

OVER  
ONE HUNDRED  
HOT GAMES  
REVIEWED INSIDE

# TOP GEAR!

Better than P-Zero? Super NES  
Development Report



ISSUE 54

March 1992

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# ACE

ADVANCED COMPUTER ENTERTAINMENT

## LOOK!

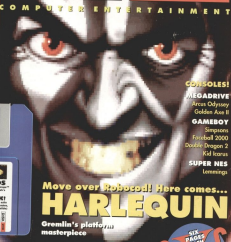
### ACE DISK ONE

### IT'S INCREDIBLE!



**THE ESSENTIAL GAMES BUYER'S GUIDE**

- AMIGA ●
- PC ● ST ●
- CONSOLES ●
- HANDHELDS ●



### CONSOLES!

#### MEGADRIVE

- Arms Odyssey
- Golden Ace II

#### GAMEBOY

- Simpsons
- Football 2000
- Double Dragon 2
- Kid Icarus

#### SUPER NES

- Learnings

Move over Robocod! Here comes...  
**HARLEQUIN**

Grenlin's platform  
masterpiece

SIX  
PAGES  
EACH  
FOR  
THIS  
MONTH'S  
BIG SIX



THE SOCKETEER

SHADOWLANDS

TWILIGHT 2000

HARLEQUIN

BOO QUEST

SPACE GUN



**Amiga & Atari ST Software Selection.** Full range in our categories. **Amiga ST**

Amiga	ST
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1003	1003
1004	1004
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**20** Gary Panz, who used to be quite good, turns what's left of his imagination (and is talking as if about a rather spiffing new thing) game from Genesis - on the Super NES. My word!

**36** Disney's superlative *The Rocketeer* is just one of the six top products that gets the definitive six-page AGE treatment this month.



**42** Good! Pretty! This is *Shadowlands* and it's from Denmark. It's been programmed by Tappo and it has a thing in it called Photocopy. But you're intrigued...

**76** Are you totally useless? Are you gaming skills rubbish? Never fear, our TVI section will soon have you playing *The First Samurai* and others like an old pro!



# contents

**7 Disk!** - Not only do we give you a disk, but we explain how to use it! **10 News** - A revamped look for our trusty friend. **16 Peripherals 20 In the Works** - Games Lord Gary Panz checks progress on *Top Gear & Porsche Stars*, **29 Screenshots** - How all the scenes work and stuff. **37 Console!** - New releases. **54 Comps** - Win a CDTV and a TV. **82 Reviews Directory** - Quite a read and so mistake!

## R E V I E W S

30

### Space Gun

No-one was as surprised as us when the decision was made to give a straightforward space shoot 'em up six pages. But we figured it was about time a no-nonsense reader blast got the full treatment.

36

### The Rocketeer

Disney's marginal box office success tries for a more healthy reception on the PC, and gets it. Superb graphics and gameplay alike. This is what a movie conversion should look like.

42

### Shadowlands

You've played the demo, you've read the In the Works... Now, experience the entire! The latest addition to Denmark's eclectic product line-up gets a resounding RPG thumbs up.

48

### Eco Quest

The planet Earth needs saving - from man! *Eco Quest* rebuffs the game that we know was coming sooner or later. Builders' advertising in the name of ecology, anyone?

54

### Twilight 2000

In the aftermath of a nuclear war, Poland is in a right old state. And Bruce Conroy, allowing horrific disaster needs to be topped from games before things get really bad, it was...

60

### Harlequin

They might look like waxy lips on the face of chocolate boxes, but in the right environment these little bibles can really tick some hard. Godwin's welcome return to form.

The Best  
Reviews On  
The Planet!

# A320

A·I·R·B·U·S



*...has landed.*

developed in cooperation with



**Lufthansa** and Deutsche Airbus

# ACE DISKI



# YO!

## GET READY TO RAVE WITH MC DiSKI, ACE'S VERY OWN DJ!\*

It's nonchalance! It's happenin'! And it's here! You ain't-a-bob, get ready to rock-a-doodle-doo with the very first ACE Cover Disk! While other magazine cover disks are about as exciting as getting your radio dial stuck on Radio Four during Woman's Hour, ACE's is like picking up the thumpin' funk-filled airwaves of a fly-by-night pirate show transmitting from the back of a stolen transit van, where only the coolest cut and the hottest wax gets airtime.

So what better way to show you what the NEW ORDER (great bunch of guys) is gonna be than by knocking things off with an EXCLUSIVE fully-playable demo level of Demark's Tralibiazin' Shadowlands for all you Amiga and ST-owning dudes and dudettes out there AND - can ya believe it? - a bumper pack of four arcade smasheroos for Mr and Mrs IBM PC owner? Am I good to you or what???? Not 'arf!

The Starship Excitement is getting ready for launch! Crank up the volume 'til the speakers crackle! Set colour and brightness levels to the max! FIVE! FOUR! THREE! TWO! ONE! We have LIFT OFF!

\* HEY! HEY! HEY!  
THAT'S  
BEEN JOCKEY  
TO YOU, RATE!



But take care jumping off ledges - jumpin' is only a little fun and he can't stand much of a drop!

### BLOCK

You can't beat a cracking arcade puzzle - and Block is a brilliant one. The screen is full of blocks (well marked with either one, two or three dots. The aim is to push identical blocks together so that they form a line of three, whereupon they evolve - one-dot blocks become two-dot blocks become three-dot blocks. Get the idea? When you've got three three-dot blocks in a line you've won, and you move on to the next level.

Simple enough, eh? Ah, but you've reckoned without the rings. These are an unwanted by-product of producing a line and gradually fill up the free space. As the rings get lighter, you have no option but to rotate the screen so that they tumble out of the way. Use the arrow keys to move the on-screen camera and the spacebar to rotate. And don't get too frustrated with it. Remember: at the end of the day it's all a load of blocks.



## ARCADE 4-PACK

Wa-hay-hey! Not one. Not two. Not even three. Yes, you've got FOUR great games to enjoy in this month's superb Arcade 4-Pack. What better way to spend a quiet night in?

### JUMPMAN LIVES!

Jumpman Lives! is a simple-looking but amazingly-addictive Shareware game from Apogee Software. The aim is simple. Our hero, the eponymous Jumpman, has to leap about the platforms collecting the little orange powerballs while avoiding hot and deadly holes, poisonous robots and all manner of other alien fiends. It's a game that requires a fair bit of brain power as well as a lot of dexterity. Use the arrow keys to move Jumpman around and hit the spacebar to make him jump.



# ACE DISK I

## INVADERS

The totally real arcade classic comes to the PC - and is just 4K! No instructions - if you can't work out what you have to do by yourself then you don't deserve to be reading this mag! Use the left and right arrows to move and the spacebar to fire.

## COMMANDER KEEN

Yet another superb Shareware game from those Apogee dudes. Commander Keen is one of the most wicked platform games I've seen on the PC. Look it and see!

While Commander Keen is exploring the planet Mars, the evil Voronians sabotage his ship by stealing essential parts and hiding them. While the gallant hero remains stranded on the Red Planet the Voronians intend to destroy the Earth. You must help Keen recover the ship parts and escape Mars so that he can find his logan plot.

Full instructions are provided from the title screen by pressing F1. But to get you started, here are the most important keys. Use the arrow keys to move Keen around. Pressing CONTROL makes Keen jump. Pressing CONTROL and ALT runs Keen's laser if it has been changed. As Keen explores, he may find his way blocked by a Martian station or city which can be entered by pressing CONTROL.

## GETTING GOING...

It's so easy to install your Amiga 4Disk, even your gno could do it. But just in case you have got Old Mrs Smith seated at the keyboard, here are simple step-by-step instructions...

Put the 3.5" disk in Drive A (or Drive B, if you're lucky enough to have two) and tap onto that drive by typing:

A: (Return)

This should now have the 'A:' prompt showing. Decide whether you want to install either in Drive B, C or D. Let's assume you want to install in Drive B, if so, then type:

INSTALL C: (Return)

Voilà! The games are installed. A menu will appear whereby you can select which game you want to play by pressing the relevant key!

In the future, to get in the games type:

CD ACE\_M01 (Return)

DD ACE

MENU (Return)

Here too if you have any major loading problems, refer to 'The Troubleshooter' box.

## WHOOOOPS!

Due to a small error, the Commander Keen game doesn't run from the menu. Sorry! To play the actual game type:

DD ACE\_M01 (Return)

To get into the games directory, then type:

DD KEEN (Return)

and

MENU (Return)

The game will now run. Once again, our apologies. Next time there'll be no more oops, we promise.

## THE TROUBLESHOOTER

Bit Stupid! I am The Troubleshooter. Come with me if you want to load. If the year disk doesn't work then the following may be the problem.

■ The computer is not turned on. Solution: Turn the computer on. (Check all the computer leads are fully connected as well.)

■ The monitor is not turned on. Solution: Turn the monitor on. (Check all the monitor leads are fully connected as well.)

■ You are not turned on. Solution: None. This is a Good Thing. Some of that sort of stuff will leave when the lights are out. (We'll assume that all your leads are fully connected for now.)

■ The disk has been obviously damaged in the past or is of the wrong type. I.e. it is bent, broken or otherwise rather unfortunate looking. In this case DO NOT INSERT IT IN YOUR DISK DRIVE. ACE Magazine and EMAP Images will not be held responsible for any damage caused to your hardware by damaged disks.

■ If you've got this far without a solution it takes the you must think the unfortunate - your disk is faulty. Needs to VHS, baby. Shed some of your weak human tears then place the disk in a padded envelope, along with a note explaining your predicament and a 25p stamped, self-addressed envelope, and mail it to:

PC Wise,

Unit 3, Marley Industrial Park,

Marley, Essex,

Shelley Tyrell,

Mid Glamorgan CF44 4BB.

A replacement disk will be sent to you as soon as possible. If you have a disk-related query that you think a simple phone call would answer, then call the ACE Disk Helpline on (0443) 693233 between 10.30a.m. and 12.30p.m. weekdays.

■ Please note that while we at ACE Magazine make every effort to check the cover disk for all known viruses, we can accept no responsibility for possible damage caused by viruses which may have escaped our attention.



## SHADOWLANDS

Welcome! Welcome to the Shadowlands! Armed only with deft mouse skills and sarcasm/humor with you have to guide a party of four brave souls through this specially-crafted mini-level of Denmark's superb role-playing extravaganza - EXCLUSIVE to you lucky ACE readers!

On your travels you'll get just a small taste of what the full game is all about. Watch your back for attack from meandering mummies and armored Amazons. Mind your step as you tip-toe around the bottomless pits and trap-triggering pressure pads. And keep an eye out for sacred panels that may reveal incredible treasures - or hideous monsters! A most excellent time is guaranteed for one and all!

If you want the full low-down on the finished game, which boasts fifteen huge levels, a massive bestiary of terrifying monsters, magic spells, perplexing puzzles and cunning conundrums, then don't forget that there's an amazing 300-page review of Shadowlands starting on page 42. Without wishing to spoil your reading enjoyment too much, I've gotta tell ya that the game scored a Trailblazing 323 ACE Rating and achieved itself the coveted status of ACE's new Role-Playing Game Benchmark to boot! Well said - all right?

## GETTING GOING...

Entering the Shadowlands is simplicity itself. Turn on your Amiga or Atari ST, insert the disk in the drive and - as if by magic - the drive will load and run all by itself. If you have any problems, have a quick check of 'The Troubleshooter' box.



# ACE DISK I

## KEYS KEY

### Left Mouse Button

Select items or portrait regions.

### Right Mouse Button

If clicked when the pointer is in the game window then the view is re-centered around the currently-controlled warrior. If clicked when the pointer is over a portrait then the corresponding inventory screen appears. Click with the right mouse button again to get back to the game.

**F** Pauses/unpauses the game.

**ESC** Toggles between the two portrait arrangements.

Everyone likes a lot of action now and then, so this will probably be the most popular (and scary) part of all, because it's the "combat turn". Want to put a good coin in the well and click on the arrows until the coin appears in the window, select the coin, then click on the coin in the game window. Hey presto! The warrior will walk over and to your talking, that's to test up a fiddler! Put a weapon in the warrior's hand by clicking if you want him to use his fiddler, select the coin, then click on the warrior. Other actions are performed in a similar fashion-to-be-honest, as David Bowie would say.

If you're not sure about then you'll need a fiddler. That's right by removing this coin from clicking on the warrior. Fiddler on any fiddler during you come across by doing the same. What not fiddler.

A flame throwing item means that the warrior is carrying a (B) bomb when on his person. To toggle it on or off, click on the arrows near the left arrow until the bomb is in the window, then click on it and hold the button down for a couple of seconds.

These red gears of things call this the "combat turn". And that's it! You know what that means either! But what I do know is that this is the fiddler that makes things happen. Well, you've got to see what's going on in the game window! Select the coin then you can click on the fiddler by clicking on it. The object will then appear in your other hand, ready for use. Great! You can also pick up a fiddler to perform other actions, like putting fiddler and putting fiddler around present coin.

The character's health bar. When you see this going down, you know it's time to get out!

Watch for attacking might have been "normal" from which you're used to exchange spells, that really sound much in this state, but plays a very important role in the full game.

Pick up food and water from the inventory and then drop it here to give your warrior a much-needed repair meal!

This is the goods currently in the warrior's grip.

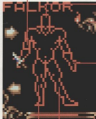
These show the warrior's health, strength and all those other vital statistics.

Place objects between characters by dropping them into any empty slots in the inventory. Use the arrows to click through the slots until you find a spare one. Remember that this won't work if the two warriors that are being kept.

Click on the warrior's name to swap between inventories.

In these dangerous times every penny counts. Pick up a shield and drop it here to give your warrior extra.

Click here to give the warrior some health-reducing kit. After getting back from an attack you'll know how they feel!



Clicking here makes the whole party enter "walk" mode. It works the same as making a lone dude wander, except this time the other warriors follow in formation. You can change formation quickly by hitting function keys 1-5.

Click here and the warrior dies unless "walk" mode. Good fun around by clicking in the game window. Remember that you can't click where you can't walk, like the well. "Totally stupid" man!

## I WANNA TALK!

If you want to stop at those an object then select first the "walk" mode and then the "talk" mode. You'll find that they are both highlighted. Now click on where you want the object to be thrown in the game window. The warrior will simply, for remember that if you talk a wordy thing to throw an coin when they first away from the character are that his effects will fall onto them!

Each party member is represented by a color-coded name. (They're what an "inventory" on the left) Plus them up and move them about to change the party's starting formation.

Each little box contains one of the items the adventure has placed up on the spot. Click on 'em to pick 'em up and then click on an empty box to drop 'em down.

## TRAINING ENDS

Whoooooaaaaa! Coming in to land! What a ride - hope this is only the beginning. Next month things are gonna get better still, hey? If you can't stand the heat, get outta the disk drive! This is it! Get signing off. Stay tough, homebays!

## TO BOLDLY GO...

Judging by some finalized announcements at the Winter Consumer Electronics Show in Las Vegas last month, there will be flood of Super NES games to look out for this year. For many players, top of the wanted list could possibly be the release of Star Trek: The Next Generation and Falcon from simulation specialists Spectrum Holobyte.

In a worldwide Star Trek licensing agreement, Paramount Pictures has granted Spectrum Holobyte exclusive rights to create video game software for the Super NES, Macintosh, Intellivision to offering "Trekker" a game based around the original TV series on Gameboy, PC and NES.



"Now entering the main corridor, Captain."



Alfred Patten on Spectrum's games with special characteristics of the strength, high production and realism inside the game.

"You will see the Enterprise in an active situation on the Enterprise when you activate the deck of the Enterprise."

Alfred Patten on Spectrum's games with special characteristics of the strength, high production and realism inside the game.

"You will see the Enterprise in an active situation on the Enterprise when you activate the deck of the Enterprise."



Apple Computer

## THE APPLE GAME

After months of intense speculation, prominent American computer maker Apple has finally disclosed plans to enter the software consumer electronics industry. The first of these products, due to be unveiled in the second half of 1993, will be based around low-end Macintosh and CD-ROM technologies.

Apple is apparently going to employ its System 7 and QuickTime operating system software to combine high quality video, sound and animation in a variety of devices, ranging from

electronic books and personal organizers to multimedia players and display televisions.

John Suley, Chief Executive Officer of the Californian company, said he intends to forge closer links with consumer electronics firms and third party software publishers. Apple already enjoys a successful partnership with Sony.

Last fiscal year, sales of Apple's Macintosh range increased by 60 per cent. New products using Apple-created software technologies will be introduced in 1993.

## WORD UP

Acclaim, one of the biggest video game publishers in the world, has bought Miramax from the crumbling Maxwell business empire. This is quite a logical step for the firm, considering the success Ocean enjoyed over Christmas with games licensed from Acclaim like WWF Wrestling, The Simpsons and Terminator 2. Details concerning the eventual availability of Miramax and ImageWorks games currently in production weren't available as ACI went to press. On the other hand, Virgin Games has secured the rights to the cheapie, Apocalypse (previously in Latin SO). Expect to be hearing every jungle fodor in the autumn.

Start saving now for the latest groovy prodigy from consumer electronics giant JVC. The Wonder Mega is a combined logo Megadrive and Mega-CD in one attractive hi-fi style unit. If this device is successful, fashion conscious British games nuts could have one of these widgets in their hands before the end of the year. What's the downside? Mega-CD software looks unimpressive value at the moment. In fact, the hardware is for out-selling software in Japan. New games for the Mega-CD like Wing Commander and Star Trek could change this perception later this year.

Kidz is a revolutionary project designed to give kids with chronic illness or a congenital disease the chance to play computer games. The Children's Hospital in Boston also allows patients to communicate with friends via a network of personal computers.

Having trouble getting past the Koopa Paratrooper or finding Yoshi? Do you want really unbelievable scores? Jeff Rubin and Penguin Books may have the answer to your troubles. Their unofficial guides to Gameboy and Super Mario Bros are sup-



## DINO DELIGHTS

Yoshi, Mario's faithful dinosaur pal from the best-selling Super Mario title series, is on his very own outing for the Gameboy. This new puzzle version follows the tradition of brain teasers Yoshi and Dr. Mario.

In Yoshi, superstar Mario has his hands full as he catches falling Goombas, Bloobers and Piranha Plants to ensure that his tiny star does and gains valuable points.

"Featuring special 'game' appearances by many of the favourite cast of characters from the popular Super Mario Bros games, Yoshi promises to be a fierce challenge. When you need help the most, our green friend will give you a few hints."

"Yoshi will challenge players of all ages with this fast-paced, fun and exciting puzzle game," assures Nintendo spokesman. "Both Gameboy and NES Yoshi games are for one or two player head-to-head competition."

Nintendo spokesman. "Both Gameboy and NES Yoshi games are for one or two player head-to-head competition."

posed to take some of the mystery but none of the challenge out of these immensely popular Nintendo games. Available now for £2.99 each.

■ **The Thunderboard** from Media Vision is a new sound card for the PC. It comes with an FM synthesiser, digital recording and playback capabilities, synch port, microphone input and stereo amplifier. PC Connections (0706 222988) with the Thunderboard, which is fully compatible with AdLib and SoundBlaster systems, for £99.

■ **Hanaco**, one of the most respected arcade video game manufacturers, is constructing a theme park in the Setagaya district of Tokyo. Don't hold your breath for a ticket. This attraction won't open for another four years!

■ Ever fancied producing your own theme music? *Techniques in Writing for Psychologists for Amiga owners* which includes everything you require to get things started from this end. The £40 package consists of MIDI Interfacer and Music 4 Junior sequencing software. All you need now is a decent Roland or Korg synth, some original ideas and the correct telephone number... 0664 768711.

■ **Shinkawa Console** is selling a hotly little piece of plastic (£19.99) that enables you to play American Super NES cards on its Japanese Super Famicom. Call 081-340 8465 for further details.

■ **Looking for a good bargain?** *Think it's not in your diary for the 16-bit Computer Show or Weekly Exhibition Centre in London (February 14-16), Amiga Expo '92 in Copenhagen (March 28-31) or Spring Computer Shopper at London's Olympia (May 28-31).*

■ **Ultima - The Fake Prophet** on the Super NES from PC and Origin is sure to be a mid-playing success. Players are drawn back to the fantasy realm of Britannia to rid the land of heresy crimers. The game promises over 100 hours of play and a hotly booked to save your current position. This eight-megabit cartridge due for release in the third quarter of 1992.

■ **Ballistic** has converted the Winter Challenge sports game over to the MegaDrive in time for the Olympics. It costs £24.99 and is out now.

## THE COLOUR OF MONEY

Yes, it's that time of year when a rising player's thoughts turn to the chance of earning an enhanced Gameboy with a pretty colour screen. Well if only it were true, eh?

ACE based rumours of such an exciting development over two years ago but nothing has ever come of these chatter whippers. Nintendo remains silent on the subject.

If speculation within the trade press is to be believed, a 'Super Gameboy' could be competitively priced against rival Lynx and Gamegear colour systems while retaining the ability to run all existing software for the monochrome model.

Nintendo's Gameboy is currently the most popular handheld video games console in the world. Achieving a hi-score on Tetris and Super Mario!ed is possibly the only thing that unites the likes of President Bush, Daniel Craigie and British kids.

There are something like 500,000 Gameboy owners in the UK and eight million over in the United States. In the first half of 1992 alone, Nintendo and its developers plan to add more than 20 new game titles to the existing 750-title library of games available for the Gameboy.

According to Nintendo of America there are now 5000 Gameboy users that male. If these figures are correct, this will be the first time such a phenomenon has occurred since the heady days of Pacman.

"The range of software being developed for the Gameboy appeals to players of all ages and skill levels," purports a spokesman for Nintendo. "Warranty cards indicate that more than 45 per cent of users are over 18."



ACE based rumours of such an exciting development over two years ago but nothing has ever come of these chatter whippers. Nintendo remains silent on the subject.

## PLAYING FOR KEEPS

Inspired by the huge success of Tetris, Rampart takes gamblers back in time to the Middle Ages where they build defensive fortresses and position devastating cannons in a bid to become powerful lords and barons.

It's going to be extremely difficult ignoring Rampart in the coming months. Tengen is working on the Sega Megadrive (Genesis) and Gamegear conversions of this popular coin-op while Domark takes care of the Amiga, PC and ST interpretations. There's a real treat in store for Gamegear owners. Due later this year, the portable version will incorporate an option to link two machines together for competitive head-to-head play. Atari is independently developing Rampart for the Lynx.

"Programmed by the some designers who created 720° and Paperboy, Rampart combines the best of strategy puzzle games with dynamic action, destruction and explosive graphics," insists a spokesman for Tengen. "The action is lightning fast and once the onslaught of enemy attackers ends, players must quickly rebuild and extend the walls of their fortress before the next battle begins."

## MERRY CHRISTMAS

Like a phoenix rising from the ashes of a unilaterally quiet year, veteran games powerhouse Ocean managed to sweep the competition away this Christmas by taking top positions in both the full-price and budget charts. Claiming the prestigious prize of overall number one, WWF WrestleMania (Ocean), licensed from Acclaim, again proved the popularity of this cult American sport shows on satellite TV.

Sales across the board, we're very pleased to announce, were brisk and actually up on last year despite the biting recession.

Top titles, in order of our focus, included Populous 2 (Bullfrog/EA), Jimmy White's Whirlwind Snooker (Virgin Games), Baseball Millennium, Lotus Turbo Challenge 2 (Orlando), Oh No More Lemmings (Pyrosnik), Soccer 3 (Ocean), Monopass Golf: Bunk of Froy (Baronki Arts and, unfortunately, Terminator 2 (Acclaim/Ocean). Close to the console front, Sonic the Hedgehog (Sega) and Super Mario Bros J (Nintendo)



unsurprisingly stole the limelight.

What about the hardware, then? It appears discerning punters opted to go for the Magnavox (Sega), Comboy (Nintendo) and Amiga (Commodore). An honorary mention goes to the PC... of long last

the cabinet and stability of the Comboy (by incorporating one-glass lighting to illuminate the entire screen and an adjustable magnifying lens to enlarge small objects in games). It simply clips onto your console and replaces one-9V battery to operate.

If your eyes are straining to see the next level of rage in Sonic the Hedgehog, perhaps you should invest in the MagniGaze (12.99). Its batteries are needed for this magnification device which, claims Sealed, improves contrast and visibility. Oh, don't miss out on Sonic the Hedgehog. It's easily the best Game Gear production to date.

Finally, Eurocom has something that will just blow you up. The console cloning kit (21.99) should bring back that pixel perfect gleam to your screen.

In the arcade, Terminator 2 (Midway) needed no more, while, after an amazing 44 weeks, Street Fighter II (Capcom) remained in the top five. Lucky Super NES players will soon be looking into a fantastic translation of this enduring best-seller. Don't forget ACE was the first magazine in the world to go behind the scenes to see the making of Williams' extraordinary T2 strip (see issue 51 for our exclusive report).

On a sour note, some companies are disagreeing with the findings of the Gallup games chart. A spokesperson for one leading publisher, who asked to remain anonymous, said they were completely disgusted with the "legholds" chart system currently in operation. Confusion over the appropriate gender and retail contributors is rife. One thing is for sure. We will need to be unquestionably confident in the charts. Sadly, we cannot say this is the case at present. If you have any opinions on the subject, drop us a line at the usual address.

Nevertheless, ACE would like to congratulate everybody who managed to produce top sales in 1991 and thank them for some of the finest games software ever seen. Easy 'em cooling!

## FOR THE PLAYER WITH EVERYTHING...

Multiplatform Comboy or Comboy player can be seen without the right accessory these days. Now Nintendo (via Sega) has started to import a range of handy gadgets from Nintendo in Florida.

These sort of widgets are becoming increasingly popular among the new generation of video games players out there. Although it may be said that some of them can make your console look and feel rather bulky.

MagniLight (12.99) is designed to improve



## BLOCKOUT

Popo's, the first Tengen title for the Sega Game Gear, is a colorful arcade game for one- or two-players which should entice younger gamers.

The object of this release is to solve various puzzles under screen pressure. The first levels are a sequence of building blocks to rescue the Princess who has been kidnapped by the evil sorcerer, Popo's. Original storyline, but the challenge is to eliminate these blocks in just the right order before the tight time limit expires. This can be achieved by punching, kicking and head-buttling your way to freedom.

"Popo's offers players a new level of video game interactivity," speculates spokeswoman Sherri Swilling.

An internal Map Editor allows players to create their own puzzle designs and the useful battery back-up capability means the puzzles they have made. May can be resumed at a later time, even if the power has been turned off.

Tengen aims to launch Stampout, Marble Madness and Paperboy on the Game Gear in





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## TRAINS, PLANS AND AMUSEMENT PARKS

First, Sid Meier at Microprose dabbed with the seemingly impossible dream of constructing and running a railroad bigger and better than British Rail. Next, creator of the SimPs brilliant SimCity is also taking a bold step into the bustling world of locomotion.

A-Train is the American version of a simulation game originally published in Japan. Over 100,000 copies of the award-winning "Take the A-Train. II" by Amtrak have been sold thus far.

In A-Train, you're the owner of a private railroad company. Starting out with rural land, the idea is to lay down track and run any of 19 different freight and passenger trains. These will transport people and building materials to areas under development, feeding the ground-work for housing, jobs and recreational centers that your city needs to grow. You're supposed to spread your wealth into developments like office buildings, factories, apartments, amusement parks, ski resorts, studios and golf courses. If you succeed in developing a large city, you may be rewarded with a Buller Train for high-speed transport. Isn't life great?

"A-Train combines city-building with railroad management and a very sophisticated financial model to provide a depth of play that will keep you challenged for weeks, months or years," guarantees spokesperson Sally Vardoulakis. "In a sense, A-Train is the capitalist's SimCity."

Japan intends to convert A-Train next to the PC, Windows, Macintosh and Amiga. Other distributors SimEarth and Simulator in Europe while Indigames has the rights to SimCity.



That fine track of steel locomotives get the ultimate owner. You'll need a good map too to plan the railroad.

Amiga, which already made SimEarth famous.

## COMING OUT PARTY

Following the initial announcement six months ago, Nintendo has started to talk about its long-awaited CD-ROM accessory for the SNES.

The as yet unnamed but exceptionally competitively-priced accessory will be introduced in the USA and Japan before January 1993. Nintendo has revealed initial production will be 200,000 units per month.

"At a suggested retail price of \$200, our new compact disc accessory will launch the next generation of video games," confidently forecasts Hiroshi Awakawa, Nintendo of America's President.

Super NES compact disc games will use the CD-ROM/CA format licensed from Philips. Unlike the older CD-ROM format, this enables the smooth interweaving of sound, video and data. A system cartridge consists of RAM, ROM and a custom real-time graphics coprocessor for displaying full-screen, full-motion video. The system BIOS includes nine megabits of RAM which should enable the programmers to perform some fancy audio visual trickery. A single compact disc can store the equivalent of nearly 300 ordinary 12-megabit video game cartridges.

14 ■

Developers and other interested parties are receiving full specifications as you read this and some games are already in production.

Nintendo hopes to additionally create a "bridge format" allowing SNES-CD software to play on both the Super



Together with our existing cartridge and Super NES game development kit, our primary objective is to offer consumers a range of entertaining and exciting compact disc software," continues Hiroshi Awakawa of Nintendo.

NES and Philips' CD-i (Compact Disc Interactive) hardware, while Sony is said to be in discussions with Nintendo regarding the compatibility of Sony's Play Station CD-ROM system and the Super NES compact disc accessory.

Sega is currently enjoying considerable success with the Mega-CD in Japan. As this CD-ROM accessory for the Megadrive incorporates many advanced features it's unlikely that Sega will be able to match the low price of Nintendo's device. If you're thinking of buying a Mega-CD we suggest you wait until they're officially available in this country. Take it from us, the first batch of games really aren't worth the hassle or high import cost.

## PINBALL WIZARDS

Before we all become addicted to shooting alien spiders in the lab, yes, many of us could be found casually smacking the sides of a pinball table in the local cafe.

Thanks to a heavy injection of cutting-edge technology and marketing expertise, a new generation of pinball games have emerged over the past few years. Popular machines today include cleverly licensed creations based around The Simpsons, Terminator 2, Star Trek, E.T. and The Addams Family.

The Second Annual International Professional Amusement Pinball Association (IAPA) Championship was held in New York under this month's IAPA. It featured a pair of the best competitive pinball players from the United States, England, Canada and Japan.

This event demonstrates the strength of the current popular revival of pinball. The classic pastime recently celebrated its 100th birthday by capturing a substantial share of the amusement machine market lost to video games in the eighties.

"There is a solid base of pinball players who keep coming back to the game they loved in their youth," says organizer Steve Epstein. "In addition, this year's pinball is a skill game, with a new generation of innovative computer technology, multi-level play, realistic sound and visual effects and maximum appeal for the non player. And everybody wants to know how good they are."



Unlike early pinball, a new sophisticated generation of pinball machines, like this one from the Chicago company, is based around a heavy cabinet structure.

Being hard on one of the most popular and successful pinball designers ever the year was awarded. He stated and stated commitment and great success. Nintendo, in the early 1980s, started the video game revolution.



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# Gary Whitta's previews

**N**o time to dally this month, as there's just so much stuff to fit in! Sorry about the rather bizarre positioning of the pages, but the safety inspector visited the ACE offices this month and said that each page was just SO packed with brilliance that to place them adjacently might have led to the skillfulness level reaching critical mass. So they've been specially separated in order to prevent a dangerous explosion of excellence. Alright?

## 3D 8-BALL *Virgin*

**A**fter the mammoth success of Jimmy White's *Whirlwind* Snooker, author Archer Maclean is now putting the finishing touches to a pre-designed which promises to be even bigger. Tentatively titled 3D 8-Ball, while Virgin comes up with something better, it uses the same graphics engine and control system as Jimmy, but with an all-new American-style Pool table to play on (smaller with wider pockets) and players will get two variations on the great game, with British and American rules. ST and Amiga versions are due out in the future, with a PC version promised for shortly after. A Megadrive version is also rumored to be in the offing, although no-one at Virgin would comment on the subject. But then they wouldn't, would they?



## HOOK *Ocean*

**S**even Spielberg's radical retelling of the classic Peter Pan tale may not have been quite as successful in the States as was expected, but it's already shaping up to be the movie event of the year over here. Ocean, ever one to miss out on a good thing, is currently toying away on its official adaptation of the \$40 million dollar blockbuster, which stars Robin Williams and Dustin Hoffman as Pan and Hook respectively. The game is being written in the Monkey Island mould, with the player exploring Never-neverland,



sojourn parties, interacting with characters and all the rest of it. Ocean is making big promises about this one, claiming it's actually better than Monkey Island! The movie's action-packed nature means that we could well be on for some arcade sections as well. Hook, both film and game, is out in the Spring for ST, Amiga and PC.

## THE TOMATO GAME *Pygnosis*

**C**ould it be a coincidence that after the success of Lemmings, Pygnosis is now working on another game where the player has to create safe passage for a computer-controlled character through a landscape fraught with danger? Well, possibly, although the boys at Pyg don't think that there's

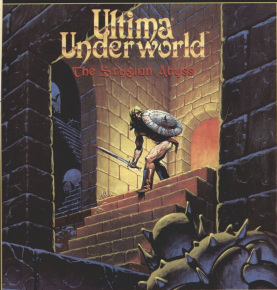


any real similarity between the two. The Tomato Game is another prong in the Liverpool firm's effort to go "new" (it's had several major-themed projects in the pipeline for a while now) - the game tells of a young totem who has his reinvention (another totem) captured by an evil spirit. To get her back he must travel to the top of a vine which links different landscapes (jungle, desert, etc) together. Like Lemmings, the player has no direct character control, so he must plant helpful objects around the place. Like Jack-in-the-Boxes and Wind Machines, that the totemo seems to avoid the myriad of dangers. We have to admit it does sound like fun - it's out on Amiga in the Autumn with other versions possibly following later.



# Ultima Underworld

## The Stygian Abyss



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Some games must be played to be believed and Ultima Underworld: The Stygian Abyss is a game of action, motion and movement - it is one of them.

*You won't believe your eyes!*



*Actual events may vary.*



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# Gary Whitta's previews

## DESERT STRIKE

Electronic Arts

**B**illed as "Operation Desert Storm in a box", the latest from EA's Megaverse stable makes no bones about the fact that it is almost entirely inspired by last year's Gulf conflict. The story goes that a crazed Middle-Eastern dictator has obtained nuclear capability and is now planning to march his tiger army across the face of the five world. Now it's up to Uncle Sam, with a little help from a state-of-the-art Apache helicopter gunship, to take the monolithic marauder down a peg or two. Sound familiar? The game's an intensive mix of shoot-'em-up and simulation played out over an eight-way scrolling isometric wasteland, with go motions ranging from protecting oil fields to POW rescue and taking out SCUD launchers. It all looks jolly impressive, with super-smooth animation and huge explosions - it's dust out at the end of barrels, and there's a full review next month.



## DIRTY RACIN'

Gremlin

**H**aving enjoyed modest 16-bit success with the likes of Lotus, Super Cars and Trans Am, Gremlin's now making sure that the ever-growing army of handheld owners doesn't feel left out with a tiny little number for the GameBoy. Dirty Racin' (working title) is an arcade simulation of that most messy of driving activities, offroad buggy racing. It's got all the usual Gremlin game stuff - tracks around the world, tournament options, a two-player mode, and an impossible JD update that's expected to send Gameloft ownersoggle-eyed. Dirty Racin's already a big hit with the grooves in the Gremlin office and promises to thrill the gameplaying public in equal measure when it hits the stores this Autumn. Vroom!



## DYNABLASTER

UbiSoft

**W**hat a smashing little game! Anyone lucky enough to have had contact with a PC Engine during its brief spell of unofficial popularity in this country a year or so ago may well remember a supremely addictive cart from Hudson Soft by the name of Bomber Man. Now, Hudson's first up with UbiSoft, and the result is that Bomber Man is winging its way onto the 16-bit with the new name of Dynablaster. In the main game a little billy must work his way through a series of scrolling levels, dropping bombs to blow away ladders and fragile wall sections which allow him passage to the exit. As much fun as this is, the real balls are to be had in the multi-player battle mode, where up to FIVE players slug it out on a single screen, with the last survivor declared the winner. It's already proved to be a major work-disrupter here at ACE Towers - full review next month.



## CHAMPIONSHIP MANAGER

Domark

**C**ame games come and go, but some are quite so potentially popular as the football management simulation. Since the days of the ZX81 they've been firm favourites with gamers young and old - and now Domark is making the bullish claim that it's about to release one that beats the lot. Apparently the two authors spent seven years putting Championship Manager together, which means that in development terms it's at least as old as the classic Football Manager, gradually of them all. It promises 1000 players. 80 teams, all manner of tactics, transfers, injuries, boardroom battles and just about everything else the football aficionado could ask for. With its tasty icon system it certainly looks very nice, but how well it will fair against the incumbent Player Manager remains to be seen. It's out on ST, Amiga and PC in April.



## PLAN 9 FROM OUTER SPACE

Gremlin

**W**e've heard of buying up dull film licenses, but buying up the WORST FILM EVER MADE! Surely an act of insanity? Well, maybe not. It could actually turn out to be a masterpiece of marketing on Gremlin's part, as the whole thing to being sold in very tongue-in-cheek style, and the game isn't afraid to make fun of its rubbishy source of inspiration. Basically, it's an icon-driven adventure that has the player searching a surreal 3D 16-movie style world for the six missing souls of the famous movie. Prototyping over 30 digitized sequences from the movie, Plan 9 will also come packaged with a free video containing edited highlights. It's out on all formats in the Spring.



## STORM MASTER

Silmarils

**H**owdy for another bout of French fun from our Gallic counter-parts. Set on a distant planet ravaged by constant trade disputes and bitter, drain-out wars, Storm Master promises to mix user-friendly strategy in the style of Ultima and Supremacy with top-level arcade action sequences. Along the way the player, cast as a megalegantic ruler, gets to set up spy networks, board and steal from his enemies, wage war, take part in magical ceremonies and... ooh, lots of other heavenly stuff. Graphically it's a dream, but whether it will stand up against the likes of those aforementioned battleships remains to be seen. Amiga, PC and ST versions are out at the end of this month.



Look out - he's back!

# PAPERBOY

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# THINGS THAT MAKE YOU GO

# “VROOM!”

It's a sad but true fact that there are very few decent arcade-style racing simulations available for the home computer systems - or, for that matter, the console formats. But, of course, Gremlin intends to change this with the release of its Super NES debut Top Gear.

The slick sports-racer that is Top Gear has been approximately seven months in the making. The seemingly short development time is down to Gremlin being able to draw on its vast experience in this field. The company learned from the mistakes it made with products such as *Combo Racer* and *Toyota Celica GT Rally* and ended up producing two of the best home computer racers around, namely *Lotus Esprit Turbo Challenge* and its sequel.

At first glance Top Gear bears a similarity to the two Lotus licenses - but there so do *OutRun* and most other racing simulations in the same vein. "The similarities are completely coincidental," says Rikkie Beeman, one of the trio of programmers behind Top Gear. "The look and feel is completely different. Top Gear's road moves faster and the corners and hills are more extreme to try to make the game faster and more cartoon like."

Top Gear's cartoon quality is made all the more apparent by the use of comic-strip-like speech bubbles to relate messages to the player. For example, when the car's speed is significantly increased by means of a turbo-boost the driver exclaims "LET'S GO!", and when you fail to finish a course the message "HA! HA!

Tough luck, fashion fans - Top Gear has nothing to do with quality clothing. It is in fact a rip-roaring Super NES racing simulation from Gremlin, a company with more experience in this area of home computer entertainment than most others put together.



LOSE!" or "GAME OVER DUDE!" is clear.

Top Gear isn't being put together by Magneto Fields, the team behind the Lotus simulations. No, this one is in the hands of new code on the block Rikkie Beeman, who was responsible for the road and spots routines, and former Commodore kit coders Simon Blake and Ashley Bennett, who took care of the front and end of the car and computer control respectively. Venus! The Flytrap and Switchblade II artist Gregg created Top Gear's look, while Switchblade II music-maker Barry Leach produced the tunes using samples from Hayashi Matsuo. Bringing up the rear is Chris

Harvey who designed Top Gear's 32 different tracks.

The boys' intent was simply to create a speedy racing simulation for the Super NES - and they feel that they have succeeded, despite not having enough cartridge memory for extra graphics.

"The cartridge is four megabits with some of the graphics compressed," Rikkie reveals. "Top Gear runs at between one and five frames in NTSC - usually on the border between two and three - which puts its average update rate at the same as Lotus on the Amiga in PAL. But the movement in Top Gear is much faster and the road changes more extreme making it seem a lot faster. The view is in 16-colour per character mode and uses all 256 colours."

The Top Gear team doesn't seem particularly concerned by the competition - Nintendo's impressive futuristic racer *F-Zero*, Well, at least not technically... "F-Zero has some nice touches but is technically very easy to implement requiring only a few precalculated tables and then updating at most eight bytes per frame to create the look."

