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# CTW

8-8-88 BRITAIN'S TOP COMPUTER TRADE WEEKLY ISSUE 198

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## Pirates fall in HK bust

The worldwide fight against software piracy received another fillip last week, with the news of a major bust in Hong Kong's notorious Golden Shopping Arcade.

Local government investigators have raided a number of premises, taking goods worth HK\$8.5 million (£636,500) in the process. In all, some 30 shops in the arcade were discovered to be dealing in counterfeit goods. Bona fide retailers now say that they expect the pirate trade to dwindle, following the government crackdown.

Amongst goods seized was a fake *WordStar* retailing at HK\$60 (plus HK\$100 for the manual), in comparison with HK\$3,860 for the genuine article.

Kowloon's Golden Shopping Arcade has long been regarded as the worst site for software piracy in the world, both in its extent and in the openness of the counterfeiters' activities. The apparent victory by the Hong Kong government is proof positive of the increasing worldwide determination to stamp out piracy.

## INSIDE:

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Fresh from a trip to the AmiEXPO in Chicago Anthony Jacobson comes back with some new hope for the Amiga as a business computer. With the machine apparently having some success in that area Stateside he wonders why not here? ..... 10

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Distributor ASAP majors on the A2000 and claims that wise dealers would do well to take note of the creative design and training markets toward which the machine is pitched. *CTW* listens to boss Gordon Shields ..... 13

### POEL THE INTERLOPER

Newstar/Paperback boss and industry rent-a-quote William Poel talks business with *CTW*. Naturally, his perception of Amstrad figures high in the conversation as well as bundling, OS/2, price points and mail order. Oh, and butterflies ..... 14

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## Atari set for new ST

A new, enhanced, "better than the Amiga" ST is due to be launched by Atari in the UK next April.

And the firm has all but confirmed that there will be a £299 ST this autumn, along-

side a freshly bundled £399 version. Additionally, there will be a \$199 ST console on sale in the States next spring. It has not yet been decided when - or if - this latter machine will arrive in the UK.

Particularly well placed

sources at Atari have confirmed the existence of the new ST, which will be called the ST Plus. It will be capable of producing 4,096 colours - the same as the Amiga - have stereo sound and will allow both horizontal and vertical scrolling faster than both the Amiga and ST at present.

At this stage, no firm price has been set. Atari is hoping that the D-Ram chip famine will have lessened considerably by the spring, thus enabling it to price the new machine at £399. It will be unveiled at the January CES in the States and available from April over here.

*CTW's* Atari source commented: "Far from simply matching the Amiga, our engineers believe that this makes the ST much better. In addition to the colours and the stereo and the scrolling, we'll also have the MIDI output. It'll be faster and cleaner and we won't have a 'watch me fall over' operating system. It'll be the ultimate games machine."

Officially, the machine does not exist. Atari's UK boss Bob Gleadow told *CTW*

that he has "never heard of it", and promptly refused to discuss the matter further.

As for the pricing and marketing strategies on the existing ST, Gleadow offered that there would be a "super-duper new pack available from September". This will include at least 20 games, an integrated productivity package, a new user manual and a 32-odd page *Atari World* magazine - which, inevitably, will be produced via the ST DTP system. Gleadow stressed that the magazine would not be seeking any direct end user sales.

The new pack will retail at £399 and will replace the existing summer bundle. Sold separately, the bundled products would have a nominal retail value of £450.

Below that, there will almost certainly be a £299 version, as the trade has suspected for some time. "We're struggling to reach £299, but we're optimistic that we can - though with a reduced margin," Gleadow said.

This comment would appear to be part of a soft-

Continued on back page



GLEADOW: What new ST?

## Amstrad set for Sept 13th

Amstrad's new batch of machines will be unveiled on the day before next month's PC Show commences.

Even though sundry invitations have been sent out to European firms, in its customary fashion Amstrad is refusing to confirm or deny that any such event has been planned. The presentation is scheduled to be held at Olympia - the site of the last ten *PCW* Shows - on September 13th.

Though even this detail does not completely confirm that the new machines will be unveiled, it is highly unlikely that Amstrad would call any form of conference unless it had something material to say. Indeed, it has been Amstrad's habit in the past two years to announce new machines to the press on the Tuesday before the full unveiling at the show.

Following various unofficial press leaks during the spring - capped by the ex-

traordinary *faux pas* by Amstrad's Spanish boss (*CTW* July 11th) - the nature of the Amstrad line-up has been virtually confirmed. It is expected to unveil 286, 386 and PS/2 machines, along with a cheap MS-DOS games machine.

That said, there were some figures in the trade last week stating that the latter machine will not be appearing. Senior buyers at essential multiples are said to have no knowledge of it. Nonetheless, on balance of likelihood and on the

strength of *CTW's* own contacts, this looks like a belated attempt at a smokescreen at best.

The Amstrad booking at Olympia's conference hall has been confirmed by the organisation. To this, an Amstrad spokesman offered: "They haven't really any right to reveal anything since a booking is only between Amstrad and themselves. If they choose to say that, then so be it. We will neither confirm nor deny this."

## CBM set for business

An earnest Commodore was last week claiming to be on the threshold of a new era in its business computers history.

For the first time the firm has given its range of PCs official price tags. The announcement was cautiously labelled a price structuring with a total of 23 configurations now ranging from the PC1 to the high end 386s. In effect, some models have been cut in price, though not significantly.

Distribution announcements are likely in the near future with two more suppliers being added to the cur-

rent line up of Addons. Lightning and Micro Peripherals. Also, negotiations are underway with an unnamed high street chain. Rumours had been floating that it would be Wilding although at present this seems unlikely. Wilding itself has denied the possibility.

● The entry level PC1 has been given a recommended ex-VAT retail price of £315 - claimed to be the lowest price on the market. The single drive XT with colour display will retail at £430. Whilst Commodore is saying that the mono is £50 cheaper than anything else, its advertising campaign is heralding the whole range as "mid price".

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BARRETT: Business thrust

## Pylator crashes

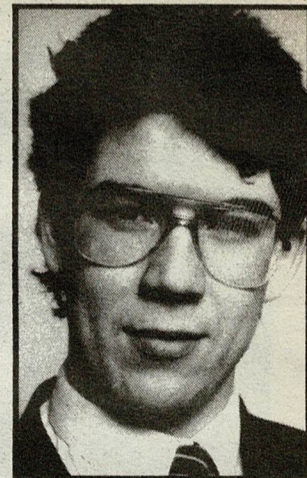
Sweden's second largest leisure distributor Pylator has gone into liquidation owing around £700,000.

Currently it is not known what proportion of the money is owed to UK firms or who the largest creditors are. The firm claims, however, that it had accounts with "practically all" the UK publishers, major ones being Ocean, Centresoft/US Gold and Elite. It was also the exclusive Swedish distributor of US joystick manufacturer Suncom.

The firm's liquidation is being handled by Ulf Mortenson in Stockholm. According to Pylator boss Per Lundell, the bust is due to a mixture of customers' bad debts, over investment, over valuation of stock and accounting mishaps.

"We were working on our yearly report in July and then discovered that we had to do this. We'd bought a big computer system and it hadn't given us the right figures," Lundell told *CTW*.

The Taby, near Stockholm based firm turned over £1.3 million last year and has emerged as the largest Swedish distributor after HK Electronics, (also in Stockholm).



DUGDALE: Elite clear

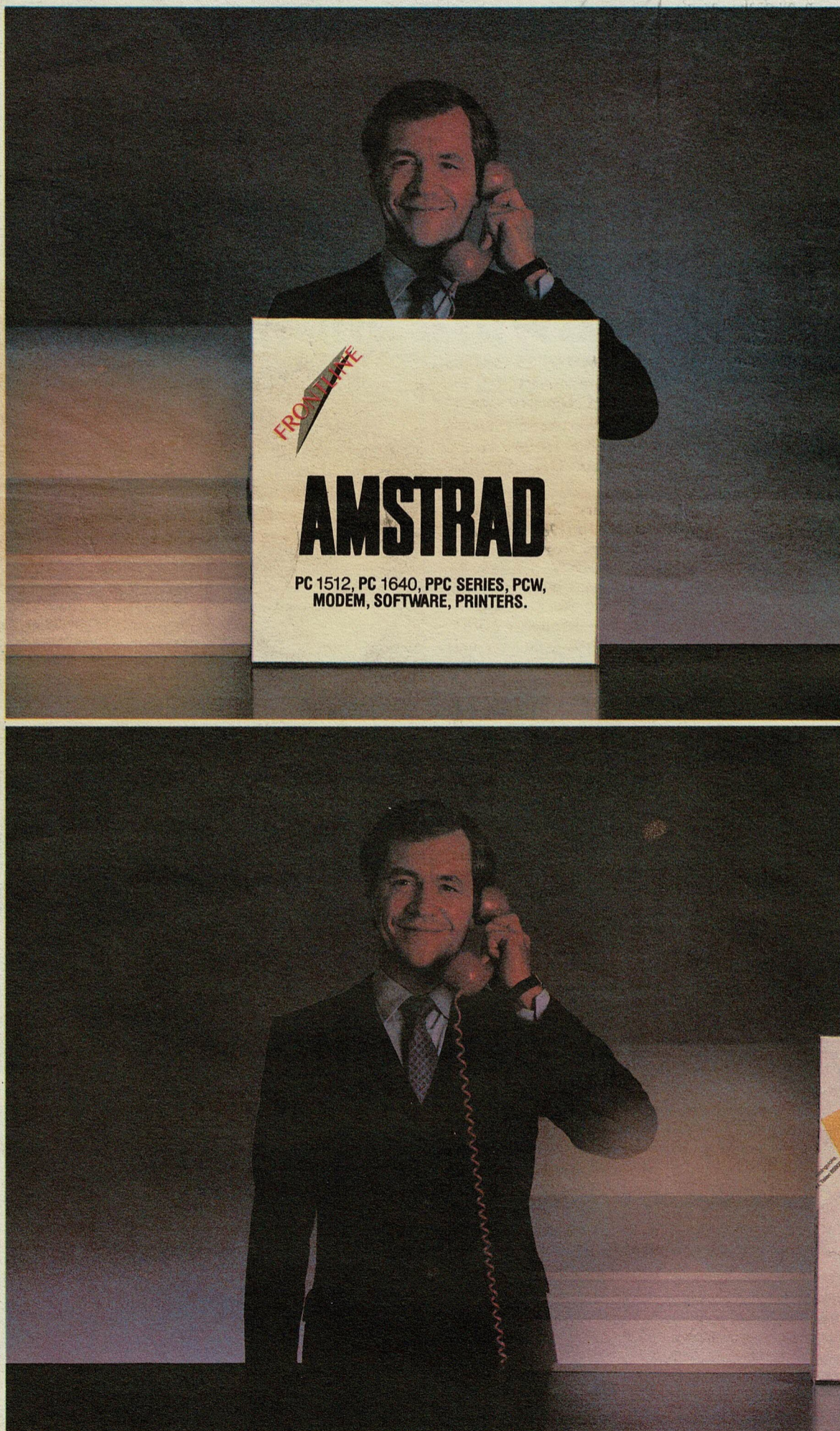
The liquidator is currently helping Pylator sell off its remaining stock and notifying creditors of the firm's collapse.

Several UK firms had been aware of Pylator's mounting financial difficulties over the past few months, but it seems that very few had been told of the firm's fate when *CTW* went to press.

Elite had been having problems receiving payment for product but claims that it is not owed anything.

"We're clear now. They did around £50,000 of business with us over the past year. Payment trouble has always been a feature of Scandinavia rather than just Pylator," commented director Bernard Dugdale to *CTW*.

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**FRONTLINE**

# Dixons guns for indies with business barrage

**IBM price-cuts, interest free credit, free trials and free software are just a small part of Dixons' latest promotional armoury on business equipment.**

The firm will also shortly be taking on two further business product categories and has embarked on a three-way programme to increase the number of its stores carrying business products - including solus Business Centre Stores.

The flurry of activity follows swiftly on from Dixons' latest financial results which showed 50 per cent increase in PC sales. A largescale mail-shot explaining all the deals has been sent to previous and potential customers within the catchment areas of each of its 55 Business Centres.

The IBM PS/2 Model 30 Mb hard drive is being

offered at £1,549 (mono ex VAT) and £1,849 (colour ex VAT) - a saving of £525 on each. There is also a saving of £325 on the twin drive mono and colour both coming down to £1,299 (ex VAT) and £1,599 (ex VAT) respectively.

Six months interest free credit is being offered on Dixons' exclusive Amstrad home office package which includes PC1640, printer, software, desk, calculator, telephone and dictation machine for £1,045 (ex VAT). A £699 Olivetti Prodest PCI package also boasts six months free credit.

