

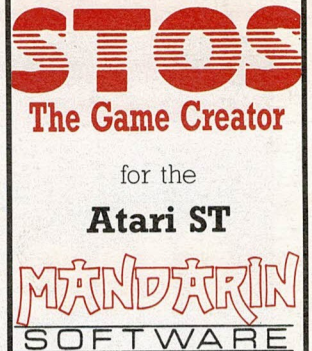


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CTW

5.9.88 BRITAIN'S TOP COMPUTER TRADE WEEKLY ISSUE 202



for the

Atari ST



More details from

Diane O'Brien on 0625 878888 Ext. 315

Sinclair wins new chip cash

Japanese electronics group Fujitsu is backing Sir Clive Sinclair's bid to produce a cheap wafer chip.

Its move is part of a £6.5 million investment package in Anamartic, a Cambridge-based firm quarter-owned by Sinclair Research.

Wafer scale integration promises to reduce substantially the cost of large scale computer storage. Its object is to allow the direct connection of hundreds of chips, thus eliminating the expensive wiring and packaging of chips on a circuit board.

The other investors in this second-round financing include Tandem Computers, Barclays Bank and several UK venture capital firms. Anamartic won the £2.8 million needed to get the project properly off the ground last October.

Tandem was part of this original financing. It put in around £1 million and gained a 20 per cent stake in Anamartic. It is not known exactly how much Fujitsu has invested, or if this has lessened Sinclair's stake further.

INSIDE:

REAL TIME SIMULATIONS

In order to attract the younger consumer WH Smiths is giving away a watch with every MicroProse military simulation. But does this put the indies at a disadvantage? And will they react with Prose price cutting? Smiths hopes not 12

BIG MOUTH STRIKES AGAIN

A year after revealing ambitious plans to sting the computer industry out of at least a million pounds Mark Gallarotti is still some way off (very, very nearly a million pounds in fact). CTW talks to the smallest distributor in the country and finds out if the market is ready for him yet 20

GROWING UP IN PUBLIC

The leisure market has often been sniffed at by the weightier business fraternity for instability and immaturity. But in the post MS-DOS flux the business distributors are higgledy piggledy whilst their leisure counterparts have come of age and are experiencing more stability than ever 22

CHARTS/REVIEWS 29

Genic clashes with Gold

Mediagenic has all but won a legal action against US Gold and has another three cases pending against the firm.

The first action concerns *Katakis*, the game which Gold was set to release at the end of September. Mediagenic argued that it was a "blatant rip off" of its own *R-Type*, and instructed its lawyers to take action.

This has resulted in Gold and all its associated companies promising not to reproduce, advertise, sell or supply *Katakis* in any form; not to infringe exclusive licensee rights; deliver all versions of *Katakis* to Mediagenic's solicitors; and to pay costs. Nonetheless, Gold is understood to be still maintaining that this does mean that there has been any infringement of copyright though it is

difficult to see that such a capitulation is proof of innocence.

Gold itself was steadfastly refusing to take calls on the matter last week.

The case would be bad enough for most firms, but it is particularly embarrassing for Gold. Just a few weeks ago, it put out a statement of its beliefs about copyright and how it had gained the agreement of leading distributors not to support "competing plagiarised products".

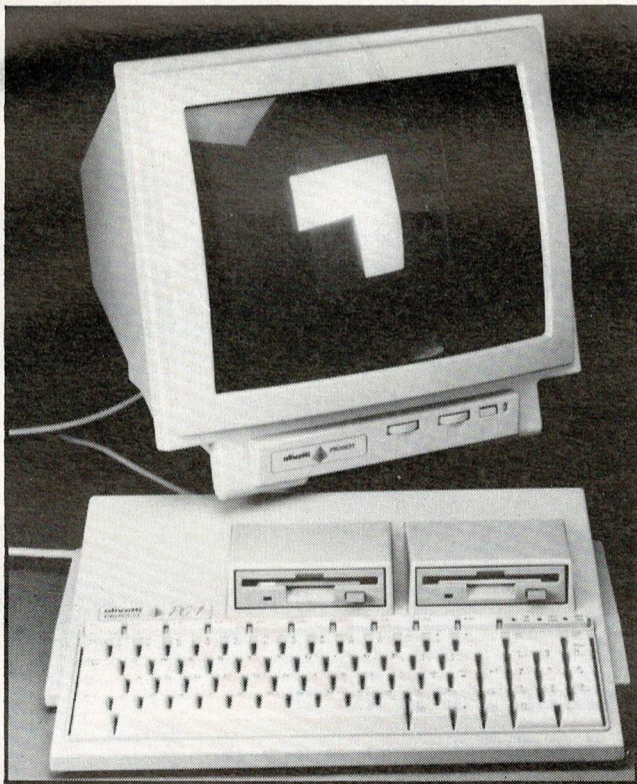
Also, it has probably been the most assiduous of the leisure software publishers in taking action against claimed plagiarists. It recently made allegations over *Fire and Forget* from Titus and Elite's *Overlander* - both of which were said to be too similar to its own



COUSENS: Silent on Mediagenic's apparent victory

Road Blasters. Elite is currently in the process of suing Gold for libel over that claim. Furthermore, three other Mediagenic cases against Gold Continued on back page

Olivetti launches into class war



PC1: Now Olivetti lines up low-cost education line

Olivetti UK will this week unveil a new low-cost machine to bolster its presence in the education market.

At this stage details are scant, but it is expected to be IBM-compatible and priced midway between the £399 Olivetti Prodest PC1 and the £1,619 M240.

The selective launch later this week will be for the benefit of the educational press and local authorities. Olivetti is promising that the new machine will be "only a part" of what is being announced.

Olivetti is attempting to re-pitch itself in a market which has become somewhat overcrowded with potential major players. Since the new year Commodore, Atari, Zenith, Tandy, Apple and Cambridge Computer have all put together education-specific promotions and schemes.

The firm hopes that the new

machine can have a more universal education appeal than previous lines.

"We've been very successful in the past, mainly with the M24 and more recently with the M240," began micro computer division marketing manager Bob Garrett to CTW.

"It's mainly been in the Higher Education sector, though, because we sell high end machines. We've got a lot of experience and there are certainly a number of polytechnics and universities that already standardise on our products."

Garrett ruled out the possibility of the new machines being any relation to the Olivetti Prodest PC1 which has been exclusively imported from Italy by Dixons since March.

The education-pitched line will be getting its UK airing marginally ahead of Italy and first stocks are set to arrive "within a matter of weeks".

Nintendo centres on indies

After much talk of selling direct only, Nintendo is set to appoint Centresoft as its first UK distributor.

The news comes at a time when Nintendo is preparing for the full scale launch of its console into the UK via a networked TV ad campaign.

Boots, Debenhams, Littlewoods, Toys R US and the northern Macro chain have been confirmed as Nintendo's main outlets this autumn. With the firm's emphasis on getting multiples' distribution right and its previous ruling out of

distributors serving independents the Centresoft deal comes as something of a surprise.

The Birmingham distributor is already supplying Nintendo software to Boots and is expected to start shipping consoles to its dealer base within the next few weeks.

"We felt that since we're going to be engaged in a national advertising campaign we should be majoring on the multiples to get that national exposure," commented Nintendo director Mike Wensman to CTW.

"We do, in fact, sell to a number of independents already and we'll continue to add to that with the help of Centresoft and possibly others."

The Centresoft/Go/PDQ conglomerate variously handled the Nintendo last autumn when it was being marketed in the UK by toy firm Mattel. It admits candidly, however, that this fell some way short of being successful.

"Because NESI are doing it this year the product will be far more suited to the UK. It will obviously be helped by the huge TV advertising," said

Centresoft's national accounts manager Richard Steele to CTW.

Centresoft already carries the competing Sega console and has some Atari console stocks left over from last year.

Nintendo is planning a £2 million promotional spend in the weeks leading up to Christmas. Over £1 million will go on the networked TV ad campaign that is now set to break in October.

London agency Geers Gross will be putting UK touches to ads created in the US.

Sega breaks TV virginity

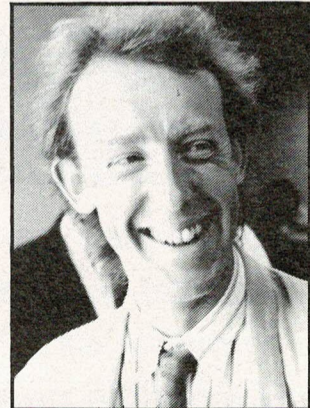
Sega has appointed Virgin to handle sales and marketing of its console and software in the UK, Germany and France.

One immediate effect is that there will now be a "real" £300,000 TV adspend in Britain this autumn. The change means that the former UK sole Sega agent Mastertronic has been replaced by its parent company Virgin. The switch would appear to be largely of internal interest only, as the relevant Mastertronic staff will still be working on the console.

In Germany, Virgin has replaced Ariolasoft but - somewhat confusingly - has reappointed it as a sub-distributor. In France, the position is more clear cut: current handler Cameron has been dropped and has been replaced by another firm.

The TV campaign breaks in the third week of October, and will run through most of the major ITV regions. The ads will be a mixture of 30 second and 10 second affairs, running on a week on, week off basis until Christmas.

"Our research has shown that there are a very high proportion of 20-35 year olds buying Segas for their own use - somewhere around 50 per cent. We believe they're the sort of people who have had a computer and are now moving up to Sega. Consequently, not only does that mean that there's more longevity in this market, but it also means that not all of our ads will be in kids' TV slots," Virgin Games' boss Nick Alexander said.



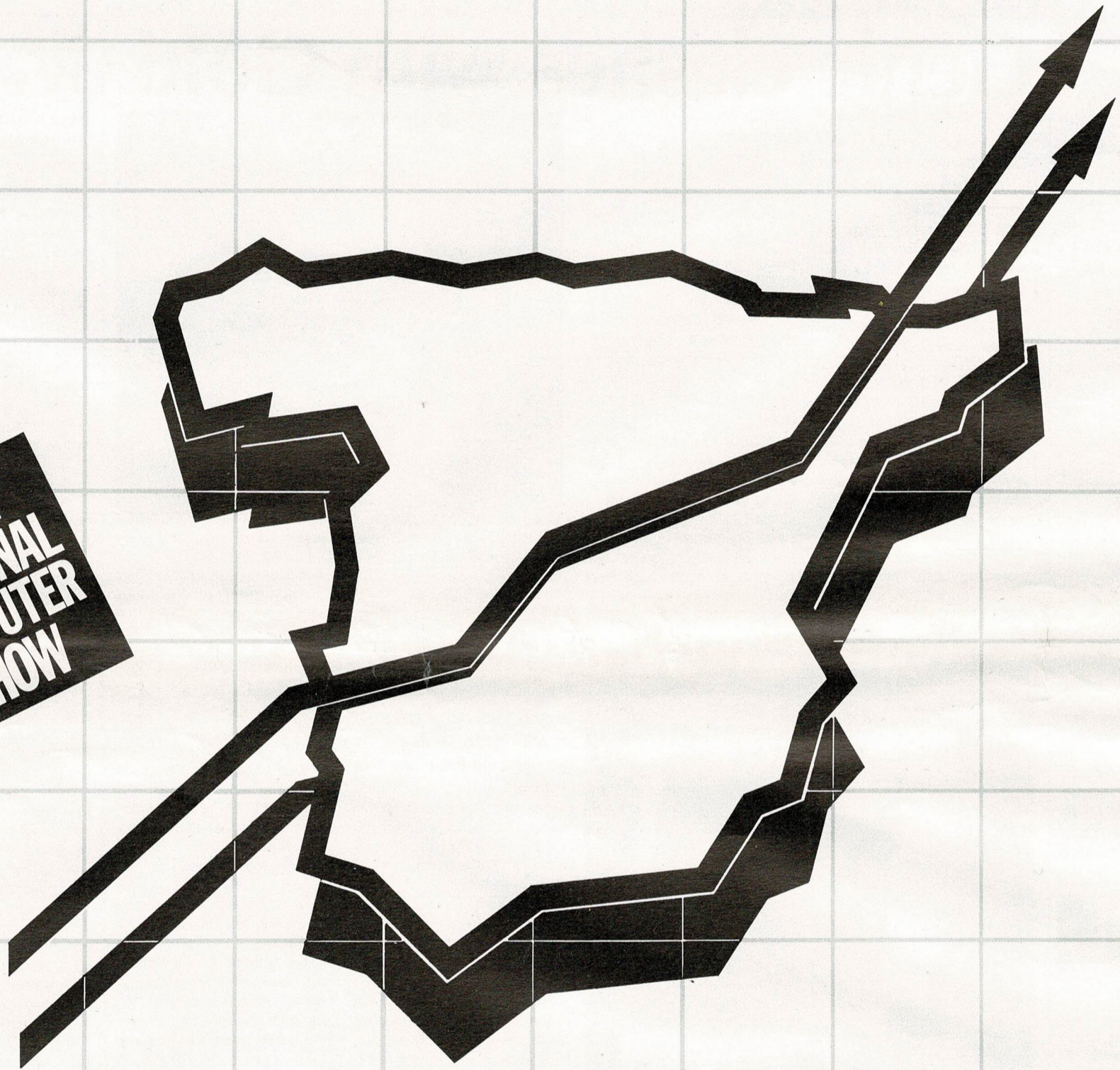
ALEXANDER: TV push

The ad campaign underpins Virgin's aims roughly to double last year's sales of 30,000 hardware units. In all, in the three countries, it has targeted twelve month sales worth £25 million, split 175,000 hardware and approaching one million software.

"The biggest reason they chose to work with us is that we have the financial muscle to make sure there's sufficient inventory to sell substantial numbers," Alexander added.

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SDL digs up £299 ST batch

Distributor SDL has unearthed a new batch of £299 STs — just weeks before Atari's own expected £100 ST cut.

Since March 14th the official ST price has been £399, this price currently including some £413.94 worth of free software. Atari, however, said earlier this year that a £299 standalone was likely to be available for the autumn season, plus a new £399 winter bundle. Announcements are due at next week's PC Show.

SDL appears to have pre-empted the cut, but not with current stock. The batch being

offered at £299 as of this week features only a half Mb drive. Atari's current summer pack configuration has a 1Mb drive.

"Some people were selling £299 STs for quite a while after the increase but the margin tightened to 15 per cent. We've managed to get a batch of £299 STs at the old 20 per cent margin," commented SDL boss Tony Deane.

"The £299 price point is a very important one and we're giving dealers a chance to achieve it. The summer pack is good value but a lot of users still can't afford £399."

Unsurprisingly SDL is not revealing its source of supply,

offering only that the machines have come from within the country. It is expecting a good response from mailshots advertising the offer and claims stock will last up to three weeks.

Deane was unworried by other distributors' possible reactions to the move. "We've bitten the bullet and gone with a £299 machine at 20 per cent. Anyone can do it if they want."

"A lot of the other distributors would rather just shift the summer pack because it means the same carriage costs for better margins. Our philosophy is to support the market and stock everything we can."



ST SUMMER PACK: Undercut by SDL

The Power House in fresh mystery

Defunct budget firm The Power House sold off 85,000 units of £1.99 software just prior to going bust, CTW can disclose.

The firm itself is refusing to comment on the deal made with London-based Drakus Marketing, which specialises in liquidated stock.

Though there is no suggestion of anything illegal having occurred, the timing of the agreement appears somewhat peculiar in the light of boss Ashley Hildebrandt's comments after the bust (CTW August 22nd). Then he argued that The Power House had ceased trading "some time ago". The Drakus deal oc-

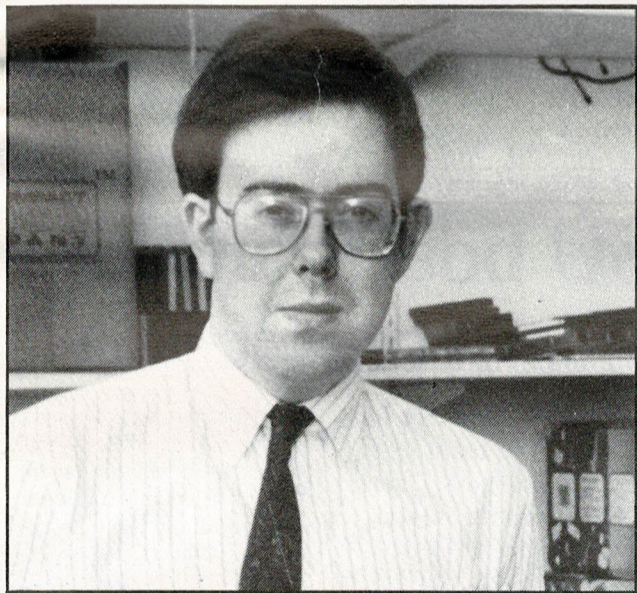
curred at the beginning of August, and the first Drakus boss Atul Majithia knew of its demise was when he read about it in CTW.

It is believed that something under £10,000 was paid for the 15 pallets of stock. Majithia is currently working out the best way to sell them.

"We haven't really made our plans yet. We might give them away with some machines — such as Spectrums, Commodores and Amstrads — if we can get hold of them," he said.

Drakus handled a similar deal last year when it somehow managed to persuade an American estate agent to take a batch of Memotech computers on to be sold on the principle of "Buy a house and gain a free computer". Though one of the least obvious-sounding deals in the history of such events, it worked to the extent that Drakus ran out of Memotechs.

Other deals have proved less rewarding. Majithia offered: "We've still got 300 brand new ZX81s still in their boxes with the Rampack and games and everything..."



HILDEBRANDT: Silent on stock

Capital leaves City after two year stint

Centresoft has closed down its London based distribution centre Capital and is moving the majority of its operations back to Birmingham.

Essentially, Centresoft's reasoning is that Capital was set up to establish a dealer base in London and the South East. That task, says the firm, has been completed and Capital's resources are too slim to take on the full Centresoft range.

Capital had been run from Battersea by Simon Cairns who in turn reported to Jenny Richards. Centresoft is stressing that Richards' imminent departure to Mediagenic in California (CTW August 22nd) has nothing to do with the shut down.

Cairns will continue to operate in the London area although the other four members of staff have been laid off. "I don't see any reason why Centresoft can't handle distribution from Birmingham," said a cagey Cairns.

From Birmingham, Centresoft's national accounts manager Richard Steele commented: "There's physically not the room in Capital to handle the huge range Centresoft has. It was very much set up specifically with the intention of building up a dealer base. It's been a success."

Steele went on to say that distribution costs would not be greatly affected and claimed that since Cairns is continuing to work in the South East the dealers will not be neglected.



STEELE: Logical decision

"This decision has been taken over the past two or three months," he said. "It's a logical decision."

Capital was set up almost exactly two years ago.

New US line leads 'Prose into budget

MicroProse is set to join the budget fray next month when it launches its latest new label for the UK.

The firm has tied up Hi-tech Expression — claimed to be the biggest budget players in the US — in a bid to cash in on the expected demand for PC games once Amstrad launches its games-pitched PC this autumn.

