

# EINSTEIN

# REVIEW



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# MERLIN EINSTEIN REVIEW

## EDITORIAL

There have been many exciting developments for the Einstein over the past year. Probably the most significant being the very successful NATIONAL EINSTEIN USERS GROUP EXHIBITION. This was organised by the U. K. National Einstein User Group and was held at the Motor Cycle Museum at the NEC in Birmingham early in November 1986. A repeat is in the planning stage for 1987.

Well over 1,000 people attended this meeting, a remarkable number when you consider the limited publicity given to it compared to other exhibitions. Well known Einstein dealers such as Blagbrough & Hebblethwaite, Business Computer Centre, Screens Microcomputer Distribution and Syntaxsoft, were there as well as Surrey Software, Tony Brewer and David West. Tatung themselves were there in the guise of David Bell, Roy Clarke, Gloria Campbell and Will Morson. The Tatung stand promoted the Einstein User Group and sold their new T-shirts, took magazine subscriptions and orders for back-issues of the magazine. The popularity of the show was evident by the fact that most of the dealers sold out of a number of products prior to mid-day and that many people came from Scotland, Anglia and even from the Isle of Wight. I did hear some foreign language spoken but these could have been on holiday at the time of the show.

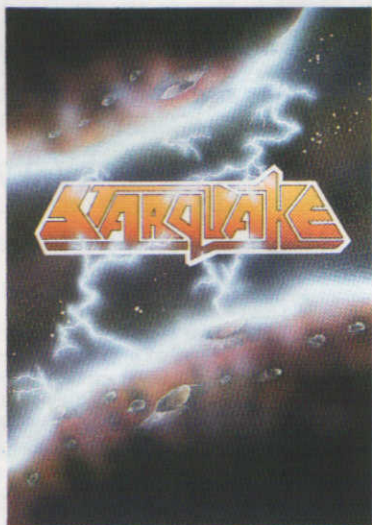
The new Einstein 256 computer was launched at the PCW show in September 1986. Both Tatung and Screens Microcomputers were showing it on their stands at the show. The main difference between this machine and the existing Einstein is the fact that the Einstein 256 can display up to 512 colours, produce stereophonic sound and has a German and Spanish character set built in the machine as well as English.

Other events of 1986 were the reduction of the price of a single drive Einstein to £149.00 (subsequently £129.00) by Dixons stores, A 256k silicon disk drive for the Einstein and a variety of software titles including the games HOUSE OF USHER and ATTACK OF THE KILLER TOMATOES. On the utility front there was COLOUR PRESTEL via the software SYNTTEL.

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## LATEST RELEASES



Entertainment:- STARQUAKE (Golden Joystick Award)  
MINER DICK/INTERSTELLA EXPLORER: KIDDS STUFF: CROSSWORD  
and ANAGRAM SOLVER.  
Business:- TELEVISION RENTAL PACKAGE: SUB POST OFFICE  
Utilities:- BATCH (similar to submit): CONFIG: MERLIN  
TRANSFER: ANSCOPY with EMULATOR (for 6128 format only)

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### TRAINING Einstein and IBM Compatibles

We are running training courses at various venues during the Autumn.  
Courses will be one or two days duration and overnight accomodation will be available if required.

Courses planned are:-

- |                             |                                  |
|-----------------------------|----------------------------------|
| 1. Beginners course.        | 2. Wordprocessing (Wordstar etc) |
| 3. Programming.             | 4. Dbase II                      |
| 5. Spread sheet.            | 6. Networking.                   |
| 7. Modems & Communications. |                                  |

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# CHOOSING A PRINTER

Probably the first peripheral that a business user purchases to go with their Einstein is a PRINTER. I believe that this is even prior to purchasing a second disc drive.

Choosing a printer is no easy task, especially on the Einstein which will accept a number of different types.

