

CRASHED

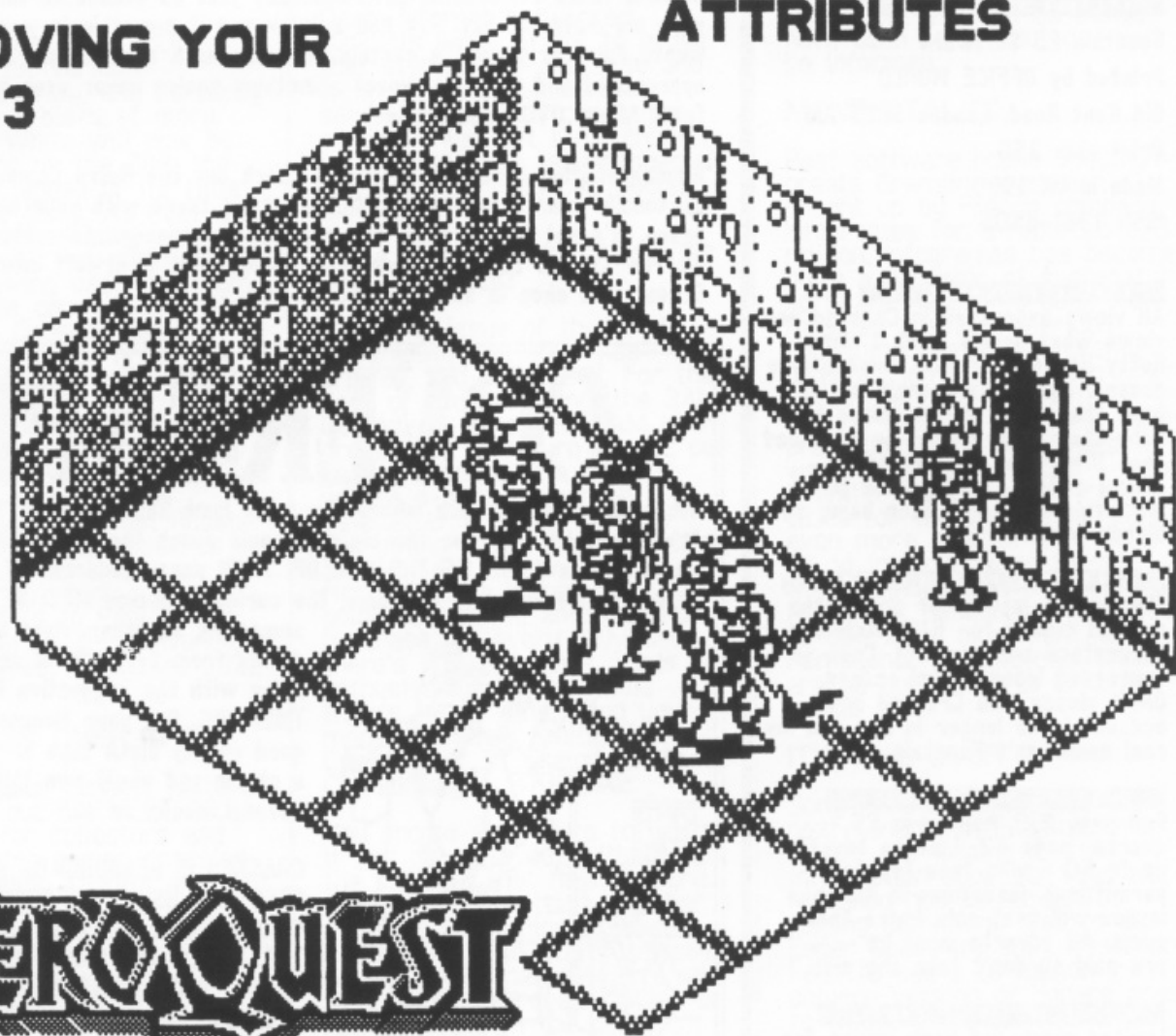
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HEROQUEST

The alternative Spectrum and Sam fanzine

EDITORIAL

CRASHED FANZINE
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DISCLAIMER

All views expressed in Crashed are views what people have, I blame Betty Bo doing the do. Anyone who doesn't agree that people should have their own views, unless they echo their own, should be reminded that they were a dickhead at school and it doesn't seem to be improving with age. Stop being so bloody precious.

SUBSCRIPTIONS

The next 5 issues for £5 or the next 11 issues for £10 (including all postage and packing). Cash or uncrossed blank postal orders ONLY please, the Crashed bank account is no longer in use and my real name isn't Fountain.

ADVERTISING

Full page £10, half page £5, quarter page £2. Lineage adverts up to 50 words free (space permitting). Insertions in three issues will cost only twice those sums. All adverts must be pre-paid so don't take the piss.

BACK ISSUES

Limited stocks of back issues for £1 each: 5, 8, 10, 12, 13, 14, 15, 16, 17, 21, 22, 23, 24. There are currently no plans to reprint sold out issues.

EDITORIAL

Best to start with the bad news then gradually build to an orgasmic crescendo - a thousand film directors can't all be wrong. As from issue 26, that's the next one fact fans, Crashed will once again cost £1.50. I will bore you with the facts as I don't want people thinking I'm out to make a profit (if I wanted to make money I wouldn't bother with a Spectrum for starters). As I took on all the outstanding subscriptions with no money left in the kitty, and despite the recent influx of new readers, I'm still running at a loss. Even at the increased price, Crashed will still be the cheapest hands on fanzine and still have more text and graphics per square inch than any similar title. Without having to worry so much about where the next print run will come from, I can instead concentrate on making things even better. Existing subscribers will still get the old deal so no worries there. People taking out a subscription right here right now will also get the old deal up to 30th June 99.

At some point in September, Crashed will be 5 years old. I was going to avoid a token celebration as it's usually just an excuse to fill new pages with old material, but, I've had a think and if something's worth doing it's worth doing originally. A certain bald man with a beard has already been approached and you can expect something you've never seen before (apart from Allens DVDA adult video).

Anyone visiting London soon should check out the Retro Computer Exchange, I personally guarantee that you'll just stand there with your bloody big gobs agape. It's not just a shop, it's a computer museum. Take the tube to Warren Street, turn right out the station then first left into Whitworth Street. The shop is on the right. Enjoy.

COVERTAPE

What was that cartoon where the frilly lamb kept shouting 'It's the Wolf, It's the Wolf' and then the big dog would punch the wolf's head in? Oh yeah, it was called ITS THE WOOLUF. Thrill your trousers off with this issues Dungeons style PD game, the curiously named MEZI VEZEMI

something or other. Have a couple of 4k demos from FUNTOP 98 on me, then relax with the suggestive ROARING TWENTIES. Get your flappers out. Send a good quality blank tape or +D disc plus a stamp and you'll own this stuff within several weeks or so.



CRASHED IS DESIGNED ON A 128k +D SPECTRUM USING THE PC6 DTP. GRAPHICS ARE TWEAKED ON ART STUDIO 128. PAGES ARE MASTERED ON AN EPSON LQ100 PRINTER. CRASHED IS AN 8 BIT FANZINE MADE EXCLUSIVELY ON AN 8 BIT COMPUTER USING 8 BIT SOFTWARE. WHAT WILL THEY THINK OF NEXT? COLOUR NAKED POSTER OF JANE HORROCKS PLEASE.

THE NEWS

SHOWING THE WAY

Graham Howden at Retro Classix fanzine is currently putting together details of a multi-format retro computer and games convention to be held in London later this year. This will be the most high profile event ever, with definite media interest (Graham has already been featured by Sky). With any luck it could also see the end to anaemic 8 bit jumble sales held in draughty scout huts with a bus once every two hours to the local train station (five miles away).

TRIBUTE TO ELITE

The final issue of ZX FILES (number 7) hit various doormats recently, and certainly went out in a blaze of glory. Editor Paul White will now be concentrating on the Z88, the once almost ahead of its time yuppy laptop thing. As Paul was a normal human being, always concerned with new software and interviewing past Spectrum greats in the comfort of their own homes, Crashed has snapped him up for brand new articles and features.

ZX Files 7 comes complete with a free cassette featuring not only the 48k and 128k versions of Elite, but the un-official sequels from Russia and a plush manual based on the original. Snap this work of art up now by sending £2 to cover all costs to Paul at his new address: 12 Third Avenue, Wetherby, West Yorkshire LS22 6JR.

FOOTBALL'S OVER THEN

If you like your console history then check out BRITMEET 99, a convention for collectors and users of retro games consoles and hand helds. Tickets are still available (there's a shocker) and cost £6 for adults who should know better and £3 for kids. This event is being held at the National Hockey Stadium in fun town Milton 'mind the prams and where's the pub' Keynes on Saturday 5th June. Add £1 booking fee and you'll get a free map too. Clue: Milton Keynes is in the middle of nowhere. Apply to: Jonathan

Dyton, 89 Redding Grove, Crownhill, Milton Keynes MK8 0BU. For more information you can have a look at britmeet@yahoo.com

NERDS TAKE THE PILLS

A recent clipping from the Sunday Mirror suggests that Internet users are far more likely to commit suicide than normal people. The Samaritans are concerned at the increasing numbers of E-mails they are receiving from suicidal surfers. And in America, yet another pair of dysfunctional computer geeks have gone mental with guns. The heavy metal listening Doom Internet networked fuckwits went all out to prove that stereotypes are alive and well, until they shoot themselves that is. All concerned parents must get their children to complete this issues special questionnaire. Then call Social Services.

SAM COMMUNITY ARRIVES AND IS GOOD

The first issue of the SAM Community newsletter has arrived, and it is good. For the hard of understanding, the SAM Community is a new SAM user group that, in return for £2 per year, provides its members with a 4-page bi-monthly newsletter bringing together everything that's been happening on the SAM. Judging by the first issue, it looks like it's going to become an essential purchase for every SAM user - there's loads of news, loads of enthusiasm, and the whole thing's rather fine. Send your money to Gavin Smith, SAM Community, 34 Craigowen Road, Carrickfergus, BT38 7NE.

