POPULAR RETRO

The original handhelds

Pocket-sized entertainment from decades past

PLUS:
Top Trumps • What's in a name? – Atari

THE WORLD'S BEST SELLING HOME COMPUTER — REBORN!

It's 1982 and a new home computer graces the scene. Out goes the silent black and white experience and in with 64KB of RAM, colour graphics, and synthesizer sound.

Roll forward 35 years and kick nostalgia into overdrive with the release of THEC64 MINI. A tiny but perfectly formed officially licensed 50% scale replica of this much loved machine.

Featuring high-definition output via HDMI, a classic style joystick and 64 built-in games including classics like California Games, Paradroid, Nebulus, Impossible Mission and Uridium.

THE C64 MINI

FEATURES

- High Definition output at 720p via HDMI
- Pixel perfect display, with US/Europe display modes and CRT filter options
- Save game function
- 2 USB ports: plug in a USB keyboard and use as a fully functional home computer, or add a second joystick for 2-player games
- Supports software updates via USB flash drive

RETRO GAMES LTD

POPULAR RETRO

In this issue

If you wish to contribute to the magazine, please email **submissions@ popularretro.com** with a short description of what you wish to contribute. Please only submit ideas, do not send entire completed articles.

Editorial

Welcome to the second issue of Popular Retro, the nostalgia focused publication from Andrews UK Ltd.

The feedback we got from the first issue was overwhelmingly positive, so many thanks to everyone for the encouragement and kind words. We will try to make each issue as informative and nostalgic as we can.

Aside from the usual news and fun items, we have the second and concluding part of Tim Chaney's anecdotes of working for Commodore UK in the early to mid-80s. We also have articles about some 1970s pre-computer handheld gaming devices that fitted in your Pocket (there's a clue!), a look at the story behind the Top Trumps card game series and the reason behind the names of some of Atari's gaming hardware.

RETRO GAMES LTD NEWS

Galencia comes to THEC64 Mini

Thanks to Jason Aldred, a specially produced THEC64 Mini version of the terrific arcade shoot-em-up 'Galencia' was added to the CAROUSEL via the latest 1.2.0 firmware upgrade, released just before Christmas 2018.

Galencia is the winner of the Reset64 Magazine 2017 Commodore 64 Game of the Year Award. It is a colourful, highly polished, Galaga inspired single-screen shoot-em-up.

This upgrade also introduced the Virtual Joystick, which gives THEC64 Mini owners the ability to use THEC64 Mini without requiring a joystick or other game controller. The Virtual Joystick is made possible by plugging in a USB keyboard into THEC64 Mini, and using the numeric keypad to emulate a joystick. More details are available from **https://retrogames.biz/support/upgrade/**.

If you haven't upgraded your THEC64 Mini to the latest firmware yet, why not? You don't want to miss out!

A THEC64 update from Retro Games

by Chris Smith
CTO and Product Development Alchemist

It has been quite a busy 2019 so far. We've upgraded the hardware from that used in THEC64 Mini. It is more powerful, which gives us more freedom, and we've increased the number of USB ports available for use, so probably no need for users to require a Hub. This improved hardware also enables THEC64 to autodetect your TV capabilities and, if supported, prompts you to set 50 or 60 Hz the first time you turn it on.

THEC64 firmware has had a major overhaul, with a significant number of critical parts having been completely rewritten. The features we wanted to bring to you in THEC64 required that the core firmware operated internally in a very different way.

Overhaul done, we can reveal that THEC64 boots straight into BASIC, just like the Classic original, but you can also switch to "Mini mode" at any time to access and play the bundled games.

THEC64 can also boot straight into Mini mode if you choose. All of THEC64 settings are available while in Classic mode, such as those for Display and Language, and we've added the ability to insert and eject disk and tape images etc. We've also introduced a model selector, so you can switch between PAL and NTSC variants at any time and set your default. THEC64 still locks to your fixed TV refresh rate for solid, flicker free graphics, and the firmware does the difficult job of keeping things in sync regardless of what model you select.

Currently we're polishing off the firmware features, making some PCB alterations, implementing some tweaks to the keyboard actions and iterating over some fine detail with our manufacturing partners.

Retro Games Ltd supports local developments

As a local company with a global impact, Retro Games Ltd fully supports the recent announcements from Luton Borough Council regarding the approval of the much-needed developments in Luton Town Centre and by Junction 10A of the M1 motorway.

The Power Court and Newlands Park projects from 2020 Developments are fantastic opportunities to rejuvenate and reinvigorate the town and the surrounding areas. They will bring in thousands of new jobs, millions of pounds into the local economy and secure a home for the local professional football club Luton Town

F.C. for decades to come as part of the overall development.

It's an exciting time for everyone at 2020 Developments, Luton Town F.C. and all those people who have tirelessly campaigned for these ambitious plans to come to fruition. Retro Games Ltd. wants to publically applaud all of those involved and look forward to similar local success stories in the future. As an example, we are working in collaboration with the University of Bedfordshire, The Mall and Luton Borough Council exploring ways we can help grow and inspire the next generation of game developers.

Playing games from your pocket

Come with us back to a time before the Internet or mobile phones, before DVDs, before home computers, before VHS and Betamax, before there were more than three UK TV channels to watch; even before the first Star Wars film came out. This is a time of long, hot summers and knee-deep-in-snow winters; a time of strikes and general discontent. Welcome then to the mid-1970s in the United Kingdom.

This is a time when cycling around on your big brother's Raleigh Chopper and getting your flares stuck in the oily bike chain, drinking bright orange Tartrazine-saturated squash and sucking on sweet cigarettes to look cool were all the rage. Of course, that cool exterior was forever ruined by the shirts you were forced to wear at family events; shirts that exactly matched the wallpaper in your house so that you were perfectly camouflaged against a mess of yellow, brown and faded tangerine flowers.

Back then, playing games either meant getting out Monopoly, Cluedo or Scrabble or going outside and kicking a football around in the street then marking hopscotch on the pavement and using the tiny stub of chalk as your stone. Or, at least it did until Leicester-based UK toy company Palitoy decided to import and rebrand a range of pocket-sized mechanical games from Japanese toy maker, Tomy.

In Japan, these pocket-sized games were called Pocketmates. In the US, they were named Pocket Games, and came in simple blue denim packaging that looked like a pocket on a pair of jeans, with a small transparent window in the middle that showed the game inside. However, in the UK the range was branded as Pocketeers and featured green slipcase

packaging, complete with a wonderful cartoon-style character in the bottom-right corner of the box front, representing the type of game contained inside. So, for 'World Cup' there was a typical 1970s' goalie, for 'Crossbow' there was a rather amusing Norman soldier with a quiver of arrows and for 'Rally' there was a 1920s-style driver complete with tweed clothes, cap and driving goggles. They clearly weren't the same character, but they were all drawn in the same style and certainly appealed to at least one particular 8 year old boy I can think of.

In the UK, the first batch of Palitoy Pocketeers were unleashed into department and toy stores in 1975. These initial games included the iconic 'Fruit

Machine', 'Cup Final', 'The Derby, 'Grand Prix', 'Golf', 'Blowpipe', 'Pinball' and 'Crossbow'.

Pocketeers were mostly mechanical games, usually but not always encased in a sealed plastic box that was roughly the size (but definitely not the same thickness!) of a typical modern mobile phone. They were all brightly coloured and each one looked very different from the next in the range. Oh, and they were all eminently collectable. Damn those clever Palitoy marketeers!

From an admittedly slightly hazy memory, I can recall getting three of those original titles as birthday or Christmas presents, or buying them with the white one-pound notes given to me around those times of the year.

The noisiest of that initial range was definitely 'Fruit Machine', which made a loud clattering noise whenever you pulled the black trigger at the base to send the mechanics inside spinning. After a few noisy seconds, you then pressed the side trigger to stop the rotation. Over time, the noise got louder as the internal plastic parts loosened due to daily, hourly (minutely?) use. In the end, mine fell apart form excessive play, at which time I elected to dismantle the case and try to fathom how it all worked.

The bright yellow and red (not a nice colour combination I can tell you!) 'Pinball' was the second noisiest game, with nine little metal ball bearings shooting around inside the case. To cap it all off, the character on the box was a suitably suited and booted Elton John look-alike, complete with huge glasses. In hindsight, I probably should have left that one on the shelf and bought something else!

'Grand Prix' was favoured over buying 'The Derby' for two reasons. The first was that a friend who lived close by already had 'The Derby' game and secondly, 'Grand Prix' had four cars where as 'The Derby' only had three horses. That was very important to me at the time, but unfortunately became redundant in the end when one of the cars somehow became detached from the tiny magnet underneath, and became a permanent reminder of how not to drive safely in Pocketeer land. Those differences aside, 'The Derby' and 'Grand Prix' were very similar in design. You used a small shuttle-dial in the bottom left corner to move the cars or horses around the circular course. Each animal or vehicle had a different colour, and you and your mates chose one before the race began. As they wheeled around the course, they would interact with each other, nudging opponents into a different trajectory. There was no skill involved. Only one person could move the dial during the race, and it was complete potluck as to who won or lost each game. It was good fun though!

