

**MAGAZINE
OF THE YEAR**

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CPC ■ SPECTRUM ■ PC
■ NINTENDO ■ SEGA ■

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ACE

ADVANCED

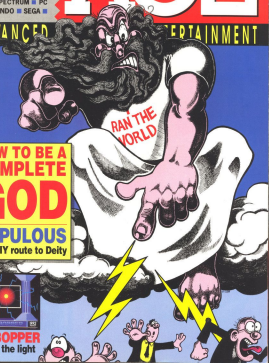
ENTERTAINMENT

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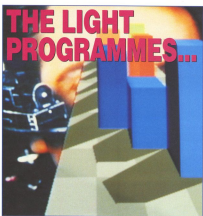
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THE LIGHT PROGRAMMES...



SPECIALS



WALLOWING IN MUDs

Expert multi-player gamers
Zig ramrudes on the possibil-
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LIGHT ENTERTAINMENT... 32

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Archimedes computers to win? And who, or what the
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them make the grade. Find out which.

TRICKS 'N' TACTICS... 70

Steve James and friends really go to town this month,
offering up no less than ten pages designed to make an
amateur into a professional gamer. Including full
maps of Rambo II, Incredible Shrinking Sphere and the
complete solution to Total Eclipse.

ADVENTURES... 95

Our man with the well-oiled lamp,
lights the way through the
horrorful paths offered by The
MickRocks, and a trio of
games from Sierra Online...



DEAR MUM...

It's really great, now they've got computers at school - learning is now so much fun that I've actually given up transposing at the weekends in favour of doing homework. Well, I say it's homework, but the teachers don't actually set it. You see, there's this really neat piece of educational software called PaperToss in which you get to practice creating worlds, sending earthquakes and manipulating your war-shippers, and nearly all of us have taken a copy home - it's a real laugh! Sometimes, I even sneak the computer into the study, and Dad's furious to the hilt and phone up Nick's mum for a game. Suddenly, being a schoolboy is fun again.

Mum, you, wandering around on Earth in my celestial parks and hiding behind a pair of extra thick glasses just so I could collect train numbers was a bit pointless really. Once I'd got the knack of causing minor weather incidents, like ice on the points, there was no reason to hang around chaotically six hours at specific times just to note the number of Great Trains or Peaks. With just a touch of pre-planning, I found I could have a long lie-in on a Saturday morning and then collect all the numbers I wanted with a quick visitation to Paddington station.

Dad caught me at it once, and was really angry, thundering on about cheating and stuff but I did point out that everyone had to practice Acts of God and he seemed to accept my explanation... He still confiscated my pet plague of locusts that I had been keeping in a matchbox under the bed, though. Good job he didn't make my bolts wrap again, mind - a couple of insurance companies down in your end of things nearly went bankrupt last time that happened.

Anyway, Mum, I expect Dad'll be down to see you again soon - I've noticed that he's been folding around with that bag of swan feathers in the jetting shed lately, and you know what *that* means...

Your loving gobson, Zass Jr

REGULARS

NEWS

Lots of goodies, including more on the Bonk Multi System, early details of the PC Engine CD-ROM drive and the first PC CD-ROM game from AtariSoft/Pegibone Compact Solution. Then there's S&B...

LETTERS

If you've got anything to say, here's the place to say it.

GRAPHICS

From Larkspur chips away at SculptMania 4D and into a gallery to view William Larkspur's exhibition of computer-generated graphics art.

THE BLITTER END

That's all blatted, really all. Why is a top software issue never riding a plastic motorbike? Find out.

PINKS

There's N-Gate, Thrustobots and Nigel from Nigel to give you a chuckle. There's a prize crossword and guide to make your head ache and there's the definitive guide to Puddles, Brain Games and Specials. If you're thinking of making a software purchase, but don't believe as if you top one we recommend and then find yourself unable to go to work or school for the next six months because you're glued to the monitor.

If you look carefully, you may just find the odd cartoon, and the occasional something that's a little out of the ordinary as well. You have been warned...



CORAL SEA, MIDWAY, SAIPAN RELIVE THE BATTLES THAT

They were the most dramatic of the World War II Pacific theater. The Coral Sea, Midway, and Saipan battles were the turning points of the war. The Coral Sea and Midway battles were the first major naval battles fought between the United States and Japan. The Coral Sea battle was a tactical draw, but it was the first time that a Japanese fleet was stopped from advancing toward Australia. The Midway battle was a decisive victory for the United States, which destroyed four Japanese aircraft carriers. The Saipan battle was a decisive victory for the United States, which captured the island of Saipan, a key Japanese base in the Western Pacific. The battles of the Coral Sea, Midway, and Saipan were the turning points of the war, and they led to the eventual defeat of Japan.



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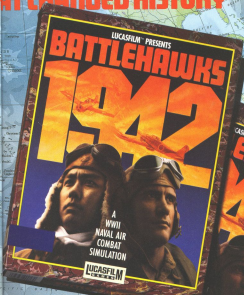
"My first love was my airplane, the P-51 Mustang. I was a pilot in the Army Air Corps, and I was shot down during the Battle of Iwo Jima. I was the only pilot to be shot down during the battle. All for what, the plane you built?"



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After several years of rumours and murrings about the imminent possibility of CD ROM entertainment software, the new medium for computer games is about to become a reality. Two products have just been launched at different ends of the world, and a new CD standard was recently announced which makes Compact Disc Interactive a more immediate possibility.

In Japan, NEC recently launched a CD ROM drive for the PC Engine as an add-on which costs the equivalent of £300. Already two games are available for the system: Street Fighter, a conversion of Capcom's traditional computer hit, and *Yokai*, a text, audio and graphics adventure-type game packed with text that is impenetrable to all but fluent Japanese speakers. And we may yet see the PC Engine in the UK within the next couple of months - Micro Media claims to be on the verge of signing a deal which will allow them to import the Engine and games.

The PC Engine CD ROM could soon dominate the world - at the moment there are probably around 300,000 CD ROM drives in existence connected to IBM PC compatible hardware, but if only half the Japanese Engine owners go for the CD ROM drive, NEC will at least sales of over half a million units.

CONSOLE

On the day we photographed the latest personnel for the PC Engine, Program Compact Solutions and Bannock launched the first CD ROM game for PC systems running audio CD ROM drives: *Defender of the Crown*. Conceived as a pilot project to polish the methodology of adding full-motion-picture-quality audio to computer games, the *Defender* project was undertaken in association with Commanco who produced the interface software and audio soundtrack.

The gameplay in the CD ROM version of *Defender* has not been altered one jot - deliberately, as the intention was to see how people reacted to having high-quality audio added to an existing game. Jim Mackenzie, Chairman of Bannock and the man behind the sister company Program Compact Solutions which specialises in CD ROM products for the corporate market is unsure how well the latest version of *Defender* will sell. "I don't want to sit around and do nothing until I had a large installed user base", he explains. But CD ROM is catching on in America - a chain of software retailers, Egghed, has announced that they are stocking CD ROM drives and

COMPACT DISCS SLIP OUT



PC Engine - Street Fighter, CD ROM style. There's no full-motion video animation, but the accompanying soundtracks are well impressive.



PC CD ROM - The features in this version of *Defender of the Crown* has to be noticed - full CD quality stereo accompanies the graphics.

the PC Engine slots into a well-emerging niche alongside the CD ROM drive. The obvious case is the interface, and the CD drive can be removed and used independently as a portable CD audio player.

are looking for compatible entertainment products.

An IBM PC with an interface card linking it to a CD ROM drive with audio capability is needed to play the latest version of *Defender of the Crown*, but the full soundtrack which includes a narrator speaking in an "Old English" accent makes the experience much more dramatic, even though game graphics are identical to the floppied PC version.

IMMINENT INTERACTIVITY

Compact Disc Interactive, which offers the potential for television TV pictures (as part of the screen at least) in interactive programmes that load from CD is getting a little closer with the announcement of the CD-IX standard that allows audio and animation data to be interleaved on a compact disc rather than stored separately.

Next month we will take a look at the future of CD-based computer entertainment - catching up on all the developments. Stay tuned.

EARLS COURT AND BEYOND



The Multi developers responsible for most of the Multi System hardware. Standing behind Wye Holloway, who couldn't resist one more go in his neck 'n' roll inside chair; left, Chris Green, middle, Wye Holloway, right Robert Mann.



The prototype arcade chair is off its glory...



...and an artist's impression of the final one.

Alongside the My Little Poodle and early days of the Earls Court Toy Fair, Konix unveiled their Multi System console. The occasion was also the first public showing of the rock 'n' roll arcade chair that will be available as an add-on - obviously it was not the final production version but a rather noisy prototype that drew the crowds to the Earls stand.

The hardware and demon-

stration software were warmly received by the toy trade and visiting members of the entertainment software industry alike - in the Monday of the show programmers and publishers were invited to a presentation on the stand. The moving chair was a definite hit - at least one programmer was overheard planning to link it to his ST.

Although the first prototype of the final hardware

didn't make it to the stand at the Toy Fair launch, the Attention To Detail team had completed a quarter of games which showed off the potential of the console.

According to Konix boss Wye Holloway, the launch was a major success - two days after the show closed, interested parties were "opening up" inside the Earls HQ in Ipswich Street to talk serious business.

The market for state-of-the-art micro took a back up the backside with the first public showing of SAM, the new home computer from Miles Gordon Technology. SAM is a 256K micro, priced at £149.95 and built around a 6MHz 25003 processor. It made its first public appearance at the NMSA-electronics show in Harlow, Essex in February, and reaches the shops this summer.

Entry-level machines still sell well, but Hardware has been caught in a firetrap since 1983 when the first big sellers captured the UK software market. A survey size of home machines like the Memotech, Dragon, Linden and Enterprise have fallen and gone, yet the vintage Spectrum and Commodore 64 still dominate first issue purchases.

Several occasionally finds CPC machines looking around in neuroses, and sells a few - but the bottom dropped out of the CPC software trade a couple of years ago, interesting the Spectrum and C64 still further. Remarkable considering how little home machines have developed in the last seven years.

Amstrad has done little with the C64 apart from releasing compatibility and selling on a batch of tape recorders and cheap disk drives. Commodore has recently changed the 64's box, producing the futuristic gesture of the AAC. A redesign, the 64 Plus, was commissioned from Ronix Games from Creative Devices, but did not go into production.

MSX has slipped into the sea with SAM, a machine design that runs Spectrum software but includes custom video to bring the machine's spec up to date.

SAM VS 8-BIT MICRO

SAM outpaces the 1.5MHz Spectrum with its 6MHz 25003 processor. Like the Suga console, it has a range of 64 display colours - combining with the Spectrum's eight, with 'normal' and 'light' variants.

The biggest flaw of the Spectrum is its dull display. Gameplay can be as good as Tetris offers, but after a while every game looks the same because of the restricted palette and 'tributary' grid that inhibits developers (tagged between Scylla and Charubel) - favouring colours in a monochromatic palette.

The SAM design cures these problems, although games need some conversion to make full use of SAM hardware. Full resolution can be better as high as on the Spectrum, and attributes are optional - if you must, you can use

THE MULTI SYSTEM DEMONSTRATION SOFTWARE



(Above) An 48Kbyte demo in which a jet zooms over rapidly-scrolling landscapes.

(Right) An 8-bit Konix demo game put together to show the power of the Multi System - illustrated here with a jet zooming over rapidly-scrolling landscapes.



(Left) Jumping along a river on a jet bike - mind those logs!



(Below) On the road with the Multi System.



SAM GOES PUBLIC

all 64 colours in one character space.

Even if you just load a standard 40K 25 cassette game, SAM can refresh your palpitating eyeballs. All 26 Spectrum colours and shades can be independently translated to palette colours, which should make a sucker to fill the slots from the shelves in many games.

Sound effects are routed either through the TV or through stereo Walkman headphones. SAM has a six-channel stereo sound chip, rather than the three-channel mono AY-8930 of the ST and Spectrum 128 (both of SAM's SAA-1000 are in the Maple Electronics catalogue). The little Spectrum 'BEEP' is still supported, for compatibility with old software.

SAM's ROM includes a block-structured BASIC interpreter and a 'loader' which lets you access disks and use up to four programs at one time.

SAM VS 16-BIT BROTHERS

The basic model of SAM is half the price of the Atari ST, but it comes close to the same price when you expand the memory to 512K and add a 720K disk drive. When it comes to graphics and sheet processing power the Atari is still way ahead.

SAM does have a built-in network, potentially useful for games as well as education. You can plug all sorts of cheap Spectrum ports into SAM's expansion connector, while the ST limits you to built-in interfaces and a G4E cartridge port. Besides the main expansion port, SAM has sockets for a mouse, joystick, light pen or gun,

printer, cassette, telephones and MIDI musical instruments.

There's space for one or two 760K 3.5 inch disk drives, based on MIT's exciting Spectrum add-on, three times faster than Rembrandt drives. Data slot into the front of SAM, under the keyboard, in a more sensible than the ST or Amiga arrangement, which puts a single drive at the side of the computer.

SOFTWARE - OLD AND NEW

The main point in SAM's favour is its Spectrum compatibility, which means that a vast range of commercial games is available, at half to a fifth of the price of 16-bit titles.

It remains to be seen what price software houses will set for programs that use SAM's special features. With its extra memory and processing power, SAM should be an attractive machine for people developing new Spectrum software. It should not be hard to produce a cheap-as-SAM version of a title using the Spectrum code it's written.

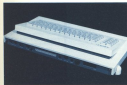
MIT have a 16-channel MIDI package in the works. This incarnation started life as the 120K Spectrum but after Steve Turner ran out of memory and processor power before he'd finished. SAM should encourage other programmers to dust off software that became too ambitious for the Spectrum.

SAM is unlikely to give Rembrandt or Amiga much cause for concern, but it should draw new users into the hobby, and that's good news for everyone in the long term.



The SAMBA Show - SAM surfaced up North, rather than at British Computer in some other mainstream show, because the SAMBA Show fitted MIT's development timetable and provided an audience suitably impressed by SAM's price and impressive hardware.

It's an annual event, organised by ST amateur radio, show tapes and competing clubs in the North of England. It's a big show, with over 100 stands in two halls and two annexes - even those brave traders had to be turned away because of lack of space. About 8,000 people attended and the trade was guaranteed solid until late in the day, when these pictures were taken. The show started five ST years ago, as one of the many Radio Rallies where wireless enthusiasts exchanged notes, articles, and goodies. Nowadays there's a reading table in some corners, interfaces and disk drives as well as other attractions. Prices are the worryingly low - just £10 for a working, populated 640 or 128K machine board - but taxons, power supplies and keyboards are extra, and it's unusual to get any documentation...



SAM - the first finished computer.

GET THE MAXX?



London's premier specialist software house have specially developed to meet the challenge in PC joystick from Amiga-ism. Called the Maxx it adds a new sense of realism to flight games, incorporated it to the classic, often lousy, non-PC and looks to this point... £19.95 including VAT - the rest of the price's profit. Sam Software Company, 200, 201, 202, 203, 204, 205, 206, 207, 208, 209, 210, 211, 212, 213, 214, 215, 216, 217, 218, 219, 220, 221, 222, 223, 224, 225, 226, 227, 228, 229, 230, 231, 232, 233, 234, 235, 236, 237, 238, 239, 240, 241, 242, 243, 244, 245, 246, 247, 248, 249, 250, 251, 252, 253, 254, 255, 256, 257, 258, 259, 260, 261, 262, 263, 264, 265, 266, 267, 268, 269, 270, 271, 272, 273, 274, 275, 276, 277, 278, 279, 280, 281, 282, 283, 284, 285, 286, 287, 288, 289, 290, 291, 292, 293, 294, 295, 296, 297, 298, 299, 300, 301, 302, 303, 304, 305, 306, 307, 308, 309, 310, 311, 312, 313, 314, 315, 316, 317, 318, 319, 320, 321, 322, 323, 324, 325, 326, 327, 328, 329, 330, 331, 332, 333, 334, 335, 336, 337, 338, 339, 340, 341, 342, 343, 344, 345, 346, 347, 348, 349, 350, 351, 352, 353, 354, 355, 356, 357, 358, 359, 360, 361, 362, 363, 364, 365, 366, 367, 368, 369, 370, 371, 372, 373, 374, 375, 376, 377, 378, 379, 380, 381, 382, 383, 384, 385, 386, 387, 388, 389, 390, 391, 392, 393, 394, 395, 396, 397, 398, 399, 400, 401, 402, 403, 404, 405, 406, 407, 408, 409, 410, 411, 412, 413, 414, 415, 416, 417, 418, 419, 420, 421, 422, 423, 424, 425, 426, 427, 428, 429, 430, 431, 432, 433, 434, 435, 436, 437, 438, 439, 440, 441, 442, 443, 444, 445, 446, 447, 448, 449, 450, 451, 452, 453, 454, 455, 456, 457, 458, 459, 460, 461, 462, 463, 464, 465, 466, 467, 468, 469, 470, 471, 472, 473, 474, 475, 476, 477, 478, 479, 480, 481, 482, 483, 484, 485, 486, 487, 488, 489, 490, 491, 492, 493, 494, 495, 496, 497, 498, 499, 500, 501, 502, 503, 504, 505, 506, 507, 508, 509, 510, 511, 512, 513, 514, 515, 516, 517, 518, 519, 520, 521, 522, 523, 524, 525, 526, 527, 528, 529, 530, 531, 532, 533, 534, 535, 536, 537, 538, 539, 540, 541, 542, 543, 544, 545, 546, 547, 548, 549, 550, 551, 552, 553, 554, 555, 556, 557, 558, 559, 560, 561, 562, 563, 564, 565, 566, 567, 568, 569, 570, 571, 572, 573, 574, 575, 576, 577, 578, 579, 580, 581, 582, 583, 584, 585, 586, 587, 588, 589, 590, 591, 592, 593, 594, 595, 596, 597, 598, 599, 600, 601, 602, 603, 604, 605, 606, 607, 608, 609, 610, 611, 612, 613, 614, 615, 616, 617, 618, 619, 620, 621, 622, 623, 624, 625, 626, 627, 628, 629, 630, 631, 632, 633, 634, 635, 636, 637, 638, 639, 640, 641, 642, 643, 644, 645, 646, 647, 648, 649, 650, 651, 652, 653, 654, 655, 656, 657, 658, 659, 660, 661, 662, 663, 664, 665, 666, 667, 668, 669, 670, 671, 672, 673, 674, 675, 676, 677, 678, 679, 680, 681, 682, 683, 684, 685, 686, 687, 688, 689, 690, 691, 692, 693, 694, 695, 696, 697, 698, 699, 700, 701, 702, 703, 704, 705, 706, 707, 708, 709, 710, 711, 712, 713, 714, 715, 716, 717, 718, 719, 720, 721, 722, 723, 724, 725, 726, 727, 728, 729, 730, 731, 732, 733, 734, 735, 736, 737, 738, 739, 740, 741, 742, 743, 744, 745, 746, 747, 748, 749, 750, 751, 752, 753, 754, 755, 756, 757, 758, 759, 760, 761, 762, 763, 764, 765, 766, 767, 768, 769, 770, 771, 772, 773, 774, 775, 776, 777, 778, 779, 780, 781, 782, 783, 784, 785, 786, 787, 788, 789, 790, 791, 792, 793, 794, 795, 796, 797, 798, 799, 800, 801, 802, 803, 804, 805, 806, 807, 808, 809, 810, 811, 812, 813, 814, 815, 816, 817, 818, 819, 820, 821, 822, 823, 824, 825, 826, 827, 828, 829, 830, 831, 832, 833, 834, 835, 836, 837, 838, 839, 840, 841, 842, 843, 844, 845, 846, 847, 848, 849, 850, 851, 852, 853, 854, 855, 856, 857, 858, 859, 860, 861, 862, 863, 864, 865, 866, 867, 868, 869, 870, 871, 872, 873, 874, 875, 876, 877, 878, 879, 880, 881, 882, 883, 884, 885, 886, 887, 888, 889, 890, 891, 892, 893, 894, 895, 896, 897, 898, 899, 900, 901, 902, 903, 904, 905, 906, 907, 908, 909, 910, 911, 912, 913, 914, 915, 916, 917, 918, 919, 920, 921, 922, 923, 924, 925, 926, 927, 928, 929, 930, 931, 932, 933, 934, 935, 936, 937, 938, 939, 940, 941, 942, 943, 944, 945, 946, 947, 948, 949, 950, 951, 952, 953, 954, 955, 956, 957, 958, 959, 960, 961, 962, 963, 964, 965, 966, 967, 968, 969, 970, 971, 972, 973, 974, 975, 976, 977, 978, 979, 980, 981, 982, 983, 984, 985, 986, 987, 988, 989, 990, 991, 992, 993, 994, 995, 996, 997, 998, 999, 1000.

GIRLS JUST WANT TO HAVE FUN...

GIRLS IN THE DESERT OF ISOLATION

In reply to Mary Flower's letter in the March issue, indeed there are more of us women computer users than many people would think - and yes, just a bit more difficult to find than the men.

A look at the gender of reviewers in magazines will reveal that we still do a small amount at that level, but as users we are often hidden under that barrage of speltly 14 year old boys that seem to be the norm. Ditto, to paraphrase a term of mine, Betsy Teas, GAGS is here. GAGS is the Organization Against Gender in Software, and is a newly formed group that is open to both men and women but takes women as its starting point.

The group is not a lot of building. Mary Whitehouse is to visit people having fun, though it does want women to get a fair deal from this industry. GAGS is a forum for discussion for its members, primarily through a newsletter, and also serves as a source of information for women who may feel isolated as users.

So, Betsy and all the people out there who are interested, write to GAGS for more information. The only way we can stop feeling isolated is to let people know we are here! Betsy Vogel

GAGS

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BEST SOFTWARE SOLUTIONS?

There is no definite reason for the male domination found in the world of computers.

Personally, I think that a major factor must be the fact that females are not encouraged to use computers at an early age as much as males. For instance, take the kind of leisure software on the market about chess, even the help-free prices from the various shops, are similar... and so on. I really can't see how much of that could be attributed to the average female. But it's not all bad. Some software does appeal to both sexes, even though a lot of it is biased towards males.

If this bias exists, then why don't software houses market more in the way of female only software?

For instance, I remember

reading about a program available only in America that allowed an on-screen doll to be dressed in a range of clothes, hair styles and so on, but I remember reading that the company involved had no plans to sell the program in the UK as they didn't think they would achieve worthwhile sales.

A chicken and egg situation exists. Software will mainly be targeted towards the male, and females will have less to attract them into using computers. The only solution would be for a major software house to think of some good "female" programs and advertise them in magazines that the girl, or woman, would read.

But that would never happen... would it?
David Carter
Maidling, Surrey

True, much of the existing games software is itself sexist and is marketed in a sexist manner - but unless careful thought is applied to designing games that appeal to girls, at you'd end up with software that reinforces current sex-stereotyping. Operation Wolf is female games propaganda for male male stereotypes, and still-dressing simulators for the same for female sexist stereotypes. Which doesn't go very far towards solving problems.

The nature of elaborate, costly software is a function of the sexist attitudes of society itself which influences the people who make the games and the people who buy them. Chopping away at sexist advertisements in the computer press or making noises about sexist games that exploit women and their bodies is a start, but more fundamental changes need to be effected if women are to be attracted to computing - either in the entertainment or serious side.

A useful lot of women are familiar with computers - owing to the way society generally perceives women's role in the order of things, most noncomputer operators are female. Now, there are female programmers too, and the work of computers such as P International, which operates in computer programming education by female programmers working from home on a teleworking basis, does allow women to sit computers in with their thinking.

And remember, Paula Byrne is at the helm of one of the country's largest software publishers, Telesoftware.

Equality of opportunity in the world of computing is not going to be easy to achieve, even with the worthy efforts of groups such as GAGS, but a bit more awareness is required. There's a massive, untapped market of female customers out there for a start - let's have more software publishers - and from more of our female readers on this matter.

Remember, men to women or female with a computer-related problem...

SUBSCRIBED BLISS



I would like to congratulate you on your excellent magazine which I have never read.

How does one know if it is so good that I have you and that I must be? What else would stop all communication between my boyfriend and I as soon as he lays his hands on a copy?

How it looks as though I am in for a very busy year because he has just written to you for a subscription. I don't suppose you would consider shortening your October issue, as I would like some of his attention for my birthday.

Come to think of it, I remember correctly, for all I talk to one day the other week - he said something like 'let me try it once more' about his Allens tape wouldn't that.

An well, isn't there a saying, if you can't beat them, join them...
Sarah Scott, ACE Widdow
Chilworth

There certainly is Sarah, as last week had a three pages are being produced on Valentine's Day (lastly) and seeing as communication between couples is essential in a relationship, it now looks as if you are going to have to get involved with your folks on the computer gaming side of life. On receiving your £50 worth of software which you can run on my machine - maybe you'd like to write to GAGS for a bit of advice on what to choose before you start chatting to your partner about the final selection of games that you will use for playing together as a couple.

FOUR THINGS YOU NEVER KNEW ABOUT YOUR BT or ARISA



1) On the new BT, the mouse and joystick ports are actually positioned

underneath the console. To get over the problem, simply keep your computer unbalanced.

2) Never to make prize copies of games, but frightened of being caught? There is a solution! First buy the original game and make a copy of it. Take the label off the original and put it on the copy. Flush the original down the toilet, and keep the copy in its box. What if you find a copy that is indistinguishable from the original.

3) Happy days aren't very nice to eat. So if you do eat one, make sure you put lots of tangy tomato ketchup on it first.

4) If an adventure program confuses you, why not use the console Simply type in "XZZZJ". The program won't have an answer for that. Great, isn't it?
Stephen Monk
South Hantside

Er, yes, imagine our surprise when we received this letter in the office... there's £25 worth of games, Stephen.

GK

SLEPPED HIS DISKOO!

There is one, based on research, which I would like to discuss out with you.

Problem: cassette-taped software usually retails for around £12 or less, but the equivalent disk package may sell for more than the price of the cassette version and the cost of the disk, added together.

Solution: locate licensed disk copying facilities at retail outlets, so the purchaser can buy a legal copy of the software and put it onto a disk of his own. By this arrangement, everyone seems to win: the producer can sell software at a lower price yet still make the same profit; the retailer doesn't have to worry about keeping stocks; yet can offer off titles immediately; and the buyer is happy because the software is cheaper, yet the producer can maintain quality as he is getting the same revenue as usual.

The only drawbacks that I can see are that retail computer stores are not catered for and that the risk of piracy might be increased. But mail order companies should have no such copes-fully as retailers of copying their own licensed-copying centres.

Secondly, if the copying outlets

Another month, another collection of views and opinion and another £100 worth of software given away. It's been shared out a bit this time, but if you fancy having a go at doing the ton solo, put printer or pen to paper and send a missive to our Editor at: **ACE LETTERS, THE EDITOR, 4 QUEEN STREET, BATH BA1 1EJ.**

supplied a load of insurance as proof of purchase and only transferred protected files using equipment similar to that used by software houses at the moment, there appears to be no real problem.

It'd be interesting to read comments on this subject, including those from the software houses who will no doubt say the initial idea cannot be financially viable.

**Peter Hanger
Barnesley**

Great idea, but it has been tried before and didn't work too well. Two separate companies had a go at installing just such a software duplicating system for cassette games a few years ago - (Bios) has had a machine in their shop, for instance. It never really caught on, partly because retail ers didn't want to spend time duplicating games on a busy Saturday morning. Shops still had to keep stocks of the original and packaging for games, so at the end they didn't really benefit.

The company, however, provided a useful service for Amstrad owners with dup machines - Amstrad would make up stock in one disk completion, and only charged the cassette price for each game (providing a customer bought at least two games with each order). There are whippersnappers who may be starting an again, so CPC owners with this drive might want to keep an eye out...

WILLYT DEBATE

PRICE
LETTER

It's a pity it that a small group of 'big gamers' but does think that computer games are bad for us, and lead to aggressive and social activities?

