

Where it's all happening

ATARI CHRISTMAS SHOW

THE WEST HALL
ALEXANDRA PALACE

10am-6pm Fri November 25
10am-6pm Sat November 26
10am-6pm Sun November 27

CTW

21.11.88 BRITAIN'S TOP COMPUTER TRADE WEEKLY ISSUE 213

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Migent settles at last

Migent UK is claiming to have overcome its recent spate of staff shuffling and uncertainty with the formation of a new board of directors.

Erstwhile managing director Neil Holloway has taken the role of UK boss, joined by Joel Coleman as commercial director. Two other directors will be appointed shortly.

The most significant development is that the new managerial team will be British. Migent's UK operation has been shrouded in mystery since former bosses Chuck Hamilton and Jan Feaster both returned to the US. This had followed the departure of marketing director Jacqui Sasserath.

Migent US has been dogged by financial problems and it is understood that Migent UK's staff had been looking over their shoulders too much for the firm's good. Migent UK is also believed to have been funding part of the US operation - which came close to filing for Chapter 11 last month.

The new board is promising a "less flashy" approach to the UK and European markets.

INSIDE:

ST ACTION

A couple of weeks ago *CTW* revealed that Atari is planning a sub-£100 ST console. It could be launched next autumn, but then again this is Atari we're talking about..... 12

BROWNE OFF

Should computer retailers be considering adding TVs, videos and hi-fis to their product lines? Some think so, others think not..... 14

SETTING SALE

Why should a dealer be lumbered with a range just because it's well marketed and has a high brand awareness? With a good selling technique higher margin product can walk out of the door just as easily, says Keith Warburton 18

KISS ACROSS THE OCEAN

US giant Epyx recently 'merged' with French publisher Infogrames. Reasons for this at first seem difficult to find, and after looking somewhat harder remain so 20

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Atari and CBM step up

After much prognostication Commodore and Atari both took further steps upmarket last week with new machine launches at the Comdex show in Las Vegas.

Rather than unveiling anything completely unexpected, the two firms were both confirming their intent to keep apace with developing markets such as Unix and parallel processing.

Atari unveiled its 68030-based UXE low-cost Unix workstation, showed a prototype of the Stacey laptop ST

and gave yet another preview of the ATW transputer (formerly the Abaq).

Commodore, meanwhile, launched two new Amigas: the 2500 (which runs Amiga DOS, Unix and MSDOS) and an Amiga 2000 with built-in hard disk.

The 2500 is a further bid to gain top-end sales into business, science, engineering, graphics and education. It features a 68020 and an 80286 processor, a 40 Mb hard drive, two Mb of 32-bit RAM (expandable to four Mb) and will retail in the US at \$4,699.

The Amiga 2000HD features a 40 Mb drive and will

retail at \$2,999.

Commodore was last week resisting the temptation to predict any UK availability date for either machine.

"Experience has taught us that it's daft to say anything before we get a definitive shipment time," commented Commodore's UK marketing manager Dean Barrett to *CTW*.

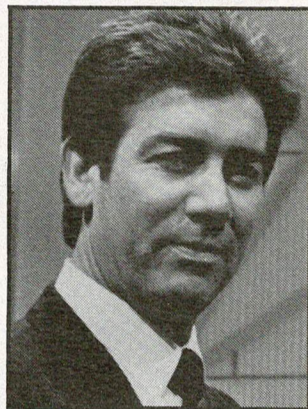
"What we are seeing is the beginning of a new era for the 2000 which takes it up to the Unix environment. It is starting to find its feet in its vertical markets and the corporation is making sure that it is supported and upgraded effectively."

Amidst Atari cries of 'copy-cat' Commodore also last week demonstrated an Amiga equipped with Inmos transputers. These function within an AmigaDOS window, whilst normal Amiga tasks run in others. As on the Atari ATW, the Commodore Transputer uses the Perihelion-developed Helios operating system.

Atari's transputer machine was expected to go on sale at Comdex but the wait continues. The first 300 machines are being manufactured in December and will go on sale from January 1989.

Atari was also expected to
Continued on back page

Konix picks trade show



HOLLOWAY: Console confirmed Konix has earmarked a £2m TV adspend for its much talked about console — and has chosen the European Computer Trade Show as its official launchpad.

Last week Konix boss Wyn Holloway finally confirmed the existence of the games machine which was revealed exclusively by *CTW* at the beginning of last month (*CTW* October 3rd).

Holloway told *CTW* that the games console will be shown privately to potential major customers at the British Toy Fair in January. The first public unveiling of the machine, however, will take place at the *CTW*-sponsored European Computer Trade Show which takes place at the
Continued on back page

Palan swaps CBM for VCS

In a complete rethink on hardware policy Palan has decided to cease distributing Commodore product and take on Atari's various consoles.

To that end the firm is currently offering dealers sundry bundles involving the C64, Amiga and Commodore PCs in an attempt to run down stocks. The next step will be a promotional campaign to herald the availability of the Atari consoles as soon as details are finalised with the firm.

Boss Lou Fine told *CTW*: "With Commodore we just can't work with their margins, but with Atari we support the cartridge software for their console so heavily that it makes sense for us to take the hardware as well."

"With people like Zappo and Hugh Symons moving up towards the PCs and 16-bit machines we can see a gap in the market opening up and we're there to fill it."

Fine added that another factor in the decision was the ability to sell the cartridges on
Continued on back page

Acorn scorns and appoints

Acorn last week appointed Hugh Symons as sole distributor for next year's upmarket Archimedes — whilst opening old wounds with educational rival Research Machines.

The new Unix-based Archimedes is expected to be available in limited quantities from January 4th with greater numbers expected from the end of February onwards. Its arrival will herald something of a major move upmarket for Dorset based Hugh Symons.

Meanwhile Acorn was once again finding itself responding with incredulity to Research Machines claim to be number one in the field of education. The latest claim was made in a recent RM national press ad, leading Acorn boss Harvey Coleman to make public Acorn's anger.

Commenting on the Hugh Symons deal Acorn's corpor-

ate communications manager Michael Page told *CTW* "We always want to give people as much power as possible but at affordable prices. The Hugh Symons deal is one way we have set about achieving that."

"They've got dealer contacts with good quality, not just anyone who wants to shift a box — that's not where Unix belongs."

At Hugh Symons Geoff Storer gushed: "We view this joint venture as an exciting opportunity and a major development for Hugh Symons in 1989. We are looking to harness some dealers with Unix experience."

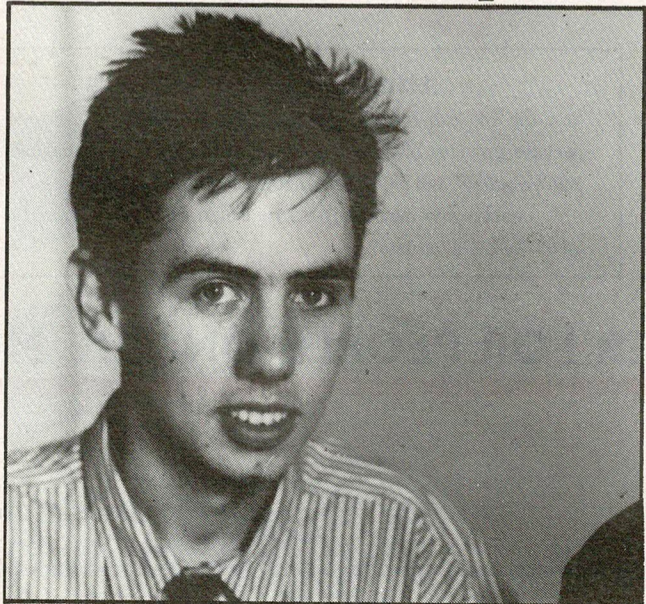
As yet Acorn is undecided on the price of the new machine but Page claimed that the firm was "looking at Comdex and listening to what sort of figure people are talking about and then we'll come up with some pretty aggressive pricing."

The Research Machine
Continued on back page



COLEMAN: Adding Hugh Symons, lambasting RM

Coders slap Alternative writ



DARLING: Getting tough

As part of a new get tough policy Code Masters has slapped a writ on fellow budgeteer Alternative, alleging breach of the copyright and passing off laws.

The firm is claiming that the packaging of Alternative's new *Formula Grand Prix* release plagiarises that of its own *Grand Prix Simulator*. The main complaints surround the similarity of the title both in wording and presentation, and the general similarity of the cover designs.

Both game packages feature a picture of a winning racing Ferrari numbered 27. Unsurprisingly both firms are putting radically different interpretations on how far this goes to-

wards constituting a breach of copyright.

At Code Masters the general mood seems to be that things have finally gone too far. It believes that its ideas, particularly on packaging and marketing, have been "widely imitated" but that this time the likeness is "too obvious and blatant".

Managing director David Darling commented: "This has now reached the point where we have no option but to protect the intellectual property which is responsible for our success. Copying is the theft of intellectual property."

The writ — which was issued November 16th — is also against Alternative's parent
Continued on back page



FAST MOVER



EVEN FASTER MOVER

■ The Cambridge Z88 has already proved itself as the prime mover in the fast-growing lap-top sector.

Weighing less than two pounds and taking up as much space as a folded newspaper, the Z88 packs more computer power into a briefcase than most people have access to in the office.

New All-in-One Pack

The new All-in-One Pack makes the Z88 even more attractive.

Designed to look good and sell well, the Pack will make an excellent Christmas present. It contains the Z88 with batteries, mains adaptor, carry case and 128K RAM pack. This gives your customers all they need to get started, with a memory capacity to hold over 60 A4 pages of text.

And at a retail price of £299.95 plus VAT, it offers excellent value to your customers.

Continuing national advertising

The successful advertising campaign for the Z88 will continue running in the national press right through to Christmas.

All-in-all, a package which will have the Z88 moving even faster.

Order your pack now

Order your new Z88 All-in-One Packs now to catch the Christmas shopping season. Contact your regular distributor, below, or call Cambridge Computer on 0223 312216.

Attention all Mac Dealers

Now the Z88 can talk to Apple Mac through the new Z88-to-Mac. The package provides utilities to convert between Z88 text documents and MacWrite files, and Z88 spreadsheets and Lotus 123 files.

Contact your regular distributor, below, or call Cambridge Computer on 0223 312216 for details.

CAMBRIDGE Z88 · THE COMPUTER FOR PEOPLE ON THE MOVE

EA's Rushware link totters as Microdealer imports from US

Electronic Arts has reacted phlegmatically to Microdealer's importing of one of its titles — but has warned that the move is "really hurting" EA's tie-up with Rushware in Germany.

Ever since EA set up in the UK last year the firm has operated a strict direct distribution policy. Distributors have only been allowed to handle product in order when supplying major multiples.

Microdealer, however, has begun importing Interplay's *Battle Chess* from a US distributor and is promising to do the same on future big titles.

"We've got it available along with a 24-hour delivery service — which, of course, EA can't provide. There's nothing EA can do about it," commented Microdealer boss Lee Ginty to CTW.

EA has hinted that its German distribution deal with Rushware (owned by Mirror Media, headed up by Ginty) could be jeopardised as a result.

"Both Rushware and EA are upset that Microdealer is doing this. The question I've got for Lee is what does he think he's doing to the long-term market place," offered EA's UK publishing director Mark Lewis to CTW.

"It's really hurting the profitability of the EA/Rushware partnership — which is hurting Microdealer. It's too bad that they're doing it."

The major worry for EA will be the prospect of other distributors tapping into Microdealer's supply routes, thus getting hold of major products possibly even before they have been released in the UK.

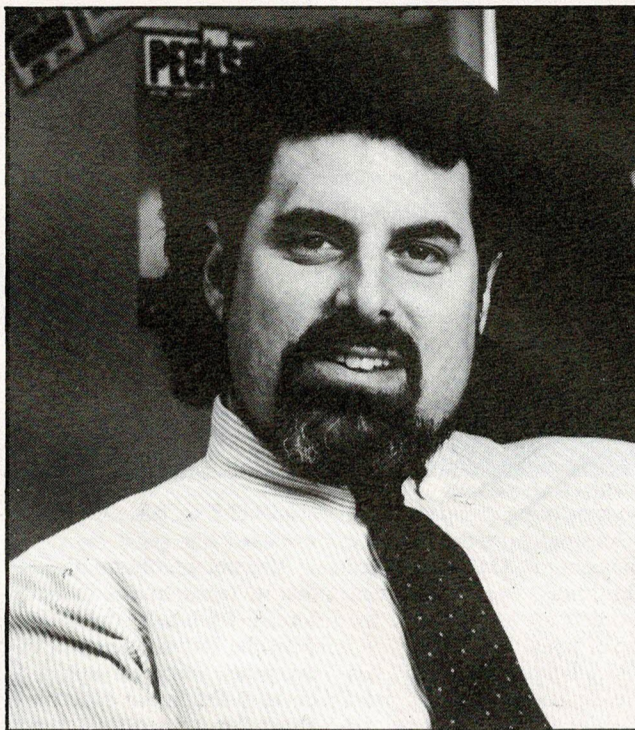
Because Interplay is only an affiliate label EA has no real

degree of power over its products, whereas EA-produced titles such as *Powerdrome* and *Interceptor* are not easily importable.

For its part Microdealer, longtime critic of EA's policy, has invited other distributors to get in on the grey importing act. "The product is freely available to all of us," added Ginty.

Lewis, however, is trying to play down the importance of Microdealer's move. He claims that there are only small quantities of *Battle Chess* available and that they will suffer from the necessarily higher price-point of £29.99, as opposed to the official UK price of £24.99.

EA also pointed out that as far as the European market is concerned, French and German versions of the game are only available from EA in the UK.



LEWIS: Rushware warning

Games trial fails to win over HMV

Despite yet another trial run, it looks unlikely that record chain HMV will be taking leisure software nationwide in the near future.

Similar to last year, HMV's flagship store in Oxford Street took on a range of both 8-bit and 16-bit titles in August. There are no plans at this stage to pull the games racks from the trial store, but sales haven't warranted giving over similar

shelfspace to HMV's other outlets.

"We've had some titles in the Oxford Street store for a couple of months. They're doing okay, but they're not setting the world on fire. There's no major incentive for us to scale it out to all stores," commented HMV's buying manager Bob Douglas to CTW.

The decision to have a similar trial run last year raised hopes that software would eventually be rolled out

amongst all 67 HMV stores, but the experiment was canned in the early part of this year.

Strangely, one HMV store — Reading — has been dealing with software for a while now and is generally believed to have been successful.

Douglas offered that this was due to the commitment to software that the Reading staff have. He does not regard the store's progress as any proof of the market's potential.



HMV: Games 'okay' — but not national

New show picks up pace

Following the announcement of the new European Computer Trade Show, organiser Database has received over 30 provisional bookings and considerable interest from Europe.

Rushware, the German distribution giant recently acquired by the Mirror Group, has already expressed considerable interest. Boss Jurgen Goeldner commented: "We intend to be there and to be honest we've been looking for

something like this for some time."

He continued: "Of course we go to the PC show but it is not the sort of event to find enough time to talk to everyone in the trade you want to."

French publisher Ubi Soft's marketing manager Isabelle De Batz echoed: "I think it's a good idea. This would be a first for Europe. Before this we had to rely on the PC show in London to do business, but that has its limitations."

Last week the firm's exhibit recruitment drive switched

to Comdex in Las Vegas where a Database team was extolling the virtues of the new show.

Database's sales director Mike Malone told CTW: "It's early days yet but so far the reaction has been extremely positive with lots of firms asking us for more details. So far no-one has said no."

One of the firms that has definitely said yes is Konix. It has confirmed a booking of a feature stand which will almost certainly be used to show off its new console planned for launch later next year.

WordPerfect UK cuts to match US standard

WordPerfect UK (formerly Sentinel) has announced a string of price reductions throughout its range of *WordPerfect* products.

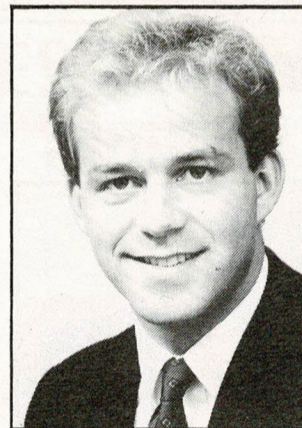
The UK distributor claimed that the cuts bring the products more in line with WordPerfect US. It pinpointed the most important changes as *WordPerfect Library* falling from £147 to £99, *PlanPerfect 3.0* falling from £375 to £299 and the general reductions in its network range.

Marketing manager David Godwin commented to CTW: "After changing the name this month this was the ideal opportunity to announce that we have bought our prices in line with the US."

He added, however, that it was an independent decision from the British firm not a result of a US directive. WordPer-

fect UK is hoping the cuts will put an end to some of its potential customers buying product in the States and bringing it back for British use.

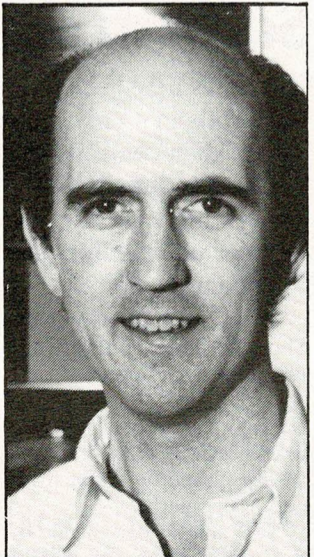
Godwin continued: "Dealers have been initially fairly happy with it, obviously their margins will be less but the increase in volume of sales should outweigh that."



GODWIN: Range cuts

Two more bite Bullet

Promotion and merchandising firm Bullet has signed up Code Masters and Incentive, and is set to take on another 'major' software house within the next few weeks.



EVANS: Two new labels

The Bullet list of clients already includes Telecomsoft, Elite, Mirrorsoft, Electronic Arts and Mandarin, and whilst another deal is said to be imminent the company also intends to add two or three more clients in the new year.

