor, switch on the monitor, and get nothing, has it ever occurred to you that your power supply might have packed in? If you do, and it does, and it has, why don't you just buy a new power supply rather than throwing your computer out of the window? It should only cost £9.95 from Video Vault, and then you can actually use your Spectrum instead of staring at a blank screen. Clever, yes?



£25
(thanks auntie Maud)



With £25 in your hand the world is your oyster. For a start you can now get that long-awaited subscription to **SINCLAIR USER** — blimey, it's only £15. Just think, twelve issues for the price of . . . er . . . fifteen. Isn't the cost of postage terrible? Hang about, you also get two free Firebird 'Hot' titles too.

If your Spectrum is in poor physical shape (like you will be after pigging out at Christmas) give it the electronic equivalent of a sauna. For £20 **MANCOMP** will repair any faulty Spectrum, either while you wait or by mail. The good thing is that unlike some other firms, the charges aren't fixed; so if there is only a minor fault you pay less. Your Spectrum will thank you.



Write your own adventures and create suitable pictures with Incentive's **GRAPHIC ADVENTURE CREATOR**. It's fun and easy to use, and gives you a decent text Parser along with text compression to squeeze in decent-sized plots. £22.95 to you, my little Pixie.

Perhaps you would like a better joystick, or perhaps you would like an alternative to a joystick. Well, if Sir/Madam has £25 to spend then Sir/Madam could have both. For instance, the sublime **CHEETAH MACH 1+**, a microswitch-operated conventional joystick with autofire and all the twiddly bits, and the **EEC JOYBALL**, a most odd device which gives you a large tennis-ball shaped thing to waggle and the usual array of firing buttons. Looks odd, plays good.



PSSST! Want a Printer? Only £18.95. No, it's no joke. If you can put up with thermal paper, the **ALPHACOM 32** can be yours for this puny sum, and you don't need any form of interface 'cos it's directly Sinclair-compatible. Talk to those nice people at **WAVE** mail order.



What's that? You'll want a word processing package to use with your printer? Why don't you just buy **TASWORD THREE** and keep quiet? It's available on Microdrive only, with special versions for the Spectrum 128 and Opus disc drive. They'll all leave you a few pounds change from your twenty-five.



If you're that way inclined you could get an **RS-232 CABLE** from Tasman at the same time, and connect your Spectrum to a printer via Interface 1. The printer will cost you a bit more than £25, though.



For frustrated painters, **ARTIST II** from The Edge offers all the graphics potential it's possible to squeeze out of the Spectrum. Featuring mouse control, extended cut'n'paste facilities and more options than you can shake a stick at.



And if you like a little music while you compute, how about this to impress the neighbours. The **CASIO RD-100** pocket FM radio receiver is the size and shape of a credit card, includes tuning, volume and mono/stereo controls, and comes complete with a recharger and stereo earphones. With your fivepence change from £25 you could buy some bubble gum to chew while you're listening to it.

< £50

(peripheral power)



£50. A terrible responsibility. If you make a mistake with that sort of money, you'll never forgive yourself. Lucky we can offer you some good advice.

For a start, stop mucking around with that squidgy old Spectrum keyboard. Isn't it about time you invested in a very super **SAGA 1 EMPEROR** replacement? Thing is, it's easy to fit, has a nice professional feel, offers a full-size space bar and extra caps and symbol shift keys, has a luvverly cream finish and costs only £39.95.

For keyboards of another kind, try the **ECHO** music keyboard for the 128. It's a three-octave device with proper full-size mechanical keys, and comes complete with connection cables, interface and software which enables you to synthesize and play cosmic sounds, for only £39.95. (For £64.90 you can have it with an Echosound speaker/amplifier as well, but we can't talk about that).





Why hasn't anyone produced a Centronics printer interface for any Spectrum, including built-in word-processing software which enables you to create great-looking documents quickly and easily? And why don't they put a joystick port in it too? And why £34.95? Oh. They have. It's called **RAMPRINT** from Ram Electronics.



