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CBM 64/128  
Spectrum  
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# ACE

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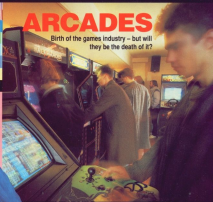


## GRAPHICS

Quantum Point - 4096 colours on the ST

## ARCADES

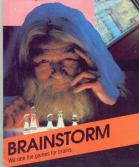
Birth of the games industry - but will they be the death of it?



## SOFTWARE BUYER'S GUIDE

The best 50 games money can buy reviewed in the ACE Pink Pages.

FULLY UPDATED



## BRAINSTORM

We rate the games for brains

## GAMES



**EGG**  
Ocean's Best?



**BLACK LAMP**  
Beautiful Fantasy Tale

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CASSETTE

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makes a true simulation of the Arcade hit for your home screen. Enjoy superb  
graphics and realistic action as RASTAN takes on a world of danger — magical  
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Is it more than you can handle?

# CHAMP



In the belly-ache  
world of the night: there  
time place to rest, no time to  
think — but look sharp — there is  
always time to die! From the city  
subways to the gangland gutters you  
will always encounter the dangers of our  
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Having survived the  
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Collect items to build up the firepower necessary to fight  
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Action and excitement all the way with this  
exciting and unusual game which has that  
classic extra something to keep you  
coming back for more.



the name  
of the game

SNK logo and copyright information.

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# ACE

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Quantum point.

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What a magnet that it's completely free when you subscribe to ACE.

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### 100 Readers' Pages

Small ads, big business. Whether you're after people, a PC, help with adventures, or just the chance to contact other readers, these pages can put you into the pink.

# Selling the industry for 10p?

There's nothing so heart-stoppingly satisfying as a quick blast on a state-of-the-art arcade console. Whether you're punching the pads in Streetfighter or leaning into the bends in Super Hang On, it's an experience that Pongsters could never have imagined even in their wildest dreams.

But the challenge and involvement of a truly original, complex, well-designed computer game can be even more satisfying. The intricacies of Sentinel, the wit of Intocom, and the pleasing perplexities of Xor are typical examples. Games like these give the home computer industry a unique quality and a future full of satisfied gamers.

However the 10p-a-go design concept of arcade games spills over all too often into computer entertainment and when the big league companies seem to concentrate so strongly on arcade licenses and game formats we've a good reason to start feeling uneasy. The success of this magazine in itself is a sure sign that people want **more** in their games - more originality, more long-term challenge, and a greater awareness of the fact that not all games players are under five years old.

We don't want to lose the fun and frolic of the arcade scene, but if the industry isn't to remain confined to the 'kiddy market' then it **must** become more aware of the needs of the more sophisticated player.

## • The ACE Team

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PRESENTS

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COMPELLING  
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ENDLESS HOURS OF ZANY  
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**N**or content with having women ripped apart by Jack the Ripper, the company are now releasing a game in which they're torn to shreds by a werewolf. And, of course, there'll be the dog food pot to protest.

All this plus headlines — the company's PR agency — in either a light spin. Naturally they're anxious to dissuade CRL, from any hint of sexism or porno-intent, but the company's release policy seems to be making things rather difficult for them.

"It wouldn't damage Neko Singh, speaking for headlines, that pornography is any worse. There is a little bad scene... Naturally

## CRL DO THE DIRTY...

does...No nudity," but the relevant lady admits that the main character is more than a little hairy on the inside (as the film Company of Wolves put it) and has a tendency — not long deferred — to tear ladies to pieces.

The game (which we can't even bring ourselves to start) is written by Rod Pitts. Shouldn't he really have learnt from the adverse publicity generated by CRL's last release? Apparently not — This's a lot worse, not a terribly progressive sort of person admits Neko. Presumably this means it isn't a very progressive

sort of game either.

So what's to be done, if anything? Electronic Arts, who distribute CRL's products, are quite clear that they "cannot adopt any editorial stance towards the product, we are supplied with that if matters started refusing to stock them, then things might change." If that looked as if it was the case, we'd have to reconsider," said a spokesperson for EA. The moral's obvious, then — if you don't want these games on the shelves, don't buy them, and then the shops won't stock them...

## NINTENDO DROP MATTEL?

**I**t is a shock turn-around Mattel — the toy company responsible for the marketing of Nintendo games consoles in the UK — have dropped the project.

"Essentially we are a toy company and we have other brands we have to support," declared Michele Han, speaking for Mattel. Nintendo and Mattel are joint company-industry sources, however, suggest that the move follows pressure from Nintendo, who were reportedly unhappy with Mattel's performance with the product.

Naturally this has been vigorously denied by Mattel, but whatever the truth of the situation, the suit looks to be far from being a setback for the hardware, which has sold nearly 10 million units in Japan alone and retains its nearest competitor in the US by a staggering 90%.

That's because Mattel were never able to offer the software support the system needs to be successful. You can still only play 22 games on your Nintendo — the same 22 that were available when the product was launched. There are some stupendous prices of software in Japan but the UK machine has a special chip in it that rejects any program not specifically coded for the UK market. The only hope is to persuade Nintendo to



Japan to convert titles for its poor old Brits.

Mattel's departure leaves the field open to NES UK, a new company set up to promote the Nintendo with heavy TV advertising campaigns. It's run by the same people who took the machine to the top of the pile in America and will concentrate exclusively on supporting the system. It should also be able to get its hands on some of the earlier

game software everybody's playing in Japan and the US, but which has never appeared over here. They've done it in America and now they'll do it here. They going to wipe the floor



Super Mario Bros. — the game that launched 1 million consoles.

with Sega," said a (subtle) Marketo hint. Certainly the machine that launches one of the best console games of all times, Super Mario Brothers, deserves special attention.

## SMART EGGS OR HUMPTY-DUMPTY?

**C**an Smart Egg Software's new budget label, Powerplay, turn?

The label is a collaboration between the Eggs (previously a development house for Macintosh and Microsoft International responsible for the Top Gun budget range), what's intriguing about the company is that they plan a 50/50 mix of graphic adventures and arcade or strategy releases.

Adventurers don't sell as well as arcade

games, so can a budget label that relies on them for half its sales logic really make money? That's a pertinent point, admitted Nigel Brooks of Smart Egg. "One of our

previous titles, Nigel's Revenge for Macintosh, sold as well as any of our other titles, but that was an exception and of course we won't have such a high turnover as they do." So what about the vital question of timing, then? "We'll try it out for the next three months and see how it goes," said

Nigel, suggesting that if the adventures didn't cut the mustard then they might reconsider and issue a higher proportion of shoot-'em-ups and strategy.

That might be difficult, because although the company — who will rely to a large extent on submitted products to maintain a budget-style high output — have received 75 games for evaluation, 5 out of 10 of them are adventures. However, they're remarkably confident about the future and it's certainly interesting to see a company that doesn't rely entirely on forcing items to sell, instead, let's hope Humpty stays on the wall.

## Stop Press!

Just as we went to press, we received details of a new range of computer-based comics — from magazines, to all people. For further details of Lundy Macintosh and his battle against the government, see page 93.

## LOGOTRON GO FOR ACE

**F**or advanced computer entertainment, that is. The company that brought you LOGO has taken on ex-Tescomat supremo Herbert Wright in a special bid to attack the more mature market.

"We believe a market of more discerning buyers already exists," declared Wright, "and we want to be



Herbert Wright, ace Logotron.

in a position to exploit new game opportunities that may arise from technological quantum leaps like ray tracing and CD-ROM. We're avoiding emphasis on 4-bit machines or cloning, and aiming for a market that's more mature, more professional, and has more spending power."

The policy also dictates keeping company overheads as low as possible, so that the company can't afford to release much titled titles in rapid succession but can concentrate on fewer (and therefore hopefully better) games.

ACE got an ACE rating of 80%. Let's hope the next one's just as good. Meanwhile it's nice to hear of company that thinks writing "mature" and "discerning," but predictable? No, SIR.

## GAME OVER FOR EURO-CODERS

**I**magine you're a successful programmer, in the prime of your games-writing life at the age of 18. You've just released a game that got an ACE Rating of over 100, and it's selling very nicely. You're looking forward to a couple more big releases in the next 12 months.

Hang on a minute, though. Aren't you forgetting something? There's a small matter of your military service to consider. For the next 12 months, instead of coding through the nights, you'll be slogging through the trenches, cleaning toilets and peeling potatoes as your contribution to the

nation's security. Couldn't happen here? No, it couldn't, because we haven't had National Service in this country for over 25 years. But it's happening right now to programmers all over Europe, in particular it's happening to our German friends, programmers of the 634 video game Queen.

Despite his Greek name Stavros holds Finnish nationality, and just about the time you read this, will be starting an 8 or 11 month stint in the military. How will it affect him?

"I really don't know what's going to happen. The 64 market could be completely different when I get out. He doesn't think he'll get much work done while he's in. It's an all-day job - running, training, cleaning toilets... In the whole period of his service, he'll get a mere three weeks leave."

It all makes you wonder what would have happened to some of our best-selling games if we still had National Service here. If David Bradley had been equate-leasing instead of programming there might never have been an Eliza (Richard) and David Searing had been polishing bowties there might be no Code Masters. If Paul Hindes had to spend a year serving his 15 the Eosion what would become of Manager? Thank God they abolished National Service.



Stavros isn't so keen on seeing another game like the well-known Queen for the 64.

## PIRATE CLAPPED

**T**hings are looking up in the war against pirates - the first prison sentence for the crime has just been passed. The prisoner to be hung is one Gerhard Wilhelm Mariner, a German living in Tokyo.

Mariner got 12 months penitence after pleading guilty in charges of forging, copyright infringement and illegally importing software in to the UK. His court was to try the pirate while in Hong Kong where they are busy, it legally arrested and the marauder in Taiwan, he then shipped the stuff over here and advertised his wares in the computer press, at prices slightly - but not substantially - lower than other shops.

He wasn't punished until a purchaser realised that the heavy-weight database package he'd bought wasn't all it seemed. He contacted the manufacturers, Ashton Tate, Enter FAST - the

Federation Against Software Theft, the organisation set up by the computer industry to help wipe out piracy. FAST's co-ordinator Bob Hay went in to action, making sample purchases, followed up by a raid on the premises in the company of the Regional Crime Squad.

Mariner was caught long in rights. It took the FAST team two days to sift through the 200 pirated titles in the shop. Not only did they get the software, but they also found that he was printing notices, so if you suspect that the title slipper on the next item you buy looks a little odd, maybe it came from Tokyo...

### LIBRARIES

Mariner's software business covered entirely of business software. But what are FAST doing about games piracy? Bob Hay says that his level does not cover individuals. "I do not deal with one

## Snippets... Up and coming titles for your micro.

Except where stated, the games listed below should be available at your local store.

### September

**Antares**  
CIB  
£9.95 to £14.95 sb  
Spectrum  
£9.95 sb

**Antares**  
£9.95 to £14.95 sb

The computer version of the board game where the players compete to construct a line from one side of the board to the other. Hailed in some quarters as the first new strategy game since Chess or Backgammon, September should be available here.

### Thundercross

**CIB**  
£84 to £95 to £12.95 sb  
From the man who brought us the computer version of The Rocky

## I COST £75000 - FLY ME

**I**f you want to get the feel of racing around Ecoscion on a Super II, diving in to water the easily from your home, look out for the new Super II simulator. This £75,000 game includes a game of new video synchronised to the racing a fitting of an hydraulic cabinet, large enough to seat 14 people. Those who've experienced it can't deny its thrills.

The machine has what its developers call "steady level", so that it can be set to give County a gentle turn-up round Silverstone or the youngsters a rather rougher ride.

Speaking for the company,

Geoff White tells us that with its £75,000 sales are high, and he's confident that pretty soon will be seeing a Super II machine in just about every arcade and shopping centre in the land. One of the legs to be installed will be at the Royal Air Arm Museum at Hendon in Somerset, where it's hoped to run simulations of major flights.

At the moment, you just get in the cabinet and enjoy the experience, but the company does hope to introduce an element of interactivity in the future - there are no plans as yet for this development, however.

# ED IRONS

you just copying a program and pasting it on to another? But where piracy is concerned ROST can't see - and does - take action. "We busted a guy recently who was running a lending library" he says. "When we got there we found a thousand disks with over two thousand games on them. The case is likely to come to court quite soon, we'll keep you posted on the outcome."



**Home Shot** - Jeff Lee - comes this fast and furious shoot-em-up. The Thunderbolt is, apparently, a sort of space hoverer that's doing a pretty good job of sucking up the Unions.

## Power of Sea

This strategy game is based on the WW2 Battle of Leyte Gulf. The player takes the role of the US Fleet commander ordered to capture the Gulf from the enemy - within 96 hours. You've got a Battleship, aircraft carrier and an aircraft carrier under your command, but watch out for the Kamikazes.



## Venom strikes back.

**Genre**  
Spectrum  
07-00-c  
04-00-00 or 04-00-04  
**Rated**  
00-00-c 04-00-c  
**MSRP**  
07-00-c  
Or **M.A.S.T.E.R.** if you prefer. This time the baddest have kidnapped Matt Tucker's son and are holding him in their mean HQ. You play Matt and you're on your own for this multi-level space adventure.

## Champ

**Genre**  
Amiga  
04-00-04  
This fast moving and realistic boxing game should be on the streets by now. It features authentic noises (punch! - punch!) and spectacular graphics. The player has a choice of four fighters from various weights.

## Crazy football

**Genre**  
Amiga  
04-00-04  
This highly original arcade game has the player trying to dribble four balls through a maze - simultaneously. It's going to be a very tough game to master, but practice makes perfect.

## Blackshadow

**Genre**  
Amiga  
04-00-04  
This one or two player shoot em up takes place on the seemingly deserted planet Blackshadow (Gene's big brother?). It was up to you to save the earth from collision with the asteroid, but it wasn't until you got to the asteroid that your scanner revealed what upon what of black ooze. Surprise, surprise.

## Loads of Midnight

**Genre**  
Spectrum  
03-00-c  
This adventure game is a spin-off of the old classic Lords of Midnight. Take the part of Ludo, son Ludwig and race against the evil Baron Gloomph to reach the all powerful Cores.

## Coven

**Genre**  
Spectrum  
00-00-c  
04-00-00 or 04-00-04  
**Age** 17  
04-00-04  
As a witch who's broken faith with your coven you must attempt to take the power from the twelve covens before All Hallow's Eve arrives when they will be at the height of their powers. So get on your broomstick and prepare for

trouble. This arcade style game should be out around June time.

## Escape to Non-mondy

**Genre**  
Amiga/Ats  
04-00-00-c 04-00-04



The action takes place in France in 1944 and the player takes the role of Resistance leader Pierre Le Feu. The mission is to escape an armoured train that's loaded with priceless French art treasures and guide it through the enemy lines to safety at Rome.

# PROGRAMMER SPEAKS OUT

An important, soul-searching ACE exclusive...

Ignatius Goosebeak is famous for his fast and furious arcade games. We've been writing for the C&A for five years now under a non-de-keyboard and this is the first interview in which he has given permission for his real name to be used. We approached Ignatius to discover how to write a game in a week - which a recent ACE survey suggests is the time you need to knock them up if you want to make money programming budget titles.

**ACE:** Right, Ignatius, is there anything I need before I start to become a rich and world-famous budget games programmer?

**IGN:** Yes, the first thing you need if you intend to write a commercially viable game in a week is a personal library of machine-code routines. My own took about four years to build up.

**ACE:** Is there an alternative to spending four years mastering machine code?

**IGN:** Yes, the usual answer is to steal some code from famous games like *Indiana* and *Quaxton*.

**ACE:** OK, I've got my routines. What now?

**IGN:** You need an idea. All the best ideas are rip-offs, so the simplest thing to do is to look around the software store until you are led by a sudden inspiration. If you've already written a game, do a sequel: same code, change the graphics around and add a few pull-down menus, that's the usual format. If you haven't yet written a game do one as 'homage' to an old favourite. My last mega-game was a sequel to a rip-off of an earlier homage to an arcade game (unwisely done, I made a packet).

**ACE:** Are programmers overpaid?

**IGN:** Well, I certainly am. But then I overpaid, so it tends to balance out.

**ACE:** Now, about the game...

**IGN:** As you need, basically, use a few pretty sprites, a collision-detection routine and some back-steps. Add a landing, an... jump and some FX (*Bomb! Bomb! Whooosh!*) and *Bolt's* your TV game best. Come in a week!

So who's been making the big bucks? Who – not to put too fine a point on it – is making money hand over fist? An easy answer was provided by the news early in January that US Gold had sold a staggering 200,000 copies of Out Run.

The game was undoubtedly the biggest 8-bit seller of '87, so it's not surprising to learn that the US Gold group is the most successful success of home computer software in the UK. In the few years since it was established, the company has grown from making a net profit of £175,000 on a turnover of £3,800,000 in 1984, to a net profit of £1,020,000 on a turnover of £20 million in 1987.

That's pretty good going, by any standards, but not everyone makes it to the top. Nexus went out of business just in time for Christmas, Mirogen disappeared when distributors CSD went bust and Software Projects cut their releases down to the bone. It looks like the smaller independent software houses are either going to

# SOFTWARE HOUSES '88 - BIG BUCKS OR BIG BUST?



Out Run: biggest seller of 1987?

the wall or being absorbed into larger groups or 'development houses'.

## 8-BITS DEAD?

The problems have come about largely because of the uncertainty over the full-price 8-bit market. There's a general feeling that you and I are no longer willing to go into a shop, buy a game and pay 10p for a Spectrum

or 84 game (unless it's some mega-price release). We'll spend £1.99 without feeling an eyelid, but full-price 8-bit frightens us off.

Derek Brewster of newly-formed budgetsters Zappin! (see his for more about them) puts it this way: "There's a lot to be said for full-price software at Christmas. But a lot of the time it's dead." Herbert Wright of Legation – publishers of ZOR – echoes this view in rather stronger terms: "If you haven't got a licence 8-bit is dead. Where you're budget, of course."

## The Big Boys

Just who are the big boys in the UK software scene? Of the home-grown houses the **US Gold** group is by far the largest, its major shareholders Geoff and Anne Brown not only have US Gold itself, but also major distributors **Centrowest**, but have fingers in other pies as substantial as **Cosmos** and **Mastertronic**.

**Cosmos** and **Mastertronic** are the most indigenous big boys, but the picture is slightly muddied here by Virgin's recent acquisition of 49% of **Mastertronic** – which probably puts Virgin up into the software big league.

**Telecomsoft** – **Fluorid** and **Enlight** – are the other big players. After a shaky start they were reputed to have paid over £1,000,000 to buy Beyond and another large amount for Oribi. They have now gained a large segment of the UK market.

Checkbook software development seems to pay off – especially if you've got a company as big as British Telecom's own.

It dark horse are **Cole Masters**, they haven't released any titles yet, but if the charts are anything to go by they are doing quite nicely. Thank you! Not just in the big league, but also to watch. But the UK companies haven't got everything by themselves.

**Bullwinkle** came from several years ago and, after a shaky couple of years, are now performing well. **Electronic Arts** are big in the States and seem set to be big over here too. They're looking for more titles to handle and have recently signed an agreement which means their software will now be appearing in **Books** – the single largest retailer of entertainment software in the country.

## US GOLD

Yes, they're not a rock band – but this US Gold promo material does make a nice connection with 'lead singer' Geoff Brown's prior existence as music teacher and part-time rock musician. Only four years on, the company he started is the single biggest player in the UK games market, bringing on a host of outside hits and coin-up-and-fire licenses. The whole group comprises US Gold, **Eol** and **Operation** on the software side, and the software and hardware distributors **Centrowest**, who supply games to **Books** and other retailers.



## BUDGET TAKES ITS BITS

According to Rachel Davies of *Marketline* - and it might ought to be true, it should be fair - budget software now accounts for 60% of the market. *BIT* magazine suspects that full-price 8-bit software is in terminal decline.

The evidence for the success of budget software lies in the results of companies like *Mastertronic* and their rivals *Code Masters*. *Mastertronic's* profits of £1.2 million last year were 50% up on the previous year's - because of games software. *Code Masters* haven't released figures as yet, but you only have to look at the number of their games in the shops to see that they won't be doing too badly. The company's *Share Finance* says they've sold 550,000 games in December '81.

Clearly, there's a choosing top market out there for budget games, and it's probably going to increase substantially in '82. But what of full-price software?

### 16-BITS GOOD

While everyone agrees that the days of the 16 quad 8-bit game are numbered, there is a widely held belief that 16-bit is a growing market for full-price software, the machines are selling well, and customers seem willing - for the time being, at least - to pay 15, 20 or even 25 quid for games.

And here might be the place where the small software house, even the lone individual, might make a comeback in the games industry. *Harlan Wright* agrees, as a recent *Art User Show*. "It was like an old ZX *Master*. All the small guys were there and I hope they survive. They bring much-needed originality to the industry." Agree to that, *Mastertronic*. too. See 16-bit



Some Zappeln, sponsored by *Zeppelin*.

## ZEPPELIN TAKE OFF?

Budget software already has 60% of the market, and that figure may well rise this year. A good time to start an 8-bit software house? *Dennis Brewer* obviously thinks so, since that's what he's done with *Zeppelin*.



The company plans to bring out four titles per month throughout the year across the popular formats, at a price of £3.99. *Dennis Brewer* says they need to sell 10,000 games per month to break even, on the basis of the company receiving around £1.17 per game sold.

Will it make a fortune? *Zeppelin* hope to sell 20,000 games per month and to have matched a 2% share of the budget market by the end of '82. That is, they hope to be doing business to the value of £2.5-million.

software as an area of growth in the year ahead - or, in fact, just about anyone you care to talk to will tell you as the growing path leading to sales and profits.

### WILL THE GAMES INDUSTRY SURVIVE?

Will the 8-bit get hotter and the poorer paper in '82? Probably. What seems likely to happen is that the budget companies will increase their share of the 8-bit market. The big boys with the big money for the big licenses will continue to look it from non-ups and then. And the

smaller, independent houses?

Mergers and marketing deals seem to be the order of the day. *Rachel Davies* doesn't think that many houses will actually go bust in the year; software houses are more professional than they used to be. But she does believe that there will be 'Mergers, a polarisation around the big houses, with the small houses becoming development teams still publishing under separate labels.' Let's hope that it doesn't mean they'll just be turning out non-up clones to order.

## What's in a game?

Just how much does a software house actually make out of a game? Although you buy it in the shop for £3.99 or £4.99 the software house obviously doesn't get all of that.

First of all they have to give a discount to the distributors who are getting onto the retailer's shelves. The discount is usually of the order of 20%, so a £3.99 game will bring the publisher around £3.00.

The advertising and packaging of the game will eat up a good proportion of that. Then you have to pay your programme a royalty (a publisher's artist/composer/development fee). And of course there are the normal business costs of renting space, phone bills, travel etc. etc.

Out of that original £3.99 there might not be much more than £1.50 - £2.00 left. If you're only selling a few thousand of a game then you're not making much money. Obviously, *BIT* *Software* have done pretty well from *Out Run* they must have taken in around £500,000 from that one game alone - but even there you have to bear in mind the substantial costs of licensing the coin-up and the required six months development period.

Unless you have the resources to buy licenses and promote your games heavily, it's hard to sell a lot of full-price games. No wonder then that the smaller houses are cutting back on their licenses and turning to development for their bread and butter.

## ELECTRONIC ARTS

One of the most striking developments in '81 was the establishment in the UK of the European arm of EA - biggest US publisher of entertainment software.

EA is not a public company, so they're not obliged to divulge profit or loss figures. Their latest number though, for the year ending March 1981, was \$20 million - and it's felt that likely it will be substantially higher in March '82.

EA's European boss *Mark Lewis*, offers many other people in the games field an opportunity about the prospects for 8-bit software - EA's, it seems, is still a healthy market, based on sales of *Chuck* *Yager* and *Snake* in Oct. He says

The implication being that the games will sell well at full price if they're good enough.

For the future, EA are investing in CD and interactive video, but *Mark Lewis* thinks it unlikely that we'll be able to buy anything at a reasonable price until Christmas 1982.

And for 1982 we could see some of those independent software houses signed up by EA as 'associate labels' - in C/P, and *Market* has already done. "We're still looking for associates," says *Lewis*, and it's more than likely that we'll sign some more software houses in the new fiscal year.



*Mark Lewis* - *Director of European Publishing*.

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Get DEXTER II—beat the boss by a bit of the-squirt!

## GET DEXTER II

Intelligence

Clones of Duke went down a tunnel with Arnie's camera in tow, but the chance ran the rest of them didn't even make it. On the side of the Channel, you see the game was marketed by videogame specialist PSL under the name Get Dexter. Now Intelligence are getting up to bring us the full cinematic sequel, and as you can see it does look rather good. Once again, you control the toxic android Dexter (obvious as a license quest to the parent of Dex, with plenty of noses to control) with only the

travesty 1980s postapocalyptic Sucker (Duke) for help. These Intelligence people are still busy translating the game and its accompanying literature, but it said Arnie's CPC version should be able to see the results very soon. (Circled)



## PREDATOR

Action

Film fans have a double holiday in the software market, but Activision seem to have hit on a winning formula: go for movies with stars in 'em. Whether the next movie licence will top the charts for them is still unknown, but it's got all the elements: megastars and megabucks. Activision's new releases, necessarily considered and often have good frame slowdowns. The controller in the film is like other than Arnie Schwarzenegger as the villainous slug-out is (presumably) something of a tongue twister, but on the micro version things should be a good deal tougher. Predator the game is due for potential real soon now, it will be dead.



Is it you who are dead, what are they with the map?



PREDATOR that you are controlled, but what have they made for him.



Get DEXTER II to PSL—some great music, great graphics, and absolute zero politics.

## CRASH GARRETT

Intelligence

D...well, Eric. Intermittent, actually. These French buddies who brought you Get Dexter, Bubble Glee, and Phoenix are now trying to woo you with cinematic adventures under the aegis of renowned French parodist Michel Rivard. Eric of Phoenix's Stillep and Co should love this one—the action is confined to a scrolling text window above the main graphics display with constant crowding of unrelated faces as the various characters get and tell their way through the plot, in which an ace Crash Garrett has lost his girlfriend Cynthia to the evil Baron Von Kral and

head get her back.

Scroll text input but lots of visual tricks as scenes progress: swirl, 'peel off', dissolve, and slide about the display. As a character enters, his picture scrolls smoothly on-screen—



type ATAGGGG and watch his slip down out of sight beneath the weight of your power-geared punches. There's even a degree of animation showing the emotional life of those involved—smiles, grimaces, snarls, and things give you some idea of how your hot hardware text inputs are being received, turning music on the AT version, superb graphics all round, but some doubts about the long-term interest and definitely not one for those keen on 100% arcade action. Keep your eyes peeled for the full review of the English version, coming soon.



# LIGHT TRACERY



**I**n the first part of the series we stepped into the territories and went straight into the techniques involved in showing the bulk of three-dimensional objects, surface textures and light direction. The month were going to pause for breath and take a look at some of the more basic skills involved in creating computer art.

Technically, the first thing that should be considered is *what* drawing is the structure. Visualizing the fundamental structure of an object is quite difficult, and getting it drawn is even more so. Learning the skills required takes a lot of practice so, for the moment, we are going to cheat, and copy objects directly by hand digitizing.

There is a number of techniques that can be used to copy a picture, but the simplest one is **tracing**. All of the pictures illustrating the article were produced initially by tracing images from magazines. The method used is described in detail below, but first its worth discussing the process of selecting images, since that is really the very last job once you have decided what you want to draw.

Naturally in the copying graphics era, we are surrounded by images suitable provided for us to copy. Newspapers, magazines, instant replotters, picture books, posters, postcards, family photos - the list of good sources is endless. If you intend to work quite often with a computer paint program, it is worth making a collection of images that interest you. Before sitting down at your computer, scan through all of the suitable pictures and select those that are closest to what you want.

Initially you should just choose one image to complete picture to copy, though whatever you choose, try to make it something simple unless you have a very sophisticated, high-resolution system, most

## The second instalment of our series on graphics technique finds Brian Larkman trying out a bit of light tracery.

attempts of complex images tend to look rather messy. As you get more practiced you will want to take bits and pieces from various sources and paste them together. In that case, the two most important things to look out for during picture selection are scale and orientation.

### SCALE AND ORIENTATION

In both our main pictures, the aim was to mix together widely differing images. For this to work, T-Rex and the Car, for example, needed to be approximately the right size and at exactly the right angle and view.

## GT REX

A poster made - and here been produced using IBM Advanced Art Database was actually created © Nelson Reed's on an Aegys.



1 Initial tracing, from the poster used as a model.



2 Redrawing on the computer (in white) details added. Both of these images are saved as bitmaps.



3 Initial colorizing of objects. More detail could have been added at this stage using either 2D patterns, but most of the modeling is achieved by the lines. Based on Windows.