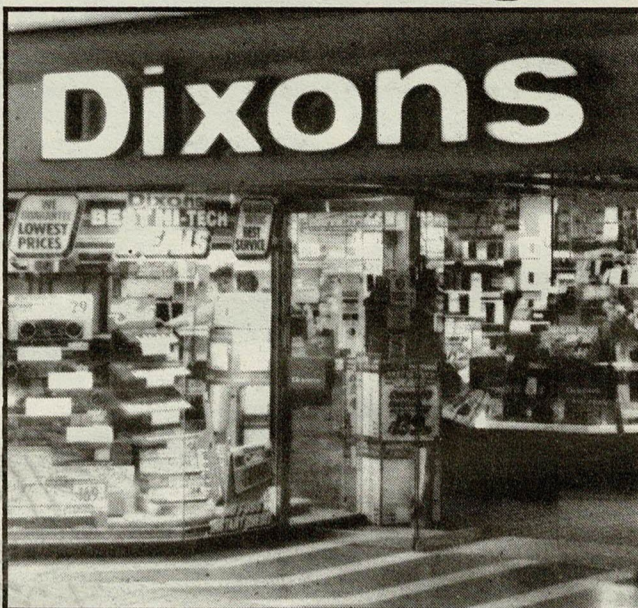
The chain is also pushing hard its Low Cost Lease Plan which involves small monthly payments over three years on products costing over £1,000. Added to this plethora of potential customer benefits are offers of free software and free 14 day try-out periods on specified machines.

The current make-up of the deals will last until September 3rd, no doubt to be superceded by further promotions.

Dixons' purchasing director Danny Churchill explained that the IBM cuts are a reaction to the lower prices currently being advertised by many specialist dealers. Indeed, this whole push appears to have the aim of winning business from the independents.

"We're offering some very attractive deals and they're deals that many dealers aren't in a position to offer," Churchill told CTW.

He added that two new product categories would be added to the Business Centres over the next few weeks. Expansion of business equipment stocked is set to continue via normal Dixons stores carrying more than just Amstrad PCWs and low-cost



**DIXONS: More business expansion**  
PCs - more Business Centres being designated within existing stores and the formation of standalone business outlets.

"It's taken us three years to get to where we are now and we're not totally happy with that. We can still do better," added Churchill.

## Watford enters PC fray

**Despite previous claims to the contrary BBC specialist Watford Electronics has entered the PC marketplace.**

This week the firm will start shipping a 286 based AT priced at £995 and an XT costing £875. Watford has traditionally based itself in the mail order market and says that it will continue to do so with its PC products. However, some dealers are likely to be supplied direct.

The PCs have been branded Aries - a company which Watford purchased two years ago for a claimed £60,000. Whilst the firm had viewed the PC market as saturated it apparently changed tack after a visit to the Far East.

Technical director Shiraz Jessa said: "We hope initially to be selling a minimum of 500 machines a month with a high target of 1,000. We're now making sure that we have sufficient quantities."

The AT features 640K of

RAM with a 1.2 Mb disk drive, 40 Mb Winchester and flat screen mono monitor. The XT also runs 640K with Turbo mode up to 10 Mb.

Both machines are being pitched as "cheaper than Amstrad". Currently Watford is toying with the notion of free on-site maintenance with the range. A 386 model is expected before the autumn and PS/2 has also been hinted at - with a 1988 launch a possibility. Also, the firm is launching an EGA monitor priced at £300.

## Publishers back Software Show

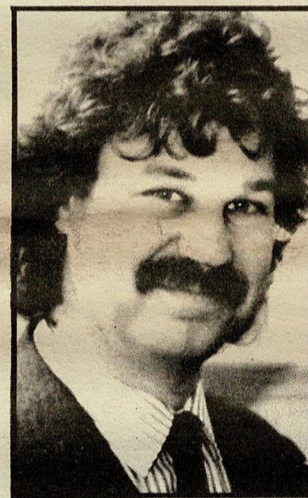
**Software Limited will be holding its second dealer specific show next month with the help of 25 US and UK exhibitors.**

The first Software Show was held in 1987 and generated visits from 620 dealers over two days. Software Limited boss Alistair Handyside is looking for a similar response on September 4-5th.

"We always said we'd only hold a show when we had enough new products to justify dealers taking the time to come along. If you catch a flat time you're just showing product everyone's already seen," Handyside told CTW.

The exhibitors include Ashton-Tate, Borland, Computer Associates, Digital Research, MicroPro, Panasonic, Sentinel and Zenith. Software Limited is promising that the majority of these will all have something new to offer.

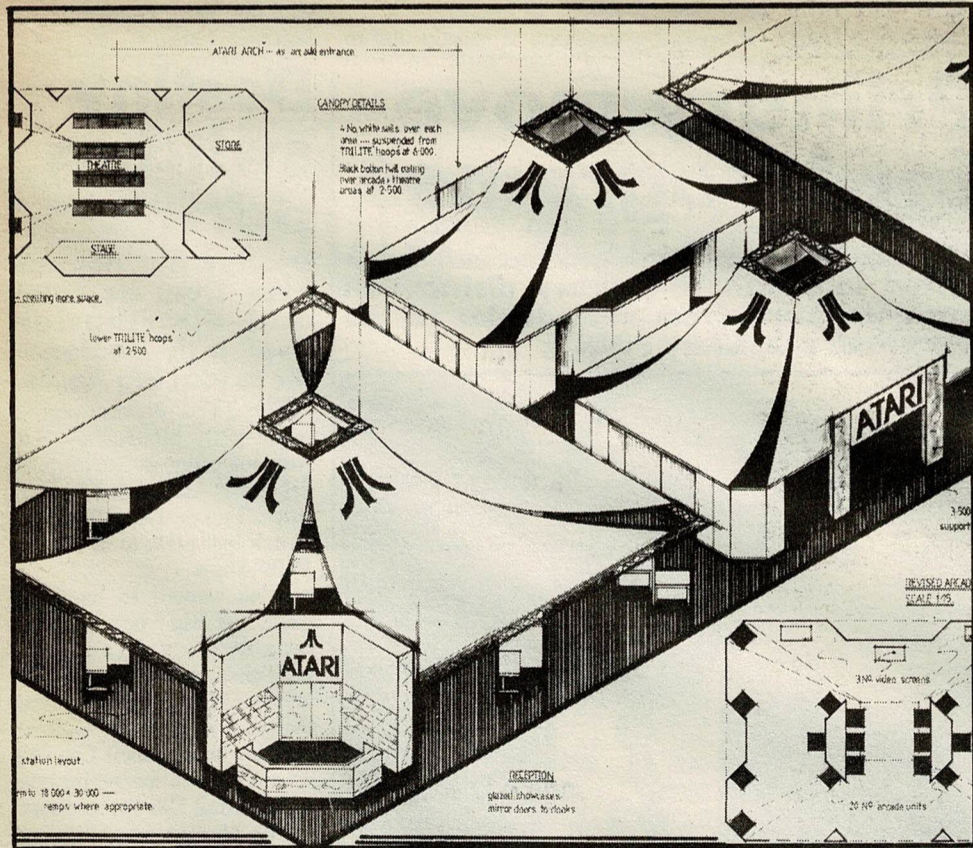
Handyside is pitching the show as one devoid of "technical delerium" caused by



**HANDYSIDE: No tyre kickers** over enthusiastic technical staff.

"This is a different kind of show. It's dealers only and there certainly won't be any tyre kickers there. Exhibitors will be talking to people who are or could be selling their products. It's a sales environment."

The 1988 Software Show will be held at the Brewery, Chiswell Street, London EC1 on September 4-5th.



In the week that its great rival Commodore has trumpeted that it will have "the largest single stand" (504 square metres) at this year's PC Show, Atari is drumming up support for its own grandiose show effort, the 918 square metre Atari World. Its tented pavilions will house some 30-odd associated companies (software writers, publishers, peripherals firms), featuring "over 100" new products.

It is also threatened that the firm "will also be announcing a brand new development in personal computing" at the show. Given the firm's delight in launching, showing and/or previewing products so many times, the prospect of this being Atari's mysterious CD-ROM device should not be ruled out.

Meantime, the firm is no closer to settling its problem with the Abaq name. It showed a prototype of its new transputer workstation earlier in the year, only to find that its chosen name Abaq was already owned by a Belgian firm. Atari's policy now appears to be to ignore the problem for as long as possible so that Abaq becomes synonymous with its product. Last week, a spokesman for the company would not even confirm or deny that Abaq was indeed the name of a Belgian company...

## Saatchi lands Microsoft ads

**Microsoft has made its first major advertising move in the UK with the appointment of Saatchi & Saatchi as its agency.**

The news comes at a time when Microsoft has just posted its worldwide financial figures for 1988, showing a 72 per cent increase in profits from \$71.9 million to \$123.9 million.

Saatchi has landed the UK account worth some £1.5 million after a three-way pitch against Leo Burnett and Ogilvy & Mather. Advertising pundits were somewhat surprised by Microsoft's choice

considering that O & M's Los Angeles office gained \$14 million of Microsoft business back in March.

It is likely that Saatchi's first work for Microsoft will highlight either the latest version of the DOS operating system DOS 4 or, more likely, the *Presentation Manager* front-end software.

The US publisher's turnover for 1988 rose 71 per cent to \$590.8 million compared to \$345.9 million in fiscal 1987. The figures were helped by record fourth quarter results showing a 71 per cent increase in turnover to \$170.5 million and a 74 per cent increase in profits to \$30 million.

# CTW

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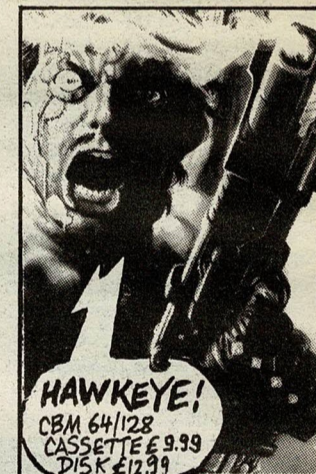
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## Gold Rush

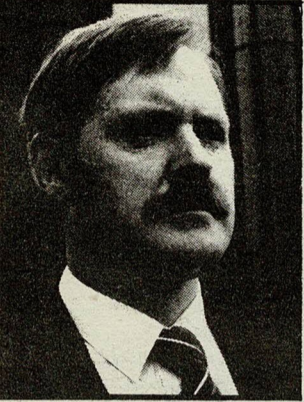
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# Industry bodies toast Copyright Bill success

**Both the BMF and FAST are toasting the recent third passing of the Copyright, Designs and Patents Bill through the Commons.**



FRASER: End to campaign

Effectively both have won their prolonged battles to distinguish computer software from other media. Whilst the Bill covers all intellectual property including literature, music and video there had been some anomalies which both organisations have been lobbying against for some time.

The BMF heralded the ironing out of some clauses as "a victorious conclusion to its campaign". "We now have probably the best legislation in the world to protect software from piracy," offered BMF chairman David Fraser.

FAST claims that those anomalies would have cost the industry £50 million a year. It has long campaigned against the 'right to rent' software.

Government legislators have conceded that one off rental of software would be inappropriate. It is also unlikely that the blank levy tape will be introduced. That would have legalised audio taping and would therefore have endorsed home copying of software.

The Government, FAST and the BMF now believe that the Bill ensures that copying and electronic transmission of computer programs is now properly covered. The BMF had been asked by various companies such as Apple, Ashton-Tate, Atari and Lotus to oppose the original proposals. The long running tightening up of loopholes appears to have come to a successful end.

## Trio back Telecom for back catalogue

**Telecomsoft last week announced the signing of a number of back catalogue titles from Mirrorsoft, Palace Software and Digital Integration for its Silverbird budget label.**

All titles, having proved successful in the full price market, will be released in the next six months at £1.99. In addition, Telecomsoft has first refusal on all future Mirrorsoft 8-bit titles for possible release on its Silverbird label.

Mirrorsoft titles include *Biggles*, *Dynamite Dan 1*,

*Dynamite Dan 2*, *Sai Combat* and *Meanstreak*. The three Palace Software games are *Cauldron*, *Cauldron 2*, and *Antirad*, with *Fighter Pilot*, and *Night Goner* from Digital Integration. The Mirrorsoft deal was first signalled last month (CTW July 18th).

Telecomsoft claimed last week that the signing up of the trio will consolidate its rising Gallup market share figure, which has been achieved solely through original product sales.

## VNU finalises finalists

**Amstrad, Mastertronic, IBM, Compaq and Cambridge Computer are amongst shortlisted by VNU Business Publications for this year's Personal Computer Awards.**

The final judging took place last week. The winners will be announced at a presentation dinner on the first day of the PC 88 show in September. There are 10 awards up for grabs, including the new *Tomorrow's World* innovation prize given for any product that the judges deem most likely to "cause a stir in the next few years".

In the home/small business computer category, the race is between Cambridge, Dell and Amstrad. The battle for the title of Business PC of the year is between Compaq, Toshiba and IBM - all with 386 based machines.

On the leisure software side Mastertronic, Incentive and Rainbird are all in the running for awards. VNU Publications claimed that "despite various other awards scattered round the industry this really is a prestigious event".

The finalists in each category are as follows:

- Business personal computer: Compaq Deskpro 386; T5100 Desktop portable 386 from Toshiba Information Systems; and IBM PS/2 Model 70-a21.
- Business software: *Excel* from Microsoft and Ashton-Tate's *Draw Applause*.
- Personal Computer Magazine corporate computing award: Compaq Computer; IBM; and Torus.
- Personal Computer World home/small business personal computer award: Cambridge's Z88; Dell System 220; and Amstrad's PPC 512/640.
- Personal Computer World

home/small business software award: *Sidekick Plus* from Borland; Nextbase's *Autorange*; and *Timeslip* (Mirrorsoft).