To the average user there are two types of printer that could be considered. These are DAISY-WHEEL and DOT MATRIX. Pound-for-pound dot matrix printers are faster than the daisy-wheel but daisy-wheel gives a better print quality. A dot matrix printer can be anything from 5 to 20 times faster than a daisy-wheel at the same price. Over recent years the quality of the print on a dot matrix printer has increased and manufacturers have been promoting what they call NLQ or Nera Letter Quality print. This is accomplished by the printer making two passes over the paper thereby closing up the dots that make up the printed character.

Two specifications that are important when choosing a dot matrix printer are CPS or Character per Second printed, and Matrix Size. CPS is normally quoted as the speed accomplished in draft mode, this is not the near letter quality mode which can reduce this speed considerably. Matrix size is the number of pins that the printer head has to make up the character. Obviously the more pins the better the quality.

Some of the dot matrix parallel printers that I can recommend for consideration are:-

CANNON A-50	approx £379.00
PANASONIC KX-P1091	approx £295.00
TAXAN KP-810PL	approx £349.00
STAR NL10	approx £278.00 all ex vat.

The Cannon would be my first choice but, as the Star is frequently discounted, this can be extremely good value for money.

Whichever parallel printer you choose, you will require a connection cable from the Einstein to the centronics port on the printer. This item should cost you about £14.50.

## COMPARISON OF SYSTEMS

Only a matter of a few weeks ago I was manning a stand at the WHICH COMPUTER SHOW in Birmingham and a visitor showed understandable ignorance of the meaning of the different ways in which a business computer system can run. I am sure that this visitors lack of knowledge is not unique so I will use this article to explain the difference between SINGLE USER, NETWORKING and MULTI-USER computer systems.

Most people will easily understand the concept of a SINGLE USER SYSTEM. This is probably the system that you now have with your Einstein computer. These systems can be quite basic or can be fairly complex with high capacity disk drives and advanced graphic capabilities. A SINGLE USER SYSTEM is quite capable of controlling a great deal of sophisticated software packages such as Accounting and Word processing. However, as its name implies, a SINGLE USER system only allows one user at a time. The heart of the SINGLE USER computer is the CPU or Central Processing Unit which contains the processor that does all the calculations. This, together with the keyboard, Video Display Unit and file storage system (disk drive/s) make up your personal computer. The CPU of the SINGLE USER system is not shared by other users and all its time is taken up waiting for your commands from the keyboard; displaying to the VDU or reading/writing to the disk drive or printer. This makes a SINGLE USER system fairly fast

but, in a business environment, should two departments want to share the same data (a list of clients names and addresses for example), a copy of the data has to be made onto floppy disc and this disc is physically carried to the other department and loaded into the computer that is there. Not only is this time consuming but the data may not be up-to-date when it arrives. There may, for example have been a change in someones address.

MULTIUSER systems evolved from the large mainframe computers which were designed to allow many users to access its power at the same time. All MULTIUSER systems share certain common characteristics. All the users share the features of the machine in a round-robin fashion, each waiting their turn for the computer to process their commands. The advantage of this is that the expensive resources of printers and hard disk drives can be shared amongst a number of individuals, and that there is no need for copies of programs to be physically moved from one place to another on disc. Also as everyone shares the same data, this data is always up-to-date. The CPU of the MULTUSER system is normally larger than the SINGLE USER system but it is divided amongst all the users so that each user could have a relatively small amount for the work it is doing. This is why some programs make MULTIUSER systems seem to run slowly. A typical example of this would be where a number of users were using Word Processing (which normally demands a lot of shuffling data within memory).

The third system is the LOCAL AREA NETWORK or (LAN). the LAN has the power of a single user system in that each user has their own

computer with its own CPU. It also allows the users to share the resources such as high density disk drives and quality printers. Sharing the resources such as disk drives means that each user can share programs and data and this is very necessary for business use. With a LAN system the invoicing department of a business can print out the invoices that were just previously produced by the despatch department who had only just discovered not to send goods to a certain customer as the credit control department had put that customer on stop. On the EINSTEIN computer a Local Area Network system was produced by SKYTRONICS LTD and reviewed in Volume 2 Number 3 of the Einstein User Magazine.