I have played computer games for five years, during which time I've seen countless children on, hair-raising and adventures, none of which have led me to become a mad, info-wielding Ninja from Middle Earth. I can't understand them, where can the line between games and real violence possibly be? It has to be said, that out of the millions of games players in the world, there will inevitably be a few who are

mixing a bit, but this minority should not be used to control the fun of the vast majority.

If the games manufacturers don't join together and make a stand, they'll have restrictions placed on them before they know what's happening. It's not even as if these meddling fools could do anything anyway - there are networks of orders in the games world, and these would force if censorship were introduced. Banned games, or restricted games, would still reach those who weren't supposed to have them.

It should be left up to the programming houses and the public to exercise self-censorship - after all, we've forces us to buy any particular gruesome game.

**Alan Morley
Mansfield, Leicestershire**

Mr Morley makes several sensible points about the practicality of censorship which earn him £25 worth of software. Anyone out there fancy providing a well argued case for censorship? After that convincing thumber-

down to censorship, let's hear from a parent...

Computer and arcade games violent? WHAT? BARRAGE

I am the mother of a 12-year-old computer and arcade game fanatic, and he hasn't changed into a little Rambo. He's quite normal, just like all his gaming-loving friends. Kids aren't stupid - they know the difference between pulling a few buttons to destroy an image on the screen and loading a real rifle and shooting someone.

These people who seem to know everything are so sanctimonious. First when they warn kids, they don't go and shoot real robbers after playing cowboys and Indians. They must have forgotten what it is like to be young and enjoying an adventure or fantasy game.

Maybe if there weren't games like Rambo and Operation Wolf for kids to have a good shoot out, there might be more violence on the streets...

**Mrs Bryan
Croydon**

NEXT MONTH

Issue 23 is the one to watch out for - it arrives in the shops on 30 April, and there's a cassette on the cover. Not an ordinary 8-bit game or playable demo though, but a real treat for the ears.

Our music coverage resumes as Jon Bates tunes up with an audio demo that backs up the start of a whole new way of looking at music and computers.

And the future is nearly upon us. Check out the latest developments on CD, CD-ROM and other interactive entertainment media. We speak to the experts.

Getting into Roles - Steve Cooke spends a week locked away in an isolated location in Cornwall. How does he keep sane? By engaging in Role Playing games on a multitude of machines. Check his definitive guide to the genre.

Being Better - Andy Smith catches up with war games, while Dog and others ramble on the possibilities for military simulations...

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DESIGNED AND LAYOUT BY PHILIPPE

ACE ON THE ROAD AT

MAELSTROM...

Mike Singleton has been selling games for some long while now, but the urge to publish their own still has never really passed him. A couple of years ago, he set up Maelstrom with Hugh Bellamy and Malcolm Hinton, primarily as a development house to write software, but not ruling out completely the concept of publishing as well. Fairly soon, though, it became clear that an international perspective and considerable resources were needed to publish games successfully, so Maelstrom decided to concentrate on developing software and focus marketing and sales in the hands of publishers.

The most recent project to come out of the Maelstrom stable is *Star in Middle Earth - Maelstrom*. Hugh asked Mike and he team to provide the 3-D version. Gameplay is completely different to the 2-D implementation. Obviously there wasn't room for the detailed character-based graphics on a humble 386 computer, but Mike Singleton decided that it would make more sense if the player couldn't see the location of *Samurai Heroes*: "If you think about it," he explains, "the 2-D versions are more mobile - in the book, *Star* had an obstacle course of Orcs would be located but didn't know for certain until his party

encountered the enemy."

Future projects are still under way in Maelstrom's virtual HQ, but a couple of major games are well under way, including *Star Lord*. We can't tell you how many more than the title and the fact that up to 3D players, human or computer, will be able to join the fun. Look out for further details in a few months' time - from what we've seen, it'll be well impressive.

be well impressive.

Mike has been working on 3D routines, but without a specific game scenario in mind, and a couple of real items are waiting to be incorporated into a future title. He's mastered a method of preloading filled 3D shapes and showing them round the screen which includes 'the headlight effect' - objects are lit as if they were appearing in the path of a car's headlights, or as they get 'closer' to the player, they are better illuminated. Thus there's a high-speed demo of a filled 3D landscape which is waiting for a game scenario, and a game which might be described as the evolution of *Lord of Midnight* into the *ST* and *Amiga*. More news of this, as well as other publishing companies Maelstrom is waiting for allow us to mention details...



Maelstrom's *Star in Middle Earth* is full programming. On the left, Mike Singleton and the *Star* who did the graphics for the Spectrum and Amiga versions and helped Paul Broadbent with the graphics. On the right, Mike Singleton, for whom the *Star* Mike in *Middle Earth* was the first major design project. Andrew Harrison was the graphics man on the *Star*.

...AND AT GREMLIN

For the last two years, progress in three months forward, Gremlin's in-house programmers have been hammering away on their latest video product, *Samurai And*, although reconnaissance by Maelstrom was slow, the game was on the drawing board well before Peter Heller's modified character appeared on the video screen.

Set over four vertical, free-scrolling 'act' levels (Low-tech, high-tech, Action, plus one optional) the player's mission



(LEFT) Part of the uncoloured Action level, which utilizes authentic template and statue designs. (RIGHT) A collection of Gremlin's 16-bit animation frames.

is to keep *Samurai* from becoming bored. This is achieved by manoeuvring around the landscape playing computer games - what else? - shooting



Paper, playing music, shooting aliens and many other missions. Contact with arcade machines brings up a sub-game, which, *Samurai* hopes, can be the first step towards being a computer company such as Sega. Commenting on the sub-game an one level was *Samurai* found a mistake for *Samurai* in the main.

For any additional tracks and items, the game runs off eight of memory made with 1024 Kilo of graphics data (not counting 128K for each of the four sub-games), and *Samurai* has had two more 160 frames of animation.

Samurai will surface first on the *ST*, with an *Amiga* version not on its heels.

INTELLIGENT PLAYERS

Mike and his partners at Maelstrom are very keen to develop the personality element behind some computerized players. Put for them the most interesting of a chess-player, no matter how sophisticated. Mike explains his view of computer gaming: "In practice, I think it's much more satisfying when you play real people - where the fun is beating a computer? Much of the time, all you're doing is playing against an algorithm and you're frustrated and you beat it, then you get bored." Pete Barrett, Production Manager and Action track chips in... "Computer chess is so fun, when you want to improve your game, you're fairly certain that the computer is going to win when you start, so what's the fun? Even if you do defeat the computer, you're denied the satisfaction of seeing them for half an hour and taking the victory out of the boss." The Maelstrom team are working hard to develop potentially elements behind computer players - "computer-generated players should play like people, not like a chess computer." Pete continues, "For an artificial chess player on a computer that played like a person would lead to a more enjoyable game."

So chess-players are out of the future product portfolio. What about Dungeons and Dragons type games? "They don't turn me on at all," Mike says, "because you can never win." Strategy underlies all Maelstrom games, but as Mike explains, "Our games don't really fit into any category, mainly because we don't fit doing the same thing twice. Strategy without 'train' is probably our game design motto - getting the computer to take care of tactical elements is game, it's not that you simply couldn't put a game based on dog and cardboard counters." Like the planetary orbits in *Star Lord* perhaps... yes, can't say that! ■



Samurai stands overlooking the Low-tech Samurageo. Note the background for playing music, and the computer chess game near the bottom of the screen.

RAFFLES

ENTER THE ILLUSION!



ATARI ST
AMIGA

ENTER THE ILLUSION!

Get lost in a dream... a house more wondrous anything you've experienced on a computer before. Lured by its name, you must find every gem hidden within its walls before it will release you. Get lost! There are real traps, graphically enhanced monster mice, and a puzzle inventory system that will keep you glued to this game for months to come. So be warned! Featuring the most realistic, parallaxed of a house ever, using the revolutionary "World Maker" technique to allow you to pick up, move and use virtually every object you find!
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INTERPHASE YOUR IMAGINATION

Come with us now on a journey into the depths of imagination, to places where only the mind can go. A world where the lines between reality and fantasy blur until they are indistinguishable. This is the world of Interphase, the flagship game that has captivated everyone who has seen it with its outstanding text and 3D graphics.

Back in issue 112 we had our first look at the early graphics for the game, then titled *Manhara*. Since then programmer Adrian Stephens has taken his impressive graphic routines and used them to create a game.

Because the game is so abstract in appearance, an important part of understanding what is going on is the accompanying storyline. The events aren't finished, but two of the elements to make a great film. It revolves around 'dream tracks' - recordings of brain patterns during intense experiences. These tracks can then be played back to other people, and they will experience the events as if they were real. There are even portable consoles to plug into - like a sort of *Dreamman*.

The problem with these devices is that the experiences are so real they are addictive. They are also being used for substantial advertising. One of the kids who has been trained since birth to record the tracks, resolves this and tries to do something about it.

Events culminate with him operating a

secretly dream back unit, using it to connect with the computer in the building where the tracks are broadcast from. He's trying to guide an accomplice through the building's defence systems. He has to retrieve his lost son dream back recording, which will otherwise cause chaos all over the world. ■



The pod at the bottom of the screen has captured the fighter in the foreground. The fighter is in fact able to communicate wirelessly - and guess what? The virus in this computer is they guess troublemaker since you can shoot them - resulting in the explosion of yellow spheres filling the view.



1. Here is a diagram of part of the building and the defence systems. The architecture is the building's skeleton; you always see through it.



2. This is where the component belongs, but because that is only in outline form, you will have to guide the component itself.



6. Once locking mode is activated, you can shoot with the component and shoot like purple tanks. This one has an spinning propeller which changes shape about. Collision conditions here will have an effect on enemy.



3. Looking for details, more detail than can be seen on the computer.



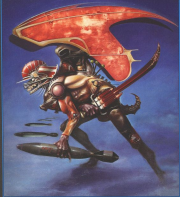
4. Where's the component heading on the top part of the screen. Do you see it has got into position?



5. Because the component can rotate, you can shoot with it like any other component.



BALLISTIX



BALLISTIX It's a whole new ball game!

Sick of silly old soccer? Tired of pathetic pinball? Then you need a dose of Ballistix - the fastest, wildest, toughest ball game yet to appear on a computer. Ballistix isn't exploded with excitement, puzzles and an amazing 100 different screens of frenetic action.

The aim of the game is simple: score more goals than your opponent to win the match. Going it is a different matter as splitters fill the screen with dozens of balls, bumpers fling them from view, bumpers bounce balls all over the show, ferocious red arenas speed them up to almost impossible velocity, magnets pull them away from your control, and much, much more.

Ballistix is incredibly flexible, too. You can play against the computer or another player, set the speed if you can't stand the pace, change where the balls are sent and their velocity, rack up bonuses that will get you extra goals and then, at the end of an exhausting game, set your name in pride of place on the high-score table. And it's all played to the awe-inspiring and astringent sound-track and it's called that applauds your every goal.

Ballistix is definitely not a game to skip. It's tough, fast, challenging and incredibly competitive - in fact, it's just the kind of game you like.

Two joysticks required for two-player game

ATARI ST/MEGA-ETHOS

Screen shots taken from the Atari ST version.



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PSYGNOSIS

3D POOL ● Firebird

Continuing the current trend for green table sports, Firebird have produced a 3D pool simulator, due to be released on all formats - Archimedes, BBC Electron and BBC Micro.

Kicker (as the steel ball) overcast, dipping the table and balls move in true perspective allowing players to take shots from any lateral viewpoint.

The package features a knockout tournament in which the final opponent faced is the European Pool Champion, 'Maffew' Joe Dartford. Anyone who fancies taking a crack at the Maffew will have to wait until next April.



Archimedes - Pool with a fresh perspective. The display should be identical to the ST and Amiga versions.



Vindicators on the Atari ST, with (inset) a glimpse of the Amstrad version too.

VINDICATORS ● Tengen

Demarc's subsidiary label, Tengen, which deals exclusively with Atari co-op conversions, is all ready to kick off with its first release, Vindicators. The game is due for an all-format release with a PC version to follow.

APRIL SHOWER

**BALLISTIX** ● Psygnosis

Just when it looked as if Speedball had the monopoly on high-speed ball games, along comes Ballistix from Psygnosis to try to redress the balance. Boasting fully adjustable game features, exhilarating gameplay and over 130 different pitches it sounds like the one for Amiga and ST owners to watch out for.

● **ST/II** Ballistix, a whole new ball game.

THE REAL GHOSTBUSTERS

● Activision

You've seen the cartoon, played with the toys and wondered what happened to Dan Aykroyd in the process. Now, thanks to Activision, you too can be one of the Real Ghostbusters. Get armed soon!



COMING SOON FROM ACTIVISION

Amiga versions of **R-Type**, **SDI** and **Afterburner** **STAY TUNED.**



PAPERBOY AND GHOSTS 'N GOBLINS

• Elite

After a quiet couple of months, Elite are set to land back onto the market with 16-bit versions of their best-selling 8-bit games, *Paperboy* and *Ghosts 'n Goblins*. Both games are set to appear over the next month or so - expect full reviews soon. From what we've seen, fans of either coloop are in for a pleasant surprise.



One of two action-packed conversions coming from Elite: *Paperboy* or *Goblins*.

FORGOTTEN WORLDS AND VIGILANTE

• Capcom

US Gold's Capcom label continues its assault on the Japanese console with *Forgotten Worlds* and *Vigilante*.

Forgotten Worlds lets two players work as a team, battling across an assortment of weird and wonderful scenery, letting us with heavy-duty firepower purchased along the way.

The Oriental combat theme gets another bite of life with *Vigilante*, where a few Western mental arts expert takes life and limb across the seedier parts of New York to rescue his beloved.

Released on all formats, *Vigilante* should be ready for a full review next issue, with *Forgotten Worlds* to follow sometime in April.

Forgotten Worlds - Two forgotten heroes search for something to break.



Vigilante - A slinky breaks out over the price of an ice cream?



MILLENNIUM 2.2

Last time a big asteroid hit the Earth it wiped out the dinosaurs. In the year 2200 one arrives with the human race's name on it. All that survives is a colony of 100 people on the moon. Not a very promising position to have to face as the colony leader. From just this one base you've got to colonize the solar system and survive all the dangers that a hostile universe can throw at you.

In order to expand the colony there are seven areas of the base that need to be used - research, production, energy, resources, defence, flight bay and life support. The purpose



of each is well explained but the important thing is the interaction between sections and the ever-increasing detail that is revealed as you get into the game.

For instance, the research department will start off being able to do only simple projects, but as the game progresses more and more complex and time-consuming bits of equipment become available. To build with these you need more and



more resources, and the energy to operate them. Resources are limited and so other colonies must produce them for some building projects. You'll even have to go and mine asteroids.

Of course you aren't going to be left in peace to explore the solar system. Disasters will strike and threats will materialize. The defence systems provide solid 3D shoot-em-up action that will have you panting to get fast.

Whatever the setbacks you have to persevere or the human race to get fast.

Whatever the setbacks you have to persevere or the human race to get fast.



The energy will allow us solar panels as many mineral generators are associated and built.

will die out. As it is there are some unpleasant mutations to be made in order to colonize inhospitable worlds.

The beauty of the game is that just when it seems there's nothing more to discover, something happens that changes everything. Nearly all the action is icon controlled and accompanied by some moody and attractive graphics scenes.

Just one more thing to remember, something no self-respecting space colonist should forget - F00M.

CHICAGO 30'S • US Gold

Take a trip back in time to the Chicago of 1930, where the ruling force is the mob and prohibition is in force. Detective Elton is on the trail of illegal booze and runs the gauntlet of gangsters who come out of the woodwork to take pot shots at the doc.

Programmed by Spanish software house Tapsoft, *Chicago 30's* is to be available soon on the US Gold label for the Amstrad, OSA, Spectrum, ST and MSX.



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**FREE
DISKS**



HIGH SPEED DRIVING, DRUG DEALING AND DEATH!

Where could you find CD jukeboxes in the shape of pink Cadillacs, kiddie rides in the shape of helicopters, fairground Wotzons and banks and banks of the latest arcade games? At the 45th Amusement Trades Exhibition International at Olympia in London. So that's where we packed Andy Smith off to for the day, to check out what will be big news in the arcades in the coming months.

The ATI Show - nice, hot and loud, in fact, it's just like a normal PC Show, except for the surge of goodies on display and the fact that it's only open to the trade. Which meant that so at the Preview '89 Show (opened in June '89) most of the groups flocked around the machines and sampling the rides were besotted businessmen.

The Atari stand was one of the most popular, since a new game was enjoying its world premier. *Hard Drive* has been some three years in development, and according to Atari it's the most realistic simulator ever to hit the arcades. And that's what's so revolutionary about the machine - it's been specifically designed to be more of a simulator than a driving game, and there's not a hydraulic to be seen!

Climb into the seat, adjust it for height and you're ready to start. Unless you can drive



Atari's television machine steering off *Operation Thunderbolt*



The chase isn't all in vain, out - see last month's *Q&A* for a review of the game.



More simulated vehicles, this time showing off Atari's *Marauder*.

already it's probably a good idea to stick to automatic transmissions because this simulator has more than just the standard accelerator and brake pedals - it has a clutch, and a four-speed gear shift. Select the transmission type, turn the key in the ignition on the console front and the motor kicks into life.

Then it's a case of deciding what kind of race you'd like. There are two courses: a start point and a speed course. The speed course is probably the easiest to cut your teeth on, since it simply involves driving around the course avoiding oncoming traffic while overtaking the slower moving cars in a bid to reach the next checkpoint within the time limit. Break the lap record and you enter 'The Challenge Lap': the machine remembers the course and time of the best driver on record, who becomes your opponent in a head-to-head race.

Speeding around in a simulating circuit in what feels like a real car (thanks to the carby

Atari, the ATI rated puzzle game developed in Florida, makes it into the arcades in a superb simulation (see last player machine). This game's got one big thing to be famous - it's madamemmy substantial (possibly) - start to prove it really is an arcade machine.



Atari's *Marauder* (captioned before) versions have an overhead monitor to allow others to watch while you drive.



feel steering, wheel and controls that supply you (visual feedback) as you drive, juddering over rough ground, or parking your hands all over the wheel if the car spins) is exhilarating enough, but for real breathtaking, heart-pounding action, try the stunt course. Again, you're up against the clock and there are other cars to avoid, but there are also some amazing obstacles to negotiate. The first is a jump across a bridge (Alan Brothers' tandem wheelers exactly the right speed) must be reached, not just to make it across the gap but also to avoid



Hard Drive - on the stunt course. But in the right gear and make sure you accelerate at the correct time when you go through the loop -- or you'll fall off the ceiling!

landing on the front bumper on the far side. Next, there's the astounding 360 degree vertical loop, where the speed must be adjusted on the way through the loop to avoid falling off the ceiling! Finally there's a high bank you have to drive around before you reach the check-point and gain extra time.

Alan isn't just blowing their own trumpet with their description "the closest thing to driving without actually being there" - it really is. You may have to pay a bit more than normal for the ride (playing is a dollar but a longer may cost up to \$1.50) but it's well worth

the money, and hopefully the respect also that will follow should it prosper to play.



Alan Smithee (a change for them, as they're normally associated with pin-ball machines) that's you in the middle of the road. Moving away some vicious events with your handy sub-machine gun.

Alan didn't have the drive all tied up through. There were plenty of other games grilling the controls - including Marc from Williams. It's curious, but this and other machines (Ray the 30 design is undoubtedly all over the controls) is a virtual, blood-thirsty, heart-pounding, exciting shoot-out.

The players (one or two simultaneously) play the roles of Max Power and his team and are set to smash the K.I.L.L.-R. drug organisation. That's why they're each equipped with two machine guns and a handful of rockets and hand to shoot loads of badmen that stand with

the screen from either side. A small map of the top of the screen shows how far away the boys are from the current gang-leader's location. Once they eliminate the leader, they're told to go after the next, tougher opponent. During the course of the game, badmen aimed will drop their body of either money or - and enemies - packets of drugs, which must be collected for bonus points at the end of the round.

The design for Marc is great, mainly due to the fact that as well as on-line stage, Williams are using a Texas Instruments 320x170 graphics standard processor to generate

the near-photographic quality pictures. Though the game may have good graphics and a message to get across, it's not that good a shoot-em-up.



Williams get the message across.

Also of interest on the Alan stand was the console version of Yates, the ACE rated arcade game (designed in Bosnia. You'll certainly remember it if you bought it, because it's one of those magnificently simple but horribly addictive games that is quite impossible to stop playing once you've started. And what a wonderful coin-up formula that ruled!

The game breaks down into several rounds that you progress through by stacking falling wagers to fill a set number of lines.

There's no time limit, but the falling sheets get faster as you move up through the rounds and once the stack reaches the top of the screen the game's over. Experienced Tetris players should seek out one of the console machines in their local arcade, because Tetris will be so impressed by your skill at playing this (in them at least) boards and alien machines. Tetris were also to be found there in force, showing off their Chase HQ

win version and more importantly, Operation Thunderbolt, topped by the highly successful Operation Wolf that Ocean recently converted magnificently to computer. As you might guess, it's as much the same vein as Oq Wolf, but the scenery and enemies have changed. You now fight what appear to be Middle Eastern terrorists and two players can simultaneously shoot and land the enemy to their hearts' delight. The rest of the plot's the same - destroy a set number of baddies, collect extra ammunition and rocket bombs and avoid taking hits. Magnificent blasting action, and even more fun now you can play with a friend.

Amongst the best of the best was Winning Run from Namco. This is a video game based on Formula One racing, viewed from the cockpit with a practice lap to determine your place on the grid before you launch into the Grand Prix. Formula stuff, and enhanced by the highly-ventured cabinet. Also from Namco is Mean Hawk, a helicopter shooter-up viewed from above that's tough but promises to be highly addictive.

The show promised a bright future as arcade games. Naturally such matters were much in evidence on a variety of games, and if manufacturers can keep coming up with games that involve new ideas and new technological advances, like Hard Drive and Marc, there's going to be no excess in future to walk past an arcade thinking "Well they're all the same, aren't they?"



Airborne Ranger



Not content with the purely battle, military simulations that MicroProse have brought out in recent times, Major Bill Stealey decided to take a step out of line and introduce some of the strategy and quick reaction thinking that MicroProse simulations are renowned for and pump them into an 'action strategy' game. The result? Airborne Ranger, an addictive game combining the best of MicroProse strategy with fast arcade action where you control one of the troops belonging to that crack American combat unit who have earned the privilege to wear the exclusive black beret.

As the best of the best, you are chosen to single-handedly accomplish twelve missions, set in three different parts of the world. Amongst the frozen wastes of the Arctic, you must beware the perils of walking on ice. In the more temperate climate of Central Europe, you are faced with the prospect of coming up against the best frontline troops that the massed Communist forces can produce. Alternatively, you could end up somewhere in the Persian Gulf taking out a fuel dump where, if the enemy doesn't get you, the heat and fatigue almost certainly will.

On each mission, you can choose from an impressive array of weaponry and supplies that will form the contents of three supply containers that will be your

lifeline on your mission. Grenades, magazines for your carbine, LAW missiles, knives, time charges and first aid packs can all be selected to best suit your needs for the coming mission.

Once packed, you are flown to your destination in an Copter aircraft. Having parachuted safely down to terra firma, the action really starts to hot up as you run, walk or crawl your way towards your objective, picking up the dropped supplies as you go. The difficulty can be altered before each mission, thus affecting your chances of survival. However, those with experience can go for a higher risk and the greater glory that ensues on return from a successful mission.

ST VERSION

Extremely playable and visually appealing with plenty of variety

Although proving popular with simulation devotees, seasoned arcade players will also enjoy getting to grips with Airborne Ranger. The game can be played as a fast-moving, hit-and-run-action game, but players will soon find that it will require some thought and pre-mission planning if one is to succeed in achieving each objective. This is where MicroProse's

reputation for excellence in strategy and simulation games comes in. Often it is a matter of getting to your objective in as quiet a manner as possible, thereby ensuring that the enemy remains unaware of your presence.

Once you have achieved your objective, you must make tracks for your rendezvous point where you will be picked up by a waiting Copter. However, one word of warning - there is a strict time limit to each mission so, although stealth may be important, lack of time might occasionally mean having to run the gauntlet in order to succeed. Are you man enough to handle the pressure?

The action is real - the suspense triggers the adrenalin rush that starts your senses working overtime. Airborne Ranger is an addictive strategy game that will have you playing over and over again in an effort to complete the next mission and get back in one piece.

RATING OUT OF TEN

GRAPHICS	8
SOUND	7
STRATEGY	9
PLAYABILITY	9
OVERALL RATING	9

Airborne Ranger is a move away from the simulation side of MicroProse releases but is still a step above the normal 'Rambor' Commando style of shoot-'em-up. An effective combination which should attract those looking for a thought-provoking game! - TOM

... an excellent game with a first-class mix of strategy and arcade action. "Once I'd learned that death with a knife gets you further than blasting everything in sight ... trying to complete the other missions was quite compelling. A game which needs careful thought as well as great firepower is revealed!" - COOK

RELEASE SCHEDULE

CGA/LSB OUT NOW	£14.95	US \$29.95
SPCC 128	OUT NOW	£ 9.95
SPCC +3	OUT NOW	£14.95
AMSTRAD	OUT NOW	£14.95
AMSTRAD	NEW	£29.95
IBM PC	SOON	ETBA
AMIGA	SOON	ETBA



MICRO PROSE

PLAYING BY PHONE

A man who has spent many a night crouched in front of his computer running up the phone bill contemplates the future of multi-user, modem games and the race between players and game designers. His real name remains a secret, but Zog (for it is he) knows his dungeons. He achieved the coveted status of a god in Gods, one of the more popular Multi User Games...

THE
GAMES

With the capabilities of computers to rig and cheat, falling, both the possibilities of what can be modeled by Multi-User Games (MUG) and the depth of realism they can achieve are constantly increasing.

As processor speeds increase, programmers get the freedom to move away from writing the customized code in assembler needed to achieve speed of response. They can start using more advanced languages which are more portable and cut development time. The major problem for those writing MUG-User Games is that users always expect a quick response to their input, as with any real-time system. It has been shown to be psychologically necessary for users to get an immediate response from the computer - even if all that happens is an echo of the last keystroke. A long delay causes users to feel less in control and somewhat uninterested, or they soon stop using the program.

Because software tools have progressed fast, game developers can now use powerful compilers that produce highly-optimized code, and so can worry less about achieving speed and concentrate more on the looks and functions that they are trying to code into their game.

With the cost and power of hardware has changed, and nowadays the machine that a MUG runs on no longer needs to be a large mainframe or mini-computer at a university. It can be a micro with a specialized board, or multiprocessor unit, to handle the connection to several terminals, and thus to the phone lines. Ma, but is it a machine more than I can afford? How you suffer to yourself. I had my doubts too, until last October, when I was here at the Adventure Convention. In its sunny Ballroom Library, I can now look you straight in the terminal and honestly tell you that this rather nice game runs on no more than a 486, done!

Multiprocessors can be made to control the machines for a MUG, clearing up the messes that dropped lines can cause and generally being widely served. They can also be personal,

and, after a little argument, to become more intelligent still. This becomes especially useful when more than one game is connected to the same multiprocessor. The immediate advantage is that paying customers have more choice about how they spend their money, since every game has a different feel and style of play to it. Also, intergame communications are possible - perhaps a player in one game picking up a telephone and dialing, and someone in another game suddenly hearing a telephone ring...

The function of a multiprocessor, to switch a number of telephone lines to several games, also provides a useful way of avoiding some of the current limitations on game speed. If a single MUG will only support about 16 players before slowing right down, then add plug another machine is used to it, and two periods? You can now support up to 16 players, if you have enough phone lines. Unfortunately, any one player can only ever meet the seven other people in the one game.

MEMORY BONDS

There might be a world memory(s) shortage at the moment, but the bonds required by computer memory on multi-user games are also becoming. Early games, stored in their room descriptions in disk because of space limitations, but disk access is a noticeably slow process compared to memory. Just try to imagine what would happen if 10 or more people each moved into a new location simultaneously, and each new location description required at least one disk access - the response to your simple North command may not come back for ages!