● Game of the year: *Xenon* from Mastertronic/Melbourne House; Incentive's *Darkside*; and *Corruption* (Rainbird).

● Personal Computer World editor's award: Abaq from Atari; Zortech; and Dell.

● Personal Computer Magazine editor's award: Windows 386 from Microsoft and Toshiba T1200.

● British personal computer special award: Hewlett-Packard's Deskjet; Multisync II from NEC Business Systems; and Zortech C++ Compiler.

● *Tomorrow's World* innovation award: TurbosPort 386 from Zenith Data Systems; Davrelle Wand (Soft Image Systems); Atari's Robokit; and Write-Top from Linus Technologies.

## C&VG duo set for role-playing

**Erstwhile C&VG leading duo Tim Metcalfe and Paul Boughton are set to pop back into the limelight with the publication next week of the new role-playing magazine *Games Master* (GM).**

Published by Croftwood (which also produces *Commodore Computing International* and *Amiga User*), the title is at least in part being targeted at computer owners.

"There are a number of obvious cross-overs between computer games and role-playing fantasies. We believe

that people will see that we're obviously getting to those who play computer games but who don't read computer magazines with any great fidelity," Croftwood boss Anthony Jacobson commented.

Metcalfe and Boughton will be the joint editors of the new monthly title. The first issue is set to appear next week at £1.20 with a claimed initial print run of 80,000. Amongst its selling points are its size, which at 235 x 305mm is 'giant' A4.

Metcalfe was the editor of *C&VG* until late last autumn. At the time, Boughton was his deputy on the title.

To help pump up sales,

Croftwood has tied up a subscription push via an insert in some 75,000 SSI (US Gold) boxes.

Meantime, the firm has also secured a deal which means that *Amiga User* will be published in Italy. Some two thirds of the Italian version will be sourced from the UK.

The Italian market is said to be the second in the league of Amiga buying European countries behind Germany, and thus ahead of the UK. Jacobson said that there were up to 60,000 machines in the country.

*Amiga User Italy* will first appear at the end of September with a cover price equating to £2.50.

# Ponderous Samsung adds on Northamber

**Samsung has brought its number of distributors up to six, whilst admitting that it would prefer to only have five.**

The Korean manufacturer has just added Northamber to its UK network. It joins Hugh Symons, Logitek, Pronto Electronics, Ideal Hardware and CPU Peripherals.

Northamber has been appointed as an across the board distributor, whilst most

of the others have targeted Samsung machined at specific sectors such as education, VARs and specialist vertical markets.

"I've always said that we'd try and restrict the number of distributors, and we certainly can't keep on adding them. My ideal number is five but we're running with six at the moment," commented Samsung UK's computer general manager Derrick Maddern to CTW.

He did not confirm, however, that the manufacturer

would subsequently be looking to drop one of its other five distributors as a result of the Northamber appointment. "At this stage we're just watching the situation very closely," said Maddern cautiously.

Samsung last week revealed to CTW that it is planning to bring its own range of MCA PS/2 compatible machines into the UK in the new year. These are now likely to be joined by a range of standard 386 machines, portables and possibly printers.

## Precision settles five year wrangle

**Precision Software's long-running dispute with the Irish firm Software Laboratories was settled last week - with both sides apparently plucking some form of victory from the jaws of defeat.**

The news comes at a time when Precision is due to announce full details of its plans to establish American and German subsidiaries.

The row centred on the *Unigem* real time Unix-based accounting package. Back in 1982, Precision commenced funding Software Laboratories to produce the package. Financing was withdrawn after three years when the project had still not been completed.

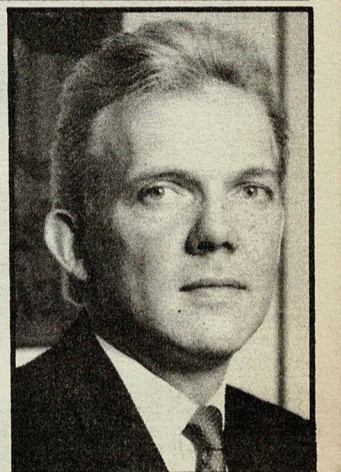
Thereafter, Precision alleges that Software Labs completed *Unigem* and tied up two £6 million deals with NEC Australia and the French firm Linqor. It began

actions for breach of copyright and marketing rights in the Dublin high court last December.

Last week's out of court settlement appears to mean that Software Labs will be paying a substantial sum to Precision in several stages. In exchange, it now receives the "unencumbered ability to further develop, market and sell *Unigem*". At least part of the costs of the action appear to be included in the settlement, though Precision boss John Tranmer refused to comment on any of the terms.

He confined himself to agreeing with the prepared phrase "both sides win". *Unigem* dates from Precision's early days as a mini-computer software development and marketing firm. These days it is better known as a publisher and distributor of software for the Amiga, PC and ST. Its Unix business was hived off in April 1987 to Care Business Solutions - in which it retains an interest.

Precision is shortly due to

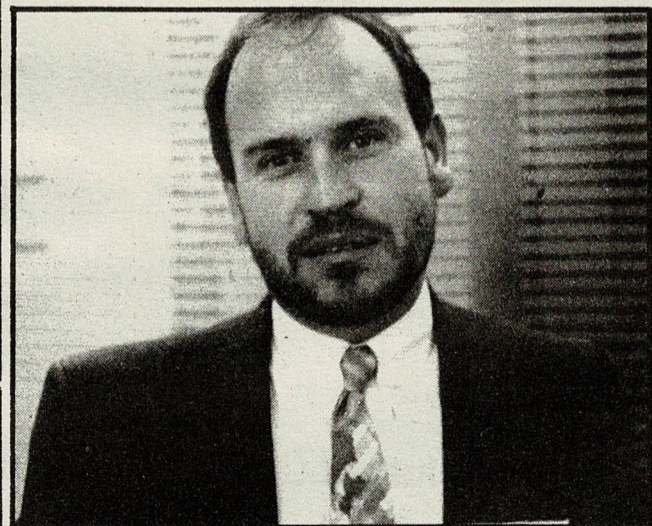


TRANMER: Settlement now, subsidiaries due

commence trading via new subsidiaries in the US and Germany, based in Dallas and Munich. Tranmer commented drolly: "We've had a certain amount of experience in setting up overseas, so we're not planning to go over the top." This is a reference to the firm's abortive attempts in 1983/4 to set up in Manhattan and then Stamford on the US east coast. The aim was to succeed on the strength of Unix-based products such as *Unigem* - which, at that stage, had not been completed by Software Labs.

## Primary move for Infogrames

**Captain Blood firm Infogrames has been forced to switch its primary distribution business away from Microdealer to the Centresoft subsidiary PDQ.**



GINTY: One in, one out

The move is a direct consequence of Microdealer gaining the Mediagenic account last month (CTW July 25th).

Confirming that Infogrames has been dropped, Microdealer boss Lee Ginty said: "Activision (Mediagenic) is a lot larger account than Infogrames, and we simply haven't got the room. The new man at Infogrames Henri Coron is a distribution expert from

France and he knows why it's happening and what he's doing."

From the end of August, Infogrames product will be handled by PDQ in Birmingham. To date, the Centresoft offshoot is best known for taking on Ariolasoft's products last year. Since then, PDQ has been particularly quiet.

## Destiny switches partners

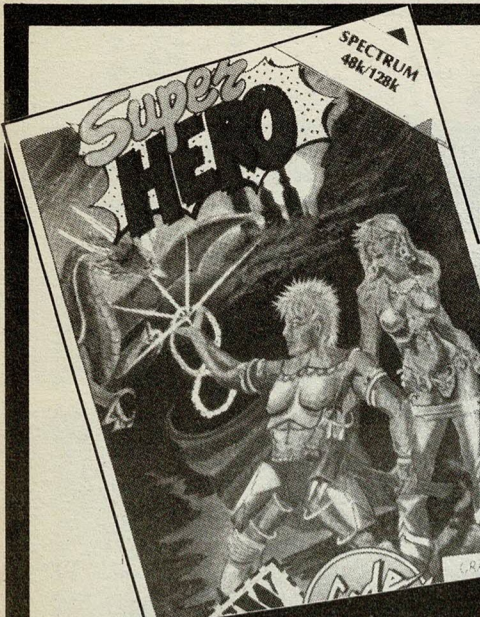
**Destiny has hopped over from its sales and distribution deal with Mediagenic to join Big Apple.**

The fixed product agreement with Mediagenic will run out after the firm publishes the next three Destiny titles. The deal was originally struck just prior to last year's PCW Show.

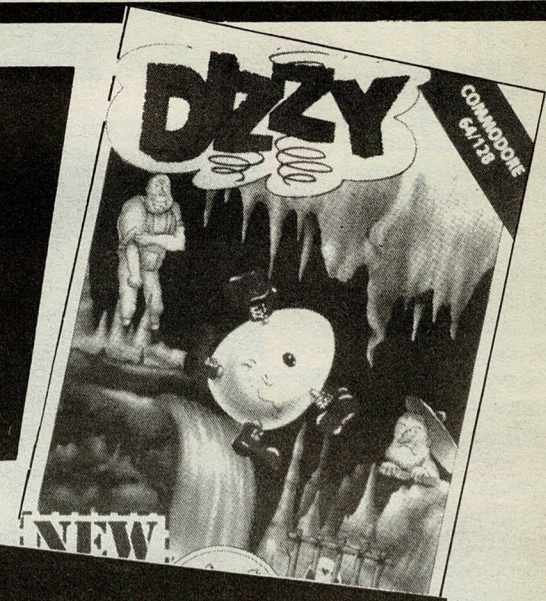
"I've wanted to be taken under the Big Apple label because we're not just a software publisher - we're also a record label. There's some exciting things happening," offered Destiny boss Francis Lee. Big Apple will be marketing and distributing Destiny product.

For Mediagenic, boss Rod Cousens told CTW that he was not renewing Destiny's contract anyway. "They haven't exactly set the world on fire," he said.

Lee responded to these comments by saying: "It takes time, but let's look at Activision's performance over the past few months." The first Big Apple/Destiny product will be available at the PC Show and it is likely that Mediagenic/Destiny product will be available at the same time.



# NEW



Code Masters is famous for its classic titles. They just keep on selling. We've proven that quality counts. Now they are being joined by a new range. Exceptional products. Alongside the classics these will give you more business. You know that Code Masters quality is what the kids want.

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<b>SOON</b>	GHOST HUNTERS £1.99	Another classic best seller gets converted.
<b>SOON</b>	INTERNATIONAL RUGBY £1.99	Contains all the subtlety of the real thing.
<b>SOON</b>	PRO SKATEBOARD £1.99	Code Masters do it again. Infuriatingly addictive.

### CODE MASTERS PROVEN PLUS CONCEPT

<b>SOON</b>	SUPER DRAGON SLAYER £1.99	A massive role playing game of quality.
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## SPECTRUM

This machine represents nearly half the market. Code Masters supports it with a string of smash hits.

<b>OUT NOW</b>	SUPER HERO £1.99	As seen on Sunday Get Fresh TV
<b>SOON</b>	BLADE WARRIOR £1.99	The definitive platform game. Amazing value.
<b>SOON</b>	ADVANCED PINBALL SIMULATOR £1.99	The Oliviers have done it again.

### CODE MASTERS PROVEN PLUS CONCEPT

<b>OUT NOW</b>	PRO BMX £4.99	Will repeat the success of the £1.99 original. With a higher margin.
<b>SOON</b>	PRO SOCCER SIMULATOR £4.99	A genuine new concept in football games.

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Code Masters are the largest producers of Amstrad software in the world. We often occupy the top three chart positions.

<b>OUT NOW</b>	SUPER HERO £1.99	As good a game as anyone has released this year.
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### CODE MASTERS PROVEN PLUS CONCEPT

<b>OUT NOW</b>	PRO BMX £4.99	Code Masters have proven that PLUS products sell.
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A recent dealer survey proved it. All these titles sell easily if displayed. Try it yourself!

