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# CTW

1-8-88 BRITAIN'S TOP COMPUTER TRADE WEEKLY ISSUE 197

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## Commodore in PC push

Newly styled machines, price cuts, promotional pushes and a more coherent strategy are due to be announced this week by Commodore on its PC front.

The aim is to open CBM's largely dormant business front and to place its machines in a position where they can at least challenge Amstrad's sales. In all, somewhere approaching £1.5 million will be spent by the firm this year on advertising its PCs.

Details of the CBM re-launch were being finalised as CTW went to press. But it is known that smaller, "sexier" boxes are high on the agenda.

Whilst there will be no announcement of any changes to the distribution network - which doesn't really exist on PCs - CBM has been wooing hard the high end suppliers. Currently, the bulk of the modest number of PCs it sells are supplied direct by the firm to dealers. An experiment for Software Limited to take the range last autumn finished without discernible success at Christmas.

"We've got a lot of things in place and we've found that

Continued on back page

## INSIDE:

### SUM YOU WIN

When the ABC figures come in the magazine publishers are quick either to point out their irrefutable worth or their small impact in the grand scale of things (depending on how well they've done). Here CTW runs through the ins and outs and finds out how the sums and figures are put together. ... 12

### SUM YOU LOSE

But it's the advertisers who are putting their money on the line. As such they like to know how well a publication is doing and whether their ad spend is being used wisely. CTW talks to the games industry's money spenders and finds out what effect the ABCs have. .... 13

### STREET OF FAME

Tottenham Court Road has always attracted the sharper characters. Be they shrewd businessmen, bargain hunters or salacious reporters, the street has become the centre of electrical retailing. It represents the best and worst aspects of dealerland. CTW takes the high road and unravels some of the pre-conceptions. .... 15

### ALL THAT GLISTENS

Some letters on the US Gold margin changes. And details of yet another extraordinary exchange between CTW and Gold. .... 19

### CHARTS / SOFT OPTIONS 17

## Amstrad bolsters PPC

Amstrad has announced a printer plus software bundling deal on the PPC 512 in an apparent attempt to revive flagging sales.

The news comes at a time when the latest market re-

search indicates that the sales gap between IBM and Amstrad in the UK is as wide now as it has been since Alan Sugar's firm first launched PCs in the autumn of 1986. Abiding supply shortfalls are primarily to blame.

The new deal means that the two lower spec PPCs will

come with the £199 DMP 3250 printer and the £69 Infomaster database package. These will now retail at £549 (single drive) and £699 (double - both figures ex VAT), in comparison with the previous £548.85 and £631.85 (both inc VAT). Effectively, the bundle signals a theoretical consumer

saving of £118 in each case.

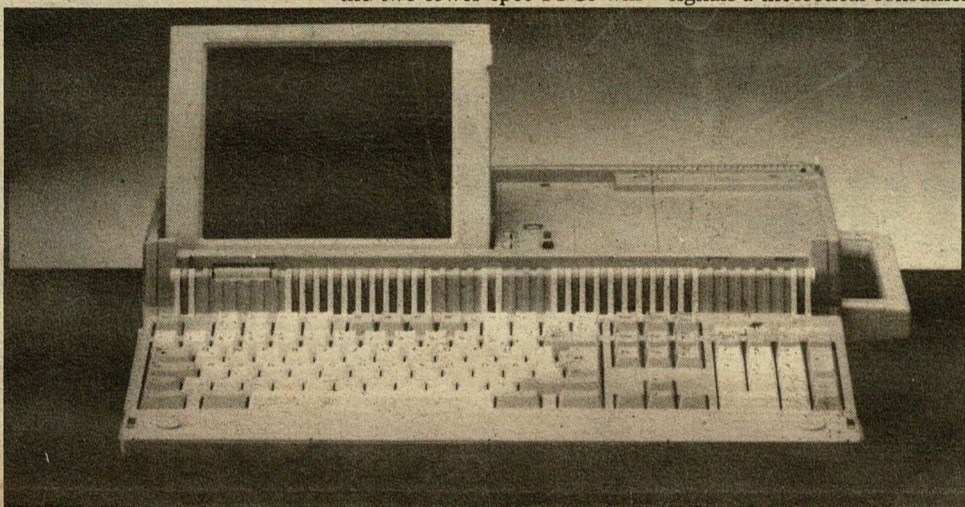
The push will continue "whilst stocks last", though without any specific marketing or advertising. Amstrad said that the bulk of dealers have been informed about the pack already.

Though Amstrad is pitching the deal as being pretty much the same as any other Amstrad bundling deal at this time of year, it is clear that PPC 512 sales have fallen noticeably short of the levels achieved by the PPC 640.

Sales to the end of May were running 64/36 in favour of the 640, according to market research firm Context. And one distributor told CTW that the 640 was currently outselling the 512 four to one.

Yet overall, the PPC range is doing well. In Context's analysis, for the twelve month period to May, it achieved a 20 per cent laptop market

Continued on back page



With reports of an enhanced PPC doing the rounds, Amstrad bundles to shore up 512 sales

## Bullish EMAP chides rivals

The magazine publishers were last week busy posturing and proselytising over that old chestnut, ABC figures.

EMAP, fresh from announcing rises in circulation of its three frontline computer leisure titles, threw down the gauntlet to Newsfield and Dennis to publish their ABC figures.

To this both have pointed out that EMAP's figures are unusually early and that theirs simply aren't ready yet. Nonetheless, EMAP is confident enough to have announced that *Sinclair User* will be branded as 'The Best Selling Spectrum magazine'

in its October issue.

SU turned in average monthly 85,615 sales from December to June. The expectation is that both Dennis's *Your Sinclair* and Newsfield's *Crash* will come in at about 82,000.

EMAP's challenge was greeted with the rebuff "they'll just have to wait" from Newsfield director Franco Frey. "The readers don't care a fig leaf about ABCs and people still refer to *Crash* and *Zzap* for reviews rather than *Sinclair User*."

He added: "If you come out first with figures you may look like an idiot when someone else comes out with a higher figure. They're over-emphasising the point."

Newsfield though accepts that in terms of general profile and presentation it has been caught napping on *Crash* by both EMAP and Dennis.

For Dennis, soon to depart publisher Kevin Cox told CTW: "They've got one figure that they've forced through and they can swagger and brag all they like. This is just a snapshot and not a panorama. Year on year *Sinclair User's* increase is minute.

"I'd do the same thing and good luck to them but in the end it may be hollow. ABCs are about overall trends."

Terry Pratt, EMAP's computer magazines publisher wryly noted: "ABCs are important when you've got good ones and not so if you haven't.

They've got to prove us wrong," he said.

On EMAP's early publishing of the figures he said: "We always get our figures early because we use the transactional system. It's no secret. In the past though there's been a tendency to just release them to the marketing press initially."

Meantime, Newsfield has announced that it will be stepping up the number of cover mounted cassettes on *Zzap* and *Crash*. The firm has criticised other publishers for this tactic but concedes that it does increase sales. Newsfield says that the cassettes will feature playable previews and will be simply an adjunct to editorial.

## Sega cut and bundled

Sega price cuts and new bundles were announced last week by its UK distributor Mastertronic - along with an autumn promotional spend "in excess of £500,000".

The entry level console thus comes down from £99.95 to £79.95, as Mastertronic seeks to counteract the still-looming threat of the rival Nintendo system.

Nintendo has pledged to spend £2 million at rate card in an attempt to establish its machine. Though more modest, the Mastertronic budget does include children's TV

advertising, along with radio, computer specialist, video, toy and national press pushes.

The firm is also seeking to address what it recognises as the "software famine" by announcing a block of new titles for the autumn. By Christmas, some 72 titles in all will have been launched.

Director Geoff Heath claimed that Mastertronic has sold 30,000 Sega units to date. He added: "We are looking to substantially increase the figures for the winter."

To date Mastertronic has done little in the way of promoting its product. Heath revealed how this is due for change. A Sega club will be opened on September 1st,

which will include a phone line, as well as all the usual promotional bumph. In addition there will be specific Sega

promotions commencing at the beginning of the remaining months of this year.

Continued on back page



SEGA: Cuts and bundles

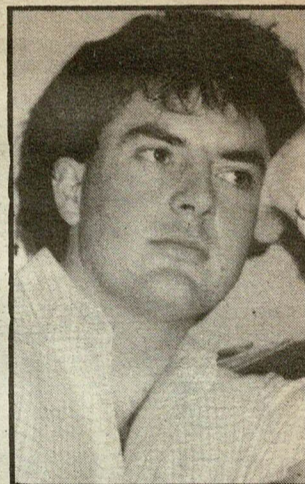
## Ingham departs

After four years as editor, Greg Ingham last week resigned from CTW to join Future Publishing.

He leaves directly after the PC Show in September. He will be replaced by CTW's current deputy editor Stuart Dinsey, with a subsequent promotion for Colin Campbell.

Ingham joined the paper in September 1984, in the days when it was labouring under the name of *Home Computer Trade Weekly*. He is becoming a publisher at Future in charge of *ST/Amiga Format* and *8000 Plus*, as well as working on Future's mysterious Project X.

"It's exceptionally sad to be leaving CTW after nearly four years, but this is neither the time nor the place to get maudlin. Editing a weekly for so long would simply not have been possible without a very close working relationship with some remarkable people - 'nuff said," Ingham commented.



INGHAM: New Future

For CTW, managing director and publisher Tom Stock offered: "Inasmuch as an editor personifies the identity of a publication, Greg has impressed his own independence and integrity on the character of CTW. While he has probably made a few enemies in the industry in the process, it is true to say that his demand for the truth has been greatly appreciated by CTW readers and by those who have come into contact with him.

"I wish him the very best of luck with his new appointment, but emphasise that his pioneering journalistic spirit will remain with CTW in the future."

Meantime, on a more important topic, CTW is shortly due to make its most significant move to date: to coated paper. The aim is that from its 200th issue on August 22nd, CTW will have the look and feel to match its content.

Continued on page two

# Prize packs picked

The winners of the software packaging scheme Box Clever were duly announced at the Design Council last week.

The scheme, organised by the Design Council and sponsored by the COS group, is aimed at "promoting the best innovative solutions from British manufacturers to the computer packaging problem".

The awards presented by COS boss Mike Clark were split into two categories: lei-

sure and educational, and business software. They were assessed on flexibility, durability in use, durability in storage, design continuity, aesthetic design, and use of materials and resources.

Joint third in the leisure sector were CDS Software Ltd with *Brian Clough's Football Fortunes* and Virgin Games with the *Leisure Genius* range. Prism came second with *Eye*, and ESM was the overall winner with *Screenprint*.

The quality of software in the business sector was not high enough to award

trophies, but the judges were keen to make two commendations. They were Multisoft Systems Ltd with *Multisoft Microsystems* and Blyth Software Ltd with *Omnis Quartz*.

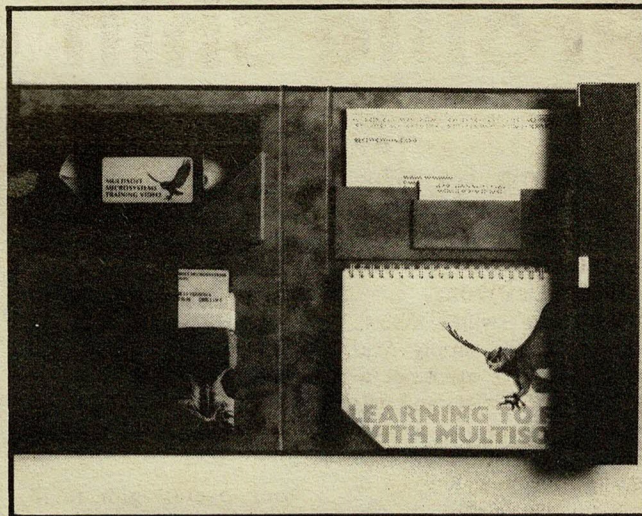
The judging panel, headed by BMF chairman David Fraser, were Ian MacNaught-Davies (Comshare), Graham Gordon (PIRA), Sheila Clark (Packaging Innovation Group), Greg Ingham (CTW) and Paul Donnelly (Gem).

Only now have the organisers chosen to disclose the results, although the winners were decided on May 5th. Debbie Hale, publicity officer at

the Design Council offered: "All the people here are very important, and it was difficult to arrange a time when they were free that also fitted into the Design Council's schedule. Other factors, like the designing and manufacturing of the trophies, featured too."

Box Clever is intended to be an annual event. Ivor Owen, director of the Council, said he felt the modest response in its first year was nonetheless encouraging. There were 25 entrants, eight of which were in the business sector.

Owen added: "We believe, quite passionately, that there's still lots of room for improvement in software



MULTISOFT: Commended in business packaging, and would like next year to have more en-

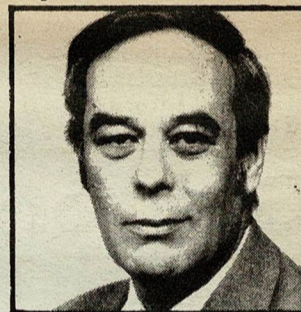
trants, with a higher standard."

## PS/2: Korea opportunity

A spate of new machines including an MCA/PS/2 compatible are likely to be launched by Samsung early next year.

Also being flagged are a laptop and a 386 machine and it is most likely that all three will be aired initially at the *Which Computer?* Show. It is understood that Samsung's Korean top brass have been in tentative negotiations with IBM for an MCA licence although this has not been confirmed.

This news follows Amstrad's MCA licensing agreement with IBM. Samsung is confident that this will have a positive affect on its own PS/2 plans. Computer general manager Derrick Maddern told CTW that the firm "needs to see PS/2 acceptability - the Amstrad end will help on this count".



