

ACE

MAGAZINE OF THE YEAR

- ST ■ AMIGA ■ C64 ■
- CPC ■ SPECTRUM ■ PC
- NINTENDO ■ SEGA ■

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VOYAGER

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The name of the game

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Get that ghetto-blasta gleaming, shine up that MP3, overhaul that Walkman. Radio ACE has arrived for your edification and amusement - and it's all in glorious stereophonic sound.

Radio ACE

Take it to the soundtracks of 60 games instead this issue, listen to the ACE chart numbers, find out what Bob Walkman's latest composition sounds like, check out the history of computer music, soundtrack on CD-ROM Defender of the Crown, pick up your ears to the Radio Ace Award Competition and listen to the first Reader's Composition, sent in by John Radio after he heard the Making Music feature last issue. Where'll you have to put your ears on a det after they've learned on Radio Ace.



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PLUS a host of goodies from entertainment giants Virgin Ha

LEVEL 2

CD THE MEDIUM FOR GAMES OF THE FUTURE

"...there will be a massive shakeout in the industry. Costs will rocket, games will become multi-million dollar productions..."

Find out why. Page24



TRICKS 'N' TACTICS83

Graced with the presence of Mike Singleton, TMT's main attraction this month is the first installment of a special two-part playing guide to *Star War* in Middle Earth, giving the low-down on all things Hobbit and Gollum.

Meanwhile on the *World Foot*, there's a special coaching session on TV Sports Football, and some extremely useful tips on how to get going with *WFL*. All this, plus a glutamine of information for the discerning - but unscrupulous - games player.

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IN THE PINK

In the Pink Pages this month the editor goes slightly mad, handy tips for computer gaming, featuring the fabulous *Discographic* competitive results, more news of *Play by Mail* games, a full *MicroPhone* sector report, plus puzzles, cross-words, surveys, Mail from Nigel, Mike's Travels, and (eventually!) the final frontier in the form of the *Walter* Test.



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CHECK OUT THE NAMES.COM



VIGILANTE - "When a bad guy goes too far, every man has the right to take the law into his own hands." - *Rolling Stone*. "A thriller that's as smart as it is scary." - *TV Guide*. "An intense, suspenseful, and completely satisfying thriller." - *USA Today*. "A perfectly paced, edge-of-your-seat action thriller." - *Entertainment Weekly*. "A must-see for fans of the genre." - *USA Today*. "A solid, suspenseful thriller." - *USA Today*. "A solid, suspenseful thriller." - *USA Today*. "A solid, suspenseful thriller." - *USA Today*.

JOURNEY TO THE CENTRE OF THE EARTH - "A thrilling, heart-pounding adventure." - *Rolling Stone*. "A classic adventure story that's as exciting as ever." - *TV Guide*. "A perfectly paced, edge-of-your-seat action thriller." - *Entertainment Weekly*. "A must-see for fans of the genre." - *USA Today*. "A solid, suspenseful thriller." - *USA Today*. "A solid, suspenseful thriller." - *USA Today*. "A solid, suspenseful thriller." - *USA Today*.



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MicroProse Soccer



MicroProse shocked everybody when they released MicroProse Soccer for the C64. Not only had they produced a non-militaristic product, they had done it with such expertise that MicroProse Soccer has become an instant classic on that format. Now, MicroProse have released the sixteen-bit version. Just how do they compare with the original version? Read on....

The simulation provides both indoor and outdoor action with American rules, six-a-side and standard eleven-a-side respectively. The time for each game can be varied between 2 and 30 minutes. Players may play against each other or one play against the computer. Selection of your team in the World Cup Competition is crucial, as it is in real life - it is much easier to win if you are a historically good footballing nation, such as Brazil than if you are Oman or Algeria. Conversely, if you get too good, you could try taking on the might of West Germany with yourself playing as Poland. Other control options allow for extremely varied games, with effects, such as, rain, thunder, overhead kicks and banana shots coming into play.

You are presented, on kickoff, with a look-down view - not a common one, but one that works well. On the 16-bit versions, you get no-folds (barred, full screen), 3-way scrolling (no zoom), Control your player nearest the ball with your joystick, using the vibration to kick the ball in the



direction your player is facing. The position of the joystick when kicking the ball determines the path that the ball takes, such as, high tops, banana kicks and overhead kicks. Recapture possession of the ball with a sliding tackle (the wider the pitch, the longer the slide). Should the opposition get within range, you gain control of your goalkeeper to prevent the inevitable shot from resulting the back of the net.

Three-ins, corners and goal kicks all play their part in the game. Attention to detail is one of MicroProse's hall marks and MicroProse Soccer has not been left wanting in any respect. The colour of the



players, strips, strength of banana kicks and an action replay when a goal is scored are all excellent finishing touches to an already brilliant game. Overall, MicroProse Soccer has to be the definitive football simulation - be there for the kick off!

C & VG - Game of the Month - 20%
"Undoubtedly the best football game ever produced - miss it at your peril!"
C & VG

Zip - Soccer - 90%
"One of the best soccer sims I've ever seen. Little touches like the rain on the pitch and banana shots really make it something special."
Zip

TGM Star Player - 20%
"MicroProse Soccer is of the highest quality - its fast action makes it far more playable than other soccer games."

RELEASE SCHEDULE

AMIGA	SOON	ETB*
SPIC 128	OUT NOW	£ 9.95
SPIC +3	OUT NOW	£14.95
AMSTRAD	OUT NOW	£14.95 or £19.95 dk
ADJUST	NOW	£24.95
IBM PC	SOON	ETBA
C64/128	OUT NOW	£14.95 or £19.95 dk

RATING OUT OF TEN

GRAPHICS	8
SOUND	7
STRATEGY	9
PLAYABILITY	9
OVERALL RATING	9



MICROPROSE

- Console competition heats up
- MicroProse launch new labels
- Rob Hubbard: where is he now?

ACE NEWS

AWASH WITH CONSOLES...

Nintendo's 65000-based console, the 7800, should arrive in British shops in the next month or so (based on a comprehensive range of games from the likes of Electronic Arts, Activision and Epyx). Compatible with cartridges for its little brother, the 2600 console, the 7800 offers rather more sparkling graphics: 44 graphics modes are available to programmers, and they can be used or modified just about every which way, according to a technical spokesman from Nintendo.

At the moment, games are being converted from American NTSC versions so that they will run on the PAL system to be sold in the UK, but new original games have already been commissioned from software houses in the north west of England. A team of software programmers have apparently contracted to produce six original games per year. Classic 7800 titles already available in the States include Sumner Tamm's, *Winter Games*, *Commando*, *Impossible Mission*, *Kaikyo*, *Spear Hely* and *Clayton*. Per-

haps the most interesting title in the lineup is a game called *Power Tapper*, published in America on the US Gold label. UK gamers will already know it as *Archie*, from Newco.

The 7800 has reached the number two slot in America according to our source within Nintendo, something the legs in the chair for console domination which has already been soundly won by Nintendo. Over 11 million 8-bit Nintendo have been sold in the States, and these days one in five American households owns a Nintendo console.

Nintendo refused to name list prices for the 7800 and its software as we went to press, but the console is likely to sell for less than £90 - probably £69.99 - and cartridges are likely to weigh in at £12.95 or £14.95 depending on the complexity of the game they contain.

HAND HELD ACTION

Rumours arise from Japan that Nintendo plan to launch their 1.5-

bit response to the 7800 (Egg later this year, although it is unlikely to reach British shores before 1990) of the earliest; there's still plenty of room yet for 8-bit Nintendo titles out here as it is. A hand-held Nintendo console is also rumoured to be in the offing, but only in Japan for the time being.

Not to be outdone, the Americans are working on a hand-held games machine. Rumours have been circulating for some while that Epyx have been planning a console that bridges the gap between hand-held games machines and the 'traditional' console. According to industry trade paper *CMA*, Epyx have confirmed that their new machine will be unveiled at the June CES Show in Chicago, and while Epyx are not yet releasing

any technical details, the unit should go on sale in America during July this year for less than \$150, which would indicate a sub-£100 price for a UK launch. Founder and director of Epyx, John Braun, has confirmed that the machine is due to arrive on these shores in time for Christmas next year.

Finally, a CES launch could well be on the cards for the American version of the PC Engine, and if the Engine is indeed launched in the States later this year, leading

American software developers are likely to start producing games for both the Engine and its CD-ROM drive. Further news on the decision games design is taking with the impending arrival of CD-ROM drives in the home can be found this month in our CD feature.



The 16-bit Egg console seen in hand at Nintendo's CES reveal.



Nintendo's 7800 console, reputedly the machine for which Lucasfilm originally wrote *Raiders*. Coming soon to a High Street store you for less than £90.



GOLD AT THE END OF THE RAINBOW

German software-publishing group Rainbow Arts has unveiled its links with US Gold and is to go it alone in the UK market from now on. Grand Master (Stern), the first title to be published solo in Britain, is reviewed this month and should see its shops under the Golden Casket label by the time you read this. Rainbow Arts is currently conferring the price points at which it will be entering the market. Their

games will be full price, but whether that means £15, £20 or £25 in the case of 30000 product remains to be decided.

Next off the Golden Casket line should be Circus Attractions, due later this month, and then Sorcerer is due before June. Flip back to the March issue for full details of what to expect from the Rainbow Arts group of companies over the coming months.



Applying its first use of the events in Circus Attractions, also taken from Rainbow Arts.

LIGHT FANTASTIC

It's a novel deal with hardware manufacturer Amstrad, the Mastertronic arm of Virgin Mastertronic is poised to launch a new light gun for the Spectrum Plus machines and Amstrad CPC range of computers. A Commodore 64 version of the £29.99 gun is also being contemplated, but no firm decision has yet been taken on the C64 front. The unit should be available in the next few weeks, and arrives bundled with six games: full details of the titles are currently being hot up, ready for the launch. Other software houses will be invited to write games that support the peripheral.

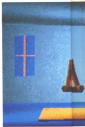
The Virgin Mastertronic light gun, which will definitely be available for the Spectrum Plus and Amstrad, and might cater for the C64 as well.

NO DUNGEON ON THE A500



FTI have finally admitted defeat in the quest to produce a version of the ST classic Dungeon Master for the Amiga 500. They simply can't fit the code into an unenhanced Amiga, and feel that the reduction in the cost of memory enhancements, combined with the increase in demand for 3 flag games, means that it's not worth compromising. More and more people are upgrading their machines, thus covering within range of the full Amiga implementation.

"My effort to reduce the size or complexity of the game would result in a product wholly unacceptable to FTI Games" is the official line, so Amiga Dungeon Master has been aborted. Bad news for A500 owners, who won't be able to enjoy the original game



or the imminent Chaos upgrade which adds new dungeons and quests to the original game.

Dungeon Master II is currently underway at FTI's American HQ and will be published in Britain by Microsoft in due course. Meanwhile, for full details of the latest magazines, Cinemas, FTI, and Spectrum Hobbyist products, check out the AGC On The Road in Reader's' feature that appears on Page 14.

FOFT UPGRADE UNDERWAY

Following reviews which marked the ST version of Federation Of Free Traders as failed, Gemstar are taking steps to ensure that the Amiga version is as polished as possible. "Everything is there in the ST version" the Gemstar supremo Ian Stewart kindly explains, "but we just got a little too close to the game during development. We're actually taking role of the critics while producing the Amiga version."

Gemstar are working on a sub-manual that includes a starvo guide to FOFT and will accompany the existing FOFT documentation

in the Amiga packaging. Once the Amiga version has been tested and released, ST owners will be able to acquire the ST FOFT manual and a copy of the supplementary manual by sending their original FOFT disk to Gemstar with £3 to cover P&P costs.

Meanwhile, if you're having a bit of difficulty getting the most out of FOFT, take a peek at the Tricks 'N' Tactics section this month, and remember, Gemstar have a full hotline service on 0142 753320. As soon as the ST disk exchange service dates into being, we'll let you know.





Optical is a new 3D graphics package from Autodesk, which will allow Amiga users the chance to build pictures like this from a combination of simple 3D shapes. Contact Autodesk on 0415 535288 for more information.

MICROPROSE EXPANDS HORIZONS

Two New Labels Launched and Teleconsort Acquired



Honda 2000 racing, is the first release from new label MicroStyle.

As we went to press with this issue, MicroProse and Infocom had apparently reached agreement in principle over the sale of Teleconsort's three labels, Rainbow, Firebird and Starboard. No firm details were available, but it is rumoured that the Freix/Metricone group might well acquire rights to the Infocom back catalogue for budget releases from MicroProse while the main labels Rainbow and Firebird transfer to MicroStyle. Further details as and when they become available.

Whatever comes of the Teleconsort deal, MicroProse is clearly gearing up for some serious expansion. A deal has been cupped with Infocom under which MicroStyle

will release the cream of the Infocom arcade crop in America, while back in England the Prose people will be dealing with Infocom's 30-bit marketing as well as releasing Universal Military Simulator II: Nations at Sea, Infocom's Dark Side and Total Collapse as due out later this month on a brand new label - MicroStatus - under which MicroProse plans to release games that require a bit of brainpower to complete. Complementing the MicroStatus label is MicroStyle, set to feature super-slick shoot-em-ups, Xenophobe, Rainbow Warrior and WIP, a Honda motorcycle simulator, are among to go any day now. More details in the Features section...

ROB HUBBARD

★ INTERVIEW

FEATURED IN
Radio ACE

For over two years Rob Hubbard held sway over the CB-Music scene, with public adulation and a fair number of awards under his belt. Then, without so much as a fond farewell, he disappeared precisely without trace. ACE spoke to Rob in Foster City, California about his sudden exit...



"I had been doing C64 and other eight-bit stuff for some time, and the ST was just starting to happen when I spoke to Mark Lewis, the head of Electronic Arts UK. He expressed an interest in my doing some sounds for them, and arranged a visit to the States for a few months, which I enjoyed immensely. I came back to Britain for a while, but when EA offered me a permanent position I took it."

Since he had a stronghold on the computer music scene in Britain, Rob's decision to pack it all in and move to America may have seemed strange to his many fans, but Rob couldn't help

move at the time: "I was starting to get a bit bored with the eight-bit constraints, simply doing the same sort of thing but on different machines. I wanted to experiment more and America is really at the forefront of technology."

"It's a different market over here; the main machines are IBM compatibles, some C64, a lot of Amiga and a lot of Apple II-III. I first started on the Tandy 800, writing a digitised sound routine for the Tandy's four-voice sound chip.

"The main problem I have now is supporting all the non-standard sound boards for the PC, which include the Ad Lib, CMS (Creative Music System), Roland MT-32 (a 32-voice generation: Rob's favourite!), and the Music Feature Card, not to mention a number of digital to analogue converters. There are also versions of two new sound boards which employ the Amiga's sound chip and the C64's handy SID."

"To get around this, I now compose music using the Purebox package on a PC, and store all the tracks as MIDI files. I have a different MIDI driver for each different sound board, and when the program detects specific hardware, it simply loads the correct driver overlay from disk and then uses the single MIDI file through the driver."

"The big advantage of this is that it saves so much time only having to produce one music file and it's also easier to compose on a synth than in real"



time. So what of plans for the future? Rob, like everyone else, is waiting for the optical disc revolution to happen: "EA have a Philips CD machine - which is one of about three in the country - and there are already a number of formats, with CDD, CDL, the PC Engine CD-ROM, the Tandy read/write optical disc system and the Next! machine which is a 90000 machine with read/write CD drive. The beauty of all these is that they're ROM-based: I can simply record in disk like a normal CD."

"Although I am now able to write using conventional synthesizers, the real challenge is doing clever things with the software. It's already going to create intelligent interactive music on the PC, as a precursor to the arrival of truly interactive

action games. For instance, I'll write a backing track that plays continually, and then as the action rolls up, I'll overlay other voices to spice up the soundtrack accordingly, and vice versa. This technique is featured in my latest project, an interactive storytelling/adventure project for the PC."

And CD-ROMs? These stories for Rob happened in 1991, when his visa was valid anyone who wants to sample Rob's recent work can listen to the Hubbard soundtrack on Rings of The Beach from EA (also found on a Tandy 1000 SX or TG), or catch a snippet of his latest music on the Radio Ace cassette.



ACE LETTERS

Time for some new topics and tight-wad decrees, pausing only to offer a measly £25 in prizes this month. And that to an oppressed minority! If you want to try to 'prize' open the Editor's wallet, get your mittens in the post:

ACE LETTERS 4 Queen Street Bath Avon BA1 1EJ.

MONEY FOR VALUE?

Why is it when you buy software for the Amiga or Z8 it comes in a box big enough to get ten disks in, let alone one! How when you open the box you have to dig through piles of adverts and books to find the disk.

When I buy software all I want is a box big enough to store the disk, and information on what keys to press to make it work. Also the screen shows the same as these boxes have not the slightest thing to do with what's inside.

After digging through the adverts and other assorted bits of paper, at last I see the manual. No, it's not the manual - it's a book about the life story of the vendor on the cover.

I lay out down on novels, cut down on other assorted junk, and cut down on software prices.

G & Shaw, Wford

them. And there was everyone thinking that special, justice and other goodies in the box made the software all the more worth seeing. Have the marketing men got it all wrong?

OK

Time and time again you hear people moaning and groaning about the price of software. If the software is too expensive, why did they buy the computer in the first place? If someone else bought it for them, they must have asked for it.

I used to own a Spectrum Plus two with over 370 games, and out of all of them I didn't have one copy. All my mates had between 25 and 100 copies because they said the price was too high.

Now I own a Gega which I have had for a very short time. The games cost between £15 and

£30, and all the games I have played have been worth it.

Why does everyone moan. Are games really expensive?

Daniel West, Kent

Not so far as most software houses are concerned, that's fairly clear. But 370 original Spectrum games, even if most of them were budget titles or freebies with magazines, represents a large investment. Not everyone could afford such a collection of games.

Moaning about the price of software and 'greedy' software houses does no good, I agree, and is generally unhelpful.

No matter how little spare cash you've got to spend on games, money is no solution to making more software than you can afford. It's theft, every bit as much as filing your pockets with out paying down at the shop. The trick is to buy games more selectively - and there's no reason why two friends shouldn't exchange original copies of games, providing it is a genuine swap and backup copies aren't held onto.

OK

FIGHTING PLAN

During our lunch hour four of us decided to pop into an environmental arcade near our working place in Central London. There we were very surprised to find that, other than a female cashier supplying change, there was absolutely no sign of more than the slightest female game-playing fanatic.

Could it be that the average British male has found something which is more appealing than the over-coverage that alleged British females?

The next day, a visit to fight recently confirmed our suspicion - the computer department was visited with the male-only species of the human race. Not even our

short skirts and icy back lights attracted their attention.

So that's that. In the not-so-distant future, men MAY stop women for the physics. MAY get the computer to make the dinner, or men MAY say 'let tonight's dining, I've got a computer' to fading wives. These four office girls known as the British 50 Ladies NLL fight to bring females into the arcade, females into computer games stores and females back into the British home as the NO 1 interest of the British male.

How? First, by playing games ourselves.

Janet, Anita, Susan and Chasida, London

Best of luck! And for the time being, that closes the debate on women and computing. Time for a new topic.

POSITIVE EFFECTS OF VIOLENCE?

I'm not only a parent, but also a Foster Parent, in view of this, please read you send my name and address if you print this letter.

In reference to Alan Blaney's letter about shockwaves being little or no effect on the majority, this opinion can be reinforced here, I hope. I have in my care a 7-year-old boy who has had a very disturbed start to his life. Having the need to monitor him at various times in various activities, brought forward many observations.

We recently purchased an Amstrad CPC 664 for the three children in our home. The inner aggression and ferocity our little foster boy has had backed away, and which even a qualified therapist was unable to unlock, went straight through the backrest, stockings, slacks etc etc etc played.

My message is this. Let the 50 gamers experience the problem, that many normal parents face from day to day. A computer

ON THE SPOT

This letter has a strange purpose. The purpose is to ask Sandra Vogel, who is one of the spokes-for women computer users to refrain from making references to 'poorly 14-year-old boys'. I happen to be, unfortunately, one of these boys and it can be very unpleasant to have an unpleasant fact of life like sports used almost as a form of abuse.

I'm, really 18-year-old boys, do not write letters complaining about the waste of space given to the modern, outgoing women who wants to make her views on software targeting known.

And the answer to Sandra Vogel's question: the reason that games are male orientated is that many more boys play games than women. And what do the software companies want to do? They want to make money, and they do this by targeting their games to the average or most common user - BOYS.

James Ball, Chester

Another minority offended and was defamed. Regarding the urge to mention spot prices, glossing over non-complexities that may have been put in the matter, there's just time to apologise to Mr Ball and any other similarly offended readers and attempt to make up for the insult with a voucher for £25 worth of software...



tacked away in a bathroom is quite often a damn good pressure release for many a family fricker. Mind your business, and let people who really know mind theirs.

A Pensive Parent

WEALTHY WORKMANS

The unfortunate thing with censorship is that the voice of reason is always drowned out by the moral minority.

Girls get upset about boy pictures because they are being used as objects, and I get upset as I am being treated like a bag of hormones with money. I find girls attractive, but using the female form and my own liking for the same depictions not only seems to me as well.

Which is why censorship cannot be left to a profit making company or to the consumer. It must lie in the hands of an independent body to draw the line is order to prevent the slow erosion of standards. The line is where the media can, be it book, film, computer game or whatever, fails to entertain or add to the quality of life, but instead shocks and degrades.

At the moment the line is drawn just about line for society today. Freedom of choice must be allowed, but we need the right to say 'no'.

Timothy Bell, Dundee

Maybe there is a case for taking down advertisements, but who is to act as the independent censoring body?

OK

OVER THE TOP

Does anybody but there ever see Archimedes? He ha ha, that was a good one.

I own a sturdy rubber-keyed Sperry from way back in 1982, and every day I use an Archimedes in school. I can safely say that the Sperry goes all over the Archimedes. Please have stopped off the rubber keyboard

for years, but have they tried using an Archimedes keyboard? It is too slow and confusing, with all the keys in exactly the wrong places.

And then we come to games. You would think a 20-bit computer would supply better games than a 40k one but no. This is not surprising when you consider there are less games for the Archimedes than there are for the Spectrum 128 which went off the production line years ago.

This letter is to let the country know what a great computer the Sperry is and what a load of garbage the Archimedes is!

Daniel Hedding, Isle of Lewis

Great computer though the Spectrum is, aren't you going just a little bit far in condemning the Archimedes? Without the Acorn, there's probably be no Virus for a start, and just you wait and see what programmers start doing as the games that once the Archimedes starts selling in serious quantities.

OK

TIMELY ADVICE

I recently bought a game for my Atari ST on the strength of two reviews, one in Popular Computing Weekly and the other in New Computer Express. Both were glowing in their reviews of the game.

I could not understand why your magazine waited until the May edition to publish a review of the game, but I now see that your reviewer has actually just tried the game and come to the same conclusion I did.

The game in question is *Predator* of New Traders. It would appear that the other two magazines drew into the type surrounding this game and I doubt if they even took the time to load it into a computer before reviewing it.

In future I will wait for your

reviews before parting with hard earned cash and getting out another wad of money from my wife when buying a new game.

C Systems, Penryn

As is our rule, we waited until the limited version of FGT was available before writing our review - which meant that we followed the two weeklies and were over two months behind a couple of other monthly magazines. Reviewing 'early' or unedited versions of games can easily lead to (an apparent) misjudgment on the part of the reviewer.

Here at ACE we'll continue to review limited versions of games as soon as we can and leave the other magazines to fall over one another and do deals in the chase for 'exclusives'. We aren't being sentimental or anything - it's just that we believe that the version of a game that ACE reviews should be, to all intents and purposes, the game that our readers will end up buying.

Disappointed FGT owners can find some good news on the next pages (please don't!) this month. Gamewise plan to offer you an update early soon...

OK

HOLY CREAM

Do you remember all those e-zips in ACE issue 5 and 7, there were some letters about Leaderboard hole in one? The only hole in one shown on Leaderboard last Month Class Leaderboard was by a *Wraithes Prolerator* and *Sad* on New ST.

Well an 8-bit center has got a hole in one. Mr. I expect others have as well, but haven't written in. By the way, I own a CGA.

Mark Fletcher, Stoke on Trent

Everyone will be furious for 60-70 minutes, according to Andy

Warbur. You've just had your first 60-minute worth Mark...

OK

ALL JOIN THE FUN

I see multiple player games as the way forward in games design. Just imagine two, or indeed more parties in the same dungeon in the phenomenal *Dungeons Master*, or later be even hundreds of player controlled characters in *Center Command* or... or... the list just goes on.

While you at ACE see large networks (a through modems and telephone lines) games becoming popular, I must disagree and argue the case for local area networks - in through direct cable links. I believe that the cost of playing by modem could make the idea prohibitive to the end majority of computer users. Add to this the fact that only a very small percentage of users own a modem, and this gets the cost up by the price of the modems and software to drive it (by no means cheap).

A direct link could be the most viable alternative to the majority of computer users - indeed many games already support this option - *PowerStrike*, *Mel Blaz*, *Falcon* to name but a few. The only problem with this form of link is the amount of equipment which must be gathered together in one place, but limiting the number of players to the capacity of the room.

While on the topic of multi-player games, I would like to appeal to software companies to produce more games which utilize the *Gauntlet II* and *Leatherstocks 4-player* joystick adapter, as this enables life into shoot-on-zips.

Scott Ramsey, Glasgow

Would any ACE readers out there who are currently using computers together and playing games mutually against other humans like to drop us a line?

OK

NEXT MONTH...

ACE gets back on the road on 1st June, when issue 22 arrives on the shelves. Check it out, check it out.

JOE BATES gets to grips with tone modules and continues his friendly guide to making music with your computer while...

BROWN LAMBSON gets ready to go on his hole and casts a professionally eye over readers' artistic submissions to the ACE gallery while...

STEVE COOM continues his foray into the world of Role Playing games on computers while...

We tell you more about Compact Disc Interactivity - Philips reveal a few of their secrets while...

The full ACE reviewing service gets into overdrive. Don't part with your cash till you've read our full-colour evaluation for YOUR machine.

Some we had with on the road to Microsoft just before Christmas) are or two of the Imageworks titles have suffered from delay: Three 16-bit only projects, *Paradise*, *Pyramania* and *Cometown Sports* won't be appearing until the latter part of this year, and although *Phobia* is complete on the Commodore 64, Imageworks are holding on to it until Tom Caswell has got to grips with the Amiga and has finished the 16-bit version planned. Meanwhile, new projects are well underway, and leading the field is *Amiga II - Megapolis*, the latest offering from the Brothers Bitmap.

ALL BYWRAPPED UP

These pretty features are being won on Earth once again, only this time the scenarios are mixing with the fabric of time. Events have been plotted in the timelines that make up our planet's history and, if the Xenite manage to deformate them, the passage of history will be altered and Xenite domination of the world will be assured. So it's time to hop into your fluffy space cruiser, your futuristic-lad, and zip off on a peevish quest to save everything we hold dear. Plenty of extra weapons can be collected as the war, including a 'messenger' that allows a trail of delayed-action bombs to be laid on the screen, and the usual array of megawatt-erful laser options.

The Bitmaps have been working with *Amiga The Stars* on the soundtrack that accompanies the game, and while the sequel is also a vertically-scrolling *Megapolis*, this time there are three levels of parallel scrolling, and the player can dip in and out of all three. The action is fast and furious in the playable areas that currently exist,

ACE ON THE ROAD TO

AMSTERDAM

What better place to introduce the Bitmap Brothers and their new game, *Xenite II* to the world's press than Amsterdam? And while everyone was assembled in the Dutch capital, Microsoft took the opportunity to divulge a hefty chunk of information on their forthcoming releases. Graeme Kidd checks out what's going down...

and SE Amiga and PC owners can expect to see well-improved come *Summer* when *Amiga* is scheduled to hit the shops.

HUNTING BUGS IN SHROGGLEWAGGLE

SOE is set to be one of the pre-ordained arcade adventures ever produced on the Amiga; the Amiga's lead Art Moddy graphics mode is to be used throughout the exciting platform game, and here the early screens demonstrated, the effect is impressive. PC, ST and C64 owners are also in line for a treat later this year, while the graphics will obviously change from machine to machine, the gameplay and ten-world play area will remain the same in all versions.

Playing the part of an eccentric Dynamic Debugger taking the



SOE, the continuing story of man's battle against insects...



Amiga - Building it up in SOE, on the quest to become a qualified Debugger.

level tests that will lead to qualification as a Licensed Debugger, and a lucrative career in the bug-infested world of Shrogglewaggle, you aim to rid the game-world of pesky creatures. Tools of the trade need to be collected and used appropriately in this arcade adventure-style task set for bug-slaying casual gamers, a GDI gun and a chamber loader that fires like a rifle.

BEING TO WAR

Microsoft's FPS label is about to



PC - Examining part of the Warhawk battlefield.

experience a resurgence it has been quite on the wane for a while, but soon PC and Amiga versions of *Warhawk* are due to hit the streets at £24.99. Historically accurate, the game offers 30 hours of the battlefield and allows orders to be issued to your generals. They interpret your

commands in accordance with their character traits, so whether you opt to play Napoleon or Wellington, the experience is close to the realty. Enhanced 16-bit versions of the FPS *Red Steel* (Activision) and *Warhawk* (Activision) are also imminent.

GOING TO THE MOVIES

Despite reviews to the contrary, *Demetrius and the Lords of the Flying Saucers* is still not looked as these pages are being written, but we should be able to bring you a review of limited version next issue. The TV Sports series

is due to be beefed up with a couple more releases in the coming year, but the next movie-inspired release is to be *It Came From The Desert*, a spoof on 1950s B-Movie horror films. Few details are available as yet, but the team of *Lizard Breath* in this zone suddenly becomes played by giant ants that arrive after a meteor storm...

