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CTW

RENEGADE III
A Quest Through Time...

27.3.89 BRITAIN'S TOP COMPUTER TRADE WEEKLY ISSUE 229

Leisure firms unite to scupper pirates

The leisure computer trade united last week to launch the market's biggest ever offensive against software piracy.

The startling show of collaboration followed a speech by Bob Hay — co-ordinator of the Federation Against Software Theft — at the 1989 Computer Arena conference held in Palma, Majorca.

A batch of new ideas to help prevent piracy and educate consumers that it is actually illegal sprung forward during the conference. They were also promoted with such vigour that it seems any tail off in interest after the event seems unlikely.

Getting the message across: It was agreed that the leisure sector's burst of energy should be co-ordinated so that any slo-

gans used should be common to all.

FAST is already liaising with a number of firms to establish up to five similar-styled anti-piracy messages — similar to the varying health warnings used on cigarette packets.

Software: Once established, it is the plan that the slogans will then be incorporated onto all publishers' inlay cards. There is also the possibility of a universal symbol being used on the disk or cassette.

Ocean has also offered to look into ways of incorporating the agreed messages into loading or menu screens inside the games themselves.

POS support: Promotional video firm Bulletin 1000 has already begun discussing how it can incorporate an anti-piracy message into its in-store



HAY: Overwhelmed by leisure support

productions. The emphasis is clearly on making the clip 'streetwise' in its approach, so that it appeals to gamers.

Licenses: It was also proposed that when publishers tie-up endorsements from public figures — such as Steve Davis, Gary Lineker etc. — an anti-piracy message should be seen to be coming from the celebrity.

Anti-piracy literature: Promotional firms USD and Network have both agreed to distribute FAST leaflets and brochures amongst retail outlets free of charge. They are also currently deciding whether to finance the printing of the material.

Advertising: CTW, Future Publishing, Newsfield, Database, Gollner and EMAP have all agreed to run a specified number of free FAST ads a year. These will be designed to

work along the lines of the Advertising Standards Authority ads, which come in several different sizes and have varying messages. Psygnosis has already offered to design the artwork for the FAST ads and brochures free of charge.

Commodore: The hardware manufacturer has agreed to become a member of FAST, and it is also willing to carry FAST literature free of charge in its leisure machines' packaging.

"I think the leisure sector has the right to take a bow," offered Hay to CTW.

"I'm completely overjoyed at the marvellous offers of help achieved. I have meetings planned at this time to take matters forward and if they do not come about then it is as much the fault of FAST as everyone else."

Piqued Acorn brings in ASA

Commodore was bullishly shrugging off the wrath of Acorn last week, following its aggressive ad campaign pitching the Amiga against the Archimedes.

The campaign is currently running in a number of educational mags as well as the education sections in the national press. In the ad CBM unfavourably

Continued on back page

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Unlike its expensive classroommate the Commodore Amiga 2000 offers the hardware operating systems, Amiga DOS and MS DOS, as well as emulation of BBC software. With 5 hours of RAM storage board will soon be available.

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CBM'S AD: Archie under attack

Dixons consoles itself with Nintendo support

The Nintendo console has been taken on by Dixons and it is possible that chief rival Sega will suffer as a result, CTW can reveal.

The games machine will be available in 25 Dixons stores as of this week. Initially, it will be placed alongside the Sega and although the set up appears to be a straight head-to-head for survival it has been suggested that the Sega's fate is already sealed. The Sega has been placed in Dixons for the last two Christmases.

Dixons' buyer Alan Dickinson told CTW: "If the market is big enough for two products then we'll have both." He did, however, concede that it was more likely that one machine will be dropped. When asked if this would be the Sega he offered a firm "no comment".

Dickinson also explained why the firm has taken the system on in March while choosing to ignore it in the run

up to Christmas: "Anyone can sell video games machines at Christmas time, to get an objective view of the market you need to experiment in off season and that's what we're doing."

Dixons' decision has

undoubtedly been influenced by the enormous success that its US sister chain Silo has enjoyed with Nintendo. In the States Nintendo is believed to have 70-80 per cent of a \$2.3 billion market.

Continued on page two



DIXONS: Docking into Nintendo

INSIDE:

MARGINAL DECISIONS

With the leisure publishers still keeping their determined silence, CTW talks to the retailers that will be affected by the proposed change in margins next month 12

THE ELEVATION OF FAIR TRADERS

With the recent Commodore price fixing case the Office of Fair Trading has at last become involved in the computer market. But what can it really do about a problem that everyone knows about but few talk about?..... 15

SURVIVAL SPECIAL

Hewson is without doubt one of the industry's old guard and so using the excuse of a few new deals CTW decided to find out just how it keeps going — not from strength to strength but just going..... 16

SPA IN PARTNERSHIP

With the UK's version just beginning to take shape CTW looks at the undeniably successful Software Publishers Association in the US and ponders its role over here 18

CHARTS 19/LETTERS 22

ESPA takes shape after Arena debut

A new UK association of software publishers was formed last week at the 1989 Computer Arena industry conference in Majorca.

The Entertainment Software Publishers Association (ESPA) has set itself the modest goal of attempting to "radically change the face of the

computer industry body; has already gained a great deal of support with almost all the major UK publishers becoming members. US Gold, Ocean, Elite, Mirrorsoft, Virgin Mastertronic, Grandslam, Hewson and Alternative have signed up and Psygnosis, Domark, Database, Audiogenic and CDS

have pledged to do the same.

There are still a number of matters regarding how ESPA will function that must be sorted out before its official launch at the European Computer Trade Show on April 16th. Andrew Hewson will be working as interim chairman along with Simon Treasure, the interim acting secretary, to keep ESPA running smoothly

in its formative weeks.

"My job is to steer the nascent organisation through its next meeting and then when we get to the European Computer Trade Show members will decide what happens next," offered Hewson to CTW.

ESPA is keen to increase the level of communication between UK publishers and develop a far greater percep-

tion of the industry by forging direct links with TV, radio and the national press.

"We want to build the market for everybody, pool information on the market for everybody and construct overseas relations for everybody," added Hewson.

Although it is still to be officially decided, non-publishers will probably be able to partici-

pate in ESPA by becoming associate members. This would be a way of incorporating magazines and hardware manufacturers.

CTW has already agreed to become a founder associate member. If ESPA does become a software publishers-only organisation CTW would hope to keep this status as it is directly related to the trade.

Chaney leaves behind Golden life for secret solo venture

US Gold's operations director Tim Chaney last week announced his resignation and revealed sketchy details of his future plans.

Chaney was very much the accessible side of Gold and along with boss Geoff Brown played a large part in the firm's continuing success. He has been with the firm for over four years. A replacement is not

being sought and his duties will be absorbed by Brown and the rest of the management team.

His split from the firm seems to have been wholly amicable and based on personal ambition rather than ill feeling. Chaney's next step will almost certainly be to establish his own firm which will act as a UK and European representative for American and Japanese firms.

His departure from Gold was certainly a well kept secret

and an announcement last week shocked the leisure trade. The rumour machine immediately began to pencil Chaney in as either Accolade's or Epyx' UK boss but Chaney told CTW that neither option was likely "at this or any other time".

"I've spent four years contributing to the establishment of US Gold and I have no intention to go out and start work on US Gold II.

"I haven't set any wheels in motion, but there are a few

things that are 95 per cent certain and I will be involved in representing firms in the UK. It's really a now or never situation with me. I don't want to reach a certain age and look back and see that I never tried to make a go of it on my own," he continued.

Chaney went on to hint that although his roots were in software and traditional hardware his future may lie in more diverse areas - possibly consoles, hand-helds and more toy



CHANEY: Gold no more orientated products.

For now, though, Chaney is still with Gold and will not be

departing until late April when more details of the new career will doubtless emerge.

Hit Squad favourite for Ocean budget dip

As the wait for Ocean's budget label to appear continues, the wise money was last week being put on it carrying the brand name Hit Squad.

Ocean itself was still unprepared to talk about its budget intentions - or indeed the label's name. But ironically concrete proof that £2.99 product is arriving any week now has arrived thanks to Guild Home Video's *Rambo III* release.

Concurring with an idea first used with its *Platoon* hit early last year, Ocean has a Bulletin 1000-style ad for its *Rambo III* game in the video. There is also a mention for the original *Rambo* computer game being "out now" at £2.99.

It is clear that Ocean will use its budget label to breath new life into possibly the most sought after back-catalogue that has ever existed.

Pat Kavanagh was recently drafted in from Liverpool software producer Software Projects to run the label, but again this has still to be confirmed officially.

There is no fixed launch date for the label and no word on how many games will be appearing each month - although anything other than 2-6 titles would be a major surprise.

Dixons consoles

Continued from front page

"Obviously the UK isn't going to sell 7 million in its first year but Nintendo has experienced great success in the States and there is a good market for consoles over here", added Dickinson.

Virgin Mastertronic handles distribution of the Sega in the UK and was far from dismayed to hear that its arch rival had made it into the largest hardware shopping chain in the country. In fact, deputy managing director Frank Herman claimed that he was "delighted" by the news.

"No, I'm not worried. I see no reason why the two machines can't go side by side. If it means there's going to be more interest in consoles then it obviously benefits us as well," he told CTW.

Unfortunately, despite the glad tidings, no one from Nintendo UK was available for comment.



FRIGHT NIGHT

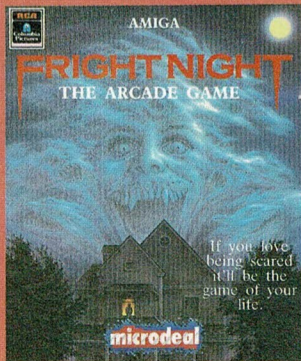
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EMAP cries foul as Martech wins High Court *Phantom* fight

Martech last week gained a High Court judgement against EMAP over its treatment of *Phantom Fighter* but EMAP itself denied any knowledge of the case and promised to attempt to have the judgement set aside.

The legal wrangle stems back to last November when Commodore User printed an extremely unfavourable review of a preview copy of its *Phantom Fighter* game. Martech claimed that EMAP's review has affected its earnings on the game and sued the publisher for breach of contract and copyright.

The court judgement in the software house's favour means

that Martech has now made an application for damages which runs into six figures. According to Martech boss David Martin the substantial claim was based on *CU's* circulation, influence and other EMAP publicity material.

He commented to *CTW*: "We just felt that it was time that certain areas of the publishing trade were made aware that there is an awful lot involved in software development. There is a great financial commitment to a product these days."

"Someone has to take a stand, they've got to learn to play by the rules because a lot of people can get hurt by this sort of thing. Hopefully the industry can now set a more professional standard."

Meanwhile, in a remarkable twist EMAP was claiming that the writ had been served to its old address and therefore the judgement should be set aside. The publisher last week contacted Martech's solicitors with the proposition and if it is turned down it will appeal directly to the High Court.

Publisher Terry Pratt commented to *CTW*: "We're simply saying they can't go to court without us, in fact they didn't even talk to us. It was a party that we weren't invited to and it doesn't take a barrister to work out that what happened in court should be set aside."

Regarding the case Pratt claimed EMAP had an "arguable defence" but was not willing to go into detail out of



MARTIN: Now applying for six figure damages

missed the firm's claims as "ridiculous". He considers the judgement to have been made and is determined to continue pursuing damages.

Thame chips in with extra 286

Following its recent entry into the PC market, printer distributor firm Midwich Thame has added a 286 machine to its range.

The new model is part of Midwich's exclusive distribution deal with US firm Blue Chip - signed back in September with Midwich initially taking the pcPopular range of XT's. A 386 model will also be added to the range some time in the autumn.

In a bid to make way for the new models Midwich has cut the prices on its XT machines by £50. The entry level model - single floppy and without monitor - is now priced at £549.

"The XT initially sold well, but sales have since slowed down, with dealers waiting for

the 286 to come through. The price cuts will make room for the new machine. The 286 is a growing market and we obviously want to be involved," offered Midwich's product manager Nick Pye to *CTW*.

On the Popular 286 model, prices start at £1,175, with the machine operating at either 8 or 12MHz and offering 640Kb of RAM. It comes with a single 5.25 inch, 1.2Mb floppy disk drive and a controller for a second floppy. Enhanced versions are available with 20Mb or 40Mb hard disk, plus a single 1.2Mb floppy.

The new machines are available immediately, with the firm looking to sell around 3,000 units a year. Midwich currently boasts 40 dealers for its Blue Chip XT, and is confident that they will all be taking the new model.



PC POPULAR: 286 sister added

NACR gathers pace

The much touted National Association of Computer Retailers is to have a recruiting presence at next month's European Computer Trade Show.