MicroProse has also signed up a second new label, due to be announced shortly after next week's PC Show at Earl's Court, London. This and Hi-tech join Cosmi, Microleague, Suncom and Origin in the MicroProse ranks.

Some 15 Hi-tech games are set to ship in October costing £9.99 on PC. This first batch will be supplemented by four new titles appearing each month.

Hi-tech in the US holds licences such as Walt Disney

characters and Sesame Street. It also originated jungle disc greetings cards — which MicroProse claims to be re-introducing via a special Xmas line.

The two firms have been negotiating the tie-up for around eight months. "It's a new development for us," began Microprose UK's managing director Stewart Bell to CTW. "We are ideally placed with the upcoming Sinclair Professional machine to offer excellent products for a growing marketplace."

Meanwhile, MicroProse is also for the first time seeking European product to publish in the US. This is a policy which has already been executed successfully by US publishers such as Mindscape and Epyx.

The Euro product will be published under the US firm's Valueline retailing at around \$30. MicroProse product normally sells at \$70.

Embattled Lifetree resolute following bad debt surprise

Lifetree has donned its best brave face following an administration order slapped on it recently.

Two bad debts allegedly approaching £500,000 had forced the firm to appoint an administrator, under the UK equivalent of Chapter 11. That is for a three month period following which Lifetree's joint administrators Ernst and Whinney will either present the firm's recovery from a sticky position to the courts or will apply for an extension.

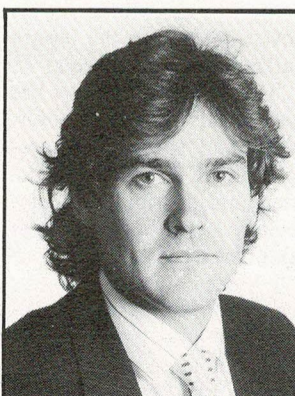
Last week though the firm was more than confident of success following a £120,000 order to Holland and an apparently near to be completed 1,000 unit deal with an unnamed corporate client.

Marketing manager Colin Bastable acknowledged that the firm's position could cause a loss of confidence, but claimed that such an attitude had not been apparent. The firm's US president Ed Sattizahn has been in the country assuring major customers that

the UK operation will be supported.

Bastable told CTW: "The objective here is to trade our way out of this patch and come out a stronger and more experienced company. People here have a spirit borne of fighting to build a successful company and there's a positive attitude. It's business as usual."

The European companies responsible for the bad debts are not being named but together they account for more than 30 per cent of Lifetree's total European turnover.



BASTABLE: Spirit

CTW

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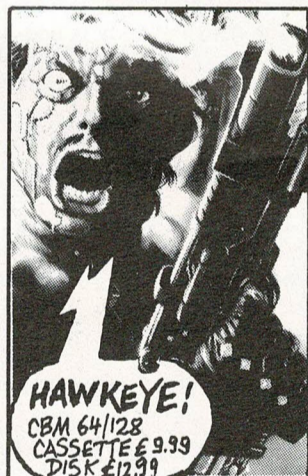
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Smiths: no Xmas Amiga

WH Smiths has said that it will definitely, definitely not be taking on the Amiga before Christmas.

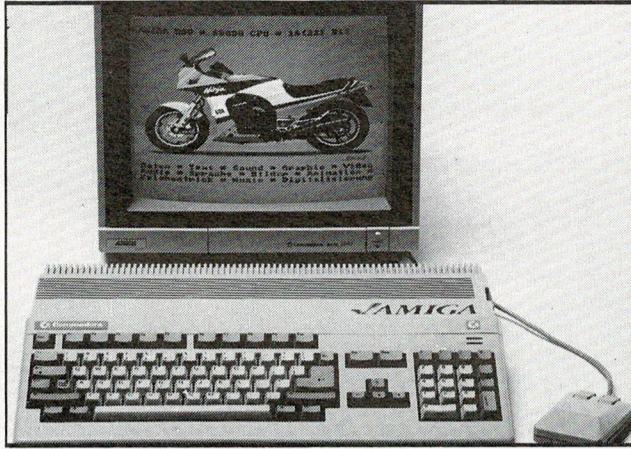
The chain has been stocking the Atari ST for well over a year now indicating a degree of success with 16-bit hardware. However, it would appear that despite a ramping up to Amiga software in its stores the firm envisages no reason to introduce an alternative to the ST.

"We're not taking that on board because there's a limited amount of hardware we can take," commented computer

buyer Ian Laurie. "Frankly, we took the ST at a very early stage and we've had success with it. Over that time we've built up a good relationship with Atari."

He also claimed that ST and Amiga software sales now account for 12 per cent of total software sales as opposed to two or three per cent a year ago.

Laurie said that the Amiga's position will be re-evaluated come the post Christmas lull although the prospect of Smiths making room for another computer in the lean winter months seems slim.



A500: Not in WHS for Christmas

Watford bridges PC support gap

Following Watford Electronic's entry into the PC market (CTW August 8th) with low cost 286 based machines the firm has announced a free 12 month warranty scheme with an extra option of two years.

Also, Watford plans to spend upwards of £250,000 on magazine advertising which includes spreads in specialist accountancy and pharmaceutical publications as well as the PC press. Largely based in the Acorn market Watford is now embarking on a stronger pitch at the traditional business market with a range of cheap computer furniture sourced from Taiwan.

A deal has been struck with Nationwide Systems to handle

the claimed eight hour response on site maintenance. Further two year extensions to that cost around 10 per cent of the original purchase price. All the machines and furniture will be mainly available though mail order and a few dealers. Distributors are being completely ruled out.

"We've had an astonishing response to the PCs," claimed technical director Shiraz Jessa. "And I think that our initial target of 500 machines a month will be easily achieved."

Watford has specifically pitched its Aries range of machines as "cheaper than Amstrad" with the AT costing £995 and the XT prices at £875. There is talk from the firm of a 386 machine and the possibility of PS/2 is being floated.

Elite budgets on continent success

Following a number of discussions on the continent Elite has decided to launch its full budget range Encore in Europe and has shifted full price distribution in Germany.

After a year with Ariolasoft the firm has switched to Bomico. Given the amount of reorganisation after Ariola's management buy out it's hardly surprising that at least one UK publisher has moved on. Ariola's other UK partners

have thus far shown no sign of desiring any change or of lacking confidence in the distribution giant.

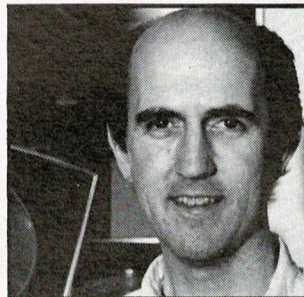
Elite director Bernard Dugdale commented: "Bomico are very entrepreneurial. When you mention money their eyes light up. I would call them a hungry company." Germany takes up about 10 per cent of Elite's business currently. Before the Ariola deal Elite marketed itself in Germany via Elite GmbH.

On the budget front the firm is hardly going out on a limb

with brash predictions. Dugdale is seeking an equivalent £2,99 price point in all countries to cover the extra few pence involved in shipping costs.

Licenses and agents such as Ubisoft (France) and Bomico will handle the full five product range in each country. "We don't have to be the top selling brand in these countries," said Dugdale. "There isn't a staff of 45 to support. I have no doubt that we'll make money out of it."

Bullet slams rival



EVANS: Hitting back

The battle of the retail merchandisers moved onto another plane last week with Bullet signing up new accounts and slamming rival USD.

Last week Telecomsoft, Mirrorsoft and Mandarin appointed Bullet for apparently long term contracts with more promised for the peak selling season. This follows USD poaching Palace from Bullet recently and tying up Mediagenic, Grandslam and Beau Jolly.

Bullet managing director Barry Evans promptly compared his company and USD as like "Rolls Royce and a Mini-van". "We both cover similar ground but with a very different pace, style and efficiency," he said.

Evans also claimed that Palace director Pete Stone had wanted to continue with Bullet but was "over-ruled at the last minute". He is clearly incensed at comments made by USD boss Andy Wood to CTW (August 22nd), calling them "nonsense". Wood had said that the software industry and record market are "very different mediums with a different user base and with different support techniques".

Bullet entered the software market proper last February after eight years in the pop music industry. The firm has thus far worked with the likes of Mediagenic, which is now tied to USD, as well as Softek, Evans though pointed out that contracts are on an ad hoc basis mainly concentrating on one product at a time.

"Bullet's main thrust is promotion, information and merchandising, whereas USD's is to secure transfer orders - a task we feel is most efficiently undertaken by distributors' telesales departments," he said.

Dealer body ramps up for Earl's Court

Konix has donated part of its PC Show stand to the National Association of Computer Retailers for the two trade days.

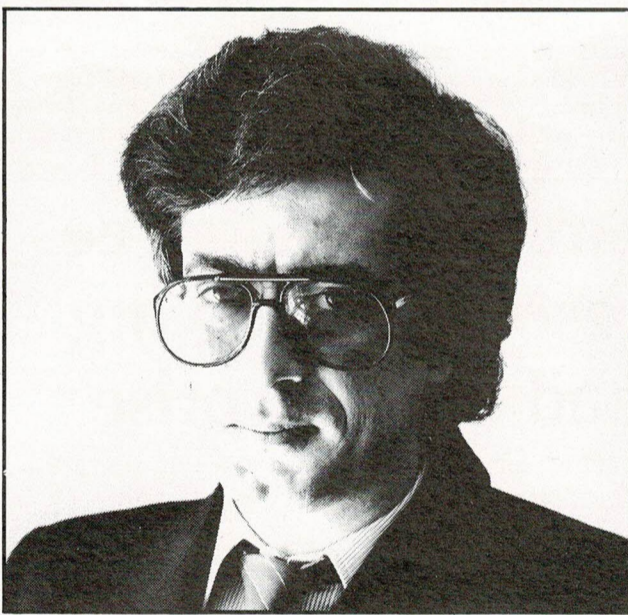
The fledgling body is hoping to double its membership from 20 to 40 and to make itself known to the rest of the industry. A committee meeting has been pencilled in for just after the show.

NACR has also drawn up a nine point charter of aims which joint founder Vic Purnell (Computability, Ebbw Vale) acknowledged will be "torn apart anyway" at the first general meeting. The aims are to:

- Improve the public image of the industry.
- Establish a code of ethics.
- Get a fairer deal for the independent dealer.
- Curb piracy.
- Create standard identities for product.
- Ensure that only quality product is sold.
- Make sure that publishers release times are accurate.
- Arrange SOR for dealers.
- Establish better warranty for dealers.

Whilst these aspirations will hardly surprise anyone Purnell admits they are optimistic. "You can't be negative," he said. "Just making the points known will help and we can definitely do something about piracy." He said that the underlying aim is to achieve a better bargaining position.

Micro Interface leaps up to £7.5m



PATRIARKOS: Doubling turnover That "very peculiar type of distributor" Micro Interface has announced a doubling of turnover to £7.5 million.

The firm acts as a hardware agent for end of line or distressed stock from distributors, multiples and manufacturers. In recent times, it has moved away from the leisure market into the PC sector.

"Doubling our turnover has been largely due to the overstocks and special contracts we've picked up from manufacturers and distributors - particularly in the PC area," boss Takis Patriarkos began. "Our only home computer business comes from calling to the Eastern Bloc. We ship around 25,000 units annually to Poland, which has increased since Timex has not been

involved with Spectrums."

Exports are now up to 75 per cent for the firm. Years back, they used to comprise all of its sales, but slipped back to half two years ago.

The company is not planning to move into software as other export firms have done. "Micro Interface is only four people - one Greek, one Dutch, one Iranian and one English, speaking nine languages - so we have to be very careful what we do. We've succeeded because we're flexible and keep very low overheads. We're a very 1992 company," he added.

Aside from hardware, Micro Interface is currently touting its range of unbranded Amsoft disks, along with two other types of disks, cleaning kits and the like.



ARIES: Amstrad basher?

SU boasts amidst rivals' quiescence

EMAP monthly Sinclair User is set to taunt its rivals publicly over latest ABC circulation figures.

The next issue of SU will feature a front cover flash boasting that it is the UK's best-selling Spectrum magazine. This is despite any confirmation of such a claim via other mags' ABC results.

Seven weeks ago EMAP announced increased sales figures across all three of its computer games mags in a blaze of swaggering glory. The most startling claim was that with an increase of 7,500 readers to 85,615 SU had jumped from third to first place in the Spectrum sector.

"We believe very strongly that we are the best-seller and see no reason why the others should be hanging on with their figures any more" commented SU editor Graham Taylor to CTW.

"In the end I think they'll have to just admit defeat gracefully."

Newsfield, publisher of longtime number one Spectrum mag Crash, preferred to remain uncontactable rather than respond to Taylor's taunts.

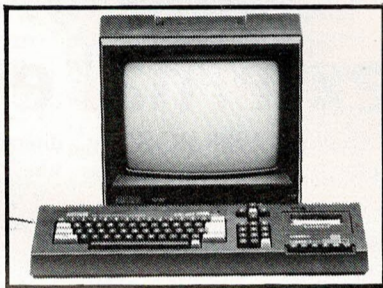
The next issue of SU (October) will appear on September 18th. It will have a cover-mounted cassette featuring Deviants by Players and a demo of Ocean's Typhoon.



SU: Sales and dander up

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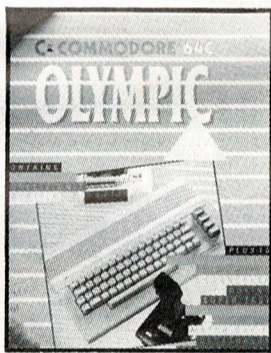


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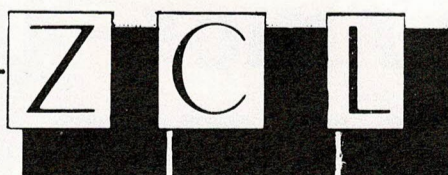
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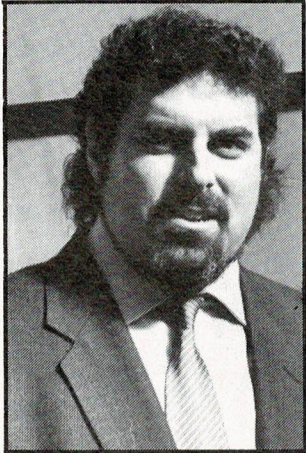
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Dinamic boards EA

As flagged in CTW (August 29th) Dinamic has signed up with Electronic Arts for UK and European distribution.



LEWIS: Dinamic affiliate

The Madrid based publisher already has agreements in Italy, Portugal and Spain but EA will be handling the rest of Europe. Previously its titles were licensed to Ocean and published on the Imagine label.

The deal follows some months of Dinamic looking for a proper distribution deal after ending the Ocean agreement three months ago. Electronic Arts is understood to be on the verge of announcing another tie up with a European publisher – possibly Ubisoft.

First out from Dinamic will be *Game Over II* – the follow up to the game published by Ocean last year.

"We had a very good relationship with Imagine but the problem was that we felt we

had the potential to sell product ourselves. We had to look for a distributor who worked like us," said international manager Michel Angstadt.

For EA, director of European publishing Mark Lewis offered: "Dinamic are probably the number one publisher in Spain. We felt that their products have a nice look and feel and that they would be capable of doing their own marketing and PR which is always part of our agreements."

EA will be publishing four Dinamic games over the next year but not taking on all its products. "They do a lot of stuff that won't come out in England and which is real Spanish," said Lewis. Dinamic joins EA's batch of affiliates which includes Martech and Accolade.

Cameron scans UK

French peripherals firm Cameron is due to set up in the UK just after this month's PC Show.

Its primary thrust will be with scanners and mice, with which it claims to have found considerable success in Europe.

Speaking in the wake of losing the Sega distribution in France (see front page), its almost eponymous boss Cameron Macsween told CTW: "Quite genuinely there's nobody in the market with the same range of peripherals as us. And they've got high margins, too. If I sell 25 Segas I don't make as much as I would from selling just one scanner."

The new venture will be

sited somewhere within the M25. "The major part of the funding is actually the product itself – we're that confident about it," Macsween added.

Essentially, the line up splits into two grades of scanner at £199 and £299 for three machine formats: PCs, STs and Amigas. Additionally, there's a £540 flat bed scanner. "And you should see our PC mouse: we've done 6,000 units a month in Germany and we're up to 1,000 per month in France. It'll be £49 in the UK with a two year guarantee."

To date, Cameron's UK business has been confined largely to an exclusive distribution deal with Lightning. Macsween said it had done "an ex-

cellent job" and would continue to be supplied alongside other distributors.

The firm will also be selling direct to consumers via mail order adverts. Macsween played down the significance of this, stressing that the prices will be the same as retail.

Macsween is something of an industry veteran. A Frenchman "by acquisition", as he terms it, he has been active in software and peripherals for the past six years. He is still probably best known as the former boss of Prism France, and for the deal he helped put together for another French firm to buy the residue of the ill-fated Oric from the liquidator.

Samsung chip sales double

The worldwide chip shortage has not surprisingly substantially increased profits for Samsung's semiconductor subsidiary.

Samsung Semiconductor and Telecommunications' (SST) sales rose by 53 per cent to Won 392 billion (\$543.2m) in the first half of this year.

Recurring profit (roughly equivalent to pre-tax earnings)

increased from W12 billion to W53 billion.

According to Sean Goldrick of stockbroker Hoare Govett the increases are likely to continue. This is due to the continued high demand for 256K D-Ram chips, but more importantly the launch later this year of its one magabit D-Ram.

SST is to be merged this year with Samsung Electronics, the group's consumer electronics division.

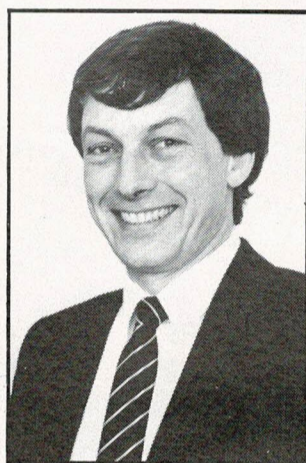
Leisuresoft ties Hewson

Leisuresoft has scored the primary distribution account for Hewson's two budget labels.

And discussions are currently being held with another two publishers as the distributor seeks to capitalise on its increased warehouse space and also to fill the gap left by the recent departure of Mediagenic.

The Rack-It and Rebound labels will be handled by Leisuresoft from the beginning of next week, when it moves to double-sized premises.

"It's not a question of us trying to form a new power group to compete here and there. We're just doing a job for firms



ADAMS: Hewson deal who asked us to," operations director Tony Adams volunteered.

Refuseniks plan external events

Two of the 1988 PC Show refuseniks Electronic Arts and Leisuresoft have announced their own functions during the event.

EA has joined the hotel suite brigade and will be hosting its "Winter Preview" at the Gloucester Hotel.

"On the last day of the show last year we made a decision not to go the the next one," explained European publishing

director Mark Lewis. "Then, it was important to say 'Here's EA – We've arrived'. This year, everybody should know who we are."