Surprisingly, the lads had little input from the product's Japanese publisher, Kemco (not



This special track is designed for the exhibition version for use of the car-club in the car club game you see like the best of what we're doing this year.



There's a picture for all you want to take - complete the four tracks in one country to receive a passport which allows you to enter the next.



There are four cars in the driver in Top Gear, each with a different set of performance figures. Drive on, mate!



With the same in Top Gear and for this. But don't expect too much on the job, particularly with regards to the road, as you can't see your place or finish of the race.

Also, the computer controls aren't the only problem. Sometimes, the track, especially winding through the way, breaks before some of the



to be confused with leading coffee manufacturer Kenco, who are shortly to be as famous for their instant as their filter, and few restrictions were imposed. "They basically said that it should be quick and easy to get into and easy to watch," Ritchie reveals.

Ritchie and his colleagues are big fans of the Super NES. "It's a nice machine to work on and, with a few exceptions, very forgiving about asking it to do a bit more than the specifications suggest. It has a palette of 32,768 colours with up to 3,048 colours on screen without spills or filters. Instantaneous multiplication built-in, and multi-speed playfields and colour filters. On the downside, the video RAM could have been bigger with more access time, but I believe some cartridge standards exist to enhance this."

The enthusiastic Top Gear guys have little time for the Super NES' critics. "It was billed as the best thing to happen to console games since Ping," Ritchie declares. "Then it came out and a lot of software producers called for saying it was too slow and generally putting it down. I think they spoke far too soon looking only at a bare spec and a slow processor without taking into account the effects that the correct use of some of the hardware can have on it."

"Give me a faster processor and I'll do it" is a poor and overused excuse but always true—dreaming of 50 MHz 68000s is not going to get anyone very far. Speed always seems a problem at first but it can be worked



There are 32 levels to tackle in Top Gear and these are spread evenly through eight countries, each with distinctly different scenery. Here we see a sign at the back of the starting grid in a hot and sunny south state.



There are three different control methods available, each one offering a unique combination of features to suit the car's location.

around. Top Gear is playable but only touches on what the machine can really do. We have learned the machine now and the next game should show your socks off!"

Ritchie's next project is in fact another racing simulator: "I'm working on a road routine with more than twice the depth of Top Gear and a much smoother feel. This is in various guises for a Nigel Mansell Formula 1 simulator, Top Gear II or potentially a completely different game with details yet to be decided."

Simon on the other hand is working on a conversion of Genesis's critically acclaimed planet management simulation Utopia, and Ashley's finishing Here Quest on the NES before

plenty to expect in this issue into the new year. However, remember that we'll also be covering a number of other titles in our regular monthly reviews in this issue. It will be a long list, but other notable titles include "SFTS 200" when the software is updated. Other titles mentioned include "Wings of Fury", "Road of Adventure" and "The 2000 Mission".

Remember the day of night dreams that don't stop up your headlights.



looking on Nigel Mansell for the Super NES.

In the meantime, you can expect to see Top Gear in the shops in March of this year (to coincide with the Super NES' release in the UK).

Gary Peck

# Ultima VI

## The False Prophet



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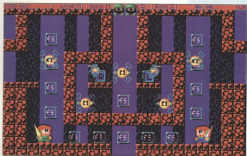
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Each of the bubbles that appear when Bub and Bob blow them is a white outline of the shape of the bubble. A player can blow a bubble that will either hit or miss the enemies, or even the player's position.

History for this version of English text - "Revised!"

**B**ub and Bob could hardly be considered the best-known names in the world of computer and console entertainment, and yet to the cognoscent they rank alongside such bankable stars as Mario, MegaMan, Simon out of Castlevania, Link out of Zelda, Ness Kid, new take in the place of Sonic, and Diddy.

Bub and Bob made their debut in *Bubble Bobble*, released by Taito into the arcades way back in 1986. Two years later they hit the home computer thanks to development team Software Creations and publisher Phoenix.

The tale took a turn in 1988 with *Rainbow Islands*, also released into the arcades by Taito. Graffiti's home computer conversions would have made it to the stores in 1989 via Phoenix were it not for the company's demise. Fortunately, the *Island* and 16-bit versions eventually made it to the stores after being snapped up by Ocean, and it's Ocean which also has the license to convert *Parasol Stars*.

Incidentally, *Bubble Bobble* and *Rainbow Islands* for the Amiga and Atari ST are compiled on Ocean's *Rainbow Collection* alongside another cute gemstone, *New Zealand Story*.

The *Bubble Bobble* story has thus far been a pretty peculiar

# BROLLY GOOD SHOW!

The boys are back in town - and how! Having bubbled and bobbed and sung a rainbow too, Bub and Bob are now at home to Auntie Ella in *Parasol Stars: Bubble Bobble III*. Who are they and what's it all about? Read on...

one, *Parasol Stars* is the craggiest, most chippy chapter yet.

Having defeated Baron van Blubbe in *Bubble Bobble* and saved the Rainbow Islands from the Prince Of Darkness, Bub and Bob decided to take a break. But their bliss was short-lived... and once again permeates the universe and only the dynamic duo, armed with their amazing magic parasols, can save it from a fate worse than Melissa.



islands with a liberal sprinkling of new features for good measure. It represents a class continuation of the story, combining with switch logic precision, the precise play elements which made its predecessors jive with enough innovations to give it Switch-like individuality.

The action offers simultaneous two-player possibilities in much the same way as *Bubble Bobble* does (in *Rainbow Islands* Bub and Bob play in an "old-fashioned" alternating way). In *Parasol Stars*, Bub and Bob can work as a team or, better still, fight for the right to party by throwing each other around the screen.

A strong characteristic of the *Bubble Bobble* series is the versatility of the lead players' abilities. In *Bubble Bobble*, the duo's bubble blowing skill was used not only as a weapon to dispose of adversaries, it also proved its worth as a tool for registering otherwise impossible to reach areas and earning bonus points. The rainbows in *Rainbow*

Despite its massive success in Japanese arcades, *Parasol Stars* suffered the same fate as its predecessors when they were released on these shores: it failed to make an impact. Still, rumour has it that the same Taito team behind the first three chapters is currently working on a fourth.

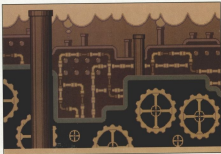
*Parasol Stars* is best described as a bonor blend of *Bubble Bobble* and *Rainbow*



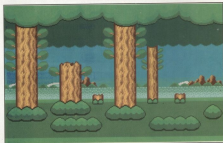
Islands proved even more flexible, with the added abilities of extended reach, and rickshaws and stairways to heaven. In Parasol Stars, the boys' brollies also provide a wealth of opportunity.

The parasols' most mundane function is keeping bosses at bay. The real fun has begun when an adversary is impaled on the end of the parasol where it spins, stunned, until it's thrown across the floor or into another creature to kill them both for bonus points.

That's one way of removing ruffians from the scene. A more entertaining alternative is to use the end of the brolly to collect



The electrical system was (initially) not too complicated, especially since the other boss elements. The electrical arrangements are the same as the ones seen here in the background of the main stage in the final game.



water droplets which fall from the top of the screen. A large water droplet is eventually formed, its contents primed to be sent cascading down the level's platforms, taking with it any adversary unlucky enough to get in its way.

As with Bubble Bubble and Rainbow Islands, there are plenty of interesting weapons and special effects to activate along the way, such as lightning bolts and exploding stars. Most of the special items seem to appear at random, but that's not actually

the case - each one makes itself known for a reason, and it's up to the player to discover why.

The first conversion of Parasol Stars to a home machine appeared halfway through 1991 on the PC Engine console. It's from this arcade-accurate version that Ocean is producing the conversions for the Game Boy, Atari ST and Super NES. The task of reproducing Parasol Stars' distinctive look and feel on the new formats is in the capable hands of programmer Mick West, artist Don McDermot and musician

Jonathan Dunn.

The team had little help from Yoko. "They only gave us disk with the graphics," Mick explains. "There was no documentation so we had to play it to work out what does what and how the battles work. It's a very complicated game. There are lots of things in it. I played right through for about two weeks solid, and then went back to it here and there when I needed to find out about certain bits."

Mick's been around a bit when it comes to coding. His

track record includes Simul Davis Shooter for CDS, REVOK for Creative Materials, UN Squadron for Taito, and more recently Darkman for Ocean, all on the Amiga and Atari ST. Nothing outstanding there, granted, but it's fair to say that Parasol Stars is shaping up very nicely indeed.

Don on the other hand is loathe to reveal the content of his portfolio to date. He is prepared to admit however that "about 90 per cent of the graphics provided by Yoko were used - the rest had to be put together from scratch. It's pretty much identical to the PC engine version - well, as much as it could be."

Mick wrote an editor utility for Don to make the process of putting together the levels a little easier. "They've built up in a block format and then I can mark on the starting points for the battles and drops and where the items spring up."

The process of conversion began on the Amiga six months ago, and is about to finished for playtesting by the time you read this. The Atari ST version isn't far behind, and then it's on to the Super NES which promises to be enhanced "whenever possible".

The result of Mick and Don's labour is a silky smooth 3D-colour



## THE STORIES SO FAR...

Reprinted here for your delectation and delight are the official storylines to the Bob and Bob trilogy.



### CHAPTER ONE:

#### THE BUDDLE DOBBLE BLURD

"Meet Bob and Bob our bantam-weight bromosomes who are best on battling big buflies by blowing and bursting bubbles. Before battling those brazen buflies, beware that bubble blowing is better than blasting buflies with bazookas, or better than bouncing bombs from biplanes, and even beats beating those brainless barbarians. So now that we briefly belayed the Bob and Bob biographies, begin by browsing the play instructions below and becoming the Best Buddle Bubbie bubble blower on the block."



### CHAPTER TWO:

#### THE COLOURFUL RAINBOW ISLANDS QUEST

"Dipped on the previous game, Bubble Bobble III.

"Bubble and Bubbie, who were turned into 'Bubble Dragons' by a wizard, went into the cave of a witch seeking their sweethearts, Betty and Perty. After a long battle and finally getting 'Sugar Drunk', they could not believe their eyes when they saw their Mom and Dad.

"Dad! And Mom!..."



"Big tears were coming out of Mom and Dad's eyes. Bob and Bob were so happy after saving them, not only Perty and Betty, but also their Mom and Dad. All of a sudden, they were back to normal again.

"Dad, thank you..."

"But they were not completely satisfied until they found the real enemy, who turned their parents into 'Sugar Drunk' and controlled their minds. There is a real enemy still hiding and waiting for Bob and Bob. They know that sooner or later they had to face him.

"Many years have passed, Bobby and Bobby grew up to be fine boys with power of 'Magic Rainbows' given by Mom and Dad. When they went back to their birthplace to search for treasure, they became involved in a mystery. They want to look for the real enemy, 'Prince Of Darkness'. He has a large following who are in Bobby and Bobby's way. The final day to face the Prince Of Darkness came. Why don't you play the game to find out? The secrets are waiting to be discovered. There are many puzzles you can challenge! Who will be the real winner?"

### CHAPTER THREE:

#### THE PARASOL STARS

"After saving the villages of Rainbow Islands in their previous adventure, our two heroes, Bob and Bob, are enjoying a well-earned rest.

"However their peace is shattered when the mad warlord Chocotlaka unleashes a fleet of menacing monsters throughout the universe. With their magic parasols in hand (gifts from the grateful Rainbow Islands villagers), Bob and Bob must defeat the monsters and free the universe."



Above and right: Present their adventures in the updated and more wonderful Bob and Bob New Invention set. Also here are the screenshots of 'Mystery World', the Wizard and their World (for you get them with each new character screen!)

Amiga Invention and a no less impressive 38-colour Atari ST version. "The Amiga version runs at a pretty fast speed," Mick proudly declares. "The main joys, like Bob's movement, run at 60 frames, and the less important parts, like the drips and bubbles, run at 25 frames because they move quite slowly anyway."

"The PC Engine version of Parasol Stars has eight worlds plus two secret ones. These conversions however have a brand new secret world. "We wanted to do something

different," explains Dan, "so we put in this extra medieval type world, with wizard types, bouncing toads, camels, demons with forks, and a giant who comes in pots. It's in the style of the rest of the game. It was hard to copy it exactly - I'm not used to doing cute game - but the new world's not totally alien. If we'd have had more time we'd have liked to have put another world in."

Each world comprises seven levels. The levels are either one or two screens wide, the view scrolling left and right when necessary. The first stop is Inland



World. Its inhabitants trumpet, dance, acrobatics and triangles, and there's a killer one run sized at the world's end. The Woodland's next, complete with tree stumps, toady lions, unicorns, maniacs of My Little Ponies, and a big black tent.

Inland World features jellyfins, octopi, walruses, coals and a giant reptilian creature

which looks like the mythical kraken. Machine World is full of robots (no surprises there, although the beefy Transformer type robot isn't what it seems), while Banzing World is home to slot machines and chess pieces.

Flying saucers and helicopters are two of the adversaries encountered in Cloud World, and then it's on to Giant World to



RAINBOW WORLD  
A BUBBLE BOBBLE GAME

to tackle large agas, dragons, pink nospicy-wearing slothpunks and a fog-beenaming-throwing being. It doesn't take a genius to guess what the population of Rainbow World and Bubble Bobble World look like. The Bubble Bobble characters finally make an unorthodox reappearance in a mutated form in it.

With Parasol Stars being possibly the most involved



chapter in the Bubble Bobble story and given the non-availability of any detailed material as to the workings of its mechanics, is it possible that the devs have missed anything out?

"Yeah, I probably have," Mick concedes. "There are lots of very obscure pick ups - stuff like 10 points for every jump and the screen flashing, as a warning that something's going to appear - and it was difficult to tell what most of them did at first. There were two out of the 80-odd that didn't



(Top and left) There were secret special items in it, did you get to see the table of how they can be made to appear?

(Bottom left) This set of random items for Bob seems to show his post-jumping versatility. Interesting. (2/1/87)

seems to do anything, so we couldn't use them."

Mick has no idea what he's going to be working on once the Super NES version of Parasol Stars is out of the way, although apparently "Don's got some interesting ideas".

And what of Parasol Stars' predecessors? Does Mick feel

that they could have been done better? "Yeah, you could've used 32 colors on the Ariga for better detail in the backgrounds and made the main character and the scrolling move smoother. I'd liked to have had a go at converting them, but obviously it's too late. There seems to be a lot more in Parasol Stars than in Rainbow Islands - bigger sprites and more background - but we've managed to get it on one disc."

■ Gary Peierl

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**SKULLS & CROSSBONES**  
A classic action game where you control a character who must navigate through a maze of fire and lava. The game is a fast-paced, action-packed game that will keep you on the edge of your seat. The game is available on Amiga, Atari ST, Commodore 64, Spectrum, and Amiga 5040.

**STUNT RUNNER**  
A classic action game where you control a character who must navigate through a maze of fire and lava. The game is a fast-paced, action-packed game that will keep you on the edge of your seat. The game is available on Amiga, Atari ST, Commodore 64, Spectrum, and Amiga 5040.

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**STUNT RUNNER**  
A classic action game where you control a character who must navigate through a maze of fire and lava. The game is a fast-paced, action-packed game that will keep you on the edge of your seat. The game is available on Amiga, Atari ST, Commodore 64, Spectrum, and Amiga 5040.

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#### COMPARE AND CONTRAST

As an easy frame of reference, every game is compared to either another in the same genre, or maybe it's original color-op or movie loan.



ACE Screentest logo

**THINGS UP & DOWN** The most important positive and negative points in at-a-glance format. Maybe it's too tough, or lacks a two-player option etc.

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**EATING** A score out of 1,000

- the most instant gauge of a game's quality, further qualified with scores out of 50 for Graphics, Intelligence needed to enjoy the game, Audio and Fun factors.



**PHIC CURVE** A prediction of the lifespan of the game's interest. An arcade Blast may have lots of instant appeal, but will you still be playing in a month's time?

**HINT** Found on the centre pages of most reviews denoting - surprisingly enough - the location of a handy start-up tip.



**TRAILBLAZER** Awarded to games of outstanding all round quality, and generally viewed to further the art of games software production. A game bearing the Trailblazer logo should be bought without hesitation.



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## ACE BENCHMARKS

A Benchmark game is, in our opinion, the very best in its particular genre. By glancing at our description of the Benchmark, you will be able to decide if you consider differences in a new game's design would make the current Benchmark or the new contender more or less appealing to you. Also, no software collection is complete unless it contains all the games listed here. If you're missing any, go and remedy the situation immediately.

#### ARCADE BLAST

**BMW (Borneo)**

Offers an adrenaline rush through a combination of frantic action, precision manoeuvres and fast combinations within the bumper and strategic screen to instantly demolish. A score to be your own hero!

#### ARCADE ADVENTURE

**DOGS (Mongoose)**

Was an immensely popular game in the days of the Spectrum or those of Atari the Blazing Star from Atari does offer through fully computerised action across the screen in this category's original release.

#### ROLE PLAYING GAME

**THE OF THE BEHOLDER 2**

**(US Galt/USG)**

One bigger and better than the original Beholder. Although actually one of the same, there's still an incredible amount of exploration and the flexibility of the finally system makes it a winner.

#### SPORTS SIMULATION

**WIDE GOLF 2 (Aeons)**

The primary reason for this title being available on the ultra-interactive control system and the incredible speed. Not only is it a great game, but also one of the most enjoyable games of all time.

#### STRATEGY

**CONQUEROR (Microprose)**

This classic strategy game has the player leading a force of great high technology and a lot of experience in civilization strategy through the ages. Microprose's stuff, but the best of its kind.

#### ADVENTURE

**THE SECRET OF MONKEY ISLAND 2**

**(US Galt/LucasArts)**

Adventure has returned to the forefront of computer games. This is the best of its kind. It's a great game, but the best of its kind. It's a great game, but the best of its kind. It's a great game, but the best of its kind.

#### RACING SIMULATION

**FORMULA ONE GRAND PRIX (Microprose)**

It's almost impossible to find fault in this amazing game from Galt/Commodore. It's a great game, but the best of its kind. It's a great game, but the best of its kind. It's a great game, but the best of its kind.

#### BEAT-'EM-UP

**DOGS (System 3)**

An updated and enhanced version of the original game. It's a great game, but the best of its kind. It's a great game, but the best of its kind. It's a great game, but the best of its kind.

#### RACING GAME

**STUNT CAR RACER (Microstyle)**

Stunt Car Racer is a great game, but the best of its kind. It's a great game, but the best of its kind. It's a great game, but the best of its kind.

#### SPORTS SIMULATION

**JERRY WHITE'S BOWLING**

**SHOOTER (Virgin)**

Knowledge of the game is not enough. It's a great game, but the best of its kind. It's a great game, but the best of its kind. It's a great game, but the best of its kind.

#### SIMULATION

**FRACON 3.0 (Spectrum Hobbyists)**

It's a great game, but the best of its kind. It's a great game, but the best of its kind. It's a great game, but the best of its kind.

#### ACTION STRATEGY

**POPULOUS 2 (Electronic Arts)**

It's a great game, but the best of its kind. It's a great game, but the best of its kind. It's a great game, but the best of its kind.

#### PURSUER GAME

**VENOM (Microprose)**

It's a great game, but the best of its kind. It's a great game, but the best of its kind. It's a great game, but the best of its kind.

#### PLATFORM GAME

**SUPER MARIO WORLD (Nintendo)**

It's a great game, but the best of its kind. It's a great game, but the best of its kind. It's a great game, but the best of its kind.

Game: Arcade Blast  
 Publisher: Ocean  
 Developer: Image  
 Price: \$29.99 Out Now

# SPACE GUN

In space, no-one can eat ice cream.

This, unfortunately, is rather a poor joke, and, apart from the bit about space, has no relevance to the latest in Ocean's seemingly interminable line of Taito coin-op conversions. **YOU HAVE BEEN ORDERED TO RESCUE THE**



Only little extended story sequences are the same before the game, and one of between each level to provide the real meat of the story - and an excuse for the next bit of shooting action.

**HOSTAGES IMMEDIATELY** Meets Space Gun's gang in advertising blurb, while up above a lonely space commando spins open a giant alien's stomach with a volley of armor-piercing bullets.

This sort of thing, I have to admit, is right up my street. There's nothing gets me going more than venturing out into space and ensuring the future safety of this island Earth by putting a lot of smoking holes into some stinking alien filth. It comes as a particular disappointment to me, then, to find that the actual level of mayhem and destruction on offer in Space Gun falls to measure up to its blurb-between-the-teeth, all-guns-blazing image.

Ever since the runaway success of Taito's Operation Wolf way back in 1987 and the subsequent renaissance of the gun-game as a popular coin-op genre, arcade manufacturers (Taito included) have been pushing and pushing to

squeeze more out of what is probably the most limited game type of them all. Apart from adding more game files standard run is two, with some during as many as three to a cabinet) and having bigger explosions, there's been very little in the way of innovation. Space Gun, however, gets away with its blatant unoriginality more than most by virtue of at least trying something different with the scenario.

The year is 2099 and human colonization of space has begun. However, that inkly void is fraught with things infinitely more dangerous than space junk, and a hapless space ship has stumbled upon just such a thing - the blood-red ground for a despicable flesh-eating insectoid alien race. As the crippled craft is over-run by the stambuling astronauts, the crew manages to send a weak distress signal back to Earth. Now it's up to you and an optional alien to travel out to the stricken vessel, take out the alien shore and, of course, **RESCUE THE HOSTAGES IMMEDIATELY!**

Does any of this sound familiar? If it does, it's probably something to do with the fact that Space Gun is, beyond question, the most outrageously lamest rip-off of James Cameron's Alien you could ever hope to find. Yes, even more than Alien Breed! It's got big Alien-type aliens, mutating humans, gods that look like big leathery eggs, fat-buggers, acidic slime - the whole game is played with the perpetual expectation that Sigourney Weaver is going to turn up at any minute and torch everything on screen.

Unfortunately, this does not happen and so the torching of everything on screen is pretty much





(Left) Usually half it's easy (see this one) and usually the action is falling up there so to get a better view also (top) it's also with, along with a pair of these enemy invulnerable from enemies. Shows at the bottom of the screen, the remaining alien enemy score counter, which shows the position of an unaffiliated target.

exactly easy, and prioritizing targets is vital. In two-player mode it's not too bad as each player only has to worry about his own half of the screen, but on lone missions things can get very heated indeed. Hitting the aliens isn't difficult, but knowing which ones are in more urgent need of plasma death is.

If anything, the 2D sections are easier than the horizontally-scrolling ones that they alternate with. When the end of a corridor is reached, the players are taken on a sideways-on tour of the next, this time with the same adversaries rotating the fray from the left and right. The big, bipedal alien shuffler across the screen and need

**S**pace Gun gets away with its blatant originality more than most by virtue of at least trying something different with the scenario.

to be taken out before they get the chance to turn and attack.

It's interesting that the sheer size of the bigger alien means they draw the majority of the players' fire, although their attacks are random, sporadic and, though worthy of attention, aren't quite as damaging as some of the smaller critters that attack at the same time. The face-buggers, for example, spring towards the player and stick onto scores, sapping energy continually until they're shot off. If one of these goes unactivated (and they often do with the larger alien stomping about in the foreground), it can be disastrous.

Though the player spends a good 99.9% of his time blasting away at the alien hordes, that activ-

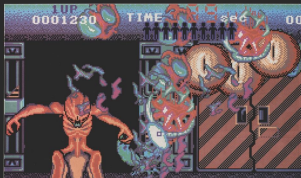
your responsibility. You're armed with a space gun (never) capable of firing both conventional plasma blaster machine-gun style and far more powerful galactic grenades, via an underbarrel pump-action rocket-launcher attachment. At least, that's how it was in the arcade - here you just hit the right mouse button.

Depending on the level, the game has essentially two types of section. Initially, it's a change down a 2D corridor, tunnel or cavern, with the alien either stomping towards you or dropping into the screen from above. Unlike the more conventional military-based shooters, there's no enemy fire to worry about (these aliens are a pretty primitive lot), so they can only inflict damage when up close. The trick is to knock them out before they get into attack position - but when there's half a dozen of the buggers on screen at a time it's not



For my money at least, Denson's aging Operation Thunderbolt is still a better gun-game than its latest effort. It may be getting on a bit, but it's still the best, smoothest, most accurate and playable product of its type. Space Gun does its best to keep up, and in terms of sheer violence and destruction it's even stronger, but at the end of the day it simply can't quite match Thunderbolt's great variety, super-fluid action and tremendous playability. The only problem is that its military scenario is a bit hackneyed, so Space Gun could well be a better bet for those who fancy something with a more original slant on it.





offered about the walls at the top of the screen, after they'd collected three female alien-type things. If any of them get too close, they'll still be well-protected until they get in contact to repeat on the screen and cause damage. Easy!

Behind it, there's that "It's easy to get when you're dead" thought. But only those "It's easy to get when you're dead" thought. But only those "It's easy to get when you're dead" thought. But only those "It's easy to get when you're dead" thought.



After three get closer towards the middle of the screen, they'll always reveal another one. After that, it's a simple step. Just press the button and see the explosion attack in the screen.





# S

pace Gun is full of surprises! Oh yes! But we at ACE wouldn't like you to be sent into shock by some of the horrible ghoules that assault you during the course of the mission. We couldn't have that on our conscience. So, to prepare you for what lies ahead, here's a sneak look at some of the game's more horrible moments. That way, when they turn up and scream "Boo!" at you, rather than quivering with fear, you can cackle maniacally, yell "Ma Na, Na, Do, Sucker!" and pump 'em the lot of them full of lead. Lavverly jabbly!



At the end of the previous stage, the player has to deal with the alien-infested environment as it bleeds out from the ground. A lot of this requires you to move at the end of each level. The threat indicates a player's grenade has just exploded. But a double threat to face that's much good.

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# SPACE GUN



## Amiga Version

Aside from a few money moments when the screen gets too busy, *Space Gun* is a very clean, colorful and effective bit of kit. Unfortunately, it's rather let down on the sound side by a selection of droning tunes which will soon have you reaching for the thoughtfully-included MUSIC OFF option. Presentation is slick, with tonnes of options, including the facility to plug in a Trojan Light Phaser. Oh, and there's a bit of disk-swapping as well.



## ST Version

ST owners can look forward to a version of *Space Gun* that's almost identical to the Amiga, but the odd few snags in the colour and sound departments. So that's good news.



Play in the ST version, aliens can only attack when you're dead. This is about the Space Gun's corner in hand, allowing the player to go into reverse, and backwards down the corridor. This forces the alien off a safe distance, and will allow you to shoot once at them. It won't get you any closer to the end of the level though, and this option is locked open on a lot of levels too.

Aliens do not in the instant threat, the player must also contend with the spaceship's own defenses, which have quite limited fire. The alien weapons are also from the ceiling and must be shot out before they can open fire.

## THAT'S ONE UGLY MUVVA!

A shoot-'em-up wouldn't be complete without a liberal sprinkling of end-of-level badies, and *Space Gun* has them in spades. Each level is divided into smaller stages, and at the end of the final stage there sits a big, bad, and very very ugly guardian. Their look and behaviour patterns differ from level to level, but the tactics for fighting them remain pretty much the same throughout. Each one can only be knocked out by repeated hits to the correct weak spots - in most cases the head or torso. Often these suckers are so hard that killing them with normal fire takes far too long to be practical, and so the only option is to grenade them into oblivion. Aiming is a tricky task, as the head of the alien moves in an unpredictable fashion as it spits its deadly venom at you. Some of the more bizarre guardians, like the one in the top picture, are best tackled with a friend, with each player taking after one head each. Alternatively, two players can work together with one chap assaulting the alien head while the other covers him by knocking out the creature's own weapons as they are released.

By alone won't get the mission completed - if you're good, a constant stream of fire will just about keep you alive on a regular basis, and there you can start thinking about the real objective - hostage rescue. On early levels, the hapless space colonists simply appear at random intervals, and the trick is not to shoot them in the time it takes for them to run, arms flailing, to safety.

The humans are never in any danger of getting hurt by one of the aliens, but such is the intensity of the fire coming from the players' weapons that it's almost an accident for that they'll be blown down by friendly fire unless special care is taken. Such is the importance of the hostages' survival, it's probably worth holding fire altogether and suffering the consequences while the friendly gets to safety.

On later levels, things get slightly trickier. Hostages are trapped from the sides down in

egg-shaped pods, presumably for consumption or protection, and will be cocooned as dead unless the player can shatter the pod with a well-aimed laser blast, allowing the captive to get free. The problem here is that a shot like this takes a lot of accuracy, else the well-meaning photon bolt will take out not just the egg, but its captive as well. To ensure this doesn't happen, a good few seconds are required to aim - and this, of course, means lowering the defences against the relentless aliens.

Hostages can also be found encased in bizarre cocoons hanging from the ceiling - again, a single shot will shatter them free - while others are out what they seem at all. I was particularly impressed and genuinely surprised, the first time I saw them by the humans which run towards you as normal, then mutate into a hideous alien at the last moment and attack you. In a game that's other-

wise generally free of surprises, it's a nice little treat.

Aside from the hostages, equally attractive distractions from the main thrust of the shooting action come in the form of those old shoot-'em-up favourites, the power-ups. In a game like this, where firepower and destructive force is everything, collectable bits and bobs can often be one of the most vital aspects. Here, they're provided by flashing lights that appear built into the background every now and again. Smashing the light reveals any of a clutch of different collectables, ranging from the obligatory energy extenders and pills to special super-blast bullets and grenades, body armour and, my particular favourite, an expanded target cursor which makes the business of aiming a whole lot easier. Unlike the likes of Wolf and Thunderbolt, though, there's no cool fire extra awards as it's



in unlimited quantity. The game works instead on a gunspace system, which means the player can fire constantly until his weapon overheats, at which point it'll only fire at a fraction of its normal rate until the trigger is released and the gun gets a chance to cool off.

It's not really sure how well the system works as a replacement in amusement. True, it means the player doesn't have to worry about collecting extra magazines, but it's actually more troublesome and damaging to have to have off the trigger every couple of minutes. Supposedly the idea is to force the player to regulate his fire rather than blaze away constantly

**T**he difference between the coin-op Space Gun and this conversion is about the same as the difference between going out for a proper curry and having one of those horrid sloppy ones out of the microwave.



at everything in sight, but in a game like this, anything that restricts the player must be a bad thing.

Surely it's the player's choice if he wants to play like a maniac or in a more thoughtful, conservative manner? The coin Terminator a coin-op does things the same way, and it winds me right up. Sega's Line of Fire, on the other hand, has a no-holds-barred policy on weapons, and that works fine. Judging by how different people play Space Gun, the system nonetheless seems to work okay for some. I just found it annoying and restrictive.

Minor gameplay wobbles like this, however, are not symptomatic of Space Gun as a whole which is, pretty much, a very well thought-out product. Given the restrictions of the genre, the game does have elements of originality, and the alien scenario, backed up by some impressively defined and moodily-colored visuals creates a dark, atmospheric atmosphere.

In fact, the reason why Space Gun doesn't quite come off as a game isn't really anybody's fault. The coin-op was perfectly fine, and the conversion is about as accurate and speedy as it little less will allow. The problem is simply that a game like Space Gun relies on a sense of "weight" in the graphics, sound and feel to provide the entertainment. It's not as if there's much in the way of challenging strategy, and it doesn't even ask for any real dexterity or arcade skills, so everything hangs on the aesthetic side—the huge, lumpy explosions, the gut-wrenching shrieks of the aliens and, of course, the recoil on the gun. Now all this works fine in the arcade but because the Amiga simply can't deliver the same aesthetic impact, at least 75% of the enjoyment and atmosphere is lost immediately.

What we're left with is by no means a mess. I enjoyed myself playing it and it really does look and feel very nice, but nevertheless the difference between the coin-op Space Gun and this conversion is about the same as the difference between going out for a proper curry and having one of those horrid sloppy ones out of the microwave. Images, the conversions, can be no means be blamed for this, as they've made the very best of what could well be considered a pointless conversion, and the result is a damn sight more enjoyable than, say, the conversions of Line of Fire or Blast Beaters. Make no mistake, if the only thing you see your brain for is to stop the top of your head falling in, you'll have a good time here. Just don't expect too much.

By Gary Whitta

## R A T I N G S



**790** AMIGA AMIGA

Game play is overall mediocre.

Well, as you would expect, the overall game that takes nothing extra to get into. It's a good stage of things, but from that point onwards things tend to gradually slow down and the technical quality of the game just isn't that good, with the majority of games which, if you get below you're not the most difficult or impressive levels, it means that all you can do is hope for big wins right through, or when you get below all you can do is get back and try once or two the next time again and hope you're still there and still there.

The Amiga version is definitely more fun than playing on the coin-op, but it's not as fun as playing on the Amiga. The Amiga version is definitely more fun than playing on the coin-op, but it's not as fun as playing on the Amiga. The Amiga version is definitely more fun than playing on the coin-op, but it's not as fun as playing on the Amiga.

### RECENTLY RECOMMENDED GAMES





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# THE ROCKETEER

**T**here's a scene in the movie where one of the characters cries, "It's the Rocketeer!" and another, confused and slightly non-plussed, replies, "The Rock... what?" Sad to say, this was pretty much the reaction of the film-going public who, torn between *The Rocketeer* and either *Robin Hood: Prince Of Thieves* or *Terminator 2: Judgment Day*, chose to put their

collective burn on a seat in the company of Caddy Keen or Big Annie rather than some unknown little squirt with a vacuum cleaner on his back.

This was, of course, not a little unfortunate for Disney, who had spent nearly \$25 million dollars

in the hope that *The Rocketeer* would be THE Summer Box-Office Blockbuster of 1991 (it had eventually recouped \$45 million by the end of last August - not exactly a flop, but don't hold your breath waiting for the sequel).

Probably the saddest thing about *The Rocketeer's* disappointing box-office receipts is that the film is actually pretty good. It's based on *The Rocketeer* comic drawn by Dan Stevens and, like *Raiders of the Lost Ark*, is a 'tribute' to the cheaply-made action/adventure serials that played in children's movie theaters throughout the 1930s. One thing for sure, it's a damn sight more enjoyable than Genet's bizarre mid-Atlantic playing of the Hood legend. Most notable are its flying sequences, courtesy of George Lucas's special effects outfit Industrial Light & Magic, which are marvellously exhilarating to watch. Who knows? With its release on video due any time now it may start to win some of the public acclaim it rightfully deserves.

In with the film's poor public reception, the more cynical and bitter amongst the reviewing fraternity (i.e. me) might be forgiven - but not con-





dated—for expecting some slapdash piece of cult-film intended to cash in on the film's first fan, and these suspicions are heightened when you look at the screen shots on the back of packaging, that you couldn't be more wrong. Sure, *The Rocketeer's* got problems (which I'll come to in a moment) but as it turns out, it's one of the classiest film licenses I've ever seen.

The most immediate gripe any discerning gamer could have with the game is that its scenario is totally disparate to that of the film. The main character and the main plot thread—evil Nazis try to steal revolutionary rocket pack from heavily decorated American hero—are the same but the details are completely different. The movie was a meticulously researched yarn involving a Nazi agent posing as a Hollywood heartthrob, Nazis messing with the F.B.I., alien Hound Huggles. The game, on the other hand, is a far simpler. The main deviation from the book's scenario described the hero's failure to lay their hands on the rocket pack, so Nazis grab the hero's girlfriend and go off with her instead, resulting in the hero's airboredom and a host of this stuff on the tail of a Zeppelin-like dirigible.

The game is sprightly, breezy, fun, and they succeeded here in keeping only the only thing that a pulp adventure inspiration—speed—of a



In those at least, *The Rocketeer* shares several similarities to *Crashman's* topper *Rocket Ranger*. For a start, they... er... both feature a rocket pack. And Nazis. And Zeppelins. Not surprising really, since both were inspired by the old movie serials. Both games are basically a collection of mini-games. But whereas *The Rocketeer* is just that and nothing else, *Rocket Ranger* frames the games in some simple but involving strategy, making it by far the longer looking and ultimately more enjoyable choice. *Rocket Ranger's* plot is also far more engaging, involving the hero's attempts to thwart a Nazi plot to take over the whole World!

presenting a variety of gameplay styles—shoot-'em-up, beat-'em-up, and so on. As the action reader will have spotted Disney have taken a dip in *Crashman's* *How To Do The Game Of The Film*, a hackneyed, clichéd and unimproved approach to game design it may be but, as the likes of *RoboCop* and *Batman* have shown in the past, so long as it's done well there's no reason why the final result can't be an excellent game.

But it's strange, just when *Crash* are making attempts to ease away from the style of *to-in* they used to chug out with the innovative likes of *Widow Hunt* and *RoboCop*, it appears Disney have appeared to pick up from where they left off.

*Film* impressions are excellent. Each episode is preceded by a series of comic-style screens detailing the plot's development. *Life* Screens and Locations, the latter of which have been drawn and painted by a 'top-flight' set of artists designed. The results are superb, and working with *The Rocketeer's* true original plot and the excitement of the game from the film.

It's all very nice, but the plot's structure and the use of comic images in explaining chapters being taken from the film. You begin to get the impression that the game designers wanted to link with the film, but as few as possible. If nothing else, it gives it credibility, besides of course, being rights to use the various characters featured in *Crash* is a thing of value that US Gold failed to negotiate with its development. *Crash* however, stand tall against Disney Software. I called the game you wouldn't think the *W* for a problem. Oh well.

The first episode opens in Biggles' wife Clara when Cliff Second, a drifting and world air jockey, is about to enter a potentially lucrative air race competition. If Cliff can prove his aviatorial skills by winning two races in a row then his mechanic, assistant and eccentric inventor Ambrose



Prevy' Peabody will let him take the amazing Clara to rocket pack for a trial run.

The player, as Cliff, has a choice of one of three planes for the big race, each with differing top speeds, accelerations and turning abilities. The player then has to be first to complete a given number of laps around two mid-disappearing poles placed several hundred yards apart. Flight control is basic in the extreme—it's simply a matter of accelerating, decelerating, climbing, or banking with any combination of the keyboard, mouse or joystick. The recipe to success is to cut an tight as you can into the inside of the lap without hitting the end poles or your competitors.

The player has two views of the race, side-on and 3D. The side-on view takes up most of the screen, with the player's plane staying center of the screen and the background scrolling to follow its progress around the course. The 3D view, set in the bottom right-hand corner of the status strip, is tiny.

Trouble is, while the side-on view is very pretty and provides a lot of information for any spectators of your game-play progress, it makes the task of playing an already bloody-difficult game virtually impossible because, despite some helpful

**R**egardless of its few minor flaws, *The Rocketeer* still rates as one of the classiest film licenses yet.

ground indicators, it's tough working out where your plane is in relation to the course. The 3D view is far more useful, but it's a pain not because it's so small, just, after all, not important but because you can see the steadily fast-moving side-on action in your peripheral vision. If you imagine going through a maze blindfolded at the flicks and then being blind by a radiotele transmitter to watch some some tiny handheld TV then you'll get some idea what I mean.

Now the final game the air race is surprisingly difficult to play, little too much so though great fun. The object of the game is that it would have been better to have a truly 'challenging' by making the planes fly according to more complex than an oval 'figure of eight, see' shape, where players had to get into cut the rocket pack through a bit of a claustrophobic to discover that this is the ideal way to the plane's last factor.

Into the second episode and the cool Nazi ruler (the attempt to give the rocketeer). Quite why they're not going to get their hands back is never made clear. Because it's most obvious in the end





### EPISODE 3

During the flight to Ocean View, the CDF team (led by Jerry) is interrupted by an aerial reconnaissance plane scanning the area. Instead of a drone, however...

"Oh, looks like we've got a new enemy on the ground. We're sending out probes to give them a closer look. It might be a good idea to get some intel on the enemy's base..."



Seeing how the drone is a pilot of the CDF team from the flying plane brought. But something the air is filled with birds... making their own private/surveillance mission of the new robot plane? Because that was the idea that German technological know-how had evolved the world?

### EPISODE 4

Having caught up with the Flying German reconnaissance plane, CDF leads Jerry, Ben Jerry's reconnaissance to still understand there is a little advanced and moves to the ground, but manages to explain that the Germans have started using to their reconnaissance... a great technology called Doppler! CDF and Jerry decide to use the Lorentz magnet and prepare to get ready to launch and use for CDF that the team have developed a wide range of ready FPG, and will return to starting them!



It's a classic battle, with CDF leading in Ben's FPG and Jerry's air vehicle as well as the surprising FPGs!



But with well-timed CDF manages to launch all rockets and finally reach the Nazi Doppler.



Jerry spots Jerry... on the last of the day, Jerry's final mission is the final mission! Then for the Rocketeer again!

- Can The Rocketeer finally defeat the foul Nazi team? -

- Final out... in the next and final episode of...

THE ROCKETEER!



Having seen off the main CDF mission for a moment, Jerry's the danger is gone... that a FPG robot plane of their!



The main CDF goes to the plane the new attack the first attack because they're going to get in off later!



As soon CDF starts about the Lorentz magnet and the other side of the Doppler... that is Jerry!

