

**POPULAR**

**ISSUE 03**  
**SUMMER/AUTUMN 2019**

# **RETRO**

## **Melting moments**

*Unthawing the ice lollies of  
yesteryear*

**PLUS:**  
**Action Force figures • WJS Design's 16-bit games**



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# POPULAR RETRO

**ISSUE 03**  
**SUMMER/AUTUMN**  
**2019**

[www.popularretro.com](http://www.popularretro.com)

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## ***Editorial***

Where did the Summer go? As ever, things have been busy here at Andrews UK Ltd moving into our new offices, as this third issue of Popular Retro was taking shape.

Firstly, we have a new contributor this issue. Blogger and accomplished artist Chris McAuley writes about a particular line of action figures that some of you might have had if you were a child of the 80s. With memories of warmer weather starting to disappear as autumn sets in, rediscover the wonderful variety of ice lollies (or ice popsicles) and ice creams that kept the British public going in summers gone by, when two giants of the ice cream world squared up to each other for dominance.

If 16-bit computer games were your thing, then a trip down memory lane with WJS Design founder Wayne Smith should be right up your street. As usual, we also have some retro fun in the form of a crossword, word search and spot-the-difference.

Now, better start hunting for those retro themed Xmas presents. See you all next time!



# RETRO NEWS

## *Better Late Than Never*

More than thirty years after the ZX Spectrum won the hearts of a generation of gamers, artist Andy Green realised there was enjoyment to be had from the challenge of creating artworks that complied with the graphical limitations of the much-loved home computer. Happily, for the retro community, he has a real knack for it! *Better Late Than Never* is a new 'coffee-table' book that features a range of Andy's excellent creations, from loading screens for games that were devoid of such a luxury to depictions of titles that never made it to the platform ... and plenty more.

Generosity has always been a hallmark of the retro scene, and in keeping with such traditions it is pleasing to know that profits from the sale of this book are being donated to the MS Society ([www.mssociety.org.uk](http://www.mssociety.org.uk)). The book itself is a nicely-weighted hardback of roughly A4 landscape size. We've found ourselves studying some pages for hours, trying to work out how Andy has avoided the bane of Spectrum graphics: colour



clash! It's not just pictures though; interesting comments and musings from a small handful of contributors are scattered throughout.

We've been lucky enough at Popular Retro to have been given a preview copy, but you can get your

hands on one from Amazon (and other bookstores) when it is released in late October. For news about the hardback and upcoming eBook and to see more of these amazing works of art, head over to [facebook.com/AndyGreenPixelArt](https://facebook.com/AndyGreenPixelArt).



*Better Late Than Never* is published by AG Books and is due to be launched late October.  
Hardback ISBN 9781789821529



# A THEC64 update from Retro Games

THEC64 launch date was officially announced on June 25th 2019. Since then, production has started on the full-size THEC64 in time for release in December. This is the result of a huge amount of work that has been put in since THEC64 Mini was released last year (2018). As revealed in the previous issue of Popular Retro, THEC64 uses upgraded hardware, more USB ports, an integrated keyboard reminiscent of the original C64 keyboard, the ability to choose between 50 and 60 Hz output, and many other features including the recently revealed addition of a VIC 20 (or VC 20 if you live in Germany) computer model option. You can configure expanded memory options to allow THEC64 to run a vast number of titles from the VIC 20's software catalogue, including

virtual disks, tapes, cartridges and stand-alone programs.

THEC64 features two distinct boot modes. In Carousel mode, chose from a selection of pre-installed and preconfigured C64 and VIC 20 games, including some Jeff Minter classics like Iridis Alpha, Psychedelia and Hovver Bovver. You can also load your own sourced C64 and VIC 20 programs from USB. In Classic mode, you boot directly into BASIC on a C64 or VIC 20 like the original computer. This mode also includes a fully featured Media access option, allowing easy swapping of virtual disks for programs that require disk flipping or swapping during play.

As previously mentioned, THEC64 full-size can be configured to output at either

50 or 60 Hz, which means it can be used on HD TVs and monitors across the globe, regardless of region. The integrated and fully functional keyboard on THEC64 faithfully reproduces the look of the original, and works seamlessly with both C64 and VIC 20 software.

As with THEC64 Mini, a number of different simulated display modes are available, and all of THEC64 menus and screens can switch between English, French, Italian, German or Spanish text on the fly.

Finally for this update, THEC64 comes supplied with a Mk2 micro switch THEC64 joystick, which can also be purchased separately. All of this and much more, delivered just in time for Christmas.





# Summer lolly days



**T**he 1960s through to the '80s was a prolific period in the UK where licking feet wasn't just for dogs, and biting Dracula (rather than the other way around!) or giving someone The Finger was an almost daily occurrence during the summer months.

No doubt a fair few ice cream van owners were able to retire and live happily ever after following the UK heat-wave of 1976, and it set the benchmark for hot summers in the UK ever since. However, novelty and themed ice lollies were selling like hot cakes for many years before that landmark season and for decades since. In fact, the earlier sweltering summer of 1959 was also significant, as it persuaded a number of British households to buy a home refrigerator, which created the market for ice cream at home and gave corner shops an incentive to install freezers to sell ice cream and ice lollies.

The sheer variety of ice lollies sold by Ice Cream vans and corner shops around Great Britain during that time is cause for reflection and celebration. It would also be particularly remiss not to throw in a few ice cream cones into the mix whilst we're at it. The battle for lolly supremacy across those three decades was almost exclusively a straight stand-up battle between two UK companies, Wall's and Lyons Maid. Let's get going, before things start to melt!

## –ICE ICED LOLLY–

*For the sake of consistency, throughout this article we have referred to each product as an ice lolly. However, it's interesting to note that Lyons Maid referred to almost all of their products as an 'Iced Lolly' on the packaging we researched. In comparison, Wall's typically called them a Lolly, an Ice Lolly or an Ice Cream, varying on a product-by-product basis. Sometimes, they didn't have a category on the wrapper at all!*

## Another Lick on a Wall's

In the late 18th century, young Richard Wall began his apprenticeship to a pork butcher called Edmund Cotterill on a solitary stall in St James' Market, London. Richard eventually became a full partner and then sole proprietor in 1807, renaming the business as Wall's.

Wall's the butchers grew throughout the 19th Century, gaining a Royal Appointment as pork butcher to the Prince of Wales. Moves to larger premises followed, and ownership of the business passed on to other family members after Richard died in 1838.

Richard's son, Thomas Wall eventually became the owner. His own son, Thomas Wall Junior became a

partner in the business in his mid-20s in 1870 and was joined by his brother Frederick in 1878, when the company name changed to Thomas Wall & Sons. By then they were supplying Queen Victoria with her own special sausages as the company links with the British Royal Family continued.

By the turn of the 20th century, business was booming but it was always prone to losses during the summer months when customers didn't buy as much fresh meat, sausages and pies. Clearly having a barbecue was not a thing back then! As a result, staff were laid off every summer.

It is unclear who came up with the idea of selling ice cream to help boost trade during those quieter periods, but it was likely to have been Thomas Wall Junior. However, this business-changing decision didn't come into effect until after the First World War. By then, the company had been sold to William Hesketh Lever, following Thomas's retirement in 1920. William Lever owned a soap-making company that included the Lifebuoy, Lux and Vim brands, having originally started in the grocery business. Two years after Thomas Wall & Sons was sold, the company became part of Lever Brothers Ltd, which in turn became Unilever in 1929, after merging with Dutch company Margarine Unie.

