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**A confidential monthly newsletter—**  
not for external publication

# **Sinclair** bulletin

Issue 7: February 1983

## NEWS REVIEW

Sinclair valued at £135.9 million . . .

January's private placement of 400,000 Sinclair Research shares with a group of UK institutional investors has raised £13.6 million gross and capitalises the company at £135.9 million.

The sale was carried out for Sinclair by merchant bankers N M Rothschild & Sons Limited, and follows a recent presentation to potential investors at which Clive Sinclair outlined future plans and prospects.

As a guideline he forecast pre-tax profits for Sinclair Research in the year to 31 March 1983 of not less than £14,000,000 (1982 - £9.8 million).

The £12.7 million realised by Clive Sinclair personally will be devoted to the electric

vehicle project which now requires significant additional funding. This project has been acquired by Clive Sinclair as a separate undertaking, independent of Sinclair Research.

Calmer Waters at Timex . . .

In the last month company eyes have been turned anxiously towards the Timex plant at Dundee as management and unions sought ways of resolving the issue of 1900 proposed redundancies without a strike.

Early on Sinclair Research made its position clear by stating that if a major strike occurred it would be forced to move production to alternative sites, probably on a permanent basis. These sites were identified by the production department, following November's dispute, to prevent any disruption to our customers.

Equally we made it clear that we have been delighted with both the quantity and the quality of production at Timex, especially in recent months, and have no wish to leave the plant unless forced to do so.

Latest reports suggest that sufficient numbers have accepted the management's voluntary package to prevent any confrontation over compulsory redundancies. Sinclair can now look forward confidently to further expanding its computer production at Timex - perhaps up to 60,000 Spectrums in March.

Spectrum leads the field . . .

As production races ahead, Sinclair's ZX Spectrum has established itself as the firm market leader in the under £200 sector of the personal computer market. Sales are now running at 40,000 units per month and rising fast.

The computer has been introduced with great success throughout the W H Smith chain and is now being made available via a number of other high street retailers and Prism Micro-products.

Overall, Sinclair is confident that it can maintain its 60% market share in the UK during 1983, at a time when the overall market is expected to double. Smiths and Prism alone are projecting sales of 10,000 units per week over the next 2-3 months.

So now for export . . .

From this firm base Sinclair has now finalised its plans for export marketing the ZX Spectrum, commencing March/April. It is particularly confident of achieving major sales in Europe.

To support its move into overseas markets the company is considering holding a major seminar for all overseas agents in the UK during June.

Upward slope for software . . .

Led by the cult figure of Horace, Sinclair's software sales for both the ZX81 and ZX Spectrum are moving ahead fast. Horace, in his latest ski-ing incarnation, is proving a major attraction.

A large amount of new software is in the pipeline, particularly for education, as Sinclair concentrates its marketing activity increasingly in this field.

Elsewhere, the ZX81 and its peripherals continue to sell well in the UK and overseas and to maintain their valued position in the range. A number of major promotions are planned to further support and expand UK sales over the coming months.

#### IN BRIEF

Sinclair's new Willis Road head office will be the focus of publicity on March 10 when we plan to bring in a party of journalists and to generally show it off . . . Clive has recently appeared on Robin Day's 'Question Time' and on BBC 'Newsnight', and during March will be appearing on the new BBC series, the 'Tim Rice Chat Show' . . . Sinclair's appearance at the London Home Computer Fair in January was good for sales and was marked by the launch of further Spectrum software . . . Apart from the share sales and the Timex dispute Sinclair has

also been in the news over the proposal by the British Micro-computer Manufacturers Group to limit micro-computer imports into the UK. Sinclair rejects this and has urged Government to focus attention on the inequitable tariff structure which actively discourages UK manufacture of personal computers. Clive has developed this theme with a call for serious Government investigation of freeports . . . The last month has also been notable for a major restructuring of the company together with a number of new personnel appointments at senior level and these will be covered in detail in the next issue.

#### OFFBEAT

This column is in danger of demise. Could we have some reader participation please?

#### IN CAMERA

We return this month to the UK to feature Sinclair's 'Quiet Man', David Southward, director of research and development at St Ives for the Microvision TV projects. David, 46, is



probably one of Sinclair's best-known names and yet one of its least-known personalities. Surprising since he has been with Sinclair since 1977.