Spectrum Holiday are about to release the first in a series of Mexican titles to complement Falcon's details on price and availability are still sparse, but the first dual

releases *Drift Two* is the Falcon package and offers a new world to fly over and a dozen new missions to simulate. And a brand new simulation is due for 16-bit machines. Later this year *Vette* is in the driving seat of the ultimate American sports car, the Corvette, the player can take on a selection of classic sports cars in a realising contest through the streets of San Francisco.

There's plenty more promised from both *Spectrum Holiday* and *FTL*, but for the moment every one's looking quiet about the details. More news to and when we get it... ■



Equipped with a well-timed beam weapon, tearing through hordes of raving mutants in *Xenite II* - Megapolis.

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FLAMING JUNE PREVIEWS

Manufacturers in the lightweight 80 class were not given encouragement with one not only entering in its own class into the C1 category and take on the likes of Jaguar and Porsche, but who have also been busy going high and assistance in America in the design of a driving simulators on some of the world's most famous circuits including Le Mans, Silverstone and BT. The car should be out the wire before the year has even started.

RVF MicroProse

Kicking off the Prose MicroProse list on BT (partly followed by Amiga) will be this multi-talented simulation based on the Honda RVF machine (shown) in RVF's 80. Prose are keen on accuracy they've been studying videos of some of the world's most famous circuits along with a load of technical data from Honda themselves, so expect plenty of realistic detail in with the knuckle-whittening action.

That's you in the red and black, gunning the engine and going for it.



INNER SPACE CRL

Even Harry Truman's been transported to the sixth dimension - a land of abstract physics - where there are nine levels of attacking alien warheads intent on decimating him! Only you can save him (the poor fella), it was only trying to manage the nuclear warhead bomb, when it all happened, he tried to go over her head.



684 - Have you got what it takes to save Harry, and the day?

SPORTING TRIANGLES CDS

Pay attention 'cos I'm asking questions later. Get seriously into, get something and break up your sporting knowledge because this latest addition to the ever lengthening list of sports video games is this CD-ROM offering based on the popular TV series. Watch out for it, coming soon.



70 - Have a P please Bob? - nope! wrong show.

HYPERFORCE Addictive

HOW'd an arcade challenge ever evolve that first appeared on the CD several years ago and was written to our old friend TOMY TACO/SHIT? The BT and Amiga versions due for release 50000 pounds to be just as BECTIC, 1988! First 1992 and 1993/94/95/96/97 as the original. JUST LOOK AT THOSE GRAPHS! We've had you a million times, don't exaggerate!

Could it... nah, couldn't be our Tom...



Amiga - A high-speed fly-past in your P-119F

BOMBER Activision

Want to fly lots of different planes in exciting situations, but can't afford all those flight sim's? Activation to the rescue with Bomber, a multi-aircraft flight sim with the graphics to prove. There's your fix - come to climb into the cockpit of your P-119F (remember Libby's), or your 1800-25, or even your Bost-A02 if that's more your style.

SHINOBI Melbourne House

The fable version is already out, but coming soon for both 16- and 32-bit machines will be SHINOBI's companion of the floppy popular version. This, as a major bonus, will be rescue some children kidnapped by an evil gang of rival ninjas. The children have been abducted in different locations throughout the world and are currently guarded by kooky things, so you'll have to put your shuriken, ninjabun and sword to good use.

BT - That choppy on the tea circuit does not look too bloody. Best get ready for a ramble.



NIGHTBREED Ocean

Fans of Chris Barker (he of Hellraiser fame) will soon be able to play the game based on his legend, the latest film. Apparently Nightbreed contains some of the most exotic and frightening creatures ever to be seen on the screen, so the game promises to look quite spectacular...

TANGLED TALES Origin

The light-hearted, witty approach to traditional fairy tale re-playing scenarios has the player cast in the role of a wizard's apprentice with three increasingly difficult tasks to perform as part of his training exercises. These will over 3000 hand-drawn characters to read in this book and more across 200 which tries to lighten the usually dark and gloomy mood of most games of this genre.

A wizard's apprentice is hardly likely to give you much of a headache in 19!



Suburban paradise Finer is now home to System 3, who are busy fighting a war against crime on the carpets of their new offices. Come development as the C84 is regularly interrupted as yet another 500-choke takes the dust, topped by an electrical charge that has built up inside a member of the in-house programming team. Despite these setbacks, work is tumbling ahead on a clutch of releases: five original games, across most formats, are due from the System 3 stable during the course of this year.

First game off the starting blocks will be *Cominator*, a multi-level horizontally-scrolling shoot-'em-up that takes place inside the Cosmos of a huge alien creature. All versions should be complete and in the shops by the end of this month.

Then we come to *Finer*, the games were virtually completed; graphics were nearly finished, but gameplay was still being tweaked. *Cominator* looks particularly impressive as a Spectrum game, but all incarnations are packed with gaudy background graphics that seem almost riotous and



Cominator...travelling along past some bases that have enhanced the galactic of the alien in *Cominator*. All five stages of the game, more yet to come out. Weapons systems have been built into the ship.

driving to the touch. Hacking along inside the speedy bits of a game plan is a potentially sticky experience. The 8-bit versions, like all 8-bit System 3 games from now on, are multimedimensional Mark Gale says "It's the only way to give players value for money."

KIDNAP BUNCH

Following in the footsteps of *Last Ninja 2* - due on the PC, ST and Amiga early in June - is *Rescue*, a four-level arcade game which sets the player on a mission to catch up with a gang of kidnapers. Taking the part of a vigilante character, the player must complete arcade adventure sections and then drive to the next location. Distance must be collected on the quest to catch up with the kidnapers, as well as useful items and weapons. From the point of view of the police, the hero is engaging in criminal activity, so unless he can prove his

ACE ON THE ROAD TO PINNER



C84 - The end of the first arcade adventure section in *Rescue*. *Rescue* like *Cominator* and you can get on the road...

motives to the cops in that they'll see the real bad guy and arrest him instead.

Four stages each contain a mission section in the style of *Last Ninja 2*, but the 3D environment is that bit more realistic: you can peek up a videotape, for instance, and feed it into a VCR to see an image displayed on the screen. Getting out armed only with fists, a camera to collect evidence for the police and a rack-back to store weapons and other items collected on the way, the hero's first objective is inevitably to get loaded up. Four weapons are available - an M167 hand-grenade, a baroque and an 8-bit sub-machine gun - and ammunition is stacked discreetly around the scene. Fighting past enemies, the vigilante must reach the end of the current section with all the evidence and useful items he has found along the way, then follow a car to drive to the next location.

Rescue is played against the clock - one hour of gametime is available unless you complete the mission too late - and there's more than one route to each destination, knowing the shortest way saves time, so finding a map is a useful bonus. On the driving sec-

tion, helicopters and planes zoom in to attack and, although the car does have its own defences, collecting the appropriate keypad in the adventure section allows you to access an automatic 'tearing' computer that makes steering the bad guys out of the lanes rather more straightforward. The car itself is indestructible, boasts five weapon systems and a turbocharger, and offers the driver the option to select gears manually or use the automatic gearbox.

Like *June* is the target release

time for 8-bit versions of *Rescue*, with ST and Amiga software to follow late in August.

ELEPHANTS GRAYVARD

Pinke, an arcade adventure in which an Indiana Jones-style character embarks on a quest to find the *Elephants Grayvards*, is well under way following one or two late starts. The finished game should arrive on 8-bit machines during August, with 16-bit versions following a month later.

The hero indulges in plenty of hand-to-hand fighting on a journey through four levels, each level consisting of three sections in which useful items and weapons have been hidden. Starting out in the desert, the hero makes his way through jungle and water to the next section where a native temple fan to be explored before



Pinke - Hunker the bad-weather, leather-clad hero about to join battle with a couple of evil-looking Neanderthals in a dusty desert encounter.



C84 - Driving along the road to the next level in *Rescue* and that police car. Even on all five major computer formats, *Rescue* will also look great on the *Cominator* Multi System, according to Mark Gale, an *Rescue* System 3 pro writing it for the *Cominator* too...

the action moves on to a native village contained in the third level. Finally, a magical garden is reached and the *Cominator* Game yard is found in a surreal tropical paradise at the end of the last level.

AUTUMN GOODES

When the year draws to a close, System 3 plan to launch a tennis game - no details available on that one yet - along with a multi-level, multi-level arcade adventure that takes the player through all the legends of the world, battle through Madras, take on *Rescue* and hurdle through *Rescue* get about every mythical land is featured, complete with appropriate nasty inhabitants.

And, of course, System 3 are connected to the *Cominator* Multi System. Development systems were shipped by *Cominator* to software developers at the end of March, and both *Last Ninja 2* and *Rescue*

is should be available on the *Cominator* Multi System during the PC show in September.

"We're going for the awards," System 3 supremo Mark Gale asserts, proudly showing us around the new offices that will soon be packed with programmers and artists. With the strongest lineup of products it has ever had, System 3 just might have cracked it come the giving out of gongs after Christmas. ■



C84 - Thrillsome monkey-baiting rocks from the trees and charging wild bear can both cause problems on the journey through the jungle.

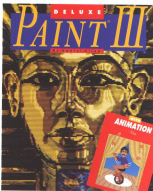
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DeluxePaint III makes animation easy. With the AnimPaint features, you can create animation just by pressing one key to record your paint strokes, and another key to play them back. You can also use any multi-rol animator as a brush and paint with it, even in full 3D.

8 New Paint Features

DeluxePaint III also adds sophisticated features to the number one Amiga paint software: Extra-halfbyte support for 64 colours; direct overcan pointing for desktop video; wrap and tie/brush modes for special effects; better font support; improved compression; and many performance enhancements, including faster perspective. Product requires 1MB of RAM.



SPECIAL UPGRADE OFFER:

Upgrade now and save £30. (Recommended Retail Price £79.99 inc. VAT)
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Allow 2-4 weeks delivery. BPaint I owners can upgrade for £55.



ELECTRONIC ARTS®

ARCADE ACE

Andy Smith teams up with a mythical creature and a couple of not-so-mythical hard men in this month's up-to-the-minute round-up of all that's new and happening in the arcade scene.

SAINT DRAGON

Jaleco



The Japanese have some really ideas when it comes to game titles. Red Dudes versus Dragon King was bad at first, but Saint Dragon? Well, they know how to make hit arcade games and, judging by the success it has gained in Japan, St Dragon is destined for the top-four list.

After a quick look at the screenshots, it will come as no surprise to learn that this is a one player horizontally scrolling shoot-em-up over six stages. You control the scarily speedy Saint and must manoeuvre through the stages avoiding the flying and ground-based aliens that infest the place.

So far, so standard, but, as might be expected, there are a couple of twists in the tail. Being in the form of a dragon, you're not only a head, but also a beating body which cools and heats as you move around the screen. This could be a major problem if you fail to dodge all the fire dished out by the aliens, but here's the twist: the body can absorb shots, so it's just your head that requires protection.

That said, you can't afford to get bleak, because contact with any aliens on any part of your body causes you to lose a life; and here's the real little tick, in a normal big-shouldered arcade game you can pick up extra weapons which improve your firepower. The same is true here, but whereas normally of the coins disappear when you lose a life, this doesn't happen in St D. Just as well, because the sheer number

The final end-of-level question, a huge mechanical ball. You're armed with ray lasers, so be shouldn't be too much trouble...



Level One: you're limited firepower at the moment, but luckily there's not much around.



That's better: taking out some alien installations with your multi-ray firing.

Level Two: things are beginning to get just a little bit more...



of aliens means you'll need every bit of help from the ray laser shots or bouncing bullets that you can get. Not merely because some of the prey don't take themselves as crosses, but also because there are a fair number of big go-for-the-weakness enemies, in crosses, that pose a problem that being up from the base of the screen just when you are hacking through a particularly prolific wave of aliens.

So it's got a couple of extra features, but it's just another shoot-em-up, isn't it? Well, yes; but it's certainly one of the classiest to appear since it's got the difficulty-rating bits just the right spot between frustration and addiction. If you're looking for a top of the range shoot-em-up, Saint Dragon is the business. ■

EXTENDED PLAY...

FIGHTING HAWK

• Taito

A vertically-scrolling shoot-'em-up in the flying (and mostly) involving much shooting of enemy fighters and bombing of ground targets, with bullets and guided missiles. As you fly through five stages of enemy territory trying to ultimately destroy the big enemy bomber "Dragon Hat", it's original, but very enjoyable.



NASTAR

• Taito

You outgadget your frog you, braving a bit of evil ghosts and ghouls to protect a sacred stone in the land of Nostaria. One or two players can join in this horizontally-scrolling hack-slash that boasts loads of extra weapons to

pick up and loads of bosses to kill, including end-of-level bosses, and loads of jumps and clones. Fans of Asterix at all find it well worth playing.



RALLY BIKE

• Taito

The joystick-controlled motocross car has pioneering across the States through six stages, avoiding all manner of obstacles, including other road users and helicopters flying overhead. Pull into jersey options to keep your fuel tank topped up or you'll never make the check-point in time.

Challenging stuff that's bound to appeal to driving and racing fans.



IKARI III



Right, who's next?



The quest of the four warriors continues. Their wit and brawn have already proved they're tough stuff in two previous games of beat-'em-up action, and now they're back. This time they've been drafted in to rescue a presidential candidate's kidnapped child (they don't mention which candidate's kid, but you can work out for yourself where the inspiration came from) it would appear that the child has not in reality been kidnapped, but it's a good enough excuse for a game.

Either one or two players back, chop and kick their way through the changing enemy territory, and fight against increasingly tough enemy soldiers, using an eight-way joystick and punch and kick buttons. The enemy appears from all parts of the screen, and many of them carry weapons such as knives and machine guns. A well-aimed blow can send the enemy flying with a bit of a headache and reduce him of his weapon, which you can then pick up and use



(Missed) Preparing to meet the first one-at-a-time guardian. That better not go to his mouth first.

(Fighting) That machine gun should prove to be of much more use.

against someone else. Fail to pick up the item and it'll start flashing before a either disappears or — in the case of grenades and of drums (it explodes, burning anything with blast range).

You get three lives for your money, with an energy meter at the top of the screen showing your state of health for each life. Apart from the 'one less and it's dead' brigade, there are some reaper guards to destroy and analo-level guardians to defeat, so you'll have your work cut out.

Ikari III has great graphics, great music and effects and great gameplay. Of course it's best played with a friend, but even solo it's got plenty of action and excitement to keep you chasing the money in. ■



Thanks, once again, go to Electrocoin for all their help and assistance in producing Arcade ACE.

"In seven or eight years there will be a massive shakeout in the industry. Costs will rocket, games will become multi-million dollar productions..."

Phil Adams, Spectrum Holobyte President,
interviewed in ACE a year ago.



CD Interactive games now will include full-motion video scenes against computerized backdrops, just like this TV advertisement for Clark's store produced by IBM Business Partner...

CD INTERA



With the advent of the Compact Disc as a data storage device, computer entertainment is about to enter a new era.

Tomorrow's game designer will work with full-motion video and HiFi quality synthesized sound. Games will become more like movies, and the successful publishers will be those who have invested in teams that can operate in a multi-media environment.

The bigger companies are already bringing together musicians, scriptwriters, artists and directors and providing them with the software tools and authoring systems they will need.

The first fruits of these labours are beginning to be seen, and the hardware is a reality. But much more is yet to come...

You may have seen it on television as a robot in which a small boy and his dog are spirits in a computer game, taking on a massive monster armed only with a football. A clever ad, maybe, but could it really be a glimpse into the future direction of computer entertainment?

The answer is yes, it could. Already vibrant events with new technology and new ways of thinking about the nature of audiovisual entertainment are leading to a new form of computer gaming and the buzz word is 'interactive'.

The hardware is already there, or nearly. The key will be Compact Disc storage, providing 100 megabytes of information on one large shiny disc. Already, the worldwide installed base of CD-ROM drives has been esti-

mated at some 110,000 units, with 25,000 units in Europe, most of these attached to IBM PCs or compatible machines, but some 5,000 linked to Apple Macs around the world. The PC Engine CD-ROM is already forecast to sell 670,000 units in Japan alone.

But CD-ROM storage can't improve the graphics or sound quality of the host computer it is attached to. The PC Engine games so far have been updated versions of cartridge-based standards, and PC CD drives have been used to create a version of Defender of the Crown that sounds marvellous there in quick turn to Rolex 4CD but plays just the same.

The path of real progress lies in finding a way to mix genuine video pictures and music with computer control. Compact Disc video

and interactive television have traced a path for entirely new forms of dedicated systems to be developed that will allow game designers to mix full motion video sequences with computer interaction.

TALKING TO YOUR TELEVISION

Developers have been working on interactive 4CD games with ideal fit in America. The New-Master Interactive Vision system is due to be launched in the States this summer, and although it is aimed primarily at children between 3 and 8 years of age, it offers the opportunity for the viewer to participate in a TV program, making choices by toggling a controller or pressing one of two buttons.

The interactive 4CD technology is fairly simple - great for kids' according to GameWeek - but there's more to come. We can't talk about it yet, but there are more capable systems in the 4CD interactive world. With the other staff we can do real interactive movies..."

MAKING MOVIES

Even the PC Engine could provide a user base large enough for software houses to start producing big-budget games that approach the complexity of movies, but the real contenders

ACTIVATED

WHEN LAW FAILS...VIGILANTE PREVAILS

VIGILANTE

1994 NEW YORK — The police dare not patrol the streets. The army cannot control the city. Law and order no longer exist. — When street gangs dominate a city. When ordinary citizens no longer defend themselves for enforcement agencies are powerless to help. Your last chance is —

VIGILANTE
— THIS
TIME IT'S
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A CDI pilot system

Back in June last year, *3D!* brought you news of Electronic Arts' (EA) pilot system - the Demo Station. Twelve months later, the EA Interactive team has already developed a fully interactive team - a complete home videogame for EA's CDI demonstration. This demo will be EA's CDI demonstration. This demo will be EA's CDI demonstration. This demo will be EA's CDI demonstration.

The game is played rather like *Archon* or *Demolition*, except the images on screen are displayed from various angles in EA's offices. Pick it things on screen, click, and you can examine or use them.



Entering EA's office, you have a strange feeling that something is wrong. Suddenly a phone rings - someone is picking up and you hear a voice announcing the kidnapping...

But the usual flow of activity - something must be seriously wrong. Using the screen, point and click on items to explore...



Even more like *Archon*. In its own way, the team has been successful in being to EA's...

are the CDI and DVI standards.

Compact Disc Interactive is the result of a joint development between Philips and Sony. A CD player will contain a CD audio player which will be able to handle reading audio CDs; but it will also contain the Multi Media Controller, or MMC. This is the hardware that allows audio, video and text data read from the CD disc to be decoded, controls play and runs interactive programs.

Digital Video Interactive is based on two streams, supplied to video buses for an IBM PC AT or compatible: the Pixel Processor and the Output Display Processor. Essentially by storing the differences between frames of video rather than complete data on each frame, DVI allows massive data compression. A single frame of video is compressed from 600K to 5K, and the audio accompaniment is reduced to 500 bytes per frame before it is stored. Unlike CD, DVI is not tied to CD as the storage medium but the massive data capacity of CD makes it a logical choice.

DVI decompresses the video and audio data in real time, and allows full-screen, full-motion video to be used. CD, on the other hand, is likely to have a limited capacity for full-motion video; at present a window occupying half the screen size is about the limit.

CD and DVI systems are currently with software developers throughout the world, although much of the development work currently going on is in directed at more serious, directly commercial applications like education, training and sales, not at their entertainment.

A NEW ELECTRONIC ARTSFORM

Meanwhile, leading software houses are preparing for a new way of writing games. Electronic Arts, for instance, is concentrating on providing tools for writing games, tools that can be used by musicians, artists and scriptwriters who have never even thought about programming computers, let alone text. CD games will require megabytes of code? Greg Bear from Electronic Arts notes, "and we tend to develop tools that allow games to be written with a quick turnaround. For a consumer medium to succeed we need a wide group of skilled people without programming knowledge, who can use tools to create products."

Electronic Arts are using specialists to work on their games, building up a design team which contains people from specialist disciplines. Bob Hubbard, for instance, was brought from the UK to work on a code package for EA which allows musicians to compose music on MIDI and bring a database to the programmer. "Musicians don't need to know anything about programming, so we can use people who have experience in scoring movies - we can use work directly with composing musi-

cians who can convey the underlying emotion in their soundtrack", Greg explains.

"We're starting to work with scriptwriters, people whose trade is writing stories, teaching them what it means to write an interactive script and we're always working with graphic artists who do texture rendering and animations. Now we have a prototyping tool that allows us to film real-motion video, capture it in a machine and let the artist manipulate the images easily."

The emphasis is on creativity, and with creative talents being run by directors and producers there could be obvious parallels to the film world. Are EA looking to make computer movies and could there be a crossover between the worlds of computer game programming and movie making? Not so Greg Bear sees it - the two media are different. "An interactive product has to be designed to last

much longer than a film - we want to create hits - let's create something without creating a movie."

REAL CINEMA SOFTWARE

Cinemaware was set up in the first place as a rehearsal for new interactive technologies. President Bob Jacob explains: "We're using home computers as a training ground, developing and refining the methodology for interactive games," whatever technology wins out, Cinemaware will be ready and waiting. As David Riosler, head of the Cinemaware Interactive Group puts it: "The way we have done our designs, particularly in the last year, they can all be expanded into CD without being rewritten."

"Currently we are doing work on authoring tools, seeing what we can make of full-motion video windows on the screen. For

A PILOT'S DVI SYSTEM?

Apart from full-screen 3D-motion video, one of the main advantages of DVI is the capability to move between video world 3D objects. This flexibility is particularly useful when simulating real world scenes - or indeed situations. Here's how the pilot's view of the city changes as the plane is flown across the terrain...



...flying along, you catch sight of a small red truck on the ground...



...looking in to the street, the truck grows larger...



...Ah yes, it's that dog from the EA Master's Voice advert!

instance, in *The Sports Football* we could replace the digital picture of the coach with an actual person, and we could use camera views looking down the sides of the game," he continues.

The full implementation of CD allows three planes of video to work independently on the screen, and the Commodore team is already working out how best to use the new medium. "With *Beholder*, for instance, we could forget about the digital picture of the castle and build a model just as they would for a movie. The photo of the castle would be placed in the middle plane, and as a photograph of a 3D object it would have 3 axes depth. We could then have a digital sky in the background with thunder and lightning effects perhaps, and clouds moving along. In the front plane we could shoot a real knight and use frames of a real person as a kind of video sprite.

"Video sprites could be used to give characters, and with the opportunities for audio soundtracks we reckon it will be possible to get real emotional responses from a game in the same way as you can from a film. Without facial expressions and body language, you can't create real emotional responses, but CD could make it all possible." The team at Commodore is thoroughly excited by the prospects of the future: "We're all for the future world and we're dying to have real dialogue, we're really looking to get going", David says.

INTERACTIVISION

Bruce Davis, President and Chief Executive Officer of Medagoric - Activision UK's American parent company - was emphatic about his company's commitment to the CD future:



"When it happens, we'll be there" he said. On the CD front, Activision is one of the few software houses to have written its pilot programme - *High Gribble*, produced in conjunction with Imaginering, William Volk, Director of Technology at Medagoric is eagerly awaiting the arrival of CD: "We hope it comes out soon... the delay is really frustrating."

William is more enthusiastic than most about the potential for DV. The most interesting aspect of the system, he asserts, is the facility for mapping textures onto solid objects. "It's the most interesting thing about DV. It brings realism." As for so far's conversion, the big snag is that chipmaker Intel has bought the DV technology from General Electric; "Intel are in the best position to drive down the price of the chips to a level that allows the consumer to afford them", he says.

Apart from their development work with DV, Medagoric have also produced a CD ROM entertainment product for the Macintosh. Initial

ly launched late last year on a set of five standard floppy disks, *Beholder* has been available as a Mac CD ROM product since January this year according to William Volk. *Beholder* uses the exclusive Macintosh software system, HyperCard, in an innovative way (see panel). "Beholder uses a portion of HyperCard but we can't do all we want to with it - Beholder CD ROM taught us a lot, and we're now looking into building systems of our own to move things around," Bill explains. "Very few people have the chance to get a CD ROM title yet," he asserts, explaining that Medagoric are investing in the future, developing authoring tools and game design methodology ready for the arrival of the technology: "we're preparing to support mass-market CD ROM once the platform is there. We're looking at the PC Engine which is due for launch in the States very soon, and we're very interested in that and in the new Nintendo and Sega consoles. We intend to be flexible and go on to a variety of platforms -

PHOBIA

TO SLEEP, PERCHANCE TO DREAM... but don't sleep too deeply 'cos all your nightmares are waiting for you in this unique arcade blast from Tony Crewther.

Phobia is set in the minds of men, feeding on every human fear: spiders, fire, death - and dentists!

Grab hold of your courage and prepare to face the frightening challenge of each of the 14 planets that *Phobia* have set against you. Can your body take the heat, can your brain take the pressure?

Available on: Amiga £24.99, Atari ST £24.99
Commodore 64 Tape £9.99 Disk £12.99



In the interactive world of the Manhole, click on the beamwalk to see a fellow leech on the move, and drive down... South again and enter at the main door to the floor and it opens... click again, and pass through... click on the stairway and several tunnels another adventure.

series computers can have CD-ROM drives, and CD-ROM drives are not just for games. The PC Engine with CD-ROM offers a quality that is not that much lower than the CD-i standard, and with luck there will be a bridge between computers with CD drives and CD-i equipment - people should be able to load the same disk on several different systems."

THROUGH THE MANHOLE

Described as a fantasy exploration for children of all ages, Manhole takes the user into a charmingly convoluted world that borrows from the scenarios of classic children's literature such as Alice in Wonderland. The player is the active, first person explorer who wanders around interacting with the environment.

First, click, watch and listen: the only four things you need to do when exploring the world of Manhole. At the very start of the game, you can see a fire hydrant and a manhole cover. Click on the cover and it moves aside as a

giant beamwalk grows into the sky. Three routes are now available to the player: into the hydrant, up the beamwalk or down into the underworld world made for mutants.

Gameplay is both simple and addictive. You just wander around, touching things, feeling out what happens. Sometimes one of the whimsical characters will speak to you. Touch doors or desk drawers and they open, revealing hidden items. Objects in the gameworld can be manipulated by simple touches: musical keyboards can be played, books can be read, TV sets and radios can be turned on, and all the while appropriate digitized sound effects make the experience real. Overall, the effect is both pleasing and believable to the adult mind - is the hands of younger children Manhole will certainly captivate.

As a demonstration of the potential of interactive CD-based products, Manhole is an interesting plot. While compact objects, non-realistic cartoon graphics with simple

in animations and fantasy scenarios are not exactly unheard of in the world of entertainment software, the way in which they are linked together in Manhole opens new vistas, much wider than those opened by laser vision games such as Dragons Lair.

In Manhole, all the player has to do is move a cursor over an image and click on an item of interest. The interactivity is total, the experience of exploring a new and strange environment convincing. Just imagine what the Manhole experience would be like with full-motion video star from live action...

INTERACTING WITH VIBRIBO

Of all the software houses exploring the possibilities of interactive CD, Virgin Masterframe is perhaps first placed to produce multi-media programmes. Parent company Virgin is already involved in books, music, film and video as well as entertainment software - all creative disciplines that will feed CD-based interactive pro-





Drop-frame video can be linked together to produce appropriate motion sequences. Before making a complete listing, you need to make adjustments for the local computer frame...

grammer of the future. No surprise, then, that Virgin has set up an interactive Media unit...

About 18 months ago work started on an interactive programme based on Sir Ranulph Fiennes' 1982 expedition to the North Pole. Several hours of movie film together with 500 slides were made available to the Virgin team, who sat down to design an interactive simulation of the real expedition that would be "inspiring and entertaining as well as instructive".

The aim was to simulate the total experience of planning an expedition and carrying it out - participants should be able to interact with the professor as well as with the programme. But this was intended to be more than a "textbook" laboratory project. The programme was expected to sell, and even make money... "The main academic background to the project was to produce a programme that developed interpersonal skills, and we wanted to patch it, so to speak, on the standard system in schools - the BBC Comendary system" William Bennett, the main aim of the North Pole project was to develop the methodology for writing interactive programmes that involved video footage and still pictures: "we went into it with clearly-defined criteria" Mr Bennett says, "but we looked to develop skills in-house for products on CD - we felt it was worth getting into early to learn about the techniques involved. The only way to learn is to actually produce something."

It is unclear which medium will come out when in the next year or so - people are guessing will relatively scarce products, and although video and computers are not the

best of things to marry together in a friendly system, it looks as if CD will be the delivery medium for this type of product. Our programme was designed to be transferred to CD-based systems, but as the laser vision system is here and now, we used it."

The Comendary System, which uses a laser vision paper linked to a BBC computer, has been installed in around 1,000 schools. The hardware costs around \$4,000 to top, if you already have access to the system, the Virgin North Pole Expedition software is available for £199 including manuals, a teacher's guide and a copy of Sir Ranulph Fiennes' book, *To The Ends Of The Earth*.

BVI OR CVI?

William Bennett and the Virgin interactive media people have looked at both CVI and BVI and are keeping a weather eye open on all the new interactive technologies. "We don't mind which technology wins" William explains, "providing the right design decisions have been taken, you can move the product to any media. For instance, we've already learnt that it's better to take images from film than from videotape."

"The difficulty with BVI is that it requires a powerful engine to decompress and film not sure you actually need to do that in interactive programmes. Interaction is nonlinear, so there isn't the need for the full motion video capabilities offered by the BVI system. It may be more effective to use the background still image generated by CVI, if only because of the variety you can introduce into the programmes."

