

Britain's top entrepreneur brings the curtain down on 40 glorious years

Sir Alan calls it a day at Amstrad

By IVOR SPITAL

After 40 years at the helm of consumer electronics giant Amstrad, Sir Alan Sugar steps down today.

Over the past four decades, Amstrad has become a much-loved household name, synonymous with innovative, value-for-money products.

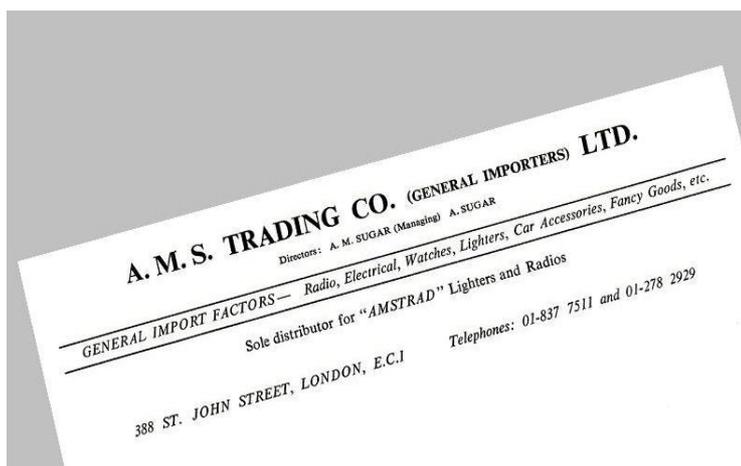
Sugar has pioneered many of the electrical items we now take for granted in Britain's homes and throughout the world. He gave computing and word processing to the masses, bringing hitherto

prohibitively expensive equipment down to a price everyone could afford. He created markets where there *were* no markets. UK Satellite TV owes its existence to Amstrad, who brought out the very first range of Sky TV receivers and dishes.

Even in the humble world of audio where Amstrad's business started, when the trend was for 'separates' he made them affordable, no longer the exclusive province of the hi-fi snob. He then forged a new path, pioneering the ubiquitous all-in-one stereo system we see in every modern home.



Sir Alan Sugar



How it all started...

On 1st November 1968, Alan Michael Sugar registered a new company, naming it A. M. S. Trading Co. (General Importers) Ltd. The company operated from 388 St John Street in Central London, importing 'fancy goods' such as cigarette lighters, intercoms and car accessories.

The brand name he used was a contraction of the company name – and thus the word 'Amstrad' was born!

OTHER HEADLINES FROM

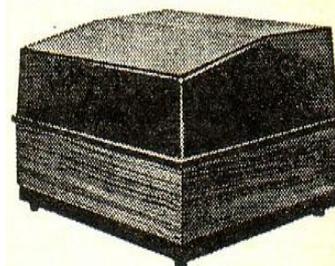
1968

- 'I'm Backing Britain' campaign started
- Martin Luther King Jr assassinated
- The QE2 is launched
- Two-tier postal service introduced – stamps cost 4d and 5d
- Saddam Hussein becomes Chairman of Iraq's leading Revolutionary party after coup d'état



One small step for man, one giant leap for Amstrad

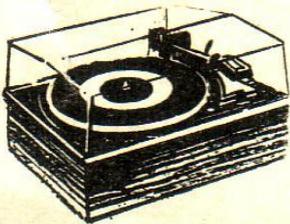
PLINTHS & COVERS



SPECIAL BULK PURCHASE £3.02 plus 71p Post and Packing and Ins.

Finished in teak with tinted dust-cover. Ready to use (fully assembled). Suitable for Garrard SP25; 2025TC; 3000; AT60; 2000; 2500; 3500; 5100; 1025; SL65B. BSR McDonald MP60 £3.08 P. & P. 71p. **Plinths and Covers** for AP76; AP75; SL72B; SL75; SL95B. *£4.51 plus 71p P. & P. Also in walnut to match Japanese equipment—no extra charge.

FANTASTIC OFFER
Limited Number Available



Garrard SP25 Mk III Special Offer £14.56

Garrard SP25 Mk. III. Goldring G800. Teak plinth and tinted cover with mains lead and Din plug and screened lead all fully wired. Please add **£1.48** for P&P and Ins.

1969-70 saw more and more people moving away from mono record players into the world of hi-fi stereo.

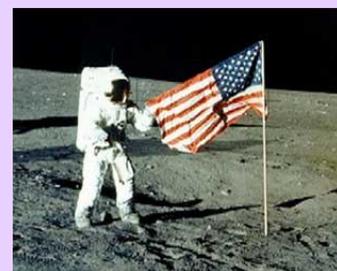
As the 70s progressed, it became customary for people to buy their audio equipment as 'separates' – separate turntable, separate amplifier, separate speakers.

The *de facto* beginner's system inevitably included the Garrard SP25 turntable. This was invariably housed in a teak plinth with a tinted Perspex cover. Sugar completely radicalised the manufacturing process for these covers, pioneering the 'injection moulding' method as opposed to the expensive vacuum-forming used previously. At a stroke he revolutionised the plinth and cover market, driving the price down and making them affordable by the masses.

OTHER HEADLINES FROM



- *Man lands on the moon*
- *British troops sent to Northern Ireland*
- *Richard Nixon becomes president of USA*
- *The Boeing 747 'Jumbo Jet' makes its maiden flight*
- *Robin Knox-Johnston becomes first person to sail solo non-stop around the world*



As the new decade rolled in, Amstrad consolidated its position selling a variety of goods including plinths and covers to electrical retailers such as Premier Radio, Laskys, Lindair, G W Smith and Global Audio.



42-45 TOTTENHAM CT. RD., LONDON, W1 Tel: 01-636 0845



OTHER HEADLINES FROM

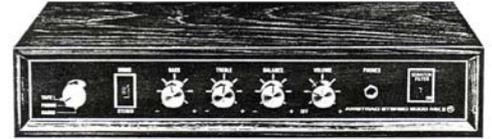


- *Conservatives win General Election – Ted Heath becomes Prime Minister*
- *Concorde makes its first supersonic flight*
- *The World Trade Centre is completed*
- *Paul McCartney leaves The Beatles*



Sugar takes the plunge and branches out into electrical manufacturing

Amstrad launches first range of hi-fi amplifiers



1970 saw the first two products to roll off the Amstrad production line, the model 8000 (above) and the IC2000 (left).

These were hi-fi stereo amplifiers in the then contemporary style of a 'techno' front panel in a teak cabinet. While the inclusion of bass and treble controls, mono/stereo switch and headphones socket may not seem very advanced by today's standards, customers upgrading to this type of equipment from their old record player would have been used to just an on/off switch, volume control and tone control.



Time to move...

By 1971 Amstrad had outgrown its St John Street factory. With amplifier sales booming, production needed to be stepped up and larger premises were required. The company relocated to London's Great Sutton Street (right), close to Fleet Street and St Paul's.



OTHER HEADLINES FROM



- Britain changes from 'old money' (right) to decimal currency
- British Parliament votes to join EEC
- Walt Disney World in Florida is built



Here we go again!

Such was Amstrad's rate of growth that within a year the Great Sutton Street factory was proving too small.

Sugar needed even bigger premises for the production of his 8000 and IC2000 amplifiers as well as for new products in the pipeline. So once again Amstrad upped-sticks and moved



Ridley Road market

east across London – this time to 89 Ridley Road in Hackney.

The large 4-storey factory stood next to a cosmopolitan market selling Asian, Jewish and Afro-Caribbean goods. Amstrad moved to Ridley Road in 1972 and stayed there for the next five years.

OTHER HEADLINES FROM



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- Bloody Sunday in Northern Ireland



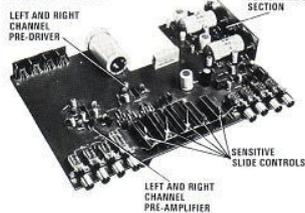
Sugar's big thinking heralds unprecedented growth throughout seventies

The products keep on coming



50 WATTS: 12 WATTS RMS PER CHANNEL INTO 8 OHMS

FEATURES



Now with improved circuit performance and the additional facility of Quadrosound

The ALL BRITISH MADE Amstrad Integra 4000 Mk II has much more in the way of advanced electronic circuitry providing an improved circuit performance plus the added facility of Quadrosound. The Mk II version is fitted with a new type transformer specially developed and tested to reduce hum and noise. In addition, zener diodes are employed throughout the pre-amplifier and tone stages presenting a greater voltage stability. The construction is based on printed circuit layout on the one board principle, utilising integrated circuits by a world famous maker and specially graded and marked for Amstrad, complemented by two integrated circuits for pre-amplifier and driver application.

The main amplifier section provides 12 watts RMS per channel into 8 ohms (50 watts total music power). Distortion factor is less than 0.5% at 1 Kc full output. Frequency response 20 Hz - 25 kHz. The tone control circuit employs the latest SLIDING

Available from most Hi-Fi dealers for under
£30.00 inc. VAT
ALL BRITISH MADE

CONTROLS for accurate manipulation of the frequency spectrum. The controls are Bass, Treble, with an additional refinement of 'MIDDLE' control for mid-range frequencies, together with two separate volume controls for left and right channels for true stereo balance.

FEATURES: Magnetic Cartridge input, Ceramic Cartridge input, Radio Tuner input, Tape in and out, Switch Filter, Rumble Filter, Loudness Control, Mono/Stereo control, Headphone output and Power On/Off switch with matching neon indicator.

STYLING: Teak cabinet, affixed to anodised brushed extruded fascia trimmed with black, silver slider knobs and push buttons. Size: 132" x 9" x 24".

Available at: AUDIO SUPPLIES - CANTERBURY HI-FI - F. CAVE - COMET HI-FI DISCOUNT - GLOBAL AUDIO - LASKEY'S RADIO LTD - LIND-AIR AUDIO - ROY NEWTON - R & B SYSTEMS - G. W. SMITH (RADIO) LTD - SONIC SOUND AUDIO LTD - YORKSHIRE HI-FI - VICTOR MORRIS OF GLASGOW and most reputable Hi-Fi Dealers

A.M.S. Trading (AMSTRAD) Ltd
 89 RIDLEY ROAD, DALSTON, LONDON E8
 Telephone: 01-249 5237-8-9

Please rush me literature on the AMSTRAD INTEGRA 4000 Mk II and address of my nearest stockist.

Name

Address

As 1973 marched on, Amstrad introduced three further products: the model 3000 tuner (a first for Amstrad), the IC2000 Mk II, and the Integra 4000 (left).

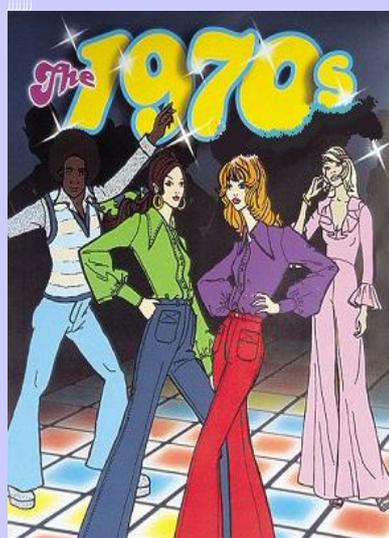
Both the Integra 4000 and the IC2000 Mk II incorporated 'Quadrosound' in keeping with the then current trend of having four speakers in the room instead of two.

Already, within a few short years Amstrad had become a major player in the hi-fi market. Its reputation for value-for-money was unimpeachable.

Amstrad enjoyed blanket coverage in the national press and hi-fi publications – not only through its own advertising, but also through stores' advertising, product reviews and editorials. Further exposure came through Amstrad's presence at hi-fi exhibitions such as the Audio Fair, Sonex and shows at the NEC and Harrogate.