To experience a MUG by the time it gets behind, it tends to play behind like trying to move through clogged traffic. It is immensely frustrating because of the time-lag between command and response, so if you type ahead and make a mistake you could be in big trouble. Usually, a special bit of code called a Watchdog is written which keeps an eye on the rest of the program, and if nothing much happens for a certain time from the Watchdog, assumes that the game has gone into an infinite loop and

crashes it. When response times get too bad, the Watchdog can stop the feature for you in the original way possible, probably just when you've gained thousands of points and got your gut ready to saving your new score!

Nowadays, plenty of money is usually in hand, so people can begin to model their worlds in more detail, developing complex models of internal reality and of various continuous processes which add a realism (however striped which appears to people. For example, if a game is to model the weather, either to add realism or make a puzzle that is only solvable when the rain level is low, then it becomes attractive to build a weather system rather than using a random number generator to determine the water level of the rivers. Players also feel somehow more in control of their environment with this approach than if the whole thing is just the result of a single roll of computerised dice. So, you build weather in, wind and all, and allow a spell or magic which lets the players begin to affect it. Deciding when to wind the spells, and when, can be a puzzle in itself that the players have to solve...

A well-modified effect can avoid interaction bugs between various other bits of the game, but the code usually tends that there are still a few bits that introduce more problem effects than they cure and have to be plugged to get them to work.

JUST PLAYING IN THE PAUL...

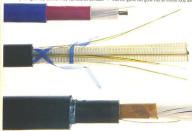
Always, back to the weather. But isn't too bad - just add a central location to all the rooms that represent outdoor locations, and let all the players take an outdoor (without the umbrella) about getting wet. Try not to forget to put in the rain code that stops matches striking and makes the power stop all soggy if they get wet. But how what do you do if the weather turns cold and it snows? Snow lies on the ground, only going away if it melts. People and monsters leave footprints in it. Or what happens if it rains for forty days and forty nights? Does the programmer assume that rain just soaks into the ground, and model the water as something separate, or does he try to make users have develop watercourses through which a certain amount of water that has fallen as rain flows? Can he cope with floods at all?

Despite (or possibly because of) these problems, a large number of game developers are very interested in playing with continuous process modeling techniques, which, if at possible economies can be raised for, can provide many hours' worth of data for the players (after repeating).

FUTURE DEVELOPMENTS.

With more memory and more processing power, a single game is increasingly able to handle a larger number of players online at one time. Because the equipment at the players' end is also becoming more sophisticated, models that use intelligent patching between speeds depend on the quality of any line are becoming

more common (although they only work if both ends of the phone line are set up to handle it). Gradually, the old job of 'Who laughs



PHOTOGRAPH BY MICHAEL BEE

last is at 200 baud" is becoming less common. This is good for all players, since it lets them get more response in either by the speed of the slowest part rather than masses of speed from the fastest ones.

Graphics are now the topic for all the single-user adventure games that are available. Even lifecosts, past masters of the advent adventures, now have at least static pictures as part of their games. Providing graphics with a MUG is not at all easy, however, given the limited bandwidth of the normal phone line. It is more likely that graphics will be handled as much as possible by the player's own machine, so if you are the lucky owner of a 386 workstation, you could have wonderful scenes with anti-aliasing, highlighting, shadows and all the extras. Otherwise, you will have to make do with the best picture that your machine can be made to draw. This has the advantage that the picture is transparent, the MUG not caring about how things are drawn, and the fact that the player at the other end has some kind of graphics capability. If he goes mad and upgrades his machine, or his graphics cockpit, the MUG couldn't care less.

Unfortunately, a local machine can only be allowed to do a small portion of any processing. If the MUG sends out a chunk of data and says "Here - take this bit and show the player what he can see," someone is going to modify the program so that it displays the observed and music file objects too - a useful tool for debugging purposes, but it does give a player rather an edge... in fact, it could be called cheating by someone less kind than myself.

This also highlights another point that has come to light concerning the use of a home computer which was once no more than a dumb terminal. With communications programs becoming more advanced, players can now log a personal read file into it if it scrolls off the screen too fast for them to read at the time and build in sets of commands, as a function key assignment or a script file. With a cutting set of commands, the gaming of treasure before other players get to it becomes a matter of who can log in first and press a key - not much for any more.

This is not to say that I am personally against the use of F keys and scripts - it is rather like Camel's telling the sea to go back, but things could be developed further. I am all in favour of artificial intelligence in a personae - and I would dearly love to see control programs that handled most of the behaviour and actions of game characters automatically. In other words, the program handles the mechanics of moving about, hunting for treasure, etc., and you have to be a sort of supervisor, controlling an overview of what is to be done next and chatting to the other game inhabitants. People are hard at work on producing these artificial intelligence machines.

FURTHER GAME CHANGES

The MUG itself is going to have to change further. For example, randomising the start locations of treasure is one of the simple plays used by game designers to cope with control programs having function keys. Its scripts create which can test upon descriptions for the presence of treasure, and keep on searching until it is found, so game design is going to have to keep pace. The point is not to become annoyed

about technological advances and lose clever home-computer players, but to make game personae more like human beings, with automatic and learned responses. If gamers are made more complex, only a human will be able to cope.

Many deaths amongst experienced players of MUGs tend to occur when they try to use the keyboard to make a quick cup of tea. Because they are lazy, they just leave their character hanging around in the game rather than logging out. Jog's First Law, that the more unlikely an event is, the bigger the chance of it happening when you are most vulnerable, then coming into effect. The deadly mummy stands in in the room and of course attacks your character. You return with a steaming cuppa in your hand, just in time to see the mummy deliver the final crushing blow that kicks your over-optimally-developed personae into limbo. But is it fair or realistic? Is not the best crushing blows as your trust door is converted to matchwood should

easily be enough to weaken you from your day-dream and encourage you to log out of the site? With clever programming, giving the player useful information (online maps, for example) and handling the simpler and more repetitive tasks, the MUG can concentrate on dealing with the traps and avoiding things from his position as general, rather than having to do the dorky work. When a door is smashed down, the intelligent player should be warned enough to keep long and loud at you and still make your personal log out of the window if the mummy hasn't it.

Still, players of games do not by any means face it all their own way. Little tricks by the coders, such as routes through mazes that are randomised between visits can confuse all but the clearest players (human or script). The evolutionary race between home players and game designers has a long way to go yet, and both have a few tricks up their sleeves. ■



IMAGE: JAMES DEER/SUNSHINE ARTISTS

BRINGING HOME THE CHAMP

LAST DUEL™



LAST DUEL™ The Golden Tales of SAGOLIA have written the tale about life and death against the beautiful Princess (SAGOLIA). The princess carries out duty and wishes the "bringer" of happiness to face the monster that exists. Enjoy your story through an exciting world with many more and surprising adventures that take it where it's never been before!

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Computer-generated images are all around us. Complex and expensive hardware is used in the TV and video world to create effects, animation, and graphics — everyone from Lucasfilm to the smallest, back-street video editing suite is using computers. And computer game graphics are popping up on TV and even in a few high-tech stores.

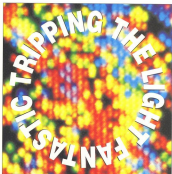
The computer is beginning to be accepted as a medium by the artists (see Brian Latham's graphics pages this issue), and we find by the self-congratulatory types in the advertising and TV world. Already, complete graphic packages put professional results within the grasp of the IT or design lover, and by investing in a video digitizer and graphics board, impressive video production facilities can be enjoyed by the individual.

Then there's the world of music, where the MIDI standard, sampling techniques and computer-driven equipment allow an amateur who has minimal training in music to create and record professional-quality compositions.

With talent, a CBS, the right software and a Super machine it is possible to create a Top Ten hit.

Yet computer games are still the main entertainment application of affordable machines, and it is the graphics and music from computer games that most people are familiar with. There's a big thing to be made producing sounds and images to go with entertainment software, and it rarely makes commercial sense for a programmer to go off as a self-indulgent, creative track divorced from games programming or hardware commercial systems work. But apparently self-indulgent pursuit of innovation is 'way of life' products can pay dividends. Like the Apple Macintosh project, led in an amateur and off-the-wall way by Steve Jobs, a man with Pixar and the drive to create a computer that was 'insanely great'.

Despite the low possibilities of immediate financial reward, two casual programmer-led companies have spent the last couple of years following their primary interest, paying the bills with the profits realised from earlier, commercially-oriented projects. Jeff Miner's IT Colourquester opened Trip-A-Trip, a creative graphics performance 'tool', and in turn a concept video album *Hexa4*, but for the time being Jeff has returned to writing about on- and off-line money. And Alex Blok and the Technation team have dedicated six months to Project Flashdance — the development of an Amibrosius-based digital audiovisual entertainment system for professional users.



Today, computers can be creative performance tools. The arrival of 16-bit and 32-bit RISC machines at 'affordable' prices opens up new possibilities for new forms of computer entertainment. Seen, we could be entertained by audio-visual programmes generated by computer, or even generating our own multi-media entertainments.

PROJECT FLASHDANCE

Alex Blok has a somewhat 'alternative' view of the world, as opposed to the hardline commercial viewpoint — 'insystems' appears on his business card alongside 'hardware', 'software' and 'systems'. He intended in developing things that help to preserve the environment, he explains, and he is clearly serious when he says that he will 'invest money in making the world a better place' if Project Flashdance makes a lot of money.

He first got interested in home computers in the days of the ZX1, when he entered a magazine competition to predict the likely design and capabilities of a theoretical machine, the ZX82. Readers of the now-defunct *More Computer* might remember that Alex Blok used in the winning entry, which predicted many of the features of machines such as the Q1, One Per Desk and Z88.

By a strange and dramatic quirk of fate, Alex moved from his Spectrum prior to the BBC when his house was struck by lightning, which blew up the Spectrum and other electrical goods. The insurance money funded the purchase of a BBC, and Technation was born. An unpublished graphics program was followed by a Morse code word processor for the disabled developed in cooperation with Quantel, and then the first major commercial success for Techna-

tion — a Desk Top Publishing program. This RISC software and its subsequent versions generated most of the money that funded Technation's Blue Ocean resources.

By drawing together people with a variety of skills, and talents, and paying them on a royalty basis — if a project succeeds, then all the members of the team get to share in the proceeds — Blok has assembled a pool of creative talent. Technation's slogan is 'Innovation by Inspiration' and apart from runs of the self-commercial work, there is plenty of room for creative thinking. Much of the work on hardware is in algorithms for projects of the future proven useful in the development of more immediately commercial applications.

The idea for a sound-light system first



A schematic diagram of the BT Browser and the potential inputs and outputs.

began taking shape at Technovation during 1988. Using the BBC computer, a prototype system called *Bit Ripper* was built and tested, but with no commercial prospects pushed it onto the back burner for a while. The following year, design and feasibility studies began on a project called *Genesis* - which may be described as an imagination processor, designed to run on graphics workstations of the future. By the autumn of last year, *Bit Ripper* had taken over



Artist: Bit whimsy gains a new lease of life on the *Bit Ripper*. The geometrics shapes swirl around the screen, changing colour and getting larger and smaller. Scaling an 800 by 600, Alex Blok put an AEG tape to them too...

again, moving onto the Archimedes and entering into a system for controlling sound and vision. Project *Handmade* came into being, a project to which Technovation has devoted all its resources.

BIT RIPPER

Technovation have only been working full time on Project *Handmade* for about six months now, but already the *Bit Ripper* is capable of producing some spectacular effects. Running on two Archimedes machines linked together via BBC, the system is designed to be integrated into existing visual entertainment systems which might include devices such as lasers or other effects equipment, as well as monitors or video projectors. One Archimedes, called the *Envision Control*, runs software that is used to set up the effects that can be generated by the



The partitioned *Envision Control* - shows different frequency analysis patterns in time to the audio track. Just for fun, this too!

other Archimedes, the *Envision Processor*. It is the *Envision Processor* that does all the work during a *Bit Ripper* programme.

Working on the *Envision Control* machine, imagination is all that limits a light display. A wide range of effects can be produced and run automatically, sequenced in a visual programme as specified by the system to an audio track. An art utility is part of the *Envision Control* software, and text messages, logos or patterns can be generated, saved to disk and incorporated into a *Bit Ripper* programme. Alternatively, a video source -

CONFESSIONS OF A LLAMAPHILIAC...

Fig. 4: Tom, son of Collaboration and product of Sams-tipped programmer Jeff Miner is billed in its own advertising as 'a creative graphics performance tool'. Reasonably so, for it is in effect a light, or graphic effects synthesizer that allows the user to prepare a sequenced 'show' or production graphics on the G7 format.

Jeff Miner has devised an unconventionally large chunk of his programming



The front panel of Fig-4, shows in effect the main control menu which allows subsidiary control panels to be called on screen and used.



Fig. 4: Tom is prepared with ability but not names and more than the fair share of furry animals. This is the *Bit Ripper*, the design tool that allows laser effects to be generated.

effort-to-developing Fig-4-Box, which contains over 28,000 lines of assembler-8 major code indeed, and one which has absorbed much of Jeff's creative ability and experience of programming fast-moving graphic games.

Fig-4: Tom is no mere sound-to-light program - it was designed as an instrument which allows the user to play with light as a musician would play with sound. While very much an 'alternative' product, away from the mainstream of games programming, **Fig-4: Tom** is certainly innovative and well worth checking out.

If looking out CES on a

piece of software for the G7 domain, then involving £12.95 in the *Merak* concept video would be a worthwhile alternative. Produced by Jeff Miner, in association with electronic musician Adrian Plogner, *Merak* is a space-opera in which Fig-4 Non-generated graphics accompany and illustrate a concept album.

Merak, the video, makes interesting watching - even if you don't share the llama-loving hippy values which run through it at least one of its creators. Without wanting to sound too much like an advertising supporter, even if you hate *Merak* (unfairly), all you've done is bought a rather expensive blank video cassette.

Jeff Miner and Alex Blok are already talking about the common ground which the *Bit Ripper* and



Merak we have the *Colour Control*, which could just as logically have been called the *Merak Show*. This lot of Fig-4-free software (and the changes to be effected).

Fig-4: Tom share, and are chaffing over the possibility of a joint product for the Atari 8500, if, as and when the hardware materialises.

Merak is available on VHS cassette, direct from Llamaphil at 48 Mount Pleasant, Telford, Shropshire TF11 8BA, Tel: 07556 4475. Go on, give a labelled old hippy a bit of support!



Just as a computer musician might use a sequencer to program a tune, so the **Fig-4: Tom** light artists use an event sequencer to set up a sequence of pre-defined events. Alternatively, you can customise the keyboard, having being told alphabetical keys into powerful light syntheses keys and play gestures strong to music. Jeff Miner has taken the **Fig-4: Tom** out on the road, going with light on stage, and not with music. There's no reason why you, too, shouldn't become a visual star.



Fig-4: Tom - Merak the video, **Fig-4: Tom** needs the video tapes.

perhaps a handheld video camera that moves amongst dancers at a dance - can be used for live input. Then there's a sophisticated text processor module, that allows messages to be set up and made to appear at pre-defined times or under certain musical conditions. The way in which text appears on the screen is also controlled by the Light Jockey - in the prototype we saw letters falling, spelling out a message could be built into the screen as 3D letters.

A video processor gives the Light Jockey comprehensive control over images fed in as a video signal. They can be positioned, flooded with colours, recorded and played back or assembled in a sequence and displayed in time to the music. Facilities to cut from one image to another are being programmed in - already there's an impressive roll, which cuts the full screen up into text. As with all the Bit Dipper functions, images may be pulsed in time to the audio input.

A suite of basic visual effects is also available to the light jockey. The Tivvixi Zoo generates psychedelic patterns which can then be



The stunning solid 3D frequency analyzer display, overlaid on the Starlightmanor video. These blocks bounce up and down, following the lyrics of Peter Gabriel's songs. The movement is smooth, slick and well impressive. All the other Bit Dipper effects can be overlaid on video images in the same way, using the built-in graphics facilities.



This section of the control panel found on the Architecture that acts as Emulator Control. The software is still in a reasonably early stage, but everything works via a really friendly user interface based on sliders and a control panel layout that is familiar to anyone who has used a mixing desk or edit suite.

pulsed in time to the music, an 01 Effect simulator adds a new level to the old 80's disco favourite - a basic set of geometric shapes is available on the system, but custom ones can be generated using the art utility and moved around the screen with or instead of the standard shapes; the Freevax utility generates starburst effects, rotating jacks across the screen; the Slope Dipper offers a set of unusual frequency analyzers that pulse in time to an audio track, and finally, there are a range of 3D sound/light effects planned. Already, a 3D bar graph frequency analyzer is up and running, and even more is promised.

All the Bit Dipper effects can be used in their own, or superimposed on a video signal - which means that a Bit Dipper programme can

be overlaid on a pop video. The Light Jockey can extract the Bit Dipper to produce its own effects randomly, in synchronization with the audio track or can drive the system manually in real time.

Words can hardly do justice to the complexity of the effects that may be produced with the Bit Dipper - it is, after all, meant to be part of an audiovisual entertainment system, and really needs to be experienced. Techniques are still developing away, adding more and more effects to their system but the demo software is sophisticated enough for them to take on the road to audio visual companies. If a partner is forthcoming, the Bit Dipper and Light Jockey could soon be a vital ingredient of every high tech disco show. ■

COMBINING TECHNOLOGY WITH IMAGINATION

Technation. Set up in 1982 by Alex Blak, Technation has remained low profile - you probably haven't heard of it, but as a BBC, PCW, CFC, CBA or Amiga person you will certainly have heard of, if not owned, software produced by Technation. They use the people who claim to have produced the first DTP software in Europe, and equate the world - remember 486? Pagemaker for the BBC? Potential envisaged with the American giants Aldus, who also came up with the Pagemaker name and DTP software at roughly the same time, led to Technation's prod-

uct being renamed *Step Press*. After its debut on the BBC computer nearly five years ago, Pagemaker/Step Press was rewritten for the CBA, and then for the Amstrad CPC and PCW machines, each coinciding with new reviews in the specialist press.

In 1987 Technation turned its attention to the Amiga, producing Amigamagic, a demo for Commodore UK, but incorporating 'Samples' Steve Skelton, an interactive rolling demo, a 3D animation system and a computerised User Guide. This was followed



The world's first Light Jockey Alex Blak sits down in front of Emulator Control, the Architecture that runs software that controls a Bit Dipper programme of visual effects and music. Essentially, it's an on-screen audiovisual mixing desk that lets playing with.

The full installation of the Project Flashdance view goes as follows... Concept, graphics design and Emulation Control code, Alex Blak; Emulation Control and Emulation Processor code, Neil Lane; Audio hardware, Andrew Fisher; Video digitisation hardware, Mike Harrison; Video graphics, Mike Haines.

by the design for an Amiga product, Sample Studio, published by Data! - Technation also co-wrote the code. Then at the end of last year, Technation decided to start publishing in its own right. Dealer Press offers a utility for the PCW version of Step Press, is being published in-house, but Technation is not going to end up at a software house. The team is committed to innovation, and for the last couple of years has been using receipts from commercially published products to fund research and development on projects for the future.

FULL WARNING STATUS: CONDITION RED

BLASTEROIDS

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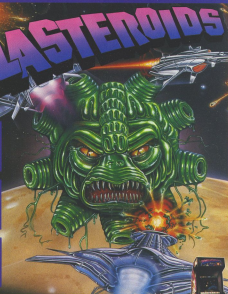
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WIN A 2000 YEAR OLD COIN



AGE and Actual Screenshots, CRL's new label, are teaming up to offer a lucky reader the chance to own a coin that was legal tender before the birth of

Christ. It's a Silver Denarius of the sort issued between 80BC and 30BC, and the first prize winner in our *7 Ludicrus* competition will collect this piece of small change along with a copy of the game on the ST or Amiga.

Five runner-up prizes of VHS copies of the classic Carry On film *Carry On Cleo* are also on offer, cunningly complemented by a free copy of *7 Ludicrus*, and then by way of consolation we have a further ten copies of the cute gladiatorial beat-em-up to send out to ten more successful entrants.

Poor old *Ludicrus*, a short and puny staff writer of a Roman soldier finds himself in a bit of a predicament in the latest release from Actual Screenshots. *Ludicrus* was boasting one evening that he could take on the combined might of the Emperor's gladiators and defeat the lot of 'em, no trouble. Sadly for *Ludicrus*, the Emperor got to hear of his drunken boast, and has had him arrested and thrown into the arena. The game starts as *Ludicrus* squares up to the first of his formidable opponents. Can you light a path to freedom for the little legionary? Well, enter the competition and you might get the chance to test your combat skills without parting with any hard-earned cash.

Answer the five questions, complete the entry form and post it to **7 LUDICRUS, AGE MAGAZINE, 4 QUEEN STREET, BATH, AVON, BA1 1EJ** making sure your missile arrives in our office before 2nd April.

Usual competition rules apply.



FIVE LUDICRUS QUESTIONS

1) What's a Roman coin?

NAME _____

2) What's Crocian 2000 for?

ADDRESS _____

3) Who built Hadrian's wall?

4) Where is Caesar's palace?

5) What sort of Centurion carries a qua?

COMPUTER OWNED _____

AGE

963

Look closely at your archrival: Gods II (resemble Mount Olympus, the best of the Gods). Currently, perhaps not - but it's Professor that's exactly what it can become, as you look down on a world in which you have divine powers, and influence the lives of the population at the touch of a mouse button.

As a Divine Being, the more followers there are to worship you, the more power is put at your disposal to influence nearby affairs to your own advantage - and you're going to need a few advantages in order to survive. Why? Because it's war down there.

Another bunch of people living there takes a real dilly controlled by either the computer or a friend, who can be sat right next to you or placed miles away via a modem or satellite cable, and these worlds aren't big enough to support both tribes, so one has to go. And that's where you come in.

First thing to do is build up a good following. This is achieved by ordering your image population (which starts at about three tiny men, each representing a tribe) to settle. In the main, the big tent outside the countryside looking for flat pieces of land to build houses (surrounding towns and villages) on. The flatter the immediate surroundings, the more advanced a house the little chaps can build - as is a castle. The more advanced the dwellings, the faster your power builds up and the greater the population's technology level, which helps later when it comes to fighting.

So what if the land is too uneven to build on? Easy: flatten it for them (using the left mouse button, click on a piece of land and, lo and behold, a small hillock appears). This is very handy for filling in gaps between other bits and thus creating flat land. The right

POPULOUS

A little divine intervention from ELECTRONIC ARTS



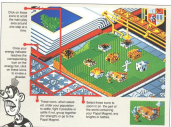
A Desert World - your followers, having run out of flat land to build on, are like in their houses. You won't give power until they populate more land...



...as level the land off and they'll be encouraged to go forth and multiply. Remember - the flatter the surrounding land, the more advanced the dwellings.



See? They have been tempted. If you move them off the rest of this part of the world, they will hopefully move onto that as well.



RELEASE BOX

ATARI ST	£24.95pb	April 83
AMIGA	£24.95pb	April 83
IBM PC	Version pending price TBA	

LANDSCAPE GARDENING

Populous contains three games. The historical game spans the world, the modern game allows you to alter your own game parameters (making the opposing dilly as tough or as soft as you wish) and the campaign game consists of over 1,000 increasingly difficult worlds. Like The Settlers, you don't have to play through all the levels.



A Snow World. Life is hard in this climate.

scopes in the campaign game at one sitting; the real world you play depends on the scope selected, and you can access the last world played by simply typing in its name.

As well as the difficulty of the opponent (varying the abilities of the resident dillys), affecting how your population reacts. For

example, Snow Worlds are the most friendly whereas Ice Worlds are inhospitable places where it can be difficult to persuade dillys to leave their cozy homes to settle in other areas.

Desert and Fire Worlds are also harsh and the people tend to die young. This may not sound like worrying, but you do have to change strategy to compensate. For example, if you're used to having lots of knights wandering around a Snow World tamping all the dillys, you may be all too ready to give up when you try that tactic on a Desert World, where knights tend to die off before they can reach far or do much damage.

mouse button has the same effect, so by clicking and dragging out pieces of land you can encourage your population to grow.

Right, the population's growing nicely, your power is increasing and it's a lot of fun playing with the landscape. But your people aren't producing the more remote areas lovingly created for them - what to do? Simple, make them journey to settle by placing what's known as the Paper Magnet in the right spot. The Paper Magnet is a kind of religious icon, a monument that your population is attracted towards when out in town to Paper Magnet's needs.

If your followers have a leader they'll head towards the leader who in turn heads for the Magnet, but if you have no leader they head directly for the Magnet and the first to reach it becomes the new leader. Leaders can be for good, especially since you can lure leaders into traps, or immediately set off for the nearest enemy settlement, kill the inhabitants and burn down the houses, destroying the land which the continuously was going to sustain itself. Knights remain on the rampage until they're eventually killed.

Does you get your people in the right



Gain enough energy and you can turn your leader into a knight.



Knights set off in search of enemy dwellings. Fight the occupants then burn the houses.



It's tough to build around burnt-out houses, so to get rid of them, why throw them to sea level.

place, all you have to do is switch them back into Settler mode and they'll populate the right area. Assuming things are going well and the other player appears to be struggling, it might be a good idea to switch them to Settler mode. Then they'll look for enemy houses and fight the inhabitants, taking over the houses if they win. If there are no battles in sight they'll settle as normal. This is a handy way to push off the lead of the other player's followers, so depriving the power of the opposing god, and asserting dominance over the whole world. Then it's on to another world, a new kind of landscape and another challenge.

Posidon is a terrific game. The LOGOS world does not take months to play through—and doesn't require to win each one—but the ability to play against a friend (especially a remote one) increases the leading interest even more. Unless you're the world's most innovative chessplayer, too, you're bound to enjoy playing Posidon for a long, long time.

● Andy Smith

AMIGA VERSION

Terrific graphics, well-presented, an complemented by lifelike sound effects and some character music. Absolute wonder! But that will keep you playing and playing. Nothing are going to let this one a high call to follow.

GRAPHICS: 9 IQ FACTOR: 4
 AUDIO: 9 FUN FACTOR: 9
ACE RATING: 9.0

PREDICTED INTEREST CURVE



If only every Amiga game was as good.



ACTS OF GODS

Knights may be heavy pieces of work, but if you really want to upset the other god, try throwing a natural disaster at him. Storming (shown) may cause buildings to burn, but also clear the board of dead sheep that are blocking to build around and can only be removed by moving sheep into the sea.

Storming (top right) is a kind of enemy lightning and will only be deadly to a resource that still has, destroying buildings and expelling huge clouds of smoke. If the sea level is too high, a timely earthquake can force some of his people (standing in the water), and if he doesn't build fast under these odds, they'll drown.

An equally effective means of getting rid of some of his sheep is to visit a nearby monastery in his territory—any of his followers wandering into it will be worthless.

Even less subtle than volcanoes and floods (below), the water table can cover the whole world, hopefully covering most of his territory.



Headling, before and after. Encourage your population to settle as high, the areas and if your opponent's units are about to be cornered (start with populating the new lands. Activate the Flood and Storm! Most of his population will be wiped out!

SYNONYMOUS will be the very best in best adventures in the name of Mechs. Now they are turning their talents to roleplaying games. *BattleTech* is well known among RPG fans, rather for violent conflict than for character development. Ironically this makes it a much better bet for success on computer than other, more violent games.

The *BattleTech* games are set in the Star Century, when two warring nations fight it out using lethal robots called BattleMechs. The Mechs are similar to those robots in children's cartoons, which have all manner of wacky weapons, but there's no messing about with transformations into seemingly harmless kiddie steeds — these Mechs aren't about to disguise any of their metal-munching armour.

The first *BattleTech* scenario, set on the planet of Pacifica, is subtitled *The Crescent Blade*. Inception and centres around a young character called Jason 'Ironblood'. You control him as he learns how to become a MechWarrior and — subsequently joined by several other characters — tackles a difficult quest.



The *BattleTech* where you start and do the initial training. The main game screen shows an overhead view of the action. It's also where you can withdraw and reassign troops up for transactions in shops, and to provide information.

