

**sinclair
user**

TOP 50

**SPECTRUM
SOFTWARE
CLASSICS**

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user**

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TOP 50

At long last the editorial team at Sinclair User has decided to commit collective hari-kiri and present what it

considers to be the definitive list of all-time software greats for the ZX Spectrum. In doing so we have probably started a controversy which will rage in the letters pages of the magazine for many months to come.

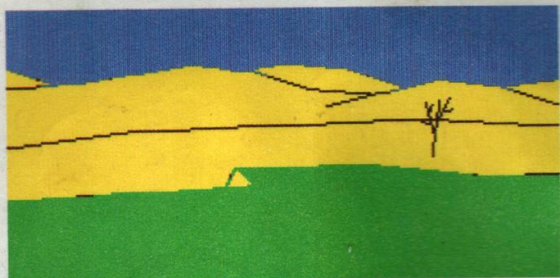
Selecting the Top 50 has not been an easy task and reviewers nearly came to blows when their personal favourites were excluded. It was not sufficient for a game to have been a best-seller to be included, and in fact many of the 50 enjoyed only a limited success. More important was whether a game could be considered a milestone along the labyrinthine path followed by the games industry during the last three years.

A considerable number of the games can be granted full classic status due to their achievement in breaking new ground. Adventures with interactive characters, graphics adventures, 3D arcade games, artificially intelligent mind games... innovations in all those areas have made games software what it is today. Though subsequent programs may have improved upon those early pioneers, their importance cannot be underestimated.

Other games deserve recognition for simply being the best of a particular genre, and into that category fall some of the amusement arcade spin-offs. If you are looking for a version of **Pac-man** you will be disappointed, however, as until recently there was no program which in any way approached the original.

The Top 50 is therefore a guide to the best in Spectrum software as well as being a condensed history of the continuing development in games programming. For collectors of software the 50 are, in our opinion, essential buying. Your opinion will possibly, or even probably, differ but then that will be half the fun. At the back of the book we have left space for you to list your own choice.

The list contains only games software as utilities, business, educational and practical programs are altogether a different kettle of fish deserving of their own charts. ZX-81 software has been omitted, after much debate, because so much of it is difficult or impossible to obtain and because the limited capabilities of that machine, great though it is, would make the inclusion of software side by side with Spectrum software almost meaningless. Many of the games selected do in fact have ZX-81 equivalents.



You are in a gloomy empty land with dreary hills ahead

> LOOK
> OPEN CHEST
> E
+

1

THE HOBBIT

Melbourne House

The world of computer games is divided into two types of people – those who have escaped from the goblins' dungeons and those who are still stuck there.

The Hobbit was ahead of its time when released in 1982 and remains the adventure by which all others are judged. You must follow the footsteps of Tolkien's Bilbo Baggins in his quest for the treasure of the dragon Smaug. The game features illustrations, character interaction, and a text interpreter allowing the input of English sentences. The plot changes each time you play it, and the list of possible solutions is still growing.

CORLETH THE FEY

He stands on the Downs
of Ashmore, looking
southwest to the
Mountains of Tonkren.



2

LORDS OF MIDNIGHT

Beyond

Without a doubt one of the most extraordinary Spectrum games yet devised, **Lords of Midnight** is an adventure-wargame on a vast scale. Superb programming provides 32,000 possible screen pictures of locations.

Your aim as Luxor the Moonprince is to conquer the armies of Doomdark, either by war or stealing the Ice Crown and destroying it. Numerous characters and forces may be recruited, and the sheer variety of locations and tactics make the game an endless pleasure. **Lords of Midnight** catapults you into a world of magic and terror which has the power to thrill and inspire like no other game.

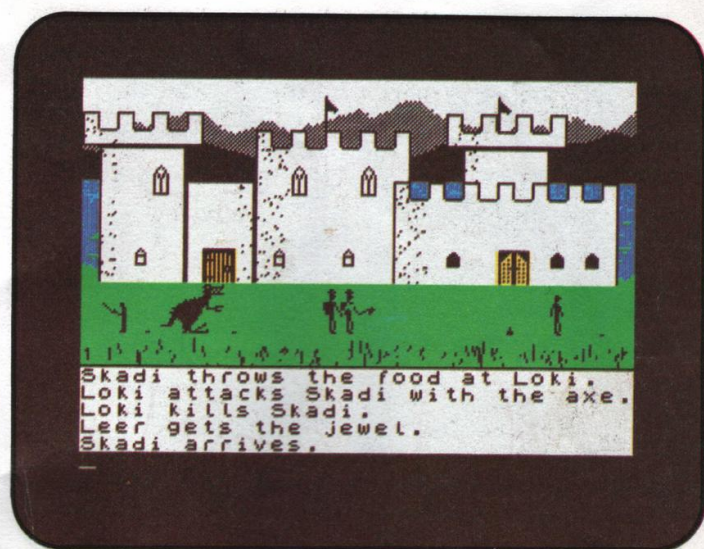


3 **MANIC MINER**

Software Projects

The all-time classic of arcade games on the Spectrum. Written by Matthew Smith, originally for Bug-byte, it proved to be the ultimate in ladder and level games, and has caused an influx of lookalike software from other companies.

Your aim is to get through as many weird and wonderful screens as possible to collect the keys to the mine in which Willy works. You must escape from mechanical penguins, mutant toilets, poisonous pansies and mining robots. At the end you can access a special screen of evil goodies which will finish off any miner.

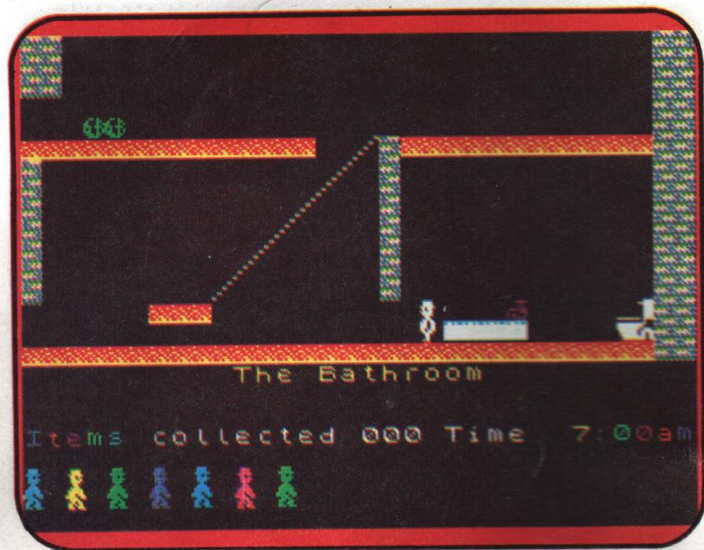


4 **VALHALLA**

Legend

The second breakthrough in adventures following **The Hobbit**, **Valhalla** set new standards for the interaction of graphics and characters.

You are a minor Norse deity, and you must embark on a series of quests for special ritual objects. A large range of gods, goddesses, giants, dwarfs and the like are also involved, represented on the screen as moving figures, fighting, eating and drinking. Each character may support good or evil with degrees of intelligence and strength, and to win their support you must convince them of your good – or bad – intentions. A sophisticated text interpreter and a strong plot rounds off a most unusual game.



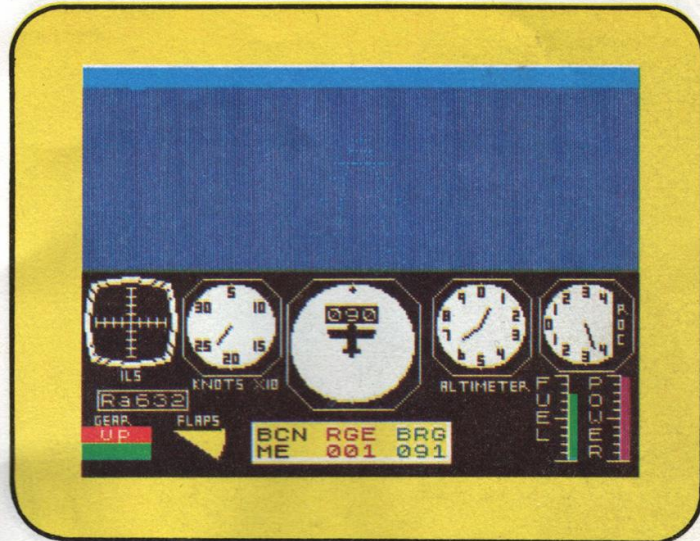
5

JET SET WILLY

Software Projects

An instant, and not unexpected, success which closely followed on the heels of the classic **Manic Miner**. Willy the miner has retired and taken to a life of drunken debauchery. His housekeeper, Maria, will not let him get to bed until he has cleared up the bottles and glasses lying around the house.

