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CTW

11-7-88 BRITAIN'S TOP COMPUTER TRADE WEEKLY ISSUE 194



SEE INSIDE FOR THE RETAILER PROMOTION OF THE YEAR

Spanish leaks embarrass Amstrad

Essential details of Amstrad's four new machines for this autumn have been leaked – and by a full board member.

Boss of its Spanish subsidiary acquired in the autumn Jose Luis Dominguez told the Spanish weekly computer title *Tribuna Informatica* of four new products, ranging from a cheap MS-DOS games machine to a PS/2 compatible.

Customarily, Amstrad releases no information ahead of launch. At this stage, it is not

yet clear whether the highly regarded Dominguez will have his knuckles rapped for speaking so freely to the press. Amstrad chairman Alan Sugar was preferring not to comment on the issue.

The four machines come as no surprise. Details of the low end MS-DOS machine were carried first by *CTW* last month (June 27th) and were then repeated elsewhere in the trade press. And Sugar first spoke about producing a PS/2 machine to *CTW* back in the autumn (September 28th).

The other two machines –

an AT and a 386-based computer – have both been widely expected. The new batch of four will be launched at the PC Show in September.

One possible difficulty for Sugar is IBM's apparent insistence that the granting of a licence to produce a PS/2 machine is dependent on the retrospective payment of royalties on the 500,000-odd MS-DOS machines it has sold thus far.

Without confirming or denying the prospects of such a machine, a company spokesman offered that Amstrad had

produced its DOS products "without breaking any patents" and so would be extremely unlikely to need to pay back any royalties. Indeed, there is a growing perception in the industry that IBM's stance is little more than posturing in any case.

The confirmation of the machines is an embarrassment to Amstrad, made worse by Dominguez being a full board member. This position was gained as part of the £21.65 million cash-plus-shares deal through which

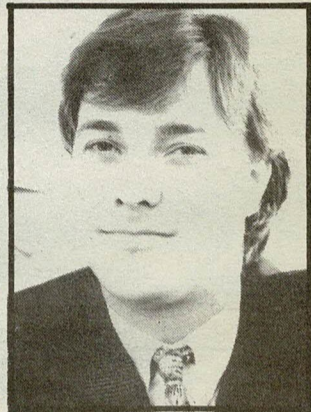
Amstrad acquired its Spanish distributor Indescomp (*CTW* October 5th).

Due to this, Amstrad was strenuously avoiding any public criticism of the 36-year-old Spaniard – in part because it has yet to ascertain the nature of the interview granted to *Tribuna Informatica*. Dominguez himself was unavailable for comment when *CTW* tried to contact him in Madrid.

Speaking from Amsterdam, the Amstrad spokesman offered: "Anybody in this industry who thought that Amstrad had been a

Continued on back page

Logitech buys AMS



PEARSON: Acquired Desk top publishing and mouse specialist AMS has been acquired by giant multi-national rival Logitech.

The deal was finalised at the beginning of last week. It is understood that Logitech employees will be placed within AMS but no changes in current staffing is expected. AMS boss Nick Pearson was out of the country when *CTW* went to press.

The Swiss multi-national has offices in Dunstable, California, Germany, Thailand and Italy with new development underway in Japan and Ireland. Managing director Helmut Spreng told *CTW*: "AMS are a big mouse distributor in the UK. This is the best way to handle it." He preferred not to comment on the specifics of the deal.

AMS is best known for its mice range originally aimed at the BBC market. In recent months its profile has been firmly embedded in the desk top publishing arena with its £99 package *Finesse* and *DTP Solution*.

Continued on back page

'Genic off to Reading

Mediagenic/Activision is quitting its Hampstead office to relocate in Reading.

Southampton based subsidiary Electric Dreams will also be housed in the 10,000 square feet office complex. Mediagenic's UK boss Rod Cousens called the move "a consolidation of our activities and a base for expansion".

INSIDE:

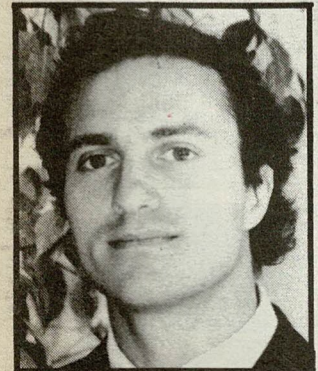
END OF PART ONE

CTW investigates the manic, crazy, wheeler-dealing world of TV advertising and how it affects the computer industry. Amstrad and Epson have made the medium work for them but there are those who have stumbled. Are the costs worth it? 8

OF CARROTS AND STICKS

Thalamus boss Paul Cooper has embarked on a strange marketing gimmick involving gold cassettes and prizes for the kids. He claims its the first step to a higher profile and, of course, increased sales. Can such a play ultimately make much difference? 13

HOLDING BACK



Borland UK boss Denis Moran is pondering clonesoft pricing and eyeing moves upmarket by rivals such as Migent and NewStar. *CTW* talks it over and asks whether he can resist the temptation 14

SOFT OPTIONS 17/LETTERS 18

DDL vanishes as MBS laments weak profits

Heavyweight distributor DDL was last week sensationally closed down by its dealership parent company MBS.

The Amstrad, IBM and Epson supplier was claimed to be on target for a huge 1988 turnover of some £60 million. However, increased competition and price-cutting in the IBM market had led to the

prospect of tiny profits – if any at all.

MBS has effectively pulled out of all trade distribution apart from Amstrad products. These will come under the aegis of a new-look Combro – the historically upmarket distributor which MBS acquired for £8 million last autumn.

Other than Combro's Amstrad business, MBS will in future rely on the direct sale of products to corporate accounts and other end-users. Combro will be staffed by the DDL personnel who handled Amstrad and is to be aggressively relaunched almost immediately.

DDL's major account was IBM, which made up some 50 per cent of the firm's business. Amstrad accounted for 10 per cent and Epson slightly

less.

It is the current state of the IBM marketplace that has been blamed outright for the closure. DDL has been hit hard ever since IBM increased its number of distributors from two to eight some months back.

According to DDL boss Steve Sowery this has led to a "serious deterioration in the margins achievable" and thus, the profits. This contrasts starkly with the Amstrad market. "All lines are under pressure but there is a good level of control in the Amstrad market," he told *CTW*.

Combopro will operate its Amstrad business from MBS' Warrington offices. DDL's own separate Warrington offices will be closed down.

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DDL'S soon to be sold Warrington offices

Gold shrugs off criticism

US Gold has run into considerable criticism over its plans to decrease distributor and retailer margins.

Companies in both sectors have been threatening boycotts of Gold's products if the firm puts its aims into practice. The new terms essentially reduce the current 55 per cent distributor margin to 50 per cent for first day orders and then 45 per cent thereafter. At least some of this reduction will be passed on to dealers. They were due to be implemented at the beginning of last week, though disquiet put that back a week.

Gold itself is insisting that there have been "very few complaints" from either sector. It was also arguing last week that no one will miss out

since the extra money it makes will be channelled back into the industry via advertising, in-store promotions and suchlike.

The terms apply to all product from Gold, its US affiliates and to titles from both Gremlin and Hewson. Given the firm's overall importance in the 8-bit full price market, not one of the firms companies contacted by *CTW* was willing to go public with trenchant criticism.

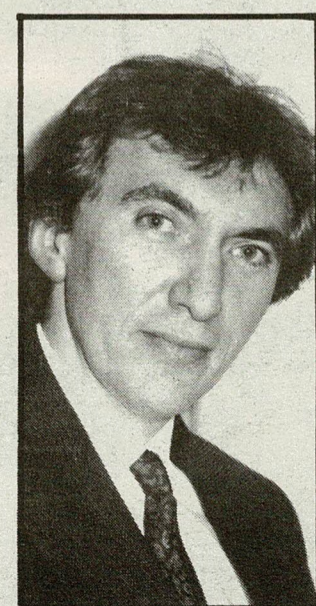
But it was claimed that Gold's ultimate aim was to be forced into a position where no distributor outside of Centresoft and perhaps TBD would be willing to handle its product, thus prompting an "inevitable" move to direct selling. Gold has firmly denied that this is the plan.

"If people are talking about a boycott, then fine," began

Gold's operations director Tim Chaney. "But one thing's for sure: that with so much discounting around, someone's got to take a stand. And we won't answer complaints from anonymous distributors who haven't got the guts to stand publicly behind their words. If they're going to boycott us, then they'll be boycotting a large part of the software industry."

He claimed that Gem Distribution had contacted 80 dealers on the plan and just two had complained, and Centresoft had had four "moaners" out of 50.

"The end result – as people will realise after all this scaremongering – will be clean, concise and leave them generally happy. You can't please everyone, but around 90-95 per cent of retailers will be happy."



CHANNEY: Few complaints
The delay in implementing the new scheme is said to be

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Weekly looms

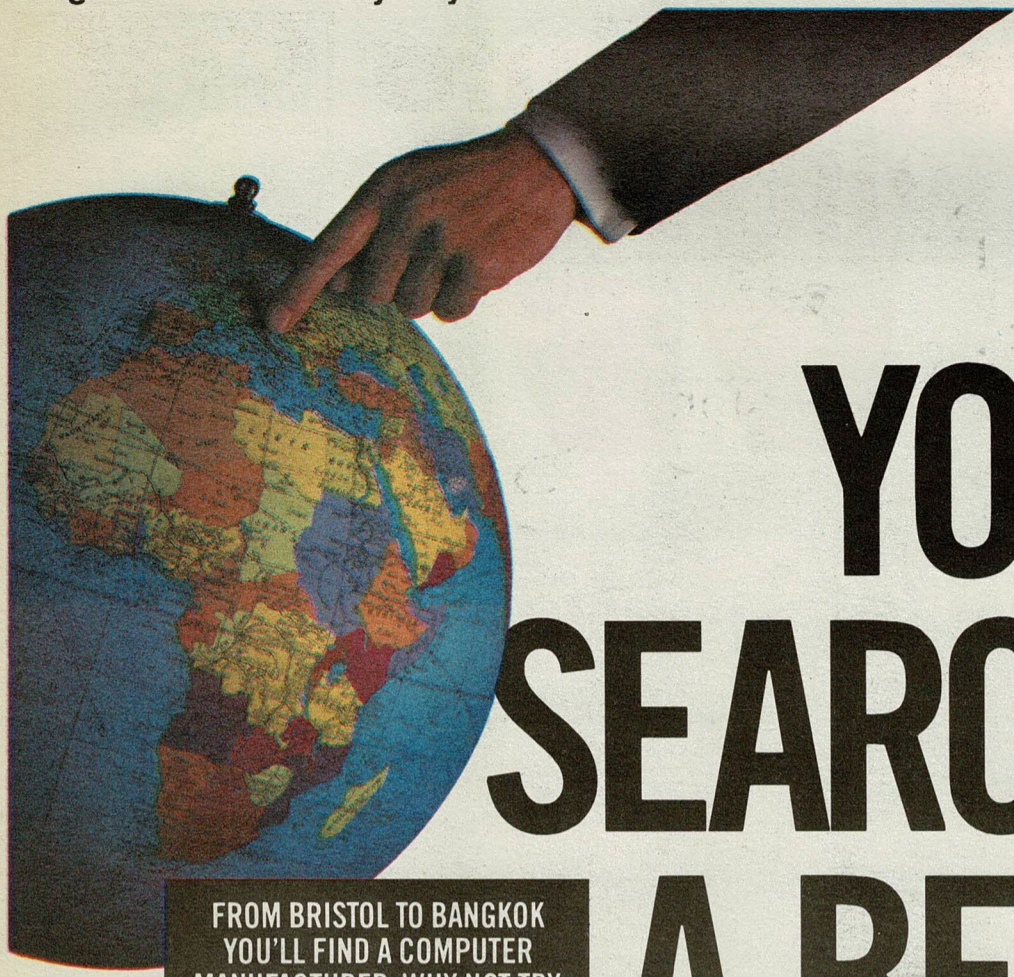
As predicted in *CTW* two months ago, Focus is set to launch a games-only weekly this autumn.

Computer Games Week will be launched on September 1st and is likely to be priced at around 70 pence. Sister title *Popular Computing Weekly* has already started its climb upmarket as a result of the move.

