

March 2020

Issue 28

THE SPECTRUM SHOW

Magazine

DELETE

SPECTRUM NEXT

IT'S HERE AT LAST

PARKER ROMS

THE STORY

PLUS:

THE PRICE IS RIGHT
GAMING ON THE GO
AND MORE...

NEWS FLASHBACK

GAME REVIEWS

FEATURES

HARDWARE



Includes material not in
the show

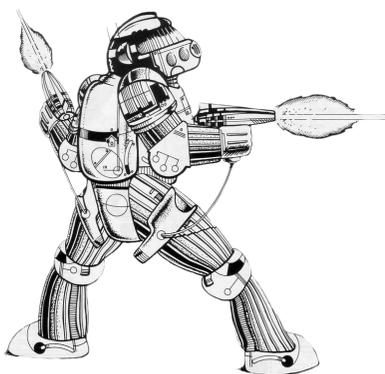
CONTENTS

GAME REVIEWS

- 06 Eric Bristow's Pro Darts
- 08 Ninja Gaiden - Shadow Warriors
- 09 Kai Temple
- 10 Thunder Blade
- 10 ROVR
- 18 Macadam Bumper
- 20 Twilight
- 21 Styx
- 32 Grumpy Gumphrey
- 34 Pheenix



Spectrum Next
Page 24



The Price Is Right
Or is it?
Page 26



FEATURES

- 04 News BITD
- 12 Parker Brothers ROMs
- 22 Gaming On The Go
- 24 Spectrum Next
- 28 The Price Is Right?
- 36 Grumpy Ogre's Adventure Page



Grumpy Ogre
Adventure Page
Page 36

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Welcome to issue 28 of The Spectrum Show Magazine. Thank you for downloading and reading.

The rush of the festive season is well behind us, and that often leaves a gap, a sense of bewilderment or a sense of reality. Gone is the seemingly free mass food and beverage orgy and the unwrapping of presents with anticipation of what you might get. Replaced instead with the drudge of real life and the mundane tasks that take over. It is during this lull that many of us take stock of our lives, add up what we have done or make plans for the future. And it is here that I found myself a few days before the new year.

I was, strangely, searching for some new backgrounds for my mobile phone, obviously retro based. As I scrolled past hundreds of images, some relevant, many not, I came across a few more modern games. This took me back to a few days previously, when I was watching a young relative playing Fortnite on his Xbox.

A beautiful looking game, that gave me a chuckle when I noticed the LOADING bar slowly filling up. He got bored and wandered off for some more Quality Street and a glass of Cola. Returning eventually, he sat down and proceeded to explain the game to me.

“You drop into the map with 100 other people,” he said, guiding a reptilian looking creature down through the clouds via an umbrella. “Then you have to kill them all.” Upon landing, he pressed a few buttons and his character started to dance for reasons I never got to the bottom of.

Upon asking if that was the sum of the game, he tried to explain a bit more.

“You build things, get weapons and stuff.”

The game seemed to be much more than that, as he demonstrated how he could build platforms, climb up them, snipe other players, fly around and use various weapons including a rather nice set of gingerbread axes. I assumed

this was some kind of festive bonus item.

This got me thinking about how you would explain a Spectrum game to someone who had never seen one before.

What about “You fly about, collect stuff and build rockets.” or “You run around a castle to find a key.”? In case you were wondering, those were Jetpac and Atic Atac. Obviously there is much more to the games than that, but it seems some things never change. I could almost see myself sat in front of the family TV, trying to avoid being killed by those bulbous eyes in *The Hobbit*. Transfixed by the graphics and deep in concentration. The only difference now is that he got the games and I got a jumper.

The Show

On to Speccy stuff then, and the next series is well under way. I can't lie, recent times have been very frustrating for me. All of my possessions including my Spectrum items have been boxed up in my partner's garage for nearly a year now, caused by house sales falling through. For each and every game review, hardware review or bit of research I have to dig through the boxes, unstack them, empty them, and repeat in reverse. Many times I have broken things in the process and many times I have given up, unable to locate things. This means the show takes twice as long to make, and is not as enjoyable as it should be.

I live in hope things may improve soon, before more things are broken or lost.



Garage full of Speccy stuff!

The Next

On to happier news then, and no one will have missed the great news that the Spectrum Next has been handed over to hundreds of backers. Yes, they have arrived at last, and the web is awash with pictures, tweets and videos.



It was fantastic to finally get it, and I spent a long time messing about with the various settings and playing not only Next games, but Spectrum games as well.

The machine has some excellent features including the ability to go online (if you got one with WiFi that is!), run CP/M and play Infocom games.

The one thing I am really looking forward to watching is development of software that uses WiFi. The supplied NXtel tool connects to a community run teletext service, but there are so many other things that can be done with this. What about file transfer, multi-player gaming or even a text-based web browser?

Exciting times.



X-RATED

CRL have become the first software house to have a computer game rated X.

Jack The Ripper has been given an 18 certificate by the British Board of Film Classification, they have never actually seen the game, and games are not subject to the rulings anyway, so this looks like a big publicity stunt by CRL.

The Board said, after seeing the script and a screenshot for the game, the clause it could break is the Mutilation or Torture rule. CRL seems to have jumped on this.

Because of all the fuss this is raking up, WH Smiths have refused to sell the game, so I guess CRLs little tricks may have backfired.



PCW SHOW

The PCW Show brought thousands of people together, 75,000 to be exact, all looking to see the latest technology and games. A lot of companies were in attendance too including Ocean, Sinclair, Firebird, Activision and US Gold, showing new titles such as Bangkok Nights, International Karate Plus, Super Hang On, Rampage, Outrun and many more.

COMPILATION CORNER

With the arrival of the new +3 machine, the disc compilations are starting to flood in. The extra storage means there can be several games per disc and companies such as US Gold and Martech are quickly throwing together compilations.

Martech's offering includes Slaine, Catch 23, Nemesis the Warlock and Pulsator for just £14.99. Companies are also coming round to the idea of releasing games on disc, with plenty on offer including Outrun, The Pawn and Starglider.

PAPER PRIZE



Elite's game Paperboy has been awarded Game of The Year at the Software Industry Awards. Other winners were Arkanoid picking up best arcade game and BMX Simulator from Codemasters getting best budget game.

GREMLIN MASTERS



With movie tie-ins on the rise, the next big blockbuster has been grabbed by Gremlin Graphics, and they are damn proud of it. Masters Of The Universe, is a massive film with a lot of potential for merchand-

ise, and many companies are jumping on board with Pizza Hut, the Daily Mirror and several toy manufacturers onboard.

Gremlin claim the game will remain faithful to the film story, with five key elements being used for parts of the game.

DK'TRONICS SOLD

DK'Tronics have been taken over by RAM Electronics. RAM, the makers of peripheral such as the Music Machine and Ram Print, now own the entire DK'Tronics range including the name. They assure users that the products will still be available and still be supported.

BOTTOMS UP

The popular television show, Treasure Hunt, not popular because of the format but mainly because of Anrika Rice's bottom, is to be converted into a computer game by Domark. There are no specific details yet, but there are a lot of young boys eager to get a glimpse of the famous rump.

Pyracurse



For 48k ZX Spectrum
and 128k ZX Spectrum (in 48k mode)
CASSETTE = £9.95
For mail order send a cheque/postal order to Hewson
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Penetrate the Portals of Pyracurse

Probe the evil of the Inca curse — discover the lost tomb of Xipe Totec, the Sinu God. Adopt the characters to manoeuvre through the depths and darkness of tombs and crypts. Guide the tired and emotional Leglent O'Donnell, the drunken reporter, archaeologist Professor Roger Kite, fiancée to the provocative Daphne, and the mischievous dog Frozbie, in their battle to save Daphne from the devastating curse of the ancient South American God Xipe Totec. — Their success depends on you . . .

Pyracurse is a unique development featuring an isometric 3-D projection with full hidden object removal and high speed multi-directional scrolling.
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ERIC BRISTOW'S PRO-DARTS

Quicksilva 1984

Eric Bristow was one of the biggest names in darts, and his ability is legendary, as were his antics both on and off the darting stage.

Quicksilva somehow got him to put his name to their game, but something tells me he wasn't involved in any stage of the development.

After a very lengthy instruction program on the first side of the cassette, where the intricacies of the game (the program and not darts) are explained painfully slowly, we can load side B and start to play.

Most dart games show the board and a roaming hand that you have to control to be able to throw the dart, but this game moves away from that mechanic and instead gives us a game based on text input. Yes, the wonderful game of professional darts has been reduced to typing things in.

Pressing the A key will tell the computer you want to aim for something (yes, this is how it is explained), you then enter a letter and number. For example if you want to aim for treble twenty, you type T20. A flashing cursor appears over the area, and you can now fine tune this by pressing Z,X P or L. This allows you to move the cursor to avoid collisions with other darts. You can also do further tuning by using other keys if you desire.

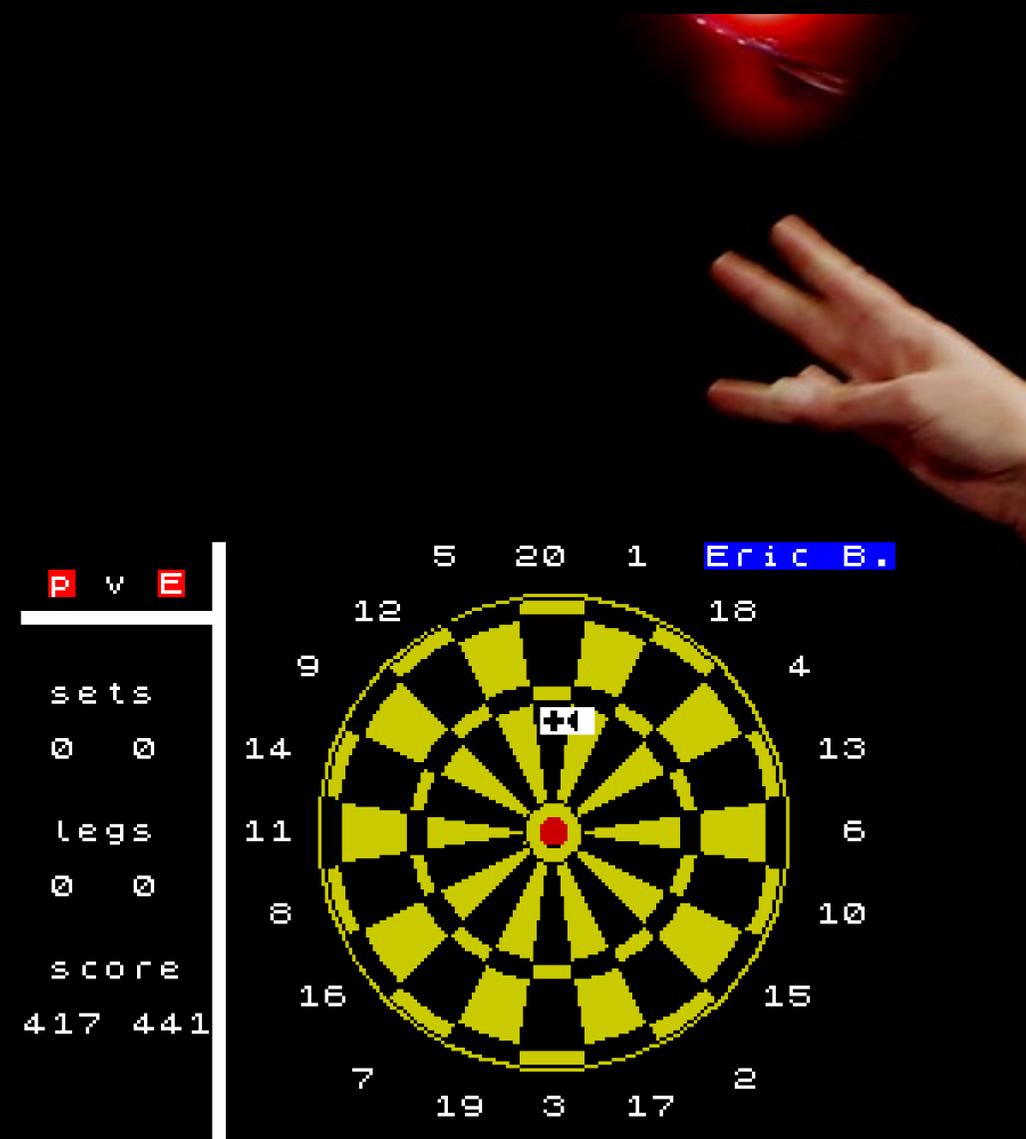
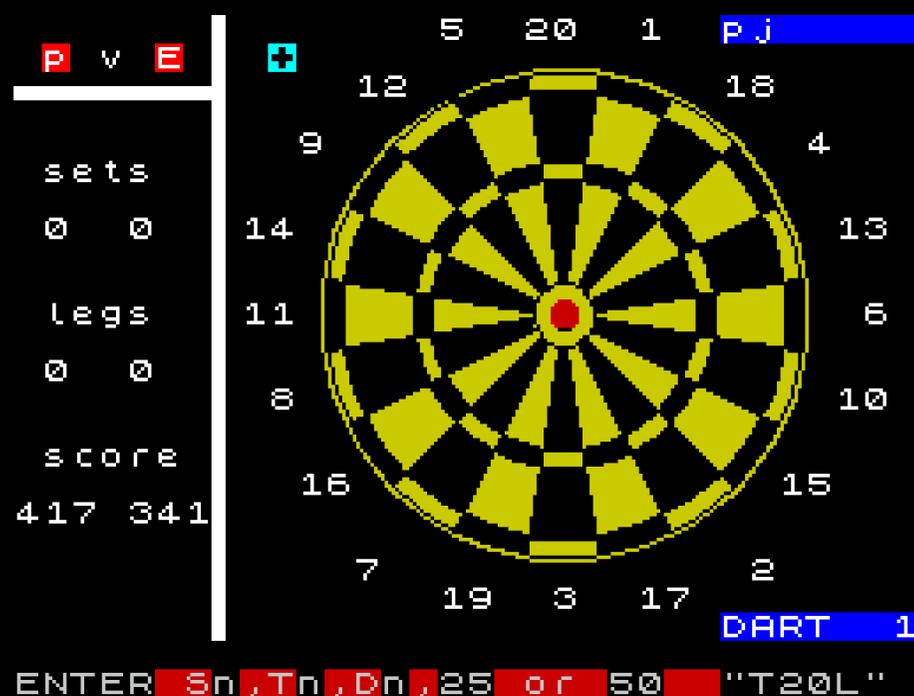
When you are happy, you press T to throw the dart. It doesn't actually move or animate, the computer just plonks the dart near your aiming point and throws in some random movement just to annoy you. This is explained in the instructions with details about how to aim more to the left if your dart was too far right.

The game is painfully slow, embarrassingly tedious and should not be linked to the great man himself. There is no excitement, no real challenge and no real connection to the sport.

Sound consists of bleeps when typing or selecting something to do, and your dart can rebound from another dart or the wire. I suspect the game is not that accurate though, and it is yet another random number thrown in.

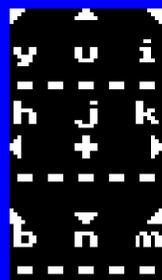
I actually sat through about ten minutes of the first game, beat Eric to the double, hit double three, and the game reported the hit. It then swapped to Eric's throw and he missed. Back to me, again I hit the double three and again the game ignored it. It seems the game only wants Eric to win!

Overall, this is not a good game. It's slow, laborious and dull, unlike the great Mr Bristow used to be.



PRO-DARTS includes the following features: -

- (a) High Resolution Coloured Dartboard
- (b) Mathematical Calculation of Aiming Errors
- (c) Automatic Scoring
- (d) Automatic Removal of Darts after Each Throw.
- (e) Rebounds off Wire and Other Darts.
- (f) Standard Darts Finishes From a Given Score.



These keys aim the dart in the indicated directions.

For example the key **i** will aim the dart slightly up and to the right.

Pressing the key **i** gives an index of the fine aim keys.

Who Was Eric Bristow?

Eric Bristow, known as "The Crafty Cockney", was the number one ranked player from 1980 to 1987, winning the World Championship five times and the World Masters five times, not to mention the World Cup four times.