The fledgling trade body has negotiated with Leisuresoft and will be sharing a stand with the distributor. The Association's chairman Vic Purnell, along with three colleagues, will be there to answer dealer enquiries and generally promote NACR.

A couple of months ago the

firm could claim only around 20 members. The C64 fault rate debate seems to have doubled its membership to nearly 50 and at the show Purnell hopes to add another 30 or 40.

Purnell offered to *CTW*: "We'd obviously like to see a few faces and explain to anyone that's interested what the objects of the body are."

Meanwhile, the firm is in negotiation with a number of distributors over special deals for NACR members. Not surprisingly Leisuresoft is among the interested parties.

Engine steams into British dealerships

The PC Engine's UK agent Micro Media was last week waiting for its first shipment from manufacturer NEC whilst claiming immense dealer interest.

Micro Media boss Andrew Smales told *CTW* that his firm had been contacted by over 100 dealers with orders of up to 50 machines each. The enthusiasm of the response has convinced Smales that interest in the Engine at consumer level may well be too great to be handled by Micro Media's mail order set-up and that "dealers will have to be involved much more".

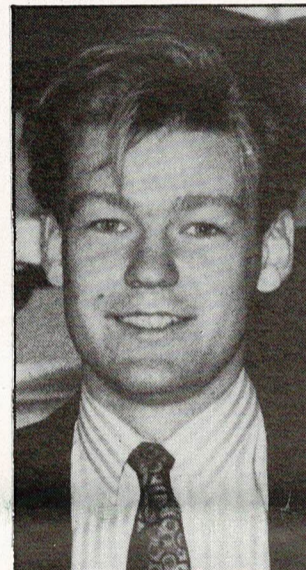
He has also revealed that discounts on the Engine will be a lot more attractive than orig-

inally feared. Fifteen per cent is available on orders of ten and over which means a dealer will make £30 on every console sold.

"The response has been unreal and hundreds of enquiries are arriving every day. We definitely want more and more dealers to come in and get involved," Smales commented. He added that new staff are also being sought to handle the deluge.

The first shipment from NEC was due to arrive this week and consists of 1,000 machines. It seems, however, that most of those already have customers allocated and in future the quantity of the fortnightly ordering will have to be stepped up.

Meanwhile, Smales has also



SMALES: Tying up dealers

warned that legal action is being considered against the host of tiny mail order firms that are currently offering the Engine via grey importing. He claims the stock being offered by such firms is not up to scratch.

Faulty C64s spark Palan tie-up for Associates

Mills Associates has signed an exclusive UK distribution deal with Palan for its Commodore datacorder LOADIT.

The product has been available in the UK for some time but previously Mills has always dealt directly with retailers. LOADIT retails for around £40 and stocks should be available from Palan immediately.

One factor that convinced both Palan and Mills that the move was necessary was the recent faulty C64 debate that has raged in the letters' pages of *CTW*. The main fault has been with the machine's datacorder and the issue has generated an unprecedented response among the dealer base.

LOADIT works by having an adjustable tape head which is altered until the LED volume reading on the device is at its maximum point. Mills claims that if tapes are then rewound and played again they will nearly always load perfectly.

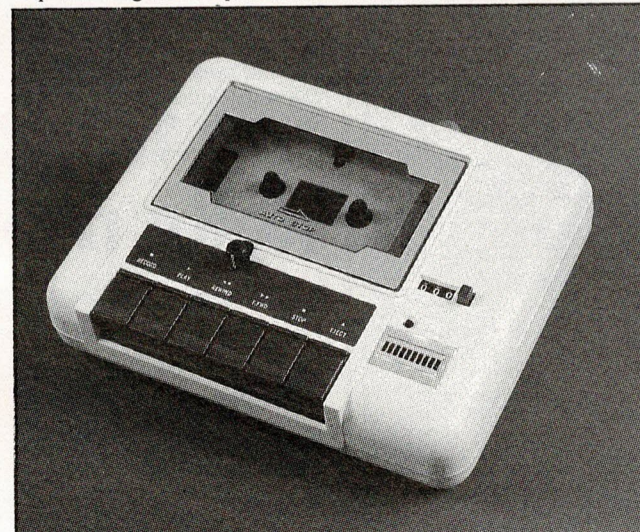
The firm boasted that the

product would cut loading failure down to less than five per cent. In the recent rumpus a failure rate of between 20 and 40 per cent was claimed by some dealers.

For now LOADIT is available for just the C64 and C128, but Mills' director John Harrison indicated that a similar product for other machines experiencing similar problems

could be on the cards. Mills is ideally equipped to tackle the faulty C64 problem as it used to handle Commodore's repairs.

Harrison commented to *CTW*: "So many people out there are upset with what they've got that there must be a market and together with Palan we are looking to shift some big numbers."



LOADIT: First ever distributor tie-up

CTW

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GOLD REPORT

Experience tension, speed and destruction as Capcom bring you the latest and best in Arcade Action....

LAST DUEL

* It's the type of game that'll have you hooked for hours' ST/Amiga Format

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Gem yokes into yuppy PC flying fanatics

In something of a shift from its business software bias, Gem Distribution has tied up the exclusive dealer distribution rights to an £80 games peripheral for PCs.

The multi-function Maxx aircraft control yoke has previously been available only through importer Paperlogic and its Oxford Street store Software Circus. But now Gem believes some 300-400 dealers will be taking on the product over the coming months.

"We are a very business

orientated company, but the market for leisure products on the PC is very healthy. And if you look at that market the biggest selling products tend to be flight simulators - products like *Flight Sim 3*, *Falcon* and *F-19 Stealth Fighter*," said Gem director Paul Donnelly to CTW.

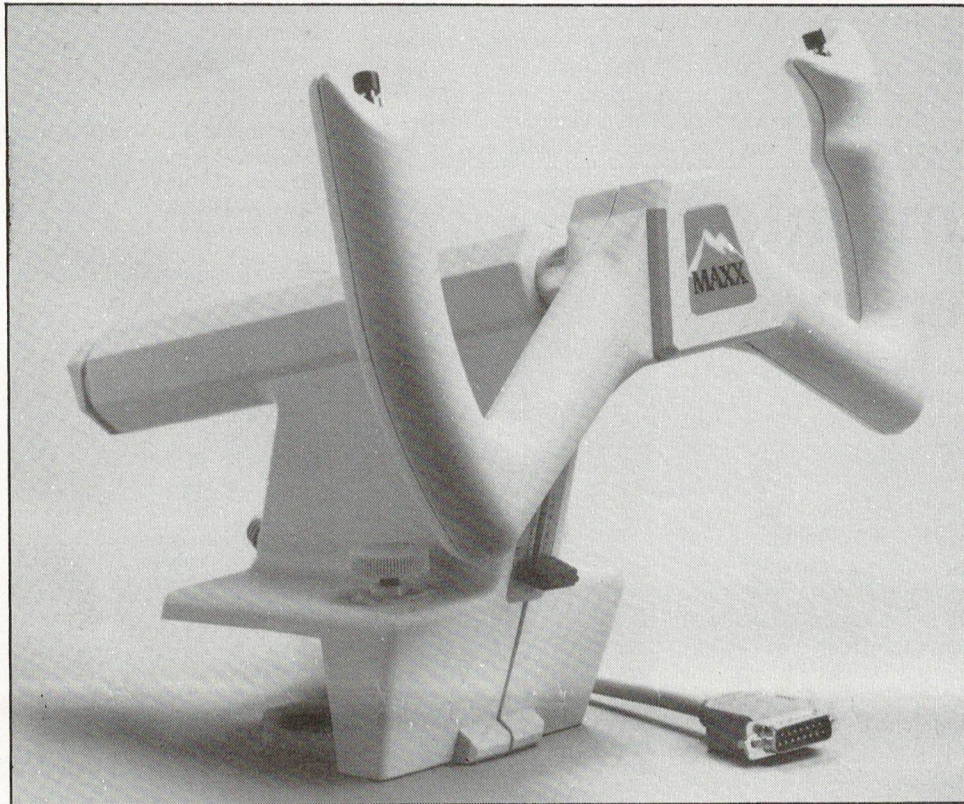
"We're taking this because it's a serious product. It isn't the sort of thing a kid's going to want just like he wants a joystick. It's a product for the top-end enthusiast."

Interest in innovative new peripherals has massively increased since UK joystick

manufacturer Konix unveiled its promised Multi System games console in January. This incorporates a steering wheel, handlebars and an aircraft yoke in its design.

The Maxx product claims to be the same size as that used on a Cessna aircraft. It turns 60 degrees left or right from centre and is spring loaded with a push/pull action. Buttons are located on each yoke arm to provide thumb tip control of software. A centrally located slide throttle controls air speed.

Gem began shipping sample stocks to selected stores last week.



MAXX: Flying in to UK dealers

Greyhound gets its fax straight from Schneider

Greyhound last week announced that it is to move into office equipment by taking a fax machine from German manufacturer Schneider.

Details of the new machine are still sketchy as certain elements are still at the design stages. Greyhound already has a strong relationship with Schneider after making its initial entry into the hardware market with its PC range last year.

A price has not yet been fixed for the fax but it is expected to come in at under £1,000. Greyhound is expecting its first shipments in mid-summer.

Boss Philip Allot commented to CTW: "We think it's a logical add-on sale for our dealers. Fax machines are coming down in price which makes it far less of a specialist market. I'm sure our dealers will find the project an exciting new challenge."

Allot added that Grey-

hound would be providing specialised training and roadshows to promote the new product although yet again details were scarce.

One interesting aspect of the news is the constant hints and rumours that have surrounded a similar move from Amstrad for the last two years. The two firms are traditional rivals with similar pricing philosophies, so perhaps this announcement could spur the Brentwood firm into decisive action.

HotShot kicks off with new video mag

Fledgling firm HotShot Entertainments is set to release what is claimed to be the first consumer video software magazine.

It is called *Action Screenplay*, and is the brainchild of erstwhile Ace ad manager John Beales. The video will be produced on a bi-monthly basis and is priced at £6.49.

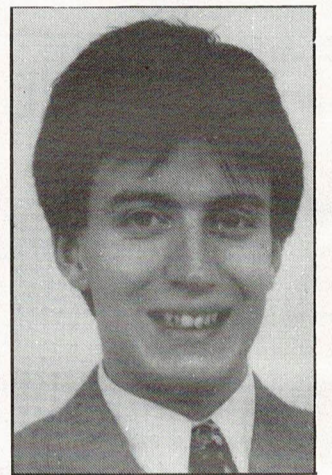
Action Screenplay will feature all the new game releases over a two month period, and covers all the major formats. The first issue will be available by the end of April.

HotShot expects at least 25 games to appear on each video. The firm is stressing that the video will be substantially different from existing POS films, with commentating throughout the 30-45 minute package.

"Video is an obvious medium where the computer market can gain, as it has the power of the moving picture. The response so far has been very positive. The chain stores, independents and the software houses all think it's great," offered Beales to CTW.

Indeed Beales claims that all the Virgin Megastores will be stocking *Action Screenplay*, along with at least 400 independents. "Things are looking very good. All the multiples are interested, but I am still in negotiation."

"The price of the video is less than a piece of software. I have been in the magazine market for three years and when people buy games they think in terms of a set price bracket. The chance of buying a video featuring all the top games provides fantastic value



BEALES: Video start-up for money.

As an added incentive HotShot will be running a competition, offering purchasers the chance to win a video camera. A number of other promotions are also in the pipeline.

Mindscape pounces on Aussie Panther

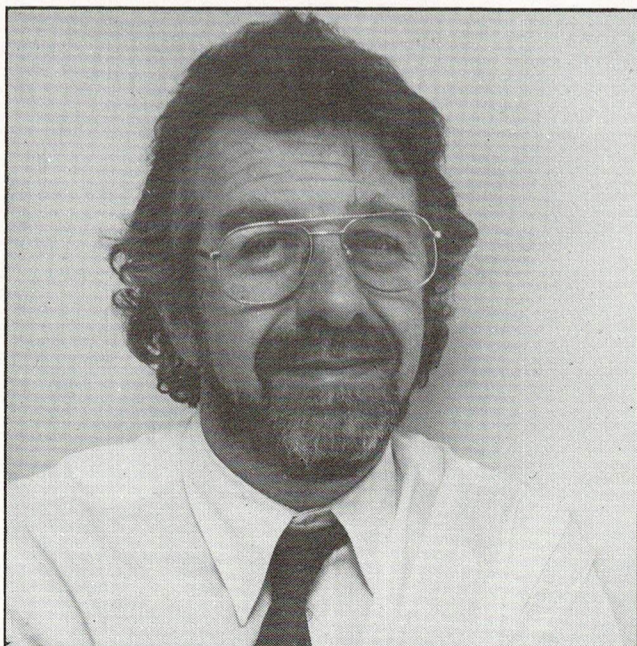
Mindscape has tied up an exclusive distribution deal with Australian software house Panther Games.