OTHER HEADLINES FROM



- 73 - USA agrees to end fighting in Vietnam
- 73 - Three-day week and power cuts
- 74 - Labour Party regains power – Wilson is PM
- 74 - Nixon resigns over Watergate
- 75 - Human Rights Agreement signed in Helsinki
- 76 - Long hot summer in UK – temps over 100°
- 77 - Virginia Wade wins Wimbledon
- 77 - Elvis Presley dies
- 78 - Louise Brown, world's first test tube baby born
- 79 - Widespread strikes by Public Service workers – rubbish piles up in the streets
- 79 - Margaret Thatcher wins general election, making her Britain's first woman PM



A reflection on Amstrad's early days

THE RIDLEY ROAD YEARS



The 1972 move to the Ridley Road site (above) was more than just a simple geographic shift for Amstrad. It was a sort of 'coming home' for Alan Sugar, who grew up in Woolmer House (left) on Hackney's Northwold Estate, just a few miles away.



Ridley Road factory viewed from St Mark's Rise

The Ridley Road factory was to be Amstrad's home for the next five years, during which the company added to its range of hi-fi products. As well as the now traditional amplifiers and tuners, new items such as receivers (tuner-amplifiers), speakers, headphones, car radios and music centres were either manufactured or imported and badged there.



Amstrad also acquired a warehouse in Shacklewell Lane (right), a few hundred yards from the factory.

During this highly industrious period, Sugar wasn't averse to getting his hands dirty. He'd often be seen down at Amstrad's loading-bay (below) helping Mick and Harry load the van!



GOLDEN MEMORIES

As the 3-day week began to bite, I recall working by oil lanterns in the cold factory. In those days, Pop Sugar would be manning the generators while keeping a watching vigil for the Electricity

Inspectors, out to catch anyone using electricity illegally.



by Ivor Spital

GLOBAL AUDIO

fantastic OFFER

Plus **FREE** Record Cleaning Device worth £2.50 with every order!
OFFER CLOSES 31st DEC. 1973

***YOU'VE SEEN THIS SYSTEM BEFORE BUT NOT AT THIS UNBEATABLE PRICE**

***NOW - FIRST TIME EVER WITH THE AMSTRAD IC 2000 MK II STEREO AMPLIFIER**

We have chosen as the heart of our system the remarkable new Amstrad IC2000 Mk II Stereo Amplifier which has an improved power output of 20 watts R.M.S. per channel and an exceptionally wide frequency response of between 15Hz to 30KHz ± 3dB; 20Hz to 20KHz ± 2dB with a low distortion factor of less than 0.25% at 1KHz at full rated output - Stereo mode. Keeping abreast of the times is the additional facility for Quadrosound operation - 4 outputs with automatic Stereo-Quadrosound switching on connection of Quadrophonic speakers. We are using the Amstrad IC2000 Mk. II to drive a pair of the popular Wharfedale Denton 2 Speakers. Size 14" high x 9 1/2" wide x 9 1/2" deep approx. The system is complemented by a Garrard SP Mk. III Turntable fitted with the superb Goldring G800 Cartridge set in a teak finish plinth with perspex cover and complete with all leads.

save over £50

£75.50
CARR. £2.75

Alternative system using the AMSTRAD ACOUSTRA 2500 speakers. Price £78.95 Carr. £2.75

GLOBAL AUDIO DISCOUNT WAREHOUSE
174 PENTONVILLE ROAD, LONDON N1. Telephone: 01-278 1769 and 01-837 1774
or 4 HIGH VIEW PARADE, REDBRIDGE LANE EAST, WOODFORD AVENUE, ILFORD, ESSEX. Telephone: 01-550 1086.

Amstrad rides out dark days of power cuts and continues to forge ahead

Iconic turntable leads new wave of products

The TP12D record deck became the latest new area for Amstrad. Its unique 'tri-lateral equiponderous turntable' meant that record warps were absorbed above and below the optimum horizontal tracking point. The TP12D was a turntable for the hi-fi connoisseur – even its drive belt was hand crafted from the finest silicon rubber.

Hot on the heels of the TP12D came an array of goods, both manufactured and imported. As he had done a few years earlier with dust-covers, Alan Sugar repeated with hi-fi front panels, once again dictating a new fashion: out went the costly extruded and anodised aluminium fascias; in came moulded front panels in the shape of the IC2000 Mk III, 3000 Mk II and 8000 Mk III.



AMSTRAD
TP12D TURNTABLE
 • BELT DRIVE • SOLID DIE-CAST PLATTER • HUMBLE • WOW & FLUTTER 0.1%



AMSTRAD

give highest level technical excellence at lowest level costing

IC2000 Mk III STEREO AMPLIFIER
 100 WATTS - 25 WATTS R.M.S. PER CHANNEL INTO 8 OHMS

The IC2000 Mk III completely new in both look and performance – an increased power handling and output with a wider frequency response and a lower distortion factor with wide potentiometers for all controls. The Mk III has new style finger-to switches for Stereo/Mono, Loudness, Humble and Soften filters, and an unlocking of all other facilities is carried out by push-button selection. The amplifier is designed especially for use with one two loudspeakers but the additional facility of Quad connection has been added for speaker reproduction is required. These advanced technical refinements have been enclosed in a sleek effect cabinet, with black fascia and black function buttons.

The IC2000 Mk III performs with a powerful 25 watts per channel into 8 ohms loads with both channels fully driven – Stereo mode. Frequency response is 15Hz to 30kHz ± 3dB. 20Hz to 20kHz ± 3dB. Distortion less than 0.1% at 1kHz at full rated output.

Some people. Provides most essential features can be safely handled by some amplifiers costing many times the price. All components are mounted on printed circuit boards. Employed in the IC2000 Mk III is a regulated power supply to ensure maximum performance in output and minimum distortion at high listening levels.

Size: 440mm x 145mm x 92mm.

PRICE £60.36
 SPECIAL PRICE **£45**

A range of headphones, a music centre and a car radio/cassette were to follow. The 9000 was the first of many In-Car Entertainment products that Amstrad would go on to produce during the 70s and 80s.

3000 Mk II TUNER LW/MW/FM
 WITH INBUILT AUTOMATIC STEREO MPX DECODER
 2µV FM SENSITIVITY – MUTING CONTROL – AFC CONTROL

The 3000 Mk II is a quality tuner in the Amstrad tradition, incorporating not only an excellent Very High Frequency F.M. receiver section complete with its phase locked loop decoder, but also including an AM radio section which provides reception on long and medium waves. The built-in ferrite rod aerial operates in medium and long waves, giving strong powerful reception over the wide wavelength spectrum – AFC being provided on the FM section to positively lock on and hold the frequency from drift. The FM section is linked to a stereo beacon which is automatically activated when stereo broadcasts are being transmitted. The 3000 Mk II is compatible with virtually any amplifier, Tape Deck and Recorder, and will perform with most stereo systems. The cabinet is sleek effect finish with contrasting black control and amber illuminated pointer. Line green tonegraphic, and green fluorescent tuning meter.

Size: 395mm x 155mm x 95mm.

PRICE £42.82
 SPECIAL PRICE **£32**

8000 Mk III STEREO AMPLIFIER
 40 WATTS:
 10 WATTS R.M.S. PER CHANNEL INTO 8 OHMS

Amstrad 8000 Mk III Stereo Amplifier built for qualitative sound reproduction, and long term reliability. The comprehensive and attractively finished controls designed for instantaneous adjustment. The standard characteristics include: Stereo Base and Treble controls, individual Volume Controls; a unique loudness switch for widespread listening; humble and scratch filter switches; front jack socket for stereo headphones; controls, magnetic tape and radio inputs, and output for tape; four nearest outputs for normal stereo or quad/sound listening. All this and much more besides in a beautiful sleek finished case.

Size: 330mm wide x 157mm deep x 78mm high

PRICE £42.82
 SPECIAL PRICE **£32**

AMSTRAD ONE OF THE LARGEST HI-FI MANUFACTURERS

AM/FM (FM STEREO MPX) CAR STEREO RADIO & CASSETTE PLAYER
 MODEL 9000

COMPLETE WITH SPEAKERS
 Net Retail Price £69.99 inc V.A.T.

£57

AMSTRAD CAR STEREO RADIO CASSETTE PLAYER MODEL 9000. This is a high quality car stereo with a wide range of features. It has a built-in speaker and a cassette slot. The car stereo is designed for use in cars and is easy to install. It has a wide range of features including a built-in speaker, a cassette slot, and a wide range of controls. The car stereo is designed for use in cars and is easy to install. It has a wide range of features including a built-in speaker, a cassette slot, and a wide range of controls.

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Ridley Road market

GOLDEN MEMORIES

One day, when it was nearly 5 o'clock, I noticed AMS keeping a suspicious eye on one of the testers. When it was home time, the tester was about to leave the building when Alan stopped him and asked him to open his document case. With everybody watching, he slowly opened the case, and there, lying neatly inside was a stolen amplifier!

On another occasion I remember one of the testers being lippy to Alan. This angered AMS so much that he chased the guy down the stairs and into the market – with Pop in hot pursuit shouting “Leave it Alan, leave it”.

by Ivor Spital



Alan Sugar's car in the 70s



Pop Sugar

Goodbye Hackney!

With more space required – ostensibly for storage – 1977 saw Amstrad on the move again, this time to Tottenham N17, a stone's-throw from Sugar's beloved Spurs.

In truth, the Garman Road building was not the most salubrious of places – in a poor state of repair, on a run-down industrial estate next to marshland.

However, the premises did afford a large ground-floor warehouse, something that was sorely lacking in Hackney. At Ridley Road, finished goods made upstairs were dispatched by sending them downstairs in a goods-lift, which was shared with other companies whose vans invariably blocked the loading bay. Clearly this state of affairs couldn't continue and it was time for Amstrad to be master of its own destiny.

The need for greater warehousing capacity came as a result of what would later come to be known as Amstrad's 'Blockbuster' effect.

This was essentially where Alan Sugar would dream up and launch a breakthrough product; one that takes the mass market by storm and sells big. Amstrad's first Blockbuster came as we approached the end of the decade.

In the late 70s, Amstrad was continuing to produce hi-fi separates. The 5050 was released and then, most notably, the Executive Series.



1-7 Garman Road



Model 5050

The world-famous **AMSTRAD**



The Executive Series

BIRTH OF A BLOCKBUSTER!



The Executive Series heralded no particular breakthrough technically, but a range of perfectly matching components (amplifier, tuner, cassette deck) meant that they could be housed together in a dedicated cabinet, which also provided room for record storage. Amstrad sold the cabinet and the equipment and together they offered a much neater hi-fi solution than the previous collection of disparate boxes and tangled wires. However, though the system was tidy, it was not cheap, and there was still a mess of mains leads and interconnecting cables to be sorted out around the back of the cabinet.

Alan Sugar recognised this problem and came up with a stunningly simple idea. The appearance of a rack of separates housed in a smart cabinet was what the public wanted – how that was achieved did not interest them. Sugar’s brainwave was to create the illusion of separates on the outside, but on the inside everything would be housed within one cabinet.

This would allow huge economies because it eliminated the duplication of common items. Gone were the three individual product cabinets (which would have been in addition to the outer wooden rack), and gone were three mains leads/plugs and interconnecting cables. Moreover, inside the unit, gone were the electronics for three separate power-supplies, input/output sockets and other items – the ‘Tower System’ was born.

In true Alan Sugar tradition, the aforementioned cost savings were passed on to the customer so that when the Tower System was released, its price and performance knocked spots off the opposition.

What’s more, no longer was Amstrad the sole province of specialist hi-fi stores. With help from massive press and TV advertising campaigns, Tower Systems sold in their thousands throughout the country in every high street Currys, Rumbelows, Dixons, Argos and Woolworths.

Other Tower Systems followed (TS41, TS30, TS33) but the concept was the same – customers would unpack them, plug in the speakers and mains lead and be ready to go. Sugar had single-handedly invented the ‘user friendly’ one-plug concept.

