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CTW

14.11.88 BRITAIN'S TOP COMPUTER TRADE WEEKLY ISSUE 212



**The first Amiga
game with
4,096 on-screen
colours!**

See Page 8

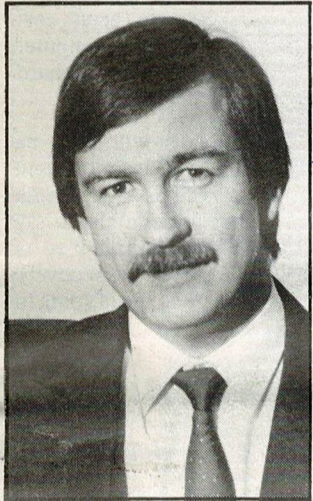
**MANDARIN
SOFTWARE**

Tandy opts for TV first

Tandy UK is set to embark on its first ever TV advertising campaign.

The campaign will run for three to four weeks starting on November 21st and will be pushing Tandy stores in the run up to Christmas. Despite the recent launch of its new range of PCs the company has taken the decision to advertise Tandy as a whole, although the

Continued on page two



ROSSER: Adding ads

TBD back in hardware groove

TBD has returned to the computer hardware market by taking Atari's full range of leisure machines.

The company has not handled hardware for over two years, following a rather acrimonious split from Amstrad. This latest deal means that TBD will be distributing the ST, the 130 and 4001XE and the UCS2600 console.

The move follows the news last month (CTW October 24th) that TBD's parent company John Menzies has decided to take the ST into 45 stores.

"We have had the ST in Menzies on a trial basis for the past six months and with the expansion TBD is the ideally suitable distributor to handle the business," Atari's national sales manager Paul Welch told CTW.

TBD boss Norman Smith, however, claims that "we made the decision to support Atari before Menzies and have probably been more bullish about the ST than our associated company. In fact we influenced Menzies decision".

The company will also be looking at making greater inroads within the independent sector. "We obviously have a number of independent customers but not as many as three years ago. We are very much into convincing all customers in the home leisure business as long as they are competent with the product," commented Smith.

Atari is also keen for TBD to develop its existing contact with other outlets, particularly video shops. "Video dealers are looking at other opportunities to interest their customer base and the console could fit in well," offered Welch.

Smith is convinced that "there will be a lot of video outlets doing a nice little number on the console. Historically, when Atari was strong in the early '80s, many such outlets had several good Christmases with Atari product."

TBD was a distributor for Sinclair prior to Amstrad's takeover. "We didn't take the decision to come out of

hardware - the decision was taken for us by Amstrad when they took over. We could no longer be secure of getting any product," said Smith. Whilst TBD claims to have spoken to Atari and Commodore at the time, the experience left the company feeling bitter and hence its decision to concentrate on other areas.

"1989 is a good time to be coming back into the game. We're looking to the future and we now feel more comfortable with more and more of our business being in 16-bit software and the 16-bit market needing all the support it can get."

The company currently supplies WH Smiths with software and whilst the high street chain has been stocking the ST for some time, Welch claims that there are no plans to switch its distribution to TBD. "We have been supplying Smiths direct and there are certainly no plans in the foreseeable future to change this arrangement," said Welch.



Atari's Paul Welch (left) welcomes TBD's David McWilliam back into the world of hardware

INSIDE:

SOME TANDY TALKING

After rejuvenating its range, posting pleasing financial figures and advertising on TV has Tandy got itself a whole new image or just the emperor's new clothes?.... 12

SHOW NEWS IS GOOD NEWS

After the announcement of a new style strictly trade-only show CTW looks at the background that prompted the decision and why, or indeed if, it is needed..... 14

THE POINT OF SALES

Sheltering under the Nimrod holdings umbrella Mike Clark's Network is the latest in a spate of merchandising firms..... 17

THEY CAME BEARING GIFTS

It may not be soft but it's rather strong and it's very, very long. CTW's look at the leading contenders for the Christmas number one - together with a brief look back and a bold look forward at the market trends - will prove an essential Yuletide read. So in between all those traditional Christmassy things like being sick and pretending you're out when the relatives arrive take time to join CTW rummaging around the Christmas crackers and festive turkeys..... 22

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Share fall angers Amstrad

Not for the first time, Amstrad last week found itself annoyed by the City's attitude towards the firm.

Up until the middle of last week Amstrad's share price had been steadily falling, despite the fact that Amstrad itself hadn't made any announcement or move likely to upset

the hoardes of analysts and brokers.

With its share price standing at 186.5 (Wednesday November 9th) Amstrad had witnessed a 14 per cent drop since its 1988 financial figures announcement last month - and the October figure was deemed low within Amstrad to start with.

Such City downgrading led

Amstrad last week to vent publicly its anger at the low valuation, pointing to one broker - Sheppards - which has pinpointed Amstrad as "quality stock" that should be bought.

"Why don't these people bloody listen to what the analysts are saying," was Amstrad's view of the share price slide.

"The thing is the price of the

shares only comes into the frame if we want to do something - but we're not buying anything and we're not saving up for a major acquisition.

"We really think it's about time our value was reflected in our share price. It's ridiculous at the moment and many people agree with us. It's obviously a very volatile market."

Continued on back page

Epyx in French connection

Paris, November 10th

US leisure giant Epyx and major French games publisher Infogrames joined forces last week in what is officially being pitched as a merger.



CORON: Toasting the Epyx deal

At a surprise launch in Paris last Thursday, CTW was presented with Epyx' plan to strengthen its position in the European market by gaining exclusive worldwide rights to all Infogrames product. At the same time, Infogrames - which claims to be the French market leader - now feels that in a world of tie-ups and affiliates, its own position is far safer.

"In the future Infogrames can see the smaller companies finding it harder and harder to survive. We'd rather be one of the big companies that survives than just get swallowed up," commented Infogrames' general manager Henri Coron to CTW.

"In England this will be seen as a deal between an elephant and a mouse - or rather an armadillo - but it's very much a merger."

With the more intricate

details of the deal still to be sorted out, some confusion originally developed regarding US Gold's new role - as it has been Epyx' European distributor for some time.

It seems at this stage that US Gold will continue as distributor. Whilst both Infogrames and Epyx were being hazy last week, Gold boss Geoff Brown explained that the deal meant Epyx could take whatever Infogrames product into the US it desired, rather than have to bid for each property.

He was also under the impression that the French product more suited to Epyx' profile will actually be marketed as Epyx product in Europe.

Brown was also adamant that the deal was actually an Epyx takeover - an argument that appears strong consider-

Continued on back page

Mindscape unworried after losses

US leisure publisher Mindscape last week posted a loss of \$192,000 for its first full quarter since the firm went public.

This compares to a \$369,000 profit for the comparable period in 1987. During the nine months ending September 30th Mindscape has now lost \$632,000 - compared to a \$462,000 profit in the same period last year.

This news appears to have come as no surprise to the Illinois based company, which has suffered a dramatic drop in share price over the last few weeks in anticipation of these results (CTW November 7th).

Mindscape's president Roger Buoy seems unperturbed by this turn in the company's fortunes. "It is unfortunate and we're obviously not happy about it but we're gonna make sure that the next one's a lot better."

Buoy also claims not to be worried about investor's response to the losses, despite the consequences of a similar situation for the business software firm Micropro.

Following its flotation in the US, Micropro was landed with a securities lawsuit from disgruntled shareholders claiming that the initial share prices were too high. The com-

Continued on page two

Mirror looks for more European acquisitions

Microdealer has finally talked openly about its involvement in the Mirror Group's acquisition of major German distributor Rushware — and has announced that further acquisitions are planned.

CTW exclusively revealed that the deal had gone through three weeks ago (CTW Oc-

tober 24th), but only last week was Mirror-owned Microdealer able to explain some of the move's ramifications.

Rushware has officially been acquired by a newly formed company called Mirror Media GmbH, headed up by Microdealer boss Lee Ginty. This will be a holding company similar to Maxwell Media in France — which handles the Mirror Group's

French deals.

Ultimately, there will be far greater co-operation between Rushware and Microdealer in selling product in Germany.

"The German market is the second biggest in Europe after the UK. Microdealer is one of the biggest exporters into Europe and it now has the official duty to protect the companies that Rushware has exclusive contracts with," commented

Ginty to CTW.

Rushware's accounts include US Gold, EA, MicroProse, Mastertronic and Sub Logic. Microdealer hopes that together with Rushware it will be able to keep the German market "clean" and cut down the level of parallel importing.

Mirror Media is likely to be involved in further pan-European tie-ups in the future in preparation for 1992.

"There will be a number of agreements made in the distribution market throughout the rest of Europe," added Ginty.

"We will be able to offer publishers in the UK, Europe and the States a complete distribution arrangement."



GINTY: Pan-European distributor

Tadio Rimes CHRISTMAS & NEW YEAR

ABC 1

9.00am SAVAGE

First out of the stocking this Christmas has to be SAVAGE. An epic of gargantuan proportions in three mind blowing action packed levels.

Savage features graphics so stunning they'll put your Christmas tree lights to shame!

Spectrum cassette £8.99
Commodore 64 cassette £9.99, disc £12.99
Amstrad cassette £8.99, disc £14.99



Amstrad screen shot

11.00am ELITE

Intergalactic action hits the 16-bit screen with a bang as the all time classic ELITE explodes into solid 3D splendour. Be warned, this game is so addictive you'll be up all night . . . and Santa won't leave any goodies if you don't get to bed on time!

Atari ST £24.95
Amiga £24.95



Atari ST screen shot

3.00pm DYNAMIC DUO

Going underground takes on a new meaning as you battle through pitch black tunnels and passageways in search of wealth beyond your wildest imagination. But beware of lurking monsters with no sense of tradition, it's duck not turkey on their Christmas menu.

Spectrum cassette £7.99
Commodore 64 cassette £9.99, disc £12.99
Amstrad cassette £8.99, disc £14.99



Amstrad screen shot

6.00pm BLAZING BARRELS

Christmas just wouldn't be the same without a rip roarin' Western. So Firebird are proud to present, fresh from their famous ICOM studios, BLAZING BARRELS, featuring the all star cast of . . .

Bammo
THE MEXICAN BANDITO
TNT Tom
THE REALLY BAD GUY
You, alias Black Jake
THE BOUNTY HUNTER
Atari ST £19.99
Amiga £19.99



Atari ST screen shot

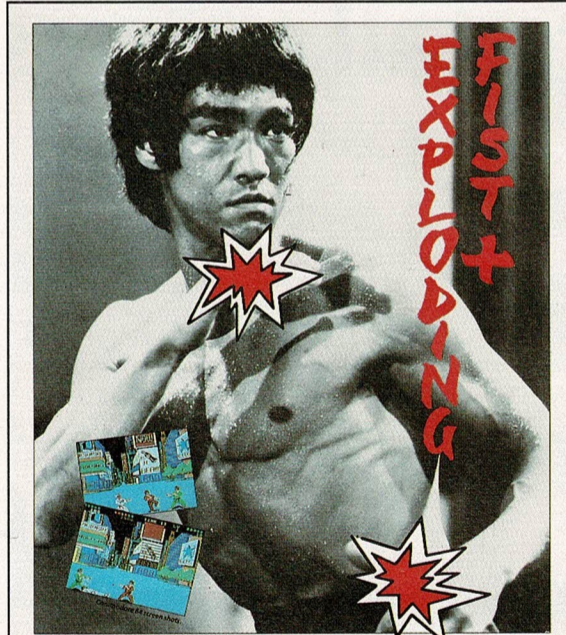
9.00pm EXPLODING FIST +

When the snow starts a-falling and the wind starts a-howling there's nothing better to warm up those frost bitten fingers than the blistering heat of EXPLODING FIST +.

If you're feeling guilty after stuffing your face with all that Christmas turkey, here's your chance to get back into shape — or get kicked into the middle of the New Year!

Spectrum cassette £7.99
Commodore 64 cassette £9.99, disc £12.99

Commodore 64 screen shot



HANDLE WITH CARE



A LEGEND IN GAMES SOFTWARE

Sequel to the blockbuster WAY OF THE EXPLODING FIST!

Tandy

Continued from front page computers will be in the 'concept' of the commercial.

"For the past year we have been advertising to increase awareness of the Tandy range of computers in both the trade and consumer press. The decision to promote Tandy as a whole was simply one of budget. We could have booked 20 weeks at 800 spots a day but it wouldn't have been cost effective," Tandy's computer marketing manager Richard Rosser told CTW.

The adverts will only be shown in the London and Granada regions. The media and creative sides of the Tandy campaign are being handled by MBS and HQ respectively, although at the time of going to press the adverts were still in the initial stages of production.

Tandy will also be running an in-store promotion this Christmas on its low-end 100-CHX PC. The machine is priced at £395 and £495 and purchasers of the HX will be offered a full refund in holiday spending money in the form of Bonus travellers cheques.

The cheques will be redeemable at a rate of 7.5 per cent on the cost of the holiday, and the offer lasts until December 31st. "We think the offer is a very good one and we are expecting three times the sales on that particular unit," commented Rosser.

Mindscape unworried

Continued from front page pany ended up paying back \$1.8 million.

"I really don't see this situation occurring. We're in constant contact with our investors, in fact we've spoken to everybody. A research report was published in August by our underwriters and we've been particularly careful in explaining everything in our prospectus," Buoy told CTW.

The company is blaming its poor results on a general malaise in the US software market coupled with increasing competition from Nintendo. "We've had to modify our expectations of the market. We are now buying less components and adjusting our buying procedures."

Despite Mindscape's troubles Buoy claims that "up until August sales were ahead of projections, but the market is now depressed and that has brought on a whole spectrum of problems but we're working at it".

Christmas Viewing



A LEGEND IN GAMES SOFTWARE

For mail order please send your order and remittance (cheques payable to British Telecom plc or direct debit from Access/Visa card by stating number and expiry date) to:
The Marketing Department, Telecomsoft, First Floor, 64-76 New Oxford Street, London WC1A 1PS.



Telecomsoft, First Floor, 64-76 New Oxford St, London WC1A 1PS.
Firebird and Firebird Logo are trademarks of British Telecommunications PLC.

Nintendo makes indie move at last but demands loyalty

Nintendo UK has finally decided to sell through independents, but with heavy provisos.

Any dealer taking Nintendo products will have to make a number of strong commitments to the firm. For a start there is a ban on software-only deals, with all outlets required to take a certain amount of hardware.

Retailers will also be required to put the system on prominent display with continuous live demonstrations. In all a dealer's initial investment for an opening package of hardware and software must be at least £1,500.

In return Nintendo will provide the dealers with promotional display material. So far ten outlets have taken the deal with around 20 more expected to follow.

Distribution to the independents will be handled by Centresoft, which already sup-

plies the system to over 100 Boots stores. Sales director Richard Steele commented to CTW: "They want to distribute to a small number of committed dealers. They're not looking for the widest distribution but the best, we're helping them do that."

He continued: "It's pretty clear that they won't be massive this year but they will be important next year, and that's why we're getting involved."

At present Centresoft is the sole distributor but Nintendo boss Mike Wensman told CTW "We're certainly not offering any exclusives, there could well be more distributors added." He also revealed that talks have taken place with R&R and Leisuresoft but that no deal had yet been struck with either firm.

Wensman went on: "We're in the British market now and the independents do have a certain following over here.

We're just utilising that following".

"Software sales will only be generated by hardware sales so we're not looking for people who in two years just want the software. We want people who will sell hardware now as well as reap the benefits in the future."

Nintendo is spending around £1 million (ratecard) on TV ads promoting the console. The first part of the campaign - through London agency Geers Gross - recently finished, but a second splash is planned to run just prior to Christmas.

The firm is facing stiff competition in this market from Virgin Mastertronic's Sega and Atari's VCS and XE consoles. Virgin has recently been claiming higher than expected sales uptake for its console, whilst Atari has swung into action its Atari Games Centre idea.

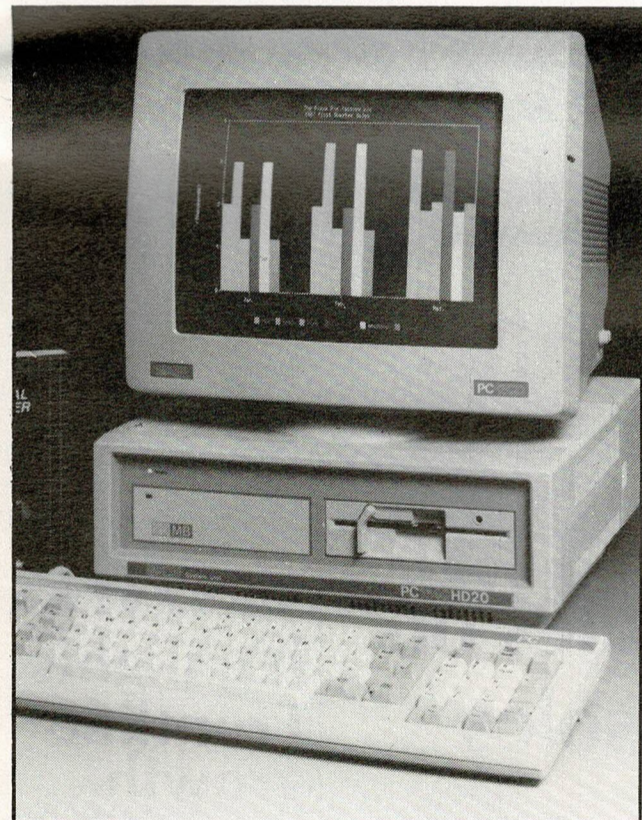
The Atari consoles are also due some TV advertising.



STEELE: Committed dealers wanted

MBS offers on 1640 and welcomes 2086

MBS Combro was last week trumpeting the arrival of Amstrad's 2086, while at the same time announcing a string of dealer incentives for the 1640.



1640: MBS freebies offered

The firm's managing director Derek Lewis, however, refuted suggestions that the two events were linked and that the offers were an attempt to sustain the 1640 in the face of 2086 competition.

Lewis also denied that it is a measure designed to divert dealers attention from the 2086 due to lack of initial stocks. He told CTW: "It's simply a question of this being our busiest time and the 1640 being a very popular line which we want to maximise on."

Dealers purchasing the 1640 will be able to choose one of a range of software packages which will be available either free or for less than £20. Among the packages on offer are *Supercalc 3.21* (£15), *Paymaster* (free), and *Gem Draw* (free).

Lewis commented: "Clearly the 1640 will eventually suffer from the new range, but we still have quantities of them included in our budget for next year. This is by no means a closing down sale."

He also claimed that after a difficult period following the closure of DDL the firm is now prosperous again. "It's pretty much business as usual now. People did think that when DDL went everything it did stopped, it was hard work convincing them they could still do business with us but that has been achieved."

Lewis went on to predict that MBS Combro would have a 1989 turnover of £25-£30 million. This is close to the figure posted by the firm when DDL was at its height.

Coders nix mid-price and move up to £2.99

The current wind of change blowing through the budget market has blown Code Masters' way, with the firm announcing a new pricing structure.

It has announced that all future budget releases will be priced at £2.99 rather than the existing £1.99. The £4.99 Plus label has also been repositioned as a low-end full-price label - C64 and Amstrad titles will retail at £8.99 and Spectrum at £7.99.

The shift up to £2.99 follows something of a trend in the market, whilst with Plus Code Masters becomes the latest pricing pioneer to jettison attempts to establish an accepted mid-price.

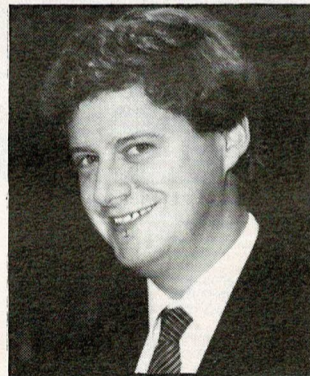
Code Masters' existing budget catalogue will remain at £1.99, with all new releases at £2.99.

"What's happened - as any observer will tell you - is that although £2.99 product didn't

sell well at one time it is now an acceptable price-point," commented operations manager Bruce Everiss to CTW.

"We've seen Kixx and Encore have success with a number of products at £2.99. Our products are superior to most of the so-called budget product and we think it's time our pricepoint reflected that."

The first newly-priced Plus product is the just released *Dragon Slayer*, which despite



EVERISS: Prices shifting upward

being advertised at £4.99 will actually sell at £8.99 on C64.

Code Masters is adamant that Plus was not a failure - pointing out that *Pro BMX Simulator* and *Pro Jet Bike Simulator* both charted. It is arguing, instead, that double cassette product at £4.99 can be perceived as discounted full-price product, thus holding back sales.

Due to Code Masters' 100 per cent sale or return policy on its Plus range, *Pro BMX* will remain at £4.99 until January 1st.

Code Masters expects to release a handful of titles on the Gold full-price label and up to one new game a month on Plus.

"There's no doubt that Code Masters is one of the major players in terms of market share and it's now time to convert that market share into revenue. The only way to do that is through increasing pricepoints," added Everiss.

Moneyspinner looms for System 3 in US

Mediagenic affiliate System 3 is currently negotiating a licensing deal with its US partner which could net the firm upwards of \$500,000.

At the same time Mediagenic has decided to market System 3 as a separate label in the US from the new year onwards, rather than have its products appear under the Activision brand name.

System 3 boss Mark Cale is currently negotiating for Mediagenic to take over the arcade, Sega and Nintendo

rights for its latest property *Last Ninja 2* - which is claimed to have sold 100,000 units in its first two weeks in Europe.

Cale preferred not to comment on the prospective deal in detail. "There's been a lot of talking but we haven't actually signed anything yet. Obviously the game has very wide market opportunities," he told CTW.

The \$500,000 figure is believed to be the sum of any advance payable on the deal. If contracts are exchanged and the product fulfills its true sales potential System 3 could be

looking at a total haul of around £800,000.