The agreement covers both the UK and Europe, with the first game *Fire Brigade* being released in the next few months. Mindscape admits that the game is fairly expensive, with the PC version priced at £29.99.

"It is a huge program, though, with a big booklet. It's one of these mega type games.

Panther have some fantastic products and they fit in well with our own range - containing lots of stuff and with a long shelf life. We feel that they will complement us perfectly," offered Mindscape's UK boss Geoff Heath to CTW.

The deal is described as a "serious long-term agreement", with Mindscape expecting to handle at least three Panther products this year. Commenting on the firm Heath offered: "They're small, but they are perfectly formed."



HEATH: In the pink with Panther

Musical MCM tunes into new dealers

Music Market distributor MCM, is set to attack the independent computer market with its range of low-cost music software imported from the US.

The firm, which claims to be the largest music distributor in the UK, believes that there is a massive untapped market of computer users interested in music.

MCM plans to turn around the current trend of only directing music software to people involved in the music industry and is actively looking for computer dealers.

"There is a huge number of people that have computers and are also interested in music and our range of low-cost products will enable people to get involved for the first time,"

offered the firm's sales manager Steve Wright to CTW.

"At the moment we are developing a plan of action to get into the computer market and we're at the negotiating stage. A lot of computer dealers are realising the opportunities in this area. It is not just an idea we've pulled out of our head. There are major changes going on in the market at the moment."

MCM is offering dealers a 25 per cent margin on all its products, which rises to 30 per cent for authorised MCM dealers. "We'll distribute to everybody. Any dealer who expresses an interest in becoming authorised will receive an application form. We will appoint them at our discretion, and in return they must have ten of our products in stock a month."

Kelly moves up

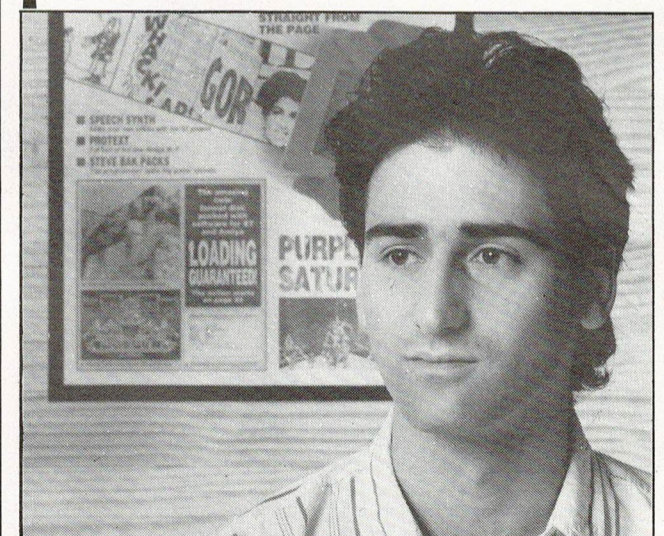
Business fortnightly *PC User* has promoted its editor David Kelly into a managing editor role and appointed Chris Long as his replacement.

Kelly has been heading up the EMAP title for fourteen months, its latest circulation

figure coming in at around 43,000. He will now oversee happenings at both *PC User* and *Technical PC User*.

Long joins from rival publisher VNU, where most recently he was working on *Mac News*. Until a couple of months ago he was editor of *Personal Computer*.

16-bit format picks new man



MONTEIRO: Moving up Future's 16-bit monthly, *ST Amiga Format* has gained a new editor in the form of Richard Monteiro.

This follows the promotion of Ben Taylor, who now wears the mantle of the firm's computer systems manager. Monteiro's rise to editorship has been rather meteoric, having only recently been appointed as deputy editor on the same title.

"Richard has proved himself to be an exceptionally talented writer, with an impressive grasp of all maga-

zine details. I am certain that he will prove to be a high calibre editor. He is ideally suited to taking over *Format*. We're particularly ambitious about the magazine, and so needed the best possible person to take it into the next major growth period," said Future publisher Greg Ingham. Commenting on his new role Monteiro offered: "*Format* is now established as the leading 16-bit magazine, offering an unrivalled package. The minimum I've got to do is make sure it stays there; the maximum is pretty much limitless."

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Satellite dishes up games chance

Negotiations are under-way to give the leisure industry a much needed boost in terms of TV coverage.

Michael Baxter, boss of PR firm Solution, is currently talking with satellite TV producers to organise a regular ten minute slot on a children's channel.

The programme would feature games being played on air. "In the past programmes have taken a wrong approach. They have shown things like a man walking along and they look very boring. They haven't tried to get inside the image and show the kids' involvement in the game. We want to try and get across what the game actually means to the kid,"

offered Baxter to CTW.

Although nothing has been finalised Baxter is confident that a deal is imminent. "At this stage things are still a bit vague, and I don't even know my role in it all - but things are developing."

The need for greater TV exposure for the leisure sector was one of the major areas of discussion at last week's



BAXTER: Satellite opportunity
Computer Arena conference held in Majorca.

PST boasts budget boom

Export company PST is one of the few firms claiming to be reaping any benefit from the Government's recent budget.

The firm that specialises in buying other company's excess stock, claims that the Chancellor's stated intention to keep interest rates high - and the knock-on effect of reducing consumer spending - has

already resulted in a substantial growth in surplus stock.

"We have seen a massive increase in the amount of surplus stock in the computer industry and more and more companies are now turning to us for our professional stock disposal service," commented PST boss Howard Strowman to CTW.

Meanwhile, the firm is claiming its recent trip to the CeBit computer show in Hanover as an unqualified success. "We bought a hell of a lot of stuff, more than we did at Which? We certainly made big dents in what we want to spend. £20 million was the original target and we will spend that, but a lot of stock is in Japan and that will take time to come over," offered Strowman.

At the Hanover Messe PST claims to have bought up a variety of products including XT's, laptops, monitors and scanners. "We even managed to buy some 386 machines. Some manufacturers see 16MHz as old hat now, they're looking to 25MHz machines."

Dataflex wins OEM double

Dataflex Design has tied up two OEM deals for its modems with Mitsubishi and Victor.

Under the Mitsubishi deal, Dataflex will supply the Japanese firm with a specially designed internal modem for its laptop computers, whilst Victor will be using an OEM version of the Stradcom modem to offer with its laptop.

The Mitsubishi modem fits into the expansion slots of the mp286L AT-compatible laptop, with the machine now bundled with a customised version of Dataflex's Data-Link program. Dataflex is currently awaiting BAPT approval for the new modem which is expected next month.

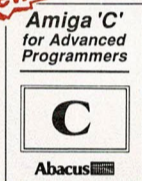
Victor's OEM version of the Stradcom modem is called the Comms-Pak, and is also supplied with Datalink software. Having already received BAPT approval it retails at £199, and has been specifically designed to fit into the V286 laptop.



DATAFLEX DIRECTOR PHILIP BENGE: Tying up manufacturers

One Good Book deserves another and another, and another, and a...

New



Amiga C for Advanced Programmers

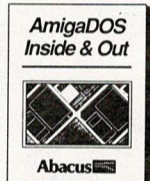
-contains a wealth of information from the pros: how compilers, assemblers and linkers work, designing and programming user friendly interfaces using Intuition, combining assembly language and C codes, and more. Includes complete source code for text editor.

ISBN 1-55755-046-8 400 pp **£22-95**

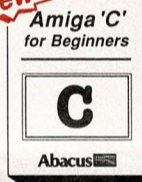
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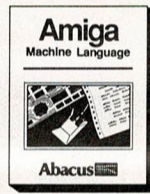
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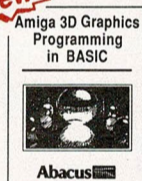
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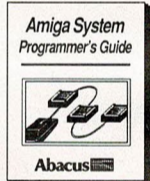
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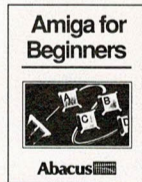
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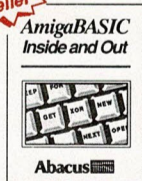
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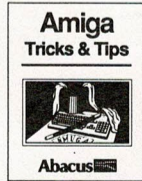
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Why is Andrew Hewson going to the first European Computer Trade Show?

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With three weeks to go . . .

- Product launches planned by exhibitors to date now top the 100 mark.
- Amiga and ST running neck to neck in new product stakes, with 30 titles to be unveiled for each so far.
- Microprose reveals it is to announce two further labels at the show.

The European Computer Trade Show is too good a business opportunity to be missed. Just ask Andrew Hewson. . .

HELP FOR PROGRAMMERS FROM KEY DEVELOPERS

A new event designed to assist programmers prepare the software of the future is to be held during the final two days of the show.

It will take the form of a series of developer/programmer seminars.

Brainstorming sessions will involve key personnel from Commodore, Atari, Acorn and IBM.

Subjects to be discussed include: New TOS – pluses and minuses; Amiga's new operating systems; RISC OS programming implications; and IBM's new operating systems.

Programmers wishing to attend the seminars need to book in advance. They should contact Pam Turnbull at Database Exhibitions (0625 878888) for relevant passes.

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Prose seals watch offer

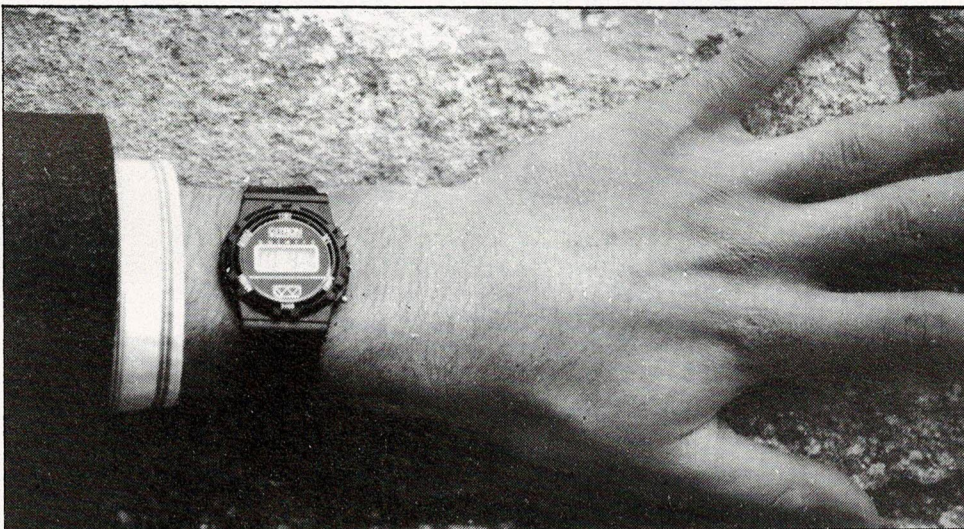
MicroProse is giving away a free watch with every copy of its latest game *Navy Seal*.

The game is set to be released on the Cosmi label next week, with the watch included in every box. This follows the watch offer tie-up between MicroProse and W.H. Smith last autumn.

and it's definitely not a Rolex. It's something to give extra perceived value to the product. The watch is just an extra, but rather than a poster it looks better," offered the firm's Martin Moth to CTW.

Navy Seal will initially be available for the C64 and is priced at £12.95.

Meanwhile, MicroProse claims to be on the verge of



MicroProse's handy giveaway signing a major licensing deal, with an as yet unnamed com-

pany. Although contracts are expected to be exchanged this week MicroProse was keen to keep the details under wraps.

Publishers rethink swapshop offensive

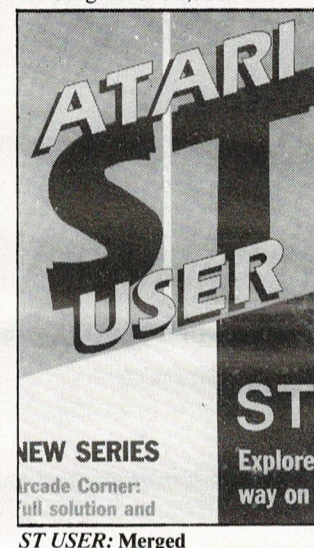
After recently swapping a few titles, both Focus and Database have now announced plans to redesign their attacks on the Amstrad market.

Focus bought three titles from Database in the deal - *Amstrad Professional Computer*, *Amstrad PCW* and *Amstrad Computer User*. The firm has promised a complete redesign of all three magazines plus a six figure promotional campaign.