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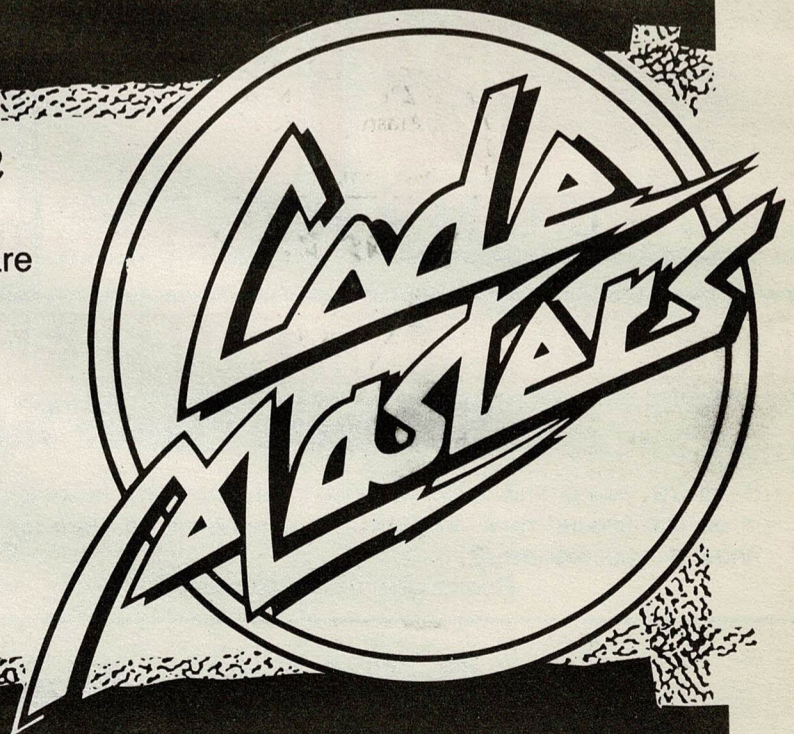
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# SNIPPETS

That Grandslam charity football match between journos and distributors (CTW August 1st) managed to raise a total of £1,500 for Great Ormond Street's Hospital. The actual event raised £750 with Grandslam doubling the money . . . Sentinel Software has appointed David Godwin as marketing manager . . . Shock news from Focus Magazines: contrary to earlier reports from the company (CTW July 11th), the firm's looming Computer



OVER THE MOON: £1500 raised

Games Week will not after all be priced at "around 70 pence". Focus is now saying that it will cost "approximately 50 pence". Will it be 40p? Will it be 51p? An industry's breath is bated as Focus ponders the enormity of the decision. Perhaps predictably, the dummy first issue shown to sundry trade folk has been slated in certain quarters . . . Just ahead of a whole batch of financial results due to be filed shortly comes news of the year to mid '87 performances of many leading software houses. US Gold had a turnover of £7,367 million and a profit of £403,000. Elite's turnover was £3 million and it ended the period with a profit of £321,000. Gremlin managed a profit of £210,000 from a turnover of £2.402 million. Mastertronic's profit for the period was £1.124 million from £8.429 million, though it wrote off £807,000 following its Melbourne House purchase. Last and just possibly least Domark has a turnover of £1.196 million and a profit of £117,000 . . .

Computerland in Southampton has got to the back of the bus by placing an advertisement on the number 243 which apparently travels all over the city and surrounding areas . . . The Darling dynasty looks set to reign at Codemasters for quite a while with even the very youngest members of the family taking an interest in computer programming. William (aged eight) is already writing his own games, while Annie and John (both aged four) take a leading role in planning the firm's future direction, the decision to write a sequel to Dizzy seemingly based on their judgement . . . Following last week's announcement of a 68 per cent leap in its half yearly profits P&P has this week signed a deal with Philips Interactive Media Systems Division for its monitors . . . Philippe Kahn, chairman of Borland, has led his crew to victory in the 2,200 mile Pacific Cup race. Kahn was assisted in his attempt by an amazing array of technology including an all weather fax machine and a weather analysis program that Kahn developed himself during the race (?). Kahn claimed that he and his crew gave 200 per cent (??). He now plans an intensive period of "rest and relaxation on the Hawaii shores" . . .

## DOMARK SOFTWARE ISN'T GOING FAR (Well, Wimbledon to Putney ain't far)

At last! A place we can call our own, and yards from the River Thames, Putney Bridge, and the Hurlingham Club.

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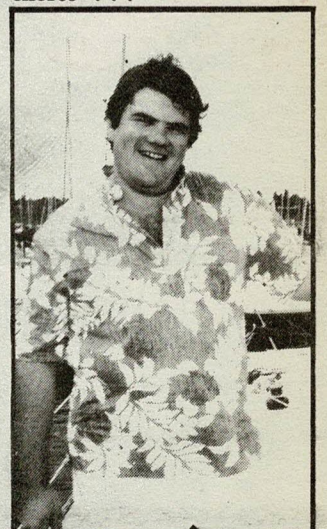


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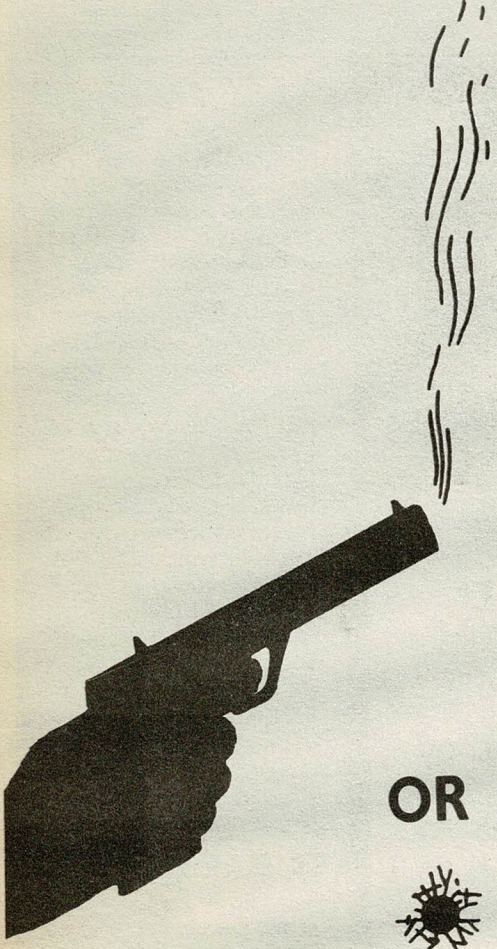


KAHN: Great race, awful shirt

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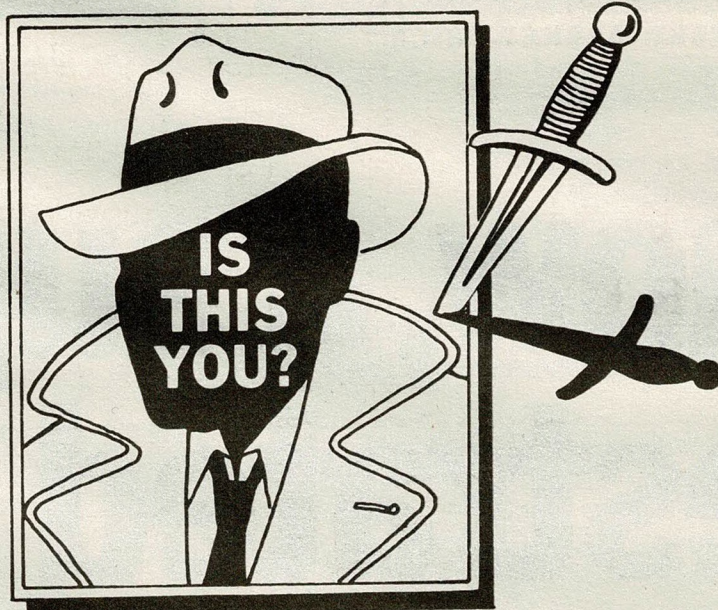


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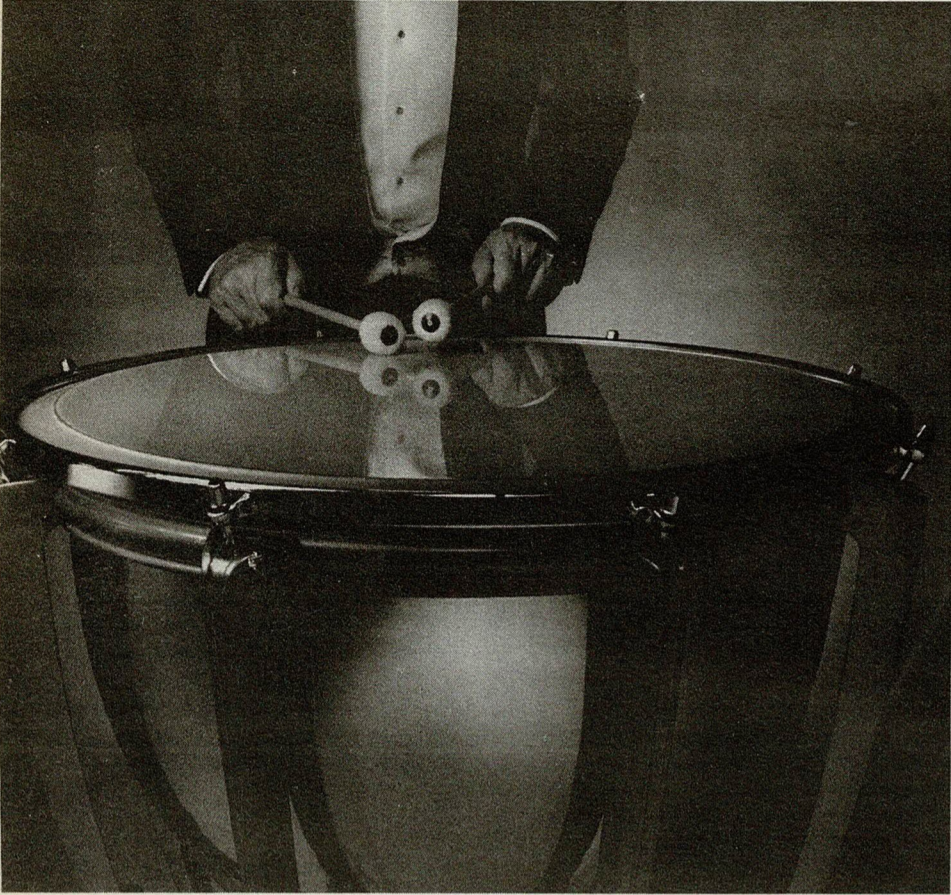
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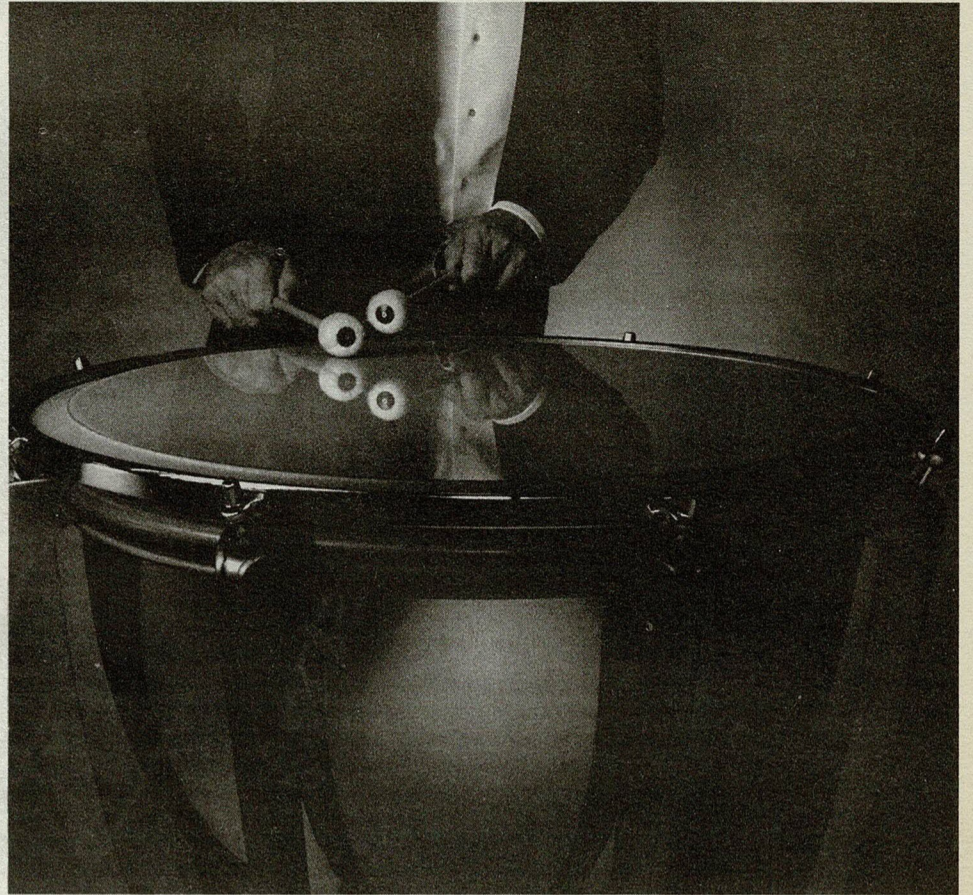
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**Commodore**

# TAKING THE AMIGA BACK TO ITS BUSINESS ROOTS

Originally, the Amiga was marketed as a business machine – and none too successfully at that. But when Commodore got out of the habit of pitching niche markets too small to sustain much business and realised the potential of a relatively cheap, lower spec A500, so the games side developed. But now, the American experience suggest that the Amiga is finally beginning to break through into the world of business. ANTHONY JACOBSON reports from the latest AmiEXPO in Chicago and ponders the ramifications for the UK market . . .

Chicago might seem an odd place to celebrate the Amiga's

third birthday. But it was not. The third AmiEXPO, which by chance coincided with

almost the exact date on which the Amiga was launched in 1985, was by any stan-

dards a solid success.

While the two previous AmiEXPOs in New York and

Los Angeles seemed to draw their attendances from their immediate surroundings, Chi-

cago pulled in both exhibitors and attendees from all over. As a beautiful, relaxed, highly civilised city, was it just Chicago's strategic situation in Middle America both geographically and democratically?