*I bet they're the people responsible for the incredible **MUSIC MACHINE**. It plugs into the back of the Spectrum, and includes a sound sampler, a drum machine for arranging sounds into sophisticated patterns, an effects section for creating echo and reverb, and Midi ports for control of the latest synthesizers. And it's only £49.95. Yes, that must be Ram again.*



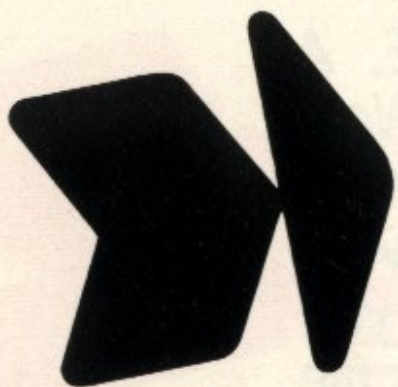


Now, you've written the world's greatest 999,000-level arcade game, and quite naturally you want to give copies to fifty of your friends. You could spend a week saving the same program to cassette over and over again, or you could be sensible. You can get 50 C10's **DUPLICATED** from your cassette master for only £40, batch tested for reliability, all through the mail from Sounds Good. Sounds good to me.

The **SINCLAIR MICRODRIVE**. A legend in its own lunchtime. Now for a shade under £50 it can be yours, complete with the very necessary **INTERFACE 1**, giving you quicker program loading, bigger file storage and the advantages of RS-232 interfacing for modems and printers. Complete with a demo cartridge which tells you everything except how to tell the cartridges apart. The deal comes courtesy of Applied Technology.



Anyone for music? BOOM-BOOM, THUNK, CHAK-KA-THUMP, PWEE, PWEE, CRASH. Oh, that sort of music. It must be the very wonderful **CHEETAH SPECTRUM**, voted peripheral of the century by all right-thinking people everywhere. For a mere £29.95 this plug-in unit with software offers eight digitally-sampled drum sounds, which can be played three at a time to build up complex and incredibly convincing drum patterns in real time or step time. Since we're spending £50 here, you can also buy the extra Latin Kit and Electro Kit sounds on tape, and look out for the African drum set coming up soon.



Quick and simple: the **TASMAN CENTRONICS INTERFACE** costs £29.90 and comes complete with software to drive any standard Centronics printer from your Spectrum. Okay?



Owzaboutthis then? The **MIRAGE MICRODRIVER** costs £39.95, and enables you to transfer programs from tape to microdrive for fast loading — typically, 15 seconds for 48K. The Version 3 model is now out. If you want a microdrive, you'll want this too, greedy.



Swank time. Not content with your 'Mister Cheapie' easy-break tape recorder, why don't you look out for the posh SONY WM33 WALKMAN. It's got a built-in three-band graphic tone control, metal tape facility, lightweight headphones, battery indicator light, DC transformer socket, and the very reasonable price tag of £30. Now if only the Spectrum was portable as well . . .



<£100

(serious spending)

The ton. The big one. £100 burning a hole in your pocket.

Let's talk reeely good keyboards, like 88 keys, full-size space bar, numeric keypad, function keys, programming template, SU Classic status. It's got to be the SAGA 3 ELITE at £69.95.



*If you're into communications, half-a-dozen competing manufacturers are after your crispy ackers, so go for a modem with BT approval and facilities like autodial/answer, multi-speed, auto-log-on, frame editor software and all that. Modem House's **VOYAGER** will cost you £79.95, but the VTX 711 interface and software will push you up over the hundred.*