His persona came across as arrogant, but he could back it up with superb darts.

He was one of the 16 players to break away from the BDO and form the now dominant PDC.

His flamboyance, coupled with the other darting characters such as Bobby George, Jocky Wilson and Cliff Lazarenco, helped moved darts out of the pub and into national and international prominence.

During his later life, he took a promising young player under his wing, taught him how to play and how to manage himself professionally. That player was Phil "The Power" Taylor.





Jerri, DaRkHoRaCe, Diver4D 2019



The Ninja Gaiden series has seen many versions across many platforms, but this one is a remake of the Gameboy title.

The loading screen is excellent and the rest of the game maintains this high standard.

The first thing you notice is the screen. Most of it is taken up by a large border, reducing the actual playing area down to about 50% of the total available space. The border art is excellent though, and the playing area is reduced to maintain game speed. The playing area is also similar to that of the Gameboy, so transferring things over would have been easier.

The game itself is great in all aspects, and the feeling of "just one more go" is very strong. You do, however, get a decent game out of it, the playability is pitched just right, and I found myself enjoying this one, and I am not a fan of beat-em-ups.

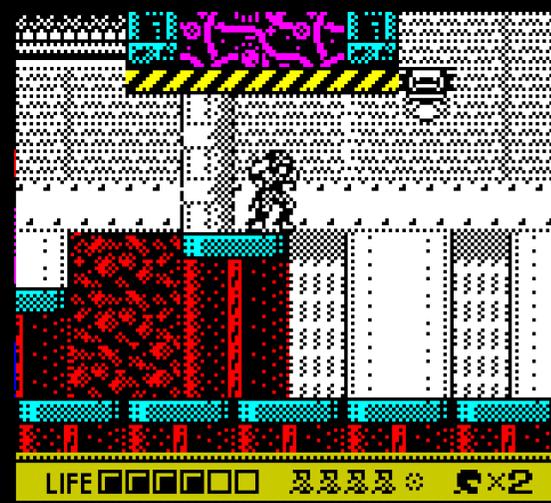
The graphics are well drawn and move really well, given the size and available area. Your ninja can hit high and low, jump, crouch and do somersaults. These are all useful for dealing with the variety of enemies you will encounter.

The backgrounds are well drawn and change as you progress, as do the enemies. There are other ninjas, missile launchers, hovering droids and a whole manner of other nasty things.

There is music playing throughout along with sound effects, and this really makes the game feel special. The screen uses push scrolling, which I am fine with, because the gameplay makes up for it. This really does look like a polished, professional release.

There are end of level bosses, which are tougher to beat, and overall this is an excellent game.

Go and get it now.



KA TEMPLE

You are trapped inside a Kai Temple and have to escape. To get out you have to get past Ninjas and Divas (whatever they are - female singers perhaps?).

Divas can be killed with a knife (which moves slower than a slug when thrown), ninjas though, have to be fought hand to hand. You can however kick them anywhere, as there is no actual punch button.

There are also flying swords to avoid, which are massive compared to you, and also move at a remarkably slow speed. There is also a time limit in which you have to get rid of all enemies onscreen. This means you can't hang about.

Onto the game. The screen has three platforms that you can move up or down onto. Pressing up or down will cause your ninja to jump or drop to the platform of your choice. This can be a good way to avoid enemies, but also wastes time.

From time to time the screen flips upside down, for no reason I could discern. This causes a bit of disorientation when playing, and I am not really convinced it adds anything to the game.

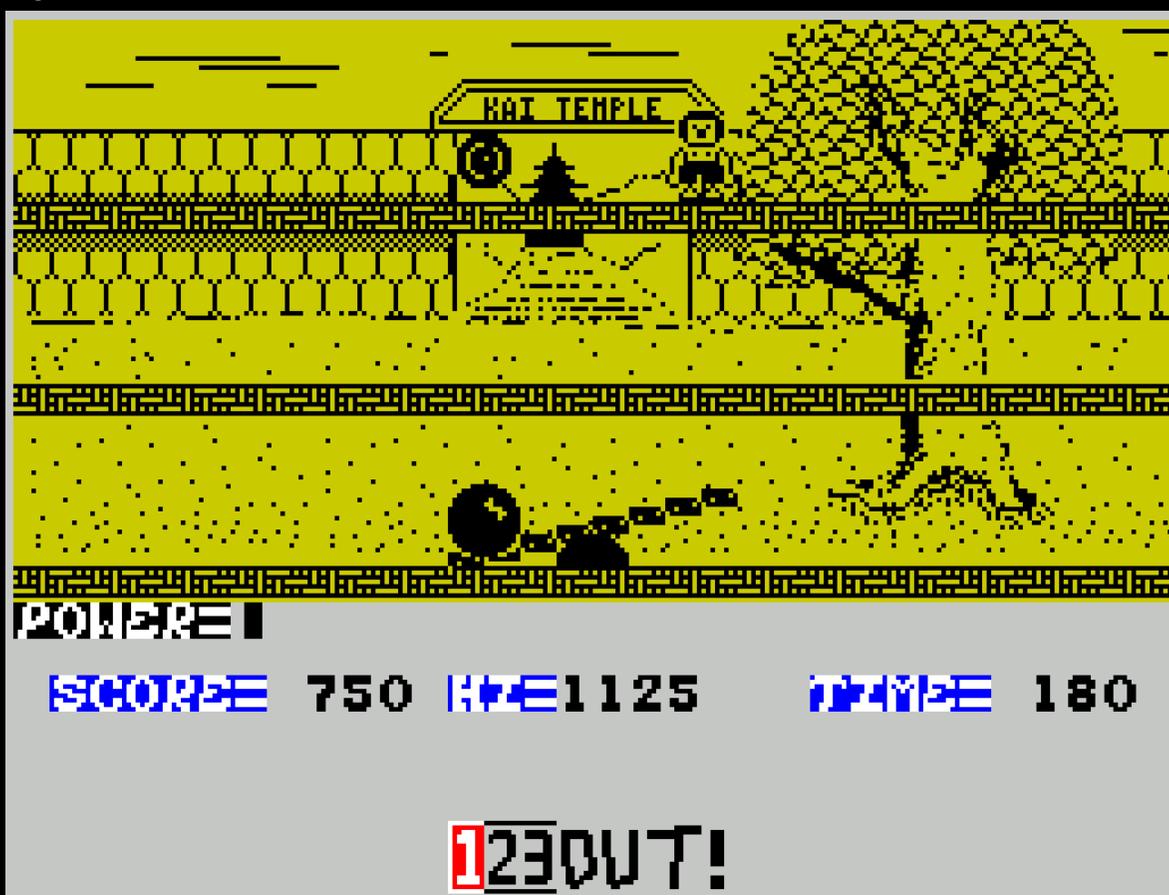
Actually hitting another ninja is tricky, and is all about timing the kick at a certain point, just before they reach you. I think looking at the footage, it's about 3 pixels before they hit you. Should you miss this opportunity, there is no second chance. A terrible sound effect is played and you die.

If you do manage to kill the first one, you then get two to fight. With the tight time limit, the best policy is to run at them, let them get 3 pixels away and then kick them in the nuts.

The random swords are a real problem, especially when there is more than one ninja to contend with, and it makes lining up your kick sometimes impossible.

The graphics are OK I suppose, but the door marked "exit" does nothing. You can't actually escape through it. The sound is average apart from that death sound, which is horrible.

Firebird 1986



Gameplay is dull, repetitive and frustrating. You have to be very precise about your proximity to the ninjas, and despite playing for a while, I never saw any divas!

If you do progress far enough, you get a change of gameplay where you have to ring a bell. To do this you pound away on the "kick" key so a power meter goes up and then try to jump on a seesaw. Usually this ends in failure. There must be better ways to ring bells!

This is a terrible game. I see no enjoyment here at all.

No.1

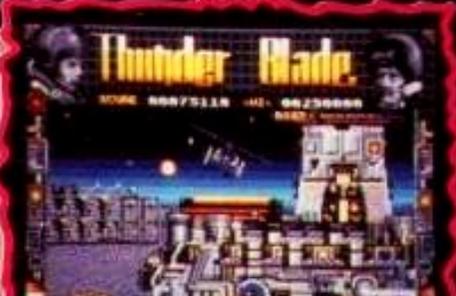
TM

US Gold 1988

Thunder Blade



**THE PEPSI CHALLENGE
GAME OF THE YEAR!**



Hold on to your stomachs, unscramble your brains for the journey of a lifetime as you take the controls of the most advanced Helicopter armaments specialists could ever conceive - outmanoeuvre the fastest jet fighter, outgun the most dangerous gunship.

Traverse the war-torn skyline of skyscraper city as you sharpen your skills for the battle ahead. Plunge out to sea for an epic encounter with a huge, heavily armoured gunship. Race on to a shoot-out in the rocky canyon and dense forests, where your flying expertise is tested to the limits as you dive, hover and skilfully manoeuvre your way through this fortified maze.

Thrusting forward you gallantly roar ahead blazing enemy gunships, armoured tanks, jet fighters - avoiding heat seeking exocet missiles through the perilous oil installation to reach the final encounter - the awesome APACHE battle cruiser, the action never ceases. Never that is until you emerge victorious - Golden Gunner - master of the meanest fighting machine ever to hit the skies.

Thunder Blade was released into the arcades by Sega in 1987, and was a hard 3D shooter seeing you control a helicopter armed with guns and missiles. The game had two views, the top down view, with parallax effects providing a nice 3D depth, and switching to flight view as you pilot your helicopter across different terrains.

A great looking game in the arcade, and one I played at a recent retro event. I was eager to see how the Spectrum could manage the 3D effects that looked so good in the arcade.

You'll never get that same look, but the developers have done a pretty decent job here.

The game is tough, and having avoiding the buildings and the shots coming up from the tanks is tricky. You just have to shoot anything that moves, or in fact, anything at all.

Your cannons are best suited for the ground based enemy and missiles should be used for airborne targets. Having said that, in the frenzy of battle you just tend to fire anything.

The graphics use the same layered parallax effect as the arcade to give the illusion of height, and it works quite well, even on the humble Speccy.

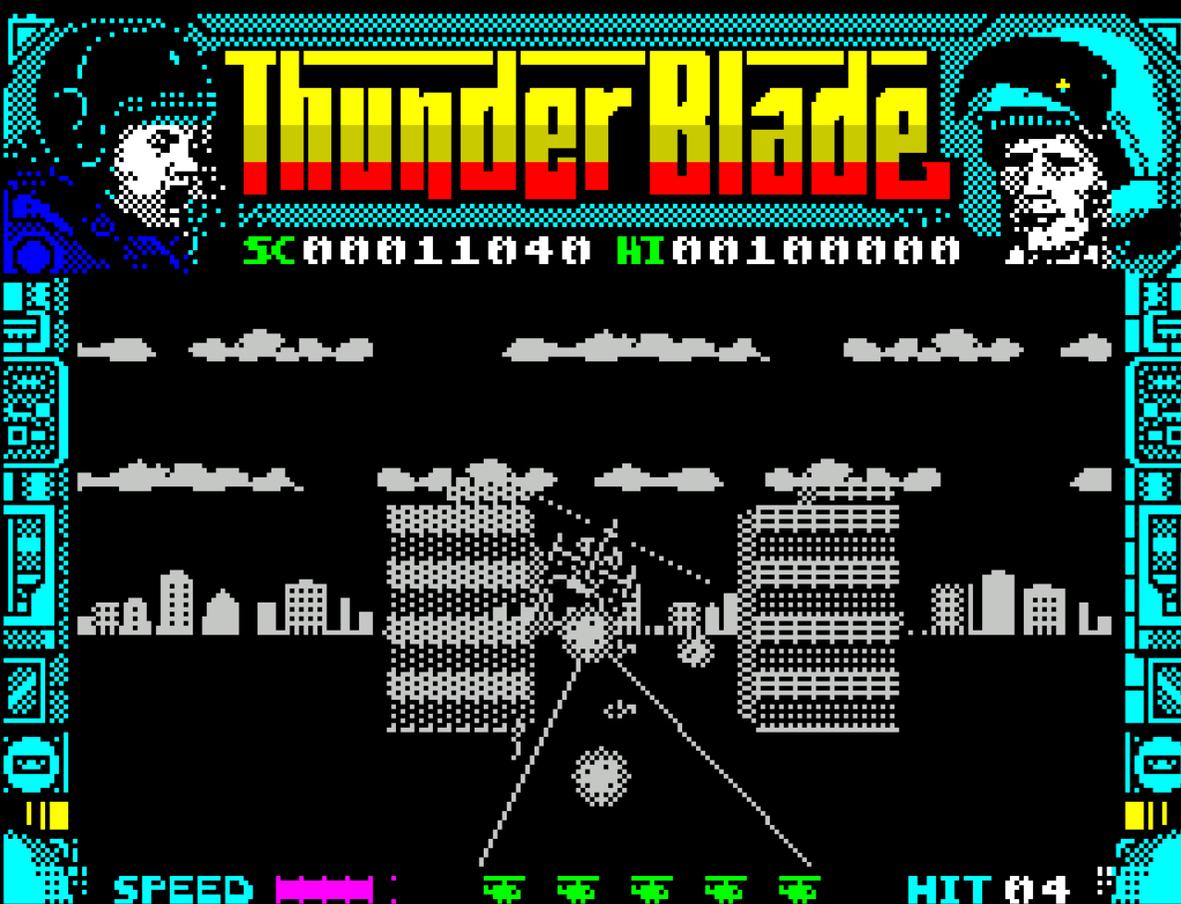
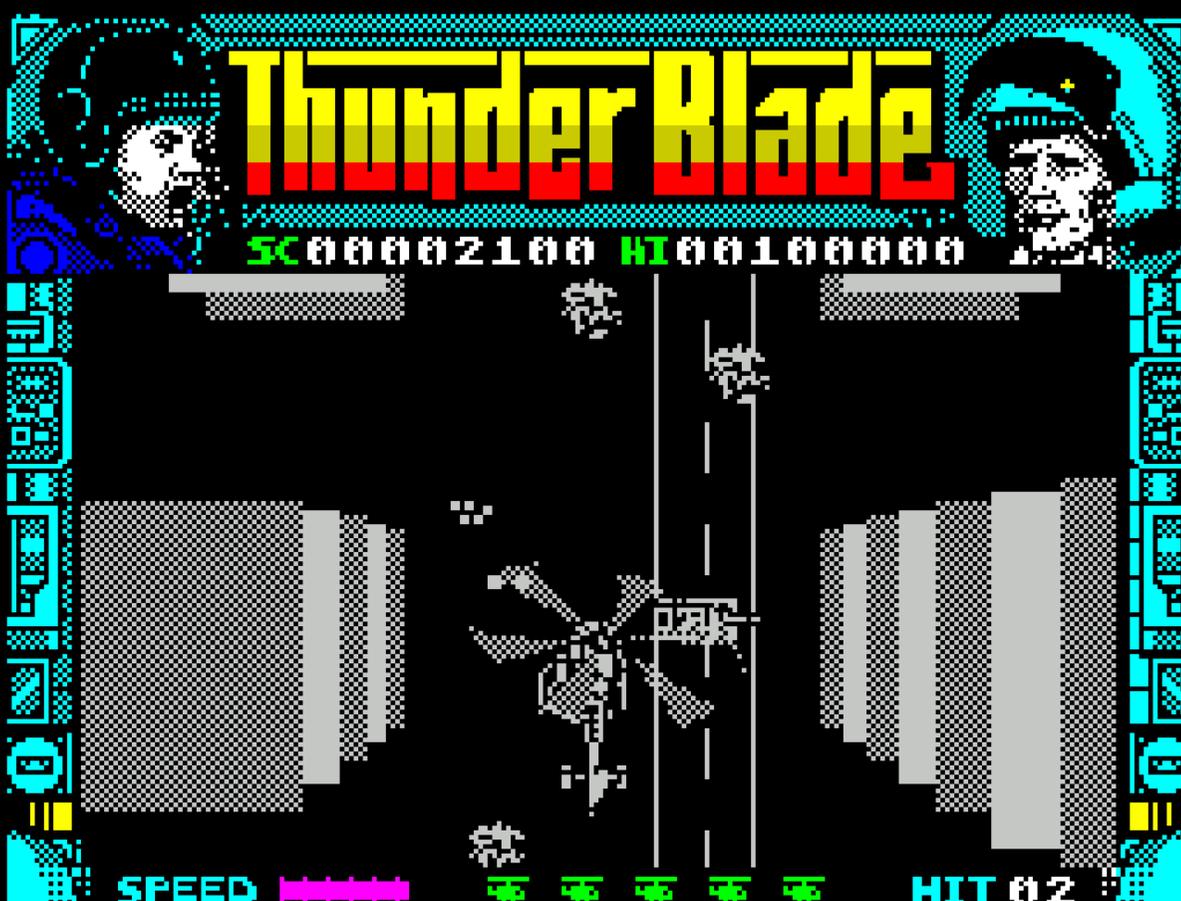
When, or if, you reach the end of the first level, you change viewpoints, and this is where the actual game mechanics create a problem. Because your helicopter is large and close to you, it can block out enemy targets. This was also an issue in the arcades too.