Or was it the increased sense of strength behind the momentum that the Amiga is achieving that brought a seriously involved and determinedly higher spending user base crowding into the spectacular downtown Hyatt Regency Hotel?

How do I know they were higher spending and more determined? Because every single copy of *Amiga User International* magazine we had shipped over was sold – virtually snatched off our stand – as indeed were the few hundred CCI's we had taken.

In fact, so well did the show go that we had to stop selling both magazines on the second day of the AmiEXPO – it ran from Friday 22nd to Sunday 24th July – so that we could have some left for visitors on the last day.

The same story was told by many exhibitors. But we were the only company exhibiting independently who found that the obviously sharply interested Mid West Amiga owner (or potential owner) was clearly in the mood to increase his – or surprisingly in many cases – her Amiga armoury and damn the cost.

For AmiEXPO should not be confused with UK-style shows in which either enormous corporate stands dominate or the large part of the audience is made up of kids looking for cheap games software bargains.

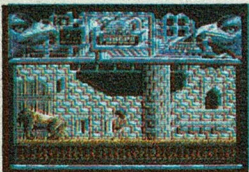
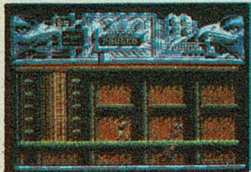
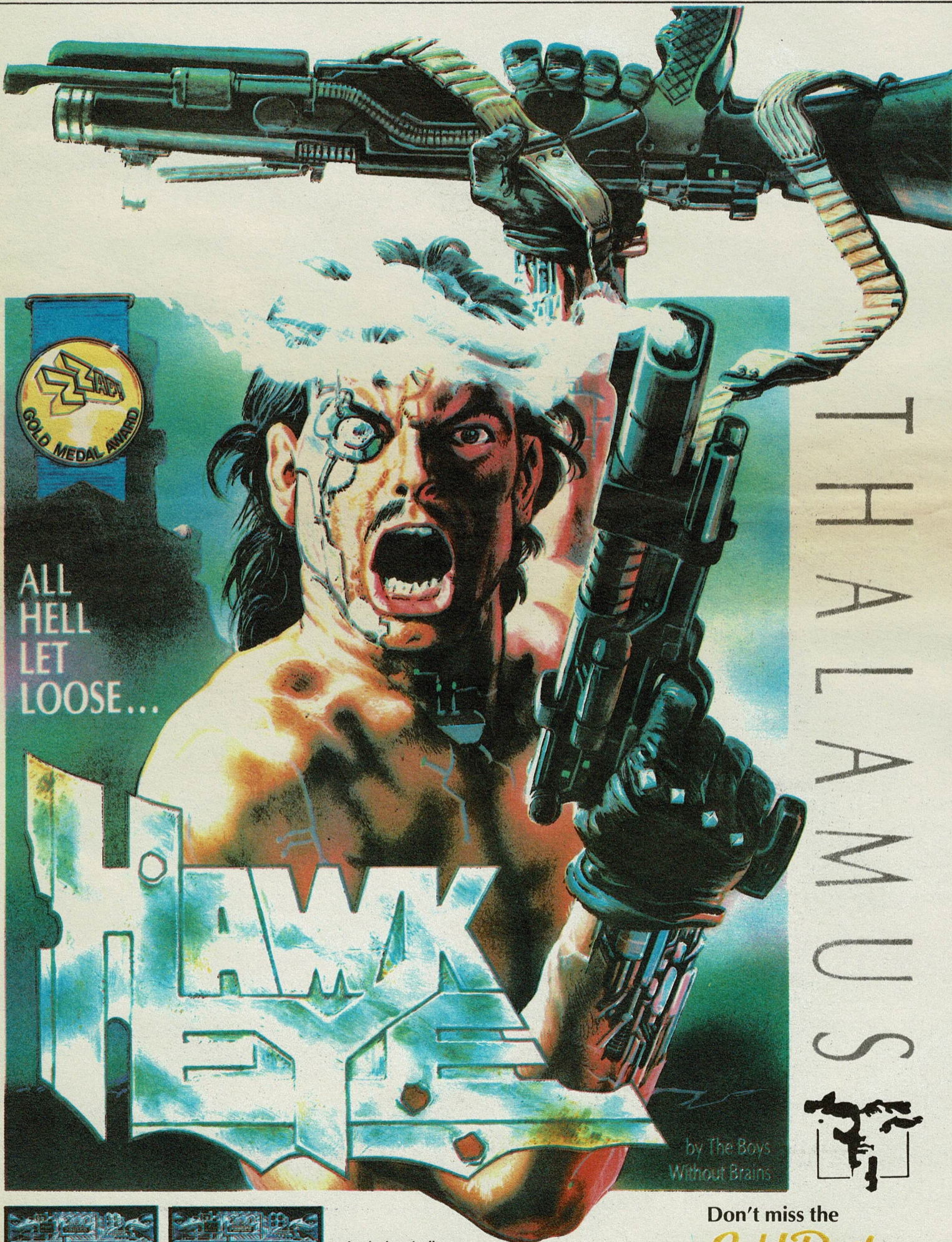
This was a show where there were no spectacular stands, just curtained booths where the software and the peripherals in the main business or home productivity had the starring roles. It was the Amiga and what the Amiga can do that was the central focus – not the companies, which were almost anonymous.

As for games which at most British shows play the lead, they occupied less than 20 per cent of the show. Discovery Software, the creators of the Amiga *Arkanoïd* stood out with the provisionally titled *Sion* which, with figures filling literally three quarters of the screen, will knock a lot of buyers' socks off this Christmas.

## Five to One

This Ami EXPO's so obvious emphasis on non games throws up an interesting dichotomy: that the major part of "serious" Amiga products are being produced in the US, whilst the most powerful thrust towards games software seems

Continued on page 12



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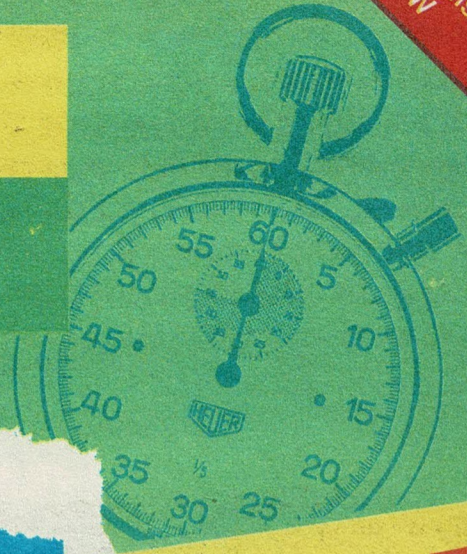
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# TAKING THE AMIGA BACK TO ITS BUSINESS ROOTS

Continued from page 10

to be largely taking place in Europe.

This is possibly because the acceptance of the A500 in Europe has occurred with a sudden surge that has been far greater than the welcome given to the heavyweight A2000 - a situation that does not, it appears, apply in the US. One major dealer told us that he sells five A2000s to one A500 - about the exact opposite of this side of the Atlantic.

One reason why the A2000 is finding it more difficult in

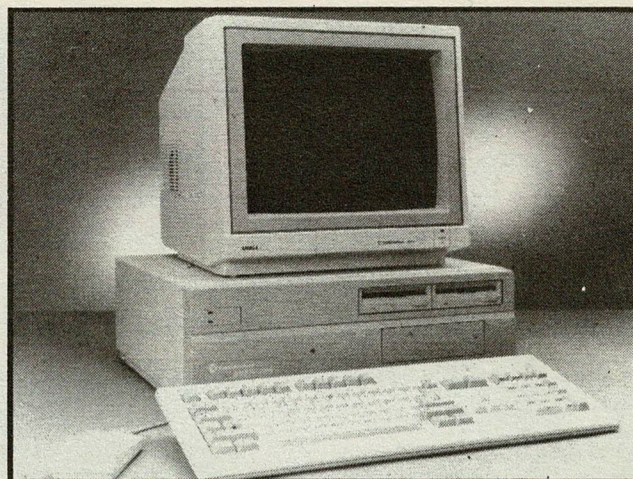
the UK and Europe than the A500 may be that the realisation and acceptance of the Amiga as a business machine is far from complete. Yet on all the evidence it should be gaining the kind of credibility as, say, the Apple Macintosh.

There are now, for example, over 1,000 non games Amiga programs, *Professional Page* for example. It not only offers excellent ordinary DTP facilities but also provides amazingly cheap colour separations - a boon to publishers like ourselves or anyone wanting to produce col-

our advertisements. In desk top presentation the Amiga far outdistances any computer under £10,000 including the Mac.

If you class business as just word processing or spreadsheets you might be better off trying to sell the Amiga's internal IBM compatible bridgeboard especially as Commodore is now offering it with AT compatibility.

But there is a growing view that business represents more than that. Today business means not only corporate executives running Lotus on PCs but the whole spectrum of highly specialised and highly profitable professional level markets.



AMIGA 2000: More business acceptance in US

The specialist markets where the Amiga is finding acceptance exploit the graphics capabilities as a tool for raising the quality of computer output with a far higher

degree of graphic quality than the competition.

## Amiga to hear more

Unquestionably the Amiga is regarded in the industry as a superb graphics engine and is usually sold in this market because it is either easier, cheaper or faster than the competition. In most cases it is the deciding factor in an Amiga purchase.

Commodore's increasing promotion of the Amiga into specialist markets and its sound abilities and graphic qualities are also of major importance. This comes at a time when, as was seen in Chicago, many people both inside and outside the industry are prepared to give the Amiga a second look.

It has already made its mark in Europe as a games machine were in software and hardware sales it is beginning to overhaul Atari's ST. On the evidence of the Mid West Ami EXPO we may be witnessing a reassessment of the Amiga as a 'business' machine too.

The 'security' that the Amiga 2000's PC capability offers business users gives it the first step into business credibility. But for a whole range of areas the Amiga's special abilities provide a clear advantage.

Desk top presentation, for example, where executives can add to reports or documents the sophistication of video or sound, does not really count yet. But as word processing led to DTP developments, so the availability of Amiga graphics and sound is carrying desk top publishing into the new business stage.

There are a whole series of developments emerging on the Amiga for CAD - Computer Aided Design. They are in general inexpensive and easy to use, and open up that new area of low cost computing.

At Chicago AmiEXP there was clear evidence of the quality being injected into the business end of the Amiga. In communications alliances with industry giants Robotics, Tymnet and Tolenet are drawing the Amiga into mainstream business.

Improved printer drivers for *Postscript*, scanners with optical character recognition, Genlocks for video frame capture and plug in cards which provide true broadcast standard video, "turbo" products including 32-bit OS; a Benoilli Drive with its removable 20 megabyte cartridges and high-performance SCSI interfaces that give the A2000 four megabyte memory: these are a few of the new Amiga things.

They all added weight to the business potential.

## Game for business

Some people may look contemptuously at a machine whose worldwide sales of some 600,000 are 80 per cent A500s bought at a low home user price and say it is not a business computer.

But from what we and distributors like HB Marketing, Burocare and Microdealer (which are all talking of taking stands for themselves at the next AmiEXPO), saw at Chicago, there is a very solid base of Amigas that will be used in a growing range of commercial activities which are going to bring those involved some very good business indeed.

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# APPLYING ENTERPRISE TO THE APPLICATION ZONE

As an Amiga distributor ASAP is keen to push the A500 into the background and concentrate on the A2000. Regular readers may find this an odd prospect but boss Gordon Shields insists that dealers trading up can cash in on the applications scene. CTW listens in...

Dealers used to trading up and contemplating the A2000 as a viable prospect are realising that their traditional and well worn methods of in-store selling are of little use.

A new market is bound to bring about headaches. Those who have moved through the BBC or games markets to MS/DOS have needed to brush up on some pitches, get used to

broadly different customers and quickly become knowledgeable about the machines, the software and the applications.

But essentially the machines themselves are bringing consumers in via the shop window. The A2000 though needs to be nurtured carefully. Its potential applications are of little use to people just becoming aware of

the A500 or Atari St. And its strengths don't lie in normal business applications where the PC is so prevalent.

Retailers are having to get up from behind the counter and make telephone calls. They're having to woo the likes of video development companies, training centres and throbbing corporations.

For a dealer unused to

these areas the prospects are daunting and as such any shifts into this area are slow and cumbersome. Commodore itself, realising this and the work that needed to be done, appointed a distributor specifically qualified to handle these matters in the form of Applied Systems and Peripherals (ASAP).

It has only been in existence since the autumn of last year and its entry into the market came about just after the considerable shift in CBM management personnel and thinking.

The distributor handles the A500 but there's an almost snobbish attitude to it. It's the A2000 which appears to animate boss Gordon Shields. He's described his operation as "somewhere between box shifting and techies." And he refutes the notion that he could possibly be either.

## VERTICAL marketing

Of course, ASAP is prone to start babbling about value added retailing and such distribspeak and given half a chance Shields will go into automatic and drive through the 'next day delivery' speech followed by a monologue on

service and support. But what do you expect?