You should also write to Gavin if you can help out with any of the projects that he's planning. These include putting together a database to catalogue every game, demo and utility released on the SAM (that shouldn't take long, ha...Ed). Andrew Collier is helping out with the demo database, but Gavin is still looking for people to organize the game and utility things, so if you want to do that, write to him.

BYE THEN FRED

After a long and drawn-out death, Fred Publishing has finally ceased to exist. The once-great SAM software house and diskzine has changed hands several times in the past couple of years, finally coming to rest with Malcolm Mackenzie, who decided that the only sensible thing to do would be to start publishing Fred's software under the Persona name and incorporate the Fred diskzine into Blitz. Following Malcolm's death, things with Persona are obviously up in the air to an extent (although it will definitely continue in some form), but as soon as things have been sorted out you will be informed.

MONEY TALKS

Past software house Spectrum greats Gremlin have been bought up by French company Infogrames for a reported £23 million. Infogrames has become quite a predator of successful software houses to build its muscles against American publishing companies. Gremlins director, Ian Stewart, can now spend the rest of his life sipping lager in the West Indies, pretending that Infogrames won't sack various long serving Gremlin staff. Expect Actua titles for the PlayStation to get even more sequels with little or no improvements to get their money back. Reports that Alchemist Research are subject to take over bids from Harry Ramsdens fish and chip shops are un-confirmed at time of press.

IT'S ALL OVER

Sony recently announced the next generation PlayStation in Japan, and judging by the information supplied, Sega and Nintendo had better start finding something else to do. Eager Spectrum enthusiasts are keen to see a 16 million polygon version of Horace goes to watch Manchester United, even though he lives in Plymouth (directors cut). As long as they stay away from racing and shooting games, Crashed will be happy enough.

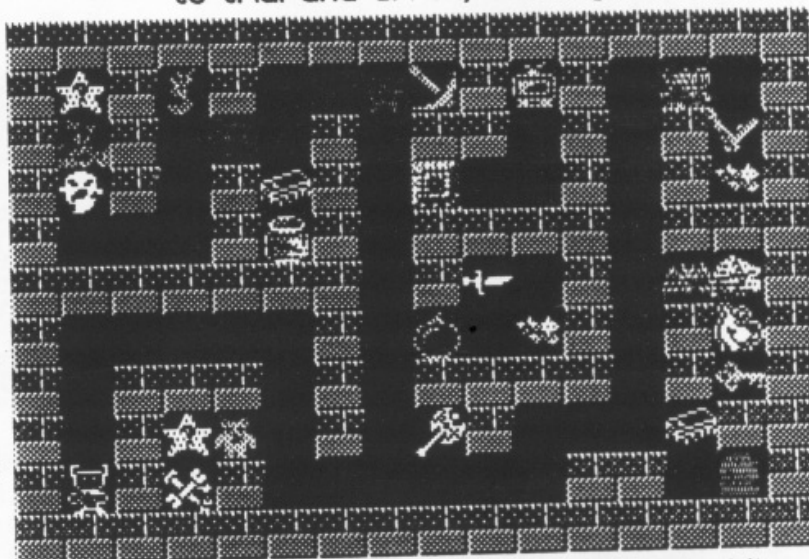
software

HAMON 4
ASCENDANCY
Public Domain
Spectrum 48/128k

you escape the level. Still with me? That axe could fell the nasty monster, who guards a pickaxe which you could use to hack your way through that wall, yeah, you got it. There is no handy index to refer to, it's all down to trial and error, but if you find the

Gone it seems, are the days when you loaded up a new game and got straight into the action after selecting your weapon, Russian programmers especially, are keen to bolt on a front end in the style of a public domain demo, which is no bad thing is it? You can usually side step the icing anyway once you've already witnessed it (well why mention it then... a very pedantic and irritated reader).

What we have here is quite a complex single screen puzzle maze game where you have to use certain items to vanquish certain objects in order to gain use of vital items to let



sprites are reasonably recognisable, common sense could even overpower luck. If you don't consider yourself to be the patient type then you could be in for a nasty ride here. I'm sure that's Scooby Doo and a couple of sods from Gauntlet in there, nothing wrong with a bit of borrowed artwork, it certainly beats badly drawn out of proportion sprites anyway.

CRASHED RATING 4/5

+ ANOTHER WELL THOUGHT OUT HIGH LEVEL PUZZLE GAME FROM SPECCY MAD RUSSIA.

- QUITE COMPLICATED AT FIRST, NEEDS A BIG WAD OF EDUCATED GUESSWORK.



As loading screens go these days, Hamon 4's is a bit of a work of art don't you think? Much better in colour too.

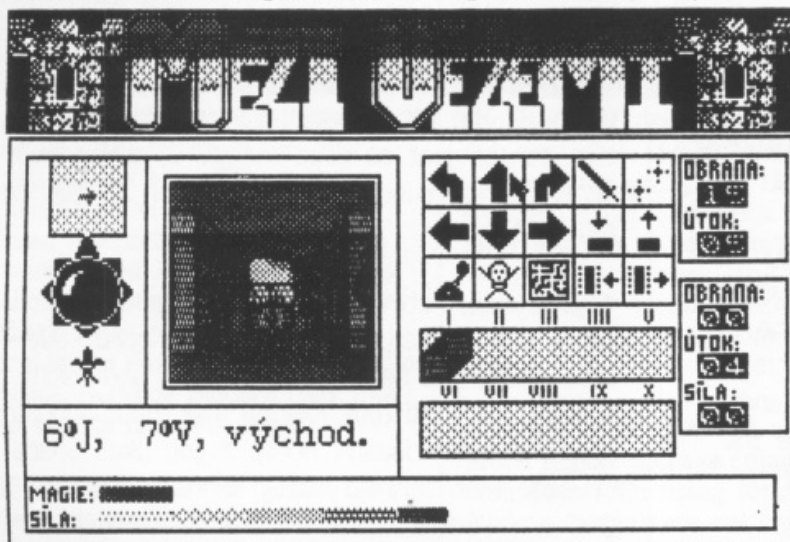
MEZI VEZEMI
+GAMA
Public Domain
Spectrum 128k

I like a nice challenge, and I do like a strange game kindly sent in from Womo, complete with no instructions, no clues and not a whiff of English in sight. This is why I get out of bed in the mornings and don't pretend to have middle class M.E.

On first impression, it's quite daunting taking in all the buttons and options, but be brave and try a few things. Judging



research?). It's a very low level Doom if you will, more Dungeons and Dragons than Ludo - search, kill and probably do something important.



from the small window, that looks like a corridor (and look, there's a big fuck off spider bearing down), over there are some universally familiar icons that I'm sure guide your way through the maze. That's a sword - that probably means attack and those numbers means it's a dice combat system. That's a map screen, pick up and drop... hey, I can speak a funny language and all through the remarkable gift of the Spectrum computer.

There's a very famous culty sort of game, the name of which eludes me at the moment, that this seems to be based upon (don't you just love Crashed's incisive reporting and

The overall look of the thing is pretty shallow, down right ugly as the cruel might say, but it's obvious that a lot of work has gone into it by just one little bloke, and that's got to be worth you spending at least half an hour with it. The 128k music and spot fx by ESA are quite irritating though, turn the sound down.

Check it out on the covertape, and the first reader to send in a complete home made manual will win a life subscription to Crashed (like, whoop). There are plenty



This is Gama, sweet boy, but don't ever let him babysit or have access to firearms. Never never ever!

more strange little games out there in PD land, so if you like this one, stay around for slightly better or worse things. How does 3/5 grab you?

HEROQUEST
GREMLIN
SPECTRUM 48/128K

CLASSIC software

Now look here you, Spectrum games are not just Manic Miner, they are not just third hand versions of Frogger, it's a competent little computer and if someone puts a lot into it you get a lot out. Now bare your bottom and receive your punishment. I do get a bit worried thinking about people poised over table-tops crammed full of plastic fantasy figures. They throw a dice, move some things about then out come the rulers and set squares to measure shots and damage. This is not going to make you the local village fanny magnet. War style board games translate exceptionally well to computers, because you can hide the screen or turn the telly off in an attempt to keep your terrible secrets away from prying eyes.

My terrible secret is now out, I enjoy playing games like Heroquest but I am ashamed to admit it. I'm moving my four little blokes about, one of them is a Wizard and he has all spells up his cloak, the little one is a squat Dwarf thing and the other two look fairly average really, like the blokes from Steps but minus the faggot Butlins expressions. I make them search rooms for hostages, traps and hidden treasure, open doors and discover short cuts, I enjoy hunting down the skeletons and other evil trolls with a swish of hardened steel. Ring Rolf Harris and put me down now, the girl in the chip shop is starting to get very suspicious and the lollipop lady has started to point at me in the street.

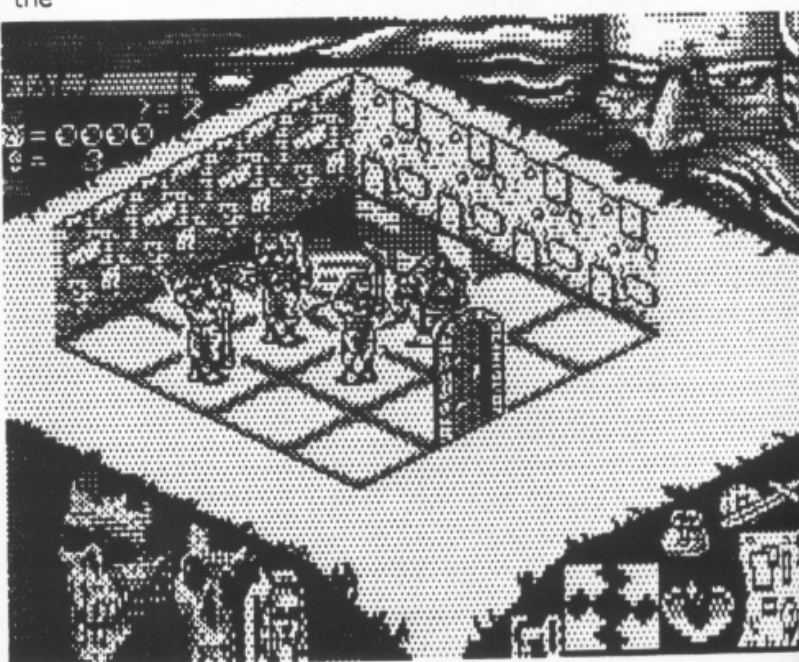
The game itself is a series of missions (multi-loaded in the 48k version) of increasing complexity. Modern gamers will recognise the gameplay from titles like Vandal Hearts; turn based chess style action where you have a certain amount of random movement points per turn. Four separate people can play as each character which can be a lot of fun, and the most fun is always when you let someone get it from three tooled up denizens of hell and

HEROQUEST

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ASSC. WITH GAMES WORKSHOP
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COPYRIGHT 1991
GREMLIN GRAPHICS LIMITED

you walk the other way, laughing. Playing on your own can be just as good though, directing each person to complete certain tasks or all fighting together.