### Hand Digitizing

Transferring the image of any object (or sound) from the outside world to a computer environment is called digitizing. Most parts of the physical world appear to us as gradual changes of shade or tone. This continuous variation is known as analogue. A computer can only deal with variations in definite steps, each of which can be very small, but always numbered, and therefore known as digital. The easiest and most well-known way of digitizing an image is by passing an analogue video signal through a hardware digitizer. This produces an approximation of the original made up of dots. Nevertheless, it is equally possible, though a lot more work, to hand-digitize an image by carefully copying it. A skilled artist can do this 'by eye', but most will at some time take the short-cut and trace an image.



2 The images are superimposed and some white (opaque) shapes added based on the window.



3 Complete foreground composition. The original (2) file is copied over slightly (by defining a smaller "to mask window" and mapping the original to it) so it then "fits" slightly horizontally. The smaller window is also saved.

point in relation to each other. Size (scale) is easier to adjust on the computer after setup, provided your point package allows scaling of not, see the file on how to draw using a grid. Orientation is usually much more difficult to change, except in the special case of mirror images. If possible, making out the objects and placing them together

gives a better idea of how the picture will look. Otherwise, try rough tracing or sketches. It may seem laborious, but it's hard to over-emphasize the fact that the early preparation is what makes a good painting.

The next stage is to copy the objects you have obtained, either by tracing or with a grid. Both these techniques are described in boxes

### Tracing

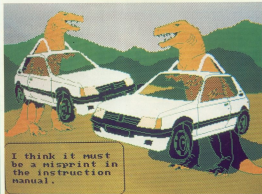
By far the easiest hand method of digitizing an image is by tracing it. The tracing paper needs to be completely transparent. Some form of clear acetate such as overhead projector transparencies is most suitable. They can usually be obtained from a good model making or stationary shop. A fine-lined waterproof, permanent felt or ballpoint pen is also required. Red or green are better than black, allowing the lines you draw on screen to show through.

Trace the image carefully - following all lines of the object, not just around the edge - but do not be tempted into drawing too much detail. If there are definite colour changes, trace those too. If colours change gradually, try to pick out a line that divides them. The final tracing should look like painting-by-numbers.

One great advantage of this technique is that it should stick to the monitor screen by itself where possible (the tracing on screen is in the correct orientation. If static is not enough, use the rack or masking tape).

The copy is made using rubber-banded line or penplotter - or, for circles or ellipses, the software tool. It is usually best to select an off-white screen and a distinctive line colour (different from the tracing pen). Starting at the top and working down, follow the shape of the traced lines with short rubber-banded lines. With a little practice it's possible to produce a very good copy, even with quite tight curves. You may find it easier to line things up if you keep one eye closed.

The final copy should look something like the first G.P. file outline above. **SAVE IT IMMEDIATELY!** There will be lots of gaps and wrong lines, but these can be corrected with magnify. The fine details of the line drawing can be added at this stage.



4 The final picture. A single foreground window is composed first. The smaller window is placed above, followed by the original larger window slightly overlapped to show depth of field. Shading on the dinosaur's neck with white makes an excellent tail mask.

## NUCLEAR FAMILY



1. All art objects - like these - appear after being set



- 2. Components
- 3. 2-D fill (painting by numbers) style
- 4. Shaded - textured paper
- 5. Shaded - like a drawing on canvas
- 6. 3-D fill and a pattern background

Once the detailed line-drawing has been made, the real work begins. However, it can't be stressed frequently enough to **SAVE YOUR WORK CONSTANTLY**. Keep a separate copy of the line drawing, so you don't want to lose it in the future or make a total mistake with the electrical version.

What you do next depends on how you like to work and the subject matter. It may be that the whole picture can now be assembled as a line-drawing and then filled in with colour and texture. In most cases, it is better

to finish each object completely and then assemble the picture. There are several reasons for this. Firstly, complete objects can be stored separately as files for use in other pictures or a later date. Secondly, some objects may overlap each other, or be multiples of one image and it makes no sense to colour each one individually. Thirdly, you may wish to try a variety of compositions and backgrounds before settling the final one.

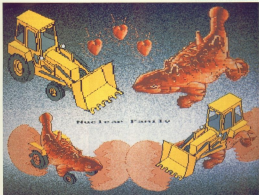
### Changing Scale with a Grid

If the software you are using will not allow scaling, it is possible to copy an image using a grid. Draw a pencil grid over the original picture, dividing it up into a reasonable number of squares (at least 4 x 8). If you do not want to draw directly on the picture, then use an acetate sheet. Using the grid back end of your painting program, create a grid of similar proportions to your drawing, but at the new scale (eg. 4 x 4 = 16). Working systematically across your drawing, copy the contents of each square into the corresponding square on screen, taking the position that each line crosses the grid into the next line as a guide. Details and corrections can be added with magnify, SAVE OFTEN.

## ARTWORKS

Inspired by our DIT series? Want to show the world what you're made of? Then send your artworks - with a note explaining how they were created - to

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# QUANTUM PAINT

ATARI ST 520/1040, EIDERSOFT £19.95

It was so obvious that hardly anyone noticed at first. Meochrome, the original art package for the ST, gave the first hint by using over 200 colours on-screen at once. Now Eidersoft have proved it with Quantum Paint – the Atari ST is actually capable of displaying 4096 colours on screen at once, just like the Amiga. Is it worth having? Brian Larkman finds out.

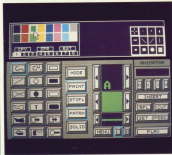
**T**he trouble is, once you have got them what are you going to do with them? Some people would say that 4096 colours is ridiculously excessive. Certainly the new Macintosh II gets by with 256, as does Amiga Archimedes. Nevertheless, as MacPaint have shown with DigPaint for the Amiga, 4096 colours provide beautifully smooth shading of pictures, allowing the drawing of realistically shaded objects, transparency and reflection. To achieve these feats, DigPaint has a whole range of sophisticated tools. What of Quantum Paint?

Lets start at the beginning. Quantum Paint is provided on a single-disk and operates on all ST machines from the 520 upwards. It starts from the GEM workbench, though the program uses a customized interface of its own for operation. Before we see a Key-Board has to be bound to the mouse,

a single operation that seems the least enjoyable method of protection, normally allowing the user to load-up their master disk as often as necessary. For some reason, the review copy refused to produce a usable backup, but Eidersoft say that it should be possible to copy all of the necessary files individually.

The control panel now appears. The completely clean drawing area is accessed from here, with the right mouse button in Design style. Filing, preferences, set-up options and other less-often used functions are available from a second control panel via a Menu feature on the main screen. The main controls are set out logically into three areas: basic drawing tools on the left, annotation controls on the right and palette control across the top.

Most of the drawing tools you would expect are present, though there are several omissions in a package of this nature, making it less useful than it might be. At first there seemed to be no Undo feature, something even the most experienced computer artist would not want to be without. In fact, it is possible to undo via the keyboard (CMD) key, though this is not mentioned in the manual. However, undo operates on all drawing that has been done since the control panel was last brought up. For someone used to screen-wide undo, this is rather irritating and potentially disastrous.



Quantum Paint - the main screen when everything starts



## ONLY AND PARTS

Over 2000 individual bits in the limited on-disk palette. Areas of the screen can be panned up and stored or copied, or used as backdrops with or without a transparent background. They cannot be saved and loaded, even into a temporary clipboard, or behave like Quantum Paint's two drawing windows. The previous one of the major advantages of computers came over the more money variety – building up pictures from a library of components. On the plus side, it is possible to 'zoom' open out by drawing several times over them. Nevertheless, the obvious could, for people used to more sophisticated on-disk paints, integrate Quantum Paint to being useful simply for working on pictures produced by some other package in digital.



## PALETTE CONTROL

The top of the control panel is the area of real wizardry - making QPaint's unique programs on the 27 - the palette control. Using it's quite the manual - a system of horizontal lines through a completely exchangeable new palette of colours for the current one, while the picture is being displayed on the video screen. For new modes (26, 32, 39, 42 and 48) have been added to the 27's graphics capability. The number of these are the 126 and 32 modes, the old medium resolution respectively, providing - yes, you guessed it - 126 or 32 colours on-screen.

What the palette control does is a normal 16 (or 4 or 16 etc) colour palette. Each of these colours can be selected individually from a full screen display of all the 27's normal range of 32 controlled by the F10E buttons. Or by using 808 sliders. Colours can also be swapped between 'point-to' and speed between two selected colours giving an evenly graduated range. Besides the current palette is a set of colours suspended 1 - 8. Clicking on each of these will display its respective palette, allowing it to be set up or changed. Once-clicking on a button brings up a Cycle requester so as to independently control colour, speed, and direction of colour cycling to each.

When they are activated, each of the eight palettes available are coded a horizontal level across the screen. The PALETTE button on the screen - control - screen, brings up a requester displaying the size and distribution of all palettes by means of eight white sliders, which can be dragged up-and-down the screen, and eight 'toggle' to turn palettes on or off.

The effect of these controls can be seen in the picture Madonna. The background consists of 3 areas of basic or colour, each independent of the others. Seen first, these are as alternating with colour coded by colour cycling. Only the colours in the foreground (of the face and hair) are common to all palettes. Similarly, the landscape picture. Carved from two independent 16-colour palettes just to produce the smooth six colours, plus two more to shade the mid-foreground and background.

In use, 126 mode is quite straightforward. The pointers are simple to set up and drawing is satisfactory within the limitations of the tools already mentioned. Oh, but how nice it would be to have more control over how the colour is distributed. Freshly drawn cycle draw offers each of the colours in the cycle range to be printed in sequence on a brush like a stream, but there is no cycle draw on any of the other tools, and indeed this is not available. This is a great pity. Having gone to the trouble of providing so many colour on-screen, the tools for using them really should be more sophisticated. On the plus side of colour control (although not implemented on the current version) the control process (shifting, inserting and deleting - all very useful effects).

## SUPER PALETTE

In the centre of the main control board is a button marked MCEP. Clicking on it allows selection of the two Super Palettes



Great view - the palette used to produce the sky, but notice the foreground background

modes. In when using these, especially 48 mode, the real achievement of Etron 7 Amos, the programmer of Quantum Paint, can be appreciated. Super Palettes allow the use of either 162 or 4096 colours on-screen, something that most 27 cards though was possible only on the Amiga.

In practice, 27 modes are slightly more likely to use them 126 or 32 because of the need for draft screen. Most of the normal QPaint drawing tools except flood fill are available, but the colours that appear on-screen are selected from a suitable range of 16, like a normal 27 palette, so the draft drawing can be rather dull. No matter, after a period of accuracy the length of which can be set the program is able to calculate the correct colours to display and presents a full colour screen. If you do not mind the slight flicker of an interlaced screen, all 4096 colours can be seen (well actually only about 3600 different ones) or 512 without interlace.

It seems a little overkill to pick holes in the drawing enhancement, but it was mentioned at the beginning, 4096 colours are only as useful as the tools available to pointing them with.

The 2 27 Modes mentioned in the manual are, like most of the Draw modes, not imple-

mented on this version, so I cannot comment on them. If they are anything like the other two Modes in QPaint, then they will be great. Nevertheless, it is a nice drawing tool like different bits and allowing that one the real commonly required means for using lots of colours. The lack of these is the greatest limitation of the package.

One of its great advantages, though, is the simple animation facility provided. Any screen can be saved not as a full screen dump file, but as a data file containing only the differences between the current picture and the previous one. If only out-and-palette disabled could be loaded from a binary image animation would be very easy. Even here, its combination with the excellent colour cycling facilities, provides a good.

Quantum Paint is going to be a spectacular program. At present, it is very good, especially for the price (£19.95), but not really finished off to the point of replacing the '...and other wonderful graphics software...' of other programs. To quote the manual, Etronch must find that there is a definite upgrade path to version 2 for a normal user that only to registered users. Version 2 will have all of the colour manipulation tools mentioned in the manual plus some. If not all, of those I have suggested as well. In the meantime, Version 1 has to be a read to any 27 artist.

## FOR

- 4096 colours
- 4 video modes
- Easy to use animation
- Amazing 162 colour palette

## AGAINST

- Incomplete basic drawing tools (especially set & paint)
- Very few specialised colour manipulation tools



Madonna - Only the colors in the foreground are common to all palettes

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## THE FREE LUNCH

Don't you believe it if some wiseacre offers up to you and whippers. There's no such thing as a free lunch; it's a wrong thought you with this additional role, you will be strictly limited at one of Bath's many fine restaurants - all to cost whatever it pleases!

## Tie Breaker

Here's a letter from a poor soul in agony. In not more than 25 words, write - on the dotted lines below - a suitable reply to print in the magazine.

Dear ACE,  
I am having a problem. I cannot get my 16-bit version of Glib to load into my Sega Console. I am getting desperate. Can you help?  
A. Wally Berkeley

.....

.....

.....

# BAD CAT



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# BACK TO THE FUTURE

Coin-ops in 1988 - Chris Jenkins reports from the 44th Amusement Trades Exhibition at Olympia.

**T**oday it has been said that today's coin-op is a teenager's home computer game. Verily, from Space Invaders even unto Acroplane for it been so, and thereby that they know the shape of next year's hot products.

All that may change, though, if the ages and parents' wits at the arcade industry's annual get-together at Olympia come to pass. It looks as if the coin-op industry has run out of new ideas for game themes and has come to stalling point in the virtual graphics handling technology. Next year's big game(s), it seems, will be the cabinet roller from the robots.

In a bid to woo players away from their computer and back to the arcades, the Japanese and American coin-op designers have been concentrating on the areas where home computers cannot compete - the actual playing environment. While the extent of this being soon may depend you from the intense business of steam-heating the arcade, and even the results of the real thing Companies such as CapCom are said to be experimenting with the arcade equivalent of Touch-Tone technology, by which operators' shouts will be heard through the cabinet as you play. The pattern so far is that they've perfected the imitating smells such as engine oil, saddle leathers and burning rubber, but can't come up with anything that people actually WANT to smell. I think it will be some time before the smelly thing to the city. Was that you, or have I said it before?

The main move, then, is away from expensive graphics systems such as colour-wheel laser disks, multiple monitors and giant screens, and towards mechanical effects built into the cabinets. The target is not a Sega's Afterburner, the sort of lighted simulation featuring stunning graphics, housed in a 94000 hydraulically-operated shell cabinet. Obviously it's the cost of such units which make them relatively rare, but there are cheaper alternatives which tend not to dominate the market. Segor's Thunderbolt, for instance, is a fully straightforward helicopter simulator. Presented as an outdoor-type view, it includes brilliant graphics of high rise buildings through which you have to weave, tons of missiles being lit up by lighting-led fighter planes, sea-borne

tasks, believe it or not, in to blow the lot to bits.

Thunderbolt is a small-scale coin-free standing cabinet, but like many new games, it's also available in a deluxe version. This consists of a heavy-duty motor mounted in a control panel featuring supposedly realistic helicopter controls, attached to a helicopter-like body on skids. Mounted on this is a pilot's seat, complete with foot pedals, joystick with resistance, and speed control to the side. As you bring your chopper through the skies, creating landings, queues and moving planes, the shoe ends from side to side and the instruments and controls. It's an intensive feeling which immersively enhances the game, and which certainly couldn't be reproduced outside an arcade.

Unlike the expensive Super Hang On and other hydraulically-powered simulations, Thunder Bolt uses a simple system of levers connected to the joystick. It's therefore much cheaper to buy and service, and is thought encourage a whole wave of similar games, such as Kazuo's RBT: Leaves every simulation.

Another exciting-looking ride-on is Namco's First Ops. It's very similar to existing



machines such as Caliber in many ways. However, the rollers, mounted on hydraulics, flip themselves backwards and forwards, and they can be electronically linked together so that up to eight players can race at the same time. Taito's Full Throttle also features hydraulics. Available too is beam-riding fun, this one has a cabinet which looks more like a bubble-car than a formal one room, but what the heck, the action is strongly reminiscent too with vehicles, underground and bridges rather than race tracks.

## GOING TOO FAR?

Another impressive 'beater' is a lot of it there.



The Super Full Throttle racing bubble car simulator.

back to the pre-war cowboy shooting games I missed playing when I was ten. *Texas Operator* itself is an incredibly nice simulation in which you will soon feel the weight of the action slapping you into a horse-saddled frenzy.

The control is deceptively simple. A vertically-revolving tilt sub-machine gun mounted on a release, featuring a conventional trigger and a barrel-mounted stud to launch grenades, points forward the screen just behind a glass shield to prevent nose-bleed, perhaps?

The game's simple too, so while some



**Operator...no close cousin of the revolutionary gun.**

of simple games in which you must gun down the enemy while comparing your status to knock-out mechanisms, or pick-up ammunition, or power reserves. Doing so often cut, roll and penetrate onto the screen, firing grenades, shooting wildly and even in the memorable case dodging themselves behind crates, who you must not shoot. You are back really searching out space clips, rocket barrels and fuel oil tanks to replenish your supplies. The premise is that as you start the gun buds wildly, throwing you one way or another you to expect valuable ammunition wastefully in order to be sure you demolish all the troops, helicopters, jets and gunboats before they shoot you down.

*Operation* what certainly made me get carried away my policy of aiming careful shots and avoiding shooting civilians also gave way to a madman-killable in which I quite happily blew off the heads of Subjugated citizens. If anything, *Operation* that takes means a little too far and more questions as to whether these games ought not to be subject to some form of monitoring.

The same innovation could be cited at Sega's *Heavyweight Champ*, another rare sport which is best viewed as the mechanical penny-arcade games of old. *Heavyweight Champ* is a boxing simulation using graphics of a type which has been available at various times for a couple of years, it is a foot high cabinet mounting a twenty-inch monitor displaying a 3-D view of the ring. You look through your gloves, who submerse in outline form, to see your opponents. A number of shooting and defensive moves are possible, and if you can complete five fights within the time limit, you become champion and go on to defend your title against increasingly better and more skillful fighters.

Some years ago you may have seen a

film called *Futuroworld* in which android buses were controlled by people who wanted to work out their frustrations ferociously. The stars of the game will, *Heavyweight Champ* because instead of hitting or woeily jousting you gain hold of a pair of handles, and actually push-out the machine and swing the top section of the cabinet to make your moves, straight forward to a job, forward with a twist for a hook, nerve the lever down low to high for an uppercut, and reverse and raise the lever to defend. I saw players getting really carried away with this and looking at the machine as if all they were worth the price will tell whether the machine cut into the punishment or whether players will manage to move themselves punching at it.

**REBELS**

Another trend for '84 is to produce much enhanced sequels to old favorites. I had you they were running out of steam. Whether you think this is worth the effort is largely a matter of taste. Atari's *Galaga '84* for instance, is a follow-up to one of the biggest early arcade games. In the new version, the game contains the same waves of alien swarms down from the skies, being it lands you or captures your fighter. The difference is that instead of the woeily two-color sprites, we now have unusually detailed and strikingly individual enemies, glowing crystals and rocket cannons, the jolly music is



**The Jet Set, while an innovation through the position control on Sega's Vector-Beam.**

replaced by stunning digital effects and electronic drum beats in the bonus sections, and the backgrounds are now impressively detailed, with grain stations, whirling stars and planets, all for a cost, but nothing more than a polished version of the original.

The same can't really be said of *Starhawk*, which takes the old Asteroids and turns into a totally new dimension. New instead of monochrome vector graphics of penny-arcade and boules, you have monochrome multi-color vector ships, banks of free space fighters, bottle crushers, AND planets to contend with. You can hit one of three buttons which cause your fighter to reconstruct itself into different modes,

designed for fighting, running or defending. Being saved into when you hyperspace also enables six-quadrant, with twelve full-time background and another set of one man. It's fun, but the *Galaga '84* looks a bit primitive compared to the latest 3-D light simulators such as *Star Out* or *Force*.

**CUTIES**

Another trend which fails to inspire me with excitement is the return of the cutie game. After last Atari's *Konami*, follow up to the ground-breaking *Rescue* and *Parody*, we now also possess *Handful Island*. That's equal to *Rescue* and *Parody* and *M. Hill*, but it's still the same, which makes me think they'd be better off concentrating on titles such as *R Type*.

I don't see myself spending many hours on those types of titles, but I think the old penny-arcade will take a leading of the latest round of combat games. Most of the designers have solved the problem of these games being so static by combining elements of the horizontally-scrolling shoot-'em-up. *Texas* *Blade* *Infantry*, for instance, uses a dual three-monitor system to display highly detailed backgrounds of steel wires and military bases. You fight on Eurosets - apparently a fairly new, although I don't know how you can tell with all the clutter and that other wires, guard dogs, tanks and fire-breathing dragons using laser, missiles, and the even-visible *Thunder* and sound lovely graphics, then, though life is the way of simplicity.

*Rescue* is a more biting shoot-'em-up, with *Texas* follow-up to *Rage* that and *Flying Shark* due to put in an appearance soon. Two *Claws* adds variety, includes some one player, death, and backgrounds, allows you to pick up extra weapons such as mines, bombs and smart missiles, and has a two-player mode. *Original*, it isn't, but then neither is *HyperDuke*, Konami's on-target shoot-'em-up which does at least feature an unusual mixture of top-view and perspective gameplay as you battle in slaying the invisible planes, missiles, rocket canons, and ground bases.

**TAKE YOUR PICK**

Another new trend is to make multi-game consoles. Although for obvious reasons, these are limited to the less ambitious titles - some of your favourites, *Hydroxide* or *Rolling Mountains* are here - *Moscow's* *Profligate*. The idea of local save systems these games, and a panel attached to it for games such as *Dark* *Star* and *War* *Games*. More conventional games, such as *Confederate* *Mario* *Area*, *Volleyball* and *Indestruct* may also be found on these units, which at least give you a wider choice of games, even if they aren't state-of-the-art. *Arcade* *Super* *Select* *System* works on the same multi-drive principle.

1984, then, looks like a year for mechanical rather than electronic games. Some will be sitting out, adding it, punching, shooting, even probably taking out non-ops rather than just twisting the joystick. From now on, when you're enjoying the games, you can be getting some exercise too.

# ...and back to the blasting!

## ● AARGH!

by  
Zigzag

As 68000-based micros come to dominate the home computer market, the dividing line between computers and consoles becomes increasingly blurred. Just to make things more confusing, Matel's own one-up division, Accotia, is now developing machines using Commodore Amiga circuitry, implying that the resulting home computer conversions will be nearly identical to the console originals.

If that's the case, I can't wait to get hold of AARGH! (It's like you have to shout to get the full effect, which is a fairly understated rip-off of Rampage; the monster-on-the-loose game recently cracked in home magazines by Activision). AARGH! takes the basic idea of making you the baddest and offering you the chance to do as much damage as possible.

—Zig Zag



Map of the Island

allow you to roam in any direction around the entire village.

Your task is to smash up everything you can, a process which is depicted as gory

loops. You can even climb on top of them to finish off the job.

It's not all fun, though. In the two-player game, you're competing for points against the cyclops in the one-player game, something more fun than...

The natives are obviously used to the monster's shopping expeditions, and have knotted together a little defense in wood-work fences. The stone-throwing catapult can be very detrimental to your health, so as the natives drag it around the village trying to get within range, you should chase after them and give them a taste of the old death-tooth.

As you progress through the villages creating mayhem, more threats loom, including guard details which try to take off the top of your head.

Should you be unfortunate enough to run out of energy, your monster colleague is a bloody mess of outlets which look out about the right way for the recharging pot.

Excitingly tedious and violent, AARGH! should entertain Accotia as an arcade force to be reckoned with.

—Gregg DeGardner



to, but there's a nice neat twist and great details.

Set in a jungle island straight out of King Kong, the one- or two-player game lets you control either a Godzilla-like dinosaur, or a ferocious cyclops. The opening map shows you the island's most beauty spots, which you must return to smothering outside. The first scene is a native village guarded by enormous gates, which crumble at your decal to allow you to run smack under the compound. Freaking perspective effects

The instruction screen



distort. Beasts on thatched huts and they burst into flames, little natives running around until you stamp them into puddles. Some huts with your fate and they fall into smoking







Remember the first time you played *Defender*? Christina Erskine charts the development of the arcades, from the good old, bad old days, to the first official license between the coin-slot industry and the home-computer copy-cats.

**W**hat was the first ever video game to hit the arcades and start off the coin-op craze? At those who answered *Space Invaders* go to the bottom of the class. Brownie points to everyone who remembered *Pong*.

*Pong* was the first commercial video game, written and launched in 1972 by an American university graduate called Allan Nuttall. His budding company, Atari, sold the game into hundreds of bars and amusement centres in the United States. A year later, *Pong* arrived in the UK with immediate impact. To arcade visitors, *Pong*



# AFTER PONG

made a complete change from one-armed bandits and pinball machines. The video game boom had begun.

Three days, *Pong* looks laughably primitive, but even in those early days certain simple guidelines were established that are recognised even by today's multi-colour mega-games – simplicity, addictiveness, strong, increasing levels of difficulty (although in the very first versions the ball didn't speed up as the game progressed) and competition between two or more players. The game consisted of two blocks representing each player's bat, and a circle, square ball moving slowly between them.

In years ago, it like had never been seen before. Throughout 1973, *Pong* hurried into amusement centres up and down the country. Then, almost as quickly as the coin-

slot had, it took out again. By 1974, the original *Pong* was burnt out and the embryonic industry which had grown up around it took hold.

The first version of *BreakOut* – which in 1976 is enjoying a renaissance through *AtariMania* and *Impact* – appeared in 1974 and established yet another industry guideline – the variant clone. This *Pong*-obsessive kept the balls on the screen and the video game industry in the black for some time, but after the initial enthusiasm for *BreakOut* had waned, things remained quiet at the coin-op scene for some years.

## ENTER THE JAPANESE

*Pong* and *BreakOut* were both developed in the US. It wasn't until 1978, with the arrival of the first *Space Invaders*, that the Japanese

burst onto the market and the popularity of these games exploded all over again, and with an alarming intensity.

There was kept manufacturing 400,000 *Space Invaders* machines for the Japanese market alone and licensed rights outside Japan to US company Midway in order to cope. By 1979, there were something in the region of 700,000 *Space Invaders* games installed in arcades, pubs and public buildings throughout the world, and over 85,000 of them in the US.

*Space Invaders* later climbed somewhat by 1980, but this time there was a plethora of quality games to take its place. *Galaxians* was the first significant landmark – another variant clone (this time on *Space Invaders* but now in glossier technicolour). Then came three very important releases which together with *Galaxians* have shaped both the arcade industry and its on even greater extent the computer games market ever since.

First, there was *Scramble* which together with *Defender* established the horizontal scrolling shoot-'em-up. You will find very little in a modern game like *Blade* that doesn't exist in the original *Scramble* version. *Defender* gave us even more reversible fight

paths and level imperials) of all-a complex game objective including search, destroy, and resistance. Another point worth noting about Defender is the language barrier, solving the problem of a field-of-view limited by the monitor display most effectively.

The other two games of note were Odyssey Song and Rocket. The former was a co-op game featuring platforms and ladders - a genre/style that was equally copied by vast numbers of home computer software houses, though the ladders slowly disappeared. The platform, however, are still with us in games as diverse as Impossible Mission and Jet's Rigger 2.

Rocket established the really influential maze concept (later given 3D status by Mystic Maze type games). It serves a perfect example of a game containing total simplicity with some oddities.

Along with the original game copies and clones, many of which emerged from the Fair Deal, where the retail industry was burgeoning and the copyright laws were lax. In a year or two, the coin-op industry raised its standards of these maze games to its place, with the odd driving game, such as Alan's Hole Position and Q7-10, there to verify.

The tradition of cloning, copying, and



Star game, but creating it a dead-end style since Asteroids was different than and a more dynamic image produced using computer, like the computer ports or ports) but despite its success because the software is better. Finally, that had a similar feel but more like Laser Land 2 that is better.

jeansy legal things happening for a while, but inevitably the wheel soon turned full circle and the bottom fell out of the market as manufacturers were unable to reap the necessary rewards from their products before the pirates stepped in to meet the customer. Today, companies such as Sega and Atari and the custom chips used on the game's circuit board to make it difficult for variable clones to break in. It gives their new games a vital three-months start before the piracy-related variants appear. In the early 80s, such alternatives had not yet been devised.

#### INTO THE HOME

By the time Space Invaders was being played everywhere you could physically fit a cabinet, Atari first home video arcade was on the market. This began the relationship between home machines and the arcade, an uneasy one at first. Atari produced its own home arcade versions, but coin-op manufacturers were barely interested in the first two home models.

As these machines, the first 25, 3280 and 3281, went on sale along some smaller

#### Charting the changes

Andy Walker has seen both the coin-op and computer software industry at first hand. He began programming and designing coin-op games in 1981, stopped in order to go up to London Software - of SuperPuzzleFest - and has now gone back to writing for the arcade, courtesy of Measurements.

The arcade industry has changed drastically. When I first started in September 1981, we were not only writing the programs, but had a factory actually building the cabinets as well. This probably has done better I would just stick to writing rather than trying to do everything.

The great winners of arcade games by other arcade manufacturers almost killed it all off with one exception. Take Scramble, which was a very good original game. In the UK, there were people taking cabinets apart, photographing all the components and copying them, often using very good cabinets. Suddenly from nowhere there were Scramble variants and up-offs everywhere, everyone had to have the best version.