Just ten short years after Alan Sugar formed the company, it had become a household name – a Great British institution.



The Amstrad Tower System



Amstrad expects... Amstrad gears up for the new decade

Amstrad headed into the 80s expectantly. Ever on the lookout new fields of business to expand into, it continued to import ‘commodity’ goods such as car audio, portable TV and radio.

On the manufacturing side, the decade finished with the elegant Micro Hi-Fi Laboratory Series and the less elegant RP10D record player with flashing ‘disco’ lights!



Above: RP10 Disco
Middle top: VRX101 monochrome TV
Middle bottom: 6010 multi-band radio

70s ROGUES GALLERY

Amstrad employees of the era...



Alan Sugar



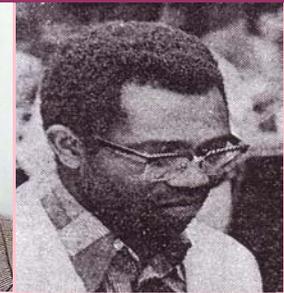
Bob Watkins



John Wyatt



Simon Angel



Ted Ike



Malcolm Miller



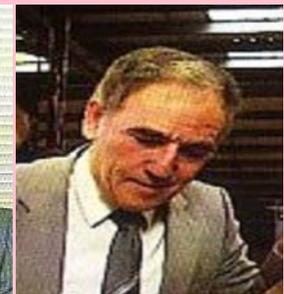
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Dickie Mould



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Plus many more, including... Roger Adams, Peter Alligan, Stephen Alligan, Delroy Ambrose, Colin Baker, Peter Baker, John Beattie, Raj Birdi, Tom Buchart, Derek Burford, Sid Burns, Joyce Caley, Maggie Charles, Terry Cooper, Richard Davis, Marisa De Giulio, Alice Dodd, Tom Eve, Anna Ferriggi, Mike Forsey, Vina Gupta, Rowena Janeway, John Kendall, Harry Knight, Jenny McNally, Mike Mordecai, Mick O'Malley, Vahana Patel, Terry Quince, Horace Richardson, George Shrubsole, Ansell Simpson, Keith Skelton, Dave Smith, Pop Sugar, Norman Thorne, Simon Tipple, Ainsworth Toussaint, Frances White



by John Beattie

GOLDEN MEMORIES

In a time and place long long ago, one of our first manufacturing facilities was in a place called Stock Road in Southend on Sea. There we had a rather large character as production manager who went by the name of Norman Thorne (right).

Now Norman was a very big fellow carrying over 20 stones of fighting weight, which was just as well, as he was the part time door-man / bouncer of Southend United supporters' club.

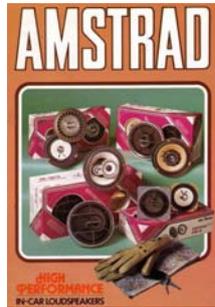


During one of his visits to the factory, AMS decided that Norman should be encouraged to lose some weight. After much debate, a deal was struck – if Norman could lose 2 stones within 3 months, then AMS would buy him 3 brand new, no-expense-spared, suits of his choice. Big Norman was overjoyed, as he would now be the best-dressed part-time doorman in Essex, if not the whole of England. In true Geordie style, Big Norman rose to the challenge, and at the end of the 3 months managed to PUT ON half a stone!

Amstrad enters the Energetic Eighties

As the 80s started, Amstrad was already a leader in In-Car Entertainment. A vast array of products was sold, from simple car radios to powerful 'super-fi' graphic equalisers and sub-bass woofers.

Sugar launched Amstrad models CB900 and CB901 Citizens' Band radios and once again cornered the market at a stroke.



In 1981, Citizens' Band radio became legal and, typically, Alan Sugar was no slouch when it came to seizing the marketing opportunity.

Beside the seaside...

The turn of the decade also saw Amstrad's manufacturing move from sub-contractors such as L N Radio, N Szirtes and Web Electronics, back to its own factory.

By 1980 Amstrad had acquired a factory in Stock Road, Southend-on-Sea. However, as happened in the early seventies, this factory was soon outgrown and in 1981 another building was leased in Progress Road, Southend. Finally, Amstrad paid £2.5m for a vast 133,000 sq ft factory and warehouse in Shoeburyness-on-Sea, remaining there for many years.



Speaker production at Stock Road



In those following years, the factory ran flat out producing Tower Systems and speakers. Amstrad even entered the world of large-screen colour television assembly with the CTV2200.

As well as being a manufacturing facility, Shoeburyness afforded a wood mill and massive warehousing capacity.



HEADLINES FROM



- 23rd April - Alan Sugar floats Amstrad on the Stock Exchange – Shares are 9 times over-subscribed
- John Lennon is assassinated in NY
- Ronald Reagan elected US president
- Bill Gates licenses MS-DOS to IBM, making virtually nothing on the deal
- On TV's most popular show, Dallas, JR is shot!

offer sheets or banked debt must accompany each Application Form.

see and banked debts, which must be drawn in writing on a branch in England, Scotland, Wales, Northern Ireland, the Channel Islands or the Isle of Man, of a bank or a member of the London or Southern Clearing Houses or which has arranged for its cheques and banked debts to be cleared through the facilities provided by a bank of the Clearing Houses and must have the appropriate writing underwritten in the top right hand corner, must be made payable to "Kleinwort, Benson Limited" of "The Regent", and must represent payment in full of the application price. The application will be considered unless these conditions are fulfilled. All cheques/bank bills to be presented for payment on receipt.

Amstrad Consumer Electronics Limited
(Incorporated under the Companies Acts 1948 to 1987)

Offer for Sale
BY
Kleinwort, Benson Limited
of 2,331,250 ordinary shares
of 25p each at 85p per share payable in full on application

Shares	£10	Shares	£10	Shares	£10	Number of shares applied for	Amount included at 85p per share
250	2,500	2,500	25,000	2,500	25,000		
500	5,000	5,000	50,000	5,000	50,000		
1,000	10,000	10,000	100,000	10,000	100,000		
2,000	20,000	20,000	200,000	20,000	200,000		
4,000	40,000	40,000	400,000	40,000	400,000		

Application forms for a minimum of 250 shares or the minimum multiple of shares, maximum of 2,500 shares and including a 250p share certificate (worth £125) must be sent to Kleinwort, Benson Limited, 100, Old Broad Street, London EC2M 1JG. Applications for more than 2,500 shares will be accepted in multiples of 2,500 shares, not exceeding 80,000 shares, and thereafter in multiples of 12,500 shares.

AMSTRAD LIMITED.

Include a cheque/bank bill for the above mentioned sum(s), being the full amount payable on application at 85p per share for the



Amstrad maximised its growing brand-awareness by building up its range of imported commodity goods. Customers visiting High Street stores looking to buy a cheap clock-radio or cassette player would seek out the Amstrad brand, aware of its renowned value for money.



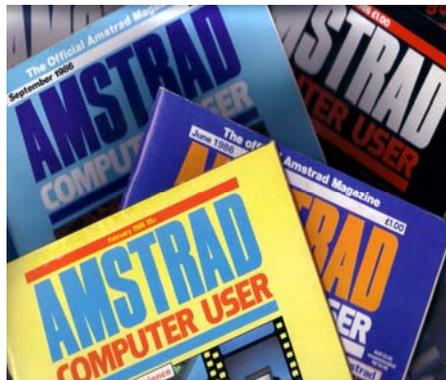
BLOCKBUSTER No.2 – THE CPC

In 1984 Alan Sugar once again took the UK market by storm. Just when everyone thought they had the measure of Amstrad – a churner-outer of value-for-money brown goods – Sugar launched his first home computer, the CPC464. There was nothing on the market to touch it.

True, there were other devices around: at the lower end there was the Sinclair Spectrum which, with its rubber keypad, was little more than a toy; while at the upper end there was BBC Micro – much better but very expensive. At the time, the home computer was not a mass-market product – more for the hobbyist than the average truck driver and his wife.



What's more, in order to use one of these computers, one would have to commandeer the family TV to use as a monitor, then attach a portable cassette player to use as a software loader – all in all, not a good user-experience.



And so, drawing on the same principles that served him so well with Tower Systems, Alan Sugar brought his 'plug in and play' ethos to the world of personal computers. Everything you needed was in the box – the system unit had the keyboard and cassette deck built-in, and it came with its own monitor. The monitor powered the system unit, so once again there was just one mains plug. And the CPC464 came out at a price that had the public flocking. The customers loved it, the shops loved it, the computer-press reviewers loved it and the industry loved it because it opened up new sales avenues through games, software and other support. Sugar wanted to grab a slice of that market too, so he created Amsoft, Amstrad's software support division. A users' club was set up and a monthly magazine was launched which sold in all the major newsagents throughout the country.

Amstrad makes its final move

To house the growing number of staff required to support the new home computer, Amstrad purchased the Brentwood House office block in 1984. It was to be Amstrad's final relocation.



Amstrad responds to demand for peripherals

Amstrad released its dot matrix printer, the DMP1 to accompany the CPC464. Further peripherals were released in 1985 (see below).



DMP1



Sugar wins award

The man who brought computing to the masses, Alan Sugar, receives The Guardian's Young Businessman of the Year award for 1984. The award was presented by Lord Carrington.



HEADLINES FROM



- *Ronald Reagan accidentally broadcasts his famous "We will be bombing Russia in five minutes" speech*
- *AIDS virus is discovered*
- *Bob Geldof forms Band Aid*



Amstrad launches new CPC range with integral disk drives

Never one to rest on his laurels, in 1985 Alan Sugar announced a successor to CPC464 – the CPC664. The new model's *raison d'être* was that games and business software, loaded via cassette, was too slow and error-prone. Floppy disks were the future.

Amstrad had already released the DDI-1 disk drive as an add-on for the 464, but doing so was departing from Amstrad's user friendly 'all in one' concept. The CPC664 was soon followed by the CPC6128 – more compact and twice the amount of memory. The CPC6128, having a disk drive, was able to run more 'serious' software and was another best seller.

Amstrad also released a range of complementary printers for the CPC range – the DMP2000 and DMP3000.



Above: CPC664
Below: CPC6128



What's in a logo?

AMSTRAD

In 1986 Amstrad changed its logo of the previous 16 years (above) to a natty grey and plum version.



BLOCKBUSTER No.3 – THE PCW

In 1985 Alan Sugar sparked his biggest revolution to date. Having started 'Getting Britain Computing' the previous year with his CPC range, he was convinced there was more to the home computer than playing games.

He'd seen large office versions of a 'Word Processor' and was impressed – unlike a typewriter, here was a machine on which you could type a letter but if you make a mistake, you didn't have to pull out the paper and start again – you simply edited it on the screen and carried on. There were other advantages – you could 'save' a letter then open it, modify it or print it again. You could copy a block of text, then paste it somewhere else – the possibilities were enormous. Typewriter technology had improved, but despite the most modern electric typewriters costing several hundred pounds, they couldn't get around their fundamental limitations.

From his experience producing the CPC computers and peripherals, Sugar knew that the elements he needed to make a Word Processor were already at his fingertips: a keyboard to type at, a screen to see what's being typed, a printer to print it out and a disk drive to save it. All that was required was a software program to make the whole thing happen. This he commissioned from Locomotive Software and voila, the world's first *home* Word Processor was born – the Amstrad PCW8256 (Personal Computer Wordprocessor).

Most important to remember was that up to this point in time, Word Processors were in the price region of thousands if not tens of thousands of pounds. The PCW8256 was released at a staggering £399! Alan Sugar had done it again.



The Amstrad PCW8256

More plaudits for Sugar

Alan Sugar wins the Marketing Society Award for the PCW8256.



AMSTRIVIA

During development, the codename for the PCW8256 was 'Joyce' named after Alan's secretary at the time.



Amstrad buys Sinclair!

