

GREAT MOMENTS IN YS HISTORY

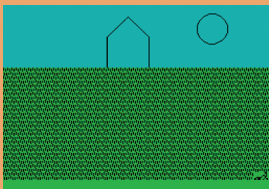
The events, happenings and strangeness that made Your Sinclair the daddy of Spectrum games mags...

FARTY THE WARTHOG

Poor Jonathan Davies. Not only was he lumbered with a flatulent warthog as a surprise pet, he was also subjected to the porcine beast's unexpected demise (Farty's last words: "BANG") and was subsequently haunted by the ghostly porker. Some claimed that Farty didn't really exist, yet those who enter the ground floor store cupboard at Dennis Publishing are still faced with a pungent, sulphurous odour that suggests otherwise...



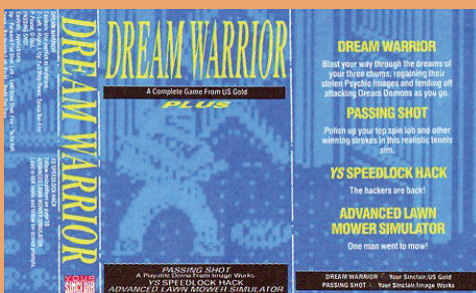
ADVANCED LAWNMOWER SIMULATOR



Hard to believe now, but back in the Spec days, it was normal for a magazine to give away five, six, even seven games on their cover tape. Some in the industry grumbled that this devalued the game product, and would lead to the 'I want it for free' mentality in the

consumer, which still blights games today. But there's one game that proves this to be the bucket of cold nonsense it clearly is – Gardensoft's seminal Advanced Lawnmower Simulator.

Had this intricate and complex wonder of game design been put out for commercial sale, it would doubtless have dominated the charts for the next 10 years. No other games would be sold, because no other games would be required. Advanced Lawnmower clans still meet today to swap tips and discuss the best ways to use the Flymo Grass-Chum. By giving this game away for free and removing it from the sales arena, Your Sinclair actually saved the games industry from utter ruin. Think about it. And then cry, you lowly dogs.



WHISTLIN' RICK WILSON

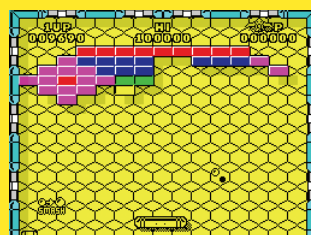
During the blood-soaked Cover Tape Wars of the 1980s, many weapons were deployed in a bid to entice readers into parting with their hard-earned wonga. Brutal knife fights took place in multi-storey car parks to decide who would get first dibs on the Army Moves demo. Seven people died in an explosion following an attempt to secure exclusive rights to Joe Blade 3. But perhaps the most controversial tactic came from Your Sinclair itself, when it unveiled the musical bio-weapon known as Whistlin' Rick Wilson.



Part club singer, part Humpardinck, part Rick Astley, his specially penned ditty – "Hold My Hand Very Tightly (Very Tightly)" – was an expression of potent erotic longing, powerful enough to turn women to jelly, men to stone and the clergy to drink. Backstage rumour has it that both Pop Idol and Fame Academy were veiled attempts to draw the legendary crooner out of hiding but, his work done, Whistlin' Rick has vanished into the mists of pop history forever, safe in the knowledge that his legacy is untouchable.

BATTY

Giving away games and demos with a mag was common. But giving away *good* complete games that had never even been near the shops – that was something else. Following a half-hearted start with Road



Race (a rather limp racer that had been rejected by Ocean), YS really struck gold with Batty, a fiendishly addictive Breakout clone from Elite, which took the Arkanoid model and added even more features. The game was so good, and so popular, that Elite would later include it in commercial compilations. And it cost YS readers precisely nowt pence to enjoy. Gawd bless 'em.



LOVE IN A COLD CLIMATE

"That's Michael Fish – one of the most brilliant people in the country!" So begins one of the many YS diversions into the pointlessly hilarious – a photo love story that has zilch to do with games, Spectrums or indeed anything other than the YS crew mucking about. The tale is a steamy and sensual one, as boring Brian (Matt Bielby) drives his girlfriend into the arms of rockabilly sex-muffin Darren (Dave Wilson) thanks to his tedious obsession with the weather. The saga ends on an uplifting note: "I can only snog you till nine o'clock, cos I've got to tune the carbs on the motor. But I do love you."