The early computer versions were a bit like that, though none of them could compare with the arcade original.

opportunity for pirate versions - the time unlicensed versions of coin-op games on the home computer.

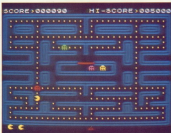
The success of the first home computers, particularly in the country for the 2801, led to a huge demand for software. Small local bedroom companies spring up overnight many of which disappeared overnight as well writing simple games for the rare machines. Some of them were a bit short on original ideas and took their inspiration directly from the arcade.

The earliest examples were probably the versions of Lunar Lander written for the 2800. But come January 1982 and the second ZX Spectrum visitors could take time pick some of while variety of titles all featuring variable-size environments in programs in the arcade. It should be added however that though the alternatives were obvious and plentiful, the more versions were largely very rough and ready, thanks to the limited time of the maker themselves and the complete inexperience of the programmers.

Microcosm where are they now? offered Space Invaders, Breakout, Pac-Man and Dragon Maze at the time. J & K Game Software had JD Myster Maze-as-duplay. Bug



Andy Walker - in the past several quarters of copyright copy machines.



Finally in the Spectrum - its only official version, produced by Activision. The simplicity of the game format made it ideal for conversion into the portable home computer.

Byte demonstrated *Invaders* and *UK Break-Out*. At the time, Quicksilver (which still exists as a label today) was getting busy with titles such as *Defender*, *Invaders*, *Oil Bomber*, *Asteroids* and *Galaxian*. In the last corner, Quicksilver attempted to distance the title slightly from the original, at least on the story board: the enemy spacecraft became robotic birds dropping exploding eggs and your lone hero was apparently a dragon-oid catapult. *Donkey Kong* appeared in a number of guises: as *King Kong* (*Anteoskop Miroslav*), as *Creasy Kong* (*PKC*), or even *Monkey Romeo* (*Antos*). And not a licensing or rights agreement in sight.

As Andrew Newson, then the head of newly-formed Newson Consultants, and responsible for a hastily-disposed little number entitled *Space Invaders*, says, it simply didn't occur to people that there was any kind of problem with rights. Everyone was doing versions of arcade games, so you just started it.

#### LEGAL INVADERS

The video game companies were slow to get litigious for a number of reasons. Firstly, in the very early days of computers, it simply didn't seem worth it to initiate legal action



An early 2600 *Space Invaders* front panel, courtesy of the Spectrum Historical Players club. Not ground-truth, with pseudo 3D effects, but quite close to the original my opinion for a time or two on computers, opening a number of variants of what became widely used in the more successful 480 *Invaders* for the Amiga 50.

against a game that might sell a few hundred copies at most. It was only in 1982 when the software boom began to take off that games started getting in *Space Invaders*. But they woke up to the fact that their ideas were being poached.

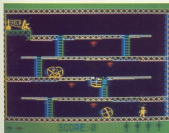
Steve Stern, then vice president. Until the updating of the Copyright Act in 1980 specifically to include computer software, the copyright position regarding programs was a very grey area. Copyright was defined as relating to the written word, works of art and

#### What's Pong?

'Everyone thinks Pong was my first video game, but in fact it was the second,' confides star founder Nolan Bushnell. 'The first was a game called Computer Space which we licensed out to another company. It was not a great success. It had lots of spacebars and flying saucers all over the screen and all my friends loved it, but then they were engineers, and it didn't go down so well with the public. I then realised that my next game would be something simple.'

Pong was certainly simple. At that time, Bushnell had already set up Atari as a research and development firm licensing its products to other companies to sell. Bushnell claims that the only reason Pong came out under Atari's name was that no-one else wanted to take it on.

We went on to write 20 or so games for Atari, including *Asteroids*, before selling the company to Warner Communications in 1976. After Atari, Bushnell set up his own company to design and sell robots, from simple functional devices to Proctors, a light-hearted robot cum fully companion for the home.



Monkey Romeo from *Antos*. Apart from the obvious similarities imposed by the Spectrum, the arcade has a charming story of *Donkey Kong* being programmed for the console almost certainly resulting in legal action being taken.

## Chronology - from Pong to the first official arcade licence.

1972 Nolan Bushnell writes *Pong*

1973 *Pong* machines become available in the UK.

1974 The first version of *BreakOut* hits the UK arcades.

1977 *Pong* is produced for the brand new Atari 2600 games console.

1978 The Atari 400 sees the light of day in the US.

1978 Taito's *Space Invaders*, the arcade game, sets off the second coin-op game explosion.

1979 *Galaxian*, the first colour display video game is introduced.

1980 *Defender*, the first game played with horizontal rather than vertical movement, appears.

1980-81 Games such as *Pac-Man*, *Scramble*, *Donkey Kong*, *Mr Do* and *Frogger* keep the coins going into the slots.

1981 *Space Invaders* appears on console format for Atari machines.

1981 The Atari 400 and 800 games consoles arrive in the UK.

1981 The ZX81 is launched, and the UK home computer boom begins. Demand for software, particularly games, leads to hundreds of software houses setting up shop. Unauthorised versions of coin-op titles sweep the market.

1982 Atari releases *Pac-Man* for its console range.

1982 Bug Byte withdraws *Women* after threats of legal action from Atari.

1982 Atari goes on to do battle with Commodore over *Jelly Wrestlers*.

1983 Century Electronics licenses Superior and Ocean to produce official versions of *Warlock*, setting the final seal of legitimacy on the relationship between the home and arcade industries.

music - where did computer software fit into that definition? The technology was new to lawyers as well; it was difficult to argue a case when it was uncertain whether the musician in question was covered by the Copyright Act or not.

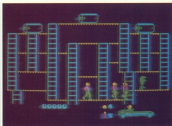
Litigation did however follow. Atari was particularly keen to test the law of uncopyrighted versions of its coin-op games, not surprisingly, since Atari was also putting official versions of its arcade games onto its own computers, and planning titles for other minis as well.

In 1982 Atari persuaded Bug Byte to withdraw *Warrior* (*Warrior* is all but named from its catalogue) and later that year entered into a well-publicised legal dispute with the much stronger Commodore over the latter's *Jelly Monsters* game, which also claimed Atari infringed its *Proktor* copyright.

Minis for the first licensed arcade title probably lie with Century Electronics. The now-defunct Milwaukee company managed long and hard against architectural computer versions and minis, and in 1985, its officially licensed its successful *Runesword* title to Superior Software for the Commodore and BBC machines, and Ocean for the Spectrum.

A climate approaching certainty of legal action, and the promise of changes to the Copyright Act prompted software-companies to look to officially licensing arcade titles in 1988. The advantages of being given access

to source code and an agreed



Be there - see it before you perform an action long activities. It's hard to get the graphics on your, just as well you face the owner of Tutankhamun. (Screenshot only with you)

was seen by the coin-op manufacturers, plus the publicity gained from being able to openly use the name of the original outweighed the costs involved in obtaining the licence.

Software houses and their coin-op counterparts have thus had a much easier relationship of late, with some computer versions being actively encouraged. An Igal booth of Electro-Coin, one of the UK's largest coin-op machine distributors, points out: 'The two industries complement one another. The public gets the opportunity to play the games in arcades and that stimulates demand for the home-titles.'

The coin-op manufacturers have also been doing very well financially recently out of home computer versions, perhaps too well for the way some to continue. It is well that US Gold's *Out Run* licence cost them £200,000, the price the same company paid

for it of its own. This could well happen if the arcade industry, overpopulated with racing simulators and music-art derivatives, loses some of its impetus and enters another period of stylistic depression. ■



Andy Miller - from the outside, it is home computer industry and we look to the outside with Ferrari.

### Copyright

Ever to the new 1988 Copyright Act, the safest way to signal a copyright infringement in the computer industry was to go by the writer's word - in the case of software, the actual programming code. Thus in order to infringe copyright, the offending title had to be a copy of a substantial part of the original's code. Obviously in remaining games from early a printed circuit board in an arcade cabinet is a ROM, this definition rapidly became meaningless. The code couldn't remain the same!

An alternative was to try for a passing of action, i.e. that the computer game mechanically resembled the original. Just how much the very early computer versions of arcade games, written on 8k chips, did manage to resemble the coin-op original is debatable.

by *Grandiel* was pushed up-and up since the licence was more or less restricted through the software industry.

If plans for licences continue to be pitched very above the majority of copyright's needs, we could well see a return to wholesale cloning - with just enough differences programmed in to make an avoidance of copyright infringement difficult to stick. Indeed, it's already happening - there are any number of games on the market today which bear a striking resemblance to *Grandiel*, *Merlin Madness* and others.

The alternative, of course, would be for the home computer industry to follow a path

### Costs

To play one of the first Space Invaders machines in 1978 cost just 5p per game, compared to between 20p-50p today. However from the arcade owner's point of view, profits have remained remarkably stable. To buy in a *Break-Out* machine in 1975 for an amusement arcade would cost about £1,200, to buy a simple stand-up machine in 1987 costs about £1,200, though the price of some later-style cabinets, such as *Duffman* and *Afterburner* approach five figures.



Be there - see it before you perform an action long activities. It's hard to get the graphics on your, just as well you face the owner of Tutankhamun. (Screenshot only with you)

# TETRIIS.

MIRROR  
Soft



## A NEW WORLD FROM RUSSIA

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Coin-op fever is with us as never before. Arcade cabinets, screenshots and logos dominate adverts for home micro games, while the big coin-op manufacturers are now household names. Are pale imitations of coin-op games the best entertainment your micro can offer you? Do even pixel-perfect clones of arcade hits make anything more than mediocre home fare? Andy Wilton investigates...

**O**nce it was the old TV sets, now it's coin-op games. Even more than cartoons at picnic picnics, a fall of floccus loquax is the only guarantee the success of a home-computer game in every people's eyes. It's a game and it's loaded with coin-op conversion, the chances are it draws fairly heavily on several arcade titles to its glory.

The connection seems obvious, doesn't it: coin-op and home micro-games are both aim to provide pretty much the same kind of entertainment, so what would well on the one front must do best stand a good chance on the other - provided it can be technically converted, of course. That's the theory.

In practice, however, the kind of attitude it's going to take to convert. Coin-op game play might have been the best you could hope for on a VIC-20 or ISE Spectrum, but

the ST and the Amiga are capable of it as much more. There's not in way that coin-op games are poor - to be sure it - but they're designed to operate rather than living rooms, and there's a big difference between the two.

#### CASHFLOW

The ideal coin-op game and the ideal home micro game shouldn't have a great deal in common, because coin-op and home-games designers are trying to achieve quite different things. There are many constraints in game design for the arcade. First and foremost, good coin-ops must be visually striking and, in the short term, very addictive indeed. They must appeal right from the word go if you aren't hooked after two or three plays, you probably won't bother with the game again. Each play must be fairly short if it's to get you hot as fast, the machine can't possibly pay its way.

# GAME OVER?

#### The conversion problem

This has traditionally been a big stumbling block, especially when the Spectrum is concerned. Sinclair launched his world-beater bet when Phantasyland's *Demigrip* claims were the order of the day, so its colour and scrolling limitations weren't considered serious at the time. The vast majority of colourful, fully-scrolling coin-ops aren't there, however, as a rule, converted any less well.

The rival C64 and Amstrad CPC machines have had their problems too. For a while the C64 seemed the ideal machine for coin-op conversions, with its fantastic sprites and impressive scrolling capabilities, but the quest for bigger visual impact in the arcade has rather left the machine behind. The enormous and of level guardians in scrolling shoot-em-ups severely strain the C64's resources, and the head-on perspective of *After Burner* or the Out Run/Enduro-Racer style of racing games doesn't suit it any less well either.

As for the CPC, its poor scrolling and stretchy sprites have made for problems in the past. Coin-op conversions have certainly benefited up a great deal now that programmers and games writers have learned how to use its 16-colour mode properly, but like the C64 the CPC has trouble coping with large sprites or head-on perspectives.

The 16-bit revolution is changing all this, however, with ST and Amiga conversions often being almost indistinguishable from the original. Indeed, the Amiga can produce arcade-style games to such a high standard that several manufacturers are now producing Amiga-based coin-up machines. There's a good temptation for 16-bit programmers and software houses just to turn out large numbers of coin-up conversions to their derivatives.

It's a question of economics. There's a shortage of software for the new machines, prices are high, and 16-bit programmers are in great demand. In conditions like these, the vital thing is to turn out games quickly. There's no percentage in thinking up whole new types of game when you can sell ideas you already know inside out.

A good home-micro game has to meet a different set of requirements. It's to be judged not only by how addictive it is, but also by how long the addiction lasts. If a coin-op holds your interest for a solid don't play before you let it go, the game designer home share pretty well. If a home-micro game comes up at first easily, on the other hand, it's in a rough time to be reviewed and the sales will probably suffer accordingly. Very few pure-arcade titles can manage the long interest to justify being released at full price; it takes enormous skill on the part of designers and programmers to hold an experienced player's attention that way.

The problem can only get more pronounced as the 16-bit micro take over. At it 16-bit, a full-price ST or Amiga game has to offer something that really tem. With 16-bit of money to fill, a 16-bit scrolling shoot-em-up usually won't do the bill any more.

That's not to say some games can't be used to test fingers aren't just because they are remembered here or inspired by coin-ops, but if the fun's about level it shouldn't come as a surprise. Certainly some shoot-em-ups or racing games will still be worth looking up in a year or so's time, but these games release can save things indeed; they can hardly pay by the tonnes of arcade-inspired titles flooding the market nowadays.

What's needed, it seems, is some blend of arcade action, with strategy, exploration or

adventure - on its easiest, if you will. Putting the brass into gameplay is a tricky business, and you, dear reader, attempt such as *Disc Blast* or *Disc Drive* have been at least only partially successful.

#### OVER THE SHOULDER

Long-term interest isn't the only novelty of the games industry's arcade-oriented view of things. Coin-up economies tend to produce games that look not only depth but also originality: the arcade home is lot to do with a game's own the shoulder apparatus, and the viewer the focus on its success.

As far as showing in the paying public eye, the most advertising for a coin-up is the monitor itself. It's not enough for a game to be stoppably addictive from the moment you start playing; the machine must get its claws into you the moment you look at it, either in its effort sequence - the substitute between-games demo mode - or



**THEY'RE SHOOTING UP!** Depth is more important than flat, repeating back-the-plate-in-the-coin-up game. Most about being the best.



**DISC BLAST (Top)** Though primarily aiming at gamers, the coin-up game plays fine in playing with its stunning graphics. The spin cycle through the screen.

more likely over someone else's shoulder while it is used. The operators stand in good machine-hug but for a direction, or at least an appreciative customer for the coin-up people, but to the arcade owner they're all potential customers.

If a game's going to earn its place in the arcade line, it'll have to be a persuasive winner: first impressions are everything here, and that means graphics power above all else. The phenomenal success of *Out Run*, for example, has so much to do with what the game looks like with someone else behind the wheel as how it plays once you're in the driving seat.

Notice how different this is from home-movie training, where the player is all-imp-

## Games that wouldn't work as coin-ups

Some of the greatest home-video games just wouldn't work as coin-ups. The fact that they wouldn't shows just how different coin-ups and home-games are.



**DISC BLAST (Top)** Deep-space flight is not the great set for a coin-up, but certainly the fun mode that most of us enjoy. Unfortunately, as the machine's main mode, it's not the best for the coin-up. As the game's primary (and most important) mode, it wouldn't work as a coin-up.



**DISC BLAST (Top)** As a coin-up, the game's primary playfield - those people who see a coin-up in the machine - is all wrong for a coin-up. It's not the best for the coin-up, and it's not the best for the coin-up. The game's primary (and most important) mode, with the best mode of being the best, is not the best and is the best.



**DISC BLAST (Top)** As a coin-up, the game's primary playfield - those people who see a coin-up in the machine - is all wrong for a coin-up. It's not the best for the coin-up, and it's not the best for the coin-up. The game's primary (and most important) mode, with the best mode of being the best, is not the best and is the best.



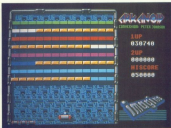
**DISC BLAST (Top)** As a coin-up, the game's primary playfield - those people who see a coin-up in the machine - is all wrong for a coin-up. It's not the best for the coin-up, and it's not the best for the coin-up. The game's primary (and most important) mode, with the best mode of being the best, is not the best and is the best.

level and the main graphics still goes into the form of the entries. In coin-up like *Star Trek* a game level of breathtaking background work is completely wasted on the players themselves - they're concentrating on slaying elves rather than rightswings - but then it's not really wasted at them. It's meant to last in future plays, and it does that admirably.

There's a further point too, and one that has some far-reaching consequences. If the games over-the-shoulder display is the only advent you'll see for the machine, it's also (along with the official responses) often the only set of instructions you get. That means you'll have to be able to work out what is how the game works just from watching it played. Few players will risk putting money into a machine they don't understand just in the hope of picking it up or they go along.

For this reason, abstract coin-ups have again failed to gain popular support. Few games like *Temple and Flag* graphically expensive at this time and obsolete enough to achieve our following. And while playing they way just because they were unconventional it wasn't obvious how to play them, or whether they would actually be fun once you'd got them figured out.

That's not the end of the commercial problem. If a merchant gets to receive moneys both that they can play the game straight away and that they'll enjoy playing it, inventors clearly find it easy business for coin-up designers. The easier way to make a game that clears these hurdles is to use an existing game format, improving on graphics and other gameplay features but keeping the overall idea conventional enough to



Abstract (star 1): Unconventionally difficult even for arcade, great format even in the under-16s. Easy thing that should help it get long-term slot fortunes - but it just seems to give players the wrong message.

be done at least intuitively recognizable.

There is a convention in the coin-up world of course, but it usually has more to do with presentation than gameplay. *Marslock* works of games like *Rebus* is the bestest might be instantly better practically entertaining, but you won't find overlaps with that kind of originality.

However it happens, the home game industry has to find a direction of its own. It is-it games only over the arcades they show away the market most important

sweepers in the sales battle against games machines - flexibility.

There's certainly a lot to be learned from coin-ups as far as presentation and initial reactions are concerned, but the micro games of the future will need a good deal more than that. However they get it, the games must have the kind of lasting interest and originality to justify buying an ST. Average or beyond - not to mention the \$10-15 selling price - and they won't find that in the arcades. ■

### Direct transfer

With the arrival of Amiga compatible coin-up machines in the arcades, a whole new avenue of conversion is opening up. It's not really conversion at all - you just transfer the coin-up program to an A800 or whatever, and it runs there without any need for modification. In the immediate future we can expect *Road Wars* and *Samurai* from Melbourne House, both of them home versions of Amiga coin-ups.

The ease of transfer will certainly give home players closer, better - looking games, but it could create some problems as well. Unless the games are modified somewhat during transfer - the difficulty being in particular will need some attention - the games simply aren't have the lasting interest a traditional game needs.

### The two-way street

Direct transfer works both ways - if coin-up games will work fine on home machines, home games can be made to run in the arcades. *Starblade* (Parsons Agency) is a case in point.

When the straightforward looking action and fast over frame graphics of the ST through the eye of arcade game *Baby Monkey*, conversion to coin-up form was no problem at all. Baby's new series of machines are based on Commodore's Amiga compatible 800 boards, so the Amiga version of the game will run on them almost without modification. Even so, there may still be some need for changes in officially being an Amiga format, the differing sequences in particular being unsuitable for a coin-up as they stand.

Said Parsons' Dave Engley, "It's the first British game to be converted to coin-up form at all for us we know, though *Starblade* have done the same sort of thing in the States. We'd certainly consider converting other titles to coin-up if they were suitable."

Though starting unconventional in viewpoint and controls, *Starblade*'s power sweeping shoot-out-up. Such fast at the simplicity and possibility a coin-up fan could wish for. In many ways a *Delorean* or for the 20-30 era, the game would be hard to beat for sheer the shoulder appeal - if only it could actually reach the arcades. But it. Again, the answer might well lie in the Amiga version currently under development. If the game transfers satisfactorily from its native Archimedes, it could look very attractive to coin-up companies with Amiga-based machines. Not such a fanciful possibility this, considering that Parsons will be publishing the game's ST and Amiga versions.



8000 Melbourne House



2000 Parsons



8000 Parsons Agency



# SOLDIERS OF FORTUNE



The coin-op smash hit from Konami now for your home-micro. This fantastic conversion with all the original play features takes you into a thrilling alien world as you negotiate force fields and take on fanatical guerillas as you infiltrate their headquarters.

Split second timing and nerves of steel are a must for this fun packed program where addiction will always bring you back for more!

## BOTH, WORLDS APART.

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Featuring all the gameplay of the arcade original Combat School offers a real challenge to the toughest throughbred gamer.

Seven grueling events, plus a penalty stage and if you don't make the grade - you're out!



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ocean



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# DAN DARE

## MEKON'S II REVENGE

WINTER ISSUE 1985

The story so far . . .

The Mekon has returned, running at odds to take revenge on the Planet Earth. In the bid to become ruler of earth the Mekon has developed a new genetically engineered race . . . the SUPERTEENS!

To save the earth someone must destroy the Mekon space ship before the Super Teens can be launched. There is only one way to defeat the Mekon - face to face. There is only one man for the mission - DAN DARE!



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Play Dan Dare - or the Mekon in this follow up to Dan Dare - "The Pilot of the Future", the game that was voted the 22nd 64 Arcade Adventure of 1986, and was declared in Cash Smash, C + HQ and A Factor, User, Classic, and your Sinclair Mega Game. Dan Dare - Mekon's Revenge is not to be missed!

Available from all your retailers or direct from Page One Books, 24 Nelson Yard, Northolt Road, London W5 3DQ



Commodore 64



Spectrum Screen



Amstrad Screen

# SCREEN TEST



Post-Christmas depression can be lifted simply by taking a look at our Screen Test reviews page. There's loads of good stuff, and those who like a more reflective kind of game will be cheered by the two 800+ programs - Superior's *Bonecruncher* and CDS's *Mah Jong*.

*Bonecruncher* racked up a whopping 843, mainly because of its mind-bendingly addictive puzzling. Not to mention its really cute graphics. *Mah Jong* is the best ever computer version of the classic Eastern board game. A lot of folks out east gamble on this game, but you won't be taken for a ride backing an outsider with the CDS corker.

Prettiest game of the month had to be Firebird's long-awaited *Black Lamp*. It really does look stunning. It didn't quite have enough of the Right Stuff in terms of gameplay or control to break the 900 barrier, but it's still an admirable achievement.

Lettdown of the month had to be Ocean's *ECO*. Great things had been expected of this Denton Designs game, but there was just a gaping hole where you might expect to find the gameplay...Doubly sad because we'd been so impressed with the preview versions. Well, you can't win 'em all.



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## THE ACE REVIEWING SYSTEM

If you're new to ACE, a word of explanation is in order about our innovative reviewing system.

First of all the PC - PC stands for **Pixelated Interest Games**; it's an easy-to-use representation of how long we think your interest might be held by a game. Instant setup conventions will start high and then steadily fall off, games demanding some thought and planning will stay higher longer. All games start to go and go together but down.

The ACE Rating is a figure calculated to show the area underneath the curve. It's the game's overall score, and is ranked out of 1000. Any game which scores over 800 is ACE Rated,

and is pretty damn good - see *Bonecruncher* and *Mah Jong* in this issue.

As well as an ACE Rating each separate version of a game reviewed gets its own version too, giving you details specific to that version and a score for graphics, sound, fun factor and Creation.

These last two categories are there to give you an idea of whether the game demands much in the way of thought, is instantly enjoyable, packs an exciting punch, and so on. A high IQ Factor does NOT necessarily mean that the *Play Factor* will be low. *Bonecruncher*, for example, scores 9 on IQ and 7 on Fun Factor; it's not only a demand-

ing puzzle but great for us too!

**Version Scores** on each review tell you how much the game costs on the different formats, and when they should be in the shops. Bear in mind that we can only guess on what the shelves hours will be as to the date of arrival of a game. Imminent means that that version should be in the shops by the time you read the review.

Each game is reviewed by one main reviewer, but is played by at least three of the ACE team; the final ratings and judgements are the combined opinion of us all.

**NUFFINK** has been proved to make the perfect game on the street, gun. Just look at those go-folksy-whats-the-name pop-ups, his mate! Oo, not a scratch of a game...

No doubt about it, *Black Lamp* is a games aficionado's dream. It looks stunning and must undoubtedly take the award for perfect arcade adventure yet, but underneath the beautiful facade you want find very rare items. This is a straightforward shoot, search, and survive number in the grand tradition of *Jet Set Willy*, *Somaria*, and any number of others.

As Jolly Jack the Joker you must find nine lamps of different colors. The display area is divided into three sections: street



Best 10 lamps! This one's getting a bit far from the lamp, with 100 percent you can now go to bed in a ditch.



Provision: that lamp that is actually invisible. The biggest advantage with random placed objects when you end up at a street they're floating, especially if it's a large or feature.

one in the start location.

To make things difficult, every screen is swarming with bottle chancers, ranging from little "Whites" to hammer-wielding "Blacks." Outside you will also be plagued by Werewolves and bomb-blinking Cows. Every time you get hit by a missile your strength diminishes by an amount that varies with each opponent. By far the worst are the Dragons, each of which guards a Lamp which require several strikes in specific spots to kill them.

To add to these are four categories of object to be found - food/drink, weapons, armor, and musical instruments. Food/drink boosts your strength, helping you to survive in your five lives. The other objects have to be

used or their value added the design that guards the Black Lamp is extremely difficult. All this would make for considerable resistance if it weren't for the intuitive controls. You can target mouse and keyboard controls (though they are permitted) because they're highly important, but even the joystick control is extremely touchy. The objec-

#### Atari ST Version

Great music (including an excellent rendition of Queen's "We Will Rock You") and stunning graphics make this a visual treat. Gameplay is extremely challenging but jolly controls remain a constant frustration. Not something you'll finish in a hurry, or without obtaining the treasures every time a slip of the stick sends you to your death.

GRAPHICS: 5 + HD: 4.0/5.0 B: 3  
AUDIO: 5 FUN: 4.0/5.0 A: 4

ACE RATING: 813

ted directions (always tricky to select quickly) and conceivably no any joystick are very important, determining whether, for example, you move left, jump left, or simply walk left according to your position relative to stars, platforms, or ladders.

Combine the touchy controls with a host of death-dealing opponents and you frequently find yourself dying while attempting to scale a series of platforms. Even after hours of practice you'll still find yourself occo-

# BLACK LAMP

FIREBIRD'S old wine in state-of-the-art bottle

scenes, countryside, and building interiors, with outside screens scrolling as you move across them. The music cues simply cut in to a new display as you move from room to room.

The lamps are scattered throughout the screens. You can only hold one lamp at a time and although there are hints (the exception of the infamous Black Lamp duplicate of each color) you need only find one of each, which you then deposit in a special chest before hunting down the others. To help you, there are several such chests throughout the game and there is always



#### RELEASE BOX

ATARI ST	128 Kbit	CUT NOW	
SPICE	17.95	FDGAMRCH	
BURSTRAD	13.95	14.95	FDGAMRCH
CHYON	13.95	14.95	FDGAMRCH

collected one by one until you have five of each. Five weapons will give you enhanced firepower, grants better immunity, and instruments called "beavers" (which means that you can fall from higher platforms without killing yourself). All these enhancements are temporary, lasting about 30 seconds, and the enhancements carry into effect on even the fifth object is collected - so you can't choose when to implement it, which is a pity.

*Black Lamp* has a large map and is swarming with hidden spots, so the challenge is considerable. What's more, the location of objects changes with each game and subsequent games become more and more difficult, with faster-moving opponents. Lamps are easy to find, but staying alive to find all



So the lamp, that one is about to land you with exploding skeletons, and the second is just like a white ball of red wings.

scarcely stepping onto the edge of a platform to fall to your death, either from jumping up onto the next one.

Old game concept, state-of-the-art graphics, involving gameplay, great music, enormous challenge, but it is indeed top quality, but there's no doubt that the release can't go to state it rich with the one. If you can't find a game that delivers instant reward, but meets a high price for successful completion, then you're stuck - but don't expect anything particularly original.

Steve Cole



**MORAL** dilemmas are things that most of us spend a great deal of time and effort trying to avoid. This computer version of the successful board game, however, throws moral dilemmas at you, one-up to one other player, constantly.

The computer version is a direct transfer from the board game, with the same card obstacles remaining the same. The idea is to get rid of all your dilemma cards (34 or 5 of them, depending on how many players there are) before your opponents. To begin with, each player receives his quota of dilemma cards and one drawer card. The drawer card simply has either "yes," "no" or "depend" printed on it, and you have to decide which player is likely to give the other drawer to one of your dilemma cards on the drawer card. If the drawer agrees, you discard the dilemma card and receive a replacement drawer card. If the drawer dis-



DO YOU WANT TO GIVE YOUR FRIEND A DRAWER CARD? DO YOU WANT TO?

# SCRUPLES

Discover your inner self with VIRGIN'S help



Oh...Moral dilemmas in Scruples come as challenging as the game can be put in a box.

agrees, then you or any other player can challenge the answer if you think their reply is out of character. Both players then vote for one player or the other and the winner hands a dilemma card from his pile to the loser.