Meanwhile, Cale hit back last week at some retailers' decision to remove the rubber shiraken throwing star from special edition packs of *Last Ninja 2* (CTW October 31st).

"We have a very strong cult following and I feel that many of them are being seriously let down. Kids have been phoning us up in tears about it."

"It's got to be up to the kid or the parent to decide. You can't tell me the shopkeeper has a right to take the star out of the box - a lot of people buying the game are 18 or over."

CTW

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Two Smash Hit Games
You MUST Stock!

ARMALYTE

Commodore 64/128

£9.99 cass £12.99 disk

SANXION

the SPECTRUM remix

£8.99 cass £12.99 disk

ARMALYTE, universally received by the press as the best blaster for Christmas, is NOW available for the C64/128! Yes, the buyers are queuing up for this staggering extravaganza of shoot 'em up mayhem.

And now SANXION the SPECTRUM remix is coming - the game thousands of Spectrum owners have been crying out for. Ring David Birch at THALAMUS for the low down on both these future number one games and place your orders. ARMALYTE and SANXION are the games which will make YOU money this season!



THALAMUS

Thalamus, 1 Saturn House, Calleva Park, Aldermaston, Berkshire RG7 4QW

New Genic labels arrive with originality promise



COUSENS: New labels added

Mediagenic has at last named its latest two UK affiliate labels — followed with a promise of more to come.

Vivid Images and Motion Picture House are being pitched as labels which allow programmers more creative freedom than is available simply through writing for a major publisher.

The programming team that wrote System 3's *Last Ninja* and *Last Ninja 2* will make up Vivid Images. Mediagenic's UK boss Rod Cousens was keen to explain a move which initially seems to be depleting System 3 itself an affiliate.

"That programming team has obviously been conscious of their products' success. They want more of their own identity than can be gained simply through a licence deal with any publisher," Cousens

told CTW

"We had no wish for them to leave System 3, but we also had no wish for them to go to a competitor. So, with the help of System 3 boss Mark Cale, we devised a way of publishing their products as an affiliated label."

Vivid Images is expected to produce around four titles a year. The Motion Picture House will be slightly different in that it will be an outlet for a series of programmer one-offs rather than any designated team's work.

"This label will centre on creativity. I'll be very surprised to see any endorsed product appear on it. In fact, I'm prepared to let some of the releases be quite experimental," added Cousens.

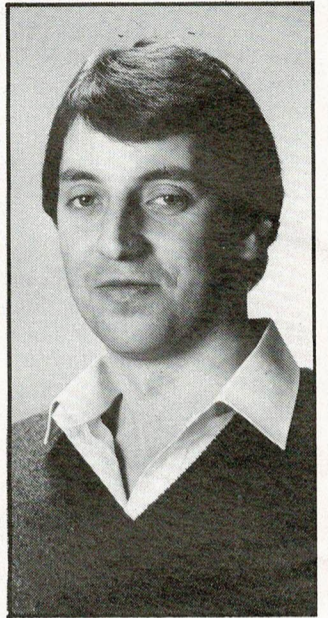
The Motion Picture House is expected to produce around 12 titles per year.

Superior secures new batch of Beeb rights

Superior is set to release a BBC version of Elite's *Question of Sport* and is also planning versions of Palace's *Barbarian II*, System 3's *Last Ninja* and Mediagenic's *Predator*.

OutRun but talks had fallen through.

Barbarian II and *Predator* will not be available until the new year. All games on release will retail at £12.95 on cassette, £14.95 on BBC disk and £19.95 on Master Disc.



HANSON: Beeb deals

The BBC specialist has already released a version of Palace's original *Barbarian* and these latest deals seem to indicate a growing market for the firm. Both *Last Ninja* and *Question of Sport* will be released around the beginning of December.

Director Richard Hanson commented to CTW: "We're in a position where we are the only major firm left producing for the Beeb and Electron and obviously we're taking advantage of that."

He also predicted that "more deals of this nature will come along". Indeed, Hanson revealed that there had been a possibility of gaining rights to US Gold's

US companionship wins Softsel CompuAdd deal

The recently launched UK branch of the US mail order giant CompuAdd has signed up Softsel as the software supplier.

The two firms apparently have a strong relationship in the US and the new deal has come off the back of that. It also seems that Softsel has been involved in an advisory role in CompuAdd's UK establishment.

Currently CompuAdd has a total of around 350 titles available and is hoping to increase this to around 500 by 1989. Marketing manager Tom Irby claims the move is just part of a progression towards "the concept of one stop shopping".

Softsel's marketing director Richard North commented to

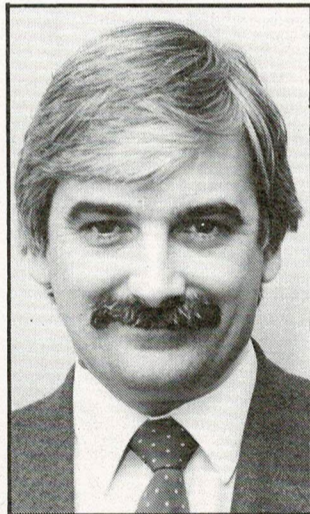
CTW: "They've been one of our largest customers in the States for some time and now they've set up over here so we're supplying them with a wide range of software — although not our complete range."

North went on to deny suggestions that the deal with a mail order company may alienate some of its traditional retail clients. "Anybody who buys from Softsel gets the same services and if we didn't sell to them then someone else would", he offered.

Although Softsel is currently CompuAdd's only official software supplier it would seem unlikely that the distributor will also be providing the mail order firm's 16-bit leisure titles.

Meanwhile Softsel has also announced the availability of

Logitech's *Scanman* which it describes as the ultimate in hand held image scanners. The product is available for £189 for PS/2, AT or XT machines.



NORTH: Mail order deal

Ocean adds video ad

Ocean has tied up a reciprocal promotional deal with video publisher Virgin Vision for its soon to come *Robocop* game.

basically to increase awareness of the product. It's a very good film and a very good game too."

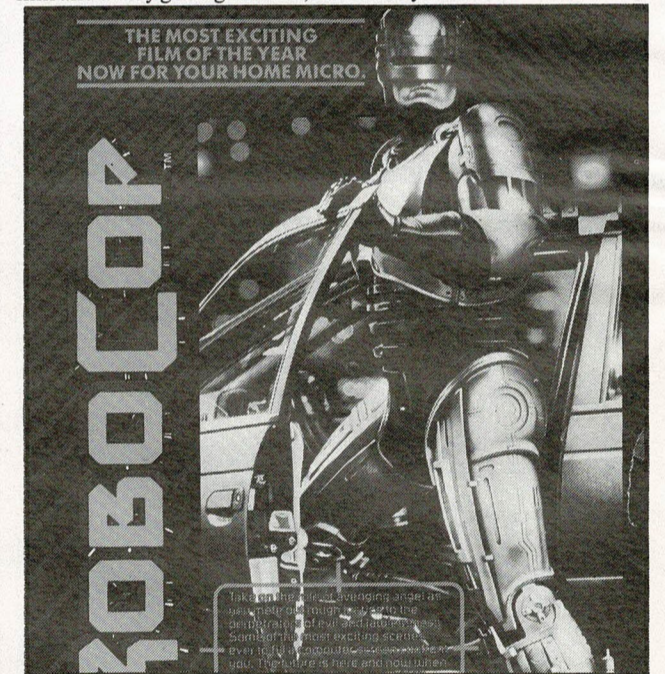
commented Ocean's software development manager Gary Bracey.

The deal is an expansion of the co-operation between Ocean and RCA/Columbia back in January with *Platoon*. Virgin Vision's *Robocop* video will carry a 20-second ad for Ocean's game version, whereas the *Platoon* video only carried a five-second computer blast.

Ocean will be plugging the *Robocop* video in its own computer press advertising with Virgin Vision including a tag line for the game in its video dealer ads.

The computer game version of *Robocop*, however, will not be featured in the current video TV campaign.

"The tie-up has been done



ROBOCOP: Blanket plugging

Jolly prepares for late, late TV splash

Compilations firm Beau Jolly looks set to embark on its third successive TV ad campaign, although it is holding back from buying space until the last minute.

The company will be plugging its two Christmas titles *The Ultimate Pack - Supreme Challenge* and *Computer Hits 5*. According to joint director Nigel Mason, the commercial has already been made and "we are now waiting to get the right spots at the right price".

Last year however, Jolly was forced to pull its Christmas campaign after only one week. "We just didn't have the right facing. All our products were in double library cases and they were not getting the shelf space. This year we are using A5 boxes which puts us back in tune with the competition," Mason told CTW.

CBM poaches for education push

In its continuing push for the education market Commodore has poached SDL man Bill Owen as sales manager for education.

Prior to SDL — one of Atari's biggest distributors — Owen worked for Atari itself as a regional sales manager specialising in the education sector.

In his new job of promoting the Commodore range, Owen commented: "Whilst being convinced that 68000 machines were right for education, there was not enough good educational software around for the ST. What I have seen of the Amiga convinced me that it outstrips the ST's capabilities in education, both in terms of

software and flexibility in the classroom."

National sales manager Peter Talbot believes that this latest appointment is a statement to the market about Commodore's commitment to the education sector.

"Both Bill and myself share the same belief with regards to computers in education. It's a strange old market where the mood is very much horses for courses and Bill has an understanding of its needs and special demands," Talbot told CTW.

In the meantime Commodore claims that it is coming close to appointing yet another distributor for education. "We are trying to keep an open mind and talking to lots of different people, but discussions are certainly progressing," offered Talbot.

R&R bundles on Atari consoles

R&R has announced special Christmas bundles for Atari's VCS console and the XE4001.

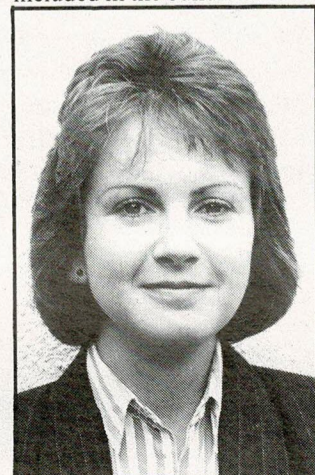
The firm will be adding two free cartridges to the XE and one to the VCS. What titles are included in the bundles will be

"subject to availability".

The offer will be available to dealers from the end of November and will be running until the end of January. Sales manager Finuala Kavanagh told CTW: "These kind of games consoles are going to go very well and this is just a way of maximising that."

The firm has only been dealing with the XE console since the beginning of the month but Kavanagh claimed that initial dealings had proved "very successful".

Meanwhile R&R's Green Shield stamp dealer promotion continues with a possibility of the two firms combining for a joint advertising campaign in the new year. Kavanagh commented: "We've had a very, very good response so far and they're proving quite a selling point when we do open new accounts."



Kavanagh: Consoling offer

Survey highlights Frontline growth

Research firm Context has named Frontline as the UK's fastest growing software distributor.

Apparently 21 per cent of dealers contacted named the firm as their primary source of software. On top of that 43 per cent rated Frontline as "field leader".

The report also indicated the growing importance of software distributors. Some 63 per cent of dealers now name distributors as the most important supply source compared to 42 per cent last year.

This statistic goes hand in hand with the decline in direct sourcing from software houses. The report shows that now just 17 per cent of dealers consider publishers their most important source. This is nearly half the figure for 1984.

30 DAYS TO CHRISTMAS

PRODUCT AVAILABILITY INFORMATION

SUPPLIER		PRODUCT	AVAILABILITY	COMMENTS
COMMODORE	1	AMIGA A500 + free modulator	Currently fair but problems anticipated towards Christmas	TV advertising begins 14 Nov. This will be an Amiga Xmas if there's enough stock
COMMODORE	1	64C HOLLYWOOD PACK	Intermittent due to build delays, major shortages anticipated	This is a hot product selling well ahead of all projections. Xmas advertising begins 14 Nov.
COMMODORE	1	64C ENTERTAINMENT PACK	Availability good, no stock shortages anticipated	Sales so far only fair, this is a Xmas product – expect Dec. demand
COMMODORE	1	1541c (New Style) 1084S Monitor A501 RAM Expansion	Fair to limited stock Limited stock Good	No more stock until January. Should be enough stock? Substantial stocks held.
AMSTRAD/SPECTRUM	2	PLUS 2 PLUS 3	Currently good but looking tight for December	Demand will be massive in line with TV campaign. Make sure you have stock from mid Nov. onward.
AMSTRAD	2	464 6128 2160 Printer	Currently good but looking tight for December	Demand will be in line with TV advertising. Watch out for the entertainment pack (TV tuner, Clock radio and desk). Another hot product.
AMSTRAD 2000 SERIES	2	2086 Single Drive Dual Drive, Hard Drive	Dual drive 2nd week in Nov. Single drive, Hard drive mid November	The hottest of the lot, the first of the new range with a backlog of demand.
AMSTRAD	2	PCW 8256 PCW 8512 PCW 9512	2nd week in November (few 8512 in stock now)	Last and only delivery before Xmas. They are bought as Xmas presents. Expect good demand.
AMSTRAD BROWN GOODS	2	VCR 6000 Video/MX 200-300 Midi Hi-Fi/TVR 2-3 Video TV Systems/ CDX500 Midi CD System/ Studio 100 Midi System recording studio	New stock items, available 1st week in Nov. for immediate delivery	All products stocked feature in national TV advertising and are volume sellers at very aggressive price points. If you don't stock Amstrad Brown Goods, contact us now.

1 ALL PRODUCTS COUNT TOWARDS ZCL HOLDINGS 1989
HONG KONG – CHINA DEALER INCENTIVE

2 ALL PRODUCTS COUNT TOWARDS ZCL HOLDINGS 1989
CARIBBEAN CRUISE DEALER INCENTIVE

Dear Retailer,

The above information has been produced giving, to the best of our ability a reasonable assessment of stock availability between November and Christmas. This year, more of our suppliers will be on TV than ever before; please don't underestimate the power of a good TV campaign!

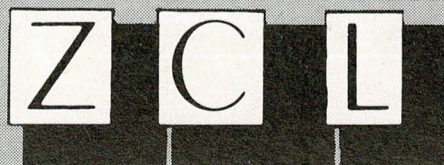
Where stock is likely to be short, I have given our best estimate; where a TV campaign is involved, the problem will be that much greater.

This season will be the best for years; I hope that you get your share.

Kind Regards

Don Carter

Chairman



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Kahn warns of private switch after \$6m losses

As expected Borland has announced major losses for the six months ending September 30th, totalling nearly \$6 million.

In anticipation of the bad performance Borland initiated a worldwide restructuring of its operations last month to "reflect an increased focus on profitability". This, amongst other things, meant the redundancy of 100 staff -

including eight in the UK.

Expecting a cool response to the results from the City, Borland chairman Phillippe Kahn last week indicated that the surprise step of turning the company private again is not wholly off the agenda.

This course of action will be taken by Kahn if he considers the City's valuation of the company to be significantly below its true worth.

In the six months ending September 30th Borland's pre-tax profit fell from \$4.9 million to a loss of \$5.8 million. Net profit declined from \$2.9 million to a loss of \$5.7 million.

Borland's continued optimism regarding its performance comes from the major increases being made on sales. For the same period turnover rose 60 per cent from \$25.6 million to \$41 million.

Sir Clive shifts load to new MD

Sir Clive Sinclair's Cambridge Computer has appointed its first ever managing director to take over much of the day to day running of the company from its founder.

Alan Boxer, former vice president of McDonnell Douglas Information Systems, will be taking on many of Sir Clive's responsibilities, although he will still be involved in the company as chairman.

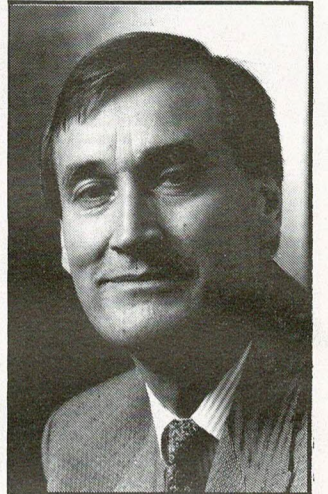
The appointment follows Sir Clive's recent announcement that Cambridge is set to enter the satellite broadcasting market with a low-cost receiver dish.

"We have big plans and the company is constantly growing. Sir Clive is involved in lots of different ventures and we needed someone to look after the every day running," Cambridge's sales manager Paul Streeter told CTW.

"We had been planning to find a top notch MD since the

company began and if you look at Alan's CV his track record speaks for itself."

The position had previously been filled by production director Dave Chatten, but as Streeter points out "his forte is production and he just assumed the responsibilities until we found the right man".



BOXER: New man at Cambridge

Comms speeds up

Mirroring the trend in the PC market for 286 and 386 machines, the modem market too is currently experiencing a clamour for speed.

According to latest figures from research firm Romtec a look at the market split by maximum speed since the fourth quarter of 1987 shows a clear trend towards faster modems.

Those with a maximum speed of 1200 bps accounted for 74 per cent of total sales in October 1987, which had dropped to 58 per cent by August 1988.

Over the same time period modems working at 2400 bps and above increased their share from 26 per cent to 42 per cent, with a high point of 44 per cent in July.

The Romtec figures refer to sales of modems to business only - home and education sales are excluded. Only dealer sales are counted with OEM and direct selling also excluded.

Grandslam decides on film first

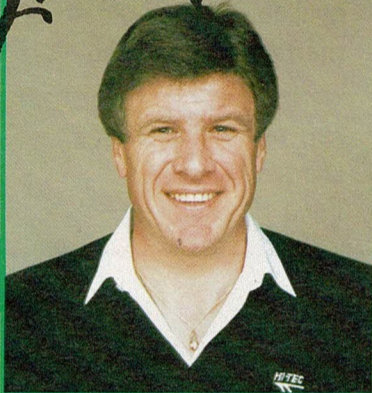
Grandslam has tied up its first movie licensing deal for the rights to Arnold Schwarzenegger's latest film - *The Running Man*.

The company has also signed a joint advertising agreement with Brave World, who will be bringing out a video of the film early next year. In a reciprocal arrangement Grandslam's game will be advertised on the front of the video, with the video being promoted on the packaging of the game.

"We are obviously delighted to have the film rights. Schwarzenegger is the number two box office attraction next to Eddy Murphy," Grandslam's sales manager Duncan Lowthian told CTW.

Grandslam is now looking to sign other film licences, "at the moment I'd rather remain evasive. Let's just say that there is possibly something in the pipeline," offered Lowthian.

Emlyn Hughes



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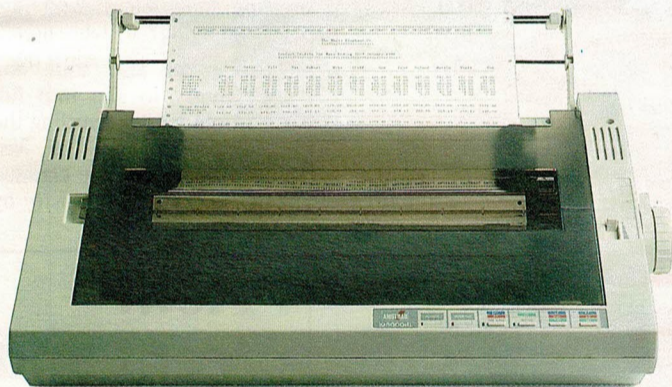
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Which produces excellent letter quality output, from a full 24 pin print head, in an astounding number of different typeface combinations.



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Making it ideal for business wordprocessing use.

And with its wide 13.6 inch carriage, it's an excellent choice for spreadsheet printing as well.

The LQ5000di is also one of the three printers in the range with dual centronics / parallel and RS232 interfaces. (The 'di' stands for 'dual interface'.)

So it's compatible with virtually any serious computer you care to name.

And with print speeds of up to 288cps in draft mode (12CPI) and up to 96cps at letter quality (12CPI), it's faster than the quoted print speeds of Epson's

comparable LQ1050 too.

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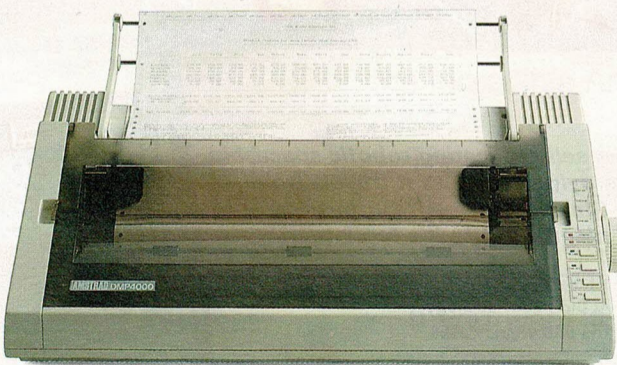
LQ3500di RRP £349 + VAT

quality output across an 8 inch carriage, making it the perfect width for A4 paper.

It too offers a 24 pin print head, and is fully Epson LQ and IBM Proprinter compatible.

But with an overall footprint of 17.5 inches by just 16 inches, it will fit on anyone's desk.

Moving on to 9 pin printers, Amstrad are offering opportunities for greater profits on the robust DMP 4000.



DMP4000 RRP £349 + VAT

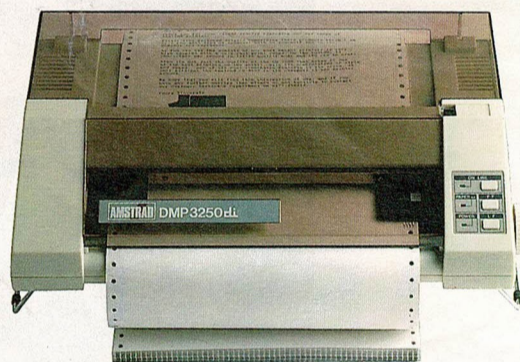
With a superwide 13.6 inch carriage, it should cope with your customers' widest balance sheets. And with its high speed draft mode at up to 200 cps, they won't be spending much time

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With built-in legs, allowing the storage of fanfold paper underneath it, and a flat paper path, making it perfect for printing on card, envelopes and self adhesive paper.

