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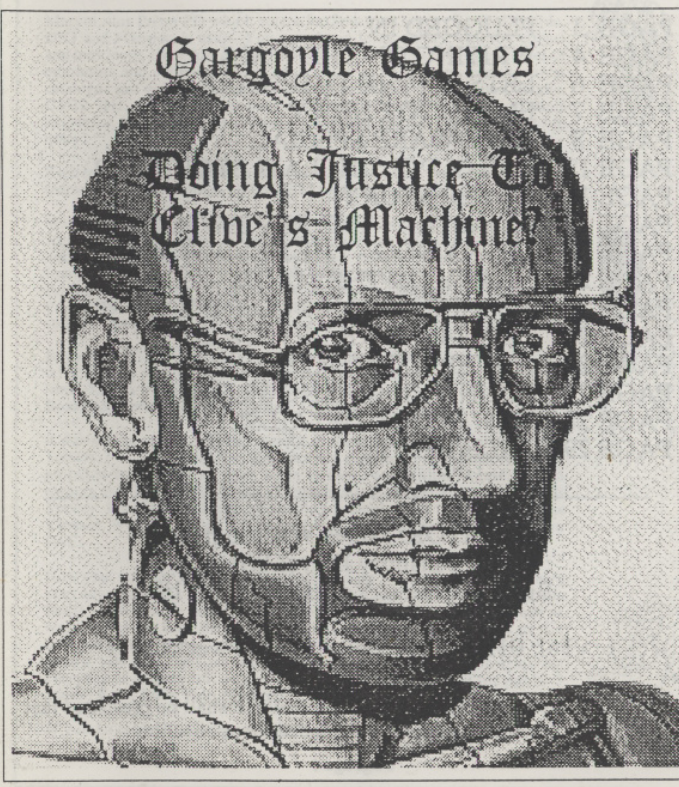
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GETTING ALL NOSTALGIC

ISSUE 3





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AUGUST 1996



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PLEASE NOTE: Unless marked differently, it shall be presumed that all correspondence is intended for publication.

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PLUGGED IN

Who's Doing What In
The World Of Speccy
Paraphernalia?

Firstly, apologies to Martyn Sherwood who kindly 'pointed out' that we somehow managed to miss his name off last issue's 'Plugged In' section. Sorry Martyn, can't print your advert due to lack of space, but here goes:

Martyn runs Prism PD which caters for Spectrum tape, +3, +D, Disciple, DX1 and Microdrive users. You can obtain fonts, games, utilities, clipart and tons more. Even Amiga and PC owners needn't miss out - free copies of emulators and emulator games are waiting to be claimed. For the latest catalogue just write (NO SAE needed!) to 13 Rodney Close, Bilton, Rugby, CV22 7HJ. Alternatively, send a 38p SAE for a FREE copy of their magazine, in which free software coupons are printed. Don't delay, write today!



Richard Coles has finally produced Express Software's first piece of software, so see the advert on PAGE 13 for more fascinating details.

Many thanks to John Wilson of Zenobi Software for getting in touch with me again recently. Apart from sending me his usual MAMMOTH back-catalogue, he also sends news of new releases. Send a 29p SAE for further details: ZENOBI SOFTWARE, 26 Spotland Tops, Cutgate, Rochdale, Lancashire OL12 7NX. Oh and there's currently a BUY THREE, PAY FOR TWO OFFER and a ONE POUND OFF ANY TITLE offer on, so here's your chance to snap up some CLASSIC adventure games!

Beyond SANIT-E is an excellent read - IF YOU'VE GOT AN AMIGA that is! BS is very well presented Speccy diskzine which is getting better all the time! Send a blank disc and SAE for a free sample - you won't regret it: Brookside Cottage, Moorby, Boston, Lincolnshire, PE22 7PN.



It was nice to see Paul White recently, making his inaugural visit to Classix Towers. I have now read the ZX Files and can report that if indeed it does go paper-based then we have some serious competition! Again, Amiga owners only here (1200 machine recommended) can get a free copy of this Speccy dedicated diskzine by sending 3 blank discs to Paul at 30 The Rowans, Wetherby, West Yorkshire LS22 5EB. Oh, and don't forget your SAE.

Now you may say I'm plugging it just because I'm writing for it, but here goes anyway: ZED 2 is edited by Mat Beale (hope that's the correct spellin Mat!) The content is definitely Speccy-orientated (catering for emulators as well, but at the time of writing I'm not sure how much it costs or it's frequency. Best thing to do is drop Mat an SAE and ask for details. Who knows, you may even get sent a complimentary copy, but then again not everyone is as generous as me! (HA, HA say my friends at the pub!). 3 Station Road, Birch Vale, Stockport, Cheshire, SK12 5BP



If you haven't been plugged in yet, drop us a line and we'll see what we can do.

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Writing On The Wall

ANDY DAVIS, Alchemist Research, Sheffield

Dear James

Thank you for issue two of Classix. I was impressed with the first issue, the second issue knocked it for six! Im sure most are saying that its a great improvement on *SPELL* DTP wise, but we all have to begin somewhere, as the material was just as good, which goes to show that its not the quality of presentation, but quality of work that counts.

I think your Oasis quote could develop into a long running joke! From the picture on the front cover, if I were Bilbo Baggins and had old Smaug on my tail, I wouldnt be looking back in anger, jest or any other bloody thing! Perhaps Keep On Runnin by The Spencer Davis Group (good old uncle Spencer, he sure made some good tunes!) would be equally as appropriate!

Staying on this theme, can any readers suggest other appropriate tunes for games? Walking On The Moon by Sting for Lunar Jetman? Spandau Ballets Gold for Alchemist? Or even Wonderwall for Arkanoid! (More suggestions invited from readers - ED).

OK, I hear the hoos. Im off! Enclosed is a cheque for payment for another successful find! Thats two in a very short space of time! The service works and it works well!

Take Care

Andy - Proud To Be Associated with Classix.

ALAN from PowerTek (producers of Beyond Sanit-E), Boston.

HiYA James!

Thanx for the letter and issue two of your Classix magazine. I must say I was impressed with the quality of your fanzine as I full well know how difficult it is producing an on-disk mag, and a paper-based magazine is, I suspect, much more time-consuming. Keep up the good work!

(He continues...)

Anywayz, as well as your adverts and stuff, I'm also going to do a review of Classix ISSUE 2 for Beyond Sanit-E. Don't worry it'll be positive! So you should get some more publicity out of that. Actually, it's doing me more of a favour because ever since

Page



I heard that the Speccy scene was still alive, I've wanted to write some articles about the latest developments on the scene, and Classix arrived! If you have a load of Speccy contax then please let them know that I'll gladly publish any news or whatever concerning the scene in Beyond Sanit-E (See Plugged In section for address). It's about time the Speccy scene was know around the Amiga scene.

Well, I'd better go coz I've got some more letter to do (I know the feeling - ED). Tch.... does this typing ever end! C yA L8R!

Alan (zYLAX of PowerTek)

MARK STURDY who is the Former Editor of CRASHed, Wetherby.

Dear James

Thanks for your letter and copy of Classix, which I recieved a few days ago. I have to admit that it came as a bit of a surprise that you'd written before, because I'd never received anything from you. Presumably your original letter got lost in the post. Actually (although I still contribute to it), I stopped editing CRASHed almost a year ago. The 'new' editor, if you want to get in touch with him, is Allan Clarkson, The Old Coach House, 16 The Avenue, Crossgates, LEEDS LS15 8JN. Allan's also organising (and I use that term loosely!) the Northern SAM/ Speccy show some time in September. Sorry, but that's about as precise as Allan gets. Nah, he's all right really!

Anyway, I enjoyed reading Classix (especially the Fountain Of Knowledge bit), and I'll try to get a review in the next issue of CRASHed (out in a few weeks for £1). I won't be subscribing for the time being (to Classix), because a) I'm too poor, and b) I'm just as interested in the present of the Speccy (and SAM) as the past. Although they'll always be a place for what was happening 10, 15 (and coming soon) 20 years ago, I prefer not to dwell to such an extent on games I've already played. Saying that, Classix is a very well written magazine which is superb for its target audience. Best of luck to you. I think what you're doing with the second-hand game thing is great and I'll make sure you get another plug for that in CRASHed.