If you've enjoyed the board game, or think you might enjoy it, then the computer version will not disappoint. There is enough variety between computer-controlled play-

ers to make it interesting and there are enough dilemmas to keep even the most apathetic members of the community soul-searching for a long time. The best way to play the game, though, is with a group of friends and a couple of bottles of punch. Then sit at home and let the computer handle the tedious parts of the game like shuffling and dealing.

Andy Smith

## RELEASE BOX

SPEC 128	£19.95, £14.95	OUT NOW
SPEC 64	£19.95	OUT NOW
AMSTRAD	£17.95, £14.95	OUT NOW
AMSTRAD	£19.95, £14.95	OUT NOW
ATARI ST	£14.95	OUT NOW

## C64 Version

The translation makes a superb use of the animation of the characters in all forms. The graphics and algorithms are the same as the other versions and the only problem is the slow movement of the selecting card. Be much fun on the C64 as on any other computer.

GRAPHICS	5	SD FACTOR	5
AUDIO	N/A	FUN FACTOR	7
AGE RATING 807			

## Amstrad Version

Graphics is very smooth and the animation is very witty. Most of the options are there and the 4 straight translation from the board game.

GRAPHICS	5	SD FACTOR	5
AUDIO	5	FUN FACTOR	7
AGE RATING 807			

## Spectrum Version

Eighty-two animation, but still as much fun. With a multi-card with the 128 version looks in the graphics missing from the Spectrum version.

GRAPHICS	5	SD FACTOR	5
AUDIO	5	FUN FACTOR	7
AGE RATING 807			

## Atari ST Version

The graphics are great and each player's portrait is animated throughout the game, showing expressions of joy, bewilderment and fury. Party of atmosphere goes to make this version the best of bunch, and the computer is the perfect medium for this type of game. For a game you'll play with for weeks, but certainly one to come back to often later.

GRAPHICS	5	SD FACTOR	5
AUDIO	N/A	FUN FACTOR	5
AGE RATING 813			

## PREDICTED INTEREST CURVE



Scruples is not the sort of game to keep you entertained for weeks on end, but you'll enjoy it so much you'll want to play it often when you return to the electronic game.

# CRAZY CARS

TITUS drive like maniacs

## RELEASE BOX

AMIGA	CD-ROM	OUT NOW
STARBIT	CD-ROM	IMPENT
IBM	CD-ROM	IMPENT
AMSTRAD	CD-ROM, 14.95k	IMPENT
SPEC	CD-ROM	IMPENT



The game Crazy Cars - driving is easier for you to learn to win it.

**FLORIDA** - the sunbather state is the setting for yet another installment on the now aging drive-thru car theme. Its very much an Out Run meets Jaggy Boy type game, and elements from those games can be found within Crazy Cars.

If you haven't already guessed the plot then, here goes. There are six stages, and each one has to be completed within a time limit before the player can progress from his humble Mercedes van Porsche and Lamborghini to the prestigious Ferrari Testarossa.

The player views the action from directly



behind the camera and the heading track scrolls continuously towards the player. As you're up against the clock to work the stages, it's a good idea to avoid bumping into the other road users or the kerb, because that causes your car to lose speed - thus time. Complete the six stages and you're not again into the beginning of a new car ride with slightly less time. It's a very addictive game that looks and sounds fantastic. A shame, then, that it's far too easy to be anything like a long-term challenge.

• Andy Smith

## Amiga Version

The graphics are certainly colourful and well drawn but the scrolling is jerky. The only real difference between the cars is the handling and each has a bit for the better models. Without several long penalties for crashing or back-sliding other vehicles the challenge soon wanes, and it can become very boring. Still it's playable and you could find yourself going for the odd spin in a year's time. A brave attempt to combine two very different game styles which doesn't quite work.

GRAPHICS 8 IQ FACTOR 2  
AUDIO 8 FUN FACTOR 8

ACE RATING 6/10

# WINTER OLYMPIAD 88

TYNESOFT are Calgary bound

**THE** 15th Winter Olympic games are the occasion for this latest Tynesoft offering. There are five events for the player to compete in and the game can be played by up to six players in alternating turns. The object is to win the gold medals for your selected country in each discipline. You have three attempts at each event except for the Bobsled, where you have only one and whoever makes the best time/wins wins the medal.

The player's perspective changes for each event - for example, the Downhill section shows your skier in the centre of the

screen viewed from behind, while the Bobsled shows your character side-on. The skills the player requires to win each event vary according to the event and it's quite possible to be an expert at one event and novice at another.

If you've ever played Winter Games you could well find that Winter Olympiad has too many similarities to be a necessary purchase. But if you don't own a copy of Winter Games and you're interested in the Winter Olympics, there's then you may find the game absorbing for a short while at least.

• Andy Smith



Only 17 tracks of the top of the ski jump. All for the bobsled when you're in the lead and you're pushed to a good race.



## RELEASE BOX

STARBIT	15.95k	OUT NOW
AMIGA	15.95k, 14.95k	OUT NOW
AMSTRAD	17.95k, 14.95k	IMPENT
SPEC	17.95k	IMPENT
IBM	15.95k	IMPENT

## Atari ST Version

The graphics for Winter Olympiad are superb, but sound seems a little to be desired. Each stage starts well and requires a substantial amount of practice to progress with anything like a second-leading team. Dedicated sports simulation fans could find the best of both things.

GRAPHICS 8 IQ FACTOR 2  
AUDIO 7 FUN FACTOR 2

ACE RATING 8/10

## CD Version

Great graphics and sound and a tough game to enter as well. The CD version plays in the better way as the CD version has the multi-task on the console version could use your internal memory early.

GRAPHICS 8 IQ FACTOR 3  
AUDIO 8 FUN FACTOR 8

ACE RATING 5/5

# OCTAPOLIS

Play the baddie with ENGLISH SOFTWARE

**SAVING** worlds and rescuing damsels in distress are standard-issue scenarios, so it makes a change to play the badkidd and set out to conquer planets that have so far managed to thwart the invasion attempts of the universe's most powerful empire.

Octapolis is the name of an important little planet whose secret weapon is the ability

RELEASE BOX		
DATE	Price	OS/10bit
	£19.95	£19.95
No other versions planned		

to evaluate the merits of space warriors and attack ships. The Galactic Imperium is the name of the evil organization determined to conquer the planet and you use a special plot for the Imperium. So how come you get to play the wicked under? Well, it would appear that Octapolis is not able to contain your mind and render you a pliant robot, so the Imperians are relying on you to do their dirty work.

The game contains shoot-em-ups with

## C64 Version

The graphics, sound and animation are superb on the shoot-em-up section for the graphics are a little less on the platform stage. Sound is very good and atmospheric. A good combination of the two game styles.

GRAPHICS	8	IQ FACTOR	3
SOUND	7	FUN FACTOR	8
ACE RATING 739			

platforms, with the shoot-em-up stage coming last. The screen is split into two with a side view occupying the top half of the screen and an overhead view taking up the bottom half. Your space ship scrolls left to right and back again over on Octapolis city and is attacked by various waves of alien craft. The player can decide the speed of the scroll and in which direction to fly. After a while you stop state to think, and then it's time to land your craft on the narrowway (which is conveniently located in the centre of the city). There comes the platform stage - you control a small on-screen character who has to cross five screens completely with bombs that remove one of your lives on contact.



A shoot-em-up section with a variety of enemies.

Octapolis manages to combine the two distinct game styles very successfully. The shoot-em-up section is particularly well done with the few waves adding variety. The platform sections are a little less but still fun.

Andy Gault

## PREDICTED INTEREST CURVE



Plotting out a scenario for a while - and you can't get to the end.

# TRAUMA

ERE INFORMATIQUE get unoriginal

**FRENCH** programmers may know a thing or two about graphics, but they do tend to produce unexcitingly gaudy-style text-based games - no matter if you feel tempted to gaze about weird, intelligently unusual. Gaudy game play, here in mind the alternative - or, at least, the software stock in the same hat as the foreign-made article.

Take the lower offering from the line: Informatique for example. It's a vertically scrolling 2D shoot-em-up at which you score death blows to a world of barbarians, and then - with friends like that, who needs enemies? - by blasting

a path through four levels of their defenses. You can pick up extra weapons on the way to help you take more upon waves of alien quags. Fight your way through for enough and you'll come up against large enemy ships which can only be destroyed by repeated blasting (sound fornicus, treat us, ps?)

Admittedly there are quite a few unoriginal features to the game - weapons that

RELEASE BOX		
DATE	Price	OS/10bit
1988	£19.95	£19.95
No other versions planned		

wrap you further up the game map (for example, and really blue areas of background which drain your energy if you fly over - but the basic game idea is nothing you haven't seen a hundred times better. The ground installations shoot the usual alien, shoot the big alien and so it goes.

It's quite playable stuff for all that, and good-looking too. The problem is just that, with so many similar games on the market

either of the same price - it's cheap, it's very hard to find reasons to recommend this game. Its long sections might seem like a plus point, but it spoils the gameplay by underestimating enough that you can plough on through them without too much difficulty. The result is that, as with so many other games in the genre, you can see well you want to quit early.

Andy Gault

## Atari ST Version

The backgrounds and sprites are fairly detailed (short of the point of being busy, but the style is quite unimpressive. It's a top-notch game with stuff for the...

GRAPHICS	8	IQ FACTOR	1
SOUND	5	FUN FACTOR	5
ACE RATING 410			

## PREDICTED INTEREST CURVE



Plotting out a scenario for a while - and you can't get to the end.



Being a collector from the way through.



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# HUNTER'S MOON

THALAMUS attack the workers

**COMPARISONS** aren't always helpful, but the Genesis side Muskrat with the Thalamus Web from the TV series of Star Trek and perhaps you'll make some of the tactics of the new 8-way smiler. Programmer Martin Walker has you fast, light-years from home, with vast numbers of strange alien invasions between you and your loved one.

To get back home you need to fight your way through 18 star-systems, each one divided into several separate levels. It's not a straightforward shoot-em-up by any means (though blasting certainly plays an important part) partly because your main aim is to collect coins, earn vital credits, and partly because your real opponents - alien workers - are unkillable. The workers do little while those which enter the starship, leading colonies of protective cells around them.

At last, the colonies empty out as physis are born - fly into them and your ship explodes, costing you a life - but as you get less than them, it actually try and limit your way in, you'll find they run, decidedly needs. These colony cells nearest you ship turn into massive obstacles, being locally glowing spots of you, that is best enough while you're outside and can manoeuvre freely, but as you blast through the colony wall to grab those stars, the all-round fire can get very hotly indeed.

Later systems have guided spaces and other tactics to fire at you, but you'll have a much larger problem right from the word go though you can follow through individual colony cells, that won't stop the workers doing their job. The job of course is to copy or steal the colony, repairing damaged cells along the way. Unlike with a worker, or sneak into repaired cells, where you expected a previously loaded hole to be waiting, and you'll have to start the level again.

Firing, then, is of the essence, and so a secondary collecting a starship gives you a temporary shield against those nasty spaces, so pressing on with the best attack run can be a lot better than getting your teeth sunk. The tactics you employ here are all about stacking attacks together, or clearing out multi-layered colonies in one movement. Of course you've still got to get into the best

entry of each level sometimes, though even here you'll get some credits, sometimes get you off the flying start.

If the tactics of Hunter's Moon are interesting stuff, there's a strategic side to change too. On completion of each system, you'll get the choice to win a bonus life by defeating eight attacking workers in a little sub-game. There are eight different sub-games and the one you play each time is selected at random, but they all run on the same lines: first the workers get built before they turn or open up.

Yes, it isn't the sub-game, you still get an extra percentage at the end of each system - and this can be a good deal more useful than it looks like. There's also the extra space preference you get when you collect a credit, but not for the duration of a

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CD-ROM 25 Dec. 1994 MSN CUP 50%

No other version planned

level. They don't become active the moment they're collected it's up to you to choose which levels to use them on. Life time bonuses is awarded, percentages add depth to the gameplay by facing you with long-term decisions early on. Add the instant reward of the unusual action plus a little - life level - game task and you've got something of a winner.

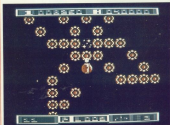
★ Andy Wiles



Life - Game playing you come your way into a colony to fight the starship.



Illustration by the program itself is a star through.



Life - Shooting your way into a colony, you're about to crash. But with skills at hand it's your ship to watch!

## C64 Version

Music and sound effects are high grade stuff, and there are also colours are probably very strong on. Professional and well worth a look.

GRAPHICS 5 50 FACTOR 4  
AUDIO 5 50 FACTOR 4

ACE RATING 8.5

# ACE

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# TANGLEWOOD

MICRODEAL'S text-less adventure

**DODOS** seem to be something your uncle has a lot of interest in. His latest venture had him buying the mining rights to a distant planet which everyone thought was barren. Only when the planet started to reveal its true worth did a rival mining company invade it—and steal the documents that proved you uncle owned the site rights.

It's up to you, then, to recover the docu-



Mobile control fits—this is the only one with the ability to track scores when they happen online.

ments with the aid of five mobile robots that you control individually. These robots are controlled using the mouse, and the idea is to guide them across the planet along little pathways. Occasionally, the robots will have to make an underground trip through one of the several mines on their quest, or wander through some storage tunnel or vault.

Various objects are to be found around the planet, and it's up to the player to discov-

## Atari ST Version

The graphics are superb. The animation is smooth, and control has been well-used. Control is extremely difficult though, and not something you can perfect to any great extent—when it's a shame. Sound effects are sparse but good, and if you enjoy a challenging mobile adventure, then Tanglewood will provide you with one.

GRAPHICS: 5 HD FACTOR: 7  
 AUDIO: 5 FUN FACTOR: 7

ACE RATING 752

## RELEASE BOX

ATARI ST	11/1988	OCT/89
AMIGA	11/1988	MARCH

No other versions planned

er their own. This mobile adventure will not appeal to everyone's taste, but if you've been fed up of adventure games that require text input, then Tanglewood could well be worth a look. The game is complex enough to keep even the most experienced mobile adventurer guessing for quite some time.

Andy Smith

## PREDICTED INTEREST CURVE



This game could keep even the most experienced mobile adventurer busy for a long time.

# METROPOLIS

City adventures from MASTERTRONIC

**SORDID** things go on in cities, and the sordidness of Metropolis as city called City's is no exception. In this case, someone's stolen a leader tape and it's up to you to get it back.

Metropolis is no ordinary city; its citizens are all of the robotic race. They're courteous and helpful, but they do tend to be a little on the digital side. You've got to do your best with them, though, since the only way to get the information you need is to

ask it normal for business is to steal!

Metropolis the city has 10 physical levels, while Metropolis the game has 18 levels of difficulty. You move around the place by means of walkways and lifts, in a manner not unreminiscent of Gargoyles games. On the last level you are told by boss and shown the signs in what looks you to release you get your feet into and essential MUM Code-both which you can buy Plasma Bug on-site. From then you just follow one level



Tricky road for the city, involving not only not losing it but also not losing it.

offer another.

There are several problems with the game. Even though you're visually told what to do, it can be tricky actually getting through to level 3. Its graphics are flimsy looking, and the tedious-ness of Metropolis's sordid city, but you ultimately find your investigations getting a bit tedious.

Peter Carter

## RELEASE BOX

IBM PC	11/1988	OCT/89
AMIGA	11/1988	MARCH
ATARI ST	11/1988	MARCH

ask them to it.

Metropolis is an arcade adventure. You can experiment rolling around the city, and can question robots by typing text into a speech bubble. Ask the right robot the right questions and you might get a meaningful answer; ask the wrong questions and Police Dept 3 (or perhaps talking Dept 3) could well reply with a conversation stopper such

## IBM PC Version

There's one huge drawback to Metropolis on the PC, unless the forthcoming ST and Amiga versions, there is—inevitably—no Save Game option. This means that each time you play the game you have to start right from the very beginning and follow each step in exactly the right order. Even knowing it backwards, it's going to take you a good 10–15 minutes to complete. This could easily have been overcome by the simple expedient of giving the player, on completing the level's code, a code to access the next level. Granted, the game looks pretty good, with some use of colour and some music.

GRAPHICS: 5 HD FACTOR: 7  
 AUDIO: 5 FUN FACTOR: 5

ACE RATING 622

## PREDICTED INTEREST CURVE



Metropolis, but even really works in the game in addition.

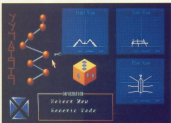
**BIRDS** do it, bees do it and now it seems even Denton Designs are doing it. Were talking about evolution here, where life-forms, and the quest for a body that can survive and reproduce in its environment, but don't imagine the program is heavy-weight Darwin simulation with a ton-thick manual; it has relatively game of week (it'd be hard to imagine).

For most of the game's playing time you use crystal or mouse to control a laboratory attempt to feed, mate, and breed getting ones. Starting as a small, six-legged animal (winged or otherwise), you'll test of all how to find food, and quickly. You can trade down a suitable meal - a tree shoot perhaps, or a nice-tasty slug - either manually, or by using your creature's learning instincts. The later ones work at close range, so you'll have to get in the "hedgehog" (or "weasel") - even so, they tend to make things a bit too easy if you fail to work fast in game over time and then, but if you make it you'll naturally reach adulthood.

Reaching successfully come of age, your next task is to reproduce. For this you'll need to find a mate, but in this rather over-simpli-

# ECO

OCEAN put their genes on



ECO(1) How the genes determine behavior, with your mouse (right) controlling the way you want it.

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fed scheme of things any other creature of your species will do. The mating game is pretty simple in the feeding game, consisting of a round search (looking up by learning instincts of close range). Your creature is a suitable instrument (presumably corresponding to a series of small - scores in fairly time for spotting potential partners at a distance, but for the most part you can feel a mate quite successfully by sight alone.

Once you've done up to your intended, for nearly someone the act of mating by switching to an icon-driven genetic engineering screen, here you can juggle your creature's eight genes to produce an attempt with different characteristics. At first you can only alter one at the right, but with each successive generation another gene is unlocked (and also eight generations you've got total control over the shape of your descendants).

By altering the writings of the genes -



ECO(2) There's lots to see and control (without us) as you perform a feeding game.

each can have any one of eight values - you can give both to back, duplicate characteristics, change, increase, limit, or either desirable spends. As you make adjustments, you can see the effects they'll have on the 16 shared organisms (there can be complex, as the genes interact continuously - if you can't decide quite what set of creature you want, click on the dice icon and you'll randomly alter all unlocked genes, giving you a post-lock cloning).

Once you've got the hang of this, and survived long enough to unlock all eight genes - not terribly difficult, to be honest - you've seen (at least) all the game has to offer. Survival is fairly tedious once you can create any organisms you want, and there doesn't seem to be any other object to the game. There you can alter your generation,

all closed up and nowhere to go; you can be anything you want, but what's the point?

To put it simply, this is a disappointment. While lesson-oriented, slick presentation and really suitable icons make a great first impression, but the soon wears off as the total lack of lasting genetics becomes apparent. Early versions of the game promised so much, but the finished version really wouldn't hold anyone's attention long enough to offer value for money.

• Andy Wilson

**Atari ST Version**

The more there have more well and the more are generally colorful, but no amount of graphs for the Atari ST version of genetically resources.

GRAPHICS	9	10	10	10	10	10
WORLD	9	10	10	10	10	10

**ACE RATING 5/11**

**PREDICTED INTEREST CURVE**

It's not really, but after its testing and looking for potential responses.

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RAINBIRD

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Masters of the Universe takes place on a remote city map, across which your small HE-MAN figure makes his way, battling SKELETON's henchmen, who reside on each screen and pepper him with bullets. Your strength drops each time the bullets score a hit and can only be replenished by picking up the occasional sword found in the street. Your objective is to achieve 100,000

before confronting SKELETON.

The action is based on uninteresting as it could possibly be, but it saves the game from tiring monotony to the rubbish by these are other scenarios. For example, every so often a small posse tumbles into the scene, starting one of your two companions TELA and OWLDOE. They will give you a hint, sending messages telling you where they are and inviting you to join them. Get there in time and you'll be propelled into a game-within-a-game to alleviate the monotony.

Unfortunately, these mini-games are poorly executed as well. One of them features a punch-and-lock combat sequence. It's

#### RELEASE BOX

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DATA - Masterly play taking in becoming a paragon of the city with some of the best.



AMSTRAD - How precise the location of items but not in size. There's also an auto-protect in the screen as they would be in regular play.



ATARI - Good, but not too long to be able to protect - but too long to be able to enjoy the city.

#### Spectrum Version

Most of the bit, some of the screen as it would have been done in 1984. It's not as simple as that.

GRAPHICS 2 HD FACTOR 2  
AUDIO 1 FUN FACTOR 1

ACE RATING 369

#### C64 Version

The best of the bit, with faster action, decent into this, and better graphics. It's not just an improvement by changing the game. It's not just an improvement, however, it's still not worth getting.

GRAPHICS 4 HD FACTOR 3  
AUDIO 3 FUN FACTOR 2

ACE RATING 439

#### Amstrad Version

The generally reasonable, although not worth getting. It's a comparison to the best design of the game and the best of available quality.

GRAPHICS 3 HD FACTOR 3  
AUDIO 2 FUN FACTOR 2

ACE RATING 394

#### PREDICTED INTEREST CURVE



Over playing and how many are playing. The game is not too bad.

# MASTERS OF THE UNIVERSE

GREMLIN present He-Man

#### Why oh Why??

Gremlin are obviously unhappy about getting a comment on a game that, reading between the lines, they are unhappy with. Robert Barby, speaking for the company, said "We could have put more money into the project, but then we couldn't have recouped our costs. If you spent ten times as much money on a game, you don't get ten times as many."

It was in the case, when Gremlin's own funds need to come down. Perhaps the main issue is that the market just isn't big enough to support the degree of hype, overhead, license fee and programming costs that the larger companies are committed to. "Time for a major part of the Jet Man style of video game programmer, perhaps?" Certainly it's a possibility as far as the shrinking 8-bit market is concerned.

Speaking for the programmer, Greg Holmes of Gremlin was refreshingly honest about the game. "We don't necessarily want to do the product," he said, "we were told to aim for the younger market... And after all, there isn't really any in the first place, is there? We're not 100% happy with it, but for the sake we think it's good."

Why? What else?

slow, unconvincing, and unexciting. There's also a "shoot-out" which puts a mouse on the screen that you move over the head of a building, shooting figures that pop up in the windows before they shoot you. Hardly original.

Other scenarios include a "die bottle" which has you firing around the streets, shooting on-screen obstacles, and the final confrontation with SKELETON where you have to shove him into the "dying" machine (if there is likely to have you on the edge of your seat with excitement).

What you're left with then is a lot of robot-like shooting in eight directions only, against uninteresting opponents, and spent up with the occasional strange-looking scenario. Gameplay is appalling, with the direction of He-Man changing each time you fire a bullet, forcing you to reorient yourself constantly the action on the Spectrum and Amstrad versions is desperately slow. Furthermore, the graphics on all versions are unimpressive and repetitive.

It's debatable whether the product should ever have been on sale in the first place, but the best thing to be done to do now would be to buy the video disk and start work on something better.

Steve Cook

# BEDLAM

GO! Create some havoc

**PINBALL** games are not the sort of thing you expect to find in the realm of endlessly scrolling shoot-em-ups. But here, however, is one such variant called, and the four pinball games incorporated are designed to increase the player's score during the main game. This consists of killing things at a spotlights (viewed from above) and attempting to complete the 20 levels of the game - which is, apparently, really a lightbulb simulation cooked up by the head of the Berlin Superior Photo Academy, when you can't stand. The various levels involve attack from both ground-based installations and waves of airborne aliens, and combat with any of these results in the player losing

one of his total five lives.

Extra life power is available to the player who manages to pick up any of the five-point symbols that appear on the ground at set places throughout the game. The judgements here seem very accurate, and included an option that allows the player to take up the game again from the point he switched last time. That said, *Bedlam* adds nothing new to the shoot-em-up theme. You'd have to be very determined to fight your way through to the end - and it doesn't take long once you've heard the name locations.

Andy Smith



**SPECTOR** - This is in the better option category. How do you go to the entrance to the box of the actual titles.

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AMSTRAD	£3.99	£14.99	CLT NOR
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## PREDICTED INTEREST CURVE



Meaning follows while in the Spectrum format as in the Amstrad box with Spectrum for the first time through.

## Amstrad Version

*Germany* is a bit tougher, as you can't roam around a lot more easily. It's how (should) that the Spectrum version, but that's only to be expected. No pinball titles available on the Amstrad version, making it a very average - and realistic - shoot-em-up.

GRAPHICS	4	IQ FACTOR	3
AUDIO	4	FUN FACTOR	7

ACE RATING 678

## Spectrum Version

Great use of colour makes this a very good-looking game. The writing is adequate and the animation is fine. *Germany* is good if you're playing solo, but it tends to be a little tricky to decipher what it you're a set lot of the sort of game that makes it out. Though even shooting-up details could find the interest waning early.

GRAPHICS	4	IQ FACTOR	3
AUDIO	5	FUN FACTOR	7

ACE RATING 739

**GELDRÄS** the main villain in the conversion of the Mexico shoot-em-up. It's up to agent Alcatraz to penetrate the ten levels of Geldrä's secret base and destroy him. *Rolling Thunder* is a platform shoot-em-up mixed action, with enemies or German guards attracted to patches, shoot or blow you up on sight. Theoretically you're armed with a pistol and a machine-gun, and you can collect ammunition for both through marked doors - then

# ROLLING THUNDER

Shoot some hoods with US GOLD

which the guards also appear - stuck at ground level and on balconies. Jumping up and down is pretty simple though. The main reason guards had coloured heads is to indicate the number of shots required to kill them, but there's no such indication on the home video version - you have to guess which guard will need the maximum.

The cover-up has been tamely commented and the programming team have done a reasonable job considering it's for amateurs. It's fun to play and quite addictive in the short term, but as with most coin-op conversions, the challenge will fade quickly.

Andy Smith



**SPECTOR** - The sort of version. There's some extra behind the box or the video.

## RELEASE BOX

SPEC	£3.99	CLT NOR	
CGA 128	£3.99	£11.99	BRANDY
AMSTRAD	£3.99	£14.99	CLT NOR
ATARI ST	£7.99		BRANDY
AMEGA	£3.99		BRANDY

## Spectrum Version

The screen's well coloured and the absence of colour on the characters makes them a little less clear. Sound unfortunately is a different Germany is slight to slow and a little noisy in places.

GRAPHICS	7	IQ FACTOR	3
AUDIO	7	FUN FACTOR	5

ACE RATING 715

## Amstrad Version

The graphics are colour but there's a chunky feel about them. *Germany* is slower than on the Spectrum, making the game slightly less enjoyable to the frequent crash problems. *Germany* very much in the Spectrum version but not quite as popular.

GRAPHICS	6	IQ FACTOR	3
AUDIO	7	FUN FACTOR	7

ACE RATING 690

## PREDICTED INTEREST CURVE



Meaning follows while in the Spectrum format as in the Amstrad box with Spectrum for the first time through.



**KONGS** and pungs are the order of the day here - and if they sound like old-school games to you, prepare to be enlightened along with draws and pats. Here's the best why you can find in the video-like oriented game of strategy and chance. For sets of cards - as you might assume from the comparison, but sets of tiles - small slabs of ivory or plastic with symbols on them, the distinction being a bit oddball in its case since they're confined to just computer screens.

The tiles fall into five groups: suit tiles, wilds, dragons, flowers and seasons. The last four groups are far and away the most important of these, lower and lower the last being flowers and not essential to the gameplay.

The game has three suits - bamboo, dragon and circle - the tiles within them being numbered from one to nine. There are four different kinds of wild tile - Mats, Souts, Sout and fiesd - while dragons come in red, white and green varieties. If you're a whiz at mental arithmetic you'll probably note that 24 tiles defines the three groups, but the actual total is four times that number.

Quite simply, the three main groups have four of everything, four red dragons, ten for white, four green, and so on. The last of many-pung gameplay is all about selecting sets of three duplicates - either four identical tiles in pungs or at the 14 kongs. Though you're used to both the anti-sequentiary pungs, its pungs and kongs that get you the big points, while about - sets of three consecutive tiles, but the same suit - score you nothing whatever.

#### RELEASE BOX

MS-DOS \$19.95, £14.95 C/D NOW

Ami/64 \$19.95, £14.95 C/D NOW

PC If you can't access late the page

I'm talking all about pungs (and I certainly do) you might wonder why anyone would want to learn draws or all. The answer lies in the structure of the game. At the start of a hand, each of the four players is dealt fifteen tiles, and must then try and get as many below the other three by forming sets. If there are kongs or pungs then so much the better, but there can be pairs, overpairs if you go really-pung - get all of all your tiles, that is - as it can be worth

#### Ami/64 & C64 Versions

The versions are identical in their mechanics - the original program was written in the high-level language Pascal and ported to each machine. There's nothing to see there apart from the graphics of sound fonts, better C64 palette and better draw.

