CRASHED - It's A Rollover Week !

CRASHED!

NEW LOOK!

Allan gets busy with the Macs at college

ALSO...

Reviews

Interviews

News

Views

And other things that rhyme with muse,

And more!

FEB/MAR 95
75p
ISSUE 6/7

ADVERTISEMENT

JUPITER SOFTWARE

2, OSWALD ROAD RUSHDEN,
NORTHANTS. NN10 0LE.

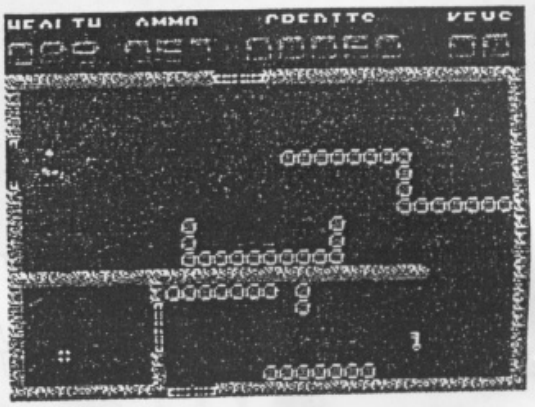
Amalthea

THE ULTIMATE SPACE SHOOT EM UP

Amalthea is the latest game from JUPITER SOFTWARE.
The game has **seven** massive levels, with two different perspectives (top down and side view).

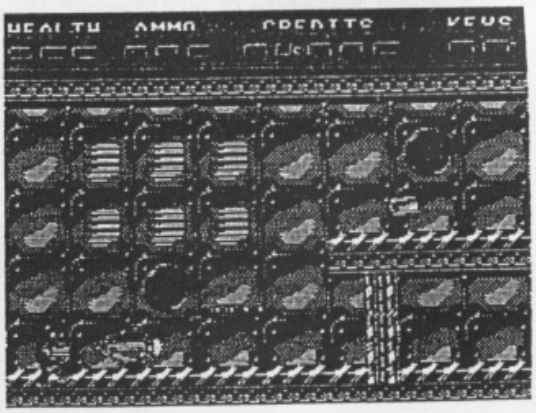
The game has taken over a year to complete, going through several changes until we were happy with it.

A recent addition to the game is the sound samples, these have to be played through the new Quazar Surround sound card. They are 16 bit samples (CD quality) that give spot sound effects when certain actions are taken eg; collect items, die, win etc.



ABOUT THE GAME.

The game was programmed by Steven and Terry Ekins from JUPITER SOFTWARE, The graphics for the top down levels were by Terry Ekins, the side view graphics were by Steve "Picasso" Pick.

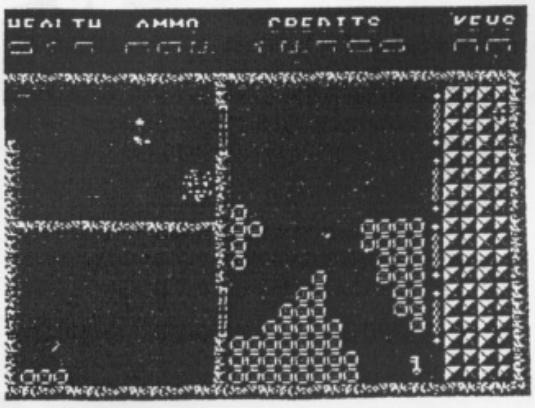


Each level on the game has a time limit, on some levels the limit is very strict, but on others you have time to explore and search for extra goodies.

The main aim of the game is to collect the power crystals, you are told how many you need at the start of the level. During the game you can collect the following; Ammo, Keys, Energy and Credits. The credits are worth either 50, 250 or 1000. They can only be used when you log on to a computer terminal. With credits you can buy all the items that you can collect (excluding power crystals and credits), you can also buy an extra weapon which is more powerful than the standard gun.

WHERE TO GET IT FROM.

The first place that AMALTHEA will be available from is JUPITER SOFTWARE, although the game will be available from other places soon after its release.
We are now taking orders for the game, which is priced at £10.00, cheques will not be cashed until the game is dispatched. The game is finished now.



If you order now, you will also get a free copy of one of our other games, called Mega Blast, this game is the closest game to Super Bomberman yet seen on SAM (usual price £2.50).

PLEASE MAKE ALL CHEQUES PAYABLE TO S EKINS.

Send an sae for more info. on our many other products.

CRASHED

ISSUE 6/7 • FEBRUARY/MARCH 1995 • OUT MID-JUNE

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What about this then, eh? C'est une petit blinking snazzy, non? Not only has the contents page finally made it to the journalistically-approved right-hand page, but (as hinted at last month) we've moved over to full DTP, done on snazzy PCs and Apple-Macs at Allan's college with digitizers and laser printers and everything. I'd welcome your comments on the new look - letters to the normal address.

It may also have reached your attention that this issue is slightly thicker than normal. This is because I've finally caved in to reality, and decided that we'll never catch up on the lost months by putting out an issue every three-and-a-half weeks, and nothing to do with the fact that Allan's now doing all the DTP so I don't have to bother with it. Oh no it isn't. This issue, and the next few, will all be double issues, so we should have caught up in time for our first anniversary.

All this, of course, means that we need your contributions - whether it's a full article or just a letter or bit for Playing Tips, we need your stuff. Next issue will hopefully see the introduction of several new sections including a classic games review section and a regular PD column, plus the return of Fish's Haddock music/film/TV review section, and the survey results, which have again been held back because at the moment many of the results would look extremely silly - the best programmer category is split about seven ways at the moment. I'll repeat that: the results of issue four's reader poll are not yet in a workable state, and BARRY SPENCER, ROBERT CHILTON, STUART BURTON AND ALISTAIR FAIRWEATHER ARE ENTIRELY TO BLAME. Ahem.

Something else we've had very little response to is the constant plea for letters. Perhaps the themes I've suggested in the past are too specialist, so here's something a bit more general: why do you still stick to the SAM/Speccy? There's computers out now that offer infinitely more support in the shape of high street mags, professional new software, etc - why didn't you sell up when YS closed down, at the very latest?

Finally, I must apologise if, service-wise, Crashed hasn't been quite up to scratch lately - my excuse is that I've got my GCSEs from May 23rd to June 23rd, and as such don't have a great deal of time left (between all the last-minute cramming) to reply to enquiries or write letters. Hopefully normal service will be resumed by next issue.

Here's a sobering thought to leave you with: the reason the Amstrad Spectrums had non-standard joystick sockets is that Alan Sugar had bought a job lot of cheap joysticks with faulty wiring, and got his hardware bods to come up with a computer that fitted them. The sad thing is, this is completely and utterly true. See you next month.

Mark.

CREDITS

The Sheriff
Mark Sturdy

The Deputy
Allan Clarkson

The Gunslingers
Mat Beal, Andy Davis, Paul Howard, (and apologies to Chris Bailey for missing him out of the credits last issue!)

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12 ISSUES BAIL
Just 8 quid for a full year! (Cheques payable to M. Sturdy)

'WANTED' POSTERS
Policy change time again! £10 (full page), £5 (half page) or £2.50 (quarter page) FOR A FULL YEAR, or if you run a fanzine, you can advertise in Crashed for free in exchange for advertizing us. Similarly, if you run a software house get in touch and we can sort out a deal.

THE GOOD TOWNSFOLK
Dave F, Andy Davis, David Ledbury and the fantastic "M.A.".

CROOKS ROUNDED UP
May 1995: 20 (we're in the big league now!)

The views expressed in Crashed are not necessarily those of the magazine as a whole, and we will take no responsibility for them. So don't try suing us.