The redesigned *APC* and *Amstrad PCW* will be seen in May, while the all new *ACU* will not be revealed until June. Focus claimed the promotion and facelifts are a response to a growing Amstrad market.

Database, meanwhile, will be merging *ST Update* - acquired from Focus - into *Atari ST User*. PC Amstrad will be given the minimalistic new title of *PC*.

It also claims that it will be spending £90,000 promoting the magazine which at last count was enjoying a healthy ABC figure of 32,514.



Apple scores in legal row

In possibly the most important lawsuit in computer history, Apple has won the first round of its legal battle with Microsoft and Hewlett-Packard.

Apple is claiming copyright infringement on software developed by Microsoft and HP. The firm argues that the programs give IBM-compatible PCs many of the attributes of the Apple Mac.

Last week a federal judge threw out Microsoft's claim that under a previous licensing agreement with Apple, the firm had the rights to use the *Windows* program. The judge has ruled that this was only applicable to the first version of the program, and not current ones.

Ultimately the judge must decide whether the "look and feel" of the Mac's visual displays are protected by copyright, and also HP's counterclaim that the displays are not original, and therefore should not have been copyrighted in the first place.

It is believed that the outcome of the case will have a far-reaching effect on the entire industry.

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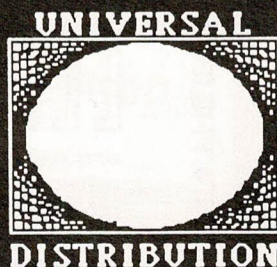
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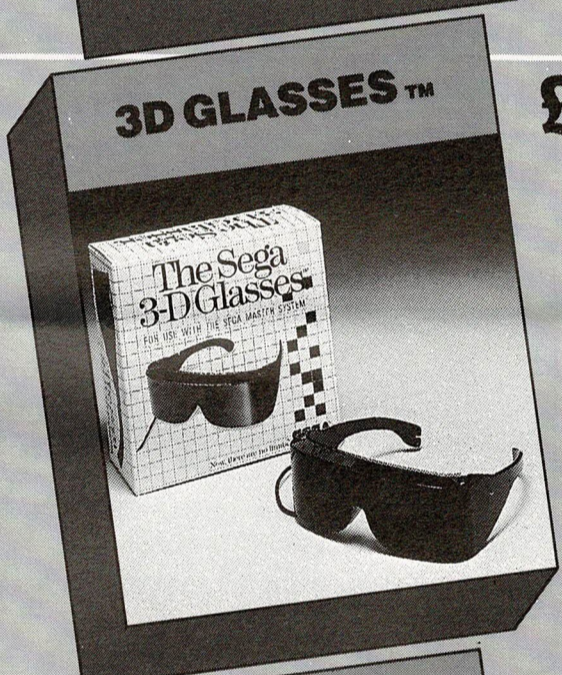
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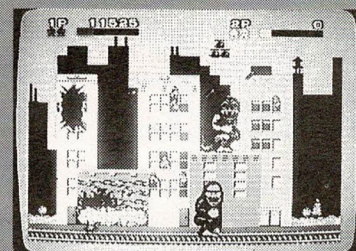
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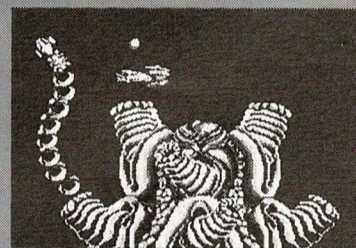
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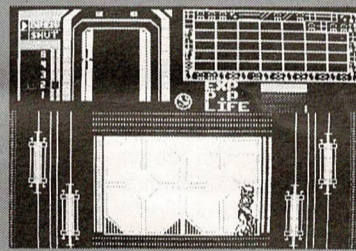
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The whole thing looks incredible - the best I've seen on the Sega. Y's offers depth and playability and will keep you engrossed for weeks. It's a must! C+VG, March 1989

Dealer Focus Dealer Focus Dealer Focus Dealer Focus Dealer Focus Dealer Focus Dealer Focus Dealer Focus Dealer Focus Dealer Focus Dealer Focus Dealer Focus Dealer Focus

thing is ridiculous. I can't see what it will achieve apart from giving them more profit (*the point is that's probably all it's meant to achieve*). US gold did it and promised this and that and it's been a waste of time. Figures show that we sell more software than the multiples so why are we being clobbered?

"This lot can give us all the stories they want about ploughing it all back into the industry but that's just rubbish. I've got no sympathy with them in the slightest, I just can't see their arguments. The only thing that could do anything

about it is an effective trade body but the industry is in such a state that it just won't happen. Oh dear, sorry Vic.

Distribution of wealth

Unlike the majority of the retailers contacted however, Miles did lay some of the blame at the distributors' door. "Without a doubt some of the fault lies with them, there's certainly not that many of them on the breadline.

"But I honestly don't know what can be done about it. If the publishers are determined to cut prices then they will. You

can't just say you're not going to stock Ocean product. We've just got to suffer in silence because that's all we can do."

A bleak picture indeed but one that is painted by a depressing number of retailers.

Again Miles claims he will be cutting down on his stock-

ing levels due to the increased risk.

Tim's Megastore – proprietor **Tim Swift**: "It's clobber the retailers time again. We don't cut prices here but I'm still going to have to take a five per cent cut. To be quite honest I'm starting to look at other things

to stock because of the reduction of profitability.

"In other industries they pass cost increases on to the public but not in this case." Well in this case to charge more than £10-£15 for a piece of 8-bit software would be pushing luck that has already been stretched. Publishers are well aware of this.

"We're just going to reduce our quantity because we can't take the risk. Whichever way it goes the distributors don't lose out and the people who publish don't lose out." Well perhaps not, if all the independ-

ents reduce levels of stocking then distributors, publishers and the industry as a whole (not forgetting those annoying little consumers) will lose out.

"Basically the publishers are not in touch with the dealer base. They think there's a load of us out here getting fat on the industry but quite obviously there's not. You see a lot more retailers going out of business than you do software houses.

"If they're going to trample all over the independent then it could backfire on them. We rely on software just as much as them but if multiples find it too much bother then they'll just replace it with perfume.

"Distributors might be the ones to fight back for us but we'll have to wait and see. At the moment all we've got is the National Association of Computer Retailers and with the members going up all the time perhaps we can do something."

At last some encouraging words from someone who is not the chairman (although Swift is a member). But they seem like little crumbs of comfort rather than anything more substantial."

Apathy in the UK

Well what did you expect? As Ginty of Microdealer has pointed out these peoples' livelihoods depend on software. It is not a sideline it is a means of support. When their conditions of buying and selling are affected so dramatically then the reaction is bound to be heated.

The saddest thing is that the undeniable anger is mixed with an extremely strong helping of resignation. The retailers feel they have been bullied and forced into a corner. They'll spit and snarl at the advancing foe but they know they will eventually be overpowered. It is all a show of feeling rather than a show of strength.

Certainly the smaller amongst them seem to be clinging desperately to the image of the distributor as the gallant white knight, slaying the fire breathing dragon and rescuing the dealer in distress. But although public noises of defiance by Gem and Microdealer have apparently been matched in private by Centresoft and Leisuresoft there is still nothing more than admirable bravado to build on.

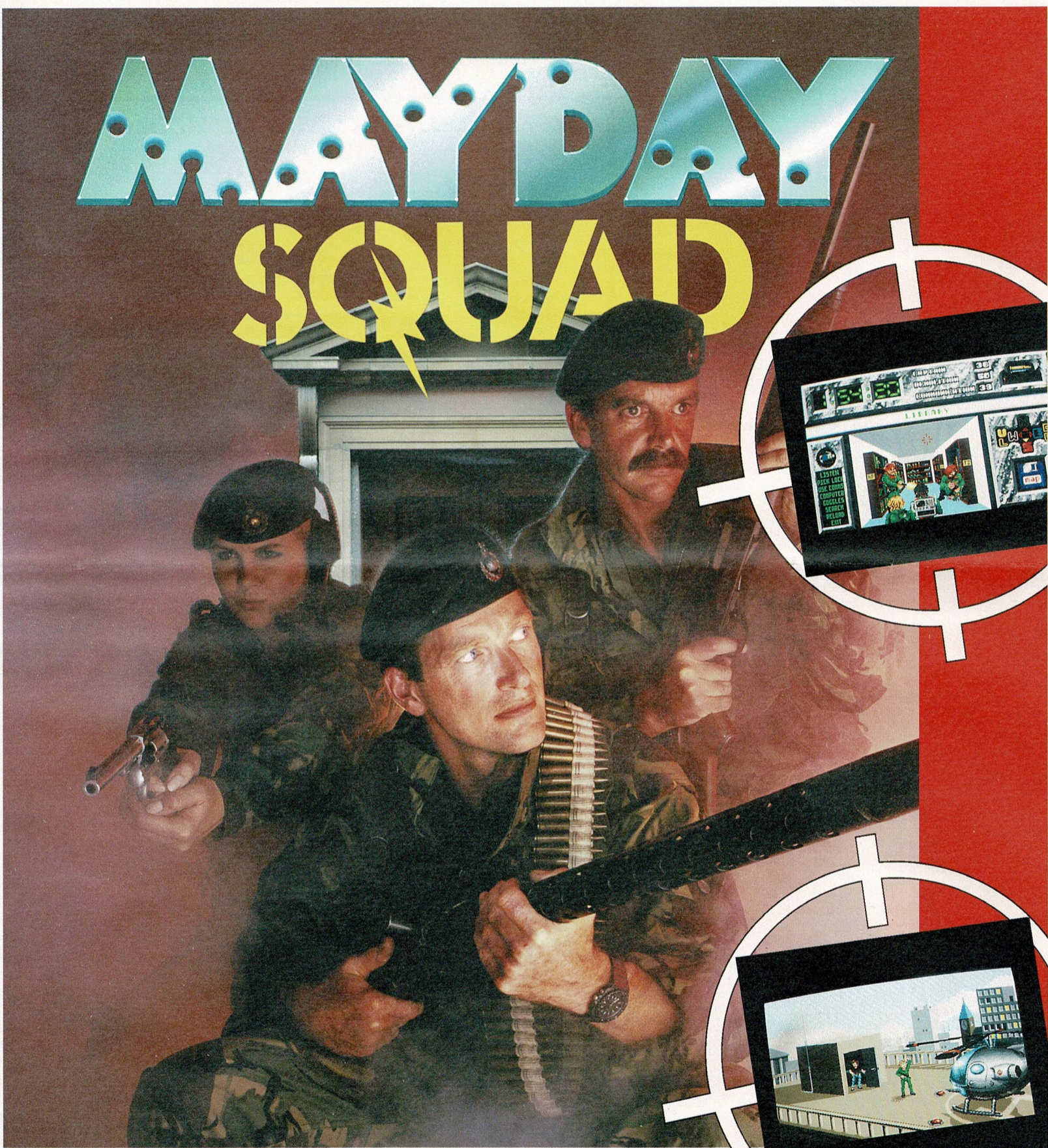
For the National Association of Computer Retailers this could potentially be the organisation's finest hour – although many seem to believe that a reasonable five minutes would at least be a start. So far though the attitude of the retailers outside the body is one of scathing cynicism mixed with sheer amusement. This must largely be due to the appalling history of previous attempts at unification through organisations and although that is not the fault of Purnell and the gang, it does mean that the project will be hampered.

So while they're certainly not suffering in silence just yet it does seem likely that, as with the US Gold uproar last year, the initial volley of shots fired in anger could die down to the odd stray bullet fired more in frustration. Ideally it should be the time for the independents to move in the big guns but sadly they just don't seem to exist.

"We're just going to reduce our quantity because we can't take the risk. Whichever way it goes the distributors don't lose out and the people who publish don't lose out."