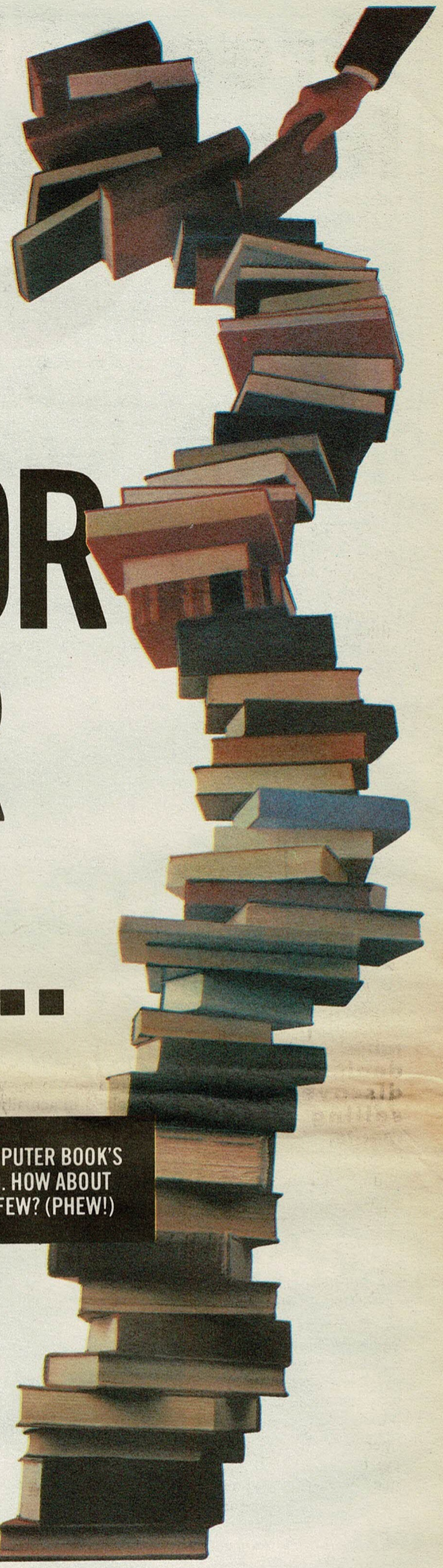
The new publication will be pitched at 13-19 year-olds who currently buy monthlies. It will cover news items – but not on the front page – with the emphasis very much on product reviews and previews.

"We did quite a lot of market research and have found that there's definitely a gap in the market," commented

Continued on back page



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MANUFACTURER. WHY NOT TRY
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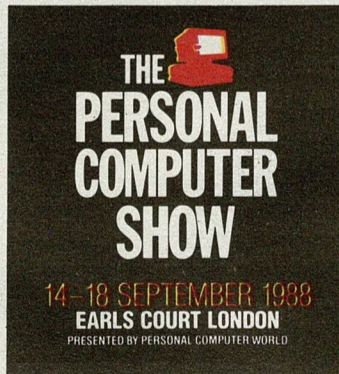
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BECOMES A SORE POINT?

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READING A FEW? (PHEW!)

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Green Shield stamps into leisure market with R&R

Leisure software distributor R&R has secured a dealer incentive based on Green Shield stamps.

The announcement comes in the wake of separate broadly similar dealer schemes from Microdealer and US Gold amongst others. But R&R is stressing that it is not leaping on any incentives' bandwagon and that its arrangement is more straightforward than those produced by rivals.

The R&R deal represents a Green Shield exclusive amongst computer firms. It is centred on dealers receiving tokens for half or full books of stamps which are then redeemable against sundry goods at Green Shields' 28 regional centres.

"We've been looking since mid-March for something to help us generate business and reward our dealers, and we've been talking to Green Shield for about two months,"

R&R's sales manager Finuala Kavanagh began.

"The advantage of our scheme is that it's extremely simple to administer and has none of the horrendous logistics of the Microdealer offer. And it's much more of a personal incentive for the dealer, rather than giving free stock or an extra percentage point on margins."

The scheme has just started and runs for the next twelve months. Thereafter, R&R has the option to extend it.

"Of course we're seeking to increase our business, but it's really more a question of looking after those dealers we've already got. We're mailing our active dealer boss of around 500 with full details, and we expect that the vast bulk will join in."

On the issue of Green Shield stamps being perceived as somewhat downmarket for an increasingly sophisticated dealer base, Kavanagh

offered: "Well it's not like Co-op stamps. With us, it's get two vouchers and receive a Sekonda watch - not two vouchers and a goldfish or whatever."

The deal comes at a time when Green Shield is seeking to re-establish itself in the UK after recent lean years. The company that had virtually disappeared out of supermarkets and petrol stations is now said to be "coming back with a vengeance," with a batch of TV ads in the south and then midlands.

Meantime, R&R is shortly due to tie up its first multiple. No details are being given as yet, but the indications are that it will be with a small - though growing - chain closely allied to one of the major software multiples. R&R has traditionally concentrated on the independent trade, where it is generally regarded to be in overall fourth position behind Centresoft, Microdealer and Leisuresoft.



KAVANAGH: Green Shield stamp push

Lifetree seeks dealer details

Business software publisher Lifetree is engaging in a detailed survey of the dealer market to discover precise selling requirements.

But the firm has scotched notions that the exercise is in anyway a dry run for direct selling, thus by-passing distributors.

"What we're trying to do via our newly set up tele-marketing section is to discover in detail the full selling requirements of our dealers. We'll be looking to separate the dealers out into those who have retail premises - and thus need point of sales material and so on - and those who operate more as a consultancy: the sort of people who'll need training manuals and more technical information to help with upgrades," Lifetree's marketing manager Colin Bastable told CTW.

"We're also interested in discovering more about the dealers who have traded up from the leisure sector, to see what

their requirements are." In the past, that has been a notoriously poorly researched area.

Bastable added: "But there's no way we want to get involved in actually selling to dealers. That's what the distributors are there for. They're geared up for discounts and dealing with a mass of accounts, and we're not and have no desire to be. It's as simple as that."

Currently, Lifetree claims to have around 1,000 active dealers through its distributors, with another 3-4,000 on its books.

Meantime, despite the claimed low level of clonesoft sales (CTW June 27th, July 4th), Bastable is stressing that Lifetree has no intentions of moving away from the low cost end.

"Yes we've got *Total Word* at £425 and there will be others at that sort of level. But we don't see any reason why we shouldn't be active in both ends of the market. There's a significant business opportunity in both sectors for us."

Victory fires up bullish precision

Precision has promised that its victory in the Database Challenge held at the PC User Show two weeks ago will be used "as ammunition" against competitors.

The newly launched *Superbase 4* was deemed the best database after 12 hours of programming. The specifications for each programming team on each database were set by the British Computer Society.

"We think we did extremely well and we'll be flashing all our advertising. The point that we won will be made throughout our marketing," said Precision's Alison Rutherford. "Now we have further ammunition."

The other competitors at the PC User Show were Blyth (*Omnis Quartz*), Borland (*Paradox*), Compssoft (*Delta 5*), Informix (*4 SQL*), Microfit (*Aspect*) and Migent (*Emerald Bay/Eagle*).

Precision's database was launched at the show with a retail tag of £445 (exc VAT).

Chapter 11 not the end of the world says Corvus

Network firm Corvus (UK) is playing down the significance of its parent company filing for Chapter 11 in the US.

Customarily, filing for Chapter 11 is regarded in the UK as a significant nail in a company's coffin. But Corvus is stressing that it was profitable at the time of the decision, and that is experiencing nothing more serious than "cash-flow problems".

"Many companies have filed for Chapter 11 before - General Motors, Texaco, Toys R Us. Essentially it's a method in US law by which companies can gain a certain breathing space from their creditors. We're trading normally, but we've been relieved of the pressure to pay whilst we reorganise ourselves," Corvus' UK managing director Tony Gibbon

told CTW.

Corvus has recently hit the headlines via its networking deal with Amstrad. This is unaffected by the US news, and product has already been shipped to Brentwood for Amstrad to package for marketing in September.

Gibbon acknowledged that due to a degree of ignorance about the meaning and implications of Chapter 11, the firm would suffer in the short term with some companies.

"They'll say it's the same as bankruptcy. But it's not because we're trading profitably and in any case our assets at \$11.5 million exceed our liabilities of around \$9.6 million. The larger companies like Apricot, CDC and Amstrad will understand the position."

Gibbon added that the present problems notwithstanding, the firm is close to three new deals worth £500,000 upwards for the first orders.

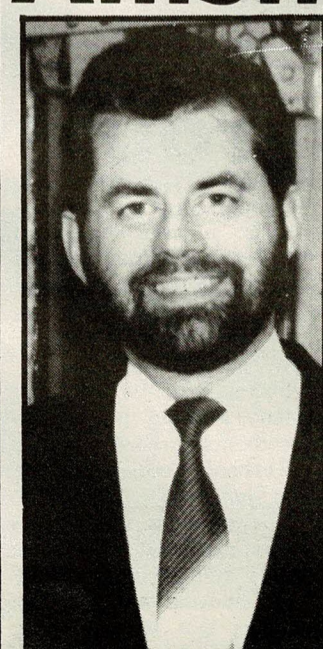
"We're eight of ten certain on one, and we've got two fives."

Essentially, Corvus' difficulties appear to stem from certain large customers not settling their bills on time. In its year end to May, the firm made around \$3 million on a turnover close to \$30 million, in comparison with a \$19 million loss the year before.

The move for Chapter 11 was made two weeks ago. At this stage, it is not clear how the resignation just prior to this of the company's president Lew Lipton affected Corvus' position. He has since been replaced by Joe Rooney.

With Chapter 11 cases, firms are given 120 days to produce a revised business plan for the courts, though this can be extended. Corvus' current outstanding debts are "less than \$1 million, but not significantly so" according to Gibbon.

Now ZCL tackles Amstrad leisure



CARTER: Fully Amstradified

Four months after picking up Amstrad's business range ZCL has taken on the CPC and Spectrum leisure machines.

ZCL also announced last week that its turnover for the year ending June 30th 1988 had risen by 100 per cent to £6 million.

The distributor is explaining the latest hardware addition as a "natural progression" considering its Amstrad links, yet it comes after recent efforts to take the firm up-market. Several months ago the firm changed its name from Zappo to ZCL for corporate reasons and just a couple of weeks ago it took on the Spectrum Group's SBC range of business computers.

"I reckon it's just common-sense," said ZCL boss Don Carter to CTW. "We have our roots firmly in the leisure market. We've got access to 600 leisure accounts and we have no intention of ignoring them."

ZCL is currently Commodore's largest distributor. Last autumn it also carried Atari products but the relationship ended just prior to Christmas.

Carter would not comment on whether ZCL had been enticed into the Amstrad fold with promises of newly configured CPCs, Spectrum bundles and possibly new machines.

"All I know is that the retailer is set to have the best season he's had since the halcyon days of the early eighties."

CTW

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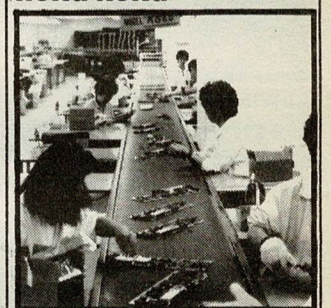
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NEXT WEEK:

IRISH TIES

Following a series of articles submitted from the US, Canada, the Far East, Mexico, France and Russia CTW takes a trip to the southern tip of the Emerald Isle. Martech, in conjunction with the Irish government, has set up a programming agency. The firm reckons Eire is a hotbed of computer activity

MADE IN HONG KONG



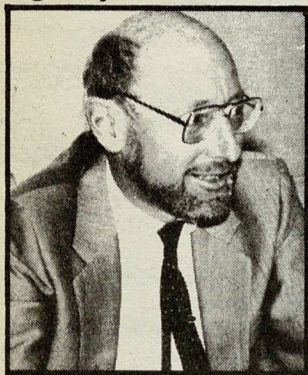
More internationalism. A stroll around Commodore's high rise factory in Hong Kong. Sweat Shops? No chance

DRIVING FORCES

Firms such as Seagate are ramping up for an expected boom in aftermarket sales of hard disk drives. Seemingly the reason for this is greater understanding amongst dealers and the public of the hardware. Some tips on this much touted sector

Cambridge adds ads

A national ad campaign is being lined up for the Z88 following Cambridge Computer's appointment of a new agency.



SINCLAIR: Ads planned

Some £200,000 is expected to be spent this autumn raising awareness in the A4-sized laptop. The HQ Partnership will be handling the ads with Inter-Media buying space.

HQ was picked from a shortlist of three agencies. "They had a good understanding of the product and produced a very competent campaign," commented Cambridge head Sir Clive Sinclair to CTW.

Ads are expected to appear in the quality nationals. A "major dealer recruitment programme" is also about to be embarked on so that the campaign can be used to full effect.

The dealer push will be made up of various incentives

and special offers through distributors, but exact details are scant at the moment.

Sinclair hopes that this "gentle persuasion" will greatly increase the number of independents currently stocking the product, although he wouldn't reveal what the current level of stockists is.

"I think there's a lot of people out there who still don't know about the product," he added.

The HQ Partnership's existing accounts include Collins Publishers, Harris/3M and Hoseasons Holidays.