Its compact size makes an attractive proposition for the smaller workstation.



DMP3250di RRP £199 + VAT

And its RRP of just £199 + VAT could attract the smaller pocket into your store too.

So if you're interested in stocking Amstrad printers, just fill in the coupon.

But hurry, because these hefty margins are available for a limited period only.

Until then we're offering you a licence to print money.

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Hibbard returns in Prose guise

After his controversial departure from Telecomsoft Paul Hibbard has now joined MicroProse as head of software development.

It is still not clear whether Hibbard jumped or was pushed from BT and for now Hibbard is remaining silent on the matter. The move to MicroProse will surprise many industry pundits who had indicated that a more likely move would be to Mirrorsoft or Me-

diagenic.

Hibbard told CTW his role at the firm would be "basically the same as at BT." He continued: "I've been very impressed with MicroProse for a while and that's why I'm joining them."

Continuing the complimentary mood MicroProse's UK boss Stewart Bell commented: "We're very glad to have Paul on board. He brings with him a wealth of talent and experience from which we can only benefit."



HIBBARD: Prose man

Acorn points to Archimedes trend

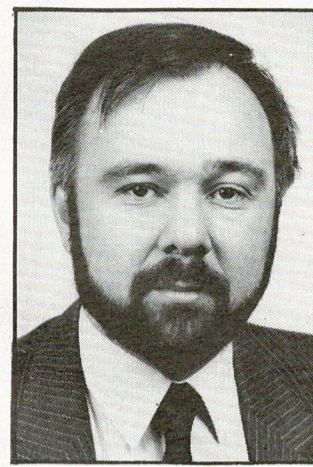
Acorn was last week claiming that an increasing number of educational authorities are opting to take the Archimedes.

The claim follows the announcement that the Scottish Central Regional Council has installed a total of 120 Archimedes in over half the schools in the area. The region had previously been equipped with just BBC B and Master machines.

The firm's corporate communications manager Michael Page told CTW that the move reflected a growing trend among educational authorities. He commented: "People are drifting towards the Archimedes by the dozen, it is a natural progression from the Master."

He also claimed, however, that the demand for the machine was so great that it could not be immediately met. "We can't deliver from stock at the moment. The demand is

just so much greater than we expected at the beginning of the year and even greater than our recent revised estimate."



PAGE: Archimedes boost

Weekly shuffles

Fledgling Future weekly *New Computer Express* has rejigged its editorial make-up after just one freebie issue.

Peter Warlock who was editor is now described as "contributing editor". Group publisher Chris Anderson also told CTW that Greg Ingham, who had been the title's publisher, is now "managing editor".

The confusing situation was described by Anderson as "very complicated" with at least seven people having the word editor incorporated into their title. When asked if he was looking to appoint an overall editor Anderson replied "are you applying?"

Anderson also took the opportunity to slip into full hyperbole mode regarding the first issue proper of *New Computer Express*. He claimed it would "take the industry by storm".

Prism preens and appoints

Following its revamped sales operation Prism Leisure has appointed a new sales and purchasing manager.

Peter Dellow, former employee of MCD, is just one of several changes the firm has undergone recently in its attempt to boost its distribution division.

A new computerised stock control system has been introduced along with a guaranteed next day delivery service. Prism is also planning to expand its existing range of titles, as well as supplying products specially requested by customers.

The firm is currently offering back-catalogue full-price ST titles at £2.95 and Dellow is confident that these latest changes will make Prism "the forerunner in the back-catalogue software industry".

"Obviously I will be looking to increase sales and hopefully open a few accounts with the majors. One area I would particularly like to develop is sell-through video and I will be looking into this over the coming months," commented Dellow.



The first Hold-and-Modify game for the Amiga - 4,096 on-screen colours!

Destroy hostile probes as they rise up out of their silos

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- Drone flight patterns that you can program to soak up energy from the city below
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- Dazzling HAM-mode graphics: 4,096 on-screen colours
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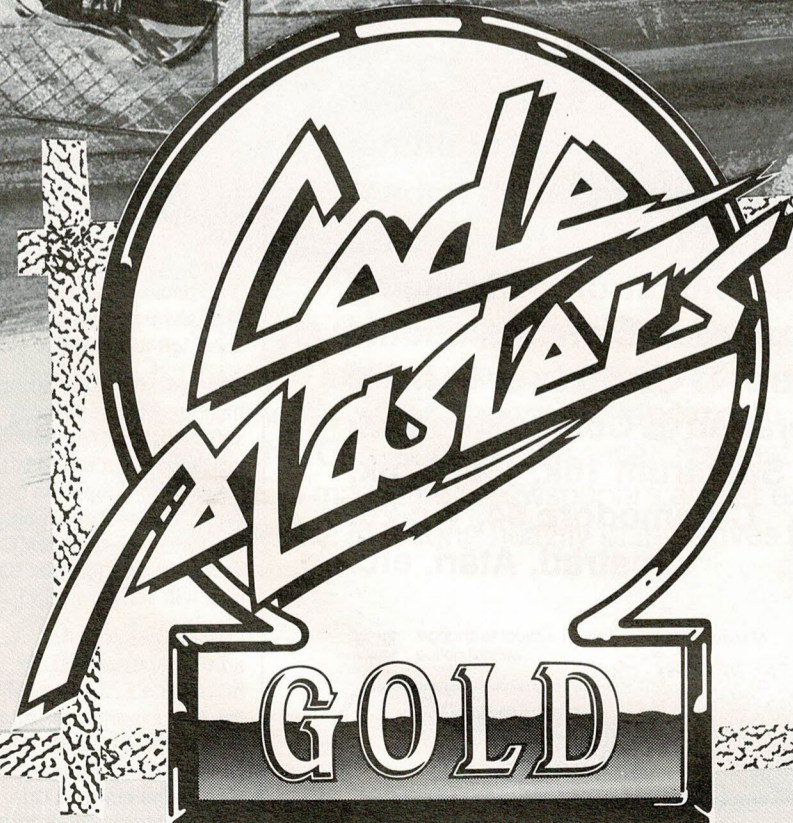
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SNIPPETS

According to market research firm **Gallup**, the 16-bit sector is continuing to break new ground, with sales by unit share rocketing from 7.8 per cent to 9.3. These figures are for the week ending October 22nd, and it would look like the ST and Amiga could hit the elusive 10 per cent barrier this side of 1988. The firm is also predicting that the current 13 per cent unit share lead for budget titles will fall considerably in the run up to Christmas...

Mitsubishi has appointed its

final distributor Mancos Computers to handle its PC range. The company now has a total of three distributors and will be looking to Mancos to market its 286 and 386 machines in the North...

The long awaited UK version of **Borland's** word-processor, *Sprint*, has finally started shipment. And the reasons behind the delay? "We obviously wanted to ensure that the UK version included the most recent enhancement," offered

Borland UK managing director Denis Moran... Following complaints that Telecom Gold's Mailfax is too complicated for users, **Microlink** has introduced a simple service for its own subscribers called Easy Fax. The company has also introduced Fax-Check, a method for seeing whether messages queued for transmission have been sent or not...

CDS is going for the full hype with the imminent release of its latest game *Tankattack*. A



Journos and CDS staff get tanked up

preview of the game was recently held at the National Army Museum, London. *Tankattack* is based on a board game and is due for release in late December...

A package that guarantees PC users efficient file recording and eliminates wasted disk space has been released by **Xpedients**. *The Disk Organiser* either comes bundled with a hard copy version and 100 sheets of continuous stationery, or includes Mirrorsoft's *File Rescue Plus*. The packages are priced at £29.99 and £39.99 respectively...

A new range of RM Nimbus compatible floppy disk drives are being introduced by **Cumana**. The drives are said to offer fast access, quiet operation and reliability and come in two models, the CSR 200 and CSR 400, with the latter offering formatted storage capacity...

Surplus stock disposal firm **PST** has put together a new video to explain how all surplus stock can be disposed of both quickly and cost-effectively. PST claims to be able to pay for and collect stock within 48 hours, offering a confidential service with a customer base in more than 80 countries...

Walking Circles, previously known as Design Design has been rather quiet of late. However, the company has been pretty busy on the sly, working behind the scenes on such titles as Domark's *Spitting Image*, Elite's *The Wanderer* and the US Gold title *Echelon*...

A new book on the Psion Organiser has been published by **Kuma**. The book has the rather catchy title of *File Handling and Other Programs for the Psion Organiser II* (£14.95) and is the author Mike Shaw's second book on the subject...

A series of seminar sessions for dealers has been jointly organised by **Softsel** and **Informix**. The seminars will concentrate on training dealers to sell Informix's *Smart Software System*. As an incentive dealers will be offered a free demo copy of the package...

A new software package capable of greatly reducing the processing time on the Acorn Econet networking system has been developed by **European Communications Group** - sister company to Acorn distributor Kelator. The package is called *ARCshare* and retails at £139 for a ten user license...

International Data Security has bundled its security software with Zenith's portables. In a bid to bring security to people on the move, the package includes *Protec*, *Gatekeeper*, *PDQ2* and *Datasave-ABA* and the basic unit will sell for £3,195...

Despite being under administration **CRL** is boasting a £25,000 profit for the three month period of July, August and September. Bullish boss Clement Chambers claimed this overall figure was despite a loss of £10,000 in the first month...

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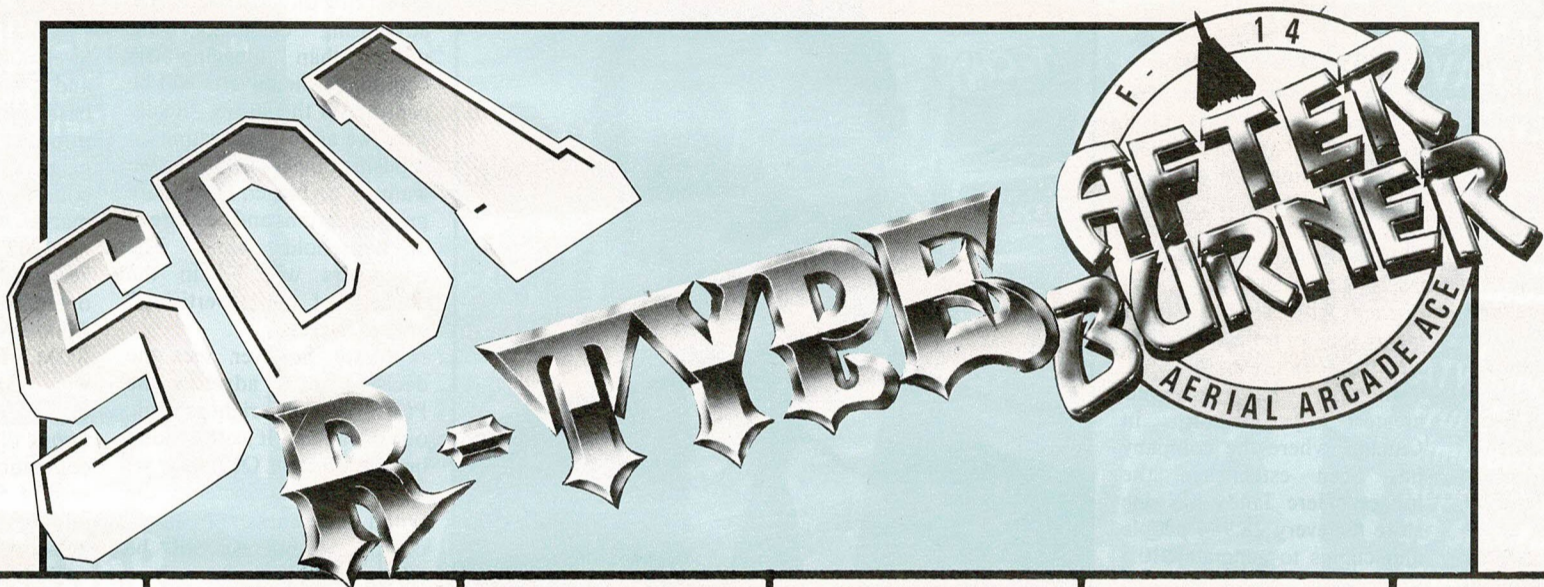
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NOVEMBER	NOVEMBER	NOVEMBER	NOVEMBER	DECEMBER	DECEMBER

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Showing at peak-time Saturday and Sunday morning TV, each 20 second commercial for **AFTERBURNER**, **R-TYPE** and **SDI** will be broadcast a total of 34 times starting November 19. A guaranteed high profile exposure during children's premium TV viewing time – approximately 6.2 million viewers.

So get switched on, and watch our products blast off your shelves.

And remember **AFTERBURNER**, **R-TYPE** and **SDI** speak for themselves.

"Excellent – in more ways than one. The game is absorbing, the graphics are first rate, the controls are just about perfect and the sound is great – what more could one ask for in an arcade conversion".
...ST Action November 1988.

"All the features of the arcade have been included".
"An absolute must for Spectrum blasting fanatics!"
"The ST version looks identical to the arcade version".
...C & VG November 1988.

"Spectrum owners can revel in one of the fastest and most impressive arcade games to appear in the 6 year history of the machine...Afterburner is an excellent conversion".
...90% C & VG Hit.
"Afterburner really does set your pulse racing".
"Afterburner is a great game, you'll be a fool to miss it".
...Crash December 1988.

OUT OF THE WOODS, INTO THE . . .

With some best-ever results behind it, TV ads and a revamped computer range Tandy is looking to finally shake off its tag as one of the more lugubrious UK retail chains. KELLY BESWICK looks at what's changed and what remains the same as ever . . .

The name Tandy conjures up a number of images, and probably the foremost perception in people's minds is that of a lumbering beast – a huge animal that in the past has plodded along quietly nursing its wounds and shying away from the full public glare.

But, in the words of Bob Dillon, the times they are a-changing, or so the friendly giant would have us believe. Certainly in financial terms Tandy has turned that elusive corner. For the first time last year the company posted a substantial profit, and if the results for the first quarter of this year are anything to go by then Tandy is back in the black and hot on the acquisitions trail.

Financial year 1987 saw the company with its back against the wall, with an overall trading loss of some \$12 million. Yet vice President of InterTan UK, John Sayers considers the time of losses to be "another story".

With 1988 showing over \$46 million in pre-tax profits and the first quarter of fiscal year '89 revealing further improvements via a 22 per cent increase in sales, Tandy is in something of a self-congratulatory mood. At last week's launch of its revamped range of PCs, the company was taking the opportunity to pat itself on the back with

plenty of fighting talk of bigger sales and more stores.

In 1986 InterTan Inc. was formed as a holding company to the Texas-based Tandy Corporation. InterTan now owns and operates all the non-US stores and is broken up into Australia, Canada, Continental Europe and the UK. This split was seen as an opportunity for the Tandy interests outside the US to make their own decisions on the merits of the individual countries – rather than vague corporate direction from the Tandy Tower. And it looks to have been successful.

Visibly more

The UK operation is now being hailed as the "shining star" in the Tandy firmament, finishing the year with 234 company owned stores and 206 dealer outlets. The UK division plans to open over 50 new stores in 1989, starting with 8 this month including a prime site in Tottenham Court Road.

InterTan has achieved greatest penetration in Canada, where the company has been established the longest. Here Tandy has one store for every 28,984 people and claims to generate \$10.5 from every person in the country. This is clearly impressive, and the company estimates that if they could

develop similar penetration in the other countries then Tandy could generate around \$2 billion in sales – a big and ambitious if.

Yet Tandy as a whole just can't quite shake off the past. Whilst it appears to have sorted out its problems financially, it is still seen as a firm that trundles along, rather than one with the dynamic image of a slick corporate organisation.

"The problem is that people

look to Tandy stores as a place to buy parts, a bits and pieces sort of place. The image of the past is hard to shake off, but we are showing commitment. We've now got high street stores and are far more visible," commented computer division marketing manager Richard Rosser.

Indeed Sayers believes that up until a few years ago "Tandy looked like a tatty second hand store, but we've had time to change. I think the lumbering

beast tag is dead, we are now vibrant and alive as our financial results show".

But surely it is not an easy task to change people's perception of something so big. Upon entering a Tandy store one cannot help feeling that here is a company that has fallen into the category of being a Jack of all trades and master of none.

Aware of the problems, Tandy has over the past year been advertising to increase the awareness of the Tandy name and range of computers. This month Tandy is embarking on its first ever TV advertising campaign, but rather than plugging its computers the adverts will be centred on the stores. "Really what we are concentrating on is pushing the name Tandy. We want to be bigger, have more prime locations and be more of a household name. The computers will be in the concept of the advertising," offered Sayers.

Rosser, however, sees the decision not to advertise the PCs in their own right as being one of budget. "It just wouldn't be cost effective. Obviously we are looking to increase the brand awareness of Tandy computers, but we will be taking other routes."

The Crystal Room at the Mayfair Hotel was an impressive setting for Tandy to

show-off its latest range of PCs, but unfortunately the machines were rather overshadowed by the surrounds. There is certainly nothing earth shattering new on offer from the new range, thus placing major importance on the price. The machines are not cheap, but as Rosser points out "the price is competitive – it is not our intention to be the cheapest."

Tandy is introducing five new computers in all, with various versions of the 1000 and 4000 lines, along with a new Tandy 3000 and 5000 machine.

The Tandy 1000SX entry level model has been upgraded and renamed the 1000SL. The basic monochrome system is priced at £695 (ex VAT) and is being pitched at the home, education and small business market. New features include: a new 102 key IBM compatible keyboard; an MS-DOS 3.3 operating system and a *Deskmate* interface stored in ROM. The machine comes with 384Kb of memory expandable to 640, a 5.25 inch floppy disk drive plus five PC compatible expansion slots. A second 5.25 inch or 3.5 inch internal floppy disk drive can be added.

Both Rosser and Sayers believe that the Tandy 1000TL will be the best selling model

Continued on page 34



SAYERS: "The lumbering beast tag is dead"

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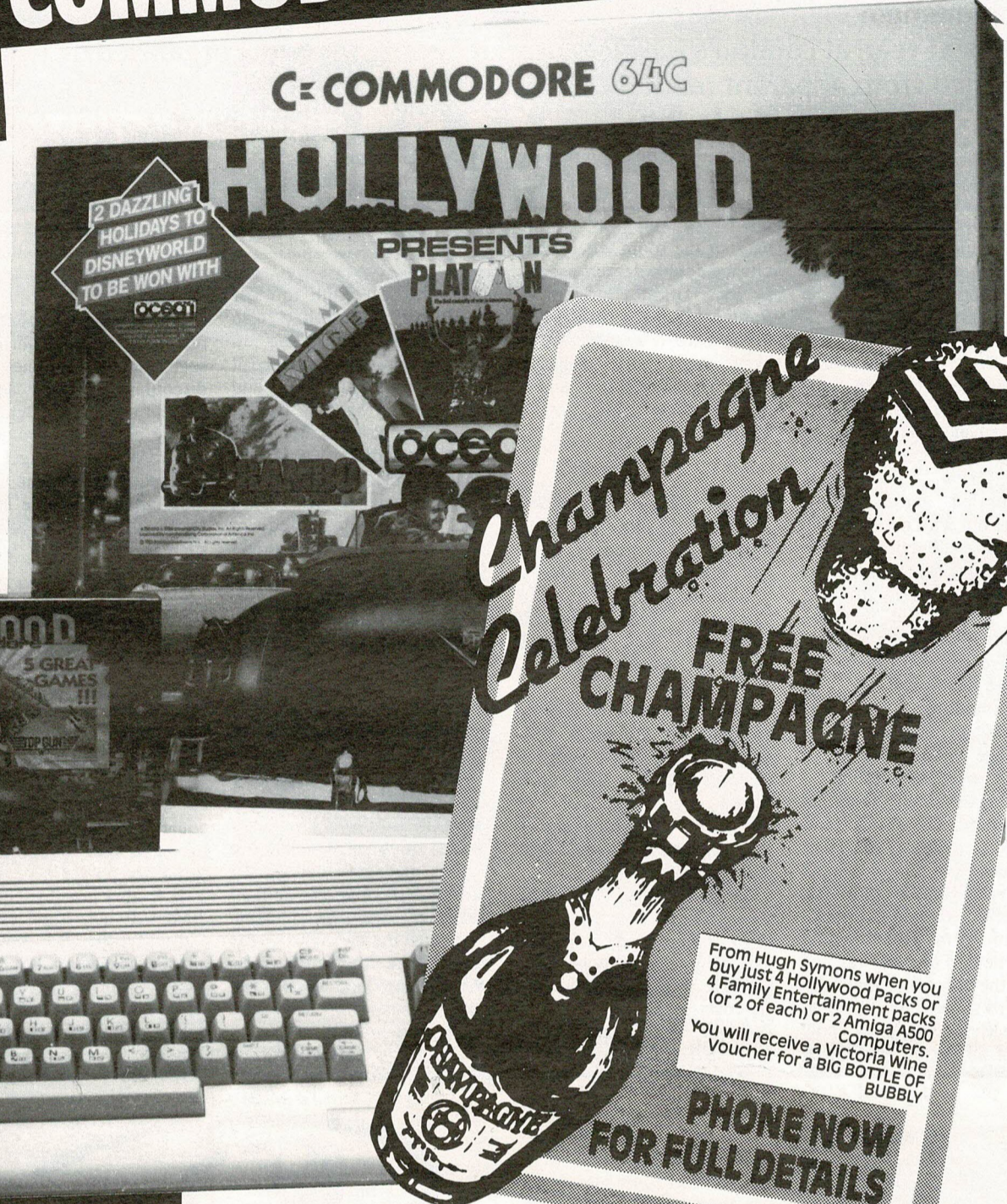
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A TRADE SHOW? WHO NEEDS IT?

