

SAM Community

Newsletter Issue #1

Mar/Apr 1999

Malcolm Mackenzie

1946 - 1999

Malcolm Mackenzie of Persona sadly passed away in February. Readers of the SAM-Users email list probably heard it first, and the sad news was followed by a mountain of shocked emails from genuinely sad SAM owners. Many of us found it hard to believe that such a thing could happen to someone with such enthusiasm for life, especially for the SAM. Tributes poured in from SAM owners all over the world, many of whom had enjoyed one of those long and interesting chats with Malcolm.

Over the last few years, Malcolm had put in an incredible effort into keeping the SAM scene going. He had managed to release brand new games and hardware as well as re-release the back catalogue of other companies who had since left the SAM scene, including SC_Software and Fred Publishing.

Exactly what will happen to Persona now is not certain. David Ledbury, editor of Blitz and good friend of Malcolm has vowed that Malcolm's hard work will not go to waste and that Persona will continue.

It is a sad way to have to start the Newsletter but we all know that Malcolm would have wanted us to get back on our feet and keep the SAM going. We'll remember Malcolm and all his efforts and will enjoy the work he put into Persona for years to come.

More news on the future of Persona and where to buy Persona software, will be detailed in the next issue.

Quazar redefines SAM video

Colin Piggot has been as busy as ever over the last month, and has rewritten his Quazar Video system. Quazar Video 2 now has *fixed frame rates*, which can run right up to 25 frames per second. This is an improvement over the original Quazar Video, as the more the image changed, the longer it took per image frame.

The second improvement in Quazar Video 2 is that the frames of the video appear on the screen nearly instantly. This is due to Colin's rewritten image decompression routines.

The final improvement is that the size of the images in the video can be different, unlike the original Quazar video in which the images were fixed on 80 x 60 pixels.

You can see the very nice effects of Quazar Video 2 on the latest issue of Soundbyte, issue 47. The fact that Colin chose B*Witched's Rollercoaster video to demonstrate his new system, will not be mentioned, and we'll move swiftly on.

More good news from Colin tells us that he is working on an expansion disk for his Quazar Video Construction Kit - this will allow you to create videos in the new Quazar Video 2 format. More news next issue.

Inside this issue

Malcolm Mackenzie 1946-1999, Quazar redefines SAM Video, SAM Community rapidly grows, Bye Bye Fred, Blitz 8, SAM Community projects, The SAM Community Market, Crashed Revival, SAM Community File Library, Chris Pile's next game, New 8-bit Show, German Shows Announced, Reminder and Next Issue! Phew!

SAM Community, 34 Craigowen Road,
Carrickfergus, BT38 7NE.

SAM Community rapidly grows

Over the last few months, a steady trickle of applications for the SAM Community have come in. It's been quite impressive really, and it shows there is a lot more life left in the SAM than some people might think. It's particularly impressive, when you consider that very little of the SAM users on the Internet are aware of the community. This will be rectified over the coming week - expect to see membership double by the next issue. A web site is nearing completion which will give full information on the SAM Community, as well as the SAM Coupe itself. For those with Internet access, keep an eye on <http://www.lineone.net/~samcommunity>

You should also be a member of the SAM-Users mailing list. Every day members of this list bounce ideas, information and jokes around - it keeps SAM owners in touch and is very worth while joining if you have Internet access. Just send an email to...

sam-users-request@nvg.ntnu.no with nothing but **help** in it - this will send you back more information.

Don't worry though, as a member of the SAM Community, you are sure to be kept up to date with any happenings on the list.

Bye Bye Fred

The first thing I ever loaded on my SAM was an issue of Fred. Sadly over the past year or two, the once great Fred magazine and Fred Publishing have been in turmoil, passing several hands on the way. Malcolm finally rescued them recently, when he obtained the rights to the Fred Publishing software and disk mag. He also decided the only sensible thing to do with the mag, would be to incorporate it into Blitz.

Whatever way Persona continues, this means that all Fred software will once again be available for purchase.

Blitz 8

David Ledbury has recently announced that Blitz issue 8 will be available as a free download on the Internet and will be a tribute to Malcolm. The Persona web site is at

<http://www.persona.clara.net>

SAM Community projects

Your chance to get involved!