The arcade-style graphics, the number of rooms and the strange creatures which inhabit them ensure **Jet Set Willy** a place in the history of arcade gaming. The game is also notable for the colour code system employed to combat piracy – with, unfortunately, limited success.



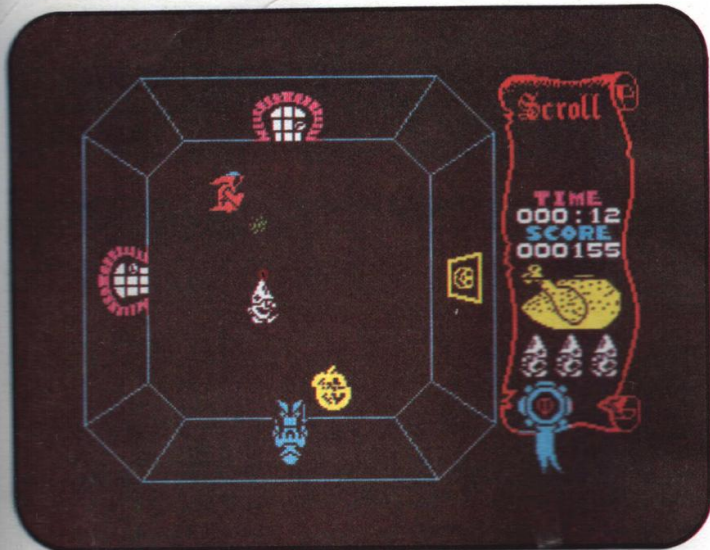
6

FLIGHT SIMULATION

Psion

Flight Simulation broke new ground in 1982, as the first 'serious' game for the Spectrum. It has stood the test of time extremely well, and spawned a host of lookalike simulators from other companies.

The aircraft is an unspecified light propellor-driven plane, capable of aerobatics but requiring considerable skill to navigate, especially in windy conditions. The large map over which you can fly includes terrain features such as lakes. Although the graphics seem conservative today, the satisfaction of flying a plane, even on a computer, is such that people will return to **Flight Simulation** again and again.

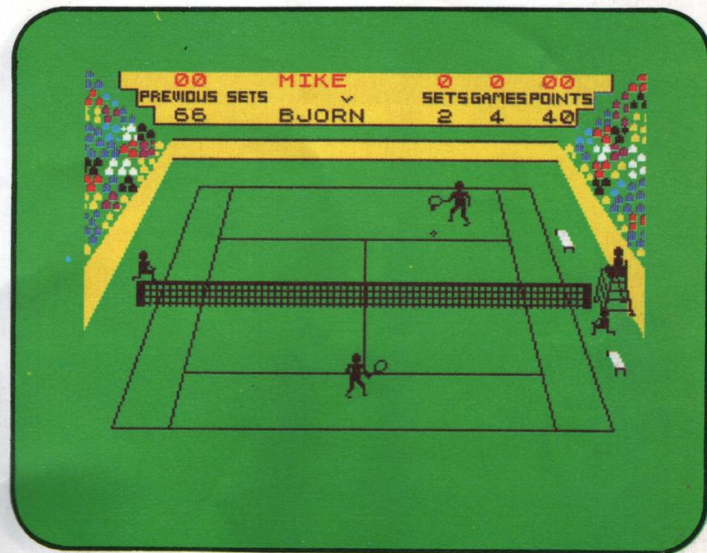


7 ATIC ATAC

Ultimate

Set in a gothic castle with dungeons and caverns below, **Atic Atac** is a superb arcade adventure. You move from room to room collecting parts of a golden key. Monsters galore seek to stop you, and there are other objects which help you in your quest.

Atic Atac would have been a fine game anyway, but the care lavished on the program makes it outstanding. You have a choice of three characters to play, whose powers effectively create three games. The attention to detail is splendid, with humorous touches such as the roast chicken status indicator.



8 MATCH POINT

Psion

The only game which comes close to a simulation of centre court activity at Wimbledon. The game can be enjoyed by two human players or by one player against the computer. Its three levels of difficulty ensure the participants can warm up with a first round session and then let off steam with a final.

Its most impressive attribute is the detail with which the court is displayed, right down to the ball's shadow. Movement of players and ball is smooth and fast and the action so realistic that you can use your racket to put some spin on a stroke.



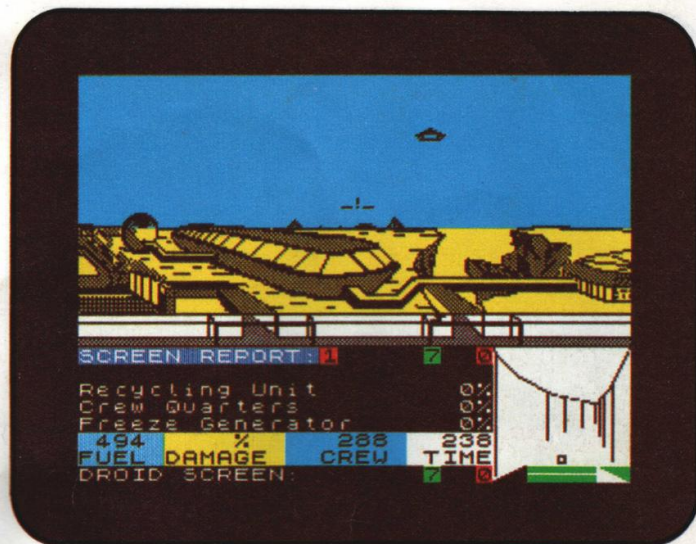
9

3D ANT ATTACK

Quicksilver

An arcade game which heralded a revolutionary technique called 3D softsolid, an apt name as the background scenario, a city called Antescher, and the ants, hero and heroine, are all displayed in solid 3D. Characters can pass behind objects and move in three dimensions. The technique makes movement of objects and characters extremely fast. The walled city can be viewed from four angles which can be switched around on the screen instantaneously.

The game is novel too because it allows you to select the sex of the protagonist who combats the evil ants to rescue their prisoner from the city.



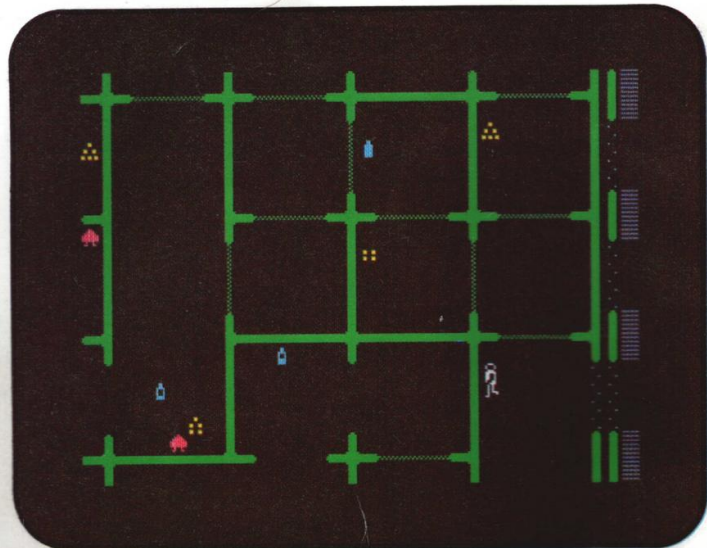
10

PSYTRON

Beyond

An unusual combination of land management and arcade action coupled with superb graphics made **Psytron** one of the finest games of 1984.

You control an intelligent computer system defending a space colony from attack. Action takes place on ten screens simultaneously and at a number of levels. As you work your way through the game planning becomes necessary as you must conserve your crew numbers, and organise supplies to vital areas in between zapping the invaders. **Psytron** also features a window for scrolling status reports and some of the most breathtaking background pictures of any arcade or adventure game.