"We definitely has a place - there are some great applications you can envisage for it, but the PC is not necessarily the place you'd start if you were going from here - you need two boards and a PC to run BVI programmes, and it's going to be difficult to get the hardware since below £2,000 and £3,000. From the programme-maker's point of view, working with BVI means everything has to be pre-defined and compressed down first. CVI, with its use of full motion animation on the screen, may be more flexible. The latest version of CVI may allow full screen full-motion video, but even if it doesn't I don't think it's much of a drawback - designers just need to think what they're doing with it."

FORWARD WITH VIRGIN

The Virgin group as a whole has a large range of entertainment interests - including a CD pressing plant in its *Defeat Street Magazine*, which could just as easily produce CD-ROM disks as music pressings. Virgin interactive is working on the plots for a couple more educational products at the moment. "We're looking at specific CD-only products, which are probably a year ahead or so, the hope is to be able to deliver games on CD-ROM eventually."

While home entertainment products on CD-ROM might be a way into the future, CD-based arcade machines from Virgin's Arcade subsidiary are a definite possibility, although no firm details are available at present. Today's technology, however, would allow the CD-ROM designer to produce a much more sophisticated game than the comparatively simplistic *Dragon's Car*. ■

Travelling across the Fennies...



Just one of the problems encountered on the trek to the North Pole. Multiple choice questions are answered by clicking on the best options.



Illustrations based on real-life data from the expedition are part of the attraction. Unlike most games, however, you can't lose a life by making a mistake.

Next Month ★ The full story of CDI...

POPULOUS®

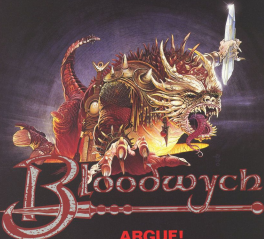
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Bloodwych

**ARGUE!
BARTER!
LIE THROUGH
YOUR TEETH!!!**

As the people of the Bloodwych awake to a new dawn, they find a stranger in their midst - from one of many races he has come. His task: to halt the demons that lie dormant within the Castle of the Bloodwych.

Unification of the Crystals of Sangria will secure the Belhaven in his lair for all eternity. Should they remain separate, then he shall rise to bring darkness into the world.

This unique role playing fantasy game allows greater interaction with the environment than has ever been seen before. Argue, barter, negotiate - even lie through your teeth! The fully implemented personalities of all the characters in Bloodwych allows a rich style of role playing that has only been dreamed of.

With one or two player simultaneous mode, this is the game that you've been waiting for. Bloodwych for those that dare!



Asa 3P screenshot



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Atari ST	£24.99
Spectrum (tape)	£9.99
Spectrum (disk)	£14.99
Acornstrat GPC (tape)	£9.99
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IN CONJUNCTION WITH ACE, VIRGIN
MASTERTHORN ARE GIVING AWAY THE TOP
OF THE RANGE CONSOLE PACK, ALONG WITH A
STACK OF CONSOLE-ING PRIZES FOR RUNNERS UP

COMPETITION

The prize in the great Virgin Masterthorn giveaway is the Sega Super System pack, which contains the basic console unit, two controllers, the light Phaser and a set of 3D glasses. As if that package, containing several games for the light gun and 3D glasses, weren't enough Virgin Masterthorn are throwing in a couple of extra Sega games of your choice and a Sega T-shirt.

Should you miss the big prize, next in line is a trendy Virgin sports bag and trackkit: the latest equipment for getting fit or losing the excess equipment for getting fit or losing the extra nibbler for attempting athletic crossings is left as balloons. Then the runners-up packs are on offer: each containing a game from the Melbourne House label, a game from the Leisure Genius label, and two games from the massive Masterthorn budget collection. So go to choose the titles you want...

The challenge we're setting is simple enough - all you have to do is answer five straightforward questions, then complete the straightforward questions, then complete the straightforward questions, then complete the straightforward questions with your name and address. Remember to choose the games of your choice, and as a gentle reminder of what's on offer, here's a round of the Melbourne House and Leisure Genius ranges that we prepared earlier...

LEISURE GENIUS

Baron's C64, Spectrum, Amstrad
Double Dragon C64, Spectrum, Amstrad, ST, PC, Amiga
Mastoply C64, Spectrum, Amstrad
Madballs C64, Spectrum, Amstrad
Scrapies C64, Spectrum, Amstrad, ST, PC
Wah C64, Spectrum, ST, PC, Amiga, Commodore

MELBOURNE HOUSE

Double Dragon C64, Spectrum, ST, PC, Amiga
Assault Amiga
Ballplayers ST, Amiga
War in Middle Earth C64, Spectrum, Amstrad, ST, PC, Amiga
Masterthorn PC
Redford ST, PC
Verduken C64, Spectrum, Amstrad
Terminator C64, Spectrum
Beam C64, Spectrum, ST, Amiga

Down to the questions. The Virgin group was founded by Richard Branson in 1970, and in the last 10 years it has expanded into a variety of activities, building on its early recreational foundations. Today you can play computer games published by the group. To access the Atlantic to America with the Virgin airline, buy a Sega console distributed by Virgin and, of course, join into a Virgin Megastore to buy books, records, CDs, just about anything you need to have fun, in fact.

WIN A SEGA SUPER SYSTEM



1. Fill in your name and address (including postcode) on the form and return it to: Virgin Masterthorn, c/o Virgin Records, 150 Tottenham Court Road, London W1P 0LP.

2. The five questions covering the Virgin Masterthorn ranges are: a) How many titles did you own in the last 12 months? b) How many titles did you own in the last 12 months? c) How many titles did you own in the last 12 months? d) How many titles did you own in the last 12 months? e) How many titles did you own in the last 12 months?

3. Melbourne House has published three games known as 'Madballs' titles of Middle Earth, Space Invaders and others.

4. There have been Masterthorn prizes.

5. Read in the country of the origin (USA, UK, Canada, Australia) the latest game programs of Leisure Genius and Mastoply, which have been distributed in the Virgin Masterthorn computer by Leisure Genius.

NAME _____
ADDRESS _____
TELEPHONE NUMBER _____
COMPUTER OWNED _____

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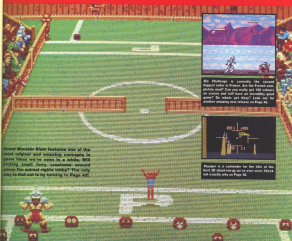
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SCREEN TEST



Grand Wrestling II features one of the most original and amusing concepts in game design we've seen in a while. Will kicking small, furry creatures around among the animal rights lobby? The only way to find out is by turning to Page 42.



Blade Runner is generally the current favorite choice in America. Are the Forests really that good? Can you really get the cadence on screen and still have an interesting game? Do robots get along? Look out for another amazing new release on Page 42.



Blade Runner is a contender for the title of the best 3D shoot-em-up in that genre. Check out details only on Page 42.

THE ACE REVIEWING SYSTEM

THE NUMBER

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CRITERIA

The review consists of several criteria: graphics, sound, playing mechanics, value, and replayability. In the reviews, I try to mention the most important factors in each category. The ACE review score is a combination of all these factors.

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FEATURED IN
Radio ACE

VOYAGER

OCEAN voyage to
the moons of Saturn

EARTH, 1971. Major world news: the Queen of England celebrates her Silver Jubilee, the Sex Pistols join in the celebrations with a lip up the Thames as a boat blocking out their latest chart topper 'God Save The Queen' and the satellite Voyager I is launched.

Somewhere in space, 2032. The Sex Pistols are long since forgotten, Queen Elizabeth II has died, and an alien life form scoops up Voyager II and takes the satellite back to its home world to decipher the information it holds.

Earth, 2139. Present-day items appear in

the Solar System, wiping out all space-borne craft of terrestrial origin within the System in what's undoubtedly a sign of aggression. Several peace envoys, sent to negotiate with the aliens, fail to return; the world forgets about the rain forests and the Russian forest to concentrate on imminent invasion and almost certain destruction from the hostile aliens, the Rlooi as they've come to be known.

Obvious to all this is one Luke Smythes, a criminal returning to Sol after a 50-year stretch of Investigative Exileation. Now, Luke is not alone, and he soon learns of the alien presence and their intentions. On closer inspection, he discovers that the Rlooi are using the 18 moons of Saturn as bases for

BT VERSION

The smooth, fast, colorful graphics help to make a very believable game world. You'll be hooked on this after just a few plays, and it'll take you a while to beat. But it's just looking that extra something to keep you playing for months.

GRAPHICS 9 IQ FACTOR 4

SCORE 7 FUN FACTOR 4

ACE RATING 883



Drop a missile and you can view, and shoot at, the missiles from inside your craft. And if you're wondering what your craft looks like - here it is.



If you're in a tight spot, launch a nuclear missile to confuse the enemy craft. One either makes a run for it or bangs the alarm as they come flanking to the missile.



Pick up the pod that enables your craft to special-attack and suddenly being on flying alone becomes a lot easier.

her forces. So there's only one option open to her. He'll have to defeat the Russian army single-handed.

You take the part of Luke and, starting at last, endeavor to wipe out the alien craft from each moon before slipping through a very gate to the next. To do better you've had to leave your mothership and send it on to Probe the tenth moon to wait while you scurry around in a shuttle. This shuttle is more low-ly and not well equipped: in fact, it's only armed with a lightning laser, a couple of atomic bombs and some power pyramids (total energy bombs). You can pick up pods from the surface of each moon which were dropped by the mothership when it passed over, and enhance your firepower. One pod even allows you to transform your tank-like shuttle into a flying craft and back again at the touch of a button. This proves to be very handy, especially when you need to destroy air-based alien craft.

Each moon is more heavily defended than the last, not merely in the number of enemy craft, but in their intelligence. Missiles, for

example, is infested with horrid craft called Squatters that can only be destroyed by atomic bombs, and as these are always more Squatters than you've got bombs, life can be tricky. It's clear, by trapping the Squatters behind buildings, and pelting all at the other craft before getting three or four to follow you, that let me have an atomic bomb and see how they like it!

Woyager is a bit like a 3D Starblaster, but better. Not only are the graphics better, but the gameplay is far superior. You can't simply rush around blasting everything, because it won't work - for a start, you have a limited amount of fuel - tactics are needed if you hope to survive and progress. Because a certain amount of thought is involved, you'll find it much more entertaining than the average battlespace clone and will consequently be playing it for long periods of time. The repetitive nature of the game just takes the edge off, though, so it just misses out on attaining the coveted 100%-rating, but it's still one of the best 3D shoot-'em-ups we've ever seen.

■ Andy Smith

RELEASE BOX		
ATARI ST	175.000	OUT NOW
AMIGA	10.000	IMMINENT
IBM PC	Version planned, details TBA	



RAIDER

IMPRESSIONS are the sincerest form of flattery



In working at the second system, the player has to enter the planetoid via the opening on the left, and destroy the gun emplacement while avoiding all the enemy's fire!

AMIGA owners have been denied conversions of the Quanta/1 under clones Thrax and Ode, but this debut product from Impressions goes some way in redressing the balance.

As with all the predecessors, the player's ship obeys whichever of the laws of gravity are in evidence and is controlled from the keyboard using the non-standard rotate and thrust commands with the language scrolling around the central vessel.

The game is set in deep space (aren't they all?) where the player's mission is to visit four planets in each of eight star systems and retrieve a stolen fuel pod from each. Having captured all four pods, the craft must then be deployed to an automated powerplant where the pods are repositioned in their correct locations.



Having blasted off the enemy base on the first level, the ship deploys the tractor beam to pick up the required fuel pod.

Success is rewarded with access to the next system, and a password allowing the previous star system to be skipped on later games.

Pods are only released once off the plane

any defences have been destroyed using the ship's cannon, a tractor beam device - which also doubles as a shield - is then used to collect the pod and any spare fuel containers that are lying around on the planet's surface.

Although Raider obviously borrows heavily from Ode and Thrax, it doesn't quite manage to impress as much as its inspirations due to the unimaginative theme. Also, the control method isn't as precise as other games in this mode, since the ship's inertia is a touch over-strong. However, the difference is only really noticeable to anyone brought up on the previous Quanta/1 under clones; anyone new to the genre will readily adapt to the gamestyle, and returns can prove an odd bit of nice casual.

● Steve Judd

RELEASE BOX

ATM ST	11996	AMIGA
AMIGA	11996	121900

AMIGA VERSION

While the multidirectional scrolling is of very smooth, the graphics do have a slightly amateur quality about them. Sound is limited to simple engine effects for thrusting, firing and explosion, all of which are adequate, but no more.

GRAPHICS	5	IS FACTOR	4
SOUND	4	FUN FACTOR	7
AGE RATING 6-74			

PREDICTED INTEREST CURVE



The first and best gaming genre indicator by far, the above, and the first truly powerful system helps custom interest right into the core.

SILKWORM

Rebel, ST version reviewed, C19.99cb.

Shoot-em-ups come and shoot-em-ups go, so what could possibly make this one stand out from the crowd?

Having said about everything you could wish for in a game of this type (lots. Plant a simultaneous two-player option! It's got it. Want real and individual guardians to destroy? It's got 'em. Want to be able to pick up extra firepower to beating the flying and ground-based targets becomes a little easier? No problem.

Beginning to get the idea? Good. How for the scenario: You're piloting a helicopter in a level across a peaceful, horizontally-wrapping landscape, blasting

it and sandy that comes your way, including the gratuitous amount of fat that the enemy throws at you. You've got three lives to lose before you get the first of three 'orbital' options, so you've got one lives in effect (all not enough, huh?)

All in all, Silkworm is a very good shoot-em-up; nothing more and nothing less. The attacking craft are varied, and there's plenty to blast, so it'll keep you busy for a good while and is guaranteed to take years off the life expectancy of your joystick fire button.

● Andy Gault



A superbly good moment, having just disposed of a missile base and created a tank.

GRAPHICS	8	IS FACTOR	8
SOUND	7	FUN FACTOR	9
AGE RATING 7-15			

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Typhoon presents a wriggling bag of ten Sprites to the Sea Sprites in the armory.

(Main Picture) On the second level (hence the starter pack) TT walks in the center of the island village, ready to blast the two flyers who are about to show in for the kill.

TYPHOON THOMPSON

BRODERBUND/DOMARK raise a storm

FLIGHT 306 plummets down to the surface of Aquia, an ocean world in the Omega system, and all hands are out at sea... except one. A tiny infant survives the crash, and is adopted by the Sea Sprites that inhabit the placid waters of Aquia. After several abortive attempts are made to rescue the child, the task falls upon the narrow shoulders of reluctant hero Typhoon Thompson.

Forcefully persuaded to board his personal jet, Thompson heads for the nearest group of islands where he is met by the Sport Guardians, remnants of a long dead civilization, who help him on his quest. At the beginning of



After an unsuccessful attempt, the Sport Guardians levitate Typhoon, prior to installing a new jet-aired underwater fin.

each level they ask for a particular artifact - dagger, hammer, balloon or protector - which is held in the Sprites' armory at the center of a 'village' of six islands. To retrieve the item, Thompson must capture all the Sprites from the surrounding islands and trade them for the required valuable from the water Sprites in the central armory.

Sprites appear from their archeological dwellings either once the island is shot, or automatically after a short time. However, the little amphibians are enclosed in steel hovercraft called Flyers, which home in on Thompson's jet-aired and attempt to remove the minor annoyance by a variety of means, including both missiles and more direct methods.

One bit from the plot's greater web the Flyers destroyed, and the Sprites are sent whizzing through the air, to land with a splash some distance away. While the creature is stunned,

Typhoon must reach the Sprites and scoop it up in a sack; otherwise, the Sprites regain his wits and swim, dolphin-like, back to his island.

Having captured all the Sprites and swapped them for the required object, Thompson may revisit the Guardians in order to receive his orders for the next level, and also take receipt of an extra weapon.

The above scenario might sound a bit tedious, but the gameplay is in fact very straightforward and very absorbing. The joystick's unusual mouse control soon becomes second nature, and the only drawback is that the limited gameplay might seem just due to uncertainty or completion of the game (although the latter is quite a task). Still, Typhoon Thompson oozes class quality, and is a suitable feature for the reappearance of Broderbund products.

Steve Lantz

RELEASE BOX

STEAMT £19.99K AMIGA* £19.99K

To other versions planned

BT VERSION

The photo above is little advice to TT's graphics: they may not seem to be too bad. The animation is nothing short of superb - rain or such tiny particles - and the water itself is enhanced with lovely splashes and ripples. Sprites, the 3D is quite striking. Movement is great smooth and the slower of death is almost perfect. Sound is crisp and used to a purpose, with decent 300 effects capabilities looking with detail.

GRAPHICS 9 IS FACTOR 3

AMIGA 9 FUN FACTOR 9

ACE RATING 922

PREDICTED INTEREST CURVE



Simply amazing for the first few years, and the challenge holds its appeal for a year or two before repetition starts to kill interest.

FEATURED IN
Radio ACE

900
FREE GAMES

GRAND MONSTER SLAM

GOLDEN GOBLINS make the fur fly



The main game, the Barbarian has already cleared six Barbarians, and one more, from the home run.



BARBARIAN - Run, Jump, Kick.

GOBLIN - Attack.

GOBLIN - Run, Jump, Kick.

GOBLIN - Attack, Jump, Kick.

GOBLIN - Run, Jump, Kick. It is the only one who can jump. It is the only one who can jump. It is the only one who can jump. It is the only one who can jump.

GOBLIN - Run, Jump, Kick.

The top left shows all the main characters from the first season you see at top left. Below is the detailed description on your equipment. Comments system works again.

WHAT

sort of meter is it that would gleefully go around launching cute little baby animals into the air with its foot? The sort of monster that wants to eat? There's only one way to win in this game, and that's by accurately and forcefully introducing cute, fuzzy babies to the unsuspecting lens of your live TV.

The GMS takes place in the land of Gloom where goblins, dwarves, ogres, humans and many other monster races live alongside each other in perfect harmony. To avoid the complete collapse of social order, the monsters confine their potential battles to the field of play.

You're a dwarf, but don't let it get you down, because dwarves are good at this game. In the first two sections of the game you are placed with seven other competitors in a bracketed competition. The players in the first section are not too good, but none of them are easy to beat.

Each match pits two creatures against each other on a patch viewed from one end, and your dwarf is always at the rear end. In front of each player is a baseline with six buttons lined up on it. The players walk along the line and beat the you, pushing buttons one at the opponent, with the aim of completely clearing the line of buttons and keeping up to the other end of the field.

If you can hit an opposing player with a button a fiery fire for a while, providing you with the best chance to attack a few more in his direction. Buttons automatically line up on the baseline to be kicked, which is very self-satisfying considering the hammering they take. A shot can be angled in either direction and hooked in the air, although the danger of this is that it might fly into the crowd, resulting in a penalty.

Of course, in a game like this, the penalties are anything but normal. They involve scoring a Penalty (a big duck) into the opposing monster's netball, and while buttons thwack three buttons over to the receiver's side, a rare bonus is one button is given to the kicker's side. The computer players can give away penalties too, but that depends on how skilled they are.

It may all sound simple, but the gameplay is utterly manic, with the dwarf scurrying along the baseline in a desperate attempt to kick buttons and avoid incoming ones. Most of the ball lies in strong shots to keep the other player pinned down, which is all at all easy when it has to be done at speed. This is even harder in the two-card knockout series, because a golden force with a pig in it is placed in the middle of the field. Their job here is to hound and beat the hero in a game through the pig.

After every game, the buttons get their revenge for all the beating about by surrounding the player and launching a 'punitive aimed kick attack'. They can be pushed off for a while, but defeat is inevitable. The longer you can survive, the more points are awarded.

After quarters, semi and then the final have all been played, there is a qualifying game where buttons have to be kicked into the mouth of 'T' rather than poked at others. These players are of different lengths, and a certain number of successful shots are needed to qualify you for the real knockout games.

In the first section three champions meet, who all have to be defeated in order to achieve final victory. Unfortunately for you, they also possess magical abilities to surprise you.

Despite being simplistic and repetitive it's a very addictive game with the same sort of all-action as Speedball. You will keep coming back to it regularly, because no two games are the same and it's always a challenge. It's fast, snappy and desperate to beat buttons like this, but we love it.

SCREEN TEST



The two top-games, Revenge of the Buttons and Penalties Penalty [Top] One Button monster at the right but another is coming from the left. [Bottom] One Penalty has been hit and the second Button is flying into an open man.

RELEASE DATES

ATARI ST	Price TBA	AMIGA?
AMIGA	Price TBA	OUT NOW
CD-ROM	Price TBA	AMIGA?
IBM PC	Price TBA	AMIGA?

No other versions planned

AMIGA VERSION

The graphics and animation are spectacularly good, the poor little Buttons being lit up bright as they appear, whizz through the air and land into the screen. The music and effects are slick and involving. The top of the crowd, the grunts of agitated competitors.

GRAPHICS	8	10 FACTOR	8
SOUND	7	10 FACTOR	7

AGE RATING BOX

PREDICTED INTEREST CURVE



Before bumping really breaks you, and needs great (and not too) and persistence. With no two games alike, and a variety of opponents, it's one to come back to for months.

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THIRD of the SSI/TSR range of computer games based on the AD&D system to arrive in Hillsfar, bringing with it a number of questions. Will it be an arcade adventure, like *Heroes of the Lance*, or will it be more in keeping with the role-playing system, like *Pillars of Eternity*?

Hillsfar takes its name from the town in which the game is based, and actually turns out to be a mix of game styles, rather than falling neatly into one category. Before setting out on your adventures you can import a character already created in *Pillars of Eternity* or create yourself a new persona (Thief, Fighter, Wizard and so on) in true RPG style.

Then the adventure starts, placing you at a computer a few miles from the town. To travel to Hillsfar, you go via the first of the four arcade-style subgames: horse riding. Using the joystick, you have to gallop along a path avoiding road obstacles such as puddles and holes.

OS4 VERSION

The graphics are fine, with especially nice attention to the horse-riding sequences. The sound effects are few and far between, and they're missing several elements to appear. A nice mix of prose and RPG.

GRAPHICS: 8 16 FACTOR: 5
 AUDIO: 7 16M FACTOR: 6
AGE RATING: 7-12

knives and sticking kamikaze birds that flap along at head height.

The other arcade style games include fighting in the arena, where you try to bash your opponent into unconsciousness; target shooting, where you fire a total of ten shots, arrows, stones or daggers at a series of targets for a gold prize and more wandering/loot picking. These last few are linked because of an entering screen on your character as he wanders around. Soon you'll come across some treasure chests and if you've got a set of picks, or a friend with a set of picks, you can attempt to spring the locks by matching the picks to the lock numbers - the number of numbers varies from three to six - within a time limit. Failure not only halts your loot, but will

HILLSFAR

More AD&D from SSI - OK?



The main map shows the town of Hillsfar and your position. The inset display reveals that you are outside the Fighter's Building, and you will be given a mission.

probably also bring some sort of trap that will have an adverse effect on your hit points.

On to the adventuring side of things. The screen display breaks down into three main sections. A large map, viewed from above, shows your position in the town at all times. In the top left is a window showing a view "through your eyes" and at the bottom of the screen is a window displaying text messages.

What you do in Hillsfar is largely up to you. If you're into the adventuring side of things, you can try interacting with some characters and discover some quests. For example, if you're a thief character, head for the Guild of Thieves, chat to the man man and he'll send you on a mission. If you prefer the action side of things, wander to the arena and pick a fight. Actually, whichever type you prefer, you'll almost

certainly end up taking part in both. Wandering around the city, for instance, you might come across a pub and pop in to have a couple of beers. If your health's low, you could easily end up being carried off to the arena for a fight, or you could just as easily pick up a juicy bit of gossip that sends you off adventuring.

And that's about it. All quests involve one-arena sequences and most involve more than one, making Hillsfar much more of a middle-ground game than true RPG. That's in some ways a great advantage, and could well attract newcomers to the type of game, but don't expect it to be as moving, or the game world as believable, as a game like *Pillars of Eternity*.

by Andy Sabin

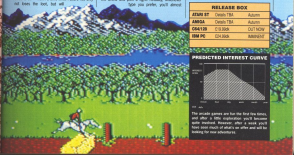
RELEASE BOX

ATARI ST	Details TBA	Autumn
AMIGA	Details TBA	Autumn
CD-ROM	£19.99	Out Now
IBM PC	£24.99	Autumn

PREDICTED INTEREST CURVE



The middle games are for the first few sales, and after a little exploration you'll become quite involved. However, after a week you'll have seen much of what's on offer and will be looking for new adventures.





To destroy the blue mechanical on the left, CLIFF must move first to the recharge slab...



...and perform a vertical jumping maneuver. Changing the view, it falls to the left, destroying the creature.

919
AGE RATES

BIO CHALLENGE

La première jeu de **TRIPLE PLAYERS** SEUL PROTAGONISTE avec PALMAGE



The first and foremost guardian in his cavern, it will find what hits the large robot smack in the chest!



RICHARD Cleydeman makes *Delphine Records* look a lot of money in fact, here's one of the biggest-selling recording artists in the world. "So what's that got to do with *Bio-Challenge*?" you might ask. Well, *Delphine* have dipped a corporate toe in the software world and come up with the second-highest seller in France after *Castan Blood*. And now it's being released in its country under the guidance of Palace Software.

Coded by the co-authors of *Elfers* (3D Space Raider), *Bio-Challenge* features a typical 3D French sci-fi strategy theme, and some unusual and innovative gameplay.

The player takes on the mantle of a RUPT robot, leaving the body of a robot and controlled by a human brain. To test the effectiveness of the experiment, RUPT is expected to conquer all six levels of the *Bio-Challenge*.

Each level is split up into "stages" accessed by contact with colour-coded transporters which hover at the top of the screen. The level is completed by collecting four pieces of shield beam around the planets, and then defeating a large end-of-level guardian.

Planet landscapes are littered with dead resources, movable platforms called "charge slabs" and three varieties of biomechanical beings: small ones fly across the screen in formation, medium-sized creatures suspended there when both the charge slabs, and larger mechanical ones and jump along the ground.

The unknown creatures show RUPT's progress - indicated by a falling of level - but otherwise prove little more than an annoyance. RUPT simply deals with these pests by going into a high-speed spin (essentially jumping at the same time which destroys them). Oil is replenished by collecting barrels along the way, but if RUPT's reservoir is completely drained, he loses a life and restarts the level from scratch.

The other two alien species cause similar pain, and can be destroyed in several ways. RUPT can collect red armour from one of the stations which regularly appear at the top of the screen. That being, whenever the android goes into a spin any flying creatures which he hit are sent whizzing off across the screen, and all as enemies to destroy both the charge slab hangers and ground-based boosters.

Other conditions also become viable as items are destroyed and include such goodies as additional time, bonus points, an extra life, increased tank capacity and green armour, which allows RUPT to destroy any enemies that are in the screen briefly by performing a back-swing movement.

Charge slabs carry one, two or three charges, and can be made to fall on unsuspecting beings by reducing the charge to zero. RUPT does this by performing his back-swing while standing at the slab, or by clipping them on the edge on an upward jump. The latter maneuver causes them to either fall sideways, if they only carry one charge, or to move sideways, reducing the charge by one unit. In this way, slabs holding two or three charges can be positioned as required.

When suitably smashed on the head, shot or "ion-bombbed", the distinct creatures yield either sections of shield, or units of ammunition which are then used against the guardian. Once the shield is complete, RUPT can head back to the large sphere at the start of the level where he is transported to his meeting in the guardian's lair.

During this sublevel, whenever RUPT attempts a jump, he is transformed into a float-

ing cannon which slowly falls back to the ground. The guardian constantly rises and falls, shooting as it does so, and RUPT's bullets must be timed to hit the guardian on the most vulnerable area, his head. Successfully defeating the large mechanical allows RUPT to continue his mission on the next level.

This strategic shoot-em-up - but without the shooting - sounds a lot more complicated than it actually is. Once the mode of play becomes familiar the writer proves extremely skillful, and the game is nicely balanced to provide a continual challenge.

Bio-Challenge is beautifully presented and features a great tutorial demo, which is well worth watching (in fact, the only real criticism is an level-entry system allowing the early stages to be bypassed on later plays). Once learned, though, the levels are rapidly completed, and there is no ideal method for completing each level. A great detail for the *Delphine/Prince* team: let's hope this is the start of a beautiful relationship!

Steve Lamb

BT VERSION

Not content with dual smooth four-teen available scrolling, the programmers have also used some clever techniques to produce a playing rate with more than its normal amount of colour bits to fill, apparently, to with other French games, the BT's scrolling is also polished back, with a smart sample soundtrack and some very pleasant effects during play.

GRAPHICS	5	IQ FACTOR	5
SOUND	5	FILE FACTOR	5
AGE RATING 9/9			

AMIGA VERSION

Visually identical to the BT, used for a better palette and even more colours. Although the spot effects are comparable, the Amiga builds a substantially superior version of the title track which can be played throughout the game.

GRAPHICS	5	IQ FACTOR	5
AUDIO	5	FILE FACTOR	5
AGE RATING 9/9			

RELEASE BOX

ATARI ST	£18.99	OUT NOW
AMIGA	£24.99	IMMINENT
No other versions planned.		

PREDICTED INTEREST CURVE



The unusual graphics provides instant allure, while familiarity with the controls and multi-graded levels give extra an enthralling and long-lasting challenge.



1 Positioned below the trophy, reveals a Red Guardian. RUPT becomes immune to a high jump.

2 Showing the end of his level, about to head back the condition.

3 The hidden condition reveals a red tank attack.

4 Asks to the ground, closely followed by the cylinder.

5 RUPT attempts to pick up the tank, and then moves on, tank's added in his own armour.



Your character, the eccentric-looking type with the large beard and cloak, is going to have problems sneaking past the green thing on the ground that throws white objects.

STORMLORD

It's raining HEWSON

RAF Ecco is one of the biggest names in 8-bit games, with an impressive track record of releases like *Cybernet*, *Episun* and *Dragon Realm*; all these games have blended shoot-'em-up action with arcade adventure to



The bees, to the left, have been successfully avoided using the honeyjar.

produce a unique style. Stormlord's 2D side-on view is also typical of Ecco games, as are the detailed graphics that appear on all screens.