Sadly, as you may have read, some of the plans for the SAM Community are running a little behind schedule but this is all the more reason for you to get involved! One or two of the more exciting plans will probably start to materialise later on in the year, and full information and requests for help will be printed then! Below is the current list of projects planned. At the moment these are all directly linked to the SAM Community, but as time goes on, and the Community grows, hopefully this column will be used for all projects (software etc).

Project title - S.C. Demo Database

Project description - An attempt to name and describe every demo ever written on the SAM Coupe.

Project supervisor - Andrew Collier

Help need - Any fans of demos on the SAM, please get in touch with me and I will link you up with Andrew to discover if you have any demos he doesn't yet have in his database.

Estimated completion date - Unknown

Project title - S.C. Games Database

Project description - As above, but for games

Project supervisor - Required, please write

Estimated completion date - August 1999

Project title - S.C. Utility Database

Project description - As above, but for utilities

Project supervisor - Required, please write

Estimated completion date - October 1999

More projects added next issue!

The SAM Community Market

Place your free advertisements here! Simply send them into the usual address.

Wanted - All Sinclair items - software, hardware, books, magazines, I want the lot! Whether giving your old stuff away to a good home or you want to make some money in the process, write to me, Gavin Smith, at the usual SAM Community address with details. Thanks!

Crashed Revival

The latest issue of Crashed popped through my door yesterday. Just a few issues ago Crashed looked like it was very much dead but this latest issue confirms that new editor, Dave Fountain, has turned things around and Crashed is once again well worth reading.

The issue I received, issue 24 contains several interesting articles including an interview with Joyce Cook, who some of you may remember from Spectrum Software Hire. Other articles include Sinclair Years (a series of articles on Sinclair computers over the years, whilst mentioning other machines available at the same time) and Hardcore Hardware (making a custom joystick interface for the Speccy). It's also worth noting that the print run for this issue of Crashed is 200 which is very large for a Speccy fanzine these days. Dave says that he has had some success selling some copies of Crashed to computer retro shops in London.

Sadly for SAM owners, Crashed seems to be moving further into the Speccy direction. Indeed, Dave admits that Mark and Allen, previous Crashed editors, were more SAM orientated than himself, and he is therefore relying on others to send him Coupe material. If you are at all interested in Spectrum machines, Crashed is well worth reading.

To subscribe to Crashed, just send £5 (cash and uncrossed postal orders) to...

Crashed Fanzine,
11 Camel Road,
London,
E16 2DE

...and you will receive the next 5 issues of the new improved, rather smutty Crashed!

SAM Community File Library

Things are a little behind regarding SAM Community, but hopefully the File Library will be up and running by next issue. The current plan is slightly more adventurous than the original, with the hope that the File Library will turn into a fully fledged PD Library. This will incorporate the original promise of access to files currently available on the Internet, for those with no Internet access. Files will, of course, be available for the price of the disk and postage. The File Library list that should come with your next newsletter, will display the size of each file beside its description, allowing you to fit as many files as possible onto your disk.

Chris Pile's next game...

Chris Pile, author of the wonderful Defender is currently working on another new SAM game, this time it's chess. Although quite a long way from completion, the main chess engine is written and Chris has kindly sent us a few of the features that are likely to appear:

Windowed/pointer system for menu control.

Drag and Drop movement of chess pieces.
No typing of A5-A6 Etc!

The above two functions can be controlled using the SAM mouse.

Full timer control of computer thinking. No old fashioned 'fixed depth' searches.

Complete game save/load and replay.

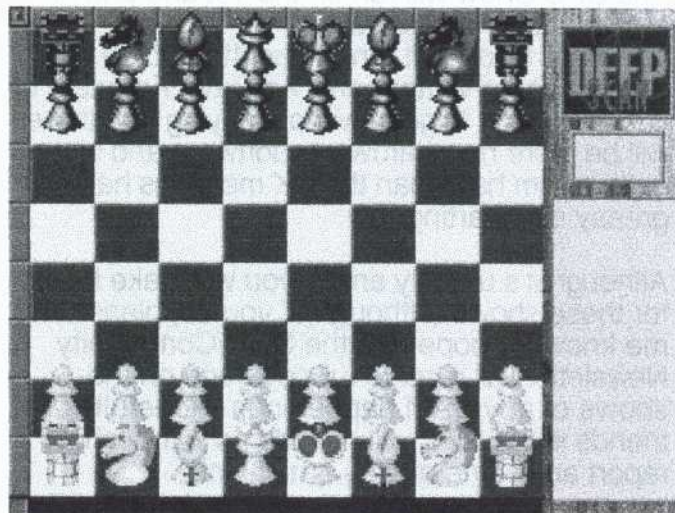
The usual board set-up functions, including move take-back as far as the start of the current game.

