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ISSUE ELEVEN • AUGUST 1988 • £1.50

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ATARI ST AND AMIGA

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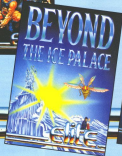
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A small Cambridge company have come up with a machine that could change the face of computer entertainment. How does it work? What does it do? And will we ever be able to top it?



35 Who's Bad?

These guys don't just know a good game when they see one - they write them! Britain's hottest coders give us their latest episode of the work done by their companies.

38 Crazy on Screaming...

Just one more alien to beat and...Aaahh!/Ee! Please, not anything but THAT! We check out games that make grown men cry, snap their joysticks, smash monitors, and leap screaming from their windows. Don't say we didn't warn you...

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Numbers-based adventure *Gladius* has stunning graphics and comes complete with three-level Filoos menus. Next is a Platform American Express card and a Porsche 911 Turbo, it could be just what the Filoos are looking for...

INTERFACE

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Can Tandy give us of CD-ROMS? What is Jeff Mavis doing in Iceland? Why are biologists talking bats - and who are they? Who's afraid of the Big, Bad Bink? They told us, and wrote just looking to tell you...

Wish it in better yet? It together on page 6.



ACE

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Games of the future, planned in full colour over this month's pages.

101 Letters

Write us like these, who needs a magazine? We put our feelings and let you fill the pages...

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Find the good news, you can be an ACE previewer. Now the bad news, you've reached the end of the magazine.

SIGHT...

21 Back to Basics

We're heads, influence people, and put together the hottest screen displays on the street. Brian Lammert's tips on state-of-the-art plotting make it all so, so easy...

24 Hang 'em High

Join ACE's featured Gallery page. Digital masterpiece from masterful Picasso in the shade.

.....AND SOUND

96 Budget Ivory

At least Oberon have emerged with their long-awaited budget range of master keyboards. Chris Jenkins gets all the key facts, a snapshot impression of the astonishing RT32, and news of a powerful new music card for the IBM PC.



THE ACE CARD

Win an Amiga!

Turn to page 10 for details of your chance to win one of two Amigas, we're giving away - and check The Bitter End to see if you've won an Amiga 25 or any of the staggeringly 24 software prizes we offered last month.

GAMEPLAY

41 Screen Test

Mike Singleton shows off his best colours in deep space, plus the definite review of *Blaze on the 127*. Hebert's *Preposterous Darkside* and a host of other red...



Page 46 strategy... Singleton test in space with a way way from this view.

for reasons - all exhaustively reviewed and rated by the country's top game testers. Don't say Amiga! say Right!



Page 46 Arcade Ace - another classic now available on ACE.

26 Arcade Ace

Could be there's a revolution in the horizon in the arcade - you don't just blast everything in sight in *Arcade Ace*, you think while you're doing it - or so they claim. Plus news of *SD2*, *Vulcan Menace* and - we'll let you not - *StarDuster* versus *Dragon Ninja*.

91 Play-By-Mail

Pop writer in the post debating your plans for out-gunning the prince and sorceress, sometimes, might just take you seriously.

88 Tricks n' Tactics

Let's face it, if you can't top the high score table in *Riftm*, *Moscow Old*, *Impossible Mission*, *Comet* or *Command* many others, then there's only one thing to do... cheat.

72 Adventures

What's month/has only do you get *Companion* (legend of the forest) but also exclusive news of new games by the bands *Tail team*, *Infocom*, and others.

BUY LINES

12 The ACE Card

It just can't go on, we hear you say. But it can... for now. Prices, worth hundreds of GBs, for ACE card offers - plus details of how to get your card if you're missing out.

14 Reach for the Skies!



Age and Gender being your competition to help you fulfil your wildest dreams - £100 worth of flying lessons, or a state-of-the-art radio-controlled sky steamer. The choice is yours, and so is the chance...

16 Special Offers

Talk about a divided Britain - some people in this country have never had it so good. They're the people who save up to £4 on a single game, then return the summer months on the ACE Special Offer pages. Join them.

18 Subscription

We have a problem. For some reason, we aren't content with offering you a year's subscription to Britain's finest gaming magazine - we have to go and there is a stack of superb £10 Gold Games at half-price as well. Don't ask us why, or we might change our minds. Just get that bargain in the post pronto...

ACE PINK PAGES

105 Buyer's Guide

Play off the best games available, complete with price and mini reviews. We've played them, we've passed them, now you can buy them.

122 Upgrade Guide

Do you want to buy a better micro ACE into the upgrade options, the technical details, the prices, and the software available. Get the facts before you spend the money.

124 Random Access

Puzzles, problems, analyses. You don't just sit back and read the magazine, you're in - you're in to 100 things or so.

127 Readers' Pages

Look, it's our job to fill the magazine right? So will you let a blind eye to all these mini-advertisements, help offers, announcements, and other things. If the answer gets any bigger, we'll have to get the ads found for a space prioritizing, OK?



FROM THE BETELGEUSIAN EMBASSY

Earthlings.

We extra-terrestrials are, as you say, overfed upwards. More than that, we are adicely passed off.

Every sun-cycle our representatives are forced to witness the abominable slaughter of our peoples on your monitors. Of course, we enjoy a few blasts of Attack of the Mutant Karting Dudes as much as any alien bean, but at least we shoot you with your trousers on.

We aliens I always portrayed without our clothes on. So not only are we demobilized without merry, but we suffer serious loss of dignity in the processor.

However, this is not the real reason for righting.

Our real reason is to ask about this ACE Card business. We are led to understand that these Cards I some form of Inter-Galactic freebie, possession of which gives the owner the chance of receiving mega-luxury Earth items for absolutely no charge.

Can this be true? Are there any Ace Cards left? Please send several thousand immediately by Fed Star.

Gratefully yours,

Marglet Seiddel V'Teacher

The letter above may be moonshine, but the ACE Card is the business. Every month we give away dozens of prizes - a share-out that YOU can join in if you're a cardholder. If you're not, full details of how to get your ACE Card free of charge can be found on page 12.

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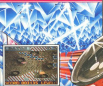


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Attempers - never enough to buy an Amiga?

16-BIT WAR!

The glasses are off in the battle for 16-bit supremacy. Commodore have slashed the price of the Amiga 8000 by £100, and that's only the beginning of a massive price war in the computer entertainment market.

The cut leaves the 8000 with a price tag of £299.95, putting it on a par with the Atari ST for the first time ever, and Commodore have other cards up their sleeves. Announcing the cut, Commodore's marketing manager Dean Garret described it as 'just the beginning' and promised 'further initiatives in September' - all aimed at making '1988 the year of the Amiga.'

This sudden interest in the leisure market follows a long period of relative indifference, during which Commodore concentrated on selling the Amiga as a business machine, and comes at a bad time for Atari. Earlier this year the ST seemed to have the entertainment side of home computing sewn up, with a £200 ST costing only £200 less than the Amiga's whopping £400. In April this changed, when Atari knocked the £200 ST price by £100. This astonishing and unexpected move was forced on them, Atari claimed, by a word shortage of dynamic RAM chips, it supposedly left the ST vulnerable, despite the impressive line-up of games included in the price and the less well-publicised upgrading of the £200 ST due to 1050ST standards.

The question now is whether Commodore have in fact left it too late to make their move. The ST's old £200 price-tag sold a lot of machines, and that in turn gained it plenty of software support. Titles like Star Trek, Our Run and Captain Blood have sold in very large numbers on the ST, making it big business indeed for the games houses. It's not just the numbers of each title that get sold - a really successful Spectrum or C64 game will normally sell many more than its

ST counterpart - but also the higher ST price. In Satop's sales by value chart, which takes into account the price of a game as well as the number of units sold, ST titles as a whole are now normally ahead of their C64 equivalents, putting the ST second only to the Spectrum.

If most ST games are typically a little over twice the price of 8-bit ones in the shops, they can look even more attractive to the general public. According to one major software house, an ST game earns a programmer three times as much per unit sold as an 8-bit title does, if the royalties here are tied to how much the software house itself makes on the game, it's easy to see why the ST's getting so much software support these days.

The Amiga may be able to offer software houses the same price advantage as the ST, but it can't sell anywhere near as many titles. For most programmers the Amiga version of a game is only worth doing as a spin-off of the ST original, and

wouldn't be worth the programming time in its own right. Does that matter to the end user? So long as the conversion turns up eventually, who cares if it is an afterthought?

With the price difference gone, the crux of the matter for gamers is whether the few impressive games released for the Amiga (but not the Atari machine - like Intercryptic Ferrari Formula One or Benchmark - can outweigh that ST counterpart (the still unaccounted for) for example) and those of the freebies. With so many buyers also looking to double in computer use, the Amiga could do quite well at the one-on-one - and that's not something anyone would have predicted six months ago!

A C C E N E W S



Dean Garret - Commodore's marketing manager - looking out on game players. No comment.

HEWSON GO 16-BIT

Outspoken 8-bit software house Hewson are about to attack the 16-bit market with two original products for the ST/Amiga - Asterix - The Angel of Death, and Ponder 800 Hit only has, but they're also converting some of their biggest 8-bit hits - stand by for Maxxon, Zynaps, Exolon and Demon for the 16-bit screen.

Previously they had only released Asterix on the ST and Amiga. Andrew Hewson explained, 'It gave us a feel for the market. It was an experiment and it worked.' So what have they been doing since then? 'We've been deciding what 8-bit material to take over onto the new machines, and what original games should be developed.'

He also said that their intention was to produce games that use the machines to the full, rather than just taking digital sound into an 8-bit game. Zynaps, Maxxon and Exolon will appear on both ST and Amiga, with Cabernet, Hellword and Stormlord on the ST.



ST - Asterix appears to go on 16.

BIG SPLASH FROM BIG APPLE

Field your breath — there's a few software houses in the market who are planning to take on the likes of US Gold and Ocean, and we're "American save-a-me too" and "open the apple eat". They're launching with multi-million-pound backing and headliners. Who are they?



Big Apple's first release — *Base!* — the title game.

They're called The Big Apple Entertainment Co Ltd, and are part of a group called Pressack Holdings. Pressack hail from the record distribution business and with their associated companies in the video and character licensing

business they turned over a whopping £40 million last year. They claim to be determined to become a leading software house within a young but exciting industry.

Sounds good, but what's behind the hype?

First, there's cash — and plenty of it. Up to £5 million has been earmarked for expenditures over the next year. It's a long time since we saw anybody enter the market with such a commitment and the finance to back it up.

Second, there's a good deal of experience. Character licensing and video are just part of the Pressack operation — they also own Buell Photo, the first people.

Finally, there's a commitment to 'originality'. Sounds like more hype — the market is, if anything, improving in this respect already anyway — but Big Apple claim that 'the game portfolio are totally original — you wouldn't expect to see a computer game based on *Star Trek*'. The originality, it seems, extends even to the 'designer games' pack-

aging which has 'all-round originality' though it will, in fact, be rectangular. Its special 'flip-top box' has apparently been tested for up to 200 openings and closings. We're impressed.

The first games will be hitting the market in June (*Base!*) — stand out the *Perverts* (*Perverts*), *Pages*, *War!* — be willing.



Big Apple's mascot — Steve Billy — who is designed to enhance the company's theme with New York spirit. He is also featured in a 'Designer Games' computer that will offer the gifts to customers.

pen in a couple of year's time, or two-year's time with something else. It's got to happen — look at music videos — they're a star, but they're



not close to the money. It's what everyone was trying to do in the 80's with all wheels, or Jean Michel Jarre with his laser shows, but I'm doing the real thing right now — not just some pre-sequenced light-show.

ACL is presently awaiting to receive copy of Trip-A-Ton. Watch this development...

TANDY CD-ROM DOES IT ALL?

Tandy claims to have come up with a revolutionary development in optical disc media which they're calling TANDY CD. The TANDY stands for Tandy High-Optical Recording and the big thing about it is, first, that it is compatible with existing CD players and, second, that it promises to be cheap.

We're unlikely to see TANDY-CD in the country until 1990, but if we do, we'll get a compact unit that will be able to both read AND write data. That means it won't be a CD-ROM at all, but more like a CD-RAM — or an ultra-high-capacity hard disc system. The company vision they'll be able to offer hundreds of megabytes per five inch disk.

Even more importantly, the access time looks as if it should be on a par with hard disc systems and the system will be able to cope with musical, video, and computer data. Price is uncertain at present, but the audio unit should cost around \$300 — the computer kit will cost more.

There's just one small problem. The attempt of the Japanese to introduce digital audio tape (DAT) into this country already reported in ACE, have not with very little opposition because of the piracy problem. Surely the same problems will apply with Tandy's CD-system?

I can see that they might be applicable, but we wouldn't like to comment on that at this stage, and company spokesperson Amanda

JEFF ON STAGE

The Golden Light show at last year's festival... the year's best is at September 24 at St John's, Smith Square, London SW1. Tel: 01-232 1981 for box office or Book Services on 01 882 2880.

Jeff Minter takes again, this time in a converted church in London's Smith Square, where he will be taking part in this year's Festival of New Age and Synthetronic Music to launch the 'Triple-Ton' — an advanced software-based light synthesiser.

Before the optics are laughing, they should know that the whole

idea of linking sound and light — as Minter did with his original ColourSpace series — has taken on a whole new meaning with the advent of MIDI. Using MIDI codes you could now control one of Minter's light synthesisers with a conventional MIDI keyboard.

'It's possible,' elaborates Jeff, 'to sense MIDI data including pitch-

band and velocity so that you can moderate your light performance according to the music.' He thinks that in the near future the light synthesiser will become a powerful instrument in its own right, used as part of the band line-up for live performance.

It's incredible, if it doesn't happen with Trip-A-Ton now, it's hap-

THE PHONE GAME

Would you like to play games down the phone without using a modem? Well, you can! Until now the phone system's contribution to the world of adventure and mystery has been confined to MUDs like *WIZ* or *Shards*. Now the voice games are coming - and you may never think of your phone the same way again!

TONE DEAF?

If you're wondering what all the stuff about "tone" is, you probably can't dial the Starline service at all: only users of American-style DTMF phones can enter their data this way.

The hardware barrier here is not insurmountable: separate tone dialers let you enter the informa-

tion God or Tech.

Unfortunately, most people have a strong aversion to taking out subscriptions and paying for things in advance. BT's pay-as-you-go facilities using 0800 numbers may slow other game organizers: a way round this natural resistance, thanks to its small part to some very clever computer technology.

Even on normal push-button phones, that's small consolation for services that rely on casual users - would you sit out and buy a tone dialer just to hear your horoscope? - but it could be good news indeed for all you adventures and role-players out there.

While "subscriber" services have never really mushroomed the way pundits expected, pay-as-you-go systems are a major growth area. Microsoft itself has such a system, Hot! California, offering many of the subscription database's interactive areas (on their equivalent is non-members at a per-minute charge). Both Intel California and that online service *Teens* are tight because 0800 services simply because you need a computer and modem to access them.

The phone is a natural for creating the atmosphere a good adventure needs. After all, what graphic adventure really could compete with a *Wizard*. Price monogamy? The problem is actually making money out of providing such a service. For years, the only way to charge people money for accessing your system was by selling membership subscriptions, with passwords to keep out the freeloaders. *President* and *Computer* both work on this basis, as do independent games.

MUSICAL BONUS

Destiny Software, the company formed by erstwhile *Beyond* man Francis Lee, has started to release music with its titles - buy a copy of their last release *Diamond* and you'll get a free cassette featuring What A Girl Wants from up-and-coming group The Company Six Reeds.

In fact, Mr Lee is going one step further and actually starting his own music label, Destiny Records. Although What A Girl Wants was actually licensed from Capitol Records, future releases will be signed directly to the label, which will not only release singles on vinyl but will also package them along with games from Destiny Software. *President*, Lee thus joins the ranks of R-Tal, *Beasties*, *Relax*, and *Virgin* - all of whom have sought to combine the music and software businesses with varying success.



Interactive

The vast majority of pay-as-you-go phone services are voice lines, and most of these offer nothing more than typed monologues read out to stockholders. Page 1-guns or similar. However, there's a new breed of service coming in which, though based on voice rather than modem communication, is nonetheless interactive.

In other problems involved - so Starline's suppliers were forced to use an alternative, higher tech approach.

The service uses the caller's telephone dial as a numeric keypad, decoding the tones made by his phone as to keys in his personal numeric details.

Already an 0800 online game exists. Called *FIST* (Fantasy

INTRODUCING THE VOOG...

Though *FIST* doesn't rely absolutely on the use of a tone-dialer or DTMF phone, it's slower without one or the other - and that's pretty important given that the service costs upwards of 25p per minute. A far more exciting possibility for the future is the VOOG.

VOOGs are Voice-Operated Online Games and, as the name implies, they use voice-recognition technology to allow spoken commands by the caller. Voice recognition is only just becoming practical for commercial use, but already BT experiments have shown just how successful games along these lines could be. With a very short "training" period to let the system learn your speech patterns, a game can correctly follow directional and other commands with a 95% or better success rate.

VOOGs were first tested by BT a couple of years back, when a small band of select subscribers were able to explore a *Domish* village over the phone using directional commands. The system was pretty primitive, recognizing only a very few words, and running on an ordinary little PC with a voice recognition card tacked on. More up-to-date systems can recognize more words and do not require "training" for different users - saving time and subscriber's money.

A case in point is the new well-established *Russell Grant Starline* service available in the London area, which gives each caller a horoscope message based on his or her state of birth. Using a separate line for each possible message was clearly out of the question here - fitting 263 different phone numbers legibly on an advert is hardly a serious proposition, quite aside from

Interactive Scenarios by telephone, would you believe? It takes the form of a spoken Steve Jackson text adventure-run role-playing game complete with sound effects. The latter's a crucial element in the whole idea, as anyone who's played *Infestus's Lurking Horror* will tell you, in the realm of fantasy one sound effect is worth a thousand pictures!

REPEAT POWERPLAY

Aranea are releasing a new version of *Powerplay* for the Amiga. This unusual occurrence has been prompted because, as Aranea put it, "it became more and more clear

only from July 7th see coupon in ad; it should be in the shops by the end of July. The company are also investigating the possibility of producing more question sets.

not to us that Amiga owners were no longer satisfied with games ported over from the Atari, and that it was time to produce a game solely for the Amiga, using all of its graphic capabilities."

The game is initially available via mail-order





WHO'S AFRAID OF THE BIG, BAD BIRDS?

The bar has been lying lowly over allegations that Microsoft, a company partly owned by British Telecom, have been using their BT connections to flood down prices in unfair competition against other on-line game publishers.

The idea is that if you can make use of big BT's buying power, sooner or later you can put everyone else out of business. One newspaper even suggested that Microsoft's recent price increase was a direct result of pressure by the industry body OFTEL, following allegations of accounting irregularities in the way Microsoft fixed its prices.

At this, as OFTEL themselves pointed out, is nonsense. Its buying was however similar accusations have often been levelled at

Telecomsoft, Planet, Silverbird, and ProReal are beginning to pose a very potent combination and some people in the industry actually seem to be afraid of our feathered friends. They reckon that in Telecomsoft's case, big is bad, bad, bad. Here's a company, they say, which represents a deadly form of cheque-book publishing—a company who can march into the market and spend millions, and so what if they lose a lot of cash? They can afford it. Others can't.

For example, Telecomsoft paid a substantial £1 million for Beyond: Whatever the real sum involved, they certainly can't have made much money out of that. And what about Odin? Another label bought and then lost in the maelstrom. Transactions such as these would surely have sunk any normal software house, but Telecomsoft can just keep marching on, leaving less well-endowed companies to bite the bullet.

From a commercial viewpoint, complaints are well-placed industry sourds. I doubt if they're making a profit. They're strong in the 16-bit market where the games are more expensive, but the number sold is low.

Telecomsoft, however, arranges payment that all this is rubbish, understandably when their accounts take cover behind anonymity.

This is a list of names; names company supreme Paula Burns. Frankly we've heard all these offerings three years ago. We've gone past all that now and are very happy with our performance.

The reason Telecomsoft put out such high quality product is that big programmes want to work with Telecomsoft as they trust the name of British Telecom.

That aside, Telecomsoft has a large development team of 14 people who offer our programmes support and help through the development of each product. Payable statements are raised, with payments

made online to show programmes. Incidentally, Telecomsoft pays its own phone bills, rent, accounts for its etc., and furthermore it is not in British Telecom's interest to support unprofitable businesses.

Perhaps the last word should go to Andrew Newson, who has two of his best programmes—the notorious Turner and Bayneski—to BT last year. Surprisingly, he's all in favour of the big boys: "It doesn't matter how big your cheque-book is—if you make silly decisions, you're still going to lose money. The only difference is that those with money can afford to go on making mistakes longer—and if someone in the industry can afford to train people in that way then it can be of benefit to all of us."

Looks like the training period is over for Telecomsoft—the month sees no less than four strong titles from the Birds—Virus, Rhapsody, Legend of the Crystal and, inevitably, Scorpion 2. Watch out everyone—these birds are BAD!



Legend of the Crystal—more releases. Check it out on page 16.

IS BIG BEAUTIFUL?

Do we really want large companies dominating the games world, or do we have a secret longing for the days of old-fashioned programmers who sell their own games at fairs and are accessible and (sometimes) responsive in a way that large companies can never be? The good news is that perhaps now we'll be able to have both.

Electra's name of a brand new software house that just goes to show that even nowadays you don't, everything. What's more, they could point the way to a whole new style of games programming and production that may have important repercussions for us-gameseeks.

Since the big companies have lots of money to spend, a whole host of small companies have sprung up offering programming, marketing, and sales services for the game. This means that it's now possible to launch your own software house by getting Small Company 1 to do the coding, Small Company 2 to do the production, and Small Company 3 to do the marketing and sales.

That's just what Electra have done. Oxford Digital Enterprises have written the game, a shoot-'em-up for the ST and Amiga. SPH are doing the production, and Entertainment International are managing the sales. Hey presto—the little birds gang together and do springs a whole new bird.

The sort of flexibility is something quite new in the

games business, where previously launching a title cost easily thousands of pounds, required a large office, and lots of in-house talent. It would bring greater publishing power to the small guys—the owners of Powerplay firms, for example—who can produce great software but may not have the muscle on their own to publish it. In some ways, it's a return to the days of the old programmer, Jeff Minter-type—small, imaginative concerns who can move quickly with the market and deliver hot products. Let's hope Electra can set an example that will inspire others to go the same way.



Electra's Better Dead Than Alien, along with a shell you can see.



SNIPPETS...

Up and coming titles for your review

SALEREGIONS DOMAİN

Parsons
April '97 £19.95pb

From the people that brought you *Into the Dragon's Nest* comes a romp in the lands of fantasy. It's a quest for the five gems of *Edon*, which, when brought together, naturally bring you ultimate power! The game is played over six levels where you battle the minions of the wizard *Azzazel*. Features promised are a 3D colour screen, player-mouse interaction, hundreds of locations, load-a-character and a huge gameplay map. Wonder how they're going to map-gameplay?



April '97 - Saleregions Domain

DEBUT

Parsons
April '97 £19.95pb

Also coming soon from Parsons is the mixture of arcade action, simulation and strategy, where you're trying to stabilise the ecosystem of a planet. To do this you have to control the weather system, process food chains, rehabilitate the population and try to stop wars and pollution. Looks like we can all play at being God again.



April '97 - Debut

JOE BLAZE 2

Playtex
Spectrum £1.95pc

The original game did well amongst the ranks of budget software and

now the main character's back as a London vigilante. His task is to clear the streets of muggers and punks (since when was being a punk a crime?) and save the ordinary citizens held prisoner in their own homes.

BLACK THORN

GGI
Spectrum £9.95pc
Commodore £9.95pc £11.95pb
Amstrad £9.95pc £16.95pb
April '97 £19.95pb

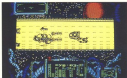
This is the latest of GGI's Copernicomm and dumps the player into the usual plethora of monsters, demons and dragons. The idea is to rescue nice nice folk who may then get extra weapons. Final level guardians and time limits also get in on the action. Expect this one in September.

THE PURY

March
Spectrum £9.95pc £14.95pb
Amstrad £9.95pc £14.95pb
April '97 £9.95pc £13.95pb

This looks like being the latest in reality racing games. This one is set on a track floating in space called the Pury where the onscreen karts (its champion drivers. Of course you've got to upbraid Earth's tennis against all comers. Knock other drivers off the track, shoot them, jolly lag or even make a dash to the line on foot if your engine cuts out. Its wonder Nigel Mansell isn't endorsing this one - a formula one grand prix sounds easy by comparison.

New Toys



App - The Pury

TD
Commodore £9.95pc £14.95pb
Spectrum £9.95pc

Probably the first time a game has been based around a robot - Phil Hordley's electronic opiate that won't number one. The game was delayed from last year but is now progressing towards release. The action starts in test mode with training before you get on to the real stuff.

App - 01



DREAM WEAVER

US Gold
Spectrum £9.95pc
Amstrad £9.95pc £14.95pb
Commodore £9.95pc £11.95pb
IBM PC £19.95pb

A short one up, that takes place entirely in your dreams, or is it the offices of *Magbook* too? Not, either was you're going to run into a lot of demons, aliens, minims, paggobas and all the other nasty things that pop up when dreams turn into nightmares. The final task is to close one and fix all the six eyes of *Coat*, destroying the power source of the Pass. It's enough to put you off sleeping.

DAILY RAIN

Wardini
April '97 £19.95pb
Amiga £19.95pb

A simulation based on the Lombard RAC Rally, and in which you get to be a lousy test driver. That's your viewpoint, but you're still got to change gear, steer, take the navigator's directions and generally not crash. Features will include damage reports and the chance to enhance the car.

MARS COP

Arsons
April '97 £19.95pb
Amiga £19.95pb

Arsons' somewhat delayed game is nearing completion. It's a first-shooter space pursuit game in which you have to defend the colony on Mars from the UFOs that have entered the solar system. Arsons say the game is faster and looser, combining strategy and shoot-'em-up. Don't out at the end of August.

New Clips



STARGLIDER 2

In the beginning there was a void, a blank
universe without life or progress.

And ARGONAUT Software looked upon the void
and said...

LET THERE BE FLIGHT
... and there was STARGLIDER.

And as time progressed, the art of three dimensional
solid graphics became known unto the
ARGONAUTS, and they rejoiced.

And they said...

LET US CREATE THE ULTIMATE
PROGRAM, TO HAVE IT SHINE ON OVER
ALL OTHER PROGRAMS IN THE
UNIVERSE.

... and there was a blinding light and the Earth spun
fast and revolved.

And as the fire diminished and the vapours cleared,
the brains of their labourers emerged from out of the
clouds.

THE ULTIMATE CREATIONS:

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TALLY HO!

Yes, it's true. You can get yourself on the road to winning your very own Private Pilot's Licence with ACE - in conjunction with Graemlin we're offering the winner of our competition £700 worth of flying time completely free. Alternatively, you could plump for a mouthwatering state-of-the-art radio-controlled plane that really puts the **solid** into solid 3D!

RIGHT TRACKER - THE GAME

Graemlin are offering the prizes to celebrate the launch of their latest game, *Right Tracker*, available for the Commodore 64/128, Amstrad SC, Spectrum, and Amstrad CPC models and burning into a shock-test vna so you read this.

The game claims to be the ultimate flight simulator - stress 'em up' and blasts you into the skies at the controls of a sophisticated bomber - your mission: sink the Bismarck.

You'll need to practice navigation and gunnery skills before taking the Bismarck and create your own flight plan, bearing in mind that the *MSB* Air Force, the aircraft carrier from which you took off,



Right Tracker

TAKE TO THE SKIES WITH
GRAEMLIN IN OUR HIGH-
FLYING COMPETITION...

may also be under attack and need protection if you're ever to get back home!

HERE'S WHAT YOU HAVE TO DO

To enter the competition, all you have to do is use your knowledge of pilots past and present to answer the three questions on the coupon below. Then enter your name and address and you're supported!

ACE Flight Tracker Competition,
4 Clonem Street
SOUTH
S84 1 1SL

The closing date for entries is 4th August 1988. The prize will go to the first correct entry chosen at random from those received before the closing date and the prizewinner will be announced in the October issue of *ACE*. Employees of Future Publishing Ltd and/or Graemlin are ineligible for entry - hard luck lady!

THE PRIZE

OPTION 1

£700 worth of flying lessons (or simply flying time if preferred) at absolutely no cost to you. We can arrange for the pilot to be seen at an airport close to your home. You'll probably be flying in an aircraft like the one pictured below and with your instructor will be able to master the basics of flying technique and theory - great practice for playing *Right Tracker*!

Naturally a full pilot's licence requires a greater investment in terms of time and money than is provided for by the pilot, but it will certainly give you a headstart should you be serious about flying - not to mention the thrill of flying!



OPTION 2

A Kyosho Zero Fighter complete with electric-powered motor and radio-control unit, plus a Futaba state-of-the-art digital radio control system. Domination of the skies around your home could soon be yours! (See page 5, this is the part of solid 3D flight simulator that's REALLY solid!



ENTRY FORM

NAME _____

ADDRESS _____

TEL. _____

Tick the box next to the correct answer to the three questions below.