There was never a dull moment at Amstrad in the 80s. No sooner had the dust settled from the spectacular emergence of the PCW than Alan Sugar announced to a shocked computer industry that Amstrad had acquired the Sinclair brand name and intellectual property rights.



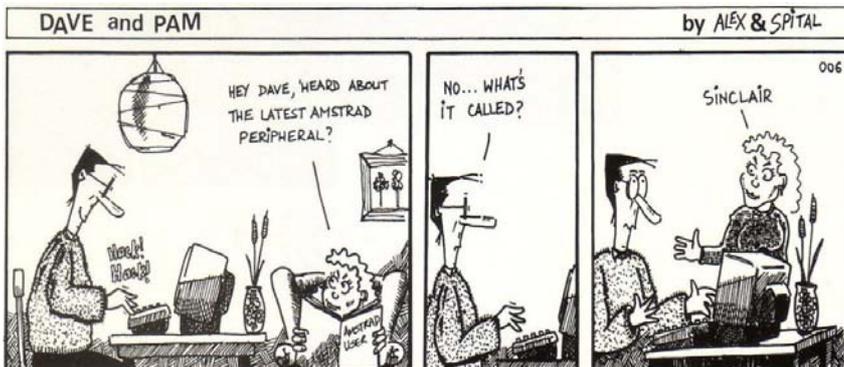
Sugar: 'Sinclair was a pioneering innovator'

Controversy over Wordprocessor Ad

Amstrad found itself in hot water over its TV and press advertising of the PCW8256. The advert shows old typewriters being thrown into a skip. Objectors were up in arms, suggesting that the advert implied that people should dump their perfectly good machines in favour of the Amstrad device. Amstrad denied the accusations.



Filming of 'Skip' commercial



Sinclair Spectrum given the Amstrad treatment

In the period following the brand acquisition, Amstrad released the Spectrum +2 with built-in tape deck and the +3 with built-in disc drive. Both models were well received.



BLOCKBUSTER No.4

THE IBM COMPATIBLE PC1512

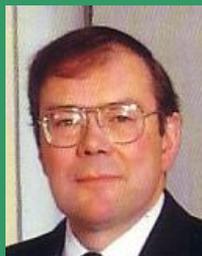
In 1986 Alan Sugar once again ventured where no man dared to tread. Taking on IBM in the home professional market was unthinkable. This massive American corporation had up to now cornered the market with its *de facto* Personal Computer, which retailed at a thousand pounds or more. Sugar assessed the machine's 'bill of materials' and realised that he could bring the product to the market for a fraction of that.

And at a stroke, Amstrad smashed the monopoly 'Big Blue' had held, thereby unlocking full-blown 'serious' computing to the masses. This pioneering move has been responsible for the low cost of home computing enjoyed by the public ever since. Once again, Alan Sugar's no-nonsense approach smashed the big boys' cosy cartel and changed the way the world viewed and used computers – forever!



80s ROGUES GALLERY

Amstrad employees of the era...



Ken Ashcroft



Colin Heald



Richard Altwasser



Ian Saward



Mark Simons



Vitus Luk



Bordan Tkachuk



Tim Bustin



Tak Koshida



Tony Dean



Jon Dumont



Martin Lucas



Sally Tyler



Sue Maybee



Simon Sugar



Joe Oki



Roland Perry



Janet Kiddier



Laurence Ollivry



Morris Simpson



Russell Cutler



Lynn Knight



Glenn McDonnell



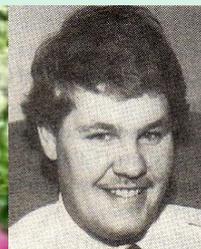
Callen so



Julie Morement



Vic Morement



Andy Hyatt



Isaac Ip



Terry Clancy



Mitch Konstantinovic
(Dubrovnik)



Kim Konstantinovic



William Poel



Mike Dowsett



Barry Young



David Hennell

Plus many more, including... Mac Abhyankar, John Alexander, Julie Allen, Chris Anstey, Peter Baylis, Paul Birleson, Andrew Bolton, John Bowden, Mike Burke, Jenny Butcher, Alec Campbell, John Cathorne, Brian Chappel, Ginny Cheke, Colin Coleby, John Cornish, Sharon Corrigan, Angela Cox, Gary Clarke, Ken Clarke, Keith Collins, Les Creak, Tony Cummings, Greg Delforce, Deborah Dickeson, Alan Dixon, Jane Edwardes, Bill Edwards, Steve Farmer, Caroline French, Pat Flight, Barry Fraser, Stephen Gane, Lisa Goode, Robert Goode, Jo Harvey, Nicki Haynes, Hilary Henshaw, Tracy Hilliard, Rod Horne, Steve Howes, Terry Hurd, Roger Hurrell, David Hyams, Isaac Ip, Steve Jones, Dave Kaktovics, Rob Kay, Shelley Keeley, Peter Kembal, Cliff Lawson, Mike Lees, John Legon, Bob Makepeace, Richard Manville, Donna Marsden, Tony Massing, Gordon Marshall, Donna Metcalf, Ian Morey, Phil Munro, Jane Nolan, Vic Ollivry, Frances Penn, Nicola Pippen, Caroline Potts, Louise Power, Rita Power, Thomas Power, David Prague, Des Rackliff, David Radisic, Mike Ray, Nigel Rickman, Peter Roback, Martin Roberts, Dave Scott, Neil Scott, Anthony Sethill, Eric Shaw, Richard Simmons, Margaret Simms, Colin Small, Susan Somerset-Liquorice, Betty Still, Heinz Stumpf, Daniel Sugar, Martin Sweeney, Richard Thornton, Sue Todd, Eddy Tosney, Sue Tucker, Jill Turner, Metta Voigts, Mike Walton, Keith Warburton, Steve Watkins, Chris Waugh, Bill Weidenauer, Steve Weir, Andrew Wilkes, Guy Wilkinson, Ben Wilson, Sally Wilson, George Winner, Helen Worthington

HEADLINES FROM THE



- 1981 - Charles and Diana marry
- 1982 - Delorean Motor Company goes bankrupt
- 1986 - World's worst ever nuclear disaster in Chernobyl
- 1987 - Zbrugge ferry disaster
- 1988 - Pan Am Flight explodes over Lockerbie
- 1989 - The fall of the Berlin Wall



Product ranges continue to expand

During the latter part of the decade, Amstrad consolidated its success of the previous years, adding to its range of products in all fields.

In the world of audio, the Compact Disc had recently been invented and in 1987 Amstrad released its first stereo system incorporating the new technology – the CD1000.



CD1000



Studio 100

Another audio ‘first’ in the same year was the Studio 100, a comprehensive mixing and recording system supplied with twin tape decks and everything the budding producer needed – even four microphones and headphones!

In the world of computers, the PC1512’s successor, the PC1640 was launched with greater memory and a Hard Disk Drive, while a new range, the PC2000 series was under development. The famous PCW range was given a facelift, as the stylish PCW9512 (below) was unveiled.



Other ranges were expanded – the DMP4000 wide-carriage printer was released, along with Amstrad’s first portable computer – the PPC512 and PPC640.



Alan Sugar presents a PPC640 to HRH Prince Charles

AMSFAC

In 1986, Alan established The Alan Sugar Foundation, which has donated many millions of pounds to charity. Sugar is also an ongoing supporter of the Great Ormond Street Hospital for Sick Children’s ‘Wishing Well’ appeal.



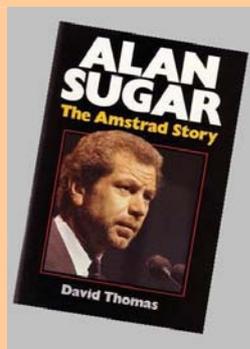
Amstrad sells majority shareholding in VCR business

In 1987, Amstrad sold 51% of its video cassette recorder assembly business to Funai, whose new factory opened at Shoeburyness.

Two years later in 1989, Alan Sugar sold the remaining 49% to Funai.



GOLDEN MEMORIES



In the late 80s, AMS took us out for a meal with Funai to the Brentwood Moat House.

During dinner, Alan mentioned that he was currently working on an auto-biography. Mr Funai asked “Are we mentioned in it?” to which AMS replied “It’s an auto-biography, not a f***ing horror story”!



by Vic Morement

AMSTRIVIA

On 1st November 1988, Amstrad was 20 years old!



'Year of Disaster' ends on hopeful note

Technical glitches surrounding the Hard Disk Drive of the PC2000 series meant that 1988-89 was Amstrad's *annus horribilis* – in fact, lasting 18 months.

The faulty HDDs, supplied by Seagate and Western Digital, knocked the public's trust in Amstrad computers. Lengthy litigation followed and Amstrad was awarded substantial compensation.

However, life went on for Amstrad in other areas, seeing it branch out in two new consumer-electronics directions: a music keyboard, the CKX100 with Sugar's own invention – *Playright Mode* – and the first in a range of video camcorders, the VMC100. Models VMC200 and VMC8 were to follow in later years.

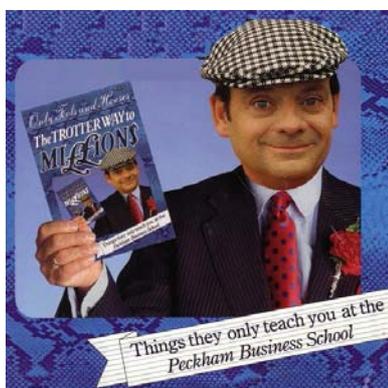


CKX100



VMC200

During these troubled times, even Del Boy had some words of advice for Alan in his book 'The Trotter Way To Millions'.



Things they only teach you at the Peckham Business School

As the 80s became the 90s, Sugar put the 'Year of Disaster' behind him and forged ahead with further new products – some winners, some losers.

Amstrad's attempt to break into the games console market with its GX4000 (below) proved to be less than successful.



TROTTERS INDEPENDENT TRADING CO.

NEW YORK
PARIS
PECKHAM

Alan Sugar, Esq
Amstrad Consumer Electronics PLC
Brentwood House
169 Kings Road
London SW3

11 April 1990

Dear Alan,

The word at the Nag's Head is the Japanese are giving you a pretty rough ride on the fiscal rollercoaster. My brother Rodney tells me that if you don't count weekends, bank holidays and Christmas, you dropped about a million down the plug-hole every day for the whole of last year!

Cheer up, Alan! I've had times like that, and look at TITCO today! I put it down to a combination of my business acumen and Rodney's ability to drive a three-wheeled van. This is the decade of the specialist, see, and at the House of Trotter we specialise in everything, from Parisienne haut couture fashion to mobile phones and interior decoration.

A know a lot of blokes who'd be saying: 'Marque de fabrique' Al's still got £118 million on the hip. Where's the fire? Well I say this, my old son: At the rate you're going you'll last about another six months. But as it happens, I might just be able to get you out of stuke. Here's the Trotter four point recovery plan to beat the Orientals at their own game:

1. I let you know the name of the kid who fixes up all my hooky word-processors.
2. I send round a team of my best men to paint your new office and generally sharpen up the corporate image.
3. You give me two hundred quid and I'll even throw in the paint, no questions asked.
4. Any time between now and the end of September would be favourite. How about the Wednesday after Easter?

Syanora for now.
Yrs *Del Trotter*
Derek Trotter

DEREK TROTTER
Chairman and Managing Director
127 Nelson Mandela House
Nyere Estate
Peckham, London SE15

No Reply!

On the other hand, the DD8900 'Double Decker' VCR (right) *did* capture the public's imagination. This was the first commercially available machine on which you could record from tape-to-tape.

As in the days of twin-deck audio units, there were the usual objectors and nay-sayers asserting that the machine was an incitement to break copyright laws, but having previously won the court case against the BPI, Alan Sugar wasn't about to listen to them. As before, one could argue that by the same token, the sale of knives or cars should be prohibited.



