

ISSUE 2

October 1994

Harrowden, 39 High Street, Sutton-in-the-Isle, ELY, Cambs CB6 2RA

Editor: Brian Watson

Tel: 0353 777006

THE EDITOR'S PROLOGUE

Issue 2, and already we have a new masthead. It was the only part of issue one not produced using an 8-bit computer so I thought I'd drop it in favour of this new version. There are more articles this time, and I have taken all the hints to heart and put the small ads into separate sections for to the relevant computers. This was always the way I intended to do it, but inexperience led me to use them as space-fillers in the first issue. Please let me know if you think I could improve things further.

STILL CAN'T GIVE IT AWAY?

Again very few subscribers have chosen to take up the "free small ad" option for this issue. I hope the article elsewhere will inspire you to have a clear-out in time for issue 3!

FOR BETTER OR VERSE

The balance of opinion appears to be against including fiction, even if computer-related. So it stays out, but thanks anyway to the two subscribers who offered. The last straw was the threat of being sent one reader's poetry. You know who you are....

NO THOUGHT POLICE HERE, MATEY!

So far, one reader has asked that I do not pass his name and address on to anyone else. I make it plain here and now; I will not pass *anyone's* name and/or address on to anyone else.

Brian Watson Oct '94

CONTENTS

Yes, there are contents and they are in some sort of order! Because of the multi-format nature of 8BIT MART and the variable amount of submissions for the computers' bits, I have not attempted an index. But as I said to a supplier in a reply to a recent enquiry I hope ALL the magazine is of some interest to ALL the readership - you may only use your computer for one or two purposes, but what other computer owners do with theirs may inspire you to have a go at something new on yours.

Now I have seen what some of the user groups are up to, I have had my eyes opened to the versatility of some computers I knew only by reputation. For example, The Sam Coupé, ("just an updated Spectrum"?) has been used to DTP "Zat"; and the layout and visual appearance are stunning. Please leave your preconceptions at the door.

LOADS OF CPC GOODIES

Tape, Disc, Rom, Magazines, Books, Systems too. Extras and spare parts available. To sell or any (reasonable) swap, or I will buy.

Also "King Arthur's Domain" PD in conjunction with Amstrad Contact - 50p per selection.

SSAE to: Angela Cook, *Brympton Cottage*, Brunswick Road, WORTHING, Sussex BN11 3NQ.

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WANTED: Information or borrow, buy, lend, etc any old utilities like Action Replay, An-ram, Mirage Imager, Transmat, Oddjob, Disc Wizzard. All for the Amstrad CPC only. Concerned CPC user wants to try these for evaluation for fanzine reports. Send all details to: Mr PL Curgenvin, *The Hollyar*, Bay Road, Trevone Bay, Nr Padstow, Cornwall PL28 8QZ, or you can telephone: 0841 520875

WANTED: A KDS MK 2/3 8-BIT PRINTER PORT for use with an Amstrad 6128. Reasonable price will be paid. Please contact Mr R Boreham at 37, North Street, Pembroke Dock, Dyfed, SA72 6QT or Telephone 0646 684627

The disczine IMPACT needs new writers! For more info write to: 53, High Lane, Burslem, STOKE ON TRENT, Staffs ST6 7DF. You don't get paid - after all, IMPACT's PD!

WANTED: TO BUY OR BORROW. Or the construction details of a Microstyle or Avatar CPC 6128 ABBA and side-select combined switch. Also wanted: a ROMBO Rombox (without ROMs). And also wanted: Tasprint on disc. 0934 623648

contd.....