MADDERN: *Which?* trio

Any specific details concerning the machines were not forthcoming. Samsung UK itself will be waiting for the thumbs up from Korea. Maddern stressed that the project was "at the formative stage". He added: "We'll watch how the market develops and then see how we feel about it."

Indeed, for Samsung to be talking of machines which won't be launched for at least five months shows that it is, for the moment, testing the wind.

## Ingham

Continued from front page  
The move upmarket follows the gradual shift in the editorial coverage in recent years away from being a solely leisure sector publication.

"We believe that many advertisers know CTW to be a far more effective medium than any of our trade publication rivals, due to our unparalleled news-gathering abilities and understanding of the market. Our move to coated paper should help clear away any lingering qualms about the look of CTW that they might have. Glossy rivals beware," Ingham added.

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## ISSUE ONE LAUNCH PC SHOW 1988

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# Profile shift at Computacenter

**Further proof of Computacenter widening its distribution act came last week with the appointment of Citizen printers.**

The move swiftly follows the decision to supply Amstrad's business machines to its 15 owned outlets and network of dealers (CTW July 18th). The historically high end firm is now looking to increase significantly its distribution business and this means pitching lower end dealers.

"Up until these two new contracts the majority of our distribution service was to IBM-style dealers, which was a group of only 100-400 deal-

ers," commented Computacenter's commercial director Bill Gretton to CTW.

Computacenter currently turns over around £100 million with the distribution side relying heavily on IBM and Epson for its £15 million slice. This latter figure is expected to increase to £25 million over the next year with "three or four" further product signings promised in the near future.

"Our overall aim is to broaden the product range available to our distribution division so that it includes all the major names," added Gretton.

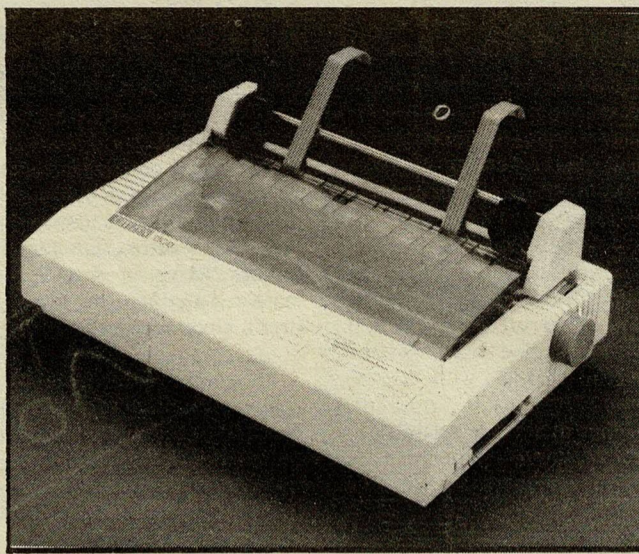
He sees the Citizen product line as one that will complement the recent Amstrad

appointment in terms of attracting different style dealers.

This does not only mean attracting lower end dealers, however, as upgraded Amstrad machines are expected to appear later this year and Citizen already produces a number of high end products.

"We've only really got this profile as a low-end manufacturer because of the enormous success we've had with a low end printer - the 120D. We actually produce across the board," commented Citizen's Rosemary Gacki to CTW.

With the appointment of Computacenter Citizen has brought its UK distribution network back up to six. The Akhter distribution division



**CITIZEN 120D: Downmarket?** MSL was signed just a few weeks ago whilst XMA, Eltec, Hugh Symons and Norbain remain in place.

# CTW

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0438 310184  
0438 310185

**Editor:** Greg Ingham  
**Deputy Editor:** Stuart Dinsey  
**Staff Writer:** Colin Campbell  
**Reporter:** Christina Bent

**ADVERTISING:**  
0438 310105  
0438 310182

**Advertisement Manager:** Jerry Hall  
**Advertisement Executive:** Russell Beadle

**PRODUCTION & ADMIN:**  
0438 310106

**Production Editor:** Lesley Hunt  
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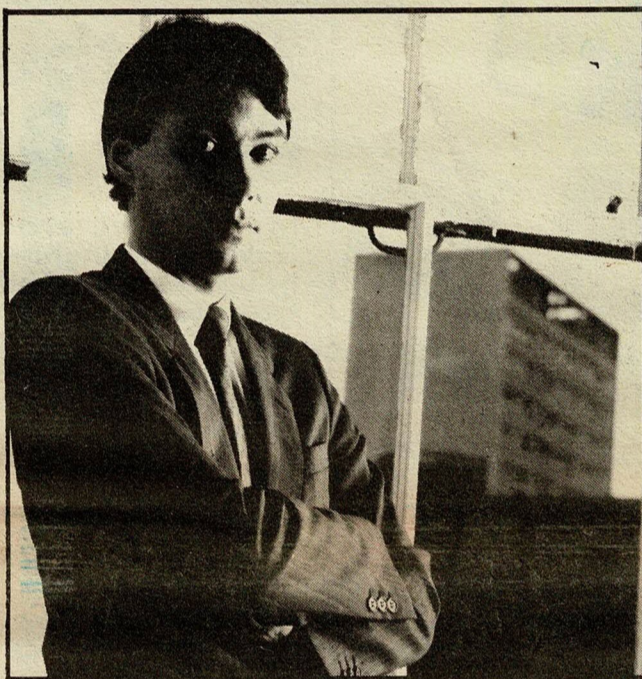
## P&P profits leap up

**In its first financial results since the stock market flotation last April distributor P&P has reported a 68 per cent increase in its half year profits.**

Turnover increased by 48 per cent to £50 million. Profits for the half year reached £3.3 million as opposed to £1.9 million for the half year ended 30th May '87.

"What we're most pleased about is that all the things we were saying at the time of the flotation have come true," offered marketing manager Steve Brooker to CTW. "We weren't pulling the wool over anyone's eyes."

He went on to comment on the two acquisitions made in April - Broadsword and Training International. "We're still in the process of



**BROOKER: Profits up again** integrating them and it's going very well. Training, as a major force, will come on line in '89," he said.

## Rush deal looms?

**A deal to buy the huge German software distributor and publisher Rushware is imminent, according to well-placed sources.**

In recent months, the likes of Electronic Arts, Centresoft/US Gold, Microdealer International, Markt and Teknik (the German media combine) and possibly Virgin/Mastertronic are all understood to have been in some form of negotiation.

Rush is attractive at the right price due to its range of distribution accounts. It acts as the sole German agent for

US Gold, EA and MicroProse amongst others.

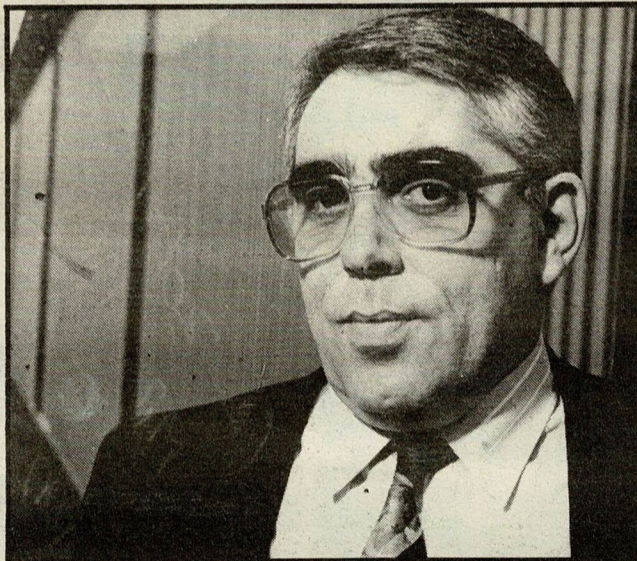
Additionally, it has SoftGold, a sizeable publishing arm. This produces games on the Rainbow Arts, Time Warp, Recline, Digital Artwork, Chip and Rainbow Games labels.

As yet, details of any potential deals are scant. Sources suggest that Rush boss Hans Rabe has had numerous exchanges with the named British and American firms, and that at least one is within striking distance of matching his asking price.

Rush itself was making no comment on the matter last week.

## Sage chips in for OEM deals

**Sagesoft has taken its furthest ever step away from software with the development of a custom built networking chip.**



**GOLDMAN: Chip first**

The LANCIA (Local Area Network Communications Interface Adaptor) chip is currently being hawked around US and European manufacturers with a view to gaining lucrative OEM deals.

The low-cost chip replaces the need for a circuit board to be fitted into computers requiring network capabilities. It is being offered to manufacturers for as little as £10 per unit.

"It would give them built-in networking. It's not revolutionary but no one's really having a go at the market at the moment," commented Sagesoft's managing director David Goldman to CTW.

The firm claims to be very

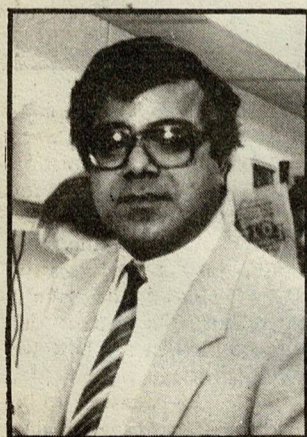
close to a "fairly significant" OEM deal. One such agreement would quickly pay off the £250,000 that has been spent on developing the chip over the past eight months.

Further moves in the custom chip and network hardware markets are expected if the LANCIA succeeds, with the ultimate aim of forming a Sagesoft networking division.

Goldman insisted, however, that there wouldn't subsequently be any rationalisation in the firm's software business.

"Networking is probably as far as we'll go, so hardware for that is fine. We're certainly not going to try getting involved in too much high risk manufacturing."

## Gultronics watches TV



**TULSIANI: TV plans**

**Electrical trade veteran Gultronics is currently eyeing its first ever move into TV advertising.**

The £20 million outfit currently spends around £250,000 a year on advertising. It has bought spots on London radio station LBC in the past and regularly appears in *The Standard*.

Boss Sam Tulsiani admits that the plans are at an early stage yet but stresses that short ads on Thames or LWT are being considered. These

would appear during autumn selling season, not necessarily concentrating solely on computers.

"I think TV is a very good value media. We have an advantage in that we're very strong on computers but we're also into other items as well," Tulsiani told CTW.

Gultronics' five outlets are all in the London area: three in Tottenham Court Road, one in Edgware Road and one in Croydon. It also runs a successful mail order operation.

## Paris show shapes up

**French publisher Neo Media is gearing up for the second Festival de la Micro due to be held in Paris in mid October.**

Billed as the only all formats computer leisure show in France, a claimed 25,000 people will be passing through the doors. The firm hopes to have attracted 45 exhibitors with Atari already having taken a third of the 4,000 square metres floor space.

Amstrad, however, won't be exhibiting due to a historical disagreement with the

organiser. Neo Media was formerly the organiser of the Amstrad Show in France. However, Amstrad France registered the name Amstrad Expo and apparently forbade Neo Media using the Amstrad name.

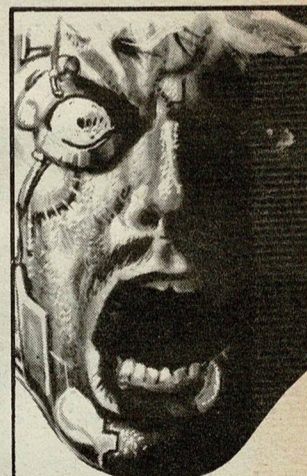
Speaking from Paris boss Jean Kaminsky told CTW: "I'm happy to have created an all formats show but even then you can't be glad about the way things have turned out. You can't be happy when you've created something successful and then it's taken away from you."

Kaminsky claimed that the show would attract a large

number of visitors from abroad. He is currently preparing an advertising and promotional budget pitched at the UK trade. Some £70,000 promo spend has been set aside in all.

Formerly, the Festival de la Micro was held in January. The new date was set to take advantage of peak selling times. Neo Media itself publishes various monthly magazines in France including *Game*, *Atari 1ST* and *AM Mag*.

The show will be held between Friday 14th October and Sunday 16th October at the Espace Champéret.



### Gold Rush

**WARNING:** Stocking Thalamus's HAWKEYE will seriously increase your profits due to the GOLD RUSH promotion! Among the thousands of HAWKEYE games being shipped are three gold and six yellow cassettes. When a customer finds a gold cassette they win a Amstrad Studio 100, find a yellow cassette and a ghettoblaster is won. You win a prize too! Prize cassettes... out soon... be a winner with HAWKEYE

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# Epson nixes Combro but Philips jumps on

**MBS' trade distribution remnant Combro has failed to keep hold of defunct DDL's Epson contract but last week gained Philips instead.**

The firm carried over its Amstrad business to the new set-up and had hoped that it might also keep Epson, whilst realising it was somewhat unlikely. The printer firm was accounting for over £8 million of DDL's business prior to

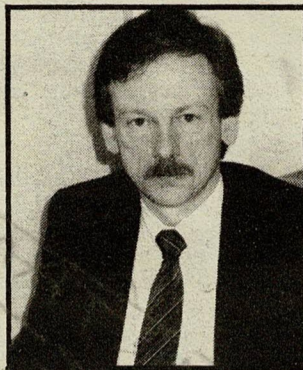
the closure.

MBS' Steve Sowers preferred not to go into the reasons behind Epson's decision. "All I can say is that we've been advised that the DDL contract has been terminated, which they reserve the right to do in these circumstances," he told CTW.

Combro had apparently primed itself for Epson's decision and claims that it is not any major blow to the firm's repositioning as a trade-only distributor.

The appointment of Philips means that Combro now has six product lines to offer, the others being Amstrad, Seikosha, Taurus, Canon and Omega Bernoulli. It will be mainly handling the Dutch firm's monitors and PCs.