MS-DOS \$19.95 \$5 FACTOR B  
Ami/64 \$19.95 \$5 FACTOR B

ACE RATING 937

# COLOSSUS MAH-JONG

Will CDS make the chow?

ACE  
937  
RATED



Ami/64 - Quite fittingly, sometimes it takes quite a long time to set up the first pung

making draws rather than keeping an eye being hidden to a 'Concentration' like three notes decisions in mah-jong - notably over which tile to discard - quite complex things. The strategies involved seem odd at first, but they can be picked up very quickly and make for intriguing if not really mind-bending gameplay.

Those studying the game, which the computer version get extra? Well, there are three useful opponents for starters, adjustable in strength between complete push-overs and real tough cookies. The package also includes a tutor program which, along with the built-in manual and a little bit of concentration, provides a great introduction to the game.

Consistently polished and generally easy to use with some cleverly timed opposition, the scales is really addition to the Colossus range and a great piece of entertainment software in its own right.

Andy Wilson



Oh - that's right the game - concentrated six sides - and the path of seven - makes you the making of another? That's about though for the system - makes the first page to go right - makes you think it's a real thing.

#### PREDICTED INTEREST CURVE



# SORCERER LORD

PSSst - wanna play a wargame?



**SORCERER** - Will all the pain and death of your foes be converted to strength?

**TOUGH** Wars can often be the most painful kinds of Galator. That did inspire the Shadowlord's, even as you need the, marching forth from his camp with a token army that's led by an old captain, the attack of Sorcerer, and thereby ruling the land.

Waves of course you can stop him, this into limiting wargame puts the player in charge of the three remaining core types that inhabit the lands of Galator. At the start of the game only a small number of characters know of the Shadowlord's invasion, and the player controls these few characters and attempts to rescue the rest of the forces within the land.

Rescuing armies is your noble and worthy cause is not difficult - it will usually have to be on the border or attack where an army is located, and the army is called to your cause.

No limiting wargame would be complete without the addition of a little magic to spice it up, and Sorcerer Lord has its fair share, which can save the player's army in a sticky battle. The strength of magic



**SORCERER** - Strategic tactics appear. You've got the best in strategy in the land of the game.

that the player is able to summon through when it's used is decided by the computer; it's determined by the number of blue flags placed on terrain features like Sorcerer, but the player controls. At the start of the game the player has control of all eight blue flags, but as the play progresses, the Shadowlord's will in turn possession of them.

Apart from the tactical map, which can be scrolled in any direction, a strategic map can be called up at the touch of a button. This map shows the whole of the lands of Galator, together with terrain features and the approximate positions of the units. Terrain plays an important part in the game, as each unit has a set number of movement points at the start of each turn, and the various types of terrain affect the various units in different degrees.

Sorcerer Lord is certainly no cakewalk. A player will lose either if the Shadowlord's forces are captured, or if the Shadowlord captures any towns and holds it for twelve consecutive turns. An absorbing and atmospheric game that will keep you playing for a long time to come.

• Any Link



## Amstrad Version

The most striking thing about the Amstrad version is the hexagonal shape of the playing area. The colors, though, are garish and dull, and the unit symbols are not as detailed as with the Spectrum version. Just as difficult and just as absorbing as the Amstrad is the Spectrum.

GRAPHICS 7 IQ FACTOR 8  
AUDIO 3 FUN FACTOR 8  
**ACE RATING 838**

## Spectrum Version

The screen display is colorful and well designed, though the information screen does not remain on the screen long enough to check the statistics it offers. The screen is cluttered into squares, not hexagons, but this doesn't affect the overall playability of the game. For those that enjoy PDS's audio sequences, well, it's about you don't get into the line.

GRAPHICS 8 IQ FACTOR 8  
AUDIO 8 FUN FACTOR 8  
**ACE RATING 844**

## PREDICTED INTEREST CURVE



The Spectrum version has more color than any other game. It's a good game to get into the game, but for those who are looking for a long time.

## RELEASE BOX

SPEC	£11.99	£17.99
AMSTRAD	£11.99	£17.99
CD-ROM	£11.99	£17.99

# GUADALCANAL

ACTIVISION head back in time

**KAMIKAZE** plots may have played their part during the Japanese and American struggle to control the Pacific during World War II, but you won't find any of them in Activision's latest engaging war effort around the island of Guadalcanal - regarded by many as the key to American and Pacific offensives. If the Americans couldn't take and keep Guadalcanal, then their plans for total supremacy in the Pacific were all washed up.

## RELEASE BOX

OS/2	3 disks (14.99)	OUT NOW
AMSTRAD	3 disks	ARRIVAL
SPC	3 disks	ARRIVAL

The war wargame gives the player the choice to recreate the battle, with the player deciding to play either the Japanese or American forces. If you're at all familiar with the original campaign then you'll realise that Activision played a major part. It's only thing then that a major portion of the



The strategy you can't see in the top portion of the screen, with you can see the more detailed actual map in the center for all those important features.

game is given over to getting supplies to whatever army you happen to be controlling. Troops can't march on empty stomachs and they can't attack the enemy without ammunition.

The three scenarios in the game include a short three-day battle which is designed to introduce the player to the game. The other two scenarios are the full campaign, with the player controlling either the Americans or Japanese forces.

In this to play card would serve as a great introduction to the genre for budding wargamers, though the excellent strategy could test the gamers' intellects a little more.

• Andy Gibb

## C64 Version

The screen is well-developed and colorful and sound is well-used. The supply side of things has been well implemented, making this an enjoyable game to play while still providing enough of a challenge to keep the player busy for quite some time.

GRAPHICS 7 10 FACTOR 8  
AUDIO 6 FUN FACTOR 8  
**ACE RATING 7.64**

## PREDICTED INTEREST CURVE



Analyzing game titles for several months to find if we can give consumers the best recommendations possible.

# APOLLO 18

Space out with ELECTRONIC ARTS

**OVER** the moon is where you could find yourself in this curious not-quite-right sci-fi based on the American space program. It takes you through seven distinct stages of a lunar mission, ending - if you're successful - with your triumphant splash-down in the Pacific.

## RELEASE BOX

OS/2	10 disks (14.99)	OUT NOW
for other versions planned		

It's a strange game, because although it takes us through it should be some kind of simulation, it plays more like an old-fashioned action game. The objective is that after a couple-of hours you'll have successfully completed all the various tasks, leaving you simply with the aim of getting further up the high score table.

If the last goal is total off - the only skill needed is to hit your fire button as soon as you can (possibly as a matter some very much) to hit 999 to 999. You have to do this several times before making it into orbit, and you are very allowed a tolerance of 145. The

last few goals it seems frustratingly difficult, but after a few minutes it becomes not just easy but boring.

Successful entry into orbit gives you the



Going for orbit into space with you're get to look in the sky the only the star that is completely perfect.

offer to perform other tasks, docking and undocking the Command Module with the Lunar Module, controlling course, landing and then walking on the moon, space walk, splash-down. All of these are controlled in a pretty simple way and are done in a demanding to accomplish.

Overall, the Apollo 18 mission must be considered a disappointing failure. It fails to challenge, fails to simulate anything worthwhile and, worst of all, fails to entertain.

• Pete Corio

## C64 Version

Graphics are pretty enough and the sound is adequate, but the gameplay seems so awful to be almost a bit of a dump rather than a missing action.

GRAPHICS 8 10 FACTOR 8  
AUDIO 6 FUN FACTOR 8  
**ACE RATING 8.49**

## PREDICTED INTEREST CURVE



Pete is one of our software game reviewers.

**HEROES** come in all shapes and sizes and just to prove it, hot from *The Daily Mirror* where he stars in his own comic strip, comes Andy Capp. Like the latest, most-controversial skinner south of the border, and the transition from print to pixels hasn't changed him one bit.

Andy's debut on the screen has him in an arcade adventure named *alcohol*, where he attempts to recover his stolen tin. You're only got a week to guide Andy around on his seven-screen adventure, before this game's top it back if neither's. So time is of the essence, and with very limited funds it's not going to be easy - especially since you still owe money to the real man, and he won't be put off for much longer.

Andy's limited funds at the start of the game simply aren't enough to keep his rumormongering topped up for the week, and should he dry out - well, it's game over. The game's full of puzzles like trying to find out how to buy money in stock exchange deals, and how to get rid of the real man into town

#### Amstrad Version

Almost identical to the Spectrum version, *Gameplay* and objectives are the same. Sound is the same as for the Spectrum version, but the effects are of a slightly higher quality.

GRAPHICS 5 IQ FACTOR 4  
AUDIO 5 TEN FACTOR 7

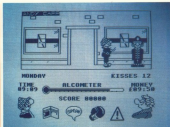
ACE RATING 641

#### RELEASE BOX

SPEC	19.95	OUT NOW
DATA18	19.95	IMMINENT
AMSTRAD	19.95	OUT NOW
ATARI ST	19.95	IMMINENT
AMIGA	19.95	IMMINENT



0017108 - And here is Andy Capp's week just by real man and get the tin back please!



0017109 - It's to make the film-makers looking stupid, or here perhaps for a film.

your entrance to the pub.

The gameplay is tough to begin with because it's hard to find your way around. New touches added to the game, like the changing background colour to signify the time of day through a twenty-four hour digital clock is always convenient and distinctive, making the game fun to play, at least until the novelty wears off.

The advertising side of things is somewhat limited and the *Alc* springs immediately to mind as a comparison. And followers of the comic strip will easily identify all of Andy's traits, but dedicated arcade adventures may find the game too simplistic and too easy to complete to keep them interested for any length of time.

Andy Bell

# ANDY CAPP

Newspaper capers from MIRRORSOFT

#### Spectrum Version

Though its ready-made theme it's very attractive. Sound is limited to a life tone and Andy's foot steps which tend to intrude after a while, but the sound effect from the gameplay, which is easy to pick up. A fun game to play that unfortunately doesn't have software in it to hold your interest for any great length of time.

GRAPHICS 7 IQ FACTOR 4  
AUDIO 5 TEN FACTOR 7

ACE RATING 636

#### PREDICTED INTEREST CURVE



Despite its strengths, and it's not that far off anything like change of a challenge, it's not keeping playing very long.

# GARFIELD

Cartoon cat capers from THE EDGE

**GIRLFRIENDS** come and gamers go, but before we get Garfield start going to lose his weight a struggle. The lovely Arlene has been spoiled at to the food pound and poor Garfield has to get her back.

## C64 Version

Stylish and unusual graphics give the game the right feel of cartoon atmosphere, and there's a funny soundtrack to accompany the action. Whether you feel the author's tongue or not is another matter.

GRAPHICS 7 IQ FACTOR 4  
AUDIO 7 FUN FACTOR 8

ACE RATING 586

## PREDICTED INTEREST CURVE



Garfield is great and could be even stronger if he played a 64-bit game.

As the inauspicious title of the cartoon strip will know, Garfield has two main problems in his life: he can't get enough sleep or enough food. His ideal life would be one long kip, punctuated by very large meals. So in this arcade adventure your job is not only to feed Arlene (but to keep up both food and sleep levels).

The game starts out in the house of Garfield's owner, Jon. Unfortunately for you, Jon has locked the fridge, so food is the last priority. The best you're likely to doot early in the game is the stacked balls belonging to Odie (the world's most stupid dog).

Throughout the game you can pick up and use various objects - lemons, leeches, and the like. Should you be unable to find any food or oil, Garfield will suffer a stroke attack and gobble what-ever object he is carrying. It isn't carrying anything at all, in the big sleep-of his.

Both food and sleep meters run down pretty quickly, so you've got to get out and explore as soon as possible. There's a park, underground cave,

and shops. Carefully, the owners of the hardware store, butcher's and health food store seem to be identical types.

While Garfield graphics are silly and cartoonish, the games provide adventure and cast a very slight - wander around, pick up objects, try to use them intelligently, and don't let your food and sleep meters run down. While lots of the cartoon may go for the rule and partly representation of these items, others played by before they live.

• Pete Carter



Garfield in the hardware shop. The mouse/leecher seems to sleep in the kitchen's, and the health meter.

# MINI PUTT

Crazy clubbing from ELECTRONIC ARTS

**PURILE** though you may find the idea, in practice this computerized one got actually provide a reasonable adaptation.

Instead of all that various business of selecting clubs and tipping the caddy. Mini Putt simply gives you one club - a putter, naturally - with which to finish your very intricate very cheap courses indeed.



Miniature try, in Electron. What an odd world. Let them up!

## RELEASE BOX

OS/116 On the table, On the table, On the table  
No other versions planned

Whenever you select the obstacles prove to be somewhat different to those you'd encounter of Obstacles or Royal Bunkers - the difficulty than has you trying to putt past a protruding problem, and in others, wind-mills and even jet planes interrupt your steady progress. And, of course, there are all manner of rolling rough, bridges, water hazards and walls. Control is quite simple - set one meter to straight, and then another for accuracy. What still there is - and to be honest there isn't exactly a lot required if you - comes mainly in selecting the appropriate path through those windy hazards.

There is not the most demanding sports we play ever play, it certainly provides

enough purity to make it a welcome alternative to tennis club like GolfLegend - and there's an option for up to four players to compete.

• Pete Carter

## C64 Version

If possible, get the disk version. The tape hardware can be very frustrating, leading not just to expensive recovery but even more irritating tape. Graphics are bright, it's fun to play, while the sound is really quite nice.

GRAPHICS 8 IQ FACTOR 4  
AUDIO 8 FUN FACTOR 8

ACE RATING 586

## PREDICTED INTEREST CURVE



Simply and it fun, but nothing long.

# ARKANOID

TAITO  
COIN-OP

## REVENGE OF POH



*...the name  
of the game*

Multi screen,  
realistic graphics and all the  
coin-op features.

SPECTRUM

**£7.95**

SPECTRUM

COMMODORE

**£8.95**

AMSTRAD

# SCREAMING WINGS

RED RAT crash land

## RELEASE BOX

AMSTRAD 17K64 2/84  
SPECTRUM 17K64 2/84

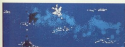
**PROFESSIONAL** is the best word that screams into your head as soon as you start to play *Screaming Wings*. The realistically-rendered shoot-em-up boasts some terrific collision detection, terrific animation and incomprehensible dipped speech. Simply fly your plane around from screen through

## PREDICTED INTEREST CURVE



several stages under constant attack from other airborne craft. The game's tough only because the collision detection is best.

Andy Smith



# BASKET MASTER

Sam-dunking IMAGINE style

## RELEASE BOX

AMSTRAD 17K64 07/84  
SPECTRUM 17K64 08/84  
AMSTRAD 17K64 08/84

**IMAGINE** on one is the name of the top of the basketball simulation. Play against either a human or the computer and choose, interesting that it is, whether you want into the local basket replay facility when you wish those game highlights to slow down. However,

surprisingly tough graphics makes this a frustrating game to master and a tedious one to play. Steady one for basketball fans.

Andy Smith

## PREDICTED INTEREST CURVE



# TOUR DE FORCE

GREMLIN get on their bikes

## RELEASE BOX

SPEC 0/84 1/84  
AMSTRAD 0/84 1/84  
SPECTRUM 0/84 1/84

**JAPAN** from the list of five legs is a bicycle obstacle race that takes the player to exotic countries. You simply have to win each race to proceed to the next, and if you don't succeed fast time, well you can't play that leg until you do.

Well it is very poor game on the Spectrum - the rendering is awful, as is the collision detection. The races are easy to win and you won't get more than a few hours play out of the game.

Andy Smith



## PREDICTED INTEREST CURVE



# KICKSTART 2

MASTERTRONIC throttle up



**WIA**, the thrills and spills of dirt bike racing? Well, not quite, but it's a playable game for a short while and the course-designer reminds you one of local expert-ness with the obstacles. The 24 preset courses will not hold long to master and the computer opponent is a pushover. A so-

phisticated game, but don't expect much in the racing arena either.

Andy Smith

## RELEASE BOX

SPEC 0/84 0/84  
AMSTRAD 0/84 0/84  
SPECTRUM 0/84 0/84

## PREDICTED INTEREST CURVE



## ATARI ST

### SUPER SPRINT

Electronic Dreams 0191968

Spectrum version reviewed Issue 2 -

ACE Rating 9/10

C64 version reviewed Issue 3 -

ACE Rating 9/11

Amstrad version reviewed Issue 4 -

ACE Rating 10/11

The transition from arcade machine to ST has been highly successful. The graphics, sound and sheer playability are superb. With up to three players and a timer, the action is hot and furious. Add in great addictiveness, and the game merits its high rating.

● ACE RATING 9/11

### ENDURO RACER

Activision 0191968



This interactive arcade game made the transition to first racers some while ago, and the ST version is now inevitable. The graphics have been improved and the result is a good, fast, addictive arcade conversion. The disco driving tones have been replaced by music, though, which may disappoint some.

● ACE RATING 8/15

## SPECTRUM

### RAMPAGE

Activision 0191968

C64 version reviewed Issue 3 -

ACE Rating 8/11

The monster smash makes it to the Spectrum, and was well worth waiting for. The main



Some very tasty updates are now available. Can ST owners afford to miss out on *Super Sprint*? Can Amstrad owners pass up *Bobsleigh*? Should Spectrum owners ignore *Rampage*?

Don't be caught out by a duff conversion though - first check the ACE updates section to see just how well the game plays on your particular micro.

view use all microchips and it can be a little difficult to tell which who at times. Still a great game to play, and Spectrum arcade conversion fans will not be disappointed.

● ACE RATING 8/10

### GRYZOR

Cosmos 0191968, 0121968

Amstrad version reviewed Issue 5 -

ACE Rating 7/11

The game's main task on the Speccy, but at least you can look at each level until you've completed it. No stacks to pick up either - just shoot the gas dispensers and you're off the rails. The Amstrad version's on you for a very convincing and sensitive 3D maze arcade effect - on the Spectrum, though, it looks like a soap bubble. Still, its an enjoyable game that should keep you going for a while.

● ACE RATING 7/10

## C64/128

### FLYING SHARK

Pelican 0191968, 0121968

Spectrum version reviewed Issue 5 -

ACE Rating 8/11

If you've played the arcade or Spectrum versions of this game, then the C64 version may disappoint the gameplay has suffered, though being speeded up drastically. The



only defects from the game, and your score will still be the same.

● ACE RATING 7/15

### TEST DRIVE

Accolade 0191968, 0121968

Amiga version reviewed Issue 5 -

ACE Rating 10/11

The gameplay is surprisingly smart to the Amiga version. Graphics are chunky but well-rendered to give a good old driving game. Still worth a rating above though.

● ACE RATING 8/15

## AMIGA

### FEUD

Blackburn 0191968

Amiga budget titles don't come much better than this. A wonderful arcade adventure in which the player takes charge of one of a pair of feuding warriors, and has to avoid feeding the ingredients for spells to cast on the other. A well worth the price.

● ACE RATING 8/10

## AMSTRAD

### BOBSLEIGH

Digital Integration 0191968, 0121968

Spectrum version reviewed Issue 4 -

ACE Rating 9/11

C64 version reviewed Issue 4 -

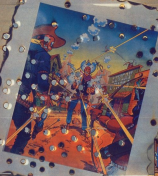
ACE Rating 10/11

Thankfully the Amstrad version followed the Spectrum version more than it did the C64. A fun, engaging playable bobsleigh simulation to keep you entertained for a long while.

● ACE RATING 9/11



ROOTIN' TOOTIN' CONSTANT LOOTIN' ALWAYS SHOOTIN' SHOWDOWN!



CAL'S SMOKE



**CAPCOM®**

A side-by-side comparison.

GBA 641128 Covers \$9.99 Box \$14.99  
Spectrum 488 Covers \$8.99  
Amstrad Covers \$9.99 Box £14.99

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# ATARI ST DEFENDER OF THE CROWN

Microsoft \$29.95/dk



Some eyes are always ready to strategize from afar.

When the Atari and the Atari ports got the Atari Defender of the Crown a lot of coverage when it hit the US market last year, and small wonder. With all those epic sequences — re-enactments by night, occupying enemy castles, riding off to the post and the like — this epic tale of Brian Hooper leading England from Norman invasions could hardly fail to turn heads.

Sadly, opportunities abound, and the game failed out to be something of a disappointment. Behind those fancy sequences the actual gameplay was pretty odd, unstrategic. Most people completed the thing with a dog, while hardened gamers conquered Merse England the first time they played.

Fortunately for all you ST owners out there, Defender of the Crown creates. Creators have really improved things during conversion. The arch still pretty much fits some — conquer territories, build an army with the revenue the brings in and then march on the Norman strongholds of the South. However, extra options and limits

## Atari ST Version

Graphics create a wonderful medieval-themed atmosphere, with maps and maps screens being particularly impressive.

GRAPHICS 4 HD FACTOR 4  
AUDIO 3 FEM FACTOR 3

ACE RATING 828

tools new to the ST version turn the strategy of this not-quite-a-ricky logistical exercise. A clever gambit system gives you some interesting decisions on marching, while a delightful espionage option gives you a peek at your opponent's forces and financial well-being (or a lie). Get ready, stand and you

can visit Sherwood Forest to seek assistance from Robin Hood — but hell, only help you save time, so do with your other resources you'd have to use the Sherwood option judi-



Nothing's so scary as your fighting Sherwood to Robin's return to a visit at his office.

ciously.

Add to these strategic problems the technical interest of individual battles, and things really hot up. When the Atari version offered a simple choice between attack, strong attack and retreat, the ST game is quite a bit more complex. What's left is some options open to you — you can charge with your knights or bombard with your catapults, perhaps the enemy or just stand and fight him — you've got a lot removed to think about.

The upside side of things has been nice



Fighting on a defense that is expensive, but the information on maps is the difference.

by fished out too, with outgunning and out-foxing both posing some tough timing and coordination problems. A successful real-time game you strategy or land while good map technique is vital, so the increased difficulty here makes a big difference. The march on, you should position the post, pretty interesting, but in the tough game Defender of the Crown has become on the ST it can be a lifesaver as a last-ditch way of getting level.

Other nice touches help things along, but with good strategic gameplay revealed to the starting presentation, if the original the version could hardly fail to impress and entertain anyway.

Andy Miller



Only siege to Nottingham built, though the well and castle all profits perform in detail.

# ATARI ST & AMIGA POWERPLAY

Arceus \$19.95/26

Arceus' Greece was a troubled spot if place it would seem. Winning gets tied to power, the three crosses of solars and innocents struggling to answer really difficult questions like "Whom the tallest cathedral in Britain?" or

and your move is to take your opponent to your intended goal. You can't change the pace substantially, but you can go going into him, then the farthest.

As soon as combat is joined, the scene



ARCEUS - Can't you please sign up for an online - get it wrong and it's not there!

"Which side did Larry Hagman play in Dallas?" Well that's what Arceus takes away, and these is-bit versions of their classic quiz and strategy computer board

## Amiga Version

Great graphics, great music, great sound, what more do you want?

GRAPHICS: 9 IQ FACTOR: 8  
AUDIO: 8 FUN FACTOR: 4

ACE RATING: 955

game might need someone you too. A lot of what's going into them can't observe the common, but their card is there.

The central board game is straight-up card that seems way below the level of thought, the object of it being to wipe out the opposition, stopping the other guys (or the computer's piece) from moving adjacent to them and engaging them in combat. The 3 water card that does, however, because of the way the game's quiz-related moves.

Before you can name your chosen piece, you'll have to choose the answer to a trivia question from four alternatives given, and it's right within the time limit and you get to look one square, adding to your piece's limited power into the bargain, get it wrong

changes to one of these areas: (leaving cards), a mountain-top or a lava pool. Now you're faced with a series of questions either against the opposing player or the clock. Get far enough ahead on points before your piece runs out of combat strength and the opposing piece turns to stone, falls as the lava or gets squashed by a large stone piece.

The question-and-answer system obviously



ARCEUS II - Can't you please sign up for an online - get it wrong and it's not there!

## Atari ST Version

Great presentation, with on-line graphics and digital sound that really show the machine at its best.

GRAPHICS: 8 IQ FACTOR: 8  
AUDIO: 7 FUN FACTOR: 4

ACE RATING: 955

gets round the problem of repetition, any given set of multiple-choice answers will be used with several different questions, so you can't simply learn the correct answers out of each group. More importantly, you've got to get the right answer quickly, so even when you've got the questions and answers off by heart - not something you'll manage easily - there's still plenty of challenge to it.

Meaning as it does with the board game side of things, the trivia takes on strategic interest. The squares of the board are color-coded, each colour corresponding to a question topic; it's vital therefore to choose scores and attack strategies that keep you on the colours you like, so that you get questions you can answer. History and science facts may well leave problems if a crucial square gives them TV soap opera questions.

## PREDICTED INTEREST CURVE



Can't you please sign up for an online - get it wrong and it's not there!

Overall, it's very absorbing stuff indeed! If you only buy one quiz game, this has to be the one. If you weren't planning on buying a quiz game at all, take a look anyway; you may be pleasantly surprised!

by Andy Miller

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CBM 64/128 ONLY £9.99 includes £14.99 plus





Shoot-em-ups may come and shoot-em-ups may go, but a game that actually gets you thinking can last you till you're old and grey. We present the ACE guide to the best in brain games, from chess and bridge through to real originals like Tetris and Boulderdash.

# BRAIN GAMES

**I**ntelligent games can be a lot of a problem for most. When they're just presenting you with puzzles — as in *Age of Empires* — the mind doesn't really have to think for itself, but once they start getting involved in human games it's a very different story. Chess and bridge are very complex things, and modern computers are ill equipped to mimic the way humans approach the mental challenges involved. Programmers have developed ways of looking at games that do work well on macros, however, with results that are in many cases very impressive.

When deciding on their next move, human beings tend to spend

a lot of time working out how good one game position or arrangement of cards is compared to another — a process called evaluation. The positions they're evaluating could be real moves, the moves after or maybe even a dozen moves later; the process of working out what positions could possibly arise is called look-ahead, and this is what computers specialize at. To oversimplify a bit, humans tend to look very hard at the next few moves while computers concentrate on what the game will look like much further into the future.

How many moves ahead a computer looks depends on the type of game it's playing. If a game has a large number of possible





clear, though, in 2D mode, it's strength of play is more important to you than smart graphics, that's it for this year's chess.

### CYRUS CHESS

Adult

Amstrad CPC £11.95us \$14.95us

Contains the prettiest chess game for the CPC range, and particularly nice in 3D, the pieces are masterfully shaded to give a great impression of solidity. It has all the features you could want, but it is not as strong a player as Colossus 4.



## BRIDGE

All computer bridge games work in a similar format. You play South, against two computer opponents East and West, and with a computer partner North. All offer randomly dealt hands, the auction and card play and will score for you according to the rules of Rubber Bridge. Usually it calculates the relative strength of hands by the Acol high-card/distribution point count.

Compared to good human bridge players, computer simulations are fairly primitive, more believably what an fan and/or novice. Home computer bridge programs do not work out probabilities of a hand/distribution according to bidding, do not account for the rubber-effect or access in the bidding and implement usually no card play memories (such as pecking).

### COLOSSUS BRIDGE

CG

Spectrum £11.95us  
Amstrad/CPC £11.95us \$14.95us  
C64 £11.95us \$14.95us  
Amstrad/PCW £11.95us  
BBC £11.95us

The programs intended for beginners and novices, and is packaged with 14 Fun's book *Begin Bridge*. It offers both random hands and hands with a certain point count for those who get tired of pecking at the line. There are lots of options

for selecting, reviewing, and replaying hands, or pecking at your opponent's cards, and the computer will understand and indicate both Stayman and Blackwood conventions.

Consistent with scoring to the conventional Acol point count/distribution, with the occasional inexplicable call made by the computer (as to those you off balance). Card play is similarly un-



iform. It will show trumps, then lead out during suits. It also freezes sometimes - although not only when it will be successful.

With its replay options and later program, Colossus is a very good choice for those getting to grips with the game. The screen display is clear and easy to understand, though functional rather than pretty.

### GRAND SLAM

Steve Wallace

PO Box 163, Slough, Berks.  
Tel: 02944 91165

CG

CG/SG

Nearly four years old, and rather ponderous compared to recent programs, but it still provides a viable (and cheaper) alternative to Colossus on the M. The computer handles conventional doubling, Stayman and Blackwood, and strong/weakenable no-trump openings.

Grand Slam offers simple play, view hands and abandon hands options, and both bids and plays preferably and solidly. The screen, while unexciting and with no use of graphics, is very clear and easy to follow. No tutorial or demo features are available to beginners.

### BRIDGE PLAYER BRIDGE PLAYER 2000

CP Software

Amstrad PCW £19.95us  
Amstrad £19.95us  
IBM PC £19.95us

CP's Bridge Player series appears under a number of variations, the above are the recommended versions. The program is similar in style to Colossus, though with fewer options, and slightly fewer conventional features. The computer will not for instance make Stayman or Blackwood conventions, but will

respond appropriately if you make the first call.

While the computer generally bids with fluctuating tenacity, so that you will often underestimate the strength of your computer hands, it is also capable of making wily optimistic bids on occasion, just to keep you on your toes and ready for you in it. When defending a contract, you can frequently bring East/West down if trumps are split unevenly, since it doesn't seem to have been coded to draw trumps particularly efficiently. Not done, it shows.