The new owners of Wall's began





manufacturing ice cream out of a factory in Acton, North London (Called the Friary) in the early 1920s. The only problem was, most shops didn't have a refrigerator and so the ice creams had to be sold directly to the customers literally on the street. The ice cream salesmen would travel around on tricycles, with the slogan 'Stop me and buy one' placed upfront and above the navy blue insulated boxes that contained their wares. Wafer biscuits, fresh fruit juice and chocolate bars were sold alongside the variously sized ice cream bricks, brickettes and snofrutes.

These Wall's bikes became commonplace, operating from over a hundred different depots across the country right up until the outbreak of the second world war in the late 1930s. In fact, whilst many of these bikes were melted down and repurposed during the war, some were retained and used to train fighter direction officers thanks to the addition of metronomes, radios and compasses.

In 1959, Wall's opened a much larger, purpose-built ice cream factory based in Gloucester, in the west of England. The name Wall's was becoming synonymous with ice cream even more than its other food products. As a result, a separate company called T. Wall & Sons (Ice Cream) Ltd. was set up in the 1960s specifically to look after that side of

the business, with their meat products falling under the auspices of T. Walls & Sons (Meats) Ltd.

Shops were starting to use refrigerators and freezers to store produce in the late 1950s and early 1960s, with many of them supplied directly by Walls. However, only a small percentage (reported to be as low as 13%) of UK homes owned a refrigerator with an ice box compartment suitable for storing ice cream, so the vast majority of ice creams were still being sold to passers-by as an impulse purchase.

## Vantastic Day

Just a few years before the turn of the '60s, the forerunner of the ice cream van had made its official debut in the United States. Irish brothers William and James Conway used their Chevrolet panel truck to give away green-tinted soft whip ice cream to St Patrick's Day revellers in West Philadelphia, using a freezer strapped to the back of their truck, powered by a large electric generator. Emblazoned on the truck was a name that would soon become synonymous with ice cream vans ... Mister Softee.

A few years later in 1958, the first few franchised Mister Softee ice cream vans started appearing on UK streets. This was the result of a fruitful partnership

between Smith's Delivery Vehicles and a company who became Wall's main competitor in the UK's ice lolly market, Lyons Maid.







## The Lyons Sweet Alright

Lyons began as J. Lyons & Company Ltd., founded in 1884/85 by Joseph Lyons and his brothers-in-law Montague and Isidore Gluckstein. Joseph was a professional artist by trade, and the Glucksteins were already business partners in a successful tobacco company called Salmon & Gluckstein.

What began in 1894 with one tea-shop in Piccadilly, London flourished into a chain of tea shops known as Lyons' Corner Houses. The J. Lyons & Company also ran a number of successful hotels and some very swanky restaurants elsewhere in the Capital.

The quality of the service was as important as the quality of the teas, biscuits and cakes they made and sold within their establishments. The

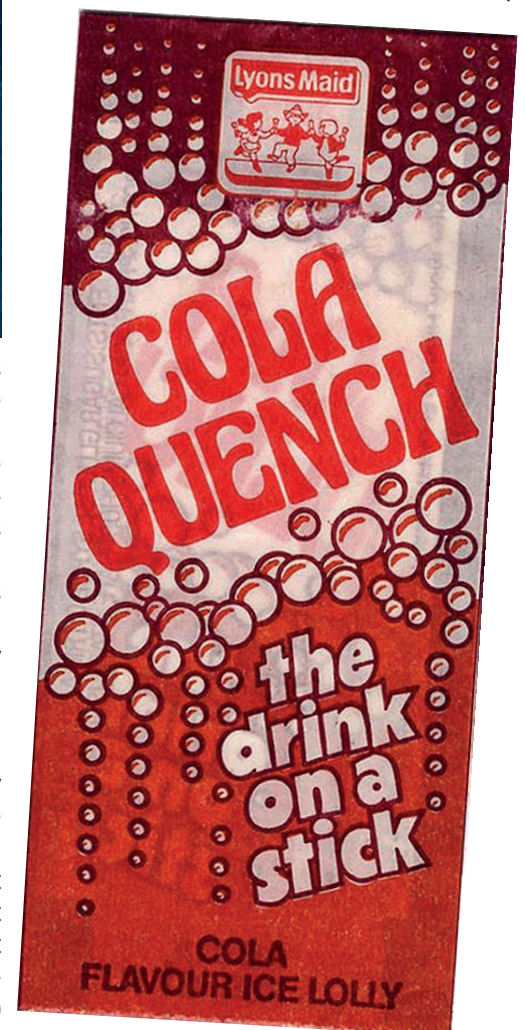
waitresses in particular were always smartly dressed in uniforms and were even given a nickname, starting with 'Gladys' and eventually becoming the rather curious 'Nippy'. With the number of tea shops expanding, thousands of Nippy waitresses were employed across the country during the 1920s and 1930s.

J. Lyons & Company Ltd. eventually became the owner of a huge food empire, selling all across Europe. They diversified into meat pies, tea, coffee, jam, soft drinks, confectionary and hugely relevant to this article, ice cream. They also took over running many hotels, laundries and even got involved in engineering. It was this last particular entrepreneurial move that led to J. Lyons & Company Ltd. managing a Royal Ordnance Factory (ROF)

in Elstow, Bedfordshire that was built by the Ministry of Works on behalf of the Ministry of Supply to support the UK's war effort. Filling munitions began on the site in February 1942 and closed in 1946. The company also supplied rations to millions of troops fighting overseas during the hostilities.

Once the war was over, Lyons expanded further into Europe and America. In the States, they bought the Baskin-Robbins Ice Cream Company, Dunkin' Donuts and developed the Wimpey hamburger franchise as well as introducing the world to the Maryland Cookie. Not bad for a company that started life with one tea shop in Piccadilly!

One of the most surprising facts about J. Lyons & Company Ltd. is their involvement with the fledgling computer industry in the 1950s. The company saw computers as an efficient tool for their food distribution network, and so they invested in the Electronic Delay Storage Automatic Calculator (EDSAC) at the University of Cambridge. This led to the development of the Lyons Electronic Office (LEO) digital computer, which handled the company accounts as well as helped organise the logistics side of the business. Ultimately, their foray into the world of computing was sold in the mid-1960s and ended up







becoming part of Marconi and eventually became part of ICL, which was bought by Japanese company Fujitsu in 1990.

The image of three children holding ice creams and lollies and dancing around each other was first introduced in 1973. Often referred to as the 'Good Time' symbol, it became an iconic part of the Lyons Maid brand and remained as such until the late 1990s.

## Mr Mister

By the early 1960s, ice cream was becoming a big money earner and so that side of J. Lyons' business was spun off into Lyons Maid Limited in 1963. The new company began buying smaller rival ice cream companies in an effort to compete with their main rival, Wall's. To further gain advantage, Lyons Maid went into business with Smith's Delivery Vehicles and with the US company Mister Softee to bring ice cream vans onto the streets of the UK, selling soft whip ice cream and Lyons Maid ice lollies. They eventually bought out the owners and passed the running of the Mister Softee operation to Glacier Foods Ltd, a subsidiary of the Lyons' vast food empire.

In an effort to remain competitive on the streets, Wall's responded and bought the hugely successful Mr Whippy ice cream van franchise business in the mid-1960s, setting up as a direct rival to Mister Softee. The unofficial battle for lolly supremacy in the UK had begun!