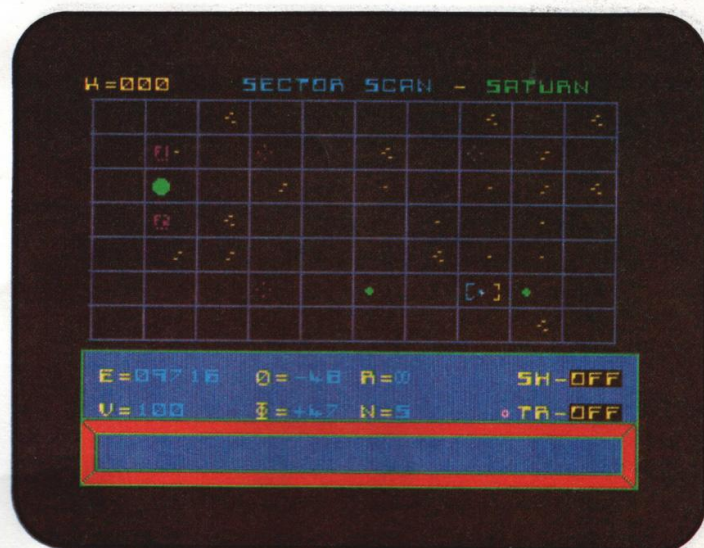


11 HALLS OF THE THINGS

Crystal Computing

A ridiculous title for one of the first and fastest arcade adventures and one which has lead the way to many similar games, none of which has equalled its technical excellence.

You move through a multi-level maze, attacking monsters with arrows and lightning bolts. The things can gang up and quickly fry you to death. To escape from the maze you must pick up keys, gathering strength from milk found in bottles along the way. A unique loading routine makes the program almost pirate-proof as both boarder and game are loaded without the need for a Basic loader program.



12 CODE NAME: MAT

Micromega

A space adventure and strategy game which can only be described as a souped-up version of **Star Trek**, a game made famous on large mainframe computers.

You take the part of either a space cadet or a commander in charge of fleets of battle cruisers scattered throughout the galaxy. The object is to defeat the Myons who are destroying all the planets within the Earth's solar system. You must stop them through remote control of ships in other systems and first-hand combat achieved by going through star gates into another part of the galaxy. The 3D effects which show the space cruiser moving through space are created using only 2.5K of code.



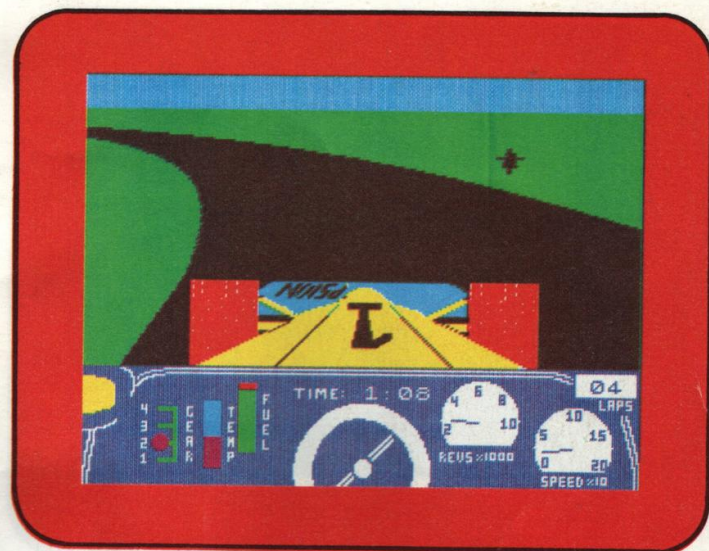
13 TRASHMAN

New Generation

A game based on rubbish does not seem an auspicious idea for a best-selling program, but **Trashman** has rapidly established itself as a classic since its launch early in 1984.

You are a dustman collecting suburban dustbins and emptying them in your cart. There is a time limit on each street, and hazards include motor cars, pavement cyclists, and vicious dogs.

Featuring tremendous graphics which won New Generation a French award, the game was designed with the family in mind, having a domestic non-violent theme and little jokes for spectators to enjoy. For sheer originality **Trashman** is one of the best; there are few games as much fun to watch as they are to play.

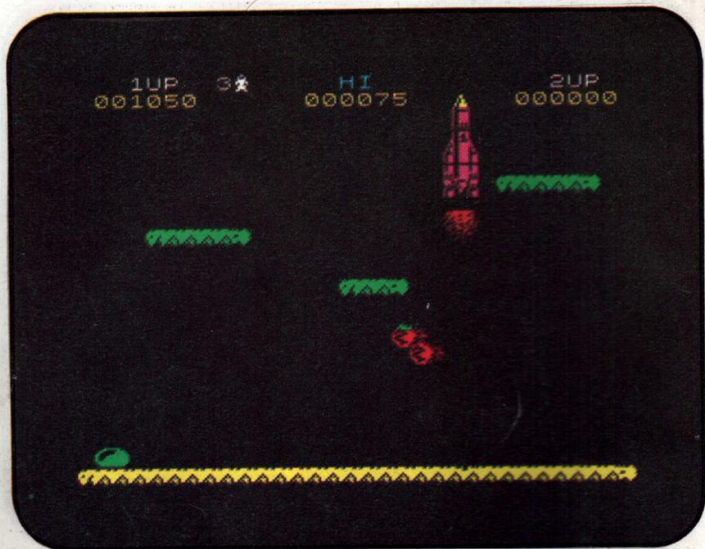


14 CHEQUERED FLAG

Psion

During the year since it was released **Chequered Flag** has rarely been out of the charts. A Formula One racing car simulation, it presented a variety of problems in programming terms which Psion solved with its customary style and solid quality.

The game involves driving one of three cars around a choice of Grand Prix circuits against the clock. Apart from the fiendishly complex control changes required to negotiate a circuit at high speed, additional hazards include patches of oil and water. Its strength is its ability to simulate an experience many of us dream of but will never have at first hand.



15 JETPAC

Ultimate

The first of a long life of sprite arcade games from a company which has built its name around quality.

The game involves a space man with jetpack who must build a space ship from the various bits of rocket scattered around the screen and then catch the fuel drums before taking off to the next screen.

Still a bestselling game it has set the standard for sprite games as the entire screen is covered with colourful movement without being affected by the usual slowness of response from input or movement of characters.

What now?

D

You are lost in the forest

What now?

L

You can't move in that direction

What now?

W

You are lost in the forest

What now?

S

You are at a picnic spot littered with small tables and benches carved roughly from tree-trunks. In the centre a large stencilled sign saying 'no litter' is attached to one of the tables

There are some sandwiches here

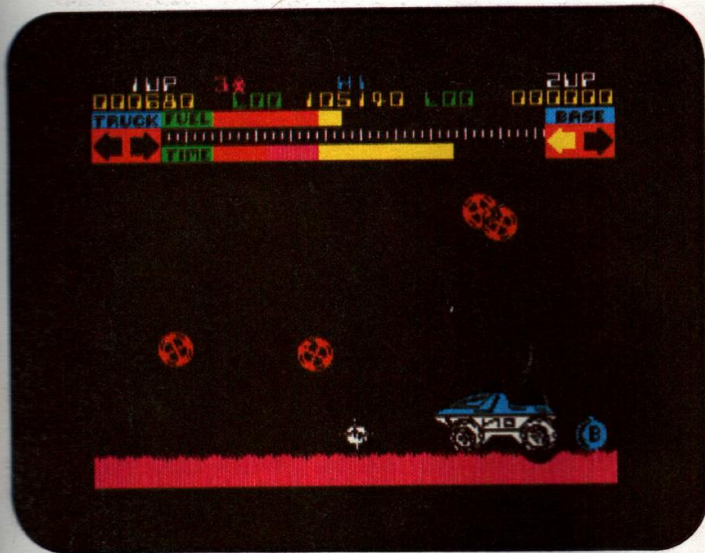
What now?

16 COLOSSAL ADVENTURE

Level 9

Back in the dawn of history two gentlemen, Crowther and Woods, created an adventure game on a DEC mainframe and started the whole computer adventure scene. Their adventure is still one of the finest text adventures ever written, and is available in a number of versions on the Spectrum. **Colossal Adventure** is one such, with the additional bonus of 70 extra locations.

Using advanced compression techniques, the program contains long, involved text descriptions, a large vocabulary, and hundreds of rooms and puzzles. It has all the classic ingredients: a dungeon, a plot, lots of wit and it produces a real sense of satisfaction.



17 LUNAR JETMAN

Ultimate

A sequel to the equally successful *JetPac*, *Lunar Jetman* is a display of virtuoso graphics programming.

In addition to his jetpack, the spaceman now has a lunar buggy to explore a hostile landscape and discover the whereabouts of the alien base and destroy it. A new base is then created and must be destroyed in turn.