HOWARD AUSTIN SAYS:
"After-dinner drink, anyone?" (ref. Jan 1995)

NEWS

Wired for sound

One of the most interesting things on display at the Gloucester show was the Quazar Surround, a new sound card for the SAM, developed by Colin Piggot. It gives CD-quality 16-bit sound (the standard SAM sound chip can manage 4 bits), putting the SAM right up with the better PC sound systems. Up to four speakers can be added, giving that total quadrophonic experience, and a stereo sampler add-on will be appearing within the next few months. Jupiter Software and Phoenix have already pledged their support, chiming in with special versions of Amalthea and Manic Miner respectively. Colin has also released the Quazar Studio, a full sample manipulation system. The Quazar should be out around now, costing £61.99. (MS)

It's so hard

One of the other most interesting things at the show was the sudden, unexpected appearence of not one, but two SAM hard drive interfaces. Nev Young's is the official, Format-endorsed one; Simon Cooke's is the one that works and has a fully-written DOS, and will probably be swept by the wayside because Format don't like admitting the existence of such things as competition. (Sorry, Bob.) Both will accept standard IDE drives. No release date for either has been set, but info can be obtained by sending an SAE to SD Software (Nev) or Entropy (Cookie). (MS)

Plug Corner

A honourable mention must go to Capri Marketting (them what was once known as Computer Cavern). They've got just about any Spectrum game, utility or accessory you may care to mention - even stuff for those venerable doorstops, the Rotronics Wafadrive and the Opus Discovery. They've also got (wait for it) +2/+3 JOYSTICK ADAPTORS! (Hurrah.) If you've got an Amstrad Speccy, you really cannot be without one of these. It just plugs into either joystick port, and you can use any standard Atari-type joystick. The price? £2.99, which is a far cry from the ten quid or so that Software City used to charge. For a catalogue, just give them a ring (they're on the Post Box page) and they'll send you one. Be warned, though - they really do have a completely crap photocopier.

Also plugworthy this month are Supplement Software - you may recall that a few months ago, we mentioned that they were selling 256K, no-drive SAMs for £40. And! they're still doing it, which can only be described as a Very Good Thing. If any of you Speccy owners out there would like to upgrade but (a) hate Format and (b) can't be forking out the £200 quid they charge, you are urged to get in touch with Supplement. Admittedly, there's no tape software available for the SAM, but you can either get a drive fitted internally (£79.95 from Format), or (if you've already got a 3.5" drive) buy an external drive interface (£44.95) which works in exactly the same way as an internal drive and also has a printer port built in. Add on top of that a 256K memory card (not essential at the moment, but becoming that way) at £34.95 and you can have a fully-functioning Coupe of your very own for (swift burst of mental arithmetic), er, £119.90, a saving of over £80. Another advantage is that you can build it up bit by bit - in the words of Alan Miles, "With the Coupe, your computer can grow with you." "It's the absolutely very bestest thing in the whole world ever!" - D. Ledbury (no relation) (not to me, anyway).

Finally tonight, you may want to know that Datel Electronics are still selling all the stuff they used to advertise in YS - the +D, the Genius Mouse, printers, various interfaces and stuff, most of which can no longer be got elsewhere. The prices remain the same - give them a call. I would. If I had any money. At all. Damn. (MS)

Spectrum - Birthplace of 21st Century Talent?

Quite recently, our favourite computer has been something of a headline maker! In the April issue of ".net", a magazine dedicated to the Internet (yawn) ran a feature primarilly on the Spectrum, it's continuing popularity and it's role on the Internet. Gerton Lunter, author of the Z80 emulator, was interviewed, and coverage was given to the Speccy area of the Net and also the uplink site in Chile (original source of AlchNews on the Net), along with the old argument about copyright of old Spectrum games. The publishers don't care or want to discuss the matter unless ridiculous money in involved, distribute it and they threaten legal action.

The Daily Mirror also ran a story in late April about two dropout brothers who created "RARE" and have just signed a multi-million pound deal with Nintendo following the phenomenal success of "Donkey Kong Country", the consoles biggest selling game of all time.

The Stamper brothers started out 13 years ago in a terraced house in Ashby de la Zouch, Leics. They spent the first six months concentrating on getting a game called Jetpac ready. It sold 330,000 copies at £4.95 which was a clear sign of their success. Following other great Spectrum classics on the Ultimate label they began working for Nintendo in 1985 and Rare now has a workforce of 80 at a converted farmhouse near Twycross.

So, let this be an important lesson to all you Amiga and PC types who sneer and poo-poo the Spectrum at every opportunity.

Will YOU be celebrating your first million in ten years time, thanks to programming skills learnt on your machine? Methinks not! (AD)

SCADS for free(ish)

Glenco's SAM Coupe Arcade Development System, aquired by Revelation last year, has now been released into PD, with the manual still available from Revelation for £7.95. The software itself is currently available from SAM PD only, although it may be passed on to other libraries in the future. (MS)

Further expansion of AlchNews

Plans are afoot to make top Speccy tapezine AlchNews even bigger.

Ferry Groothedde of the Spectrum Computerclub Benelux and magazine Uncle Clive & Uncle Sam has proposed a merger between his magazine with AlchNews.

This means that AlchNews will essentially be known as a Spectrum and SAM magazine but will most likely to be seperate entities, Spectrum controlled by Alchemist Research and the SAM side by Ferry.

Further details are explained later in the magazine. Feedback forms based on this article have been in circulation since April, your comments are most welcome. (AD)

Austin Maestro (or not)

Format Publications have relaunced the classic Spectrum +3 music composing program, Music Maestro, priced at £7.95. Although it is only available on 3" disk at the moment, a +D/Disciple version is on the cards if a hacker can be found to transfer it across. If you think you can help, get in touch with Format. (MS)

Essential Manuals

Something just squeezed out of last month's news section was the news of Alchemist Research's Essential Manuals project. The idea behind this is to get all the groups supporting the Spectrum to contribute information on a certain area, to be collated and then sold by the groups who originally contributed. Most of the main Spectrum people (and Crashed) have already agreed to help out, and Roelof Koning of something called the SGG will be collating the info. The first of the manuals will be on the original Spectrum 128+, with ones on the +3 and +D planned. More info on this next month, or in the meantime you could take a look at AlchNews 16. (MS)

MD02 - Vorsprung durch technik.

Yet another piece of Alchemist-related news this month is the new external drive that we briefly mentioned last month. It's being developed in Germany, with a UK version hopefully available from Alchemist.

Filderstadt's finest, the Spectrum-User Club, reports that production is not yet complete on the new interface but the prototype shows real promise.

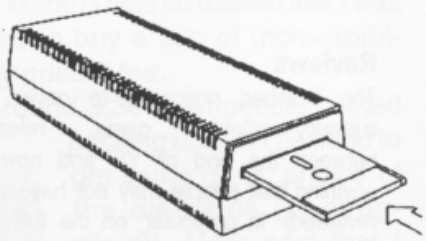
Thomas Eberle says thats it can format upto 2 Megabytes and is faster than any other interface. It can also turn your 128K Spectrum into a 256K model (no doubt with extra sideways RAM). If you use the possibilities of the interface it is also claimed that in can increase the speed from 3.5MHz to 18MHz. *(And I do hope they'll send me one free. To review, naturally. And keep. Forever. AC)*

The interface should be available in May and average costwill be £135.50. However, the high cost will be offputting to most, especially as you'll have to add the drives. Also, with the device being new, many will be unwilling to take the plunge and become a pioneer, as has been clearly shown with the failures of the QL, SAM, and DX-1. (Excuse me? Ed) When further information and, perhaps, a demo model becomes available, Alchemist Research shall seriously consider investing in one.

Other hardware available from Sintech is a new sound interface which, Thomas claims, "blasts your Spectrum with the same sound as Amiga", for only £35.50.

On the software side is the new SQ-Tracker which is supposed to be easier and better than Soundtracker. Cost of this package with instructions is £21.50.

For more details, contact SUC whose address is in Post Box. (AD/MS)



Let's just hope that the MD02 looks nothing like this.