Another ice cream rival, Tonibell became part of Glacier Foods Ltd in the late 60s, just as the number of refrigerators and home freezers was hitting its stride. With ice cream now readily available at home, the number of people popping out into the street

## — LOLLY LIST —

*Here is a selection of just some of the ice lollies produced by Wall's and Lyons Maid down the years. How many can YOU remember?*

### Lyons Maid

Angel, Animal World, Apple Jack, Bananaman, Bionic Lolly, Black Prince, Blackcurrant Smash, Brandy Alexander, Brrr Blobs, Captain Cody, Captain Rainbow, Chocolate Glory, Choc Mint, Choco, Cider Quench, Coconut Flake, Cola Quench, Cola Rola, Cola Smash, Crazy Egg, Crime Squad, Dinosaurs, Fab, Freak Out, Frekles, Frutie Blue, Goal!, Gone Bananas, Hard Rock, Haunted House, Jack of Diamonds, Jelly Genie, Jelly Terror, Jubilee, Jungle Bar, Jungle Jim, Junglies, Lemonade Smash, Lolly Gobble Choc Bomb, Luv, Melting Monsters, Merlins Brew, Mint Crisp, Mivvi, Mr. Men, Mr Merlin's Magic Purple Potion, Orange Maid, Orange Quench, Orbit, Pick of the Pops, Pina Colada, Raspberry Smash, Real Milk Ice, Red Devils/Red Devil, Rev, Rock Around The Choc, Score, Sea Jet, Smash, Smashers, Space: 1999, Squeezes, Star Trek – The Motion Picture, Star Wars, Strawberry Glory, Superman, Super Orange Maid, Super Sea Jet, Super Spring, Super Sticky Swisho, Super Zoom, Treble Hit, Triple Choc, Toffee Crumble, Totem Pole, Zoom

### Wall's

5 Ice, 2 Ball Screwball, Astro Boy, Banana Lolly, Big Wiz, Blackcurrant Rhyme, Blood Red Dracula, Callipo, Chilly Choc, Chocmint Starship, Choc Top, Choc-Top Woppa, Choc-Top Wiz, Chunky, Cider Barrel, Cornetto, Count Chocula, Count Dracula's Deadly Secret, Crazy Joe Cola, Dalek's Deathray, Dennis the Menace, Dracula, Fame, Feast, Frank 'n Berry, Funny Faces, Funny Feet, Happy Days, Heart, Hop-Scotch, Jelly Jumbo, Jubilee Special, Jumbo, King Kong, Kinky, Lemonade Ice Lolly, Lemonade Fizz, Lemonade Sparkle, Little/Red Imp, Lord Toffingham, Magic Monster Lolly, Magnum, Mega Bytes, Mini-milk, Mister Magic, Monkey Bar, Monster, Mr Snow, Nogger, Orange Fruitie, Orangeade Sparkle, Red Arrow, Rid Wiz, Red Woppa, Screwball, Shoot, Skateboard Surfers, Sky Ray, Slimey Limey, Solero, Split, Starship 2000, Stick Up, Strawberry Split, Super Spy, Super Star, 'Finger, The', 'Incredible Hulk, The', Tiger Mint, Tom & Jerry, Top Ten, Twister, Warlord, Winner, Witchy Goo, Wiz, Zapp

to buy an ice cream from a van began to decline in the late 1960s and early 1970s, forcing all of the companies to come up with more appealing, exciting products to appeal to the children who were still their main consumers. Of course, they were also able to sell their ice lollies from corner shops, which was far more convenient for the customer than hoping a van might come round the corner, playing its merry tune to announce its arrival.

## Facts, Figures and Failings

By 1976, Wall's had approximately 37% of ice cream sales by value and Lyons Maid around 27%. Together they therefore accounted for a staggering 64% of the supply of all ice cream in the UK. The ownership of the freezers deployed to retail outlets was an equal split between the two companies by the late '70s and early '80s, hovering around 45-46% each. However, Walls were leading the battle on the streets, claiming a 52% market share compared to Lyons Maids 39% in 1980, and increased their percentage to around 66% by the end of that decade.

In 1978, J. Lyons & Company Ltd. merged with Allied Breweries and became Allied Lyons Plc, with Lyons Maid continuing to operate as a subsidiary. However, this merger failed to address issues that were clearly mounting up within the ice cream company. Lyons Maid's gradual decline throughout the '80s was blamed on a number of factors. Little or no new product development was instigated under the new parent company, and none of their products registered in the top ten best-selling brands list.

Allied Lyons'





modest investment in manufacturing plants and a huge reduction in advertising didn't exactly help to slow down Lyons Maid's decline. Distribution difficulties after the sale of their in-house logistics company Alpine Refrigerated Deliveries (Holdings) Ltd. also contributed. Their attempts to claw back market share by concentrating on sales in leisure outlets and cinemas softened the blow a little, but ultimately made no real difference to the final outcome.

In contrast, Wall's (by now part of the Birds Eye Wall's company after a merger between the two Unilever-owned companies in 1981) invested huge amounts of money in new production facilities during the '80s, expanding and updating their Gloucester factory and closing the Acton factory. They also spent heavily on R&D and new brand and product development, reorganised to make themselves more efficient and modernised their refrigerated cabinets. They also persuaded many of the previously Lyons Maid exclusive retailers to jump ship.

By the end of the 1980s, the writing was – rather ironically – on the wall for Lyons Maid. Already in a bad state, some new players then entered the ice cream market and one of them was a very familiar name to UK households; Mars. They were soon followed by a name that soon became synonymous with ice cream, Haagen Dazs. They became a big player in the home freezer ice cream market in the years to come.

Lyons Maid's ultimate fate was sealed when Allied Lyons began experiencing financial problems in the early '90s. Allied Lyons entered into a new venture with Carlsberg in 1992 to sort out the brewery side of the business, and they sold Lyons Maid to UK newcomer Clarke Foods in February 1992. However, that turned out to be a disastrous move as the company immediately hit issues with manufacturing in the UK, which meant they couldn't produce anywhere near the number of products they had lined up, and – to make matters worse – the summer of '92 was very wet in the UK, meaning ice cream sales fell dramatically short of expectations.

In October of the 1992, barely eight months after Lyons Maid had been purchased, Clarke Foods went into receivership. Food and confectionary giant Nestlé stepped up and took the opportunity to buy most of the valuable assets, including the two factories that Clarke Foods had only recently bought and crucially, the Lyons Maid brand.

Lyons Maid continued for a while,



but was eventually dropped by Nestlé six years later in 1998. The brand now resides with Froneri, a company that is the result of Nestlé entering into business with R&R Ice Cream. R&R started in the mid '80s, and ended up buying Allied Frozen Foods' ice cream division in 2000, followed by their acquisition of Nestlé's UK ice cream business in 2001. Various mergers and take-overs over the next 12 years have led to R&R becoming a huge player in the European ice cream market.

In comparison to Lyons Maid's traumatic journey in recent decades, Wall's is still a Unilever brand to this day.

## Lolly Licensing

There have been dozens and dozens of different branded ice lollies over the past six decades. Many of them were licensed from popular children's TV shows. Lyons Maid introduced their Zoom lolly, shaped like a rocket and specifically aimed at boys, in 1966. Initially, Zoom was associated with the Gerry Anderson show Fireball XL5, but then switched to Thunderbirds when that series debuted. After that, Zoom became the Joe 90 lolly of choice.