How does a LAN system work. Well, In a single user system a program is brought into the computers memory from the disc drive. A Multiuser system works in much the same way except that this memory is shared by all the users. In a LAN system, however, we load the application from the disc drive and processor that is shared by all the users, (called a "file server"), into the RAM of our own computers CPU. This loading is done via a communications channel that connects all the computers to the file server. When a computer needs data it requests it from the file server and this is loaded into the computer's RAM via the communications system. The software used in a Network system should have some special features if it is not to cause server problems. Imagine the situation where a customer has an account balance of £100.00 and the accounts department receives a cheque for £60.00. The data for that customer is drawn into the memory of the account departments computer and £60.00 is deducted from the balance leaving £40.00

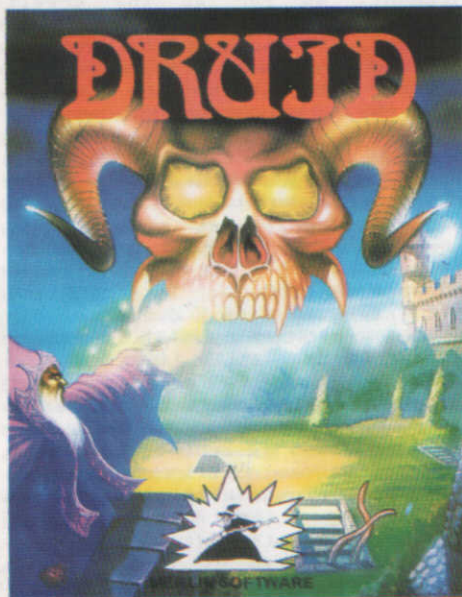
owing. At this particular moment the credit control department receives notice that the same customer paid an earlier cheque for £50.00 which has now been dishonoured and has to place a further £50.00 on to the customers account. As far as the credit control department is concerned, the computer shows a balance of £100.00 (the accounts department has not yet sent the new balance that they are processing, back to the file server). The CREDIT CONTROL department adds £50.00 to the balance and returns £150.00 as the current balance. Now the ACCOUNTS department returns its new balance of £40.00 thereby overwriting the Credit Controls balance of £150.00. This conflict of interests is overcome in NETWORK software by what is known as RECORD and FILE LOCKING. The software itself detects that either a customers record, or in more severe cases a whole file, is being used by another person on the system and will not let a different person alter that record until the first person has finished with their transaction.

All this may seem complicated but is the heart of good business administration and is the way many large companies work. 16 and 32 bit microcomputers are normally used in medium sized applications as they process data faster than their 8 bit counterparts but the Einstein would be quite capable of a Network system of 5 or 6 work stations without showing a significant loss of speed. The Skytronics system will, however, allow up to 93 Einsteins to be connected together.

David Bell. Feb 1987

# GAMES

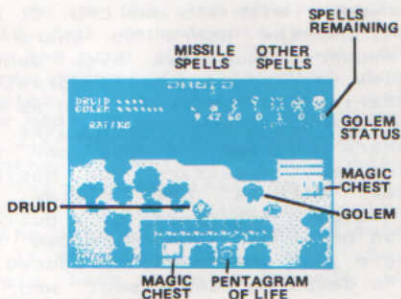
## REVIEW



### GAME TITLE: DRUID

This game, the first from MERLIN SOFTWARE, is the first of what is hoped to be a number of FIREBIRD titles that this company will be producing. (Editorial note. ELITE IS NOW AVAILABLE)

Druid has some of the attributes of the popular GAUNTLET arcade game and, in Druid, you take the part of a Druid who is trying to destroy four skulls created by the prince of darkness. These skulls are located in the lower four dungeons, each of which is connected by one or more stair wells. Before you can reach the first skull you must battle your way through four other levels.



The landscape of each level is seen through a window in which the background scrolls to your command. Each level is a maze of corridors in which are hidden treasure chests that give you amazing powers, and pentagrams which can replenish your dwindling energy supply. At the top of the screen are shown a number of gauges and counters. These show the number of each type of missile that remain, spells of each type (invisibility, chaos and Golem, together with your remaining energy and current rating.