If you really hate the typical Games Workshop game styles, then give this a wide berth, but then again, you never know do you, you might get hooked like I did (but looking over your shoulder now and again doesn't hurt). If you liked Space Crusade then this is pretty similar territory. The CPC and C64 versions were decidedly ugly up against the monochrome action of the Spectrum.



HARDCORE HARDWARE

THE +4/+1
DISC DRIVE INTERFACE
YESTERDAYS TECHNO CLUB
Price: £27.50

New hardware modifications for the Spectrum are all the rage across the channel (and for christsake keep going a bit, ignore the bloody French) but nowadays a rare novelty for the likes of the British. Introducing the Plus 4 Plus 1, a crafty super disc system switch enabling the awful Plus 3 to have an improved A: drive yet still retain the 3" joke that only Alan Sugar found amusing.

My review kit was very nicely packaged, a lot of thought had gone into the simple things, attention to detail never does anyone any harm. Thankfully there was no phone directory sized instruction manual, just a double sided A5 sheet containing all the fitting instructions - yes, that's right, you have to delve inside the dusty casing and fiddle about. Nervous readers may like to skip to the next page.

If you're the sort of person that pops his hooter under the Spectrum casing out of sheer curiosity or to give the innards a hefty spring clean, fitting the +4/+1 will not have you too worried. Someone who has never turned a screw in the casing for fear all the insides will plop out on springs Tom and Jerry style, your best bet would be to start practise changing the plug on the iron and come back next year.

The gubbins consists of a 9cm x 6.5 x 2 plastic control box complete with a large old fashioned and wonderfully clunky radiogram knob selector switch. From this extends twelve multi-coloured wires separating into three power sockets plus a ribbon cable. Imagine something between a Datel product and a hobby project.

Fitting is simply a matter of whipping off the ribbon cable and power sockets from the rear of the 3" drive and bunging on two new ones (the old ones then fit into the new ones). You then face the problem of squeezing all this extra tomfoolery inside the casing. I had quite a struggle but sensed it could be achieved with a bit more shoving, so for the time being I just left things looking like a bomb had hit it.

So I've fiddled about and it's taken me about 20 minutes to get everything hooked up, believe me when I tell you my middle name isn't Marconi, if I can do it I'm sure anyone can. Time for blast off with the example tests. That's funny, my 3" drive won't stop spinning, shit, I've got the socket upside down going into the external drive. One quick twiddle later and I'm up and running with two A: drives. Hang on a minute, why would I want two A: drives, I can only use one at a time.

Utilising a 3.5", you can achieve much higher storage capacities, well over 700k using some of the various formatters out there in PD land, and that really makes 173k per side of an obsolete disk format seem pretty limp. The actual act of copying files from a 3" disc to a 3.5" using this system struck me as being quite a performance. Copy from 3" to the internal M: ram disc, whack the old Doctor Who switch over to the second drive, save from M: ram disc to the external A: drive. Excuse me whilst I recover from all that, I won't be copying all those old screen files just yet then.

Every time I switched drives the screen display jumped about a fair bit but quickly settled down, this probably has more to do with the telly I used and the Plus 3 in general, but it still made me feel slightly nervous that it shouldn't really be doing it at all, well, I'd

rather it didn't. Removing the system and returning to the standard 3" drive took only five minutes with no harm done at all.

I see this system as being very handy for dedicated Plus 3'ers who want to replace the need for those ridiculous 3" discs but still retain access to their 3" archives. It's also one less plug hole and power supply to worry about as both drives draw power from the +3 (but not at the same time). There is obviously some benefit in only having to worry about an A: drive when programming your own load/save routines say. On the other hand, just using an external drive as a dedicated B: drive, and using the handy slot on the back of the computer to plug one in, would negate the need to alter the insides, it would look better and give you two active separate drives for much better file transfer possibilities.

The more I write this review the more I'm beginning to realise that the +4/+1 doesn't really offer any benefit whatsoever over a dedicated external B: drive if an extra drive is all you really need. Mind you, having this system installed as well as a dedicated B: drive, Jesus, now that would be quite useful for the hitherto unknown prospect of bulk storage capacity and transfer on a pissy Plus 3. There might be a reason to get mine out of the cupboard on a permanent basis after all.

Write to: YTC/M23, PO BOX 19,
Manchester M23 0YJ.

CRASHED RATING 4/5

+ IT DOES WHAT IT DOES VERY WELL AND THE WHOLE PACKAGE IS HANDSOMELY TURNED OUT

- YOU PROBABLY DON'T NEED WHAT IT DOES UNLESS YOU KNOW WHAT YOU WANT IT FOR, STILL EH?

Pornography is a funny old subject, we either quite like looking at it or we pretend that we don't (dependant on who is listening or looking at the time). The hypocrisy involved is quite staggering, and you can almost count on a so called pillar of society being caught with a jazz mag in the old briefcase every week or so. This feature is all about sex and the Spectrum, two things that clearly don't mix very well for a number of reasons; a computer isn't very sexy and having it off is more fun than computing. Doing both at the same time is not recommended. Cybersex? Don't be silly.

When a new technology becomes available on the high street, it's usually the sex industry that is the first to exploit the fresh territory under the counter-home video, internet etc. It's always a sure fire winner, there's money to be made, so much money that even the merest glimpse of a nipple is enough to send some people into credit card free-fall.



Sex on the Spectrum struggles to register a blip in size when compared with the overall software ever made for it, and on the official commercial side, I can only recall SAM FOX STRIP POKER, several other strip poker games and SOHO SEX QUEST. The latter was a plain standard text adventure set in London's red light district (Londoners call it the tourist trap rip off zone, but that's another story). Released in 1983 by Malan software, it was also comically bugged - you weren't carrying anything but you couldn't pick anything up and you were carrying too much in the first place. Didn't they have software testers in those days? In your role as Albert Battersby, you were right up against it from the off.

An advert appeared in Sinclair User in the early 90's, adult programs for the Spectrum! These turned out to be a series of bacon and eggs screen files and a much gentler animated picture postcard show called the ROARING TWENTIES. Software company R'n'H Microtec didn't make a million out of it either. The

SEX ON THE SPECTRUM



sex industry was never much interested in 8 bit computers. It would be down to the bedroom programmers and demo-makers to put a little bit of sauce and pube into the proceedings.

There are roughly fifty public domain demos from the 1000+ archive that use sex as the main theme, some PD libraries refuse to touch them for fear of reprisals, and it's not down to basic legalities either. The problem is, there will always be someone somewhere, usually of the right wing Christian variety, who will take it upon themselves to become morally outraged when it suits them. Such a person could make life very difficult, making a mountain out of a molehill as they went, all the time blowing the situation out of all proportion.

The obscene material laws in Great Britain are in a ludicrous state and they don't appear to be getting any simpler. What you can bring into the country is down to the custom's officials, what you can buy, sell and watch is down to the appointed censor's- the Home Secretary is supposed to issue guidelines to all concerned, but even he (pious Jack Straw) doesn't know what's going on under his fundamental Christian nose. Give two people the same image to look at- one might faint and the other might start impersonating a tripod. So just what are the laws and how do they affect us on the Speccy?



You can go into a shop like HMV in Oxford Street and buy a video, passed and certified by UK censors, showing full intercourse and almost all other sexual acts, nothing is left to the imagination. You can buy similar magazines from licensed sex shops. You can buy newspapers from any newsagent that never miss an excuse to show a bit of tit and bum action, and you can watch soft core minge films like *Emanuelle* on Channel 5. It therefore goes without saying that you can own and watch rude demos and amateur naughty games on a Spectrum without becoming either a criminal or morally corrupted. Keep it to yourself, don't show it to minors, and you're doing nothing wrong.

It is illegal to send obscene material through the post, but what is obscene is already known to be down to the individual. Sending a disk or tape to someone through the post containing sexual software is not even open to interpretation because the material is en-coded, it isn't visible to the eye



and needs special equipment to decipher the code. The depiction or suggestion of sexual acts with animals and children is illegal however, and a couple of Spectrum demos do tread dangerously on these subjects, albeit in a cartoon-ish jokey way, but still too near the knuckle for comfort. A well run PD library would have checked all content in every program and censored accordingly.

Now that we have established a few things, let's consider what has appeared on the Speccy from the bedroom programmers. Making a porny demo



from a video using a digitiser is very easy, making those images move is slightly harder (it's even more difficult to then make it realistic). Listen up, don't for one second doubt the Spectrum or the coders ability to show graphic sexual acts in a reasonably realistic fashion. If you need to be warned then consider yourself warned. Your next step will be to order the demo RTLO1.

The vast majority of so called X-rated Speccy demos consist of nothing more than industry standard topless bimbos with a bit of arse thrown in, a few more rely on cartoon style graphics or even quite artistic hand drawn images. What's the difference between art and porn? well, we're told it's down to the class status of the person looking at the 'dirty pictures'. Bit of satire there. The screenshots in *Crashed* are from the softcore end of the scale (I don't want the obsessed puritans at my doorstep thank you very much, I don't need the hassle), if you want to see what is on offer, you'll have to order the lot and take your chances - that's how the sex industry makes its money after all. Do yourselves a favour though, just subscribe to the *EROTIC REVIEW* from the Guardian instead.