The company claims that it will still be able to maintain an individual and specialised service, despite the growing number of accounts.

"We work the same way as we do in the record industry. We only work so many records in a cycle as priority items. Incentive only release about four games a year, whilst Telecomsoft use us strategically, it really isn't a question of how many clients," Bullet boss Barry Evans told CTW.

Bullet will be promoting Code Master's first venture into full price games with 4 *Soccer Simulators* on the new Gold label. The first Incentive games to be promoted by Bullet will be *Driller* and *Total Eclipse*

CTW

Computer Trade Weekly

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0438 310184

0438 310185

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Published by Specialist Retail Press Limited, Business Technology Centre, Bessemer Drive, Stevenage, Herts SG1 2DX.

Telex: 825824

(Answerback "Bustec")

Fax 0438 741247



Lithographic Origination Printing & Despatch
Manson Graphic Ltd
4 Maxted Road,
Hemel Hempstead, Herts
0442 47251

Subscriptions: UK£75; Europe £120; US and Asia £220; Australia £250
Registered at the Post Office as a newspaper

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Two Smash Hit Games
You MUST Stock!

ARMALYTE

Commodore 64/128
£9.99 cass £12.99 disk

SANXION

the SPECTRUM remix
£8.99 cass £12.99 disk

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

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



THALAMUS

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

Amstrad modem sells out but Amsoft wait extends

After little more than a week of availability Amstrad is claiming to be completely out of stock of its new standalone modem.

The SM2400 was launched at September's PC Show but only recently went out to distributors. At the same time, the already advertised Amstrad multi-user software has continued to be delayed.

Amstrad claims that some distributors taking the SM2400 sold out within half an hour of gaining their shipment.

"It's bloody amazing how it's gone. I suppose it's because it works on any computer that is fitted with an RS232 port — whether you've got an Amstrad or an IBM it'll work," commented Amstrad's software manager Mike Mordecai to CTW.

The SM2400 retails at £249 and joins Amstrad's existing MC2400 card modem. These are now Amstrad's only modems, with the firm's original two early badged Pace



MORDECAI: Sold out modems being dropped.

Amstrad expects one more shipment of SM2400s before Christmas — and claims that re-orders are already twice the size of initial orders.

Meanwhile, Amstrad has already begun national press advertising for its range of multi-user software but

availability is still at least a week away.

"It's not a problem, it's just that we're determined to make sure everything's right. We want the software to work on everyone's network not just ours. We're more concerned about that sort of thing these days," added Mordecai.

Database sells, merges and loses in rationalisation

In a rush of cuts Database has sold Atari User to Page 6 Publishing and absorbed CPC Computing into Amstrad Computer User.

The sale of the Atari 8-bit magazine is being described by the firm as an indication of its faith in the continuing emergence of the 16-bit market. The new owner, Page 6, started life as an Atari newsletter.

The title will be merged with Page 6 magazine and be available bi-monthly at £1.50. At the time of sale Atari User's ABC was 19,271.

The firm's Mike Cowley told CTW: "The move is a rationalisation. Obviously the market is moving away from the 8-bit to 16-bit and that's why we've decided to concentrate on that area with Atari."

Amstrad Computer User's absorption of CPC Computing was also described as "rationalisation". The move creates a magazine with the rather long title of Amstrad Computer User

with CPC Computing. The latest ABC for ACU is 35,560 with CPC Computing pitching in with 22,292.

Cowley commented: "CPC could have continued but we thought it was a better idea to put together a very strong title and a not so strong title be-

cause if you combine them then you've really got yourself quite a super title."

Meanwhile, the firm has announced the departure of its marketing director Peter Brameld. He has resigned in order to launch his own consultancy business.



BRAMELD: Leaving as mags shuffle

Sage boasts amidst MainLan bug doubts

Sagesoft was last week shrugging off its MainLan technical problems to claim the product's launch as the most successful in its history.

Sage claimed that the networking system has been taken by over 400 dealers with another 250 enquiries received since the promotional cam-

paign began. In total the firm is boasting sales of over £400,000 for the first three weeks of release.

The firm's marketing manager Tony Hatton told CTW: "We established ourselves in this market with SageNet but obviously there were a few problems with that. With the new chip though there really is nothing to compete with MainLan at this price."

Hatton went on to claim that the sales that had been budgeted for MainLan's first quarter of release had been achieved within the first month.

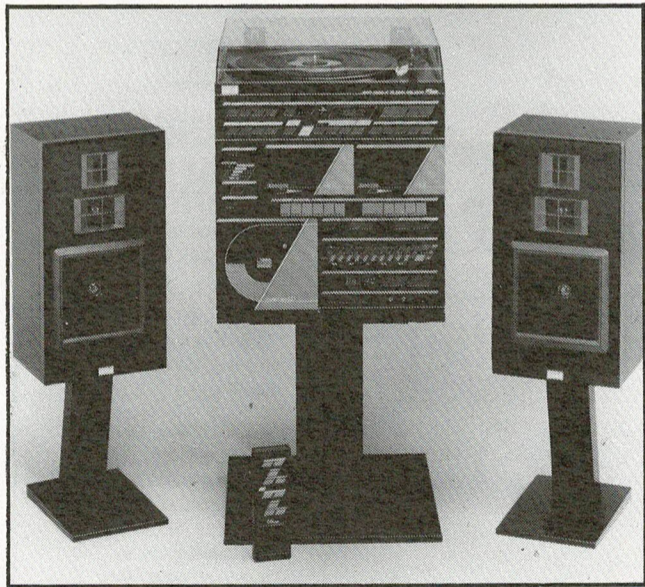
Early users of MainLan recently located a fault with the network. If it was left unattended for a short period of time it crashed.

Sagesoft originally argued

that the problem was only minor and could be cured by disconnecting the remote drive from the server when not in use. It is now, however, attempting to make sure latest editions are trouble free.

The product sells at £199 (+VAT) with a starter pack including software, adaptor cards, end plugs and an operating manual available at £399.

ZCL turns Amstrad brown for Christmas



CDX500: Part of ZCL's brown goods push

ZCL has made its first ever venture out of the computer market by taking on Amstrad brown goods for the Christmas season.

The Amstrad business and leisure machine distributor is offering videos, video/TV systems and hi-fis to its existing dealer base.

"We've committed ourselves only to the brown good products that are being featured on national TV. It sounds a bit mercenary, but we've chosen the winners," commented ZCL boss Don Carter to CTW.

He claims that ZCL's own research revealed that a signifi-

cant proportion of its dealers were already taking some brown goods.

"And we know that if we offer the right products dealers can make a bit of extra margin in the run up to Christmas — the store traffic is already there anyway, so why not try and sell a video?"

"The good thing about Amstrad product is that it's so well marketed and has wonderfully aggressive price-points," added Carter.

If it feels dealers are interested, ZCL is willing to continue stocking the Amstrad brown goods after Christmas. But Carter was quick to rule out any move towards other non-computer brands.

Now Tronics look for more at £2.99

The budget market's re-appraisal of pricing continued last week with Mastertronic offering that it too is looking to push prices higher.

Unlike Code Masters, however, it is not yet ready to move wholeheartedly away from the historical £1.99 budget price-point (CTW November 14th).

Instead, the firm has announced that next year it will be looking to cut down the number of £1.99 releases and increase the number at £2.99.

Currently the £1.99 to £2.99 release ratio is around 10:1, but next year this is likely to be closer to 4:1.

"We're not moving away from the £1.99 pricepoint. It's just a case of market trends. Costs have obviously risen by an enormous percentage, whilst the £1.99 price has been around for years," commented Virgin Mastertronic's marketing director Geoff Heath to CTW.

The firm's £2.99 range is branded MAD, with the Mastertronic and Ricochet brands still selling at £1.99.

Also unlike Code Masters, Mastertronic is not looking to incorporate its own brand in a full-price label. For the near future at least it will be sticking with Melbourne House, Virgin Games and Leisure Genius.

Scottish show builds up

The dates have been fixed for Scotland's only computer show and its organiser is predicting a major increase in the number of exhibitors and attendance.

The Scottish Computer Show will be held on April 4th-6th at the Exhibition and Conference Centre, Glasgow. It is the eighth show of its kind and as in previous years emphasis will be placed on the business end of the market.

The show has been organised by Cahners Exhibitions, which also run the

Which Computer? Show. Admittance has been limited to over 18s, with Cahners keen to attract serious business people.

This year many major manufacturers will be attending including: Toshiba, Olivetti, ICL, Sun and Wang. "We are already well filled, we have a great many more than last year, and a lot of old exhibitors are extending their stands," Cahners' exhibition manager Stella Hall told CTW.

It is claimed that in recent years up to 50 per cent of the exhibitors have been Scottish based companies, whilst over 90 per cent of the exhibitors have come from Scotland.

Microsoft brings in education cuts

In an attempt to increase its penetration of the education market Microsoft has announced a string of substantial price cuts aimed at the education sector.

The firm has also introduced an authorised education dealer programme and signed an OEM agreement with Research Machines which will bundle Microsoft product with RM's Nimbus network system.

The education discounts will be up to 60 per cent with two of the most notable being the latest versions of Microsoft Word and Microsoft Excel both

being reduced from £395 to £158. The firm claimed that this gives it the most aggressively priced education policy in the UK.

The education dealers will be providing special academic versions of Microsoft product. So far five dealers have been appointed with Microsoft looking to add a further fifteen by the end of the year.

The firm's education accounts manager Mark East explained that the firm had established the new policy in response to the "UK dilemma" of education being an "advanced market with a low budget".

Domark switches primary to PDQ

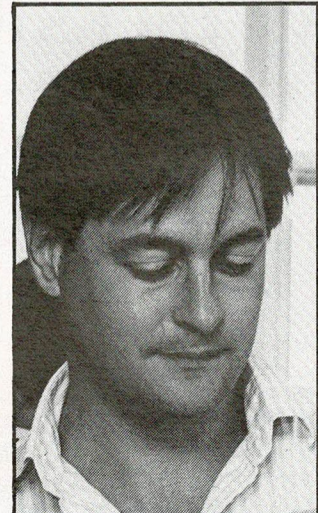
Domark has switched its primary distribution from USD to Centresoft offshoot PDQ.

Domark was in fact USD's only primary distribution account, having signed up with the firm in early 1987. It was initially hoped by Domark that other software houses would join USD, but further deals failed to materialise.

The split appears to have been amicable, with Domark's decision to switch being mainly instigated as a result of increasingly high costs through the firm's inability to spread expenses. USD claims that it will now be able to concentrate all its resources on retail sales and merchandising.

"The point about USD is that it was essentially meant to be a central body that performed certain tasks for a group of independent software houses. By grouping together we were meant to get cost benefits. As far as merchandising is concerned that has gone very well, but where it didn't work was on the primary distribution side," Domark director Dominic Wheatley told CTW.

USD's boss Andy Wood was unperturbed by the split. "Domark's decision is no big deal to us. There are obviously a lot of other companies better equipped to offer a more efficient and price competitive service. It really isn't an area of the market we wish to compete in."



WHEATLEY: Moving to PDQ

25 DAYS TO CHRISTMAS

UPDATE

PRODUCT AVAILABILITY INFORMATION

SUPPLIER	PRODUCT	AVAILABILITY	COMMENTS
COMMODORE 1	AMIGA A500 + free modulator and Photon Paint	Stock levels fair, Photon FOC whilst stocks last. (In this week).	TV advertising has started and sales have doubled over last week
COMMODORE 1	64C Hollywood Pack 64C Entertainment Pack	O.K. but definite problems ahead. Availability good.	50% up on last week Great improvement over last week
COMMODORE 1	1802 Colour Monitor 1541c (New Style)	Whilst stocks last! Limited stock	£95.50 trade!! Grab 'em Whilst you can. Runs 64C and 128 (replacing 1571)
CUMANA 2	Disk Drive – Amiga Disk Drive – ST	Fair but under pressure	New price offer has significantly increased sales
AMSTRAD/SINCLAIR 2	Plus 2 Plus 3	Everyone will be out of stock before December. Plus 3 availability fair.	Stock shortages and a massive increase in demand this week. T.V. commercial and Plus 2 shortages will guarantee Plus 3 sell-through.
AMSTRAD 2	464 6128 2160 Printer	Fair but tight for December	Mail order and catalogue sell-through is well up on last year, usually a good indicator, this will be a record season.
AMSTRAD 2	1640 D/D – H/D Colour	Very limited floor stocks	No more available until 1989
AMSTRAD 2000 SERIES 2	2086 Single Drive Dual Drive, Hard Drive	All in stock	Amstrads new product range, need we say more...!
AMSTRAD 2	PCW 8256/8512/9512	All in stock	Selling as well as ever. Now UK specification
AMSTRAD PRINTERS 2	LQ5000 di DMP 4000 DMP 3250 di DMP 3500 DMP 2160	Ex-stock Ex-stock Ex-stock Ex-stock CPC Compatible, Ex-stock.	Selling well. Selling well. Selling very well. Selling very well. Selling very well.

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

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

Dear Retailer,

There was a significant up-turn in demand during the past week – most particularly with the Sinclair plus 2, CBM 64C Hollywood pack and A500 Amiga.

It is now apparent that there will be significant shortages of sub-£150 product and the mail order companies and multiples are buying in where they can.

Our new range of Amstrad Brown Goods has sold well and repeat orders have been placed right across the board.

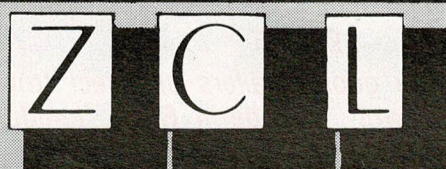
Look out for Commodore's 1802 monitor, bundle it with the 64C for a profitable added value sale.

Our new stock of Amstrad PCW product is full UK spec. and will be all there is until January.

I hope that you find our information useful; for the very latest trade information, please don't hesitate to call our telesales on 0543 414817; you will find them very helpful.

Kind Regards

Don Carter Chairman



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Germans gain Z88

Cambridge Computer is now pitching the Z88 at the West German market following an exclusive distribution deal with Stengel Computer Technik.

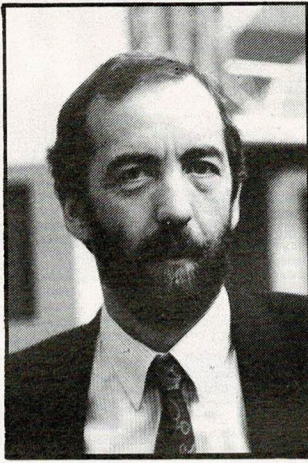
Cambridge is already selling the Z88 in most parts of Europe, and is confident of the machine's prospects in West Germany.

"This market is very important and we believe that it has great potential for the Z88," commented Cambridge Computer's marketing manager Peter King.

SCT is claimed to be one of West Germany's leading distributors. Its existing range includes the Psion Organiser, as well as telecommunications, hardware and software. The firm is also involved in software development.

"We chose SCT because of its excellent experience in marketing and distribution and its 300-strong dealer network throughout West Germany including West Berlin," offered King.

The Z88 recently had its first official public airing in West Germany at the Orgatech show in Koln.



KING: German invasion

Kixx gets flying start in budget market share

After just three months in existence US Gold's budget arm Kixx has already claimed over five per cent of open market sales.

Gallup figures for the week ending 29th October show the firm with a 5.1 per cent share which puts it in seventh place. They also show three Kixx titles in the budget top ten - *Gauntlet*, *Footballer of the Year* and *Ace of Aces*.

Although the firm is still some way behind market leaders such as Alternative and Encore which take over eight per cent each it is a considerably better performance than that of US Gold's previous budget experiment with Americana.

Joint managing director John Mearman commented: "We're obviously very pleased with the figures considering the short length of time we've been going. Two factors are

involved, one being the quality of the products and the other being our knowledge of the market."

He also claimed that the firm had been proved right on the decision to go with a £2.99 price point. "It is inevitable that product will have to come up to £2.99 and we thought we would set the standard rather than wait for someone else and now of course people like Encore and Code Masters have followed", he opined.

Softsel goes for hard sell

Softsel is ramping up its move into hardware with a series of hardware promotions running from now until the end of the year.

The promotion - the first of its kind for the company - is claimed to demonstrate the firm's increasing commitment to the hardware market. Softsel will be handling products from six companies including: AST, Kodak, Hitachi, Iomega, Logi UK and Video Seven. The company will also be offering bundling incentives on the hardware.

For the AST promotion Softsel is offering either a 1Mb or 2Mb Rampage 286 board bundled with Quarterdeck's *Desqview* software program. The boards are priced at £539 and £1139 respectively.

The Kodak promotion is a 300 or 300W parallel printer priced at £299 and £349 respectively and both products come with a free carrying case, POS material and demo disks.

Softsel is also bundling a Video Seven VEGA VGA card with both the Hitachi multi-scan monitor (£499) and VGA monitor (£449), whilst a free pack of cartridges and an interface card is offered with the Iomega Beta 20+20 Bernoulli Box, priced at £1,299.

Both the Ligimouse serial and bus, priced at £55, come with a free watch. The Video Seven promotion consists of a Fastwrite VGA card and a free copy of Microsoft's *Flight Simulator Version 3* and costs £235.

"We are joining forces with market leaders in hardware to offer our dealer network a Softsel that can deliver the highest quality hardware as well as software," commented Softsel's marketing director Richard North.

BT loses another

Following the recent departure of Telecomsoft's publisher Paul Hibbard (CTW October 24th) Domark has poached Rainbird sales manager Martin Defries.

Defries has taken on the newly created position of software sales manager. "We've been looking for someone for ages - I mean quite a long time," said Domark director Dominic Wheatley.