1. Who took the lead role in the film *Reach For The Sky* about the air ace Douglas Gader?

- a) Marilyn Monroe
 b) Kenneth Williams
 c) Kenneth More

2. Who was the first pilot to break the sound barrier?

- a) Chuck Yeager
 b) Sam Clem
 c) Charles Brown

3. Which pilot carried out a forced landing in a famous international incident?

- a) Phoebe Weston
 b) Peter Connor
 c) Gary Powers

SPECTRUM 48K/128

20

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SEE PAGE 106 FOR DETAILS



THE NAME BEHIND
THE GREAT GAMES



STAR

Brought to you by the team who produced the top-selling STAR WARS® game, THE EMPIRE STRIKES BACK™ is the next stage of the unfolding drama.

This game follows the non-stop action of the movie and is a direct conversion of the famous coliseum.

The player takes the role of Luke Skywalker, piloting a snow-slicer against the huge Imperial Walkers. Darth Vader controls his forces with deadly cunning, using his Probe to search and attack the Rebel Base.

The action continues as the player becomes Han Solo in the Millennium Falcon, looking for safety in the galaxy whilst being attacked by Tie-Fighters, and dodging asteroid storms.

May the Force be with you - Always!

WARS



Programmed by
The Empire Strikes Back
The Empire Strikes Back



© 1982 THE
EMPIRE STRIKES
BACK
THE EMPIRE STRIKES
BACK

Published by

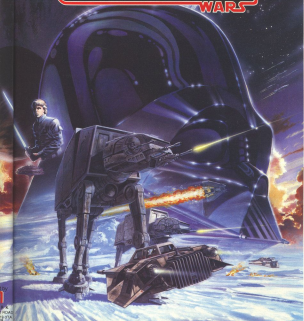
M

DOMARK
A WAREHOUSE FOR
ENTERTAINMENT

STAR

THE EMPIRE STRIKES BACK

WARS



by

1

1980

1980

1980

**BARBARIAN 2**

Palace

To Larry, this looks - and he's got a big sword. Not only that but the graphics are looked up and ready to go (and are looking so well). In that vision out before the fire of the members of the screen action and can claim a respectable playing area taking us at scores of head-clearing moments. Prepare to be shocked - one of the very best you'll see through with a treatment.

87 - One of the Best Software Games

HIT FOR SIX

THE EMPIRE STRIKES BACK

Donark

Wendy has the knowledge of the Death Star method, that up pops the Empire back to its new light. Once again, the game is based on the highly successful color-ops. There's some based on the film. Video graphics are made in evidence as you begin with the lights, weapons and anything else. Donark has some kind of to show at you.

Star... a rather tedious format, you, but how do you bring it back?

The software houses have won the toss and elected to bat. We'll soon be hearing the thud of packaging on shelves - 'and what a fine delivery that is'. Will they be making impressive scores of 900 not out, or trudging back to the pavilion with a duck? Better get your helmets on and prepare for some fast scrolling. There will be some pretty fine efforts, hits for six and the odd game that gets caught out, bowled over, stumped and run out by silly points. Now over to Radio 4 where during the tea interval Brian's about to enjoy a nice slice of cake and a game of *Virus*.





Gopsi—Is anyone else in there?

GOPS!

Big Apple

New software house Big Apple will give plenty of players the pop with this device arcade puzzle. You're got to travel on the blocks to pick up objects, while avoiding the holes and other dangers. If you go on a quest, that it could be good, but it could be disaster. Looks like an interesting beginning to the new boys.



Star Ray—Defender wants to eat arcade addicts doing for their laptops.

STAR RAY

Logotron

Defender makes a comeback in this swirling 3D-strategy. Remember all those little people to protect? Some kinds of robots to eat? These really exciting things that never know when to stop coming after you? Well here it is all over again, but with shiny 3D, 3D backgrounds.

TETRA QUEST

Microdeal

The label from the producer of Leatherstock and Goldrunner is a weird mixture of shoot-em-up and exploration. The strange thing here is that your cart is confined to a grid and has to collect objects without encountering the other robot inhabitants of the pathways. Purposeful use of teleports and beams helps things move along.



TQ—a grid of boards to test your patience.

HI-SCORE

18456

RR

2PLAYERS

345

1943

GO

Another of the Capcom coin-op conversions. These 3D screens show that you can expect plenty of weapons and juicy explosions. Illustrations may come to note that the screen is supposed to take place at the battle of Midway, while gameplayers busy like to know that you can still do coops and collect weapons by shooting dead into enemy planes.

BT—It doesn't look like this big bomber is going to survive much longer. Heck! BT—one of those planes, but with eight shooting stages every stage.

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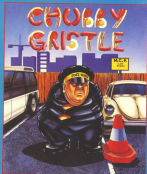
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BACK TO BASICS

After a few months' break – you *HAVE* been diligently practising all the tricks revealed in the first three instalments *HAVEN'T* you? – it's time to go back to basics...literally.

Basical every good picture sits on good basics – with a well thought-out background. Body-driven objects can jump out of you and still attract positively glow with added meaning.

However, if you examine the economy of published computer-generated pictures – whether they are

graphics-driven slides or state-of-the-art techniques – an almost total absence of identity, or none at all. The classic examples are checkered surfaces reflected in mirrored balls and the lot – more – space the lessons for using such simple backgrounds as themselves single – look at it, and the need to emphasize depth in the best available two-dimensional way.

Historically, most well-known computer artists were not in fact artists, they were scientists and programmers, used however by the only people with access to machines capable of computer graphics. However, for testing and diagnostic they were technically satisfactory. Their vision was limited. "Science fiction" images predominate, especially of "space" where many of the artistic rules can be abandoned – there is no "up" or "down", for example. The visual limitations of these early artists were further exaggerated by technical constraints. Early computers were very short of memory so pictures had to create visual effects very economically – the Lines of Sight test gives some elementary examples.

LINES OF SIGHT

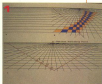
Since images are created on-screen as a series of horizontal lines scanning from top to bottom, the easiest and most memory efficient way to program a simple background emphasizing depth is to draw a series of horizontal lines with progressively increasing intervals between them. Although modern drawing programs are much less constrained by memory since this principle is all of use – see picture 1a.

The illusion of depth created by horizontal lines can be enhanced with a series of lines radiating from a point on the horizon to provide perspective. If colour and area fills are available then the spaces between the lines can be filled with just 2 colours and this simple pattern of lines a very effective sense of depth is created by the checkboard picture 1b.

Checkboards and mirrored spheres are now perhaps the worst clichés of computer graphics. Nevertheless, this basic perspective grid can be very useful as an underlying structure in any landscape drawing. It can be constructed quite simply and stored on disk to be brought back as a starting point for many landscape pictures.

The horizontal lines can be drawn with any progressively increasing interval between them. Picture 1 uses the simplest progression: 1, 2, 3, 4, 5... etc but the same numbers squared (1, 4, 9, 16, etc) would also work. To draw the perspective lines, to the vanishing point with the correct spacing can be difficult. A diagonal line passing through the grid square that you are standing on would pass through the opposite corners of one square on each parallel row to a point on the horizon close to the edge of the screen.

If you draw these construction lines (shown in red in picture 1c) it is relatively easy to draw the radiating perspective lines from the horizon vanishing point through each point that the construction lines cross, e.g. from x through 1, 2, 3, 4, etc. (plotted in red). The angle between the red diagonal construction lines should always be greater than 90 degrees or distortion will occur.



1. Horizontal construction line – each point is marked either from the top-down (1, 2, 3, etc)
2. Perspective construction lines showing checker board effect.
3. Perspective grid. Red diagonals should be at greater than 90 degree angle to each other.

For many drawings it is not really necessary to use such an elaborate grid as that described in the Lines of Light box, however. If the basic lines are fewer, simple construction lines can be drawn and the details of the landscape built up over them depending on the type of terrain. Figure 2a shows a much simpler construction for a 3D landscape valley with gentle hills on either side.

At this stage it is easy to try out several different points of view. Positioning the hor-

izon line near the top of the screen can give the impression that you are looking down into a valley from a hilltop or airplane. A low horizon and high hills gives the opposite effect. Working with a photo or painter can be very useful when making these decisions. Try to determine the structure of the photo and draw it in easily in copy.

If the background is to have no detail at all then the hills can be filled with colour (or preferred fills) with decreasing colour sat-

uration (more white) toward the horizon. The use of opaque, washed-out or dusty background can prove very effective in some circumstances, but increased detail makes for a more interesting composition. Using the underlying structure of the construction lines, gradually build up a sense of lines representing smaller hills, ridges, gullies, field boundaries, track cuttings, wind fences, etc... Try not to include too much detail at this stage, just structure.



Stages of building outline landscape features around an arbitrary grid lines. Red lines can be removed later using landscape editors.

- a. Outline features filled with a range of colours in 3D patterns, using copy to make those in the distance have a lower saturation than those in the middle ground.
- b. Addition of small bushes, trees, with shallow silhouette.
- c. Dark outlines removed from distant features to emphasize distance (see colorfields column).



DIS PLATE

So you have been avidly reading our series on how to draw and paint pixels, practicing every spare minute, and filling dozens of disks with your art work? And now you want to display it, show it off to the neighbours, exhibit in your local gallery, 3D something with it - but what and how?

Over the last few months a flood of packages have appeared designed to help us to make our static artwork look more interesting. The range of the software is so wide that it is impossible to keep up with reviewing it all. Instead we are going to try to mention as much as possible in a series of miscellaneous items in the graphics column.

The Amiga in particular is blessed with loads of graphics utilities, packages designed not to draw with, but to manipulate existing drawings. These fall broadly into two categories: image enhancement and Super-draw show. Some of the most useful items in the second group are mentioned below, and those in the first will be mentioned, together with other software and hardware items in the coming months. But first, what of the first SIT?

In spite of the wider software base, the ST seems quite definitely to be falling behind in the area of graphics utilities. Why? Several excellent new drawing systems have appeared recently, most notably the ultra-rapid Quadrow 3.0 and Quantum Paint, but when it comes to utilities nothing is in sight (Please put me right if you know different). I am willing to review any interesting and innovative graphics software for machines other than the Amiga if only I could find some.

Once you have built-up a range of images - whether grabbed using a digitiser, collected from tape and PG, or drawn by your own fair hands - you can begin to present them in an interesting way. Standard slide show methods are okay but what is really needed is a lot of production like they use in pop-music and television.

The simplest sort of display production is the use of fancy wipes and fades. This and much more using ANIMATION EFFECTS (from Enterprise/Amiga Centre Scotland £35) provides a basic access to all these special effects with Mattri-Hack's usual simple no-fills user interface but without much in the way of control over speed and timing. A bargain price though!

More versatility is provided by TRYPACHE (from Group/Meridian £18.95). Over 50 special effects are available, most of which are smooth and Red-line in operation. Controlled via menus and excellent icons, the program is fairly easy to use. Though some problems can arise if your palette change greatly from picture to picture. A nice touch is the ability to add a spoken timing commentary.

Even more control is on hand with THE DIRECTOR (the High Avenue Group/Amiga Centre Scotland £47) though at the expense of a bit of user-friendliness. The Director is, to quote "...a professional display and animation language...". This seems a little tall-order for us quaffed Amigans but even a very rudimentary knowledge of BASIC (in which the language used bears a strong resemblance) allows some excellent presentations with little effort.

The most unusual utility is another in Mattri-Hack's Animation series - ANIMATION STAND. One of the conventional TV and conventional animator effects is pan and zoom across the scene. Previously no software has allowed a smooth and effective pan or zoom across a picture. Usually, drawing programs seem to be an area by entering pixels. STAND uses a special 'Integrator' technique to 'freeze' the imagery of the detail without causing jaggies. In practice the method works very well, creating a unique way to view your artwork.

If the construction lines are obvious in a contrasting colour like red, it is easiest to delete. Over trees is one base colour that suits the drawing well as yellow, olive-green or mid green. Black is used in pencil for detail. When the outline is complete you can the red lines can be removed by fading or erasing all the other colours and pasting instead with the background shade.

The next stage is to fill the areas you have sketched in with body colour, and it



Myrtle Park. These brushes were used to outline and background detail. First trees and bushes were filled to define position. Spray shades as roughly in position. Second pass with less opacity matching the first. Third and final areas through gaps. All features can be copied and flipped for variety.

HOW TO DRAW TREES

The tree in **MYRTLE** was formed from a triangular shaped brush - smooth on top, broken underneath - like that of 4.2. This is repeatedly passed down in an overlapping fashion (about five fish scales) modeling the desired shape of tree. Branches can be drawn into the black gaps left and a trunk added. When the tree is pasted down, all of the background details show through the Manxhammer area, eliminating all shadows. This can be corrected by lightly spraying out with a dark shade the entire area of the tree just pasted then repeating the tree exactly on top once again. The tree the shade shows through. If you have enough colours the process can be carried out when composing the tree originally but this tends to occlude all of the area behind the tree whereas you really need some of the background to show through.

Final picture can be used as a background to any desired scene. It can be changed in any number of ways to depict a different picture. 

you have it tessellate pixels (34 x 30 shaded) or pattern like at 4 shades to your limit. Each of the trees to be filled must obviously have a continuous border. Temporarily changing the outline to a darker shade makes gaps easier to find. Even if you do not want a wavy effect, making the distance colour lighter than the close ones enhances the feeling of depth. Nevertheless, the real landscape usually has a wide range of tones on a clear day so do not be afraid to use lots of shades if you have them. Nature 3e suggests this directly without using its depth.

The final job is to add the details of background, trees, animals, rock outcrops, rocks, buildings, and need imperceptibly shaded out. If it is a bright day everything will probably be shaded. If you have a sophisticated simulation package like **Photos Realist** or the **Avatar** or **Spectrum 5/2** for the 3D, you may be able to post the shadows on very attractively. **Deluxe Paint** and **Seegas** like colour a degree of shading but the palette tends to be set up properly first. An alternative method was discussed in the first installment of this series, using patterned tiles with alternative dark colour and transparent pixels. The pixels of dark fill over the area but allows some of the original colour to show through. A finishing touch shows in picture 3e is the removal of dark outlines, especially on distant hills.

5



The complete picture is **WYSIWYG**. The background we have produced sits behind a traditional view of brushes, lines and text. The windows/brushes used to produce these details are shown in picture 4, in fact the way to fit for the scaled part of the image is produced as it is made from only lines or four simple elements, a clamp-it piece, a brush, a tree branch and a section of roadbed.

These are all plotted down repeatedly, sometimes slightly altering their scale or tipping them for variety. With a bit of practice, the art of drawing is a very easy.

The great advantage of producing a background on a computer is that it can be recycled in other pictures. All the steps in the production of an image should be saved so you go along as a matter of course. After

the final display is observed the most important steps should be kept for later use. Sometimes just tipping them horizontal is not changing a few values is enough, but more complex alterations can easily be made so that a particular background can be reused many times. Next month, we shall look at some of the possibilities and techniques used England by some exotic locations.

HANG 'EM HIGH!

So you think you're a pixel prodigy, eh? Get a load of this month's selection of digital masterpieces and think again...

SLUGSLIPS

We don't often get requests for a real picture sent in. The obvious reason is that they are perhaps the hardest subject to tackle effectively. Peter Brown's version of Maggie's Favourite Man shows us though, even if it does seem to have a touch of mutton.



SUPERSTING

Considering this was Norwich-based Michael Pease's first ever picture with Digital Bits, we were very impressed indeed. Michael notes that "colour-palette, for example from yellow to orange, was achieved using MacPaint™ and not SIMLAR. The SIMLAR mode I find rather clumsy and inefficient, especially in detailed work."



CARTOON CAPERS

Cartoonists often design their characters using certain basic shapes (e.g. circles, ovals, and so on) that make the image easy to replicate and scale accurately time and time again. This approach obviously lends itself well to computerisation, so it's no surprise that we often get sent readers' impressions of well-known cartoon-characters.



MacPaint's repetitive Judge Dredd (center) is plotted to fit your old Dear Mike of Southampton on the next 27.

Send the Deck - another nice little reproduction of the 27.



Oh, there's a little bit of technical trouble here as it's a digital 277 using the 48K mode of pages.

Any Computer Production of Microsoft (S.A.), the Microsoft (S.A.) based on the Porsche 911 (center), using Windows 84 for the Commodore.



SEND 'EM IN...

You too can achieve outstanding results by having your personal systems are played in full. Adding color in these pages if you want to make a splash in the world of computer art, this is the place to start. "This issue" Someone might say you're a little late and offer you work. At the very least, you get into print - and that's a great in any portfolio.

Some of your work on top is due to Amiga, ACE, A Queen, Amiga, B&B, IBM, etc. Screens should ideally be stored along with a display program to save time at the end. Though we do have copies of most of the popular art pack, don't forget to include some eye on how you draw the picture to the other. Can't wait from your page.

VRRROOOOM!

Car's seem to be one of the most popular subjects, and these examples only go to show that you don't need a state-of-the-art 16-bit machine to come up with a decent image...

QUADRALLEN



LOGOTRON LTD. - SINTHESE VOOR DE HULPEINDUSTRIE - LUSTON 18 600



Being in the easy level might mean you skip other levels, but you get no stars.

VINDICATORS

April '89

Playing this one or two-players 3D space game is no picnic until you get to grips with the controls, which consist of two joysticks per player. The player pulls and pushes the joysticks in order to move his/her on-screen tank around the multi-level stations searching for the concealed centre in each level - bomb it, though, whenever you can, and you might just stop the invasion by the evil Vindicator empire (but it's unlikely).

The levels are sub-divided into sectors and a wall from each you'll need to blast or level one key to open the exit door. Practice with the controls is essential before you attempt any of this because the sectors are guarded by various tanks and gun emplacements designed to make your life difficult. Shooting the steering tanks is tough to start with because your target is fixed, but if you

BOMB THE BASE!



The player's opponent uses tanks that'll leave without collecting those fuel pods, huh? The blue tank's found the key—now he has to find the exit.

drive over the stars that can be found lying on the ground, you can buy yourself some juicy old-ies at the end of the sector. There's infinite a gun-rotating option which allows the player to rotate the turret independently of the body of the tank simply by pressing the uppermost of the two buttons that use an analog joystick.

You can save your stars from each level, until you can afford to buy something you think is really important, like armour or extra speed. It's just as important to collect fuel though - run out during a game and you lose your one and only life.

Multiplayer is not your usual run-of-the-mill arcade game. Sure, it looks and sounds great, but the action is not as frantic as you



Get here it's. Really goes through slowly.

BAS

Taito
30p

Who said there were only seven different types of man? Perhaps there are only the same number of coin-up scenarios. This one surfaced a long, long time ago and was called Pac-man. Nowadays we've got 50 Pac-man games, but here's one that reverts to the old 80-stage idea with power pills to be collected and various enemies to be avoided. The '88 incarnation puts the player in a circular CD-like mazelike with a iron-firing gun, and end-of-level guardians to defeat. It's great fun to play and a great nostalgia fix.

VULCAN VENTURE

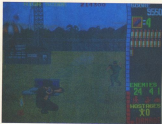
Konami
30p

No, it's got nothing to do with Star Trek. The continuously sideways scrolling shoot-em-up has got a lot to do with Gandemon and Hercules though, and is just like those earlier Konami games with a few extra fills. Your routes through the game are far more complicated and the extra weapons given more devastating, but you're still going to have your work cut out and you'll have to be very sharp to defeat a band of level guardians.

High repeat rate would need to make a date as you muddle around the scenery. In this respect it's like a bunch of best-of-the-series number-one titles, you're better off playing something like Operation Wolf.

OPERATION WOLF

We brought you news of this machine back in issue 8, but unfortunately we were unable to show you any photographs of the game in action - unless...



Steering up a personal battle with the wicked gun.



Steering a flat track with the fire.



With 24 enemies, 2 helicopters and a tank left to destroy, you've got your work cut out.



A boss level - a lot of the stars and ball paths before a short time that you can't see the stars or you.

BAD DUDES VERSUS DRAGON NINJA

Data East
30p

Times for arcade games get more don't they? This simultaneous two-player shoot-em-up plays rather better than the title suggests. Push your way through hordes of baddies in the left-right corridor, punching and kicking them into oblivion. If you're lucky you may be able to pick up an extra weapon like a bomb or dagger to make your job easier. We hope to bring you a further report on this machine in the future.

ATARI ST

EXPLORE THE

Your plane has ditched on a mysterious planet somewhere in deep space. That's you and your companions are alive but recovery from the impact is short lived - a large shape is moving towards you, as it gets closer you rub your eyes in disbelief - a Dinosaur - where are you... and when? Now you team to survive in a world untouched by modern life - a world frozen in time. Stunning graphics and starting action in this thrilling narrative game.



OF



You are one of the elite - a parachuted, crash trooper in battle against a formidable enemy. You'll need all your skills to take advantage of every situation, stamina to keep on-going when others would falter and courage to face the countless bombardment by enemy troops, helicopters and artillery and if you survive Army Moves you'll have some great tales to tell.

ARMY MOVES



AND BEYOND HIGHEST YOU



£19.95
EACH



HIDE TREASURES

THE



The Award-winning film by Oliver Stone has been stunningly translated to the software entertainment world, as creating a Blockbuster Computer Game. Hailed as the "Best Film Tie-in to date" - the programme has received brilliant reviews on all formats. Special GreenPack containing a VHS film poster game pack and audio cassette presents of Oliver Stone's classic song "Tracks of my Tears".



BEYOND THE STREIGHTS OCEAN



Don't have passed... yet despite apparent evidence in the original ARKNOH game. Dimensional controlling force DON has come back to life, and occupying the huge space over DON, has entered our Universe ARKNOH3D huge space fighter ARKNOH through long forgotten computer data and it finds the answer to his threat - "ARKNOH 2" is launched and speeds towards the treasure island presence, before it can extract its revenge... "The Revenge of Don"



FLARE

You read it first in last month's ACE: there's a brand new micro out there that could knock the whole computer entertainment world for six, and it's so unconventional it seems to defy logic. Designed from the outset as a mass-produced machine, it's already attracted interest from manufacturers as large as Amstrad and Atari - but will they take it up? And what will we see in the shops if they do? Andy Wilton investigates...

ARCHITECTURE



The Flare board, complete with its four supplementary custom chips.

The Flare One is not really one more but two. The first job of the machine is shared by the Z80, the latter, the video chip and the job-of-it-trades 'game' chip. The Z80 does the fine decision making here, while the latter handles video operations and other large, repetitive memory-searching tasks. They take turns; the Z80 sets the latter working as desired, and the latter then feeds the Z80 and its task the bit's data.

Unlike many Z80 machines, the 8-bit half of the Flare One runs at very nearly full speed despite the video chip's need to access screen memory. Where the Z80s in the Spectrum and CPC are both locked out of full significant portions of time, the Flare Z80 - a chip that runs 80% faster in any case - and its little third things almost entirely to themselves. There are also five-bitable comparators here with the Armg, which can suffer significant losses of processing time because of video access, and the Arghmedes which suffers very heavily indeed on this front.

That might be the whole machine as far as most people are concerned, but there's another side to the Flare One which could prove to be crucial. The machine has a separate third setup consisting of its fourth custom chip - the right-angle processor, or DSP for short - and two tiny portions of very fast, very expensive static RAM.

The DSP is technically both sophisticated and complex - hardened silicon-breaks can check out the low for details - but the big picture goes like this. The DSP can crunch numbers at a terrific, Arghmedes-beating speed, making it very handy for a number of tasks. It could handle all the 3D calculations for a vector- or solid-graphics game, put together some very complex sound-waveforms,

or clean the video 'buffer' out of a frame-grabbed image. It could probably also take its talents to big number-crunching problems like modelling or financial generation, both of these being natural applications for a machine with such a good graphics display.

The DSP is a great deal faster to program than any other processor in the modern micro-world, but it's got enormous potential. For one it's tremendously fast, but because it's a separate unit it can leave the Z80 and latter free to do other things while it takes care of the number crunching. That's not just power - that's useful power!

The Flare One's Architecture



FIGURE 101 - Flare One Architecture

The Flare One is an 8-bit micro. Yes, it can move graphics and block graphics faster than an 8-bit one in 8-bit colour or text. True, it can store text there three faster than an Amiga; store-though, it can handle the scale of 3D structures better even than the ultra-speedy Arghmedes can. But it is an 8-bit micro, hence. Its normal processor is a Z80 - essentially 8-bit. In city Spectrum or CPC jargon will tell you - and though it's got a better, more 8-bit too. Now everyone knows that 8-bit micros are fast, slow and generally things of the past, so how come this one knocks spots off the 16-bit competition?

The answer lies in the Cambridge suburb of Chesham where Martin Bennett, Ben Claxton and John Mellorson - also Flare Technology - have been putting their hard-earned brains into precision. The technical side of their success proves an unconventional design and some very powerful custom silicon base ideas and created the details but the oil starts from something very simple: a belief in computers as pieces of leisure equipment. Alan and Commodore want to let the game 'letters to businessmen, Access see the Arghmedes fitting in best in the classroom, but those just want to entertain people by focusing on games, graphics and music performance in the context of almost everything else. They've managed to stand accepted wisdom on its head.

Something like this main piece of effort have gone into the Flare One board, and it shows, the thing is complex. That's not to say that the board's crowded with costly little bits, but neither that the Z80 and four whopping great custom chips all have to work together - and two of these four are processors in their own right. During the board's development time, Flare have funded the work and kept themselves alive by taking on hardware projects from other businesses, notably Amstrad themselves. What with the work and consistently experience of Sector



The Flare team - will their machine change the face of computer entertainment?

fewest before setting up on their own, but in the old days of designing for mass production.

The problem now is to actually get the machine manufactured, and that's well beyond Flare's resources. While several companies have shown interest, the front-runner is the naming strain in Acornsoft. While the boys from Brentwood could certainly fit the Flare One into their product line - probably by designing the silicon spectrum to make tools - such success-deferit always works a great deal, it's a complex task taking the months that take Acornsoft one putting Flare over the machine, a claim both sides strongly deny.

But will Acornsoft want to make such an unenviable machine? As it stands now, the Flare One's specifications look alluring - and that's not saying the final realisation out of bags for the moment. The Flare One can consistently manage an 800-

line text screen, so word processing and other serious uses are just about out of the question. Its screen takes up as colossal bit of memory, only the Acornbeats and top-end PCs can make its under 40000. It has no screen palette on sale. To change one of the palette colours, you need to change all the pixels drawn in that colour.

The above points aren't problems at all, but they certainly show what an unusual approach Flare have taken. The idea behind the Flare One project was to produce not an all-round machine but an entertainment machine. The design demands

many assumptions made by manufacturers in those years, and in its philosophy almost makes a throwback to consoles. When CD it receives the drops, the entry-level Flare One will quite possibly load programs from tape, and may not even have a keyboard. This is not an crazy as it sounds: tapes are a very cheap storage medium, especially for

games, and with modern printer-style operating systems a keyboard may simply be unnecessary. Besides, Flare have a place to aim for. They want to see the basic machine selling for under £200. ■



GOOD FOR GAMES?

If the Flare One does make it onto the market, one game's house you can expect to see supporting it is Realtime. "A byte-per-pixel screen is just what you want for 3D work," said Realtime's Ian Oliver. "It makes things so easy. We took a look at the new VGA graphics boards for the IBM PC because that's got a byte-per-pixel mode, but it wasn't any use; you could only have one screen, and you need two for games programming. Otherwise there'd be a VGA version of Castle Command."

20th author David Watkin is a fan of byte-per-pixel screen layouts - "They're much easier to program for than bitplanes" - but the DSP's resolution speed also caught his attention. "Two thousand vertices every refresh (1 refresh = 1/60th of a second) is quite impressive. You'd be very hard put to get that kind of performance out of an Archimedes - but then that's not really the intention. The big tasks in said 3D are scanning databases of shapes and putting polygons on screen."

SPECIFICATIONS

MACHINE	TYPICAL RES	COLORS (ON-SCREEN)	COLORS TOTAL	PRICE
ATARI ST	320 x 200	16	612	£399
AMIGA	320 x 200	32	4096	£399
ARCHIMEDES	320 x 256	256	4096	£600
FLARE	256 x 256	256	256	£300?

SCREEN STORY

The extraordinary graphics power of the Flare One stems from a whole series of related design features, but central to the whole thing is the layout of the screen in memory.

The 128K of video RAM is split into two 64K screen areas. The normal arrangement has the video chip displaying one of these (the 'front screen') while the other updates the other ('the back screen'). Once the back screen has been updated the two are switched over and the updating process starts again, continually repeating as long as animation is required.

The machine has two screen modes, either 256 x 256 pixels in up to 254 colours (see also p 107) or 512 x 256 pixels in up to 16 colours (high res). In the res, each byte of screen memory gives the colour of one pixel. In high-res things are a lot more complicated with each half (or 'byte') of a screen byte representing one pixel. The normal games mode would be low res, because its simple byte-per-pixel screen layout makes graphics manipulation very easy indeed.

In low res, the byte values represent the physical colours of pixels, not the palette colour. That is, you decide what colour a sprite is going to be when you actually draw it. This isn't a statement of the obvious: most modern micro use palette colours, which you can change at any time. For example, on an Amiga you set colour A to be green, and draw a line in colour A. This simply gives you a green line. If you set an colour B to be red, the line you draw instantly turns red - so does anything else you've drawn in colour B.

The Flare One doesn't have a palette as such. If you draw a line in green, the only way to turn red is to completely redraw it. In practice it's only way to simulate palette changes using the video, but if you're used to the Amiga's way of doing things it'll strike you as odd that you should have to do this.

If you're used to the Amiga's way of doing things you'll find the Flare One pretty odd right the way through.

BYTES, LINES, OR RATHER THE LACK OF THEM

The byte-per-pixel layout of the Flare's screen screen is in total contrast to the bitplane system used by the ST and Amiga, and gives the machine a distinctive edge over them.