Tim Swift, Tim's Megastore

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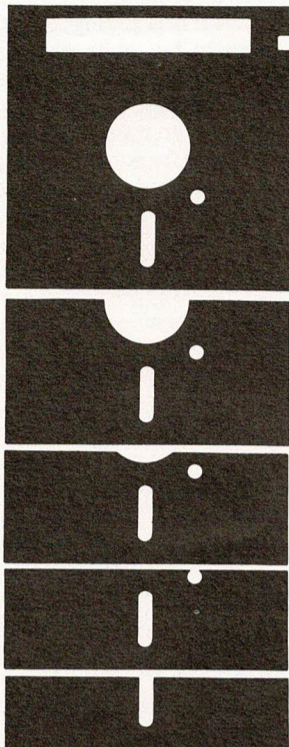
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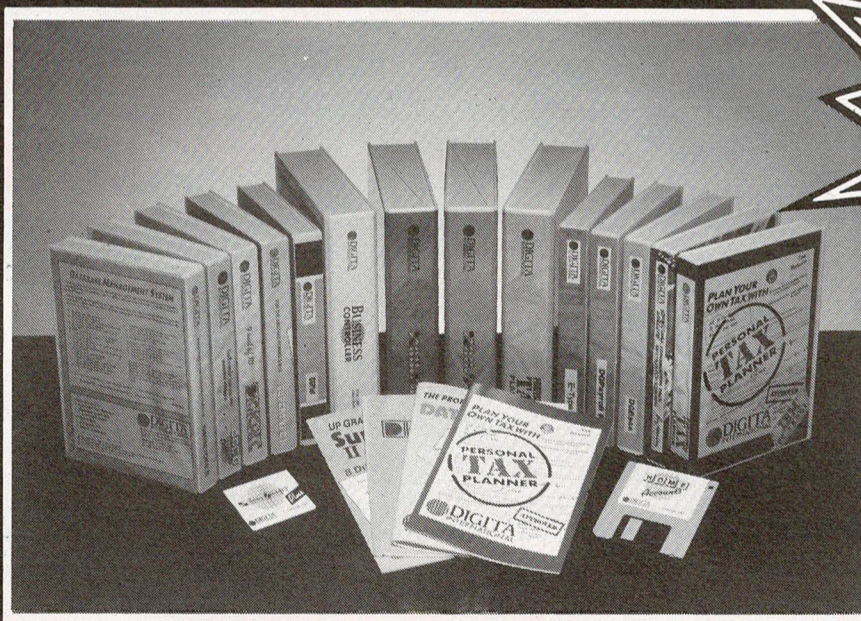
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MARCHING OFF TO WAR

Until Commodore was pulled up last week by the Office of Fair Trading, neither itself or many dealers realised that by trying to impose minimum prices, the firm had acted illegally. KELLY BESWICK brushes the dust off a thirteen-year-old law that many don't even know exists . . .

The dictionary definition of a law appears on the surface quite straightforward — a rule established among a community and enjoining or prohibiting a certain action.

Yet in order for a particular society to go to the considerable effort of establishing a law and taking the necessary measures to ensure that it is in fact implemented — a law must by definition owe its very existence to the fact that people will invariably contravene it. This is basically a long winded way of explaining the old adage — laws are there to be broken.

Such is the situation facing the Office of Fair Trading, an official government body established for the specific purpose of monitoring the trading practices of all companies.

The dusty legal tomes are crammed full with acts of parliament, laying down the manner in which firms should conduct their business. Unfortunately very few people outside the legal profession are well versed in trading laws, so the job of the OFT is that of a vigorous watchdog, constantly alerting firms to their unlawful activities.

Caught in the act

A particular example of the OFT's work came to light

last week with Commodore being hauled over the coals for demanding that its dealers stick to the Amiga 2000's recommended price, or run the risk of being struck off its authorised dealer list.

Unbeknownst to Commodore this was a direct contravention of the Resale Prices Act. This 13 year old law clearly states that it is illegal for a firm to seek to impose minimum prices, at which goods are sold by a dealer.

This fact will probably come as a bit of a surprise to quite a few dealers out there. Indeed it came as something of a shock to Commodore's Amiga sales manager Barry Thurston who warned of CBM's intentions via a letter to CTW back in May.

Commodore now admits that the tone of the warning letter was "over zealous", with the firm originally justifying its threats on the grounds that "the danger of price cutting is that instead of increasing sales it devalues the product as business users will not take it seriously".

The firm has subsequently been forced to go cap in hand to all its dealers, assuring them that whatever price they choose to sell the machine at, it will still support them.

It is amazing that Commodore got pulled up on the matter, considering that many well-known computer manufacturers have been com-



BORRIE: Slapping Commodore's wrist

ing on heavy about minimum prices since the birth of the industry as we know it.

Nine times out of ten, a dealer will bow down to a firm's demands — clearly not knowing any better. It is a situation that the OFT is well aware of. "It is too often forgotten that it is against the law. I repeatedly encounter breaches of the Resale Prices Act and I hope that any dealer becoming aware of attempts to enforce a minimum resale price will draw it to the at-

ention of my office," offers OFT's director general Sir Gordon Borrie.

In the law's 13-year history its offenders have been many and varied including: a guns supplier, seed manufacturer, golf equipment firm and even the yuppy coat company Barbour. "It happens all round. Laws get broken, and clearly every industry doesn't know every law. Nevertheless people in business should be aware of it, and if they breach it through

ignorance then there is no excuse," comments the OFT's Terry Larkin.

Despite the fact that many dealers in the industry have succumbed to pressure from firms to stick to a recommended price, the OFT has not been bombarded with complaints specifically related to the computer market. But this may well be down to the fact that the majority of dealers are simply unaware of the law's existence.

Indeed in the bulk of its cases it is only through dealer's complaints that the OFT actually gets put on the trail of offending firms. Commodore's situation, however, was slightly different. Because of the nature of Thurston's letter, it was drawn to the OFT's attention at an earlier stage than is usual in such matters. So CBM, was effectively nipped in the bud, with the firm claiming that it never, in fact, acted on its admonitions.

So the computer industry has in the past gone relatively unnoticed by the OFT with regards to breaches of the Retail Sales Act. Yet for that other well known watchdog, the Advertising Standards Authority, computer firms have all but kept it in business over the last five or six years. Indeed at least half a dozen different computer companies

feature in nearly every ASA monthly report.

Although the ASA does not have the same legal backing as the OFT, it appears to consistently rap the knuckles of a disproportionate number of computer firms for what have now become a standard batch of complaints — availability, compatibility, pricing and of course sexism.

Yet the trouble for the OFT in implementing the Retail Sales Act, apart from ignorance, is that firms can take a far more subtle approach than that displayed by Commodore.

A mighty manufacturer can make it all too clear, through a variety of different means, that price cutting will evoke its not inconsiderable wrath. And it is these more surreptitious methods that the OFT finds so difficult to pick up on.

Ultimately the OFT must resign itself to thousands of manufacturers getting through the net. But by it taking decisive action when a case does come to light, more and more retailers are likely to become aware of their legal standing. And who knows, in perhaps another 13 years time, dealers will be so up on the Retail Sales Act that it becomes one of the few laws that doesn't get broken. But then there would be no point in having it.

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WALKING ON THRIFT AVENUE

Both Hewson the label and Andrew Hewson the eponymous boss have a reputation for being non-controversial, respected and vigorously independent. Neither of them are reknowned for taking risks either. But with a lucrative US deal behind them, a new sales and marketing tie-up and a change to primary distribution is this historical mildness about to end? DAVE ROBERTS investigates . . .

This business is like a game of poker. The important thing is to keep winning steady money that enables you to play the game, not to win a fortune one day only to blow it the next. That's the philosophy that's helped Hewson survive."

So says Andrew Hewson, founder and boss of the aforementioned card shark and the man who has been described by CTW as "eponymous boss" no less than 241 times.

The poker analogy is a favourite of his. He knows that in such a game Hewson would not be a major player. It doesn't splash the big money around, it doesn't take massive risks and it is certainly not the one that all other players have to watch. Yet since time immemorial it has always managed to be in the game. The word cagey springs to mind.

Hewson is also one of those firms that always attracts the 'independent' tag line. No one is quite sure what this means, if it is a bonus or a drag or just what these firms are independent of. Still, whatever it is, companies seem to enjoy the description and usually

end up being "fiercely independent" - certainly no-one is ever described as "meekly independent."

Hewson himself is one of the leading members of this ill defined group - but even he is vague on the subject. He offers a few theories on "an independence of mind" and an "avoidance of a corporate approach" but little else.

To a watching world one definition that leaps to mind is a small firm that will never rock the industry to its very foundations with an all-conquering smasheronee, but will always maintain a nominal chart presence to keep it in business. Another vital distinction is that the managing director will come to the phone rather than invent meetings and ideally the firm should have some sort of tinny but endearingly individual image.

Timing of the shrewd

Hewson is untroubled. He does not see setting the charts on fire as his job. That may be through choice or it may be through circumstance, whatever the case he does not seem envious of the *Operation Wolves* of this world.

"The key item is that you have to be making money and while it is exciting to go chasing the big hits with these big licences it's not necessarily that profitable."

A quick glimpse at Ocean's balance sheet for this Christmas may throw some doubt on that theory, but with an initial budget the size of Hewson's the basic premise is sound. It is only the top few that can splash out on big licence and take the risk of arcade reputation compensating for an expensive slice of mediocrity.

Firms like Hewson must rely on quality rather than hype to attract the punters and unfortunately hype tends to have a much higher profile. Still, Hewson claims his quieter way of doing business may avoid the headlines but manages to find enough profit to make it worthwhile. After five years it's about time we believed him.

Apparently the firm designated 1988 the year of 16-bit during which the firm would free itself from its traditional 8-bit shackles and join the bold trek upmarket. Unfortunately, it didn't tell anyone about it so many people could have been



HEWSON: Truly independent again after flirting with Gremlin

forgiven for thinking '89 had been designated the year 8-bit hits begin to dwindle. Closer examination, however, reveals a slightly more positive change within Hewson.

"The growth has gone out of the 8-bit market. The Spectrum market has retracted to just England and Spain and the whole thing is on the slide. We knew we had to make the transition and we're now a long way down that path. It's no good waiting until it's happened and then snapping fingers and expecting to be a 16-bit firm, it just doesn't happen like that. The writing has been on the wall for a long time and you can't just ignore it."

bully Robert Stallibrass and he does a good job for me", he explains.

Mild thing

Certainly Hewson has moved from being a small fish in a veritable ocean to being a big fish in a small pond - if not a puddle. But with the addition of Hewson no longer will Active be forced to get quite so excited at the signing of Lichtenstein's second largest label. The firm now has something rather more substantial to work with and seems to have the people, the structure, the ability and certainly the ambition to cope.

The Hewson deal will undoubtedly be a test for Active but it could also be the springboard to the first division - where it is dying to play.

Another important deal struck by Hewson in '88 was the long term licensing deal with MicroProse in the States. It ties the firm up in MicroProse's Medallion label and means for the first time that the Hewson name will be exposed regularly to the US public.

"Like every other publisher I've licensed products in the States before, but in the current climate I thought it would be wrong to cherry pick. I wanted to take things a step further and build something more than a one-off relationship. You need a deal that means you're not just plonking down your product and saying 'd'ya want one Guv?'"

"You see there's been an

Continued on page 23

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FROM HERE TO FRATERNITY

The happenings at last week's Computer Arena notwithstanding, when discussing the need for a unified UK leisure trade body firms often stare green-eyed at the Software Publishers Association across the Atlantic. So when a member of the US body is in the country it's usually worth asking him what the UK's historical problems have been. When Barry Friedman of acquisitions agency International Computer Group is around you just sit and listen. DAVE ROBERTS lends an ear...

To say Barry Friedman is paranoid is to describe Lord Lucan as out of town.

As we are ushered into his far from humble three-month-a-year home in London's Mayfair Hotel, pen is poised and tape is rolling. Stop, rewind. Mr Friedman would like to get a

few things straight.

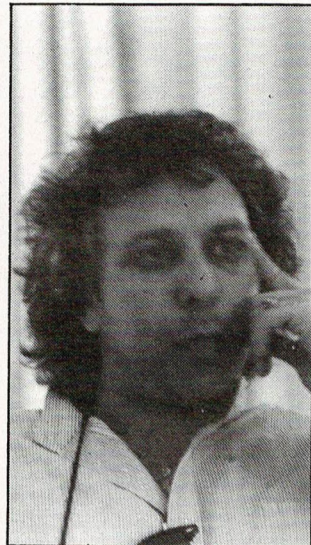
Before anything more controversial than an invitation to tea is offered some points are made clear. Very clear. As head of acquisition agency the International Computer Group, member of the Software Publishers Association and, as it transpires confidant to around

half the industry Friedman has many interests to protect. Interests that in some cases could be worth serious money and could easily be jeopardised by a misplaced paragraph or an unfortunate misunderstanding regarding what "off the record" actually means.

So virtually before our host can even admit to being Barry Friedman a slightly, only slightly, watered down version of the official secrets act must be scrutinised and signed. Roughly translated from its jargonese it warns "be very economic with some of this information or there could be big

trouble". OK let's get on with it - but let's be careful out there.

Firstly, although Friedman is keen to point out that he is not a representative of the SPA, he does have strong views on the role of that well respected body and the time it has taken Europe to even hint that it could have its own equivalent. But



FRIEDMAN: SPA fan then one suspects he has strong views on the wallpaper in his hotel room.