BATTLETECH

INFOCOM swap text for "Tech

You start in the training school where Mech combat training is the main order of the day. There are many other things to do, however, most of them essential to successful completion of the quest. Dealing in stocks and shares is the best way to make big money; money which is needed to pay for combat training, buy armour and weapons, and learn skills in tech and medicine. Most expensive of all is customising a Mech with non-standard weaponry.

Once *J* graduates from the training school — and this will happen abruptly — his main job is to report on the rest of Pacifica. This takes time, and many hostile forces must be engaged after leaving your home town. An expensive terrain



Entering the *MechTech* Later when 'Mechs use the required, tech skills based on a Mech customised.



Building with two 'Mechs during a training exercise.



Out in the open you encountered an enemy group. Will you take them on or try to escape?

can also be gained at an arena where you can go head-to-head with another Mech. Defeat, though, is costly.

Factors affecting the outcome of a battle include the terrain, weapons used, which opponent is tackled first and how much you move around. The computer can generally be treated as a good job against an inferior or equal force, but against a stronger opponent more cunning strategies from the human mind are needed.

After a while Mech combat becomes incidental to the quest part of the game. Exploring Pacifica is a big job and every town will have to be visited at some point. frequent trading is handy too because you never know when disaster will strike.

BattleTech does not have quite the level of plotting you would expect from an Infocom game, but it combines the Mech combat and quest elements well. The only problem is that because the game is addictive you may solve it quickly, and it only has limited replay potential. A great start though, and it looks as if there will be more *BattleTech* games on the way.

—Neil Peate

PC VERSION

The VGA and VGA graphics are pretty darn good and even in CGA events are clearly displayed. For Mech combat for compensation though.

GRAPHICS 4 IS FACTOR 7
AUDIO 1 RUN FACTOR 5
ACE RATING 5.01

PREDICTED INTEREST CURVE

Very absorbing and challenging, but you might complete it rather too quickly.

UNSCRUPULOUS members of the military have concocted a devious method of gaining new recruits by cloning. A normally routine non-simulation war results in the somewhat confused patient regarding consciousness on another planet, with a genetically identical copy in tow and facing hordes of menacing creatures. A most unpleasant welcome to the Queen's Closed Highlands.

The freshly imprisoned Captain Fizz and

RELEASE BOX	
AMIBET	014 256 OUT NOW
AMIGA	014 256 OUT NOW
SPDC 128	Price TBA IMMINENT
AMSTRAD	To version planned
OS/2	Price TBA IMMINENT
IBM PC	Price TBA IMMINENT

BT VERSION

Each screen resembles a small playing arena, but the two players are close and real, being horizontal rather than vertical. The tracking system is accomplished by a more low-contrast screen effects - adequate for the job in hand, but hardly the product of a real imagination.

GRAPHICS 4 IN FACTOR 4
 AUDIO 5 FUN FACTOR 7
ACE RATING 754

CAPTAIN FIZZ MEETS THE BLASTER-TRONS

PSYCLAPSE play a duet

his Blaster-Trons have been beamed aboard the planet Fizz to stage a huge installation affected with Blaster-Trons. After negotiating all 32 levels of the full-screen console, they must reach and document the designed game computer that's creating the Blaster-Trons.

QMPS gives the Gauntlet theme another twist by featuring a simultaneous split-screen

dually and vibrantly two player action. In fact, the packaging states that it's impossible to complete the mission alone, so computer friends should steer clear from the cabinet.

Both players move individually, but must cooperate in order to solve puzzles and progress through the maze-like installation. Additional ammo and armor can be collected,



(Right) Showing the last grey 'L' levels since this character hit computer space, allowing Blue to enter.

(Left) If Blue notices this setting and switches to the right entry, a room of green lights appears and the glowing green force field is deactivated, allowing Red to reentry past.

COSMIC PIRATE

OUTLAW hoist the Jolly Roger



Amiga - In deep space, fighting off hordes of marauding fighters.



Amiga - Combat continues. The arena shrank like objects are taken.



Amiga - Plan for home with a ship in tow.

MAKING

Once you're in the air in this hot hot from the Galactic station as you play Gay liberally, a state with a doggy post set to stake it risk in the tough world of intergalactic organized crime.

On board NEXT 51 Gay encounters The Council, who are the meanest, baddest mother's boy side of the intercomets nebula and only happens to be behind every crooked show in the galaxy. To prove himself Gay must make them (and hopefully, you feel safe of money to roving around sailor hoarding innocent space truckers in order to pack their trucks, too than back to base and flag the cargo).

Before setting out on a first hijacking mission, you need to convince The Council that you've got what it takes to survive. Thankfully, they have installed several mission simulators at the base to give a taste of what you can expect to find in space. And what, exactly, can you expect to find in space?

For a start, there's a multitude of kinds of missile launchers and guns, set to destroy your ship. Secondly, there are hyperspace beacons, providing shortcuts from one sector to another, which you need to use to reach the same sector as the space truckers. Once in the same sector as a truck, you only have to follow the icon to the ship and then shoot it a few times before backing up and bringing it in for a reward.

Unfortunately, working from one sector to

AMIGA VERSION

The graphics and sound are great and it plays well. The missions are fun for a while, but do become repetitive eventually.

GRAPHICS 5 IN FACTOR 5
 AUDIO 5 FUN FACTOR 5
ACE RATING 756

RELEASE BOX

AMIBET	013 000	OUT NOW
AMIGA	013 000	OUT NOW
SPDC 128	Price and release date TBA	
AMSTRAD	Price and release date TBA	
OS/2	Price and release date TBA	
IBM PC	To version planned	

another costs points, and the only way to collect points is to shoot them. It takes a long time to mount up points merely by slaughtering, but luckily the alien alien ship pods which can be collected to increase your score, or reduce your damage level. After the damage meter is reach the top, and you'll have failed the mission and will have to do another simulator session before The Council will allow you to go out again.

As you gain experience The Council allow you to undertake increasingly dangerous missions, which usually mean you're hyperspaced further away from the target and have to spend longer making plans to gain points to boost

together with colour-coded keys which open doorways. Credits may also be traded in to maintain a player's flagging health status.

A pleasant mix of blasting, strategy and puzzle-making makes *JULES* compelling and entertaining. An interesting change of direction for Polytron, a welcome price tag and a good excuse to invite a friend round for a blast.

■ **Tom-Jarvis**



JOURNEY TO THE CENTRE OF THE EARTH

Going underground with RAINBOW ARTS

This map gives a rough guide to the locations that are available.

The four stats and their maximum levels: your maximum score, your maximum health, your maximum energy, and your maximum money.

Characterisation in health is also influenced by the character's sex, as well as his or her equipment and accessories.

There are four items which are essential for survival: a map, a compass, a flashlight, and a first aid kit.

JULES seems liked to go where no man had gone before – if only in past – circling around the world in 80 days, 26,000 leagues under the sea and, of course, to the centre of the earth. Leaders, and later followers, delighted in being taken on these journeys – since computer gamers can venture into the realms of the unknown as well.

As might be expected, coming from the team of programmers that produced *Joan of Arc*, the game is presented as a mixture of adventure and strategy demands interspersed with arcade action. The player can choose to take the side of one of four adventurers, each of whom possesses different skills, but play is much the same for any of them.

The task is to find a route linking various locations, descending into the bowels of the earth. Along the way, the character faces a host of attrition against numerous underground dangers. A rough map acts as a guide but the exact route has to be discovered by exploring rock strata and test descriptions of the loca-



There are many delightful backgrounds; this one appears at the start of the game and is followed by a rockfall sequence.

tion. Should the adventurer stray off the route a number of harmful surprises await, injuries can be healed from the medical kit but there's only a limited amount of healing power.

The arcade action sequences require the player to avoid falling rocks, catch water dripping from the ceiling, beat steamships down and circumnavigate levels of stampeding woolly mammoths. Unfortunately the gameplay is really too, because all it involves is running left and right to avoid things.

It's certainly a well-structured game, but lacks sufficient content to keep you hooked. When it's completed and the route is known, it will offer little to keep you coming back.

■ **Sam Hall**

through hyperspace leasards. After surviving a few missions you will have earned enough to start thinking about upgrading the ship with better weapons, faster engines and so on.

Comic Future is a fun shoot'em-up, ultimately it's lack of depth in gameplay, but the increasingly difficult leasards make the interest for a while.

■ **Andy Smith**



Always – The smaller map screen shows you plan a route to visit...



RELEASE INFO

JULES ST	£19.99	OUT NOW
AMIGA	£19.99	imminent
CD-ROM	£24.99	imminent

No other versions planned

BT VERSION

There are attractive ball shots and backgrounds, action sequences are not well executed – the main results are intensely pink as they thunder towards. The sound effects are mostly aghast, including the roar of the mammoths and action collisions.

GRAPHICS	5	IS FACTOR	5
SOUND	4	FUN FACTOR	4

AGE RATING 5/70



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The Atari Super Pack logo features the Atari logo symbol (a stylized 'A' with a triangle) to the left of the text 'ATARI' in a large, bold, sans-serif font. Below 'ATARI' is the text 'SUPER PACK' in a smaller, bold, sans-serif font.

DRAGON'S LAIR

The READYSOFT six pack



A traditional way of the sword...

...and this ends up being profitable by the tank's side.

WANDER into any arcade of five years ago, and it's a good bet there's a large crowd huddled round the machine, buying in \$2.50 for their 15 minutes. Don Bluth's *Dragon's Lair* was one of the first machines to present the trendy CG look of today by using (cheap-quality) animation from a laser disc.

The expensive and obsolete machines soon fell out of fashion, but now, Amiga owners with a 1 Meg memory (or an A1300) can see

all the delights of the groundbreaking arcade classic. All the animation and soundtrack of the original has been digitized, and the resulting 130 Megabytes of data compressed on to six double-sided disks. Our smooching owners of a second drive.

The gameplay revolves around the efforts

AMIGA VERSION

The hard and most magnificent *Dragon's Lair* is beyond doubt, but the game is very profitable and doesn't take long to complete because of its exciting and pleasing price to be the best set in the world.

GRAPHICS: 5 10 FACTOR: 5

SOUND: 5 FUN FACTOR: 5

AGE RATING: 4/7

RELEASE BOX	
ATARI ST	Five and release date TBA
AMIGA	\$24.95 OUT NOW
No other versions planned	

of one Dirk Daring to rescue princess Daphne from the clutches of Sirko the Dragon. Daphne has been imprisoned in Sirko's castle and Dirk must hack-slay his way through lonely trapped rooms, up climbing spiral staircases and (just in case of creators in a boss attempt to liberate his beloved.

Dirk's actions are limited to movement (left, right, forward and back plus a jump of his sword, and are dictated by the proximity of monsters or flashing objects which clear the direction in which to move - the real trick is in the timing. Depending upon the action chosen by the player, the corresponding sequence is drawn from memory and the next situation is entered.

Many locations require a number of actions to be executed, and progress tends to be a matter of trial and error, simply remembering the correct sequence for test later - a somewhat demanding occupation.

Steve Linn

PREDICTED INTEREST CURVE



Shows off the Amiga's capabilities, but that's unfortunately about all it does.

PALADIN

Because the knight belongs to OMNITREND

A what? A Paladin is a knight-errant or a paragon of knightliness, according to Chaucer's *English Dictionary*, and that's what you are in this Amigaian crisis between roleplaying and wargaming. There are ten quests in the basic package, with an additional disc available separately containing another sixteen quests.

Each quest involves a specific objective that must be reached, sometimes within a time limit. For example, the 'Train' quest puts you at the head of a small party who must infiltrate a castle and rescue a princess within a game-time limit. Like most wargames, *Paladin* is made up of phases - your moves and combat

revelled by the computer's moves and combat - but unlike yours, it's for a single player only.

Movement and combat are both restricted by the number of movement points each member of your party has and, in turn, the number of movement points is restricted by the amount and type of objects or weapons the character is carrying. Simply any action in the game requires a quantity of movement points to be consumed - to attack an adjacent enemy, for

Staff: You must prepare to move in and rescue the princess in the Trojan situation. Survival is and hopefully you'll increase your Paladin's capabilities.

(Editor): Another quest, and some beautiful dragons to avoid or attack. Fortunately that really is providing cover - but how long will it remain intact?

inference, costs 3 points if you use a sword or 5 points if you use a crossbow, while movement itself costs different amounts depending on the type of terrain to be covered.

Complete a quest successfully and hopefully your Paladin will have his characteristics assessed and improved, making him slightly more powerful as you move through the quests. If your Paladin should be killed, though, you'll have to create a new one before playing again. The quests are fun, the fantasy wargaming side of things gets very tactical at times and it's good to be able to develop your character. A flaw in the game, however, is the inability to move a character through a square that is occupied by someone else, which forces frequent and costly detours.

Paladin is a little simplistic, but if you enjoy chomping up dragons and looting beautiful armour it can be fun. The quest-builder program included allows you to modify existing quests and create new ones, so it'll keep you busy for quite a while.

Andy Duff



RELEASE BOX		
ATARI ST	\$24.95	OUT NOW
AMIGA	\$24.95	OUT NOW
IBM PC	\$24.95	ANNOUNCED
MAC	\$24.95	ANNOUNCED
Extra Quest disks probably \$4.95/5.95		

SUPERMAN

TYNESOFT's man of steel

LAST time Superman popped up on a computer it was in boots of steel. Now Tynesoft has breathed new life into the old hero, casting him into eight action games against his deadliest opponents. Forget the boy, here comes the man.

Each of the eight action sequences is preceded by a comic book page telling the story so far. They don't have to be read every time, but they are nice introductions and time savers.

The first sequence is a battle against Dark Side's Para-demons. They try to reduce Superman's power to zero with fireballs and concussion blasts. All the big S has to do is destroy enough demons and concussion cannons to move to the next stage. Heat vision is most effective for this, but super breath is good for keeping the demons back and the super punch is also acher if needed.

The weapons don't change much in each stage, although a super kick and teleoptic vision are added to our hero's powers. Having had a behind-the-action Space Harrier view in Stage One, we move on to a horizontally-scrolling Stage Two. Flying guardians have to be shot or avoided while traveling along a slip to release two hostages.

Stage Three takes the form of a vertically-scrolling shoot-em-up, in which Super contacts the space shuttle from an asteroid storm, avoiding Kryptonite asteroids that weaken his power. In Stage Four it's back to horizontal scrolling to battle yet a new batch of defense systems.

In all the stages it is very easy to run out of power — not only do enemy hits sap it, but so do your own weapons. A careful eye on the

(Top left) **AAA** — Following the space shuttle from the asteroid storm. Watch out for the green rocks because they are made of Kryptonite.

(Below) **BT** — The Para-demons are green and either fly the concussion cannons or shoot fireballs.

power gauge and occasional rests can save a lot of frustration.

There really are several different types of game in one here and each one has been well thought out and programmed. The only major grip is that it gets tough too quickly. However, with a little bit of practice the variety shows through and makes for a most enjoyable game.

■ **Bob White**

CIA VERSION

Only six stages, but set as well programmed as the ST. The loading is a pain with long pauses between the action. Three still levels more if more playable.

GRAPHICS: 7 IQ FACTOR: 8
AUDIO: 5 FUN FACTOR: 7

ACE RATING 752

BT VERSION

Delightful graphics and animation and a possible re-birth of the Superman films.

GRAPHICS: 8 IQ FACTOR: 8
AUDIO: 7 FUN FACTOR: 8

ACE RATING 865

PREDICTED INTEREST CURVE



Sometimes variety and challenge, though BT version is difficult, and CIA loading poor.



RELEASE BOX

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IBM PC	£14.95	MARKET

ST VERSION

Again the graphics are nothing special, but the play is fun. A simple but challenging game with plenty to keep you playing.

GRAPHICS: 5 IQ FACTOR: 6
AUDIO: 7 FUN FACTOR: 5

ACE RATING 761

AMIGA VERSION

The graphics are colorful but simple, leaving you with the impression that a lot more work could have improved the game considerably. Sound effects are good though.

GRAPHICS: 5 IQ FACTOR: 5
AUDIO: 7 FUN FACTOR: 5

ACE RATING 761

PREDICTED INTEREST CURVE



Simple but playable stuff with plenty in it to keep you occupied.



WANDERER

Futuristic feline frolics from ELITE

PSEUDO 3D games have been around almost as long as the Spectrum, but it's only now that one in three 3D Elite Wanderer is one such game and to get the full effect you have to wear a pair of weird glasses with red and blue lenses.

The game is set in the future when cats have become extremely rare and expensive - in fact Earth's last cat has just been stolen by wretched galaxy ruler Veldt, and locked away in his fortress called the Solyma. It's down to you to get that cat back and destroy Veldt.

First problem is that you'll only get to face Veldt by convincing his guards that you're a feline admirer of his by offering a gift of 5,000

cats. How are you going to get hold of so many cats? By playing cards, of course.

The planets in Wanderer are all involved in an inter-planetary game of poker. You start with

RELEASE BOX

ATARI ST	£19.999	OUT NOW
AMIGA	£19.999	ARRIVING
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AMSTRAD	£9.999 + £14.999	ARRIVING
CG412D	£9.999 + £17.999	ARRIVING



The Solyma grid.

In 3D mode - of course, you wouldn't be able to see much if we showed Wanderer in 2D mode, because it spoils the unique blue red and blue - fighting off a group of menacing aliens before you land on a planet.



two cards and it's a case of shuffling between the planets (sipping cards to give the planets better hands than they had before and thus being rewarded with jobs). Then you fly off to another planet - working or destroying any other ships you may come across depending on whether they appear to be aggressive - and start playing the cards again.

Wanderer is not like the average shoot-'em-up. It goes to be quite strategic at times, in the card-playing amongst planets, which can be fun. Don't expect it to keep you glued to the monitor for months to come, though.

Andy Jones

ST VERSION

The 3D effort is very good (thankfully you can opt to play in 2D if you want) but the sound effects are poor. Wanderer is not a boring game, but it can be repetitive in the short term.

GRAPHICS	4	IQ FACTOR	5
SOUND	3	FUN FACTOR	7
ACE RATING 602			

PREDICTED INTEREST CURVE



The 3D is nice, but there's not really enough to keep you interested for very long.

BASED on the recent Lucasfilm movie, Mercedes' first solo product (rather than under the auspices of Microsoft) tells the tale of one Willow Ufgood, teenage farmer and wizarding catalyst in the magical coastal town of Dunwiddie, and Queen of Neveryar.

Born to a common Dunwiddie woman in a North-Asian lineage, the baby Eliza-Diana is found to be the bearer of a prophetic birthmark - she is the child destined to destroy Dunwiddie and

IBM PC VERSION

Average graphics, solidy writing and solid animation combined and combined the best graphics, while combined and combined fairly with any remaining edge to combine. While there have are some good, though it plays a nice soundtrack at the beginning.

GRAPHICS	5	IQ FACTOR	4
SOUND	5	FUN FACTOR	5
ACE RATING 338			

become Empress of all Kingdoms. In an attempt to save the child, the noble Eliza rescues the baby from the dungeons and sets the child off on a quest. Willow-like, on a bed of vegetation, the tale from the child, and the adventure begins. The story of Willow's tale is portrayed through sub-scenes based on scenes from the film, all based through a central story-telling scroll.

The Lucasfilm logo is usually one to watch

WILLOW

MINDSCAPE minus the light and magic

not fun, but in this case it's one to beware. Willow provides a collection of six imaginative and technical games: one is merely a single selection screen, one a simple puzzle, three are maze-based, and the last a dice-crone played independently, and it isn't this to it. Action-2D mapping, without which the game would be irreparable. OK, how the mighty have fallen.

Steve Jones



One of the sub-games (which makes sense the warrior Mindscapes to be. Testing, huh?

RELEASE BOX

ATARI ST	£24.999	ARRIVING
AMIGA	£24.999	ARRIVING
CG412D	£24.999	ARRIVING
IBM PC	£24.999	OUT NOW
Further remains planned		

PREDICTED INTEREST CURVE



The story potential has been missed by a mile. It's a real matter of just, perhaps?

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y with
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known
icators.
gamers,

Indicators provides incredible action and graphics. It challenges you to negotiate each station's heavily guarded corridors, and locate and destroy its control room.

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	CD-ROM	Box
System	\$9.95	\$14.95
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Amstrad	\$9.95	\$14.95
Amiga	\$19.95	\$19.95
Mac/II	\$19.95	\$19.95

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U.S. Gold Ltd., Suite 20 Bedford Way, Bedford, Buckinghamshire MK43 1AX

SERIOUS end not so serious. Strategists have plenty to smile about these days. If you own an Atari machine there are the 550, 590 and 800 T Smith games to choose from. On the 16-bit front, there's *MSD* and a couple of PSX games to try. You have Atari corners the first of their 8-bit strategy cage for the ST.

Borodino, designed and programmed by a certain Dr Peter Tuxen, is a one or two player simulation of the famous battle of 7 September 1812 in which Napoleon commanded the French troops in a confrontation with the Russian army under Prince Kutuzov, 70 miles west of Moscow at the small town of Borodino.

The way the game plays is its most riveting feature. For a start, you play (the part of) the Commander in Chief - either Napoleon or Kutuzov - and only see the battlefield through his eyes, as if standing on a nearby hillside. This means that you might not have as clear a picture of what's happening as the commanders who are in the thick of it, which can affect the outcome of the orders you give. It is possible to cheat slightly by looking through the eyes of other commanders if you wish - useful while ascending yourself with the game.

Unlike other wargames, you don't select units in turn, give them objectives and then sit back to watch them try to reach their targets. Instead, orders are addressed to your Corps Commanders who in turn issue orders to their Division Commanders and so on down the chain of command.

The game progresses in 15-minute turns, each Commander in Chief being allowed to issue up to eight orders per turn. Orders are sent - because of the context of the game - via riders, and this is another important factor in the game. As your subordinate commanders and their troops get caught up in the fighting, orders can arrive too late, too early, in the wrong order or even worse, not at all.

Orders can be as simple or as complex as

RELEASE BOX

STARI ST	£29.95	OUT NOW
IBM PC	£29.95	IMMINENT

to other versions planned

BORODINO

ATARI's 1812 Overture



Watching Napoleon's advance from the Russian's position at The Redoubt. You can only see this sort of thing when you start to look through the eyes of other commanders as well as the Commander in Chief (either Napoleon or Kutuzov).

you wish, ranging from 'hey, order your artillery to shell The Redoubt for 2 hours', to things like 'Send them an attack line from 1/2 mile southeast of Sharvinski linking with Ney, to 1/2 mile southeast of The Redoubt linking with Potemski'. Obviously, as you become more confident and conversant with the system your orders are likely to become more complex.

The display is solid 3D throughout, with coloured blocks to represent the various top-

ST VERSION

Though the graphics are slightly blocky, the screen updates quickly. There's no sound at all but that doesn't detract from the game. Though it's not as flexible a system as *MSD*, it's still a superb and enjoyable game.

GRAPHICS	4	REACTOR	7
AI	4.5	INTERFACE	7
ACE RATING 89%			

starts of the armies and groups of small icons as to movement towns and villages, adding to the realism of the simulation. *Borodino* really is a great attempt to recreate the battle while not putting you in control. The frustration of not knowing whether an order has made it through, or how a part of the battle that's out of view is going, is very real, and though the game is easy to play it's also challenging. If you're at all serious about wargaming you should search this out. Dr Peter Tuxen could be a name we'll hear a lot more of in future.

Andy Smith



(Above) Start to see the commanders and you'll know when and if your orders get through, and how your subordinate commands may well interpret them.



(Above) Looking north from Napoleon's position on The Redoubt, Kutuzov will see your troops in a good position for a push on Borodino. By the time the order gets through to Kutuzov (it is clear an ally may have received this order) you'll be looking the other way to his subordinate who the attention to the north may be completely different.

PREDICTED INTEREST CURVE



A great game, but with only one scenario it'll play out quickly. Still, one for the library.

G.NIUS

Intelligent escapology on the LANKHOR label



In *G.NIUS* the small droid in the control can avoid falling debris, destroy the other robots and shoot the blue crystals. He can grab a lift to the next floor.

RELEASE BOX		
ATARI ST	£19.95	OUT NOW
AMIGA	Price TBA, under development	
IBM PC	Price TBA, under development	
No other versions planned		

MAINTENANCE Great supervisor G.NIUS suddenly finds his routine of electronic management broken by the developer teams of his cargo vessel falling a planet, hoodoo. Although still sound, G.NIUS is far from safe: the ship is slowly disintegrating; the fuel is on the far end of the vessel; and his underlying maintenance strategy is all displaying varied indicators.

The ship is made up of numerous fire-screen rooms separated into levels. In order

ST VERSION			
It typically breaks down, G.NIUS generally tends toward the long side. But it seems tight on particles. The numerous compact tool effects are clear and well suited to the theme. Jobs are, while smart static graphics are accompanied by a collection of neat optics and some clever effects, such as damage sustained by the scenery from stray shots.			
GRAPHICS	?	IQ FACTOR	3
AMIGO	?	PMN FACTOR	4
ACE RATING 5/5			

for G.NIUS to reach the exit, he has to negotiate all the rooms on each level and blast the fire-screen terminals in each. Only when all the orange lemons have been deactivated do the lifters appear. Shooting these provides a lowering platform to the next level.

G.NIUS runs the gamut of collapsing rooms, springboards and ladders, and defends himself from his rampaging controller by rapid laser-assisted dismantling. Collecting the energy shields and rails (I left behind in the droids helps to prolong the droid's lifespan).

This topside-up arcade adventure is an exhilarating romp, but its initial lure is soon dispersed by a serious lack of variety. Only the more straightforward will want to stay the course through to the very end.

Steve Jenett

PREDICTED INTEREST CURVE	
INTEREST	TIME
Fun to play for a while, but not bursting with long-term possibilities.	

GARY LINEKER'S HOT SHOTS

GREMLIN hit the crossbar



C64 VERSION			
Reverendly comfortable to play, but who particularly want get much of a game from the Beasty computer. Beasty optics and patterns certainly do like to enhance its appeal.			
GRAPHICS	3	IQ FACTOR	3
AMIGO	3	PMN FACTOR	7
ACE RATING 5/5			

SPECTRUM VERSION			
Takes to play like the C64, but at least the computer provides a really impressive level challenge. Much smiling and only player movement make the game a little daunting at times.			
GRAPHICS	4	IQ FACTOR	3
AMIGO	3	PMN FACTOR	4
ACE RATING 5/5			



(Left) C64 - Those with little taste may want to play on a real pitch. Note the pitch radar at the bottom of the screen. (Right) Spectrum - It's an open goal, but that maximum-power kick is bound to be over the crossbar.

JUST when you thought the glut of soccer games was over, along comes another Gary Lineker-endorsed product to prove everybody wrong. Taking a more mainstream approach than many of the same games, *G.NIUS* Hot Shots provides a one or two player game of international soccer.

The pitch and team members are viewed from overhead and control is accomplished in the usual way, with the player nearest the ball coming under direct control. Pressing the fire button causes the player to kick the ball when in possession, and attempt a sliding tackle when not. Tackles are taken into consideration, so too much busy work off-the-ball defence is frowned upon.

RELEASE BOX		
ATARI ST	£19.95	IMMINENT
AMIGA	£19.95	IMMINENT
SPARC 128	£19.95 + £12.95	OUT NOW
AMSTRAD	£29.95 + £19.95	IMMINENT
CGA128	£29.95 + £19.95	OUT NOW
IBM PC	No version planned	

Ball-control also follows the non-standard procedure: while the fire button is held down, a sliding meter varies the strength of shot, and pointing the joystick changes the direction of shot accordingly. In this way, tactical shots and unforced back-kicks can be executed. Surprisingly, the player becomes stationary when the joystick is pressed, allowing the opposition to catch up and attempt a tackle.

The package supports a wide range of options, including a choice of pitch surface and colour, team colours and game length.

Steve Jenett

PREDICTED INTEREST CURVE	
INTEREST	TIME
Entertaining at first, but has too many flaws to be considered a long-term purchase.	