'Cup Final' had very little to do with football, other than it provided the backdrop to what was essentially a very simple one-player pinball game where you shot small ball bearings into the goal-mouth at the top. In the US, it was basketball-themed instead. To complete the pinball theme, a small leg could be pulled out on the underside, to give the game a slope so that the ball would slide back down to the bottom if a goal (or basket) was missed.

A few of those initial Pocketeer games differed from the rest, in that the plastic case was opened and the game components taken out and played

with. 'Golf', 'Crossbow' and 'Blowpipe' fell into this category and none of them appealed to me for that very reason. Losing toys or parts of toys was annoying enough, and so none of those games were bought. I much preferred self-contained games that I could take anywhere, without fear of losing anything.

Palitoy were clearly on a winner, and they soon introduced another batch of Pocketeers onto the shelves over the next few years. 'Basketball' was a two-player game where you tried to launch a plastic ball into your opponent's basket, by pressing your trigger situated at the opposite end of the case. 'Rally' was an odd game. It included only one magnetically-driven car that you effectively drove around a few roads using two controls (one for left/right movement and one for up/down). It was less like a car rally and more like a driving lesson. The packaging even used two 'L' (Learner) plates in the title logo. There didn't appear to be any rules as such, you just drove the red car around the course, performing three-point turns as and when you needed to. It helped pass some time, but wasn't anywhere near as enjoyable to play as other games in the range.

'Time Up' was another of the noisy Pocketeer titles, but for an entirely new reason. This red and blue game introduced the concept of the timer, presumably a clockwork-style mechanism as no batteries were involved. You pulled down a switch on the side, marked with five-second intervals from 20 down to 0. The moment you released, the switch began moving back up towards 0, making quite a racket as it went. In that time, you had to navigate a single ball bearing through a maze, scoring points at certain stages, with 10-point increments for each stage you reached. Point A started at 0 and ended at point B, scoring the maximum 100 points.

Poker was similar in the basic concept to Fruit Machine except that you had five triggers, one for each card in your hand. Each rotating drum had cards printed on it, and a small window revealed the card you were dealt. Thinking about the mechanics years later, I doubt that all 52 playing cards were actually available across those five drums but back then it didn't stop me enjoying the game. The predominantly blue and white colour scheme was also appealing.

A number of bagatelle-style games then came out, including Flick 'n' Spin, Rock 'n' Roll, Bombard, Time Machine, Drop 'n' Catch, Rebound, Gobble and Rat-a-Tat-Tat. As I already had a few games of that ilk, they never found their way into my collection.

'Angler' featured a fisherman, sitting to one side of a round lake. You wound up the mechanism via a switch in the middle, and then used the start/stop switch to set it off. At that point, the lake rotated and the little fish on it moved round. By using a simple slider control, you pushed the fisherman up and down, moving his rod which could ensnare some fish and push them into a small area (effectively his landing net) on the other side. The idea was to catch all the fish before the rotation stopped, whilst avoiding catching the odd Wellington boot that was also in the water. It sounds quite naff but was actually quite fun to play for a game based on fishing!

More Pocketeers began appearing, but the designs were starting to become a little more samey, and in some respects a little less well designed and engineered than the earlier games. It was almost as if there wasn't as much enthusiasm and love being put into the games as there was at the beginning, or maybe that was just me. Maybe the range had run its course with my increasingly hard-to-match expectations.

By now, we were into the latter years of the 1970s and I was heading towards being a teenager. Two things happened in the last few years of that decade that had a big influence on how the remainder of the Pocketeer range fared in the UK. The first major change was at Palitoy, who struck a deal to release a range of small action figures and vehicles based upon a new movie that had exploded in the US in May 1977, and was due to get a release in London

in December '77 and country-wide in early 1978. Of course, that film was Star Wars. It brought with it a huge amount of toy merchandise, and Palitoy hit the big time.

The second major shift was the introduction of cheap microprocessors. This fuelled the explosion in arcade machines, home computers and hand-held electronic toys. Almost overnight, hand-held mechanical games like the Pocketeers range suddenly felt very old hat in comparison. Star Wars and electronic toys were the future. Of course, a few Pocketeer games tried to emulate those early arcade games, with the most obvious being Space Invader (avoiding the plural no doubt for legal reasons!). Sadly, it was just the beginning of the end.

In total, Palitoy released close to 50 Pocketeers over a four or five-year period before they stopped and concentrated their efforts on more lucrative markets including the Star Wars range. The games did apparently reappear later, directly sold by Tomy with basic packaging and rebranded as Tomy Pocket Games so they could use the same SKU (Stock Keeping Unit) in multiple territories. By then, the toy market had changed completely compared to the mid 1970s. A hitherto unheard of Japanese company called Nintendo had released their first batch of LCD toys called Game & Watch into the UK. Digital watches were a pretty neat idea and simpler toys and games like Pocketeers didn't stand a chance. Such is progress!
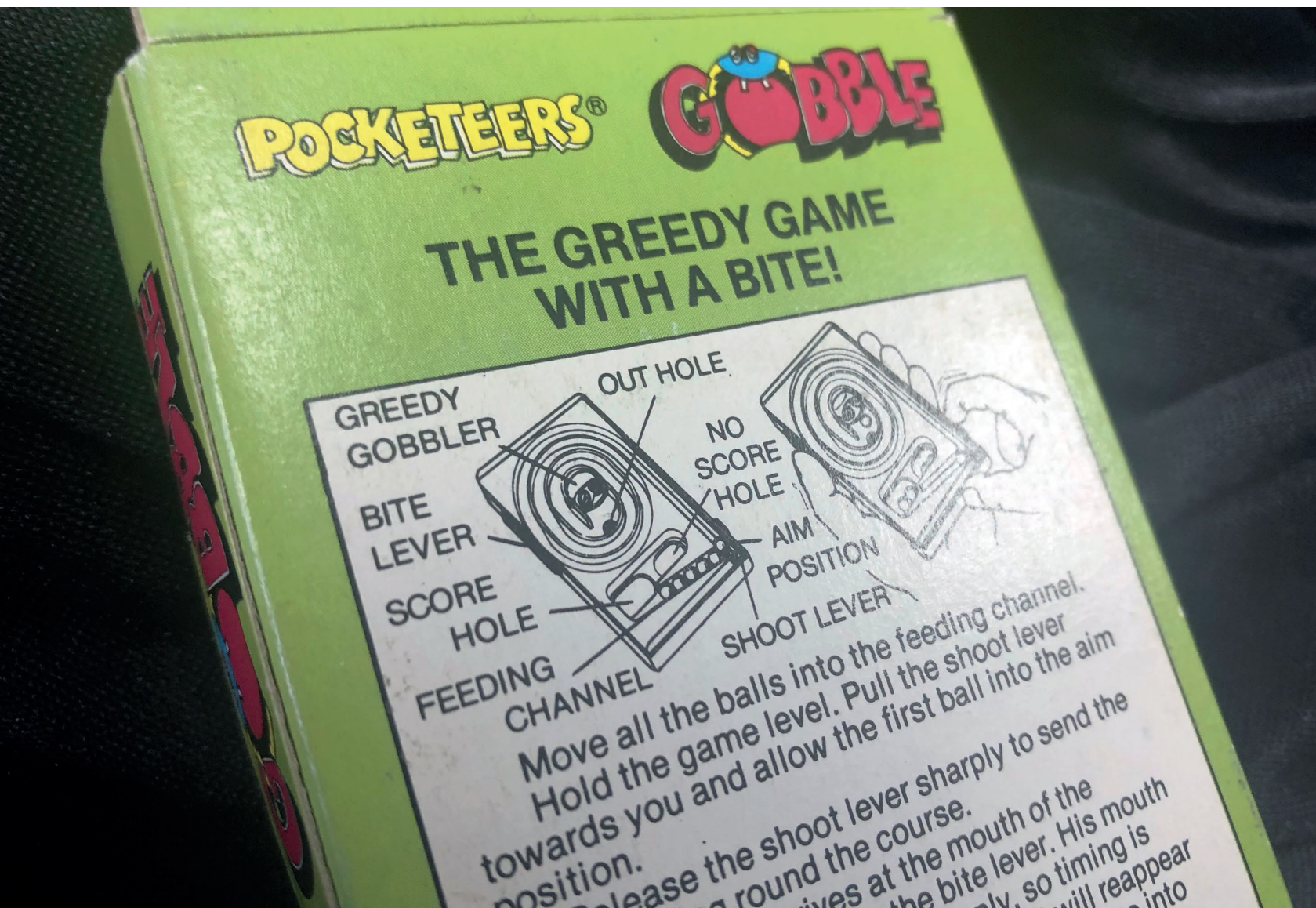
One last thing. We can't mention Pocketeers without giving a shout out to a couple of very informative web sites that helped verify a fifty-something's memories!