Meantime distributor Leisuresoft has hit on a dealer evening during the show, its impressive stand at last year's event notwithstanding. The dealer dinner takes place at the Forum Hotel on the Thursday night, and is being co-hosted by Elite, Telecomsoft and Ocean. Some 100 dealers are being invited.

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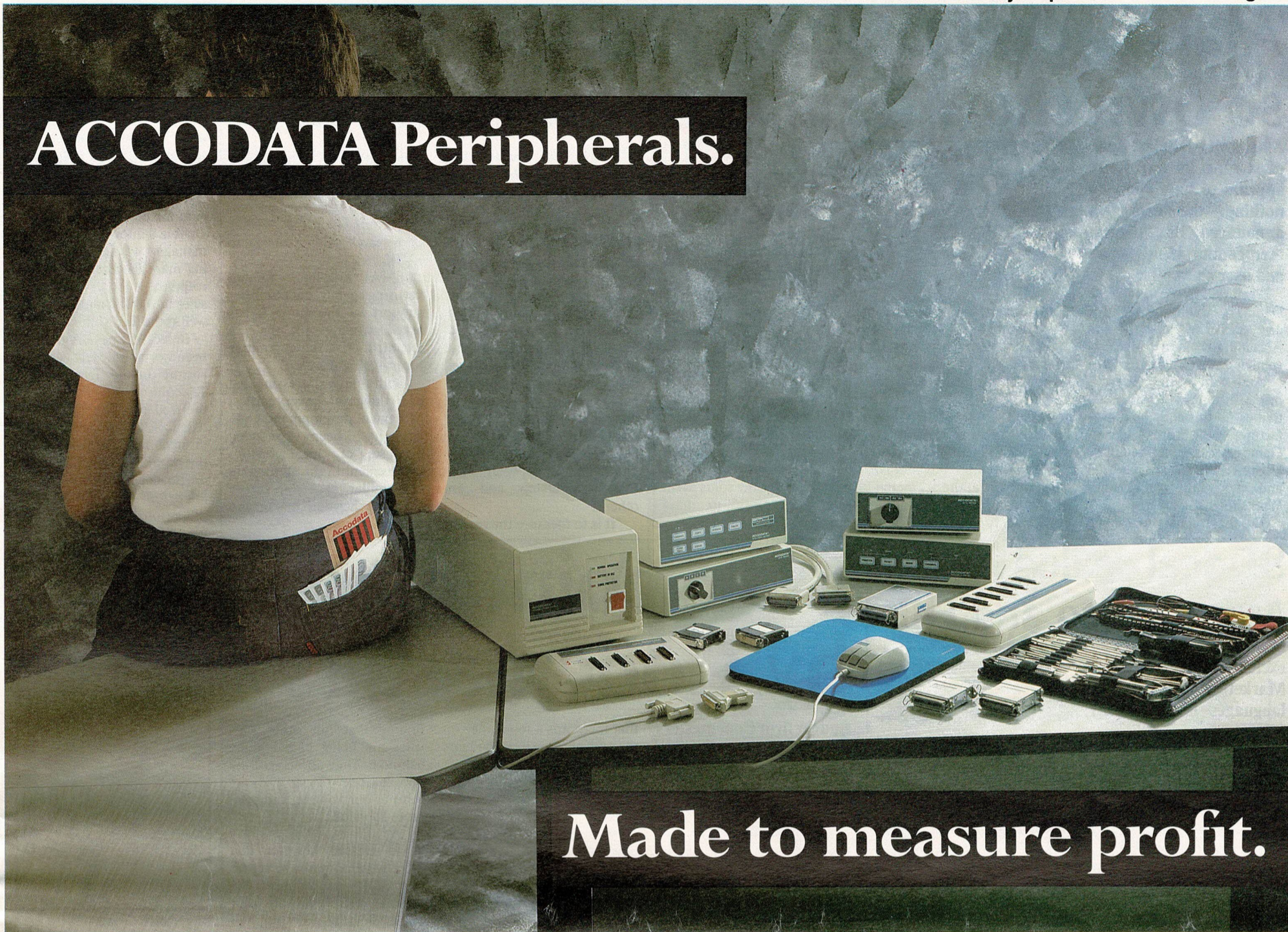
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Atari backs Database so own show dwindles

Atari's airy talk last June of staging its own show appears to have come to nothing: the firm has announced its "biggest ever commitment" to an end user show.

The event in question is the Database Exhibitions' three day Atari Christmas Show at Alexandra Palace from November 25th.

Atari will be using the event primarily to push its games activities. To this end, the manufacturer will host the Atari Games Arcade, the Big Game Highest Score competition and the multi-level Games Workshop.

Database claims that some



FLASHBACK: Now own show less likely

70 other firms will be exhibiting, and what the Christmas attendance will surpass its own record set back in April with 17,000.

Atari UK boss Bob Gleadow's talk of the firm's "biggest ever commitment" seems at some remove from indications given to CTW at the beginning of the summer (CTW June 6th). Then a spokesman came

up with the memorable offering "We're well used to doing our own computer shows - we used to do them when we were called Commodore."

Talk of Atari doing its own consumer show care in the week of its apparently successful trade forum. Now, though, the prospect of my solus event occurring seems to have slipped back off the agenda.

EMAP bids for readership data

EMAP Business and Computer Publications has linked up with media buying agency TMD to investigate the possibilities of producing computer press readership data.

The idea, initiated by EMAP B&CP managing director Lyn Lavers, is to cut through the confusion caused by there being so many different computer titles aimed at different markets. EMAP would like to have access to figures which would instantly differentiate between one title's readership and another's.

"It is to measure the reader-

ship of as many computer titles as we can. We don't know yet if we can come up with a way of sorting out the various sectors," commented TMD's head of research Alan Copage to CTW.

EMAP is trying to win advertising agency and publisher support for the move. It has asked Copage to chair a technical sub-committee investigating the plan.

Both sides are stressing that everything is at the very earliest of stage of development. Copage has been contacted because of his previous involvement in the starting up of a similar readership survey scanning the youth market as a whole.

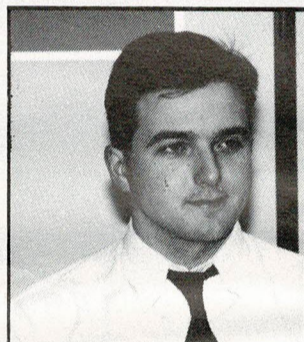
Brennan departs

Telecomsoft's sales manager Sean Brennan has left the firm to join Mirrorsoft as sales director.

Resulting reshuffles at Telecom include the promotion of Debbie Sillitoe from marketing manager to sales and marketing manager. Brennan will be responsible for all Mirrorsoft's sales in the UK and Europe as well as the firm's affiliate labels.

In recent times Brennan has been working closely with Mirrorsoft on the Triad project. Telecomsoft boss Paula Byrne preferred to call that a "coincidence". She added: "It's the disadvantage of success and the profile we've had that staff are poached. He's done a good job here."

Curiously, nobody at Mirrorsoft was prepared to comment on Brennan's appointment while managing director Peter Bilotta is out of the country. However, in a statement hastily prepared the firm said he has "a broad background in the software industry".



BRENNAN: Change

ST deal sealed by Metacomco and HB

Metacomco has tied up an exclusive bundle with HB Marketing to promote languages for the Atari ST.

Dealers buying a copy of Lattice C, together with a copy of MCC Pascal, are being given a free copy of Macro Assembler.

They can decide between selling this as a special bundle, or splitting it to sell the items separately, enabling them to increase profits by around 70 per cent. The promotion is only valid during September.

Over 100 dealers took advantage of a similar bundle of Amiga software offered by Metacomco and HB Marketing during July shifting over £12,000 worth of software.

Metacomco's sales manager Tony Bassett commented, "We react to make sure we don't have a quiet summer." Julian Swallow at HB added, "Whilst a lot of distributors give up during the summer, HB Marketing are sufficiently innovative to ensure that our sales don't suffer."

SOR point made by Codemasters

Budget firm Codemasters is already claiming success with its recently launched Sale or Return (SOR) policy.

Just three weeks ago, the firm said that it would be moving over to full SOR on its £4.99 Plus title Professional BMX Simulator for the rest of the year. At the time, it argued

that there was a reluctance on the part of some independents to stock a higher priced budget title. It claimed that sales would double as a result of the switch.

Now, though, its operations manager Bruce Everiss is trumpeting an even bigger rise. "Our ship is up more than four-fold, almost five-fold," he claimed. "What's more, we're

finding that our other Plus titles are being pulled along behind it. They now constitute between one quarter and one third of our volume, and even more by value."

He stressed, however, that there were no plans to repeat the SOR procedure. "We reckon we've proved our point."

THE CTW YEARBOOK

Collected in the CTW YEARBOOK are all the salient details of all the companies active in this market.

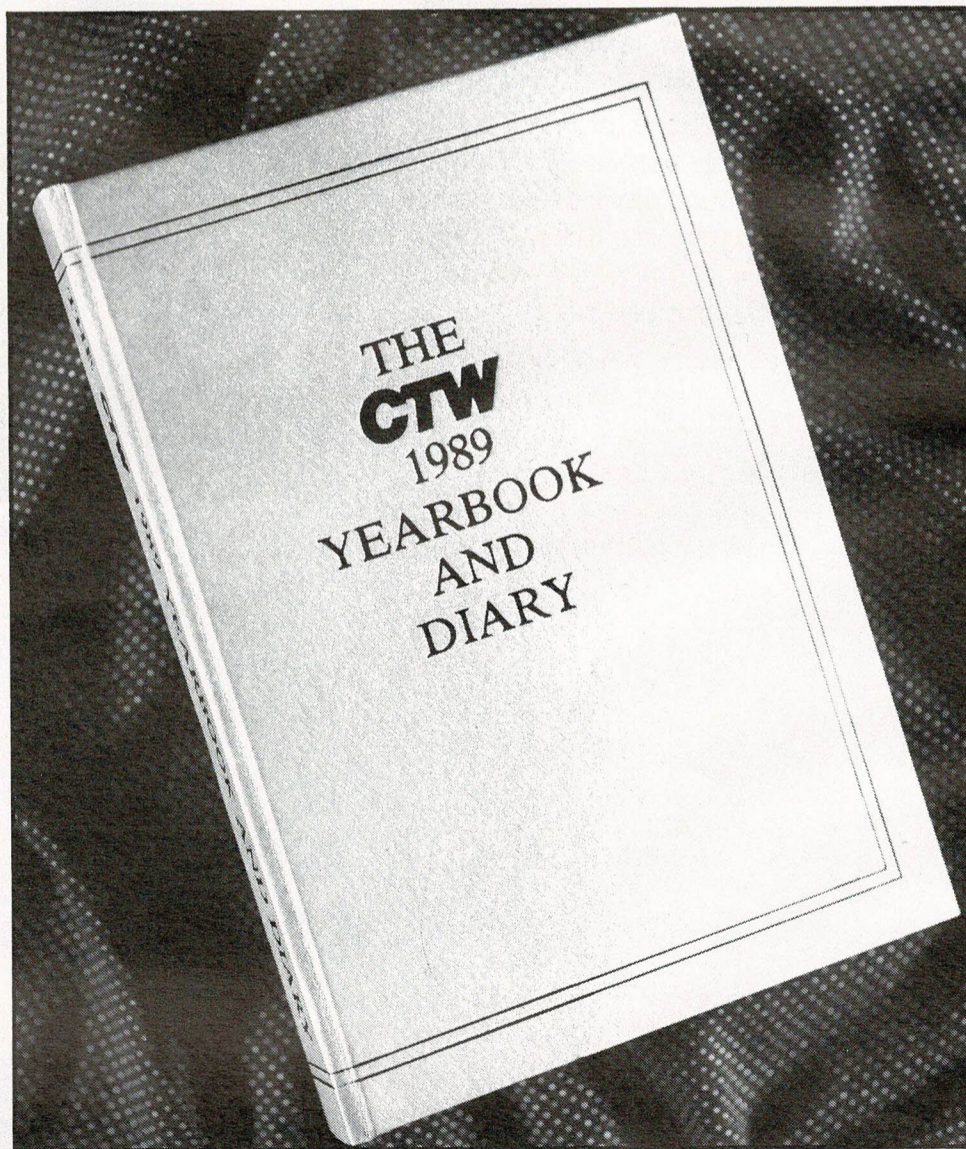
Addresses, phone numbers, principals' names of manufacturers, distributors, publishers, agents, magazine firms, promotional companies, exhibitions, organisers, duplicators, packagers, sales teams, trade bodies, PR firms, market researchers, exporters, peripherals firms — all are contained in a smart desk top CTW YEARBOOK.

There is also a useful week to view diary section, making the CTW YEARBOOK even more of a practical day to day aid.

The price? Just £19.95.

The method? Mail order via CTW YEARBOOK, CTW, BTC, BESSEMER DRIVE, STEVENAGE, HERTS SG1 2DX. Or else purchase direct from the CTW stand (2529/2531) at next week's PC Show.

The CTW YEARBOOK: arguably more essential than CTW itself...



It would seem the general impression of networks is that they're very complicated to use, very difficult to understand, and very expensive to buy.

Which is why the arrival of new MainLan heralds such a departure from the norm.

SIMPLICITY ITSELF

Designed with smaller work groups in mind, the MainLan starter pack has everything you need.

S

And it couldn't be easier to install. (A simple guide shows exactly what to do.)

The software is written in everyday English, and it operates from a simple master menu.

But don't make the mistake of thinking 'simple' means 'unsophisticated'.

A

At £199 for each PC, MainLan has the features of systems twice the price. It's compatible with networking versions of favourite software programs such as dBase III, Lotus, Paradox, Word Perfect and the like. (And from January '89, there will even be a version for IBM's new Micro Channel Architecture.)

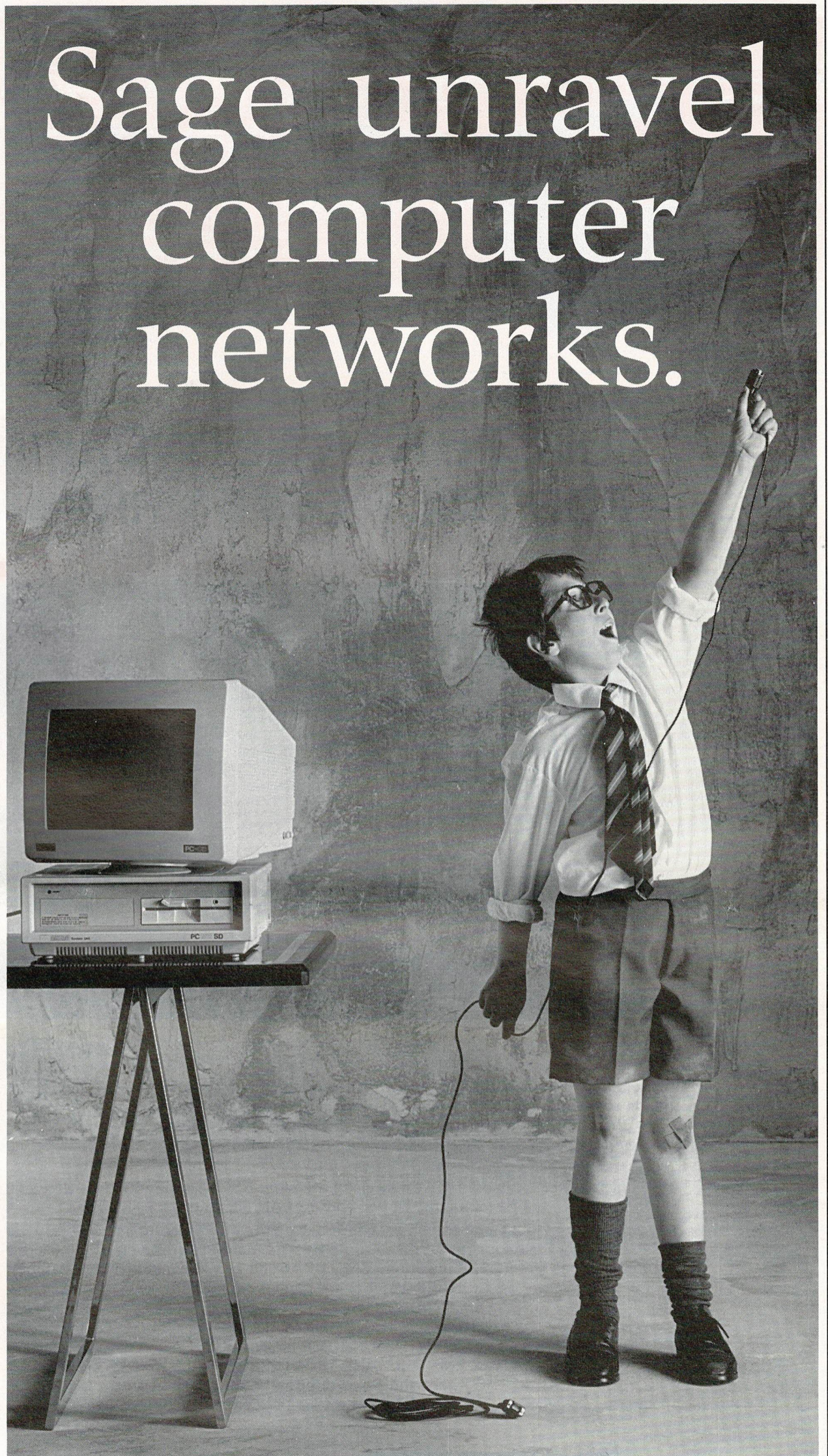
G

It has file transfer and printer sharing. Electronic mail and hard disk sharing. (There's no need for a dedicated file server.)

It's just that MainLan doesn't need a 'boffin' to explain how it all works.

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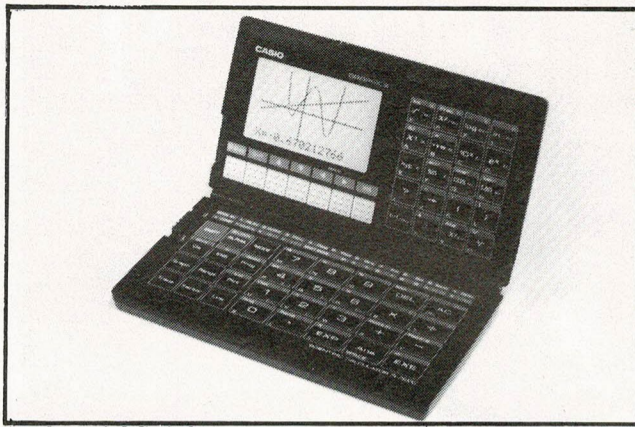
To find out more, either contact us at the address below, or buy it direct from

one of the authorised MainLan distributors. Softsel, Gem, Software Ltd., or Frontline. It's a product that all good dealers will want to stock.

