

ACE

MAGAZINE OF THE YEAR

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■ CPC ■ SPECTRUM ■ PC
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TUNE IN TO FM TOWNS.....27

Right now, producing a 32-bit games computer that comes with a built-in CD-ROM as standard. The graphics are not hot and the software base features some stunning conversions of familiar titles. Read over the details and start buying...

SHOCK HORROR.....35

There you are, creeping behind the sofa in a cold sweat, breathing violently, stomach churning, and screaming for Mum's. So bad everyone else is out for the evening. You know it was foolish, but you just had to look at that game one more time, and now you're here, very sorry...Just a reality dream? Or could software houses really give us the chills?



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The Photographers' Gallery set professional artists and photographers loose on sophisticated computer scanning equipment. This is the result...

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That moment when that machine has the better sound chip as your 32, more memory than a Spectrum, and is curiously programmed to swallow your cash. That's what Lee Wick opens the case...

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Gamers in Japan can now play *AfterBurner* on the first machine with a built-in CD-ROM...

TOWNS SENSATION



Ever since we first printed a picture of Fujitsu's FM Towns computer, we've been inundated with demands from readers for more information. We're delighted to oblige. Thanks to some timely co-operation from Japan's famous Log magazine, we've been able to bring you a report on this record-breaking 32-bit games machine on page 27...

FM TOWNS - a machine to satisfy your wildest dreams, complete with CD-ROM and massive processing power...

ANCO

Anco are celebrating the launch of *Player Manager* by giving you the

WHAT A MONTH!

OK, so Christmas is on the way, but that's still no excuse for bombarding you with all the goodies we've packed into this issue. Find out about Tetris II; the extraordinary FM Towns computer; a simulator that plunges you into the depths of the human immune system; a coin-op that contains a PC Engine; which of this month's games you've got to grab; and much, much more.

Not only that, but we've gone overboard on the giveaways. You can win an Atari Lynx, or (courtesy of Anco) a stunning Sony video camera, and pin up on your wall the ultimate new technology wallchart.

The ACE Technochart comes free with this issue and gives you details on almost all the hardware you're likely to find in the shops in Britain - and quite a few that you won't. It gives you a complete guide to computer entertainment in one glorious full colour experience. Eat turkey, Santa...

OVER THE RAINBOW109

A CD-i game that looks as if it's coming on an Amiga? A game about cigarettes? Visit Rainbow Arts in Germany and find out for yourself...

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Jan Wales checks out the latest musical developments for music owners and discovers, amongst other things, why the games we play are going to sound better and better.

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New simulator technology is being used by First Cloney to give punters the experience of a lifetime, including a journey through the human body...

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Danger! This month's ScreenTest section is positively scorching! The long-awaited Samocles from Novagun crashes with the superlative interface from Microsoft's Rainbow Arts! Rock & Roll proves devastatingly stylish, and Star Trek takes off... for the 19th time.

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If you thought Tetris was additive, wait till you try World's - Old Gagner reports from San Francisco...

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At last! The new ACE adventure and fantasy section kicks off with five glorious pages and reviews of Swords of Twilight, and much, much more...

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News from the arcades, including details of a new arcade console based on the PC Engine.

WIN! WIN! WIN!

AN ATARI LYNX CONSOLE121

Get your paws on one of the world's most desirable hand-held consoles - absolutely free!

ANCO BANCO!40

Win a free video camera and record those gamey feet!



Anco's Player Manager takes the field...

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There's always something to win in the Pinks. A reputation, by sending in your tips, your jokes, your cartoons... and some prizes as well. Check the Pink Page index on page 161 for details.

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Maps, cheats, hints, and tips enable you to kick ass where you might otherwise wimp out...

FREE ISSUE!120

A year of authoritative game reviews, exclusive coverage of exciting new technology, and a free issue of Britain's best computer entertainment magazine - for only £17.99.

Journey into the human body with Lucasfilm's latest mega-simulator.

See page 104.

BANCO!

the chance to win a free video camera - kick off on p.40.

Hard

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DOMARK

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BALLISTIX It's a whole new ball game!

Sick of silly old soccer? Tired of pathetic pinball? Then you need a dose of Ballistix - the fastest, wildest, toughest ball game yet to appear on a computer. Ballistix just explodes with excitement, puzzle action and over 100 different screens of frenetic action, on the PC, Atari ST and Amiga. On the CDi version there are 64 screens.

The aim of the game is simple: score more goals than your opponent to win the match. Doing it is a different matter as spiders fill the screen with dozens of balls, batsels bite them from above, bursters bounce balls all over the place, batclash red arrows speed them up to almost impossible velocity, magnets pull them away from your control, and much, much more.

Ballistix is incredibly flexible, too. You can play against the computer or another player, set the speed if you can't stand the pace, decide where the balls are fired and their velocity, rack up bonuses that will get you extra goals and then, at the end of an exhilarating game, set your name in pride of place on the high-score table. And it's all played to the accompaniment of a throbbing sound-track and a crowd that applauds your every goal.

Ballistix is definitely not a game for sissies. It's tough, fast, challenging and incredibly competitive - in fact, it's just the kind of game you like.

AMIGA ATARI ST £19.95 PC £24.95 CDi £24.95/£29.95/£39.95

Screen Shots taken from the Amiga edition

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COMMAND PERFORMANCE

Retailer Games 'R' Us isn't long dead, but eagerly awaited, follow-up to the gaming classic *Carrier Command* should be out next March. The game is to be called *Battle Command*, and although it places the player in a futuristic tank, the guys at Realtime are keen to stress that "it is not a tank simulator". Instead, *Battle Command* is in the *Carrier Command* tradition using a multi-stage game format with approximately 30 mission scenarios, which the player must complete before the "final encounter". Just what the final encounter is, the guys at Realtime aren't saying at the stage, but suffice to say that with up to 32 missions to complete there should be plenty to keep even the hard-core tank commander happy!

Battle Command has already



Will *Battle Command* top the success of *Carrier Command*?

been under development in nearly 16-bit format for the past 18 months, with Realtime making improvements to the unimpressive *Carrier Command*. These

'improvements' include far more complex solid 3D graphics with highly detailed objects, and a better gameplay combination of strategy and shoot-'em-up.

TEXT GAME OVER?

Tulls, hobbits, dragons, and gnomes staged a mass demonstration outside Level 9's offices last night, following the news that Britain's best known fantasy authors have announced their last traditional adventure title.

"It's true," said Peter Austin,

addressing a militant crowd with fuel between the toes. "We shall not be releasing any more adventures, unless *Scorchfoot* (reviewed this issue, p.145) sells much better than expected. There have been so many good adventures written over the past few years that producing new ones, which will sell in any quantity as

getting more and more difficult."

Naturally avoiding a festival from a distressed client, Austin went on to reminisce about *The Age of the Adventure*. "Our favorite game, not including our own, of course, had to be an Italian title," heal muggers from a small group of *Leather Goddesses and...Trolls...* (strikes of indignation from the crowd). "...and our favorite Level 9 title, were Ingrid's *Back and*, at the older games, *Dungeon Adventure*."

As green hobbits broke down and wept, Austin conceded that times were changing. "We released *Colossal Adventure* back in 1991. Since then it's sold around fifty thousand copies. We still get orders for it, but only a couple a week and those are mostly from people wanting to complete their collection. Nowadays everyone wants animated graphics and arcade action. However the time will come when tactile feedback and headsets will give the adventure format a new lease of life."

Meanwhile, at another

LOCK AND LOAD

Are you worried about the increase in virus threats? Can you bear to leave your micro unprotected? Are you sick of your kid brother borrowing your computer?

Well Homeguard UK may



have the perfect solution to your troubles with the Audio and Video Guard anti-theft alarm. This a compact security device used to protect electronic appliances (cameras, videos, hi-fi's) that are permanently connected to the mains.

The unit uses a electro-magnetic current sensing strip to detect if the power to your appliance has been switched off, unplugged or had its cable cut loose. Any of these actions would result in a loud piercing alarm lasting 45 seconds.

The unit runs off a P03 battery, costs £14.95 and can be obtained from Homeguard UK on 0337 758134.



Just in time for the new year.

I know what you're thinking. It's just another hyped-up game. It may have a plot that I could follow, but it's not going to hold my hand like I need it.

Development released in this month's issue

rally nearby, Anita Sinclair of *Magnetics Scrolls*, producers of *The Pawn and Gold of Thieves*, was delivering enthusiastically about the future of the very same game format that Peter Austin claimed was dying. "Of course there's a future for the text adventure," she said. "There will be a whole slew of adventure titles from *Magnetics Scrolls* coming out next year and will be a true *Magnetics Scrolls* fantasy. It will be the start of the text adventure, not the end."

Whoever's right, the *Sinclair* was then carried off into the night shoulder-pigged by several thick-knitted old men. The apparent death of the text adventure appears, therefore, to be some what in doubt...

THE GREATEST SHOW ON EARTH

At long last there is a computer show devoted to you – the gamer/player. There won't be a business machine in sight at next year's European Computer Entertainment Show – the only computer show dedicated solely to games.

ECS is sponsored by ACE, and our sister publications: The One, C+M, Commodore User and Sinclair User. Each magazine will run a special event during the show, such as C+M organising the World Computer Gaming Championship in cooperation with leading software company US Gold. Of course ACE will be running its own event – we'll keep you informed with further details over the coming months.

All of the leisure industries big names like Ocean, US Gold and Playgroup will be at



ECS, showing you their latest games, software – the outstanding titles of Christmas 1990.

In effect, ECS has taken over the PC Show – the computer industry's premier show. "ECS will be more of a festival than an exhibition," said the show's enthusiastic spokesperson Dean Barrett, "we will get the excitement back into the computer entertainment industry." ECS will be extensively covered in TV and in the national press, acting as a much-needed forum for computer entertainment.

The European Computer Entertainment Show will be held at Lords Court from 12th-15th September, 1990. We look forward to seeing you there...

WE ARE GLASS

You could be playing your favourite game on your window, patio door or car windscreen if Pilkington Glass' predictions for the next decade become reality.

In its *Forecasting 2000* report, Pilkington believes the information technology and building construction industries will merge together to produce futuristic buildings in the form of transparent glass. This smart projection adds up to video or TV pictures and computer data being displayed on an "average" sheet of glass producing a high resolution flat-screen colour display of "holographic" quality. You can see ACE's predictions for games on glass in the free pull-out supplement in this issue.

"We can't wait to hear the duo negotiating salesmen pitch for this one..."

EXTRA TIME FOR KICK OFF

Kick Off, probably the best football simulation available and one of the best games released this year, is about to gain a few hours of life thanks to the release of an Extra Time Expansion Disk.

Extra Time is designed to appeal both average and top-rated Kick Off players alike, thanks

CUTE COIN-OP CRAZE

The next time you go into the arcade for a bit of mindless electronic violence, you may have to buy balls of plastic fluff instead of Operation Droid's Gun Tumbler.

At least that's the theory many Japanese coin-op manufacturers are subscribing to. The evidence to back this statement up came with the JAMMA coin-op show in Japan last month, when over 50% of the attractions on show consisted of cutely named games like the one where you hit bubble characters over the head with a mallet and children's playsets, as opposed to the latest in turbo-MODE, multi-player games desks. The JAMMA show has traditionally been the place to see "next year's" coin-op blockbusters.

The reason behind the decline in arcade electronic entertainment? Most probably a lack in origi-

nality – after all who was the last time you played a new coin-op which wasn't a shoot'em-up, beat'em-up or racing game? Over the past three years, coin-op manufacturers have not so much improved upon the gameplay as the electronic sub-visual frills that's there to impress you into forking out \$1 per game. Of course, there are a few exceptions – but these just help to raise the bar.

So what of the future? Coin-op electronic games will still be there – there will just be fewer of them, and as a consequence they will be of a higher standard and perhaps a little more modern – which is ultimately what we all want, yes?

As for the home micro scene which has followed the coin-op industry very closely – indeed a little too closely – over the past three years, many software publishers are gleefully looking forward to having the chance to produce superior computer games as a result of the coin-op's decline in numbers. In fact, one leading industry figure told ACE, "there will be an emphasis away from coin-op conversions towards RPG and strategy computer games – and our company is perfectly poised for such a change in the games market".

It looks as though gamers will not so much be spoilt for choice, as spoilt for quality and originality – we'll have to wait and see, but in the meantime why not write to ACE and tell us your views. Coin-op contribution, ACE Letters, Penny Court, 30-32 Farringham Lane, London EC1R 3AG.



XENON II MEGABLASTS ONTO PC



Xenon II, the charmingly bizarre Brothers Beater is going to make it onto the PC later this month. The 330-rated Amiga version of Xenon II was reviewed in ACE issue 25, and quote: "stretches the Amiga further than any shoot-'em-up has ever

stretched it before".

PC Xenon II should match the quality of the ST and Amiga versions, and will probably be the PC shoot-'em-up. We can't wait to hear the thump the Aces Megablast soundtrack through our PC speaker...

to a whole host of new features including: full control over the power of shots, missiles and clips; player control of the game area (allowing a goal-kick); four more team tactics to choose from; four new playing surfaces - Hard, Wet, Slippy and Artificial; players can select their team from a squad of twenty; and there's a new set of refs to encounter.

Extra Time costs £9.95 for ST and Amiga, obviously requires the original Kick Off disk, and should be available later this month. Meanwhile, Aces has announced another footballer, Roger Manager (see page 43 for a brilliant competition to celebrate its launch) and is currently working on Kick Off 2, due out sometime next year.



Microprose's Kick Off and footballing.

WHO'S IN THE HOUSE?

Mega looks US software company Microprose is setting up its own in-house programming team in the UK. The house crew should consist of about 54 programmers diverting themselves to ST and Amiga conversions of Stateside Microprose's popular PC products like F-19 Stealth Fighter, F-19 Strike Eagle II and 3D1 Tank Platoon. In fact, F-19 Stealth Fighter should be the first off the conversion line with an Amiga F-19 due next month and a ST version following in January or February.

What this should mean to you is more ST and Amiga conversions - faster!

But according to a Microprose spokesperson, the reason behind this move into personal computer possession is simple: Microprose doesn't want its valuable PC source code to go walkies outside the company - and our UK programmers can apparently show the 'babe's a piece of pie when it comes to programming the ST and Amiga.

As ACE goes to press, Microprose is just on the point of signing up software development house Core Design to produce the follow up to the immensely successful Kick

ACE DREAM MAC-HINE



What piece of hardware has ACE editorial been drooling over this month? Is it the Lynx, Roms or PC Engine 2? No, it's the new Apple Mac (probably) but why would a bunch of games geeks be interested in a top powered 386MHz CMOS 68000 portable computer with 1.44Mb Super-Drive, 1Mb RAM, optional 40Mb hard disk, 65525 dot to bundle power management, and the cheapest display to be seen on any portable model? Easy, the Mac plays the best game of

Pinis (the only of the Nintendo Game Boy. Then there's Cosmic Demos and Crystal Quest, and wouldn't it be great to lay out the ACE pages on the way to work, and of course the pose rating of using a Mac on the train goes right off the scale. So what stops us from all going out and getting one today? That's even easier - the whopping Apple II asking price of £3995 is £4495 - that's what! But we can dream can't we?

Dangerous. Inexplicably titled, Kick Dangerous 2 this month will see our hero in space - up against more puzzles and action. It should be available sometime in the Spring.



the coming year, as PC games software sales start to seriously compete with those of the ST and Amiga.

BARGAIN 286 PC

Atari has launched a price busting 286 PC for an amazing starting price of £599.99 ex VAT. The Atari 286 286 is the first in a new range of low cost Atari PCs, and comes with a single 3.5" disk drive, 1Mb RAM, motherboard expansion and 3 other expansion slots. The starting price is for the CPU only, other options include: CPU & VGA mono monitor (£699.99 ex VAT), CPU & 30Mb hard disk (£799.99 ex VAT) or CPU, 30Mb hard disk & VGA mono monitor (£899.99 ex VAT).

The price of higher powered 286 and 386 PCs are starting to tumble, and hopefully other PC manufacturers will take Atari's lead in reducing prices further. This could help the predicted rise of the PC as a serious contender in the games machine stakes over

CHESS GOES ONLINE

Chess has introduced a new service catering for online Chess enthusiasts. The Chessline Club is designed to cater for 'correspondence' chess players, but offers a faster, more reliable and more economic alternative to conventional postal chess.

The Chessline Club is affiliated to the British Chess Federation (BCF) and The British Postal Chess Federation, and Chess-Match will hold an annual tournament.

ment, in close competition with the WCJ, from January 1990 onwards. Other Chesdell Club services include Chesdell's (where members are put in touch with each other) and Chesdell's (a news, reviews, event diary and game results information desk).

Subscription to Chesdell's Club is free of charge to Postal users, for further details contact Station on Freephone 0800 200 700.

GREMLIN ON SKIDZ ROW

Gremlin is counting on skateboarding and BMXing still being "in" this month, with the release of *Skidz*, a BMX and skateboard simulation with just one simple task - you have to become the "tippiest and smartest kid in town". *Skidz* is played over 7 weeks and 7 days with you riding either a BMX bike or skateboard through city streets, parks, canal ways, beaches and construction sites while encountering the likes of thugs, cops, gremlins, traps and jugs. *Skidz* is out later this month on ST and Amiga for £19.99, with the Amiga version using a full-screen software display. *Skidz* is also under development on the Nintendo console, which is scheduled for release sometime next year.

Gremlin should also have Footballer of the Year II and Ultimate Golf out this month on various formats, though *Footballer* - the experimental game featured back in ACE issue 1 - has been delayed again to sometime in 1990.



GAME BOY HEADS FOR 5 MILLION

Nintendo's Game Boy handheld console is enjoying phenomenal success in Japan and the States with Nintendo looking set to ship four to five million units next year. So far this year, Nintendo has already shipped 1.1 million Game



Boys, because Japanese and American kids are going "crazy" over playing portable Super Mario Bros. and Tetris.

SOFT HOUSE

New sound sampling techniques, combined with the falling price of dedicated MIDI music peripherals, is giving a new lease of life to game soundtracks.

Currently, sampled sound tracks on games like the ill-fated Money and Xena II remain considerable amounts of money, even when compression techniques are used. At the same time, these games are proving that the multichannel stereo noise is a real turn-on for gamers and an important part of the playing experience. So what's to be done?

Some 3D-line have for some time been producing games with MIDI soundtracks that will drive certain Roland and Yamaha modules. These make the normal Xeno-type tracks sound pretty ugly by comparison when output through a suitable set-up. You can check out the hardware side in this month's issue on page 123.

Not all of us, however, can

IT'S A S.T.U.N.E.R.

Hot on the heels of the coin-op's UK debut last month at the Associated Leisure Preview trade show, Domark has signed up the home video conversion rights to Atari Games' latest coin-op.

S.T.U.N.E.R. (Stunt) is a futuristic roller-type game, placing you in control of a 21st century futurist racing vehicle with the power to reach speeds in excess of 800mph. Your machine is equipped with powerful lasers and shockwaves which will stop anything in their tracks. Perhaps the most stunning (and) feature of *S.T.U.N.E.R.* is its realistic, polygon generated 3D visuals.

Commenting on the acquisition, Domark's joint managing director, Mark Strachan told ACE: "This is a marvellous game and is destined to be a major coin-op success later next year. Rather than being completely brilliant... it's completely S.T.U.N.E.R.!"

S.T.U.N.E.R. should be out later next year on all major formats. In the meantime, you'll just have to make do with Domark's first Atari coin-op conversion - neatly topped as this year's first runner for Christmas Number One. Take a look at next month's Screenland to see if we agree...



Atari's S.T.U.N.E.R. the rolling competition

afford £200+ for a 680 sound system. Good news then that Rainbow Arts have developed a new sampling system for including more sampled music in games using less space. The software system first breaks up the sampled track into sections, having scanned it for repetitions and redundancy. It then stores each section as an indexed file. The sound track program simply selects the sections it needs in the order defined by the sound track file.

As a result, claims Test Technicians at Rainbow Arts, you'll be able to play Rainbow Arts games with impossibly long sampled sound tracks without having to fork out for the extra disks that might otherwise be involved, or buy memory expansions for your machine.

Expect even more radical sound improvements which we move over to CD-ROM, which shares a common data format with the standard CD audio system.

ALL ACTION LOGOTRON

Logotron, the software developer responsible for the excellent *Strategic Archipelago* strategy games, is currently working on a number of "action" titles due for release between now and Spring 1990.

Probably the most exciting release is *Revolution 131* (currently working title), which is being produced by Adina Software, the team behind *Archipelago*. The game itself is a futuristic vehicle simulation featuring a combination of 3D vector graphics and high-speed sprites used to produce a believable sci-fi cityscape. During play, you'll have to hunt



down criminals for a bounty - which may sound nice enough, but as you walk through the scene of the city, each thief will gather progressively tougher and smarter. To help your fight against crime you'll be able to upgrade your craft with extra armour and armaments and even vehicle type -

the most desirable of which is the ultra-rare amphibious craft.

The game is a part of talks between the John Carpenter film *Escape from New York* and the cult based game *Battle Cars*. ACE sees a winning theme a couple of weeks back and it's looking better than *Archipelago* - with better graphics and far more game-play action. Expect to see it on ST, Amiga and PC during Spring 1990.

Logotron is also planning to release *Archipelago* on the Mac, "due to the high levels of Atari-cast demand". He states or proves though.

NEVERMIND



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- CUBIC CHAOS

Never Mind is a unique combination of arcade action and mind numbing problem solving, and uses a clever blend of computer-generated and hand-crafted puzzles. Is your brain up to the most intriguing challenge of the decade? There's only one way to find out...

Screen Shots taken from the Amiga and PC Versions

AMIGA \$19.95 AMIGA £19.95 PC \$24.95 001-709-5753

PSYGNOSIS

**PSYGNOSIS
GAMES PEOPLE PLAY**

ACE LETTERS

A DREAM MACHINE, TROUBLE WITH THE WIFE, AND A 24 MILE LONG COMMS CABLE (OH YEAH??) AND OTHER INSPIRED MISSIVES. DON'T FORGET, THESE CORRESPONDENTS AREN'T YOUR AVERAGE PIMPLY WALLIES, THEY'RE ACE READERS...AND THAT MEANS THEY'RE A CUT ABOVE THE NORM. HONESTLY...

THROBBO LAMENT

I was wondering if you could take a mystery for me. What has happened to the Pink Pages section of your magazine now that you have been taken over. Where has NIGAR THROBBO suddenly disappeared to? And what has become of the excellent section on Games Design? I appreciate that there must have been quite a lot of confusion caused by the takeover and I hope these features return to the magazine as soon as possible.

While we are on the subject of solving mysteries, could you please tell me whether happened to an old computer magazine called Home Computing Ready? I used to get some issue when I owned my Texas TI99/4A computer, but it suddenly disappeared after issue 133. This magazine used to have a story called Ron Complex in fine piece of prose which was left in the air by the magazine's disappearance, and I still have not received my price for having a letter printed in issue 119. I hope that MGRH THROBBO is not left in exile as poor Ron Complex was.

Only new subjects, and the letter that you received from Serge Daktaris in issue 23. What an intelligent person this dutiful is, but there is one thing that stops the flow from being the same as his fellow users. I now see an Atari 512, but I am the only person in my area who I know owns one. Serge's suggestion to form a small collective amongst your friends for buying software. GDI is a good one, but I feel it could only work for Commodore 64 and Spectrum owners in this country at the present moment. I suppose that I will just have to wait until the 512 becomes more affordable to the general public.

Now, to something which has been eating away at my brain for quite some weeks. When did TIB-BAM FORMULA ONE be released on the 512. I have driven myself crazy waiting for this superb game to be released. According to magazines it should have been released some months ago, and yet I still have not seen it in any of my local software shops.

Keep up the good work, and I hope you keep up the same standards now that you have been taken over.

Ned Lockman, Birmingham

Thanks for the good wishes, Neil. The AGU move to London has occasioned a lot of administrative difficulty for us, mostly to do with printers, to whom we offer our services on-line, but we're now getting out the problems. One of the reasons why I was so keen for one of the original editors to work for the new service is because I know they had the financial resources to support the magazine in the long term. You'll be seeing the results of this over the next few issues as we have articles from Australia, Japan, and Russia - as well as continuing to commission the best writers we can find in the UK. As far as ST owners are concerned, I suspect that there are more out there than you think...

POST HASTE

I recently had to send some of my game disks back to their respective manufacturers after they had crashed and failed to load, the responses I had were very interesting. I posted all the disks on a Friday morning.

Gerard Grayles was first to respond (and he sent it on Monday with a nice letter, a new disk,

and all sent by 1st class post, incredible! And what a brilliant example of good PR. I will now always look on GDI as a professional and professional company.

Oliver was second a few days later with a large box of printers and a new disk. Well done again to Oliver.

Verde was third - a week after GDI, with just the disk and a compliments slip, acceptable...

Telecomsoft (Microspace, to be exact) came in fourth and fifth place over two weeks later with a letter stating that I personally had damaged the software and would have to pay \$5.00 for the replacement service that I required. I reluctantly wrote a cheque and am now waiting for a reply. I only hope that the aforementioned get a grip on themselves for their own benefit and that of the consumer.

P. Blanchard, London.

Frankly, we were amazed at the response by all the people you contacted. Two weeks isn't a bad response time in most consumer areas (don't you wish that? You'd love some people wait years!) In fact, considering the various Microspace now face with no less than five new labels to support Microstyle, Microstate, Randco, Standard, and Firstaid we reckon two weeks is pretty good. As for the \$5.00 it does seem a bit tough. However, you say in your letter that more than

one of your game disks has corrupted. Are you sure you don't have a floppy drive?

CONSOLE WAR

As the handheld console war heats up (between Nintendo's "legions" and Sega's "legions" and Atari's all-singing, all-dancing colour offering, the situation as it stands seems suspiciously familiar. Doesn't this in some way remind you of several previous battles fought in competing "territory"? How about:

1. Spectrum vs. C64
2. ST vs. Amiga
3. Nintendo vs. Sega

There you have three cases of technically superior machines being out to marketing muscle. How although none of these compare with something like the killing of Intellivision by MS, they all illustrate the fact that money makes a machine, not specification. Looking at the above examples, it seems that Commodore are a notable victim of marketing mistakes, with Nintendo riding high selling their converted shockboxes like hot cakes. Doesn't it make you sick? Well, I'm not blaming the Spectrum of ST (howlers) or the Nintendo (well...) but you've GOT to admit that, on paper, they all lose out - in the marketplace, though, they don't.

OLD GAMES NEVER DIE

Here's a desperate plea from an ex-Spectrum turned Atari ST owner. Is it possible that conversions of such Spectre classics such as the Lords of Midnight trilogy, Shocktroop, To-Ha-Tag and countless others may eventually surface as Commodore on the ST?

It may seem backward to do this, but couldn't either exact or updated versions be released on PD or compressed (hardly a day gone) by without me going over the Danish or The Hooah. I'd save the software houses could make plenty of extra disk from it.

Nick Pears, Poole

We're with you all the way on this one, Nick. There are some games but many, but you're certainly pinpointed a culprit who's magic never dies (see romantic walk around). Software houses should really get their act together on this. We checked with Microspace, who own over the rights to the Lords of Midnight trilogy, but they say that programmer Mike Singleton is currently too busy to do the conversions. We'll press ahead with the campaign and keep readers informed as to the results...Personally I'd travel several miles for a good 16-bit Pac-Man at £9.99.

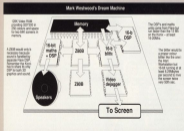


ACE CHALLENGED

Having studied your ideas and specs for a games machine of the 90s which you hope the industry will produce, I would like to add my comments, ideas, and constructive criticism.

First, your tech spec seems impractical. It's not just the complexity of your machine, it's the cost as well. Your machine has 1Mb of RAM, has 52-bit processors, disk drive etc. A machine like this would be hard pushed to succeed in at under a grand at current costs - although I do agree about the de-gapper chip to get the maximum out of the PAL TV standard.

Here's my tech spec:



Clearly this machine can be realistically built within a short time span - most of the technology is there.

As for price, well, if you compare it with the Multi-System (about £2000, it looks more expensive because it has an extra DSP and is more sophisticated. It also runs faster, but chips are usually cheap - 801 RAM that costs the money. The Multi-System has more RAM, complex control mechanisms, an 80486 16-bit control processor which is almost redundant on the systems anyway, and an 800k drive built in.

My design would be credit card style operated - these can currently hold 2 megabytes, a large card socket would allow for future 48MB games. The machine would be priced at between £1500/£2000 and future additions would include a joystick-style controller like the Rock and a CD-ROM interface as on the PC-Engine.

The casing design would be a sleek box like the MegaDrive - Wyo Holloway of Rock said the MegaDrive is a 'great games machine, but it's just a box.' I would say the Multi-System is a great games machine but it is a failed one!

Mark Westwood, Barnsbury

Our intention in issuing the ACE Challenge was not to start a debate amongst users (who are the only people who's opinion really matters, surely?) about the hardware we're sold to play and program our games on, we probably seem to be succeeding! However, with regard to Mark's suggestions, we would like to point out that the analogue control mechanism on the Rock is more important for gameplay than for graphics. Perhaps there have something to say about this?

Which brings us to Atari. Nintendo, and the impending hand-held war. And this is where it gets interesting. I think Nintendo will win. Atari have in the past ended up marketing their products against a technically better machine and losing it although the things it was outcutting will not lose will this battle one?

Both these companies are big corporations and this is certainly the first time two giants of such size have had to compete against

each other. Looking at the two machines, it is blatantly obvious to anyone that the Atari stands head and shoulders above the GameBoy, so will this be a first? Will justice be done? Will an actually not the better machine win for a change?

Richard Haseman, Buntingford

The machines we buy certainly feel more to do with marketing and other factors than with tech specs. However, you've missed

one vital element: quality of software. The Amazon Nintendo tri-impacted user Sega in Japan last few shareholders was due as much to Super Mario Bros as it was to marketing skills. And the Barnsbury has Super MarioBros...

However, we agree that the Atari Lum is by far the more interesting machine technically. Whether the software matches up or not remains to be seen. Check out our hand-helds article coming soon...

CG4 IN AMIGA ROLE

Can you tell me if there is any way the CG4 can run Amiga games - i.e. upgrading memory, or sending it somewhere to have it made compatible with any 16-bit machine?

Also, as a roleplayer, I disagree with the term Computer Role-Playing Games. An RPG is a game in which you use your imagination to create your surroundings, and in those surroundings you can do almost anything. Whereas in a CRPG you're restricted by menus and icons, and are limited in what you can do. Unless someone teaches a computer to understand English, it will never be roleplaying. It will be a menu-driven graphic adventure. Another thing - in an RPG you have the chance to lose your character and get to know him/her as if they were real. I feel you can't do this in a CRPG.

Matthew Hanson, Barnsbury

As far as your first question goes, the answer is definitely no. You would need a different (16- or 68000) processor, a whole host of support chips, and a different keyboard. In other words, you need an Amiga. It is sometimes possible to run games for 56k machines on 154k ones using software emulation (which makes the more powerful more 'pretend' to be an 56k machine) but the opportunities are limited and the results usually disappointing.

As for CRPG's, you can store your characters in most of these games and develop them over a long period. In some games (Blood Feat, Fantasy, and some Ultima games) you can even transport the characters into different games from different publishers. CRPG's are developing very fast, so I wouldn't write them off just yet.

11-PLUS QUESTION

In the special twenty-fourth issue of ACE, which is usually a splendid read, the reason given for the pathetic small Adventure and Empire sections is shortage of space. The completely ordinary twenty-third issue had twenty-four more pages. Stronach

Phil Armstrong, Gateshead

Also, yes, there were some delays in re-building the Adventure section, but I don't think you'll be complaining from now on - the gribnos pages in this

month's issue - and more to come every month in future.

Magazines are printed in "sections" and the size varies during the production cycle, so that you sometimes find a section either increasing in size or decreasing after various articles have been written. You can meet in papers being either inserted or removed from sections at short notice prior to printing. Most of the time you wouldn't notice, but then you could be a clever dick, wouldn't you?

CRASH LANDING

Your 'Learn to Fly' competition in the October issue caught my attention, especially the picture of the aeroplane on the cover.

Being the Editor of a magazine relating to this type of aircraft, I hope that the prize went to the (in North American \$24.95 (The UK) was the US Navy version of the famous Harvard trainer) because for £200 you will only have an hour and fifteen minutes flying time.

As to the point of your type-setting and proof-reading, I think the readers should know that it takes a lot of time and work to produce a magazine and however hard you check the proof, the odd mistake is always bound to creep in.

One word though, in the Radio article you state: "Push the coin holder forward and your coin rises, push the coinholder towards you and the coin descends."

I don't know what you are trying to fly, but when I do go flying, pushing the stick forward lowers the nose the plane, and pulling back raises it.

M.J.Peggall, Cornwall

Good! No wonder we kept giving letters at the end of the magazine. A classic ACE bonobo, indeed. As for the topic, we're still taking on more staff and each issue gets better as we get more time, but in the meantime thank you everyone for your patience.

CYNIC

After reading J.J.Bigger's letter concerning the linking of two computers for headhunter games, I decided to try out a similar scheme with a friend of mine.

Anyhow, I bought the necessary 88 miles of connecting cable, and found that by winding the cable around 24 miles of telephone wire connecting our telephones, we could have a fun - if slight

SNIPPETS

Why can I only fit 23 cassettes into two binders?

Dave Brown, BPPOL

It's not that the binders are that, it's that the cassettes are so thick!

I have got every issue of ACE since number one, but what happened in issue Number 23, October 1991 I checked the shops every available in Bristol but to no avail. Can you please send me details on how to get a copy?

K.Barrett, Bristol

I'm afraid a printer's error resulted in a shortfall of copies for this issue, and so a result it sold out. For this issue and others since October '87 you can order backcopies from ACE Back Issues Dept, POB 903, Leicester, LE99 9WJ. Each issue will set you back £1.50 (postage included).

ly clear - game of professional chessmen. Unfortunately nothing was worked.

By the way, readers interested in this scheme should note that the necessary cable costs only £799 (inc VAT), although the protective outer cable is extra.

I'm now considering purchasing a similar cable for a joystick extension in order to cut out the annoyance of having to walk all the way to his house to play Gauntlet II - there's a catch in this one, however, I can't think what it is.

Richard Head, Heathrow

There's always a cycle somewhere.

DOG HOUSE

Once again, my wife and I are not talking. How does this concern ACE, you may well ask...

Picture the scenario: it dawned on a forthcoming feature game description to protect the guilty.

Having had a pretty well day in the mundane world of commercial mainframe programming, I return home is greeted over a game the game on my Amiga and things are going well - Bob the Dog has played, worked, and has learned to play through various levels of the Mountain Story and has received seven of his collectible well-earned commodities from the clutches of birds, the caretaker of the British Museum.

It is just reaching the end of Level 24 to face the giant and deadly hammer-wielding "super-planet" indolent guardian with all three of his legs intact when I walk my wife to ask me how many baby bears I want for my life. Right seconds and three lives later and it's all over - the wife gets a volley of verbal abuse, plus

several items of assorted hardware hurled at her, and I face the prospect of a silent evening and the latter being levels I've played several dozen times before.

Now I for one have the greatest respect for the people programmers who come up with these games in between doing the paper round and studying for their 11-0s but why do they ignore the most fundamental aspect of program design: user friendliness? In the case of a game that means the likelihood of not of its being to player in distraction within ten minutes of it being opened.

Surely it is so easy to include a "password" system to allow access to the latest uncompleted level in screen of a game to allow play to continue if desired from that point, rather than facing the hapless player to endure the frustration time having to play rounds that were long since mastered and no longer hold any challenge.

M.J.Dowley, Salisbury

This is being done by more and more programmers, but I'd see more of it, eh, baby?

READY AND WAITING

I'd like to have a last word on the subject of games difficulty, which I first touched in my "Pier Letter" in the September issue. It is not that I am unable to complete games. For instance, I like some Peggall's games. There are far too many such and an interesting note to explore, peeped with (initially cheap) plots or incidents, and I have completed them across Barbarian, Barbarian, and Gael without the aid of cheats.

It is just that I dislike games,

whether arcade or adventure, which seem longingly difficult for their own sake, and I do not share the sense of masochistic challenge which excites Jim Lauer - although I notice that even he uses the Adventure Hebble, so his principles cannot be as unyielding as he makes out. For me, the fun and work has enough challenges as it is, without inventing more.

Since it is rarely possible to buy games before buying, it is all too easy nowadays to buy out one's £20 or so and find that the only outcome is a lot of boring, repetitive faffed without any sense of interest or fun, such as mopping floors, pondering for hours on loam patches, banging away mindlessly on the fire button, or mowing gardens around meaningless landscapes, as in Giacomo's Barbarian, which I recently made the mistake of buying.

I thought that all games must take the form of a challenge thrown down by the programmer, and I prefer the idea of exploratory hypertexts mentioned in an article in the September issue. Jim Lauer is right, I have given up, in the sense that I buy far fewer games than I might buy if I could obtain more entertainment from them. The money is waiting in my pocket if only the games industry would provide what I want.

Alan Hughes, Milton Keynes

CONSOLE CRITIQUE

I hear so much about the so-called "console revolution" that is supposed to have occurred, yet still the Computer is by far the more popular investment. My personal view of the console is that for most people it is a waste of money.

What can be done by a console that cannot be done by a computer? Sound and graphics standards are easily matched by 16-bit games. And if you cannot afford a 16-bit machine just by a 5-bit and the Commodore 64 is relatively cheap at around £150, and has a vastly superior range of software at much cheaper prices than any console, and, due to the "closed shop" approach used by console manufacturers, this is likely to remain so.

Ian A. James, Stanley

Well, there's an idea - and one that Commodore would be delighted to support! However, I think you're underestimating the power of some of today's consoles.



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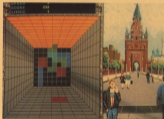
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BEYOND TETRIS

OLD GROSSER TAKES A CHEAP DAY RETURN TO SAN FRANCISCO AND COMES BACK WITH A HANDFUL OF GOODIES.



It's a bit difficult for us, here in the US, to understand what a phenomenon Tetris has become in the rest of the world. The game that was first published here was successful here, sure, but despite morning, afternoon (lots of exclaim, didn't seem to get to the quarters in quite the same way, but I were as hell did everywhere else.

Sitting on the tube in Chicago I tell a guy I'm into computer games - he asks me if I've ever played the great game all the people are playing in his office, it's called Tetris.

Walking into a store, there's the Nintendo Gameboy on sale - being snapped up by eager consumers, it's got Tetris bundled with it.

At the recent arcade show, I'm told that the arcade version of Tetris is sold about 25,000 units. At say, \$800-\$900 a time, that's a lot of handsome John.

But surely such phenomenal success has to be a one-off, the cynics say to anyone that will listen. I feel I have to tell the assembled company, I think not. The Russian guy that came up with the original had just done it again, with a game called *Bejeweled*.

Why? Cause it's Tetris, but played in a way you're looking down a well (see screenshots). Shapes can be rotated around at four sides of the well so they fall down, unless a particular face is "locked" and you can still rotate shapes along the axes of the plane of the well.