Zoom was quickly followed by a lolly aimed more at girls. Called Fab, it was



## You Started It!

It's amazing how many similar themed ice creams and ice lollies appeared from both Lyons Maid and Wall's over their years or rivalry. Clearly, there was some reactionary marketing at work, with each company echoing the choices of the other, subconsciously or otherwise. Here are just a few:

Wall's	Lyons Maid	
Little/Red Imp	Red Devils	Presumably marketed for naughty kids!
Jubilee Special	Jubilee	For the Queen's Silver Jubilee in 1977
Magic Monster Lolly	Melting Monsters	Classic movie monsters
Funny Faces	Brr Blobbs	The ultimate ice lolly face-off
Cider Barrel	Cider Quench	Possibly a case of in-cider trading!
Cornetto	King Cornet/King Cone	Competing slogans 'The Big One' vs 'Just One . . .'
Sky Ray	Zoom	Multi-flavoured rocket-shaped lollies



named after the catchphrase used in Thunderbirds (FAB), and featured the only regular female character in the series, Lady Penelope on both the packaging and advertising. The FAB lolly survives to this day, but without any licensing attached to it. To complete the sixties trio, a third lolly was introduced called 'Orbit' in 1967, and was tenuously linked to the Anderson's brand new Supermarionation TV series, Captain Scarlet. Disappointingly, that lolly wasn't scarlet, but was orange and chocolate brown!

Other themed ice lollies would pop up during the '60s, '70s and '80s, including the Dalek's Deathray from Walls, which was chocolate and mint flavoured. This lolly was introduced in 1975 after the Daleks latest appearance in Doctor Who, which by then starred newcomer Tom Baker as the

fourth actor to play the eponymous role.

Walls had previously tied-in with Doctor Who in the late 60s via their Sky Ray lolly, which featured 36 Doctor Who adventure cards and was raspberry and orange flavoured. It also featured some decidedly mixed artwork featuring a person dressed like the first Doctor (as played by William Hartnell), but sporting hair and a stove hat that was more like the second Doctor (as played by Patrick Troughton), but which actually didn't look like either of them! Presumably, the marketing budget didn't stretch as far as paying the TV actors for the rights to use their likeness!

Space: 1999 was another Gerry Anderson license from Lyons Maid, with lime green on the outside and (again) a red centre, which came out in 1977. Very refreshing! The lolly came with a free series of picture cards, with 25 to collect that had absolutely no effect on this author wanting to buy that particular lolly many times that summer, honestly.

Other licensed lollies from the two companies included Happy Days, The Incredible Hulk, Star Wars, Star Trek - The Motion Picture, Disney's The Black Hole, Mr. Men, Bananaman and lots, lots more.

—HAVEN'T WE MET BEFORE?—

*Ice creams and Lollies were constantly rebranded as trends and licences changed over the years. Here are just a few that returned:*

- The licensed Happy Days ice lolly from Lyons Maid was previously Rock Around the Choc, but started out as the Lolly Gobble Choc Bomb!
- Count Dracula from Wall's took flight for a short while, only to re-emerge in 1979 as Disney's The Black Hole ice lolly
- Wall's Red Wiz returned as Little Imp, which was later renamed Red Imp
- Wall's Lemonade Fizz and Lemonade Sparkle appear to be the same lolly but rebranded as Sparkle and slightly smaller in size





## Sticks and Groans

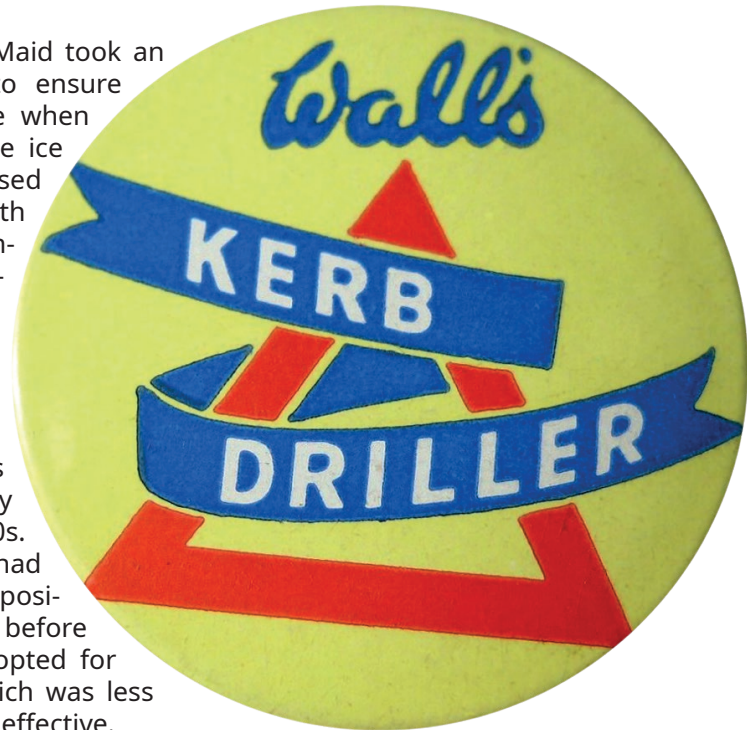
Some ice lolly sticks featured jokes. The punchline was revealed at the opposite end of the stick only after you finished eating the lolly. Most of the jokes were of the Christmas cracker standard, ranked about the same as the infamous Dad's joke standard (considered to be quite low down on the humour scale for some reason!).

Other lolly sticks featured quizzes, whilst some had riddles. Plastic lolly sticks became popular for a while, with Lyons Maid using plastic sticks as promotional gimmicks with characters on them (e.g. for Goal! and Superman), whilst Wall's introduced stencils on plastic lolly sticks for part of their Count Dracula's Secret 'Trace-a-face' campaign. Uniquely, the Stick Up ice lolly from Wall's featured a stick made of liquorice, which you ate after finishing the lolly. Sounds horrible and was also probably quite unhygienic. Yuk!

## Chilled Safety

Both Wall's and Lyons Maid took an active part in trying to ensure that children were safe when getting to and from the ice cream vans that traversed the streets of the UK. Both companies had campaigns to remind children (and car drivers) of the dangers of crossing the road safely near ice cream vans.

Wall's rather bizarre 'Kerb Driller' badge was part of their road safety campaign in the 1960s. The Mr Whippy vans had stickers in prominent positions that said 'Kerb drill before crossing!'. Lyons Maid opted for 'Mind How You Go', which was less bizarre but possibly less effective.



### - QUICK FACTS -

- In the US they are commonly called Popsicles, apparently named after a mash-up of Lolly Pop and Icicle. They are also called Ice Pops or Freezer Pops. In the UK they are typically Ice or Iced Lollies
- Officially, the British Isles heatwave in 1976 lasted from June 23rd until August 27th and brought with it a severe drought. Whilst 1959 had some very hot weather in comparison, it was not as continuous as what came 17 years later
- Why is a 99 called a 99? The classic soft whip ice cream cone with a flake has been around for decades, long before it would have cost 99p to buy (so there goes that theory!). Competing theories believe that a 99 is regarded of the best of the best, named after the elite Italian guard for the Italian Monarchy that consisted of 99 men, whilst others claim it is named after 99 Portabello High Street, Edinburgh in Scotland where an ice cream with a flake was first served in 1922
- The edible ice cream cone was invented in 1888 by Mrs Agnes B. Marshall from Pinner, in London. Agnes was a cook and an inventor of an ice cream maker and a forerunner of the modern freezer, called an ice-cooling plant.



## Record Players

Both Wall's and Lyons Maid produced vinyl records. Wall's had an extended play 7" vinyl record in association with Apple Publishing Ltd and Donovan Music Ltd. Produced by George Harrison, Paul McCartney, Peter Asher, and Mal Evans in 1969, the record featured four tracks - The Ivey's (Storm in a Teacup), James Taylor (Something's Wrong), Jackie Lomax (Little Yellow Pill), and Mary Hopkin (Pebble and the Man). It was a mail order only promotion, which featured on a Wall's ice cream wrappers.