"It's certainly not going to replace a product like Epson in revenue terms but getting the account is still very pleasing. We're particularly interested in their CD ROM drive," added Sowers.



SOWERY: Epson no, Philips yes

# Laskys bolsters business drive

**High Street electrical chain Laskys has signalled its intent to become a major player in the PC market.**

It currently has four Laskys Business Centres up and running, and like its rivals Dixons and Comet it sees the business market as an area capable of enormous growth.

The stores are currently stocking Amstrad PCs and PCWs, Commodore PCs, Zenith PCs and Acorn's Archimedes. Computer sales are already making up 30-35 per cent of sales in the chain's high profile Tottenham Court Road site and this is hoped to reach 50 per cent in the coming months.

National newspaper advertising has recently been offering Amstrad products with in-

terest free credit. The extension of the business range is also to be advertised, but it will stop short of dwelling on CBM and Zenith product because it is currently available in so few stores. Laskys' first computer press advertising is also being lined up.

The Tottenham Court Road outlet claims that multiples can eventually tap into high end and corporate sales just as easily as off the shelf Amstrads. The store's price ceiling is currently around £6,000 for a Zenith 386 machine.

"The market's becoming more fast moving and the corporate deals are starting to come to Tottenham Court Road. People are buying this stuff much more openly now," commented the London shop's computer sales manager Jo Simons to CTW.

# US tripling eyed by Virgin

**Virgin is forecasting that its £2 million annual business in the States will triple next year.**

The firm trades in the US as an affiliated label of Electronic Arts, and is currently in the process of evaluating just how much to increase its US prices.

"Mainly, we sell our Leisure Genius range in the States, plus one or two others such as *Dan Dare* and *Shogun*," Virgin Games' boss Nick Alexander said. "We reckon our business over there will be tripling because we'll be having so much more product out.

"Also, our prices will be increasing because our costs

are going up. We'd like to have 3.5 inch as well as 5.25 inch disks in the same pack for our PC products. And since the dollar's been weakening against the pound - except last month it turned the other way of course - there are other concerns."

Leisure Genius products currently sell in the States at around \$39.95 on the PC. Alexander stresses that no firm decision had been made about the nature of any price hike.

Meantime, Leisure genius' *Monopoly* is due out soon in the UK, with a price tag of £20 or £25. "Leisure Genius may not set the world on fire because it's not the latest, greatest arcade licence, but it's bloody good business," Alexander added.



LEISURE GENIUS: US success

# Montbuild man picks Big Apple

**Industry veteran David Cunningham has been poached from Montbuild by new games outfit Big Apple.**

Cunningham joined the Prestwich subsidiary last week as sales manager. He had spent the last year organising various computer shows at Montbuild and previously worked on failed trade

monthly LET.

"I met Terry Ashton (Big Apple's boss) years ago and we kept in touch. When he approached me on the golf course I jumped at the chance. Big Apple are going places," offered Cunningham.

The firm currently employs five people and more are expected to join in the near future.

# Grandslam backs show

**Grandslam last week revealed that it too has decided to take floorspace at the PC Show after initial misgivings.**

The news follows recent moves by Mediagenic (formerly Activision), Cascade and Domark to appear in some shape or form at the

show (CTW July 25th).

The firm has chosen a regular stand after sizing up the benefits of relying on a hospitality suite near the PC Show's Earl's Court venue or joining the USD consortium stand - which already includes Domark, Palace, Beau Jolly and Martech.

The cost of appearing via

USD is only around £8,500, whilst Grandslam now claims to be spending £35 - 40,000 for a 60 square metres stand.

"The USD idea had some attraction for us on cost but we've got a lot of strong product and the place for that strong product is on the floor of the show," commented Grandslam boss Stephen Hall to CTW.

"We're more than pleased with the way the image of the company is building up and we feel that a presence at the show is very important to continue that."

Grandslam will be showing *Espionage*, *Bruce Lee: Enter The Dragon* and *Pacmania* plus variously blowing the trumpet via video and hand-outs for *Thunderbirds*, *Saint and Greavsie* and a forthcoming Arnold Schwarzenegger film licence.



HALL: Showing approval

# Gallup loses Treasure

**Industry veteran Simon Treasure has lost his position as chart consultant to Gallup and will now concentrate his efforts on embryonic industry body ESPA (Entertainment Software Publishers Association).**

He will continue to work on the Gallup poster chart but the bulk of his work as general PR man to the industry will now be undertaken by Gallup itself. The change apparently

comes about as a direct result of the departure of Godfrey Rust from Gallup and the appointment of John Pinder as chart manager.

"For me to be working as a consultant to Gallup and organising ESPA would be a conflict of interests," said Treasure. "I've never been directly employed by Gallup and they don't really need me here now. My role has been outgrown."

Treasure is this week mailing the 45 page proposal for ESPA to the 12 leading publishers of whom he apparently

has had verbal approval from 10. He is also hoping that smaller publishers will become members.

A provisional two tier membership policy has been drawn up whereby large publishers will give £5,000 to the body and smaller publishers will be asked for £1,000.

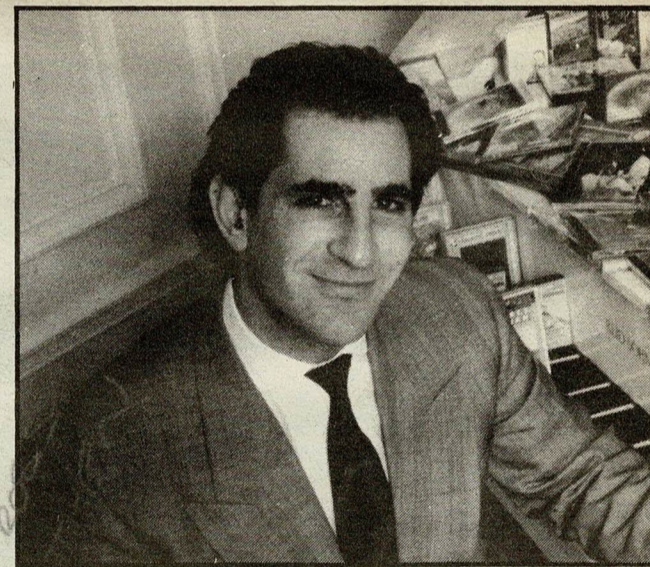
Treasure aims to have a £30,000 PR campaign for ESPA on line in October running through to the end of next January. In all it is hoped that ESPA will be funded to the tune of £50,000 (CTW 16th May).

# Prism profits again

**Prism Leisure last week surprised the City analysts by reporting year end profits of £663,000 - 27 per cent up on last year.**

Turnover rose by 6.7 per cent from £5.7 million to £6.1 million. Prism immediately repeated its intention to make acquisitions within the leisure industry. Chairman Geoff Young said that the firm would be eyeing games software firms over the next year.

City watchers had predicted profits of around £550,000 - a figure which Young had called "conservative" (CTW July 18th). "We're happy," he commented. "There are some great things lined up for the coming year especially on the computer side where the success of *Football Manager II* has re-established Addictive's profile."



YOUNG: Happy

He went on to predict bullishly that this "will be the year for Prism Leisure USA" which was set up in Pittsburgh 14 months ago. "I'm very happy that in our first year we made a trading profit there," he said.

During the year Prism established European Music Distributors and acquired pub quiz organiser Burns and Porter. These moves have prompted the analysts to predict substantially larger profits for next year.

# EEC to sell off Oxford

**EEC has firmly placed its Spectrum utilities arm Oxford Computer Publishing in the shop window.**

It is hoped by the firm that the sale will raise "between

£10,000 and £20,000". OCP has traditionally specialised in Spectrum based serious software such as *Finance Manager* and *Stock Manager*.

Whilst not a sector noted for its lucrative nature EEC reckons there is potential in conversions of the programs.

He described the asking price as "realistic".

"We want to concentrate on new software development for other people," commented boss Bill Richardson. "EEC is still my basic business - I'm selling the OCP label and all the stock."

"There are tremendous aftersales in Spectrum stuff," he added. "Software sales are still high." EEC sells various peripherals for leisure machines as well as programming such titles as *Art Studio* (which was licensed to Telecomsoft).

# Watch Out!

Over the next few months Code Masters is increasing its catalogue by over 50%. With exceptional products. The games you need for your customers. Here are four new guaranteed best sellers. This is just the beginning.

**DIZZY**  
(C64) £1.99

What can one say about our cute cult hero? Already a classic mega-seller on the Spectrum and Amstrad. Now Commodore owners need wait no more. This original Oliver Twins cartoon adventure is a Code Masters success story. Watch it sell!

**SUPER HERO**  
(SPECTRUM) £1.99

By now you will have seen the amazing Amstrad version of this game. So have millions of others, on Sundays 'Get Fresh' TV programme. As good a program as anyone has released this year, at any price. Destination - number one!

**PROFESSIONAL BMX SIMULATOR**  
(SPECTRUM) £4.99

It was gratifying to see Jet Bike re-enter the Spectrum chart after four months. These Plus products are exceptional value and the kids know it. Professional BMX Simulator on the C64 is our highest revenue product so far this year. This Spectrum version will do better still.

**ATV SIMULATOR**  
(AMSTRAD) £1.99

Another best selling conversion. Another TV star on Sundays 'Get Fresh' TV programme. Another guaranteed best seller. This will be battling with Super Hero for the Amstrad number one slot.



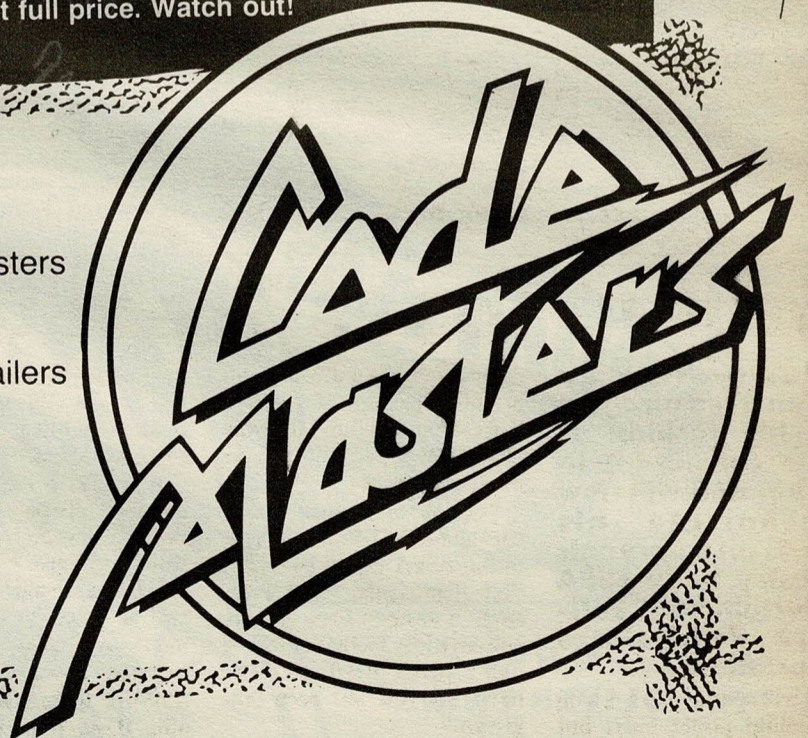
Coming soon are lots more excellent £1.99 games. Simulations, arcade adventures and much, much more. The best sellers that the customers want. Also a steady succession of £4.99 Plus products. With all the incredible value Plus features that have made this price point such a success for Code Masters. Also, later this year, the much rumoured Code Masters full price. If you look at what we do at £1.99 and £4.99, just imagine what we will be delivering at full price. Watch out!

## The number one name in the game

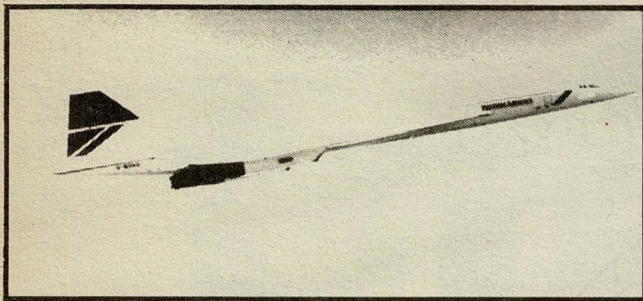
In the open market, where the customers can choose, Code Masters is usually the No 1 best selling software brand. A success story you can join. Our titles continue to sell and sell. BMX holds the record for chart longevity. Its still there. Thousands of happy retailers are profiting from Code Masters success. Join them.

**If you want to make money with Code Masters software**  
**Ring Ann Pinkham 0926-814132**

Code Masters Software Co Ltd · Lower Farm House · Stoneythorpe · Southam · Warks CV33 0DL



# SNIPPETS



CONCORDE: Image comp

Mirrorsoft's new label Image Works is running a consumer comp publicising its Sky Chase game. The first prize is

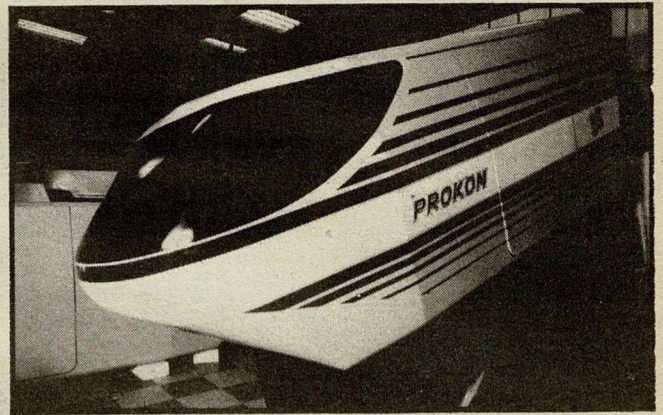
a flight on Concorde. Entry forms will be in the games packaging . . . Elite's young budget label

Encore has taken 4.5 per cent of the market share according to Gallup. This would hang mainly on the chart success of Frank Bruno's Boxing and Airwolf. . .