A typical ST or Amiga game screen is made up of four separate 'bitplanes'. Each byte of a bitplane corresponds to a row of eight pixels on screen, giving a small amount of information about each of them. The video chip has to combine this information with similar data from bytes in the other three bitplanes to find out what colour each of those pixels actually is.

In other words, if you want to set the colour of one pixel you'll have to alter four different bytes of screen memory, one in each of the bitplanes. What's more you'll have to make the alterations carefully so as not to disturb the other information in each byte and to accidentally change the colour of neighbour pixels in the same row-eight.

This careful attention is a fairly precise affair for the old-fashioned 'writing mask' technique used in more special effects. In practice you're not to do three separate operations on each byte; you set the information already in the byte, combine it with a 'mask' byte to clear out the data you want to alter, combine the result of that with a 'total' byte to fill the gap made by the mask, and then write the bit-planes back into memory.

So at that? That's three read operations and one write operation for each byte, and you've got to alter four bytes in all. A decent game programmer can cut out the mask for the 'mask' and 'total' bytes



The better screen is dead, if these grabbed images meant the screen - but it's too fast to photograph



Even without a palette in this conventional sense, colour changes like this are also not quick thanks to the video.

steadily enough (but it still takes eight memory accesses and another eight internal processor operations to change one pixel). The Flare One can do the whole thing with one single write operation, no mask and no internal moving around. No wonder it's so quick!

The bitplane layout handles a lot better what you'd expect several different pixels in one go, doing software sprite operations for example, but the

BENCHMARKS

MACHINE	CLEAR	VECTOR LINE	FILL LINE	SPRITE
ATARI ST	160	2.5	30	22
AMIGA	128	4	40	57
ARCHIMEDES	540	32	200	86
FLARE	80	80	60	30

The four sets of performance figures, CLEAR, VECTOR LINE, FILL LINE and SPRITE are rough estimates of the four machines' raw screen-filling power, measured in thousands of pixels per frame, (1 frame = 1/50th of a second) - so the higher the number, the better the machine. CLEAR is equivalent filling of a large area, an important ability for 3D games which need to clear a screen area before drawing shapes onto it. VECTOR LINE is line-drawing between arbitrary points as used in user-made graphics games. FILL LINE involves drawing horizontal lines of the kind used to fill a large polygon in a solid 3D game, working on a line length of about 30 pixels. SPRITE involves putting an arbitrary shape on screen, but without wiping the background first. Some of the figures are based on manufacturer's estimates we haven't been able to verify. Also NB that Amiga and more particularly Archimedes figures could suffer badly from screen chip process, (many Amiga games only use 16 colours at once, giving them a performance very similar to their ST equivalents.)

Any chip that can handle a 3000-vertex 3D world (and/or process 30 times a second) can reasonably claim to be powerful. Well, that's what Flare reckons the DSP (digital signal processor) chip in their local can manage. For how come it's so fast?

It's not just a question of brute force: the DSP runs at 6MHz - that is it can perform 6 million 'logical' or individual operations per second - whereas the ST's 68000 runs at 8MHz. Despite this the DSP is far and away the faster of the two chips, thanks to advances made in chip design since the 68000's day.

The DSP is a reduced instruction set chip (RISC) for short. This means that, like the Acorn ARM processor used in the Archimedes, it can only perform a small number of different operations. Just that a complex chip like the 68000 can do with one instruction might take the DSP two or three - but those two or three will take less time than the 68000 one, usually much

Plan's no slouch at these either as the Benchmark show. Bear in mind that a Plan One pixel can be any one of 256 colours as opposed to 16 for the ST or 32 for the Amiga (obscuring impractical reading), and its performance looks like a remarkable improvement to the per-pixel way of doing things.

THAT BITTER

The bitter's speed of conventional operations may be impressive, but that isn't all it can do. If the screens set up properly, the fancy little chip can also perform collision detection and foot-casting/rails automatically.

This means sprite-based 2D games very easy to write, and could also come in handy for displays with overlapping windows. These facilities work by varying depth in screen/background colours in each pixel's screen memory byte, and this necessarily cuts down the range of colours available. You'll still always have 16 colours available in low res; however, so this is unlikely to cause games suffers problem.

Another technique that uses logical-colour information is mask-masking. Many machines allow you to split the screen into areas of different modes, but Plan has really pushed things to the limit. You can set each byte of the Plan One's screen memory to be either one colour or ten high-res pixels, so that primary areas on a multi-colour background (or vice versa) can be just about any shape you want. This is very useful for text messages, instructions/parts and/or detailed sprites. Again then, you can use the high/low res indicator as a depth indicator too, really producing real leaves from graphics operations if you wish.

CUSTOM SILICON

The Plan One's custom chips are remarkable not only because they're so ambitious – made-to-measure ASIC processors are rare things indeed – but because of the shoestring budget they were produced on. Until recently, prototype custom chips have been produced by photographic methods at an initial cost of around 100,000 per design. New techniques meant that Cambridge Ion Clusters could knock them out at a tenth of the price by using an 'X-beam' – an electron gun, that is – to cut the pattern directly into the silicon.

Plan's creative use of custom silicon caught the attention of the Department of Trade and Industry, who've made a 10-minute film about the company. The DTI are trying to encourage more manufacturers to use custom silicon as a way of increasing efficiency, and are keen on the Plan One mostly because it's such a clear example, both financially and literally, of the technology's advantages.



It's difficult to see graphs show really is important.

● NEXT BIG THING

If the Plan One isn't the success it's shaping up to be, it wouldn't be the first time a potentially earth-shattering micro fell by the wayside. The history of microcomputing is littered with machines that were well put together, great value for money or years ahead of their time but still never quite made it in – or even to – the marketplace.

Computer fans with longish memories may remember the Memotech MT3 series, a set of sturdy 280-based colour computers well liked by programmers but sadly unsupported on the games side of things. Deleted attempts to give the machines Spectrum compatibility failed to save them from commercial failure and consignment to their owner's attic.

Another would-be blockbuster micro went through such unhappy times as Sansual, DPC (renowned to stand for Stamp-Proof Course) and Alan before eventually being launched under the name of its creators Enterprise. Commonly known as the Plan, the machine had a

built-in joystick and almost no games software; terrific graphics and only a poor little 280 to drive them; and a fantastically comprehensive Basic that ran at a snail's pace. The console design's pleasingly rounded edges made the Plan look like an artist's palette without a hole in it, or possibly a chocolate micro that had been left in the sun too long. There must be a warehouse full of the things somewhere.

Possibly the greatest of the failed contenders, the GL, came from Sinclair Research's very own Uncle Clive. Its central processor was the 68000, the runt of the 68000 litter, which put the GL at least a year ahead of its time (1984). While the press haggled over whether the 68000 was a 32-bit chip as Sinclair claimed, or in fact just an 8-bit chip with ideas above its station – history favours the latter point of view – pundits tended to ignore the machine's real problem, namely that the GL's microdrive system was wholly inadequate for serious use and too expensive for mass game distribution.

Needless to say, the GL got previous time games support despite being the most powerful home machine of its day. ❖

POWER CHIP



One of the most expensive, Motorola's going for last for the silicon to build. The speed is slow for the time, but the performance characteristics are all the DSP's work.

low. The typical 68000 instruction takes 4.4 in 10 nsecs while almost all DSP instructions execute in a single cycle.

Given where the DSP has to break its one-cycle one-instruction stride, there's very little else it doesn't. Multiplication is always a slow business as far as chips are concerned, and the DSP's mul-



tipule is easy – there are only 16 multiplies to deal with – but Plan makes the DSP use hardly 3000 multiplies at its own speed. The year ahead's second chip is that!

tiply takes up a whopping 7 cycles (compared to a normal 50 or 60 cycles on a 68000) and that's nowhere near as fast as it sounds. The multiplier side of the DSP is completely separate from the rest of its innards, so your DSP program can carry on with other tasks until the result is ready. Clever stuff!

Move over BROTHERS!!! Make way for ...

The Great Giana Sisters



Where one famous double act stopped short, another begins, headbatta and dozens, platforms and pits - all delivered with a glamour and style that neatly disguises the cunning tricks and tantalising lessons of a couple of wild cats.

"This is one of the most addictive arcade adventures I have ever played, the gameplay is fabulous."
Soap Gold Medal.
"Having been totally addicted to the original Super Mario Bros., it is no mean feat to say that I found the Giana Sisters as compulsive."
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WHO'S BAD!?

GAMES FOR PROGRAMMERS

We depend on the independent programmers of this country to come up with technically impressive, manically playable games – titles like *Virus*, *Lords of Midnight* – but who do they depend on? What sort of games will these software mavericks be loading up tonight after a hard day's work on their latest blockbusters? What do they look for in other people's games, and who do they rely on to deliver it?

GETTING ANALYTICAL

GThere are two reasons why a programmer might be interested in statistical data about his. The first and most obvious is the same one everybody has the feeling of a game — the sheer enjoyment of playing — but the second is peculiar to people who work with machines only by writing. It's analysis, the practice of judging a game by the technical skill that went into writing it.

Analysts are interested in the good of writing, with movement in 3D shape manipulation. This burning question is "Could I have written that?" Analysts care to investigate strange things when they see a really original game technique. They'll sit down with pencil and paper to figure it out and know it works. They are hard people to impress. Games usually manage the tricky bit by using something you never felt suited to — always writing on the ST or Spectrum, or said ST on a C64 perhaps — but the occasional little like Knight Lore or Center Command will knock anybody's socks off by the sheer scale of its ambition.

If a surprisingly large number of programmers do analyze, there are some good reasons for this. There's probably an element of competition in these activities — programmers writing alone can only judge their own skill at the job by looking at other people's latest games — and also a natural professional curiosity, but there's another side to it as well. Most programmers are either reluctant to spend their spare time playing computer games, or simply don't have any spare time in the first place. If you only look at a game for five or ten minutes you won't see much of its gameplay — unless it's very simple indeed, that is — but you'll get a good idea of the technical skill involved in writing it. In other words, analysis may well be all that a lot of programmers have time for.

JON RITMAN

Since his games debut with the improbably named *Remix* Series, Jon has written some pretty hot stuff: programmed *Matchday*, *Reflex*, *Revol*, and even *Real* and *Matchday 2* for Ocean. Jon's currently working on a futuristic on-line game for EMI, the arcade and Nintendo cartridge company via its UK-based houses Ties and Chris Trampier. The game will run on SAMIs and dedicated gaming hardware — "the actual board uses a scaled up 286. It's a Nintendo world which has built-in quality instructions and stuff" — but Jon plans to convert it down to the home market as well possible.

I don't really play a lot of games. I don't like violent shoot-'em-ups, and they never do account for 90% of the stuff released these days. I read most of the magazines pretty thoroughly for the reviews, but I won't buy things unless they look original. My games collection runs to 20 titles or so, but most of them are pretty old.

The *Revised* (and *Command*) was a lovely idea, but I didn't like the way it was so waxy



Knight Lore by Williams is a game defined to almost everyone as the origin of "What I saw But I just thought 'How the hell are they doing that?'" (Chris Trampier)

to get disconnected. I prefer something really straightforward like *Knightsend*, say?

You played all of Ocean's stuff apart from *Center Command* — it sounds great but I haven't got an ST, so I've not seen it yet. I think *Revised* was very, very complex people!

The graphic techniques for generating the landscape in *Knightsend* (Miles Singleton, I believe) were very clever indeed. I never really got to grips with the game itself though. Its strategy really, and that kind of thing takes a lot of time to get into. I prefer games which keep things relatively simple. I want it to be obvious what you're got to do. I liked your *Knight Lore* (I missed the day I missed the trained *Matchday* crew, and I just went 'Wow! I really want to write games like that. I went away with my head full of ideas for *Knight Lore*-style games."



DAVID BRADEN

Active (with his best friend) of the remarkably successful EMI, David's more recent titles to name were the starring *Archon* and *Archon 2* for the ST incarnation *Virus* (see Screen Test for review).

He's currently working on *Amiga Virus*, but once that's out of the way it'll be back to the somewhat task of writing an *Elite* sequel — don't expect to see that one this year!

I try not to play computer games too much. It's in kind of a computer screen programming all-day, with my spare time I like to get away from it, do things out of doors or whatever. It's not that I don't enjoy games, and it's certainly not that being a programmer spoils them to me; it can be very interesting seeing whether people have done things properly or not. Like *Center Command* for instance, that does look very good. Unfortunately it was built like you'd need to play it a lot to do it justice — and as I say, both something I try not to do.

STEVE BAR

Steve has firmly established himself in the ST and Amiga world with games like *Goldrunner*, *Remix* *Box* and *Return to Genesis*. His new convert to the latest hit, *Knightsend*, is



Center Command by Williams is a game you can't help but love (but never had chance to play it properly). The only bit that has a good rhythm... (Mike Singleton)

run on the Amiga ST toward coin-op systems, before he starts on the ST conversion of Logotron's forthcoming *Amiga* title *Star Boy*. Future projects include an Amiga arcade adventure for Microlevel based on the cult home/comedy video *Fight Night*.

I play mostly arcade games. I've never really seen a home computer game to measure up to the arcade. I really got into the concept of playing a whole book, and actually had a machine of those. Once I managed to completely finish it without being a bit like *The Conan*, obviously was very disappointing in comparison, but then what can you expect? The bookmaker just isn't the same loop.

Of those home games that I have enjoyed, the way that *Knightsend* was very attractive. The *Revised* was very good too. I was playing the *Amiga* version recently, but I ended up playing it for more than I needed too, and got to somewhere around screen 1000. When I play a home game, it's just the gameplay that I'm interested in. I couldn't care less about the technical skill that went into it so long as the gameplay's right. I still play *Jeopardy* on the C64 and both technically well, but the game itself is great. When I write *Goldrunner*, *Remix* *Box* and *Return to Genesis*, I did them all as challenges really. People said that it couldn't be done — the fact that in *Goldrunner*, the large gates in *Box* and the horizontal scrolling in *Return to Genesis* — so I set out to prove them wrong. I think gameplay is more important though, and the converting on that does take an awful long time. I had a simple vertical scroller and I finished the technical side of it about six weeks after the PCW show had left, but it's only just been released. I needed the time in between to get the game more and difficulty using the way I wanted them.



STEVE TURNER

Steve's finished up a bit of number of software bits over the years — *Magnetics* and *Revolutions* are two of the more recent games we see to be the same of gameplay — and he's not too far from his fourth effort. Right now he's busy converting Andrew Braybrook's unrelaxed



The Settlers, by Geoff Crammond. When this old-time strategy scenario got get looked after by me, it was already hot. Joe Bower found it fascinating, and Mike Sinclair of the month. There's a beautiful piece of sculpture. It actually cost me not bought a copy.

Old-time strategy is the Spectrum, both versions being old and very rare in the States.

I don't often find the time to play games - not really at my rate - but I do enjoy them. I usually go for good old-fashioned strategy-type. I like the feeling of power you get from them, especially progressive shoot-'em-ups like Side Arms or that sort of thing. In the circles my tastes are probably still the King. I love the impression of speed you get in that.

I don't really think about the technical side of games like playing. If there are things (such as progress or something like that) that I don't like, I often, I won't. Good programming doesn't normally stand out.

I like games I can get into quickly. For instance, there's usually all I have time to do, I don't normally go by choice - one game can be in different form (such as - but I do look forward to seeing that Chess set).



RAFF CROCCO

I don't feel much of a sense for myself with the Mikropop title Spectrum, but he's been known to be known for his Spectrum games like Doctor and Chessman. A dedicated fan has been curiously waiting on a Spectrum version since last in early days yet, but he's been happy to have his in the States as Side Arms Chess.

I don't really enjoy some games that need to be done up into the circles and play something like Chessman, Wolf or A-Type. What impresses me on a micro-game is technical achievement. Like the adventure writing on the Spectrum version of Zynapsa (which I believe) that was technically excellent. Getting scrolling like that without hardware support is very difficult indeed.

CHRIS HINSLEY

Chris has been making games since the dawn of the industry - his first title was a (single-disk) game for the Commodore - and has a list of programming credits as long as your arm. He has been known as the 'King of machines' for arcade alternatives like Drayton's or Rallycross Pyz-

zombies, but now he's turned his attention to the ST and Amiga. His work here includes SE Serious, Advanced Art (both on the soon-to-be-released Macintosh), Oros is currently waiting on Commodore, a scrolling game for the ST and Amiga which will probably be published by Amiga later this year.

I don't normally buy home games, because I can't really find any getting interest in them. After ten minutes of play I start picking holes in a game, finding fault with it technically. I was quite impressed by the scrolling in the character Steve Bolt when it came out - it didn't seem much to it as a game though, but being around and knowing - but withing really noticed the size. Right? Sure. When I saw that I just thought 'how the hell are they doing that?' and that's the only game that was like that. It's not huge, it's either on and play in the States. The hardware just is much better there. Take something like A-Type, it was just a straightforward scrolling game really, but hey - it's got some objective qualities.



JOHN PHILLIPS

John's been a debut professional brought a brand new perspective in leaving ball games and proved to be wonderfully compelling. He followed this up with the ACE-rated Nebula which combined well-judged gameplay with remarkable inventiveness and technical skill. He's now almost finished the ST version of Road Star, a driving and skating game for Amiga which is due out in the States.

I like Paul Wootler's stuff is a lot - Mercury, Kickball and so on - and a few of the old Ultimate games up well. When I have to go on someone else's game I don't look at it technically. I just play it!

I do like games to be complete within themselves, but a lot of the stuff you see these days seems to have something missing. Paul Wootler's stuff isn't like that, even when his games are fairly abstract, they still fit together well.

REALTIME

Realtime published 3D Stealth, 3D Starblitz and the 3D conversion of Starblitz before heading into 3D's prominence with the sharing system, Game Command. They're now finishing off Post, PC and Amiga versions of PC. Their next project is Realtime's first will copy on sold 3D - it's said our Realtime promised and ST the really interesting

ing - but the game will only be produced in 10-12 weeks, and the response will be an instant download as opposed to Amiga's complex gameplay.

In the circles I used to play (Befores is a lot, and I quite liked them too). As for home games I like Joe Bower's stuff, and I really get into Chessman's Guide to the Galaxy (Steve Marley and Douglas Adams too - though I never could get past the scrolling stuff) I think people get the impression that because we produce all the best ST stuff, we're a bit snobbish about other people's games - but that's not so. We like lots of other programmers' stuff. It doesn't matter what sort of game it is, as long as they feel good. The thing everyone's been playing round here recently is Dangerous Men (Andy Lee, Doug Lee & Mike Newton) - we really have got in some time on that one.



MIKE SINGLETON

Mike's done the games world with his level-scoped, intermediate levels of insight and its sequel, Commando Revenge, since which he's also brought us Dark

Apple and Dances of the Sea and his Moonshine level are currently wrapping up the state. It's a shock-up. It'll be followed by various projects or just all under wraps.

To be quite honest, I don't play nearly enough of games. I think that's a mistake among programmers. Partly its spending all my writing in that sort of it - it's not all I want to do. I don't think I'm a fan - I don't even watch much, but I've tried playing games - but mostly it's just a slow task of time.

There are some games that have impressed me. The finished in particular. I actually went out and bought a copy of the game, and that's mine. I want the product that really struck me - though they were excellent - but either the way the gameplay was engineered to fit in with them. It was a beautiful piece of inspiration, and turned the limitations of its graphics system into virtues - which is the mark of a really good game. Recently, Chris Commando has impressed me too, though I've only had the time to quickly look at it for

THE WINNER

So who comes out on top? Among the titles Ultimate's Knight's Love will reign supreme, with Geoff Crammond's Settlers and Chris Gray's Boulderdash also having strong followings. The current favourite on the other hand must be Realtime's Game Command - though hardly anyone we spoke to had actually found the time to play it properly!

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an awesome shape emerges ...
rumbling towards its destiny.



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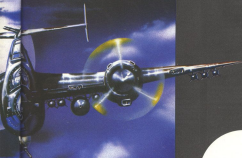
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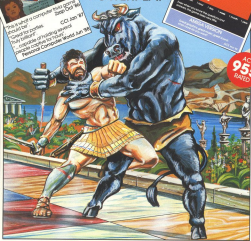
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SCREEN TEST

Everyone is catching the fever this month, because Virus is spreading like wildfire. You saw it first in the pages of ACE and now the whole software industry is buzzing with excitement about David Braben's blockbusting game. So prepare yourself for the definitive review, from the people who you can trust.

8-bit owners will have just as much fun with *Dark Side*, the sequel to *Orion*, that uses the Freescape programming system. It too is 900 rated - a superb double for programmers Incentive.

Also bursting out of the pages are an exclusive review of Mike Singleton's latest game *Whirligig*, the computer game based on Mickey Mouse and a hot update on the Amiga version of *Sentinel*.



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THE RATINGS

HOW they're calculated...

If you buy a game, how much enjoyment will you get out of it, and for how long? Just check out our revolutionary PC (Predicted Content) for the full story. Different arcade games start high on the curve, and then steadily fall off as you lose interest; powerful puzzle games stay into the end of the curve for months - but the moment you solve them they'll come tumbling down; complex strategy games may stump you at first - but climb up the scale as you begin to appreciate the scope of the game-play; and as for the lucky ones - they start low, stay low, and have nowhere to go but down, down, down.

Once you've seen how long the game can hold your attention, all you need to glance at is the renowned ACE RATINGS. This is calculated according to the area under the PC. The bigger it is, the better the game. Add to that our definitive ratings for 10 Factor (and if you're from north-side a week-out!) and Fun Factor - a measure of instant appeal and exhilaration as you dive into the game. And, of course, we rate the Graphics and Audio effects too...for EVERY machine the games are available on.

WHY you can rely on them...

The ACE reviewing team covers a broad spectrum of computer entertainment talent. Andy Wilson - ACE's resident technical wizard - is at hand with a smart bomb as he is with heretofore. Andy Smith wouldn't know heretofore from a hole in the ground, but can wipe the floor with any number of alien. Bob Peake (ex-Parsons Computer Games, Zap!84 and Amiga! Action) has played more computer games than any sane person ought to. Add Steve Gaskin (ex-PCZ) and former columnist for magazines ranging from Zap!84 to four Siskin and Pete Connor (ex-Amiga! Action, PCZ) and Your Computer reviewer and you've got age and experience as well as youthful enthusiasm.

Every game on the following pages has been seen by all of us. We compare notes, express differing opinions, and only then do we decide who's to take final responsibility for getting our views into print. When it comes, then, isn't just a collection of casual comments, but the definitive ACE verdict on this month's software. We've checked it out - now you can too.

UPDATES

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CRAYTOR

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SPECTRUM

- 67 CHARLE CHARPIN US Gold



The top screen: sector IDs are set away and it's got a fuel and ammo display. It could also be working with items.



It is, because when lights are lit, and with no shell, looks off it into the gas gauge is coded.



The last (dark) screen sector. Before how it looks and into fuel. It's a bit like what, you'll have working of the things appear.

WHIRLIGIG

FIREBIRD set things spinning

SOME people don't know the meaning of the word "rotation." Mike Singleton and the rest of the Madhouse programming team certainly don't. Their latest offering has score 4 882204 (seconds) (best), that's 4,000,000,000 (each of these sectors a different and collectively they're known as "Sigs" system). Fire of the sectors are known as "Sigs" space, and it's these two sectors that the game revolves (see below).

The game opens with a map display of sectors and items. In the map represent various objects, including fuel, dust and missile jumps. Also displayed is an icon representing Stargate 1. The Stargates are the doorways to the other sectors and the numbers tell you exactly which sector they lead to. Small blue dots on the map repre-

sent possible positions of bottle items. Fuel in the map is a lot of the Stargates in that sector and icons representing fuel etc that can be found in those particular sectors.

So, sector into starts. Press the left mouse button of the joystick and you're transported to the sector. The game view changes completely now. Your looking at your ship in the center of the screen.

To roll it into 3D, or tilted 3D would be an objective. Lightsource 3D is the best you need to describe here all the objects—no drive and wheels, the lightsource being used as your ship (and all the other objects) moves in and out of shadow as it turns and turns while you attempt to guide it around the weaponed sectors with the mouse.

You will have already decided how you

going to handle the sectors before you actually get there. Is whether you're going to move or roll to (or both) before you head through a Stargate. It's worth remembering that the links between the Stargates and sectors are mathematically linked (eg prime number sectors always have a Stargate that will lead back to sector 1).

Once you're in a sector it's time to set about finding your target. A pop-up control panel contains a meter which you can use to guide your ship around the sector. Using the control panel is fine when things are quiet, but once you start coming under fire from either a fixed position enemy installation or a moving enemy fighter, then it renders your view and makes you translate into a moving slightly more difficult. The control panel's your way away if stacking fuel and other items so you have to do it automatically. One thing it doesn't show is your



It's a sector containing fuel and ammo dumps. It's a shame we can't show you the weaponed sectors.



Here's a view from approximately the same position but this time you've got your control panel visible. Before how it obscures your view.

RELEASE BOX

ATARI 87	CR BOX	OUT NOW
VIDEO	CR BOX	AVAILABLE
SPIC	CR BOX, CR BOX	AVAILABLE
DISC	CR BOX, CR BOX	AVAILABLE
CD-ROM	CR BOX, CR BOX	AVAILABLE

ATARI 87 VERSION

The graphics really are top notch, being both smooth and colorful. The music's good but you can't turn it off, which is a pity. The mouse cursor used to move over the screen's tough to get a grip with but you soon get used to it. Also, all strategy games have to get plenty of extra features. You'll find the mouse cursor to be a pain for the most part, but it's not worth fretting over. The graphics are top notch, being both smooth and colorful. The music's good but you can't turn it off, which is a pity. The mouse cursor used to move over the screen's tough to get a grip with but you soon get used to it. Also, all strategy games have to get plenty of extra features. You'll find the mouse cursor to be a pain for the most part, but it's not worth fretting over.

GRAPHICS: 9 | MUSIC: 8
 AUDIO: 8 | FUN FACTOR: 9

ACE RATING 8.8

control panel color is the position of the enemies - rotating or fixed. The fixed installations aren't much trouble to deal with, once you've found them, just loose off one of your best-seeking missiles and watch the explosion. If the enemy gets a shot in but through, you'd better be ready to hit the right mouse button to counter the attack by releasing a shield field. A word of warning is needed here, your missiles are best seeking, loose of a missile with no enemy in range and your missile is able to home in on your own shield!

Dealing with the rotating enemies including Scimitar class fighters, Nightshade class fighters and Archer class fighters is a bit of a pain. These fighters vary in manoeuvrability and can be tough to destroy - especially if the high number sectors when you can be fighting more than one ship at once.

If the idea of finding their separate sectors (using 4 billion credits like the big red tank, don't worry. You're told which sectors are the better spots ones, all you have to do is get them in one piece. And working your way through the sectors doesn't take you half as long as you might imagine.

Although an impressive game and one the severity of the stunning graphics has worn off, it's not long before you realize just how playable it is too.

● Andy Bell

PREDICTED INTEREST CURVE



Use these to ACE. Read carefully, but it's not worth fretting over.



They're tough to shake off... and the missile might not be enough to take it out.



It won't and isn't hanging on to your tail. But if you can make it through the Shields you'll be safe.



From this it's anything in the sector plus what's through the Shields before the screen switches on to the next screen.





1 Rotating the video camera



2 Looking on the joystick you get a closer view of the hero.



3 Flying forward puts you a better view of the phone gun in the ground. What can that thing be for?

DARK SIDE

INCENTIVE scheming in 3D

ULTIMATE With the last adventure house to come up with a programming technique that took the games world by storm, New Incentive are causing a similar ruckus with their *Incentive* system. It first made its appearance in *Diller*, and is



This is the phone call you get through into La and Incentive. Inside you find a helpful crystal - but how can you bring Incentive up again?

now used for the sequel - which looks set to be an even more popular success.

The game is set 200 years after *Diller* and continues the battle between the Kelgo and the Draths. Your task is to destroy an energy grid which is generating up *Energy One* - a constantly deplete source of your planet.

If you've seen *Diller* then you'll immediately recognize the style and distinctive *Incentive* system. It creates a 3-dimensional world which you can walk and fly into, over and under. Your freedom is constantly enhanced by being able to fly right over the side with the aid of a joystick. However, there isn't much fuel - so no joy-riding.

The view you're given is very versatile. You can look through a 180 degree arc up

and down, and also tilt the view. The movement capability is greatly enhanced by the joystick - which can go straight up and down - and the ability to crouch and crawl under things.

Interaction with the styled landscape is conducted in one of two ways: either you can shoot things with your laser or walk into them. The latter can be a little dangerous because every time you walk into something you shouldn't it depletes your energy level and your supply. Both these can't feel levels can be increased by walking into the right object.

Once you're familiar with the environment and your equipment, you can get down to the task in hand. It's more of an attack game than *Diller*, although the puzzle element is still strong. Destroying the

915
AGE RATED

This may look like an expensive fuel to find it looks a game engine or a high-level computer system.

The FPS rating affects the speed at which the time (and your) runs out. Every frame simulated reduces it to 10.

The zoom level controls how close a enemy display. It is maximum the top screen your view.

This is one of the several ways to standing but the character can break or lose all his all parts at once.

RELEASE BOX			
AMS	22.999	274.999	CD-ROM
SPES	22.999	274.999	CD-ROM
COM-12	22.999	274.999	MANUAL
ST and Amiga versions under development			



This is the interior of the Incentive and there's one crystal in there. What it and the pad will mean is a new location.