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SNIPPETS



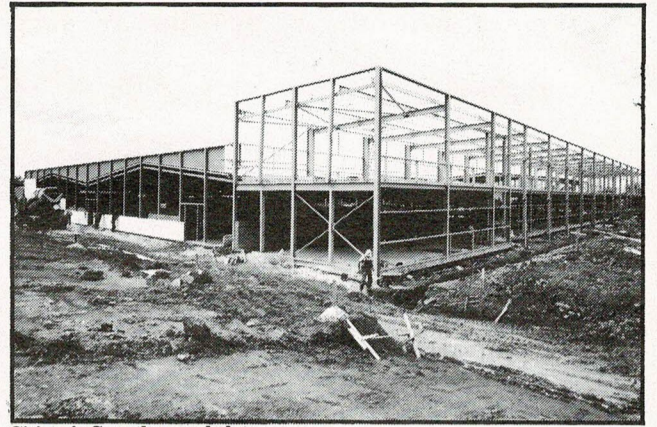
Another weird Casio box

Casio has produced another of its weird little boxes that presumably someone somewhere likes. This time, it's the snappily titled PX7500G, which can magnify or reduce various screen areas, has 195 "scientific functions" (and answers, please, on a postcard about those), and retails at five pence short of £80...

Zipstick has served a writ on A&S Distribution alleging that it is owed £857.51 for goods delivered last February... US Gold's *Leaderboard* was

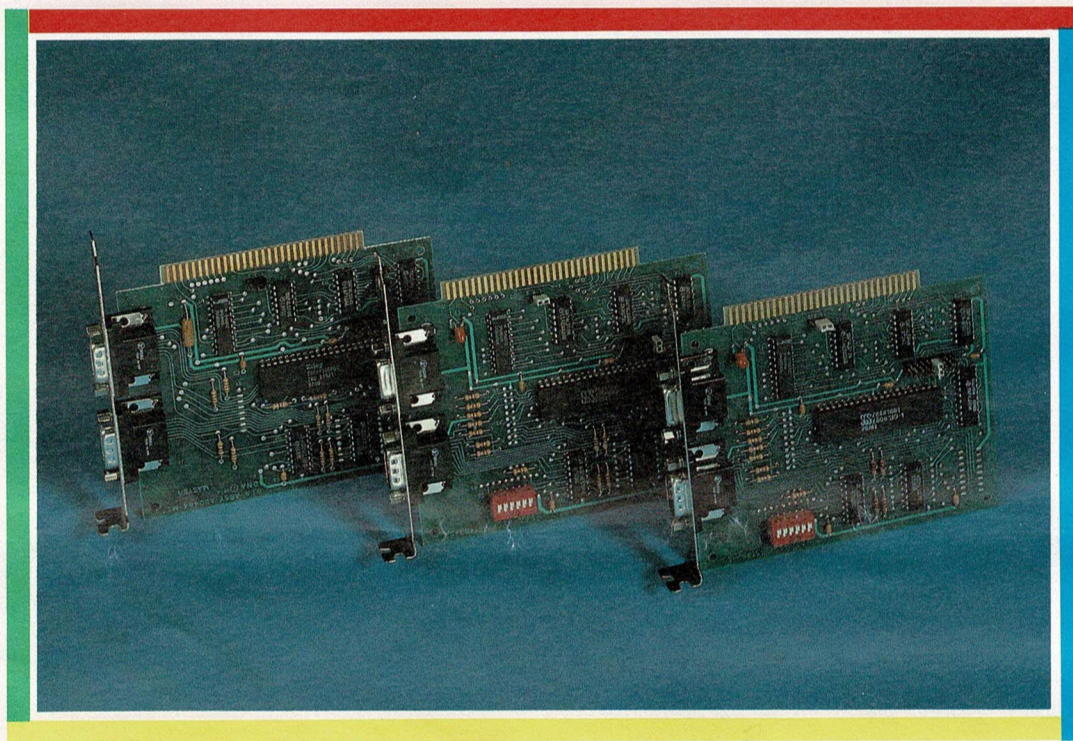
elected the best sports simulation of 1988 in an event held by French retail chain FNA... *Football Manager 2* has completed two months at the top of Gallup's all format charts. According to the chartist though its lead is continuing to dwindle...

A new package for the Z88 has been developed by **Racing Car Computers** which can act as a multiple stop watch. This apparently appeals to motor racing schools and the like... **Citizen** is confident that its



Citizen's Scunthorpe skeleton

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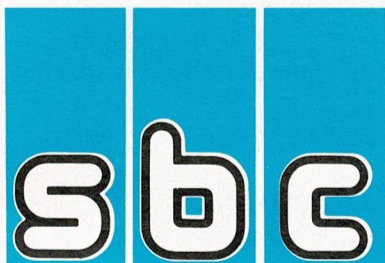
sbc's newly-launched Net-2 is the cost-effective answer to small and medium business's needs to get the most from their existing computer systems. Net-2 not only allows PC users to share printers and peripherals but, unlike its far more expensive alternatives, permits operators to use, access and update data in common with other PC users, and to communicate information to them.

And, unlike other low cost networks which are slow RS232 products, Net-2 is a fast 1.25MB which emulates Novell and PC-LAN File and Record locking.

With Net-2 any business equipped with a basic PC system can utilise powerful accounting packages like Pegasus and Tetra, or run powerful multi-user network database information tools such as Dataflex, Revelation, TAS, DBASE III+, Clipper, Smart or Deltanet without additional major capital expenditure.

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75,000 square foot printer factory will be completed by October. Construction of the Scunthorpe based plant began in May...

One irony of the proposed Maxwell purchase of **Rushware** (CTW August 29th) is that his subsidiary **Mirrorsoft** currently does not trade with the firm. Instead its German distribution is handled by arch rival **Ariolasoft**...

The world of fanzines has had another happy little birth: the latest issue of **Epsom** is out. Touted as "the most respected spectrum specific computer fanzine" (note that careful "specific" - anything to prevent a letter from the dreaded *Bug*), this'll be the first one since many, many, many weeks ago. Its print run is 350, which may be modest but at least the mag reveals its figures - unlike other, larger outfits...

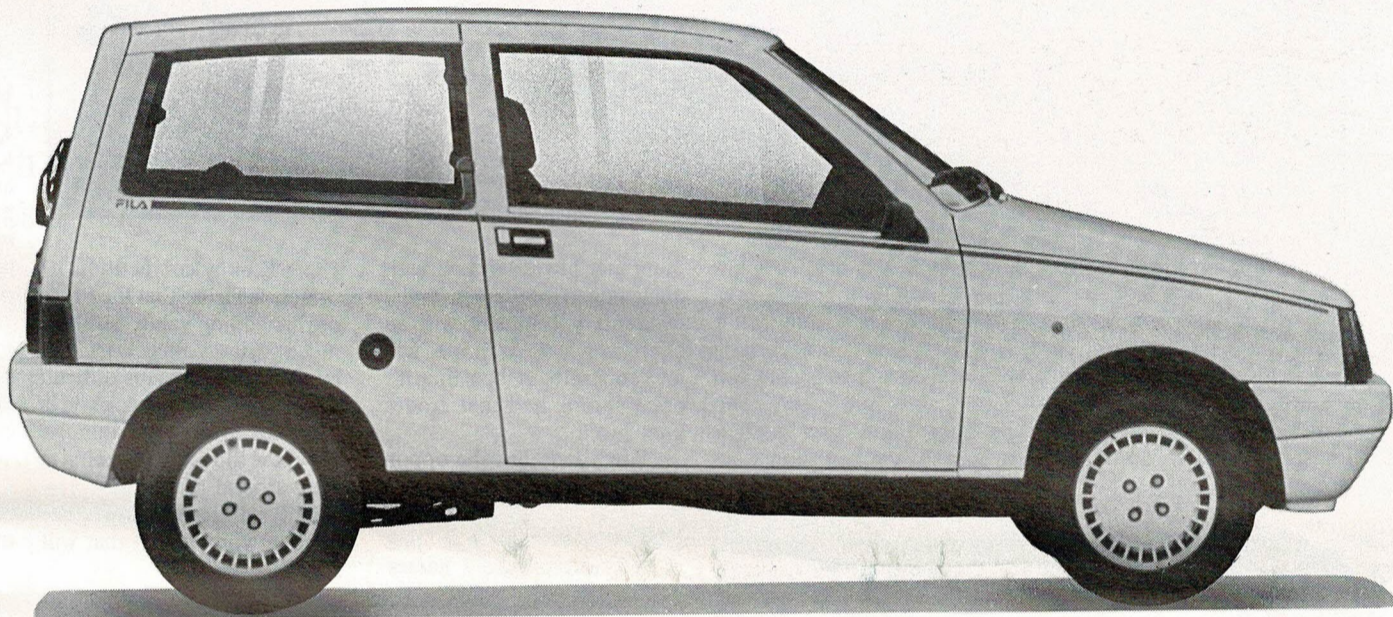
At the PC Show **Atari** will have a 70 metres long by 30 metres deep banner proclaiming: **Atari - the best of both worlds.** This refers to the firms' dual leisure and business push. Apropos the latter Atari has formed a new Business Products Division...

Domark has surely scooped the best gimmick for its PC Show effort. Prime Minister Margaret Thatcher (no less) will be on its stand. The fact that a *Spitting Image* game will be on view may lead some to suspect that the Iron Lady will turn out to be a latex lady... Political instability in South Korea has forced **Tandy** to move production facilities to Taiwan...

More on South Korea. **IBM** is putting together a results analysis system for the forthcoming Olympic games. The installation involves a fairly staggering 1,400 pieces of software... Meantime **Thames TV** has chosen **Sapphire** to keep a database of information on the innumerable happenings, facts and figures of the Games... Statistical analysis of economic prosperity in the UK undertaken by **Mintel** has thrown up at least one curious snippet. It seems that the Welsh own more home computers per head than any other region, although they spend less time on the machines than Londoners or those in the South East. As a result of various new conflicts springing up throughout the world **Mindscape** has updated *Balance of Power*. The 1990 edition of the strategy simulation includes 80 countries as opposed to 62...

In the continuing tradition of taking industry people into the air **Imageworks** (Mirrorsoft) gave 12 **Microdealer** staff good and true a free flying lesson in order to promote *Sky Chase*.

Sage present The Great Lanslide Competition.



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a runner up enjoying a fabulous holiday for two in Lanzarote.

For every three nodes you order after the initial three, you'll receive another bottle of Lanson bubbly and another entry form to increase your chances of winning our star prizes.

So hurry and send off your orders now. For further information call us on 091-213 1555.

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WATCH OUT FOR MULTIPLES

That, in brief, has been the traditional cry from the independents. They believe that the chains are in the best position to flex their muscles to gain the best marketing deals. And watch is the word; the latest such deal sees WH Smiths offering a timepiece with every MicroProse game sold. But how does WHS regard the indies? And where do such offers fit into the overall scheme of things? COLIN CAMPBELL ponders the immensities . . .

Attracting the consumer is one of those interesting pastimes marketing people get paid extortionate salaries for attempting. As such they indulge in it wholeheartedly. There is, after all, a spectrum of ploys and cynical plans available to part suckers with their money.

And whether it be money saving offers or giving away something extra (usually much the same thing) one can always rely on the buying public to fall for a clever gimmick. So it is with MicroProse and WH Smiths.

Buy a Prose title in Smiths and there's a free watch to be had (inevitably without the strap). At first sight it would seem that a (probably) dodgy timepiece shouldn't sway someone looking for a high class simulator. But of course that's naive. It doesn't matter a fig if the consumer already owns a Cartier watch. If there's a freebie to be had then there's a sale halfway in the bag already.

No matter how long Prose's competitors witter on about not having to sell their products via sales gimmicks the fact remains that the Tetbury crew's titles will stand out on



WHS: Watch Out

the shelf. MicroProse has the edge.

It isn't the first time that Smiths has singled out a type of game for special treatment. Last Easter, a "giant" poster could be had with every purchase of two coin op conversions.

Multiples are in a better position than indies to get

involved in such offers. A publisher is only too happy to throw in bags of whatever if it means a flash on the packaging in Smiths. The two parties can get together and there's no problem. Indies are on their own and their response in times of trouble is often to cut prices.

This, according to Smiths

computer buyer Ian Laurie, is damaging to the market. "Independents will come up with an offer which they hope will affect our sales. A lot of time it's price cutting and that erodes away profits.

"Everybody has the opportunity to get something that affects our sales and I'm sure they'll do something to promote MicroProse games.

That's healthy competition."

Laurie insists that the Prose deal is adding value. But how much will it affect anyone's buying decision? "It's difficult to say or put a percentage on it. It's going to affect the impulse purchase though. He's going to look around to see there's an offer. It's difficult to say at this stage how important that will be."

The offer is going on in 230 stores. Packaging will feature large round yellow flashes and there's also shelf strips. Games included are *Gunship*, *Silent Service*, *F15 Strike Eagle*, *Stealth Fighter*, *Airborne Range* and *Acrojet*.

Simulations are priority purchases for new 16-biters and there's a theory that says independents sell STs and Amigas better than multiples because they can demonstrate the machine. There's also a theory that says computer buyers will go back to the same store for software. Laurie doesn't agree with either of those.

Watchful eye

Smiths has been selling the SST virtually from day one and for it still to be selling the machine (and not the Amiga) suggests healthy sales. He refutes the idea that this has been planned as an assault on the 16-bit market. A year ago 16-bit software sales accounted for two per cent of total sales. That figure is now close to 15 per cent.

The offer though is a pitch at younger buyers. "The products which MicroProse produce are more sophisticated than, say, a

Continued on page 31

PC Show . . . Ring for stock

SEX VIXENS FROM SPACE

Adult graphic adventure game for the Amiga.

You are Captain Brad Stallion, owner and operator of the one-man space vehicle known throughout the galaxy as the "Big Thruster". You have been assigned to a high priority mission by the Government. The Government has long been harried by a series of raids on the population of its colonies. It is rumoured that these raids are conducted by "The Tribe", a colony of beautiful sex-starved female clones from the mysterious planet Mondo. Your mission is to locate the colony and destroy the deadly Sex-Ray Gun.

Be prepared to spend hours admiring the stunning graphics of this game. Be entranced by the crisp detail of the ships control panel. Gaze upon the sleek silhouette of the verdant valleys of Planet MONDO. Enjoy the spectacular beauty of outer space. This original game for the Amiga is a smash hit across the states, to cash in on this success at the show ring your supplier or you may ring us directly on (0386) 553153, extra point of sale information and demo disks are available.

There is no age limit for buying Sex Vixens from Space, however people who suffer from high blood pressure should refrain from buying this exciting game.

Ring your supplier for stock today . . .

Archimedes Games

£14.95 each

ORION
Skillfully manipulate Orion, the latest air to air combat interceptor, to defend your planet against the tide of marauding aliens. Shoot them down before its too late! Score points by saving your men before they are changed into mutants - otherwise they will turn against you. Contains Batters, Pods which explode into Swarms and waves of Bombers. Orion is a fast and furious scrolling 'shoot em up' game based on the all time arcade classic.

HOVERBOD
Hoverbod is a traditional maze adventure in the style of the classic Manic Miner, yet it is of stupendous proportions. Hoverbod, the yellow spherical droid, has been banished from the planet Zingle and goes in search of some stolen treasure. The player must guide him through the perils which befall him and help him puzzle his way through the eight different levels to the final quest level. But beware ... the lobbies and Squibbles start to materialise!!!!

FREDDY'S FOLLY
An enchanting game using animated graphics. Just watch the little men load the canon and pull it along. Notice the celebration when they win! Colourful fun for all the family. Sir Freddy is sneaky and envious to shoot down Sir Freddy in his balloons. Sir Freddy then hired several Gun ships to shoot your canon crew. Defend your castle and shoot down the balloons and the invading ships.

MINOTAUR
The Minotaur maze game is aimed at a market for children or adults who want a game where quick shoot-out reactions are not necessary. Theseus walks around the Labyrinth, collecting items to assist in the search of the ill fated men which have been provided as food for the Minotaur. The ultimate aim is then to kill the Minotaur and lead the men out of the Labyrinth to safety. The maze size is fully definable by the User. Games may be saved and reloaded for use at a later time.

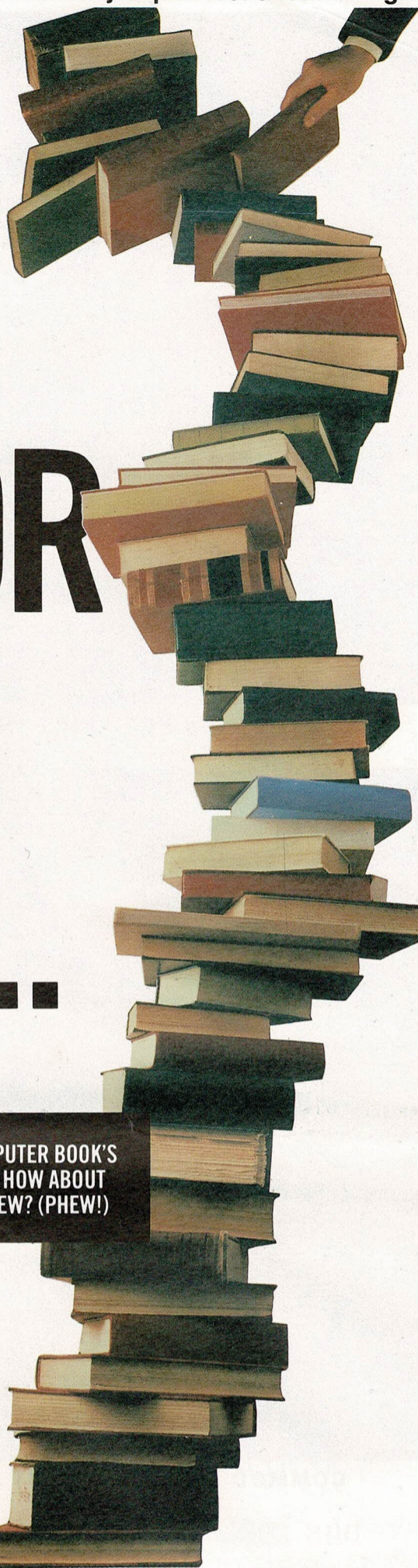
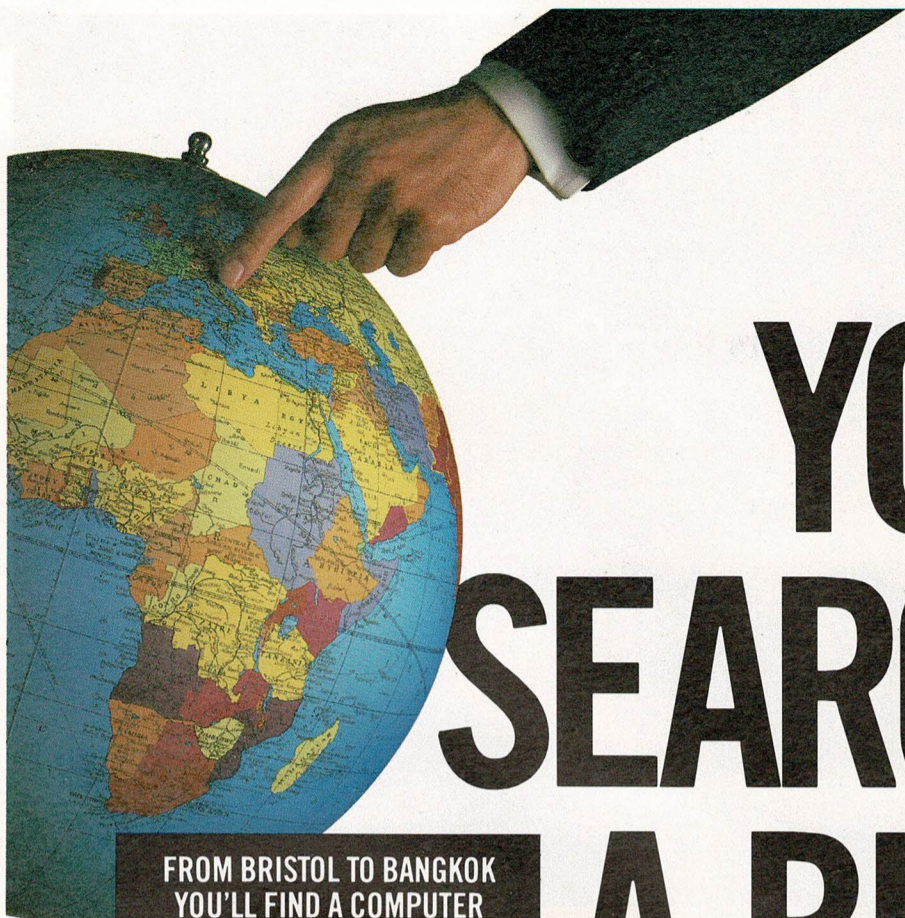
MISSILE CONTROL
Missile Control is a classic arcade game written for the Archimedes to make full use of the advanced graphics and sound, while remaining faithful to the original concepts of the game. The Player is in control of the missile launches and must do the utmost to protect the cities from the incoming missiles. On each subsequent attack further planes, satellites or 'smart' missiles attack the target cities.