He can be located with his three small children and wife, Helen, in the village of Cottenham, some four miles north of Cambridge, which David firmly denies to be 'pretty'. Its greatest claim to fame is that it possesses the longest high street in East Anglia.

David has been engaged full-time on the TV project for over five years, first establishing it at Radionics and then carrying it forward into Research. His connection with Clive Sinclair, however, goes back to 1961/62 when David and Tim Eiloart founded Cambridge Consultants. For David, who read Chemical Engineering at Cambridge University and then worked briefly in chartered accountancy in the City, Cambridge Consultants embodied a commitment to his real 'love', research and development into a wide variety of new industrial and technological concepts.

Over a ten year period the consultancy grew to employ some 150 or so staff and to be involved in projects ranging from industrial instruments through hi-fi to carpets.

Ultimately, Cambridge Consultants collapsed in 1971 - 'under capitalised when it went into manufacturing', was David's terse explanation - and David moved on to work first for Lepson Audio designing top-end hi-fi products and later Cambridge Instrument Company. This latter concentrated on the medical field, a particular interest of David's.

So why the TV? 'It appeared a fascinating product and from the outset presented a challenge to take it all the way down the track into commercial production'. David was first involved in setting up a suitable structure for the product's development and financing. 'Certainly', he agreed 'there had been problems but no more than you would expect from a major new product. Every major item of production machinery for the TV has had to be custom designed and tested.'

He now exudes a quiet confidence, as he discusses the pre-production phase at Timex where several hundred tubes per week are now being produced. 'I would not have stuck with it unless convinced that it would be a winner. It will be half the price of its nearest competitor and will have specific advantages, particularly in the areas of battery consumption and weight'.

quote his hobbies. 'DIY', he said. I groaned. 'Oh, and water ski-ing', he added. I gulped.

Now that the TV project is so near to completion David is looking forward confidently to future products. He sees a wide area of potential industrial and consumer applications for the flat-screen technology, and in addition is looking forward to starting a number of new projects in completely unrelated areas.

He enjoys the atmosphere of the company which even after its growth retains a 'family feel' and believes it to be 'positively productive' in terms of achievement.

Of all those interviewed for this column David produced the biggest surprise when asked to

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Issue 9: May 1983

## NEWS REVIEW

### Spectrum prices drop . . .

Sinclair surprised the computing world again last month by dropping its ZX Spectrum suggested retail prices to £99.95 for the 16K version and £129.95 for the 48K model. Managing Director Nigel Searle credited the cost cut to dropping computer production costs coupled with the rapid progress of computer technology.

Quick to implement the new price were UK retailers WH Smiths, Boots, John Lewis Partnership, House of Fraser, John Menzies and Greens.

Initial consumer response to the new prices was very positive, with the 48K out-selling the 16K by a margin of some four to one.

Also discounted this month was the ZX Printer, which fell in price from £59.95 to £39.95,

meaning harder copy for softer cash.

### New ZX81/Spectrum Software . . .

Nine new cassette programs, including an additional language FORTH, an advanced chess program and another adventure for our hero Horace were launched this month, soon to be available in all retail outlets.

The new FORTH program responds to ZX81 and Spectrum users with an interest in programming by combining the simplicity of BASIC with the speed of machine code. For games-players, the new eight level Cyrus-IS-Chess program provides tough competition, with cursor movement of pieces, a replay facility and the ability to function as a normal two-player game-board.



Horace seeks adventure, this time with The Spiders, in a program by the same name. For more traditional parlour games-players there's a 10,000-plus word Scrabble program and a full-feature Backgammon. And ZX81 owners have two new adventure games, Sabotage and City Patrol. Finally, for the growing number of Spectrum owners looking for effective business software, the new Small Business Accounts program (48K) provides balance sheet and profit and loss information, together with VAT returns.

The new software selections will retail from £4.95 to £15.95 inc. VAT.

Timex sit-in ends . . .

A five and one-half week sit-in at the Timex plant in Milton was settled on May 18 after lengthy negotiations between union leaders, workers and Timex officials. The situation began in early April, when 130 workers, made compulsorily redundant by the company, occupied the Milton site. Previously some 1770 had accepted voluntary terms.

The dispute prevented any progress on the CRT project. Computer production, at Timex's Camperdown site, remained completely unaffected.

With the plant now reopened, work on the flat screen has resumed, and all efforts are being made to speed the finished product to market.

Sinclair on the run . . .