Not to be outdone, Lyons Maid produced a 33.3 rpm record in 1973 called With Lyons Maid You're Laughing, featuring lyrics by comedic writer and TV presenter Denis Norden and music composed by Malcolm Mitchell. The record featured ten tracks, created for a specially produced one-off musical production for over five hundred sales executives to celebrate 50 years of ice cream production by Lyons. It was staged at the Talk of the Town Theatre and Restaurant within the Hippodrome in London's West End.

Songs included Blaze A New Trail, The Girl On The Lyons Maid Phone, Get Behind It And Push, Tele-Op Blues and Plain Or Fancy. It had a very sixties and musical hall vibe to it, and the lyrics featured many Lyons Maid brands and a few executives' names as well! However, some of the lyrics would also not be tolerated in these more enlightened times, so if you do stumble upon the songs, please keep that in mind!



### —LEGISLATION, VAN'S WHAT YOU NEED—

- In the UK, ice cream vans can currently play a tune for no longer than 12 seconds, and only once every two minutes
- The tune played by an ice cream van can be no louder than 80 decibels, and less in narrow streets
- It is advised that the vans do not play their chime when in sight of another van
- Ice cream vans cannot play their chime within 50 meters of a hospital, during school classes or by churches during services, or after 7pm
- Ice cream vans must have a copy of the code of conduct in their van so that anyone who presses the chime button must be aware of the legislation.

**Thanks must go to the following resources used in research for this article.**

*Reviews of UK Statistical Sources – Volume XXVIII - The Food Industries*, by John Mark and Roger Strange (1993)

<https://www.kzwp.com/lyons/>

<http://letslookagain.com>

<https://blog.wfmu.org/freeform/> and David Nodes for kind permission to use some of his photographs

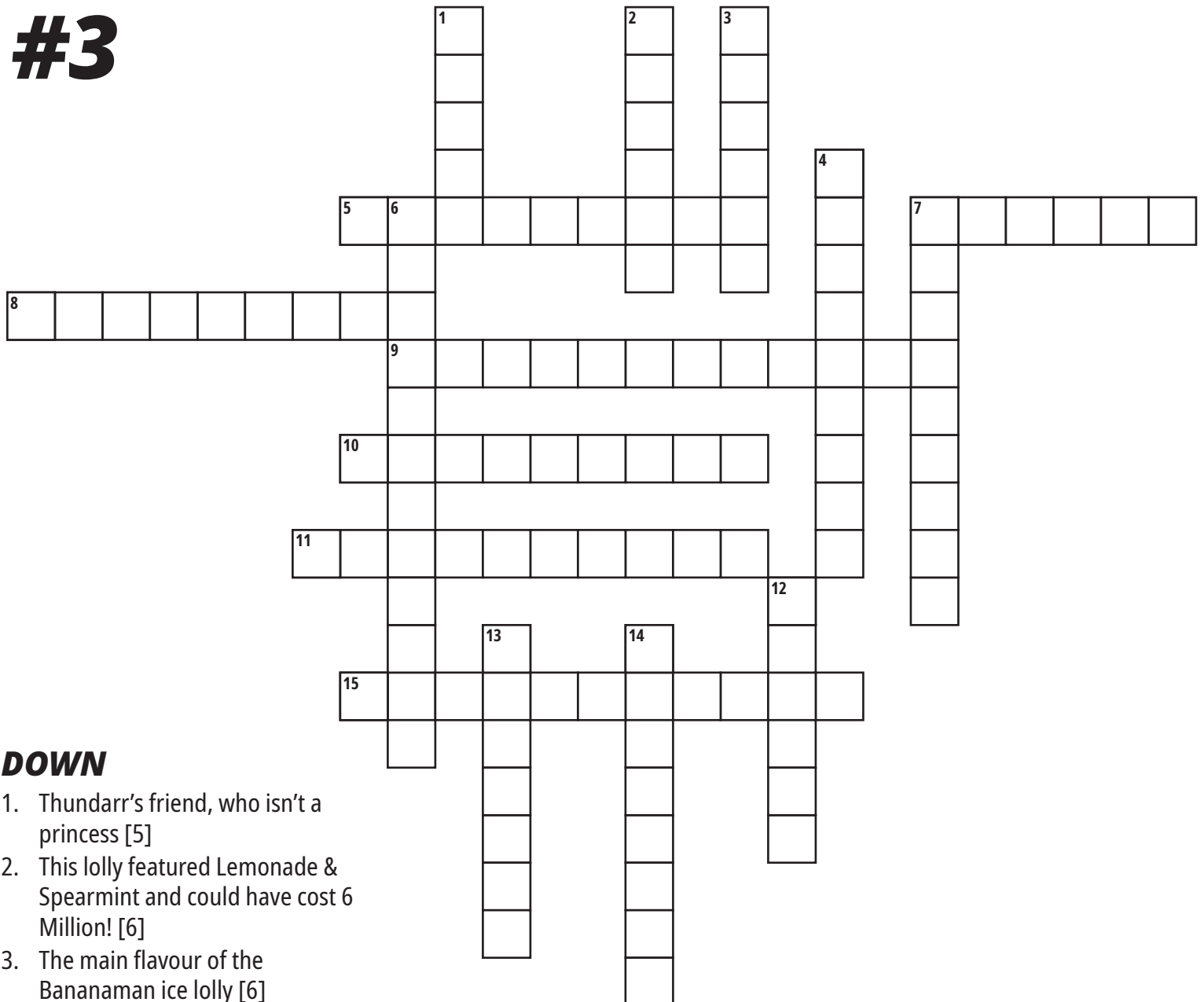
<http://www.reevesdesign.co.uk/stop-buy-one> and Helen Reeves for her kind assistance and images

Stop Me and Buy One image - © Unilever UK Ltd, from the Walls Ice Cream photo archive



# CROSSWORD

## #3



### DOWN

1. Thundarr's friend, who isn't a princess [5]
2. This lolly featured Lemonade & Spearmint and could have cost 6 Million! [6]
3. The main flavour of the Bananaman ice lolly [6]
4. A lolly stick was made out of this foodstuff [8]
6. The ice cream vans used by Lyons Maid [6,6]
7. The UK city where Psygnosis was originally based [9]
12. Two lolly names ended with this word. Orange or Cider what? [6]
13. The mode of transport used by Wall's salesmen in the 1930s [7]
14. A gondola featured in the advert for this ice cream [8]

### ACROSS

5. Who did WJS Design prank by Fax machine? [3,6]
7. Both J. Lyons and Wall's started in this UK city [6]
8. The only computer-themed lolly to ever be made by Wall's [4,5]
9. A Disney movie themed lolly from Wall's [3,5,4]
10. A football-themed lolly from Lyons Maid with Pineapple, Strawberry & what other flavour? [5,4]
11. A west country city in the UK where lots of ice cream is made [10]
15. This English comedy writer created lyrics for a Lyons Maid musical [5,6]

*The answers to Crossword #3 will be published in the next issue.*



## SPOT-THE-DIFFERENCE!



*The differences will be revealed in the next issue.*



# RETRO MEMORY LANE

by Kieren Hawken

## Wayne Smithson

(WJS Design)



Starting your own games development company at age 15 is something that many of us dreamt of but pretty much nobody fulfilled. However, Wayne Smithson did just that, as the story of his own company WJS Design proves. Kieren Hawken sat down with Wayne to discuss his legacy in the industry, being mentored by Psygnosis, pranking DMA Design and much more!