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Screen shots from Atari ST

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(Please do not send coins or money)



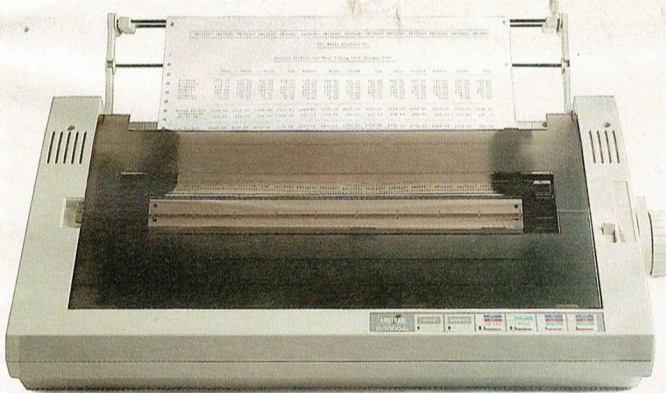
AMSTRAD PRINTERS. NOW BETTER BY AN EVEN BIGGER MARGIN.

Epson's salesforce will be shivering in their beds this coming winter.

Because Amstrad are now offering greatly improved margins on printers.

Printers like the advanced Amstrad LQ5000di.

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



LQ5000di RRP £449 + VAT

Making it ideal for business wordprocessing use.

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

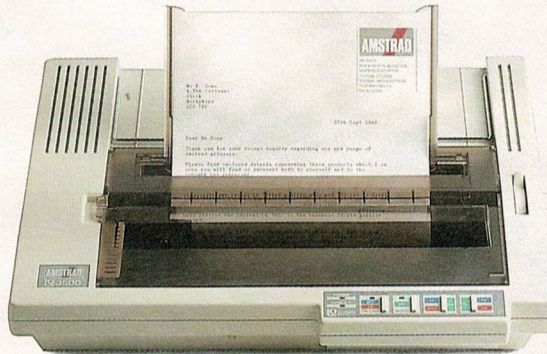
The LQ5000di is also one of the three printers in the range with dual centronics / parallel and RS232 interfaces. (The 'di' stands for 'dual interface'.)

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

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

comparable LQ1050 too.

We're also offering bigger, better margins on the Amstrad LQ3500di. Which produces letter



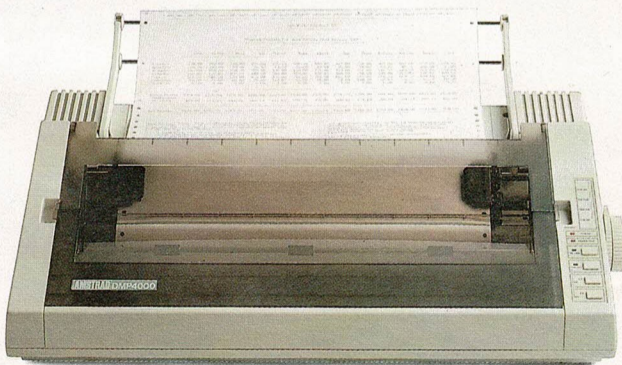
LQ3500di RRP £349 + VAT

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

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

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

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



DMP4000 RRP £349 + VAT

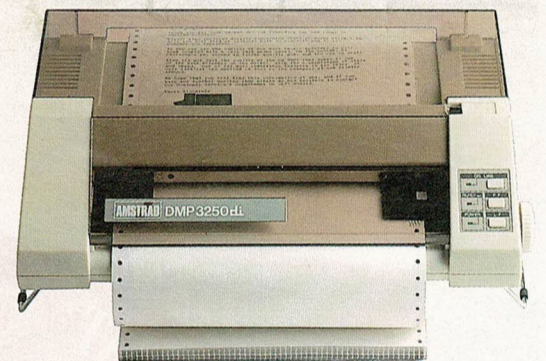
With a superwide 13.6 inch carriage, it should cope with your customers' widest balance sheets. And with its high speed draft mode at up to 200cps, they won't be spending much time

waiting for printouts either.

Finally we're cutting our sell-in prices of the Amstrad DMP3250di.

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

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



DMP3250di RRP £199 + VAT

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



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

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

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

Please tell me how I can increase my profits by selling Amstrad printers.

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Porn squad swoops on Sex Vixens from US

The porn squad has impounded the latest shipment of the US game *Sex Vixens From Space* which has in fact been available in the UK since September.

The airport C25 Squad took the decision to stop the software coming in on the grounds of "protecting the youth of today". Precision software had imported 25 copies of the game on a trial basis, but ended

up having its whole shipment of software impounded.

The other packages have since been released, whilst it is understood that the *Sex Vixen* titles will be destroyed. "It's a brutal fascist regime stopping simple software coming in. The closest you get to seeing anything in the game is in your head. They've probably not even seen it, unless they had an Amiga on hand at the airport," Precision's European distribution manager Paul

Burgess told CTW.

The game's creator Free Spirit Software is partly owned by 16-bit software house ASoft, which has been shipping the game since the autumn. "It's very surprising, most parcels are inspected but we've never had any problems. Okay, so the game's been hyped up but there really isn't that much sexual content. Its a heck of a lot tamer than strip poker," commented ASoft's boss Tim Harris.

Citizen drives on, appoints new trio



Citizen with its new additions

Citizen is planning to increase its share of the floppy disk drive market and has appointed three new distributors to help it achieve this goal.

Citizen claims to already be third in the world in this particular field having invested \$500 million on research and development. The company is also set to open a new production line in Japan at the end of this year, which will increase its capacity to 200,000 units a month.

The three new distributors appointed to handle the Citizen range of floppy disk drives are CPU, Disc-Byte and Liberty. A fourth distributor is likely to be signed in December.

"The appointments are a reflection of the company's commitment to continue to expand in the floppy disk drive market. We have chosen these distributors because we believe their position in the market and their expertise make them better placed than most to secure contracts with corporate and OEM customers," commented Citizen's European marketing manager Robin Marriot.

Citizen will be launching two new floppy disk drives next year, both of which will be 3.5 inch. These are expected to be of a slimmer design, making them suitable for the lap-top and portable market.

Last Virgin takes games

Virgin retail last week opened a software department in its flagship Tottenham Court Road branch.

This is the last of the current 11 nationwide stores to stock software. It will stock around 2,000 titles on most formats and the initial 16-bit to 8-bit split is estimated to be one third to two thirds respectively. Virgin expects this to change after just a couple of weeks.

Manager Simon Burke commented: "This is not intended as a trial, and we're very optimistic about its success. The other stores in Tottenham Court Road have a limited range. I think the serious players tend to seek out the better stores and stick to them. And, we've got the best range."

Seikosha offers on printers

Following the recent UK launch of its printers Seikosha has announced a 50 per cent discount for the first printer purchase by any new dealer.

The offer applies to the complete Seikosha range which goes from the £170 SP180 to the £2,899 SPP10. The firm has only recently established a UK base which is run by Sojiou Aihara in Colnbrook, near Heathrow.

Meanwhile the firm is also offering a free DTP Lite package with either a SL130AI or SL80AI printer. Seikosha described the package as "fast and friendly" and claimed that it is an ideal partner for its SL range of printers.

THE SHOW THAT MEANS BUSINESS

EUROPEAN COMPUTER TRADE SHOW 1988

Business Design Centre, Islington, London, N1 April 16-18, 1988

YOUR CONTACT:
Mike Malone
Tel: 0625 879970

"A most interesting concept - and one that must surely provide major benefits for the industry as a whole" - Bob Gleadow, managing director, Atari UK.

"I think it's a good idea. Major players will be looking to get dealers and distributors on board. To recruit new ones - that will be the benefit for us" - Steve Franklin, managing director, Commodore UK.

"We've always wanted a trade only show and we're delighted that CTW and Database Exhibitions have got together to come up with the goods" - Lee Ginty, Microdealer International.

"This would be a real first for Europe. Before this we had to rely on the PC Show in London to do the goods" - Isabelle De Batz, UBISoft, France.

"We intend to be there. To be honest, we have been looking for something like this. Of course we go to the PC Show but it is not the sort of event where you find enough time to talk to everyone in the trade you want to" - Jurgen Goeldner, Rushware, Germany.

It's on its way. The show the entire computer industry's been waiting for!
A totally new concept in exhibitions, the European Computer Trade Show will be A STRICTLY TRADE ONLY EVENT
Sponsored by Computer Trade Weekly and organised by Database Exhibitions, it will involve all the leading manufacturers, distributors and software houses - with dealers and retailers as the target audience.
It will offer a functional setting to achieve maximum business - at a reasonable cost. And there will be a singular lack of "hype" dictated by conformity of stands.

Unique features include:

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- 'Space only' to erect feature stands - from fax to a major manufacturer.
- A fully equipped office support centre - from fax to a translation service.
- Visitors will be targeted trade representatives from the UK, Europe and the USA - along with the UK and international computer media.

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Home Computing. We're not in it to play games.

You don't need us to tell you that home computers, whether they're for entertainment or serious use, are good business. Especially at this time of year.

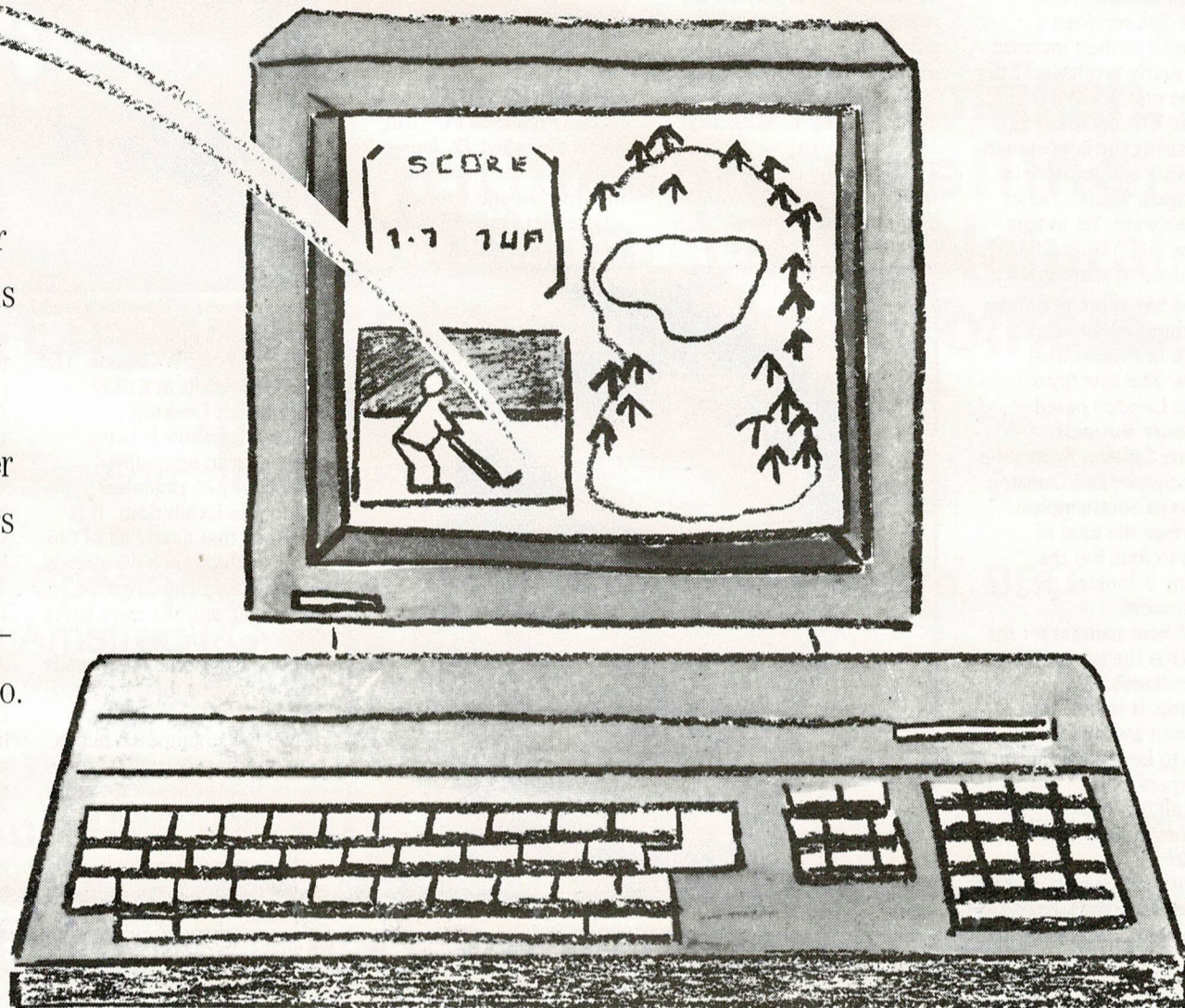
Even better when you consider that all of the main manufacturers will be promoting their products heavily during the coming weeks – not just in the press, but on TV too.

And as you may expect, there are a number of special packages put together to attract the Christmas shopper.

We take the whole business seriously.

Whatever machines your customers want, we can supply. (Next day, if you get caught with your stocks down).

The Amstrad CPC series, also available as complete Home Entertainment Centres. Sinclair Plus 2 and Plus 3, plus Joystick and games pack. Atari 520STFM (including the Super pack). The Commodore C64 packs – Hollywood, Entertainment and Olympic. The Amiga 500 with free Modulator and Paint. (Those who have



registered for our family Florida Holiday will find the Commodore packs particularly good news).

We can supply them all, as well as peripherals and accessories.

As we said, we mean business. And remember, our support package includes:

- ▀ Regular calls from our Nationwide team of representatives.
- ▀ Next day delivery (including Saturday deliveries).

- ▀ Deliveries right up to and including Christmas Eve.

- ▀ Exclusive promotions and offers.

- ▀ Trade counter.

- ▀ Frequent catalogues and new product information.

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SNIPPETS

Sir Clive Sinclair has given his authoritative opinion on what roads will look like in the 21st century. Whilst his C5 electric tricycle failed miserably, Sir Clive believes that the roads of the future will resemble a high-speed conveyor belt on which electric vehicles will sit nose to tail until they drive off at their destination . . .

Apricot has reported a massive £4 million increase in half yearly profits, a 37 per cent rise on the same period last year. The company is emphasising the importance of software and services in these latest figures, rather than hardware. Yet in true style the city has responded with a drop in share price . . .

Borland has appointed three more companies to its network of Professional Centres. The new firms include: London based Crownpark Business Software; Systems Workshop in Manchester and Dunston Thomas of Southampton. This brings the total of centres to four, but the company is looking to appoint more . . .

A hand-held scanner for the Atari ST is the latest offering from midlands based **Kempston**. It is called Daatascan and enables images to be scanned from newspapers, photos and books, all of which can be incorporated into Daatafax . . .

A major management shuffle is taking place at **Lotus** with

the departure of marketing manager Simon Rogers, who is to be replaced by ex-sales support manager David Pinches. The knock on effect sees technical services manager Shamus Kelly moving into Pinches' shoes and so on and so forth all the way down the line . . .

An ex-Saatchi account director is set to take on the role as **Citizen's** European advertising and promotions manager. Richard Pook will be working with the firm's external advertising agency JST . . .

The delightful people at **Inmac** have come up with an ingenious little device affectionately known as a

Mobile Monitor Stand. Not only is it height adjustable and comes on castors it's also vinyl coated to make it scuff and knock resistant. At £129 who could ask for more . . .

Unsurprisingly, **Frontline** is heralding its recent mini-roadshow as a major success. Some 300 dealers attended the London event, with similarly high numbers boasted for the Leeds, Birmingham and Swindon days . . .

Cascade is plugging its recently released PC virus protector called *PC Immunise*. "We have been inundated for information and strongly advise that every PC owner takes some form of



Dealers browse at Frontline's roadshow

protection," said operations director Peter Wilkinson. The package retails at £19.95 . . .

The recent Desktop Publishing show is being hailed as an unqualified success by its organiser Database Exhibitions. It is claimed that nearly all of this year's exhibitors have already committed themselves for next year, and the extra space afforded by the new Docklands venue has already been snapped up . . .

Educational software firm EMS has organised a pupils and teachers "play-in" this week to offer hands-on experience of its range of software and applications. The company's latest product, Colour Screenprint will also be on show, and

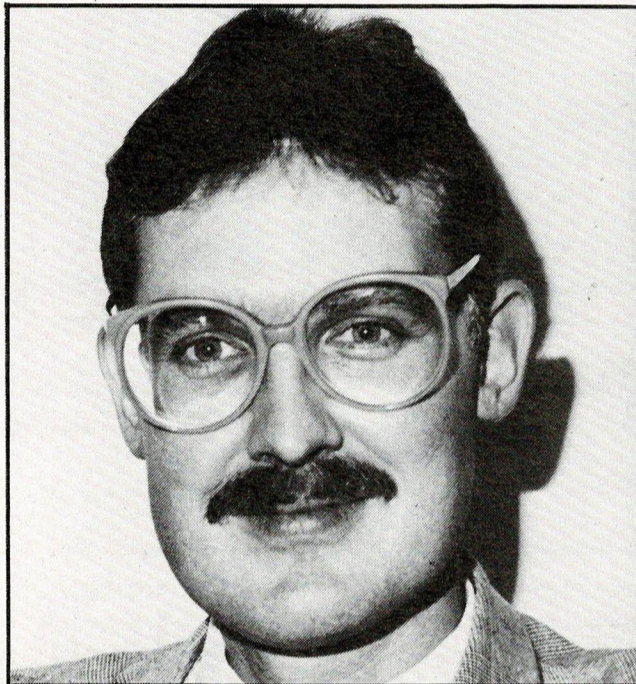
enables any screen to be sent to the printer whilst working on a program . . .

Following the recent resignation of **MicroPro International's** president Leon Williams, the post has now been filled by Gari Grimm. Contrary to the name, Grimm is in fact a woman and has been on the board of directors since 1986 . . .

A new 5.25 inch floppy disk drive for the Amstrad PC2000 series has been launched by data recording and communications firm **Cristie**. The drive is called Copydisc 5A and enables users to read and write data to the new disk as well as the standard 3.5 inch disks and costs £225 . . .