Cambridge has been without an ad agency for three months. "The last lot were a chain of letters which I've forgotten," offered Sinclair.

ST autumn pricing options kept open

Atari is playing its cards close to its chest about the prospects of cutting the ST back down to £299 for the autumn.

One appraisal doing the rounds in distributorland is that Atari has been pleasantly surprised at the fact that ST sales have not dropped off this summer. This is despite both Atari's rise to £399 and Commodore cutting the Amiga to the same price.

"Atari's original plan was to increase it during the summer, offset that by the bundle and then bring it back down to £299 in September. But I think that Bob Gleadow (Atari's UK boss) is in greedy mode and is enjoying the extra profit.

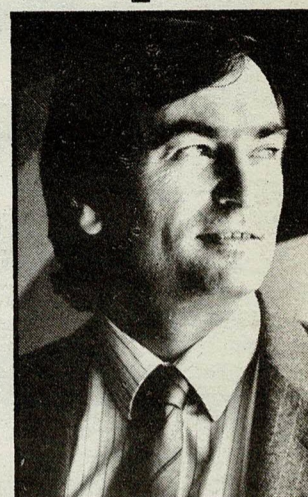
"I think he's got away with it better than he would've dreamed possible. We've certainly noticed no more falling

away in sales than you'd expect for the summer months," one distributor told CTW.

For Atari, a spokesman commented: "I don't know who's been speaking so freely about what Bob Gleadow might be thinking, but the most important point is that pricing is dictated by availability. Currently, Gleadow's got an empty warehouse and when you haven't got any stock you can sell for almost any price.

"Demand is strongly exceeding supply because the chip situation is still a major factor in production, though it's becoming less so as the year develops. We expect it to be a lot better by the end of the year. That may point to a cut, but the decision is still yet to be made."

However, given Atari's abiding fierce rivalry with Commodore, it seems inconceivable that it will enter the



GLEADOW: "In greedy mode?"

crucial Christmas selling season with the ST at the same level as the Amiga. A decision appears likely to be made next week, when Atari holds its meeting of subsidiary heads near Lake Tahoe on the California/Nevada border.

Nintendo minnows pitched by De Gale

Fresh from winning a Nintendo dealership De Gale Marketing has announced plans to pitch independent dealers with smaller orders of the machine and cartridges.

Headed up by Konami UK's erstwhile boss Luther De Gale and backed by coin-op distribution giant Electrocoin the firm plans to mop up potential dealers who are unwilling to invest in larger stocks from Nintendo itself.

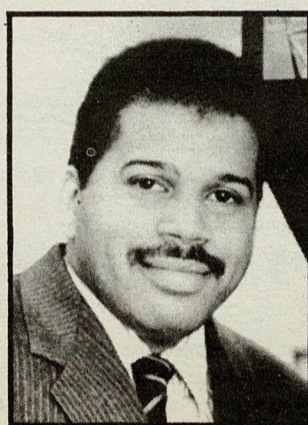
With the Nintendo market undeveloped as yet in the UK De Gale claims that smaller indies will be keen to invest in

amounts of stock smaller than the minimum orders required by NESI (Nintendo UK).

"If a dealer only wants one cartridge then it's not worth NESI getting involved," offered De Gale. "We are just a larger dealer which is allowed to supply other dealers. Obviously a big dealer won't come to us - he'll go to Coventry (NESI's head quarters)."

De Gale was keen to stress that he had not been appointed a distributor for Nintendo. "They don't have distributors. We are a dealership which is specialising in unconventional areas. We want to get other retailers involved."

NESI itself has continually



DE GALE: Smaller orders shrugged off suggestions that distribution appointments might be made, arguing that only a supplier with "something to offer" would be considered.

Dram picks up Peartree lines

Dram Electronics has acquired Peartree Computers, which went into receivership last month.

The Acorn spares supplier and boards manufacturer has bought Peartree's assets and started up a new company called Peartree Dram. Debts, however, will be settled - or not settled - by the receiver. Dram is believed to have

paid at least £100,000 for Peartree and will continue to market its range of cards, music synthesizers and specialised software as well as an imported PC line.

According to Dram managing director John Landells, Peartree fell into difficulties because it invested some £250,000 in the music 500 synthesizer which wasn't then returned in sales.

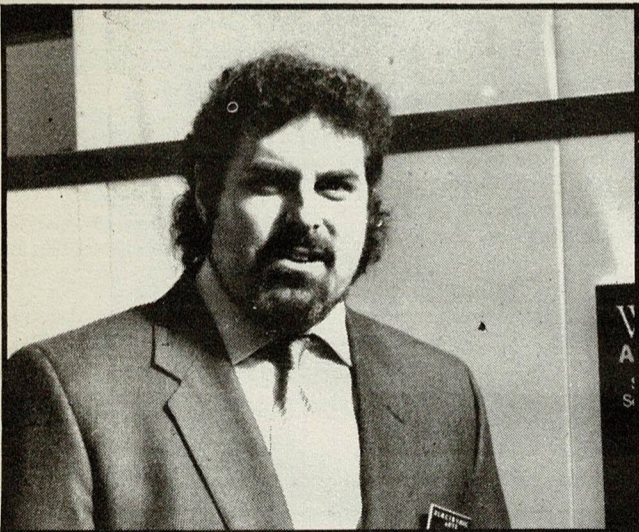
"They're strong in mail order and education and these are areas that Dram wants to get into. We looked at the company very carefully and decided that it was a sound business. One mistake had brought the company down," added Landells.

Peartree Dram will be run as a new business but will remain at its Huntingdon premises.

The DR Series of Peartree clones begins at £399 for a standard PC and runs through to a 25Mb 386.

Prior to its downfall Peartree boasted a turnover of £1.2 million.

Interplay picks EA for Europe



LEWIS: Signing Interplay

Electronic Arts has signed up another European distribution deal - but is still no closer to adding a second UK affiliate.

US publisher Interplay has recently switched from development house to independent publisher in the US. Its products will not be sold exclusively throughout Europe by EA.

Interplay had previously developed product to order. Its most successful game, *Bard's Tale*, was actually published by EA in the UK and Europe. It has also produced titles for Activision in the past.

The small US label joins Interstel, Accolade, Software Toolworks and Strategic Studies Group which all licence product to EA for European distribution. Martech is currently the only affiliate label outside the US.

"That's just the way it's come out. It's not been an active policy to get more licence deals than affiliates. We're still interested in talking to people," commented EA's European publishing director Mark Lewis to CTW.

The firm claims to be negotiating with three European firms eyeing affiliation. One of these is French label Ubi Soft.

Now Acorn enters Cambridge schools

Acorn has once again won the right to supply a county's schools with the Archimedes.

Some 330 machines are being supplied throughout Cambridgeshire in a deal initially worth just under £300,000.

The move underlines the fact that despite the well publicised ambitions of firms like Atari, Commodore, Apple, Tandy and Microvitec, Acorn is proving to be just as predominant as ever in the education sector.

The Cambridgeshire deal follows on from a recent purchasing scheme run by the Department of Trade and Industry in which some 93 out of the 126 UK education authorities selected the Archimedes.

"More and more people are recognising that the Archimedes computer offers a route to the 21st century and are questioning the future of alternative ageing MSDOS machines that offer no affordable upgrade paths," commented Acorn's education adviser Roger Brody.

Softtek finds German route

Softtek has finally secured its distribution in Germany following the signing of a twelve month deal with Bomico.

Since splitting with Ariola-soft in February, Softtek games have been exported direct. Bomico adds the Ace and Edge labels to its Code Masters business and handful of French firms.

Most UK publishers sell German product through either Ariola or Rushware, but Softtek boss Tim Langdell claims that the market has become "confused" because

of Ariola's management buy-out shenanigans.

"The situation was such that they had more work than they could effectively deal with. I don't think any product was getting full attention," added Langdell.

Softtek will be shipping mostly finished product to Bomico and predicts that sales will exceed £1 million over the next year.

"Germany is the second biggest market in Europe and the ST and Amiga are really pretty buoyant there. They're markets that we're moving into with full force at the moment."

Best embarks on media mix



BEST: Media spread

Erstwhile System 3 man Tim Best has set up a media company dealing in such diverse activities as software writing, PR and television.

The new company, Foundation Design, is apparently working with several publishers on "confidential" projects. It is based at Andromeda Software's London office where Best is working in an advisory capacity.

"This is a convenient office for us and I'm here to lay the foundations for Andromeda's future plans," said Best. "Foundation Design is very difficult to describe - it's a creative resource."

Projects claimed to be in the pipeline include two sitcoms being written for the BBC. Best offered: "We can tackle any sort of media. A good idea shouldn't be just wasted on computer games - it's only a very small market."

On his departure from System 3 last month Best told CTW: "Working there was a fabulous experience. It went from being A N Other label into a good publisher."

Best, it is understood, is not being replaced. Boss Mark Cale is taking over his responsibilities. *Last Ninja 2* is apparently nearing completion but as yet System 3's distribution plans have not been revealed. The firm ended its publishing agreement with Activision last winter.

The Atari ST

NEW - 1040 WITH MODULATOR



The 1040ST-F has a retail price of £499.99 for a 1Mb RAM computer with 1Mb double sided disk drive built-in. Now, SDL are pleased to announce that we have stocks of the new 1040ST-FM which has all the features of the 1040ST-F, as well as a built-in TV modulator. Not only do we have stocks, but this stock is available at the normal ST-F price, with the normal 20% dealer margin.

£499.99 INC VAT
DEALER PRICE EXC VAT **£347.82**

With Mono Monitor **£599.99** INC VAT
DEALER PRICE **£417.38** EXC VAT

With Colour Monitor **£798.99** INC VAT
DEALER PRICE **£555.82** EXC VAT

1/2Mb 520ST-FM - LAST FEW IN STOCK!

Atari's recent price increases have meant that the RRP of the 520ST-FM with 1/2Mb drive has now gone up to £399.99. However, SDL have a limited number of 1/2Mb FM's in stock which you can sell at a retail price of only £299.99 (inc VAT). With a Dealer Margin of 15%, the trade price of the 520ST-FM is just £221.73 (exc VAT). In addition, SDL can offer a 1/2Mb 520ST-FM and SM124 Mono Monitor to retail at just £399.99 (inc VAT), with a dealer margin of 15%, trade price is only £295.65 (exc VAT).

£299.99 INC VAT
DEALER PRICE: **£221.73** EXC VAT

With Mono Monitor **£399.99** INC VAT
DEALER PRICE: **£295.65** EXC VAT

520ST-M PACKS

NOW BACK IN STOCK!

The 1/2Mb 520ST-M from Atari is now back in stock and the popular SDL 'ST-M Packs' based around the 520ST-M are available again. All four packs are at lower prices than previously offered and come with 1st Word word processor and Spell-It! spelling checker. Order now to secure your requirements.

	RETAIL INC VAT	DEALER EXC VAT
PACK 1 520ST-M, 1/2Mb SF354 DRIVE, MOUSE	£269	£187.13
PACK 2 520ST-M, 1Mb SF314 DRIVE, MOUSE	£299	£208.00
PACK 3 520ST-M, 1/2Mb SF354 DRIVE, MOUSE, MONO MONITOR	£369	£256.70
PACK 4 520ST-M, 1Mb SF314 DRIVE, MOUSE, MONO MONITOR	£399	£277.57

SUMMER PACK

1Mb DISK DRIVE £400 OF S/WARE

We are pleased to announce the 520ST-FM Summer Pack from Atari. This pack includes a 520ST-FM with a 1Mb disk drive built in, plus a spectacular FREE software bundle. Contained in the pack is a CX40 joystick as well as over £400 worth of top entertainment software. That's a total of 22 game titles on 15 double sided disks, incorporating best sellers and brand new releases from many of the UK's leading software houses. The Summer Pack is priced at only £399.99 and is wrapped in a bright, full colour sleeve which shows a screen shot of each of the 22 games. This attractive point-of-sale packaging really delivers the message to your customers.

£399.99 INC VAT
DEALER PRICE EXC VAT **£278.26**

NEW MEGA PACK

OVER £800 OFF NEW ATARI PACK

SDL announce a brand new word processing package for the discerning word processor and spreadsheet user. Hardware in the pack includes a 2Mb MEGA ST, SM124 Mono Monitor and SLM804 Laser Printer. And, featuring the sophisticated Lotus 1-2-3 compatible VIP Professional spreadsheet, the powerful Microsoft Write word processor, plus 90 day on site warranty, this package offers excellent value for money at only £1599.99 retail (exc VAT). The consumer saving at this price is a massive 31% off normal RRP and the dealer price of £1279.99 gives a full 20% margin.