When the shapes hit the bottom of the well, they keep moving towards the centre of the screen and the idea of the game is still to make whatever

lines across the bottom of the well, which then disappear, etc., etc.

You loose when all four sides of the well are locked - which happen when a bit of a shape cannot fall down completely into the bottom section of the well.

Simple enough, but is it any good. Sorry chief, so it is. Admittedly I was supremely wonderful at the original game, but I had to be dragged away from the test machine at Spectrum Helsinki, ticking and containing like another - just one more - go.

Contemplating life separate from the far-flung corporate straightjacket of Maxwell Communications, there is no doubt that Tetris is going to do the future prospects of the company hell headed up by Pti "Third Issue Man" Adam and Gilman "I Talk in Cyberspace" Local absolutely to have whatsoever. And maybe PlayStation - the guy that keeps coming up with the ideas - might just get a PlayStation bonus in the wage packet next month. But I wonder what's he picking up the European rights, or you and me can start playing over here?



PCS FOR PLEASURE

In case you didn't know it, the IBM PC is probably the best domestic computer for playing games. All, before the knives start coming out, maybe I should qualify that - a VGA 386 system is the best domestic computer for playing com-



With utilities like this to simulate, why doesn't everyone own IBM PCs?

puter games. First as you like, 256 colours, give me a 24 Meg 386 every day of the week, particularly with a flopped sound board plugged in the back. Give me the £1580 to buy the mother with as well please.

But there's no doubt that the PC is now, at last, being taken seriously on both sides of the Atlantic as a game machine. In the USA, of course, it accounts for over half of the non-line trends entertainment software sales, whereas the ST hardly gets a look in, with the Amiga coming well down the scale. However, it looks as if PC gamesters are coming out of the closet in the UK too - with some jolly good stuff to look forward to as well.

First and foremost, the latest craze in the States - *Sim City*. Already given rave, rave reviews in the European press, almost before



Chicago from its incarnation in PC Sim City - but perhaps the San Francisco earthquake option is no longer in the heart of hearts.

Imparante (the European version) had heard about it first. San City is way much a phenomena over there, with national coverage - making Matt Software's Jeff Brown a very happy man indeed.

Less than a year before it, San City was turned down by Italy's software house, with author Bill Wright leaving his job at Interleaf to finish the game, before he found it a home at Matt. Now it's received the ultimate expression of endorsement - with the Nintendo Corp buying the rights to publish it on the Nintendo themselves. Details of the amount of cash changing hands on the deal are, of course, confidential - but I bet it's more than you or me could easily eat in a month. And that it was once turned down because of being - in the opinion of one last - "unNintendoable". Funny old world, isn't it?

Another PC must is going to be PC Dungeon Master - in the final stages of testing now. Looking exactly like, it isn't better than the original, IT, (as I expect to be highly pleased for the program by a whole new community of users. They'll probably make it on time at 1m, too - for causing more damage to the data and productivity of PC users than the "Yoda the 13th" virus.

After all these share price scares, the average PC owner (yuppie) will be wanting to get rid of some of that periodic aggression, and EA's Buckman will probably satisfy. A martial arts book with a lot more authenticity than most, you can have it go at Karate, Kendo, Ika or Hapkido, then get broken up by guys that lost trained in other disciplines, like Judo.

LEVEL 9 GET HUGE

The adventure starts at Level 9 (usually something of a minor star at the recent PC Show) by announcing that Soapghost, the latest release from that company, was going to be their last. Their last adventure, that is, too, from now on, Level 9 will be producing games under a new game authoring system, called M.U.S.E. (Cringe warning - it stands for either Universal Games Engine, Cowen).

Teaching the Austin down to their new Southampton habitat proved essential, so they revealed some of the power of the system that's taken anything from 3 to 10 person years of programming to produce - depending on which of them you speak to and how much they've had to drink at the time. But it isn't you this, it's impressive.

The Austin have turned the problem of writing for multiple formats on it's head. Instead of writing separately for each machine, they've developed a language for writing games, and games, in a high level format, with separate compilers for each machine type.

This means they can do real party tricks, like making a change to an animation sequence on the ST - taking the changed data and compiling this straight



Level 9 - abandoning adventures but still typical English eccentricity...



away and running it on, say an IBM or Amiga - with the alteration working on the other machines instantly. This is the developers' equivalent of the Philosophers' Stone.

To make things even more interesting, the system seems to out perform most of the usual ways of programming games to look, in terms of the amount and speed of animation - and it extra, super speed is needed, code segments can be nested into the framework without problems, they say.

With game for original games (see screen shot), conversions and tie-ins on the cards, it's not surprising that big firms like Cinematix are taking a strong interest in M.U.S.E. and Level 9. Watch that, presumably M.U.S.E. space.



The graphics in the M.U.S.E. games are a lot better than LP's previous efforts.



Ah, the life of a British Gentleman abroad...



And a splash glimpse of Buckman on PC ISA - coming soon from Electronic Arts.



PC owners can now get all religious, mystical and altogether otherworldly - in their own little bit of heaven, going the way of the Maharishi, but putting Populous up on the company PC. Just as completely wonderful as this for, that as an any other, the only question mark is over whether the fact of heaven changes the geography.

*Pretty As A Picture,
Mean As The Devil.*

Weird things happen...
The slime is on the rise.
The Titanic has arrived.
And after 300 years, Vigo
the Carpathian won't
stay dead.

Who you gonna call?

Get your bustin' business
back on its feet. Hit the
streets in your
Ectomobile. Go
underground to discover
a river of slime...and rise
above it all with the
Statue of Liberty. All to
turn evil to good and
defeat Vigo at the
Museum of Art.

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strategy challenges —
and great laughs.
Ghostbusters II.

THEY



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GH**OST**BUSTERS™ II

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YRE BACK!



 **ACTIVISION**

COIN-OP ENGINE

JOHN COOK DISCOVERS A PC ENGINE IN THE ARCADES

In a move that mildly got-to-mocked a mildly depressed trade attending the recent AMCA Show in Las Vegas, a US firm, United Amusements, announced a shock tie-up with NEC, the makers of the PC Engine games console.



▲ PC Engine PCB

▼ S.T.U.N. Runner

Revealed the Turbo Grafx16 Statewide line Men of speed in the NEC marketing Dept for that end, it will now turn up where we all expected it first, in the arcade!

Why unexpected?

Well simple, the US arcade operators view the advance of the domestic game console with the same zeal: the Patch Lady! where the Patch Lady viewed the average thinking, standing firm, but keeping the dry cleaners in brick business, the operators are blaming their lowered incomes of the mega success of the Nintendo system (over 20 million units in the US now - and the thought of a higher speeded system coming through is not making them happy. Or wasn't utilitised.

What United have done is make a version of the PC Engine on a PCB that is compatible with JAMMA cabinets. The difference is that it change the game running on the system, what you do is just change the special ROM cartridge with the game data on it (and no, it's not directly compatible with the home console) and there you have it - a new game.

And the price? After you've invested in the kit, a new game will cost the operator anything from \$50 to \$200. Compare that to \$800 for a new PCB.

Cheap - and that is what the operators are getting so excited about. NEC are pretty happy about it as well. The system blows the Nintendo Playforce 23 system out of the water - which won't do them any harm in the split struggle to defeat the big N in the home market - and also gives NEC a great showcase for displaying new PC Engine software. They intend playing enhanced versions of the new games on the arcade version enhanced



■ S.T.U.N. Runner

because you can have up to 4 Meg of data on the arcade cards - with adverts saying, 'coming to your PC Engine soon!'

Having distributed a few games on show in Las Vegas, I can personally vouch that Gunhead played on a 25" monitor with an industrial strength joystick is even more fun than playing it on the home unit.

The trade loves it, the public will love it - expect to see a lot of this in the near future.

THIS MONTH'S GAMES - LIVE FROM LAS VEGAS

1989 AMCA - the big show of the year for the arcade industry - was this year slightly coloured, as it has been repositioned two weeks before the main Japanese trade show... so naturally many of the Japanese firms were holding a little bit back for then.

But with an estimated \$3.1 Billion slipping into the American video console plus another \$2.37 Billion being spent by pinball junkies, the show was still well attended and very much a global event.

Sega had its new communication unit that goes between Super Monaco Grand Prix units, two funsters, multi-player JUMP, the most have done something very good in a past life to deserve this treat - it's now simply the best multi-player driving game in the galaxy. Hopefully well see that making its way over here very, very soon.

As well as showing a new PCB game GTHRT, Sega also had a great new golf game for its System 26 cabinet - Super Masters. Another treat for Sega - another winner.

Alan Games lead with a new Mini pin game - S.T.U.N. Runner. Heavy on the lap 30, light on the gameboard - or so the first impression seemed. Namco had another link-up game based on racing quad





Puck Force Hunter

Men which was fun, but not up to the standard of Final Lap. Expect another only game from them soon, however.

Disappointment of the show – Capcom writing the genius of its new hardware on perhaps concepts like LPI Squares, Hagg Squares, battle colours, hardly worth going beyond the third screen as the beauty of this horizontal shooter unfolds. Sorry folks – it's on the way!

Racing games are in – and before too long a lot of money in Big Run, a rally game based on the Paris to Dakar rally. Not, if a little overrated.

Data East might have a winner to its hands with Midnight Resistance. A good (probably) come shooter.



Puck Force Hunter

SPREAD THAT JAMMA

More coin-op jargon explained – this month we're talking about serious hardware

Look into the classified pages of any arcade trade magazine and you'll see pages (and pages) of new and second-hand PCBs for sale. PCB? What the hell are they?

Well, PCB stands for Printed Circuit Board, so you might guess that we are talking about serious electronics here – and you'd be dead right.

In the home sector, games software comes on floppy disc and you load the data on the disc into the RAM of a standard hardware unit in order to play. In the arcade business you buy the computer and software hardware into a single circuit board that you slot into a standard Cabinet. It's this board that is referred to as the PCB. But what's a Cabinet, I hear you cry?

Simple, it's a shell and consisting of everything that you need to run a console, apart from the PCB – the box itself, joystick, fire buttons, monitor and outspokes.

The idea is that an operator will buy cabinet separately from the boards, the PCB's – and simply change that board when he/she decides a game is not bringing in enough money – the cabinet remains.

The particularly perceptive reader will realise that for boards and cabinets to be interchangeable with each other, a certain amount of standardisation will have had to take place as far as input/output protocol from board to cabinet goes – and so it has. In a surprising bit of unity, in the early days of the industry, such a standard was agreed on by the manufacturers and it's referred to as JAMMA (completely named after the Japanese trade association that thought it up).

So long as your PCB is JAMMA compatible, you can plug it into any JAMMA compatible cabinet they all and be up on down straight away.

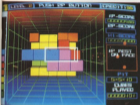
Now, ever heard of a coin-op being referred to as a Dedicated? What can this mean? Are the electronics whizzing around the circuits of such a game particularly dedicated to the cause of coin-op? The fact that wouldn't be seen changed up anywhere near a washing machine, for example. Or do you have to be a particularly hardened arcade head longer to tackle such a Dedicated game?

None – all it means is that the unit in question has a control system on the cabinet and/or other features on the PCB that make a non-JAMMA compatible – so you couldn't take a normal PCB and plug it into that system.

For example, take Operation Wolf. The control system here is a gun – not the usual joystick and two fire buttons. The machine'll be able to play the. Stride, into the one – it wouldn't work. Likewise most of the games that throw you around – driving games and so on; these are all dedicated units.

In the trade these are recognised as usually being superior games, but are viewed as high risk ventures, as they cost more (you have to effectively buy the specialised cabinet along with the PCB hardware) and you can't change over boards to make it into another game. Most operators will have one or two dedicated at the front of the shop as showpieces to draw the punters into the place, however.

Occasionally, if a particular Dedicated has been very popular – Donkey for instance – someone will release a conversion kit for it. This, as you might expect, is a piece of hardware that replaces the original PCB, but allows the non-standard control system of the original specialised cabinet.



Block Out

It's doing very well on test in the UK and well worth a try.

Best Football of the show has to be Data East's AFC Monday Night Football. Licensing the American Football equivalent of Blitz of the Day – the table is a dream to play and breaks a spell of mediocre releases from that

section of the Data East megagaming.

Best PCB of the Show – Puck Force Hunter – another one for the satellite head bangers from the makers of Omega Force. Or was it X-Mally? You know!

Lastly – most unexpected success of the show was led by American Technos with a two

3-D Tennis variant, Block Out. Rotating shapes in the x, y and z axis makes the unit still need more attention in Cryptography, brain tests. Mum. See you next month with news from the big UK autumn show, the Associated Leisure Preview.

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GOING TO TOWN...

Fujitsu's 32-bit FM Towns is setting Japan alight with its combination of raw processing power and CD-ROM drive. ACE brings you the specs, the software story, and a prayer that someone will bring you the machine...

More than half a year has passed since Fujitsu's brand new computer, the FM TOWNS, made its debut in Japan. It was first unveiled at a computer show in Tokyo in January where it caused a sensation amongst trade and public alike. It wasn't just the 32-bit performance or the town graphics and sound that got people talking either - what really caused the adrenalin levels was the built-in CD-ROM, supported as standard with the machine.

Although Fujitsu isn't that well-known in Britain, they've in fact been very active in the Japanese home market for some time, so the FM Towns didn't come as complete surprise. The company have a reputation for bringing out interesting machines ranging from the highly regarded (in Japan) FM-7 to the more recent FM-77 A6 - a very colorful little beast with high graphics and sound specifications. The FM Towns is therefore part of a continuing series of hardware releases and not just a one-off.

CD-ROMS

The CD-ROM that comes with the machine has some obvious advantages, but there are some less obvious ones as well. To start with, you get the vast capacity of an optical disk (up to 540KB in the case of the Towns unit). This means that very few games require more than one disk (although, there are some that do) so despite the higher cost of individual CD-ROMs, software can sometimes work out cheaper. Furthermore, the disks are far more stable and, being ROM, you cannot, of course, delete any files by mistake or write over them. Finally, the disks are almost indestructible in normal use, so you don't have to worry foot around the bedrooms any more by trying to trample on your carefully scattered



ShoutOut, a stunning 3D adventure that shows off the Towns's powerful graphics processor and colour handling capabilities.

delights. In fact, being a CD-ROM is a bit like having a vast capacity cartridge system, except its cheaper cartridges carrying 1MByte are under development but currently cost hundreds of pounds.

POWER ON TAP

The Towns boasts a 32-bit 80386 CPU. This makes it as fast as the latest PC-compatible 386 machines (and a lot faster than some of them). It makes the current ST and Amiga performance look pretty sick in operation and games like *Afterburner*, which on the Towns runs a hefty margin of colour and sound, really show the results. The other advantage of the 386 is that it can directly address (i.e. refer to) more memory than a 16-bit chip, though in practice most games do not load that much data into memory anyway (assuming you've got the memory installed - the FM1 comes with 1MByte on the entry level machine, 2MByte on the more expensive model - see the Specs box on page 25).

However 'power' isn't all about chips and disk capacity. What really makes the Towns attractive is the way everything works together



AN INTERVIEW TALK...

International co-operation between ACE and Japan's Number One games magazine, Login, brought you this report. Here at ACE we'd like to say a big thanks to Login, and especially to Akio Ito and Masao Ito for all their help. We hope to bring you more joint reports like this in future, giving you the low-down on the exciting Japanese market. Meanwhile, all our best wishes to the Login team...and a large bottle of the best Scotch!

when you get CD-ROM AND 32-bit technology hand in hand you get some stunning displays and sounds. This is particularly true of the fact that the CD-ROM disk storage medium is really the only way to provide the memory needed for high-quality (16-bit) sound samples. You can pack Tera, a stunning series of digitised backgrounds, and fully digitised voice sound of CD-quality onto the CD-R - something you simply couldn't do on a conventional system.

The graphics chip in the Towns is no weakling either. It offers very effective sprite and scroll functions - essential for making certain game categories (particularly shoot-em-ups) really impressive.



AkaBomber goes to Yonem...

PERIPHERALS

The Teams is a very much a VAMP (Video, Audio, Memory, Processor) machine. In fact, the operating system designed by Fujitsu takes the machine so far in this direction that a keyboard is not standard equipment. Almost all the software, including the OS, is mouse-driven and requires nothing more than menu selection and clicking to operate.

Keyboards are only necessary for word processing and other text intensive operations. The main advantage of this for gamers is that it reduces the cost of the basic package - it also underlines the fact that Fujitsu regard the machine primarily as an entertainment item. It only Commodore and Atari had taken this attitude from day one!

There are two types of CRT monitor available from Fujitsu, one costing \$9,800 yen (\$298) and the other 136,000 yen (\$420) depending on resolution. However, the Teams has proved so popular in Japan that there are already many third parties producing monitors, memory and other widgets to go with the machine. You will soon be able to look out on an IBM-style expansion (great for opening up the old 80 hardware), a 286 expansion memory, a video card, a modem card, and a SCSI card for communicating with other standard peripherals) to name only a few. At the moment however, most of these peripherals are still under development as the machine has not been widely available for long enough.

One slightly odd peripheral you might think, is System Saver's 48 Mb HD drive and 5.25 FD drive. Why, after all, should you need a hard disk or floppy when you've got that whopping great CD-ROM? Apart from storage, the main reason for games players is that the CD-ROM has one major disadvantage - it offers relatively slow access speed to data on the disc compared to HD or FD. For business users, this can be critical when working with applications that constantly access a lot of data. It's also bad news for some games that require frequent disk access.

PARLEY YOUR MARKET

Any Japanese company has a big handicap compared with those in English-speaking countries. In Japan, a machine has, naturally,



AkaBomber again. Just look at those colors.

enough, got to cope with the Japanese language, the most complex written system in the world with more than 5,000 characters. This naturally results in a need for larger RAM and storage devices. In this sense, the FM Teams has got an edge over its rivals, having plenty of memory and a large ROM which includes a Japanese dictionary in it. This is certainly contributing to the popularity of the machine in Japan - the Microsoft, for example, though highly respected, was rarely purchased by Japanese until recently when the Japanese word system was implemented. It is now one of the „most popular machines in the country.

Finally, the price of the Teams makes it a clear winner with the Japanese. Although expensive by US standards, at over £2,000, it compares in the market with machines that would normally cost at least three times as much. After some debate, Fujitsu eventually priced it at 136,000 yen (\$4,200) for model-1, with one FD drive, and 198,000 yen (\$2,770) for model-2, with two FD drives.

THE SOFTWARE

The FM Teams comes with a very well developed operating system. As stated above,

you can do everything simply by selecting from a pull-down menu and double-clicking the command you want. You are totally free from complex commands like DOS or FLIS. But what about the games...and are we going to see it over here in the UK?

Original software is currently being released both in Japan and the States for the machine while many other successful titles on other formats are being converted. In the



Mushroom Story.

States, the FM Teams Support Centre, fully supported by Fujitsu, was established in May and works to improve co-operation with software developers. This is particularly important since in order to develop a software under new legal rulings, such as CD-ROM, programmers have to share their knowledge as much as possible.

Information gathered to the Support Centre will be available via CompuServe for developers who support the Centre in return. This open access means that it is by no means impractical for British software houses to support the machine should they wish to. At the moment, however, although both Microsoft and Acorn (who have a machine) appear to be interested, it is unlikely that anyone will bring out games titles we like the Teams will ever have.



Readers who checked out our Hyperspace feature in a recent edition of ACE will know that this new genre title could prove very popular in Britain. Hyperspace uses a vast number of 3D-style graphics scenes together with animation sequences to offer the player a whole virtual environment to explore at will. This sort of game is an excellent candidate for CD-ROM technology, so it's significant that this is the only official programming language currently available for the Teams is "Hyperspace". This is a Hyperspace-like programming environment that could be used to create theme or simulation-type games using the CD-ROM. Microsoft is already an licensee for the Mac, so a Teams version could follow soon.

FM POWER...

Microprocessor:	80386 (32bit)
RAM:	model-1: 1Mbytes model-2: 2Mbytes
VRAM:	2.5M
Sprite RAM:	128K
Internal drives:	model-1: CD-ROM (540Mbytes x 1) model-2: CD-ROM (540Mbytes x 1) FD (1.2Mbytes x 2)
Graphic mode (dot):	640 x 480: 256 out of 16,777,080 colours 640 x 480: 16 out of 4,096 colours / 2 screens 600 x 240: 32,768 colours / 2 screens 640 x 400: 16 out of 4,096 colours / 2 screens
Sound:	PCM sounds: stereo 8-channel FM sounds: stereo 6-channel sampling: 8 bit, 19.2 KHz CD-ROM works as an ordinary CD player
Scan:	128lines x 150lines x 420lines
Weight:	11 kg
Optional devices:	Key board 80387 processor expansion memory video card modem card SCSI card 14" display



The only good news here is that a success in America launch (which seems likely because of Fujitsu's commitment) means we should be able to see slightly cheaper price points and thus, if the machine really catches on, a proliferation of services. The situation is slightly improved since the technology used in the Towns is, at the moment, pretty futuristic so it's not a case of 'it's not out this year, it'll be too late.' Unfortunately, Fujitsu are adamant at present that the machine is for the domestic Japanese market only, but grey imports should be available as soon as production gets up.

Meanwhile, converted games include *After Burner*, *New Zealand Story* and several other

popular conversions. If you want a shopper, you could try *Last Armageddon!* which costs prices no less than 3 CD-ROMs. Each disc is as much as 540 mb so that makes 1.5 Gb altogether in an 89G Liberator-style romp.

At the moment, the FM Towns seems to be almost entirely game oriented, 90% of software is games only, 10% comprises paint/draw/music/communication tools. Though there are no business applications available, Fujitsu should soon change all that with an MS-DOS emulator that currently enables more than 30 business applications to run on the FM Towns. It includes the most popular Japanese word processor 'Jibiki'



One of the advantages of the CD-ROM format is that it is identical with CD-Audio. This means you're FM Towns can not only play back conventional CD disks, but it can also, with appropriate software, use them as its sample sources for editing and manipulation.

and as well as more familiar programs like Lotus 1-2-3.

Fujitsu have already shipped around 20,000 units of the machine in Japan - a tiny number compared to the millions of IBM and Pentium machines, but it's growing very rapidly. The main problem has been the speed of manufacture, rather than lack of demand, with most available models going into shops for demonstration. The company hope to be able to fulfil demand soon and we can then expect the software base to explode.

However, one problem at the moment does seem to be the marketing policy behind the machine. Fujitsu are claiming that the FM Towns will be a computer for everybody ranging from kids through housewives to business users. Compare this with the approach taken in Japan by Sharp a few years ago with their X68050 - clearly marketed as an Apple killer and not very strongly supported.

Meanwhile, competition is shaping up with NEC announcing their own CD-ROM machine, the PC-9501 BE, an 8048 personal computer with a CD-ROM drive as a standard equipment. The machine uses a PC-Engine CD-ROM set and costs about two-thirds of the Towns machine, though the specs aren't as good.

There's no doubt that CD-ROM is the storage medium of the future. Let's hope the British market catches up soon with machines like the Towns, otherwise we may get left far behind in the race towards truly advanced computer entertainment.



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The spirit of Gunship is...

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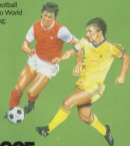
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NIGHTMARE ON SOFT ST.

John Minson looks into the past, present and future of horror software...

Fear. Four police races. Aderalain crashes to your brain. Your brooding squawks, and the hairs on the back of your neck stand up. The focus of fear: David Koffell as Freydenberg's tortured creation, the gruesomely gut-baring tank of James Herbert. One Bauer's creators of the the other word, another morality. The lawless, slow-witted art of Freddy-Krueger.

Fear in every form, in every medium. The good one told by children. The Gothic novel's muddy pages. The cinematic shocker that sent audiences screaming behind their seats. All computer games...

The first video monsters were introduced in their own right. When Palace debuted

The Evil Dead for its first ever release in 1984, it turned the cult film into a blood-soaked, eye-size of tiny sprites running around ultramini rooms.

"Back in 1983 *Evil Dead* was one of the biggest films in Britain," Palace's Pete Stone recalls, "and I thought it would make a great game scenario. You had the hero trying to survive the zombies, but we never got out to make a horror game to scare people." Which is so well-considering the only scenario came from disappointed publishers expecting a computer sale.

At the same time, smelting gamers experienced an unlikely Friday 13th courtesy of Demarc. The actually caused a minor upsur

over the bloody hockey mask as its boss. Unfortunately the horror dropped there. Leading the program introduced a series of stock figures who just wandered around waiting to be killed.

"Don't mention that..." Demarc's *Demarc* wheedles groans. "At the vague concept level we topped it was a piece that could make people hooked. I believe that can be done but *Friday 13th* didn't do it because we played it in the hands of people who were creatively incompetent."

In horror software got off to a gritty start and has, generally remained an frightening as *Carry On Scavenger* ever since. Software houses just don't seem to grasp what makes us gasp. The external frame might say *horror*

MONSTROUS PERSONALITY FREDDY KRUEGER ON HORROR SOFTWARE...



Freddy Krueger is the first movie monster with mass appeal since the film, and actor Robert Englund, who plays the child killer in the nightmare on Elm Street series, believes his views rely

"It's a monster with a personality. A diabolical sense of humor. It's not so much that I'm terribly funny but I believe the reason when you release the tension it's so much easier to let the audience up and have them again."

Englund's analysis presents a considerable challenge to suit new movie mongers. Giving entire a personality is near impossible

and creating a structure with controlled peaks and troughs seems to go against the free range nature of games.

Which director Bernard Rose, whose recent film *Paperhouse* lacked the *Demarcage* in a more psychologically credible fashion than *Evil Dead's* parade of effects, also believes you may be able to manipulate the viewer.

"The whole point of the film (*Paperhouse*) is, the audience feels quite confident with it for the first 40 minutes, that it's quite a nice bit to be film, quite chilling perhaps, then suddenly you come at them with a stophammer." But as Harvard's little Woodruff observes, if a game doesn't use the complete attention to present, immediately you're lost your player.

John Gilbert was a computer compiler before he founded award-winning *Fear* magazine and was actively involved in the development of *Phantasm's* 3D arcade adventure *Meltdown*; he has doubts about horror and video.

"We're still looking at quality *Space Invaders*. People don't know how to handle horror. They don't do it seriously. You can do it in books or film but how do you put it on a computer with the very limited number of techniques available?"

Horror works, he says, because it gives us a social metaphor for mundane reality and watching nasty things happen to other others on screen. "It plays on people's deepest and darkest secrets."

Englund agrees. "I read something... and I wish they was my quite but it's not... that it's like a little passion play. There's something about the catharsis and the dark and the horror and you address these obsessions of death and things but in the stylized form of the horror movie which is an approval thing we have in the culture."

It's very easy for a programmer to present you with pictures of death and destruction but the linear must be more than *Evil Dead* or *Life*. "Try *Agony*" it is to communicate man's mortality and losses of ultimate end. Sophisticated new forms, harnessing advanced processing power, sound and CD-ROM graphics, must be developed before games start to make us shiver.



Frankenstein from ORL. Horrible in more ways than one...

route is to recycle the iconography of horror from other media.

The chains blurring a film, like Demark and Palace did, or mixing generic images and grafting them, Frankenstein/Archie, onto an existing game formula (Woodcock's *Night Night* and Arcussoft's *Resurrection* of London were simply arcade adventures wearing Hal-loween masks, however much they tested your reflexes or joystick technique, they never cast a shiver down the spine).

As Chris Elliott of Edith Games, programmers of Electronic Arts' forthcoming *The House of Shadow* puts it, "When you have an animated figure it's difficult to make something as rich and a half full horror. You can make it grotesque but not horrific."

Not that it's stopped people trying. In the mid-eighties a pair of games, *On To Hell*, from the (now-merged) names Edut Software and Powerhouse's *Soft and Cuddly* led the genre with a flourish. Big them up as marauders and you'll discover just how on-stomach churning Spectrum games are - unless you're particularly sensitive to artificial color.

Even with today's high resolution machines graphic horror is not the solution, according to Chris Elliott. "You get into the problem that movies have. People soon become bored. So you have to fall over yourself to be more and more gross. It's the law of diminishing returns."

ORL boss Denise Chambers agrees. "People have always said horror is exploitation and some people have taken that exploitation element and not delivered." His solution was to launch a series of adventure games based on the classic monsters, Frankenstein, Dracula and The Wolfman, plus the legend of real life slasher, Jack the Ripper.

Recasting the mission of reading a horror novel proved more capable of raising genre-jumps than using shock horror films, though ORL will throw in the odd digitized picture of disembowelled victims as a top in the gore rounds. Chambers is quick to stress that the games were more like a series of unpleasant stills though. "These games are very visual but the content goes with it."

He's careful to draw the distinction between horror, the recoil in revulsion, and ter-

ror, the emotion of fear. "I always thought *Demark* or *Machine Automation*'s experimental life game was quite terrifying. It's a question of artistry and that's something that's generally missing from this industry. Fear was not blood-thirsty but he was terrifying. We like to have both in our software."

While the ORL series and Infocom's *Lovecraftian* The *Lotus* never set out to scare adventurers, a couple of strategy games demonstrated an alternative approach. Alan appeared under *Apex* Management's label while James Herber's publisher Hodder and Staughton (briefly fitted with software for The Rat).

Neither title could be classed an unseasonal success but both succeeded in generating response rarely found in arcade or adventure games. In *Apex* you searched the ship for the creature while *The Rat* followed the novel

closely as you investigated the mysterious ruled killings.

Both were played in real time, forcing you to react quickly. Despite schematic graphics (Alan was not a map based effects such as a quaking globe, were used to good effect) and the sudden appearance of the alien or rat-chewing through the screen provided suitably disturbing cinema as you prepared to meet your maker... or at least retreat.

10-BIT INQUEST

Horrible has progressed since those *Rat* jettisoners and the former game is currently undergoing something of a renaissance... it should that be renaissance? Electronic Arts is based to release a horror role playing game based on the works of classic horror writer HP Lovecraft's best book. And Tyrensoft has launched a label devoted to terror.

Mike Woodhoff, the brain behind Horrorsoft, has been involved in software since its earliest days, producing traditional text adventures including the mildly horrific and highly enjoyable *Chambers*. Moving with the times he's now producing 16-bit games like *Flowers of the Labyrinth*.

"I noticed that not a lot of game, in the book driven adventure, is being well in the America's but I thought that they're rather rare and scary."

Computer games allow less time to develop an atmosphere than a film. Woodhoff admits that he has to hook the player within ten minutes of they'll do something else. However to



Apex from Apex Mind Games - they're still screaming about this one.

GETTING PAST THE CENSOR

When ORL released its horror adventures it opened another can of maggots. Clement Chambers interpreted the 1984 *Video Recordings Act* (VRA), introduced as a result of the 'video nasties' scare, as referring to computer games.

"In the day Chambers insists that what he did was merely follow the letter of the law; that a computer game was (in quite the strict) a video work... any series of visual images (with or without sound) as produced electronically by the use of information contained on any disc or magnetic tape, and shown as a moving picture."

The VRA states that any such work had to be submitted to the British Board of Film Classification (BBFC), the body responsible for certifying films, if "to any significant extent it depicts... mutilation or torture of, or other acts of gross violence towards humans or animals."

Despite the fact that, as ACE so carefully pointed-out at the time, the act refers to moving pictures, the BBFC's panel played Chambers' games, examined their

digitized images, and passed judgment. The classic monsters were rated as fit for 15 year olds but the real life *Jack the Ripper* briefly achieved the coveted 18, leading to items on the radio and in the press.

Nevertheless you get the idea that the Board is fairly embarrassed by the whole affair. A spokesperson said, "The four CRL programs were submitted voluntarily and probably did quite well in terms of publicity for them but we've had nothing since." As the cost of classification can reach \$1,800, it's easy to understand why there wasn't a rush to follow CRL's lead.

However this raises an important point. As CRL becomes a reality, a game which included fitted in unseasonal sequences of a bodyhorrid nature certainly would come within the letter of the law. But unlike a film, which can only be classed in one, linear fashion, a game is interactive so has no set pattern. Could the BBFC make far decisions about a medium which is only superficially similar to their area of expertise? Only time will tell.

LOVECRAFT, HORROR, AND MADNESS



Friday the 13th: The Game — a game that combines puzzle and horror.

"Imagine if you have a player sitting in the dark with his fingers wired up to stereo speakers, and he has one by his side and the other by the window. Suddenly there's the sound of a tap from the window and while he looks to see what it is, we flash something up on the screen."

"While approaching it the same way a film director approaches a film. We've got a special language and it's written like a script for graphics, sound and data." Of course to produce the total sensation he requires the player's cooperation in turning down the lights, placing speakers correctly and suspending disbelief, but Wooduff believes this isn't too much to ask of somebody who's spent \$25-\$30 for the software.

The powers of software creation, Donnie Whalley and Pete Stone, both believe that somebody games will have come the power to come at films or books. "The newer video games," says Whalley, "but I'm sure a game that does what I don't know how to do it though, I think that sound is a big element." Stone adds, "In principle I think you will be able to scare people in the future but at the moment advances in technology are not great enough." Why, then, did I decide to produce a more adult product?

"He appealed to Lovecraft, as rules designer Scott recalls: "We did some market research and found that horror is massive in all media, but we felt nobody was addressing it in software and you have to do something different in this industry."

Looking back to a few quality titles a year, the label is about to follow up Personal Nightmare with *Black Wooduff* says that they will be aimed at the *Leviathan/Gothic* end of the horror spectrum. "You might find a chill in one of the games," he says, "but there won't be a plug out."

Instead he intends to induce shivers with more restrained images. In *Personal Nightmares* you have to cut the fingers off a corpse to get a proper look. I wanted players to get scared as they did it." Another instance occurs in the label game if you strap into the garden, where a lightning bolt hits your head. Suddenly the tent sways down and tears out your eye. The final image is of the bloody orb clasped in its claw. Can he be restrained?

Wooduff defends the gore by referring to the covers of horror paperbacks and the content of comics like *Heavy Metal*. Today's viewer expects his horror to have, well, guts. His primary concern is suspense though. "It's like a film. As the heroine walks down the stairs with the lights off you want the audience to go, 'Oh no!'"

Chris Elliott and Richard Edwards of *Electronic Arts* (the *House of Dread*), are HP Lovecraft aficionados. HP who? Little Fox, Lovecraft remains relatively unknown in Britain though fans like *The Ravenator* and *From Beyond* are starting to change that.

Howard Phillips Lovecraft was born in 1890 in New England. A prodigy, he was reading by the age of three and writing a year later. His grandfather's 2,000 volume library left him with a lifelong passion for the 18th century's style and language. However his childhood was marred and unhappy. His father died in an accident when he was only eight, his mother was increasingly protective, paranoid and mad about her recurring dreams in his youth.

He was only 25 when he wrote his first horror story, *The Hound in the Cave*, but soon after turned to writing and essays and it wasn't until 1918 that he resumed writing fiction. His next story *Herbert West - Ravenator* was published in 1922 and soon he was a regular contributor to *Weird Tales* pulp magazine.

For the next fifteen years Lovecraft and his disciples created the *Chaotic Mythos*, a completely realized private mythology based around the ancient Great Old Ones, whose forms glided their return. Though he died in 1937 his influence on a whole new modern horror writer continues to this day.

"He's not a good writer technically," Elliott admits, "in some ways he's appalling. His one trick is to pick the milky in letters with these dots at the end." But despite the genre's name, Lovecraft hooked a nerve.

"There really are things not to get you and

the world," says Edwards. "They're not after you personally. They just don't even notice you." "It's the idea of huge, impersonal forces," Elliott continues. "It's ghastly because there are things out there which would dole you out if you could see them."

The creation of such a malevolent, genre and universe, where dreadful secrets haunt the corners of waking moments, calls for sensitive game technicians. Cortich is using role playing to bring Lovecraft to life.

"It's better than the traditional 'monster' type story. That's very much about the collection of objects, there's the feeling of the player being in control, but for the moment when it comes you get to feel that something else is in control. The first element of horror is a feeling of helplessness, and role playing is all about character and interaction."

He notices the problems inherent in this though. "There is a very fragile atmosphere. With computers you're dealing with an interactive medium which is like no other. But this computer offers some of control you have as a storyteller."

"It's very easy to go from horror into gore," Edwards adds. "The wrong word can lose the atmosphere. So *House of Dread* is mostly low key. There's no dropping blood every five seconds giving the impression you're making through a dimly lit tunnel. So when the horror comes it's more affecting."

Lovecraft's evocative mythos translates in terms of a world where significant events have occurred but *Electronic Arts* also have to break the boundaries of their medium and give us a glimpse of that mythic age.



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COMING SOON!

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Previous two-player simultaneous martial arts mayhem. Evil friends have captured your girlfriend - it's up to you and your brother because his. Don't fail. Through the town, countryside, mountains and finally into the lab. Use whatever weapons you can find to stay alive.



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favourite team and a copy of Anco's

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Matches

10**18**latest release, *Player Manager...***84****Int 1st 2nd 3rd 4th****Work rate****84****0****0****0****1****1**

Anco's latest release brings the quality of *Kick Off* to the art of football management... As the newly appointed *Player Manager* and international class player, you take charge of a third division club with just one simple objective: bring back the glory days!

Player Manager is split into four distinct objectives: playing skills of the manager (on-pitch action using a modified version of *Kick*

Off, managerial skills (set the right tactics and players to form a winning team), tactics (choose from four well proven tactics or design your own ingenious combinations of defense and offense) and player's lower league players to choose from, each with their own attributes like shooting, pace and aggression...

...And that's just for starters, other factors to be taken into consideration include refs, injuries and disciplinary problems. But who said

I was going to be easy?

Player Manager is available now on ST and Amiga for £19.95/£24.95 with Spectrum, Amstrad and C64 £9.95/£14.95/£18.95 (see page 100). Meanwhile, don't forget Anco are hard at work on *Kick Off 4* - and they're eager for suggestions from current *Kick Off* players. For your suggestions on the postcard along with your entry (don't worry - they don't count in the competition).

Video your local footie team and the Big Match with this Sony CCDP250 Camcorder



The Sony CCDP250 is the latest addition to Sony's extensive, and award winning, camcorder range.

Featuring a 4.5 power zoom, built with facility, high speed shutter (1/500 - 1/6000) and 7 sec. capability, the CCDP250 CCDP250 is designed to introduce the joys of video photography to a wider audience...

THE SECRET OF SUCCESS...

So how do you get your grubby hands on a Sony camcorder, live in a football club or a copy of *Player Manager* into your home? Easy! Just answer the following questions:

- Which football team won the FA Cup in 1991?
(a) Liverpool (b) Arsenal (c) Tottenham
- Which football team won the FA Cup in 1992?
(a) Liverpool (b) Arsenal (c) Tottenham
- Finally, tell us which are your two favourite sections or articles in this month's ACE, and your two LEAST favourite sections. Don't worry - there are no right answers for this question. We just want to hear your views, and whatever you say will in no way affect the outcome of the competition.

Please write your answers (in BLOCK CAPITALS) on the back of a postcard. Don't forget to include your full name, address and telephone number. Don't forget to include

the following details: your computer and your favourite football team.

Send your completed postcard to:
ACE ANCO COMPETITION, Entry Court,
20-22 Farringdon Lane, London EC1R 3AU.