BLOCKBUSTER No.5 – SATELLITE

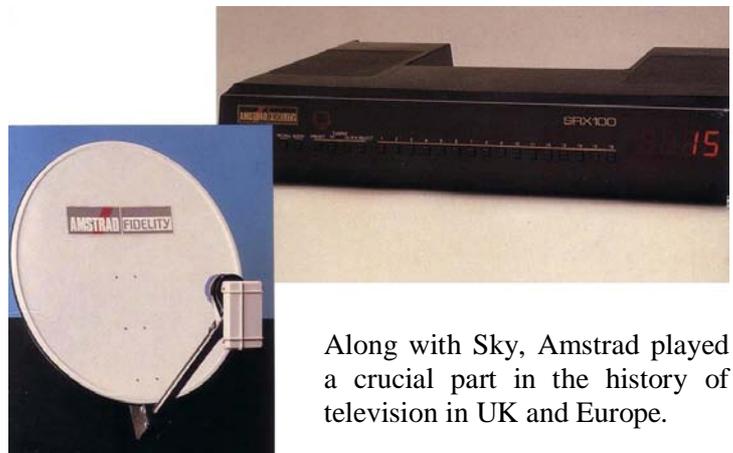
In 1988, Australian media tycoon Rupert Murdoch spoke to Alan Sugar about his intention to start broadcasting satellite television to UK and Europe.

Aware of Amstrad's reputation for getting product to the market quickly and at competitive prices, Murdoch asked Sugar to manufacture the hardware that would make his plan for 'Sky TV' a reality. Amstrad would make the dishes and receivers; Sky would pick up the subscriptions.



Murdoch and Sugar

In 1989, Sky began transmissions to UK via the Astra satellite. These first programmes were picked up on Amstrad dishes and decoded by the Amstrad SRX100 receiver



Along with Sky, Amstrad played a crucial part in the history of television in UK and Europe.

AMSTRIVIA

In 1989 Amstrad purchased the famous 'Fidelity' brand name and subsequently used it on budget VCRs and satellite receivers. Other consumer-electronics products of the day were co-branded Amstrad Fidelity.



Satellite through the nineties...



Following its initial launch, the Amstrad satellite receiver underwent many improvements and facelifts during the 90s.

To date, over *five million* Amstrad satellite systems have been installed in British and European homes.

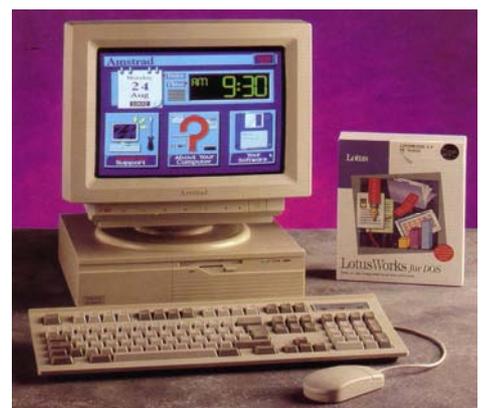
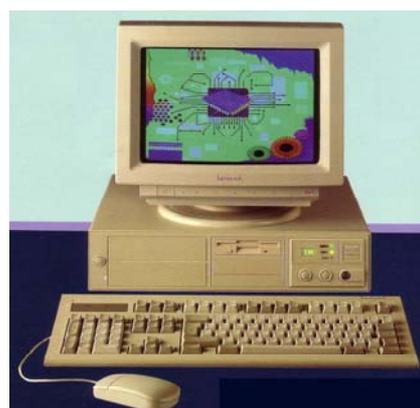
AMSTRIVIA

In two separate eras, Alan jokingly referred to one of his staff with long curly hair as 'Shirley' – Simon Angel in the 70s and Graham Webber in the 80s.

Both subsequently committed suicide.

PCs through the nineties...

Despite the PC2000 debacle, Amstrad continued to develop PCs throughout the 90s. The PC6000 and PC7000 ranges were typical.



1990s' User Friendly videos cut through techno-babble



In the early 90s Amstrad looked for a new edge in the overcrowded VCR market with its 'User Friendly' design concept. Where other manufacturers were busy over-complicating machines by adding niche features, Amstrad was simplifying matters, concentrating on ease-of-use.



The User Friendly range was particularly popular with Amstrad's older customers, and the VCR range grew considerably during the nineties. A successor to the original Double Decker was also launched – the DD9900.

GOLDEN MEMORIES

By Janet Kiddier

During development of the DD9900, Ivor asked Mr Yamamoto at Funai to include some after-sales-service holes on the underside of the chassis. However, despite back and forth faxes, Funai couldn't seem to grasp what we wanted. So Alan, who had been monitoring the fax exchanges, decided to intervene with one of his famous faxes (right).

Ivor could see how exasperated Alan was and thought it'd be fun to do a wind-up job on Alan by way of a fake fax from Funai. I cautioned him that Alan would only read the first 3 lines or so before exploding, but Ivor was confident (given that after further reading it would be obvious that it was a wind-up) that all would be well.

Ivor's wind-up fax...

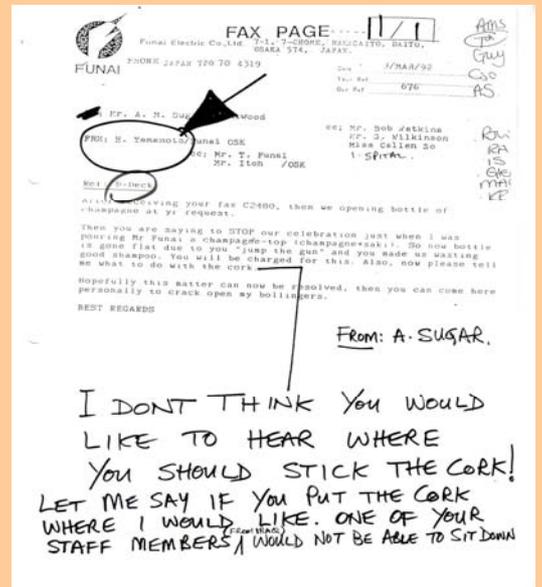
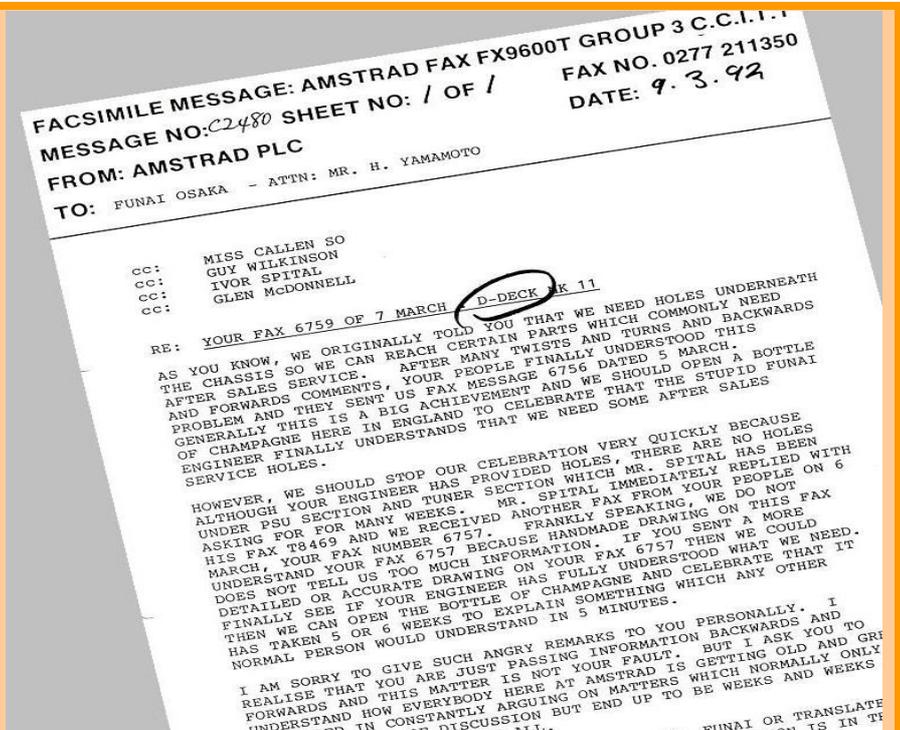
Dear Mr Sugar, After receiving your fax C2480, then we opening bottle of champagne at yr request.

Then you are saying to STOP our celebration just as I was pouring Mr Funai a champagne top (champagne + sake). So now you made us wasting good shampoo. You will be charged for this. Also, now please tell me what to do with the cork?

Hopefully this matter can now be resolved, then you can come here personally to crack open my bollingers.

Of course, Alan didn't read all of it and did explode, scribbling a rude response and faxing it straight to Funai (right).

Meanwhile, as Ivor had heard nothing from Alan, he phoned Frances and asked tentatively "Has Alan seen that fax from Funai yet?" to which she answered "Yes, he's already sent a reply". "Oh dear" Ivor said, "You'd better tell him that the fax was a wind-up – it was from me not from Funai". Ivor could hear mutterings as Frances told Alan, then heard a loud "WHAT?" followed by "PILLOCK".



Luckily, when all was explained to Funai, they took it in good humour and Ivor still had his job.



During the nineties, as other manufacturers followed the path that Amstrad had beaten and cheap PCs became commonplace commodity items, Sugar began to turn his attention towards communication. He purchased several telecommunications businesses including Betacom, Dancall Telecom, Viglen Computers and Dataflex Design Communications.



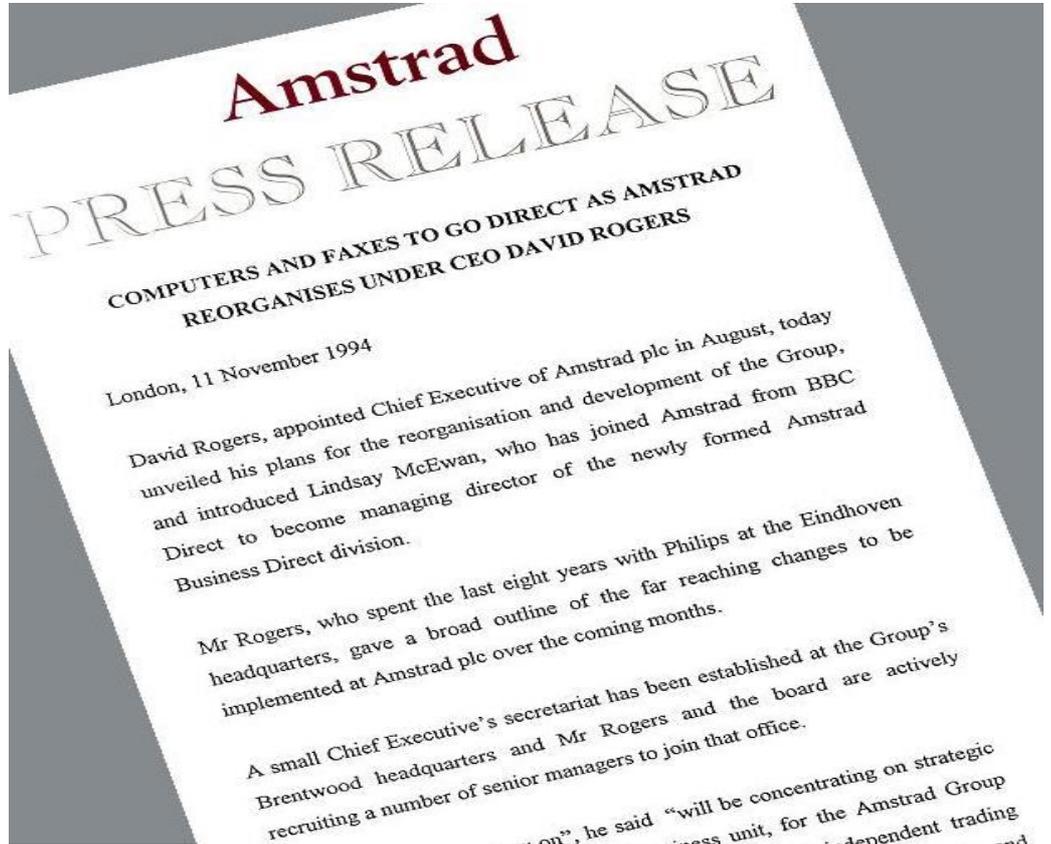
All change at Amstrad as Sugar hires new top brass

NERVOUS NINETIES BRINGS ABOUT AMSTRAD SHAKE-UP

The mid-90s was a time of flux at Amstrad. Profits were down and shareholders and investors urged that Amstrad follow the recommendations of 1992's Cadbury Report whereby the company should no longer be run as autocratically as Sugar had hitherto.