STORMTROOPER

Destruction from CREATION

HAUL in these combat boots and let's go do some serious damage. Irreversible damage is viable, gun implementations and an arsenal far too good to stand in the way of a battle through levels of a mining complex, heavily defended by men and machines.

Each level is composed of a horizontally-scrolling area with platforms on three levels. The aim on each level is to find the exit, which involves removing barriers as well as battling against manning bad guys. You can walk, be down, jump and climb - and shoot while sprint or prone. Barriers that block the way are destroyed by shooting terminals.

The starting weapon does not take out all

the enemies - just ones with little armor. To deal with robots and heavily-armed enemy units, a more powerful weapon is needed. Several can be found scattered around the levels. Unfortunately you can only alternate between the standard gun and one other, at any time.

After the first few games it becomes a fairly simple matter of remembering the pattern of attacks and compensating timing problems. - good old-fashioned gameplay. As one territory is encountered there are lots of frustrating deaths in store from the unexpected.

● **Get With**



Having battled to the first underground level the Stormtrooper now has to eliminate terminals like the ones to the left of the middle level. These remove the spawning barriers like the ones on the bottom level.



RELEASE BOX

IBM AT	12/1988	Out Now
AMIGA	03/1989	April 89
IBM PC	03/1989	April 89
No other versions planned		

ST VERSION

Smooth scrolling and moody backdrops of the arena nicely Animate characters help to maintain the atmosphere of slugs. Sound and music aren't that special, but there is a nice screen when you fall down a hole.

GRAPHICS	7	IQ FACTOR	3
SOUND	6	FUN FACTOR	7
AGE RATING 703			

GALDREGONS DOMAIN

PANDORA on the treasure trail



Paying a visit to the ancient wizard who inhabits the land can be quite profitable. This one provides a bank of magic spells.



Beside, the barbarian often brings into battle treasures. The guy on the horse is the one to watch out for! He's actually an important knight in Azazel's employ.

AZAZEL

The wizard has been resurrected by the high priests of Alcar, and seeks the five legendary gems of Zalar to become ruler of all Mioran. Fearful for the safety of his people, King Rahan sends a mercenary barbarian warrior to

RELEASE BOX

IBM AT	12/1988	Out Now
AMIGA	12/1988	Out Now
OSAY 28	12/1988	Summer 89
IBM PC	02/1989	Summer 89
No other versions planned		

AMIGA VERSION

Galdregons Domain doesn't really make full use of the Amiga's potential. The graphics are OK, if a little limited, but the possibility for sound effects has been severely missed, relying on standard sampled grunts, groans and roars.

GRAPHICS	6	IQ FACTOR	4
SOUND	3	FUN FACTOR	6
AGE RATING 704			

remove the gems before the evil wizard and his cohorts can get their hands on them.

The barbarian's quest is displayed from a first-person perspective in a cross between Dungeon Master and Lords of Midnight. As well as negotiating rooms, corridors and labyrinths, the Schwarzwagner barbarian can go yomping across moorland and through woods, visiting the local hostilities and dropping in on the small houses dotted about the landscape.

As into combat are entered, a variety of characters appear who either wish the barbarian well or yell him up, depending on their loyalties. Combat, however, is a simple matter of selecting the option and repeatedly clicking on the chosen opponent until a result is obtained. Likewise, magic spells, once discovered, are selected from a menu and invoked on hit.

The interactive element of Galdregons Domain is quite limited and although the large scale of the quest should keep many of gamers' heads, Dungeon Masters in need of a fix might be disappointed with this offering.

● **Save Jarrt**





Trouble brews in Central Africa, with the Russians supporting the rebels in Chad, so let's help the government out a little...



However, a glimpse of the Chad situation shows that the rebels are leading their own, by supporting both factions.



A newspaper report details Russian movements, but the advisors clearly think it wiser to question their actions.

BALANCE OF POWER

THE 1990 EDITION

MINDSCAPE's George Bush/Mikhail Gorbachov simulator

960

Absolute power corrupts absolutely, the old adage tells. And what better stage could there be on which to examine your moralized tendencies than that of global politics.

In what can only be described as financial detail, *Balance of Power: The 1990 Edition* (successor to the award-winning *Balance of Power*) takes the player through eight years of world politics as if you're at either the USA or the USSR, jockeying their interests in countries around the globe.

The basic aim is to increase the geopolitical prestige of the host nation above that of the opposing superpower. This means getting friendly with powerful nations, and making sure enemies are few and weak. At the higher levels, this is achieved by using every military, economic and diplomatic trick in the book. However, the opposition doesn't just sit there and take it; if disparate policies can't be sort-

ed-out across a debating table, problems escalate rapidly through the Defense Conditions, push too hard and it's time to retreat the world.

The simulator provides four levels of play, including the newly-added MultiPolar scenario where players have to contend with 50 countries, all of whom indulge in active foreign policies. (The monumental logistical task of co-ordinating global intercourse is most evident in lengthy delays as the computer works out the effects of each turn.)

To attempt to summarize all but the most basic mechanics of this situation cannot be covered in any great detail here; it takes the 33-page instruction manual to do them all justice. Suffice to say that this is a strategist's dream. The sheer size and scope of the simulation mean that it is possible to become totally immersed in the proceedings; single turns can take hours to fully digest and implement.

—Steve Jarrid



Just one of the many information maps displays. This one shows how much influence the two superpowers have in other countries.

RELEASE BOX			
STAR 87	CD ROM	8889047	
AMIGA	CD ROM	047 809	
IBM PC	CD ROM	8889047	
MAC	CD ROM	8889050	
No other versions planned			

AMIGA VERSION			
There are no sound effects at all, so world events are carried out in complete silence, and the main screens support only six colours at most. However each screen is clear and there the job it was intended for well. Constant disk access does things up slightly but this is a small price to pay. A minimum simulation, though processing is noticeably slowing.			
GRAPHICS	4	IQ FACTOR	0
AMIGA	85A	FILE FACTORS	4
ACE RATING 990			



A cost simulation which, although pricey, repays itself in a worthwhile long-term investment.

SEGA ROLL THE R'S



R-TYPE ● £29.95crt

R-Type has been hugely successful on both coin-operated and home computers, and console owners certainly would not want to miss out.

The first design and adventures are exactly the same as all other versions - familiar level-by-level - and the original gameplay are the same too, well impressive when it's all attached, boasting several kinds of laser, homing missiles, energy and speccards. All of which is needed to deal with an enormous number of attacking alien and deadly end-of-level guardians that take a lot of killing.



The two bad things to note about this version are that play movement is sluggish and when there are a lot of sprites on-screen it flickers horribly. Apart from that it's just as addictive and thrilling as ever. One of the best shoot-'em-ups on the Sega.

● **5th Rank**

GRAPHICS	4	IQ FACTOR	2
ADD-ON	0	FUN FACTOR	5
ACE RATING 600			

RAMBO III ● £24.95crt



This is the latest game for which you need the light gun. It's not like the computer versions of the same name, but is instead an Operation Stallion exercise in target practice.

The screen slowly scrolls horizontally and enemy soldiers appear from the side of the screen or from behind objects. You have to blast them as fast as possible before they do too much damage. Other attackers, such as helicopters and tanks, are harder to take out.

The gun starts off on automatic fire and switches to single shot when the ammo runs

out. There are also tanks which fill off everything on screen. Along the way you can rescue prisoners and pick up more bombs, ammo and life boxes.

If played properly, from a distance away, it's a very tough game. Even close up you've got to be very quick and efficient at blasting the enemy. Should satisfy anyone keen for an Oz Wolf-type of game.

● **3rd-Place**

GRAPHICS	0	IQ FACTOR	1
ADD-ON	0	FUN FACTOR	7
ACE RATING 500			

RASTAN ● £24.95crt



is, busy warriors! Pull on those fur-lined boots, shoulder that axe and let's go slice and dice some fiends. In fact let's go back up anything that moves on this horizontally-scrolling landscape.

As you wander along, leaving holes and trails, swinging on ropes and climbing between floors, there are all sorts of things to fight. Some of them fly, some jump, but most just come straight at you.

Extra weapons, food, potions and what-

soever can be picked up along the way. Weapons are positioned specifically, but every thing else is randomly distributed after the death of fiends.

It's a lot of fun and the 'continue' option allows you to get reasonably far into the levels. Would not go wrong in anyone's collection.

● **5th Place**

GRAPHICS	7	IQ FACTOR	0
ADD-ON	4	FUN FACTOR	0
ACE RATING 700			

RAMPAGE ● £24.95crt

Here's another arcade conversion that made it onto computers before the consoles, and did well for itself. With only two joystick ports and no keyboard there obviously isn't the three player option, but it should satisfy most people as a two-man.

The idea is simple enough and neatly requires a love of destruction on a grand scale to enjoy. As a mutated monster - assuming what food addictions can do - you're going round in a fit of rage tearing down city after city of brick out of America's cities. All you have to do is demolish up the sides of buildings and smash

them up until they collapse to the ground in a cloud of dust.

Each city is defended by helicopters, tanks and men with guns, and there are weapons both tasty and unpleasant inside the rooms of the buildings. Most much of this has a big effect on health, but all-in-all the monsters will eventually turn them back into humans and end the game. Best as a two player game but gets repetitive in the extreme.

● **5th-Place**



GRAPHICS	0	IQ FACTOR	1
ADD-ON	0	FUN FACTOR	0
ACE RATING 510			

CINEMAWARE

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SHORT AND SWEET

TEENAGE QUEEN

■ **Euro International**, Amiga version reviewed, £19.95cd

Area, it seems, aren't the only ones trying to spice up a poker game with pictures of salacious women. But whereas *Acco* at least uses digitised photographs, this game from French software house Euro International uses *Avatar* icons to depict the lady at the gambling table her clothes and adopt occasional facial grimaces.

The standard three-player format is followed - both players start with a set amount of money, and you try to win money from the girl and the *Ace* to borrow more money in exchange for an item of clothing.

The poker games don't have a very good

reputation as games, after all, once you've seen the final screen, there's little incentive to play again; but the *Teenage Queen* plays a better game than your average strip-tease and the graphics speak to well-dome.

On the whole, it's nicely presented and with a dash or so pictures to play through it might take you a few hours to beat it. Once you've played through it though, you'll have to be very bored to look it up again.

Andy Gibb



Amiga - Teenage Queen.

GRAPHICS	7	IQ FACTOR	5
SOUND	7	FUN FACTOR	7
ACE RATING 40%			

REALM OF THE TROLLS

■ **Rainbow Arts**, Amiga version reviewed, £24.95cd

Are you a troll? If not then don't even think about going down to the *Realm of the Trolls*. It's an 800Kb platform game in which you control your elf using the mouse and have to run along platforms connected by ladders, and talk to gnomes by clicking on icons.

The *Elf* has to be careful as he's surrounded by trolls who are enforcing their strict code of gold, swords, eggs, golden goblets and so on. They don't take too kindly to the thought of someone making off with their treasure, so will attempt to stop you with blows to the head. It only takes a couple of hits to kill

you off, forcing a restart, so it's a good idea to either avoid them or hit a bit of energy or life at them, which adds time to get long enough to make a getaway (usually). You can also try making a couple of holes in the actual platforms and have the trolls fall through them - but, alas, the holes don't last forever.

Realm of the Trolls is good. The gamestyle is very simple, the animation is nothing special, the sound effects are dire and the graphics are very simple. Most of all is the game's real-time icon selection, which is good.

Andy Gibb



Amiga - Realm of the Trolls.

GRAPHICS	5	IQ FACTOR	1
SOUND	1	FUN FACTOR	1
ACE RATING 24%			

HUMAN KILLING MACHINE

■ **US Gold**, Spectrum version reviewed, £9.95cs, £12.95cd

Factor is the killing machine in question, but its sub-machine guns and rocket launchers here; this is a blow-em-up in the *Street Fighter* mould, with large sprites and sounds fought in various capital cities.

You start the game in Moscow feeling pretty tough, so it'll take five opponents before you knock-down to defeat you, whereas you only need three to beat him. Allow yourself to get knocked down a couple of times though, and you'll take on the next opponent in dog called *Stepaid* in a fixed state, meaning you fight on equal terms - but manage to scrape through

the round and you're in a weak position to take on the next opponent, which is in Amsterdam outside a nightclub, vlogging it out with an elite woman called *Maria*. If you think that's tough, wait till you meet *Heiga*!

As well as the usual moves available with or without the fire button pressed, some of the attacking plays are rather more spectacular than average. Graphics are good (especially the backgrounds) and animation and gameplay are fine, but it's not original stuff and is probably one for the real beat-em-up fanatics.

Andy Gibb



Spectrum - Human Killing Machine.

GRAPHICS	8	IQ FACTOR	7
SOUND	4	FUN FACTOR	7
ACE RATING 58%			

MINI GOLF

■ Magic Bytes, ST version reviewed, £19.95ck

Everyone is going crazy for crazy golf games. The version from Gemma has two courses of 18 holes, ranging from simple ones to be found at any seaside resort, to weird ones straight from a fevered imagination.

The ball is positioned anywhere on a starting mat and then a hit is struck out from it using a cursor, which indicates the direction of the ball and its strength. In expert mode the ball is turned off, so shot calculation is harder.

Most of the holes on the first course should be completed in two or three strokes, but the second course is much more compli-

cated and has lots of fun- and yuck-like holes. Wacky features range from tables and tunnels to teleports. Later courses even go as far as having surreal 3D and gravity. Shots can be replayed or redone if you think they could go better. The contours of each hole may be viewed from several different directions.

This sort of putting game works well on computers, but with only two courses it won't remain interesting for very long. Only the expert level and second course are likely to test you after a few days.

■ Bob Wade



Mini Golf - Mini Golf

GRAPHICS:	4	NO FACTOR	4
AI:	4	FAIR FACTOR	4
ACE RATING 813			

BAAL

■ Psyclus, ST version reviewed, £19.95ck

Your mission: find and destroy the evil Baal and return with the Run Machine. How to go about it? Well, you're in charge of a troop of Time Warriors, and controlling them one at a time—you have to wander through the three parts of Baal's domain collecting pieces of the Run Machine. A set number of pieces are needed from each section before you can seek out a computer and move to the next section.

Progressing through the sections involves walking along platforms (connected by ledgers), finding and destroying generators which cover the floor fields that block your path.

Then it's a case of destroying any aliens that attack you and avoiding any mines on the floors. For dispatching aliens you've got laser modes, but you have to find aliens for three of them.

Baal isn't new any more for originality, but the graphics are very colourful and the animation is very fluid. It's also a very large game (thankfully there's a save game option, so you won't have to complete it in one sitting) and will keep map makers and collect and shoot fans happy for quite a while.

■ Andy Smith



Baal - Baal

GRAPHICS:	5	NO FACTOR	4
AI:	5	FAIR FACTOR	5
ACE RATING 726			

DUGGER

■ Line!, Amiga version reviewed, £19.95ck

Herb! Stone has popped up, or is coming in, in Duck, a blowback clone. Now he's back in a variant of the old arcade game Dig-Dug.

The most memorable thing about Crack was the hilarious opening sequence, and this has been developed a little for the new title. It's still very funny and has all the signs of being a companion gag.

The game itself is a very straightforward affair. The screen represents a cross-section of earth which can be tamed through. Dotted ground are two types of animal and some rocks. The aim is to either crush the animals

with the rocks or inflate them until they burst, if you can get close enough.

The animals don't tunnel but will occasionally mutate and float towards you. Running into them is fatal at any stage, but rock-droppers can kill by creating fire at will.

It's very odd to find such an old game concept as this rearing its head on the Amiga. As soon as the initial nostalgia (that of reimagining Dig-Dug) is gone, it's just a repetitive and uninspired game. Let us hear something more original, please.

■ Bob Wade



Digger - Digger

GRAPHICS:	5	NO FACTOR	1
AI:	5	FAIR FACTOR	5
ACE RATING 373			

ANDES ATTACK

■ Lamason, ST version reviewed, £9.95ck

Once upon a time, there was a computer called the Commodore 64. Now this was a great little machine (the being the operative word) and some great games were produced for it. One of the most prolific games writers at this time was a chappy called Jeff Minter.

Jeff managed to produce simple but highly playable games with animals as the main characters—especially sheep, cats and lambs. That made him very popular with almost everyone because it was such a wacky idea.

Now it's 1990 and Jeff's been busy converting some of his classics to the ST. Andes

Attack is one such game. It's nothing, but a Defender clone, in which you fly a ship over a horizontally-scrolling landscape protecting lambs from being annihilated by a wide variety of alien beings. Lambs, smart lambs, all the usual stuff is there, but by today's standards it's not up to much. The graphics are bad but not particularly colourful and the game plays slowing its age. Still, if you haven't got a Defender game for your ST and you'd really, really like one, give it a try—it's not hard to find better games, but you could feel worse as well.

■ Andy Smith



Andes Attack - Andes Attack

GRAPHICS:	5	NO FACTOR	1
AI:	4	FAIR FACTOR	5
ACE RATING 350			

SLIPSTREAM

■ Microdeal, Amiga version reviewed, £19.99pb

The Slipstream is actually one stream, all infused with flying craft that you have to destroy, as well as planes to shoot — they drop bombs, or it's best to shoot them — there are giant geometric shapes and walls to avoid.

You view your spacecraft from slightly behind, afterburner-style, and the buildings of small towns background to foreground to meet you when enemy planes stick to scrolling from one side to the other, dropping their bombs.

Although all the sounds like loads of fun, in reality it isn't. The scrolling is carefully slow; there's no sense of movement or urgency as

you jig along. The backgrounds are fine, but the sprites are unimpaired and the mathematics is better called a mottling-eyelash. Collision detection is also bad and it's fairly annoying to have to sit through a moshing drop you will look at the beginning, into after you lose one of your three lives. The digitised Grand Prix Commander speech at the beginning is also good, though the sound effects aren't bad.

Microdeal have loaded with the credits. There are many better alternatives around, and plenty of better ones in the same price.

● Andy Gault



Amiga - Slipstream.

GRAPHICS	2	IQ FACTOR	1
AUDIO	4	FUN FACTOR	1
AGE RATING 2/3			

ZANY GOLF

■ Electronic Arts, ST version reviewed, £24.99pb

Crazy, wacky, wild, loopy, quirky golf. Nope — it's Zany Golf. Why doesn't somebody produce a game called Blasted Golf, or Ninjas Breaker where ninjas battle like windmills and tennis rackets instead of pockets?

This is graphically the most impressive of the crazy golf games. Every hole is in 3D and attractively drawn. It also has an excellent range of holes and obstacles — things like bouncing hamsteagers, fans to blow the ball around and stage carpets to guide it with.

There are only two holes, but each of these is very complicated. It still won't take long to

reheat, but that's crazy golf games for you. Other nice options include seeing a map of the hole at the start, having a limited number of strokes to complete the course and getting bonus strokes for completing certain tasks.

The putting method is a little odd, operating like a slider bar — showing not a line behind the ball. It's quite difficult to judge direction and strength using this system because it's only a dotted line. Fortunately you don't have to be too accurate about hitting the hole dead on — a relief when playing in 3D.

● Gid Rice



Amiga ST - Zany Golf.

GRAPHICS	5	IQ FACTOR	3
AUDIO	4	FUN FACTOR	4
AGE RATING 3/3			

CIRCUS GAMES

■ Tynesoft, ST version reviewed, £24.99pb

The sound of the flourish, the flash of the lights, the song of the elephants... It's Big Top time as Tynesoft provide amusing artiles with their chance to take part in the greatest show on Earth.

Four events are included: tightrope-walking, trapeze-homering, trapeze artistry and tiger-leaping. Each one may be practised on a stand alone event, or the International Competition may be entered which plays through all four in sequence.

Performance of events follows the long tradition of timed joust-like movements, rather

than fierce waggling to illustrate a manoeuvre. That, however, seems and jumps are attempted in the more aerial acts, and the figures are directed toward their specific tasks by controlled use of the whip cord.

All four acts are beautifully portrayed, with pleasant static graphics, smooth scrolling and reasonable animation. It's essential comes in being viewed: once at four points, and a paltry four at that, have been considered to any degree, the urge to return is quashed. And the over-inflated price tag is a major hurdle, too.

● Steve Grant



Amiga ST - Circus Games.

GRAPHICS	5	IQ FACTOR	3
AUDIO	4	FUN FACTOR	4
AGE RATING 3/3			

WHO FRAMED ROGER RABBIT

■ Buena Vista Software, Amiga version reviewed, £24.99pb

It doesn't take long for game manufacturers to get their teeth into a big business these days. One of the winners is the film industry: from the game is inspired from America. It's made up of three separate games based on sequences from the film, the plot of which goes something like this: Roger has been framed for the murder of Marvin, the Gag King, and so he has to find Marvin's will before Judge Doom discovers Toots and all the other characters.

First you are put in the driving seat of Boney the Cab, a Tom car, as you race across town springing over patches of Dip, the stuff

that deceives you, and cars that get in your way. Then it's into the Ink and Paint Club for a mad run around the tables grabbing supplies and receipts in the belief that the will is hidden amongst them. Another quick dash across town takes you to the Gag Factory where you make a bunch of animals laugh themselves to death before being Down himself.

Unfortunately it just doesn't cut the mustard. Not only are the games boring, but there are too few of them. Roger Rabbit falls the old trap: Graphics alone do not a game make.

● Andy Gault



Amiga - Who Framed Roger Rabbit.

GRAPHICS	5	IQ FACTOR	3
AUDIO	4	FUN FACTOR	5
AGE RATING 3/3			

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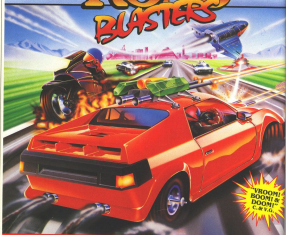
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SPACEBALL

■ Rainbow Arts, Amiga version reviewed, £24.99dk

Oh look, another continental variation on the Breakout theme – how exciting. This one is a two player game where each ball tries to out-score the other.

The screen has a layer of destructible blocks on either side and bumpers at the top and bottom. Floating around in the middle are various alien beings which rebound the ball and explode when hit.

The aim is to outscore the other player by hitting more objects. Big points are gained by going through the wall opposite to score a goal, then that happens play restarts with all

the blocks in place.

Blocks appear in the playfield and when the ball hits them it makes a bonus effect appear in boxes in the corners of the screen. Hitting a highlighted box will put the effect into operation. There are split balls, small balls, faster balls and so on.

You can play single matches or a knockout tournament in which eight players can take part. The music is excellent but the gameplay is just too simplistic and unremarkable to hold interest after a few games.

● See Page



Amiga - Spaceball.

GRAPHICS 4 IQ FACTOR 3
 AUDIO 5 FUN FACTOR 3
 ACE RATING 500

BILLIARDS SIMULATOR

■ Ete International, Amiga version reviewed, £18.99dk

You won't be pocketing any balls in this 3D billiards one. No, you'll French billiards, so the table has no pockets. Instead, the game consists of caroms, so you score points by striking your ball to contact with both the red and your (computer or human) opponent's ball in the same shot. And that's all there is to it.

The rules may be simple, but actually playing the game is not so easy. Which one should you use? Do you want one that allows you a more powerful shot but less accuracy or is accuracy of paramount importance? This is just one of the host of options open to you, includ-

ing where to hit the ball to make it spin different ways and the strength of the shot. Unlike real-life billiards you can also alter the weight of the balls, the amount of rebound or even the amount of friction of the balls on the table.

The 3D option is great, allowing you to move and view from anywhere around the table, but if you prefer you can also play in 2D. Billiards Simulator is a very competent piece of programming, and it's very enjoyable to play well worth having a look at if you're at all interested in the sport.

● See Page



Amiga - Billiards Simulator.

GRAPHICS 5 IQ FACTOR 5
 AUDIO 5 FUN FACTOR 5
 ACE RATING 619

HIGHWAY HAWKS

■ Ecco, Amiga version reviewed, £19.95dk

There's no mistaking the on-ramp reputation for Ecco's wacky blend of roads and blasting in this drive and shoot game.

Basically, the object is to complete each sector in as short a time as possible. The player's car is fitted with a gun with which to dispose of other road users, and depending upon the time taken and vehicles destroyed, a cash bonus is awarded which can then be used to purchase more equipment. Bigger cars, efficient tyres and extra weaponry can be obtained to supplement the basic kit.

Extra fuel is collected as tokens along the

route, and additional ammunition is available on shooting the sluggish trucks which congest the road. The tail gates fly open, leaving other ammo caches or oil slicks on the road. Similarly, more time can be gathered by sniping for bonus players on overhanging gantries.

The action on offer here is, surprisingly entertaining. The roads move very quickly, the opposing vehicles are jostling and the whole affair is pretty smooth. Those who can't wait for the official 1994 Roadbusters could do much worse than acquire this little game.

● See Page



Amiga - Highway Hawks.

GRAPHICS 5 IQ FACTOR 3
 AUDIO 5 FUN FACTOR 7
 ACE RATING 634

STREET SPORTS FOOTBALL

■ Ego, C64 version reviewed, £9.99dk, £14.99dk

British kids play soccer and cricket in streets and playgrounds, but American ones are even more adventurous and risk life and limb at their own brand of football. Naturally it's not the full-blown version – there are only three players on each team.

The teams are picked from the neighbourhood kids, who all have different skills. The three positions are two receivers and a quarterback. With only three players per side the action is easy to follow and there isn't much switching between them.

The most interesting part of the game is

the ability not only to use a large range of preset plays, but to be able to design your own. The rules can also be changed to select the number of points for a win, the number of passes required for a first down and the time delay before the defence is allowed to cross the scrimmage line.

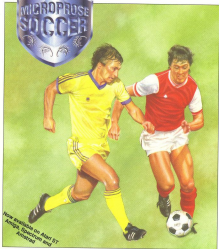
It's a much easier game to get into than other American football simulations, but ultimately doesn't have the same depth, even with the ability to design plays. A nice variant on the theme.

● See Page



67 - Street Sports Football.

GRAPHICS 5 IQ FACTOR 5
 AUDIO 4 FUN FACTOR 5
 ACE RATING 711



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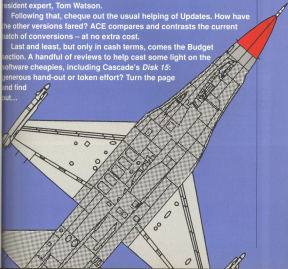
SUPPLEMENT

For everyone out there who always wants more, here's a little supplementary benefit to improve your fortunes.

Cash in on the biggest ever Tricks 'N' Tactics section: ten whole pages crammed with info for the frustrated gamer. Follow the official FoursField maps of *Incredible Shrinking Sphere*; complete *Total Eclipse* and *The Munsters*; rescue the Colonel with our superb *Rambo III* map; and take *Falcon* flying lessons from Microsoft's resident expert, Tom Watson.

Following that, cheque out the usual helping of Updates. How have the other versions fared? ACE compares and contrasts the current batch of conversions – at no extra cost.

Last and least, but only in cash terms, comes the Budget section. A handful of reviews to help cast some light on the software cheapies, including Cascade's *Disk 15*: generous hand-out or token effort? Turn the page and find out...



VIRUS

The game that puts the floppy into Archimedes' emulation mode gets the PC/DOS treatment, here. Type in the listing, RUN it and load in the program. Easy.

10 CLEAR #0000: LOAD "" CODE
20 PORG \$2004, 200: PORG \$2005, 20:
PORG \$2006, 128
30 FOR A=32768 TO 32846: B=0: C:
PORG A, B: NEXT A
40 RANDOMIZE USR \$2400
50 DATA 50, 21, 255, 122, 254, 46
60 DATA 192, 62, 90, 56, 84, 255, 33
70 DATA 25, 256, 34, 86, 255, 62
80 DATA 195, 58, 54, 252, 33, 52
90 DATA 125, 34, 99, 252, 195, 9
100 DATA 252, 50, 167, 62, 33, 89
110 DATA 128, 37, 160, 252, 1, 15, 0
120 DATA 237, 174, 199, 46, 252, 179
130 DATA 50, 145, 175, 50, 253, 147
140 DATA 195, 184, 53



■ Matthew Flynn, Dandy

DOUBLE DRAGON

BT Double Dragoners should stop playing for a while, get on the high score table and take in THE HOLLOWING (with special, for an interesting effect.

