

LOOK SWEETIE, IT'S...

CRASHED

The worlds greatest SAM and Spectrum magazine

Issue 21 •

May 1998 •

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**Sir Edward
Heath**

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MARK SPEAKS...

Well, at least this issue isn't as late as the last one. I've no reservation in saying that it's entirely my fault that it's still almost two months late, basically because I'm completely rubbish at doing any sort of work, especially Philosophy essays. Anyway, I think we've got a pretty good issue, and I hope you think it's worth the wait.

You may notice that this is also one of the most games-orientated issues that we've had in a while. What do you think about this? When I took over, I thought it'd be nice to have a bit more techy stuff, but few people seem to be interested in writing something. Are you happy for the magazine to concentrate largely on games, or would you prefer a more technical slant? Let us know.

Finally, I'd like to extend a warm and groovy welcome to all the Z2 readers who are joining us this issue (and thanks to David Ledbury for finally digging out the mailing lists). Hopefully by next issue the ever-growing Crashed empire will also have incorporated Zodiac. Iridescent, baby!

SRD,

Mark x
Mark.

STEW SPEAKS...

After all the time keeping troubles that we had last issue, I'm sorry to say that we are still running late. More about that in a moment. I can tell you that I actually started working on parts of this issue about 2 days after issue 20 was released. Shame it's still taken us 4 months to finish the job off.

Anyway, this will be my last issue in the editors chair. I'm tired, I need a break and so does my printer as I'm sure you will all see.

The other major factor is that having to send items from Leeds to London and back again is a pain in the neck, as well as being very time consuming.

So the next issue will see the 'Old School Crashed Revival', and will be produced on a humble Speccy, by none other than Mark. And the best of luck to him.

It's been short but sweet looking after the design side of things, but all good things must come to an end. And relax, I'll still write from time to time.

All the best,

Stewart.

DELVING DEEPER...

4 News - And loads of it.

6 Kliatba Noci - It's a new Speccy game. Fancy.

7 Ted Heath - He's back, and he's more outrageous than ever.

8 The Crashed Interview - With the one and only Cloin Macdonald.

10 Stratosphere - Colin Piggot's magnum opus reviewed.

12 Licensed to print money? - John Rose looks at licensed Speccy games through the ages.

14 Show Reports - Including the *Crashed Travel guide*!

16 Retro Reviews - You know.

17 Spec On The Net - John Garner surfs.

18 Post Box - Yes.

19 Shop - With all-new Fish and Z2 back issues!

CRASHED ISSUE 21 INCORPORATING Z2

Managing Editor - Mark Sturdy

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Thanks - Colin Macdonald, Maria Rookyard, Simon Goodwin, James Waddington, Chris Thomson, Andy Davis, Martyn Sherwood, Paul White, George Boyle, Thomas Erberle, David Ledbury, Malcolm Mackenzie, Colin Piggot, Alec Carswell, Robert Skene and you.

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This issue is dedicated to Warwick University for being a very, very long way away from Yorkshire. Thank God.

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stuff

SIMCOUPE ON THE MAC

Some of you may already know that Allan Skillman's much-acclaimed PC SAM emulator has now been converted to run on the Apple Mac. Like the PC version, it's not yet complete (it only exists in beta form) but it works perfectly well, and can be downloaded on the internet - along with quite a few other emulators for 8-bit machines - from <http://internetter.com/titan/software/index.html>.

Meanwhile, the original PC version (now on version 0.74), as ever, can be downloaded from

http://www.hep.ucl.ac.uk/ajs/simcoupe/simcoupe_snapshot.html

(SG/MS)

DESPERATELY SEEKING HARRY

James Waddington (of Classix fanzine) is currently trying to track down a programmer called Harry Price. He used to work for IJK Software, and wrote games like Odd Job Eddie. If anyone can help, get in touch with James at 11 Pinsbury Drive, Wrose, BRADFORD, BD2 1QA, email him at wadster@compuserve.com, or check out the Classix website at <http://ourworld.compuserve.com/homepages/wadster>.

(JW)

FISH2 MOVES

Time, convenience and a lack of material has meant that Fish2, Chris Thomson's Speccy tapezine, has moved to the WWW. Contributions, as ever, are welcome - email Chris at chris.thomson@uk.origin-it.com.

(CT/MS)

CLIVE BOOKED

Doubtless the most interesting Speccy-related book to appear this decade is Sinclair Archeology by Enrico Tedeschi. In its 130 pages, you get a complete, illustrated list of every Sinclair product ever, plus fascinating historical details like old adverts and inside information on the story of Uncle Sir Clive's various companies. In a letter to the author, Uncle commented "I would like to say how astonishing I found your book. It is so remarkably complete and will be a great help to me." Golly, eh? Sinclair Archeology (ISBN 0 9527883 06) is available for £10, plus £2 postage and packing, from the author, Enrico Tedeschi, at 54 Easthill Drive, Brighton, BN41 2FD.

(MS, with thanks to AlchNews)

IDEA DEBASED

Based On An Idea, the much-loved but sadly infrequent techy SAM fanzine, has finally closed down. Co-editor Simon Cooke is now in America, and Martin and Maria Rookyard also have other commitments, meaning that there's sadly little chance of ever getting the magazine out more than twice a decade, so they've packed it in. There is, however, a possibility that it will continue in a different form on the internet. Nothing has appeared as yet, but you might want to check <http://jumper.mcc.ac.uk/~simonc/boai> and see if anything's turned up.

(MS/MR)

UP AND ATOM

Since the report in last issue, Persona's rather fine-looking internal hard drive, the Atom, has been finished. It's yet to go into production, but hopefully will do soon. To recap, the Atom slots into the second drive slot of any Coupe (although not the Elite), and (avoiding tedious techy details) works pretty damn well - there's none of the screen distortion or crashes that the other hard drive interfaces occasionally cause. Since last issue, the DOS had been completed, and is available now from Persona. Known as BDOS, it not only allows you to access the hard drive from BASIC using normal SAMDOS commands, but also adds lots of extra commands for floppy users. The whole thing looks like it could be the best thing ever to hit the SAM, so get in touch with Persona c/o the address in Post Box (or email persona@clara.net) to find out more.

Meanwhile, the streets are abuzz (a lie) with rumours of a hard drive interface for the Spectrum. Alchemist Software's Lloyd Garland is supposedly looking at the possibility of building one, so you could try writing to him. More details (if there are any) next issue.

(MS/MM)

THE RUMOUR MILL

- A Bubble Bobble type game for the SAM from Chris White?
- A Spec Tec Jr novel from Simon Cooke?
- Mmm?

ALCHEMIST PD ON THE NET

In response to a lack of new Speccy software on the net (as opposed to old games), Alchemist Research's Andy Davis and Mick Harrop have set up an Alchemist PD website from which you can download any of Alchemist's 5000-strong collections of demos, utilities and that. The library allows you to download between 40 and 60 programs in one go as a Plus D disk image. So that's nice. The address is <http://cix.co.uk/~mharrop/index.htm>.

Meanwhile, two other Speccy PD libraries have closed down. Paul Howard's Impact Software has shut up shop as Paul moves away from the Speccy to do PC stuff, and The United Minds' MDL library has died as a result of a lack of custom and Dok's move from Glasgow to Bristol. But! as of next issue, said Dok will be writing the PD column for Crashed. Hurrah.

(MS/AD)

NOTICEBOARD

MESSAGE

Sorry, but I couldn't be assed to change the other messages.

Anyone who has a working Interface one that they want to sell me, email me at sskardon@argonet.co.uk or drop me a line via Crashed. Thanks.

WANTED:

Small ads for Notice Board.
Send short lineage to the usual address.
Absolutely free!

Wanted

A copy of Impact by Audiogenic (Breakout clone). Robert Chilton, 61 Sandfield Farm, Brownhills, West Mids, WS8 6LW

MESSAGE

Do any Sheffield-based readers know anything about Pulp's early days in the city? I'm writing a book about then (it's Sturdy here, by the way) and I'd be interested in any recollections or artefacts. Get in touch at the usual Crashed address

SHE DON'T COME CHEAPLY

Following her much-acclaimed (maybe) Multiface poke directory, Bernadette Dowsland has released a repair manual for the 48K Speccy. For £2, you get a 22-page booklet containing a guide to just about every possible thing that could conceivably go wrong with an original Spectrum, and detailed information on how to put it right. It's already been rave reviewed in AlchNews, so send £2 to Bernadette c/o her usual address (to be found in Post Box). Yes, do.

(MS)

READY FREDDY

Roy Everett has ended the drought of Plus D/+3 compatible 3.5" DSDD disk drives by producing his own. The Freddy Drive costs £68, for which you get a high-quality, metal-cased drive, a cable (to order), and a one-year parts and labour guarantee. The whole thing sounds rather funky, and more information can be got from Roy Everett, 2 Coldnailhurst Ave, Braintree, Essex, CM7 7SJ, tel (01376) 344 572.