A feature of the game is the almost total lack of instructions. You must find out the significance of the scattered objects, and then move successfully with only limited fuel and time. That turns an already impressive arcade game into one requiring considerable forethought.

You've fallen into a stinking waste disposal unit. You can clamber out by hitting bottom or by heading towards 9.

Pssst! Excuse me! This is the Pi Man. I'm s-scared. C-can you c-comfort m-me?



You have:
A CUDDLY TOY
with you.

IT'S UP TO YOU PAUL!

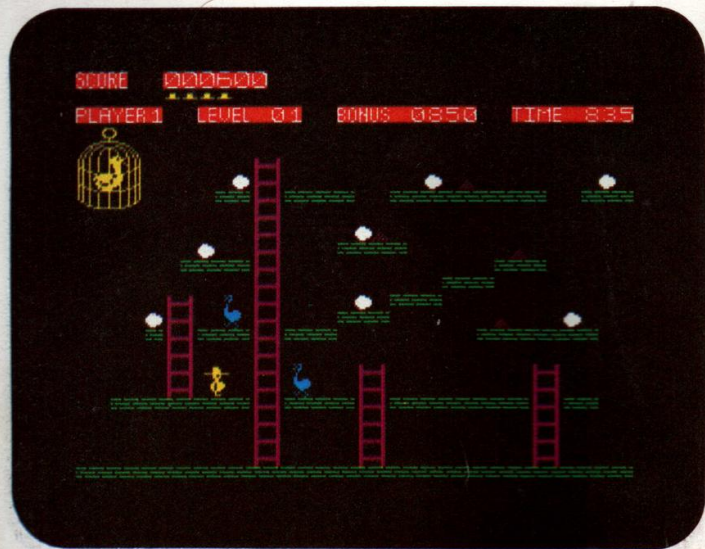
C

18 PIMANIA

Automata

The first move towards graphic adventures takes you on a journey through the mysterious Pi-Land in which objects have to be collected in the correct order so that the Gate of Pi and the Golden Sundial can be found.

The game combines puzzles with the slapstick comedy of the Pi-man who pops up from time to time and does incredible things with a saxophone. It is also one of the first games in which is hidden the secret to a prize, the Golden Sundial. The combination of innovative software and a challenging competition has made the product a legend.

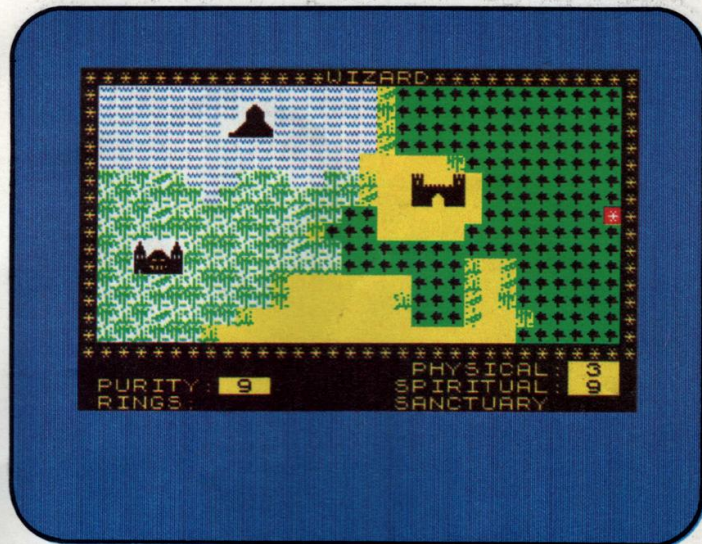


19 CHUCKIE EGG

A & F Software

One of the first games to get away from the space invader mentality with a fresh and unusual plot, **Chuckie Egg** is a ladders and levels game in which you must pick up eggs while avoiding the broody hens. Once all the eggs on one level are picked up you ascend to the next floor of the henhouse and, if lucky, get a sizeable bonus.

The program, originally written for the ZX-81, was a forerunner of the **Manic Miner** type of game. It renewed gamers' faith in the software industry and boosted creative thought in games design.



20 BLACK CRYSTAL

Carnell/Mastervision

A role-playing adventure consisting of six programs. The task is to collect the seven rings of creation and neutralise the evil power of the Black Crystal.

Authors Roy Carnell and Stuart Galloway set the game in their own fantasy world, The Third Continent, and the attention lavished on that creation over many years paid off handsomely. Neither author had ever played a role-playing game or computer adventure before they started programming. The result is a quirky, idiosyncratic game quite unlike any other adventure. Its length is epic, its quests challenging, and its plot dramatic.



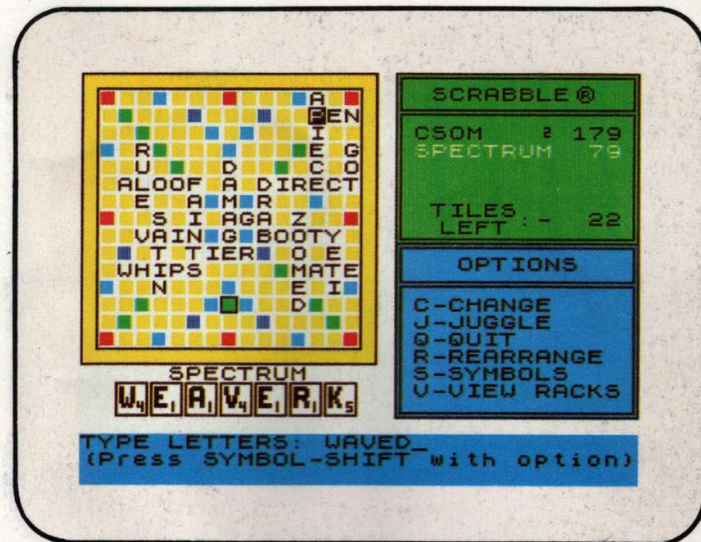
21 CORRIDORS OF GENON

New Generation

A 3D arcade maze game with a novel twist: the maze is circular. You must get through a series of doors some of which can only be opened by the correct number code. Once past the doors you enter the main computer room to deactivate the machine which will destroy the complex.

The only other little problem is Bogul. This quaint-sounding creature will drain the psi energy from any player that it encounters. Bogul will clone itself and you will have many of them to avoid on the return journey.

The game combines the best elements of strategy and arcade action.



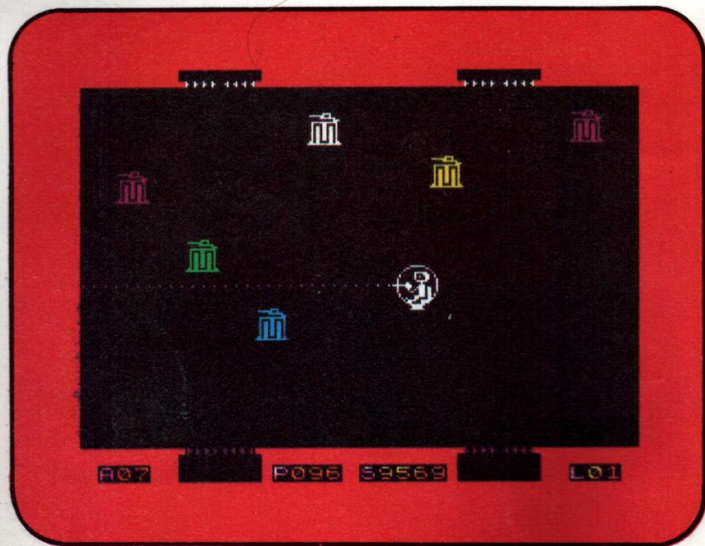
22 SCRABBLE

Psion

The only version of the popular boardgame for the Spectrum and the best version on any microcomputer.

The wordgame allows four people to play. If only one person plays the computer can take the part of the other three with ability levels set by the human contestant. The program contains a dictionary of 11,000 words and will respond within 90 seconds. It is possible to cheat by making the computer believe a word is correct but that is unsporting.

Scrabble is the best board-game simulation and certainly the most intelligent. Word-packing techniques leave room in memory for the excellent graphics and the computer capacity to play three parts.



23 THE PYRAMID

Fantasy

An arcade adventure which introduces Ziggy, an alien intent on discovering the secret of life, the universe and everything.