Betasoft under pressure

Anyone who is considering ordering software direct from Andy Wright's company Betasoft should take note that, due to pressures of work and having a small family, Andy may have trouble finding the time to respond to your orders promptly. The company is still in business, but it would be a great help if you could order any of Betasoft's products from a middleman, such as Phoenix, who sell just the entire range anyway.(MS)

NEXT MONTH

Can you belive that we're so organised that we know what's coming next month? I can't! Well, anyway, next month we might have a new regular section called Games Without Frontiers which looks like being a section where Mark and Linda get to rant on about old games to their hearts' content. ALSO! Haddock - FISH magazine's old wibble section gets dug out of Mat's toy box and dusted off. AND! reviews of Fishpaste 2, and er, maybe some other things (sorry). And! we'll have a full recipie for various cakes and buns on every page! (Or not.) BUT! there may be a letters page, too, (though I wouldn't place any bets on it), so get scribblin'! See ya there, or something. Erk.

All Points Bulletin

The idea of this section was originally that it was going to be a sort of "lost and found" type thang. However, after four issues it seemed that I and Andy Davis were the only people who had the slightest interest in it (In what? AC), so it's now been expanded to be a readers' ads type section. There's five main categories: For Sale, Wanted, Services, Lost, and Found. The first two are pretty self-explanatory. Services covers things like fanzines, software companies and disk/tape zines. Lost and Found are basically the same as the old APB section - if there's a company, person, piece of software or whatever that you want to trace (or you've got a general enquiry), you put an ad in Lost, and if you think you can help with one of these, you put an ad in Found. There's no word limit (although you can judge for yourself what'd be sensible), and the service is free. All entries to the normal address.

CONTRIBUTE!

Here are some easy tips on how to shed those pounds by working yourself to the bone by writing lots of text just to get mentioned in some fanzine. (I need a holiday.) AC

Reviews

The Crashed policy is to cover any currently-available game released between the end of YS and now (ie anything that people may not have seen reviewed). In particular, on the SAM it'd be nice to see reviews of Oh No! More Lemmings, Football League Manager, WaterWorks 2, Legend Of Eshan, Sophistry, Exodus, T 'N' T or anything by Supplement or Jupiter, and on the Speccy anything that may have been quietly re-released on a budget label (in particular Manchester United Europe was released just after YS finished) or put out by the programmers themselves, a la Brendan O'Brien and Jonathan Cauldwell. Also, if you can supply screenshots (as SCREEN$ files on Spectrum tape or SAM disk) then all the better. Oh, and 700-800 words would be an extremely nice length.

Highly Recommended

Just write a couple of hundred words about your favourite piece(s) of hardware or software. You can say anything about them you want - what they do, why you like 'em, improvements that can be made, fixes for bugs - you decide.

Playing Tips

Please, please, please write in with any tips, cheats, POKEs, maps, problems, whatever - filling a page up with ancient stuff from old mags is really doing my head in, I'm afraid. Do you realize that there's never been a single tip printed anywhere for Dalek Attack or Nigel Mansell? The same goes for most SAM games - does anyone actually buy them?

The Forum

It amazes me that I've recieved virtually no letters expressing any kind of opinion since Crashed started. The SAM/Speccy scene is an infinitely more interesting place than it was in the days of the big mags - let's get a debate raging, eh?

Tech Niche

Allan is on the lookout for any description of techy stuff - programs, tips, questions, bug fixers . . . whatever, however basic or advanced it may be. Write to him at HIS ADDRESS ON THE TECH PAGE, not mine. He's ever so knowledgeable. (I hope you mean that. AC)

Public Domain

While I can run to the occasional feature on PD in general (like the Fountain one this issue), Crashed really needs someone who has the knowledge and the connections necessary to write a regular section on the PD scene, doing reviews on new releases, plus perhaps the odd specialist feature on specific programmers. If you're clued up on both the SAM and Speccy scenes then great, but if you only really know about one or the other then you could either share the column with someone else, or perhaps alternate with SAM stuff one issue and Spectrum stuff the next. We'll see how (and, indeed, if) it turns out

Adventures

I'm led to believe that adventures are still quite big on the Speccy and SAM - so where are all the writers? As with PD, if you reckon you know enough about the scene (which I certainly don't) to write a section, get in touch.

Comms

Communications is the most undercovered area of the Speccy and SAM. The only series there has ever been about it (other than one-off features in Format and the like), to my knowledge anyway, is Your Sinclair's Dial Hard, which only ran for a few months anyway. If you know anything about the VTX5000, the VTX711 or that Hayes-compatible thing, or indeed networking (and this includes the SAM too), please pass on your knowledge. We will settle for nothing less than a ZX80 on the Internet! (Or maybe not.)

Getting it here

Ah. Tricky. At the moment, the only formats that I'm absolutely certain that I can accept are (in order of preference) WordMaster files on SAM disk, +D 3.5" disk (not tape, as the SAM version of WordMaster won't load or save any kind of tape, despite having a tape function), the NotePad word-processor that came on Fred 36, Outwrite and DRiVER's Notepad. The best thing for you to do would be to send it in as many formats as you can, and I'll see which ones will load. If your w/p has a "Save ASCII" option, try that. OR! if you want, send it on a PC (preferably DD) disk or an Apple-Mac one.

Something that I keep forgetting to mention is that you can send your stuff in on paper. In fact, if you do send it as a w/p file, a hard copy would also be appreciated so that we know what it's meant to look like.

Finally, if you contribute to an issue, you get that issue free (or get an extra month on your sub), so in theory you could get free copies of the world's third-best Speccy 'zine indefinitely! Worth thinking about.

SHOW REPORT

Biddeepideepeppideep - reports are coming in that a SAM and Spectrum computer fair in Gloucester was, allegedly, rather good. It happened on the 29th of April 1995, and we also have exclusive pictures on the next page. Over now to our roving reporter Allan Clarkson...

For about 2 years now it has been a policy of mine not do 'do' Saturday mornings. But on April the 29th I was awake at 6am after about three hours sleep. At 6:30 I got up and ready, and waited for Mark to arrive at 7. Mark arrived at half past (they'd got lost due to a badly placed street sign, apparently), and we set off for Quedgeley, described as the world's financial capital (by some madmen). A brief stop at Birmingham and by ten-ish we were in Gloucester. My mother ignoring my directions brought us into the town centre (luckily, as it happens - I needed some cash), and by half past eleven we were parked in the car park by the hall.

Mark and I entered the building and paid our two pounds to Jenny Bundock's delightful daughter Christina, then we went into the main hall. My first impressions were "oh no, it's going to be really crap" - I have never been more wrong in my life. Mark and I split up. I didn't know where to start - even when I did decide, most of the stalls were hidden by other browsers.

One of the first I went to had Nev Young sitting behind it demonstrating a Spectrum playing tunes on a MIDI keyboard, and, excitingly, a SAM with a hard drive. Don't get the cheque book out yet, though - it'll be a while before it's even fully operational, let alone releasable. Nev had a BASIC program operating it, and showed me a batch of MODE 1 screens being loaded off it. It was slow - slower than a floppy - and the PALETTE wasn't being loaded in. But I was impressed merely by the fact that there was a hard drive connected to a SAM.

Other interesting developments were the Quazar Surround, an interface which enhances the SAM's sound chip to Amiga and PC standards - quadrophonic (four speakers), too! SAM PD were selling the SAM DAC, another sound boosting device, aswell as lots of PD, and just about every screen had Matt Round's newie T 'N' T on it at some point. Simon Cooke was there showing everyone up by having about ten-billion hardware projects on the go at once, including another HD interface.

Other well known names there were Stephen 'Pickasso' Pick, Matt 'too good' Round, David 'in on everything' Ledbury, Colin 'FRED-ED' Anderton, Carol 'free advice' Brooksbank, Andrew 'Illusion' Collier, Lee 'Bubel' Willis and Stephen 'SC_' Nutting

amongst other Sam and Speccy celebs. Bob and Jenny of FORMAT were there, of course, and so was FRED boss Colin McDonald - wearing a kilt and sporran! (And being a lot less hairy than I had imagined.)

Mark introduced himself to Bob Brenchley, and those of you who read Format were probably expecting a fight to break out, but they made a peace with each other (damn! Could've been exciting!). I handed out CRASHED leaflets (hello to all you new readers!) and chatted to many people. I had a go on BOOTY from Jupiter/ Phoenix, and had completely forgotten how to play it. Stefan Drissen and chums tried to get me to buy a SAM DAC and his new MOD player (plays music with sampled instruments), and SAM PD's Derek Morgan ordered an issue of Crashed on the spot. I also marvelled at the number of personalised (EP)ROMs that everyone seemed to have - where can I get one?.