The second annual Sinclair Half-Marathon has been scheduled for Sunday, July 17 and entry blanks for the hearty are now available. The race is a featured event of the Cambridge Festival, a city-wide potpourri of cultural and sporting events held each July in Sinclair's headquarters city.

Several high-ranking executives, as well as an upstart contingent from the company's US offices have announced their intentions to tackle the 13-mile course, and plenty of numbers are still available from the Cambridge offices. First stop Cambridge, 1983, next stop Los Angeles, 1984??

## PERSONNEL

Welcome aboard (and abroad) to Mary Reinman, who joins Sinclair from our US public relations agency. Presently working with Bill Nichols in our London offices, she will return to Boston in November to head up our US PR efforts . . . also to Sue Campbell at Willis Road . . . and to Tiziana Ferri in overseas sales . . . to Karen Laurence, owner of the friendly voice on the Willis Road switchboard . . . Barbara Lohar with the double duty of customer relations and mailroom supervision . . . and Julie Skillington, an HND student on six months work experience.

## IN BRIEF

Some 3,000 children will be introduced to computing on Sinclair hardware over their school holidays at Dolphin Summer Camps this year. The residential and day camps will combine computing, robotics and videomaking with more traditional sporting and outdoor activities. Special family weekends will give parents a turn at the ZX Computer

keyboards as well . . . Plans are underway for a new Sinclair booth to debut at the Personal Computer Fair to be held at Earl's Court June 16 - 19. The new booth is designed to improve visitor traffic flow. Free tickets for the show can be obtained from the London office.

## IN CAMERA

This month we focus in on Alison Maguire, 32, Sinclair's resident expert on applications software development. Alison assumed her post at Willis Road, in January 1983.

From there, she seeks out promising new software from Psion, Artic, ICL and other independent suppliers. The best of it she publishes under the Sinclair name.

Alison's ability to make such decisions comes from more than ten years working in computers and software-related jobs. Most recently, she was manager of large accounts for CSS in London. CSS sells computer time sharing to companies in need of high-level database services.



Earlier in her career, Alison worked as a systems analyst and computer programmer for Shell International, who had given her industrial training while still at Oxford Polytechnic specialising in mathematics, statistics and computing.

A professional move by her architect husband lured her, with daughters Tabitha, 9, and Emily, 8, away from London to Cambridge and to us.

"Believe it or not, the thing I like best about Sinclair is the unpredictability," Alison says. "It's quite exciting to make decisions and see immediate results."

"The software business is in its very early days and the potential of computer applications have hardly been tapped - particularly in education. Most educational programs now available do little more than use the machine as an electronic blackboard. But the innovative use of graphics could revolutionize the teaching of concepts and ideas that are difficult to convey in words."

Alison agrees with the prominent theory that hardware sales in future will be software led. "Sinclair needs to be thinking ahead to maintain our consumer prominence."

Although her CV would imply a career-long enthusiasm for computers, Alison's real love is far removed. "I started in computers originally to finance my acting career, she reveals. "I love to act, sing and dance."

Not only does she love it, she's quite proficient as well. Her last role was Gonerill in the Combined Actors of Cambridge production of "King Lear." Other memorable parts include Eliza Doolittle in "Pygmalion" and Polly in "The Boyfriend".

We're delighted that Alison has accepted a permanent role among our motley cast of characters and we anticipate a long and successful run.

July topics

Car

Computer Fair -

Text of PCW &

Spectacular

Sri Lanka unit +

Meta Car

Knighthood

MEP software

Corporate campaign

Mike Py



# Sinclair QL Preservation Project (SQPP)



On January 12<sup>th</sup> 1984 Sir Clive Sinclair presented the Sinclair QL Professional Computer in a typical Sinclair-extravaganza type launch event at the Intercontinental Hotel, Hyde Park Corner, London. This was exactly 12 days earlier than Steve Jobs presented the Apple Macintosh.

The QL is a very good example of an innovative, stylish, powerful and overall underestimated product and ecosystem. On one hand it failed in the market but on the other hand it influenced many developments which ended in many of today's computing devices.



Check out the website <http://sinclairql.net/> – The semi-official website related to the Sinclair QL Professional Computer. **QL forever!**

Urs König (aka QLvsJAGUAR)

[http://sinclairql.net/about\\_urs.html](http://sinclairql.net/about_urs.html)

<https://www.youtube.com/QLvsJAGUAR>

<https://plus.google.com/+QLvsJAGUAR>