Well, I think that's everything.

Zucchini, MARK.

Editors Comments: Well, quite a nice mixture of letters this month. I printed the whole of Mark's letter in order to clear up any confusion (mainly my own!) about who does what at CRASHed. I personally have never had a reply from Alan, although I am keen to have a stall at the Northern Speccy/SAM fair.

It's nice to see that even on other computers, the Speccy still has a presence. The number of speccy-based PC/AMIGA productions (i.e. zines, solutions, tips) which are appearing is astounding - keep up the good work at Beyond Sanit-E! But, what about Mark's point about not wanting to dwell too much on the past - write and tell me what you fell about this. And please also follow Andy's lead and send in your song title which seem to suit certain games. I look forward to hearing from you!

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LET'S DO THE TIMEWARP

Right, to get you in the mood for your bi-monthly nostalgia trip we have decided to take you back a decade and re-print the results of the 1986 SINCLAIR USER READERS POLL. Making its appearance in the April 1987 edition of SU, the more sharp-witted of you might realise what connection this listing has to the later contents of this issue.

BEST OVERALL PROGRAM OF 1986: STAR GLIDER (Rainbird). RUNNERS UP: Uridium, The Great Escape and Gauntlet.

PERIPHERAL OF THE YEAR: SPECTRUM (Cheetah). RUNNERS UP: Opus Disc Drive, Multiface I and the AMX Mouse.

MOST EXCITING SOFTWARE HOUSE: ELITE. RUNNERS UP: Ocean, Hewson, US Gold.

PROGRAMMER OF THE YEAR: STEPHEN CROW (Hewson). RUNNERS UP: Keith Burkhill, Bo Jangeborg and Jonathan Smith.

WORST PRODUCT OF 1986: WORLD CUP CARNIVAL (US Gold). RUNNERS UP: Ninja Master, Amstrad's Joystick and the 128k +2!!!

BEST SOUNDTRACK OF A GAME: GLIDER RIDER (Argus Press). RUNNERS UP: Ping Pong, Cobra and Fairlight II.

BEST GRAPHICS IN A GAME: LIGHTFORCE (Faster Than Light). RUNNERS UP: Uridium, Great Escape, Dan Dare.

BEST ADVENTURE GAME: HEAVY ON THE MAGIK (Gargoyle). RUNNERS UP: The Boggit, Price Of Magik and Vera Cruz.

BEST TOOLKIT PROGRAM: GRAPHIC ADVENTURE CREATOR (Incentive). RUNNERS UP: Art Studio, Artist II, Super Toolkit III.

BEST ARCADE GAME: URIDIUM (Hewson). RUNNERS UP: Gauntlet, Lightforce, Space Harrier.

BEST FILM: TOP GUN (Tom Cruise, Kelly McGillis). RUNNERS UP: Aliens, Back To The Future, Rocky IV.

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8BIT

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From Brian Watson
Harrowden, 39, High Street,
Sutton, ELY, Cambs
CB6 2RA

EMULATOR NEWS



The crazy guys at BEYOND SANIT-E recently announced that they HOPE to be releasing a whole boatload of Spectrum titles to run on the AMIGA using the SPECTRUM emulator. Although I have recently been told that the project is being 'put on hold' for a while, the first lots of goodies shouldn't be too far away. For more information, contact the address given in the PLUGGED IN section of this issue. The planned projects are as follows:

FORGOTTEN WAREZ 1:

A Shadow On Glass, How To Be A Complete..., Alien 8, Chaos, Finders Keepers, Chiller, Dizzy, Frankenstein Jnr, Knight Tyme, Little Puff, Skool Daze, Mr Wino, Slightly Magic, Spellbound, Spin Dizzy, Terra Cresta, Tetris.

FORGOTTEN WAREZ 2:

3D Death Chase, Atic Atac, Batman (The First One), Batty, Bear A Grudge, The Bobby Yazz Show, Cricket Coach, Enduro Eddie, Galaxians, Hacker, Hacker 2, Mutants, PacMania, Pippo, SkyRunner, TLL (Tornado Low Level).

FORGOTTEN WAREZ 3:

CIR Demo 1, Dizzy 2 (Special Edition), Gift From The Gods, Manic Miner, NMI (No More Intelligence), Phoenix, Pinball, Plexar, Pool, Renegade, Play It Again Sam (Pt 1), SpecTec, StageCoach, Starstrike, Super Shuffle, Theatre Europe.

The lads also plan to release some AMIGA disks called NUKED and NUKIN HELL. These packs will contain all the information they can muster about a particular Speccy game. Watch this space!!!

For PC owners (like myself), ALCHEMIST SOFTWARE is an ideal place to go if you want to see an extensive range of CHEAP and GOOD QUALITY emulator software. If you want their catalogue then send an SAE to 126 Hayward Road, Redfield, Bristol, BS5 9QA.

John Wilson, the mighty ROCHDALE BALROG, now offers his complete Spectrum ZENOB1 collection on PC Disk and AMIGA disk, for use with the appropriate emulators. You even get a free copy of the emulator supplied with the game! Look him up in our PLUGGED IN section.

If anyone has any other Spectrum emulator information, please send it to us - after all, any Speccy-related news is GOOD NEWS!

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International Emergency Ghosthunter Calling All ZX Clubs

HARDWARE SPECIAL

By Colin Bibby

Disturbed by frequencies presently beyond my control it remains my goal to suppress the ghoul from my system by whatever means available. Can you help?

Briefly - My +3 is set up upstairs in a room at one side of the house while the stereo is downstairs at the other side separated from each other by two walls at a distance of approximately 10 meters. When the +3 is switched on upstairs it switches off the stereo in the living room downstairs. By who or WHAT?

This problem might be more widespread and so serious that it now seems practical that I ask others to help me in my search for an answer (or answers).

I find inside my somewhat antique Apricot comp that it's rather PSU is encased into a well ventilated and earthed metal box. The +3 PSU on the other hand is in an unscreened plastic case. While the +3 will switch off the stereo the Apricot doesn't have any adverse affect. Have to wonder what affect the +2A / +3 system might have on a pacemaker? I also wonder if my +3 has any adverse effect on next doors stereo but am too afraid to ask. (One might deduct from this that I love my +3 moreso). Many +2A / +3 users will also have experienced freak keying on the screen of odd digits such as 77777 and others.

Might the PSU be the cause? My Apricot has a filtered power sw. I am beginning to wonder if the +2A / +3 system managed to escape legislation in these areas. Or might in fact this have been the true reason for it's FINAL SURRENDER? TRANSMITTER LICENSED!?!? Which ever is true we ZXers do need to try harder to isolate the probs associated. Poor, I can ill afford to waste money. So HOW?

All help and suggestions appreciated. We really do need to help each other with this one quite urgently. If you have a better brain than I then do help is all with this one as soon as poss. WORKING TOGETHER - Some hints:

Thin aluminium gauze sheet available from car accessory shops. Might the above gauze be wrapped either around or inside the +2A / +3 PSU then earthed for screening.

**WARNING: - DO NOT ATTEMPT THE LATTER IN A HURRY.
240 VAC CAN STRIKE THEN KILL AT THE SPEED OF LIGHT!**

Might it be more practical to replace this PSU with another from such as Greenweld who often sell very low priced similar PSU's by mail order which are metal-cased and therefore earthed? Might the 777777 problem go deeper than its PSU alone?

It came to my attention some time ago that the grey +2 has what seems to be an aluminium heatsink on one of its chips. But that aluminium jacket must then be one of the most ridiculous heatsinks ever. It isn't tightly clamped onto the chip in ways that a heatsink should be. So might this aluminium jacket be just that, a jacket or shield to assist a busy chip in eliminating the 777777 probs? This jacket is absent from the +2A / +3 system boards.

Might it be practical to invest further in aluminium foil or similar screening and earthing of the interior of the +2A / +3 system? To help insulate against the 777777's is it practical to paint any of the +3 I'C pins with rubber silicone solution such as that available from aquatic shops and DIY centres for tank making and window sealing? Might a 12V battery and 5V reg eliminate the 777777 etc? All help and support appreciated by thousands of ZX lovers.