Not since the ill-fated CES Show back in April 1986 has there been a trade show specifically designed to incorporate the full entertainment to business spectrum. The European Computer Trade Show is ready to become the latest contender on April 16th next year, at London's Business Design Centre. It's being organised by Database and sponsored by CTW — it's also been spawned from apparent market desire. DAVE ROBERTS runs through the reasoning . . .

Shows can be hazardous things. The burbling muzak, the speiling salesman and the marauding freebie hunters seem to mesh horribly together to form a tidal wave of needless techno flash topped off with a cardboard baseball cap.

This year's PC show at Earl's Court took the whole show concept to dizzy new heights of glitz and glam. The Atari village seemed to be developing into a reasonably sized new town as it sprawled across record acreage but with a lack of any real focus or direction. No one seemed quite sure where Atari itself was hiding in the vast maze, just that it was the undoubted winner in a rather primitive competition to see who had the biggest one.

Commodore was splendidly pyramidal with its new age stand casting a shadow over all around — including the purely functional CTW stand. The Psion stand bristled with designer dummies from dum designers and no-one quite saw the point. Strangely enough Amstrad, the only firm with anything really new to display, was just about the only firm with an old stand to show it on. But then maybe Mr Sugar and Co. know best of all that a matt black

concept stand does not shift as many units as fully competitive pricing.

Meanwhile the leisure publishers were sent to the back of the room where they pitched double deckers against F reg Porsches and latex Rambos against machine gun toting foxes. It was the land of hype and gory displays. Definitely more showbusiness than a show conducive to business.

Now though a different style of show has been mooted. Sponsored by CTW and organised by Database Exhibitions, the European Computer Trade Show is scheduled for London's business Design Centre on April 16-18 next year.

Both sponsor and organiser are pitching the event very much as a response to industry demands. And a look back across the catalogue of complaints about other shows does give this line a great deal of credibility.

Most recently distributor Gem has quit next year's PC show. Joint managing director Paul Donnelly summed up a growing feeling at the time: "It costs us about £20,000 a year and we're definitely not interested if they maintain that

venue. We thought it stank — and to be honest so did the people who organised it."

The sour smell of failure

Before that Elite director Brian Wilcox had also mounted a splenic attack on the PC show. He described it as "simply a disgrace", and complained that on top of everything else the appalling smell of the drains was simply unacceptable.

Offending odours apart, one of the most frequent complaints about such shows is the carnival atmosphere that prevents any serious business being done. Some parts of the industry seem to want a show that is geared to their needs and where acne ridden teenage gamers looking for free goes on the latest shoot-'em-ups are strictly barred.

Database sales director Mike Malone believes that is what the European Computer Trade Show will offer. He claims that the event will be strictly trade and that even ad salesmen will be banned. "We're trying to create a sane atmosphere in which to trade. We've abandoned hype. It will be functional, comfortable and reasonably priced."

The show itself will consist

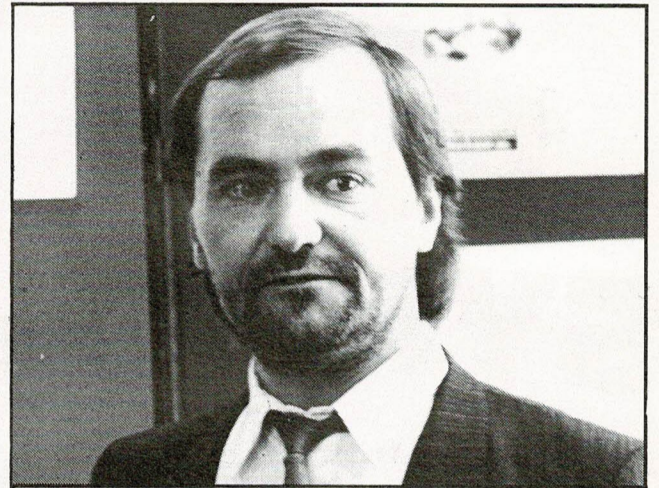
of around 150 stands costing £2,300 each. They will all consist of a four by two metre meeting room and a three by two metre sales counter area. No flashing lights, no banks of speakers and certainly no villages.

The idea is that the functionality and uniformity of such stands will not only discourage but actively prevent unwanted ostentation. Surely not even Commodore and Atari can get too competitive about who has the most appealing three by two metre sales counter — although such major players will be allowed extra space.

Show of strength

As well as CTW and Database Exhibitions it looks quite possible that PC Dealer may become involved in some capacity. Publisher Guy Hibbert offered: "We're talking to the organisers at the moment about collaboration to support the business end of any such exhibition."

It is also possible that the BMF will chose to get involved. Currently the trade body has lined up its own show for April, but the European Computer Trade Show hopes to involve as many industry bodies as possible.



STOCK: Exhibitionist

For now CTW publisher Tom Stock will only concede to being hopeful of BMF participation. It is clear that he is keen for the event to be all embracing and equally anxious for it not to become 'the CTW show'. He sees it as a show designed for the trade by people in the trade where trade can be done.

Indeed both firm's involvement in, dependence on and knowledge of the computer industry is something that will surely have a beneficial effect on the show. PC Show organiser Montbuild for all its wealth of experience and indeed just plain wealth is not part of the computer industry — a fact that many

believe becomes all too clear for five days every September. Mind you, it's probably Montbuild's independence that has built the PC Show into the incredibly successful event that it is.

Stock offers: "I think that while the PC Show was ostensibly successful in attracting an acceptable level of trade visitors from both the UK and abroad, I doubt whether they would have found the environment acceptable for formal business dealings. There's an obvious dichotomy in attempting to run a show primarily geared to the public, and then expecting that same regime to provide

Continued on page 35



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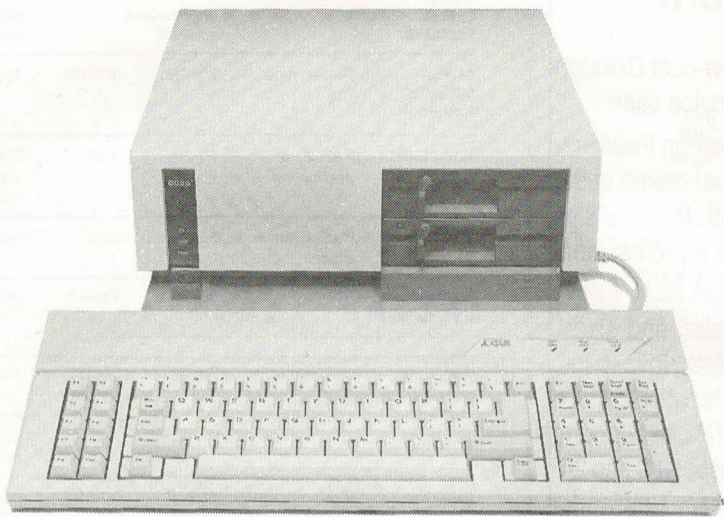
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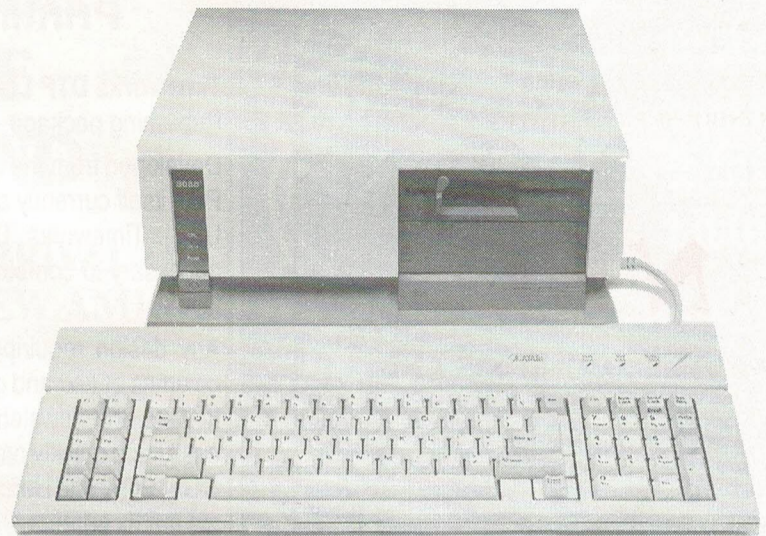
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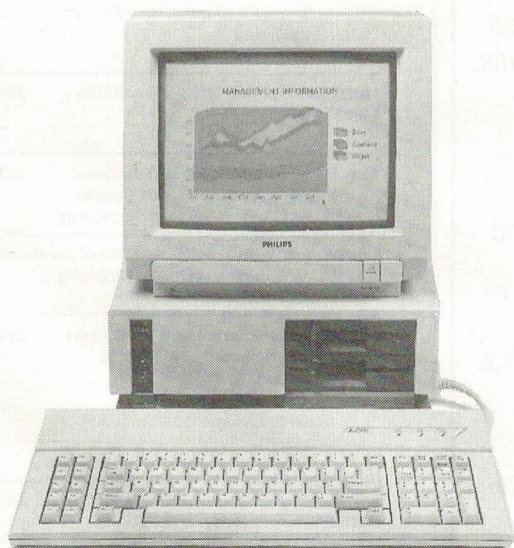
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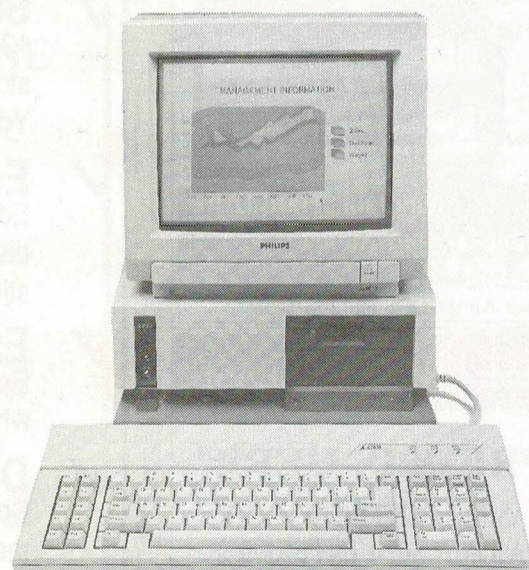
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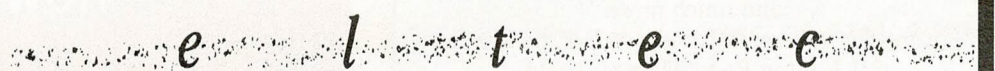
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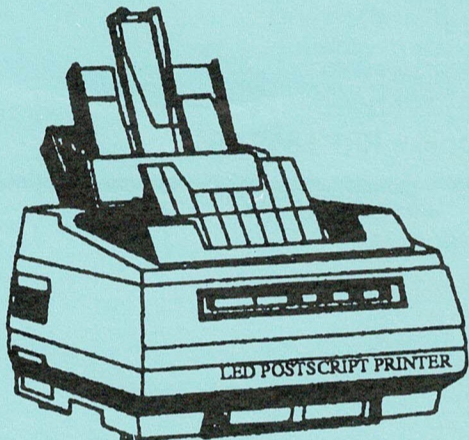
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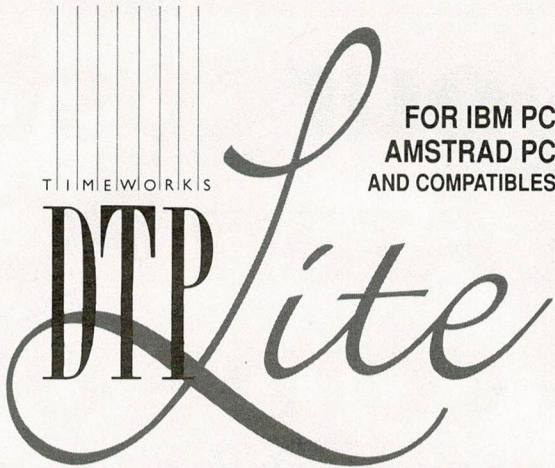
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CAPITAL COMPUTER PRODUCTS	References/ Cash	30 days	30-40%	Telesales	400	Open
CENTRESOFT	Pre-pay or application	30 days	40%	Pre-sales support+ Interlex	150	Words Expres
ELTEC	Cash with order	21 days	35%	Telesales	50	Words Expres
ELECTRIC DISTRIBUTION	Account	30 days	Various	Softline	130+	Timew Publish
FRONTLINE DISTRIBUTION SOFTWARE	References/ cash	30 days	30-45%	External reps; Product specialists; catalogue.	60	Lotus
GARWOOD	2 references and bank	28th of month following	30-50%	Catalogue, telesales, pre & post sales support	160	Top Co
GEM	References	Negotiable	Negotiable	Telesales: vansales	300	AMS Pack
GREYHOUND	Immediate credit facilities	30 days	30% Up	Courier; telesales and in-house support	600	Word
HB MARKETING	References or cash	30 days	37-40%	Courier, rep telesales and tech support	200	Comi
HUGH SYMONS	References	28 days	35-45%	On-line support; technical back-up	130+	Words
LEISURESOF	References/cash	30 days	Negotiable	Telesales	300	Accou
LIGHTNING	2 refs + bank	25th of month foll. supply	35-40%	In-house tech support	100+	Words
MICRO DEALER INTERNATIONAL	Cash and/or 2 trade ref	30 days	30-40%	Support via 50 publishers		Finan Contr
NEW STAR/PAPERBACK SOFTWARE	References and CWO	30 days	30-45%	Catalogue and Telesales	100	VP Inf
P&P	Cash and/or 2 trade ref.	30 days	25-60%	Tech. support; end user marketing	165	Lotus
PRECISION DISTRIBUTION	Yes	30 days	25-50%	Telesales and road support	250	Math-
R&R	References/ cash	20th of month following	40%	24hr courier	300	Pay R
SDL (UK) LTD	Cash with order/account	7th of month following	35%	24hr delivery; telesales	40/50	Publis
SOFTSEL	After credit check	30 days	35-40%	Overnight delivery; full SOR; twice yearly Softeach	309	Lotus
SOFTWARE LIMITED	2 trade ref. + agency ref.	30 days	35-50%	Tech. support; POS; literature	100	DB XL

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THE PROMOTION BATTLE

Now that the software industry has discovered merchandising there is an ever increasing number of firms ready to provide a plethora of posters, stickers and badges to an army of grateful retailers. Network certainly won't be the last but it is the latest. DAVE ROBERTS talks to boss Mike Clark about all things promotional . . .

The promotion battle is hotting up. At the top there's the fast developing and somewhat bitter rivalry between what could now be seen as the old firm of Bullet and USD. There's also the smaller less fancied outfits such as Active, without the big money signings but with ambitions to match anyone's, and now we have a new campaigner in the shape of Network.

It was established two months ago by Mike Clark and is part of the Nimrod group which encompasses CDS, Blue Ribbon, a couple of retail ventures and a printing plant. So far it has five publishers tied-up and is promising one more.

To no-one's great surprise the first two labels to be announced were CDS and Blue Ribbon. Big Apple followed shortly and now this week Gremlin and Target Games have been confirmed. So far the sixth account has not been finalised but Clark claims discussions are underway with a number of firms.

According to Clark these staggered announcements are not just a matter of lacking initial business but part of a wider strategy: "I'm really in no hurry as far as the accounts are concerned. I want this to develop properly with both

retailers and publishers getting to know us gradually. To take on six at a time would have been folly."

An added bonus of course is that it guarantees the new firm a regular spot in this very organ with this week being no exception. But only a cynical mind would see that as a motive and Clark is far from being a cynic.

He talks enthusiastically of his new venture and is particularly keen to place emphasis on open business relationships and communications between all sides. He is also anxious not to be drawn into the rather ugly sort of back-biting that has crept into this particular area of the industry of late.

He describes Network as something of a double edged sword, with distinct sets of advantages for the two areas of the industry he has contact with. "For the publisher its like having a sales force which also handles merchandising and promotions as well as keeping them in touch with dealers' opinions.

Anything's POSSIBLE

"For the dealers we not only bring them POS material but we bring them publisher's information, plus we've got the voice to push their views back. An easy way of looking at us

would be as a mouthpiece for the dealers and a sales arm for the publisher."

He also gives an example of how these paths of commu-

they're still stocking the full price product. Things like that alienate a retailer.

"What we want to do is to provide a link so that we can

ready for compilation status yet."

Sounds idyllic. But this is certainly not an ideal world. That sort of scenario would require lengthy, regular and quality contact with a host of retailers who have something to say. The real world tends to be horribly cluttered with missed appointments, ringing phones and that most annoying of shop pests - persistent customers.

Then of course even if valid points are collated a receptive publisher is needed, one which is prepared to contemplate changing its schedules according to the whims of dealers. Clark is of course all too aware of these obstacles but is hopeful of them being overcome.

It they are not then in some respects Network will have failed. For Clark is pitching the outfit as not just another merchandising firm but as a channel of communication. He is not interested in charity work obviously but he is keen for Network to be seen as a service as well as a business and then to profit from this reputation.

"If a retailer or a publisher says 'can you do this for us?' the answer has to be yes. We're not set up around some rigid structure that says we just have to do certain things, we have to

be able to adapt to suit our customers."

Currently Network has a total of four reps on the road with Clark acting as co-ordinator. He considers four reps to six publishers to be an adequate ratio but concedes that at times it is very much all hands on deck: "As with any new business people end up doing a bit of everything, I mean I'm the managing director but I still make the tea sometimes."

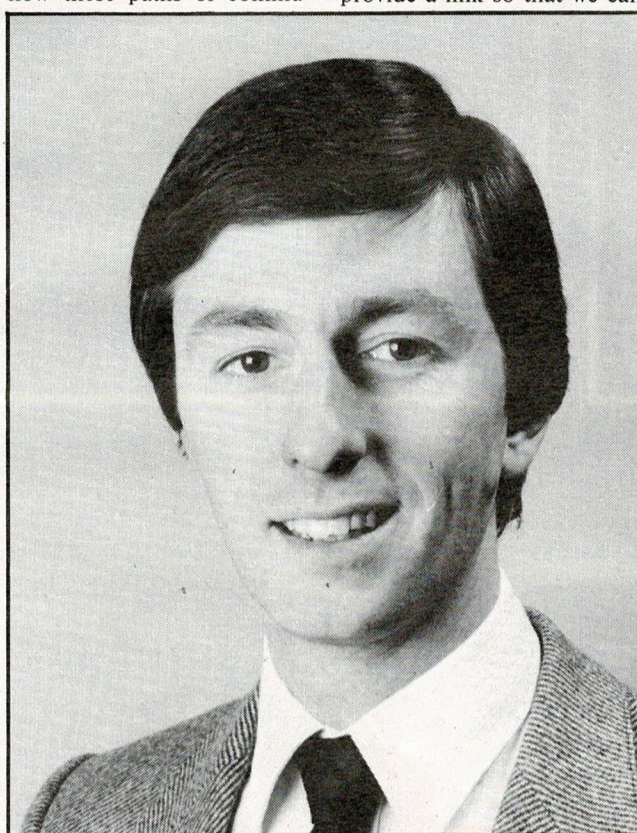
On the subject of his fellow promotion candidates Clark has little to say that is not complimentary. Surely he's not going to opt out of the increasingly popular 'my firm's bigger than your firm' game so beloved of Rolls-Royce owners and mini van drivers alike?

Silly brag

Doesn't he realise that the main reason for acquiring new accounts is to brag about it to the opposition? Thankfully not: "I'm certainly not looking to poach anyone's account, anyway we all do a slightly different job and there are plenty of publishers out there. Neither Bullet, USD or ourselves could possibly look after all of them."

But how much room is there in this promotion zone? With the growing number of firms

Continued on page 35



CLARK: A promotion candidate

nication could benefit everyone involved: "Dealers get annoyed if a product comes out on compilation and they didn't know it was coming, so

tell retailers to run a certain product down or alternatively to report back to software houses that a title is still doing well at full-price and is not

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3M	6.10	5.88	5.67	5.46	5.25
Dysan	7.25	7.00	6.75	6.50	6.25
Verbatim	6.52	6.30	6.07	5.85	5.62
Sony	6.38	6.16	5.94	5.72	5.50
5 1/4 DD 96 tpi					
Precision by Xidex	5.10	4.80	4.50	4.10	3.90
3M	11.89	11.48	11.07	10.66	10.25
Dysan	9.57	9.24	8.91	8.58	8.25
Verbatim	9.42	9.10	8.78	8.45	8.13
Sony	9.13	8.82	8.50	8.19	7.87
5 1/4 DS 1.6 M					
Precision by Xidex	8.70	8.40	8.10	7.80	7.50
3M	12.47	12.04	11.61	11.18	10.75
Dysan	10.15	9.80	9.45	9.10	8.75
Verbatim	11.60	11.20	10.80	10.40	9.99
Sony	12.18	11.76	11.34	10.92	10.50
3 1/2 SS 135 tpi					
3M	9.28	8.96	8.64	8.32	8.00
Verbatim	11.60	11.20	10.80	10.40	10.00
Sony	8.70	8.40	8.10	7.80	7.50
3 1/2 DS 135 tpi					
Precision by Xidex	10.73	10.36	9.99	9.62	9.25
3M	12.32	11.90	11.47	11.05	10.63
Dysan	13.05	12.60	12.15	11.70	11.25
Verbatim	11.60	11.20	10.80	10.40	9.99
Sony	11.89	11.48	11.07	10.66	9.90
3 1/2 DS 2 MB					
3M	36.25	35.00	33.70	32.50	31.25
Dysan	34.00	32.90	31.70	30.50	29.30
Verbatim	29.00	28.00	27.00	25.50	24.00
Sony	34.80	33.60	32.40	31.20	29.90

The products in each table may be added together to take advantage of quantity discounts. For instance, if you ordered 10 boxes of 3M 5 1/4 DD, 10 boxes of Sony 3 1/2 DD and 5 boxes of Amsoft CF2's, all three products will be priced at the 25 box rate.