The growth in semiconductor sales in Europe is expected to slow next year according to figures from US chip manufacturer **Motorola**. In 1988 the market expanded sharply showing an increase of almost 25 per cent. Next year that is predicted to slow to a 10.7 per cent rise with the UK increasing individually by 13.7 per cent . . .

WordPerfect Version 1.0.1 for the Apple Mac has been reduced by £50 to £249, whilst the price of the other Apple versions has also been cut from £199 to £149. These reductions are designed to bring the price of the packages more closely in line with the US . . .



POOK: Citizen ad addition

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FIRST AND LAST — AS ALWAYS

Atari invented consolemania all those year ago. And whilst this autumn season is the first time for years that it could all happen again, the market is already looking to what Atari has up its sleeve for late '89. A sub-£100 ST console no less? (CTW October 31st). But is it a good idea? And if Atari's saying late '89 already, will we really see it this decade? CIARAN BRENNAN canvasses the views outside the Atari camp . . .

Once again the computer press is falling over itself to be the first with the news on yet another premature announcement from Atari.

But from now on it would probably have been better if the people involved exercised a little of that cynicism that journalists are supposedly famous for. After all, if the company in question delivered everything that it promised it would now be possible for everyone to have the ultimate multi-purpose home computing system in their homes for about the cost of your average PC. Fortunately for other hardware manufacturers, Atari's optimistic announcements are rarely matched by the appearance of any tangible product.

Atari's latest brainchild, however — a new 16-bit ST console — looks as though it will actually make it into the marketplace on schedule. A dedicated games machine — based on existing ST architecture but without a costly keyboard or disk drive — could feasibly sell for under £100. On paper it sounds like a winner, beating existing consoles in both potential and price.

The only grey area at the moment is the price of software, figures ranging between

£20 and £50 have been mentioned, but as software prices are generally related to the initial hardware cost, it seems most likely that the lower of these two figures will be the closest.

At this stage, the people most interested in new developments in the console market are the companies already competing in that sphere. With an existing 8-bit product and a new 16-bit machine scheduled for release at roughly the same time as Atari's product, Virgin/Mastertronic would appear to have a lot to lose by the appearance of yet another competitor — especially one with such potential.

However, marketing manager Geoff Heath almost gleefully announced: "It sounds terrific", he said. "Healthy competition is absolutely fine. The Atari machine does look formidable, but I've seen our upgraded console and it looks absolutely unbeatable."

This optimistic outlook isn't exactly shared by Mike Wensman of the other major console manufacturer, Nintendo. Wensman believes that the market may be ready for a more sophisticated games machine, but the industry's creative element is as yet un-



ATARI VCS: The daddy of them all

able to do justice to the high technical standards set by a new generation of hardware.

"Unfortunately, contemporary computer programmers aren't yet capable of fully exploiting a 16-bit console," he said. "Nintendo has already developed a 16-bit console, but like all hardware its success will be entirely dependent on the software that's developed

for it. For this reason we will not release the machine until we believe that the software will do it justice."

Quality street

But will a 16-bit console be that far advanced? Gary Penn, Editor of EMAP's 16-bit title *The One*, thinks not.

"People assume that be-

cause the 8-bit consoles are capable of producing much better graphics and sound than their computer counterparts, that 16-bit consoles should leave their equivalent computers behind to a similar degree.

"That said, there's only so much that a dedicated graphics or sound chip can achieve, so if people are expecting miracles they may be disappointed."

Penn does believe, however, that the latest machines will be impressive: "A 16-bit console should be able to deliver near perfect arcade conversions, but the results won't really be better than those that the ST and, to a greater extent, the Amiga, are already achieving."

The major fault of the 16-bit home computers is that very few people can afford them. Novagen's Bruce Jordan sees money as probably the most important factor in the selling of a games console. "A machine may be capable of great things, but if it's too expensive then the average family is not going to be interested. If Atari keeps its word and prices the new console at below £100 then it's onto a winner — this is definitely a £100 market."

Mike Wensman, however, isn't so sure, reacting to the machine's proposed price with a sceptical: "Below £100?

When? We'll believe it when we see it!"

First cut is the cheapest

Still on the subject of money, Hugh Gollner, publisher of *ST Action*, believes that a sub-£100 ST-based console will almost definitely prompt another price cut for the standard ST.

"I know that it's been Atari's intention for a long time to price the 520 at £199," he said, "and the launch of a new ST console would appear to be the perfect time to make the cut."

Gollner also believes that a new cheap console is just right for the legions of people who apparently would love to play games at home, but are repelled by the thought of owning a computer.

"To draw an analogy, we all buy hi-fi systems for our homes, but very few people would buy a full mixing desk — we're not interested in the technicalities of making music, we just want to hear it."

If the world were a perfect place where hardware manufacturers (and most other people for that matter) could be taken at their word then it would appear that the com-

Continued on page 31

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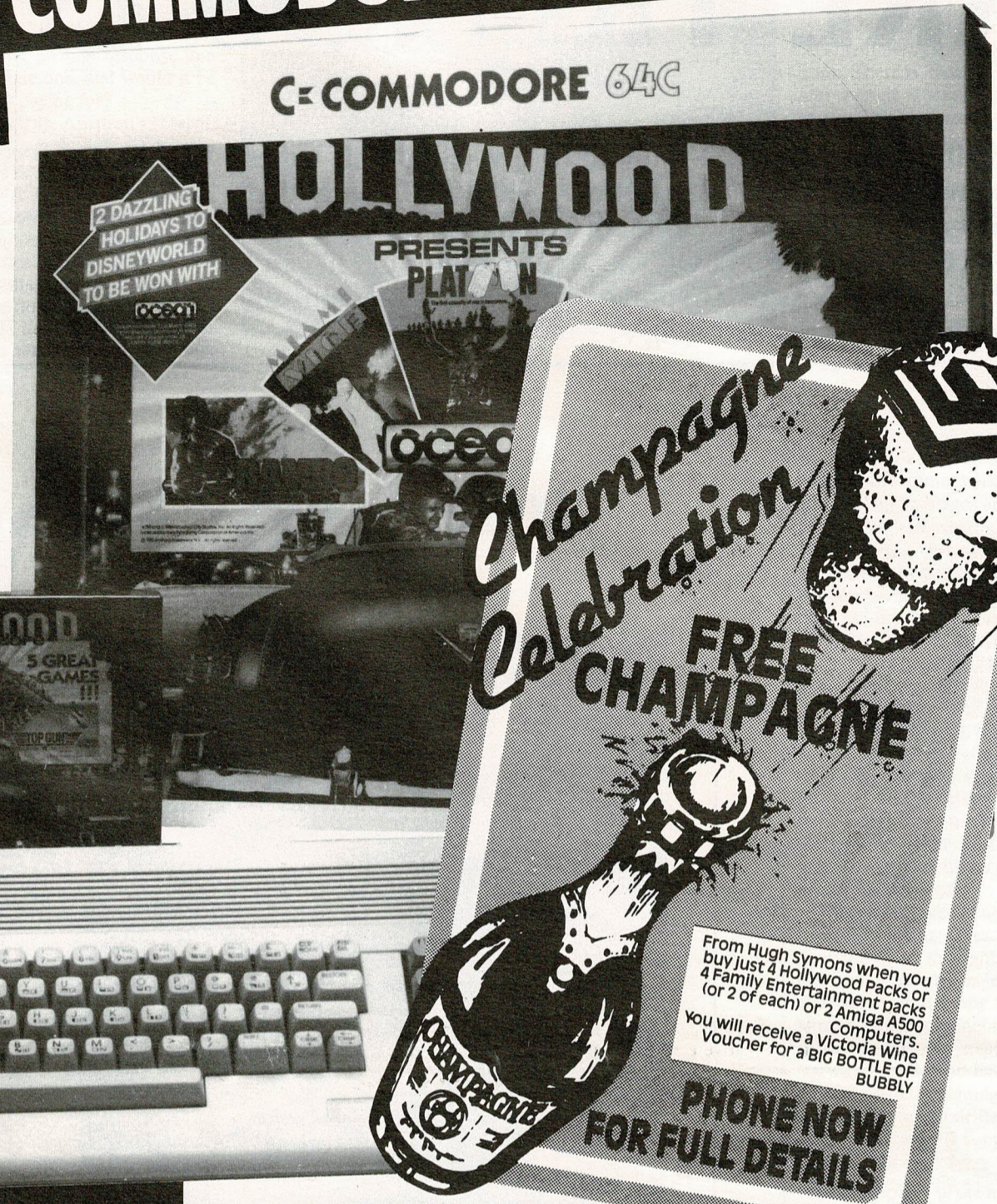
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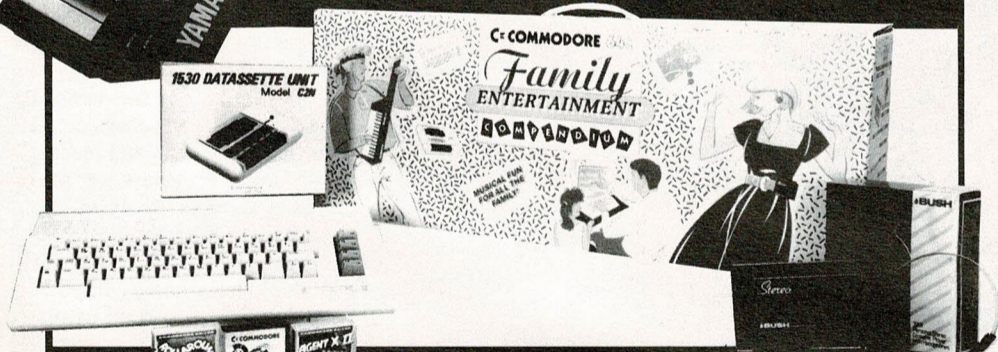
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ARE TRENDS ELECTRIC?

Could the days of computer-only and brown good-only indies be drawing to an end? Herein GRAHAM KNIGHT argues that retailers from either market should be looking to widen their product mix. Further on BOB CRABTREE, editor of ERT, and DON CARTER, boss of ZCL, give two different opinions on the potential of cross-stocking . . .

Some time ago I belonged to the now defunct Computer Retailers' Association. It never had more than a double figure membership and they were mostly software companies. When I attended CRA meetings I was often the only retailer present. Thank goodness for my other trade

association RETRA, the Radio Electrical Television Retailers Association which represents 6,000 hi-tech outlets - everyone from Rumbelows to small family firms like my own.

The purpose of this article is to outline the opportunities presented to Electronic dealers to sell computer equip-

ment and to suggest that computer-only dealers should stock other products.

Many electronic dealers got into selling computers simply because they have always sold the latest technology which came along. As our family business was founded in 1937 it is obvious that we started by selling radios and progressed to television, video, etc., as these products were introduced by the manufacturers.

Sharpen up

In 1978 I decided to sell computers after visiting the Microdigital shop in Liverpool and watching the owner selling an Exidy Sorcerer. The owner was a brash young man called Bruce Everiss. I started selling Nascom kit computers but this British company soon failed.

By 1979 the Japanese had recognised the growing computer market and Knights became the first shop to sell Sharp home computers. Our account number with Sharp is still 0001 but today, ten years later, we have progressed to laptop PCs and laser printers.

It is easy for established TV dealers to expand into computers as they will already have links with firms like Toshiba, Sony, NEC and Panasonic. They will already have staff used to selling and servicing hi-tech equipment. They already have showrooms and provide credit facilities - why shouldn't these shops sell computers?

The home computer market hasn't gone away completely. TV dealers can easily sell them to the mums and dads who flow through the shops. Lightning supply us with the Commodore product and the £149 Hollywood pack is easy to sell. The £199 entertainment pack is even easier - especially if you separate out the various items and put price tags on all the individual bits and pieces.

Many TV dealers got into selling computers when the Japanese introduced MSX. These reliable units arrived at a time when the home computer market was in a state of disarray. MSX failed to set a standard like VHS did on video and the computers were eventually sold at a quarter of their introductory price.

Fortunately the TV dealers didn't lose out on these clearance prices. The Japanese honoured their usual practice of rebating on price reductions although this must have cost millions. However, the shops in turn kept faith with their suppliers and have gone on to sell Japanese PC products.

These same Japanese companies are now the main suppliers of the growing range of new technology items which the computer only shops should consider selling. If you already sell PCs and laser printers it is an easy step to adding telephones and fax machines.

If your shop is known as a hi-tech centre why not think of adding satellite antenna systems? There are many exciting video projects which are about



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The best joysticks under the Sun

Dealer Stockwatch Dealer Stockwatch Dealer Stockwatch Dealer Stockwatch Dealer Stockwatch Dealer Stockwatch Dealer Stockwatch Dealer

to be released and most of these products are like CD and cross over between the TV and computer market.

From a whisper to a screen

Think of the opportunities presented by the newly announced 100" LCD screen. Sharp is about to release this huge screen which is only six inches in depth and is therefore suitable for displaying TV and computer generated video. Think how that would look on your computer displays instead of those terrible projection systems.

The latest satellite systems from companies like NEC have a mass of memories and micro-

processors to control the direction, elevation and polarity of the dish antenna. These hi-tech satellite receivers are full of RAM and ROM and wouldn't look at all out of place in a computer shop.

The recent government White Paper details plans for 96 new TV channels - the customer will need a computer just to make sure the TV and video are switched on and the antennas are pointing the right way.

Our family firm has prospered for 51 years by adapting and changing with the times. I realise that we have only been selling computers for 10 years but in that time I've seen a mass of computer-only shops fail.

If you run a computer only shop maybe you should be thinking of expanding into other products and cashing in on your hi-tech image and personal service.

Maybe you should even join RETRA and enjoy the benefits of a clearing house for your accounts, low credit card commissions and all the political strength for a really powerful trade association.

Graham Knight owns Knight's TV and Computers in Aberdeen, stocking Amstrad, Mitsubishi, SBC, Sharp and Sanyo products



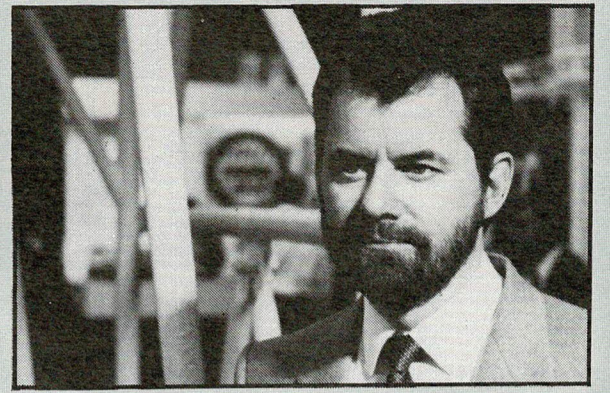
STUDIO 1000: Adding to the Amstrad ad splash

SWITCHING ON

The likelihood of walking into a computer shop to buy the latest piece of software and coming out with a video tucked under your arm does seem improbable. Yet with ZCL taking on a selection of Amstrad brown goods, boss Don Carter is convinced that a significant number of computer dealers will snap up this latest offering as a "nice little profit opportunity".

"The brown goods market is larger than the computer market and now it's basically a box shifting operation. No technical expertise is needed - it doesn't warrant it. The store traffic is already there and we've chosen a limited range of products that will all be winners," offered Carter.

The TVs, videos and hi-fis are being pitched at small independent dealers who deal with software and bottom-end machines. "It's not a million miles away from the Dixons formula,



CARTER: No expertise needed for brown goods

but the majority of our customers will not be situated alongside Dixons in the high street parades."

Carter claims that a surprising number of his dealers, particularly in the south, are already selling brown goods in the bottom-end of the market and that many are now turning to ZCL for an established brand name.

"We're not motivating our customers to take any sort of quantity. We're saying just take one video on a stock it and see

basis. If it doesn't sell they can always give it to someone for Christmas. It's really no great risk."

ZCL is also looking to stock the Amstrad brown goods after Christmas. "I feel strongly that retailers should exploit the site they've got to maximum advantage. The satellite market is set to take off and its going to be absolutely phenomenal in terms of profit. Unless independents look at some diversification they're going to miss out."

SWITCHING OFF

Any independent computer outlet which decides to try and make a quick sell on videos, TVs and hi-fis would be "bloody silly" according to Bob Crabtree, product editor of the electronics trade newspaper *ERT*.

"I can well understand brown goods stores taking on computers, this has been done historically. But the reason why people go to a computer shop is for their expertise in that particular product, not to pick up a video on the way

out," offered Crabtree.

"Besides the margins on brown goods are bloody awful and it's not going to be an easy market place to live in, sitting alongside the likes of Dixons and Currys. The big boys can slash the prices and offer their own brands, whilst a small computer shop who doesn't even know the product just won't be able to compete."

Crabtree is sceptical that we are likely to see a new trend. "I think the whole idea looks very unlikely to succeed - I can understand it better if it is just a seasonal thing - it's a bit like

everyone stocking Christmas tree lights. But it certainly isn't a twelve month idea."

The idea of a firm that specialises in computer distribution wanting to handle both types of product, does not seem quite as incomprehensible to Crabtree.

"Providing they make sure they've got their act together and have reached some sort of arrangement about servicing then they should be okay as the products aren't totally incompatible. But trying to pitch brown goods at computer stores is a joke."