EDITORS NOTE

Since Colin wrote this article, I have been in touch with David Williams from SCOTWEST.pcw user group. Supporting the AMSTRAD machine. I noticed that in their newsletter there was a mention of a similar problem. After asking David to explain further, I received the following letter in reply regarding Colin's problem.

*Dear James,

Thank you for your letter received today. This reply will be delayed because there is another of those strikes tomorrow, but you will receive this letter a day or so late.

Front End Immunity refers in principle to the receiving equipment which is being referred to, i.e. the Stereo you refer to. It is the *receiving* equipment which has to be immune, although of course the source of interference should not be pushing it out. However, the law refers to receiving equipment being manufactured so that it is unaffected by any other transmission, whether legal or not. Obviously your reader's radio does not have this property.

When you say the equipment is being switched off, it begs many questions. Very obviously it is not being switched off at the mains, but what is actually happening? On the assumption that it works under all other situations, i.e. not interfered with by television, another radio, or a computer other than a Speccy, it does seem strange that it only plays up when one of the Specs is switched on. Does it happen no matter where in the house the radio is placed? Is it mains powered, or does it work from batteries? Is it turned by a manual tuner, or is it one of these new fangled pre-set button machines? I could understand interference if the latter is the case!

I have no trouble myself from any of my computers. Originally my +3 was powered by a home made supply, but it got so hot I invested in the proper commercially made power supply. But in neither case did I suffer any interference. Unless your reader has two rogue Speccies I strongly suspect he has a faulty Stereo radio. He is welcome to telephone me at any time (I am retired, although I am out a lot helping pensioners) and an answer machine is on line to accept any messages in my absence.

I know of no-one else who has this interference problem, so let us try and help your reader. Does this problem affect any other radio? Has he/she friends who could bring their machine into his/her house to see where the actual fault lies?

If the correct commercial power supply is being used, I think the problem lies elsewhere, but I have heard, from time to time, of real stinkers of problems. 90% of the answers lie in the aerial input connections into the receiver being affected. Look there first, and then talk to me. There will be more comments from me in our next Newsletter, which will not be until August, since we are taking a summer respite!"

I hope this is some help to you Colin and for that matter, any other people who have been experiencing this problem with our beloved $+2 / +3$. Any further suggestions on this matter would be most welcome. David's number has been passed onto Colin - GOOD LUCK!!!

HARDWARE SPECIAL PART II

Boot Up

By Richard Coles

Let me remind you of the scene a few years ago. Everyone wanted the hottest console out, be it Mega Drive, Super NES, Nio Gio, or any other beast you care to name.. Do you also remember the prices of the games? £40+. Now they have come down to around £15-£20.

What's he talking about I hear you ask!?! There are still some game consoles around and they are in plentiful supply. Ah, correct you may be, but most of the newer consoles use CD's and anyway, people have noticed what a rip-off these are now. I talk with my school chums about what a load of rubbish MS-DOS is and how silly Windows 95 is, with its fancy graphics slowing the whole thing down, rather than tell them to shut up when they start talking about how Street Fighter 2 is a barg at £49.99!

So, what am I getting to, and what has it got to do with our beloved Speezy that we all adore so much? Ah well, I've got another point to make before I get to that (ZZZZZZZZZZZZZZzzzzzz..... a reader).

The end of the 70's. Microsoft with young, smelly, greasy-haired Bill Gates and IBM with the multi-million pound Main-frame empire, battling it out in the States. Even with all that action, we can't forget Atari. Remember the 2860 (I think!). Well, that console thingy anyway - yummy, low-res graphics but automatic loading or boot-up. One of the first consoles around but sadly it had to make way for the biggies (Hmmm, that sounds familiar - ED) - Sinclair, Commodore etc... These 'biggies' noticed this and started working on their own consoles. Commodore put a cartridge slot in its Vic 20 and 64/128, and they weren't the only ones - lots of companies did the same.

The ones amongst you left awake may already know what I'm getting to. Sinclair's attempt to attract the serious gamer who wanted instant loading times. The legendary INTERFACE 2.

The Interface 1 was much more serious - printer socket, microdrive socket, networking sockets..... not really what people wanted. The Spectrum was regarded as a games computer because of its keyboard. One reason why the Interface 1 was produced was to try and make people take it seriously, vaunting it as a powerful office tool; especially with the Interface 1 added.

Anyway, the Interface 2 was for gamers. A treat. The serious bods had got their fast media and their full-size printer, so games got a ROM socket and two 'Standard' joystick interfaces.

Funny how Sinclair used the word 'Standard', as they weren't standard at all! Kempston had designed their make to be THE joystick for the Speccy, so I don't call two joysticks using a brand new system standard at all. Oh, well!

Anyway, the fun bit was the ROM socket. This was quite small, and took carts only a bit bigger than a microdrive cart! Amazing stuff! Basically the way it worked was simple. When the computer was turned on, it would check to see if there was anything in the ROM slot and if this was the case, it would totally by-pass the main ROM and just boot up the game straight away. Simple, yes; but it worked too.

I got my grubby hands on a boxed model with a tasty game - one of my all-time faves (my mum got it for me and my bro in 1984) - Jetpac (Yeh! - ED). Slotted the cartridge in, got my Dad to turn the computer on at the wall and the first thing I saw was the loading picture from the tape with the words PRESS A KEY TO START. No flicker, no brief copyright message, nothing. Just the game straight away. Wow!

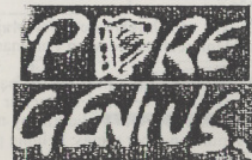
Now don't get all excited. The game play wasn't any faster or anything like that, which was a bit of a shame. But there was a difference I found out about with a bit of research. If a game is 48k only on tape, it will be okay on a 16k ROM cart. Snazzy!

But there was never much software because people didn't buy it - mainly because it was too pricey. So it flopped. Shame, there were very good (and still are), but I don't suppose that people were used to paying those sort of prices for games back then.

They are worth looking out for, games or no games, as they are very interesting on their own especially for Speccy collectors like me. I'm really interested in hardware. The only thing is that they don't work on +2, +2a or +3 computers because of the AMSTRAD ROM changes. Damn.

But you have to hand it to Sinclair - they did produce a high quality item. It just didn't sell and if it's any CONSOLEation (Groan - ED!), AMSTRAD tried to do the same on their 464 and 6128+'s and failed.... miserably!!! Ha.

(ED - Any comments on the Interface 2 or other hardware, readers? Please feel free to send in details of your experiences, good or otherwise).



The Clive Sinclair Story

PART 2

By Richard Coles



Clive. He's just 17 at the moment, but he's invented a radio the size of a lighter! He's certainly an accomplished inventor. Soon after this amazing feat, a journalist quite correctly forecast that Clive Sinclair would become a household name. Even so, as far as his parents were concerned he was just the same old Clive; their son.

Not that they didn't have anything to boast about in their family. Clive's first cousin fenced for England. Incidentally, Clive could match him with his sporting abilities anyway as he runs (and finishes) the New York and London marathons - but that's a bit more up-to-date.

Anyway, his mum, Thora, a firm-footed down-to-earth Devonshire lass would just bluntly refuse to accept that Clive was "special" until he was knighted by the Queen. This was his reward for single-handedly taking Britain to the front of the home computer industry (front-end technology at low prices).

Until then, on every occasion she picked up the paper and saw her son's name on it she would say to her husband Bill, "I can't understand why they write about him". How Bill felt about it, I don't really know.

I also don't know what Thora was thinking. See, her son (who like most sons was the pride of his mother) had developed the home computer industry in Britain, tied it up in fancy bows and ribbons and given it to the man in the street for next to nothing. For this he had been named "The Guardian Young Business Of The Year" and "Computing's Person Of The Decade".

So that was it. Until 1983 when he was in the Queen's birthday honours list, he was just "our Clive" to his mum.

"It was as though when Her Majest touched Clive on the shoulder, his mother suddenly realised he wasn't ordinary", Bill recalls.