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YOUR SEARCH FOR A BETTER SOLUTION...

FROM BRISTOL TO BANGKOK YOU'LL FIND A COMPUTER MANUFACTURER. WHY NOT TRY A FACT FINDING MISSION?



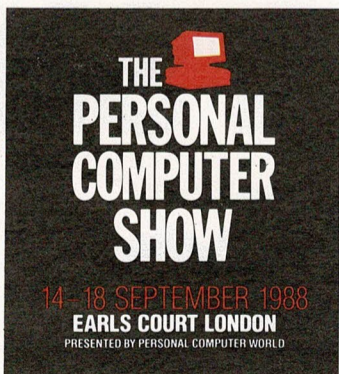
TRY PHONING AROUND. HOW LONG BEFORE IT BECOMES A SORE POINT?

RECENT COMPUTER BOOK'S TOTAL 6,049. HOW ABOUT READING A FEW? (PHEW!)

...ENDS HERE

For more than a decade Personal Computer World has consistently presented a show that gets talked about and with over 500 exhibitors both from the UK and with a large contingent from overseas this year's event will be even bigger, even better, and truly international, with a separate hall dedicated to each sector of the market. And to reflect this new direction we've retitled the event The Personal Computer Show and moved it to a larger and more appropriate venue, Earls Court. For the first time the Show has been divided into three separate halls. In the Business and Professional Hall you'll be able to see and try all that's new in personal computing from Hardware and Applications Software through to peripherals such as Printers, VDU's and Disk Drives. The General Hall contains systems appropriate for smaller business users and the Leisure Section has all the latest games, software and equipment. So whatever part of the industry you specialise in you're sure to find the right products at the Personal Computer Show.

The Personal Computer Show is presented by Personal Computer World Magazine a V.N.U. publication. Organisers: Montbuild Ltd., 11 Manchester Square, London W1M 5AB.



THE PERSONAL COMPUTER CONFERENCES
For the first time we're running a series of conferences at the Show. The Personal Computer conferences cover a wide range of topics from business areas such as : **Information Management and Presentation; graphic design and CAD** to booming new markets like **Music and Micros**. Phone the Conference Hotline now on 01-948 5166 for full details, or tick the box on the coupon.

APPLY FOR YOUR TICKETS NOW
Apply for your Personal Computer Show tickets now and you'll walk straight into the Show on the day. So your search for a better business solution ends as soon as you phone the Personal Computer Show ticket office on 0203 470075 or complete and return the coupon. Finding the right products for your business couldn't be simpler.

Personal Computer Show Ticket Office, Data House
Curriers Close, Tile Hill, Coventry CV4 8AW. Tel: 0203 470075
Please send me _____ ticket(s).
 Please send me more information about The Personal Computer Conferences (tick box)

Name _____
Position _____
Company _____
Address _____

These tickets are available to Business, Professional and Trade visitors only. Anyone under 18 years old will not be admitted to the Business Hall.
Admission without a ticket will cost £3.00 on the day.

CTW

Personal Computer Show Ticket Office, Data House, Curriers Close, Tile Hill, Coventry CV4 8AW. Tel: 0203-470075



· AMIGA 500 PRICE INITIATIVE ·



· HEAVY INVESTMENT IN BUSINESS MARKET ·



· COMMODORE PCI LOWEST MARKET PRICE ·



· NATIONWIDE SALES ROADSHOWS ·

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orchestrated
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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

**Come and meet us on
our stand 2228 at
the PC Show**

THE DEALER AS ENTREPRENEUR

As the computer market matures, so dealers are having to become proactive rather than reactive when it comes to selling. Running a computer store these days is so much more than just standing behind a counter and waiting for punters to enter. Sales and marketing consultant JEREMY YATES advises dealers about the best ways to maximise their sales potential.

"Would you tell me please which way I should go from here?"
"That depends a good deal on where you want to get to!"
"I don't much care where" . . . said Alice.

"Then it doesn't matter which road you take!" . . . said the cat.
This quotation from Lewis Carroll's classic says more to me about the true meaning of marketing than many more elaborate definitions that proliferate the serious tomes written by marketing heavy-weights.

Lewis Carroll precisely makes the point, if you don't know where you are going, or where you want to go, then don't begin the journey.

But thousands of companies, small and large, throughout the country have happily set off without any real knowledge of where they were going to finish, often because they have followed the same path successfully over many years. The difficulties of computer retailing should have showed us how dangerous a path this really is.

Those companies who have survived in tough times and can look forward to a few years of prosperity, are almost exclusively those who redefined their objectives in the light of present day marketing requirements. Those companies who did not survive, simply ignored the needs of the market place

and continued to produce as they have always done.

Markets are people
Let us explain one irritating myth — a marketing myth. Markets are not ethereal; markets are people! If you do not heed what people want, then you run the risk of producing goods, then trying to move that merchandise into the hands of people who do not want what you are trying to sell.

The result is commercial suicide.

This is of course what production-led companies traditionally have done. If there are any left — and there are some household names, that the taxpayer has had to bail out, that fit into this category — then the sooner that they realise that the LAW OF SUPPLY AND DEMAND IS DEAD, the better.

Modern day marketing is all about creating a demand and then providing the supply; not the other way round. Therefore, the marketing-led company is all about having objectives and setting goals to achieve those objectives; then ensuring by constant monitoring and appraising performance that those are achieved. But the targets are also constantly appraised, so that the company's direction is closely monitored.

So who is it in modern day marketing who sets the goals?

The Accountant? — the Financial director?

I would suggest not!

In my book it has got to be the CONSUMER. In other words, to survive in retail business today you need to have constant dialogue with the end user of the goods and services that you sell.

It sounds so simple, and it certainly is common sense, but I have never ceased to be amazed when working with retailers, large and small, how little communication many of them have with their customers. Especially when they have sold them something; they seem incapable of realising that the satisfied customer will keep coming back.

But who are our customers? How well do we know them?

What influences their lives? And in consequence their purchasing decisions?

What sort of customer should we be looking to attract?

What extra are we going to do to ensure that we attract that customer?

These therefore are the fundamental questions that the successful retailer must ask himself and his sales staff.

All changed, changed utterly

One only has to look at the high street to see that recently it has changed dramatically. The retail success stories are lifestyle stores, who are concentrating on one sector of the market and milking it.

The high street has had to change, because significantly it was a consumer led revolution that engineered the change. It is the marketers' awareness of what the customers wanted that changed "Hepworths" to "Next" and created similar modern retail giants.

Are you giving your market place what it wants? And if so how can we guarantee that we do this as efficiently and cost

THE MAJOR AWARDS WON BY FIRST SOFTWARE LAST YEAR ARE NOW HANGING IN FRONTLINE'S RECEPTION.



No. Frontline haven't stolen First Software's awards. It's just that First Software has changed its name to Frontline.

But you'll find nothing else has changed.

You'll still have the same service, back-up and technical support. As well as the friendly people you've come to know so well.

What you may not be aware of is that last year First Software won many major awards, including UK Distributor of the Year for NEC monitors and Ashton-Tate, No. 1 UK

Distributor of Lotus products, and European Distributor of the Year for MicroPro and Orchid.

This outstanding reputation was also recognised across the globe.

They were Outstanding International Distributor for Intel (PCEO) and International Distributor of the Year for Tecmar and Informix Office Automation products.

They were also the distributor for Amstrad, Claris, Hercules and Microsoft and many other leading hardware and software products, with a sound knowledge of every aspect of

their marketing, training and technical support.

Admittedly, it's a superb pedigree that's been inherited.

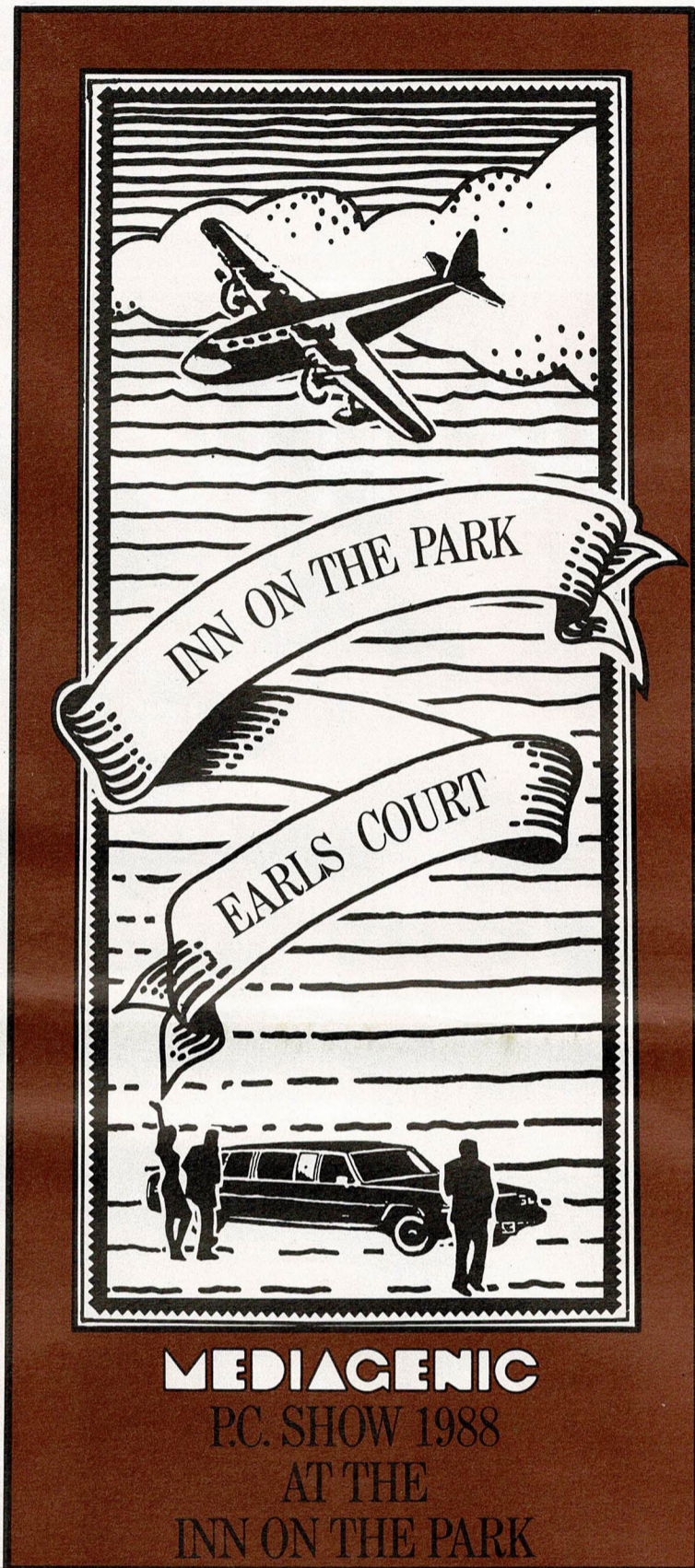
But with the same people showing the same commitment towards its dealers, there's no doubt Frontline will have even more prestigious awards hanging in their reception next year.

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



W

HERE DO YOU THINK YOU'RE GOING ON THE 14/15TH SEPTEMBER?



MEDIAGENIC (formerly Activision) invites you to the Inn on the Park on 14 & 15th September.

See (and play) the best games in the business and best business systems in the game.

It will be your first opportunity to see AFTERBURNER - The Arcade Sensation of the Year as well as R-Type, SDI, Timescanner, ISS and more.

All our affiliated publishers will be there - Infocom, System 3, Sierra On-Line, Microillusions, New World computing, Gamestar, Destiny, Abstract Concepts and Hyperware.

So get on down to our Check-in Terminal at Earls Court (Stand 3061) and we'll transfer you by chauffeur driven Cadillac Limousine to the Inn on the Park.

THE DEALER AS ENTREPRENEUR

Continued from page 16

effectively as possible?
The traditional forms of advertising and sales promotion are possibly too non-specific to give you adequate feedback. Local and regional Press; local broadcast radio and TV offer their own problems:
Which paper. Free or paid for!
Which night?
Which time slot?
What sort of ad? What message?
What about the competition?

Who is actually reading, watching or listening?

The serious advertiser now has serious competitive activity to worry about, as the multiples can afford the high cost of truly national media and can compete unfairly. Especially as the local advertiser in say one prosperous London suburb has to make the invidious choice between six local free newspapers and no traditionally established paid for.

The widespread use of

remote control channel changers and the increased usage of video recorders has given the television advertisers the same sort of headaches that the local advertiser faces when examining the increased fragmentation of the media.

So let us stop! Let's climb off the media carousel for a moment, and try to look objectively at what faces the independent retailer.

Given that as we said before, the enterprising retailer should know who his or her customers are, and if you accept the 80-20 rule of business - that 80 per cent of your business comes from 20 per cent of your customers - it should be immensely profitable to speak to your

existing customers regularly, instead of spending £££s randomly prospecting for less reliable sources.

Maxi marketing

I have coined a phrase for this type of marketing for the small retailers: I call it "COMMON SENSE MARKETING" others may use the more in vogue titles of Maxi-Marketing or Database Marketing; call it what you will. Modern day marketing is all about establishing a rapport between your customers and your shop, and personalising your services.

Price only really becomes solely important when the consumer is left to his or her

own devices. The multiples who scream - "PRICE" "SPECIAL" "DISCOUNT" "INTEREST FREE" will only score when the independent ceases to show what added value services he has to offer.

But for years, the independents have failed to speak to, and communicate with, their loyal customers.

In the electrical retail world this is clearly shown in the way that the TV rental customer has been ignored as a potential purchaser of a TV set. The result has been that hundreds and thousands of committed customers have been pushed

into the hands of the multiples, because the independent retailers had no dialogue, other than to send the monthly or annual invoice, and therefore failed to capitalise when the rental customer decided it was time to buy; possibly after having been seduced by the delicious prices and deals dangled in front of him each Sunday in his national newspaper.

So what is the alternative to the traditional methods of reaching your best customers?

In my opinion it means taking a closer look at "Direct Marketing" which is not just direct mail as many wrongly believe, but is succinctly defined as the process by which you establish and continue a relationship with a consumer.

Direct marketing becomes so much easier if and when you know who your customers are, and where to find them. You can then establish the on-going relationship by writing to them, by phoning them or even by calling on them in their homes if you so desire.

If you are not a major multiple, if you are a small or medium sized independent, the fast way to go out of business is to ignore your existing customers.

So the judicious use of direct marketing in concert with those forms of advertising and sales promotion you have come to rely upon, might just ensure that your business expands and flourishes.

For the retailer, I therefore suggest that a dramatic change is taking place in the way merchandise is being promoted and sold to the public. Mass marketing to anonymous customers is a thing of the past; advertising must be more accountable, more effective and certainly more efficient. The wastefulness of mass advertising is bound to give way to a new affordability to locate and communicate directly with your best prospects and existing customers.

Period of transition

The 80s will be remembered as the decade of transition. The move is away from hard selling to building and managing customer databases that allow you to develop and evaluate the value of your relationship with each customer. And of course you should be looking to receive outside help to enable you to make an effective transition. I refer of course to the help you should expect to receive from your major suppliers, once you show them a sound base of potential users of your product that you have at your fingertips.

So common sense marketing should lead to a liaison between manufacturers and retailers based firmly on co-operation and collaboration - not as sometimes has happened in the past, where the relationship has foundered on the rocks of conflict and confusion.

Common sense marketing means that the bond between the manufacturer and the retailer will grow stronger, as together they explore the needs and wants, likes and dislikes of the end user or products in that locality.

Make no mistake: the retailer who can deliver database information on this scale will find the manufacturer very receptive indeed, simply because

Continued on page 31



PIPELINE - A Fiery Adventure in Space and Time

In the 25th Century, the Earth's supplies of sulphur had become so badly depleted that mining operations were established on Io, one of the moons of Jupiter. Following a volcanic eruption on Io, the robot-controlled extraction platforms have been engulfed in a burning sea of sulphur and are now malfunctioning.

You have been sent to the platforms in a single-handed, death-defying mission, to collect the precious drums of sulphur, close down operations and return to Earth. To complete your task, you must carefully weave your way through a complex series of pipelines in each of four platforms. But beware of the fast-moving flames and carnivorous plants!

Pipeline is a massive four level arcade-adventure, that combines the best features of a game like Ravenskull, with a novel pipeline system. Once you enter a pipe, there is no going back. You are carried past junctions, around bends and over other pipes, to be deposited at the end, wherever that might be.

In addition to an exciting, novel arcade game, Pipeline also includes a character designer and a very powerful level designer. Design your own level, including intricate puzzles and a vast array of pipeline complexes, and test your route through the pipes directly on the level design screen. With practice, you will soon be able to design complicated and highly unusual games.

BBC Micro Cassette.....£9.95 Acorn Electron Cassette.....£9.95
BBC Micro 5 1/4" Disc.....£11.95 BBC Master Compact 3 1/2" Disc.....£14.95

(Compatible with the BBC B, B+ and Master Series computers)

Please make cheques payable to "Superior Software Ltd".