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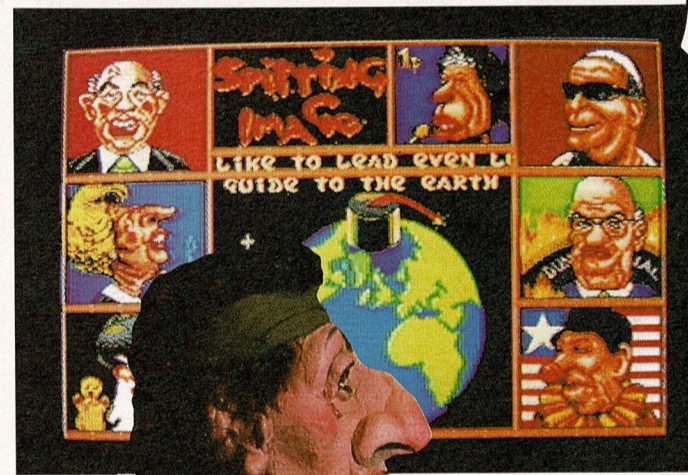
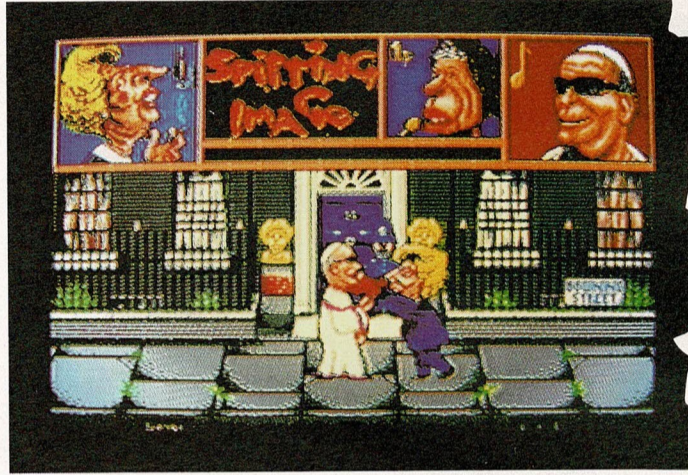
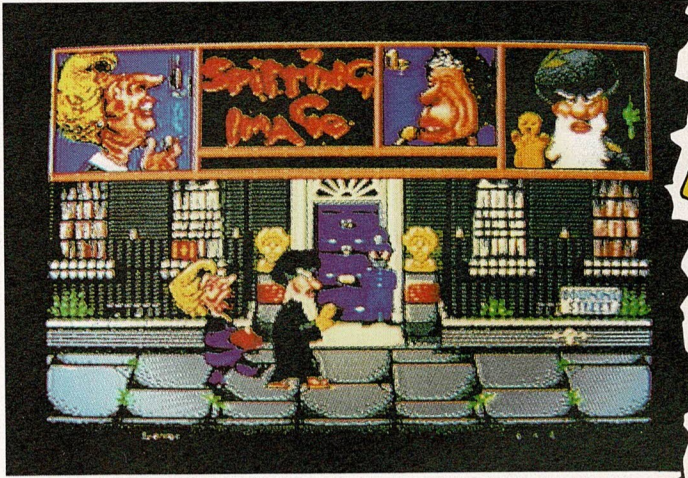


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Tac 50





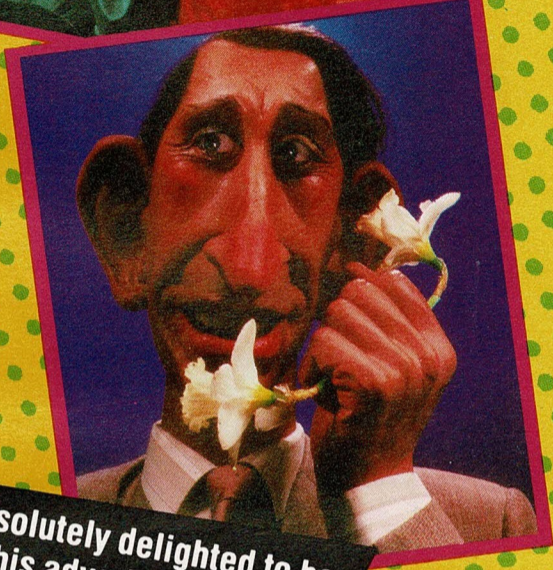
"There we were, okay yah, in our GTi, okay, playing this frightfully good game, okay"



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WARNING: DAMAGE
A good way to really damage your cassette or disk is to smear marmalade all over it or leave it overnight in a bucket of creosote.

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WEAK CAN WORK IT OUT

Many dealers believe that they are often treated unfairly because a manufacturer knows its products are easy to sell. Thus, even if a good spare parts turnaround is non-existent dealers have to put up with it. KEITH WARBURTON argues that it's only dealers' laziness regarding selling that puts them into such a weak position . . .

Yet again we see complaints from the trade that Amstrad is destroying dealer reputations and profits.

I hold no brief as an apologist for Amstrad, quite the contrary in fact, but I think it right to attempt to inject some perspective into the debate.

The personal computer market has grown from little or nothing ten years ago to being worth somewhere in the region of £1,000 million today. (A rough guess that includes software, printers and other peripherals).

Those opportunists or entrepreneurs (call them what you will) who have capitalised on that growth, who have indeed been essential in order to allow growth to occur have all operated in a manner dictated by their own past experience.

In this way IBM went for a certain market, and adapted their usual methods, and Amstrad went about business in their traditional and (apparently) inimitable way. Many new companies developed their own styles as circumstances dictated, but still based on the personal qualities and experience of their founders. Some of the best illustrations of personal style can be seen in the area of distribution. Look at Northamber and Lightning for consistency of style. Especially consider P&P, where there has been considerable development in style as the people at the helm have changed, and as the company has matured in the market.

I am sure that most computer dealerships have their own style, influenced by the past experiences of their founders.

This breathlessly fast growth industry that we are in is changing all the time, and if you cannot adapt to suit change well . . . just remember the dinosaur.

The people who are buying computers now, do not have the same profile as those pioneers of seven or eight years ago. In the early days of this business the typical purchase (and vendor!) were often enthusiasts or experts of some sort who were able to be self supporting to a considerable degree.

They did not mind getting involved in "bits & bytes" and exploring the intricacies of operating systems. They were often prepared to pay high sums for their equipment, and to spend hours developing their own software, or tailoring a specific package to suit their needs.

Minors' strike

Today that purchaser still exists, but is now very much in the minority. A large part of the market is dominated by the major corporate buyer, who knows what he is about and will screw the very best possible deal out of the supplier. He is often and to a great extent self supporting and may have direct lines of communication with the manufacturer (typically IBM or Compaq).

He merely wants a reasonably efficient and low cost channel or supply for the commodity that the Personal Computer has become.

These two types of purchaser contrast heavily with the one who is likely to make up a major part of the market over the coming years. By this I mean the non-computer per-

son, who has no desire whatsoever to be any sort of expert. He just wants a solution to a problem, and the solution should be cost effective, and not cause more problems than it solves.

Gradually an awareness of personal computers has crept up on many ordinary businesses, those "minor corpor-

ates" that many dealers seem to ignore in their race towards the "major corporates" who drive such a hard bargain. That awareness has been helped by the "man in the street advertising" that Amstrad is good at. We should realise, by the way, that their advertising is good not just because of its quality or approach, but because of the

sheer saturation effect they go for. Amstrad advertise in a manner usually only seen in the f.m.c.g. markets.

So, the "punter" is made aware that a computer could be a good thing for him, and as a result he contacts a retailer of some sort. We should pause at this point and look outside the industry for some parallels.

There are many industries where well trained professional salesmen consider it an unusual treat to see their product nationally advertised. When did you last see a full page ad in a quality daily paper, or extensive television campaign for a dyline printing machine, industrial storage system, or industrial vacuum

"I think, therefore IBM



PC3 DUAL DRIVE
8088-2 with socket for optional 8 Mhz 8087 Maths Co-processor
4.77 and 8.0 Mhz
640K RAM
5 XT Slots
2 x 5.25" Floppy Disk Drives
1 Serial and 1 Parallel Port
EGA, CGA, MDA and HGC



PC4
80286:12 Mhz 1 Waitstate
1 x 1.4 Mbyte Floppy Disk
1 x 60 Mbyte Hard Disk
VGA
512K Onboard memory expandable to 2Mbyte using 256K DRAM or 8 Mbyte using 1 Mbit DRAM
2 Serial Ports and 1 Parallel Port
5 AT Slots and 1 XT Slot
Software selects 8 or 12 Mhz
PRICE: £1599.99* No Monitor
£1699.99* Atari mono EGA
£1899.99* Typical colour EGA

IBM have had things their own way for a long time. Many people believe they are the safe choice, but are they the wise choice?

Not any longer, because Atari have entered the business computer market with a range of PCs that will certainly give IBM something to think about.

The Atari PCs are such full specification

machines that all the features you're likely to require are already built in.

Even the smaller computers have CGA and EGA graphics modes with a hefty 30 Megabyte hard disk and fully expanded memory.

It's not just the extras that will save you money, but the design too.

cleaner?

Salesmen in these industries usually do not have the luxury of prospects cold-calling them, telling them that they are interested in buying an item from the range. Those salespeople have to generate the prospects themselves, they have to identify (create) the need, and fend off the competition who will almost certainly have been invited to tender for the business. They work very hard as order-makers and may be earning anything from £10k-£15k (on target).

This is in stark contrast to many of the untrained order-takers in our industry who may receive income substantially over £25k, but who can often

bounce from job to job without ever really proving themselves.

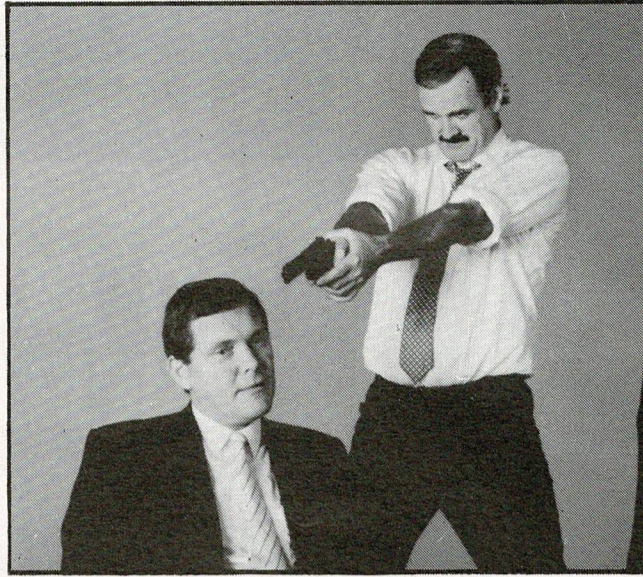
Stage coaching

The point I would make is this. A real salesman is able to take the interest that the advertising has generated and turn it to the advantage of the company, whilst not neglecting the customers best interest. For example, he can take that initial enquiry for an Amstrad PPC, draw the customers attention to the *Sunday Times Magazine (Quality Car Supplement)* of October 23rd where it says: "We call the Amstrad Customer Support Hotline [it takes them an hour to answer ...], and then invite the customer to call Toshiba or Com-

paq for support and see what happens.

He will then suggest that the customer consider how he would feel if he ran up against a problem at a critical stage in a project and then experienced this level of support. Would he prefer a prompt response to a lethargic one, and would it be worth paying for?

It's true, Amstrad's marketing makes it difficult for the trade to ignore it. However, you can if you really want to, if you are confident enough in your sales abilities. But to sell alternative, perhaps more highly priced products requires certain professional skills that are sadly lacking in many computer dealerships.



CLEESE: Media king of sales training

These prospective purchasers have been brought to the dealers' premises by the promise of a low cost solution to their problem. You are dead right that they won't take kindly to being told they need to exceed their initial budget by 50% in order to get the right solution. There is, however, a certain miracle worker who can accomplish that feat - he is called "A Professional Salesman".

All too often the "salespeople" in the business are order-takers rather than order-makers. A real salesman is able to project such empathy with his prospect, that he is able to very neatly steer that person in the right direction.

Sometimes the best solution may indeed be to shift the cheapest possible box. The good salesperson will be able to explain clearly and effectively, in terms the customer will understand, the advantages and disadvantages of this option. However, very often the best solution may require real selling effort, and will include support, training and software other than the cheapest packages. No matter how good the product awareness of the salesperson, or how long he has been in the industry, if he has not trained in the profession of selling he may very often miss the sale, end up giving away more margin than he needs, or (perhaps the worst sin of all) he may allow the customer to buy the wrong product.

Dealers who would not consider employing a technical person without the right qualifications, training or experience seem quite happy to employ as sales personnel people whose track record in selling is not established, who have had no recognised training, and who may have just drifted into selling (perhaps via support).

Room at the top

At the top end of the market, the "ordinary" dealers who wish to progress to the level of an IBM Systems Centre need to be able to demonstrate to IBM that their technical skills are matched by their sales skills. The whole Systems Centre appraisal takes months, and covers every aspect of the dealership sales and support operation. Salespeople are examined in their ability to identify and sell a preferred solution to suit a customers need.

Unfortunately, many dealer sales personnel may receive little or no real sales training within the dealership. Sales training is not about having a once or twice a year chuckle at a John Cleese Video Arts film. Most large industrial and commercial concerns spend considerable amounts of time and money training their salespeople in negotiating skills - so that they don't "give away the deeds to the farm" at the least sign of competition.

They train them in basic sales psychology, so that they can correctly identify the customers real, underlying buying motives and if necessary switch sell by focusing on those needs.

There are many top quality and well trained salespeople outside the computer industry. If dealerships chose to invest time effort and money in providing a basic product training (giving the professional his basic tools) they would be surprised at the results those salesmen can achieve.

won't get my PC order."



PC3 HARD DISK
8088-2 with socket for optional
8 Mhz 8087 Maths Co-processor
4.77 and 8.0 Mhz
640K RAM
5 XT Slots (1 occupied by Hard Disk)
1 x 5.25" Floppy Disk Drive
1 x 30 Mbyte Hard Disk Drive
1 Serial and 1 Parallel Port
EGA, CGA, MDA and HGC



PC5
80386 - 16 Mhz socket for 80387
64K bytes of directly mapped
Cache Memory
2 Mbyte of RAM with parity
1.2 Mbyte Floppy Disk
60 Mbyte Hard Disk with high performance
controller card allowing 1-1 interleaving
and a 7.5 Mbits/sec data transfer rate
4 AT Slots plus 1 XT Slot
PRICE: £2599.99* No Monitor
£2799.99* Atari mono EGA
£2999.99* Typical colour EGA

Because Atari PCs are the latest computers around, they use 'state-of-the-art' technology, where one component can replace the functions of many.

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Makes you think, doesn't it?

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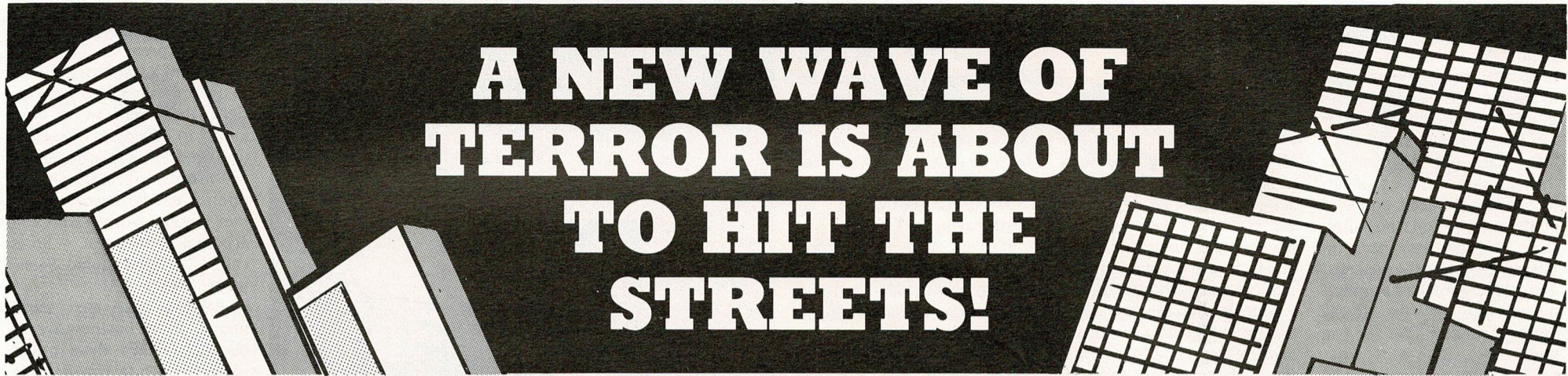
Company Name: _____

Address: _____

Post Code: _____

Phone No: _____

Please send to: Atari Corp (UK) Ltd, Atari House,
Railway Terrace, Slough, Berkshire SL2 5BZ



A NEW WAVE OF TERROR IS ABOUT TO HIT THE STREETS!

FRENCH KISSING IN THE USA

The leisure industry was not so much stunned as bemused by the news last week that US giant Epyx had 'merged' with French publisher Infogrames. Some people are calling it a veiled take-over, and even more are wondering what the point of it all is. DAVE ROBERTS went to Paris for the wedding ceremony and chatted to several major players at the reception . . .

We are gathered here today to witness a strange kind of marriage. It is the union of Epyx and Infogrames - the odd couple with the whirlwind romance. No engagement, no period of courtship and certainly no announcement in *The Times*. Usually such speedy affairs only take place when one of the partners is expecting trouble which in a few months would start to show.

This time though both sides

The union was blessed with a bullish barrage of financial forecasts and the bride, groom and guests went through to the reception where much was made of what a lovely couple they make and how they were both looking forward to a rosy future together.

Quite what structure that future will take is not yet clear. Both sides are describing the event as a "merger" but adding that legal and financial details are far from finalised. So it seems that when the fanfare

take advantage of that and become the number one company in the world - or at least part of it."

Strength through join

Quite how this ambitious goal is to be achieved is shrouded in mystery. Indeed there are many things about the whole affair that have yet to be clearly defined. One of the few things that has been decided is that the two firms will embark on joint promotion projects.

"Both of us will be putting money in a pot to fund these joint projects and then when the games are completed we will look at them and decide whether they are Epyx or Infogrames labels. But that is not important, what is important is quality product," explains Bonnell.

Epyx president Gil Freeman is equally ebullient about the hopes a new relationship can bring. "This is bound to strengthen our position in Europe simply through having more product on the market place. Plus of course we'll have the Infogrames input in products so if they say 'no that wouldn't work in Europe' we will listen to them."

He is obviously keen to strengthen his firm's position in Europe and it seems that this is the main driving force behind Epyx' decision to get involved with the French firm. That decision will have been consolidated by the adverse affect the Nintendo influence has had on the US market recently.