"I am suspicious of anyone that is not a member of the SPA because they really should be supporting the organisation. I would recommend that if you are a publisher, developer, designer, supplier of disks or whatever then you should be a member. It is a solid organisation that organises certain events, takes on certain causes and is a very useful discussion forum.

The easiest way to imagine it is if you took the PC Show and took out all the attendees and just left the exhibitors." If only...

Certainly the removal of the public from the biggest circus of the year would be a popular move. Perhaps the European Computer Trade Show in April will become that very event.

Folly the leaders

Whatever happens, for now at least we are left with an industry united only in distrust. Copyright infringements are all too common and leave grown men squabbling like children over racing cars and "stomach churning hills". As a sign of maturity it ranks right up there with wetting the bed.

There have certainly been enough attempts at unification ranging from miserable to laughable. Until ESPA arrived last week the big hope was the BMF, an organisation split so badly by what basically boils down to nothing grander than snobbery that it can surely never comfortably embrace the entire market. Certainly the major leisure players' understandable apathy towards an organisation that seems to view them with ill-disguised disdain will be hard to shift.

Friedman offers: "Europe as a whole is difficult to deal with anyway, not because it's large but because you have 13 or 14 languages to handle and even with the five key languages it is impossible to get the main publishers in the UK, Germany, France, Scandinavia, Spain and Italy to agree on just about anything.

"In America we still work as a unit even though we're highly competitive, the UK does not seem to work like that. I wouldn't say your firms are cut throat but they're certainly not as co-operative in their trans-

Continued on page 23

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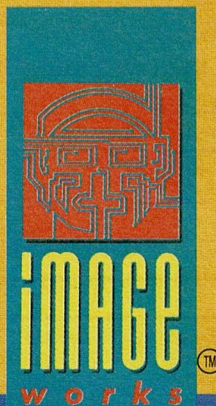


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TW	LW	WK	Title	Publisher	Formats
1	17	5	SAS COMBAT	CODE MASTERS	SP AM
2	1	56	GHOSTBUSTERS	MASTERTRONIC	SP CD AM AT MS
3	3	7	TREASURE ISLAND DIZZY	CODE MASTERS	SP AM
4	2	5	WEREWOLF OF LONDON	MASTERTRONIC	SP CD AM
5	5	13	ROBOCOP	OCEAN	SP CD AM
6	27	5	WORLD GAMES	KIXX	SP CD AM MS ST AG PC
7	6	14	KNIGHTMARE	MASTERTRONIC	SP CD AM MS ST
8	12	19	FOOTBALLER OF THE YEAR	KIXX	SP CD AM BB EL C1 AT MS
9	13	4	DRAGON NINJA	OCEAN	SP CD AM
10	30	21	ADVANCED PINBALL SIM	CODE MASTERS	SP AM
11	9	4	WEC LE MANS	IMAGINE	SP CD AM ST AG
12	19	8	INTERNATIONAL SPEEDWAY	FIREBIRD	SP CD AM
13	7	62	KIK START 2	MASTERTRONIC	SP CD AM AG
14	37	2	HACKER	RICOCHET	SP CD AM AT ST
15	34	27	BOMB JACK	ENCORE	SP CD AM C1 ST AG
16	11	3	EMLYN HUGHES INTERNATIONAL SOCCER	AUDIOGENIC	SP CD
17	4	23	JOE BLADE 2	PLAYERS	SP CD AM BB EL C1 ST AG
18	20	42	YOGI BEAR	ALTERNATIVE	SP CD AM
19	24	3	IN CROWD	OCEAN	SP CD AM
20	14	28	GAUNTLET	KIXX	SP CD AM AT MS ST
21	RE	63	FRUIT MACHINE SIM	CODE MASTERS	SP CD AM
22	18	9	BIG FOOT	CODE MASTERS	SP AM
23	10	15	OPERATION WOLF	OCEAN	SP CD AM ST AG
24	26	7	BMX FREESTYLE	CODE MASTERS	SP CD AM
25	RE	2	FUN SCHOOL 2	DATABASE/MANDARIN	SP CD AM BB
26	22	10	FALCON	MIRRORSOFT	ST AG PC
27	36	6	BATMAN	OCEAN	SP CD AM ST AG
28	NE	1	PAC-LAND	GRAND SLAM	SP CD AM ST AG
29	NE	1	TEMPEST	ELECTRIC DREAMS	SP CD AM BB EL
30	NE	1	BMX SIMULATOR 2	CODE MASTERS	SP CD AM
31	21	7	BACK TO SKOOL	ALTERNATIVE	SP
32	15	15	AFTER BURNER	ACTIVISION	SP CD AM ST AG
33	NE	1	SWEEP	MASTERTRONIC	CD
34	8	16	INTERNATIONAL RUGBY SIM	CODE MASTERS	SP CD AM
35	RE	40	GRAND PRIX SIM	CODE MASTERS	SP CD AM AT
36	NE	1	DENARIS	US GOLD	CD
37	40	14	ACE 2	CASCADE	SP CD AM C1
38	NE	1	123	FIREBIRD	SP CD AM
39	RE	17	COMMANDO	ENCORE	SP CD AM BB EL C1
40	28	4	DEATH STALKER	CODE MASTERS	SP AM

SHARE OF SALES BY PUBLISHER

Publisher	Units sold (%)			
	This week	Last week	4 wks ago	12 wks ago
CODE MASTERS	16.2	14.1	14.8	10.1
MASTERTRONIC	13.3	15.1	16.3	10.2
OCEAN	7.5	6.7	6.2	10.2
KIXX	7.3	5.6	5.5	4.5
ALTERNATIVE	7.0	8.6	10.2	8.3
FIREBIRD	6.3	5.9	7.2	7.8
US GOLD	3.9	4.2	3.6	5.6
PLAYERS	3.8	4.2	4.3	3.9
ENCORE	3.2	3.3	3.2	5.2
DATABASE/MANDARIN	1.7	1.4	—	—
MIRRORSOFT	1.6	1.8	1.5	1.3
IMAGINE	1.4	1.3	—	—
ELECTRIC DREAMS	1.3	1.3	—	1.1
GRAND SLAM	1.2	—	—	1.0
ACTIVISION	1.1	1.1	1.9	3.0
AUDIOGENIC	1.1	1.1	—	—
BUGBYTE	1.1	1.3	0.8	1.2
CASCADE	1.1	1.1	1.5	1.5
MELBOURNE HOUSE	1.1	1.3	1.4	2.5
RICOCHET	1.1	—	—	—
ZEPPELIN	1.1	1.4	1.0	0.8
BLUE RIBBON	1.0	—	0.7	—
MICROPROSE	0.9	0.9	0.8	0.9
CULT	0.8	—	—	—
GREMLIN GRAPHICS	0.8	1.2	—	1.5

SHARE OF SALES BY MACHINE

Machine	Units sold (%)				Titles sold (%)			
	This week	Last week	4 wks ago	12 wks ago	This week	Last week	4 wks ago	12 wks ago
SPECTRUM	38.2	38.9	40.1	42.4	26.3	26.9	27.1	28.5
COMMODORE 64	22.1	20.9	20.8	23.3	21.1	22.3	21.6	22.3
AMSTRAD	20.5	19.2	20.1	15.3	19.2	17.6	17.3	17.2
AMIGA	5.9	5.8	4.3	4.0	7.0	6.9	6.6	5.2
ATARI ST	4.5	5.5	5.1	5.5	8.5	8.0	8.7	7.5
ATARI	3.1	3.3	3.4	1.5	4.6	4.8	5.7	3.9
BBC	1.3	1.9	1.7	2.1	3.3	3.4	3.0	3.6
COMMODORE 16	1.0	0.7	0.8	1.1	2.4	1.6	2.3	2.3

AVERAGE SALES PER PANEL SHOP

This week	Units Sold		
	Last week	4 wks ago	12 wks ago
69	67	77	129

All charts shown are copyright of Gallup. The All Formats Top 40 and Share of Sales by Publisher charts refer to the Total Market. Week ending March 11th 1989.

Soft options

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

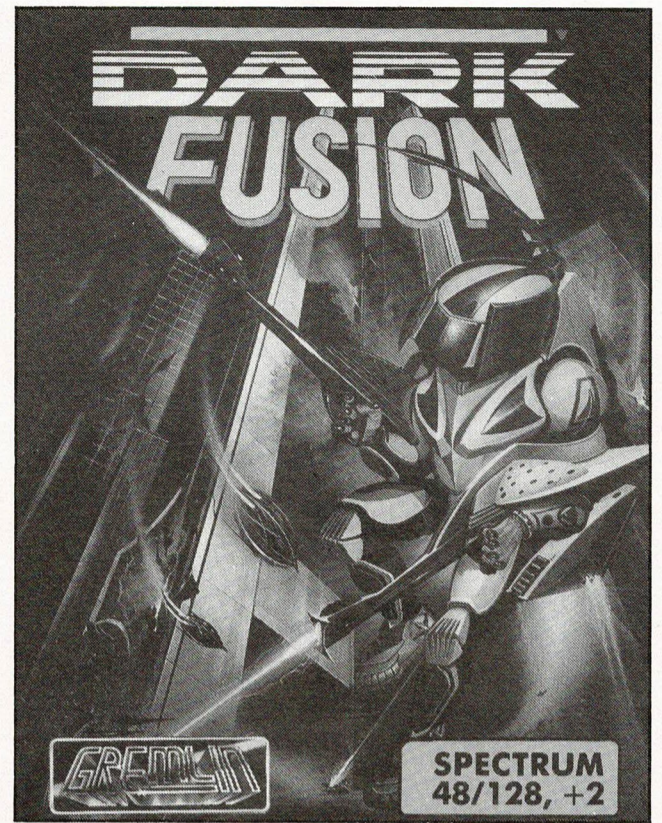
△ **DOMARK:** *Vindicators* (STAg-£19.99) The 16-bit versions of the first fruit of Domark's prestigious Tengen deal follows hot on the heels of last week's 8-bit efforts. Hoorah!

△ **GREMLIN:** *Gary Lineker's Hot-Shot* (AmSp-£9.99) After the FOFT fiasco getting 1989 off to such a bad start, the Birmingham firm must be hoping that the boy Lineker can do fantastic. Unfortunately the former golden boy of English soccer is going through as bad a spell as Gremlin.

△ **AGAIN AGAIN:** *Operation Hormuz* (STPCSpAmC64-£9.99-£19.99) Apparently some aliens have taken the Straits of Hormuz and are controlling essential military bases and naval shipping with the intent of crippling the world's oil supply. Sounds like a 1970s James Bond plot without the girlies and just possibly the excitement.

△ **ACTIVISION:** *The Real Ghostbusters* (C64AmSpSTAg£9.99-£24.99) Strange that characters called *The Real Ghostbusters* are just cartoon versions of their big screen counterparts but that's just the crazy mixed up world we live in. Anyway, these guys are absolutely enorm out there in kiddie land so if all versions are up to scratch then this could be a biggie in the younger market.

△ **SYSTEM 3:** *International Karate Plus* (PC-£24.99) More jumping, kicking,



punching and shouting Hiiyaarrgh! arrives via the Activision combine. The main difference between this and the original, apart from now having more opponents to batter hell out of, is apparently an "enchanted fully animated landscape against which the men thump it out". With aesthetically pleasing backgrounds playing an increasingly important part in karate games, this should take the market by storm.

△ **GREMLIN:** *Dark Fusion* (SpAmC64ST-£7.99-£19.99), The blurb talks ever so enthusiastically about "co-ordinated fury", "frantic defence", and the intriguing monster of the pit of despair.

Unfortunately the phrase "shoot 'em up" keeps springing to mind. Still at least it seems like a pretty good shoot 'em up.