Well, back to the present (or past). Clive's first big break was in 1962. From Islington, Clive formed Sinclair Radionics. It was a big success. The company made and sold DIY radio kits by mail order. As the company grew larger, Clive set his mind on other things: helping people with maths. And he managed to pull it off: 10 years later!


1972. Sinclair Radionics dropped the Radionics and became just Sinclair. The reborn company bloomed straight away. After Sir Clive's success with his radios and amps, he must have been overwhelmed when his titled company came out with a world first - the Pocket Calculator. And it's name? The Sinclair Executive (My dad's still got one - ED!). Remember, we now take this little box of tricks for granted and can pick them up for next to nothing, but back then it cost £79. That was still cheap however. For the first time, someone (in this case Sir Clive) had taken technology and given it to us for next to nothing. And it wasn't going to be the last time either.

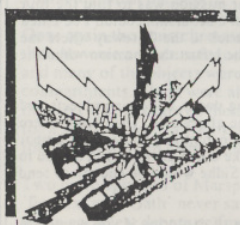
All this may have seemed amazing to us, but for Clive's bank account - well! Our hero (!) made over 2,500,000 in export revenue.

Fancy that? I do! Anyway, as you can guess, the name Clive Sinclair meant 'pure genius' to a lot of people in the electronics world. They were right, but Clive did flunk a bit on his next venture. In 1975, Clive launches one of the first digital watches - The Black Watch. It worked. It worked brilliantly in fact. But there was a catch. For some reason (I don't know what), the company had difficulty with the supply of chips, and this resulted in losses.

So, Clive is big in the world. Where will he turn next? Find out next month in the best Speczy mag around.

If you wanted to write to me, please do so at the following address: Richard Coles, 7 Manor Drive, Merritt, Somerset. TA16 5NT.



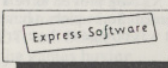


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COVER STORY



Gargoyle Games by Richard Howson



Gargoyle Games was essentially three people: Ted Heathcote, Greg Follis & Roy Carter. Ted was in charge of marketing and sales, Greg was the man behind designing the games and Roy was the programmer. Greg and Roy were friends for 15 years prior to setting up Gargoyle Games. They were both system analysts and remained in their full time jobs whilst Gargoyle got established with their first release on the Spectrum, an arcade shoot 'em up called 'Ad Astra' which hit the shelves in early 1984.

It wasn't a case of overnight success. Eighteen months of hard work and planning had gone into 'Ad Astra' and 'Tir Na Nog'. The first release sold well but slowly, so the trio were caught by surprise when 'Tir Na Nog's sales shot off from the word go. The game was well received by the important computer mags, (for example, Crash magazine awarded it their highest accolade - a "Crash Smash").

'Tir Na Nog' was different from any other Spectrum adventure at the time. It was completely graphical and didn't involve any typing apart from a few key presses which made the player pick up items, use them or fight. The term 'graphic adventure' was coined and this game fitted the bill perfectly.

The most impressive aspect of 'Tir Na Nog' was the animation used on the character that the player controlled. Displayed 'side on', the movement of Cuchulainn must have been closely modelled on real walking footage. The hero's hair would bounce off his back, and he even had a slight stoop. Another nice touch was that you could change the direction that you viewed him from, so a different backdrop would be displayed. These included mountains and a mysterious tower. Small birds were seen flying in the distance and the backdrops made a valiant attempt at parallax scrolling to give the illusion of depth.

The game was based on the exploits of Cuchulainn, also known in Celtic mythology as Sedanta, Cucuc, the Hound of Heaven, Culan's Hound or just plain Hound. When the game starts, the hero is already dead. Tir Na Nog is in fact the afterworld and your mission was to find the four fragments of the seal of Calum and re-unite them into one. Whilst Cuchulainn couldn't be killed he could weaken and each time this happened he was thrown back to the Gateway where the game started. Any objects he was carrying at the time would be left at the location where he 'died', so the player would have to go back there to retrieve them.

Most of the game was spent wandering along the paths, opening doors, collecting objects and fighting off the chimp-like Sidhe, who were the bad guys in the afterworld. The objects were many and varied, and many had a use that would only become apparent much later on. Combat was a matter of readying your weapon and pressing a key to strike out at the enemy. You had to remain ready for a fight at any moment, as one touch from the Sidhe would be enough to send you back to the Gateway.

Tir Na Nog proved to be a massive game that took an awful lot of exploring if you wanted to succeed. Some paths seemed to go on for ever and many players only solved it thanks to a map that was printed in the ever popular Crash magazine.

A C64 conversion of Tir Na Nog coded by Design Design (nee Crystal Computing) followed soon after. The game was originally born from Greg's fascination with Celtic legends and

mythology, and after taking into account the sales they decided to abandon their plans to do a game based on 'The Hunting of the Snark' and instead create a sequel.

The sequel turned into a prequel and was tentatively named 'Cuchulainn - The Early Years'. One of the criticisms of the first game was that it was simply too large. Players would spend most of their time wandering around the roads and not enough time puzzle solving. To avoid this problem, Greg decided that the second game should be set inside a city to give the world some distinct and plausible boundaries. The game evolved into 'Dun Darach' and was named after the city in which the adventure took place.

'Dun Darach' was another step forward. For starters, Cuchulainn was alive and was surrounded by dozens of other humans who went around their daily lives. There were many shops and buildings to visit and plenty of people to trade with. Visually it looked better too. Different locations were displayed on different colour backdrops and this added variety to the look of the game. The animation on the characters was as good as ever, but the real improvement was in the game design. Some of the wandering characters had to be talked to. Others were thieves who would steal your money if you weren't careful. The puzzles that involved objects were numerous and challenging.

'Dun Darach' was released six or seven months after 'Tir Na Nog' in the summer of 1985 and again it went down well with the magazines and the public. At its heart was the same style of game as it's predecessor, but it was so much better the second time around.

Only four months separated 'Dun Darach' from the third (and ultimately final) game that used the same system. 'Marsport' was a science fiction game which had you exploring the many levels of Marsport (a city based on Mars) looking for the plans of the city. The baddies of the game were the Sept warriors, insect like creatures who behaved in a similar manner to the Sidhe. One touch and you were dead. The very first puzzle to solve involved finding and charging a blaster (gun) so that you could defend yourself against the Sept.

Once again the main character used the same frames of animation as before, but this time he wore a space suit complete with helmet. The station was predominantly red and many of the objects were to be found in cupboards and other similar compartments. There were also friendly 'herald' robots that patrolled certain areas of the city. If you followed them around they could protect you from the Sept Warriors for a short while. They looked like floating orbs in appearance, not dissimilar from the robots that were in Gerry Anderson's 'Terrahawks' TV series!

Two more episodes of Marsport were announced for release in 1986. Unfortunately, 'Fornax' and 'Gath' never saw the light of day. Gargoyle's next release in late 1985 was a complete departure from anything they had done before. It was an isometric 'Knight Lore' style game called 'Sweevo's World' which involved a rather humorous looking robot named Sweevo. He looked like a cross between E.T. and Stanley of Laurel and Hardy fame! Again this went down quite well with the games buying public.

Their second release in 1986 was (in my opinion anyway) their best game to date. It was another graphic adventure but it used an updated graphic system from that seen in the Cuchulainn games and in 'Marsport'. The game was 'Heavy on the Magick' and it proved to be the most atmospheric and challenging game of the series. The graphics were actually magnified (expanded) versions of much smaller graphics which enabled Gargoyle to include many more locations than were previously possible.

The game focused heavily on magic and spells and was based in a dungeon under Collodon's Pile. You controlled Axil the Able who was sent into the dungeon by the Wizard Master Therion for telling rude stories about him in the infamous Golden Thurble tavern. Axil was a mysterious looking fellow dressed in a dark flowing cloak. His face was forever hidden in the depths of the cloaks hood.

'Heavy on the Magick' included some role playing game elements in the form of hit points for stamina, skill and luck. These could be swapped around if you didn't like them although they couldn't be re-calculated unless you were starting the game again from scratch.