Meanwhile, there's a possibility that Prism PD's Martyn Sherwood will be organizing the production of a batch of new Plus D interfaces. There are no firm plans yet, but at the moment Martyn needs a circuit diagram for the original interface. If anyone can help, write to Martyn at 13 Rodney Close, Bilton, Rugby, CV22 7HJ.

(MS)

QUAZAR NEWS

Colin Pigott has been working on yet more groovy things for his Quazar Surround soundcard. The main thing is a new sample compression method that allows you to play a whole three minutes of 16-bit sampled sound at a sampling rate of 11kHz, as opposed to the previous maximum of 22 seconds. The whole thing, according to Colin, is based on "a modified ADPCM (Adaptive Differential Pulse Code Modulation) compression technique for 16-bit samples which is mainly used on PCs". And who are we to argue? Issues 27 and 30 of Colin's disk mag Soundbyte contains demos of three-minute songs samples using this technique, and apparently sound rather fine. Details from the usual Quazar address in Post Box.

(MS/CP)

SAM CLOCK FINALLY ARRIVES

Almost 18 months after it was announced to be imminent, Format Publications' SAM_Clock would seem finally to be upon us. Should anyone have forgotten, the board plugs into the SAM's Euroconnector port (but it's got a through-port, so you don't need a Two-up or SAMBus to connect other add-ons), is compatible with the MasterDOS TIME and DATE functions, and has a built-in battery backup thing. It's available for £29.95 (or £24.95 for INDUG members) from the usual Format address.

(MS)

NEW SAM ADVENTURE

F9 Software have just released Robyn Campbell's Murder Most Foul, the follow-up to Wonderland, released by F9 a few years back. A whodunnit adventure in Agatha Christie stylee, it's got music from Crashed reader Bob Brunsten (hello Bob), so it must be good. Anyway, the whole thing's supposed to be rather fine, and it's available for the attractive sum of five pounds from the usual F9 address, which can be found in that thing we call Post Box.

(MS)

SMART ALEC. OR POSSIBLY NOT SO.

Alec Carswell's SAM diskzine X is still going, and can be got from him for £2. He is, however, absolutely desperate for contributions of any kind, so anyone who can help him out with some kind of something is urged to get in touch. Meanwhile, Alec is concentrating on producing sci-fi and horror fanzines, the first of which is Slideways, dedicated to something called Sliders which he'd like you all to watch (BBC2, Mondays, 6.45pm, apparently). Alec will also soon be relaunching Adventure Coder (the multi-format adventure/RPG fanzine), and has a library of 15000 sound modules for the SAM, from which he periodically releases disks containing between four and eight modules. The library should also soon expand to cover the Quazar Surround soundcard. For information on any of these things, write to Alec at 16 Montgomery Avenue, Beith, Ayrshire, KA15 1EL.

(MS)

CHEAP Z88s

Clive's last computer, the much-loved Z88 laptop, is now available for £40 from a company called Rakewell, whose address is nowhere to be found, which is annoying. However! perennial Z88 suppliers EEC (address in Post Box) have bought a lot of said Z88s, and is selling them for £50 with a 90-day warranty. So.

(AD)

LOOK AND LERM

The range of SAM and Speccy utilities released by Lerm in the late '80s and early '90s are available once more, thanks to Persona and Alchemist Research. Alchemist is now distributing all of Lerm's Spectrum titles, with Persona selling the SAM ones. The only title that Persona is lacking is the autorunning SAM Assembler (not the SAM Toolkit one), so if anyone can help Malcolm out with a copy of that, get in touch at the normal address.

(MS)

GLOUCESTER SHOW DATES

The next two Format-organized shows at Quedgey Village Hall, near Gloucester, have been announced. They will take place on Saturday 4th April and Saturday 17th October. They generally don't have a huge amount of Speccy stuff (certainly not as much as the NSSS), but if you've got a SAM they're more than worth a visit. Crashed will hopefully be at both shows, probably desperately trying to sell enough back issues to pay for the train fare home. But anyway.

(MS)

NEW SAM ADVENTURE

F9 Software have just released Robyn Campbell's Murder Most Foul, the follow-up to Wonderland, released by F9 a few years back. A whodunnit adventure in Agatha Christie stylee, it's got music from Crashed reader Bob Brunsten (hello Bob), so it must be good. Anyway, the whole thing's supposed to be rather fine, and it's available for the attractive sum of five pounds from the usual F9 address, which can be found in that thing we call Post Box.

(MS)

Kliatba Noci

BY Ultrasoft

PRICE £5.99 (NOT +3/+2A COMPATIBLE)

AVAILABLE FROM Sintech / Trading Post

OUT Now

Reviewed By Gavin

Those crazy foreigners, eh? They certainly know how to make a Speccy game with style. Their graphics in games are often far more impressive and colourful than some of our feeble attempts, and Kliatba Noci is such a game.

Meaning "Curse of the Night", Kliatba Noci was made in the Czech Republic, and sadly therefore has Czechoslovakian words throughout the game, from the objects you pick up to rooms you enter. Which makes things a tad difficult, even though the instruction sheet does come with both the English and German storylines and controls.

I did manage to find a Czech guy on the internet though, who kindly translated a lot of the room and object names, which helped a bit, and explained a few things. (I'll send these translations to Mark, and if anyone wants them maybe he could pop them in with your next issue of Crashed? So you'll only have to wait a year or two then. Hahaha. Sorry Mark.)

The plot isn't perhaps the most imaginative one ever but the game itself creates the atmosphere. Three burtal highwaymen decided to be a tad nasty and killed 100 people. They had cool names though! Max Lamehead, Black Arpad and Hellish Wetman. (Even the German instruction sheet maintains those names!) Anyway, they were soon caught, and were sentenced to death. Which is great except the evil bastards decided to curse the castle just before they were executed. Everyone in the castle died, including the king (sobs) but thankfully (and this is the unpredictable bit) the princess is still alive (hurrah!). She is very ill though and she needs your help.

Your quest? Destroy the skeletons of those nasty people that made the curse, and prepare a magic drink to cure the princess.

This is all fairly average stuff for a Speccy game, but! this game has atmosphere and style in bucket loads.

From the moment you hop off your horse and enter the castle, the game smacks you around the face with gorgeous graphics, great looking bad guys, and stunning rooms. Although it's a platform game, it's more like Prince of Persia than any of those hop-on-little-bad-creatures'-heads-to-kill-them-type-of-things. Exploring the castle you will have to dodge skeletons and wizards and other baddies. Perhaps I'm just in a bad mood, but these guys pop up in every damn room, and as soon as you kill

one, another one appears. Hmm. Doesn't ruin the game, but might have been nice if the odd room didn't have any of those damn evil peeps. The game slows down quite a bit now and then, mostly when a few bad guys enter the room, but hey, that's the Speccy for you.

There is one in game tune, which is quite nice, but does get on the old nerves a bit after a while - although if you're a poor sod and have a 48K Speccy, there's no tune at all. There aren't many other sound effects, and they all sound the same, so boooo for the sound then.

I had a really good time playing this game, and found myself quite addicted to it. In case you hadn't realized, I was well impressed with the graphics - you can even walk past some mirrors and see yourself! The only real problem with the game is the lack of English, which would have kind of helped in a game like this. Even with my page of translations, I found it hard to work out what a few of the objects and rooms were - which means that I haven't got as far as I might have (although it's probably cos I'm a bit crap, but we won't mention that). I think Sintech need to get a few of their games translated into English because it's a real shame that we can't enjoy this game to the full. Having said that, you will enjoy it, and you will be impressed by it - it's the kind of game that would have sold by the truckload back in the peak of the Speccy's life.

Kliatba Lingo... Or translations.

SEKERU - AXE
JE - IS
SOM TO - I (DO SOMETHING)
JA - I
POTOM - THEN
KRVAVY - BLOODY
DVOJITU - DOUBLE
LISTINU - PAPER, PARCHMENT
KLUC - KEY
KVIETOK - FLOWER
POLIEVKU - SOUP
FLASK(Y) - FLASK(S)
KRIZ - CROSS
KLADIVO - HAMMER
VIDIM - (I) SEE
MAM - (I) HAVE
ZOBRAL - TAKE
PLNE VODY - FULL OF WATER
ZOZRAL - EAT
TMA - DARK
ZLY - EVIL
VYROBIL - CREATED
VYPILA TO - SHE DRANK IT
SKUS JU NEJAKO - TRY TO
JE CHUT - IS TASTE
NEJAKE SVINSTVO - SOME SHIT
VYROBIME Z VODY A TRUSU - CREATE FROM WATER
AND SHIT (?) POUZI MAGICKU ZBRAN - USE MAGIC
WEAPON
POTREBOVAL BY - NEEDS
VODA JE SKAMENE - WATER IS FROM STONE
KRASA - BEATIFUL, WONDERFUL
DVERE - DOOR
TREBI MI NA ZACHOD - GOTTA GO TO THE LOO
BOJIM - SCARED
UNAVERN - TIRED
SKAPAL - DIED
STRASNY KONIEC - TERRIBLE END
PRIEWAN - WIND
DOVIDIENA V PEKLE - SEE YA IN HELL!
FUJ, SMRDA! - BLEH, (THEY) STINK

Well worth buying, and once you have a few goes, you'll be quite addicted to it, eager to see what's in the next room, and eager to work out just what the hell "zombrel som polievku" actually means.