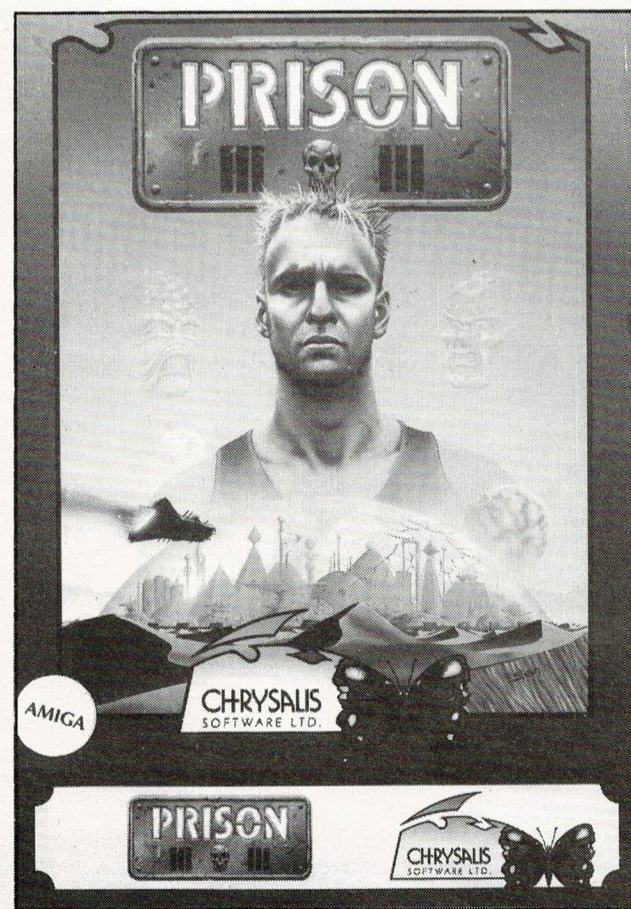
△ **RACK-IT:** *Into Africa* (Sp-£2.99) Oh I get it, *Out of Africa* — *Into Africa*. Very good. Basically just budget jungle capers from the Hewson crew.

△ **CODE MASTERS:** *Fast Food* (SpAm-£2.99) Pac Man's little pills are replaced by all sorts of burgers and other rubbish and as if that wasn't enough loveable old Dizzy makes a special guest appearance.

△ **US GOLD:** *Road Blasters* (STAg-£19.99) The game which Gold claimed was ripped off by *Fire and Forget* and *Overlander*. Ironically though that wrangle was only pushed out of the headlines when Gold itself was accused of breach of copyright twice in one week.

△ **ACTIVISION:** *R Type* (Ag-£24.99) And after all that the Amiga versions of this and *Katakis*, sorry *Denaris*, arrive at the same time. So it's just a straight head-to-head between a couple of *Defender* derivatives.

△ **KRISALIS:** *Prison* (STAg-£19.95) On the box it says Chrysalis but in the future it will say Krisalis. Apparently a certain record company got a tad annoyed at the original name. It's the first product from the firm and involves shooting things.



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

The Release Schedule

Software Information Services

27/3/89
WEEK 12

New leisure software

A vital reference to new and forthcoming software, expected release dates and prices. Updated weekly.

AMIGA

ALIEN LEGION.....	24.99	EARLY APRIL	GAINSTAR
ARTURA.....	19.99	OUT NOW	GREMLIN
BALANCE OF POWER 1990	24.99	IMMINENT	MINDSCAPE
BARBARIAN II	19.99	APRIL	PALACE
BIO CHALLENGE	TBA	APRIL	DELPHINE/PALACE
BLASTEROIDS	24.99	OUT NOW	IMAGE WORKS
BUTCHER HILL	19.99	IMMINENT	GREMLIN
D.N.A. WARRIOR	19.99	OUT NOW	ARTRONIC
DARK FUSION	19.99	IMMINENT	GREMLIN
DENARIS	19.99	OUT NOW	RAINBOW ARTS
DRAGON NINJA	24.95	MID APRIL	IMAGINE
DRAGONSCAPE	19.95	IMMINENT	SOFTWARE HORIZONS
FUN SCHOOL 2.....	19.95	OUT NOW	DATABASE
GARY LINEKER'S HOTSHOTS ...	19.99	APRIL	GREMLIN
HYPERDOME	19.95	IMMINENT	EXOCET
LORDS OF THE RISING SUN	29.99	END APRIL	CINEMAWARE
MANHUNTER	24.99	APRIL	SIERRA
MILLENNIUM 2.2.....	24.99	APRIL 27	ELECTRIC DREAMS
OPERATION NEPTUNE	24.95	IMMINENT	INFOGRAMES
OUTRUN EUROPA	14.99	APRIL	CAPCOM/U.S.GOLD
POPULOUS	24.99	MID APRIL	ELECTRONIC ARTS
RAIDER	19.99	LATE MARCH	IMPRESSIONS
ROBOCOP	24.95	APRIL 3	OCEAN
SHOOT-EM-UP			
CONSTRUCTION KIT	24.99	APRIL	OUTLAW
STEVE DAVIS WORLD SNOOKER	19.99	OUT NOW	CDS
TECH	19.99	LATE APRIL	GAINSTAR
THE CHAMP	24.95	IMMINENT	LINEL
WEC LE MANS	24.95	MID APRIL	IMAGINE

AMSTRAD CPC

BARBARIAN II	D 14.99	IMMINENT	PALACE
BARBARIAN II	T 9.99	IMMINENT	PALACE
BLASTEROIDS	D 12.99	OUT NOW	IMAGE WORKS
BLASTEROIDS	T 9.99	OUT NOW	IMAGE WORKS
BUTCHER HILL	D 14.99	IMMINENT	GREMLIN
BUTCHER HILL	T 9.99	IMMINENT	GREMLIN
DARK FUSION	D 14.99	IMMINENT	GREMLIN
DARK FUSION	T 9.99	IMMINENT	GREMLIN
GARY LINEKER'S HOTSHOTS	D 14.99	OUT NOW	GREMLIN
OUTRUN EUROPA	D 14.99	APRIL	CAPCOM/U.S.GOLD
OUTRUN EUROPA	T 9.99	APRIL	CAPCOM/U.S.GOLD
PURPLE SATURN DAY	D 14.95	APRIL	EXXOS
PURPLE SATURN DAY	T 9.95	APRIL	EXXOS
THE NATIONAL	T 9.99	OUT NOW	D & H GAMES
WEC LE MANS	D 14.95	OUT NOW	IMAGINE
WEC LE MANS	T 9.95	OUT NOW	IMAGINE

AMSTRAD PCW

MINI OFFICE			
PROFESSIONAL PLUS.....	49.95	APRIL 4	DATABASE
SPELLING CHECKER & THESAURUS	24.95	LATE APRIL	DATABASE

COMMODORE 64/128

ACTION SERVICE.....	D 14.95	IMMINENT	COBRA/INFOGRAMES
ACTION SERVICE.....	T 9.95	IMMINENT	COBRA/INFOGRAMES
BLASTEROIDS	D 12.99	EARLY APRIL	IMAGE WORKS
BLASTEROIDS	T 9.99	EARLY APRIL	IMAGE WORKS
BUTCHER HILL	D 14.99	IMMINENT	GREMLIN
BUTCHER HILL	T 9.99	IMMINENT	GREMLIN
D.N.A. WARRIOR	D 14.99	OUT NOW	ARTRONIC
D.N.A. WARRIOR	T 9.99	OUT NOW	ARTRONIC
DARK FUSION	D 14.99	IMMINENT	GREMLIN
DARK FUSION	T 9.99	IMMINENT	GREMLIN
DENARIS	D 14.99	OUT NOW	RAINBOW ARTS
DENARIS	T 9.99	OUT NOW	RAINBOW ARTS
GARY LINEKER'S HOTSHOTS	D 14.99	IMMINENT	GREMLIN
OUTRUN EUROPA	D 14.99	APRIL	CAPCOM/U.S.GOLD
OUTRUN EUROPA	T 9.99	APRIL	CAPCOM/U.S.GOLD
PURPLE SATURN DAY	D 14.95	APRIL	EXXOS
PURPLE SATURN DAY	T 9.95	APRIL	EXXOS
SOCCER Q	T 2.99	IMMINENT	D & H GAMES

ATARI ST

BALANCE OF POWER 1990	24.99	APRIL 13	MINDSCAPE
BIO CHALLENGE	19.99	MARCH/APRIL	DELPHINE/PALACE
BLASTEROIDS	24.99	OUT NOW	IMAGE WORKS
BUTCHER HILL	19.99	IMMINENT	GREMLIN
CHAOS STRIKES BACK	14.99	JUNE	MIRRORSOFT/FTL
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GRIDRUNNER.....	9.95	LATE MARCH	LLAMASOFT
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MINI OFFICE PRO.			
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POPULOUS	24.99	MID APRIL	ELECTRONIC ARTS
ROBOCOP	19.95	APRIL 3	OCEAN
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THUNDERWING	19.95	OUT NOW	ARTRONIC
WEC LE MANS	19.95	MID APRIL	IMAGINE

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ROBOCOP	5.25	19.95	IMMINENT	OCEAN
SPACE QUEST 3	5.25	24.99	APRIL	SIERRA
TECHNOCOP	5.25	19.99	OUT NOW	GREMLIN

MACINTOSH

BALANCE OF POWER 1990	29.99	OUT NOW	MINDSCAPE
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MSX

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DARK FUSION	T 7.99	IMMINENT	GREMLIN
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SOCCER Q	T 2.99	OUT NOW	D & H GAMES
SOCCER STAR	T 2.99	OUT NOW	D & H GAMES
THE NATIONAL	T 9.99	OUT NOW	D & H GAMES

SPECTRUM+3

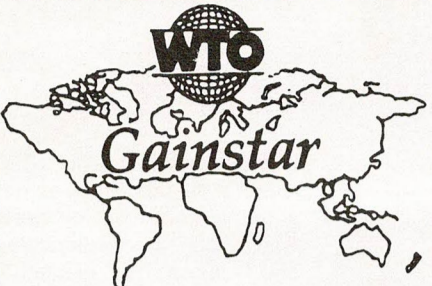
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Out Now = Released within the last month. *Imminent* = Expected at time of publication.


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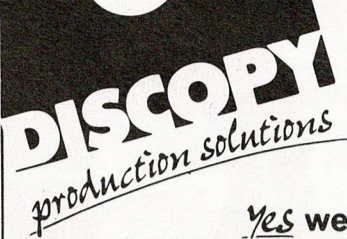
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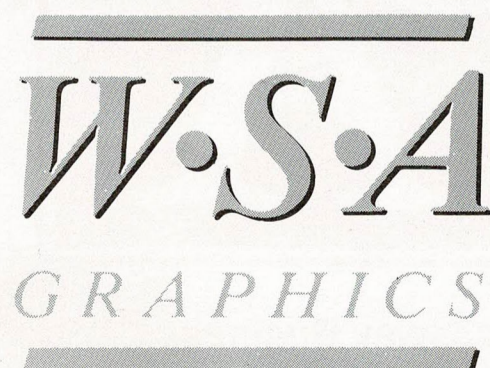
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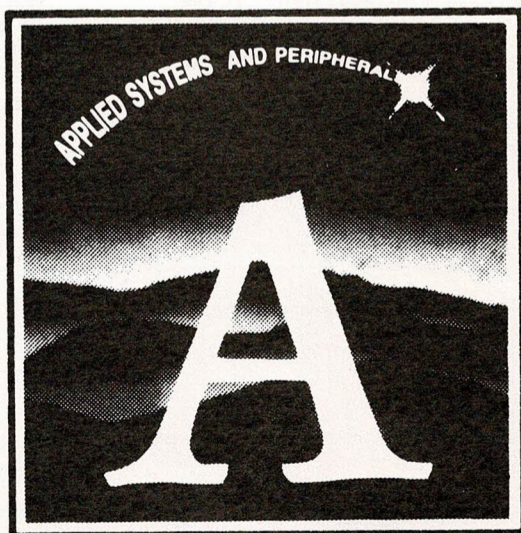
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SPEAKEASY

Gremlin attacks...

Re: *Games Machine* ad in April Issue of *Zzap* attacking Gremlin's *Federation of Free Traders*.

I am amazed that neither the advertisement manager, editor or publisher was aware of the house ad's copy.

I am even more amazed that Geoff Grimes admitted to me that even if he had been aware, he would not have thought it unethical in any sense to publish such a statement.

Justified criticism by way of a reviewer's personal opinion is acceptable, but for a publisher to announce a corporate view in this way is quite outrageous. Can we expect to see

TGM plagiarize advertiser's artwork along with their own copy in an effort to express their displeasure in future editions?

It's unfortunate that *TGM* have needed to resort to such blatant sensationalism in order to promote their publication.

I would imagine that Newsfield's latest ABC ratification confirming the industry's suspicion that all audited titles would record an alarming deterioration in sales has prompted a major re-think as far as how to attract readers is concerned.

I don't think they are going the right way about it. News-

field's magazines sales of late suggest that they can ill afford to upset advertisers at the moment.

This kind of quasi tabloid direction could set a disturbing precedent in the publishing market. I can not think of one example where a publisher has sought to discredit a product in this manner before.

The line between editorial freedom - i.e. writing an uncomplimentary review - in conjunction with an advertiser's support through the advertising of that and other products is already fine enough. I feel that Newsfield

have well overstepped this border. No media buyer in any industry could be expected to "fund" a publication on an ongoing basis and "tolerate" press which has a counteracting effect on all his marketing efforts.