Your character walks and jumps around four levels, tryinging, failing, and avoiding to dispose of enemies, solving a series of puzzles, and finally completing each level by retrieving the imprisoned forces.

Objects that pass up throughout the game, although only one at a time can be carried, must be used to perform specific functions: keys to unlock doors, an umbrella to keep the rain off and honey to attract bees, which doesn't take too much working out. Among the more entertaining features are trampolines that act like teleports but do so by chucking you through the air.

As even with Ecco games there's a host of timing problems where run-downs have to be avoided rather than shot. At this juddering and

studding is familiar but difficult, so even hard-core players will have trouble completing the whole thing. It's enormously frustrating, and far too frequently demands near-perfection from the player.

Despite the fact that it has been well programmed, looks great and is really quite action-packed, Stormlord is just too frustrating. If gameplay is to progress at all, it must get away from timing problems, avoidable deaths and other things, but left back in 1984, Stormlord is not really a bad game; it's just not as good as gameplayers these days have every right to expect.

■ Rob White

SPECTRUM VERSION

The backgrounds are detailed and attractive and are accompanied by some lively animation on the sprites. There are some good in-game effects and a nice title font too.

GRAPHICS: 4 IQ FACTOR: 4
 AUDIO: 3 FUN FACTOR: 5

AGE RATING: 8-9

RELEASE DEX

ATARI ST	£11.99	July '88
AMIGA	£11.99	July '88
SPEC 128	£9.99	OUT NOW
AMSTRAD	£9.99 • £4.99	IMMINT
ORIG 128	£9.99 • £4.99	IMMINT
IBM PC	no version planned	

PREDICTED INTEREST CURVE



Forecasting gameplay has a dampening effect early on and, although this can be overcome, the game only has four levels.



A surprisingly casual attacker bats some garlic and nails, hands in pockets.

GRAPHICS: 5 IQ FACTOR: 1
 AUDIO: 5 FUN FACTOR: 4
 AGE RATING: 3-7

FRIGHT NIGHT

Microdeal, Amiga version reviewed, £19.99

Berry Dandrige is a member of the undead, and Gerry would like to remain undead. So Gerry has to leap, slink and crawl around his house, after dark, and suck the blood of any one he happens to come across.

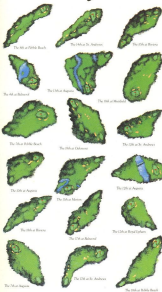
These people aren't sold on this idea, so we'll attempt to turn Gerry by listing various articles at his: Garlic, holy water and so on. As the night past, the number of people stumbling into Gerry's house increases (including people he killed yesterday) but so does the number of hazards, but have a detrimental

effect on his health, including ghosts of past victims and hands that thrust up from the floor, contact with any of which will cause your death (or at least reduce health to you and try to take a limb).

Fright Night has been a long time coming; the wait was not worth it. The game concept is dull, the play area is small, the animation is poor (Gerry looks and moves more like Eric Prexley than Elvis was dead) and the gameplay is frustrating. Not a game to add to your library.

■ Andy Smith

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THE SEGA SELECTION

CALIFORNIA GAMES ★ £24.95 crt

Sega's much-acclaimed and well-loved beach sports simulation has been beautifully converted to the Sega. All six events of the original have been squeezed in intact, and the major advantage is not having to wait while each event loads.

For anyone not contented with the familiar beach sports simulators, California Games includes full-on skateboarding, foot bag for technical juggling, surfing, roller skating, BMX bike racing and throwing the flying disk (Wheeie to you and me).

Gameplay involves sound strategic use of

the joystick and fire button to perform set maneuvers, and success is rewarded with points. Each event may be played in justified individuality, or as part of a multi-event dual game. Unfortunately, the multiplayer feature of the original has disappeared along the line.

Sega California Games is smarter than all the other computer versions with the possible exception of the Amiga. The gameplay is looking a bit dated, but since it's the first of its type on the Sega, it should receive an appreciative audience. And deservedly so.

● Steve Jarrid



Our California Dreams! Here comes a wave, magnificent in its beachy grace.

GRAPHICS	5	IQ FACTOR	5
SOUND	5	FUN FACTOR	5
AGE RATING 7-10			

VIGILANTE ★ £24.95 crt



The vigilante takes a graceful kick in the face of an unpleasant character who is threatening him with a large tank.

Once more into the streets dear friends and let's kick some ass while we're there. Of course, it's all in a good cause: rescuing some poor girl called Maria. That's right, the usual usual story. Oh well, it's a good excuse for a punch up.

Your rather glib character has to progress along the horizontally-scrolling levels, fighting off the thugs, hoods, gang members and assorted street scum that attack from both sides. The cause is much aided by grading a weapon which dispatches them from both and at longer range.

● Bob Rice

The bad guys come in many varieties as well, taking many forms to defeat. Some of them also have the nasty habit of grabbing onto you if they get close enough, draining energy needs.

Once again it's an unusual gameplay, but as scrolling combat games go it's fun stuff that will not easily be beaten.

GRAPHICS	5	IQ FACTOR	4
SOUND	5	FUN FACTOR	5
AGE RATING 8-11			

TIME SOLDIER ★ £24.95 crt

Cast in the role of a time soldier (suppose), survived the player - or players, for there is a simultaneous two player option - has to breach the barriers of time itself in order to rescue his troops who are lost among the zones, and ultimately defeat the evil being, Apokal, who sent them there in the first place.

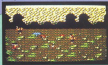
Naturally, the soldiers have to negotiate a series of vertically and horizontally-scrolling landscapes representing the different time zones, and battle any odiousness hostiles that appear.

On destroying specific enemies, additional weaponry becomes available and is simply

picked up to add temporary weapons to the arsenal. No surprises at the end of the level either: a guardian being manifested itself according to the period, and must be vanquished before attempting the next one.

The 3D8 console won't believe and, astonishingly, this version doesn't impose upon the matter. The visuals are sparse, the action is a little slow, and unfortunately after a few goes it all becomes a bit tedious.

● Steve Jarrid



With his timecube, the time-traveler blows away badman who've been annoyingly holding them over.

GRAPHICS	4	IQ FACTOR	5
SOUND	4	FUN FACTOR	5
AGE RATING 5-8			

ALTERED BEAST ★ £24.95 crt

Ready some for a game with some eye-catching graphics. The beast in question is a hero risen from the grave who can power up, first into a Choker Atlas body and then into a demon, fire-spitting wolfman.

Power-ups are gained by destroying certain foes, encountered on the grimly winding levels. They come from both sides, above and



Against a background of the neo-classical architecture, the monstrous fighting man leaps to the attack, ensuring the deaths of the Wonders of Purple Treasures.

over up from the ground to be punished, kicked and copped out of existence. End-of-level guardians are of course essential and take a hell of a lot of beating.

Not very imaginative in gameplay, but notable for its classy graphics. The wolfman, however, adds to the fun considerably, because as well as shooting bullets he can launch himself across screen and lay waste to all who stand before him.

● Bob Rice

GRAPHICS	7	IQ FACTOR	4
SOUND	5	FUN FACTOR	5
AGE RATING 8-11			

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Blood Money



BLOOD MONEY

The ultimate arcade game

Head it right there. Are you REALLY ready for this one? Have you got the courage to live up the experience that makes all the other games you've played seem pathetic?

Because **BLOOD MONEY** is simply the best arcade game you've ever seen. It has a staggering 3 megabyte state-of-the-art graphics, an amazing **AMBIENT** of sound effects and music and the most gripping gameplay you've ever known in any life. **BLOOD MONEY** just leaves the competition for dead and takes you into new realms of arcade action.

But it's going to be tough. From the instant you hear that driving soundtrack you'll be plunged into a masterpiece of sheer destruction. As you plumb the four Outer Planets in a fanatical quest for gold and glory, the aliens in **BLOOD MONEY** set subtle visual traps, and it will test all your skills just to survive.

Use your awesome firepower wisely and you'll turn those aliens into blood money that can win you extra weapons and equipment. And you're going to need them, because there are no easy scores in **BLOOD MONEY**. It's a life-or-death struggle that demands all your tactical genius and that we can guarantee you'll never see through it, only to confront the four planetary Guardians.

With its vast 88-megabyte graphics, superb animation, lightning sound, devilish obstacles, awesome firepower and 100% 3-player gameplay, **BLOOD MONEY** is the greatest challenge yet faced by any games player with a joystick in their hands.

It's here. It's ready and waiting for you. But are you sure you're ready for **BLOOD MONEY**?

Two complete masters for two player game
Smaller boxes are from the Ariga version

ARIGA EDI.01 © 1991 BY COMING SHORTLY



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STRANGE Like some games come about. Take this one: a conversion of a coinop that was derived from pinball games. First, certainly, but the coinop was a big success and produced a far more complex game than any normal pinball ever could or ever has.

There are four white tables to play, each with its own task to be completed. Each table is split into two halves, with flippers on both halves, so if the ball slips off the top section, which it's launched onto, the bottom ball starts its run. If you lose it off the bottom screen it's one of five balls gone.

AMIGA VERSION

Excellent tones, varying for each of the levels and accompanied by good effects. Graphics are close to the arcade version. Ball movement is so perfect, but it's close enough to offer plenty of fun for a good while.

GRAPHICS: **B** IS FACTOR: **B**
 AUDIO: **B** FUN FACTOR: **B**

ACE RATING 7.5B



On the left is the first level, the volcano, on the right the second stage, the ruins. If you can hit the ball up one of the tubes that start above the volcano, it lights up one of the letters. Light all seven and multi-ball mayhem results.

TIME SCANNER

ACTIVISION's time and motion study

The first level is the volcano, followed by the ruins and the pyramid, if those three can successfully be mastered, the fourth and most difficult table awaits. To get between levels the ball must be hit into a 'time tunnel' which will wrap it there. The task on volcano is to hit the ball up a slide to light up the letters in the word volcano. Done this is done, you get three balls at once: a great chance to make a score.

A similar situation is found on the other

two levels, where completing a task gets you a multi-ball play. You don't really want to know what to do, do you? I thought not. Have fun finding out.

Once all three levels are completed the final table can be reached via a time tunnel. Here again there's a task to be completed, but this time it takes in the old classic Breakout and is by far the hardest of all the levels.

Like the arcade version there's a bit option for setting the screen around. This can save the ball from impending doom and the machine never objects to the bouncing about. Tiltin is vital for victory, as is accuracy with the flippers.

Basically, Time Scanner is pinball with extras thrown in to good effect. It may not be



This is the top half of the pyramid stage, where a task has to be completed. However, we don't need to spend it out for you.

original, and it may not take long to see everything, but pinball has always been very addictive and this game is no exception.

• Bob Peck

ARCADE ACCURACY

Both the graphics and the game play mirror the coin-op closely. It's a real gem.



THE ORIGINAL COIN-OP -- CLASSY BALL!

COIN-OP SCORE 9

RELEASE BOX

ATARI ST	£19.995	URGENT
AMIGA	£24.995	OUT NOW
SPEED 100	£23.995	URGENT
ANSTRAD	£23.995 - £24.995	URGENT
COM 128	£23.995 - £24.995	URGENT
IBM PC	to remain planned	

PREDICTED INTEREST CURVE



Even after the excitement of the first few days has worn off, you'll still keep coming back for more.

ST VERSION

The graphics are good, but the gameplay can be very frustrating. Once you know the terrain it isn't like you long to win every game.

GRAPHICS 8 **IS FACTOR** 3
AUDIO 8 **FUN FACTOR** 7
ACE RATING 647

(Right) ST - A water race, and you're avoiding a lousy boss. These could lead to generous bugs and bloat, so you'll have to beware of excessive.

SUPERCATS. Quads and Miscon are all modes of transport, surprisingly enough, and they all feature in this game based on the popular TV series Run the Gauntlet.

On the telly, international teams compete against each other in semi-finals (on land) and water, driving various kind of weird and wonderful vehicles. In the computer game you and a couple of mates can compete against each other in nine races (three groups of three legal ages), for the most part, in assorted vehicles.

The driving races consist of three laps of a set course that varies depending on the type of



craft you're in. The action's viewed from above, though it's more 'above and a bit to the side' for the lugga driving races. Just like in most Cidebuster's games, the controls are simply left, right, accelerate and brake.

Competing, whether playing solo or with friends, involves racing round the course against two computer-driven 'bikes' for each lap, and points are tallied up at the end of the race and points awarded to whoever finishes most quickly. Failure to achieve the standards required, in other words not finishing in the top five, means you won't progress to the next round, so you will have to take risks and sally go for it sometimes.

As might be expected, there are other factors as well as the computer-driven that can prove a hindrance. Explosions on both land and sea can send your craft spinning out of control for a few vital seconds, and colliding with the computer-driven delays only your progress, and not theirs.

Run the Gauntlet is not one of Ocean's better games. It's well put together and is fun to play (although the collision detection is a bit iffy), but it's far too easy to beat to keep you playing for months.

• Andy Smith

RUN THE GAUNTLET

Multi-eventing around with OCEAN



Spectrum - Supergraphics are the starkest of all the land units, although that's not necessarily a bad thing!

SPECTRUM VERSION

Everybody's who fast and the graphics are fine. It's tougher to win on the Spectrum, so there's more being challenging, but you'll master it eventually. Its inquisitive streamer mode in the Super Sprint and 8000 Simulator mode.

GRAPHICS 9 **IS FACTOR** 3
AUDIO 9 **FUN FACTOR** 8
ACE RATING 677



Amstrad - Placing a human face the great map in the top corner to guide yourself round the course.

AMSTRAD VERSION

The gameplay is closer to the Spectrum than the ST version, so you can expect to get a fair amount of play from it. The graphics are good, being both smooth and colourful. Probably the most enjoyable version overall.

GRAPHICS 8 **IS FACTOR** 3
AUDIO 8 **FUN FACTOR** 8
ACE RATING 682

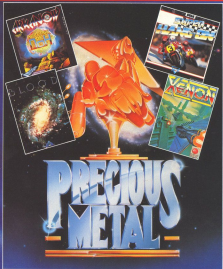
RELEASE BOX

STARI ST	£19.995	OUT NOW
AMIGA	£24.995	IMMINENT
SPEED 128	£9.995 • £12.995	OUT NOW
AMSTRAD	£9.995 • £14.995	OUT NOW
DISKET	£9.995 • £14.995	IMMINENT

PREDICTED INTEREST CURVE

After the initial launch phase caused by several problems in execution, you'll find it extremely wide selling - until you beat it, which will be sooner rather than later.

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ocean

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DARK SIDE

The Dark Side: The city where the Matrix goes to live when it's revenge. 200 years on from Cybertron, Dr. Evox has taken power. To unlock the Matrix's true potential, you'll have to work with the Dark Side of Evox using its very best tool: your own mind. Using its Energy Matrix, this saving energy from pollution, by recycling the night's waste and power, you'll be able to use the power that has built Cybertron. No group there, yet one that is totally empowering.

Designed for 10 minutes by Nintendo, the game features over 100 Powerups, stunning graphics and a great storyline. The challenge awaits you on 3D and jumps from your favourite stories under the new Nintendo Game Boy Advance. Price £24.99 each.

NINTENDO
STATUS



The white team try to stop the blue team from scoring another goal. That screenshot of the whole pitch on the left can be viewed in size if you wish.



Goalie where you're going to strike the ball (connect the scanner to see where the rest of your team have positioned themselves and hopefully you'll score).

WHILE the world waits for Microsoft Soccer to appear on the 16-bit machines, Anco have created it with their semi-realistic footy sim. Is it worth considering, or should you save your cash?

Well, we can't tell you that it's definitely worth considering, because it's one of the best footy games to have appeared on the larger machines to date. As seems to be the vague tradition, the game is viewed from above with you controlling whichever player is

KICK OFF

ANCO put their boots on

in the best position to get the ball. It's a one or two player game, in which you can either play against a friend, or take on the computer single-handed.

The matches last from ten minutes (five mins per end) to a full-blown 90 minutes, and if you don't fancy practicing first penalties, corners or just joystick control you can pick your formation and dive into the game.

With the ball and you can decide whether to play vertical (like a vertically up and down the screen) or down for the first half; the teams switch for the second half. Though you can't see the whole pitch on the screen at once, there's a scanner in the top left, showing your position on the pitch.

But what about the gameplay? Your players automatically dribble the ball once they get hold of it, and turning with the ball can take a while to master. Hold the joystick fire button down (before touching the ball) and you'll free it, making it much easier to control (but

once you do, you'll find the pace of the game makes it thoroughly enjoyable). Add to the great gameplay a host of skill levels, a league to play in and a save option and you're into a winner.

■ **Any/Soft**

RELEASE BOX		
STARS 57	£19.95pb	CUT NOW
AMIGA	£19.95pb	IMMEDIATE
SHARON	£9.95 - £11.95pb	IMMEDIATE
IBM PC	£24.95pb	IMMEDIATE

ST VERSION	
The graphics and animation are good, the sound is nothing special, but the gameplay is a great football game that will have you playing for a season or two.	
GRAPHICS	8
ANIMO	5
IB FACTOR	3
FUN FACTOR	8
ACE RATING 82%	

PREDICTED INTEREST CURVE	
The controls take a while to grasp, but in return it gives you the feeling of more you'll find the fun team.	
GRAPHICS	7
ANIMO	7
IB FACTOR	3
FUN FACTOR	6
ACE RATING 58%	

DANGER FREAK

Rainbow Arts, C64 version reviewed, price T8A

The Germans have at last started to produce some original software instead of just conversions. This particular example puts you in the role of a stuntman trying to film several sequences for the camera.

The first sequence is a horizontally-scrolling road filled with hazards like ramps, potholes, puddles, policemen and lost fans. These must be driven round, skidded under or wheeled over as fast as possible. Every mistake causes cuts in the film, affects your health and adds up the budget. Too many errors and everything has to be started again.

In the end of the sequence you have to

jump onto the back of a car and then drive onto a rope ladder dangling from a helicopter. None of this is very easy and takes a frustrating amount of time to master.

After an interlude screen based on Super Space it's back to stunt action on the wheel. Some sort of obstacle-dodging as in the first stage, but easier. The third section takes you into the air where all sorts of birds and planes attack and have to be avoided.

There's basically not enough of the game to hook you for long, but it is quite fun.

■ **Soft/Soft**



Starting off on the highway to hell means maintaining speed and avoiding the obstacles are extremely difficult tasks.

GRAPHICS	7
ANIMO	7
IB FACTOR	3
FUN FACTOR	6
ACE RATING 58%	

SKWEEK

LORICIELs make like a mouse

CUTE

makes a comeback with its lovable, silky little orange character Skweek. His massively important purpose in life is to turn blue squares pink. What more worthwhile reason for existence could there possibly be?

There are 99 levels that have to be pinked, each one viewed from above and scrolling vertically when Skweek reaches the edge of the screen. The floor is made up of tiles that all have to be turned pink by running over them. That's the game in a nutshell, but there are a host of features to complicate the action.

Doled out over the levels are tiles that throw out nasty little monsters: most can be

taken out with the forward firing jet ball Skweek starts with, but other weapons can be collected that are more effective.

As well as extra weapons there are other objects that appear randomly on each level like

ST VERSION

The graphics could be described as very colorful or even garish. There are several boxes that bounce along nicely, adding to the cartoon feel.

GRAPHICS: 7 IQ FACTOR: 4
 SOUND: 7 FUN FACTOR: 5
AGE RATING: 7-15



Skweek, the cute little orange creature with the punk hairstyle and flame jets, is threatened by a not-so-cute green monster. There's gonna be a fight...

shells, extra lives, extra speed and exits to the next level. You're guided to these by a direction pointer, but they will disappear after a while. Some tiles are also marked with a lion's-cubed green ones act as smart bombs, and blue ones destroy surrounding tiles.

Getting through the early levels is easy but things get more complicated the further you go. There are shortcuts that act as fallouts, disappearing blocks, materializing blocks and ice blocks that make Skweek slide. Using these basic building blocks, the programmers have created some tricky levels which require pause for thought as well as racing for the best time.

Not all the bonuses are good for Skweek. Reversed controls make it all too easy to run off the edge of a level. Another problem is turning tiles blue instead of pink: it doesn't last long, but it still wastes precious time.

It's enormously jolly and guarantees lots of short-term fun. 99 levels will keep most players busy, particularly with the random level option that plays there in random order.

■ Bob White

RELEASE BOX

ATARI ST	£19.99	OUT NOW
AMIGA	£19.99	BRING IT
AMSTRAD	£19.99 (24.99)	BRING IT
IBM PC	£19.99	BRING IT

No other version planned

PREDICTED INTEREST CURVE



The many features and levels keep interest high at first, however, even the random level option doesn't stop the graphics coming after a few weeks.

STEVE DAVIS WORLD SNOOKER

CDG, ST version reviewed, £19.99pb

Six game styles are supported (English 15 reds, Russian 15 reds, UK pool, US pool, English billiards and Carom billiards) all of which are played on the same table, except that US pool uses four 'balls'.

Play follows the standard pattern of selecting the direction of shot, specified by a movable line attached to the white, and then setting strength and spin prior to releasing the cue. Also, any really tough shots can be taken back, like a chess move, and for more memorable attempts may be replayed a finite number. Each game can be played versus a human opponent, or the computer which is set to one of six experience levels, up to Steve Davis standard.

As with any game that purports to simulate the green table sports, authenticity is highly

important, and SOWS fails on several counts. Maximum shot strength is robotically overpowered, and the targeting system, not quite accurate enough, gives the resolution of the screen and the size of the balls. A room mode is incorporated, but proves useless for the longer shots.

The display is neat and nice, but not outstanding. Good effects are weak, although a sampled commentator punctuates the action and a smart version of the BBC's snooker theme introduces the game.

It's fun to play as a game in its own right, and does have lasting interest, as long as you appreciate its idiosyncrasies, but genuine snooker and pool enthusiasts won't be greatly impressed.

■ Steve Dent



In practice mode, the direction line can be extended from the white to predict the movement of the object ball.

GRAPHICS: 5 IQ FACTOR: 5
 SOUND: 4 FUN FACTOR: 5
AGE RATING: 14-10

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The art of combining text and graphics in the latest word processing packages, with a low cost DTP system, you can create anything from a club newsletter to a monthly magazine on-line.

If the show you'll be able to try out the latest systems, digitisers and super-fast programs, and get a first-hand glimpse of the way DTP is set to develop in the future.

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Business



GAMES

GAMES

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The winning entry in the STOS Competition of the Year (award will be awarded) and several new exciting STOS accessories will be shown for the first time.

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bored and hungry. On Earth the gate crashers are about to arrive - they are the RCOAC, but Snayles has got other ideas - no-one, but PRO-CME is going to spoil his home-coming party!

ocean

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WHO were the other ones? Inspiration! The meeting for "understand amongst us" will need no explanation, but for the rest, the story goes something like this. Sheelobers the film became an Activision computer game full price, then budget. Then in America a TV cartoon and comic appeared, featuring the GHS team and called The Real Ghostbusters, which made parts (John Ford decided would make a jolly comic machine, saw ACE issue Four). Now, Activision have decided it would make a jolly computer game.

SPECTRUM VERSION

The game is excellent, which is surprising. The graphics are OK, though the animation leaves a lot to be desired. Not a game that stands out in its department.

GRAPHICS: 6 **IQ FACTOR: 3**
 AUDIO: 5 **FUN FACTOR: 6**
ACE RATING: 5/4



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ST VERSION

The intro music and the effects are OK. The graphics are unimpaired, and the perspective used is confusing. Many bits in the game animation are quite not left with the game of the size, and certainly not a game that's easy to look for long.

GRAPHICS: 7 **IQ FACTOR: 6**
 AUDIO: 7 **FUN FACTOR: 7**
ACE RATING: 5/5

So, here we have it: the computer game of the collapse of the comic cartoon film genre!

You, and possibly a friend too (because it supports simultaneous two player action), have to fight your way through some ten levels of ghost-infested systems, collecting the nasty things with your Proton beam capper. Before collecting the ghosts you have to shoot them first with your normal gun. A quick tap on the fire button to turn them into coin, quickly, fluffy white ghosts, before holding your finger on the fire button to trap them in the beam and draw them into your backpack.

There are benefits to be collected - from either ghosts or shooting parts of the scenery, such as oil drums - including a pricing (similar who gets a shield, if things weren't tough enough already, then remember you've got to complete each level within a time limit.

The collision detection is poor and the graphics is bad. It's nothing more than an average shoot-em-up and is certainly not as much fun as the original Ghostbusters game.

• Andy Cuth



ARCADE ACCURACY

Just about every feature of the console has been included.

COIN OP SCORE 3

PREDICTED INTEREST CURVE



Frequent deaths cause initial frustration, but once the levels are cleared progress becomes altogether easier.

RENEGADE III

Imagine, Spectrum version reviewed, £9.99

The urban jungle combat isn't really out of its depth this time. Poppy clearing up the mean streets of the city; he's battling through ten zones against the nastiest things history can throw at us.

The battle starts in predators' lairs where dragons and caimans, taking like Rock and Grendel who draw the Riddemobile in Wacky Races, try to beat us dead to a pulp. He must battle along the scumming landscape, jumping pits and climbing walls, to get to a cooak of mean confrontations. These are against multi-pl opponents who all attack at once.

Battle in the end of the level and a time machine will whisk him off to the next time zone. All the energy and lives are restored and battle is opened against a new group of snakes. The second zone is ancient Egypt, full of mummies, the third zone is a medieval encounter with knights and the fourth a trip into the future.

The action is very similar to the previous game enjoyable but unimpressive. It has been a good series of games but hopefully this is the final chapter.

• Bob Bell



They're the usual stuff in the shades being attacked by birds throwing eggs, and Wood them supporters throwing rocks.

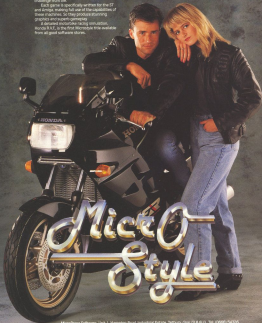
GRAPHICS: 6 **IQ FACTOR: 5**
 AUDIO: 6 **FUN FACTOR: 6**
ACE RATING: 5/4

GAMES FOR ADULTS

MicroStyle is the new software label. The new option for those who demand fun, excitement and challenge from life.

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A detailed motorbike racing simulation, *Roads R U.L.*, is the first MicroStyle title available from all good software stores.



MicroProse Software, Unit 1, Mangrove Road Industrial Estate, Telford, Shropshire, TF1 8LQ. Tel: 0895-34300

Welcome to this month's TNT, where the usual batch of hints and cheats is accompanied by the first instalment of a two-part 8-bit player's guide to *Rip in Middle Earth*, written by some other than the man himself, Mike Singleton. There's also some useful coaching for TV Sports Football players, clues for the spy game *The President Is Missing*, and a helping hand on FOYT. Plus a new C&A Robocop listing - you lucky people!

R-TYPE

Hertz up all those Spacey owners facing a hard time against the evil Bots Empire? Thought so. Since infinite lives would make things a bit easier, here they are in listing form. It's a bit long, but it certainly is worth all the effort.

Simply type it in and **RUN** it to load 8 Edge with infinite lives and infinite credits. Good, huh?

NOTE: When the border flashes, stay for a sec. Start the race again when the border turns black.

- 10 FUR A-23206 TO 60535
- 20 HEAD: F F-999 7480
- RANDOMISE USR23206
- 30 FORD A.F. NEXT A.
- 100 DATA 343, 60, 266, 66, 270
- 110 DATA 83, 263, 52, 17, 195
- 120 DATA 11, 205, 80, 5, 48
- 130 DATA 341, 175, 60, 35, 60
- 140 DATA 206, 32, 93, 80, 179
- 150 DATA 33, 147, 243, 1, 82
- 160 DATA 11, 52, 11, 35, 120
- 170 DATA 177, 32, 249, 29, 123
- 180 DATA 211, 254, 32, 137, 62
- 190 DATA 202, 50, 133, 254, 20
- 200 DATA 109, 251, 33, 68, 91
- 210 DATA 170, 50, 42, 252, 34
- 220 DATA 23, 294, 49, 0, 0
- 230 DATA 196, 222, 254, 62, 20
- 240 DATA 50, 60, 254, 206, 64
- 250 DATA 254, 33, 90, 90, 17
- 260 DATA 22, 198, 1, 10, 0
- 270 DATA 233, 176, 196, 0, 106
- 280 DATA 179, 50, 254, 343, 50
- 290 DATA 148, 140, 105, 253, 11
- 300 DATA 999

■ Daniel Russell, Bristol



FOYT

For all those people who rolled out and bought Gemini's City day-ride on the 27 without making the review first, here are some desperately useful hints...

At the beginning, take the initial 150 credits and go straight into the Trading option. Watch the price of food in the Agricultural Products section, until it falls to 18 or below. Buy as much as possible, then keep watching until the price rises to 20-25 credits. Now sell the lot.

Continue to do this, using up all the available credits each time. Eventually, all the food can be bought and sold, raising the market to fluctuate between 7 and 22 credits.

After playing the market for some time (patience, patience) profits should be high enough to afford all the useful goodies: class three shields, tertiary weapons system, and a Star Drive Mk 5 (which speeds up travel in local space).

After hyperjumping to a system and reaching the planet by using the short range jump, space stations are located by accessing the long range radar and looking for the white stalk. It's then just a matter of flying within visible range, and initiating the automatic docking computer.

If under vicious attack from hostiles, contact the craft in question using their orbit code. This tends to end their assault.

■ Drew Dobbin, Lincoln, Steve Miller, Lancaster & R Carr, S Humberwick

HEROES OF THE LANCE

Further to the tips printed in issue 15, here are some additional tips for the 328 episode adventure from someone who should know...