CPC - WANTED (contd)

WANTED: The "Admiral Graf Spee" and "Seduction" for the CPC. Also 64k Ram Pack for 464 and 32k Ram card for Star LC24-20 printer, copy of wiring instructions for 464 tape mechanism and drive belt size (mm) Dave Caleno, 29, Chapter Road, Strood, ROCHESTER, Kent. ME2 3PX (01634 724262 8.30-10.30pm)

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SOFTSELL

I have received the September edition of the newsletter sent out to customers of Softsell. They specialise in Spectrum supplies and the letter includes a very comprehensive list of suppliers and supporters of all things Spectrum. Of course, if these companies support one eight-bit machine they may support others, and there are many names on the list who I know do. For example, JV Electronics in SHREWSBURY, who will repair Spectrum and Amstrad computers, as well as keeping a good stock of tape and disc games. If you are in their area and need a repair they could be worth a call. Their number is 0743 352009.

There are also news items, wants and needs advertisements, and the style is very friendly and conversational. This is a very good example of a supplier who 'goes the extra mile' to serve their customers. The Softsell shop is in the Shopping Mall in TROWBRIDGE. This is normally open Saturday 9-5 and weekdays from 4-5pm (apart from school holidays) or you may prefer to get in touch with the proprietor, Joyce Cook, by post initially at 32, Dursley Road, TROWBRIDGE, Wilts BA14 0NP. If you would like a copy of their newsletter and details of what else they can offer, send them a self-addressed envelope big enough to take A4 sheets and keep an eye on the letterbox!

SUPPLIERS DIRECTORY

The most common grumble is the few retailers now stocking 8-bit hardware, games, and other software. While it is true that supplies for a fortnight can be necessary to seek out shops who keep a decent range, there *are* still suppliers who hold stocks of 8-bit kit and can supply by mail-order.

I would like to publish a list of suppliers, updated each issue, in 8BIT MART; not covering publishers unless they stock items other than their own work. Appearance on the list should not be taken as a recommendation as I may not have personal experience of their service, but if you can help with this project I would be pleased to hear from you, or them. The initial list is believed accurate but please contact them before sending them your cheques!

The information is in the format:
Company Name, Address Details, Phone,
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SPEC

The Software Shop, 48, High Street, RENFREW, Renfrewshire, PA4 8QP, 041 885 2830. SPEC

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THE UNITED AMSTRAD USER GROUP

The UAUG was founded in 1986 by a group of dedicated Amstrad CPC-owning enthusiasts who were dissatisfied with what they felt then were biased and incomplete reviews, expensive hardware and software, and the non-availability of free Public Domain software.

The group is now well established with a very friendly and mutually-supportive membership which extends throughout the world. The reason they feel they have been so successful is that not only do they offer many of the same services as other computer owner clubs but they do so for a considerably lower membership fee; just £8 for their UK members, £11 for Europe, and £15.25 for the rest of the world.

The membership fee also includes a year's subscription to the group's bi-monthly magazine 'CPC USER', and access to about 6 megabytes of free PD software of all sorts, ranging from clever but quite useless demos of the various CPC machines' capabilities to very sophisticated business programs, passing through games, art programs, data bases, word processors, and programming languages on the way. These are mainly on disc but some are on tape as well. If you send a disc or tape the only cost to members is the return postage. There is also a book library which operates on the same basis and an extensive helpline network in the membership.

Membership also confers some price discount advantage through selected suppliers of Amstrad CPC software and other computer equipment.

If, after reading this, you would now like to receive further details of the United Amstrad User Group, just send a SAE to me: Tony Baker, UAUG, 26, Uplands Crescent, PAREHAM, Hants PO16 7SY.

If you would also like to receive a sample copy of the group's magazine 'CPC USER', please include either a cheque or postal order for £1.50 with your SAE.

