

SAM Community

Newsletter Issue #2

Oct/Nov 1999

Bunnik SAM and Spectrum Meeting

The WoMo-Team from the Spectrum and SAM Profi Club in Germany contacted us with a show report from Bunnik, Holland which was held on the 2nd of October.

Bunnik - where is Bunnik? And what kind of meeting? We guess that, unfortunately, a lot of the Newsletter readers have never heard of it. The Bunnik meeting is up to 4 times yearly in a small Dutch town and is organised by the HCC. It is a meeting for Spectrum and SAM lunatics, the second of which is what we are interested in.

Over the years that we have been visiting Bunnik, the meetings have seen less people coming, but Bunnik remains a meeting point for such Dutch SAM enthusiasts as Edwin Blink, Stefan Drissen, Martijn Groen and Robert van der Veeke - all well known names in the scene. The WoMo-Team from Germany's biggest Spectrum club (and the only one with SAM support), SPC, are also usually there. We bring you SAM users, since Malcolm's sudden death, hopefully some very good news.

Meeting Martijn and Robert there, we got hold of some very new and interesting programs. However - as we write, the meeting was just yesterday so we have only used them in Bunnik so far. But they are very impressive!

Since the first release of the SAM, there have been two add-ons which have been much talked about: the hard disk and the possibility of using a CD-ROM drive. But both of them only become interesting with useful software available for them. Well, here's our thanks to some Dutch and German programmers! But enough - what's new?

B-DOS 1.6 (by Edwin Blink)

This is the latest release of the DOS which lets you control your hard disk in an easy way. Version 1.6 has got some new features and now supports access to a CD-ROM driver. Detailed information in the form of a read.me file is included. (B-DOS can also be used on SAMs without a hard drive, although can only operate one floppy drive.)

REDBOOK AND YELLOWBOOK (by Martijn Groen)

Two programs which give you access to CDs in your CD-ROM player - Redbook is for using audio CDs and Yellowbook is for data CDs (with screens, programs and so on). Information is included within the programs.

SPECTRUM EMULATOR (by Martijn Groen)

This is a new version of the emulator, previously 2.1.

The great improvement is, that you can now load Spectrum programs not only from Plus D disks or hard disk as before, but also direct from CD (there are a lot of CDs with Spectrum programs on the market). Nearly all formats are supported such as .Z80, .TAP, .SLT, .SNP or .SP to name some.

NEW MOD-PLAYER (by Stefan Drissen)

If you are MOD freaks as we are, then you too probably missed the ability to load MOD(ules) directly from the hard disk. The old MOD-Player could read SAM and DOS-disks. With this new MOD-Player you can also use your hard disk as storage media and we guess it is only a matter of time until we get a version which loads MODS from CD.

As we have decided to help Gavin with the SAM Community Newsletter, you will read more in the future about such programs and how they work. We will send these programs in the next time to Gavin, so he can also see for himself. The good thing about these programs is that they are free. People who can't wait can write or mail us to get the programs (for formatted disk and SAE or via email as .dsk):

Spectrum & SAM Profi Club
Wolfgang and Monika Haller
Im Tannenforst 10
D-51069 Koeln (Cologne)
Germany

e-mail: womoteam@t-online.de
web: <http://www.womoteam.de>

Greetings to all SAM friends, your WoMo-Team from SPC.

Thanks again WoMo-Team! Some very interesting items there. See elsewhere in this Newsletter for another way of getting these programs, the SAM Community File Library.

Inside this issue

Bunnik Show Report, Outwrite goes PD, Persona Problems, Bits and bobs, Len Bennett returns, 8-Bit show cancelled, Quazar Update, SAM Community File Library, Adventurer's Convention, The Future...

New products

in the last two months...

Atapi Driver - CD-ROM Driver - PD
 B-DOS 1.6 - Advanced SAM DOS - PD
 CPM22QED - CPM emulator - PD
 Crashed - Issue 27 - Fanzine
 Len Bennett hardware re-released - See news article
 Mod Player 2.1 - As name suggests - PD
 Morse Tutor - As name suggests - now PD
 Outwrite - Version 2 - Word processor - now PD
 Redbook - Audio CD-ROM extension for B-DOS
 - PD
 Soundbyte - Issue 53 - Quazar Surround disk mag



Soundbyte - Issue 54 - Quazar Surround disk mag
 Spectrum Emulator 3.3 - Guess what it is! - PD



Yellowbook - Data CD-ROM extension for B-DOS

Outwrite goes PD

Bob Wilkinson has kindly offered his Outwrite 2 word processor to the SAM Community File Library. It is also available on various places on the Internet. He has made his Morse Tutor public domain

Persona Problems

I have heard many reports from various people of problems with Persona. Since Malcolm's death earlier this year, the full situation with Persona has been unclear, but more recently it has been alleged that his family are refusing to fulfil orders and answer any queries. The copyright situation with a lot of Persona titles remain confused which is a particular problem to the SAM scene as Persona had a very large catalogue of software. I am currently attempting to contact some authors and other people to find out how we can once again make this software available.