http://worldofstuart.excellentcontent.com/pocketeers/new/index.htm
http://www.masters.me.uk/pocketeers/index.htm
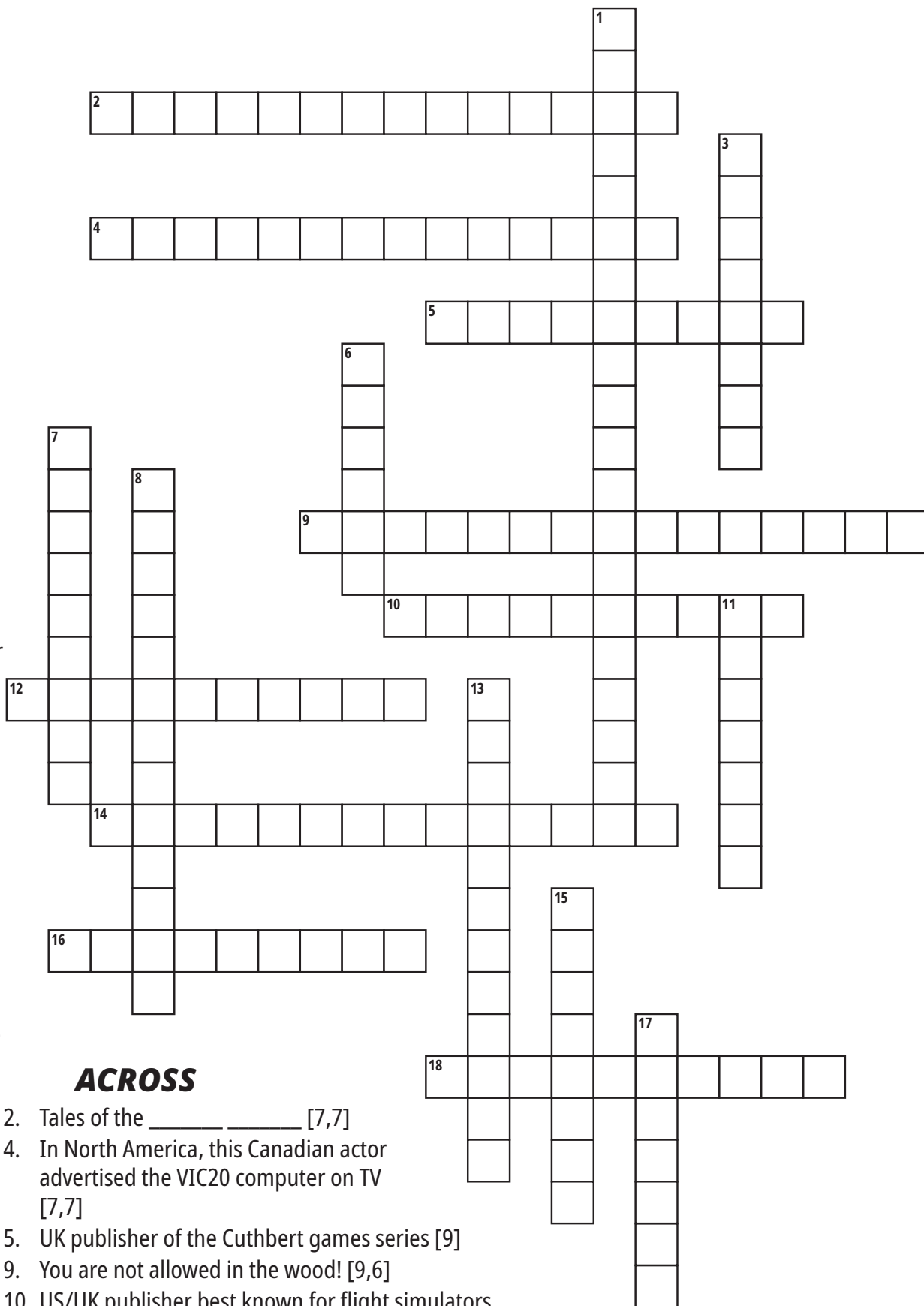
CROSSWORD

#2

DOWN

1. This game has a house on a disk! [6,8,6]
3. A very brainy name for a UK publisher [8]
6. Mixed up Charon plays chess, sort of [6]
7. Excluding RETURN and SPACE, how many keys does a C64 keyboard have? [5,4]
8. Allegedly this was the first game ever published for the C64 [7,6]
11. How many colours does the C64 colour palette have?[7]
13. This game monitors the city's PK energy levels [12]
15. He quickly avoids heavy round things to stay alive [8]
17. They would all be very annoyed if you took their P away! [7]

The answers to Crossword #2 will be published in the next issue.

ACROSS

2. Tales of the _____ _____ [7,7]
4. In North America, this Canadian actor advertised the VIC20 computer on TV [7,7]
5. UK publisher of the Cuthbert games series [9]
9. You are not allowed in the wood! [9,6]
10. US/UK publisher best known for flight simulators [10]
12. A platform game involving collecting gold quickly! [4,6]
14. 64K RAM SYSTEM 38911 _____ _____ ____ [5,5,4]
16. In this game, someone gives you a map or sings about gold [3,6]
18. Most of his games have a woolly or psychedelic theme [4,6]