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5 1/4 DD 1.6 MB	0.83	0.80	0.77	0.74	0.71
3 1/2 SS 135 tpi	0.61	0.59	0.57	0.55	0.52
3 1/2 DS 135 tpi	0.66	0.64	0.62	0.59	P.O.A.

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SB 5-100	4.35	4.05	3.90	3.75
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Amstrad PCW 8256 - Nylon	2741 FN	2.15	2.05	1.95
- Multi Strike	2741 MS	3.29	3.18	3.05
Amstrad PCW 9512 - Nylon	2746 FN	1.76	1.70	1.64
- Multi Strike	2746 MS	1.74	1.68	1.61
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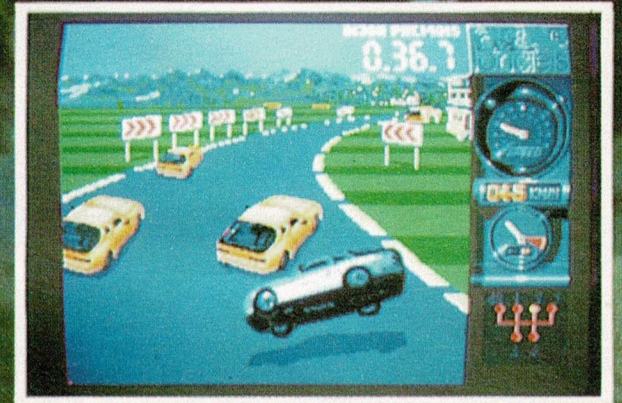
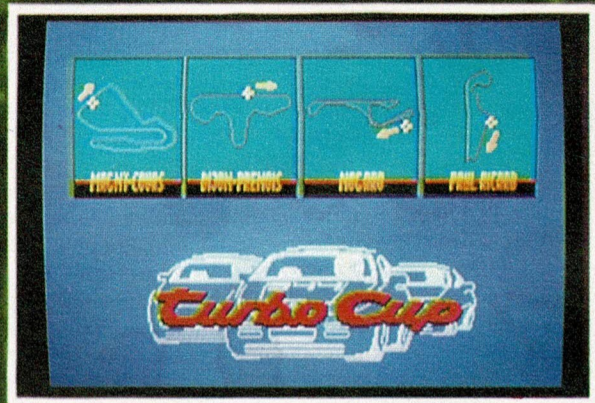
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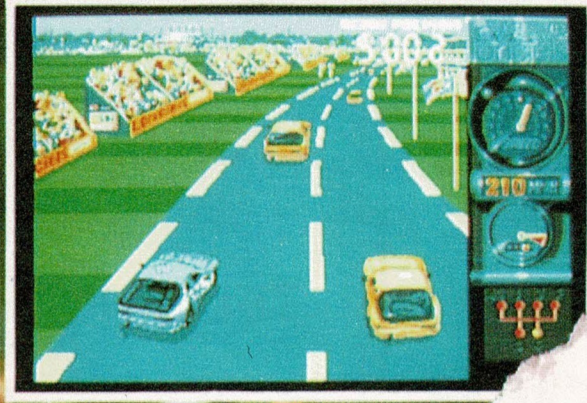
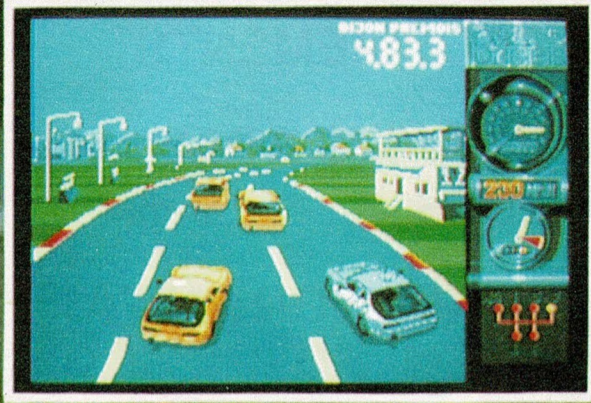
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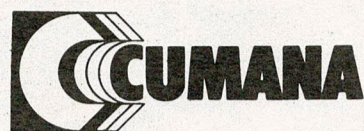
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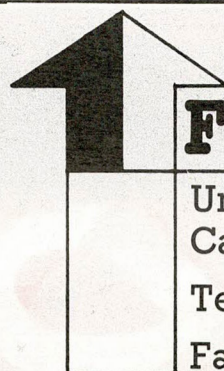
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CHRISTMAS STOCKING CHRISTMAS STOCKING CHRISTMAS STOCKING

CHRISTMAS KICKS INTO ACTION

With 16-bit taking an ever larger chunk of software sales, 8-bit holding up, consoles threatening and TV ads splurging all over the place, things are genuinely looking good for the leisure market this winter. Predictions of an early eighties-style 'boom', however, are probably still a tad optimistic. Herein CHRISTINA BENT and KELLY BESWICK take an in-depth look at what will be on offer from now until January. To kick off, though, STUART DINSEY offers some thoughts on this year's sales race . . .

Listening to this year's November optimism one instinctively gets the feeling that we've been here before.

"It's been our best year ever . . . sales are already up on the whole of last year . . . we've got some really big titles lined up." Such remarks appear frequently throughout this year's winter check-up on the leisure market's health, just like they did last year and the year before that.

The bullishness of labels just about to release their sexiest titles of the year has become as written in stone as hardware manufacturers predicting shortages and retailers' woeful laments about being drowned in a sea of releases. After all, if a publisher can't keep a twinkling eye on the order books pre-Christmas he may as well take up knitting.

But for all the uniformity of the peak selling season there have been changes, some predicted some not. This time last year many were rejoicing in 'the last big Christmas for 8-bit' - just as many will be doing it again this year, but it looks as if the C64 and Spectrum dinosaurs could still be lumbering around quite happily in the last three months of 1989.

It doesn't matter how much wishing on a star is done by those already creaming it in the high value/rising sales world of 16-bit, a few million machines simply don't vanish overnight. A quick look at the amount of 8-bit product lined up for release over the next six weeks proves that most publishers are not so stupid as to give up on a market when it's only just starting to wobble.

And wobbling or not, if the right package is offered there's



no reason why big sales can't still be achieved. The emphasis here is on the word *package*, for one of the other major changes to have taken place in the last year is the full realisation of what good marketing can do. This has been a gradual process with some firms getting in early last year - compilations, audio tapes and outsize boxes aren't purely the class of '88 but this will be the year when they graduate with honours.

Friends and neighbours

Everyone considering himself a major player in the market will have put together a compilation - or more likely - offered their big title(s) for someone else to market. If that product was a sport title then it almost certainly went to Ocean, a firm which after last year's success with *Game Set and Match* and this year's follow-up, looks to have sewn up one corner of the compilation market all by itself.

Firms have realised that putting all their titles released throughout the year into one box isn't necessarily the way to gain best results. Consumers compilation buying habits have changed. Only a few want everything a particular label has done - good and bad. Just like the record buying public computer games want as many absolutely huge releases as possible in one purchase. Thus, the leisure firms have learnt to talk to each other and make deals. US Gold is virtually the only major league player to be sticking resolutely to Gold-only compilations.

And the marketing emphasis goes on: Controversy aside, System 3 has taken a major step forward with its *Last Ninja 2 Special Edition*. The idea of perceived value has, of course, been around since day one, but a box containing map, a toy shiraken throwing star, a muslin facemask and the game itself (nearly forgot that bit) proved what can really be achieved if

publishers sit down and think about what it is that the kids buying the game really want. Over 100,000 European sales in *Ninja 2*'s first two weeks was the result - and we're talking 8-bit only here.

Another marker for the future will be Gold's release this year of some 'special US versions' of *OutRun*. Cynics may argue that nobody wants to buy the same product twice, but tell that to the record industry, they've been making consumers do just that for the past ten years.

Firms are thinking harder about what can be achieved, especially if they've had to pay for something in the first place. Gremlin had a soccer game - just like everyone else - lined up for autumn release ages ago. It was to be called *Ultimate Soccer* and sit alongside the just released *Ultimate Golf*.

But there was no punch to that, and if you've already got a major property like Gary Lineker why not use it to the full? Once upon a time his

name would have been used once and then forgotten. But *Ultimate Soccer* has been re-named *Gary Lineker's Hot Shots* - Gremlin's third use of the England number nine, look out for *Gary Lineker's Boot Laces* and *Gary Lineker's Superstitions* next year.

Telly addicts

Of course, the battle of the year is about to take place between Atari's ST and Commodore's Amiga. The ST has an edge in that it is cheaper and is more established in the games market, the Amiga meanwhile is enjoying a rapidly increasing software base with some of the titles at last utilising its superiority regarding sound and colour.

Both machines will be on TV shortly and both machines will have a good Christmas, CBM UK boss Steve Franklin claims that the Amiga is on for 60,000 total autumn sales. Atari boss Bob Gleadow offers that he will be 'happy' for the ST to reach that figure and 'stunned' if Commodore gets

anywhere near it.

If TV ads are a barometer of the market's state then it might just be as healthy as some are claiming. As well as the ST and the Amiga, there's splashes lined up for Amstrad's Spectrum, the Nintendo and Activision's three Christmas hopefuls: *SDI*, *R-Type* and *Afterburner*.

The consoles, having seriously missed out last time, look like they might finally be reaching a degree of their potential, Virgin Mastertronic's Sega is apparently experiencing shortages already (always a good sign and a tried and tested demand stimulant), whilst the Nintendo looks in danger of finally reaching the indies after prolonged distributor negotiations.

The Big Push does seem to have taken longer to come around this year, but then again people say that every year too. Theories behind the official start of Christmas '88 range from the rather hopeful belief that sales shot up once the clocks went back (kids having to stay in at night need something to do, play computer games, etc.) to everything being later this year because of higher interest rates (harming credit card sales of more expensive products i.e. computers).

And with sales beginning to rise as the temperature outside falls do spare a thought for those who have disappeared since last time - Ariolasoft, Piranha, Nexus, Robtek, Powerhouse and Vulcan.

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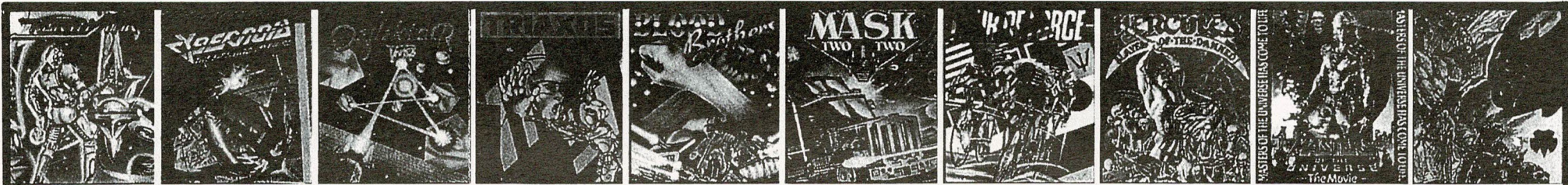
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CHRISTMAS STOCKING CHRISTMAS STOCKING CHRISTMAS STOCKING

Ocean

Barring a plague of locusts across all major formats initiating a December strike, Ocean should be in for another chart-clogging Christmas.

A plethora of releases across all major formats includes two compilations – *Game Set and Match 2* and *The In-Crowd* – plus *Rambo III*, *Robocop*, *Dragon Ninja*, *Victory Road*, *Batman*, *WEC Le Mans* and the much touted *Operation Wolf*.

The batch is being pitched as Ocean's strongest line-up ever – two years after sizeable trade criticism over product quality and missed release dates.

"People are saying we've got the best line-up this year and I hope the quality of our products lives up to that title," said Ocean's software development manager Gary Bracey.



BRACEY: Strong position

"I'd like to think that this year we'll do even better than last. We were let down by a couple of titles then but I'm sure that most – if not all – of what we're doing will be ready across all formats this Christmas."

Game Set and Match 2 looks set to build on the success of the original. It features *Basket Master*; *Match Day II*; *Track and Field*; *Nick Faldo*; *Ian Botham's Test Cricket*; *Steve Davis' Snooker*; *Super Hang-On*; *Superbowl* and *Winter Olympiad*.

The second compilation, *The In-Crowd*, boasts no fewer than six Gallup number ones.

The eight games featured are: *Combat School*; *Gryzor*; *Platoon*; *Crazy Cars (Last Ninja on C64)*; *Predator*; *Karnov*; *Target Renegade* and *Barbarian*.

Electronic Arts

1988 will be the first year for EA to fully cash in on the Christmas selling season in the UK – although it was already established by mid-winter last year it hadn't really got its operation fully into gear.

EA's strongest titles volumewise look to be coming from the Accolade stable. Sporting simulations *Fast Break*, *Serve and Volley* and *Grand Prix Circuit* should all do well.

Fellow affiliate label Ubi Soft also has a number of new products lined up with *Skateball* creating the most interest at this stage.

Some 12 titles will be published under EA's own label, amongst which are *Zany Golf* and *Powerplay Hockey* – oh, and the inevitable *Bard's Tale* conversion of course.

Logotron

It took a while, but Logotron seems to have just about convinced the market that it is serious in its attempt to become an established leisure publisher.

The oddly named *Star Goose* has already been received quite well on the Amiga and is due out on PC. This will be backed up by *Starray* (PC, Amiga) and *Ice Yachts* (ST, Amiga).

Beau Jolly

Compilation pioneer Beau Jolly has had a tough time of it this year, with all the big boys jumping on the bandwagon making it harder to get good titles. Nevertheless Jolly director Colin Ashby takes a philosophical view. "Yep, we have felt a squeeze, but then you just have to become tougher at negotiations."

Two titles are being promoted: *The Ultimate Pack* –

Supreme Challenge (already out) and *Computer Hits 5*. Both titles have the usual offering of the good, the not so good and the anonymous.

The company hopes to get a 16-bit compilation out in time for Christmas, but is keeping details under wraps. This will be Jolly's first foray into the 16-bit market.

Ashby seems unperturbed by the onslaught of titles: "Christmas comes but once a year and everybody wants to make a killing. If you put product out at a quiet time you may get the support but the chances are you won't get the volume. Basically dealers are telling porkies if they're saying that there's money to be made all year round."

"This year it looks like a case of the strong getting stronger. That's bad for the industry because it is squeezing out the innovators. The successful companies this year will be companies that have put the resources into major properties – be it coin-op or endorsed product."

"At the end of the day commercial realism has to prevail, and over the last eighteen months it has become clear that arcade licences are the vogue for the consumer. It's not up to us to question that, but it is up to us to influence it."

Rod Cousens
European vice president
Mediagenic

Telecomsoft

"All our products are good," claimed Telecomsoft's marketing manager Debbie Sillitoe. "We've got a policy now whereby we're looking very closely at what we're releasing."



SILLITOE: Modest claims

That 'select' product this Christmas includes four Rainbird products: *Fish* (IBM, ST, and Amiga), *UMS* (Amiga), *UMS Scenario 1* (IBM, ST, and Amiga), and *UMS Scenario 2* (IBM, ST, and Amiga).

The Firebird titles are *Savage* (Spectrum, C64, and Amstrad), *Elite* (Amiga), *Star Trek* (IBM and C64), *Flying Shark* (ST), and *GI Hero* (Amstrad, Spectrum, and C64).

And the Silverbird budget label features *Turbo Boat Simulator* (Sp, C64, Ams), *Skateboard* (Sp, C64, Ams), *Video Classics* (SP, C64, Ams, Atari 800, C16, BBC), *Scuba Kidz* (SP, C64, Ams), *Peter Pack Rat* (Sp, C64, Ams), *Cauldron II* (Sp, C64, Ams), *International Speedway* (Sp, C64, Ams), *Motorcross Mania* (C64), and last but not least *Billboard* (Sp, C64, Ams, and MSX).

"We're not worried by the amount of software out at Christmas," Sillitoe concluded. "There's always been loads and loads of software at Christmas. The only thing to worry about with Christmas product is if you can't get it out by the last week in November. After that it's not going to get distributed or be in the shops in time."

Arcana

A series of psychological tests devised by the fictional Russian professor, Boris Perestroika, is the rather heavy Yuletide offering from Arcana in *No Excuses*. But never fear the game is spiced up with the obligatory deadly aliens. It will be available for the ST and Amiga.

The company also mentioned the possibility of a new addition to *Powerplay*, with another question disk to be bundled with the original package. Both products will be promoted via the usual round of magazine advertising, plus a few competitions and the customary posters and flyers.

"We will be holding back one title *Mars Cops*, until the beginning of January. Its a strong time and if you look around Smiths and Menzies at this time the place is packed, you can hardly see the shelves. Besides you're competing with less product and the distributors are usually feeling rich after their Christmas pickings," commented Arcana boss Max Taylor.

With unexpected modesty Taylor did not pitch his own product for the number one slot. "I reckon *Elite* could come out on top, but then again I don't think much about the 8-bit products as we only concentrate on 16-bit."

Active

Active handles the product to a whole host of smaller software labels. Amongst these is EAS with four titles: *Zero Gravity*, *Sound Tracker*, *Ringside*, and *Compilation*. Eight titles find themselves being thrust from the Lankhor corner, amongst these feature *G'nus*, *Vroom*, *Maupiti Island*, and *Mortville Manor*. Fresh from Coktel Vision sees the release of eight titles, including *20,000 Leagues Under the Sea*, *Peter Pan* and *Jungle Book*. Satory is releasing *Hotball* and *Reporter*, both for the ST.

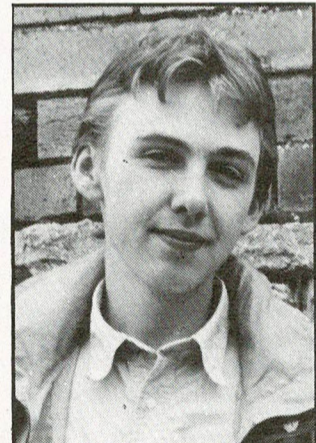
Robert Stallibrass, boss at Active, commented: "What's happening is that about 100 games are released between

now and Christmas, most of which is either average or below average – it's not select. There's a hell of a lot of product around, and about 50-60 per cent of that never gets on the shelf.

"It's not the software houses fault, it's more market demand. It's not the market being led by product. People don't bring out good products in the summer because there isn't a demand for it. It could be argued that there's not a demand because there's no product – it's the chicken and the egg. But I believe there's not a demand."

Code Masters

Richard Darling, joint director at Code Masters pontificated: "It's been a very exciting year. We've had a lot of success on our older games. We believe that our old games become classics, *BMX Simulator* has been in the charts for over 100 weeks – that's longer than any other game."



DARLING: Longevity boast

And next year? "I'm very enthusiastic about the PC. It's very good, although the graphics can't compare with the ST and Amiga. They reach the gap between games and business."

Twenty two games in all are coming from the Coders stables, most of which are Simulators, and those that aren't have the pleasure of including a Ninja, a Jet Bike or the like.

Continued on page 24

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CHRISTMAS STOCKING CHRISTMAS STOCKING CHRISTMAS STOCKING

Continued from page 23

Digital Integration

Christmas sees the launch of one game from Digital Integration – a PC game called *Combat Pilot*.

"Christmas is not a critical time for Digital Integration – our product for this Christmas will still be around next Christmas," claimed boss Dave Marshall confidently.

"It's been a very busy year for us and now we've reached the peak. We've been working all year for this. It's been quiet from the publishing point of view, but we have had massive response from our *Combat Pilot* product."

Martech

Martech managing director David Martin complained that there were too many delays in 1988 for his liking. "Products didn't come out in time – but we're up to date now. The second half of the year has definitely been better than the first half."

The Christmas titles from Martech are *Shoot Out* (ST, Amiga, Spectrum, C64), *Armageddon* (PC), *Rex* (Spectrum, C64, Amstrad), *Phantom Fighter* (Amiga, PC), and *Circus Circus* (Spectrum, Amstrad).

Zeppelin

Zeppelin's Christmas stocking holds a whole host of product: *Rally Simulator* (Sp, Ams), *Deathchase* (Sp), *Battle Tank Simulator* (Ams), *Jocky Wilson's Darts Challenge* (Sp, C64), *Bionic Ninja* (Sp, C64),

Para Assault Course Simulator (Sp, C64, Ams), and *Full Throttle* (Sp).

"Next year," commented boss Derek Brewster, "we'll be increasing on this year's number of releases with about 5-6 launches a month across all formats. It's been a very successful year. Next year we'll have a greater chance of dominance and will be able to maintain our quality."

"Also, next year we'll be releasing on full-price ST due to the growing 16-bit trend. But 8-bit will be around for a couple more years to come."

Activision/Mediagenic

If anybody out there doesn't know what Mediagenic's big Activision title is then they've obviously had their head in a bucket for the past ten months.

Afterburner is spearheading a three-pronged attack from the US firm this season – all of them Sega licences, and all of them gaining coverage via TV ads very shortly.

SDI and the much copied *R-Type* (Electric Dreams) will lead the way followed by *Afterburner* in the last week of this month.

On the Sierra On-line side there two offerings – *King's Quest 4* and *Man Hunter*.

Mediagenic's UK boss Rod Cousens is currently worrying about the dominance of coin-op conversions in the UK market. This may sound strange considering his big three all come from Sega, but

Cousens claims that the rapidly increasing number of affiliate labels will make sure Mediagenic, at least, continues to promote real innovation.

"I'd say that over the next year we'll achieve a balance, reaching a level of coin-ops over which we would not pass. You only have to look at *System 3* and *Last Ninja 2* to see what can be done with good original product," explained Cousens.