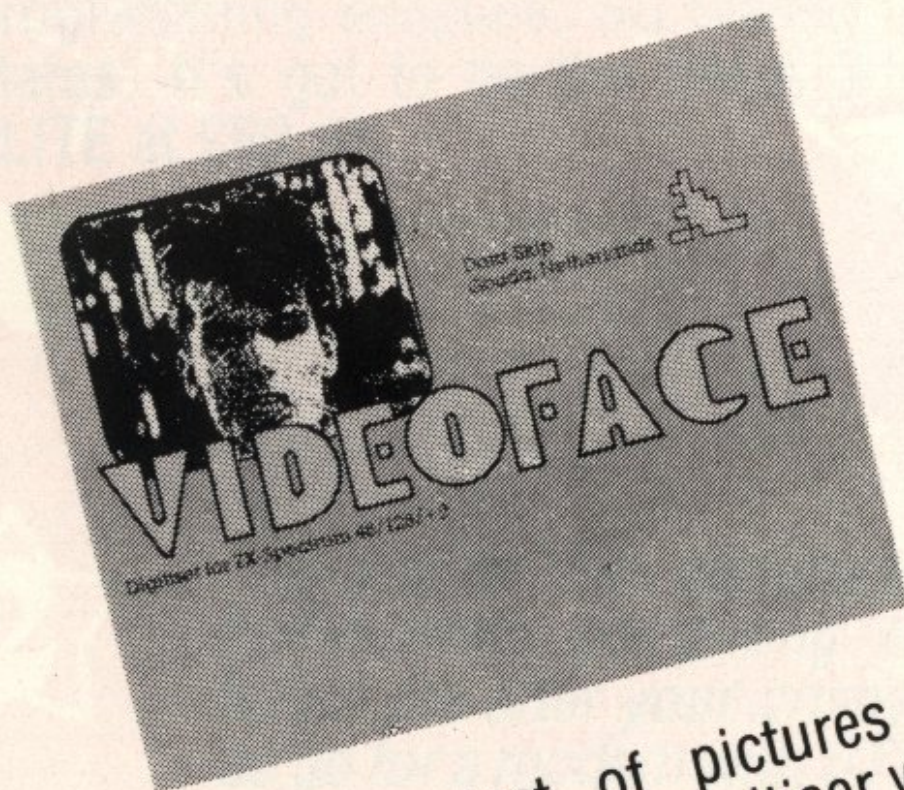
For five pence short of £100 you can get your grubbies on an Opus **DISCOVERY** disc drive. It's a 3½ inch 250K device with RAM disc facility, joystick, printer and video interface, and built-in power supply. It comes with a tape-disc software transfer program.



*It's not just Macintosh/Amiga/ST users who can use a Mouse. Didn't you know that the Spectrum **AMX MOUSE** comes complete with window/icon/menu-driven drawing, colouring and mouse environment programs, and an interface with a Centronics printer port? And that it's only £69.95?*



On the other hand, the **SAGA DISC DRIVE INTERFACE**, for the same price, will support single- or double-sided 3", 3½" or 5¼", 40 or 80 track drives, while the £89 Interface 2 also has joystick and printer interfaces. Don't forget to budget for the disc drive itself, though.



On the subject of pictures (clever link), the **DATASKIP VIDEOFACE** digitiser will take signals from videotape, videocameras or other computers, produce a hi-res 256×192×4 bit image and allow you to manipulate it with graphics programs: all for £69.



7

Centronics printer for £99? It's the **CENTRONICS GLP**: 100 cps, draft/NLQ mode, subscript/superscript/condense/emphasize doobrie from Rock Hall. Watch out for the VAT, P&P, and extra for the tractor feed, though.