Barry Paul Distribution has stopped dealing in leisure software during the summer. It promises to start again once the autumn rush begins. The decision has been made because of a rise in CD business and the usual summer drop in software Consumer electronics sales

wiped out good ground made by Zenith for the firm's second quarter results. PC sales were up 18 per cent but the form's profits were only \$12.1 million due to losses on its television business . . .

A multi passenger flight simulator will be plonked in the middle of the PC Show this autumn courtesy of MicroProse. The firm scored a hit with a smaller version last year and naturally felt that this year bigger would be better. The 14 seater is open

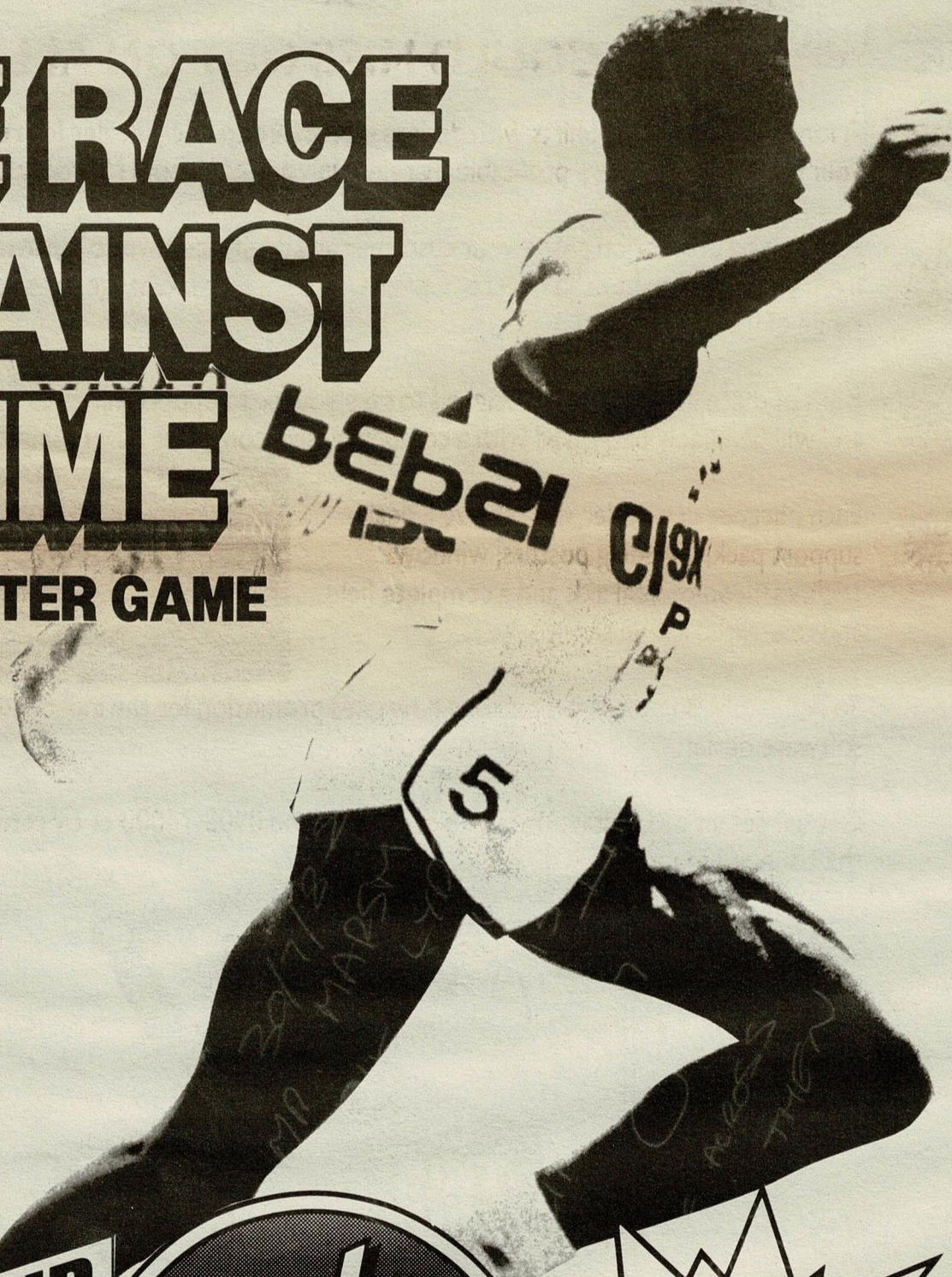


Prose's monstrous machine

## MUSIC BY PETER GABRIEL

# THE RACE AGAINST TIME

COMPUTER GAME



SPORT AID

88

Code Masters Software Co Ltd

£4.99

WRITTEN BY THE OLIVER TWINS

ALL PROFITS TO SPORT AID '88

Code Masters Software Co Ltd  
PO Box 6, Southam,  
Leamington Spa, CV33 0SH

to trade visitors and winners of a competition being held through WH Smiths . . .

In a *Sunday Times* performance study of the UK's top 250 companies Amstrad ranked top for the second time. Boss Alan Sugar boasted that he never lets his staff out for lunch breaks: "They get a sandwich thrown at them and coffee in a mug - if they're lucky," he said.

More words of wisdom from Sugar. On seeing a demonstration of the soon to come satellite receiving equipment last week, he offered: "I was delighted at the quality of the picture. I was afraid that it would be all snowy" . . .

BT rings the changes (again): Telecomsoft has been shifted within BT's infrastructure and now comes under the jurisdiction of Dialcom.

When asked why the shift had been made Dialcom's general manager Tom Baird offered: "We're a very large organisation. A lot of our businesses are re-organised. There's no reason to shift Telecomsoft as a business" .

Distributors and journalists descended on Feltham for a charity football match recently staged by Grandslam. A fair whack was raised for Great Ormond Street Hospital via an auction, donations and programme sales. Men of the match were CTW's Stuart Dinsey and Entertainment

International's Ian Higgins. The final score? It can be obtained via the CTW footie hotline (0438 310184) on the condition that callers donate £5 to the said charity . . .

A security PC package called Gate Keeper has been launched International Data Security. Retailing at £49 it apparently keeps unwanted snoopers out of a computer system . . .

Strategic Simulations - published here via US Gold - has received six nominations for the Origins Awards presented for "outstanding" adventure games . . .

Chairman and co-founder of Microsoft Bill Gates will be the key speaker at the next meeting of the OS/2 User Group on September 5th. The theme? OS/2 and beyond . . .

Newly formed De Gale Marketing (CTW 11th July) has won its first account. Tottenham Court Road based Shekhana has taken on the Nintendo games console. Shekhana's sales director Sheila Nesbeth commented: "We all know it (the Nintendo) is better than the Sega. It will do very well."

Travelling Software - US publisher of file transfer program Lap-Link - has appointed Frontline as its UK distributor . . .

# GET INVOLVED

IN **THE GREAT** Microdealer

# COVERUP



OR

YOU COULD MISS OUT ON ALL THIS:



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



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



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

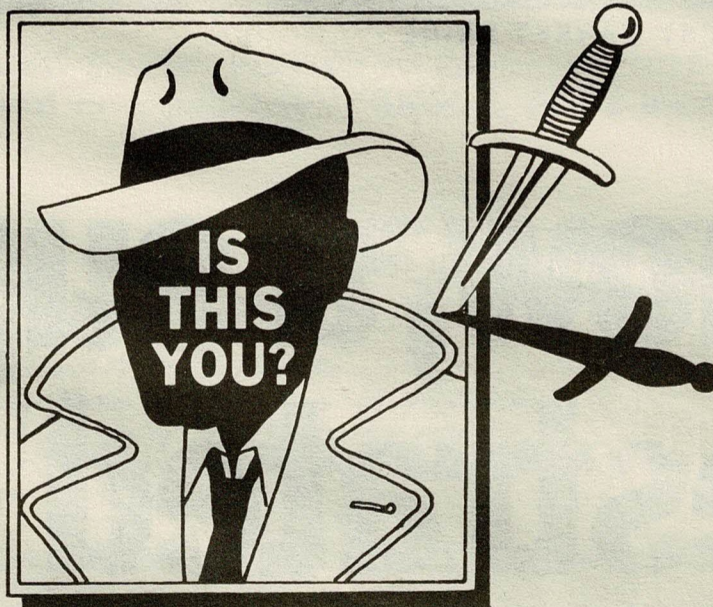


Each Microdealer dealer will receive a dealer support pack, including posters, window stickers, promotional aids and a complete field and telesales back-up service.



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

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

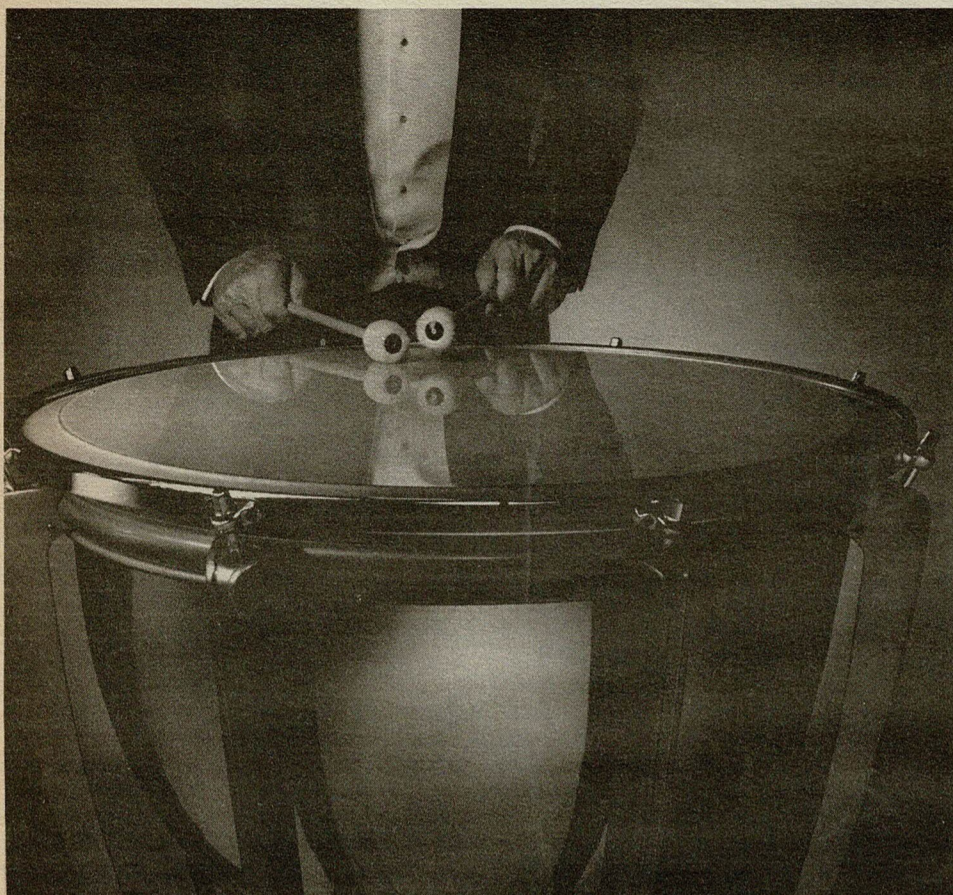


# Microdealer

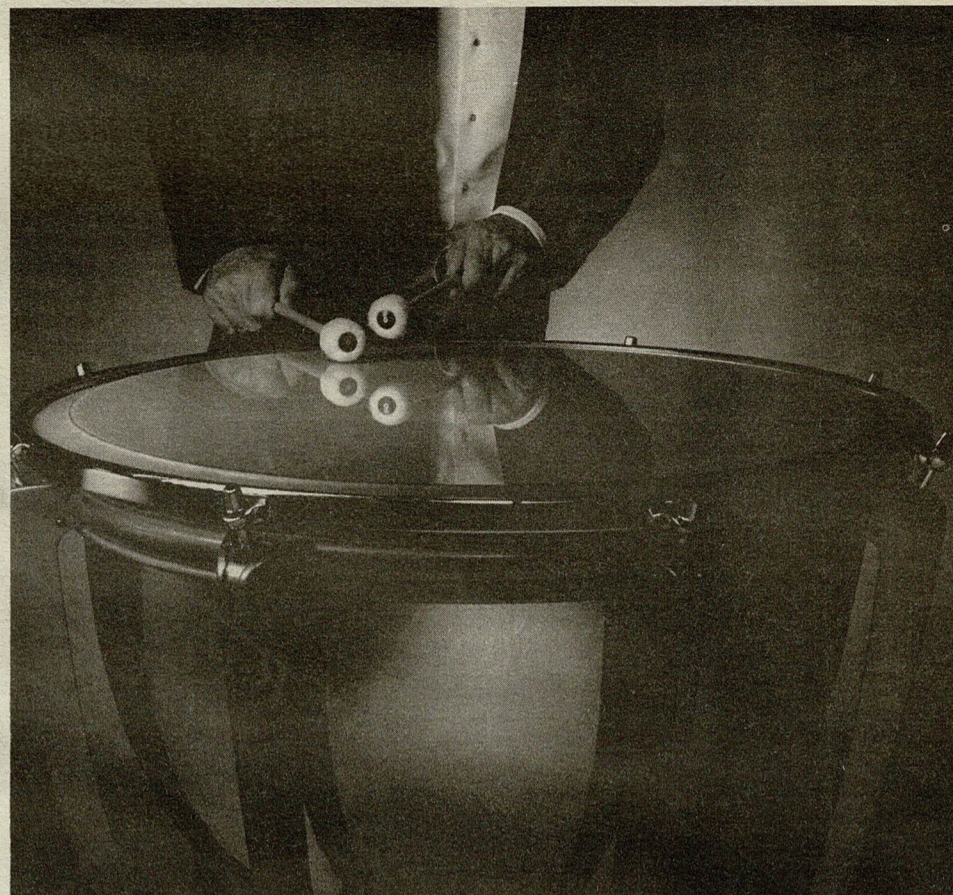
I N T E R N A T I O N A L

Monarch House, 16 Third Avenue, Denbigh West Industrial Estate  
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Tel. 0908 74000

Please send me details of the Cover Up promotion.  
Company .....  
Address .....  
Name .....  
Position .....