And so, a new wave of senior executives was drafted-in, with former Philips chief David Rogers the head honcho.

All that remained for Sugar to do was to join with the BUMs (Business Unit Managers) in attending the SoB (State of Business) meetings, and sit back and wait for sales and profits to boom again.



No shortage of product ranges as the new régime kicks in

Lack of choice was not an accusation that could be levelled at Amstrad in the mid-90s. Its satellite, video, audio, fax, telephone, PC and PCW ranges were full to overflowing.

One of Sugar's last ideas before the new era was the IX1000 Index Phone, a combination of a phone and Rolodex. The user turns the knob until the required name is displayed, then presses one button to dial it.



FX8500 series



Micro 1000 series



FX7500 series



PCW10

Mid-90s' renaissance of miniaturisation

As PCs became common items in Britain's homes, there grew a demand for computers on the move.

Earlier 'lap top' offerings from the industry were bulky and heavy. However, advances in computer technology and LSI meant that lightweight miniature computers, as powerful as their desktop counterparts, were now within the realms of possibility.

NC200 NOTEBOOK COMPUTER



RRP £349.99
INC VAT

The NC200 Notebook is both compact and lightweight. All information is automatically stored in battery backed memory, providing the ideal computing solution for literally anybody, whether in the office, at home or on the move.

NC100 NOTEPAD COMPUTER

The NC-100 Notepad is quite simply the world's most easy to use computer. We are so confident that absolutely anybody will be able to use their Amstrad Notepad within just 5 minutes that, if you can't, you'll get your money back.



RRP £99.99

Amstrad PenPad PDA 600

"Just pick up the pen and write on the screen"



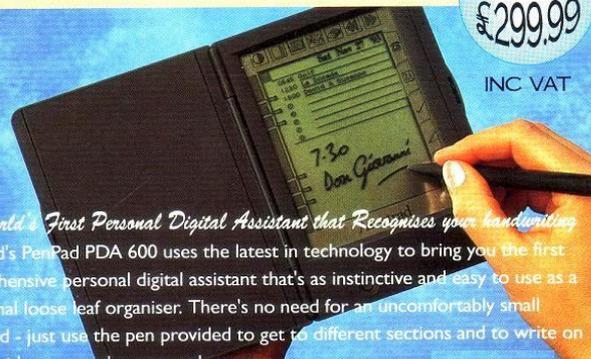
the ultimate personal digital assistant

Special Features of PenPad

- Pocket-sized electronic organiser with pen-based input
- Full hand writing recognition
- User friendly, symbol driven 'you teach' interface
- Automatically serial Address list with 'you teach' search function
- Automatically compile and serial Telephone list with search function
- Address Diary with day or month per page view, alarm
- Scribble and Scan Memo Taker
- Personal and customizable Conversation Tables
- World Time Clock and multiple event Alarm Clock
- Full function Calculator
- Month at a view Calendar

PENPAD PDA 600

RRP £299.99
INC VAT



The World's First Personal Digital Assistant that Recognises your handwriting

Amstrad's PenPad PDA 600 uses the latest in technology to bring you the first comprehensive personal digital assistant that's as instinctive and easy to use as a traditional loose leaf organiser. There's no need for an uncomfortably small keyboard - just use the pen provided to get to different sections and to write on screen - it's as natural as pen and paper.

GOLDEN MEMORIES



While developing the NC100 Notepad, Cliff was enthusing about its various features to Alan, who said "only freaks and weirdoes would want that". Cliff said "Well, I would want that" to which Alan replied "Exactly - only freaks and weirdoes".

by Janet Kiddier

Left: Cliff Lawson

ALL CHANGE FOR SATELLITE

In the mid-90s, Amstrad augmented its satellite range with 'value-added' features. The Videosat VS1000 series satellite video recorder was introduced, as well as the SRD2000 with Dolby Pro Logic (below).



Both products sold reasonably well but neither really took the market by storm.

In the latter part of the decade, big changes were afoot in the world of satellite broadcasting. Digital satellite was coming, and as previously with analogue, Amstrad would be at the forefront of receiver manufacture.



Amstrad: a thing of beauty! INTEGRA

A surprising diversion for Amstrad in the 90s was the Integra Facecare System. Once again Alan Sugar targeted a market where a few select companies were raking in huge profits selling vastly overpriced equipment.

Sugar's proven *modus operandi* had always been to champion the consumer while turning a reasonable profit, and the area of face care and skin care seemed a potentially lucrative market. However, although the Integra performed the same functions as apparatus costing many times the price, this type of item didn't have the huge mass-market appeal of entertainment or IT products. Nevertheless, the venture was well executed and was deemed successful overall.

Then there was the Bodyskate. This product was designed to bring the lifting and toning qualities of the Facecare System to the whole body. Tiny electric micro-currents were applied to the Bodyskate's wheels while it was rolled over the user's body. The wheels were also shaped to provide an invigorating massage.

The Bodyskate was launched in a blaze of glory. Skaters from the show Starlight Express whizzed around the stage while celebrities Sue Barker, David Ginola, Jeremy Guscott and Susan Dando conducted a pseudo-'Question Of Sport' designed to extol the virtues of the new product. Unfortunately, despite the glitzy launch, the Bodyskate hit the skids, selling only a few thousand.



GOLDEN MEMORIES



Anthony Sethill

In front of Brentwood House were the directors' car parking spaces. And so, as Anthony Sethill was the self-appointed 'Director of Marketing', he too had his marked place in the car park. The only trouble was, people such as Danny Sugar and Ivor would come to me requesting that I typeset 'alternative' names, which they would then pop out and stick over his nameplate (see two of the more publishable examples below).



by Janet Kiddier

HEADLINES FROM THE



- 1990 - Margaret Thatcher resigns – John Major is PM
- 1990 - Germany reunified
- 1990 - Nelson Mandela released from jail
- 1991 - Iraq invades Kuwait – Gulf war ensues
- 1994 - Commodore Computers goes bust
- 1995 - Israel's PM Yitzchak Rabin assassinated
- 1997 - 'Dolly' the cloned sheep created
- 1997 - England hands back Hong Kong to China
- 1997 - Labour wins general election – Tony Blair is PM
- 1997 - Princess Diana killed in car crash
- 1998 - Peace in Northern Ireland
- 1999 - The Euro is created



NIGHTMARE IS OVER AS SUGAR RETAKES THE REINS

The period 1988-89 may have been Alan Sugar's nadir, but for long-term employees of Amstrad – or ACE as it was at the time (Amstrad Consumer Electronics) – 1995 was the 'year of disaster'.

However, in 1996, Amstrad was once again in the hands of its rightful owner – the man who built it from nothing and the man who knew, more than any other, how to run the company.

During this time of restructuring, Sugar identified that one of the company's problems was that it had too many products in each range – some varying only slightly from another.

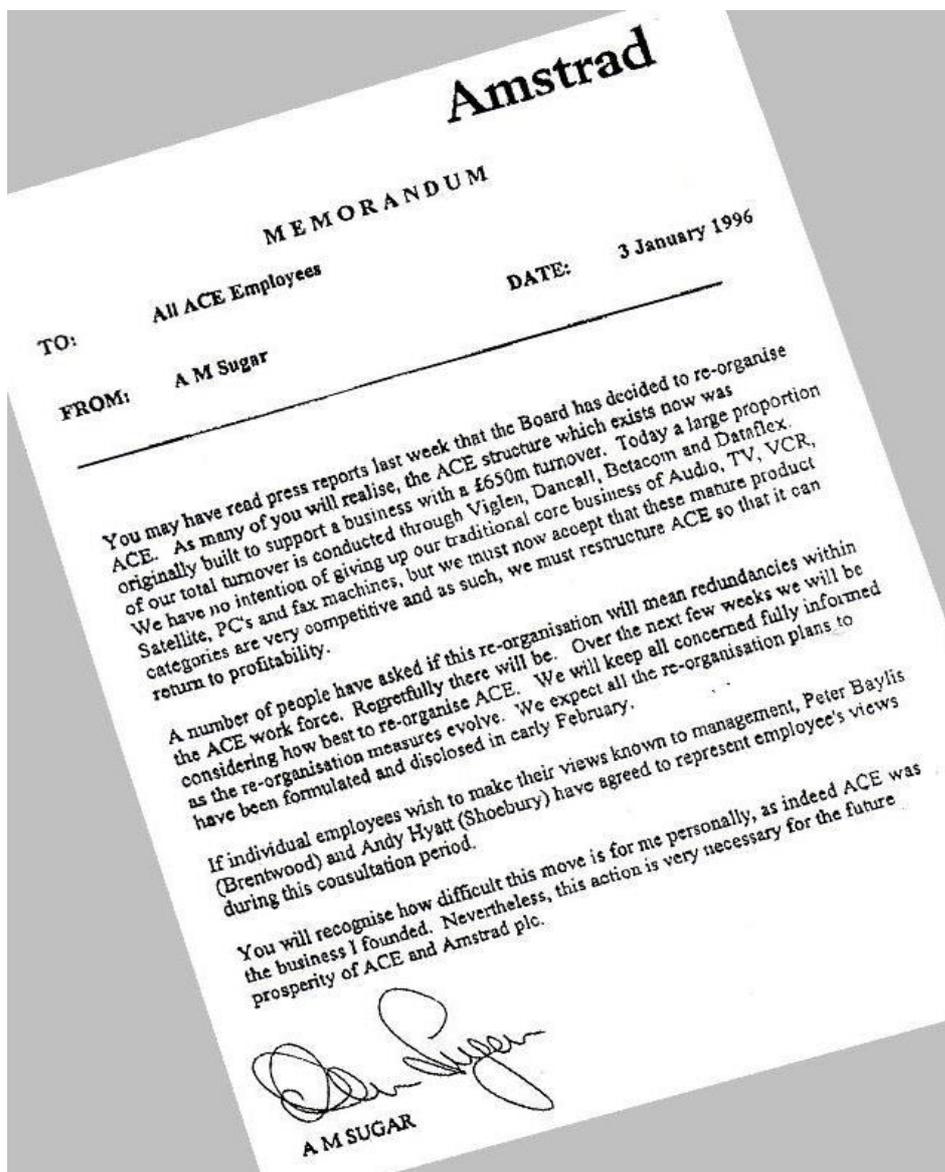
Sugar also took the decision to pull out of 'commodity' products such as VCRs. Market saturation in these areas meant that very little profit could be made.

Thus the late 90s saw a rationalisation of products as well as staff. Meanwhile Sugar, true to form, looked for new and innovative market areas.

In keeping with this new policy, Amstrad released two innovative product lines. The first of these was the MCR2500 series (below), which was a modern-day jukebox – users could load up to 70 CDs and select 'playlists' on a large fluorescent display; then play, store or record the playlist onto an integral detachable MiniDisc or tape unit.



Another novel idea was the PhoneBook PB1000 range. Sugar developed the idea he introduced with the IX1000 Index Phone, but instead of rolling through the entries, the user could start typing the address-book name on a QWERTY keypad and press one button to dial it when displayed. An added bonus was a 'Pocket Dock-it' supplied with the product. This looked like a small organiser which docked into the main unit and saved all the PhoneBook entries.



