

# Goodbye Mr. Chips

When I was a kid I used to love going to massive game shops like Future Zone and Electronics Boutique, even Game. They filled me with awe, all these different games for various systems from the Atari ST to the Philips CDi and many, many more than we see today. However these wondrous places of game retail were mainly found in cities far away from where I lived so it was the smaller shops I used to spend most of my time in, gazing at the backs of boxes, wondering what it was like to play them. The staff were always friendly and knowledgeable but the shops themselves seemed so much less inspiring than the giants found in the shopping malls.

This was set to change though and as gaming became more mainstream the companies like Electronics Boutique grew their empires, destroying the small independent stores in a similar way that has been happening with supermarkets and coffee shops. However food and drink are far more important than gaming, so this went fairly unnoticed. As these retail chains started growing the smaller shops simply couldn't compete and as stores like Game grew their magic started to wear off. The people who worked there tended to be less interested in the wares they were selling you and as the shops got bigger the choice got smaller. Support was only seen for the latest and greatest consoles with a small section for a console or two that still had people buying enough games for it to be profitable.

With this change I began to see the independent game stores for the amazing things they were. People worked there for their love of it and were interested in what they were selling. If a game didn't work on your computer they would do their best to get it up and running, creating customised boot discs for PCs, explaining what advantages a hard drive or CD ROM would bring you and show you how you could get the most

out of the machine you had rather than try to sell you something brand new.

But these shops began to die off and they have become a rarer and rarer sight over the years. However there was one name that you began to see around a country surrounded by Game and Gamestation logos and that was Chips.

Chips has managed to keep the independent store vibe whilst becoming a franchise within itself. There used to be a Chips store near where I lived and it is where my Dad bought perhaps my favourite computer; an Amiga 500+ and I was inspired every time I went there with the incredible things the staff were able to make this machine do and the demos that would be running on the computers they had set up. As this may suggest to you, Chips has managed to survive a very long time. The first store opened in the mid 80s and another 11 followed along with 14 franchise shops and a online store. I first noticed the Edinburgh branch of [Chips](#) whilst on the bus to work and from the moment I walked in it became my favourite game shop in the city. The staff were awesome, the prices were competitive and games could be found for systems from the Xbox 360 to the Sega Master System. However all good things come to an end. Several weeks ago it was [reported](#) that Chipsworld was going into liquidation and the Edinburgh store, among many of the others would be closed.

So, now Edinburgh's best game store lies dormant and it saddens me. As much as I still like some of the bigger retail chains they really do lack the heart and charm of shops like Chips. I hope the people (in fact I believe it was person, but i don't want to leave anybody out) who worked there and at all the other branches across the country find fantastic new jobs that they love, because they deserve it. They have kept the notion of an independent game store alive, never once trying to shove junk onto customers or sell shoddy goods, never

patronising, always happy to answer questions and far more knowledgeable than many of the staff I've encountered at other outlets.

When I started writing for the Reporter one of the things I was hoping to do was an article about this store. This was not the story I wanted to write.

Goodbye Mr. Chips, you will be missed.