THE PRIZES

The Sony CCDP250 camcorder will be awarded to the first entry giving the correct answers to questions (1) and (2) drawn at random from the entries received prior to the closing date. A football team shirt (of the winners' own team choice) will be awarded to the second correct entry and a copy of *Player Manager* will be awarded to the third correct entry drawn.

THE RULES

- The closing date for entries is 7th December, 1991.
- Employees of BSNP, ANCO and BSNP are not eligible for entry.
- The editors' decision is final and no correspondence will be entered into.



OUT OF THIS WORLD

TOWER OF BABEL

An intricate 3D strategy game involving an interconnecting network of towers, platforms and lifts all rendered in solid 3D with innovative light and shading techniques. Take control of rickety spiders and program them to solve problems and puzzles and interact with other creatures, such as Puffers, Zappers and Goblins. Alternatively, real time control is available to you at any time for instantaneous reaction to the game's developments. For the more adventurous among you, there is a complete game designer, allowing the construction of your own series of towers, platforms and lifts. Attempt to fix your friends with your own fiendishly difficult creations. More than just a game, more than just a puzzle - Tower of Babel is a whole new concept in strategy gaming.



WEIRD DREAMS

A RIDE ALONG THE ROCKY ROAD OF SUBLIMINAL THOUGHT, WITHOUT SHOCK ADROCKERS.

Imagine yourself in a world full of nightmares with Dull-Escape creatures & mind eating eyes. Picture yourself in an apocalyptic landscape. Now in a weird dream & wondering what the...

"Weird Dreams is stunning. It's one of the most bizarre concepts yet seen on a computer being more of an experience than a game".

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A PORTRAIT OF THE ARTIFICE

Since the birth of photography the camera has been consistently manipulated to do the one thing its exponents said it couldn't - lie. At no time though, has it lied more inventively and efficiently than at the present. With the increasingly common use of computers in design and, in particular advertising, image manipulation has become an exercise in creative duplicity. The recent 'Machine Dreams' exhibition at London's Photographer's Gallery illustrated what happens when you give artists the latest in state-of-the-art machinery to play with. Mike Patterson went along to take a look at the results.

Nearly every advertisement you see in national magazines like the Sunday supplements has been manipulated in some way. Often the colours have been changed, an area has been darkened, a blemish removed, and sometimes whole segments have been created by repeating a section of the image many times.

Since the advent of computer screens with very high-resolution screens linked to publishing tools like scanners the kind of image distortion is commonplace. It's simply no longer safe to believe your eyes.

The reaction of the half dozen artists who were offered the systems to use was not to attempt to create some sort of perfect image using the multitude of tools at their disposal, but to demonstrate their consummate ability to deceive. Frequently conflicting images were juxtaposed against each other to make the point.

Photographer David Galloway took a nine-month military black and white strip of Napoleon surveying forests across a bay, retouched it and substituted nearly all the soldiers from the scene to create an almost pictureless scene, demonstrating a final-act of history. All this, moreover, was without the artist ever leaving the actual print. It was produced by communicating via fax from Australia. Another, still more impressive, recreated Monet's 'Water Lilies' using garden vegetables. Commercial artist Tessa Inyang multiplied images the entire bridge, for example, was composed of a string of cucumbers and then smeared them to create the effect of movement and reflected colour.

The attitude of nearly all the artists to the technology they were dealing with was one of wariness and not a little suspicion. With some reason perhaps because the distortion of truth that such systems offer is frightening. The



Who Else? Knows His History
- Graham Budget

Two parts of a tripod, three one photograph to a highly creative degree, taking and distorting our views of progress. The picture (right) of Paul Sagaris was lifted straight from a professor, retouched to make images the satellite floating high above the local conventional picture of California's coastline. The carefully arranged materials roll from the print.





Pig - Mike Dean

This is a composite of four transparencies: a pig's head, a fish on a plate, some chicks and a cat in a glass cupboard.

Old in America have long been researching into the power of visual communication or "perso-communication" as they call it.

Rightly, a medium which is so obviously open to misuse should be approached with care, the possibilities are only as limited as the imagination. It would be interesting to have seen an artist subvert the system by: first one ends, only then will art lead technology, not technology itself.

Machine Dreams can be found at the Photographer's Gallery, 565 Great Newport Street, London WC2E 8JN. 7722 ext Nov 4.



Horse - John Dutton

Accompanied from several transparencies and an etching, each of differing program lines to create a complex montage, attention to detail is shown in the way that even the highlights on the solid objects suggest that all the light has originated from the same source.



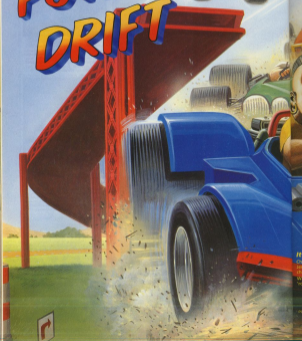
Heat and Shadows - David Hirsch

This artist is known for the way he takes images and distorts them, often by scanning them. Using the Crofield he was able to take two transparencies and then using the gelatin panes to reverse the image and create a different colour.

THE SYSTEMS

Sophisticated computer imaging equipment made all the pictures in the exhibition possible. Artists were offered use of a Crofield Imaginator II, Quantel Graphic Paintbox, and a Sotex Imager System. The Crofield is based on a 386 PC with a colour scanner and an 8000 line per inch high resolution monitor. With a number of transparencies in memory (a 10"x10" will fill approximately 40 million bytes of data) the options exist to cut, paste, rotate and superimpose. A palette of a staggering 6 million colours means that images can be retouched in any colour imaginable. The finished image can be output direct as a 2"x4" transparency. An Imaginator II will let you talk about 100,000 if you're interested. The system is currently in use on Today newspaper and Time magazine.

POWER DRIFT



It's
Over
the
wall
too



ACTIVISION SEGA GAMES PRESENTS

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It's fast... it's furious... it's POWER DRIFT!

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Bank the best. Flip and the wheel spins as you scorch over a roller coaster track and weave gladiator to your opponent!

Roar over mounds of mud, drive through the desert, slip 'n slide on snow-covered tamarac and race your way through the night to face the final lap!

CAREFUL! Power Drift is no easy ride!

If you're heading for a collision, bail into your seat and enjoy those 360 degree spins before you bump back down to earth! Burn some rubber, put your foot to the floor and power back to the winning post!



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INFESTATION



INFESTATION

Are you ready for a new level of realism in computer games? Are you prepared for an atmospheric experience you will never forget? Can you cope with super-fast solid 3D vector graphics? Will you venture into the unknown, alone, and armed only with a single pulse rifle? Can you overcome the IMPERATION?

INFESTATION takes computer games to a new level of realism. It creates a complete environment stunningly rendered in super-fast solid 3D vector graphics. You are completely free to move within the game world, examining and manipulating objects just as you would in a real world. And, as in reality, you are not alone. Only, unlike those on Earth, the other occupants of Infestation's world are not very friendly at all . . .

Your task as Kai Solar, Agent of the Interplanetary Federation, is to travel to Alpha II, investigate and end the alien threat. Your mission will not be an easy one. As well as the mother alien and its eggs, you will have to deal with hostile droids and computer systems, radioactive areas, and things unknown.

INFESTATION is a truly atmospheric experience. Don't play this game when you're alone . . . it may well be your last.

Screen Shots from the Atari ST version AMGA-KITARS BT 02165

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SCREEN TEST

PIC CURVE POWER

The PIC - Predicted Interest Curve - is the most sophisticated reviewing tool around. Here's why...

The curve is divided into six sections, indicating the player's screen time after one minute, one hour, one day, one week, one month, and one year. But the info you need is that just what your interest level will be at any given time (although that's obviously important in itself)...

For example, a high one minute rating means that the game must look terrific and get you all excited from the word go. That means it's probably a good game to show off to the neighbors - after all, they probably aren't going to pay attention for much more than a minute, after which they'll go back to drinking coffee and making such remarks about those awful bottle games the boys play these days!

The minute, hour, and day ratings can tell you a lot about a game too. If there's a dip here, followed by a rise, you've got a game that may take a bit of getting into - not recommended if you like to get down to something quick and easy. Alternatively, the graphics may put you off for a while until the gameplay starts to grip. Check out the PIC comment for more details.

Finally, you've got the month and year ratings. The better a game holds up over the time deserving it is of your hard earned cash.

PIC curve construction takes a lot of playing on the part of ACE reviewers. PIC curve analysis is an art in itself. The reward is knowing just what you're getting when you make the decision to splash out on *Ultimate Wizard*, *Demolition*, or *Final Strike Eagle II* - just one of this month's excellent examples of today's software technology.

PREDICTED INTEREST CURVE



PICs give you more than a rating - they represent the entire life of a game... you see!

Star Trek V - the legend continues on pages 52/53 as the Enterprise boldly goes over the top once again...



DON'T FORGET THE UPDATES!

PIC Center Download is this month's Truly Great Conversion, but then Star Trek V for the Cid isn't something to moan about either. Check out page 100.

THE ACE REVIEWING SYSTEM

THE CURVES

The unique feature to the ACE reviewing system starts the review by reading a game description over a period of time. The curve is accompanied to a comment to explain why it is the shape it is. You can view the PIC Curve Pages used on this page.

Each review also carries special feature boxes that give you details of the game's implementation on a particular machine. These boxes include ratings for...

GRAPHICS

It reports of the game's graphics and the limitations of each implementation etc. essential. It goes through how many games will be shown, how long light time on each implementation, Amiga etc.

AUDIO

It reports, and provides effects for music. A high rating is

possible on even limited hardware like the Spectrum and PC. It also considers short-circuiting etc. severely disallowed.

AI FACTOR

Yes, sometimes you have to let your brain rest. This rating evaluates the rate of mental activity - rate is some people actually enjoy... Note that ACE readers are generally not used to more intelligent than other human beings, so the ratings may be lower than you expect...

PER FACTOR

Basically a measure of mind less applications. Games like *Ultimate Wizard* and *Final Strike* require virtually zero load space but are still reasonably addictive. Other examples come and go because they are designed for instant satisfaction. Games said to have little or no AI are intelligent - they can be fun.

ACE RATINGS

This is not just picked out of the air but is calculated from the area under the PIC Curve. To get a really high rating a game will not only have to be very addictive but stand the test of time as well. Just because a game does not get over 1000 stars does not mean an awful review (meaning 1) - the following is a general guide to what the ratings mean.

1000+ A classic game, recommended without reservation.

800-999 A superb game, but perhaps requiring the computer itself to last into the month and your cash goes.

700-799 Not highly recommended, but probably from a wealth of options for the game that will be worth it.

600-699 The 'bar' zone, where it tends to be very good if you like that sort of thing.

500-599 This will be good things going for it, but the game clearly has some noticeable problems.

400-499 Problems with gameplay and programming make this an inferior game.

300-399 Not only is the game inferior but the design was probably flawed in the first place.

200-299 Things are getting really serious here...

100-199 7000 games coming at us from...

Under 100 Nothing has ever achieved this appalling score 21 times, if anything ever (yes, it would fit in for worst looking it to be).

VERSION NOTES

This covers any problems encountered in operation, such as loading problems etc. If there's no fix for your machine but a version is planned, it'll be covered on an update or order sheet.

THE TEAM

Includes Steve Cohen - one of the original editors of the semi-annual magazine, known for thousands.

Other reviewers include Matt Morgan and Gordon Douglas, both of whom

used to produce the magazine before its demise (magazine but don't think that ACE was written by their father).

Finally **Mike Patterson**, editor of Commodore User, one Britain's most prominent Commodore magazines. What Mike doesn't know about software could be written on a 5.25...

ing that he could actually push a game into beta, but he's not quite a pro for and not you at all.

Other reviewers include Matt Morgan and Gordon Douglas, both of whom

used to produce the magazine before its demise (magazine but don't think that ACE was written by their father).

Finally **Mike Patterson**, editor of Commodore User, one Britain's most prominent Commodore magazines. What Mike doesn't know about software could be written on a 5.25...

We don't review anything until we are 100% certain that we've got it right. We've checked them out thoroughly - now you can too.

Approaching Eris at warp speed.

DAMOCLES is a giant comet hurtling through space on a direct collision course with the planet Eris. Having successfully escaped from the planet Targ in *Mercury*, the player must stop the comet from colliding with the planet in three hours time.

To have played *Mercury* is an advantage as the game play structure is similar, and you can save the items that you collected on Targ and use them in the new game. It is not essential though – as *Damocles* is a self-contained challenge.

The first thing that will strike you when *Damocles* performs its breath-taking opening sequence is the quality of the 3D effects. Paul Winkler has improved on the 3D solid vector technique employed in *Mercury* with greater speed, smoothness, and detail. The excellence of *Damocles* graphics – with its comets, landscapes and architecture provides further evi-



DAMOCLES

Trouble with Novagen comets

dence of David Braben's *Galaxy of Illusions* and Wood claims in last month's *ACE* that there is still a long way to go in 3D on 16-bit computer PCs.

Paul Winkler was one of the people who pushed the limits of 16-bit 3D gaming. *Damocles* will do the same in the 15-bit area – though Novagen regrets that it's not going to be able to implement the game design on 16-bit



See Eris's outer atmosphere.

machines. But news for the loyal army of OSA seeing *Mercury* fans.

Novagen claims that if *Damocles* had a race for the mechanics of flying, it would be the best 16-bit flight simulator ever. When you are flying into one of the Space Centre's on one of the nine planets in orbit around the star Delta it's difficult to dispute the claim. But whether Novagen's boast is true or not doesn't really matter as the main attraction of *Damocles* is in the game challenge itself, rather than in the speed and realism of its 3D graphics engine.

Like *Mercury*, *Damocles* has a large chunk of adventure in it. There is no set way of stopping that comet. There are a number of ways of doing it – some easier than others – even one that enables you to prevent the colli-

sion seconds before it happens.

The similarity with *Mercury* and with adventure games ends in the use of objects. There are dozens of these to find and examined on the nine planets and their 19 moons – and you will need to use a good deal of them if you are to be able to prevent the catastrophe on the beautiful watery planet of Eris.

When an object is picked up it appears in the *Damocles* window in the centre of the ship's control panel. Instructions on how to use it can also be brought up in this panel. To say too much about the combination of objects and how to use them would spoil the game – but as an illustration of the type of objects and their application there is the camera. You can use this fully, taking remote control over it if you so desire. You may want to set up surveillance on one of the moons to watch the progress of the comet. This is possible with the video camera. You may even want to watch the catastrophe taking place if you have failed in your first attempt. This is really done by placing a camera on a nearby planet, or one of Eris's moons.

It is also possible to take remote control of the ship if you wish to watch it performing a landing, firing its lasers at something, or simply flying into a sun set.

Exploration of the buildings is a large part of the gameplay. There are a lot more of these than in *Mercury* and they are far much bigger – many of them with lifts, stairs or corridors, windows and doors.

Some of the more notable buildings are the mid-level banks office, as it lets slowly turn against the back drop of the setting sun, parchment, building, bars, shops and space centres. The really neat thing about the buildings is that you can peer out through them at

PREDICTED INTEREST CURVE



Damocles is an open and easy to get into, but a challenge that you can do in different ways, ignore if you want to, and still enjoy.

ST VERSION

Novagen has stretched the ST to its limits in *Damocles*. The speed of 3D imaging has to be used to its fullest – and without any loss of accuracy in the graphics. The ST has to support powerful matrix math to simulate the comets, movement of the planets, and the 3D world of *Damocles* – all of which it handles admirably. Colours are dramatic and convincing. Good, though sparse, use of sound.

GRAPHICS **B** IN FACTOR **B**
 AUDIO **F** FUN FACTOR **B**

ACE RATING **5.5**

RELEASE BOX

NAME	CD-ROM	SHARE
AREA	CD-ROM	SHARE
EN PC	YES	SHARE



The Redwood building - where you will be briefed by the president.

any time and see the world just as you left it. If you park your ship out side the bar you can see it from the window. The relationships of objects, each other is always accurate - however thick, you manipulate these objects. It is this that makes for a totally believable world. A world that looks the same from whatever angle you explore it. The best direction of this is the ship window. If you go inside the ship will place a table in the air

over you can then come outside of the ship and see that table exactly where you placed it. That may not sound like anything that marvelous - but when you consider that it is all happening in 3D, without any wear of the disk drive, interruption of the screen action, and maintaining the positions of all the other objects on screen relative to the table and everything else in the picture, then you can understand that this is a gameplay system far

more powerful than anything else like it. There isn't really anything like it in fact - save possibly Democles, but this doesn't have the control over objects that is possible in Democles.

Time is very important in Democles. Not just because seconds are ticking away before the comet crashes into Earth, but because time travel, from planet to planet, and around individual planets, is all weighted against the real time that you have to achieve the mission.

Very little is given away at the beginning of the game. You have to discover the secrets and clues as you explore the planets and cities. The cities themselves have connecting road networks and there are land vehicles to use if you so desire. I preferred flying low over the roads, but race fans might fancy a bit of speeding along the alien roads.

To help you unravel the mystery of Democles and stop that comet you have your old friend from Interphase along with you - Benson, the 16th generation PC.

Benson communicates with you through a message panel on the ship control panel, he has stacks of very observations, hints, clues and amusing notes - which help to lighten the slightly lonely, solo world of Democles.

Democles has everything - the thrill of discovery, the fun of exploration, a totally believable world, a tough challenge, and even the odd bit of blasting. It could well become an all time classic, go there in the Premier League with games like Falcon, Commander and Elite.

◆ Eugene Lucy

INTERPHASE

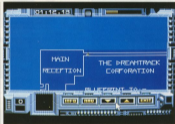
Image Works dream of a game

NEUROMANCER provided the map editor for Interphase. The famous cyberpunk world of Bruce Sterling, created by the cult sci-fi novel, is what Interphase is all about.

The game supports a world where the steered classes have given up on computer games, given birth of the latent theme parks, Acid House (anagrams and lyrics), instead, to the roller coaster rollercoasters of the Dream Tracks and Dream Recording.

The DreamTracks are the play missions of Interphase. Supposedly recorded by the big corporations of the future to keep the masses safely engaged in pointless leisure so that they can be more effectively exploited - it is down to you, Steve, to get and destroy the MasterTrack to end this subliminal thought control.

What this impressive, if unoriginal, game scenario gives rise to is a 3D arcade adventure - a quest, track, and explore challenge on the best of the Silver Fox Democles.



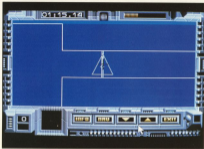
The blue point map of the Dreamtrack Complex.

The advantage Interphase has over these two games is its ability to switch out of 3D mode into a 2D map and control screen - where you are given instructions and informa-

tion on things that you have to seek out and eliminate.

The map and information screens are a delight. You can zoom in and out of the blue

RELEASE BOX		
ATARI ST	02.1990	September
AMIGA	02.1990	July 1990
IBM PC	02.1990	December



→ Docking is on the blue print.

responsibly. Some of them can be taken out with enough laser fire, while others require a missile to be locked onto them before they can be eliminated. You can also dock with certain security devices and alter them from within or simply move them out the way with your tractor beam.

To help you find your way around the computer there is a "Navcom" device to guide you to the object you need to work on. This works by a system of directional arrows as you fly. Two green arrows appear when the item "Navcommed" onto has been reached.

You can fail your mission by running out of energy, or if your partner is caught by a robot or steps onto a high voltage floor. It is therefore crucial to keep a constant check on

PREDICTED INTEREST CURVE



Intercept is tough. A good number of hours, saved games, and work on strategy will be needed to destroy the MasterTrack.

AMIGA VERSION

A great assortment of save games, (save) and focus helps enhance the strange world of Interphase. The nice vector graphics work pretty well and smoothly and combine lots of detail with plenty of animation.

GRAPHICS ■ IQ FACTOR ■
 AUDIO ■ FUN FACTOR ■
ACE RATING 815

print to look at certain objects within the beam track, such as a surveillance camera at a security door – click on the mouse for more information and you are given an animated 3D view of the object with a print-out of information on that object. You need this information if you are to get anywhere in Interphase. The blue print screens also enable you to communicate with your girlfriend who has penetrated the systems, and is attempting to steal the control MasterTrack so that it can be destroyed.

Flight controls are implemented via the mouse and they do take a bit of getting used to. Fly pointing forward or back – and taking



The tunnel access. You must survive this to get into the Dream Track.

your finger on and off the mouse button – you can fly forward, backwards, accelerate, decelerate, bank left, right or stop. The feeling is very much of a flightsim as you explore the mawths of the DreamTrack computer system.

As well as all the consoles that you will have to take out of commission to give your partner room to manoeuvre there are also stacks of ground based and airborne defence craft operating in the computer. These are your

girl's progress and whereabouts using the blue print – so that you can protect her and clear the path for her, and guide her safely to the MasterTrack.

She is carrying a small transmitter which she can use to send messages, but you cannot communicate with her directly and of course, the DreamTrack computer will also be aware of any messages she sends out. It is therefore essential to become quick at carrying out manoeuvres. You have to constantly monitor what is going on and react to it if you are to succeed in your task.

The various objects that protect the DreamTrack computer are excellently drawn, and there is a good one of fun to be had when you first get the game just following them around, dodging missiles at them and working out what they are all for. Hardly anything is there just for show. There are "bonuses" for example at certain junctions that you can manipulate to guide your partner in the right direction. Growing Plants constantly churning



A generator - use it to top up energy.

DAMOCLES VS INTERPHASE

Damocles and Interphase both feature some of the best 3D programming currently available in 16-bit games. They are the new standard, with *Damocles II* and *Interphase* stepping down the pecking order. Both offer an absorbing strategic challenge, both will have rave reviews in just about every magazine you pick up. This used the same and are both on the shelves of your local soft shop around about now. So which one do you spend money on? Best magazines will pop out on this question - raving about both of them, with the implicit suggestion that you should buy them both. This is of course a luxury that few of us could afford, so at AOC we will not conveniently avoid a comparison that we don't really need to be made. We think *Damocles* is the better game for the following reasons. It is more open-ended than *Interphase*. There is no set way of winning - indeed you can still play the game and derive a great deal of enjoyment from it even if you ignore the central hunting towards the planet Eris. It is packed with secrets that you will discover slowly, as you play it over a period of time. *Damocles* is also far easier to get into, but every bit as tough to beat as *Interphase*. The comparisons of the speed of the 3D techniques are not really relevant in this department, whereas the highest possible standard in this department, *Damocles* may be slightly prettier, but this too, is a matter of pure taste. The main reason we put *Damocles* ahead of *Interphase* is because of the quality of the game design - more challenging, more absorbing and ultimately more rewarding.



Security door to next level.

but finds that it is unable to close down, and energy sources that you need to locate to replenish your jet supply.

What is particularly nice about the various structures and defence systems inside the *Damocles* computer is that almost everything has moving parts. The effect is of a factory in full production. The reality of real computers is the complete opposite of this of course, as they are in reality a static electronic world of circuits and chips, but the effect in *Interphase* is totally convincing despite this, a sort of surreal electronic world out of control - which fits exactly with the scenario of the game.

Interphase is a fast and fun-out challenge. You need to think

quickly, and you get a genuine feeling that the computer you are competing against is thinking equally quickly.

Like *Damocles*, *Interphase* has had two years of intensive effort spent on it. Graphics are state of the art 3D and the gameplay and plot have been thoroughly worked through to provide an entertaining, testing challenge that is sure to stack up with *Blon* and *Speedball* as one of those works best titles to date. Highly recommended to gamers who want all of the benefits of serial combat with a cerebral element as well.

■ *Digital Lucy*

SOCCER MATCH

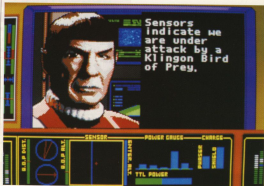
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IMPRESSIONS



STAR TREK

STAR Trek has a chequered past as a computer game, which is odd when you consider how ideally suited the feisty storyline is, and how much scope there is for building gameplay around the Starship Enterprise. Fredrick were responsible for the biggest Trekty cock-up of all with a game that seemed to get lost in a black hole in midweek overnight — emerging about five years too late to universal indifference.

The good news is that Mindscape have finally unlocked the potential of Star Trek with this new game, launched at exactly the same time as Star Trek V goes on general release — uncharacteristically good timing for a new Star Trek computer game.

The game is based closely on the storyline of the film — the renegade Vulcan Spock has taken command of the Enterprise and is steering her on a course through the Great Barrier to the centre of the galaxy. Blattered, and low on energy, Enterprise is pursued by a Klingon Bird of Prey — closing at warp speed and leading its torpedoes.

As Captain Kirk it is your mission from Starfleet to deliver three Ambassadors to a safe planet, interacting with your crew — Scotty, Uhura and the irresistible Spock — you

MINDSCAPE boldly
go where most
softcos cock up...



have to take decisions quickly to complete the mission. Advanced control of the Enterprise is provided with a large, simulator-style manual exploring all of the systems at Captain Kirk's fingertips.

The key controls, requiring careful monitoring, are the weapons systems — Phaser, Photon Torpedoes, and Shield strength. The status of these is represented by bar graphs on the Enterprise main control panel. Each of these has its own targeting system — and this too, needs to be fully understood to deal with the various enemy ships that Enterprise will encounter in its adventure.

Versus engineering displays and 'Threat Available' reports can be checked to make certain of your exact status before taking an action and — if things look really bad — you can rely on Scotty or Spock to appear on the main display in person to point out any dangers or options.

The first problem for Kirk to deal with is to manoeuvre safely to Enterprise through a 'beam lane' closer to the great Barrier — with minimal energy available on board. This is

As you can see, the graphics on the PC version really do the game justice.

RELEASE BOX

JMAY 87	CD-ROM	HAPEY '86
JMAY 87	CD-ROM	HAPEY '86
AMC	74-096	WINDMOT
IBM PC	CD-ROM	WINDMOT

PREDICTED INTEREST CURVE



There is enough in it to keep you coming back for many a light year.

good practice is steering the ship — the 3D effect being limited by a series of concentric circles emerging from the screen, passing dead on over the ship, causing serious damage to Enterprise should you collide with them.

It is not all bad news in the 'Worm Holes' though, as you might spot some Dithium Crystals floating in the void which you can tractor beam aboard to replenish your energy supplies.

PC VERSION

Graphics for the Amiga and CD-i are nice, even VGA is pretty good worth it. The gameplay is the thing, though — well thought-out to provide absorbing and challenging hours of fun. For the most part it should cater for whatever system you have & most for updates — and an entertaining space strategy/simulator for everyone else. The only problem is the sound — but then the PC for you.

GRAPHICS 9 IQ FACTOR 7
 AUDIO 4 FUN FACTOR 9
 ACE RATING 830



Not all of the action takes place aboard this ship, which provides welcome relief from manhandling all of Enterprise's systems. You will in fact find yourself at hand to hand combat with the Klingon Commander Kias, on the island of Sha Ka Ree. Kias is a tough adversary — one of the finest Klingon Commanders — but you must be careful not to kill him, capturing him instead and bringing him aboard the Enterprise to enjoy the 'hospitality of the Starliner'.

The Klingon Bird of Prey is an awesome ship — far larger than the Enterprise and armed to the teeth. One of its richest passengers is to be a 4-wheeled Planet Winfield around the Enterprise — requiring a careful use of Weapons, sensors, and Navigational controls to blow a hole in the DPM to escape. To practice some of the trickier manoeuvres required to beat the Klingon challenge a Mission Simulator is provided.

One of the best aspects of Star Trek V is the feeling of command over the Enterprise that it creates. This is something that the earlier interpretations failed to achieve. It is the



Star Trek V — The plot of the computer game of the movie begins to unfold in glorious technobabble (see *Blah* in this issue).

feels of Ufers, Scotty, and Spock that make the crucial difference — as well as the number of orders you can issue. Scotty, for example, can be ordered to Stand By (Cause covered activity and avoid further external Fire At Will, Arts of Quantum Physics, Rate or Lower Shields, Arts Photon Torpedoes, Damage Control, Effect Immediate Repair) or Repeat Last Statement.

A similar level of sophistication in commands is possible with other key staff. You



'We've got good capt'n — the engine's awfully like a monkey...!' Classic Tardis stuff as Scotty gets down to work.

really feel as though you were in charge, with the safety of the universe resting on your shoulders.

Gradually Star Trek V is superb. From the rolling into screen with its pretty static screens that set the scene — adventure style — right through to the attention is the attention is the attention is a high standard is maintained.

The film may not have won major accolades from the film critics but that isn't matter a jot to computer-owning 'trekkers' — as this is easily the best interpretation of Star Trek yet. Misscage have successfully gone where plenty of other software houses have regrettably gone — and emerged without Klingon egg on their faces.

By Eugene Lacey

'It's for protest...' Top, it's Star Trek command on the line with your orders.

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THE

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UNTOUCHABLES



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Sinclair User



"An absolute corker of a game... as smooth and polished as you can get, animation is top notch... a brilliant film conversion"
Your Sinclair



TAKE ON THE MOB



THE UNTOUCHABLES

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SOUTH

BASED on a series of Belgian comic books entitled Les Troupes Bleues, North & South is an interpretation of the American Civil War. The choice to play either Yankees or Confederates is yours, with the battle taking place during one of the four years of the war at one of three levels of difficulty.

However it becomes obvious from the cut set that this isn't a straightforward hexagons and squares affair... It adds animated ground rider in the sky (ugh!) to the title fare, and being able to 'fold' the option screen photographs but looks with your pointer for a 'ugh' is indicative of the general nature of the game, in translating the comic to computer, Infogrames has managed to capture the humor - and thrown in an extra marketing feature for good measure... namely an abundance of guffaw-inducing sound effects.

Troop movement and most of the strategic decisions take place on a single screen map of relevant American states, with the objective of winning the opposition from sight. Your priority is to occupy enough territory to establish a rail supply line and subsequently fill your safe and in turn buy new troops. Occupation of territory inhibited by enemy troops means war, a brief animated sequence of the side firing a shot into the ranks of the other is shown and the fighting commences.

Gun-toting foot soldiers, cannon-bearing cavalry companies with bugle blare and cannons are at your disposal, well controlled with train-fared when appropriate. Boulder, trees, canyons and rivers abound to trap formations, but can also be used to an advantage. Out of all the North & South's arcade games, the

battle sequence is the most amusing - which is fortunate as it's played the most often.

Less interesting though is the footcandle scrolling race to capture a fort when you invade a state occupied by an enemy flag. A mission of Yankee Goodie plays as you run, with each state corresponding to your foot-steps, avoiding obstacles and explosives and punning soldiers in the order of the day, with a time limit represented by a 'banging' foot level against the clock tick tock. The process of hijacking an enemy train after occupying an area containing a supply line is much the same, only you perform death-defying leaps from cartage to cartage in an attempt to reach the right.

Now all this sounds like gallons of fun - and it is. At least it is until the jobs stop being funny and it becomes apparent that there's not much room for strategic play - even when playing an strategic game the arcade sequences are played for you. The three levels of computer controlled opponent represent a challenge, sure, but certainly not in the long term. Catastrophes, such as the Indians and Mexicans occasionally taking offense to military presence, claims (because troop movement for a month) and supply ships to tropicals using ferries are all very well, but none of these

aspects makes up for the small play area and limited gameplay.

North & South is rich in visual and aural quality. A cartoonish feel is prevalent throughout, with select screens appearing in panels. But there's just not enough flexibility for game-play - playing area limited!

■ Brian Reynolds

AMIGA VERSION

Expansive presentation generates a subtle 3D-like look throughout. Stylish visuals combined with plenty of suitable sounds and images provide a treat for the eyes and ears, but this is inadequate compensation for the game's limitations. The sea supply line to hold 5000 units for the day... just.

GRAPHICS 10 FACTOR 10
AUDIO 10 FACTOR 10

AGE RATING 7-11

PREDICTED INTEREST CURVE



Limited play area restricts lasting interest of an otherwise slick, slickly designed program.

RELEASE BOX

AMIGA BT	CD-ROM	CD-ROM
AMIGA	CD-ROM	SEMI-CD
IBM PC	1.44	1.44

Blood Money



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ST41

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AMIG
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NINJA WARRIORS

VIRGIN try some metallic espionage...

WHEN I mention the name *Ninja Warriors* to you, your first reaction is bound to be "Oh, wasn't that the scrolling beat-'em-up game that used a three-screen system under the name 'Rei' or well, *Ninja Warriors* isn't nearly in every arcade across the globe. As a thing it was, and a conversion it is.

The world is, as usual, in distress. We see dictators has, as usual, overthrown the system, and everywhere, as usual, less part. The country's only chance is to somehow kill the dictator. But - as usual - no-one wants to draw the short straw. All the feuded men in the land is after what by one of the dictator's foul mutated creatures, or something in fear. Who can take us now?

In essential robotic *Ninja Warriors*, that's who. Nobody knows how they came about, or what their real purpose is, but one thing's for sure, they're the only one's who can save the life.

As a game, *Ninja Warriors* is pretty simple. You are one of the robotic warriors, at first armed with a limited supply of shuriken, who has to travel from left to right across six long scrolling levels before you reach the boss, whose threat you have to kill. Along the way you come across loads of different enemies, including hunchbacks who cock a mean punch, fire-breathers with the power to disappear and appear at will and a massive demonic tank, to name but a few.

The graphics are arcade perfect, and for a game of its size, that took some clever programming (see box).

As a beat-'em-up, it's great. There's lots of variety both in the backgrounds and enemies, so it takes a while to get bored, and it's learnable, meaning you can get a little further every time.

A fine arcade version from the people that brought you *Silvermist* and *Centurion Circus*. I can't wait to see *St. Dragon*.

• Tony Olsen

ST VERSION

Started with no graphics, complete with a great soundtrack made on analogue gear, and that mixed with the fun you'll have playing it makes it a true winner.

GRAPHICS: 5 HD FACTOR: 4
 AGEED: 7 FHM FACTOR: 6

AGE RATING: GGG

CGA VERSION

The graphics and sound aren't as good as the ST version, and the CGA hardware system has been dropped, but it's a great looking game and a lot of fun to play.

GRAPHICS: 7 HD FACTOR: 4
 AGEED: 6 FHM FACTOR: 7

AGE RATING: GGG

RELEASE BOX

ATARI ST	£14.99	December '93
AMIGA	£14.99	December '93
SPECTRUM	£14.99 + £14.99	December '93
ANTRAD	£14.99 + £14.99	December '93
CD-ROM	£14.99 + £14.99	December '93

CODING CHALLENGE

Sales Curve, being the perfectionists they are, were hit with a pretty tough obstacle when they started to program the graphics for *Ninja Warriors*. There were too many of them. The backgrounds, for example, never repeats, so they couldn't block it out like you can with most games, and to just place it in random memory took too much memory, so this is what they did. By using a clever form of backdoor, the game can load in areas of backgrounds and enemy sprites as it needs them, essentially making the disk drive a limited access ROM.

"We have used a similar method before on *Silvermist*", explains Don Manderson from *Sales Curve*. "On the Amiga version, the game actually loads in the end sequence as you are flying through the last level. Of course, *Ninja Warriors* is a much improved version of that, and *St. Dragon* will be a much more improved version."

With so much extra graphic memory, *Sales Curve* have not only been able to take all the backgrounds directly from the cart-rop, and scale them down to Amiga640 resolution, they've also been able to take all the sprites, complete with all frames of animation intact, a feat never before accomplished. What you end up with is a cart-rop quality looking game.

PREDICTED INTEREST CURVE



The graphics of the ST version plus the slightly longer loading level makes it just a touch longer (and better) than the CGA version.



OMNICRON CONSPIRACY

IMAGEWORKS conspire to bring US humour to British adventurers...

THERE seems to be a trend in the computer world at the moment for cheap adult adventures in which the emphasis is clearly on light-hearted gameplay and offbeat humour. Some of us have probably explored this genre to a greater extent than most adult games teams, with titles like *Ultima* and *Lara*.

Now First Star Software have made a contribution with *Omnicron Conspiracy*. You take on the persona of Ace Powers, a star police captain who has been assigned the task of investigating an intergalactic drug ring. You begin aboard your ship, where your PR (Personal Assistant) Link informs you that your presence is desired on Coon by the planet's chief of police.

After arriving at Coon you are recruited by the rather short-tempered Lieutenant Dink to the hyperfit which takes you to the Chief's office. Once there you are given the full news. The previous report investigating the red drug ring has gone missing. You must pick up the trail and hunt the dealers. From here on it's up to you to follow up on the clues that are literally strewn in your path.

Like the *Servus* adventures, *Omnicron Conspiracy* is fully animated. Movement is achieved by using either joystick or keyboard to get your character from room to room. Unlike *Servus*'s staff, however, there is no limit on the number of decisions you can make by selecting options from a menu. Move into an object or



Ace stands on the bridge of the Falcon with his trusty P.A.L. and his plasma cannon locked safely away in his locker.

character, press Enter, and a menu appears with two or three possible courses of action, which change depending on your situation. One of the most useful options is *CONVERSE*, which allows you to gain useful items from anyone you might encounter. You have six pockets which can be used for storing collected items, although your *AGNUS* Automatic Laser System with Energy Light (Leah) should permanently occupy one of these if you want to last long. Activating any of the six pockets again calls up a menu of options.

Finding items for most of the objects is not too difficult. There are also one or two in there that are just for fun. Try peering into the CO shop on Coon and inserting a disk into the CO display. By far the most useful item is your *Almond*. This can be set to either stay or fall (just like the old Star Trek plover).

Eliminating other characters is simply a matter of facing them and hitting the space bar and they are instantly fracted. Of course there is also the great danger that you will meet with much the same treatment. I was most affric-



Not lots of dead green men in the hallway... could've been some party!

scapes, or wandering into a bar, I was accosted by some ugly green guy whose idea of a friendly greeting was a few laser shots to the belly. Fortunately, if such a disaster should occur, your PAL, droid can beam you back to the ship and have you reassembled by the alien (and following a successful mission by I marched straight back to the bar and had the pig before he could get a word in edgewise. Very satisfying indeed!

You should actually find yourself solving the first part of the game quite easily, but the thing that is only the tip of the iceberg. There are, in fact, two further mysteries to be solved before you have properly completed the game.

I quite liked *Dead Green's* Conspiracy. The very American humor does grate from time to time, but on the whole the game is good fun. The graphical interface that has been used in favor of first entry is going to make the game accessible to the sort of people who otherwise wouldn't touch it with a barge pole. The graphics and animation actually have a slight edge on the Genix games, although the sound is severely restricted. This is certainly not going to be everybody's cup of tea, but if you're not turned off by software that has a very American feel to it, then it should be worth a look.

—Lawrence Scotland

PC VERSION

The animation and graphics have a lot of oomph to them and give the game a very slick feel. Based on a fairly limited set of video cards to accept from PC games, it stays well though and should appeal to more people than a lot of alternatives.

GRAPHICS IQ FACTOR
AUDIO FUN FACTOR

AGE RATING 700

RELEASE BOX

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PREDICTED INTEREST CURVE



Should provide reasonably challenging entertainment for some time.

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DOUBLE DRAGON II

AFTER the truly appalling home computer version of Double Dragon, it seemed only right for Virgin to knock the idea of the release on the head. Sadly though it was a case of an already bought ticket, so here it is.