Anco

Anco has three definite releases this Christmas, plus a whole host of possibilities. The dead-certs are *Super Six* (a compilation of six games, retailing at £24.95 on the Amiga) and *Maria's Christmas Box* – this is a Maria Whittaker strip poker game for most formats. *Ice Hockey* is the third release and will be available for the ST, Amiga and C64.

Gill Stephens commented:

"It's definitely been a good year, and we're improving all the time. It should be a great Christmas for us all."

"Next year we will be developing in the States, and will continue our across the board approach to 16-bit."

Dynamics

General manager at Dynamics, Kevin Parsons, told CTW: "Dynamic's year was excellent – we didn't experience such a slow summer as we usually do. The market has been very strong. Next year we'll continue increasing our market share and bringing out new product, like the IBM digital joystick interface."

New products are the *Competition Pro 5000*, the *Competition Pro 5000 Clear*, and the *Pro Extra*. The joysticks retail at £14.95, £15.95 and £16.49 respectively.

Microdeal

Jug, *The Grail Adventure*, *International Soccer*, *Fright Night Arcade Game*, *Goldrunner II*, *Turbo Trax*, *Syngeres*, *Karate Kid Adventure*, and *Airball* are the £19.95 games from Microdeal this Christmas.

The other releases are *Replay 4* (£79.95), *Payroll* (£99.95), *Hit Disks Volume 1* (£24.95), *AMAS* (£99.95), *Talespin* (£49.95 provisional), *Time Bandit* (£24.95), and *Hit Disks Volume 2* (£24.95).

Microdeal's managing director John Symes commented: "This has been the best year our company has

ever had. We've established ourselves as top performers in the 16-bit market."

CCS

CCS is claiming one of its best years yet. "Being a specialised company we initially felt a bit left out in the cold, but over the past year war titles have really taken off," commented director Trish Peters.

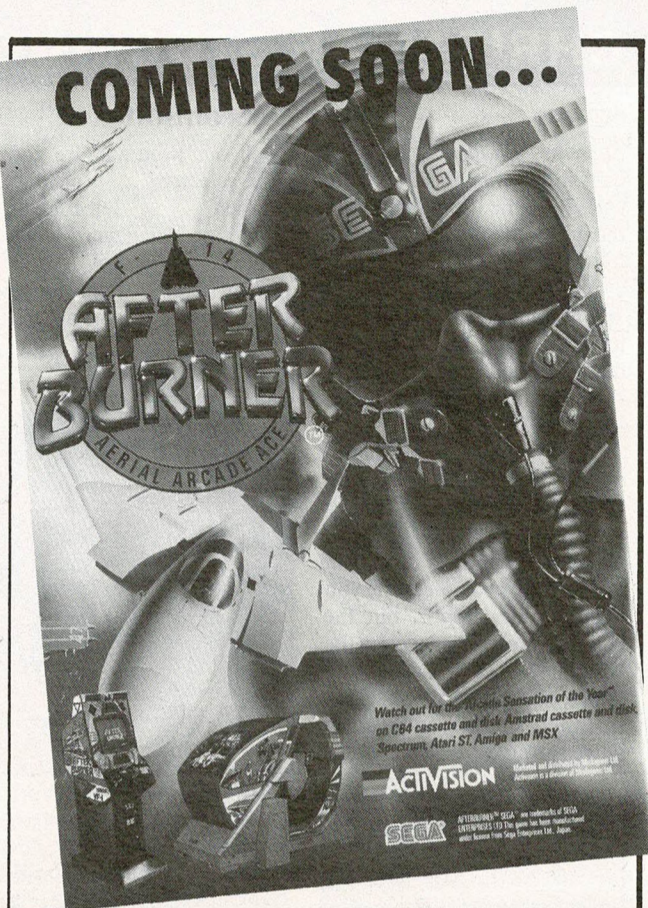
The company has two main titles out for the pressie buying public, with *Vulcan* soon to be released for the PC and *Ancient Battles*. This latter game was created by the apparently famous R. T. Smith, and the big difference is as the title does tend to suggest, the game is about ancient warfare.

CDS

Tank Attack is one of the three Christmas releases from CDS. It is a board/computer game which comes with over 48 tanks and armoured cars, already released on the Amstrad, C64, Spectrum, and BBC. It is due for release on the IBM, ST, and Amiga early next year.

The BBC version of *Football Director*, and *Colossus Chess X* are the two final releases. The latter, claimed marketing manager Dave Carlos, "has already sold 35,000 units abroad on the ST. And obviously we are hoping to match that in the UK."

Blue Ribbon sees the



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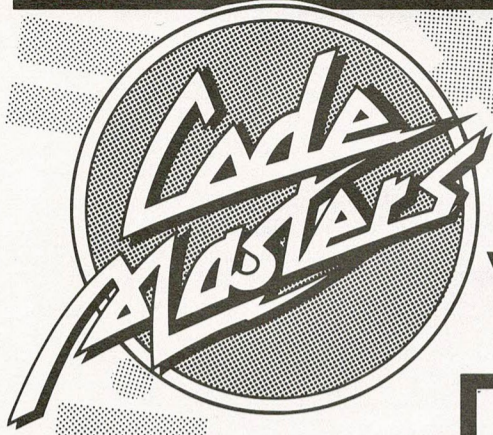
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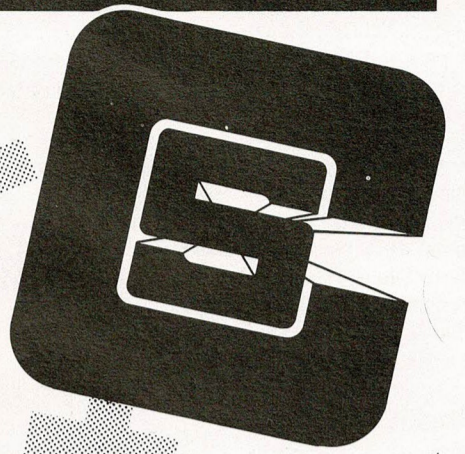
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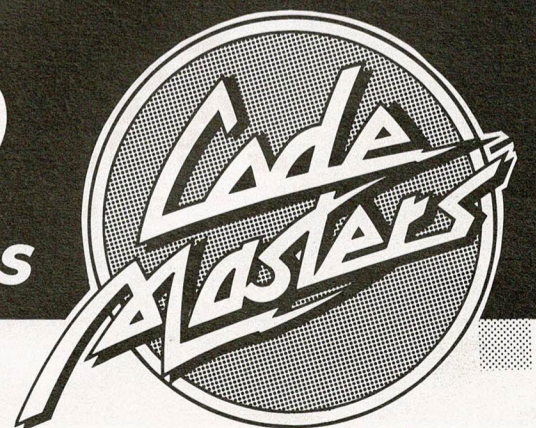
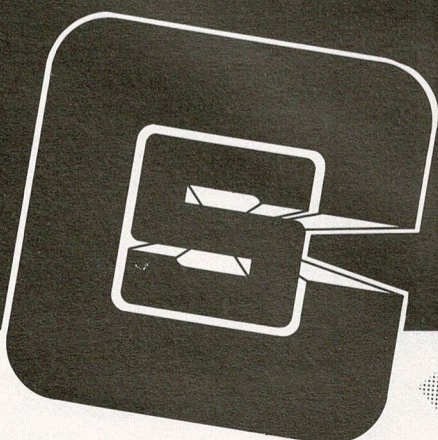
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Continued from page 24

release of *Percy Penguin*, *Mr Wizz*, *Karate Combat*, and *Repton* – all from the Superior software deal, in addition to *Wolf Pack*, *Hi-Q Quiz*, and a shoot-'em-up called *Syntax*.

Carlos commented, "We haven't launched that many new products this year. Our main thing was when *Steve Davis Snooker* was put down to budget, it was at the top of the charts for six weeks. It was a good year in that respect."

Incentive

Freescape solid 3D system *Driller* (new formats) and

Total Eclipse are Incentive's two festive releases.

Incentive's Ian Andrew commented, "It's been a very good year – we're expanding all the time. We're concentrating on solid 3D graphics, and they're so complicated that no-one else can do it as well as us – it's a nice little niche."

Mandarin

MicroProse has been making noises about doing it – but we've been doing it for ages! What is Mandarin boss Peter Holme talking about? – Games on HAM

mode, that's what.

"*Pioneer* is special – it will blow your socks off," enthused Holme. "It has over 496,000 colours. It's like when Walt Disney went from black and white to colour; like when the first 16-bit games came out and made 8-bit look pale. It'll be front page news. At last we're using 16-bit to it's full potential – Cinemaware are the only others to have achieved that." *Pioneer Plague* retails at £24.95 on the Amiga.

The other release from Mandarin this Christmas is *Lombard RAC Rally*, on the ST,

Amiga, and PC compatibles. "The movement on the roads is unbelievable – you'll need a sick bag! It'll be advertised in Ford's own publication, in the December Nat West magazine, and in the RAC mail magazine – in total reaching over three million people outside of the computer press.

"The actual Lombard race is held on the last day in November – there will be a demo machine there at the beginning of the race. Dealers can win a day at the Rally – it's going to be massive," predicted Holme.

Thalamus

Following the success of *Hawkeye*, and the recent launch of *Armalyte*, Christmas sees the launch of Thalamus' first Spectrum game – *Sanxion*. This game had massive success on the C64 when it was first released. In addition, the company is hoping to have a compilation ready for release in December.

Company boss Paul Cooper offered his views on the 8/16-bit split for 1989: "Sure 16-bit machines will increase, and 8-bit will decrease, 8-bit won't die out – the 8-bit machines are passed down to younger

brothers and sisters, they're not thrown in the dustbin.

"Next year a lot of software houses will decrease their 8-bit output, and their 8-bit support. 16-bit is important but some companies are still at the price-point of when hardware was hundreds of pounds more than it is now. I'm not saying that all ST games should be at £9.95 – some of the better compilations are worth their price.

"It's been a fantastic year for us. We haven't had a lot of product out, but the ones we have had out have been very successful. We took this year to gear up as a software development company, and we've increased our staff from one to three.

"Next year we'll be releasing more product than usual – on average there'll be a release every month, maybe even two. Plus there's our entry into 16-bit."

Level 9

Ingrid's Back! is Level 9's only release this Christmas, and will be available across all formats.

Level 9 is steering clear of the mad rush to release at Christmas. "It's unfortunate – but I think it's got something to do with the timing of the PC Show. The smaller software houses see the PC Show as a good time to launch. But we find that although sales are larger at Christmas, it's not enough to make us release less games in the summer.

"We spread our releases through the year. Next year we've got four adventures – one every three months.

"It's been a very interesting year, especially since we're moving back into doing our publishing ourselves after Mandarin and BT. We will be involved in two main areas: adventures; and role playing games.

"There's a terrible tendency to throw everything out at Christmas. In terms of the deluge of software, it doesn't do the industry – or the consumer for that matter – any good. A lot of companies will be going bust over this."

Stephen Hall
Managing director
Grandslam

Softek

"Our philosophy is to put one major release out at Christmas, and then launch our key bullets in the January / February season," was managing director Tim Langdell's solution to the Christmas rush of software.

This Christmas *Soldier of Light* emerges on the Ace label. The other Christmas release is *Inside Outing*, which will be released on the ST on the 15th of November, with the Amiga version following at the beginning of December. This will be on the Edge label.

On the Softechnics label will be *Word Processor* on the Atari, ST, and a *Garfield* product

Continued on page 28

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Commodore

CHRISTMAS STOCKING CHRISTMAS STOCKING CHRISTMAS STOCKING

Continued from page 26

currently under the name of *Garfield's Winter's Tale*. This name is not yet finalised and there will be further announcements on it soon.

"It's been an excellent year," added Langdell, "because of *Garfield*—it will stand out from the rest. It's not in the same league as the *Thunderblades* and *Afterburners* of this world. Also it was the year of our move into coin-op licensing.

"It's been thus far twice as good as last year, and we're looking to make next year three times as good as the last."

Grandslam

With pre-sales of a claimed 50,000 units *Pac Mania* is the major Christmas launch from the Grandslam corner, Boss Stephen Hall claimed, "It's causing massive interest both here and in Europe. The other major full-price release is *Espionage*—a computer/board game—with *Pac Man* and *The Flintstones* appearing on the Bug Byte budget label.

"It's been an extremely successful and exciting year for us," asserted Hall. "We've achieved a lot in our first year as an independent, but there's still a lot to do. No-one here

will pretend otherwise.

"Hopefully 1989 will be even better than this — there's licensed product already announced and some more to be announced later. It's been a very buoyant year for us."

Tynesoft

Tynesoft is celebrating Christmas with two 16-bit compilations featuring six titles. Both include *Winter Olympiads*, *Mousetrap*, *Plutus*, *Frostbite* and *Seconds Out* — with *Suicide Mission* on the Amiga version, and *Blood Fever* on the ST.

In addition it will be

releasing *Superman* and *Circus Games*, for which director Colin Courtney claimed advanced orders on 16-bit were "phenomenal". He added: "We've sold more with advanced orders than we would have sold had we sold on 16-bit in the summer."

Courtney concluded: "It's been a very exciting year of growth for us. Our turnover has doubled in the past year, and we hope to see it doubled again. Look out for us in 1989."

CRL

"I'd like to see less product at Christmas," stated a

bold Clement Chambers, boss at CRL, "Personally I wish all the other software houses would drop dead, so that I could release all my product. It doesn't make sense to release in the summer, because no-one buys it — not unless it's a really great game."

Five games are being let loose from the CRL stables this Christmas. The end of November sees the launch of *Professional Football* (Sp — £8.95), *Purple Heat* (C64 — £9.95), and *Transputor* (£19.95 on the ST and Amiga). And with December comes *Ludicrous*, again on the ST and

Amiga at £19.95.

Chambers doesn't hold out much hope for the continuing life of the 8-bit sector in 1989, "8-bit is in the minority — I should think all those Spectrums and C64s are broken after five years of use. Anyway, it's the 8-bit buyers who give up and discover women or BMXs or whatever, 16-bit machines sell better — plus 16-bit makes twice as much money, and that's what it's all about — making dosh — isn't it?"

And CRL's year? Chambers explains: "The first six months was a Trip up shit-creek, and the second six months was a paddle back down again."

Palace

In addition to a couple of undecided possibilities, the festive season sees the launch of *Barbarian II* and *Shoot-'em-up Construction Kit* across more formats.

Boss Peter Stone commented, "We haven't released a lot of product this year, but we've had a good year. *Barbarian I* sold well, and has continued to sell well. We had a number one with it, and we've got a lot of new product for the new year."

Stone appeared quite concerned about the mad rush of software at Christmas: "We tried very hard to avoid it. We kind of fell into it by accident. *Barbarian II* was meant to be released earlier, but it was set back. We have some of our biggest successes in the summer.

"We haven't had masses of releases this year — but we've got a lot of product next year. It's been a somewhat difficult year, with us only releasing one or two products. But, we've got 5-6 nearing completion."

"Like any software house we've worked hard to build up a good image. It may be a bit presumptive to say it, but I think we've achieved that good image now. And if it was difficult to build up it's certainly going to be even harder to maintain."

Gary Bracey
Software development manager
Ocean

System 3

Nothing, absolutely nothing. That's what's being released by System 3 this Christmas. But the firm still feels that it's in for a sales-grabbing last seven weeks of the year.

The reason, of course, is *Last Ninja 2* — which was released a few weeks ago. It's already out on the three major formats and System 3 boss Mark Cale believes it will still be performing well come January 1st.

"We were originally going to launch it post-summer but there wasn't much point. We've deliberately released before *Operation Wolf* and *Afterburner* and we hope to be in the top three for Christmas," he said.

Continued on page 30

Archimedes Games

£14.95 each

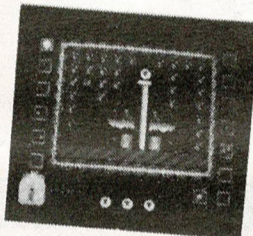
ORION

Skillfully manipulate Orion, the latest air to air combat interceptor, to defend your planet against the tide of marauding aliens. Shoot them down before its too late! Score points by saving your men before they are changed into mutants - otherwise they will turn against you. Contains Baiters, Pods which explode into Swarms and waves of Bombers. Orion is a fast and furious scrolling 'shoot em up' game based on the all time arcade classic.



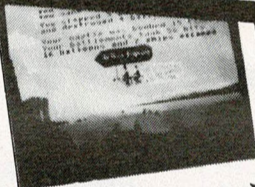
HOVERBOD

Hoverbod is a traditional maze adventure in the style of the classic Manic Miner, yet it is of stupendous proportions. Hoverbod, the yellow spherical droid, has been banished from the planet Zingle and goes in search of some stolen treasure. The player must guide him through the perils which befall him and help him puzzle his way through the eight different levels to the final quest level. But beware ... the Ibbles and Squibbles start to materialise !!!!



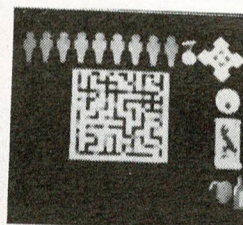
FREDDY'S FOLLY

An enchanting game using animated graphics. Just watch the little men load the canon and pull it along. Notice the celebration when they win! Colourful fun for all the family. Sir Freddy is sneaky and envious of your castle so plans to bomb it with a fleet of balloons. You built a battlement to shoot down Sir Freddy in his balloon. Sir Freddy then hired several Gun ships to shoot your canon crew. Defend your castle and shoot down the balloons and the invading ships.



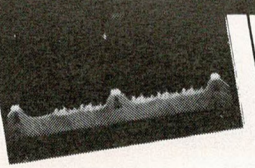
MINOTAUR

The Minotaur maze game is aimed at a market for children or adults who want a game where quick shoot-out reactions are not necessary. Theseus walks around the Labyrinth, collecting items to assist in the search of the ill fated men which have been provided as food for the Minotaur. The ultimate aim is then to kill the Minotaur and lead the men out of the Labyrinth to safety. The maze size is fully definable by the User. Games may be saved and reloaded for use at a later time.



MISSILE CONTROL

Missile Control is a classic arcade game written for the Archimedes to make full use of the advanced graphics and sound, while remaining faithful to the original concepts of the game. The Player is in control of the missile launches and must do the utmost to protect the cities from the incoming missiles. On each subsequent attack further planes, satellites or 'smart' missiles attack the target cities.



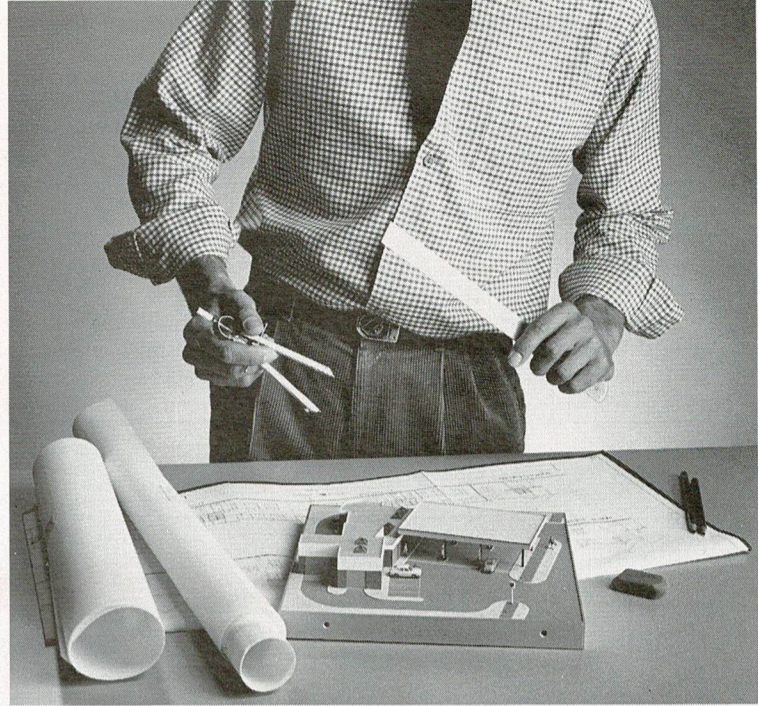
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Continued from page 28

MicroProse

Everyone knows that MicroProse's specially cultivated niche has been simulations. Up until now this has generally meant gung-ho warloving games. It's a bit of a shock, then, that its big title this season is likely to be *MicroProse Soccer*. Other titles across a range of labels - include *F-19*, *Times of Lore*, *Crystal Hammer* and *Way of the Dragon*.

Marketing manager Peter Jones commented, "We're concerned about the poor quality of software out at

Christmas - and not unduly so. But our games have a unique position in the charts, and have a different profile to most publishers.

"We have a loyal following of people, and we're confident we'll reach our sales targets. We believe we'll be immediately sold out on the *MicroProse Soccer*."

"1988 had been a superb year for us in the UK. We've launched no end of traditional simulation products this year, which have been even better than their predecessors. We've covered new ground.

"We're one of the few

company's that stands on quality, hard work, and consequently has a reputation in the market place for producing top quality product.

"Next year we will continue to support, quite heavily, 8-bit. Our release schedule is very 8-bit supportive. We haven't neglected 8-bit, and quite frankly anyone would be foolish to do so," concluded a forthright Jones.

Gremlin

"We trimmed back our Christmas releases this year, and held some titles back until January and February.

Christmas is always a popular time for releasing and it's always a concern," offered Gremlin boss Ian Stewart.

This Christmas sees the release of *Muncher* (64, Sp), *Motor Massacre* (ST, Am, C64, Sp, Ams) *Hot Shots* (C64), *Federation of Free Traders* (ST), and *Technocop* (ST, Am, C64, Sp, Ams, PC). *Ultimate Golf* is also due, along with several new formats for older games.

"We've had a fair transformation this year and have endeavoured to change our category of product by moving into the high-brow of the market. This product takes

longer to produce and is of a higher quality at the end," concluded Stewart.