PRIZE COMPETITION - DESIGN A LEVEL

If you complete Pipeline, you can enter our competition. To enter you should send in your score and submit a level design to Superior Software. Prizes of £100 each will be awarded for the highest score and the best level design. Books on astronomy will be awarded to 20 runners-up. Each prize-winner will also receive a signed congratulatory certificate. The best level designs may be used in a future Superior Software program.
Closing date: 31st January, 1989.

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ACORNSOFT

(Acornsoft is a registered trademark of Acorn Computers Ltd. Superior Software Ltd is a registered user.)
Dept P6, Regent House, Skinner Lane, Leeds LS7 1AX. Telephone: (0532) 459453.

The screen pictures show the BBC Micro version of the game.



24 HOUR TELEPHONE ANSWERING SERVICE FOR ORDERS

- OUR GUARANTEE**
- All mail orders are despatched within 24 hours by first-class post.
 - Postage and packing is free.
 - Faulty cassettes and discs will be replaced immediately. (This does not affect your statutory rights).

Commodore promotes. Lightning delivers.

Throughout the coming year, Commodore will be spending in total a record £6 million in aggressively marketing its entire product range to the public.

A powerful programme of television, national press, national poster, regional and local press advertising as well as specialist media ads will firmly establish Commodore as a name to be reckoned with in all of its markets.

In short, every marketing tactic from advertising, PR, exhibitions, sponsorship through to direct mail, roadshows, powerful literature and POS will be created and executed in order to put Commodore on the lips of the computer-buying public.

Aggressive marketing, quality products and sophisticated support is Commodore's commitment to its dealers.

And as our new name – Lightning Business to Business – suggests, we too have a commitment to our dealers. As a supplier of all



leading products in computing and communications, we will deliver Commodore products to our account customers the next day. Anywhere in the country. So they can meet the demands without having to carry large stocks. The fast-action number for account customers to ring is 01-961 8585.

If you don't have an account with us, you should put the situation right by ringing our new account enquiries on 01-965 5555. The Lightning business support

package that can be working for you includes:

- ▀ Regular calls from our nationwide team of representatives.
- ▀ Next day delivery (including Saturday deliveries).
- ▀ Frequent catalogues and new product information.
- ▀ Exclusive promotions and offers.
- ▀ Trade counter.

So why not call us fast.
(Everyone else does.)

Lightning
▶ BUSINESS TO BUSINESS ◀

THE RETURN OF MOTOR MOUTH

Just when you thought it was safe to open the pages of *CTW*, now that the whizz-kids have turned into was-kids or (never) has been, so the loquacious Mark Gallarotti pops up again. Don't say "Mark Who?" — just cast your minds back a twelve month to a young man whose main problem in closing sales is that he can't close his mouth. Word-spattered CHRIS BENT reports . . .

This time last year *CTW* unearthed the ambitious 20 year old Mark Gallarotti. You remember him, he's the mouthy one who thinks he's got what it takes to hit the big time in the world of computer budget software.

These days, he's still with the fruit machine company, GP Fox & Co, and he spends a good deal of his time cruising around in his £5,600 E reg Renault 5 working on his very own enterprise: MG Software, purveyor of budget software to the smaller emporia of London. He's not yet a millionaire, but he's been successful enough to still have confidence in his ambitions.

Gallarotti attributes much of his business to the help he has received from Codemasters' Anne Pinkham. "She supplied me with contacts and helped me up the road to success. If it weren't for Anne I'd be lost. I wouldn't be anywhere."

His main links are with R&R, Blue Ribbon, and Micro Selection. "I get games from R&R, but I think they're making a profit out of me. Once I got something like 60 smashed games from them. I couldn't

send them back, could I? They change the procedure a lot too.

"First I'd just send the games back, then I had to ring up and tell them the value of the goods, and how many I'd sold. They'd send me a label, which I'd fill in and attach to the games, then I'd return them. Now I have to fill in a form before they'll even send me a label."

"Micro Selection gave me some free games — not many though. They're the only ones that have ever given me free games. No other firm has." More free games and fewer forms to fill in — that's not much to ask for, is it? Perhaps they could bung in the occasional tenner as well . . .

Onwards. "Blue Ribbon are helpful. They send me inlay cards, and keep me updated. The only company that was not good to me was Mastertronic. They never sent anything back, like promotion, and inlay cards. It's not as if I'm asking them for money, is it?"

By this time the jaw muscles were in full swing "I've done a deal exporting in Italy. I got £500 commission. It's a small order on a monthly basis — it could get bigger . . . I'm the

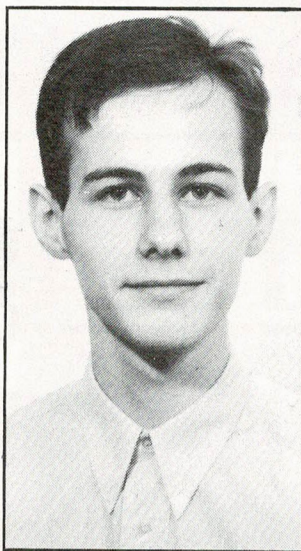
middle man selling hardware on behalf of the Italian company, it's a big market.

You wonder how he ever closes a deal; he can't even close his mouth.

Improvements in store

Gallarotti has increased his number of outlets to between 20 and 26, which is a considerable improvement on last year's three. Apparently he had been pitching a store in Oxford Street for a year, and recently managed to seal the deal. He has already given it 140 games, of which 70 have been sold, 30 per cent of all the £1.99 games sold is taken by the store. "I'm competing with Virgin . . . I give free games away." Fantasy? Reality? What does it matter?

The mere mention of faulty games causes Gallarotti to fume. "Big companies don't check their games. I don't know why that is." It was pointed out to him that it is budget software, and isn't worth the hassle to big companies. "Well, I do a straight swap on faulty games." And of course, everyone has heard of Mr Gallarotti . . . haven't they?



GALLAROTTI: Is the world ready for him?

He hasn't got the backing to do any great deal of advertising, and is content with his posters in shop windows, and gold labels (carrying his name and address) on the back of each of his games.

"I could branch out but for the bills. I had a bill from R&R for £488, but I had to use my commission from the Italian deal to pay for it." Poor Mark, he feels so hard done by.

Evidently, Gallarotti's age causes him trouble, with people refusing to take him seriously as a businessman. When those people are the police, things start getting a bit sticky. In fact, he was picked up by them — because they thought he had stolen the games.

So why does he bother? "I'm a very good salesman. As long as I'm making money and en-

joying myself, I'll stay" — Heads down, Gallarotti's going into full blown sales spiel — "I look for the shops that the kids go in after school, then I go to those. If the shop next door just sells games, and I give away free stickers and games, well then, who are the kids gonna buy from? Me, right? It makes me feel proud when I see kids buying my games.

"I've learnt the sales tack. I picked it up from the fruit machine business. It's pretty likely that if a shop sells music cassettes that it will sell computer games.

"I've got shops from Heathrow to Watford, and I've got rid of some — they weren't good to me. When I first started out, I wasn't prepared to take risks. Now I am."

The question is, can he be as choosy as he when it comes to his customers? It's risky, certainly, but so is setting up business on your own.

Relative expansion

This time last year his small little enterprise had one sole employee — Gallarotti himself. Nowadays, with his increasing number of outlets and eye for expansion he felt a need for two extra hands and employed his brother.

Gallarotti reckons that last year he didn't ever have more than £100 in the bank. Now he claims to be well in the money, with no less than £1,000 in the bank each month. Currently he claims to have five grand accumulating interest in the bank. "That's pretty successful, isn't

it?" Er, yes — but at that rate of expansion, Gallarotti wouldn't turn into Alan Sugar until well into the 22nd century.

On the way up to being a moderately successful young man, Gallarotti has trampled on a few toes. "I've sent cheques off to companies when I haven't had the money. I then get the money off of shops. I don't want everybody knowing that though, I don't want to get a bad name for being a bastard."

Despite being "a bastard", Gallarotti does have a good streak in him. At last year's PCW Show he entered the *Brian Clough's Football Fortunes* competition and won £30 worth of computer games. Did he go into Arthur Daley mode and flog 'em? No way . . . he gave them to the Oxfam charity. What a nice guy.

But back to the basics of buying and selling, where our motor mouth merchant is pondering the intricacies of the business world. "Since I've got more shops I've sold more games. If I bought 100 *Steve Davis Snooker* games I could sell them. As long as snooker is on TV, games like that will sell. One firm I know bought 200 snooker games at 78p each, and sold them to me for 99p. They sent them out the day after receiving them to me by Securicor." He innocently added, "I don't see how they can make money."

Gallarotti had better expand and stand on his own two feet as soon as possible for his

Continued on page 31

MARKETING MANAGER

Home Computer Clubs

Book Club Associates

Book Club Associates, the largest direct marketing operation of its kind has a vacancy for a Marketing Manager with responsibility for its 5 Home Computer Clubs.

Candidates should have relevant experience within the home computer software market and must be able to demonstrate considerable marketing flair, be numerate and have the ability to work within tight deadlines.

Salary and benefits will be commensurate with the seniority of the position within an exciting and expanding division of BCA.

Apply in the first instance, in writing with full CV, to:

Jenny Morrish, Personnel Officer
Book Club Associates,
87 Newman Street, London W1P 4EN

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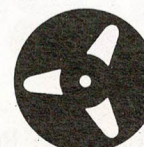
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Lightning invite you to the family holiday of a lifetime.

This is not a competition. Any – and every – Lightning dealer can qualify for the holiday of a lifetime. We're offering you the chance to take your family – during a school holiday period – on a top quality programme of exciting days and nights that includes Walt Disney World, EPCOT, and Florida's fun-in-the-sun Clearwater Beach. And at the same time, you can substantially increase your profits. It's an opportunity that's simply too good to miss!

All you have to do is make sure you purchase Commodore goods *exclusively* through Lightning Business to Business, and the holiday could be yours.

The qualifying period for this fantastic trip is from the 1st September '88 to the 28th February '89 (inclusive).

Register early – Win a Free Place!

All dealers whose Registration forms for the Florida holiday campaign are received by Lightning on or before September 30th '88 will go into a draw for one *free* adult place (we'll notify the winner before October 31st). So you could start making your holiday plans by simply registering early! Act now – call our special Florida Hot-line on 01-965 3221 and we'll send you the full information pack on this superb holiday trip.

Not a Lightning dealer?

The Florida trip is just one of

the many special promotions Lightning Business to Business offers to its dealers in a full supporting package. Act now to become a Lightning dealer and as well as having the opportunity to join us in Florida, you'll get:

▀ Regular calls from our nationwide team of representatives.

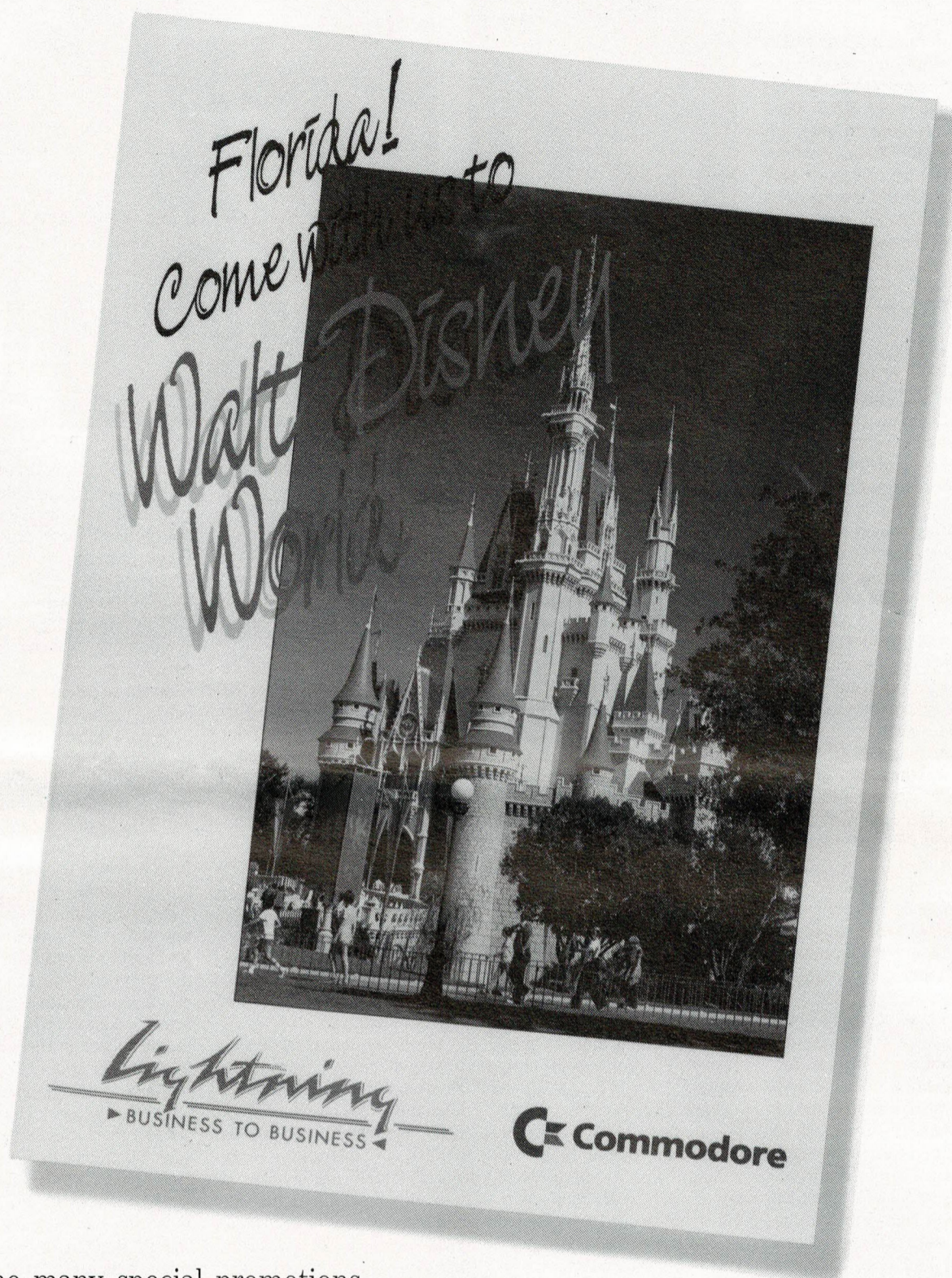
▀ Next day delivery (including Saturdays).

▀ Frequent catalogues and new product information.

▀ Exclusive promotions and offers.

▀ Trade counter.

Ring our new account enquiries on 01-965 5555 now.



Lightning
▶ BUSINESS TO BUSINESS ◀

GROWING UP IN PUBLIC

The leisure sector has had more than its fair share of traumas. Being young, fast, dynamic, etc etc, you'd expect nothing less. But curiously, just as the leisure market has entered a period of apparent stability, so the business world has commenced a difficult period of transition. DAVID BRENNAN ponders the micro world . . .

It's one of the ironies of this industry that the supposedly young, naive, volatile leisure market has been so stable this year whilst the cooler, more mature, weightier business scene has been in such turmoil.

At any rate, that's the case on distribution. Where the likes of Centresoft, Microdealer and even R&R have been continuing to pick up momentum, DDL, Norbain and Softsel have been all over the place. Of the last trio, the first has been shut down peremptorily, the second has been bought having traded at a loss, and the third has been in an extraordinary state of flux. The revolving door employment policy at the Softsel indicates that the rest of the trade believes it has the staff that dreams are made of.

Of course, leisure software distribution and the handling of PC boxes aren't quite the same thing. One is essentially wholesaling, the other close to true distribution (or should be). But the developments and difficulties of the two sectors are illustrative of a number of points. And it would appear as though the leisure market has coped better with the change from ten quid games to a more fractured scene involving cheapo budget, £25 16-bit and low cost business packages, than its business counterpart has managed the slow trawl from basic PCs to 286s, 386s and even PS/2s.

And if one definition of effective management is coping with change, what does this suggest about the supposedly lesser quality of personnel in the leisure sector?

A two-fold change has been thrust upon the business distribution sector. One is technological: the new machines have come in as new machines will. The other is structural. A handful of more than useful distribution firms have made the successful move upmarket. Lightning Eltec, Hugh Symons, Gem and perhaps ZCL (Zappo) and SDL spring to mind.

The consequence has been a double squeeze on traditional PC distributors. At a time when they're finding the MS-DOS scene splintering, they're also encountering another group of rivals emerging. In brief, it's yet another Amstrad Effect

Public Image

For years, the games scene has been the lesser partner in the overall micro business. There has been an unnatural defensiveness about an industry which has had to grow up fast - too fast, and so sometimes painfully - in public. The leap has been made from jeans and tee-shirts and bawling out unreliable wares from tacky trestle tables to suits, professionalism and coherent marketing.

Sure, the products aren't necessarily any better. But at least the leading firms on the whole know what they're try-



Deals in the can for the leisure sector . . .

ing to do and have opened up new marketing avenues in the process.

The result of this is that the leisure sector has moved into the mainstream of the youth market. The deadening boffin tag has been all but shed - in part as a result of the departure from the helm of Sir Clive Sinclair.

Obviously his importance in the growth of the computer business should not be underestimated. But just as one of his legacies is the still-strong cassette scene (when virtually all of the States and Europe revolves around disks), so another is the image of the loony inventor boffing away in the laboratories of never-never land. Yet though for a man who sold upwards of five million strange black boxes it was a grossly simplistic image, it evidently aided the whole industry's PR profile in the early days.

Now with his effective departure from the leisure sector, games have suddenly started abounding on TV, in the press and in a far wider retail swirl. TV coverage used to be limited to the worst of 1950s' style BBC "explanation" programmes, where grey people banged on appallingly. The tedium was the message.

These days, it's far sexier, to use the TV term, Kids' game shows and Saturday morning sprawls regularly and unself-consciously feature computers. Even the late teens to 20s style warriors of *Network 7* haven't been immune to the computer disease. The metamorphosis will be completed with the recognition that perfectly normal adults actually find STs and Amigas fun and interesting.

Other examples of the sea-change can be picked almost at will: the US Gold/Coke deal; Codemaster tapping into the *Sunday Mirror* for *The Race Against Time*; Woolies quintupling the number of its stores carrying games; increased local press and radio coverage; computer columns springing up in kids' comics; Commodore's sponsorship of Chelsea; Gremlin parading Gary Linekar for a licence; Domark

doing likewise with mediabore Jeffrey Archer; games chain Hamleys and record chain HMV increasing software - all have helped take computers into the real world. There was even a winner at Epsom on Bank Holiday Monday called *Micro Love*.

None of which should be taken as indicating that the leisure sector has matured to blandness. It's still more than capable - willing, even - to go into full headless chicken mode at the merest invitation. Pointless spats, tantrums and wrangles stamp their feet on the market, as if proof that the sector's days of mewing, brawling, whingeing adolescence aren't far gone. The undertaking lawyers smugly measure up the corpses of such rows not for length but for expenses.