Control is a mixed bag. You can use a joystick – with or without the keyboard to control speed. Not using the keyboard is terrible as you have to hold fire and move the joystick to get up to speed, meaning you can't shoot anything. You can also slow down if you accidentally press forward and down together. Using the keyboard as the speed control is easier and makes more sense.

Sound is a mix of helicopter blades and white noise representing explosions. It's effective, but could have done with some more variation.

It's a good arcade conversion, and one that surprised me, but with a difficulty that is high, it can border on frustration. You can't see things to dodge as the screen is just a blur of pixels.

Having just played the arcade version, it does



give the same feeling and anyone who bought it back in the day, I think would have been satisfied if they were good at this kind of game.

A good action shooter then, still a tad too hard, but certainly worth playing.





PARKER BROTHERS

ROM GAMES

IN 1984 PARKER WERE SET TO RELEASE GAMES FOR SINCLAIR'S INTERFACE TWO, THEY NEVER ARRIVED

In October 1983, Sinclair announced a new interface for the ZX Spectrum, the Interface 2. This new add-on would allow the use of a new format of storage, the ROM cartridge. This new, instant loading media would not only put the Spectrum in line with consoles for loading games, but also, it was thought, deter piracy.

Copying a tape from a friend would cost pennies and a few minutes, copying electronic circuits however, would prove expensive and beyond the majority of the schoolyard pirates.

Interface 2 was cheap, costing just £19.95 when it was released, but the games were a different story. The unit itself has very little in the way of circuitry though, and essentially it just pages in the content of the cartridge, replacing the machine's own ROM.

The initial set of ROMs (as they were called) consisted of just three titles, Planetoids, Backgammon and Space Raiders. Two arcade clones (Asteroids and Space Invaders) and a board

game, all produced by Psion. Chess was released shortly after and in December, a few months later, the final six arrived: Hungry Horace, Horace and The Spiders, Jetpac, Pssst, Transam and Cookie.

The format was expensive to manufacture and games appearing on the small cartridges cost around £15, more than the cost of the equivalent tape game, and in some cases more than three times the cost. This was a major issue for Sinclair along with the memory limitation of the games. Because of how the unit worked, cartridges were limited to just 16k, to match the machine's built-in ROM.

It's not surprising then that most software houses were cautious, and not a single one released titles for it. Many were obviously looking to the larger 48k memory, allowing them to produce larger, better titles, and having a restriction was not popular or competitive. In April 1984 though, Parker announced that they would be releasing some of their games for Sinclair's system, the first independent publisher to do so. They were concerned with piracy and hoped releasing on cartridge would help. But they also were going to expand the ROM inside the cartridges from 9k to 16k, offering more space for games.

They expected the titles to be ready in June or July of 1984, however, this changed to October a few months later as development seemingly stalled or there were questions about the format. It seems the Sinclair delay bug was taking hold again.

Things didn't go to plan, and Interface 2 didn't really attract any interest from publishers, and despite putting resources into the games, Parker announced its withdrawal from the UK

games market in November 84, just 7 months after their initial plans to produce software on the system. This, I think, was the final nail in the Interface 2's coffin, but somehow the games Parker had been working on found their way out, and they give us a glimpse of what might have been.

Two games did get a release on cassette, those being Panama Joe – AKA Montezuma's Revenge, a favourite amongst Atari 2600 owners, and Return of The Jedi – Deathstar Battle, again another conversion of an Atari 2600 game. The other titles, although not complete, and sometimes buggy, show us how far Parker had got before pulling the plug.

Spectrum cartridges

PARKER Brothers, the US toy company, will be the first independent company to produce cartridge software for the Sinclair Spectrum.

The first programs will be released in August — a mixture of established titles on other machines such as *Q-bert*, *Popeye* and *Return of the Jedi* and two new home computer titles — *Gyruss* and *Star Wars* (both converted from the original arcade games).

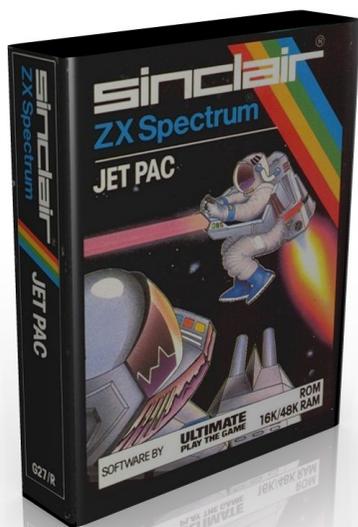
Until now, only Sinclair has taken advantage of the facility offered by the ZX Interface II of running plug-in Rom software.

In October last year Sinclair announced, along with the Interface II, a range of 10 cartridge titles — all of which had been previously available on cassette.

A Parker spokesman commented: "We are taking a long term view on the Interface II and we feel it will eventually be successful."

Parker Brothers are known to be particularly concerned by software piracy and this has been one of the factors leading it to launch a range of programs on Rom rather than cassette.

Prices for the cartridges are expected to match Sinclair's own — at around £10. However, Parker's cartridges will use a 16K Rom, unlike Sinclair's which use an 8K Rom.



THE GAMES

Popeye

Popeye is a conversion of the arcade game released by Nintendo in 1983. The arcade game has three main screens seeing Popeye collecting items dropped by Olive Oil.

The ROM version looks rough around the edges but you can clearly see they made progress.

The graphics are a bit bland and chunky, and the Popeye sprite has an appendage that may have raised eyebrows. There is no sound but things move smoothly but it's a bit of a nightmare to play. From the attract mode it looks like all three screens are included, so from a completion point of view, there was probably a few months of work left.



Q*bert

We all know Q*bert, that fun bouncy pyramid game released into the arcades in 1982 by Gotileb.

There are many versions of this on the Spectrum and the ROM version could have been pretty good judging by the game here. This prototype, though is buggy and is prone to crashing, pressing a random key by mistake is often enough to reset your Spectrum.

This game though, is much more advanced than Popeye. We have game-play, sound and the arcade features have been incorporated nicely. In fact it's quite fun to play and is better than the majority of clones released at the time.

The bouncy snake chases you and the discs take Q*bert back to the top of the pyramid, and most of the mechanics are in place. This is a nice game, or could have been if it was released. I don't know why they didn't finish it and put it out on tape.

Gyruss

One of my favourite arcade games. Released by Konami in 1983, I always try to grab a game on this at retro events. There isn't a good version on the Spectrum, so hopes were high for the Parker conversion. I didn't have much hope but the start tune gave me a suggestion things might be good.

Wow! This is a great game. I love this, why didn't they release this on tape or even just finish the ROM. The playability is there even though the graphics are not really colourful and there is no music during play, but this is a great version of the classic.

They've got it right. The movement, the attack patterns, the playability. Really excellent.



Star Wars – The Arcade Game

Another classic arcade game, released in 1983 by Atari, and using vectors to depict the now famous battle scenes from the film. There are a few decent versions of this on the Spectrum, so I was wondering how this stood up.

The music is there and it certainly looks like the start screen of the arcade too. It all seems very familiar but the sound during play is a bit poor. This could have been fixed before re-release though, but one thing that looked to be set in stone was the ship. Unlike the arcade, your wings and cockpit don't bob around when you change direction, but we can forgive this if the game is good.

There are obviously no voices like the arcade, but then again, there are memory limitations here.

The trench scene has nothing to dodge in the first pass and blowing up the Deathstar was quite easy. The second run takes you to the surface with turrets to shoot and once in the trench, there are things to dodge at last. This game is certainly quite a way along the development path.

This is also a good game. Nice to play and very rewarding. Again you wonder why wasn't this put out on tape to try and get something back for the work they obviously put into it.

Return of the Jedi - Death Star Battle

What the hell! This is a conversion of an older Atari 2600 game, and the game is terrible to play. Some of the graphics almost look identifiable, and I think one of the sprites is supposed to be the Millennium Falcon. The aim, I think, is to fly around shooting things and at the same time dodging the Deathstar shooting at you.

The graphics are poor, the game play is rubbish, sound is dull. (it's far better on the Atari 2600). I just can't see the gameplay here.

Loco Motion

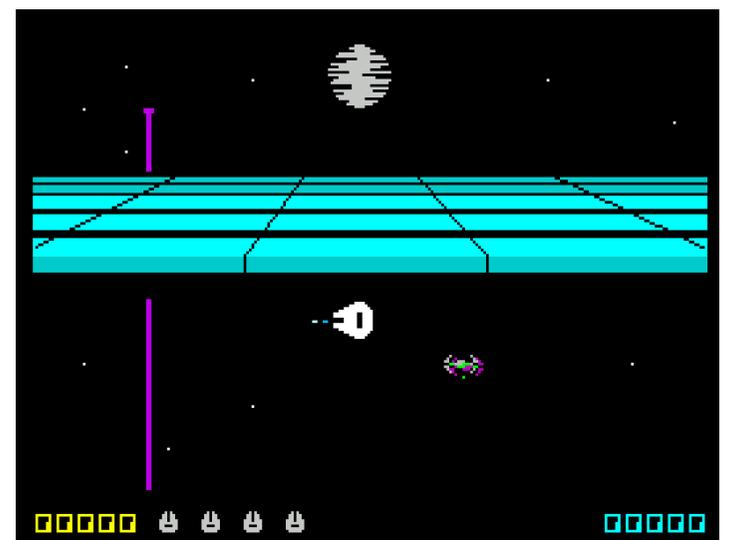
An odd game with two options; Arcade or Adventure mode.

Arcade mode sees you controlling a train driving on a track. As you progress you will come to a junction and crash. No matter what I pressed, the train always crashed. It seems the game was not developed far enough to get beyond a junction.

Adventure mode allows you more control. You can collect some cargo and head off down the track. Eventually you come to the same junction and yes, you can guess what happens next. The train crashes. I'm not sure where the gameplay is for this game to be honest, and the best part is the animation of the man falling off his horse.

Montezuma's Revenge

Here we have the classic Atari 2600 game ported across to the Spectrum. Having recently played the cassette version, this version is slightly different. The recovered ROM files have two versions of the game, each differing slightly again.



The main difference is the first screen. One version is different to all other versions across all other platforms. The on-screen game name is different and the character name (Pedro) is also omitted on one version. This though does not detract from the game itself.

For the record, I think version 2 is an earlier version, so for the rest of this review I will be calling ROM 2 the early version and ROM 1 the release version.

The first screen on the early version has a different layout and this one makes it difficult to jump back. Parker chose to remove the steps for both the release version and the tape version. Strangely, the layout in the early version matches many of the other versions including the Atari 800 and Colecovision.

One screen with multiple conveyor belts has different mechanics. The conveyors move in different directions on the early version, making jumping difficult – at times impossible, and again, this is changed for the tape and release versions.

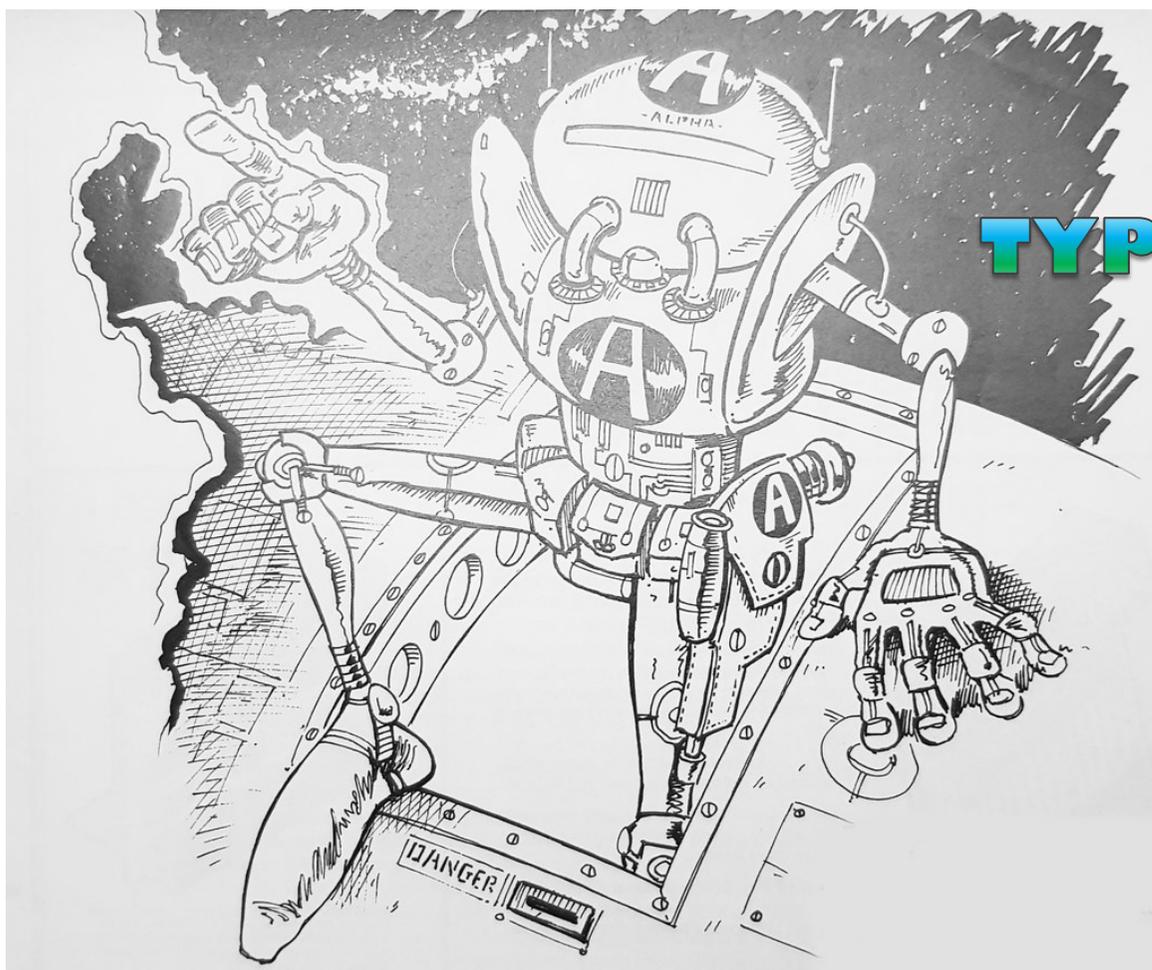
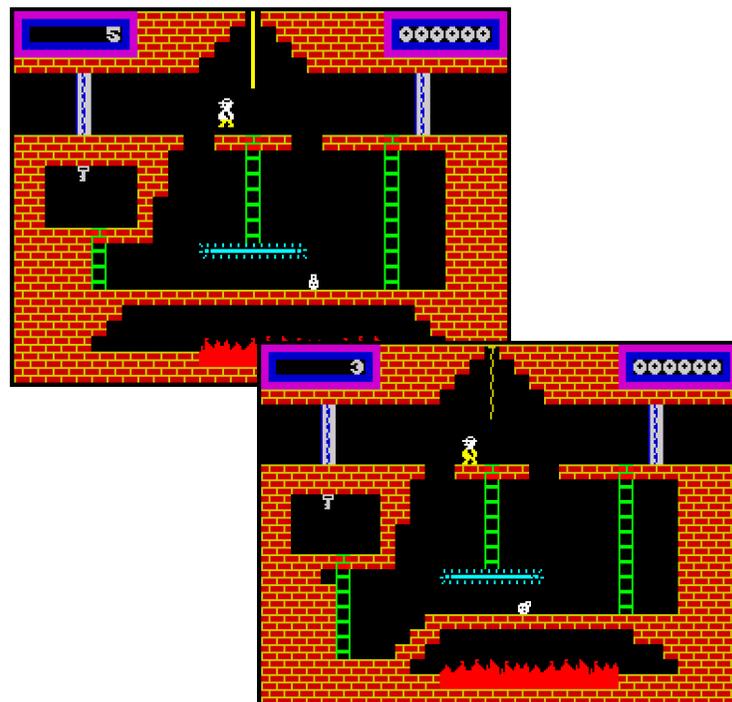
The sound effect when you collect an object is terrible on the early version, it's a kind of off-key badly coded version of the correct one found in the release and tape versions.