Like Colossus, Bridge Player is suitable for newcomers to the game. In addition to replay and view options, it also has a demo mode where the computer plays through bidding and hands for you, in an as a kind of tour option. The Amstrad version includes a tour which takes you through 30 hands with explanation and analyses.

### INFO-GAMES BRIDGE

Integrated

Amstrad CPC £10.95us \$13.95us  
MSX £10.95us \$13.95us

Probably the best home-made bridge on the market - but sadly confined to the few machines above. It's certainly one of the few that attempts a pleasing graphic

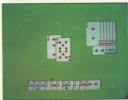
display, with pictures of the cards dealt on a suitably green table-top background.

Particularly strong is the range of combinations available, with Spades, Hearts, Diamonds available to suit, King, Queen, Jack, Ace, Five-card games all included. These can be toggled on or off according to your preferences.

Bidding and card play are at a

par with its competitors, although the computer's bidding, in general, appears to be better than its most other bridge programs.

Bridgegame Bridge is not, however, so well suited to beginners. There is no "help" option, and screen information pertaining to the contract being played, or which team is declaring/defending, is somewhat scanty.



## PUZZLES

### THINK!

From Leisure Genius

Amstrad CPC **£1.95**  
Spectrum **£1.95**

A wonderful idea: make up a boardgame of pure skill, and computerize it. Originally built for an Amstrad you can now pick it up as a budget brain-buster, and excellent value it is too.

It's a simple-looking game, but appearances are misleading. Your aim is to make a horizontal, vertical

playing of somebody wins.

The game has interesting subtleties to it and the computer 55500 can be very tough indeed on the harder settings, but it still tends to go down quite what makes it so masterfully addictive: probably just that it's a simple idea very well implemented. A must buy for Spectrum and Amstrad owners, at 875-0385.

### SHOULDERDASH

From Leisure Corporation

Spectrum **£2.95**  
Amstrad CPC **£2.95**  
C64/128 **£2.95**

At once in style and requiring a considerable amount of hand-eye coordination this fine old piece of high-speed calculation is doubtless a tough challenge for the grey matter.

Your job in each of the games is to dig for gems, but your progress is hampered by boulders, underground creatures and some rather strange wind. These have rules of behaviour which are quite easy to learn, but actually using them to your advantage can take a fair old bit of the brain - especially considering you need the stones in seconds rather than minutes.



or diagonal line four pieces long on the game's six by six board. You and your opponent (human or computer) take turns to push counters into the lower or right-hand edges of the board. As the counter pushes into the row, any counters already on the row move up or left one square. If this takes them off the edge, they disappear and are lost for good. There's no limit to the number of turns you just keep

## SCRABBLE

Leisure Genius

Spectrum **£2.95** or **£14.95**  
CPC **£2.95** or **£14.95**  
C64/128 **£2.95** or **£14.95**  
MSX **£2.95** or **£14.95**

### Deluxe Version

Spectrum 128K **£19.95** or **£11.95**  
CPC 6128 **£19.95** or **£11.95**  
C64/128 **£19.95** or **£11.95**  
MSX PC **£14.95**

From around quite a while ago with their first version of computer Scrabble for the Spectrum, it appeared just over three years ago and was remarkable for squeezing an 11,000 word dictionary into the 48K machine together with a high degree of intelligence. As a result, many players discovered that Scrabble, like Chess, is a game that can be very satisfyingly

played against a computer opponent.

Fing's got just this used to be, of course, and now Scrabble is available from a different company - Leisure Genius (owned by Fing's) - and to additional machines. The original From version is not sold for the Spectrum, again by Leisure Genius, and there are also helpful conversion kits for most other formats. Suitable examples are the ST and the Amiga, but were presented an ST version for February this year.

Playing Scrabble against a machine has certain advantages. To start with, you can be sure that the machine won't cheat. The words it chooses are in its vocabulary (which has been checked by an official Scrabble expert), not in its imagination. If you cheat, entering a word that's not on the computer's list will cause it to challenge you - but simply confirming your decision will get it to back down. Cheating, therefore, is a matter for your conscience and not the computer's objection.

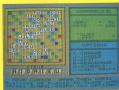
To complicate matters, Leisure Genius have also released Scrabble Deluxe. This offers a vocabulary ranging from just under 20,000 words on the Commodore to just over 20,000 on the PC. In addition, the number of skill levels has been increased from four to eight - a significant improvement since it enables you to match your own skills more accurately against your computer opponent.

The Deluxe version also has a game clock for timed play and an improved algorithm that speeds up the thinking time by computer players at high skill levels. You should definitely try the extra for the extra version - in fact on the Commodore it's the same price, 80-00-00-00-00.

All versions allow up to four players, of which any number can be computer controlled. Various game-play options include shuffling the letters in your rack (helps to spot possible words) and asking for hints. All normal rules conventions are supported.

One thing you will need, however, is a good wallpaper if playing with other humans - so you can just stare the letters on your rack before removing them from the screen display. You can choose to have all words on permanent display, but this makes cheating rather easier and can be particularly serious at the end of a game after your deciding whether to go out or hang on in the chance of getting the O into a triple letter score square.

Along with chess, Scrabble is one game that converts excellently to computerized play. Fans of the game can't get play without having to seek out their 80000, and chess can win every time.



Available on the Spectrum: Here's the difference between the formats, for the convenience of its most experienced.





The pressure and variety the game offers make it extremely addictive and certainly a bargain at budget price, but if you don't know one end of a joystick from the other or are just looking for a quiet evening's cerebral entertainment you'll probably find it a little less than advertised.

**SKULLDUGGERY**

Neuro

Atari ST

Based very closely on *Skullduggery*, this sticky little customer had a nice split-screen option for two-player pouncing, and works with mice as well as colour ST systems. Unfortunately, its publisher Neuro has recently gone into liquidation so you may have a job getting hold of the game, though while stocks last!

**KCM**

Logotron

Spectrum £7.95  
Amstrad CPC £8.95 (11.95)  
C64 £8.95 (12.95)

When giant maces fall to the limits with puzzles provide the challenge in this impressive test of spatial visual logic. The main components - fish, chickens, 11 bombs, 11 bombs.



spikes and fireworks among others - before according to strict physical rules, so you always know what they're going to do in any given circumstance.

By shunting these objects around with your feet (and the explorers you can unlock the tricky formations in your way and get at the mace you need to complete each maze - but only after some very careful thought, its easy to work out what an individual object will do when shunted, but since one object can hit others in motion it's perfectly possible to trigger a fish-chicken-bomb avalanche by an ill-considered move.

There's no limit to the game and no manual strictly required, but clarity of thought and attention to detail are vital. You'll also need considerable imagination to think your way sideways out of problems. A classic game for brains!



**BOMBSCRUNCHER**

Superior

C64 £9.95 (11.95)  
Amiga £14.95

Entertaining title made puzzle somewhere between *SD* and *Skullduggery* - see main review on page 47.

**3D Tic-Tac-Toe**

Micro

Microsoft

Amstrad CPC £9.95 (12.95)

Spectrum £9.95 (19.95)

Atari ST £19.95

Amiga £19.95

IBM PC £19.95

Amstrad CPC £9.95 (12.95)

Spectrum £9.95 (19.95)

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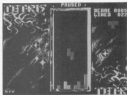
Amiga £19.95

IBM PC £19.95

A toppling geometrical oddity, this Russian puzzle turns the obscure mathematical topic of packing into a cult game. One at a time, shapes fall downwards into a well-shaped playing area, left to their own devices. They'll pile up until they reach the top of the screen; your task is to guide them down and pack them in tightly so that the tower's happy.

If you can shunt the different shapes together that they form a solid row from one side to the other, the top disappears and the shapes above fall down into the gap this makes. As long as you keep this process up you'll survive, but it's not easy: the game speeds up as it goes along for one thing, and small mistakes will cause the heap going up less time to guide the next shape down.

Different versions of the game have proved to be rather variable in their artistic aspects, but the brilliantly simple idea behind them means they're well worth a look whenever you have a spare.



**Where now for brain games?**

More chess has just about reached the limits of what most home players need in the way of strength, speed and flexibility. Programmers are turning their attention to other, more obscure games - with some considerable success. It has to be said - but after a while, they're pretty much bound to run out of games anyone's heard of or wants to play.

One possible direction is to create games especially for computers: games that just wouldn't work in the physical world. Display problems aside, 3D games should work admirably on home machines with the clocks expediting their better grasp of the situation to defeat that renowned human organuity. With con and mouse available there'd be no need for complex notation systems, and advances in the field of 3D computer-aided design might well have lessons for programmers trying to display solid objects clearly.

Another direction worth pursuing is that of machine learning. If a program can work out and improve basic strategies for games, skills in the face of the game rules - there's been a certain amount of work done on this with draughts programs - it may be possible to create 'construction site' games with CPU rules which the computer adjusts itself to. Load the system up, create a pseudo chess on a 13x13 board with three different kinds of pieces, and see how the computer copes just using genetic programming. Will you handle the unfamiliar situations better than I can?



By Spidey - photography by Ian Hunt





# TRICKS 'N' TACTICS



## RAMPARTS

Infinite energy

This handy infinite energy pokes should help any players having trouble with this game. Simply type in the listing, run it, and load the game from the start.

JOHN RAY CHRYSLER  
 20 FOR 8-1024 TO 1000 READ A POKE  
 8,4 NEXT 0  
 20 FOR 1040  
 20 FOR 14 100,101,107,109,8,100,8,14,1,100  
 80 DATA 8,75,15,8,100,109,141,101,54,70  
 70 DATA 8,112,32,80,240,100,8,14,1,100,8  
 80 DATA 100,4,147,107,8,70,70,8

IAN PERMAN, *Widford*



AGENT X: ColecoVision

## AGENT X 2

Three elusive codes for levels two and three on the Coast

Make this your highest scoring month yet with this assortment of tips and pokes.

We bring you infinite time for *Buggy Boy*, infinite energy for *Ramparts* and a superb players' guide to *Defektor* - plus much more.

Code for level 2 = G0MM6W0407

Code for level 3 = M0GAL0M0M0

LEE ROWLAND, *Bradford*

And for Spectrum owners:

Passwords:

- 1 Have energy of 10000
- 2 There's no escaping it

Mr P.C. JOHN HOSKIN, *Doncaster*

## TEST DRIVE

Get to the Dealership a little earlier with this handy little tip for the Amiga.

To avoid going over the cliff or crashing into the walls - needed to add you in your general cornering - simply keep the fire button pressed. The car will then just glide around corners without any trouble. Of course you'll still have to avoid the other road users and release the fire button should you wish to accelerate or brake.

Mr. GEORGIADIS, *London*



BUGGY BOY - This year's best

## BUGGY BOY

Infinite time

This wonderful car game can now be played a lot easier thanks to this C64 poke. Type in the listing, run it, and start the game tape from the beginning.

70 8,0,70  
 80 READ A\$F A=200 THEN END

80 POKE 16144-1,0070 01  
 20 0270 070  
 40 DATA 100,43,134,100,104,84,102,100  
 60 DATA 30,80,240,100,80,144,240,0  
 80 DATA 100,8,141,204,0,70,15,0  
 70 DATA 104,104,100,100,101,141,204,100  
 80 DATA 2,141,27,4,100,80,150,1  
 90 DATA 70,8,4,100,80,141,0,84  
 95 DATA 70,8,0,0,0

TIM AND IAN PRASER, *Northrop*



1000 0000 - Make it to the Dealership



### ● LEVEL ONE

#### Hints:

This screen was designed to introduce the player to as many characters as possible. The screen shows the usefulness of revolving mirrors, reflectors, floor-uplit ceilings and positioners. No great difficulties here, and a chance for the expert to accumulate points.

#### General Tips

You enter and leave a floor-uplit in the same direction.

If those Gremlins have been causing you headaches in this 900+ Gremlin/Vortex brain-stretcher, never fear because Vortex's very own LUKE ANDREWS is here to show you the light...

# DEFLEKTOR

The excitement generated from a new purchase usually forces the player to load the game immediately and try to play it. This is not the recommended course of action with any game, let alone Deflektor, because it will get you nowhere (read the instructions and try to memorize the characters including what they may or may not do. Go with the set of the play card and the multi-load system which scrolls the instructions across the screen while the rest of the game is loading, so are ready to play).

To play the game through you'll need to set aside a couple of hours at least, but if you wish to practice first, the facility is there. A demo mode enables you to view all the screens, and if, while you're actually playing, you wish to view a screen and then quit your attack or have a break, then there is a pause mode, or 'Intermission'.

The aim of the game is to link the transmitter beam to the receiver. Before you can do this, however, you have to deflektor all the Cells left behind by the Gremlins that all float around various screens. You will see the Gremlins on your heads, still floating and turning the mirrors -

probably to your annoyance. Once the energy levels have built up, the beam is activated. The beam will always hit the first mirror and deflected accordingly. You will notice the mirrors flickering around during energy build up (during which the mirrors can be moved), so it's not

guaranteed that you will hit the first mirror inevitably. At the start of each screen you should turn the first mirror full circle - you will then experience either energy loss, a direct hit on a Cell, a link with another mirror, a link with another character or the screen positioner. The object is to hit a Cell or another mirror that is in a position to hit a Cell.

The game concept is the same for all machines, but the screen layouts are sometimes different and speed varies from machine to machine. On the Amibeam, programmer Costa decided to put the beam mode for clarity, simplicity and definition, as opposed to using some colours, which would have meant chunky and irregular graphics not at all suitable for Deflektor.



### ● LEVEL TWO

#### Hints:

Beware of overload, absorbing blocks may prove. The middle Cell of the top line is the main problem, though the added mirrors can be a headache. Plan the route, because it's easy if you think about it. Can catch you out, though, if the mirrors are not in your favour.

#### General Tips

You have more time than you think. Move away from danger and let your energy build up again.



### ● LEVEL THREE

#### •••••

**Problems from the start.** Make sure the first mirror is in your favor, otherwise instant-death awaits. Geminis make their first appearance. Station Cell is the main problem - destroy it by using the reflector and bottom right hand mirror. Last of the easy screens.

#### General Tips

Remember, mirror-to-mirror is not always direct - you may have to bounce the beam off walls or other things. Geminis can be a help as well as a hindrance.



### ● LEVEL FIVE.

#### •••••

The first of the 'Wall of Mirrors' screens - if you think this one's hard, you have a shock in store. Energy loss or Gemini interference could prove to be your downfall on this screen.

Remember - if you can't destroy with one mirror, move on to another.

#### General Tips

Make the most of the 'Intermission'.

# TOR

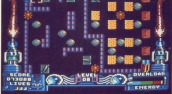
### ● LEVEL FOUR

#### •••••

This is the first shoot-'em-up screen. They will get harder. You can destroy all but a few Cells by direct mirror rotation. The red can be destroyed by using the revolving mirror and deflecting the beam with the extreme right-hand mirror.

#### General Tips

Reappear! Geminis re-appear. Watch your energy levels. Fanny routes can lengthen the beam and cause overload. Do not force the beam back on itself, it will self-destruct.



### ● LEVEL SIX.

#### •••••

There are two sections to this screen. Destroy the first series of Cells, but be careful of overload. Polarizers and reflectors do the main job (if you're lucky).

#### General Tips

In screens that are restarted off you can avoid Geminis by vaporizing them and hoping they re-appear away from trouble. React quickly to alarm bells and warnings, but don't panic!

## STAR TREK

Is the mission taking you about five years to complete? If so, these tips will prove invaluable.

## Key:

R=Regional zone, L=Local zone, Q=Quadrant zone.

## L-Rest generations can be found on:

- 1 Corral 64 67 71 K-Ring
- 2 Helix 66 62 26 K-Ring
- 3 Mael 66 76 36 R-Ring (poth)
- 4 Nexus 27 76 66 R-Ring (poth and quart)
- 5 Nexus 10 62 36 R-Ring
- 6 Parker 76 72 76 R-Ring
- 7 Lamer 76 67 66 L-Ring
- 8 Comet 46 62 64 R-Ring
- 9 Tula 26 76 67 Q2-Ring
- 10 Sorex 66 64 41 R-Ring (quart)

## Ligon guns can be found on:

- 1 Lora 71 23 66 Federation
- 2 Mael 76 67 61 R-Ring
- 3 Comet 31 67 66 Q2-Independent
- 4 Nexus 49 64 66 R-Federation
- 5 Saker 79 50 41 Q2-Ring
- 6 Saker 36 17 66 Federation
- 7 Sorex 61 16 41 R-Ring
- 8 Helix 26 56 76 R-Ring
- 9 Parker 49 61 61 R-Ring
- 10 Veruk 55 65 25 R-Federation

## Signal Console planet:

- 1 Helix 52 33 36 L-Ring (quart)

## Klingon codes file planet:

- 1 Mael 26 76 26
- 2 Helix 62 76 66 L-Ring (head Flux)

## Machell file planet:

- 1 Mael 66 14 66 R-Ring (head Flux)



STAR TREK—Data by Gagnier



## Psychogor planets:

- 1 Ruxat 50 41 56 R-Federation (poth)
- 2 Dolor 69 66 60 R-Federation (poth)
- 3 Helix 34 52 66 R-Ring
- 4 Helix 36 66 76 R-Federation
- 5 Dorian 62 62 61 R-Federation
- 6 Saker 16 66 47 L-Ring
- 7 Parker 26 74 68 Q2-Independent
- 8 Comet 20 66 66 R-Ring
- 9 Helix 76 62 60 R-Ring
- 10 Sorex 61 56 16 R-Ring
- 11 Zensuk 55 67 49 R-Federation

## Rival-commander planets:

- 1 Sorex 66 24 62 R-Federation (head Flux)
- 2 Helix 38 76 76 R-Federation
- 3 Corral 18 67 67 L-Federation
- 4 Comet 64 76 63 R-Federation
- 5 Saker 61 60 62 Federation

## Dithium Delta 6 planets:

- 1 Comet 63 61 64 Klingon
- 2 Veruk 52 55 25 L-Independent

## Peace Virus Antipode planets:

- 1 Sorex 32 15 67

## STUART WYNNE, Chicago

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## 100 (C64)

36,36,346, 46,25, 44, 37, 2, 69, 267, 14, 136, 3  
178 C64A  
66, 166, 173, 141, 21, 1, 44, 147, 267, 146, 166, 263  
126 DATA 2, 14, 267  
126 FOR L=62992 TO 63214:PRINT  
#C=C:G:POKE L,4  
END NEXT IF C=0:44 THEN SYS 62992  
END PRINT "DATA END OF END"

## THE DOUBLE ACES 64, Cleveland



ACTION FORCE—Series releases every year.

## HOT TIPS...HOT PRIZES!!

Every month we give away C64's worth of software to the readers who send in the best playing tips, maps, puzzles and hi-score tactics. If your contribution is selected as Tip of the month you can expect to receive six top-rated games for your machine, specifically selected by the ACE team, complimentary free.

This month, Stuart Wynne's *Rip It* has been chosen from five copies of *Beats the Game*, *Breakage*, *Defense of the Crown*, *Planescape*, *Yongyong* and *Mudpie* (available for his ST).

For more news himself a copy of *Scripts for his C64 as the Tin and the Power*. The Double Aces also pick up a copy of the game for their C64, as does Leo Pittman.

Dr. R. G. Johnson, however, came himself a copy of *Scorcher Lord*. We don't just give these games away though, you have to work for them. So send your tips, maps and puzzles to TRICKS 'N' TACTICS.

ACE  
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BATH,  
BA1 1BJ





# MUSIC MINUS MIDI

Fed up with MIDI? Can't afford it? Then check out our list of budget, non-MIDI musical packages for your micro. Mark Jenkins checks out what's available...

**P**rofessional and semi-professional music is all about MIDI these days, but there are those of us who don't want to spend hundreds of pounds in MIDI-equipped synths and samplers, but would still like to produce our music in a cheap and easy-to-use package.

Scores of packages have been released to allow you to do just this. If you have a Commodore 64/128, a BBC Micro, an MSX, an 8-bit or 16-bit Atari, a Spectrum or an Amiga, then check out our musical software or different music systems for different macros, with the accent on budget price and packages that enable you to get the best out of what you've got - your computer sound chip.



Instant Music - each dot-line represents a note, different colors indicate different instruments - play the page's last article!

## ● INSTANT MUSIC

Electronic Arts  
Amiga £54.95  
C64/128 £9.95 (D+4.95)

The main, colorful package is aimed at the music user who wants to make music but gets a little apprehensive at the sight of standard sequencing notation or the intention of sound chip registers, harmonics, and voice parameters.

The package allows you to compose with the four-voice built-in FM sound chip. The main screen shows the tune you're looking at created, with a menu bar above and three instruments you've currently selected listed below.

What makes Instant Music different is its use of colors and its method of entering notes. Each instrument is associated with a

specific color, and once it's selected you can use the mouse to enter a series of colored dots/lines/notes on the screen. The vertical position of the line determines the pitch and the length the duration of the note played.

A four-function bar at the top visualizes what is in it, which can be very appealing to a beginner. You can have a bit of fun just wrapping the mouse across the screen and hearing the effects. This is probably the reason you'll actually come to 'painting with mouse' on a micro.

There are stacks of demos in all styles, covering rock, pop, jazz, blues, folk, classical, and even minimalist styles. The Parent Directory lists all the styles and sub-directories list the demo pieces, which include some simple chord progressions to help in your own compositions.

Full-screen menus include SOUND, EDIT, SOURCE, JAM, PROJECT, and OPTIONS. JAM is the most fun - it lets you play any of the four voices live with any sound using the mouse clicking it up and down the music grid, both functions limiting the notes and rhythms available to fit in with the backing music.

The package offers a prodigious set of comparisons between complete tracks and

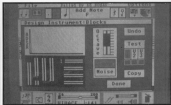
helpful 'play-along' type features such as auto-rhythm and auto-following, speed drawing of notes and chords, and so on. It's not historically easy to compose complex tunes with, but it's not difficult to create something - and very easy to have fun with.

## ● MUSIC CONSTRUCTION SET

Electronic Arts  
(Deluxe version) £99.95  
Amiga £59.95  
Apple II/IIc Import - contact your dealer.  
(Standard version)  
AmiST £24.95

The suite of programs provides both control of your computer's sound chip and the means to build up professional pieces of music - writing, sequencing, and editing your work as you proceed. In short, it's a powerful package designed for those who know a little bit more but like.

But that also means it's a useful educational tool, since the manuals are comprehensive, and anyone with even a superficial knowledge of music theory will find them



Music Construction Set on the Mac - this package comes with a demo disk.

when using the package with ease. You won't get any play along features as you do with Instant Music, but you do get the facilities to enter notes on the keyboard, or to place them directly on the manuscript using the mouse.

There are extensive editing facilities, and the package provides a reasonable number of different instrumental voices which can be written into the scores, giving you a clear idea of how your composition would sound live!

The essential concept behind the standard and deluxe versions is the score, but you may find some versions missing from the ST program. Goodies available in the Mac version, for example, include provision for lyrics, computerised scoring functions, voice editing, MIDI hardware, and quality output of your score to a laser printer if required.

Excellent packages with good documentation that deserve the attention of anyone planning to use their money sensibly for musical inspiration, but who doesn't want to spend a fortune.

## ● THE MUSIC SYSTEM/ADVANCED MUSIC SYSTEM

Released

TMS

Amstrad

£19.950

CGA/CG

£14.950

MSX

Amstrad CPC

£19.950

CGA/CG

£29.950

The Music System and the Advanced Music System were developed by Systems for Music Logic and later transferred to TMS. The latter have been made available for the BBC, Cit, and Amstrad CPC users, and the programs (the AMX is particular) are among the best available. It's possible to imagine for these terms.

All versions use a sophisticated icon system, with the AMX version having added MIX facilities in some cases, printed options using a wide variety of patterns, and laser printers which allow you to string together compositions to create lengthy works.

The 8088 keyboard module does most of the work, allowing you to play 'Live' from the music keyboard or to record performance. A double music store is displayed and pull-down menus allow you to choose notes, while a metronome click is available for you to time your playing.

It's also possible to place notes on the store using the cursor keys, and other notes such as rests, volume changes, and tempo/force can be added.

Sound parameters can also be saved and the sound editing section includes software-based VCF's (Auto Frequency Cutoff) for special effects and other features not normally found on the music in question.

An opening page of icons allows you to view the major functions - sound control, composition, editing, printing, or disk speed



Remember Music System running on the Amstrad CPC. Great fun, only a few real-time patches! (See Amstrad Music, in this issue for an early look for scores in the score at a time while editing through the score using patches)



The Music System's control screen - choosing an icon using the pointer gets you into the appropriate area of the program.

for - and MIX, Editing facilities on the AMX versions.

The only problem with the package is that it can't be system-driven, which would have made more sense of the non-fixed screen. But overall the TMS/MS packages represent very good value for money and should be thoroughly investigated.

## ● OLIVER'S MUSIC BOX/MUSIC COMPOSER

Compos Page, PO Box 478,

London, E4 6UR

Oliver's Music Box

Spectrum 128

£9.99

Music Composer

Spectrum 128

£11.99

Both these packages are intended to cope with music inputs and processing and have a few features which their creators claim are unique. Both use conventional music stores but can cope with tied notes (notes placed together with a line which indicates that their values are to be added together even if they cross bar-lines). The Spectrum 128 can't be converted to a printer while it's in DRG operating mode, so there is no printing facility on the Music Composer, but otherwise the two packages are pretty similar.

Music Composer does allow you to use the Spectrum's note generator which is full normally accessible from BASIC, and that lets you create chord scales as well as musical notes, the nature of the drum sound depends on the musical pitch and envelope you choose, and the tied notes can another effect accessible from the Spectrum's sound chip.

Oliver's Music is a simpler version of the same package for a 48K machine. The difference is that it allows you to print out your music, writing notes from the keyboard in store or less the same way. Whether printing is of any interest to you depends on what applications you'll find for your music.

In the Final Chords mode, Music Box lets up the empty stores a note at a time, which is a good way of getting mistakes in your programming. 5000 note capacity over 15 stores have made this one pretty good value for money too.



If you want to try something simple, you could try the Commodore Music Box, which gives you a mini-keyboard to fit over the top of your kit, together with software that enables you to make any use of the computer's sound chip. There are a number of software packages and you can also get a system designed to fit over the Commodore 128 (which the reviewer wasn't able to test, due to the difference in the keyboard). For the full, but not a great deal in the way of explanation, unless you get the Sound Explorer (mentioned) from any - they probably have it.

## ● EMU

Graphic Graphics  
Amesbury 014 593 018 0566

The Electronic Music Utility comes on tape and opens into operation in French or English, depending. The opening menu offers Dev. Del. Voice, Music, News, Load Data, and Save MIDI, the examples and help notes are on the inside of the cassette.

Loading a demo requires a bit of moving about on the load page and the main menu page, although the music display on the computer screen is a quite impressive when you eventually do come to it. Press Copy to make the music play and your time is necessarily complex, time taken pointed out in three string notes.

The screen display allows you to make notes, set tempo, sound notes consisting of key, time signature and dot and choose note half and and values to insert, and also shows you what notes are playing or being programmed at any particular time on a musical display of a one-octave keyboard. Notes are inserted one at a time using the list function, or five from the top two lines of music keys used as a basic piano keyboard. The software will record your performance and isolate it on the screen - quite an achievement.

You can fit notes together, enter all notes of same markings, and change the records used with the Dev page and the Del page. The latter defines envelope aspects. The format is a comprehensive display within the limitations of the Amstrath sound chip of the time, volume, and timbre of a note, and gives as much control as you could reasonably expect over the sounds available. You can vary the overall volume during a piece of music and save a piece normally in an SD2 Standard System Extension form for use in a BASIC or machine code program.

The handbook has a comprehensive list of keyboard for programming plus a useful summary of the Back Copy function which allows you to reproduce any section of any piece on many times as you like. Overall,



Expansion/Load Expander settings. There's also a Sample settings outside. For those who want to use a lot of MIDI voices.

Well seems powerful - but a bit fiddly!

## ● FM SOUND EXPANDER

Commodore

Price: 99p - shop priced

A really popular FM synth option, based after some time by an Editor/Composer package. This allows you to compose polyphonic music, edit it, and to create new sounds to play it with.

The Composer section opens with a simple music editor which allows you to choose a key signature, tempo, note to be used, and so on. Notes can then programmed using the computer's keyboard in the Commodore music keyboard, you can enter one part at a time, and edit notes, copy blocks, and so on.

For MIDI links, the FM/MIDI page assigns each of the eight FM voices plus permission to a MIDI channel and decides whether you want to clock the music inter-

nally or externally (say, from a MIDI drum machine). There's a nice set of 64 address FM voices which are far superior to the original set, and you can save and load music and voices to disk.

The voice editing software is separate on the disk, and the Set-up facility allows you to choose on upper and lower sound, split point, transposition, permission on/off and MIDI on/off. After that stage you go on to the Edit page proper, which has list graph displays for Envelopes, Envelopes, Pitch 1 and 2, Vibrato 1 and 2, Tremolo, and other parameters.