Only three of the seventeen spells are needed: Cure Light Wounds; Walk to preserve dangerous-looking opponents for absorption at towns; and Dragon Breath for use against Pleasants.

None of the treasures, potions, scrolls etc that are found are actually needed.

Fight everything but Habbings; run off them and dodge into a den.

Rescue jumps farthest. Save your position before colour doors.



Guadalupe Brives, her staff of Wraith (she can't throw it at any other friend); then get a fighter to run over the flying dragon to win.

■ Peter Austin, Level 9 Computing

FUSION

Getting 51 versions of Fusion has a nice little cheat: load the game, get a high score and then save "WRAP" TRNG (including the special on the high score table). On starting a new game, pressing T cycles through the extra weapons, B installs ten fuel tanks, G provides shields, and S brings up the cheat mode, where items may now be selected at will by pressing the "A" and "Z" keys on the numeric keypad.

■ Thanks to Glenn Cooper, Baffing



MONEY!

TNT gives away up to £250 worth of vouchers each month. If you have any hints, cheats or maps for the LATEST games (logs and Nintendo included), send them in. You could win a £20 voucher - or even the top prize of £100!

THE PRESIDENT IS MISSING

THIS TRICKY INVESTIGATIVE GAME HAS PROMPTED SOME USEFUL HINTS. HOPEFULLY, THESE WILL MAKE SENSE TO ANYONE PLAYING THE GAME...

TERESA BECKWORTH'S MURDER

Teresa worked for Colonel Sebastian Moran, whose activities are uncut baited for the four days, June 19th. Her boyfriend was Jerry Pinger. On the back of her checkbook is written "let or look never it also" which means "let a watch look now".

Note the discrepancy between the President and the President's wife when referring to her husband-as-Guy. Also, the caption link between many participants of the Span of Teresa Unit. Van num 0765 73.

Further into Adams Subvoltage and Krite Schneider went to Cyprus on June 3 for one day before reporting to Otto Demokovost. Schatzmann and Maloney have been translateing leads to Gerry Accorino, Todd Vogel, Stan Kitzler and Joe Smith. One of the latter probably came through Arvinian custody prior to the abduction.

All Agent/State (sheer) must entries must be in capitals and have a space between the names, eg: BUCKLEY, SEEDOR 944

CODED MESSAGES

The five Morse Code transmissions are deciphered to the following messages:

1 O CHARON TO DRIMAR, SET EMERALD IN PHUL
2 OI-OO OI GAZZAE OI-OO OI
3 CHARON TO DRIMAR, RECEIVED 888
4 GEGGAMUS TO DEVOLPH RINGEZHOS (942 2 PUS 22)
5 CHARON TO DRIMAR, DELIVERED TUBBIR L-HOOSU DUPT BLAND

(Dr means to that effect.) DR may be Edwin Mulrooney.

The sixth 'hidden' message is 'FOUCHE', tapped out by the French President against the microphones. Fouche can be seen on the photograph 'President As Hostage!'

PHOTOGRAPHIC EVIDENCE

'President As Hostage!'



Fouche is one of the captors. The President's watch may indicate that he's in the Continental United States.

'TV Photo'



The man in the picture is Robert Medvedev, he's standing outside Lee Yvel's video store, 4129 Bellevue Street.

'Staging Area'



The helicopters were taken from the NATO exercise. The AI stands for Anzalgemeine Interlink.

'Turkish Police Station'



Last recorded owner of the gun was Supter Ragout.

SEGA STUFF

GOLVELLIUS

This Sega game is getting on a bit hot, since it hasn't been covered before, here are a few tips to give the quest an added boost.

When entering a code, put the number three on the third digit/letter. This is important for a number of items, money and life potions. The exact result is dependent on the code, so try out different ones.

To find the second demon, slash the central blue stone (about five o'clock). When the demon appears, hit him by waiting for him to stop, then hitting him. Simply keep dodging when he follows.

To find the first demon, hit the gravestone in the top-right graveyard above the river (the one is the correct).

To defeat Fobos, squabbles are needed. These are found by visiting a large pain tree north-west of the beach. Fobos is then found on the Swamp Island. Write can be beaten by waiting for him to attack, sidestepping and then hitting him.

Jesse may be defeated in the same way, but it is more difficult because of the need to avoid missiles.

Red can be beaten by sidestepping, and rapidly dodging, ignoring damage being low.

Catherine is killed by shooting at him, then allowing him to smother while still hitting him. The following code allows you to reach the end of the game. All that is needed is the location of Golvellius, which a fortune teller will divulge.

2,3,4 2,3,4 2,3,4 2,3,4
8,8,8 8,8,8 8,8,8 8,8,8

WONDERBOY IN MONSTERLAND

Later on in the game, there are large empty walls. These should be knocked on regularly, because there are hidden doors which can be opened.

To get the Gustavine Bell, head for the cavern on the second round and knock on the invisible door which lies on the third step above some lava. The winner music provides a scroll for Gustavine.

Go to Barstons and enter the invisible door located next to an ordinary door on a platform above a Society bearing a cross. The woman provides a File.

Go to Peters Beach and head right until a large open area. Climb the tower and blow the Tube. Head right and enter the mansion. Collect the Star Charm from the old pastor.

Next, head for the Undersea Kingdom of Castor, head left and enter a shop. Buy something cheap and then re-enter. The cutoff should now have the Hysteria Emblem. Knock on all of the doors and someone offers the Ruby or the Bell (take the Bell to help negotiate the doorway).

■ Paul Taitel, Editor

Can anyone provide more information, pictures or the linked screen captured files...
After the abduction, the helicopter's wreckage was left in 1945 (documents discovered in the...
General's base near the helicopter's wreckage was left in 1945 (documents discovered in the...
Boston, Mass (see note)...
Newman was connected with the reporter (General's base, Lee Yvel, Fouche, Doctor, Vogel, Richter,...

(Schatzmann and Maloney provide the necessary links, with the President's 'handwritten' from...
Newman was connected with the reporter (General's base, Lee Yvel, Fouche, Doctor, Vogel, Richter,...

WHAT MAY HAVE HAPPENED

MIXING

Business

WITH

C, E, I, S, U, R, E

WILL BE
A REAL

EDUCATION

Commodore computer show

Britain's brightest event for Commodore computer users is back! And there's more to see than ever before.

This show has three main themes covering some of the major uses to which Commodore machines are put. There are over 30 key companies who will be exhibiting their latest products, which means that just about everything that's new in the Commodore world will be on show!

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Leisure

The CBM and Amiga computers are the most powerful it ever got for leisure for producing first-class word-processor games. The range of new software on show

will demonstrate how these machines' power is continually being stretched, producing faster and even more addictive games with superb graphics.

If you're a keen-games player, you'll find there's so much on offer at the show you're guaranteed a real treat!

Education

Commodore micros are now used as educational tools all over the country. With the development of BBC Basic on the Amiga, and the advent of Desktop Video (combining TV pictures with text and graphics), the range of educational applications is endless.

At the show you'll see how the latest software

packages are making real breakthroughs in the educational sector, and be able to try them out for yourself.

Special Events

As well as special events and presentations, you'll also be able to meet some of your favourite celebrities, and maybe get a chance to talk with them about how they use micros in their work.

So for a great day out, whatever you want to see when the future looks for Commodore computers, to try the latest software or to get advice on specific applications, the Commodore show is the place to go. And if you want to in the double holiday, we'll knock £3 off the price of each ticket!

For the first time we are offering a family ticket for just £11 allowing entry for two adults and two children - saving up to £7 off the usual early price!

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ARCHIPELAGOS



Atari ST screen shots

*Imagine a game without violence,
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*Imagine a 3D world, yet the only
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*Imagine the danger of a tormented
soul, carried aloft by nothing
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*Archipelagos is a completely new
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*Archipelagos is conceived and
coded by Astral Software.*



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TV SPORTS FOOTBALL

OK, AMIGA OWNERS: INTO A HUFFLE FOR SOME ON-THE-SPOT COACHING FOR MIRRORSOFT'S GRIDIRON GAME:

At the start of the start of the season, you're left half-back for the Number One unit, and the following statistics apply: A strength 4, hands 4, agility 4. This should guarantee a mediocre hitting record against forward passers.

Both receivers should have good hands, although the tight ends flourish for the opportunity to run more than the LBs, so RBs worth going for a second round pick.

The Quarterback should be ranked a least sixth on the roster, with a fast three and decent scrambling abilities. Coaches need to be fast and agile to cover the opposition's receivers and tight ends against a QB of this ability. Their fullback joining the Centre Linebackers' good ratings makes the QB formation a bit braver when they start again in the 4-1 formation, and there's always the risk of a LB.

Offensive and defensive Linebackers need to be strong with future average ratings for the other three factors.

One use of the Wide Linebackers' high pass high speed and strength 7 or 10, and the other lower average line, is to cover the higher ranked LB during the game.

★ DEFENSIVE TACTICS

Against 1-3 Formation

If the Wide Receiver switches pick sides, the probability is that it's a pass. Nevertheless, the computer runs more from this formation than from the other two. Use a 4-1 formation in wide receivers to hit through the center, but position the Linebackers on either side of the defensive line. With 4-3 or 3-3, most RBs will close to the line.

When choosing the play, take the fullback half line; the computer always runs the Wide Receiver.

Against The Shotgun

Heavy always a pass, so pull the QB away from the line of scrimmage. Try to run, because of a run to the right, especially when the opposition are close to the endzone. Pass behavior is the selection to combat the play.

Against Kickers

Blocking field goals is impossible and better to see they would miss anyway, so the feature is pointless. Double the computer never attempts the kick.

Against Pro-Set Formation

Impossible to tell what they're going to do on this play, when using a 4-1 or 3-3, select a line rusher that they are passing. If in 4-1 formation, select Pass Defender but stay ready for a run.

Against Pass

RBs run straight at the center after the snap. It's practically impossible to block the pass and if it's a later pass, the team can get stranded in the attacker's half, and the computer-controlled defenders will probably fail to stop again.

Use the 4-3 in normal and most other formations, the 3-4 when more than 15 yards are needed or when the opposition are desperately trying for the 1-1. Inside your own 20 and use on the extra man are needed in the small space needed to be covered. Only use 4-1 in extreme short yardage situations.

On the second play-calling screen, look across to see the offensive direction. Can usually tell a shotgun and run outside for either run side and then both are are risky and pointless. When selecting Pass Defense, select one Inside Linebacker and motion to the right end of the line. After the snap you can quickly reach the QB and sack him. If the QB runs off, the runner runs into you and you can get back into it. On the full Defense, select either Linebacker and stand directly opposite the QB facing the defensive line. If the play is a full tackle, turn right or left and a strong backer stops any gain.

The number two can also be dropped quickly to the other two Linebackers and yourself. When the QB prepares to pass, you follow the Wide Receiver, until he is off-screen the computer hands passes off-screen and your player's further back can cover him and then move down to cover any blocking. Backs who cover run well in defense. Before the line formation your other LBs will have reached the QB.

The computer often throws to a Wide Receiver on the 4th down, leaving the Outside Linebacker back for yards seem to discourage this.

Use wide Outside Linebackers on a computer Passing Play at the pass. The QB has making a poor pass.

Occasionally, the computer QB has a short pass to the fullback. In

order to, mark and follow a receiver with an Inside Linebacker. Once the computer realizes what is happening, it may run up the sideline. If he does, face a line using the Inside Linebacker. If he attempts the pass, the same Linebacker should be able to cover the pass.

★ OFFENSIVE TACTICS

Playcalling

Use Shotgun and the better right pattern for any distance of three against a 3-4, three receivers are immediately open to catch the pass, while against a Pass Defense the left half back running up behind the left wide Receiver is left free to catch the pass after the LBs fall down if the cover away.

Blocking

Use Formation and the left half pattern often coming from, the Left Half Back gets the ball and can go left or placed, not back up the middle as two or three gaps open up, or cut across up the right when blocked, stop at the middle when an Inside Linebacker is used, go up the outside, avoid inside.

Short Handoff

Use ProSet and the top left pattern, when the Quarterback hands off to the Left Half Back who goes through the pass to the middle to pick up the yards. If the pass is covered or blocked, then go around either side.

Long Yardage

Use the Shotgun offense called Shotgun and then call for the receivers to get outside off-screen. They can't cut wide Receiver and Left Half Back can get free ahead of the defensive backs and a quarterback three yards the opposition touch yarding.

During the first half, passing on short yardage situations running with Quarterback at 3rd and 1st works well. After the first half, anything can happen. QB passes, run slightly to one side to give the opposition receiver a head start. There's pass from the ProSet or 1 Formation, only the Shotgun. The measure gives about two seconds more time to pass. Always pass the short yardage—most a failure.

© Simon Liu, Barry & Janaki-Ahlu, High Wycombe

RAMBO III

If there are any butch hard-men (or women) who can't rescue the Colonel and get back to the good of US in one piece on the SE, they should play the game and get 5,000 or more to get on the high score table, then type in RENEGADE and press return. Now, when the film artwork is up on screen, press 1, 2 or 3 to start on a chosen level.



Concerning the Ways of Orcs, Feats of Arms and the Schemes of Sauron in the realms of 8-bit Middle Earth.

The Dark Lord, Sauron, wields great power in Middle Earth and holds under his sway many regiments of foot and flying Orcs, yet even Sauron is not invulnerable, as those who have read the account of the fall of the Ring in Professor Tolkien's book will well know. Those who so choose can make the same decisions as were made in the book and virtually duplicate the history of Frodo Baggins and the Fellowship of the Ring, but you will find that success is by no means certain and that this path, like any other, is fraught with danger. Sauron's plan of war is flexible and changes subtly each time you play the game. Likewise, to succeed, your plan of war must be flexible too.

IN THE THICK OF BATTLE

In battle, your men will fight where they stand, without further instructions from you. But this is not the best way to kill lots of or to safeguard your warriors. Even in a hopeless situation, your battle tactics will determine just how many Orcs are slain in the struggle.

As in most battles, the greatest advantage lies in reorganizing your forces. When one orc is fighting one man, neither has any special advantage apart from their own innate strength and skill. When one orc is fighting two men, the chances of the orc killing a man remain the same but the chances of the man killing the orc increase substantially. For example, if each of the men had a 10% chance of killing the orc individually, fighting together they would have a 19% chance of killing the orc and if three were first of them, it would become a 27% chance. Likewise, two of three men fighting just one man gain a considerable advantage.

In battle, then, the main priority is to engage each orc from as many sides as possible and to do this you must try to bring as many of your troops as you can into the front line. Even this task requires some thought. During the early stages of a battle, the best will be moving fast across unobstructed areas to get at your men and there is hardly any time to speak of. If you mobilize men too close to the area, you'll

WAR IN MID

find it a waste of time because the area will probably attack them anyway. If you hesitate, it will run away from the area, it will run from it while it journey across the battlefield, and meanwhile the area may have moved or it may even have been killed! The real ploy is to stabilize nearby areas that are not likely to be attacked immediately by the roaming orcs.

The real problem is how to motivate them. Do you use direct control or indirect control? In the early stages of battle, while the area is clearing across the battlefield, direct control is the best option. Although you have to click the terrain to fix destination (which sometimes means clicking around, you can avoid this by clicking on terrain to the corner according to the flow of battle and then top-down flow area with the cursor) in the later stages of battle, which are generally less fluid, you'll find groups of orcs enticed in to a particular combat. Since they are relatively static, you'll be able to use indirect control quite effectively.

In the longer battles, you'll have the strength to manoeuvre your troops into battle formations. Due to the odd and flow of battle and the movements of the area, your battle formations will be rough and ready rather than the precise grid formations of a well-trained army, but some formations can be extremely effective and against such deadly creatures as the Nauglic fighting a formation is almost essential.

The simplest formation is the straight line of troops. Simple and uncomplicated your line will always find themselves outnumbered by one, however, as soon as a horde of orcs thunders half against your line, that same advantage is lost. Worse still, the orcs are forced onto a line too and cannot easily be outflanked. A much more effective tactic is to form a V-shaped tunnel into which the attacking orcs are channelled. The deeper into the tunnel they march, the harder it gets for you to close the end and the funnel and surround them. Using this tactic against a lone Nauglic, it's possible to have four warriors fighting against him simultaneously.

To use formations effectively takes some practice, but only will

you meet directly with the opponent, but you will also need some quick thinking if you are to respond in time to the rapid flow of battle, constantly adjusting your formation as enemies of your lines get focused out. But, if you want to play as many areas as possible, formation fighting is the way to do it.

THE SCHEMES OF SAURON

As your armies and heroes march through Middle Earth, they will sometimes encounter moving herds of orcs and be forced to battle for their lives. Although the movements of the Elessar's armies always remain hidden, they are not random; there is a pattern to the schemes of Sauron and even a passing knowledge of this pattern is of great value.

Sauron, in his evil wisdom, has divided his armies into two

The campaign plan of Sauron is intricate in the detail and spans only parents, the broad outlines of his plan to be great hero. The Dark Lord has marked out over sixty different objectives for his armies to take and secure. To allow his commanders some flexibility in the field, each objective is followed by one or two alternatives, either of which the commander can choose to attack at his own will. Even the Dark Lord himself cannot say which particular route his armies will take when the choice arises and here lies the subtlety of his plan, for he knows that the Lurly Galadriel has the power to look into his mind and know his thoughts, his plan is flexible enough to be unappreciated but by carefully hiding out the spider's web of objectives, he can be sure that his strength is eventually brought to bear against whichever of the

map, though much of the detail has, of necessity, been left out.

There are a number of useful hints given by this way. Firstly, for instance, the two key routes through the Mines of Moria, the gate at each end of the Mines of Moria is a further objective than the other gates. Often, this means that a herd of orcs will march through the Mines of Moria to the far gate and then, as soon as they reach that objective, subset one of the two further objectives which just happen to be the gate they have come from. So, a band of orcs may sound quite low just marching back and forth through the Mines. In this way, the Dark Lord keeps the passage through the mountains well guarded.

Notice also the road through Rivendell. This is a route for one army, but only for armies passing northwards. Arwen found on the road make their way eventually either to Lullathen or to Pinnatell and hence to the Stars, where Sauron has spotted no other routes for them.

It is also vital to understand the way the Dark Lord's hatred may work. Any attempt to suffer blood loss with anger and greed him to seek revenge, attacking him from his master plan. For each army of his that is destroyed, Sauron will send a fresh army to hunt down the victor. Only when vengeance is fulfilled will that army then turn back to Moria and begin to follow Sauron's campaign plan. The most successful one of your armies is, the more it will be haunted by Sauron. One tactic, knowing this tendency of Sauron's, is to draw off Sauron's strength by attacking a weakness, but only into the wilderness, with a trail of surviving forces of orcs deliberately following it.



groups, the assault armies and the hunting armies. The hunting armies were Middle Earth tracking down particular individuals. The Dark Lord, for instance, has assigned to three Nauglic the task of hunting down Gandalf. The assault armies follow Sauron's complex campaign plan which involves from each a series of objectives to take before the final assault on Minas Tirith can start.

Even Saruman and the orcs he controls have a part to play in the Dark Lord's plans, but Sauron's assault armies follow a separate campaign plan with more limited objectives, the details of their movements lying largely within Eborin and Gondor.

strongholds he desires most.

The final destination in Sauron's web of objectives is Minas Tirith, but before reaching his goal his armies can range far and wide, from Mt Arwen in the south to Gal in the far north, from the far gates of Lullathen to the Gray Havens in the west. Where the web is thickest, the armies of Sauron are more likely to be found. There are three main areas that Sauron concentrates on: the villages of the Stars in the north, the triangle of Meads Deep, Old Arwen and Minas Tirith to the west of Moria and Mt Arwen and Sallowens of Eborin Hill. The broad canopy of Sauron's plan is shown on the

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BUDGET

The bargain basement section of this month's Screen Test has a distinct gambling flavor about it, with a package of gambling games, a one-armed bandit simulator and some pinballing action. The Titanic had a casino, too. Probably.

ALTERNATE SCREENS

LAS VEGAS CASINO

ZEPPELIN • C64 • £2.99

This one isn't quite as pointless as a fruit machine sim because card and dice games can be enjoyed for their own sake. This features four games: blackjack, baccarat, roulette and craps (also gambling at the back, it's a dice game and you know it).

Each game is played with the computer as the house. The simplest is blackjack (bottom) but the other three take quite a bit of knowledge of the rules in order to bet intelligently.



These are not very well explained, though, so players who don't know how to play baccarat or craps will have problems.

The only aim is to make money so there's no motivation except the enjoyment of the games themselves. The graphics are very ordinary except for a nice end screen when all the money has been lost.

■ ACE RATING 476

TITANIC

KIXX • Spectrum, Amstrad • £1.99

The pride of the Blue Star line now lies in bit form, one mile below the surface of the Arctic



ocean. Remote controls have pinpointed the great ship, but its secrets have remained a mystery until now.

A new pressure-resistant diving suit has been developed which allows some brave person to actually touch down to the wreck, and this is where the player comes in. Armed with a harpoon gun and a limited number of batteries, a safety-checked diver must be guided through a labyrinthine cave system which is inhabited by all manner of dangerous aquatic beasts. Keep contact with air, squid,

anemones etc. clauses the diver to last oxygen from his tank, which can be replenished by picking up extra tanks. However, entering a dark or close quarters is instantly fatal; death ends the mission unless from the cave entrance.

Having escaped the caves a passage is provided to allow access to the second level, which begins inside the wreck of the Titanic. The diver's aim is to locate switches to open doors, fix some explosives and blow a safe full of valuables, while avoiding a similar group of bottles from the previous level.

Control of the diver is a little haphazard, and the game is of the simple search 'n' destroy type. Once mapped out, it shouldn't take too long to finish, but having said this, Titanic does provide a reasonable challenge along the way.

■ ACE RATING 587

ADVANCED PINBALL SIMULATOR

CODEMASTERS • C64 • £2.99

As pinball games go - and there haven't been many on the C64 of late - Codemaster's entry to the genre is pretty good. The ever-important



ball movement is realistic, and it plays in a similar fashion to Elite Simulator, in that specific features must be hit up to exit the screen.

In this manner, a magic book appears and is opened by crossing letters in redover (and a potion is made to bubble and a Mandy's castle is slowly removed by falling switches), and a forest leaving the exit is partially destroyed on contact with the ball. Access to the next stage is finally achieved by clearing the screen and hitting the exit column.

Unfortunately, there is only one screen to complete, which doesn't really offer much of an attraction in extended play. A '99' function is sadly lacking, and there are a couple of bugs which make the ball fall through floors and barriers, or even go sailing out of the play area.

Although the game's certainly enjoyable for the first few goes, the urge to play should disappear once the 'ball' has been played through a couple of times.

■ ACE RATING 595

SUPERNUDGE 2000

MASTERTRONIC • Spectrum, Amstrad • £2.99

Of all the ridiculous things to do a simulation of fruit machines isn't by far the dumbest. The whole point of fruit machines is to win money, take the cash home, and they are almost entirely redundant.

However, experience has shown that there are people prepared to shell out hard cash for them. On the Amstrad, this one is very colorful but the reels are actually clear. It also does

well have as many features as the Spectrum. The Spectrum looks much worse but at least it has fast reels and bits going on all the time.

Basically this is computer entertainment for vegetarians. Sit and watch the pretty reels spin round and jump for joy as they come to a halt on three lemons - or could it possibly just be one big lemon?

■ ACE RATING 312

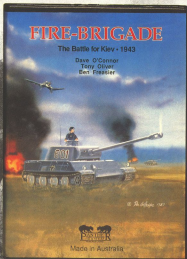


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UPDATES



AMIGA

AFTERBURNER

ACTIVISION £24.99db

Best ST version reviewed Issue 18 - ACE rating 877

Undoubtedly the best of the versions, but that still isn't saying much. Some top



sampled speech accompanies the action, which is fast and colourful. Sadly, the game play lets everything down again: lots of anti-loops flying around that require little skill.

■ ACE RATING 899

CRAZY CARS II

TTLS £24.99db

ST version reviewed Issue 18 - ACE rating 755



Apart from a subtle palette, police sirens and a beautifully smooth scrolling map, Amiga Crazy Cars II compares exactly to the ST release. Road and car movement is slightly less smooth than its predecessor, but the door still is open the gamewise on offer.

■ ACE RATING 755

PRISON

ORIGAMI £19.99db

ST version reviewed Issue 20 - ACE rating 784

Merciful in look, feel and play to the Atari version, with the added advantage of only one game disc. Although sound is sub-par, the Amiga still gives the chance to prove off its musical prowess, least for a pleasant listening treat.

■ ACE RATING 784

VICTORY ROAD

ORIGAMI £24.99db

Amiga version reviewed Issue 18 - ACE rating 843

Not an impressive offering on the Amiga, the graphics don't make the most of its



BATTLEHAWKS 1942

LUCASFILMS GOLD £24.99db ■ PC version reviewed Issue 17 ■ ACE rating 826

Flying a Grumman F4F-4 (30280) it alone your aircraft carrier is the middle of the Pacific Ocean, you suddenly spot them two Japanese torpedo planes, protected by two Zero fighters, closing rapidly in on the carrier.

That's a typical mission in this unopposed combat flight sim, where the emphasis is heavily on the combat side of things. As a pilot with either the Americans or Japanese, you can fly three types of plane - fighter, dive bomber and torpedo - and participate in some thirty-two missions, divided amongst four of the major battles of the Pacific war.

Before attempting any of the missions (which range in difficulty from easy, through moderate and hard, to - impossible?) it's always a good idea to practice flying the various planes first. Staying in the air is easy, but hitting a carrier deck with a bomb from 2,000 ft is not at all.

Once you start playing for real, and without using the options for unlimited fuel and ammunition and penetrable armour (after your plane is in any way and your service

record is not updated, so you don't stand any chance of winning medals) you may find the enemy planes a little tough, so you can alter the experience level of the enemy pilots, making them slower to react, and less accurate when firing back, to give yourself a fighting chance.

There are a host of views - both from within the cockpit and from outside, if you select to record some of your missions using the on-board camera, and then watch the playback - and at the whole, if you enjoy flying around blasting enemy planes out of the

sky, you'll find Battlehawks very satisfying.

AMIGA VERSION

Ferocious and colourful graphics plus some impressive and atmospheric sound effects all combine to ensure you'll keep coming back to this again and again.

■ ACE RATING 826

ATARI ST VERSION

Graphics are just as good, so is the gameplay. Highly recommended for flying, shooting, bombing and torpedoing fun.

■ ACE RATING 826

ULTIMA V

MICROPROSE £24.95 db ■ PC version reviewed Issue 13 ■ ACE rating 928

This monster game kept RPGers countryside reeling with tales (well) for a long time, but once it arrived almost everyone agreed it was well worth the wait.

You control a party of adventurers roaming the countryside of

the land of Britannia in search of...erm... adventure. The main quest in the game is to wander into the recently-discovered Underworld and find out what happened to the party of adventurers led by Lord British (who has been absent



abilities and the gameplay is straightforward in Commander style. The additional missions are good, but honestly it's no better than it was in the first version.

AGE RATING: G12**ATARI ST****ROAD BLASTERS**

US GOLD £19.95/US

CD-ROM version reviewed Issue 12 - **AGE RATING: G14**

The 8-bit version never quite managed to emulate the full feel of the concept, but on the ST a much finer game has emerged. The feeling of movement on the road is convincing and the control of the car is much sharper, making driving a pleasure and excitement.

The early levels are quite easy, serving as a nice introduction. By Level 14 things have heated up and it becomes a real test of survival, as it's well proved to ease you into things and that provides a long-term challenge.

The graphics are colorful and detailed, many excursions add to things really. The enemy forces are suitably varied so the feeling is the same carefully done system as in Out Run but in fact there are no delays during the action. A high quality conversion that will please fans of the concept, and many more besides.

AGE RATING: T15**SPECTRUM****CAPTAIN BLOOD**

EXXOS £9.95/US £14.95/US

ST version reviewed Issue 7 - **AGE RATING: G17**

It's been a long while coming, but the Spectrum interpretation of Intergame's (now Core) Captain Blood has finally landed. Apart from the inevitable cosmetic differences, the game retains the same formula. It's the arcade player looking experience well represented and the adventure aspect remains intact. In fact, the only real drawback of this (and other) 8-bit conversions, is the lack of mouse control for which the game was originally designed.

AGE RATING: G13**ELIMINATOR**

NEWSON £24.95/US £34.95/US

ST version reviewed Issue 13 - **AGE RATING: G14**

Although the Spectrum version quite well with the ST return of the game, the lack of colour often makes it difficult to differentiate between items, solid objects and reflections. The colour palette also removes the post-processing which made the ST version so enthralling.

AGE RATING: T16**PAGLAND**

GRANDSLAM £34.95/US £49.95/US

The Spectrum version of this unusual PC variant follows the arcade game pretty

well as well, so things in between aren't as wonderful as they might be for the new government's in power. Like all good adventure RPGs, though, there are numerous opportunities for you to take on levels and plenty of fights with evil lords and the like to get involved in. There are loads of people to interact with - some of whom you can recruit - and once you start to play you'll find life becomes less black-and-white and simple and far more grey and complicated. There are hints and turns to the game that keep you on your toes constantly and you can never trust anyone completely.

The graphics are simple - an overhead view of a character representing your party - but the whole game world is surprisingly believable. The whole Ultima series is good, but this is the best yet. There's plenty to keep you playing



for months and if you've never played an RPG before, you'd be doing yourself a favour by getting a copy of this; the game that could bring advertising out of its ghetto.

ST VERSION

The graphics are certainly better if a PC can do better. The controls generally grip and hold you.

AGE RATING: G16

DOUBLE DRAGON

MELBOURNE HOUSE £19.95/US

The member arcade hit used conversions to all formats, and the two recent 32-bit releases profit most from the operation.