Spectravideo

Two new joysticks will be available from Spectravideo this Christmas; the Quickshot 15 for the Sega, and the Quickshot 13 for the IBM.

Director Ashwin Patel commented, "It's been a fabulous year - sales have been well above our expectations. We're moving forward all the time, and we will see progress next year with our new products."

Konix

Konix is expecting big things to happen with its new Navigator joystick this Christmas. In addition the festive season sees the launch of two further desk top joysticks - The Predator at £12.99, and the Mega Blaster which is cheaper than average at under £7.

The company has also launched its PC joystick, already available in the States, and soon in the UK. Apparently this move was prompted after a considerable amount of PC Show demand.

"Konix have gone from strength to strength this year, building upon the success of the Speed King. The company is going to enjoy even greater sales this Christmas with its new products," claimed a spokesman for the company.

Mirrorsoft

Bombuzal for the Atari and ST, and *Speedball* for the C64 are Mirrorsoft's two pre-Christmas releases on the Imageworks label. From the Spectrum Holobyte label comes *F-16 Falcon* on the ST, and from Cinemaware comes *Rocket Ranger* for the C64.

Managing director Peter Bilotta commented, "1988 has been a year of tremendous growth for us. We have published some astonishing product. Our line up for 1989 is even finer, and we know that by next Christmas our position will be even stronger. Imageworks, Cinemaware, FTL, Spectrum Holobyte and PSS are brands that fully complement each other, and are all set to enjoy continued success."

Novagen

Following the release of *X-Terminator*, *Battle Island*, *Hellbent* and *Transformer* in September/October Novagen plans to release *Damocles* on the ST and Amiga in November. It will retail at £24.95.

"For some years we've all been saying 'this will be the last year for the Spectrum and C64', but it's very hard to see how much longer 8-bit can hold off the challenge of 16-bit in volume terms."
Nick Alexander
 Managing director
 Virgin Mastertronic

Hewson

On the £2.99 Rack-it label Hewson is this Christmas releasing just the one title: *Hydrofool*. This will be available on the Spectrum and Amstrad versions in November.

On the full-price side there is a single possibility - *Netherworld* on the Spectrum.

It seems that Hewson has chosen to shoot its main bullets into the early months of 1989 with a splurge of software - presumably to miss the Christmas rush.

Infogrames

Hostages (Am, Sp, C64), *Captain Blood* (Am, Sp), *Action Service* (Am, C64), *Worlock's Quest* (Am, C64),

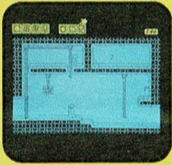
Continued on page 32

PLAY IT AGAIN SAM 5

NEW ELECTRON RELEASE



IMOGEN
 Micro Power's Recent Hit
 This superbly animated adventure game, playing the part of Imogen the wizard with powers of metamorphosis, was highly praised when recently released for the BBC Micro. It is now also available for the first time for the Electron, having been specially prepared for this compilation. Both versions combine addictive and frustrating game-play with highly detailed graphics.



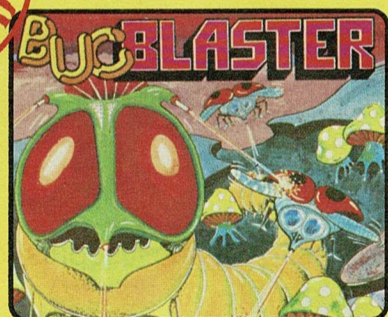
A Superior Hit



ELIXIR
 Superior's Humorous Strategy Game
 Help poor Cyril to return to his normal size by finding the elixir. Keep clear of the lipstick missiles, dodge the acid, and watch out for the "circulosaurus" creature. "The logical puzzles are well thought out... and give players something to get their teeth into"... Acorn User.



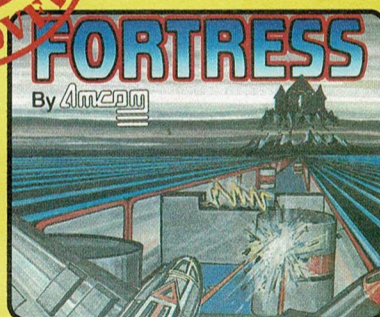
SUPERIOR APPROVED



BUG BLASTER
 A Classic Hit from Alligata
 The best implementation of the "Centipede" game. (Even better than Superior's own version!) Fast-moving with very detailed graphics. Features include mushrooms, spiders and a mushroom-poisoning scorpion known as Brian. Nerve tingling excitement... the better you get the faster the action.



SUPERIOR APPROVED



FORTRESS
 Pace/Amcom's No. 1 Hit
 You fly a delta-winged starfighter over rocket launchers, gun turrets and force fields on a 3D diagonally scrolling screen. "A new dimension in arcade games. The game is thrilling, the diagonally scrolling graphics superb and the sound effects excellent"... Micro User.



PLAY IT AGAIN SAM 5 for the BBC Micro and Acorn Electron

Superior Software has combined two recent chartbusters (one new to the Electron) with two all-time classic games. The result is another top quality four-game compilation that combines variety with great value for money.

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ACORN ELECTRON VERSION

Unfortunately it is not technically possible to produce an Acorn Electron version of FORTRESS. The four games on the Acorn Electron version of PLAY IT AGAIN SAM 5 are: IMOGEN, ELIXIR, BUG BLASTER and MOONRAIDER.

MOONRAIDER - A fast-moving and compulsive space spectacular from Micro Power. "A good value game, crammed with action and needing skill to test the most ardent arcade fanatic"... Electron User.



(Acornsoft is a registered trademark of Acorn Computers Ltd. Superior Software Ltd is a registered user.)
 Dept 5PS1, Regent House, Skinner Lane, Leeds LS7 1AX. Telephone: (0532) 459453.

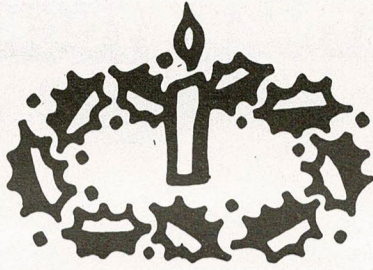
The screen pictures show the BBC Micro versions of the games.



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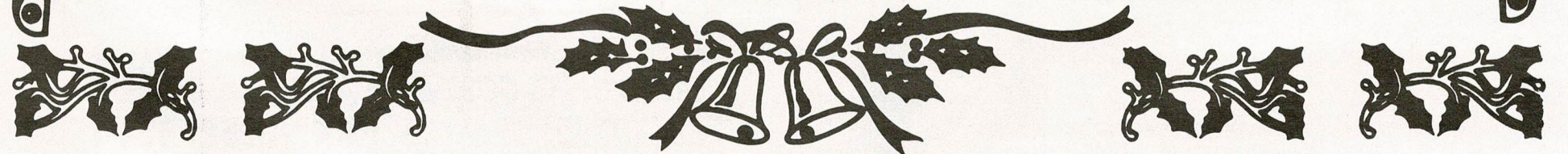
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CHRISTMAS STOCKING CHRISTMAS STOCKING CHRISTMAS STOCKING

Continued from page 30

Wanted (At, Am), *Purple Saturn Day* (At, Am), *McCadem Bumper* (Am), *Billiards* (At, Am, PC), *Tin Tin* (At, Am), *Teenage Queen* (At, Am), and *Operation Neptune* (At, Am, Ams, PC) are Infogrames Christmas releases.

Sales manager Pauline Garsden offered. "It's been a fantastic year with *Captain Blood*. We've finally got widespread recognition, and we've got an edge on the other software houses. Our quality has progressed from strength to strength, and we're looking forward to 1989."

Domark

Bob's Full House, *Return of the Jedi*, *Spitting Image* and *The Computer Maniac's Diary* are the four Christmas releases from Mr Do and Mr Mark.

Although Strachan proclaimed Ocean's *Operation Wolf* as the future Christmas number one, he added that Domark's *Spitting Image* would be up there in the running. "It's one everyone can relate to, and it's because it's one that appeals to everyone that we think it might just sneak up the charts."



STRACHAN: Image maker

Strachan doesn't see the sudden splurge of software in the Christmas period spreading more evenly throughout the year in the foreseeable future. "It's inevitable - we're in a competitive market, and this is the time of year when we get the maximum number of sales. It's not going to change until all the software houses get together and decide who's going to release what when, and I can't see that happening."

Alternative

A whole host of games are galloping out of the Alternative stables this Christmas. Amongst the four titles on the Alternative label are *Through the Trap Door* and *Postman Pat*. The Summit label sees the release of *The Double* and *Mini Office*, retailing at £2.99, *The Munsters* and *Tracksuit Manager* for the ST and Amiga will be released at £19.99 on the Again Again label.

"This will be the first major 16-bit Christmas, and that's why Again Again are launching 16-bit titles, 8-bit will always be there, though there's one computer - the C64 - that's tailing off," offered boss Roger Hulley.

"We've been the best software house this year," he added. "We've been number one most of the time - it's been our year without a doubt, no-

one could argue with that.

"Next year there will be a lot of good competition, and of course, we're not expecting to hold on to the number one position at Christmas. But next year we expect to maintain our number one spot budgetwise.

"We're budget software house of the year, and we're the best at relaunching on back-catalogue - we've got great pride in that."

Atlantis

Pint-sized budget software company Atlantis is excelling itself this Christmas with the release of nine new titles: *Plasma Ball*, *Battlefield* and *Aquasquad* (written by the same author as *Cerius* and *Gun Fighter*) on the Spectrum; *Battlefield* on the C64; *Periscope Up* on the C64 and the 8-bit Atari.

The remaining four games are a first for the company, because they will be released on the ST. *Alpine Games*, *ST Olympiad*, *Pot-hole Pete*, and *Shut Down* are all in the final process of testing. These are due for release in the first week of December, although their retail value was not decided at the time of going to press.

"Obviously next year 16-bit will be stronger and I'm happy that we're starting to get into the 16-bit area," commented Atlantis boss Mike Cole.

"It's been a very, very good year for us - the best we've ever had, and next year will be even better. Our product will be more well known with *Gun Fighter* being taken by Woolworths for the first time. Obviously it's good for sales to get into a store like Woolworths," he enthused.

Superior

Steve Hanson, director at Superior, offered "In 1989, Superior Software will continue to fully support the BBC/Electron and Archimedes markets with new games, conversions and compilations - including the best games from other software houses.

"Following the success of *By Fair Means Or Foul*, Superior will regularly produce games next year for all 8-bit formats, starting with *One Night In Bangkok*, which features tunes from the *Chess* musical. Superior will also release in the new year two very special games for the Atari ST, and will bring out other 16-bit games later in the year.

Releases include *Exile* (BBC/Electron), *Repton Infinity*, *A Question of Sport* (BBC/Electron), *Play it Again Sam* compilations 5 and 6, *Repton 3*, and a claimed "mega game", whose title will be announced soon.

Addictive

In a surprising move, Prism's Addictive label will not be releasing anything in the period leading up to Christmas. "We have one big game called *Kristal* being put together at the moment. We could rush it out in time for Christmas, but what's the point as the market is bound to be flooded? And quality would probably suffer as a result," offered spokesman Richard Hennerley.

Kristal will be released on both the ST and Amiga formats, and will sell for a hefty £29.99. By putting all its eggs in one basket, to use a cliché, Addictive is pitching for the spring number one. "It is our biggest 16-bit project ever and we though we'd rather wait until the kids had brought their machines and were looking around for good software," added Hennerley.

Addictive is establishing a trend for not following the seasonal shifts of the market, and is still patting itself on the back for the success of *Football Manager 2*, which was released in the summer, and went on to become a number one. "We've had an excellent year, although our follow-up *Hotshot* only did alright in the UK - for some reason it's doing a lot better in Europe."

Konami

Five releases are coming from the Konami stables this Christmas: *King's Valley II*, and four for the Nintendo games consoles. These include two games that coincide with US movies - *Top Gun* and *Goonie II*.

The company's Tetsuya Yamada commented, "We're very pessimistic about our MSX business. Our customers have told us that there's no MSX hardware available in England. Before, there was a big demand for the MSX in France and Spain, but now that's going down too. We think we might have to close this sector of our business.

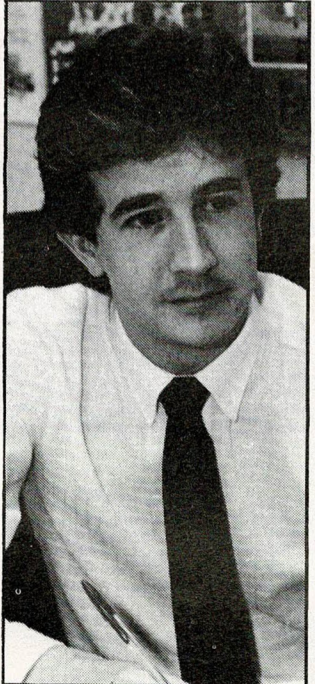
"November will be good for us though. We've already had 160,000 orders for Nintendo cartridges, and have sent them out. We're not in a position to accept any more orders yet.

"Also, next year we are considering moving into the ST and Amiga sector."

US Gold

Yuletide sees US Gold releasing a multitude of titles, as expected. Amongst the 17 new titles are *Thunderblade*, *Joan of Arc*, *4x4 Off Road Racing* and *Tiger Road*. Its Christmas compilations are *Sportsworld '88*, *History in the Making*, and *Command Performance*. *Thunderblade* is being tipped by some as the Christmas number one, and US Gold is no exception.

On its contenders the



TISDALL: Confident

company's marketing manager Richard Tisdall commented: "Afterburner is a very strong coin-op, but Activision said *Rampage* would be number one last year. *Operation Wolf* will be a very good conversion, and if the kids still want a shooting-only game, they'll choose this one.

"*Thunderblade* out-earned *Afterburner* as a coin-op in Europe because it features a variety of gameplay styles. The consumer is also aware that *Thunderblade* is realistically convertible to the home computer."

Tisdall appeared unconcerned by the prospect of losing an otherwise good title in the Christmas rush. He commented: "The Christmas market is the peak selling period and consequently the chance to sell more product - recouping the investment that is made into the best coin-op titles - which are the ones the kids want.

"Many smaller software houses choose to spread their releases throughout the year, because of the dominance the major titles have over the Christmas market."

He concluded: "We still believe we're way ahead of whoever's number two - but only fools are satisfied!"

Audiogenic

Around now sees the launch of Audiogenic's only two Christmas releases, *Helterskelter* (ST and Amiga, £14.99), and *Emlyn Hughes' International Soccer* (C64).

International Soccer (C64).

Audiogenic boss Peter Calver's predictable tip for the Christmas number one is the outsider from his own company *Emlyn Hughes' International Soccer*. Calver is convinced that following the huge success of *Football Manager II* and other such soccer games, his game is bound to top the charts. There's nothing like eternal optimism.

There will be five Audiogenic releases in the first half of next year, and Calver commented, "I'll be interested to see whether the entertainment market opens up on the PC in this country in 1989. About 50 per cent of the US product sold is PC, compared to just two per cent over here."

"Our first 10 months saw enormous losses, and the last two months saw enormous profits," was Calver's resumé of Audiogenic's year. He continued on the predictable line. "Obviously next year we'll have 12 months of profits." Well, obviously.

Elite

Question of Sport and *Mike Read's Pop Quiz* are Elite's only two releases this Christmas. *Pop Quiz* on BBC and *Electron* are being published through Superior software.

In addition four titles are being released by French publishing wing Loriciels. These are *Turbo Cop* (ST, Am, Ams), *Albedo*, *Space Racer* (ST,

PC, Am, Ams), and *Eddie Edward's Super Ski* (C64).

Loriciels' UK product manager Niki Penny commented, "We look at Christmas in such a way so as not to release titles in one mad rush at Christmas. We're also looking at releasing some after Christmas, when we believe there's still quite a high demand.

Virgin Mastertronic

Virgin Mastertronic is celebrating this Christmas with a whole host of titles. On the Mastertronic label are *El Cid*, *Nonamed*, *Panther*, *Pulsoids*, *Grand Prix Tennis*, *Reveal*, *Rigel's Revenge*, *Megaplay Volume 1*, *Camelot Warriors*, and *Hacker*.

The Ricochet label sees the launch of *Rock 'n' Bolt*, *X-15*, *Ball Blazer*, *Mindshadow*, *Manic Miner*, and *Hacker*. On Melbourne House are *Double Dragon*, *Xenon* and *War in Middle Earth*, Leisure Genius sees the arrival of *Risk*, and *Scruples*. The sole release on the Rebound label is *Heavy on the Majick*.

Managing director at the company Nick Alexander offered his views on the shape of things to come this Christmas: "I think it's looking extremely good. Obviously it's going to be the biggest Christmas so far for 16-bit, but 8-bit is holding up very well too.

"We're going to see a significantly larger market this year than last year, and with video games adding to that it must be good news all round."

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SPECTRUM TOP 20

TW	LW	Title	Publisher	RRP £
1	2	LAST NINJA 2	SYSTEM 3	12.99
2	1	JOE BLADE 2	PLAYERS	2.99
3	10	END ZONE	ALTERNATIVE	1.99
4	7	EUROPEAN FIVE A SIDE	FIREBIRD	1.99
5	20	ADVANCED PINBALL SIMULATOR	CODE MASTERS	1.99
6	4	BOMB JACK	ENCORE	1.99
7	17	GAUNTLET	KIXX	2.99
8	8	DALEY THOMPSON	OCEAN	9.95
9	13	FOOTBALL MANAGER 2	ADDICTIVE	9.99
10	NE	COMMANDO	ENCORE	2.99
11	12	ACE OF ACES	KIXX	2.99
12	25	FOOTBALLER OF THE YEAR	KIXX	2.99
13	6	FIRST PAST THE POST	CULT	1.99
14	5	AIR WOLF	ENCORE	1.99
15	31	FRUIT MACHINE SIMULATOR	CODE MASTERS	1.99
16	3	ON THE BENCH	CULT	1.99
17	24	OUT RUN	SEGA-US GOLD	8.99
18	11	FRANK BRUNO'S BOXING	ENCORE	1.99
19	36	RUGBY	BLUE RIBBON	1.99
20	29	BIGGLES	FIREBIRD	1.99

C64 TOP 20

TW	LW	Title	Publisher	RRP £
1	1	LAST NINJA 2	SYSTEM 3	2.95
2	4	END ZONE	ALTERNATIVE	1.99
3	3	JOE BLADE 2	PLAYERS	2.99
4	5	BOMB JACK	ENCORE	1.99
5	25	GAUNTLET	KIXX	2.99
6	11	INTERNATIONAL RUGBY	CODE MASTERS	1.99
7	15	YOGI BEAR	ALTERNATIVE	1.99
8	7	DALEY THOMPSON	OCEAN	9.95
9	2	BARBARIAN 2	PALACE	9.95
10	8	RED STORM RISING	MICROPROSE	4.95
11	10	SUPREME CHALLENGE	BEAU JOLLY	2.95
12	26	GOLD SILVER AND BRONZE	US GOLD	14.99
13	14	AIR WOLF	ENCORE	1.99
14	40	TAITO COIN-OPS	OCEAN	12.95
15	NE	COMMANDO	ENCORE	2.99
16	17	TRACK SUIT MANAGER	GOLIATH	9.95
17	37	ACE	CASCADE	2.99
18	20	ACE OF ACES	KIXX	2.99
19	18	FOOTBALL MANAGER 2	ADDICTIVE	9.95
20	WE	FISTS 'N' THROTTLES	ELITE	12.99

AMSTRAD TOP 10

TW	LW	Title	Publisher	RRP £
1	8	LAST NINJA 2	SYSTEM 3	12.95
2	1	JOE BLADE 2	PLAYERS	1.99
3	2	BOMB JACK	ENCORE	1.99
4	5	AIR WOLF	ENCORE	1.99
5	7	KIK START 2	MASTERTRONIC	2.99
6	6	DALEY THOMPSON	OCEAN	9.95
7	4	ADVANCED PINBALL SIMULATOR	CODE MASTERS	1.99
8	NE	BIGGLES	FIREBIRD	1.99
9	NE	FIST 'N' THROTTLES	ELITE	12.99
10	17	ATV SIMULATOR	CODE MASTERS	1.99

ATARI ST TOP 5

TW	LW	Title	Publisher	RRP £
1	1	ELITE	FIREBIRD	24.95
2	4	STOS GAME CREATOR	MANDARIN	29.95
3	2	STAR GLIDER 2	RAINBIRD	24.95
4	NE	DALEY THOMPSON	OCEAN	19.99
5	NE	MOTOR BIKE MADNESS	MASTERTRONIC	14.95

AMIGA TOP 5

TW	LW	Title	Publisher	RRP £
1	2	ROCKET RANGER	MIRRORSOFT	29.99
2	1	STAR GLIDER 2	RAINBIRD	24.95
3	3	BATTLE CHESS	ELECTRONIC ARTS	24.95
4	RE	VIRUS	FIREBIRD	19.95
5	3	INTERCEPTOR	ELECTRONIC ARTS	24.95

SHARE OF SALES BY MACHINE

Machine	Units sold (%)				Titles sold (%)			
	This week	Last week	4 wks ago	12 wks ago	This week	Last week	4 wks ago	12 wks ago
SPECTRUM	44.1	40.4	45.7	44.0	24.3	29.3	31.3	28.7
COMMODORE 64	22.9	26.3	24.3	23.6	24.4	24.2	24.7	25.0
AMSTRAD	18.5	17.5	17.2	19.5	18.9	18.0	19.6	17.6
ATARI ST	4.1	5.4	4.0	3.1	7.0	8.4	8.0	6.7
AMIGA	2.7	3.9	3.2	1.5	4.7	5.1	3.6	4.2
COMMODORE 16	1.5	1.5	2.1	2.5	2.5	2.0	2.7	2.8
BBC	1.4	0.8	0.6	1.8	2.5	2.1	2.2	3.8
ATARI	1.3	1.7	1.6	0.8	2.2	3.1	1.8	2.9
ELECTRON	1.3	0.6	0.6	0.9	2.7	1.8	1.5	2.6

AVERAGE SALES PER PANEL SHOP

This week	Units Sold		
	Last week	4 wks ago	12 wks ago
106	87	70	124

Soft options

Soft Options carries salient details of leisure software just released or which are due to appear in the next few days. Software house wishing to be included should fax (0438 741247) or phone (0438 310185) through details prior to our publication date.