I've only seen one game that I personally found offensive, I can't even remember the name now but it was from Germany. It involved getting past the hotel security and then molesting women as they slept upstairs in *Jet Set Willy* style. No one in their right minds is going to find that even mildly amusing. A game that never fails to make me laugh however is *MASTERWANK* by Crapman. In time honoured Daley Thompson tradition, you must waggle your joystick as fast as you can to make the on screen 'joystick' move up and down. That could be almost educational to a teenager with oppressive Victorian religious parents.

Check out the latest *Crashed* Demo Library catalogue for all the adult titles currently available. *Viagra* is probably what you need, but at least these will make you laugh instead.

Fontastic SAM *coupe*

by Simon N. Goodwin

DESIGN CONSTRAINTS

The SAM fount is a set of character-designs based on an 8 by 8 pixel grid, to ensure efficient storage on an 8-bit micro, and Spectrum compatibility. A character depth of nine pixels (like the Elan Enterprise) or ten (like the QL) would improve clarity a great deal, but it would reduce output speed and limit the number of lines on the screen to 21 or 19 (vs. 24).

'Fount' is the English spelling, pronounced like the American word 'font'. The word is derived from 'foundry', the place where print workers used to obtain metal type. A standard fount is built into the machine, but each character design can be redefined by the user if necessary. The default SAM fount consists of 137 characters, with codes between 32 and 168. This range includes the standard ASCII sequence with the addition of a copyright symbol at CHR\$(127), ASCII 'delete'.

Character codes from 128 to 168 use the same symbols as modern dot-matrix printers from major firms like Epson and Star. This is a logical and convenient standard which should help SAM users avoid a common problem on most computers - inconsistency between the display and printed results. You may wish to re-define some displayed characters if your printer does not conform to the standard. The range of codes chosen includes most but not all of the accented and special characters used in Europe, North and South America. 'Missing' characters are listed and discussed later.

At the SAM Development Meeting (Swansea, 2/11/88) it was decided that the same fount should be used for both six and eight pixel wide characters, with gaps around 8-pixel wide characters. This saves ROM space, marks the new machine out from the Spectrum in a very obvious way (a fact we may appreciate if Amstrad's legal eagles get heavy), and simplifies coding and documentation. The disadvantage is some small cost in legibility when using 8-pixel characters exclusively. It is possible to re-define the entire set with shapes up to 8 pixels wide, so this decision is not binding on the determined user.

It may be practical to provide an alternative 8 by 8 pixel fount, either in ROM or - more economically - on the demo disk supplied with the machine. I have an attractive fount that should fit the bill; it was designed for some TV credits I programmed for Central ITV in 1984, using a Spectrum. My 8 by 8 fount is big and bold and nothing like Sinclair's set, but it may be a tight squeeze adding accents over the top of the lower-case letters, for reasons discussed later. It may be better to encode Spectrum-style block graphics into character codes above 127. This fount is then ideal for use when running programs originally written on the Spectrum (which has no six-pixel width) and it can be provided as 'proof' that the character-set is easy to change.

THE 6 X 8 FOUNT - DESIGN OBJECTIVES

The prime aim should be legibility, rather than artistry.

These are, to an extent, contradictory requirements. To make each individual character look as well-formed as possible, the entire 6 x 8 pixel grid should be used for character pixels. However this means that adjacent characters may blur together, depending on the particular sequence of characters. Thus some 6 x 8 text may be hard to read if the character forms fill the grid; it takes a lot of trial and error to get a set which does not blur in the most common cases, and even then you keep finding new combinations that cause problems.

Consequently I have decided - with very few exceptions, noted later - to design characters in a grid of seven rows, each five pixels wide. The last row of each character is normally left blank, as are the last two columns and the first. It may be necessary to rotate the supplied fount patterns left or right to suit SAM's six-pixel wide printing routine.

The next question is what size to make the characters. The readability of a typeface printed small is mainly determined by the 'x-height'. This is the height of lower-case characters without ascenders or descenders (like 'a', 'e', 'r', 'w' and so on). The lower the ratio of the maximum height of a character to the x-height the more readable the character-set, for a given total height. It is important that this height should remain constant throughout the fount, if text is to be easily read.

You can see this by studying the typefaces used in books and newspapers over the last century. Modern typefaces like Times Roman and Univers have short ascenders and descenders, to make them readable in small sizes. When reading, the eye notices the absence or presence of these strokes; it does not attribute meaning to their size. Unlike newspaper or book publishers, we are particularly concerned about the legibility of capital letters. Even though contemporary children learn to read lower-case first, and we all read far more lower-case letters than capitals in our lifetime, computer users ARE USED TO TEXT IN CAPITALS!

This penchant dates back to the first Teletype and Telex machines, which had a restricted character-set. Early programming languages like Cobol and Fortran required program code to be entered in capitals, and this convention has persisted into BASIC and ZX BASIC. The first Sinclair BASIC machines, the ZX-80 and ZX-81, could only display capital letters, unless the user subverted the system's display routines - a technically demanding task. Sinclair introduced lower-case on the Spectrum in 1982, but the new characters were nowhere near as well-designed as the capitals, taken from earlier machines.

Convention and expediency have combined forces, so most Spectrum programs and displays use a large proportion of capital letters compared with 'free text'. New SAM applications (like word-processors and databases) need not follow this lead, but it seems that particular attention should be paid to the clarity of displays made mainly from capitals, especially if programmers are to get on well with SAM in the early stages.

Given a limit of seven rows, and a requirement for clear capitals, we have two design options:

(1) ONE PIXEL OF ASCENDER AND ONE OF DESCENDER
This means something like the Austel character set, giving capitals 6 pixels high and a clear 2 pixel gap between lines. I have not designed such a set, for the following reasons:
The top of the x-height may need to be either one or two pixels from the top of the character-grid,

depending on the letter - some, like 's' and 'e', must be five pixels high if they are to look neat, whereas others (like 'b', 'd' and 'h') need two pixels above the horizontal stroke to form the ascender clearly.

In the Austel character-set this inconsistency in x-height also crops up in capitals, where the height of the horizontal bar in 'H', 'R', 'A', 'B', 'G' and so on fluctuates. Another flaw of this format is that it leaves only one row for accents above lower-case letters - this is not enough to distinguish between acute, grave and circumflex in any clear way, so accented letters must be printed below the base-line.

(2) 2 PIXELS OF ASCENDER AND NO DESCENDERS

This means clear, consistent capitals which use the full available height of seven pixels, and look noticeably taller than six pixel characters on the screen. However dense text can look cramped - especially in dark ink on light paper - as the gap between lines is just one pixel.

Lower-case letters like 's' and 'e' appear neat, as there are five rows available within the x-height, but characters with descenders must be crushed upwards. With care they can be clearly recognisable, but some words end up looking rather ugly until you get used to the font. The good news is that this format leaves enough space for accents above letters without pushing the letter down to make extra room. On balance, I consider that it is better to have large, symmetrical capitals and accented characters, even if we lose the display of 'true' descenders in the process. The screen font does not constrain the appearance of print-outs.

NOTES ON SPECIFIC CHARACTERS

The copyright sign, CHR\$(127), uses all six pixels of character width. All the others leave a margin of one pixel, so they don't run into others on the same line, but it is not possible to separate the 'c' from the circle in the copyright sign unless the whole character is six pixels wide. No problems crop up as long as the sign is at the left hand margin of the screen (often the case) or preceded by a space (ditto).

Capital C cedilla uses all eight pixel rows, so it could 'knock into' capitals, accents or ascenders from the row

below. It could be drawn in seven rows, but the base of the C is already one pixel higher than other capitals. It would need to be two pixels higher to leave a blank row at the bottom. Similar problems affect the small c cedilla, 'e' circumflex, and underlined 'a' & 'o'. Likewise, the Peseta sign uses eight rows, in order to separate the 'P' and 't'. It could fit into seven rows if the 't' was moved up, but the clarity of the whole symbol would be reduced as a consequence.

If true descenders are considered vital, the lower-case characters 'j', 'y', 'g', 'p', and 'q' could be moved down by one pixel - but they may then run into the row below. In tests I came to the conclusion that this change reduces legibility, rather than increases it, though the Arnhem set does this.

MISSING CHARACTERS

Our decision to stop at CHR\$(168) excludes a few European characters from SAM's set. The printer standard defines all codes up to 255; most of the rest are maths symbols, crude box graphics and an incomplete Greek alphabet. It does not seem expedient to use another 704 bytes of scarce ROM to support those characters. A determined user can always re-define SAM's set to continue to CHR\$(255).

There are a few codes that might be considered useful by some overseas customers. Characters 174 and 175 are << double hairpins >>, continental quotation marks. Double inverted commas can generally be used instead of these. The German Beta symbol (printer code 225) can be written as a double 's'. The Danish slashed O replaces the backslash CHR\$(92) on some printers and appears as CHR\$(237) in the extended printer font. It can usually be printed as a zero, which often has a slash to distinguish it from an 'O' in computer print-outs.

I have found only two other European symbols on rare printers and ethnic daisy-wheels. Apparently Germans use a section marker, like an ornate 'f' with a circle in place of the horizontal line. Some Swedish fonts include a round shape with protuberances at each corner. Can anyone identify these?

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Public Exposure

WHY ARE THERE NO NEW SAM COUPE DEMOS COMPARED TO SPECTRUM ONES, OR ARE THERE? WHY DO THE RUSSIANS KEEP MAKING DEMOS THAT DON'T WORK PROPERLY ON REAL SPECTRUMS? SO MANY QUESTIONS AND NO ANSWERS AS USUAL, I'M OFF DOWN THE PUB, TAPE SMACK THE PONY FOR US, CHEERS EARS.

THE FUNTOP DEMO PARTY 98 / SOMEWHERE IN RUSSIA...