**First of all, can you tell us about your background. How did you get into programming?**

The first time I ever saw a computer was when I was at school, I was probably about 15 years old. A friend of mine brought in a Sinclair ZX81 and typed in some lines of code and made a very rudimentary *Space Invaders* game (with just 1 invader). I was fascinated by it, and eventually bought the ZX81 off him and started to learn BASIC, copying programs out of magazines and trying to figure out how they worked.

A while later (still at school), I managed to save enough to buy a Dragon 32, which I again used to learn BASIC properly this time. A month or two later I heard about this book on 6809 machine code so I bought a copy and began to learn. It was really when I started to read that book that I became hooked on programming, I found it really interesting. I then began to write games for the Dragon in assembler and that was the start of everything!

**What games did you program for the Dragon 32?**

My first Dragon 32 title was actually a word processor called Electronic Author, but I did follow up with three games in *Gordon Bennet*, *Frankie* and *Superkid*. They were all really well received by the press of the time.

**What led you to setting up WJS Design?**

It was really just a natural progression. I started out releasing my own games myself (on the Dragon), all done via mail order with adverts and reviews in magazines. The sales weren't very high of course but it was more of a hobby at that stage. I probably did that for a

couple of years before I got myself an Atari ST, moved onto 68000 machine code, and wrote a game called *Skyrider*. I can't remember exactly how, but that game was picked up by a small publisher and with it we attended a trade show in London – it was there that I bumped into the guys at Psygnosis.

When I finished *Skyrider*, I had started work on another game, then unnamed but later came to be called *Baal*, which was just a demo at that point, but Psygnosis liked it and I was signed. I did a couple more things for them as a 1 man band before deciding I wanted to expand, get an office, like I saw others doing. Psygnosis gave me more work and WJS Design was born.

**Who were your first clients and how difficult was it obtaining work back then?**

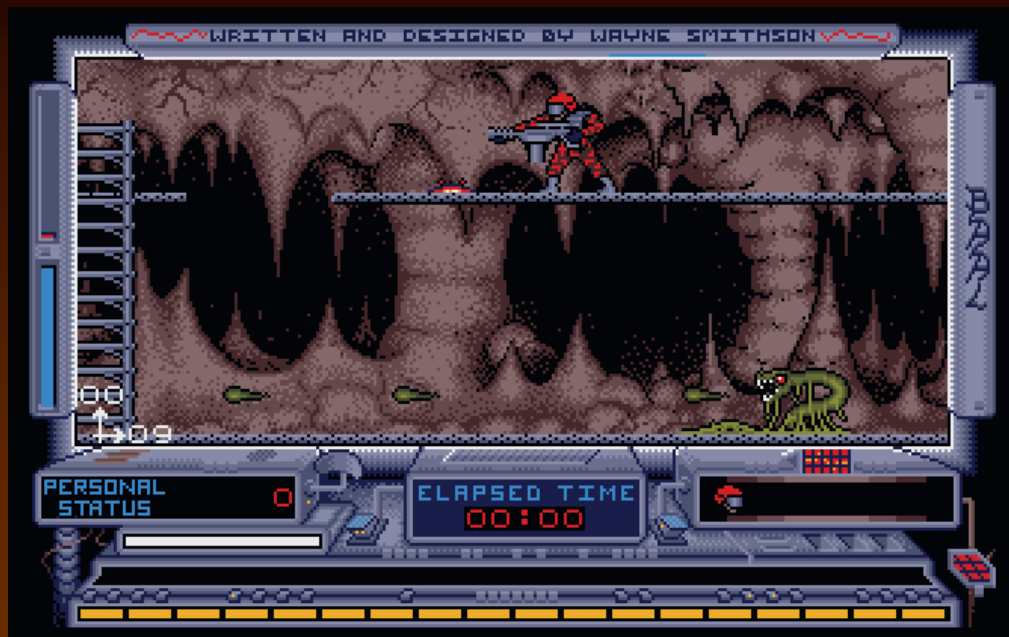
It was all Psygnosis in the early years, but later we worked with people like Thalamus, Ocean, Microprose, Team 17 and Atari. I never really found it difficult getting work, the main problem I always faced was cash flow. I didn't charge anything like enough and the royalty deals back then were shocking.

**What was it like working with a software house like Psygnosis?**

Honestly, it was a dream come true.

A GAME BY  
WJS  
Design





They were considered to be the best software house around at the time and Ian & Jonathan who ran Psygnosis were two of the nicest guys you could meet. They offered good advice and were more like mentors – you have to remember that I was pretty much just a kid at the time, still very naive with a lot to learn. They were fun times and I look back on them fondly.

**“It was a dream come true.”**

**What were the challenges in converting games designed for the Amiga to the Atari ST?**

Technically it was anything that used the custom chips on the Amiga, which the ST didn't have (so, Blitter & COPPA mainly). Audio wasn't so much an issue as I just got a specialist to redo the music / sfx for ST. Moving sprites around on the ST was a much slower process than on Amiga, so I had to find ways of making it quick, which usually involved a lot of pre-shifting, which in turn used a lot more memory.

**You mainly produced games for the ST and moved onto the Jaguar later, what brought about your love of Atari?**

It stemmed from the first time I saw one running a graphics demo, it was just so

far advanced from what I was used to (the Dragon at that time). I think it came out before the Amiga, which probably helped, but I also liked the fact that you really had to work hard to push the ST to its limits. I liked the challenge of working out how to get the best out of it, especially when porting Amiga games and proving they could run just as well on the Atari. It was the same to some extent with the Jaguar, you had to work to get the best out of that too, even though it was a superior machine when it was first released. Should never have been cartridge based though!

**From the ST you moved over to the Mega Drive, was this because of your familiarity with the Motorola 68000?**

I personally didn't do any programming on the Mega Drive, but my team did. It wasn't anything to do with the processor, it was simply that we were asked to work on it (and the SNES too). I think it was for Ocean but I can't really remember now (yes it was – Ed).

**How did signing a deal to develop for the Atari Jaguar come about?**

If I remember correctly, Atari UK asked a number of companies to provide a pitch for original content prior to launch, and we were one of them. We then went to Atari towers in Slough, along with the other companies pitching and sat round a table to present the ideas. Ours was one of the ones chosen and *Attack of the Mutant Penguins* became a thing.







**How did the end of the company come about?**

Well, without naming any names, we were shafted by a publisher who decided they didn't want to make games anymore so left us high and dry owing us £50K (which was a lot back then). We couldn't afford to sue them for breach of contract (and they knew it) and we couldn't take the hit, so that was that. The games industry was a bit 'Wild West' in those days unfortunately.

**Do you have any funny or interesting stories you can share from your WJS/Sunrise days?**

Well, as you know, making games is a serious business but I do remember getting into a 'fax war' with DMA Design. It started off by faxing cartoon drawings by our respective artists then quickly escalated into faxing anything – Kit-Kat wrappers for example. We won though, when we faxed a toilet roll to them and they switched their machine off!

**What are you most proud of from these years and what do you think is the best game you made?**

It's difficult to pick any one thing, but I liked it at the very start when everything was new and a challenge. I really enjoyed, and was proud at the time, of the various conversions of games from the Amiga to the ST, proving that they could run on what a lot of people considered a 'lesser' machine. *Blood Money* was a classic example of that. My personal favourite was a game called *Anarchy* mainly because I loved *Defender*. I'm also quite proud of *Attack of the Mutant Penguins* on the Jaguar, even though a lot of people didn't like it, it was different and I believe is one of the very first Tower Defence style games ever made – a genre which is very popular these days.