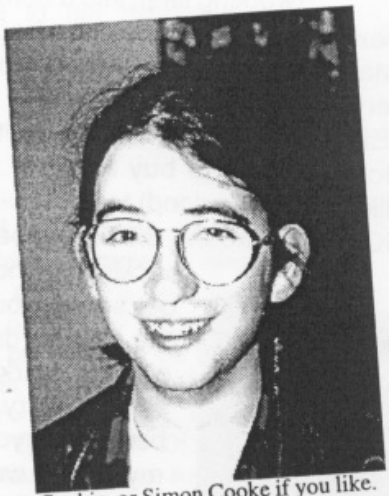
We met Mark Bennett from Leeds who had been meaning to write to us for ages, but hadn't, and I had a chat with Stuart who collected computers. He has a 1meg ZX81 and a 386 BBC Micro, or something (how about an article, then, Stu?). I (like most others) lost no chance to slap my own disk into a spare drive and load Ded Gud Software's future epic, Detective (working title), into a Sam (plug, plug), and even convinced some people, whom I shall not mention yet, to get involved. It could be big! (Sorry about that, Mark!) I was so excited that I was forced to buy a cup of (non-exorbitantly priced) tea.

Around 3:30 most people started packing up and I decided to get some group photos of the die-hards (or stragglers!). Mark said that I should hurry up about it before everyone went, but my theory was "If they're going early, then they can't be the die-hard fans". Colin Anderton arranged everyone into a group and at a shout from me we were all arranged nicely. Stuart clicked shutters on various cameras, and I then reeled off some film on snaps that'll probably all come out blurred anyway. My mother came in for me (aaaaargh!) as I was chatting to Carol Brooksbank, and both Marks (we gave the other one a lift back as his train wasn't due for hours) and I left the hall. Mark Bennett had bought just about everything under the sun, Mark S had bought a fair bit, and I hadn't bought enough. But still, eh?

All in all, the show was brilliant. It just goes to show that personality and friendliness is better than expense and flashness - and I'm looking forward to the next one. And there was "ample parking", as promised. Go to the next one, you won't regret it (unless you get run over in the car park, or something).

ALLAN'S PHOTO CASEBOOK

HEALTH WARNING: Looking at the mugs in this picture may damage your eyesight and could mentally scar you for life. Don't say we didn't warn you.



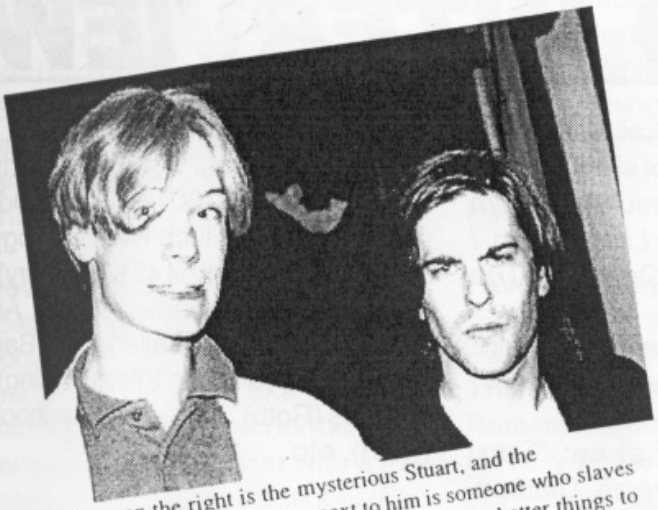
Cookie, or Simon Cooke if you like. D'you know how we met? I handed him a Crashed leaflet, unaware of who he was, and he said "ooh! I've been interviewed in this!". A momentus event and no mistake. Three people faintedas it happened. (Or not, perhaps.)

Mark Bennett and looking shiftily at him is Mark Sturdy - yes, what a strange looking lad he is too. (SPOOK FACT: Mark does that thing with his eyes alot of the time!)

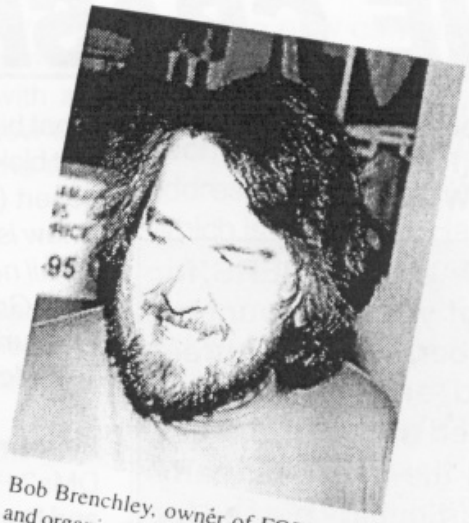
Colin Anderton and Colin Macdonald from Fred. Cheesy grins all round! What you can't see is that Colin is wearing a FRED jumper which his gran knitted him especially for the show - awww!

Ste Ekins of Jupiter Software and Simon Cooke of Entropy. Insert your own humorous caption here (I'm too tired to think of my own).

STOP PRESS! Or stop photocopy, anyway. Colin Anderton had an idea about a FRED day out to Alton Towers, and I (Allan), have started the ball rolling again. SO! There's probably going to be a SAM and Spec-chums day out to Alton Towers, on either the 19th or 20th of August. See FRED 59 or next "months" Crashed for more info.

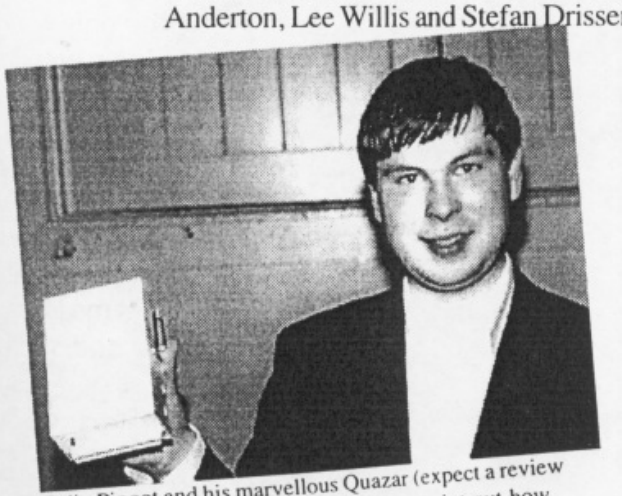


The one on the right is the mysterious Stuart, and the devastatingly handsome one next to him is someone who slaves away at a hot keyboard for hours when he's got better things to do, just to get this magazine looking good. (Grrr.)

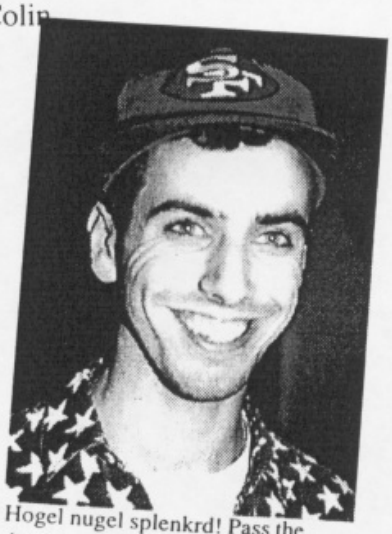


Bob Brenchley, owner of FORMAT, and organiser of the fair. Some would mistake him for popular entertainer Willy Rushton, y'know. But Bob hasn't been on Thru The Keyhole. (Yet.)

"Wanna be in my gang my gang my gang, Wanna be in my gang - oh, yeah!", sang Frank Sinatra in 1912. BACK ROW, L to R: Mark Sturdy, Mark Bennett, Steven Pick, Simon Cooke, Tim Paveley, Peter Moore. And the FRONT ROW: Colin Macdonald, Allan Clarkson, Colin Anderton, Lee Willis and Stefan Drissen. Hohoho.