Tony Baker - Chairman UAUG

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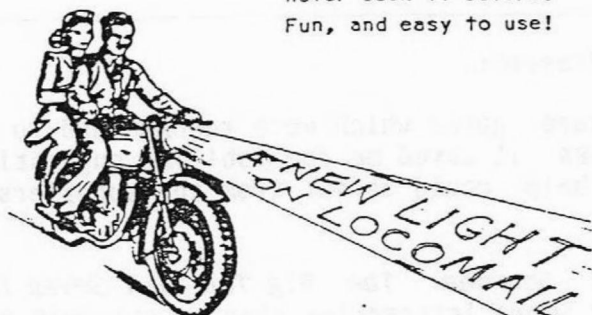
My last visit to a Toys 'R Us branch (Peterborough) was about 3 years ago, and I had found a lot of old games from various publishers. I guessed they were handling the games as a 'clearance' line; to be dropped once their supply of deleted games dried up. I think they then cost about £3, but I may be wrong.

Today's trip to the Basildon shop was a revelation. There were still a large number of 8-bit games, all of them published by Hit Squad. Many of them were budget editions of very good and popular games, as well as some rather less famous items. All on tape.

The game display was fairly evenly divided between the C64's, CPC's, and Spectrum's versions. No MSXs at all.

When you consider how few of the 'proper' computer shops can now be bothered to support us, I think Toys 'R Us deserve wider publicity. And they've just got it.

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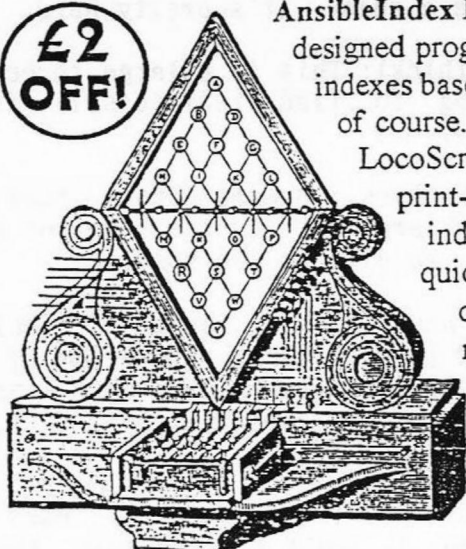


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STARTING COMPUTER ADVENTURING Pt2 by Gerry Prescott.

Here are the titles of some good adventure games which were recommended to the editor by The Pancotts of WoW Software. Thanks, it saved me the job! The suggestions are for CPC owners, but I am sure similar help could be got from the suppliers of adventures for other computers.

For under 12's, WoW recommend *The Last Snowman*, *The Big Top*, and *Seven Lost Gnomes* - they are graphic-based, so visually more interesting than a text-only game to a youngster. *The Case of the Mixed-Up Shymer* is for beginners of all ages as its theme is that of well-known nursery rhymes.

For the more mature newcomers, try the *Trewhella* series, especially *Simply Magic* (also graphic-based). Clever, and incorporating ingenious puzzles, they make good starting points. Then *Helvera* and *Grue-knapped* by Bob Adams, and *Balrog*, which won the Amstrad Action competition for games created using the Adventure Creator (GAC).

THE BEST PUBLIC DOMAIN FOR AMSTRAD CPC

Catchy title, yeah? I'm Tom Dean of the discmag IMPACT writing for 8BIT MART about the best PD for the CPC. In the next few issues I'll be looking at the best software from these categories: ADVENTURES, GAMES, DEMOS, UTILITIES and the best of the rest (slideshows, discmags, etc.)

In the first part, I'll tell you about the best adventures. The text in brackets beside the author's name is the name of the language used to program the game (BASIC, PAW-Professional Adventure Writer, GAC-Graphic Adventure Creator, etc.)

The Base by Ken Bond (CP/M) (PAW): This game is very deep - nearly as in-depth as an Infocom adventure! The story line is that you're some guy trapped in a South American prison and you have to escape to steal a submarine or something.... This game is very hard, only for the experienced player.

Eve Of Shadows by Rob Buckley (BASIC): This game is in BASIC, but it doesn't look that way! It's an excellent graphic adventure, where you control two characters (flip between them). It's slightly bugged, which is a shame. It's pretty hard.