After the final demise of his company in 1995, Wayne has continued to be a big influence on the industry working for famous companies such as Gremlin Interactive, Sumo Digital and Double Eleven – where he remains to this day. His post-WJS CV contains many hit titles such as *DiRT 2*, *F1 2009*, *Grand Theft Auto 2*, *Sonic All-Star Racing*, *Jackie Chan Adventures*, *Little Big Planet* and the *Pixel Junk* series. Keep up the great work Wayne!



# WORD SEARCH

Y B J U M B O O M N L S S C  
T H N E S T L E S I L G C O  
H C C E M E M I A P E E R R  
U T W R F A S M L P B I E N  
N L I O A O H A S Y I F W E  
D R M E N N J G Y E N U B T  
A P P G S Y A U N A O N A T  
R L Y L O P M L B I T N L O  
R S O T O U O Z O I F Y L F  
P I H L T B O R Y I L F A M  
B R J A L O R O T B N E O E  
A T T C M Y E L A A B E E T  
F L Y O N S M A I D L T T C  
L F N S F M J I F G L E N S

TOFFINGHAM

FUNNY FEET

BAAL

FAB

PSYGNOSIS

SCREWBALL

JUBILEE

ANARCHY

NIPPY

NESTLE

CORNETTO

THUNDARR

TONIBELL

PORTAL

LYONS MAID

LOLLY

WIMPY

JUMBO

ZOOM



# THE HISTORY OF ACTION FORCE

by Chris McAuley

## *Recognition and Change in the Marketplace*

Palitoy was rewarded for its clever design and marketing choices in 1980. Action Man was presented the highly prestigious 'Toy of the Decade' award by the National Association of Toy Retailers. It was at the beginning of this new decade that it had become evident that the toy industry was changing. This was partly due to the introduction of the Star Wars toy range two years earlier. These representations of the galactic war from a time long ago and a place far away had introduced a new scale concept. This allowed for a greater range of products to be produced. The Star Wars action figures were 3 3/4" compared to the 12" height of an Action Man.

This sizing change enabled a greater number of toys to accompany the Star Wars action figures to be produced. Vehicles, accessories and exciting play-sets emerged. These concepts were too large or expensive to create at a 12" Action Man scale. The Star Wars toys were less expensive as the investment in the production of the product was lower. These toys were produced by Kenner, a U.S. based toy company also owned by General Mills. This enabled Palitoy the rights to distribute the Star Wars toys in the U.K.

Palitoy became all too aware of how this new scale of toy was starting to change the marketplace. They decided to redevelop Action Man in a new format. At the same time, Hasbro was developing its own range as well.

## *An Action-Packed Beginning*

The U.K had a long history of manufacturing small plastic soldiers and these were updated in this era by the Action Force brand. It's common knowledge that Action Force is perceived as the European cousin of G.I. Joe, the Real American Hero. This is partly true but the Action Force brand stretched into various franchises such as Star Wars and Action Man. Action Force also became a comic book title that was published by Marvel U.K. and featured stellar talent such as Simon Furman.

The journey began twenty years before the Action Force toys were in production. In 1965 a multinational deal between the British company Casseloid and an American company, Hassenfield Brothers Inc brought the boys 'doll' known as G.I. Joe to the U.K. Hassenfield Brothers Inc was later renamed to Hasbro. With this deal, the British companies' toy division known as Palitoy quickly rebranded the G.I. Joe product as Action Man. The Action man toy was launched in January 1966 and became an instant hit. With this success of Action Man, an American grocery giant, General Mills offered to buy Palitoy in 1968. General Mills wanted to diversify into the toy market. With this acquisition Action Man began to take on an identity of its own and moved away from Hasbro's G.I. Joe product. Action Man's design began to introduce many improvements that were innovative in the industry at the time. Including realistic hair and hands that could grip weapons and accessories.



Image credit: Steve Hilson



## ***A New Force Emerges ready for Action***

August 1982 saw the launch of the new scale Action Man, code-named Action Force. These were designed and manufactured in Leicestershire and included several design variants of the classic Action Man. Kids could look forward to playing with figures from WWII to the modern military. Eventually, a new high-tech fantasy range of the product emerged seeking to capitalise on the appetite for Science Fiction, which had gripped the globe. The early packaging sported the Action Man logo to help build recognition and acceptance. This launch range included vehicles as well as an adapted Death Star from Star Wars to give Action Force a cardboard play-set.

Action Force became an instant hit. Over a million figures were sold in 6 months and the product line began to expand. Meanwhile in the U.S. Hasbro began to launch its new scaled version of G.I. Joe with the tag-line identifying the characters as 'A Real American Hero'.

## ***More Additions to the Force***

As the Action Force product became more popular in 1983, Palitoy saw the opportunity to diversify from the Action Man range. A new storyline united the range into a raging conflict against a common terrorist enemy. The figures and vehicles were repainted into new organisations and teams. Those on the side of good and justice were the strike team SAS, infantry backbone Z Force, nautical operations Q Force and the galactic Space Force.

The Red Shadows were the bad guys, like most evil organisations of the era, they sought world domination. Red Shadow was led by the ruthless Baron Ironblood, IPC Media became interested in the potential of the toy's story. The included Action Force narratives in the popular weekly comic Battle. Palitoy's external relationship with Hasbro through the Action Man product allowed them

to incorporate some G.I. Joe characters into the Action Force range. This saved Palitoy expensive design and development costs.

All indications were pointing to a huge success. However, 1984 would bring changes as to how the toy line would continue. General Mills announced that development on their large scale 12" Action man was to be halted. The demand for smaller and cheaper products coupled with licensing payments to Hasbro led General Mills to order the closure of the line. Action Force continued to grow, introducing further Palitoy designed and re-branded Hasbro GI Joe products. However, by the close of the year, most of Palitoy's design department was made redundant. This impacted on any further development of the U.K. designed Action Force products.

## ***Action Force Becomes G.I. Joe***

In 1985 the Action Force teams and their opposition, The Red Shadows were no more. The entire line was replaced with packs of the Hasbro G.I. Joe action figure. The Battle Action Force comic aided the transition by the suggestion that Baron Ironblood abandoned his terrorist movement to start a new one, named Cobra. All Action Force teams had to reorganise into a new unit to combat the Cobra threat. The action

figures were all Hasbro products under a distribution agreement. Even though the toy range was moving away from its roots, Palitoy still carried the Action Man logo as one last act of defiance, or perhaps a salute to the fallen.

In 1987, Hasbro relaunched Action Force after General Mills had decided to abandon all product development outside the U.S. The repackaged their G.I. Joe toy range figures as Action Force to make them more suitable for the European market. All that remained the same was the name Action Force. New partnership deals were made with Marvel UK for a new Action Force comic and the US G.I. Joe cartoons were redubbed. Sadly, it only took a few years for Hasbro to lose the Action Force identity completely. Hasbro eventually bought out all of General Mills toy interests and G.I. Joe action figures continued to sell in the U.K. into the 1990s. Ironically, Action Man was then resurrected for the U.K. Market to replace the G.I. Joe figures.