■ Steve Hess, Digibrawl

TNT

TRICKS 'N' TACTICS



ARKANOID II - REVENGE OF DOH

Owners of Insignia's 2000 Greatest game should dust it down, show it in the store and load it up. As soon as the purple Arkanoid screen disappears, press the right mouse button and hold it. Some free advertisement for RoboCop appears, and if the button is held down long enough, a "tone" can be heard. Wow.

■ Colin McCaffery, Television

I N C R E D I B L E S H R I N K I N G

LEVEL ONE - PLANE 1



LEVEL ONE - PLANE 2



LEVEL ONE - PLANE 3



LEVEL ONE - PLANE 4





PACMANIA

Pacmenact having trouble reaching the final level can now reap the obvious benefits of having infinite lives. Simply type in the required listing, substitute and follow the prompts to load in the game.

The listing below works on both the Spectrum 486 and 5286 versions.

```

10 INPUT "HOW MANY LIVES?" Q:255;
   Q=NUMBER(Q);L
20 IF L<=0 OR L>255 THEN GOTO 10
30 GETWORD 80+(10*486)-60
40 PRINT "PRESS PLAY OR DEL..." LOAD L:
   CODE 24300: PORE 24301, 119: PORE
   24302, 95
50 FOR F=0 TO 75: READ A: PORE 24401+F, A:
   NEXT F: PRINT USR 24300
60 DATA 205, 71, 95, 52, L, 90, 198, 134,
   201
70 DATA 205, 71, 95, 175, 50, 89, 137, 0,
   201
  
```

■ Jason Bellough, Douglas

WINNERS

Lucky recipients of this month's \$100 mail order voucher is Gary White (28 Milledale, for his masterful solution to *Star Trek: The Next Generation*), Bob Wynn (1004 Wynn Drive, Dallas, TX), Bill Macdonald (1000 99 St., Austin, TX), Joseph, Douglas, Gary White, Christopher, Matthew Piggis, Christopher, Chris Hill, Peter B. and Sam Roberts, East Grafton.

And many thanks to everyone else who sent in hints or tips but who didn't get a prize. Please keep sending them in - there's no reason why YOUR name shouldn't be next next month!

HEROES OF THE LANCE

Here's a welcome helping hand with 25-Gold's AD&D game.

When first starting, use magic sparingly since each staff only has a limited number of charges. (Star Crystal Staff=200 charges; Staff of Magic=100 charges.)

Use the 'Find Trap' spell often, as falling rocks severely weaken the team. However, many non-rocks can often be avoided by moving quickly.

Always put Goldmoon first or fourth in the party, with Tero or Flamered up front; they have a ranged weapon and a hand-to-hand combat weapon. It's also useful to have a magic user in the first slot.

First feelings aren't too good at combat because of its dimension slip. Its forte is dealing with the Aghor, otherwise, use him as chief healer!

Use all scrolls and wands to Roanin.

Shields can and should be given to each member of the team. Also, share out the gem rings to boost confidence.

The 'Web', 'Sleep' and 'Thorn' spells can be useful if



unfamiliar with normal combat - especially against bats.

Use the 'Find Invisible' spell to discover potions. However, try to use them sparingly, and only when necessary.

Scrolls contain combat spells and can only be used by one person.

The water fall behind the door seems useless, but can be used as a trap. Make a note of its location and return only when several members of the party are severely wounded. Try not to cast the 'Cure Poison' spell until after the water fall has been visited.

During the early stages, the only real problem in combat should be the hatchlings. They are invulnerable to magic, so use the 'Reflect Dragon Breath' spell and get

Tero to the front. Use his range weapon (the bow) and aim at the hatchling's stern arch. The six or so well-placed shots should dispose of him.

When confronting the Blood Dracemans, use a 'Web' spell, running at the same time so that they back off. Once they are weakened, walk behind and attack from the rear, avoiding the magic missile.

Avoid contact with wraths, as they drain life forces almost immediately. Only red arrows are effective against them, and the same also applies for Spectral warriors.

Never run from a spider, since it is more dangerous than standing and fighting.

Do not enter into combat with baby dragons; their acid breath is lethal.

To kill Mithrains, throw the Star Crystal Staff at them.

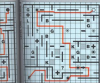
Once the first staff has been obtained there is no going back, so make sure that as many items as possible have been collected, and that members of the team are all equipped with shields and potions.

Do not run straight for the disks - the party get teleported out of the city without them. Run and jump, then let Goldmoon pick the disks up. Move slightly to the left, then back up.

■ Gary White, Christopher & Mark Hill, Newcastle



OSPHERE INCREDIBLE SH



ROBOCOP

Get a GMAT? Can't Kill? Dance? Stealback? Having a spat of bother with a rampaging CD-ROM? Cool. Turn in this listing. RUN it and sit back as the future of law enforcement appears with infinite time and energy for all levels and sections.

10 FOR 1-352 TO 458; READ A; POSE (A; C=C+A; NEXT J) IF C=C+1 GOTO THEN POINT TERROR IN DARK; END (30 30) 068

40 0000 17, 149, 131, 145, 98, 1, 168, 1, 140, 90, 1, 304, 173, 32, 208
50 0000 96, 32, 96, 246, 168, 1, 141, 86, 3, 169, 96, 140, 85, 3, 159, 52, 141, 84, 3, 76
60 0000 189, 96, 141, 304, 173, 141, 167, 170, 169, 96, 140, 211, 246, 140, 238, 246
70 0000 189, 96, 141, 239, 246, 969, 118, 141, 240, 296, 162, 176, 142, 241, 246, 232
80 0000 142, 236, 168, 189, 179, 191, 240, 246, 149, 1, 181, 244, 246, 76, 0, 139, 168, 96
90 0000 141, 159, 185, 141, 354, 189, 189, 354, 141, 181, 358, 169, 169, 141, 162, 185
100 DATA 168, 221, 141, 358, 185, 189, 357, 141, 197, 359, 76, 0, 139, 93, 43, 65



MUNSTERS SOLUTION

No doubt fans of the cult TV show were chuffed to see a computer game based on the antics of the Munster family - and would be even more chuffed to see the complete solution. Look no further.

From the start, go far right and stop at the top of the stairs. Keep shooting the ghosts and the spell bottle fills up. Then descend the stairs and collect the object to the left.

Shoot the ghost to the right, then walk right to collect the cross. Go left, up the stairs, then walk left and another flight of stairs is reached, and walk down.

Go left, shoot three ghosts and collect the object. Keep walking right, collect another object and then head left and back up the stairs.

Go far right and down the other stairs. Head left, shoot the ghost and go down more stairs. Quickly shoot the three ghosts, collect the object on the left, and then go right to meet Herman and Grandpa.

Collect the object, go up the stairs and wait for the vampire in the middle of the room. When he arrives, head left, then go right to the end of the gateway and collect the object.

Walk left killing the centaur, then return to Herman and Grandpa, who are now under your control. Go right, three screens without stopping, and then wait at the edge of the fourth. When the tanks appear from boxes 2, 4 and 5 walk right and underneath the fourth box. When the tanks appear from boxes 1 and 3, head right and then climb the stairs. Grandpa now transforms into a bat and flies off.

With Herman in tow, go up stairs, kill the ghost guarding the right door and go right (don't worry about the ghost - he doesn't attack unless attacked). Go right, collect the object, and then meet Eddie in the real room, where the second stage of the game starts.

In control of the dragon, go to the far right of the screen and keep firing in the middle and lower part of the screen to kill the creatures

Thank you for your co-operation.

■ Dean S. Adam, Leeds, East Gales

SEGA TIPS

SHINOBI

When the title screen appears, push diagonally while pressing button 2 and select a level to start on.

QUARTET

On Level 2, kill the monster, collect the key and star, and enter the way door hidden for a bonus sheet.

ALEX KIDD IN MIRACLE WORLD

When the octopi appear in Lava 1 (after), kill the first one and sit on its back. Keep tapping down and a bonus sheet is entered.

To continue the game, push up and tap button 2 eight times. Note that Alex

must be in possession of at least 4000 for the continue option to work.

CHOPLIFTER

On the second stage, fly behind the battle ship, far and up comes down!

On Level 3, travel backwards past the lava pit.

BLACK BELT

After power-up, press button 1 to access the number of players. A blank screen then appears. In about 30 seconds, quickly tap the Reset button for infinite lives.

ACTION FIGHTER

Bring up the same enemy

again, but instead of a name, try the following: WARRIOR, OP_WORLD, SARCAS, and DORPIN for various modes of transportation.

FANTASY ZONE

Buy all of the engine parts and the ship's weapons never run out.

TEDDY BOY

When the title screen appears, move the control pad up, down, left, right and a new screen appears. Now press up and down nine times, press button 1, and select a starting round.

■ Craig Brown, Middlesbrough & Garesburg, West

INCREDIBLE SHRINKING P



Garfield

WINTER'S TAIL



JIM DAVIS

EDGE

The ski animal's coming your way soon

It and BOOT0800 icons as they appear.

Enter the game as normal, then it's up and running, select the "Quit" option from the Main section of the pull-down menu.

A GUI window now appears. Type LIST to list the YOUT0800 part of the game.

Using the cursor keys, edit the program lines 0514 and 0547 to read as follows:

```
0514 NEXT
  MA=100-INT(PWR*100)
  MA=INT(MA,WF)
  MA=200-INT(PWR*100)
  MA=INT(MA,WF)
  A=9000000-INT(PWR*9000000,WF)
  MP=9000-INT(PWR*9000,WF)
  MP=INT(MP,JA-WF)
GOTO 002
```

```
0547 GOSUB 0548
  IF MA=0 AND A=9000000 OR
  A=95000000 THEN 0547
GOTO 0548
```

```
[0547: A=INT(A,0000)
PRINT TAB(5);
```

```
PA$
PRINT "DIRECTOR'S WITHDRAW"
```

```
PA$
PRINT TAB(5);
MOVY INT(MA)
PRINT TAB(5); "*"
JA=0000
```

In line 0514, making MA equal to 5,000,000 provides 15M starting budget; this can be tailored to suit, however. Line 0547 making MA=INT(A,5000) stops the director's team with allowing too much cash to be used.

Click on the Close window icon for the window containing the program text, and save the amended program file by going Save YOUT0800.

To run the amended disk, load up the disk as normal, by clicking on the TD-F icon. When the YOUT0800 icon is clicked, the message 0800 FILE MODE appears. Accept this by using the OK key.

Close the GUI window containing the few lines of text, by clicking on the Close window icon.

Type 0800. A message box appears prompting for the NAME OF PROGRAM TO LOAD: Using the left-hand mouse button, click on the text bar and type YOUT0800.

SIDEWINDER



Tired of the way ST Sidewinder looks? Why not copy the data disk B into a new disk, and load the individual compressed graphic files into Degas Dots. The more artistic draw-lookup laws may now replace the backgrounds, explosions, and craft at will.

Used in conjunction with the designer program on disk B, ST owners now have a possible version of the Star Trek Lite Construction Kit (and it works smoothly, too).

■Chris Cox, Glasgow

When the 080 message appears, type 0800. The program should now start as normal with plenty of cash to spend.

■Les Atwood, Wodehouse

METROID

Nintendo owners enjoying this very Japanese shoot-em-up arcade adventure could do worse than follow the excellent tips below.

First of all, enter the following password:

```
80-... -c01e0
Y5-rts 00000
```

This places Samus in the last zone, Tourist, armed with Screw Attack, High Jump Boots, Varia, Missiles, an Energy Tank, 250 missiles and a long Ice Beam! And not only that, Zebette - the Mother Brain's power source -

has been destroyed.

No map of Tourist is necessary since it's a one-way trip to the Mother Brain. But first, to ensure success, the Energy Tanks must all be filled. To do this, simply hang around destroying Metroids. The only way to fill them is to freeze them with the Ice Beam and then blast them with fire missiles. The destroyed organism leaves a capsule behind which then provides either 50 missiles or 25 energy units.

When the Mother Brain is finally reached, stand facing it between the two metal pillars where the Zebette used to be, and blast it with around 30 missiles. If Samus is knocked from her perch by a Bomb, just wait another one appears, freeze it, and use it as a platform to reach the previous position.

Close the Mother Brain is destroyed, a door appears. Enter it, race up the vertically-scrolling corridor, and board the lift to safety.

■Craig Reed, Perth

KING SPHERE INCREDIB



BAAL

Propping difficult shoot-em-ups suffers from only having six warriors at the player's disposal. To increase the available army, find a convenient hallway/level point and then keep moving back and forth between it and the nearest monster, building up points by repeatedly killing the creature. Since an extra warrior is awarded every 5,000 points, repeating the process soon results in a few more men with whom to rally forth and do little exploring.

One such location is at 58-49 on the first level, with a hallway, pond and some green, snake-like monsters.

To make things easier still, the following coordinates provide the approximate location of the racket pads on Level One:

24:04 25:54 49:02 08:02 36:36
08:45 38:52 12:45 18:29 58:37

■ Alan Hughes, Wilson-Raynes & Son (London, Edmonton)



ELITE

Fueled by the cheat for ST Elite, many people have written in with the byte changes for the Amiga version. To put in the fun, simply type 5400 when first prompted for the start-up password, then enter the correct code. During the game, press "" to bring up the hacking screen, and alter the following bytes for the required effects:

Byte	Value	Result
16	FF	More money
17	FF	More than you can
1A	FF	Stable a
1B	FF	Trick it
27	06	Maximum fuel level
21	04	Maximum no. of missiles
22	01	Large Cargo Bay
28	01	Fuel Gauge
29	01	Escape Capsule
2F	01	Energy Bomb
30	01	Energy Unit
31	02	Naval Energy Unit
32	01	Docking Computer
34	01	Galactic Hyperdrive
3A	01	Retro Rocket
3C	01	ECM jammer (activated by Y)
3E	01	Docking Device (activated by Y)
60	01	Embassy Refuelers
6D	01	Secret Document
6F	00:08	Rankless - Date rating
9F	30	Mission 1
9F	20	Mission 2
9F	31	Mission 3
9F	40	Mission 4
9F	50	Mission 5

Cargo can also be obtained in this way, but since the above items render the user all incredibly rich and all incredibly well-equipped, it's really a bit pointless to include them.



NETHERWORLD CHEAT

To escape from the current level of C&A Netherworld, try pressing Z, V and E all at the same time.

INTERNATIONAL KARATE+

When Arthur (Nathan) coded the ST version of IK+, he included a number of special messages and effects which only appear when the correct codes are typed in:

WARR (D&H) GUP* 044H 031H TOTO
ANGL FLOOR GPO* 044H 031H JUMP
FISH 044H 031H FINEZ PAC

The following codes have been created, so a bit of imagination is needed to fill in the spaces:

Q** S** W** C** T**

■ Timothy Cooke, Norwich

WHOOPS!

Last month's Carrier Command cheat intimated that the password worked on both the Amiga and the SE. In fact, the correct password for the ST version is 'GROW OLD ALONG WITH ME', again with spaces. Sorry for any inconvenience caused. The offending staff writer has been shot. Again.

LE SHRINKING SPHERE I



FEATURED ON TV'S s SATURDAY MORNING MOTOR MOUTH



ddRRRRRRring

Weird Dreams

RAINBIRD

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FEATURED ON TV'S s SATURDAY MORNING MOTOR MOUTH

'State of the Mind'



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FALCON

GENERAL TIPS

The most important aspect of playing Falcon is the game settings, in terms of what you're going to need in the game. Refer to the manual for the different runs and their respective difficulty levels. The higher levels rely less on the technology aspect, and more on pilot skill. There are also more variables to watch out for, so be prepared.

The higher up the levels, the less reliable missiles become. Missiles become more effective and it's more difficult to get a lock on another plane. Missing dogfights is no longer a matter of just being up with an air-to-air.

When coming up on the later levels, the night aspect becomes more important. Drag factors also come into play: speed itself in certain turns will be affected, and so on.

DEALING WITH SAMs

The most difficult aspect of Falcon's flight is attack from SAM sites. There are two types, SAM 2 and SAM 7, ground-based and shoulder-launched respectively. SAM 7s are normally fired ahead of the plane and can be spotted by a visual sighting, while the first signal of an airborne SAM 2 will probably be as a lock-on warning signal.

The best method in dealing with ground-based is simply to avoid the SAM site. Plan a route beforehand, and keep a constant lookout when flying on autopilot.

However, if a SAM does get on the Falcon's tail, don't hang around. Flip the plane on its head and go into a dive. Turn again, then let out releasing chaff. As the F-16 bottoms out of the dive - coming within a couple of hundred feet of the ground - release more chaff and then pull up again.

Going nose-up before a dive avoids a red-out, since the maneuver is similar to pulling a positive-G climb, rather than the more danger-

Mirrorsoft's 'Colonel' Tom Watson climbs into the F-16, pulls a high-G Immelman and spills his guts.



Learn to fly by the Head-Up Display. Russian MiGs are giving you a momentary taste of concentration, caused by having to look at the control panel.

ous negative-G dives. It's also quicker to pull 'up' and dive, than push the nose-down to normal.

Releasing chaff at the bottom of the dive confuses the SAM's lock-on, hopefully sending it straight into the ground. If not, it's time to hope that its limited fuel runs out before it hits.

Note that carrying some of the heavier air-to-ground weapons, when ranked as Lieutenant Colonel or above, can cause a loss of stability when banking over, at which point the plane just drops out of the sky. It's therefore best to jettison just one or all of the stores beforehand, or the ground: but it's better to lose a payload than a plane and pilot.

COOPER WITH MiGs

However, at least pilots are safe in the knowledge that they won't have to deal with SAMs, while those are MiGs in the air. But how to cope with the Russian fighters?

To begin with, it's worth noting that MiGs aren't always detected by radar. Keep a check on the HUD - they often appear here first as a lock-on signal - and constantly scan the sky for a visual sighting, using the different viewcreens.

As soon as there are MiGs in local airspace, slow to a combat speed of about 900 kts, avoid 350 knots.

C R E D I B L E S H R I N K I N G S H



On being to approach the first target, there's a good chance that the Falcon will enter into a head-on maneuver called 'engage', where both fighters are headed straight for one another. Select cannon - missiles can't get a decent lock-on to the MIG's nose - and fire once the MIG is in target. With a speed advantage the Falcon stands a good chance of coming out unscathed.

Use the cannon in short bursts to consume ammunition; it's best not to run out of ammo with a MIG approaching at high speed. If there's no result from the engage, go to auto-air and attempt to get on his tail. With greater maneuverability, the F-16 is in a prime position to do so.

If you can see a combination coming off the MIG's wings, that's because it's pulling a very tight turn. That's when they are at their weakest, so strike while the iron's hot!

Be in mind that whenever two or three MIGs are in force, they will adopt authentic Russian fighter tactics: one plane sets itself up as a target, while the others are getting at your tail, hoping to put an air-crew up your exhaust.

In this situation, the Interspace is a very useful evasive maneuver to learn and execute. However, later levels often require a



Surfaced to Air Missiles: lose them or loathe them, they're here to stay. And there comes a time in every pilot's life when BBMs just aren't enough, so blow, blow, blow!

kind of the afterburner to reach the climbing speeds necessary. Make sure there's enough fuel left, and get ready to level off abruptly when there is on the powerful heat signal of the burners.

Success in dogfighting is all down to precision. Always know what weapons are still available, and get used to switching to the correct weapon system without looking at the display. It's also useful to be able to fly by the full screen, using only the HUD for information, to facilitate good visual sighting of the enemy.

EDM pods are useful, since the electronics are extremely effective against coded guided missiles. Apart from their great weight, though, the main problem is that when it's hovering, it's like a log beamer using 'H, I'm here - come and get me!' And in general, the trouble with the onboard computer systems is that the more there are running, the greater the chance of discovery. The basic principle on any long-distance mission is to fly fast, fly low and fly quiet. ■



Follow the basic rules of Falconery and you just might live long enough to sip some nice fragging olives...

FALCON CHEAT

If an engine is lost at any stage during the mission, rather than eject and risk



The engine's out, the EDW's down and you're no weapons left. There's a cheat.

capture, wait for the RPM to reach zero, then pull the nose up while pressing the

'HELP' key to stabilise the plane. If the airspeed still isn't at zero after this, bank the craft to left and right, so that any sideways forward movement are

removed. If the HUD display is out, press 'F' on the numeric keypad to bring up an alternative airspeed indicator.

Keep holding the 'HELP' key, to retain level flight, and then wait until the Falcon touches the ground. Press the 'ESCAPE' button and choose 'End Mission' from the pull-down menu. A helicopter should now pick up the surviving pilot.

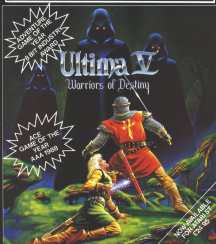
■ Martin Colquhoun, Levenshulme.

S P E R E

But the puzzling maps about possible routes to complete the level 20 levels of ISB (we've left the last one a mystery). The maps are fine for the ST and Amiga, but some level four onwards, things are replaced by destructible walls on the original versions. ■ Thanks to the PowerField team



WORLDWIDE PHENOMENON



Ultima V is Available Now

From Lord British, one of fantasy gaming's most imaginative authors, comes Ultima V, latest in the award-winning Ultima saga. More than four man-years in the making, a labyrinth of mystery and intrigue, Ultima V, Warriors of Death will be your greatest challenge!

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WORLDWIDE PHENOMENON

UPDATES: AN AT-A-GLANCE GUIDE

NEOWIN CD-ROM

CD4 version reviewed Issue 4 - ACE rating 900

In the 32-bit it was astoundingly good. On ST and Amiga it was still astoundingly good. Now, on the PC, it's set to cause late nights and manic addiction all over again.

John Phillips' brilliant invention has been remarkably well converted from the ST and Amiga versions. This means that it's the extended version with two missions instead of one. All the towers are exactly the same, although speed changes on the PC make timing problems slightly different. It plays slower than other versions, but this isn't much of a problem.

The existing towers look superb and all the hazards and features (mine, gas, float and slide in 3D). There's the familiar nifty look, available in the form of disappearing blocks, sliding blocks, doors to nowhere and complicated series of lifts.

In between towers there is the interface

UPDATE SPECIAL

screen where fish can be shot while juggling around in a submarine. This is one of the most impressive tests on the PC because it has amazing parallel scrolling in several different planes. Forget the tactic description - it looks fantastic, particularly from a distance.

This one can't be recommended highly enough. It is an entertaining and absorbing game that is certain to prove utterly addictive.

■ **ACE RATING** 950

PC VERSION

The CD4 version looks great - one of the best early editions of CD4 graphics there is. VGA looks terrific also. The sound effects are understandably weak but at least they match the Spectrum's.

■ **ACE RATING** 950



AMIGA

ADVANCED SKI SIMULATOR

CDROMMAGIC CD-ROM
Spectrum version reviewed Issue 3 - ACE rating 700

CDrommagic's budget publishing makes it into the big machines with a slightly-valued title and a major price increase. You can compete against either a friend or the computer as you race down several slopes, each against a time limit. Good fun, but pricey.

■ **ACE RATING** 840



DEFLEKTOR

GREMLIN/VOYTEC CD-ROM
Spectrum version reviewed Issue 4 - ACE rating 900

This great little puzzle game based on the properties of light has taken a long time to come onto the Amiga. But the wait has certainly been worth it. 60 screens of puzzling and frantic physics manipulation accompanied by some great music that plays throughout means you'll be playing this for a long time to come. Fascinating stuff.

■ **ACE RATING** 920

FLYING SHARK

PHILIPPO CD-ROM
Amiga ST version reviewed Issue 3 - ACE rating 880
A straight portover of the ST version, so it's just as impressive.



Fabulous graphics and very demanding wave patterns. The sound effects and music were so good that they haven't had to be changed much either.

■ **AGE RATING** 900

LIVE AND LET DIE

DOMARK (19.95)
C64 version reviewed Issue 18 - **AGE rating 720**

As you might expect, things move a lot quicker on the Amiga than they do on the C64, and are a lot nicer to watch and listen to as well. There are still only four courses, which is a pity, but it's very enjoyable and provides a tough challenge. If you fancy playing Buggy Boy on water, with a couple of Roadblasters and Out Run bits thrown in, check it out.

■ **AGE RATING** 700

MICKY MOUSE

GREMLIN (19.95)
Spectrum version reviewed Issue 11 - **AGE rating 700**

Not much to tell this and the ST version apart. Excellent animated graphics and good sound. The gameplay is hectic and varied, but always on the simplistic side - particularly in the subgames.

■ **AGE RATING** 770

TITAN

TITUS (24.95)
Amstrad version reviewed Issue 18 - **AGE rating 870**
 The scrolling is smooth and not as eye-strainingly painful as the Amstrad. The gameplay and levels are the same. Graphics have been improved but not by that much.

■ **AGE RATING** 890

TRACK SUIT MANAGER

AGAN AGAN (19.95)
Spectrum version reviewed Issue 15 - **AGE rating 880**
 Makes no attempt to introduce any graphics or sound. The strategy elements are the same compared with as on the Spectrum, ideal for tests fans but has little appeal otherwise.

■ **AGE RATING** 900

AMSTRAD



AFTERBURNER

ACTIVISION (9.95), (14.95)
Atari ST version reviewed Issue 18 - **AGE rating 880**
 Very colourful and fast-moving version - probably the best of the 16-bit ones. It's got the speed of the Spectrum version and the superior

use of colour. Unfortunately the gameplay is still pretty boring.

■ **AGE RATING** 870

TECHNOCOP

GREMLIN (9.95), (14.95)
Spectrum version reviewed Issue 15 - **AGE rating 884**
 The driving graphics are colourful but don't convey much impression of speed. The sections in the buildings are identical to the Spectrum and virtually the same graphically. Still good value and entertainment on the Amstrad, with two games in one.

■ **AGE RATING** 884

ATARI ST

BATMAN

OCEAN (19.95)
Spectrum version reviewed Issue 18 - **AGE rating 800**
 Keep the Spacey gameplay and



objectives and improve the graphics and you're left with a great arcade adventure with plenty of pulling and slings manipulation to keep you busy. The two official games come on two separate disks included in the package so once you've completed one it's a

simple case of booting up the other disk and starting it at that.

■ **AGE RATING** 910

THE GAMES - WINTER EDITION

EPYX (19.95)
C64 version reviewed Issue 13 - **AGE rating 880**
 It's the same seven events, expertly put together and programmed. There's quite a lot of skill involved in getting proficient at each. The backdrops are pretty and the animation good for each event. Excellent presentation but it's old hat these days.

■ **AGE RATING** 870

C64

CRAZY CARS

TITUS (9.95), (14.95)
Amiga version reviewed Issue 9 - **AGE rating 880**
 The graphics don't convey much impression of speed and the sound effects are poor. The driving also leaves much to be desired - it's far too easy to lose it on a corner and it's very tough to get the car back on the road.

■ **AGE RATING** 440

RAMBO III

OCEAN (9.95), (14.95)
Atari ST version reviewed Issue 18 - **AGE rating 880**
 Not as difficult to survive as in the ST version - a welcome change. The gameplay is otherwise very similar. Some mix of exploring and shooting. Of graphics and a decent tone.

■ **AGE RATING** 880

R-TYPE

ACTIVISION (9.95), (14.95)
Spectrum version reviewed Issue 15 - **AGE rating 870**
 The classic from coin-op turned out to be a superb Spectrum shoot-em-up, with all the gameplay intact and some surprisingly good graphics. The C64 version is pretty good too, but not quite up to the Spectrum standard. Still well worth a look at, though. If you're a blasting fan.

■ **AGE RATING** 820

WEC LE MANS

OCEAN (9.95), (14.95)
Amstrad version reviewed Issue 18 - **AGE rating 841**
 Oh dear! Although the Amstrad and Spectrum versions of this classic conversion were great, the C64 version is not. The impression of speed is there, but the car's handling feels all wrong. It's still better than Out Run was,



but it's not up to the standard of the others.