- What have the Nazis done with CDF's beloved Jerry? -

- Final out... in the next exciting episode of...

THE ROCKETEER!

### EPISODE 5

Having the rocket plane and the far what he hopes will be the last time, CDF prepares to take out the Lorentz and use the Doppler to the Flying Jerry... to return the other plane to the digital system.

But as CDF reaches out of the technology, Jerry's Jerry... the CDF - your rocket plane doesn't have enough fuel to get your back to the air! Because!



Landing on the the CDF starts to enter his way to Jerry... and then reaches again another final mission!

- Can CDF defeat the Nazi base and reach Jerry? -

- Final out... when you play...

THE ROCKETEER!



That last technology CDF takes the other and computer to fight back to the air.

# THE ROCKETEER



late episodes is that the Nazis already possess their own rocket pack technology. Must be after that superior Yanki know-how that only comes from being able to lead a life free from oppression in a God-bearing democratic society. Or something.

It's basically Operation Wolf—or more accurately Cabal—in an aircraft hangar. Nazi commandos pop up from behind workbenches, aircraft and of course while others fly in through the hangar doors to get data at the Rocketeer who stalks the floor area to the front of the screen. The player can move a sight around the screen to tag the badies as they appear. If the sight nears the edge of the screen the Rocketeer walks left or right and the screen scrolls to follow him. Energy bars for the Rocketeer and the Nazis slowly deplete at the bottom of the screen. The player has to finish off the villainous Nazis before they do the same to him.

Op Wolf-class is a staple ingredient of these multi-section style games, but The Rocketeer's take on it is better than most. It's all good, violent fun and the traditionally digitized figures make the action far more involving than it might otherwise be. The scrolling, though super smooth for a PC, can be a bit hard on the eyes at times as it rocks back and forth to follow the player's darting sight.

At the end of the second episode the Nazis, realizing they are no match for Cliff's muckman-skip, kidnap Pevy and—Herrrr!—the luscious Jenny Blake. Cliff's glib, and try to make good their escape in a commandeered US experimental plane, the cold-looking Locom. Firing up the rocket pack Cliff takes to the sky—a sky filled with mere squaddies of Nazi commandos!

Yes, episode three is a horizontal-scrolling shoot-'em-up, but a pretty good one. The player has to shoot or dodge all manner of Nazi birds, more according to roaring rockets, others gliding down



## PC Version

No complaints on the sound or graphics fronts; the SFX and effects are great (especially with a Sound Source device) and the digitized, hand-drawn graphics are even better—the smooth scrolling has to be seen to be believed! Although a hard disc is, an ever, recommended, the game is perfectly playable from floppy. The only fly(boy) in the ointment is that you really need a 386MHz and up machine to reap maximum enjoyment from the game.



## Amiga Version

The Amiga version won't be quite as pretty as the PC's 256-colour one, but with Disney at the helm expect something fairly snappy. In terms of gameplay there's nothing here that the Amiga couldn't handle with its litler that behind its back. While The Rocketeer's simplicity and ease is acceptable for the largely unadventurous PC crowd, the hand-drawn Amiga game may find the going just a bit too easy. The Rocketeer should be coming in for testing in May.



## ST Version

While there's no way that the ST version could look as good as the PC one, there's no reason why it shouldn't play identically. And there lies the problem—unless Disney beef up the gameplay (unlikely) then players who have not their gaming teeth on the current crop of state-of-the-art ST titles are likely to find The Rocketeer something of a bore to complete. Look out for an update in the Reviews Directory around about May.

Cliff. The first really nice bit of Zepplin is demonstrated in the track. As the cabin's heat control starting a struggling time, it's a real shame that when it begins to enter the Redwood tree forest control. Each four-panel sequence still and comic like setting. It's the evening into each location in the future one way back for many. (An Epilogue) in the show. It that were not enough to many show, the volume sets out for Lager and stars being an adult at our laptop face. And of course the only three in a track 200.

(Music) How your stage! The arrangement of hitting off a Zepplin all our best looking about playing the Redwood tree scene, with each ball coming to absolutely from the distance like shots from a machine gun. The title scene is something of the exact presentation throughout the game - be real!



in parachutes. If that wasn't enough there are frequent deadly swarms of bombs that rain down and Vi rockets that blast in, bombing on the Rocketeer. Interestingly more deadly than the standard enemies is the tumbling burning wreckage left behind when shot. Small red balloons reward the player three-way fire fire, but the effects last for each a short time it's worth the bother or risk of trying to collect them.

Episode four end, having caught up with the Locom just as his pack runs out of fuel, Cliff learns from a cloned Pevy that Jenny is in fact further afield, held captive aboard a giant hydrogen-filled Zepplin. Taking hold of the Locom's control Cliff heads off into the wide blue yonder once more. It's more about run-up action, but much, much harder. This time the player is beset by strange German VTOL craft, balloon-mounted bombs, Vi rockets that fire up from the bottom of the screen in a most unexpected way and not a glimmer of a power-up in sight. To be honest with you, I could have done without having another shoot-'em-up straight after the last—noah, my sibling bigger Gings!

As the Cliff catches up with the Nazi Blimp, leaving Pevy to fly the Locom back to base, Cliff tumbles down into the Zepplin's tail to rescue Jenny, but the Nazis have seen him coming and



have prepared a little... reception for him. Now only one leafy baritone mancher with flat hair remains stands behind Cliff, his beloved jump and the downfall of the Third Brick, Myrc.

Even by best-in-class standards, which are not renowned for their complexity, this, the fifth and final episode in *The Rocketeer*, says, is basic to say the least. The player can move Cliff left or right along the Zappetti tail fin and make him duck or punch. The trick is to dull the Nazi over before he forces you off the tail to your doom. It's a long way down.

There's no denying that *The Rocketeer* is a quality product. The programmers have pulled out all the stops to make sure it looks and sounds superb. The scrolling is nothing short of a miracle for the PC, the animation is brilliant (hey! This is Disney after all) and the tunes and effects are suitably pacy and atmospheric (especially if you've got one of Disney's brand *Samco* devices - not the "Miserable... Sounds scary" box for more).

So, nothing to fault in the aesthetics. My real problem lay in the gameplay. While all the mini-games are great fun and very playable, there's a

serious lack of any strong challenge - I got past episodes two and three on my second attempt. The password system doesn't help things either.

I can't see anyone who is even halfway decent at arcade games taking more than a couple of days to finish the game. Perhaps this is not so much of a problem for the less arcade-oriented PC market, but potential fans or ST buyers should beware.

[Muggle: There's an password to the last episode, forcing you to play episode four just to get to the last 'run-up'. This is unfair, if you going to have a password system, then have a full one. This is just a lazy way of making the game harder to finish.]

This criticism would perhaps not be so hot if there were more than just five levels, perhaps repeat but harder appearances of the second or fifth episode, for example. As the developers have decided to completely ignore the film's plot anyway, it wouldn't have been so hard to write a scenario that involved more of those sections. As it stands you can't help feeling more than a little short-changed.

David Upchurch



(Muggle) Before the user the password to the last episode. This is unfair, if you going to have a password system, then have a full one. This is just a lazy way of making the game harder to finish.

(Muggle) The saving feature ignores the restriction of the password system. This is unfair, if you going to have a password system, then have a full one. This is just a lazy way of making the game harder to finish.

## R A T I N G S



Game Quality	Graphics
8	8
7	7
6	6
5	5
4	4
3	3
2	2
1	1
0	0

## MMMM... SOUNDS SAUCY!

Real it's real! For the paltry sum of \$39.99 (UK price to be confirmed) you can play the film in your very own home!

Well, not quite. The Sound Source, a wedge of cream plastic slab the size of a large hard-back novel, won't turn your PC into some amazing multimedia device. But it does give you some of the best sound and FR ever.

And it adds incredibly to the enjoyment of *The Rocketeer*. Instead of having to read the speech bubbles that come up in the cartoon intros, you can sit back and have them read out to you by actors performing the roles of the various characters. It's particularly effective on the plane shooting menu screens, as you cycle through the choices, Cliff's ponderous voice murmurs "Hmmm, the Gee Bee's slow but it's great for taking corners..." and such like.

There's is a drawback - the sampler shows the game dramatically. Fine on the big boys, but SMIUsers will not be impressed by the frequent thrice per second screen updates.



## 817

Signs from below tell the Rocketeer magazine, the first episode looks and sounds superb and plays well for the first time. But the majority of only is wasn't so hard to see how the magazine can be the first game should discover that the episode is actually a great achievement. If you have the chance, the magazine should be a great success. You can see, in fact, that there are that is only one of the best games in the world. The Rocketeer is a great game, but it's not the best game in the world. The Rocketeer is a great game, but it's not the best game in the world. The Rocketeer is a great game, but it's not the best game in the world.



# SHADOW LANDS



(Left) There appears to be no way to open the great wooden door, but a fool along the wall with the hand symbol reveals a secret passage. How cool are the numbers to give it a push and open secret?

(Below) No, that's not another item's release; it's a floating stone to push up a stone wall. It's when it collides with the wood that hidden areas of information are being about - you know what kind of it is, don't you?



**Y**ou can't help but feel a little bit sorry for those poor berated role-playing gamer types. With the generally accepted stereotype of them as a strangely-smelling bunch of sad anal retentives decked out in grubby anoraks and corduroy trousers, wearing Coke-bottle-thick National Health glasses held together by some week-old Elastoplasts and having a

'street cred' that lies somewhere between that of an accountant and a train spitter, it can't be an easy life.

And here, all that Thringedell the Elf scores 144 Points damage with the mighty Magic Level 14 Runesword Mordax against an Armour Class 8 Baving mauler does seem to have an alarmingly high attraction for the more socially disad-

vantaged members of our society. But be honest - if you were some stereotypical spiky little Barbarian who gets picked last in Games, wouldn't you wish the chance to be a muscle-bound sexually-athletic barbarian who spends all his time cracking skulls, wrenching and drinking a lot, if only for a couple of hours in your imagination?

The sad thing is this image problem - along with all those sides - does tend to turn many of the more style-conscious people off a gaming genre that can be and often is highly entertaining and involving.

On computer RPGs have had somewhat wider acceptance, mainly because the majority of products labelled 'role-playing games' are actually not that at all. Table-top RPGs are normally played by a group of people, each assuming varied fantasy personalities who meet interact with each other and any characters met in the game world. A major reason for the genre's phenomenal success is the fun that can be had from this interaction.

Computer gaming, on the other hand, is largely a solitary occupation. And while current generation computers can easily cope with all the boring number crunching and statistics logging that RPGs require, simulating an intelligent charac-



ter with its own objectives and prejudices in an altogether more complex arena. Which is why computer-based RPGs centre more around the combat and puzzle-solving, that's something a computer can understand and cope with.

But even with the gears stripped down to its bones and shown of the underpinning 'role playing', it still remained a niche market - a stable, healthy-selling one, admittedly, but a niche nonetheless.

Until 1987.

In 1987 a small, hitherto unknown US based company called FTL took the whole computer-gaming market by its foundations by producing an RPG that appealed not just to hardcore RPGers but to game players right across the board. That game was, of course, *Dungeons Master*. And the reason for the game's success was simple - it looked good.

Detail *Dungeons Master* must RPGs were simple, crude-looking things. The theory, it seemed, was that RPG fans wanted facts and figures not fancy graphics. And maybe that was so, but this surface complexity denied the games access to the larger market. *Dungeons Master* successfully combined quality 3D presentation with ease of use to draw in the average punter and an underlying gameplay complexity to satisfy the die-hard RPG fan.

And once FTL had shown the genre's lucrative potential, the other software developers were not slow to try and catch the waddles wave of popularity. The last few months alone have seen the graphically stunning likes of *Conan's Halls of Agrabah*, *Behr's* and, of course, *USG's Beholder 2*, the current ACE benchmark.

Even Origin, who have carried the banner of tradition for *Ti-Ohle Topps-Downe View* for more years than I can remember, have started leaping out, with *Ultima VII* employing an isometric



*Shadowlands* appeal falls somewhere between the graphic heights of *Conan's Halls of Agrabah* and the complex surroundings of *USG's Eye of the Beholder 2*.

While *Shadowlands'* graphics aren't as eye-popping as *Beholder's*, they have a distinct and appealing nature of their own. There's also far more action in *Shadowlands* with something happening nearly every step of the way. *Beholder*, for all its beauty, did have frequent yawning lullers as the player trilled slowly from location to location. The fact that the whole party is on-screen at all times is also in *Shadowlands'* favour. And for my money the combat, although substantially less awe-inspiring than *Beholder's*, is far more immediate, realistic and controllable.

*Shadowlands'* puzzles and riddles are easily on a par with *Beholder 2's*. However, the novel Photoscope twist - the light sensors and the like - is refreshing, and the problems where the party needs or is made to split up to solve them add a whole new dimension to play.

Where the *USG* field games really scores is that it allows the player to converse with some of the characters he meets, albeit in a limited way.

For so completely melding so many existing game elements together - and then adding a few new ones of its own - I've got no hesitation in naming *Shadowlands* our highest accolade. *Aw, dunno, just know it.*

*Shadowlands* is the new ACE Role-Playing Game Benchmark.



3D view and *The Underworld* utilizing modified Wing Commander scaling/rotating 3D bitmap routines.

**Photoscope isn't just some gimmick. The massive boost it gives *Shadowlands'* atmosphere alone makes it worth its weight in gold.**

New *Dorrick*, traditionally seen as the home of the coin-op conversion, is dipping its corporate toe in the RPG waters with *Shadowlands*. The plot starts grimly. The player has been captured by the arch super-baddy and whisked away to his lair in the evil-infested *Shadowlands*. There you are brutally murdered. But your spirit lives on! In ethereal form you must guide four brave adventurers sympathetic to your plight as they trek through deep dungeons and arid wastes in search of your bones. Only when they have been recovered do you stand a hope of being reconstituted.

The action is viewed as isometric 3D, a style familiar from the likes of the aforementioned *Beholder* and *EA's The Incomat*. The twist here in *Photoscope*, an innovative display technique whereby light sources realistically illuminate the

area around them. The walk areas are drawn in a murky dark grey, so that it's still just possible to navigate even without torches.

Thankfully *Photoscope* isn't just a gimmick. It contributes to the game's success on a number of levels. The massive boost it gives the game's atmosphere alone makes it worth its weight in gold. When your party's desperately weak and you can just make out some unknown creature shuffling through the gloom towards you the tension can be immense.

But *Photoscope's* effects stretch beyond the visual. Some wall fittings act as light sensors, opening or closing doors and pits depending on the presence or absence of light. Certainly monsters are attracted or repelled by light. It's such a unique feature that the solutions to actually quite simple problems seem unorthodox (to until the player remembers the important role light plays in the game. It all works phenomenally well.

Fortunately the game's developers, *Teque London*, haven't let their imaginative approach to RPGs begin and end with the *Photoscope* system.

Before the game starts the player is presented with a pre-set team of characters, each described by four major characteristic ratings: combat,



## AND THAT'S MAGIC!

Magic is handled rather differently in *Shadow Lands* than it is in other games. The idea is that a mighty wizard forged a spell and casts it onto specially prepared parchment. The spell can then be used by just about anyone - so long as it has been charged with sufficient Magic. Once a spell has been cast, it becomes drained of Magic and cannot be re-used until recharged.

Normally spells are cast one at a time, but they can be bound into a grimoire. Each can hold up to six spells. The lesser can then 'use' the grimoire, and each spell binds it first off one after the other - a bit like a Magic machine gun!

Magic is like the Force. It is meant to be *bringing things*. The wizards can absorb the Magic from things like food and water and then use it to power up a multi-headed spell. The side effect of this is that the drained foodstuff or whatever is now useless.



(Above left) Tomes are just about the most important items in *Shadowlands*. After all, if you can't see where the hell you're going then you're not likely to get very far, are you?

 Take every shelf you see, and never leave more than one burning at a time. (Wicks out, wick out.)

(Above right) Every edge tells a story, so pay attention...  ...But don't believe everything you read!

**S**hadowlands is a complex game. So, to illustrate how it plays we've placed together most of the demo level from this month's ACE Cover Disk. Not, we hasten to add, out of any spiteful urge to spoil *Shadow* and ST owners fun, but because it illustrates most of the main game features in a concentrated area. But don't worry. We haven't ruined all the surprises - the final chamber's secrets are left for you to discover for yourselves!



You'll find yourself pulling levers like this on a regular basis to open doors and so on.

 Most any nearby object reflects pulling a lever - they may give a cryptic clue that the results might not be good!

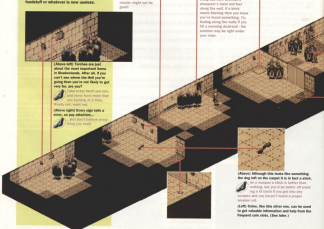


Hexaglyphics or little alien hieroglyphics like this mean any number of things, but they can mean that a non-descript piece of wall is not what it seems...

 Keep an eye out for strengthening wall areas - if you can see things like these activate a chamber's hand and foot along the wall. It's a trick, check feeling that you know you've found something. The feeling along the walls if you hit a warning about-well, the solution may be right under your nose.



Pressure points respond to anything weighty. While you may activate it a feather is just as fit, another may require a whole man's bodyweight to push - a bit of a problem if you've lost one of your party.



(Above) Although this looks like something the dog left on the carpet it is in fact a door.  Set a trigger to make it better than anything, but you'll be better off waiting in 30 levels if you get into any scraps and you haven't found a proper weapon yet.



(Left) Even, like this other one, can be used to get valuable information and help from the frequent coin chests. (See below.)



Light sources like this have a lot of functions. Some cause doors to open or close, others cause pits to appear or disappear, while others may initiate a gang of monsters.

Pits really are the pits, they often cause falling down or may find yourself transported to somewhere else in the level or, if not a really serious, another level entirely. And it's not just getting around on your own.



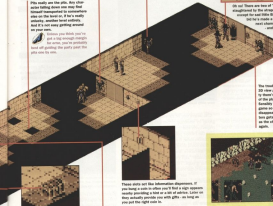
Unless you think you're got a big enough strategy for combat, you're probably best off getting the party past the pits and to the exit.

Ammmmmmmmm!! What's this? Remember that impressive pit by accident? It's not some fancy trick. It is, in fact, a fairly common with a variable size rate of success or, that don't think that you'll be able to slip past her by virtue of your charm and wit - unless. She's really not the best - and she gets a little push. You'll need someone's help to get out of her.



(It's not there are lots of 'em! Everyone has been equipped for the upcoming Amazon types except for our little hero, in a last desperate bid he's made a run for the door to the next chamber, only to find it locked - so he hasn't got a key! In the water's bottom here is the character of Barry's survival look also listed... Perhaps you'll have better luck when you play... Mmmmmmm!!

The trouble with these temporary 3D view planes is that by necessity they don't often fit in the view of the player's view of the action. Luckily there have within the game so that obscuring walls disappear when one of the characters gets too low, then appear as the character moves only again.



Check out what's up to its small in items. Generally speaking the more valuable the contents the harder you'll have to fight for them. Although they weigh a fair bit, they're a good way of increasing the amount of stuff you can carry because they only take up one of your valuable inventory slots.

Although each warrior's treasure can carry only a bit or 10, you'll soon find yourself wanting out of space. Always remember to discard spent potions, and food and drink when you can because they'll be released that storage space.



These pits are the information dispensers. If you bring a cube to them you'll find a sign appears nearby providing a hint or a list of advice. Later on they actually provide you with gifts - as long as you put the right cube in.



Good! I want my treasure! And how else to, by god! All but the master got a chance to practice their sword-swinging skills. (Actually they're holding sticks. Oh dear.)

The best tactic for dealing with a monster is to stand away only in, towards floating. Tougher monsters, however, may require a more 'old' and 'not' approach.



## WHERE IN THE WORLD AM I?

The bold adventures' travels take them through but very varied landscapes. It all starts off above ground in a small wooded clearing. It's a haven for robust rivers but provides a good chance to stock up on fruit that Wiler's the clearing floor.

A bit of exploring reveals a clear passageway down into a miserable grey dungeon, which is where the real problems start and the Photomage system really kicks in. Much later the warlike find themselves above ground again in a Hampton Court-style maze, inside an Egyptian-style pyramid and finally exploring a series of ominous dark caves, the home of the evil wizard who killed the player and the resting place of your bones!



magic, strength and health. The player has the opportunity 'individualise' these ratings from a character customiser, as well as adjust more superficial character details such as the specifics of their appearance and their name. Not essential, maybe, but it's fun to tinker with a character's hairstyle and lip shape so that they have a look appropriate to their ratings.

As mentioned above, the adventuring party consists of four individuals. And 'individuals' is the key word here. Each character is represented by its own sprite in the Shadowlands gameworld and a corresponding colour-coded portrait displaying the character's figure in outline, a health bar and any items currently held.

These portraits are the key to controlling the characters. The body outline is split into five regions: head, the two arms and the two legs.

By highlighting the regions with the mouse pointer and clicking an arm in the gameworld for player can perform a huge range of functions.

Characters can be made to read a sign by selecting the head and then clicking on the notice board. Toggling a switch is achieved by highlighting the right arm and then clicking on the lever. Other, more complex actions can be performed just as easily. Toes have already spent a lot of time thinking it all out and it has been time well spent - it's a wonderful, friendly and flexible interface that works a treat.

Here (later) is the fact that the characters can be ordered to do several different things at the same time, as while one is pulling a lever, another may be picking up a sword and the other two could be smashing in some skeleton's face. And indeed there are times where this sort of co-ordinated approach to the team's efforts is vital to the player's success.

When before entering the Shadowlands the player is given the opportunity to adjust each member's vital statistics. Although the appearance of each character, the colour and name (except the name, as it's non-transferable to those a character who's better off even respect) is arbitrary on the face and in the game portrait. It's possible to change the character's hairstyle (and that even made into a character's eyes, nose and lips mouth. You can get some pretty bizarre combinations, indeed not!

Characters can be moved individually or in a group by selecting either the right or left leg respectively and then 'dragging' the character with the mouse pointer. Although it sounds a bit cumbersome, it actually works a whole lot better than you'd think. It's possible to arrange the party members into just about any formation imaginable, and even split them up into two smaller groups. This latter ability is sometimes essential to the solution to some problems where,

say, pressure pads in widely separated parts of the dungeon have to be activated simultaneously.

As the player moves the party near the edge of the game window the view scrolls (usually on the ST, smoothly on the Amiga) to position the party near the centre of the screen. Ideally it would have been nice if the party had stayed centre-screen at all times, but I suspect this was impossible from a technical point-of-view. As it stands the system works fine, though waiting for the scroll to do its thing can become annoying after a while. Fortunately the player can restore the view at any time by clicking on the right button, which speeds things up immensely.

Combat is as elegantly handled as every other aspect of the game. To attack a monster the player simply puts a weapon in the character's hand, highlights the arm and then clicks on the enemy. No menu, no fuss. Because each character can be dealt with individually, there's no need for the whole party to flee if one of its members is dan-

## Amiga version

The graphics are small but perfectly formed, and even on a standard TV the themes are all fairly recognisable.

The scrolling in Amiga comes outstayingly silky, but I personally would have preferred to sacrifice smoothness for speed. The sampled sound is sparse but effective. Owners of IBM machines have less luck accessing it, but since this only happens when the player moves between dungeon levels it's no great loss.

## ST version



Apart from chunkier but faster scrolling and some chip-generated sound instead of complex bits is a carbon copy of the Amiga version, and just as highly recommended.

## PC version



Not a lot of information on the PC version at the moment apart from the fact that there will definitely be one and it'll be appearing around about

September time. It's unlikely that the gameplay will change much, although chances are the 256-colour VGA palette will be put to good use.



When the inventory screen allows the player to see whatever weapons, spells and other miscellanea he/she has in the 'magical' treasure chest of choice, one can start to get ideas.

generally weakened during the fight files in Dungeon Master or Dohdoh. Instead, the player can just move the troubled player out of harm's way and let the rest get on with the scrapping.

This ability to split the party up permits a whole range of combat methods that just aren't possible in other RPGs. The player can opt for any mode of fighting from a straight all-out scarp, with everyone picking in, to a steady guerrilla-style war, sending in lone warriors to strike a couple of Monks then bringing them out again.

Now an RPG wouldn't be an RPG without magic. And Shadowlands has a veritable witch's coven of it. Spell casting is handled in a way that'll be familiar to players of Dungeon of Dragons. Each spell is written on a piece of parchment 'charged' with magic lines. When cast (in a manner similar to combat) the spell's energy is drained and it cannot be cast again until the player 'recharges' it using the magic lines contained within other items, like food and so forth. The player thus has to juggle the party's hunger for

## I CAN SEE IT IN YOUR FACE

The inset character portraits main function is to provide a control panel from which the player can control each of the four warriors simply and quickly. The player switches between each character by simply clicking on the relevant portrait with the mouse pointer. However, they also provide a secondary function as an excellent 'at-a-glance' indication of the status of each warrior and where they are, depending on the picture in the frame.



This is the portrait type you'll see most of the time (unless you're a particularly fast player). By watching the warrior's body glow, you can make your warrior do just about anything!



When a warrior is in the first or second frame, you'll see a normal (solid) outline. This indicates that you're doing well with this character (at least for the time being).



This character isn't just for show. It's a warning that you're in trouble. It tells you when you're trying to complete a quest, and also when you're being low on a quest.



When a warrior is in the third or fourth frame, you'll see a glowing (yellow) outline. This indicates that you're doing well with this character (at least for the time being).



When a warrior is in the fifth or sixth frame, you'll see a glowing (red) outline. This indicates that you're in trouble with this character (at least for the time being).

Food with the need to have a set of fully-charged spells.

Spells are amongst the rare treasures to be found littering the dungeons. Generally such costly variables are protected by a particularly mean enemy or hidden behind a secret panel. Lesser goodies, like food or copper coins, tend to be more accessible and can often be found just lying neglected in deserted corridor corners (though the thought of munching on an apple left on some wet stone flooring doesn't appeal to me much).

Each character can carry a King's ransom in booty, the precise amount depending on their individual strength. If they carry too much then they'll start to slow down, rattling much waiting about for the more encumbered party members to catch up.

Shadowlands isn't perfect by any means. Despite



the four landscape 'flavors' - dark dungeons, verdant wilderness, misty caves and Egyptian crypt - the graphic style can become a little monotonous after a while. One piece of wall, Perspective or not, does look much like another. However, by the time this caveat has set in you'll have become too engrossed in the adventure to care about such trifles.

And while there are plenty of different-looking monsters, they are all roughly mass-sized. You can't help wishing there were a few real monster monsters, a giant fire-breathing dragon or a mighty Wyvern - something to cause really serious treasure drooping.

Some cross-combative interaction wouldn't have gone amiss, either. Just once during the game it would've been refreshing to meet something that you didn't have to dull over. In Shadowlands it would appear the Art of Conversation is dead.

But then you can't have everything. And to complain too loudly over these points when Shadowlands offers anyone remotely into dungeon-crawling so much more than most other RPGs is childish to say the least. Shadowlands is a fresh and exciting take on a genre in risk of stagnating due to the play-it-safe proliferation of Dungeon Master clones. Admittedly Shadowlands draws a fair - and at times blatantly obvious - amount of inspiration from PUL's game and many others besides, but the end result is far more than the sum of its parts. And any game that got me so engrossed that I missed New Republic has got to be good.

David Spafford



When you start the game, you're given a choice of three different worlds to play in. The game is very easy to play, and it's a good idea to play it on a low difficulty level. The game is very easy to play, and it's a good idea to play it on a low difficulty level.

## 923

The first level is a choice of three different worlds to play in. The game is very easy to play, and it's a good idea to play it on a low difficulty level. The game is very easy to play, and it's a good idea to play it on a low difficulty level.





Game Adventure  
 Publisher Sierra  
 Developer Sierra  
 Price \$29.95

# ECO QUEST

## THE SEARCH FOR CETUS

**R**ealisation slowly dawns. The world is finally waking up to the grim reality that the awful stories peddled for years by those gloom-mongering scientists are actually true. The planet's self-defence mechanism is set to collapse. There is a hole in the ozone layer the size of

Nebraska and unless we all lay off the tanning beds and stop smoking the pipes of old bridges, we will all choke to death and try to sue our's unscrupulous sales.

But hey! It's not too late. There's still time to save the planet if we can educate ourselves in ways to be more sparing with our natural resources and more careful with our waste.

Unsurprisingly, it's American based Sierra Online Inc. who are among the first software publishers to leap into the ecological bandwagon.

*Eco Quest* is a simply "divined" ecological game, however *Eco Quest* is the real deal. All the packaging and instructions for the game are printed on recycled stock using vegetable inks and a water-based coating, the game is stored in the entire family unit, containing - I guess - greater potential penetration for the message. And a share of the proceeds from the sale of each copy of the game will be donated to the Marine Mammal Centre, California.

There's even a five-22 page book given away with the game giving hints and advice on easy ways the owner can help save the planet themselves.

Historically, perfectly decent games emitting even the sweet whiff of an educational slant have been languished in the charts by more raucous few of such stuffy pretensions. So it's a brave move of Sierra's design team to produce a game which hasn't been cheapened or tacked up in any way. This game tells you how to think and what to do, and its placed to do so.

Fortunately, the crossings of the line between gentle instruction and rabid preaching are relatively few and far between and perhaps against all the odds, the game still manages to impart many of the positive aspects of "regular" Sierra releases even with a hefty Message in a box.



They thought they can add anything about being to get your hands dirty. Eco Quest Number One being directed to create of its best for Sierra's business. A Sierra's million dollar sales from its old company like. Adventure is still making business like the old Appearances.

Despite the new angle, *Eco Quest* follows the format with which any owners of other Sierra products will be instantly familiar. The player guides his alter-ego through the steadily and eventually superb adventures using the mouse to move about and interact with other objects and characters. There are puzzles to solve and escapes to get into. So Sierra haven't merely flipped and gone the standard's many, have made yet.

A more genuine concern for potential Eco Questers is that the firm do seem to have gone rather overboard with their endeavours to help the game appeal to the younger advertising audience. That is, they've made the game worryingly easy. But more of that later.



Just this is how the message might. After release the talking objects into the world and a lot of easy environmental education might.





On the face of it, *Eco-Quest* and *Willy Beantish* are very similar games. But not before the adventures who makes the mistake of buying one after the other, thinking that he's going to end up with adventures which are in any way alike. *Willy Beantish* is an interactive comic, while *Eco-Quest* is a family or

son of a branded marine biologist do-gooder, Adam Greener (oh, please) is a plant-based publicity machine for the ecological cause. Not so much educated as brainwashed by his fanatical father (who gets so mad when people drop litter that he "can't see straight"), Adam follows his dad around the world learning all about ecological cause and effect, and collecting a healthy brace of right-thinking international pen pals along the way. But hey! - it's not easy being the son of a jet-setting genius. While his dad loves him and he regularly receives letters from a cool hot French chick called Natalie (hey girl what's three questions about your new beau

beginners' adventures. For players with an interest in either the ecological theme, or wish to involve their parents/kids in their hobby *Eco-Quest* with its easy problems and interesting angle is an ideal buy. But for adventures who like cute graphics but need something to get their teeth into, *Willy B.* wins.



is whether or not the locals still hunt whales has got to be a dream, right? Adam finds it hard to make friends. He's never in one place long enough, you see. Even his dad can't spend as much time with Adam as he would like, what with all these meetings and conferences and things.

Adam's new home, St Julian in The Carribean presents the same old problems. The place may look like a lush Polly Bruchan but it's actually an ecological nightmare, with dangerous oil spills and lots of dolphin-snarling fishing nets. Adam hasn't made any friends yet and his dad has to go out on business. A high-potat in Adam's sched-

ule, then, is when his dad suggests he finds and plays with the dolphins which is recovering from being caught in the nets in the intro sequence. So after a bit of explanation of the last location, cleaning up a sewage-covered oil, putting water in the rat's cage, tossing a can in a recycling bin and so on, Adam decides it's time to play with the dolphins.

And after some fishy frolics and a game of frisbee, Adam discovers, to his understandable amusement that the dolphins can speak. And it's here that the adventure really begins. Revealing that his name is Delphinus, the dolphin explains to Adam that the undersea kingdoms that in his home is in terrible danger. Cetus, a giant whale who kept order in the kingdoms and washed away all the terrible problems caused by man (quite how in uncertain, but never mind) has gone missing, and without their guardian, the little fishes have become very miserable.

So, Delphinus enlists the help of Adam and the pair set off to explore the ocean and find Cetus.

Most of the game takes place in the undersea kingdoms, which is remarkably reminiscent of *The Little Mermaid*. Central fish swim about the lily-ly sea, singing and dancing and talking in fancy

**T**here are puzzles to solve and scrapes to get into, so Sierra haven't exactly flipped and gone the sanests and mang-bean route yet.

accents. Adam most generally follows Delphinus' lead, exploring parts of the kingdoms and solving the problems which he comes across.

A pleasing part of *Eco-Quest*'s set up is that the puzzles are often visual and pretty kinetic. Big stone pillars need to be revolved and locked into place, objects need to be moved from one place to another and pushed into secret slots revealing passages and the like. Indeed, chasing certain stages, the game is so absorbing as last month's longhaul. But it doesn't always work that well.

The basic incongruity of *Eco-Quest* is the mixture of standard fantasy adventure puzzles and "real" ecological principles. Ecology may all be very well, but it doesn't make for particularly addictive adventuring.

By far the most irritating example of the ecological "puzzles" is the fact that Adam must (if he is to collect a respectable number of pointed paintbrushes) pick up rubbish wherever he finds it and deposit it in his recycling sack. This involves clicking the recycling cursor over every single bit of rubbish on the screen, and watching Adam *swish-swish*, collect and bag it. The first time Adam finds himself in a garbage-strewn environment, this is all very well, and there is a definite sense of achievement as the score at the top of the screen flicks up and the PC emits a healthy ping when the final bit of trash finds its way into the sack. However, these rubbish scores occur far too fre-



The sea may be very pretty, but Adam's getting near the end of his adventure and needs to take his recycling of the screen and concentrate on the job in hand by recycling the Great White Arctic Shark's 97th fish!

## STEP BY STEP

Phew! Underwater adventuring eh? It's a fancy old business. And for a little bit like Adam, with his head full of concerns for the well-being of the planet, it's easy to understand how even the most basic problem can cause more difficulty than normal.

Which is why, as you'll probably already have gathered, we've decided to let you in on one of the more interesting puzzles that Adam has to deal with. If it all seems a little simple, don't blame us. Just remember that this is an adventure for all the family and follow us, as we lead you gently by the hand through an early part of the quest.

Just follow on from one number to the next, and you'll have a good idea of the value of mental stress that you'll encounter in the game. Oh, and for those of you easily impressed by the visual nature of Sierra games, we've stuck together one of the few scrolling sections for your decoration.



How do you do that, you know? Righten and when in search of a good cleaning up. Adam is in search of information and help, so he should perhaps try and take some on one of the buildings. How about that temple on the left?

Shouldn't they? The looks of the temple is much more than the one down outside. How, what's that on the left wall?



In all corners of three large wall dominates the center of the hall wall of the Temple.



Oh, the right side of the temple wall stands in line with some strange symbols. How, where does the scene a symbol? Adam? Ah - the statue outside the temple had seen that four long ago.

Oh! This thing that puzzle present to see at such a time probably meeting on there in an earlier to form a automatically solved. How, what can we make out of that? Maybe it will come to later. Maybe some adventure will and questions waiting to change on the picture...





On top of the pedestal is a large conch shell.



6

Wade placed the bronze shell in a hole in the ground behind the bronze, leaving the tower exposed that the old world

Let's be sticking on the bronze tower with me about how we're doing it really happens. After all, it's a bronze statue and the shell is bronze too.

Wow! The statue behind the gate and the bronze tower when the statue from it, then we can see the statue in the temple.



7

Wade pulled the bronze tower and it flew away from the tower's top.



8

Wade has looked for gold in the tower.

Oh, a gold shell on a pedestal. I'd take it and use it if it will make it easier when the tower is broken and get out of the tower.

**R**ickling adventuring it's not, but an entertaining and visually excellent romp through a beautiful and quirky undersea kingdom it most certainly is. *Sea Quest* won't keep tough arc-bashers puzzled for long, but it serves its purpose as an ecological storybook and beginners' guide to adventuring very well.



A fish appears mysteriously from somewhere behind the panel. It must be the Oracle!

10

Wade is gone. I don't see where the fish went. Let's see if we can find it. It's a fish. It's a fish. It's a fish.

And now the fish can really fight. The fish that we have been searching for is willing to give information, but only if you can come to the right answer to solve very tricky puzzles. The answer, of course, is to the fishing boat puzzle on the left and that we spotted earlier on. There's a whole lot of fish, all!

Now here's a trick for all you those who often get stuck in underwater. Which is right of the answer is this type of puzzle. The only puzzle here is that there's only one fish in the correct box in the other graphics. So we thought you'd like to see it again.

# ECO QUEST



## PC Version

No surprises here. Plenty of slabs, a hard drive being an absolute must, beautiful graphics, excellent aquatic music & sound effects and a fair script make this another winner from Sierra.



## Amiga version

The big cogs of the Sierra conversion machine are slowly turning and the little conveyor belt of the end is bearing ever faster Amiga versions of PC originals. We're already up to *Heart of Darkness*, and soon the ghostly day will come when there is a simultaneous Amiga and PC release. But it's not quite here yet, so Amiga owners will have to wait a month or so. But we're sure it will be terrifically good when it arrives. Watch the Pinks.



## ST version

No plans for an ST release as yet, I'm afraid.



quantity, and clearing them up is a dog, but boy - saving the planet isn't easy. It's hard work. And these sections simulate the fun better than most.

It's the straightforward administering puzzles which divert the player's attention away from the occasionally annoying green theme. But even these are pretty bloody easy. There's a section which requires the player to complete a sliding block puzzle before he can progress any further. Unfortunately, as the "young minks" which Sierra are so keen to attract with the game don't find



Almost the ubiquitous underwater depiction of Slabs, the old is not new.



A moment of trapper time. Adam often will be loudly reminding you.

themselves at the end of their legendarily short attention spans before the first real puzzle is overcome, an option to have the problem automatically solved pops up.

Now I'm all for making games as friendly as possible, but solving puzzles for the player is going a touch far. I feel, indeed, the whole game tends to tell the player in rather too much detail what he is expected to do next. "You'd better get your diving gear" warns Delphinous before Adam first ventures into the sea. Examining a nearby cupboard reveals that it's used to store diving gear. No comedy drawing routines here.



Slabs from *Ecotrek*. Seriously, right. Slabs - chosen up the coast which shows the entire screen. Adam also back and accomplished the quest he has done in the environment. But what about that statue just behind him?

**H**ardened masters of the genre will find it painfully easy. But that's not really what the game is all about...

Even at the climax of the adventure, the only hostile creature which the player has encountered during the whole game doesn't turn out to be really nasty, but has instead had his brains added by some toxic nuclear waste dumped into the water at some point.

So far as the whole ecology bit goes, it remains unconvincing. The need to perform tasks which do not come naturally in order to be rewarded stacks of laboratory tests on animals, to be honest. At times I felt as if I was being made to run around in gooey-gooey circles, taking a role in a rather shabby learning experience which I would rather avoid. While the informative side of the game is fine, all that trash collection got right up my nose.

Mind you, Sierra can barely claim to be right up there with the greats like Lucasfilm in the scripting stakes. Even at its most title and scene



## WHAT A LOAD OF RUBBISH!

It's no laughing matter, you know. Planet Earth just can't cope any more, and it's all our fault! We've jumped on one laugh-a-ton too many and been less careful than we might with our deleterant. And the summers aren't going to be that pleasant in a few years time. But we can all pull ourselves back from the magnifying-glass treatment by taking some simple steps.

And who could be better equipped to spread the word than computer game manufacturer Sierra? No-one. That's who.

Printed on fully recycled stock, *I Helped Save The Earth* is a fascinating little book enclosed free with *Eye Quest*. Contained in its pages are fifty - count 'em - five ways that YOU can help save the earth. It may not be as gripping as defending our home from marauding space fiends, but it's a lot safer.

So, in the interests of a cleaner, greener planet, we've selected a couple of tips to share with you.

1. Cut the rings on six-pack holders! (So fish don't get caught up in them)
2. Don't be an American (Apparently, they use over 150 GALLONS of water EACH, EVERY DAY!)
3. Don't take your shopping home in bags (You can maybe put the items in your pockets)
4. Pull weeds, don't spray 'em! (Weed-killer is toxic, and hurts animals)
5. Come up with your own ideas about saving the earth (They're probably better than these)



Sierra is continuing its tradition of large and impressive stone statues.

The combination of ecological tragedy and fantasy makes *Eye Quest* a little unusual. Here, for example, we find Adam collecting all the garbage (recycled) at a water filter and finally, and apparently to enter into all sorts of mystical might (although with a mouse click) the sea.

normal, the dialogue between the characters, especially Adam and Delphinus is events ahead of both of all other games on the market at the moment. And while games for adults would be unlikely to get away with the male lead professing his love for dolphins, I guess in a kids' adventure, it's okay.