Freeman also reveals that wedding bells have been in the air for some time and that it was virtually love at first sight for the young couple: "It all started with a simple licensing deal but then in that relationship we got to know them very well and found that we were

very similar so we talked about doing a line of products together, but then we found we really were so alike in our vision of the future that we decided to merge the two of us together and create a stronger, larger concern with international possibilities."

For Epyx though this is not its first European affair. For some time now it has enjoyed a 'special relationship' with US Gold. And it seems that the new marriage will not disrupt that. "We are very happy with our arrangement with US Gold and they still have the distribution rights for all our product in Europe."

Take a chance on three

Indeed, there is chance that Infogrames could join them in a curious sort of *menage à trois*. Bonnell comments: "Of course there is a possibility that there may be a US Gold connection with us, there's no reason why we shouldn't enter into licensing and distribution deals with them."

Meanwhile US Gold boss Geoff Brown seems distinctly unmoved by the announcement. He also feels that to describe the deal as a merger is perhaps being a tad generous to the French firm. He seems to give more credence to the idea that it is an attempt by Epyx to acquire a string of European products by swallowing up a firm from which it can cherry pick.

This view of the deal is bound to receive a lot of support from many sectors of the British industry which are finding it hard to comprehend why a firm the size of Epyx would consider Infogrames as a partner (last year the French firm's turnover was £5.3 million with the Epyx total believed to be around five times that).

Both sides involved are aware of this view but both are keen to dismiss any talk of a takeover - at least for now.

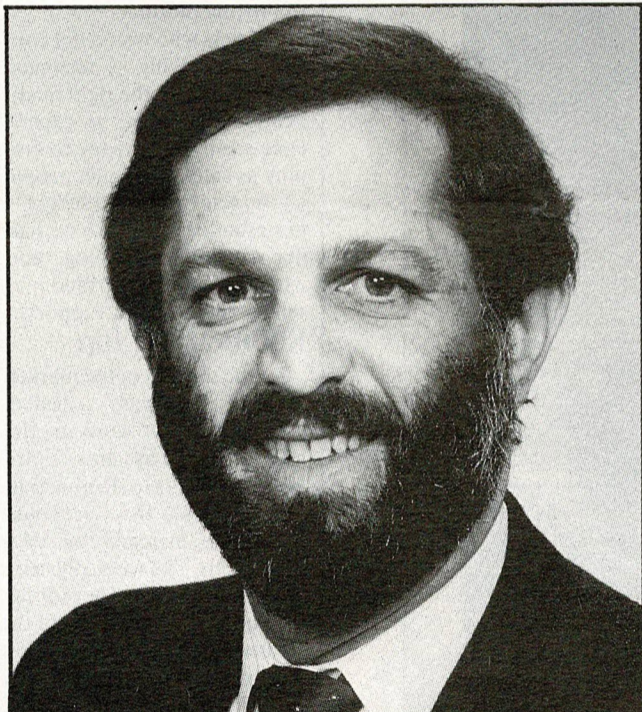
At Epyx Freeman simply states: "There is no way people should look at this as Epyx buying Infogrames. We are interested in buying a relationship and a future rather than buying a company."

Bonnell at Infogrames echoes this and stresses that his firm will always retain its own identity and that games will continue to come out on

marriage between an armadillo and an elephant the relationship could prove rather painful for one and not particularly satisfying for the other.

Size is everything

For now though both firms are full of the confidence that any new relationship brings. They are describing the event as 'the birth of a number one' and predict that by 1991 the partners combined turnover will be £100 million.

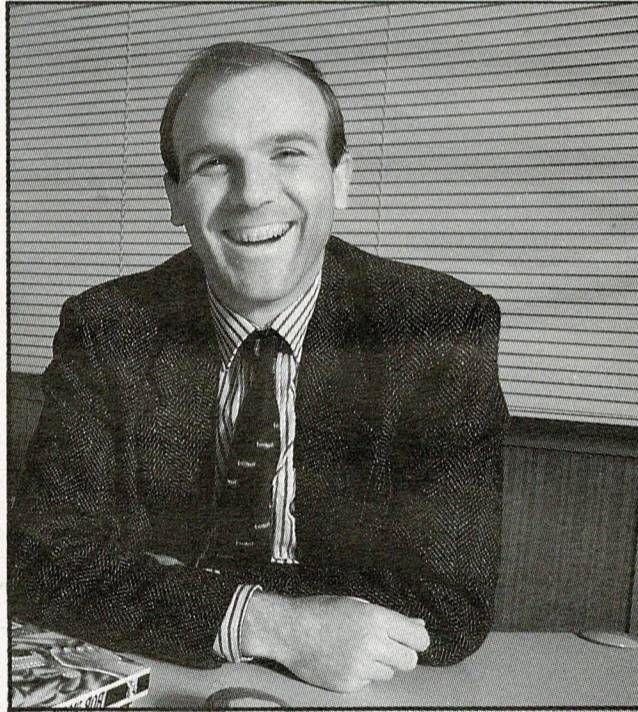


FREEMAN: Gaining European strength

seemed trouble free and it was a lovely wedding. Delicately embossed invitations were issued with CTW being chosen as the only British guest. The day arrived and the congregation of journalists in their important announcement suits sat quietly in rows while on the pulpit the two firms exchanged compliments rather than rings. Of course no mention was made of loyalty through richer and poorer but maybe that's just a little too romantic.

has died down and the champagne was gone flat what we are left with is an agreement in principle and a statement of intent.

That intent, explains Infogrames president Bruno Bonnell, is far from modest. He claims the two firms will take 10 per cent of the worldwide leisure software market. "The market is going to increase quite considerably over the next few years and this deal puts us in a better position to



BONNELL: Gaining worldwide security

the Infogrames label. The firm's international sales manager Henri Coron adds, however, that he can understand the reasoning behind the British conception of the deal. "To them it must seem like the marriage of an elephant and a mouse - or even an armadillo (the label's logo). That doesn't worry us though, as long as we're successful it doesn't matter how people see us."

Absolutely, but it is nevertheless undeniable that in a

A touch ambitious perhaps but nonetheless financial security is certainly one motive for the merger. Both firms have flirted with bankruptcy in their time and believe that this deal will be at least some insurance against repeating the experience.

"I am convinced that if we all stay in our own little corners then we would disappear and I don't want to disappear I want to survive. This gives us a finan-

Continued on page 31

TECHNO COP
Step into the future ... technology has overtaken society - the rich are richer, the poor are poorer - chaos, unrest, destruction ... lawlessness reigns, terror rules. But this is your territory, your assignment with death. These are your streets and you have volunteered to clean out the scum, destroy the street gangs and eliminate the deviants that pollute your city.
Yes you have your beloved sleek racer, but armed only

GREMLIN

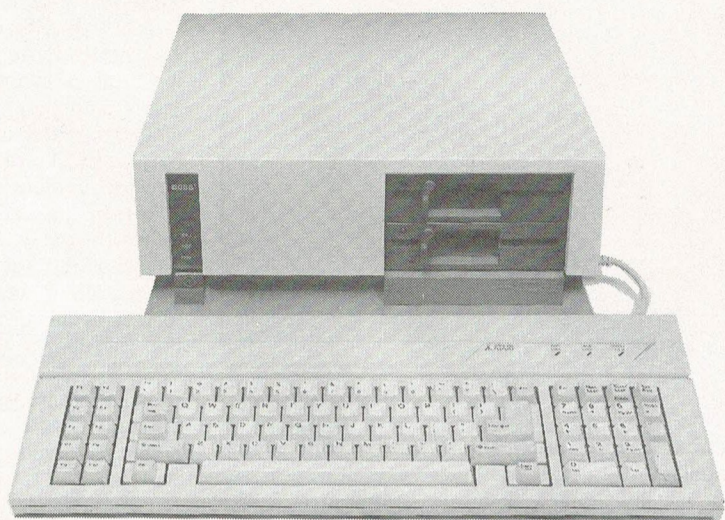
Gremlin Graphics Software Ltd
32 Ludgate Hill, off St Pauls Square
Birmingham B3 1EH
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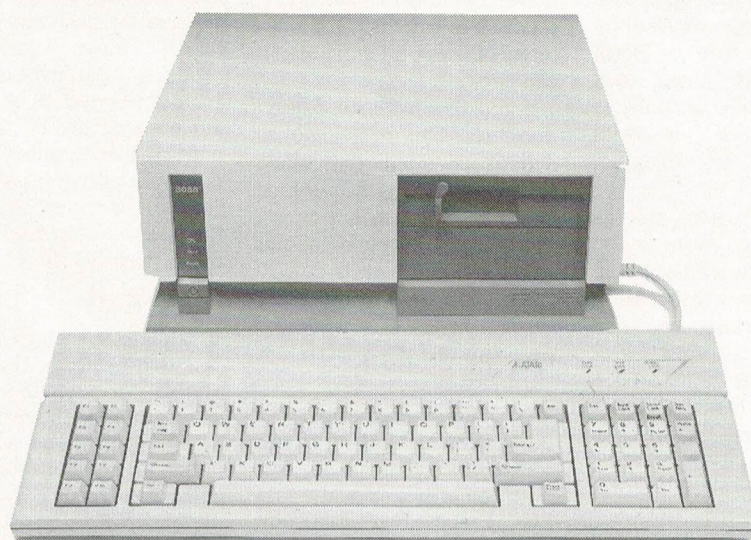
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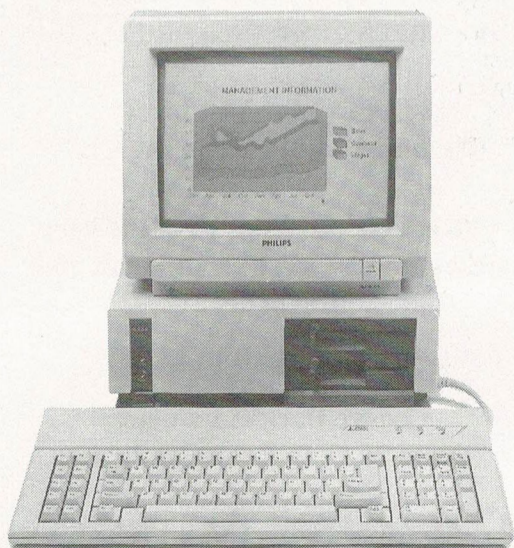
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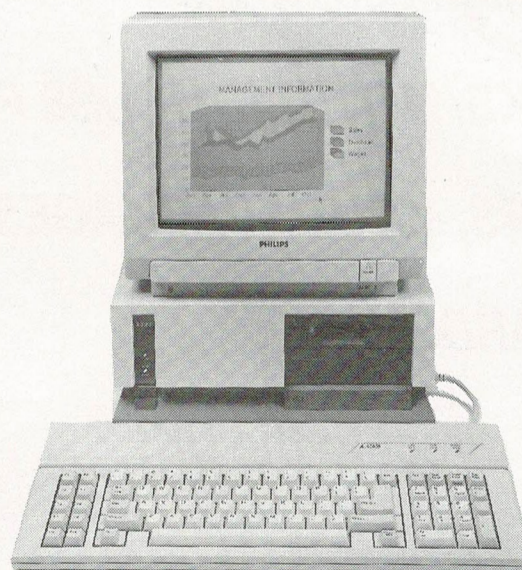
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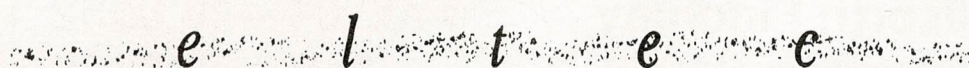
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DRAMMING UP INTEREST

When Dram Electronics announced its entry into the PC market recently tremors didn't exactly rumble through Amstrad's Brentwood offices. But the firm does boast a £6 million turnover already, and a fair few dealers too. KELLY BESWICK gets the lowdown . . .

Every so often a company comes briefly into the spotlight, with a new product or small acquisition, and although you've heard of the name no-one is quite sure exactly what it does. Distributor firm Dram Electronics is one such company, which outside its dealer network is still something of an unknown quantity.

Yet over the past few months Dram has come more to the fore. Fleet the Stockport based company tied up a distribution deal with Samsung, and then came the acquisition of low-cost clones Peartree Computers. Dram's latest venture is a new low-cost AT transportable PC (DRT 80286-20), badged from Tiawan.

Dram's boss, John Landells, is clearly pleased with his company's progress. In the space of four years Landells has built the company up from a small memory chip distributor into a £6 million set-up.

Over the year's Dram has moved from memory chips into drives and cards and now, as Landells puts it "we sold all the things that are put inside the machine so we thought why

not sell the computer itself".

And why not? Except competition is pretty fierce in this area, and with a distinct lack of experience in the PC market, pundits must be asking themselves whether Dram has bitten off a wee bit more than it can chew.

Landells obviously doesn't think so. The softly spoken Scot is confident that along with the Samsung PCs, which Dram began distributing six weeks ago, the new computer will be snapped up by a well established and loyal dealer network.

Dealer dealing

Dram presently boasts a dealer network in excess of 2,000. Landells claims that nearly all of these already stock PCs. "I believe that we can now offer our customers a full range of competitively priced PCs, and many dealers have already shown considerable interest." In a bid to drum up interest Dram is offering a 30 per cent margin on the new machine.

Shipping started just a couple of weeks ago, and Dram already claims to have saved 40 units of the transportable. Landells is looking to sell between 100 to 250 units a month, but adds "it is very

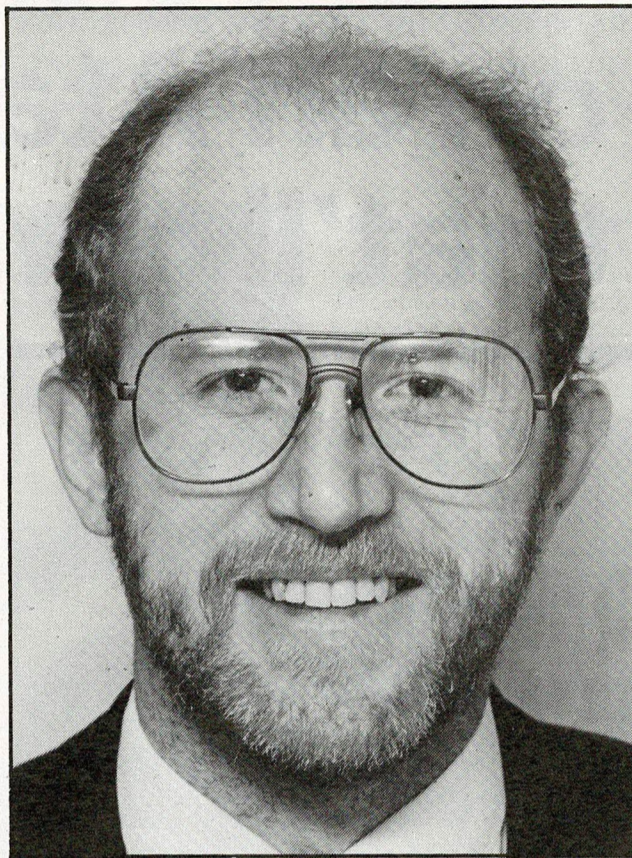
difficult to put a figure on it, in reality we will be shipping as many as we can get our hands on".

The DRT is priced at £1,660, which is claimed to be at least 40 per cent cheaper than most competing products. Apart from the price, Landells considers the major attributes of the PC to be its hard disk drive and 5.25 inch floppy disk drive, boasting that "in the low-end of the market the likes of Amstrad cannot offer a hard disk drive".

A snug fit

Landells is keen to keep the identity of the PC's original manufacturer under wraps, wanting the machine to be associated with Dram rather than its Taiwanese maker. Obviously conscious of the cheap Eastern clone tag, Landells is hoping that the PC will slip snugly in with the Samsung range, and benefit from an established brand name.

Indeed, Dram will not be advertising the PC in its own right. It has set aside a budget of £22,000, but the campaign will be concentrating on the company's complete range of products. "We have never really gone into advertising that heavily. Most of our



LANDELLS: Chips, drives, cards - and now PCs

business has usually come from direct mailing and word of mouth," commented Landells.

With its forage into the PC market, Dram is beefing up its technical support, an area which Landells admits that the company was previously weak on. "We are set to make a major technical appointment which will certainly strengthen our support facilities."

Dram is also branching out with the recent acquisition of

Peartree computers. The company bought Peartree's assets back in July and started up the new company Peartree Dram. In the past Peartree specialised in PCs, music synthesizers, specialised software and cards.

Landells considers the take-over to have been successful, although he refers somewhat mistily to a change in philosophy at the new camp. "At Dram we always have products tested, working and

available before we make any move to our dealers. In the past Peartree did not always operate on these lines." Nevertheless Landells is predicting that the new company will achieve sales in excess of £1 million for this fiscal year. Indeed, Dram is about to expand the Peartree set-up, based in Huntingdon Cambs. "With the level of sales we now have in the Cambridgeshire area, we felt it warranted another facility."

A new division called Dram Electronics Eastern Ltd. is on the brink of setting up office. The company will be employing a staff of six, fronted by ex-LCD display man Howard Humphries. Having just celebrated its fourth birthday, Landells is bullish about the company's future. He is keen to make further acquisitions following the success of the Peartree venture, and considers that the progress of the company relies on continuous expansion.

With its latest pitch at the PC stakes, Dram does not seem to be setting itself a formidable task. Landells is clearly keen that the new PC should do well, but at the same time he is not forecasting massive sales and is resisting the temptation of ridiculous claims.

The Dram approach is a quiet, steady one, with Landells shying away from the usual publicity; relying instead on a tried and tested formula of consistent reliability, and the word of mouth approach.

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EVEN CHEWIER THAN THE TOP OF C.T.W...