■ **AGE RATING** 500

SPECTRUM

A QUESTION OF SPORT

ELITE (14.95) (14.95) (14.95) (14.95)
 ST version reviewed Issue 18 - ACE rating 470
 Based on the TV show, this sporting trivia game's a lot of fun. All the rounds are there and there are four separate question blocks to choose from. Great fun if you enjoy this sort of thing.

■ **AGE RATING** 470

OBLITERATOR

MOLCAJIRE HOUSE (14.95) (14.95) (14.95) (14.95)
 ST version reviewed Issue 9 - ACE rating 570
 Obliterator was not one of the world's greatest arcade adver-



ises when it first appeared on 16-bit machines, and to give Melbourne House credit, they have managed to convert it wonderfully to the Spectrum. Unfortunately it's still not a wonderful game and frustrates more than it entertains.

■ **AGE RATING** 500

RAMBO III

ODDAN (9.95) (9.95) (9.95) (9.95)
 ST version reviewed Issue 18 - ACE rating 600

Not much difference in the gameplay, although the enemy guards behave a lot changed a little. Exactly the same problems to solve and ones to explore. Looks reasonably good too, but lacking in the sound effects department.

■ **AGE RATING** 640

XENON

MOLCAJIRE HOUSE (9.95) (9.95) (9.95) (9.95)
 ST version reviewed Issue 7 - ACE rating 660

The game that made the Ollman first famous makes it onto the 16-bit machines. The graphics are as good as you could expect from a Spectrum, and though all the extra weapons aren't there, the gameplay is. A great conversion of a good shoot-em-up.

■ **AGE RATING** 670

DUNGEON MASTER

AMIGA (24.95) (24.95) (24.95) (24.95)
 ST version reviewed Issue 9 - ACE rating 640

It's not often Amiga owners' turn goes with any of a game ST owners already have. But something happened last year that must have left every Amiga owner grilling his teeth and considering: Dungeon Master from FS/Microsoft arrived. And what a



hit the button and then get ready to take on some monsters...



Another game with different characters. These monsters are with a problem...



Screenshots (above and below) make a tasty meal for adventurers when you sleep 'em up.

game it turned out to be.

You take the part of Theron, an apprentice wizard set to recover his master's Vestfall from the clutches of Lord Chaos. Twenty-four adventures have been before you, but the finished Lord Chaos has defeated them all and hung their corpses in what he grandly calls the Hall Of Champions. It's here you start the game.

You can choose up to four champions as companions, and after resurrecting them you enter the game proper. By using the mouse and clicking on movement arrows at the side of the main game screen, you proceed cautiously through 14 increasingly difficult levels of Lord Chaos's dungeons. Along the way, you'll encounter all manner of vicious and ferocious monsters that will try to kill you. With some observation, though, you'll find plenty of weapons and armour to pick up and equip the party with.

After a while, and with the experience gained in a few fights, you'll notice your characters' statistics improving: fighters becoming stronger and mages even more powerful.

What makes Dungeon Master really special apart from its massive 3D graphics and some sound effects are the puzzles. Time and again, you'll get completely stuck and will have to sit, ponder and think hard before the answer to a riddle or the solution to a problem becomes clear.

Dungeon Master is one of the ultimate classics. Like Elite, you'll just keep playing it - and believing in the whole dark world that resides in your machine.

■ Andy Smith

AMIGA VERSION

At present IBM's only playable on machines with a 1MB memory but a normal version should be appearing soon. As it is, the Amiga graphics and sound are identical to the ST version and the game plays the same. Therefore it's deserving of the same high rating.

■ **AGE RATING** 640



WATCH OUT FOR...

BUDGET

Either straight label, Eureka, have descriptions released first or releases are sold for the C64. The best catalogue initially includes *Blomberg*, *Amsoft*, *Comarc*, *Logic*, *Software*, *Starworks* and *Piran* (Photos Imaging), all at the basement price of £1.99. I have almost all the extra titles, and any other Eureka releases will also be available on C64 - the best price to watch out for is Turbo Sprint, which will also appear on cassette for the Spectrum, Amstrad and C64 at £1.99.

COST

Plans of bestselling games should be reviewed to fear of E&F Games plans to release their £1.99 budget games on their newly formed Outpost. Soccer Stars a fun, graphical soccer strategy game, set over the first English division. Cup Football features football management through the top European leagues, and Soccer 10 contains 10,000 football-related questions in a fast quiz strategy game where the right answers are learnt via through the divisions.

All three titles will be available for the Spectrum initially with C64 and Amstrad versions to follow.

MULTITASKING

The original Mastermind release to watch out for is Advanced Soccer (Advanced Soccer), £2.99, a football management game which features some good match highlight sequences.

Those wishing to catch up on some back catalogue action can get hold of *Ministerman* (Euros & Arts 'Rings'), £1.99, *Riverun On Fire* (Euros & Arts 'Rings'), £1.99, *Amsoft* *Piran* (Euros & Arts 'Rings'), £1.99, and *Logic* *Computer People* (C&A), £1.99 on the Pioneer tape.

However, latest news from the Mastermind camp is that Product Manager Andrew Wright has decided to release using the Pioneer label for its release games, preferring to put all product under the Mastermind banner. The decision has been made because it was felt that original product from Mastermind was being overshadowed by the large amounts of Eureka releases. It was also felt that the label simply wasn't needed any more, since there are so many budget labels on the market already.

And in addition to this, the £2.99 M&A label is also to be phased, staying only for Mastermind - this will cover the regular priced £1 and '99 label products, all £2.99 and £3.99 respectively. It probably isn't wise to waste too much on the product will be on the ordinary Mastermind label. Watch the space.

RAGS & IV

Up and coming titles on Eureka's budget label include *Miss Diana* (Euros, £04), *Amsoft*, *Incognito* on its own which is, surprisingly enough, a maze game. *Chameleon* (Euros) C64 only is a brain-tying arcade adventure game with an aim to overcome 75 scenarios. *Shogun* the battles, reflect the problems and also allow the safety of winning battles - that sort of thing. Both titles are set to appear at £2.99 for the three major titles.



BUDGET BARGAINS

STREET GANG

PLAYERS

■ Amstrad, Spectrum, £1.99



Mike's Sporting, as well as having a stupid name, also has a death wish. After the infamous 'Carl' - leader of the biggest gang in New York - threatens to mug everyone who crosses his Last Stop district, guess where Mickey decides to go?

Streets and roads of the Big Apple are displayed in black, and Mickey makes his way from left to right across the Spectrum screen, all manner of accidents appear and attempt to stop Mickey dead in his tracks, with everyone from acid house brats to gun-wielding grannies laying into our hero. Mickey bats back with bare fists and jumps over garbages, but can also collect weapons en route.

A tagging being signals Mickey's current strength, and as he gets hit, so the arm withers. Death sees Mickey explode and reappear at the start of the level.

Hardly in the same league as *Demigod*, this one. Combat is too limited to be of any real interest and the zombie-like characters simply wander on, attack, and wander off again. An over-simplified beat-em-up, and really not recommended.

■ ACE RATING 4/10

SAS COMBAT SIMULATOR

CODEMASTERS

■ Spectrum, Amstrad, £2.99

Taking a Command-style viewpoint, SAS Combat Simulator takes the player through four huge levels of enemy-infested landscapes, on a clandestine mission to assassinate the rebel leader.

The SAS officer begins his mission as fast

armed only with a gun and a limited supply of grenades. Collection of 'Codemasters' logos is rewarded with a map or tank in which to cover ground more quickly; a bazooka with which to increase the death toll; rapid fire, darts, and a



smart bomb, double darts.

The play area scrolls alternately horizontally and vertically, with an enemy straight at the end of each level. On reaching the enemy headquarters, the display switches to a Grand Prix style side view as the SAS officer indulges in hand-to-hand combat against hostile commandos.

Not the most original of games, but a pleasant mix of two game styles. Reasonably polished on the Spectrum - even more so on the Amstrad - and proving quite addictive, if boring in repeat games.

■ ACE RATING 7/12

INTERNATIONAL SPEEDWAY

SILVERBIRD

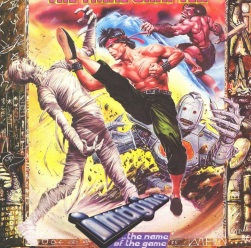
■ Spec, Amstrad, C64, £1.99



Prose Software returns to the budget scene yet again, with this unusual speedway simulation. Starting off in the local league, the aim is to progress through the national and continental leagues and, ultimately, reach the World Champ-

RENEGADE II

THE FINAL CHAPTER THE FINAL CHAPTER



...the name
of the game

When a guy loses his girl – he loses his mind! Now, in the Final Chapter, Renegade must witness all his strength and fighting reactions as he saves his girlfriend, Captain, through time it will. Fight against robotic men, mummies, and...

...regional fights, and the best of all, a special award within the game of Robert Egge. You want to see that? You'll have to see that – to a time you'll never forget! ... but remember – your girl wants to see you alive!

RENEGADE II: THE FINAL CHAPTER • RENEGADE II: THE FINAL CHAPTER • RENEGADE II: THE FINAL CHAPTER

TEA 4 D



Funny how these things seem to come together. Sculpt-Animate 4D for the Amiga has just been released in this country by Byte by Byte, coinciding with the first major one-man exhibition of computer graphic art in Britain, 'The Conquest of Form: Sculptural Images by William Latham' at the Arrol-Gil Gallery, Bristol. The importance of such coincidence is that this new version of Sculpt-Animate has the power to produce images similar to Latham's - images of which any artist might be proud. Our resident computer artist, Brian Larkman, has a look at Latham's work, a try at Sculpt-Animate 4D, and highlights the differences.



TEA 4D - William Latham with artist *Alvin Woodland* looks new very interestingly rendered with Sculpt-Animate 4D, which is rendered by Brian Larkman in the following pages. 4D4D features a new and exciting look, 'hell', that operates by drawing an area of closed curves on a profile, with a straight edge to define the start and end offset for each curve rotation. It creates a wobble 2D along a spring. As it passes up the spring it is rotating round the curved axis of the spring, with each frequency relative to curves along the axis by a certain amount, the third offset. If the spring bays along its length then each rotation of the wobble moves it away from the axis by the third offset. Simple, really!

When it first appeared shortly before the 1987 PCW Show, Sculpt 3D marked the beginning of a new era for computer graphics enthusiasts. It was the first program to offer simple and easy to use ray tracing on an unmodified home computer. The things it provided an excellent modeling system that allowed almost any object to be 'isolated' on screen, similar in many ways to the systems used by professional computer graphic animation studios. Later it was upgraded to a full animation system, Sculpt:Animate, and many new modeling features were added.

Now the series has culminated in Sculpt:Animate 3D as even more polished version. The process of continuing software support and development from the major software publishers is characteristic of mature systems, such as the Apple Mac or IBM PC. Byte by Byte are one of the first companies to display the same professional attitude toward the Amiga.

TRIAL VIEW

Right from the original version, the superb modelling interface of Sculpt 3D - the browser - has remained unchanged in its perfect balance of clear, thoughtfully-positioned and informative icons (gadgets) and carefully-coloured wire-frame mode. The Tri-view is unaltered. Even the recently-arrived Calgar system, good as it is, doesn't put as much power in the hands of a mouse user straight away.

The three windows that make up the Tri-view are almost standard things windows with the addition of 10 frequently-used 'hand tools' conveniently positioned for immediate access. These are described in more detail in the illustration below. The more specific 'power tools' are reached from menus or the keyboard.

A LA CARTE

The real power of Sculpt:Animate has been growing, behind the scenes, on the menu's. The original tools in Sculpt 3D relate solely to the construction, transformation and rendering of the three-dimensional model. The starting point can be one of nine geometric primitives or a more complex object generated from a curve defined by the user. This curve can be spun

into a spindle or jet shape or extruded into the third dimension.

Once the basic shape has been defined groups of points can be selected and acted on independently - sections or whole objects can be expanded or contracted, points can be dragged in one or more windows to distort a shape or drag out a spiral or indent the surface, gaps or holes can be filled, surface colour, texture and smoothing can be set. Similarly whole objects can be mirrored, duplicated, reflected, distorted in any direction, coloured and saved independently so that libraries of objects can be built up.

Next, the environment can be set up for rendering. The position of the observer or 'photographer' is determined by the cursor in two windows and set from the menu. Likewise the direction of view or 'target' of the observer and one or more light sources are positioned, the colour of the sky and ground are set, and the depth of shadows is chosen. The results of these settings can be varied by changing other parameters such as tilt, exposure and focal length of lenses - similar to those of a film camera.

Finally the image size, resolution and rendering method are set and the render is started. The rendering methods available increase in quality roughly in proportion with the rendering time. Hence a wire-frame view with no hidden line removal is almost instant, but a full-blown raytrace can take photographic but take many hours to complete.

ANIMATE

The arrival of Animate 3D added several useful new modeling tools, in particular a form of Bézier curve or 'lofted' to generate smooth curves. More significantly Animate provided a means to describe motion and kinetic transformation, or 'keyframing', for every object and its parts, together and separately, in addition to the shape and motion of objects, Animate can cope with transformations of colour, smoothing, surface texture and even lighting. Similarly the position of the observer and target can be changed to give panning and zooming effects.

For example, it would be possible to ▶



TRIAL THE VIEW - The three windows of the Tri-view represent three sides of a cube, viewing front-to-back, down-front and top-down views. Birds. These directions are used rather than the more conventional X, Y and Z for ease of visualization, a theme followed up throughout the Animate system with 'real-world' analogies being used for almost all functions. Other gadgets allow the view to be 'panned' relative to the world viewpoint within, zoomed in and out, centered on the mouse and rotated in either direction. Objects can be built up using points and edge smoothing (as depicted) and these points in the windows can also be selected ready for some manipulation or transformation operation.



Throughout human history artists have striven to find the ideal materials - plastic, jet permanent, enamel and various jet finishes - allowing their imaginations and inspirations to take form for all to see. Wood, clay, stone, marble, metal and plastic have all been tried with some degree of success but each material has its limitations. The latest medium to be tried is jet exactly a mixture of oil, and that is the source of its appeal and versatility.

3D modelling using a computer provides a means to generate virtual objects ready that can take on any form, colour or texture before the artist decides whether the expense and time cost of actually making them is worth it. It's a more painstaking for the artist, computer modelling allows the artist freedom to experiment almost at will and to create his work safely or dramatically many times with little pain. Only then, when the final colours have been made might the finished work need to be made real with a hard copy.

Why then, did Antoni Gaudí's recent sculpture ever take on any real form at all? As well as existing in his mind - as does the work of most artists - it takes form within an IBM computer, behind a monitor screen which, as Gaudí writes in the catalogue to his recent exhibition,

...acts as a virtual looking into a three dimensional volume of space, a virtual space - it is within this space that I make my sculptures. The final product, the sculpture piece, is usually a three-dimensional print of the image, some of these are reproduced here.

Unlike most computer artists, Gaudí was programming, individually at quite a high level, to produce his art. The use of computers over those who work in a more gradualist context at the Royal College of Art with consultancy and homographic shapes developed from drawings and prints on paper. After the Royal College he was awarded a Research Fellowship by IBM UK to continue his work at their facilities in Winchester. Access to their facilities, the IBM UK, resulted in his unique evolutionary forms. Using the high level interactive graphical language IBM's, also developed in-house at Winchester, Gaudí produced images that surprised even the designers of the software.

Many of the forms are created from simple geometric primitives - spheres, cones, cubes, cylinders, torus - constructed according to a set of rules applied repeatedly in different sequences. These sequences generally a software model which is then translated to a solid model by IBM UK, applying colour and texture according to what parameters such as lighting position and the image type. Some of the results can be seen below.

If you want to see more of Gaudí's work it will be touring to Milan, Monza (25 Feb - 1 Apr), Madrid (25 Apr - 10 May), Barcelona (22 Jun - 28 July), Newcastle (2 Oct - 28 Oct), Moscow (4 Nov - 8 Dec) and Philadelphia (12 Jan - 18 Feb, 1996).

On the right, Gaudí's work looks real. The illusion created is so good you are left wondering what the originals are really like - their scale, the feel of their surfaces. When you begin to question how they could have been made - and realize that many of them are impossible. Gaudí's digital maestro's apparently escape all from machine, baroque metal probably transforming into stone, each imperceptibly smooth to breaking point the normal process of description. In fact much of Gaudí's work is indescribable, based as it would be on the higher laws of nature we ignored or distorted.





make a film, pale their gradually faded and blue while shaking their side to side, with the viewer turning across and zooming in and the setting from forest to earth. All these changing parameters could be set up in one global scene and perhaps a couple of key scenes, then the program would generate all of the in-between scenes and render a frame for each one, eventually listing them all together into a smooth animation.

Like the original Trivium, this animation system was beautifully implemented from the start, so that little has needed to be changed for the SculptMinator 4D approach. Rather it is the modeling and rendering tools that are again further developed...

HELLO THE GAO

Despite the Trivium and animation systems are so little changed, the first impression of SAGE is a little disappointing. Apart from a change of colour, all

the improvements are hidden amongst the menus, or even deeper under the skin. The file managers have at last been improved though we still do not have the choice of adding icons to the image and view files, and what about file comments? Grids and grid-locks, fade and reveal of selected vertices, angle measurement and user-defined 'hot key' menus are some of the other useful additions. A new 'reset' tool here, folder 'sculpture' rendering modes and an overall speed improvement are always welcome.

The most exciting improvement however is Make Felt. At a time when William Latham is providing inspiration, this device is by far the most fun, as you can see from the illustrations. Even when the novelty has worn off, it will prove to be a powerful tool.

One common reaction to much of the best Twentieth Century art is the sometimes repetitive feeling that "...if only I had thought of it I could easily have done that...". Although considerable skill and expertise are still required, the predominant feature of many modern works is the original idea, contained just the application of some new material or technique. The work of William Latham fits well into this category. It is too late now for any of us to come up with Latham's idea. Nevertheless the influence of other people's inspirations on our own work is a reasonable one. Almost all art is derivative in some sense.

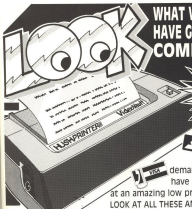
SculptMinator 4D gives us all a chance to experiment with similar techniques and themes to those of Latham - though at a much lower level of complexity and freedom - and still have just as much fun!

THREE SPHERE TEST - The biggest slight in computer graphics, spheres against a chequerboard background, still provides the best test of a rendering system. The new version of SAGE scores from this test to the greatest improvement. The rendering time of this image was greatly reduced over the old version (though still several hours) and the smoothness of the reflections is also very good. The usual blurring effects associated with RAM textures are now all but eliminated. Transparency in particular is greatly improved, especially at the edges. Some RAM pictures (though not this one) show an odd horizontal banding which may be some sort of bug. This only occurs in Photo full ray-traced mode.

Each of these images has been rendered using the basic test of SAGE. Although there are many less spheres than William Latham's images, they have a fun about similarity. They represent only a few days' progress but the versatility of the program suggests that more complex and interesting structures will develop. If so, you will see them first in SAGE.



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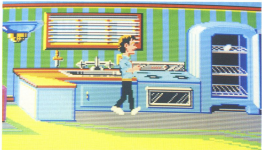
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GAMES THAT PUT YOU IN THE FRONT ROW...

STEVE COOKE takes us into an animated adventureworld with a detailed look at the latest products from Sierra-On-Line plus Lucasfilm's *Zak McKracken*...

Since the monochrome days of Legend's *Kathalka*, software companies have dreamt of producing a "computer movie" worthy of the name. This burning desire has led to the release of several products quite obviously NOT worthy of the name - we could mention *Die Sale* (Ben and others...but we won't), instead we'll check out the state-of-the-art animated adventure art as it reveals itself on the shelves right now.

This month, that means Sierra-On-Line's range of games, including *Kings Quest IV* and *Leisure Suit Larry 2*, plus a release from Lucasfilm/*20* Gold, *Zak McKracken*. All these products offer animated sequences and reasonably extensive command sets. Which, if any, could tear you away from the silver screen?

ZAK M^cKRACKEN

LUCASFILM/US GOLD's cinema ticket

MANIAC Maniac set new standards for animated adventures when it first appeared over a year ago. The principle issues of that game were the ability to 'test' between characters, providing opportunities for numerous tactical puzzles, and the excellent graphics. Now Lucasfilm have come up with a new game featuring the same system, but - visually at any rate - much improved.

A few years ago, no-one would have believed that a game like Zak McKracken was possible, at least not on the Commodore 64. Lately animated efforts like Jim Knipfers were

hopelessly limited in graphics and graphic presentation, but Zak McKracken can fairly be described as very-impressive.

Your initial character, a lanky lark named Zak, strolls through his flat in a world where people are being driven to sleep by a noise over the telephone system. Your aim is to save the world from brainlessness in the company of fellow characters, Anna, Melissa, and Leslie.

The game is full of genuine wit and good humour which the American software houses currently seem to be doing better than anyone else. Typical targets for the offbeat satire are tabloid journalism and comedy. To team up with Melissa and Leslie, for example, could take quite a bit of head-banging - they've consumed their wit into a spastic state being instructed to do so in a dream sounds more like a nightmare and are now on Mars' (wasting contact with intelligent beings).

Meanwhile, down in Earth, you struggle with your malleable, the local pawn shop, your phone bill, a somewhat loopy-brother, and a host of other puzzles before being able to join up with the rest of your party. And of course, everyone's getting more and more stupid by the moment.

The command list in Zak is pretty slim. It uses the same approach as the COG games (like Strife) which is to use a single command list (COG use OPERATE) to unlock all sorts of puzzles. Thus you don't need to CHASE MAP, you can simply USE CHRONOM OR MAPS and get the same result. In practice, this approach isn't nearly so limiting as you might think. Furthermore, the game fails along at quite a pace and allows you - unlike the Sierra games - to 'opt out' of any animated sequences introduced for the purpose of storytelling if you've seen them before.

Zak's a very colourful, well-thought-out game that represents some of the best animated adventuring around today. It's certainly on a par with the best that Sierra have to offer and should receive serious consideration, even if it is - as always with the Sierra products - grossly overpriced.

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ACE ADVENTURE VERDICT

Superbly presented on-screen, with the game itself on a CD-ROM adventure combined with the animation of an arcade game. All renders equally impressive results, with the usual exception of the CD-R.

LANDSCAPE	80	SYSTEM	80
CHALLENGE	75	ENCOUNTERS	70

KINGS QUEST IV

Ooey gooeey SIERRA animated romance...

ONE thing's for sure - these Sierra games are certainly different. After the fortynity of Prince Quest, the humour of Leisure Suit Larry, you now have the rather solid romance of Princess Rosella.

Rosella's father has got a really bad of the dreaded lung and seems destined for a resting place so fast afterwards when our heroic heroines an offer of help from the good lady Genetta. Calling by magical means from the land of dead, Genetta suggests that Rosella might be able to cure her father with a special herb found in Lemn. In return for this advice, she asks Rosella to help her save her own life, currently threatened by the wicked wizard-loots.

So there you have it - uttappy Princess,

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IBM PC	£24.999	OUT NOW

THE original Leisure Suit Larry proved, was a great success with gamers because of its adult humour... humour and sparkling story line. The second game in the series is destined to be even more successful.

Larry is dumped by the girl of his dreams and wakes up to reality in the form of an odd less quest for amorous fulfillment. Despite the promise of the title, there isn't really anything naughty in the game, but the humour is lively and mildly risqué. Larry can land probably with male partners at every woman he meets, but a desire to be truly successful with only one of them. Your pressing objective is to find her.

The puzzles in the game are superior to those in L&L, and Larry finds himself in a variety of situations involving the FBI, Italian businessmen, and a couple of TV shows. The puzzles are often highly original and almost always amusing - Larry, for example, takes it out during the game and receives a £1 million fee, but of course he never will change it for ten. Well, almost never...

The subplot in the game concerns the evil Dr. Rockhead whom Larry must locate and defeat. The program attempts to convince the

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Keyboard-based selection from a limited command set puts you going in Zak McKracken. You move the character by indicating a point for the character to walk to using the cross-hair cursor.

AHA! THOSE NEUROMANCER LINK CODES

Not exclusive but to get into cyberspace now, you punks. Get a load of these link codes to save your spatial orientation in the early game phases, yeah?

Organisation	Link	Password(s)
Chap Hotel	Chicago	ChapHotel
Regular Fellow	Regulator	VF000
Consumer Review	Consumer	
Slam Computing	Slamcom	Slam001
Hard Drive	Harddrive	Hard001
Postal Bureau	Postal	Postal001
Psychic	Psychic	Psych001
Watch	Watch	Watch001
		Watch
Colombian Co.	Colombian	Colomb
Taxider	MS	Taxider
Service Police	Service	
Flu	Flu	Flu00001
		Flu00002
Software Editors	Software	Software001
Woods	Woods/COG	Woods001
		Woods

Thanks to Benjamin Sternbach of London.

noble suffering king, good fairy, and wicked witch. And that's not all. There are also ogres, minotaurs, poor fatamases, and evils — that is almost too much — the Swain Deavers, some girls with bad haircuts, and dirty lecherous Gnomes who has to clean up!

Provided you can stomach the fairytale clichés, *King's Quest IV* turns out to be a tricky game with some very original touches and — in parts — excellent animation. With the one processor common to all Sierra games that you need a powerful graphics system and rapid disk access, the plot moves along at a lightning pace, presenting puzzles after puzzles with ingenuity and humor.

Your first real objective in the game is to rescue a tallman belonging to Genesta, stolen by Loochee, and needed to ensure Genesta's survival. As the game progresses, you have to undertake numerous other tasks to accomplish this one — defending prisons, helping the poor, and other generally worthwhile causes.

Unlike the other games in the series, *KQ4* has certain structural weaknesses that can spoil the fun — though only to a minor extent. Occasionally the program will give away a partial solution by misinterpreting an input and

halting at some as yet undiscovered feature of the game. Worse, there are certain action sequences where it is possible to die without apparent justification — particularly if you are trying to navigate on a screen with poor graphics resolution (IBM VGA, for example).

Despite these minor quibbles, *KQ4* proves

to be a challenging game where you will need to be totally concentrating in your examination of and interaction with every location. There is no need to make headsets. Of all the games, it comes closest to equal to a traditional fantasy adventure — the only drawback being that some might feel just a bit TOO traditional.

DISPLAY OF INJUSTICE!

It's just not fair for some players. Sierra games all rely to a certain degree on being able to distinguish elements of the display so that you can examine or interact with them.

Here's a typical example from *King's Quest IV*, where a trapdoor on the ceiling is clearly visible in the PG VISA system, but is quite invisible in the VGA version.

Of course, Sierra didn't want to make things too easy for you, but there's no doubt that having a high resolution graphics monitor makes playing these games a far greater pleasure. VGA owners have to be very persevering in their approach to problems where other owners get a head start by being able to SEE the beginnings of a solution.

(Right) VGA on the PG VGA system. You should be able to make out the outline of a trapdoor in the ceiling.



(Below) The same location in VGA. Where's that trapdoor game, Sam?



ACE ADVENTURE VERDICT

Amaz! too busy for some players, we expect, but a challenging game nonetheless. Some puzzles are made harder for those with low-resolution graphics cards, and some sequences are very slow on a high PG system. Multi-processor owners recommended.

LANDSCAPE PG SYSTEM SG
CHALLENGE PG ENCOUNTERS PG

LEISURE SUIT LARRY

GOES LOOKING FOR LOVE IN ALL THE WRONG PLACES...

SIERRA'S fun-lover flashes again...

ALL IN GOOD TIME

There's one way in which all Sierra games offer significantly from most traditional adventures, and that's the way the plots evolve during game time.

In *Leisure Suit Larry*, for example, you can visit the docks whenever you wish.

For much of the early part of the game, you'll find nothing there. At the appropriate moment, however,

your possibilities can develop in the location (and in many others) which previously did not exist.

The use of time here is a popular effect on gameplay that, if you have a slow machine, can be particularly getting. It means that you have to spend a lot of time moving round the map, constantly revisiting locations in your search for solutions to puzzles.