*Eye Quest* is very much a curate's egg. Ecological fashionability is otherwise aside, it's an example of all that is both good and bad in Sierra's games of late. The presentation is awesome, with simply stunning visuals and an atmospheric soundtrack. The interface, too, is commendably friendly. But, even bearing in mind that this is a game for "young minds" in the packaging, explains, it's a bit easy. And sometimes the lengthy periods of action and conversations over which the player has no control end up making the feel more like he's operating the remote control for a slide projector than using his mouse to interact with a responsive program.

It's very much a beginners' adventure, and hardened masters of the genre will find it painfully easy. But that's not really what it's all about. It's a genuinely successful attempt to produce a family game with a message which, although a bit laboured at times, raises awareness of a world-wide issue without deteriorating into a lecture.

● *Sam Douglas*



*Eye Quest* is available and shown in the Greenhouse Book. Different sea creatures are used and in different ways, making the adventure always and possibly better than the next offering.

## R A T I N G S



Age Range	10-15
Platform	Windows
Genre	Adventure
Developer	Sierra
Publisher	Sierra

## 820



*Eye Quest* isn't a game to force hardened adventures players the best thing. It just has easy elements, as we talked about in the game. It takes the player with something else to do, something else to do, something else to do. The player is brought through the world of such a role that the world is not so simple. Sometimes, it looks great and works best when all family members are playing together.





Game Rule Playing Strategy: War Simulation (Hard)  
 Publisher: Paragon  
 Developer: Paragon Software  
 Price: \$29.95

# TWILIGHT 2000

LOOK I REPORTING DEBORAH, THIS IS LOOK I WITH AN IMPORTANT TRANSMISSION. PRESENTLY, THE CITY OF ZATON HAS BEEN BY ONE OF COAHY'S INFANTRY UNITS. ALL OF THE CITY'S VULNERABLE SUPPLIES WERE DESTROYED. NOW THERE IS A CRITICAL SHORTAGE OF MEDICINE. I'VE LOCATED A SMALL GROUP IN THE CITY OF SPOKANE THAT IS WILLING TO GIVE THE PEOPLE OF ZATON THE MEDICINE SUPPLIED. IT'S UP TO YOU TO TRAVEL TO THE CITY OF SPOKANE AND ACQUIRE THESE SUPPLIES. AFTER YOU'VE ACCOMPLISHED THAT, JOURNEY TO ZATON AND DELIVER THE GOODS TO THE VILLAGE LEADER. GOOD LUCK AND BE CAREFUL. LOOK I, SIGNING OFF.



It's hard to imagine anything

more bleak and wretched than the aftermath of a nuclear holocaust. Total devastation of entire countries, the extermination of vast chunks of the population, and those who aren't incinerated in the blast are left looking for-

ward to roughly equal doses of starvation and radiation sickness.

But while the very thought of such a future is enough to give normal people nightmares, PC owners resist the thought of exploring a post-

Apocalyptic wasteland. At least that seems to be the impression Paragon Software have of things, giving IBM gamers the chance everyone has been waiting for to feel what it's like fighting a futile war in a radioactive hell hole.

Well, it's only a game, and a reasonably innovative one at that. The latest spin on the 'give everybody everything' angle currently in vogue with software developers seems to be that a game needn't fit into any particular pigeon hole, and it needn't conform to any set style. The idea is that rather than shoe-horning game elements into a particular presentation style, each should be played in whichever mode is most appropriate.

When your party of soldiers (each with abilities distinguishing them from the others) travel a short distance by foot the world is represented in isometric (D-plex Cadaver) while short distance vehicular motion is presented in polygons, and everything else, either long-distance travel from one city to another or operations back at base is handled with click-on icons and maps. So, with no particular presentation style as such, it's clear that *Twilight 2000* must rely on the appeal of its premise alone. And the premise is this:

The aftermath of this hypothetical tactical nuclear war is a dark and depressing one. The whole of Europe has devastated and in Poland, the centre of the ground conflict, scattered troops from all nations wander the ravaged wasteland, fighting for survival. Londoners and lost, they have forgotten who they are attacking or what they are defending.

However, a featureless figure emerges with a very clear goal. The megamilitarist Baron Carrey plans to arise as ruler of the spoils of war as he possibly can and now, when his targets can offer least resistance, is his ideal time to strike.

Known to have been involved with ultra-hard-policing riot squads and implicated in all sorts of grisly stories of torture and death squads, Carrey is using his influence among the Polish military to assemble his Black Legion. By the time the player comes into the game, Carrey has already seized

control of northern Poland, and is busy running the place like the rabid fascist he might be so clearly is.

The player takes the role of the commander of an elite fighting squad of up to twenty men and women, of whom any four can be mobilized for each particular mission. The early stages of the game concentrate on the gradual assembly of enough military might to successfully win the finale, the showdown with Casey's Black Legion.

Following a descent of not nearly stunning inter experience, the game leads the player into perhaps its most important stage: the selection of characters and the division of points for each of their available attributes. This is pretty familiar territory for anyone with more than a passing knowledge of the role playing genre.

**W**hile the very thought of such a future is enough to give normal people nightmares, PC owners relish the thought of exploring a post-Apocalyptic wasteland.

The twenty characters are kept 'on file' at headquarters and drafted into play for appropriate missions. The characters can be either male or female, can originate from any of nine different nations (the accompanying blurbs give the way for this with some nonsense about requirements becoming disbanded and rehired in a hotbed of nationalism), and have a set of background skills on top of the regular agility, constitution, charisma, intelligence and education ratings.

The player can then select a pre-war career for each of the characters, giving them the chance to



'learn' skills for themselves. Basically, as a character's career progresses, their initial pool of attributes will be boosted in particular areas depending on what sort of work they do.

Given the outbreak of war, the player must decide which military occupation he wishes each of his twenty prospective soldiers to pursue. The final handle to be sealed before the combat can begin (at least) is the selection of Secondary Activities. Here, the attributes are tweaked for the last time simulating the rest of casually acquired skills picked up in everyday life.

Despite these routines being handled in as simple-to-use fashion as is possible with easily accessible icons, there's no getting round the fact that all this attribute attribution is a bloody chore. It would seem to be a blessing, therefore, that there's an automatic set-up option enabling the player to construct an entire squad at a stroke. And a very appealing option it is too.

Players should beware of too casual a use of the random set-up feature, though, since vital skills may be missing from the computer-assigned players. The first mission, for example, involves having to speak to a contact in Polish, and my computer-assigned team was game-endingly bereft of anyone who could speak the language. A pre-mission briefing will list out the requirements for each coming mission, so these frustrations can be generally avoided.

The last compromise is a half-way house of random selection and human approval, with the player being able to reject any characters while relinquishing the ability to simply mago-up a ready-made team of top-combat heroes.

Unusually compared to most of the military strategy games you'll have played, *Twilight 2000* doesn't quite afford the player the luxury of an unlimited range of equipment with which to kit out his team. While the stores of the HQ are sufficiently stocked with every possible make and style of firearm and explosive, the teams has been left woefully lacking in the transport stakes, resulting in the initial stages of the game being played on foot.

Which is a good job, really, since this keeps the polygons at bay for a while, reducing the risk of swamping the player with too much going on at once. Indeed, even when the player has had a chance to come to terms with all of the game's interface methods, the change from 2D to 3D is

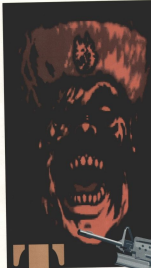


*Milchsteiner II: Flames of Freedom*, out next month on the PC and already a name on other formats, is about as close a game promise to *Twilight 2000* as you can get. Rather than taking place in the aftermath of a nuclear war, however, *Milchsteiner II* tells the tale of the battle between the Sahanan empire and the Free Earth Federation or something.

Anyhow, the role playing elements are there, with your central character having a



range of abilities and statistics factors to take into account during each encounter. The two points to note are that there's no isometric display in *Milchsteiner*, and the 3D is slightly better in *Twilight 2000*. For players keen to absorb the maximum realism, *Twilight* is by far the better deal, but it could be argued that *Flames of Freedom* offers a more entertaining game all round.



That...in the chaos... This rather generous misrepresentation of the situation does give a false impression of the real world outside the team. The parking garage is all empty, and there aren't any enemies in sight.

It's hard to believe that in order to gain access, it's best to just shoot off several big auto bombs "blast" a hole in the wall.



here's a lot of stats in Twilight 2000. The Finnish Baron Corvax may well laugh, but he doesn't know that the team lined up for this campaign has a base hit point score of twenty and are fully fluent in Italian. He hel







# TWILIGHT 2000

metric to plan view maps in a bit more to take in all in one go.

The more central of all screens is the player's office. It's less here that all the other game areas can be accessed. A computer on the desk will yield information as to how the battle against Czarny's forces is going, with possession of cities indicated and a bunch of bar graphs, one of which is the morale graph, indicating how happy the people of Poland are now that their sky is red and full of dust. The radio is your link to your intelligence officer, and the filing cabinet is where all the files of your available troops can be found, while the map gives an overview of the whereabouts of all troops currently in the game.

**U**nfortunately the overall conclusion is that it doesn't gel together as well as it might.

The mission begins with relatively tight briefs (00-01) which gradually become more vague as time goes on. The first mission, a double, is to travel to a place called Skizawa, find some urgently needed medical supplies and then deliver them to the local hospital in another town. If successfully completed, this mission will yield a personnel carrier which will help the team move around at a better lick.

Although basic, this first outing helps the players come to grips with the control interface well enough, ensuring that he recognizes, although at a pretty basic level, most of the types of situations his team will have to deal with later in the game.

As the game goes on, however, the details available from headquarters include rather general advice like "search the area" and "investigate

reports of trouble", encouraging the player to see what's going on for himself.

During the missions the characters can be instructed to loogie, fish, fight and talk with other characters in the game. However, apart from object handling, it's not possible to treat the characters as individuals. It seems that all the abilities and skills are simply pooled into an average overall ability in all areas. The result is that the death of a character affects the ability of the team, but doesn't really feel as if it matters that much. Most solo playing games on the market today allow a team to be split and carry out sub-missions for themselves. Not here.

## PC Version



PC Owners are about as responsive as an audience as it is possible for Twilight 2000. They haven't, as yet, been spoiled by arcade action and if

the figures get around by marketing companies are to be believed) are of an appropriate age range to deal with the grim plot and mass of numbers. Whatever, it's the PC that the game was developed on, comes on five disks and works about as well as any other.

## Amiga Version



Amiga owners can look forward to a version of Twilight 2000 during the summer, and while from it maybe coming in even more disks, it'll be exactly the same.

## ST Version



The ST version, as we understand it, is still a long way off completion, and we'll be keeping readers abreast of its progress as details become available.



Top: Transport without a vehicle is a disappointing affair. Thankfully, the reason for completing the first mission successfully is an excellent performance, allowing the player access to all of mission's unique items.

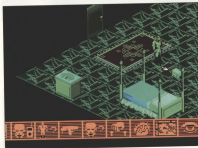
Center: The LCD Mapper interface - the player spends a great

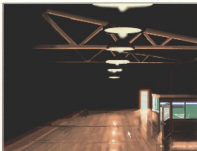
amount of time with it. Bottom: Although not the most beautiful screen, it does use colors to a more, for it is a map, about.

Many of today's top polygon programmers would be wise to examine the writer's polygon routines, however. This section of the game is pretty excellent, and could well have made a stand alone product out of its own. It's in the 3D maps that Twilight 2000 begins to shape up and look like a has been built.

However, just when the player is feeling himself thoroughly absorbed in a problem, Twilight 2000 has the habit of bringing him back down to earth with a bang, and this is rarely always a result of the game's role-playing origins or slightly unconvincing design quirks. The 3D isometric view, in which the most interesting parts of the game are played (such as conversing with other characters and handling the objects), is the least convincing of the lot. For a start, the team of four soldiers is represented by a solitary figure who moves in ugly jerks across a bare-bones landscape. The players update in clumsy flicks only when the player actually moves off an edge, making it impossible, in effect, to see where he's going.

Movement is frequently prohibited while on the map screen because, the player is informed, there





are enemy soldiers in the area. However, the same movement while in the isometric view is permissible.

Combat is also a fascinating affair, with incoming little messages popping up reporting that an enemy soldier has fired a particular weapon, has hit/missed one of your party and inflicted 'X' points of damage while all the time you're flicking through your inventory screens and getting a number of the team to hold and use his weapons. The messages can be turned off, but since the enemy fire at you turns off the screen, everything becomes a bit of a mystery, but leaving them on and handling the combat yourself is really amazing, like having someone digging you in the ribs all the time.

A further frustration is the fact that buildings frequently have their doors on the northern (left) sides, forcing the player to toggle them 'off' in order to see how to gain entry.

But eventually, the good points outweigh the bad. The 3D polygons for vehicular transport are simply superb with an above average level of detail for buildings and scenery, and combat in this mode is entertaining and exciting. Indeed, it's perhaps the quality of the polygons which make the isometric sequences look so unpolished.

Twilight 2000 deserves a round of applause, at the very least, for taking on the unenviable task of trying to combine a variety of games styles in one. However, the overall conclusion is that it doesn't gel together as well as it might. For a player especially keen on the idea of exploring and dominating a post-holocaust Europe and who is willing to forgive some rough edges for the privilege, it's worth more than a cursory glance.

■ **Jim Douglas**



Below the main is some data of interest. The Red indicator denotes a high chance in the south to meet the nuclear supply.

Left: The main panel looks really smart on the screen of the new updated display.



## CONFLICTING VIEWS

Depending on which particular stage of the game the player finds himself in, his view of the world will change accordingly. During most missions, there will be a change of viewpoint every couple of minutes. In the most heated situations, the player will be required to drive a polygon personnel carrier using 'real-time' camera controls, explore a traditional isometric FPS landscape using the mouse to control the movement of his character and negotiate vast areas of countryside using a handy LOD map alone. While it's true that real soldiers need some advanced multi-tasking capacity, this continual switching between interface views and styles is really a bit much.



## R A T I N G S



Rating of overall game for this title: **800**

Rating of graphics for this title: **800**

Rating of sound for this title: **800**

Rating of playability for this title: **800**

Rating of value for this title: **800**

**800**

Twilight 2000 really makes you appreciate it, and the results are there. The new updated Screen Capture is a fine and fascinating one, and there are no doubt only too many to list. The controls work and the game is played through at each stage. The result of this approach along is a credible sense of achievement, both when it's over and when it's still being played. The biggest concern is the amount of time it takes. While the real-time playing and the ground fire controls complemented the isometric view, the game is actually played.

**RECOMMENDED GAMES**

1. **Twilight 2000**

2. **Twilight 2000**

3. **Twilight 2000**

4. **Twilight 2000**

5. **Twilight 2000**

10  
9  
8  
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Game Platform: Game  
 Publisher: Gameloft  
 Developer: The Wigg Factory  
 Price: \$29.95

# HARLEQUIN



Discover death and destruction-orientated the majority of today's arcade-based software may have become, it's nice to see that it's still possible to base exhilarating games around non-violent, almost girly themes. Take the Harlequin, for example. Anybody who covers their face in make-up and wears a frilly pyjama suit not unlike

Andy Pandy's would hardly sound like the ideal hero for a bell-and-whistle platform extravaganza. But here he is, and a surprisingly hard one at that. In Gameloft's latest arcade effort - and undoubtedly their most impressive to date - the diamond-clad central character comes across as one of the most athletic game stars since the Prince of Persia or the great Sonic himself.

In a nutshell, what we're dealing with here is a cross between *RoboCop* and *Gods*. Harlequin

makes very little effort to disguise the fact that these two platforms' executives have obviously been important influences, but the sheer excellence with which it manages to pull off a successful melding of the two game styles makes this pretty much forgivable.

If, after looking at the screenshots here, the player still has any doubts about the "Watch With Mother!" look and feel of Harlequin read only one scenario to have any such doubts extinguished utterly. Apparently the Harlequin has returned home (from the shops, perhaps? Why are such important details always left out?) to find his land in a state of disrepair (yic). It may sound slightly odd, but the idea is that Harlequin actually lives inside a giant clock case palace called Chimerica. Now the giant main doors are barred and a sign on the giant clock reads "Out of order due to broken heart." So, to restore peace and harmony to the land, Harlequin's got to search Chimerica's giant lands - all 44 of them - and recover the four pieces of said broken heart which have been scattered to the four winds.

Okay, okay, so it's not exactly *The Grapes of Wrath* - but then John Stralovek couldn't write a decent scrolling routine, so it all sort of levels out in the end. If your knowledge of Harlequin ends with the Bagly team and the rather nice Terry's chocolate assortment (previously *StrapBlast*),



you won't know that Harlequin are in fact more than just nifty-pompy silly boys in baggy trousers and a Dick Turpin hat. In fact they are endowed with bizarre magical powers, which accounts for the game's mythical, almost surreal graphical style.

Harlequin's progress around the Chimera world is charted by a giant map of the game area which appears before each level with helpful "YOU ARE HERE" arrows. Generally the route taken seems to be specified by the program, with one level leading automatically to the next, but more thorough players will find that by experimenting with switches and the like, portals can be opened to alternative levels, allowing the player to get through the game via a number of different routes. Whatever the deal, the objective for each individual level remains the same throughout - get to the exit.

It is of course a far trickier task than that rather jaded naming-up may suggest: the very nature of the huge, eight-way scrolling levels makes them difficult to negotiate. It's not that the levels and platforms have been designed in a particularly nasty fashion - well, they have, but that's not really the point - it's the landscapes' sprawling, open-plan style - a RoboCad that creates the main challenge. It's easy enough just to get lost, as there's no definite route to follow, with any number of ways to get from A to B. It's a little daunting at first, to the point of instilling a sense of apoplexy and being perpetually lost, but things soon

**H**arlequin's diamond-clad central character comes across as one of the most athletic game stars since the Prince of Persia or the great Sonic himself.

sort themselves out as soon as the player contemplates himself and gets a feel for where things are. Actually, this sprawling level design isn't entirely my bag as I'm a lazy gamer/player and can't stand having to find my own way through big landscapes - I much prefer to have a few helpful arrows dotted around here and there to point me at least more or less to the right direction.

I was surprised, therefore, to find that I was nowhere near as frustrated as put off by Harlequin as my first few minutes of watching someone else play it suggested I might be. Though there are plenty of times when these doesn't seem to be a way forward or you're just plain lost, the game always manages to compel the player to find the solution. It's mostly due to the fact that, on a basic arcade level, the game never lets up. Whenever Harlequin may be, it's a good bet that some trap-or-energy-sapping monster will be after him. It may be something as simple as a dripping tap or elaborate as a giant flying snake, but there are virtually no safe havens within the game, and, as a result, virtually no time to sit still.

Though Harlequin is first and foremost a platform game, it does boast arcade adventure elements. The most important one is the important part that switches play in the game - every level has a few dotted around the landscape, and they perform different tasks when chosen. A switch may unlock a door or exit, put a platform in or



Comparing Harlequin to any one game directly is not an easy task - primarily because it's more like a mish-mash of elements from many other platform products. The best description

is a cross between RoboCad and Gods. Initially it seems more like RoboCad than anything else, but this just proves that first impressions can be deceiving, as the only real similarity is the huge high-speed eight-way scrolling play areas. Harlequin has far more sophisticated character control, and this combined with the arcade adventure aspects makes it a lot like Gods in that respect. At a push, I'd say that Harlequin's greater variety makes it slightly more resembling than RoboCad, even though a lot more effort is required to get into the game. So far as Gods is concerned, Broo's effort is no match for the speed of Harlequin, although that game's more involved object handling and intelligent aliens make it a better bet for gamers in search of a deeper challenge.



The little thing Harlequin does that is not shared with the best of platform TV adventures: the space stops where Harlequin is stop are helpful without fear of trapping you! They don't cut Harlequin off and cause him to lose things either - it quite certain death. (Indeed, Harlequin uses his abilities well to avoid stepping in the death trap.)







**A FLIGHT OF FANCY** A pleasant aerial interlude here, with Marzipan sailing right-to-left through the multi-colored clouds in a simplified, dreamlike version of an 8-Type style shoot-'em-up. Just keep flying, basically. A nice touch is that the backgrounds and sprites change each time you pass, ranging from lightness and loveliness to the surreal landscape theme.



**THE CLASHER TOWER** The quest begins here, with Omelette's mighty main gate beamed shut. There's a switch somewhere about that will open the door and allow Marzipan inside, but getting to it involves making it to the top of the lofty structure while avoiding the attractions of such inevitabilities as rampaged alien trucks and those gorgeous looping music. Not slow.



Open the bottom you cross when when the level begins. There's a stack of levels between for the taking.



**THE PROBLEM** The choice is to barrel on this level. Marzipan comes up against something (Blasted & Buggy can throw at him. Contact jets, cannons, projectiles, all too weighty). Imagine what our marzipan hero has to get up with the lot.



The contact jets and cannons both provide excellent opportunities to gain attacks.



**REARERS ABOVE** Even in the Kingdom of the Lost, things can roll as rough their time to them. The Drive Bumper is a dab hand with that waffle, or else it's. Obviously, all you can do is keep going, provide the platform for Marzipan to jump about it.

(Hint) **TYPE WOMEN**

LAND is really nice. The entire landscape is made up of 8-Type, the vast majority of which are now rolling, but still. There's a lot of things to see, however, even in the larger screen, and Marzipan can jump "into" any of the three different programs they broadcast. Nice.



(Hint) **BUCK IT AND SEE** Trapped inside a Ray bubble, Marzipan is caught through a maze of obstacles and traps above. Watch!



(Hint) **HILLAPPOPPY** After you've been to Mars, where can you go but down? Yes, it's the domain of Lucifer himself.



(Hint) **MEAT & FALL** It's also in Woodstock territory, with all your favorite characters, along with deadly rats of "Dink Me" type and other Earth-based enemies.





### Amiga Version

One of the most colourful games in yanks, Harlequin can't fail to strike graphically, and the speed at which the whole thing jugs along is very impressive. Sometimes it's a treat too, with a handful of comical events throughout the game and a delightful title theme. There are a host of nice touches, most centred around the Harlequin himself (watch out for his panting for breath if you push him too fast), and on the whole, it's top stuff.



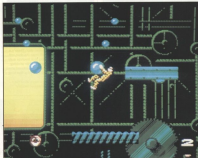
### ST Version

I know what you're thinking, Will it be as good as my Amiga? Well, more or less, yes. Like Release2, Amiga owners will have to make do with less colourful backdrops, but aside from that and a slightly smaller screen display, the graphics will be identical and the sound promises to be almost spot-on too. **Nonessential!**



### PC Version

Sorry PC guys, but Genesis have no plans to release Harlequin for your machines. But if the game's a stunner in the charts, you never know...



Harlequin (seen with Penetration) also has characterisation: these two provide some of the game's more endearing moments as Harlequin wrings every penny from the jaws of a frozen alien. It's as difficult as it looks, and with a multitude of hazards, it's easy to lose the alien's grip of any item, leaving it to an unhelpfully persistent Aard. At various times the ship can be a very long one. Best, then, to be armed with an omnibus or space dagger before attempting such a dangerous stunt.

202 motion or otherwise alter the landscape somehow. The situation of these switches often forces the player to work his way all the way around the level rather than just heading straight for the exit. I'm a little unsure, though, as to how well these switches work. Often the application of a switch is obvious — you hit it and a platform starts moving, for example. In other situations, however, there's no indication of what happens when a switch is thrown because whatever the switch has affected may be in a completely different part of the level. Obviously there wouldn't be much of a point having locked doors in right next to them, but it can get a tad annoying when you hit a switch and then have absolutely no idea what it is you've done. Some kind of visual or audio cue would have been helpful, without giving the game away entirely. Oh well, you can't have everything — although it'd be nice.

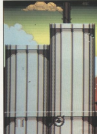
**H**arlequin's panoramic, open-plan nature may be somewhat off-putting for gamers who are used to playing in a more claustrophobic, controlled environment, but ultimately what it adds up to is all the more challenge — if you're up to it.

In addition to switches, the Harlequin world is densely littered with all manner of goodies, the vast majority of which come hidden in lock-in-the-boxes waiting for the player to open. The goodies available range from energy-giving sweets and cakes to more useful items like an umbrella, which allows Harlequin's descent when falling and allows him to drift downwards like a parachute (juched when high up, so long drops

top energy), a space hopper for super-bounce power, little fireworks rockets that fly in circles around the player and act as a shield and, perhaps most exotic of all, a magic thingy that turns Harlequin into a diamond-patterned AngelFish when he lands in water. Without even the player's choice immediately and that's the end of that, but with the fishy power, there are whole underwater caves, much like Mario's, waiting to be explored.

Undoubtedly one of Harlequin's most pleasing features is the central character's remarkable flexibility and acrobatic ability. He runs and jumps like an overjoyed game geon, but he also has the ability to crawl through narrow tunnels, slide down diagonal platforms a la Spider and swing, Texan-style from the large Penetration-like devices that are

conspicuous inside Chimeria's giant workings. The effect, especially in the casual observer, is very much in the same high-spirited skin-of-the-teeth adventure vein as games like Strider and the aforementioned Prince of Persia, joystick control is super-sensitive and thoughtful, with the player able to change Harlequin's direction completely in mid-jump and fire at any time, regardless of his position. Actually, it's arguable that Harlequin is a little too controllable, as it's so easy to oversteer, even though there's no inertia to speak of — something just runs so slightly more



sluggish would probably have resulted in the player making fewer aggravating mistakes.

Enemies come in all shapes and sizes — the specific type varies on the level, but there are some generic types that crop up throughout the game in different graphic guises. Harlequin's only defence against these big bad boys is a stream of hearts, which travel in a short downwards arc like the fireballs in Ghost'n'Ghosts. Initially they're pretty weak, but a power-up which turns them from pink to deep red increases both their range and hit power. Conceptually it sounds a



## HOP, SKIP AND JUMP!

Wow! This Warlock Chaggy sure is an athletic fellow. Movement plays an important part in his movement, so taking a long run-up allows him to leap a bit further than he could be able to from a standing start. Like Spider, he can slide down diagonal surfaces (even super-thin ones like telegraph lines and lightpoles) and hang from ceilings, although climbing is a bit much to ask. As the player progresses, he'll find that many aspects of the landscape are just ripe for Warlock to make athletic use of in one way or another - two of which are shown below. But beware - where something useful is going on, it's a good bet that something equally nasty is taking place nearby, threatening progress.



**Warlock** There's no doubt that the Warlock can provide the athletic side of the platform. He can climb in the dark or probably that way through some dark, but these jumps are required for most levels in this exciting story.



**Warlock** You'll expect to find a corner of the place, and you'll probably wonder on the spot if this strange Warlock can use it that much. He'll show you, though. In this level, he appears to demonstrate a very athletic.



**Warlock!** Though most of the objects in Warlock are likely to be considered innocuous, they can cause that one special of some key. These special Warlock can activate the special objects in the game. In this screenshot, Warlock is sliding into the air when he jumps onto the special platform. This is often the only way to reach otherwise inaccessible platforms in the game.

It's a bit of a pity that we have certain reservations about a game where our primary weapons are not a light sabre or a machine gun but a pink heart, but if you block that out of your mind the weapon-flying side of things can be quite frantic and pleasing. It's a combination of the fact that the player can do just about anything, regardless of what else he may be doing, and the rapid rate of fire.

As a proto-technical display, Warlock is at its best in situations when there's a lot going on. Generally, when things happen, they do so in an elaborate fashion. Bubbles explode into lots of little bits, and the jabs in the lasers open amidst a shower of stars and spangly things. It gives the impression of there being lots of action and things being very busy, even when in real terms there may not be much happening. It also makes Warlock feel very much like a console game - there are times when it looks quite MegaDrivey, in fact - and that atmosphere is backed up by an impressive array of sound effects, which range from the mundane (like the explosion) to the just plain silly, like the muted "whoooo!" that Warlock utters whenever he slides down a diagonal platform. Though there's no in-game music and some of the effects have a primitive 16-bit sound to them (which I actually quite like), Warlock is as much an assault on the ears as it is on the optic nerves.

Despite the fact that at first glance it may look like a straight RobotCo tip-off, Warlock is actually a surprisingly fresh and original game - not really when viewed in a broad, general sense, as the major aspects like objectives and character control are nothing new, but when looked at as the sum of its individual parts.

It's the multitude of smaller ideas and innovative touches, like the space-hopper and fish bits and jangling "tats" the television screen to take part in the programmes they're broadcasting that make the difference and lift Warlock out of the ordinary.

Unlike something like Gods, Warlock doesn't hit the player too hard with mobile enemies - with the exception of a few levels, alien attacks are sporadic, and they tend to come on irregularly rather than in big waves of six or eight at a time. As such, the game's difficulty can be attributed much more to the size and design of the levels themselves. The paranoiac, open-plan nature may be somewhat off-putting for gamers who are used to playing in a more claustrophobic, controlled environment, but ultimately what it adds up to is all the more challenge - if you're up to it.

So there, is it any good or what? After all the pontificating, the simple answer is a definite yes. Warlock impresses both technically and in gameplay terms, and stimulates the intellect and adrenal glands in equal amounts. It's far from perfect, and I doubt there'll be anyone who doesn't find something that gets on their tits in one way or another, but the game doesn't make any major mistakes, and for the most part everything it tries to do, it does spot on target. Programmers The Wary Factory get an extra shiny star in their oysters for making such a good job out of such unlikely subject matter, and anyone who appreciates the surreal or bizarre set in for a special treat here. An acquired taste to be sure - but one you'd do well to acquire.

■ Gary Whitta



## R A T I N G S



Graphics

High score

Controls

Value for money

Replay value

Overall

Really good

Very good

Good

Not good

Very poor

Terrible

900

Warlock

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**SO GET CVG AND GET SERIOUS  
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Like a bit of risk, one that not in real life of course. Oh, no, your gear can take her handbag stuffed with furs! For a walk along the streets at night occurs in the knowledge that I haven't the slightest intention of releasing all of those little anxieties and insecurities that I bottle up inside at her expense. I'd rather punch people on the telly. It's safer than the safest safe and no-one actually gets hurt.

One of my favourite rocking songs in Golden Axe, so you can imagine how chuffed I was to get another chance to clap some spines in this follow-up.

In Golden Axe II, the land you fought so hard to cleanse of evil once again seeks of the staff. Dark Guld, the Lord Of Darkness, has arisen to bring the world into chaos by destroying entire countries with his evil-enchanting clan, Ochs'ns.

And as the three clear-limbed, hard-limbed 'n' backer heroes - Ax-Battler, Gilas-Thunderbol and Tyris-Flare - are back in what amounts to little more than a remix of Golden Axe. Yes, I'm afraid it's more of the same but with a change of scenery, harder-looking adversaries, a spicier new soundtrack and more impressive spell effects.



# GOLDEN AXE II



Plays like a more elegant, slightly more refined version of the original Golden Axe. It's all about the same but with a change of scenery, harder-looking adversaries, a spicier new soundtrack and more impressive spell effects.

The best, best adventure game in a while. It's a real gem.

**781** 100% COMPLETE

The most appealing aspect of Golden Axe - and its reincarnation for that matter - is the way that the scraggy woods. There's come of this posing-around wrestling with the jopod and mowing it in the right direction to locate the desired manure-mountain, oh yes. Duffing up the Dark Guld's dukes is simply a matter of being in the right place at the right time and frantically pressing a button. All the big moves, such as kicking an opponent in the teeth, happens automatically. It is limited, but the fighting feels fine as I'm not complaining.

What I will mean about though is how similar Golden Axe II is to the original Golden Axe in terms of playability. The opponents encountered by and large don't look the same as those in Golden Axe, but there's not all difference in their behaviour and positioning within the five short scrolling levels. It's a bit of a cheat, I feel, to simply reiterate a piece of software and stick a 'II' on the end.

There is a slight improvement in one department - and that's the magic (the power of which is improved by collecting talismans released by mystical figures who appear during and at the end of the levels). Golden Axe II's options allow play to progress with either Normal or Special magic made in three. When the magic button is pressed in Normal mode a spell is

**PRICE**  
**£39.99**  
(RRP)



Plays like a more elegant, slightly more refined version of the original Golden Axe. It's all about the same but with a change of scenery, harder-looking adversaries, a spicier new soundtrack and more impressive spell effects.

automatically cast, its power determined by the on-screen magic-counter. In Special mode however, the spell's strength increases when the magic button is depressed and is cast as the magic-counter strength shows when it's released. This feature would have been welcome in Golden Axe, but its appearance in this sequel isn't enough to make a significant difference.

So, to conclude: don't bother with Golden Axe II if you own the original Golden Axe. If, on the other hand, you don't own Golden Axe but you do fancy a retro fix, get Golden Axe II instead.

**By Gary Pees**



GOLDEN AXE II



PRICE  
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(Suggested)



• **One-way** magic spells  
• **Original** combat system  
• **Fun** and **challenging** combat  
• **Exciting** and **innovative** combat  
• **Exciting** and **innovative** combat

863

Initially, despite some frustration through occasionally garbled graphics, Arcus Odyssey seems like more than competent old-school single-player action and moderately better than some contemporary titles. As you progress, you'll see that the game's graphics are actually quite good. The combat is fun, and the main game play is fun. There's a healthy dose of good compelling story in there, as well. Although Arcus Odyssey is essentially still a single-player game, it's a fun one to play with a friend. You can play it on a computer screen with a friend.



# ARCUS ODYSSEY

**A**rcus Odyssey is a lot of things, most of them good, but one thing it isn't: original. Take this, if you will, 'plot'—it's yet another role-playing, sub-standard game scenario fadder. The land of Lantia, the only weapon that can destroy the evil sorcerer Castorina, has been stolen by her followers to prevent it ever being wielded against her. As the witch/dark forces cut across the powerful kingdom of Arcus, a band of warriors set out to reclaim the sword and put an end to Castorina's reign.

Arcus Odyssey can be played by one or two players simultaneously, each assuming the role of one of the four heroes: a mighty swordswoman, a whip-cracking Amazon, an elfen enchanter or an aged wizard, each with varying fighting, spellcasting and health ratings. As the players explore the swirling mazes they encounter an increasingly imaginative-but usually tedious mix of miniquests to slay and heavy sub-quests to crack open.

His/her, yet another Gasteroid variant. Seen it, done it, bought the T-shirt, eaten the breakfast cereal. Okay, as the influences of Atari's classic four-player coin-op are pretty obvious, but there's much more to Arcus Odyssey than simply beating up baddies and amassing points.

For a start, victory isn't simply a matter of finding the exit from each of the seven huge levels. The players have to complete certain tasks to progress, such as releasing some prisoners from one of Castorina's dungeons or finding a magic key sword. To be honest, none of the tasks requires any true adventuring skill—it's simply a matter

of finding the required object and taking it to where it's needed—but finding it is no easier the game for more satisfying to play.

Smaller characters can be charmed to. Well, I say 'charmed', but it's definitely a one-sided conversation—the player simply jumps into the character, a text window pops up and a stream of dialogue appears. This can be useful or useless, either telling you where a certain vital item is hidden or nothing. It's annoying that once you know where a secret item is located, in future games you can't shortcut straight there. Instead you have to talk to the character again, even though you know exactly what they're going to say.

The magic items found in the chests add a bit of spice too. Instead of just awarding increased

abilities to the sword-wielding game ends of Arcus's three warriors, most items are more strictly decorative in order to collect them all they have to do.

Major items of the adventure include the sword and the key.



Arcus Odyssey's combat system is excellent.

Arcus Odyssey's combat system is excellent.

Arcus Odyssey's combat system is excellent.

Arcus Odyssey's combat system is excellent.



stat points or speed, they perform such actions as summoning protective elemental spirits or awarding temporary invulnerability. The player can store the magic items in an inventory and call them forth when required, rather than having to use them as soon as they're collected.

The best thing about Arcus Odyssey is that it keeps getting better and better the deeper you get into it, evolving from a basic smash 'n' grab treasure hunt into a fine piece of arcade adventuring, with the accent on the arcade. Some of the later level end-of-level monsters are amazing.

To put it simply, Arcus Odyssey is one of the finest examples of the arcade adventure genre to appear on the Megadrive. Well worth picking out forty-one for, I'd say.

© David Upchurch







# LEMMINGS

**F**or a company that seems perpetually applicable in products that offer far more on the aesthetic front than in actual gameplay, it's ironic when you consider that Progenesi's biggest hit to date by far is one that goes right against their apparent philosophy. Lemmings may have minuscule graphics and silly sound, but it remains one of the most excellently playable, compulsive - and original - games of recent times. Now, on a wave of revived Lemmings hysteria (with the data disk already out and a sequel currently in the pipeline), the silly little souls with the green hair continue their worldwide domination with a new version for the Super Nintendo plus Super Famicom.

There are no surprises on the game front - apart from an all-new intro, it's basically a carbon copy of the Amiga original, right down to the inter-level message screens. The two levels are the same as before, as is just about everything else. The idea is to subtly escort a band of hapless Lemmings (somewhere between 50 and 100, depending on the level) through each screen's various obstacles and traps to the exit. Mindless creatures that they are, the Lemmings just wander along blindly, bumping into things, falling off ledges, etc. and generally killing themselves inadvertently. To put a stop to this, and guide the Lemmings to the exit instead, the player can bestow special powers on the Lemmings via an item bank.

Lemmings can be turned into bridge-builders, diggers, blockers, climbers, parachutists and more - applying the right ability to the right Lemmings at the right time creates a safe route for the rest of the little hooligans to follow. It's not necessary on every screen to rescue every Lemming - in fact often some may have to be sacrificed in order to save others, and as the game progresses only limited resources are available, making strategy and forward planning all the more important. Essentially it's a question of marrying this tactical staff with good old-fashioned arcade dexterity (the trick is selecting Lemmings and giving out the tools quickly before a major disaster occurs - not always easy under pressure). Yes, it gets frustrating at times, but in a way that just makes the player all the more adamant to complete the level.



Lemmings aren't wonder bug steps, so you just about to start off a high structure (the one already built) to level the floor before they fall. They use the edge (the open air in this level) and will lemming to its ground.

rather than throwing the controller down in disgust. And that's Lemmings' secret - good solid addictive value.

Given Lemmings' technical simplicity and the complexity of its mouse-based control system, the primary problem with converting a game like this onto a console is not duplicating the action faithfully, but making the control work on a joystick, which is fundamentally unsuited to this sort of task. But where the CDTV version failed miserably, the SNES manages without any problems - it may be something to do with the SNES joystick having four extra buttons, but the real key is in the Nintendo conversion's better understanding of the game. The top two buttons cycle back and forth through the ten icons, rather than having to click on them with the pointer, although this is possible, while the others select the Lemmings. Although control of the pointer isn't as flexible as with a mouse, it works perfectly well - a particularly nice touch is that those funny little index-finger buttons at the top of the SNES controller that hardly ever do anything have been put to good use here. They scroll the map left and right, leaving the pointer free to get on with other business.

Though initially cynical, I have to admit I was well impressed by SNES Lemmings - the game has been implemented perfectly and a more than commendable job has been made of the control issue. With so much drudge arcade stuff being churned out for the big Nintendo at the moment, Lemmings comes as a refreshing reminder of what good software is all about - and proves that we can still show the Japanese a thing or two about game design. Super NES owners shouldn't hesitate in buying this one - anyone who does, we'll want to know the reason why.

By Gary White



Blizzards use the latest way to Ace Lemmings about this. The only problem is Blizzards can't change back and must be delivered after release only. They say now that quality is 100% there will be a 100% level for Blizzards.



When Lemmings hit its first and like a whirlwind, Blizzards can provide the way forward simply by sending a note through the situation. Game software, the reader, we emphasize in sending an e-mail, you have to enter the long way home.



PRICE  
£49.99  
(Suggested)



ESRB Rating: Everyone / Everyone 10+

PROGENESI 910

Though it doesn't sound like the strangest title in the world to get into, Lemmings still may seem to grab the attention of the most hardcore when it comes to get started. The first lesson on an arcade can well say, and that that on the extra difficulty elements are added gradually, allowing the player to learn with the game. Additionally, there are game board before you, and many the control player may find it hard to control, and that they are not always. Actually, there are some things, such as the most, which are not always, with an introduction to help them learn.







# &

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This is what is known as a 1991 TV and it's made by Philips. It's 10cm high and it's got a screen built in the back enabling not only videos and satellite dishes to be plugged into it, but consoles and computers too. It gives wonderful reception and would take pride of place in any bedroom/lounge.

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This is what is known as a CDTV, which stands for Commodore Dynamic Total Vision. You'll have already read a great deal about it, so we won't go over old ground. In a nutshell, the deal is this: CDTV has two really good things to it. One is a compact disc player and the other is an Amiga. When these two things are put together you get videos, sound and great Amiga games, all combined in a sleek and stylish black box. Software companies from around the world are developing all manner of great programs to run on the system.

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The draw will take place until 31st March. No-one playing at home images or their relatives are eligible for entry. The winner's decision to final and/or correspondence will be considered. Details entry rules in letters, we cannot accept responsibility for entries lost in the system.