A TASTE OF VIZ

If there was one act that set Your Sinclair apart from the Spec-mag herd, it was YS's alliance with the potty-mouthed maniacs at Viz. Bundling a free sampler of the lewd adult comic with the kid-friendly games mag was, from a kid's point of view, the best thing ever in the history of ever. From a parent's point of view, however, it was time to dust off the old "Ban This Sick Filth" placards and march on YS Towers. The Mini-Viz was actually a heavily toned down affair, but that didn't stop some newsagents hiding it under the counter and refusing to give it to underage readers.



THE SCI-FI NIPPLE SAGA

As seems to happen at regular intervals, 1987 saw a big kaffuffle about sexism in games ads. For Barbarian, Maria Whitaker posed with Wolf from Gladiators, wearing naught but a furry bikini. Martech tried much the same thing with Vixen, using Page 3 'stunna' Corinne Russell wielding an unconvincing whip. US Gold even got in on the act, advertising its Psycho Pigs UXB puzzler with a scantily clad filly and the caption "I know which one I'd rather play with." It was obviously an outrageous scandal, and male teenage readers were mortified at the lack of respect for wimmin being displayed. But the game ad that caused the most outrage was for Game Over, a rather tepid shoot-em-up from Imagine. The problem? The game's lurid artwork featured a sci-fi hussy in a cyber-bra – and you could clearly see a bit of her nipple poking out. Disgusting. Most mags covered the offending nip up with a screenshot, or some hastily added bra bits. Your Sinclair, on the other hand, gave its readers a giant poster of the original artwork – with the sci-fi nipple in all its pert glory. Geezer.



NATIONAL RESCUE

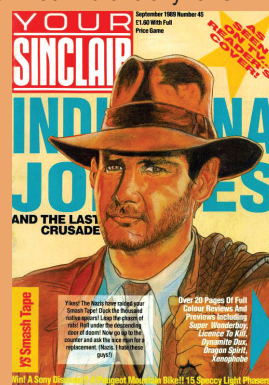
Many games mags experimented with comic strips based on game characters. Lunar Jetman graced the pages of Crash for many years, Monty Mole appeared in Sinclair User a few times, and Gremlin's Jack the Nipper starred in YS courtesy of the Viz artists. But all pale in comparison to the surreal wonder that was National Rescue, the brain burp of Duncan MacDonald.

Following the non-adventures of the Tracy brothers, who operated their dim-witted rescue franchise from a house in Croydon, the average instalment would see the heroes going to the shops or borrowing some sugar from a neighbour. Meanwhile, thousands would die in a preventable disaster elsewhere. Relevance to games? Zero. Relevance to funny? Very much, thank you please.



PUTTING READERS OUT FRONT

Ask anyone involved in magazines and they'll tell you that it's the voices in their head that make them do bad, bad things. Ask them again once they've taken their medicine and they'll tell you that the cover is a vital tool in getting people to pick up and buy a mag. Choosing the right image is paramount. So what kind of crazy folks would let a reader draw their cover art? The crazy folks at YS, of course. To tie in with Indiana Jones and the Last Crusade, YS offered readers the chance to scribble their own artwork for the cover. The result may not have been a masterpiece, but it showed where YS's heart was. In a jar, under Matt Bielby's desk.



THE PICO FAMILY

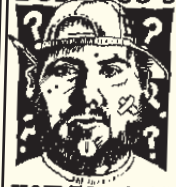
Starting with goggle-eyed fortune-teller Madame Pico, this bizarre brood answered readers' queries on all non-game-related matters – "Help! I'm stuck up a tree" went one typical letter. When Madame Pico went on holiday, never to return, Bud Pico

took over and served up DIY tips involving Rice Krispies. Bud was eventually replaced by mad scientist Femto Pico and his hippy sister Soya. Rumour has it that the Pico Family are still out there. Somewhere. Watching. Always watching...

OOH, YOU
POOR DEAR
Your problems
solved by Madam
Pico



BUD PICO'S



FEMTO PICO