△ **RAINBIRD: Fish** (ST-£24.95) The idea of a game based on a goldfish swimming around its bowl doesn't sound exactly awe inspiring. But — and here's the big difference — this goldfish has the unlikely role of saving the entire planet. A bit far fetched maybe, but who said that computer games were ever based on reality? And it's nice to see a bit of originality

△ **SUPERIOR: Exile** (BBC-£12.95-£19.95) An arcade style adventure set on the hostile planet of Phoebus, battling it out against the fiendish professor Triax. This latest beeb offering comes complete with a 55 page novella and is supposed to take absolutely ages to complete.

△ **ORIGIN: Times of Lore** (SpAm64-£9.95-£14.95) Another arcade fantasy role playing adventure, but this time set in the troubled kingdom of Alboreth.

△ **CP SOFTWARE: Clock Chess** (Sp+3PCW-£8.95-£19.95) *Classic Games 4* (Sp+3AmPCW-£9.95-£19.95) *Bridge Player 2000 with Tutor* (STPCPCW-£15.95-£19.95). A host of brain teasing goodies from the previously quiet CP stable. *Classic Games 4* includes *3D Chess*, *Backgammon*, *Bridge Player* and *Draughts* — plenty to keep granny occupied through the wee hours of the morning.

△ **CDS: Colossus Chess X** (ST-£24.99) Not more chess? This latest version in the successful *Colossus Chess* series has been revamped and revised for the 16-bit format. Added features include a 3D view with rotating board, four chess sets, and supposedly infinite playing levels.

△ **MANDARIN: Lombard/RAC Rally** (AgPC-£24.95) This well publicised game hits the Amiga and PC formats — a standard racing simulation in which you can actually watch the driver changing gear, wow!

△ **MANDARIN: Pioneer Plague** (Ag-£24.95) Claimed to be the first game to use the Amiga's colours to the full, with a palette of more than 4,000 colours and HAM mode graphics. The storyline seems pretty run of the mill though — a self replicating robotic spaceship (whatever that is) is out of control wreaking havoc on all and sundry. Never mind the plot, just look at the pictures.

△ **DOMARK: Spitting Image** (STAgSpAm — £9.95-£19.95) After much hype at the PC Show the Fluck and Law extravaganza finally makes its way onto the computer games circuit. Obviously a big scoop for Strachan and Wheatley and good timing too, with the new TV series starting only a week or so ago.

△ **DOMARK: Live and Let Die** (ST64+3Sp-£) Domark does its stuff on the James Bond classic. Action packed adventure, with Bond pitting his wits against the evil Dr Kananga along with the customary mines, guns and missiles. Actually, it was Elite that wrote it.

△ **MIRRORSOFT: Speedball** (ST-£24.99) A future sports strategy by the Bitmap Brothers, with all the excitement of space age teams vying for control of a steel ball.

KEY: Sp = Spectrum; 64 = Commodore 64; Am = Amstrad CPC; ST = Atari ST; Ag = Amiga 500; +3 = Spectrum +3; PC = IBM PC/compatibles; PCW = Amstrad PCWs; C16 = Commodore 16; Mac = Macintosh; XE/XL = Atari XE console and 800XL; Sg = Sega console; Nn = Nintendo console; VCS = 2600 console; MSX = very unlikely.

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TANDY

Continued from page 12
claiming "it's a super piece - a fast 286, well priced at £895 and versatile". The machine is being pitched at medium businesses, home office professionals and again the education sector. The TL has many of the features of the SL model along with new on-board video modes plus a 16 colour graphics mode. It comes with a standard 640Kb, expandable to 768, a real-time clock with battery backup and a 3.5 inch floppy disk drive. Both 20Mb and 40Mb hard disk cards are also included.

The 3000NL business machine is a further addition to Tandy's 286 range and is priced at a hefty £1,545. The NL is capable of handling productivity applications and can also function as a network workstation.

Tandy has added two new 386 models to its range, with the 4000LX and the 5000MC. The machines offer a choice between the AT bus architecture on the LX and the IBM Micro Channel type architecture on the MC, and are priced at £3,295 and £4,995 respectively.

At the moment the Tandy share of the PC market in the UK is according to Sayers "negligible, but still growing", Rosser did offer an approximate figure of between one and one and a half per cent. It is doubtful whether these latest additions will significantly increase that share, but stranger things have happened.

The only other machines

that the Tandy stores stock outside its own range is strangely enough the Spectrum. The company will not be looking to sell any other brand of computers claiming that Tandy can offer the entire range "so why increase the competition?"

Tandy does, however, sell its computers through other dealers, and claims that this has considerably aided sales. "Many people are not aware that we have in fact been going through other dealers for the past two and a half years and now have around 90 dealers taking the Tandy range," commented Rosser.

So in the meantime Tandy plods along in its own definitive way. It has certainly turned a corner financially but its gait looks set to remain pretty much the same. Upon entering a Tandy store one can expect to find the usual array of odds and sods for some time to come - now there will just be a few more shops to choose from, and perhaps a new touch of paint here and there.

On the computer front Tandy appears to adopt a rather odd stance. One can't help feeling that it is just another string in the Tandy bow and if the stores can flog one or two then the company will keep churning them out.

Sayers does tentatively suggest that Tandy's main competitor is - yes you've guessed it - Amstrad.

But whilst the company would obviously like a bigger slice of the PC cake, it appears quite happy to forge its way slowly ahead in the style we have now grown accustomed to.

SPEAKEASY

POP GOES A NEWS STORY

I note with total disgust the article in *Popular Computing Weekly* (November 3rd) about your so-called 'troubled trade gazette'. Your journal leaves this printing office at midday Friday every week without fail and its lateness of the last two issues has been due to a postal sacks labelling problem, now overcome, between the Post Office and ourselves.

I would like to point out to any doubting pundits that the speed and the quality of the editorial is, if anything, faster and better than before and our trade dealings with you are far more secure than any other publishers we know.

On behalf of the Post

Office and ourselves may we apologise for the inconvenience caused through no fault of CTW.

Yours sincerely
Brian Wilkinson
Managing director
Manson Graphic

- An immature publication might use this letter as an opportunity to respond to Pop's misguided editorial in an equally vindictive nature to the original 'troubled trade gazette' story.

There is simply no point, however, in getting messed up in a childish slanging match. Focus

Magazines - publisher of Pop - has already apologised personally to CTW via publishing and commercial director Paul Coster and at time of press was due to run an official apology in Pop's next issue.

This action by Focus virtually eradicates the need for CTW to even bother to point out the errors in the original story.

Yes, CTW had been suffering from a 'postal sacks labelling problem' which was effectively holding up distribution by a couple of days. We couldn't really have quibbled with a story on that - even though it would have been a trade story appearing in a consumer publication. One presumes that 95 per cent of Pop's

readers have never even heard of CTW.

But it was the factual errors that have lead to Pop's climbdown: The distribution delay was not in any way related to the departure of Greg Ingham and Colin Campbell; Colin Campbell was only staff writer not news/deputy editor (apart from one single week); CTW replaced both not just one of these staff (Dave Roberts being appointed ahead of either's departure); and CTW is far from 'troubled', considering that it has just enjoyed its most profitable period in its four year history.

Pop should be worrying about its own performance in the market rather than ours.

Not talking 'bout a revolution

What Revolution? What's being revolutionised??

A Software retail chain?? Has no-one heard of Software PLUS??

The largest independent software retailer has already 'saturated' the South-East of England with 14 (shortly 16) stores in major towns.

Software PLUS displays its product in a very similar way to record shops, we use the same racking!

Software Plus has been dedicated to software ONLY for over four years, what else are software shops for?

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Educational? We do that as well.

A small deposit can be left on anything not already in our vast range.

So, open your eyes, there's no revolution. Software PLUS has seen it all, done it all!!

We're a darn sight nearer 50 shops than anyone else!!

Unless the 'Software Circus' is stocking games for the Jupiter Ace, Oric Atmos and Mattel Aquarius it's doing

nothing new, certainly from our point of view. So why all the fuss!!

Karen Oliver
Purchasing and Admin. Manager
Software Plus
Basildon

- Just hang on a second. If you cast your mind back to the feature that has caused so much fury - Talking 'Bout A Revolution (CTW October 17th) - you might note the very last paragraph. In summing up Steve Markham's bold plans to create a chain of 50 software stores it says that not that much new or original is being offered. But at

least the intention is there.

So why the fuss? Well, basically this industry requires more big-thinking retailers if it is going to develop into the type of leisure industry we all want rather than the old-style boffin ghetto. Of course, there are plenty of stores already being aggressive in their own marketing - the Software Plus chain being one of them - but still not enough.

If the Software Circus feature spurred a few other retailers into wondering how to gain better publicity (and that doesn't necessarily mean hiring jugglers and clowns) and better store layout then it did its job.

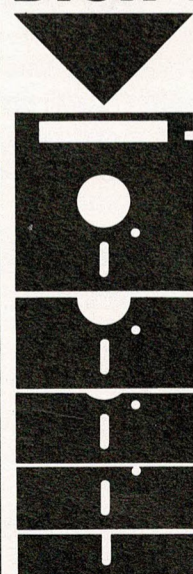
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A TRADE SHOW? WHO NEEDS IT?

Continued from page 14

congenial surroundings for business discussions."

What do you think of the show so far?

"The organisation required for most shows is phenomenal. A hell of a lot of time and money is needed. Our concept is to provide a standard all in one package with lighting, phones, fax machines, furniture, etc., already in place which effectively leaves the exhibitor with just one decision - do I go or not."

A campaign to persuade

firms to make that decision to go starts at this week's Comdex in the US. Malone will be telling US firms that "if you've got a product which needs a home in the UK then this is the premier event to be at". The recruitment drive will then move to Europe in an attempt to emphasise the *European* in European Computer Trade Show.

Malone is confident of success in that area and would even like to see this event take over from Hanover as the time when the European industry comes together to do business.

So far the trade's reaction to the news has been almost

UK boss Bob Gleadow described it as "a most interesting concept that must surely provide major benefits for the industry as a whole". Commodore UK boss Steve Franklin chimed that it was "a good idea" stressing, however, the importance of a dealer attendance.

Distributors too seemed to welcome the idea. Gem boss Paul Donnelly offered: "About time too. We're in and it's trade only - that's really good news."

At Microdealer managing director Lee Ginty claimed that his firm had always longed for a strictly trade only show

and even went as far as to provisionally book four stands.

A Codemaster's spokesman enthused: "It's an exceptional idea exactly what's needed. We've had to struggle along with the PC Show and that's an absolute dinosaur."

The only sounds of doubt came from Domark - ironically one of the PC show's most valuable summer critics. Joint boss Dominic Wheatley conceded that the idea was interesting but added that he was not totally convinced that it would be worth a couple of days out of the office.

Stock's answer is that time at the show would not necessarily equate to time out of the office. "Everything would be so

prepared for the exhibitors with everything needed to run an office laid on that an exhibitor could leave his office Friday night, come to the show Monday morning and carry on where he left off - with the added bonus of all the people he's dealing with plus more besides being under the same roof."

Wheatley also points out that holding the show in April could propose a few problems. "Software houses simply wouldn't have any product ready to show at that time."

He has a point of course. For while April is not the coolest month it is certainly not the busiest. There is a general consensus in the industry

however that the big shows do come too late in the calendar causing stockpiling from the publishers and then the traditional Christmas flood.

Perhaps an earlier show will encourage a more rational spread of product throughout the year. If it does not Malone claims he will go back to the industry and seek advice on repositioning the event within the calendar.

Indeed, Malone claims that he has already consulted the industry on quite a number of points. "We've taken counsel on the location, the type of stands, the function of the event, the length of time it should run. It really has been tailored around their needs and we're even running a competition among the exhibitors to spot the first ad salesman. It really is their show so if this doesn't work perhaps they don't deserve one."

Quite.

PROMOTION BATTLE

Continued from page 17

like Network on the road will dealers soon be looking back with nostalgia at those halcyon days when the arrival of a solitary poster was greeted with a fanfare and two bits of tinsel at Christmas was a design concept? Where once there was a desert could there now be a flood?

Clark dismisses such speculation and claims that the only dealer reaction Network has so far received has been positive. "Dealers are still welcoming anyone that is going to come in and do a job for them."

He makes the point that in other entertainment fields such as the record industry each company has its own branch of reps so dealers are receiving up to 20 visits a week. Four or five software merchandisers then are hardly cause for alarm. Again it is a case of the industry publicly claiming to want parity with other entertainment fields but then panicking at the slightest sign of that being achieved.

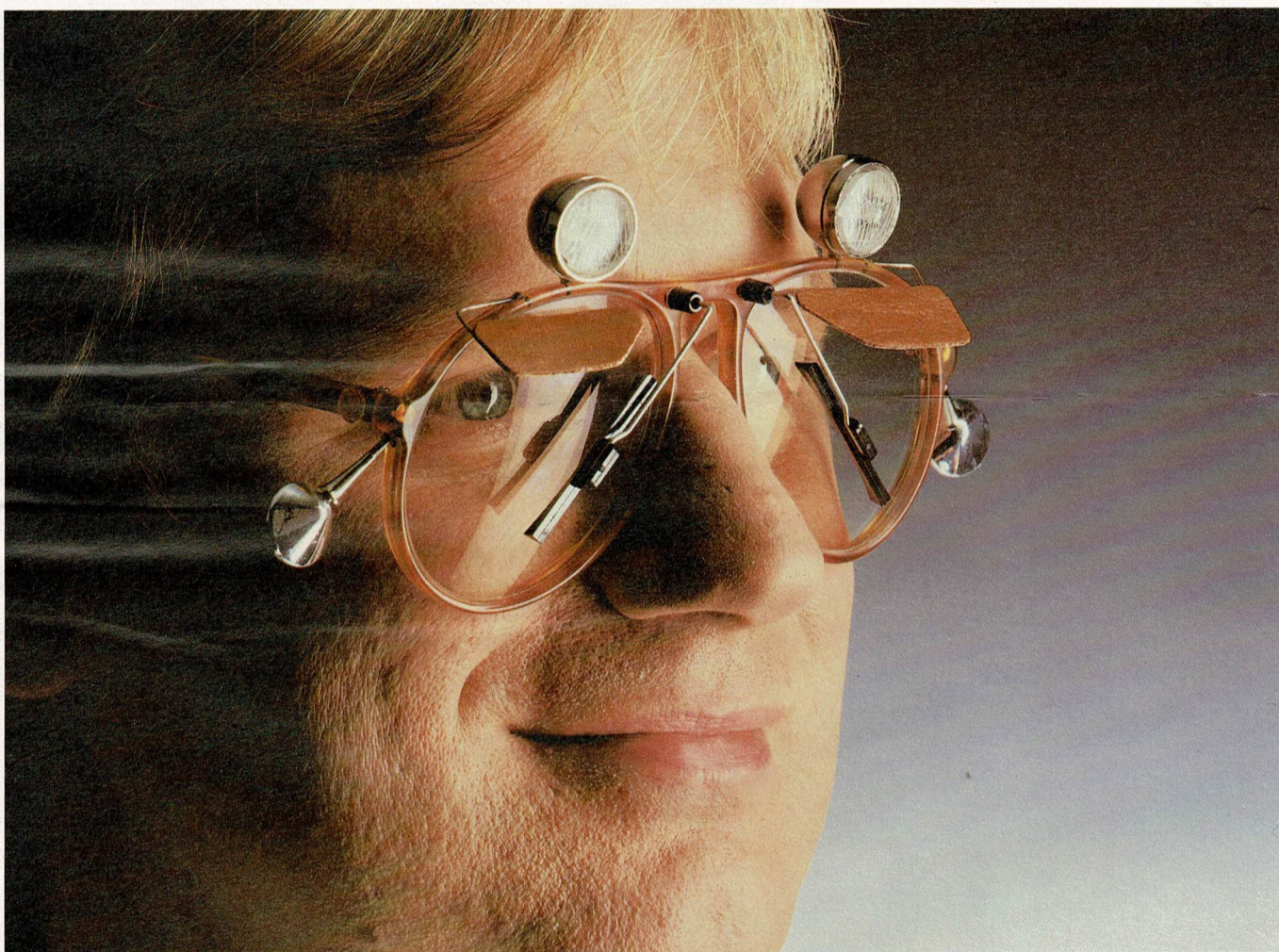
In the future of course there is that outrageous thought that the software industry might well mature and that all the companies would incorporate this sort of work within their own structure.

Clark is confident that day is a long way off: "A firm would have to be pretty big to take on its own sales force, I mean the overheads would be huge. What Network does is bring that to them for a sixth of the cost."

Looking to the future Clark can hardly be accused of being the impossible dreamer: "My immediate aim is to be seen as a firm that is responsible for six publishers and if a retailer has a problem with one of them he knows Network can sort it out. That would give us a lot of credibility and if we can achieve that in 12 months we will have done well."

With its opening shots then the new team has proved itself to have realistic aims, with a workman-like approach and a down-to-earth attitude. Definitely more of a Wimbledon than a Tottenham. And with Wimbledon holding the cup and Tottenham languishing at the foot of the table that really isn't such a bad thing.

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Olivetti slashes PC range

Olivetti has announced price cuts of around nine per cent for its M290 range.

The firm claims the cuts have been prompted by public demand driving up the volume of production on the range. This has apparently "significantly reduced" overheads thus allowing the reductions.

The entry level machine for the range is now priced at £2,028, rather than the original price of £2,228.

Meanwhile, the firm has also announced the availability of a colour system M200. This will retail at between £985 and £1,245.

Amstrad anger

Continued from front page
ket and we've been hit."

One major City broker offered to CTW that the Amstrad share fall was due simply to "the silliness of the stock market", with several major firms revising down their over-optimistic estimates for Amstrad profits in 1989.

Others, however, are pointing out that with the current high interest rate levels there are City worries about any firm that has a high element of consumer exposure.

Added to this is a generally bearish view of computer firms at present. "In the US all the PC manufacturers are at rock bottom in the stock market. People like Compaq and Apple are announcing great results but are still being rated lowly. Some of that sentiment has drifted across the Atlantic," offered one senior analyst.

One of the major culprits regarding Amstrad's bad week last week may have been County Nat West due to its downgrading of estimated Amstrad profits for 1989. The prediction fell from £195 to £185 million, ironically, after the firm had actually revised up its estimate following Amstrad's announcement of £160 million profits for fiscal year 1988.

Epyx

Continued from front page
ing that Epyx seems initially to be gaining most.

"It's totally Epyx led," said Brown to CTW. "We've got a contract with Epyx and we'll continue to distribute their product in Europe."

It is possible then that US Gold could find itself marketing Infogrames-developed product in the UK under the Epyx brand name - despite the existence of the Infogrames UK operation.

Epyx president Gil Freeman confirmed that US Gold still held distribution rights, offering: "It's a product performance issue that may develop into an international distribution issue."

He too preferred not to label the deal as a takeover. "We're not buying a company, we're buying a relationship and the future."

Kelator's new signing spree reaches Zenith

Distributor Kelator has continued its recent willingness to sign new accounts by taking on the full range of Zenith PC's and laptops.

The move follows the recent appointment of both Cambridge Computer and Commodore. Previously, Kelator had been known for its dependence on Acorn product - at one time being exclusive

UK distributor.

Kelator boss John Simnett is pitching the Zenith signing as a further move upmarket for the company, whilst pledging continued allegiance to Acorn.

"We are tackling a lot of different areas. Acorn sales are increasing so there's no reason to move away from them. But one area we're not yet covering is the mid to upper range of MSDOS," Simnett told CTW.

Kelator already handles

Commodore's PCs but believes that these are pitched more towards Amstrad-type dealers.

Simnett hopes that the Zenith range will help Kelator extend its total dealer base from around 700 to 1,000.

He is confident that the name Kelator will soon be an accepted one in the more established business market.

"If we were just going to sit



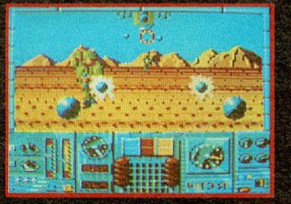
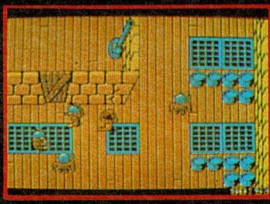
SIMNETT: Upmarket shift back and expect people to come to us then I'd be concerned - but we're not going to do that."

STALLONE

He's back and this time he's taking no prisoners! Colonel Trautman has been captured by the Russians in Afghanistan and there is only one person capable of freeing him. Negotiate the minefields, explore the Russian camp, lay boobytraps, avoid detection, free the Colonel and then ... move on to the explosive climax! **RAMBO IS BACK!**

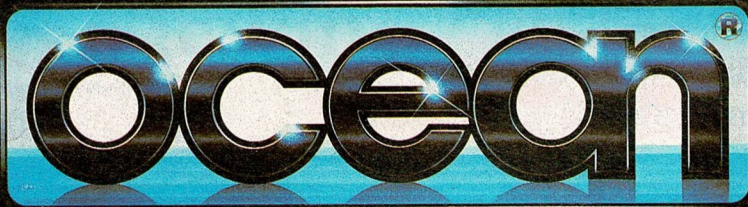


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