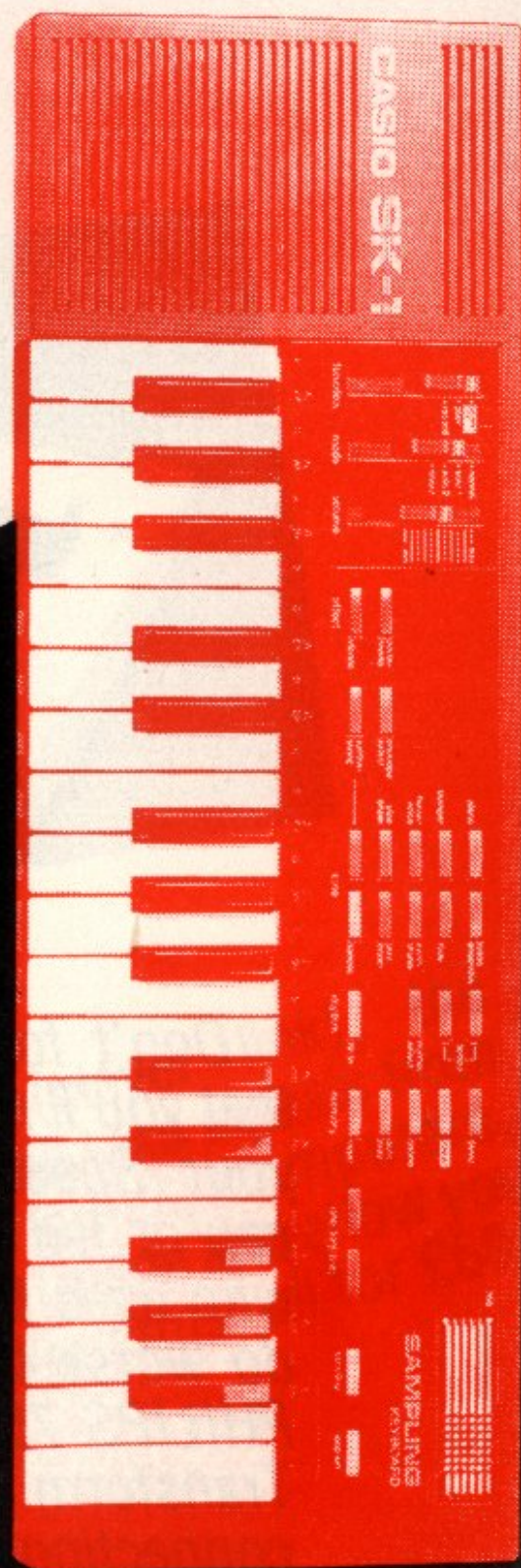
8

Don't forget, first time buyers, that you'll need something to watch your Spectrum's display with. If you're fed up with bickering over who uses the family TV, you could do worse than spend £86.25 on a PHILIPS 7502 mono monitor from Transform — plus £11.50 for the connecting lead.

On to the frothy bits now, with the next most expensive Sony about — the £60 WM-50 **DESIGNER WALKMAN**. Pretty Pastel colours and streamlined design, plus feather-touch controls make it one for real techno-snobs, but you can still load your Spectrum off it!



Last bit under £100. The CASIO SK-1 sampling keyboard. Amazingly, this tiny portable two-and-a-half octave plays eight present synth sounds, plinky-planky rhythms and arpeggios, and polyphonic sounds sampled through the built-in microphone. Don't expect Fairlight quality and you won't be disappointed. Pity there's no Midi though.



< £150

(will you extend my credit?)

At the £150 mark, you know we're talking about the best of the best, so let's just get down and consider what every self-respecting Sinclair User would like to see in his stocking this Chrissie.



The **RED BOX INTERFACE's** an ingenious £129 device which plugs into your wall socket, and communicates with slave boxes via the mains. Programmed from your Spectrum, it can control lighting, heaters, sensors, robots, practically anything you can imagine.



The **SAGA 2001 KEYBOARD**. It's £120 worth of wizardry, complete with word processing software. This top-range keyboard communicates with your Spectrum via an infra-red link and runs off batteries.



FERGUSON'S TX PORTABLE TV, with built-in RGB interface means you can get the sharpest possible display while using your micro, and still watch *Eastenders* when you finish.

A 200 RS

And the **SINCLAIR SPECTRUM** 128K is still out there if you know where to look, and it's unquestionably a bargain! It's in a pack with other goodies — software, tape deck and joystick — for £139.

SINCLAIR QL may be gone but it's not forgotten. Still plenty of software support for this ground-breaking machine.



19A

20



LTR letter quality printer from Saga. 12 CPS CENTRONICS and RS232 interface. Prints on continuous stationery or on single sheets, works with the Saga Centronics interface and offers letter quality at an affordable price: £119.95.

7

ENTERPRISE 1 MODEM. For £150 exactly you get a modem, software, interface, leads and communications manual. You supply the Spectrum and the world of Prestel, Telex, Telecom Gold and mailboxes is yours.

8

Okay. This is it — the biggest of the big money-wise. It takes a whole lot of pocket-money saving to collect this much. And when you've finally managed it, you will feel like blowing it on something wholly hedonistic. What better symbol of your coolness than the latest in super-duper-lights 'n' whistles **GHETTO-BLASTERS**. Be the coolest in your street — hurt your shoulder.

9

The **SINCLAIR SPECTRUM +2** — the latest model with built-in tape deck 128K, nifty keyboard and joystick ports (sort of) this must be the Rolls Royce of the family. Price £149.

10

15,000
PENNY
CHEWS.