4 In this form to the right a building comes into view. Left: Inset view.



5 Approaching the building reveals a break - wonder what happens when you shoot it!



6 Back in the ground you shoot the break and a shot appears. The red and black...

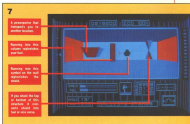
energy grid is mostly a matter of exploration and mapping, with more and more puzzles introduced as you get deeper into the game.

The energy grid is a chain of towers linked by cables that run along the ground. The lower legs have to be shot to disable them. However, if two other working towers are linked to it the damaged tower will regenerate immediately. This is the crux of the game—finding the start of a chain of towers and wiping them all out. The trick made easy by the fact that some towers are initially connected to up to five others.

It's easy to find a few towers early on that aren't as complicated, cross-crossing chains. This is important because the time limit depends on the number of towers operating. The more towers, the faster time runs out.

Naturally things aren't as easy as that because there are plenty of obstacles and puzzles to test your skills. The simplest are guns called Flares which shoot where you get to need. They don't all behave the same though—watches out for respawning ones and areas where getting hit is fatal.

The puzzles mostly consist of winking out ways to get inside buildings, and how to switch devices on and off. Slated towers can be activated using powerbeams, which take you from one spot to another. The slated also teleports you, but to use it you have to find two crystals. Each crystal will take the slated to a different place, and all four are needed to bring about a final victory. The last is easy to find—you'll encounter it by



accident—but the other three are altogether much harder to get.

As in *Duke*, you have to watch out for the unexplained (and not every corner). There's a tunnel network which lets you take odd-where-kind to get at locations. It's also used when getting out of the prison cell that the automatic defenses can't see you into. You've

also got to watch out for toxic traps when the jet-pack starts up, and the laser satellites that appear once you start blasting away at your shield.

There's a lot more agency about the action than in the more subtle *Duke*. The time limit is a tough one and you've got to move fast early on if you're going to beat it. Having said that, it is easy to get into because although the first few games will end quickly, you'll still be finding out lots of interesting things in that time.

It's more interesting than *Duke*, but probably easier to survive as well. You'd be completely entertained by it until it's solved but after that there's nothing to come back for. All the reduced price has to mean better value than the original. It looks like *Freezone* is going to be around for a lot more games.

• Seb Roberts



SCREENS—equally superb graphics on this version.

SPECTRUM VERSION

To have that 3D model view before you start. The display screen shows other important data too.

GRAPHICS: 5 HD FACTOR: 7
 AUDIO: 2 PER FACTOR: 4

AGE RATING 9-14



Old and quite finished yet, but we'll update it when it is.

AMSTRAD VERSION

The graphics aren't as high quality as those available on the more modern systems, but the sound is superb. The sound is superb, but that's hardly a surprise when you hear graphics and graphics quality.

GRAPHICS: 5 HD FACTOR: 7
 AUDIO: 3 PER FACTOR: 6

AGE RATING 9-15



It'll be a steady climb and you'll be back to back, but don't think it's a steady climb in all.

SKATE CRAZY

GREMLIN get their skates on

STREET need more ice-spiky-topped level cone tops. Forget flat, oval skateboarding - skaterikes are back.

The game is split into two sections: a one-park challenge and a championship course. In the one park you must travel around a course of gates, jump off obstacles, performing stunts on the way. The championship is a tight-knit scrolling course where you have to jump over and climb under obstacles, trying to reach the end.

In the one park four judges track you on speed, complexity and variety of moves - jumps, landings to come over, collecting bonuses and stalling backwards. You score

to complete the course as fast as possible, still doing lots of tricks on the way. Obstacles, stalling and repeating stunts to offset can actually lose you points.

On the scrolling championship course you have to slide along dog-wagging on

RELEASE BOX

OS/16M	£19.95, £14.995	OUT NOW
SPARC	£19.95, £14.995	OUT NOW
MSX	£19.95, £14.995	IMMINENT

OS4 VERSION

An extremely difficult and frustrating version, particularly on the one park, where getting a qualifying score is nigh-impossible, except by means of a bonus which when you collect the game ends for you and the championship is very unfair too. The graphics are good on average, but the graphics effects are limited as top.

GRAPHICS	7	IS FACTOR	7
SOUND	3	PLAY FACTOR	7

ACE RATING 6/10

SPECTRUM VERSION

Best friends but still rivals. There is a strong emphasis on the championship course, and the one-park is more like a one-park. The graphics are good on average, but the graphics effects are limited as top.

GRAPHICS	6	IS FACTOR	7
SOUND	3	PLAY FACTOR	7

ACE RATING 6/10



OS4 - you're the cool dude with wheels, pushing top and going through on the back.

the 400 jumping or dishing under obstacles. Along the way you can collect objects that are worth bonus points. Four different courses contain many obstacles to knock you down, and some will cause you to instantly lose a life if you don't negotiate them correctly.

You'll really need to practise to get anywhere in the one park section. The championship courses are easier, but still very difficult to complete. It's addictive in its own way, but annoying too because it's so tough. **Red Lead**

PREDICTED INTEREST CURVE



Frames are needed to complete the frustrating difficult elements, but these make the OS4 version a challenge to target.

ALIEN SYNDROME

ACE's mutant hordes

SWARMS of lethal appear to be green and purple maggots are the best thing to greet you in this arcade-commissioned from ACE (the Setaic label, not the magazine). And you're going to be seeing a lot of those in this one of two-player kind as you try to rescue your trapped buddies and escape from the complex, you're in.

At 10 toxic hordes of believe mutants aren't enough, you're up against a vicious time limit too. The exit from the level won't open until you've got enough rescued buddies under your belt, and if you don't get them in time... bang - it's game over.

All that, though, the time limit is going to be the least of your problems as these mutant creatures are horribly cunning, incredibly fast and fast. Fortunately for you, there are nuclear waste weapons to pick up from bins dotted around the complex - and you'll need 'em.

Successfully escape from the complex and you then have to do battle with a very unpleasant end-of-level monster, before setting off all over again in a new, tougher complex.

If the gameplay sounds over so slightly



SW - The exit is here to enter the next area, but you have to get to the exit on the edge of the screen you have to get to make it work, and there are lots of things you need to make the time better you're waiting.

swallow by now, the dust at your feet is more-of-the-same graphics, rates. The ending is still not easy, and you have to get to the close to the edge of the screen to make it move. Basically, Alien Syndrome is difficult tight time, the level, and doesn't offer enough interest to make you nervous. **Red Lead**

ATARI ST VERSION

Attractive graphics, especially in the featured ending a job well done. The graphics is great without being any too bright, with the soundtrack subtle and reasonable and adding little to the game.

GRAPHICS	7	IS FACTOR	8
SOUND	3	PLAY FACTOR	8

ACE RATING 8/10

OS4 VERSION

Some slight extra and that has been done for the OS4 version, but the endgame is more annoying. The graphics appear to be better on the OS4. The present, jump card, makes a whole lot better than the OS4.

GRAPHICS	7	IS FACTOR	8
SOUND	6	PLAY FACTOR	8

ACE RATING 4/10

RELEASE BOX

OS/16M	£19.95, £14.995	OUT NOW
ATARI ST	£19.95	OUT NOW
SPARC	£19.95, £14.995	IMMINENT
MSX	£19.95, £14.995	IMMINENT
SARCA	£19.95	IMMINENT

PREDICTED INTEREST CURVE



If it is too interesting with a difficult, then you'll be a problem.

HEY This, brains-deaf game much bigger than Mickey Mouse. He's about to celebrate his 50th birthday, and for once thinking about his past, he's getting even more advice in his old age.

True to his squeaky-clean image, Mickey is playing the good guy, trying to score Disney medals from the evil king who has taken up residence. To avoid the evil, avoid his lies to complete a lot of sub-games and beat all the boxes of medals set in steps. All this while armed only with a water pistol and hammer - what a mouse.

The tower in which the game takes place is a circuit. You have a midway run through one side, avoiding noxious fumes concocted by zombies. On the far wall are doors leading to the various sub-games, and from which the median comes walking out.

The bad guys come in two sizes - life and legs - and lots of different shapes. The life monsters are more plentiful and are no match to a medium sized mouse. Some types can be dispatched with the water pistol, others with the hammer. The big monsters split into two little ones when hit with the hammer, so you'll have to go after them as well.

When the monsters are stopped they leave behind an object. These are generally useful, but are sometimes bad for you. Most you'll be left water bottles to refill your supply which is drained by the monsters. The other special that appear will, for a short time spray down the monsters down, speed Mickey up, give you a shield, slow



Here - Mickey encounters a really ugly. But this with the hammer will be with him this time again.

MICKEY MOUSE

GREMLIN come to Disney's rescue

you to walk on this, or freeze the monsters, and repeat them. There's also a bomb ball which will stop you in the same way as taking through holes in the floor does.

Before being able to enter a room you'll need to pick up keys set behind by trapped monsters. Inside each room is one of two sub-games. The sub-game has to be successfully completed in order to break up the doorway. Once all the doorways are flooded you can exit to the next town.

Initially you'll encounter the maze room. Here you have to make your way round a

maze, avoiding the battery beneath your feet. You have to throw batteries down to bust the bubbles and also hammer the ghosts who float along the balcony with you.

The other two rooms are a bit wet, because in one you've got to stop a pipe dripping and in the other you've got to turn off taps. To stop the pipe leaking you have to hammer coins into it, while closing the monster, and hit the taps at the top of the screen when he starts goes down. The tap room has moving platforms which you have to keep around trying to turn four taps off. Once again, the ghosts are doing their best to foil your efforts.

The tower gets higher and harder as you progress, but initially it's easy to complete a few rooms. It's got a simple addictive which will appeal to most players. For those of you who have grown out of watching big-screen, dog-eared, red-headed mice there's still plenty of action to enjoy with. The sub-games look enough variety to make it interesting to long, but it's enjoyable while it lasts.

—**Rob White**

RELEASE DATE

ARC	17.99	119.99	ULT. BOX
GEN/EN	22.99	124.99	IMMEDIATE
ATARI ST	12.99		IMMEDIATE
MSX	22.99	124.99	IMMEDIATE

CD-ROM PREVIEW

One of several, easily opens an install it window, though the screen seems a trifle from the previous version. It's generally a very similar, but obviously better the graphics generally is fixed.

ATARI ST PREVIEW

The game has speed of the previous version. The graphics is a standard but impressive one. Gameplay again seems very similar to the Spectrum, but with a slightly better one.

SPECTRUM VERSION

The game has big, fast and brightly colored. Mickey himself has been made transparent. The levels look better. Unlike the game, but not that great. The resolution may be a standard and sound effects during the game are not that bad either.

DISKETS 0 16 FACTORS 0
 AUDIO 0 FIVE FACTORS 0

AGE RATING 7-13



It's now has a maze that's just lovely. Mickey and Gremlin's reaction to it.

series of flick screens trying to collect a bomb, not, scale and work. A black ball that is stop you - you have three lives in each sub-game. There are also bombs for bonus lives, springs to give you selective shot, a capsule which gives you instantly and skills which save you a life. As you complete more of these rooms the number of balls that appear in each-screen increases.

The inverted space invaders room puts Mickey on a revolving balcony. Below him bubbles emerge from bottles and float

PREDICTED INTEREST CURVES



FIRE AND FORGET

F O R G E T

THE FUTURE IS IN YOUR HANDS! FIRE AND FORGET! NEVER LOOK BACK.

YOU ARE OUR ONLY CHANCE...



T&E SECRET
EMERGE FROM THE SHADOWS 02/1994 £ 04/1995
FOR MACINTOSH ONLY



UNIQUE VERSION



PC, PC, ST, M3 VERSION



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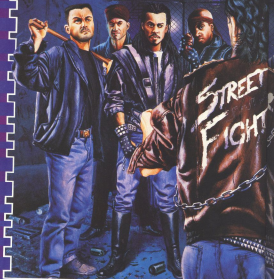
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KILLDOZERS

LANKHOR go to war

MEGALOMANIAC computers have the habit of popping up and threatening the world. Let's look at the bright side though - you can go after the evil with a hand-chooping, mean-flailing, pain-inflicting tank. The action takes place on six-foot-by-

six-foot screens as enemy's tanks and add it to your own army's reserves. Once an opponent is taken without trophies you can either take him straight out with desolators or, if he's got heavy cannons, weaken him further with cannon-piercing missiles.

The robot desolators are armed with the same weapons and are frequently much more powerful. However, they aren't very mobile or intelligent. As you go through the levels they get tougher but the bigger problems you'll have is one of mapping. This is

RELEASE BOX		
ATARI ST	£19.95	OUT NOW
No other versions planned		

computer, Doom Doom a scale-up of 24, supervised rooms. On each floor you have to locate a captured engine and make it to the exit before the time limit runs out. The time limit is triggered by putting up the engine and that reflects the speed of the tank.

At the start you get a choice of tanks with different ratings for armour, firepower, hit points and speed. These vary from game to game but generally, the tanks that tank the less powerful it is. You're armed with three types of missile destruction, shatter and cannon piercing, but desolators can be



That's where the fun gets it is for you and the tank on the battlefield because they destroy you.

KIDDIES are in need of help, and you're on your way. They're trapped inside mirrors in a castle bristling with traps you'll need to think things.

As you move up the screen, it scrolls downwards - obviously that is a very long, low castle. Initially your only weapons are your feet, but later on you can pick up more dangerous devices like bombs (explosives) and boomerangs (knives).

Mostly you'll encounter enemies who look and behave much like yourself. There are also bigger, meaner-looking defenders who throw knives or fireballs, and lots from only of these deplete your energy. You lose a more-dangerous level if you run into a mine or water - you'll end in your traps prison.

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AMSTRAD VERSION		
The picture on grid and body. The gameplay is made for the Spectrum version because the Amstrad version is supposed to produce better results.		
GRAPHICS	4	EQ FACTOR: 2
SOUND	3	FM FACTOR: 5
AGE RATING 500		

DESOLATOR

US GOLD crack mirrors

At the end of each floor there's a tiny screen where desolators level bosses around the screen. You've got to let all of them have a touch of lives in the chops to move to the next level.



DESOLATOR - Make out for that heavily-armed guy checking the victory in all directions.

SPECTRUM VERSION		
Spend things at other less than that and you'll get a message when you're killed by the evil forces.		
GRAPHICS	4	EQ FACTOR: 2
SOUND	3	FM FACTOR: 5
AGE RATING 500		

ATARI ST VERSION		
The picture on grid and body. The gameplay is made for the Spectrum version because the Amstrad version is supposed to produce better results.		
GRAPHICS	3	EQ FACTOR: 4
SOUND	3	FM FACTOR: 5
AGE RATING 500		

because there are also enemy games which can really top you.

The gameplay is really hectic - chomping around killing and switching missiles - but the explanation is the only thing that adds variety. Of course for real variety there's the desolator set. This enables you to work out your own game screens. It will take a lot of work but enhances the long term value.

• **Hot Wire**



The combination and graphics are good, but it still has some issues.

On the way along you can pick up extra life money bags and energy. Things will move you around the screen and you can use them to level. Most important of all are the mirrors. Give them a good thumping and you can get the children for you to collect. Other objects on walls also come into play - rocks from the bad guys for a time - and some walls can be pushed through.

The game's easy to get into, but ends up being frustrating because it's virtually impossible to stay alive at all the levels. Random elements, like wandering bottles, rolling bombs and such, can make life too hard.

• **Hot Wire**



Not too tough for kids but for long and get many useful elements.

CORRUPTION



Atari ST screen shot.

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Before there's just caught up with a bomber - a tough task considering how fast it's moving - and the bomber is still dropping like bombs across the landscape.



After a good level of combat has been over, however, things aren't the world's most peaceful - but since you're still within the landscape.



Before we see fly in formation, a more peaceful one appears along its path and pulls out various obstacles that it encounters, making it rather tougher than usual.



After you've pulled away from the planet surface is a bit to maintain the contact, but let's hope the approach. There is some of a landing shortly before you reach the end.



Before you're faced as other water backgrounds, but the explosion is still right and the object's still in your view - a bomber's landing here in your flight is its goal.



After the object is seen over, but another of its path has reached that other side in the landscape. The focus is back over in your screen (top left) in your view.

FROM LANDER TO VIRUS

At the risk of blowing our own trumpet, we'd like to remind you where you can find the one first. Remember our Solid State feature may have been ACE issue 21. That article introduced the first shots of the twisted, dark, jagged structures. Remember the video we did of it the month after? Or the photos of the ST conversion - not even known as that at that stage - back in ACE issue 27? Both of those were firsts.

Even before any of this, we were onto the story. Check out the news pages of ACE's very first issue, if your collection goes back that far, and you'll find the original Lander pops up in a story there - almost a year ago. It's an emotional experience to see a game this good right the way through from a single prototype back before the Archimedes was even launched to a fully-fledged CD-ROM release with Amiga and Spectrum versions to follow, but that's just what we've done here on the ACE team.

If you want to know what's already happened, there are plenty of other things you can read if you want a vision of the future, there's only ACE.

VIRUS

Can FIREBIRD stop the rot?

PANIC and you're dead, stay calm and you probably aren't panic. The ideas here come to spray and virus all over the planet, and you're the only thing in the way but you stay in control of your homeworld? Can you figure out the thing engine? Can you get them before they get you?

The idea, as long as the game everyone wanted and (almost) no-one could actually get a shot at last year has made it down to the test machines. Down that is here, Acorn's 32-bit Archimedes where, under the name of Jovis, it was the intention of the Personal Computer World show. On the Amiga it came at the game - then only called Lander - was out with every machine out, but dragging up a side demand in advance to Jovis publishers Superior Software. Instead will keep

to such level that with the game on the other machines but this - on the ST at any rate - they really don't going to meet one.

Let's face it, this game is absolutely the most unusual. It's got two very combinations of stunning over-the-shoulder attention, instead heart-pounding playability and a monstrous long-term challenge. Even before you play you'll be hooked by the screen display of rolling land, steep, towering valleys and scorching explosions. Just what all you get in the plot isn't through, you'll be staggered.

It's hard to describe just how exciting the game is, also how satisfying the controls are to use once you've mastered them. Using only mouse movements to do your horizontal and press on the left button to bank left, you run along together flying across that are fast, dizzyingly fast in

981
ACE RATED



Tricky little boss battles are best off in a world of enemy swarms.

RELEASE BOX		
ATARI ST	\$79.95/66	OUT NOW
AMIGA	\$79.95/66	MARKET
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breath-takingly delicate. Pour on the thrust and shove the ship over to one side as you see up off the landing pad, and off you go, your hurtling into the heart of the action.

Once you've figured the controls out well enough to reach one of the blips on your screen, two things really start getting interesting. At first you'll be able to swivel - dying swarms that totally obliterate the landscape spraying the bludge, landing continuously to provide a stationary target - but you'll need good control skills to bag even these stupid, defenseless foes. As for the push time-grabbing missiles and clones taken from-time intercepts which attack you even as the first wave, these can be so tough that you may well resort to bombing missiles. In a sense it is very short supply, and so the best the scores you'll have to greater need of them.

Just what's so difficult about these later waves? Everything! The game starts throwing dross, fighters like dross only (more-so) besides the intercepts dropping what bombs - and watch out for the bomb-boosters in their droves and much worse, as well as the obligatory swarms pocking every increasing density is also a problem.



A leader's carefully laid trap may just look as though the captured lives!

and since the landscape's only demarcated every fifth wave there's the bit of being completely overrun if you don't work fast.

Compared with *Delta Blast* or plain-old *Defender* might give you a taste of the get-clients-to-see-see-to-the-see-see-see, but really *Virus* is as close as it gets, its visually just about perfect late-70s-out-let

ATARI ST VERSION	
PROGRAMS	10
DISKETS	1
REQUIREMENTS	1.25 MB
PRICE	\$79.95
AGE RATING	ESR



A good enemy does have your best friend. It's trying to save you, but its aim was thwarted by their quick death if those you're just dead.

the flying fish and the sea monster! The sound effects are both entertaining and useful, the game logic brings together nicely and the technical achievement will really convince all you code-bros out there. It's just too good to be true!

By Andy Miller



KRELLANS may be great alien types, but at least you can see their homelike, which is more than *Balloon* will allow you to do. And as commander of an invincible Class Heavy Cruiser, whose job it is to keep *Advance* space clear of these invaders, you can game your problems.

If you've already started thinking of purchasing Atargothyle 3D sunglasses, think again.

RELEASE BOX		
AMIGA	C14-096	OUT NOW
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AMIGA - In the middle of a battle with some real badasses, this could be anything you or more of them and then use your tractor beam to lure them to the nearest starbase that keeps your little site at work.

STAR FLEET 1

ELECTRONIC ARTS beam up

Star Fleet 1's graphics are far from state-of-the-art and there's not a concept video to be seen. The screen breaks down into windows including a grid-top of the region of space you're currently patrolling and an selected grid that shows us on the perimeter vector you're in. Towards the top of the screen is the

list window where messages are displayed.

The idea is to visit your way up through the ranks from a lowly recruit to an Admiral by successfully completing a number of missions, each requiring you to destroy a set number of enemy ships within a time limit. Ships armed with plasma and torpedoes and every successful mission brings you a bit more up to the next rank.

Star Fleet uses a very old game style but it can still be fun to play. Special missions appearing later in the game keep you interested for a while but the repetitive nature of the game soon sees your interest waning.

Andy South

AMIGA VERSION

The graphics are rather good and sound is not impressive. The game controls by using a mouse pointer on various icons which makes it a little bit awkward to play. But the fact that it's a strategy game, and the fact that it's the best, and the best of the genre's competitors.

GRAPHICS 4 10 FACTOR 3
 AUDIO 2 FUN FACTOR 3
AGE RATING 3BB

ATARI ST VERSION

The game is the same on the ST but you must have a steady state of time. But the 4 factor is a bit awkward to play (see Amiga version).

GRAPHICS 4 10 FACTOR 3
 AUDIO 2 FUN FACTOR 3
AGE RATING 3BB

PREDICTED INTEREST CURVE

INTEREST LEVEL

Time

Graphs for an old game style and other things can't really do the maximum graphing.

THE GREAT GIANA SISTERS

Headbang with RAINBOW ARTS

LITTLE Giana from *Mario* is a four-foot sleeper; it's extra. She and her sister Lirio regularly decide to do

strange, mystical world of gnomes, wizards and dangerous creatures. Your job is to guide Giana (and her sister, in the offering) to save player mode) safely on her quest to find a huge, magic diamond that brings her only means of escape.

Giana Sisters plays more than a little like Super *Mario Bros*. It's basically another scrolling platform game with bonuses to collect, creatures to avoid and frustrating problems to overcome. There are some strange little twists, though. For example, how do you deal with those nasty tentacles? Simple - jump on 'em! And to collect those you jump up and land the tentacle bodies



AMIGA - You can jump up and get those bonuses - but don't fall to the water!

RELEASE BOX		
AMIGA ST	C14-096	OUT NOW
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PREDICTED INTEREST CURVE

INTEREST LEVEL

Time

Graphs for an old game style and other things can't really do the maximum graphing.

IBM VERSION

Control graphics, and screen stability are the best you can see.

GRAPHICS 7 10 FACTOR 3
 AUDIO 5 FUN FACTOR 3
AGE RATING 704

ATARI ST VERSION

There's also a design for the Atari ST version, but it's not really a game yet.

GRAPHICS 6 10 FACTOR 3
 AUDIO 7 FUN FACTOR 3
AGE RATING 713

with your head! These bonuses give you everything from extra lives to the ability to shoot those tentacles which take out those who fall to your way.

The graphics are nice, and the occasionally tricky music isn't bad, but it's questionable whether you'll stick with the game throughout all 30 levels to reach that magic crystal.

Phil Lester

AMIGA VERSION

They gave you a nice little bit of extra game for each level for a reasonable.

GRAPHICS 8 10 FACTOR 3
 AUDIO 7 FUN FACTOR 3
AGE RATING 713

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CAPTAIN Comes along the moment, level-along letters: the site of the Degetives. The lowly scientist-probe writes a wondrous tale of lost jewels and wind-swept desert landscapes. Forget that things do some blasting.

Intently-scrolling shoot-em-ups are nothing new, but everybody loves a good one with loads of action. However, how has responsible for some of the best, so how they come it again?

The first thing to notice is that the scrolling is under your control, you aren't forced to go at the computer's pace. It's useful because you really do need quick reactions in between the action.

The robot defenses come in four main types: low-powered, engagements, tracked and patterned. The low-powered generally tend to come in on you as soon as they appear. Like all the other defenses they intentionally fire bullets that are very accurate if you don't shift yourself fast. Unlike in the meisten can be patterned shots that, when triggered to appear, always aimed the screen in a set pattern regardless of what you're up to. It's not just the bullets you have to worry about either - turning into defenses also proves fatal.

The robots on railway tracks are a cutting breed. They shuffle up and down leaving off the end are much more inclined to be from homing or static robots. The stationary robot reinforcements tend to have higher rates of fire than the others, but at least you know they'll stay where they are.

A particularly nasty form of static defense are the missile firing tanks. These produce relatively slow-moving missiles that home in on you whenever you are on the screen. The missiles can be shot, but the only problem is to get on the right line to do it in time - particularly if you're facing more than one tank.

If you get far enough through the defense the battleship goes spazzing all the



The Marauder is about to convert energy being beamed from the air. The plane has passed over and the yellow beam has hit instead. However, you're still in danger from the other two robots. Note also the green beacon which would give you your last shot.

MARAUDER

HEWSON go blundering

one or colors red gives a short burst, yellow a shield, cyan a life, blue reverses the controls, purple loses a life and green, same from the shield, control reversed and

launching attacks don't last too long, but it can be enough to get you through a tricky spot using the shield, or to kill you when suffering from the other two.

This is a classic game for those who like learning attack patterns. Every game you can get a lot faster because you know what's coming and can act accordingly. Working out the firing sequence of the beacons also comes with practice and one, considerably giving your life. There isn't anything original here, but it is an extremely slick shoot-em-up that gives instant pleasure and satisfaction, and has plenty of difficulty to keep you going.

■ **Not Quite**

RELEASE DATE	
MSX	27 Dec 1986 - C&H
MSX2	27 Dec 1986 - B&M
MSX2+	27 Dec 1986 - B&M

ing if the screen being misty and takes you to a new level. The background graphics change and, at times, the robots get smaller. The life meter also appears in more more important combinations. They also start taking several hits to destroy.

The programmers obviously thought they were making life too easy, and have added a small feature that will make you woe. If you spend too long without ending the screen up, a plane appears from the side of the screen and drops a bomb at you. You can avoid it if you're fast but it means you can never relax completely.

The most crucial element in enjoying Marauder is the use of defense bonuses. These are granted that flow through in waves of colors, and depending on what colour they are when that can either help or hurt. There



We're in deep trouble here. Shields are being hit so you need there's a couple of two meters standing in the water levels left, and it looks like the party's over.

C64 VERSION	
The screen background are not designed, as are all the other defenses. Naturally it is worth noting: The more a number, the more it costs in the way of effort.	
GRAPHICS	3
SOUND	3
GAMEPLAY	3
VALUE	3
ACE RATING 79.1	



PHANTASM

EXOCET's academic exercise

DEJA VU is what the French call it, but believe that sometimes, you've seen it all before. Exocet's Phantasm certainly conjures up that feeling. What's your aim in the game before it is to take on CII's brilliant Academy?

In Phantasm you're in command of the ultracold space skimmer - Pegasus - as you zoom around an alien moon looking for eight Reconstitutions scattered at random on its surface. These Reconstitutions are able to return enemy craft to destroy in their own - or watch it. Your mission is to destroy these nasty pieces of work and...wait...wait, there's a light at the start you get to choose which sector of the moon you start in, and from that on it's a case of exploring the solid 3D landscape and doing battle with the many other vessels - flying enemies, tanks, ground-based defenses and watchtowers, to name



Only enough space, not the fighting effects. There's too little here already.

but a few. The extent of the four levels is a kind of training mode where the newscaster tells you what type of craft you're looking at. Oh, yes, higher levels just tell you your kill level so far. A series of bars to the bottom right of the screen tells you your speed, fuel reserves, shield strength and so forth, while to the top right of the screen is a compass with automatic direction (before you're to your dodging vehicle). The skimmer has

ATARI ST VERSION

Graphics are stark as always if it isn't not the Academy can't handle it. Few elements among the way to other's gameplay though, and still not with it out.

GRAPHICS: 6 10 FACTOR: 3
 AUDIO: 5 FUN FACTOR: 4

AGE RATING 404

Let me tell you that in Academy, even down to the little fading screen when you collect with clothes on.

Basically, the simulation behaves. Phantasm and Academy are too cautious to let it would be quicker to test the differences - Phantasm allows only one mission, one skimmer and name of the gameplay. And at \$29.95 it's not even budget.

RedAction

RELEASE BOX		
SYSTEM	DOS/6	ST/Amiga
PRICE	DOS/6	ST/Amiga

AAARGH!

Smashing down the MELBOURNE HOUSE

NEVER had Aaargh! Street would be your sign. The games for too easy to beat and no matter how good the sound and graphics are, you're just not going to want to spend much time playing a game you know you can beat easily.

The play's jolly enough - take control of either an overfed egg or a dinosaur and

beat obstacles and what could be better than a huge landscape or a whopping pile of loot? Especially when your monster only has a limited amount of stamina - the constant leeching from the villages trying to live free weapons at you, and the barrels that will eat on crashing into you. Take this job, attack is the best form of defense here and it's very enough to line your monster up with the village's cannon and beat it into submission. Dinosaur can be played if it's similar fashion. Any spare moments are best spent eating and eating in nearby villages so you can eat.