Yet for all that, there is surprising stability. Commodore, after all, did not quite manage to go bust. This past year, since CSD, has really only seen the demise of distributor Vanguard (small earthquake in Peru, no one injured on the media scale) and budget firm Power House (ditto). Compare that with Oric, Prism (as was), Imagine and Websters all shuffling off their mortal coils, as Sinclair, Commodore and Atari strutted to the *danse macabre* of financial ruin.

Compare again the financial situation of two, three years back with the current

figures. The games market may still not have burst through the £100 million at retail level that the pundits were predicting. However much the market researchers may research, the annual level is probably closer to £80 or £90 million. But the profitability within that of fewer firms is a useful barometer of the sector's well-being.

What's more, the development of combines such as Centresoft/Gold (etc), BT, Maxwell, Virgin/Mastertronic, EA and MicroProse hasn't caused stagnation. Codemasters came from nowhere two years ago to top the volume charts in 1987. Alternative came from nearly nowhere (Pontefract, R&Rsville) to head the charts this summer. In the last couple of weeks, Goliath has come from God knows where to lead the pack (and in the saturated footie sector at that!).

Magazines, too, have never been healthier. The supposedly declining 8-bit titles have collectively recorded their highest ABCs. (In the absence of actual figures from the curiously coy Newsfield and Dennis, this is a tiny bit speculative on the specifics. But with EMAP's rises, the broad thrust of the point is valid). There's been new blood too, with over a dozen launches this year already, primarily coat-tailing the 16-bit machines. The editorial standards may well be variable at best, but the punters

don't seem to mind over much.

Comedy of errors

By contrast, the business sector appears less decided, confident and settled. It has always had the advantage over its games counterpart of addressing adults dealing with Serious Problems. It has thus had the veneer of maturity, the gloss of commercial plausibility. Without pushing the point too far, that is looking less the case these days.

One of the oldest and best known of dealerships Personal Computers has just run into the sort of horrendous financial cock-up that would've prompted hoots of derision from the business world had it happened in the leisure market. The firm suddenly discovered a major error on its bad debt provision. Worse than that, as a USM-quoted company, that mistake was all the more public.

Then there is Lifetree. Perhaps for the cognoscenti it doesn't really qualify as a true business market firm, dealing, as it did, primarily in clonesoft. But a leading firm having to appoint an administrator - the UK equivalent of Chapter 11 - is scarcely an indication of financial well-being in the area as a whole. Ditto Corvus' recent fall from grace.

But the most significant problems are in distribution, which is where we came in. Recent market research by IEE/Dataquest showed not only that the UK was no longer the fastest-growing European PC market, but it is now no longer the largest, either. It's not quite the old "first into the Industrial Revolution, first into the post-industrial trauma", but neither then is it especially encouraging.

So if the rate of growth is slowing and if manufacturers can see more lucrative markets elsewhere on the continent, what does that suggest for the leading PC distributors? Diversification, maximisation, problems, or all three is basically the answer.

Trouble is, we're entering the post-PC void. IBM appears to have done the corporate equivalent of shooting itself in

the foot with PS/2, primarily by underestimating loyalty to MS-DOS. Vague areas like 286, 386 and portables have yet to break through from technobore PC hacks' delight to volume sales. Consequently, MS/DOS PCs still comprise the vast majority of business sales, just as they did three, four years ago. CP/M has been beaten off into the (hugely lucrative) sidelines of Amstrad PCWs and the Mac has been confined to niche markets.

And whilst power computing may thrill the aforementioned technobores, many companies have already had their computer requirements fulfilled by basic PCs which don't tend to wear out too quickly through over-use. This is not, despite the presence of technobores, quite the car market. If companies are looking to expand their PC base, it's more to bring in computerisation at a lower level. Generally, that means cheap PCs. In turn, generally that means Amstrads. In turn again, that generally means buying from no frills dealers who have been glass on the streets, vast technical support teams, in business PCs for years concerns.

The logic of all this is that those distributors who are handling high end PCs to traditional PC dealerships should be feeling the squeeze, collectively if not individually. And that, surely, is the point about this at this summer's shenanigans.

For sure there are other factors in the closing of DDL and the selling of Norbain. If certain parts of the trade are to be believed, one was a disorganised box-shifter and the other lacked entrepreneurialism.

But the malaise seems to go deeper than that to structural difficulties in the market.

The high end still seems not to have responded fully to the real Amstrad effect - that of opening up a major new tier of PC users whilst wholly demystifying computers once and for all. Amstrad may be slated for its lack of support, training and poor warranties. But if computers really are as reliable and as simple to use as the industry propagandists would have us believe, then much of this expensive support clutter should be unnecessary. If Dixons - God bless 'em - can plausibly retail business machines (and the jury's still out on that one), then the rise and rise of PCs as commodity selling will continue unabated.

At the very least, the performance of the business market leaves unanswered a number of major questions about its future. The shine has gone from it - witness the paucity of new software releases and the unparalleled tedium of the indistinguishable *PC This*, *PC That* and *PC The Other* magazines this summer.

The games world, by contrast, appears happier, more united and more assured of its future.

Sometimes, received wisdom is hogwash.

Norbain pulls PC plug

Software takes over Norbain PC

Distributor Software Limited has bought the PC and peripherals business of Norbain Electronics for around £3.5 million in cash, taking it deeper into hardware distribution and giving it a stock market presence.

Norbain said that the computer division had caused last year's decline in profits. Despite an increase in turnover of £2.5 million over a year, Norbain managed to make a profit of only £10,000.

Software Limited's turnover is now expected to reach £50 million this year. Its profits should be around £3 million.

The first clear sign that Norbain was preparing to sell its PC and printer distribution business came when finance director John Dyson was replaced by Mick Daw who was formerly head of finance at DPCE (see page 3).

The Norbain name will continue to be used for a limited period but according to a source close to the company, Norbain will eventually be absorbed by Software Limited.

Aldair Handyside, managing director of Software Limited, said he was delighted that his new placement of the business with the acquisition of Software Limited among the top four PC equipment distributors in the UK. He said that Software Limited had been talking to Norbain for eight weeks.

DDL vanishes as MBS laments weak profits

DDL has disappeared from the scene, leaving MBS to lament weak profits.

Direct directive loses Amstrad for Software

Software has lost Amstrad to a direct directive.

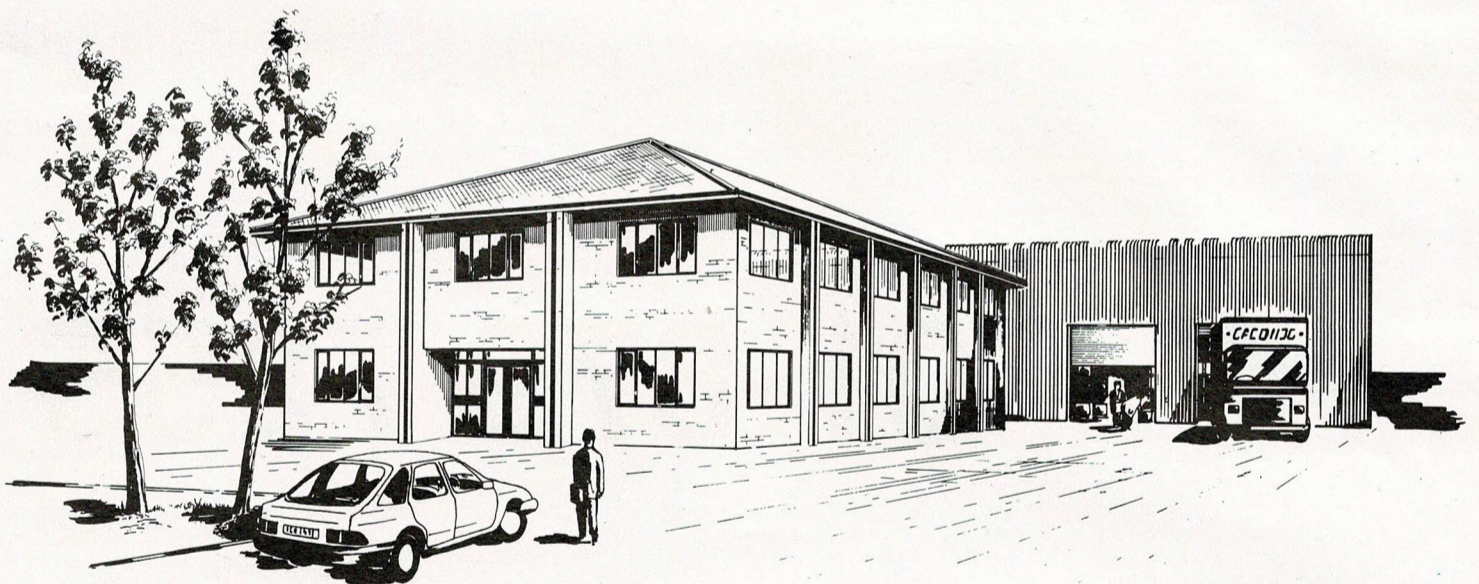
. . . As companies are canned in the business world

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TO THE POINT

IN AT THE CHEAP END

There exists a moderately successful budget software firm which has never had a ridiculous public wrangle about market share and which isn't tied up with another larger concern. It also has a subterreanly low profile, which is perhaps why "Atlantis" didn't just spring to your lips. CHRIS BENT speaks to the man from Atlantis, Mike Cole . . .

Just six weeks after Mastertronic, Atlantis zoomed into the budget software games market. There is has sat quietly for the past four years, releasing games in dribs and drabs.

With just three full time and two part time employees, boss Mike Cole manages to run a "fairly tight, solid business". The output is not especially high (with one every six weeks on average), but at least Atlantis games sell reasonably well. Modest the business may be: there again, size isn't everything.

Small is bountiful

Cole is happy to sit trailing behind the biggest. He realises that he's not in the league of the *Ghostbusters* of this world, and regretfully acknowledges that he's not fortunate enough to have the rights to *BMX Simulator*.

Unnerved by such truths it is apparent that Cole would not want his company to expand into a top software house, enabling him to achieve such goals. Apart from the obvious, that he enjoys running a small company, Cole reckons that the pace would be "too much like hard work".

It seems remarkable that even after all this time Atlantis is still in there in the running, despite its only releasing a handful of budget games a year (often on minority formats), and participating in very little promotional activities. Cole almost entirely puts this down to his loyal following and good value games. A modest man indeed. It rather proves his business capabilities.

It is curious that historically 90 per cent of the programs released by Atlantis are claimed to be ones, which "have been sent in from kids on the street". The further ten per cent comes from other software houses and the like.

The trend in recent months is apparently away from the freelancers. Is that to say that not so long ago Cole relied on more than 90 per cent of his programs coming from unknowns? Well, at first glance it certainly looks cost effective, but not particularly reliable for such a businessman. That is, until Cole has had his say . . .

"A lot of our games come from the same programmers. A lot of them have written four or five programs for us, so you see it's not unreliable at all. We pay their royalties on time and

build up a good relationship with them.

"We look after our programmers, and we're always interested in news ones. A classic example of this is a programmer called Graham Shaw. He wrote *Cerius*, *Gun Fighter*, and *Tank Command*. I hope his name appearing in *CTW* doesn't mean he's going to be poached by someone like Mastertronic . . ." He laughs. None too convincingly though.

Veritable deluge

Atlantis rather excelled itself in August by releasing no fewer than two titles: *Gun Fighter*, and *Frankenstein 2000*, both retailing at the wholly unsurprising price of £1.99. It's a company of singular intent, with no desire to develop the bastard price of £2.99 or £4.99.

Rather pleased with this double release achievement (which, of course, would be just one of those things to any other company), Cole claimed, somewhat boastfully, that his last two games had sold in excess of 50,000 units, protesting instantly, "no, no, it's true." As if we'd doubt the man . . .

Cole enjoys working for himself, even if his turnover



ATLANTIS: Quiet budget contender

isn't that remarkable.

"At least I don't have to worry about where my next meal is coming from. I mean, I used to be the managing director of a video company. Y'know: large companies; flash cars; expensive lunches. After a while it all starts to become meaningless. My best

decision was to set up in business by myself."

And business means never sitting still, even for a small budget firm. "We're ready to move into the 16-bit budget software games market. I know there'll be initial resistance, like there was with 8-bit budget software when that first hit the market.

The 16-bit market's not going away."

Cole's got his business head firmly screwed on, and most importantly, he knows how to use it. So, although it's not exactly a gold mine, this Atlantis isn't about to sink beneath the waves . . .

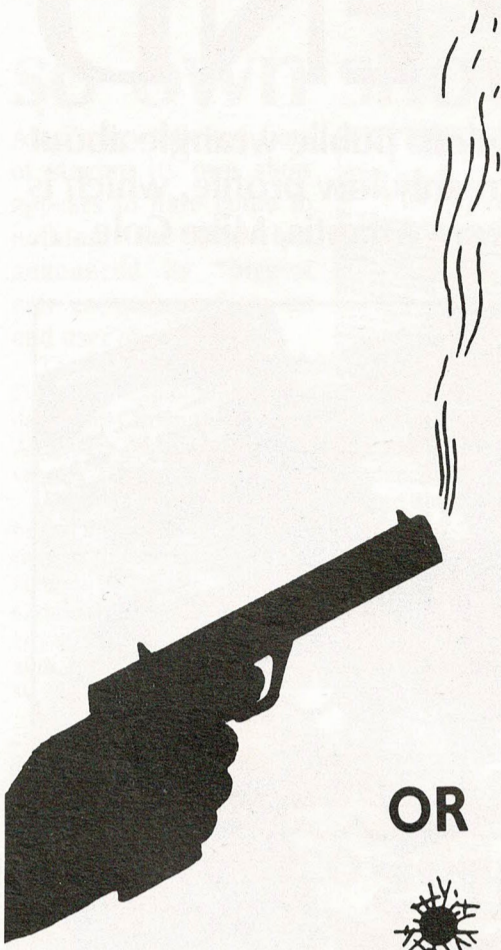
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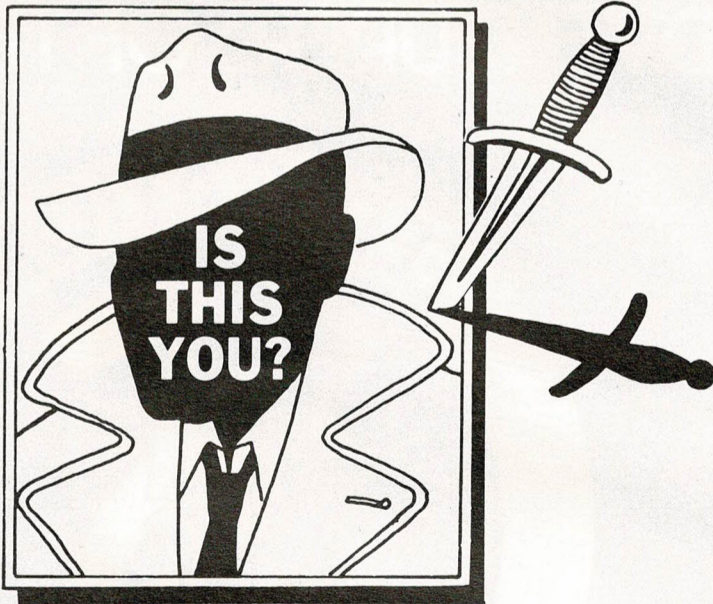


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THE MALL THE MERRIER

The Chancellor of the Exchequer is sweating over the UK's mushrooming retail boom and US Shopping mall culture is inevitably finding its way across the Atlantic. Surprisingly, Newcastle appears to be Europe's focal point for the total "shopping experience". COLIN CAMPBELL reports on Maughan Micro Computers and how it's faring in the much publicised MetroCentre . . .



MAUGHAN: North Eastern promise

Certain national tabloids would no doubt be more than happy to shove it down the country's throat that there really is a boom in the North East and that everything really does smell of roses (although not red ones).

But despite the continually desperate unemployment figures (somewhere around the 13 per cent mark) the region is experiencing the second largest retail boom in the country. Like the rest of the nation the populous is going bonkers on credit cards and nowhere is it more apparent than in the extraordinary MetroCentre - flagged as Europe's biggest shopping centre.

Eager visitors barely get time to mull over many of the mall's stores. Simply to pass all of the 300 shops, restaurants, travel agents, banks et al amounts to a three mile hike. The record number of visitors to flock through the electric doors in one day amounts to 85,000 - more than the entire population of Harlow.

Happy shoppers all, with

the sole intent of filling out the overdraft and wading home laden with goodies. Retailers dream of such opportunities.

Dixons, Menzies and Tandy are all there along with only one independent hardware retailer: Maughan Micro Computers. Only opened last May the store predictably enough has entrenched itself in the 16-bit bonanza (including Amstrad PCs) and all the business packs and Olympic offers that Atari and Commodore can dream up.

Its boss Alan Maughan mourns the fact that the North East is invariably ignored by the computer press and to a lesser extent the computer industry. Computer coverage though is rarely seen in regional terms. Be that as it may the North East is, he claims, inhabited by large numbers of leisure computer users. Certainly a higher ratio than in London.

"The North East gets neglected," he complains. "You're always reading about Tottenham Court Road. I don't know why but there are a lot of com-

puters in this area. Of course, some local areas have more than others.

"I think it has something to do with local amenities. Areas with less to do have more computers."

Maughan claims to be in a prime position when it comes to selling computers. He argues that shopping is moving away from back street specialist stores and even away from the High Street. Tomorrow's shopper, as the Americans well know, is prepared to drive some distance to shop in these vast complexes. MetroCentre was modelled on the West Edmonton Centre in Canada. It boasts 10,000 car park spaces and takes in 300,000 people a week. In peak selling times more than 200 coaches glide into the 115 acre area. Over five million residents are within a two hour drive.

"People come here from all over the country," says Maughan. "And not just the north. We have people coming up from the south. It's surprised me. The business we do

is amazing."

There is also the advantage of not having to pay rates. Floor space though doesn't come cheap. (Maughan lays out £2,000 a month). "We're laughing at the moment".

There is some dismay in the specialist stores that people are prepared to travel when they shop. And that shopping has become less of a necessity than a fun day out. MetroCentre boasts a ten screen cinema and an amusement park for the youngsters.

Malling the market

His sales splits aren't remarkable except that there's less need to worry about bargain hunters and discounting. People feel safer shopping in a mall. Still, the MetroCentre is only an exception despite the number of superstores springing up. Shopping mall culture complete with the new breed of bag ladies, appalling muzak and juveniles hanging around concrete fountains hasn't taken over.