It's just like any other party but something is missing; there is a queue for the bog, someone has stolen the vodka, young Boris has thrown up out the bedroom window but there are no girls here. What kind of party is this then? It must be a Speccy party, where young men discuss coding and show the others what they get up to in their private dens. Beats mutual masturbation and smoking drugs hands down every time. I tell you what.

Apart from the usual graphics and sound voting, the main competition was a 'do something pretty astounding only using 4k' event. In the general scheme of things, four kilobytes is just over half a loading screen, or roughly about the size of a pretty decent Soundtracker choon. Having seen most of the entrants, I was gob smacked that they could do it with 40kb let alone only a tenth of that, one hell of a code compressor is hiding somewhere in Russia... Collect the set (and by heavens there are about a dozen of them) but be warned, a lot of them have ULA interference problems on UK Spectrums.

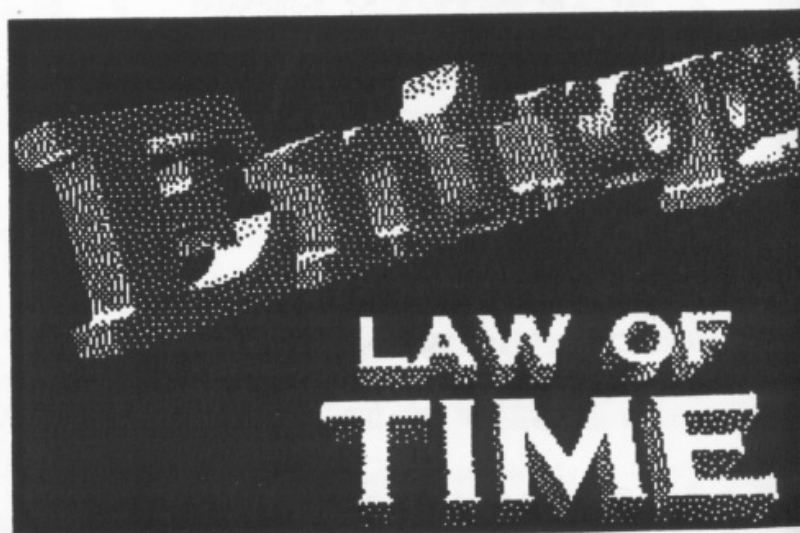
LAZARUS / 1999 / 54kb

I keep getting him mixed up with Icabad, so who did fly too close to the sun then, was it Agent X? The first demo of 1999, who would have thought six years ago that new programs would still be made for this heap of shit. Quite a novelty is that you can customize the demo to run on any model from the front end, so eliminating the now crippling problem of incompatibility between Russia and us lot. If someone doesn't sort this out soon I'm going to get very annoyed.

AIR SPACE / IVAN ROSHIN / 1998 / 27kb

This has such a crap loading screen it's untrue, it has about as much scope and presence as Thora Hird turning on the Christmas lights in Walsall. Good job it finally gets going then so bite your lip in anticipation and resist the reset.

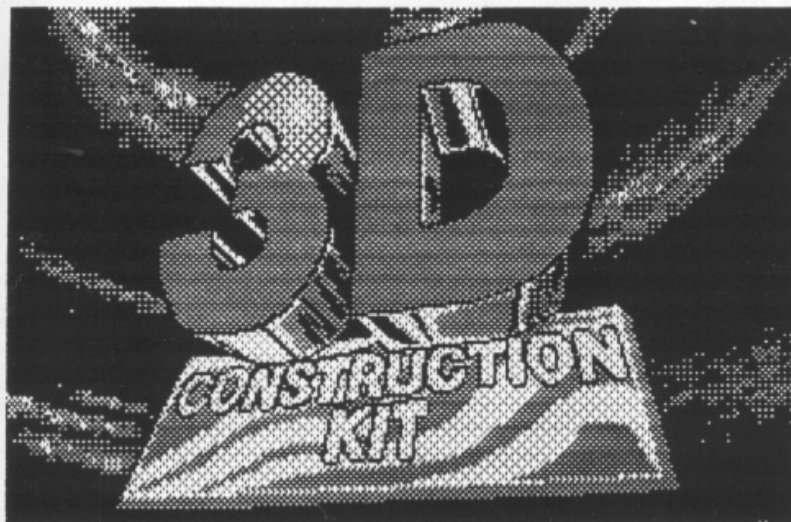
SEND AN A5 SAE FOR THE LATEST CRASHED DEMO LIBRARY CATALOGUE, 800+ TITLES UP FOR GRABS FROM ONLY 5P EACH.



Do it Yourself

One of my favourite sayings in life is the following chestnut: Don't criticize what you cannot better yourself. Well, I said it was my favourite, I didn't say I adhered to it did I? In my pathetic life I've only ever written one full game and slagged off about 2,000. I'm a computer industry parasite, I feed and get fed on the crumbs. I could never code and design even the greatest victim of my ire, except perhaps the Great Space Race. Blimey.

Since the edge was taken off the Spectrum market, so more people have decided to take the plunge and do what they've always wanted, to make their own game and have a PD librarian laugh at it. There's no better time than now, fanzine editors will tear your arm off to get a new exclusive (well, just Crashed



really, thinking about it), fame and infamy could be yours. Few people ever master machine code programming, and fewer still are likely to come up with a good idea or be good at artwork etc. If you have a good imagination but only know 12 keywords of Basic, all is not lost.

Like you, I can't program either, that's why utility software is so bloody handy. Your first step will be to decide which genre you'll have a stab at. This decision has almost already been made for you; unless you fancy a text adventure, a Freescape roam or a Knight Lore puzzler, all the other software tools will make your game look very 1982. If you want to make a top down 2D arcade shooter, with waves of predictable enemy patterns and awful Beep sound effects, plum for CRL's 2D GAMEMAKER, Quicksilver's GAMES DESIGNER or the ARCADE CREATOR from Argus. Do yourself a favour though, don't

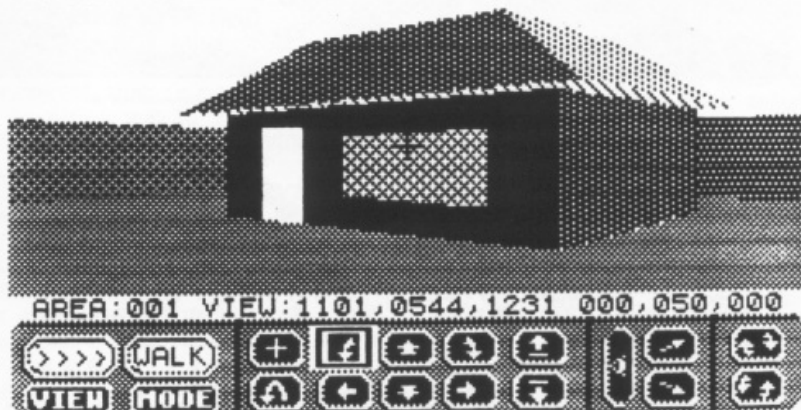
waste your time or that of the software hungry public, it's a backward step.

The amount of Jet Set Willy and Manic Miner clones appearing over the last few years have tested the patience of a saint. The editors are fairly easy to use and are available from any good PD library, but please, not another one eh? The official JSW 2 was more than enough and I'm still not convinced these games were any good in the first place.

Alongside Doom, Incentive software's Freescape arcade adventures look pretty constipated, but were they the forerunners? Being able to explore a 3D environment, interact with it using nearly full 360 degree movement is quite a feat on an 8-bit, so what if each movement takes a jerky age, this is great! You could design the interior of your own house and walk around in it, much more fun than having to go downstairs for your dinner in real-time. Make a game where you have to find a bird in a disco, get her pissed, shag her up a wall then run to catch the last bus. If you pause for chips first, it could be game over. I'm sure you all have much better ideas, innovative projects and scenarios that involve mystic folklore, wizards and witches, missing gold keys and the lost shrine of the Scrotal tribe. Jesus give me strength...

Worlds are built up using different sized shapes, then given depth with shading techniques. Your game could be a simple walk through or could take advantage of the built in easy to understand program language so that it rivalled Castle Master in complexity. Once you pop you won't be able to stop. The best bit about this package is the free instruction video featuring Incentives boys, software programmers really are the ugliest of bastards.

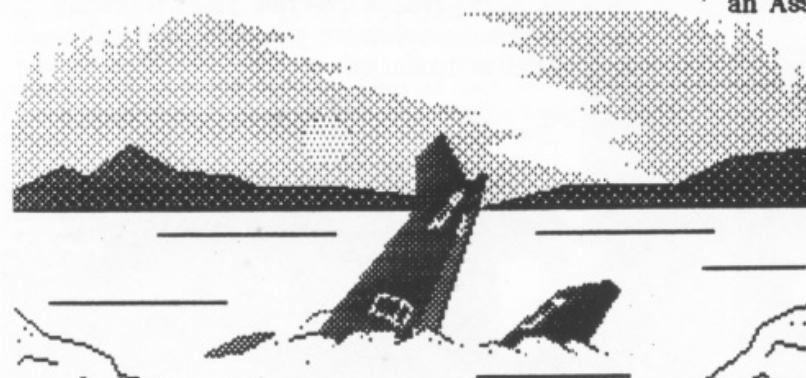
FILE GENERAL AREA CONDITION FREE:08267





If visually building your own world from scratch is too much like hard work (and believe me it's no cakewalk), but you still want your name to a game that will impress people, going down the isometric 3D road won't do your reputation any harm at all. Knight Lore started the Spectrums second generation software in 1984 and it still looks fresh and inviting today. With CRL's 3D GAME MAKER, a reasonable homage can be paid with a few drawbacks. Your end result won't be as smooth or fluid as Ultimates, on screen slow down is so chronic at times it makes the game almost un-playable, but it's the closest you're going to get. A good example of what can be achieved was put out on an old Crash covertape called STARS AND STRIPES, you can bet your life that the blokes granny was absolutely thrilled for him.