BOYS WILL BE BOYS, BUT GIRLS WILL BE OVERLOOKED

Not to put too fine a point on it, the games world revolves around the masculine, with marketing ploys aimed at pitching toys to boys. But what about the girls? Publishers may not believe it, but they tend - in certain cases - to be the same age as boys, and there's no logical reason why they shouldn't buy computer games. Sure, most are violent, mindless, expensive and/or sexist, but *aside* from that... Here, industry veteran and Audiogenic boss PETER CALVER ponders the great divide...

One of the leading computer games magazines recently reported the results of a readership survey. One of the facts I found quite amazing was that 99 per cent of their readers were male! Since approximately 50 per cent of the population is female, the figure suggests that computer games have far less appeal for girls than for boys.

Why is that? Is it because girls are inherently uninterested in computers, or because, intentionally or otherwise, the male-dominated games industry produces games that are designed by boys, written by boys, aimed at boys, and marketed to boys?

I firmly believe that it is the latter, and that we are in consequence disregarding 50 per cent of the potential market for games. Is there any other industry that can afford to do this?

Gallup's Personal computer Pilot Study showed that 34 per cent of girls aged 16-20 had a computer in their home

(against 56 per cent of boys), but only one in three of these was the main user (compared with nearly three out of five boys). One third of the girls never used the computer, compared with just 11 per cent of the boys.

Girl friendly

So we know that the computers are there. We just need to persuade girls to use them - and to buy software for them. But will they ever buy software that is overtly aimed at boys? Would boys buy software that was aimed at girls? I don't think so.

At our firm we've made a conscious decision to produce software that will appeal to girls. We'd also like to come up with products that will have an equally high appeal to both sexes, but that one has us stumped for the time being.

No doubt our plans will cause merriment amongst the MCPs who dominate certain sections of the industry, but in a year or two's time they could

be laughing on the other side of their faces. I remember when I started in this industry ten years ago being told that home computers would never catch on - how wrong can you be!

What ideas have we had so far? Well, obviously we're not going to give away trade secrets, but we're certainly not going to be producing just knitting and cooking programs.

Right now we're trying to get as much feedback as we can from our potential market - and we're finding out as much as we can about how girls currently spend their leisure hours - and their money. Girls of 10-14 are, on average, more mature and more intelligent than boys of the same age, which is likely to be reflected in their interests, and they're less likely to be attracted by *Rambo*-style fare than boys. That said, I think that girls would buy a lot of the programs already on the market if they were promoted differently, and through different media.

Even when we start produc-

ing programs for girls there will be hurdles to overcome. How will the computer press and the distributors react? Probably rather hesitantly at first. It will take time to break down the barriers - too many computer magazines are overtly aimed at a male audience (how many didn't use the *Barbarian* picture?)

If girls don't read computer magazines, how are we going to persuade them to buy software at all? We'll have to get to them through the publications that they do read - comics, teen magazines and so on. Once the ball starts rolling even the national papers and children's television might take an interest.

No doubt there'll be some mistakes made along the way, but it's quite conceivable that in a few years time girls will be spending as much money on computer software as boys, something that must be good for the entire industry.

Although the 'software for girls' concept could be



With sexist drivel in marketing, is it any surprise that few girls find games interesting?

seen as striking a blow for Women's Lib I'm not so sure that it will be appreciated by some women's organisations. After all, producing software for girls is just as sexist as producing software for boys. You can't please all of the people all of the time!

As the industry matures,

and becomes further dominated by the major groups there will be a continuing pressure to find new markets, so whether or not you believe in sexual equality, you can't ignore the potential growth that would result from a successful implementation of the idea. Let's hope it works out!

COLOSSUS X CHESS

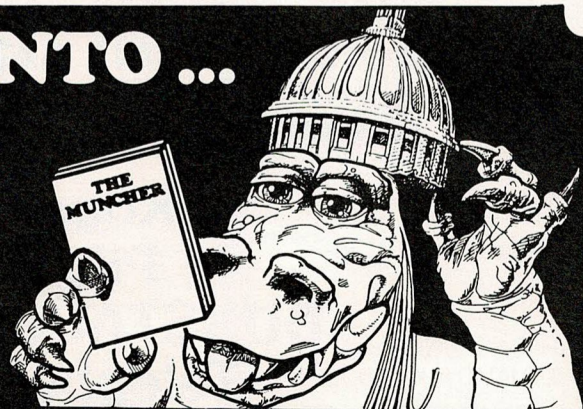
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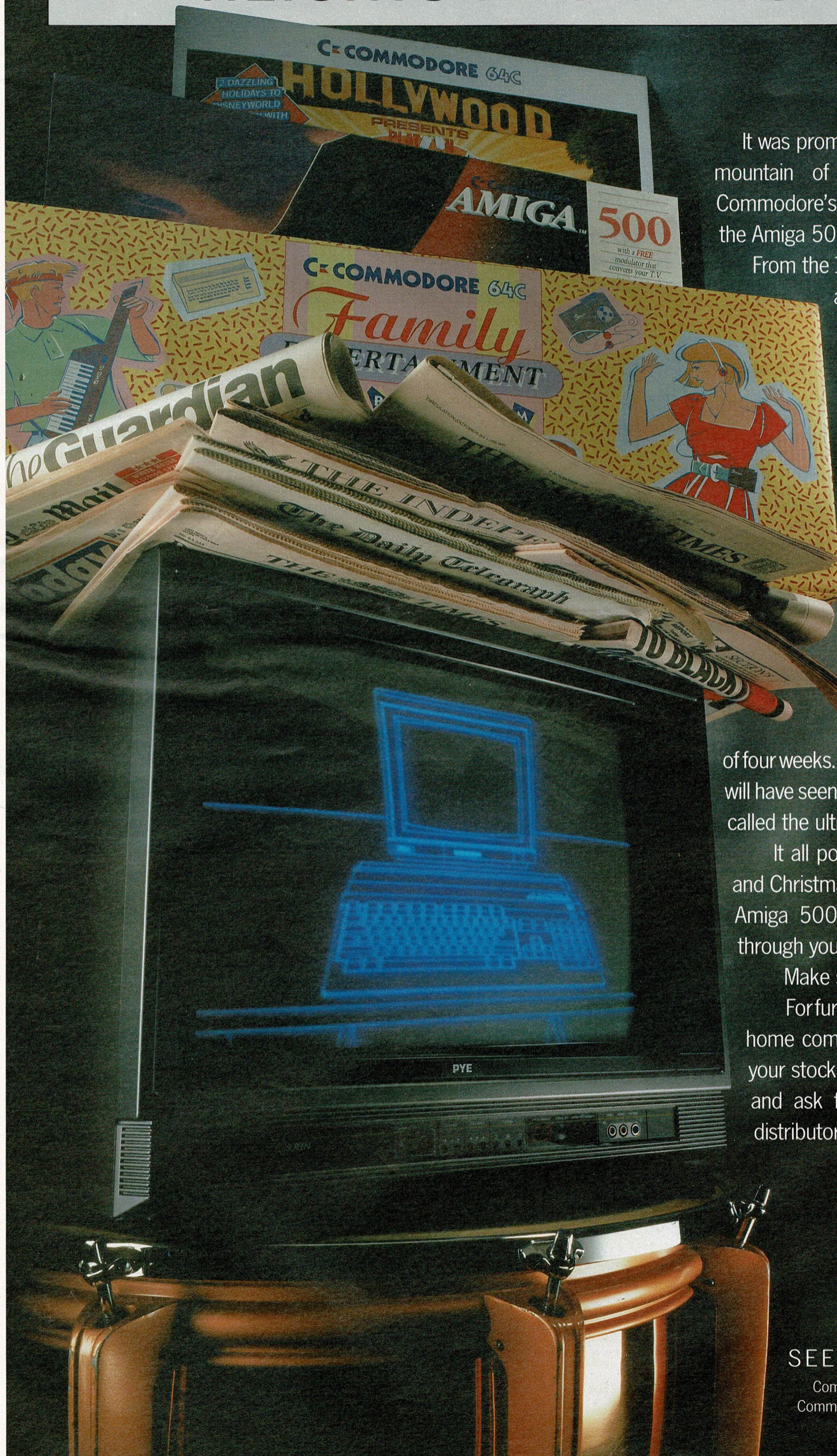
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SPECTRUM TOP 20

TW	LW	Title	Publisher	RRP £
1	1	LAST NINJA 2	SYSTEM 3	12.99
2	6	BOMB JACK	ENCORE	1.99
3	2	JOE BLADE 2	PLAYERS	2.99
4	5	ADVANCED PINBALL SIMULATOR	CODE MASTERS	1.99
5	NE	INTERNATIONAL RUGBY SIM	CODE MASTERS	1.99
6	12	FOOTBALLER OF THE YEAR	KIXX	2.99
7	9	FOOTBALL MANAGER 2	ADDICTIVE	9.99
8	RE	PRO SKATEBOARD SIMULATOR	CODE MASTERS	1.99
9	10	COMMANDO	ENCORE	2.99
10	33	SUPREME CHALLENGE	BEAU JOLLY	12.95
11	7	GAUNTLET	KIXX	2.99
12	39	COMBAT LYNX	ENCORE	1.99
13	14	AIR WOLF	ENCORE	1.99
14	23	ACE	CASCADE	2.99
15	25	BATTLESHIPS	ENCORE	1.99
16	8	DALEY THOMPSON	OCEAN	9.95
17	NE	AIRBORNE RANGER	MICROPROSE	9.95
18	RE	STEVE DAVIS SNOOKER	BLUE RIBBON	1.99
19	20	BIGGLES	FIREBIRD	1.99
20	3	END ZONE	ALTERNATIVE	1.99

C64 TOP 20

TW	LW	Title	Publisher	RRP £
1	1	LAST NINJA 2	SYSTEM 3	12.95
2	NE	ARMALYTE	THALAMUS	9.95
3	3	JOE BLADE 2	PLAYERS	2.99
4	4	BOMB JACK	ENCORE	1.99
5	9	BARBARIAN 2	PALACE	9.95
6	6	INTERNATIONAL RUGBY SIM	CODE MASTERS	1.99
7	14	TAITO COIN-OPS	OCEAN	12.95
8	15	COMMANDO	ENCORE	2.99
9	18	ACE OF ACES	KIXX	2.99
10	25	PRO SKATEBOARD SIMULATOR	CODE MASTERS	1.99
11	24	PRO SKI SIMULATOR	CODE MASTERS	1.99
12	22	SKOOLDAZE	ALTERNATIVE	1.99
13	29	HAWKEYE	THALAMUS	9.99
14	19	FOOTBALL MANAGER 2	ADDICTIVE	9.95
15	21	FOOTBALL OF THE YEAR	KIXX	2.99
16	2	END ZONE	ALTERNATIVE	2.99
17	16	TRACK SUIT MANAGER	GOLIATH	9.95
18	8	DALEY THOMPSON	OCEAN	9.95
19	NE	CAPTAIN BLOOD	INFOGAMES	1.95
20	32	STREET GANG	PLAYERS	1.99

AMSTRAD TOP 10

TW	LW	Title	Publisher	RRP £
1	2	JOE BLADE 2	PLAYERS	1.95
2	1	LAST NINJA 2	SYSTEM 3	12.95
3	5	KIK START 2	MASTERTRONIC	1.95
4	3	BOMB JACK	ENCORE	1.95
5	NE	SUPREME CHALLENGE	BEAU JOLLY	12.95
6	4	AIR WOLF	ENCORE	1.95
7	NE	BMX NINJA	ALTERNATIVE	1.95
8	RE	BATTLESHIPS	ENCORE	1.95
9	RE	SUPER STUNTMAN	CODE MASTERS	1.95
10	13	GAUNTLET	KIXX	2.95

ATARI ST TOP 5

TW	LW	Title	Publisher	RRP £
1	NE	HOSTAGES	INFOGAMES	24.95
2	1	ELITE	FIREBIRD	24.95
3	NE	MENACE	PSYCLAPSE	19.95
4	2	STOS GAME CREATOR	MANDARIN	29.95
5	NE	1943	US GOLD	19.95

AMIGA TOP 5

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

SHARE OF SALES BY MACHINE

Machine	Units sold (%)				Titles sold (%)			
	This week	Last week	4 wks ago	12 wks ago	This week	Last week	4 wks ago	12 wks ago
SPECTRUM	42.4	44.1	43.9	45.7	27.7	29.3	30.6	28.8
COMMODORE 64	23.8	22.9	24.7	23.9	24.5	24.4	24.7	23.8
AMSTRAD	15.2	18.5	17.2	19.2	15.7	18.9	19.1	18.0
ATARI ST	5.8	4.1	5.0	3.4	8.1	7.0	7.9	6.6
AMIGA	3.9	2.7	2.2	1.9	5.3	4.7	4.1	3.6
BBC	1.8	1.4	1.3	1.2	3.5	2.5	2.9	3.4
COMMODORE 16	1.6	1.5	1.0	2.0	2.6	2.5	1.7	3.4
ATARI	1.1	1.3	1.0	1.0	2.1	2.2	1.8	3.8
MSX	1.0	0.9	0.7	0.5	2.2	1.4	1.2	1.1
ELECTRON	1.0	1.3	1.1	1.0	2.1	2.2	1.4	3.0

AVERAGE SALES PER PANEL SHOP

This week	Units Sold		
	Last week	4 wks ago	12 wks ago
81	106	67	122

Soft options

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



△ **ACCOLADE:** *Fast Brake, Rack'em and Serve and Volly* (64-£9.95-£14.95) Continuing with its sports series Accolade dishes up a selection of straight forward basketball, snooker and tennis simulations. All should do well.

△ **SILVERBIRD:** *Video Classics* (Sp64AmBBCXE/XL-£1.99) An unusual compilation of the old coin-op pong games which were big in the late seventies. As well as the original squash, tennis and football, there are two new titles on offer with 4 *Batblip* and *Astro Bliperoids*.

△ **SILVERBIRD:** *Scuba Kidz* (Sp64AM-£1.99) Set underwater with evil sealords kidnapping innocent kidz (original touch), who must fend off their attackers using bubble guns — which is basically a long winded way of saying another shoot-em-up.

△ **FIREBIRD:** *Flying Shark* (STAg- £24.95) This coin-op licence from Taito did pretty well on the 8-bit formats. Now all the joys of blasting enemy aircraft to oblivion can be experienced with better graphics.

△ **RACK-IT:** *Hydrofool, Light Force and Shockway Rider* (Sp-£1.99) A good selection of titles from Gargoyle's short-lived full

price label *Faster Than Light*. They all did quite well first time around.

△ **LEVEL 9:** *Ingrid's Back!* (STAgPCMac-£19.95) A satirical sequel to *Gnome Ranger*. The question, of course, is whether the Levellers will be able to make as much of an impact now that they're operating completely apart from any publishing tie-up.

△ **MEDIAGENIC:** *Afterburner* (STSp64-£9.99-£19.99) The folks at Activision don't seem too sure whether it's gonna be this week, next week or sometime before Christmas. It's the tipsters tip for the Yuletide number one, and it gets the Soft-Options vote too.

△ **MARTECH:** *Rex* (Sp Am64-£8.99-£14.99) The unlikely combination of a crusading half man, half rhinoceros out to blow up a tower that's spilling unideological substances into the atmosphere — right on.

△ **OCEAN:** *The In-crowd* (Sp64AM-£12.95-£17.95) An eight game compilation including: *Gryzor, Karnov, Combat School, Target Renegade, Platoon, Predator* and *Barbarian*, with *Last Ninja* replacing *Crazy Cars* on the 64 format.

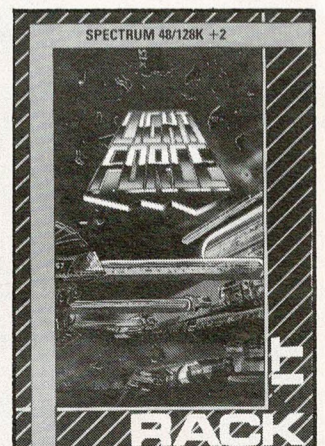
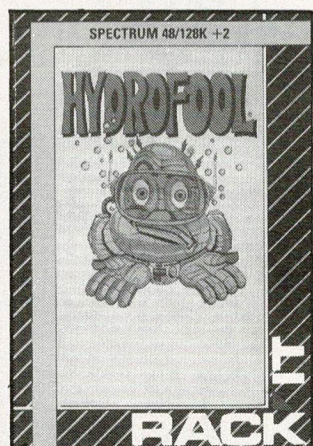
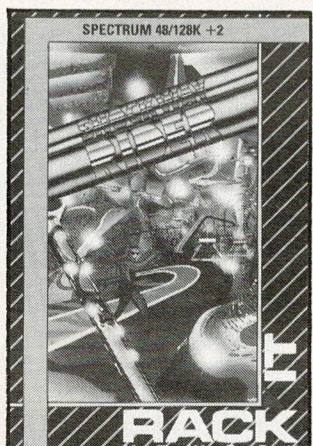
△ **OCEAN:** *Rambo 3* (STAgSpAm64-£8.95-£24.95) Another one man

rescue mission, but this time against the Afghan freedom fighters. An exciting little addition comes in the form of rubber gloves. Our hero has to search for these essential items in order to diffuse an electrical circuit. All the usual blood spurting fun with the customary climatic shoot-out.

△ **US GOLD:** *Tiger Road* (STAgSpAm64-£9.99-£24.99) Continuing the arrival of Gold's big capcom releases comes another martial arts game. This time the objective is to defeat the evil minion Ryn Ken-Oh as he invades villages, kidnaps children and generally behaves in an abominable manner.

△ **US GOLD:** *History In The Making — The First Three Years* (SpAm64-119.99-£29.99) A modestly titled compilation containing 15 of Gold's best from July 1984 to July 1987. Brilliantly packaged and an excellent stocking filler, but not particularly cheap. Check out the packaging.