	(EXC VAT)	(INC VAT)
ATARI WORD PROCESSING LASER PACK		
2Mb MEGA ST+Mono Monitor	£899.99	£1034.99
SLM804 Laser Printer	£1199.99	£1379.99
VIP Professional (Lotus 1-2-3 Compatible)	£130.39	£149.95
Microsoft Write (Word Processor)	£86.91	£99.95
RRP TOTAL	£2317.28	£2664.88
LESS PACK DISCOUNT (31%)	-£717.29	-£824.89
PACK PRICE	£1599.99	£1839.99
DEALER PRICE (-20%)	£1279.99	£1471.99

CALL TELESALES NOW!
AND EXPERIENCE THE SDL SERVICE!

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To: SDL, Dept CTW 0788, Unit 10, Ruxley Corner Ind. Est., Sidcup-By-Pass, Sidcup, Kent, DA14 5SS Tel: 01-309 0300

Mr/Mrs/Ms: Initials: Surname:

Position:

Company:

Address:

Postcode: Telephone:

I am interested in Atari ST Range (520ST-M/520ST-FM/1040ST-F/MEGA ST)

I already stock Atari ST Range (520ST-M/520ST-FM/1040ST-F/MEGA ST)

Show shows gain

Attendances at this year's PC User Show were up by around 15 per cent according to organiser Emap Exhibitions.

Over 22,000 people visited the show over the three days, compared to 19,000 last year.

Cynics had been predicting that the show would be hit badly by the withdrawal of major names such as Amstrad, Tandon, Dell, Microsoft and Ashton-Tate.

"I'm very pleased and so are the exhibitors, that's the main thing. The quality of visitor was good too. There's no point getting extra people if they're just carrier bag collectors," offered show manager Anne Roberds to CTW.

Emap is hoping to increase the number of exhibitors next year, with a claimed 75 per cent of this year's fraternity already having re-booked.

Roberds confirmed that



PC USER: Up in '88

firms that had cancelled from the show will still face a bill, but denies reports that in some cases this could be as high as £20,000.

"It's like booking an ad in a magazine and then pulling out

the week before it's set to appear. There's got to be a penalty clause."

Next year's PC User Show will be held a month earlier. The three day event will start on May 9th.

Lewis takes Vector line

Cascade's former marketing director John Lewis has joined 3D graphics firm Vectorgraphics as a partner.

Lewis left Cascade last month amidst speculation that he was less than happy with developments at the firm. Confusingly, Cascade's managing director Nigel

Stevens was a director of Vectorgraphics until last February when he "parted company".

"I wondered if joining Vectorgraphics was the right thing to do but I decided that what was happening here was much more exciting than at Cascade. I decided to blow the security," Lewis told CTW.

"Andy Craven - the other

partner - wanted to concentrate on development techniques whilst I looked after the business side. It's a natural thing."

Vectorgraphics was set up 14 months ago and specialises in 3D line games. Previous successes include Domark's Star Wars and the firm is now completing The Empire Strikes Back.

Whilst at Cascade Lewis had various dealings with Activision both in the US and in the UK. It is understood that negotiations are currently underway between Vectorgraphics and Mediagenic with a 12 month, four product contract in mind.

Cooper eyes budget

Thalamus' boss Paul Cooper is now seriously considering releasing both back catalogue and new titles on a budget label.

Initially these titles will

only be released as singles through another firm, whose identity has not yet been decided. Approximately a year after the first release on budget. Thalamus plans to bring out compilations, which it would do within its own company.

Cooper believes that producing budget titles will not reduce the quality of Thalamus' products. He added that the reason the firm had not previously marketed budget titles was because the quality of others released in the rush were of such poor quality.

Innova hits double deal

Allders and Tandy have taken Innova Software's TopCopy Plus into their computer business centres.

Released two months ago the word processing package has apparently sold some 1,200 units. Department store chain Allders will be taking the package into its 11 outlets

whilst Tandy will be selling it in around 50 shops.

"We're absolutely delighted and we're expecting both to do well with it. Now we've got a lot of distribution," offered marketing director Jane Roberts. Innova is currently in negotiation with distributors in Europe and deals have been signed for Australia and Sweden.

Brother proffers new portable

Brother has joined in the trend for portability by coming up with its own portable word processor.

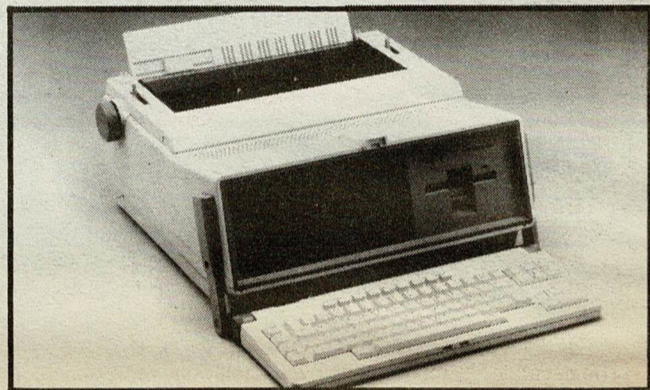
The WP-1 combines screen, keyboard, printer and full processing capabilities in one self-contained unit for £650 (exc VAT).

Features include a built-in 3.5 inch disk drive with up to 120K memory, a built-in

daisywheel printer and spell-checker.

Brother is hoping that the WP-1 will be available through its current dealer network in August.

"The launch follows hot on the heels of its success in America and - if interest to date is anything to go by - then we will more than likely be looking to introduce further WP models in the near future," commented Brother's office equipment manager John Carter.



WP1: Brother's love

THALAMUS

'An addictive and beautifully presented shoot em up of the highest calibre'

ZZAP! 64 GOLD MEDAL AUGUST 88 96%

Gold Rush

ATTENTION RETAILERS! You, your distributors and customers will all benefit from THALAMUS' wonderful GOLD RUSH promotion.

Among the thousands of copies of HAWKEYE to be shipped out are three GOLDEN cassettes and six YELLOW cassettes. When a gold cassette is found the customer wins an Amstrad Studio 100 and when a yellow cassette is found the customer wins a ghettoblaster. You'll win a prize too. These prize-power cassettes could be anywhere in the country.

HAWKEYE: don't mock it... STOCK IT!

CBM 64/128
 Cassette: £9.99
 Diskette: £12.99

Thalamus, 1 Saturn House, Calleva Park, Aldermaston, Berkshire RG7 4QW
 ☎ (07356) 77261 2

ALL HELL LET LOOSE

HAWKEYE from THALAMUS is a large 12-level arcade combat experience. The biggest original game seen, combining perfect parallax scrolling with animated graphics and sound to amaze and astound.

HAWKEYE features MIX-E-LOAD II a music mixing deck while the game loads - and an animated storyline as told by a Xamoxian. The disk version comes with a selection of free demos including The Monster Show.

Hawkeye: he has the power. Can you control it?

C64 Olympic Pack

IN STOCK NOW!

OLYMPIC PROMOTION

SDL take great pleasure in introducing Commodore's latest promotional offer for the C64, the Olympic Challenge Pack. The pack has been designed to take full advantage of the excitement created by the 1988 Olympics to be held in Seoul.

A WINNING COMBINATION

The combination of Commodore, manufacturers of the best selling home computer, the C64 and 'OCEAN', the UK's leading games software house, has proven to be an unqualified success. It is this union which has resulted in the creation of the very exciting Olympic Challenge Pack, an outstanding combination of hardware and software with a sporting theme.

THE PACKAGE

The Commodore 64 now comes complete with 'TEN' Top sports simulations incorporating best sellers as well as brand new releases. In addition to the superb software, a high quality Quickshot II autofire joystick and 1530 datassette unit are also included. The C64 featured in the pack has a new slimline casing, with sloping front.

A LOT MORE FOR A LOT LESS

The total value of the goods offered FREE with this promotion amounts to £143.44. These extras are included at no additional cost to the customer - in fact, the reverse is true. The entire system is now priced at a mere £149.99, £20 OFF the old RRP and, with a Dealer Margin of 17½%, no one loses out. The C64 also has a whole lot more to offer, including a vast network of software support. It features one

of the largest games software libraries available, with new releases being added all the time. In addition to those specifically written for the C64, the machine also benefits when titles written for powerful 16-bit computers are ported over to C64 format. The new Olympic Pack is a complete offering, with no 'extras' required before play commences!

THE MAIN ATTRACTION

The C64 Olympic Challenge Pack is supplied in a bright, full colour box showing a screen shot of each game. This attractive point-of-sale packaging is effective in delivering the message to your customers, and its built-in carrying handle, makes it easy for your customers to collect.

PHONE SDL TELESales NOW!

Ensure your position on Commodore's 'Olympic' Team as they begin another successful summer promotion. Call SDL Telesales immediately and secure your requirement.

FREE!

10 TOP TITLES

Each of these ten titles has previously achieved popularity with existing C64 owners at a retail price of £8.95 each.

- 1) **BARRY McGUIGAN'S BOXING** SRP £8.95
Battle to earn a crack at the champ.
- 2) **BASKET MASTER** SRP £8.95
Head-to-head basic basketball, one of the fastest sports around.
- 3) **DALEY THOMPSON DECATHLON** SRP £8.95
The decathlon's ten gruelling events faithfully reproduced.
- 4) **DALEY THOMPSON SUPER TEST** SRP £8.95
Challenge the computer in each of eight events.
- 5) **HYPER SPORTS** SRP £8.95
Swimming, skeet shooting, archery, long horse, triple jump, and weight lifting.
- 6) **MATCH DAY II** SRP £8.95
Head, volley and kick your way to victory in this sequel to the best seller, Match Day.
- 7) **MATCHPOINT** SRP £8.95
Join the singles competition at the world's most famous tennis championship.
- 8) **SNOOKER** SRP £8.95
A simulation featuring supersmooth cue control.
- 9) **TRACK AND FIELD** SRP £8.95
Test your skill to its limits. Includes multiple player option.
- 10) **WORLD SERIES BASEBALL** SRP £8.95
The all-American sport, captured to perfection in this simulation.

DATASSETTE UNIT

A 1530 Datasette unit has also been included to ensure all data is loaded and stored simply and with efficiency. SRP £44.99

JOYSTICK

To round off a fantastic package, Commodore have included a high quality Quickshot II autofire joystick, tough enough for even the most vigorous player. SRP £8.95

TOTAL SRP
NORMALLY £143.44



NEW LOW PRICE

In addition to the top quality software bundle Commodore are offering, they have succeeded in making this outstanding pack even more attractive by reducing the RRP of the Commodore 64 by £20. The entire system now costs just £149.99! With a Dealer Margin of 17½% the C64 is better value now than ever before.

C64 OLYMPIC PACK PRICE

£149.99

INCLUDING VAT

DEALER PRICE: £107.60

CALL TELESales NOW!
AND EXPERIENCE THE SDL SERVICE!

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Position:

Company:

Address:

Postcode: Telephone:

I am interested in Commodore 64

I already stock Commodore 64



COMMERCIAL BREAKS

As computer marketing techniques become ever more sophisticated, so more and more companies are looking to get their commercial breaks by advertising on TV. Just scan the pages of CTW in recent weeks, and you'll see plans from the likes of Atari, Amstrad, Nintendo and Epson to use the tube to bawl out their wares this autumn. Yet the history of computer firms on using TV is a sorry one: anyone else remember Commodore and the elephant? What about the amazing leaping Sinkers and the QL? COLIN CAMPBELL tunes in to find out why firms are switching their channels of marketing . . .

Marketeers will scramble, scrap and scuffle in order to gain the upper hand in the fight to gain prominence on the babbling box. Meantime independent television companies are creaming it.

Ad agencies up and down the country (but typically in Covent Garden) are brimming with slightly cynical and hugely creative people buzzing with new strategies about how to attract ABC 1s and other curious sectors of the populace.

Most people in the developed world don't seem to be able to exist without a television. With such a powerful idol in every front room it's no wonder that a share of it costs so much. It would be a Herculean task to make £1 million stretch to a nationwide, short term television campaign.

Hardware manufacturers, ad agencies and media buyers have had to put heads together in order to make that money work for them. A computer is really quite boring to look at and its advantages are enmeshed in technical fiddle faddle.

For a TV ad to lead on clever dick jargon wouldn't necessarily be a smart move and could kill any chance of attracting the mass market consumer. People like to think that they're shelling out for satisfaction, comfort, sexiness, sophistication, coolness even perfection. Who wants a box full of wires?

The advantages of laying all that money on the TV stakes are weighed in every possible measurement. TVRs (ratings) are the judge and jury in the

manic TV scene. There are no rate cards - it's a never ending auction.

But no matter how many times the figures are manicured and made up it's the ad itself which is most important - sometimes more so than the product.

Beans meanz salez

It's a fallacy to believe that TV exposure can automatically be translated into public understanding and therefore sales. The equation is fine for baked beans, marginal for cars but pointless for a product like computers which even the people buying it don't fully understand.