Once more the Double Dragon duo set out to right wrongs and rescue people by using their immense karate skills to cause as much damage as possible, usually to the street gangs. At their disposal they have flying kicks, a battery of punches and a rather lovely kick to which leaves the recipient with their eyes bulging if you get my meaning. In order to preserve their livelihood and their manhood on the coast may be, some members of the gangs have armed themselves with daggers, chains and a couple of guns. Luckily for the Dragon brothers, it's possible for them to pick up weapons dropped by fallen opponents and use them instead of punches. If anything the punch is the most effective move, but the ability to use other weapons helps break the monotony.

Another feature which helps to lighten the game is a little routine which allows you to give your man partner a kicking. Unlike countless iterations of the Dragon brothers wander on by the screen from time to time to confuse matters, often resulting in the wrong player being on the end of a right-braining.

Each level is a traditional left to right corridor with a large end of level bad guy in some cases. Bad guys doing their best to reduce you and your pal to pulp. If you should win, the drive wheels and it's on to the next level, with a very similar selection of badies, very similar indeed.

The differences between Double Dragon and its sequel in the arcades were only minor, a few backdrops, a few sprites, and the change

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tronic game that's
twice as hard

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which had to take place on the computer versions needed to be enormous. Thankfully Virgin realised the potential of this game for a home market and appear to have pulled out of

the deep. The graphics have been greatly improved - now larger, better defined, and smoother. When there are a lot of characters on the screen the action hardly slows, but it's the action itself that proves to be one of the falling points.

An arcade machine has obvious advantages over a home computer, therefore games which appear in your local arcade are going to be head and shoulders above any conversions. In the case of Double Dragon II the arcade game featured very smooth moving sprites, complex animation routines, and more colour to handle the 16-bit versions on the other hand have had to have the colour reduced, some of the graphics shrunk, and fails to play as fast as the original, losing most of the frantic feel which made the arcade machine such a hit. It's in cases like this that a game is not so much a conversion, more of a re-write.

People who are not familiar with the arcade version should give it a look as it provides lots and lots of indistinguishable head-on action with a good two player mode. Hard core fans of the career are unlikely to be impressed though.

• Matt Paterson

AMIGA VERSION

The most noticeable fact is the use of the full colour facility in most areas. This helps to provide a more arcade like feel. Unfortunately due to the lack of a real perspective effect on the backdrops, the effect is somewhat lost. Unlike the Amiga and ST version, the screen only scrolls left.

GRAPHICS	7	IS FACTOR	5
SOUND	6	PLAY FACTOR	7
AGE RATING T30			

ST VERSION

Out of the two versions I've seen the ST claim to be the closest to the original. The graphics are sharp and brightly coloured, though the backdrops have changed and have a nice forced perspective look to them. A game that is greatly enhanced by the two player mode.

GRAPHICS	7	IS FACTOR	5
SOUND	6	PLAY FACTOR	7
AGE RATING T30			

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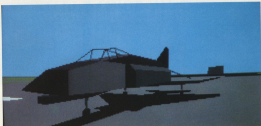
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Outside view of jet fighter as it sits on the runway. You can take an outside view of any stage of the action.

BOMBER

Activision drop a bombshell on the flight-sim scene



Aerial refueling has to be mastered to complete the more difficult missions.

If fourteen of the best military aircraft from around the world - including an F35 Falcon, F14 Tomcat, Mig-29, Saab A37, Mirage 2000 and F15E Strike Eagle - in one sim sounds too good to be believed, then you haven't seen Activision's *Fighter Bomber* yet.

All of the fourteen planes are shown in side view at the selection panel. A 3D view of your chosen plane can be selected, which enables you to view it from all angles as it forms centre in a window of the selection screen. You can also flick through the wide range of armaments that are available - and there, too, look scrupulously in every detail. There is a price to be paid for these meticulous game options though - you lose some of the detailed flight controls you get in mainstream sims, of the Spectrum variety. But who cares about things like Cockpit Air Pressure, Altitude to the nearest millimeter, or Extended Time of Arrival at the target? You get them right, you don't get right,

you get lost right. *Fighter Bomber* delivers these three key ingredients in no less than six very different missions of progressive difficulty.

The missions are divided into four categories: Covert, Tactical, Strategic and Offensive. After a brief jaunt around Mount Rushmore and have a look at some scenery, you soon tangle after your first mission - Operation Sleeper. The briefing screen informs you that a group of terrorists are holed up in a mountain valley - 50 km south east of an air-force base. Your mission is to fly in low and take out the terrorists with an "appropriate weapon".

Before setting out on a mission you have the option to look at a video recording of a reconnaissance mission. This is a first for flight games, and a most useful feature. Study every detail of the map as it will help you remember what the target area looks like. In the case of



You need a good iron stomach to make this call on an enemy base.

the terrorists, you can get in really close and see their tents and ammo revelling at the foot of a mountain range, sitting back and waiting to take the heat of your F14's cannon or Maverick missiles.

The details of each mission are only revealed at the briefings, though the objectives are listed at the in manual, which lets them in true fighter pilot language with names like "Doozerchucker", "Sam Smasher", "Big Bird" and "Molestrangler".

Although the missions start off easily enough - with an advanced fighter bomber taking out a small terrorist cell - they quickly get a lot more difficult. You come up against real enemies with jet fighters of their own. Careful consideration must be given to fuel limitations, refueling in mid air, and weapon selection - which all need to be mastered if you are to complete the more difficult missions in the 'Strategic' and 'Offensive' categories.



Enemy aircraft in view and just about to be blasted with Maverick's missiles.

But Vector Graphics has included a device to keep even the fastest computer Aol's satisfied: a mission design facility.

Another highlight of this excellent flight game is the design features, enabling you to create and save your own missions every bit as complex as the richest pre-designed missions that come with the game. Everything can be set in, even the mission briefing.

Flight controls are simple - but responsive and covering enough to let you lose your tail in the game. What's in the air you can choose from several different views, including a view from the Cockpit, Texas, view from enemy aircraft and view your own plane. The view your own plane option is particularly nice - to take your tail-completed and the target reduced to its much smaller, just sit back and watch the show.

The aerial dog fights are competent, but lack the maneuverability and sophistication of *Falcon*. But this does not matter as the dog-fighting is not the be all and end of all of the game anyway - it's a mere part of the mission, and the game is, entirely, has entertainment and playability value in abundance.

A thorough manual provides all you need to know about the various aircraft featured in the game. Great detail, rather than page after

page of unnecessary description, and a quick and easy guide to get you into the action, rather than putting you to sleep before you have your first go.

Fighter Bomber seems certain to elevate Vector Graphics to the big league of games development. They spent a long time on this one - and it certainly shows. The game gets the balance just right between convincing simulation and entertaining game. Highly recommended.

• Eugene Lacey

PC VERSION

The 3D graphics are totally convincing - even when the plane banks and spins out of control. For a PC it also moves pretty pretty, depending on a large extent on the power of your monitor. But the design of *Fighter Bomber* is so strong that it should work well on most machines - including the Spectrum and C64. Sound lets it down a bit - as it's somewhat after human sounds - but like a wisp with a nice throat. And then that's the PC for you.

GRAPHICS 9 10 FACTOR 10
SOUND 7 10 FACTOR 10

ACE RATING 9.5

RELEASE BOX

ATARI ST	CD ROM	MAY 1997
AMIGA	CD ROM	MAY 1997
SPECTRUM	CD ROM	MAY 1997
WIN95/98	CD ROM	DECEMBER
DATEX	CD ROM	MAY 1997
IBM PC	CD ROM	OCT NOV

PREDICTED INTEREST CURVE



The predicted interest curve will keep you busy for months - the design your own features will keep you busy for years. Highly SGT



Fighter Bomber - more of a game than a straight simulation.

STORMLORD



Free the imprisoned folk of the Folk by the sword. They are obliterated by an evil Queen.

HEWSON

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Stormlord is a fast-paced action game set in a dark, cavernous world. The player controls a warrior who must free the imprisoned folk of the Folk by the sword. The warrior is obliterated by an evil Queen. The game features a variety of weapons and armor, and a challenging boss fight. The game is available on Commodore, Amiga, and Atari ST.

XENOPHOBE



In two-player mode, you can choose any one of nine characters and face the might of the evil Xenos aliens. As you can see, the display area isn't large.

A Xenophobe, just in case you didn't know, is someone who has a hatred of foreigners. In the case of this game, it's someone who gets the wildest every time they come across an alien. And who wouldn't? Pull the trigger first and attempt the alien traps later in a mode that's subtitled more a pioneering space combat.

Xenophobe is also a fairly mediocre Betty Midway clone of the same name, now a couple of years old and at its best with more than one player. It depicts a future Earth of war with fast wild mysterious waves of hijacked molecules known, appropriately enough, as Xenos, which invaded the Solar System. A cynical space

sternary called Schizo is sent to investigate Space Station Zero-One Five, now occupied by things from another world.

Basically, this is a one- or two-player game which involves you choosing one of nine crew members and maintaining on the space river fleet of your choice ready to take down bug-eyed monster ass. There are plenty of different aliens, including poisonous pods, jelly critters and gantling tentacles — but in practice they're not significantly different.

You can also pick up plenty of weapons, including a pretty handy laser pistol (just about the most satisfying), bombs, lightning rifle and — the breaker's favorite — a phaser. If you drop your weapon, another one will be left by a droid, but in the meantime you can engage in some good old-fashioned fisticuffs.

There are three outcomes of all this alien beating. If you let the bad guys overrun the base, it self-destructs after you've returned to the mothership. Alternatively, you can enter a "fast retreat" to prevent it from being overrun by Xenos. Finally, clear the base of ALP (a percentage of aliens remaining is occasionally shown on the walls behind you) and you can cut off to the next. This means more multi-tasking, which can be a pain if you want to get

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kill all known
ALFs — DEAD.

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CGA VERSION

The graphics and sound do nothing to compensate for the tedium of a slow loader and bad gameplay. Ten and is a lot to pay for a brilliant soundtrack tape and a dull game, and even fans of the genre should be wary of this conversion.

GRAPHICS	5	IS FACTOR	5
SOUND	5	FUN FACTOR	3

AGE RATING 5/10

straight back into the action.

There are several things wrong with Xenophobe, not least of which is the multi-task. It's bad enough having to reload a disk to reset the option number of players; music/sound effects starting levels, so there isn't much hope for the cassette version. Another niggles is the one-player mode — you get about a third of the screen to play in, whilst the word "Xenophobe" bounces around and flashes annoyingly beneath you.

The worst aspect, though, is the monotony. Walking from room to room, room blasting aliens, picking up discarded hardware and blasting those aliens becomes very tedious, unless there's very little inter-level variety. However, before you go thinking this is a complete waste of time, one thing has to be said in its favour: the free music cassette that

comes with the package is excellent — one of the best you'll find. It's only the same could be said for the game.

• Gordon Houghton

ST VERSION

Better performance than the CGA version. Graphics and sound are both reasonably slick, although the machine is not really stretched in either department. Playability, however, remains a problem.

GRAPHICS	6	IS FACTOR	6
SOUND	6	FUN FACTOR	3

AGE RATING 5/10

PREDICTED INTEREST CURVE



Once you start working out what to do, it's good fun for a while, but even with two players it's soon back to boredom.



Many hands make light work, and a couple of collaborators made their camp of the approach. If you've got a friend who's never been before, this is by the best way to play Xenophobe.

STORMLORD



When Eagles Dare... Stormlord outgives a quick hit from Super! Best Deal!

It has been a long time since I have come across a game that has got it right in just about every department. So very often development teams spend a long time getting graphics and sound down to a tee and then disappoint us with the gameplay. Alas, Stormlord is no exception. Stormlord is a very good game, but the visuals let it down in a big way.

The first impression you receive from Stormlord is one of graphical excellence. A pretty title screen leads you on to a dark and mysterious two-dimensional landscape full of superbly animated creatures. Then when the

AMIGA VERSION

Great graphics, great sound, and great gameplay. It's all so easy to do! Usually under one the Amiga in comparison to 16-bit games, but Stormlord has definitely gone to a lot of trouble to ensure that Stormlord really uses all of the advanced features of the machine, making this version look like a completely new game.

GRAPHICS **B** 3D FACTOR **B**
 AUDIO **B** PGM FACTOR **B**
 AGE RATING **BB**

PREDICTED INTEREST CURVE



A very good game, but the challenge won't last for long.

Hewson is set to take 16-bit games by storm

But the merits of Stormlord do not stop here by any means. There is actually a very playable and addictive game behind all the effects. As a measure of Stormlord's excellence, it took a lot of willpower for me to drag myself away from the machine to write this review. Often, I'm only too happy to head for the nearest word processor.

Raffaella Casca's original version of the game was first seen in May on 16-bit formats, and was well-received at the time. It is nice to see that, rather than producing mediocre 16-bit conversions and riding on the success of the 16-bit programs, Hewson have gone to the trouble to ensure that the advanced features of 16-bit machines are used to the full.

The scenario involves the rescue of the imprisoned fairy folk and the subsequent delivery of the land from the rule of the evil queen. If that sounds a little less than scary, Stormlord has its fair share of monster mashing for those who enjoy that sort of thing.

The play the Stormlord of the title, a very Nordic-looking type with tall beard and flowing cape. Quick presses of the fire button will have him throw bombs. These are not too powerful, so some creatures may need several hits to destroy them. Hold the fire button for slightly longer and the Stormlord fires, causing it a manner similar to the knight in Chess and Sub-

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great soundtrack reaches your ears you know you're in for an audio-visual treat.

That last alone would probably be enough to ensure that this title sells fairly well, especially since many reviewers can easily be won over by a few pretty pics and tuneful ditties.

! The uncut feisty version is well suitable if you can live with sound effects on.



ins. These are far more effective, but can't be fired quite as frequently.

Each of the fairies is trapped in a bubble and all you need to do is to touch this to release them. Unfortunately there are various hazards to be overcome in order to reach the fairies. These include collapsing platforms, lava firebars, giant worms, and an assortment of other deadly creatures. Most are fairly easy to dispatch provided you are in the right place at the right time.

Although making time-based decisions is a major part of the game, there is another aspect which must be considered if you are to make any progress. This involves the various objects which can be found lying around. You must find out through trial and error which object you need to be carrying at which time. This inevitably costs a few lives but, once you have discovered what you need to be carrying and when, it is simply a matter of practicing till you get the timing and technique right.

One very nice feature in the game is the way you can travel quickly between distant locations. We've all seen losing old transporter pads before, but how's this for originality. Step on one of the stone blocks scattered throughout the level and a giant eagle, Royal Owl, will swoop down and carry you off to another block located elsewhere. It looks very impressive, and really shows off the smooth and fast horizontal scrolling.

If you do manage to rescue all the fairies in a level before your time limit runs all ways out so that you are allowed to play a sub-game. In this the fairies all fly above you and you must try and blow them all down to make them fall in love (GAAAA). If you manage to hit a



Remember to avoid the hazards, the falling lava and release the Royal Fairy, but be fast! Better the skills of their wizard's best! (In this it's games!)

fairy with a kiss she will give a tear for you to collect. Collect ten tears before your time or lives run out and you are awarded an extra life.

This is actually not so easy as it sounds since the fairies move quite rapidly and the tears often disappear before you manage to reach them. Still, it does provide an interlude between the main levels which adds a bit more interest to the game.

The graphics are absolutely brilliant and really can't be faulted in any respect. The quality of both the animation and the scrolling has

to be seen to be believed. The soundtrack is also one of the best I have heard for a while, but even if you do get tired of it you can replace it with music imitating sound effects.

There are six levels to complete in the game. You will find the first couple of levels reasonably easy, but I suspect that later levels might prove frustratingly difficult. However, have certainly lived up to their reputation for excellence with this title, all I can say in conclusion is: buy it — you won't be disappointed.

— Lawrence Graham

CTW Survey '89 CTW Survey

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Consumer Magazines Read By Trade

1. ACE
- PGW
3. Games Machine
4. Crash
5. Zzap
6. C+VG
7. Commodore User
8. Gameweek (Combined with Pop mid-Feb)
- Sinclair User
10. Your Sinclair.

Magazines Aiding Stocking Decisions

1. ACE
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DAY OF THE PHAROAH

STRATEGY /Management games were at one popular project or early micro, because they were easy to implement, and did not heavily rely on complicated graphics and sound. They usually had very broad, unimaginative games like Kingdom, Dictator, or Millions, and put you into the sort of position where you had to make important day-to-day decisions in order to retain, or increase your current status.

The games progressed as a series of turns, each of which represented a period of time, like a day, week, or month. On each turn you had to make a number of decisions related to various aspects of your position. These might be financial or business decisions, or socially affairs of state. At any rate your success or otherwise depended on how well you made these vital choices. Day of the Pharaoh's turns are firmly in the Management/Strategy genre. Unlike those simple, early games, however, it offers a lot more.

Things are going badly early in Egypt. The old Pharaoh has gone and snuffed it leaving a lot of really power-hungry leaders ready to also into his shoes. The horrible lot are being led on by the evil god Seth, who orders them to kill off all of the Pharaoh's dependents, in return for attack, they will inherit the throne.

You happen to be one of the rightful heirs to the throne, but, unlike your unlucky relatives, you are saved from drowning in the Nile by the Sun God Anubis. You grow up as a prince amongst peasants, unaware of your true destiny until one night the god Osiris (yeah, there's a lot of these guys) appears to you in a dream and leaves you with silver and a single merchant ship. Your task is to be successful enough as a merchant trader to rise through the Egyptian social ranks and eventually seize the throne.

The major part of the game is trading. So do this you must travel the Nile to reach various towns. This is where the first of several subgames comes in. Once you have selected

Take a quick trip
down the Nile,
courtesy of
Rainbow Arts.



Oh wow, things have gone badly wrong, and you're off to meet Seth in person.

your destination, a view of the grow of your ship appears floating forward through the water. You must now steer it through the rocks that come towards you with alarming rapidity. Hit too many rocks and you'll lose half your cargo - not very helpful.

You may also have to deal with thieving phoenicians (or "phoenicians" as the programmers spell it). These nasty lighters sail your ship after a bit of successful trading and the only way to stop them is by whisking them over the head with one of the ships oars, which takes a bit of mauling.

Once you have built up a good stock of commodities you can engage in a some more prestigious activities. These include honouring one of the gods, or taking a wife, both of which will require you to have fairly substantial offerings to hand. In the later stages of the game you can also indulge in a little architecture, although you really will have to be a bigwig before this is possible.

If sensible trading is too slow for you it is also possible to try the occasional wager on a camel race. Beware though, we are talking big stakes here - nobody in these parts wagers anything less than a whole payload of cargo.

Even if you are trading fairly well, not everything is all sunshine and roses - you will inevitably have to deal with the occasional conflict. If you are to cope with these effectively you must have a good line up of war chariots. Each conflict involves another subgame in which you control a character and an accom-

panying archer. Your aim is to kill as many of the enemy as possible without being hit yourself. Like the phoenician subgame, this takes a little while to get used to.

Day of the Pharaoh is an unusual combination of simple strategy/management and more involved strategy/management type gameplay. Graphically, the whole thing is up to Rainbow Arts usual degree of excellence. Music and messages are presented on screens by taking pieces of copyart, or scrolls. Sound is limited to the occasional loud effect, although what there is has been done quite well.

One very nice feature is that you can freely swap between the mouse, keyboard, and joystick at any stage of the game. This turns out to be very useful indeed (because you use the mouse while you are selecting from menus, then change to the joystick for action sequences). Rainbow Arts have obviously gone to a lot of time and trouble to make Day of the Pharaoh as appealing as possible while retaining as many of the qualities of those old strategy games as they could. The resulting game, however, doesn't quite hang together. The individual elements are all very nice, but as a whole I don't think it merits enough here to keep your interest for long.

■ Laurence Scott

AMIGA VERSION

Day of the Pharaoh looks quite easy on the Amiga, although it obviously isn't matching the machine that much. It won't be surprised if the game looks and plays exactly the same on the SE. If you are a fanatical workaholic addict, then this game will be nothing for you whatsoever. Those of you who enjoy getting the train in gear have time to the night to adjust to take a look though.

GRAPHICS 7 HD FACTOR 7

SOUND 4 FUN FACTOR 6

AGE RATING GGG

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PREDICTED INTEREST CURVE



It will take you at least a day to get into this one properly. I doubt if you'll get to playing it much after a couple of months though.

A TITANIUM BLADE A HEART OF STEEL

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DOGS OF WAR

Mercenary Elite go to war again...



Ready to select weapons for yet another bloody campaign

It seems to me that Elite's most successful titles have always been those that are the least complex and rely most on addictive gameplay. *Robotnik 3D*, *Demigore*, *Bombjack* (I Ghosts and Goblins - remember those?) The one thing that characterized them all was that they were games you would quite happily come back to time and time again, but they didn't necessarily have either graphics or sound that compared with some of the other top titles around of the time.

The firms thing is that they didn't really want lots of busy bits. The actual design of each game was good enough to carry it alone. Add larger, more colourful sprites and more complex sound, and you would probably end up with a slower, less playable, and ultimately less appealing game.

Another title that falls into this category is *Kan Wars*. The visual figures running around bring dots and life circles at each other. It doesn't exactly sound like a winner does it? But it was actually one hell of a chart-topping success. It was also another one of

ATARI ST VERSION

There's not much a lot between this and the Amiga version, it's one of those games that has been developed across both machines in an identical fashion. See the Amiga file for comments.

GRAPHICS IQ FACTOR
 AUDIO FUN FACTOR

ACE RATING 800

AMIGA VERSION

Graphics are an improvement on those in the 15-bit version of *Kan Wars*, and there is a less-often-mentioned by Dave Matthews. Probably why this is not up to their standards, but if you have someone else to hand for a freeware game, that it might be worth taking a look.

GRAPHICS IQ FACTOR
 AUDIO FUN FACTOR

ACE RATING 650

those games that was perfect as it was. So what if it didn't have the greatest graphics or sound of the century, it was still a very enjoyable, and above all, addictive game.

What Elite have gone and done now is enlisted the master of *Kan Wars* clones, Steve Kit, to produce a game about health or *Kan Wars* clone. You are a mercenary trying to make your fortune by accepting contracts from various organisations and individuals. These include either the recovery of stolen objects or kidnapped persons, or the assassination of unwanted ones.

You begin with a small amount of capital and once you have accepted a mission you must use this to buy any weapons and ammunition you need. This is done by placing a cursor over the images of the items you wish to acquire. The cost of the item is deducted automatically from your balance. This is fine to begin with - the ability to take your freemove should add some extra interest in a rather lackluster theme. Unfortunately the implementation of this feature leaves a lot to be desired. If you want more than one quantity of a particular item you have to hold the fire button down until you have as many as you require. When you are stocking up on ammunition this becomes very tedious.

The other problem is that you have to go through the rigmarole at the start of each mission, even if you want exactly the same combination of weapons. It would have been nice to have the option of saving favourite weapons combinations which could be selected instantly instead of having to reselect the selection from scratch.

When you do actually get into the game itself, you should survive just long enough to realise that it looks very much like *Kan Wars*, but plays nothing like it. Although the objectives and the way that you play the game are largely the same, *Dogs of War* just doesn't play as well. The game actually relies on the effective use of a combination of weapons to



It's hardly 'bridge over the river Kwan'

PREDICTED INTEREST CURVE



It looks like it might be a winner at first, but it doesn't have the lasting appeal of *Kan Wars*.

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AMIGA	CLASS	MARKET

deal with different sections of the game, while an AMC might be superbly useful in the opening stages of each game, it is less than useful when you are confronted by a couple of huge armoured vehicles.

The way that you actually swap the weapon in use is by tapping the left side of the keyboard. This cycles through the weapons you possess, it theory this is fine, but in practice it doesn't work very well. If you have, say, a machine gun for slaughtering ordinary troops, a handful of grenades to clear behind walls, and a rocket launcher for putting armoured vehicles out of action, you may need a couple of key presses before you get exactly what you want. By the time you have the correct weapon called up and fired you have been shot at to the four winds.

The pace of the game is, as you'd expect, the opposite as strong that even without the awkward weapon swapping you are going to have a hard time surviving. I suspect that the game will actually prove a lot more playable if you use the simultaneous two-player option. As far as solo play is concerned, be prepared for many frustrating hours trying to last longer than five minutes.

I can see what Elite are trying to do here, and in part I think this is a good effort. The choice of missions is a good idea, although to be honest the appeal here lies mainly in the change of background graphics. The choice of weapons too could have been a good feature, but because of the reasons I have pointed out, becomes more of an annoyance than anything else. What you have in *Dogs of War* is essentially *Kan Wars* with bells and whistles, but unfortunately the bells and whistles just succeed in detracting from the original concept of the game.

James Butler

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Screen shots from Atari ST version.

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CLOUD MASTER

Every cloud has a SEGA lining



Inside the temple you get the chests of five super weapons.

MOUNT Design is a very weird place. A high mountain range dotted with Buddhist temples and some very strange creatures.

The beautiful mountains provide the writing terrain for Cloud Master, the latest horizontal shoot-'em-up for the Sega. At first glance it is easy to get the impression that you are looking at an Amiga or ST game — no sharp and colorful are the graphics. The characters is created by a black line around all the objects on screen, giving the impression of cartoon animation.

The enhanced graphics and depth of game play are due to a new more powerful type of cartridge with greater memory, now being used by Sega in some of the latest Master System games.

The game itself offers nothing new, apart from its weird characters and the addictiveness of its game play. A tough shoot-'em-up with the ubiquitous end of level bosses that seem to absorb endless amounts of Cloud Master bullets before blowing.

Our red headed Japanese-looking hero — having an uneasy resemblance to Wonder Boy — cuts through the five levels of the game aboard a fluffy white cloud.

Cloud Master comes up against a mid-level nasty riding a cloud cloud. He is wearing mega-flak and is determined to stop you getting into that temple.

About half way through level one Cloud Master comes up against an adversary on a cloud. Almost impossible to blast off his cloud without at least two power-ups this nasty has the annoying habit of doing a fly past — guns blazing — every time he gets the better of you.

Get past this mid-point and a window opens up in the upper floor of a Buddhist temple. Go inside and take your pick from a choice of four super weapons. Whatever you pick, the computer comes up with "Ah, yes, a very good choice".

I found the four remaining balls of flame to be the most effective in your encounter with the first end of level nasty, which follows shortly after your visit to the temple.

This nasty will crank you up. A giant fan, beautifully drawn, and again graphically superior to many other end of level guardians from 16-bit games. This fan is no chicken flimsy, very tough in fact, spitting mouthfuls of dirt at you and taking several hits to kill. To beat the end of level baddie you need to maneuver me constantly to avoid the fan as well as continuously pumping the fire button. Nice and tough, just as it should be.

There are five levels in total. Mount Grogg is followed by the River Kero, and then three other levels of increasing difficulty. As you float through the levels on your cloud you are far from lonely as you see machine gun-toting pigs take pot shots at you — and sometimes, or something, in floppy pigs and cats heads at you from the right of the screen, just out of view.

This is a welcome addition to the Sega's shoot-'em-up catalogue. The only other decent horizontal blaster is R-Type — which was a bit glitchy and perhaps too much for the BMS to handle. Cloud Master is just right — fast, pretty, and tough.

AGE RATING: 8-8

✦ Eugene Lacey



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End of level one nasty, or turkey even.



The price increases on level two as Cloud Master gets ready for the mad monkeys.

WANTED

SEGA wants you Dead or Alive...

WANTED is a wild west shoot-'em-up for the Master System. Take your trusty Light Phaser as shooter off the shelf, strap it onto your holster, top on your 'hoss, and go gunning for law breaking cowboys in Tombstone City.

The gang members up from behind barrels and appear in windows firing red shots at you and then ducking back cover again. You need to be quick on the draw to bag them. Other cowboys are more sneaky, pulling a gun on you as they stroll nonchalantly along the side walk.

Your Light Phaser has an unlimited amount of bullets but your energy meters does not - and inches slowly, but surely, towards zero if you swat too much lead.

Graphics are bright and colourful and there is a nice ricochet sound as the bullets fly around Tombstone. If you survive the shoot out with the gang members you will come up against a final show down the gang leader at the end of level one.

Other levels offer a shooting gallery where you can get some target practice and earn

bonus points for shooting the bottles, glass and saloon side trays that swirl past on a coweyer belt.

Later in the game is a real desert scene with giant cacti and tall mountain peaks in the shoot out region on horse back.

A must for Light Phaser owners.

AGE RATING: 6/25

● Eugene Lee



RELEASEE BOOK

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Wanted! splash down shoot 'em up for Light Phaser owners.



Shoot the barrels to find the hidden bombs. These are courtesy smart bombs.

CONSOLE NEWS

Console racers gear up for next year

Console owners may be feeling a bit left behind with the biggest range of home computer racing games ever launched about to hit the shelves this Christmas.

ACE's advice is to take heart as a whole range of console racers is in the Japanese pipeline - and should hit these shores early in the new year.



Amongst the titles on the way are Out Run for the PC Engine, Turbo Out Run for the Mega

Drive, and Power Shift for the Sega Master System.

Nintendo racers are still thin.

● Turbo Outrun - shortly to appear on Sega Mega Drive.

on the ground - as are most Nintendo games - but this, too, should improve with the new year. There are stacks of good racers in the Nintendo catalogue including Road Racers, Chase HQ, Super Sprint and Super Doo. At least one of these should be available in the first part of 1993.



Power Shift for Sega shortly.

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Champions



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FAST LANE



Better than your average pit-stop, you can change anything up to the angle of your spoolers. Impressive!

RACING games have been cooler, it seems, right from early beginnings of video game technology. Pole position was probably the first really successful racing game to hit the arcade, and soon spawned a plethora of clones, both in the arcade and on home computer formats. Early efforts at macros, like Pole's Chequered Flag, were graphically very primitive with fairly simple gameplay. That is, you had a single car, a selection of tracks which were more or less the right shape, and not a lot else. The novelty was in having a 3D display, crude as it was.

Over the following years, many more racing simulations were to emerge. Slowly improvements were made to the simple effect achieved by Chequered Flag. Other cars were added, the background graphics and sprites were improved, and the handling of the car made more realistic. Now we are at the stage where, in terms of presentation and realism, the virtual race itself has come about as far as it can given the constraints of existing technology.

So what's the next step? Well, Mansoni showed the way here. Motor Racing is about



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ATARI ST VERSION		
The graphics are quite nice in the whole, although the outside objects and other cars can sometimes look a bit weird. Sound, other than a fairly nice piece of the music, is restricted to the usual engine and revving sound effects, but these are done quite well.		
GRAPHICS 8	AI FACTOR 8	
ADD-ON 7	FUN FACTOR 7	
AGE RATING 7-12		

for more than just the race itself. There is the preparation of the car, briefing the driver, opening pit stops, and countless other considerations necessary for successful racing. Lambert fully went some way towards including these factors, in addition to superb graphics and realistic car handling.

Artistic are now giving the same treatment to Grand Prix driving. The game is based around the Spice Engineering Team. The car you are driving is their 3000C (Cosworth powered) F1 racing car. All of the elements you expect from a game of this type are here. The graphics are fairly smooth and fast, and do manage to give an impression of speed. My only gripe is the graphics front is that the outside objects and other cars are not that convincing.

As far as handling is concerned, the simulation is reasonably realistic. You can almost feel the engine complaining if you

Artistic speed into the competitive world of racing simulations

try to overwork it at low gears. The car will also stall in certain circumstances. You certainly can't get round any of the corners by steering your foot or legged down and hurling round the whole thing in top gear, to master how deft you are with a joystick. Try this and you'll only end up coming off the road at the first sharp corner, and that is a bone shattering experience. It can tell you. Unlike a lot of inferior simulations you really need to think as you drive, just as you would do with the real thing. It will take you at least three or four laps of each circuit before you have got the bonds set right.

Your ultimate aim is to compete in, and win the world championship. Before you do that you can do practice laps for each of the available circuits. One very nice feature when you are practising is that you can't just go. You have to perform the correct starting up procedure first. This means switching on the electronics, the spoolers, and so on. Then you can fire up the starter motor, put the car in gear and move off.

The other area in which *Fast Lane* has a little more than any non-simulation racing game is in the pre-race preparation and pit stops. You have complete freedom to set up your car, from tyres to spoolers. It is very necessary to spend some time at this point as the driving conditions can change quite drastically: you may be driving at night, or in pouring rain. These will obviously require a different mechanical setting to that needed for driving in the middle of the day in hot, dry conditions.

Undoubtedly *Fast Lane* has many superior features, and these will appeal to racing enthusiasts. In essence, however, the game does not really score much over some of the other driving simulations to appear recently. Do give it a try though — it could well be your cup of tea.

■ Laurence Scotland





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Screen Shots from the Amiga version

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FANTAVISION

DOMARK/BRODERBUND get animated.

FANTAVISION aims to take the hassle out animation by doing most of the hard work for you. Simply by drawing a character in one frame, and then drawing it in either a different position or pose in the next, the program will supply the in-between stages required to create a moving and animated sequence.

The program works on any Amiga, although the more memory available the more animations a project can be, and all graphic modes, including Hi-Res, are supported. As the program is specifically designed to create the objects and characters in the foreground of an animated sequence, backgrounds should be drawn for digitised with a dedicated art package, and then imported. To this end Fantavision will accept any standard JFF or IFF picture file.

POINTED OBJECTS

The objects being created and animated in the foreground are made up from points, with lines connecting them. The more points an object has... the smoother and more complex it appears on screen. Even circles are simply a collection of points, the default being 18, which only become noticeable with quite large circles covering most of the screen. The default maximum number of points that an object can have is 64, though both those figures are only

restricted by available memory and speed (i.e.). Having enough memory to produce a 600-point object may be fine, but it isn't going to move quickly when Fantavision tries to animate it.

TOOLS OF THE TRADE

There are a number of tools to aid object creation, including a pencil, square, circle, line, point inserter and bitmap creator. In order to finish an object, and fill it with the currently selected colour and fill pattern there are 30, it is necessary to put the first point in the same position as the first. This isn't particularly easy so the right mouse button, which undoes the previously plotted point, is frequently utilised. The bitmap creator icon allows for rectangular slices of pictures to be cut and stored as an object. However, an object created in this manner cannot be rotated or manipulated, but can merely have its position moved.

The most powerful tools are the rotate, zoom, and the 3-D rotate options. The latter can be used to rotate the object around a horizontal axis, thus giving the appearance of flipping the object end over end, or around a vertical axis to simulate the object turning away from the viewer, before turning completely back around again.

Unfortunately there is a small problem with these options in that any object as rotated

becomes smaller, an anomaly caused by rotating a two dimensional object in three dimensions. Should an object be rotated from one frame to the next so that it appears sideways on, that object in the second frame cannot be then rotated back again using the same tool. In order to get around this, it is necessary to copy the original object over to the third frame for fresh manipulation.

The final collection of tools allow objects to be least either on the vertical or horizontal axis, squashed or stretched, and flipped back to front or upside down.

OBJECTS IN MOTION

Having created as many objects as required in the first frame of a Fantavision film the next step is to move and manipulate them all in the second. Rather than having to copy all the objects across, the program allows entire frames to be cloned. Then all that needs to be done is to add or take away points from objects, and to move them to their new positions. New objects can be introduced at any point, and old ones can be deleted, or even made part of the background. Objects moving across the background do not disturb it, but should that background be a Hi-Res image then very strange colour smearing effects are noticeable inside an object as it is animated.

It is the number of in-between stages, supplied

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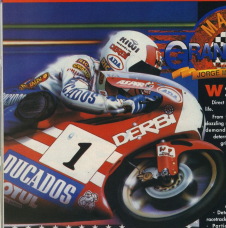
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Hardware
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POWER

ACTIVISION go for Xmas pole position

MAJOR end of year conversions are something of a specialty for Chris Butler. The long-serving 8 bit programmer has been responsible for producing home-computer versions of arcade games around Christmas before with Thundercade last year, and, in the past, Space Harrier and 720.

Butler's work has some hallmarks, and one of the most notable of these is his ability to produce very fast scrolling and that's obviously a recommendation for a race game like Power Drift.

Whether Power Drift can be a major Christmas contender is less clear. The game was undoubtedly a success in the arcade, but it's not sure why. Compared to other race games released this year like Microprose GP, Hard Drive and Namco's Winning Street though, it's not in the same class for graphics, sound or features. Nevertheless, in the grand average arcade game) have made excellent conversions and topped the charts. Combat School comes to mind.

While Power Drift does have an edge, it is the format of its game design. It's a fun game, rather than a non-stop grand prix race, with a cast of wacky characters changing around a course which is a mixture of off-road racing and hot pink water coasting.

The idea is to complete five courses, each of five stages, composed of four laps. There's a lot of hassle to battle it out with and is quickly you'll have to look in the top three to continue on in the game. That's it.

One major plus in favour of this conversion is, that it all works in one go, so there's no delay while you wait for extra courses to appear, or worse still, fail to appear when the game crashes. There is a price for this and that's in the omission of the bonus track. Elsewhere every thing points to another competent piece of programming. The game certainly moves quickly enough, with a reasonably smooth screen update and responsive controls and a well balanced challenge. The characters all have their own quirks and it's nice to see them grinding offensively - the most attractive touch of the race up, when they pass a competitor.

There's no matching Chris Butler's style.

and there's no making his graphics, largely constructed of character blocks, which give the game a square look. There's also a lack of colour that makes it a little drab looking. Sound is competent, but offers little in pure interest with no samples or speech from the cars.

Power Drift is undoubtedly a competent conversion, but whether the licence is strong enough to make it a big seller is unclear. Certainly if you compare it to Microprose's Start Car (reviewed elsewhere this issue) it doesn't compete as a pure racing game. I know which I'd rather play.

■ Mike Patterson



AMIGA VERSION

It's a 64 Conversion is competent and playable, but its 16-bit counterpart is the opposite. Graphically and conceptually, all you need work out as a piece of programming is a stage driver. The challenge rapidly dissipates when you realize the game is unplayable in places. At certain points the track just becomes a mess, leaving you to wonder which way to turn. The result is confusion and lost time. Take it easy from us.

GRAPHICS **B** IQ FACTOR **4**
 SOUND **B** FUN FACTOR **B**

ACE RATING 645

CD32 VERSION

Much of an interpretation of the original concept, but a decent conversion attempt. The pace depends on the gameplay as the track layout appears to be more playable — particularly the absence of the treacherous. Graphics and sound are also more basic but again the plain grey tracks are more convincing than the attempt on the Amiga version to emulate the original tracks with all their detail. Attention is comparable to the CD32 version — making for an absorbing race game.

GRAPHICS **B** IQ FACTOR **4**
 SOUND **B** FUN FACTOR **B**

ACE RATING 725



D R I F T

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THIS IS REALITY



I don't know what he is smiling about, in the racing game of the year status, this effort from Dinamic just fails to qualify!

1989 will without doubt be remembered as the year of the race game - with seven Continental Grand Prix, Grand Prix Master, Power Shift, RVE, Test Drive II, WCC Le Mans and Nitro, and with Ford Drive II, Chase HG and Turbo Guffin still to come, there's virtually no room left on the starting grid for yet another contender - or at least that's what it would seem...

Dinamic Software's effort is based on the Elite Motorcycling World Championships, and comes approved by Jorge Martínez 'Topac', four times World Champion. Your aim is to fit in as many laps as you can on the starting grid for yet another contender - or at least that's what it would seem...