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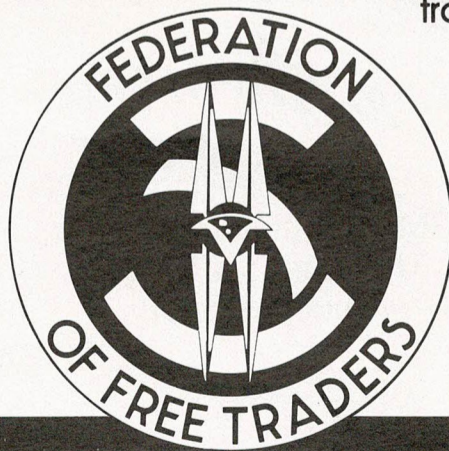
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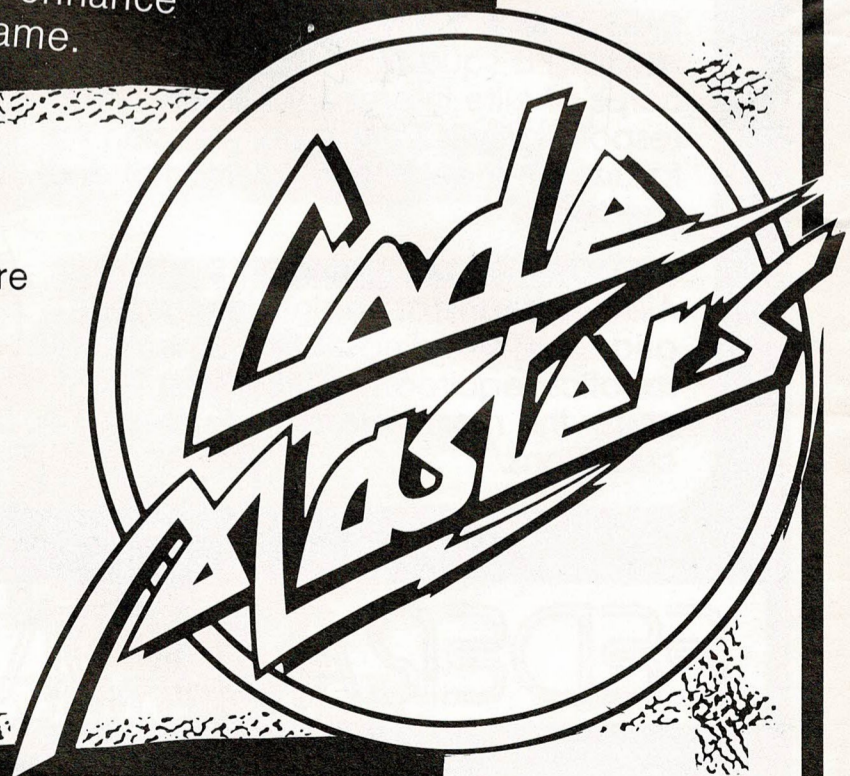
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SPECTRUM TOP 20

TW	LW	Title	Publisher	RRP £
1	1	EUROPEAN FIVE A SIDE	FIREBIRD	1.99
2	2	FOOTBALL MANAGER 2	ADDICTIVE	9.99
3	6	AIR WOLF	ENCORE	1.99
4	15	GHOSTBUSTERS	MASTERTRONIC	1.99
5	16	BEACH BUGGY SIMULATOR	FIREBIRD	1.99
6	5	ACE	CASCADE	2.99
7	11	YOGI BEAR	ALTERNATIVE	1.99
8	10	TRACK SUIT MANAGER	GOLIATH	9.95
9	9	BATTLESHIPS	ENCORE	1.99
10	7	FRUIT MACHINE SIMULATOR	CODE MASTERS	1.99
11	38	SABOTEUR	ENCORE	1.99
12	8	FRANK BRUNO'S BOXING	ENCORE	1.99
13	4	STUNT BIKE SIMULATOR	FIREBIRD	1.99
14	3	ROAD BLASTERS	US GOLD	8.99
15	13	WAY OF THE EXPLODING FIST	MASTERTRONIC	1.99
16	14	TARGET RENEGADE	IMAGINE	7.95
17	22	SKATEBOARD KIDS	FIREBIRD	1.99
13	RE	RACE AGAINST TIME	CODE MASTERS	4.99
19	19	GRAND PRIX SIMULATOR	CODE MASTERS	1.99
20	28	SHANGHAI KARATE	PLAYERS	1.99

C64 TOP 20

	Title	Publisher	RRP £
1	2	FOOTBALL MANAGER 2	ADDICTIVE 9.99
2	5	SALAMANDER	IMAGINE 8.95
3	17	BATTLESHIPS	ENCORE 1.99
4	1	TRACK SUIT MANAGER	GOLIATH 9.95
5	10	EUROPEAN FIVE A SIDE	FIREBIRD 1.99
6	NE	VINDICATOR	OCEAN 8.95
7	7	STUNT BIKE SIMULATOR	FIREBIRD 1.99
8	9	A C E	CASCADE 2.99
9	15	STEVE DAVIS SNOOKER	BLUE RIBBON 1.99
10	19	AIR WOLF	ENCORE 1.99
11	13	RALLY DRIVER	ALTERNATIVE 1.99
12	6	FRANK BRUNO'S BOXING	ENCORE 1.99
13	22	GHOSTBUSTERS	MASTERTRONIC 1.99
14	RE	SHANGHAI KARATE	PLAYERS 1.99
15	29	EMPIRE STRIKES BACK	DOMARK 9.95
16	RF	FAME 2	MASTERTRONIC 2.99
17	26	BMX SIMULATOR	CODE MASTERS 1.99
18	RF	BEACH BUGGY SIMULATOR	FIREBIRD 1.99
19	23	BIONIC COMMANDO	COPCOM-GO! 9.99
20	8	YOGI BEAR	ALTERNATIVE 1.99

AMSTRAD TOP 10

	Title	Publisher	RRP £
1	2	ATV SIMULATOR	CODE MASTERS 1.99
2	6	BATTLESHIPS	ENCORE 1.99
3	3	FOOTBALL MANAGER 2	ADDICTIVE 9.99
4	1	STUNT BIKE SIMULATOR	FIREBIRD 1.99
5	4	AIR WOLF	ENCORE 1.99
6	17	BMX SIMULATOR	CODE MASTERS 1.99
7	11	BEACH BUGGY SIMULATOR	FIREBIRD 1.99
6	12	STEVE DAVIS SNOOKER	BLUE RIBBON 1.99
9	13	SUPER STUNTMAN	CODE MASTERS 1.99
10	8	TARGET RENEGADE	IMAGINE 8.95

ATARI ST TOP 5

	Title	Publisher	RRP £
1	1	VIRUS	FIREBIRD 19.95
2	4	GAUNTLET 2	US GOLD 19.99
5	5	OUT RUN	SEGA-US GOLD 19.99
4	5	DUNGEON MASTER	MIRRORSOFT 24.95
5	2	EMPIRE STRIKES BACK	DOMARK 19.95

AMIGA TOP 5

	Title	Publisher	RRP £
1	NE	CARRIER COMMAND	FIREBIRD 24.95
2	1	INTERCEPTOR	ELECTRONIC ARTS 24.95
3	RE	IKARI WARRIORS	ELITE 19.55
4	NE	ALIEN SYNDROME	ACE 19.99
5	RE	STREET FIGHTER	CAPCOM-GO! 19.99

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	44.0	42.8	41.3	46.8	28.7	27.9	28.5	29.0
COMMODORE 64	23.6	23.7	23.6	20.9	23.0	23.6	22.5	24.8
AMSTRAD	19.5	18.0	18.7	17.0	17.6	17.8	17.7	18.8
ATARI ST	3.1	4.8	4.2	4.9	6.7	7.2	7.8	7.0
COMMODORE 16	2.5	2.5	3.1	1.9	2.8	3.6	3.0	2.9
BBC	1.8	1.8	1.3	1.8	3.8	4.0	2.9	3.0
AMIGA	1.5	1.9	2.2	1.0	4.2	4.0	3.8	2.0
ATARI	0.8	1.5	1.8	1.9	2.9	3.9	3.4	2.6
MSX	0.7	0.0	0.0	0.6	2.4	1.3	1.0	1.9

AVERAGE SALES PER PANEL SHOP

This week	Units Sold		
	Last week	4 wks ago	12 wks ago
124	134	96	78

Soft options

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

△ **ACCOLADE:** *Serve and Volley* (PC64 £9.95—£24.95) The first of a sports line up stretching until the end of the year. Accolade has done the decent thing and packed as many features into this as possible. As is the case with so many sports series of late, it's not exactly the optimum time of the year for release. Oddly enough, that doesn't seem to matter too much. △

ALTERNATIVE: *Skool Daze* (Sp64-£1.99) Great stuff. This old Microsphere re-release still looks like something *The Beano* might endorse. Bash Street Kids Stuff which doesn't require a lot of thought. The packaging will do most of the selling. △

ELECTRONIC ARTS: *Card Sharks, Apollo 18* (PC-£24.95) Two more from Accolade, one a card simulation and the other a "depiction of actual moon flight". *Card Sharks* offers the usual selection of poker, blackjack and suchlike plus an oh-so-funny twist in its three proposed computer opponents:

Gorbachev, Reagan or Thatcher. *Apollo 18* is actually a pretty damn impressive offering with screen graphics based on actual moonlike footage. But don't expect it to be 100mph stuff. △

FIREBIRD: *Elite* (ST £24.95) Yes, it's the same one that sold squillions and will sell some more. The penchant for old games goes on. It's only surprising that this wasn't on the ST already. An overall Top 20 chart hit? Stranger things have happened. △ **GRAND-SLAM:** *Alternative Reality* (64PCST) After the abysmal and completely stupid *Chubby Gristle* Grandslam has come up with something much more esoteric. It's role playing adventure from Datasoft with lots of things to keep clever dicks busy. △

PSYGNOSIS: *Chrono-Quest* (STAg-£29.95) The Liverpool lot have built up a pretty impressive reputation in the 16-bit market already, but this title actually boasts two firsts for the firm. It is the label's first ever adventure and it's the first link-up with French

development house Infomedia. *Chrono-Quest* was actually marketed in France by 16/32 Diffusion under the name Explora. Five pence short of £30 is a bit on the pricey side for this escapade based loosely around a time machine, but it does boast four disks on the ST and three on the Amiga. A lot of Psygnosis fans will probably trust the label's judgement and give it a try. △

SILVERBIRD: *Cauldron I* (SP64Am-£1.99) Having already pushed up its market share significantly over the past few weeks BT seems to have come up with another winner. This old Palace game was simply enorm a few years back and any showing of age should be outweighed by the cheap price. △ **SILVERBIRD:** *Thingy and the Doodahs* (Am-£1.99) You can imagine the market research and deep thought that went into naming this and targeting the right audience. Is this the most desperate name ever? △ **US GOLD:** *The Games-Winter Edition* (Sp-£8.99) Brilliant timing.

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.

P.C. SHOW OVERLOAD?

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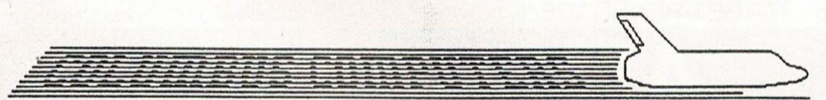
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WATCHOUTFORMULTIPLES

Continued from page 12

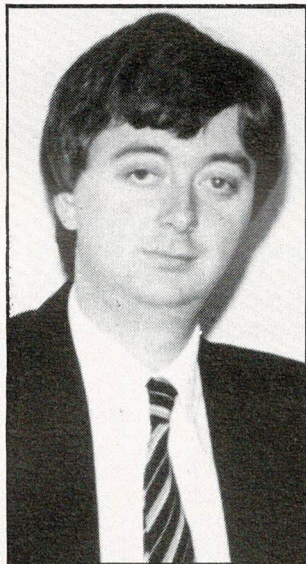
US Gold game which is arcade based. The simulations appeal to an older age group. But by adding value to the product it might be attractive to other people. This highlights the range and gives it a higher profile."

Naturally there has to be some form of constraint on the number of flashes and SPECIAL OFFER cards sprawling all over the store. Smiths already highlights chart games heavily as well as "Format 16", the 16-bit chart. As such running two offers simultaneously would be tacky.

Independents though have

been known to go absolutely berserk when they get wind of multiples gaining the upper hand. All it needs is one freckled kid to walk into a store and ask for "the game with the watch in it" to set the indies off. Whether or not the consumer can fully take it in that Prose are only giving away the watch if the game is bought in Smiths is hard to gauge.

Software houses which offer multiples something that the indies can't have usually end up being torn apart on the dealer grapevine. But so what? They generate the sales and that's generally the name of the game...



LAURIE: It's added value

ENTREPRENEUR

Continued from page 18

the manufacturer has also found the high cost of reaching potential customers through mass marketing is becoming prohibitive.

If the retailer and the manufacturer cannot get their act together, then one may find that the manufacturer is forced to seek out the vital information regardless of how or where a purchase is made, then attempt to speak directly to the consumer, and influence the next purchase whichever way they choose.

Given co-operation and collaboration, the manufacturer

must solicit the retailers' help wherever possible to track down the consumer, then influence the consumer to make that purchase with the loyal retailer.

As a retailer you cannot lose if you subscribe to my theory of common sense marketing. Your advertising will be lined to measurable sales, and more importantly with the manufacturers' help you will hunt down individual users of competing brands and lure them away with an attractive package of value added services. And here is your bonus: your supplier

can be persuaded to pick up the tab for a major share of the cost of doing all this.

Why?

Because it is profoundly in his interest so to do!

If I were a manufacturer, I would be disposed to invest a good deal of money in a retailer who could provide a meaningful list of committed customers. I would do everything in my power to help him build upon his existing customer list, by offering him access to all the sophistications that my technological investment can offer.

This is common sense marketing! The manufacturer helping the retailer to speak directly about his product to the consumer, who is made very much aware of where he or she can purchase or at the very least receive a demonstration.

Common sense

This is common sense marketing! Utilising your supply resources to speak to your own customers in a form that they feel comfortable with. You should communicate with them as often as you have something to say. By that I mean having new products to offer, or advising on technical updates, or just telling your privileged customers in advance, what items you are going to be offering on sale.

Of course you will still buy press ads to inform and attract new customers, but your future lies in speaking directly to your established customers. It's cheaper, it's less haphazard and it is more effective.

Your customers have changed. We refer to them as the "sensation generation" who now seek increasingly to enhance the quality of their lives; not any longer to strive for a better standard of living!

So if you want to take full advantage of a retail boom that says I want it now! My advice is this: once you have got a customer, hang on to him; speak to him; ask him what he needs; what he uses now; how he spends his leisure time; what his lifestyle is like. Then speak to him as often as you can. Offer him what he wants to buy. Sometimes even before he has thought of buying it!

MOTOR MOUTH

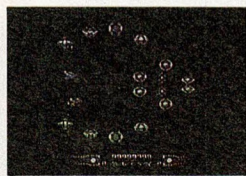
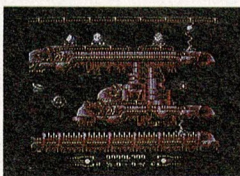
Continued from page 20

sake. Some local councils are seeking to ban fruit machines in certain premises in London, which in effect makes business for GP Fox & Co slightly tricky. As from May 11th this year one council has not been dishing out permits, so in effect when those existing permits run out, do does that part of GP Fox & Co's business.

Still, with games to fall back on, young Mr G. is not that worried. He plans to go into both exporting and full price games. He hopes to turn his company into a mail order outfit, as well as venturing into magazine advertising. Top of his list is *Your Sinclair*.

As for business, he hopes to have 30 or 40 more shops by the end of the year. "I've got a list of sites and potential shops." They have been warned.

"I'm no big shot. I never said I'd like to be a millionaire, but I'd just like to say: Watch out rivals, I'm out to get you!"



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ZCL ties Star deal

ZCL has tied up a distribution deal with printer firm Star and is shortly due to announce the inclusion of another PC range.

The Star agreement underlines ZCL's shift upmarket this year, which has been marked by a name change (from Zappo) and the taking on of both Amstrad and the Spectrum sbc ranges.

ZCL boss Don Carter told CTW that the Amstrad deal had aided him with Star. "There's no doubt about it. The decision by Amstrad to take on ZCL a distributor fundamentally changed our image in the industry and enable to speak to a number of companies from a position of strength.

"We were influenced both by the fact that Star takes a printer which is Commodore compatible and by the commitment of the Star people to being my one in the UK printer market."

Another deal - quite possibly Opus - is due to be announced at the PC show.

ZCL has had to cancel plans for a dealer beano to Morocco, due to the standard of accommodation offered. Athens is the replacement destination.

Genic

Continued from front page and its related labels are understood to be pending. These include another wrangle over R-Type with Gold's Dream Warrior; and a complaint about Gremlin's T-Wrecks, which is alleged to infringe Mediagenic's Rampage.

What complicates the Katakis position is that though Gold is in the process of withdrawing it from the market, it is due to be the cover-mounted freebie demo on the front of the October issue of Newsfield's Zzap magazine. Some form of accompanying heavy editorial disclaimer from the magazine is likely to be the resulting compromise.

In any case, Newsfield faces a battle on another front with Mediagenic. Its Thalamus label is set to release Armalite, which Mediagenic claims infringes R-Type. Yet another action against a separate software publisher is also on the cards from the US firm, which appears to be determined to fight what it believes to be its rights.

Its UK boss Rod Cousens refused to become drawn into any aspects of the actions, and was evidently annoyed that details had somehow leaked out.

He told CTW: "I've got absolutely no comment to make whatsoever, other than to note that there has been a legal dispute with US Gold dealt with through the due channels provided. It ends there because of my respect and friendship for Geoff Brown (Gold's boss) and the other directors of Wood Ward Holdings."

Gold's refusal to comment - despite numerous opportunities to present its side of the case - is in line with the firm's policy on such matters in the past. It has adopted a stance of being effusive about positive stories whilst running to ground on matters which are potentially damaging.

Lightning changes

The computer distribution wing of Lightning has changed its name - but not too dramatically.

The firm is now to be known as Lightning Business To Business, in line with the firm's aim to be perceived as a more upmarket distributor. Heading the enterprise will be Loretta Cohen, the current director of its consumer electronics division.

Records and videos will continue to be handled under the Lightning Distribution

name. Lightning Business To Business will also include leisure market machines from Amstrad, Commodore and Atari.

"We've actually been focusing more and more on business and so wanted our name to reflect this. Not only are we in the marketplace, but we needed to be seen to be in it.

"And we wanted to keep Lightning in the name because it has done a lot for us and is so well known," Cohen told CTW.

There are not planned to be

any additions to Lightning's current computer line-up this year, which includes Amstrad, Atari, Commodore, Cambridge and Psion. Early next year, another line is due to be added. At this stage, this looks most likely to be another PC manufacturer.

Lightning's existing Amstrad-only stance on printers will also change next year.

Meantime, Cohen has also announced that there will not be a repeat this year of the Lightning Dealer Circuit '87. This was a dealer roadshow

backed by sundry manufacturers, publishers and suppliers undertaken by the firm last autumn. In part, it was a response to the fact that Lightning pulled out of the PCW (as was) Show.

Though apparently successful, it will not be repeated this year because of the various changes at the firm, coupled with the pressure of work. Another Circuit in '89 is on the cards.

"But we will definitely be making our presence felt at the PC Show. We haven't got a stand, but the trade will be very aware of us," Cohen added.

Lightning has also lined up its dealer beano for next year. The eight day event in Florida



COHEN: New profile, new name is being pitched as a family affair, since it couples Disney World with the late May school half term holidays.

5 STAR

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