Lost Phirous Trilogy by Neil Scrimgeour (Quill, I think): This is a large three-part adventure, where you play a galactic trader trying to find stuff to sell (in the first part at least). This game is pretty hard also.

Caves 1990 by Simon Netherwood (Quill with good graphics): Bugged (and I think it's impossible to complete), but fun nonetheless. You are out in the lake (or peak) district, and you have to find lots of jewels, etc. to give to the spectre.

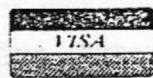
Anything by Simon Avery (Quill): Simon Avery has written loads of excellent adventures using the Quill, some are: *Rouge Midget* (pretty hard), *House Out Of Town* (pretty hard), *Spacy* (easy), *Welladay* (pretty easy), *Boredom* (adults only - pretty hard), *Adult 2* (adults only - easy), *Doomlord's trilogy* (pretty hard). He's also written a lot of adventures available through WoW software.

Journey To Geno is publicised as an adventure/RPG but it isn't really. Part 2 of it is an adventure, but part 1 is a strategy wargame. It isn't a large game, but the DOC files for it take up over 100Kb!

Most of these games can be obtained through any good PD library (for instance, the IMPACT PD advert in the CPC section!) See you in the next issue of 8BIT MART!



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PCW - FOR SALE

THE KEITH SIMONS COLLECTION comprises dozens of free software programs. Reviewed in 8000 Plus for (March 1992, p49). Includes: calendars (any year since 325), a quiz game, label printer, word counters, a tour around the solar system(!) £4.95 from PCW World (Ref B/104), Meadway Court, Bloomfield Street North, Halesowen, West Midlands B63 3RE.

PCW - WANTED

WANTED: Protext wordprocessor in a recent version. It is to run on a PCW, but CP/M Protext, as supplied for a CPC 6128, is the same. Telephone: 0202 876807, please, if you can help.

WANTED: LOCOSCRIPT 2 version 2.33c (or later) FOR THE PCW9512 - that fully supports a 3½" B: drive. Also wanted, the Locoscript 2 printer support disc. Please phone David on 0665 570662 (at any time)

PCW - MISCELLANEOUS

FOUR GAMES, PLUS a program to keep track of the fuel consumption and cost per mile of as many vehicles as you like. All running direct from CP/M. On 3" or 3½" disc. £5 including postage. FW Manders, 4, Carral Close, LINCOLN LN5 9BD

WANTED: A SHEETFEEDER for a Canon BJ10ex printer. If you can help please telephone: 0202 876807

* * * *

The FREE ADVERTISING magazine...

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COMPUTER SALES AND WANTS (formerly known as the DRAGON MAGAZINE), has loads of items such as computers, magazines, books, computer games etc. in every issue.

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The magazine is issued bimonthly on double sided A4 paper and has at least 15-20 pages. It is easy to read and understand. For an example copy send just £1.50p to the address below. Subscriptions can be taken for up to a year in advance (£9) or you can order a few at a time.

Write to: Computer Sales And Wants, 10 Overton Road, Abbey Wood, London, SE2 9SD. Cheques/postal orders payable to: D. Howard.

Computer Sales And Wants is not run as a business, but a service provided by a computer enthusiast for fellow computer enthusiasts. You do not have to buy the magazine to advertise. Full large lists of items are welcome and encouraged.

FREE PLUS TIME - PART 2

You may recall (if you got issue 1) that I gave a plug to *The Grotto*, a very good stockist of all things 8-bit, who were then on the verge of moving to new premises in Norwich. Well they've done it and are to be found at 9-11, Bedford Street, just behind *Jarrold*, the enormous stationery store in the town centre. I know at least two readers have made plans for a safari to darkest Norfolk. I hope they were successful in their search for **Big Game**. Or small disc.

Incidentally, the *Jarrold* office equipment branch, down Exchange Street from the main shop, is also a good source of stationery bargains. Cheap envelopes, £2 packs of 500 sheets of copier paper etc etc. Even those French curve things I could never get the hang of at school.