Playing the game was simple enough once you got to grips with the new control language called 'Merphish'. Keywords like the compass directions were created by pressing just one key for each direction. Other keywords let you examine items, pick them up, drop them, invoke a demon (if you had the correct focus object), blast an enemy or freeze an enemy. You could also talk to characters in a limited fashion. You had to do this if you were to complete the game. Wandering monsters including werewolves, ghosts, goblins and trolls which were all animated and seemed to home in on Axil pretty quickly!

A status panel could be toggled to show the available exits from a room as well as the spells that your Grimoire contained, your inventory and your situation (the name of the room you are in, the level you are on and your grade which went up each time you located one of the four exits). Experience points were awarded for successfully defeating any monsters.

The first release of the game on the Spectrum contained a small bug which gave the wrong clue to a puzzle. A later release fixed this problem, although if you knew the correct answer you could solve the puzzle anyway.

As with 'Marsport' before it, sequels were planned for 'Heavy on the Magick'. The manual mentioned the strong possibility of add on modules using your existing characters stats and independent sequels too. Modules included 'Collodon's Pile - the castle above the dungeons', 'The Tomb of Taro - a strange and terrifying catacomb adjacent to the dungeons', and 'Paradise Reglossed - in which things are not as heavenly as they seem'. Complete adventures included 'The Trials of Therion - What happened to Axil when he returned!'. These promised add ons and sequels failed to appear as well. HOTM was Gargoyle's finest hour and it was also their last adventure release, although nobody knew it at the time.

All of their games to date had been published under the Gargoyle label. In mid-1986 Greg, Roy and Ted decided to return to proper arcade games. With the Gargoyle label so strongly associated with adventure games, they decided to launch a new label that would release only arcade style product. The name they came up with was 'Faster

than Light' (F.T.L.). It was originally going to be the name for their first new game but they felt it was such a good name that it should be the name of the label instead. (At this point in history, no one had heard of the other F.T.L who were to unleash 'Dungeon Master' on an unsuspecting world two years later on 16 bit).

Whilst the new label was being set up, Gargoyle found themselves rescuing Elite's 'Scooby Doo' license. They had been planning a game for about a year but it collapsed and a new one was needed fast. Seeing that they were geographically close by (Gargoyle in Dudley and Elite in Walsall) a deal was struck and 'Scooby Doo' appeared in October 1986. Scooby had to rescue each of his pals who were held captive on each level. The player would walk Scooby around the house, navigating ladders and punching ghosts. It was a very basic game design, but it did provide a challenge of sorts. In hindsight, it was probably the worst game they wrote but considering the circumstances they came through it with flying colours.

The first release under the F.T.L label was a shoot 'em up that tried very hard to avoid the colour clash problems on the Spectrum called 'Light Force', released at the end of 1986. This was followed in early 1987 by 'Shockway Rider', a beat 'em up style game with scrolling paths and obstacles. It was a bit like hurdles but on flat moving escalators! Three months later came 'Hydrofool' which was another isometric game featuring the cute robot Sweevo. This time he swam through each location. Five months later came their second licensed game for Elite based on the cartoon tv series 'Thundercats'. At one point in 1987 they announced that the next F.T.L game would be a 'Samurai' fighting game but this never appeared.

There was then a two year gap before 'Supertrux' appeared, again under the Elite label. What Gargoyle did between 1987 and 1989 only they know, but I can hazard a guess that they returned to business programming as it was probably more lucrative by the late eighties. It was a shame that they did not continue writing graphic adventure games as they had a style that no one else could match on 8 bit. In 1994 it was announced that Greg Follis was returning to computer games with a PC version of 'Tir Na Nog' updated for the 90's. Psygnosis were the proposed publisher, but the game never made it to completion. The few pictures published in magazines at the time made it look quite bizarre. The graphics seemed to be digitised from paintings, and in one screenshot they showed a muscle-bound figure (similar in appearance to Conan the Barbarian) standing next to a giant apple! I can only assume that the game failed to match up to expectations in an industry that was gearing up for the launch of the Sony PlayStation and the recent debut of 'Doom' on the PC, and was internally cancelled.

Following is a list of Gargoyle's releases to date. (Thanks must go to The Rochdale Balrog - John Wilson for his diligent research!)



Arcade: Ad Astra - 1984, Sweevo's World - 1985 (both Gargoyle Games), Scooby Doo - 1986, Thundercats - 1987, Supertrux - 1989 (all three Elite), Lightforce, Shockway Rider, Hydrofool (all F.T.L.).

Adventure: Tir Na Nog - 1984, Dun Darach - 1985, Marsport - 1985, Heavy on the Magick - 1986 (all Gargoyle Games).

Right - after reading that excellent article by Richard Hewison (sadly, the last - unless he suddenly produces another one from somewhere!), we thought you'd like to read a little more about the excellent titles which Gargoyle produced. Our sincere thanks go out to Glynn Palmer for his diligent research, without which this 'zine would be much the poorer! On with the nostalgia trip!!!



AD ASTRA



Review taken from CRASH, May 1984.

Essential Information:

Producer: Gargoyle Games Memory Required: 48k
Retail price: £5.95 Language: Machine Code
Authors: Roy Carter, Greg Follis

GARGOYLE GAMES is a new company situated in Birmingham, and AD ASTRA (To the stars!) is their first game. Its quite a debut too.

This is an arcade space combat game which features very large graphics, all depicted in a very solid three dimensions with perspective. There are 20 segments, with each segment being made up of seven phases. At the start of each phase and after a lost life, large planetoid-shaped asteroids hurtle from the depths of space at the players ship. These cannot be shot but must be dodged. As the last of these is vanishing under you ship (hopefully), alien craft appear as dots in the distance and then swoop down on you firing bolts. Five different types of aliens attack in eight different formations, firing two types of laser bolts at you.

This is followed by a large mine layer, which crosses the screen, loosing streams of rotating mines. These should be blown up as soon as possible because if they blow up themselves they fire off bolts at you, which come across the screen, making two filled with flying weaponry. Then come the spinning saucers, also firing at you. These need to be hit several times before they really blow up.

The last phase is a Way Station. Before the sixth phase starts, a security code appears for the next Way Station, and as the station appears, the player must input the correct code. An incorrect entry results in loss of life. A correct entry results in a welcome message and an extra life.

The screen display is full of different coloured stars. Your ship is a large V-shaped craft, which is able to move all over the screen, and is equipped with rapid fire laser bolts.

CRITICISM

The first thing to hit you in the eye with this game is the stunning graphics. The 3D effect is quite strong, especially on the asteroids, which not only come from distance to sweep hugely past you, but are shaded as well. The rapid fire from your ship makes a

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fireworks display if you fire and move rapidly about the screen. The graphics move very smoothly and very fast, which is just as well, because all the craft, yours and the aliens, are very big. Dodging planetoids, aliens and laser bolts can be done using the perspective. You can nip upwards and sail over the top of something. This all takes quite a bit of practice. With its superb graphics, speed and mass of alien weaponry, AD ASTRA is a difficult and addictive game to play.

The 3D graphics are extremely well detailed - the moons especially so, with shading, craters and even a rotational effect as they roll towards you. Your ship is very manoeuvrable and fires really well. The explosions are particularly good: large, detailed and effective. They reminded me of a cartoon film animation. Its addictive because you want to get through the next stage to see what they will throw at you next.

The rotating moons move towards you at increasing speeds depending on what stage you have reached in the game. These are very well animated. Aliens appear in the distance and zoom in on you, but not very smoothly, as they basically go through two stages, dots, then full sized, moving down the screen. On the second screen, however, the yellow rotating aliens move very well towards you. Moving onto the third screen, the graphics are slightly more basic; the large minelayers are quite simple, though nicely drawn, but the rotating mines work well. Exceptionally addictive at first, but after a couple of hours of play this wears off.

COMMENTS

Controls: Keyboard, Kempston, ZX2, AGF, Protek.

Keyboard Play: Responsive

Use Of Colour: Very good

Graphics: Generally excellent, with effective sense of perspective

Sound: Average

Skill Levels: Progressive difficulty

Lives: 6

Features: One or two player games

General Rating: Addictive, attractive graphics and very playable.