Get it right and you're laughing. Unfortunately for Sir Clive Sinclair this wasn't the case. The QL was backed with the great man leaping through the air looking not unlike a scatty professor. The only people guffawing were the television watching masses. The QL didn't flop because of an absurd ad but it didn't help.

Amstrad on the other hand has wisely avoided the technical line, characteristically plumping for a 'life is easier and cheaper with our machines' type pitch. Out with the old typewriters and in with a cheapo PCW. There was also the swish business people with a PPC and Stanley Unwin stammering his way through the advantages of word processing (a tad subtle for some Amstrad folk, but there we have it).

The media fraternity once again recognised Amstrad's powers of persuasion and papers such as *Marketing Week*

embarked on endless profiles of Alan Sugar.

Whilst there can be no hard and fast formulae concerning the nature of ads it seems to have been proved that at least for the moment, techno jobs are a waste of time. It's hard to use comedy with something unfamiliar like a computer as opposed to a can of beer. Stanley Unwin isn't funny. Epson did score a hit with an intelligent run of ads mainly on Channel 4.

The social line has been favoured for leisure machines. Amstrad and Atari both stressed that their machines were good for games as well as for useful programs, and education.

Atari managed to visualise the technical aspect in a whoosh of hi-tech colour which was digestible. One minute a games machine the next a home productivity machine. And the whole family gained - so it went. Father and son doing things together is always a good one.

TV stands out from other media. With a billboard for instance so many people will pass it and maybe see it in a fleeting moment. Television by its very nature is watched. Research shows that people don't get up to make the tea during breaks. They watch them, laugh at them, complain about them and to some extent analyse them.

For maximum exposure television wins hands down. It's in the home already. There are only two channels to advertise on (for now). Watching patterns are structured and familiar. Television employs motion.

National TV		AMSTRAD SPEND ON NATIONAL TV £7,500,000					
PRODUCT	OCT		NOV		DEC		
	18-24	25-31	1-7	15-21	22-30	1-12	
	40, 20 and 10 second spots between 19 October and 23 November						
VCR 4700 and 4600	30 and 10 second spots between 26 October and 6 December						
SINCLAIR +2 and +3	30 and 10 second spots between 9 November and 6 December						

The computer industry's biggest and most effective TV user: The plans . . .

Who dares advertise

Keith Rose - and no, it's not the Modem House Keith Rose - sells ads for Anglia Television. He explains: "You can do a lot with TV because it's a technical medium. Other media deliver flatter messages. TV is exciting and visually there's a lot that can be said in a short space of time. You can put life into a product."

Atari's offering was put together by London agency MWP. Partner John Madell reckons that his major problem was attracting two targets in one ad. It needed games players, yuppies and earnest parents who wanted a computer for the home.

"It was very difficult to do creatively," he said. "We had a target group of future hopefuls who might want to buy a 520 ST for word processing, accounts as well as other uses. The 520 is the first home computer to really offer the power to do business. We wanted to get it across that this could do more than play games."

"I think that two or three years ago a lot of computer advertising was poor in comparison. I only remember Apple being good. Many went out regardless of consumer needs or requirements. Manufacturers weren't thinking through who was their target."

Skilled and creative production people need to be backed by marketeers who can pinpoint who they want to attract and then crafty media buyers who know when and where it's best to find the target audience.

A business machine advertised during *Coronation Street* will be seen by as many businessmen as during *Channel 4 News*. The latter is cheaper. Media people have got us all into various categories. As and Bs are most likely to buy a business computer and anyway, they like to watch *Brookside* as opposed to *Coronation Street*.

Anyone trying to attract ABs on Channel 4 would be best placing ads around *The Last Resort* (chat show) *Who Dares Wins* (comedy) and *The Cosby Show* (comedy again).

The system is stacked up against the media buyer in favour of the TV company. Bookings can be cancelled if a better offer comes along. An ad placing can cost anything between £250 and £10,000 - normally. When the World Cup final is on it's best to steer clear.

Media buyers will often wait on the sideline for left over slots particularly if the budget is a bit on the thin side. The ad guys are pumping up the prime spots. The first ad in the middle of *News At Ten* can swop hands many times.

Also, you can't run ads for similar products in succession. The "exclusive" ad can be fiercely contested.

Attracting youngsters - potential games players - isn't precise at all. A lot of kids watch Saturday morning television and the slots are cheap. Unfortunately, their parents don't view it so much as evening shows and they've got the money.

An ad like Atari's can go out anytime in the early evening and be sure of being seen by the right people.

Of course nobody can expect to get their money back from a campaign and it would be impossible to prove. Advertisers like to talk about speculate to accumulate campaigns. Company profiles soar - recognition and trust can go a long way.

Co-op tie-up

Plans are afoot for television advertising of games software as a whole. The idea is for all the publishers to contribute to a pool of money which is spent on a fairly substantial campaign extolling the virtues of games.

It would be a smaller version of then Milk Marketing Board's jaunt. Fish and mushrooms are promoted in

this way. The software market is obviously smaller than those and it will probably take a great deal of persuasion to get publishers to part with such a lot of money on ads not promoting their own products directly.

Gallup chart consultant Simon Treasure is currently in the process of setting up an industry body (ESPA) with the primary aim of generic co-funded advertising. It would need at least £300,000 to be effective.

That won't happen until autumn 1989 at the earliest. Treasure argues that generic ads will go a long way to taking the hard fought leisure pound from other entertainment markets.

"People are still thinking about *Space Invaders* and *Asteroids* and it's ridiculous that they should have such a vague idea of the medium. We could be advertising games in the same way as mushrooms. It's a nice idea but it will take some time," offered Treasure.

Ocean and CDS have advertised their games in the past. Last Christmas CDS ran 30 or so ads in Yorkshire and Tyne Tees Television. The product was *Brian Clough's Football Fortunes*.

The title is a hybrid of software and board game which isn't easy to understand just from the packaging. It was deemed necessary to publicise this in order to eradicate confusion.

That was co-founded with the firm's chain of six retail outlets all called The Computer Store, CDS claims that the game has sold 70,000 units.

Still, the prospect of computer publishers filling up air time seems at best unlikely. Even if Treasure's plans come to fruition there can be little doubt that it will be less substantial than many would hope for.

A few years of selling hardware on the telly has taught the agencies that painting a pretty picture of a computer isn't quite so easy as making a car look sexy.



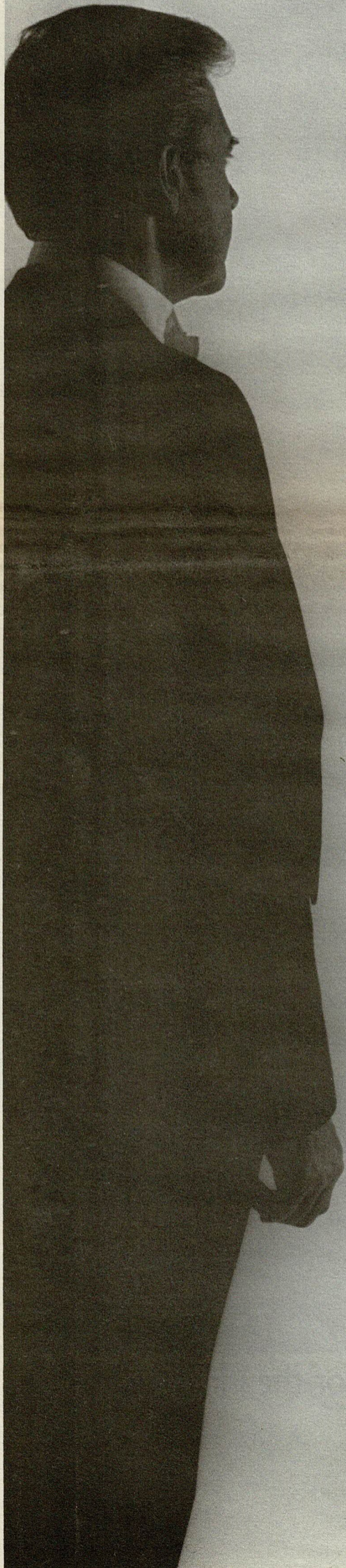
. . . and the sales generation game reality

YOU'LL BE HEARING FROM US

It's already started. By now, you must have caught the sound of a very new Commodore.

Come September, it will have built to a crescendo so forceful that few will fail to sit up and take notice.

For more details, look out for our advertisements in forthcoming issues of this magazine. If you can't wait until then to strike up a conversation with Commodore, telephone Dealer Liaison on (0628) 770088.



GET INVOLVED

IN

THE GREAT

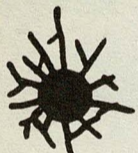
Microdealer



OR YOU COULD MISS OUT ON ALL THIS:



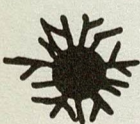
A range of software T-Shirts with designs **exclusive** to Microdealer for **resale** to your customers at a very profitable margin. Only available from Microdealer!



An exciting promotion giving your customer an added incentive to buy **more** from **you**, so that they can collect "Cover Up" tokens to exchange for a fabulous range of free gifts.



Both of these incentives are designed to give you extra opportunities to sell more and will be widely publicised with a comprehensive consumer advertising campaign.



Each Microdealer dealer will receive a dealer support pack, including posters, window stickers, promotional aids and a complete field and telesales back-up service.



So get involved in the most exciting new sales promotion for the independent software dealer.



Get full details by Contacting our telesales team on 0908-74000 or by returning the coupon.

Microdealer
I N T E R N A T I O N A L

Please send me details of the Cover Up promotion.

Company _____
Address _____
Name _____
Position _____

THE FRENCH EVOLUTION

Infogrames started it a few years back and Loriciel followed up earlier this year. Now Ubi Soft is promising that a third wave of French product is set to come rolling into the UK this autumn. To succeed it needs a licensing deal and truly international product. **STUART DINSEY** takes a look . . .

Launching two games solely on CPC disk and then disappearing for a year probably isn't the best way to make a mark in the UK.

After doing just that last summer, Ubi Soft is the first to admit that it's still got a

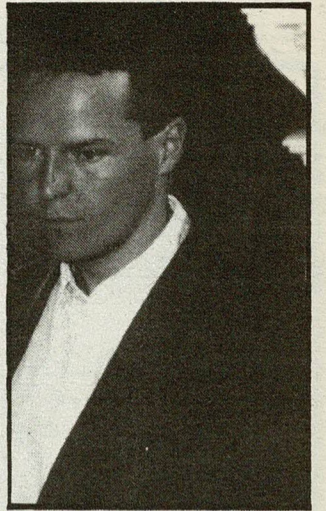
residency in Unknownsville as far as the UK games public are concerned.

Ubi fits the perfect stereotype of a French label starting out in the UK. It's a big cheese in the homeland but thanks to the nation's idiosyncratic love of such things as CPCs and Thompsons exporting has never been a successful past-time. There's also the obligatory distribution company not very far behind in the shape of

parent company Guillemot International Software.

Also, just like all the others, Ubi believes that the time has now come for a truly worldwide assault with a new crop of "international" titles and a concentration on hitting the burgeoning 16-bit sector.

Guillemot is the largest distributor in France with a turnover claimed to total some £20 million. It was set up over three years ago by the five Guillemot brothers: Claude,



GUILLEMOT: Changing Ubi's strategy

Michel, Yves, Gerard and Christian. Exclusive distribution deals are held with Electronic Arts, Mirrorsoft, Elite, Domark and Sub Logic. Given that impressive list it's not surprising that the firm has been growing so quickly of late.

The Ubi Soft publishing arm provides some £2 million or revenue currently and this is hoped to double over the coming year thanks to this new internationalism.

Amiga to please

President Yves Guillemot is fiercely proud of Ubi's seven latest games (*Iron Lord*, *Skate Ball*, *Vampire*, *Final Command*, *Puffy's Saga*, *Bat* and *Fer et Flamme*).

He stresses that the company has changed its ways like a philanderer promises chastity. If there's one thing Ubi must do to be successful it is that it must convince the foreign markets that French product is no longer prone to acute travel sickness.

"We've changed our ways. We made a lot of money out of the French market and then invested it in writing for new machines," explains Yves.

Such was Ubi's determination to get in to the 'happening' machines, a year ago it went out and bought 100 Amigas for development purposes. Apart from the snide comment that this action probably doubled CBM France's 1987 Amiga sales, it is also a pointer to the way Ubi treats its programmers. If they need something they get it.

In the UK the days of programmers driving around in Porsches might be over but the Guillemot brothers think nothing of hiring a mansion in deepest Brittany to keep its hackers happy. It's so twee they actually call it the Ubi Chateau.