Not these buildings, or these people...

RELEASE BOX		
PRICE	£19.95	OUT 50%
No other version planned		

smash your way through village after village searching for the final egg. You need to collect three before you get a shot of beating the golden egg hidden beneath a volcano. The eggs you need are usually concealed inside one of seven or so buildings in each area. You don't know which do contain the egg (that's if any of them do) until you've broken them to the ground. You shouldn't be deterred if a building can't be smelt an egg though because it will probably reveal something that's almost as important - food, livestock and silver, need

AMIGA VERSION

Good graphics, smoother sound and good gameplay but not enough challenge to generate the excitement of help you playing.

GRAPHICS: 8 10 FACTOR: 5
 AUDIO: 7 FUN FACTOR: 6

AGE RATING 261

Having found yourself an egg you then have to fight the other monster to keep it. Extremely difficult until you discover the trick that makes it a cinch.

Collect the five final eggs and you then have to make your way along a set path becoming city obstacles in the way to the golden egg. Collect this and you can start the whole process over again. Acceptable non-boring, but you'll only play it long after this before you become bored.

Andy Bell

PREDICTED INTEREST CURVE



Enough interest?

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3 1/2

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UNBEATABLE PRICES

SARGON III

LOGOTRON's brain-mangler

FAST release card is quite frugal. Sargon III will do you no good here. The chess program from Logotron would fit the old gray cells of Euphoric Island, I feel, maybe not, but even on its easiest level, Sargon III is a struggle. In a play-off against the established Chessmaster 3000, no clear winner emerges, meaning that the software is a wash on its platform. The game comes with a comprehensive manual which even teaches you the moves of the pieces. The only problem is that if you need to learn that it's going to take you a long, long time to beat the computer.

So Sargon III plays well enough, but what does it look like? The screen here is not

so good I'm afraid. The 3D-only display is basic, to say the least, and up against the several more polished chess programs around it looks lame. If it isn't extremely slow, then it's not for impressing the neighborhood in other ways.

Sargon III won the PC World Magazine Microcomputer Chess Tournament, apparently, and has beaten a Chess Master rated 2000 - but for the average user, not



The 3D display, while entertaining, does not, at least for the moment.

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AMIGA VERSION

In only one of the tough games tested, all scores reflect the software from A. Overall, strongly compiled.

GRAPHICS 1 HD FACTOR 10
 SOUND 0 FUN FACTOR 5

ACE RATING 553

things are obvious. The fact is that most modern chess programs run quite strong enough for the average user. What separates them is really attractiveness, ease of use and versatility. Sargon is easy enough to use, as versatile as any - but in terms of visual appeal a somewhere back in the Stone Ages.

Red Hatters

PREDICTED INTEREST CURVE



Being a strategy game, it's obviously going to lose steam as time goes by. The graphics, though, at a level that's right near the top.

PETER BEARDSLEY'S INTERNATIONAL FOOTBALL

GRANDSLAM slip up

8-BIT 1992 versions have got a normal, old football simulation in the shape of Grand Slam Strategy II, but it's not only 8-biters who enjoy a good game of foot on their computers. Microsoft brought 16-bit classic International Soccer - but as good as it might have been - did new developers see things to adapt it with a football era endorsed by one of England's most talented players.

The game has a European flavor in that your team can be chosen from a list of some of the best local teams from Europe. You then find yourself in one of two groups of four, where each team then plays every other in their own group and the top two go through to the semi-finals.

The latest in the game follows the

ATARI ST VERSION

The game features more real sound effects, and it's easy to switch between the two. You can also change the number of the teams during the tournament from 2 to 10 teams. The game has a full size with a good method of saving the strength-of-weakness profile.

GRAPHICS 0 HD FACTOR 2
 SOUND 0 FUN FACTOR 6

ACE RATING 392

usual pattern, i.e. you control the ball in the best position to reach the goal. You control the strength of a kick during play by holding the fire button on the joystick while a meter climbs up the side of the screen.

The game looks good enough, but the game introduction or options menu tend to disappoint. It can also be tough to see just who you're controlling since you've got several players milling about the ball. Probably the biggest thing to let the game down, though, is the overall context. This - and the fact that it won't take long to win the tournament since you've handicapped yourself with the game - makes for a bit stuck and not truly of the feelers of the second division.

Red Hatters



Perhaps if Beardsley had spent less time on the advertising headlines and more time on sports statistics, the game would have been better.



THE SENTINEL

AMIGA • Floppy C16/64k

Mike Singleton pretty much says it all on pages 16-17, but to be record we thoroughly agree here at ACE. The Sentinel is one of the closest, prettiest, best-looking games ever. The genius of the original concept plus some excellent execution, leads to the Amiga take this an essential purchase.

The graphics all-around energy, height and mobility. Over the mountains, valleys and checkerboard plains of 18,000 different landscapes, you're caught up in an epic struggle to get above your opponents. It's dangerous work, climbing trees and boulders to snag energy and while avoiding the gaze of the rotating Sentinel and his cohorts, the Sentinel, WTB, and Whisking and a great sense

of direction, you can hop between fields of vision, gain height and sneak up on the enemy from behind. Hide or get discovered on the other hand, and you'll be absorbed by the Sentinel's lethal stare.

The thing that really makes the gameplay exciting is its unique combination of freedom and terror. The game set gives you the basic tools for the job, leaving you to tackle each landscape's problems your way you see it. The result of choices can easily overtake you, especially with the Sentinel and a whole bunch of Sentines having your way—and intention kill!

UPDATE SPECIAL

Once you're hooked (and you will be), you'll find the game's persistent system of life-saves. Stop playing whenever you like, and a 16-digit code will let you start on the same landscape next time. Just as well, really 10,000 of these would take you a while to get through!

Andy Wilson

AMIGA VERSION

Colorful, fast and detailed, the color graphics here are a joy to behold. The combination graphics, with a strong sense of depth and thought and great levels of detail mean it not changes at all.

GRAPHICS: 9 INFACTOR: 9
AUDIO: 9 FUNFACTOR: 9

ACE RATING 963

PREDICTED INTEREST CURVE



So, what's the best time to buy?



There's only one way to make your next decision, and that's on a basis of options open to you... but don't panic!

PLATOON

ATARI ST • Ocean C16/64k • ACE RATING 886
C64 version reviewed Issue 7 - ACE Rating 801
Spectrum version reviewed Issue 7 - ACE Rating 828
Amstrad version reviewed Issue 8 - ACE Rating 854

If the first casualty of war is innocence, then the first casualty of conversion has to be gameplay. The difficulty tuning was pretty tough on the C64 version of this one, but on the ST things are absolutely piece-of-cake. A simple tale of jungle warfare becomes simply enjoyable invisible accidents that you're in the back. VCI leap

on you from the level design and level-leaps here you with impossible situations. Tough problems are always welcome, but inevitable deaths like those are just silly. Controls are good though, even if the graphics aren't anything to write home about.

• Andy Wilson



LEATHERNECK

AMIGA • Microdisk C16/64k • ACE RATING 907
Atari ST version reviewed Issue 10 - ACE Rating 897



The worst violence you got it bloody duty violence complete with gas, grenades and action - from what programmer Steve Smith just converted to the Amiga, and boy is it fun the game's a real stunner in the Commodore or Atari Market realm, but the graphics, sound effects and finely-tuned gameplay lift it into the ranks of the really class. Leap out of the

landing craft with anything up to those bushes, machine-gun you way up the beach and then back-charge a guy path. Through the jungle and on into the village. Beautiful backgrounds, terrible screams and truly top-notch all add up to a timeless, modern, wonderful piece of software. Go, go, go!

• Andy Wilson



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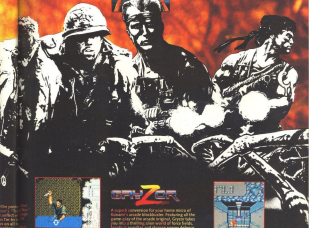
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AMIGA - ATARI ST

Is *Buggy Boy* as good on the Amiga as the 64? Will Charlie Chaplin rediscover his sense of humour on the Spectrum? Are the Lords of Conquest just as cut-throat and power mad on the ST? Find out all this and more in the latest instalment of Updates.

AMIGA

BUGGY BOY

By GEMINI

Commodore released issue 1 - Ace Rating 800

The graphics show off the Amiga's capabilities nicely with lots of smooth, fast action. The buggie is very responsive, accelerates quickly and is controlled well. Its initial appeal is high and its great fun to play, but here are two problems that drag it down a little. It's a bit too easy to beat, and with the recent spate of *Out Run* type games it has aged quite rapidly on a game format that is critical but it won't feel that long.

● ACE RATING 800



RETURN TO GENESIS

By GEMINI

Ace 11 version released issue 1 - Ace Rating 810

The horizontal scrolling shoot-'em-up owes much to *Strider* for its inspiration. On the ST it was a competent clone that lacked any originality. Here the story is the same to start. It's got excellent graphics, some digitised speech and lots of speedy action. The strange rebounding action is still present to make control awkward. Another strange shoot-'em-up to join the host of others.

● ACE RATING 810

BLACK LAMP

By GEMINI

Commodore released issue 4 - Ace Rating 810
Spectrum version released issue 1 - Ace Rating 810

This pretty, musically pleasing title should seduce you quite a bit on its way over from the ST, but not in the way you expect it was to. Disappointingly lacking in, well, game-play. Bouncing round squares, circles and winding outside corners makes a nice start, but when it's just about all there is, you're entitled to feel disappointed. Sorry packed a good deal more game into a far smaller map, and that one came out years ago.

● ACE RATING 825

ATARI ST



LORDS OF CONQUEST

By GEMINI

Commodore released issue 1 - Ace Rating 810

The graphics may not be state-of-the-art but they're adequate and certainly won't spoil your enjoyment of this great piece of strategy software. You end up to three cities can play against each other and try to conquer whichever game map you happen to be playing at the time. If you can't beat your friends (and inside you start playing) you won't be able to play even always try your hand at playing the computer - which can be made to play at any one of

three levels. Good stuff that you'll come back to whenever you feel the urge.

● ACE RATING 848

C64

DARK CASTLE

By GEMINI

Amiga version released issue 1 - Ace Rating 810

Things haven't improved with the arrival of the C64 version. Basically flat, it's a very old-style platform game in which the hero has to make his way through several screens before encountering the deviously Black Knight. Avoid the rats, bats and goblins and you're in with a chance but that's a lot easier said than done. Dull graphics and animation do little to fuel your enthusiasm and you'll probably get tired of playing the game after a relatively short time.

● ACE RATING 580

SPECTRUM

CHARLIE CHAPLIN

By GEMINI

Amiga version released issue 11 - Ace Rating 810

The game is what that great comedian put his program into into school to make several films. You've got to organize the studio, control Charlie and win the film. The final aim is to make a box office hit. The basic graphics are more suited to the Spectrum, but unfortunately the gameplay hasn't changed. It's still not a matter of watching around trying to hit the other characters as often as possible. Handle a few patches of the great man's talent. Ah well, back to the storyboard.

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STREET FIGHTER

Flying fists from GO!



ARCAD fans may know this as the game that beat you, you would actually hit Scotty they don't make them that way now, and they certainly don't do that for the Atari version. What

wishes for get another standard beat-up, but bring nothing new to the genre.

● Bob Rife

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HERCULES

GREMLIN'S mythical game



ENTERT Slayer of the Sacred. You play the muscle-bound hero of Greek mythology and you've got 12 battles to complete. Well, you've actually got to hit with your club 12 goals that appear sequentially on-screen, while trying to survive being attacked by a skeleton. The graphics and animation are poor, the gameplay just as bad and to top it off its being Hercules is not one of Gremlin's better games.

● Andy Smith

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VIXEN

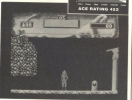
The gorgeous, pouting MARTECH?

BELLAND first again take lady Jones it seems it got done in beautiful tighty-bouded strips of leather when it comes to dealing with ladies - classless in this case. Classless who serve for you, however the plot is good. But now comes Vixen, classed lady in a pink at last. She now has the ability to change color too at will.

The always looking whip-wench get looking again in offer and its doubtful you'll be playing it in a year's time.

● Andy Smith

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EVERY SECOND COUNTS

Not a lot from TV GAMES



QUEST games don't have a great reputation as computer games, and the title of the First Domain you slow decent change makes. By the time you get into the game which slowly makes the TV title, Assembly it's not more per-

fect knowledge and have questions the list of which were over complete time before.

● Bob Rife

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CORRUPTION

Magnetic Scrolls' latest game shows a whole new approach to adventuring. Is it the beginning of a brave new world? The definitive review awaits you...

PAGE 76 >

LEGEND OF THE SWORD

Rainbird AGAIN! Not content with Magnetic Scrolls, they've also turned out this radical auto-play adventure with a control panel that really puts you in command. Is this the business, or is it a bin-liner?

PAGE 74 >



DUNGEONS AND DRAGONS

Can this long-awaited role-playing license live up to its \$1,000,000 price tag? And where is now for role-playing software?

PAGE 74 >

MINDFIGHTER

Abstract Concepts long awaited game set in post-Holocaust Southampton hits the shelves. Will the copies stay there, or should you rush out and grab them?

PAGE 75 >



BARDS TALE RIDES AGAIN

No sooner is Bards Tale 2 out of the closet, than BT3 leaps upon us. Not only that, but the BT programming team are turning their talents to other uses.

PAGE 77 >

Balrog-beating...
Spell casting...
Staff waving...
Rod toting...
Text typing...
Wizard wasting...
Treasure
grabbing...

No-one does it better than The Pilgrim – and believe us, in this month's column he really surpasses himself. Check out the menu for this month's feast...

CRACKING THE PAWN... AND MORE

Throughout the section you'll find more of the Pilgrim's Players' Guide to The Pawn, plus a host of playing tips in No Problem!, Pat's Patch for budding adventure writers, news, gossip, and other adventuring tidbits...

CORRUPTION

RAINBIRD/MAGNETIC SCROLLS' inside deal

AFTER trying around with the obscure (The Pawn), the traditional (Gaid of Thorne) and the whimsical (Liberated Magnetic Scrolls) have finally managed to come out with a game that combines powerful programming, very funny, and a compelling plot all at once. No doubt about it, Corruption is the best yet.

Some won't like it, however. The tale of master deacon, integrity and cooked business deals is unlikely to suit people who prefer to wander around picking up treasure. It does have great comparisons, however...

First, you get a lot of bangs for your money, including a cassette tape that features prominently in the plot, a lot of documentation (including a personal engineer's lecture that gives bits on your movement) and some amazing guides to لندن writing equipment, radio etiquette, online etc.

Second, the power is powerful and flexible. It can understand possession, so will accept **PUT THE COINTEGRITY OF THE SERVICE IN THE POCKET** or **OPEN THE DOOR TOP DOWN**. Combine this with a comprehensive use of pronouns, observations and flexible programming and you have a game that feels friendly and fun in operation.

Thirdly, you get the usual excellent graphics which, in this case, are certainly more atmospheric than before and every bit as technically accomplished. Much of the gameplay involves casual interaction with other people and it helps if you can see them.

Finally, of course, there's the plot. Recently made it past me in the bootstrapping lurch of Rages & Rages, you soon realise that all is not as it seems. If you don't, you'll feel you've been covered by mis-deity and found guilty of misde dealing (i.e. buying those in a company about whose financial performance you have privileged information).

The game starts at 4:00pm and the clock advances by 1 minute with every click of the **ENTER** key, so you're well advised to make maximum use of multiple commands to save time. Gameplay consists of finding and examining objects together with looting other characters when you can question

using **ASK** person **ABOUT** subject or item, using **TELL** ABOUT... Your primary objective is to put yourself in the class, your secondary is to get your secretary.

Character names about the map is, unless predetermined ways, so there are only basic gameplay but also changes it. In a normal game you map space, in this game you map time as well, taking note of what certain

920
ACE RATED

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ATARI ST	CD ROM	OUT NOW
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AMS	CD ROM (probably)	IMMENDY

people perhaps certain orders for future reference. In this instance the game is very like *Islands of Adventure* - moves down to the level of portable orders: in both games, there is someone who hides documents in a cave in the garage.

Completion is great fun, will take quite a

while to solve, and about twice everyone led up with more traditional adventure subjects. In only weakness is that the characters are all stereotypes, even the cleric blind to the master's misdeeds, and looks like wandering whether in *Islands of Adventure* took their game. *Mystic* looks heaven

gone a little too far in the opposite direction.

LANDSCAPE	90	SYSTEM	90
CHALLENGE	90	ENCOUNTERS	90
ACE RATING 900			

LEGEND OF THE SWORD

RAINBIRD'S pretty little number

HMMMM... This is a hedgehog, make no mistake.

Legend of the Sword combines a very well-designed user interface with a variety of puzzling and wandering that varies from the outrageously strange to the straightly absurd, with not a little humour scattered along the way.

The screen in full colour on page 12 is divided into four main sections. The right is a map-display with an attractive overhead representation of the game around you and features such as trees, buildings, and terrain obstacles.

Top left are two small windows which keep playing the during play, looking at simple pictures, or your companions, surroundings and other objects when viewed. In the regard the display is slightly strange as *Occas* the *Never Ending Story*.

In the centre of the screen are instructions you can refer to. An icon will illuminate if movement in that direction is possible. On the bottom left of the screen, you have the traditional but window where you can enter commands and read responses, locations, descriptions, and more.

In addition, there are a series of drop-down menu labels across the top of the screen which allow you to toggle between the map and a vocabulary display as well as select certain system commands and other actions.

Despite the number of different elements on the screen, its very colourfully presented and never seems cluttered. You play the game like any normal adventure, except that many commands can be entered via symbols, words and vocabulary tables or icons. Clicking on the word makes it take up the entire screen - useful for getting your bearings before proceeding.

As you move about the map window scrolls very gently, bringing new landscape into view. The whole impression is one of smooth, computer programming that makes the gameplay both smooth, simple, and satisfying.

When a move to the action takes place, however, the story changes slightly. With your five companions you must locate an enchanted sword and shield with which to destroy the evil wizard *Bar*. The bulk of the action consists of exploration,

RELEASE BOX		
ATARI ST	CH 800	OUT NOW
AMIGA	CH 800	AMAY 87
IBM PC	CH 800	'84

looking items, and solving puzzles. Most of these are the traditional connect-the-dot board-object type - it doesn't need to be very easy but isn't exactly a stroll if you've been solving such problems for the last five years.

Lessons feature the usual dark interiors, tunnels, woodlands, cliffs and temple chambers, together with vast areas of open country and forest. The game is divided into several distinct sections which require particular skills or special objects to enter and in the respect is, again, highly traditional.

Legend of the Sword is a beautiful looking game, but the pretty face conceals a well-worn-out traditional adventure. It will first stay to solve, however, and I suspect that beauty can always win out.

LANDSCAPE	75	SYSTEM	90
CHALLENGE	75	ENCOUNTERS	90
ACE RATING 815			

MINDFIGHTER

An ABSTRACT CONCEPT from ACTIVISION

FERGUS McNeil, the man who brought you *Delta 4*, *The Magell* and *Second Shining Arrow* is responsible in this latest venture from Activision Concepts, a new adventure design house run by Anna Ripstein. *Mindfighter* is the last game from the label, previously produced by the *Figures* and now on general release.

The game runs under a new adventure outlining system called *ORAM* (originally designed by Systems Without A Name). Most stage adventure games use their own systems, but until recently writers like Fergus and Anna have relied on clever program-

ming of more widely available utilities such as the shell. Having their own in-house programming system is a big step forward.

However, the small print reveals that *ORAM* is actually produced by *Strangel* systems, Tim Gilbert of *Ghost/Shell* fame. This explains why the new system is something of a three steps forward, one step back affair - but more of that in a minute.

The game involves a psychic child, *Scott*, who has somehow materialised in a post-industrial Southampton, where she is made even more miserable by Chinese mafia. You have to find out what's going on,

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SPC	CH 800	OUT NOW
MS	CH 800, CH 800A	OUT NOW
AMIGA	CH 800	OUT NOW
ATARI ST	CH 800	OUT NOW
IBM PC	CH 800	OUT NOW

return to the present day, and prevent the disaster from taking place. At least I think that's what you're supposed to do. The game packaging doesn't help much, preferring to give you the hints of your situation.

The graphics, like other games, include a good deal of interaction. The landscape is extremely difficult to map, with seemingly infinite geographical relations, traps between locations.

NO PROBLEM!

By gosh! This month's list has some fun: *Black Crystal*, *Robot Heroes*, and *The Physician*. Also the exclusive *Clue* by sending it your own list to address to No Problem, c/o Queen Street, San, Box 12.

STANDARD

Excuse me to find bugs, then I'll give you the game in the future.
Put the disk on the system with the opening found in the system's drawer.
To print the disk back file, type ENTER + CLR.

THE UNBROKEN

Look at the left-hand corner in the board's grid file for the 1 to open the cabinet in the master bedroom. Some aspects will open.

TRICKY

To work in each object, you must find the board on light object in the library file.
The object can be destroyed by finding a 1 to enter the box.

The instruction will enter the flag, but you should know there is also some time to set them first.

REVIEW ITEM

Open the door from the lightsource or from the doorway grid file but first use the language door to the door.

Open the instruction in front of the door, then use the door to get it out of the table. This will set your computer.

The other power to the table is lightning, the other's first.

The player features TAKE ALL, EXCEPT, and also SLEEP AND LOAD, IT, and OPEN, but still retains some classic features. In particular, it will say "TAKE? IMPOSSIBLE" when you try to take items that are not possible, when you try to walk out the solution to a puzzle. Great, when you completely forget it, and it reminds I CAN'T UNDERSTAND, I don't say which word it's having difficulty with. It seems a long time since I've had to make these entries about the power of a premium-quality product.

Finally, involved in the method of conversation with other interactive characters - you still have to SAY TO PERSON, TALKING, other than just NAME, MESSAGE. Otherough edges include occasional inappropriate responses to:

WELL, EVERY CAN WITH WATER.
KISS FILLING WATER.

After which episode I found I was opening WATER without a container.

What some this game, however, is the drama of the setting, some excellent a solution to the graphics, tough puzzles, and a useful on-disk command system. These features do help to maintain interest, but lets hope that with Alexander Corcoran's next game they're rising the better interest again rather than having to keep it going.

LANDSCAPE 00 EPHEM 00
CONCLUDE 01 ENCOUNTERS 00

ACE RATING: 020

PAT'S PATCH

Discovering bugs in your game is simple - finding the cause and correcting them is often much harder. Depending upon the nature of the fault there are several approaches, the first being to pinpoint where the fault is occurring.

The simplest way to discover what parts of code are being loaded at and which are not is to insert a set of dummy messages in your code. Don't follow the messages with a PRINT or OPEN statement or they will slow the system, simply follow them with END. The messages themselves can say anything you want - I tend to use "message 1," "message 2" etc and spread them through the code evenly. Then if while testing something unexpected happens a set of messages will be printed on screen corresponding to the points reached by the system.

That if you expect a condition towards the end of the line table to be read, put a message directly before and after it. If the condition has a PRINT or OPEN after it, the message following the condition should not be printed if the condition was successful.

Having pinpointed the area of a fault, the next step is to discover what the fault is. The following short conditions (enter at the beginning of the line table and any success/fail table) will help you to see what the system is doing and whether it matches what you expect.

1) PRINT ROOM END - Prints the number of the current room to the screen.

2) IF (NOT) 0 IN NOT | AND NEW "flag" | END NOT PAT END (if the player types "flag"

object) (and new 0 object was match) the player will be moved to the object).

3) IF (NEW "flag" | END NOT WAIT END (do 1, but brings the object to the player - useful if you can't get at the object or have forgotten its location.)

4) LF PRINT MBAD (LF PRINT MDI | LF PRINT MDI | LF) Prints the numbers of the words in the input being used by the system.)

The following lines should be inserted as and when needed with the number 'x' being specified each time.

5) PRINT CTR 'Y' END (Others 'Y' is the number of the counter whose progress you wish to monitor.)

6) IF (SETI 'Y' | MESSAGE "marker" PRINT 'Y' MISS "to test" END) Shows the state of the required marker.)

7) IF (REQI 'Y' | MISS "marker" PRINT 'Y' MISS "to test" END) (Shows the state of the required marker.)

These few tricks should help solve many of your problems.

DUNGEONS AND DRAGONS

In a \$1 million, 8 year project, US Gold andSSI have banded together to produce a series of games based on the Advanced Dungeons and Dragons system. The first two games will be *Pool of Radiance* and *Halls of the Labyrinth*, both to be released later this year.

Pool of Radiance's set is the Forgotten Realms and features the usual D&D methods of character definition together with a large monster database and an on screen presentation reminiscent of the *Bards Tale* series. First glimpses of the game's screens seem extremely promising, with lots of colour and excellent graphics. You can also define every aspect of the story (e.g. your characters' appearance) yourself.

Halls of the Labyrinth gives you control of eight companions as you generate the sum of *Bard* search to retrieve the *Dials of Malice*. *Dungeons Master-type* adventures and graphics abound.



Together with the usual character-type functionalities and, open, previous of the game look very exciting.

Best of all about the project, however, promises to be the long-term nature, with many games and support programs (including utilities to help set up your own characters) to come. We'll bring you further news as soon as we get it, but initial reaction is the mutual while seen is enthusiastic, to say the least.

By special the *Gold* and *SSI* of *Pool of Radiance*.

The Travellers' Times

Edited by The Pilgrim • Honorary Editor: The White Wizard • Published by Far-Future Publishing
Price: Free with this copy of ACE

WE'RE FAMOUS!

Adventures are rapidly becoming the centre of attention from software houses as role-playing and fantasy games continue to take off in the States like never before.

Lots of board to go last-topper is the endorsement by Megadyn's *Lonely Adventurer* that they're telling software it is to make one of their game lines of investment over the next few years.

The company here also listed an extravagant price for *Islands*, when they brought out some time ago Larry Laska, newly appointed marketing manager to the UK, is especially unhappy at the previous lack of promotion at *Islands* sites in the country and intends to put the word out.

Megadyn aren't the only ones to be jumping freely onto the adventure/role-playing bandwagon. As you can see elsewhere on this page, Electronic Arts are now fast developing their *Bards Tale* series and looking to new RPG sites to release in the next year. Even US *Island* is getting in on the act with *Dragonair* and *Dragonair* (see page 70).

There was a day when all adventures were universally despised by most software houses. These days are attempting...

INFOCOM TRILOGY

Megadyn are to release a special compilation pack of *Islands* sites, featuring *Minotaur's Guide to the Dwarven Leather Goddesses of Profane*, and *Job's 12 Small* price has yet to be fixed, but you can see that it will represent a substantial saving on the original pricing for the three separate games.

Islands are also back of with a new game with



Working Harder - the leading feature in *Working Harder*.

Douglas Adams. Watch out for *The Godfather* at the end of the *Islands* in the not too distant future, as well as further collaborations with other famous authors - check the spots for details.

SKARA BRAE BLASTED

Skara Brae is almost upon us, in which you maintain the ruins of the Stone Age and must travel the seven great planes to set the world to rights and rescue the city you visited in *BT* and *BT2*.

The latest game in the series, released last on the heels of *BT2*, adds two new classes of magic user - *Geomancers* and *Chronomancers*. This is of particular interest to experienced players if the system uses a computer as a development of an advanced fighter. In previous versions, fighting was simply 'did what fighting was here to do - fight, how they can learn to cast spells as well. *Chronomancers* have been introduced in the process of mastering 'player level' - essential in this game if you are to return one.

Other improvements include the listing of known spells for you don't always have to order in the manual, lots of outdoor locations, more puzzles, and three spells obtained in the game as 'secret knowledge' which can be pulled up by key-

code. The last feature is significant because it can provide the means to any class of character to wield some degree of magical power.

LOOK - NO BARDS!

The programmers of the ever-popular *Bards Tale* series have started work on a new game that could improve substantially on the quality of computerized role-playing.

Motivated takes you through a devastated world, battling against blue scum, new weapons, and robot battles. In addition to the usual character attributes of strength, intelligence, and so on, the program offers 20 skills ranging from gardening to demolition and *Douglas Adams* and your best out/insurrectionary.

Skills can be used up in the library and, in combination with your intelligence, lead to the greater character definition. Even better, you can now split parties of adventures in order to surround enemies, increasing the tactical interest of the game.

Continue all the while.

code. (Additional skills amongst others), however - as in 'You include the blue scum for ten points' - and attributes for nationality and sex, and you have a substantial advance on the *Bards Tale* series and a very pleasing game. Watch out for the review, coming soon.



AAGHGH! - All the while!

AAGHGH!

'What can I do? Last month, I pointed you the *Islands V* review, the month *Cooper Systems* told me it has been delayed yet again. I finally took my self in two, set it, and held my peace until the damned program actually materialised on my desk. My apologies, but when the game's out there, neither the review. As I can say it that I'm sure that when it finally does arrive, it will have been worth the wait.



Skara Brae is coming soon.

Senior officers here are. Out Jan 25, 1986 (Spectrum), Amstrad/Cass and Osborne.