ASAP is keen to get it through to dealers that the A2000 is popular amongst certain vertical markets. There's the obvious link with creative media and also training. The firm has close links with British Aerospace and has supplied its training division with 50 of the machines.

On the creative side Channel 4 has taken the lead in choosing a relatively cheap machine for graphics on TV shows such as the ultra trendy *Network Seven*.

But are dealers willing to step up into a wholly different selling environment? "Most dealers would like to raise their profiles in a conventional business sense and move away from the margineers and cut price high street scene," replied Shields.

"Some are equipped and some are going to be equipped to offer added value to large customers. The market is very much on an upward curve and we're very keen for Commodore to promote the vertical markets.

"They need to raise general awareness of product in these market areas through seminars, PR and in vertical mar-

ket magazines and specific trade papers."

Shields accepts that the dilemma will be a difficult one for a dealer already rushed off his feet. Also, there's the fear of stepping onto new ground in a market where the carpet has been pulled away so many times.

"It requires a different strategy and that's where the problem is. I have a lot of empathy with the retailers. Their philosophy and attitude has to change.

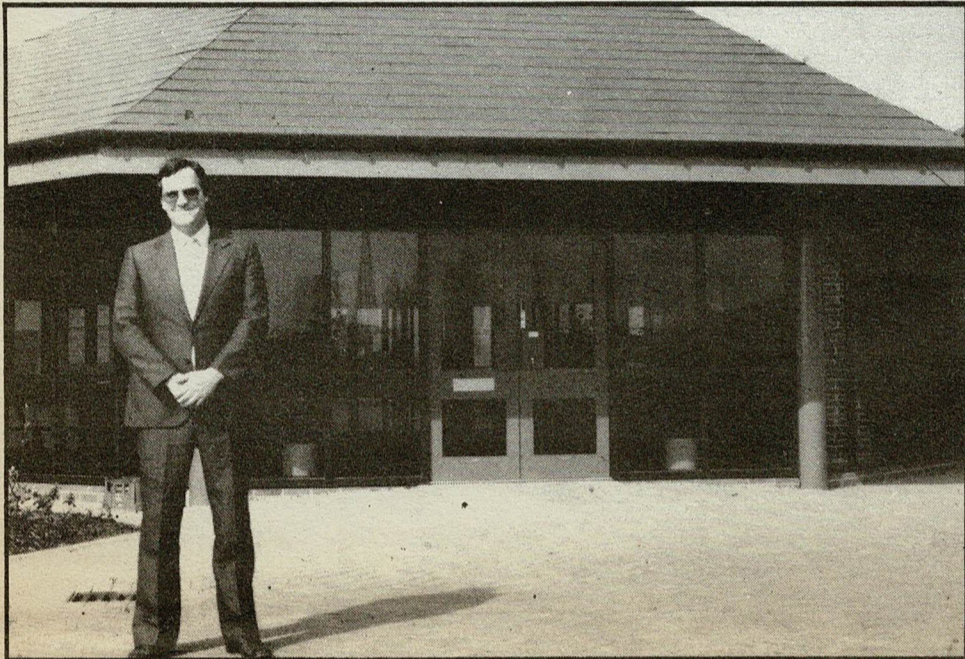
"They don't want to neglect the stock on the shelves because that's their bread and butter. They might not want to leave the store and go out onto the street, so to speak. But there's a big market out there for computer dealers.

"We help them as much as we can in terms of technical support and putting together systems and we act as a pool of guidance in the same way that Commodore does."

## Overhead kicked

Once the dealer has approached or been approached by a potential sale he will go to ASAP with all the details of what the customer wants. ASAP claims

Continued on page 19



SHIELDS: Enamoured with the A2000

## DIRECTOR OF EUROPEAN OPERATIONS

Mindscape is one of the leading publishers of entertainment, business and educational software in the U.S.A. We are now in the process of developing our European operation and are looking for an entrepreneur to lead it.

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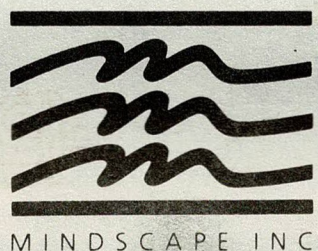
The UK facility will probably be located along the M4, although consideration will be given to other locations.

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# WILLIAM THE FORTHRIGHT

Readers of the PC trade press will no doubt have come across William Poel. Via endless correspondence and opinion columns he's managed to insult a fair section of the industry. COLIN CAMPBELL though takes a daytrip to Brentwood to find out what the boss of New Star/Paperback actually does for a living . . .

Poel's obvious lack of bull headed aggression makes it difficult to comprehend that he spent two years holed up in Amstrad Towers plotting that firm's entry into the PC market.

A culture clash between the well documented school of Amstrad thought and the dry wit and cool mannerisms of William Poel. Nearly two years after his departure there is still contact. Poel will be unkind about some Amstrad machine in a newspaper column and Amstrad will respond, predictably enough, through its corporate lawyers.

Though talk of New Star/Paperback Software is high on the interview agenda there soon comes conjectures on the pugnacious Amstrad. And Poel will observe this or that about the market place - savouring the odd irony.

What's missing is any hard selling of New Star or of Paperback. "We've got some pretty powerful word processing packages coming up in the autumn," is about as far as the sales patter goes (thankfully).

"We've got no grand slam plans for taking anything by storm," says he. "Anybody

that does in this business usually fails in the final analysis."

There is much chatter on Poel's favourite subjects. Amstrad, bundling, ultra low cost software, discounting, OS/2. Oftentimes he'll show up in the press tearing strips of this company or that software package. Opinionated is not the word.

On Amstrad he acknowledges his own stark differences from his former colleagues. "I admire them. I wish I was as aggressive and successful and generally omnipotent. You can't pretend you're Amstrad though. We're far too generous and kind and nice. We're pleasant toward our customers, which is half the trouble."

### Fogged off

In recent times he's taken what he views as the logical step in the low cost business software market. Prices of Paperback product have gone up. "I've thought for a long time that the bottom end of the cheap software market has become fogged somewhat by sheer volume and the enormous depths of allsorts of

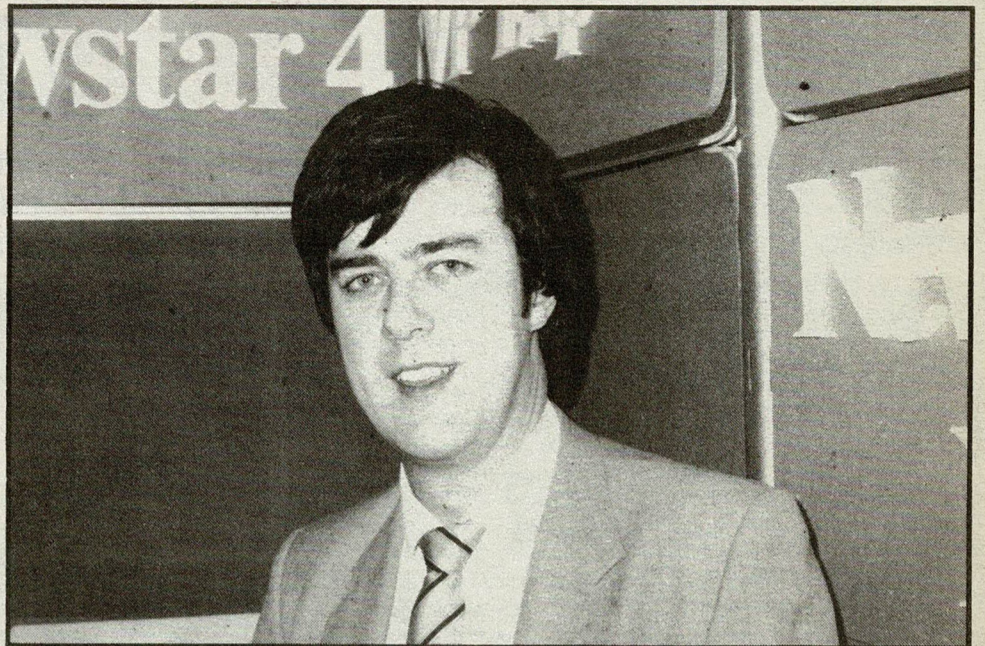
stuff people are throwing in at sub £100 prices," he offers.

"This was quite obviously drawing attention to the fact that the original intention of Paperback was to offer full function software at sort of £100 prices. There's now so much software - anything from £10 to £99 - that there's no point."

Price hiking of course is a dangerous business whether the product is superior or not. Poel promptly wheels out the argument that more expensive translates into better product in the public eye. "Price in this country suggests better quality. It always has done. England is the land of Harrods and the population has grown accustomed to the idea that one that costs more is better."

With the low cost melee awash with some fairly useless packages at frightfully base prices it appears to make sense. According to Poel the dealers like the new pricing "for the obvious reason that they're making more money out of it". He adds: "It puts more money in the system."

There is of course the slowly growing trend for £10 packages. It's inevitably of Amer-



POEL: Dishing out the salt

ican origin and appears to upset Poel's urbane sense of decency. "We try to dissociate ourselves from that sort of thing. Anybody that buys a £10 spreadsheet is probably not going to have the same expectations as one who's spending £150 to £200."

Paperback Inc US is putting its prices up too, apparently following its UK licensee's lead. America is, after all, the land of Bloomingdales.

Poel is keen to clear up "this confusion which exists" about New Star/Paperback Software. "We try very hard and issue press releases describing the differences - it didn't sink in in places."

New Star is the distribution operation supplying multiples

mainly - Comet, Dixons and Wildings primarily. Paperback is a publisher of around 12 low price business software packages the most notable being *VP Planner +*.

"New Star is a distributor of anybody's software without favour. In fact it hardly favours us (Paperback) at all. In fact it doesn't." Nevertheless, *VP Planner +* is consistently its best seller. The Paperback range is licensed from its Californian based originators.

### Poel the other one

Considering Poel's high profile and the amount of noise he makes, neither are enormous operations. He appears to be satisfied with

the company's performance nonetheless. "We've been as successful as I thought with Amstrad taking its own section of the market through badging of products. We've done better on *Lotus 1-2-3* clones and not so well with accountancy packages. It's a swings and roundabouts job."

He goes on. "I sit here and think of what might have been if Amstrad hadn't started throwing armfuls of software around. Undoubtedly this has stunted opportunities by a large margin, dramatically so. We've supported other clones."

There is always the argument that people buying an Amstrad PC have often been used to using something ex-

Continued on page 19

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### NEW HORIZONS

The emergence of the new price for the A500, will certainly increase the user base, which in turn will stimulate even greater interest from the manufacturers of software and peripherals. New products are being developed all the time, and the machine is proving its prowess in a wide variety of fields. Apart from its obvious excellence in the games market and its popularity both in the graphic and music sectors, the Amiga has also proven its worth in business and education.

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Even though the retail price of the A500 has been reduced by £100, SDL are still able to offer dealers the same 17½% profit margin which was available previously. This makes the dealer price just £286.95 exc VAT.

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### \* WIMP

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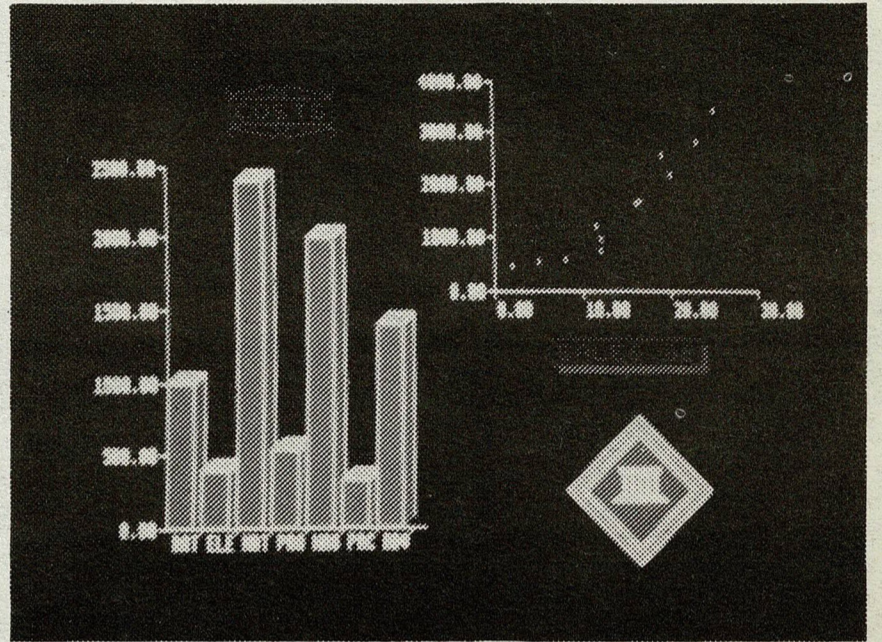
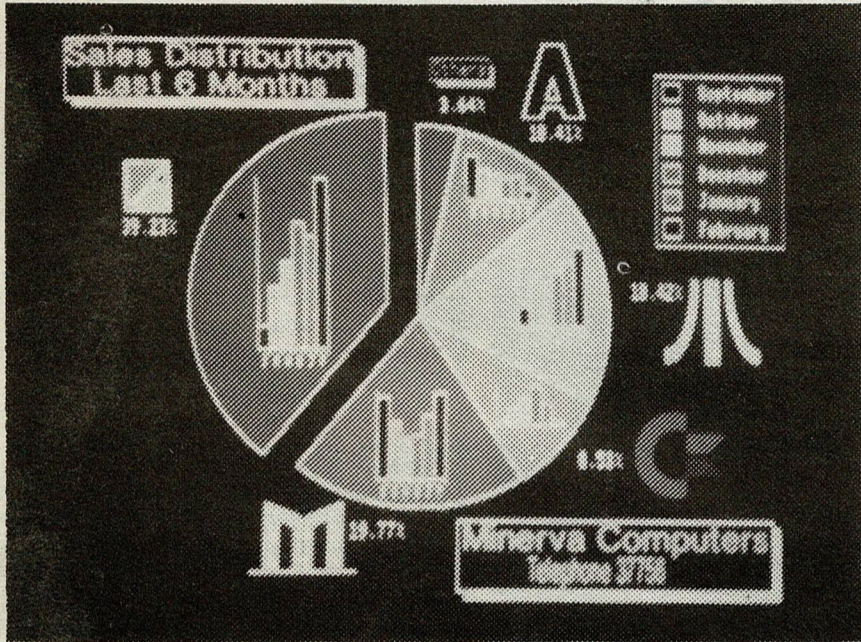
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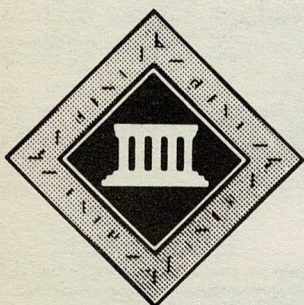
GammaPlot is an extensive chart / graph plotting program with a full art package included. It allows even a novice to produce stunning charts and drawings on one screen. Several charts may be placed on one sheet, in any position with text or drawings to make the data easily understood. GammaPlot supports six main graph and chart types of line, scatter, pie, histogram, 3D histogram and text only charts. Segments may be highlighted or percentages, values and labels switched on. Statistics and a full Slide Show are also included.