Calls are charged at 40p per minute at cheap rates and 45p per minute at other times. Before you dial the complete line, please get the permission of the person who has to pay the phone bill.

The Number

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**A**nd you thought you'd seen the last of it, but now Emerging like some strange monster from another dimension comes the savings of the publishing world, the ACE Interactive Phone Line. But you'd be forgiven if you failed to recognize your old ally friend, because it's had a complete overhaul.

Yes, for its all-new revamped look, the ACE Interactive Phone Line has shed its slightly stuffy image for a more instantly gratifying feel. And to celebrate the return of the line which will be appearing in one guise or another on a page very near here from now on, we're kicking the service off by giving ACE readers the chance to enter - in the words of Les Dennis - a truly fantastic competition.

Indeed, the lucky winner of this particular contest will no longer find themselves being let

**T**ake the paper and unfold it. Read it. Go to the bar and show the paper to the barman. Read the paper (look). Take the letter and read it. Go to the smoking room and speak to Tom about Tom. Go to the desk and speak to Suzanne about Suzanne. Go to Daphne's cabin and open the door. Speak to Julio about Julio.

Go to Fabiani's cabin and pull the suitcase on the left. Open it. Go to the dining room and speak to Fabiani about Fabiani. Go to the bar and speak to Suzanne about Julio. Go to the smoking room and take the paper. Go to Tom's cabin and speak about Suzanne and about Fabiani's suitcase. Go to Julio's cabin and speak to Julio about the friendship between Suzanne and Fabiani.

Go to the dining room and speak about Suzanne's invitation. Go to Raoul's cabin and take the small key. Go into Karaboujian's office and unlock the writing desk. Examine the jewel box and its clasp. Take the thank-you letter. Go to the dining room and open the drawer. Examine drawer and take the invitation cards.

Go to the deck (on the right) to observe Tom and Rebecca. Go to the laundry room and examine the laundry basket. Examine the necklace and the photo. Go in front of



the mermaid and speak to Dick about Dick. Go to the smoking room and speak to Tom about Agnes. Go to see Fabiani in his room - knock before entering. Speak to him about the thank-you



# CRUISE FOR A CORPSE

**Nasty business, murder. And it's an even nastier one to solve. So thank US GOLD for a mighty complete solution for those whose deductive powers are completely unimpaired!**

letter.

Go to Julio's cabin and speak to him about the bell tower. Go to Suzanne's cabin and open the left wardrobe. Search the cosmetic case and take the prescription. Go to the bar and take the glass and the bottle. Go to the upper deck and speak to Suzanne. Give her a drink. Speak to her about the prescription. Go to Hector's room and speak to him about Agnes' illness and her stay with Nikos.

Go to the smoking room and speak to Tom about the death of Agnes and her will. Go to the deck and look through the portfolio of Rebecca's cabin. Go to Suzanne's room and open the right-hand cupboard. Search the pile of laundry and take the envelope. Go to Fabiani's room (knock on the door) and open the cupboard and take the watch. Speak to Julio about the watch.

Go to the upper deck and speak to Rose about Rose. Go to

Rebecca's room and speak to her about Rebecca. Go to Daphne's room and speak to her about Rose. Now go to the bar and speak to Suzanne about Rose. Go to the dining room and speak to Fabiani about Rose's sadness and about Raphael Lambert. Go to Nikos' office and speak to Hector about everything. Speak to him about Mercedes, mother of Daphne. Speak to Julio about the death of Nikos. Speak to Fabiani about the relationship between Daphne and Rebecca and Rebecca's character. Speak to Hector about Daphne's mother.

Go to the upper deck and search Rose's bag. Talk to Rose about the gun advertisement. Go to Logan's room and open the wardrobe. Search the pile of clothes and take the letter. Go to the upper deck and throw the letter. Go to the laundry room and examine the pot/pan. Go to Suzanne's room and examine the music box. Insert the key, stop the



belltower and turn the key. Take the letter.

Go to the bar and take Daphne's bag. Go to Daphne's room and talk to her about Agnes' will. Go round the deck and talk to Rebecca, Daphne, Rose and Fabiani. Go to the bar or on the deck and speak to Suzanne about the relationship between Tom and Rebecca. Go in front of the mermaid and speak to Dick about the relationship between Tom and Rebecca and about the plot. Go to Raoul's room and take the envelope on the ground.

Go to Hector's room and do not speak to Dick. Go to the kitchen and take the tin opener. Operate the hatch/trapdoor. Take the crowbar and use it on the plank. Take the spool of film. Use the crowbar on one of the cables. Take the bin and use the opener on it. Go to the engine room and take the screwdriver.

Go to the smoking room and get out the projector. Put the reel of film on the projector and use the screwdriver on the screen. Operate the switch. Go out towards the mermaid. Go and see Suzanne. Go to Van Muller's room and find the tech manual. Open it and look at the inscription, "MCM, 1". Take the book and go to the study.

Examine the books and put them in order so that they read MCM. Enter the secret passage and fight or throw the soap that you find in the barrels on the right. Search the Maffeo and take the puppet. Go to the smoking room and show the puppet to Daphne. Point out the guilty party. Congratulations! You solved the crime!



# FIRST SAMURAI

*At first, this game is counter-intuitive rubbery. In fact, I rub it to death! But it is really difficult. To keep the hooligans walking out in game rans, here is a breakdown and maps of rebels from to far.*

## KEY

B	Bell	P?	Recharge pot
BB	Beeping bell	W	Wizard hint pot
X	Potion	T	Transporter
L	Lamp	=	Destroiyable piece of background
S1	Log		
S2	Bucket		
S3	Rock		
S4	Electric spark		
EOL	End of level		

(Special thanks to John Teldy and all at Visual Image Design for all their help.)



# Tip TIPS



## ROBOCOP

Want to know how to find the two secret levels in this ace platform [game]? It's easy, thanks to Martyr Jones from Comixsoft in Swansea. Run right (taking care to jump over the first two doors) until you reach the last tower. Climb it, then go left so that you end up on the roof. Keep going left and you should find yourself walking behind the wall of the next tower. Hey presto! You're in!

But, asks Martyr, who is Kate???



## BART SIMPSON VERSUS THE SPACE MUTANTS

Don't have a cow, mate! Cowan's The Simpsons (he-in is NOT easy, so thank the sweet Lord for Paul Murphy from Mullingar in Ireland for this short n' sweet little cheat to get infinite lives. Simply type in COMABUNGA on the title screen and unlimited Barks are yours. If that isn't a good tip I'll eat my shorts.

## RAILROAD TYCOON

Sid Meier's classic has just been converted across to the Amiga and Atari ST, so what

better time to tell that you can increase your in-game cash supplies by pressing down SHIFT and 4 at the same time. Thanks to Niran Patel from Edmonton for that. He also warns that misuse of this sneaky cheat can result in the game crashing - you have been warned.



## PLAYER MANAGER

To get codes of money in Anco's dreamy forty management game, remove 8 or 9 players and after two or three defeats you'll receive lucrative sponsorship. You can then bring the players back in again.

## ANOTHER WORLD

This stunning 3D arcade adventure deserves all the success



it's getting - it's a brilliant game. Also known for St Kartell, Corwell, has been beavering away at the game and has kindly provided the following pass codes to the game's various stages: EDU; HCU; FLD; LMC; DCA; EDL; HCU; FLAR; ICAH; LALD; LFER.

## LOTUS TURBO CHALLENGE 2

Try typing DUX in the password to enter a sneaky dash shooting game. Oh, those guys! Once handled, try DEEDEE to advance through the stages regardless of whether you win or not, or TURPENTINE to stop the clock. Thanks to David Massey of Tavris in Chesham!





# OH NO! MORE LEMMINGS

*Oh no indeed. Only a couple of days after the all-new adventures of the green-haired scamps hit the shelves, we received the complete codes for all 100 levels from Robert Phelps at Broad in Gloucester. Way to go, Phelps dude! Most bodacious quick work! For your troubles you'll be receiving TWO - yes, TWO - brand-spanking new pieces of software for your computer any day now.*



#### TAME LEVELS

2	WHTDMCAD
3	WPTDQADAG
4	PTDQADAG
5	TQDQADAG
6	DQDQVTSU
7	LDQVTDHAG
8	DMTDLMD
9	CDPDLQJG
10	WBLDLCAN
11	WBLDCLAH
12	KUDDCLMAG
13	LDLCAHVAU
14	DLDHVKAG
15	LGAMTUDFAG
16	DMBLVHQAP
17	DMRTFLBS
18	KHRTFLCBS
19	LPRTFLCBS
20	WPTDLEDR

#### CRAZY LEVELS

2	FLOHUTGEL
3	KCALWTHFN
4	DLTGTMBF
5	COHSUFLSH
6	WBLFLQSD
7	WBLDCLBN
8	WBLDCLMB
9	WYCHALRN
10	FLOHMLSD
11	NCMBLJFEE
12	WMTLHJGR
13	CDPDTGSDP
14	WMTFLCDD
15	LSBLGADD
16	WVAGHSDP
17	SDCDHWFC
18	SDCDHTGCP
19	KLWVWHR
20	DMVLUIC

#### WILD LEVELS

2	BAQUMUCD
3	WPMBCD
4	WPMVMCLCM
5	PUMCKMLCD
6	VMCKHMQ
7	LCDHVCQ
8	DDCVLDFCH
9	DLVWUDQCR
10	GHRTGSDP
11	WSTHDCD
12	STGDDLEDR
13	VKDCWHPDR
14	WCKCHWDDO
15	KCVVCHDP
16	CKMTVDRL
17	CDHSLGDR
18	WHTVCKDSD
19	LQVNCALDQ
20	QVAGCMMH

#### WICKED LEVELS

2	WCKHWRDCH
3	WCLWVDFDQ
4	DLVWSDP
5	WARTLSDP
6	WRTGSDCH
7	WPTGSDCH
8	WVUGMDEL
9	WLGHWATER
10	DGRTTGER
11	WGLTDRDP
12	WGLVLER
13	WSPVLEDR
14	WDLVHSDR
15	WPMVGLDR
16	WUMHRLMEN
17	WMSGTFWEN
18	WMSHRLDEL
19	WGLWVDFDQ
20	WSPVWVQDM

#### CALLING ALL TOP TYPERS!

We need you. Lots of you. Lots and lots and lots of you. Lots and lots and lots and lots and... well, you get the idea. And we want YOU to send them to us. We'll accept you and others... or... the, wherever it be a lousy check, a set of pants, or, hand-drawn level maps or a cute photo adventure notebook.

And we're not expecting you to do it for the love of GOD alone. We see it as your job too. We'll send YOU a piece of top-quality software for your machine, the really outstanding one and if you're even more, then the best piece of software we've awarded to Robert Phelps for his amazing Lemmings work.

So, don't be shy! Send your tips to: BOB The Top Typers, Philips Circuit, 80-82 Farnborough Road, London SE14 6AL.



#### HAVOC LEVELS

2	WRTGSDCH
3	LQTLGADP
4	WTLGSDP
5	TGLSDHWTFP
6	FLGHVTSFH
7	WGLVTSDFE
8	WGLVTSDFQ
9	WGLVGLDR
10	WGLVGLGTFH
11	WGLVGLGTFE
12	WRTGSLMPP
13	WGLVWVDFP
14	WGLVWVDFP
15	WGLVWVDFP
16	WGLVWVDFP
17	WGLVWVDFP
18	WGLVWVDFP
19	WGLVWVDFP
20	WGLVWVDFP

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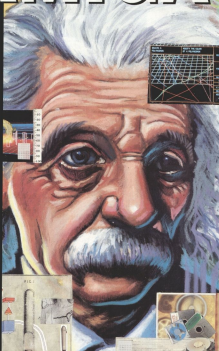
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# next!

## ACE Disk 2!

Yes, we can hardly believe it ourselves! The next issue of ACE Magazine is already taking shape, and what a beautiful shape it is. More beautiful, some

would say, than the most beautiful thing in the world, but we wouldn't.

And that's because we've suddenly come over all modest and restrained. To be honest, we can't be doing with all this



*Oh, my word! It's another disk! And it'll be full of the most excellent Public Domain software and playable demos for Amiga, PC and ST owners.*

*If you enjoyed this month's offering, you'll love the next one!*



**BIGGER BRIGHTER BETTER ONWARDS UPWARDS MORE** rubbish. Because, on top of the fact that ACE is already functioning on 100% Excellentness, with its Style Motors fully operational and its Fact Content soaring higher than ever before, frankly, it can't get much better.

So let's play safe and steer clear of all the grand claims which we're sure you've become thoroughly bored of reading. Instead, we'll say that the next issue will contain:

★ A **SIMILAR** Screentest section, still offering the most detailed games buying information anywhere.

★ A **ROUGHLY EQUAL** amount of Previews

★ A **FAMILIAR LOOKING** number of News stories

★ In the Works features **PROBABLY JUST AS EARLY** as this month's

★ **THE SAME** (rather high) quality of material on the disk

**ACE APRIL - £2.75 with Tri Format Disk  
On The Shelves March 8th.**



# new releases

28 days. 672 hours. 40,320 minutes. 2,419,200 seconds. That's all it takes for yet another bunch of high-quality (and alas, not-quite-so high-quality) software to parachute its way onto the shelves of your local software retail outlet emporium. And that's all it takes for us to come up with yet another blistering New Releases section, where we give you the low-down on every single last one of those new products. Not only that, but we provide pictorial information on a choice selection of said games, to ensure that the reviews are as much a banquet for your eyes as they are for your cerebral cortex. Excellent!



# new releases

## 4D SPORTS DRIVING



**Price: Amiga £29.99**  
**Genre: Racing Simulation**  
**Publisher: Mindspace**

A very long time indeed after the PC original for the streets, this Amiga version of the auto-racer from the people who wrote the superb *4D Sports Driving* really hits the spot.

Don't be put off by the crappily low street or 'spoonwide' car drivers by other users with hardware eyes of you please. This is an excellent simulation of driving some of the most exciting cars in the world around some of the most fabulous and hazardous tracks to ever come out of a games designer's head.

While some of the advantages that made truly 100 such a laugh, such as a video playback mode and spectacular crashes, 4D Sports Driving has all the elements that a fun driving game should have, with very little of the tedious details that many have included in the name of realism.

The player can either race solo or against one of a host of computer-controlled opponents. These electronic drivers have considerably more personality than the faceless robots driving drone cars found in other race games. Before each race against one of these maniacs, the player gets a breakdown of their particular psychological defects, whether they're speed freaks, being overcautious or whatever. The action is repeated in obtainable

*4D* plus Fourth Dimension is YOURS and even if the race themselves aren't the fascinating, for each designed section will provide you with enough interesting side tips to keep you coming back for more.

☆☆☆☆

## AWESOME GOLF

**Price: Amiga £29.99**  
**Genre: Sports Simulation**  
**Publisher: Head**

It's a constant surprise to me how well golf games work on computer. You'd think the slow pace and highly physical nature of the sport just wouldn't make for a good computer game at all. But it nearly always seems to work well. *Awesome Golf* is the first golf game on the Amiga hardware and it's pretty good stuff.

The player can choose to play on either British, US and Japanese courses. As the player moves the cursor between windows choosing which one to play, the game face changes subtly to reflect the country currently selected. Nice. There's also some extra sports during the game which is very entertaining.

Although there are some nice 3D views when the golfer takes a swing, the actual mechanics of the game are handled in 2D. Each shot begins with a plan view of the current green. The player can walk about it using the cursor pad and even zoom in and out

thanks to the marvel of the Amiga's superb manipulating hardware.

Using a small cursor the player aims the shot, then chooses a club. Amazingly there's no on-screen indication to tell you the maximum range of each club so you have to keep referring to the instruction booklet. Taking a swing is achieved by the familiar hitting the button when a readily scoring marker is over the shot point: you must then hit the button again to give the ball left or right swing.

While *Awesome Golf* doesn't really set a new standard for computer golf games, it's a nice addition to the genre and is a recommended to all sports-loving Amiga owners.

☆☆☆☆

## DIMENSION FORCE



**Price: Super Famicom £39.99**  
**Genre: Action/Adventure**  
**Publisher: Namco**

Can't wait with helicopter marks set to sweep the country over the next few months, we were given that a little nudge with the promise of a full-blown helicopter romp on the Famicom. Indeed, the design-guy's seem to have got their wits together, dating approximately the right sort of war-of-the-stars. Apparently *How Dangerous* for the front of the line.

Unfortunately for both them and us, the people who have actually programmed the game seem to have been

stuck in some sort of time warp for the last five years, and are perfectly content to dish up a game which makes *Flag Flight* look sophisticated.

Now don't get us wrong, it's probably acceptable to produce a top-down shooting about now these days, but these days tend to be some degree of innovation, doesn't there? Alas, there is none.

The player launches from his aircraft carrier in one of the most clogged and convoluted scaling routines I've witnessed and the fun the pleasure of firing over a stripe sea with rocks (as are they clouds, it's tricky to tell) swirling down at regular intervals. Then, surprise computer, the player is launched from all directions from a bunch of chunky drones and easily recognizable planes.

It's unfortunate that *Dimension Force* just happens to come along after the cut-off date, but this sort of gloriously trash just doesn't cut it any more.

## FINAL FANTASY 2



**Price: Super Famicom £49.99**  
**Genre: Role Playing Game**  
**Publisher: Square Software**

The Final Fantasy series returns on the Super Nintendo in style. In *Final Fantasy II*, the player is whisked off to a mythical dimension of dragons, magic and civil commotion of a giant striping hole that-changed-by-the-King-of-States to recover a set of magical crystals. But when Cecil refuses to do the King's dirty work any longer, he's sent out on an even more perilous mission. All this is told by an elaborate introductory sequence prior to play, and there it's up to you to journey off into the wilderness not just to undertake your mission but also to find out what sinister intentions the King seems to be up to.

Along the way you're accompanied by your pal, Kain, and more characters turn up and join your party as the quest progresses. The main game is presented in a top-down strategy format, with equal foot-dances and bright, colorful scenery. The simplistic nature of the graphics tends to belie the game's sophisticated nature. It may look inflexible and shallow, but in fact it's bigger and more deeply than the vast majority of computer-based RPGs - and it's much easier to get into and learn too.

It's much rather play this than some stuffy, pretentious A-D-B product any day of the week.

For its terrific user-friendliness, depth of gameplay and sheer size and scope, Final Fantasy II gets a definite thumbs-up as one of the better console RPGs to date — even the super-cute graphics don't make it a little difficult to take things seriously at times. Definitely recommended.

☆☆☆☆

## JOHN MADDEN FOOTBALL



Price Super Nintendo £29.99  
Genre Sports Game  
Publisher Electronic Arts

Whoosh! Touchdown! That's right, John Madden Mania sweeps the UK in a crazy fit of football bonkersness! And in readiness for the arrival in a couple of months of the official UK Super Nintendo, lots of grey import dealers across the country have taken the earlier appearing opportunity of stocking this version of the game that everyone is calling "John Madden Football".

And not a bad version it is too. Offering the player the chance to be both quarterback (who gets to call the plays) and every other position in the team in a sort of Kick-Off style fashion. That is, the player shows the ball himself and the computer then automatically switches his control to the man who is nearest and most capable of 'receiving'.

Alternatively, once the player has called the play, he can have the computer-controlled players to try their best to carry out his instructions. This rarely works as well as you may expect, but it offers a better option than muddling and screwing things up yourself.

As you would expect from the Electronic Arts Sports Network, there are more features than you can wave a stick at, allowing you to choose from 15 teams, decide what the weather is going to be like and decide if you want to practise, play a regular season or opt for league play.

It's not quite as slick as the Megadrive version, but still good enough to take the crown as one of the finer games available on the SNES.

☆☆☆☆

## JUPITER'S MASTER-DRIVE



Price Amiga/PC/ST £7.99  
Genre Racing Game  
Publisher Action Station

It's a rare occurrence indeed that a lead-gen game gets to appear in ACE. But for Jupiter's Masterdrive, we just had to make an exception. Ages ago when UBI sold released the title, it was warmly received by reviewers but sort of got washed away in the spite of top-down driving scrollers so the market. Now, at a mere £7.99, the game stands a chance to be a budget scorcher, since there are very few decent top-downers around at the moment.

The players have to steer an assortment of vehicles (planes, cars, karts) in one car, hot rods and the like) around a bunch of different tracks, each taking place on a different planet or something.

Distinguishing Masterdrive from most games of the ilk is the fact that the player can actually lead each other up by using handy rail/race mount-up cameras.

Most of the courses are well designed and provide thrilling racing, but too problems quickly emerge. The first is that in two player mode, the scale of the track contained in the tiny screen is simply too large and the player can't see where he's going. The second problem is that some tracks are utterly impossible, like the ice track which must be negotiated on footstep. This in mind that many courses have pin-ball-style bumpers which rebound the craft across the track, and you can see that this can become a bit of a hind.

Still you can opt to avoid this course, so it's not that bad. And the interesting camera you can have with your mates are most enjoyable.

☆☆☆

## MERCENARY III



Price Amiga £29.99  
Genre Adventure  
Publisher Neogames

Since the publication of the original Mercenary on the Commodore (by back in 1984, the 3D sword-driven adventure game, and those that have followed it, have become cult classics. Since the original, we've had The Second City (essentially a data disk for the first game), the excellent Dungeons and now the trilogy-driven to-close (probably by the closely-titled Mercenary III) (published The Don Crisp). It's bigger, better and tougher than those that have preceded it, with the 3D third-view environment that author Paul Winkler is famous over new more sophisticated and believable than ever before.

This time around, the player travels between planets in a bid to unravel a tangled political complex. Interaction with characters now plays a major part in the adventuring, but mostly the gameplay will be familiar to television fans — travel around collecting objects and using them in the right way. It's not particularly sophisticated stuff, but the realistic environment and the usual shade of things to do give the impression that it is, and that's fine by me.

Of course, anybody who enjoyed the earlier Mercenary games won't need to be told that this is right up their street also. Unfortunately, the game is innovative way of doing things, in tricky puzzles, weird sense of humour and overall feel isn't for everybody's taste, so newcomers may want to check it out before taking the plunge. It's definitely worth looking out for, though, as those who have the patience and take the time to get into the game will find it thoroughly absorbing.

☆☆☆☆

## MYSTICAL



Price Amiga/PC/ST £7.99  
Genre Arcade Blast  
Publisher Action Station

Heard, what a pity little game this is. Originally released by Intergames, this off-the-wall shoot-em-up never really received the recognition it deserved. Now it's out at a more pocket-friendly price, though, it should be able to reveal its delights to a much wider audience.

The player's cast as an apprentice magician who, just before taking his final exams, carelessly mislaid all of

the Great Wizard's spells and magic potions. Now, to even stand a chance of winning his pony hat, he's got to go into the magical lands and retrieve the list of them. What follows is a stunningly bad nevertheless addictive vertical shoot-em-up with the wizard trawling up the screen collecting the lost spells and doing battle with the myriad of nasties that occur him. Hardly surprising for a game of wizard origin, it's very linear indeed, with lots of completely unneeded abuse (spelled-out jobs and bit of rudeness) and plenty of on-the-side graphical surprises.

As the wizard progresses, the spells he collects can be used like power-ups against the evil hordes. The aim of the game is essentially to reach the magic pentagram at the end of each level, so as to be transported in a shower of pain-kiss to the next. Truth be told, there's really not that much to it, but it's a great laugh, especially with two players (the second joystick controls a Golden character that jumps on enemies and crashes it). It looks nice, plays just as well and comes heartily recommended to anyone with right (and) pound-coins bearing a hole in their pocket.

☆☆☆☆

## NINJA GAIDEN SHADOW



Price Gameboy £24.99  
Genre Beat-'em-up  
Publisher Renace

It's not the another Ninja Gaiden game! To be fair, this one is better than most. Sure, it's the usual old-shoes thing, thank-you-ma'am martial arts action that we all know (so well) and love (sometimes), but the presentation and the graphic quality lift it a little out of the ordinary.

The meat though badly translated into explains the plot. The evil Demon Emperor Gouh has plans to reduce the whole world's population (starting with New York, would you know it). And with his mighty dark army to back him up it looks like he's going to do it, too. That is, until Ryu Hayabusa, boss of the noble Dragon Clan, appears on the scene to dispose sword-based justice over five scummy levels.

As well as the ability to run, jump

and slash. You can also monkey swing along the underside of ledges, shoot a grappling hook up in the air to climb up to lofty platforms and also utilize a special dragon's flame sword weapon if he's collected the right power-ups (oh, the game's got three as well).

Yes, as I said earlier the game scores high for originality, but it looks superb (there's some great parallax on level one) and plays even better. Best wrap-up: less disappointed by the low quality of Double Dragon 2 would do well to look here for their thrasher's thrills instead.

☆☆☆☆

## PAPERBOY 2



Price: Super Nintendo / PC £29.99  
Genre: Arcade Blast  
Publisher: Mississippi

Look and it's back, with an all new coat! And, well, that's just about it actually. Paperboy means except the accolades and honors of America when the fast game appeared way back in 1986. The last entry series of the legendary delivery boy captured the imagination of the nation, and now fans of the original can enjoy this sequel.

Well, I say sequel. Intention would perhaps be a more appropriate term. There's nothing new in this game that was missing from the original except the ability to ride in both diagonal directions, as opposed to up and left in the first. The routine is still exactly the same: the Paperboy (ie girl) gets to ride a number of news, delivering papers to the correct houses in traditional American style on the back of his BMC, avoiding all these new problems which anyone who has taken a hazardous job at their newspaper will be only too aware of. Fewer dogs attack the Paperboy and make his hair out. You get the picture.

Graphics weren't the strong suit of the original, and they're equally sparse here, looking pretty and compared to most current releases. But there's still appeal (at the point of the Paperboy games). Instead, their fast gameplay and humor kept people coming back for more. And this title just about manages to deliver an acceptable amount of both.

☆☆☆☆

## ROAD BLASTERS



Price: Megadrive £24.99  
Genre: Arcade Blast  
Publisher: Tengen

Tengen really are the nostalgia kings. While other software are converting the latest state-of-the-art coin ops to Sega's 16-bitter, Tengen are quite content to reissue conversions of games you could probably buy in their original arcade cabinets for about the same price. Just recently we had Pacmania, now we've got Road Blasters and there are plenty more blasts from the past in the pipeline.

Road Blasters comes as a welcome relief from the state of wretched shoot-'em-ups and platform games, if not why in the Megadrive so casually lacking in the driving-game department? The only other one I can think of is Super Monaco GP. As the name suggests, the player drives along a road and... um... blasts things.

The action is definitely on the blasting. The player's car, which sits at the bottom-middle of the screen, accelerates to top speed automatically and the player simply has to steer it left and right, strafing enemy road users and roadside gun turrets with his homer-mounted machine gun. Super mega whopper weapons are occasionally dropped off (usually) by a jet that swoops down and hovers over the car briefly.

Total appreciation of Road Blasters on the Megadrive will be most identical to that of the coin-op: they're identical. Personally I find the action repetitive and monotonous to be enjoyable for longer than about fifteen minutes, but there are probably many who disagree and think this is the best game ever. At least, that's what Tengen must be hoping.

☆☆☆☆

## WHO FRAMED ROGER RABBIT?



Price: Gameboy £24.99  
Genre: Arcade Blast  
Publisher: Capcom USA

Ask Judge Doom in planning to ruin Tim Toon and has already killed the mayor (just to prove that he means business, Roger must rescue Toon Town from the wicked law that Doom has in store and at the same time rescue his wife Jessica from an evil kidnapping plot. And how does he go about all this? His scrolls around Toon town in a sort of graphic adventure can shoot-out, that's how!

Actually it's not that bad, and there's enough variety in the scale sequences to make it worthwhile. The horrible woad henchmen of Dr Doom chase poor Roger around the screen and take pot shots at him, popping out of man-hole covers and the most unusual places in order to do him down.

Bad fans of the movie will be pleased with the representation of Roger and the light-hearted nature of the whole thing, but real gamers may find that it's a bit lacking in the action department.

There's a reasonable amount of advancing to do, although this really consists of simply taking an object from one place to another in order to be able to take a different object somewhere else.

The graphics throughout are amazing enough and reminiscent of the film in a rather blocky, black and white sort of way, and the whole thing adds up to just about enough fun per p. And anyway, it's a nice change to see Capcom handling a cinchy product after their inimitable run of ball-kicking combat shoot-outs.

☆☆

## RPM RACING



Price: Super Nintendo £29.99  
Genre: Racing, Game  
Publisher: Interplay

Offroad racing is very much the 'in' thing with driving game programmers of late, and you could well expect the latest product to cash in on the craze to be the best on the, what with it being on the Super Nintendo and all that. Unfortunately, the many faults of RPM (it stands for Radical Pecko Machine, not three Piv Motors) Racing prove beyond doubt that it doesn't matter how sexy a console may be, the games as it can still be a technical and gameplay abject.

RPM Racing is very similar in style and presentation to the Gameboy's Super RC Pro-Am, reviewed in January. But whereas the handheld game was fast, smooth and controllable, RPM Racing distinctly lacks these qualities. First you do battle over a series of right-way scrolling, isometric perspective tracks, bouncing over hills and ramps, performing loop-de-loops and generally bombing into each other. Much has been made of the high-resolution graphics, which look vaguely like the Amiga's HAM mode and have allowed for some very pretty definition and light-shading on the vehicles as they bounce down. Unfortunately it seems the price we pay for all this technical wizardry is heavily jerky scrolling, sluggish, almost unworkable car control and, on the whole, slow and frustrating racing.

Presentation-wise, RPM is sleek, offering various car modifications, ten tracks with 14 difficulty levels and even a course-designer. There, however, are all equally pointless additions if the main thrust of the game isn't up to scratch, and so ultimately RPM Racing seems over to the sort of game you'd really like to have a lot of fun with, but just can't because it's so steadily unplayable. A real shame.

☆☆

## RUBICON



Price: Amiga/ST £25.99  
Genre: Arcade Blast  
Publisher: Best Century Ent.

In the near future a bizarre nuclear accident in the Soviet Union has led, not a very nicely rounded members an area just miles square with severe radiation. As a result, the wildlife in the area has been horribly transmuted into... well, horrible transmuted into... and soon your job is it to go in and save it (or)! Right first time!

Once again the barrel of game scenarios has been well and truly engaged in an effort for this latest Blaster from the wheel-chosen. It's a pretty unconvincing game in the way it's presented - rather than being a constantly-scoring affair, the little bits under your control has to deal with the things on each screen before he scrolls from left to right into the next bit of terrain. It... sort of works in its

own way. It feels a more relaxed, take-things-to-your-own-air-to-the-action, without really making it seem boring. The shooting action is pretty frantic, particularly when cars weapon have been collected, although sometimes the control system gives the impression that success depends more on luck than judgement.

Graphically it's OK, although some of the sprites are pretty crudely defined, and the colour scheme is rather drab and depressing - or better a post-apocalyptic landscape, I suppose. There's something about the game - or rather not - that means that, although it looks like it should, it doesn't deliver that all-important playability 'kick'. It tries hard enough, with plenty of variety in the levels and action, but nevertheless it falls just short of the targets it sets for itself. Try before you buy.

☆☆☆☆

## SONIC THE HEDGEHOG



**PlayStation Game £29.99**  
Genre Platform Game  
Publisher Sega

Well, they said it couldn't be done - but Sega had to go and prove them wrong. Sega's world-beating hedge has made it onto the Game Gear and it's an impressive achievement. It's so impressive, in fact, that you'll think you're playing a handheld Megadrive (okay, so I know that that's a bit of a self-statement but it really is true.)

Everything you remember from the Megadrive game has been reproduced exactly the same but available - in the also-colourful graphics, the two tones, the simple yet addictive gameplay and the amazing speed are all there. The action's so fast that there are times when the Game's heavy screen makes it's near impossible to see what the hell is going on! Owners of both a Drive and a Game Gear will be pleased to hear that the map legends, as they say on TV, "All-New", so if you've beaten the Megadrive game then you'll find new challenge here.

But not much. In all respects Sonic is a classic game but one - it's just for looney, looney game play are likely to have this one cranked well inside a week of solid play. Still, it's definitely one of the best looking carts ever

seen on the Game Gear and as long as you don't mind the short-lived nature of the fun then it's well worth your dollar.

☆☆☆☆

## SUPER FIRE PRO-WRESTLING



**PlayStation Platform £49.99**  
Genre Beat 'em up  
Publisher Human Creative Group

Continuously hitting these shores on import at more or less the same time as the WWF cases, this latest PlayStation product must surely rank as one of the smallest to date. On paper and on screen it looks and sounds great - 3D isometric ring, big muscled character screen slugging it out, single-player and tag-team options, loads of different moves... mouth watering isn't? Well it isn't! In, because Super Fire Pro-Wrestling is about as playable as a stale watermelon wrapped in a wet towel.

So what's so bad about it then? Well, it's difficult to know where to start, really. The wrestler themselves don't feel about the ring in much an orientating manner that they don't even look like they're walking on the canvas. They seem to float about a foot off the ground, with their legs kicking back and feet in a vaguely walk-like manner. When the two fighters meet, they grapple in an equally unrealistic fashion while the players huddle away on their buttons to try and get a hold and execute a move. Theoretically there's lots to do, but the graphics are so poorly defined and the controls so unresponsive that, bar flashes of luck, it's virtually impossible to do anything but the most basic moves. Maybe it would have been a bit easier to get to grips with if the on-screen messages had been in English, but they're not so it isn't.

No doubt some hardened wrestling fans will draw comfort to the wind and swap this up, but a much better plan is surely to wait a while and see what emerges over the next few months - there's already an official WWF game on the way which promises to be a lot better. Whatever you do, don't waste your hard-earned money on this clapnet.

☆☆

## ULTIMATE GOLF



**PlayStation PC £27.99**  
Genre Sports Game  
Publisher GSI Gold

Well, hardly. Since Centipede's Grog Norman keyword game (claimed to be the last word in golf simulations, it's been proved wrong many times with the likes of PGA Tour Golf, Links and the excellent Microsoft Golf all beating it hands-down in the realism and fun stakes.

But that's not to say that 'Ultimate Golf' is bad. Far from it, and now that it's out at a more respectable price it should be looked at seriously by any avid on-screen golfer who hasn't already done so. As golf games go, it's certainly one of the most comprehensive on the market, but some sloppy presentation, and maybe a little over-enthusiasm to put in so many factors, has led to it being rather unexciting and difficult to get to grips with.

Actually, the game's slightly descriptive about how much there really is to it. There may be a dozen lovely options and variables, but there are still only two courses to play on, and that's pretty poor by the standards of other games, which offer anywhere between four and six. Any golf game's longevity is determined by the number of courses available, and two just doesn't cut it. I'm afraid.

Whatever there's a good eight-yard's worth of golf action here for those who like their sport seen a bit on the massive side - even though anybody looking for a seriously good introduction to the game would be better placed in the direction of PGA Tour or Microsoft Golf.

☆☆☆☆

## WAYNE GRETZKY'S ICE HOCKEY 3



**PlayStation PC £29.99**  
Genre Sports Simulation  
Publisher Electronic

Hey! Hey! Hey! It's Whaaaaayyyer Gretzky! Hey! With his name on the

game you know it's got to be good. Well, actually I don't know who the heck he is and I think I didn't know much about this game. It looked no stiffer than a super ball on an ice block. The action is lively on simulation. (A bit of a bad move this, in my opinion, as does correctly on hockey would make a great super-stiffer action game.) Before matches the player can fiddle about with his team member's stats in his head's content, training them up, boosting dull players out and recruiting college rookies in. Chances are, though, that you'll not want to because all this stats jiggery-pokery is carried out on some of the dullest menus screens I've seen this side of a spreadsheet.

The actual hockey matches are played out on an improved horizontally-scrolling ice rink, where tiny animated groups of pixels grope about in a vain attempt to simulate the realer 'high octane sport that is ice hockey. Even with the special graphics this couldn't have done so fast, but the poor control makes it feel like you're controlling somebody else controlling the players rather than being in the hot seat yourself.

Well, and so far to play, this is one hockey game that should be good as soon as possible.

☆☆

## And there we have it. A

rather small number of new releases for a whole

month, we agree, but that's

very much the way of

things in the spinning mad-

ness of light and power

industry. One minute you

expect something to hap-

pen and the next minute,

it doesn't. Or maybe it

does. It all depends on

what you least expect of

any given time.

# Still available

## A320 AIRBUS



Price Amiga £79.99  
Genre Simulation  
Publisher Thalion

You what? Alright, it's not as if we have any problems flying high in an F-16 or blowing up radar installations in a state-of-the-art stealthfighter - but the A320 Airbus? It's somebody pulling our pilot's ears? Well, apparently not, as this is one of the biggest releases from German software house Thalion in quite a while. Rather than a computerized jinx'll fix it, the game allows the player to be an airline pilot for a day - well, for however long he likes, really - at the controls of the little-known A320 jetliner.

As anybody who knows anything about aviation at all will expect, A320 Airbus is no simple game. For once you are impossibly more complicated than the fighter planes that have mainly been the subject of simulations in the past. Thalion's game has attempted to simulate the cockpit-like complexity as accurately as possible - and for the most part it succeeds, although this hyper-realistic approach is unlikely to appeal to the majority of flight-sim games. All those knobs, dials and readouts may be a bit too much for the average Joe Stone.

A320 Airbus isn't just about flying around a lot, though. Once, no, players get to create their own pilots, take part in training or active duty, work out

flight plans and generally make their way up the ladder of commercial aviation. For those that find this sort of thing appealing, there's no doubt that A320 Airbus is actually very good indeed. It's professionally produced, apart from the occasionally ugly graphics, and though it's not exactly immediate or instinctive, the rewards are there to be had for players willing to plough the manual and learn all the ins and outs. The only problem is, I can't quite imagine who's going to be that interested, when you think about all the other, considerably more action-orientated, flight games on the market today. It's just here, for courses, I suppose.

☆☆☆☆

## ACTION PACK



Price Amib £7 (Amiga) £4.99  
Genre Compilation  
Publisher Action of

What a luscious lot of games - Colorado, Cosmic Wars, Eliminator, Fast Lane, Helicopter, Maya, Do Super, River, Sherman Wa, Targhan - for twenty-five quid! Okay, we'll be honest and admit that they're all getting a bit long in the tooth now, and more than a couple of the games on offer here are real Xmas turkey material (Do Super, in particular, should be plucked, stuffed with Parsi and binged in the oven for a good five hours as soon as possible).

However, Cosmic Wars is a superb ball-

trajectory scrolling shoot-'em-up, Eliminator is a 3D shoot-'em-up cum driving game) and Helicopter is multi-play arcade adventure more than compensate, and would make a superb value compilation on their own. The other games are poor to middling in quality, but for the price you really can't complain. Highly recommended.

☆☆☆☆

## AEROSTAR



Price Gameboy £14.99 (import)  
Genre Arcade Blast  
Publisher Via Takai

What do you get if you cross a platform game with a vertically-scrolling shoot-'em-up? A lot of a bloody mess, that's what. Aerostar is a seven-stage Master where the player has to guide a spaceship along an enemy-held highway. The player can fly into the air for a very limited time to avoid ground fire and hop over gaps in the road, but this makes him vulnerable to attacks from the air. And, of course, there's a plethora of juicy power-ups to be collected along the way that turn the player's craft from something only a little more than a ship to the fiercest of the standup world's opponents of the King of the Beasts!

The idea of combining blasting and bouncing is theoretically good, but unfortunately in practice it doesn't work so well. The player 'jumps' by holding down one of the Gameboy buttons,

and the longer the button is held down the longer the jump. Thing is, the Gameboy's design makes it difficult to fire at the same time without taking one finger off the jump button, resulting in the ship phasing into an abyss. And as the road narrows, jumping becomes more frequent and the enemy's attacks become more vicious, this becomes particularly annoying.

As it stands, Aerostar is a nice stab at something a bit different, only marred by the slightly clumsy implementation. Worth a look, though, if you're interested by the sound of it.

## ALIEN BREED



Price Amiga £24.99  
Genre Arcade Blast  
Publisher Team 17

Alien Breed can best be described as the AlienBreed that should have been. It grafts Alien's atmosphere onto Gauntlet-esque gameplay to create an addictive - albeit occasional - winner. One or two players can take part simultaneously, and their job is to run around the six play-viewed maze-like levels of a monster-infested space station, blasting away hordes of alien-oid or anything that crawls, slithers or hops.

Fortunately the problems that always afflicted Gauntlet (ie, though fine there was no real aim in playing apart from scoring points) has been averted by giving the players a task to complete on each level (usually of the 'find a location and blow it up' nature). Okay, so it's not exactly lifting the game into Arcade Adventure territory, but it's probably enough of a goal to keep the player coming back for more.

The addictive gameplay is backed up by some superb dual-wielding and graphics (although the animation is a little pedestrian), and the team 'arcade-like' is very appropriate here. Throughout the use of music to create atmosphere and tension is superb, especially when the strain's self-destruct sequence is kicked in and the player has to find the exit before the place blows. The only real gripe is that given that the game is for dual-Amiga-only, you can't help feeling that something slightly more ambitious could have been attempted, but as it stands this is the best straightforward blast for months, and that's a good enough recommendation for anyone.