The object of the game is to fight your way past hordes of attacking monsters and a different missile is required for the various monsters. You select each missile you wish to use by pressing a key on the keyboard. As you will realise, spells are essential to the game. Keys will unlock doors, invisibility will freeze a monster and chaos will destroy all monsters on the screen. Golem is the most useful spell as he may protect you. This character can be commanded to follow you, wait or go in a direction that you are pointing.

The game is excellent and highly recommended for arcade game players. You are unlikely to tire of it quickly. The game is joystick compatible.



GAME TITLE:FORMULA 1 SIMULATOR  
DISC TITLE:SOUL OF A ROBOT/FORMULA  
1 SIMULATOR

#### AIM OF THE GAME

As the title suggests, this game simulates the performance of a formula 1 racing car as it accelerates, brakes and holds the track around a number of racing circuits.

#### THE GAME

To play the game, you are required to apply the brakes and line up your car for the corners whilst trying to maintain a high speed. Pleasantly, this game offers you a choice of 10 different racing circuits. These are:-SILVERSTONE, BRANDS HATCH, MONACO, HOCKENHEIM, OSTERREICHRING, KYALMI, ZOLDER, PAUL RICHARD, MONZA and ZANDVOORT. You may select from these tracks at commencement of each race. The screen, at this point, shows the name of the current circuit and, by pressing the Q key you may highlight the NEXT TRACK option. If you press the Space Bar whilst the NEXT TRACK option is highlighted, then the next track name will be displayed and you may repeat the process through all 10 tracks. Pressing the SPACE BAR whilst a track name is highlighted will select that track.

Once you have selected the track you may select MANUAL or AUTOMATIC gears by using the Q and I key to toggle between the different methods of gear changing. Once again, the SPACE BAR chooses your selection.

You do not have a choice of wet or dry track, this is selected for you at random by the computer just before the race commences.



The top of the screen shows your current MPH; RPM; GEAR you are in; ELAPSED TIME; CURRENT RACE POSITION; and LAP number. You may increase your speed by pressing the I key and decrease it by the Q key. The O key turns your steering wheel left and the P key turns it right. Should you have selected manual gear change you must change this by pressing the SPACE BAR in conjunction with I or Q key to change up or down gear at the appropriate moment.

Overall I liked this game and found it more fun than LE-MANS which has only one track and automatic gears.

GAME TITLE: SOUL OF A ROBOT  
DISC TITLE: SOUL OF A ROBOT/FORMULA  
1 SIMULATOR

#### AIM OF THE GAME

Many years ago, the citizens of the planet Nonterrageous, were ruled by a maniac computer. The citizens tried to destroy this computer by sending out robotic seekers, but this attempt failed. The situation has now got much worse and the computer dictator has become unstable and threatens to self destruct and destroy the whole planet. In a final attempt to save the situation, the people of the planet have created another robot that has the mind of a man. However the soul of this robot is in torment and only through death can it find peace. Its programming however, will only let it die when it has reached the computer's lair, there it can explode its built in bomb and rest in peace!

#### THE GAME

The game is set in a maze of cells 16 x 16. This maze is further divided into 3 sections. You start the game in the first section and must make your way to the third section where the computer is located (you of course, playing the role of the Robot). To leave a section requires that you locate the transporter key and locate the transporter room which is labelled. As you would expect, there are obstacles in your way and these include floating robot protectors, deadly fungus and lasers.

#### CONTROLS

Q=JUMP : W=change jump strength  
O=LEFT : A=Pick up an object  
P=RIGHT: E=Press repeatedly to fly  
: SPACE BAR = Fire

# BOOK

## REVIEW

BOOK TITLE: EINSTEIN PRIMER  
PRODUCER SCREENSOFT  
PRICE £9.95

The Einstein computer has been available for nearly three years and, in that time, the author of this book DAVID BELL, has had to answer the same questions repeatedly to new owners.

This book has been produced to answer these questions and has assumed no previous knowledge of computers.

Though the publication only contains 42 pages the text is closely packed and the subjects covered are comprehensive.