As far as the multi format publishing market is concerned, I'm taking consolation in that it was *TGM* that chose to print this indictment rather than their two better selling competitors, namely *Ace* and *C+VG*.

Richard Barclay
Gremlin
Birmingham

...and Newsfield defends

Considering that Newsfield has always enjoyed a very good relationship with Gremlin Graphics, clearly we are greatly concerned that this major software publisher should feel obliged to write a letter to *CTW* such as they have.

We fully realise the sensitivity that exists in the relationship between reviews and advertisements, both to satisfy the supportive advertiser and at the same time correctly inform the paying reader. With this in mind, the review of Gremlin's *Federation of Free Traders* game received close attention from senior staff when it was realised that it was going to be low-rated.

TGM is not out on a limb with regard to its competitors' view of *FOFT*. A member of *C+VG*'s staff has told me that they have also experienced "a hard time" on the phone with Gremlin's Ian Stewart over their review of the game.

C+VG has seen fit to "discredit" *FOFT* with a 44% rating - identical to *TGM*'s - and the conclusion that "it has to be one of the greatest disappointments of recent months..." *Ace* offer only 50% and an uncomplimentary review. In the recent past, Ian Stewart has accused *Crash* of being out of tune with other magazines over their review of *Technocop* - but this was also quite untrue as is historically provable by checking the reviews.

The link between editorial freedom and an advertiser's support, says the letter, is

already fine enough. But what does this really mean? Are we to assume that he feels he has the right to manipulate reviews in his favour as a paying supporter?

Newsfield has long offered any software publisher the advantage to be gained from presenting unfinished games to our reviewers so that, through playtesting, the products may be refined and improved. The bi-directional influence is good for the software publisher, the magazine and most importantly - the consumer too.

Along with many other software publishers, Gremlin has taken advantage of this help in the past. It breaks down, however, when the software publisher has spent a lot of money on a product and the reviewers really don't like the game at all. Gremlin's *Deathwish* game was an earlier example of this.

In the case of *FOFT*, despite our being nowhere near the first to see or review the game, *TGM*'s reviewers made every effort to help rectify what they saw as fatal flaws in the programming. Several phone calls were made to Gremlin's Richard Barclay and several more to the *FOFT* programmer Paul Blythe. His response, in context of the extraordinarily high price of *FOFT*, seems cynical to say the least. When told that play is too slow and too tough, he replied to the effect that "life is tough".

Bearing in mind that, according not to *TGM* but to *C+VG*, *FOFT* is the "space flight



The offending article

simulation which the pundits reckoned would wipe the floor with *Elite*..." (our impression from the pre-release hype too), it is surely understandable that our reviewers should be disappointed by some of the product's qualities and worried by the attitude they received from Gremlin which effectively appeared to be telling them to mind their own business.

TGM received, according to Richard Barclay, the very first finished copy for review to be handed out - at about the same time the game was being delivered to retailers. It seemed to us that Gremlin were trying to sell *FOFT* on the strength of a rave review in *The One* which was written sometime in August 1988!

At the same time the issue of *Zzap*, which carried the *TGM* advertisement to which Gremlin object, went to press, many reviewers had concluded that *FOFT* was poor and unplayable, but that with the 'programming bug which rendered it impossible to save the state of play to disk - as already reported in *CTW* - which had obviously not been picked up in playtesting, *FOFT* was a very flawed high-priced game.

So, from our point of view this is not "sensationalism", nor is it a means of rectifying an "alarming deterioration" in *TGM*'s sales, as *TGM*'s first ABC has been most satisfac-

tory. No, it is actually a matter of concern for consumers - our readers.

We feel we have the right and duty to advise against, and protect them from, product which we feel is unplayable. If it is sensible of Gremlin to profit from good reviews - and who wouldn't want to do that - then it must also be seen that it is *TGM*'s duty to point out that its reviewers strongly consider those early reviews to be misleading - most likely because at the time those reviewers were not in possession of all the facts which became apparent in the later, finished copies of *FOFT*.

As a publisher of computer games magazines, we would far rather return to the situation we have enjoyed before, where uncompleted games are offered not for immediate review, but for valuable assessment by reviewers for the game's potential.

In the past this has so often resulted in improvements and highlighted the kinds of stumbling blocks that programmers, too close to their own product for such a long time, sometimes fail to pick up.

I sincerely hope that Gremlin will consider doing this again in the future.

Roger Kean
Editorial director
The Games Machine
Newsfield Publications

ROCK STAR

Michael George

Could you manage this
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FROM HERE TO FRATERNITY

Continued from page 18

actions as they might be. They're all far too competitive to their own disadvantage instead of making sure they're not stepping on each others toes."

For a man so keen not to offend and with an in-built suspicion of any kind of publicity there's no stopping him once he gets going.

"The UK publishers are far too interested in jockeying for position than they are in paying attention to specific profes-

sional ethics, values and morals that are necessary to move forward as a group. They're all out for themselves and they're not seeing that there is a much larger group vision that has to be reached or we're going to get guys going out of business everyday and the industry can't afford that.

"It creates infrastructure that is very shaky and the financial community that we are eventually going to need to invest in us is going to be scared and won't touch it."

The impotence of being earnest

A quick look round will confirm that Friedman's bleak synopsis is no exaggeration.

Friedman also offers a few opinions on the UK market's inability to mirror the SPA's formula so far. "I don't think anybody has come forward yet who is appropriate and has the backing and the sanction from the people that have the market share. Everybody that has come forward over the years here seems to have ulterior motives and personal goals at stake."

He then goes into some extremely interesting detail

and starts to name some names. Unfortunately a finger encrusted with a ring that most people would accept as an annual salary reaches for the stop button. Pity, you would have enjoyed that.

When the air of controversy has at least partly cleared the subject has moved onto the damaging and ridiculous rift between the leisure and business communities in the UK. It is a situation that Friedman finds reprehensible and incomprehensible after the experience of the SPA.

"The attitude that's held by most of the business community turns my stomach because it's the entertainment sector that creates the users

coming in. That's the ice breaker. That's what gets the kids enjoying a computer and then later they wake up to the fact that there's more to do with the machine". An idle shoot 'em up on his PC next to the day's workload lends weight to the argument.

But wait, he hasn't quite finished with these business heads yet. "You have a bunch of myopic, unvisionary idiots. If they can't see the need for a larger organisation that requires all sectors to work in unison then UK computing will never mature to the point where it will be taken as anything other than some kind of machine that just plugs in and seems to do something."

SPA for the course

The one bright spot Friedman sees on the horizon is the possible involvement of the SPA itself this autumn. For once, on or off the record, he is reticent to say too much simply because he does not want to be an SPA spokesman.

"I'm certain that when the SPA comes to your country and assists in the setting up of a body that it will be done properly as a whole because I don't think the SPA would or should support any organisation that doesn't involve the entire computing universe."

So like a bunch of squabbling children it looks like the British industry is going to have its wrist slapped and be brought into line by its more responsible brother from over the water. With some major players like US Gold already crossing the pond to attend SPA meetings that measure may be just around the corner.

As Friedman says: "It's going to happen anyway, it's just a question of whether you accept it or not."

Until then he warns we are on the path of eventual extinction as far as having any sort of supportive organisation goes. "The biggest statement of all is that you can't even agree to establish an organisation. If you can't agree on that the chances are highly likely that you wouldn't agree on anything if there was such a body", is the bleak parting shot.

Then as the subject moves onto the sale of Telecomsoft, certain British budget firms, developments in the US hardware market and other topics too sensitive to even hint at, the stop button is pressed for the last time.

It's by no means the end of the interview and with the tape off and guard down we chat, rather he chats and we listen, and the mud flies for at least another hour. And there lies not just another story but a fair sized novel.

WALKING ON THRIFT AVENUE

Continued from page 16 historic change these last few years because instead of all the American product flowing over here they've taken flight from developing their own games and the tide is flowing from the UK to the US, which puts us in a position to bargain a bit."

The result of all that bargaining was the 'Prose deal which was launched with US boss Bill Stealey as the "Wild Bill and Mild Andrew" show in the States. Hewson dressed up in Oxford robes next to Stealey's spaceman, the Yanks sniffed history and lapped it up.

"The long term advantage is that we get our name and brand image known over there. The ultimate goal of course is to have our own sales office over there and when the Micro-Prose deal ends in two years time I think we'll be ready to set ourselves up," offers Hewson.

A big ambition for one of these strange independent creatures and it will certainly have to be dealt a good hand for it to come off.

But whatever twists Hewson's beloved game of poker takes he knows he'll never win the pot and he doesn't seem particularly bothered. He may not have a card up his sleeve but he certainly seems to enjoy playing the game.

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Amstrad Euro share dip follows PC2000 hold-ups

The non-arrival of 286 and 386 machines last year has been blamed for a dip in Amstrad's share of the European computer hardware market.

Figures from Dataquest subsidiary Intelligent Electronics claim that Amstrad's UK market share sunk from 21.9 per cent in 1987 to 13.6 per

cent last year.

IBM's share fell as well, from 20.4 per cent to 17.9 per cent. The combination of Atari's PCs and STs helped the firm jump up from a 5.6 per cent share in '87 to nearly 10 per cent in '88. Commodore, strangely, apparently saw its UK share fall from 4.2 per cent to 3.7 per cent despite increased sales of the Amiga. The UK market itself grew

by nearly 41 per cent. Whilst the low-end 8088/86 sector grew by 30 per cent it was outshone by 286s (up 62 per cent) and eclipsed by 386s (up 500 per cent, from a very low base).

Better news for Commodore was its market leader status in West Germany, where it holds a 19.2 per cent share followed by Atari (14.7 per cent) and IBM (11.3 per cent).

Atari, however, managed second place in France with a 10.3 per cent share trailing IBM's 14 per cent.

In the European market as a whole Amstrad also suffered a fall - from second place with 10.7 per cent in 1987 to fifth place with 6.7 per cent in 1988.

The market share table for computers sold throughout Europe last year reads: IBM (16.2 per cent), Commodore

IBM AND NON-IBM COMPATIBLE COMPUTER SALES IN THE UK

	1987		1988
Others	38.5%	Others	43.2%
Amstrad	21.9%	IBM	17.9%
IBM	20.4%	Amstrad	13.6%
Atari	5.6%	Atari	9.6%
Olivetti	4.8%	Compaq	6.7%
Tandon	4.6%	Zenith	5.0%
Commodore	4.2%	Olivetti	4.0%

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(8.5), Atari (8.2), Olivetti (7.6), Compaq (3.4) and others (44.8). Amstrad (6.7), Apple (4.6),

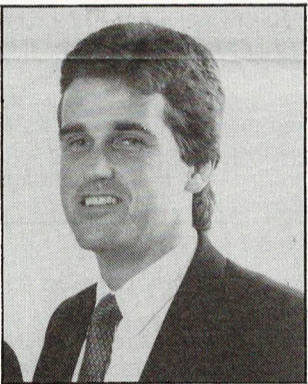
Piqued Acorn

Continued from front page ably compares the price of the Archimedes to its own machine.

Acorn has subsequently grounds that the advertisement is an unfair comparison -featuring its top end 440 machine rather than the 310 model, which is more popular in the education sector.

The ASA is now investigating Acorn's claim, and is expected to reach a decision within the next two weeks. Regardless of the outcome Commodore seems unperturbed.

"Acorn came to us and said 'gosh chaps this isn't fair', and went on to report it to the ASA. We are preparing a case to answer, but it's going to take the ASA a while to do anything, and by the time it does the campaign will have finished anyhow," offered CBM's national sales manager for education Peter Talbot to CTW.



TALBOT: Unworried by protest

The Acorn stance was one of anger mingled with bemusement. "Commodore certainly hasn't done itself any favours. People realise that it's not a fair comparison, and it's making themselves look foolish. Still it puts the Archimedes' name up, and it brings people's attention to the machine. It does say in the small print that it is a 440, but that model doesn't really go into the education market," said the firm.

Commodore was taking an equally bullish stance to the fact that CBM now features on the DTI's list of approved manufacturers. "At the end of each financial year the DTI procures money from the treasury and makes it available to schools to spend on technological equipment. Historically its list of manufacturers has precluded everyone except Acorn and RM. This year through our lobbying things are opening up", commented Talbot.

Meanwhile, Acorn was unavailable for comment last week regarding a report in consumer weekly *New Computer Express*.

The report claimed that a stripped down Archimedes was being readied for launch in the £500-£600 price bracket, featuring an internal disk drive.

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