· AMIGA 500 PRICE INITIATIVE ·



· HEAVY INVESTMENT IN BUSINESS MARKET ·



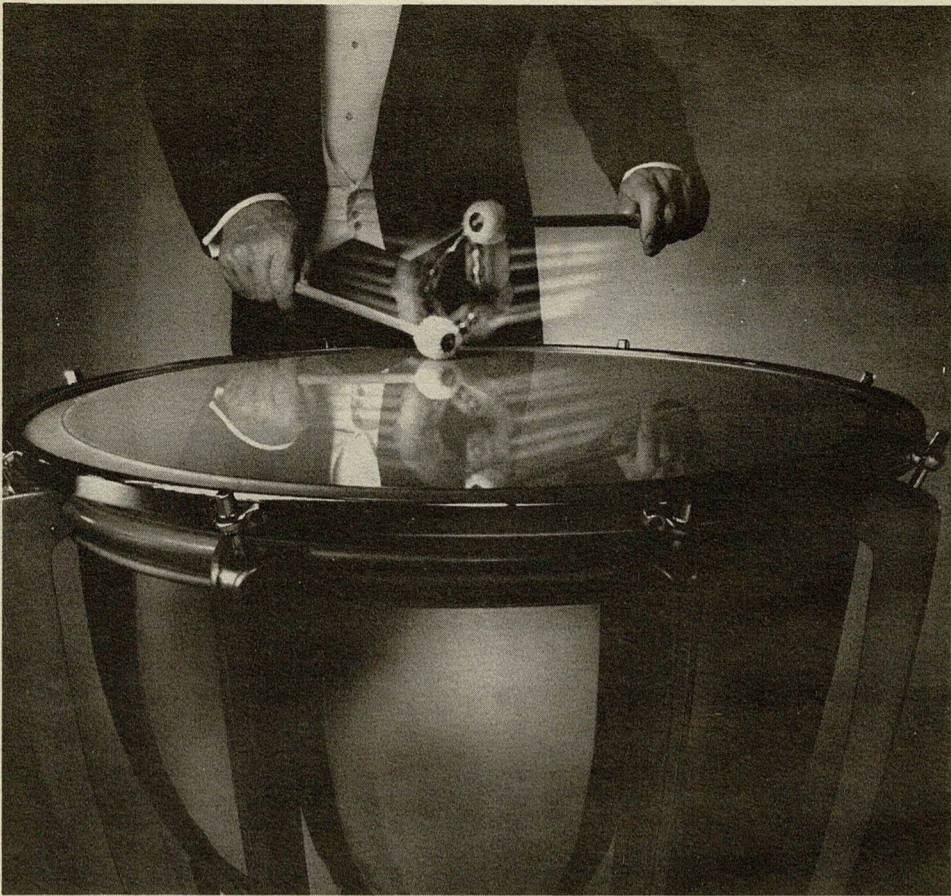
· COMMODORE PCI LOWEST MARKET PRICE ·



· NATIONWIDE SALES ROADSHOWS ·

**And now, a superbly  
orchestrated  
promotional campaign  
from Commodore**





· NEW LEAD GENERATION PROGRAMME FOR DEALERS ·



· NEW DIRECT MARKETING PROGRAMME ·



· PRE-CHRISTMAS TELEVISION SUPPORT ·



· MASSIVE £6 MILLION ADVERTISING CAMPAIGN ·

By now, the message must be very loud and very clear. The name of Commodore is going to be making its presence felt throughout the industry.

Very soon, you'll be seeing us on national posters, in magazines and newspapers. We'll be at roadshows and trade shows. Investing in the business market and education.

An enormous advertising spend will regularly be feeding qualified leads to your dealership. And, through direct mail, we'll be bringing

people back into the market at the time they're ready to buy.

Early next year, we'll be giving you more information about our plans at our first major dealer conference.

Do we hear a note of approval?

If you want to discuss a working partnership with Commodore, please telephone Dealer Liaison on (0628) 770088. If you're already a Commodore dealer, you're to be applauded.



**Commodore**

COMMODORE BUSINESS MACHINES (UK) LIMITED, COMMODORE HOUSE, GARDNER ROAD, MAIDENHEAD, BERKSHIRE.

# WHAT'S THE DIFF FIRST SOFTWARE AND FR

The corporate logo you see at the bottom of this text belongs to a company that is one of the leading trade-only distributors of hardware and software.

Since its introduction of Lotus 1-2-3 into this country over five years ago, it has gone from strength to strength.

It has increased its range of products, year by year.

Won numerous awards for being

the U.K.'s leading distributor of various leading products.

And has a reputation for enjoying itself. (After all, if you don't enjoy your job, you might as well not turn up for work.)

Which means it works harder, and you benefit.

One fact that may surprise you though, is more than half of its business comes from hardware distribution.

And it's a company that's moving in all sorts of new and exciting directions.

Directions in which it will be just as involved and committed as it has been to its dealers for the past five years.

Intec-1, Wade Road, Basingstoke, Hampshire RG24 0NE. Tel: 0256 463344.

**FIRST SOFTWARE**

DISTRIBUTORS OF THE WORLD'S  
LEADING COMPUTER PRODUCTS

# DIFFERENCE BETWEEN ONLINE DISTRIBUTION?

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Intec-1, Wade Road, Basingstoke, Hampshire RG24 0NE. Tel: 0256 463344.

**FRONTLINE**

(As you may have already guessed, the only difference is in the name. In July of this year, First Software changed to Frontline Distribution.)

# LEARNING TO READ ABCs

Now is the time for all good publishing folk to come to the aid of their magazines by burbling on about ABCs. ABCs – for the uninitiated – are the means of measuring magazines' sales and are derived from the Audit Bureau of Circulation. Overleaf, we canvass some of the leading leisure software companies about how much attention they pay to such number waving. Here **RENNIE KAPILLA**, the account director for magazine circulation form Frontline, explains how ABCs work. Frontline handles the distribution of EMAP and Haymarket magazines, including the former's five news-stand computer mags . . .

An ABC ought to be a standard way for a magazine's circulation to be independently audited.

They are registered with the Audited Bureau of Circulation for the benefit of potential advertisers, to see a real figure on copies in read-

ers' hands for an average issue. The reason I've stressed "ought" to be is because there are two ways to compile an ABC: the transactional

method which details every transaction between the months included in the ABC period; and the estimated sale method in which the pub-

lisher must convince the auditor that there are good reasons to believe the sales figures he has submitted. *The transactional method,*

which we use at Frontline covers all transactions between the 1st of January and the 30th of June.

The equation is: all issues sent to wholesalers (both UK and overseas) minus all returns sent back as unsold by the newsagent/wholesaler, plus subscriptions and divided by six if it is a monthly magazine.

The advantage is that the figure will include the latest wholesale orders for the June issue, so it will always be a bit ahead of itself.

The disadvantage is that everything comes back to haunt you. Because sale-or-return in this industry gives wholesalers three months from the off sale date (ie when the next issue appears) to register returns, all the Christmas issue returns will tend to come back to count against the Jan-June figure.

The advantage for the advertiser is that there is no guesswork in the resulting ABC figure. It's a cast iron record of the magazine trading over those six months.

## Second guessed

*The estimated sale method* used by some of the distributors in the home computer market is decided by a debate between the publishers and their auditors.

It looks at the issues produced during the six month period, so Jan-June includes the February, March, April, May, June and July issues. For February and March all UK returns should be in so the publisher looks at his past record and what was distributed overseas and estimates a figure for overseas sales.

For the last four months, there is less hard information to go on. But the publisher will look at his distribution promotional strategy, the returns pattern so far and arrive at a figure.

The auditor will dispute figures which look unreasonable compared to the circumstances and eventual outcome of the same issue the previous year. And the debate ensues.

The advantage for the publisher is that the figure is more controllable and he can reflect any optimism felt about the latest promotion. Also past mistakes (e.g. 100,000 agreed figure for March only turns out to be 80,000) are history and those extra returns never come back to haunt them.

The disadvantage is that everything must be argued using past performance as the base.

## Warts and all

ABC is under pressure from the Periodical Publishers Association to tighten up on its figures and standardise on an auditing system so advertisers can compare like

Continued on page 19

**Are You Good Enough to TACKLE**

**HOT SHOT**

STAR BUY

There is so much in Hot Shot - you need to be a crackshot, a pinball wizard and an ace controller. Have you got what it takes to beat Hot Shot?

GOLD LABEL AWARD

Screen shots from Atari ST version

Universally acclaimed as the greatest game this century. Hot Shot has exceeded all expectations. out of hundreds of games only two have qualified for Addictives Gold Label award. These are Football Manager 2 and Hot Shot. Hot Shot is so action-packed, before you buy, read the back of the Hot Shot box. Available at all quality stores.

"A fast, addictive challenge. Original and humorous." Games Machine

"It looks fabulous ... and well brill it looks too." Sinclair User.

Street Date: End of August.

CBM 64/128 - £9.99 cassette £12.99 disk

Spectrum - £8.99 cassette, +3 £12.99 disk

Amstrad - £9.99 cassette £12.99 disk

Amiga - £19.99 Atari ST - £19.99

IBM PC - £19.99

**No. 1**

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# THE SELLING OF SPACE

With the leisure market magazines becoming ever more important, we thought it was about time to ask some of the leading publishers about what motivates them in placing adverts...



or bad editorial coverage?  
 "We do sometimes wonder how objective the reviews really are, but overall there's a high degree of journalistic integrity in the games market. One does object to putting ads into a publication which pans you, and one occasionally goes through a period where one feels that certain magazines have it in for you. But overall we strongly support the computer press."

**Nick Alexander**  
 Managing director  
 Virgin Games



Telecom Soft

"ABCs are terrifically important: they're as near to an objective measure of what's actually happening as we can expect to have. They're somewhat more useful than publishers' statements. I'm always dubious about readership per copy figures, where they cite six or more per issue."

we've always been opportunistic as a company. Maybe around a third of our bookings - perhaps three of four pages a month - are offers. That third constitutes perhaps 10 per cent of our budget which we hold in reserve. Deals can be jolly good but you can't plan that you'll get them."

"New ABC figures always prompt a re-think in our strategy - absolutely. One's always doing that of course, but it makes one look again at the rate when the actual circulation figures emerge."

What about new launches?  
 "Generally we don't go into first issues unless the rates are absolute dynamite. We prefer to look closely at something once it's been out - scrutinise the racks in the shops, check the distribution, see if something's just sitting there. One can get a fair idea of how well a title's doing fairly swiftly and easily."

What about those that don't have ABCs?

"We also consider the promotional side, such as whether there are cover mounted gifts, though those can be a little speculative."

"I'm sometimes inclined to go with them, but I'm actually suspicious. There again, if they can come up with a rate to match their lack of credibility, we'll consider them. But we try to buy scientifically - or as scientifically as we can. As for 'last minute offers',

Are you influenced by good

of the mass to the specialist market. Taking out TV, that becomes 25/75. There may well have been a slight trend over the years for us away from the specialists, mainly due to our Leisure Genius products being coffee table computer games of gift purchases."

lot of our own surveys."

How far are you influenced by rate?

"We want the keenest rates. When mags give you free ads, it's silly to think we'll advertise with them again because of that."

Does it concern you that some publications (like Pop

and CCI) don't have ABCs?

"Yes, I don't understand why they don't have them. It's up-facing their own mag. Surely it's better for a magazine to have as much as they can? The absence of ABCs makes me slightly suspicious, but it doesn't stop us advertising with them."



"Obviously I am influenced by ABC figures, but it's not only them that influences me in placing ads. It's a combination of ABC, the type of product we're putting out, and so on. If it's a more adult game, we would not advertise in what we consider to be the younger age mags."

How far are you influenced by your own perception of the magazine?

"You haven't got to have your own opinion. I'm not the kid reading the magazine."

Are you influenced by reviews when placing ads?

"If your product is good, then you get good reviews - unless you've got a biased reviewer, which has shown up for us on several occasions. It depends on how big we feel our product will be - we do a

## MEDIA GENIC

"It's irresponsible to ignore ABC figures and obviously I am attentive to them. It's how you view them and the validity you attach to them that is important."

What influences you in your choice of magazine for

placing ads?

"We are aware of our relationship with the magazines, and are interested in its future: we are conscious of what they do. The main thing is the ability to work together. Basic

Continued on page 19

## PROGRAMMERS GRAPHIC ARTISTS MUSICIANS GAMES DESIGNERS

Urgently required to join Britain's most productive and innovative software development house.

We can offer impressive all-round performance to talented and experienced 8086, 8088 (IBM and compatibles) 68000, 6502 and Z80 applicants, for major development projects.

**1**st

Our reputation has spread

**FAST**

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So discover your true hidden potential and join the team

Our team have bought you:  
 OUTRUN (Z80, ATARI ST), ARKANOID,  
 SLAP FIGHT, SIDEARMS,  
 SOLOMONS KEY, ENDURO RACER,  
 TRANTOR, METROCROSS,  
 XEVIUS and many more ...