Some very nice graphics by Gordon Wallis!

Piece-can-move-to-square-X highlights for beginners.

Chris says that, as work progresses, more features are likely to be added.

A mockup screenshot of the graphics in this game is shown below, and it does indeed look fantastic. Sounds like this one could give Jupiter's Chess game a run for its money. The next issue of the SAM Community Newsletter will feature an update on the progress of the game, and also an interview with the man himself, Chris Pile.



New 8-Bit show

It's been looking a little worrying on the Spectrum/SAM show front lately but there is good news from Brian Watson. He is organising The 1999 UK 8-Bit Convention. Don't say you weren't given fair warning of the event, because it doesn't happen until Sunday the 26th of September. Brian is clearly trying to make the event a major success by publicising it early. It will take place in The Saddler's Club, Walsall, Nr Birmingham, England and will cost only £2 to get in. Up to 40 or 50 tables will be available and awards will be made to the best exhibitors on the day. Food facilities will be available nearby, and, in the words of Brian, there will be a "comfy sit-down and chat area".

Bookings will open at the end of March and for further information as it becomes available e-mail uk8@spheroid.demon.co.uk or write, enclosing an A4 stamped addressed envelope, to Brian Watson, Harrowden, 39, High Street, Sutton, ELY, Cambs, CB6 2RA, England.

Or look out for more news in the SAM Community Newsletter!



German shows announced

As ever, Speccy and SAM fans outside the UK are ahead of us and have announced two shows in Germany.

The SPC Show will run on the 1st and 2nd of May in Monchengladbach.

The SUC Show will run on the 4th and 5th of September in Wittenberg. As Dave Fountain of Crashed put it "it goes without saying that there will be more new hardware, software and blatant enthusiasm here than the UK meetings have greasy side partings."

Although it's unlikely any of you will make it over for these shows (although, if you do, please let me know!), I hope that the SAM Community Newsletter will receive full coverage on the shows of any SAM happenings. Hopefully our friends in the SPC will provide us with a show report and some photos...(hint hint!)

Reminder

The SAM Community is here for you. It is non-profit making, and its only goal is to support the SAM, its companies and its users. There are various ways you can help and also various ways you can make use of the Community. Two ways to help are:

1) Take a look at the SAM Community Projects list - can you help with any?

2) Send us all the news you can find, no matter how small or large, all is welcome.

Ways the Community can help you:

1) You know that program you were working but lost enthusiasm over? Find the graphics artist you need - tell me about your project and it will be published in the Projects list.

2) Are you a company/individual providing a service or product for the SAM? Get in touch - we can provide free advertising, mailshots and also give you advice via the Database on what your potential customers might like you to produce next.

Write in - tell me what you want, and let's get a bit of momentum going in the SAM world again!

Next issue...

Our interviews kick off with Chris Pile, the man behind SAM Defender - and we'll try not to mention *that* virus...

We also kick off our series on companies/individuals still involved with the SAM - we run down their history, full details of their present products, and any of their plans for the future.

Finally with a jump in readership expected next issue, we will publish the results of the SAM Community questionnaire that I pestered you all into. Some of the results are quite surprising!

The Small Print

It's been odd writing the first issue of the SAM Community Newsletter. Just as I was about to start writing it, I heard the sad news of Malcolm's death. Among other things, this put me off the SAM altogether for a few weeks, there didn't seem any point and I couldn't find the energy to start the Newsletter. A few weeks on and I've got most of my enthusiasm back, although there are times I almost want to get rid of my SAM stuff. SAM Community is now back on track however, albeit a month or two behind where I would have liked it to have been. One thing I found hard whilst writing the Newsletter was to keep my own opinions out of it and to keep it purely news as I promised. Bit of a stupid promise really, a Newsletter would be incredibly dull and lifeless if it wasn't for opinions of its writers. However, I will try and stick to the promise and provide nothing but pure news - forgive me if I slip up from time to time! See you next issue...