Crashed

Looks	●●●●●	(5)
Feels	●●●●○	(4)
Sounds	●●●○○	(3)
Final Score	●●●●○	(4)

8BIT

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He's wide, he's snide, he's annoyed beyond belief. Who else could it be but...

SIR EDWARD HEATH



Hello. Aren't we all nasty little bitches, then? You know, for a scene that prides itself on being friendly and intimate, it strikes me that very few people round here actually like each other.

Over the past few months in particular, the SAM and Spectrum scene seems to have been characterised by people slagging each other off in especially nasty ways.

Format seems to be an especially popular target. One SAM figure makes a habit of phoning people up and telling them how he has absolutely no argument with editor Bob Brenchley, then going on to explain, without being prompted, exactly why he thinks said Brenchley should be hung, drawn and quartered.

Another Spectrum fanzine practically has a regular section in which Format is viciously attacked.

And what had Bob actually done to deserve this? Format is the only monthly magazine for our machines; it's also the only magazine that gives any kind of serious technical/programming coverage. (That's not to say that it's better than Crashed, but that's by the by.) Format is also a rare source of new software and hardware. True, it's no longer the magazine it was - but there's little about the SAM and Spectrum nowadays that is. It's hardly fair to begrudge Format for having fewer pages than it did five years ago, when you could still buy a new Speccy in Dixons.

The two things that Format is criticised for are basically that (1) it doesn't publish enough news, and (2) it never mentions Persona. I'd personally agree that both these things the wrong thing to do, and are probably pretty stupid and self-defeating. But why does anyone feel the need to elevate Bob into a hate figure as a result of the way he chooses to run his magazine? You can't legitimately attack someone with this kind of vitriol just because you happen to disagree with the editorial policy of their magazine - it's just silly.

Format aren't the only victims of this kind of pointless mean-spiritedness. David Ledbury, who has done so much over the years to support the SAM, has been the victim of what amounts to a smear campaign from another prominent SAM figure. Two of the most valued Spectrum services, Prism PD and Alchemist Research, while not feuding to the extent that they were two years ago, still continue to attack each other, to the detriment of their own services. The list goes

on. And what for? Nothing. Nobody is gaining anything from any of this, and we're all losing out. The blinding stupidity of it all truly is breathtaking.

Take a step back from all this for a second. What we're talking about here is computers. A computer. Your computer. That's all. An old-fashioned computer that nobody else really uses any more. You might play games on it from time to time, or write letters, or do a bit of

programming, or collect old bits and pieces just for the pleasure of having them. Face it, it's hardly world-changing stuff, is it? Just a quirky, harmless hobby that there isn't any kind of real justification for. Someone recently said that killing the SAM was "the worst thing it was possible to accuse anyone of". I mean, come on! Of course, it's all a matter of opinion, but I always thought that there were people out in the real world who have done much worse things (and are accusing people of much worse things). I should know; I used to be Prime Minister - just ask the miners. Messing about with computers in your bedroom or loft is hardly very important in the scheme of things, and slagging off others in the course of your hobby doesn't make it any more fun.

At one time, lots of people were saying that if people kept on feuding in the way they were, they'd kill the Spectrum or SAM. Three years on, and it's started happening. As there gets to be less and less SAM/Speccy activity (in terms of software, fanzines, whatever), and the atmosphere gets worse and worse, more and more people are deciding that it's not worth the aggro. Look at just a few of the people who have disappeared (or at least significantly withdrawn) from the scene in recent years. Dave Fountain. Mat Beal. Allan Clarkson. Simon Cooke.

Some of the most talented people ever to come near a SAM or Spectrum have lost interest in the whole shebang, all because we can't all manage to get along with each other.

Why are you reading this magazine? Presumably it's because you're a keen Spectrum or SAM user, and you want your computer to continue to be supported. So be nice to each other. If someone does something that you don't agree with, don't mark them down on your shit-list and then spend the rest of your life trying to destroy them. Hold your tongue. Be polite. It might just work. On the other hand, in the light of the morning, it'll turn out not to matter so much after all.

Of course, if you want to, you can carry on with your bad-mouthing and bitching. That way, in a few years' time you'll have the pleasure of being the undisputed ruler of the SAM and Spectrum scene. Because you'll be the only person left.

Sir Edward Heath

Next Issue

Join us for the Crashed Old School Revival.

16 pages of pure Speccy and SAM enjoyment.

New lower cover price of just £1.

Produced on a real, authentic Spectrum.

Just the like the good old days....

THE CRASHED INTERVIEW

COLIN
MACDONALD

Cloin! We love you, yes we do. The man who gave us Fred (the magazine), Fred (the software house), Lemmings on the SAM, and the sight of his naked calves at the Gloucester show. But which way did he vote in the Scottish referendum? Can he make a curry?

What does he really think of David Ledbury? And how does he react when you quote the rude bits from Pulp songs? LEAH M WETBAT investigates...

Have you ever heard other people fucking and really enjoying it?

"[Sounds extremely shocked] Err... no."

How did you get introduced to the SAM?

"I was a big Spectrum user. Everyone else was buying Amigas and Ataris at the time, and I just didn't want to do that, purely because everyone else was doing it. The SAM came along, and people like Crash started reviewing it in early '88, and it just sounded like the natural upgrade to the Spectrum. I started saving up money from my paper round, and two years later I bought one."

Were you disappointed when it wasn't the success people were expecting it to be?

"Yeah. I bought mine at the end of May 1990, and it was already not an instant success. About a week later, MGT went down, so I was getting a lot of grief off everyone. But I'd still got this new machine, and I was playing around with it and stuff, and within a couple of months I'd started to have a bit of success on my own, and that kind of got round it. Six months later, I could say to everyone who slagged off the machine, 'Well, screw you, I'm making money out of it', and of course they weren't making any money out of their Amigas, so they kind of lost the argument."

How did you come to set up Fred, then?

"The first issue was boredom... well, not boredom, but there was no other software available for the SAM. Defenders of the Earth wasn't released until July, and Fred started in June. I used to write Spectrum reviews for tape magazines - I typed some of them into the SAM, and created a little magazine around it. Then I thought 'Well, there's nothing else there, let's see if anyone wants it'."

Were you surprised when it took off like it did?

"Yes and no. I mean, I'd obviously dreamed of that, but I've had so many dreams, and so few

of them have actually happened! But yeah, it was a fantastic surprise. I mean, it wasn't like an instant success - for the first two issues I had practically no readers. I think maybe three or four people bought the first two as they came out, and then just with time, and Tetris going on issue three, it got spread about by word of mouth that Fred was worth buying. For issues one and two, it was all stuff done by me - there was nothing really of interest, it was all just crappy stuff I'd done. Then by the time issue 5 came out, I was getting reviews in Crash and Your Sinclair, and it all sort of blossomed from there."

How did you get into the software publishing side of things?

"When I was down at SAMCo after my first year of doing Fred, I started off just helping out answering phones and stuff, but by the end of my three months I was helping programmers come along and doing almost everything. One of the first contributors to Fred, Steve Taylor, had written a game called The Viking Game for the magazine, and I said 'Hang on, this isn't a bad little game, let's have a think about publishing it.' I'd seen how relatively easy it was to publish stuff on the SAM, and working so close with Alan and Bruce meant that I could count on them for a little bit of help. Steve came back to me with another game, Trillex, which was far better, and I just thought 'Right, we'll put them both out.' And by, I think, October, that was it, launched. And the money was good, so we just kept publishing one after another - as fast as we could find programmers, almost."

Did it ever get to a point where you wondered what you'd taken on?

No, never. Because I'd started it as a hobby, for fun, I think that had a lot to do with it - I always enjoyed doing it. Things were hectic - I frequently had to pull all-nighters to do various things, certainly when I was editing the magazine as well as running the rest of the business and doing my degree or whatever. The whole magazine would normally be done in one night - I would start it just after tea on Thursday night, and it would typically take me 15 hours to do it straight. By about 10 in the morning, it would be done. Then I'd go down to the post office, post it off, then go down to university or whatever. And, I mean, the money was good for quite a bit of the time, so that wasn't going to be any cause for complaint either. Some of the things, like the amount of phone calls and things like that, got on my nerves from time to time, but I always saw that as something I had to put up with, although most of the phone calls I didn't mind."