Editor of Blitz, David Ledbury, has apparently come under a lot of abuse from various unhappy people, annoyed at not receiving their orders nor their money being returned, despite the fact that David was only the Blitz editor. Understandably, David has now washed his hands of Persona and has had to change his phone number. If you have a problem with Persona, please attempt to contact Malcolm's family.

Bits and bobs

CPM22QED is now available - unfortunately I haven't had a chance to try this one out yet, but as the name suggests, it's the CPM operating system on the SAM, allowing lots of CPM programs to be used on your SAM - the author, Jarek Adamski, has also written programs for it, which give easier access to a lot of different disk formats which exist under CPM. CPM22QED should be in the File Library next issue, along with more details.

The latest Crashed reports that Dave Tonks is working on a new issue of SAM Supplement and also has a new card game. As ever, more information next issue.

Atapi Driver by Slawomir Grodkowski is the first program to make use of CD-ROM on SAM. It is apparently not as nice as Redbook or Yellowbook. It is however written completely in Basic, so every SAM user can see how it works. Typing in "help" gives you a full list of all commands. It makes it easy to load something from CD and to store it on a disk or a chosen Record (directories or folders are known as Records in BDOS) on your hard disk.

Last issue (if you can remember it!) contained a news item about a new Chess game from Chris Pile, author of SAM Defender. Chris reports that although the game is only a few weeks away from completion, he has stopped working on it due to lack of enthusiasm. He has been disappointed by the lack of feedback from Defender, so if you don't have it, order it now from the File Library and if you have any comments, I'll pass them on to Chris.

Len Bennett returns

Perhaps not a name all of you are familiar with, but you soon will be! Len is the designer and maker of some wonderful hardware products for the SAM, including the Atom. I have been chatting to Len recently, and he has confirmed that he is going to start selling his hardware himself, because of the sad problems with Persona. Below is his price list (note new prices for the Atom!)

Atom Hard Drive interface - £30 (A hard to obtain component at time of writing has meant that Len is only able to supply the 3.5" version of the interface at the moment - therefore you will need a power supply (+5v and +12v), and unlike the 2.5" version, the hard drive will be external - more news on the availability of the 2.5" version next issue).

External battery backed clock - £12.50

Internal battery backed clock - £10.50 (This requires 16 soldered connections inside Sam)

256k memory upgrade - £10.00

Disk protector - £6.50

S.P.S. 3 - £18.50 (Expansion boards similar to
S.P.S. 4 - £21.50 Format's Two-Up but with 3 or
(4 sockets)

(Atom Connector Board - £7.50 (For plugging the Atom into an S.P.S. for operating outside the SAM)

Write to:
A.L.Bennett,
Holwell Hyde Farm,
Holwell Hyde Lane,
Welwyn Garden City,
Herts,
AL7 4AA.
or email bennett@kilblain.freemove.co.uk

It's worth remembering that the Atom can now be used to access data CD-ROMs and audio CDs using new extensions to B-DOS - see the File Library Update for more information.

8-Bit show cancelled

The 1999 UK 8-Bit Convention announced last issue, was cancelled with no explanation given. With no Spectrum/SAM shows for a while, this looked to be a major event, however, due to various reasons (there is some arguments going on in one or two newsgroups on the Internet about the reasoning behind this), it didn't go ahead. This leaves a gaping hole in the UK Spectrum and SAM scenes - any news on future SAM shows would be most welcome.

Quazar Update

The ever busy Colin Piggot has sent me an update to bring you all up to speed from the last issue of the Newsletter. Soundbyte, the monthly disk for users of the Quazar Surround soundcard is now up to issue 54. Recent issues have included:

Issue 48 : Mousehunt : A game that uses the full surround capabilities of the Quazar Surround - where you have to catch the mouse that is running all around you. There's also some music made with Quazar Sequencer Pro (sample sequencing software for the Quazar Surround) - of the song 'Bitter Sweet Symphony'.

Issue 49 : Flat Eric : A video using Quazar Video 2, as outlined in the last SAM Community Newsletter. Multiple Source 3D 2 - have sounds playing all around you!

Issue 50 : (Double Disk Half Anniversary issue) - several programs, two of which are reader contributions - compressed music, a Quazar Video 2 film, and a great sequence made with Quazar Sequencer Pro!

Issue 51 : Dreams - an instrumental soundtrack - using 8:1 sample compression with on screen gfx equaliser. Stars - music made with Quazar Sequencer Pro

Issue 52 : Sunchyme - the full song! Raindrops - a game level for Super Byke Championship

Issue 53 : Disco Madness - a music game where you have to hit keys or waggle the joystick in time with the music. The track on this disk is D.I.S.C.O by Ottowan. A game along the lines of Bust a Groove and Dance Dance Revolution. Additional tracks for this game will appear on future issues of Soundbyte.