On his quest he investigates a pyramid which contains many alien creatures to be avoided or destroyed. Ziggy must go through a series of chambers and levels, starting at the apex, to get to the bottom level and the final exit. There are 120 chambers and 15 levels so a successful play can take several months to perfect. All players can enter the high score competition and have a chance of being credited in the Fantasy newsletter.

two close friends, a Mrs Brown and a Mrs Jones, were murdered last night in separate incidents although apparently with the same weapon. The crimes occurred at their respective homes in the township of Leather Head and, because of the lack of murder weapon and apparent motive, the local police are completely baffled. They have called upon Scotland Yard for assistance and it appears that the famed detective Inspector Giles Lestrade has taken an interest in the case and will be going to the scene this morning."

You wait.

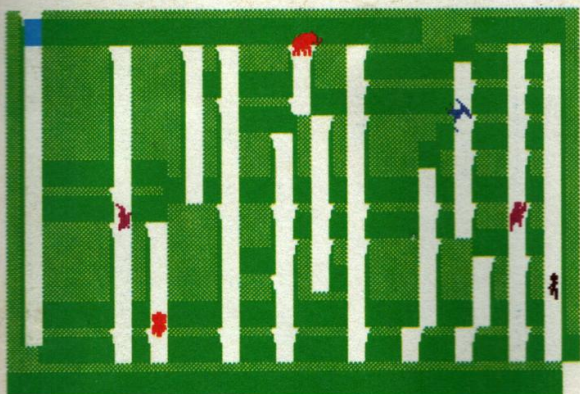
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* Mon 08:21am *
> .
> .
> .
> .
> +
```

24 SHERLOCK

Melbourne House

The successor to the number one classic, **The Hobbit**. The game was released after eighteen months of development, six months later than expected. Drawing heavily on the concepts of English and character interaction pioneered in the earlier game, **Sherlock** takes things further by introducing a wide variety of characters and increased sophistication of commands.

The game requires you to unravel a typically intricate mystery complete with plenty of incidental detail to create an atmosphere faithful to the original Sherlock Holmes stories. Despite poor graphics the game is tremendous fun and sure to gain a permanent place in the hearts of adventure gamers.



25

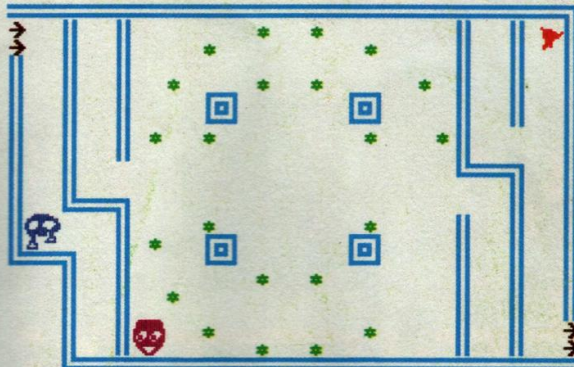
ESCAPE

New Generation

The first of the 3D maze games. The player runs around a maze trying to pick up an axe in order to escape while being pursued by up to five dinosaurs. Level five of the game is the most difficult as a large pterodactyl is brought to life and flaps alarmingly around the pathways in search of its quarry.

Escape was one of the first Spectrum games to be produced but still retains its technical excellence two years later. It is a legend among Spectrum owners who remember that far back and is still a favourite with author Malcolm Evans.

PASSES 1 SCORE 01130 BEST 02010



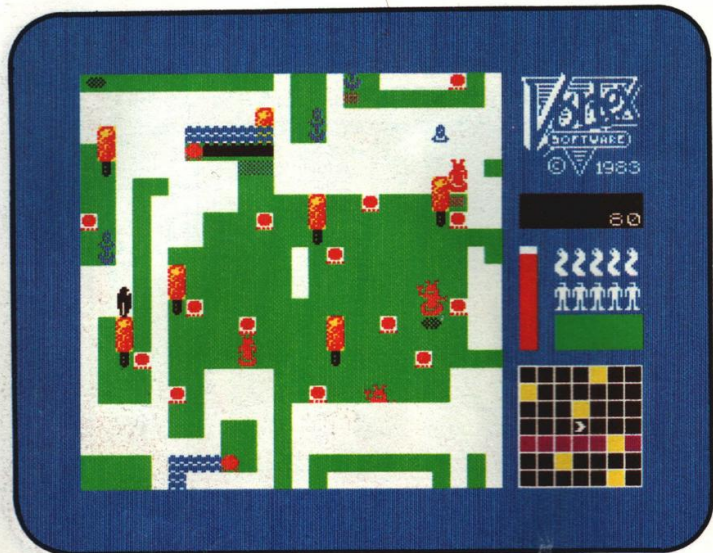
26

HUNGRY HORACE

Melbourne House

A game whose claim to fame is the cartoon-style character Horace who has to eat the plants in a park maze and escape before the attendants catch him. It was the first game in which the character was more important than the plot. The graphics were, and still are, outstanding with the predominant use of sprites for character images, a technique which had not been used before.

The game is a logical progression from the arcade **Pacman**; the latter had no software equivalent on the Spectrum because Atari was not interested in the small machine.

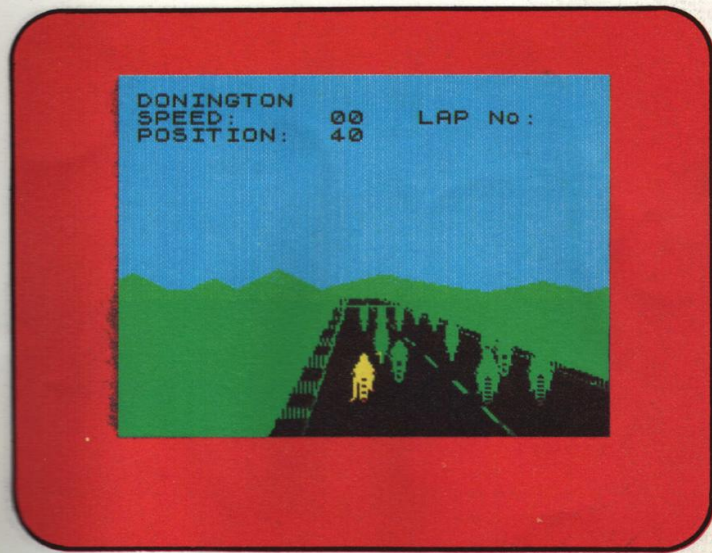


27 **ANDROID II**

Vortex

An impressive 3D arcade adventure game which relies more on looks than plot. The robot hero must stop the advance of the Millitoids, a race of centipedes, while avoiding robot guards such as Hoverdroids and Bouncers, all the while moving around land mines. There are three zones in the game – the maze of death, the paradox zone and the flatlands. It is unlikely that many players will reach the second phase of the game let alone the third.

The game, brought out in late 1983, was one of the first to generate a random maze bigger than the screen and which scrolled in all directions.



28 **FULL THROTTLE**

Micromega

Racing car simulations, following the path blazed by **Chequered Flag**, have tended towards the disappointing. Micromega decided on Grand Prix motorcycles racing instead, and **Full Throttle** is a fine version of the sport.

Essentially very similar to the earlier game, with its curving track and sparsely detailed background, the game has one major advantage in that it is a real race, with forty other bikers to beat. Were the graphics not so flickery the game could be rated even more highly. A choice of genuine circuits with information on the lap records is a spur to the player's achievement.



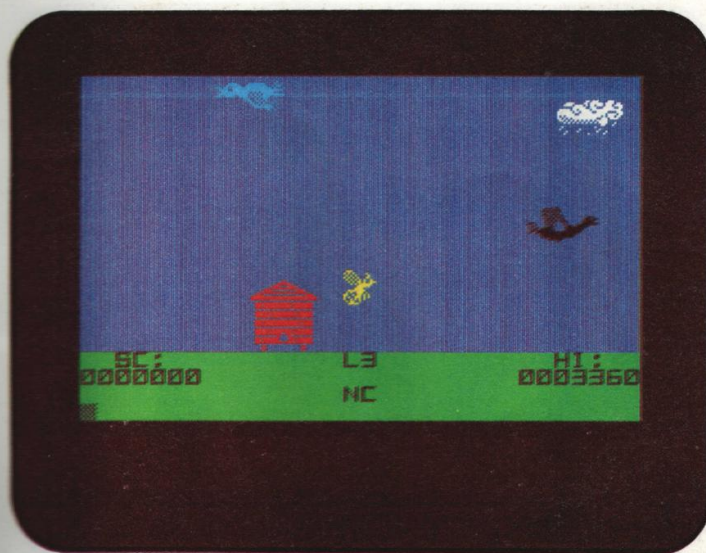
29

THE ALCHEMIST

Imagine/Beau-Jolly

Combining arcade skills with the logical thought required by adventures has gained immense popularity since the release of **Halls of The Things**. **The Alchemist**, challenging and a visual delight, is one of the best.

You must assemble the ingredients for a spell to defeat an evil warlock. To do that involves moving around a complex of rooms and caverns which each require a different strategy to negotiate the hazards. You can either walk in human form or change into a spectacular eagle to fly between levels or across chasms. There are many objects and minor spells to find and use in the special situations.



30

THE BIRDS AND THE BEES

Bug-Byte

A game with cartoon-style graphics involving Boris the bee's attempt to collect nectar while facing opposition from the local birds who are none too pleased about the invasion of their air space. It arrived at a time when Melbourne House was consolidating the popularity of its Horace character and cute games were all the rage.

The game was an instant success because it was different from anything that Bug-Byte had done before. It also showed that a simple plot concept could be turned into an original and engrossing game.



31 SABRE WULF

Ultimate

A successor to *Atic Atac* rather than a direct sequel, *Sabre Wulf* is a gigantic maze game set in a strange jungle full of riotous life, most of it hostile. You must collect four parts of an amulet to escape, while fending off abundant attacks from a wide range of beasts. Magic orchids bloom suddenly in your path, and a host of objects can be found which may aid you on the way.

The graphics are extremely rich and varied, although not as well-disciplined as earlier Ultimate games. The playing area is enormous and it is a maze game of great distinction.

This house is well kept and
has two floors.

Also here is a Cartographer
The Cartographer says
"Gosh its cold."
Edgar says
"We'll never get to the
mountain at this rate!!"

What shall we do? SAY HELLO
The Cartographer says
"Speak up sonny I'm a bit deaf"

What shall we do? HELP
Don't just kill everyone!

What shall we do?

32 MOUNTAINS OF KET

Incentive

The first of a trilogy of text-only adventures in which the player must fight through dangerous situations coping with characters who are intent on doing the most damage.

The game includes a novel combat system which has been loosely constructed around the *Dungeons and Dragons* method of scoring in which character is determined by using a points system. The game is incredibly detailed in plot and atmosphere and even contains a monetary system. The author has included interactive characters which, while not especially intelligent, react of their own volition to decisions taken by the player.