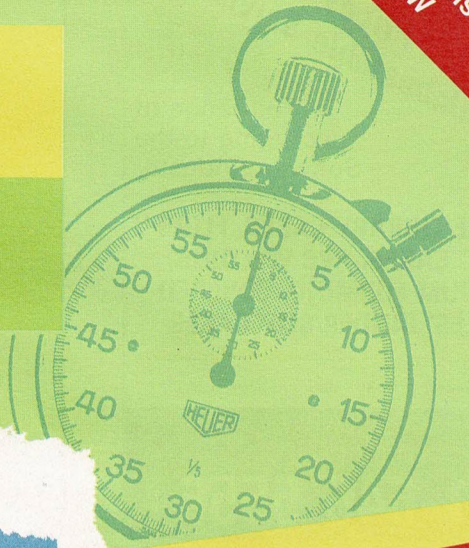
△ **EAS:** *Ringside* (STAg-£19.95) World championship boxing with the added incentive of a nubile young creature parading across the ring whilst the boxer is being towelled down. Scintillating stuff and bound to appeal to all those pent up adolescent desires.



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

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PART ONE: THE DAGGER IS DRAWN

Is Atari re-entering the software market really a good thing? Is there really any point to the EISA/MCA war? What lies behind the *New Computer Express* mystery? Find out in the first of a regular column by THE DAGGER. Sharp ain't the word . . .

What's going on at Atari? Taking the 16-bit software market by storm sounds great. There's huge potential in 16-bit software sales. But the problems start here. When I rang them they appeared somewhat confused about discount structures - and that was after I'd spent ages trying to get through to someone who would actually sell to me. It was touch and go whether Bob Gleadow himself was going to have to do the trading terms honours - not a great way to convince people you really know what your business is all about.

That's not all though. There have always been problems selling software published by the hardware manufacturer. Dealers as long in the tooth (what there's left) as I may recall the dreaded days of 1984-85 when suddenly all the unsaleable stock of the previous two years had to be written down. Most of it was from Atari Commodore and Acorn. It'll take some convincing to assure the market that this time Atari(soft) has got it right. Personally, things got off to a bad start when my copy of *Hyperpaint* on the ST arrived. It was in a soft cardboard box, inevitably squashed in the post until its arrival in my lap at which point it looked just a little thicker than *CTW*.

The views expressed herein are not necessarily shared by the editor or anyone else at *CTW*.

Why is it so hard to get hold of anything other than Amstrad's own branded three inch disks? Supplies of a Japanese-imported alternative recently dried up on me, just as the importer started getting several large orders. There's no doubt who he was blaming. But what I'd like to know is this: why is it so hard to get anything other than Amstrad's own branded three inch disks?



GLEADOW: Atari's only software salesman?

There's furious confusion about who is distributing PC-based DTP package *NewsMaster II* at the moment. It may be of no value other than that *NewsMaster II* is one of the best £50-odd DTP packages you're likely to find - loads of clip-art, nice WYSIWYG display, all mod cons'n that. It was being distributed by MGA Microsystems in Kent until recently, but then Database Software (of Stockport) took up the cause and, claimed front man Peter Holmes, was going for exclusive distribution with a new (lower) price point and updated packaging. Then, as the November 1st date set by Database came and went, it suddenly appeared that the ink was not quite dry on the contract. And now? Who knows? It's all gone eerily quiet since then...

Are you absolutely sick of new low-cost PCs? I realised this when I saw the Schneider Euro PC. Yet another wretched four-colour PC - this one with an external power supply if you please - jumped on by misguided journalists as being newsworthy. The only newsworthy thing about Schneider is that they used to be Amstrad's distributor in Germany. Apart from that, the idea of a Euro PC sounds interesting. Unfortunately, the end result is just another list of compromises. Inevitable when you think about it. No doubt about it, the low-end PC market is getting overcrowded. There are too many machines with similar specifications and prices being marketed in too many different ways. Small business? Loads of choice. Home users? No problem. Running a club? Yes. Games player? Just the job.

The launch of Schneider's Euro PC only confirms what we already knew - there's too much choice. Market leader Amstrad now has the PC1512, PC1640, PPC portable, Sinclair PC200 and PC2000 ranges. They variously have CGA, EGA or MGA, mono or colour monitors and 5.25 or 3.5 inch floppy drives. I've spoken to people for hours trying to explain what the difference between just Amstrad's range is. Better to buy a colour 1512 or mono 1640? Goodness knows. Why is there so little 3.5 inch software? No excuse. Which PC is best for desk top

publishing? Absolutely all of them, apparently. Meanwhile the Sinclair PC200 hit a low by having only two expansion

slots. Schneider has gone one better by including only one - I mean, what's the point? Sprechen sie sense?

No sooner does *CTW* (Mike Scialom in Issue 210) praise Rainbird as being 'the most evolved software house in the UK at the moment' than they do the dirty and blow their release dates for Christmas. It's true. The much touted *Savage* and *Carrier Command* on the Spectrum (£15.95 already!) have been delayed until after Christmas. The embarrassed Rainbird should be ashamed of themselves. As for being 'evolved' - so are sewer rats.

What's the real story behind the sudden departure of Peter Warlock from Future Publishing? Industry man Warlock was suddenly replaced as editor of *New Computer Express* even before the first official issue! My sources say that Peter was somewhat tired by the pace of the weekly, and indeed the

Future ambience in general. But, given that he was replaced by former VNU hack (now Future supremo) Chris Anderson and former *CTW* editor Greg Ingham, it seems just possible that there were some itchy keyboard fingers waiting for an excuse to get back to the horrors of deadline-driven journalism.

Just so's you know I'm a genuine industry pundit I'd like to make a few serious remarks about the MCA versus EISA debate currently being stirred up a storm by biggie hardware companies (Compaq, Amstrad, Tandy, Atari) and PR companies. The fact is, there's nothing to go on. Nothing to compare one underdeveloped system with another underdeveloped system. Why should a bus be so important suddenly anyway? It seems certain that before launching a product these days you do market research to find out if anyone wants it by starting a war with a likely competitor. Then, if you win, you don't deliver anyway,

which is what Lotus has been doing with the promised latest version of *Lotus 1-2-3* (not to mention *dBase IV*).

Finally - this has taken years and a lot of grief to rumble - people start to realise that new products serve two functions. Firstly, and most importantly, they stop customers from buying competitors' products. Secondly they make you some more money - once you've drummed up enough interest.

As for MCA vs EISA the whole debate has about as much real meaning to punters as two dinosaurs being weighed in the British Museum

That's MY opinion, anyway. . . Bye!

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Sony	9.13	8.82	8.50	8.19	7.87

5 1/4 DS 1.6 M

Precision by Xidex	8.70	8.40	8.10	7.80	7.50
3M	12.47	12.04	11.61	11.18	10.75
Dysan	10.15	9.80	9.45	9.10	8.75
Verbatim	11.60	11.20	10.80	10.40	9.99
Sony	12.18	11.76	11.34	10.92	10.50

3 1/2 SS 135 tpi

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Verbatim	11.60	11.20	10.80	10.40	10.00
Sony	8.70	8.40	8.10	7.80	7.50

3 1/2 DS 135 tpi

Precision by Xidex	10.73	10.36	9.99	9.62	9.25
3M	12.32	11.90	11.47	11.05	10.63
Dysan	13.05	12.60	12.15	11.70	11.25
Verbatim	11.60	11.20	10.80	10.40	9.99
Sony	11.89	11.48	11.07	10.66	9.90

3 1/2 DS 2 MB

3M	36.25	35.00	33.70	32.50	31.25
Dysan	34.00	32.90	31.70	30.50	29.30
Verbatim	29.00	28.00	27.00	25.50	24.00
Sony	34.80	33.60	32.40	31.20	29.90

3" CF2

Amsoft CF2	17.90	17.20	16.80	16.40	15.90
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SPEAKEASY

Publishers be damned

Since my letter which was printed in your magazine on the 17th of October regarding the problems I've been having with Softek, there has been no reply.

Looking at their track record for lack of response it is hardly surprising - especially where payment is concerned, and I know I'm not only talking for myself when I say that.

I thought that maybe they would have the decency to at least acknowledge the fact that payment problems exist between them and myself, not to mention the others. The invitation to respond that you appended to the end of my letter invoked nothing, but could have been used by them as chance to at least partially clear their name. Maybe they have run out of excuses this time. Let's just hope that they wake up soon to this unfortunate situation. It can't go on. And they don't deserve to either!

Since my letter was printed, I have been talking to others in the business who sympathise with my case, and have had

similar problems of their own. The general feeling is that there is an awful lot wrong with the attitude of many software houses. One of the areas where this is very much in evidence is in financial matters. Making as much money as possible with the smallest of out-goings seems to be their prime objective.

While this may make sound business sense, the extent to which it happens often means, for example, that the programmers suffer as I did, or advertisement are not paid on time or in part, with a promise of payments in the future that may not be fulfilled.

While I respect Palace Software for consistently releasing high standard games, I'm disappointed by the amount of time it's taking them to release my most recent game, *Quadron*, which I rushed to complete by the end of last year. I actually finished it by March this year, and after gentle prompting by myself, it has still not been released. In a marketplace where 16-bit titles are gradually becoming more

popular as 8-bit owners upgrade, I feel the failure to release *Quadron* as soon as possible has meant that a highly playable game is not going to have the same sort of impact that it might have had nearly a year ago. Apart from the delay, Palace have made quite a good impression on me, paying advances promptly and suchlike. I do not consider them to be typical of the companies criticised above.

I'm sure many able programmers will be put off by those companies in question, and move on to other areas where their needs are recognised.

Lately, I have bought an Amiga with a view to programming for it. After purchasing various reference books I find that many software houses are unwilling to supply me with any form of development software with a view to using it to program for them specifically. This unfortunate situation has meant that my development cycle time has increased, and no-one benefits.

SPEAKEASY

Surely those companies should release that as a competent 8-bit programmer yearning to learn about and develop 16-bit products, I am being let down (as I'm sure others are) due to their unwillingness to make an initial investment in my abilities.

I suppose you can put this down as part of their low input/high financial output theory. And it's a shame things are this way.

But as in the "natural selection" theory of evolution, those software houses with the best reputation will out-live those with the dodgy track records, and so, hopefully the situation will improve.

Yours sincerely
Andrew Beale
Chessington
Surrey

All CTW can do is openly invite Softek once again to fully explain what went down between it and Andrew Beale.

One would hope that not all programmers have as many problems being treated fairly as Mr Beale, but regarding Quadron one must remember that it is ultimately the publisher's right to hold back release - whether the programmer believes it to be a good prospective seller or not.

FRENCH KISSING IN THE USA

Continued from page 20

cial base strong enough to withstand any mood swings within the market, a small firm just hasn't got that security," offers Bonnell.

The price he will have to pay for that security remains to be seen. For now all talk is of mergers and partnerships with takeover being a dirty word and Bonnell is still very much boss of his own firm. But when all the financial and legal details are finally sorted there is a chance that some autonomy may be lost. For many industry pundits looking at the news from the outside only one thing will seem certain and that is that Epyx will certainly not lose out.

In these initial stages both sides are quite sensibly putting flexibility forward as the key ingredient in the deal. They are

not ruling anything out and that includes Infogrames games coming out on the Epyx label via US Gold. Despite pitching this adaptability as a mature attitude to a market in a state of flux this lack of rigidity would also seem to be connected with the lack of decisions made to embellish the original announcement.

So if Epyx does turn out to have the upper hand in this new relationship then it can be claimed as a natural response to the market trends and to the industry's view of the deal.

But with confetti still in the hair of the new couple such talk is perhaps a little premature. For the moment the couple are still enjoying their honeymoon period but the only sure thing about a honeymoon is that one day it must end.

FIRST AND LAST - AS ALWAYS

Continued from page 12

puter entertainment industry is about to enter a watershed phase. With the imminent launch of at least two 16-bit consoles, another on the shelf poised to enter the market when the time is right and still another possibility in the shape of a Konix much hinted 'British' console - we could be witnessing the death throes of the micro computer as a home entertainment tool.

On the other hand, if things remain true to form the most likely outcome would appear to be a broadening of the mar-

keting, with people who would never previously have considered buying a computer opting instead to have a dedicated games machine sitting under their television.

Either way, bearing in mind the way promises and predictions are made in this business, there seems to be only one message coming through loud and clear from the majority of interested parties; if you're waiting to play games that look great, sound better and cost practically nothing - don't hold your breath.

Calling all publishers

I have been asked by Rod Cousins to act as a coordinator for the forthcoming awards dinner. My particular frame of reference being sales awards. There will be eight categories, with the time frame being the twelve months to December 1st, 1988.

As previously, information on sales is being asked for direct from software houses. As far as is possible please restrict the claims to known UK sales.

Please forward entries for each category with absolute sales achieved to me as soon as possible after December 1st. This information will of course remain wholly confidential and will be destroyed once the winners have been ascertained.

The winners will at a later date be asked to

supply auditor/accountant's verification of the sales levels claimed to avoid fallacious entries. There will be two main prizes for:

1. Overall format full price best seller
2. Overall format budget best seller

And 8 format prizes for:

- A) Individual format best sellers (full price)
 - C64
 - Spectrum
 - Amstrad
- B) Individual format best sellers (budget)
 - C64
 - Spectrum
 - Amstrad
- C) 16-bit: best sellers by format
 - Amiga
 - Atari St



TREASURE: Fill in the form

With two runners up for each award. Please apply to me direct for relevant entry forms. My fax number is: 01 892 3665.

Yours sincerely
Simon Treasure

- Publishers you heard what the

man said. Get on with it and fill in those forms. All those that don't will be punished by joining Mr. Treasure in '73 meetings, briefings and breakfast lunches discussing the future of the BME. You know it makes sense.

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Stepping up

Continued from front page
show off its 68020-based ST Plus at Las Vegas but the machine was not widely visible — although private viewings were probably held.

In the UK, Atari has at last made its PC4 and PC5 machines fully available. The full range of Atari business machines are currently being backed by £100,000 worth of specialist ads. This campaign precedes a claimed £2 million national press ad series planned for 1989.

Acorn scorns

Continued from front page
row, meanwhile, has been instigated by claims in an RM advertisement that 19,000 sales of the Nimbus PC186 systems to the education sector had made it number one in that field.

Acorn does not dispute these statistics, but strongly refutes the claim that goes along with them. The firm's managing director Harvey Coleman commented: "These figures hardly justify RM's present misleading claims."

Page echoed: "For a long time we've treated these sort of statements with disdain because really they've been so ridiculous. The latest advertisements though are just over the top, we don't want to but we're forced to respond to something like this."

Konix picks

Continued from front page
Business Design Centre, London on April 16-18.

The Konix console will boast 4,096 colours, run 'pirate-proof' software provided on three inch disks costing £15 and retail at a base price of £149. Some 32 software houses from the UK, Japan and the US have apparently already pledged to support the machine.

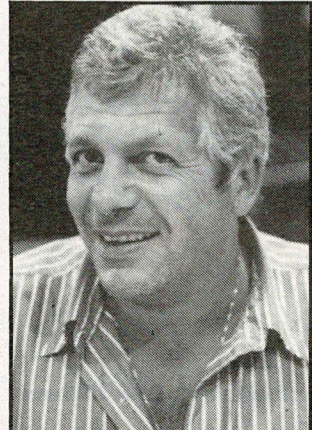
"We'll have the biggest stand at the show — which is taking place at just the right time for us. It's the time when all the major people are making their stocking decisions for the rest of the year," commented Holloway to CTW.

Two ad agencies, McCann-Erickson and HQ Partnership, are currently pitching for the Konix TV ads. The campaign will begin in autumn 1988.

Palan swaps

Continued from front page
the back of the consoles. Atari cartridges currently account for around 60 per cent of Palan's sales.

Fine also indicated interest in any ST console that may arrive in the UK next year. "If any such machine does come along then we would take it. I think it would be a good idea and good competition for people like Sega, but of course it's up to Atari in the end", he offered.



FINE: Hardware shuffle

Coders slap

Continued from front page
distribution company R&R, with Code Masters claiming that anyone handling the product is in breach of contract. When contacted by CTW the boss of both firms, Roger Hulley, was unaware of any such action taking place.

This is again due to Code Masters' new tough stance on such matters. It has decided to dispense with any warning letters which may be construed as bravado. Instead, it has gone straight in with a writ to prove its intent.

Hulley's initial reaction to the news was that there is "no question of any plagiarism".

He went on to describe the whole affair as a "storm in a tea cup" adding that in his opinion Alternative is "one of the most innovative firms in the industry".

"I'm not aware of any similarity. Of course if it's a grand prix game you've got to have racing cars on the front but they can't have copyrighted Ferraris. There was certainly no intention of anything like plagiarism on our part in fact the original CRL game that this is a licence of was called *Formula 1* and we changed that name to avoid any confusion", offered Hulley.

Since its release in the summer of 1987 Code Masters claims that *Grand Prix Simulator* has sold 200,000 copies.

Research firm predicts PC boom

Market research firm Context is predicting that PC sales in the UK will top the £1 billion mark in 1988.

The company's figures, drawn from retail outlets over the first nine months of the year, indicate that the PC market will have grown 35.6 per cent over the 1987 figure in volume terms with a total of 410,000 units sold. In terms of value the rise is even sharper, with a growth of 63.1 per cent expected to give a total value of £1.044 billion.

Context puts the discrepancy in the two figures down to the boom in 286 and 386 machines and the decline of low-cost 8086 machines. The Sep-

tember PC unit shares also show IBM opening up a 10 point gap as market leaders, taking 28.5 per cent of the market with Amstrad being the nearest rivals.

Director Jeremy Davies commented to CTW: "It's all looking good now. There was a period where people were just waiting and seeing but at the end of '87 and during this year the 286 boom really went off and people were selling them left right and centre. Then of course the 386 took off as well."

His reflections on the 8086 market, however, were not as encouraging. He claimed sales had "at best remained static" and added that Amstrad shortages were a main factor in that statistic.

He also pinpointed Amstrad as perhaps the key factor in determining the future of the 8086 market. "It will become a lot clearer when we begin to see the full weight of the Amstrad 2000 range next year. The thing is definitely very much in Amstrad's hands and there is every chance that they will repeat the success of the 1512 and 1640."

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