Faced with the standard kid-stuffed girlfriend scenario, two players are charged with fighting their way through five levels of mayhem in order to reach the leader's HQ and rescue said girl.

A variety of enemies crawl out of the woodwork in order to inflict bodily damage upon the dog-eating duo, but the brothers' acrobatic abilities will be using a variety of kicks, punches and overhead throws. Should an assistant drop a

**UPDATE SPECIAL**

weapon, one of the Less may pick it up and continue the battle issue favourably equipped.

ST VERSION

Unbelievably easy, the ST version was completed at the first sitting in one player mode. irrespective of any aesthetic factors, this makes Double Dragon a total waste of time and money.

AGE RATING: T15**AMIGA VERSION**

Smooth scrolling and faster gameplay make this more comfortable than the Atari, however, it's only made slightly harder to dirt of hazards on the final level and should similarly be avoided.

AGE RATING: G16

EMLYN HUGHES INTERVIEW

ALDOGENIC £9.95/US, £14.95/US

Every time is better known these days for game shows than football but, for a game, being associated with somebody who has boundless enthusiasm is no bad thing.

When most football games fail to achieve it the balance between strategy and avante action. Here there is not only plenty of on-field action to keep the player occupied, but important off-field decisions have to be taken too. This is mainly a matter of picking the team, which becomes most relevant

when playing a long season, because players live and affect the team's performance.

The 3D side-view of the pitch is a familiar one for football games, as are the horizontal scrolling and the player selection method. The range of features during a game is impressive: sidestepping, blocking, back-pass, heading, sliding tackles, free kicks, corners, throw-ins, penalties and the ability to control kicking height and direction. The best part about this being that you can actually use all

these easily, and are not forced to perform half-hearted joystick movements.

There are also unsharp options for altering the game, such as having two players against the computer, an auto magic goals, cup or league competitions, substitutions, 10 ball levels and so on.

All in all, this is an extremely thorough game that provides still competition to Microprose Soccer for the title of best football game around.

Bill King



clearly taking only in colour and some decent colour detection. The scoring was not really that hot in the first instance, but Zenonfire have produced a useful and playable conversion, which might have more of an appeal to younger gamers.

■ **ACE RATING 6/10**

PC

BILLIARDS SIMULATOR

ERE INTERACTIVE! £19.95/£6

Amiga version reviewed Issue 18 - ACE rating 9/10

Every bit as good as the Amiga version both graphically and in gameplay. The game wide range of options for changing gravity and the table speed too. It's not as interesting as 3D Pool but it's a lot of fun.

■ **ACE RATING 8/10**

DALEY THOMPSON'S OLYMPIC CHALLENGE

COLECO £19.95/£6

Amiga version reviewed Issue 10 - ACE rating 8/10

Coleco's April Daily Adventure was resurrected with the appearance of DTCC late last year so all the major formats. Now, with the release of the PC version, the set is complete. The tedious Finnish waggling gameplay is still in evidence, compounded by reliance upon an analogue joystick or lever. PC DTCC also suffers from predictably poor graphics and, more importantly, a ridiculous game structure which is crippled by vast amounts of disk swapping.

■ **ACE RATING 4/10**

STAR GOOSE

LOGOTHON £24.95/£6 USA, £29.95/£6

Amiga version reviewed Issue 13 - ACE rating 9/10

An excellent conversion with some superb graphics, lots of detail and smooth vertical scrolling too. The gameplay is virtually identical to the ST, obviously understandable in the original version. It still hasn't got enough variety, but it's a good example of what is possible on a PC, even if the USA price is a little bit steep.

■ **ACE RATING 9/10**

TECHNOCOP

GREYS £19.95/£6/£6

Spectrum version reviewed Issue 16 - ACE rating 8/10

Looks good but unfortunately is very slow, particularly in USA. The keyboard response is sluggish, particularly noticeable when exploring the outposts. The gameplay remains intact despite the slowdown, but it's not as enjoyable as previous versions.

■ **ACE RATING 7/10**



FUSION

UPDATE SPECIAL

ELECTRONIC ARTS £24.95/£6 ■ Amiga version reviewed Issue 15 ■ ACE rating 9/10

Secretly claiming to be nothing more than a computer game for petroleum scientists, rubbish level Fusion sets the player off on the task of visiting a series of laboratories, collecting keys to unlock sections of traps, and attempting to gather the separate sections of a huge bomb. To facilitate the negotiation of some mazes, the player's craft splits into a hovering mothership and a land-based crawler, which are used individually but in conjunc-

tion with each other.

Each level is filled with enemy gun emplacements, missile sites and hostile vehicles, which sustain a constant barrage of fire. However, both of the player's crafts are filled with bastions and all enemy craft and installations can be destroyed.

Surprisingly, Fusion has redefined Fusion, tailoring it to the ST's capabilities rather than trying to emulate the game as it appeared on the Amiga. This has

worked to the game's benefit, and so it is now more playable than its Commodore counterpart, but certainly no easier.

ST VERSION

The alien levels can scroll vertically only, but they retain the terrific parallax effect and are just as colourful as the Amiga's. Sound is limited to a cacophony of gunshots and explosions, which grows tiresome after a while.

■ **ACE RATING 7/10**

SPECTRUM VERSION

The graphics obviously are not so good, but despite being small they do the job nicely. Sound effects are in a similar vein to the C64, in gameplay they are very clear. Both versions are very easy to get to grips with.

■ **ACE RATING 8/10**

C64 VERSION

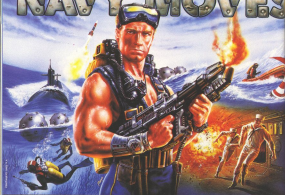
The graphics are the tacky variety expected of the C64 but they are functional. The sound effects are limited but all you need are a rising crawl and a few ball and vehicle effects.

■ **ACE RATING 6/10**

INTERNATIONAL SOCCER



NAVY MOVES



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To accomplish this you have to master all types of oceanic warfare:
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BEHIND THE WAVES, where you will use a torpedo with explosive sensors to make your way through the dark infected waters.

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INSIDE THE ATOMIC SUBMARINE, making the necessary transfer between the sea. The biohazardous virus will be a great help, but you will also need to be an expert chessman, manipulating the submarine's computers.



NAVY MOVES INCLUDES A BOSS FOR THE COMMAND AND A COMPLEX OF THE SUBMARINE.

SPECTRUM/MAGNUM COMMANDER 48
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DINAMIK

DEVELOPED BY
ELECTRONIC ARTS

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Professional Draw has been designed as a partner to Professional Page, one of the main DTP programs for the Amiga, also from Gold Disk. The layout of the screen reflects this; menus, status bar and ruler across the top; ruler on the left; and tool palette on the right, using the chunky icons required by the Amiga's multiple resolutions. In the efficient way of most good DTP programs, the frequently-used tools - text and lines, text, polygon, ellipse, scale, rotate, stretch, mirror, multiply, fillofill, pointer, etc - are all icons on show; the remaining operations are accessed by double-clicks on the icons; and flag, printing, colour or line-weight changes, preferences and other less immediate tasks are all menu-driven.

Since Pro Draw is an object-oriented drawing system employing both bitmap and character drawing techniques, it gives us a good opportunity to define our terms. The drawing method we all know and love from our vector paint programs is **bitmapped** - the drawing area is a map or grid of thousands of pixels of the same size, each of which can be any one of the available colours. Even marks that is made changes the colour of a group of pixels and hence the map. If the image is saved to the disk, or transformed in any way, ALL of the pixels in the map must be stored or acted upon, even if only three pixels in an otherwise blank screen are changed.

An **object-oriented** program, by contrast, ignores the background. It is only concerned with the changed parts of the screen, the objects. Each of these is stored separately in memory and can be affected independently on screen - moved, sized, oriented or brought to the front - just like cut-out pieces of paper. Most games use similar bitmap techniques, are related to become sprites.

In many DTP programs, the objects are either blocks of text or sections of bitmapped images. Unfortunately, when bitmapped images are printed they retain the resolution or dot size used to produce them. Even on the best computers, this 'print size' is quite coarse. Besides, if a bitmapped object is transformed, the original graininess is retained unless any sophisticated (and very slow) smoothing techniques are used. One look at the edges from

Over the last few months, references to 'structured' and 'object-oriented' drawing systems have begun to crop up with increasing frequency. By now, you may well be asking yourself "What objects - which orientals?" Many people have little or no idea what the concepts behind these words have to offer or how important they may become in the future. The arrival of PROFESSIONAL DRAW, the ultimate example of object-oriented drawing on the Amiga, gives Brian Larkman a chance to explain...

ORIENTAL OBJECTS

any normal drawing program can afford any printer - dot matrix, daisy, laser or wax-transfer - is evidence that there must be a better way. Areas that have been scaled up or down lose detail and gain chunkiness, even when antialiasing or something has been applied. Even simple transformations, like rotation or perspective distortion, result in a disproportionate loss of clarity.

What is required is a method that affords the maximum resolution of the display or printing method available, independent of resolution. With a structured system, one that utilizes vectors, these defects just do not happen.

A vector is a line that is described in terms of its length AND its direction. In most vector-graphics drawing systems, this is achieved by defining both ends of the line as a set of coordinates, either x and y for a 2D system or x, y and z for 3D. The advantages of this approach are plentiful. First of all, it is economical of memory: only the data referring to two points in a file have to be described or saved to disk. The others are created each time the line is drawn. Second, the data relating to a particular object can be easily transformed, in effect, rotated, scaled, distorted. Third, nothing is committed to the screen permanently; any object or point can be entered independently and its attributes changed.

To sum up: graphic images can be of two types: bitmapped or structured. Bitmapped images are easy to produce, but difficult to change without losing detail. Vector (structured) images are difficult to produce, but easy to change, regardless of resolution. Object-oriented systems can use both types of image and can therefore always take advantage of the most appropriate method.

TEXT

One of the main claims of Pro Draw's object-oriented system is its ability to handle even a bitmapped image, so perhaps a real illustration using this technique might show up the program's strengths and weaknesses. The picture chosen was of the four heads of Glasgow Bond, Texas. Each head was treated in a different way. Some of the problems encountered are described below.

This was originally a high-resolution, interactive, digitized picture of the bond heads. Pro Draw reduced the lines to four and scaled it to fit the page. For this reason, it takes a long time to appear on screen initially, or to rotate, since it has been left exactly as the original. Head 2 was moved using the four-point tool with a four-point-width line. Head 3



shows the range of greys available, layered one above another. Zooming in on the bitmaps allows a very high degree of control of the line, but antialiasing would have caused a lot of trouble. Editing was made more difficult by the problems of layering each of the faces correctly. Head 5 is not a member of the band, just Head 4 cloned and its colour and line thickness attributes changed.

PROFESSIONAL DRAW

Being straight in and loading a bitmapped, the first thing you will notice is that it is incredibly slow writing on screen. To be fair, this is a problem with all object-oriented systems - even on the Mac II. Antialias seems to take forever to rotate an image - nevertheless, Pro Draw is too slow. The manual appears that bitmaps clear the action and describes a strategy to speed things up: marks, to avoid scrolling. Like most good drawing systems, Pro Draw operates in a draft as well as WYSIWYG (what you see is what you get) mode. This also helps, because it suppresses redraw of the bitmaps.

TOOLS

Most of the editing tools are quite ordinary in operation, except for distort, which is very unusual and interesting. Selecting the distort tool places a rectangular box around any

selected objects. This box is itself a basic object. Dragging any one of its points curves the object controlled by that point. The manual explains the effect of the action perfectly.

"Think of the rectangle as a rubber sheet on which the object is printed. As a side or corner of the sheet is pulled, the shape of the object is distorted."

TEXT

Pro Draw is not intended to be primarily a text handling system: Professional Page is for that. Nevertheless, it has two fonts available that are structured and therefore easy to manipulate. The fonts provided - with and without serifs - both look good on screen, but they suffer from one fundamental flaw. The apparent holes within letters such as a, b, d, g, or v are not transparent. They are, in fact, stippled drawn in the background (same) colour and layered above the main letter. The limitation is especially annoying if the text sits above a fairly detailed object, as is the case in the "Texas" illustration.

TRIAL BY SEPARATION

Although colour has always been difficult, expensive or just impossible to output from a drawing program (as opposed to a painting program) the latest generation of packages provides fabulous facilities so that high-quality



Professional Draw in draft mode, which allows quicker redraw of the image when changes are made.



The same illustration in WYSIWYG mode, but without antialias. Note the considerably lower quality lines.



A full antialias mode, which produces much cleaner lines without aliasing, although the slower bit mapping.

GRAPHIC ACCOUNTS

pages, but are destined to be professionally printed can be colour separated. The cyan, magenta, yellow and black components of each shade are printed out separately. Professional Draw can produce these separations, but problems are created by the limited - and boring - range of colours available for on-screen display.

Using the Amiga's highest resolution to get the most accurate representation on screen means that only 16 colours from 4096 can be used at once. Nine of these - black through down grey to white - are set and unchangeable, leaving just seven for the user. This is not quite as limiting as it seems, because for colour separation and colour printing each object can be assigned almost any one of the Amiga's 4096 colours, regardless of what colour appears on screen. Nevertheless, using just seven colours in represent of the tones required can present a real hindrance to efficient drawing, if a range of realistic matching tones are required. The problem is not helped by the manual which provides only very terse instructions and only one limited colour example.

Head 4 in "brush" was an attempt at introducing fresh tones, it failed because too many screen colours had been introduced. The program seems to offer no method of removing colours from the palette, though once there they can be changed (not the names though - hence a white face looked as pink).

LAYERING

Incidentally to the object-oriented system of drawing is the idea of layering. Each object is in effect a 2D slice of image, and like paper cutouts, the slices can sit on top of each other. The ability to move these slices up and down through the pile can make this drawing method very easy because it eliminates any worries about which part of the image is in front of other parts. New objects can be painted back as far as necessary. Pro Draw provides the ability to change the stack by pushing or pulling any object to the back or front. At times this can be a little confusing and lots of shuffling is needed. A numbering system for layers, or more simply the ability to push and pull by just one layer would be perfect.

CONCLUSIONS

The arrival of Professional Draw is an important development, for the Amiga and for other semi-professional micros like the Atari ST and Acorn Archimedes, because it points the way forward in the future. Similar software has been available for more expensive systems - especially the Macintosh - for some time, but the Amiga industry has a high-quality profile now for developers to provide the level of support it is only a matter of time before the ST is similarly provided for.

Professional Draw still has a long way to go before it can rival or even approach Mac products like Photoshop 2, Illustrator 88 or Superpaint, but then so has Professional Page. Nevertheless, it has some worthwhile and unique attributes, especially the dotset tool. If colour were never to use and reduced palette limited and shaded fills, if layering were more controllable, if text views were transparent, and if it could do screen present images, it would most likely be a winner.

That's an awful lot of 'ifs', though. ■

A sharp step on the wind from our Windows editor - or its telephone equivalent - reminds me that Graphic Accounts has been requested of late, so here's a round-up of graphics products that have hit our desk recently.

■ **Deluxe Paint III** (Electronic Arts, Langley Business Centre, 11-49 Station Road, Langley, Leic. Shugan, Berks SL3 2PH tel 0793 49442) is in fact one of the most recent new products, but it is so good that it has to go straight to top of the heap. Would you believe, to quote, "...paint



and animation is one incredible tool." For once, the hype is really true. The latest version of the final-setting paint program for the Amiga is greatly improved and includes what must be the easiest to use animation tools yet. Almost any transformation of a 2D brush can be animated, including moving it in the z dimension. Best of all, an animated object can be placed up exactly like a normal brush and then painted anywhere on screen. A full review is under way. DPM is multi-tasking even as I write.

■ **Logic (HB) Marketing, 32 The Green, West Drayton, Middlesex, UB7 7PD tel 0883 494133** have been working away hard for the Amiga for over the last six months, developing animation and presentation software that extends the Professional range. Photocapture 3D Version 2 has been around for quite a few months but only

recently has there been time to have a good look. A great improvement on the original, it now supports PCL, HMM mode, screen scrolling, screen surfaces, extra colours in the regular mode, auto-fill, font support, hierarchical motion and easier operation with new menu options. It is still not easy to use though, especially when modelling objects, so Logic have thoughtfully provided the following.

■ **Modeler 3D (HB Marketing)** is a 3D object modelling and generation system that is designed to support Photocapture 3D though it produces objects that can be used with almost other rendering systems on the Amiga. Almost every imaginable conventional modelling tool has been provided, plus the ability to create camera and object motion files.

■ **Lighter Camera Assistant (HB Marketing)** is the easy-to-use Amiga tool not to be left out of the Desktop Presentation arena and it comes with a number of features that put it on a par with the rest of the competition. It allows 99 pictures, some animations, and 3Dcor Instruments, and music to be combined to produce polished desktop video presentations. It includes over 80 special effects such as edges, fades, dissolves etc. and is designed to work with the OpenGet goosack for smooth dissolve effects.

■ **MovieMaker from Gold One (HB Marketing)** is in some ways similar to Lighter Camera Assistant (LCM) but it is designed, as its title suggests, to let you see what you animate as you produce the animation. Using an on-screen storyboard, MovieMaker makes it easy to move through the animation, editing timelines and playing them back to see the results. Immediately. Included with the program is a supply of "movie clips" and stereo sound samples (that let you start animating straight away). A full review will follow soon!

■ The Cyber Series for the ST from Artic and Electric Compositions (Stowood Lane, St. Ives, Cambs PE17 8JG) has also been gaining an amazing rate. So much so that we will have to be doing a feature on the whole range in the near future. Just to be getting on with are Cyber Sculpt and Cyber Texture, both designed to work with Cyber Studio (reviewed ACE 6). Sculpt allows objects to be treated as if they were malleable, like lumps of clay.

"...painted, pulled, and compressed into endless shapes." It seems to be very easy to use, the only limitation being the number of colours that a standard ST can display. Texture transforms B&W, HyperPaint or RasterImage pictures into CyberPaint images, into Cyber Studio CADDD objects. Any pointing or animation can thus be wrapped around any textured, spun, or sculpted object. Texture mapping has arrived on the ST in a big way!

■ **Render Blender for the Archimedes from Clavis (Clavis Micro Supplies, 88 Middleway Road, Rushmore, Berkshire, Reading RG6 7QA)** enables the user to construct scenes using 3D objects and ray tracing. These can then be compiled to produce smooth animated sequences. A first release (bigly but not been seen yet, so how well it works is still to be discovered, but with the speed of the Amiga and 2D colours, ray tracing should be fast.

■ **Plunder's** products are another feature that has been neglected for many months, but don't despair or think you are not forgotten. Very soon we intend to start a new feature, covering just this area. Selected pictures will be published in AOL, each with a few tips and words of advice as to how to improve your work. And those of you who have sent us for the return of disks or tapes should be seeing those long-lost relations again before very long.

RENEGADE

THE FINAL CHAPTER THE FINAL CHAPTER



...the name
of the game

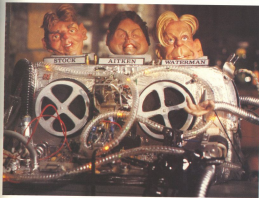
When a guy loses his girl — he loses his mind! Now, in the final Chapter, Renegade must reverse all his strength and fighting abilities as he chases his girlfriend's captors through time itself. Fight against another man, mechanical tanks & colossal robots...

...medieval knights, and the top-ranked undead boss, with the Tomb of Ancient Egypt. Your quest finally takes you BEYOND the present — to a time you'll never forget! ... But remember ... your girl wants to see you alive!

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★ The last series of *Spinning Images*, and the cover of our last issue, featured a send-up of *Beak, Atken and Waterman*: a machine with a lever on the side that could be set to Kyle, Rick or Bonanarans. Ironically, this was not very far from the truth. The machine in question is, in reality, a sequencer; and it is this piece of kit that gets this month's in-depth treatment.

MUSIC



A SEQUENCE OF EVENTS

Last month's MIDI cover featured a music 4444444, with a tone which was put together on a sequencer. What do you mean, you've recorded over it already? The sweet tones of Our Glorious Leader explained how the piece had been "glued" together from separate sections, mistakes had been corrected, and even the key changed to suit, all on a sequencer. So how is this achieved? Simple: it is all made possible because you are recording digital MIDI data, and not the electrical impulses that make an ordinary cassette player work.

Any MIDI-equipped instrument outputs information that relates to the notes played: how long they are, how many at the same time, and whether any controls, such as volume or pitch-bend, were used. More expensive instruments will also output information about the

velocity and pressure with which each note was played. If you are using a drum machine, there is even a regular clock pulse out that bears an exact relationship to the speed at which it is playing. Now, as well as outputting that information, the MIDI instrument will also respond to the same

information, MIDI being as much a common standard as ASCII is to printers. By putting a computer in the chain you are given a tool that is capable of remembering and manipulating that digital data, and outputting it. This is the first general principle of a sequencer: it stores data, manipulates it, and

when re-output, outputs it. The degree to which it is capable of doing this depends very much on the software.

In the simplest of sequencers this is what happens: set the machine to "record", play away to your heart's content, and then "play back". What you then hear is the instrument being told to play exactly the same notes that you played, at precisely the same speed. The chances are that you will have dropped the ball note or two. Tough, what you need to get them right is a better sequencer, one that will allow you to somehow see the notes you have played and then detect and chuck out those notes only.

But I can't read music, I hear you cry. No problem. Sequencers have developed three ways of presenting the notes for you to read. The most tedious of these is a

sequence of notes on a staff, with a key signature and a time signature. This is the most tedious of these is a

Complete numerical list of the "notes" (for so the notes are called) as they happened, usually checked against the bar and beat number so that you can find them. Scroll your way through the notes until you come to the offending one, and simply highlight and delete them. Effective, but time-consuming. The next most sophisticated display is usually to couple the data to a graphic depiction of the notes, in terms of length and sometimes pitch. This can take various forms, on screen, depending on the design of the program. The final method is to use traditional music notation, a very fast method of correction, but only any good if you can read music.

To you as the end user, the important thing is that it should make sense. It should be fairly obvious whether the note is high or low, long or short, and you should be able to jump to the correct note, hear it sound, and then decide whether or not to keep it. OK, you've whopped out all the bad notes, but how about those notes that you haven't quite played at the right time? As well as correcting or deleting notes, you can also change the position of the notes in the bar to suit your needs, more often than not by dragging them around with the mouse, or by entering the correct position numerically. Again, this is a job that has a low threshold of boredom, what you need to make life easier is a "quantize" function.

TRACK 24

• ST, price £75, Soundbits Software 021 733 2043

In short, use Groovesave over the next year. For the remarkably low price of £75 you can acquire a very competent sequencer that, as the name implies, runs on 16 tracks. With these tracks you can fit all the things that experimenters are equipped with, and the nice thing about any of the functions is that they are all pretty logical and there seems to have been a conscious effort to use familiar icons.

The main screen is presented with the track listed across the top, when highlighted they enter action and the status of other tracks is also similarly highlighted. This by the way is a fast way of hearing one track without having the bother of turning off all the other tracks, useful for tuning in air studios. As usual, the controls for recording, playback, fast forward and reverse take the form of cassette recorder icons. You can enter for them with the mouse or use the appropriate key. The latter



The main display for Track 24 sequencer on the Atari ST. Note the cassette recorder icons for record and playback.

is very useful, particularly when you have your hands busy with synth etc. Other features are on drop-down menus.

Track 24 has one feature which is quite unique. Tracks 23 and 24 are suitable for recording melody and chords respectively. Melody is a

This will sound up any notes that are outside a preset note value and shuffle them into line. The better programs will let you restrict to the values you had previously, so that you can find out what is going to work in a non-destructive way. The advanced programs will

sort out quantizing for you without having to go to the edit page; they just do it for you in the data stream, and only when you hear that it sounds right do you fix the data permanently.

Quantize used to be just this, rounding up note values, and no

more. However, it has now become a growth area of most sequencers, extending to rounding up entirely values and hence the 'roof' of the sound, putting in fixed notes useful for drum machines, putting in the same time value for every note and also putting in a small degree of error-tolerant's track.

By now, you should be getting the impression that a sequencer is to a musician what a word processor is to a writer. Sequencers also have the ability to copy and repeat any part of the music and into them. The piece we last saw in this topic was written in three separate sections, which were then copied and repeated until they chained together to form the song. The initial work was done very quickly using just one synthesizer and a drum machine, the latter was loaded up to the sequencer and had to work in time with the sequencer and not its own internal clock. Having sorted the sections out, it was then simply a matter of copying sections forward to the appropriate bar numbers and repeating that the correct number of times. Just to eliminate the boredom I put in a couple of key changes for some of the repeats.

There were obviously more instruments than just one synthesizer and a drum machine on the tape, so far I've just talked about using one instrument. The language of MIDI allows up to 16

THE WADDINGTON SEQUENCER

• ST, Public Domain

Microchips, with an average end of the market, we have an excellent value for money sequencer written by one Geoff Waddington who hails from Ontario, Canada. It will record on up to 32

tracks and is very professionally laid out, with the tracks down the left side of the screen and the right side split into sub-functions at the top and user-defined song sections below. It has good quantize

and copying features.

Although I could only get the copy function on the same track, it supports punch-in and real-time recording, auto-track, overdubbing and internal synchronization, and the controls follow the customary

cassette recorder icons. My only quibbles were the track editing - there isn't any - and there was no count-in, as the first few bars are nearly always blank, unless of which I can quantify anything you can't go back on it. Since you can't copy from track to track this could mean the ruin of several good ideas. But as an introduction to sequencing it is probably the best. Usual if what your disk drives you will also have a "read me" document that takes you through the sequencer step by step. Allow for about £20 per year.

CONTACT

Goodman (UK) 0783 89304
 Software 0792 288000
 Freephone 01 6224 88324



The Waddington Sequencer on the ST features a useful Punch In/out facility.

monophonic only track. Otherwise a song already has four tracks for guitar and chords allows you to get in the studio by allowing you to share channels containing them to a rhythm pattern. You can also do this the other way round by playing your instruments - say G - for a couple of seconds in a rhythm pattern you like, it will recognise this as a chord and if you can't trouble your real sound chords, this is your guitar.

It's especially if you are familiar with the single keyboards that have flooded onto the market, the chord track takes a number of notes.

Very much.

To do this

if the program, apart from one of two options, it has more features than you would expect, coupled with the advantage of being very simple to use. I don't doubt you will be up with the most ideas and software. It will feature all the usual MIDI functions, such as scale tables, and also record

the actual voice data from your synth, known as MIDI Dump. It has a really 'interactive mix' feature which is very unusual for something of this price. You play back your recordings, having selected the stereo-mono features, and any changes you make, tempo changes, adding tracks of another, etc. are recorded on a new track. When playback it really gives the feel of a piece played and the top mixing is made very easy.

It's only major problem was the editing, which uses traditional music notation and was not that simple to get into given what the program does.

lots of your notes, but only in mono stereo, one note at a time, so editing chords is quite a problem. But my favourite feature. But it's logical. Set it. The program also has both short functions and long functions, plus very easy copying features, all of which makes it quite a bargain.



The display for editing involves traditional music notation.

channels of separate information to flow at the same time, and all sequencers can do depend on these three channels. At first, this can be rather confusing, since the software is presented on screen as recording on 'tracks' and the MIDI transmits on 'channels'. The reason for this is that the term 'tracks' is borrowed from the world of multitrack recording. So you have a track for the bass, a track for the drums, a track for the melody, and so on. The sequencer should allow you to name these on screen so that you don't get lost in the whole process. Each track can then be assigned a MIDI channel to output its data on, and this will be picked out by the instrument that is set to 'listen' on the channel. As you will find out, many sequencers have more tracks to record on than there are MIDI channels. This is so that you have room to spare for adding extra instances of the piece in, or building up various parts and then playing them all back together to be performed as one instrument. If you are running short of track spaces, you can tie or bounce these tracks together: unlike conventional tape recording, there will be no loss of quality, because you the music is still being played 'live' by the sequencer.

Often there is a 'bunch in/out' feature which lets you pick a few bars that are beyond redemption,

also the track back and, at the specified area, re-record over your first. Some allow the machine automatically steps in and out of record mode. In practice this, you can also 'loop' the section first and have the pleasure of hearing it ad infinitum until you feel you have got your sounds correct. A good sequencer will also remember any sound-changes you make. Say you want the sound to change on one instrument from a piano to a trumpet for eight bars, and then back again. By actually changing the sound as you record, the sequencer will remember this because it is transmitted as part of the MIDI data, known as a program change.

It goes without saying, that you need to be able to save your efforts. Many sequencers will offer you the choice of saving the whole song or just individual patterns when the song makes you would want to use the drum pattern for another piece, just like a certain well-known and successful producer team.

To sum up, a sequencer is as much a part of the modern musician's kit as a reel pen and parchment were of Beethoven's. The advantage is the non-association is that you can immediately adjust what you have played and order it into a piece. They give you enough scope you supply the inspiration. ■

SEQUENCING FOR OTHER COMPUTERS

There are, of course, sequencing systems available for most computers. The ST offers the best deal so far, because it has on-board MIDI ports. This means that the software has to be compatible, hence so much PG software that costs very little. All other machines require a MIDI interface. What you are running it on will dictate the price and compatibility, for such is the luxury of music software houses that many of the interfaces will not run software belonging to another interface - a factor that has contributed to the demise of several.

	ST	AMIGA	CPC	SPECTRUM	64	PC
Cost of interface	£5	£45+	£35+	£35+	£35+	£100+
Compatibility	Y	Y	N	N	N	N
Lowest commercial software price	£50	£50	£25	£10	£15	£80
Availability	good	good	very little	none new	none	good

* No longer produced commercially

A SHOPPING LIST FOR THESE WOULD POSSIBLY BE:

- ST ■ EZTrack ■ £49 from Synchronic Music 01 444 9125
- AMIGA ■ Dr T Eight Track ■ £45 from MCAI 01 724 4104
- CPC ■ EMR Performer ■ £48.95 from EMR 0762 302747
- SPECTRUM ■ Contact the Music Machine Club on 05242 62258
- 64 ■ EMR Performer ■ £45.95 from EMR 0762 302747
- PC ■ 16 track sequencer ■ £79.95 from DHCP 0443 51207

I should point out that with all the machines except the ST, you will need to add the cost of a compatible interface to the cost of your software. With the 64 and the Spectrum it is possible to pick up a complete package if you do not the second-hand column.