Use Of Computer: 85%

Graphics: 80%

Playability: 84%

Getting Started: 79%

Addictive Qualities: 75%

Value For Money: 78%

Overall: 80%

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TIR NA NOG



Review taken from CRASH, December 1984.

Essential Information:

Producer: Gargoyle Games
Memory Required: 48k
Retail Price: £9.95
Language: Machine Code
Authors: Greg Follis & Roy Carter



Our recent preview of the new graphical adventure Tir Na Nog, which loosely translated means Land Of Youth, from GARGOYLE GAMES, who first games Ad Astra caused such a stir with its graphics, seems to have already aroused a lot of interest. Tir Na Nog is one of those games that is a review teams nightmare! There is such a lot of it to get through in a shortish space of time that it is inevitable that we can only give a hint of the flavour.

Tir Na Nog is set in a mythical Celtic world peopled by the Sidhe. Once mighty, now fallen on hard times, these monkey-like creatures are the main protagonists in the adventures. They had bound the Great Enemy by creating the Seal Of Calum, and thus had become a great civilisation. But the Great Enemy had managed to steal the Seal by sending a thief. In their rage the Sidhe killed the thief but the seal was shattered into four pieces and the Great Enemy freed to wreak havoc on the Earth again. So fell the Sidhe into sub-human beasts.



When the game opens it is a new, darker age. You play Cuchulainn, the Hound of Heaven, a mighty warrior who has been called to reunite the four pieces of the Seal of Calum and thus defeat the Great Enemy. In this respect Tir Na Nog is definitely an adventure. You are required to explore, seek useful objects such as weapons and keys (some of whose uses are immediately apparent, and some are not), and interact with the other characters who inhabit the land. But it is not a text orientated adventure - text only plays a part in telling you where you are and what objects you are carrying, although occasionally there are situations where text will appear, such as the Oracle. There are puzzles to solve (the Oracles obscure pronouncements are such), and there are many arcade situations where quick reactions are needed to stay alive.

The screen is split roughly into two sections - a top playing area, where the land is seen, and a lower information area which tells you where you are, what you are carrying or using, and most importantly, a compass. The hero Cuchulainn, moves left and right, but the scene may be viewed from four camera positions which relate to the changing compass below.

Tir Na Nog comes in a large cardboard box which contains a 28 page booklet and a full colour map of the land. The booklet has playing instructions, a history of the land and playing tips contained very neatly within a supposed Sealltuinn, or observations of a Bard or a Sidhe. The game may be saved at any point (to avoid constant death!) and reloaded.

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CRITICISM

What we have here is a game that desperately needs careful mapping by the player! The map provided is very useful in giving the general layout of the land, but as the booklet says, "So many doors are there is Tir Na Nog that it has often been called the Land Of Opportunities, because of the number of openings that exist". And there are hundreds of path ways. Because of the 3D world the program creates, but which you only really see in two dimensions at any time, it can get very confusing at first! The first time a player would be well advised to ensure that he or she doesn't loose a life right outside the altar cave and so drop the axe picked up just inside, because a Sidhe prowls around on that path and makes it a hard job on a next life to get the axe back. And that's an important point - as in Avalon, objects used or dropped remain where they are, you affect the land every time you play and things are not reset to start. The graphics are extremely good. Cuchulainn walks and fights with tremendous vigour. Its marvellous animation. The adventure quests are numerous and this game is going to take a long time to get through, which makes it good value for money, and a must for adventurers and arcade players alike.

Tir Na Nog requires the skills of adventure, strategy and arcade. Some of the creatures you just have to fight and what with orienting yourself and moving, it can be quite a skill. But some are in possession of things you need, and you may have something they want, so strategical thinking and forward planning come in as well. Colour has been well used so there are no attribute problems to spoil the look of it. All the animated characters are masked on the backgrounds, so they look realistic and can be easily seen. The Sidhe are very good, but a damned nuisance! I have barely scraped the surface of this marvellous looking game, but as far as I have got, it is playable, fun and (not usually the case with an adventure) very addictive.

I didn't get to see a preview copy of Tir Na Nog earlier, but I had heard about it, and was looking forward to seeing it. Then I saw The Legend Of Avalon and wondered whether Tir Na Nog wasn't going to be very similar. Well they are not at all alike, visually or in the playing, beyond the fact that in both games you do have to be able to think and move very quickly at times (reminds me of last orders! - ED) in what is a vast playing area. I like the idea in Tir Na Nog that access to the many major above and below ground places is done by the way of caves which lead you from one place to the other. This game is also one of those which a lot of exploring and familiarising before you have a hope of getting onto the quests. Fortunately, the exploring itself is fun, and there is a lot to see. I wonder whether there isn't too much walking about to do? I feel sure that Tir Na Nog is going to appeal widely because of the different things in it, and its going to take time to get right through it and destroy the Great Enemy".

COMMENTS

Joystick: None, but a programmable joystick might prove useful here.

Keyboard Play: Responsive - takes getting used to keys and views.

Use Of Colour: Black drawings on simple colour grounds, works well and looks fresh.

Graphics: excellent animation, using many frames, large characters and smooth scrolling effects.

Sound: Not much, mostly warning beeps.

Skill Levels: 1

Lives: 1, but the game constantly returns you to the start position, with effects of last life intact.

Screens: Continuous scrolling.

Special Features: Map Of Tir Na Nog

General Rating: A sophisticated looking and playing game with masses of content, good value for money, generally excellent.

Use Of Computer: 82% Graphics: 98%

Playability: 93% Getting Started: 95%

Addictive Qualities: 90% Value For Money: 91%

Overall: 92%

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Heavy On The Magick

Taken From Computer & Video Games Handbook

Greg Follis lets some secrets slip about this epic interactive adventure.

THE ART OF CONVERSATION

Without a degree of communication with the local inhabitants progress will be difficult. Apex The Ogre is your main source of information once you are down in the dungeon, but many other creatures and objects have something of interest to say. All conversations in The Price Of Magick take this form:

"NAME, OBJECT


Don't forget to include the initial quote mark and the comma. These are well crucial! For example:

"APEX, SIGN

"WYVERN, LEAVE

"DOOR, OPEN

Several doors needs special passwords to open them. These can only be discovered by talking to other monsters or particular objects in the room. As an example the following conversation, or something like it, will get you through the first gates of Wolfdorf.

MESSAGES IN WINDOW	INTERPRETATION	
"DOOR, OPEN SILENCE	NO LUCK!	
"APEX, DOOR "WHO KNOWS GUARDS!	THAT'S CRYPTIC	
"APEX, GUARD "WHO GUARDS KNOWS!	THANKS A BUNCH APEX!	
"GUARDS, PASSWORD "WE ARE THE GUARDS	I KNOW THAT!	
"GUARDS, DOOR "CRY AND ENTER...	OF COURSE, CRY *!?! AND THE DOOR SWINGS OPEN!!!	
"DOOR, *!?! "CLICK		

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OBSCURE GAMES CORNER

With Dave Fountain of Fountain PD

To kick off this column, I'd like to throw down the gauntlet and give you all the on to beat. Let there be no drum roll, no building tension, let's just steam in with the title....

LOCOSPOTTER 1994 by DEEKAY SOFTWARE

Maybe the title of this column should be IMPLAUSABLE CORNER? Yes my friends, LOCO is a 48k trainspotter simulator, complete with three sheets of train numbers that you must tick off one by one. Choose your location from the many infamous platforms and shunting sheds available, and watch as the little UDG trains trundle across the bottom of the screen.

It must be said that DEEKAY were a rather chraming software house, churning out management-style games that avoided the usual football flavour and went straight for the Diesel stains. My own personal favourite is TESS-TYNE PULLMAN, which puts you behind the controls of an Inter City 125 from Newcastle to Kings Cross (a bit like Southern Belle but without the graphics or the steam). Other curious but interesting titles included DELTIC FLEET MANAGER (a management sim), MERRY GO ROUND (similar to TEES bu involving a slow goods train!) and SHEDMASTER (a coach cleaning and maintenance sim).

The real beauty of this column means you think I'm making it all up.... but I'm not!!! Let's see what you have - BUT I think I've won already havn't I?