Colin Piggot and his marvellous Quazar (expect a review soon). I wasn't the only one that day to point out how much Colin and his white box reminded me of Alan Miles and *his* white box (about five years ago), as David Ledbury pointed out. Let's just hope that fate has a better time in store for Colin!



Hogel nugel splenkrd! Pass the dutchie on the left-hand side! And other comments bordering on racism! It's the marvellous Stefan Drissen! (And he wants you to buy his MOD player.)

THE CRASHED INTERVIEW

Whatever Happened To Those Heroes? (Part One)
THE SHAW BROTHERS.

THE SHAW BROTHERS, for those of you too young to remember, was the three-headed entity who programmed a load of Speccy stuff in the late '80s, early '90s, particularly games for budget supremoes (ho ho) Atlantis and D&H, including Superkid In Space, Skatin' USA and The Last Vampire. They're about to make a comeback (of sorts) with several of their unreleased games being, er, released. By MAT BEAL. As it happens. Anyway, he got this list of answers back from codebod GRAHAM SHAW but they were, he assures us, "answered in a collective fashion by the Shaw Bros." Off we go, then.

How were you first introduced (blah)?
"We first got 'into' computers back in 1982. We were actually stuck inside one for six hours once. (Ho-ho! Lard) One of our pals had a ZX81 and we thought it was amazing. The fact that you could only have around ten lines of BASIC didn't seem to disappoint us. We bought the odd computer mag and then saw an advert for the ZX Spectrum 16K. Christmas 1982 approached fast and we splashed out £120 odd quid for one. Spent the next six weeks solidly typing in Spectrum games from mags. Then it packed in so we replaced it and updated to a 48K."

Favourite crisps: "Cheese and onion Quavers/McCoys."
Favourite cartoons: "Roger Rambet and Duckman."
Favourite Monty Python sketch: "That bit in the Holy Grail film where that bloke took a vow of silence in the desert (ho ho)." *(I presume the film Shaw is referring to is Life of Brian. I recall no such skit in Quest For The Holy Grail. Mat)*
Favourite drinks: "Vimto, Yorkshire Tea, McEwans Red Can, Guiness . . . "
Favourite brand of shoe: "Erm, DMs? Ha. Erm. Converse, Diadora and Dunlop wellingtons."
Favourite magazines: "Fish, Wired, Q, Select, anything mediocre." *(Not Crashed, then. AC)*
Favourite wierd theory: "There is intelligent life in Cheshire." (Bugger off. Mat)
Favourite items of clothing: "Luna Lunapark white T-shirt, Levi jeans . . . they've just dropped to bits, so now it's Lee Coopers (back in fashion by the end of summer . . . he hopes . . .)"
Favourite Speccy games: "Atic Atac, Sabrewulf, Match Day 2, Matchpoint, Robin O' The Wood, Nightshade, Legend of Avalon, Quazatron, etc . . . "

Favourite musical entertainment?
"The Beatles, Neil Young, Velvet Underground, Love, Lovin' Spoonful, Jonathan Richman, The La's, Mazzy Star, House Of Love, Monkees, Mercury Rev, Bob Dylan, Red Crayola, Luna, Galaxie 500, Wedding Present, Stone Roses, Oasis, Beat Happening, Rod McKuen, Nirvana, Iris DeMent, James Taylor, Memphis Slim, Muddy Waters, Lloyd Cole *(He went to my school, y'know. Mat) (Yes, we know. Shut up, Everybody)*, Donavan, Champion Jack Dupree, Miles Davis, Smiths, Morrissey *(He went to my school, y'know. Mat) (No, he didn't. Stop lying. Anybody)*, Simon And Garfunkel, Happy Mondays, Leonard Cohen *(AAAAAARRRRRRRRRRGGGGGGHHHHHHHH! Ed)*, The Seeds . . . how long have you got?" *(Wish I'd never bloody well asked. Mat)*

Favourite books?
"Catch 22 (Heller), How To Talk Dirty (Lenny Bruce), 2001: A Space Odyssey (Clarke), Hitch-Hiker's Trilogy (Adams), Fahrenheit 451 (Bradbury), A Kestrel For A Knave (Hines), An American Dream (Mailer), Body Bag (Rollins), Lord of the Flies (Golding), Tarabas (Roth), Trickster's Handbook (Edin), etc . . . "

Films? Dare I ask?
"2001: A Space Odyssey, Slacker, Take The Money And Run, Blooming Youth, One Trick Pony, Don't Look Back Kes, Apocalypse Now, Saturday Night Sunday Morning, Billy Liar . . . " *(I've had enough of this. Shut up. Mat)*

What's the future of the Spectrum? Does it have one?
"I think the Spectrum died a thousand deaths when Mr Nintendo and Mr Sega took over the marketplace. Apart from the chosen few soldiering on I don't think we'll ever see a computer industry like that of the mid to late 80s again. I still use my rubber-keyed 48K Spectrum as a DTP (sad but true)."

Criminal Justice Bill: Orwellian (etc) . . . ?
"Unfortunately we are now a police state, which is the only way this sad government can keep any kind of hold on proceedings. Kill The Bill I say, and a few others while you're at it. Off with their heads. I don't automatically believe anything I see on the TV or read in the paper. Most of it's down to MI5 anyway. And if their's any MI5 agents reading this then let me just say "Ooh, ooh, sorry mister" and quote "Leave me alone - for I was only joking." BUT WE KNOW DIFFERENT." *(Scary. Mat)*

Take That: Ironic purveyors of perfect plastic pop, or pile of petrid poodle-piss? *("Petrid"? Making up words to fit your alliteration again, eh Mat? Ed)*
"What a load of clobbock they are.

they really are the cheesiest chart "act" since Glen and Chris *(They used to go to my school, y'know. Mat) (Sob. Somebody)*. Well, what more can you expect from a man whose main influence was Elton John? Rock and roll . . . "

How would you like to die?
"Being immortal I've never had to think about that one. But maybe from a mortal standpoint I'd like to die by standing next to a certain former Conservative Prime Minister with a live hand grenade, pulling the trigger *(Eh? Mat)* and stuffing it down said person's throat whilst singing There She Goes Again by the Velvet Underground. How's that for starters?"

Have you been fooled by the National Lottery?
"I have actually bought the odd ticket in my past. I actually "won" a tenner on the first one . . . but not a sniff since. I'd rather see ninety first prizes of £100,000 than three at £3,000,000 each. It stinks . . . I've got about as good a chance of winning as Barnesley have of playing in the Premiership."

What's the best thing you've ever written on the Speccy?
"I once wrote my name and postcode unsing a green marker pen. It just rubbed off into my hands . . . I ended up with green fingers for six weeks. (Ho-ho! Lard) Best game? Ooh, a tough one this, they're mostly the same level. Erm, Cerius was the first one to get published, how about Moontorc, Cavemania, Superkid In Space, Skatin' USA, Last Vampire and Kosmos. A funny thing on the Last Vampire inlay is that it mentions the town being called "Whitley Bay", when it was supposed to be "Whitby" (where Dracula was set), but somewhere along the line somebody mistyped it to Whitley Bay. It was too late to rectify things. Anybody with an ounce of authenticity will know the subtle difference between the two towns!"

Favourite telly programs?
"Bottom, Calendar, Late Review, Alan Partridge stuff, Match Of The Day, The White Room, Blackadder, Reeves and Mortimer."

Have you heard Talk Radio UK yet?
"Has anybody? I did actually tune in once; it's like standing at a bus stop and listening to two not-very interesting people talking about a similarly not-very-interesting topic. It stinks at the moment. Then again I do rate most radio stations in the same category. I do occasionally listen to Radio One ("1FM") through the week between 7pm and 11pm and GMR on match-days." *(GMR is the BBC local station for the environs of Greater Manchester, for those of you who don't live in the fabulous north-west of England. Mat)*

The two new compilations of unreleased Shawbrothers' stuff will soon be available for £2.00 each (inc p&P) from the Fish address on the Post Box page. Which is my house. Ha. A tape containing both Hop 'N' Chop and the other long-lost game Football Glory will be available for about '3 in a few months. Graham is starting a "non-literary literary" fanzine soon, called Semicolon, and for more info on that you could send an SAE to his address on the Post Box page. His musically-inclined brother Ade is doing something odd called Sick Happy Idle, and you'll probably get copious "information" on that whether you want it or not before long. NEXT ISSUE: We chat inanely to the Balrog. See ya!