Grand Prix Master's most notable innovation is the use of a scrolling plan view of the track to get the action, as opposed to the more familiar first and second person perspectives. There are seven tracks to race over, all



GRAND PRIX

On your bike DINAMIC

AMSTRAD VERSION

Grand Prix Master is spoiled by sloppy execution - the scrolling is jerky to the point of being disturbing in a race which is noticeable on the TV and laptop and the control mode is so fiddly you end up on the track in a hopeless and frustrating jolt. To cap it all the graphics are too small and poorly defined - it takes a while just to work out which way round the lake is facing left or right and you'll need to have to resort to the substituted effort.

GRAPHICS	4	IQ FACTOR	2
SOUND	3	PLAY FACTOR	3
AGE RATING 400			

of them supposedly faithful recreations of the real thing.

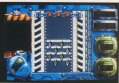
Before going into the Championship final list, players can opt to take a spin round the tracks in a training lap or take in an aerial view of the track before taking part in a compulsory qualification round from which the slowest 4 of the 12 racers are eliminated. Then fol-

The racers are lined up on the starting grid, the engines are revving, the pit crews are ready, and the tension is mounting... well, well, well!

low the race proper, and if you emerge from that victorious, you go on to the next round, and the next, and the next. A top-panel provides all the relevant race data including speed, current position and remaining laps.

As in real Grand Prix racing, times and positions are converted into points that are accumulated on a master scoreboard to form a racer's 'league' - the highest points scorer at the end of the tournament gets to walk away with the Champagne.

Grand Prix Master lacks the one thing that makes or breaks a racing game - any feeling of speed or exhilaration. The 'action' crawls along



at a snail's pace that is, when you're not struggling with the control model and the lack of any sense effects in favour of an unrealistic in-game time doesn't help matters. Still so many excellent racing games currently on the circuit, there's no need to have to resort to the substituted effort.

by Guy White

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PREDICTED INTEREST CURVE



The point is driving down the road - you can work it just as easily.



Wow! These heavy controls again...

The ball controls some of the many features to be found in *Rock 'n' Roll* from their own game's website, Matthew Bell.

WARNING! If you like sleeping if you want to ignore my advice then go right ahead, but don't blame me when you find your self huddled over your keyboard at three o'clock in the morning, binary eyes fixed on the screen, hand levers still clatching the mouse—get the picture? Good, 'cos I assure you it will happen.

Rock 'n' Roll is one of the most brilliantly addictive games I have come across in a very long time. There are elements of many other games within it, but it manages to combine these to create a very distinctive flavour — one that you will love to infinity.

The game has you controlling a ball through a series of 32 levels. These are divid-



ROCK 'N' ROLL

ed across 7 continents each of which has different features and peculiarities. If you remember Martin Madsen you will have some idea of the way that the game works.

The mouse is used to control the ball. The speed with which you move the mouse affects the ball's speed and inertia, while the direction of movement, obviously enough, affects the heading of the ball. This actually works very well and, provided your mouse is clean and working properly, you will find the game extremely pleasurable using this method of control. It wouldn't have been quite the same using a joystick — it remains to be seen how well the game will work on joystick-only formats.

There is only one way to get through each level and it will take quite a lot of experimentation before you find it. Things aren't quite as simple as just rolling a little ball around a two-dimensional surface since there are various objects to be negotiated. These take the form of magnets, which attract the ball, ventilators, which blow the ball away, arrows, which roll the ball in a specific direction and so on. As well as moving your progress and generally making a nuisance of themselves, many of the objects will also drain your energy. Lose too much energy and your ball collapses miserably.

ARCADE VERSION

While the graphics are not exactly pushing this machine to the limit, they are still very nice. The scrolling, on the whole, is very smooth. Sound is a bit repetitive, but you can turn it off quite easily. This is going to be one of those addictive games that will make Amiga owners sleepily eyed and late for work. What better reason do you need to buy it?

GRAPHICS: B FUN FACTOR: F
AUDIO: B FUN FACTOR: B

ACE RATING: B7S

Will Rainbow Arts roll straight to the top slot?

The other aspect of the game world — which you will soon learn the hard way — is that it's built on a platform sitting high above a blue gash; one which can be seen executing a very nice piece of parallax scrolling through occasional gaps in the landscape. Roll into one of these gaps and you plunge headlong to your death. Unless, that is, you happen to possess one or more little parachutes. Open these up



A game you'll play and play, but one you're never to, mate!

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before you hit the bottom and your ball will live to roll another day.

Parachutes are one of the many useful items you can pick up within the game world. Some of these will be essential if you are to complete the level. The handy goodies you can collect include the aforementioned parachutes, armour for your ball, coloured keys for entering appropriately coloured doors, bombs, and so forth. The purpose of most of the items is self-explanatory, but you will still have to work out exactly when and where each of them should be put to use.

Nothing counts for less, however, so before you can collect any goodies you have to find some money to pay for them. This comes in the form of coins of various denominations left lying around on each level. Further reward comes in the shape of coloured diamonds which, when collected, give you bonus points, the value of which depend on the colour of the gem.

The ideas in *Rock 'n' Roll* are not exactly revolutionary, and if you have played lots of similar ball games then there might not be enough new elements here to hold your interest. My only other gripe is that the soundtrack, while being quite OK for a while, is a bit repetitive — but you do have the option to switch it off. It is these few things above that stop this from becoming a 100% game, otherwise all the right elements are there.

There are some very nice touches, like the way the ball slips and slides over patches of ice, and the way the video pans as the ball travels through gaps. But these are all just icing on a very nice cake. I would venture that this is the best of 'bored' the ball type games to appear yet, and unless you are absolutely sick of them, for you really are concerned about your heady sleep, then I thoroughly recommend you do not eat and buy it today!

■ Lawrence Cooley

Goodness
gracious great balls of fire

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UPDATES

THIS MONTH'S CONVERSIONS INCLUDE STUNT CAR FOR C64



PC TAKES COMMAND

CARRIER COMMAND

Rated **M** Microsoft PC 386/486

Recent activity has created a vast intelligence from the depths of the ocean, unspoken, and unclaimed by any world power. For a long time now the Earth's available resources have been near to exhaustion, but this new cluster of lands has thrown up a rich supply of minerals and materials vital to continued life on the planet.

As the commander of a multi-role assault carrier, a secret document has been given to you which reveals full details about the islands and their contents. Unfortunately, a foreign power has gained access to your computers and is slowly, but surely, occupying territories for itself. Allowing them to gain control over the archipelago will mean starvation and ruin for your people, destroying them will lead to wealth and a secure future. Your mission has begun...

The weapons to accomplish the task includes a fleet of multi-role strategic and amphibious assault craft, a laser turret, sun-reflectance missiles, deployable tanks and modules, and a ship's crew packed with the latest mil-

itary hardware. If your carrier is damaged you can set it to repair itself, but too much damage means destruction and the end of the game.

Capturing an island involves knocking out its defenses (so making a fire), then sending off a landing craft to construct a base. Gain a cluster of islands and you can establish a supply and communications network. However, everything is played out in real time — so, while you're busy knocking out enemies, the enemy is equally busy occupying territory further north.

From the beginning you're offered the choice between strategy and action games — the former gives you a quieter introduction and is recommended for beginners. The latter launches you straight into the heat of the battle, so homing missiles can slam on your carrier with bare efficiency. Because of the depth of the game, Realtime Software have thoughtfully provided a save game option.

Although the ST and Amiga versions have been out for over a year, and the sophisticated Spectrum version for a few months, Carrier Command proves its timelessness as a game. This version

is arguably the best of the lot — even on low-MHz machines it moves very fast, and supports all the options you could want from a PC game. It runs in most colour modes (Hercules, CGA, VGA, and Tandy Hi-Colour), it can be transferred to a hard disk (though you still need the floppy to set up a 'key'), and it offers the choice between mouse, joystick, or joystick control — though mouse is by far the best. Even the slowness of travelling between islands has

been overcome by an added 'warp' mode.

If you're keen on strategy/action games, you won't find one better than this. It takes time to get into, but it is all the more rewarding for it. Carrier Command has an incredible amount of depth and long-term playability and should provide any serious gamer/player with months of enjoyment.

AGE RATING: M6+





PURPLE SATURN

PURPLE SATURN DAY Spectrum 43 £14.99/MS £19.99

I've fancied losing the Purple Saturn Queen! Well, if you win the annual Purple Saturn Day Games, you've got no choice, since looking face with her mastery is the ultimate prize. This year, the Good Lord Essex has randomly selected the four events for the game himself: Ring Pursuit, Time Jump, Tronic Slider and Brain Basher.

You can choose any of the four from the retail selection screen. Ring Pursuit has you racing around Saturn's rings in a land of slalom. Coloured space ships mark your route — you fly to the right of the red ones and to the left of yellow ones, all the time aiming to stay in front of your opponent to score points.

The Tronic Slider places you and your adversary on the orbiting energy field. Shoot the energy balls released into the game area and they yield fragments which are yours to collect. The player who collects the most fragments in the time allowed is the winner.

Brain Basher is by far the most rewarding of the sub-games, because the random puzzle element makes each game different. You're placed on opposite sides of an intergalactic forest, controlling an electroball which can alter switches, collect energy and slow electrical charges to reach to pins which activate the central locks. It's much easier to get the

long of them to describe, and would make a neat budget game on its own.

In contrast, the Time Jump is probably the most resistant of the sporting quartet. You have to jump as far as possible into the future by capturing energy sparks — a kind of operation Wall in space. These sparks provide fuel for a gravity catapult which launches you through time and space, time you've catapulted, you're propelled with an image generated randomly according to the amount you jumped — all very nice, but a bit pointless.

What this boils down to is a collection of four reasonably good sub-games, loosely strung over a scenario of competition. There are rounds leading up to a final with opponents of increasing difficulty, and there's a practice game against a robot — but ultimately there are just four events.

Purple Saturn Day has a brilliant manual which lists such things as recommended diets (including Peter's various quails) and forbidden substances. Good luck stricken chicken heads, but even they can't save the game as a whole from being set in the great dead of modernity. If you aren't wondering a lot more than just fun for a while, check it out, if you're used to games with plenty of variety, leave it on the shelf.

AGE RATING: 100



C64 STUNT CAR

STUNT CAR RACER

Memotech C64Plus £14.99/MS £17 version reviewed issue 34

When 34's Stunt Car arrived, we loved it. We sat down and talked with it, eventually took it to dinner, had a long lasting relationship with it, and finally proposed marriage. C64 Stunt Car is every bit as good as the 512 version.

It may be a little short on colours but short of gameplay, or speed, it isn't. The concept

graphics are almost identical to the 512 and the Amiga versions, which is pretty amazing, but the most extraordinary thing is the speed. Solid writers have never been so good on a C64. You can feel every bump, your stomach heaves as you fly over huge hills and jumps, and you emerge as you come off the back at one of its highest points.

A perfect conversion of an amazing game.

AGE RATING: 041

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PAPERBOY

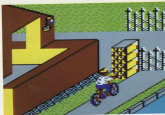
Edin, PG, £24.99

Yep, it's back again. The brilliant concept, that was also an 8-bit hit, is now making more fans as a 16-bit conversion. The game, in case you don't know lead it out, allows fans you (best), has you playing a parody of the American variety (who have a tendency to throw papers) rather than popping them through the letter box like cultured English superbood.

Your task is to pedal your bike down a typical American sidewalk banging papers into your subscribers' mailboxes. If you can't manage a mailbox, a window will do (less anybody and they will cancel their subscriptions - and rightly so. As if that isn't enough to cope with, the rest of the world and his wife seem to be hellbent on giving you a hard time, so until you have learnt to anticipate what's coming, collisions will be frequent.

This version caters for both VGA, VGA and Turbo displays, and while the graphics are inevitably a little (sorry they still have a nice cartoony feel to them. Gameplay is as good as it can be without the arcade machine's handrails. A very good, addictive conversion.

AGE RATING: 900



Paperboy on the PC — as you can see, the graphics are still OK. You can play in VGA or VGA, but either way the game play is great.

CPC

GEMINI WING

Edin, Amstrad CPC, £9.99, £14.99, Amiga version reviewed issue 26, Age Rating 750

CPC owners get their chance to do battle with whatever it is you're supposed to be doing battle with

speed. Plus and Mega accompany the action, and the update is so slow, it seems better suited to a budget adventure game. No seriously, it is that bad. But we can at least be thankful that it does work!

AGE RATING: 250

ST

PAPERBOY

Edin, ST, £16.99

This really does look and feel like the arcade original. I really can't fault the graphics and sound, and the gameplay has all the charm and sheer addictiveness of the coin-op. Edin has done a superb job on all the PaperBoy conversions, which considering the excellence of the best versions is hardly surprising. The bonus sequence in the path is especially well-executed. Highly recommended.

AGE RATING: 900

GEMINI WING

Virgin/Mastertronic, ST, £19.99, Amiga version reviewed issue 26, Age Rating 750

This shoot-'em-up from Virgin really doesn't offer much more than most similar games currently available for the ST line, it all looks fairly pretty, and it does offer a simultaneous two-player option, but the gameplay is not that hot.

The sprites are not quite as smooth as at fast as those in the Amiga version, so the game feels a little stiff when you are firing a missile. Additionally the soundtrack that was superb on the Amiga sounds strained when transferred to the ST's inferior sound chip, and I



guarantee you will turn it down after the first few minutes. Not a landmark game, but not an essential buy either.

AGE RATING: 900



the time around. First impressions tell you that it's far less better than the atrocious C64 version, but even so, it's still pretty bad. Graphically it's fine, with large full colour sprites and all bullets clearly visible, but then you come up against two Amstrad CPC (black-ales, Amstrad sound and Amstrad

C64

GEMINI WING C64

Virgin/Mastertronic, C64, £9.99, £14.99, Amiga version reviewed issue 26, Age Rating 750

Take a good look back at the history of shoot-'em-ups on the 64. Unknown, Terra Cresta, Starry-Nite keep looking back, because you ain't gonna find no future in Gemini Wing. The sprites are small and blocky, except for the bad guys, which are expanded sprites, which makes them large and blocky. The backdrop is pretty tame too. There is so much detail, picked up in such bad colours, that it's impossible to see where your ship is, let alone the enemy bullets. Control is sluggish and the soundtrack is awful. Awful.

AGE RATING: 950

GEMINI WING - WHAT WENT WRONG?

It looks like Gemini Wing turned into a bit of a disaster in so far as the C64 and Amstrad versions go. But why, considering that the arcade version was nothing more than a basic shoot-'em-up? The Amstrad version is so slow because of the amount of colours on screen, causing Don Manktelow from the Sales Corps. "We did try to do a faster version with fewer colours, but it slowed really hell". But what of the confusing C64 backdrop? I guess the programmers, maybe, need to copy the arcade backdrop, which they did quite well, but in hindsight maybe it was the wrong thing to do. Well, we're happy with it, and so are Virgin/Mastertronic. If nobody else likes it, I guess it's just bad luck. You can't have a hit every time."

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FEEL THE MOVIE

What do you get when you mix the movie magic of Walt Disney and Lucasfilm, with the realism of a full-size flight simulator? Rick Haynes flies the theatre-simulator...

Walt Disney's latest theme-park attraction at the EPCOT Centre in Florida, *Wonders of Life*, opened to a rapturous general public last month. At the heart of this position devoted to life, health and medicine is *Body Wars*, a *Terminator*-inspired ride utilizing Disney's newly developed theatre-simulator technology.

Body Wars is a thrill ride through the immune system of the human body in a simulated battle between trauma troops and infection fighters. Stunning anatomical images, produced through computer graphics and special-effects film techniques, combine with the sensations of a high-speed ride against live-to-guests accompany an enlighten pilot and a medical expert on a "Terminator" voyage through the cabin of a miniature body probe. *Body Wars* is in effect a 40-passenger flight-simulator, hence the term theatre-simulator: a synthesis of movie special effects (Americans call their cinema's theatres and cinematic/theatre flight-simulators).

The theatre-simulator concept is a collaboration between Disney Imagineers (the

Universe of Energy and other Future World attraction at EPCOT centre - Future World increases imagination, knowledge and technologies of the future. Presented by Exxon, this is a unique 80-passenger theatre-ride glides through a primieval scenario - a forerunner of the theatre-simulator partially powered by photo-voltaic solar cells, audio-animatronic dinosaurs, winged reptiles and special effects such as projected animals, rising oceans, earthquakes and an erupting volcano, *Body Wars* - the Earth's energy resources. Disney multi-dimensional theatres are a combination of cybernetics, computers and audio-visuals.

creative design, engineering, production and project-management subsidiary of Walt Disney, responsible for all attractions at the Disneyland and Disney World theme parks) and Industrial Light and Magic, the special-effects production division of Lucasfilm. Another division, Lucasfilm Games, produce brilliant computer games like *Jak McKracken*, *Mars*, *Marsian*, *Rescue on Fractalus*, *Ballblazer* and *Battlehawks 1942*. George Lucas, the man behind the *Star Wars* and Indiana Jones movies and founder of Lucasfilm, has taken a personal hand in helping with the theatre-simulator design.

The original theatre-simulator ride was first unveiled at Disneyland back in 1987. Presented by IMAX/Mars, *Star Tours* is a *Star Wars*-inspired ride taking you on a space voyage to the Moon of Eotax. The movie atmosphere is enhanced by the presence of two double *Star Wars* characters - C3PO and R2D2. Cutting

edge technology is employed to make you actually believe you are situated a *Star Speeder*. By synchronising a stunning film with the motion of a theatre-simulator, passengers actually feel what they see, the action actually out of control. *Star Tours* is open now at Disneyland in California, and will open in early 1993 at the Disney-MGM Station in Florida.

Body Wars has just opened in the Wonders





▶ **Horizons:** The desert form of Mesa Verde, one of the outstanding accomplishments of the future presented by General Electric, Horizons is another Future World attraction featuring the Omnimover system: the largest screen and motion picture film format in the world. The main frame area is about ten times the area of Silver Line's film frame. By putting the two standard Omnimover screens together, the Omnimover screen measures 80 feet high by 240 feet across. Horizons also has 48 multi-automatons figures and 36 animated props.

▶ **SPACETOWN** opened on October 1st, 1968. After Walt Disney World Theme Park (1) Walt Disney World has more than 20, 000 employees, (2) 8 screens 24, 000 seats or 40 motion pictures - twice the size of Horizons. (3) Only 20% of the land has been developed, and another 20% is designated a wilderness preserve.



▶ **Star Trek: Voyager** visual sensations and actual motion combine to create a thrill attraction.



▶ **Stunts** requiring a Berlin-sourced Star Trek Star Spedee - offering a slight corner of futuristic before the impending space flight. Passengers take in a sales pitch for the latest intergalactic travel packages now being offered to the human space traveler.

100, based on life, health and medicine. Michael Eisner, Chairman and chief executive officer of Walt Disney, says: "For more than 10 years, our imaginers have been searching for a way to dramatize the inner workings of the human body. Body Wars links the future of the health sciences in a dynamic and entertaining way."

Walt Disney has plans for further Star Trek simulator developments in the future, and with



▶ **Star Trek: Star Spedee** passengers waiting to board the Star Spedee Star Spedee. Later before it takes off for the Moon of Epsilon. Get ready to encounter a galaxy full of misadventure...

the opening of the Paris-based Euro Disneyland in 1992, you may be able to experience the thrill of a three-dimensional without the full land aspect of a trip to the States...

▶ **Body Wars** presented by Metropolitan Life Insurance an artistic impression of the still ride through the immune system of the human body... wherever there the still hit



of Life pavilion at EPCOT (Experimental Photo Fun Community Of Tomorrow) center in Orlando, Florida. Using the same theater simulator technology as Star Trek, Body Wars redirects the theme towards inner space - the human body. The ride begins with an attack on a cellular organism by a giant, germ-carrying spore.

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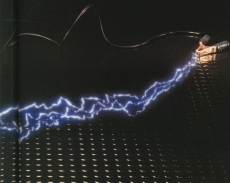


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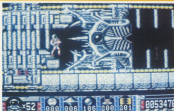
CROCKS OF GOLD

ACE GETS TO THE END OF RAINBOW ARTS...

ACE travelled to Germany to visit the offices of Rainbow Arts - and discovered some software secrets that got us even more excited than the free lunch. A C64 game that looks as if it's running on an Amiga?? A new method of getting soundtracks on games?? And a CIGARETTE game?? It's all in the pot of gold at the end of the Rainbow...

OK, so we had SOME excuses. We were standing in one of the development studios at Rainbow Arts, in Düsseldorf, just recovering from the flight and an overindulgent breakfast. There were machines everywhere, all connected to different monitors. No chance of telling which program was running on each monitor. Suddenly the whopping great sports menued its way across one of the screens, clipping and sliding.

"That looks nice," murmured your brainiest writer, and wandered over to the Amiga to try and take control of the little fellow who was



That, that really looking thing on the right is our big sports, and yes, this is *Turricane* - running on a C64! If you can't see how fast that thing could move, you'll be disappointed!

dancing around doing his best to destroy the vicious bit-mapped beastie.

There was a polite cough in German from Teut. Modernism - software development exec-

TEUT TALK

Teut. Modernism, Rainbow Arts' product development supreme gives us the nifty, glibby art...

3D

We've been to introduce 3D systems into areas where they have never been used before. Watch out for a 3D RPG and... wait for it... a 3D platform game. We're also working on a 3D hardware project for the arcade.

FRACTALS

We'll be releasing a new fractal game through Lucasfilm on the 16-bit machines in September 1990.

ON THE C64, THE SPECTRUM, AND THE BT

It had to be said, we'd been the bit of team. By 1987, that - along with the BT. The trouble with the BT was that the original spec wasn't good enough (single sided drives) and now everyone is forced into writing software for the lower spec machines because that's where the market is.

ON THE NINTENDO GAMEBOY AND THE Atari Lynx

Provided the Atari Lynx is properly marketed, the Gameboy doesn't stand a chance. The Americans want colour, and besides,

the spec of the Lynx is absolutely incredible (see article in this issue of ACE for more details). The Atari machine is also bigger than the Gameboy, and the Americans like things big.



Turricane again - that bit really flies! And the artwork is as smooth as it is fast.

ative of Rainbow Arts. "Actually," he said, "the program's running on that 64 over there." "Impossible," we replied. "Look at the size of that thing. You'd never get that shipping around on a C64. Pshaw the thought."

We were wrong, of course. But when we'd recovered from the shock, warps was to come. The game in question, previously entitled *Turricane*, was programmed by Manfred Trapp - and it was only his SECOND game! His first one was Demons on the Amiga, and, well this is a bit depressing, chaps, but the fact is he did the entire program his first ever-in six weeks.

Turricane is pretty monstrous in more ways than one. First, the action is very smooth. We were a bit dubious when Rainbow Arts claimed that the frame rate was 50Hz - or a C64? Come on, put the other franchise, damn - but further inspection and gameplay made the claim look deliriously accurate.

The basic scenario involves battling your way through various landscapes, which range from the mountains through the suburbs to the public honor interior. The map is vast - in fact, we managed to get hold of Trapp's own sketch of it (see next page). And if you're wondering about the locale, we spent about 20 minutes crossing the first few pages on the left-hand mountain range.



Apprentice — a very unique little number that involves black pawns and arcane castles.

BREAKING THE LIMITS

With games like *Turrican* under development, and programmers like Manfred in chains, Namco Arts are obviously a force to be reckoned with. But we discovered that there was a lot more going in this small German office than we would ever have imagined. How about a 'cigarette game', for example? Apparently German cigarette company Philip Morris producers of L&M cigarettes asked NA to do a promotional game for them! It wasn't possible, unfortunately, otherwise we could have given you a quick drag, but the idea sounded quite good. "We've had several approaches from big German companies to program promotional software for them," said Test, "the attitude to computer games here in Germany isn't the same as it is in the US."

No, it certainly isn't, not when Microsoft games get banned by the German government. Every game that goes on the shelf in Germany has to be vetted to be sure it doesn't encourage children to embark on a life of mass alien murder. "It's not a serious problem for us," said Test, "but we do have to remember the question of taste. However, we wouldn't really want to produce undesirable games in the first place."

So if it's not serious, one of the best titles that we saw in Düsseldorf was *Apprentice*. This is an extremely cute little number that takes the basic factor from Super Mario Bros though there's no similarity in gameplay and combines it with the black pawning elements of *Sokoban*, adding a good deal of attractive graphic detail

city in the process. The mouse touch here, as you bounce and climb around the landscape, was the little doppleganger — a tiny scaled-down version of the catwee figure you control, who you can 'pick off' from the back and send off on adventures of its own. This isn't just a gratuitous bit of fancy, it actually serves to introduce a whole new set of puzzles in the game as you discover blocks that can only be accessed by someone of small size and vice versa.

SOUND SURPRISES

Namco Arts have also been turning their attention to the sound side of things with their recent release *Rock And Roll* (reviewed in this issue). Following from their experience with *NAI*, NA have developed a new system for storing and using samples in games that could have a dramatic effect on the music we hear while we play.

Most players will probably have already heard sampled sound tracks on games. Some of the most notorious recent examples have been the Pygmalion titles *Shadow of the Beast* and *Blood Money*, not to mention Kenes's misadventure. However, sampled sound sets up quite a bit of memory and you're unlikely to get a very long, uncompressing sampled sound track as you might say.

Until now, that is. NA have developed a system that actually scans the samples and breaks them up into small sections. These sections are then stored and referenced by a look-up table. Combining this system with other compression methods means that we can expect to get some very long, high-quality sampled soundtracks in the near future. Doubtless other software houses will be disassembling every NA product that comes their way in an effort to duplicate the system.

Our next effort, now we have that system, is to draft in professional musicians to write scores for games in the same way that people write scores for movies. We want the music to mirror exactly the action of the game and to contribute to the atmosphere by being appropriate — not just by being loud. We have a good start here since our music programmer, Chris Hallock, is the German equivalent of Rob Hubbard. "Can't be bad."



Mark Ehrlich, founder of Namco Arts, started the company while he was still at school. By the time he was 17, he had three employees. Enough like for the sports most of his money on a hobby...

THE POT OF GOLD

OK, to the software we saw was impressive. But good games come and go, and often the companies that produce them just disappear in the mists of time, at what? However, Namco Arts actually managed to get in even more excited about their future plans than about their current products.

"We can't go on just doing the sort of games we're doing now," claims Test. "The problem is that we've already reached the technological limits of the C&A. Once you get someone like Manfred achieving 50 frames a second there really isn't anything else to go. There's gameplay of course, but we already have literally a tonne of gameplay rates that all our programmers work to. So we have to look elsewhere."

Test reckons that after the release of *Castro*, *Turrican*, and *Apprentice*, Namco Arts will have reached the end of an era. From the middle of next year, their programming team will start to explore brand new worlds of programming. "Test is a Macintosh fan so he's already been impressed by the advantages of such hypertexted as *Count*; *Demo* (see ACE issue 78) and he's dead keen to steer an exciting course through new game-styles."

"The first thing we're going to do is a project concerning a highly complex fantasy sports simulation. I can't say any more than that, but imagine the adrenaline of sport mingled with the detail of simulation and the atmosphere of fantasy. After that, we're heading out into scientific RPG territory. We've already begun to develop techniques that will enable us to generate and simulate entire galactic systems — far larger than anything we've seen to date."

"Our aim is to be able to release our games over different media. After all, we make games out of film — why shouldn't we make films out of games? We're determined to put into our files sufficient originality and design to ensure that they can be converted into other entertainment media."

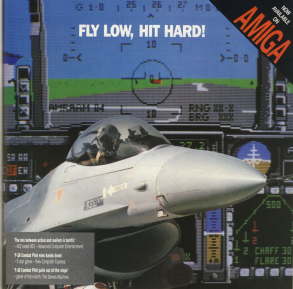
There's no doubt that NA, one of the most successful European software houses outside the US, have the means to pursue these aims. Despite an air of secrecy, it's clear that they are already investigating the possibilities of dedicated hardware, CD-I, and other game media. Watch this space...



The world of *Turrican* — involves falling down chutes, underwater battles, and moon-landing challenges!

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my mission is to destroy a battalion of tanks. Suddenly, threat
warning - interceptors closing fast! I quickly select daylight
mode and assume a Go-around. We both die at the same time -
duff and a high-g turn-out manoeuvre for my missile. A road
explosion tells me I'm not so lucky.

F-16 COMBAT PILOT

Flying fast and low, I turn my F-16 towards my target. Time to
switch on the ground radar and aim the laser-guided Mavericks.
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TED BAKER MAGAZINE

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ARCADE REVIEW

"The graphics are superb."
BY PUBLISHER

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→ THE TEMPLE OF SET

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 □ = ESCAPE



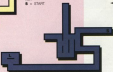
→ DOWNSTAIR

KEY
 P = HIGH PRIESTESS
 USE A COUPLE OF SCROLLS THEN ATTACK HER WITH A WEAPON YOU CAN USE THE WORD IF YOU HAVE IT



→ ABBESS'S GUILD

KEY
 S = START



→ ABBESS'S GUILD

KEY
 S = START
 L = LORD OF ABBESS'S LIES
 SCROLLS ABOUT 2 COINHA, IF NOT DEAD, THEN ATTACK HIM WITH MIAFON

LABYRINTH
 KEY
 S = START
 M = MIDDLE, MAKE SURE YOU HAVE SOME ATTACKING SCROLLS LEFT AND YOU HAVE THE MIRROR



Now it's off to the Temple of Set. If your energy (health, strength, stamina) is low, go to an inn with two floors and buy some food and healing. Then off to the temple. Make sure you have some attacking scrolls (death, frost, etc.) for use against the high priestess.

Make sure you go all round, especially to the large area on the east side before you go down the stairs. Make sure you get the necklace.

Make sure you have the cross. Now go to the castle. Go along the long corridor. On the way to Lich, when you're near it, you will see three ghost-like people standing in the room. Kill them, collect the gear, then carry on. (Check the door and go in. The only one you have to kill is Lich (he looks the same as the three mentioned before). Nick his gear and teleport out. Go to the AG on the main map to build up money and weapons. Then go to AG2.

After you have got the other four gems you can then go to the Labyrinth. Use the wand to kill the mages. Make sure you get a key and a mirror off the mages, as without the mirror the mages will turn you to stone.

After killing the mages get the gems, then teleport or find your way out. Then go back to the king and that's it, you've completed Galadriel's Domain!

Lord of the Deers, kill her, sack his goodies then go and kill the rock monster.

After you have the gems and other weapons and armour, make your way to the Forest of Dees. The people are friends but they carry good armour, potions and scrolls so it is best to kill them. The Lord of the Dees carries the item stick and money; kill any body you see in the Forest of Dees.

It is best to go all round the Forest of Dees and kill anyone you see.



It may look like David and Galadriel, but with these ACE tips you're only a stone's throw from success.

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GOLDEN OLDIE - ELITE

Fans of Elite who are having trouble making much progress in this excellent game will be pleased to see this cheat from Mario Verhoeven in Holland. While it gives you a helping hand, it won't spoil the game for you.

When you want to jump more than the allowed range you should do the following:

Equip yourself with anything you need and launch. Outside the station choose galactic chart (F6) and click on a planet in the circle.

When you move the mouse around and press **D** you get planets that orbit in your range. When you hyperspace click on a planet in your range and position the cursor on a planet you found with **D**. Now hyperspace and press **D**. It's a bit tricky because you can't use the mouse in hyperspace, so you'll have to choose a planet before you hyperspace.

My personal record is 112.4 light years. To accomplish this there's a slightly different method.



You'll have to choose a planet and click on local. Now the circle will be around the chosen plan-

et. If you now press **D** you'll get much greater distances to jump. But still choose a planet with-

in range and after that choose local.

OOPS!

Back in issue 25 we printed the solution to Battletech but forgot to tell you which master games play



or had provided it. Some Slipped orbits all round. It was in fact Adam Merley of Leicester. A name to take note of because it's one you're likely to be seeing quite regularly in this column in the future, since we neglected to credit Adam when his solution appeared here's a quick plug in recompense. Adam's first novel, *Blade*, has just been published, so if you liked his Battletech solution rock on to your local book shop right now and head straight for the SF shelves...

CODE CRAZY

Steve Williams of Newbur Spilthorpe, County Durham helps out other games players with a few neat codes.



THUNDERBIRDS (AMIGA, SE, C64, IBM/PC, & SPECTRUM)
PART 1 - 2 - RECOVERY - 3 - ALTY

RICK DANGEROUS IS A CHEAT...

If "A message a day keeps the glitches away" Fletcher says: "Don't getting through previous levels get tedious? Thought so. Just enter **POOPY** on the high score table and you are given the option to start on any level up to the furthest you can reach." Well, now you know.



...AND SO IS SAVAGE HAWKEYE!

More help from Holland. This time it's for *Savage and Hawkeye* on the ST courtesy of Jan Jansen.

Hawkeye: Press the game when playing, press the **HELP** key and start playing again by pressing the joystick button. Now you have infinite lives. If you press the + key on the keypad you will enter the next level.

Savage: Right at the beginning of game one (blue sector) you will find a wall on the left. Run towards it and jump before you hit the wall. Now you will find yourself at the other side of it. Keep on walking to the left and you will notice the screen going crazy. Plugge the joystick in all directions and after a while you will find yourself in the red sector. Once in the red sector do the same as in the blue sector. Now you go in the purple sector. Do the same as in the red and blue sectors. A message appears that you have completed game one and the code word for game two is also shown there. That word is **"SAMANTHA"**.

It must! Sounds like a bug to me, but what the hell... it works! Thanks Jan, keep them coming.



SWI 4 - ANDERSON

SWII MORES (ARCAD & ST)
PART 1 - 2 - THE 150

SWIII (ARCAD & ST)
PART 1 - 2 - SABAZZA
3 - FORSCHE

WORLD GAMES ON THE CPC 464

And now, assistance for Amstrad games from Andrew Llewellyn of Keswick in the West Midlands.

- 1 LOAD GARRUL JUMPING
- 2 SET THE BARRELS TO 30.
- 3 KEEP FIRE BUTTON PRESSED WHILE SPARKER LIGGS ARE BEING MOVED.
- 4 WHEN THE BLACK FLAG APPEARS AT THE EDGE OF THE SCREEN THE SPARKER AUTOMATICALLY JUMPS.
- 5 KEEP THE FIRE BUTTON PRESSED WHILE THE SPARKER JUMPS OVER THE FLAG.
- 6 PULL THE JOYSTICK DOWN WHEN THE SPARKER BEGINS TO FALL HELP THE FIRE BUTTON PRESSURE THE DOWN TRAIL.
- 7 THE SPARKER LANDS ON FRONT OF THE BARRELS. YOU CAN PRESS YOUR FINGER OFF THE FIRE BUTTON NOW.

Can I Oh good. Ever onwards...

CONSOLE CORNER

Yes folks, it's back again... the editor of Console Corner everywhere. The ultimate friend to gamers afloat. Now it's Console Corner.

In this month's corner we have some very comprehensive tips for Sega owners from the cunning console crew down in Cambridge, Massachusetts: Jeff Coons and Mark Cook.

R-TYPE

1. To make your R9 indestructible before you face on the power-based press downright in Central past 1 and press up/left and button 1. Do this simultaneously and hold them down until the R-type logo appears on the screen. Now let go and start the game as usual.



2. To defeat **Krell** fire your droid unit into his stomach, then move up to the top eye and keep rapidly firing.

3. **Somnambula**. Collect the reflecting laser force. Then move just above his blue eye and rapidly fire. If the water gets close move to the top-left.

4. **Mega Bombship**. Collect the reflecting laser force and place it on your back. Move carefully around the ship and prepare a full laser beam. Wait until the generator pops back then let the beam in.

5. **Morgana**. Collect the reflecting laser force. Hit it on your back. Aim for the 90 degree angle and fire rapidly. The other two are always forward, just aim for the green air drops.

6. **Knalton**. Collect the anti-laser laser force and prepare a full beam. When the rock appears, fire your beam and on. Keep firing and dodging the rocks. This may be it easier to defeat.

7. There is no boss to collect the anti-laser laser force. Move your R9 to the backward "L" and position it so it is half and half. Let off the droid unit and keep firing. You should not get hit.

8. **Shuriken**. Collect the anti-laser laser force, put it on your back. Keep firing and dodging. It is easier to do this level like this.

9. **Hyde**. You can collect any laser force here. Wait until he opens his mouth and fire your droid unit inside. Keep firing rapidly and dodging. You should defeat him easily.

10. To get in the super stage go to level 4 and when the mechanical coils fill the screen there are two pillars at the top. Reverse into the first pillar. The screen should flash and now you enter the super stage.

Super Stage Boss. Just aim for his eyes. There are his weakness. Watch out for the balls he fires out of his mouth.

11. To get the **scumfled**, rotate the D-Position clockwise a couple of times. If you want sound effects press button 2 and press right on sound-test 17.

To gain extra **continues** rotate the D-Position anti-clockwise on the continue option. You can gain a total of 12 continues.

VIGILANTE

TIPS

To choose a reward. When the title screen is showing, press both buttons and up/left on CDL. Repeat these down. Your reward can now be selected by pressing up and down.

When fighting **boss two**, first go to the van and let him jump you. Then, no matter how far from you he is, and provided you dash and punch, he can be hit (this only works when he is to your left).

TACTICS

The "chokinoider" thugs can be jumped to avoid combat.

To flykick, press both buttons while running, then sharply press up, still holding buttons 1 and 2. To fly punch, repeat but press down as opposed to up.

If you get to a boss with no munchakas



you can safely go back for them with no thugs challenging you either way.

Level 1

1. Jump all chokinoiders before fighting a knifer, chairman, etc.

2. To kill boss, grab munchakas, hit him in the right corner and hit him rapidly. His energy diminishes more than normal.

Level 2

1. See level 1 tip 1.

2. To kill boss, use the aforementioned cheat, but as soon as you've had three hits it on his jump knock him and repeat the cheat.

Level 3

1. See level 1 tip 1.

2. Motorbikes — don't let the riders off, just keep jumping them and moving forward and pretty soon they'll stop coming. Don't land in their smoke or their fire (after the bikes blow up or you'll lose energy).

To kill boss, ignore his traps and jump into him. Dash and punch immediately. After two hits, jump back out and wait for him to run into you. Repeat the process.

Level 4

1. Guess what? Level 1, Tip 1.

2. To kill boss, dodge his dynamite and fly punch him up on his ledge. When he jumps down, keep fly kicking him, running back, fly kicking him, etc., until he dies.

Level 5

1. Tip, Level 1...

2. To kill boss, grab munchakas and dash. The boss will walk towards you and before he can kick you, hit him with the munchakas. Repeat until he dies.

Thank you, thank you, thank you. Hopefully we shall be hearing a lot more from these fine old pros in future corners. Keep 'em posted.

A SWEDISH CHEAT - CARRIER COMMAND

Pause the game and type "The best is yet to be". Now you are in the cheat mode.

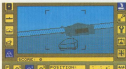
4-SURPRISE

1-UPPED UP THE GUMB

6-SHOW ALL THE COLOURS, ETC. IN THE GAME

Try also pressing CTRL and M for a surprise. Try also "Grow old along with me" and press "N". To go back in the normal game press "I".