The theory is that the programmers are all kept together, thus no one project is the responsibility of a single individual and tips, hints, pokes and suchlike are swapped around like Activision job titles.

"It costs us a fortune," says Guillemot honestly. "But I think that they work better in a place full of art as they are artists themselves."

It's a theory that the great software philosopher Trip Hawkins at EA is likely to back. Ubi will also be taking a leaf out of the EA book when it comes over here by setting

Continued on page 18

CAN YOU TACKLE THE HIGHER STRATEGY?

FOOTBALL MANAGER 2



Kevin Toms, inventor of the world's best selling football game says, "It beats my best seller - hands down"



New improved features include:- Spectacular graphics and tactics with unlimited action, more fun and excitement.



The press says "It's fantastic - another all time great."



The computer panel says "We were looking for improvements on Football Manager to be assured of a good game. We were surprised - it's outstanding! It's gold class!"

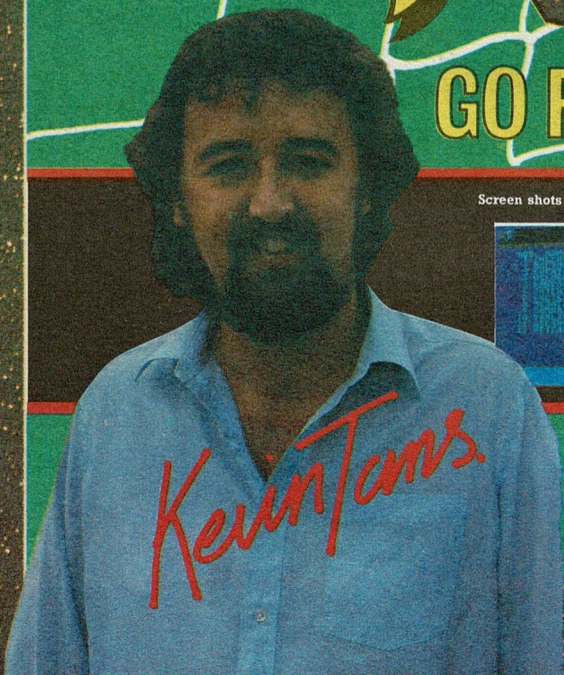
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"Football Manager 2 is not just an improvement on Football Manager - it's the next generation!"



GO FOR GOLD!

Screen shots from Atari St system.



IT'S TOTALLY Addictive

*Addictive games is a division of Prisma Leisure Corporation plc, Unit 1, Baird Road, Enfield, Middlesex EN1 1SJ.

Street Date: All formats June 17th

AFTER THE GOLD RUSH

Thalamus has just launched its Gold Rush summer promotion which — as much as anything else — will help raise the firm's subterranely low profile. CHRIS BENT quizzes the firm's boss Paul Cooper about the scheme, the company and what happens next . . .

Keeping a low profile is considered to be Thalamus' best policy for the best part of any year. Maybe it will be this year that things start hotting up in the

Thalamus quarters. Boss at the company Paul Cooper is looking at increasing his annual amount of releases, and already two new titles are planned before Christmas.

This of course would be no big deal to most other companies, but to Thalamus it is a deluge.

This usually quiet company emerged just two years ago,

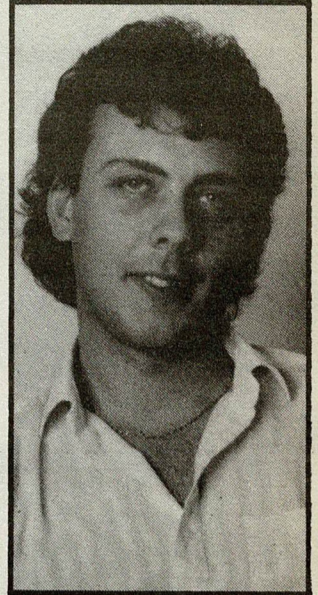
and was founded by ex-Newsfield hack Gary Liddon. Its first smash was *Sanxion*, and its second *Delta*. The ambitious Cooper joined in March 1987 after the departure of Liddon and Andrew Wright. Cooper is confident his company's success will continue to soar, no doubt due to his original promotional ideas.

This summer sees the wake of one of the best promotional ideas around at present: the Gold Rush. It appears to be based on the *Charlie and the*

Chocolate Factory idea, despite Cooper's insistence that he has neither seen the film nor read the book.

The idea is that nine tokens in all have been concealed in the packaging: three gold; six yellow. On finding a gold one the buyer receives an Amstrad Studio 100, and the prize for finding a yellow token is a ghettoblaster.

Cooper plans to run the promotion at least until Christmas and said he'd had the idea of a push similar to this a few years ago, but nothing came



COOPER: Promotion notions of it. His reasoning behind the promotion is to be "different", as well as adding "a bit of excitement for the kids" — who he acknowledges "are not as stupid as people make out". On the new promotion Cooper claimed it "offers support and help to all areas of the industry, helping distributors to push products in the multiples as well as the independents".

At the end of July Thalamus plans to release *Hawkeye*, a large 12 part multi-load game, on Commodore. It was written by some Dutchmen, who call themselves "The Boys Without Brains" and will be their first ever program released. Sidetracking from the reason for such a bizarre name Cooper commented: "I gain a lot of satisfaction from new blood in programmers."

In August in time for the PC show Thalamus will be releasing *Armabyte*. This name is not as yet finalised, but will probably carry something after it to show that it is the follow-up to *Delta*.

Kicking against the pricks

It has been said that Newsfield gives Thalamus softer and even better reviews in its publications *Zzap*, *Crash*, and *The Games Machine* than it does to other companies.

Cooper thinks not. "People think we receive favourable reviews because of the Newsfield link, but this is not actually the case. As long as we get good reviews through all publications, there's no favouritism. We do occasionally actually tend to get marked down by our parent company."

Thalamus' biggest seller to date is its first release *Sanxion*, which Cooper claimed sold 60,000 units on Commodore alone worldwide.

Although these figures are good, they evidently don't qualify Thalamus as a top ten software house. But this does not worry Cooper, who is entirely satisfied to remain a small company, and has no desire for Thalamus to become even a top ten software house. That way he feels more comfortable as he is not forced into putting out production every month to pay the rent.

"Quality rather than quantity" is Thalamus' policy. The latter is obvious, so what about the quality?

Continued on page 19

ATTENTION Amstrad Dealers

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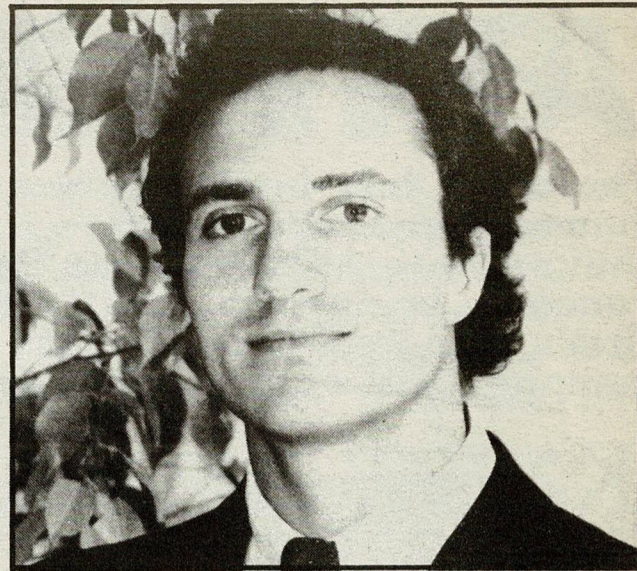


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* subject to availability

BORLAND PUZZLES PRICING PARADOX

There once was a time when, thanks to a firm called Amstrad and its PCs, business software publishers were all racing to find cheaper and cheaper product. But many are now starting to look upwards on price. Borland has been selling software cheap since pre-Amstrad days. **STUART DINSEY** spoke to UK boss **Denis Moran** and asked if his price is right . . .



MORAN: People copied us and got it wrong

As an event the recent PC User Show was something slightly less interesting than a yawn. For

low-cost software specialist Borland it was business as usual: the previewing of an unavailable new product.

Its new *Sprint* word-processor has actually been unavailable longer than most. It was first previewed to the

press over a year ago and given a last quarter '87 release date. The important thing is that when it does finally arrive

▶ ATTENTION ALL DEALERS ◀

EARN BIG PROFITS

ATARI ST & AMIGA SOFTWARE

Metacomco, the leading publishers of languages and utilities, announce the launch of Pascal 2 for the Amiga. To upgrade your existing stock FREE-OF-CHARGE, contact your distributor. Upgrades to registered users contact Metacomco.

ATARI ST SOFTWARE

METACOMCO PASCAL	V2.0
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CAMBRIDGE LISP	
BCPL	

AMIGA SOFTWARE

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in the autumn it will cost £195, no matter how long we all have to wait.

Other firms that started talking about a £195 product all those months ago might just be considering selling at a higher price by now. From every corner of the PC User Show were heard cries of the market "maturing". For maturing read price hikes.

A company such as Migent (which wasn't at the show) built its reputation on low-cost product, namely the *Ability* range, but has recently looked for higher profits and greater acceptance from the established business players by launching the *Emerald Bay* database.

Mirrorsoft is just half a year into its concerted business push and it's talking about *Fleet Street Publisher* on PC coming in at a *Ventura*-style price. *Publisher* on the Atari ST meanwhile only costs £125.

Even that doyen of clonesoft William Poel has been won over by the up, up and away syndrome. At last year's PCW Show he was singing the praises of Paperback Software's *VP Planner* at just £99.95. Prices for the whole range are set to rise by 100 per cent in the next few months once some new products arrive in late summer.

Borland's UK boss Denis Moran has the trepidation of a man who has often spoken to the press about new products and then been unmercifully ripped apart when they haven't appeared on time. Subsequently, he is also wary of making predictions concerning Borland's future pricing strategy.

"It's kind of a touchy subject. I don't want to say something that will be contradicted six months down the road," he explains in his nasal French lilt.

In the pitcher

But even if no promises are being made Borland certainly doesn't seem to be won over by the actions and arguments of others just yet.

"When you're looking at things long term, what counts is user satisfaction. If I'm a dealer and a customer says 'I'd like to buy a spreadsheet' and I sell him 1-2-3 on the basis that it's more expensive than I'm making a mistake. It doesn't matter that I might have made a better margin if in the end the user finds out he could have bought a good enough product at half the price."

Despite often losing himself in well rehearsed sales pitches with emphasis on phrases such as "value for

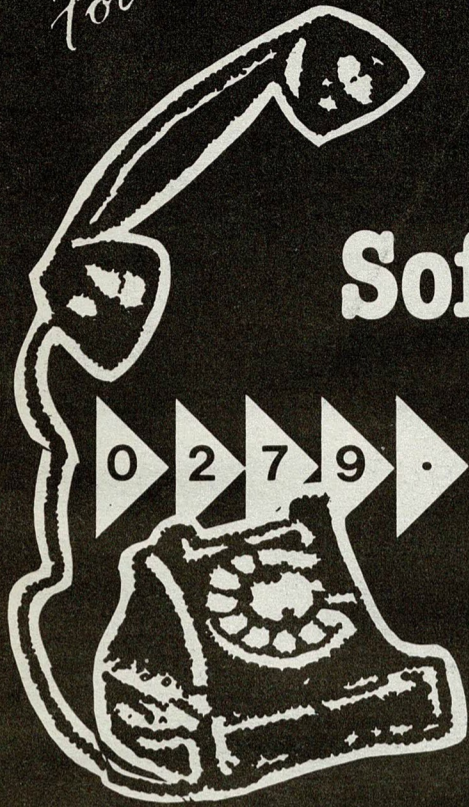
Continued on page 19

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Contact your distributor or U.S. Gold now for your first Treasure Trail Guide and prepare yourself for the great U.S. Gold Summer Adventure.