From what I have played through, the release version, labelled version 1 in the download, is in fact the same version they put out on tape.

And finally...

Well, an interesting rummage through gaming history there. A mixed bunch of games, some terrible games (yes I'm looking at you Loco Motion) and some obviously far from complete. But there are some great ones too. Star Wars and Gyruss being the stand out titles for me.

It was sad they never released them in completed form on cartridge, and even sadder they didn't put the good ones out on tape.



TYPE-IN ARTWORK

Some of the artwork that was used to depict type-in games was excellent.

Let's celebrate it.

ROVR

REMOTE OPERATED VEHICLE RECOVERY

Paul Jenkinson 2018

As part of an exclusive team, you are sent into the deserts of ancient Egypt in search of vast treasures. Although you are happy to assist the boffins and their research, for you the aim of the trip is to make money.

During a quiet day, you trek into the nearby desert carrying your ROVR unit. The Remote Operated Vehicle for Recovery is ideal to get into tight passages and narrow halls, and even better to grab the treasure that may be within.

Your ROVR unit is equipped with a diamond drill, able to drill into certain rocks if required, so any debris should not be a problem.

The unit can carry only one item at a time and has a limited charge. This can be replenished once you enter the drop point.

Your luck must be in as you soon locate a small entrance above a large chamber. Slowly you lower the ROVR into place, set up the drop point and pick up your video controller.

Controlling the ROVR, you must locate and return any treasure back to the drop point in order to complete your task, get rich and live the life of a millionaire.

Using the drill and generally moving around uses power, but this can be replenished back at the drop point. The tomb is also infested with various things that take away power, so you have to be careful as you move around the sometimes ruined corridors and rooms.

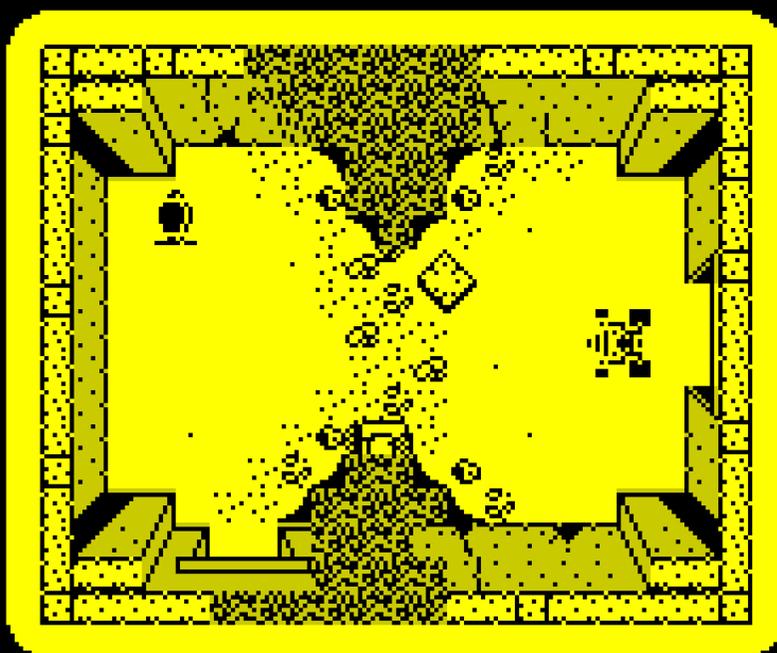
The game is yellow, and this was done on purpose. The game is set in Egypt, inside a tomb! The game uses a forced 3D top-down affect for the graphics that works well, and as with all AGD games, the graphics are smooth.

Rooms vary in size and content, some not accessible immediately giving glimpses of other areas you might find.

There is a nice tune on the intro page, and various effects throughout for things like refuelling, drilling or collecting artefacts.

It's a maze collect-em-up that should keep you busy for a while if you like this style of game.

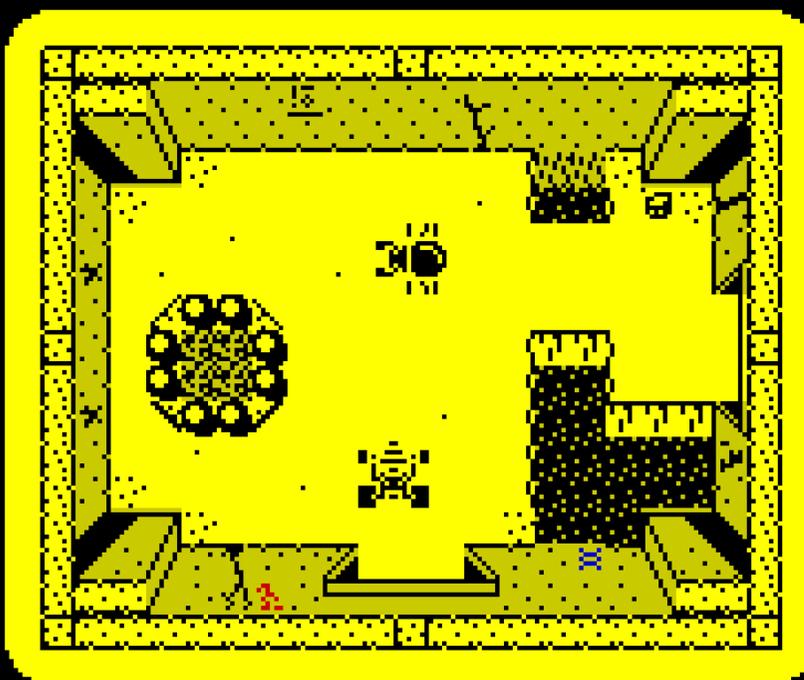
The game is free to download from The Spectrum Show website.



ROVR

POWER
47

ITEMS
0

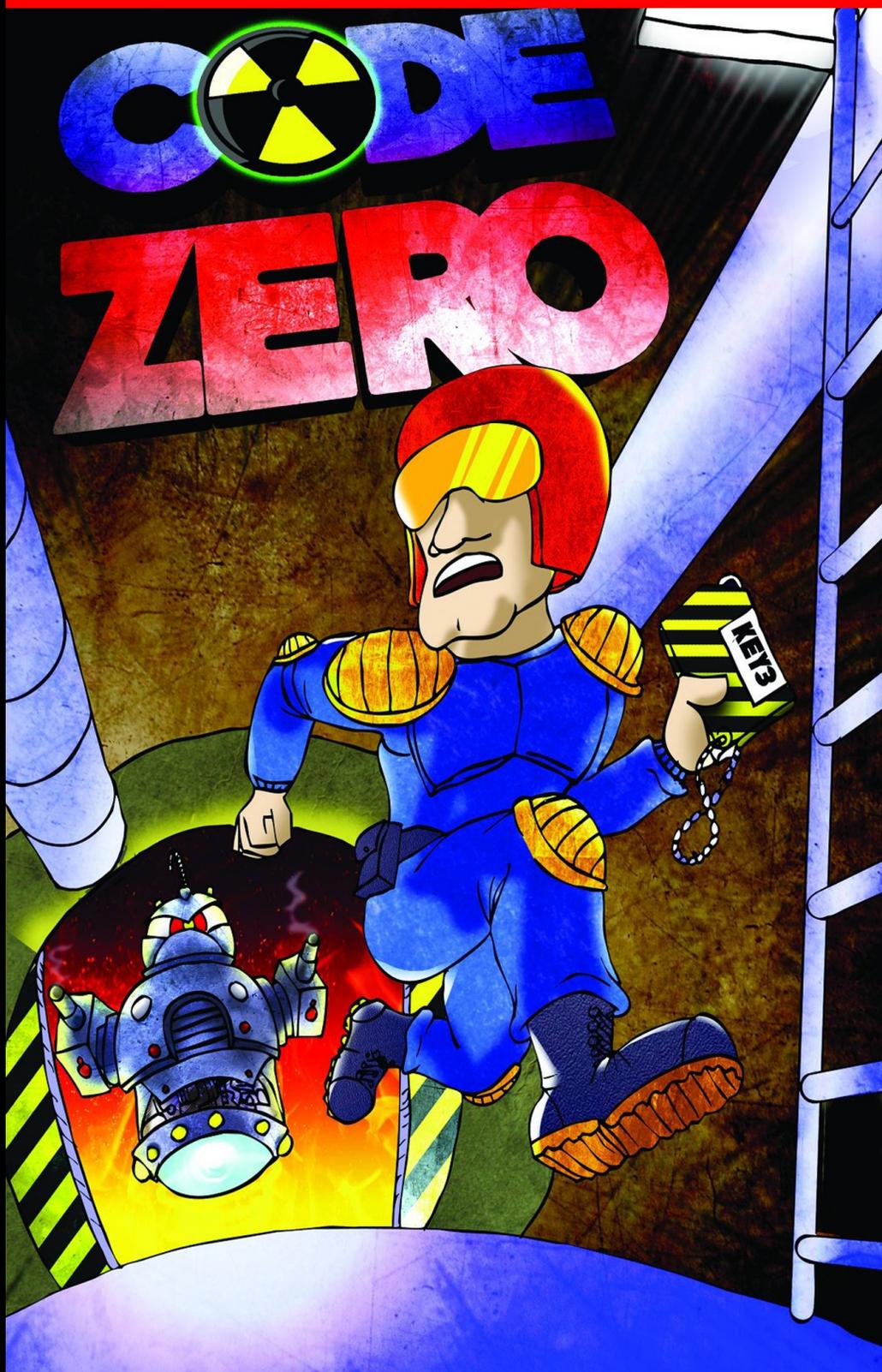


ROVR

POWER
44

ITEMS
1

RELEASES ON REAL MEDIA



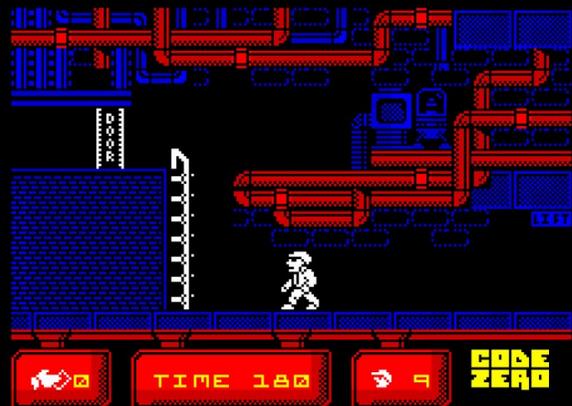
CODE ZERO

It's about to blow.
Can you be a hero?

Infiltrate the base, watch out for rogue robots, swerve past dripping acid...

Locate the computer room and do your thing...

Action adventure game for the Spectrum 128*



*works on 48k models with reduced sound

ALSO AVAILABLE

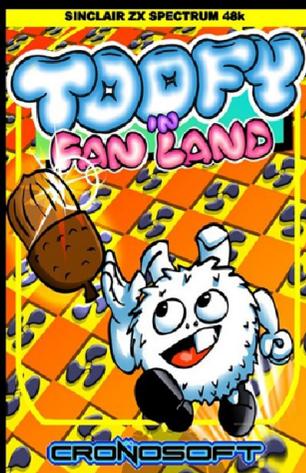
Games from Paul Jenkinson

Bounty

Test yourself with this sc-fi text adventure.

Baldy ZX

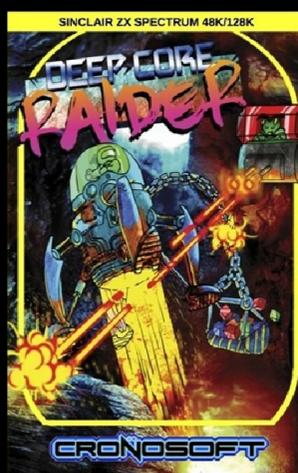
Unique platform game across 20 levels.



Toofy In Fanland+
Help Toofy get his nuts back in the weird world of fans.



Space Disposal
Cleaning up the universe, one planet at a time.



Deep Core Raider+
Navigate the planets, grab the loot and get out alive.

www.thespectrumshow.co.uk

MaCadam Bumper

PSS 1985

Pinball games on the Spectrum numbered probably fewer than ten, and good ones even lower. A few spring to mind such as Pinball Simulator from Codemasters and Sagatari's Pinball Wizard, but this one may be known to more players.

Initially released by ERE of France, it was later re-released by PSS in 1985, and has a neat trick up its sleeve that we'll get onto later.

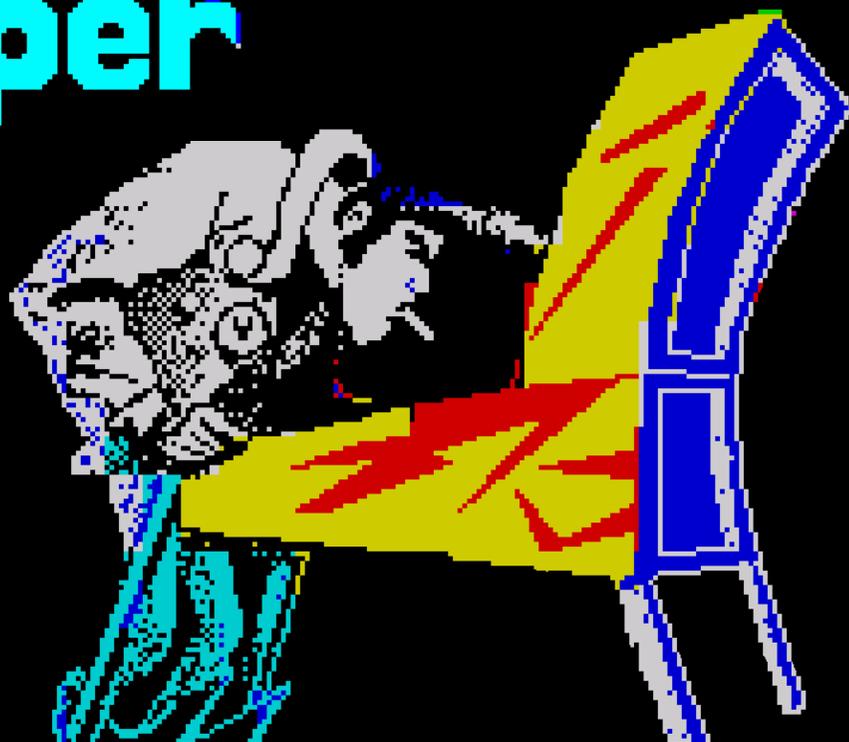
The game follows the usual pinball fair, with various bumpers, flippers, bonuses and targets. The table though has a lot of flippers, seven in total, and this can become confusing as the ball flies around.

To release the ball you press and hold both left and right flipper keys and the plunger slowly lowers, releasing the keys will send the ball into play. From this point on, the Spectrum sometimes struggles with realistic movement and we can forgive that a little bit; it is only an 8bit machine after all.

The ball sometimes slows down on its own, but this is no different to other such games on the Sinclair machine. The bumpers work well and the flippers do a fairly good job of mimicking the real thing.