Section 1 covers the concept of computing with the Einstein and what the various peripherals are for and how to attach them to the Einstein.

Section 2 reviews some of the more expensive pieces of software such as Wordstar Professional and dBase II.

Section 3 is an introduction to business programming in Basic.

If you own an Einstein and know nothing about the computer or its capabilities then this book is for you.

The following tips are documented in the Einstein manuals, but, as we get a number of questions regarding them it may be as well to repeat the details here.

1/ Should you wish to hide a file on your disk you may use the LOCK command to do this. Supposing you have created a program in Basic called INCOME.XBS Go into DOS and enter the following:-

```
LOCK INCOME,XBS S
```

The S at the end of the line makes the file a System file as far as the computer is concerned and System files are not shown in the directory.

From XBAS you may run the program by entering RUN "INCOME" providing that you remember the file name.

To make the file visible in the directory again just enter:-

```
UNLOCK INCOME.XBS
```

2/ PSW

There has been considerable confusion over the PSW command to enter a password onto a file. I have made a statement in B & H's first issue of their Software catalogue but will mention the command briefly here.

The password used in PSW must contain 8 characters even if some of them are the SPACE BAR. The password will only apply to files that are recalled or saved after the PSW command is entered. The following is an example of protecting a file called FILES.COM

From DOS enter LOAD FILES.COM and make a note of the number that appears on the screen.

From DOS enter PSW SECRET12  
(:-note I have used 8 characters)

From DOS enter SAVE n FILES.COM (where n is the number that you previously noted in the LOAD command).

The file is now password protected and can only be run by entering PSW SECRET12 from DOS after powering up. Any files that are on the disk and not SAVED after PSW is implemented can not be run with PSW implemented.

NOTE. It is impossible to recover the password should you forget it so use this command with caution.

## TECHNICAL HELP

Q. Some of the graphic keys do not seem to work on my Einstein computer.

A. They do all work, the trouble is that the standard Einstein has two modes in Basic. These are 32 columns across the screen and 40 columns across. To enable the computer to produce 40 columns on the screen, the right-most pixels that make up the character are stripped off in this mode. It follows therefore, that any graphic character that shows an image on the right-hand side will not appear in 40 column mode. These characters would be produced when you press the GRAPH+SHIFT+5, GRAPH+SHIFT+6 and GRAPH+SHIFT+A keys. If you enter 32 column mode in Basic by keying CLS 32, you will see all the graphic characters.

# SYSTEM 80

80 TRACK DSDD DISCS FOR THE  
EINSTEIN

A REVIEW OF THE USE OF SYSTEM 80  
by VINCE DAVIES.

Over 750 kbytes now accesible on the Einstein without having to turn the disc over ! This is very good news for me and I am sure it must be for many others. I don't think it is exaggerating to say that this nearly doubles the potential of the machine, at least for the serious user, and I have the impression that most Einstein's are not used just for games.

The system 80 disc arrived just before Christmas and as soon as it arrived I set about making use of it. I had a DSDD (double sided double density) disc drive with a cable to fit the Einstein, so this was plugged in and the power switched on. The directory of the System 80 disc showed the program CONFIG. This was run and it is simplicity itself to configure the Einstein for whatever disc arrangement you choose. This is so much easier and safer than having to dive into MOS. My machine was configured for two single sided double density drives in 0 and 1 and the new DSDD drive for drive 2. It all works beautifully with no hassle at all.

From the programmers view of using the machine with a double sided double density disc it is now possible to have the text editor / word processor on the same disc as the compiler or interpreter as well as the source code being developed with its hierarchy of

version numbers. It is a big advantage to be able to keep several generations of a program under development on the current working disc (as well as keeping a back up copy on another disc in case of trouble). With the single sided drives I confess that I often did not bother with keeping more than the current version and the last one simply because of the relatively small capacity of one side of the single sided disc and I often regretted it !