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# Soft options

## SPECTRUM TOP 20

TW	LW	Title	Publisher	RRPE
1	1	FOOTBALL MANAGER 2	ADDICTIVE	9.99
2	2	EUROPEAN FIVE A SIDE	FIREBIRD	1.99
3	22	RALLY DRIVER	ALTERNATIVE	1.99
4	4	AIR WOLF	ENCORE	1.99
5	6	YOGI BEAR	ALTERNATIVE	1.99
6	12	STUNT BIKE SIMULATOR	FIREBIRD	1.99
7	8	GHOSTBUSTERS	MASTERTRONIC	1.99
8	3	A C E	CASCADE	2.99
9	18	FRANK BRUNOS BOXING	ENCORE	1.99
10	14	STEVE DAVIS' SNOOKER	BLUE RIBBON	1.99
11	17	FRUIT MACHINE SIMULATOR	CODE MASTERS	1.99
12	19	SAMANTHA FOX STRIP POKER	REACT	1.99
13	7	BEACH BUGGY SIMULATOR	FIREBIRD	1.99
14	9	SHANGHAI KARATE	REACT	1.99
15	35	NINJA SCOOTER SIMULATOR	FIREBIRD	1.99
16	10	TARGET RENEGADE	IMAGINE	7.95
17	16	WAY OF THE EXPLODING FIST	MASTERTRONIC	1.99
18	13	ROCKY HORROR SHOW	ALTERNATIVE	1.99
19	RE	DARK SIDE	INCENTIVE	9.95
20	42	SWORD SLAYER	PLAYERS	1.99

## C64 TOP 20

TW	LW	Title	Publisher	RRPE
1	1	FOOTBALL MANAGER 2	ADDICTIVE	9.99
2	4	AIR WOLF	ENCORE	1.99
3	27	STUNT BIKE SIMULATOR	FIREBIRD	1.99
4	5	EUROPEAN FIVE A SIDE	FIREBIRD	1.99
5	13	FRANK BRUNOS BOXING	ENCORE	1.99
6	2	A C E	CASCADE	2.99
7	12	BRUCE LEE	AMERICANA	2.99
8	10	YOGI BEAR	ALTERNATIVE	1.99
9	9	RALLY DRIVER	ALTERNATIVE	1.99
10	16	STEVE DAVIS SNOOKER	BLUE RIBBON	1.99
11	15	ROCKY HORROR SHOW	ALTERNATIVE	1.99
12	29	WAY OF THE EXPLODING FIST	MASTERTRONIC	1.99
13	9	BEACH BUGGY SIMULATOR	FIREBIRD	1.99
14	19	FRUIT MACHINE SIMULATOR	CODE MASTERS	1.99
15	17	GHOSTBUSTERS	MASTERTRONIC	1.99
16	11	ROAD BLASTERS	US GOLD	9.99
17	24	SHANGHAI KARATE	PLAYERS	1.99
18	22	GRAND PRIX SIMULATOR	CODE MASTERS	1.99
19	6	SAMANTHA FOX STRIP POKER	REACT	1.99
20	25	ALIENS	MASTERTRONIC	1.99

## AMSTRAD TOP 10

TW	LW	Title	Publisher	RRPE
1	1	FOOTBALL MANAGER 2	ADDICTIVE	9.99
2	2	AIR WOLF	ENCORE	1.99
3	21	FRANK BRUNO'S BOXING	ENCORE	1.99
4	9	STEVE DAVIS SNOOKER	BLUE RIBBON	1.99
5	5	RALLY DRIVER	ALTERNATIVE	1.99
6	3	A C E	CASCADE	2.99
7	8	YOGI BEAR	ALTERNATIVE	1.99
8	RE	STUNT BIKE SIMULATOR	FIREBIRD	1.99
9	4	BEACH BUGGY SIMULATOR	FIREBIRD	1.99
10	14	SUPER STUNTMAN	CODE MASTERS	1.99

## ATARI ST TOP 5

TW	LW	Title	Publisher	RRPE
1	5	FOOTBALL MANAGER 2	ADDICTIVE	19.99
2	1	GAUNTLET 2	US GOLD	19.99
3	2	OUT RUN	SEGA-US GOLD	19.99
4	3	DUNGEON MASTER	MIRRORSOFT	24.99
5	6	EMPIRE STRIKES BACK	DOMARK	19.95

## AMIGA TOP 5

TW	LW	Title	Publisher	RRPE
1	2	INTERCEPTOR	ELECTRONIC ARTS	24.95
2	3	AAARGH	MELBOURNE HOUSE	19.99
3	RE	BUGGY BOY	ELITE	19.95
4	RE	SENTINEL	FIREBIRD	19.95
5	RE	THREE STOOGES	MIRRORSOFT	29.99

### SHARE OF SALES BY MACHINE

Machine	Units sold (%)				Titles sold (%)			
	This week	Last week	4wks ago	12wks ago	This week	Last week	4wks ago	12wks ago
SPECTRUM	44.4	43.3	45.5	45.1	30.2	30.6	37.7	28.3
COMMODORE 64	23.7	23.3	21.7	23.8	23.7	23.3	22.6	26.3
AMSTRAD	19.7	20.7	17.7	17.7	17.8	17.9	17.1	17.0
ATARI ST	3.5	3.7	4.9	3.7	7.2	7.4	8.2	6.0
COMMODORE 16	2.6	2.7	2.5	1.9	2.9	2.7	3.2	3.1
BBC	1.3	2.6	1.7	1.8	3.2	3.0	3.1	3.5
AMIGA	1.2	1.7	2.1	1.5	3.3	2.3	3.2	2.6
ELECTRON	3.7	0.7	1.3	1.3	2.1	1.6	2.5	2.6
ATARI	0.8	0.7	0.6	1.7	2.5	2.0	1.3	2.4

### AVERAGE SALES PER PANEL SHOP

This week	Units Sold		
	Last week	4wks ago	12wks ago
116	100	70	98

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

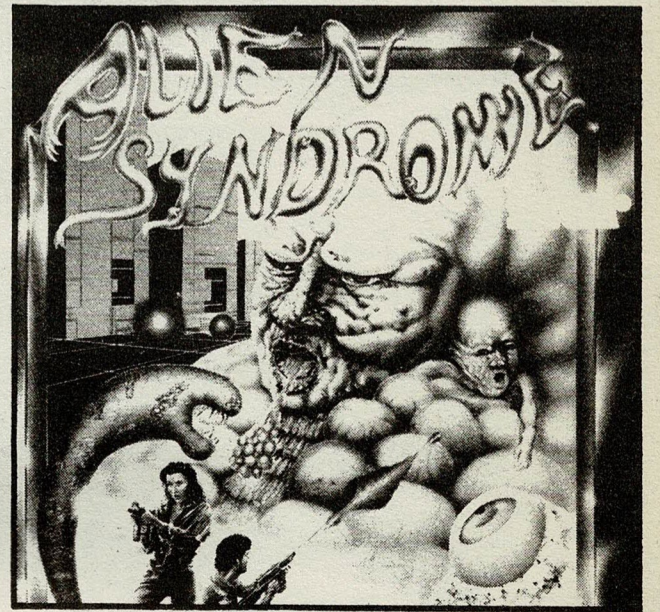


**▲ ACE:** *Alien Syndrome* (AgSp+3 - £8.99-£24.99) According to the Softek community the C64 and ST versions of this "hit the top of the UK charts instantly... and have firmly planted themselves there". These rather over the top comments notwithstanding they did actually do quite well. A simultaneous all formats release would have made the success far more visible, though. **▲ ALTERNATIVE:** *Chess* (C64 - £1.99), *Othello* (C64 - £1.99), *Arthur Noid* (C16 - £1.99) and *Classic Arcadia Triple Decker* (Sp - £1.99) The two trad board game simulations are part of Audiogenic's illustrious (?) past whilst *Arthur Noid* is another *Breakout* derivative apparently boasting a "rather surreal storyline". *Classic Arcadia* features *Space Invaders*, *Pacman* and *Galaxian* for anyone fancying some ancient history. **▲ ATLANTIS:** *Space Trader* (Am - £2.99) Even veteran Atlantis has tapped into the idea of re-releasing old full-price material. This is an old Amsoft Gold Label game originally called *Macrocasmica* and thankfully re-titled. As the name explains this is a space trading game and it boasts a mixture of both text and zapping. This is also Atlantis' first Amstrad game since March. **▲ CODE MASTERS:** *ATV Simulator* (Am - £1.99), *Dizzy* (C64 - £1.99), *Super Hero* (C64 - £1.99) and *Professional BMX Simulator* (Sp - £4.99) Code Masters' unrivalled skill for releasing games that everybody thinks have been out for ages continues unabated. *Super Hero* is the only one that hasn't been in the charts

for a trillion weeks already.

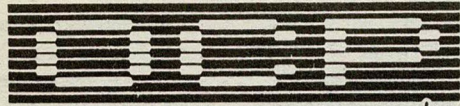
**▲ DIGITAL INTEGRATION:** *ATF* (STAg - £19.95), *F-16 Combat Pilot* (STPC - £24.95) Digital Integration hasn't really made an impact on the 16-bit scene as yet, but these are three of its biggest titles. Being simulations they should transfer well onto the sexier machines if the conversions are up to standard. **▲ ENCORE:** *Bombjack* (C16AmSp - £1.99) It may seem strange to some that whilst ST owners are having to pay £19.99 for this game others are only paying £1.99. That's because the 8-bit versions are over two years old. It was a good old fashioned megahit back then and will do well again as budget, despite the countless compilation appearances it's already clocked up. **▲ GREMLIN:** *Gary Lineker's Soccer Skills* (C64SpAmST - £9.99-£19.99) This is the kind of strong sounding title that one might have expected Gremlin to have held until the autumn. Considering

that it's a mixture of a soccer game and *Combat School* it should give the label the much-needed chart success that has been missing a little of late. If not, then something somewhere is going wrong. **▲ MARTECH:** *The Fury* (C64 - £9.99-£14.99) This futuristic racing game has got great artwork and an original concept but has suffered rather from some lukewarm reviews. Martech will be hoping that the C64 version can turn things around but unfortunately this game's probably shot its bolt already. **▲ MICROPROSE:** *The President Is Missing* (C64 - £9.95-£12.95) This is one of the first Cosmi releases since the split with US Gold and a truly American affair it is too, both in theme and style. The not-really-an-adventure-because-it's-far-too-meaningful effort comes on a double-sided cassette and includes an "audio evidence" tape. The theme is a mixture of hostages, terrorists, CIA and the like. Also, Microprose deserves a commendation for keeping the price to a normal full-price level rather than adding on a fiver for the frills. **▲ MICROPROSE:** *Gunship* (CPC - £14.95-£19.95) This one does have the higher pricepoint, probably because Microprose knows a game that has sold 250,000 units worldwide can carry it virtually unaffected. Cunning eh? **▲ PLAYERS:** *Thing* (Am - £1.99) No hype here. According to a company spokesman this game based on an intergalactic postperson "is a load of crap, really". Expect sales to rocket. **▲ PLAYERS:** *Streetgang* (STAg - £14.95) This is an unashamed clone of Ocean's *Renegade* and will probably win a few sales by punters taking the wrong title off the shelf. **▲ US GOLD:** *The Games - Winter Edition* (Sp+3) £8.99-£12.99) This Spectrum version has been delayed a week or two but such a strong title won't suffer overmuch, it at all.