SPOT-THE-DIFFERENCE!
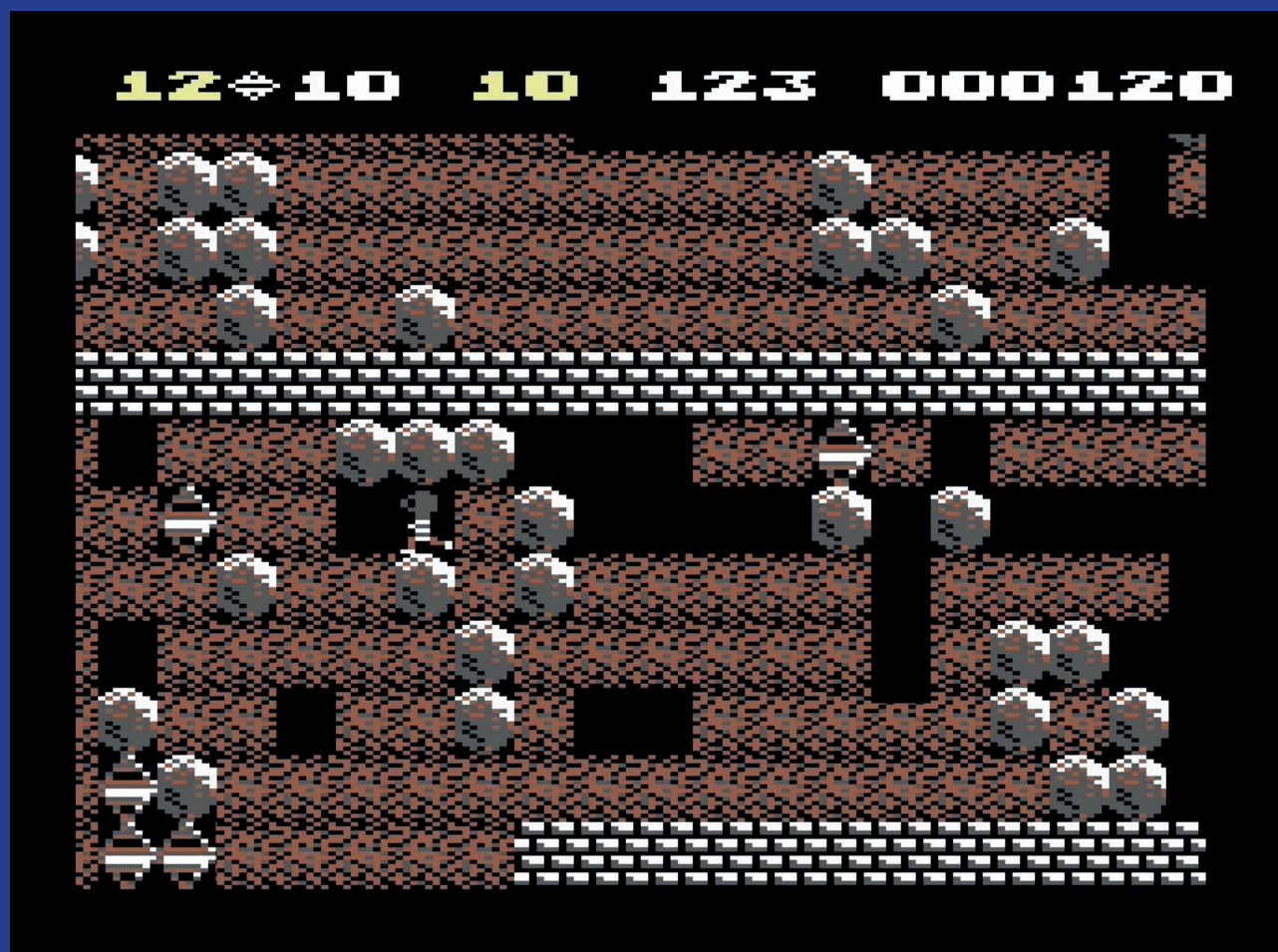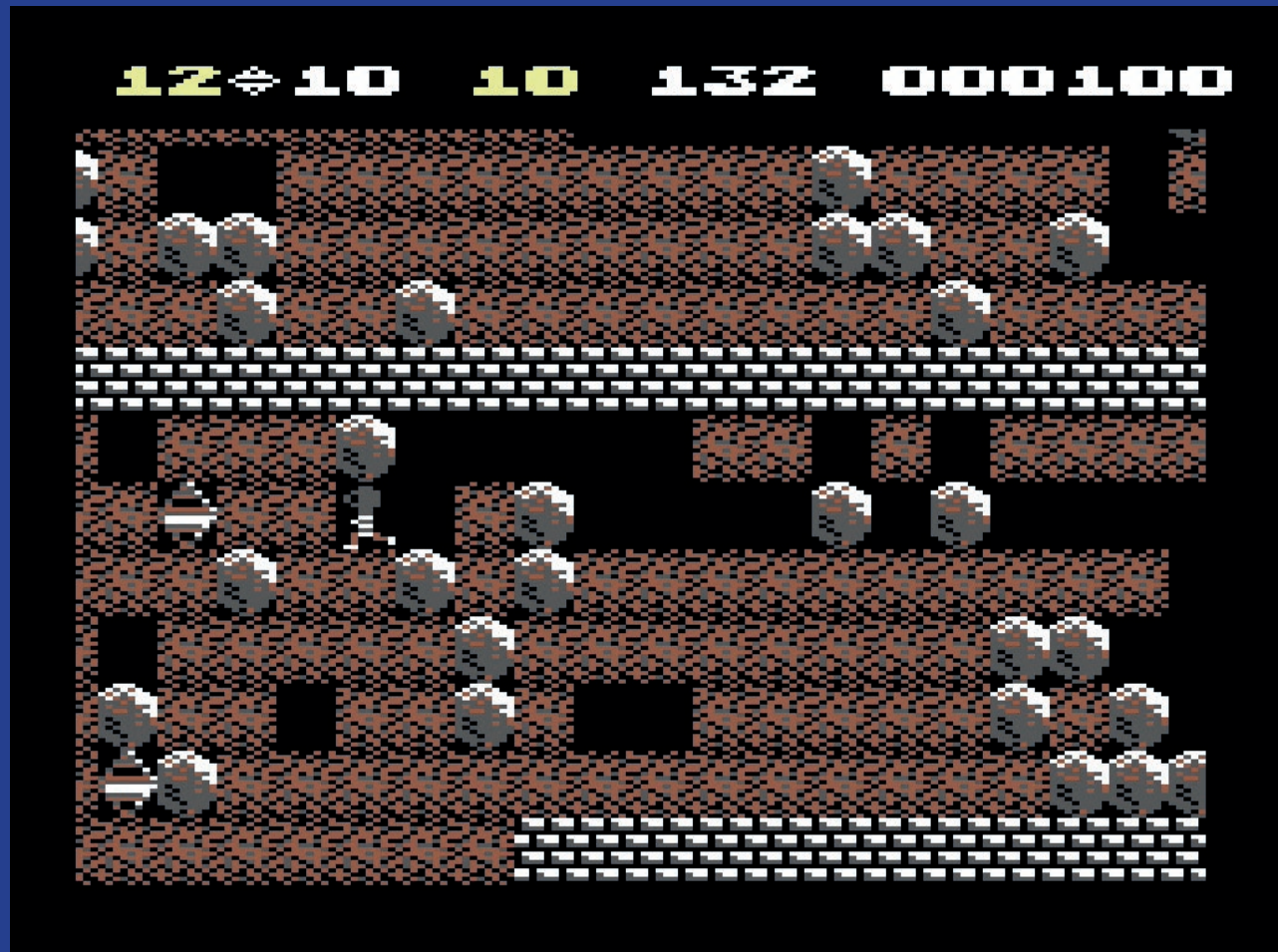
The differences will be revealed in the next issue.

RETRO MEMORY LANE

Tim Chaney

(Commodore UK and US Gold)

PART 2

Continued from Popular Retro, Issue 01...

" In 1982, in the lead-up to Christmas, the first deliveries of the Commodore 64 arrived. I spent that week going to Slough, loading my car up with C64s with help from Kelly Sumner, then delivering them – one per shop – for display purposes only, to show during the Christmas season. I had one myself, of course courtesy of Commodore and it was clear quickly that it turbo-charged the VIC 20 beyond anyone´s expectations. It ejected the 'geek' from the early days of VIC 20 and Sinclair ZX and heralded the dawning of a new age.

If the VIC-20 was a game changer, then the C64 turned the game on its head. Positioned as a hybrid business and casual computer, it was market-designated as a games machine in less than six months. The machine was very successful in the US which led to a significant uptake in the development of games there, while the UK forged its own ecosystem, stealing a lot of development resources from the Sinclair Spectrum and BBC Micro, who had a difficult task in keeping up.

At Commodore, in my new position in National Accounts, I had a plethora of 'B' accounts (such as The Co-op (CWS) and The Co-op (CRS) – as confusing as it sounds). There was also Rumbelows, Wigfalls, Terry Blood, Our Price, Virgin, Littlewoods and others.

Many of these were based in the north, so most weeks I would stay at the Post House in Manchester and attend Grab-a-Granny nights for some local colour (I was 28 at the time and the "grannies" in question were only a bit older, maybe 30 or 40.)

In late 1983, the C64 was hammering it. It dominated retail. In a way, job done. I was approached and offered a sales director job by Camputers in Cambridge. The company had launched three versions of its Lynx Z80A-based home computer (48K, 96K, 128K) and was based in a quaint office overlooking the River Cam, and the job came with whatever car I wanted– so I left Commodore and I took the sales director position, opting for a Saab 900.

Getting UK distribution there was difficult – a new competing home computer was launched every few months, our margins were tight and our games were Z80/81 rehashes. So I focused on export and we found distributors in France, Norway, Belgium,

"You're the only salesman who has ever stitched us up, and we want you on our side."

Italy and South Africa. But Camputers had run out of money, and most of my time was spent helping shareholders try to raise more capital. In the end, we had £3 million of orders that we could build.

I saw the writing on the wall and called Paul Welch to see if there was anything available back at Commodore, despite the company launching two shockers: the Commodore 16 and the Commodore Plus/4 in the interim. Both products had bombed, but the following year would see another milestone launch: the Amiga.

In the summer of 1984 I met with Paul at Newport Pagnell Services one Sunday morning and gave him my Camputers hard-luck story. He said there was a role for me as head of software sales – I wasn't aware we had any that warranted selling, but I accepted and it was back in the fast lane with another new car: a Ford Granada Ghia Mk2. Now that was a sales director car!

Around that time Commodore had built a large facility at Corby in Northamptonshire. Corby was a steel town that was now without steel. The £20 million building was originally announced in May 1983 and was built with the assistance of UK Government grants and included marketing, sales and administration facilities as well as an assembly line. Only eight months after the announcement, the factory –one of four Commodore production sites worldwide – was turning out 5,000 VIC-20s and Commodore 64s a day. By this point, Jack Tramiel had left Commodore, along with Bob Gleadow, and Irving Gould had stepped in to become the new president.

Returning to Commodore at its new Corby office was a strange experience. Most of the familiar Slough faces had been swapped for new ones, and the cottage industry of 1982 and 1983 had made way for the home computer gold rush, spawning an entire industry out of nothing.

Meanwhile, 1984 gave rise to Alan Sugar's Amstrad CPC, a new Z80 machine that would go on to sell some 3 million units against the C64's 14 million. And there was talk of 14 Hi Fi manufacturers creating a common PC format called MSX – which transpired, but was dead and gone soon after.

Indie Distributors

Selling – or at least trying to sell – Commodore software introduced me to a whole new sector: indie distributors that were becoming a major factor in the games retail chain. Firms such as Lee Ginty's Microdealer, Geoff Brown's CentreSoft, Clive Digby-Jones's Websters, Ash Taylor's Leisuresoft, Terry Blood Distribution, Tiger Distribution and others loomed large as publishers started to bid for attention and shelf space in the independent retailer and national chains.

One of my customers for software (and hardware before that) was Lightning Records, based in London NW10 and run by Ray Laron and Loretta Cohen. They were far too savvy to buy our software, but Loretta liked me and offered me a role as sales director at the company. This represented a move into records and video alongside home computers, and came with a Rover SD1 as my chosen company car. I accepted and handed Paul my notice.

Come the afternoon of my final day, and as I was packing up my office, Paul came to see me and offer me the role of national sales manager. I accepted, and rang Loretta to tell her and to send the car back. She was very gallant about it.