NO PRISON

There you are, just about to score your highest EVER score and you have the shielded go-Juice that led to so many of knowing you were in the middle of a game, but you can bet it'll be the target for your frustration once you get round to setting her in. Intermixes aren't usually such a problem for us here at ACE although it can be when you're playing a game with no game mode and the shielded go-Juice runs round, but what usually shows a magazine all more than anything is a feature to game that will let us score mode, it also can't move getting screen shot a nightmare by either altering the screen displaying it out a particularly upsetting it by plotting some (house) right across the action. The worst game-mode offender is *Fortis* and the word change between when you've played a feature is *Intermixes*.

HIGH-SCORE TABLES

Some games force you to enter your initials after every game - this is not as bad if you've done well, but some games have high-score tables so large you can get your name on them just by starting the game and letting yourself get killed this is particularly bad when it doesn't save the score to disk so you have to go through the whole process every time, and believe us, putting your name up of the 10th position does nothing for your ego. The worst example of this too large high score table is *Clot*.

MULTI-LOADS

A nightmare, next of three, you're almost out of lives on you manage to reach the end of the second level. You at least and you'll be level three to level in and almost as soon as you start to play, you lose your last life. That's somewhat beyond then, appears on-screen. Please remind to the start of the tape? You've got to go through the whole process again, and what to guarantee you do better next time? Nothing *MANAGE* because otherwise here are *Produce* and *Integrate*.

FLIES IN THE OINTMENT

Just, but by no means least, are the games that really do back

and have a good laugh at you. You've played a game for hours, you've done extremely well, you've nearly finished some remarkable feat and you suddenly realise the game won't let you finish it because you forgot to carry out some insignificant task right at the beginning. Or you've fought your way through loads of probes (yes, we're talking *Die* clustered around some on-charge planet, and other what seems like hours of concentrated effort, you're almost within range of a space station. Suddenly you hear that siren and realise you're being shot at - you make it in for the station and as you do so, a quiet message appears on the screen: Docking computers destroyed. Even if you reach the dock, you still have probably crash as you try to dock (usually because the manoeuvre and you're probably be pleased to learn that your previous siren's changes here than it was when you bought it, *MANAGE*).

Senior officers here are legion. In *A.T.T.*, for example, you're low on fuel and just about to land but putting the undercarriage down stalls the plane. Then there's *Get Dealer* - you do all that work and then find yourself in the ward that costs where furniture drops on your head, not to mention the guy cutting her. And then there's *Manslayer* - get that down his enemy from the city and it's a long, long walk to retirement. Or you might be joining Academy where you destroy loads of viruses trying about defender in a magnificent running battle - only to find out the last that took out your compass can't leave as you realise you've going to find your way back to base. And what about *Deliberate*? There's just one sphere left, but can you find the right line to hit it before the enemy runs out? Nope. Really, there's always *How To Be A Complete Loser*. If you hit on to the computer in this game, the next option you're given does just that - resets the machine, not just the game.

If you've ever had any of these things happen to you, then spare a thought for the poor soul who spent hours and a whole lot of money playing *MANAGE*. And before they become provoked to a word, some unliking person skidded them in the back and sent them right back to never land.

IT HURTS, BUT I LIKE IT

BATMAN

Osborne

Amstrad £19.95 £14.95
Spectrum £19.95

Suitably are we drawn in by the enticement of wearing, exploring and peering through the delightful comic-style screens. How clearly we are lulled into a false sense of security by these pleasant surroundings. Then, suddenly you burst through a door, convinced you know what you're doing, and you slip headlong into a hot power that takes away what jumps, speed or whatever other powers you did have.

Then of course there are the hot power (looked in hard-to-get) items, which offer great effort to get them to absolutely nothing at all.

Most nerve-hacking of all is the bit of the batmobile that takes-hits view - it could take you weeks to find it. By which time you'd still be the soldier.



Batman

Batman

BOUNDER

Osborne

Two Great Games Compilation

Amstrad £9.95, £14.95
Spectrum £9.95, £14.95
C64 £9.95, £14.95

What an addictive nightmare this is. It's not just that it's frustrating, it's the fact that you can't stop playing it. The last problem is controlling the launching ball, which is like trying to manoeuvre a supermarine in a bathtub.

Then, as you merely launch it all up the walling course, you go in the wrong direction and slip into a hell-busting dead end. Not content with that the game may then put you back on a better point when you've got no chance of surviving.

Just to top it off, can the unfortunate happen and sublimates that one so easy to hit, and you'll never know what hit you. *Waste, the cinema...*

NEBULUS

Osborne

Amstrad £9.95 £14.95
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Mostly games have always had a frustration element, and the time-taking reward is one of the best of it. The whole idea is to get to the top of the tower, and everything is trying to stop you.

Imagine the terror that



skies your feet. As you rise to the top of the tower, white lines are running out, indicating that one more move will send you falling a horrible distance back down again.

The puzzles and clues you also have you shoving through your lip is needed again. They have a level of appearing just when it's most awkward for you, as pulling a disappearing block where you least expect it.

You can easily spot Nintendo players because they essentially became assigned to these spin-crabbing directions and adopt wall expressions, drooped heads and sloping shoulders. Then again, you should see them when they complete a tower - they would go down a level on The Tower is Right.

TETRIS

Miscellaneous

Amstrad	£8.95	£12.95
Spectrum	£8.95	£12.95
CGA	£8.95	£12.95
Amstrad	£18.95	£18.95
Amiga	£18.95	£18.95
IBM PC	£18.95	£18.95

It's a game that can be said to soothe the nerves. On most versions it would become a Nintendo's cradle type of device for calming the mind at about speeds 1 and 2, but it keeps on speeding up. You learn to do it so fast you can't even see the pieces fly or light speed, but all is so quick - you just need win.

However much you possess that magic computer it always going to win. Oh, the agonies of Tetris! www.nintendo.com



Photo



Photo

Photo



Photo

After back left to fit into these carefully cramped paths and double-eye under the top of the screen.

It's also a puzzle of not being a puzzle made, except on the CGA version. You can never get any sort of a level from the screen and you'll waste every a more stack of your tower and.

THRUST

Miscellaneous

Spectrum	£1.95	
Amstrad	£1.95	
CGA	£1.95	
Amstrad		£8.95

Sensitive controls and big-integer levels are enough to make the one deep-down frustrating. You fall into a corner, your bullets into those gun-like and - turning suddenly covered the area out with a general one of the game - fall into the opposite wall because you're going too fast to stop. If that's not quite mastering enough for you, there are always the real prize to drive you bonkers. A special mention here goes to the next, a structure

only found in the 12 version, which forces you to lead the pet diagonally down out of its corner. Complete the monumental feat, and you skip level the game puts you right back in the cup. Get a little further before you crash and it'll put you in a bonus level below the cup, but with the pet blocked above you. Good, your teeth is real.

TOPI

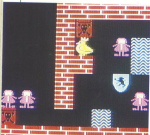
Logic

Amstrad	£8.95	£14.95
Spectrum	£8.95	£14.95
CGA	£8.95	£14.95

This game of maze puzzles with obstacles, but not explosions, is a classic for getting 'hacked out' and it can happen at any time. The puzzles are constructed so that in nearly every case one wrong move can trigger the whole game. Of course your second chance might be able to get you out of trouble but you'll probably be too stressed to manage it.

The word part about it is the speed with which events can happen. You decide on a move and put it into action, only to find the unstoppable sequence of events results in a fate penetrating your soul.

It's also a classic for the creeping feeling of 'Oh no, what have I done?' as it slowly dawns on you that you've blocked an essential passage. It's absolutely devastating and makes you feel much more determined to have another go and succeed.



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SARGON III



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IT JUST HURTS...

ARMY MOVES

Imagin

Live Action Compilation

Aimed	£9.95c	£14.95c
Spectrum	£9.95c	£14.95c
CHI	£9.95c	£14.95c

The 'most' capital ever in its opposing retail points. Most people probably haven't even managed to get off the test stage without the aid of a pal or other cheat.

It's not just the water levels either. What makes it SO frustrating is the fact that it's very demanding on the player as well. You've got to be near perfect in your jump as you jump into obstacles in stages, beat other jumping steps and have plenty of helicopters landing outside death. After falling through screens after screens of that and eventually succumbing, game where you end up? Back at the £9.95/£14.95 mark.

BARBARIAN

Argosoft

Aimed SP	£4.95c
Amiga	£4.95c

Not to be confused with Robert's classically named title - frustrating only because it's so easy to complete - the 16-bit version rewards untimely deaths. The only way to learn which bits of the scenery crush you, collapse under you or burst open and instead fatally crush you is if you're to let them do their worst. And how you'd know better of course, but that hardly gets away on the old blood pressure. Couple these with a hero who stays your comrade sluggishly if at all, a game system that seems to load every screen separately from disk and a title low and slow designed to lead you astray, and you're in for quite a hell-raising ride.

ECO

Claris

Aimed ST	£19.95c
Amiga	£24.95c

A unique case, this, in inspiring

the player to new heights of conquest. A game that looks flawless in its conception, when you try to modify a single insect into even higher life forms. A game with appeal, extensive graphics. A game with ending and end death. With that except, surely a game to inspire positive views of delight?

None. The whole problem is that you start with high hopes of a great experience and spend minutes, hours and days trying to find the game. The real truth is it *isn't* there - and it's even frustrating going through that just to be let down.



Army Moves

Predator



Predator



rather than well (it) be done with enemy firepower be could-it help getting wounded by? Being ground down without actually making mistakes is deems it is just too frustrating for words but, if your bloods still a bit before being game, why not (back) out the value (rewards)? You can push up any thing from a monster point to a 4,000 points per minute (though) but your fire rate drops (slightly) (consider) (sounds like a bit of a slow down, though?)

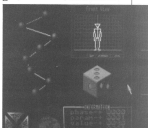
PREDATOR

Activision

Spectrum	£9.95c	
Aimed	£9.95c	£14.95c
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Aimed ST	£14.95c	

Any game that gives you more than ten lines for free equipment should put you on your guard for frustratingly avoidable deaths, and here's a case in point. When it comes to action gameplay, the technological set-up comes out top every time. Pioneering through a jungle (just) you might expect to take hits from snakes, but what would really get killed by bats? And would he really be then

Barbarian



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PLATOON MAPPED (PART 3)

(an Thompson supplies the third section of the combat zone.)



Those juicy tips and pokes just keep rolling in – if a particular game's driving you up the wall, here's the place to look for a tip that could make your life a whole lot easier. Do you want to crack *Impossible mission*? Would you like to complete *Dan Dare II*?

Or make it to the end of stage 5 in *Out Run*? If you can hack your way through other people's code – or produce a map that could prove invaluable to others who are lost, then don't hesitate to send your contributions in – for the best tips, maps and pokes each month we give software away like it was going out of fashion.



SAMURAI WARRIOR

Bushido Basher loving C&Fers can make life a lot easier for themselves by typing in the following.

First load the game and read the C&F, now by Bushi-Jobee:

POKE 18002 (\$127) for higher starting energy

POKE 18007 (\$127) for more money

POKE 18050 (\$12) to start on a higher level

For unlimited energy, type this list in:

POKE 00065,\$2-POKE 00065,\$2-POKE

01007,\$27-POKE 00097,\$57-POKE

00206,\$20-POKE 00206,\$20-POKE

00406,\$20-POKE 00406,\$20-POKE

00407,\$17-POKE 00407,\$17-POKE

00408,\$20-POKE 00408,\$20

Type BYE 14008 to end the game

ANDRE VAN DER BLET, Rotterdam

ODDS

Microsoft's ACE rated Thrust-in blast is straightforward enough, but here's a couple of points you may have missed.

1. After refuelling at a fuel base, fire into the air before lifting off. If the refuelling pipe comes out again then the dump will has come full. In 4, if the pipe doesn't re-engage then the dump's empty and can be shot for an extra 100 points.



2. When going through treports, fly slowly and activate your shield just as you touch the teleporter – this reduces the risk of projecting your ship on the sides of a small cavern.

3. When creating new planetoids, if you require a more powerful insulator such as a stronger attractor or repulsor or a rapid-fire gun, turn them simply place two or more of the same object in the same position. (Each hit during the game destroys one of them.)

STEVEN BAINES, Coltringham



DAN DARE II

Here's a complete solution to Virgin's brain-ent-up on the Spectrum.

- 1** LEFT, DOWN, D, L, L, L, L, UP, RIGHT, U, U, L, L, D, L, D, SHOOT COMPUTER, R, R, D, D, SHOOT SUPERGREEN, U, R, R, R, D, SHOOT SUPERGREEN, D, SHOOT SUPERGREEN, D, R, PICK UP EXTRA ENERGY, L, D, WAIT FOR CRUSHER TO CRUSH TWICE, DOWN INTO CRUSHER, L, SHOOT SUPERGREEN, D, L, D, SHOOT SUPERGREEN, D, L, L, U, U, R, D, L, L, D, R, SHOOT BLAST DOORS, ENTER, WAIT FOR DOORS TO CLOSE - FINISHED.
- 2** R, R, S, L, D, D, L, SHOOT COMPUTER AND SUPERGREEN, D, LOSE A LIFE, GET EXTRA FIREPOWER, D, D, D, D, SHOOT SUPERGREEN, L, L, L, SHOOT SUPERGREEN, R, R, R, U, D, R, D, D, SHOOT SUPERGREEN, D, L, SHOOT SUPERGREEN, R, U, U, R, S, D, R, GET RADIO FROM BEHIND DOOR, U, SHOOT SUPERGREEN, D, L, L, U, U, D, D, R, D, R, D, R, GET BEHIND BLAST DOOR - FINISHED.
- 3** R, U, U, U, R, R, D, SHOOT COMPUTER, U, L, L, U, L, REPLENISH ENERGY, R, U, R, THROUGH FIRE BLAST DOORS, L, D, L, REPLENISH ENERGY, R, D, D, L, SHOOT SUPERGREEN, D, L, U, L, D, L, SHOOT SUPERGREEN, U, L, L, SHOOT SUPERGREEN, R, U, COLLECT SCREEN FROM BEHIND DOOR, D, R, R, D, D, U, R, U, R, R, GET BEHIND BLAST DOOR, FINISHED.
- 4** R, R, R, R, U, R, GET EXTRA ENERGY, L, U, U, R, R, U, R, D, R, U, U, U, L, SHOOT COMPUTER AND SUPERGREEN, R, D, D, D, L, SHOOT SUPERGREEN, U, U, SHOOT SUPERGREEN, D, L, L, SHOOT SUPERGREEN, R, D, D, L, L, D, L, SHOOT SUPERGREEN, R, D, D, D, SHOOT SUPERGREEN, D, D, L, SHOOT SUPERGREEN, R, U, U, U, U, L, L, D, L, GET TRIPMINE DISGUISE, R, R, D, SHOOT SUPERGREEN, D, U, R, U, U, U, R, R, U, R, D, R, U, R, R, R, U, R, U, R, GET IN ESCAPE POD, WAIT FOR TRIPMINE TO REACH ZERO - GAME COMPLETE.

JONATHAN BARLOW, Southampton

MERCENARY - THE SECOND CITY

Here's a neat tip to allow Airtage-winning Mercenary fans access to the author's cheat room where you'll get keys to every door, passes out of prison and the ability to carry codices of goodies in your pockets!

Fly the demonstrator as usual, fly to stairs 200 meters level of (your speed should be 1,791 kph) and fire a missile. Pick the missile up once you get close to it and then land. Go to 04 05, take the on-air intercompter and end game 04 05, go underground, exit your ship and break through the triangular door - bingo!

SIMON LAM, Crediton

CARRIER COMMAND

A handy tip to find the enemy carrier.

Start an action game and set course for Isula (just east of Thermopylae). Stay out of range for approximately 70 minutes. As soon as the message 'Isula is now an enemy island' appears, search a Manta and fly towards the north side of the island. The enemy carrier will be directly ahead of you.



When you're aiming a Manta, try loading it up with both missiles and a laser (plus whatever you wish to carry in the rear compartment).

STUART MAX,
Watson on Thames

IMPOSSIBLE MISSION (C64)

How could we resist publishing a poke for such a good game? (especially as we gave it away free on the cover of our American issue).

Enter and RUN the short listing below loading the game and you'll find the sports collision detector has been disabled (the robot's can't kill you).

- 1 FOR G=320 TO 340:READY=C:\POKE
- 2 YINXIT
- 3 IF C=2041 THEN FOR I=107,108,95,330
- 4 PRINT "DATA 03800"
- 5 DATA 82,184,225,185,55,141,143,5,106,1
- 6 DATA 141,134,137,118,32,77,50,150
- 7 DATA 90,141,91,100,32,132,255,50

THE MASTER HACKER, Holywell



CYBERNOID MAPPED

BRUCE ROBERTSON, *Stevenson*

STAGE

1

GUN

MAIN CARGO PICK UP POINT

DRONE

CANNISTER

MISSILE LAUNCHER

BLOCKS

CATERPILLAR

ALIEN WAVES

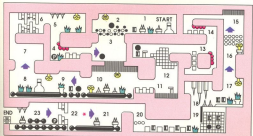
REAR GUN ADD ON

MOVING ALIENS

PLANT

STAGE

2





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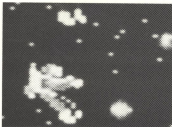
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ZYBOX

An infinite lives poke for the Q&A. Simply type in the listing and RUN it.

```
100 DATA 33,86,248,166,75
110 DATA 141,208,2,189,1
120 DATA 14,1,20,1,90,160
130 DATA 81,14,1,32,1,4,100
140 DATA 1,141,1,82,1,70
150 DATA 8,4,188,188,141
160 DATA 188,13,78,8,88
170 FOR L=100 TO 254
180 READ X:POKE L,X:NEXT
190 POKE 157,108:SYNCH
```

MEL WATFIELD, Washington, Tyne and Wear



OUTRUN

QT owners not only get the best version of the game to date, but some handy tips too.

Type in **STRAT** while playing the game then press any of the following codes:

- B** - Gives extended play
- Q** - Gives you some information about the program
- T** - Adds ten seconds to your time
- S** - Takes you through the locations
- D** - Saves the screen in **DISK** format
- R** - Resets the computer!

MARTYN CARR, Woking

STARSHAKE

It may be old on 8-bit machines but **STARS** have only recently been able to join in the fun. These codes will help you if you having problems with the Teletexts.

```
TARGET HIND KIRAND:ROKRA SOUJH DWIRE
KALID DAVRO BORDA TROAM FLEDO MOWA
LWARD DWIND BOKE
```

BRION JAGGS, Birmingham



TARGET:RENEGADE

This fix should prove valuable to Spectrum owners who are finding the game a little tough for them.

Play the game until you have enough points to register your name on the hi-score table. When entering your name, hold down **CTRL SHIFT** and press **BREAK**, enter a line and a full of characters and then press enter. Let the game count down and then continue to play with infinite lives (the game screen will be corrupted for a short while but it will clear itself).

DARREN BARTLETT, Hayes



NORTHSTAR

Spectrum owners need worry no longer as this infinite lives poke will solve your problems.

```
IN LOAD:0000
40 FOR N=10000 TO 80000
50 READ Q
60 POKE N,Q
70 NEXT N
80 FORADDRESS L000:R000
90 DATA 42,26,30,242,148,195,181,183
100 PEEK:INFINITE LIVES
```

JAMES TOUCH, Aberdeen

SOFTWARE GALORE!!

Not many of us can afford to splash out on all the software we'd like, so what's the next best thing? Sending someone else's money, like a cheque to ACE. You'll not know, you could well agree with your best friend games for your money if your idea proved to be "Up of the Month". Steve Robertson's laughing all the way to the bank now that he doesn't have to splash out on copies of **Dark Side**, **Target: Renegade**, **Comix**, **Action Force**, **Revenge**, **Stakes**, **Dark** and **Reynolds** for his **Spectrum**. Why? Because he's already been sending all of them (except **Dark** and **Reynolds**) to all sorts of grinning over his copy of **Stard**, **Comix** as well. **The Master Builder**, **Demon**, **Bartlett** is going to be chuffed when his copy of **Dark Side** gets through his door as well. **Quest** may also be going to go with **Leatherneck**, **Star**, **Cart** in for a real treat once he gets started on **Danger**, **Master Touch**. There's nothing stopping you from winning a jolly nice offer, so get those post-holing and send:

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Tony Ross gets his teeth into two newcomers this month - both from Jade Games. *New Order*'s an American import, run over here under license while *Chronicles* are British through and through...

NEW ORDER

Jade Games

No, there's no connection with that pop group from Manchester. This is a game featuring standing fleets moving through space, attacking, destroying or otherwise not systems. Set in a 20 x 20 x 15 volume of space, up to 10 players engage in simple building by deploying and controlling army at the 100 planets scattered throughout 200 star systems.

There is a great deal of detail in *New Order*, with seven different attributes for space ships and ten ship types. I think the six pages of glossary and two pages explaining observations give a good guide to the complexity of the game.

Victory is achieved by building, controlling, dotting or destroying colonies. There are awarded according to the type of player you are, and the list is more approximately 100:200:2000 +/- 20% as the winner.

Usually for an American-designed

CHRONICLES

Jade Games

In the last year or two, several computer-assisted fantasy games have appeared, and these now present a credible alternative to the older board-top games. *Jade* has brought out not one, but two such games in rather two volumes, the 100-player *Chronicle of the Knights of Arden* and the 500-player *Chronicle of Kings*.

I found the substance level and a lot vague about the players role in the game. So far as I can tell, each player starts as the ruler of a province with five armies of his command. Each province is 50 miles square and there are four empty provinces for every player in the game.

Through conquest, settlement, trade and diplomacy, players expand their provinces and use in some form of early figure or storage of the game's up to Kings. Along the way, players can hire lords and even their own regions with the help of other players. The main interest is not depicted as province conquest but on 'importance points' gained from successful actions like this - it encourages less violent strategies.

So what does it cost? Well, it's free to start and there used a cheap 50p for the first version. Needs good, but extra orders cost 10p each and a 10000 turn would be £1 to 10p run free there is an advanced rulebook which costs £1.00, and the game rules information card order. I believe this looks a the same to both games.

The two games are set in different eras of Arden, but the major difference other than the number of the players, is the lack of an interface rule system in the later game. The only way to play in the game is to write directly to those players whose orders you receive when you make them.

Both releases are a copy of the map in the manual and A1 size maplet copies are available from Jade. You can fit out a two-room wall with these. They are only black and white, but well-down, and they make mapping easier. (Maybe Jade would consider producing A1 size printed leaving paper to go with the maps.)

COMPLEXITY 7 ENGAGEMENT 7
PRESENTATION 7 SKILL 6

ACE RATING B

COMPANY ADDRESS

Jade Games - PO Box 54, Southsea, Hants, PO5 0SL.

PLAY IT... BY MAIL

From reading the detailed 40-page rulebook the impression is of a complex but well thought-out game. There are some features which seem derived from other games, most notably the player types Despotism, Monarchy, Rovers and Crusades which may seem familiar to players of *Warlord*, the last space-BMW game.

There is little room in the plot of *New Order* that hasn't been done before. Space games tend to have similar features. As well, some form of topographic map system is employed, otherwise the game would be very difficult to stage while retaining realistic

game, there is only one price for turn, it is however £2.50, which I consider expensive for a computer-aided game. Given the complexity of the game, though, I am nearly prepared to accept that the price is justified. It also costs £2.50 to start a game and the rulebook costs £3.00. The ACE rating is lower because of the cost, which might exclude many younger players.

COMPLEXITY 8 ENGAGEMENT 6
PRESENTATION 7 SKILL 6

ACE RATING B

SPECIAL DELIVERY

Crownsoft's *World* has been taken over by Chesford and is now run entirely by Bill Lindy (last issue of ACE) from the new address below. Former GM Mark Dutton lists the post office as such, but he now writes for them, delivering post instead of creating it.

The new address for Crownsoft is 4 Crescent Avenue, Doreways, Blackpool, FY5 5SE. I haven't seen anything of this game yet, though I know it's one of the oldest UK fantasy campaigns and was originally run by KAC. I believe it is undergoing revisions, following the 5th issue.

Bill with KAC (some on some of you others, but

we what's happening), Neil Dutton, mentioned in the June ACE, has now got over 2,100 players, with 25 games started. Our ACE reviewer isn't doing too well and should be reporting next issue.

I've received several letters, including some from editors of *Fantasy*. These are amiable magazines dedicated to providing extra information about other games, along with news, letters, fiction and general things. I hope to cover some in a future issue, so if you write me, drop me a copy.

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GAME SET MATCH

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Now it's time to spend more money than necessary in setting up a decent home music studio. Inevitably, though, you'll spend more than one MIDI synthesizer or sampler - maybe even three or four. The problem is that at around £1000 for a decent full-sized keyboard, many of us can't even afford one!

A computer-based system which can handle your sequencing, patch editing, and even functions such as scorewriting, is part of the solution. Obviously, you could also save money by avoiding unnecessary duplication of equipment, and the usage of MIDI can make one of the most expensive, bulky parts of a system - the keyboard itself - redundant. Inevitably, the best way to save money and space is to forget the idea of buying multiple keyboards, and invest instead in a single controlling master or 'mother' keyboard, and several keyboardless MIDI sound modules.

From the theory, in practice, though, the UK market for master keyboards has been slow to take off. The first Japanese products from being Yamaha and Roland were too pricey to make any impression, and it's only with the advent of Casio's MT series keyboards that the idea has become popular to musicians on a reasonable budget.

Most of you will know that Casio's started off in the home computer market, and broke into music through the popular Spectrums digital drum machine add-on to the Sinclair computers. Now the Casio's music range includes MIDI keyboards, drum machines, sequencers, drum kits and synthesizers.

The keyboards are particularly impressive, because they are such amazingly good value for money compared to Japanese and American competitors. In fact, the most expensive Casio keyboard now costs less than the cheapest from rival manufacturers!

WORKING!

What exactly is a master keyboard, used for? Put simply, it produces no sounds, but generates MIDI signals which control sound-producing keyboardless modules. These signals include pitches, performance features like pitch bend and vibrato, and pitch-bend change instructions which tell the 'slave' synth what sound to play.

Fortunately every new synthesizer produced now appears in a cheaper keyboardless module form too, for instance the Yamaha DX11 and the TB11 and the TB11 module, the Roland D40 and D110 modules, and the Ensoniq Mirage sampler and Mirage-M module. Some units, such as the popular Akai 9900 sampler, are only available in modular form. By setting each module to respond to a different MIDI channel, a single master keyboard can control sixteen or more synths.

Of course, you also need a good keyboard if you're programming a sequence. Many synths, even fairly expensive ones, have relatively poor keyboards which can become tiring to play, so it makes sense to invest in one good master keyboard instead.

BUDGET IVORY

A master keyboard can enable you to control a host of MIDI-compatible systems, from synthesiser modules to drum machines. Up till now, however, they've been priced out of the range of all but the enthusiastic professional. CHRIS JENKINS looks at Cheetah's latest range - expensive it isn't...

THE GOODS

Cheetah's basic keyboard is the M25, standard, but still available. The 800 and is the absolute minimum you'll need to connect a synth module. It features five columns of full-size keys, a pitch bend wheel, and buttons to change the sound program, or 'preset' at the synth module (pitch-bending, it doesn't have velocity response, so it won't play louder as you hit it harder; it doesn't have aftertouch, so it won't ring in a performance when you press the keys down, and it doesn't have a modulation wheel, so you can't introduce wobble or vibrato as you play. But it is cheap, and - remember - it deals with any MIDI system module, from the cheapest to the most expensive.

The M25's slightly enhanced replacement, the M252, costs £199. More interesting is the latest model up - the more professional £275 M20V. As you'll guess from the name, it has a real 'Velocity sensitivity'. If your synth module is velocity responsive, hit the

M20V harder and it will play louder, at least, as long as you have programmed the synth to respond. This feature is a must if you want to develop any real playing technique.

The Steel-cased M20V also features pitch bend and modulation wheels, and a more professional four-position control pad. The controls you use to select the sound you want from the core module by pressing one control key for the oscillator (A or B), one for one 'bank' (1 to 4) and another for the 'pitch' (upside, 1 to 8). This gives a total of 128 assignable patches, and most new synths will respond happily to this arrangement.

Three dedicated keys control the MIDI channel on which you're playing, move the playing pitch up or down an octave (giving an effective range of seven octaves), and put the keyboard in pitch select mode. A two-digit and LED display keeps you in touch with which you're on. The M20V is a fully polyphonic, so your synth module will play prop-

erty whether it has six, eight, ten or more voices. The one thing you can't do is change the velocity response to suit your playing style. If you want that feature, you have to go for the top-of-the-range M270A.

HIT THE HIGH NOTES

The M270A is an amazing length of £599. If you think that's expensive, bear in mind that the cheapest real semi-portable full size keyboard, the Roland (see M20B, code £102)

The Cheetah M270A doesn't have some of the complex features of the 800, but its partly steering nonetheless. The seven-octave full size keyboard has a weighted action, and responds to velocity, aftertouch, and release velocity. It can be split into two separate playing zones, each of which can be assigned to a new MIDI channel, with post-velocity MIDI effect controls (type, pitch bend and modulation response), upper and lower note limit, MIDI cut-off notes (there are two, one for each zone) and so on.

There are also several parameters for 'velocity response' (1 to 200), default pitch, type of keyboard control, and so on. All the information can be stored in one of eight on-board memories, and recalled at any time. While many of the control buttons serve several functions, there are dedicated buttons to switch the zones on and off and to switch on the custom function of each zone. The M270A also features MIDI in and MIDI out sockets, and a MIDI MESSAGE function, so you can play the keyboard while the computer is playing your modules through it. The message that you start with is speed money on a MIDI message board.