COME ON READERS - prove him wrong and send in details of your obscure games

AN EDITORIAL OF SORTS - AND AN IMPORTANT ANNOUNCEMENT

I hope you all enjoy Issue 3 - I have tried to make it the best yet. However, after issue 4 appears in a month or so there might be a slight delay before the next Classix production appears.

You see, I am leaving sunny Bradford in early September and am heading off "Darn Sari" to Bournemouth University to pursue my career in Journalism. However, threat not readers. CLASSIX will continue to be published and all you will notice is a slight delay in the answering of mail after September. Obviously I have no idea of my new address, but as and when I do find out, all relevant parties will be notified. And could I please ask now that after September 1st, that no phone calls are made to my Bradford number - it will only create problems (i.e. garbled messages). I thought my move was worth mentioning my "removal" - after all we do aim to be a 'friendly' and 'close-knit' little community here at Classix towers! The only thing which might disappear is the baragin software which I keep putting in the 'zine. Watch this space.

That's about it for now. Just to end, I'd like to say THANKYOU to whoever mentioned Classix and the Games Finder Service on the INTERNET! We hope to be hooked up soon, but until then keep your letters and assorted paraphenalia flooding in! Next issue £1.20 by the way. Adios!! James!!!!

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BLAST FROM THE PAST

ST JOHN SWAINSON
REVIEWS:
THANATOS

Published by Durell (Released December 1986 / January 1987)
Price £9.95 Memory: 48k / 128k
Originally Reviewed in Sinclair User, Jan 1987 by Jim Douglas

In this issue, we are going to visit a magical land populated by huge dragons and various mythological creatures. A land of imposing castles and deadly dark caves. A land where the sun never shines. Somewhere in this land lies a book of spells and a magic cauldron which need to be found in order to, er, win the game.

If you were being pedantic, you could call Thanatos a horizontally scrolling shoot 'em up but that would be doing a dis-service to an original and absorbing game. You take control of Thanatos The Destroyer, a huge green dragon. He is able to walk, fly and swim through varied landscapes. His numerous enemies can be destroyed by a breath of fire or by grabbing them with sharp claws. Double-headed dragons, spiders, giant sea-creatures, villagers and knights all require the adoption of different tactics in order to defeat them. Long fights will ensue but they take their toll on your health. It is therefore essential to find a safe area to land and rest. Your fire breath is not unlimited and if you run out whilst fighting a dragon, you will certainly be killed. To prevent this you must fly back the way you came and you will quickly come across a witch trapped between 2 stakes. You must land beside her and eat her. This is not easy because she is protected by a knight on horseback who is almost as difficult to kill as Sylvester Stallone (or Steven Segal, starring in *HARD TO KILL*? - ED?).

In the first castle you discover, you must collect a 'beautiful young enchantress'. She rides on your back and you must ensure she remains there. This can be difficult in the midst of a fight where knocking into another creature or turning round quickly will cause her to fall off. When she is on the ground, she is extremely vulnerable to attack. You must land quickly (being careful not to kill her with your own claws) so she can regain her perch. Of course, your enemies will see this as an opportunity to attack. If she dies there is no-one to cast the spell at the cauldron so you cannot complete the game. You only have one life but you have to be quite crap or be me to get killed. Unfortunately, it is easy for the enchantress to get killed - so killing you.

The music is distinctive and original and the sound effects also add a lot to the game, especially in 128k mode. Even better than this though, are the graphics. They are probably the best the Spectrum has ever produced (a bold claim - ED). The dragons are huge (over half the length of the screen) but extremely well detailed and beautifully animated. There is ample use of colour and the atmosphere created make you feel a part of this strange land. The caves

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seem dark and eerie, the castles forbidding and dangerous and the oceans desolate. You feel as though you have travelled for miles as you keep encountering new monsters and landscapes.

Thanatos is one of my all time favourite games. It all fits together perfectly; nothing seems to be missing. There are no extra weapons, different levels, multiple lives, in-game music or multicoloured sprites but these are often mere gimmicks and would add nothing to this game. It was granted a re-release in 1990 but still failed to impress in the charts. Nevertheless, 9 years after its initial release, it remains original, enjoyable and addictive.

Complains 50% Sound 45%
Playability 15% Addictiveness 95%
Graphics 75%

WHAT THE PAPERS SAID!

SINCLAIR USER (January 1987): "Durrell seems to have employed virtually every fantasy sub-plot in order to make the game as interesting as possible. Initially, you must wreak a bit of havoc amongst the local people, before moving on to find Eros, an enchantress who will guide you to more wonderful lands".

"The graphics of Thanatos are really something". (Good English there, eh readers?)

"I enjoyed it all hugely".

CRASH, (December 1986): "WOW! This game is really amazing: stunning, astounding, brilliant! The tune on the title screen is very nice, but the graphics are absolutely superb". 93%.

THE ADVERTISING BLURB

"In this mythical game you take control of a dragon. Thanatos The Destroyer, whose eternal destiny lies in conflict with the underworld. The dragon which is very large and superbly animated, flies, walks, swims, and burns its way through the landscape. The game features fantastic landscapes with a totally new panoramic scrolling action".

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Looking For A Game? We Can Help!!!

In case you're reading this fanzine for the first time, then you may not have heard of the Games Finder Service. Basically, its this: If you're looking for any Spectrum-related piece of software, then for a £2 fee plus the amount it costs to purchase the game, we will endeavour to find it for you using our numerous contacts - both at home and abroad!

But remember, you owe us absolutely NOTHING until the desired title is found. With over 40 successes already, the system obviously works. But don't take our word for it! Check out what Andy Davis said in issue 20 of Alchemist Research:

And, due to our amazing success on the Spectrum scene (we have even been plugged on the Internet!), we are pleased to announce an extension to our services. From July 31st 1996, we will also be taking order for Commodore AMIGA, Commodore 64 and Amstrad CPC software. The same charges apply - £2 per title plus the cost of the software.

All "FINDER" requests should be sent, along with a contact number (all orders are confirmed before the title is purchased) and as many details as possible about the software to: Games Finder Service, 11 Finsbury Drive, Wrose, Bradford, West Yorkshire, BD2 1QA.

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F O K U N O T W A L E N D G E O F

With Dave Fountain of Fountain PD

Many people have recently enquired about Currah Speech - i.e. what exactly are its capabilities. So who better to ask than Dave?

"Make your Spectrum talk.... like a HAL 9000 or Sparky The Magic Piano? The Microspeech is the most famous "Speech Box" add on; there were a few others but they contained the same chip. After the usual ten minutes of making it say rude words using the hit and miss allophone system, the only other use as typing - "LET keys-1". This simple command gave you a rather strange sounding noise everytime you pressed a key (I later found out these were supposed to be the actual keywords being uttered, but at the time it could have been anything). If anybody wants to hear how bad it was, then order the VOICEBOX demo from PD libraries (pref Dave's - ED!), as it has a good stab at emulating the system.

A few games were written with the Currah in mind rather than being especially written from scratch. My favourite has to be Sport Of Kings by the Kwik Save of the Speccy world, Mastertronic. I do not have a complete list of enhanced games but you are probably only looking at two dozen tops. As a side issue, THOR software, who released more than most, was run by Mark Evans, the guy who later turned IMAGINE software into the fiasco it became until bailed out by Ocean.

For 48k owners, an added bonus was having the sound re-directed through the TV - a novelty in those days! If you find one second-hand then snap it up. A complete waste of money in its day, it has now become wonderfully collectable".

Recently I heard rumours that there was some Speech Recognition Hardware developed for the Speccy - Is this true Dave?

"There were two pieces of early hardware that allowed Speech recognition to control programs (or rather, Analogue to Digital conversion). Big Ears from William Stuart and the Micro Command from Orion Data.

At its most primitive, any sound could be used as a trigger to start or Load a program using a microphone or another sensor-type device (and silence being a glorified Pause 0!).

Speaking into the mic, digital representation of a sound could be stored in memory. If the Spectrum then received more or less the same sound via a live voice command, then it was possible to "Voice Control" the Spectrum providing you has written a program to act on this input. Obviously, with memory restrictions, commands had to be fairly concise like LOAD or SAVE... you couldn't say "Computer, Load Manic Miner and make me a cup of Earl Grey".