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

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## SPEAKEASY — SPEAKEASY

### Gold again . . .

I am writing with regards to the thinking, or apparent lack of it on US Gold's policy on dealer percentages.

This cut in profit margins has been justified by Gold as an attempt to end the cut-price merchants. The money, it is said, will be reinvested in the form of advertising to "benefit the retailer". But I fail to see how the advertising of US Gold's own product - presumably filling a few pages of every magazine that are as yet free of their adverts - can benefit the retailers any more than it will the cut-price firms whom Gold is apparently so keen on hitting.

Should Mr Brown be reading CTW this week, here's a suggestion for him. If you really want to do something useful then attempt to stop the firms which are breaking

the law by hiring out your games and the insistent copying which is going on much of the time before the games are even released.

It's no good putting a copyright message on a piece of software if it's not going to be enforced. Neither is it any good releasing a game which has been circulated around 90 per cent of the potential buyers months before release.

It is unfortunate but inevitable that Centresoft has been hit as a result of US Gold's attitude but I suspect it will continue until Mr Brown either relents or comes up with something better to spend our money on.

Yours sincerely  
Rob Massey  
Capricorn Computers  
Solihull

# PC SHOW SUPPLEMENT

On September 5th, CTW will be publishing a separate supplement on the PC Show. Something of an annual event, it will detail the principal products and aims of the leading companies exhibiting at the show. In times gone by, our guide has proved indispensable for anybody with any interest in the show - which pretty much means the whole market.

To make sure that your company appears, please fax (0438 741247) or post (at the usual address, marked PC SHOW) your details *as soon as possible*.

**ALSO:** Don't forget that CTW offers special, even more attractive rates than usual to those advertisers interested in grasping the opportunity to appear in our supplement.

COMPANY NAME .....

STAND NUMBER .....

REASONS TO BE AT SHOW/PRODUCTS ON DISPLAY/HOPES etc .....

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**CTW: Mixing business with leisure**

### Distribution guide I

I notice in this week's CTW in your distribution guide that appears on page 10 (CTW July 10th) that TBD are no longer listed and I wonder why this is the case?

To my knowledge we have always appeared in your distribution guide, and I am not aware of anybody here making any request to be deleted. Therefore, if this is just an oversight, could I ask that we be included in the next issue of the distribution guide.

If there are any problems, perhaps you could contact me in order that we can discuss the matter further.

Dave McWilliam  
Sales & marketing director  
Yours sincerely  
Terry Blood Distribution

- It appears from time to time that CTW makes upwards of

half a dozen calls to a particular distributor to glean details for the guide, only to find that no one is capable of providing straightforward information.

Sometimes, we simply repeat the previous month's entry. On other occasions, the process is so frustrating - given that the guide benefits the firms, and not CTW - that we take the decision to pull a firm's whole entry. The rationale for this runs something like "If we can't get any sense from a company on the blandest of bland details, what hope do retailers have?"

TBD is not the worst at this: Eltec clearly heads the pack, being quite extraordinarily unhelpful and uncommunicative.

Whatever, if firms continue to supply us with details easily and on time, then they will be included.

### Distribution guide II

Checking our entry in the Distribution Guide I see we are listed as Paperback Software.

Paperback Software was established last year as a separate entity, because all distributive activity is now channelled through New Star, and all PUBLISHING activities via Paperback Software.

A glance at our new catalogue will reveal that New Star is a very independent operation where Paperback forms only part of the range on offer.

And I just loved to read that the special offer was to increase the price of PC software by 16 per cent.

Well, only some of the Paperback published lines are affected by the price hike, and wouldn't it be nicer if you described the increase as "dealer profits up 15 per

cent" instead? After all, that's primarily why we put the price up: to give those great dealers out there more margin to continue to do such a great and conscientious job of selling our products.

Yours etc  
Bill Poel  
New Star/Paperback Software  
Brentwood

- This is, of course, a long term plan by us to put William Poel out of business. Provided that we keep inserting the odd, virtually meaningless inaccuracy, young pen-pusher Poel will have to respond - thus taking time out from his work. We actually went to the bother of interviewing him at length recently on much the same basis.

Poel's drolleries about margins and dealers should, of course, be taken wholly seriously as ever . . .

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## WILLIAM THE FORTHRIGHT

Continued from page 14

pensive at work. "An awful lot of people buying an Amstrad aren't going to be completely satisfied with SuperCalc or whatever," muses Poel. "There's always the astute customer who recognises that if you're paying £100 for something you understand it's cheaper than spending a week learning to use something which doesn't do what you thought it did."

New Star itself is eyeing a bigger concentration on the independent dealer. Poel explains: "We're going to have more emphasis because the PC dealer is beginning to

appreciate the better stuff. And they're appreciating that too much bundling is bad news. If you bundle SuperCalc with a PC you're still going to end up supporting it.

"We have evidence from our dealers that they prefer selling software to using it as a substitute for polystyrene chips to pack up computers."

Dealers figure large in New Star thinking. "Frankly, it's up to the dealers what happens. The user and software publisher has very little to say in the matter. If there was any justice in the world everybody would buy VP Planner and no-one would sell Lotus 1-2-3.

But it doesn't work out that way does it?

"The dealer has the influence to persuade people to buy Lotus because the dealer makes more money - I suspect." So why not go the whole hog and price Planner in the £300 mark? "It's fatuous to put the prices up to £395 only so that the discount market can put it out at £225. I would rather have a real £199 price. It gives the impression of an orderly market."

### Headless chickens

Despite the market knowledge though Poel, like everyone else, is at a loss

when it comes to crystal ball gazing in the clonesoft sector.

"Everyone is running around in headless chicken mode while they try and work out what OS/2 is going to mean. Lotus have got well behind in releasing updates of existing product. We're all sitting on our hands waiting to see.

"Amstrad's reputed 386 machine appears in September and the popular view is that it won't be OS/2. Amstrad doesn't know what it'll cost but I understand the target was £3,000 for a 40 MegaByte 386. Amstrad is trying very hard to lose its cheap and cheerful image and is trying to get a corporate

look together.

"I don't know that Amstrad needs to be cheap anymore. In the days of hi-fi and audio it needed to because it was crappy. You couldn't put an Amstrad alongside a Sony. The Amstrad PC has always been slightly better. Perhaps they can get out of this fixation of having to be cheaper than everybody else.

"If I was Mr S I would be getting people used to the idea that Amstrad can be a bit more expensive. A well sexy 386 would get them into the corporate market."

Phew. Poel gives his mouth a rest to save an ailing butterfly but not before accusing it of being an Amstrad bug. And

then there's some more views. This time, it's Commodore.

"The reason why Amstrad is so successful is because the competition is just pathetic. It's the same old faces circulating through the corridors of Commodore. One doesn't see any evidence that they've got their act together. Commodore's reputation for being unhelpful is at least the equal of Amstrad's reputation for being aggressive."

And that must equal Poel's reputation for severity. He may not be the bull headed salesman that Amstrad likes to see, but Poel's nice guy image falls short when it comes to handing out the salt. Still, it's nice to hear people willing to talk about more than their own sales pitches. Meantime, here's Poel talking about the dynamic future of new Star/Paperback.

"The prediction of where a company is going in this market place is a very dangerous business. We'll go with the flow."

### APPLYING ENTERPRISE TO THE APPLICATION ZONE

Continued from page 13

that it can put together a specific package for whatever the application is. Or, on the other hand, ASAP informs the dealer that it can't possibly whip the A500 into shape for a certain use.

The machine is gaining more credibility in the training area. The days of overhead projectors are slipping away and the much touted graphics and animation capabilities of the are now in vogue.

"It's a better way of teaching the ground crew of a Tornado how all the parts interact with each other. You can't do it with a blackboard." ASAP has also supplied Great Universal Stores which uses the machine to design its shops' floor space.

Despite his obvious close links with the dealerships, though, Shields has "no idea" where the machines he passes onto them are going. Although the specifics of configurations are coming from different companies and different markets they're broadly similar in terms of what is needed. After all it's those capabilities which seem to excite people so much and that persuade corporations such as BAe to part with their money.

"I think they're impressed with the price performance equation. Instead of paying for one enormous CAD workstation they can get a number of Amiga workstations," explained Shields.

His current dealer line up has increased from 90 to 150 in the last four months and he insists that in order to maintain the claimed current levels of support that number can't go any higher.

As an A500 distributor ASAP will hardly be competing with Lightning, Zappo or Hugh Symons. "It doesn't need a great deal of support and we tend to use it as a way of generating revenue - which is the most important thing. The A500 is an entry level system and as such we need to support it."

Dealers currently enthusing about the A500 may be dismayed at this idiosyncratic attitude. It's paradoxical that the majority of that trade is so enthusiastic about the mass market as opposed to niche markets, whilst Shields takes the opposite view.

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# Atari New Tandys now in US, soon in UK

Continued from front page

ing up process by Atari to persuade retailers to accept a 17.5 per cent margin, rather than the existing 20 per cent that they currently receive. At this stage, the £299 ST is unlikely to include anything more than a manual, Basic disk and warranty card.

Meantime, Atari has commenced its annual talk of product shortages. The difference this year is that the talk is both earlier and less dramatic than usual.

"We'll be about 15 per cent short of what we think we can sell," Gleadow said. "That's because of the worldwide shortages for Atari but also because I'm not going to air-freight in product like last year. I paid a fortune then: it was my biggest cost after advertising."

## Tandy last week launched a range of new PCs in the US which will broadly make up the UK operation's promised November unveilings.

Revised versions of the Tandy 4000, and 1000 lines were shown along with the first Tandy 3000 machine. A Tandy fax machine, photocopier and online communica-

tions service also made their debuts.

Tandy is stressing that not all of the products on show in the US will be coming to the UK and that those that do could be modified for the different market. Last year, however, Tandy US carried out a similar launch of revised machines which was then mirrored in the UK in the autumn.

There were no changes to Tandy's entry level 1000HX

system but the next up 1000SX which currently sells for £795 has been upgraded and renamed the 1000SL. The new machine has had sundry enhancements added to its running speed, front-end software and sound. It will retail in the US at \$899.

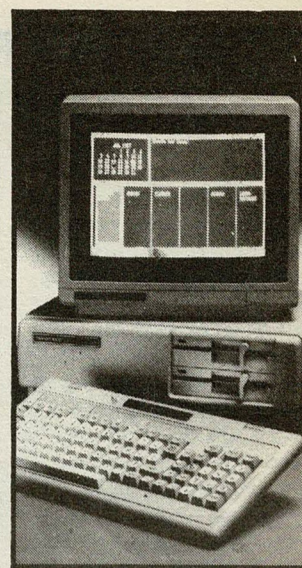
The 1000TL is a 286-based PC/XT and carries on from the currently available 1000TX which retails at £895 in the UK. The TL comes on line in the US in September

costing £1,299.

The 3000NL is a 10MHz 286 machine capable of running under OS/2. The standard configuration includes a 3.5 inch drive, 1.4 Mb drive and seven expansion slots. It will retail at £1,699.

The new 386 machine, the 4000LX becomes Tandy's new top end machine. The existing 4000 is being modified whilst the LX boasts a 20MHz running speed and costs \$2,599.

A \$1,299 fax machine called the TandyFax 1000 was unveiled in the US along with a \$199 portable photocopier and an online communications service called PC-Link.



1000SX: Upgraded dup

## CBM

Continued from front page

● Commodore's PC10 III, PC20 III and PC40 III XTs and ATs have been slightly re-jigged with improvements in "speed and performance" as well as substantially smaller footprints. The PC10 single drive mono retails at £549 rising to £999 for the double drive ECD.

● Almost a year old now the 386 PC60-40 and PC60-80 were on view, although these can hardly be described as new machines. They initially appeared in Germany last year, then at the *Which?* Computer Show in Birmingham last January. At that time a March availability was being talked of, although the machines still won't actually be here in any great volume until October. The entry level 40Mb hard disk drive retails at £3,999.

● On the education front Commodore announced a new scheme whereby education institutions can order direct from Commodore and then nominate a dealership. The dealer then provides support and suchlike. This has the effect of reducing pre-sales costs and thus education prices are lower. The PC1 for example will cost £299.

● An advertising campaign directed at businesses has been launched. Ads will initially run in the *Financial Times* and other broadsheets as well as the *Daily Mail*. A poster campaign has been pencilled in for the autumn.

"When we attack the market we have to have everything in place," offered CBM's UK managing director Steve Franklin. We're here to make an impact in the PC business market."

He went on: "This goal has taken me a year to achieve. I thought I could do it quicker but we have sorted out Commodore in the UK as a company. We mean business."

Marketing manager Dean Barrett stated the notion that Commodore was looking to take on Amstrad head to head. "We're not squaring up to any one manufacturer, contrary to recent press reports. There's a significant opportunity in the PC market. Our strategy is to target the small business user through dealers and the corporate market through 50 direct dealers as well as normal dealers."

# THE

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