COLIN MACDONALD'S VITAL STATISTICS

Age: 23

Height: 6' 1"

Favourite Doctor Who: Peter Davison

Shoe size: 11

Starsign: Aries

Weight: "Pass."

Favourite records: "I can always go back to stuff like The Beatles and Pink Floyd, but other than that it varies from one month to the next."

Favourite films: "A lot of the gangster stuff like

Goodfellas... Trainspotting obviously, and Braveheart was good."

Favourite books: "I'm reading a lot of biographies at the moment; I've

been reading about Adolf Hitler and Che Guevara, which is quite

interesting. But I'll read more or less anything."

Favourite yoghurt: "The vanilla one with those little puff rice things that go in it. They're great."

Favourite part of the body: "Hair, 'cos I've got none."

Favourite place: Swansea

Favourite swear word: "I'm a good little boy, I don't swear."

Favourite drink: Caffrey's

Favourite Pulp song: "I'm not a big Pulp fan."

What were Alan Miles and Bruce Gordon really like?

"Great, absolutely great. The first time I actually met Bruce, he wasn't overly friendly to me - he wasn't unfriendly, he just didn't acknowledge me that much, whereas Alan was friendly with absolutely everyone. He's a guy you can't imagine having an enemy. He was just so nice and considerate, and all the stuff that we just hate people like that for! When I was working for them, I frequently did things wrong, and Alan always took time out and showed me how to do it right, without making me feel bad about doing it wrong in the first place. Bruce was... once you got to know him, he would really bend over backwards to help his friends - I stayed with him for three months when I was working at SAMCo, having met him once before. I just turned up at his house and that was that; we were friends from that point. Chris White was there for a while as well, and we'd be borrowing his car and having parties in his house and things. Bruce was more temperamental to work with; I think he used to go along with the whole genius way of life. He'd occasionally go into a little mood or something - maybe he just did it to see everyone's reaction, I can imagine him doing that. But yeah, they were absolutely great guys to work with, and I wish that we could do that all over again."

Would you say that the SAM would benefit from having people like Alan and Bruce around now, to motivate people?

"Definitely, yeah. I mean, the SAM's always really needed people to hang everything off. Other computers, say the Commodore, never really ever had anyone famous other than one or two programmers, but with the SAM there's always been celebrity programmers like Simon Cooke and whoever, musicians like Andy Monk, things like that, which is strange. It'd be great if Alan and Bruce were to come back on the scene somehow, but I think they did their bit. People got so much from Alan and Bruce talking to them and just being there as figureheads up until 1992... but I can see how people are going to directly accuse them of losing their money or making the companies fail or whatever, so it's maybe better for other people to take a bit of the glory at the moment."

What's your opinion on the way the SAM's gone since then?

"Inevitable, I suppose, is the best word. There's certainly been a small number of people who've worked extremely hard, and a large number of people who have worked hard to make something else happen. But with so little time, money and everything that it takes to make a computer succeed in the marketplace today, it was just a one-in-a-thousand shot. But I think what's kept it alive so much is that there's a very active social life behind the SAM, with the shows . . . I know a lot of the people aren't getting together, but they are in touch, phone calls and stuff like that. Which is great - it stops it from going completely downhill."

How do you see the future of the SAM?

"Err . . . it's definitely got one; I mean there's always going to be people like myself that are always going to have at least one SAM because of all the nostalgia. There's going to be hundreds of them, maybe. But I think that with the way everything's going PC-orientated, the best chance for SAM is maybe through the emulator side of things, with people that are maybe away at university or don't have access to their SAMs, they can still do absolutely everything that they could on their SAM, just without having a physical machine there. And I think as long as they're using the SAM in that way, it'll still count as supporting the SAM just as much. They're using it because they want to see Fred or SAM Supplement every month, and they like the BASIC and want to knock up a little program. I mean, it's probably easier to pull up a SAM Coupe window under an operating system than it is to load up a version of BASIC to write something. Having said that, there's always going to be the actual machines being used. But as time goes on, there's always the problems of building new ones or fixing old ones."

What would you like to see on the SAM scene in the next 12 months?

"There's two projects I want to see of mine. The book [about the story of the SAM] - I mean, I wouldn't care who did that, it's just a fantastic story, and I think a lot of SAM people would find it really interesting - it'd just be a shame to see the story get forgotten in the mists of time. If it was written down, it'd be able to be handed round to people who are curious about the story. And again on the emulator side, I'd like to see a SAM CD, so that in ten years' time, when floppy disks have disintegrated into dust, it'd be possible to pull stuff off the CD and create new floppy disks for the SAM if people don't want to use a PC, just to stop anything from going to waste, because CDs are going to be around for a little while longer anyway. Other than that, further developments on the hard drive to make it reasonable to get software running from that, that'd be great. Maybe the same could be applied to a CD drive, you never know. But I think in 12 months, I'd like to see things just as strong as they are now. Disk magazines and programmers, I think, are SAM's strongest things at the moment."

What do you miss most about running Fred?

"Probably getting to speak to so many people. I mean, in the last couple of years Fred has been a pain to run, because it's involved juggling money and worrying about things, trying desperately hard to get enough stuff out there, or get enough to put together an issue of Fred. It was great get to speak to all the different programmers, just chat with them and talk about their latest stuff. I just miss the

whole scene at the moment, I just don't feel involved. I'd like to get back in somehow."

What are your favourite games?

"Tetris is definitely the game I've played the most, no doubt about that. I've still got a soft spot for Trillex. And Prince of Persia, which is still lovely to go back and play, despite the bugs - it still looks so professional, especially considering the environment it was written in."

Does it bother you that that sort of thing isn't appearing on the SAM now?

"No, not really. I'm happy to see almost anything appearing on the SAM now."

Did you enjoy yourself in America?

"Absolutely. I'd never been travelling anywhere before, in that sense. It doesn't matter where I went - if it had just been around Wales, travelling like that is just a completely different lifestyle. Okay, I got to see all these fantastic cities, fantastic places, but half the fun was the lifestyle and the people. Absolutely amazing - it's a shame that more people don't get the opportunity to do it."

Can you . . . play a musical instrument?

"None whatsoever."

Sing?

"No."

Whistle?

"No."

Draw?

"Nothing recognisable."

Cook?

"Boil-in-the-bag, and curries."

If there was one question you could be asked in this interview, what would it be?

"'Tell me your life story', because then I'd tell you everything and you'd write it all down and make it all witty and nice, and I wouldn't have to bother writing my book."

Any opinions on David Ledbury?

"David has got his heart in the right place; he's another devout SAM follower, which is great. The politics of everything kind of made us enemies, with us having different views on what'd be good for the SAM, and me making money out of it at the same time, and him . . . not making as much, I don't think. We just suffered from differences of opinion and fell out. But before then, we got on great."

Do you object to Format?

"Not in general. I mean, Bob's just one guy. He's got his right to his opinions just as much as everyone else has. Personally, some of the things he does I disagree with, but ultimately he's running a business. If you're going to lose custom from something he says, then that's his doing. But maybe he's smarter than everyone else put together, and maybe he's doing far more good than anyone else realizes."

Did you ever meet Jon Pillar/Jonathan Nash?

"Yeah. Great laugh. First time I ever met him, he kept coming up and putting his briefcase on my stand and rummaging around looking for papers and things, without me knowing who he was. I was ready to start charging rent before he actually introduced himself. But we got on great after that - there was a time when through the pages of Your Sinclair, I was quite close with Jon for a while. He was phoning me up, if not on a daily basis, then certainly every other day, because he wanted something to put on his SAM pages. But we used to meet up in London and go to Amiga shows, things like that. He was a witty guy in real life and everything."

Any clues as to the name change?

"None whatsoever. He kept quiet about that."

When did you last hear from him?

"I last spoke to him about two years ago - before the Gloucester Shows, I used to phone up people like him and Nick Roberts, just for a chat really, and to see if I could get them along. So the last time would have been when I invited him to one of those . . . he was maybe in a bad mood or something, but I didn't get a very good impression from him, although Nick Roberts has always seemed quite keen, even though he hasn't been able to make it to the shows."

How did you vote in the devolution referendum? (NB: this interview was done a few days after said referendum, and this question is yet another failed attempt at being topical)

"Yes to both. I had to think about that; it might not be the right decision in the end, but I think with the way everyone's feeling, it couldn't have gone any other way, and in five years' time we'll see whether it was the right decision or not."

Are you a nationalist, then?

"No . . . I think Britain is actually better off as a whole. If Scotland went independent, we would lose out more than anyone else, and we do quite well out of being part of the United Kingdom. But being Celts or whatever, I think the Scottish, Irish and

Welsh have a lot of pride in their nationality, and it's good feel that we're getting something back that we lost 300 years ago."

Are you going to wear your kilt to the next Gloucester show?

"[Laughs] It's unlikely - I've done that once, and unless people are willing to pay for me to wear it, or not wear it . . . maybe some other time, but it's a bit cold."

Look out for the second part of the Colin interview in the next issue of Crashed.