Text adventure games appeal to a certain type of games player, and as they were the first ever 'games' to appear on main frame computers, there is a certain reverence about them. The problem with the majority of these games is the abysmal dependence on middle earth storylines or fried to the bone space trilogies. Hampstead proved that a



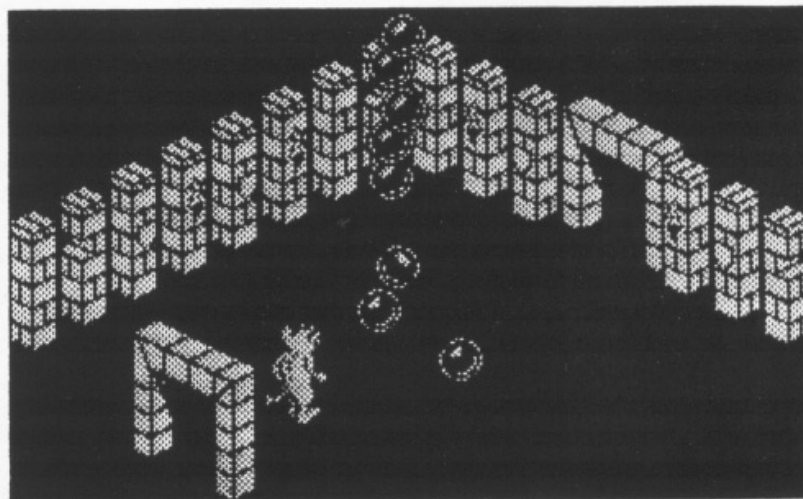
You are by the wreckage of your crashed Cessna light aircraft. You can see a fur coat, a pair of snowshoes. The aircraft radio crackles, "Welcome to Winter Wonderland." and then cuts out.

Spectrum text game could be both modern and satirical, it gave The Hobbit a run for it's money but still the nod went to the Tolkien hand shandy and the genre became set in stone.

If you are going to write an adventure using either PAW, THE QUILL or the GRAPHIC ADVENTURE CREATOR, for fucksake don't have a wizened old hag mumbling clues to a dwarf with green hair, because I'm going to kick your fucking teeth in. Using the written word, you can create any scenario, relying on the same old tosh is both lazy and very un-inspiring. Take a look at the room you're in now, see how many objects there are to search and examine, how

many objects could be inside others. A well programmed and intelligent text game could be done in one room couldn't it?

There is of course another alternative. If you can program from scratch then you are in great demand. The restrictions on writing Spectrum and



Sam games on a real Spectrum or Sam, are obvious by the amount of single screen puzzle games that are now the mainstay of the new material. There just isn't the room inside 40k for an Assembler, various routines and a brilliant high level scrolling R-type game all at once. Don Priestly had a novel answer, he had two Speccy's networked together, one held the assembler and the other just had the job of running the resulting code.

All your favourite stunners were more than likely developed on a PC as pure source code then converted to run on Speccy's, C64's and Amstrads. With just your Speccy and a 'How to' book, you're on the road to misery. If any readers have written their own game, I'll compile a special covertape and we can all have a good laugh. My offering, a modern day indie pop text adventure, featuring sex and violence, will be included.

TECH NICHE

PAUL HOWARD, THE MAN WHO HAGGLES IN KWIK SAVE, CONTINUES HIS ALMOST BASIC COURSE.

The display file is a technical name for the memory where the screen output is stored. With an understanding of this area of memory, it's possible to use Basic to do some neat tricks with the screen. First off, let's see how the display file is laid out. It occupies 6912 bytes starting at 16384, the lowest address in Ram. Try this:

POKE 20304,255

See the tiny line in the middle of the screen? you just wrote a value directly into the screen display. The graphic data is split into areas like this one, each 8 pixels wide. You may have seen screens loading from tape, in which case you'll know that they are constructed from top to bottom and from left to right in horizontal rows. To see exactly how the screen is laid out, try this program which slowly fills the screen with blackness:

FOR N=16384 TO 22527: POKE N,255:
NEXT N

You can see that the screen is divided into top, middle and bottom thirds, each of which corresponds to eight text lines. Each address can be Poked with any number between 0 (empty) and 255 (solid). The binary bit pattern of the number Poked shows what will be drawn on the screen, using 0 for an 'empty' pixel and a 1 for a 'filled' pixel. So you could produce a dotted line like this:

1 0 1 0 1 0 1 0

$128 + 32 + 8 + 2 = 170$

FOR N=16384 TO 16415: POKE N,170:
NEXT N

You can also use PEEK to read back the contents of part of the display file:

10 POKE 16384, RND*255
20 PRINT AT 1,0; PEEK 16384,
30 PAUSE 0; GO TO 10

Each time you press a key, a different random bit pattern appears

together with its decimal equivalent. The comma at the end of line 20 prints a few spaces to clear the previous decimal value.

That's all very well, but what about colour? Well, the last 768 bytes of the display file are the attributes. Here, each byte represents a combination of Ink, Paper, Bright and Flash values for a particular square. Try this:

POKE 22528,242

You should see a square of Bright, Flashing red and yellow colour at the top left of the screen. The attributes are stored from left to right as you'd expect. To fill the screen with random colour, you can use something like this:

FOR N=22528 TO 23295: POKE
N,RND*255: NEXT N

This routine only changes the colours, it doesn't remove any text or graphics from the screen. Because the graphic data and attribute data are stored in separate blocks in this way, you can 'hide' graphics behind solid colour! Black Ink on black Paper is often displayed while a game's title screen loads from tape, so that you can't see the screen until the colours are painted.

Here's how to calculate the value to POKE for a particular colour. Let's call the Ink colour I, the Paper P, Bright value B and Flash value F (these are just the standard values you'd use in a Basic program). The decimal attribute value is:

$128 * F + 64 * B + 8 * P + 1 * I$

The Basic function ATTR (x,y) returns the attribute value of the square at row x column y. This is more convenient than using PEEK because it allows you to specify the co-ordinates rather than the address.

You can create an interesting screen display by cycling through the whole range of values, 0 to 255, and Poking them into the display file in sequence. The resulting screen contains a psychedelic pattern of every possible colour combination:

10 LET A=0
20 FOR N=16384 TO 23295

30 POKE N,A
40 LET A=A+1
50 IF A=256 THEN LET A=0
60 NEXT N

You can calculate the address of a particular horizontal line of eight dots in a given character square. If the character square is at row R column C, then the address of line L is:

$16384 + 2048 * INT(R/8) + 32 * (R - 8 * INT(R/8)) + 256 * L + C$

Be aware that Basic takes time to perform this kind of calculation!

A quick note on the SCREEN\$ keyword. LOAD "name" SCREEN\$ has exactly the same effect as LOAD "name" CODE 16384,6912, it's just easier to remember.

Accessing the file display in Basic is useful, but in most cases there are faster, more convenient alternatives. Consider a program which loads a screen from tape and removes the Flash attributes from every square:

10 LOAD "" SCREEN\$
20 FOR N=22528 TO 23295
30 IF PEEK N>127 THEN POKE N, PEEK
N-128
40 NEXT N

This works, but it's very slow and difficult to understand. Here is a far better solution using higher level Basic commands:

10 LOAD "" SCREEN\$
20 INK 8; PAPER 8; BRIGHT 8; FLASH
0; OVER 1
30 PRINT AT 0,0;
40 FOR N=1 TO 22
50 PRINT
60 NEXT N

Line 20 uses the 'transparent' attribute value 8 to ensure that Ink, Paper and Bright remain unchanged. OVER 1 lets us print spaces of colour without altering the actual graphic data. Line 30 sets the print position to the top left hand corner of the screen. The FOR-NEXT loop then fills each line in turn with blank spaces. PRINT doesn't work with the bottom two lines (where error messages appear), though if you wanted you could use the POKE method just for these two lines.

This routine strips the Flashing attributes from a screen in under a second. The first routine took around 14 seconds! This process of using alternatives to produce the fastest or smallest code is called 'optimising', and next time I'll describe some generic techniques for optimising your Basic programs.

THERE'S NO FUNTASTIC LISTING THIS MONTH AS I'VE RUN OUT OF SPACE AND NONE OF YOU TYPE THEM IN ANYHOW. SAVES ME ABOUT TWO HOURS WORK, THANKS.

Are you the next Internet nonce mass murderer.com

Not a week seems to go by without some youngster shooting all his tormenters in Burger King. Did the mensa candidate behind the counter put too much ketchup on his BSE Donkey Whopper or is there a more sinister reason why? This question needs to be addressed; does the Internet create arseholes or just attract them like a fly around dog shit? You'll need a pen and paper and do it properly.

1. What does the number 18 mean to you?
 - a) Brilliant age for the girl next door
 - b) The age you could vote
 - c) Hitler's birthday
2. When confronted by the 15 year olds from the council estate, do they,
 - a) Call you a wanker and run off laughing
 - b) Wink and ask how's it going
 - c) Ignore you completely
3. Have you ever had to move because of a long running feud with the neighbours?
 - a) No never
 - b) Yes, that has happened
 - c) The way things are going, probably
4. Have you ever burnt anything to the ground out of cowardly spiteful revenge?
 - a) Yes
 - b) Thought about it
 - c) Never
5. Were you bullied at school?
 - a) I never went to school
 - b) No, I did the bullying
 - c) Yes
6. Do you feel that you're always right and everybody else is out to get you?
 - a) I could have written a better question
 - b) I always take on board every ones opinions
 - c) Everybody is a cunt
7. How much time do you spend with your computer?
 - a) Up to 2 hours a day
 - b) Only when I've nothing better to do
 - c) Over 16 hours per day
8. What are you favourite types of computer game?
 - a) God sims and strategy games
 - b) Doom, Quake and Duke Nukem
 - c) Arcade or sports games
9. What magazine do you have a subscription with?
 - a) Radio Times
 - b) I'll send you straight to hell monthly
 - c) PD Power
10. Where do you usually buy your clothes?
 - a) Your mum gets them from her catalogue
 - b) Haven't bought any for about 5 years
 - c) Top Man, Burtons, C&A etc.