```

What now?
FORWARDS
You bump into a door
What now?
SEARCH FOR KEY
You bump into a door
What now?
IT
Could you elaborate?
What now?
N
You bump into a door
What now?
LOOK
You are inside a gigantic
clock. You can see huge cogs
numbered 1 to 9 and a massive
pendulum.
The only visible exit is north
(through a door).
What now?
■

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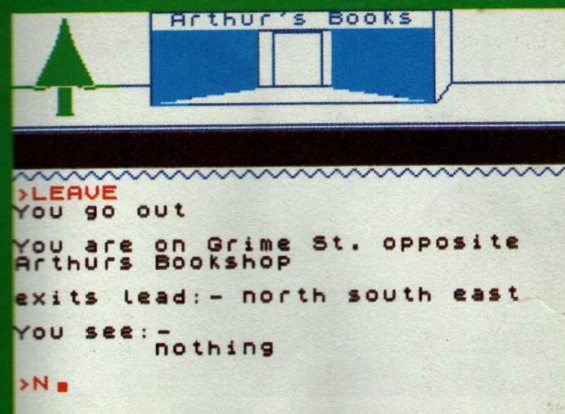
33

LORDS OF TIME

Level 9

A text-only adventure in which you must travel to different time zones in a grandfather clock collecting objects with which you can defeat the evil Lords of Time. The game includes over 200 locations and 80 objects. It is squeezed into 48K using a data compression compiler written by author Pete Austin.

It is in a class of its own as it contains adventures within an adventure. There are nine in all and each of those have at least three scenes. The complexity of the plot has kept players going for months and has given Level 9 a place in the history of adventure gaming.



```

Arthur's Books
>LEAVE
You go out
You are on Grime St. opposite
Arthurs Bookshop
exits lead:- north south east
You see:-
        nothing
>N

```

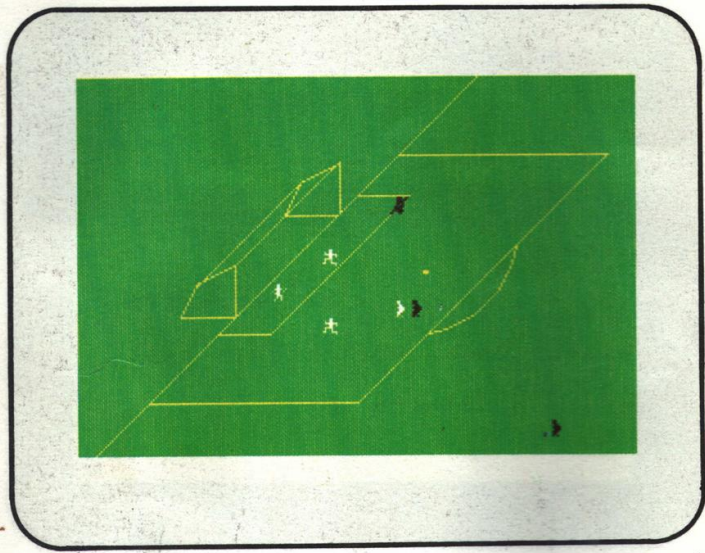
34

URBAN UPSTART

Richard Shepherd Software

A true adventure for the eighties, set in the city of Scarthorpe, a dead-end town in a bleak world of inner city decay. Your only object is to leave.

It is the scenario rather than any particular excellence of programming or graphics that qualifies the game as a classic. Scarthorpe is an overwhelmingly depressing place; the park, an apparent haven of peace and greenery, is bordered by the sewage farm and a cemetery. Gangs of police and football hooligans roam the midnight streets. Richard Shepherd deserves credit for a bold and completely different approach to the adventure market.



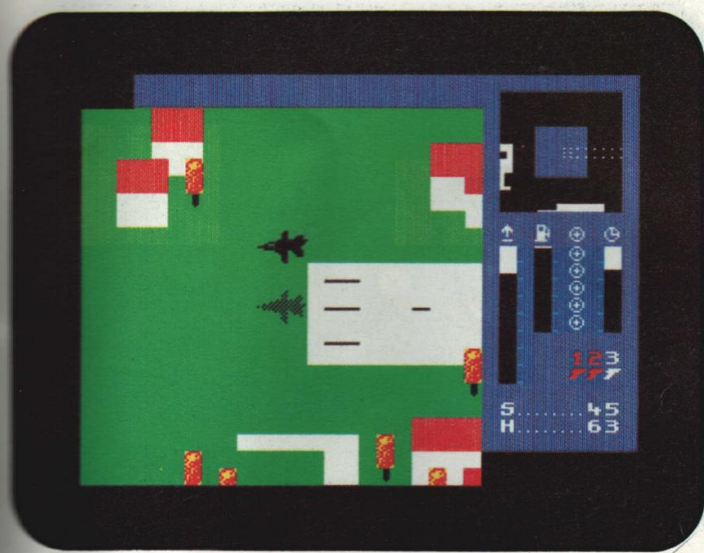
35

FOOTBALL MANAGER

Addictive Software

Written in Basic and hardly the fastest game ever seen, **Football Manager** was nevertheless a huge success, both for the Spectrum and the ZX-81.

It is your job to guide a football squad through a season of league and FA Cup football. Each player is given a rating for skill and energy, and your team gets a morale rating depending on its status over the last few games. The game is played in a series of goalmouth highlights, while you sit and bite your fingernails. Deceptively simple, it is probably the most addictive strategy game ever produced for the Spectrum.



36

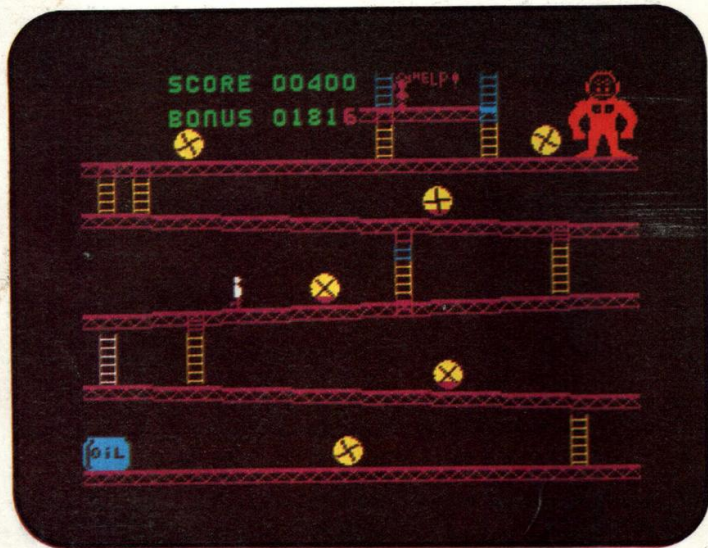
TLL

Vortex

A masterpiece of 3D graphics programming in which you fly a swing-wing Tornado fighter a few feet from the ground to eliminate a series of targets.