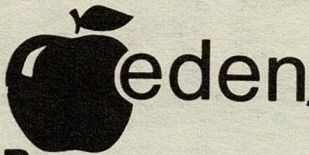


The force behind the industry

Contact:

**Fergus McGovern or William Burey**  
 Probe Software Ltd., Unit 6, Dale Park Court,  
 Tamworth Road, Croydon, Surrey CR0 1XU  
 01 680 4142

**OFFICIAL**



**STANDARD SOFTWARE PACKAGING GUIDE**

AS APPROVED BY MULTIPLE STORES

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<b>BUDGET</b>	Eden Single Cassette Library Case	IM/SLC
	Eden Double Cassette Library Case	IM/DLC
<b>8 BIT</b>	Eden Double Library Case	IM/DLC
	Eden Floppy Disk Case	IM/FDC
<b>16 BIT</b>	Eden Rigid Covered Box with Vacuum formed Trays Softbox or A5 sizes	
	Eden Floppy Disk Case	IM/FDC
	Eden Rigid Covered Box with Vacuum formed Trays Softbox or A5 sizes	

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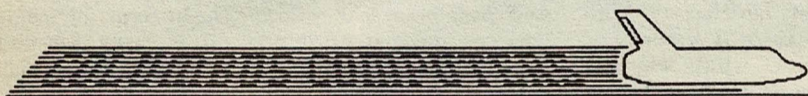
**WE CAN DO IT AND SAVE YOU MONEY**

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UNITS 1/2 CONLON DEVELOPMENT,  
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• Choose from 10 of the very latest games FREE with your first order!

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- 2600 cartridges
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3" £1.65

3 1/2" £0.75

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C64 PSU £9.95

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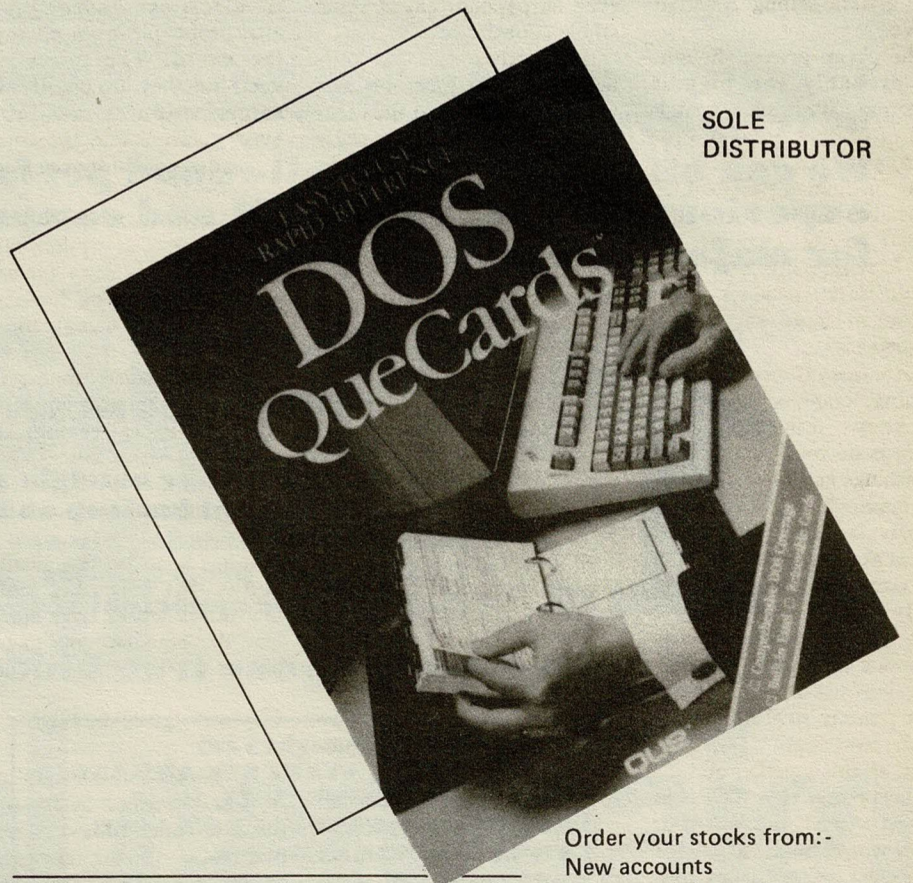
EL PSU £3.95

Telephone Steve Lockwood on

**061 - 301 - 4320 or 061 - 370 - 2118 NOW !**

Experienced users often need clarification of ideas they have not used for some time. Trivial lists of the syntax do not help if you cannot remember what the purpose of the instruction is !

DOS Que cards are Que's way of solving this problem, they are already in wide use at CBL !



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# STREET CREDIBILITY?

With its apocryphal tales of shady deals and cheapest of cheap prices Tottenham Court Road has developed a wonderfully seedy image in the computer world. At the same time, it remains the biggest generator of electrical retail sales in the smallest space in the UK. There has also been a steady trend to go upmarket in terms of hardware stocked of late. **STUART DINSEY** takes a walk . . .

Only in a certain street in London West One do retailers shrug at the sight of trade journalists. There's no excitement, no corny comments like "fame at last" and no sniggering from the young buck salesmen.

That street is Tottenham Court Road, the nation's mecca for electrical products that go boom, bleep or buzz. Sales staff are quick to mumble "not another one" as they learn that their store is to be featured in yet another report on life in 'the Road'. Managers, meanwhile, run for cover behind the nearest stack of boxes or leap onto an available telephone - connected or not.

"The last time one of you lot came here we were called the worst. No one can talk to you," said one gentleman paradoxically called an assistant. This was a legacy of a recent electrical press article which fairly trampled down TCR and most of the shops in it.

The regular visits this area gets from the trade press are due to one simple fact: for stereos, telephones, cassette recorders, paging devices, printers, computers or just about anything else that needs a plug fitted, Tottenham Court Road is the place to go. It has the best range and it has the best prices too.

The range is something that is bound to be there when you consider that two out of every three stores sell electrical goods, each of them usually carry a couple of in-store concessions run by other retailers. Thus, even the highest of hi-fi shops will often as not have a desk selling Amstrad PCWs.

The cheap prices, though, are probably the biggest attraction. With such a high level of competition few products can be retailed effectively at normal retail value. There has to be something offered to the customer to stop him popping next door for the same product. This can mean large savings or bundled extras.

Tottenham Court Road is a bustling, cramped road with the shops mirroring this. There is no room for Habitat furnishings and air conditioning here. Window displays usually have the aesthetic appeal of a ten-year-old's toy cupboard, whilst inside things rarely improve. There are piles of boxes, hoardes of sales assistants each manning their own shop's counter and plenty of punters sniffing around for the best deal.

Put all this together and it's not surprising that TCR has the sort of seedy image Arthur Daley would be proud of. It's an image of no questions asked business - especially questions about where the stock came from - and cheap prices substituted for warranties, quality and suchlike.

There is, of course, some truth in this and there are still some very shady operators. But TCR simply wouldn't



Shabby in look it might be but Tottenham Court Road is looking increasingly upmarket for its nice little earners

have the pulling power that it still retains if all the shops were as underhand as legend insists.

## Seedless gripes

Despite only arriving in force six years ago, computers have taken to the Road well and now make up a large slice of takings. The clutch of stores and concessions owned by major players like Gultronics, G & B and Micro Anvika probably boast a collective computer turnover nearing or even surpassing that of some whole counties.

The seedy image that journalists love to focus on certainly pervaded into the computer stores in the early years and still exists to a degree today. But the big operators are trying hard to move away from that as corporates and government and education accounts loom ever larger as prospective customers.

Few of the shops even had a Spectrum or Amstrad CPC in stock, let alone crates of them soon to be quietly offloaded to Poland. There weren't any unmarked PC clones just in from Hong Kong either.

The games world here is a 16-bit world where the Amiga is quite definitely king. Other than that it's PCs, portables and printers all the way. After a string of disappointing autumns and unreported busts it is business rather than leisure that has arisen as the till filling path. The small but growing Shekhana is a concession and the only outlet specialising in games, offering a full range of formats.

Gultronics, with three outlets in the Road plus two elsewhere in London, is a self-styled 'serious' retailer. It turns over some £20 million and claims to employ 100 people in all.

Boss Sam Tulsiani has been retailing here for 20 years

with the slow grind from brown goods to computers starting in 1982. The latter sector now makes up some 60 per cent of business.

This man has technical staff, runs a hotline, advertises regularly in *The Standard* and claims to be looking very carefully at TV advertising. It's not surprising that 'seedy' is not the first word on his lips when assessing his most successful stamping ground.

"Tottenham Court Road has an attraction for the end-user because it has the latest in electrical gadgetry. It attracts people from all over the world. The prices are keen but they are usually the same products available everywhere else in the country and supplied by the same suppliers.

"This seedy image has been built by jealous dealers outside the Road. They try and stop people coming here because it is far too competitive for them."

Tulsiani insists that it is simply sharp buying and large volumes that gives him the chance to drop prices, but even then they are not so low as to cause manufacturer's unrest.

It tends to be the smaller outfits that only offer really low prices whilst large stores give the big discounts to big buyers.

## Cheap uncheerful

Q-Tronic, which can only be described as an anything-goes electrical store, had some of the cheapest prices in the road. The computers available were only Amstrad. A 20Mb 1640HD was offered at £1,260 rather than £1,437 and a PCW 9512 was down from £574 to £445 including VAT.

A sales assistant proffered a grubby leaflet when questions were asked about the 9512's

capabilities and software. On hearing more in depth questions such as "how come your prices are so cheap?" A second assistant offered that too many questions were being asked. The sales pitch ended.

Despite complete ignorance about how any such thing might work, a one year guarantee was still offered on the 9512. That said, seeing £1.99 tennis sets on sale in the same store doesn't fill you with enormous confidence.

"People think it's a rip-off market. It's not really but the small places definitely try to get away with anything," comments Ian Hegarty, manager of G & B Computers' TCR outlet which was previously a sex shop. It also has concessions in Galaxy and Budget Sound Systems.

For these G&B pays something near £500 a month in rent. The expense is outweighed by the three retailers who pay G&B for a counter in Hegarty's shop.

The firm turned over around £2.5 million in 1987 and is looking at £4.5-5 million for this year. Like Gultronics it is the business market that is being attacked with the Amiga and a little bit of ST making up most leisure sales.

Hegarty claims that things have been pretty bad for the computer stores lately thanks to the strength of the pound and the usual summer dip. The pound factor is a very important one. Many, many customers come from abroad to buy products at low prices in Tottenham Court Road and then claim the VAT back as it goes out of the country.

Around 20 per cent of G&B's business comes this way. Hegarty argues that it was historically the large number of often African, Asian or Mediterranean customers that helped the TCR

stores develop as rather ramshackle in appearance. "They're used to shops like that in their countries. A lot of people come here trying to barter too."

The recent bad times have caused price-cutting to increase over the past few weeks. Hegarty claims that one outlet was recently selling an Amiga 2000 system for £2,080 instead of the usual £2,500. As far as he could work it out they were actually losing £50 on the sale.

"When it gets quiet, profit takes second place to turnover: all the bills are coming in but no money. Things are sold cheap because they know they can make it up in the good months."

Hegarty claims that his store usually tries to work on a 15 per cent margin with an absolute bottom line of 13 per cent. Others, he said, would stoop to trade plus five per cent. Those others, of course, said that they wouldn't but he would.

One contender on the Road has little it can do to keep up with the discount houses. Laskys has two outlets, one of them a business centre à la Dixons. This is a new initiative, with only three others currently up and running in the UK.

## Best indies

It is something of a paradox that on Tottenham Court Road it is the multiple that has to try and gain sales by offering expert staff and guaranteed after sales support. In other words, it offers all the bells and whistles that an independent usually employs to stave off the threat of Dixons, Smiths and Boots in the high street.

In the suburbs it is the big stores that have the discounting muscle, but here the multiples aren't on safe ground.

Testament to this is the fact that Laskys is indeed the only multiple battling it out for business.

The major independents don't count it as a serious threat yet, but the stock is there in the shape of Amstrad PCWs and PCs, Zenith PCs, Acorn's Archimedes and Commodore's Amigas, C64 and PCs.

If the store's manager Jo Simons is anything to go by the commitment to succeed is there too. "Our problem is to build ourselves a reputation. And with some heavy advertising coming up we should be in there properly within the next six months."

Pricing, however, is his Achilles heel. The Series III Commodore PC20 that sits in his store has £69 chopped off to make for a £1,200 pricepoint, but he admits that most others in the Road will offer it at another £100 cheaper.

Simons believes that the wheeler dealing is still there, so much so that it is apparently repairs that is Laskys' most successful computer operation - repairs of products bought elsewhere.

He truly believes that a multiple can make an impression on the bargain hunters if they can be educated to take factors into account other than price.

Tulsiani disagrees. "Obviously Dixons, Currys and Comet must have looked at Tottenham Court Road years ago, and Edgware Road. But they don't even consider them because they know they couldn't compete with the independents. We're not complacent dealers here, and they know that."

In terms of manufacturers it is easily Amstrad that is king. From the smallest shop to the largest Mr Sugar's PCWs and PCs are on view. More upmarket names such as Epson, Toshiba and Sharp are forcing their way in via the new wave of trading up but Commodore is still the clear number two.

"Commodore restructured their sales team by sacking half the people in their company and it seems to have worked. They've tried very hard in this road. I believe they're even trying to get into Wildings in Percy Street," comments Simons.

In the independents there are CBM monitors and drives that the rest of retailerland thinks disappeared years ago. The ST pops up here and there, but for Atari fans it really is only the ST plus a few distant memories filling "sold as seen" boxes.