Stratosphere

BY Colin Piggot / Quazar

PRICE £17.99

AVAILABLE FROM Quazar

OUT Now

Reviewed By Justin Skists

It's sexy. Get it now!

Umm . . . okay. Somehow, I think the editor would like just a tad more detail to this professional, well-balanced and unbiased review.

Stratosphere is one of the latest games written by a seemingly talented Colin Piggot of Quazar. To quote the manual: "Stratosphere features stunning 3D wire frame vector graphics all in mode 4 as well as extra spectacular music and effects for the Quazar Surround soundcard." However, Colin stresses that you don't need the soundcard to play this game - it plays just as well without one. Trust me, I know.

The game comes packed on to four floppy disks with a decent manual telling you how to play the thing. There doesn't seem to be much of a plot, which is unusual for this type of game. It

is just said that the cyberspace battle has begun and that, once you get through the forty levels by killing a few cybercraft, you get to blow up the biggy Dreadnought cybercraft at the centre. Well, that's what it says in the manual, but I haven't managed to get that far to find out whether it's the truth or not. (Colin insists it's true, so I'll have to believe him.)

You have the option of three 'standard' cybercraft to choose from, or you get to have your own customized setup (which I use quite a lot since I can't seem to get anywhere with the others).

If you have the Quazar Surround soundcard, you are greeted with quite a catchy tune and the standard 'groans' (atmospheric, futuristic and other eerie music and sound effects) that are used in the

latest PC/PlayStation games. The graphics in the menu system are very well done. In the game, you get the standard wire-frame graphics used in



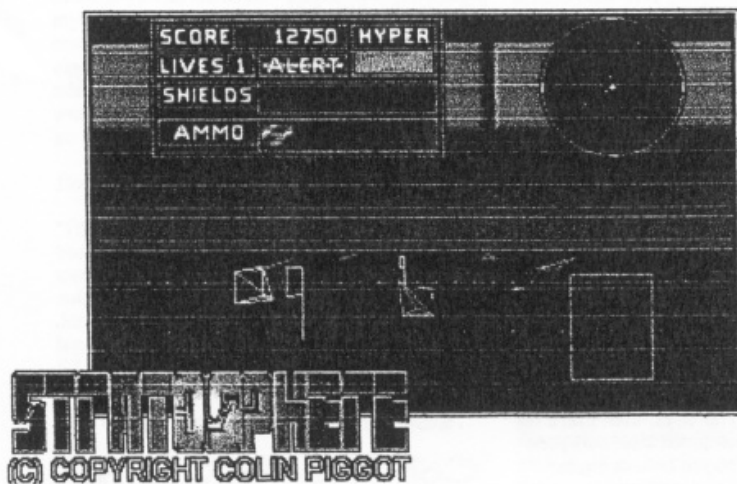
These things are getting more difficult to write now. Yes, well it's lovely isn't it.

games like Elite using a well thought out 3D graphics engine that actually skips out displaying certain frames when the screen is full of objects which keeps the playing speed up.

The engine incorporates what Colin calls a '3D Engine Speed Regulator' which can be adjusted, switched off or put in a turbo mode (for when you are feeling especially suicidal). On the default setting, you hardly notice any missing frames.

Compare the default with running the game with the regulator switched off and you'll be impressed.

The wire-frame graphics may look a little basic and the gameplay may seem a little slow at first, but it soon gets very hectic and very addictive. You control a cybercraft within a square, flat, battle arena. You need to go around picking up all the green spinning flags to get to the next level, shoot the various style cybercraft baddies, dodge the buildings and missile turrents and pick up the pulsing red shield and weapon replenishers. The screen shakes when you bang into something (sometimes making you pay with your life within a battle - so don't do it!) and you



Coo. Look at that... 3D in mode 4....put's Elite to shame really.

don't get nearly enough lives - although I think that last bit has more to do with skill. The good thing is that, if you time it right and have a lot of luck on your side, you can manoeuvre yourself out of a tight spot whilst the baddies accidentally shoot themselves. And just watch that radar screen - but not too much because buildings aren't displayed!

It's easy to get to grips with playing the game and once you gather a few combat techniques you're well away! Unfortunately, there are a few not-so-brilliant points. The first thing I noticed was that the in-game sound: it's the normal SAM sound coming out of my telly, rather than my Quazar Surround speakers. Colin tells me that it's because he needed all the machine cycles he could get for the 3D graphics engine to make it as fast and as smooth as possible. I think that's an acceptable reason. This is a 6MHz Z80 machine and not a 166MHz Pentium with MMX that we're dealing with here.

Besides, the game's for non-

Quazar Surround soundcard machines as well.

The second thing is the time it takes to load. The game is huge! Well, you do get about two megabytes of sound to listen to. And I wish it kept the settings of the customised cybercraft between goes (although, I wouldn't call it fatal or anything). At times, I wish that there were extras such as mines or more powerful

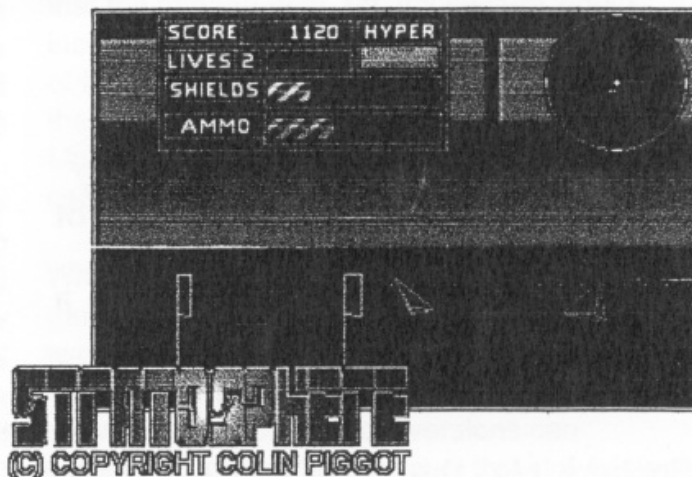
certain someone for all the times you're are going to be late for those dates!

There are a very few games that really impress me, but Stratosphere certainly does! I

can certainly give it ten out of ten. The only other game I can give that to was the original Elite on the Speccy. And if you can afford it, the Quazar Surround soundcard gives the game that extra spark (especially if you can mix the

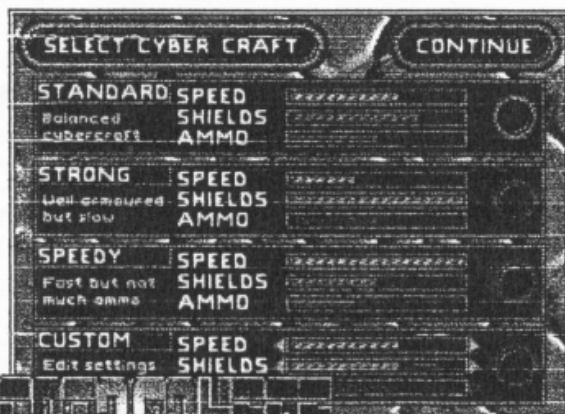
SAM's sound with the soundcard's into the the same set of speakers) and it makes the length of time for the game to load worthwhile.

I can certainly recommended it. Well done, Colin. So, when's Stratosphere 2 coming out?



weapons to make life a little easier.

The third, and most annoying, bad point is its addictiveness! The amount of times that I've been late for one thing or another because I've been playing this game ... sheesh. Be prepared to spend lots of money on flowers for that



<i>CRASH</i>		
Looks	●●●●●	(5)
Feels	●●●●●	(5)
Sounds	●●●●●	(5)
Final Score	●●●●●	(5)

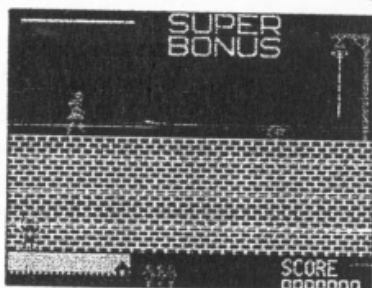


This article was written for Issue One of Z2, but at some point between Beal typing it up and sending it to Ledbury, it went missing. I suspect X-Files-type Government intervention, me.

So, here it is - the article they didn't want you to see: **JON ROSE** on licensed Speccy games through the ages!

With all the disquiet over yet another version of Street Fighter appearing on the consoles, I thought it would be interesting to look back on the history of licences on the Spectrum.

Since Ocean's dominance surfaced in 1985, the preoccupation with licensing everything that



Hunchback.

moves and hang the quality has been noticeable.

Although Ocean did release some excellent titles, the blame for licensing fewer must be put on

it. It was Ocean that

first released an official licence, Hunchback, in 1983. That was followed by a procession of licensed titles, not all of them great. Anyone for a game of Knight Rider, or what about Street Hawk?