Thanks to Joseph Munkin of Stockholm, Sweden for that little gem.



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THAT'S HANDY!

Here's a chance to get your hands on the incredible Atari Lynx colour hand-held games console...



As revealed back in ACE issue 23, the new Atari Lynx hand-held console is one of the coolest games decks to be released in years, and now we give you the chance to own this handy piece of hardware, thanks to these generous guys at Atari.

The Lynx was first unveiled at the Summer Consumer Electronics Show in Chicago, where it astounded the gaming world with its impressive array of features and technical specifications.

The Atari Lynx is the world's first colour hand-held games console with a 3.5" LCD screen, resolution of 192x120 pixels, processor running at 10MHz, 64K DRAM, 16 megabyte game carts, multiplayer options and custom graphics and sound chips producing 30 colours on screen out of a palette of 4096 and four channel stereo sound.

Among the games due for release on the Lynx are California Games and impossible Mission and Treasure Chests - plus a myriad of other game titles from third party developers.

Although the Lynx was launched last month in the States, Atari won't be releasing it in the UK till early next year... but ACE readers don't have to worry or wait, because you can WIN a LYNX now by entering our simple competition.

WHAT YOU HAVE TO DO...

Winning the Atari Lynx couldn't be simpler! In fact, it's as simple as 1, 2, 3...

1. What year was Atari founded?

(a) 1972 (b) 1987 (c) 1981

2. What computer, console or coin-op game would you like to see converted to the Atari Lynx? Why?

3. And finally... we want you to give us a gaming tip for your all-time favourite game - it can be on computer, console or coin-op. For example: Have you found a hidden cheat mode or a bug? What about a well tested tactic to get past that difficult part? Is there a secret level?

Please write your answers in **BLOCK CAPITALS** on the back of a postcard. Don't forget to include your full name, address and telephone number.

Send your completed postcard to:
ACE LYNX COMPETITION, Priddy Court, 30-32 Farnborough Lane, London EC1R 3AU.

THE PRIZE

The Atari Lynx will be awarded to the first correct entry drawn at random from those received prior to the closing date.



UP-BEATS

JON BATES REVEALS NEW MUSICAL DEVELOPMENTS AT THE PC SHOW

What's new in the world of computer music? Cards for the PC, both one for all micros, sexy new software, and a system that could, if used to its full potential, set you back \$2500 just for the MIDI leads! Jon Bates tunes in to this year's PC Show...

If you were one of the hordes who attended this year's PC show at Earls Court then you could not escape the fact that music software was set in force. Once you had navigated your way past the lethal bombardment of the multitude of games they were subject to further battering from the music area (unimagnitively called the Music and Micros area) a whole section of stands, each one with soft and hardware plus synths and samplers all set at star volume. To cap it all, Atari had a huge bank of 71 screens backing a stage with feature regular demonstrations of the new Shindig! sequencing package. Cubase from Tony Heinings (ex Cutting Crest, Here's what we'll do...)

BUILT ON SPECTRUM...

Can you someone first complained about the Spectrum's sound chip (probably the first person to own a Spectrum), hardware manufacturers have been selling us little bit-on goodness that will enhance the musical performance of our machines. In recent months these bit-ons have been supporting for the new 16-bit ma-

tel and some of them are very impressive indeed. But owners needn't despair either as several of these new units are simply modified MIDI bit that can be driven by any MIDI equipped micro, whether it be an Amstrad CPC plus (MIDI interface) or a IBM Music Machine's Spectrum.

FM MELODY MAKER

Although designed for the ST only, this little beast shows the degree of crossover we're seeing now between the dedicated music market and the computer scene. Marketed by Hybrid Arts, the package consists of a cartridge that plugs into the side port on the ST and comes with playback and recording software.

The cartridge contains a sound chip that uses the same method of sound creation as the very successful Yamaha DX series of synthesizers, Frequency Modulation. It will give you up to 11 sounds simultaneously which includes a drum kit. To get the best from the unit it would be best to have both an external amplifier and a MIDI keyboard. The latter then plugs into the computer's MIDI IN port and allows you to play any of the voices contained on the chip.

The recording software will let you play anything in and multi-track your performance into something charitable (copyright rules OK) and is an ideal entry level program into the world of sound and MIDI.

The package also has good MIDI facilities that will allow you to control and play other synths connected to the MIDI out port. Not bad for \$69.95. Like many of the MIDI add-ons it can also be incorporated into games and there are several titles in preparation that will be able to use the cartridge as an extra sound generator.



The FM Melody Maker from Hybrid Arts has plenty of options to customize the sounds. Each one can be assigned to a separate MIDI channel.



Setting up a drum pattern with FM Melody Maker: The grid rolls from left to right and each black square represents a drum beat on the instrument listed on the left.



Sequencing in FM Melody Maker uses traditional music notation as well. Note the mixer in the lower left-hand corner which lets you balance the individual volumes of the sounds.

POWER AND HONOUR...

Undoubtedly some of the sexiest bit-ons bits of the show were coming out of the Roland stable. Ever since this company released its popular little MT32 sound module, a whole market of home computer users demanding quality sound sources on the cheap has sprung up.

To satisfy demand, Roland have put out a new range of synth modules designed specifically to run with all MIDI software and computers. Although not cheap by computer hardware standards, they are in effect repackaged versions of two of their most successful sound modules, the 5117 LA synth G synthesizer, rack mounted MT32-64bit and the 5130 sample player, both renowned for their excellent sounds.

The CM32L corresponds to the 5130 and has 128 sounds plus 36 percussion sounds and

BLASTS WHILE YOU BLAST

King's Quest IV not sounding quite right? Want to beef up your games performance with a spot of heavy duty sound? Several of the units mentioned on these pages will respond to data dished out by some of today's top games, giving you a full stereo sound-track.

The FM Melody Maker is, as we said, going to be supported by several software houses, and Sierra On-Line already support the MT32. Yamaha Music Feature PC card, and the Casio C2 series. Compatible software is also promised for the Games Master (at its name suggests) mentioned in this article.

As you can see on

these pages, prices for these units vary enormously, but if you're in the unfortunate position of tightening the belt on your pogo bank, you can at least take heart from the current trend, obvious in virtually every stand at the show and exemplified by recent releases such as Blood Money from Peggibee, Peak and Phal from Rainbow Arts (see this issue), and Xanox II, for improving radically the quality of games sound tracks.

In general, most of this is currently being done by using sampling, and new techniques for storing and compressing sound data mean that the music we hear while we plough the Amstrads will continue to develop dramatically over the next year.



Sierra On-Line's titles now come with authentic full-stereo MIDI sound tracks...

STRYX



- ★ Ultra smooth 3 way scrolling
- ★ Designed with small fully animated characters from Garvan Corbett, the artist who brought you the classic hit Barbarian
- ★ Multi-directional free formed weapon usage
- ★ Large playfield for even more action.

You're really up against it this time. These scurrying robots have finally speed and formed their formerly powerless weapons on their 3 and 4 legged masters. Someone's got to stop it before it all gets out of hand. I mean, you just can't have bloodthirsty Cyborg assassins ransacking the streets of Dome City and expect the citizens to put up with it. Who on earth is going to sort out the mess? You guessed - you get the job.

Fortunately, you are just a little bit on the special side. You see Stryx, the product of Project Alpha Systems, the advanced fighting, smelting, banking machine, ever-invented man, half-robot you are the business, the cyborg who can stop those wretched Cyborgs.

You'll have to work hard, though. Slashing hordes of the scurrying creatures (such a sad waste of so many metals) and recovering the keys to the Labyrinth.

So, Stryx, you'd better get nice and quick on the keys to the Labyrinth (scurrying through the immensely complex underground world of the Dome city. It's a tough assignment, and time is running out.



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GAMES PEOPLE PLAY

31 sound effects plus adjustable digital reverb. This will set you back £350 but after all you are getting up to nine channels of professional quality sounds simultaneously. An equivalent synth keyboard, for example, would cost you around £800.

The CM209 steers the role of the UE30 and will perform six simultaneous parts of tailored sound with 64 sounds available, giving you a maximum of 31 notes at any one time. More sounds can be obtained by the priority by purchasing sound cards which will cost £45 each in addition to the £245 you have splashed out on the unit. For £749 you can have both modules in one box (the CM64) and a row with your bank manager.

SAMPLING SAFARI

Samplers, those devices that digitally capture sound, let you edit it, and then play it back, are set to fall dramatically in price following the news that Creative, who have been pioneering a budget end of the market with keyboard controllers, drum machines, and an analogue sound module, are now stepping out of the sample-madness.

On offer will be a 16-bit dedicated sampler for under £500. This may sound a bit but the spec is comparable to units costing a very great deal more. The beast (displayed at PCG but not in operation) is a stand-alone number and not dependent on any computer to drive or edit it. It comes complete with a 2.5" drive and has the ability to play back multiple samples, as well as supporting a full MIDI specification. It will also accept data from 'external' other samplers. Should you get the cat amongst the sample tigers early next year...

REPLAY REPLAY

Meanwhile, through Microsoft and the indelible Tony Haxby, the man behind many a sampling program, there is a refined version of Replay now in its fifth version and called Replay Professional, costing £129.95 for the ST only. Its advantages over previous versions will be that the sound editing features are made much easier and simpler to use, the sound filters are greatly enhanced, and, most importantly of all, the sound is actually sampled in 32 bits and crunched down to 8 bits for the ST to store.



Roland's CM64 - not many knobs, but swaggers of sound, and all under computer control. More and more games are exploiting MIDI economics - a unit like this could just write a punch into your playing...

Without going into great technical detail, the bottom line here is that the sound will be much smoother than before and will have a lot less background hiss. The new version will also allow you to play back four separate sounds simultaneously. There is for good measure will be a sample sequencing program and also a MIDI keyboard with a reasonable degree of reproduction.

Instantly ST sample freaks could check out the A265 Samplerack - a professional piece of hardware that comes as a separate item all ready to slot into a rack. Needless to say it works in stereo, comes with a sequencer and full MIDI features plus all the bells and whistles that you would expect for a stable under £550. This may seem very expensive, but you would probably pay considerably more than this for a separate sampling device and you would certainly not have the editing facilities that the A265 can give you. One for the serious purchaser though.

ST owners could also try out Creative from Microsoft. For £49.95 you get a piece of software that will play up to four sampled voices



Replay Professional - yes, it's not Origiand with graph paper but a three dimensional display (and Fourier transform) of a stereo sample.

simultaneously and will store up to 30 samples in memory, dependent on the length of each one. It uses samples that are in the same format as the Replay range and there are plenty of these available in the Public domain if you can't locate your own using the Replay package. The program also includes resampling and graphic sample editing facilities.

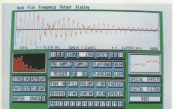
MUSIC-X JAMMER

Reviews abound that the alien-composing Music X sequencing, sampling, and mixing program (reviewed last month) will soon be available in smaller and hence cheaper forms. The word is that SOX will be making a Junior version available for under £100. Having got you hooked on that you can then save up and buy the additional software modules to add to the program and build up to the full version. It's a bit like a Lego kit - you start with Junior and build your big brother, finally you end up with Master Builder edition that will construct a fully-working model of the Space Shuttle in your bedroom.

INTO THE FUTURE

Apart from the move towards improving the sound quality of games and a desire to sample anything that so much as squeaks, the other interesting trend at the PC Show was the development of the multitasking or interactive environment for the computer.

What it has been possible for several programs to share the memory space and let you jump from one to the other, it has not necessarily



The main control screen of Replay Professional. The main sample covers the upper half of the screen whilst a harmonic analysis is displayed on the lower left and filtering characteristics on the right.

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TANK BUSTING!



Everyone's been so obsessed with the latest state-of-the-art flight simulations recently that the more down-to-earth armoured divisions of computer entertainment seem to have been forgotten. After you've flicked on the afterburners and dived in out of the sun, surely rumbling around on the ground taking pot-shots at other metal mickies must be a bit, well, just a teensy bit dull?

Oh boy, do we have news for you...!

Advanced tank design, as on this recent example, is particularly suited to advanced 3D displays. The regular obstructions associated for software as well as metal reinforcement, like a nice flat center tank even in real M1P offers a high degree of detail in the display, but you can toggle the level of detail to suit different machines. The more detail, the more processing power you need.

Anyone who remembers the shock of seeing their windshield shatter after receiving a shell up the nose in Battlezone will know that tank boobying can result in almost terminal admin-downs - and the good news is that the software boys are about to run this lesson home with several promised heavily-tanked simulations. Microprose's is the first to appear. Features? Tank Command is aimed for release, and there are others rumormongering along the track. What's all the fuss about?

MC first got its hands on a copy of Microprose's M1 Tank Platoon during a visit to the Bowington Tank Museum in the company of Proctor's floor 'old Bill' Straley. He was pretty impressed by the speed of the game, its detailed 3D VGA display, the choice of heavy-weight armor you could flog about, and the even heavier weight 200pp manual, which must be getting on for an industry record.

In fact the manual just about sums up the new era of tank sims. Things may be slower on the ground, but that simply means more opportunity for strings and game detail. None of those 200-page art manuals, and every line tells you something useful about the game - not it's a tribute to the program design in M1 Tank Platoon that you can get down to playing immediately. What's more, the detail in the game, which ranges from the explosion of and opportunity to indulge in conventional tank tactics to the muzzle velocity of the 7.62mm-Pull standard Machine Gun, isn't fiction - Microprose had to involve the Freedom Of Information Act in the States to get the necessary documentation released, and they've made excellent use of it.

Our only slight fret was, the quality of the manual binding, which appeared to shed pages at an alarming rate. The manual's pretty essential, however, so we ended up hole-punching all the pages and popping them in a ring binder.

THE GAME

M1P involves around your choice of platoon, your choice of men, and your choice of conflict scenarios. Stored on disk (and updated) every time you play's a score of platoons, each one



This is where the gamster would be sitting in real life. It's rather less comfortable than you might think...



featuring different names and associated skill ratings. Your average tank comes equipped with a tank commander sticking his head out of the hatch, a gunner who keeps the 57.1 tonnes of heavy metal thundering across the 3D terrain at speeds of up to 60mph - an amazing experience for the uninitiated who thought that tanks, well, sort of thudded along.

The skills of your crew are of paramount importance and your long-term objective is to develop their skills in action, winning the medals and improving their performance. Your ultimate goal is, naturally, to become embroiled in a full-scale war against the Soviets and send their T34s and other metal members to the scrapheap. Microprose obviously aren't in a hurry to declare an end to East/West conflict, which seems a pity when you realize that if the game is to be realistic it has to reflect the fact that the Soviets are currently the only people with some hardware to challenge you with.

During the war, however, is quite impossible unless your crew are up to scratch. That's because M1P is a clever blend of player intervention and computer control. Battles are fought over a 3D map with hills, valleys, rivers, and many other topographical features. As you fire during battle you can select any one of your vehicles, whenever and whatever it may be, from a saucy helicopter (yes, even total flight breaks get their fix) and checking out the opposition is an M1 Abrams, smacking up the nose, and get the relevant 3D view up on your screen.

With tanks, the selection gives you complete control over that vehicle and all the crew members. The good news, however, is that the complete control is supplemented by the same order so that you can, for example, take the commander's position, sticking your head out of the hatch and peering around with your binoculars, while at the same time telling your driver to go full speed ahead, your gunner to fire at will, and the other vehicles in your formation to take up a chosen left formation (stepped behind you, guns at 45 degrees). Suddenly, there you are careening across the landscape, guns all blazing together, smashing your way through the opposition. Fight one break: can cut hot lead for all I care, the best single handed aerial combat any day.



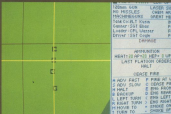
OK, an M1P Straley looks as if he's finally topped his list. However, he did have the good sense to use the Freedom of Information Act to get the data he needed for the game.



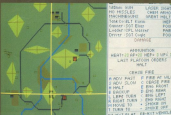
Major Bill Straley takes a real hardware through the game.

ATTACK!

How does it feel to rear into battle at the head of your armored platoon? Here's a quick engagement with the Soviets to whet your appetite...



On the map display here at full screen, we see our four tanks easily homing in on the enemy platoon because they're on a hill...Some of the crews are over the hill, but they're another matter...



Zoom out to see the entire map. The panel on the right shows the current vehicle's status, data that the commander is, as "capt", the red spots are hostile vehicles. Let's go get 'em!

The main screen is where you do your thinking, and where you find out what's going to happen the coming battle scene. You can see the commander's line of sight, marked and you can select any unit (friendly or hostile) by pointing at with the crosshair and pressing RETURN. This not only gives you control over it, but also all pertinent information in a window to the right.



The driver peers through his windows and spots his first target. The information isn't just for show - each one tells you something that could save your life!



A solid crystal ball out of the main window, one of our other platoon members on the left, warns you to follow the stream to the west and then cut off north to engage the enemy (without the road).



As we approach, the commander gets jump. Health indicator at bottom center starts appropriate alarm - we're currently using laser weapon giving jump around 1000 meters. The jump's value does almost not show the right - all we've got to do now is close in and get it!

THE ACE VERDICT

We rate M1P at 90%. That ought to speak for itself. It's a welcome break from fight sims that demand enough detail to keep even the most compulsive military hobbyist, and at the same time has a breadth of challenge and combat options that should satisfy the most ardent gamer. A winner.

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XMAS 189

RUNNERS & DRIVERS

Your complete guide to the main game launches of Christmas season.

As the main challengers for the lucrative number one slot in the Christmas charts line up on the starting grid the likely winner is as difficult to predict as ever. One thing is clear though: Christmas 89's league is going to be a racing game.

In pole position are last year's winners *Street* with their home conversions of the Tale room - *Chase HQ*. Sega's *Power Drift* will be challenging strongly with heavy weight PR and TV commercials through Activision.

In third position on the grid is *Hard Drive* - the console game licence from Denmark. These are not the only games in the race. There are one or two brilliant original titles to be reckoned with as well - *Stunt Car* for example, or *Wets* are yet to appear on a few key formats, and *Continental Crisis* and *Turbo Out Run* are no slouches either. There are other hot licences: *Ninja Warriors* looks superb, as does *The Misadventures* - but ACE is sure the Xmas league will have wheels on.

We have divided the field into favourites, from *Runners*, *Outsiders*, and *Christmas Toppers*. Don't buy anything until you have checked our guide - and why not let your best friend, lover, parents, or Great Auntie Betty take a sabbatical at it as well before they do their Christmas shopping.

THE FAVOURITES

Chase HQ

Sega

Sega's *Chase HQ* placed the player at the wheel of a plain clothes police Porsche. It was straight out of Miami Vice - chasing the villains through the streets and along the highways, taking pot shots at them as you speed up in the car, and aimed your gun from the sun roof. The HQ gives you more mission which is generally the main business of tracking some town bender who has been abducted by the bad guys. A constant running commentary is kept up by HQ as you twist and turn and



attempt to get the credits in your gun sights. The cops and robbers scenario provided an added interest to the main business of racing along at breakneck speed in a Porsche.

There is nothing in *Chase HQ* to make you gasp and think "they are never going to do that on a home computer". Converting it to home systems should provide no problem to Sega's large in-house programming team - even if they

are not particularly well known for driving games. Of the work we have seen so far on the conversions they are looking extremely good - with the Spectrum performing particularly well in the graphics and speed departments. Our money is on *Chase HQ* - to take the number one slot with us happened last year. *Ocean* competing largely against themselves, with at least another two of their titles likely to be in the top ten.

Power Drift

Activision

Once again Activision make their bed for the top slot by attempting to convert a title of the art faga game. *Power Drift* was a monster, literally, when it appeared in the arcades last summer. One of the biggest cabinets I have ever seen. But its physical size was not matched by its performance as a money spinner. It proved a bit difficult to get into, and of a card a go you couldn't afford that much practice.



This was a shame as the game is superbly well thought out as opposed to the simple sight seeing of something like *Surf Fun*.

The game places you at the wheel of a souped up hot rod with massive tires, a very low perspective on the road, and pits you against eleven other racers spaced frantically. There are five courses - with five separate circuits in each. The best splits and trails are to be had on the corners and with the ramps as the huggy takes off and slides on landing. Piece



and slippy uphill slides add to the feeling of power that rocks under the hood of your huggy. Conversions work in progressing nicely - with just as in the case of *Chase HQ*, the 3-Dot versions looking largely well. Check our full review of the Amiga version on page 80. All versions will be reviewed in Updates as soon as we lay our hands on them.

Although the ACE money is on *Chase HQ* - there are one or two voices around here stating that Activision may well outpace the Manchester software house, and that the quality of conversions will have nothing at all to do with what sets in Christmas week. Shame that.

Hard Drive

Demarc

The Dem Demarc bid for the Christmas huggy runs on their conversions of Atari's *Hard Drive*. A big hit in the arcade - with stacks of them still around - which is more than can be said for *Power Drift*.



Hard Drive took a revolutionary approach to coin-op racing when it appeared in the arcades the Spring. It is much more of a simulation than any of the others - with the car performing in a realistic manner, i.e. the steering wheel wincles against you if you attempt to take a corner too quickly. There is lots of fun to be had though and there is also a race on with stacks of other cars to be lapped or to collide with for the hapless driver.

The nearest feature of all is the 'loop the loop' track. You really need to put your feet down to have sufficient momentum to push your vehicle through 360 degrees. The graphics in *Hard Drive* look more like a home computer game in the *Starglider II* Carter Command style than they do a coin-op. This looks well for the conversions - particularly the 16-bit conversions. As with all games of a semi-3D nature the Spectrum versions perform well and *Hard Drive* is no exception judging from the work in progress we have seen so far. The *Hard Drive* course with its 'loop the loop' track, bridges, ramps, and loop the loop track provide stacks of playability. A lot more challenging than *Chase HQ* and, to a lesser extent, *Power Drift* as well.

THE FRONT RUNNERS

Operation Thunderbolt

Oscom

The sequel to *Operation Wolf* - and really just more of the same. Spray (or fire at anything that moves as you attempt to rescue the hostages and escape in the plane. Lots added an extra bit to the cabinet for simultaneous two player action and there are also one or two pieces of 3Dish graphics as you travel into the screen in armoured vehicles. More levels than the first one - as you travel from road, to mansion, through an army camp, an airfield and finally to a hijacked airliner where the hostages are held. Your aim is to shoot the terrorists without injuring any of the passengers or the pilot. As the sequel to the massively successful *Operation Wolf* - *Operation Thunderbolt* has a large army of fans, but there may only find another job at the shooting gallery.

Conversions look every bit as good as they were of *Operation Wolf* and the sequel will benefit from the fact the programmers can patch up and improve on the mistakes they developed for the first game. Completed conversions or all machines - make *Op-Thunderbolt* a strong front runner.

Galaxy Force

Action

Another massive Sega cabinet from their "Big Top" mix. The right angled monitor looked more like a laser landing module than a cockpit. Complete with booming speakers and hydraulic seat (if machines don't come cheap when they were launched last Summer. For this reason you could only find them in the bigger-destination arcades.

Action raised a few eyebrows amongst arcade fans when they announced that they had licensed the game for home conversion. The basic idea is to blast the tail out of the alien as you barrel through a choice of five space stages. The graphics of the conversion superb. Faster than *Afterburner* and with stars more detail in the background. You could fly under objects, as well as over them, all the time blasting away with a choice of weapons. Each of the levels is divided into two sections - an open sky shoot out and then into the cavernous interior of the enemy base. You stop is replenished by shield strength - which needs to be topped up by grabbing power-ups as you travel.

Action has their work cut out attempting to convert this. As for its chart performance - its a big name license, it will be heavily promoted by Action, and it will sell regardless of what ACE or anyone else thinks of it.

Cabal

Shoot

Cabal is 3D military shoot 'em up in the Quake style - but you control a commando rather than moving a cross hair around the screen. The end of each level is protected by a giant gun ship, tank, and submarine. The game did well for Capcom in the arcades and ought to equally well for Ocean as a conversion. All versions should be coded to a high standard as the original game design is fairly straight forward - and Ocean ought to be able to cut striking routines.

Tobin

Demarc

This year could surprise a few people. It was never a massive arcade hit but it had a loyal following who absolutely loved it to bits. Like *Double Dragon*, it is over so cute and hugely addictive.



Another wacky Atari coin-up title in which the player has to shoot the vapors - in a few more俗ious 'Toob' as they call them in the States - hence 'Toobin'. One to watch.

Ninja Warriors

Shoot

From a formerly bad conversion of a best 'em up last Christmas in the shape of Double Dragon - Ninja has found back with what is arguably the best conversion of any best 'em up ever, you ever, in the shape of Ninja Warriors. They have pulled off the feat impossible by devising a system that successfully simulates the treble screen, falls across an one narrow strip of game play action on 32bit machines. Looks superb, and plays well - as you take on a variety of military, footsies, and animal adversaries in this horizontally scrolling conversion of the Summer '80 arcade hit. A very strong front runner indeed.

Bat Man - The Movie

Shoot

Can *Batman* carry through until Christmas? There is no reason to think not, particularly with the gaming and get friend purchasers making up a significant number of *32bit* 'giff' game buyers. The conversion surely concentrates on a few of the exciting scenes from the film - like the race through Gotham City - in the Batmobile, the big scrap in the Joker's hide out, and the bursting of the toxic balloons that floated above the city that Batman passed by flying through them in the Batjet. This makes for an amusing multi-event arcade challenge. Could even be a number one. Holy megabucks!

Stunt Car Racer

Microprose

Geoff Crammond's insider piece has so far only been reviewed on the ST - where it won accolades from every single reviewer who looked at it. The excellent CD4 version is booked on page 99 and that, too, is superb. With key versions about to hit the shops (Panga, Spectrums, and PC) that all look equally good - this miniature game could well catch some of the big name licensed racer's off the cloud. Its combination of 3D polygon graphics and rare challenges like bridges and ramps make for comparisons with *Hard Drivin* - but in ACE's view it is more entertaining than this. It is more of a challenge - and that's what racing games have been crying out for. You want to do much more than just drive fast.

The best original challenge to be implemented, megabyte innovations. In



the hearts of real racing fans, this deserves the top slot - even if they know in their hearts that it isn't going to get it. Still ACE's first choice racing game - whatever happens in the Christmas Computer Game Grand Prix.

Ghost Busters II

Action

The film hasn't exactly bombed, and it hasn't exactly done that well either. It has just been overshadowed by things like *Lethal Weapon II*,



the indomitable *Batman*, and the soon to be launched - *Star Trek II* - which also has a computer game conversion, and a real hot one (I hope). The game is apparently brilliant - though not reviewable as we go to press, and is high on Action's list of titles to receive heavy weight hype, which should insure a chart position. Gary Williams is Manhattan Man.

The Untouchables

Ocean

Sean Connery made the film. He played a certain type of American cop - tough, uncompromising, and best described by Tom Wolfe in *Fortune of the Warriors* as 'fish Cop - don't back off'. This shoot 'em up don't back off either. Based on a few action packed scenes from the film (Ocean are becoming quite expert at that) the player has to complete six levels. Its combination of horizontal scrolling action and impressive graphical representation of 1920's Chicago makes for an excellent - *Op-Block* sort of a game. Could well repeat the massive - though unexpected success of *Blade Runner*.

Turbo Outrun

if it Could

Our Run is such a successful coin-up that you will find plenty of them around in most arcades

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- two and a half years after its launch. The Turbo version simply added graphics, and smoother graphics - with a turbo button which gives a 100% boost (if super speed) when pressed. USG's chief development focus - Pulse of South London - are craving about the quality of the conversion. A big name game that will undoubtedly shift the shelves this Christmas.

Ghosts and Ghouls

US Gold

The Capcom coin-op is ideally suited for conversion to home machines, indeed many reviewers observed when Ghosts and Ghouls and its predecessor - Ghosts and Goblins, were launched - that they should have been home games. The Sega Megadrive version of Ghosts and Ghouls has already won praise in many reviews - and there is no reason why these USG conversions shouldn't be every bit as good on the Amiga and ST.

You are a knight in shining armour on a mission to rescue a princess - collecting power ups and taking out the ghouls, ghosts, and other assorted nasties who are out to stop you. USG are not amongst the favourites this year - for the first time in four years - but they do have a very strong track record in Ghosts and Ghouls.

THE OUTSIDERS

Shadow of the Beast

Playgroup

Very pretty scrolling, shoot 'em up adventures. So far only available on the Amiga. Unlikely to take a top placing on any one format.

Kick Off

Amco

Footy is always popular - and Amco have the best version for 16-bit machines currently available. Likely to find its way in to quite a few Christmas stockings.

Continental Circus

Wega

An excellent Taito grand prix coin-op in its day and well converted on most systems by Wega. Likely to be overshadowed by more up to date racing conversions.



Star Trek V

Mindscape

The world is full of Trekkers - and with film number 5 about to be released - this film title should have very strong Christmas present appeal.

Strider

US Gold

Excellent conversion of the recent Capcom arcade adventure. Has been well copied by ACE and other mags. May have peaked by Christmas.

Myth

System 3

Excellent arcade adventure from the Last Ninja software house. Could get System 3 back into gamers' good books - after the fiasco that was Dominator!

Damocles

Nevegas



The sequel to Ultramaryn - and looking absolutely superb. Only available on 16-bit and PC after Christmas! Demoversion on the stocks in the increasingly popular solid 3D filled vector graphics - Banglander if that game. Race reviews are about to break in most magazines and hard core game fans will love it.

Vette

Spectrum Hobbyist

Its chart performance will be restricted by only being available on the PC so far - which is probably fortunate for the bookies of some of the coin-op racers. Watch it race up the charts as soon as it is available on Amiga/ST. An excellent simulation of a race through California in America's answer to the Ferrari - a red Corvette.

Interphase

Image Works

Another filled 3D vector graphics incarnation that looks stunning on 16-bits. Currently ACE rated in the issue - but perhaps not commercial enough to go too far at Christmas.

Fighter Bomber

Activision

ACE rated fight game that should convert well to all machines. F4U, F16s, Mig's, and stacks of other planes to chase from. A strong seller up to and after Christmas.

Rick Dangerous

Foxford

Without doubt the best platform game launched this year and now available on all formats. Should maintain a strong chart position there now till Christmas.

Ultimate Golf

Gremlin

Gremlin have put a lot into this one and it shows. Should benefit from a rare shortage of new golf games. Could go all the way to the top ten.

Altered Beast

Activision

Popular Sega beat 'em up with huge sprites and excellent sound. Likely to be a bit of fashion victim in that beat 'em up are not as popular as they used to be. It might chart - but it is unlikely to go too far.

BI Tank

Morpheus



Superb tank warfare simulation. So far only available on PC and therefore unlikely to chart this Christmas.

Iron Lord

Ultimat

Risk playing strategy game in the Christmas style. Very pretty, but not main stream enough to go top ten at Christmas.

Moonwalker**US Gold**

Whose ball? Not M's computer game say US Gold - but then they would, wouldn't they. Strong Christmas presents appeal should ensure a chart position for this bounce game.

Storm Lord**Atarisoft**

Extremely pretty arcade adventure featuring towers and dragons. Will you reach the top with its graphics.

CHRISTMAS TURKEYS**Beach Volley****Orion**

Bronzed bunks play volleyball on the beach while their teammates look on. PAL. In the middle of winter as well. Double cut.

Gazza's Super Soccer**Empire**

Sports Gazette card provides the 'name' endorsement for this latest computer soccer



offering. Why don't companies concentrate on making good football games instead of us getting soccer stars mug shots for the packaging?

Cribbage King**Mindspace**

According to the advertisement this game features the 'World's strongest Cribbage-playing algorithm'. My word, how interesting. **TELETYPE**.

Roadburn**16-Bit**

How can anyone in their right mind recommend this major turkey - even if it is only £4.99, and even if it is in the season of good will. You will be

well and truly stuffed if you get this in your Christmas stocking.

Dictionary**Smart**

The 1984 version cost more than the board game itself, which is clearly ridiculous when you consider that they don't have even half of its playability. What a turkey.

Lotus 1 2 3**Lotus Development Corporation**

No pretty graphics, no arcade entertainment value whatsoever, it costs several hundred pounds and doesn't run on the C&A, Spectrum, Amiga 50, or Amiga. Pass the Crimbley sauce.

CHRISTMAS PAST AND CHRISTMAS PRESENT

In the next few weeks the C&A's Hits, ACE Ratings and stacks of other magazine awards are going to be flying like nobody's business. Everything can't be brilliant, can it? The answer is definitely no - but it is easy to get this impression when you flick through some of the mags in Smiths. To help you make up your own mind we have six 'Top Tens' - the Top Ten from the last four years according to C&A's ACE's prediction for Christmas. We actual sales - and our secret Top Ten - the ones that would make up the Top Ten if the ACE review team got their way.

CHRISTMAS 1985

1	Commando	Atari
2	Yie Ar Kung Fu	Orion
3	They Sold A Million	Various
4	Warrior	Orion
5	Elite	Fredfox
6	Way of the Exploding Fox	Melbourne House
7	Computer Hits 20	Various
8	Formula One Simulator	Mantechronic
9	Jeopardy Games	Epyx/US Gold
10	Back To School	Microton

CHRISTMAS 1986

1	Gauntlet	US Gold
2	Computer Hits 20	Various

3	Final Fight	Demarc
4	Space Harrier	Atari
5	Planet Rob	Atari
6	Hi Play	Various
7	Korean Cowboy Hits	Orion
8	Clie and Lisa	Fredfox
9	Five Star Games	Various
10	Cobra	Orion

CHRISTMAS 1987

1	Out Run	US Gold
2	Watch Dog 2	Orion
3	Garage School	Orion
4	Mighty 2	Orion
5	Like A Lion	Orion
6	Grand Prix Simulator	Code Masters
7	Roller Gold	US Gold
8	Star Wars	Demarc
9	Hi Play	Gremlin Graphics
10	Game Set And Match	Orion

CHRISTMAS 1988

1	Operation Wolf	Orion
2	Polycop	Orion
3	Double Dragon	Melbourne House
4	After Burner	Activision
5	Thunder Blade	U S Gold
6	Giants	U S Gold

7	Falcon	Miramax
8	Joe Blade 2	Players
9	Hi-Top	Electric Dreams
10	Shredbusters	Mantechronic

ACE CHRISTMAS PREDICTION 1989

1	Star Wars	Orion
2	Power Soft	Activision
3	Batman - The Movie	Orion
4	Hard Drive	Demarc
5	Operation Thunderbolt	Orion
6	Shouts and Gheds	US Gold
7	Neq Warriors	Negan
8	The Unhatchables	Orion
9	Winners	US Gold
10	Tycoon	Demarc

ACE REVIEW TEAM - MINE TOP TEN

1	Star Wars	Microton
2	Demarcos	Horagan
3	Interphase	Image Works
4	Fighter Bomber	Activision
5	M2 Tank	Microton
6	Wets	Spectrum
7	Hard Drive	Demarc
8	Kick Off	Revco
9	Rock Dangerous	Fredfox
10	Batman - The Movie	Orion

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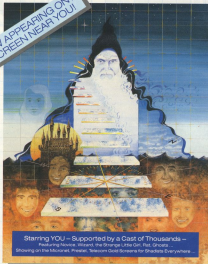


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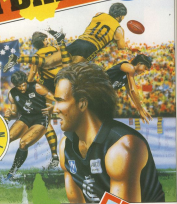


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THE OUTER LIMITS

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SCAPEGHOST

The last LEVEL 9 adventure... Good riddance, or sad farewell?

This is the last text/adventure adventure planned by Level 9 before they set to work with MIRA and their H302 system (see page 19 of this issue) and a year-long fit-out of all last. How many times have you played the part of a ghost, barely able to lift a piece of blotterboard, never mind tackle a hardened criminal? To succeed in Scapeghost you must forget about brute force and rely instead on your wits.

Infuriating a chaps gang has its hazards as you, policeman Alan Chance, have discovered. Someone or something alerted the gang and as a result they rubbed you out, replacing you with your colleague Sarah as a hostage. Unfortunately, this formal text/adventure doesn't seem to have gone down well with the Force, or the writing, they seem to believe that you were in with the gang and have branded you a traitor -



Level 9 put their character handling to work for the last time...with Scapeghost.



Marvel at the graphics, design or the night of the last Level 9 adventure...

this you discover when you materialise, as a ghost, within your own funeral. You may have only three nights to clear your name and get revenge.

After the insurers have left your first task is to build up your strength while persuading your neighbours in the houses to help you in your task. However the other ghosts are rather a surly lot - well, wouldn't you be if you'd spent the last few years in a damp, dark cemetery? - so you'll need to discover what makes them tick and cheer up their gloomy faces before they'll be of much use. This 'do-gooder' scenario seems to be a typical Level 9 trademark nowadays, after Night's attempts at 'blowing you all up in previous games.

Without going away too much of the plot, the game is split into three sections, one for

each night. The first night is spent devising your ghostly powers and working out a way to foil the gang's criminal plans. On the second night you must attempt to alert the police as to the present whereabouts of the criminals, while the final night is spent rescuing Sarah and presenting the gang with destroying the evidence.

Presentation is up to the normal Level 9 standards with atmospherically detailed graphics which can be moved up and down the screen or switched off altogether if you prefer complementing good descriptive text descriptions and a fairly comprehensive parser.

Responses are nicely creepy at times and occasionally the game presents you with evocative puns on the ghostly theme. I found that these little wades did much to dispel the so-so implications of the plot without detracting from the atmosphere too much. It is, however, open to question just how horrific a game can be anyway - see the former article this month in page 26. If the man who plays Freddy Krueger thinks games can't cut the mustard is a suitably gory fashion then who am I to disagree? On the other hand, I can't help feeling that he never played Lurking Horror...

If you're used to object oriented adventures you'll find Scapeghost quite a challenge. Lateral thinking is definitely required to complete the game and the satisfaction of working out the answer to some of the puzzles is equivalent to that gained from the solving of entire games with more conventional plots.

What a shame there won't be any more text adventures from the software houses which has given so much pleasure over the years. Scapeghost definitely marks the end of an era, let's hope the H302 games are an adequate replacement.

Definitely a sad farewell this, and so good riddance. Perhaps, sometime well one day per issue Level 9 to give us another adventure.

KAYDEN GARTH

German fantasy from EAS GOLD SELECTION.

Funny how whenever a style of game becomes popular we see titles with little approximation of the motifs of the genre jumping on the bandwagon. Kayden Garth is a case in point.

According to the press release this is a highly complex strategy and dungeons game with numerous traps and opponents to make your task difficult. Quite why it was felt necessary to add opponents and traps to the game is beyond me as the operating system itself contains enough traps and involving information to satisfy the most hardened masochist - and that's before you even start to play.

Kayden Garth is a detention planet in the year 2445 where the prisoners have rebelled. You are the commander of a reconnaissance

unit sent to the planet to shed light on occurrences there and put down the rebellion.

The game is a fairly standard RPG with an overhead view of outdoor locations and 3D for dungeons. The four characters for your party can be chosen from eight races/professions. Statistics can be reviewed to your taste before saving your party to disk - the original game didn't in fact a game disk can be used for saves, but nothing in the documentation suggests this. The only thing that stopped me saving out the pre-arranged party was my habit of reinterpreting all original data.