SPECTRUM TOP 20

TW	LW	Title	Publisher	RRP£
1	3	FOOTBALL MANAGER 2	ADDICTIVE	9.99
2	5	YOGI BEAR	ALTERNATIVE	1.99
3	4	A C E	CASCADE	2.99
4	1	STEVE DAVIS SNOOKER	BLUE RIBBON	1.99
5	17	BEACH BUGGY SIMULATOR	FIREBIRD	1.99
6	14	FRANK BRUNOS BOXING	ENCORE	1.99
7	2	TARGET RENEGADE	IMAGINE	7.95
8	6	GHOSTBUSTERS	MASTERTRONIC	1.99
9	NE	AIR WOLF	ENCORE	1.99
10	27	EUROPEAN FIVE A SIDE	FIREBIRD	1.99
11	8	POPEYE	ALTERNATIVE	1.99
12	12	SHANGHAI KARATE	PLAYERS	1.99
13	30	SUPER STUNTMAN	CODE MASTERS	1.99
14	9	RALLY DRIVER	ALTERNATIVE	1.99
15	11	SWORD SLAYER	PLAYERS	1.99
16	29	TRAP DOOR	ALTERNATIVE	1.99
17	10	WAY OF THE EXPLODING FIST	MASTERTRONIC	1.99
18	16	FRUIT MACHINE SIMULATOR	CODE MASTERS	1.99
19	19	SOCCER BOSS	ALTERNATIVE	1.99
20	7	BRUCE LEE	AMERICANA	2.99

C64 TOP 20

1	2	A C E	CASCADE	2.99
2	NE	AIR WOLF	ENCORE	1.99
3	1	STEVE DAVIS SNOOKER	BLUE RIBBON	1.99
4	25	BEACH BUGGY SIMULATOR	FIREBIRD	1.99
5	5	YOGI BEAR	ALTERNATIVE	1.99
6	15	FRANK BRUNOS BOXING	ENCORE	1.99
7	3	EUROPEAN FIVE A SIDE	FIREBIRD	1.99
8	13	ALIEN SYNDROME	ACE	9.99
9	8	GHOSTBUSTERS	MASTERTRONIC	1.99
10	NE	BIONIC COMMANDO	GD?	9.99
11	6	BRUCE LEE	AMERICANA	2.99
12	4	TARGET RENEGADE	IMAGINE	9.95
13	33	ALIENS	MASTERTRONIC	1.99
14	20	SHANGHAI KARATE	PLAYERS	1.99
15	16	FRUIT MACHINE SIMULATOR	CODE MASTERS	1.99
16	10	IMPOSSIBLE MISSION 2	EPYX	9.99
17	14	RALLY DRIVER	ALTERNATIVE	1.99
18	18	POPEYE	ALTERNATIVE	1.99
19	7	WAY OF THE EXPLODING FIST	MASTERTRONIC	1.99
20	32	BMX SIMULATOR	CODE MASTERS	1.99

AMSTRAD TOP 10

1	1	STEVE DAVIS SNOOKER	BLUE RIBBON	1.99
2	3	YOGI BEAR	ALTERNATIVE	1.99
3	19	AIR WOLF	ENCORE	1.99
4	9	FRANK BRUNOS BOXING	ENCORE	1.99
5	2	A C E	CASCADE	2.99
6	4	BEACH BUGGY SIMULATOR	FIREBIRD	1.99
7	7	RALLY DRIVER	ALTERNATIVE	1.99
8	5	FRUIT MACHINE SIMULATOR	CODE MASTERS	1.99
9	11	ALIENS	MASTERTRONIC	1.99
10	15	EUROPEAN FIVE A SIDE	FIREBIRD	1.99

ATARI ST TOP 5

1	1	FOOTBALL MANAGER 2	ADDICTIVE	19.95
2	2	GAUNTLET 2	US GOLD	19.99
3	3	OUT RUN	SEGA-US GOLD	19.99
4	4	BUGGY BOY	ELITE	14.95
5	6	CAPTAIN BLOOD	INFOGRADES	24.95

AMIGA TOP 5

1	1	INTERCEPTOR	ELECTRONIC ARTS	24.95
2	NE	FOOTBALL MANAGER 2	ADDICTIVE	19.99
3	3	AAARGH	MELBOURNE HOUSE	19.99
4	RE	SIDEWINDER	MASTERTRONIC	9.95
5	RE	BARBARIAN	PSYGNOSIS	24.95

SHARE OF SALES BY MACHINE

Machine	Units sold (%)				Titles sold (%)			
	This week	Last week	4wks ago	12wks ago	This week	Last week	4wks ago	12wks ago
SPECTRUM	45.5	45.5	43.8	47.9	31.7	31.0	31.3	28.2
COMMODORE 64	21.7	22.6	22.9	20.0	22.5	23.6	25.5	23.1
AMSTRAD	17.3	17.7	19.3	16.5	17.1	18.8	16.2	16.1
ATARI ST	4.9	4.4	3.9	3.5	5.2	7.5	6.1	6.3
COMMODORE 16	2.6	2.1	2.9	2.3	3.2	2.6	3.3	4.5
AMIGA	2.1	1.7	0.9	1.5	3.2	2.5	1.8	2.8
BBC	1.7	1.9	1.1	2.4	3.1	3.3	2.5	2.4
ELECTRON	1.3	1.1	1.3	1.7	2.5	2.6	2.3	2.3
MSX	0.8	0.7	0.6	0.6	2.5	1.1	0.9	1.8
ATARI	0.6	1.1	1.9	1.7	1.3	2.0	2.1	3.7

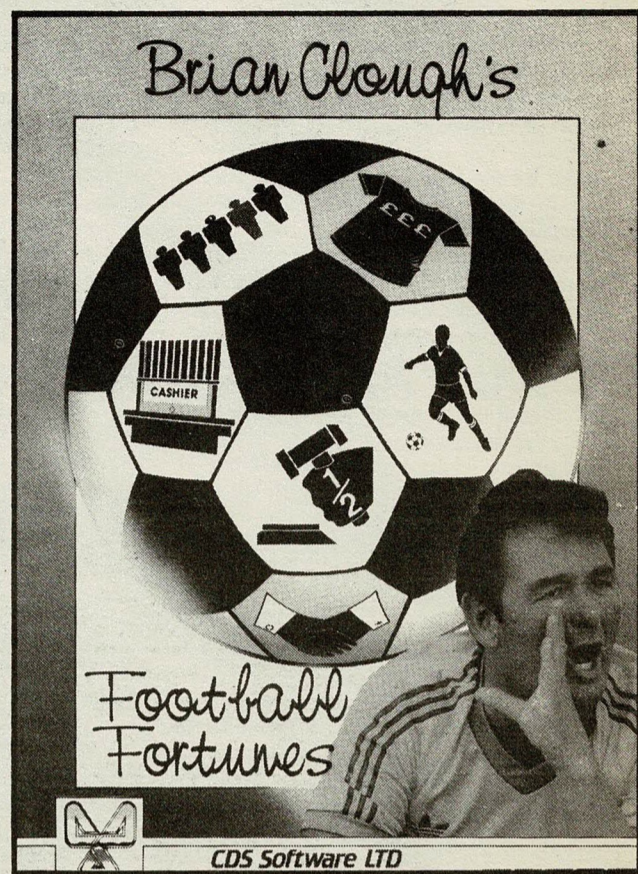
AVERAGE SALES PER PANEL SHOP

This week	Units Sold		
	Last week	4wks ago	12wks ago
70	76	85	135

Soft options

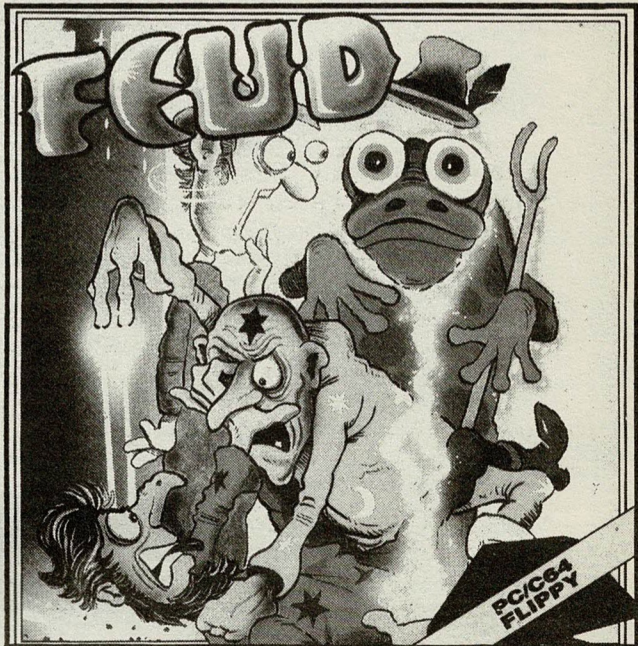
SOFT OPTIONS carries salient details of leisure software titles just released or which are due to appear in the next few days. Software houses wishing to be included should fax (0438 741247) or phone (0438 310185) through details ten days prior to our publication date.

▲ **ATLANTIS:** *Pothole Pete* (At - £1.99), *Daylight Robbery* (At - £1.99), *Overkill* (Sp - £1.99) Three more from the budget veteran, featuring the usual mixture of blasting and platforms. No one hears much about this firm but it does well on the smaller 8-bit formats. Expect to see both *Pothole* and *Robbery* in the Atari top ten. ▲ **ALTERNATIVE:** *Sam Cruise* (Sp - £2.99) This was Microsphere's last big title. It should transfer well to budget and keep Alternative breathing hard down the neck of the Tronics. ▲ **CDS:** *Brian Clough's Football Fortunes* (MSX - £9.99) This is a very, very good value package with cassette, playing board, counters, player cards and wads of dosh. Both MSX owners will be thrilled to bits. ▲ **DOMARK:** *The Empire Strikes Back* (STAg - £19.95) Tweedle Dum and Tweedle Dee at Domark will be lifting their



chambers and saying hurrah if this does as well as *Star Wars*. There's no reason why it shouldn't as long as there's plenty of variation on the original. ▲ **ELECTRONIC ARTS:** *The Bard's Tale II: The Destiny Knight* (Ag - £24.95) Even EA is starting to run out of things to say about this little number. After the release of the 756th different version it offers simply that "the saga continues". Watch this space for *Bard's Tale XXV* on the Abaq. ▲ **ENCORE:** *Battleships* (SpAm64 - £1.99) Now here's a strange one. This was originally planned to be a full-price release and after the usual peeking *Commodore User* and *Your Sinclair* both decided to give it rave reviews. Elite then turned around and decided that the game wasn't good enough to warrant an £8-10 pricepoint. This either says wonders for the game and Elite's standards or seriously embarrasses *CU* and *YS*. ▲ **GRAND SLAM:** *Peter Beardsley's Football* (64 - £9.95) PBF makes it onto a third format. Surely it would have been better if all versions were released at the same time, thus creating a much bigger impression on the charts - which in turn helps sales overall. ▲ **GREMLIN:** *Mickey Mouse* (AmSp64+3ST - £7.99-£19.99) Bags of cash were no doubt spent on the licence and bags of cash have been spent on advertising. This is pitched firmly at the younger gameheads and will have to do well to make all the build-up worthwhile. This follows on from *Basil the Great Mouse Detective* and no doubt we'll eventually see a *Wonderful World of Disney Licenses* compilation. ▲

▲ **SILVERBIRD:** *Trojan Warrior* (64 - £1.99) According to a certain member of BT's personnel this involves "riding a horse through the skies blasting things". Well there you have it. ▲ **US GOLD:** *Road Blasters* (Am - £9.99-£14.99) Strange that such a big title should could out at this time of year and on Amstrad first. Considering the arcaders' love of this driving shoot-em-up it should do very well, but Gold will be monitoring closely the success of Titus' clone *Fire and Forget*. ▲ **US GOLD:** *Wizard Warz* (64SpAm - £9.99-£14.99) This one has been around for yonks with several earlier release dates planned. It's a good value adventure with lots of chunky icons. ▲ **US GOLD:** *World Games* (MSX - £9.99) Further proof that the MSX must still have one leg to limp along with. And to think that those two well catered for owners have only had to wait eighteen months for this Christmas '86 chart topper to reach them. Lucky things.



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

SPEAKEASY

Counter attack

I am a dealer with retail premises in south Birmingham and have on show a range of PCs, 15 different printers along with a wide range of software and consumables. I am somewhat disturbed by the frequent inclusion in your publication of letters from a Mr Clive Warner, managing director at Digital Matrix.

This gentleman, who runs his impressive sounding title and business from a private house in a suburb in Solihull, has entered my premises on a couple of occasions. During the last two visits he loudly informed me that he could supply various peripherals and hardware at attractive rates.

He then proceeded to inform me of the actual amounts involved, all in front of a few of my customers. This person then had the gore to write in to Speakeasy (CTW July 4th) on the subject

of the professionalism of dealers!!!

As an independent dealer myself I am in a position to say that it is quite difficult to compete with the buying powers of large multiples. We are further harassed by the competition from cut-price merchants, who operate with no extra over-heads (rent, rates, travel expenses to and from work, staff, etc), who sell at very close to dealer cost price due to their status as a mini distributor both buying and selling direct.

I only wish that I had as much spare time as Mr Warner, who appears to spend his days playing games and writing letters to yourselves criticising real dealers.

Yours sincerely
Maurice Lee
Lee Computers
160 Highfield Road
Hall Green
Birmingham

SPEAKEASY

Warring fictions

I is Electronic Arts joining the happy band of Spectrum wargamer producers (CTW June 6th) with the *Battle For Stalingrad*? Apparently not according to their customer services department. But confusion apart CCS definitely released *Stalingrad* at £9.95 on 24th June and hopefully CTW will be proved right and will be "pored over" by strategists but who won't be bored by it!