NEXT MONTH
 If you're taking a look at some programming software for synthesizers, both cheap and expensive, and looking at a MIDI microprocessor.

ADVENT

SHOGUN

Full of Eastern Promise?

WHILE Marc Blank was struggling with Journey, Infocom's Dave Lottig (the old Lottig whose name) was trying to reestablish Infocom's lead in straight story telling. It's debatable whether that lead has ever really been lost, but it's also true that down-to-earth text-and-graphics adventures have not been doing too well on the market



Shogun on the Apple Macintosh. Working below decks to find the happy crew enjoying some well-earned rest.

recently, wherever they come from.

Lottig's adaptation of Shogun, according to Rob Sears, one of Infocom's top brass, had two priorities: authenticity and an upgraded parser. Along with all our products it's a battle to combine creativity with technical excellence."

"With one or two exceptions, the preproduction steps of Shogun we've seen certainly impress in all these departments. There are excellent graphics, a very strong parser, and—thanks in part to James Cleveland—a superb

storyline. Mixed on the coast of Japan in the days of pioneer merchant trading, you steadily acquire fame and fortune in a few weeks, angling to the elevated rank of Shogun.

The game has superb graphics on the Apple Mac version (the only one we've seen so far) and the text, of course, is flawless. The screen layout is more flexible than in Infocom's early games, allowing level indicators of relevant game data. For example, during the opening of the beginning of the game, you can tell which way the wind is blowing and which way the boat is headed; vital information for solving at least one important puzzle.

The parsing in the program certainly seems to have improved. You can address collective groups of people and communicate easily in a variety of ways. Despite the richness, however, it still managed to fall over twice during the opening sequences, once allowing something to move about when it was, in fact, locked to the deck, and another time mistakenly refusing to acknowledge the presence of the walls: oops, because a few minutes later they got torn to shreds and had to be fixed.

Going a full verbet on a game like Shogun on the basis of a preproduction copy is not a good idea, so we won't be committing ourselves until we receive the finished product. However, it seems that this release has a powerful enough storyline to attract the committed adventurer, but whether, after the swagons of RPG and strategy, there are still enough committed traditional text-and-graphics adventurers out there remains to be seen.



GETTING my hands on the first preprod copy of Journey was one of the more exciting experiences I've had in the last year. This, it seemed, had to be one of Infocom's main thrusts into the new world of 1990s advertising. To succeed it needs brilliant graphics (except Magic: Scabbia, back to us for looking a pretty fatigued little bit, good



character control (except Level 9), and a thoroughly good story (except everything).

In typical Infocom fashion, however, the company have brought out a product that succeeds in side-stroking all these issues and giving it something completely different and unexpected. Journey is not really an RPG at all nor is it a traditional text-and-graphics adventure. In fact—and please don't reach for the sickling QUOTE yet—the game it bears the closest resemblance to is probably Level 9's old title...wait for it...Adrian-Mole.

The scenario is a simple one, though supported throughout by copious text that's well up to Infocom's usual impeccable standards. The crew are sailing and a small party consisting of yourself (an apocryphal food merchant), Begon the carpenter, Frank the wizard, and Efer the Magician sets out to seek the help of a long-lost island called Isen.

Geometry is highly unusual and very easy to grasp. There's a small window showing the names of the characters and alongside, in three columns, up to three commands that

Before embarking on our RPG guide, we've just got room to bring you two EXCLUSIVE previews of the game you

ADVENTURES

JOURNEY

Not quite RPG, not quite Adventure...

while in each character. At any time you can click on one of these commands to execute it.

For example, Praxia may be aligned with the command **DISMINE**. Clicking on this brings up the object names in the second column for you to apply the command to. You click on Praxia, for example, and up comes (in the story window) a description of Praxia's pouch

inside and the program, once it's off on a new track, won't know the opportunity. This becomes crucial later on when you try to steal quite a mink: you can only look at the map once, for example, and you can't simply go back every time you make a wrong move. Hilarious jokes are frequent.

The unique feature of the game, however,



Journey on the Apple Macintosh. Casual conversation with strangers in a tavern is used to obtain information.



This slightly droll-looking character wishes to offer his services. Should the party accept him?

before he keeps his magic ingredients.

The commands available are a tantalizing mixture of the mundane and the unusual. One of the more useful ones is the **TALK** **STORY** option that results in a character launching into a frequently angled discourse about some feature of the game world you've recently encountered. Then there's **SCOUT** which sends a party member off on his own - sometimes never to return - and a whole host of others.

The command method enables the game to change the commands available at any point, giving the adventure a flexibility not normally enjoyed by RPG's, which tend to have a small collection of fixed command options. On the other hand, it's not as flexible as a normal text adventure, which means that you don't spend excessive time wondering what you should be doing. The possibilities are always laid there in front of you.

On the other hand, the system doesn't give you many second chances. Confronted by angry dwarves, clicking on **FID** when they ask you to accompany them could cause a lot of

trouble which are supposed to be the story which you see chronicle at the expedition's write during your travels. For example, you might **EXAMINE** **POUCH** and a new paragraph of materialize, saying perhaps "Praxia suddenly decided the innkeeper had come to look in his pouch. He was determined to find that he only had enough Water essence left for one spell..." and so on. As with all Infocom games, the story line can be directed to a greater or lesser extent.

Combat in the game is fairly straightforward, but with good text descriptions. There are very few options, but you're occasionally offered the choice of quitting your party to attack the opposition from behind. Magic is based on the elements of Earth, Air, Fire, and Water which have to be collected whenever possible, otherwise Praxia runs out of power. Some puzzles involve a fairly complex use of several spells in conjunction to achieve a desired effect.

The atmosphere of the game boils at extraordinary (and possibly intentional) resemblance to the Hobbit, even down to being kidnapped by orcs in the mountains. Despite the limitations of the command system, however, the excellent Infocom ability to tell a story still shines through. However I don't think that Journey is itself going to be the game that puts Infocom back at top-of-the-pole. The system they've developed - providing they can work in more flexibility and better character development - might, in the other hand, do just that. For their sakes, I hope so. Stand by for the final savings and format details as soon as we receive our desktop copies. ■





At last! The complete low-down, in-depth, three-part guide to RPG software. ACE checks out what's on the shelves and discovers that all that glitters is not necessarily gold...

OLD AND FAMOUS? OR JUST OLD?

THE ACE RPG-GUIDE PART 1

Everyone dreams of TRPG games... You know what we mean, the tabletop game that comes from Outer Space, takes into your dim-lit, cluttered magazine after magazine of glorious graphics, sets and enough games to keep you going for the rest of your life. Question is, does it or will it ever exist?

You'd probably had a hunch for 10 years ago, but remember there are many people (some might call them wankers, but we'll let that pass) who claim that the legendary tabletop game is sitting on the shelves of your local software computer right now. In fact, there's more than one of them, they're... and they're all tabletop RPGs.

In the next few issues of ACE, we'll be taking a hard look at RPG, to it really better than you? Does it truly offer games that will keep you hooked to your computer for weeks on end? Can it provide the ultimate challenge a gamemaster will ever face? Or is it just a Rubber Fantasy? Some of software for people who haven't the balls to master an RPG or were not an alien attack wave?

RPGs IN HISTORY

The first shock most consumers get when they take RPG is the primitive nature of the display. No vector graphics here, none - it's mostly crude character block displays and some scrolling perspective views that look like they've been copied from SD Monitor News. Like strategy RPG, both a few exceptions, which we'll look at next month, has a long way to go on the presentation side.

This is all the more depressing when you look at other efforts on the IBM machines that claimed - often wrongly - to have RPG elements. Take *Conquest: The Great Egyptian*, for example, released in 1982 and 1983 on the IBM-compatible PC. Although it only offers two personality attributes and a single class character, it did have disturbingly well-comparable with some much more recent releases.



The year is 1982, and *The Great Egyptian* has its own character-based graphics, randomized gameplay in six modules, spells, and combat.



Wizardry's *King of Dungeons* was born on the Amstruc. This *Ultima-type* RPG first appeared on the Spectrum and eventually made many more recent RPGs to shame.

Using another early release, Wizardry's *King of Dungeons* is just as exciting. The can't help wondering after making it the design and doing battle on the Amstruc display what this game isn't got for, say, the more recent *Legend of Blackbeard* has. The clock at P&G's 1989 product, *Secrets and Sur-*

vey, featuring magic, character training, and a colorful scenario and you'll wonder how more.

Yes, the most recent RPG's are bigger than their predecessors' cousins, but this can immediately be



P&G's *Secrets and Surveys* - magic, graphics, a lot of interesting items, and a reasonable display that had for 1988, eh?

improved only in the world - and these words aren't exaggerated either for 1984 scores. And if you don't believe us, just ask yourself how many recent RPG's have been converted into the Spectrum...

The very state of affairs becomes even more obvious when you compare arcade games over the same time period. Remember *Wizardry* (didn't you imagine it should have had). Most people would want to forget it with a mixture of being it. Now compare that title game with *Dragon's Lair* and you'll see a lot of differences. At the time *Dungeon*, imagine you remember now working on *Power's Adventure*, and recall: "What I think of what we got away with in three days, I just can't believe it. It was subtle." How many RPG programmers could have of a similar development in-outside and ability?

OK, so there are a few, and we'll be checking out their world later in this series. But meanwhile, let's look at four of the most recent RPG's released over the last couple of years. Some of these are still coming out for the IBM machines. Should you be keeping an eye on them?

On the following two pages, we start an assessment of what's currently available on the RPG scene...

WHAT TO EXPECT...

What actually happens when you play a computer RPG? Different programs follow different conventions in defining characters and developing that attribute, but usually they have the following game structure...

- 1 CHARACTER DEFINITION**
You name your character and you're to playing attributes (e.g. race, sex, profession or class) to do. Characters fall into three basic groups: fighters (used to develop strength), magic users (only men based to develop intelligence and knowledge of spells), and clerics (used to develop skills, history and bookkeeping skills).
- 2 EXPLORATION OF LANDSCAPE**
To move your party around a map, choose any different locations and standing for them about your quest. You can purchase weapons, trade items, and sharpen your combat and magical skills with any monster that you encounter.
- 3 EXPLORATION OF DUNGEONS**
Dungeons are multi-level mazes crammed full of hostile parties, treasure, and clues. In almost every RPG you will have to descend into at least one of these and battle it out to the lowest level in search of your objective.
- 4 FINALE**
You've explored the landscape, penetrated the dungeons, built up your character's attributes to make them capable of leaving the land of a dragon or saving a World Elder's soul, and learned whatever items or knowledge you set out to find. The characters you've developed can often be loaded into other games of the same series for further play.

WHAT YOU SEE IS...

Computer RPG's tend to fall into two distinct display categories, although many use the two in different parts of the game. To save space during our RPG-walk, we'll refer to them as Type One and Type Two. Here are the basic characteristics of the two formats.

TYPE ONE



This display taken from *Ultima V* shows (on the left) a scrolling window with a character's status map. Your party's position is shown by a single icon. Items, skills, and other features may be entered by positioning the character on top of the feature and giving an Enter command. Most Type One displays have change to a large-scale display of the feature you've entered, showing objects, non-player characters, and buildings, as shown on the right, above.

TYPE TWO

This display type has been developed from the old 3D main games and shows a scrolling perspective image, taken from your party's viewpoint, of the location straight ahead. You move either forward, left, or right and the display switches around accordingly. Some games use Type Two almost exclusively but the screen shows the page of stats and Magic, others use Type One for the major locations and Type Two for dungeons. The most important point to bear in mind is that Type Two is much more difficult to adapt

RPG IN A (LARGE) NUTSHELL...

A role-playing game (RPG) as implemented on a computer takes its name from fantasy role-playing games, the best known of which is *Dungeons and Dragons*. These games are played by assuming adults in dark rooms and involve the creation by the players of a character (i.e. game characters) who together form a party of adventurers.

The party explores a fantasy environment created by the Dungeon Master (DM) who is usually an elected player. RPG's are dominated by complex rules of engagement and exploration as laid down in the documentation for whatever system (e.g. *Advanced Dungeons and Dragons*) is being used. Creative Data use these rules to construct

unique and individual environments, but you can use newly-packaged scenarios if you prefer.

Each party member starts off with certain 'attributes' that determine his/her role in the game. During gameplay, these attributes (e.g. Strength, Experience, Agility) are developed, making the character more powerful.

The back-bone of any RPG is the 'encounter' with hostile forces, be they dragons, bats, or Malard Sugar Mice. All 'monsters' (a generic term not necessarily implying monstrous size or even hostility) have their own attributes and the course of each encounter is determined by complex rules governing attack, weapons, skills, movement,

and so on.

So what's a computer RPG? In essence, it's simply an RPG cut-down to size in which the computer programmer has played the role of DM and the rules of the system are applied by your machine. It lacks the real-life interaction you get with other human players but attempts to make up for this through the use of computer-controlled characters (the equivalent of NPCs, non-player characters) and allowing you to control and define a whole party yourself. Traditional RPG's tend to steer at all this, but for all-computer treats, a good adaptation for computer can sometimes offer a gameplay experience very different from your average arcade scenario.

WIZARDS CROWN

SSI/US Gold



Wizards Crown is the combat option. The user selects items for each character at the beginning of the game. Characters can move and fight in a single turn.

This is a fullmouth of wits and wares, make no mistake. *Wizards Crown* is now over two years old and shows its age with updating graphics and use for the 256K one of the lowest disk-based randomized passwords I've ever encountered. It did manage, however, to offer some attractive features.

With *Wizards Crown* you get off to a rousing start (beginning as you do in all of the total ownership of the scenario). Eight party members, however, is more than most other games do, when combined with as many as thirty skills, five professions, and five character classes, adds up to

a complex package of game options.

The odds range from swimming, juggling and, unlike some other programs, the odds a character has made a very skilled impression on game play. This also applies to the character abilities, which do not include even such as "charisma" — after included in

RELEASE BOX

WIZARD	29.95	2.0	5.0
WIZARD-INT	29.95	2.0	5.0
WIZARD	29.95	2.0	5.0

CHARACTERS 10

Complex items systems and up through in your game.

SETUP 15

How the user is required to use the game. Reasonable instructions.

LANDSCAPE 45

Good graphics for a game of this type.

COMBAT 10

Good graphics but lots of tedious options.

MAGIC 40

Limited spells but some interesting effects.

ENCOUNTERS 25

Little interaction with NPCs in dialogues appears to be.

RPG-UIDE RATING 516

The game looks very pretty on the recent Amiga version and possible on other machines, but it contains a number of serious weaknesses.

First, there is only one player character and no party option. Second, the attributes for your character you find from the beginning. Third, combat is a limited affair looking like a standard puzzle with only little *Star Trek* and *Star Wars*.



Fourth graphics on the Amiga for *Questron II*, but a VERY simple game system.

The display is a colorful type like with items, characters, objects, directions and battle screens, normally to explore in search of wealth and information as you attempt to destroy the evil forces and the owner of this power, the full look of Magic.

Entering villages and interior locations gives you the usual top-down overhead view of your surroundings. The combat system are extremely

QUESTRON II

SSI/US Gold

simple but you can SPEAK in anyone's name standing next to. Handy-wise items out of a finished you get no skills left.

Questron II is a very limited game in terms of interaction, but there's a lot amount of exploring to do. There is a map to help you in this regard and the, combined with the fact that death brings immediate resurrection, makes it very suitable for impatient players or for those working a very simple introduction to the type of game.

What you will get, however, is

the excitement that comes from creating your own characters and developing them together as a team. Perhaps *Questron II* will address this old dilemma...

RELEASE BOX

QUEST	29.95	2.0	5.0
QUEST	29.95	2.0	5.0
QUEST	29.95	2.0	5.0
QUEST	29.95	2.0	5.0

CHARACTERS 10

Only one character, one attributes listed by the program.

SETUP 15

How the user is required to use the game. Best for experienced and experienced.

LANDSCAPE 45

How the user is required to use the game. Best for experienced and experienced.

COMBAT 10

Not very exciting but very simple.

MAGIC 40

Very few spells, but they do the job.

ENCOUNTERS 25

Lots of people to meet, but not many to talk to. Interesting, however, and other features that you may find in some.

RPG-UIDE RATING 540

breaks like on the boundaries of the RPG genre. It only shows you and the user in looking at your abilities are listed from the beginning without player interaction. But their objective is to rescue Princess Aelia's father from the evil Baron Dargan and give the Baron's good speaking for his old deeds.

The game is a frustrating combination of simple exploration — interrupted by numerous random encounters — and solving tough puzzles. Most exploration is done over a top-down display showing the various geographical features of the lands of Thales and Marthana: Castles, temples, towns, and dungeons that are based on the particular player and on entering. Maps are shown in the traditional top-down large-scale format.

There is a reasonable degree of interaction with NPCs in the various locations, some of whom will set you simple tasks in return for money. Buying and selling is done whenever it is appropriate.

RELEASE BOX

QUEST	29.95	2.0	5.0
QUEST	29.95	2.0	5.0
QUEST	29.95	2.0	5.0
QUEST	29.95	2.0	5.0

A NOTE ABOUT RATINGS...

★ We've devised a special rating system for our RPG-uide. It works like this:

CHARACTERS: How complex a character class you create within the program? How easy is it to create and save characters? How many can you have?

SETUP: How good is the documentation? How long will it take you to start playing? Does the program require some cumbersome steps before you play?

LANDSCAPE: How good are the graphics? Is the terrain varied, extensive, and interesting? What are the mapping facilities of any? How good is the screen display?

COMBAT: Is it just a case of "You go first, they hit you back," or is it a full-blown tactical and strategic challenge? Do you get

choices of weapon types, or just a plastic dagger?

MAGIC: How many spells are there? Are they interesting and original, or do they just kill your monsters?

ENCOUNTERS: Are there any, one to talk to? Do you just brush everyone on sight, or can you

engage in more meaningful interaction? Is there enough variety in encounters, or are they all the same?

RPG-UIDE RATING: Should you buy it?

All ratings are out of 100, except the RPG-UIDE Rating, which is out of 1500.

MIGHT AND MAGIC 1

New World Computing/Activision



Might and Magic 1: Inside is about the same as...

MM1 is now around two years old and really shows its age. Despite being quick and easy to play, it's let down badly by its graphics.

The objective is a standard search-and-destroy in the company of five companions. There are six character attributes for each party member, its classes ranging from Wizard to Fighter, and five races. In addition, characters can be given an "alignment" indicating good, evil, or neutral disposition.

Together with the usual armor class and hit point attributes, the game has reasonable copies of character complexity but fails to introduce any startlingly new or interesting character capabilities. The character creator provides a good and powerful framework, combining random "slot" items with the option to craft. This means you can generate some very powerful characters if you're prepared to head-train at the graphics.

The starter is a 2Dish face but with few abilities. Although there are both interior and exterior locations (the



—available.

rooms, rooms, mountains, dungeons, etc.) The display mode remains constant. Moving around becomes rather dull after an hour or two and the only reward from them is a map.

There are a large number of spells, but few of real interest. The majority are simply offensive or defensive mantras of varying strengths. For example, Hammer sounds interesting and/or nice the hope that it might enable you to control a monster better than "slings" (summon), but all it does is stop the opposition from attacking for a short period.

Might and Magic 1 is a competent game, but it fails to offer any real innovation and does not merit enough in any single department to make it worth buying. Might and Magic 2, on the other hand, could be very different. We'll be looking at it in the very near future.

RELEASE BOX

IBM PC (DOS) \$29.95

IBM PC (OS/2) \$29.95

CHARACTERS 40

Easy to play, but not a real character creator.

SETUP 40

Requires a substantial disk organizing system. Most sophisticated at least and other than that, reasonably self-explanatory.

LANGUAGE 30

Minimal background that the graphics are very good.

COMBAT 40

Not especially easy, but not too hard.

POINTS 50

Lots of options, but no real innovation.

ENGINEERING 70

Really shines with other than 3D, but nothing special.

RPG-UIDE RATING: 441

NEXT MONTH

Next month we move right up in date with a look at the big guns in RPG today: Wizardry, Interplay, and Origin Systems. We'll also be giving you an eye full of Might and Magic 2. Don't miss it!



World's Largest - the city layout and more commands than 1000. In the game, you can move the city layout and more commands than 1000.

commands which then follow up if the effects don't work.

Many Wizard's (Level) state skills, however, it is unclear if he has the most complex and satisfying combat system of any computer-based RPG I've played, with the greater number of item tags (see text) really adds. Lastly, you can choose between two combat modes - Quick and Tactical - because tactics, the most interesting option, can take you out of the way to complete.

Back combat simply gets the fight

over and done with and then reveals the damage you've suffered and the body you've found. Tactical combat, on the other hand, gives you a close-up view of the battlefield (rather like Ultima) and the positions of the different characters, including the enemy.

Each character can be found with one of many control commands, ranging from Fall Press to Occupy, Hit, and Break. In a usual battle you become extremely complex and make special use of each character's skills. Although slow in operation, the aspect of the program is very satisfying, the cast also kill you early during play if you're slow.

Otherwise the game is pretty bog-standard stuff. The graphics are a major Turn One with few additions and the sound is almost nonexistent. Atmosphere is helped with occasional cut-scene and various music tracks which usually provide your instant information.

Wizard's (Level) gets up at the pillars of computer-based RPG, it adds a lot of fun and a long time to get into. It still manages, however, to avoid a quest or "save" because enough to get it a chance...

LEGEND OF BLACKSILVER

Epyx/US Gold



BlackSilver: the overhead view isn't terribly inspiring.

CHARACTERS 40

Easy to play, but not a real character creator.

SETUP 40

Easy to play, but not a real character creator.

LANGUAGE 30

Minimal background that the graphics are very good.

COMBAT 40

Not especially easy, but not too hard.

POINTS 50

Lots of options, but no real innovation.

ENGINEERING 70

Really shines with other than 3D, but nothing special.

RPG RATING: 541

Warfare it shows a combat, a detail after detailing an exchange of blows and a fast report of the action. The only thing in its favor is that it's not too easy, avoiding the encounter.

On the plus side, the game plays very quickly and smoothly with few-disk episodes. The CD-ROM takes a lot of progress around the countryside (providing you avoid encounters), entering features into the map provided with the game. In addition, some forms of interaction are intriguing - particularly those involving the training, where you can often double or triple your money.

Apart from the weak combat and some very limited spells, BlackSilver plays very well. There are numerous challenges, ranging from crossing the oceans to dangerous exploration. If only it had the facilities for forming a party, together with better magic and control, it would be a winner.

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ACADEMY

Set on the planet Cygnus in 2187, a novice pilot selected the wrong gear when docking with the main control tower and returned half the planet to molten lava. Calving has decided that a special training school was essential and only the top pilots will make it through!

Complete your 20 missions, grouped in the levels of four in order to graduate from the "Galaxy-Academy" for advanced starship pilot.

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In 2000 the first wave of colonists left earth for the nearby solar system of Tau Ceti as the first wave of man's great adventure. On the inhospitable desert world of Tau-Ceti a war has begun. Infinitely years they great cities were built, until, without warning a great plague decimated the new world. The remaining desperate colonists were evacuated and in time a cure was found. An expedition force was dispatched and then destroyed by the now malfunctioning defense systems. The only way to incorporate the automatic defenses was to shut down the massive fusion reactor that fuels the planet. It was decided that single highly skilled pilot in an armed ground summer might succeed where they would surely would surely fail. Like a fool you volunteered!

BALANCE OF POWER

THE 1990 EDITION FROM MINDSCAPE

A new and enhanced game of global struggles. 80 countries are allowed to ship weapons and troops and to fight wars. Your challenge as a superpower is to

monitor their policies and use your influence - or spies in the past of diplomatic crisis - to protect your interests.

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- 1 and 2 player games
- includes a 1 person or screen "cross advisory" group for counsel in crisis.

"This is a strategist's dream, the sheer size and scope of the simulation means that it is possible to become totally immersed in the proceedings!" Steve Jarratt Ace April '95



	RRP	ACE PRICE	ORDER CODE
ADRI ST	£24.99	£11.95	ACE005
AMIGA	£24.99	£11.95	ACE006
IBM PC	£24.99	£11.95	ACE009
MAC	£29.99	£22.95	ACE010

F-16 COMBAT PILOT

FROM DIGITAL INTEGRATION

Based on the award F-16 Fighting Falcon, this flight simulator takes you through four basic game-playing, a set of five missions, a campaign game and a one-to-one dogfight. As squadron leader, brief your team on weapon loading and then proceed as all from enemy threats. "The mix between action and realism is terrific!" *Andy Smith*, *Amiga* '88. See the full review in this issue!

952
BEST SELLER

	RRP	ACE PRICE	ORDER CODE
IBM PC CGA	£24.95	£17.97	AC006CSA
IBM PC VGA	£24.95	£17.97	AC006CSA
ATARI ST DDP	£24.95	£17.97	AC006ST

F-16 COMBAT PILOT



POWERPLAY

FROM ARCADE



The stunningly original quiz game for one to four players of all ages. Over 4,000 questions on 20 topics. The clues are ZAPP the other guys pieces, which involve moving adjacent to them and engaging them in combat. This is easier said than done though because of the way the games quiz element intrudes. Call the questions wrong and more to one of three animals, the Mad Cow, a mountain top or a lava-cool.

"If you are thinking of buying a quiz game this has to be the one!" *Andy Wilson*, *Amiga*

	RRP	ACE PRICE	ORDER CODE
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ACE IN THE PINK

THE ACE PINK PAGES... IT'S ALL HERE! FROM THE CONTINUING STORY OF NIGAR THROMBOSO, TO THE COMICAL EXPLOITS OF NIGEL FROM NIGEL, FROM THE QUIZ TO THE COMPETITIONS TO THE CROSSWORD... IT'S ALL HERE, PLUS YOUR OWN INPUT TO THE MAGAZINE, INCLUDING THE READERS' PAGES AND THE OCCASIONAL LETTER TO THE PINK PAGES EDITOR. IF YOU WANT TO JOIN THE FUN, GET WRITING, REMEMBER, TO GET READ, GET IN THE PINK...

The Ace Serial THE GIT IN THE MACHINE: 9

That the temperature of his employment was rising at an average rate of about one thousand degrees a second might well have been the last thought that went through NIGAR Thromboso's little electronic mind, but for one highly singular event. The slow-washer lamp of electronics that his bit of floppy disk was wedged up against spontaneously generated an anti-dimensional gravitational waveform. In less time than it could take to prove it impossible, the lamp of electronics and fragments of floppy disk were jolted unceremoniously from normal space, extruded into transdimensional antiquities the approximate length of the MM between Dawn and the Breakfast tablespoons, and sucked into a trans-astrophysical supercritical vortex.

"Where, where am I?" said Nigar Thromboso.

"**** know?" said the red lamp of electronics. "I'd like to see you!" Thromboso asked.

"No, wouldn't you like to see my ****ing life?"

After Thromboso touched a flicker, wishing the electronics wouldn't see so many electrons, and wishing to be heard, he began a literary list of all those bits which in the instant after he was sucked into that vortex.

"What have you got to show me?" he said.

"I generated an arbitrary and gravitational response which, basically, did not do a thing," ****ing electronics,

its critical eye lit reading "arbitrary."

"No, I am," said Thromboso, who really didn't care what. "But you know there's no reason to quit or... and... about?"

"You're ****ing about. Four billion stuffed through a pipeline, loaded into a code and formatted your ****ing machine loaded off a ****ing system, just ****ing don't understand."

"In your ****ing after-egg, you know something, contributing 100%."

"I'm a ****ing man!" shouted Thromboso excitedly. "20,000-175,000 words in the language of electronics. Temporary ****ing stress I made no impact, there was more when absolutely

repeated his feeling at that moment.

"But where am I?" asked the floppy disk.

"No care!" said the lamp of electronics, whether a lamp of highly convertible body had not really been the objective to send his memory details. But after forty minutes (back on the outside of a closed vortex) about, it had learned there's good days at the time.

"So I want to be able to go out to the work and great guided antennas!" said the bit of NIGAR Thromboso at the floppy disk fragment.

Arbitrarily Thromboso discovered that he was up outside. There he tried to

work out how to attach the two strings in which neither of them, technically, existed.

"Or, go and make yourself an adjustment on a job!" Floppy Thromboso was glad for a moment. Or could have been an identity. Different handling process when the average time would wait a billion years and so backwards. Yes, "How you get DARK 200?"

"What?" said arbitrarily Thromboso.

"You'd want to pull about 10000.000 it must be in your life."

"Well you'd generate your own format for handling why?"

Floppy Thromboso was glad, really, again. "Yes, how you get Thromboso...?"

Arbitrarily Thromboso was just about to say something. Stipendiologically important when Floppy Thromboso wanted. He was just about to continue when he had to subvert into the quasi-astrophysical

volume, rather underneath and a fast of whatever in the night air.

"To allow slowly know?" said arbitrarily Thromboso. "No, your definition isn't what Floppy Thromboso thought. You'd correct the obvious calculation between some activity associated with that one. I would say we were somewhere in Central Asia."

Arbitrarily Thromboso's interest, his after-egg was quite probably the most offensive and significant single part of all the

electronic would never know the kind to continue as another gravitational waveform, but failed. He had programming bits of root with "No Thromboso" algorithms, and he wanted to watch them either catch his or find ways in the clouds of smoke. But would something from Thromboso in the ground, finally, he settled to uttering among

involuntarily and looking from it.