Relief as entire Amstrad range proves to be Y2K compliant!

As the new millennium approached, so-called ‘experts’ warned that the end of the world (at least the electronic world) would happen at 0:00:00 as the year clicked over from 99 to 00.

To combat the impending disaster, billions of dollars were spent worldwide on Y2K upgrades, which would otherwise have meant that power stations would stop, phones would be inoperative and the law of the jungle would be in place by five past twelve.

As it turned out, Betty Allsop in Macclesfield had to reset the clock on her video, but little else happened.

GOLDEN MEMORIES

by Ivor Spital

Some difficult and important decisions had to be made in the 90s. One such was the allocation of the parking bays outside Brentwood House.

Having decided the line-up, a company was called in to produce the nameplates. The list of lucky recipients was reeled off to the signwriter, along the lines of “Malcolm Miller in the first bay, then Tony Dean, Anthony Sethill, etc, etc, and David Hyams last”.

All was fine, it seemed; at least it was until we looked at the nameplates...



AMSTRIVIA

In 1992, Amstrad’s logo completed its final evolution to the now familiar:



Amstrad’s first logo (c.1971):



ARISE SIR ALAN Alan Sugar knighted in Millennium Honours List



Bob Watkins and Sir Alan Sugar

GOLDEN MEMORIES

by Bob Watkins

Alan used to pop in and out my office quite regularly. One morning he came in and closed the door. I thought ‘Shit, he’s going to bollock me for something’ or maybe we were about to have a blazing row.

Anyway, he stood behind me and said “I want to tell you something that only Ann knows. And you must keep it very secret – I can’t even tell the kids”. I thought ‘this is going to be bad news – a health problem or something of that nature’.

He then said “I’m being given a Gong”. I thought ‘what’s a Gong?’ So, after an embarrassing silence, I said “Sorry Alan, I don’t know what you mean... what’s a Gong?”.

He said shyly “you know, a bloody Gong”. I was getting more embarrassed now, thinking ‘what an earth is he talking about?’ So I repeated “Sorry Alan, I really don’t know what you mean. I must be being thick or something”.

He then said “You must be f***ing winding me up... you must know what a Gong is”. He eventually told me he was going to be knighted.

What an idiot I was. I actually felt extremely proud that he had confided in me, but also stupid that I didn’t know what a Gong was.

Amstrad sets the pace in Digital satellite age



Sky entered the 21st Century by moving to Digital satellite broadcasting, and in the years 2000 to 2004, Amstrad produced a range of stylish 'Digiboxes'.



DRX100



DRX200



DRX300



DRX400

ROGUES GALLERY... 90s AND BEYOND

Amstrad employees of the era...



Martin Bland



Trevor Harradence



Laurent Beusseron



Chi Wan



Stuart Askey



Brian Eaton



Simon Hatcher



Huw John



Rehana Hussain



Manula de Zoysa



Gero Orlando



Nick Linford



Andrew Stockton



Erdinc Mutlu



Davy Yuen



Steve Nash



Bernard de la Motte



Dennis Berry



James Brock



Gwen Eaton



Dave Clark



David Roberts



Hayley Furnival



Dyfrig Rees



James Morrison



Hee-Tae Kim



Ken Crane



Ercan Sozeri

Plus many more, including... Teresa Allibon, Kirsty Argent, Paul Aylett, Paul Bailey, Steve Ball, Lisa Barham, Tina Barham, Tony Barham, Danny Basgallop, Wayne Bodimeade, Tony Bott, Elaine Brown, Tim Campbell, John Chadd, Gary Curtis-Wiggins, Andrea Davies, Carl de Souza, Guppy Dhariwal, Ulas Demirdag, Simon Duke, Jeff Easdown, Tim Fern, Paolo Gava, Peter Gibbard, Dave Godfrey, Mark Godfrey, Mike Grange, Samuel Greeney, Raymond Greenfield, Nick Gregory, Jacquie Greig, Murat Guven, Jackie Hamilton, Richard Hastings, John Hom, Bob Hopkins, Nigel Hopwood, Danyel Horner, Colin Humphrey, Patricia Jeanes, Malcolm Johnston, Efi Kagelari, Janet Kiddier, Charlie Kosla, Chris Leonard, Esther Lewis, Nick Lightowler, Mike Locke, Vickie Lockie, Beryl Maidman, Jackie Mansfield, Lyndsay McEwan, Helen Mobbs, Jim Moss, Kevin Newton, Sevvyy Ozkor, Ian Paine, Nilufer Pegg, Jane Perry, Mark Phimister, Ahmed Razak, James Richardson, David Rogers, John Ross, Steve Rumble, Amanda Russell, Mike Sangster, Tomasz Schwabe, Gavin Scothern, Hema Shanmugam, Richard Sherry, Mark Simms, Colin Smallman, Tarik Taktaki, Gary Thorne, Karen Turner, Jacob van Houdt, Roger Vigilance, Dave Vincent, Petra Weeks, Simon Wilson, Mike Winston, Simon Witham, Derek Woodhouse

Sugar continues to launch innovative products

Sir Alan gets Britain emailing

As the new millennium dawned, it was clear that the age of the fax machine was all but over, and that *email* was the way forward. At the time, however, the only means by which email messages could be sent and received was via computer.

Enter Amstrad yet again! The e-mailer (right) was a stand-alone device which (as well as being a multi-function phone with Voicemail, handsfree operation and 700-entry address book) allowed the user to send and receive email messages using its pull-out keyboard and built-in LCD screen monitor.



Yet that description doesn't do the product justice! There were so many goodies packed into the e-mailer that even some of its purchasers failed to appreciate the sheer power of the machine. It could send text messages to mobile phones and faxes to fax machines; it could even send electronic greeting cards. Its address book entries could be stored, edited and re-loaded via the Pocket Dock-it provided (as with the earlier PB1000 PhoneBook). There was also an on-screen calculator and a SERVICES button which brought up multi-level menus for one-touch service selection. Synergistically, these services were advertised on the screen providing a source of downstream revenue, which together with the 12p per email call tariff, meant that the machine could be sold at a subsidised price.



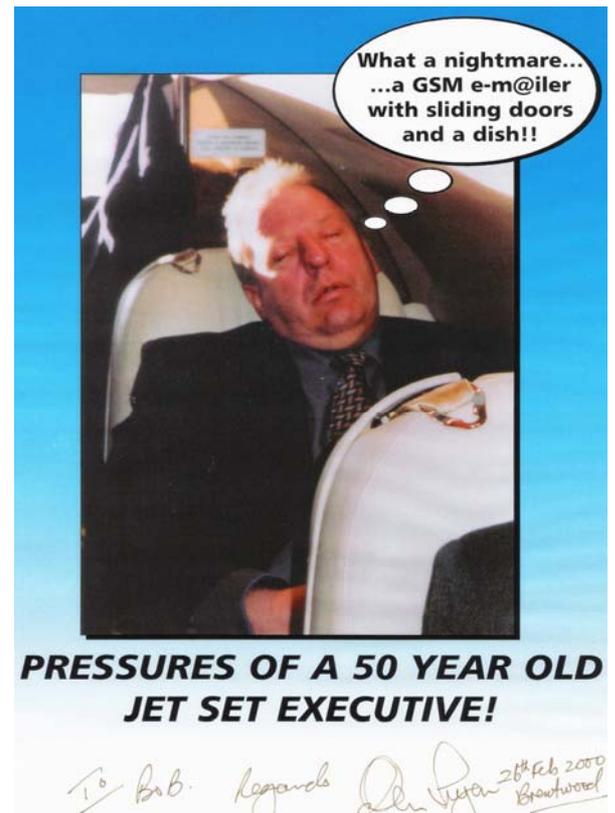
The e-mailer userbase grew rapidly, as the public started emailing each other using the *@amserve.com* address.

HOT ON ITS HEELS: THE E-MAILER MK 2

In 2002, less than two years after the e-mailer arrived on the scene, its successor was launched – the e-mailer plus (below). In addition to its sleek silver restyling, a number of electronic enhancements were made, most notably internet access and the ability to play Sinclair Spectrum games. Personalised ringtones could also be downloaded.



Simon Sugar and Alan Sugar at the launch



GOLDEN MEMORIES

AMS decided he wanted to be involved in recruiting a replacement for our purchasing director who was retiring. During one interview, AMS interrupted the candidate to ask him if he was religious. The guy without hesitation said that he was 'a good Jewish boy' who went to synagogue every week.

AMS replied what that was a problem for him. He explained that in order to be a good buyer you had to be a good liar, and in his experience religious people were not good liars.



by Mike Ray

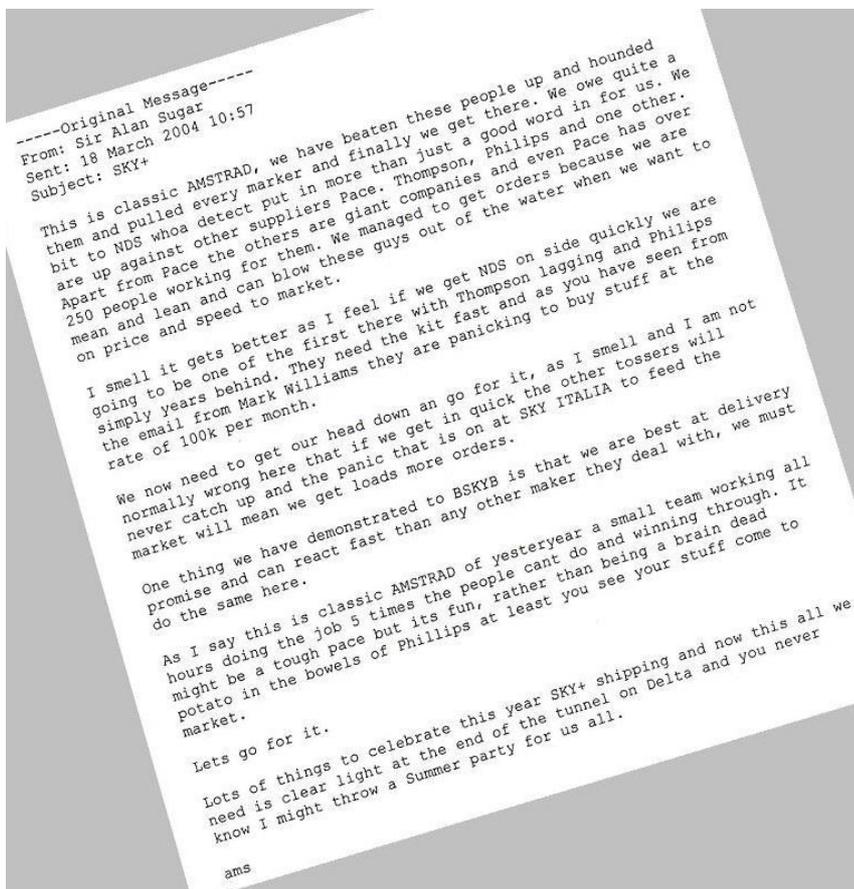
Sky Plus receivers to revolutionise satellite TV

Once again, Alan Sugar's drive and determination meant that Amstrad was in pole position to be appointed as one of the manufacturers of the new Sky Plus receivers.

Sir Alan was not slow to give credit to his team of engineers, whom he values greatly (see right).

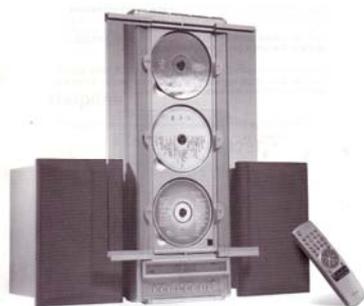


Amstrad's first Sky+ receiver was the DRX180 (above), which was followed by the DRX280 in 2004.