Trisha Peters
CCS
London SE3
- Er, yes. Somehow a gremlin - and not a Gremlin - popped up in the copy. Apologies . . .

Hype, hype, hurrah!

Many thanks for your article (CTW July 4th) and slight error about *Star Wars*. It's high time hype was removed from our industry and for the truth to come out. We didn't sell 750,000 units, we actually sold 75,000,000. Hurrah!

With kind regards,
Mark Strachan
Joint managing director
Domark
- It was just our little joke, of course. We know that the old Do-Dos appreciate that sort of drolley.

Besides, it gave Mark Strachan the chance to go "Hurrah!", which is one of the things he does best.

THE FRENCH EVOLUTION

Continued from page 12
 up regular "focus groups". These entail a collection of average gamers sitting in darkened rooms telling the publisher what's good and what's not about his software.

Big deal

Other than a clutch of new titles and a bagful of money just what is Ubi Soft going to use to become a hit in the UK? You guessed it: another one of those exclusive licensing deals that firms in this market adore so much.

Ubi Soft has already got a \$1 million Epyx deal under its belt, so perhaps these great new titles are actually quite interesting after all. According to Ubi Soft UK firms are currently popping their corks all over the place at the possibility of winning the licence.

Being the little French tease that it is no UK firm has been allowed to have its wicked way yet. An incredible 10 firms are claimed to be waiting for the nod - and it had better be soon if Ubi is to get

its operation fully under way in time for the big unveiling at this September's PC Show.

"Marketing and quality of product are equally important. In the UK you have people who know how to do great marketing, but one firm told us that it's the *only* important thing. I can't believe that that is right. You just give the customer satisfaction with the product."

Although it is aware of the need to produce distinctly international product (and occasionally hold back titles that are too French for worldwide consumption) Guillemot is determined to make sure Ubi Soft is known as a French company. It will keep the Ubi brand name and provide finished product and artwork for the UK.

"We are a French company and we want to be considered a French company that writes games for British, American and German people."

Until recently a policy making sure people know Ubi Soft is French would have been pretty much suicidal. We

Brits have historically had an intense dislike of product made anywhere east of Lowestoft. If it wasn't British or American it usually flopped, irrespective of the product quality.

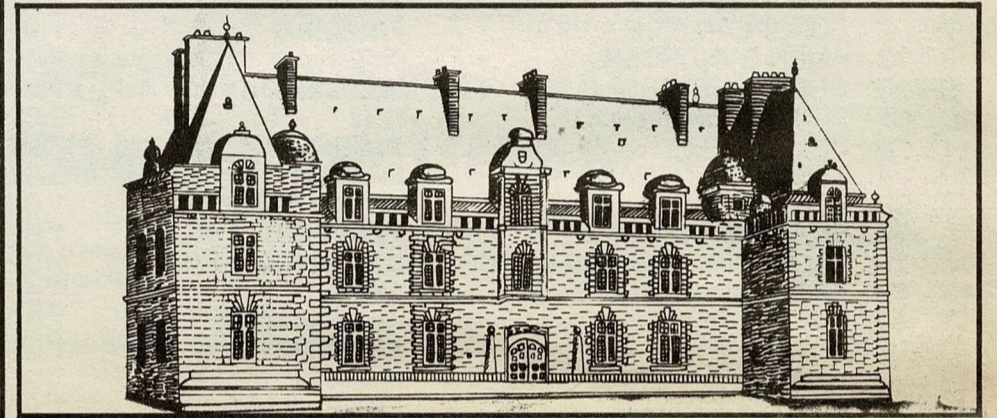
This has changed a little, however, mainly due to the take off of the ST and Amiga. These machines have helped games such as Infogrames' *Captain Blood* and Titus' *Crazy Cars* fulfil their undoubted potential in the UK.

Ubi Soft thinks it can follow this lead, but such things as C64 cassettes will still appear, as will the odd Spectrum game.

Guillemot immediately realises he's being rather optimistic when he predicts that Ubi Soft will be amongst the top six UK publishers within a year.

He then modifies this slightly: "The intention is to sell enough of each title each time and that the guys buying it will be happy."

No one can say fairer than that.



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BORLAND PUZZLES PRICING PARADOX

Continued from page 14
 money" and "customer satisfaction" Moran is ready to admit that low cost software is "often seen as something that downgrades the business market". Presumably that would mean Borland's product too.
 This may, then, be something of an explanation for firms looking at higher prices. That higher price is seen as a stepping stone to gaining respect in the world of *PC Dealer*, *Computerland* and *VARs*. And once you're in that world you can sell product at a high

price with high margins for publisher and dealer alike. A perfect world, it would seem.
 Those firms would do well to remember, however, that just short of two years ago it was budget software that was supposed to be bringing the manna from heaven.
 Borland launched its first product in 1983 at just \$50. It likes to believe that some publishers had been watching the US firm very closely when the number of low cost packages started to increase.
 "A lot of these companies

followed Borland's example. You might think that I'm very keen on putting Borland first in the picture but it's true.
 "People had a very short-sighted analysis of our success. They thought we'd succeeded just because we were selling products at half the price — or less — of our competitors.
 "That only works if you also have better product. If the product isn't good enough to sell at even the low price then you fail."
City limits
 Moran concedes that the idea of higher prices is a tempting one. He argues with

some validity that sales would not be affected that much by any such increases. This would seem a particularly useful course of action considering that Borland is ever on a financial tightrope when it comes to financial performance and how the figures are viewed by the city.
 Borland's recent year-end announcement showed pre-tax profits of \$7.17 million on sales and royalty income of \$76.5 million. This seems like a fair enough performance to say the least, yet just a few months before that it had announced third quarter results in which profits had actually halved compared with the previous year. Some-

thing approaching mild pandemonium set in amongst City analysts with Barclays de Zoete Wedd, for example, halving its year-end profit estimate to \$6.5 million.
 Moran bucks at the idea of higher prices bringing in more revenue, thus keeping the City happy. He also argues that it isn't pricing that has caused occasional trouble but delays. "We've had to pay for the cost of a product's launch in one quarter and then the product hasn't been available to give us some sales." Borland surely must have learnt its lesson by now and Moran promises it has.
PC User saw the launch of *Sprint* at £195 but also the

unveiling of *Paradox OS/2* at £549. So will Borland be shoving its prices higher as time goes by?
 Moran tries hard not to say anything definite but it seems not just yet. There are some 30 Borland packages available and just three are over £200. These are different versions of the *Paradox* database — a product left over from the acquisition of Ansa last year.
 Moran squirms just a little when it is put to him that some might be worried about *Paradox* costing £549 and what this means for future policy. He gets out of it by putting forward the usual plausible defence based on the need for extra support and development on something as complex as an OS/2 product. Also, Ansa was traditionally a publisher of full-price business software.
 On the face of it Borland is one of the falling number of publishers not to have been bitten by the price hike bug, but historical leanings notwithstanding, there's no reason why ultimately things should stay below £200.
 "It all depends where you're coming from. As long as you're giving good value for money that's all that matters. If someone's selling something at £50 and he's just not making it then it makes sense to raise the price."

AFTER THE GOLD RUSH

Continued from page 13
 "We spend a lot of time polishing up our games when they are actually finished, then we'll release them." Oddly enough this notion crops up in reviews too — Gary Penn, when reviewing for *Commodore User* in February 1988, said of *Hunter's Moon*, "It is a highly polished piece of work." Cooper is confident this policy is efficient especially since he claims to have "doubled the workforce in the last month", adding, somewhat rashly, "no other firm has".

Cheapies next
 Thalamus is now seriously considering releasing its back catalogue, as well as some new titles, on a budget label, although not through Thalamus itself. It had considered the same thing in the past, but rejected it because of budget's well-known poor quality releases. Cooper did not want his company to be drawn into that, which is not surprising considering he feels the best thing about Thalamus is that it consistently releases high quality products.
 Perhaps this is why Cooper has no immediate plans to leave Thalamus. In fact he is rather set on making Thalamus as successful a company as he can, and sees himself staying with the company for a good many years to come.

However if Cooper were to move on, he is determined it will be into another company in the leisure entertainment sector. He sees his best professional decision as "launching the Gold Rush promotion," but regretted not having done it earlier.
 The trouble with promotional ideas is that if they're good, they get nicked and so lose their originality and appeal. Still, Cooper should have such problems . . .

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Spanish leaks

Continued from front page
strad would stand still has not been a close follower of the company. The press speculation which has signalled the direction in which the company will be going has been logical. However, it would be less than commercially sensible to spell out the timing, configuration, price or marketing strategies that we are even now putting into place.

"Therefore the official line would be adhered to - that we are not prepared to jeopardise our well-chronicled commercial edge by broadcasting plans that we may have underway."

The interview with Dominguez revealed little about Amstrad's strategy, beyond predictable hopes to "convert the 386 into a consumer product" via pricing "40 per cent lower than its equivalents". The products will be available in the UK from October, and will then be launched in Spain in October for sale in 1989.

Gold shrugs

Continued from front page
due to distributors' "logistical difficulties with their computers" and is not because of any abiding doubts. Chaney also ruled out the prospect of distributors banding together to resist the measure because they are all competitors.

One other factor irking those handling Gold product is that suppliers of multiples - such as TBD with Smiths and Menzies and Centresoft with Boots - are being given a preferential margin. Chaney said that that had to happen because of the nature of multiple business.

Amongst the other distributors, numerous meetings were being held to discuss tactics. None of those contacted by CTW has confirmed that it will be either dropping Gold product or agreeing to the new terms.

"We all feel that discounting should be stopped, but this isn't the way to go about it. The terms are not workable and they're going down like the Titanic," one distributor told CTW.

Another looming problem for all sides is that Gold intends to revise its terms once more in September.

Meantime, some suppliers have been annoyed by Gold's policy on a separate matter. The firm is telling distributors that if they stock *Fire and Forget* from Titus then their margins on Gold's *RoadBlazers* will suffer, since the former is claimed to be a "rip-off".

This stance was variously dubbed "high-handed", "arrogant" and an infringement of the restrictive practices laws.

Chaney didn't deny the substance of the complaint, but said that Gold was forced into such action because of the poor nature of UK copyright laws.

"I think it's remiss of distributors to support a knock-off product. It would be good policy to support us because we're investing in the long term with well-backed, big licences - and not to take a short term view."

Centresoft is understood to be the only distributor which has thus far pulled *Fire and Forget*, following Gold representations.

DDL vanishes

Continued from front page
but the vast majority of its 70 staff will be redeployed within the group. One casualty, however, is deputy managing director Gordon Towell who only joined the firm in February from Norbain.

Sowery warned that other firms are suffering similar problems to those of DDL. "We're absolutely convinced that we're not the only ones. It'll be interesting to see how others survive and I wouldn't be surprised if others took a similar route to us," he added.

DDL's 1987 business totalled some £33 million, whilst MBS recorded £136 million.

Weekly looms

Continued from front page
Focus' computer publications publisher Trish Phillips to CTW. "Popular has a different kind of readership with the average age being over 19."

Focus is hoping to fund the title largely through unit sales rather than advertising. The first issue will have a print run of 50,000 with the possibility of a cover-mounted issue appearing with the September 15th PC Show issue.

CGW will be edited by ex-Pop writer and *ST Update* editor Duncan Evans. *Pop* itself will continue to cover the games market but to a lesser extent.

SubLogic splits UK business

SubLogic has opted for a splitting of its UK operation with the lower price orientated Actionsoft label being licensed to US Gold.

Due to the Actionsoft name already being registered in the UK, Gold will be calling the label ActionLogic. SubLogic itself will continue to supply its top range products from its UK base in Manchester which was opened late last year.

The firm is best known for *Flight Simulator* which retails here at around the £50 mark. The Actionsoft label was

formed in 1986 by president Bruce Artwick in order to cash in on lower price points and "gain more price flexibility".

Gold's initial releases on the ActionLogic label will be a helicopter simulation *Thunderchopper* and a submarine game *Up Periscope*. Gold sees this line up as a pitch for long shelf life products as opposed to its traditional chart based dogma.

"The market is with Gold's type of product profile but it's good to have games which last a long time," commented operations director Tim Chaney. Price points have not as yet

been arranged but they are likely to be similar to those of MicroProse's range of simulations.

Chaney added: "This is the first phase and we want to get ActionLogic product into Europe and make it a strong brand. We've been wanting to talk to them for five years." Gold expects the conversions to UK formats to take "at least" six months with a simultaneous release likely.

SubLogic itself is launching *Jet* and the evergreen *Flight Simulator* for the ST in September, along with a PC version of *Jet*.

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