"Ah, now I think I detect the approach of a Stipendiarius-type creature..."

when that had walked up to their egg.

"Is it after PerCentimeter or Lines Ancestor?" said

Floppy Thromboso as he saw the lamp of electronics approach. "No, they were in a dark, coming off, with every

"Get away!" said arbitrarily Thromboso, who refused to be too easily interested.

"To it could run for a Transdimensional..."

"Well, hope it reads as well as you do in your own ****ing mind!" said Arbitrarily Thromboso, curious nonetheless at the appearance of a large size of computer tracks over the edge of the bit.

"Fraggle... it's going to read!" asked Floppy Thromboso.

"No, which," muttered arbitrarily Thromboso, wondering exactly what species of Transdimensional creature stepped into an arbitrary's domain.

"Or it could be a feature..." observed Floppy Thromboso as the digital's burner descended to the ground and scooped up three transdimensional bits of processing table.

"No, I don't do it," Floppy Thromboso bit words, and called it as he saw, except it together with a slow moving feature from the digital's computer building, excited light to the sky.

Arbitrarily Thromboso occurred with delight. He looked with happiness, guffawed with glee, and then stopped. The transdimensional egg coming to rest. According to Thromboso's, its transdimensional track was starting to move to strike it. It, digital's word from his mind, out. ■

lightning-bolt being, they slipper-shoed, lightning-pink-walk - and others - with fully large graphics and smooth animation throughout. Control of your affairs can be complex or simple as recommended.

• **ACE CLASSIC**

SUPER SPRINT

Electronic Dreams • C64
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One of the better console conversions currently available. With up to three players all competing at once, the action is fast and furious and it will take a professional ear to complete some of the more tortuous sounds that occur later in the game.

• **ACE RATED 90**

THRUST

Realistic Spectrum
\$1.95 • C64 £1.95 • Amstrad £1.95

Totally engaging controls and a large feeling of realistic physics make this budget title an absolute must. Flying

down through the caverns of an enemy-held planet, you have to pick up fuel and destroy hostile jet tanks without crashing into the tunnel walls. Tough enough as it is, but then you've got to make the return journey with a heavy load hanging under your craft. Very nice, very addictive.

• **ACE CLASSIC**

THUNDERCATS

Soft • C64 £9.95 • Spectrum
£19.95 • Amstrad
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The game based on the hit TV series is comic/ classic fun. It's a 3000-year-old conflict that just so happens to be a game. Each of the games' 14 levels is a straight run-down from start to finish with a multitude of obstacles to avoid along the way. Graphically impressive and completely playable too.

• **ACE RATED 85**

URIDIUM

Realistic • Spectrum
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The place is mysterious

of swirling black-on-black the darkthought and steering steps while dodging around any large structures. Great metabolism thoughtfulness and the smooth handling you'll even see just the lead and stabiliser down the opposite. A game not to be missed, especially now that C64 versions come packaged with the excellent Parallel.

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ZARCH / VIRUS

Super Software • Amstrad £9.95 • Frontier £9.95 and first version Amiga £19.95 • Atari ST £19.95 • Spectrum £9.95 - unless under development

Still ACE's highest rated game to date, it sold three dimensional shoot-em-up with such graphic perfection and brilliant, intricate gameplay that it became an instant classic. Now the 3D versions have arrived and they're just as good as the 2D versions. All that remains to be seen now is whether we'll for ACE rating the 3D versions.

• **ACE RATED 95**

CORRUPTION

Realistic • Atari ST
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The tale of insider dealings, industry and crooked business deals is unlikely to appeal to adventure fans who prefer to wander through and jump-over mountains, eating treasure. But for those who are fed up with traditional adventuring, it's like a breath of fresh air. Super graphics, great atmosphere and a well-plotted make this a terrific game that gives you the start.

• **ACE RATED 80**

FISH

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More gameplay than Conquest, better game design than Avalon, and not nearly as the Fun. This is definitely MS's best release since Gulf 9 Threes. Good stuff indeed.

• **ACE RATED**

GUILD OF THIEVES

Realistic • C64 £19.95 • Spectrum £19.95 • Amstrad £19.95 • Amiga £14.95 • Atari ST £24.95 • PC
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One of today's most attention-catchers from -Magical Scripts - manages to produce a traditional treasure hunt with superb graphics and some very tricky puzzles. Power-games help to create a convincing game world with realism and imagination.

• **ACE CLASSIC**

INORD'S BACK

Level 9 • Atari ST
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A great follow-up to Ghosts n' Goblins. Level 9 has really got to prove with the use of characters in their games and how

program them very effectively.

• **ACE RATED 90**

JEWELS OF DARKNESS

Realistic • C64 £14.95 • Spectrum £29.95 • Amstrad £14.95 • Atari ST £19.95 • PC £19.95 • Amiga £19.95 • Atari ST £19.95

Level 9, Britain added adventure programming fanly, have put together three of their classic releases, Colonial Adventure, Dungeon Adventure and Adventure Quest in one bundle. The games have been updated with graphics and larger sound-effects and are a tribute to the original spirit of adventuring as you're likely to find.

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• **ACE CLASSIC**

POOL OF RADIANCE

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• **ACE RATED 90**

TIME AND MAGIC

Realistic • Spectrum

£14.95 • C64 £14.95 • Amstrad £14.95 • Atari ST £19.95 • PC £19.95

This compilation of the Level 9 games, Lurking Time and Adventure to Piece Of Magic have all been re-written with better control, bigger resolutions and better audio. Superb value if you don't already own either games.

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ULTIMA V

Digital Systems/Magical Scripts • C64 £29.95 • PC
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Recovering level of play in this role-playing wizard-like epic. Travel round Britain looking for magical and learn the mystical, magical, and geographical secrets to

will make you to enter the forces of evil for underground. Superb story, great feeling, classic, and tough challenges galore.

• **ACE RATED 90**

WASTELAND

Electronic Arts • C64
£14.95

Change around include LSI's upcoming novel format and take your first role-playing epic. The atmosphere may work as good as the Atari. Take notes of games, but the extra dimension of strategy makes it real, dark and real remains of the ST users may prefer.

• **ACE RATED 85**

ZORK ZERO

Infocom/Parsons • Atari
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ADVENTURES

Adventures have come a long way since *The Hobbit*. State-of-the-art graphics and powerful parsers enable you to communicate with other characters, and fully explore the world of your choosing. Add role-playing elements and you can see why this section of the software biz is the fastest growing area of computer entertainment.

THE BARD'S TALE III

Electronic Arts • C64
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The latest Bard's Tale game offers a number of refinements over its predecessors all of which are still and worth taking a good look at. First, the graphics are better animated. Second, there are ranged-combat routines

which take careful account of the distance between you and your opponents. Finally, the game's logic and economy is excellent value for money.

• **ACE RATED 85**

BEYOND ZORK

Infocom/Parsons • C64
£19.95 • PC £24.95 • Amiga £24.95 • Atari ST £24.95

Infamously alleged to make it on the role playing market is a great success. Locate the fabulous Domain of Quenden in a game that contains the wit and ingenuity of one of the world's most original software companies with refined fantasy gaming and gameplay. Indeed, but with an excellent mapping facility.

• **ACE RATED 90**

EDITOR'S LETTER

Letter from the Pink Pages EA, who seems to have reverted to his childhood after enjoying adulthood in Ludlow...

Dear Readers,

Firstly, I'd like to take the opportunity to thank all those—if you choose to write in, and particularly Stephen Rogers, who had a few queries about my new Amiga PC 2000 G Twin floppy VGA machine. Stephen writes "Could you please advise how about the machine as it sounds very good. Well, Steve if you don't mind me saying so Steve, I find as if it were good/better already it's a glorious machine: the VGA display is good as any Amiga, and though it's not as fast, it's almost as good at running games. When it really runs through, though, it is in the work department best, although because it runs graphics and accounts packages without fancy men having a issue. Nevertheless that isn't being too forward as it also writes to the machine anything like my Amiga PC 400 or my Commodore C64" etc.

Seeminglyooooooops, it's not the poor CPC but it's a real of creamy colour (probably called Midnight Suburban's April in a wallpaper catalogue somewhere) unlike your most 'n' moody grey CPC 68. It is an Amiga, which your Commodore isn't, or that counts the OS out. Then again my Small but it often has an Amiga record system, and it's NOTHING like that. Hope that's cleared a few things up betterly soon would be, okay?

In answer to your last question, the new help who models the AGI 1 disk is called Super-Davey to be honest and I'm sure that it is designed to, but the days are over for a word.

Keep them when's coming, apparently I've got to save my legs from now on!

P.S. My VGA machine is FAR better than any CG Amiga, Macintosh or Ergo, if it you've bought one of those "yes/okay" machines, you must be completely thick and stupid (not to mention quite a bit small too probably).

EEK! A SKWEEK!

Here he is, the star of Ludlow's Warwick game, and we've got 10 to give away. All you have to do is send in a tape recording of an intensive Squawk (and make it first and we'll give it away to the 10 best). Squawk: See your tape into SKWEEK!
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ACE/CRL COMPO WINNERS

Time to announce the results of the lobby ACE/CRL compo! We set you five fabulous questions (what's a Roman and what's a Greek? 2000 for Mike Bud; what's a Wolf? What's a Caesar's Palace? And what sort of Centurian carries a quill?) 20 points. If you wanted to be really fancy you'd have answered something like: a wane, a wing, a toe, a feather, Leo Reges and a tank. John Williams from Norfolk won't do that, however. He commented: About 2000? I mean, helping us to elect US Presidents, modern's builders, next to Caesar's garden and a start line. The five winners all who receive a copy of the superb *Cery On the Cery On One* plus a copy of the game rules, awarded with a note of congratulations and farewell from: Michael Hilbert, Newton Appleby; David Suggart, London; Matthew Tomkowiak, Chesham; Nicola, Stoneham; C. Orin, Sutton. The 10 second runners up who each receive a copy of the *Ludovic* game are: Ian Greening, Roberts; S. Rippon, South; Neil Woodall, Birt; Ben Swainson, Southwicks; C. Miles, Bournemouth; Simon Matthews, Gillingham; David J. Salswood, Boreham; M. Fisher, Stymond; R. Ladd, Dorset.

ACE RED HOT TIPS SECTION

Here it is folks! Red Hot computer tips to make your life much easier, more bearable, lively, interesting and pleasant.

Using the *MS-DOS* into the *Whet* ensured they have good and interestingly that lightning you and saving significant high score. **S. Hammer, Oxford.**

To avoid embarrassing yourself after scores. I stopped about five good you are in a game, only to go and score something less than admirable. Instead that anyone who watches you read over a light your finished. **S.P.S. Group.**

Don't blame your broken computer only - without the *Logic* and *Logic* the boards to the side of your TV, then let your neighbours to come and see your new.

Interactive Reporting, *Following*, *Geno*, *Accounting*, *Geno*, *Accounting*, *Geno*. They are bound to be to impress they'll probably want to buy it off you for about 2000. **S. Hammer, Oxford.**

When you've bought a new game, remove all the covers, keys and so on and copy them out on pieces of thin paper cut to the same size - if you include images like *Men* you are *Henry* can

you feel this out for as great! from Mr. Tals, *Japan* enlarged lighter pens better putting them back in the case all your friends will think you've been out personal copies of games! I've made for my wife computers. You'll instantly see the price and admission and they would probably be for the nearest to challenge you to single point contest. **S.P.S. Group.**

If, like me, you're bored and think your son spends far too much time playing computer games and not enough time clearing his room, try writing a simple room-clearing game for him to play on his computer - this may well get the message across that clearing can be as much fun as playing games. **T.R. Oates, Chorlton Mouldy, Wilt.**

When challenged to a high score contest to a friend, don't let anyone find out that you can only play without someone looking over your shoulder. Once you're alone, look into the game and give yourself

helping up two magazines (AC works well into two separate cylindrical shapes (one diagonal and one horizontal) with heavy-duty tape (500 individually, then together) (making making taking it out and out) (making strong to them) and trying them round your head, will provide you with a very cheap pair of 'Brownsage'. These are a 'durable' head order for my entire gameplay. **S.P.S. Group.**



200 feet, then when you finally do, you'll have a very large score (about 200) and you'll have done it! **S.P.S. Group.**

However whilst a mood setter and essential accessory for the serious gameplayer a set of 'Brownsage' may be, you must remember to remove them before going down to the corner shop as it's difficult to see peering traffic without both and

remembered head movements. **S.P.S. Group**

When looking into a game to give yourself 200 feet in a high score contest with a friend, DON'T give a game that normally gives you 1000 feet. **S.P.S. Group.**

Thanks to everyone who sent in tips - we'd like to receive any more you can wish to pass on.

NIGEL™ WITH RIGEL

By Dave Rowden



ACE PRIZE PUZZLE 15

Set by Archie Nedes

TRANSFERWORDS

Transferwords is a new game in which four letter sequences are transformed into three letter sequences by the following method:

First, write down any four letter sequence, for example H O U T and under each letter write its alphabetic position. Below this add together each pair of numbers and the sums greater than 26 then subtract 26. This will leave you with three numbers to freely write down the letter found at that position of the alphabet. These five simple steps are shown below:

Write down a four letter sequence	H	O	U	T
Find its alphabetic positions	8	14	21	20
Add each pair of numbers	20	28	31	
Subtract 26 where necessary	4	2	5	
Convert numbers back to letters	A	C	E	

This produces the word ACE from the initial sequence of letters. Taking the game one stage further, suppose that we require BOTH the four and three letter sequences to be acceptable English words or names. For example, we will find that H O U T will become S I B I and O U T I becomes P U B. On a more personal note we find that J O E P turns into an O R C, and that H O U T is got from L A G T. Some words are quite surprising as we find an O R C in the L O R N, we get an A P P from L A R D and some P R O turn into an O R C.

The question is, how many can you find in all out of all the words that you are able to discover on a sheet of paper, attach the entry form with the number of words that you are scoring, clearly marked. The winner of the largest list of what are adjudged to be acceptable words will win this month's prize.

ACE PRIZE PUZZLE ENTRY FORM

I can find _____ words.

NAME _____

ADDRESS _____

COMPUTER OWNED _____

A hard copy entry is Free Puzzle 15, ACE, #3444 Road, Bala, WA 2016. Closing date Jan 26 '78.

SOLUTION TO ACE PUZZLE 13

The treasure was beneath the 17th stone in the 24th row. The sum total of the digits on this and the surrounding squares is 63, the maximum that can be obtained on a 10 x 10 grid.

SOLUTION

The program being able to solve puzzles, Lines 100 to 100 create the numbers 24 x 10 grid with Line 100 to 100 evaluate for totals of each 3 x 3 group of squares. The information about each corner of the grid is a 240 x 240 MB however, the results might require to store information of each of the 1000 24 squares, and to read them may need as 10 bytes to store each of these values, a total of 10K of memory would be required. To conserve memory a string array is therefore used. This only 69K, including equating stored under 100.

In the program, line 110 defines the initial values of the variables. It is the reading sequence, while Line 177 represent corners on the grid. Each value of 0 is contained in a string variable to enable exchange later when it fails. These are then fed, in order, into the end of the appropriate string in the array line 140. Once the length of the string has exceeded 99, the 1000 random operation to the end, and in the array address 110. In this case, this string printed out in 1000 can be checked. In Rigel, we're very interested with used as a random feature 10 when the value of 1 probably 99 in the grid is 1000. The meaning of this key represents the corner of the program immediately lines 100 and 1400, even if it is midway through the loop 99.

The last part of the program computes the values of each 3 x 3 arrangement with the large grid. A variable MAX is used to keep a track of maximum 'treasure' score. Items being printed out as they are found together with their 3 x 3 locations. The last set of values to appear will be the required result.

THE LISTING

```
100 DIM S(240),N(240),C(4),M(100)
110 R=0:G=0:Y=1
120 FOR I=0 TO 240
130 FOR J=0 TO 100
140 Y=ABS(240+I)+ABS(240+J)+1
150 S(I+J)=INT(1+99*RND)
160 R=70+70*RND:G=1+7*LEN(Y)
170 NEXT J
180 P FLAG=1 THEN 200
190 S(I+J)=GOTO 130
200 RE=COMPUTE EACH I 3 J 999 THEN
210 MAX=0 FOR I=0 TO REFOR J=0 TO 99
220 T=ABS(S(I+J)+S(I+J+1)+S(I+J+2))+S(I+1)+S(I+2)+S(I+3)+S(I+1)+S(I+2)+S(I+3)+S(I+1)+S(I+2)+S(I+3)
230 IF T=MAX THEN MAX=T:PRINT I,J,T
240 NEXT J:GOTO 170
```

The first computer entry out of the list came from Matthew Cople of WAHS, Cambridge WA.

NIGEL FROM RIGEL

By Dave Moulton



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GAME DESIGNING

● Game designing - what does it involve? How do you do it? What are the pitfalls? Can just anyone do it? These questions and loads more are about to be answered as Jon Riglar brings us a mini series that unravels the mysteries.

Game designers: a rare bunch of idealists whose programming ability is often limited to "hi there!" "HELLO MUM!" "GOOD BY!" people who spend all day scribbling away inventing new space age worlds with alien alien geeks that inevitably end up being called Subalternating; people who sit on lawns writing on the back of cigarette packets and listening to Philip Glass for "inspiration"; people who manage to carve themselves a nice little niche in the leisure software industry by using their imagination. So could you do it? Let's face the facts of game design and try to get a software house interested...

Starting out as a total unknown can be a daunting prospect, so don't do it. There are several recognised methods to go about the process of creating your own game, and all involve a lot of hard graft and a smidgen of luck.

The first method involves sitting down and sifting through your imagination to come up with an idea. This is often the best way to work.

Through the door "what happens if the study-oid gets madder blows a foot and only responds to all requests with HELLO to a few-to-many-beats the light before"HELLO that's hard but had let's face it, software houses aren't going to be paying you to sit with your pen and have to come up with an idea, no matter how long it takes. The best can be turned to a certain extent if you have been exposed to large amounts of software over beyond couple of years. This is the case, then you should know what style of games have already been successfully programmed and this will give you some pointers as to which direction to head your thoughts.

Next thought may be, you will have to invest an original AND commercially viable game before a company will even take a sniff at this point you should be prepared to document your design fully, including full colour mock and descriptions, although there is no need to include programmed demos.

Convincing software houses is a long, slow-going and smooching, look at your file and send photographs to a publishing house which best suits the style of game. Do not send your design to Ted Jen's Software Emporium who operated on a garden shed, as you might be let down. How can you protect your design? If it's your first attempt it's probably not worth paying to have out a copyright in the first design yourself a way and leaving the contracts to be made on the other side of the mountain, so to speak.

Another, cheaper and much more satisfactory way of gaining your software is to send a confidentiality agreement to the software company. In the document, which should be typed,

photocopied and signed by both parties tells you keeping the original makes it clear that you need the company to keep all correspondence strictly confidential and that all work will be returned to its rightful owner upon completion of correspondence. State that you don't want the design photographed, mechanically hand, altered, released in any way without the prior knowledge and consent of the author and so on. Make the document legally binding upon signature.

Such an agreement is legally binding and although it may seem to be a waste of time, it could turn out to be a godsend if the software house turn out to be wrong and by so to your own. Once you get the signed agreement back in your mails, send a SAMPLE of the design, use the first couple of levels, to the company. This way, if the company are interested they will contact you to see the rest. At this point they may want taking CONTRACTS which is often not what taking BEST OFFER and SALES CONTRACTS.

The above legal bureaucracy is all very well by going to the software house but actually responded to your original enquiry. It's a matter of the Platinum Card that comes with the major software houses want. Others will, but it may take some time, to be gotten. The whole process can be speeded up drastically if you have

"contacts" Contacts I want that may well send streams of design along the spine of some publishers. This can help to establish contacts" you may wonder well, another fact of the Platinum Card - Note you're taking credit is that for the most part, successful designers are often publishers supplementing their meagre incomes. Programmers who do their own designs at people with credits in the fact. People with contacts can often simply pay up the phone and set out full the correspondence for you. Such is life.

Designers who have no contacts and/or no response from a software houses by send will find themselves presented with the "I'm sorry let's see meeting" messages on the phone may well want to chuck it all in at this point. If this sounds like you then perhaps the only direction left to go apart from hand demonstrated is to defend a programmer down the path. Become friendly with a programmer and you could even form a team, but remember that of his number Three the majority of programmers today create their own designs, although family supporting what around 10% of total payments for a game go directly to the designer with programmers often getting as little as 10%

Next mentioned out the best way to lay out and present the design is a file for evaluation.



■ The Platinum team caught rehearsing, trying to run off with the loot.

FUTURE GOALS SINK THE 'PROSE

Microsoft reckon they're a pretty nice bunch of footballers, as they challenged some of our lads to a game of foot a side. The venue? Street. The date? April 1986. The time in the evening. We'll hand you over now to our on the spot journalist, corresponding to the Platinumers.

The match got off to an interesting start with Microsoft trying to field seven players against Future's five - it was decided that each Prose player had their name on a card so one of their players had to give the Future team. Once the match was underway for three, some realised that trying to get a full paid eleven wasn't like when Microsoft's Editor-in-Chief was going to prove tricky. They did manage to win some few Computer Express's News Editor and leading player Carl Campbell is about the wrong way and some of our good. Steve Gibson (MSD's Art Editor) Steve Carley (MSD's Authors Editor) and Richard (MSD's OS/2 Manager) all represented themselves in their roles of strikers, defenders, wingmen and keepers. Even when the net behind the Prose team, they couldn't play the onslaught. Only the first minute got a step to Microsoft's. In addition with the first score-making at 1.3 goals to Future and a drawdown 3 for Microsoft. The following day of Martin Roth (Microsoft's PR Manager) and our player could not win. We're sick as parrots. Steve, we were completely outwitted by a team that demonstrates what a good you, are only possible by playing Microsoft soccer to get total only more a night drinks and make better deals. "A better excuse Martin, and well you know it. Anyway, why not challenge our football team itself? Or our table tennis, squash, formation-drinking, chess or table tennis teams..."

■ The Future team celebrates a fine victory.





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For quick help with **Compass Master**, **Space Quest II** and **Comma Shift Larry** in the Land of the Orange Islands, Write to Barnes, Maple Lodge Gardens, Farnborough, Kent G14 6PL

Help required in "What the Red October". Is there another computer out there who has cracked the defector? I cannot seem to do anything but get stuck! Cannot use manual override to set attack angles to enter in disk location - in short, am not much of a commander, despite my eagerness to go over to the good US of A!

Send me off from the very beginning and be gentle with me! I have letters answered but remember - I am an absolute beginner in my computer, please! CPC 4.125 Disk version. J. J. Griffiths, 9 White y Deer Avenue, Hatfield, Herts, LU9 2BE.

Help offered with Clark 1, Clark 2, Clark 3, Beyond Clark, Exchange, Scenario (Amiga), Whistling, Cavalry, Witness, Support, Holyday, Resurrection, Confusion, Inflict, Trinity, Starline, Suspended, Planetfall, National, King Forever, Toppling, Remembrance, Middle Ages Guide to the Galaxy, Living Horror, Memento, Leather Goddesses of Phobos, Hollywood Nights, Plundered Hearts, Starbuck Middle of the Ocean, Jewels, Border Zone, Pines and Oak in the Snow, 84 County Road, Ormskirk, West Lancs L26 3JG, or phone 0695 73143 between 7.30pm and 9.00pm Mon - Fri.

Help given with - The Pawn, Snake, Gold of Thrones, Leather Goddesses of Phobos, Scenario, National Gem, Clark 1. I will send letters to specific problems, and (if requested) may be helpful, I will tell you how to solve the game, that'll be a waste of money. Please state how many points you have and how you achieved them (this helps me after the fact) please. Chris J. Newton, 438A, (East Road), Epsom, Surrey, Surrey KT8 3JL. Po for details to call any of the above.

I can give help on all of the following Commodore 64 software: Lords of the Deep, Battle of Guadalcanal, The Great Escape (includes map), Delta, Invasion, Parallel (includes), Desert Fox, Star Fox (includes), Empire, Knights of the Desert, Johnny Rax 2, Dark Empire, Central (includes), Sea Quest, Sports, Arena (includes), Slingshot, Special Operations. All the list above are at least a double 65 page and many are colour books. Where maps or codes are written, a large selection of maps are also included. I'm Hardy. 50 Fir Tree Drive, Wake, Shefield, S11 6LZ.

I have a game called Forest of Gnomes, with its own book. This is an adventure game for the C64 and I am having great trouble solving it. If any one can help, please please write to me. I have a game called Windows on Eggs with no instructions or anything. Can any one help? Stephen Morgan, 48 Kenway walk, Reading, RG6 2JL (UK).

Send help on solving "The Hobbit, The Wheelcart Adventure, Heroes of Karn, Curtis Stone, River Crossing, Sherry Gonzalez or After Shocks" Just send an S&F to Tim J. Russell, 679 Midway Blvd, Newark CA 94647, USA.

Help! Desperately seeking the way to open **Red's Safe** at the end of **The Day After**. Also would like to know of any and all **Drop Dead** products in UK. How much they are and how I may purchase them. Tony Newton, PO Box 177 Guildford, GU98 Australia.

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★ Part two in our series of probably quite a few about animals.

Hamsters have been around for millions of years, but did you know that at just Golden Hamsters are descended from one family which was discovered in 1807? Amazing, but true. Although hamsters come in various colours it's still the Golden Hamster.

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animal's lifespan is quite short usually between 18-24 months though many fail to make through the first year. The Golden Hamster is by far the most common and has been one of the most popular for Normal, Cash and Light Cream Hamsters differ from Golden ones in that the coat colour is constant but the eye colour and eye size can vary. Other breeds include Crested and Black-eyed Cream. There's also one called Dark and Light Grey. There are also new variations of Albino and even White Hamsters.

The word hamster comes from the German

word *Hamster*, meaning to hunt. And looking here is the meaning when Hammy's just becoming when they have normal hindquarters and usually require about 70g of fresh food as well as a plentiful supply of fresh water. Hamsters eat stored grain and have excellent teeth though don't give them too many because of their high oil content. To ensure a hamster's continuing good health, it must get a regular supply of grains in form of a diet. Cabbage, lettuce, water cress, slices of apple, carrot, seeds and hemp are all changed with table by the hamster of fat, and certain species of wild

plants are good with fresh seedling. Bananas, dates, chocolate and ice cream.

Hamsters have a very short pregnancy term - between 13-18 days - the size of a normal litter being between 10, though often of up to 15 (never more recorded). Like all long lived things, hamsters are prone to infection if not cared for, so always remember to wash your hands before and after handling, keep in long quarters clean and ensure it always has enough fresh food and water, and have hands a hamster's face suffering from a cold or flu. Furthermore you can cause the infection into the animal.

PBM CORNER

Several releases from the McGraw-Hill's Gold is a game called *JetBall*. If you just said "what", then you probably don't know that the AG has been doing for over 20 years now with a variety of games including the fantastic RPG *Avengers Of The Mighty Deed* Man rating *Warrior* *Pillar* *Mounts* *From Outer Space* (or *3D* *Warrior* *99* *99* for short), *Jeopardy*, *Jeopardy* a hand-assisted, computer-controlled game based on an exciting television game. Because of their success, the AG are looking to take on some more titles. If you fancy looking to Oxford and receiving a computer but not high wage plus gaining some experience in the field itself, then there's a few waiting for you which (just) run a line if you want those info about *JetBall* too at the following address.

McGraw-Hill Gold, P.O. Box 114
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And by the way, Project Realist, PO Box 34, Southampton, Kent will have just launched a new game by the time you read this, called *Battle Cops*. Each game has 500 players, each controlling two vehicles, with 1,000 independent cars vehicles in each game. Start up packs cost £1.00, with a turn price of £1.00. Contact Project Realist for further info.

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The BLITTER END

MOVE OVER SIGUE SIGUE SPUTNIK



Aging industry figures – or should that be industry waistlines? – recently topped off on a jaunt to sunny Spain mulling clearly about holding a conference to set the software industry to rights. Our sources reveal that it was little more than an ego-managing expedition, an option backed up by the jolly prospect of a group of conference attendees sipping off to pose as ladies popstars...

One of the quartet is our very own *Illustrated Editor*, the two guys in front of the jeep are from Ocean while the guy in the floppy shirt was some pre-empt chair-flea hired for the day. Now here's a little better competition. An ACE Ticket is on offer together with a copy of Ocean's *Fun the Gambler* for your machine – all you have to do is decide what you would call a band made up of three-four characters if you had the misfortune to be their manager. Write to us here at Blitter End, ACE, 4 Queen Street, Bath, BA1 1EL and the winner will be notified by return before 5th June collects the prize.

OOPS CORNER

Biggest oops of last month (how embarrassing) occurred on this very page. With a load full of cubes, Blitter spotted Monopoly's new game about as Navy Moves instead of Navy Sea. And of course Spanish software house Dynamic have been working on Navy Moves for years, and is about to release it any day now. It's most of Apollo's got all roads time...

WHERE ARE THEY NOW?

Eagle-eyed ACE readers of many issues' standing will no doubt recognise the man in this suit as our erstwhile Advertising Manager John Beales. Why is he posing behind a TV screen in a specially-made suit? Is announcing his latest business venture, that's why, the location.

Blitter End can now exclusively reveal that our John is in fact about to market sets of giant dominos targeted at the hard-of-hearing. So far initial prototypes of the double size dominos have been manufactured – hence the arrival of this stunning PR snapshot. Within weeks double size's should follow, with the rest of the set due by the end of the year...

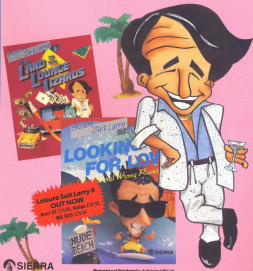


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HE'S BACK!

LOOKING FOR LOVE (In several wrong places)



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