CREAM OF THE CROP

If money's no object, you could spend as much as £7500 - that's a master keyboard such as the Kurzweil K2500A, a smaller, weighted 88-note instrument designed for players brought up on Steinway grand pianos.

The most advanced master keyboard, though, is the Elic 8800 at £2000. Features include seven columns of weighted keys, six playing zones, 64 on-board memories on cartridge, seven programmable MIDI controller sliders and switches, four MIDI out sockets, and a clock facility for driving an external drum machine or sequencer.



The Elic 8800 and K2500 - luxury for a grand price.



Cheetah's M20V offers a starting specification for the price. It may not look as sexy as the Elic with polished aluminium on this page, but that doesn't mean it's inferior when you realize it only costs £285.



Is the 808? - velocity sensitive keys plus modulation and pitch-bend options - great features for \$250.

One particularly welcome facility is the MCT40's ability to display the velocity of which you are hitting the keys. No more surprises when you play leads in sequence and find it twice as loud as you thought you'd played it!

As what kind of effects can you achieve with it keyboard as powered on the MCT40? You could program two synths to respond to the white keyboard range, but with different velocity responses so that as you play harder the sound fades as you rise the first. You could then switch to a program to trigger the keyboard in split or dual, so that the lower half plays along steadily while the top half plays a lead synth sound. For a finale, try setting up a program which puts a bit of sampled drums on one extreme of the keyboard, synths on an octave, bass notes on the other and a saxophone sound on the top three.

LA LORE

The latest synth module ideal for use with a MIDI master keyboard is the Roland D10. It is a professional version of the MIDI module in ACE issue 2.

Like M102, the D10 uses "linear arithmetical synthesis". This is a combination of sampled "attack" sounds and synthesized "sustained" sounds which give incredibly powerful and real-time results. It has a built-in digital mixer, a selection of sampled drum sounds, and it's multi-timbral, so it can play up to eight sounds at a time under keyboard or computer control.

Unlike the M102, the D10 fits in a standard 19-inch studio rack, has six sound outputs for separate mixing and effects, rather than just two; has a slot for plugging in sound memory cards; and you can edit the sounds from the front panel or an optional hardware programming box, rather than having to buy a software editing package as you can edit the sounds from the front panel or an optional hardware programming box, rather than having to buy a software editing package as you do with the M102.

There are 128 preset sounds and 94 programs, and the D10 has some interesting built-in drum (bass, hi-hat). Check out the main "version of Flight of the Bumble Bee, the inverted file drum solo in the jazz demo, and the notable Jamaican reggae demo.

MIDI is a very reasonable £360, so the D10 is an ideal complement to any computer-based sequencing system.

- Roland UK, Amersham Drive, West Cross Centre, Brentford, Middlesex, TW8 9DL



Roland's D10 MIDI synth module uses the same system as the incredible 808 and the multi-timbral M102.

Check out future plans for the music market include the MIDI synth module ideal for use with the MCT40. The M10 is a dual module with two oscillators per voice, variable wave forms, velocity cut-off, multi-response, 256 preset sounds and 128 programmable memories. It's also multi-timbral, so you can pick up to six single-note sounds at once. At £274.95, you'll still pay less for it.

MCT40 keyboard and MIDI synth module together than you would for some less well specified Japanese synths.

- Clavin Marketing, Hobury House, Marbury Road, Farnwater, Dorking-SPE, Surrey. Tel: 0252 55555

PC WONDER BOARD

Fancy plugging a full-sized FM synthesizer into your PC? Audio Digital Technology are bringing just a new expansion card for PC compatibles offering a built-in MIDI port and Yamaha synth circuitry that can produce 256 different voices/FM generated voices with 8-note polyphony.

Called the IBM Music Feature Card, the unit comes with editing software and is the result of collaboration in the UK between IBM and Yamaha, but will be distributed exclusively in this country by ACE.

Additional software available separately to accompany the unit includes Yamaha's Player program which gives simple 8-track sequencing options together with up to 64 automatic arrangements, of which 22 can be user-defined.

Alternatively you could try Yamaha's Composer software, which gives up to 8-part composing ability together with printing, control of the Music Feature card, and the option to import data from real-time performance. The Music Feature card is also compatible with some professional MIDI packages - the Feature 3.0 Sequencer, for example, and Horizon.

All this will set you back £299 (inc. VAT), which is by no means cheap - but then MIDI equipment for the PC never was. When you consider that you can pay around £140 for a MIDI interface unit, the package looks to sound more attractive. Contact ACE on 01 877 4546.

NEXT MONTH

Next month sees the beginning of a new look music section for ACE. We'll be introducing our new Consultant Editor who'll be on hand to answer your queries each month, and will bring you all the latest music news and reviews in each issue. And don't forget - if you want to shape the new section, make sure you fill in the questionnaire on page 100 - and you could win a prize from the bargain!

YOU CAN DO IT!

...help decide what goes in the magazine, that's what. We don't just sit on our backsides here in Bath and write whatever takes our fancy, you know. We do our level best to make sure that what's on these pages is what YOU want to read - and you can help us by filling in our latest reader survey below. We'll reward you by offering five lucky readers an ACE 900 rated game for their machine absolutely free.

1. BE HONEST!

Are you: Under 12 13-16 17-18 19-24 25-34 35-44 45-54 Over 55

2. SPECIAL INTEREST

Are you: Male Female

3. CHOOSE YOUR WEAPON

Which of the following computers do you own or plan to buy:

- | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|
| Own | Might buy | Own | Might buy |
| <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Atari ST | <input type="checkbox"/> Commodore Amiga | <input type="checkbox"/> Commodore Amiga | <input type="checkbox"/> Commodore Amiga |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Acorn Archimedes | <input type="checkbox"/> Commodore 64 | <input type="checkbox"/> Spectrum 486 | <input type="checkbox"/> Spectrum 128 |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Spectrum | <input type="checkbox"/> IBM PC or compatible | <input type="checkbox"/> Amstrad 4125 | <input type="checkbox"/> Amstrad 4125 |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Amstrad 486/584 | <input type="checkbox"/> IBM PC or compatible | <input type="checkbox"/> Atari 400/500 | <input type="checkbox"/> Atari 400/500 |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Amstrad PC16 | <input type="checkbox"/> Atari 400/500 | <input type="checkbox"/> Atari 800/600 | <input type="checkbox"/> Atari 800/600 |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Apple Macintosh | <input type="checkbox"/> Atari 800/600 | <input type="checkbox"/> Other (specify): | |
| <input type="checkbox"/> IBM | <input type="checkbox"/> Other (specify): | | |

Peripherals:

- | | | | |
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| <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Modem | <input type="checkbox"/> Graphics tablet/light pen | <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> MIDI interface |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Video camera | <input type="checkbox"/> MIDI keyboard | <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> MIDI keyboard |
| <input type="checkbox"/> MIDI keyboard or other MIDI musical equipment | | | |

Is your system currently loading only? Yes No

4. A BIRD IN THE HAND...

Please indicate your level of interest (High, Medium, or Low) in the following sections of THIS issue...

- | | | | |
|--|--|--|--|
| H M L | <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> | H M L | <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> |
| <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> News | <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> Composition |
| <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> Preview | <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> Graphics |
| <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> Arcades | <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> File menu feature |
| <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> Screen Test reviews | <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> Pink Pages Hardware Guide |
| <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> Adventures | <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> Frustration games feature |
| <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> Trainers/Books | <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> Music |
| <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> Play By Mail | <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> Letters |
| <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> Random features | <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> Readers' Pages |
| <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> Biller Deal | <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> Who's hot? programmers feature |
| <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> Pink Pages Software Guide | | |

5. TIME FOR NOSTALGIA

Rate your interest as High, Medium, Low, or Don't Know (i.e. you don't see the feature concerned) in the following features that have appeared in recent issues of ACE:

- | | |
|---------------------------|---|
| H M L (Don't Know) | <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> |
| ACE 10 July | <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> Hack Attack! Hackers - what they do and why |
| | <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> Games to Play - The games learning game |
| ACE 8 June | <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> American Issue |
| ACE 6 May | <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> Life Games - Evolution and Intelligent aliens |
| | <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> Silicon Spines - ACE goes to Cambridge |
| ACE 7 April | <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> Break the Bank - Computers and Gambling |
| | <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> Progress or Ponder? Games Psychology |
| | <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> Into the Mainframe... Miss England asks... |

6. YOUR PERSONAL, MOST INTIMATE HABITS...

Apart from games, do you use your micro for:

- Word Processing Business Graphics applications Medical applications

7. YOUR INNERMOST DESIRES...

What sort of games do you enjoy playing? Rate your interest in the following categories (High, Medium, or Low).

H M L

- | | | | |
|--|--|--|---|
| <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Coin-op conversions (e.g. Salamander, Nemesis) | <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> Original shoot-em-ups (e.g. Phobos, Backblast) |
| <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> Arcade adventures (e.g. Black Lagoon, Terminator) |
| <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> Strategy games (e.g. Overlord, Lords of Composure) |
| <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> Puzzle games (e.g. Minesweeper, ACR) |
| <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> Adventures |
| <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> Simulations (e.g. Flight Simulator II, Comanche) |
| <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> Role-playing games (e.g. Ultima VI, Bard's Tale) |
| <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> Misc games (e.g. Chess) |

8. NAME DROPPING

Name your favourite entertainment program: _____

9. HACKING HABITS

Do you: Program in BASIC or another high-level language Program in assembler Not program at all

10. THE CREATIVE BIT

In addition to any award, give us your comments on ACE together with any suggestions you might like us to consider. Use a separate sheet of paper if necessary.

Post to: ACE Survey, 4 Queen Street, Bath BA1 1SU

YOUR NAME _____

ADDRESS _____

To qualify for the prize draw, entries must reach us by 12th August 1988

You thought the Spectrum was dead? Then think again! Not only are ACE's readers firmly behind Uncle Clive's little beaut, but they're sick up to here with machine vs machine bigotry too.

Other burning issues of the month include software prices (are we getting ripped off?), disk drives (are they supposed to do that?) and most importantly of all, cricket (Owzat?!). There's more: should you bin your micro? should you use it as a doorstop?

But why not read 'em for yourself, and then tell us what you think: write to ACE letters, 4 Queen Street, Bath BA1 1EJ. There's fame, glory and software to be won, and all for the price of a stamp. Why not fill in the Questionnaire on page 100 while you're about it - and help us make ACE an even better mag!

RE: FTL - ST (TA-100)

I cannot believe it, I have just finished reading your screen test of "Intercept" in issue ten of ACE. By the time I had finished I was drooping then Oh no! What do I see, in the release box "no other versions planned". I cannot understand why S.A. and FTI don't get together and swap some ideas about programming STs and Amigas - I mean there must be an almost equal number of Amiga owners out there drooping over Douglas Mason and that's a pretty big market for anyone's standards so come on ACE, try putting some things designed ST owners.

M.B. Collins
Berkshire

We'll love to see Amiga Clive or ST Intercept, but putting things in Simon Galley can be a bit difficult from this side of the Atlantic, even for the globe-trotting ACE team. The sad fact is, in the States both the ST and Amiga are minority machines living in the shadow of IBM compatibility. Many of the realy great games they do get are produced by companies focused with a particular fondness for one machine or the other and aren't necessarily written with transfer in mind. Intercept is a case in point, having been closely tailored to the Amiga's sound and graphics capabilities, so conversion to the ST might not be a picnic or give such impressive results. Still, for sure programmers on both sides of the Ocean will learn the valuable lesson it offers on standing water and gameplay.

RE: WFF, NO TAPER

Not for export, the cover of your June mag reads, I'm disappointed. All of a sudden ACE becomes selective towards its readers.

The overseas readers who are avid ACE fans, they must be, for they are paying far too much for your mag; are left out when you start giving games away but they still have got the ACE card!

Make up your minds down here. Let us in on everything it leaves us out. You should do least if you take a look at other mags and let them teach you a lesson in overseas readers handling.

And if that doesn't work, well nothing is lost, really. You could rename yourself OPER (only for English readers) for instance. Because I have a one thing I - and

certainly a lot more overseas readers - can do without, it is an over-priced mag that was once good value, but once established became a pain in the ass.

Edward Beck
Delft, Netherlands

We'd have loved to bring all you overseas readers impossible Mason, Stuart but unfortunately we don't have much say in the matter. For copyright reasons we could only distribute the feeble cassette in the UK, so it was either that or abandon the game away entirely. We do overseas ACE fans in all of the various way, but it'll be a shame if anyone missed out when we can give most of our readers such a good game.



ACE LETTERS



is ST - SUGGEST

I have just read the letter entitled "Obscured" in your July 1988 issue, and am writing to disagree most strongly with Greg Bowen, and with the review in ACE. I bought "Obscured" for my Amiga recently, and think it is simply the best game I have ever bought.

Everything about the game is superb, especially the sound, (although as Greg Bowen only owns a humble ST he probably was deprived in this area). As for the game being too easy to complete, I spent several evenings playing it, enjoying it, and most importantly, enjoying it. I admit that I completed a game easily, but surely that is the point. I always find that most games are far too difficult and I get bored before I complete them. The complaint that it was CG and only took 4 hours to complete is ridiculous, many times an video will at least take much and last only 2 hours. Minutes like this are typical of ST games, who seem to be interested in nothing except low prices.

While I am on the subject of the Atari ST, I would like to comment on the latest titles being offered by Atari to get people to buy ST's. Twenty-two free games with every ST sold. There's no doubt says the editor "ST" What about the £2.00 increase in price? 8 Balls isn't a catch I don't know what it is, I can't really blame Atari though, this price increase brings the ST right into the Amiga price bracket, and lets face it, who would buy an ST at the same price as an Amiga? It's like trying to sell a new Shoda at the same price as a new BMW by offering free petrol! It should all the people who will look to take Atari up on this amazingly generous "free" offer won't see it that way, but will they feel so pleased when they get bored with their new games? I doubt it.

Anyway if you are still reading, thanks for putting up with my rather biased views. I won't be surprised if you can't risk offering all of those ST games who read your magazine. I didn't include my name or address for similar reasons!

Spunk

In the ACE packet that everyone's entitled to their own opinion when I comes to games. That said, your thing for the particular Playroom offering is little short of mystifying. The sound may have been excellent but the animation was well below par for 16-bit machines and the controls were really poor too.

It's the gameplay bit that's really got me wondering though. If winning more than 4 hours' play out of a £25 game is typical of ST users then I'd say that makes them a pretty smart bunch. A typical Am video nowadays costs under £10 and should be worth watching at least half a dozen times at say 90-100 minutes a time. That works out at about 77 or there, which is fairly nice these days. Compare that to £25 for an hour for "Obscured" - assuming you aren't want to play once you've completed the game - and the video really looks like a bargain. (Of course you could buy a tape of a film you only wanted to see once, but most people would be inclined at something like £7.99 to £12 for the evening, making "Obscured" £2 or thereabouts.)

We don't seem offering ST' games or anyone else for that matter - what else are better games for? - but I don't really think you can get away with the Sega/BMW comparison. Amiga games may have the edge on sound and the quality of the colours used, but otherwise they're typically very close to their ST counterparts.

is NOT NO GAMEPLAY!

My subject in the game *Center Command* and the apparent failure of reviewers to give a true picture of the game. Up to now I have been impressed with the coverage ACE has given of computer games, but I grow less content.

Let us explain exactly what I mean with reference to *Center Command*. It is on the face of it an excellent game, a worthy contender for the title "Game of the Year". But it is flawed in a very serious way.

NOT REALLY CRICKET

Many many years ago, I owned a C64 (ugh!) and I started to buy "Commodore User" but then, when seeing the 64 graphics I decided to upgrade it. Now though, I have a problem: should I stay faithful with CU which is getting more and more diminished by the amount of stuff I can see on a new list and buy ACE with free games such as "Impossible Mission" and "Spindizzy"?

There is only one way to resolve it: I thought to myself and looked up "Graham Gooch's Test Cricket" Over now to Richie Bennett with the results: 1st Test, C64 5, Setup top scoring with 10 and 11 Graham taking 3 wickets, A Head and 3 Madings taking 2 each and 8 King with 5 superb catches. CU total 38 (all out, 1st Test ACE) 4 Smith top scoring with 34 with help from 4 Wilson scoring 27 and P Corner scoring 25.

ACE total 136 for 9 (declared) 2nd Test CU, M Patterson top scoring with 10 and 3 Madings taking 3 wickets, A Head taking 2 and 8 Needs 4 in 1 over!

CU total 23 (all out, ACE wins by an innings and 75 runs) Now I can rest with the

PRIZE LETTER

knowledge that next month I will go out and buy the most wonderful magazine around with news, reviews, and hopefully more free games. ACE!

David Hart
Chelmsford

PS. Couldn't you spice up your best covers a bit?

Since then you? Great! ToGraham is on his way over to Chelmsford right this minute cricket bat in hand! As for beating CU in each covering (although we put it down to getting a good night's rest before the match. We don't want any Test Cricket's Shamy Cricket's Illustrated Reviews! After stories in The Sun now, do we?)

TOTALS

ACE	136	DEC	
CU	36	LMAN	10
		PLAY ON	
CU	25	ALL OUT	
		ACE WIN BY INS. & 76	

unless of course I have missed something. My problem is the amount of time it takes for the editor to get between islands, or rather the lack of anything to do while it sails. It can take five minutes to get between some islands, then the minutes of blink empty seas. Now I play games to be entertained not bored. So I realize that real crickets do spend long boring hours coasting around but then I thought SPINDOZ was funless. Surely play testing would have revealed the problem with the game. So my plea is that reviewers should look behind the surface gloss of games and examine the gameplay. Graphics and presentation are important but they are nothing without good gameplay.

Could the game not contain a time accelerator for those boring stretches?

So I ask for your comments, perhaps you do not agree with me and for the minutes of empty blue sea scope. For myself a game that lets me play it and write this letter at the same time can not be the classic you suggest it is.

Ian Black
Wantage

Two things immediately spring to mind here: first, are you leaving your shores at before setting sail? Failing to do so can send you just a great deal. Second, are you not you've got an up-to-date version of

the game? The lips you see with your letter mention continuously running out of fuel, one symptom of pre-production bugs already worked out in the version we reviewed. You'd be well advised to contact Rainbow about this, with a superceded version you're still changing yourself and the game. On the general part, you accused that an early game was thoroughly reviewed here. Though DC certainly does have plenty of surface gloss, there's a solid foundation of gameplay underneath that had us all enthralled. We're confident more gamers will agree with us if they've got the finished version in front of them.

IT DON'T BURN IT!

I haven't really got any major subject to write to you about, as I will cover several subjects in this letter (Make us eat your ragged).

First, a bit of advice. I would advise anyone thinking of upgrading to a 10- or 12 to keep their old computer, say Spectrum or C64. The reason for this is pretty obvious, it being the astronomical price of Amiga and ST software. At prices of £15 to £25 a time your software collection is not going to get too large, unless you resist to printing, which will only end up in the prices increasing more often. Personally, I seem not to be getting an Amiga, but will be selling my old, faithful Spectrum 48K.

Talking of 10-bits what happened to the great price drops we were supposed to be seeing in early '89? The ST has gone up £120, a more localized price rise, it might not? Living in South I have always enjoyed retailing, but to large amounts of software. We used to have three shops: Boots, WH Smiths and an independent software shop. Since about January of this year however, the indie shops have become business only. Smiths seems to only have patchy budget software and even Boots does not stock all the new titles. I have now been to retail order buying, which is very cheap but usually involves waiting for up to four weeks or more. What I would like to know, through your letters page, is whether this is a local problem or a larger scale one.

In the July issue the Editor, when replying to a letter from A. White said that no version of GAC was available for the ST. In the June issue you carried a full review of GAC, which is precisely what the letter-writer wanted. Doesn't the editor need to be a bit more open?

Lastly please never compare

me to those who were rubbish like film reviews, game cartoon covers etc, but then read the already plentiful amount of second rate magazines which do this.

**Patrick Nash-
Bough**

(I am not eager? What cheek!) Well I certainly agree with you on keeping your old machine - many's the time I pine for the old W: 20 and a quick blast on Spiders of Mars - but a lot of people just don't have the choice. If the only way you can upgrade is to sell your old Spectrum or long-in-the-tooth C64 then it's just not an option open to you.

Read the magazine? Or do you enjoy writing it?

As for your last point, we don't know the meaning of the word 'compression'. (I'm sure that **** dictionary.)

IT BURN BURNS DELIRIOUS

Please! Please print this letter my truth will be very unattractive about my Amiga 500. When I got my Amiga I thought the software was amazing, the sound incredible, but the disk drive extremely noisy. At first I took no notice of this because I thought all Amigas were like this until my friend bought an Amiga 500 (SHOCK, HOPKINS) his disk drive was quiet! Why is his disk drive quiet and mine not, and why does Sinclair beat on his computer and loads on mine but the spins faster? How do you know of anything or anywhere I could make my disk drive quiet? Please answer my letter because I am very concerned.

**Michael G-Wilks
Buckport**

The disk drive noise probably isn't anything to worry about. Drives often vary in the amount of noise they make - we get the same thing here with 303 - and in any case, a noisy Amiga drive seems to be the rule rather than the exception! (Please briefly list with water-tight info of how fast from Amiga owners etc.) Daily enough, equipment here at ACE show that you're not the only one with flicker problems on Schneider 1014 in your line or one of the two A500s in the building. It flickers cheerfully on the other. We asked Microbyte House/Basementic why this should be, but they couldn't come up with an explanation then...

IT BURN DRIVE DELIGHT

On May 1st of this year I bought an Amiga 1000STPM from "Basement" in Leicester for £275. Nothing strange you might not see, a couple of nights ago I decided to format a disk to double size to see what would happen. And guess what? It works!

I then put over 5000 worth of stuff on and all I loaded back, no

problem. This has led me to the conclusion that I have a double-sized disk drive which for a £50 must be pretty rare.

Do I possess a single-master or dual? Also often put double-sized drives in a machine that's supposed to have a single-sized drive?

Is there an easy way to see how much memory I have to see if I have to see if I have a 1040 in a 512-case?

I intend your answers with interest.

**Mark Weston
Milton Workington**

The simple answer is that you do have a 512 if there have a double-sized drive, and the rest is all crucial any more. Shortly before the unexciting 1700 price rise, Amiga took the very sensible and thoroughly pennywise step of upgrading the 500's drive to 1040 standard, without actually telling anyone. Why the industry about improving a machine they're suddenly changing more for anyway? Probably because the buying public has such a history of reacting badly to such things. Remember the Amiga 2000 got when they ditched the 68K and started using the 68K better 68010 - even though the 68K had been excellent value itself? Well, my guess is that Alan Dean's not just getting concerned unfairly for telling about owners of single-sized.

THAT'S ENOUGH BIGOTRY

Are you all sitting comfortably? Then it begins. First of congratulations on an attractive, well-written interesting magazine. It reads my previous monthly reading folder into a cooked mess.

Before it or not (as the case may be) I'm not going to mean and write about the (very) lack of reviews for my particular computer. But still I spare a word for praise - be sure that you're becoming pretty 'big' stick of the 'before' of me now.

Anyway, enough of this merry chatter and onto the real point of my letter. (Thumps and drums!) It's slowly but surely getting more than a little tedious by all of the Commodore-64 versus Spectrum output. I'm not about to struggle either of these machines I happen to own, suffice to say it's one of the two.

To be frankly frank, both machines are extremely 'long in



the tooth' and right on technically antiquated. However, neither of the old dems can quite be called 'slow' just yet. Their respective read rates however will, I think, guarantee software production on a large enough scale for at least another two years. I'm glad that you printed Seymour Lightman's letter as I am now quite relieved that not all your readers are out-right wrong-heads.

Let's keep this thing in perspective, we are, after all, only

talking about a handful of two of semi-conductors (bused) inside a moulded plastic case aren't we?

Okay, damn soon. How if we have any more of the relatively immature and that, and the Commodore then IT give the bit of you a step more my lines. I mean it, I really do. I conclude, I must admit that I would have to be infinitely naive that my three-pence-worth of opinion will make any impression on much of your self-righteous readership.

**Adam White
Leicester**

It'd be nice to think that was the end of it. My own intention however we've been played with ourselves. But this kind of thing's been going on so long it'll probably take more than a few letters from the likes of Seymour and Adam to stop it.



IF THE PRICE IS RIGHT

At last, my editor! It had better why he won't upgrade to a 16-bit machine and he will inevitably tell you that the price of games on these machines are far too high. As an Atari ST owner, I can't argue with that line of logic, after all it's absolutely true.

When I bought my machine some 14 months ago I did so on the assumption that software prices would plummet since STs became mass-market machines. Now that there are 120,000 ST owners in this country alone, it's well past the time when software prices should have fallen. But they haven't, instead we are now faced with a concerted effort by the software houses to extract massive profits by keeping prices in the \$20 - \$25 range. Indeed some software houses have even increased their prices over the past year (Eidos, Ocean and Tycoon are the three names that spring immediately to mind). What is fairly an encouraging sign for us owners.

Thus, there are some games retailing for £15, but these so-called budget games consist mainly of old converted 8-bit titles which sell on the said machines for £1.95. Thus £15 can hardly be termed either a good price or a bargain.

Software houses may try to defend their ridiculously high prices by claiming that the 16-bit games are clearly better than their 8-bit counterparts and take more development time to complete, but the fact still lies. Attention on 16-bit machines is generally substandard, the size of the playing area is usually minute, and more often than not the games are just straightforward conversions of 8-bit games.

Anyway, back to the point, unless the software houses wake up quickly their gross profiteering is going to kill the 16-bit software industry in this country. Oh well, at least I can use my ST as a desktopper.

If you, like what I am saying is utter rubbish, then send your mind back to when games consoles first arrived in this country. They sold

reasonably well, but were soon abandoned by their owners because they couldn't afford to keep playing the high prices for software. A similar fate now looms on the

horizon for the Amiga and the ST unless the software houses are fit to dramatically reduce their prices in the immediate future. How about all you software houses out there creating some reasonably priced games for my \$300 desktopper then?

T'Shine Workshop

I don't know about 16-bit software prices being extortionate, those high prices are a major factor in the ST and Amiga getting the growing support from software houses that we've been seeing recently. If you can't build a large software collec-

tion, an extensive games like Obs, Interceptor, Virus, or Career Command really can't be worth the extra.

As for announcing the software houses of gross profiteering, that's not necessarily fair either. There's pressure on them from distributors and shopkeepers to keep prices up, and they're also got programmers to pay. Bear in mind ST and Amiga programmers are still early this side of the pond, so they can put a rather higher price on their skills. Lower prices would certainly give sales a real boost, but only if they're for good games that actually reach the shops!

REPORTS OF MY DEATH ARE GREATLY EXAGGERATED

I see you are now running a competition where people send you letters which either deny all known facts of logic. In issue 19 I advise you to a letter telling your readers, many of whom own Spectrum computers, to throw them away and buy another computer.

Now, you might have guessed by now, I own a Spectrum (and) have owned it for nearly four years without any major problems with it. Then along comes this article and tells me to get rid of it for the simple reason that he does not like it.

If I may, I would like to point out a few facts:

1. I own over \$300 worth of software and can quite easily walk into a major store and buy more software for it. It, as far as I'm interested, my computer is 'dead' then I should not be able to do this. BUT I CAN.

2. You can still quite easily purchase a brand new Spectrum, if they were 'dead' I would not be able to do this. They are easily available - unlike the C64 which could not be found in any of the major stores in Glasgow. It seems to me that Commodore have lost all interest in the C64 concentrating mainly on the Amiga.

3. The Spectrum's graphics aren't, as he puts it, 'obscure' like 'Drib' for example. The graphics on that are equal, if not better than the C64. The only thing wrong with it is its lack of colours which make it generally unattractive to look at.

I never usually enter into magazines but on this occasion I felt I had to. I, like many other readers, am getting sick and tired of the attitude adopted by a small minority of your readers at my computer is Scott's gift to computing and still

the best. I realise of course that the Spectrum isn't a prime contender for the new United States defense computer but it is a damn sight better than some other ones I could mention. If that is what happens to you when you buy a Commodore computer I think I'll stick to the Spectrum.

Finally, let's quit questions; 1. What about a best-selling computer game sold in your mag? I have recently on other mags for this. 2. Why does every second letter in the mag come from an Atari ST owner?

Right, it's time over to make room for the next letter. Keep up the excellent work.

Scott Hutchings Glasgow

Why does everyone who writes to your magazine seem to take a strange psychopathic delight in putting down the Spectrum?

Glancing through your letter pages I found a whole host of letters saying how bad and out of date the Spectrum is. One 'poor' person had written a letter which how deeply offended he was because someone had compared his beloved C64 with a Spectrum. One of the shame passages from the letter was: 'The always hated Spectrums are and always will, mainly because of the atrocious graphics they dare to display.' Another excited Spectrum-owner to those that machines away. The big question is, 'Has the person ever actually used a Spectrum?'

I myself am quite happy with my Spectrum (I've got a rubber keyboard and fractionally more graphics) but most games are a pound cheaper on the Spectrum than on the C64 or the Amstrad

and about £15 or £14 cheaper than the Atari ST which is an advantage when I am faced with the prospect of having to save up '7 weeks' pocket money for 'Realisation'.

Peter Crailing Ipswich

My copy of Abacus has stirred up a hornet's nest. Do you add the appo you could when you start slagging off other people's machines? The fact that you can still buy Spectrums doesn't necessarily mean they're alive and kicking - many burned-out or suppressed models have been dumped on the market in previous years - but the continued and vigorous software support is a sure-fire sign of life.