Adrian, Graham and Dave. This photo was taken just after an embarassing episode involving two pineapples and a chinchilla. The guitars are a ruse.

Spook Shaw Brothers fact: none of them has ever eaten ant flavoured ice-cream! Blimey!

T 'N' T

SAM · £9.99 · Revelation · Programmed by Matt Round

I'd start with the plot, but there isn't one, so I'll have to make my own up. Here goes. One day Mrs. Scoggins was making herself a cup of tea when she heard a knock on the door. It was the milkman, come for his money. When she told him that she'd have to pay double next week as she hadn't been to the bank yet, he exploded, and all his bits turned into smiley faces. Mrs. Scoggins didn't want the police to find out, especially after what had happened with the postman five years previously, so she called her grandchilden, Ted and Tam, to collect all the smileys before the next day, when the other villagers would notice the distinct lack of milk in the area. Ted and Tam set off to the recently vandalised Louvre for no apparent reason, and Mrs. Scoggins went to Tesco's for some more milk in case they didn't do it in time.

MOVING TONGUE

Enough of the plot. The game loads up and begins with a smiley in the centre of the screen, with a ticking noise in the background. The smiley explodes to reveal the title screen, which has two music levels in the centre, and Ted and Tam either side of it. Press fire or Z and Ted will dissapear, and F0 will banish Tam to the netherworld. The first level is a digitised picture of the Mona Lisa, with glasses, a moustache and a cigarette painted onto the appropriate areas. The player(s) start at the bottom left or the bottom right of the playing area, and after the music finishes you're free to roam around collecting the smileys and getting killed by a green skull.

To say that TNT isn't similar to Bombjack would be like saying Crashed has always been out on time. But that's no bad thing as I have always liked bombjack and have wanted a SAM version for a long time. Other levels include Gazza (with moving tongue!), Zeb Green on the moon, Captain Kirk and Roger Rabbit. It's nice to see a game with humour playing a fundamental role in it.

HOSEPIPE BEING POINTED

The game plays well. Your character runs around faster than a crowd of Elastica fans escaping from a hosepipe being pointed at them from above (but that's another story), and the meanies are difficult to get away from at times. The time limit is strict but reasonable, and the FX are adequate. You'll need to get used to the two modes of the fire button - flying and jumping, but it doesn't take long to understand it. The bonus levels are frequent but they're all the same, and the learning curve is excellent. The music is good, and there is a 99 position high score table. There's lots of power ups including, extra speed, lives, higher jumping, flying, and much more.

BAGUETTE SANDWICH

On the down side, the sprites are a little on the small side, but I suppose it adds a greater movement area to play in. The in game FX are sparse but adequate, and a tune while playing wouldn't go amiss. But they're the only bad things about it. There is never more than 2 nasties on screen at once, but they're unrelenting, and any more would make the game more difficult than eating a baguette sandwich. But having said that, the game is too easy to complete. I bought it at the Gloucester show on Saturday and finished it the following wednesday (albeit on two player). If there were more levels then I could keep going for a lot longer, as part of the attraction of the game is wondering what the next level is going to be. Many of the levels I finished on the first try, too. However, I must admit that I keep going back to it time and time again.

POURING COFFEE

To get the most out of TNT you really need two players, as long as you're not likely to kill each other. This game is very competetive in two-player mode and those fists get flying when your adversary pinches that extra life you so desparately needed.

TNT is a marvellous game and is very flash. There's a players guide on the disk to help those afflicted by not realising the obvious, and I get a general feeling of value for money about the whole thing. Buy it now (if you haven't already), and end up pouring coffee over your (ex-)friend's head at some point.

Brilliant with two players.

PRESENTATION	81%
GRAPHICS	83%
SOUND	81%
PLAYABILITY	88%
LASTABILITY	80%
OVERALL	78%

FISHPASTE VOL.1

Fish Paste Volume One. • Spectrum · £2 · Fish Enterprises · Compilation

Fish Paste Volume One (subtitled I Shaw The Light Part One) (sub-subtitled The Best Of The Shawbrothers' Unreleased Stuff) is the first in a line of Speccy compilation packs put out by onetime fanzine svengali Mat Beal, in his words, "primarily to get some good, cheap stuff released on the Speccy." So hurrah, then.

This pack, like the forthcoming second volume and the worryingly-titled Mr Shaw's Double Whammy, is centred around two mid-80s Shawbrothers games, plus some extra, never-before-seen bits and pieces. The two main games, by the way, both date from 1986 and as such are pre-128K, only Kempston compatible and, er, crash when you don't load them in 48K mode (so don't firebomb Mat's house when you try to load them from the main menu and they don't work). But enough of this straighforward, sensible journalism. Let us get on with the review, and insert obscure John Otway and Wild Willy Barrett references where you least expect them. Or not.

The Invasion Of The Intergalactic Mutant Halibut (From Mars)

This ludicrously-titled platformsandladderser was first released in 1986 by Gadtek, and failed miserably to go down in history in any way, probably connected in some way to the fact that nobody really knew who Gadtek were. Anyway, you've got to walk round this warehouse-type place, collecting bottles of vinegar and shooting nasty blobby things, and when you've got all the vinegar you can jump on top of the energiser, destroying all the mutants and moving you on to the next level.

There's lots of power-ups, but they're placed more or less at random around the game, meaning you can't plan ahead in that respect. However, the map is quite logically laid-out so you get to know your way aroung after a while. The only real problem is that whenever a baddy gets you, you lose a vinegar bottle without knowing where it's gone, which is pointlessy annoying. Still, it's fun, addictive and playable.

20-20 Vision

Another obscure '86-er, 20-20 Vision is an Atic Atac-type arcade adventure. You've got to wander around a rather huge map area (400 screens, fact fans!) and shoot nasty folk whilst looking for bits of your boat. While enjoyable in its own way, it's really too fiddly and frsutrating to have much in the way of lasting appeal, whenever you get anywhere you seem to die, and the millions of dead ends make the map too confusing.

Shaws III

Originally written for the Fish covertape that never was (maybe - don't know, really) is a Space Invaders-type effort with an aquatic theme, vis you're a submarine and the baddies are fish (spot the subliminal advertising gimmick). Graphically gorgeous, sweet and simple, with an only slightly self-indulgent high score table.

Random Insult Generator

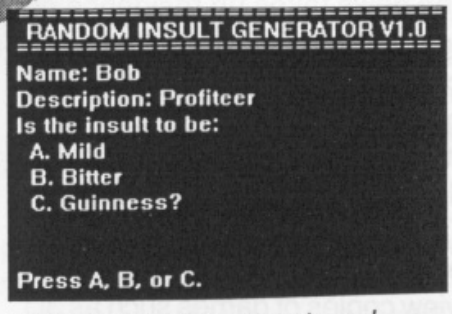
This is it. After over twelve years, the art of Spectrum programming has reached its peak. Written by our very own Mr Beal, RIG is a multi-purpose utility that allows you to roundly insult any person such as takes your fancy. Using it couldn't be easier: you just type in the name of the person you wish to insult, a noun that describes them, and the program does the rest. Pure genius.

So, there we have it. Two nice games, a jolly extra and a timeless classic. Buy it. I would. (Ah, but you got it for free, didn't you? Logical reader.)

It is a complation. It is good. Thank you.

HALIBUT 81%
20-20 VISION 67%
SHAWS III 72%
R. I. G. 100%

OVERALL 80%



Random Insult Generator. A good reason to buy a Speccy. No kidding. (All the console kids will return because of it!)

NOSTALGIA CORNER

Home Computing Weekly: HERE. And it's Allan Clarkson who has it.