In *King's Quest 4*, Rowella gets involved with a number of characters, but sometimes finding them in the right place

and at the right time isn't that easy. The same's true of *Police Quest 2*, perhaps even more so, since the very nature of the game revolves around a series of events and your response to them.

However, provided your machine can still give you about the game at a decent rate, this feature of Sierra games can add considerably to long-term interest. When you get stuck, you can never be sure that the solution hasn't just appeared around the corner.

player that this is the main plot of the adventure, but when there is nothing on the horizon, everything else gets relegated to subplot. You might be in search of glory, but that is more immediately interesting.

LSL2 is a highly amusing game. My own personal feeling was that, like any good one, it didn't grab me quite as much at the first time round — but you get a bigger game, more laughs, and ultimate gratification.



ACE ADVENTURE VERDICT

Highly amusing and enjoyable. Only, with a slight snag in the interim area around a flat of the way through. Things pick up once you're in the high seas, however.

LANDSCAPE PG SYSTEM SG
CHALLENGE PG ENCOUNTERS PG

POLICE QUEST II

SIERRA-ON-LINE put you on the street...

POLICE Quest II is the successor to the mastercrafted PQ1, a program that appealed to gamers who preferred contemporary scenarios to the romance of the Kings Quest games or the science fantasy of Space Quest. The second game in the series is an enjoyable challenge that has you fighting for your life against your old enemy Jesse James, who's out to get you for sending him to jail.

PQ2 uses all the standard Sierra game-world creation techniques like the World Building tool for further details and ease of its use. The action is spread across the town of Lytton (a mix of which comes with game) and the only way to travel about is in your unarmored copcar. The car sequences are impressive compared with those in PQ1, with a street-viewing display seen through the wind-

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No other versions planned at present.		

screen, rather than the overhead view in PQ1. You play the role of Detective Sammy Bond and are accompanied throughout most of the game by your close-riding buddy Koth. Both face a habit of stroking off for a flap whenever there's work to be done—probably just so well since the novice player would otherwise be frustrated by the setback at every opportunity. The game comes with complete documentation regarding penal codes, traffic codes, and radio codes. Codes, passwords, files, and combinations reset throughout the game, pre-

venting enough trouble to give most players more than their money's worth.

As with all the latest Sierra games, PQ2 boasts a considerable range of locations, including hotels (agari) and streets. You'll be glad to hear that you can't enter one by the other. There are also airplanes, various police stations, and the odd bit of night life.

Despite superficial similarities, the main spirit of the Sierra games is that each one offers a very different atmosphere from the other titles in the series. PQ2 is a challenging game, requiring frequent saves, and offering excellent graphics—provided you have a machine capable of displaying them.

ACE ADVENTURE VERDICT

One of the best Sierra games if you're after contemporary excitement and enjoy learning about the law. Graphics and sound are excellent, but PC DOS players may be disappointed.

LANDSCAPE	TO	SYSTEM	90
CHALLENGE	TO	EXCITEMENT	70

WORLD BUILDING

Sierra games accomplish a number of different tasks in their presentation that, when taken together, provide a powerful structure for story telling.

First, the games contain many live sequences, in which characters move about the screen carrying out certain predetermined actions while the program displays appropriate messages in a text-window. These sequences are often used at the beginning of a game to "set the scene", although you can skip them when you've seen them before.

In addition, story-telling sequences occur during the action. A typical example here is in Kings Quest II where you enter the "deserve" house. The place is in a shambles and entering "DOD FURZE" will set in motion a sequence where you first help both rooms and then send the "deserve" who arrive soon afterwards and treat you to supper.

During the rest of the action, you control the game entirely by mouse/keyboard. This enables you to manipulate your character about the screen, negotiating obstacles and approaching other characters



(Above) An interior location - your office in Police Quest II. You can examine the entire room, all at your desk, use the phone, and flee from the station, and talk - in a very limited fashion - to other characters.

(Above) An interior location - your office in Police Quest II. You can examine the entire room, all at your desk, use the phone, and flee from the station, and talk - in a very limited fashion - to other characters.

(Below) A typical exterior panoramic view - outside the Lytton Police Station in Police Quest II.

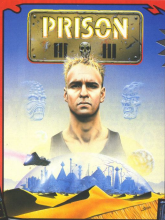


or items of interest.

At any time (after than during animated sequences) you may hit a key and initiate a "fast entry" mode, where a panel appears for you to enter a command. The command structures within the games are simple but adequate, enabling you to interact with the objects and people you encounter.

Staff Kings Quest II is narrative made at the beginning of the story, where the good lady Sammie asks for your help. Hit back and watch.

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The graphics are dazzling good, from the fine detail of all the artwork, including, Bob White Ace issue 17

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WAR IN MIDDLE EARTH

This massive Melbourne House classic loosely follows the plot of Tolkien's The Lord of the Rings. It got a 900 ACE rating and a Predicted Interest Curve of 90% at the end of a year (see February issue). Awarding depth of play and responsive graphics which open-up adventuring to everyone, War in Middle Earth sets new standards of game involvement.

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Atari ST User Jan 89

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All of the following games are **ACE RATED**, that means they're all red hot masterpieces of computer entertainment. Some of the games were available long before the first issue of **ACE** came off the presses however, so we never had the chance to review them in the magazine. These games are marked with the **ACE CLASSIC** flash, and rest assured, they're all superb pieces of software and are well deserving of the title.

PUZZLES

If you're after a game that will provide you with a real challenge, without necessarily requiring large doses of strategic thinking, then it's a puzzle game you want.

BONECRUNCHER

Superior Software ■ C64
£9.95/\$11.95 ■ Amiga
£14.95/\$16

As far as it goes this recent release may appear to be nothing more than a Boulderdash-off. However there are a number of highly innovative gameplay features which give Bonecruncher a head all of its own. Highly recommended for those who prefer to solve problems rather than shoot them.

ACE RATED 948 - AMIGA

BOULDERDASH

Prime Leisure Corporation ■
Spectrum £2.95/\$4 ■ C64
£2.95/\$3
■ Amstrad £2.95/\$3

A game that has everything - instant addition, long-term

challenge, frenetic excitement as the clock ticks down and extremely tricky puzzles. You must collect jewels hidden in caverns, dig up earth and boulders to get at them. Boulders can drop and cause you serious damage, while the jewels are often hidden by seemingly impenetrable walls. Confusing, but great fun. Boulderdash is a classic you can't afford to miss in its budget incarnation.

ACE CLASSIC

DEFLEKTOR

Gremlin/Varco ■ Spectrum
£7.95 ■ C64 £9.95/\$14.95
■ Amstrad £7 £9.95/\$14

Optics are the order of the day here (not the spirit dispensers as the player has to connect a laser beam to a receiver and at the same time destroy a number of walls that are on-screen as well. You'll need to make full use

of the mirrors, flow-optic conduits and polarising and reflecting blocks if you're to achieve your aim. Clear the first screen and you'll only have 100 more to do. Fascinating stuff that's worthy of notice.

ACE RATED 906 - ST

HEBULUS

Hewson ■ C64 £9.95/\$13.95
■ Spectrum £7.95/\$10

Guide Pogo to the top of eight towers using the spiral of plain forms, life and edges that form the route. It's a highly original game that strikes a fine balance between frustration and addiction, added to which is the rotary scroll, thus making it a great-looking, playable winner of a game.

ACE RATED 943 - C64

SENTINEL

Frontier ■ Spectrum £9.95/\$13.95
■ C64 £9.95/\$14.95 ■
Amstrad £9.95/\$14.95 ■
Amstrad ST £19.95/\$26.95
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Stare and compelling strategy game played over the alien, sparsely populated surface of a planet domi-

nated by the alien race. Fundamentally you have to shoot enemy while trying to keep the Sentinel from absorbing yours. A close train and fast trigger finger are both necessary in this very original and large - 10,000 possible landscapes - game.

ACE RATED 943 - AMIGA

SKULLDIGGERY

Nexus ■ Amstrad ST £18.95

Skulldasher clone that completely outdoes the original on this particular machine. Again (see Skulldasher, above) you're digging for diamonds in caverns over 100 different screens - with a time limit for each screen. Skulldiggery scores on playability (easier screens, a legal roll and a choice of starting point) and its entertaining two-player option.

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great graphics make *Spore* a worthy full-price release - what a bargain then to be able to pick it up for £7.99!

■ **AGE RATED 915 - G64**

TETRIS

Microsoft ■ Spectrum £8.99
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£7.99 ■ Amstrad £8.99
£7.99 ■ Atari ST £7.99
■ Amiga £7.99 ■ IBM PC £7.99

A fascinating geometrical study, this Russian puzzle turns the obscure mathematical topic of packing into a cult game.

One at a time, shapes fall down onto a rectangular playing area. Left to their own devices they'll pile up until they reach the top of the screen; your task is to guide them down and pack them in tightly so that doesn't happen. Different versions have proved to be rather variable in their create aspects, but the brilliantly simple idea behind them means they're well worth a look whatever your machine.

■ **AGE RATED 906 - G64**

THINK!

Preston ■ Spectrum £1.99
C64 £1.99 ■ Amstrad £1.99

Originally released by Amosoft at full price, but now available for a fraction of that from Firebird, it's a thoroughly addictive game played on a grid you either one or two player - in which you attempt to remove four numbers, horizontally, vertically or diagonally. A compelling puzzle which incorporates many additional features and skill levels.

■ **AGE CLASSIC**

XOR

Legion ■ Spectrum £7.99
Amstrad £8.99 C14-950 ■ £8.99 £8.99 C12-950

Notably tacky maze game involving the player controlling two phials, and selecting mazes through 15 mazes, which increase in complexity as you progress. Also in later stages, but also chickens fly in, and other blocking the mazes and not waiting to fall on you and bring your quest to a premature end. Later still, the fat and chickens are the boss of your wishes (a bomb, transporters and rolls) and so to compare against you, smooth scrolling, simple graphics, this one requires planning in complete succession.

■ **AGE RATED 927 - SPECTRUM**

SPECIALS

Original works that are simply unclassifiable feature in this section.

ATF

Digital Integration ■ C64
£8.99 C12-950 ■ Spectrum
£8.99 C12-950 ■ Amstrad
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Excellent combat flight simulator that's a lot of a change for Digital Integration, the simulation specialist. The emphasis is on solid action, the result being a sure-fire hit.

■ **AGE RATED 906 - SPECTRUM**

DARK SIDE

Inevite ■ C64 £8.99
£7.99 ■ Spectrum £8.99
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The second game using the PicoScope programming system, which sets more of an arcade challenge. The 3-D graphics are again superb as are the tracks and puzzles.

■ **AGE RATED 915 - AMSTRAD**

DRILLER

Inevite ■ C64 £7.99
£7.99 ■ Spectrum £7.99
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£7.99 ■ IBM PC £7.99

This three-dimensional masterpiece of expansion and adventure took a year to develop, but the wait was worth it. A whole world was crammed into 640 pixels to give the player such a feeling of being there it's uncanny. It's best, dazzlingly original and very playable. A milestone in computer entertainment.

■ **AGE RATED 906 - AMSTRAD**

ELITE

Preston ■ Spectrum £7.99
C64 £7.99 C12-950 ■ £7.99
Amstrad £7.99 C14-950 ■

DEC £12.95cc £14.95cc (available from Superior Software)

Get the best space trading game. Like on a standard for other companies to follow. One of the first space games to use vector graphics, it's a shooting and trading effort set across several galaxies, with plenty of variety to the gameplay. You can trade legal goods in (relatively) safe systems, or hit the gauntlet of pirates in the galaxies' danger spots with your hold full of contraband. Either way there's a nice line in per-O daylighting, and as big a **look on you'll find savants.**

■ ACE CLASSIC

INCREDIBLE SHRINKING SPHERE

Electronic Arts ■ Spectrum £9.95cc £14.95cc ■ C64 £9.95cc £14.95cc ■ Amstrad £9.95cc £14.95cc ■ Atari ST £15.95cc ■ Amiga £24.95cc

A classic (space) world where mass, size and inertia combine to provide exotic gameplay. Ticky puzzles and endless nasty obstacles will have you rolling around in delight.

■ ACE RATED 9/10 - C64

MAGNETRON

Frederic ■ Spectrum £7.95cc ■ C64 £9.95cc £12.95cc

Puzzles and action Steve Turner style. Save the world by dominating eight satellites. Steer game from the empty blocks to upgrade your own orbit, and hopefully make your job a little easier. The ideal game for all Cassiopeians looking for a little, new challenge.

■ ACE RATED 9/10 - SPECTRUM

QUEDEX

Thalman ■ C64 £9.95cc £14.95cc

In this impressively challenging game you must steer a metallic ball through 100 different patterns of mazes, bonuses and obstacles, all within a set time limit. This simple game concept has a host of subtle features to make it particularly pleasing; you can carry over unused time in the next screen, for example, and tackle the different screens, or planes, in any order you wish. Excellent graphics and utterly absorbing play.

■ ACE RATED 9/10 - C64

SPINDICZY

Electric Dreams ■ Spectrum £9.95cc ■ C64 £9.95cc £14.95cc ■ Amstrad £9.95cc £14.95cc

Tremendous stuff, steer your spinning top over laughable obstacles and collect jewels, against a **Rembrandt** time limit. The game landscape is a vast system of catacombs, ramps, towers, and hampeles surrounded by tall steep - and NO safety rails. Four switches activate lifts and bridge gaps, but flipping them in the right order can be harder than it looks. A few bad guys and a lot of nice touches, but the expansion's for long.

■ ACE CLASSIC

STARGLIDER II

Parsons ■ Atari ST £24.95cc ■ Amiga £24.95cc

One of the finest examples of a game using vector graphics to their full advantage, gets the **solid 3D** treatment and comes out looking every bit a winner. But we've got a large task to complete and there's plenty of **ignora** to destroy, making this combination of blasting and exploration a game that stands head and shoulders above the competition.

■ ACE RATED 9/10 - ST

TAU CETU ACADEMY

ORL ■ Spectrum £9.95cc ■ C64 £9.95cc £14.95cc ■ Amstrad £9.95cc £14.95cc ■ Atari ST £19.95cc ■ Amiga £19.95cc

Flight simulation/boom-up and its sequel which are both incredibly accurate and well put together. The attention to detail is impressive as you set off on a **rain-ravaged** mission as a space cadet. In Academy you get to design your own space stationer port as well.

■ ACE CLASSIC

TOTAL ECLIPSE

Incredible ■ Spectrum £9.95cc £14.95cc ■ C64 £9.95cc £12.95cc ■ Amstrad £9.95cc £14.95cc

The third game using the **Pressage** system is a bit of a departure from the first two, but it's still an incredible game. In Total Eclipse you're battling against time back in the 1930s trying to prevent the moon exploding. For arcade adventures who love puzzles, the Pressage system is a godsend.

■ ACE RATED 9/10 - AMSTRAD

WIZBALL

Ocean ■ Spectrum £7.95cc ■ Amstrad £9.95cc £12.95cc ■ C64 £9.95cc £14.95cc

A compelling and original ball game in which you become the ball and must set out to conquer the 'savage creatures' which are intent on eliminating the spectrum and restoring the landscape grey.

and drink. Controlling the wizard is great fun and makes this one of the most playable games to have appeared for a long time.

■ ACE CLASSIC

BRAIN GAMES

Fed up with mindless blasting? Want a game that offers you an opponent who's worthy of your skills? This is your section.

CHESS MASTER 2000

Electronic Arts ■ C64 £9.95cc £14.95cc ■ Amiga £24.95cc ■ Atari ST £24.95cc ■ IBM PC £24.95cc

Strongest chess game on the Amiga, with excellent graphics, 3D or 2D movement, 10 levels of difficulty and all the playing options you could wish for. Plus some fairly nifty speech synthesis.

■ ACE CLASSIC

COLOSSUS CHESS 4

CDI ■ Spectrum £9.95cc ■ C64 £9.95cc £14.95cc ■ Amstrad £9.95cc £13.95cc

Best bet for 5-bit machine owners, with choice of 2D or 3D view, unspoken levels of difficulty, and myriad options which enable you to play watch, work out chess problems, etc against a low-computer opponent.

■ ACE CLASSIC

COLOSSUS MAH JONG

CDI ■ C64 £9.95cc £14.95cc ■ Amstrad £9.95cc £14.95cc

Plumby the original game of strategy and chance. A later program and short manual make this an easy to use and highly entertaining piece of software for veterans and novices alike.

■ ACE RATED 9/10 - C64

INFOGRAMS' BRIDGE

Infogrames ■ Amstrad £12.95cc

£15.95cc ■ IBM PC £29.95cc

Graphically the best of all current bridge simulations, with large playing cards depicted against a suitably green base background. Plays a good game (it is computer, after all) and is a bit out in the imagination and fun department, and features a wide range of options and bidding conventions which you can toggle on and off according to your style.

■ ACE CLASSIC

POWERPLAY

Amiga ■ Amstrad £9.95cc £14.95cc ■ C64 £9.95cc £14.95cc ■ Amiga £19.95cc ■ Atari ST £19.95cc

If you want to try out your general knowledge, we reckon you'd be better off with this original and challenging combination of strategy game and quiz that with the admittedly morose selling team Paradox. Powerplay is graphically very pretty in its setting on Mount Olympus, home of the Gods.

■ ACE RATED 9/10 - AMIGA

SCRABBLE

Letravis Games ■ Spectrum £9.95cc ■ C64 £12.95cc £14.95cc ■ Amstrad £9.95cc £14.95cc ■ IBM PC £14.95cc

The hugely popular word game translated very successfully onto the micro. Fast, excellent display and a surprisingly large vocabulary (over 175,000 words in all). Good enough to give even strong human opponents a tough game at the higher levels.

■ ACE CLASSIC

BUYING THE MACHINE YOU REALLY WANT...

With so many machines to choose from, which one should you upgrade to? It's not an easy decision, but Roger Yates might be able to help.

If you're the Sinclair PC200 is a 3048t machine, July 1991 compatible and comes with a colour graphics adapter". All of the above is true, but what the salesman didn't tell you is that you don't want it. Choosing the right computer involves a little more than looking to hit sales pitch.

Fortunately, the architects of the team to have allowed two distinct categories of people - those who want to purchase mostly business-type activities, and those who don't. Frankly the latter group is the more interesting, so let's deal with the former first.

THE BLUE BROTHER
IBM. There, now that's over. Well, what else do you expect? The truth is remarkable. If you are looking to

balance your books in some sort of serious business environment - perhaps where you and few other souls' livelihoods might depend on the computer - or you work for a company that expects results, and where penalties can be meted by offering yourself the capacity to work at home - then you have no choice. The sad and sorry IBM standard has been imposed and it's a very brave man for salesman, indeed who can honestly claim that a computer other than one which is July 1991 compatible is going to do the job. Of course you don't need to buy a real IBM, heaven forbid. There are hundreds of IBM-compatible computers out there, from Amrad to Watford. The price, for what essentially is the same machine, varies like interest rates.

In fact the complication with IBM type computers is that the range of vendors and corresponding machines is a little too large. The oldest type of computer comes equipped with an Intel 8088 processor. So call that one that you don't want it - it isn't even a real 16-bit processor.

Probably the cheapest IBM type which offers reasonable performance is based around the Intel 8086 - as the cheaper Amrad PCs are. However the mid-range chip, the 80286, is now found in computers which can be had for under a thousand pounds, and the extra power is worth the money.

As a very rough guide to performance each generation above the 8086 offers a 5 times improvement in the performance-speed. This varies from one machine to another - some have faster clocks and others have that and faster memory. Do you need speed? If you can afford it, then yes. The only way to forecast is to think about how you are going to use the computer. If your intended tasks are keyboard-dependent, like word processing, speed is generally a luxury. On the other hand, if the task is processor-intense, graphics, database or accounts work, then the faster the computer the longer you are likely to keep it.

In the way, if you are looking at any of the latter applications, or hope to use the computer for a multitude of tasks, then budget for a hard disk. If for the moment one is beyond your purse, at least make sure that you buy a computer which offers real IBM expansion compatibility - that pretty well rules out computers like the Amrad PC200, Amrad compatibles and the Dixiet PC1.

BEHOLD GAMES T

For the home-computer enthusiast who has just been talked into an IBM clone there is hope that it can be used for entertainment - music, games and so forth. Unless you can afford to spend over a thousand pounds on the kit then you will be disappointed with IBM as games machines, especially those only offering CGA, like the PC200 which unfortunately pay from the meanness of CGA graphics with its few pathetic colours and terrible sound. Only the EGA colour computers offer anything like decent screen displays, and even then while the range of serious software is huge, game software is not overly prolific. The cheaper CGA display is fine for all business applications but if you are forced by local restrictions to go for this type of computer you can improve on it later by adding an EGA card and



screen, but again, only if the cash-pusher you select has proper expansion slots, and doesn't draw its power from the monitor or a la Amstrad. You cannot improve the sound, that must remain appalling.

APPLE CORE

There is another machine which has been labelled as the ultimate 'business man's' and is both powerful and very easy to use. While it's true that the Macintosh SE is easy to use, it is also frighteningly expensive. The disadvantage is that there isn't nearly the choice of business or games software for the thing, and, even worse, it offers little hope of IBM-compatibility - you can't even read IBM format disks without spending lots more money. Yes, the Mac is easy to use, but DOS on a PC is within the understanding of all, with a little effort. The reward for not going the Apple route is more money, more choice and a place in the computer world.

THE GAMES MACHINES

While computers such as the Amiga and ST cannot directly run IBM software, they are capable of performing most serious tasks. Furthermore, they offer the best value for money in terms of absolute quality and speed for pounds. Both the Amiga 500 and Atari ST make use of the Motorola 68000 processor and to great effect. The real games enthusiast might be best going for the Amiga - it has the edge in terms of sound and graphics over the Atari.

The Atari offers a better cost-price between-business, none of use and games. It's certainly no arcade touch and if you spend that little extra you could opt for the excellent mono screen which is great for word processing - your colour TV has to double up for games. The Atari has two more advantages. Firstly it has built-in MIDI ports, so the budding musicians will approve of it. Secondly, the 1040 can read and write IBM format 3.5" disks so at least you can take data from IBM applications without much grief. The ST may not be as fast as a PC, but it is very nearly as easy to use.

REVOLUTION BUSINESS ?

The Amiga, of course, has business capabilities. One of the best known IBM word processors, Word Perfect, can be bought for it for a couple of pounds, and the Amiga mouse-driven environment makes it a delight to use, much nicer than an IBM. The Amiga has a reasonable range of serious applications, certainly enough to offer you choice.



The main problem with an Amiga is a dual role might be messy. If you need to do business like things you will need the expensive high quality Commodore colour display, I truly love playing games on an Amiga but for one point, which rather ruins it is a serious pain when compared to the ST, and that's its awful disk loading speed. Oh, serious applications might justify a hard disk which is much faster.

Both the Amiga and Atari have a respectable catalogue of serious applications but they tend to offer the widest choice in word processing, with the range stretching as you move from database programs, to spreadsheets. The Atari is the weakest area for both computers. There are plenty of examples of programs being available across all machines - but don't expect to find programs, as excellent as they are, like Protext or Superbase in daily use of work.

ARCHAISM

Games publishers seem to concentrate on the SE, Amiga and PC - in that order. The rather leaves Atari's Archimedes out in the cold which is a shame since the different technology employed in this computer if used a thing known as the RISC processor means that it is something really special.

The Arch produces graphics comparable to the Amiga but with many more colours and frame-speed. Screen displays on the



Arch are among some of the best I have seen on any computer. But, sadly, it isn't a mainstream computer and lacks choice in both games and serious software. Plus, because it really is an exciting and interesting computer. If your interest is in programming computers and you don't mind being limited in the range of software you can buy then you should investigate this computer a little further. If you once owned a DOS computer you will be used to being in a bookstore so an Archimedes might be an attractive option.

MAKE LIKE AN IBM

The Amiga, Atari and Archimedes offer an IBM emulation. On the ST this is done MOST cheaply via software but it doesn't really provide a real way of running IBM programs, it's just too slow. Commodore has the A286 with built-in emulation, which is actually an IBM clone inside the Amiga. This is an expensive way of getting a 4.77 8088 IBM and even if you can afford it, you might be better buying an A286 and an IBM clone. The Archimedes offers software emulation which is surprisingly fast. Not good enough for long term use, but excellent for running IBM applications on an occasional basis.

BUY WHAT YOU NEED

The key to solving this dilemma is to look at the software for these computers first. If your priority is games find out what pleases you most, and which computer runs it

the best - chances are it won't be a CGA IBM PC. If you need serious applications as well as games then look at the software on offer for the particular machines and see if any of it can do what you want - and that's all that really matters.

Don't just ask the salesman to tell you what the computer can do. If he says it can run programs which accept data from IBM applications then take him a copy of your data, nail him to the floor and ask him to demonstrate. Don't walk into a shop just with the idea of buying a computer, get it firmly fixed in your mind what you want the computer to do, and write down all your questions so that you don't get distracted. The salesman will hate you, but at least you will get the computer you deserve. Remember that no matter how superb the hardware, if it can't get the software it's just a box of components.

ABOUT ROGER

Roger Torres doesn't work for IBM or Amstrad. He lives in Surrey with a typical but unusual household comprising (just) the spanned classed the kitchen carpet, though.

COMPO' CORNER

THE ACE PINK DRAGON COMPETITION

Thanks again to Danielle of US Gold, who kindly donated these completely brilliant 'collectors' editions of Dragon-ance chronicles and legends, we can now offer you the chance to win the separate volume sets. Chronicles comes in 3 volumes as does Legends, so the lucky winner will win 6 glorious paperbacks!

All you have to do is tell us where the authors Margaret Weis and Tracy Hickman now live (a clue neither of them live in Tolkien!)

Send your answers to DRAGON PINK, ACE at the Bath address to arrive no later than 5 April 1989.



THE WEIRD PINK COMPETITION

Unless you've been lying on Mars for the past few weeks, you must know that Bantam have managed to gain a spot on prime time TV with their Weird Dreams game. The game is played on Saturday morning's Motor Mouth programme when a person from the public is picked to represent the main sprite from the game, and by answering questions they progress through the game and earn themselves some great prizes. Wonderful fun!

We had a little chat with Bantam and managed to get hold of FIVE limited edition Weird Dreams/Motor Mouth T-shirts. Want one? OK! Just answer these simple questions, post the answers to WEIRD PINK, at the Bath address - ensuring they arrive no later than 5 April. The first five correct entries pulled from the sack will each win a T-shirt.

THE QUESTIONS

1. Who said 'I have a dream' in a famous speech?
2. Who dreams of electric sheep?
3. Who dreams of Jeannie?
4. In which American TV programme was a whole series written off as a dream sequence?
5. Who will always be together in electric dreams?

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"The 3D graphics are great... a terrific game with more yet to come." ACE Rating: 8/10

"I think Laser Squad is Mega fun... on a par with Giga for training warfighters." Your Smiler Magazine, 5/10.

"Lots of brain busting action without all the boring complexities of other products... Target a really hot buy for the barracks!" Smiler User 80% overall.

"The original concept of 'Rebelstar' was elegant and addictive and Laser Squad takes it much further without losing any of its playability. An excellent expansion of a Classic." Crash 80% overall.

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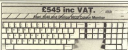
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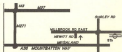
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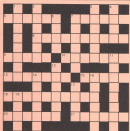
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ACROSS

- Motorists being off (7)
- Reversal of input and output circuits to make raster sharp (3)
- In case the founder forms a software house (7)
- Early form of electronic device (5)
- Crust, the sabotaged game from Genesis (6)
- Fly male character's mating sound in school break (6)
- Ten to one backing for leading Norwegian game (6)
- River Liffey flowing from Clonsilla (7)
- Time to get busy in computer (6)
- Head prepared to introduce heated game from Addictive (7)

DOWN

- Night vision (6)
- Key to get top of network (3)
- Memory software house (7)
- The way to win a game from Imagine (7,4)
- Normal's family game (3,6)
- Driven surgery (4)
- By greeting (4)
- Boy whoops at first to get game (4,4)
- Good to develop student computer language (5)
- Big size to get a screen option (3)



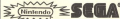
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