## ***Personal Memories and the Future of the Force***

Action Force is a toy brand that is closely tied to my memories of childhood. In Ballymena, a small town in Northern Ireland, the 1980s was a fairly bleak place. Terrorism was on the rise and I came from a low-income family. Action Force was a reasonably priced toy range that captured my imagination. My parents were able to regularly treat me with products from this universe, the toy range, and comics. They were an exciting and dynamic set of toys that opened up a world of possibilities in my living room. Recently toy genius Bobby Vala has been working to bring the range back onto the shelves and to a new generation of fans. I have been lucky enough to have been chosen to colour the new comic book range which will accompany the series. You can catch up with the progress on the official website at [valaverse.com](http://valaverse.com). I'll see you on the battlefield, soldier!

*Image credit: Chris McAuley*

*The following site was helpful in the creation of this article:*  
[20thcenturytoycollector.com](http://20thcenturytoycollector.com)



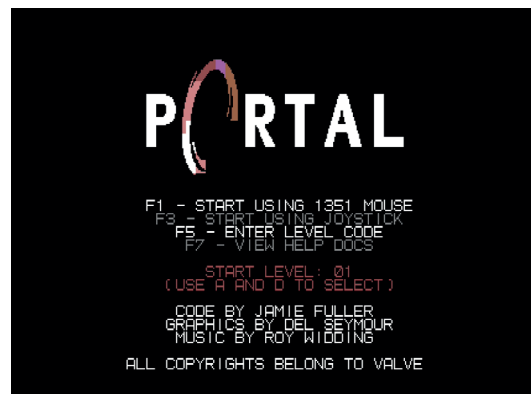
# CHICKEN-HEADS-UP!

Two new old games for the C64 to recommend in this issue. Both are C64 adaptations of games originally written for other platforms. One if from the last decade, whilst the other was originally published in the early 1980s.

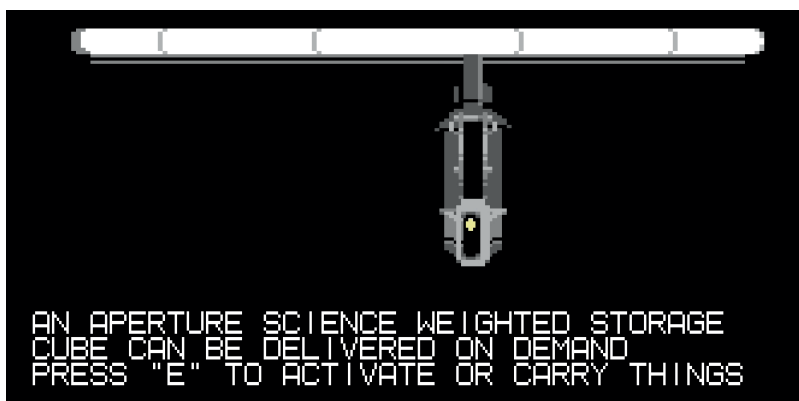
## Portal

This is a free, unofficial 2D interpretation of Valve's *Portal* game from 2008. Jamie Fuller created the C64 version, with art by Del Seymour and music by Roy Widding.

The options on the C64 version include the ability to use a 1351 mouse with a keyboard. At the time of writing, THEC64 Mini does not recognise a mouse, so use the joystick option (F3). You need to have use of a joystick and a keyboard, as well as access to a USB stick to auto-load the Portal PRG file.



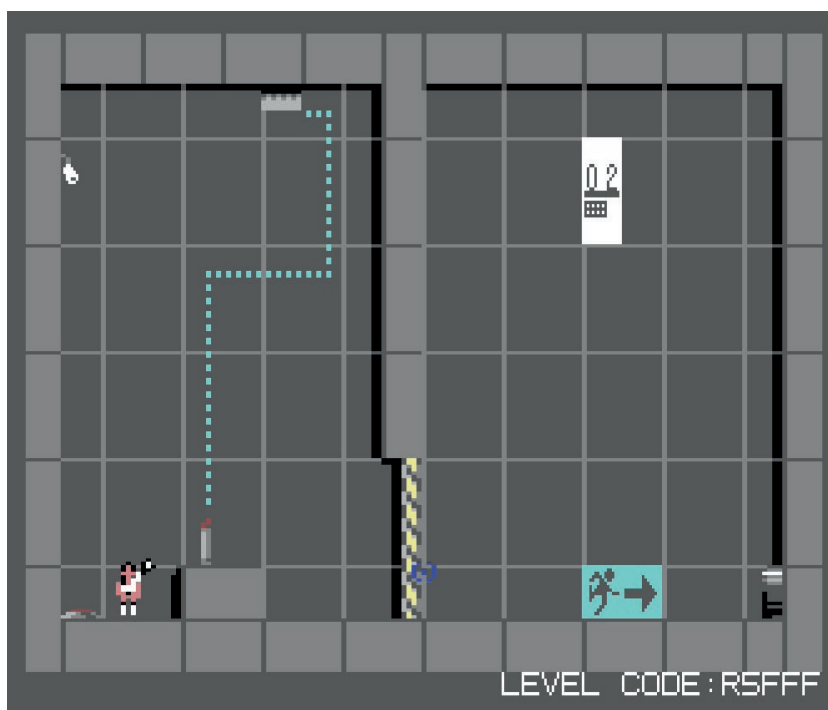
Full details on how to play this version are available at [www.jamiefuller.com/portal/](http://www.jamiefuller.com/portal/) where you can also find links on where to download the game file.



Configuration for playing on THEC64 Mini is relatively straightforward. Just map a button via a CJM file to behave as the Spacebar to get you past the title screen. Set another button to be F3 to choose keyboard control and map another as E to skip past some of the other non-game screens and act as the action/pickup/drop function in the game. Assign R to a button to switch portal colour and assign a button to Run/Stop to abandon the current level.

X: c64, pal  
J: 2\*: JU, JD, JL, JR, SP, F3, JF, JF, JF, E, R, RS, JF

This C64 interpretation of Portal is a fun challenge and well worth downloading. Full kudos to the developers!





# Chopper Command



The game was originally developed and published for the Atari 2600 by Activision in the early 1980s. This free and totally unofficial and unauthorised C64 adaptation was recently coded by Antonio Sovana, with artwork by Steven Day, music by Saul Cross and sound by Flemming Martins.

[csdb.dk/release/download.php?id=224639](https://csdb.dk/release/download.php?id=224639)



Chopper Command works without needing to configure THEC64 Mini, so add the downloaded PRG to a USB memory stick and play immediately using the latest firmware. Be warned, this game is very responsive and slick, and will take some mastering but is a fantastic addition to the C64 library!

If you have discovered a hidden C64 gem that can be purchased and/or legally downloaded, please get in touch and we will try and feature it in a future issue. If you have a suggested CJM configuration file, send that along as well!

# PUZZLE ANSWERS FOR ISSUE 02



PALITOY

BLOWPIPE

ANGLER

REBOUND

POCKETEER

RALLY

TOMY

GAUNTLET

GALENCIA

YODA

STORMTROOPER

EMPIRE

SOLO

LANDO

LEIA

LUKE

TRAMIEL

CENTRESOFT

ATARI

LYNX

We must apologise to any of you confused by last issue's wordsearch. Apparently some Gremlins got into our system and changed the G highlighted above in red to an F, and (as far as we are aware) there is no Galaga-inspired shoot 'em up called 'Falencia'.



ARABIAN KNIGHTS

WILLIAM SHATNER

MICRODEAL

FORBIDDEN FOREST

MICROPROSE

LOADER RUNNER

BASIC BYTE

THE HOBBIT

JEFF MINTER

ROCK

RATES

SIXTYFOUR

JUPITER

ARCH

MICRPUT

NINE

GHOST

THIRTEEN

JEFF MINTER

ROCK

RATES

2

10

123

000120



[illegible]