I kept on working in software part-time, but the software itself was getting weaker and weaker. One day I visited Centresoft at their new offices in Birmingham and Geoff told me that as he didn't know much about Commodore's software I should just send him what I thought he should have and could sell. Well, the "Business is War" part of me said I shouldn't do that. So, I cleared the Corby warehouse and relocated it in Birmingham.

At Christmas that year, 1984, I was given a budget to take my best software accounts clients for a meal, so I took out Geoff and his wife, the fiery, feisty Anne. Towards the end of the meal, Anne asked me if I would like to join their games software label, U.S. Gold, as managing director –basically, employee Number 1. I asked Anne, "Why me?"

"You're the only salesman who has ever stitched us up, and we want you on our side."

Golden years

And so I joined in January 1985, the day the CND protested the U.S. Gold offices over the pending release of Raid Over Moscow. I never did get to sell any Amiga hardware.

Over the following 4 years, until I left in 1989 to build my own publishing company, Tecmagik Entertainment and after that, joining Virgin Games/ Interactive Entertainment as President, USG grew and grew and along with Ocean pretty much dominated the industry. We published something like 80% of all US C64 disk (which we converted to cassette) product in Europe. I loved Beachhead and Leaderboard and Gauntlet, Summer Games, Winter Games, Street Fighter, Roadblasters, Thunderblade and, of course, Out Run.

If you set me down on Desert Islands Games to choose three to take with me, I would plump for Beachhead, Leaderboard (I had just taken up golf at the time) and Out Run. In my back pocket I may have hidden a cassette of Chuckie Egg from A & F

Software, of course, on the C64. I couldn´t abide playing Sinclair or Amstrad games. Never did, once.

Although there is some confusion about the exact number of C64´s sold worldwide, it is commonly accepted that the number was at least 23 million. Rightly so. Until the Amiga, there was really nothing to touch it. In hardware and software terms, I could never get my head around why someone would choose a ZX based machine. It was that black and white to me.

35 years on – still can't.

”

To read more about Commodore UK, see David Pleasance's book 'Commodore: The Inside Story' (Kindle Edition), available now from Amazon.

WORD SEARCH

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S R T E M P I R E Y L E I A
T E A N X B I R E L M N O T
O B C E Y L A R T Y O U M
R O S E P P P O T C G N T O
M U F P N M A A W U A T X T
T N A O L T R L A P E M T R
R D L C S Y R T I L I R R A
O O E K P O A E T T O P R M
O R N E U R L N S T O E E I
P C C T I L U O A O L Y L E
E C I E L A N D O G F M U L
R A A E G A O G N O A T K O
A A P R N Y L A T O T L E I
T N P A K L E L G A N W D R
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PALITOY

BLOWPIPE

ANGLER

REBOUND

POCKETEER

RALLY

TOMY

GAUNTLET

GALENCIA

YODA

STORMTROOPER

EMPIRE

SOLO

LANDO

LEIA

LUKE

TRAMIEL

CENTRESOFT

ATARI

LYNX

The solution will be published in the next issue.

What's in a name?

ATARI EDITION

by Kieren Hawken

I have always found it incredibly interesting how consoles and computers got their name. Would we still think of the Sega Genesis the same if it had been called the Tomahawk as originally intended? And why did Nintendo not stick with the cool sounding Revolution instead of the frankly bizarre Wii?

So I did a little research for you all you readers out there and discovered the interesting stories behind how some of these systems got their monikers. In this edition, we look at the consoles and computers of the company that started it all – Atari. There are perhaps more interesting stories here than there are with any other too, for example: did you know that it's nothing more than an incredible coincidence that the Lynx, Panther and Jaguar were all named after big cats? I thought not, so let's discover the real story behind all these consoles and more!

Atari ST / TT

Over the years many people came to believe that "ST" stood for Sam Tramiel, the former CEO of Atari and outspoken son of President Jack Tramiel. But this is not true at all! It does in fact stand for "Sixteen Thirty-two" which references to the ST's powerful CPU, the Motorola 68000. This processor is 32-bit internally but 16-bit externally – so 1632. Likewise, the successor to the ST was named the "TT", an abbreviation of "Thirty-two Thirty-two", as it uses the Motorola 68030, a CPU that is fully 32-bit both internally and externally. Of course the numbers that appear before the "ST" part reference the amount of memory 520 = 512k, 1040 = 1024k etc. But I am sure I didn't need to tell you that!

Atari 2600

Originally Atari's best-selling home console was just called the Video Computer System, or VCS for short. Only later on did it become known as the 2600, which refers to its manufacturing part number – CX2600. You will also notice that the numbers for 2600 games follow this same structure. For example the very first game Combat is and then they go on from there. This same simple sequence of numbering also led on to the naming of Atari's next two consoles too, as I will further explain.

Atari 5200

Also dubbed the "Super System" its numerical moniker is pretty simple. They saw this console as twice as good as its big brother the 2600, and even a dunce can work out that $2600 \times 2 = 5200$. I suppose it could also describe the weight or mass of the console too as it's absolutely bloody huge! Interestingly a smaller Jr. version of this console, much the same as the 2600, was planned but never released as Atari Corporation discontinued it in favour of the 7800 ProSystem.

Atari 7800

We might as well finish off the set here, so for those who haven't already worked this one out: $2600 + 5200 = 7800$. This goes by the logic that the system also known as the ProSystem could do everything the 5200 could do but also play 2600 games – makes perfect sense right? After the release of this machine Atari seemed to step away from naming their consoles after part numbers and go onto more original monikers. Like both the 2600 and 5200 the games carry the same number structure too.

Atari 400 & 800

This one is quite interesting, because the names actually don't make sense as originally intended. When these powerful 8-bit computers were first conceived the 400 would have had 4k of memory and the 800 featured, yes you guessed it, 8k of RAM. But by the time the computers were ready for release the price of memory chips had dropped considerably, so Atari made the decision to bundle the 400 with 16k and the 800 with 48k. Maybe they should have considered new names too?

Atari XL & XE

The replacements for the 400 and 800 computers were given the XL tag for (e)Xtended Line, signifying the additional memory and resigned chip set. When the Tramiel Family took over Atari and replaced the XL with another updated machine they choose to call it the XE which in turn stood for XL Expanded, although some people have often quoted that it was XL Enhanced, just like the "e" in the STe machines, however this is wrong. Either way the idea is pretty much the same I suppose. The numbers before the letters name no sense on the XL models but follow the same conventions as the ST on the XE models. For example 600XL (16k), 800XL (64k) and 1200XL (64k), but on the other hand 65XE (64k) and 130XE (128k) make perfect sense. That doesn't explain the 800XE though, even if that was only released in Eastern Europe! (It had 64k in case you wondered)

Atari Lynx

The handheld wonder that we know today as the Lynx started off life under California based software developers Epyx as the "Handy". Atari were not keen on the name and came up with several of its own before settling on "Lynx". Originally they wanted to called it the "Atari Portable Entertainment System" but several people point out this was extremely wordy and would just get shortened to "APES", which Jack Tramiel felt was derogatory. The final name is nothing to do with the wild cat of the same name at all, Lynx is a reference to its awesome link-up ability – a corruption of "Links". Hence why we also have Comlynx and the words Lynx-Up used to determine how many players can compete in each game release. Interestingly though Atari did use the Lynx cat as part of the branding later on though.

Atari Falcon

This one is a bit of strange one, with the name originating from what its prototype version was called. The very first pre-production models were codenamed the "Sparrow", why though I am not exactly sure. Obviously when it came to naming the machine proper Atari thought Sparrow sounded a bit wimpy so choose the name of another bird that was much more impressive, and the Falcon was born. The numbers that followed the Falcon name didn't refer to the amount of memory, as they did in the ST, but rather the computer's CPU configuration. So 030 referenced the Motorola 68030, the 060 the Motorola 68060 and so on. Although many of the intended configurations were never actually released due to the machine's failure in the market place, including the very cool looking Falcon 040 Microbox.