I would still be very pleased to hear of any local dealers who you feel deserve wider fame through 8BIT MART. Elsewhere you will see I am also requesting information on good mail-order suppliers. As with them, I will build a database to be published in each issue of 8BIT MART. I have been pleasantly surprised to pick up 8-bit items in various charity shops in my travels around the country.

The LAWYERS PCW CLUB

The Lawyers PCW Club looks at PD and Shareware in this issue. Not every programmer wants to sell the products of his labours. There have always been programs given away free. The idea is you simply pay for the disc and a copying fee; and use the program with the author's compliments. This is "Public Domain" (or PD).

Some commercial programmers also use this method of distribution. In Shareware, you pay the copying fee to the library, and receive the program. For a trial period you can then use this program. If it is not suitable for you, you incur no further expense. If you like and continue to use the program, you must pay a further fee to the author. Often this fee is much less than for non-Shareware programs.

Of course, programs available as PD and shareware vary considerably in quality. Some are poor, but you only paid a nominal amount. Others are of the highest standard; vast improvements on their commercial rivals. Some have no commercial equivalents - the only way to do a task. You buy them, you experiment, and pick the best for you. Hobbyists love this - each program throws up new challenges and real enjoyment finding the ideal program. Because of the danger of "bugs" (programmers' errors) and possible viruses (no PCW ones known), the rules are: keep back-ups and keep them away from your other discs; switch the computer off after using suspect programs; don't use discs other than from reliable sources, where possible.

Now a few PD or shareware programs for PCWs which you might wish to try out (some will work with other 8-bit computers): *VDE* is the fastest wordprocessor for the PCW, *D* is a better version of CP/M's *DIR*, *DU49* formats your discs rather larger. *NSWP* is a combination of several CP/M disc manager utilities. Plenty of games may be had (including *Chess*, which beat my father!). The Club's Hon Secretary wrote *The Keith Simons Collection* in Mallard Basic, which provided him, and will provide you, with many hours of fun and perhaps be useful too. All are available from PCW World.

Club enquiries to: 10 Orrishmere Road, Cheadle Hulme, Cheadle, Cheshire SK8 5HP

INSTANT RECALL FOR THE PCW/PCW COMPUTERS

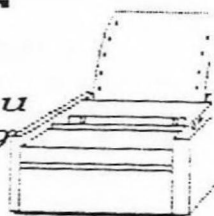
The Instant Recall suite (on 3" or 3½" discs) comprises a set of LocoMail routines to make life easier for Locoscript users. You will need Locoscript 1, 2, or plus the appropriate version of LocoMail to access the routines. You don't have to specify which version because routines are supplied in Locoscript 1 and 2 versions, and Locoscript 3 users can convert them automatically by normal editing.

You've already got a pocket calculator so why do you need one for your PCW? Well, your pocket calculator doesn't retain a screen display of all the figures that you've entered, and it (usually) doesn't let you print out the sums, nor enter them into a Locoscript document. Instant Recall's calculator can do all that; and has memory store/recall facilities. In addition to the calculator, it offers a pair of routines for converting all kinds of measurements from Imperial to Metric and back; a set of full screen calendars up to the year 2000 that can show holidays for different parts of the UK; and a very handy accounts package which records cheque book transactions etc, and provides the current balance with a statement giving a description of each transaction.