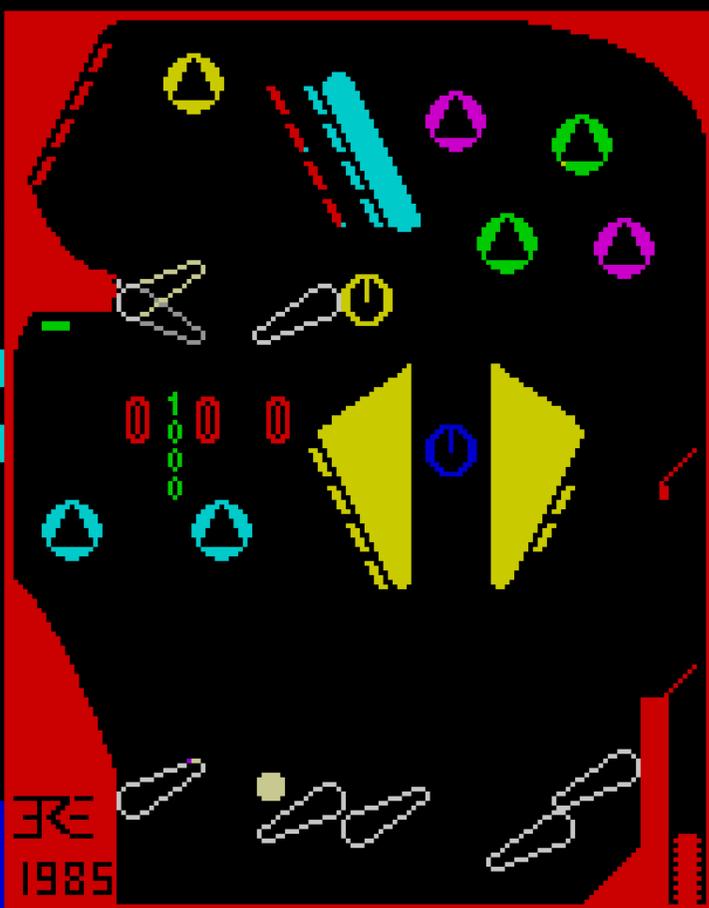
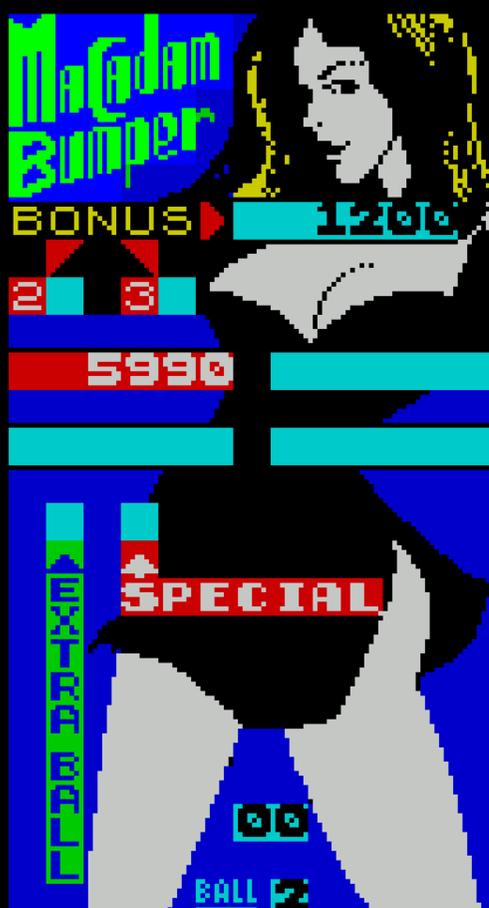
The table is squeezed onto the right of the screen, with the left being taken up by a semi-clad woman, over which are the scores, number of balls and bonuses.

Once the game gets under way, the sound is used really well for a 48k game, with different sounds for the different elements of the table. Various bonuses pop up from time to time, and once you get past the multiple flipper issue, the game is really enjoyable.



Early games were over fairly quickly, but as time went on, the five balls lasted quite a long time.

If you get fed up of the single table, here is where this game scores extra points; you can design your own!



Pressing C from the main menu will take you into the table editor and starting with a blank table you can place all the different elements where you like and then play it.

You can choose to modify the existing table by pressing M, which will take you to a screen full of options and then allow you to edit the layout.

Moving the cursor with the cursor keys, you place it over the area you want to draw a specific element. The starting point for the element to draw is indicated by the red arrow on the elements panel to the left.

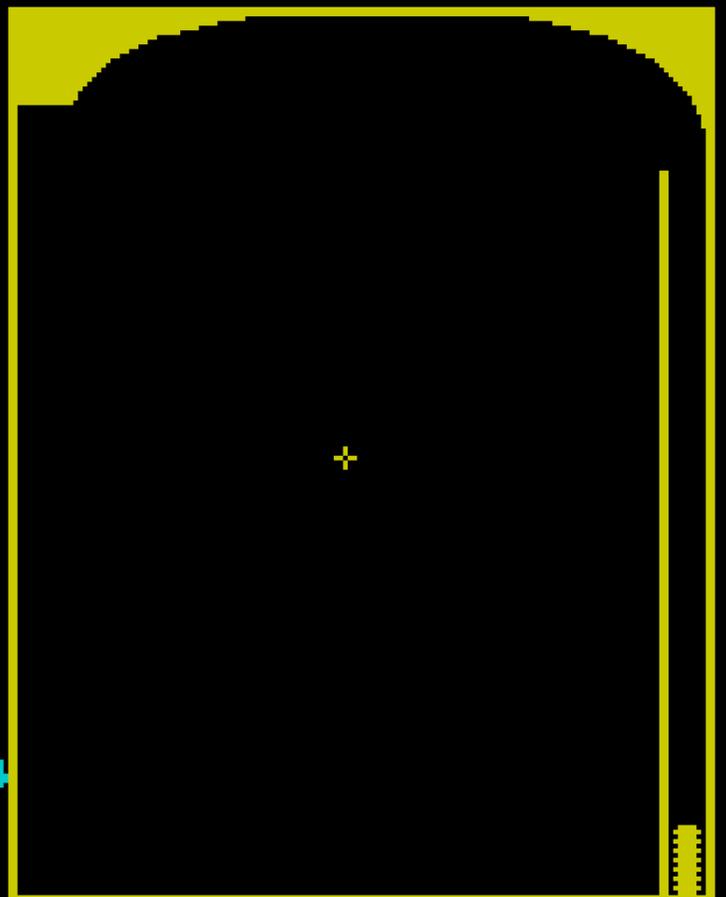
Making your own table is a bit tricky at first until you get used to where each element is drawn from, but you can soon have a playable table up and running, even if it does look a bit rubbish!

At first I could not find a way to add colour to my newly created table, so it was just yellow, but at least I had the freedom to make whatever I wanted. Later I discovered you can actually paint over the attributes by using a 'paint brush' option. These instructions only appear in one of the instruction sets online, so make sure you read both. I should have read the inlay to be honest..

Once I found this, I could make the most terrible coloured tables in the history of pinball!

You also have the chance to draw your own shapes too, so if you have enough time you

could create some nice looking tables to exchange with your friends.

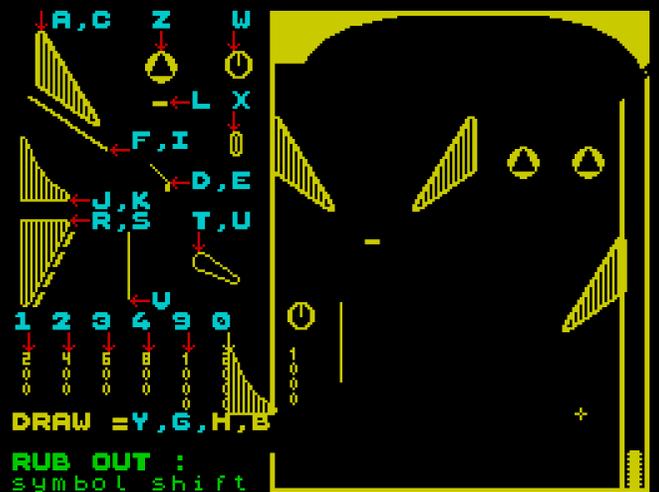


There is also a modification screen.

This allows you to adjust everything from scoring, tilt, slope of the table, the force of the thumpers, triangles and holes, and a whole lot more, allowing you to build just the table you need.

It also allows you to change the ball speed from its default of 80. Slowing it down does help with playing, but you really need to maintain the original speed to get the best out of it.

Overall, a nice game and the table editor is really a great addition. The sheer amount of



modifications you can do is brilliant, giving this game a lot of extra life with tables seemingly limitless.

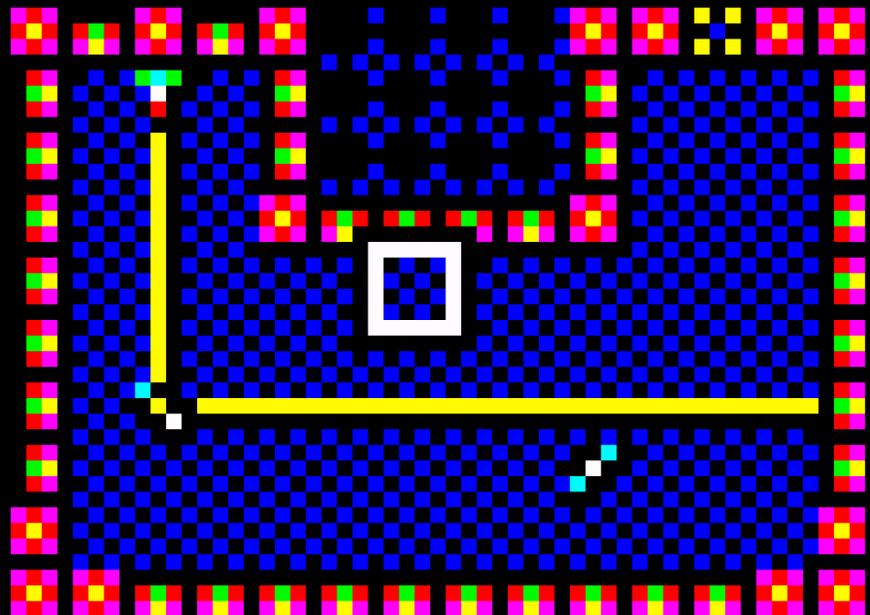
Values of	SCORE	BONUS	FORCE
THUMPERS	00000000	00000000	00000000
TRIANGLES	00000000	00000000	00000000
HOLES	00000000	00000000	00000000
TARGET DOWN	00000000	00000000	00000000
ALL TARGETS	00000000	10000000	00000000
PERM. TARGET	00000000	50000000	00000000
1st EXTRA GAME	19000000		
2nd EXTRA GAME	42000000		
Conditions for	BONUS	EXTRA	SPE-
ALL TARGETS DOWN	x2	x0	BALL
PERM.TARGET HIT	00	00	CIAL
LAYOUT MODIFICATION	>	<	Y=Yes

I wonder if there were any table packs made so you could get to play other people's, or more tables from the programmers?



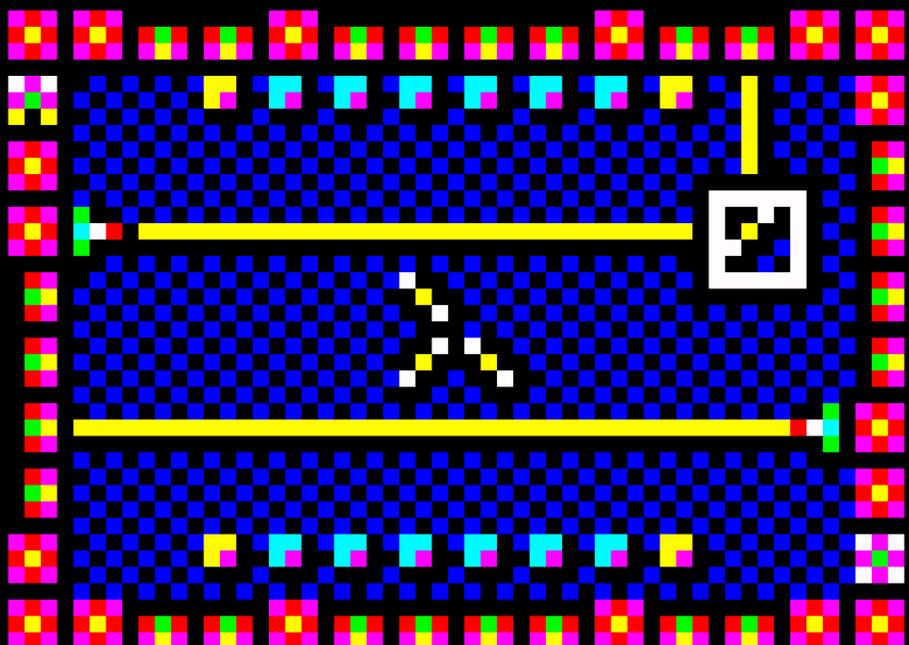
Retro Souls 2017

STAGE : 01



GUIDE A BEAM TO RECEIVER

STAGE : 03



NEVER CROSS THE BEAMS

Anyone who has played deflector on the 16 bit machines will be familiar with the concept of this game.

Using a series of mirrors you have to guide a beam to a set point to complete each level.

Once you get to know how the beam, or in later levels, multiple beams, react to each mirror, it's then a matter of working out which one to place where to get the desired result.

Some levels have additional tasks, for example, destroying all pods before you can finally deflect the beam to its end point – the flashing block.

The graphics are chunky and colourful, and suite the game style, and the music that plays along is excellent.

It is no surprise to find the coder of this game is Denis Grachev, a man who has produced some great games for the machine.

This puzzler is excellent and certainly challenges your brain.

A well presented, well produced game that's definitely worth checking out.

STYX

Bug-Byte 1983

If you didn't know, Styx was written by Matthew Smith before he went on to write Manic Miner and JetSet Willy.

The idea is simple, as most 16k games are, or have to be, and that is you have to get across the river Styx to kill the grim reaper.

Simple you may think, but this is Matthew Smith. The task involves navigating a maze full of spiders, then diving into the river and shooting fish and finally another maze before you can get to the reaper himself. The screen is split into three distinct areas.

The first maze has a large spider that keeps spawning smaller ones, so to continue you have to get to that and kill it.

The fish level is fairly easy, you just have to make sure you don't hit the spawning things as you exit.

The bottom maze has more spiders, and the reaper himself.

It's a simple game, all the action is on one screen and with a bit of care you should be able to kill the reaper in your first few attempts. If you do, it's back to the start again.

The enemies only appear when you enter each of the three sections, so you are only ever playing in a third of the screen.

If you use your laser too much though it shrinks which means you have to get closer to the spiders and fish to kill them, so you need to pick your shots carefully.

The graphics are simple but move smoothly and the sound is a set of basic machine code zaps. It's nothing special but it is quite fun to play, weighing in at just over 5k.

The game cover is much better than the loading screen though, which consist of just the game name in 3D effect text.

Have a go on this if only to see where Matthew started.



GAMING ON THE



GO

There are several ways to play Spectrum games on the move; on your smart phone, a GP32 (or any number of handheld Android devices) and even an OMNI128, the Harlequin based laptop that I looked at in episode 71. Most just require an emulator and some game files, but some require a bit more effort.

Recently I discovered a neglected device in a drawer at my partner's house. She had not used it for over 6 years, and had forgotten she even had it. Here was an opportunity, I thought, to get me some mobile Speccy gaming.

The device in question is a Nintendo DS Lite, and up until I found it, I knew very little about emulation or homebrew on the device.

Getting Spectrum games on here is not as simple as loading an emulator, but after a few hours of research I had my first games running, after an important piece of the puzzle had been ordered and duly delivered.



To make the DS Lite accessible so emulators can be loaded, you need an additional card. Nintendo had, as usual with console manufacturers, tried to protect their hardware from being hacked in the hope that it would stop pirated games from being used. As usual with the community however, this protection was soon circumvented in a way that was easy to implement by most users. The normal method for the DS Lite is to use a card that plugs into the game slot which interrupts the general boot process and/or implements a hack. There are several of these cards available for this little machine and I ordered mine from China for around £7. It arrived in less than a week and then the work began to set

hold the emulator and game files.

The next step is to download the firmware and copy the files and folders across to the FAT32 formatted card. This, in conjunction with the R4 card, will force the DS Lite to allow software to be executed from the SD storage.