The graphics are solidly drawn houses, trees and telegraph lines. The Tornado casts a shadow which even climbs the walls of buildings. You can fly under bridges and phone lines with nary a flicker on the screen.

It is not the most difficult of games, but the large wraparound playing area and superb graphics give it the edge over most rivals, and make it a real pleasure to play.



37 KONG

Ocean

Tastes in arcade games vary, and while reviewers tend to value originality and sophistication the public often prefer their old amusement arcade favourites. **Kong** is one such game, directly licensed from the makers of the arcade hit **Donkey Kong**.

As Mario you must rescue your girlfriend from the clutches of the giant gorilla, climbing a variety of girders and ladders while Kong hurls barrels and other missiles at you from on high. Chunky graphics and the right blend of skill and speed make it one of the most successful attempts at translating a game from the slot machines to the television screen.

N

YOU HAVE BEEN CAUGHT.

YOU ARE FIGHTING YOUR WAY
THROUGH THICK FUNGI GROWTHS.
THE AIR IS FILLED WITH FUNGI
SPORES, ALMOST TO THE POINT
OF CHOKEING YOU.

YOU ARE IN COMBAT WITH
1 GIANT SPIDER.

WHAT WILL YOU DO NOW ?

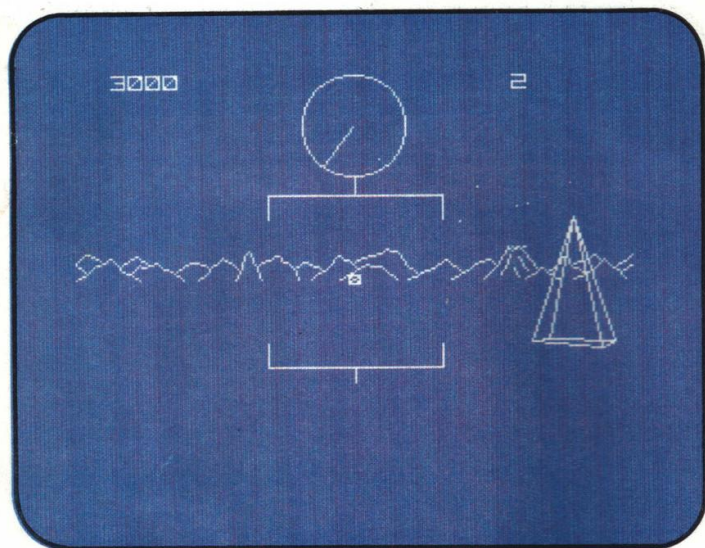
C

38 VELNOR'S LAIR

Quicksilver

A witty, intricate text adventure of the *Dungeons and Dragons* genre, which takes you into the dungeon fastness of the evil wizard Velnor to prevent him from destroying the world. The game is notable for its simple but effective combat system, and the choice of characters. Players may start in any one of three classes. Fighters are strong, wizards use spells, and clerics can heal themselves.

Few adventure games manage to combine logic problems and monster-fighting happily, and **Velnor's Lair** remains one of the best as well as one of the earliest. A well-wrought and much underrated adventure.



39 ROMMEL'S REVENGE

Crystal Computing

The best version of the arcade **Battlezone** on the Spectrum in which your tank must take on and destroy those of the enemy. The game is different from the Atari original and it contains certain improvements. You can switch on or off the fiery blasts which come from a volcano in the hills. The program options also allow tiny bleeps which indicate that an enemy tank is coming into range.

Released late in 1983, it has startling graphics and it is one of the few games in which the 3D perspective is not destroyed by the sudden or jerky movement of objects across the screen.



40 PENETRATOR

Melbourne House

One of the most successful amusement arcade games has been **Skramble**, where you pilot a craft through caverns and over mountains to a large bomb store.

Penetrator is a superb realisation of the game and had the critics raving in early 1983. The graphics are large and smooth, with sharp outlines, and the action very fast and highly addictive. What really raises the game above its fellows is the revolutionary facility to completely redesign the landscape. That, coupled with the practice modes at each level, makes it one of the most comprehensive arcade games ever.



41

MUGSY Melbourne House

An expansion on the land management theme where, instead of ruling a small kingdom, the player enacts the role of underworld boss out to rake in as much money as possible from illegal activities before being rubbed out. Slush money is paid out regularly and the police will often visit the mob's private safe to collect for the police benevolent fund.

Mugsy unfolds as a series of pictures in an animated cartoon strip. Instructions and replies are put into speech bubbles which provides the novelty value of the game. The cartoon strip concept has been well received by reviewers and customers alike.

What next?
INV
You have:
a bottle: it is full of water
a bunch of keys
some fruit
a sling
What next?
LOOK
You are in the building. Steps
lead down a well in the centre
of the floor. A white dot is
marked over the door.
A small table is here
What next?

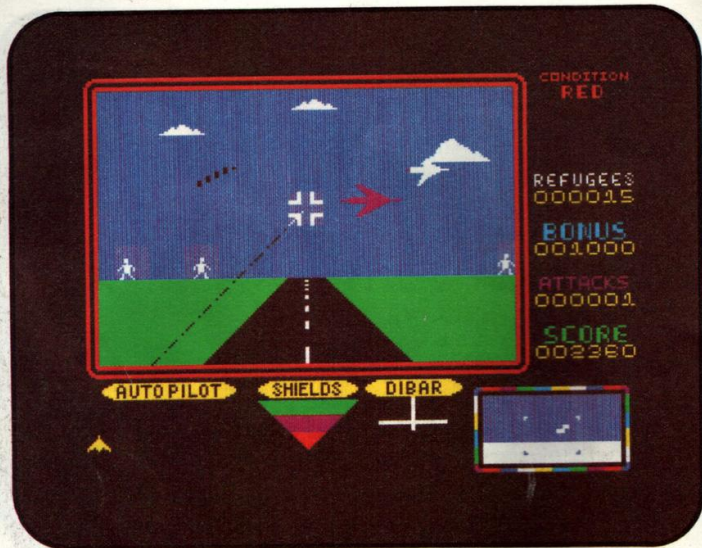
SCORE
You scored 1124 out of about 600
0.
What next?

42

ADVENTURE QUEST Level 9

A sequel to **Colossal Adventure**, the original mainframe adventure game, and the second of Level 9's Middle Earth trilogy. It is distinguished by its poetic text descriptions and perhaps draws closer to a literary form than any other text adventure.

Although most of the action is set in deserts, mountains, forests and by the side of mysterious rivers, the game makes continual reference to the earlier game both in plot and also vocabulary used. Although there are no graphics in the game Level 9 is one of the few companies which really uses the English language to paint pictures in the imagination.



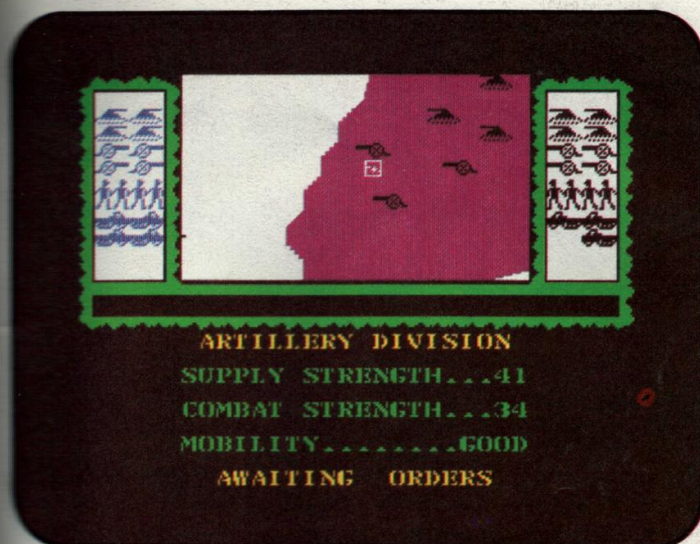
43

ZZOOM

Imagine/Beau-Jolly

An arcade game in which you must defend a chain of refugees from enemy aircraft, tanks and submarines. The graphics put **Zzoom** into very select company when it was first released in the autumn of 1983. All the features move smoothly across the screen, apparently quite independently of each other, and there are no problems when colours overlap.