Having said that, Ocean's best releases have probably come from the licensed titles. The 128K version of Midnight Resistance, The Addams Family and Chase HQ to name but three. Where the problems started was with the formulaic appearance of the film tie-ins. All had different stages, with



Chase HQ

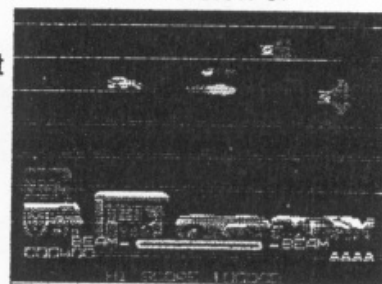
platform sections, shoot-'em-up parts, and elements of puzzle games or driving sequences. Playable, but boring once you had seen more than two titles of the same format.

US Gold's first titles weren't straight arcade conversions, but rather products licensed from US software houses. It has to be said that some were iffy in the extreme, with the conversion of Zaxxon being quite dreadful. Some of the titles were excellent, however - ironically one of the best, Beach Head, was converted at Ocean. US Gold distinguished themselves with great conversions of Gauntlet, most of the Capcom titles (including a crack at Street Fighter 2), and reasonable conversions of the OutRun titles (the first one excepted - a case of giving the Spectrum more to do than was possible). US Gold also licensed the games series from Epyx.

The results were a mixed bag, with Winter Games coming out best.

US Gold's worst mistake, for me, was the release of the execrable conversion of Thunderblade. A terrible multitload, zero gameplay and iffy sound made this overhyped pile of cack one to avoid.

Activision released, to my mind, the best ever licensed title, bar none. The conversion of R-Type still looks stunning today, and it was a shame that a 128K version with all the levels loaded in one go and 128K sound was never released. Activision



R-Type

also released titles based on Super Hang-On, Sega's biker game, and Time Scanner, a superb pinball title.

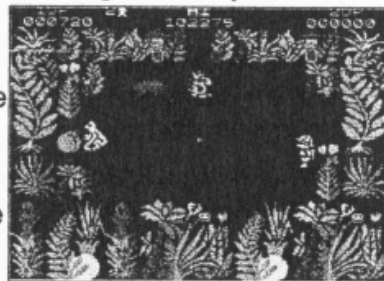
Imagine, previous to entering Ocean's clutches, never released licensed titles. When Ocean took over, Imagine only released licensed software. Goodies include Yie Ar Kung Fu, Hypersports and Terra Cresta.

Ones to leave included Yie Ar Kung Fu 2.

Hewson, one of the most innovative and sadly missed software houses, never released licensed

titles. They relied on original titles from new authors, and the games seemed all the better from being untouched by licensees' wishes. The trouble with doing licences was that the software houses had to get the OK from the licensees before releasing these titles. US Gold weren't allowed to let the digitised version of Michael Jackson get hurt in their conversion of Moonwalker, and the gameplay was limited because of it (Obviously. Ed).

Ultimate were always looked upon as the premier software house, with games that had playability and style in each title. Only when they seemed to give up on the Spectrum scene did the standard drop. Games like Pentagram and Martianoids seemed to have lost the magic of early titles like Jet Pac, Sabre Wulf and Atic Atac. Of course, now Ultimate are known as Rare, and have written stunning titles for the SNES like Donkey Kong Country.



Sabre Wulf

Storm Software continued where Mastertronic had left off by releasing Double Dragon 3. Comparing it with Imagine's excellent conversions of the Renegade titles showed that games hadn't really progressed much in the time between the release of the latter and the former. The one thankful thing about the demise of the Spectrum as a major player in home software is

that the thirteen-year-old architecture would increasingly be shown up if conversions of some of the newer coin-ops was attempted. I can't see the Spectrum being able to run conversions of Mortal Kombat, Primal Rage or Virtua Fighter - can you?

Where the Spectrum did do well was in simple games with loads of playability. Tetris, Klax, the two Arkanoid titles were all well received on the Spectrum. However, the first Arkanoid title showed where coin-op conversions can sometimes go wrong. On level three of Arkanoid there is a screen which is nigh on impossible to finish first go. Now, in an arcade this is fine, as it means you have to keep feeding the machine with dosh to continue playing. On a home computer the situation is different, as progress through a game can be spoilt by a frustrating level early on.

When a game moves from computer to coin-op, as Starglider did, a game can sometimes be shown to be the 'Emperor's New Clothes'. Shorn of the extra missions on the Spectrum 128K version, the Starglider coin-op was no more than a wire-frame shoot-'em-up.

So, the conversion of a coin-op, film or book may not always be worth doing, unless you are cynical enough to think that kids will buy anything on the reputation of the product being licensed. But software houses wouldn't be like that, would they...

Next Issue



CRASHED 22 - PURE, VIRGINAL, AND COMING YOUR WAY SOON.

In the next issue of Crashed :-

- † The return of Public Exposure.
- † The Crashed PD Library round up.
- † Plus all of the usual news, reviews and letters.

It's showtime!

Since last issue, we've had quite literally three different SAM and Speccy shows. The Sturdy reports...

The Ninth Gloucester Show * Quedgely Village Hall * 25th October 1997
For some reason, the Gloucester Show has always been a lot more SAM-orientated than the NSSS, and this one carried on the tradition. SAM Supplement were there, showing off their unfeasibly massive range of games, as were Fred, SD Software, Quazar and Mungus. It was a shame Persona and SAM PD couldn't be there, and also that there wasn't an awful lot of representation for the Spectrum - although we did have Chic Computer Club, and someone selling a damned impressive selection of old games. Carol Brooksbank was in her usual back-room spot, dispensing programming advice to anyone who wanted it, and there were plenty of celebs milling around - amongst them Colin Macdonald (back from the States), Tim (Scrapbook) Paveley, Dan (Banzai) Doore and Ian (Greenwich) Collier. And then we all went to the pub. Nice.

The Fourth Northern SAM and Spectrum Show * St James' Church Hall, Wetherby * 28th February 1998
Church bells tolling in the distance, tumbleweed blowing across the deserted prairie... okay, perhaps it wasn't that bad, but it'd only be fair to say that, because of an unfortunate last-minute change of date and venue, the latest NSSS was a lot quieter than the previous shows. Still, it was far from being a complete washout - Alchemist's Andy 'Bumfluff' Davis and Mick Harrop (the latter of whom went to school with the girls out of The Human League) were there as usual, as were Persona, showing off their Quazar-enhanced newie, Bowen And The Count Dracula. Paul White was also there selling issue 5 of the ever-superb ZX Files, and Matt Wescott and John Garner were there with some superb graphics demos. Chris White (programmer of the SAM versions of Prince Of Persia and Lemmings, as if you needed reminding) turned up later on, as did Colin Macdonald and Allan Clarkson. Hardly bustling, then, but still worthwhile. The next one, if it manages to avoid the problems with (lack of) publicity that the last two have had, should be a goodie.

THE CRASHED TRAVEL GUIDE

So. There are now two major Spectrum and SAM events to look forward to. One organized by our George and held in Wetherby, the other organised by Format and held in Quedgely. But! which one offers better value for your money? LEAH M WETBAT investigates (in a crap sort of a way).

1. Where is it?

NORTHERN: Wetherby, at the end of the A58 from Leeds.

Which is in the North. 5/5

SOUTHERN: Quedgely, near Gloucester. Which is down South. But it can have a bonus point for (a) being near my mate Sarah's house and (b) being near a town called Ledbury. 1/5

2. Which fanzine is it sponsored/organised/promoted by?

N: Crashed, the best Speccy and/or SAM fanzine ever. 5/5

S: Format, which is quite good for writing rude words on. 2/5

3. How much does it cost to get in?

N: £1.50. But there are so many of those "50p off" vouchers floating around, it may as well be a quid. Bargain. 4/5

S: £2 Extortionate rip-off or what? Capitalist pigs! 2/5

4. Is it easy to get to?

N: Not really. Wetherby is not conveniently situated off any motorway, and more to the point has NO TRAIN STATION. So you'd have to go to Leeds (or Harrogate) and catch a bus. But the bus service around those parts is very efficient. 2/5

S: No. It's down South. 0/5

5. I have to eat! Are there many pubs nearby?

N: Yeah, hundreds of the buggers. 5/5

S: One or two, apparently. 3/5

6. And what's the ale like?

N: Yorkshire bitter is the finest in the country. 5/5

S: Southern beer is crap and expensive. 0/5

7. I live in the Scottish town of Thurso, but I'm really desperate to go to a Speccy/SAM show. How readily available is accommodation in the locale?

N: Allan's mum is pretty accomodating.