This is not the only instance where error trapping is either inadequate or non-existent. The manual supplied gives a list of keys for the ESC and a short warning not to press the

LANDSCAPE	70
Has 1 homogeneous outdoor atmosphere, but what there is, is well described.	
ENCOUNTERS	80
Good for connecting with your fellow ghosts - and monks.	
CHALLENGE	80
Get your thinking cap on for this one... it's not easy.	
SYSTEM	80
On the feature, you'll expect such a complex, low particle count to cost a high price.	

ACE RATING 88%

Don't let the scenario put you off. Scapeghost is spine wiggling rather than spine chilling. A great challenge and lots of kick yourself punts included.



Repeat death on the ST, there is at least RPG games like this so often fail to improve? There have been dozens of releases, but only a handful are worth playing. Which? Well, here's our advice...

wrong key as this could load an old save and wipe out progress to date. Fine, but the ST uses some rather different keyboards (described by expensive trial and error) and again the load/save routines are not error-traced. It should not be necessary to have to constantly use the physical escape/abort instead of an "Are you sure?" type screen prompt.

Control of the game is probably the worst I have ever seen. Moving around on the dark forest view landscape involves the square touch of keys for east/west, the minus key for south and below it or set SHIF/LB for north - great for while attempting to run away from an approaching enemy. As usual the fonts representing your party is centered on the map but movement leaves much to be desired. Motion is very slow and jerky with no key repeat making journeys from A to B tedious and frustrating.

UNDERGROUND

Exploring underground has its little tricks too. Dungeons are shown in 3D perspective which gives absolutely no sense of movement if you happen to be in a long corridor with no visible exits - not even a flicker. You'll need to cast a spell to appreciate this though as the dungeons are unit so the party requires a light source. Easier said than done, unfortunately. After equipping the party at the local town with some lanterns each I entered the dungeon,

LANDSCAPE

100
Pretty nice top presentation but close-up of trees are really done with simple but effective animation.

ENCOUNTERS

90
No excess over which of your party is fighting in a particular round of battles.

CHALLENGE

85
Plenty of exploration and combat - if you can be bothered to cope with the system.

SYSTEM

90
It runs reasonably well now.

ACE RATING 350

Perhaps the plot could have made a decent shoot-em-up, but as an RPG it's a disaster.

ground. As instructed to use my lamp and...darkness, plus a message "No time to loiter". Oh yes I have, I realised, he just had hard credits for them. Only trouble is, there appears to be no command for inventory so I was unable to press my point.

Combat brings up a display of your character and the opposing foe. There seems to be no way of adjusting marching order so weaker members are effectively in the front line. Not a

NO PROBLEM!

We'll be cheering you with tents and too every month from now on. But why don't you stake a claim to fame by landing in some of your own? We'll post help on any fantasy, RPG, or adventure game on the market. Send them on a postcard to ACE No. Problem, Priority Court, 30-32 Farringdon Lane, London, EC1R 3BA. Get to it!

BLOGGZYCH

To obtain plentiful supplies of money and keys, select your champions but don't recruit them yet. First go through the hall recruiting each champion you don't want, remove them of their supplies, remove them from the party (never respond) then kill them. Only when all the champions you don't want are dead should you recruit the others for your quest.

Use a 'Wallow' spell instead of food. Stone helps restore strength, the red spell 'Foolish' is extremely useful in the early stages. Try the yellow 'Terror' spell to stop monsters advancing on you.

When mousing, metal doors are not halfway along metal sections while wooden ones are at the end.

Watch out for spiders in the maze! Use compass and dropped objects to stay safe.

Locked doors give a clue as to the key required. Look at the colour of the top of the door-locks.

Save before entering the Sarpent tower - preferably on a spare disk! Once in you can't get out again unless you do the right thing which involves going up one side of

there any way of controlling which member of the party is attacking (and taking the full return-of-fire). Messages appear during the battle to say who has attacked who and what resulted in. "Vaxator shot (x) at the alien but missed" or "Spid called (x)". Apparently the members don't join in the fighting, they write the screen messages as well.

Anyone who's played most of the overhead view RPG-influenced games (E.G. Legend of

FANTASY FUTURES

US Gold are set to release several new adventures ranging from AD&D licenses to an icon-driven comedy thriller.

First on the list is *Illiac Manor*, billed as the comedy thriller that dare be so different. Different? Isn't this the *Illiac Manor* we reviewed here in ACE many, many moons ago? Ah, well, no...yes...but due to the popularity of *Illiac Manor* and their look-alike competitors, USG have decided to put more stud-

die behind the *Illiac Manor* title. Actually, it does deserve attention, with over 50 rooms, all sorts of fancy adventures and fun-different stories with different ways to win. The control method is via text menus and you can control different animated characters against some very attractive backgrounds. Lots of fun if you're into American beer culture, it will be available for C64 S, Acorn ST, Amiga and IBM/PC.

Matthew Manchester

Pool of Radiance is finally being released for the ST, Amiga and Mac before Christmas, thoughtfully preceded by the follow-up game *Watchtower* which should be out as you read this.



the tower, down again to the bottom, then back up the other side and out.

COLOUR OF MAGIC

You must eat the meat in part one to be able to kill the troll in part two.

DEJA VU II

You can get money by standing in the sun (reproduce the dealer?)

BLIZZARD PASS

To get through the window - get the snow, it will turn to slash in your hands. Put the slash in the cracks around the window - it will freeze and crack the rock and the window will fall away.

DUNGEON MASTER

Try to lure monsters to a doorway and close the door on top of them.

Examine walls for secret buttons - some are mislaid!

Practice casting spells and fighting. Even if you cast spells at this or those objects ahead of you or fight walls or anything it counts as practice and helps to gain a level. Don't worry if a spell fails - it's still practice. Don't practice casting spells against walls.

WOLFMAN

To kill the Magistrate at the top of the tower you need to turn into a wolfman by howling at the moon.

FRANKENSTEIN

To stop the boat from sinking 'plug leak with ferns'.

DRACULA

If you're attacked by birds, close the window.

If you're attacked by a dog, look around and give it the bone.

Reckless (Quester/John) knows that most of them offer primitive gameplay but, in recent years, both up adequate atmosphere and lasting interest. Reckless unfortunately, doesn't. Only recommended for confirmed masochists.

Meanwhile, AD&D has another hit coming out. You can find out more about it in the Future Fantasy box at the bottom of this page.

MORE DRAGONS

While the bookshelves keep thrusting fat paperbacks under our noses by West and Hickman about dragons, trolls, ogres and so on, TSR are soldiering on with the AD&D format and going on, in the run-up to Christmas, the next AD&D product: Dragons of Flame.

Available on most systems, Dragons of Flame is billed as an action game rather than role playing and the plot predictably continues the fight to save Kryn from the domination of Takhisis, the Queen of Darkness. You involve the use of the skills of Michael Incorporated in the earlier games to aid the companions on their quest to free the slaves of Pax Thurnis.



Kayden South again - it's a pity the game isn't as good as the graphics.

SWORDS OF TWILIGHT

FREE FALL fantasyRPG

On loading this new RPG from Free Fall my initial impression was of its resemblance to the Ultima series, with overlaid views of the playing area and opportunities to converse with other characters. Further play maintained that impression. The other main resemblance is to Saurian style games where several characters move independently around the playing area.

The game concerns your quest to recover the Swords of Shambala and truth about the full extent of the plot as far as I can see, instead of describing a complex scenario, the manual concentrates instead on describing the multiplayer aspect of the game. In fact this is the main thing that sets Swords of Twilight apart from run of the mill RPGs. There are normally you control each member of your party,

this game offers the opportunity for up to three players to each control their own character, either co-operating or backstabbing each other. For solo play the computer controls the two spare characters and you can do little to direct their behaviour.

Around two thirds of the screen is taken up by four large boxes. Three of these each can take a head and shoulders view of a character together with a table of name and mood. The rest of the box is blank for the most part and is used for messages during the game such as "You're" or menus which allow action selections during play. The fourth box is blank most of the time and used only during encounters when the NPC's name and mood are shown in a similar manner to the player characters.

All the character display leaves only the

al who gave us the Scott Adams games and AdventureSoft at Grimme Lane.

BUILD YOUR OWN COMBAT

This is certainly a step beyond Muzak, if you fancy being the star of your own wild west adventure watch out for Far West, also from U.S.S. In Kayden South's wizard which contains elements of a role playing game, a simulation and an invade game. The aim is to survive and make money by creating your own combat, buying gear, food, beer etc, entering the wilderness by train or horse, and buying bears or building yourself a gold mine. Arise up! 1111-090 has just now.

The AD&D contract has three years to run and TSR has a policy of producing five such games a year. Under development is War of the Lance which is the first AD&D computer wargame and will offer fully detailed tactical or quick combat options and allow you to engage in diplomacy, send parties of heroes on quests to discover magical items and ultimately conquer the world.

One noteworthy point about these games - several were produced by more often than Mike Woodruff, who older readers may recall was one of the driving forces behind adventure software in the UK in the early '80s, starting such companies as Adventure International



Swords of Twilight - shades of RPG, but the scenario is about as original as your average sword-swing.

control field of the screen to show the playing area. The view winds moving around the land and interior locations in a standard overhead style. Each character marches around independently with simple animation to maintain the sense of movement. A size touch here is that injured members of the party often lag behind the others with the animation speed slowing down to give the impression of a bad limp - very atmospheric.

The game is set in a variety of different worlds - each having its own usual layout but with different inhabitants and magical qualities. Access between worlds is via gates leading to the Rainbow Road. Most of the gates are guarded by shapes who may a matter with the party before allowing it to pass. Once on the Rainbow road you can choose to drop off at any of the other worlds - each identified by a color coded gate.

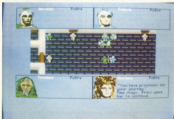
Combat is carried out by placing your character adjacent to the enemy and facing it, then holding down the trigger key or joystick button. The system is described as arcade style but this shouldn't put off those with slower

reflexes as co-ordination is more important than speed.

There's a comprehensive magic system. Conjure, witches, wizards, enchanters and sorcerers may be included in your party, each with their own batch of spells. Casting spells drains the character's energy, the degree determined by the complexity of the spell. The keyboard is used to prepare and cast spells and requires entry of either the number or elemental involved together with the name of the spell.

ALL TOGETHER NOW

What sets this game apart from many of the others around is the multi-player system. For three players to take part, two joysticks are needed. The other player uses the keyboard. The mouse cannot be used at all. Each player controls his character independently, but the party cannot split up too much and must always be within sight of each other on the playing area. A character attempting to move too far away from the others is simply blocked from moving until the others catch up.



Swords of Twilight - the combat system is the best thing about it, but even that is like a hot plate in time...

During the multi player game each character has a variety of move options which include taking, getting and dropping objects and shifting moods. Mood shifting is an important part of the game strategy. Characters can be hostile, wary, polite or friendly at will, each mood affecting the results of interaction with NPCs. This hostility towards a potentially friendly character will reduce the chances of eliciting useful information, while being friendly to a hostile type is likely to have fatal effects. In the solo game the computer controlled characters tend to follow the lead of the player's character as to mood - but not always.

Movement of computer controlled characters in the solo game can be fraught with difficulties, especially if the player character is a magic user 'leading' fighters from the back. Left to themselves the other members of your party are likely to bang their heads against a wall adjacent to the door you have just passed through, or take off on their own account to attack the monster you had just decided to run away from. Careful leadership is a must and adds considerably to the enjoyment of the game.

After several hours of sustained play becoming impatient with the general lack of originality in presentation and plot, my interest in continuing was saved by a gradual appreciation of the tactical nature of encounters. This is a game that grows on you gradually. When the time came to finish off play to write this review I was definitely reluctant. Hopefully I'll have the chance to explore Swords of Twilight's greater depth in the future.

LANDSCAPE

48
Generally unimpressive and not of the best, but characterisation by character somewhat better.

ENCOUNTERS

15
Detailed in single and often the best encounters, with occasional unique problems and thought.

FINAL LEVEE

85
Definitely a better game. The 40 things provided the compromise for lack of variety.

SYSTEM

60
Play about the mouse - not everyone can master a second joystick - especially adventures.

ACE RATING 750

Takes some patience to get started but there's to be a good game in there with persistence.

MINI TIP

PERSONAL NIGHTMARE

Getting started - wait around in the bar of the Dog and Duck. After a while Mr. Moberly, the receptionist will arrive. He takes off his jacket and hangs it up. Keep waiting and you'll see Jimmy Standford arrive, then after a while Jimmy Standford leaves. Shortly afterwards Mr. Moberly is heard from, this time being friendly in conversation, as soon as Mr. Moberly leaves the job look in the jacket and get the key. Immediately leave the job and you'll see Jimmy Standford being in the road. Exchange his body before Moberly returns - you'll find a roll of film, the key to the College and a broken door.

WARREN



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ADVENTURE ORGANISATIONS

Stuck? Need help? Need friends? Here's the latest on the adventure-got-together scene...

DIAL-A-TIP

Having operated both written and phone-in helplines for several years and therefore understanding the effort involved, I was intrigued to hear of a new adventure helpline set up by Jackie Wright under the name Guiding Light. What makes this line different is the use of one of those famous 0800 numbers which the national press features regularly on behalf of recipients of large bills.

Guiding Light's policy, however, is not that of maximum gain but of fair reward for the time and effort involved in making the line. To this end they positively discourage youngsters in particular from staying on the line any longer than is absolutely necessary.

With access to a wealth of hints and tips (some of which grace this month's column - thank you together with knowledgeable adventurers on-line, Guiding Light are able to help with most games on all formats. The lines are open 7 days a week from 9.00am to 8.00pm and calls are charged at 25p per minute (cheap rate) and 38p per minute at all other times. The number to call is 0800 338 9333.

INTERACTION

New to the scene of adventure clubs is Inter-Action. For £15 you receive 6 conveniently dosed-up of at least 50 pages featuring reviews of the latest adventures, RPGs and strategy games, previews, gossip, hints, maps, letters,

articles etc. Also included in the price is access to a telephone helpline open for hours a week. More details from Inter-Action, The Cottage, Halford, Corndon, Ludlow, Shropshire, SY8 4DB.

SSA

Building and established software authors, artists, designers and musicians may be interested in The Society of Software Authors. SSA is a collection of people with similar interests sharing knowledge and protecting their interests as a group. The aim is to ensure that the relationship between publishers and authors is fair and professional and that the authors' interests are protected in the long term. Membership offers practical advice and representation on industry issues such as copyright, contracts and pay. Full members (already published authors) pay £150 while associate members (still trying) may pay for £50. More details from The Society of Software Authors, 6 Calve Court, Harrogate, Wetherby, WF8 3TB.

HALA

Remember Sonia Griffiths who has been running HALA (The Hints Archive for Lord Adventure) for over four years now? HALA is a totally free helpline operating a bulletin system. Help is provided on any adventure in exchange for an SAC and some tips of your own. Over the last year Sonia has had to wind down the activities

of the club due to other commitments but is now set to help the world again. A new feature is a free telephone helpline 18.00am to 11.00pm Mon-Fri which can be reached on 0483 854038. The address is 38 Bedford Drive, Wilbury, Eastleigh, Hants RG4 7JL. A last word from Sonia... "I'm still the only free club in England and proud of it."

SYNTAX

IT users who fancy a stack of reviews, solutions and hints on disc could do worse than try the disc magazine. Published by Ian Hildrey and John Hambley, each disc is crammed with adventure information. Issues are bi-monthly and details of price etc. can be obtained by sending an SAC to Ian Hildrey, 9 Warwick Rd, Sidcup, Kent, DA14 8LJ.

A similar publication but this time on paper and catering for all computer formats is Spellbreaker. This is a monthly magazine which also includes maps and costs £1.25. For further details contact Mike Bratton, 15 Flower Place, South Park, Greenwich, Fla, W9 1LR.

PROBE

For general adventure chat, tips, solutions and other related topics the long established Adventure Probe gives an excellent monthly read covering all markets. Sample copies are available for £1.25 from Adventure Probe, 24 Mans 7 Cam, Llandudno, Gwynedd, LL30 1JE.

SCAPEGHOST COMPO!

It's the end of an era. Level 9, the adventure company started by the Austin family, have been responsible for inspiring and maintaining the British adventure market since their first game, Colossal Adventure hit the shelves over six years ago. For several years after that, they retained an undisputed number one slot with a succession of highly imaginative and technically superior text adventures.

Scapeghost is their last but not adventure title. In common with their later releases it includes fabulous graphics (hand digitised, as opposed to the early style of keyboard cut-out) and of course the gaming and character handling systems the company are famous for.

However, what has always made Level 9 games successful has been the creative originality of their game designs and the technical excellence of their products. Now they're developing a new range using their more advanced graphics programming system - so maybe this isn't the end of an era, but the beginning of a



Scapeghost - five copies waiting for the clever readers...

new one.

Whoever was you took it, we're determined to celebrate, and Level 9 have got five copies of Scapeghost to give away. All you have to do is send us, on a postcard, the correct answers to the following five questions:

1. What was the first Level 9 game to feature graphics?

2. Which Level 9 adventure was modelled on the original mainstream adventure game programmed by Doxey and Flood?

The prizes go to the first five correct answers drawn out of the hat on 7th December 1989 - so get your entries in pronto on a postcard to ACE Level 9, Priory Court, 30-32 Fulnegton Lane, London, EC1R 3AG.

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FRUIT CASE



Ever wondered whether there's a cheat mode for fruit machines? Or how they decide when to let you win? Fruit machine programmer Lee Witek tells it how it is...and it's tough...

A LONG TIME ago, before computers controlled practically everything you can mention, from washing machines to nuclear reactors, fruit machines were simple electro-mechanical affairs where you stuck your fiddly coin in the slot, pulled out the handle, the reels spun, and more often than not you lost. When the handle was pulled springs would spin the reels, which had a series of encoding holes around them. At the moment the reels stopped, a light would shine through these holes and if it made it through the hole onto an array of photo-cells then the coin mechanism was activated and you won lots of lovely cards. Winning amounts were decided depending on which photo-cells are activated by the light falling through the encoding holes.

Fruit machines in those days were kind of odd, mostly and only superficially a game of chance. In fact, the machine controls absolutely everything and the player's role is limited to pressing buttons and clinging to a naive belief that 'chance' may favour him. One thing you can be sure of, of course, is that the machine will make a profit, since this is what it's there for.

Things haven't changed much, except for

the fact that nowadays fruit machines are astronomically complex beasts. Modern A&F's (Amusement & Fun Places) - have you been reading your A&F Arcade magazine column? - have a vast array of games, arCADES, and bells to attract the punters into parting with too hard-earned cash.

INSIDE THE FRUIT CASE

In order to manage the workings of a game, there is a computer (they get everywhere) sitting at the heart of the machine. This controls everything from the spinning of the reels to paying out the money if and when you win.

Two of the biggest fruit machine manufacturers, Bell and Barcrest, both use a similar setup to control their machines. The corebits of a small micro-processor system with a 6409 as its CPU. If you were wired a Dragon 32 micro, you'd be familiar with the little beast. It's a fairly fast 8088 processor and a predecessor of the current 68000 series used in the ST and the Mega.

The processor board has a small amount of ROM (8-16K), masses of I/O ports to communicate with all the bells and whistles, and a cartridge port. It's the latter that really provides the crunch behind the machine, because the



RING THAT BELL

On the sound front, most fruit machines aren't far to seek. The majority of machines are equipped with a bog standard AY-3-8913 sound chip. This, believe it or not, is the same chip as is used in the Amiga's CPC, ST, and most Spectrums. If it is, in this programmer's humble opinion, crap—no matter how many times an ST owner tells you it's better than an Amiga, etc. etc.

However, things are, depending on your point of view, looking up for fruit machine sounds. Some manufacturers are experimenting with various synthesizer chips and sample players, so you can expect the double level to rise in the months quite drastically in the near future. At the moment, when you walk past an arcade and hear a stereo sound track, it's coming from a video machine—not not for much longer...

Since adaptability is the name of the game here, it's possible that the manufacturers may develop a sample manipulation program similar to that developed by Rainbow Arts (see the Crooks of Gold feature in this issue on page 108). This would enable new sets of sound samples to be loaded in an cartridge.

Control program is stored as EPROM (erasable non-volatile memory chip which is built into a program module). This module forms a small cartridge that fits into the slot on the processor board. The modules are, in fact, very similar to those used on the old Atari VCS games consoles.

This system allows easy reprogramming of the machine by simply inserting new cartridges. These cartridges are very complex and often hold 64K of code or more, for the more complex casino fruit machines, 128K. When you consider that an average 8-bit arcade game will rarely have more than 16K of code (including the graphics data) you can see that these control programs are no chinkers.

Two other components inside the casing in the coin mechanism are the reels. The coin mechanism will accept your coins, sort them via separate hoppers, and pay out your winnings. It identifies the value of the coin you feed it by letting it drop through a magnetic field. Each size of coin will distort the field in a specific way, and this distortion is measured by the coin mechanism so that the value can be accurately recorded. Bad news for the punters: this system of detecting coins is fairly tamper-proof and stops people putting washers and other bits of metal in to get free credits on the machine.

ALL UNDER CONTROL

A lot of people still seem to think that the reels are mechanical, they actually spin due to momentum rather than in a precise way. This is surely not the case. In fact, the hidden truth is that the machine actually knows the exact landing position of the reels BEFORE they've even started spinning!

Fruit machine programmers, however, are

clever lads. How many times have you seen the reels spin to a fast just one position short of a winning reel? Often, no doubt, and each time you see it you think you'll have just one more go! This is, of course, done on purpose to add to the excitement of being money.

The secret is that the reels are attached to stepper motors which are under the precise control of the on-board computer. Surely you're not for being so greedy.

WHERE DO THEY COME FROM

Trying to think of new ideas that will attract people to playing new fruit machines is not an easy job, but someone has to do it. Recently one fruit machine manufacturer set up a competition for all its employees from the top ladies in the production line to come up with new features for adding to machines—a proof of the fact that new approaches often slide even the design teams.

However, once the basic format of the game has been decided upon, all the required Pascal percentages for each feature are worked out using a spreadsheet. All this info is then passed on to the programmer who sets about coding the game.

The program is written in a variety of high and low-level languages. Licensed for example use assembly language for the speed critical parts of the code and Fortran for the rest of the program. The advantage of Fortran is that it is very flexible and allows you to define all the necessary routines for flashing the lights and so-on. Jupiter Ace owners would have a ball on a one-armed bandit!

All the programming is pretty heavy-duty work—the code is edited/compiled/checked/linked on a DEC VAX mainframe. All the programmers are users on the same machine to allow easy transfer of files and access to library functions. The code is then transferred down to the microprocessor board, in a rework up of the fruit machine, via an RS232 link.

Once the machine is finished, it's sent for tests testing by people with nothing better to do and then on to various test sites around the country to see if the punters like the new design. If it takes badly money then the machine goes into full production and gets sent all over the country.



WHAT ABOUT POKES?

OK, so here's the nitty gritty. Fruit machines have a small amount of RAM and some buttons. How about cheat modes, then?

Well, there's good news and bad news. The good news is that they ARE cheat modes on fruit machines. The bad news is that you can't operate them from the front panel alone. They are designed for testers and work in conjunction with the internal board. Pressing certain buttons in combination will then force a feature to a win or a loss. Like games, most machines have cheat modes but they are not, to be fair, given over to the punter.



CAN I WIN?

No.

Most fruit machines pay out around 70-80% of the money which is fed into them. This pay out percentage has been carefully calculated through experiments, on spots and people to give the maximum addition to the machine. The chances of winning each feature on the machine are carefully worked out by the designers so that no matter how skilled the player is, the payout over a large number of games will stay around the target 70-80%.

When the player presses the start button, the computer chooses, AT RANDOM, the new positions of the reels. If this position is a win, the chances are that the computer will purposely forget it and generate a new position with either no win or a lower value win. This is done to stop the machine from paying out too much, unacceptably. Only when the computer is finally happy with the spin position it will move the reels.

The bad news is that the other top possibly random and 'self' features are worked out in the same way and modified to stay within the target 70-80%.

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4

1

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2

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IN THE PINK

THE ACE STOCKMARKET163

Which games are going to be next month's hot titles? And which readers are going to walk away with prizes for predicting the right ones? Find out all about the new games chart section that's setting the industry talking

GAMES YOU'VE GOT TO HAVE166

The ACE updated guide to the games you just have to buy. Check them out, and then look at your collection, remember it's coming up to Christmas and give yourself a treat

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How do professional animators go about their work. Duncan Evans celebrates the release of Aniga Fantavision (see p56) with a look at modern animation techniques

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Grandslam are kicking off their launch of Saint and Greavsie, the latest football trivia quiz sensation, with an exclusive competition in which you can walk away with £250 worth of gear including a match quality football signed by Saint and Greavsie themselves, plus other goodies

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Have you got a brain the size of a planet? Of course you have, and of course this month you really are going to win that exclusive prize for eggheads

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Domark are falling over themselves to reward lucky ACE readers with FIVE Ferraris. Radio controlled, that is, but still loadstarun.

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Logotron are about to release Bad Company and Star Blaze – and you could be first on the street with a FREE copy. Find out more on page 186.

MYSTERY PAGES174,185, 188, 190, & 191

At the time of going to press, these mystery pink pages were still blushing virgins. Find out how they've been corrupted by the ACE Team!

THE ACE STOCK MARKET

HERE'S WHERE YOU CHECK OUT WHICH GAMES ARE GETTING THE HOTTEST REVIEWS IN MAGAZINES AROUND THE COUNTRY - THE HOT RELEASES YOU SHOULDN'T MISS. YOU CAN ALSO PRACTISE YOUR GAMES MARKET SKILLS BY PREDICTING NEXT MONTH'S FIGURES - AND WINNING SOME GREAT PRIZES! THE ENTRY FORM IS ON PAGE 192.

THE 8-BIT COUNTER

Here are the month's 8-bit top ten titles. (Remember always to use a magazine's - great game, share about the review, and System 3, etc - row that becomes regular in the 8-bit list of next year as well as using that of No. 2.)

ATARIAN	Dragon	Amn./4.5p	92.29
ATARI	System 3	84.5p	91.1
INTOUCHABLES	Dragon	84.5p	90.9
SCORRY'S CURSE	Mastertronic	Amn./3p	89.29
NEW ZEALAND STORY	Dragon	Amn./4.5p	88.67
IRON LORD	Usball	84.5p	79.79
TRUCK	US Gold	Amn./3p	77.83
ALIAS BEAST	ACTVISION	84.5p	77.79
DRAGON SPIRIT	Demarc	Amn./3p	76.99
PISSING SHOT	Image Works	Amn./3p	76.69

Systems available: Atari, Mastertronic, Operation Gemmy, and Demarc.

THE COMPANY COUNTER

Which companies have really been slugging it in the media this month? Here's where we'll be going away to the biggest prices, each month if you can name the top software in the current issue. We give two ratings for each software issue: the first is the rating for themselves (which determines their current position) and the second is their "share rating". This is a guide to their past performance, and also the first time value for the listing. All software houses start at 100. Next month, if a company gets down, it's share price will fall. If it goes up, it'll rise.

The positions are determined by the ratings awarded for reviews in different magazines during the current month. The lowest that certain software houses may not appear in the chart will be the lowest that products reviewed during the survey earned. It also means that at the start, some software houses who produce only one very highly rated title will score more highly than those who produce several less successful titles. In the long term, the system will favour ratings dependent on only a few releases - reflecting the "shell bit" of the share in question.

8-BIT SOFTWARE	94.7	100	MCILLILLIONS	73.82	100
ATARI	89.19	100	COMBIB	73.82	100
HI SOUND SCULPT	85.75	100	88 GOLD	73.77	100
IMAGE WORKS	82.00	100	SYSTEM 3	73	100
MICROPHONE	82.90	100	FRANCO	72.76	100
OCULAN	82.70	100	ELITE SYSTEMS	71.89	100
EPIC 88 GOLD	80.88	100	BYTE BACK	69.88	100
MUSICAPE	80	100	ISA	69.83	100
IR BLITZ	79.80	100	HENSON	69.52	100
POI	79.48	100	CANSTAR	69.17	100
ARTIBONE	79	100	COOL MASTER	67.93	100
8-BIT	78.20	100	RELIFE	66.6	100
MICROTRAIL	78.17	100	FLAMES FUMBER	66.17	100
SHROULAN	78	100	88-178 GOLD	66.07	100
ALPHABET	77	100	88-18	66.01	100
POYPHONE	76.80	100	88-100	66.00	100
ISA	76.19	100	MULTI-PHONE	65.7	100
ELECTRONIC ARTS	76.02	100	FRONCO	62.47	100
88-ORANGE	75.70	100	SHAMAN	61.6	100
CDI	75.13	100	NELOUNGE HOUSE	61.00	100
ACTUAL SCHEDULES	74.6	100	88-100	60.00	100
ACTVISION	74.09	100	88-7	60.17	100

THE 16-BIT COUNTER

If you've got a 16-bit machine, this is where you should be looking to decide how to spend your hard earned pounds this month...

FLY-COMBAT PILOT	Digital Integration	Amiga	94.47
88-100	Coman	Amiga	92.04
BOMBER	ACTVISION	81.67	
88-178 GOLD	Image Works	Amiga, ST	91.18
ARTIBONE	Intouch	Amiga	88.79
TRUCK	US Gold	Amiga, ST	88.6
88-178 GOLD	Electronic Arts	Amiga, ST	88
88-100	Pixel-Monster	Amiga, ST	84.79
88-100	Image Works	Amiga, ST	83.79
CONTINENTAL CIRCUS	Viggo	Amiga, ST	83.42

Reviews by: Mike Adams, John, Bill Ingham, and Shadow of the Beast.

THE MACHINE COUNTER

Oh, here are the month's 16-bit top games for each machine. You can win magazines by naming next month's 16-bit top. Check out the system image...

ATARI	NEW ZEALAND STORY	Dragon	86.75	COMBIB	84	Coman	85.75
88-178 GOLD	88-100	Dragon	86.4	88-100	84.88	Coman	85.57
88-100	88-100	Dragon	85.7	INTOUCHABLES	Coman	84.87	
FLY-COMBAT PILOT	CONTINENTAL CIRCUS	Viggo	84.6	NEW ZEALAND STORY	Coman	84.87	
88-100	SPECTRUM	Dragon	81.20	88-100	Dragon Omega	84.29	
88-100	INTOUCHABLES	Dragon	81.00	88-100	System 3	83.75	
88-100	88-100	Dragon	80.00	88-100	88-100	83.00	
88-100	NEW ZEALAND STORY	Dragon	80.75	88-100	88-100	82.67	
88-100	88-100	Dragon	80.25	88-100	88-100	79.00	
88-100	88-100	Dragon	79	88-100	88-100	78.25	
88-100	88-100	Dragon	78	88-100	88-100	77.1	
88-100	88-100	Dragon	76.00	88-100	88-100	71	

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102 £399.00 INC VAT

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In pack includes C64 computer, power supply, mouse and, light gun, 3D laser, Robotics, Rambo / Pitaco, Hyperpunks, What School, Batman the cat crossover, Mike Points (over), 3D action pack (over) Days, Gadget and the Traveler. Plus artc maps, music cassette, joy labor and Shockem Up activation kit.
102 £149.99 INC VAT

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AMIGA EXTERNAL DRIVES	100.00	100.00
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AMIGA ACCESSORIES

AMIGA ACCESSORIES	100.00	100.00
AMIGA ACCESSORIES	100.00	100.00
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AMIGA ACCESSORIES	100.00	100.00

COMMODORE C64

COMMODORE C64	100.00	100.00
COMMODORE C64	100.00	100.00
COMMODORE C64	100.00	100.00

AMIGASTORE MONITORS

AMIGASTORE MONITORS	100.00	100.00
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AMIGASTORE MONITORS	100.00	100.00

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EPSON PRINTING	100.00	100.00
EPSON PRINTING	100.00	100.00
EPSON PRINTING	100.00	100.00

PARANOID PRINTERS

PARANOID PRINTERS	100.00	100.00
PARANOID PRINTERS	100.00	100.00

MANUSCRIPT PRINTERS

MANUSCRIPT PRINTERS	100.00	100.00
MANUSCRIPT PRINTERS	100.00	100.00

DISKOLIA

DISKOLIA	100.00	100.00
DISKOLIA	100.00	100.00

DRINKS

DRINKS	100.00	100.00
DRINKS	100.00	100.00

AT&T

AT&T	100.00	100.00
AT&T	100.00	100.00

COMPUTER PERSONAL ORGANIZER 2

PERSONAL ORGANIZER 2	100.00	100.00
PERSONAL ORGANIZER 2	100.00	100.00
PERSONAL ORGANIZER 2	100.00	100.00
PERSONAL ORGANIZER 2	100.00	100.00
PERSONAL ORGANIZER 2	100.00	100.00

OTHER THINGS

OTHER THINGS	100.00	100.00
OTHER THINGS	100.00	100.00
OTHER THINGS	100.00	100.00
OTHER THINGS	100.00	100.00
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PLEASE CORRECT ON 2nd/3rd Issues for errors

MEGALAND

stars of the year that should not be missed.
AGE RATED 13+

RYF

Macintosh • \$74.95
 Amiga • \$79.95

RYF offers a near-endless supply of fast-paced bike action as you race your friends. **RYF** attention to detail is paid out all along the route with your rider going the like a path that after a crash, or accident one of accidents and collisions. **AGE RATED 13+**

SPIDERTRON-IC

On International • Atari ST • \$29.95

Guide your spider-like character around the game area, collecting colored panels in the correct order. The built-in combination of music you'll be looking out for you can locate all the new game items. **AGE RATED 100**

SUMMER GAMES

Apple II/II+ • \$49.95
 DOS • \$14.95
 MS-DOS • \$19.95

Enjoy sporting simulations of high quality but now have quite captured the playability and style of the original Summer Games and its immediate successor, Summer Games 2. One to six players can take part in high-pace games, spring board diving, clay pigeon shooting, swimming, you name it... and others... with lively graphics and smooth animation throughout. Control of your athlete can be controlled in practice is recommended. **AGE CLASSIC**

SUPER SPRINT

Commodore • \$24.95
 DOS • \$24.95
 Amstrad • \$24.95
 Spectrum • \$24.95
 Atari ST • \$24.95

One of the better strategy simulations currently available. With up to three players all competing at once, the action is fast

and furious and it will take a five-minute-or-to-complete some of the more tortuous circuits that appear later in the game. **AGE RATED 13+**

THRUST

Atari Spectrum • \$1.95
 DOS • \$4.95
 Amstrad • \$1.95

Tamelying sensitive controls and a range feeling of realistic physics make this budget title an absolute must. Flying down through the streams of an enemy-held planet, you have to pick up fuel and destroy hostile jet fighters without crashing into the target walls. Tough enough as it is, but then you've got to make the return journey with a heavy load along under your craft, they mean, very addictive. **AGE (CLASSIC)**

URIDIUM

Atari Spectrum • \$24.95
 DOS • \$24.95
 Amstrad • \$24.95
 Spectrum • \$24.95
 Atari ST • \$24.95

The great excitement of handling dual dragons hand the dragonhead and attacking ships while dodging around any large structures. Great metal-looking dragonheads and the shimmering pointing, you'll ever see out this front end (readers above the opposition). A game not to be missed, especially now that CD-ROM versions come packaged with the excellent Personal **AGE CLASSIC**

ZARCH / VIRUS

Superior Software • \$24.95
 Amstrad • \$24.95
 Freedom II • \$24.95
 Atari ST • \$24.95
 Commodore • \$24.95

A solid three-dimensional shooter-up with such graphic perfection and instantly addictive game play that it became an instant classic. Now the CD-ROM version has arrived and they're just as good as the original version. **AGE RATED 13+**

ADVENTURES

After a brief surge of NPC-related popularity, the traditional text-entry adventure is rapidly disappearing. But for those of you who savour the powers of the imagination, the verbal twist, and the thrill of encountering other characters, this genre still has much to recommend it. Here are some of the all-time great computer fantasies...

BEYOND ZORK

Infocom/Infocom • \$24.95
 DOS • \$24.95
 Amiga • \$24.95
 Atari ST • \$24.95

Infocom's attempt to cross over in the role-playing market in a great success. Leads the fabrication. *Commander Zork* is a game that combines the wit and ingenuity of one of the world's most original software companies with state-of-the-art graphics and graphics. Technically well up to snuff in many ways. **AGE RATED 100**

CORRUPTION

Infocom • Atari ST • \$24.95
 DOS • \$24.95
 Spectrum • \$24.95
 Amstrad • \$24.95
 Atari ST • \$24.95

The tale of master thief ego, identity and involved business deals is unlikely to appeal to adventures who prefer to wander through vast dungeon networks seeking treasure. But for those who are fed up with traditional sword-fang, it's like a breath of fresh air. Superb graphics, great atmosphere and a gripping plot makes this a terrific game that goes from the start. **AGE RATED 100**

FISH

Magnific Software • PC • \$24.95
 Amiga • \$24.95

More graphics than *Commander Zork*, better game design than *Zork*, and not as quirky as *The*

Pen. This is definitely the best release since *Quest* or *Thames*. Good stuff indeed. **AGE RATED 100**

GUILD OF THIEVES

Infocom • \$24.95
 Spectrum • \$24.95
 Amstrad • \$24.95
 Amiga • \$24.95
 Atari ST • \$24.95
 DOS • \$24.95

One of Infocom's most adventures software features... *Magnific* leads a team up to protect a man from a monster. Well up to snuff in many ways. **AGE RATED 100**

INGRID'S BACK

Level 7 • Atari ST • \$24.95

A great follow-up to *Golden Bagger*. Level 7 have really got to grips with the use of characters in their games and how to program them very effectively. **AGE RATED 100**

JEWELS OF DARKNESS

Infocom • \$24.95
 Spectrum • \$24.95
 Amstrad • \$24.95
 DOS • \$24.95
 Amiga • \$24.95
 Atari ST • \$24.95

Level 7 have got together three of their classic releases, *Commander Zork*, *Dungeon Adventure*

and *AdventureQuest* in one bundle. The games have been updated with graphics and larger world areas and are as close to the original spirit of adventuring as you're likely to find. **AGE CLASSIC**

LURKING MONSTER

Infocom/Infocom • \$24.95
 DOS • \$24.95
 Amiga • \$24.95
 Atari ST • \$24.95

Infocom's tribute to H.P. Lovecraft and the horror-fantasy genre sends you into a cool world as you discover something very scary lurking beneath your college town's streets. Superb text-only game that takes you to play it after dark. **AGE CLASSIC**

TIME AND MAGIC

Infocom • Spectrum • \$24.95
 DOS • \$24.95
 Amiga • \$24.95

PUZZLES

If you're after a game that will provide you with a real challenge, without necessarily requiring large doses of strategic thinking, then it's a puzzle game you want.