Colin has also contacted me with a special offer, only for SAM Community members. He has reduced the following items:

Quazar Surround soundcard - £48.99 (£5 off)
Money Bags 2 - £7.99 (£2 off)
Stratosphere - £14.99 (£3 off)

These prices only stand until the end of October, which gives you a couple of weeks or so. More information will be popping through your doors soon or write to Colin, enclosing an SAE for his 12 page information booklet:

Quazar,
204 Lamond Drive,
St. Andrews,
Fife,
KY16 8RR.

Colin has hinted that he might be working on another game to smash Stratosphere (his last full game) of the pedestal that is 'The Best Game Ever On Sam' but it all depends on how sales of Stratosphere total up.

SAM Community File Library

The File Library is a service available to all SAM Community Newsletter readers. Files are organised by type (Applications, Demos, Disk mags, Emulators, Games) and are shown with their size in kilobytes. A SAM disk holds 780k - minus 14k for the DOS, and that leaves you with 766k to fill with whatever files you choose. Simply send a £1 coin per disk of files you want (or a 50p coin plus a disk) to the usual address, and your disk will be returned to you with the items requested - no cheques or postal orders please! I cannot be held responsible for coins lost in the post. This month we've got just a few sample files to get us off and running, and to give you an idea on how it will work, including Outwrite 2 and Defender - lack of space prevented me from printing more. Either wait for the full catalogue coming with your next issue or send me an SAE and I'll send you the latest catalogue.

Applications

Morse Tutor (Morse Code tutor) Bob Wilkinson 33k
Outwrite 2 (Word processor) Bob Wilkinson 524k

Demos

Lyra 3 (One of the best demos on SAM) ESI Full disk

Emulation

SAM81 (Excellent ZX81 emulator) Stefan Drissen 28k

Games

Defender (Extremely faithful version of the arcade) Chris Pile Full disk
Ore Warz 2 (Turn based like Space Crusade - great!) William McGugan 268k

Adventurer's Convention

The Tenth Anniversary Adventurer's Convention will be held in The Royal Angus Thistle Hotel, Birmingham, Saturday, 30th October, 1999.

The convention will run from 9am on the Saturday until 6pm and covers all formats. Tables will be available if you wish to bring your own computer (someone bring a SAM!) You are welcome to bring along software/hardware for sale too, although no pirated software is allowed.

A number of the adventurers stay over night on Friday and Saturday nights at the hotel and you are welcome to join them.

During the day there will be a competition involving cash prizes - contestants get 20 minutes playing time at a specially written text adventure.

Tickets are available now at £5. - there is also special room rates if you are staying at the hotel. If you have any queries about the convention, or would like to reserve tables for hardware or software please contact either Larry Horsfield or Karen Tyers:

email: Larry - alaric@larryhorsfield.demon.co.uk
Karen - karvic@btinternet.com

The Future...

There are now no regular SAM disk or paper magazines (excepting Quazar's Soundbyte which is for Quazar Surround soundcard owners). When the SAM Community was first thought of, the SAM scene was quite different, with plenty of support, groups and individuals still working on it. The SAM Community was intended to support their efforts.

Because of the dramatic change in the scene over the past year, it has been suggested to me by a number of SAM Community members, that the Newsletter should evolve into a full magazine. Nothing has been decided yet and I would very much value your opinion. Here is what I am proposing for the SAM Community:

A bimonthly paper based magazine, first issue, Jan/Feb 2000, containing news, reviews, opinions and some general hardware and programming features. The File Library would be expanded and work hand in hand with the magazine which would display updates to the Library since the last issue. The magazine would be priced as low as possible - target price of £1 (£5 for a year's 6 issues). **However**, all current SAM Community members would receive the number of issues that they are owed anyway, regardless of the change in price. So to sum up: we scrap everything that we have at the moment, and launch a new magazine simply called "SAM Community". The original point of the questionnaires was to help developers decide on future products etc, but only one developer has taken advantage of this. Therefore I propose we drop the questionnaire, which was a hassle anyway, and gauge support for the SAM by the readership figures of the magazine. You would therefore receive a magazine which contained as much news as the first two issues of the Newsletter, but which hopefully be more interesting to read, rather than the dry "only news, no opinion" style of the Newsletter. Rather than being restricted, it would also allow us to expand the news articles, going in depth on the more interesting ones.

It is however up to you. If you are against the magazine please write in and let me know. If there is a large number against it, you will receive the third issue of the SAM Community Newsletter around the 10th of December. On the other hand, if no-one is against it, you will receive the first issue of the "SAM Community" (the magazine) around the 19th of January. Clear as mud? Good. Write to me with any opinions.

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