5/5

S: You'd have to go up to Sarah's, I s'pose. 3/5

8. What else is there to do in these towns?

N: Not much. 1/5

S: Not much. 1/5

9. But what of the nearby cities?

N: Leeds is a nice place, despite the bad press it gets. Lots of nice shops. A large HMV. 5/5

S: Gloucester is down South. 1/5

10. Any phrases I should learn when venturing into these foreign parts?

N: "Eee by gum". "Where there's muck, there's brass". There's nowt so queer as folk". "Trouble at t'mill". Etc. 4/5

S: "Oo-ar". "Oi be plain Jack Durbeyfield, the haggler". "Angel, I am almost glad - yes, glad! I have had enough; and now I shall not live for you to despise me!" And, um, "Oo-ar". 2/5

11. Who will I meet at these happenings?

N: Most probably a variety of people with Red Dwarf T-shirts and e-mail numbers. And dodgy haircuts. 1/5

S: See above. 1/5

12. At what risk am I of having an unflattering photograph taken of myself, against my will, which will later be badly reproduced in Crashed?

N: Very high. 0/5

S: Probably not quite as high, if you stay alert. 1/5

13. Do you get free lollipops?

N: Yes! 5/5

S: No. 1/5

14. Am I in any risk of bumping into Mat Beal?

N: No. But if you stay at home, you're at even less risk. Providing you lock the door, mind. And the windows. 4/5

S: As above. 4/5

15. Who's in charge?

N: George Boyle. 0/5

S: BOB BRENCHELY!!! 1000/5

16. Overall?

N: Top day out... 46/75

S: ... But it hasn't got Bob, has it? 1022/75

Final statistics:

NORTHERN: 61.3%
SOUTHERN: 766.5%

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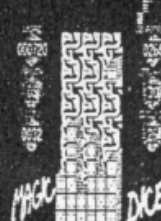
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retro review

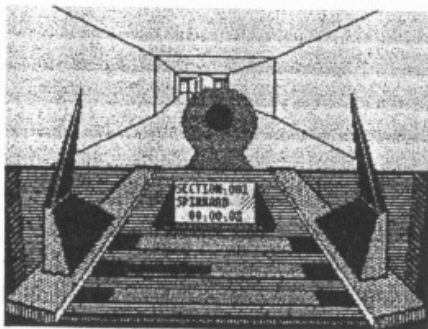
Here's Mark and Leah with some more elderly Speccy games...

The Behind Closed Doors Trilogy/Zenobi

LEAH The first Behind Closed Doors game was written by our friend the Balrog in 1987. A banzai epic (or something), it was conceptually the most minimalist adventure game ever, based entirely around one location: the lav. You played the part of the Balrog who had (rather foolishly) got himself trapped inside said building and had to rely on his wits, cunning and what few objects he had to let himself out. Behind Closed Doors 2 soon followed, and was the reverse; some boulder had locked Balrog out of the toilet, and he had to work out a way of getting inside. The final game in the trilogy, Behind Closed Doors 3: Revenge Of The Ants, had the Balrog taking on a contender from each country in the world in a frenzied beat-'em-up scenario. Only joking.

It actually saw him, er, stuck in the bog again. Or rather, ON the bog again, as the seat had been smeared with Superglue beforehand. Oh dear.

As you have probably worked out by now, the Behind Closed Doors games aren't exactly Lord Of The Rings. I for one think this is a damned good thing. Not only are they more entertaining than such fantastic romps (toilet humour a plenty, although expected), they are much easier for your average novice adventurer (I think you mean "hapless tosser". Ed) like me.



And, erm, here's Micronaut I....

Put quite simply, this is a Genuine All-Time Speccy Classic (TM), right up there with Horace Goes Skiing, Skool Daze, How To Be A Complete Bastard, Jet Set Willy and Chaos. And what's more, you can still get hold of all three games in a bumper boogie pack from Zenobi. Buy, buy, buy.

●●●●● (5)

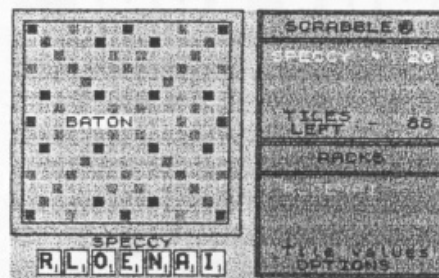
Micronaut One/CRL (1988)

MARK Peter Cook. Peeeeeeter Cooooook. Not Only... But Also. Derek And Clive. The sole reason Dudley Moore had any credibility. Peter Cook. The man who gave us Private Eye, Richard III on The Black Adder and topless darts.

But that's irrelevant, because this is a Speccy fanzine. This game was written by a chap called Peter Cooke, who became slightly famous during the '80s for writing a series of innovative, technically brilliant Speccy games. And it's really rather good.

In many ways a precursor to the Freescape games, Micronaut One sees you zipping around a series of tunnels, zapping Scrim (larva things which very quickly turn into horrid jellyfish things and reproduce all over the place, trapping you in their webs) and trying to prevent the whole affair from blowing up. It's atmospheric, fast, addictive, and probably one of the best Speccy games ever. (But then, I've never played Park Patrol. Mind you, very few people have. In fact, that scamp Bailey probably made it up to look cool. Well you don't impress me one bit, you Romo dropout).

●●●●● (5)



SPECCY PLAYS BATON for 20

Even though it's getting on, the Speccy isn't going senile yet...

Scrabble/Sinclair (1823)

LEAH It's a hard job trying to decide which games to review in this column, y'know. Which is why, to save me the hassle, I'm just going to thrust my hand into my cupboard and review the first one I randomly extract. (Thrusting/extracting

sounds). Oh. And now in Crashed, a review of a Luna tape and a floral tie. (No. Ed). Er... (more thrusting/extracting sounds). And now in Crashed, a review of Scrabble by Sinclair. (Pheew).

Actually, this is rather convenient, as because everyone (except mad people and babies) knows the rules to Scrabble, I don't have to explain them. The Speccy version is faithful to the original, right down to the Triple Letter Score squares. And, indeed, right down to the pointless arguments

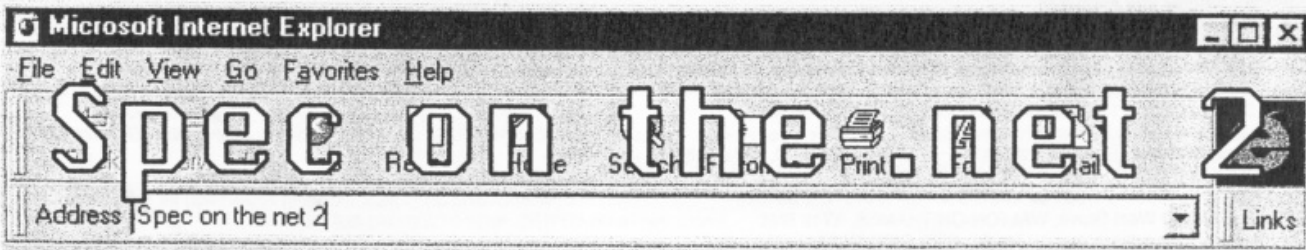
about whether or not "queeg" is a word, as if the computer comes across something not included in its (somewhat limited) vocabulary, it presents you with the novel message "ARE YOU SURE? Y/N". Obviously, this makes playing against the computer a piece of piss, and playing against friends slightly easier, if all your friends are a bit thick, like mine.

I've never really seen the point of computerised board games as they're invariably less fun than the original incarnations - you can't sit four or five people around a telly - but if you're looking for an electronic version of Scrabble, you need look no further. Basically.

●●●○○ (3)

TOP TEN REASONS WHY BOB BRENCHELEY'S ACE

1. His rockin' haircut!
2. His smart West Country accent!
3. He saved the SAM, 'cos no other bugger would've touched it with a bargepole after SAMCo went bust!
4. His magazine, Format, is really funny if you scribble rude words all over it!
5. He annoys David Ledbury!
6. And rightly so!
7. He's a dedicated family man!
8. He speaks at the same speed I type!
9. He organises the Gloucester show, giving something for people with Red Dwarf T-shirts and dodgy haircuts something to do with their weekends!
10. He's a walrus of love!



Subject: Spec On The Net Article
Date: Tue, 30 Sept 97, 13:45 BST
From: John Garner
<jmg7@ukc.ac.uk>
To: Crashed
<crashed@argonet.co.uk>

I decided you all must have enjoyed the first one so much, I would write another. (Aaargh. A disgruntled reader) So as a followup to my totally unreadable, nonsensical, mad Spec on the Net article in Crashed (issue 15), here is a totally unreadable, no nsensical, mad, Spec on the Net article again. Only this time it's called Part 2.

If you've had the chance to go surfin' (in which case you'll have fallen off the board a lot), or even had the chance to browse some of the Web pages I mentioned last time, you will have noticed that there are actually loads of Speccy links on the Web . . . but how to find more?

There are various search engines which you can type words into. These then go away for a while and have a cup of tea. Oh, and while doing that they look up references to your word(s) in massive (and I mean massive) databases of sites.

You don't just have to look up Spectrum stuff - just about everything possible is indexed at these places, although there is actually one that checks the Spectrum stuff only. Sorry I can't find the address to that site at the moment. Go look for it on another Speccy site, I think the Planet Sinclair site at <http://www.nvg.unit.no/spectrum/planet> has a link to it, and if not, then it's a good place to go looking for.