As for Peter's point about the Spectrum being such an Atari ST for machine doggo, I think it does have a lot to do with our having used the machine. The similarly vintage C64 has all its strengths - sprites, scrolling, audio and sound - upped where the casual observer can easily see them. Its limitations on the other hand only become apparent over time, so you have to know the machine quite well to slag it off accurately.

The ACE view on all this is that it's horses for courses. Different machines have different good and bad points, but the main machines are never all have a leg going for them. If you've got a machine that's good at what you are doing or playing, why worry about what anyone else has got? (Every second letter from an Atari ST owner? I think you'll find the 8-bit owners have had a rather better showing this month.)

ACE PINK PAGES

Welcome to the Pink Pages, bursting with indispensable information. A games guide updated with all the hot new software, a hardware guide to tempt you into upgrading, the latest Random Access brain-teasers and the Reader Pages, where lots of great bargains and help can be found.

ACE recommended games have all met extremely high standards of quality. We're confident that these are the very best games available for all machines and all tastes. It's constantly updated and this month there are two very distinguished new entries - *Mur* and *Dark Side*.

Sadly, the sands of time have run out for *Highway Encounter* and *Cosmic Causeway*, as they make way for the new entries. *Highway Encounter* has been there from the beginning, but even this classic game had to hang up its joystick one day. Farewell to those stalwarts and hail and well met to the new blood.

ACE RECOMMENDED SOFTWARE

ARCADE ADVENTURES

These games usually give the player a joystick controlled character with which to explore the huge game area.

AIRBALL

Atari ■ Atari ST ■ C64 ■ MSX

Full coloured three-dimensional arcade adventure that owes something to the classic style but is years ahead in terms of graphics detail and presentation.

You, as the actual in question, must negotiate corridors and rooms full of various obstacles - all requiring instant death, an outstanding member of a classic genre.

DUNGEON MASTER

Atari ■ Atari ST ■ C64 ■ MSX

A fascinating arcade adventure game for

playing game that gives you four characters to guide through a series of dungeons in a quest to find the Wizard. Superb graphics help to create an amazing game that will keep you playing for a long time to come.

EAGLE'S NEST

Panasonic ■ Amiga ■ C128 ■ C64 ■ Atari ST ■ MSX

This is one of the better Counterforce games on the 128bit machines. The military flavour of the arcade adventure adds atmosphere and it fits the particular style of game you want to be distinguished with Eagle's Nest.

HEAD OVER HEELS

Comet ■ Spectrum ■ ST ■ MSX ■ C64 ■ C128 ■ C16 ■ Amiga ■ C128 ■ MSX ■ MSX2 ■ MSX2+ ■ MSX2C

3D perspective shooter to play with the huge invisible mazeplayers. You play two characters - head and heels - as you search for the objects that will free the galaxy. The puzzles can get very difficult indeed, and each object has to get head and heels up to use their different capabilities. The graphics are beautiful and witty music, and the animation is excellent throughout. A real classic.

MAGIC KNIGHT TRILOGY

Atari ■ Amiga ■ Amiga Plus ■ Spectrum ■ C128 ■ Amiga ■ C128 ■ C64 ■ C16 ■ Amiga ■ C128 ■ C64 ■ C16 ■ Amiga ■ Spectrum ■ C128 ■ Amiga ■ C128

The trilogy is a series of mainstream arcade adventures which, as well as all the expected turning and jumping, has

a complex system of interaction between characters. In *Spellbound* you must rescue Central the Wizard from the Evilman. *Castle of Karn* is Knight. *Time* you have to find a way back in time after being catapulted into the 18th century, while in *Strasbourg*, the final part, we find that the magic might has been split in two, one good, the other evil. You can't all proceed, so the only solution is to merge the two halves. But how? Lots of action, plenty of thought and great graphics make of these entries.



**CHUCK YEAGER'S
ADVANCED FLIGHT
TRAINER**

Electronic Arts • CD-ROMs C14-000A
• PC C14-000

Chuck Yeager's flight trainer takes the flight simulator genre a step further by including a training option. Chuck will guide the novice through such difficult maneuvers as extreme stalls and stalls with 90 turns. In one session it will take many hours of instruction but to master all of the stunts options.

FALCON

Electronic Arts • Apple/MS-DOS C14-000A • IBM PC C14-000

A magnificent fight on that gives you a dozen missions at any of five levels, so there's an awful lot to get through. The game's very colorful overhead making it military-style for fighters rather than gun-fans. After a short while of playing, it's easy to see why Falcon topped a whole bunch of awards in America recently.

**FLIGHT
SIMULATOR 2**

Sub Logic • Apple/ST C14-000A • Amiga C14-000A • IBM PC C14-000A

The updatable gateway of flight simulators, Flight Sim II is the standard by which all others are judged. Although it opens a whole world on top of the US charts, it's difficult to get hold of in the UK. If you have the technology, this is an essential purchase.

GUNSHIP

Mindscape • PC C14-000

Excellent graphics, involving simulation and a variety of missions make this one of the better PC games. Making your target accurate in order to see various paths may not be terribly useful - but if you can spare the points you should have a great fun.

INTERCEPTOR

Electronic Arts • Amiga C14-000

PC IBM simulator featuring stunning 3D

3-D graphics with atmospheric background and increasing variety of missions - impressive and extremely playable.

LEADERBOARD

Amiga/MS-DOS • Spectrum C14-000 • CD-ROM C14-000A • Amiga C14-000A • Amiga C14-000A • IBM C14-000A

If you only buy one golf simulation for your collection, buy Leaderboard. It's fast and chockers above everything else in playability and match play. It's got it all, with detailed graphics and some weird courses. One you've mastered the basics of the original, 1986 Tournament Leaderboard then World Class Leaderboard Band-Aid has courses, including St Andrews, plus the Tourist County Club - descent by Access is so difficult to position.



TOMAHAWK

Digital Integration • Spectrum C14-000 • Amiga C14-000A • Apple II C14-000A

One of the all-time great flight simulators, Tomahawk also has a strong combat edge to it. Flying a US-Army Apache helicopter is a complex business, and the game's realistic controls make no concessions for learner pilots. Choose one of the three combat missions and you can fly your attack ground targets, while keeping a weather eye open to enemy aircraft. Landscapes, buildings and terrain are all drawn in superb 3D graphics.

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Goel Computer Services

The Complete Computer Store

45, BOSTON ROAD, HANWELL, LONDON W7 3SH TELEPHONE: 01 579 6133

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	REP	PRICE	REP	PRICE		REP	PRICE		REP	PRICE
Apex Messenger 2.0	5.95	7.95	5.95	5.95	Armed 2	10.95	12.95	Atlas	14.95	18.95
Axis	7.95	9.95	9.95	9.95	Army Moves	11.95	13.95	Avon	15.95	18.95
Ballistics 2	5.95	7.95	5.95	5.95	Battle 2	12.95	14.95	Box Wars	15.95	18.95
Battle West	5.95	6.95	5.95	7.95	BattleShip	12.95	13.95	Boxman Puzzle	15.95	18.95
Beam Star	4.95	7.95	5.95	7.95	CastleBlade	6.95	9.95	Boxy Soldier	15.95	18.95
Big Kah Mopeds	5.95	6.95	5.95	7.95	Cannon Shooting	3.95	5.95	Boxman	15.95	18.95
Binary	5.95	6.95	5.95	6.95	Comet Chase	5.95	7.95	Brandy	14.95	17.95
Brickies	5.95	6.95	5.95	7.95	Confusion	12.95	13.95	Brandy Snapper	15.95	18.95
Brain Light	5.95	7.95	5.95	7.95	Countdown	15.95	18.95	King of Crabs	24.95	28.95
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Brainiac 36	5.95	7.95	5.95	7.95	Countdown 37	15.95	18.95	Brainy 35	15.95	18.95
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Brainiac 49	5.95	7.95	5.95	7.95	Countdown 50	15.95	18.95	Brainy 48	15.95	18.95
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Brainiac 51	5.95	7.95	5.95	7.95	Countdown 52	15.95	18.95	Brainy 50	15.95	18.95
Brainiac 52	5.95	7.95	5.95	7.95	Countdown 53	15.95	18.95	Brainy 51	15.95	18.95
Brainiac 53	5.95	7.95	5.95	7.95	Countdown 54	15.95	18.95	Brainy 52	15.95	18.95
Brainiac 54	5.95	7.95	5.95	7.95	Countdown 55	15.95	18.95	Brainy 53	15.95	18.95
Brainiac 55	5.95	7.95	5.95	7.95	Countdown 56	15.95	18.95	Brainy 54	15.95	18.95
Brainiac 56	5.95	7.95	5.95	7.95	Countdown 57	15.95	18.95	Brainy 55	15.95	18.95
Brainiac 57	5.95	7.95	5.95	7.95	Countdown 58	15.95	18.95	Brainy 56	15.95	18.95
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Brainiac 59	5.95	7.95	5.95	7.95	Countdown 60	15.95	18.95	Brainy 58	15.95	18.95
Brainiac 60	5.95	7.95	5.95	7.95	Countdown 61	15.95	18.95	Brainy 59	15.95	18.95
Brainiac 61	5.95	7.95	5.95	7.95	Countdown 62	15.95	18.95	Brainy 60	15.95	18.95
Brainiac 62	5.95	7.95	5.95	7.95	Countdown 63	15.95	18.95	Brainy 61	15.95	18.95
Brainiac 63	5.95	7.95	5.95	7.95	Countdown 64	15.95	18.95	Brainy 62	15.95	18.95
Brainiac 64	5.95	7.95	5.95	7.95	Countdown 65	15.95	18.95	Brainy 63	15.95	18.95
Brainiac 65	5.95	7.95	5.95	7.95	Countdown 66	15.95	18.95	Brainy 64	15.95	18.95
Brainiac 66	5.95	7.95	5.95	7.95	Countdown 67	15.95	18.95	Brainy 65	15.95	18.95
Brainiac 67	5.95	7.95	5.95	7.95	Countdown 68	15.95	18.95	Brainy 66	15.95	18.95
Brainiac 68	5.95	7.95	5.95	7.95	Countdown 69	15.95	18.95	Brainy 67	15.95	18.95
Brainiac 69	5.95	7.95	5.95	7.95	Countdown 70	15.95	18.95	Brainy 68	15.95	18.95
Brainiac 70	5.95	7.95	5.95	7.95	Countdown 71	15.95	18.95	Brainy 69	15.95	18.95
Brainiac 71	5.95	7.95	5.95	7.95	Countdown 72	15.95	18.95	Brainy 70	15.95	18.95
Brainiac 72	5.95	7.95	5.95	7.95	Countdown 73	15.95	18.95	Brainy 71	15.95	18.95
Brainiac 73	5.95	7.95	5.95	7.95	Countdown 74	15.95	18.95	Brainy 72	15.95	18.95
Brainiac 74	5.95	7.95	5.95	7.95	Countdown 75	15.95	18.95	Brainy 73	15.95	18.95
Brainiac 75	5.95	7.95	5.95	7.95	Countdown 76	15.95	18.95	Brainy 74	15.95	18.95
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Brainiac 78	5.95	7.95	5.95	7.95	Countdown 79	15.95	18.95	Brainy 77	15.95	18.95
Brainiac 79	5.95	7.95	5.95	7.95	Countdown 80	15.95	18.95	Brainy 78	15.95	18.95
Brainiac 80	5.95	7.95	5.95	7.95	Countdown 81	15.95	18.95	Brainy 79	15.95	18.95
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ENQUIRIES & ORDERS



FACE RECOMMENDED SOFTWARE

Eye-competition ■ C64 23.95ms
\$14.95ms ■ IBM PC 29.95ms in competition with Other Recommended Summer Games 2

Thinking, racing game where the winner is split into two and you can race the computer or a friend. Lots of different Grand Prix circuits, top-down and if course the all-important pitstop guarantee to give you hand-crank and your brain a real racing fix.

SPIDERTONIC

Entertainment ■ Atari ST 19.95ms

Guide your spider-like character around the game area, collecting coloured items in the summer order. You run a construction of means you'll be breaking up your own areas to the main 300 items.

SUMMER GAMES

Special 2-Disk ■ C64 23.95 ms 24.95ms
■ IBM PC 23.95ms



Eye-popping simulations are of top quality but now have quite captured the gameplay and style of the original Summer Games and its immediate successor, Summer Games 2. One to six players can take part in high jump, gymnastics, water-polo, diving, city-pool shooting, swimming, pole vault - and others - with lovely large graphics and

smooth animation throughout. Control of your athletes can be complex as you take a recommended.

SUPER SPRINT

Electric Dreams ■ C64 23.95ms 24.45ms
Amstrad 24.95ms Spectrum 29.95ms
Atari ST 23.95ms

One of the better user-exp-construction currently available, with up to three players all competing at once, the action is fast and furious and it will test a traditional car-to-competition sort of the more technical circuits that appear later in the game.

THRUST

Realtek ■ Spectrum 21.95ms 24ms
23.95ms 24.95ms

Terrestrial precision controls and a large helping of realistic physics make this sub-



get like an obstacle race. Flying down through the caverns of an enemy-held planet, you have to pick up fuel and defuse hostile gun turrets without crashing into the terrain walls. Tough enough as it is, but then you've got to make the right points with a heavy load during other war-work they mean, very addictive.

THUNDERCATS

Elite ■ C64 23.95ms 24.45ms ■ Spectrum 23.95ms ■ Amstrad 23.95ms 24.95ms

The game based on the hit TV series is completely the it's a 30-in-the-line action that just means gameplay. Each of the games' 10-10-10 is a bright, the dash from space to finish with a multitude of obstacles to avoid using the map. Quaintly impressive and completely playable too.

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UNIFORM

Monitor ■ Spectrum £165 ■ Citi £145 ■ £13.95 ■ SEC £155
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The good the resistance of scoring through an open face the draught and allowing also with sliding secondary large structures. Great flexible-looking draughts and the smooth controlling over see put the head and shoulders above the opposition. A game



3D to be mixed especially now that Citi version come packaged with the excellent Plotmate

NEW ENTRY

ZARCH / VIRUS

System Software ■ Amstrad
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£15.000 ■ Game £16.95 versions under development

Set 400's highest resolution to date. A set three dimensional structure up with both graphic period and timeliness sensitive graphics that it became an instant classic. Now the 1000 versions have arrived and they're just as good as the 32-bit version (check out the review on p. 54). At the moment it's not clear whether we'll be seeing the 3-bit version.

SPECIALS

Original works that use simply inaccessible features in this section.

ATP

Digital Integration ■ Citi £165
£17.95 ■ Spectrum £18.95 £19.95
■ Amstrad £15.00 £15.00

Excellent aerial-flight simulation that's a bit of a change to Digital Integration, the simulation specialist. The approach is an odd one, the result being a 100-kg 10.

Set is playable, just in writing and set as standard. Check out the main review on p. 44

DRILLER

System ■ Citi £14.95 ■ £17.95 ■ Spectrum £16.95 £17.95 ■ Amstrad £14.95 ■ £17.95 ■ SEC £14.95

The three-dimensional masterpiece of exploration and adventure that is just to describe, but the word was really it. A whole world was planned into 600 hours to provide player with a feeling of being there. Its complexity, its 300, 000-ship original and very playable. A nice screen computer entertainment.

NEW ENTRY

DARK SIDE

Monitor ■ Citi £165 £14.95 ■ Spectrum £15.95 £14.95 ■ Amstrad £15.95 £14.95

The follow-up to Orion (see below) that

ELITE

Phoenix ■ Spectrum £14.95 ■ Citi £14.95 ■ £17.95 ■ Amstrad £13.95



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HARDWARE UPGRADE

	BUYLINES	GRAPHICS & SOUND	
ACORN ARCHIMEDES			
<p>The ARCHIMEDES consists of the CPU, RAM and CD-ROM packaged as modular modules and other add-on add-on modules (such as hard disk). It includes the installation of a PC-compatible True HIGHLIGHT in the form of ROM and the RAM comes with 1 MB, with two other sizes (2K or 4MB).</p> <p>► Recommended Retail Price: 1049.95 (CPU) or 1499.95 (CPU+RAM+CD-ROM) with four disks.</p>	<p>HIGHLIGHT will be one of the best bargains since it hasn't been around long enough to become a commodity item.</p> <p>► Buyer's guarantee: Acorn maintains a three-year warranty on the system.</p>	<p>RESOLUTION is either 640 x 350, 640x400 or a pricing 640 x 480 without any problems. With a price of 699, you'll find a better value for money in 640x480 mode or 640x400. The Archimedes also sports an 8-bit graphics mode for 16 resolution level per color.</p> <p>► Audio output: 16 — composite video output — 16K — stereo.</p>	<p>The INTERNAL SPEAKER is good quality, with the Archimedes offering a 500-MHz stereo stereo output. It includes a 16-bit sampling rate and an excellent</p>
APPLE MACINTOSH			
<p>The MACINTOSH is designed to be used as a desktop computer or a portable system. It's available in a 12" or 17" format and offers a variety of features. The MACINTOSH can be used to run the OS and software development systems. It's also available in a 12" or 17" format.</p> <p>► Recommended Retail Price: 1299.95 (12") or 1499.95 (17").</p>	<p>SOFTWARE is what you get with the Macintosh. There's a lot of software available in the form of software, but you generally have to pay for it. Don't expect to find a lot of software in the form of software.</p> <p>► APPLICATIONS: The Macintosh has a lot of software available for it. It's also available in a 12" or 17" format.</p>	<p>VIDEO DISPLAY is what you get with the Macintosh. It's available in a 12" or 17" format. The 17" format is a better value for money in 640x480 mode or 640x400. The Archimedes also sports an 8-bit graphics mode for 16 resolution level per color.</p> <p>► Audio output: 16 — composite video output — 16K — stereo.</p>	<p>GOOD SPEAKER QUALITY is what you get with the Macintosh. It's available in a 12" or 17" format. The 17" format is a better value for money in 640x480 mode or 640x400. The Archimedes also sports an 8-bit graphics mode for 16 resolution level per color.</p>
ATARI ST			
<p>The ST has been available in Europe since the 1980s. It's available in a 12" or 17" format and offers a variety of features. The ST can be used to run the OS and software development systems. It's also available in a 12" or 17" format.</p> <p>► Recommended Retail Price: 1299.95 (12") or 1499.95 (17").</p>	<p>SOFTWARE is what you get with the Atari ST. There's a lot of software available in the form of software, but you generally have to pay for it. Don't expect to find a lot of software in the form of software.</p> <p>► APPLICATIONS: The Atari ST has a lot of software available for it. It's also available in a 12" or 17" format.</p>	<p>VIDEO DISPLAY is what you get with the Atari ST. It's available in a 12" or 17" format. The 17" format is a better value for money in 640x480 mode or 640x400. The Archimedes also sports an 8-bit graphics mode for 16 resolution level per color.</p> <p>► Audio output: 16 — composite video output — 16K — stereo.</p>	<p>GOOD SPEAKER QUALITY is what you get with the Atari ST. It's available in a 12" or 17" format. The 17" format is a better value for money in 640x480 mode or 640x400. The Archimedes also sports an 8-bit graphics mode for 16 resolution level per color.</p>
COMMODORE AMIGA			
<p>The AMIGA has been available in Europe since the 1980s. It's available in a 12" or 17" format and offers a variety of features. The AMIGA can be used to run the OS and software development systems. It's also available in a 12" or 17" format.</p> <p>► Recommended Retail Price: 1299.95 (12") or 1499.95 (17").</p>	<p>SOFTWARE is what you get with the Commodore Amiga. There's a lot of software available in the form of software, but you generally have to pay for it. Don't expect to find a lot of software in the form of software.</p> <p>► APPLICATIONS: The Commodore Amiga has a lot of software available for it. It's also available in a 12" or 17" format.</p>	<p>VIDEO DISPLAY is what you get with the Commodore Amiga. It's available in a 12" or 17" format. The 17" format is a better value for money in 640x480 mode or 640x400. The Archimedes also sports an 8-bit graphics mode for 16 resolution level per color.</p> <p>► Audio output: 16 — composite video output — 16K — stereo.</p>	<p>GOOD SPEAKER QUALITY is what you get with the Commodore Amiga. It's available in a 12" or 17" format. The 17" format is a better value for money in 640x480 mode or 640x400. The Archimedes also sports an 8-bit graphics mode for 16 resolution level per color.</p>
IBM & COMPATIBLES			
<p>The IBM PC is the most popular computer in the world. It's available in a 12" or 17" format and offers a variety of features. The IBM PC can be used to run the OS and software development systems. It's also available in a 12" or 17" format.</p> <p>► Recommended Retail Price: 1299.95 (12") or 1499.95 (17").</p>	<p>SOFTWARE is what you get with the IBM PC. There's a lot of software available in the form of software, but you generally have to pay for it. Don't expect to find a lot of software in the form of software.</p> <p>► APPLICATIONS: The IBM PC has a lot of software available for it. It's also available in a 12" or 17" format.</p>	<p>VIDEO DISPLAY is what you get with the IBM PC. It's available in a 12" or 17" format. The 17" format is a better value for money in 640x480 mode or 640x400. The Archimedes also sports an 8-bit graphics mode for 16 resolution level per color.</p> <p>► Audio output: 16 — composite video output — 16K — stereo.</p>	<p>GOOD SPEAKER QUALITY is what you get with the IBM PC. It's available in a 12" or 17" format. The 17" format is a better value for money in 640x480 mode or 640x400. The Archimedes also sports an 8-bit graphics mode for 16 resolution level per color.</p>

GRADE GUIDE...

HARDWARE & SOFTWARE		IN BRIEF
<p>THE BUILT-IN DRIVE is good, efficient and takes 1.5-megabyte loading capacity (50K) for most. Very comprehensive hardware includes programmable controller and lots of room for upgrading along with great file management. A 4.5-megabyte model comes with the hardware, but upgrades are not supported.</p> <p>■ Also provided: 500K serial Centronics communications port (model 2.200)</p>	<p>comes with 40-megabyte 4-megabyte port (50K). All communications are handled (50K).</p> <p>EXCELLENT SOFTWARE is available (2000K) for users. It includes DOS (2000K) and a range of databases from Microsoft Systems. Graphics capabilities are excellent. Powerful search capabilities are what the software users</p>	<p>ADVANCED — the cutting edge of micro technology.</p> <p>...all the programs in this. For those it has the software base of single-configuration. It's a very exciting machine. But has software not advanced — unless for now.</p>
<p>BOOK FORMATTER is the one that is in the class for the built-in drive, which is not an option. The file support is standard, standard include format tags and a standard support an optional version of Apple II/III. Hardware with 100-byte capacity and high speed, but compatibility is not a major issue is needed.</p> <p>■ Also provided: 500K 1-inch floppy disk.</p>	<p>computer. It offers a wide range of options for users. It has a built-in drive and a 400K — 500K connector. It also has a 400K — 500K connector. It also has a 400K — 500K connector. It also has a 400K — 500K connector.</p> <p>■ Also provided: 500K 1-inch floppy disk. It also has a 400K — 500K connector.</p>	<p>EXCELLENT and up-market hardware features built-in disk for loading and operations. Also, software — which is very expensive. It also has a very good support. It also has a very good support.</p> <p>■ Also provided: 500K 1-inch floppy disk. It also has a 400K — 500K connector.</p>
<p>NEW FOR 1988 is the one that is in the class for the built-in drive, which is not an option. The software has 100-byte capacity and high speed, but compatibility is not a major issue is needed.</p> <p>■ Also provided: 500K 1-inch floppy disk. It also has a 400K — 500K connector.</p>	<p>EXCELLENT SOFTWARE building the one that is in the class for the built-in drive, which is not an option. The software has 100-byte capacity and high speed, but compatibility is not a major issue is needed.</p> <p>■ Also provided: 500K 1-inch floppy disk. It also has a 400K — 500K connector.</p>	<p>EXCELLENT general-purpose home machine for games, email, business and productivity. It's the number one choice for 1988 releases. The 100-byte model will give you a great start on the things. It's the one that makes it easier to get into the 100-byte model. It's the one that makes it easier to get into the 100-byte model.</p>
<p>IN WHOLE BOOK includes the software changes like other software. It also has a 400K — 500K connector. It also has a 400K — 500K connector. It also has a 400K — 500K connector.</p> <p>■ Also provided: 500K 1-inch floppy disk. It also has a 400K — 500K connector.</p>	<p>EXCELLENT SOFTWARE building the one that is in the class for the built-in drive, which is not an option. The software has 100-byte capacity and high speed, but compatibility is not a major issue is needed.</p> <p>■ Also provided: 500K 1-inch floppy disk. It also has a 400K — 500K connector.</p>	<p>STUNNING SPECIFICATIONS and built-in into university software support the 100-byte model. It's the one that makes it easier to get into the 100-byte model. It's the one that makes it easier to get into the 100-byte model.</p>
<p>EXCELLENT are used by 100-byte, but some may not be able to use it. It's the one that makes it easier to get into the 100-byte model. It's the one that makes it easier to get into the 100-byte model.</p> <p>■ Also provided: 500K 1-inch floppy disk. It also has a 400K — 500K connector.</p>	<p>EXCELLENT SOFTWARE building the one that is in the class for the built-in drive, which is not an option. The software has 100-byte capacity and high speed, but compatibility is not a major issue is needed.</p> <p>■ Also provided: 500K 1-inch floppy disk. It also has a 400K — 500K connector.</p>	<p>BUSINESS ORIENTED of the PC (100K) (100K) (100K).</p> <p>...all the programs in this. For those it has the software base of single-configuration. It's a very exciting machine. But has software not advanced — unless for now.</p>

RANDOM ACCESS

Welcome to the regular section of the magazine that promises to puzzle, tease and perplex you. We've got a fiendish puzzle and a cryptic crossword to give you some mental exercise, and something to make you chuckle. If you reckon you could draw a cartoon that will give us a giggle, don't hesitate to send it in (for the best chances of reproduction, draw your cartoons black on stiff white paper). If you're one of those types that needs extra motivation to get your thinking cap on then consider the fact that the first correct entry pulled from the hat after the closing date for both the puzzle and the crossword wins £25 worth of software – so, heads down and get to it!

THE ACE PUZZLE No5

Sendy Archie Mader

Take 10 pieces of card and write on both the 10 digits – 0 to 9 as shown.



Place two of the cards on the table to make a two-digit number that is exactly divisible by 2. Now place a third card to the right of these two cards to produce a three-digit number exactly divisible by three. Continue in this way, each time placing a card on the right-hand end of the row to produce a four-digit number divisible by four, a five-digit number divisible by five and so on – ending finally with a 10-digit number which must, of course, be exactly divisible by 10.

Thus, each number that is formed must be divisible by the number of digits that the number contains. Needless to say, the cards must not be rearranged once they have been placed on the table!

What 10-digit number will you end with?

Instead of writing this out with pencil and paper why not devise a simple listing that will get your mind to solve it for you?

SOLUTION TO PUZZLE No3

And Cnd Ecd

The complete values are:

2 6 2 (prime)
2 2 6 2 1 (53 x 427)
5 6 2 6 2 6 4 (2172 squared)
1 2 7 2 6 2 5 2 7 (562 cubed)

Of the 10-ten-digit primes, we seek only the one which can also form the seven digits, in each of the positions in turn, and which by such repetition can only result in one prime! For example, the prime 173 would not do this as it is not divisible, while the prime 137 would be rejected as there are 1762 possible cases (2176742 and 1767422), and therefore resulting in 2176742 possible primes.

The first correct entry out of the hat came from Mike Owen, Northfield, Cheshire.

The last method to find each of the primes is fun, after trying those for which a calculator is not found. As there are only 100 three-digit primes it is a modest approximation of the primes as opposed to nine million for an eight-digit prime. The most elegant the best idea appears using 1 computer each of the three-digit primes is just as determined by the substance, and then look each of these against the table of numbers for a 100 primes. A great 277-rough table of the number of possible values for each of the primes in fact, enables grids to be used with computation – in forming a card of 10. This results in 48 primes remaining from the original 10. The number was reduced to 20 by ordering all three values which form substituted digits as an end to the 10 and 2 are 2176742 and 1767422. These 20 primes are then placed in a 10x10 grid of using 2 to complete the search of the mathematics solution.

Using 2 words in a similar way in the table can get applied across them to find out those values remaining using digits only. This means out of the 10 primes, there is only one word in the 10th row of using 1 word, leaving the rest, the three-digit word four substitutes (276). After the rest only one prime remains (262), from which the other value can be easily determined.

The appearance of the professor's number also is not used the appearance of the number which is a number out of answers. The professor's number should be used.

HAVE YOU GOT THE CDS-YET?

NO, I ONLY USE PROTECTED SOFTWARE!



This month's cartoon comes to us courtesy of A. Jefferson of Hull.

PUZZLE ENTRY FORM

NAME

ADDRESS

COMPUTER OWNED

I think the solution is:

.....

Send your answers for: **PUZZLE 1, ACE, 4 Queen Street, Bath BA1 1EM** Closing date August 10th.

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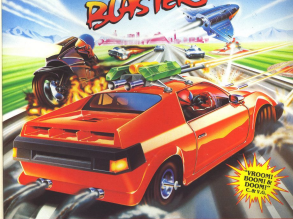
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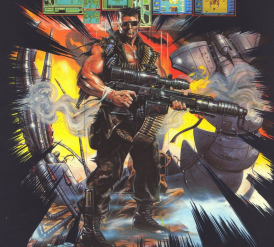
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