Now it was time to get a Spectrum emulator and I opted for ZXDS. Placing this and a few game files in a folder, it was time to try it out. To be honest, I wasn't expecting it to work. I had an old handheld console I was not sure worked, a strange card from China and some files I had just downloaded. I had little idea how it would work, and when I turned on the DS Lite, not much seemed to happen. After a

few minutes though, I discovered if I selected the thing named Bomberman Land, the DS Lite dropped into a new interface. From here I then had to select the Games option and then MOONSHL2 option and there was ZXDS ready to start.

It took another few minutes to work out the settings, which are very comprehensive, and allow all kinds of things to be changed. The emulator will emulate various models of Spectrum and

has options for different video and audio settings including ULA plus mode, which is quite impressive.

I loaded up Antiquity Jones and had a quick play. It worked as I hoped it would, with great emulation, great sound and a fantastic screen.

Setting ZXDS to emulate the Kempston Joystick is simple via the Controls option, and for games that support that standard it means the D pad of the DS Lite works straight away. If you have a game that does not work with a Kempston, you can choose to use a curser joy-

stick or Sinclair joystick, or a set number of pre-defined keys. You can also set up your own keys to map to the D Pad. This is useful for older games that don't support joysticks.

The lower screen can display a view of a Spectrum keyboard, so for games requiring more advanced input, for example, adventure games, this is easily accessible. The view offers two keyboard types, one for the 48k rubber model, and another for the Spectrum Plus.

The games don't load instantly, but they are quicker than the real tape. I suppose we are spoilt today with instant loading divIDE devices, but you don't have to wait long to get to



your next game.

It has to be said, the screen is brilliant. Very clear with vibrant colours and I was surprised just how good it was. There is a reason for this, and it is because the DS Lite has a screen resolution that matches the Spectrum exactly, 256 x 192 pixels. The sound too is spot on, with both the 48k beeper and 128k AY working fine. Once you get the controls set up, it's good to play Speccy games like this.

My stylus seemed a bit out on some keys initially, but a quick calibration sorted that out.

I know there are other, less legal things to do using the R4 card, for example downloading Nintendo game ROMs, but I was only interested in getting a Spectrum emulator running. I did discover some original DS titles later, so do have things to try, but for now, I am just happy to play Speccy titles.

For those wanting to play games on a handheld device, and who were, shall we say, disappointed with a certain item that never materialised, this is a brilliant way to get better results. You can get a DS Lite on eBay for around £20, so it's a bargain price.

Overall a brilliant way to get your Speccy fix.

up and test Spectrum emulation.

There are other ways to do this, with other types of cards, so this is by no means a definitive way. A comment on the video also claims it can be done without a card. I would recommend you do some research before choosing which option is best for you.

The card I chose to use was an R4 SDHC. To avoid any legal problems, I will not provide details about where to get it from, but a quick search will point you in the right direction. The other thing you will need is a micro SD Card to





SPECTRUM NEXT

Starting as a Kickstarter campaign in 2017, quickly reaching its goal, this project has been eagerly followed with great anticipation, with fans both old and new, salivating over the looks and potential of this new machine.

The prototype and development boards have been shown at various retro events over the last few years, with a full device available to play throughout 2019, along with several games like Warhawk and Baggers In Space. The popular and friendly crew drawing the attention of enthusiasts and the inquisitive visitors.

The campaign did not go to plan, with delays being caused by pretty much every aspect, from RAM chips, case mouldings, keyboard membranes, keys and colour highlights. Eventually though, with the persistence of Henrique Olifiers, Jim Bagley and the team, the backers finally got their new machines delivered in February 2020.

The Box

Let's start with the packaging and both box and artwork are brilliant. Very sturdy, professional and inviting. The back shows various games written for the machine's new capabilities such as Lords of Midnight, Dreamworld Pogie, Warhawk and Monkey McGee.

Inside the box it is laid out really nicely too. The machine itself sits firmly in a stylish black card inlay, and a smaller box containing the power supply sits above it. Underneath is the excellent and high quality manual.

When we interviewed Jim Bagley in 2019, and asked him what was the first thing we should do when we got our Spectrum Next, he replied, read the manual. Sound advice, but one very rarely followed. People just dive in.

The manual though is excellent. Clear, well written and impressive. It covers everything from setting up, to loading games, changing cores, using Wi-Fi and more. It really is worth reading.

Hardware

The machine itself, designed by Sinclair genius draftsman, Rick Dickinson, is definitely part of the Spectrum range. Its sleek lines look amazing and fit in with the other models, but obviously it takes its main inspiration from the Plus and 128k machines.

The keys themselves, although looking like the Plus and 128k machine's, are much more modern. They have less travel and are thinner, but work so much better while looking identical in design. It is really nice to use too, with a nice satisfying movement.

The unit is festooned with ports, some empty depending on the model you ordered. The front contains two joystick ports, both compatible with Kempston, Sinclair and cursor variants. On the left hand side we have a reset button, a drive button, the SD card slot and the NMI button. The drive button executes the built-in divMMC for file browsing and other esxDOS functions. The reset button, obviously resets the machine and take you back to the file browser. The NMI button brings up another menu when playing a game.

The SD card slot is used for loading the operating system, loading games and saving data.

On the back we have the power socket and a covered expansion port that is, to the best of the teams knowledge, 100% compatible with the

original.

There is a HDMI output, above which is a digital video or debug port if you opted for the accelerated version. Next we have two USB ports, again only there if you got the accelerated version, and underneath those are the familiar ear and mic sockets. Next we have a VGA output port and an external keyboard or mouse port. This can be used to emulate the Kempston mouse - a nice addition.

Underneath are two fold out legs that tilt the machine if you prefer a different typing angle.

Specifications

Z80 processor with various turbo modes allowing switching of speeds from 3.5, 7, 14 and 28Mhz.

1024kb RAM. Upgradable internally to 2048kb

Hardware sprites and a 256 colour mode from a palette of 512.

Built-in divMMC for holding files on an SD card.

3 AY chips.

Set Up

Once set up, we can turn on and with the supplied SD card, you will see a test card that iterates through various video settings, allowing you to set the one that best suits your monitor and connections.

After that we get an introduction screen. This can be turned off later so you go directly to the file browser.

The machine can load several CORES, and these essentially turning the machine into another system. The Cores supplied are for various models of ZX Spectrum including Pentagon, and a ZX81. More on this little gem later. Other Cores are in development that emulate a host of other 8bit machines including various arcade machines like Frogger and Moon Cresta along with Colecovision, NES and MSX machines.

The Card

The card supplied with the machine not only has the firmware and operating system, but a variety of demos, game demos and tools.

There are some nice game demos including Warhawk, Dreamworld Pogie and Lords Of Midnight along with an excellent version of the arcade classic Scramble.

Also included are a few ZX Spectrum games, but adding your own is simply a matter of copying the files to the card. The machine supports a wide variety of formats including, .TAP, .SNA, .Z80, .DSK and .TZX (requiring the accelerated version to work).

On the card

There are a few goodies tucked away on the card if you go looking.

A folder named Z-Machine in the Next folder holds a Z-Machine interpreter and a few games. Z-Machine is a format used by Infocom for their amazing text adventures, so with the Spectrum Next, you can play Infocom games without any additional software.

In the Tools folder you will find something called NXTel. This is a viewdata-style terminal that allows you to connect to a service set up by the community on the internet. To do this though, you would need to have got the Plus or accelerated model with built-in Wi-Fi.

Spectrum Games

The machine is claimed to be 100% compatible with all existing ZX Spectrum game across all models. To test this I loaded a selection of games onto the card and tried them out. They weren't all successful.

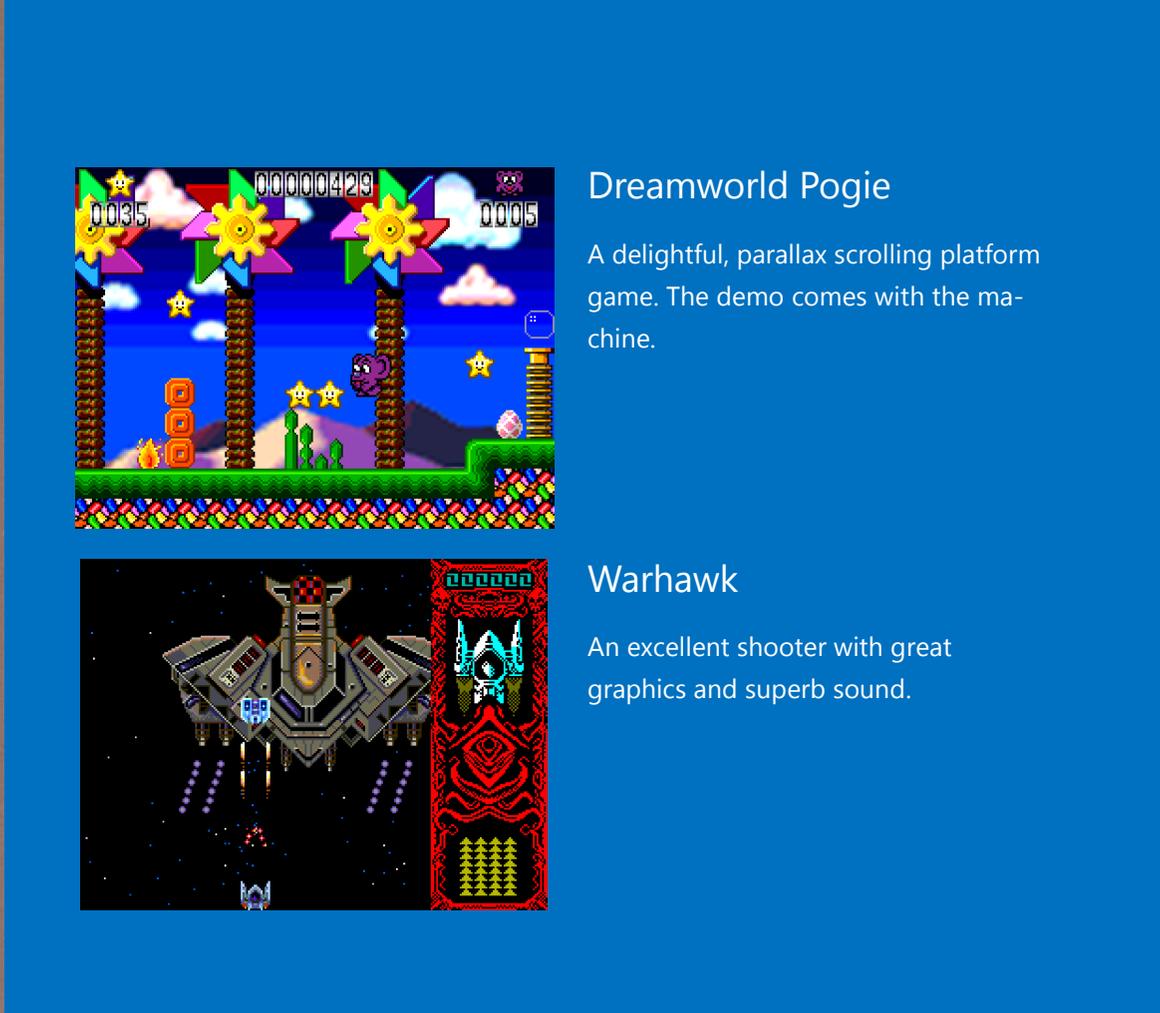
When you pick a file to load, you are first prompted which mode you want to use for that game. Here you can choose 48k, 128k, Next, Pentagon, USR 0 mode etc, along with a set of advanced options to turn on or off various features of the Next.

Despite this though, I found a few games had problems when using the HDMI port. Aquaplane from Quicksilva uses exact timings to produce a split border effect. The Next could not replicate this, and I did try everything to try and get it working.

Bitfrost and Nirvana games that produce multi-colour affects also did not work. The game ran but the multi-colour effect was not visible. Zynaps also did not display its multi-colour effect, but ran fine anyway.

To fix this you have to use the VGA port, either as a direct VGA output or using a VGA to Scart lead that are readily available.

Of the other game I tested, they all worked flawlessly. Manic Miner, Knight Lore, Buggy Boy, Jetpac, Invaders (Artic Computing), Bear Bover, Alien 8, Atic Atac, Pentacorn Quest, Antiquity Jones, Cobra plus more.



Dreamworld Pogie

A delightful, parallax scrolling platform game. The demo comes with the machine.

Warhawk

An excellent shooter with great graphics and superb sound.



NMI

When playing a Spectrum game, pressing the NMI button brings up a small tools menu that allows you to do a multitude of things. You can set scanlines, change the sound settings, change the frequency output and save snapshots in 48k or 128k mode to the card. You can also enter pokes. Here you can also change the speed of the CPU if you bought the Plus or accelerated model.

Mouse

The Next has a PS/2 port that allows you to plug in a keyboard or a mouse. The mouse emulates a Kempston mouse, so any software that works with that, will work fine.

In tests, the port did not work with a PS/2 to USB adaptor like the original Kempston

Mouse interface. If you want to use this, you will have to have, or buy, a PS/2 mouse.

ZX81

The Spectrum Next can also play ZX81 and ZX80 games. The supplied Core will support these and you can use normal .P files.

I tested a few games and they all ran perfectly. It was odd playing 3D Monster Maze, Galaxians and Mazogs on the Next, but enjoyable as well.



Hardware Compatibility

Onto the last element then, hardware compatibility. This was always going to be tricky.

How do you make a hardware clone with additional functions like HDMI, Wifi, divMMC, VGA and USB, to work 100% with every piece of original hardware. There are a lot of things you can plug into the original Spectrum and reading the forums, there have been problems.

The first issue was getting to the port itself. The covering plate seemed stuck, and I didn't want to break anything trying to get it out. A quick search online produced nothing and the manual seemed not to mention it either. Maybe I was too eager to try it out. In the end I had to open the machine up. It turns out I just needed to pull a bit harder!

Back together and with Interface 2 in place ready to test, a problem cropped up. Many interfaces may block the HDMI port! That's bad news if you haven't got a VGA monitor or a cable that can use the port and convert the signal to SCART. Luckily I had one to hand.

Connecting everything up, powering on and nothing. The Next booted to its own system. Even setting the default boot ROM to the standard 48K, the interface still did not work.

A few searches on the forum, and it seems you have to disable a few things on the Next to make it work by entering two OUT commands. I since found there are options to run ROM games in the menu when using Interface 2.

The same sort of work around is required to get Interface 1 working as well and I suspect it will be a similar story for most other peripherals too. If you want to use old hardware in this way, then be cautious. Do some digging. The port may be compliant, but that doesn't mean it will work due to the changed base hardware.

For me this is not a problem. I don't want to use Interface 1 nor 2. The Next has an SD card. Of the other interfaces I may consider, a printer interface may be useful but it's not the end of the world.



CP/M

Yes the Next can run this operating system too, opening up more opportunities.

You have to download a free file first and extract the contents into the correct folder (see page 236 of the manual) then once selected, the Next will import all of the files, and set-up CP/M on the card. Once complete, you restart, load CP/M from the menu. and there it is. Now you just need to find some CP/M programs, for example, by reading the article in the previous issue.

Conclusion

New games will be coming soon for the Next and it will be interesting to see how far people push it. The new hardware, programming languages and routines improve accessibility, and have potential to result in great things. It is also exciting to see what retro software appears. Software that uses the original Spectrum mode but with the added features. Will the Wi-Fi be put to good use? Will games be created that use the SD storage? Will games evolve to use the faster processor speeds?

My initial anticipation and expectations have been exceeded with the Spectrum Next. It was a well run Kickstarter campaign showing how to do things professionally and how to respect your customers. A product delivered, albeit late, but with frequent and honest updates. And the end result better than the original promise.

You can't really ask for more.

The machine is fantastic. It is a welcome addition to my collection and something that I hope will grow its own user base and produce some exciting innovations.

THE PRICE IS RIGHT

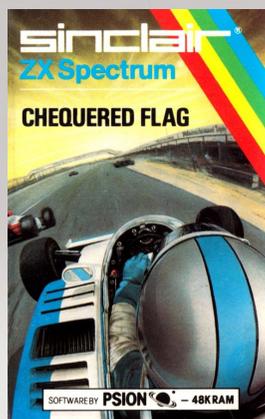
OR IS IT?