Atari Panther & Jaguar
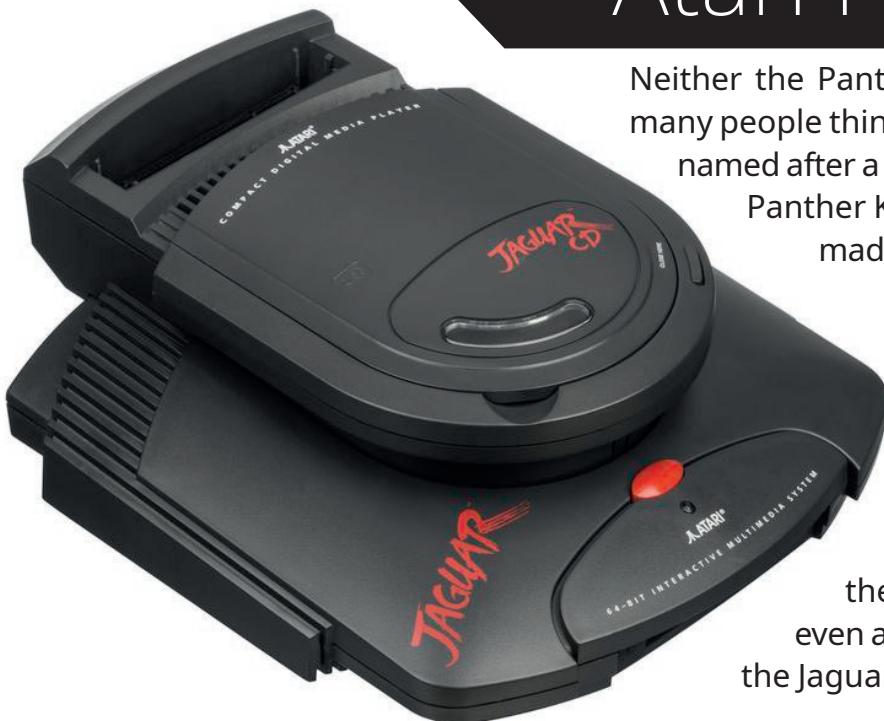
Neither the Panther or Jaguar were named after big cats as many people think. The unreleased Panther console was in fact named after a car belonging to one of the chief designers, the Panther Kallista. When Flare Design, a British company made up of ex-Sinclair engineers, came to Atari with the Flare 2 (the Flare 1 being the unreleased Konix Multi-System) Sam Tramiel decided to follow his team's lead and name it after a car of his own – the Jaguar XJ. Interestingly when Atari choose to stick with the name Jaguar they even wrote a letter to the famous English car company asking if this was ok! Of course, they didn't, but it was polite to ask. There was even a proposal to make a Jaguar-based car game on the Jaguar, although sadly this never came to anything.
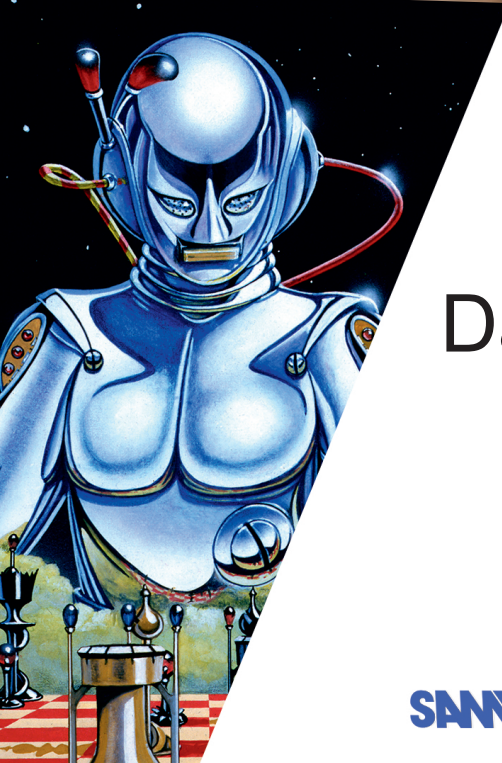
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THE C64

SAM coupé

ORIC

CHICKEN·HEADS·UP!

More new programs that run on THEC64 and the original computer have come to the fore in the last few months. As ever, we have to thank the C64 community for pointing us at new demos, games and applications that help keep the C64 alive!

The Star Wars Demo

As much a tribute to the late great Carrier Fisher (and a little bit for David Bowie!), this demo is an enjoyable homage to all things Star Wars. It's difficult to remember sometimes that this demo is running on a C64, as this is usually the kind of thing you get to see on the later 16-bit computers! Great work!

https://csdb.dk/release/?id=170922
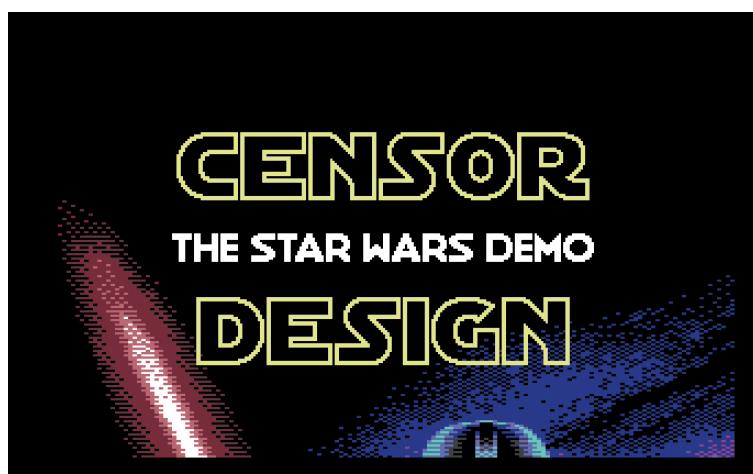
This demo only runs correctly on a PAL C64.

Note that you are asked to to flip/change the disk image file halfway through the demo. To do this from firmware v1.1.0 upwards on THEC64 Mini, try the following process:

- Create a folder (e.g. Star Wars Demo) on your USB memory stick
- Inside that folder, create a folder called s1 and another called s2
- Copy each d64 disk image file into their respective folders (e.g. starwars_s1.d64 goes into s1 and starwars_s2.d64 goes into s2)
- Rename each d64 file so they are the same filename (e.g. sw-demo.d64)
- Create a default CJM text file called thec64-default. cjm and place it inside the main folder (e.g. Star Wars Demo) to run this on THEC64 Mini
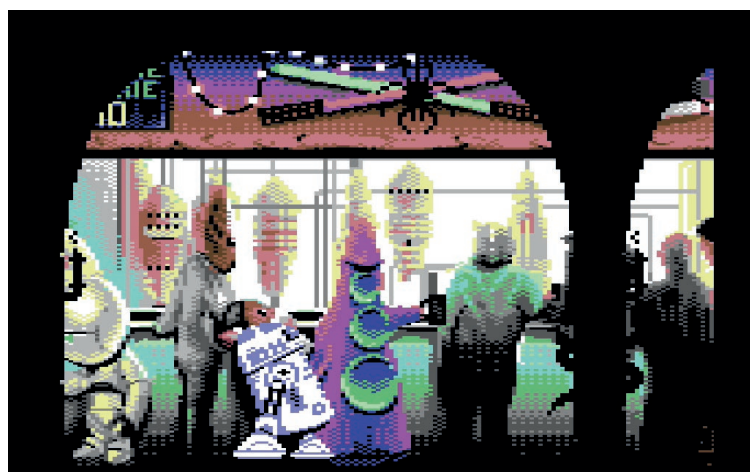
Ensure the CJM file is configured as recommended below:

```
X:pal,accuratedisk,readonly
```


If using filename flags, append each filename with _TPADRO so that it runs correctly on THEC64 Mini.

- Now insert your USB memory stick into THEC64 Mini
- Select the USB icon that appears at the bottom of the HOME screen
- Navigate into your s1 folder and run sw-demo from there
- Enjoy the first part of the demo!
- When it asks you to flip the disk, save to an empty slot (press MENU and select 'Save/Load game') Now press MENU again and select 'Exit game'
- Using the USB File Loader once again, navigate to the s2 folder and start loading 'sw-demo'
- Press MENU as soon as it allows you to and select 'Save/Load game' and then this time load the game you saved a few moments before
- The demo will resume

Super Galax-i-Birds

C64 CRAP DEBUNK PRESENTS
SUPER GALAX-I BIRDS
THE GAME THEY COULDN'T STOP AGAIN!

An unofficial sequel and homage to a Firebird budget game from the late 80s that was originally coded by Sensible Software no less, this is a slick vertical shoot 'em up created with an obvious amount of love for the C64. What's more, it's completely free!

Run the PRG file from your USB memory stick. The game runs quite happily on a PAL or NTSC C64 and uses joystick port 2 for player 1, which is the default on THEC64 Mini. No configuration on THEC64 Mini required!

https://csdb.dk/release/?id=175354
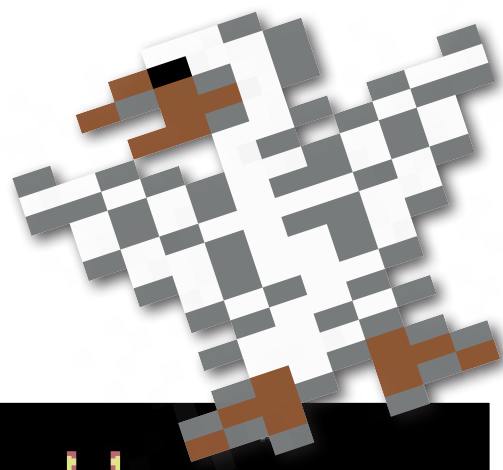
If you have discovered a hidden C64 gem that can be purchased and/or legally downloaded, please get in touch and we will try and feature it in a future issue. If you have a suggested CJM configuration file, send that along as well!