It is also highly addictive. The setting, which rejects science fiction for a more contemporary scenario, seems to create a greater player involvement than the average arcade game. As you progress through the various levels, the violence intensifies into an orgy of destruction.



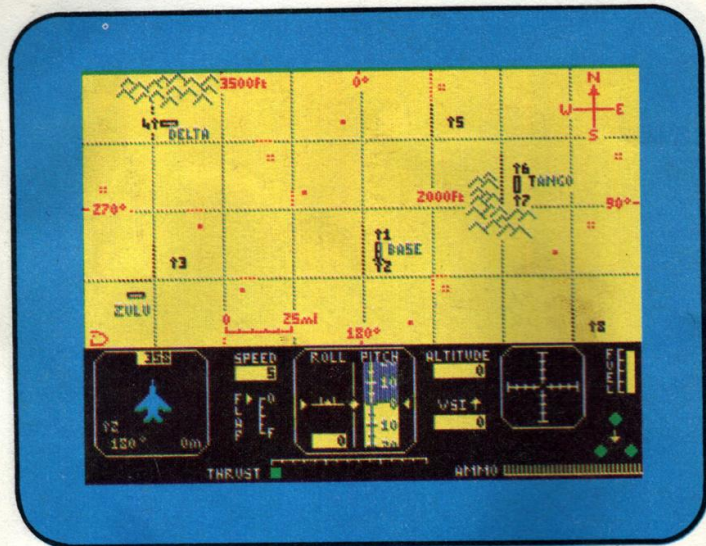
44

STONKERS

Imagine/Beau-Jolly

A state-of-the-art wargame in which you line up tanks and artillery to do battle with an enemy armoured in the same way.

Stonkers is visually exciting as it has a map of the terrain together with the positions of each force. Certain keys allow you to zoom in on sections of the map. As well as fighting you must make sure that provisions, unloaded from a boat in the estuary, are sent out to the troop positions. The game also includes some complex artificial intelligence routines which enable the computer to become a formidable opponent.



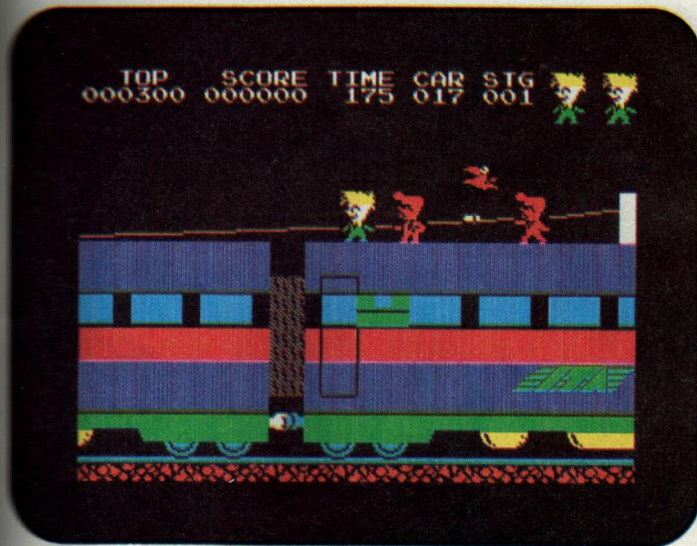
45

FIGHTER PILOT

Digital Integration

One of the finest flight simulations on the market, it goes one better than the Psion **Flight Simulation** by allowing you to not only pilot an advanced jet fighter but also engage in simulated aerial combat. Landing is more difficult with an F-15 fighter than a light aircraft, and the program is consequently tricky to use, but there are the usual practice modes to develop your skills.

The greater sophistication of the program is achieved at the expense of graphics representing features of the landscape, so you cannot have fun diving into lakes and the like.



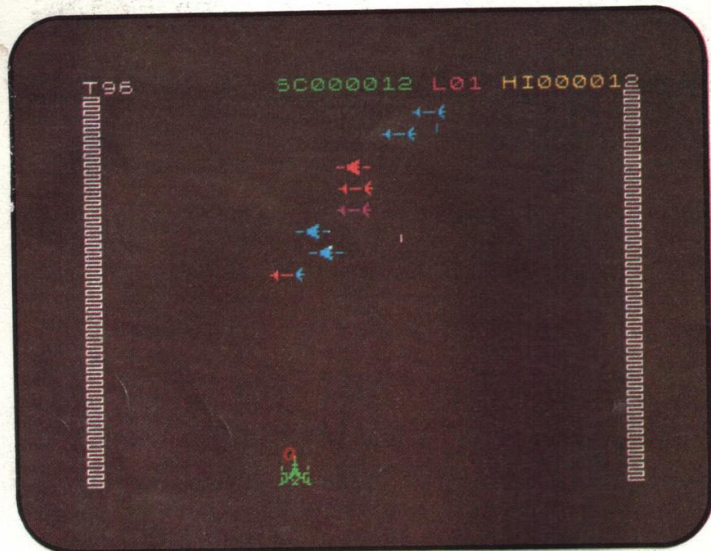
46

STOP THE EXPRESS

Sinclair Research

A cartoon-style arcade game with an unusual plot. The player is a secret agent who must stop a train before it reaches the country of the red men who have hijacked it. The special agent can slow the train by running across the top of the carriages, entering the express and running down to the engine where the brakes can be applied. On the way the red men with their deadly guns must be avoided.

Stop the Express was launched in the spring of 1984. It has set a new standard for graphics on the Spectrum.



47

ARCADIA

Imagine/Beau-Jolly

When **Arcadia** burst on an unsuspecting world it was hailed as the most addictive shoot-em-up game ever written. The graphics were said to have achieved new heights in Spectrum arcade games.

Comparing the game to current standards it is hard to see what all the fuss was about. The graphics now seem crude and the game itself a simple **Space Invaders** variant with twelve screens of aliens.

Despite shortcomings, it is nevertheless incredibly addictive and very fast moving. It was a huge success and launched Imagine on a course which led to the top of the software industry and eventually to disaster.



48

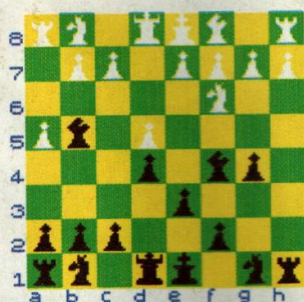
THE ORACLE'S CAVE

Doric

Adventures with randomly generated dungeons tend to be unsatisfactory due to the lack of plot and coherent logic. The **Oracle's Cave** suffers slightly on that count but makes up for it in other respects.

In one of the first full graphical adventures, your heroic character explores a network of caves, battling a variety of monsters. You may choose from four separate quests, and must complete the game within a time limit. The animated graphics were a new development at the time, and looked forward to **Valhalla**. Short on problems, but long on violence, **The Oracle's Cave** has won itself many devoted followers since its launch early in 1983.

SUPERCHESS 3.0 (1/12/1983)
 CP Software Copyright (C) 1983
 AUTHOR: Chris Whittington.



You are black
 Level 0
 Your move ?
 B6-B7
 Illegal move.

49 SUPERCHESS III

CP Software

A game capable of playing at tournament level, it includes many features not normally incorporated into computer chess programs. It has ten levels of play all of which are timed within tournament limits and the usual options such as recommended move, setting up problems and solving mating problems are included. Extra options include information on the way the program 'thinks', a display showing the types of move that the computer is considering and the number of evaluated moves.

The game is a descendant of **Suparchess I** and **II**, both of which were produced by Chris Whittington, and uses sophisticated artificial intelligence routines.



50 TIME GATE

Quicksilver

The first 3D arcade game for the Spectrum was brought out in 1982 and produced a mixed reaction from reviewers. It has, however, continued to be popular with gamers which is surprising in a market which is so flexible and prone to changes in taste and moods.

The plot involves an attempt by the player to locate the base of the evil aliens who are intent on taking over the galaxy. That involves flights up and down the time lanes through time gates which can be accessed after all the aliens in a sector have been destroyed.

YOUR TOP 50

- 1 KNIGHT LORE
- 2 GIFT FROM THE GODS
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