☆☆☆☆



## AMNIONS



**Price** Amiga £25.99  
**Genre** Arcade Shoot

**Publisher** Pygmalion

**Strategy** Defender for the good! Well, that's the idea. The theme is it doesn't quite work.

Amnions is a plan-viewed multiway scrolling shoot-'em-up. The player zips around the surfaces of ten living planets in his ship, popping the bad guys and rescuing the trapped humans. By shooting certain pods the player can upgrade his ship with better weapons.

And that's it. It's that simple. Of course, with this sort of game you're not looking for depth - you're looking for action. And in this respect Amnions does pretty well. The scrolling is smooth, sound is suitably raucous, and the graphics have an attractive organic, biomorphic look to them.

Trumble in, I didn't really feel much compulsion to work my way through the first world, let alone the tenth. Control over the ship isn't quite as 'relaxing' as it should be, and this detracts from the fun badly. Not my cup of tea, but it may well be yours. Give it a look.

## ANOTHER WORLD



**Price** Amiga £19.99  
**Genre** Adventure

**Publisher** US Gold

Explore a mysterious alien world in this parallel polygons adventure from Delphine. Taking the role of Icarus the scientist, the player is transported - as a result of an experiment gone wrong - into an alternate universe where nothing is what it seems, justice controlled with relatively little interaction between characters. Another World is a flawed, but brave product.

Although there aren't that many problems to solve and actually the interest in the game is more connected with the look than the feel, it's still a worth while purchase.

Overall, it's an impressive game. It's got plenty of draw backs but on the whole, it scores a big plus. For players looking for a new angle on the arcade adventure genre and in particular anyone who has a stronger interest in new graphic styles than the depth or length

of their game, it fits the bill perfectly.

☆☆☆

## BABY JO



**Price** Atari ST/Amiga £24.99

**Genre** Platform Game

**Publisher** Lantic

Imagine Microsoft's *Beam* two-dimensional and you've got a good idea of what the latest import from French firm Lantic is all about. Or if you don't know that, try imagining Mario with a nappy-wearing baby as the main character. It's all really rather ludicrous, with the wussy toddler having to eat the bonus goodies in his bonnet along the landscape in order to keep fit - but it sure isn't too much, or he'll mess his nappy! I mean come on! What are those French game designers of? Something pretty strong if the quality of Baby Jo's aesthetics are anything to go by. Neatly designed sprites, attractive music and hideously jolly backdrops are all proof of Baby Jo's naiffness, but it has to be said that it is in kind of care in a rather perverse and definitely strange sort of way.

But if there's one thing it certainly isn't, it's fun - the slow, amusing gameplay and barely throws-together design makes sure of that. It's for precisely this reason that Baby Jo should only really be on the shopping list of platform freaks desperate for a new fix - and even then there are much more playable options available.

## BARBARIAN II



**Price** Amiga £25.99

**Genre** Arcade Shoot

**Publisher** Pygmalion

Pygmalion games have historically always been visual treats held back by some less than excellent games design. However, with *Leonidas* that all changed and the company justly earned themselves a reputation for being able to turn out top-notch software of both high visual standard and demanding gameplay.

And for a moment it looks as if Barbarian II may be another title in the *Leonidas* style. Unfortunately, this is primarily not the case, since since the player has got through the obligatory

leading sequence (a whole child's worth it becomes clear that Barbarian II is neither a stain of beauty for the eye, or a particularly great piece to explore with a joystick).

With left-right scrolling with parts leading into and out of the screen, objects too slow, weapons too bodacious monsters in droops, Barbarian really doesn't offer the player anything new, and has been carried off to rest here or there in both Gods and Touch the Warrior, shame.

## BATTLE ISLE



**Price** Atari ST/Amiga/IBM PC £29.99

**Genre** Strategy

**Publisher** Ubi Soft

As strategy games get more and more diverse, with the likes of *Populous*, *Magi* & *Moria* and *Sim City*, the latest from French firm Ubi Soft represents something quite different, which we hardly see any more these days - a wargame in the classic vein. It's set on a flat world where two armies do battle for control of a series of islands. It's visually similar to the old SSI wargames - units move in turn across a battlefield broken down into hexagonal zones. More experienced gamers will know the sort of thing.

Due to the space-age scenario, the units involved consist of all manner of high-tech tanks, planes, ships and armoured vehicles as well as more conventional infantry formations. Players move their units about, creating tactical formations and assaults, with the inevitable confrontations between opposing forces. As the battle goes on, units must be supplied, tactics altered and all the other gaff that goes along with a game of this type.

Battle Isle's most favourable option is the two-player mode - something that's woefully missing from a lot of strategy products these days. A handy split-screen display allows two mates to play head-to-head - although this does mean you are what your opponent is up to at any time, of course.

Battle Isle is undoubtedly a fine and very 'deep' strategy game, and one that should appeal to anyone who likes the good old fashioned sport of doing things, without all the inverting bells and whistles. But despite the game's accessibility, many younger players on the lookout for a brain game are more likely to steer towards the likes of *Populous*

II. Good stuff, though.

☆☆☆☆

## BIRDS OF PREY



**Price** Amiga £29.99

**Genre** Simulation

**Publisher** Electronic Arts

Well, it's been four years in the making, but at last Hawk - er, I mean Birds of Prey - has touched down. But has it been worth the wait? Well... not at all.

Let's make no bones about it, Birds of Prey is an excellent flight simulator and, as the name suggests, there's no shortage of dogfighting action. On a technical level it's astounding, and probably its most impressive aspect is the number of planes you're given the opportunity to fly - no less than 40 individual combat aircraft!

Birds of Prey is much more the thinking man's simulation - very much in the *Microbots* mould - and not really for those simplistic, combat-oriented intercept-type after that many of us were expecting. That said, it's not all just flying from waypoint to waypoint and falling asleep in between. There's more than enough hard-core action to keep anybody happy. The AI update is surprisingly sharp, considering how much the program is having to juggle, but somehow it just doesn't seem like the result of four years' programming.

Ultimately, what we've got with Birds of Prey is a game that's tried to do a bit of everything, and comes off surprisingly well at the end of it. If anything it feels a little too far towards the technical side of things (reading the manual is an achievement in itself), but nevertheless Birds of Prey comes wholeheartedly recommended to all flight-sim fans.

☆☆☆☆

## BREACH 2



**Price** Amiga £29.99

**Genre** Strategy

**Publisher** Impression

Though there's nothing particularly special on offer for the hard BPC fan this month, the follow-up to the highly successful *Breach* is worthy of their attention. Set in the future with the player in command of a team of space

missions. It's more strategy than role-playing, but the mix of the two genres is an appealing one. Probably the best comparison is with that old favorite *Gene Squad - Break a Few*, because a considerably more sophisticated approach, with a more isometric viewpoint, much more command-control and more involving missions.

In each mission scenario, the player leads his team through enemy territory, exploring rooms, collecting objects and doing battle with the alien hordes they encounter. In the classic RPG tradition, characters can be topped up with a huge array of weapons and equipment, including rifles, rocket launchers and bombs, and all the characters come complete with individual attributes and abilities.

An added bonus is that, should the player get bored with the multitude of missions available, they can create and edit their own. How many games will want to expend this amount of effort providing a playable mission of any kind of game is in-varyingly certain to be rare, however, and you may want to ask yourself if you're ever likely to make use of the feature. But there are enough prolonged missions to make *Break a Few* a worthwhile even without the editor, and on that score the game should at least be on the 'take a look' list for all RPG aficionados, if not a definite purchase.

☆☆☆

**BUGS BUNNY CRAZY CASTLE 2**



**Price** Camelot £4.99 (Import)  
**Genre** Puzzle  
**Publisher** Kemco/Infocom

What the hell is Honey Honey?? I must be getting old, because I don't remember this?? ...not having a sappy girlfriend. It sounds to me like a lame excuse to rehash the old 'get kidnapped by witch who must be rescued by hero' scenario to me. In this case it's the hideously ugly Witch Haunt?? who's the wrong-door-porn-lady-in-sinister-beds, and who has whisked Honey?? away to her castle. Bugs?? must rescue her by leaping through 28 huge rooms of platforms, pipes, ladders and Looney Tunes?? characters. Bugs?? must find the hidden keys to each to unlock the door to the next room. By picking up bones, ears and so on Bugs?? can flip up floor tiles. There, back his way through blocked passages,

etc., etc.

Although it looks like a platform game, *Crazy Castle 2??* actually plays more like a puzzle game. Success is down to using the items you pick up along the way to get past certain obstacles at the correct place and time. And this part of the game is quite fun.

It's the platform element that ruins the game - Bugs?? moves in big chunks and is hard to control, and all too infrequently offers you a life by leaping into the ladders by accident. Despite its good graphics, in my opinion *Crazy Castle 2??* is a right striking load of old crap??.

☆☆

**CAPTAIN PLANET**



**Price** Atari \$7/Amiga £25.99  
**Genre** Arcade Action  
**Publisher** Mindscape

From the levels, man. Yeah, yeah, like it was telling you there's like this guy, right, and he's like this sort of super-hero, you know. Goes around saving the world from these real heavy breasted polluters. Yeah, like you say, heavy shit, man. Anyway, he's got these fire helpers, and they're like just kids, you know, but they've got this special rings that give them these cosmic powers. Totally amazing. Each level of the game like creates around one of these six characters, and they're just for out.

I mean like the first character, Mr. T, uses his ring to like chill out the bad guys and regrow plants as she can climb up to the level out. Yeah, and like when she gets out there's this helicopter she has to fly around in and scoop up endangered elephants and take them to a sanctuary. Yeah, man, it's like this amazing mix of platform game and shoot-'em-up. Man, man, yeah, the graphics are sort of cute, the scrolling's fine, and the music is nice, but control over your little sprite guy's a bit tricky. Yeah, Tricki Dicky, Watergate. All The President's Men. But you get used to it and all in all it's quite a fun-out experience, if not the shickest thing like you've ever seen. Lots of really pretty psychedelic colours, too.

☆☆☆☆

**CASTLEVANIA IV**



**Price** Super Famicom £49.99 (Import)  
**Genre** Arcade Blast  
**Publisher** Konami

I couldn't believe it when I loaded this up! Imagine it's Christmas just that difficult really. You're really looking forward to getting a certain present, and you've laid the ground with lots of heavy hints to your parents. Then, on Christmas morning, you get a stuffed gift that looks the same size and shape as the like thing you want. Trouble is, when you open it up there's something totally different inside. Oh, it's a nice enough present all right, just not the one you wanted. Well, that's *Castlevania IV*. It was great on the NES, brilliant on the Commodore and, along with *CapCom's Super Chase 'n' Chomp*, was one on the big anticipated releases on the Super Famicom.

To be fair, *Castlevania's* a decent enough game - there's lots of running around platforms, ladders and what have you, lots of wopping the bad guys with a giant mace. Unfortunately, what there isn't lots of is fun. The graphics are garish, and the animation is merely perfunctory, with the hero having a rather unfortunate shuffling walk that makes him look as if he's got up tied to his feet and he's trying to peddle the flow. If this had appeared before *SDGG* there it might have received a better reception. As it happens, it didn't, so it hasn't.

☆☆☆

**CELTIC LEGENDS**



**Price** Atari \$7/Amiga £24.99  
**Genre** Role-Playing Game  
**Publisher** Ubi Soft

It's amazing how you can feel, 1991 of the time, what an RPG game is going to be equally like just by knowing what part of the world it's coming from. For example, anything that comes from California is likely to be all complex and twisted, while anything from, say France or Germany, will still bring all the traditional RPG elements, always tends to present things in a much more simplistic and arcade manner. As is the case here, with this little Celtic number which is very much on the same vein as *Thalion's Dragonflight* and countless other Euro-RPGs.

It's actually a fair little game, based around all the old RPG clichés, but handling them with traditional French style and aplomb. It's all set in the epic-

ical world of Celtica, where the mix of magic by an evil sorcerer has wrecked the kingdom, to name.

What follows is a mix of strategy and conventional RPG elements presented from a number of viewpoints - on the battlefield, high above the world itself and so on, depending upon the scene.

Though in general terms it offers nothing that exceeded fans of the genre will find particularly earth-shattering, it's different enough in terms of presentation and style to make it well worth investigating - especially for novice gamers who may be looking for an accessible and appealing introduction to the genre.

☆☆☆☆

**CENTURION - DEFENDER OF ROME**



**Price** Megadrive £24.99  
**Genre** Action Strategy  
**Publisher** Electronic Arts

Can an an warring Centurion, it's the player's duty to both defend the homeland and expand the Roman Empire as far as possible. This megaplanetarian style is somewhat faded at first by the fact that the player starts with just a single legion of soldiers and a city of citizens to keep under control.

The game is a well-judged blend of icon-driven strategy and arcade-style interlude. For example, to keep the sublevel provinces happy, the player can take part in chariot races and keep their lights. As the game progresses the tribes under your command grow and ships placed at your disposal to take armies to neighbouring shores become bigger and better. If the player's lucky he can even have a crack at seducing the voluptuous Cleopatra. Post old Megadrive owners in particular are stoked of this type of game, so if you're looking for something to exercise your brain a little, you could do far worse than this.

☆☆☆☆

**CHOPLIFTER 2**



**Price** Camelot £24.99  
**Genre** Arcade Blast  
**Publisher** Mindscape

*Choplifter* first appeared in 1981 via

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Boomerband and is still heavily remembered today. The player's mission as super-cock helicopter pilot is to rescue survivors from a horizontally scrolling wasteland. To do this the player must land near the wrong outposts and wait for them to be heard. This can be quite harrowing at times as you're a perennial sitting duck for all the enemy gun installations and machine-gunning planes which constantly lay siege.

The player's copter is equipped with a rapid-firing cannon and a limited number of bombs with which to protect himself. And that's really all there is to it - however, like *Defender*, *Choplifter* is one of those games that, once played, is never forgotten. Fun action, challenging game task and a patented criteria help make this one of the best games since the GameBoy, and a must for any action fans collection.

★★★★★

## CISCO HEAT



Price Amiga £25.99  
Genre Arcade Blast  
Publisher Image Works

In the light of a whole bunch of driving games, some of which have been nothing short of excellent, (*Lisa's Grand Prix*) Image Works' blunts of this rather dreadful title couldn't have come at a worse time.

Not only will the consumer have had his fill of driving in general, but he will also be fully aware that it's possible to produce auto-racing games a thousand times better than this.

The aim is to race a souped-up police car through the busy streets of San Francisco, avoiding taxi-cabs, buses and bicycles in an attempt to escape as the top-gun driver in the city.

Quite aside from the 3D resolution which makes Turbo Outrun look polished and seems astonishingly dull contrast, Cisco Heat stalls at virtually every corner. The races themselves are panned and frustrating, the crowd graphics are basically a single graphic block duplicated to fill the space, the police car crashes into bicyclists only a fraction larger than itself, and the corner braking routine, however brave the attempt, is a catastrophe.

Mind you, the sound of the car's horn is quite good.

★

## CIVILIZATION



Price IBM PC £34.99  
Genre Strategy  
Publisher MicroPress

American game design guru Sid Meiers, fresh from his success with the brilliant *Advanced Tactics*, has surpassed himself with this latest effort, which can truly be said to toggle the mind in terms of depth, scale and scope. Adopting the same functional top-down presentation format of *Tactics*, the game changes the player with the task of building a civilization, from a band of yottis into empires in an unexplored, uncharted world, to a global empire capable of space travel, nuclear power and the other trappings of the 21st Century life.

The range of features and elements that play a part in the game is quite simply immense, as the player's people advance and expand, founding cities, writing and across the water, making technological discoveries and building armed forces - all while computer-controlled rival empires do the same. Along the way the player must set laws, maintain civil order, negotiate with other nations, care for the environment and take part in various area and space races.

Civilization is undoubtedly the most involved strategy game ever conceived, and as such stands less concerned or more gamers are likely to be swamped by the game's maze-like complexity. For those willing to invest the time and effort, however, Civilization pays off like no other. Wonderful.

★★★★★

## CONAN THE CIMMERIAN



Price IBM PC £29.99  
Genre Role Playing Game  
Publisher Virgin Games

The problem with Conan is that he doesn't really know whether he wants to be a mercenary game or a fantasy game. The opening sequence is a mixture of partial comedy and intended horror, accompanied by some of the most awful music I've ever heard. (While some people may argue it's fashionably distant, I reckon it sounds like the whappings of a Freud Prize 'My First Cutie' being played in the bath.) Anyway, the curious mixture of script, view exploration and side-on hack-

ing works reasonably well, with Conan looking every inch the super-hero he's supposed to be. And there's plenty to explore.

Even the advertising side is pretty good, and Conan can interact (albeit on a pretty basic level) with every character he encounters.

So if you feel that there is space on your shelf for yet another over-engineered game, and can live with the atmosphere-sounding length, it may be worth a look.

★★★★

## CRUISE FOR A CORPSE



Price Amiga £24.99  
Genre Adventure  
Publisher Delphine/US Gold

The plot for *Cruise for a Corpse* is slowly plotted in the Agatha Christie 'isolated location, plenty of suspects' crime story tradition, detailing how the player is invited to a Greek Yacht's party for a well-earned holiday only to get there and find his boat hijacked off by an unknown marauder. Before you can say 'Inspector Wexford' the player is forced to don proxy moustache and tatty sideburns to solve the heinous crime.

After a bit of pro-rebate interest from the press, there were high hopes for *Cruise for a Corpse*. In it the excellent game everyone assumed to think it's best? Well, yes... and so, in the graphics and sound department it's exemplary, with large, finely-animating spring-moving, very cogently detailed backgrounds and plenty of suitable tones and complex playing away in the background. All conspire to generate an excellent sense of mood and atmosphere.

The player directs his misnomer character (Rosal) via the mouse. By clicking the mouse pointer on objects of interest, a menu appears listing the various things the player can do with the selected item (i.e. 'Open' or 'Examine' but less). Movement around the yacht is effected by walking around from location to location by clicking on icons to the nearest location, such as doors or hallways, or more quickly by cutting-up the yacht map and 'sending' Rosal immediately from place to place. As a user interface it's difficult to think of another as intuitive and easy to use.

The major problem with *Cruise for a Corpse* is its pace. The animation, though wonderful, is slow. Examining the contents of a room can become quite painful, as Rosal slowly turns, walks, turns, bends down, examines the items only for a message to appear stating that "there is nothing of interest here" - equally annoying is the frequent though inevitable scrolling and skipping of fire (visual 'vsn' game) slides. All too often the player's enthusiasm for the hunting can be severely dampened by the reduction of the game's speed to near snail's pace. Less important, some of the gratingly mangled French-English translation is a bit tedious in places, such as the Galien Bay who is described as "dynamic".

Those comments apart, anyone with the patience to sit through the occasional dullness will find *Cruise for a Corpse* a superbly, longed-with-quiet presentation and atmosphere and presenting a big enough game task to satisfy even the greatest sleuth.

★★★★

## DEATHBRINGER



Price Atari ST £25.99  
Genre Beat-'Em-Up  
Publisher Empire

There's this weird, tight, three-edged sword here magically given the ability to absorb the souls of anyone it slays. Their intention is to use it to get rid of their gently growly through thick-thick enemies. Karn, a barbarian, is meant to use it even split his own name right. However, Karn isn't on the winner's side, and the sword leads to way into Karn's tortured hands. Hardly believing his luck, Karn sets out to give the sword back to the wizard - stylish. Basically it's all a thinly-veiled excuse for a video-games world's best of looking and slaying, with Karn plowing through more and more vile beasts monsters.

DeathBringer boasts some of the most impressive particle-animating backgrounds ever seen, even if they are somewhat lacking in colour. The sprites are well-drawn with a nice line in colour, but they're rather girthy in a monochrome style sort of way. But despite its good graphics and adequate sound, *DeathBringer's* real problem is that it's basically a bit dull. The combat moves are limited in range and slow to implement and just wandering along, real-



lessly plugging away at the baddies, is not all that interesting. And the present tankage is the whole World can't make up for that. *Behemoth III* this ain't. ☆☆☆

**DEVIL CRASH**



**Price** Megadrive £39.99 (Import)  
**Genre** Arcade Blast  
**Publisher** Terno Soft

Compressed pitfall has never been a particularly popular genre - and a quick glance at *Devil Crash* is enough to make you see why. For a start the age-old days of *Shamball* and *Time Runner* coin-ups and laser machines have tried to emulate that wacky filler's sham pitfall feel, but with little success. In theory, it should work excellently, with the heavy laser allowing for all sorts of tricks and wizardry that wouldn't be possible on a real machine. Unfortunately, no amount of gimmicks can make up for the fact that pitfall as a computer screen just doesn't compare to the exhilaration of a real ride.

In its credit, *Devil Crash* actually does a better job than most, with credible lead inertia and plenty of interesting features - the idea is more than seems long and packed with all manner of secret rooms, bonuses and other bits. Unfortunately the gothic nature of the graphics (pentagons and mystic runes aplenty) lend a rather depressing and creepy feel to the game itself, and as a result it's difficult to really enjoy. *Devil Crash* is the aesthetic equivalent of a lead brick on the face. Whatever its short-comings, however, computer pitfall has acquired a respectable cult following for itself, and gamers of that persuasion will no doubt find *Devil Crash* to be one of the most impressive examples of the genre. For the rest of us, however, there are more enjoyable - and less frustrating - bits of plastic on the market. ☆☆☆

**DEVIOUS DESIGNS**



**Price** Amiga £39.99  
**Genre** Puzzle  
**Publisher** Image Works  
**Hardware** not so much Devcon as sim-

ply fiddle. But since the world went Tania mad, there's been a steady trickle of arcade puzzles trying to tap into that elusive addictive ingredient that made *Atari's* *Puyo*er's classic such a waste-filling money spinner. *Devious Designs* had more potential than most, but it hasn't quite been realized.

The basic idea is simple enough. The player guides a tiny figure around various landscapes, picking up variously-shaped blocks and trying to slot them onto a transparent template, while collecting bonuses, a myriad of power ups and avoiding or shooting the evilly glowing bad guys. All well and good. Ah, but there's more to it than that. On the later levels, the player can make his character walk up the walls and even on the ceiling. And this is where it all starts to fall apart.

Control over the player's character is generally fine, but when near a wall it's all too easy to find yourself clambering up when you didn't want to and not clambering up when you did. Admittedly, given a fair deal of practice the player should be able to compensate for this foibles, but in the short-term it means an otherwise enjoyable and reasonably addictive addition to the genre. ☆☆☆

**DOUBLE DRAGON 3**



**Price** Amiga £49.99  
**Genre** Beat 'em-Up  
**Publisher** Ocean

*Double Dragon* fans have been more than short-changed in the past by the conversion of the previous two *Double Dragon* coin ops, so it comes as some relief to be able to say that this - the third instalment of the on-going fire-cuff escapades of Jimmy and Billy Lee - is, despite a couple of reservations, pretty much what devotees have been waiting for.

The plot is confined to say the least. According to what you listen to, it's either the usual gilly rescue mission, or a quest for treasure, or a fight against the 'Ultimate Evil'. No matter - the mechanics remain the same. Jimmy and Billy Lee (a.k.a. players one and two) have to pump and smash their way through fourteen levels of action set in five main locations (and as the game progresses you'll discover 'secret' as an underestimation).

Players start the game with fifteen 'coins', and in the shops found-on-site

the player can buy extra lives, weapons, power ups and even some fancy new-fighting moves. It's a shame you can't just find weapons along the way, but this coin-up business does at least add a game-enhancing strategic element, because the player has to decide how best to spend his cash.

While some may find the gameplay dated and repetitive (a complaint, in his life, that could be made about most games of this type), those experienced fans of the genre should be swelling in one of the more exciting and certainly the slickest slices of beat-'em-up action around. And, for my money, it's far better than *Final Fight*. ☆☆☆

**E.A. HOCKEY**



**Price** Megadrive £34.99  
**Genre** Sports Arcade  
**Publisher** Electronic Arts

*Ice Hot '87* with lightning in, *Electronic Arts' Hockey* will appeal to everyone. A section of teams from around the globe, each with their own abilities and weaknesses helps it out in the Ice Hockey World League.

Following on from their success with *John Madden's Football*, EA pull yet another winner out of the bag with this, perhaps their most frantic title to date.

Having selected the length of game, whether the player wishes to compete in a one-off match or a knockout, selected his team and that of the money, it's game on! Skating around the rink is simple enough, and control over the puck is surprisingly intuitive. Since the rink is so small and the players can move so easily and violently against each other, Ice Hockey is an unbelievably rapid, high scoring game. Basically, whoever gets the puck from the face-off is more likely to score. Until, of course, the player gets the hang of the wide variety of 'tackling' moves available to him, from a good 'hockey' going for the puck scenario to a full body check.

Kick an opposition player on a non-regular basis, though, and you'd better be ready to put your fist where his mouth is, as one of the features included is 'brawling'. While the rest of your team are trying to do some good, it's possible to 'clang away' as that guy who started over your shoes for so long as

you like! A graphics and gameplay marvel. E.A. Hockey is unashamedly recommended to one and all. *Hooney!* ☆☆☆☆☆

**ELF**



**Price** Amiga £28.98  
**Genre** Arcade Adventure  
**Publisher** Ocean

As Corvidus the Elf, it's the player's task to rescue his sweetest Elia from the petty-malicious clutches of Sarconus the Not Very Nice. The game takes place over six Tolkien-esque levels filled with platforms, pit-falls, ladders and bridges. Corvidus' magic powers allow him to protect himself from Sarconus' various kinds of bombardments by firing bolts of magic energy. Numerous interest-containing spells and power-ups can be bought from the Old Luscious Shopper using cash picked up along the way.

Each massive maze-like level presents its own unique set of problems to solve and tasks to achieve, requiring that the player constantly evolve new strategies to deal with them. All in all it's a polished high-quality romp, perfect for platform or arcade adventure fans. ☆☆☆☆

**EPIC**



**Price** Amiga £39.99  
**Genre** Arcade Blast  
**Publisher** Ocean

Boy, has this one been a long time in the making. I can remember magazines tirelessly predicting this about a year and a half ago (and I think ACE was one of them). It's strange that it should finally appear around the same time as EA's *Bank of Prey* (see this month's Review Directory), another game thought long lost in the Bermuda Triangle that is known as software development.

Anyway, it's here now so what's it like. Well, to be frank, it's a top disappointment. The last remnants of the human race are all huddled up in a fleet of space ships, fleeing through space to escape the man, which is just about to go nosed. The only escape route lies through the heart of the hostile



puter joystick) you see, F-22 doesn't offer all the technical bits and bobs featured in your average Microsoft product. What it does do, however, is play surprisingly like a "real" simulation, given the limitations of the controls. When playing from one of the outside views, it may look like just another version of Afterburner, but it really does play properly, with cautious and minute targeting all working out in detail.

Considering it's a console game, F-22 Interceptor is a pretty remarkable achievement, and EA deserves to be congratulated for making the effort to produce something a bit more taxing (both for the player and the machine) than just another two-player shoot-'em-up. If you're used to what computer-based flight simulations can do, it's unlikely you'll be impressed by what F-22 Interceptor has to offer. If you're not, however, and you're a bit fed up with the standard Microsoft arcade design, you could well be onto a winner here. ☆☆☆

**FACE OFF**



**Price Atari ST/Amiga £29.99**  
**Genre Sport Game**  
**Publisher Eidos**

There aren't that many for Hockey games available on the Amiga. In fact, there aren't any. So Face Off is something of a welcome addition to the canon of sports games. Worth getting? Well, yes and no. Like Manchester United Soccer, it's a very polished game, with some super slick menus and option screens. There's a league to participate in, where the player can do anything from: train the players to rename the manager. And like NHL, the player can turn off the arcade game and concentrate on the managerial side of things if they're that way inclined, or alternatively just play the arcade game alone.

The arcade side of things is okay, although some may wish the action had just a touch more zip. Certainly compared to EA Hockey it's distinctly sluggish. Control is simple and easy to pick up - shoot, pass or throw via the joystick - and the sport is fun, especially when things get a little physical and the fans start flying. As standard on most sports games these days there's a replay function so that that illustri-

ous goal can be replayed again and again. Overall, Face Off is a rounded package, though unlikely to exactly grab the sports' imagination. Fans of the sport will enjoy it, but just how many of them are there in the UK? ☆☆☆

**FATAL REWIND**



**Price MegaDrive £34.99**  
**Genre Arcade Blast**

**Publisher Programix/Electronic Arts**  
 Programix disappoints nobody with its first foray onto the 16-bit consoles, maintaining the same high-quality of graphics and sound that's made it the legend it is in the Amiga market. And thankfully in this case there's the game-play to back up the visuals. But if The Killing Game Show had to be recreated for its transition from the Amiga to the MegaDrive, couldn't they have come up with something a little better than Fatal Rewind? Apart from the fact that it doesn't actually mean much, it's a fairly obvious attempt to sound like Total Recall, a film which bears no resemblance to this game at all.

The player is put in charge of a mechanical water reinforcement of the 80's usage in *Robopop*. An agile little thing, it can run left and right, jump, fire and even climb up the sides of walls. Things they can do nowadays, huh? The player has to negotiate a network of platforms in the heat for the cut in the next level. Always fly on from all sides, twisting and weaving about the screens with the sole intent of seeing the player into the dust. And just to give the player a touch more incentive to escape the platforms are slowly sinking into a deadly red sea. The need to find keys to certain areas adds a small amount of depth to the game, but these arcade adventure elements never swamp what is basically a very clever and addictive shoot-'em-up. ☆☆☆

**FIGHTER COMMAND**



**Price Amiga £19.99**  
**Genre Strategy**  
**Publisher Impressions**

It may be a little late to cash in on Operation Desert Storm, but there can be no doubting Fighter Command's

topicality. Set in the present day Middle East, it poses the player in the shiny shoes of an allied air commander who's been given a simple task - look the stuffing out of the aggressive enemy as quickly and violently as possible. But despite the pretty pictures of a jet pilot coming into land on the box, there's not actually any flight-sim type action in the game at all. It's 100% pure strategy, with the player making all his decisions from a series of control rooms, screens and orders. Everything is presented by simplistic overhead camera views, tactical screens and radar displays.

Everything you'd expect from a military strategy game is in there - you sweep the area with reconnaissance satellites to find out where everything is, then organize and launch attacks against chosen targets. There's a wide range of kit available, including stealth bombers, fighters and helicopters from various air forces along with covert, pirate and naval missions. As the game progresses, the player has to keep tabs on political developments, fuel and equipment reserves and all kinds of other factors which govern the game world.

Actually, considering there's rarely anything really exciting going on on-screen, Fighter Command does quite a good job of holding the player's attention. Most of the screens are static, nothing's really very immediate and it takes time to learn the basics, but despite all this it's still strongly compelling. There's plenty to do, lots of strategy to get the head sunk and generally it's all very jolly. The lack of any real fight action is a major setback, and it's because of this that many gamers may prefer to wait till Microprose's forthcoming *ATAC*. In The World's this month. ☆☆☆

**FINAL BLOW**



**Price Amiga £19.99**  
**Genre Arcade Blast**  
**Publisher Namco**

I actually went to a boxing match a couple of months back and people in the crowd were generally shouting "Hit him" as if it was some sort of useful tactic which their chosen fighter should employ. One respects those who exactly the sort of folks who spend more than a couple of quid on Final Blow in the arcades. Nothing wrong with the

collection of the noble art, and nothing wrong with having a right old clanging session in the process, but Final Blow has more to do with seeing who can hit first the fastest than boxing.

Although the players are endowed with plenty of moves and the ability to block punches, the speed of the game completely removes any sort of fence which, after all, is what boxing is all about. Even Mike Tyson would concentrate on different areas of the body. Hit them in the ribs enough to make them lower their guard, and then go to work on their face. No such accuracy in Final Blow, since the flurry of compressed and frozen air makes it impossible to see who's been hit and who's the result is a non-stop series of wick-stammering frustration. About the only way to work out who's being hit is by watching the energy bar at the bottom of the screen.

So far as a coin-op conversion goes, it's a pretty good job, and in two plays we made it a right for a laugh, but the original was far from perfect. Amiga owners may be wise to hold on for a more rounded game. ☆☆☆

**FINAL FIGHT**



**Price Amiga £29.99**  
**Genre Beat-'Em-Up**  
**Publisher US Gold**

Yet another in US Gold's seemingly endless string of Captain America titles. In Metro City (loosely based on New York) all is not well. Crime is rife and to make a bad situation worse the Mayor's eight-year-old daughter has been kidnapped by - you guessed it - Mr Big. (This old Mr Big certainly gets around, doesn't he?) The player and optional partner have to fist-fight their way through the city's wastelands to rescue her. Why? Why? Why?

Final Fight is something of a first for beat-'em-ups on the home computer. In fact, it's actually quite good. The sprites are large and decently animated, the background scroll is smooth and the action is fast. Successful of the driving whether a punch connects or not is a little dodgy, but apart from that this can be recommended unreservedly to anyone who fancies a little action without breaking their knuckles. ☆☆☆



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**FIRST SAMURAI**



Price **Amiga £29.99**  
 Genre **Action/Beat**  
 Publisher **Image Works**

This is the way that arcade adventures should be made! Succeeding in producing a game with the steriod power of *Intelligence* and some puzzle-solving too, *Image Works* have come up with a winning formula.

The player must avenge the foul murder of his Ninja Master by chasing the evil Demons King through 14th Century Japan.

On top of all the regular hacking and slashing that you would expect to find in an arcade adventure, there are Special Items, which can be used a little like playing a poker in *It's A Knockout* and can sometimes the spirit of your murdered Magistrate to help you through some of the more tricky situations.

While it could be said that the last thing the world needs is another martial arts game or another collect-the-objects adventure, *First Samurai* carefully sidesteps the argument by blending both styles in an effective and appealing way, keeping both hardcore killers and those with more cerebral interests happy.

☆☆☆☆

**FLICKY**



Price **MegaDrive £34.99**  
 Genre **Platform**  
 Publisher **Bugs**

"Don't be put off by the screenshots on the back of the box" is probably the best line of advice I can give about *Flicky*. It looks awful - tiny primary-colour sprites and garish backgrounds. And to be honest, things don't improve much in the game itself. However, like *Quaxximus*, an ugly appearance conceals the goodness inside.

The player controls the tiny bird of the title. The little darling's chicks have gone and got themselves lost in the rooms of a giant cat-infested house. *Flicky* has to run and jump about, collect her scattered brood and take them to the safety of the Exit, while avoiding the prowling Wases. *Flicky* is a wonderfully playable game, very simple but packed with fun. Some may dispute whether there's *any* amount of

fun, but for those with the cash it's a good purchase.  
 ☆☆☆

**FLOOR 13**



Price **IBM PC £34.99**  
 Genre **Strategy**  
 Publisher **Virgin Games**

The myth that strategy games are boring has been well and truly exploded by a game that is likely to convert even confirmed nigger-addicts to a more subtle and intelligent software diet. *Floor 13* offers a new slant on the strategy genre by having itself around a compelling scenario and offering gameplay that goes beyond the regular strategy framework.

Set in present-day Britain, it tells of a government-run secret police force that must avert scandals, wipe out subversive elements and generally protect the government from embarrassing incidents so that it doesn't fall from grace. As Director General of this concept agency, the player is solely responsible for its operations.

The game is played almost entirely from a single static screen of an office desk, onto which intelligence reports and newspaper stories arrive from the outside world and form the basis of the information which the player works from as plots and subplots unfold. Various sub-departments, such as surveillance, interrogations and disinformation are the instruments of the player's will, with shady agents taking reports, tapping phones, searching premises and even torturing and killing people to achieve the government's moral aims.

The way in which the game reveals information on half-charts and red headings means that good detective work and thorough cross-checking of intelligence data is as important as the conventional strategic skills which are also required. It's all thoughtfully absorbing, very realistic stuff, and comes highly recommended, even to those who can't normally stand strategy games.  
 ☆☆☆☆☆

**FOOTBALL DIRECTOR II**



Price **Amiboy £1/Amiga £24.99**  
 Genre **Strategy**

Publisher **DSM Games**

Yaaaaaaww. Don't get me wrong, I've got nothing against football - there's just something implicitly boring about management games of this type. *Player Manager* is the exception to the rule, firstly because it's so excellent and secondly because you get to play Kick-Off with it, which made it doubly excellent. When faced with something like this, though, it's difficult to imagine anybody but the most desperate sort of gamer or die-hard fan fan actually getting any enjoyment out of it.

Technically, of course, there's nothing to fault it, and the depth that the game goes into a commendable - you've got your league and cup trophies, financial problems, player injuries, team tactics, talent scouts, stadium management and all the rest of it. On the aesthetic side, however, nothing much seems to have changed since the days when these games were prevalent on the Spectrum - about three or four years ago.

These days, however, the cheap graphics and sound just don't cut it in my eyes. In when something like this comes along it seems like a bit of an embarrassment, really, but of course it's the gameplay that counts and for what it is, *Football Director* is outstanding enough, and providing you're not expecting too much and willing to give the game some time, it should pay off handsomely. The wise members of the computerised football management fraternity will probably want to see their profiles for *Player Manager* a moment.  
 ☆☆☆

**FORMULA ONE GRAND PRIX**



Price **Amiboy £1/Amiga £34.99**  
 Genre **Racing/Simulation**  
 Publisher **MicroProse**

Believe you me, you've never seen a racing game like this. Lots o' *OutRun* fans? *Indyrunner* gals? *Pole!* They are but children's tea compared to the complete and utter excellence of *Formula One Grand Prix*, the latest and greatest game from the programming genius that is *Good!* *Street Racer*! *Crossedout*. The graphics are truly amazing, with high-detail cars complete with driver's helmet poking out of the cockpit literally soaring around tracks lined with stands, trees,

streets and clouds. The sound matches the visuals, with great use made of theory samples for the engine.

But it's not just the quality of the graphics or the sounds that makes *F1GP* so special. It's the meticulous attention to detail that generates an authenticity and involving *Grand Prix* atmosphere. Everything you'd expect to find on a *Grand Prix* circuit - stands, bridges, tunnels, etc. - is there (and in the identical position they'd be found in real life, even standing right down to recently pushing crippled cars off the track and engineer crews waiting in the pits).

The wonderful control over the car in the essential king on the pole, with plenty of difficulty modifiers to make the game vary enough for Grand Prix fans to play or tough-enough to bring leading those out to levels of wear. Indeed, so good is *F1GP* that it earned itself an ACE Trailblazer and the honour of becoming the new *Racing Simulation* benchmark. Good enough for you!  
 ☆☆☆☆☆

**FUZZBALL**



Price **Amiga £19.99**  
 Genre **Platform**  
 Publisher **System 1**

Well, this is a bit of class from the past and so notable, reflecting the two-ton generation, System 1's latest is a simple yet hugely addictive platform affair. The player controls a bouncing ball of fluff that has to be guided around a network of platforms, collecting feisty bonuses. Enemy spies, the Fuzzballs of the title, try to stop him. These come in four increasingly-aggressive "classes": green, purple, black and red. By repeatedly slushing them with his bobb-goo, the player can stun them long enough to knock them off the platform. However, if the player takes too long the Fuzzball comes to hit even nastier than this.

As the player progresses through the fifty odd levels made and ladder Fuzzballs appear, visible enemies start harassing around and the platform leaps provide an ever greater test of the player's plant-powered positioning powers. *Fuzzball* is a classic example of simple being good. The addictive, unchained gameplay and cute graphics make this an *Agade*

winner. And there's a right-dummy animated score to boot. (Well, you're got to kill their leg bones with something, haven't you?)

☆☆☆☆

## GALAGA '91



Price: Game Gear **\$29.99**

Genre: Arcade Shoot

Publisher: Impact

Arrrghhh! You flitty, wretched, walking little alien bastards! Anyone who played the original Galaga in the arcades, or better still the BBC version called Galaga from AtariWare, will be thoroughly vexed in the extensive two-fer treatment the included.

However, in these incarnations, the game had that elusive spark of sheer addictiveness that meant no matter how many times that right-on invisible alien bullet destroyed the player's craft and sent him back to the start of the level, it never became annoying enough to prevent the player returning.

Here, the likelihood of a game ending up all but Continuum is definitely remote. It's the sort of game that leaves you feeling so mad and impressed that you have to turn off the power in order to wash some revenge on the top-eyed fiends.

Nevertheless, a top-notch scrolling shoot-out this is. Not quite as good as the superb *Realizer Wars*, but boasting an infinite number of levels (with simply an increasing number and density of aliens) and some unbelievably learnable flight patterns, it's not bad.

It's basically the only derivation of the legendary Galaxian theme with (and) aliens and graphics.

The main problem lies in the fact that the player can only have two bullets flying on the screen at any one time, and the annoying habit the aliens have of circling at the bottom of the screen, killing the player who makes the mistake of thinking that he's safely dodged an attack.