Yes, for all its newfound delusions of grandeur those "sold as seen" bins do still exist. Sonic Foto Center, whilst boasting a fair array of modern day offerings is one of the few archetypal Tottenham Court Road outfits left.

Here all Amstrad and Opus PCs carried a special offer of a

Continued on page 19





# SPECTRUM TOP 20

TW	LW	Title	Publisher	RRP£
1	1	FOOTBALL MANAGER 2	ADDICTIVE	9.99
2	2	EUROPEAN FIVE A SIDE	FIREBIRD	1.99
3	3	A C E	CASCADE	2.99
4	7	AIR WOLF	ENCORE	1.99
5	NE	BATTLESIPS	ENCORE	1.99
6	4	YOGI BEAR	ALTERNATIVE	1.99
7	10	BEACH BUGGY SIMULATOR	FIREBIRD	1.99
8	8	GHOSTBUSTERS	MASTERTRONIC	1.99
9	28	SHANGHAI KARATE	PLAYERS	1.99
10	9	TARGET RENEGADE	IMAGINE	7.95
11	18	TRAP DOOR	ALTERNATIVE	1.99
12	21	STUNT BIKE SIMULATOR	FIREBIRD	1.99
13	5	ROCKY HORROR SHOW	ALTERNATIVE	1.99
14	14	STEVE DAVIS SNOOKER	BLUE RIBBON	1.99
15	RE	BIONIC COMMANDO	CAPCOM-GO!	8.99
16	22	WAY OF THE EXPLODING FIST	MASTERTRONIC	1.99
17	20	FRUIT MACHINE SIMULATOR	CODE MASTERS	1.99
18	6	FRANK BRUNOS BOXING	ENCORE	1.99
19	12	SAMANTHA FOX STRIP POKER	REACT	1.99
20	29	SUPER STUNTMAN	CODE MASTERS	1.99

# C64 TOP 20

TW	LW	Title	Publisher	RRP£
1	1	FOOTBALL MANAGER 2	ADDICTIVE	9.95
2	2	A C E	CASCADE	2.99
3	22	BIONIC COMMANDO	CAPCOM-GO!	9.99
4	28	AIR WOLF	ENCORE	1.99
5	4	EUROPEAN FIVE A SIDE	FIREBIRD	1.99
6	10	SAMANTHA FOX STRIP POKER	REACT	1.99
7	NE	BATTLESIPS	ENCORE	1.99
8	7	RALLY DRIVER	ALTERNATIVE	1.99
9	25	BEACH BUGGY SIMULATOR	FIREBIRD	1.99
10	3	YOGI BEAR	ALTERNATIVE	1.99
11	NE	ROAD BLASTERS	US GOLD	9.99
12	17	BRUCE LEE	AMERICANA	2.99
13	5	FRANK BRUNOS BOXING	ENCORE	1.99
14	6	FOOTBALL MANAGER	ADDICTIVE	2.99
15	20	ROCKY HORROR SHOW	ALTERNATIVE	1.99
16	9	STEVE DAVIS SNOOKER	BLUE RIBBON	1.99
17	13	GHOSTBUSTERS	MASTERTRONIC	1.99
18	23	WE ARE THE CHAMPIONS	OCEAN	9.99
19	11	FRUIT MACHINE SIMULATOR	CODE MASTERS	1.99
20	14	HOLLYWOOD POKER	PLAYERS	1.99

# AMSTRAD TOP 10

TW	LW	Title	Publisher	RRP£
1	1	FOOTBALL MANAGER 2	ADDICTIVE	9.99
2	4	AIR WOLF	ENCORE	1.99
3	3	A C E	CASCADE	2.99
4	8	BEACH BUGGY SIMULATOR	FIREBIRD	1.99
5	11	RALLY DRIVER	ALTERNATIVE	1.99
6	16	EUROPEAN FIVE A SIDE	FIREBIRD	1.99
7	RE	ALIENS	MASTERTRONIC	1.99
8	2	YOGI BEAR	ALTERNATIVE	1.99
9	12	STEVE DAVIS SNOOKER	BLUE RIBBON	1.99
10	13	SAMANTHA FOX STRIP POKER	REACT	1.99

# ATARI ST TOP 5

TW	LW	Title	Publisher	RRP£
1	5	GAUNTLET 2	US GOLD	19.99
2	7	OUT RUN	SEGA-US GOLD	19.99
3	3	DUNGEON MASTER	MIRRORSOFT	24.99
4	RE	ALIEN SYNDROME	ACE	19.99
5	1	FOOTBALL MANAGER 2	ADDICTIVE	19.99

# AMIGA TOP 5

TW	LW	Title	Publisher	RRP£
1	NE	FOOTBALL MANAGER 2	ADDICTIVE	19.99
2	2	INTERCEPTOR	ELECTRONIC ARTS	24.95
3	2	AAARGH	MELBOURNE HOUSE	19.99
4	NE	BARDS TALE 2	ELECTRONIC ARTS	24.95
5	NE	PHANTASM	EXOCET	19.95

## SHARE OF SALES BY MACHINE

Machine	Units sold (%)				Titles sold (%)			
	This week	Last week	4wks ago	12wks ago	This week	Last week	4wks ago	12wks ago
SPECTRUM	43.3	41.3	45.5	43.8	30.6	28.5	31.0	28.2
COMMODORE 64	23.3	23.6	22.6	22.7	23.3	22.5	23.6	25.6
AMSTRAD	20.7	18.7	17.7	17.8	19.9	17.7	18.8	18.0
ATARI ST	3.7	4.2	4.4	4.3	7.4	7.8	7.5	6.4
COMMODORE 16	2.6	3.1	2.1	2.3	2.7	3.0	2.6	3.5
BBC	1.6	1.3	1.9	2.1	3.0	2.9	3.3	3.9
AMIGA	1.1	2.2	1.7	1.7	2.3	3.8	2.5	2.4
ATARI	0.7	1.8	1.1	1.3	2.0	3.4	2.0	2.4
ELECTRON	0.6	1.1	1.1	1.6	1.6	2.2	2.6	2.3

## AVERAGE SALES PER PANEL SHOP

Units Sold			
This week	Last week	4wks ago	12wks ago
100	96	76	98

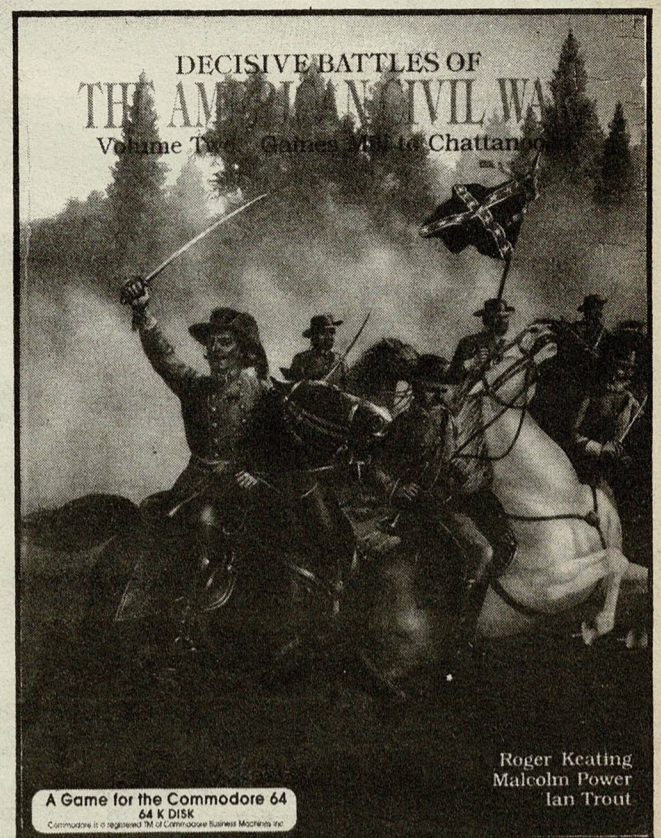
# Soft options

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

▲ **BLUE RIBBON:** *Rugby, Darts, Golf* (SpBBC — £1.99) After the success of *Steve Davis* in the £1.99 stakes it's hardly surprising to see Blue Ribbon letting loose a bunch more sporty types. No doubt they'll all fair well although it's hard to imagine these sports sims being anywhere near as attractive as their full price counterparts. ▲

▲ **ELECTRONIC ARTS:** *American Civil War Volume II* (64 — £18.95) May seem pricey but there's plenty in the package. That said, it's just another boring war sim. ▲ **ELITE:** *Bombjack* (ST — £19.95) What better way to enter the 16-bit soup than re-releasing old faves on the new formats? *Bombjack* was an 8-bit chart topper a couple of years ago and the intervening time span won't put off the punters. ▲

▲ **ENCORE:** *Saboteur* (SpAm64 — £1.99) This was a biggie at the end of '86 when Ninja games really were alive and kicking. ▲ **GRAND SLAM:** *Peter Beardsley's*



A Game for the Commodore 64  
64 K DISK  
Commodore is a registered TM of Commodore Business Machines Inc.

Roger Keating  
Malcolm Power  
Ian Trout

▲ **MIRRORSOFT:** *The Bermuda Project* (Ag £24.99) Contemporary adventure set on a Bermudan island with lots

of nasty things crawling around. This was written by erstwhile whizz kid Eugene Evans. ▲ **OCEAN:**

▲ **SOFTWARE PUBLISHING ASSOCIATES:**

*Championship Cricket* (STAg — £14.95) If this wasn't about cricket teams it would probably be called *Football Manager*. Lots of cups and leagues, players to pick, sell and buy and the inevitable financial decisions to make. Cricket bores will love it. ▲

▲ **TARGET:** *Laser Squad* (Sp — £9.95) A curious mixture of man to man combat game and war simulation. Users can buy new scenarios every few months although only through mail order. Target reckons that every new scenario — costing about £3.50 each — constitutes a new game. ▲

▲ **US GOLD:** *Summertime Specials* (SpAm64 — £12.99) Sure fire compilation sporting a mix of *Trantor*, *Solomon's Key*, *Captain America*, *Rygar* and *Brave Starr*. *World Class Leaderboard* is also there. It will be appearing on a golf compilation later in the year.



▲ **MARTECH:** *Vixen* (AgPC — £19.99 — £24.99) Poor offering which will have appealed more to impressionable kids than serious PC owners who presumably expect their games to be of substance. ▲

▲ **MASTERTRONIC:** *Barbarian* (Sp64 — £9.99) Not the Palace version but Psynosis' earlier offering. "They're two totally different products," says Psynosis. And indeed they are. The Tronics are simply publishing 8-bit versions of the game. ▲

▲ **OCEAN:**



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

**SPEAKEASY**

# Gold row rumbles on

After returning from a two weeks holiday (US Gold's new margins being announced just prior to my going) I looked forward to reading CTW and finding out the latest happenings, feeling sure you would have an article on the subject.

Having read your article I feel that Microbyte comes out of it in a poor light. In the article appears the paragraph "Some though are not being entirely sensible in what can only be described as revenge." It then goes on to quote Martyn Brown of Microbyte Leeds as saying "the only way to hit back at Geoff Brown is to stop using Centresoft".

Put in these personal terms it does in fact sound as though revenge is being sought, but please allow me the space to explain.

I received a letter from US Gold on Friday 1st July outlining their plans to reduce discounts. I was horrified to say the least. Over the weekend I considered the course of action to take. I could either sit back and do nothing and watch other software houses follow US Gold's lead; I could boycott US Gold's products; or I could carry US Gold but without promoting it.

There is no way I would just sit back, and although I cannot agree with Trisha Steadman's statement (Bits &

Bytes Liverpool) that to boycott US Gold's product is childish, if this is what dealers feel they should do then good luck to them. Any action is better than no action: I decided not to boycott US Gold.

The course of action I decided to take was to write to US Gold and put the case of the independent retailer as I saw it, and I asked Mr Geoff Brown to reconsider.

I received a courteous reply from Geoff Brown but could not agree with his comments.

I will continue to carry US Gold product - my customers may ask for it after all - but there will be NO promotion of any US Gold product in any Microbyte shop so long as I can promote and sell other software at greater profit. This is a business decision not revenge. As a result of my actions I believe I will sell less US Gold product than in the past but more of US Gold competitors' products.

If other independents do the same US Gold's market share will decrease and other software houses will think twice about following US Gold's lead. Independent retailers cannot afford to promote US Gold product.

Geoff Brown is the proprietor of US Gold and Centresoft. As a purely business decision I have stopped using Centresoft. How can I provide profit for Geoff Brown through Centresoft when I do

not agree with him taking 10 per cent extra through US Gold?

The reason given for the new discount structure is to prevent discounting. I cannot imagine the discount to Boots has altered. In the past Boots has given away 1 FREE full price game with every three purchased (by having a card stamped) i.e. £40 of software for £30. Boots now have a promotion whereby they will give a £1.99 game free with a £7.95 game purchase.

In Mr Brown's eyes does this count as discounting? And if so is he taking action to stop it now he has reduced my discount so that I cannot compete - except of course on selection, efficiency, and PROFESSIONAL well informed staff.

I would ask each and every independent retailer to take whatever action he thinks fit - other software houses are watching.

In your article Lorraine Stewart of The Micro-Shop Glasgow expressed sympathy for the telesales staff at Centresoft taking the flak. I can second that and advise retailers to put their thoughts on paper and address them to G. BROWN US GOLD.

**M. Robinson**  
Proprietor  
Microbyte  
Leeds, Manchester, Wakefield

# Even more on Gold

It would appear that US Gold have shot themselves in the foot if their products are plainly middle of the road as has generally been the case recently. Either Geoff Brown and Co are highly confident about the quality of forthcoming releases or they have totally misjudged retailers' reactions.