Typically when you look for Spectrum sites, you get tonnes that

have absolutely no connection with what you wanted, but just happen to have the word spectrum used out of context. Quite a lot of others (hopefully) will be interesting pages on what you searched for. Some of these may be old or broken links but just persevere and if you have the time to spare then you will find it.

That is one big problem with the world wide web and internet in general - the information you are trying to find is bound to be out there, it's finding it that takes the time and the expense.

Some of the better search engines are:

<http://altavista.digital.com>
which is supposed to have a bigger list to search through than many others.

<http://www.yahoo.com>
which is a prebuilt directory so you can go down a level at a time by subject as well as doing general searches. If you know what subject to look under it can be faster although there probably won't be so many pages for it.

<http://www.lycos.com> - I haven't really tried this one yet.

<http://www.infoseek.com> - good because you can refine your search as you go along - for example, you can first type in 'spectrum' as your subject, then 'games', then 'snaps', then 'Micronaut One', rather than having to type the whole lot in as one string, which is messy and doesn't always work.

There are many others, in fact you could use one of the search engines above to find other directories/indexes of the web . . . Remember that because millions of people use these, they can slow down and take

a while to respond with an answer.

INTERNET CURTAINS

How about the Spectrum then? Can it connect to the internet? Well, yes, it can. I know at least one person who used to use their modem (the old Prism VTX one) to dial into an internet provider until pretty recently, and read and send emails. (I'm not trying to be a walking advert, but the provider was Demon, who are a very popular internet service anyway.)

This is possible because the computer at the other end does all the work, and just sends and receives the commands and text you send down the line.

Okay, so you wouldn't have any of the fancy graphics, but all you need is a terminal emulator for some accounts, which the Spectrum can just about handle. Some services insist you have their software for the latest and most expensive PC/Mac/other system you can buy, I think 'Compuserve' might be one of these but it could be worth asking if they also do terminal accounts which would be useful if you only have a terminal emulator.

If you can afford the phone bills, know how to limit your time sensibly (just larger instead of massive bills) and feel the need, then it's getting easier and easier to use the 'net . . .

You can email John Garner at jmg7@ukc.ac.uk, or check out his Speccy PD website at <http://www.ukc.ac.uk/php/jmg7> (or, failing that, the old one at <http://www.nvg.unit.no/spectrum/jmg7>).
Spling!



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Corrections and additions welcome at usual address.

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CRASHED back issues

Back Issues 1-5 cost £1 each. All other issues are £1.50 each.

Issue 1 - Crashed's first ever issue, with the crappiest ever cover!
Jonathan Nash interview, Reviews of Dalek Attack, Street Fighter 2 and Nigel Mansell's Grand Prix.

Issue 2 - It's A Goal and Rotor reviewed, a letters section and some other stuff.

Issue 3 - Lemmings and Fireview 2 reviews, interview with David Ledbury, Highly Recommended, Whittle's Wibble oldie reviews, Playing Tips.

Issue 4 - Looking back at 1994, PD software reviewed in Public Exposure, Sinclair User in Nostalgia Corner, Dave F interviewed.

Issue 5 - Simon Cooke interview, Gloop, The Addams Family and The Witching Hour reviewed, Crash in Nostalgia Corner.

Issue 6/7 - First nice-looking issue! Home Computing Weekly appears in NC, Interview with The Shaw Brothers, Gloucester Fair report, TNT and Fishpaste Volume 1 reviewed, Tech Niche extra, plenty of News.

Issue 8/9 - Mark leaves in a blaze of no glory whatsoever, a stupid Atari machine in Nostalgia Corner, fanzine roundup, Ball Games and Fishpaste 2 reviewed, John Wilson interviewed, Public Exposure returns, the Crashed awards are announced.

Issue 10/11 - First colour cover, preview of Kilcol, exclusive Alton Towers pics, Amalthea and Tango/Magic Dice and SC, Word Pro reviewed, Linda Barker interviewed, Public Exposure exposes PD, Sinclair Research's 1984 catalogue in Nostalgia Corner, and lots more!

Issue 12 - BACK IN STOCK - but supplies are still limited! With it's controversial cover, this issue had an accompanying tape/disk with it, but it's not available now, so tough. Inside there's part 1 of our Bob Brechley interview, a review of the Quazar Surround, and FLM for SAM.

Issue 13 - Includes an Edinburgh show report, Game on, part 2 of the Bob Brechley interview, Retro Reviews and a look at our rivals in Going Underground.

Issue 14 - Grubbing for Gold, Rat Salad, Dead or Alive reviewed, Spec Tec Junior resurrected, Brian Watson interview, and controversial letters, plus lots, lots more!

Issue 15 - Manic Miner and Jet Set Willy graced the cover. There was also a look at the Spec on the .net, reviews of Atomix and Ice Chicken.

Plus an exclusive interview with Jupiter Software's boss, and lot's more.

Issue 16 - Preview of Kaboom!, Burglar Bob reviewed, 'Diary of a spectrumite', plus about 4 pages of now useless NSSS information.

Issue 17 - Crashed celebrates it's 2nd birthday, stunning NSSS pictures and reviews of Momentum and Quadrox.

Issue 18 - We announced the arrival of our Web Site, interviewed Mat Beal, and looked back (late again) at 1996. What a busy little issue.

Issue 19

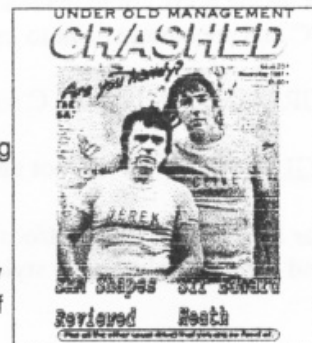
Allan's final issue, sob.
Excellent cartoon of Colin Anderton, but I'm not saying who by.

Retro Review, an impromptu interview with Ian 'Axe' Slavin, and a controversial review of SAM Elite, which is an excellent read, if I don't say so myself.



Issue 20

'Under old management' proclaimed the cover, and indeed it was, well kind of. Stewart and Marks first collaboration, an astounding 3 month's late, but not our fault. Oh yes, and it contained lots of news, some reviews, and the very first scribbings by new staff writer Sir Edward Heath.



Back issues 1-9 of Fish are now also available from Crashed costing 75p each.

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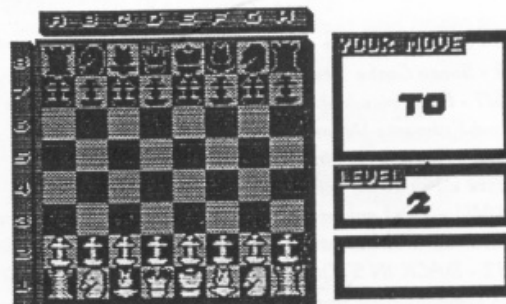
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Please allow up to 28 days for the delivery of your goods. All cheques and PO's payable to Crashed Magazine.

NEW STUFF

CHESS MATE.

CHESS MATE is the first, and probably the only chess game that will ever appear for the SAM, it is a joint game between Jupiter and Quazar. It has 16 bit sound (with the Quazar soundcard), 8 skill levels, choice of who starts, let the computer move for you and take back move. All this, together with the many computer opening moves make it one of the most addictive games on SAM. CHESS MATE is out now, and costs only £9.99



(Do they really look like cats? (Format review))

PROGRAMMING IN SAM C.

PROGRAMMING IN SAM C is a book all about, well, Programming in SAM C. The book has nearly 60 pages, including nearly 20 pages of source code, which includes examples of many different routines (stars, scrollers etc.), plus a couple of full games. Also included, for completeness, are printouts of all the header files (more up to date than the C manual).

We wrote the book not to make a profit - we make about 50p per book, but to help others to get to grips with SAM C and encourage them to use it more.

PROGRAMMING IN SAM C costs a mere £5.00 and is available **only** from Jupiter Software.

BURGLAR BOB (sorry, not much space for a description)

Burglar Bob is our latest platform game. It has four large levels of increasing difficulty, two scenery graphics sets and a completely wacky style of playing (try not to kill the nasties!). Burglar Bob costs only £4.00

BARGAINS

We have reduced the prices on all of our older software titles:

NAME OF ITEM.	OLD PRICE	NEW PRICE	NAME OF ITEM.	OLD PRICE	NEW PRICE
AMALTHEA	£10.00	£5.00	MEGABLAST	£2.50	£2.00
CRAZYBALL	£2.50	£2.00	MUNCHER	£4.00	£3.00
INVADERS	£4.00	£3.00	BOMBS AWAY	£6.50	£3.00
LABYRINTH	£4.00	£2.00	TRANSLATOR	£6.00	£4.00
BLAZING TANKS	£2.50	£2.00	(French - English dictionary)		