Anyone who has used the online auction site eBay, even if just browsing things they remember from childhood, will have seen the vast difference in pricing from one seemingly similar item to the next.

Any serious collector, casual collector or someone looking to complete a set of items will know that sellers are often delusional and insane, and some are just out to rip people off to make a few pounds. I am sure some think they are a master entrepreneur about to become a millionaire just like the favourite UK TV show, Only Fools And Horses!

For collectors of Spectrum items, whether its hardware, software or peripherals, the eBay world is just the same with some eye watering prices for items that could be easily bought in the high street back in the 80s. So why are they expensive?

The Ill informed Seller



A typical example of this kind of sale is the person who puts Chequered Flag on for £20. Yes, it happens, but why? Possibly the person is looking to fool someone into buying this old racing game that can be bought for £2 on hundreds of other listings and websites. Is it that the seller is genuinely ignorant or that they are lazy and cannot be bothered to check other listings to get a feel for the value? Good luck I say, with a wry smile and a shake of the head.

The Conman

LOOK! *RARE* Yes, how many times have we seen this sort of thing on a listing and wondered what are these people on? A copy of Match Day by Ocean software is not rare, a copy of Herberts Dummy Run from Mikro-gen is not that rare (I can currently find copies on eBay as well as four other websites) and Manic Miner from Bug Byte is not rare, regardless of the cover design (this item has several).

It is a sad truth that collectors will pay over the odds for things they want, and these conmen feed on that with their inflated prices and non-sense claims of rarity. Never trust what you read on an auction site, do some homework first, look at other sites, compare and work out the best value.

Scalpers

I am using this term in the headline, but for me this category should really be called D**k H**ds. I hate these people for so many reasons and they deserve to be stuck with items they buy until they become useless and have to be thrown away.

These people usually go for new hardware releases such as the Nintendo mini, the Vega or the Spectrum Next. They buy the goods at the same price as everyone else, often buying sev-



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eral using different accounts, and often buying items with a limited manufacturing run.

This means that genuine supporters of the project or Kickstarter, genuine fans of the items and passionate people who actually care about the product cannot get one. The very people the project was set up to help lose out because some prat thinks they can make a few pounds.

This is happening all the time. More recently the Spectrum Next, a brilliant project allowing people to pledge money to help complete the work and backers would get the finished machine for about £200 (for the minimum specification). Within days of the items shipping, there were numerous listings on eBay from these parasites offering the item for £600. It is

even more unbelievable when you consider the team behind the project are looking to do a second run for the same original price!

Enough space has been wasted on these festering delusional Gollum-like individuals.

If possible ignore them, don't buy from them ever and let them have their precious box forever.



Genuine Rare Hardware

Rare hardware items are the pieces of equipment that were too expensive for the young gamers, or held no interest. Some only sold by mail order and some may have never been produced at all such as the Logotron Sprite Board. Some were sought after, like the Fuller Sound Unit, but were always out of reach, and some were simply not needed to play games, for example the Discovery Opus disk drive system or Crescent Quick Disc. Similarly some were aimed at business users, which again held little interest to most users.

Some had limited production and were not available in stores, like the Challenge Sprint, and some just didn't sell enough units making surviving pieces hard to find like the Heart Rate Monitor. Other good examples of this are things like the Transform Keyboard, The Swift Disc or the Touchmaster graphics tablet.

These are usually sold to serious collectors for quite high prices, and good luck to anyone who sells or buys them. I admit to owning a few hardware items and can be guilty of bidding on items I want to share with fans on the show. I am also curious as to how they work, what they do and how it feels to use them.

I buy to share.



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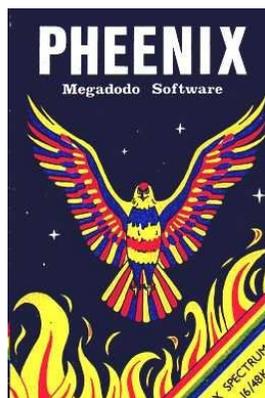
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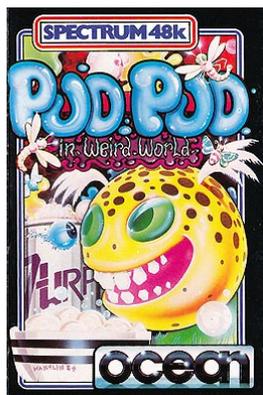
Genuine Rare Software

Now we get onto a larger subject with this. Software can be hard to find for so many reasons and because of this, can command a high price. I will pick out a few that spring to mind and hopefully explain why they are expensive but genuine.

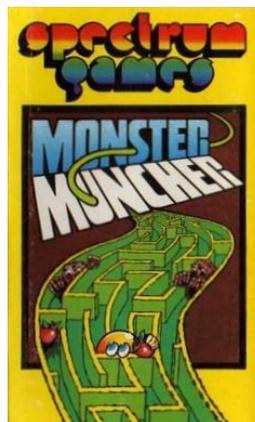
Phoenix from Megadodo Software. Sold by mail order only and was later re-released by Alternative Software. The original though was a 16k game and a brilliant arcade classic Phoenix. In fact the best version of that game for the Spectrum. This now commands prices of £30 upwards. Limited initial sales due to it being mail order make it hard to find, and when it does show up, there are always several people trying to get it.



Pud Pud from Ocean software. Now this game is strange in many ways. It was produced by Ocean Software, so there is no reason why it could not have been bought by thousands of gamers. There was good distribution, but the game was not a hit initially, making surviving copies hard to come by. Any collector of Ocean titles would love this. Also the author, Jonathan 'Joffa' Smith was a well known and liked character in the industry and was posting on forums, engaging fans until his sad death in 2010. This means there are several reasons why people want to get this game, and this means the price is high. A recent copy sold for £47.

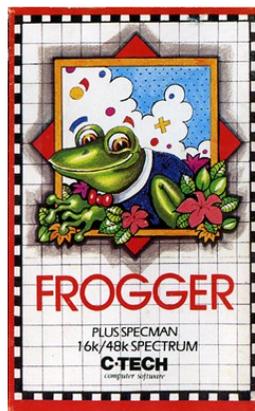


Monster Muncher from Spectrum Games. There are several Spectrum Games titles, before the company changed its name to Ocean Software.

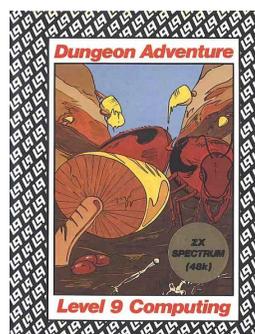


Manchester based Spectrum Games advertised and sold titles under that name for a short period of time, so these are hard to find.

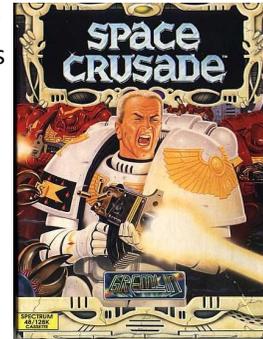
Centipede/Frogger from C-tech Software. Games that were rubbish, unplayable and badly written were copied more than they were sold, and this left original copies hard to find. These two games are examples of this. C-tech also produce only a few games making them harder to find now.



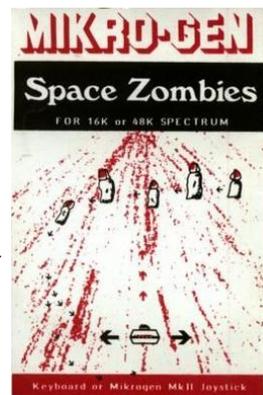
Level 9 games are always priced high. Text adventures were not as popular as arcade games and so sold in lower quantities. The packaging for these games was exceptional, with large plastic boxes and well written manuals, and so are highly collectable now. A good condition game can sell for a high price. Other adventures often have high prices, in particular Magnetic Scrolls games. These also have brilliant boxes and contents too.



Space Crusade from Grem-lin Graphics. This game was released late in the Spectrum's life, 1992. Sales may have been a lot less than games released in the heyday of the machine, and so less survived. Coupled with the fact that it was a very popular game for the 16bit machines, this now command a very high price, usually over £25. Another game that falls into this category is Gauntlet 3 from US Gold.



Various games went through different stages of artwork on the inlays, and very early or first release versions do sell for higher prices. Early Mikro-Gen games such as Space Zombies or Cosmic Raiders with the black, white and red line drawn covers usually go for £20. Early DK'Tronics games with line drawn covers like 3D Tanx or Centipede also command higher prices than the newer, more colourful releases.



Anyone wanting to buy things, for whatever reason, should really do a bit of homework first and not just dive in with their wallet. Check out other sites that sell retro games, compare prices and take into account postage.

I have often found that buying a single game from eBay at inflated prices is more expensive than buying a few games from another site bundled with the game you want because of shared postage. That way you also get some bargains if you shop around. If you really, really want something though, no one and nothing will stop you.

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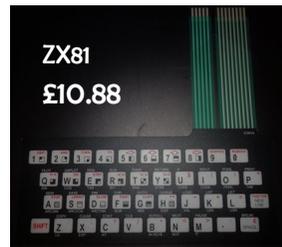
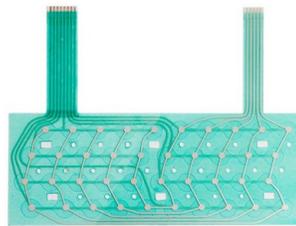
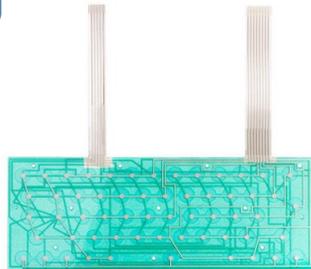
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GRUMPY GUMPHREY SUPERSLEUTH

Gremlin,



My gaming Christmas present of 1985 included three elements: an Alphacom 32 printer, a QuickShot 4 joystick and a game from Gremlin Graphics called Grumpy Gumphrey Supersleuth [sic]. The printer and joystick have long since gone. However, Grumpy Gumphrey has not only survived but secured a place as one of my favourite ever games. More usually on an emulator, these days, I often still find myself yearning for a quick game when I have 20 minutes to spare.

The game is a graphics adventure, set in a large department store, similar to the ones that used to grace towns and cities in the days before supermarkets ventured beyond groceries. Gumphrey is an aging store detective, whose goal is to make it through each day without his tyrannical boss giving him the sack. As the day progresses, Gumphrey is set a series of (sometimes bizarre) challenges, to be completed in a timely manner, to avoid the wrath of the boss. Challenges such as clearing the canteen of bugs, catching a shoplifter, or fetching the boss a cup of tea. To complete each task, Gumphrey needs to locate objects from around the store, usually kept in the obvious places, and put them to the task in hand. The tasks are varied and challenging, and give Gumphrey a chance to explore the full extent of the department store.

Unfortunately, it is not quite as simple as that. First, Gumphrey is in his later years, and as a stereotyped 1980's old person, does not have all of his wits about him. This fact is most obviously manifest by customers who tend to get in his way, knock him off course, or most frustrating of all cause him to drop what he is carrying. As the middle of the day approaches, the store gets busier, and so it is more difficult to avoid getting entangled with shoppers. If this was not enough, the store owner is a demanding person, who often sets Gumphrey another task, before the first one is completed. When this happens, Gumphrey has to stop what he is doing, and complete the new task, before returning to



his original duty. If he takes too long, he gets a dreaded call to the boss's office, which can only mean an official warning is on the way. If Gumphrey gets three such warnings, then he is sacked and the game is over.

I think this game is brilliant. It is the game I would most want to have written, if I had been a game writer in the 1980s. It does not have swish graphics nor amazing sound (it is a 48k game), though that is not to say there is anything wrong with either. Gameplay is smooth, the graphics are clear and colourful making it easy to work out what objects are, for example, and sound fits the mood of the game well. I think this game is brilliant because it is, for me, one of the few examples of a genuine graphics adventure on the ZX Spectrum. It really feels as if you had complete freedom to explore the game.

The department store is large, spanning over five floors, viewed in a sort of two-and-a-half dimension way that means you can move left

and right as well as in and out of the game screen. The style is quite light-hearted, with lots of humorous elements. If you are new to the game, it is worthwhile to ignore the boss and simply spend your time exploring and familiarising yourself with the store layout, location of objects, and so on. You will find lots of thoughtful touches such as a working escalator and a light switch in the lift; plus, a whole host of possible interactions with objects that I will not go into for fear of spoiling some of the fun for a new player.

The difficulty level is moderate. Once you get used to how different shoppers behave, it is reasonably easy to avoid them most of the time. In addition, the puzzles I have seen are reasonably logical, and the first couple are easy to solve.

The big challenge is time. Even though I have played this game a lot, I have never made it to the end of the first day, nor completed more than five or six tasks, without being



sacked. Based on the cassette inlay and on commentaries on the web, I suspect I have seen around half of what the game has to offer.

I know not everyone likes this game: it received mixed reviews, when it was released. At first glance, it feels a bit like an average arcade game (plus getting stuck in a corner with a particularly annoying shopper who keeps causing you to drop an important object can be amazingly frustrating). However, I think you need to spend some time with the game to really ap-

preciate it. I think anyone who does this will grow to love the game as much as I do.

Review by: George Beckett

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PHEENIX

Megadodo Software 1983

One of the classic arcade games from the 80s had to be Phoenix. The mix of swooping birds, flying eggs that hatch into attack birds and the end mothership all come together to form a brilliant shooter. It was no surprise then, that the game would transition to the home micro market.

There were several attempts to create this game on the Spectrum, most fell well short. Poor graphics, whole levels missing and the action being somewhat pedestrian or turbo left fans waiting for something good to come along.

Phenix from Megadodo Software was that something, and it proved to be the best.

Being mail order only initially, it wasn't a mainstream seller, but it was picked up by Alternative Software and re-distributed 3 years later.

The game includes all of the arcade features and levels from the Galaxian style first two levels, through the flying eggs, the hatching of the giant birds and finally to the glorious mothership.

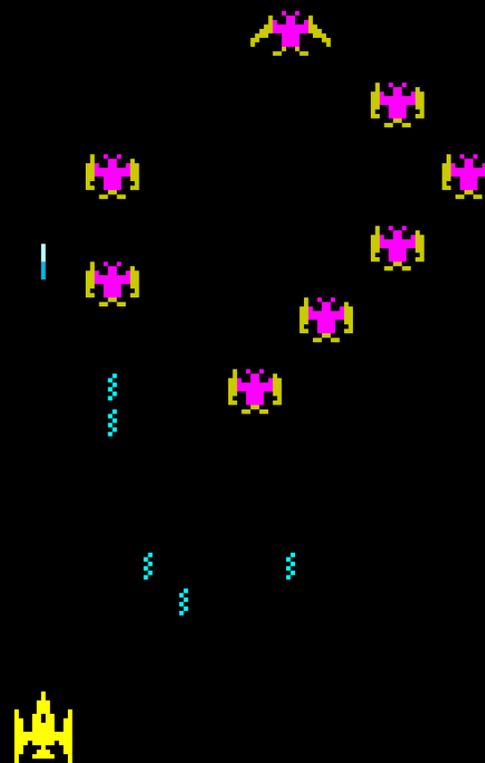
The game starts with the arcade tune and scrolling stars that sadly don't continue into the game, but this was only a 16k titles after all.

The first two levels of multi-coloured birds were impressive enough. Clever use of colour made them look so much better than single colour characters from other games, and they attacked just like the real thing.

Then the eggs appear. This was even more amazing to me. How did they get this on the Spectrum? I thought at the time. These are hard to hit and you have to try and judge the speed and direction. Eventually they hatch and large birds start flying down the screen towards your ship, dropping bombs as they go. There are two levels of this, with different coloured birds before we get to the finale.

The huge mothership descends, defended by smaller birds, and you have to blast through

000175 000000 HIGH 059365 LI



002390 000000 HIGH 059365 LI



the rotating force field to get a shot at the centre.

The game is excellent. The sound is great, con-

trol is crisp, the graphics are wonderful and just like the arcade, it all comes together.

A definite must-play game.