U.S.A.
Republic P-47

Fighter	1940
Maximum power output	1 × 2000 hp
Maximum speed	700 km/h
At height	12,800 m
Wing span	12.42 m

As a recognisable brand, the Top Trumps card game has been around for over forty years. Playing a quick game in the playground or during a rainy break became the norm at schools across the UK during the late 70s and throughout the 1980s.

If you've never played Top Trumps before, the idea is easy to understand. Compare statistics on your card with other players and the best-rated statistic wins the competing cards. The game is over when one player has claimed all of the cards or whoever has the most cards in their hand when time is up.

To tell the story of how Top Trumps became a national craze for school kids around the UK in the late 70s and has survived the test of time, we need to step back even earlier, travel across Europe and look at a number of different publishing companies who can all stake a claim to the success of Top Trumps.

Piatnik and Altenburg/Stralsunder

German company Altenburg/Stralsunder (AAS) released a series of card games in the 1960s called 'Quartetts', with subjects including WWII Aircraft, Cars from All Over the World, Police Cars, Sports Cars, German Cities and many others. Inspiration for the idea behind these games came from a Dutch game called Kwartet, published by Austrian company Piatnik in the 1960s as the card game Quartets. Similar in concept to the children's traditional card game Go Fish, the aim was to collect sets of card types by asking if a player had any in their hand.

The difference with the later variation was that by having different subjects, children could read the facts presented on the cards and learn as they played.

To make things more interesting, AAS added statistics to the cards and this extra information contributed to the 'brand new and exciting rules' that they introduced in the early 1970s, along with a new name - the 'Ace Trump Game'. Players compared statistics to win cards. This simple addition to the game design gave rise to a whole new card game genre. In subsequent years, they introduced the 'Super Trump' card into the decks, which beat almost all other cards regardless of their statistics.

Dübreq

The Top Trumps story in the UK begins with a company called Moviecol Enterprises Limited, based out of North London in the 1960s. They manufactured portable film equipment, made corporate promotional films and dubbed sound onto film.

Burt Coleman, Ted Coleman and Brian Jarvis forever changed the company's fortunes when they collaborated on a small electronic device they called Stylophone, which was effectively a pocket synthesiser played with a tethered hand-held stylus. Initially conceived by Burt Coleman whilst attempting to repair a child's toy piano, the Stylophone took on a life of its own when the colleagues realised what they – literally – had in their hands.

The trio formed a new company named Dübreq, specifically to sell the refined version of the device, worked upon by new recruit David Muir in the late 1960s. As a result, Moviecol became Dübreq Recording Studios Ltd to unify the two companies under the one brand name.

The creation of the Stylophone and its stellar success from the late '60s until the mid-70s deserves an article all of its own, but suffice to say that Stylophone gave Dübreq the freedom and the confidence to diversify into other markets.

Dübreq's foray into the world of card games came via a deal made with German company FX Schmid to sell anglicised Quartet decks in the UK. At the time, FX Schmid were keen to expand into other territories having nationally been a very successful company for many years selling card games, board games, jigsaw puzzles and toys in Germany. This deal resulted in a number of UK 'Super Trumps' games, including Aircraft, Convertible (Cars), Locomotives,
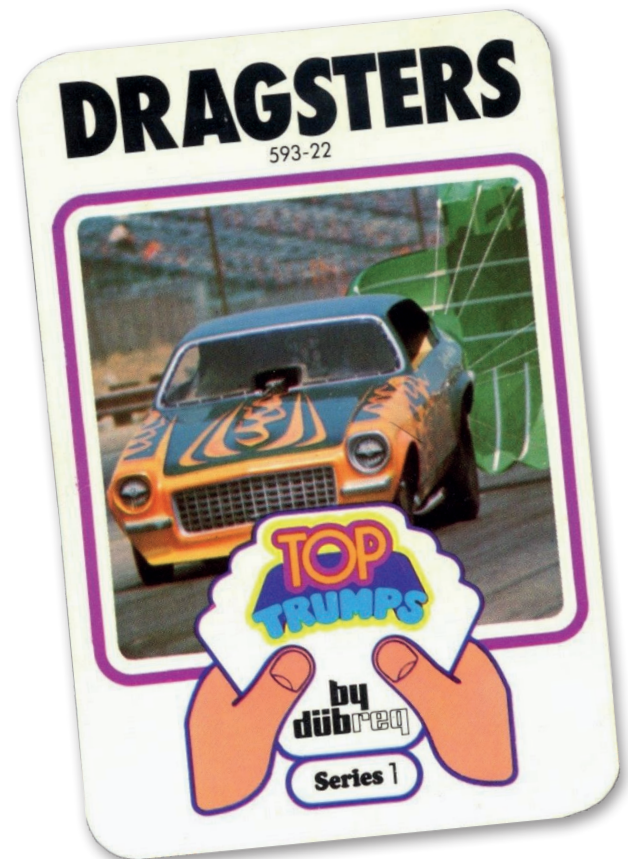
Motorbikes, New Cars, Off Road (Cars), Power Trucks, Taxi-Cabs and a handful of other titles. The Top Quartets range included Walt Disney's Mickey Mouse, Walt Disney's Jungle Book, Walt Disney's Bambi, Animal World, Racing Cars, Military Planes, Flowers, Sport and many others.

FX Schmid also released their new variant called Top Trumps, which quickly became the overall brand name for the entire range. It was based on the same idea as introduced into the AAS Super Trumps games. In early 1977, ten different Top Trump decks were launched in the UK by Dübreq at the princely sum of 50 pence each. This first series included Cars, Dragsters, Military Planes, Motor Cycles, Planes, Racing Cars, Ships, Sports Cars, Super Cars and Tanks. The second series of ten decks followed later in the year, and included Battleships, Fast Cars (Old and New), Fighters and Bombers, Helicopters, Locomotives, Motor Yachts, Prototypes (Cars), Rally Cars, Windjammers and World Class Cars.

By 1978, Top Trumps had proven to be a hit for Dübreq, and so the brand design was overhauled for the third series to establish its own separate identity from the Quartet games that had gone before. Not only were new decks introduced, including Grand Prix Cars, Jumbos and Jets, Military Vehicles, Racing Motor Cycles, Super Dragsters, Super Trains and Vintage Racers but some existing decks were rereleased with the new look. Meanwhile, US versions were beginning to appear under the brand name Boomers.

No. R 113
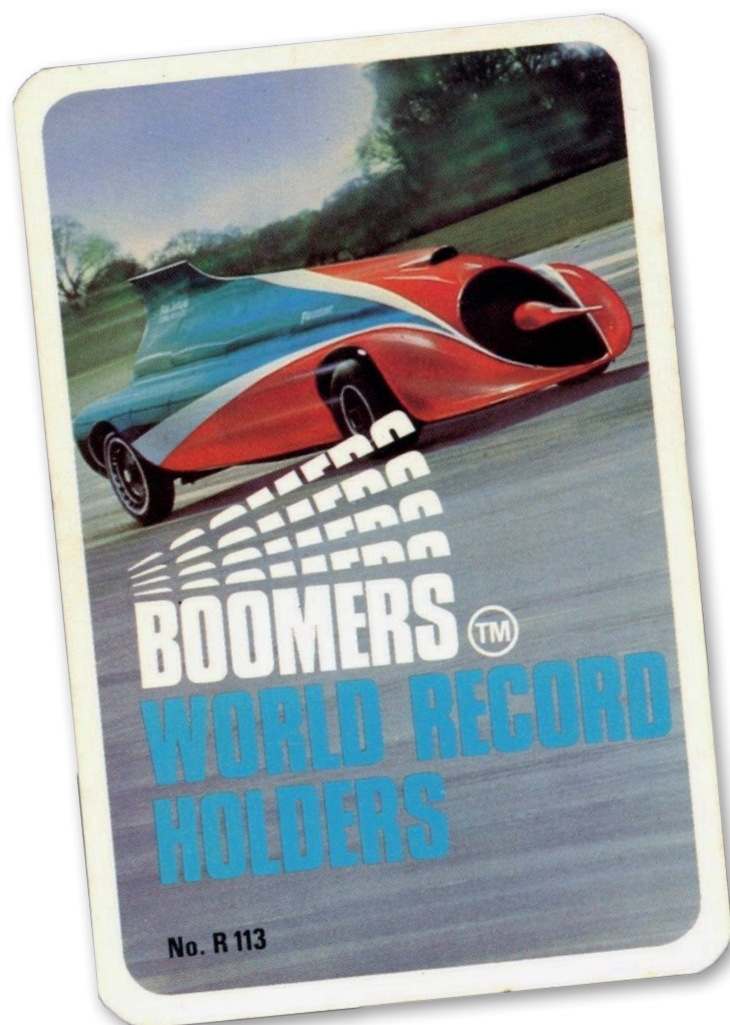
To further boost sales, a promotion was included on the cover card in each deck, announcing 'FREE packs offer inside!'. By collecting six of the promotional cards found in the series 3 decks, players could send the cards along with three five pence coins and get in return the Fabulous Buggies or World Record Holders decks that you couldn't buy in the shops. This effective marketing ploy was included in all of their subsequent releases, just with slightly different deck reward variations. It was a similar offer that Dübreq also used on one of their other popular product ranges at the time, Paul Daniel's TV Magic. A similar scheme had been included in previous series like Top Quartets, but had never been featured on the covers.