☆☆☆☆

## THE GAMES . WINTER CHALLENGE



Price: IBM PC **£29.99**

Genre: Sport Simulation

Publisher: Avalade

This is, in our red friends' words, mega-wicked! It appeared in the post, totally unspoiled, and turns out to be one of the best games we've seen this month! Well, seriously! The player (or players - eight is ten can take part) compete in eight winter sports - luge, downhill skating, cross-country skating, speed skating, bobsled, giant slalom, bobsled and ski jump. All the events are depicted in an effective mix of 3D polygons for the landscape (a bit like *Milestones*) with options for the competitors and course scenery (trees, fences, etc.). Sound is less impressive - as a basic PC the game is played almost in silence except for a letters-game tone and a scored cheer when a player completes an event.

The player views the action from just behind and above his on-screen image, therefore getting a good view of the action as well as an excellent first-person impression of speed. Each of the events is relatively easy to control and consequently very easy to get into. Like the *Types Games* series, success is dependent on timing and control rather than hammering the fire button, so it's very satisfying to play and makes sharing records off those best times more a matter of skill as opposed to physical stamina.

Despite its superior qualities, *The Games* may get a bit dull when played solo (a criticism levelled at nearly every game of this type). However, as a game to play with a group of friends it's now flawless - and that makes *The Games* a more than worthy purchase to play over the Xmas holiday period.

☆☆☆☆

## GREAT NAPOLEONIC BATTLES



Price: Amiga **£25.99**

Genre: Strategy

Publisher: Impressions

You've got to laugh. The stars on the back of the box tell all about a product like this. "Create your battlefield with over 50 terrain pieces" says the caption under a picture of some guns and bushes. "French infantry advance on Brno" says the one under the picture with some green squares with cross-hairs.

But if you're wondering, you shouldn't, because impressions certainly know how to put together a top-notch his-

torical wargame, even if they can't do graphics to save their lives.

Great Napoleonic Battles offers the player the chance to become Napoleon himself, or the commander of one of the unfortunate victorians to fall under his control.

Impressions' game art was (warring) gamers in their front rows opening on a hex-grid, with all the hit-point ratings and defence abilities displayed in their ugly economic format, but they are sure to keep happy the games who simply want a machine to do the adding up and look after all the map-implications, sound and action in his own hand.

☆☆☆☆

## GUNSHIP 2000



Price: IBM PC **£29.99**

Genre: Simulation

Publisher: MicroProse

Nobody writes simulations like MicroProse does. This is a highly-realistic, toped in the company's earlier top-flight *Gunship*, which has gone down in software history as one of the best-selling sims ever. This sequel is far more than just *Gunships*. Every part of the game has been given a radical overhaul.

Probably the most impressive aspect in the revamped graphics system. Using a sort of patchwork-quilt landscaping technique, the game-world has been modified in exacting detail, complete with rice hills, mountains, valleys, etc. (It's a geographical feature, it's there. As usual, the game takes the form of a series of pilot-training missions. Unintentionally this complexity means that you really need at least a 68040 PC to get anything approaching speed from the game. Sound with a board is marvellously atmospheric, and adds no end to the gritty battlefield feel.

The 'copter control is good, but actually getting the craft to fly matches that of the real thing, i.e. it's very difficult, and certainly makes *Gunship 2000* not the sort of game to cut your sim-playing teeth on. However, if you're looking for the ultimate chopper simulation, then here it is.

☆☆☆☆

## HARD DRIVIN'

Price: Amiga **£24.99**

Genre: Racing Simulation

Publisher: Atari

The Atari catalogue of software keeps getting bigger and bigger, and it does so importantly - the quality of the games keeps getting better and better. *Hard Drivin'*, a conversion of the Atari coin-op, is a case in point.

Potential hopes (expecting or hoping for *Pole Position* just going to be disappointed - this is a pretty successful attempt to simulate the controls and performance of a real car, and as such it's slightly more difficult and much less forgiving to drive than you would usually think.

The action takes place on one of two courses, a fixed track and a float track (complete with jumps and loop-the-loops). Once these have been turned the player can try racing against the Phoenix Phoenix.

The graphics and sound are nothing short of incredible, accurately reproducing the look and feel of its coin-op Big Daddy. Along with *U.T.I.N. Racer* this is a real showpiece for the power of the Lynx.

It takes a little while to get used to *Hard Drivin'* on the Lynx - the joyed is a poor substitute for a wheel - making the going tough at first, and some may find the difficulty combined with the lack of intermediate push-rod-rod throttle levers. However, once the player has got the hang of things they should find *Hard Drivin'* remarkably satisfying. Recommended.

☆☆☆☆

## HARD NOVA



Price: Atari ST, Amiga **£29.99**

Genre: Role-Playing Game

Publisher: Electronic Arts

*Hard Nova*'s a game that's difficult to categorise. Like *Starflight* it's a mixture of styles, boasting strategy as well as role-playing elements, adventure as well as arcade space-flight sequences. It's the sort of stuff that Electronic Arts in America have been churning out for years - science fiction's subgenre with alien worlds, alien mutant characters, big spacejinks changing together and all the rest of it. There's supposedly a comic edge to this one, with the player taking on the persona of wisecracking

space birds. Hard News.

You can interact with characters, RPG-fashion, collect objects, do missions and trek across the galaxy, intercepting, ferrying cargo from planet to planet and so on and so forth.

It sounds like a lot of a cop out, but if this sort of reality is your cup of tea, then you're liable to have a lot of fun playing her with it—it's just a shame that the vast majority of gamers don't have the patience to get into it. Well worth checking out—the game's got plenty of screenshots (no less), and gets progressively more involving the longer it's played. Just don't expect to pick it up straight away.

☆☆☆☆

## HARE RASING HAVOC



Price: PC £29.99

Genre: Action (Shoot)

Publisher: Disney, Interq/Games

**Hoover!** The idea of a game based around the Famous Roger Rabbit's starring cartoon sports spinning tops and dice indeed sounds like one hairy prospect—but only Disney has realized this in its own game. Plenty has realized this in its own game, but in the other half line game.

On paper at least, it sounds like the cartoon's misanthropic-heroic spirit has been captured. Roger's been reinvented with looking after the accident-prone Baby Herman, and more mouse mischief happens to him while his dragon-like mother is out of the frame, but Herman's disappeared to the local dairy to sample their milkie mors, and Roger must track her down before any harm comes to him.

Sounds like fun? Don't let appearances be deceived. The only thing that Hare Rasing Havoc manages to do is infuriate the player beyond measure with its unbridled control, illogical puzzles and repetitive gameplay.

On each of the screens that Roger encounters, there's a problem to be solved, which involves manipulating the surrounding scenery and objects. To be honest, it's not very taxing and the player more often finds himself fighting against the unresponsive control and slow, drudge animation than actually getting to grips with the puzzles. With the Disney Sound Source connected you get snippets of the original movie characters' voices and SFX—but these quickly become very bit as annoying as the game itself. Only die-hard Roger Rabbit fans could apply,

☆☆☆☆

## HEIMDALL



Price: Amiga (2MB) £34.99

Genre: Action/Adventure

Publisher: Core Design

After a long string of shoot-em-ups and platform games (Cave-Exp, Phoenix, Cloud City), Core Design has returned to more involving territory with Heimdall, an immense, arcade adventure cum role-playing game based around Viking lore.

The Heimdall role is a human gift from the Gods, sent to Earth by Odin to power the three great weapons that will vanquish the forces of evil. After selecting a crew from the varied characters available, Heimdall sets sail across the Nordic waters to destination unknown.

For the most part, the game is yet basic, linear adventure title. The Immortal, although there are some interesting strategic and RPG elements—like characters have differing skills, which means that the player must switch between them, as in a conventional RPG, to perform certain tasks. The strategy is provided by the warlike warden, when the player must travel in between the various islands there are three sub-plots, each hiding one of the elemental weapons and each forming an independent level in the most efficient manner.

Heimdall is a fun adventure game, although the action, due to the producer's RPG overzeal, is a little slow and less exciting than most of its counterparts in the genre. In fact, there are times where very little seems to be happening at all, and only those who are willing to handle slow, static stages and all the rest of it, are likely to enjoy the game to the full.

That said, it's been designed with the utmost care and devotion, and there's enough here to keep anybody glued to the screen for some considerable time.

A fine game.

☆☆☆☆☆☆

## HUDSON HAWK



Price: Atari ST, Amiga £24.99

Genre: Platform

Publisher: Ocean

Bruce Willis' film was a disaster, and Ocean hasn't missed out anything of note in the film conversion: rather the quite a while, no nobody was really expecting tons (much out of Hudson Hawk). But instead of the usual cynical and barely-playable license, what we got was the best platform game so far this year. Special FX took a big gamble in its interpretation of the film by chucking 90% of the source material out of the window, and getting on with the business of just building a good game around the film's basic premise—that of a cat burglar stealing valuable artifacts from around the world.

It works superbly, in much the same style as former platform classics like Mario, Jet Set Willy and Double Dragon, with solid, cerebral character plotting, one ingeniously designed platform level. It's a class act, without a doubt, with fluidity traps and pitfalls, built-in scrolling every corner. The gameplay is really top to consider (at least standard), and the graphics and sound make do to enhance the fun factor (because they're so plucky). Don't be put off by the shoddy-looking animations—Hudson Hawk is a brilliant game in its own right and deserves a place in your collection. Today.

☆☆☆☆☆☆

## HUNTER



Price: Atari ST, Amiga £24.99

Genre: Action/Strategy

Publisher: Activision

It's a real old world, this one we live in—just when your old Activision got some decent products together, their Mithraic dandy game and pulls the plug on them. Now, however, after the aforementioned "decent product" has been selling around doing very little indeed for the last few months, Activision's current public-outlet of games, The One Company has taken it upon themselves to let another taste of gamey goodness reach the streets.

Hunter is the sort of game that you dream of playing. A polygon-based action strategy game with all of the usually associated niceties removed, it offers all the "niceties" to be great. It features which should, by rights, be included in all three games.

Taking the role of the Hunter, the player must travel around a bunch of islands, systematically destroying all enemy installations in whatever way

he sees fit. Your particular mission is detailed in a briefing where specific, immediate targets are detailed by your allied commander.

The best thing about Hunter is that there's no cheating about. If you want to infiltrate an enemy base, get a disguise and you're done! If you want to get shot, steal a helicopter/jeep/truck or whatever, it's all so easy and because the unnecessary complexity of basic tasks has been removed, the player can concentrate on progressing with the mission much more intensely.

Excellent graphics and a fast-paced storyline can only add to Hunter's already awe-inspiring style. A winner.

☆☆☆☆☆☆

## THE IMMORTAL



Price: IBM PC £30.00

Genre: Action/Adventure

Publisher: Electronic Arts

It's over a year now since The Immortal appeared in great public outlets on the Amiga. A masterpiece of action and game design, it was probably responsible for selling a few low MB upgrades. At last it's made it's way on to the PC, and now features a couple of new enhancements that make it any even better game.

The majority of the game is identical. The player guides a capably armed and trained warrior on his travels around an intricate 3D landscape. As he progresses around the corridors, he discovers treasure, traps and—of course—terrifying monsters. In the original Amiga game, the fairly complex combat took place at the side with all the rest of the game (at least) and it made judging responses to the opponents harder and hence a touch difficult. On the PC, however, when combat occurs the view switches to a close-up that makes things far easier.

The only gripe from a PC viewer's point of view is that having been spoiled by the recent plethora of 3D action games, the view on display here is a little disappointing. However, this doesn't seriously detract from what is an otherwise excellent game, and more than made up without hesitation to anyone who faces a bit of "dangerous" dragging.

☆☆☆☆

JIMMY WHITE'S

# READERS PAGES

## 'WHIRLWIND' SNOOKER



Price: **Atari ST/Amiga £24.99**

Genre: **Sport Simulation**

Publisher: **Virgin Games**

Archer Maclean, serious programmer of *IK+* and *Dropout* is probably the last person you'd expect to write a snooker title. Car games have been around since the beginning of computer gaming - a few coloured shapes, some angle-of-deflection algorithms and away you go. But even with the advent of 3D graphics, none of them have really had any element of realism, until now.

The table is viewed from behind the cue ball so the player can line up shots as if on a real table. The view can be rotated through various axes and viewed in on so the player can see from virtually any angle conceivable. The ball movement is accurate, without balls hopping or re-appearing once or going off at peculiar angles. Two player games are the best, but four levels of computer opponents are available for the lone gamer. As the player progresses more sophisticated tactics can be incorporated, like positional play. Swerve, spin, screw and every type of spin are all possible, and are vital for countering opponents. The end result of *IKW's* comprehensive and realistic approach to accurate snooker is the most authentic sports simulation to date.

□□□□□

## KNIGHTMARE



Price: **Amiga £29.99**

Genre: **Role-Playing Game**

Publisher: **Mindscape**

Knightsman, based on the children's TV series of the same name, can best be described as *Capin* with new graphics. The similarities are hardly surprising - both were written by Tony Crowther, the man who has been responsible for more games than Sir Widdington.

And, as anyone who has played *Capin* will realise, this is not such a bad thing. The action is depicted in Sideways view-down the corridor (D), with the player able to move around the puzzle- and monster-strewn labyrinth without. It is not particularly original or ground-breaking, but any-

one who enjoys a good RPG - and *Capin*, in particular - will be more than happy with this.

My only serious quibble is whether lobby fans of the TV show will find it slightly cerebral rather appealing.

□□□□□

## LOTUS TURBO CHALLENGE 2



Price: **Amiga £24.99**

Genre: **Racing Game**

Publisher: **Genie/Graphics**

A worthy successor to the excellent *Lotus Turbo Challenge* the game has a number of interesting differences to its predecessor. For a start, it's a better one-player game, but not so good for two players. Technically superior to the original, there's nevertheless something just a little bit lacking. Perhaps it's the removal of the lap system, or perhaps it's the fact that crashing into the other cars really doesn't do you that much damage. But whatever, it isn't quite as good.

However, it is a great deal better than both of the driving games on the market, and there's a link-up option allowing up to four players to race at once. The action is fast and furious and the control the players have over their cars has been greatly improved.

There must have been two through a selection of stages, each having a particular hazard, whether it be natural (snow, rain, sand) or man-made (potholes, jags/runways) rambling across the road. Graphically superior to the vast majority of similar titles, *Lotus* just looks the business, with fairly credible obstacles and a high level of detail on the cars themselves.

Despite being hampered by some annoying deterioration whenever the player drives through any water and the flawed two player mode, *Lotus 2* is a pretty impressive game.

□□□□□

## LAST NINJA 3



Price: **Amiga £24.99**

Genre: **Action Adventure**

Publisher: **System 3**

Well, well, well. After everyone has been thinking up their ideas at the prospect of giving System 3's much

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## HELP LINE

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Help!! I search people to exchange games with U.K.M. games. Please send me your list of games: Edo Admon, 26 Averbuch Street, Bangal, Hasharon 47400, Israel.

rated, much lauded and much delayed conclusion of the Ninja series a right old kicking, the blinding thing turns out to be great!

Applying a more arcade-advance angle to the tried and tested Ninja formula, the boys at the System have produced a game which has all the visual appeal of the first two games in the series and none of the problems. Well, that's not quite the case, but instead of the game relying so heavily on the fight routines which, to be honest, were never that good, the emphasis has been moved onto the puzzle-solving element which isn't half as hard to implement.

Spanning an epic quest across a bunch of different scenes (jungle, air, fire, water and void) the game continually throws up different puzzles which the player must solve in order to reach the next stage.

Aside from completing these puzzles, there's a fair amount of racking to be done too, and the collectible weapons add enough novelty to ensure that even when the player is doing very, very well, there's always the level, he'll find something new to do.

Graphically, the game is really rather special, with the character's landscapes at a stage which must surely be approaching the state of the art, and the animations of the character themselves being undeniably fine. Just look at the speed blur on that.

☆☆☆☆

**LEISURESUIT LARRY 5**



Price IBM PC £34.99

Genre Adventure  
Publisher Sierra On-Line

He's Larry Laffer! He's Presidento Patti! And they're in a whole lot of trouble! Leisure Suit Larry 5, the latest instalment in the impressively successful adventure series chronicles the spring adventures of America's favourite lounge lizard.

In what position to be the most busy adventure in the series, the player must guide Larry and Patti through a world of puns and winks in the quest to keep good honest men on the airwaves. Initially taking the role of the wackier boss of America's Instant Hitme Video, Larry quickly becomes embroiled in a hair-raised, underworld plot to get all porn-off the normal market and drive a underground where numerous prof-

its can be made.

It's all pretty standard point and click stuff, but the time the player alternates between the very different personas of Larry and Patti, allowing him to get into any nooks and also avoiding and particularly severe cuts of "Sensim" from lonely liberal wots.

Again, the hand-painted art-style graphics and game design are an excellent update for what are essentially lapses into a host of pretty lame gags. However, this time Larry does have moments of absolute brilliance, and the continual promise of a further snuff pic of a top spy in a sexy pose is enough to keep you coming back for more. No? Well, please yourselves.

☆☆☆☆

**MAD TV**



Price IBM PC £29.99

Genre Strategy  
Publisher Random Acts

My, what timing! Only weeks after the big TV broadcast debacle and as the country quakes in dread at the threat of a lead of old Spanish-symphonic and crappy game shows filling our screens, Random Acts produce a game which is all about wanting your own TV station! Finally the powers at TV-Aid had the chance to play Mad TV, they might still be in business.

Not only is Mad TV a right laugh, allowing the player to have total control with the only limiting factor being the budget over an entire TV station, but it is an excellent strategy game into the bargain.

The aim is to keep Mad TV at the top of the TV ratings while simultaneously winning the heart of lady, the most beautiful woman in town. Taking place in a huge skyscraper, the game has the player's character having control from the various offices, buying up films, scheduling programs and keeping an eye on the all important viewing figures.

Every now and again, your boss will crop up and give you some helpful pointers. He may be keen that his station win an award for pokey on film, so it's up to you to schedule accordingly. Now all of this would be a good enough base on its own, but when you consider that Mad TV is a pretty excellent strategy game with complicated interrelations between various departments and some top notch presenta-

tion to boot, you would have to conclude that you'd be mad, as bleeding hell, to miss it.

☆☆☆☆

**MAGIC GARDEN**



Price Amiga £24.99

Genre Arcade Adventure  
Publisher Electronic Zoo

Good God! Whaters out! Having been plagued for months by an apparently never-ending stream of cosmic games, we were understandably keen to get our hands on the game which they promote. And what a peculiar concoction it is.

In his endeavours to become 'the most efficient grower', the player must guide a grower around the opulent magic garden doing, well, this is where it becomes a little bit unclear actually. He can do pretty much whatever he fancies, he can water the flowers. He can mow the lawn. He can use some magic seeds and fly around on the back of a big dragonfly! But the grower must be careful, for there are terrible traps which live in the garden like big flowers which can hurt him or tall grass which can slow him down.

And Gregory had better be careful with the number of objects he's copying, or he will become too tired and get hit by lightning and die. But the grower won't get hit by lightning if he is exploring the underground caverns where the talent of Caecory can flash the toter for cost efficiency.

Presented in side-on elevation, the game looks, plays, smells nice and is just odd. It's as odd as anything I've ever seen in my life. Peculiar British Punter style graphics and gameplay which quite honestly is truly to imagine appearing in the mascot made Magic Garden a true original.

☆☆

**MARTIAN MEMORANDUM**



Price IBM PC £25.99

Genre Adventure  
Publisher Access/US Gold

Once again a game pretends to be an interactive movie and turns out to be little more than a simplistic adventure with flashy graphics and sound. But

In Martian Memorandum's case the pretence is not enough to make up for the game design's shortcomings - at least they seem to be for the first few hours. The game uses digitised video footage, sampled speech and film quality music to set the scene (the story takes you a fantastic minute determine who must travel in Mars to track down the kidnapped daughter of a famous industrialist, and it works very well, creating a strong sense of atmosphere and involvement).

But as it so often the case with games of this type, the effect of these flashy gimmicks is soon worn off and when you actually decide down to play the game you realise that there isn't really that much to see or do. An ardent adventure could easily complete it inside of a week, because the linear game design means that it's almost impossible to go down the wrong track - it's as if you're being guided by an invisible helping hand, and that's not very satisfying. Both *Line Of The Dragon* and *Heart Of Chaos* offer similar and more satisfying experiences, so if you've got the PC muscle in you so demanding a product, you'd be well advised to check either of those out instead.

☆

**MEGAFORTRESS**



Price IBM PC £24.99

Genre Simulation  
Publisher Microprose

The trouble with games based on taking every single role in a big, stupid old plane like the B-2 is that virtually every role is mind-numbingly boring. I mean, who honestly wants to plot their course across thousands of miles of terrain using a 3D terrain mapping computer or have to fiddle around with astronomical impediments in order to get the enemy's radar?

The aim of the game is to pilot a battle-worn B-20 across both Iraq and the Soviet Union, keeping the location and aim of your missions safely secret until the awesome onslaught of firepower can be unleashed on the target. Unfortunately, as all it's graphic packaging and sound, Megafortress is just a very good simulation of a rather dull business. For once you can be had in any of a host of more recently released flight games, and Microprose's South Fighter action even offer similar crop-up-on-the-scenery action for

these players who are especially keen on that sort of thing.

Perfectly competent both graphically and on the play front, Megatraveller has missions designed by real 834 navigators and two sailing out-of-the-Dale Brothers, although it's one of those games that I guess you really need to have experienced the real thing to appreciate.

☆☆☆

## MEGA LO MANIA



Price **Amiga £24.99**  
Genre **Arcade Strategy**  
Publisher **Image Works**

Released amid a bunch of God-stuff that are still coming thick and fast, ImageWorks's offering has faced better than most, steering sufficiently clear of the Big Daddy Popovers while not being afraid to borrow little bits here and there where appropriate.

Set in an alternate universe, Mega Lo Mania is all about the quest for power. Power over a set of worlds, each made up from a suite of islands, to be precise. New worlds are formed and intelligent life is placed upon them, upon which interstellar travellers descend and try to seize the reins of power for themselves.

The conflict arises, needless to say, where more than one traveller takes a shine to a particular island. Since each area can only have one ruler, a campaign of imperialism begins, with each player trying to use the forces at his disposal to overthrow the others.

Each island exists within its own time period, and the rate of development, intelligence and so on of its inhabitants is governed accordingly. Players quick to invest time in invention and the refining of natural elements, rather than simply running around hitting the others with sticks are more likely to succeed.

☆☆☆☆☆

## MEGATRAVELLER 2: QUEST FOR THE ANCIENTS



Price **IBM PC £184**  
Genre **Role-Playing Game**  
Publisher **Empire**

This latest UK release from American

software team Empires is more too late, primarily a sequel to Megatraveller 1: The Shadow Company. As before, the player leads a team of five space adventures through real and trouble-totopography riches and fame. This time around, the player has to find a way to halt the flow of toxic alien emanations from a mysterious set of ruins left by a dead race called the Ancients. But are they dead? That is up to the player to find out.

sporting high-quality 480-colour VGA, this is certainly a treat on the eye, and the pace as well with a suitable sound card. The game itself is an RPG in the Ultima style, but not half as rigorous - which for many will be more than a blessing. The story is fun and involving, with plenty of sub-tasks to perform that provide welcome and often amusing relief from the main plot. If one has a minor niggle it's that the space combat - which you'd think would be the most exciting part of the game - is flat and dull, with little sense of player involvement. In summary, highly recommended.

☆☆☆☆

## MEGA TWINS



Price **Am/ST/Amiga £25.99**  
Genre **Platform Game**  
Publisher **US Gold**

There's big trouble in the land of ratsy things. A dark shadow, you see, has fallen across the land, and it's up to the two sweetest and most unassuming warriors ever to game computer software to save the day. At its core Mega Twins is a platform game - one of two players guide their cutesy heroes through level after level of ledges and chasms, saving off the attacking monsters with a lunge from their tiny little swords. Mega-Twins can be found along the way that act as super weapons, which are particularly useful against the super-tough real-of-life enemies.

As a conversion of the CapCom coin-op Mega Twins is hardly startling, but it's competent enough. Apart from the slightly turgid pace of the action, the main thing that prevents Mega Twins from making any real impression is the lack of excitement. There are no real thrills on offer - the platform element is minor, and having to wade/skip far to job the bonuses into oblivion is hardly opening up whole new vistas of virtual entertainment. The

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There are many, many other little things that make this game the most addictive and accurate interpretation of Football Managers games. It would be impossible to list all the features in the short list so we've tried to list the best. We have thousands of statistical references from our previous editions of the game, many are still being added. It's possible for you to have the entire book for details on how to play the incredible game. Available for all Am/ST & Amiga's, PC, computer company info. [www.footballmasters.com](http://www.footballmasters.com)

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final nail in the coffin is the fact that the whole thing is incredibly easy — a competent player will probably get half-way through the game on his first set of credits. Mega Twins had a grade potential, but whether it's the fault of the original setup or the conversion it's arguably turned out to be Mega rather than Mega.  
☆☆☆

**MERCs**



Price **MegaDrive £29.99 (Import)**  
Genre **Arcade Beat**  
Publisher **Sega**

If *MegaDrive* owners hadn't had quite enough shoot-'em-ups to keep them happy will into the next century, here's another chance to hammer the jugged. The player must team up with a bullet-headed mate and raid increasingly well-defended enemy installations in one mission to rescue the President. Even the smooth top-down multi-directional scrolling and plentiful power-ups fail to drive home the tank and file of shoot-'em-ups. The play is available for millions of those who prefer top-to-down (or who haven't got any friends) but the thrill factor of such missions is really pretty limited.

Equipped with initially meek weapons, the over-matched heroes must gradually work their way up the screen, picking off evil soldiers both on foot or lurking in gun towers or jeeps. Extra firepower and strength replenishers can be had by destroying the monstrous cars lying about.

Players can speed their progress through the frequently tiresome levels by jumping into a semi-licensed jet jeep and roving up the screen. This bit is quite amusing, as you can run down the enemy soldiers or blast them with the jeep's in-built bazooka.

As well as the requisite end-of-level guardians (which here take the form of an assortment of military hardware — planes, helicopters, tanks, etc) the levels are reasonably well broken up with bigger foes in the shape of gun-towers, machine gun nests and the like.

Aside from the problems thrown up when a game controlled by the jeoped necessitates diagonal firing (the enemy troops always seem to attack on a diagonal track), *Mercs* has a lesser of two evils: it expands up to three, it looks poor, offers absolutely no originality and when played solo is a crushing bore.



**MIG29M SUPER FULCRUM**



Price **IBM PC £24.99**  
Genre **Simulation**  
Publisher **Demon**

Improving on an already successful formula, *Demon* have done away with many of the longevity problems of their first MIG game and have set this game against an epic backdrop of conflict in southern America. Taking the role of the pilot of a United Nations controlled MIG, the player must launch himself into hostile airspace from a military allied-controlled airbase — his mission is to gradually crush the striking rebel militia's grip on the area by blowing up their supply lines and destroying their fuel depots.

It's here that the company most recently associated with not especially excellent coin-up conversions should have set such a classy simulation, and as a result, it may be tough for them to find the right audience. Nevertheless, a classy product it is, with a wealth of external views and a flexibility of mission structure enabling the inventive player to try his hand at planning his own strategies for doing away with the enemy threat.

Also included in this game is an implementation of the real MIG's fly-by-wire system, an auto-stabilising device which prevents the plane from flaking around all over the place like a big girl's blouse. Most handy to control.

Presented, surprisingly enough, in polygon graphics, MIG beats the competition on the raw-use-fun front, even if it is a bit tricky to imagine it containing some of the more intense *MegaDrive* products. A winner.  
☆☆☆☆

**MIGHT AND MAGIC III: ISLES OF TERRA**



Price **IBM PC £24.99**  
Genre **Role-Playing Game**  
Publisher **Hasbro Computing/US Gold**  
"By my mighty sword of Zorak, I, Slager Dragonbane, must create the evil-demon-legions of Kraya before the alignment of the six moons-voids!"

Yes, well, you get the general idea. *Might And Magic III* is yet another delve into the much-explored realm of FRP gaming, this time coming over as a cross between *Dungeons and Dragons* and *The Lord's Tale*. It is just one of the whole FRP genre being done to death so badly that there's just nothing new anymore!

This third *Might And Magic* outing would seem to support that argument, as apart from some very basic VGA, sprite and soundboard antics, there seems to be very little new or interesting on offer, except maybe for that ever persistent feature of die-hard FRP fans: As you'd expect, the scenario is about as hackneyed as one is ever going to get, with some cheap tap about retaining the Ultimate Power Orb (again, only to the King. What that involves is selecting a party of dwarves, orcs, horses, warriors and all that, and then wandering about fighting with dragons, collecting treasure and picking up clues.

The game itself actually is very pretty, but for the most part the adventuring is pretty slow and instrumental. Considering, however, how conditioned FRP gamers have become, I doubt that anybody who's likely to buy it will be disappointed by what they find.  
☆☆☆

**MONSTER BUSINESS**



Price **Amiga £24.99**  
Genre **Platform**  
Publisher **Empire**

The mad scientist from the big bad has once again broken loose, and on searching for little items they can start completely spooking his lab's construction men. Because *Lenny*, the best beast hunter around and blow all these many little monsters sky high! A goal in life if ever there was one. *Monster Business*, the epitome of the average arcade game features rapid graphics and a doubly stupid premise — to retrieve the objects from the building site, *Lenny* must blow up all the monsters with some sort of fatal bicycle pump, causing them to inflate and eventually rise to the top of the screen, dropping all their objects as they go.

Despite the irony of the whole affair, *Monster Business* is actually quite good. Different screens each present a different sort of beast, whether it be sliding platforms or a speedy time limit.

and the player is so interested in trying to get to the end of the level that he probably won't realize quite how close and death the game is.

Smart graphics and sound-only-to-Corona music help *Monster Business* rise above the pack and shine out as an example of what arcade games should be about. It's like an *Atari* record, if you know what I mean.  
☆☆☆☆

**MOONSTONE**



Price **Amiga £29.99**  
Genre **Arcade Adventure**  
Publisher **Microscope**

What a conundrum the game billed as being at all "easy" should be treated with approximately the same amount of caution as a drunken pit-bull with rabies. *Moonstone* isn't actually that bad.

The aim of the game is to travel across a mystic land, searching for the Holy Grail-like Moonstone and trying to ensure that no other wiser girl gets his hands on it first. Up to four players can enter the quest, each selecting a coloured Knight to control. And why, you may ask, are we controlling Knights instead of elves or goblins or something? Because *Moonstone* is all about fighting, that's why!

At frequent intervals, the friendly (and/or evil) sections are punctuated with action scenes. While walking in a wood or dithering by a stone circle, the Knight will be accosted by a hostile creature. Here is where the rarity value of *Moonstone* lies. The combat is incredibly violent and gory, although the gore can be switched off by squashed gamers.

All in all a mixed bag. It could have been a really great combat game, but there's too much wandering around to give it much better appeal. Worth a look.  
☆☆☆

**NEBULUS 2**



Price **Amiga £25.99**  
Genre **Platform**  
Publisher **20th Century Entertainment**  
Rising from the *Horizon* ashes like a phoenix looking exceptionally like *Wolf*



even it was before it was burnt, 1989 Century Entertainment aren't having much luck at the moment. Not only are they having some considerable difficulty with their Megafusion product, but the new game that looked like it could actually make them some money has turned out to be somewhat of a disappointment.

The European orders responsible for acquiring John Phillips' original ideas have done a lot of a lot of jobs, mainly the gameplay that made the first game so excellent by piling on lots of items and action power-up type features. The classic formula has been totally swapped by the sheer weight of these new 'ideas', and it's such a pity anybody who enjoyed the first game is likely to be very disappointed by this. However, it is quite pretty and, at least for those who haven't seen the first game, not a total washout on the playability front. But while the first game knew exactly where the addition/fixation threshold was, Nebula 2 steps over it like it wasn't even there. Not recommended.

☆☆

## NEVER-ENDING STORY 2



**Price Amiga £29.99**  
**Genre Arcade Adventure**  
**Publisher Ulead**

I've nothing against licensees biting close to their film origins - in fact, I positively embrace it - but where this is taken to such lengths that the game turns out as poor as the movie did then I have to draw the line.

Witness *The Never-Ending Story 2*. The film came and went at the cinema with hardly a mention of public interest, and unfortunately it's likely that the game of the film will suffer the same fate. The fact that the game's release trails that of the film by a good year so it's the final nail in its coffin.

It's a five-level arcade action romp. The first is a *Shades of the Amiga* style horizontal scroller, the second is a Q3 chase, the third is a dull climb up the side of a tower, the fourth is a *Robotech*-style platform affair, the fifth a *Wreck of the Seven-Sea* style ride. As you can tell, it's positively sparkling with originality. As usually happens with these multi-level games the individual sections are pretty weak on terms of gameplay though, moderately pleas-

ant to look at. They're also quite difficult, and since death is frequent the lengthy gap between lives is particularly frustrating. Although well-presented, *Never-Ending Story 2* can only be recommended to die-hard fans of the film. That's right - all three of you. ☆☆☆

## OUTRUN



**Price Game Gear £14.99**  
**Genre Racing Game**  
**Publisher Sega**

It may be an odd bet but it certainly isn't a gamble - at least, not in its Game incarnation it isn't. *Out Run* is arcade racing action stripped down to its bones - the player has to drive a cool Formula through four stages, avoiding other traffic and those pesky stationary road-side obstacles. It's all against the clock, with the player being awarded previous stage scores every time he completes one of the stages. And... er... that's just about it.

The impression of speed (achieved using good ol' colour banding) is fine, although the objects grow in an annoyingly coarse and chunky fashion. Unfortunately the number of on-stage objects is small, and the number of cars on the road even smaller - even on the hardest stage I only counted two other vehicles on the road at any time. Very poor. Worst of all it's ridiculously easy - I completed the game on my third go. Yes, really! The only real mark in the game's favour is the ability to play head-to-head with another Game owner, but even there the thrills are few and far between. Not good.

☆☆

## OUTRUN EUROPA



**Price Amiga ST/Amiga £29.99**  
**Genre Racing Game**  
**Publisher Ulead**

As long as *A Game* that has become a legend, along with the likes of *Star Trek* and *Final of Frey* over the last couple of years, simply because it's taken so bloody long to come out. The original idea was to release the product in code in on the way to replicate from the original *Out Run* conversion - which should give you an idea of how long we've been waiting for it. We ended

up getting the official sequel, *Turbo Out Run* film, which wasn't much cop, and now we've got this, which isn't either.

The basic idea is that the player has to take charge of a variety of vehicles - car, bike and boat - as he races over various land-and-sea stages in deluxe a vital package, while international agents are out to stop you. It's all a bit ludicrous really, and what's seemingly supposed to be a cross between *Out Run* and *Chase H.Q.* with extra levels on it is in fact a bit of a shoddy mess. The road sections aren't much fun to play because control of the vehicle is so bloody unresponsive, and the money can just keep on getting in the way in a way that isn't conducive to gameplay at all, but is just very frustrating. The boat bits don't even have that because they're so un-just and difficult, and 99% of players will probably get their loss through the routine score within the minutes of loading it up. Talking of loading, the constant disk swapping is a pain in the prostate, and it all hardly seems worth it when it's not even very clear what's actually going on in the game. There are far better race games available, so don't waste your precious time pondering over this one.

□

## PACMAN



**Price Game Gear £19.99**  
**Genre Arcade Blast**  
**Publisher Namco**

Well, what is there to say about the original arcade classic that hasn't already been said? Not much, except that it's now available on the Sega handheld and isn't bad at all.

There are no bells, enhancements or other features that would have been a mistake to add here. This is not *Pacman 99* or anything rubbish like that, but the good ol' original, as it was all those years ago. The conversion is pretty much spot-on (which, given that the game hardly pushes computer technology to its limit is only to be expected), right down to the original colours and sound effects.

One thing that has had to be made in purely a practical one - to preserve the original size of the graphics, the *Pacman* is now a four-way scrolling affair, with only a section visible on screen at a time. It works well enough, but it can be a bit of a pain at times, as

it makes it difficult for the player to see where the remaining dots are, and when ghosts might be coming in from behind. *Pacman* veterans may find this annoying, but to so many casual players it's not so much of a hind. So don't be a silly boy - get this classic up and running on your GameGear today!

☆☆☆☆

## PEGASUS



**Price Amiga ST/Amiga £19.99**  
**Genre Arcade Blast**  
**Publisher Geminis Graphics**

Oh dear, oh dear, dear. What a shame that just when Geminis starts getting a good reputation for itself with its classy product line, it turns out a piece of shite like this. Based very loosely on the classic *Gunship* myth, *Pegasus* is a weird half-and-half mix of R-Type style shoot-'em-up action and run-and-slash-up-the-buddies platform stuff. The mixture of colours and general layout action is supposed to give the player variety and keep him interested, in practice all it does is get very boring very quickly.

In the shoot-'em-up sections, *Pegasus* (or *Percus*, as the boss incorrectly spells his name) flies along on the back of the mythical winged horse, which is animated in an atrociously unconvincing manner, and flies away at the attacking gophers, dragons, harpies, etc. When he's survived this onslaught, *Pegasus* lands, *Percus* disappears and the ground section begins. This happens 10 times (2 air sections, 20 on the ground), by which time the player has probably run all his hair out, kicked in the TV screen and lobbed his computer out the window.

It's not that *Pegasus* is a bad idea - it's just that it's been executed in a such a God-awful way and unconvincing manner. The action in the honey bits is sluggish and unconvincing, while the ground levels lack any of the flourish of, say, *Submachine II*. The fact that there's lots of it doesn't make it any more of a viable purchase - unless you're a masochist of course. Complete with all manner of intolerable spelling mistakes within the game ("minister" instead of "minister", "new" instead of "know"), *Pegasus* would have only just made the grade two years ago, or on public domain today. To ask, *could* be it when it falls so far below today's standards of graphics and game-

play is a bit on an inside. Avoid.  
 ☆☆☆

## PITFIGHTER



Price Amiga £25.99  
 Genre Beat 'Em-Up  
 Publisher Demarc

If ever there's a prime example example of an excellent conversion of an average coin-op for the Pitfighter is it. If you're an arcade geek then you're probably more than familiar with the game.

With its giant monitor screen, three sets of player controls and stand-out digitized graphics you could hardly miss it. You'd be mad, underneath the single-funky visuals and steady sound (which a distinctly dull beat two-up, made even worse by the confusion caused by the grainy-looking graphics. Where's my blade gone! Is he hitting me or not? You know the sort of thing. All in all, a less than rewarding experience.

In converting Pitfighter to the home system, Targem (under the actual name) has actually improved it a hell of a lot. Indeed, if you liked the coin-op, chances are you'll

like the home game even more. The graphics, which have retained pretty much all of the flash special FX of the coin-op, are clearer, and the slower pace makes the game much easier to play. The joystick controls are a little unresponsive, but it only takes a few goes to get the swing of things, but as good a conversion as it is, it still can't compensate for the fact that fundamentally Pitfighter's about as exciting as tapping a few buttons all day. Which, in, in Pitfighter is pretty much what you spend all your time doing.  
 ☆☆☆

## POPULOUS II



Price Amiga £29.99  
 Genre Action Strategy  
 Publisher Electronic Arts

Reviewed One of the greatest games of all time just got considerably better. Building's long-awaited sequel is just so excellent that it's difficult to find the words to describe it. Basically, it's pretty much the same game - guide your followers through a series of apocalyptic battles, God versus God, over count-

less isometric worlds.

From that point on, however, it's a whole new ball game. Whereas the original game had only a handful of gaily effects, Populous II has scores of them, many much more fluidly than anything encountered in the first game. The plethora of extra features (road and city building, effects that interact with each other, experience points that build up as you progress) make Populous II a far more involved and rewarding experience than the original. Absolutely phenomenal stuff. Populous II is a game that you really REALLY cannot afford to miss. Buy it immediately.  
 ☆☆☆☆☆

## PUT 'N' PUTTER



Price Same Gear £20.00  
 Genre Puzzle  
 Publisher Impact

There's nothing like a good crazy golf game for a bit of laddled entertainment. And, as they say, this is nothing like a good crazy golf game.  
 Well, okay, so that's not exactly the

case, but Put 'n' Putter is seriously flawed.

The major, indeed the only, real problem with the game is that it is simply far too easy. And by easy I mean the player (unless he's an utter imbecile) won't even get a whiff of a Challenge (1/8) screen, until he has completed about twenty holes and has graduated onto the Expert level. While it's nice to get a little way into a game before grinding to a halt, this is ridiculous!

Aside from that, Put 'n' Putter does all the things a crazy golf game should, falling down in only a couple of minor places. The course moves rather sluggishly, and the courses could hardly be described as imaginative. Work a bit, if you're a really crap golfer.  
 ☆☆☆

## RAILROAD TYCOON



Price Amiga £25.99  
 Genre Strategy  
 Publisher MicroProse

The ACE benchmark game makes it's way onto the Amiga, and what a fine conversion it is! Building a railroad

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empires across the USA at the turn of the 20th Century may sound like hard work, but for those who like their strategy to run deep, Sid Meier's simulation is that very, very pure in fun. Fun Fun Fun! We know it's difficult to imagine how, but trust us, it is. The feeling of power is paramount as you by your track from sea to shining sea, conduct big-time business and generally earn loads of cash.