All routines provide a very high standard of on-screen presentation. Title bars and information boxes give all necessary instructions, and menus are designed to professional standards - LocoMail as you've never seen it before - looking great on screen, fun and easy to use. For a copy send a cheque (to D.Landers) for £9.50 to: *Brinkburn Garden Cottage*, Longframlington, Morpeth, Northumberland NE65 8AR. Or phone: 0665 570662

Super Labeller

*A new utility package enabling you
to design and print super-looking
Labels and Letterheads
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FANCY LABELLER

This program allows you to design, edit, store and print text-based labels. The main features are:-

- * Simple 'on-screen' label editing.
- * Add printer control codes to each label line eg. bold, italic, double width and, on external printers, more exotic styles such as shadow, outline, double width and height.
- * Design your own customised printer drivers with single-letter codes for each effect eg. A, B, C.
- * Matrix/Daisy/Star drivers on disc
- * Variable line spacing <> labels.
- * Locate labels by data search.
- * Print multiple copies of labels.
- * Build your own library of labels.
- * Auto-numbering for ticketing etc.
- * Fully menu-driven for easy use.
- * Simple printer port selection.

PICTURE LABELLER

This is the program for those users wishing to add graphics to their label designs. The program is again menu-driven with the following main options:-

- * Type text, in a variety of different styles and sizes.
- * Select a graphic from the 100+ pictures in the disc library.
- * More picture discs available.
- * Load and Save Label designs.
- * Print routine uses graphics + text modes for speed and quality
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Spectrum hardware for sale. Eg:
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some other 8-bit micros. Send SAE for
list to Mr K Gurd, 27, the Millpond,
Holbury, SOUTHAMPTON, Hants SO45 2QN

SPECTRUM - WANTED

WANTED FOR THE SPECTRUM: Any old
platform and ladder games. Any Plus D
owners who would like to share any
information or discs. Write to: John
Turner, 58, Burnside, PARBOLD, Lancs.
WN8 7PE

CHIC COMPUTER CLUB

I have received details, through
their introductory newsletter, of the
CHIC Computer Club, which I am happy
to pass on to readers. The group was
founded in 1982 and seems to be a very
comprehensive organisation; offering

discounts, a bimonthly magazine, PD, a
buy/sell service and, unusually, a
dealer and consultancy network.

It is not obvious from the sampler
whether CHIC is predominantly biased
towards one computer, but the club has
sub-divisions called Special Interest
Groups which cover STs, PCWs, PCs, the
16-bit Commodores, the 8-bit computers
generally, Spectrums, Consoles, and
Fantasy Games enthusiasts.

One aspect which puzzles me is
that, while the CHIC Club itself is
avowedly nonprofit-making, the intro
pack promotes the possibilities of
running a sub-group with the chance of
making a good level of personal profit.
I am not against this in principal,
but I wonder how it works in practice
as the computer groups I belong to at
present are all nonprofit-making.

Write (with SSAE) to: Ted Edwards,
CHIC Computer Club, Box 121, Gerrards
Cross, Bucks SL9 9JP

COMMODORE - FOR SALE

"Calendars 1995" - 1541 DS Disk of Geopaint files of A4 calendars for each month of 1995. Ready to print with Geos and 80 dpi printers. The Nova font is included as a bonus. £3.99 including p & p in UK. Michael D Pearson, 31, Saxon Close, Stratford upon Avon, Warwickshire CV37 7DX

COMMODORE - WANTED

WANTED: Disk copies of "Exile", "Supreme Challenge" (compilation) and "Myth" for the C64. I will pay budget price or swap with tape versions of "Rick Dangerous", "Flimbo's Quest", "Strider II", "Shadow Dancer", "Wonder Boy", "Fun School 2", "4 Quattro Power". My address is: Derek Wilson, Derrycannon, Derrylin, Co Fermanagh, BT92 9GG

WANTED: A Vic Rel Interface, also "Nobby the Aardvark" on tape. Will pay good prices for either or both. Please phone Graham on 0223 245743.

COMMODORE - FOR SALE -contd

WANTED - SOFTWARE for Commodore C16 and Plus Four computers. Anything considered, i.e tapes, disks, mags, books. Also wanted - dead or dying C16 and Plus Four. Ring Peter with details on 0444 440647. Thank You.

DEVELOPMENTS IN PREPARATION - contd

Last issue, I mentioned I was trying to establish a relationship with one of the country's largest charity organisations. As yet, this has not come to fruition, despite us doing our best to get things together, but I still live in hope.