The beat goes on

Amstrad was still producing its original product line into the new millennium, releasing a range of multi-CD audio products for the USA market.



GOLDEN MEMORIES

Flushed with encouragement (above) from the boss, John Beattie enquired whether there were any rewards in the offing...



-----Original Message-----
 From: John Beattie

Way back in the distant past, good employees use to get oranges and good time keeping pencils from employers at Christmas time or when they performed well. I don't suppose there is any modern equivalent to this?

To which AMS replied...

Yes, it comes at the end of every month!

VIDEOPHONES – THE FUTURE IS NOW!

In 2004, Sir Alan Sugar made the stuff of sci-fi dreams a reality – a commercially available, affordable Videophone.

Amstrad launched its third-generation e-mailer, the E3 Videophone (right), which was packed with even more features. To get the most out of the Videophone, a colour LCD was incorporated, which also provided a better surfing and games experience (a GamePad was also supplied). And sound wasn't neglected either – the E3 could download and play polyphonic ringtones.



New Digibox and Sky+ receivers become the mainstays of the decade

By the middle of the decade, the DRX550 had become the definitive Amstrad Digibox, while the DRX180 was succeeded by the DRX280 – smaller physically but with twice the amount of hard disk space.



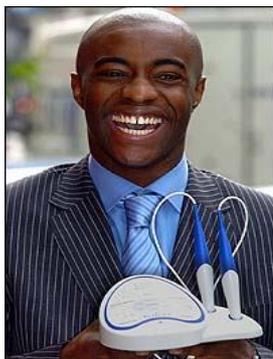
DRX550



DRX280

FACECARE SYSTEM GETS MAKEOVER!

In 2005, paths crossed between two of Sir Alan Sugar’s great ventures – Amstrad and the BBC TV hit show ‘The Apprentice’.



Sugar decided that the winner of the first series, Tim Campbell, would be tasked with heading-up a re-launch of the 90s’ Integra Facecare System.

Campbell (left) successfully managed the re-styling project from beginning to end.



The newly-styled Integra Facecare System



GOLDEN MEMORIES

by Nicola Pippen

Sir Alan appeared on the 9th floor asking if anyone knew whether we had any Integra Facecare units that Amstrad had produced a few years before – to be used as a reference for the new project run by ‘Apprentice’ winner Tim Campbell. I had seen an old Facecare unit in the cupboard, so went to find if it was still there.



Sir Alan turned to my colleagues (all male) and said “If she knows where one is, I reckon she must have been secretly using it” (lots of laughter). This was followed up by even more laughter when he had added the comment “Better not tell her it isn’t working!!”

HEADLINES FROM THE



- 2000 - Concorde crashes in Paris
- 2001 - 9/11 – Suicide bombers fly into WTC twin towers
- 2002 - Queen Mother dies
- 2003 - USA, UK and allies invade Iraq
- 2003 - England wins Rugby World Cup
- 2004 - Tsunami in Southeast Asia
- 2005 - 7/7 – Suicide bombers kill 56 people in London



Amstrad focuses on Sky HD and Italy

In the latter half of the decade, Amstrad's efforts were concentrated on improving the stability and reliability of its Digibox and Sky+ range for the UK, while also developing High Definition receivers for the Italian (and later UK) market.

However, although Sir Alan managed consistently to win orders from Sky for these products, it had become very apparent that Amstrad was dependent on Sky for its livelihood.



DRX700i HD

GOLDEN MEMORIES

Cliff Lawson, commenting on how long he'd been at Amstrad...

----- Original Message -----

From: Cliff Lawson
To: Sir Alan Sugar

...Yup, I'm always conscious of the fact that I've now served a longer sentence than the Great Train Robbers!

(I'm due the gold watch in 2009 by the way ;-)

To which AMS replied...

Fix the f..... DRX-280 to near zero defects and I will buy you a Rolex right now
ams



SUGAR SELLS AMSTRAD!

On 4th September 2007, Sir Alan Sugar sold the company he founded nearly 40 years earlier. Amstrad was purchased by the satellite broadcasting company BSkyB (Sky) for £125m.



Sky CEO James Murdoch and Sir Alan Sugar

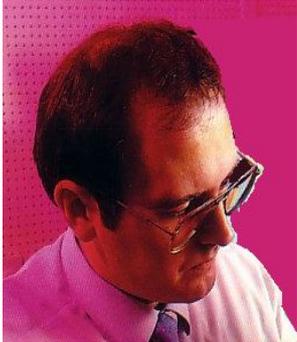


Sugar commented, "I cannot imagine a better home for the Amstrad business and its talented people. Our companies share the entrepreneurial spirit of bringing innovation to the largest number of customers. Sky is a great British success story. I'm proud to have worked so closely with it."

Sky Chief Executive James Murdoch said that the deal "will help us to drive innovation and efficiency for the benefit of our customers".

The final word goes to Sir Alan: "I turn 60 this year and I have had 40 years of hustling in the business, but now I have to start thinking about my team of loyal staff, many of whom have been with me for many years."

“” Memories & Memorabilia



Less room for failure by John Beattie

In the early 1980s when Amstrad moved to Brentwood House, AMS had a desk in the middle of the 9th floor. The desk was huge, in line with his position and status within the company. Next to his desk, AMS had a large elephant's foot type stand in which were kept various items such as umbrellas, a walking stick, some drawing cylinders and a shotgun! Apparently AMS got the idea of the shotgun from a Turkish supplier we used to deal with. This supplier had a double-barrelled shotgun on a swivel mount under his desk just in case negotiations didn't go well.

Some of the newer and younger employees may well feel put out when they receive a verbal retort from AMS, but in the old days a couple of shotgun cartridges on AMS's desk really did focus the need to avoid failure!



TRIBUTE FROM LEWIS BREWSTER VICE PRESIDENT, CONEXANT ▶

Man of his words by Vitus Luk

On a visit to Hong Kong many years ago, I remember Alan telling me the story about the man at his Country Club who asked him to pick up a Rolex when he was next in HK.

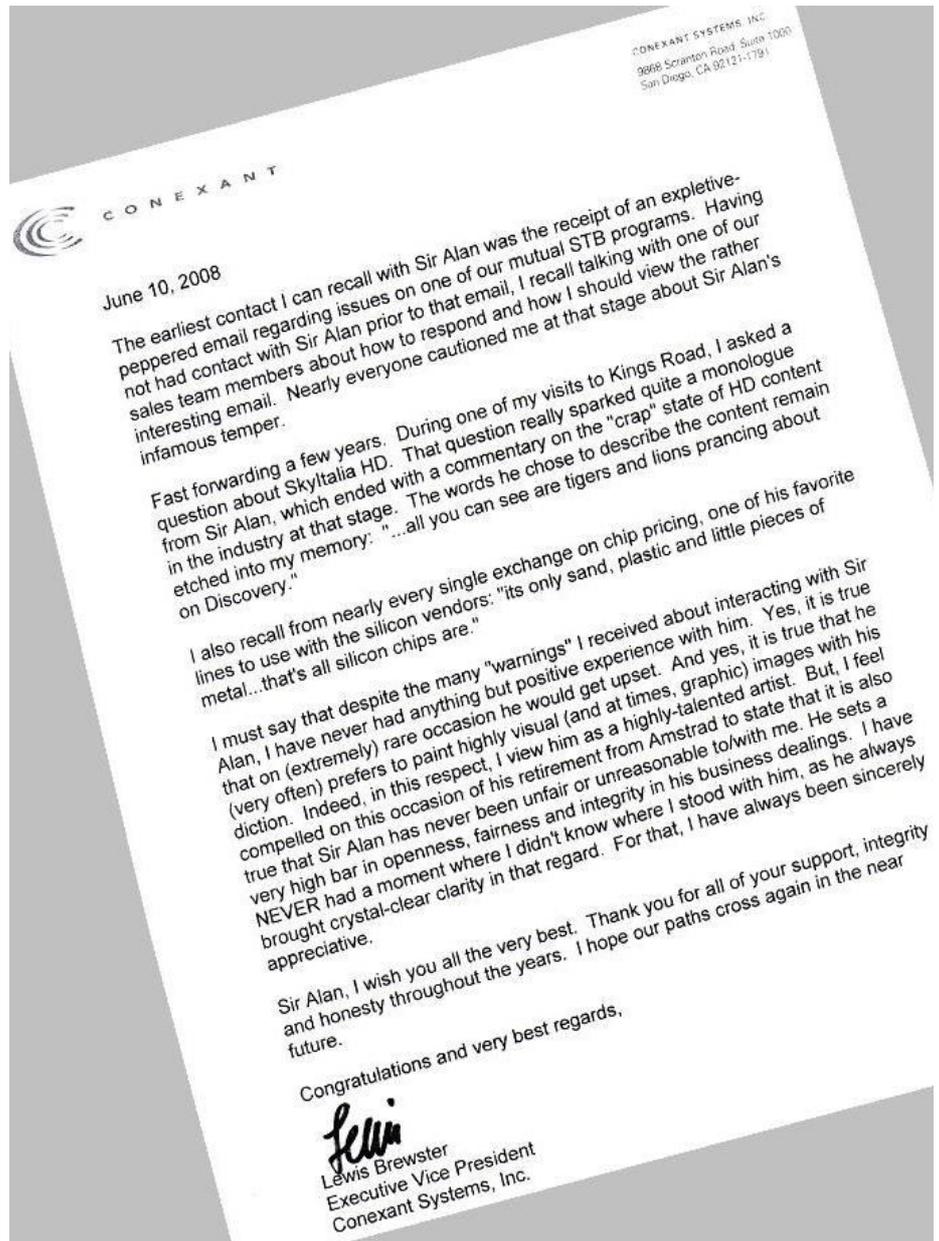


Alan said 'OK' but the guy didn't think he was serious, so he asked Dennis Baylin to get him one. To cut a long story, the man nearly ended up with two watches.

The point is this: those who know Alan well would agree that he is a man of his words. Even the promises Alan makes in an off-handed manner he takes seriously. Having said that, Alan does have a good sense of fun and humour, and some of us have been really privileged to see a glimpse of his true colours.

AMSTRIVIA

In the dark days of some twenty years earlier... Colin Baker!



“” Memories & Memorabilia

How deep is that hole by John Beattie

At Amstrad's Stock Road factory in Southend, we once had a problem with some blocked drains. Our Maintenance Manager, the late Mick O'Malley, went down a manhole and sorted it out. The same day, we noticed that there'd been a Spanish truck parked across the loading bay for an hour or so. We wanted to get it moved, but all attempts to locate the driver of the vehicle proved fruitless, so a search of the factory and surrounding area was made.



The mystery was solved when we heard a small distant voice calling "Hola, hola". It was coming from 20 foot down a manhole next to the truck. You guessed it – Mick had forgotten to replace the manhole cover, and the Spanish driver had jumped out of his cab straight down the hole!

Sir Alan's legendary dealings with the City

By Martin Bland

Meetings with Sir Alan in the City were sometimes like sitting next to a live hand grenade with the pin half out – one stupid comment (of which there were many) from a City Analyst and he would explode!



On one famous occasion he arrived at a meeting with a leading fund manager and major Amstrad shareholder, and

Sir Alan's first words were "I don't know what god-damn right you have to see me". The meeting went rapidly downhill from that point.

AMSTRIVIA

Amstrad's Mike Grange is tenth in line to the British throne.



AMSFACT

Sir Alan Sugar holds two honorary Science Doctorates, awarded in 1988 by City University and in 2005 by Brunel University.



Sir Alan at Brunel University

BELLIGERENT?

Sir Alan, when addressing the candidates for 'The Apprentice' says "I am the most belligerent person you could ever come across".



Frances, when asked for an anecdote (being as diplomatic as ever) says "Sir Alan might be able to say that, but I couldn't possibly comment!!"





Gallery