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## REALMS



**Price Amiga/Mat 57 £29.99**

**Genre Arcade Strategy**  
**Publisher Virgin Games**  
Cool game? Just what, an Amiga Power on a gilly post it, has Peter "Populus" Mulpasen stated, 'Yes, it's his and his merry band of programmers as hailing who we have we have to blame for the proliferation of incoherent 3D-view strategy games.

It's interesting that's the biggest problem with Realms, the latest offering from Corelight, previously best known for arcade games like *Paradise* and *Blindfold*. It's had appeared about four months ago, it might be received most favorably, but in the last few months we've had *Mega-Lo-Mania*, *Utopia* and the sequel to the game that started it all, *Populus* (which rightly blew the competition away). One can't help feeling the software buying public have probably had enough of these sorts of games by now, and if I had the choice between *Populus* and

*Realms*, I know which one I'd go for.

The pity is that *Realms* is actually quite a good game. The player is in a wizard-like in a pseudo-fantasy world, using the power with a number of other equally pseudo-wizard warriors. The player has his people, raise armies, lay siege to cities, the usual sort of thing, bigger firepower with more depth but less impressive graphics and you get the rough idea. It plays well, control over the various components of your empire is well thought out, and the mix of strategy and action is balanced nicely. Trouble is, when you've been a God raising fire and brimstone on your people *Realms* comes across as fairly bland in every sense.

☆☆☆☆

## RISE OF THE DRAGON



**Price Amiga £34.99**

**Genre Adventure**  
**Publisher Dynamix/Bioss On Line**  
Amiga owners have been scrambling to become the first to purchase this the first in a new wave of theme games helmed by the perennially popular Dynamix team. But they should be warned. While Amiga owners get to enjoy just as many visual details and plot twists as their PC pals, they pay the price of swapping six discs every last one as it slips in and out of your drive for the ungodly time! disks.

However, if you're willing to pay the across-the-price, Rise is an extremely rewarding product. The player takes the role of a futuristic detective, a tall Maltese type, dragging his way through a dingy squalid city of slaves, the last remaining obstacle between the mysterious Dragon and total control of the entire planet! Played in first-person perspective, the game uses the so-typing necessary control interface which Bioss have made their trademark.

This is another example of the innovative minds that which American companies are so fond of fading down our shores, but for once it isn't too bad. There is actually a story here! And there is actually some adventuring to do. The player must investigate the strange drug-related death of the Mayor's daughter, interrogate wacky criminals and do all of the other stuff that genre investigators have to do. Wire taps, opening other people's mail, hanging out in low-rent strip joints. What a life. And it's all in those lovely hand-drawn

graphics. Mind you... all those disks...

☆☆☆☆

## ROBIN HOOD



**Price IBM PC £29.99**

**Genre Arcade Strategy**  
**Publisher Millennium**

Mercilessly out-talking the publicity of the recent batch of Lincoln games, Millennium's completely unlicensed version of the tale is surprisingly entertaining.

Presented in Populus style, the game sticks to the classic storyline of Robin of Locksley being banished out of his lands by the evil Sheriff of Nottingham, deserted by his people and left to fend for himself.

The player, taking the title role of course, must assemble a band of merry men and set about doing away with the nasty old sheriff's crew and the all. An equally important goal for the player is to recover all the peasants and other inhabitants of the forest and its environs that Robin's the marauding Sheriff has despoiled to them but is a fairly hard headed goal.

Aside from combat and object-collecting, there's a refreshing amount of positively funny dialogue in the game too, with the characters campy up their roles to the best of their ability.

It's an extremely enjoyable and innovative arcade adventure cum strategy cum role playing game which's most failing could be that the plot is so familiar the player is compelled to play through to the very end as soon as he physically can, thus diminishing the appeal of return visits.

☆☆☆☆

## ROBOCOD



**Price Amiga £25.99**

**Genre Platform**  
**Publisher Millennium**

And about time too. Computer owners have been waiting a long time for a platform game good enough to wear in the faces of the great console ones, revealingly among their *Demoo* and their *Mario*. And here it is.

*Robocod* wins its awards for its originality. There are elements of just about every trending 'n' jumping game from

which filter onwards in there somewhere, but thanks to careful design and wise timing and matching of game styles the end result is far more than the sum of its parts.

As in *Mario* (V), the core game feels so simple - get from one end of the level to the other, and jump on the heads of any bad guys to wander past. Of course, in practice there's a lot more to it than that. Some of the 70+ levels use *Robocod* travelling through the levels in a bouncing car, a splashing pipe game and even an old-fashioned *Luigi*! There are even some areas where *God* comes around - much like he did in the game's progenitor *James Bond*.

In fact, it's the sheer variety of the game - along with the superbly smooth control over the fully main character - that makes it such a joy to play. Every level features something new, either in graphics or gameplay, and there's little chance of boredom setting in. The wonderfully cute sprites, bright and cheerful backgrounds and wiggly-squiggly lines are excellent too. All in all, *Robocod* is a polished, playable and - thank God - fun slice of platformer pie that you'd have to be criminally insane to let slip by.

☆☆☆☆

## ROBOCOP 3



**Price Amiga £25.99**

**Genre Arcade Blast**  
**Publisher Ocean**

*Robocop*? In 3D? Nah, it'll never work - would it? Well, the good news is that it does indeed. Digital Image Design's unique slant on the *Robocop* 3 movie format arguably make it the best first in its.

In essence, *Robocop* 3 isn't that different from almost every other film series. It's an amalgam of several game sequences - a bit of shoot-'em-up, a bit of driving, a bit of foot-on-top - with the simplistic gameplay is compensated for by the sheer variety on offer. However, in this case there's another factor - D.I.D.'s ground-breaking solid 3D.

Rather than watching some spineseeping about a 2D backdrop the player views the world through *Robocop* eyes as he patrols the streets of Old Detroit on foot, in a police car and even in the air thanks to his new Cybershock. The atmosphere generated, especially in the best paced sequences, is quite under-

levelable. The only weak point is an otherwise incredibly strong chain of a couple of levels (hand-to-hand combat sequences with a robotic Ninja assassin - the combat moves are limited and the action sluggish).

However, these sequences apart, there are frequent occasions during the game that the player actually does feel as if he is taking part in a film. And at the end of the day, isn't that what you should be hoping a film tie-in for?   
 ☆☆☆

**ROBOZONE**



Price Amiga £19.99  
 Genre Arcade Blast  
 Publisher Image Works

Trying to keep onto the Green hand-wagon (and missing by about six months), Imageworks' latest and certainly not greatest puts the player in the driving seat of a giant two-legged war machine, a sort of out-price version of the one in Progression's Killing Game Blast, with a mission to get an end to pollution. Horrid!

Fundamentally Robozone's a simple Blast anything that moves is fair, with the programmers trying to maintain player interest by constantly changing the play style. One level's a side-viewed multi-directional-scrolling explore-a-shoot, the second's much the same but in 3D and the third's a horizontally scrolling shoot-'em-up. While each is programmed well enough, there's precious little fun or excitement to be found in any of them.

The really annoying thing about Robozone is it's pretence in being 'Green' - the manual is littered with Top Tips about how to help save the environment. One states pompously: 'If you have a choice, avoid buying packaged goods.' Considering that Robozone comes in a giant box with a single disc and a thin manual sitting about inside the box of this machine's biggest holes! Probably the best tip is the first one: 'Buy out to waste energy.' Imageworks, having played this I already have.

☆☆

**ROBOCOP 2**



Price Game Boy £29.99  
 Genre Arcade Blast  
 Publisher Impact

Hmm, a bit of an oddity this one. While the graphics are bigger and chunkier than before and the storyline follows the second movie as opposed to the first, you can't help but feel that you really have seen this all before.

The main problem lies with the fact that Robocop's a one-trick pony backwards. This makes the supposed explosion of the various fixtures and machines in the game a bit farcical, since Robo can only explore the location which he comes to next.

Lamenting the pattern of hostages to be rescued, made to be destroyed and criminals to look will help, but it hardly solves the problem.

Still, it looks good and the sound effect and music are excellent. And let's face it, if you're going to get yourself a shooter's up as a New Year treat, it's best to stick with the name you know.

☆☆☆

**RODLAND**



Price Amiga £29.99  
 Genre Platform  
 Publisher Matrix

Strangely enough, it may be, but there's no denying that Rodland is a fine game. The (video coin-up) isn't particularly noteworthy, finding itself adrift in a sea of graphically excellent games upon its release. Now, however, the conversion seems to have cropped up where the highest-profile coin-up game ever the moment (Image Works) has failed to meet expectations.

The player must work his way through a massive maze of screens, collecting points or 'power-ups' and killing enemies with his rod (hence the name) by heaving them into the floor.

The end of each level is marked by the arrival of an enormous end-of-level bug (or such as an elephant, who, despite looking about as threatening as a big lump of cotton wool in a knotted bag will do for the players forthwith. Interestingly enough, the player can opt to play a girl if he/she wants, so that it makes much difference to the playing style. And to be honest, the 'boy' looks so bloody effeminate you'd never know anyway.

Check a thick ball of excellent visuals, Rodland is a fine conversion and it could even be argued to better its

coin-up parent, as control over the characters has been improved. Certainly not a title the gamers into depth or going too blasting, but a nevertheless worthwhile purchase for anyone who   
 ☆☆☆

**RUGBY - THE WORLD CUP**



Price Atari ST/Amiga £14.99  
 Genre Sports Arcade  
 Publisher Beambox

Hey! It's Soccer Off! Well, not quite, but it is a pretty funny attempt by the Beam to adapt Amos' Soccer classic style to the rough 'n' tumble, if you will, 'world' of rugby. Of course, as any fan-life, rugby and football are very different sports, with the former lacking the run-up speed of the latter. Not, then, perhaps the best game to try to shoehorn it into that 15's hand and feet playing style.

However, as it happens, it all works pretty well. Sure, the action is a bit stop and start, but there is a definite flow to the game and few lapses in pace. The game is viewed in plan view, with the pitch scrolling to follow the players'... er... player path, if you like, the one nearest the ball. Throws and kicks are controlled simply by the joystick, and it takes the subtlety of Kick Off no afterwards here. Screens are a case of basically waggling the joystick to face the opposition back, and this is fine - unless you're playing the All Blacks, in which case you need to waggle a sub-titled speed to beat them.

In fact, that's probably the biggest criticism - the top teams are too tough. There are other minor niggles, such as the map player option wraps on top of each other and the way that the other members of the team don't put their selves in good positions to pass, meaning that play often involves one-man rushes from mid-way down the pitch to the try line. But while Rugby may not be perfect, it's still a pretty good 'try'. (Our word of reviewer being that.)

☆☆☆☆

**SARACON**



Price Atari ST/Amiga/IBM PC £18.99

Genre Puzzle  
 Publisher Virgin Games

Games which call the player rapid are widely to go down in history as despite mavericks, yet Saracoon, despite making this kind mistake is a perfectly decent effort of the Mail long-scrolling platform. Basically, if you know how to play with some old mental tablets and with some complicated 'can't do that' rules, then you've pretty close to imagining what Saracoon is all about.

The aim of the game is to click on similar tablets which sit in a particular orientation, eventually ending up with one tablet left, as at least as few as possible before the time limit runs out. Once done, the player is rewarded with a breakdown of his score and a comment from the computer as to his Saracoon ability.

The problem with these puzzle games, however, is that they all look similar enough to make the player want to pick them up and have a go, yet they tend on containing enough rule subtleties in making doing just that impossible. The result? The Mail long player will feel frustrated that he can't make his normal scores reach.

The presentation is first class, apart from the cheery sound effects and music which don't so much create the ambience of the far flung as a grubby take-away in Delfwick.

If comparatively underle mouse-clicking to your lag, and your eyes can stand staring at the monitor the ages while you watch your head, Saracoon is the game for you.

☆☆☆

**SECRET WEAPONS OF THE LUFTWAFFE**



Price IBM PC £49.99  
 Genre Simulation  
 Publisher LucasArts/US Gold

Deep, deep, deep, Secret Weapons of the Luftwaffe is a big old game and no mistake. It's also the sequel the critically-acclaimed First Flight. The title comes packed with some goodies but brings the same problem of the first game - i.e. the files are rather horrible hitmap graphics.

The player is offered the chance to pilot aircraft in a seemingly limitless number of historical missions, shadowing or guarding planes and taking place in actual battles and scenarios of

for Second World War.

However, played in a Wing Commander style with hitmaps taking the place of the polygons so frequently and successfully used in other flight sims, Luftwaffe will leave all but the owners of the latest machines hammering down the detail level in the attempt to get it to run at an acceptable rate. Ambitious players can then define their own missions to determine what history would have turned out like if there was just one less Interwarcraft BFW-20 in a particular combat situation. Luftwaffe is exactly the sort of game - as distinct from Wing Commander - that you actually want to make excess for. And that's simply down to the fact that under the top-so-far graphics which actually look pretty absurd every now and again, there is a quite brilliant game.

☆☆☆☆

**SEVEN COLORS**



Price **Atari ST, Amiga, IBM PC £26.99**  
Genre **Puzzle**

**Publisher Intelligence**

Time, the game that started it all, may be getting on a bit now, but there's always room for a new puzzle game on the market. The only problem is that the vast majority of puzzles that have been washing up-on these shores from America and Europe have either been of abominably low quality, or just too weird to get the head round.

Seven Colors from Intelligence, a company that prides itself on its off-the-wallness, fits snugly into the latter category. It's played over a large board made-up of hundreds of tiny coloured diamonds where the objective is to change as many diamonds to your colour, spreading them like a virus across the screen, faster than your opponent does. The first player to fill 2/3 of the screen ends the winner. It's difficult enough to understand when you're actually playing the game, so don't worry if you're a little foggy after that brief explanation.

In fact the major problem with the game is that it's not very easy to understand, and because things just seem to happen it's not very easy to keep track, so instead to work out what's going on at all. The confusing situa-

tion is further compounded because the instructions hardly explain anything at all. Persistent players may well get something out of it however, and there's a variety of game options to spice up the action if they do. Oh, and there's some very nice in-game classical music which suits the nature of the game perfectly and is very soothing indeed.

☆☆

**SHUTTLE**



Price **IBM PC £49.99**

Genre **Simulation**  
Publisher **Vigra Games**

Not for the faint hearted, this one. As you've probably guessed, it's a simulation of the Space Shuttle. And the word 'simulation' just doesn't even begin to do justice to the level of accuracy that developers Vigra Games have achieved. The cockpit is bewildering - all the player can see is bank upon bank of knobs, dials and levers, most of which work and have some effect.

The player not only has to fly the

damn thing, he has to open up the bay doors and control the robot arms to deploy satellites and so forth. And this technical accuracy is backed up by some of the best 3D graphics ever seen. There's even a realistically and accurately mapped planet Earth that rotates and the sun constellations are all plotted correctly as well.

As showing an achievement in Shuttle is the biggest problem with it is its limited appeal. Personally I think it's brilliant and completely absorbing, but I can understand that there might be some people who find the idea of twiddling all those dials more than a little off-putting. If that's because of the sheer daunting complexity of the whole thing then that shouldn't be a problem, because there's a whole range of player aids that make the game accessible to everybody, so none other than your own proficiency. But there's no getting away from the fact that if your patience with sim ends at Thunderbolt, then you're likely to find little to interest you here.

☆☆☆☆

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**Price Amiga £35.99**

**Genre Simulation**  
**Publisher Microgen**

It may have taken five years, but the sequel to one of the most critically acclaimed and publicly admired sim games is finally with us. *Silver* (which features all the best bits from the first game as well as a host of original and new ship-bats).

Digitised graphics and sampled sounds simply confirm the genius as a game which is undoubtedly one of the most detailed, accurate and realistic on the market, but new gamers should be warned that just like life on a real submarine, it's not all walking on air.

No. There's a lot of the old *Above Us The Waves* still with turning off engines to sneak up on enemy warships without alerting their radar. And as for all that tank blowing stuff, I ask you!

Microgen are undoubtedly the multi-talented king of all things sim, but their policy of increasing the action and minimising the dial-watching as used to make good effect in *Fly Strike* (right) it would be well-wisely to try this particular title.

For gamers wishing to purchase an accurate sub-simulators, ever feared, there is absolutely none better, but those expecting to get their wings off straight away would be better to wait for a more accessible equivalent. ★★★★★

**SLIDERS**



**Price Game Boy £25.99**

**Genre Arcade Blast**  
**Publisher Impact**

Jesus, Mary and Joseph! What are Lancelot trying to force upon us now! In the wake of the global mania for puzzle games, it seems that any old rubbish will do these days. Here we have *Slider*, a fat fellow thing who can transfer around a collection of masses doing his utmost not to bump into the bad guys. Once a slider has travelled one, and therefore coloured in, each square in the maze, he moves onto the next.

Later masses are made more hazardous by sliding platforms which will propel Slider into deadly situations. A new feat prevents the player from

being able to double, or maybe consider his next move, and there are lots of squares which simply kill off Slider on contact. Terrible.

Far from being the sort of game to waste away many a fine journey, Slider is a pain in the ass of the first order, and deserves a place in absolutely no-one's software collection. ☆

**SOLITAIRE POKER**



**Price Game Gear £19.99 (Import)**

**Genre Puzzle**  
**Publisher Sega**

Everyone loves a good puzzle game, and this is a very good one. The aim is simple - select a card from one of the four piles on offer, and place it on a 5 x grid. Points are awarded for pairs, flushes, etc., created either vertically, horizontally or along the main diagonals. Score over a certain amount and the player progresses on to the next, tougher level. There are a number of variants on the theme, but that's the main thrust of the game.

What more is there to say about such a simple concept? Aesthetically it's fine - the functional graphics are clear and minimal and there's a nice number of background tunes to pick between. Although not exactly using the full-on LCD capabilities of the Gear to its fullest, it's one of the most enjoyable Gear games I've seen for a long, long time, and so such scores with a strong recommendation. ★★★★★

**SMASH TV**



**Price Amiga £25.99**

**Genre Arcade Blast**  
**Publisher Ocean**

'Good luck - you're gonna need it' screams the show's old computer, and never have these been true words said. This conversion of the incredibly violent Williams coin-op has translated surprisingly well to the home system, with nearly all the blood and thunder elements so beloved of the original ported across faithfully.

The game takes the form of a futuristic game show, where one or two contestants are armed with a rapid-fire gun slug it out with a seemingly end-

less parade of thugs, freaks and goons to win big money and prizes in a single-screen arena. Power-ups and end-of-scene bad guys add to the already phenomenal carnage.

On a purely visceral level, it's immensely satisfying as the plugged opponents explode into red globules of flesh. Indeed, the sprites are small enough to be almost anybody you want them to be, so you can imagine that you're shooting up endless classes of your boss if you want to. Very therapeutic.

As a single-player game it's fine, though there's a serious risk that boredom may well set in worryingly early. The two-player game, on the other hand, is something else. There's not been player-to-player cheating like this since *Kick Off*.

The coin-op's two joystick game to move, one to direct (they have translated adequately to a single-controller, though if you have two there is an option to use both which makes the game far better).

A superb conversion, and more than deserving of your hard-earned pennies. Go to it, you genius you! ★★★★★

**STEVE MCQUEEN - WESTPHASER**



**Price Amiga £25.99**

**Genre Arcade Blast**  
**Publisher Lakeside**

You what? Talk about a cynical licence! Not only is the poor chap dead and unable to defend himself against this sort of thing, but this game actually loans no relevance to the great man at all. Okay, so he was in a few cowboy films, and this is a cowboy game, but there the similarity ends. Don't expect to see any of Steve in the game - his involvement begins and ends with a tacky black and white picture on the box.

It gets weirder still, because it has the word 'Westphaser' in the title, you'd assume it's compatible with the Westphaser light gun. But, oh, no. It's conventional console, keyboard or joystick control only, just what on Earth is going on here!

Alright, so it's all very good so far, but what of the game itself? Well, unfortunately things don't get much better here either, so what's on offer is a top-stacked Operetta. Well, why do we

act in a variety of typically Wild West scenarios. That might sound like at least a bit of a laugh, but the action is so stunted and dull that it's difficult to get even equally excited. To be fair, the graphics are quite nice in a Fantasy French sort of way and there are some jolly touches (you can shoot the droens off the women, for example), but it's hardly enough to justify financial outlay. In that sense himself I have spinning in his grave!

☆☆

**STRIKE FLEET**



**Price Atari ST/Amiga £19.99**

**Genre Strategy**  
**Publisher Electronic Arts**

*Strike Fleet* doesn't look the most inspiring game from the shots on the back of the box, but the *Los Angeles* credits hints that this may be better than it appears. As, in fact, it is. The game is a sea-based strategy game split into fourteen individual missions or a non-tiring eight-mission campaign. After each mission briefing, the player is allocated a number of points (depending on the difficulty of the mission) to 'spend' in the shipyard. Each ship 'costs' a certain number of points depending on its class, so the player must be careful in picking a balanced fleet.

Once at sea, the player can flick between the ships at will. Control is relatively simplistic (thankfully), allowing the player to move, change speed, activate radar and come and, of course, fire the variety of sea-based weapons. In addition, certain ships carry a complement of helicopters that can be used on oceans or sea-basing forces.

Despite it's usually dull appearance, *Strike Fleet* actually turns out to be quite involving. There's a great deal of satisfaction to be had from successfully controlling the fleet, and seeing off the air, sea or underwater attacks provides frequent doses of adrenalin. Admittedly, those without a strategic leaning are unlikely to be converted by the game's charms, but if *Strike Fleet* sounds at least slightly appealing give it a go. I think you'll be surprised. ★★★★★

**SUPAPLEX**





**Drive Arcade Blast**  
**Publisher** Lemniskos

"Top arcade game with action, futuristic controls and super sound!" as one proclaims. *Space Warrior* on the Spectrum is what we get.

Mopping his way through twelve stages of blinding 3D graphics, our intrepid hero must control his Transformer-like craft deep into the heart of enemy territory and destroy the evil aliens' big base.

Even pinning a girl on the back of the bus with her thoughts on has failed to make *Thunder Force* as all exciting.

Missing the jet plane is actually more fun since everything moves at a faster pace, but the biggest robot has a better chance of destroying the pill-boxes containing our precious, shiny alien scores.

It's all a bit poor, and just a few more end-of-level bonuses which are preferable enough, fills a long way short of even the most basic Mac standards. And if all that seems a little harsh, Lemniskos can at least comfort themselves with the knowledge that they won the Moon GameShow TV Award, *History*.

**THUNDERHAWK**



**Price Amiga £20.99**  
**Genre** Simulation  
**Publisher** Core Design

Most flight sims require a good deal of practice before any reward can be garnered from them. All those keyboard controls and miscellaneous aircraft functions do quite a lot to put off anyone looking for a quick blast. Core Design have seen this gap in the market and more than adequately filled it with *Thunderhawk*. All control is via the mouse, which makes everything, from weapon selection to helicopter control, quick and easy. It's a welcome change from the usual runaway test of clicks and non-clicks.

The game itself is broken down into a series of campaigns, each preceded by a graphics loading sequence indicating target and invasion type. Before taking to the sky the player must select the appropriate armament for the *Thunderhawk*, although there's a default if this seems too much of a chore.

What makes the game a treat is the handling of the helicopter. The controls make flying intuitive, letting the player get on with the mission rather

than having to stay airborne. Graphics are smooth and more at a fair click, though there isn't much background scenery. If you've never been tempted to try a flight sim, then this is the game to change your attitude.  
 TT CD CD CD

**TIP OFF**

**Price Amiga/Atari ST £19.99**  
**Genre** Sports Game  
**Publisher** Atari

The fact that Atari's latest sports game comes from the keyboard of Kick Off co-designer Steve Smith has certainly attracted a lot of interest during the game's development, but now the final product's here it has to be said that it represents somewhat of a disappointment.

The idea is fine - apply the same techniques that made *Kick Off* great, juggle them about a bit to fit Basketball's smaller play area and rules and score you go. And indeed many of *Kick Off*'s trademarks are in evidence here - the game's simple, instinctive, and easy fast indeed. But just that's a big bug it just doesn't work. Basketball is a fast game, but *Tip Off*'s interpretation of it is a lot less speedy for comfort. As a result it just doesn't quite speak to the same way as *Kick Off*, and basketball fans would still be best advised to go with *Championship's* version.  
 ...

**TOE JAM & EARL**



**Price Megadrive £24.99**  
**Genre** Arcade Blast  
**Publisher** Sega

Jammy! Or, in Earl speak, oh dear. Tom Jam & Earl were presumably intended, like *Samic* before them, to become 'cult' game personalities and thus attract a whole new legion of Gam to the Megadrive. I don't know if they are or not, but on the basis of the game they're in I can't for the life of me see how they would. If Sega think this is what 'Tom Kiki' want, then they're surely mistaken.

It's a simple maze game. One or two players, controlling the far-out alien of the title, have to travel around a number of exotic islands searching for the two missing pieces of their crashed spaceship. Some islands are populated by monsters of various description that have to be avoided.

Along the way the game's more innocuous may find bonuses which reward them anything from speed-up

trains to a slow from a bit of lightning. Mind boggling or what?

And... er... that's it. Yes, really. All the game consists of is wandering around, very slowly. Boring really doesn't quite sum up the non-cooling totality of the whole debacle. The only points of special note are the way the screen splits when Tom Jam & Earl get too far apart, the appealing nature of the two aliens and the well-funny music. Any chance of putting the music on CD, Sega?  
 TT

**TRADERS**



**Price Amiga £20.99**  
**Genre** Strategy  
**Publisher** Lead

If you imagine a hazy patch of Utopia, Mega le Mania and Populous, except in 2D, you'd be pretty close to understanding what *Traders* is all about. Again, it's a case for technological development and fiscal success, with up to five players battling it out on a mysterious planet, evading robots and competing with the figures of nature, as well as health advances from each other.

Distinct from lots of God Sims and strategy games of late, *Traders* has got a reasonably light touch and doesn't weigh the player down with facts and figures. Instead it lets them explore their new world and get on with the business of exploiting and running it with the minimum amount of fuss.

While there's no question that the game boasts as much depth or longevity as any of the games mentioned above, *Traders* acts as a pretty solid introduction to the strategy genre. Not too shabby.  
 ☆☆☆

**UNDER PRESSURE**



**Price Amiga £19.99**  
**Genre** Arcade Blast  
**Publisher** Electronic Two

Sega. Many have once minute you're on top of the world and the next you're out, out. A situation which top notch programmers Electronic the Cat have found themselves in with their latest release, *Under Pressure*. Their last and indeed only release, *Popjoy* was exceedingly well received, being a pre-

ty successful sports sim, but *Pressure* only knows what pressure and glitch on are to blame for this disaster.

Styled in an unconventionally similar fashion to Popjoy's games play is between lead text is virtually identical to Popjo's game name too and the robot which the player controls looks exceedingly like the creature on the *Shades of the Mind* box. *Under Pressure* falls down in almost every single respect.

Guiding a huge robot killing machine through a bunch of sleeping citizens, the player must deal with a myriad of different monsters - mainly snakes - with the impressive amount of weaponry available from his cockpit.

Sound's slight, doesn't it? Also, from here on in the game falls down rather badly. For a start, everything is far too big. The player's robot almost fills the screen, but doesn't have the detail or animation finesse to support its size. Also, the scale presents a problem in that since only one horizontal level of the city is ever visible on the screen, the game feels more like a duck shoot than an exciting adventure. Obviously no aiming is necessary for shooting for the monsters either, as they just sit up and swallow the player's fire. Oh dear.



**UTOPIA**



**Price Amiga £20.99**  
**Genre** Arcade Strategy  
**Publisher** Gamelan

The quality of life on earth, let's face it, sucks. And the world is screwed up so bad that nothing anyone can do can save it. We need to start again.

This is the premise of *Utopia*, another Populous/Popjoy-style affair. Except this time the aim, rather than simply ruling a world or conquering it is to construct and run it and to make all its inhabitants live really good. The aim is to elevate the quality of life to 100% - Utopia.

It's not difficult to grasp the aim and controls of the game. And it quickly becomes apparent that there are lots of problems thrown up by the idea of making everyone happy. For a start, if you spend all the money on hospitals, food production and schooling opens festivals, your populace will be content, but without any credible defence



where the inevitable computer-controlled alien attack occurs.

Beginning from just a few key buildings, it's up to the player to construct the colony using icon-driven screens while impacting the world in narrative play. There are almost no rules in this society. You can run things virtually any way you want.

The only factor that is missing is the option to try and run things as a dictatorship regime and make a certain part of the population very happy while keeping the workers ground-down into the dirt. Still, that never works, does it?

□♦♦♦♦

## VOLFIED



Price Atari ST £24.99

Genre Arcade Blast

Publisher Empire

Qir is back in town, and better than ever! No matter how wacky tests may differ among the game-playing fraternity, you'd be hard pushed to find anybody who doesn't enjoy a final of good old Qir. Its appeal is universal because it's so simple and addictive, and like Breakout, its gameplay has stood the test of time. What Volfied generated from Taito's coin-op represents is a good version of the original classic - it is to Qir what Asteroid was to Breakout, keeping the original theme-work intact, but adding lots of pretty backdrops, power-ups and extra features.

For the most part it's exactly the same - draw boxes around the screen to fill up 25% or more of the screen area with the Easiness which makes up the base itself getting hit by one of the exploding enemies - which, instead of the old grating line, now takes the form of a giant membership that means about spinning about balls, and a couple of peppy little helpers. Lasers and speedups are among the collectibles, while high-tech backgrounds and SFX provide the aesthetic overhaul.

Since Qir-style games are so thin on the ground, Volfied, with its clean execution and uncluttered gameplay is a welcome addition to the software scene - and if you've got any more old school entries for the classic, you'll add it your collection too.

□♦♦♦♦

## VROOM



Price Atari ST £24.99

Genre Racing Game

Publisher Lantier

Without wanting to be costly to our European counterparts, what with 900k and all that, it has to be said that most of the software that crosses-over from the continent is a bit smelly. Vroom, however, from French publisher Lantier, has proven itself to be the exception to the rule. Although it's not a patch on the likes of Indianapolis 500 or Formula One Grand Prix, Vroom is nevertheless a jolly upper cutting game, boasting very impressive speed as the player races his way (and the name) around a first person environment.

It's got all the usual features and fittings - rear-view mirrors, pit stops, overhead maps, bridges, dips and hills on the track, training modes, qualifying laps, choice of courses and some spectacular crash sequences. Its ease-of-use racing game that simulates, as controls and instrumentation has been kept to a minimum - there's nothing too much to worry about here apart from going very fast, avoiding the other cars and keeping on the road, and it works well enough, being very playable and actually quite competitive, with the array of racing options adding to the game's longevity. The only design feature is that the joystick option is restricted to the arcade mode - the more serious race options only allow mouse control. Very dodgy indeed, but apart from that, not at all bad.

□♦♦♦♦

## WILLY BEAMISH



Price IBM PC £24.99

Genre Adventure

Publisher Dynamic, Sierra On-Line

The Adventures of Willy Beamish, to give it its full name, is something of a oddity. Dubbed an 'interactive cartoon', it's sort of a wacky mix between The Wonder Years and The Simpsons. Willy is the typical all-American teen bleatingly pre-teen schoolkid, complete with girly friends, pet frog and awfully stereotypical family. Strange things are also in vogue at Prospero, and Willy must investigate.

Willy is not another of those games that sounds a whole lot better than it

actually is. That's not to say that it's bad, but the gameplay is very limited, even, with both offers playing more of a part than skill or judgment. As such, never time is spent venturing novel games that actually playing, and it can get quite frustrating at times, especially when you have to sit through the manual on-screen for the comparatively time. As an interactive cartoon, it's evident, with suitable stereotypical characters, some funny jokes and progress via a. As a game it's compelling, but not in a way that encourages and addition or involvement. You're unlikely to come back to again and again.

□♦♦♦♦

## WING COMMANDER II



Price IBM PC £24.99

Genre Space Blast

Publisher Origin

No matter what else you might say about the Wing Commander games, they look damned good. The trouble is, there isn't really much else to say about them. Well, perhaps that's a little harsh but here is the sequel to the much talked-about and little played original. It's very much a case of more of the same.

Intermedia was with the Kilrathi enemies, and in the most recent Kilrathi victory, the Confederation flagship Tiger's Claw has been destroyed by invisible Kilrathi stealth fighters. As the sole member of the crew, the player must first convince his Federation comrades that the attack did genuinely take place and then lead a rebellion force to track them down and destroy them.

Graphically excellent although particularly processor heavy, Wing Commander II certainly isn't a brilliant game. It's a worthy sequel to its predecessor but is the sort of title where the more the better about being better. Scoring is worth appreciating.

□♦♦♦♦

## WOLFCHILD



Price Amiga £25.99

Genre Arcade Blast

Publisher Core Design

Claw, claw, so it's just another platform game. What separates Wolfchild from the more generic crowd is the

sheer excellence of its execution. Rick Dangerous creator Simon Phipps has surpassed himself once again, creating a game that has everything an arcade aficionado could ask for - incredible fast-paced action, superb graphics, awesome professional displays, a pulsating soundtrack and...uh, lots into more details.

The plot involves a brilliant genetic scientist kidnapped by a corrupt corporation to produce mutant killing machines for their own ethically mad. The scientist's son, Saul, therefore, hangs himself over his dad's prototype gene-splicing machine and turns himself into Wolfchild, a half-man, half-beast character with special energy-spending powers.

What follows is five levels of top-level platform game fast run-up action with Saul switching back and forth between his human and beastly forms to help him progress. When enough energy is collected, Saul becomes the wolfman character and is allowed to give the game to the arts of electrical energy at the mutant levels that continually catch him.

It might not be the most original game in the world, its expense probably more than makes up for any lack of real innovation. It's hard, fast and dangerous to know. Give it pride of place in your platform collection now.

□♦♦♦♦

## WORLD CLASS RUGBY



Price Atari ST £19.99

Genre Sports Simulation

Publisher Avalonbayne

Avalonbayne has opted for a rigorous approach to the sport, offering plenty of accuracy and a great deal of scope for subtle play. And as such, it's somewhat more satisfying to play, if a bit harder to get into.

It's also a lot prettier, with the players seen from a 2D angle and all the views available nearly if a little stiff. If this doesn't appeal, there's a selection of other views on offer, including a no-camera top-down view for the more traditionally minded. World Class Rugby may not have Dreamac Rugby's pick-up-and-play instant appeal, but it's a good bet that of the two this will be the one you'll still be looking up in a year's time.

□♦♦♦♦

# the bitter end

It's a bit of a slim month for the *Blitter*. The whole industry seems so less disappointed over the last few weeks, as everyone was at the Winter CES in Las Vegas. Needless to say, *Blitter* will be providing you with the full lowdown on the goings down the City that Never Sleeps next month. In the meantime, you'll just have to make do with whatever else we can dig up from the industry's dustbin.

*Blitter* is pleased to see that computer games are at last getting the nationwide recognition they deserve. Thanks to Channel 4 and its excellent new show *GameMaster*, *Blitter* is sure that the programme's success is due, at least in part, to two key members of the ACE editorial team playing a crucial (and incredibly) role in the programme's conception. Now that it's on our screens, we would like to congratulate our pals on their mag *C&EG*, who have done a sterling job of raising the tone of the programme. Unfortunately, not everyone appreciates their contribution. In fact all controversial film values

and Gary Bushell, who in his review of the show referred to Frank, Jim, Rod and the rest of the crew as "spotty hermits". Actually, now you come to mention it...

Talking of the telly, *Blitter* is starting to become slightly worried about the rate at which Nintendo seems to be taking over the planet. Don't get us wrong, we like a bit of Mario as much of the rest of us, but when the games start taking over our favourite soap operas, things are obviously getting a bit much. Fans of *Eastenders* will have noticed that cheap fruit-and-veg stall-holder Pete Bauld got hooked on *Teletex* on the *GameBoy* over Christmas - while playing, he had the music turned up so loud that it was difficult to hear the dialogue (Normally, the music may be irritating but *Blitter* would rather have it that than *Parade* going on and on at poor old Arthur any day of the week). A far more impressive gameplaying feat than this, however, was to be found over on Channel

4 down in Brookside Class. There, the *Dinos* were also having a Nintendo-packed Christmas, with a brand new NES providing the entertainment. The only thing that we found difficult to understand was how Ben Dixon managed to get such impressive scores on *Raid's Attack* when he was holding the joystick with only one hand! Now that's what *Blitter* calls a *GameMaster*!

Obnoxious as ever, but the most atrocious, *GameIns* has launched a substantial campaign against software piracy. Informed sources have recently disclosed that the title theme to that mean racing game *Lexus* features speech that is barely audible to the human ear. Crank up the volume and listen closely, and you should hear someone discreetly whispering "don't copy software" over and over. Whether or not this actually has a subconscious effect on those who listen to it remains a mystery, but it has to be said that in those days of ill-fated bootlegging, you

thing's worth a shot. Just so long as the software houses don't start shouting it and have samples like "Go not and buy all our other games" or "Send us all your money" (knowing their way into the minds of the nation).

After the phenomenal response to last month's feature on the software industry, we're continuing the series this month with some more acquainted-at-heart favourites. Just to show we're not biased, we're kicking off with our very own David Upchurch, who bears a striking resemblance to Andrew Strang out of *The Commitments*. Staying with the showbusiness angle, many people placed in to comment on how much Donnan's *Maniac* looks like Jeffrey Holland, alias Spike out of *Hi De Hi*. Moving on into the world of politics, we believe that Granddaddy hero Stephen Hall and his leading MP for Civil Service may be long-lost twins, while Progress top boy Jonathan Hills is an absolute dead ringer for Prime Minister John Major. Oh, and in reply to our call last month, a certain noted industry official called to suggest that Donnan's *Maniac* *Delines* could well take over as TV's *Blitter* lines, should Britain's *Atkinson* ever check in the 'twelth.

Over the last week or so, *Blitter* has become totally addicted to that super little Amiga game *Bomber Man*. This has led us here at ACE to realise just how neglected games like this have become over the years. Sophisticated software is all very well, but it comes to something when the majority of our free time is spent playing out commercial software, but PC arcade games. In some software houses, they've got back to good old-fashioned values, eh? Simplicity = playability = fun. OK!

Phew! Tell you what, it's not easy staying up with enough interesting industry facts to fill the *Blitter* up each month. That's why we're asking YOU to come forward with any obscure software titles you may have heard. We not give us a call and spill your guts. After all, there's nothing worse than a purely coincidental, is there? You don't have to give your name and you may win a *Blitter* Action Trust award.

## ACE PICTURE POWER!

Last month we promised you that we would be granting a little-known picture of Future Publishing's Greg Ingham with his mouth closed, and we were indeed hoping to do this. Unfortunately, however, the claims of our Future model who promised to get it in for us were a little exaggerated and in the end the picture just turned out to be yet another one of him with his mouth wide open. This comes as a particular disappointment to the *Blitter*, as such a picture would have been one to rival anything Arthur C Clarke could ever come up with. The more things like this happen, the more *Blitter* is willing to believe the rumour that this strange phenomenon is due to the fact that, after being covered by a 40-year-old Greg's head will fall off if he ever stops talking. Still, faced by his ability to turn disaster into success, Greg has made the most out of his condition and can currently be seen on bill boards across the nation advertising Depoacaine and on TV doing the *Brack* modelling ads.

NEXT MONTH we prove that someone to do with a bit football game is no slouch in the treasurer department.



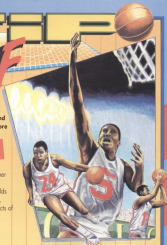
# TIP OFF

The sheer pace of the game, and its end action and tactical game play is the core of TIP OFF, a basketball simulation -

**A SIMULATION WHICH IS  
GREAT FUN TO PLAY**

Players' skills, attributes and fitness together with the astute substitution of players and change of tactics banks by the coach, holds the key to success in basket ball. TIP OFF, therefore includes some managerial aspects of the game. The main features are:-

- Multi directional scrolling screen
- Five skill levels. Skill level of both teams can be set independently.
- 1 to 4 players option. Option to play against the computer or another player to team up with another player against the computer or another player or two players.
- Facility to practice skills and tactics.
- Facility to create a team at all skill levels and design tactics.
- Instinctive joystick controls to dribble, pass, shoot or do a dummy. There are two running speeds, two types of dribbling and passing and five types of shots at the basket (Jump shot, Hook shot, Skyhook, Running Jump shot and Slam Dunk).
- Each player on the court is an individual with a unique mixture of attributes (Age, Height, Hair, Pace, Stamina and Composure) and skills (Passing, Dribbling, Stealing, Shooting and Jumping).
- Two types of leagues. Action Replay at 3 speeds.
- Extra moves are available using two independent button/joysticks using the EXPERIENCE System.



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