From the business users point of view it is probably even more important to have the extra capacity on one drive. It means that much larger files can be handled without recourse to disc swapping. For an expanding small business this could mean that the decision as to whether or not to get a bigger machine could be delayed perhaps until the start of the next tax year. A further advantage can be gained by making use of the new piece of software for the Einstein called BATCH. This program is the equivalent of the CP/M SUBMIT. Basically it allows for the user to provide a file, called 'anyname.SUB', which contains a whole set of commands. Running BATCH enables the DMM to obtain its commands from the .SUB file instead of the keyboard. So if you want to run a set of programs in sequence BATCH is the easy way to do it.

Storage and indexing of discs becomes simpler and occupies less space. There is also the advantage that the cost of the 5 1/4 disc is about half the cost of the 3" disc and yet its capacity is almost

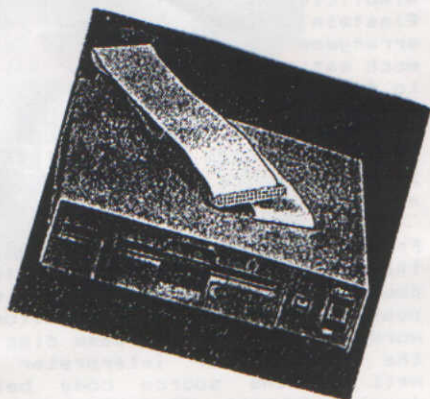
# REVIEW

double. A bit of arithmetic here concerning the number of discs you use would be interesting. From my own point of view, a considerable part of the initial outlay will be saved by the lower cost of the 5" discs. Another advantage is that they are easier to send by post, which is important to me. Hopefully the software suppliers will offer their software in the 5" format at a lower price. This should be possible due to the lower cost of the discs and postage. I hope also that this will benefit the software houses because lower prices should increase sales. In this way we all could benefit.

Well with all these advantages what are the disadvantages? I suppose the first one is the capital outlay of the new drive at about £180.00 (although it looks as though some stiff competition may reduce the price). In addition to this is the cost of the operating system necessary to handle the 5" drive. SYSTEM 80 has been produced by Tatung at what I consider to be the very low cost of £19.95 (they must be sure of large sales to keep the cost this low - good luck to them). I believe also that there is an improved version of BASIC thrown in for good measure. So, not much change out of £200.00 to get the new drive and operating system.

Another minor disadvantage is that the new drive is external and needs its own mains cable (it has a built in PSU) so the clean lines of the Einstein will become modified by the add-on. However the drive is a neat unit and the colour matches quite well.

How to decide whether or not to buy the 5" drive? I think the answer is determined by the amount of time spent using the machine. Anyone using Einstein in a small business will almost certainly recover the cost quite quickly. Software writers are well equipped to make their own decisions. For the user who has computing as his hobby or uses computers in pursuit of another hobby then the decision may not be so clear cut. I am sure that if you do get one you will be very pleased but whether or not that justifies the cost is up to you. Cost effectiveness in business just does not relate to satisfaction gained in pursuit of a hobby. Finally for the Games player I suppose the choice will depend to some extent on the difference in cost between a game supplied on a 3" disc as compared with the same offering on a 5" disc.



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## EINSTEIN REVIEW

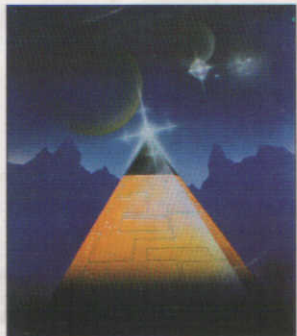
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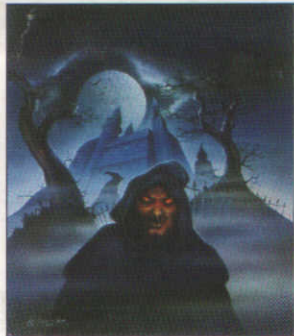
Dont forget let us know what you would like to see in the magazine and we will try to oblige.



GU0902



EINSTEIN 3 GAME PACK



HOUSE OF USHER



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SOUL OF A ROBOT/FORMULA 1 SIMULATOR



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