Many of us have expensive high street locations and generally need margins of 40 per cent to be able to move reasonable volumes of product as the distributors would want us to.

So, over to you US Gold.

Your success or failure will rely on the quality of your product in future.

**Paul Dubell**  
Doublevision  
Ealing  
London W5

- After the extraordinary run-in we had with US Gold in last week's issue, it might've been expected that the matter would have died down. Not a bit of it. Our phoned lines indicate that at least some dealers are very irate, even if they are too aware of Gold's muscle to speak out.

From our point of view, there's been yet another remarkable development with the firm. We eventually spoke to its boss Geoff Brown after last week's issue had been closed to arrange a clear the air meeting.

In the course of the exchange, Brown said that CTW "could well find itself in court, where you'd have to name your source on the Elite story (CTW July 18th)". When it was pointed out to him that no journalist worth his or her salt would ever name a source, he said that Gold would nonetheless pursue the matter and that we would have to take the consequences. When told that this could ultimately mean imprisonment for contempt of court, Brown said that that is what CTW's editor would then face.

As we said last week, "Readers may wish to make their own judgement on a firm which chooses this tactic". If Gold wishes to pursue its quite extraordinary and unnecessary high risk tactics, then so be it.

If the issue concerns Gold so much that it is prepared to help set in motion a train of events that could result in a journalist's imprisonment, then these must be rum times indeed in Birmingham. But it cannot expect CTW or the trade in general to respond favourably. If Gold wishes to up the odds from possible injunction to possible imprisonment, then we're staying in the game.

Time to think again . . .



BROWN: Prison talk

# So that explains it, then

Mr Barry Young, the managing director of Amstrad Distribution Ltd. (ADL) has asked me to write to you with regard to the story carried on page 2 of your July 25th issue.

There is no truth in the statement that ADL has slap-

ped a minimum order clause on its dealers with the specific intent of pruning its dealer base. It is true, however, that ADL has decided to limit its dealer base to those dealers who are capable of obtaining a £5,000 credit account. The decision of whether such an

account will be given to any specific dealer is made by our credit control department. No special exceptions are made as you suggest by the managing director or any of the directors of ADL.

ADL's transport costs are very low and therefore reg-

istered dealers may order as many or as few products from ADL in any order. There is thus no minimum order requirement from dealers.

There is also no truth in the allegation that minimum order requirements are set for some products and not for others.

We would be grateful if you could print a correction to the

article concerned which may be misconstrued by third parties.

**David Hyams**  
Corporate Lawyer  
Amstrad Brentwood

- With any luck, that should clear up the whole matter. We tried to speak to ADL about it at the time and were told the details as printed by us by one company figure - who then in a

mildly paranoid way said that he would deny ever having spoken to CTW if questioned. So it goes.

Incidentally, if Amstrad wishes us to "print a correction to the article concerned which may be misconstrued by third parties", then we will. We've got shelves full of corrections that can quite easily be misconstrued.

## ADVERTISEMENT MANAGER

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## Wit's in a name?

This trivial correspondence is all very well, but what is greging ham?

**Yours etc**  
**Bill Poel**  
NewStar Software  
Brentwood

- William, if my name were an anagram of 'Male Pillow' - with all the implicit associations it throws up - I think I'd keep quiet about others' nomenclature felicities . . .

## Knocking copy knocked

It is not often in this business that one will admit to making serious errors of judgement, but having seen the latest Elite advertisement for *Overlander*, we now realise the error of our ways.

During the development of *Nigel Mansell's Grand Prix* we did, in fact, consider fitting two Exocet missiles and a sub-machine gun to the Williams Formula One chassis. However, after lengthy discussions with Nigel and the Williams

Team, we were advised that it would be very dangerous for Nigel to take his hands from the steering wheel to press the fire buttons, particularly in adverse driving conditions.

We decided, therefore, not to incorporate these features - which we now realise was a grave mistake. Well done Elite for doing it right - but could we suggest adding two extra boxes to your list:

1. Technically Accurate Simulation - *Nigel Mansell's Grand Prix* / *Overlander* ×
  2. Endorsed by Leading Sporting Personality - *Nigel Mansell's Grand Prix* / *Overlander* ×
- Yours sincerely**  
**David Martin**  
Managing director  
Software Communication (Martech)

- Good old knocking copy ads: why doesn't every firm do them? If more did, we could publish meaningful little tables full of ticks and crosses about whether they've received complaints from Martech, Elite - or even US Gold.

PS to Martech: why would fitting guns to Nigel Mansell's car cause him any problems? It's not as if he finishes vast numbers of races these days in any case . . .

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## THE SELLING OF SPACE

Continued from page 13

cally it's down to the staff, the content of the magazine and the promotional activities of that magazine."

How far are you influenced by reviews?

"We're not influenced by good or bad reviews. Bad reviews do not result in our pulling ads, as good reviews do not result in our placing more. The feedback from my staff is far more important — we view a magazine's content and effectiveness. We appreciate the ones who take the trouble to phone you up; the ones who can take criticism. Having said that we sup-

port most publications."

Does it concern you that some magazines don't have ABCs?

"Yes. Although an ABC is no more than a statistic I don't see why they should have any difficulty in producing something like an ABC figure. The absence of such figures does not necessarily make me less likely to advertise, it just makes me carry out a more detailed investigation into the magazine."

**Rod Cousens**  
UK managing director  
Mediagenic

## MASTERTRONIC

"You take note of ABC figures — they are very beneficial in showing the size of the magazine or newspaper. It's not 100 per cent ABC figures that influences me in placing ads, it's a combination of a lot of things: promotional activities of the publication, the look, what's in it for me, rates, and the ABCs."

Are you influenced by editorial coverage and reviews?

"Not necessarily. It depends on our product more than anything. Obviously if a magazine were slamming all our product with bad reviews,

I wouldn't advertise with them."

How do you decide which publications to advertise in?

"There are so many magazines in the market place it is difficult. I place an ad to see the response I get. It's trial and error really."

Does it concern you that some publications (like CCI and Pop) don't have ABCs?

"No, we still advertise with them. However, I don't see why they shouldn't have them — they're pretty standard."

**Mandy Slater**  
Mastertronic

## MICROPROSE

SIMULATION • SOFTWARE

"It's more than just ABCs. It's the relationship with the magazine, its content, and its look."

Are you influenced by editorial coverage and reviews?

"I wouldn't advertise in a journal that expects us to spend a small fortune on advertising without giving us editorial coverage. Our usual response to that type of publications is 'on your bike'. If they give us editorial coverage then we feel more inclined to

advertise with them. As for reviews, we release so few products and they are always very highly rated."

How do you decide which publications to advertise in?

"We spend in excess of £1 million in advertising altogether a year, and we only don't advertise with one or two publications. The relationship with the advertising rep is important. I am distressed by ad reps who hassle you to book ads at the end of the month just because you booked one before."

How far does rate influence you?

"Our main concern is that we're paying as cheap rate as everyone else, at the most competitive price."

Do you advertise in CCI and Pop, despite the absence of ABCs?

"We don't advertise in Pop Weekly, but we do in CCI. They have a good relationship with us. They are aimed at a more mature audience — you see it all around the world selling to a higher profile person. We like CCI."

**Stuart Bell**  
UK managing director  
MicroProse

# THERE'S NEVER BEEN MORE OF THESE...



## READING THESE

**COMMODORE USER**

**69,006**

**SINCLAIR USER**

**85,615**

**COMPUTER +video GAMES**

**108,800**

To find out how EMAP's best ever circulation results can boost your sales call us on 01-251 6222

## LEARNING TO READ ABCs

Continued from page 12 with like.

Advertising agencies and national papers are also keen to bring in more up-to-date figures so that the quarterly ABC may not be so far away.

As ABCs do have their warts but advertisers have little option but to accept them as the closest they can get to fact.

And they do provide a vital function in keeping publishers honest. The surest way to publish profitably is to have ad rates and claim a marvellous circulation figure while in fact keeping print runs to a minimum. So it is advertisers' interests to encourage publications to register their ABC at the earliest opportunity.

## STREET CREDIBILITY?

Continued from page 15 database worth £399 for just one pound. Only after a lot of trying was it discovered that this database was the unsuccessful *Please* by modem specialist Hayes.

Centre stage of Sonic Foto was taken by piles and piles of Commodore's Plus 4 complete with datacorder, joystick and ten games for £69.95. There was also a C64 Connoisseur pack with 1701 colour monitor and 801 printer for just £349. And of course, a solitary Dragon without its full quota of keys has to get its mention — strangely, no price was recommended.

Despite the obvious changes since the days when the faulty Spectrum was leader of the pack there is still no place for the likes of IBM or Compaq in Tottenham Court Road. But the top-end is getting higher by the week. An Amstrad PS/2 machine is only a few months away and it won't look out of place here.

But then, to be honest, nothing does really.

# Montbuild still confident as Gremlin quits PC Show

**The to-ing and fro-ing, agreeing and disagreeing and booking and cancelling of the PC Show took a further twist last week with Gremlin announcing that it will not be taking a stand.**

In the same week that Grandslam booked a full stand (see story inside) Gremlin has likened the event to "a carnival parade" and cancelled its provisional booking of

an 82 square metres prime site stand.

To this, organiser Montbuild is reacting nonchalantly, despite a tug of war lasting throughout most of this year between the wills and won'ts. On each occasion that a firm has pulled out Montbuild has stated that the show is set to break all records - this time is no exception.

"People like to scaremonger but in terms of hard facts bookings are up," offered a spokesman. "There's a queue wishing to buy up prime sites.

We're having to occupy parts of Earls Court which we hadn't originally envisaged."

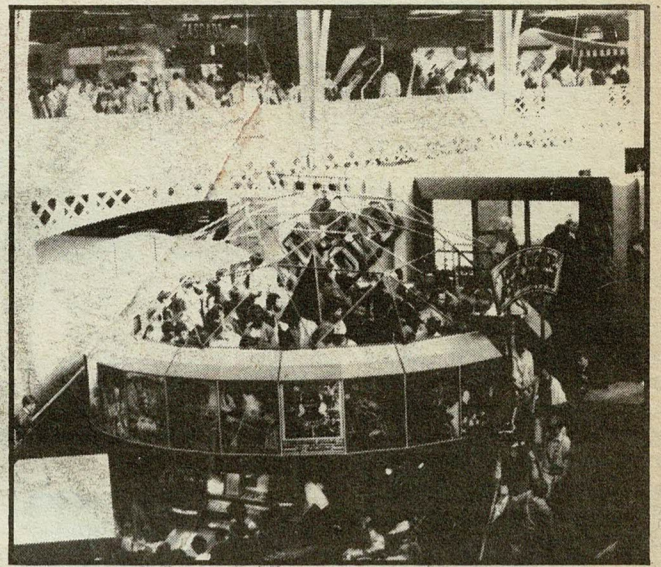
He did concede that it is "rather late in the day to talk about pulling out" but claimed that there would be no problem in filling the site.

Gremlin itself will be housed in an office open to trade visitors. The move may be part of the re-alignment between the firm and US Gold. Gremlin boss Ian Stewart commented: "Last year it was evident that the show had turned into a carnival pa-

rade to see who could build the biggest and most impressive stand."

Gremlin was housed near the centre of the leisure hall last year in a memorable offering. No doubt the cost of this will have played on Stewart's mind. He went on to say: "In my view the main people to benefit were the companies building the stands." Gremlin will also be staging a video presentation and party at Stringfellows nightclub on the Tuesday before the show begins.

● It also emerged last week that, for the second year running, Lightning won't be taking a stand. Other companies to decline include Palan and PST.



GREMLIN: Busy '87, just office in '88

## Amstrad

Continued from front page

share - even though it was not available for eight months of that. In May itself, it took 30 per cent of the sector, thus heading off the Cambridge Z88 which has managed to maintain a healthy share.

This PPC level shows the expected falling off from March (when it took 44 per cent of sector sales) and April (a remarkable 48 per cent), when interest was at its highest.

Of more concern to Amstrad will be the Context finding that it is running a full nine points behind IBM in the overall year to May PC market.

In various months of last year, Amstrad was ahead of IBM. In January, the duo were all but level. For May, the figures read IBM 31 per cent and Amstrad 22 per cent.

Context director Jeremy Davies attributes the drop almost exclusively to the much publicised problems Amstrad has been experiencing over supply. At this stage, he said, it was difficult to discern any other underlying reasons.

The Context figures, as ever, do not include any PCW sales. Davies pointed out that if he added together all the machines monitored by Context - all PCs, PS/2s, Apple etc - then the PCW would have taken a quite staggering 29.6 per cent volumetric share in the twelve months to May.

## Commodore

Continued from front page

others have begun to get very interested in what we're doing. Up until recently, they've been on decent terms with us - now, they're getting very close. We're talking to a wide range of distributors and chains," CBM's marketing manager Dean Barrett restricted himself to saying ahead of the official announcement.

## Sega cut

Continued from front page

Heath was cautious about going into too much detail, "because at this stage we don't want to give too much away - all that would be doing would be telling Nintendo."

He claimed, however, that he was unimpressed with Nintendo's effort to hit the big time in this country. "We are not really bothered by Nintendo's effect."

Sega packages now range from £79.95 (power base, two hand controllers, built-in game Hang-On) to £129.95 (basics, plus 3D glasses, light-phaser, built-in Missile Defense 3D).

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"This is one of the most addictive arcade adventures I have ever played, the gameplay is fabulous."

Zzap Gold Medal.

"Having been totally addicted to the original Super Mario Bros., it is no mean feat to say that I found the Giana Sisters as compulsive."

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