Around a hundred different card decks were published by Dübreq during the three year period from 1977 to 1980. However, by 1980 it seems that all was not rosy within the company. Stylophone had ceased production in the mid-1970s, and other products including their Stylophone related vinyl record releases, Paul Daniels TV Magic and Chippics toys weren't generating enough income.

It's at this point in the story that exactly what happened next isn't completely clear. According to some, Dübreq closed down for good in 1980 and the Directors pursued other interests. Other sources state that the company kept going for another year or so and was bought in 1982 by rival card and board game publisher Waddingtons, who just happened to be a household name in the UK. Whatever did happen, one thing is clear. Waddington picked up the Top Trumps mantle and ran with it.

Waddingtons

John Waddington and Wilson Barret founded Waddingtons Limited in the late 19th Century as a commercial printing company. Most of their business came from the Theatre, as Wilson was an actor and so had many theatrical contacts. The company soon added playing cards to their repertoire and the name was changed to Waddingtons House of Games to reflect this shift. The company name subtly changed a number of times of the next few decades before finally settling on Waddingtons.

The company became a British success story, publishing high quality playing card decks of various designs, as well as round cards that did particularly well in the US. The rights to publish Monopoly in

Great Britain

Hawker "Tempest"

Fighter	1943
Maximum power output	1 × 2000 hp
Maximum speed	695 km/h
At height	11,000 m
Wing span	12.50 m

As far as the players were concerned, the only noticeable change at first between the Dübreq decks and the Waddington versions was the addition of the Waddingtons name to the front of each pack. As time moved on, the design was changed and many new decks were introduced, totalling well over a hundred before ownership of Top Trumps changed again in the mid-1990s. More Super Top Trumps decks were produced by Waddingtons than Top Trumps, including a raft of subjects including Beetles, Buses, Cats, Dinosaurs, Dogs, Dragons and Magic beasts, Exotic Sports Cars, Goblins and Faeriefolk, Land Speed Records, Marvel Superheroes, Marvel Supervillains, Rolls Royce and Bentley Cars, Snakes, Tall Ships and many others.

Waddingtons continued to produce a flurry of additional decks up until 1996, when they finally called it a day, two years after they were bought by US toy and board game publishing giant, Hasbro. Interestingly, ASS and FX Schmid in Germany merged in 1997 and briefly produced Top AA Trump decks just a year after the Top Trumps range went on its hiatus. In 1999, Winning Moves (part of Hasbro) revived the Top Trumps brand and turned it into a massive seller that continues selling to this very day.

the UK were awarded to Waddingtons in 1934, and further successful board games followed including Cluedo, which became an international hit when Waddingtons licensed the rights to Parker Brothers in the US in the 1950s.

As far as Trump-style card games were concerned, Waddingtons had already published Quartet games on the subjects of Euro-Cars, Passenger Ships, Horses, Dogs and Cats to name just a few. They had also produced a Star-Trump range that included Tanks, Warships, Helicopters, Motorcycles, 2nd World War Planes and Animals in the Zoo. In hindsight, it was no surprise when, in 1982, Waddingtons stepped in and took control of the most popular and successful Top Trumps brand and gave it a much needed boost. Up until that point, no wordmark for Top Trumps had ever been registered, but Waddingtons were clearly trying to clear up any confusion in the marketplace.
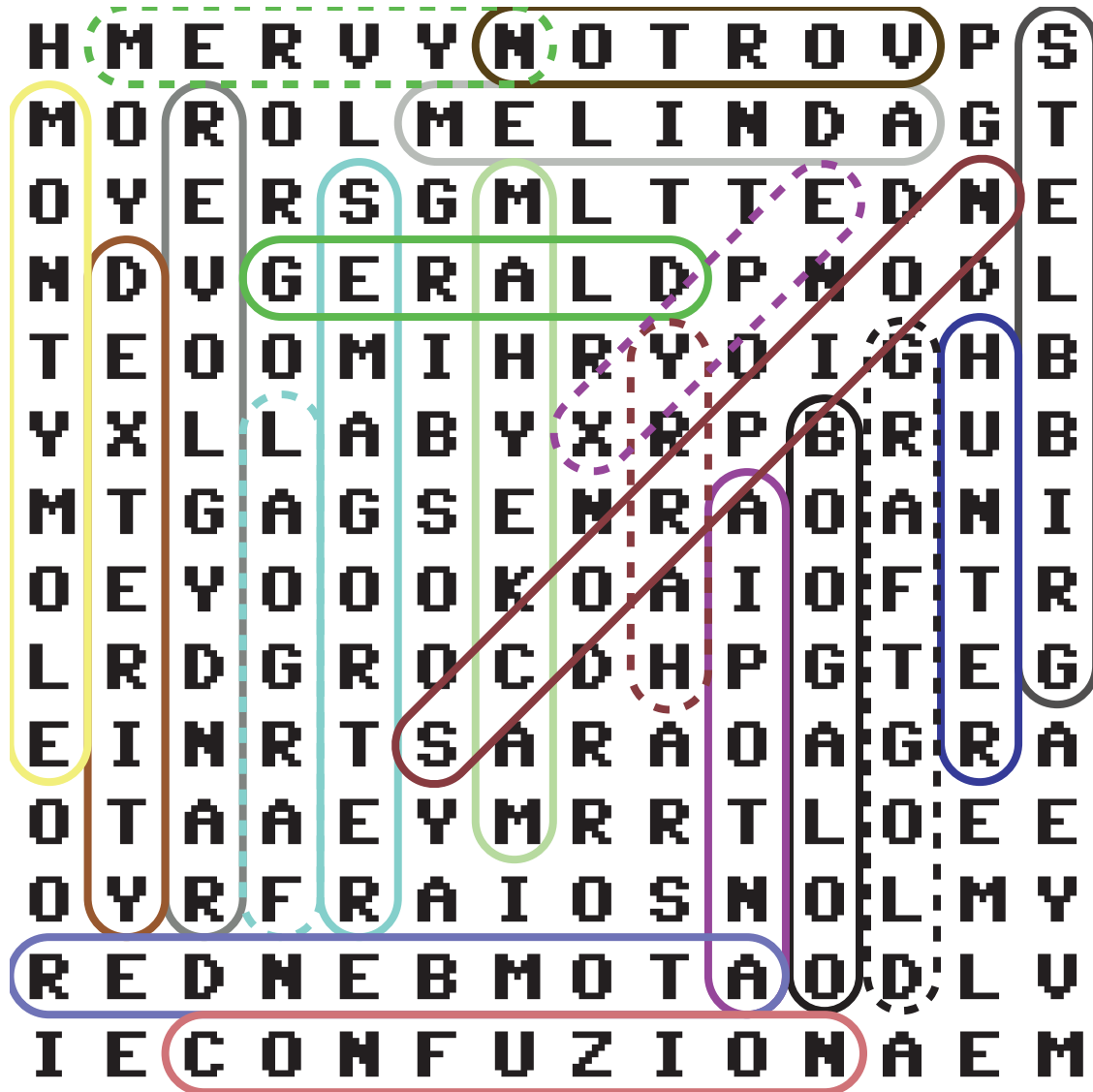

Thanks and credit for some of the information in this article must go to **www.ultimate-top-trumps.co.uk**, **www.wopc.co.uk**, **www.stylophone.ws** and **boardgamegeek.com**, amongst others.

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H M E R V Y N O T R O V P S
M O R O L M E L I N D A G T
O Y E R S G M L T T E D N E
N D V G E R A L D P N O D L
T E O O M I H R Y O I G H B
Y X L L A B Y X A P R U B
M T G A G S E N R A O N I
O E Y O O K O A I O F T R
L R D G R O C D H P G T E G
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BOOGALOO

SCORPION

RETROGAMES

ANTOPIA

GERALD

HUNTER

MONTYMOLE

DEXTERITY

VORTON

CONFUZION

GRIBBLETS

RANDYGLOVER

MACKEYHAM

ATOMBENDER

MELINDA

GRAFTGOLD

HARRY

FARGOAL

EPYX

MERVYN

#1

DATASOFT

ACCESSSOFTWARE

URIDIUM

EVERYONESAWALLY

LUCASFILMGAMES

WHODARESWINS

HEWSON

CYBERDYNEWARRIOR

ODIN

SNOWBALL

ANTATTACK

SPEEDBALL

SENSIBLESOFTWARE

ROBHUBBARD

FIREBIRD

SKOOLDAZE

DEFLEKTOR

OCEAN