11. Out of the three following, who would you prefer as your girlfriend?

- a) Deanna Troi out of Star Trek
- b) Sinead O'Conner
- c) All women smell bad down there

12. How often do you tug your own?

- a) Three or four times a week
- b) Once a week if I remember
- c) Every 18th of every month

13. What football team do you support?

- a) Football sucks, everything I don't like sucks
- b) Whoever seems to be winning most things
- c) Team you were born nearest to

14. What's your favourite sexual fantasy?

- a) Naughty backdoor fun with B*witched
- b) Strangling cheerleaders
- c) Esther Ranson blow job special

15. Finally, tick any of the following if you have or own such things. If you have ticked 3 but feel you could easily tick more, move on to the scores.

Premature male pattern baldness

Very severe acne

Cheap jogging bottoms from Happy Shopper

Complete guide to Star Trek craft

Ears that really stick out at 90 degrees

Sci-fi or horror novels

Green pattern socks that always stink

Eyebrows that meet in the middle

Cheap pirate PlayStation CD's

A working Citizens Band radio set up

Complete collection of Format

Artificial vibro vagina with almost real hair

Scores

1. a)1 b)2 c)3
2. a)3 b)1 c)2
3. a)1 b)3 c)2
4. a)3 b)1 c)2
5. a)2 b)1 c)3
6. a)2 b)1 c)3
7. a)1 b)2 c)3
8. a)2 b)3 c)1
9. a)1 b)2 c)3
10. a)3 b)2 c)1
11. a)2 b)1 c)3
12. a)1 b)2 c)3
13. a)3 b)1 c)2
14. a)1 b)3 c)2
15. 1)1 2)2 3+)3

15-20. Things are pretty much normal. Nobodies perfect after all, not even if you think you are. It still wouldn't hurt to actually go out to a pub once a week and talk to a real person.

21-30. I'll have to say things are a little too borderline for comfort here. You're showing a clear tendancy to being a wanker, the Motorhead CD you bought last week won't help.

30-50. You really do spend far too much time on your own, this is not good for you or the people you'll shortly massacre. Seek immediate help, stop reading right wing textfiles and don't come any fucking where near me.

Sinclair Years

1982

After the first ever computerised Christmas, the consumers of Britain would from now on face the critical choice of what model to go for. It was becoming clear that computers would shortly outnumber typewriters at work, so educating little Timmy to know his Ram from his foreskin would be the task of most middle class parents. Every home computer was launched with the same old Space Invaders variants, so it usually came down to how much memory did it have and how much did it cost (and did it have a version of Football Manager mister?) In 1982 I was still into marbles and Buckaroo.

NEW HOME COMPUTERS

ACORN BBC: The Beeb were making a programme about computing and they needed a computer to go with it, so they invited various companies to design one. Acorn won. Very highly priced at £400 for the 32k model B, but it was very advanced and easy to program. It ended up in schools rather than peoples homes.

SINCLAIR ZX SPECTRUM: Sinclair lost the BBC contract but went ahead alone. Costing £175 for the 48k model, the public swamped young Clive with orders. It was quite a step up from the ZX81 with full colour, huge memory and a curious keyboard. The games started flowing almost immediately and the Spectrum became number 1 overnight. Correct product at the right price at the right time - the rest will always take care of itself.

MATTEL DRAGON 32: A 32k Welsh computer based on Tandys failed Color model. What else can you say apart from make that not

very funny any more farty sound through the side of your mouth?

CAMPUTERS LYNX: Came with 48k of memory and that's all I can find out about it. It probably didn't become a best seller then.

JUPITER ACE: Two ex-Sinclair designers went with the Forth language and produced a nifty £90 computer, crippled by only 3k of memory and no outside software support, it was destined to become a collectable curio before it even hit the general public.

TANGERINE ORIC 1: What could have been the Spectrums greatest rival, shot itself in the foot with a heavily bugged Rom and feeble attention to detail. Software houses had already committed to the Speccy, and the Oric was just a fraction unlucky. Phew that was close.

COMMODORE 64: Improving on the Vic 20 with customised hardware sprite graphics and four channel sound synthesiser, this was a games computer alright, so Commodore launched it as a business model for £350. The games took ages to load from the usual Commy only tape deck, and it looked like it had a spare tyre. A very nice computer though, you can't argue with that.

ATARI 400/800: Struggled right from the start against the BBC and C64 due to being even more expensive, although it was well on a par specifications wise. Games cost up to £30 each, and this was 1982 - just sit back and try to imagine that if you can. Spectrum games were knocking out at a fiver.

...As we roll into 1983, we meet several new computers (stop it, we can't take any more) and the mighty Colecovision home console.

Unemployment reaches 3 million so it's a good job Channel 4 has started so we can all enjoy the dirty sex and swearing instead of finding work.

The first test tube twins are born in Cambridge, probably out of a real woman rather than a plastic petri dish.

Argentinian troops invade the Falkland Islands, a remote outpost of British life 8,000 miles away from Thatchers dictatorship. It's a full blown war and we win (none of us really care about a remote island but it's always jolly nice to win things anyway).

The Princess of Wales, aka Lady Di born with silver spoon in mouth sloan ranger, spreads them and gives birth to young William. That's another royal parasite on my tax then.

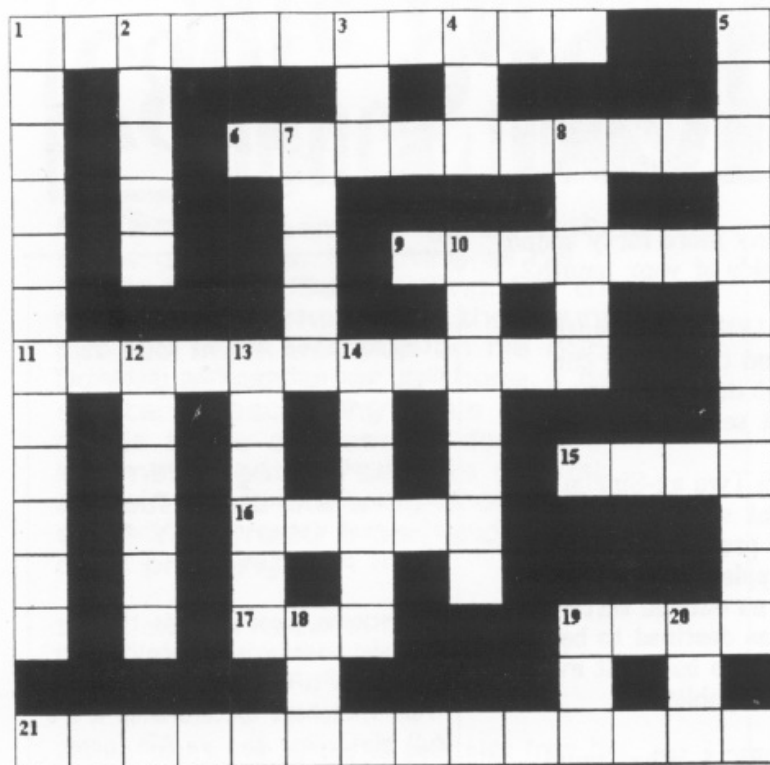
Micheal Fagin, 35, broke into the Palace and took a bottle of wine up to Queenies bedroom and had a chat with her about her family. Queenie alerted guards after he asked for a fag. Hit her over the head with the bloody bottle you idiot!

20,000 lesbians and assorted ugly hippy women joined hands around Greenham Common US cruise missile base. Just one bomb, that's all it needed.

The Thames flood barrier at Silvertown is completed. Now all the poor people will drown before all the rich people in the event of a London flood. So that's ok then isn't it.

Henry VIII's flagship, the Mary Rose, is raised after 400 years. Why? It sank on its maiden voyage. Rubbish workmanship.

Paul Howard's Cryptic Specword #4



ACROSS

1. Mission for Greek robber: may pull some strings (11,10)
6. see 1 across
9. First part of Dizzy's final outing (7)
11. He'll never believe this song by Aqua (6,5)
15. Unbalanced kilo: a computer with Norsepower? (4)
16. Codemasters Brashill, leader of the argonauts (5)
17. Small piece of a byte (3)
19. Coder Chris, who got into a heap of trouble (4)
21. Short, evil newt, I transformed into Phillip and Andrew (3,6,5)

DOWN

1. No-man's-land found in a library (6,6)
2. Software house, in the main (5)
3. Help Your Sinclair's campaign (1,1,1)
4. Encourage Dizzy (3)
5. All-round obscure Freescape game (5,7)
7. Two notes and letter are a fabled Jetman game (5)
8. Graphical clippings, or Gremlins Matt Trakker game and sequel (5)
10. Licensed game man fleeing execution- of program?
12. 32 on the screen and a famous one in London (6)
13. Unusual occupation for handyman Eddie (3,3)
14. Willy's class- that's rich! (3,3)
18. Final part of a trilogy, when in Rome (3)
19. Part of Great Escape goes with a bang (3)
20. How long is a piece of string? He'll tell you! (3)

ISSUE 24 SOLUTION: (ACROSS) 1.CARRIAGERETURN
7.AMSTRAD 8.RANT 9.ANTICS 10.COLOURS 11.TRUE
12.MYTH 14.RET 15.ARGUMENT 17.SPELLBOUND
19.SECONDSCREEN (DOWN) 1.CHARACTERCELLS
2.RESETBUTTON 3.ALANSUGAR 4.RAMTOP 5.TURBO 6.NOTES
12.MANGO 13.QUILL 16.ENDING 17.SCAN 18.BYTE

Who would win in a fight
between Lesbian fantasy
icons Xena's loyal girl pal
or shakey voiced Captain

Jayneway? If you don't give a flying toss, pity those that do, but still
want to shag Buffy the Vampire Slayer, her friend Willow and Wade out
of Sliders, buy Crashed - it's better for you than any other Speczine.

NEXT ISSUE

**Issue 26
available
16.7.99**

**GIRL ON
GIRL FUN**



LETTERS

Write to: 11 CAMEL ROAD,
LONDON E16 2DE.

Everything I receive through the post, from the phone bill to the latest bile from the BNP, will be considered for publication. The usual dull editing techniques will be employed, blah blah...