Ah, an issue with all the pages! That's probably because it hasn't always been mine - someone gave it to me (or I borrowed it and never gave it back, more likely!). Anyway, the cover promises us the Gallup Software Chart - "The Chart To Belive In", stacks of reviews, programs to type in, 4-D arrays, and the chance to "turn your ZX81 into an electronic organ". *(Raucous laughter. Ed)* (It's true, honest!) The contents on page three promise similar textual delights, and a tasty picture of two Commodore machines and a TI99/4A is there to break up the text. HCW was published by Argus Specialist Press Ltd. who were based at 1 Golden Square in London, the building now occupied by Virgin Radio . Argus also published 16/48 and Spectrum Computing, both Tapezines. (Just call me Mr. Trivia.)

The news takes up residence on page five, and Sinclar-related items include Pitfall II and Beamrider being released on the Speccy, and Elite withdrawing The Fall Guy due to loading problems. Also featured is a report of Santa Claus at a Hewson press launch, handing out review copies of games such as 3D Lunattack and Technician Ted. A large list of competition winners is included, and as usual I checked through for a name that I recognise. And I found one that rings a bell: BD Mumford from West Croydon won a two games, Jump and Red Attack, for spotting some differences! I think that BD Mumford has something to do with SAM Supplement. (Yup; Brian Mumford is now better known as the aforementioned disk mag's distributor and head of the Discovery Users' Group. Ed) (Hurrah!)

A competition to win Activision's Space Shuttle on Spectrum or C64 is followed by a page of reviews. HCW at this time reviewed around five games to one page, all following a certain theme or all being for one computer (usually the Spectrum!). Also, all percentages were rounded off to the nearest five, and thus many games received 100% in certain areas. This system doesn't really work as the final score is given as a star rating out of five. Beebul from Scorpio Gamesworld received 100% for playability and three stars whereas Softstone's Farenheight 3000 had only 50% playability and received two stars. Also, on the same page, Loderunner (Software Projects) received far less in percentages than Beebul but had an overall total of four stars. Unreliable, to say the least. [Note - Beebul is no relation to my game on Fred, Beeble. I only just discovered that this game existed!]. Also reviewed were Smash & Grab, both for the Electron, both from Superior (surely some mistake?) Software, and both received five stars.

HCW - 45p! Maybe they had an "M.A." of their own.

Page ten this week had rented out its spare room to a BBC Micro disassembler, and page fourteen fills its balloons with a feature about adventure games, including The Hobbit, some Quill games, Pyjamarama, Underwurlde. But are these adventures or arcades (the last two)? Peter Sweasy solved all of last issue's rantings by inventing arcventures. It's in there with edutainment and infomercials as one of those words that the News At Ten is likely to use!

A slightly different page of reviews is next, with a BBC music package and a C64 BASIC extention reviewed. The crap ratings system is, however, retained. A Spectrum program is revealed by turning the page. Give A Dog A Bone, by R.N. Butcher, is supplied as a BASIC listing, and a nice screen dump is shown.

Three pages later and we stumble upon two pages of reviews. On the Spectrum, Rally Driver (Hill MacGibbon), Hitman (Scorpio) and Cyclone (Vortex) all receive five stars without even trying. A 16K Vic-20 program is followed by five BBC reviews then two pages of

ZX81 programs. The first had a delve into the ROM of our flat-keyboarded pal, and the second is a 25 line program of that city bomber game. This is being tailed by Money Maze to type into a C64 if you have one handy, and MM is being watched through a pair of binoculars by five reviews. Steve Davis Snooker and Vampire Killer (CDS and Scorpio, respectively) turn up for the Spectrum, but are flanked by three BBC Micro programs.

An interesting ZX81 feature is next. As we all know (or if you didn't then you will now), the ZX81 has no sound chip. But that didn't stop Mike Biddell creating an organ program with storage and auto play for his ZX81! I tried this once but got bored half way through so never had it working. A feat of engineering, though!

Knocking bottles off walls is the TI99/4A program in this issue, and very short it is, too. Two more pages of reviews includes another page of BBC games, and on the second page the only Spectrum game reviewed is Yacht Race from Hill MacGibbon, another five star game. The 4-D array feature is next and we are given a Spectrum program to demonstrate this strange concept. The Hypercube is also introduced, as is a fourth dimension to see in. Sounds like something from Star Trek or a Douglas Adams book to me!

Another review page has Computer Cluedo (Leisure Genius) on the C64 (again - it's reviewed earlier), and a compendium of 20 games on the Spectrum. Called Winning Games On The ZX Spectrum, it received a less than favourable review as it was all in BASIC. Needless to say, Ellis Horwood, the author, probably wasn't pleased with the two star rating (but not all that bothered either, I should imagine, with this ratings system!)

Gallup charts, now. This chart just goes to show how popular the Spectrum was. All but one of the games in the top twenty was on the Spectrum, and that game, Elite, was converted not long afterwards. The next most popular computer, the C64 only has fourteen games in this chart available for it, the BBC has five, Amstrad CPC five, the Electron has two, the Vic 20 only one and the Atari 400/800 have none at all. Top of the pile is Daley Thompson's Supertest from Ocean, closely followed by Activision's Ghostbusters and Firebird's bell-bottom clad Booty. Also in the running are Manic Miner (Software Projects), Football Manager (Addictive), Beach Head (US Gold) and Skool Daze (Microsphere).

The letters page is only slightly better than that of the mid-1984 Sinclair User. The first one is from a person who had written a program to play Mollie Malone on the Vic 20, and the program was listed for those who desired to type it in. Someone with a high score on C64 Pitfall II felt a sudden urge to tell the nation, and an Amstrad CPC464 owner slagged off Spectrum owners because they were "becoming too high and mighty", though I think that it was because his machine only had a quarter of the amount of games that were available for Uncle Clive's baby. Stephen Woodhouse requested a high scores page, a TI99/4A owner bemoaned the fact that little software was being produced for his machine, M Bewick, a Sharp MZ-700 user (I've got one of these, actually), wanted similar attention and a Vic 20 owner was upset that only a handful of programs ran on her unexpanded Vic. The last word went to C Somers of London who wanted to know if anybody had beaten his score of 3250 on Horace Goes Skiing. Like we wanted to know that.

"The chart to belive in." Or not.

The magazine is rounded off with some classified ads, most offering software and repairs, often for the less popular computers.

And on to the adverts. Ultimate took out a full page ad to let people know about Knight Lore, Sabre Wulf, Underwurlde and a C64-only game, The Staff Of Karnath. Wordsworth, "The Game For All The Family", is available from, er, Wordsworth Software, Astrology For Beginners is out for just about every computer under the sun, the Advertising Standards Authority put in many appearances, an Alien advert tells us about space not carrying sound - especially screaming, and Jeff Minter's Llamasoft informs us of the chance to buy Psychedelia - a sound to light program.

All in all, quite a schizophrenic magazine. On the one hand it can be interesting and useful, but when it wants to it can be really dull. I can see why mags like this tended to die out when single-format magazines sprung up like rabbits with hormone excess. There isn't really enough to satisfy someone with only one computer.

Next month: Either a look through Sinclair Research's 1984 product catalogue, or Mark may wibble about some Atari console for a while (even though they've nothing to do with the SAM or Speccy.)

TECH NICHE

George has written this piece which, on the up-side, means that I don't have to do any work this ish, and on the down-side it means that you have to do without my hot pace and blazing wit (or not). Anyway, I'll hand you over to George.

Firstly I must have a little niggle at Mark and ask him how he had the cheek to put in issue 5 asking where I was - for God's sake Mark, you only live a couple of miles away. Shouldn't I be asking you that question? *(No. Ed) (But ask him anyway. AC)*

Anyway lets get on with it. I have a feeling that this little tip might come in useful with a lot of you out there in this maddening world. Let's put it this way: if you'd just spent ages masterpiecing a program, you'd want some form of program security when saving to disk, so that it can't be accidently wiped off.

Here's a reminder on how to use the SAMDOS commands,

HIDE and PROTECT:

HIDE "filename"
PROTECT "filename"

HIDE prevents your program being displayed on a disk DIRectory.