PHEENIX - The Challengers

There were a few attempts to create a version of this game for the Spectrum, most were terrible., created in the early days of programming when the hardware had not fully been exploited. Or was it just lazy coders?

Firebirds - Softek



Firebirds from Softek was a great game in itself, with swooping birds and an impressive giant mothership. It didn't have eggs or large attack birds, but it was a good second choice.

This is one of those games I keep returning to for a quick blast.

Winged Avenger - Workforce

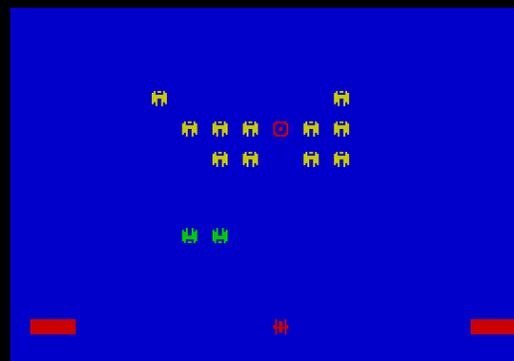


The colour scheme of this game does not help it in any way, and really distracts from what is a mediocre game at best.

The game does have all of the levels present, even if it is really hard to get through them.

The aliens only fire when directly above you, so you have to constantly move to avoid destruction.

Phoenix - Robert Spahl



No. That is all I can say about this game. Slow, BASIC, poor.

PHEENIX - Compared

	Level 1 & 2	Level 3 & 4	Level 5
Arcade			
Spectrum			

WARNING: MAY CONTAIN SPOILERS

GRUMPY OGRE'S

Adventure Page

Welcome back to strange places where your mind wanders freely and your brain shifts into a higher gear.

It has been an odd few months that has seen me flitting between various games but not really settling into any of them. I am not sure why that could be, as the games in question, I should like.

Planetfall from Infocom was one, suggested by George Beckett. An excellent text only game from the masters of interactive fiction.

I set about exploring the initial set of locations but was soon dead. This was a bit unusual for Infocom, and it had me scratching my head for a while. I just could not get into the right frame of mind to work out what was happening.

In reality, the game was guiding me to the solution by constantly killing me! Seems odd, but I can't think of any other explanation. By punishing you for doing something wrong, you feel better when you avoid it, and make a bit of progress. To be honest the start of this game took it a bit too far!

As I was writing this column, an exciting delivery arrived, and you can guess by the cover of this magazine what it was. The Spectrum Next.

I knew I had a short amount of time to get a full episode out, in fact 7 days, fitted in between working full time and trying to move house. In the end I took a day off work to get it sorted, but things distracted me.

Nestled on the SD card was an intriguing folder named Z-Machine. Now if you read this column, you will instantly recognise what that means. The Spectrum Next can play Infocom games!

It came with a few free games (non of which were Infocom for obvious reasons) but it wasn't long before I had added some to the card and fired up the interpreter.

It was amazing to see Zork on the Next. The resolution was perfect, and I had to drag myself away to get the review done.

Including the Z-Machine interpreter was a great idea, but I suspect it caters to a small audience, but that doesn't matter. It's there, and I for one will use it.

Now, back to Spectrum adventures.

Pirate Island (as the game calls itself) or Pirate Adventure (as the company advertise it), is a very early adventure from Adventure International, and some say this is the easiest. It begins in a flat with just a few items lying around and a flight of stairs. As with many adventures of this era, it can sometimes be a 'guess the word' affair, and this one is no different, although there are some clues.

Trying to go in any direction will fail, and to actually climb the stairs, you have to enter GO STAIRS. At this point the game begins to open up and the first set of locations become available. An alcove, a secret passage, a musty attic and a ledge.

Again though, the game insists on non-standard wording to get beyond the alcove. You will see a bookcase, so the obvious thing is to examine it. This reveals the message 'I see nothing special', however, upon entering GET BOOK, something happens. So the book must have been in the bookcase, but not mentioned when examined. This is one of the frustrations with early games and the limitation

of memory. Having said that, many other games overcame this hurdle.

Once the secret passage is visible, you have to GO PASSAGE to get into it, however, the passage description states you can go east or west. Going west takes you back to the alcove, but you then cannot go back east into the passage – Argh!

Now all of this may seem like I didn't like the game, which is quite wrong. I enjoyed working through the early stages, trying out various things, reading signs and books, and eventually, using the words therein, finally getting to that pirate island in search of Long John's treasure.

Yes, the game is of the treasure collection genre with the main aim to collect the two treasures hidden by Long John Silver. It's not all easy going though, even in the early locations you can die without warning, so make sure you put on those sneakers... not sure why you'd wear a bar of chocolate though!

Once on the island you can start to explore and will soon find something of interest in a grass hut, and I'm not talking about the wicked looking pirate! To get to it though, you first have to dispense with the pirate, and we all know what pirates like to drink!

```
I'm in a alcove.  
Visible items are:  
open window,books in bookcase.  
  
obvious exit:down.  
  
*****  
▶EXAMIN BOOK  
  
I see nothing special.  
▶READ BOOK  
  
sorry I can't do that.  
▶GET BOOK  
  
you hear a strange noise.
```

The puzzles continue and after climbing a hill and entering a cave, using my torch for light, I discovered a tool shed with a few handy items scattered about. The hammer got me thinking about the chest, and so back I went. Many commands later and the chest was still unlocked and intact. It seems the hammer is for something else.

Working your way through a few more puzzles and it became obvious you need to build a boat to get you to Treasure Island. No, you are not on that island, you are on Pirate Island! Luckily you are given the plans that list all of the things you need for this task, and so begins another set of challenges.

The game has a smallish map and the puzzles are logical. The only thing I found frustrating was the limited vocabulary, and the constant use of the GO command without a return of the same type. GO STAIRS, GO SHACK etc.. and then having the exit from that location as a direction.

This game also mixes the real world (a flat in London) with fantasy, and this has been used many times as a mechanic to gameplay. Here though it serves as the first set of locations and puzzles before sending you away to the island itself, hopefully prepared.

The London flat does become home to a drunk pirate though, but how he gets there (or back) is never disclosed. Just one of those things that happens in games and is accepted.

This leads into another subject all together, what is acceptable navigation? I have already pointed out the flaw in this game, whereby you have to navigate differently to go to and from a location, but this is a bad idea.

As a rule, adventure games are very limited to the directions of travel. Simple games stick to the four compass points plus up and down. More complex games provide eight compass points plus up and down. After that though, there is little else to offer. It is remarkable then, that so many thousands of games have been created with this limitation.

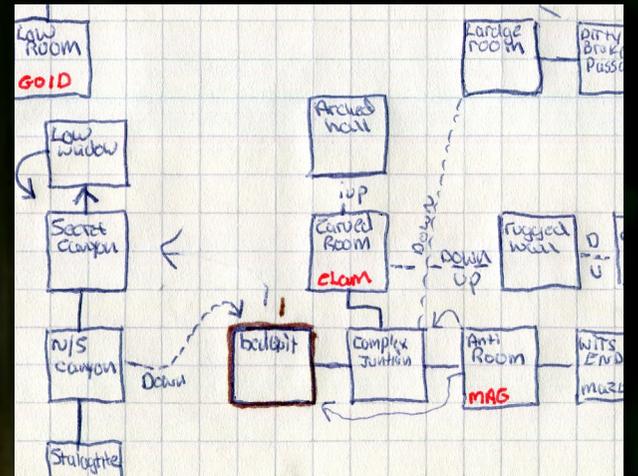
Some games try to get around this by using 'twisting passages' that bend and turn as they go, and even the great Colossal Cave itself used this technique. The description would say something like "The passage to the east twists round northward and disappears into

gloom.". Following this passage and going east would take you to a location where the exit back to the previous location is south.

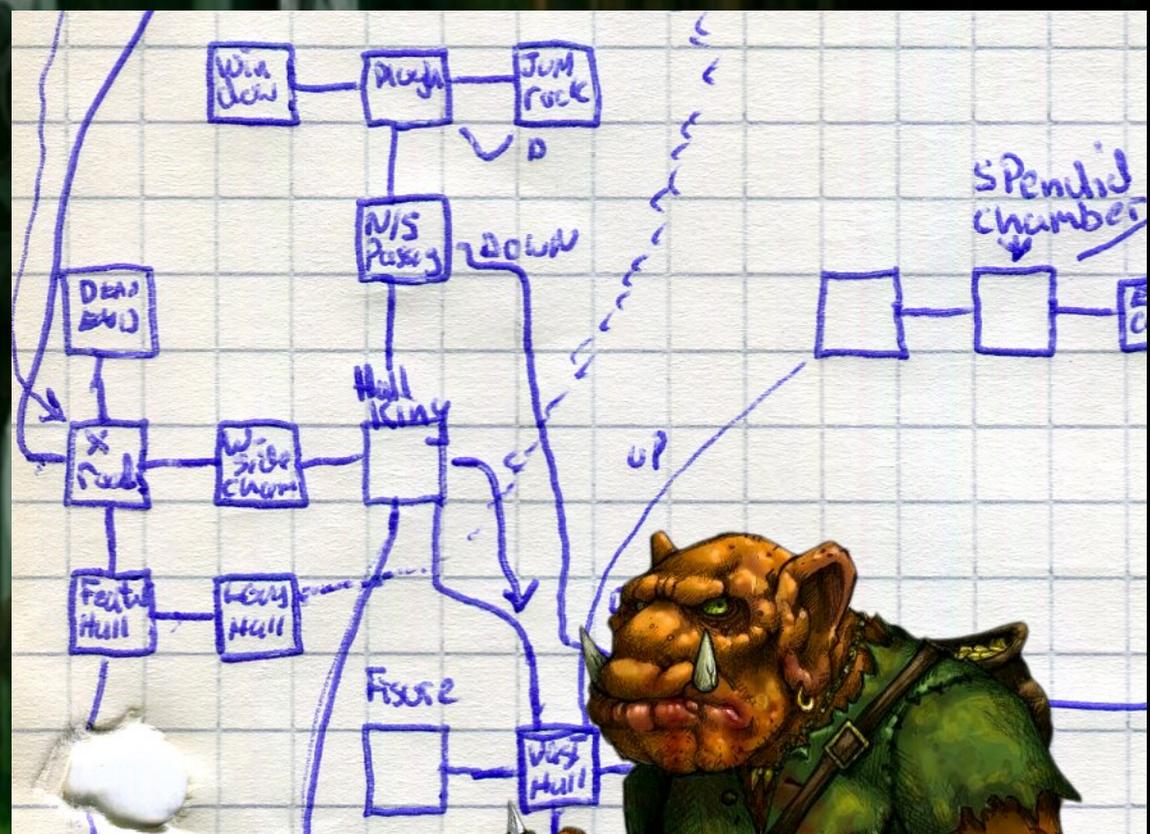
This mechanic gave players something extra to think about, and made map making more interesting.

Going the extra mile was the random exit device. Here, the player would leave a location to the east and end up in location A. However, doing the same thing again could then take them to location B. This type of misdirection was also used in Colossal Cave, and drove me to insanity.

Trying to map this kind of navigation out made things very difficult, and made playing the game later, a little bit annoying.



More from my maps archive soon.



This is my original (or part of it) map for Colossal Cave, scanned and archived for posterity. It shows my attempts at mapping a certain part of the game.

Top right is a similar mapping exercise, this time for the excellent Adventure One from Abersoft.

Was it fun? No! Is it fun to look at these now and remember the enjoyment? Yes!

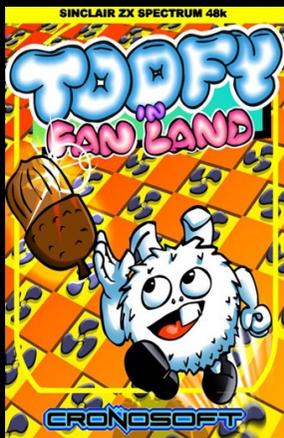


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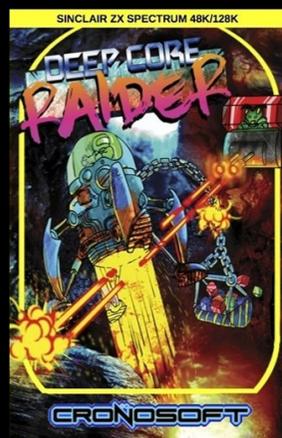
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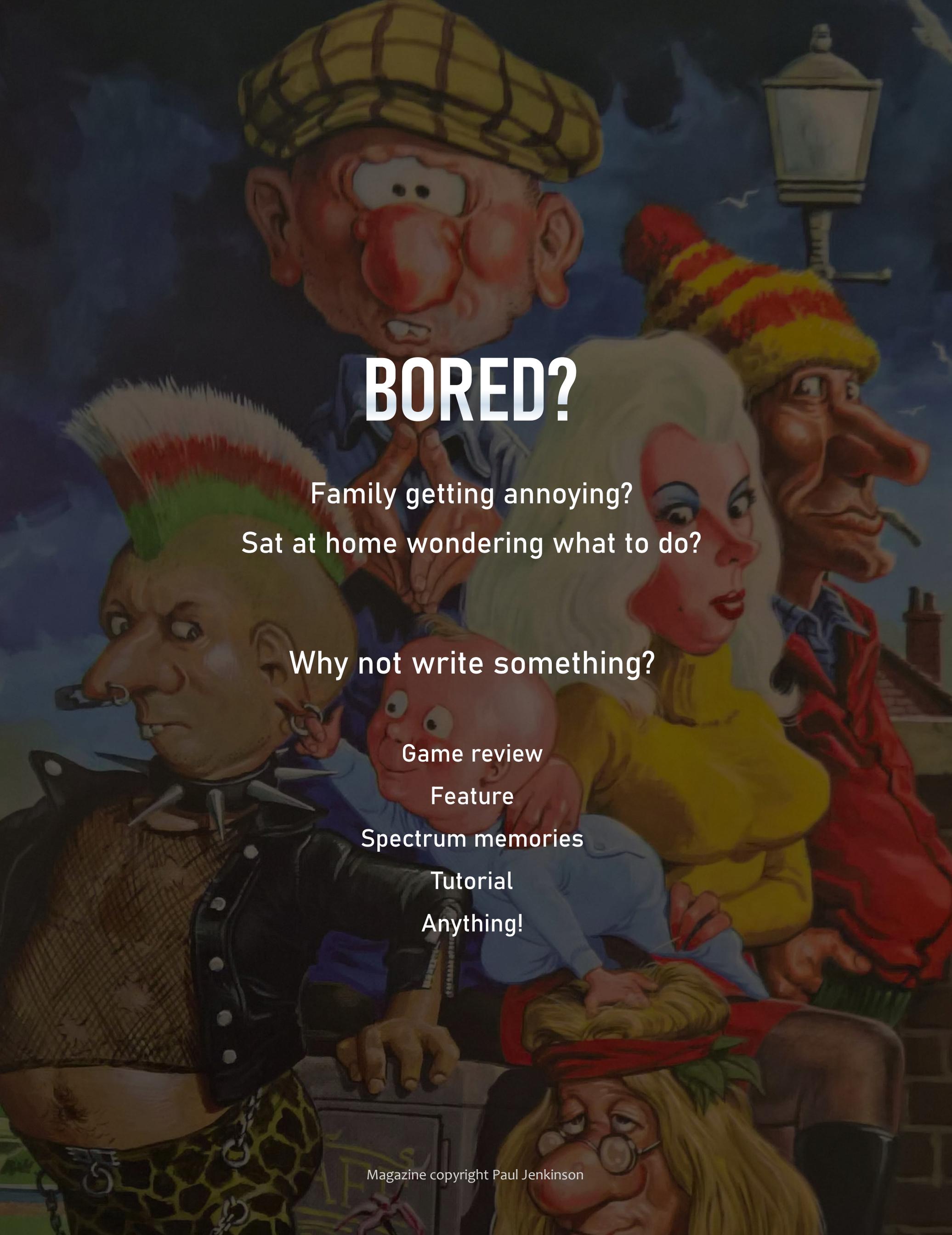


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BORED?

Family getting annoying?
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Game review

Feature

Spectrum memories

Tutorial

Anything!