In the meantime, you would be well-advised to keep your eyes on the charity shops' windows, especially if you live south of London. It would be a breach of confidence to be specific but after they have been cleared for safety, one Very Large Charity sells its computer kit through the shops near the gentleman who checks them.

MAYHEM IN MONSTERLAND

From the makers of Creatures and Creatures 2 comes probably the greatest platform game ever created for the C64; Mayhem In Monsterland is an intriguing blend of fast, frenetic platform action, with five wickedly cute levels to explore. Featuring the cutest dinosaur ever to emerge from the Jurassic period, you'll soon forget all about Italian plumbers and spikey blue hedgehogs.

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ADDRESS.....

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Apex Computer Productions, PO Box 100,
South Ockendon, Essex. RM15 5HD.

RESALE VALUES

Jo Cook, among others, has written raising a good point about the relatively low number of people taking up the offer of a free advertisement in each issue of 8BIT MART. As she says, as less new software is produced the market in the older programs collapses too until it doesn't seem worth selling one's old games software for the price it would realise. Anyone changing machine (it still sticks in my throat to say 'upgrading') tries to sell the lot as a complete bundle.

So what we have is a market place where there are more people looking and hoping for cheap software than there are people prepared to part with it at the realistically low market price! And it still beats me why I don't get more WANTS ads with the open chance of a negotiation over the price later by phone or letter. Believe me, 8BIT MART readers are all reasonable and very approachable people.

With very few exceptions, it is games which achieve the lowest resale prices. A title which originally sold on tape for a price just under £10 is now probably not going to go for more than £1, if that.

When it first came out it may have been 'state of the art' and hyped to the hilt. The box was glossy and the instructions were very detailed: the artwork dynamic, almost realistically photographic, and the advertising was exciting. We bought the 'concept' rather than the gameplay and, with any luck, got many happy hours accepting the reality after the anticipation. But time moves on and the next 'big thing' took its place.

Perhaps it was later re-released by a budget label; in a smaller box, with a smaller instruction sheet, and at a *much* smaller price. Unless the original edition of the game really needs the big presentation, it becomes worth only the same as the budget edition overnight. I have bought quite a lot of games over the years and can count the number of games which I feel

benefitted by the 'big treatment' on the fingers of one hand.

Elite came with a story book and detailed manual of background which definitely enhanced the game; in other ways it could be described as just flying about trading and fighting with wire space ships. The many simulations by Microprose were later reissued on budget labels, but the originals came with really well-produced books of operating instructions and background details to a degree which could not be expected to be adequately condensed onto a single cassette insert card. There are other examples but I hope you get my point.

So what we have are shelves or drawers full of games we used to play years ago, but which we are now too mean to part with!

Right, this is my new month's resolution - I will go through my games and ruthlessly list those I no longer play. As I do it I will briefly describe the main features (dead easy but very colourful platform game, for example). Then I will place a free advertisement for the list in 8BIT MART and thereby give other people the opportunity to get their hands on my old games at reasonable prices.

At the same time I will be freeing up some much-needed space in my computer room and, who knows, I might come across a forgotten favourite. Now where *did* I put *Elite*...?

* * * *

WEIRD WIRED WORLD

September 28th 1994. There are three possible outcomes of dialling a number; right number connected, right number but engaged, or wrong number. So the odds are two to one against success. Our local exchange have just introduced tone dialling. Now I get connected to the wrong or engaged number I've dialled 12 times as fast. That's progress.

* * * *

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OUTRO

That's it! Still more contributions from Amstrad users than anyone else but something good for everyone, I hope. I must be doing something right - the list of subscribers has more than doubled since issue 1, and everyone who has commented has been very flattering, or at least 'constructive'! By the time of the next issue I will have joined the IEBA, and hopefully have some fuller details of INDUG for you.

Brian Watson