Dear Crashed,

...Please don't print any part of this letter in a humorously out-of-context way as I'll probably get sued by someone who reckons that expressing a fondness for Helen Love contravenes some obscure 17th century bye-law, or something.
Mat Beal, Lancaster.

Does your heart go boom Mr.Beal? The only time I saw young Helen was in a pub that smelt of old metal socks, boy she was ugly but she rocks big time.

Dear Crashed,

You'd be surprised how little overlap there is between all the demo archives and libraries (on the net), including my own. The Internets supposed to be creating a 'global village' and all that, but the Russian site tends to have Russian demos, the British ones are on my site and the others are on the list run by that bloke in the Netherlands. One of the long running features of the Spectrum discussion group on the Internet is a Speccy vs C64 debate/argument/war, and one of the C64 bods was recently boasting about a site with 1000 odd demos on it. I'm sure the Speccy has enough to rival that, it's just a case of getting them all in the same place.

Matthew Westcott, Chorley.

You're spot on there Arthur, the Speccy has well over a thousand demos and

counting. Make your site the complete guide and you're laughing.

Dear Crashed,

I couldn't help noticing that you've put the Crashed details in your own database of other mags! Plus, last issue was dated March 98 and not March 99 as it should have been. Great mix of articles and love the style, keep up the good work.
Richard Woods, Milton Keynes.

If that page was copied and shoved on the internerd say, Crashed wouldn't be on it and that would piss me off.

Dear Crashed,

With regards to your recent article on copyright, yes it would be nice to be able to do what we wanted with all the old games, but what we have to realise is that these games are other peoples property and we don't have any rights at all. When we buy a game we enter into a contract with the shop and the producer of the game, it's all written in the inlays and instruction manuals. Even if the specific authors of the software give permission, you then have to consider the feelings and standpoints of the software company and any relevant third parties such as endorsed games and licences. Yes it is a glued up mess and I don't have the answers!
S.Wilson, Wellingborough.

Dear Crashed,

I wholeheartedly agree with your Guide to Copyright article - an overhaul of the copyright laws is long overdue. Refraining from giving away ex-commercial software, like for the 8 bit machines, doesn't help the copyright holder one iota (as long as no charge is made, of course, because clearly it would be wrong to profit from another's work without paying the author royalties). If it were up to me, I'd actually like

to see commercial software, or at least certain catagories such as games and utilities, come under a system of registration like patent, renewable periodically (say every five years) so that if the owner loses interest and doesn't re-apply, the work then becomes public property. After all, if someone invents a new board game, such a system already obtains under existing patent law - but if the same game originates as a computer program, it's subject to copyright law instead, and surely this is a crazy distinction. I'd be in favour of such registration being free, though, because good ideas benefit everyone, and a wise government would see it as an investment.
Miles Kinloch, Edinburgh.

Dear Crashed,

Thanks for Crashed, it is, as you say, improved in the printing department and very commendable to manage it all using 8-bit. Don't think any other Speccy mag is produced that way. However, I do have one complaint. I found some of the text references vulgar and there seemed to be a strong bias towards bodily functions in some places. I really prefer to read about Speccy related items and not those referring to the bathroom and bedroom. I had the same comments from a couple of other people and I have suggested they write to you.

Joyce Cook, Trowbridge.

Write to everybody you know and warn them about Crashed and it's contents - my readership figures will go through the roof.

Dear Crashed,

I'd just like to inform all readers that I did not write the Richard Coulthard Working Class Joke in issue 24, I merely overheard it at work (by accident) and mistakenly re-told it to Mr.Fountain on the phone sometime in January. I didn't find it funny at all, in fact I found it deeply offensive and can only apologise to all the slags, bitches and holes that must have been deeply shocked by those foul words. Clean up your act Mr.Fountain, you foul mouthed cunt sir.
R.Coulthard, Kingston-upon-Thames.

Always pleased to put the record straight in the letters page, for it is indeed the readers open forum.

POSTBOX

EACH ISSUE WE'LL BE TAKING A LOOK AT SOME OF THE THINGS YOU CAN GET FROM THAT LIST OVER THERE, THINGS THAT YOU CAN'T BUY IN THE HIGH STREET. ARE THEY ANY GOOD? ARE THEY WORTH THE MONEY? SENDING A SAE IS A VERY NICE GESTURE.

THE SMALLER REVIEWS SECTION

RETRO CLASSIX

Graham Howden
A4 Multi format fanzine
Price: £1.50

Whilst I still can't get my head around old computer stuff being worth anything (yet), Retro Classix to name but one, are really pushing the idea that yes, they are worth a bit of money, well, a few things are. Your copy of Mastertronic's Empire Fights Back is still valued at roughly 5p but a boxed and rather pristine original lenslok Elite would set you back £10 - three pints, twenty fags and a packet of condoms in other words. The trick is to get someone to pay £10 and there you have it, a collectors market taking shape before your very eyes. Money is great but have you noticed how nasty it smells, go on, take a long sniff now.

The fanzine is always an informative read for those generally interested in computer games and machine history, the Atari bits are especially well researched and written and Graham himself seems very clued up on everything from Game & Watch to the Coupe. You can even say hello to Graham at the Retro Computer exchange near Euston, see the Editorial for directions. Told you London was great didn't I.

SCENE PLUS

Austrian Speccy club
Spectrum +D disczine
Price: £1.00 from PD libraries

Being multi-lingual to me means being able to count to five in German and ask where the schoolgirl section is in Holland. It would then appear to me that Scene is written mostly in German but has a goodly portion of a Plus D disc taken up with brand new games and demos, screen art galleries and the odd very useful utility. Hang on a minute, what does this button do... bloody hell, loading and general instructions in English!

Editor Leszek has recently hooked himself up to the internerd, so that's good news for hands on Spectrum users, because Leszek is the kind of guy that converts stinking snapshots into normal Basic and Code files so the great un-washed don't miss out a thing. For those of you that like keeping up with the times, getting Scene every two months will keep you bang up to date.

PERIODICALS - MAGAZINES - FANZINES - MANUALS

ALCH NEWS: 62 Tithe Barn Lane, Sheffield S13 7LN.
-Tape/disczine. Spectrum/Z88. Price: £1.00
CRASHED: 11 Camel Road, Silvertown, London E16 2DE.
-A4 fanzine. Sam/Spectrum. Bi-monthly. Price: £1.00
DESERT ISLAND DISKS: 32 Dursley Road, Wilts BA14 ONP.
-A4 fanzine. Spectrum. Quarterly. Price: £2.00
FORMAT: 34 Bourton Road, Tuffley, Gloucester GL4 0LE.
-A5 magazine. Sam/Spectrum. Monthly. Price: £2.00
HACKERS HANGOUT: 29 Dent Dr, Wakefield, W.Yorks WF1 4JG.
-A4 fanzine. Spectrum. Monthly. Price: £1.00
MULTIFACE POKES: 26 Elsie Street, Goole DN14 6DU.
-A5 fanzine. Spectrum. Editions. Price: £2.00
OUTLET: 34 Saltersgate Drive, Birstall, Leicester LE4 3FF.
-Disczine. Spectrum. Monthly. Price: £3.50
PD POWER: 13 Rodney Close, Bilton, Rugby CV22 7HJ.
-A5 fanzine. Spectrum. Bi-monthly. Price: £1.70
QL TODAY: QBranch, PO Box 7, Portslade, Sussex BN41 2ND.
-A4 magazine. QL. Bi-monthly. Price: Annual subs £25.00
RETRO CLASSIX: 4 Chatterton Avenue, Lincoln LN1 3TB.
-A4 fanzine. 8 bits/consoles. Monthly. Price: £1.50
RETROGAMER: 52 Kingfield Road, Liverpool L9 3AW.
-A5 fanzine. 8 bits/arcade. Bi-monthly. Price: £1.75
RETROGAMES: 61 Baccara Grove, Milton Keynes MK2 3AS
-A4 fanzine. 8 bits/consoles. Monthly. Price: £2.00
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-A4 newsletter. Sam. Bi-monthly. Price: Annual subs £2.00
SAM SUPPLEMENT: 37 Parker Street, Walsall WS3 2LE.
-Disczine. Sam. Bi-monthly. Price: £2.00
SCENE+: PragerstraBe 92/11/12, A-1210 Wien, Austria.
-Disczine. Spectrum. Bi-monthly. Price: £1.00
SOUNDBYTE: 204 Lamond Drive, St.Andrews, Fife KY16 8RR.
-Disczine. Sam Quazar support. Monthly. Price: £2.00
THE SPC: Im Tannenforst 10, 51069 Koln, Germany.
-A5 magazine. Sam/Spectrum. Monthly. Price: Annual £13.00
THE SUC: Gastacksrstr 23, 70794 Filderstadt, Germany.
-A5 magazine. Spectrum. Monthly. Price: Annual £13.00
YESTERDAYS TECHNO CLUB: PO Box 19, Manchester M23 0YJ.
-A5 magazine. All 8 bits covered. Price: £2.75

USER GROUPS - PUBLIC DOMAIN LIBRARIES

ALCHEMIST PD: 126 Hayward Road, Bristol, B95 9QA.
-Spectrum/Amiga/PC public domain libraries.
ALCHEMIST RESEARCH: 62 Tithe Barn Lane, Sheffield S13 7LN.
-Spectrum/Z88 user group. Emulator support.
CRASHED DEMO LIBRARY: 11 Camel Rd, Silvertown, London E16 2DE.
-Spectrum public domain library.
INDUG: 34 Bourton Road, Tuffley, Gloucester GL4 0LE.
-Sam Coupe/Spectrum user group.
PRISM PD: 13 Rodney Close, Bilton, Rugby CV22 7HJ
-Restricted access Spectrum public domain library.
SAM PD: 18 Mill Lane, Skelmersdale WN8 8RH.
-Sam Coupe public domain library.
WOMO PD: Im Tannenforst 10, 51069 Koln, Germany.
-Sam Coupe and Spectrum public domain library.