These devices have obscure and "sold within the small ads of electronic magazine stamped all over them so happy hunting! There were other devices like the REL 4.2, which was more geared to switching appliances on and off or running your train set. Gimmicks to the consumer or useful tools to budding boffins? The choice is yours.

ALCHNEWS

Be part of one of the cornerstones of the Spectrum scene! Alchnews is the magazine for the Spectrum group ALCHEMIST RESEARCH, established some ten years ago!

Averaging approximately one megabyte per issue, or an equivalent of almost 400 pages of A4 text, Alchnews covers everything Spectrum, plus unrivalled sections covering hardware, games, fiction, and the cult RANTS sections. PLUS, software free gifts, comprising of some of the top Spectrum games in its history, such as JET SET WILLY

ALCHNEWS is quarterly and is available for all Spectrums and the PC, with FREE emulator package, on cassette tape, or 3.5" / 5.25" floppy disk for just £1, making it the best value for money read anywhere! (Classix ED raises an eyebrow here!).

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NEW STOCKNEW STOCK**NEW STOCK**

We have just purchased a whole load of software, most of it CLASSIC and RARE! Starting at just £1 per title (plus 25p postage), can you afford to miss out? This is just a small selection of our new stock - send an SAE for full list!

Adventure Games at £3 each: Lord of The Rings. £2 each: Sourcerer Of Claymouge Castle, Spiderman (Adventure International), Dracula (CRL), Eureka (Domark), Critical Mass (Durell), Secret Diary Of Adrian Mole (Level 9), Dodgy Geezers, Mystery Of Arkham Manor (Melbourne House), The Guardian (PSS), Serpent From Hell (Scorpio), McKensie (Software Projects). £1 each: Valkyrie 17 (Adventure), Runes Of Zendos (Darcos), The Circus (Digital Fantasy), Quest For The Holy Grail (Dream), Tir Na Nog (Gargoyle), Temple Of Vran (Incentive), Salvage (Live Wire), Never Ending Story.

AUTOMATA SPECIAL! Never To be repeated offer - bet you can't buy these rare titles anywhere else! Offers accepted for the full set of games!

DEUS EX MACHINA - £14.00
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YAKZEE - £7.00

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Other Software: 50p each: Fruit Machine (Codemasters), Dizzy, Transmuter, Ghosts Revenge, Project Future, 3D Braxx Bluff, 3D Codename Matt, 3D Lunar Crabs, Jasper, Daley Thompson's Decathlon, Donkey King, Pogo, Rambo, BC's Quest For Tires.



£1 each: The ETX, The Train, Enduro Racer, Galactic Games, Hacker, The Eiddon, Toy Bizarre, Krel, Valkyrie 17, Action Pack 3 (Alligator), Galactic Abductors, Skyfox, Galaxians, Space Station Zebra, Aquarius, Bomber Bob, Death Wake, Centipede, Frogger, The Crypt, Gobble A Ghost (CDS), Arnhem, Galactians, Meteoroids, Tron, Zig-Zag, Dark Star, Return Of The Things, Havoc (Dynamic), 1942, Bombjack, Ghosts N Goblins, Paperboy, Rollercoaster, Backpackers Guide, Bomb scare, Buggy Blast, Crosswise, Gothic, Hive, Olli & Lissa, Side Wize, Spaced Out, Star Firebirds, Ad Astra, Trailblazer, Xarc, BC Bill, Rastan, Terra Cresta, 1984 (Incentive), Confusion (Incentive), Splat (Incentive), Fruit Snapper, The Bulge, King Arthur's Quest, Amaurote, Motos, Appolo 2, Boscovian, Empire Fights Back, Future Games, Tetris, 1985, Doc The Destroyer (Melbourne House), Action Reflex, Sai Combat, Terror Of The Deep, Corridors Of Genon, Cosmic Wartoad, Robocop, Copter, The Young Ones, Flunky, Nosleratu, Elektro Storm, Hopper, Xaviour, Star Trek, Deactivators, The Trading Game, Matrix Gridrunner 2, Serpent From Hell, Exterminator, Super Mutt, Astronut, Dragon's Lair, Desert Burner, Quackshot, Twister, Volcanic Planet, Wild West Hero, Beach Head, Breakthru, Crystal Castles, Flak, Gauntlet, Impossible Mission, Kung Fu Master, Tapper, The Dambusters, Xevious, Android (Vortex).

Sale List

Please make cheques and Postal Orders payable to J. Waddington. Cash CAN be sent but it MUST be well sealed. UK readers please remember to add 25p Per Item (50p EEC, 75p REST OF THE WORLD) for Postage and Packing (unless stated). Items are sold on a first come, first served basis. Unless alternatives are stated, refunds will be given in the form of a cheque. Full refunds (excluding postage) will be given for items which are found to be defective.

@ Denotes Budget Game

Denotes missing inlay/instructions

Adventure Games:

£2.00 each: Silicon Dreams Trilogy (Level 9) (Return To Eden, The Worm In Paradise, with Snowball missing from the collection). £1.30 each: Zzzz. £1 each: Twin Kingdom Valley. 80p each: The Never Ending Story (128k Only, The Quest For The Holy Grail (2 Copies), The Big Sleaze@. 40p each: Adventure Quest (SU Covertape), Jewels Of Babylon (SU Covertape)#, Bulho & The Lizard King (2 Copies)#, Mountains Of Ket (Crash Covertape), Ship Of The Line (1982)#, Temple Of Terror (SU Covertape)#, A Shadow On Glass (CRASH Covertape). 30p each: Dizzy, Red Door (YS Covertape)#, Shadowfire#, Behind Closed Doors (SU Covertape)#. 20p each: Valhalla#, Dun Darach#, Kentilla#, Retarded Creatures & Caverns (YS Covertape)#. 10p each: Planet Of Death#.

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Covertapes:

30p each: (YOUR SINCLAIR) Beaut Box (March 1993) (CRASH) Crash Presents.... September 1990, December 1990 (2 Copies). 20p each: (YOUR SINCLAIR) Special Covertape - Kat Trap & A Nightmare On Robinson Street# (2 Copies). The Magnificent Seven - No.1 (3 Copies), No.3, No.4#, No.6, No.7 (2 Copies), No.8. (2 Copies), No.8. Six Pack - No.1 (2 Copies) Four Pack - No.1 (4 Copies), No.2, No.3 (2 Copies), No.4 (4 Copies). Christmas Collection Jan 1991. Exclusives - With Imagine: Play For Your Life (2 Copies)#, With Dynamic: Dustin#, With Martech: Blind Panic#, With US Gold: People From Sirius#. Assorted Covertapes - No.1 Alien Evolution (Gremlin)#, No.2 Samurai#, No.3 Army Moves#, No.4 Flashpoint (2 Copies)#, No.5 Movie#, No.6 Chaos (2 Copies)#, No.7 Fernandez Must Die#, No.8 Rebelstar II (3 Copies)#, No.9 Dizzy#, No.10 Ballbreaker II (CRL)#. Double Decker Tapes (2 tapes feature Qarx + Skate Or Die Demo) (2 Copies)#. (SINCLAIR USER) Double Hits - No.2. Six Of The Best - No.2 (2 Copies), No.3, No.4. Great Eight - No.12 (2 Copies). Megatape - No.2#, No.3 (2 Copies), No.5#, No.8#, No.9#, No.12#, No.15#, No.16#, No.19#, No.20# (2 Copies), No.23#, No.24#. Enigma No.1. (CRASH) Crash Presents - October 1989#, December 1989#, January 1990#, April 1990#, July 1990# (2 Copies), August 1990, January 1991 (Tape 2)#, May 1991# The Crash Sampler#, The Crucial Crash Tape#.

10p each: (No Cases) YS No.1 - Samurai + Playable Demo#, Y.S. No.2 - Chaos + Zythum (2 Complete Games)#, YS No.3 Rasputin Demo Tape#. Crash No.1 - Sneak Preview Tape 1988 (Dark Side & Last Ninja 2)#, Crash No.2 - Sneak Preview Tape (Batman & Savage).

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