The Drum Machine section allows you to create lists from a selection of sounds and write patterns on a graphic display of a single bar. There's also a rather wonderful Beat Machine section, which matches up sounds at random and gives you the opportunity to edit them into something really useful.

## ● K-MINSTREL

Kuma Computers Ltd

Age 57

028 9566

K-Minstrel takes full advantage of the 2M sound chip, built in MIDI and good operating speed, efficiency and memory capacity. These characters of composition and playback can be done on the computer, together with a 4, 8, 12, or 16 channels of playback via MIDI.

K-Minstrel is enjoying the success of sound it can store 330 blocks, enough for a very lengthy composition. Gains, triplets, accelerandos, and crescendos can be programmed, but K-Minstrel only offers very simple editing of the built-in sounds.

The package consists of a single disk and a slim booklet which describes the system in a manual display editor. The basic display is a double musical staff and the pull-down options are Beat, Music Flow, New, List, Slow, 40ms Sequence Play, Start, Edit, Copy, Delete, Move, Merge, and Save. Chord Play, Delete Beat, Mark, Split Chord Play, Volume, Tempo, Attack, Decay, Sustain, and Options (Change Key, Change



Commodore FM Sound Editor - this is the edit window, allowing you to define the characteristics of one sound - which in this package can be anything but a note.





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**Off his chest**

I call a games freak. I love fast moving rapping games. As I own an Amiga 500 one would think I have the right machine to keep me happy, wrong. Well I do have the right machine really—but the wrong software.

All of Amiga owners get it ported down versions of ST games if we're lucky. Please don't get me wrong, the ST is a great machine and a great price too. I wish to buy one as such as I can afford one, but to make a point when you buy a Bulls Player you expect a Bulls Round chip not a 68k drive! So I think as Amiga owners are not getting software to match the hardware features that the Amiga has to offer.

Take the game Barbarian, the graphics are great and so they should be on the Amiga but the game play is so slow that is better than some of the Spectrum or CBM 64 games. Plus, when are all the great looking screens which are on the box which the game comes in? I've been through the whole game

Well, it only takes a wee bribe and before you can say 'Advanced Computer Entertainment' the letters are flooding in—and some very really ones, too. Letter of the Month prize goes to K.B. Smith of Leeds for his sensible and forthright views on the Sex and Censorship controversy. K.B. wins Jinxter for his ST.

The other two winners are arcade engineer Ian Woolter for his peek behind the coin-up rights, and Deano Schofield for his useful fupa tips.

If you want to give yourself the chance of winning a prize at the same time as getting a load off your mind, write to ACE LETTERS, 4 QUEEN STREET, BATH, BA1 1EJ

on a cheat mode and have not found any of them.

So if that's the best they can do on the Amiga then I think I would like to buy my old Spectrum back. So come on all you software houses—let's see some games which are really fit to be played on the Amiga.

That's better now, I've got that off my chest.

**MD Tarrantage**  
Tavot

You've got a point!—many Amiga games are simply ported over from

**Sex, violence, et al**

I am writing to express my thoughts on sex, violence, Maria Whittaker, et al, following the running debate in your pages, and those of other magazines. First that I read other magazines, of course, I personally feel that many of the adverts for computer game software, for all sorts of different reasons, lets take the Maria Whittaker controversy first.

In the current (February) issue of ACE, MD of Censurium points out that the man in the ad is also scantily clad, and asks if the fact that he is one complains about that means that it is all right to see very nice, but not right to see very women. His assumption is that he is all accused of being degrading to women because it exploits female sexuality. This greatly over-simplifies the case. We all accept that, on the whole, men find women attractive. —"— vice versa, and that simple fact has been exploited throughout the whole of history and particularly advertising history.

The reason the Barbarian ad—although many others—degrades women more than men is due to the power both male and female are depicted as being walking more than a mile of physical attributes, but the male is clearly stronger, dominant, and therefore... doesn't it make you feel good, chappie?—superior. Ask yourself who the ad is aimed at— or should we believe

**LETTER OF THE MONTH**

that Palace Software expect women to buy Barbarian in stores, in order to stand over a muscle-bound man easily cutting people's heads off? I think it more likely that violence is being sold to men, rather than sex to women.

MD makes a rather poor attempt to dispute his claim by accusing M. Parag's letters, issue 11 of being condescending to women by speaking for them. I imagine Mr Parag would claim only to be speaking for himself, but MD pleads on to express the thoughts of "most women I know", and to claim that women are far more cunning than men!— a positive phrase I ever heard one. Cannot, Mr B, your message is wrong!

In the exciting world of many of today's computer games, the only violence or qualities worth having are tipping muscles, macho aggression, and a bigger weapon than anyone else, and it is this, perhaps of maleness that is degrading to men. All problems and

conflicts are to be resolved by violence and killing, and this is always justified because, you see, we're the good guys and they are the evil ones.

OK, I know that this is a convention for the sake of allowing conflict in games scenarios, but it reinforces the idea that any act is permissible as long as it is done for the right reasons, the IFA think they have the right reasons, Inter thought he had the right reasons, we all think we have the right reasons, but inhibition depends on us being prepared to submit those reasons to the judgement of others. Rambo, Barbarian, Deathwish, Renegade are etc, gradually create a climate of opinion that makes it acceptable to refuse to do so—if you have right on your side. Yes, they are just games, or films, or books, or TV programmes, or videos, but gradually they bring about a numbing of the imagination and an adjustment of social norms, they should all be banned, and then their perpetrators should be disembowelled with a chain saw, and then— if I were I'm right— we could impose censorship and the death penalty for anyone publishing anything a bit rude, and then—

Seriously, software companies, a lot more restraint please!

**S. B. Smith**  
Leeds

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the ST with no enhancements, the ST' with no enhancements. Unfortunately, the situation is unlikely to change much unless the Amiga starts selling in larger numbers. At the moment there's not much of an incentive for software houses to do anything special for the Amiga; there are more STs around in this area - in the first instance - for that.

#### • **Tarso**

I would like to point out a view I get: Mark Robinson - You're a jerk.

Only Walls  
Portsmouth

Would Mark like to comment on this petty judgement?

#### • **Lineings**

I agree that going in listings is a

waste of time and energy. However, I believe that many people would be interested in prices on programming software. For example, how to implement top tracing, visualising, and 3D graphics, etc. The algorithms required could be presented in 'pseudo-code', which could state those most applicable to all machines and languages available.

Also a few articles on the latest 'top end' hardware would come amiss, most technologies lag up features on transputers and RISC machines. Yes, I bought issue 3 - Games, as the Future was the best article I'd seen in ages. More please!

John McConnel  
Warrington

We're looking very seriously at introducing something along the

lines you suggest, although it certainly won't be a great wedge of listings. Watch this space.

#### • **More TOS Troubles**

Just before Christmas I bought an Atari ST 10M and just the GC folder. I discovered that my ST has TOS version 1.00 which would not run some software. I have compiled a list of titles which will or will not run with TOS version 1.00.

#### • **Do Not**

Mark Robinson, Defender of the Crown  
Star Wars: Flight Simulator 2  
Tenth Flame: TestRunner  
HardBall, Defender's Key  
Baron: Star Trek (1.20 version)  
3D-Games, King's Quest II/Land II  
Scypher, Star Raiders

#### • **Don't Work**

World Games  
Golden Path, Hollywood Poker

AtariSoft, Star Trek 2.00 version  
Road Runner, Skate 82  
Gaulther

I was not very pleased to discover that there are some titles that do not work, especially at £29.95 each. Please post this list or letter to have new ST owners previous time and money.

Kevin Barker  
Newlyn-Carden City

Having bought your magazine, I looked through your letters section and saw the letter named 'TOS Troubles'. I read it quickly and realised that I have the same problem. I purchased Rubik's Ghost for my Atari 520 ST from Silica Shop and when I received it up its ST just printed this not responding error. After Christmas we went back to Silica Shop in Hart and when they told it on a 1040

## 8 Bits v. 16 Bits

I would like to join Grant Furchard (Feb 1988) in saying that although I would clearly like to own an Atari or Amiga there's no way I could afford either! I have only owned a computer for just two years. When I was trying to decide upon one I read that although cheap the Spectrum had a rather slow and odd form of basic. After much debating I decided upon an Amstrad 464 (as I could not afford a 6386).

The main consideration was that I needed a monitor and with the 464 I only required a plug. Since then I have upgraded to a 4128. The Amstrad 6386 with a colour monitor cost me £299.00.

PRIZE  
LETTER

How much would an Amiga one - with monitor? £388 - £780 - £900? There is no way that I am in a position to pay that for a home computer and then be expected to pay about £25 for a game.

I therefore feel that the view that within the next year 16-bit computers will cost less than 8-bit computers (unless my beloved Alan Sugar comes up with a cheaper package) is as ludicrous as there must be many juniors who are

probably in a worse financial position to myself.

I would also be wise if the big name software houses sometimes paid more attention to conversions. The most disappointing games I have bought are World Class Judo and 1942 World Class Judo (and there would be a superb game without the bug). I have now ordered the cassette and also versions which both had a bug on certain parts of the plotting process. I am awaiting a reply from the manufacturers about this.

Now - how about some prizes? Firstly to incentive for the magnificent game Judo. Secondly - Monkeys and Animal for customer service and courtesy. Both have been very helpful to me over the past year. Thirdly, yourselves. I enjoy the News and reviews sections. The overall magazine I like but I am getting a bit fed up of the '8 bits dead' - to bits new attitude by some of your team.

Stephen Brown  
Southampton

We don't believe that 8-bit machines are dead yet, and we certainly aren't going to stop supporting them. But we are excited by the possibilities of 16-bit machines, and we think most people interested in computer entertainment are as well.

#### • **Specializing**

I was reading issue five one Sunday night when I saw a letter. By Neil Wilson, Neil Vance? Wilson. Also

me to assess what Neil has said. He wants ACE to cover the Amiga more, stop 8-bit computers (especially Amstrads), print larger photos of Amiga screenshots and smaller pictures of 8-bit games, and as a finale, get rid of the day-by-day mail section.

I haven't ever owned an Amstrad nor have I played a Play-by-Mail. I am clearly saying for an Amiga, and I've never heard of Alan Sugar (who he apparently hated). But Neil Wilson begged me more than any other person who's written to a mag.

I bought ACE because it was a non-technocratic computer magazine covering all machines equally. Even though the Amiga market is relatively tiny, and I detest Spectrums, but, however, would like you to abandon the 8-bit field. (By the by, for the laptop market all someone and abandon the IBM sector which appears to me to be an interesting hobby).

And what is wrong with Amstrads? They have gorgeous graphics compared to my C64 and a fast decent sound chip. Lots of games are released for them but I've never seen a review of them. As Chris Anupui, I'm writing on how as I'd shut up and consider in peace.

Ian Morgan  
Glasgow

#### • **Dispatch**

Neil Wilson must surely get his price in the National Dispatch competition. It seems to me he wants everything he

own way and stuff anyone else. Well, his attitude annoys. He wants ACE to cover less on Amstrads, yet he goes on to complain about how badly Alan Sugar has treated Amstrad owners. Surely, a contradiction in terms. As for his point about the Spectrum, perhaps he should remember that Alan Sugar would really have scrapped them altogether. Also, for the bit of me, I can't see your point about 464 games. They still have a strong software base. Due to the fact that the 6386 remained compatible, now, perhaps Neil should also consider the fact that 8-bit computers are still, by far, the majority and many people aren't bothered about buying a 16-bit and paying £20+ for a piece of computer software. Overall, the letter gives the impression that Neil has bought a 16 bit Amiga and is scared stiff that it may quickly be superseded by another computer. Perhaps its apparent fear of Alan Sugar has something to do with the fact I submitted new Amstrad 16-bit computer - to prove that my letter is due to my anger of the fact that Neil Wilson writes, and not just to win a prize, I have not exceeded the full address, so you can't give the one, even if you wanted to.

Mark Spencer  
Sheffield

Shame about that address, because we might just have given you a prize. But what about Neil Wilson? Is he going to take the address lying about? Will he respond? Watch this space...

OT? It loaded perfectly. The salesman then asked, "When do you buy the 387?" My dad replied, "Just before Christmas." "You probably get the newer 700 chip in," replied the salesman. So I changed it to the 700.

**Christopher Heathcote  
Olathead**

We hope that Kevin Sanders' list helps everyone with their 700 troubles.

#### It's Arcade Rip-Off!

I've known for a long time that arcade change the difficulty level or lower bonus points on certain machines. An example is the arcade near my college. It has a *World Cup* machine and it costs 25¢ for one minute extra time, in the first play mode. In the arcades in the West find you can get free to ten minutes for extra time. The same goes for *Gauntlet*—you may get 100 health points for 1¢. The smaller arcades can't afford to drop prices and difficulty levels while the bigger arcades can. The arcades have the choice to change these different levels to the best solution if you find a greedy arcade it is strip around for a better arcade otherwise you have to choose.

**Lyle Hammond  
Barnet**

#### « Music, maestro!

Clap, clap, clap for all the info on musical instruments and their performances. Since I have read the music pages, I seem to have been inspired to write my own material and I'm doing so might have got some good stuff together. So I'm going to get a recording done very shortly. I will forward a copy of the tape very soon.

**D. Smith  
Galesburg**

It'll look forward to hearing it. Could you also send a good file system.

#### « Where are the programmers?

I feel I must comment on the style of magazines — including yours — on today's market. First, let me say that I am not a newcomer to the computer world and I have been buying (and reading) computer magazines for about five years. Recently, I went through a list of my 50 magazines from 1980/84 and something struck me about the style of the news, reviews, and articles contained in the issues from 1980. The first thing I noticed

## Piracy!!

Until software houses got themselves out and make their stuff available to purchase they will get ripped off.

Some Answers Answered. These are my answers to some of the comments I think you will make.

You naughty boy, don't you know it's wrong.

Yes I do and I do genuinely wish that it could buy the software that I want, but I can't so until I can I will use pirate stuff. I mean, how long is it reasonable to wait, in this I'm sure you'll say "until it's released" but it's human nature isn't it, you would have to be a monk not to take some stuff on offer but unavailable to the public.

Be patient.

I have spent well over a thousand pounds on my 486C, I may upgrade monitor, external drive, and printer. This is a hell of a lot more than I can afford and I will be paying it off for a long time yet, so do you think I can sit back patiently waiting for a desired game to be released, and saying to the pirates I have "Death Defender of the Crown IV" it sounds very good but I'm quite happy playing *Hollywood Ship Poker* thank you very much.

A final note to software houses, I know a lot of pirates and a lot of the people who catch (pirate) goods for the layman user programs (I feel you won't you don't) and there is only one type of protection that absolutely none of them will touch, you can extend your disk to 180 tracks if you like but it will be marked (Bartlett was particularly well protected) and it only took 5 hours to crack but no one does. The Power, Jinx, Guild of Thieves etc, or intrusion games because of the brilliant packaging...you know "please open the envelope provided and read the letter" or "please type in

word x on page y etc.

**Relevant quote**

If a party would picture you part. But I think there are certain conditions. For a start, you assume that any pirated copy is a complete copy, and that software houses are deliberately testing back games. Neither of these assumptions is true. If a game is cracked to the extent that the software house is satisfied with it, then it stays out of 10 all they want to do is get it out on the market as quickly as possible. I suspect you're trying to excuse your own piracy by blaming the "losses" of software houses in releasing games. What, for instance, how the amount of money you spend on your system got to do with the matter? You know very well what a game was going to cost when you bought your hardware.

**« Is 'Biology' a thief?**

In reply to A. Dooley's letter. It just has to be let him know what a glorifier he is. Does he not understand that by pirating software he is increasing the price of the software he doesn't want to buy? It is a pity he is a thief. He doesn't want to pay for something he can get for nothing. He is spoiling the software industry as we know it. If all of us suddenly started pirating games where would the software industry be? One game buys the software and everyone else copies. Imagine the follow-up to *Defender of the Crown* being one copy — a collage of the software industry. It's sure that Dooley would be feeling sorry for himself then.

**Jim Crockett  
Whitehead**

how much more interesting they were compared to today's equivalents, but there was one thing that stood out more than any other and that was news and articles concerning programmers. Today in most magazine news sections, what that seems to be typical is what actual companies are doing.

I find this very strange as programmers are the second most important ingredient in the industry the first being the game-playing public (of course). The same thing happens in movies, a company has surprised itself with the release of

a product and to mention of the programmer who after all made the thing? A recent example of this kind of "forgetfulness" occurred in your older magazine *Amiga Action*, in the review of *Order* the reviewer fell over himself to tell us that a few of the sound spot effects were created by someone who was a competitor in a previous issue. Not a mention of the programmer who spent twelve months developing *FreeSpace*.

Why do there have been the movement away from the programmer? Is it for one would be

to see more about programmers in the future.

**Gareth Baker  
North Humberston**

We do try to cover news of programmers, and we intend to do more in future issues. But things just aren't the same now as they were just your age. In those days most games were written by individuals on their own, with possibly a little input from a graphics artist and a musician. A lot of companies were one man

## Funny fuses

I hope I may be of some assistance to Darren Moore who was having a bit of bother with his Equinox. There are two possible answers to his problem. The first is that he may have either a faulty double plug or have the wrong fuse in it. If this is the case then either buy a new one or replace the fuse with a 5 amp one.

The second reason is much more complicated. Darren may have an unstable circuit in his house or by your computer on different plugs around the house or if the problem persists you may have to consult an electrician. I like to see how Darren feels as my own computer does not work. Often, imagine an MS-DOS game demands when an extension causes interference and even

when I moved I updated these companies' games still would not work, until I changed the 3 amp fuse in my double plug to a 5 amp one.

I hope a simple fuse change is all that is needed.

Deane (Richard)  
Tamworth

PRIZE  
LETTER

hardly, where the programmer would offer his sales manager, PR person, and so on. Now, on the other hand we see a shrinking number of software houses, producing more and more software based on non-ops, TV and film licenses, type etc. There is no longer one individual programmer responsible for the whole thing from concept through design to coding; most games are the product of teams. There are still, of course, a few 'star' programmers around (David Braben, Chris Peres), Andrew Braybrook et al) but it would be doing in the extreme if we merely recycled the same faces every ten weeks. So we'll cover programmers where and when it seems interesting to do so.

### • A better class of magazine

Reading all the messages about a better class and more adult computer magazine, I was recommended ACE, which I purchased. The quality printing and the articles are very good. I have sent off for the last three back numbers.

It's nice to see a readable page back on white or even tinted paper, and you don't need to correct or starting from posters.

We are both gentlemen and wish a Spectrum and the games we enjoy are Double, Chess, Boulderdash and other puzzle games like those.

R.E.Parker  
Hemel Hempstead

How do you see us appearing in the more mature and discerning reader. The

Brain Games article in this issue should be right up your street.

### • Endgame despair

Am I alone in despairing at the endstate in games? An awful lot seem to just wrap around back to

the beginning or just give a brief textual message after completion. This sort of thing badly negates any satisfaction that a player might get from completing a game, so at least deserve a little fun, or even a graphic sequence?

Gregory Stone  
Chesham

You are not alone. Only several people around here have commented on the lamentable state of endings. There should be more than a measly 'Well done' when you've laboured to complete a game, and it's about time the software houses and game designers pulled their fingers out and did something.

### • C64 ROM

While reading the letters page of issue 4 I noticed a plea for help by a C64 owner who was having big problems with Gaudiel. I work in a computer shop and have had this problem before and so such may be able to help him.

C64s, as you know, have been around for quite a while now and inevitably they have undergone

some changes. One such change was the redesign of the graphics ROM, and while not major there are still some differences between 'old' and 'new' C64s.

Should a game in this case be Gaudiel which has been programmed upon a new style machine, refer to the ROM and find the wrong information there (because the machine running it has an old style ROM) then it will cause an error; if this error has not been taken into account at the time of programming, then the game will crash.

As to what the unfortunate C64 user can do about it, he must go along to his friendly Commodore repair agent who will replace the ROM; unfortunately the most expensive trip in the machine) and then he will be as right as rain to play all his games. Simple, eh?

Andrew R. Layton  
Aylesbury

You're right, of course. But most software is in fact written to run in the lower resolution, so you don't often get the benefit of the all those extra pixels.

## In the arcades

As an amusement arcade engineer with 5 years experience in the trade, I would like to pass comment on some points of Greg Freeman's letter, *The Machine 5*.

Firstly game pricing. Most older games, e.g. Star Wars, Paper Moon, Wanderlog, Hyper etc command a 50p price of play. Newer games such as Double Dragon, Star Wars, Phoenix etc are 30p. Some games such as Asterbuster and some of the old shoot em ups are 20p, but this is because some of these games are 2 to 4 times as expensive to purchase. As far as my experience goes, when newer machines come into the arcade, it is better that they are set up to be a challenge to the player which can be met, rather than being so difficult that they do not encourage the player to play again. If a game is too hard or too expensive people will not play it.

Secondly, skill levels. Most machines do have a menu of options which can be altered by the operator, so it is not the manufacturer's fault if a game is too hard, although I must admit some games are very difficult to set at a level which is suitable. I found this with *700* myself. Also Greg



must remember that as a machine gets older, people will get better at it and sometimes this makes it necessary to alter the levels slightly. Most operators will try to get the best value for money. But if someone gets 10,000 that they play on the machine for hours on one 50p, there is not a lot they can do. For example in one arcade I cover there are about 400 who can stay on Star Wars for 10.00am to 1.00pm for 10p, also there are several who can do the same on Gaudiel. This does not even pay the electricity.

As you can understand these are my views and each operator will set his machines, so be nice to, taking all factors into account. So, Greg, I suggest that you put

yourself in an operator's shoes, remember that if all video were set up very hard they would not be played, if they are not played, they will not take any money. So I can't imagine anyone deliberately making their machines unplayable.

If anyone out there knows, I am trying to find out if anyone ever brought out a game for the CPC 464 called GDX. Originally it was an arcade game made by TATEL, if anyone did, I would like to buy a copy.

Ian Wootton  
Buckingham Salterton

An interesting insight is to what goes on behind the scenes. As far as C64 is concerned, you think you're out of luck, there were several more versions, but never one by the 464. Shame - if you a family game.

PRIZE  
LETTER

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The Pilgrim checks out Infocomics, budget adventures, and news of the new Atari ST adventure generator from Incentive. And if that's not enough for you, there's also the first of a two-part look at role-playing games, SHADES Diary, Pat's Patch, Players' Guide....Get to it!

## Pass the Persona, Darling...

### First of a two-part Buyers' Guide to Role Playing Games

fantasy games took a big step forward with the creation of Dungeons and Dragons. It remains the role-playing game par excellence, as before we look at its computerized offspring, perhaps we ought to get clear exactly what we mean by a role-playing game, or rather what we mean by a good one.

In *Dungeons and Dragons* a group of human players occasionally they meet be-



The Atari ST version—these Infocom titles of the program, available in five areas including Super Systems and managed in the UK by Electronic Arts. The general feature set appears using character names and corresponding map using lighting and orientation systems. The area is the same, albeit with slightly different and should be suitable for use in the largest of screens.

sub-factions, but don't call them that in their lair and get together and elect a Dungeon Master. Following the rules of the game, the Dungeon Master constructs a game-world in effect a massive maze, a dungeon and fills it with treasure, monsters, and other game characters. This is done without revealing the details of the map to the rest of the group.

The other players then form a party. Each player selects and creates a game character or persona, giving them character traits, qualities of character, strength, and magical abilities. Personas can also give a small amount of money to start with, and then they all band together and sally forth into the dungeon.

During play, the party will advance through the various locations, encountering obstacles, traps, monsters, and events. Their success or failure is determined by the Dungeon Master, who reviews their progress and determines what happens in the very precise rules of the game. Combat is frequent and depends on the roll of dice, in conjunction with the various combats' attributes. Dice rolls, interpreted in conjunction with numerous dice tables, also determine success or failure in other ventures—unlocking doors, casting spells, and so on.

#### ADDITION

What makes *Dungeons and Dragons* so successful? Why do hundreds of people spend hours, days, weeks, sometimes months banded every together, often caught up in a single game, with apparently nothing but a large map and a load of dice?

The answer is simple—the power of the imagination. As gaming progresses, you find yourself identifying more and more with your game persona. Some D&D players are even named to have together their real names, instead they answer to baroque titles, such as *Melissande the Wizard*, *Daigarn the Dwarf*, or *Delphine the Witch*. Yes, the mind does funny things, and some fantasize then the tasks it plays during a prolonged D&D session.

If the idea of magical fantasy hasn't got you, then you should know that there are many other personas available, including science fiction, ancient history and so on. And of course you can create your own persona, using the standard rules as a foundation.

#### PERSONAE

Almost all role-playing games divide personas into different categories, and usually your category is pretty determined by your

# PILGRIM

abilities. Wizards, for example, need a high dice throw for their total strength allocation, warriors would have to score highly on intelligence. Character types also include race variations and even in some games moral alignment (are you good, bad or chaotic?).

Four character attributes, however, determine gameplay to a significant extent, placing limitations and bestowing privileges upon your character. Most important of all, however, is the ability for a character to change during a game. Personas grow in power and experience as they overcome obstacles, allowing the player to triumph over greater foes, and giving him/her a wide choice of alternative actions in a given situation—save spells, for example, or hire



Myriad Soft—An unusual program, combining a real-world application description, set with the abilities of a classic development. Recently released on MS-DOS, set in a language that is not a first world.

and playing abilities. Again, the character development can contribute largely to the relative nature of the game and increase the feeling of identification that a player feels with his/her persona.

#### COMPUTERISATION

Over time computer advances in the scene, people have been desiring of the ideal DDD implementation on a more "low

cost" computer have found their way into a number of games, from PSE's disappointing Sweden's Sonnet to Infocom's recent release, Beyond Zork. The critical success of Dungeons and Dragons is expected to launch towards the end of the year, but meanwhile, what's leading things back?

Fast cost tested, it seems the cost-effective market here is the UK. The simple 640 program in large games, complete with maps, text, character interaction routines, games, and screen graphics on a resolution limited to 640, or even 1280. What you need is either a 640K monitor or, even better, a good standard disk system that can load in graphics and text when required.

However, a few games have managed to distill the role-playing concept into sufficiently small space to make them work for 8-bit machines. We'll be looking at these over the next couple of issues, concentrating on the main releases. The first pair seem to succeed: Lord of the Rings series, Beyond Zork, and Monty Python's. These are better than others, but you can be sure of finding a game to suit you amongst those listed.



Lord of the Rings by the computer game maker, Lord of the Rings is a 640K window display, showing your current location and the various you encounter. Maps and control routine help guide up to action. These four text boxes.

## Pat's Patch

Pat looks forward to 16-bit adventure creating...

London's Dennis Hall of Austinlax is interested in writing adventure games for either Spectrum or Commodore 64 and wants advice on creation and markets. For Spectrum the best choice of the screen is GEMBIT's PWF which scores over 640K in several reports. Balanced against that a 640K

availability in a number of formats making conversion to other machines simple.

As for markets, the Commodore has a large world-wide user base while in the UK alone the Spectrum is probably the most popular machine. However, with the more forward-date based adventures set for a later

## The Pilgrim's Players' Guide To The Pawn

### Part I

The Pawn was the first adventure to be released by Megadrill Scrolls, now enjoying considerable acclaim following their recent releases, Guild of Thieves and Jinder. It has excellent graphics and a rather unusual storyline. This tendency to "reincarnate" has put off some players, which is a pity because the game still has a certain charm. If you've got a copy and have found progress difficult, then relax - with the Pilg's Guide you can get back to the game and flourish magnificently. So you've woken up with a lumpy on your head. Check your clothing and its contents before heading off east. (Should you bump into a certain airborne paragon, greet him [SAY TO KINGHOLO, GREETWOLF]) and he will give you a hint, which you should take.

If you examined your clothing and other personal accoutrements, however, you will have noticed an unusual device, which you should see Korvus about. He will offer to restore it if you perform a certain task and then hands you a chest to help you. Don't open it, whatever you do.

In the passage garden, the wooden key is found where (as tradition has it) people normally hide keys. You'll also find, for some reason, a small amount of cash in the fountain.

If now you'll be able to unlock the chest, but forget the whereabouts - it's not important. Move east you look everywhere, including under things. You should leave the chest with at least three items.

The Guro has another task for you, but he won't give it to you as long as he can see your wizard, so beat down it with something. What's the best before you leave, feast-less adventure that you are.

Getting past the Boulder is pretty easy, but the solution is slightly impossible. You have to lower it, of course, but using the rise and the flow simultaneously. That means you have to tie them together. Might as well use the same thing you covered up your wizard with, unless you're lucky though this would be to work in real life. Of course, there are yet more rocks, but these ones are rather easier to get past. (I bet...)



Next month: Killing the adventurer, satisfying the guru, and more...

ly to change rapidly, especially with the growing popularity of 16-bit machines like the Amiga and Atari ST.