PROTECT prevents your program from being erased from disk. To reverse these commands, use:

HIDE OFF "filename"

PROTECT OFF "filename"

(You learn something every day. Well, someone might. AC) Here's an even better tip. This POKE, when used at the beginning of a program, prevents anyone from pressing ESCAPE whilst your program is running and then disables it:

POKE &5641,1

If you want to see if ESCAPE has been pressed use this funtion:

POKE &5641,1:DEF FN esc=IN 249=223 AND NOT CODE INKEY$

Whenever waiting for a keypress you can use this next piece of code to see if an attempt has been made to break into your program by pressing ESCAPE.

IF FN esc THEN LET attempted_break=1

Mais (but), this still leaves the problem of breaking in using the break button. Whenever the button is pressed the program usually stops dead. To prevent this from happening, use this POKE:

DPOKE &5ae0,0

This will either reset the computer, or completely ignore the break button when pressed.

Hope these tips have helped. See you whenever. Signing off now,

George.

If you're really insecure, you could get Arnie to protect your files. Uzi 3.5 inch! (Or something.)

Well, George, they've certainly helped me. Helped me to avoid doing any work, that is. I might be back next month, depending on whether other people do the work or not. If I do have to actually do something, then I'll do the final part of the screen thang. D'you know how many hours I've saved this month? Lots, I'll tell you. But! I must remind you to always make a backup of your work. If you use these protection thangs, keep an unprotected copy for yourself, as even you (yes, you!) won't be able to break into George's Marvellous Protection Routine (TM). Finally, I must apologise for Mark's spelling mistakes on the contents page. Some slipped through. I don't know why I'm apologising - it's not my job to correct mistaks. Ho-hum.

Paul Howard saves me a job and a half by filling up a page with techyish stuff. Cheers, Paul! this article was originally published in Alchnews, and although I wasn't sure about it, Mark doesn't seem to have any qualms about republishing stuff. And it's a cracking article, too! Banana!

Hello and welcome to a really interesting article about Funny Filenames! Do you remember how "Saboteur" loaded, with the red filename? And what about the games that printed filenames over the "Program:" instead of after it? I bet you've spent weeks wondering how they did it! Well, now the secret is yours! You will soon be able to amaze your friends with Funny Filenames (UK Patent Pending) on tape and disk!

The trick with Funny Filenames is knowing which characters you are allowed to use. Well, it's all of them! Even the commands can be used as filenames. Try saving a file as CHR$ 249+CHR$ 249+CHR$ 249+CHR$ 249, and when you reload it, presto! You will see a load of RANDOMIZEs. This may not be a very useful filename, but as you will see, some commands are . . .

Remember that you can't load the RANDOMIZE file with LOAD "RANDOMIZE etc" because it's the command, not the word. The Speccy takes RANDOMIZE as a single character. Filenames can have ten characters, so you can occasionally be sneaky and use commands to increase your filename

EXTRA!

length.

Say you've just written a game called "Paper Aeroplane". Most people would give the BASIC loader a boooooring name like AERO, (isn't that a chocolate bar?!) (Yes and it's a trade mark and I had to pay a royalty for mentioning it. Ed), but you and I know that PAPER is a Spectrum command. Find out its character set position, which happens to be 218, and then . . .

SAVE CHR$ 218 + "AEROPLANE"

When you load the file or catalogue your disc, you have managed to create a filename of seemingly fifteen characters! (The space after PAPER appears because it is usually followed by a number).

Think of the endless possibilities - for a screen copier you could use SCREEN$ and COPY - that's just two characters, leaving you eight! If your filename is commandless, look for tiny commands like PI, OR, AND and IF within words. But there will come a time when your filename is completely empty of commands. This is where another type of Funny Filename (All rights reserved) comes into play . . .

The Legendary Coloured Filename! No, it's not some obscure racial insult, it's a clever effect which you (Yes! You!) can now use! (Beware disc owners - these may well mess up your catalogue if you pick clashing colours!). The Spectrum character set is normally thought of as being from 32 (space) to 255 (last command). The reason for this is that the characters before 32 are unprintable - erm, no, that makes them sound like swear words. They are control characters (that's better!), used for setting colours and things. A lot of them are useless, but regard, if you will, characters 16 and 17.

Printing these two will give you an "Invalid colour" error. By the way, never save a file as CHR$ 16 or 17 on its own because you'll never be able to load it off tape, and if on disc, it will make the rest of your catalogue unreadable (What a protection system!). What they need is a colour code after them. As 16 represents ink colour and 17 represents paper colour, you can use them instead of these commands, so that:

PRINT CHR$ 16;CHR$ 2; CHR$ 17;CHR$ 6; "Hello!"

is exactly equivalent to:

PRINT INK 2;PAPER 6;"Hello!"

How useless, eh? For printing, yes. But for filenames, these two characters are completely groovy!! You can't SAVE INK 2;PAPER 6; "file" but you can SAVE CHR$ 16... etc! Each CHR$ statement counts as a character in your filename, but even with an ink and paper colour (you don't have to have both, or either!) you still have six characters left! BRIGHT and FLASH can also be done like this, but I've forgotten their character codes (look in the user guide). My final filename trick is the "Ooh, how on earth did he get so many spaces in it?" one.

CHR$ 6 is the same as the comma in PRINT "Hello","Hello". It moves the text position across half a line. You can do this in Funny Filenames (Registered trade mark). Try this:

SAVE CHR$ 6 + CHR$ 6 + CHR$ 6 + "file"

The word "file" will be in a strange place, about one line down. Oh, I've just remembered the last one - printing over the "Program:". Because "Program:" only appears on tape systems, don't use this on disc unless you want to see a funny effect which you may find difficult to get rid of! Tape owners can use CHR$ 8 to backspace without deleting, thus:

SAVE CHR$ 8 + CHR$ 8 + "...file"

will give "Program...file" instead of "Program: file". Unfortunately in this case, your filename "file" can only be five letters. I used to know a trick to completely overwrite the "Program:" (I stole the routine from Players' "Thing") which involved some POKEs and CHR$ 0s, but I've forgotten it now so you'll have to break into the loader yourself.

(SAVE CHR$ 6+CHR$ 22+CHR$ 1+ CHR$ 0+ "name."+CHR$ 6. Ed) (That's the Alchnews Ed, not me, obviously. Ed)

And don't ask me how they did the "Gauntlet: The Deeper Dungeons" loader with only ten characters!!!

Oops, just remembered something. If you try to SAVE CHR$ (n) and you have a Plus D disc system, the D1 or D2 syntax must always be followed by a quotes symbol. You will therefore have to put a null string at the beginning. For instance, this command:

SAVE d1 CHR$ 6 + "File"

. . . should be altered to the following:

SAVE d1"" + CHR$ 6 + "File"

I don't know about microdrive syntax 'cos mine doesn't work!!

SAM users should note that the keywords are set out differently on their machine, and you'll probably get some wierd results, especially on disk. Try them anyway! Well, that just about wraps it up for this month's Tech Niche, next month we'll be back to one page unless I get some more articles like these. (Well, put it this way, I'm not writing two pages myself!) I'll leave you now to read the rest of the mag, and to umm and aah at the DTP. And point out all the mistakes. Next issue will be even better! I hope.

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Sinclair News(Spectrum tape - not sure whether it's still going): 166 Valley Dr, Gravesend, Kent, DA12 5SH
The Thing Monthly(lots of humorous wibble with a section on old computers, SAE for new-look promo issue): 46 High Rd West, Felixstowe, Suffolk, IP11 9JE Tel. 01394 273178
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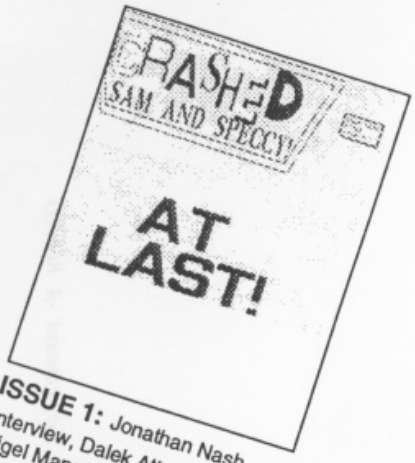

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