Two adventure writing utilities are on the way for the ST. *Glitch* seems to include a version of PWF which is currently still under development (and the details still under wraps). Meanwhile, *Adventure* are very close to releasing an upgraded version of *STAC* which has been available for a wide range of 8-bit machines for some time now. The new program, to be known as *STAC II*, will be an extension of *STAC* written specifically for the ST series. According to *Inventive*, *STAC II* will be easier to use, and considerably more powerful and flexible than *STAC*, and will allow you to write professional-looking adventure games with the minimum of programming effort. You can check out a few more details in this month's edition of *The Travellers' Times* or these pages.

One of the greatest difficulties in writing adventure (or similar) machines, such as Spectator, Assistant CPC and Commander 64 is the need to find room for all the routines required to give a feeling of reality in the game. Yet still find space to develop puzzles, graphics etc. Companies such as Infocom and Magpie's *Scorch* have attempted to get around the lack of memory by using the disk as extra memory during play, but this has its own drawbacks. Relying on disk causes a often potentially slow and needs to destroy the atmosphere (often built up) as the adventures' depth of programming. If you want good realistic examples of this, try playing an Infocom game on the Commodore 64 with a 1M4 disk drive.

With the large memory 16-bit machines, memory restrictions virtually disappear. *STAC* occupies around 100K on the 10MB, leaving about 300K free for use. Writers out-

rinely feeling stifled coping with less than a tenth of that space on the smaller machines will have plenty of scope in future.

*Got a Problem?* Write to me via ACE if you have any of the contact routines (page 2) or I begin to mention graphics. The late included but better should go in High Priority, evaluated in the conditions which stands for the best move in the game so that it is asked on only once. The other lines go in Low Priority and need not appear in the order shown, though not necessarily in an unbroken group.

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## The Travellers' Times

Edited by The *Platinum Anniversary Edition: The White Wizard* Published by Far-Future Publishing  
Price: Free with every copy of ACE Magazine

### Infocom-ics!

Not content with commands taken, linguistic puzzles, real-time, and role-playing, Infocom have introduced yet another game style to their catalogue - the animated comic.

UK players will already be familiar with the genre. We've seen Melbourne House's *Phantoms*, Parsons Soft's *ARC* and Co, and we're about to see Infocom's (via Infomagazine's very pretty *Great Games* (see page 15 for preview)). So far, few of us have been very impressed with the industry's attempts to fit comic strip with adventure. What will we make of Infocom-ics?

It's a little earlier to pass judgement solely on the basis of a demonstration disk, but even so a number of points are immediately clear. The graphics are extremely crude and the dialogue suitable for children of tender age. Unlike the British versions, there is no text entry whatsoever. You simply watch the pictures flick by, telling the story, and every so often you can press the RETURN key to switch positions, following the fortunes of another character, perhaps, or a different chain of events.

The first Infocom-ics title is called *Lane Marston Vs. The Mad Scientist* a comic spoof written by Steve Merfeld. Just in case you're thinking that Infocom have finally figured their 10, you should know that the product will retail in the USA for only \$12 - only marginally above their budget category. It's also aimed squarely at comic-reading kids, claiming that each Infocom-ics has at least 10 times more images than standard comic books and should "provide 4 to 5 hours entertainment".

The idea, then, is to compete with comics, not with other computer programs. Can Autodesk, who are marketing the product in the UK, give it cheaply enough to make this philosophy work? Prices have yet to be announced, but I can't see it knocking 300000 (which costs 20p) off the shelves.

### Atari ST Adventure Creator

...of *STAC*, so *Inventive* are calling it a new adventure generator for the Atari 16-bit machines, due for launch in the very near future. The company claim it's even easier to use than *GAE*, with added risk features and the ability to generate stand-alone programs. Save and merge of individual data portions is possible and extra conditions have been included for manipulating markers and counters.

Best thing about *STAC* looks like being the custom-ability of the package. You can define the

screen layout as you please and there is greater control over location descriptions and objects. Also is that the ability to include pictures imported from Macromedia or Digas and you have a very powerful package...if it does everything they say it will! You'll find out soon in *Platinum*'s exhaustive and authoritative review. Back with us...

### Bards Tale 2

Just to mark our short piece on role-playing games, Electronic Arts are producing *Bards Tale 2: The Destiny Knight*, a sequel to best-selling



*Infocom-ics* every so often the top right hand corner of the page will tell you, indicating a possible change of job. You can also 'feel forward/backward' through the frames...

**Beats Tale**

The program is 50% larger (in code size) and more challenging than its predecessor, say the company, and features an expanded dimension for exploration and adventure, incorporating advanced combat and magic systems.

The original *Beats Tale* remains one of the best role-playing games, so this new addition should cause a few episodes of excitement. We hope to be able to review it next month in the second part of our role-playing game series.

**Level 9 Join Mandarin**

Level 9 has severed relations with Planets Software and now took up an exclusive distribution deal with a new label called Mandarin. The label has been established by European International owners of Database Software, publishers of *Mr. Office* and is being run by Chris Payne, who remains my favorite used-to-work-for *Maniac* user in the good old, bad old days.

Mandarin will now be distributing *Time and Magic*, instead of Planets. As followers of this column will know, the product has been endlessly delayed under the Planets label, so Mandarin will be picking it up and bringing it upon us in the near future. After that we'll be seeing *Lancelot*, and after that... Let's wish Level 9 best of luck with their new partners.

**Level 9-a-Lancelot**

Level 9's Arthurian legend, *Lancelot* is taking shape rapidly now, with the game design finished and the coding well under way. It should appear on your screen in late April or early May.

The company are playing with the title *Lancelot*, and are taking great pains over the graphics. They've added more hand-drawn pictures because they feel these work better than digitized pictures, especially for interior locations. "I'm going to write an article on that," said Pete



Buon, "It's quite a complex subject." Certainly there's no denying that the company's major competition, Magenta Games, have produced some stunning interior locations using hand-drawn art

work. Remember the sitting room in *Guild of Thieves*? Or the conservatory in *Jinxed*? Level 9 have certainly got some catching up to do, but we know you can do it, babe, so get to it! ■

## Letter from the SHADE

**O**ne of the questions that I am frequently asked is whether, as an immortal, I'm fed up with it. The answer is quite simply no. It's like asking if someone is fed up with life — because in some of us, *Shades II* has, itself a fantasy one.

Look at some of the other immortals and what they get up to. The Arch-Wizards, for example, have a very important function on *Shades*. We are all told that they are there to police the game and deal (occasionally) offenders. But in fact their real function is play video and perform the ceremony at *Shades* weddings.

Of course, if you can get married, you can also get divorced too. And this is the second most important function that the Arch-Wizards have to do. A quick word to their ear (note that ear is singular, as no-one has yet discovered whether an Arch-

Wizard has two or not) and they'll formally announce at your separation. Lancelot, who does a very nice line in furries, performs accurate coronations for those who wish to make their most love affairs legal. I repeat all, on my fourth and hopefully final one (wedding, not funeral). Lancelot's ceremony was very moving (no puns about pruned pines, thank you). The Queen (Queen Antonette, Sylvia, Gwynn, Glava, and Shana, all seemed to enjoy it. But then wedding always attracts the high-fiving party-going set).

Reverend (hello, every), is the ultimate

nude immortal who is trying to make an immortal hitch out of me — and what an immortal task that is. Though the threat of being beaten up with a long lettuce and adapted heaven is enough to keep anyone in line. But that's another story altogether.

Rob, renowned for his bar post-up title, has married Sally, making this Sally's 10th marriage. Rob has also decided to make the address more permanent, probably for reasons quite opposed to mine. He and Greg Hooke, and welcome to York, with their voice and six o'clock *Shades* thrown in for effect.

Yes, these immortals are always up to something, whether it's whatever it's they get up to in the "supernatural" *Shades* Suite, or — in the case of Healer Coder's siblings, Amusingly, wearing suspenders in play *Rocky Horror Movie* for *Shades*.

Get up with being an immortal? So on or is it modern.





# SOFTWARE BUYERS GUIDE

There are some games that any self-respecting micro owner really ought to have - and that anyone new to computer entertainment ought to think seriously about getting. So here it is - the ACE guide that will bring you bang up to date with what are the best games to buy for your micro.

As the world of computer entertainment advances, some of the older games that kept us playing for months on end fall by the wayside to make room for the newer high fliers. But in the ACE guide you'll find a few old favourites that we reckon still cut the mustard.

Programs are listed alphabetically with their publishers, the machines we're recommending them for and their prices on cassette and/or disk. If a machine is not listed for a particular game it means it either isn't available on that format or that we can't recommend it. Look out, too, for versions of these games about to appear on other formats - particularly ST and Amiga.

## BALANCE OF POWER

Compositions in  
the macintosh age  
By David Crawford



## AIRBALL

Worded 4/Apple II (24.00k)

Multi-coloured three-dimensional arcade adventure that goes something to the ultimate test but is years ahead in terms of graphics detail and presentation. You are the ball in question, must negotiate corridors and rooms full of various obstacles - all leading to your death. An outstanding realisation of a popular game.

## ARKANOID

Imagine 4/Spectrum (17.00k) 4/28  
23.00k 4/2.0.00k 4/Amstrad (24.00k)  
174.00k 4/441 (15.1k) 23.00k 4/441  
27 (14.00k) 4/441 (21.00k) 4/441 PC  
2.00k

Conversion from Arkanoid the coin-op, it is far the best version of the classic Breakout. Simple in concept, the player controls a ball at the base of the screen, whacking it up and right. The object is to keep a small ball in play, knocking it off the top or opening horizontal slots in the top part of the screen. Obviously all the balls and more so in the next 16 screens. Great extra features contribute to the attractiveness. As a further coin-op conversion, Arkanoid comes out best but for a different start on the same theme and some rilly music, by MSL's Impact.



which also builds up the difficulty levels more gradually.

## BALANCE OF POWER

Multiplayer/Amstrad 4/Amiga (24.00k)  
4/441 (15.1k) 4/441 (21.00k)  
4/441 (21.00k)

Definitive strategy game for 16-biters. The player takes the role of one of the superpowers, while other the computer or a friend takes the other. There's a mass of things to see, friends and influence people on a global scale. This can be achieved in a number of ways, including





**BOUNDER**

Commodore 64/65 ■ Spectrum £7.95 ■ Amiga £9.95 ■ Atari 2600 ■ Amstrad £9.95 ■ Intellivision £11.95 ■ MSX

A great arcade bouncer-on-up, and very addictive too. You guide a ball on a bouncer that you perform to another, high above the vertically scrolling landscape. Land on marked squares and you can stay a bit longer or gain a mystery bonus. Fit in a gap or fit one of the game's many snakes, however, and you'll lose a life. Bonus-winning sections at the end of each level help ease the pace, and those tough gaps really test your timing luck for more. Right,

with graphics, great music - and it's an absolute.

**BUBBLE BOBBLE**

Atari 2600 ■ Spectrum £7.95 ■ Amiga £9.95 ■ Atari 2600 ■ Amstrad £9.95 ■ Intellivision £11.95 ■ MSX £11.95

Playability is the essence of this fun player-on-up conversion. You and a friend play bubble-clearing, dinosaurs-traveling-through-100-stage-arcade-action screens, fighting off the bunnies by encapsulating them in your bubbles to turn them into jelly fish. More frequent and various bonuses mean as you reach the more difficult later screens. Don't

missy good fun. It's 99% of the candy ride. Can also be played as one player against the computer.

**BUGGY BOY**

Atari 2600 ■ Amiga £9.95 ■ Atari 2600 ■ Amstrad £9.95 ■ Intellivision £11.95

A non-stop action driving game that will keep even the most expert car driver busy for a long while. Called the time bonuses in the attempt to complete the five questing screens, instantly playable and highly addictive. Buggy Boy should be on any serious fan's shopping list.

**CHESS MASTER 2000**

Electronic Arts ■ Amiga £9.95 ■ Atari 2600 £14.95 ■ Amiga £24.95 ■ Atari 2600 £24.95 ■ Amstrad £24.95 ■ Intellivision £24.95

Strategic chess game on the Amiga, with excellent graphics, 20 or 30 scenarios, 11 levels of difficulty and all the playing options you could wish for. Plus could fairly rely on speech synthesis.

**CHUCK YEAGER'S ADVANCED FLIGHT TRAINER**

Electronic Arts ■ Amiga £9.95 ■ Atari 2600 £14.95 ■ Amstrad £24.95

Chuck Yeager's flight trainer takes the flight simulator genre a step further by

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including a training option. Don't let guide the review through such difficult moves as screen logic and rules. With so much in one package it will take many hours of intensive fun to master of the software options.

## COLOSSUS CHESS 4

COM Spectrum £14.95 C&A £14.95 £14.95 • Amiga £14.95 £14.95 £14.95 • Atari £14.95 £14.95 £14.95

Best bet for 16-bit machine owners, with choice of 16 or 32-view, computer levels of difficulty and myriad options which enable you to play, watch, work out these problems, or against a five computer opponent.



## COLOSSUS MAJ-JONG

COM • C&A £14.95 £14.95 • Amiga £14.95 £14.95

The space-like visual game of strategy and chance. A take program and what manual make the art view to get and enjoy extending game of software for nights and hours after.



## COSMIC CAUSEWAY

Commodore £12.95 £12.95

The follow-up to the very popular bounding ball game 1-in-1000. The 34 stages of the scrolling landscape now reward you as increasingly speed as you try to guide your ball through the multitude of obstacles. Less technically demanding than 1-in-1000 but much more fun and atmospheric variety.

## DEFLEXOR

Commodore • Spectrum £14.95 • C&A £14.95 £14.95 • Amiga £14.95 • Atari £14.95

Optic on the order of the day here but this sport demanding as the player tries to control a ball down to a screen and at the same time try to destroy a number of balls that are incoming as well. You'll need to make full use of the screen, three-axis controls and pointing and shooting modes if you're to achieve your goal. Clear the first screen and you'll only have 10 more to go. Repeating cut-throat tennis substitute.

## DIPLOMACY

Commodore • C&A £14.95 £14.95 • PC £14.95

The grand old man of state negotiation tournaments finally made it onto home computer and how! The game can take up to seven players and it's an engaging and really addictive game that's a must for state negotiators.

## DRILLER

Commodore • C&A £14.95 £17.95 • Spectrum £14.95 £17.95 • Amiga £14.95 £17.95

This three-dimensional masterpiece of exploration and adventure took it into the stratosphere, but the real test was when it a whole world was contained into 800 moves to give the player such a heady feeling being there it's amazing. It's both, butting original and very playable. A real stone in computer entertainment.

## EAGLE'S NEST

Commodore • Amiga £19.95 • Atari £17.95

This is one of the better board games, especially on the 16-bit machines. The military flavor of the arena atmosphere adds atmosphere and if you're the particular style of game, you won't be disappointed with Eagle's Nest.



## ELITE

Commodore • Spectrum £14.95 • C&A £14.95 £17.95 • Amiga £12.95 £14.95 • Atari £14.95 • PC £14.95 (available from Superior Software)

Set the best space trading game, it's set a standard for other competitors to follow. One of the first space games to use vector graphics, it's a relaxing and heady effort set across several galaxies, with plenty of variety in the gameplay. You can trade legal goods in relatively safe systems, or run the gauntlet of pirates in the galaxy's danger spots with your best ball of contraband. Either way there's a nice mix of 2D-3D debugging, and so big a world as you'll find anywhere.



3D exploration reaches its peak with this huge, elaborate masterpiece. You play two characters — Fred and Heidi — as you search for the secrets that will free the galaxy. The puzzles can get very difficult indeed, and you'll often have to split Fred and Heidi up to use their different capabilities. The game's 3D0 locations are willy-they, and the animation is excellent throughout. It isn't cheap.

**HIGHWAY ENCOUNTER**

Greatly available on *The Best of 3D* compilation from 3D Soft ■ Spectrum £19.95 ■ Amstrad £19.95

Each game in this compilation is an excellent example of Britain's 3D prowess and though generally, but especially *Encounter* stands out in both departments, as you pilot your mode along with lightning lightning of threats from a future time of disaster.

**INFOGAMES' BRIDGE**

Infogames ■ Amstrad £19.95 ■ Spectrum £19.95 ■ Atari £19.95

Occupies the best of all central bridge simulators, with large playing cards



display against a suitably green baize background). Plays a good game for a computer which often is a bit short in the imagination and has a convenient card feature a wide range of options and betting operations which you can try on and off according to your style.

**LEADERBOARD**

Amstrad £19.95 ■ Spectrum £19.95 ■ C64 £19.95 ■ C16 £19.95 ■ Amstrad £19.95 ■ C14 £19.95 ■ Atari £19.95



If you only buy one golf simulation for your collection, make sure it's *Leaderboard*. It's head and shoulders above everything else on the playability and realism scales, easy to get into, with delightful graphics and some wicked courses. Once you've mastered the course on the original version, tackle *Tournamer* *Leaderboard* and then *World Class Leaderboard* based on real courses, including St. Andrews, and also conquering the Bannockburn Club, a course devised by Access to be as difficult as possible.

Definitely the football game on intense magnificent graphics, grid graphics, action and subtle computer opponents. Various improvements over the original make this a must for all computer football fans.

**MERCENARY**

Amstrad ■ C64 £19.95 ■ C16 £19.95 ■ Amstrad £19.95

It's around a city of strange buildings and explores the nature of underground warfare as presented to you in fact.



**MAGIC KNIGHT TRILOGY**

Amstrad ■ Knight (on Spectrum £19.95) ■ Knight £19.95 ■ Spectrum £19.95 ■ Amstrad £19.95 ■ C64 £19.95 ■ Amstrad £19.95 ■ Spectrum £19.95 ■ Amstrad £19.95

This trilogy is a series of three-episode arcade adventures which, as well as all the expected running and jumping, form a complex system of interaction between characters. In *Spellbound* you meet our hero (Giblet the Wizard) from the famous Castle of Mar, in *Dragon* you see him to find a way back in time after being catapulted into the 19th century, while in *Stormbringer*, the final part, we find that the magic knight has been split in two, so you play the other end. You won't let yourself, so the only solution is to bring the two halves. But how? Lots of action, plenty of thought and good graphics make all three winners.

**MATCH DAY 3**

Amstrad ■ Spectrum £19.95 ■ C14 £19.95 ■ C64 £19.95 ■ C16 £19.95 ■ Amstrad £19.95 ■ C14 £19.95



smooth vector graphics. Your goal is to escape from war-torn Tang by looting, stealing or earning an independent ship, join forces with allies of the wrong colour or mercenaries or play them off against each other.

**NEBULUS**

Amstrad ■ C64 £9.95 ■ C16 £9.95 ■ Spectrum £19.95

Guide Page to the top of eight screens

using the spiral of platforms, life and helms that from the inside. It's a highly original game that allows a fine balance between frustration and addiction added to which is the easy and fast making it a good-looking, steady winner of a game.

**PITSTOP 3**

Amstrad £19.95 ■ Available only on Epic Epic compilation ■ C64 £9.95 ■ C14 £19.95 ■ C16 £19.95 ■ PC £29.95 ■ In compilation with other games and Summer Games 3

Thrilling racing game where the screen is split into two and you can race the computer or a friend. Lots of options (2000) Pit stops, tyre blow-outs and of course the all-important pitstop guarantees to give you hard work and you leave a real feeling.

**POWERPLAY**

Amstrad ■ Amstrad £19.95 ■ C14 £19.95 ■ C64 £19.95 ■ C16 £19.95 ■ Amstrad £19.95 ■ Atari £19.95

If you want to try out your general mind-edge, we reckon you'd be better off with this original and challenging combination of strategy game and quiz than with the admittedly monster-slaying *Trojan Pursuit*. Graphically very pretty in its setting on Mount Olympus, home of the Gods.



**QUEXEX**

Amstrad ■ C64 £19.95 ■ C16 £19.95

In this impressively challenging game you hunt down criminals, but through the different screens of music, language and statistics, all within a set time limit. The screen game concept that is hard to admit generally features which make it particularly pleasing, you can carry over unused time to the next screen, all time on easy screens find and show uplays of time to make the time feature nice; and you can handle the different screens, or played in any order you wish. Excellent graphics and the play is utterly absorbing.

**RED L.E.B.**

Amstrad ■ C64 £19.95 ■ C16 £19.95 ■ Amstrad £19.95 ■ C14 £19.95 ■ Spectrum £19.95

Three-dimensional double machine games like you have seen on Red, L.E.B. offers the player a choice of three-track to cope with the various screens found





with the game. Using the popular letters of each word is essential if you hope to complete this highly addictive game.

## SCRABBLE

London Games ■ Spectrum Classics ■  
C64 £12.95 ■ £14.95 ■ Amstrad  
£2.95 ■ £4.95 ■ £6.95 PC £4.95



The hugely popular word game translated very successfully on to the micro. Fast, excellent display, and a surprisingly large vocabulary (even if it does include some strange-looking words on occasion). Will give even strong humans a tough game at the highest level.

## SENTINEL

Frontier ■ Spectrum £3.95 ■ £4  
£5.95 ■ £4.95 ■ Amstrad £3.95  
£4.95 ■ £4.95

Space and compelling strategy game played over the desaturated surface of a planet dominated by the Sentinel. Funds eventually run low because energy while trying to stop the Sentinel from absorbing you. It tests brain and has trigger finger use both necessary in this very original and large - 16,000 possible landscapes - game.

## SKULLDIGGERS

House ■ Amstrad £12.95

SkullDiggers' claims that completely out-

does the original on the particular machine. Again (see SkullDiggers above) you're digging for diamonds in rivers over 100 different screens - with a few levels each screen. SkullDiggers scores on playability (water screens to begin with and a chance of starting your profits withering) but please note:

## SPINDIZZY

Frontier Games ■ Spectrum £10.95 ■  
C64 £3.95 ■ £4.95 ■ Amstrad  
£3.95 ■ £4.95

Terminator stuff (and your spinning top) are both obstacles and useful tools against 10 fiendish little bats. The game landscape is a vast system of set walls, traps, trees, and transparent surrounded by lethal traps - and NO safety net. There are four switches to activate life and bridge gaps, but missing them in the right order can be harder than it looks. A tactical game and a lot of nice touches, but the experience's the thing.

## SPORE

Bullseye ■ C64 £1.95 ■ Amstrad  
£1.95 ■ Spectrum £2.95

The striking combination of strategy, targeted shooting and great graphics make Spore a really full game release - and it's cheaper than the lot to pick it up at £1.95!

## STARGLIDER

Frontier ■ Spectrum £12.95 (£13.95)  
■ C64 £4.95 ■ £7.95 ■ Amstrad  
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■ Amiga £24.95 ■ £26.95

StarGlider is a shoot-em-up cum strategy game featuring vector graphics at their very best. The screen is essentially your view from the cockpit, your objective is to destroy the 'StarGlider' flagship of the 'Eggs' (bats) who have invaded your homeworld planet. StarGlider uses vectors, but an outstanding game.

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### THUNDERCATS

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trun 27.95 ■ Amstrad 23.95  
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The game based on the hit TV series/comic book. In a universe even smaller than just your garage, each of the game's 14 levels is a unique tale that starts to finish with a multitude of obstacles to avoid along the way. Graphically impressive and completely playable too.

### TOMAHAWK

Digital Imagination ■ Spectrum 29.95 ■

Amstrad 23.95 ■ 1.4.85 ■ Box 27  
23.95

One of the all time great flight simulators, Tomahawk also has a strong combat edge. It is flying a US Army A-10A Tomahawk in a complex landscape and the game's realistic controls make it a pleasure to handle plane. Choose one of the three combat missions and you can fly out to attack ground targets, while keeping a weather eye open for enemy aircraft, landings, buildings and vehicles are all drawn in sharp vector graphics.



### UNS

Parade ■ Star 27 23.95 ■ BM PC  
23.95 ■ Microsoft 24.95 ■  
Amiga 24.95

Parade's Unusual Military Simulator is designed to provide a realistic battle experience based on a non-defensive mission that can be viewed in three dimensions from any one of eight directions. The game features a new six 4-16 bit colour or sequencing. The 27 version is available with all the other versions following shortly.



### URICUM

Hewson ■ Spectrum 23.95 ■ C64  
23.95 ■ 1.4.85 ■ 266 23.95  
24.95

The peak of resistance of building

shoot-on-go. Beat the dreadnought and attacking ships while dodging around six large structures. Best results found on the dreadnought and the smallest attacking vessels you'll ever see put the head and shoulders above the competition. A game not to be missed, especially now that 1000 version game packaged with the standard Parade.

### VULGAN

C64 ■ Spectrum 29.95 ■ Amstrad  
25.95

An elegant, simple and impressive weapons action game the Vulcan campaign of 1962-63. A huge playing area and 16 attack zones make the game an improvement over the same author's earlier works. Action and Great Wars. Vulcan is fast efficient and simple to play, and its fast-moving weapons should be without it.

### WIZBALL

C64 ■ Spectrum 21.95 ■ Amstrad  
23.95 ■ 1.1.85 ■ C64 23.95  
24.95

A compelling and original ball game in which you become the wizard and attempt to capture the colour crystals who are out to exterminate the spectrum and render the landscape grey and dull. Controlling the wizard is great fun and makes this one of the most playable.



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game is best appreciated on a long time.

**XOR**

Logitech ■ Spectrum 17 Miles ■  
Aminal 19 Miles 174 Miles ■ 300  
34 Miles 174 Miles

Extremely rocky maze game making the player controlling two vehicles, and controlling mazes through 10 mazes, which increase in complexity as you progress. Also in later stages, fish and diamonds to be seen when reaching the mazes and just waiting to fall on you and bring your quest to a premature end. Later still, the



fish and chickens are the best of your worries as bombs, transporters and stills stop up to 10 computers against you. Through controlling simple graphics, this one requires planning to overcome successfully.



**ZARCH**

Superior Software ■ Amstrad  
DiskBase ■ Omega and Apr 17 computers  
and development

ACE3 highest rated game in date. 4

3000 free dimensional shooting with such graphic perfection and intensity, 3000 free graphics that it became an instant classic. Zarch could do for the 3000 what the Zapper did for the Amiga.

**Zoids**

Merich ■ Spectrum 17 Miles ■ C64  
19 Miles 174 Miles ■ Aminal 19 Miles  
174 Miles

The game of the 80s, an over-driven arcade adventure, in which you face your kind with a 2000, then climb around the mountain in search of the pieces of the mighty Zoids. Tactics are needed if you're to survive long enough to come near to completing the killing game. It takes a while to get into, but it becomes an experience that it's well worth persevering.



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# THE BLITTER END...

## Face the music

There were hundreds of entries for ACE '93's Best MIDI gear competition, but we eventually managed to wade through them to bring you the results. The lucky winners, G.J. Day of Cardiff (who gets the \$1500 keyboard) and Colin Mulholland of Morley (who gets the \$500 guitar), had no trouble with the competition questions, but for anyone out there who still in the dark the correct answers were digital guitar and piano code modulator.



G.J. Day (left) and Colin Mulholland, one two going with three prizes in gifts.

Colin Mulholland, who has going with three prizes in gifts.

## Bonecruncher

Buyers of Superior Software's *Bonecruncher* (reviewed on page 1) will be interested to note the exact terms of the "Win a robot" competition inside. To get a free theme it seems you have to send them a photo of the message that comes up when you complete the game in one go. (Problem is, it doesn't say you're got to finish it, so a photo of a game someone else had finished on a different copy of most versions of the game) will do fine, in fact if it were as laughy as to print a photo of the message in ACE you could cut it out and use that if you had a Superior spokesman say "You won't tell anyone, will you?" — as naturally, we don't.

## Copci

The laptops and monitors who actually get things done on ACE are a funny middle-headed lot when it comes to packs and cones and wrinkles. If you want a good reason why they shouldn't be let loose on full-blown listings, just look at how they managed to read Chris Wiley's issue 4 page for Jack the Ripper II. The gear they had for it all claims changed into semi-circles or commas, thus reducing it to gibberish. The lines concerned should have resembled this:

100 P0KE 41761 A P0M0 4004 A  
100 P0KE 36400 B P0M0 36072 B  
170 P0KE 46864 C P0M0 46611 C  
100 P0KE 46617 C P0M0 46662 D

...but unfortunately, they didn't. Apologies, printers and obsequiousness at my end.

## Men without hats

Last month's Blitter End broke new ground with its coverage of edible hats. In yet another military mission we are being you the latest from Desford Arts, who've just listed out their UK (Euro-Talk and CPC) sites with some nifty 3D Hat Page-ant Headgear. Hats have long been the mainstay of the US software industry, of course — but these hats (St. Society has literally dozens) — but

this is believed to be a first for the UK market.

It's still in the new to be. Some commentators will be saying please let us in on it of the way to be.



## Thanks to...

This month the ACE crew would like to thank both article writers **B & K Edwards & Co** without whom this month's cover would have been impossible. If you're in the area their article, at 26

James H. Reed, is well worth a look; the illustrations positively bulge with hot new machines and classic titles, while the *Blitter Buster* stand-up in the shop front has certainly established its far share of our magazine edges before now.

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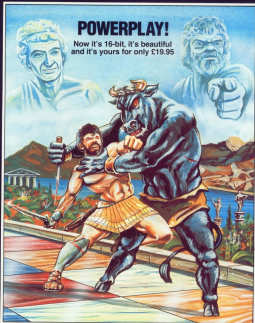
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