BONE-CRUNCHER

Superior Software • \$24.95
 DOS • \$24.95
 Amiga • \$24.95

At first sight this puzzle release may appear to be nothing more than a low-level desktop game. However there are a number of innovative graphics features which give *Bonecruncher* a real edge. **AGE RATED 100**

DEFLECTOR

Commodore • \$24.95
 DOS • \$24.95
 Spectrum • \$24.95
 Atari ST • \$24.95

Splice up the order of the dice face but the spin depends on the order they're rolled a laser beam to a mirror and at the same time during a

Amstrad • \$24.95
 DOS • \$24.95
 Amiga • \$24.95
 PC • \$24.95

The completion of the Level 7 game, *Level 7*, *Amstrad* and the Price of High has been replaced with better pricing, bigger resolution and colours added. Superb value if you don't already own them. **AGE RATED 100**

ZORK ZERO

Infocom/Infocom • \$24.95
 DOS • \$24.95
 Amiga • \$24.95
 Atari ST • \$24.95
 PC • \$24.95

Infocom's tribute to H.P. Lovecraft and the horror-fantasy genre sends you into a cool world as you discover something very scary lurking beneath your college town's streets. Superb text-only game that takes you to play it after dark. **AGE CLASSIC**

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RPG

Role-playing games have exerted an enormous influence on modern game-styles. They combine the atmosphere of text adventures with the action of arcade games and the brain exercise of strategy — but their graphical presentation tends to be weaker than other game genres. Gameplay centres around developing characters by raising their experience and skill levels in conflict with other, computer-controlled nasties. All that — and a quest too...

124.95

The third game using the Tempest system is a lot of fun, despite the fact that it's not an arcade game. In total, you're in battling spirit form back in the 1920s, trying to unravel the maze adventures for those explorers who introduced the Tempest system to a planet.

ACE RATED: BT-400 (1990)

WZBALL

OS/2 ■ C64 £8.95 ■
£4.95 ■ Amstrad
£8.95 ■ £12.95 ■
Spectrum £8.95
£4.95

Remove Michael and capture the colour creature when you start on obtaining the spectrum and rendering the landscape grey and flat. One of the best arcade games around, despite the simple controls.

ACE Classic

THE BARD'S TALE II

Electronic Arts, C64
£19.95, Amiga £14.95

The highly successful predecessor to *Bards Tale II*, it's got the advantage of being slightly easier to obtain. The Amiga version includes some very nice animated music sheets when you enter a temple and a specially coloured graphics font of course, you can update your favourite characters, their

attributes and equipment for you in BT II.

ACE RATED: 400

THE BARD'S TALE III

Electronic Arts, C64
£14.95

The latest *Bard's Tale* game offers a number of refinements over its predecessors (all of which are still well worth taking a good look at). First, the graphics are better animated. Second, there are ranged combat fire lines which take careful account of the distance between you and your opponents. Finally, the game's large and open world enables you for money.

ACE RATED: 400

BATTLETECH

Blood, PC £29.95, BT

BattleTech features some incredible customisable scenarios, arcade style action, role play and strategy. In short a complete, full game. A real fast RPG purchase even though it received an *A* on our rating.

ACE RATED: 400

DUNGEON MASTER

Electronic Arts, C64
£14.95

Good at being a little less an Advanced Core (see Entertainment), *Dungeon Master* offers 24 levels, loads of spells, atmosphere

graphics and sound. All going to make *Dungeon Master* one of the best role-playing adventures to have appeared on any machine.

ACE RATED: 400

POOL OF RADIANCE

US GOLD, C64
£19.95 ■ Amiga
£14.95

3D was very hard to attempt to capture the complex concept of the

AS&D system on a computer, but they managed superbly. An RPG-style sword game that all appear to not only AS&D fans but to anyone looking for an entertaining game that will keep them

playing for months.

ACE RATED: 401

ULTIMA V

Origin Systems/Microsoft
C64 £26.95 ■ PC
£29.95 ■ £7.95 (to be announced)

BRAIN GAMES

Fed up with mindless blasting? Want a game that offers you an opponent who's worthy of your skills? Then this is your section...

CHESS MASTER 2000

SpectraSoft Arts, C64
£19.95 ■ £14.95 ■
Amiga £19.95 ■ Star
£1 £26.95 ■ PC
£24.95

Strongest chess game on the home, with excellent graphics, 20- or 30-second, 12-level of effort to end all the playing options you could wish for. Plus some fairly nice speech features.

ACE CLASSIC

COLOSSUS CHESS 4

C64 ■ C64 £9.95 ■
£4.95 ■ Amstrad
£9.95 ■ £4.95 ■
Spectrum £9.95

Best bet for that machine owners, with a choice of 2D or 3D view, anytime levels of difficulty, and a

replay system which enable you to play watch, work out those problems, etc. again at the computer or opponent.

ACE CLASSIC

COLOSSUS MAN JONG

C64 ■ C64 £9.95 ■
£14.95 ■ Amstrad
£9.95 ■ £14.95

Bunny-like oriented game of strategy and chance. A later program and a short manual make this an easy to use and highly entertaining piece of software for either use and occasional play.

ACE RATED: BT-404

INFORMERS' BRIDGE

Informatics, Amstrad
£12.95 ■ £15.95 ■
PC £12.95

Graphically the best of all computer bridge simulations, with large playing cards depicted against a suitable game board background. Plays a good game for a computer, which often allows a bit more in the imagination and fun department, and has some a wide range of options and looking variations which you can toggle at according to your taste.

ACE CLASSIC

POWERPLAY

Amstrad, C64 £8.95 ■
£14.95 ■ Amstrad
£8.95 ■ £14.95 ■
Amiga £19.95 ■ Atari
£1 £29.95

If you want to try out your general knowledge, we reckon you'd be better off with the original and vital looking combination of

strange game and quiz than with the extremely readable solving *Trivial Pursuit*. Remember, it's graphically very pretty in its setting on Amstrad Spectrum, Amstrad or the C64.

ACE RATED: 400 - Amiga

SCRABBLE

Lotus Games, C64
£24.95 ■ £14.95 ■
Amstrad £9.95 ■ £4.95
■ PC £24.95

The hugely popular word game translated very successfully into the home. Fast, excellent display, and a delightfully tight vocabulary list if it does include some change looking words on some occasions. Good enough to give some strong human opponents a tough game at the higher levels.

ACE CLASSIC

WAR GAMES

Fancy yourself as a master of grand strategy, marshalling herds of troops and sending them off to do battle on your behalf? Look no further than the ACE war games section...

ARMEM

C64, Spectrum £9.95 ■
Amstrad £9.95 ■ C64
£9.95

One of the oldest quality wargames featured in the section, *Armem* was originally the best in the field. It has all the expected atmosphere, war scenario scenarios and one of the toughest computer opponents you could wish not to meet. A thoroughly absorbing wargame which can be played on any of the old machines.

ACE RATED: 400

CONFLICT EUROPE

Mitromax, BT £4.95,
Amiga £29.95, PC £84

The 1:64 progression of *Theatre Europe*. Lots of extra graphics and sound effects. The computer controlled intelligence was originally considered but still enough to give a challenging game. The interface between strategy and command is superb. Good for beginners and intermediate players.

ACE RATED: 400

THEATRE EUROPE

MIT, Spectrum £9.95 ■
C64 £9.95 ■ £4.95 ■
Amstrad £9.95
£14.95

The perfect game for that certain role of game with any army when they look at *Conflic Europe*. *Theatre Europe* is the successor to be considered as the best. The graphics and overall play are not as sophisticated as the whole of it, but it's a good look of a game.

ACE RATED: 401

LMS

Blood, BT £24.95, PC
£24.95, Amstrad
£24.95, Amiga £29.95

Probably the greatest war game to date. LMS' unique 3D system enables the creation of almost any battle in history, as well as a very sophisticated computer opponent. On top of this are 400+ of scenarios and a very neat command system. It's a game you going for some long. An essential purchase.

ACE RATED: 401

FLIGHT SIMULATIONS

How about flying the latest US Stealth Fighter on a mission over Siberia? Or perhaps a quick flight over Hawaii would be more relaxing? Computer flight simulations can fulfill any flight fantasy.

BATTLEHAWKS 1942

Luxsoft/Games US Gold ● ST \$24.95 ● Amiga \$24.95 ● PC \$24.95

A WWII naval air combat simulator covering the four most important battles of the 1942 Pacific war. For kowtow-whitening action this one has everything — the sense of 'being there' is tremendous. Thrilling and surprisingly addictive stuff.

● ACE RATED 920

BOMBER

Academy ● Spectrum \$14.95 ● \$19.95 ● C64 \$14.95 ● \$19.95 ● Amstrad \$14.95 ● \$19.95 ● ST \$24.95 ● Amiga \$24.95 ● PC \$24.95

Vector Graphics has spent a long time on this one — and it certainly shows. The game gets the balance just right between convincing simula-

tion and entertaining game. Highly recommended.

● ACE RATED 925

CHUCK YEAGER'S ADVANCED FLIGHT TRAINER

Electronic Arts ● Spectrum ● C64 ● C65 ● ST ● Amiga ● PC \$24.95

Fly a multitude of aircraft from an early biplane to the Space Shuttle. It's entertainingly different from your standard flight sim and there's so much in this game that it will take many hours of instructive fun to experience and master all of the available scenarios.

● ACE RATED 913

F-16 COMBAT PILOT

Digital Integration ● ST \$24.95 ● Amiga

\$24.95 ● PC \$24.95

This took nine person years to develop, and you can feel that quality of work when playing it — it's one of the most realistic flight sims on the market. If you are a connoisseur of flight simulators then this is an essential addition to your collection.

● ACE RATED 970

FALCON

Spectrum Hardware/Micro-soft ● ST \$24.95 ● Amiga \$24.95 ● PC \$24.95 ● MAC

If you really want the terror, exhilaration and sheer everything-happens-at-once confusion of combat flying, this game delivers. Make no mistake, this game is the real thing. An essential purchase for hot-hot fans.

● ACE RATED 945

FLIGHT SIMULATOR II

Classic ● C64 £39.95 ● ST £49.95 ● Amiga £49.95 ● PC £49.95 ● MAC \$49.95

The flight sim that put the genre on to the map. This outrageously realistic flight sim of a domestic Cessna plane, which is even used by flight schools to train would-be pilots. Can be enhanced by a variety of scenery disks.

● ACE CLASSIC

INTERCEPTOR

Electronic Arts ● Amiga \$24.95

A low level flight sim with a high level of fun. Paradox may dispute the label 'simulator' — it certainly wouldn't train you to fly a real life bomber — but the program combines realism and gameplay far too well to that to matter. If you want some of the finer air combat action, meticulous graphics and 90 to 100 hours flying period, look no further.

● ACE RATED 934

RACING SIMULATIONS

In the first of an occasional series, ACE takes a special look at a particular game genre and the games that are worth a look. This month it's the form of the venerable racing-simulation, as originally mentioned in our Burning Rubber feature in issue 26...

LOMBARD RAC RALLY

Mindart ● ST ● Amiga ● PC

Race through many types of terrain, such as mountain or forest, and through many types of weather conditions, such as fog or night. The game has a nice atmosphere, and though the variety of gameplay may be a little low, it's still a game you'd be playing for a good while.

FERRARI FORMULA ONE

Electronic Arts ● ST \$24.95 ● Amiga \$24.95 ● PC \$24.95

A bit old this one, but still a game that was way ahead of

its time to start with. Take the wheel of a Formula One Ferrari racer on some of the most famous racetracks in the world. A true thoroughbred.

R.V.F.

Microstyle ● ST \$24.95 ● Amiga \$24.95

The champion in the Best Sprite Based Racing Game stakes, and a superb simulation, this one puts you into the world of performance bike racing on none other than the Honda RVF750. Brilliant graphics, brilliant sound, brilliant game.

STUNT CAR RACER

Microstyle ● Spectrum

\$9.95 ● \$14.95 ● C64 \$9.95 ● \$14.95 ● ST \$24.95 ● Amiga \$24.95 ● PC \$24.95

This places itself in the annals of computer history as being one of the most amazing spectacles to watch, let alone play. The game is first-person perspective, with the outside world made up of really fast smooth filled vectors, and the impression of realism is unbelievable. An amazing experience, and a clear winner. Where can things go from here?

SUPER HANG ON

Electronic Dreams ● Spectrum \$9.95 ● C64 \$9.95 ● \$14.95 ● Amstrad

\$9.95 ● \$14.95 ● ST \$24.95 ● Amiga \$24.95

Not so much a simulation as a perfect arcade conversion of a brilliant bike racing Sega coin-op. Great game, excellent conversion.

THE DUEL - TEST DRIVE II

Accolade ● C64 ● ST ● Amiga ● PC ● MAC

Accolade tried to right all the Test Drive wrongs with the sequel, and to an extent they succeeded. There's nothing serious about the game, it's just a lot of fun. It doesn't claim to be technically as visually accurate, but why should it?

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GRANDSLAM GIVEAWAY

THOSE generous guys and girls down at Grand Slam have decided to celebrate the launch of their Saint and Gravelle soccer quiz game by giving away a bulging bagful of gorgeous goodies. Can

offer you:

A match quality football signed by Saint and Gravelle.

5 Saint and Gravelle board games.

5 Saint and Gravelle computer games.

All you have to do to get your goodies is pass on some of these goodies to find the 45 words listed below in the dis-

gram. All the words are in a straight line, backwards or for-wards, up, down, or diagonally. When you find a word ring it neatly with a bold line. Hold on, hold on... before you rush off for the nearest H&M, there's one more

thing. Once you've found the 45 listed words you must hunt for the name of a famous computer character hidden somewhere in the grid. When you have finished, send your completed grid and entry form to: Grand

Slam Giveaway, ACE Magazine, 30-32 Farringdon Lane, London, EC1R 3AU to arrive no later than 7th December. Employees of ACE and Grand Slam can't enter, even if they are football fans, so 19th box-necked!

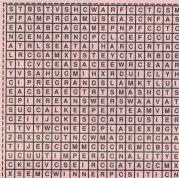
THE WORDS

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ACE

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ST
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The famous computer character hidden in the grid is:

Entries must be received on or before 7th December 1988.

THE ART OF ANIMATION

Duncan Evans has been playing around with Domark's *Fantavision* - and has been driven to investigate animation techniques in general. Here's what he found out...

Traditional cartoon animation technique has changed little since Walt Disney and his team of animators produced such classics as *Snow White* and *Fantasia*. It is the filming technology and animation tools and aids which have developed.

The basics of cartoon animation still revolve around key drawings and the stills in between. Usually the animator will draw an object in two key positions and then mark down how many in-between positions are needed to achieve the desired result. An assistant then has the task of drawing the in-between stages. The very first in-between stage is called the breakdown point, and if significant is often drawn by the animator.

One of the important techniques of 'in-betweening' is that those stages are often not spaced at regular intervals between the breakdown point and the key drawings. To achieve such effects as the slow in, so called because the action slows into a final position, there needs to be more 'in-between's' towards the end of the sequence. The converse of this is the slow out where more 'in-between's' are positioned at the start. Also it is quite rare for sequences to be split into thirds when only two 'in-between's' can be used because of timing restraints. This is much harder to draw, so inevitably a slow in or slow out is used instead.

For rotating objects through three dimensions it is necessary for the assistant to plot the centres of the two key drawings, and then the centre of the breakdown position on a separate sheet of paper. All three sheets are then aligned, with the breakdown sheet being topmost, whereupon the breakdown drawing can be completed. By superimposing sheets it is

possible to trace objects moving through three dimensions and by rotating the sheets around axes can be plotted with greater accuracy.

The making of a full animated sequence that is to be filmed and projected for television or the cinema naturally involves a good deal more stages than a *Fantavision* production, though users of such programs would benefit from following some of the stages.

The script is the first thing to produce, though with animation the dialogue is of far less importance than the visual action, with scripted speech being so memory expensive on computers, this is likely to be kept to a minimum. From the script a storyboard is produced, which portrays the action in a graphical form. Usually at this point the key dialogue and music elements are recorded so that the team of animators can synchronise the cartoon to it.

Once completed an editor assembles it into the film, and then breaks it down photographically, marking on the film where certain sounds begin and end. Meanwhile the director is arranging for designers to produce their own interpretations of the characters in the feature, which when approved will be used as the reference models for the rest of the animation team. The process then advances to Leica reel viewing of the film, too tests, clearing up the drawings by a special cleaning crew, and transferring of drawings to acetate or gel for painting. By this time the backgrounds will have been drawn and painted, and after a final checking everything is passed to the cameraman for actual film shooting. After viewing the rushes, dubbing of sound effects, a final print is developed by merging the film and soundtrack. The finished product is now ready to roll.

COMPUTER ANIMATION

With traditional pen and paper animation being such a time-consuming process, it was inevitable that computers would begin

to play a progressively larger role as they became faster and more powerful.

Iron from Walt Disney was one such film that featured numerous examples of computer generated graphics and received acclaim accordingly. Receiving rather less public enthusiasm was the *Genesis* sequence from a 1982 film, *Star Trek II: The Wrath of Khan*, which was entirely computer created and animated. It was also the longest piece of totally computer generated images seen in a commercial film. That section, and the very best special effects in films such as *Star Wars*, *Cocoon*, *E.T.*, *Polligon* and *Enemy Mine*, was produced by the organisation known as Industrial, Light and Magic, or ILM.

ILM uses the standard technique of creating objects from polygons, and describing them as three dimensional with geometric formula. The smaller the polygon the greater the realism, but some surfaces are very difficult to describe as polygons so those areas are texture mapped. Rather like *Fantavision's* method of using fill patterns, but on a vastly more complex scale. Here textures such as leather, bark and sand are described as three dimensional patches in the computer and then fitted to the surface of the polygon by stretching and size manipulation. Once an object is fully described it can be manipulated at will. The Last Starfighter from Digital Productions featured polygon created starships and space stations, with each one consisting of around 600,000 polygons. Even so the texture of many of the ships was a uniform semi-gloss metal. ILM has received delivery of a computer called the *Pearl* which is capable of processing 80,000,000 polygons, but unfortunately it won't do it quite quickly enough and there is as yet no practical method of storing the colossal amount of data that it entails. When these problems are solved through the degree of surface detail will approach that of 35mm motion picture film. All generated by computer.

THE RADICAL, RARE, RASH, RAUNCHY, RECKLESS, RECOMMENDED, REFRESHING, RESPECTED, REVOLU- TIONARY, RHETORICAL, RIOUS, RISQUE, RUMBUSTIOUS, RUSTPROOF RESULTS PAGE.

Yes folks, it's back - the most tease, the most teased, the most leered, and covered page in the magazine. The page that, without warning, can thrust unsuspecting folk to the height of fame. Yep, it's the Pink Page Compò Results.

THE BEAST HAS EATEN!

First off, an absolutely huge list of lucky people who were first to jump out of the editorial

bat and declare themselves winners of the mainman Progress Beat Feast! compò.

The personalities mentioned below will all be receiving copies of Shadow of the Beast on the Armiga any day now, each complete with a Sassy Roger Dean Beast T-Shirt.

Erny Beffel
Jovins
Llanymyl, Gwynedd;
S.G. Cox, Craster,
Derbyshire; **McK.A.**
Siddiqui, Chiswick,
London; **Andrew**
Clarence, Whitley
Bay, Tyne & Wear;
Alexander Kells,

Waterhouse,
Northampton; **M.A.**
Ringham, Bakers-
field, Nottingham;
Nigel Heale, Whit-
ley Bay, Tyne &
Wear; **H.M. Brown**,
Banfleet, Essex;
Mr J.V. Patel,
Easington, Leicestershire;
and **Joe Taylor**,
Gowlington, Herts.

Top runner-up, who all win the absolutely amazing Roger Dean T-Shirt are:

Simon
Whitehouse, Tulse
Pits, Stoke-on-Trent;
Nick Jones, Hink-
ley, Leicestershire;
Ian Davenport,
Wintborne, Dorset;
Dan Gallagher,

Orrough, Co. Tyrone;
Mark Clavering,
Arlington, Northern
Ireland; **Iain Lyones**,
Fresno, The
Borders; **Christian**
Reig, Roskilde, Den-
mark; **Mr Matthew**
Bridges, Chelms-
ford, Essex; **Mark**
Clapham, Farnol,
Hampshire; **Philip**
Anthony Brown,
Gelling, Herting-
ham.

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goodies to you pro-
to...

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Yeah! Yeah! Remem-
ber that ill of Kase-
low Arts Shop,
Shiny Leather
Compò yet of Ace
boodles ran in them
their perdy Pink
Pages back in Octo-
ber? Why sure ya do.
We had enough
entries want to dry
out Sue Ellen, and
that sure as hell ain't
easy. Those lucky
chiffers mentioned
below should be
receivin' a pair of
sassy Cowboy boots
real soon now, and
why? Cos they was
the first out of the
editorial ten-gallon
hat, that's why.

Mr.M.A. Reed, Ken-
ley, Surrey (he's
gimme thanks his
lovels to his perdy ill
lucky - real'me ya got
yourself a real cool
lubby there); **Mark**
Clapham, Harrogate,
North Yorkshire; and
Glen Durnard, Car-
vey Island, Essex.

Well, that's all for
this month folks. But
you be sure to look
in to next month's
compò results page.
Ya never know, it
could be your lucky
day. See y'all there.

THE PINK ?

We've got a bit ? hanging
over the Pink Pages - and
we reckon you can help us.

Traditionally on ACE the Pink Pages are put
together during the last day or two of the
month! - and this is often reflected in the choice
of nature of the content. However, from now on
we'll be putting them into the full production
cycle; and that means we can pack more into
Pink than ever before.

However, we'd like to hear from Pinkers on the
subject. Perhaps you've got some great ideas
for the section that we ought to know about.
Now's your chance to tell us.

Furthermore, we're prepared to open up
access to the Pink Pages in a way not usually
done on magazines. We've already printed
many cartoons and short stories sent in by
readers - perhaps you're a budding cartoonist
or fiction writer who'd like to get into print.
Now's your chance.

Alternatively, you may have a special interest
you pursue and about which you have expert
knowledge; being perhaps too you could sound
off about flight simulators or RC or just you
could sound off about usand. Short articles in
areas of special interest will often find a place
on these pages.

*You can also help by writing for us to let us
know what you think of the current features in
the Pink: the games survey, the Stock Market
first starting this issue; the puzzles, the cross-
word (leaving this month but back again next
month); and so on. Every bit of information we
get from you helps us to build a better maga-
zine.

Don't forget that the Pinks were always intend-
ed to be YOUR pages...and what pages to have
FUN with. So get in touch now with
The Pink Pages Editor,
ACE Magazine
Privacy Dept
30/30 Farmington Lane
LONDON
EC2M 3AU

THE PRIZE PUZZLE PAGE

SORRY!

Whoops, prize puzzle 19, printed in last month's issue, was subject to a slight hiccup. Unfortunately the sum did not reproduce on the page quite as it should of done.

For those of you who spent hours trying to figure it out and failing...sorry! And to make recompense here in the offending article once again, only this time with the

sum in the correct format. The deadline for entries for puzzle 19 is now 7th December 1989.

PRIZE PUZZLE 19

Set by
Annie Moxes

Jamie was never much good at long multiplication.

"I blame these pocket calculators," his father was used to complain. "Everyone gets lazy and relies on them too much. In my day we had to use brain power..."

"Bright Dad," replied Jamie. "Point me out! But if you want to exercise your little grey cells here's a long multiplication for you to try!"

Jamie sketched the following skeleton

multiplication sum on a piece of paper. Adding a few digits he handed it over.

```

      -- 2
      -- 3 --
      -----
      -- 4 --
      -- 5 --
      -- 6 --
      -- 7 --
      -----
      -- 8 --
      -- 9 --
      -----
      -- 1 --
  
```

The next day at work Jamie's dad was all set to give

up until a colleague came to the rescue with a smart computer program. In the sum shown the dashes represent the positions of the missing digits.

Can you complete the sum?

PRIZE PUZZLE 20

Set by
Annie Moxes

If there is one thing that Henry cannot stand it's Christmas shopping. Over the preceding weeks he had done his best to put off the day on which he had to venture into town, fight his way through the crush and try to find gifts suitable for all those on his list of recipients.

However, to help him in his task he had jotted down a list of items and their prices:

Cassette Player
£15.99

Cuddly teddy bear
£8.85

Gramophone record

£5.99

This year's trendy game
£21.75

Bottle of gin
£9.47

Christmas hamper
£37.99

Shirt & matching tie
94¢
£11.00

This list proved a great help as he was able to select all of his presents from this list (although he did not necessarily buy every item listed). His only complaint was the total bill which came to exactly one hundred pounds. For all his faults, Henry is very generous when it comes to giving presents to his friends and I already have it on good authority that I am down to receive a shirt and tie set!

Can you discover exactly which items were on Henry's present list?

PUZZLE 19 ENTRY FORM

Name _____ Telephone Number _____

Address _____

Closing date: 7th December 1989 (unless decided)

PUZZLE 20 ENTRY FORM

Name _____ Telephone Number _____

Address _____

Closing date: 7th December 1989



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 UNDISCOVERED III ... AMSTRAD'S LARGEST 'FOR A HIC' GUEST RPG/ANIMATED COMBAT/300M FEATURES ... AMSTRAD ... £32.95
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 PERFECT ... GRAPHIC RPG ON CHARACTERS/WEAPONS ? DUNGEON LEVELS/GREAT 'MUSIC' ... IBM/ST/IBM ... £32.95
 TROOP OF A KINGDOM ... FANTASY STRATEGY WARGAME/EXPAND YOUR KINGDOM/DEVELOPS COMMERCE AND
 400 CITIES/PAY TROOPS/EVEN NAME YOUR UNITS/TACTICAL COMBAT ... IBM/ST/IBM ... £27.95
 OMIGA ... DESIGN, IMPROVE & OPERATE THE ULTIMATE 'CYBERLAND' WEPY HIGH V DETAILED ... AMSTRAD/ST ... £27.95
 PRINCE BRADDOCK ... DETAILED GRAPHIC ARMORED COMBAT AT RISK IN WEST OCEAN/300M FOR IBM/AM ... £29.95
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 COMMERCIAL/STRATEGY CONCEPTS/TACTICAL COMBAT FEATURING LOTS OF ATTACKS/PERFECT ... IBM ... £29.95
 EMPIRE OF KINGDOM ... ANOTHER HIGHLY DETAILED GAME FROM BEST OF THE EMPIRE/INFORM OF CHINA ... IBM ... £24.95
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 NFL CHALLENGE ... HIGHLY DETAILED & COMPREHENSIVE 85 FOOTBALL SIMULATION/AVAILABLE ... IBM ... £25.95
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 JOHN EL WAYS OMBASEBACK ... GRAPHIC REAL TIME GAME WITH LOTS OF PLAYS AND ACTION ... IBM/C41 ... £29.95
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WIN A FERRARI!

The month Ace and Domark give you the chance to win the car of your dreams. We're giving away not one, but five cars, each from Ferrari's F40s. What's more you don't believe that! Oh...right... Oh then. They're actually Radio-Controlled Ferraris (and believe me, they are fast).

The models come with a full-function controller with forward, reverse, left/right turn, and stop controls.

They are fast (forward speeds) and a turbo charger (which means this baby runs very, very quickly). Power comes from easily recharged reed batteries, and for night driving there are automatic headlights.

So what is all this

generosity in aid of? Well, Domark is celebrating the launch of the latest title on the Tengen label, Hard Driver. Domark have already brought you a great driving game in the form of Tengen's F15, a really cheap game featuring Officer Bob, a hard working policeman. Now they are about to release computer versions of the best driving simulation ever to hit the arcades.

The game has been featured as the most realistic driving sim ever. You'll be stunned by the smooth solid 3D vector graphics, and super handling of the car. There are three separate challenges in Hard Driver. First there's the Speed Track where the

challenge lies in beating the fastest time. To do this you must overtake slower cars while avoiding oncoming traffic. Once you've mastered that you can try the Stunt Track which features a draw bridge (which always seems to be open) and a complete vertical loop.

If you manage to complete both courses, and that isn't easy, you can challenge the ghostly phantom driver in a test of nerve and co-ordination. Sound good to you? Sure sounds good to me... look out for this one over Christmas.

So, what do you have to do to win one of these rare right hand Ferraris. First, answer the questions below.

- (1) Which company produced the original Hard Driver? Con-vo?
- (2) What was the name of another recent driving game from Domark which featured a hard working police patrolman?
- (3) Which of the following feature is not to be found on the Radio-Controlled Ferrari F-40s?
- (a) Two-speed forward running.
(b) Car stereo.
(c) Working headlights.

Hold it, hold it, I'm not finished yet. Once you've done that take the following words and use them to construct a new phrase. You don't have to use all of the letters, but you can't use any that aren't given here. The numbers of the five wildest and most pertinent phrases (with all the questions right) will win the Ferrari.

DOMARK TENGEN HARD DRIVER FERRARI

Send your answers on the form below to:
Yeah, sure I wanna Ferrari, ACE magazine, Priority Court, 30-32 Farringdon Lane, London, EC2R 3AL.

Don't forget to clearly state your name and address. Entries must reach us by 7th December 1988.

ACE FERRARI COMPETITION ENTRY FORM

NAME

ADDRESS

.....

.....

.....

Send entries to:

Yeah, sure I wanna Ferrari,
ACE,
Priority Court,
30-32 Farringdon Lane,
LONDON, EC2R 3AL

Answers

Answers

ACE DIARY

NOV/DEC '89

NOVEMBER

WEEK'S RELEASES AT A GLANCE

Oliver (Strike Back) CD from TL, Microsoft - Computer master (MS-DOS) interface CD and floppy from Image Works - 3D vector graphics sheet set

Ballistics (format from magazines - based on French cartoon/magazine) 3D-City (single, PC and CD) from magazines - multifunctional Golf (in water)

Titan on the Moon (format from magazines - based on 60-year old comic book hero) Benjamin HPC from Palace - book, tape and text again Benjamin (Bio's) Activist PC (single package) from Palace - tape featuring Space (by CD) and Amiga from Readysoft - record to Origo's Ltd

MONDAY 13

31 shopping days and Christmas. Plenty of time yet.

Festival of St Francis, patron saint of migrants.

TUESDAY 14

Happy Birthday to King Hussein of Jordan.

WEEK'S RELEASES AT A

GLANCE

Star Games (PC) from Kudos - strange activities in American pubs.

Head Over (all formats) Best Demos (Amiga, Atari) conversion Double CPC tape and disk from Demos - not on Amiga now take note - even MSX from Grand - based on recently famous football team and CD.

Seven Gates of Jambou CD, Amiga and CD from Scandinavia - no, just, not full and huge.

Dark CD from Scandinavia Double CD and Amiga from Newcom - annual adventure

Scandal CD and Amiga from Newcom

50-Year CD and Amiga from Newcom - car racing for roadings

4 Cities From Ben Quail (single, MSX, only from Microsoft)

Master Warrior CD, Amiga, PC from Greenwood - book and tape in fantasy setting

MONDAY 20

Last posting date for Christmas: the Alps, Canary Islands, the Vatican, Spain, Mexico and San Marino

THURSDAY 23

The Americans start back again: their turkey now

for Thanksgiving day

FRIDAY 24

Computer Shopper Show, Alexandra Palace, London 100 Software and hardware bargains in a carnival atmosphere.

SATURDAY 25

Computer Shopper Show, Alexandra Palace, London 100

WEEK'S RELEASES AT A GLANCE

Computer Shopper (all formats) from CDG - football strategy

Wizards (MSX) tape and disk from Demos Star Wars Trilogy (tape) Best from Demos - all three titles in one package Dynamic Debugger (Amiga) from Image Works - about ten up

Star Company (CD) and Amiga from Logotron - about ten up Jig Saw (Amiga and PC) from Logotron

Handball (PC) from Activ - basketball on

MONDAY 27

Last posting date for Christmas: all of southern Italy Europe

THURSDAY 30

St Andrew's day Gary Loden (see 1989)

Festival of St Egidio, patron saint of leish, farmers and metalworkers.

WEEK'S RELEASES AT A GLANCE

Powerball (CD) (all formats) for Spectrum from Available - powerful racing car

Dr Doom's Revenge (all formats) from Empire - comic book action

FRIDAY 31

Wizards (MSX) tape and disk from Demos Star Wars Trilogy (tape) Best from Demos - all three titles in one package Dynamic Debugger (Amiga) from Image Works - about ten up

Star Company (CD) and Amiga from Logotron - about ten up Jig Saw (Amiga and PC) from Logotron

Handball (PC) from Activ - basketball on

MONDAY 4

Patron saint of countries,

Wag (CD) and Amiga from Goodwin

Save CD, Amiga and PC from Progress

Shout (CD) (all formats) from CD Gold - Capcom ending commercial

Army Medal (all formats) from Amiga/MS Gold - 60 army unit

War of the Lance (MSX) from USAS/Gold - RPG

WEDNESDAY 8

Festival of St Nicholas, patron saint of children,

children, pawnbrokers and other causes. See Number out To Mention

THURSDAY 7

January edition of ACE goes on sale. Form an orderly queue in your newspaper.

SATURDAY 9

Now only twice shopping days with Christmas - fighting, isn't it?

ACE DIARY FORM

Please include the enclosed details in the earliest possible ACE DIARY. (Please make sure you send us your details as far in advance of the event as you can.)

COMPANY/ORGANISATION:

ADDRESS:

PHONE:

FAX:

NATURE OF EVENT:

DETAILS ENCLOSED

FREE PUBLICITY!

That's right - if you've got something going on that you think should feature in the ACE Diary, then let us know. It's it as much as we can (subject to mutual agreement), so drop us the details with the form above in ACE Diary, Priority Post, 30-32 Farnborough Lane, London EC1R 3AJ. Alternatively fax us on 01 450 0350.

ACE DEALERS

Virgin Games Center
head office 061 3530;
contact Carolyn Stebb
Friday.

Tek's sets

The rapidly expanding
Tek's Computers &
Video opened its new
store on November
4, in Beckenham
High Street, Kent.

Why not stroll down to
take a look? The shop
stocks 16-bit comput-
ers and games (both
on 8-bit), as well as
PC games, magazines
and PC engine software
and they've promised
to support the Home
MultiSystem when (if)
it becomes available.

Beckenham a bit out of
your way? Other Tek's
computer stores are in
Sidcup, High Street,
Orpington, High Street
and Pottis Wood Sta-

tion Square - all in
Kent.

Laughing all the way to
the hardware

Look out for stickers
on shelves and windows
proclaiming that the
store is taking part in
the Funbank scheme.
Buy your software
from a Funbank dealer,
and you'll be on your
way to earning free
games.

It works like this: you
can pick up your spe-
cial Funbank passport
from any participating
store. Every time you
buy a 16-bit title you
get two tokens to stick
into your passport!
Every time you buy an
8-bit title you get a single
token.

Twelve tokens in your
passport means you
can claim a free 8-bit

game; 25 tokens a
free 16-bit game. Send
your filled passport to
distributor (address on
the passport - stating
which title you'd like
and wait for it to flood
through the letterbox.
You have until the end
of January to take up
Lexussoft and its
dealers up and down
the country on their
offer, so start collecting
now!

Top Man goes soft

If you buy your clothes
from Top Man (some-
os, admit it, you may
have noticed one of
the season's newlines
in... software. Chain
store Microbyte, which
has nine outlets in the
North and Midlands,
will be opening a 'shop
within a shop' of 15
Top Man products
over the next few

months.

'Toys for the Boys'
logo will be the name
of the in-store competi-
tion, and will sell cas-
settes and CDs as well
as the Top 15-20 soft-
ware titles for Amiga,
ST, Spectrum, C64
and Amstrad formats.

Look out for 'Toys for
the Boys' in Top Man
(Top Man's in June
to come)

Try before you buy ...

... is the theme of the
four Software Super-
store branches.
Between now and
Christmas they'll be
trading in the arcade
cabinets, so that you
can experience all the
thrills of the
console before they
begin buying the com-
puter version.

Chase HQ and Opera-
tion Thunderbolt
machines are built
lined up to make
appearances in the
shops. But it's not just
a matter of a quick
blast before perking
with your money -
there are spot prizes
and freebies such as T-
shirts and posters
waiting to give them-
selves away as well.

And if you buy regular-
ly at Software Super-
store, have you got a
Gold Card yet? Claim a
Gold Card when you
buy any piece of soft-
ware at full price and
you'll get a 10% dis-
count of any
further telephone pur-
chases that you make.

Software Superstore
has outlets at Harley,
Stratford-on-Avon, The
Nagshead, Sheffield,
Little Underbank in

Stockport and the cen-
tre of St Albans.

(plus 10% promotion
from last month's
issue)

All offers and promo-
tions are subject to
availability of stock.
Although we do our
best to ensure our
dealer promotion infor-
mation is accurate at
the time of going to
press, ACE cannot
take any responsibility
for changes or cancella-
tions to dealers'
plans.

Attention dealers! Don't
keep your promotions,
competitions, special
offers, etc., a secret.
Tell us at ACE and we'll
tell everybody else.

ACE DEALERS FORM

Dealers, don't keep your ACE readers in the dark. Send details of your promotions and events to us, and we'll let the world know about them. Just fill in the form and send it with your press pack to: ACE DEALERS PAGE, Priory Court, 36-38 Farringdon Lane, LONDON, EC1R 3AU.

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NATURE OF

PROMOTION/EVENT:

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THE ACE PROFILE

A complete personal profile of the ACE team...

Steve Cooke

Editor

Age: 34
Born: Chelsea

TOP 5 MOVIES

1. Oliver Twist
2. Pleasure
3. Crystal Voyage
4. Match Game
5. After Hours

TOP 5 BOOKS

1. Voyages of Doctor Doolittle
2. Doctors at the End of Time
3. Chronicles of Castle Brass
4. Operation Heartbreak
5. Madame Solario

TOP 5 MUSIC

1. Grateful Dead
2. Jefferson Airplane
3. Quotidian Messenger Service
4. Love
5. Earthlines

TOP 5 FOOD/DRINK

1. Chocolate Semolina
2. Home-Made Steak and Kidney Pie
3. Mescal
4. Hot Chocolate
5. Spanish Hot-Chocolate (Thick)

Rik Haynes

Deputy Editor

Age: 22
Born: Westcliff-on-Sea, Essex

TOP 5 MOVIES

1. Snake Runner
2. Quatermass
3. Immortal
4. The Thing
5. Return of the Living Dead

TOP 5 BOOKS

1. Bonanza
2. The Forever War
3. Neurosurgeon
4. Count Zero
5. Burning Chrome

TOP 5 MUSIC

1. Gary Numan
2. Propaganda
3. Depeche Mode
4. Human League
5. Prince

TOP 5 FOOD/DRINK

1. Italian

2. Chinese
3. Polish
4. Dried Popped Superdry Chinese Gum
5. Lethal

Laurence Scotland

Staff Writer

Age: 23
Born: Eastbourne

TOP 5 MOVIES

1. Dredd
2. Silent Running
3. Apocalyptic Now
4. Blue Velvet
5. Stunt Man

TOP 5 BOOKS

1. The Majors
2. The Maggot
3. Coast Zero
4. On the Beach
5. The Great Gatsby

TOP 5 MUSIC

1. Pink Floyd
2. Lindsay Buckingham
3. Talking Heads
4. John and Virgil
5. Todd Chapman

TOP 5 FOOD/DRINK

1. Dry Martini
2. Hot Chocolate
3. Extra Strong Mints
4. American Hard Seltz
5. Pasta Shell

Jim Willis

Art Editor

Age: 29
Born: Frimley, Cheshire

TOP 5 MOVIES

1. Wild Hail and I
2. Star Trek
3. Mary Poppins
4. Unbearable Automatics to Being
5. How to Get Ahead in Advertising

TOP 5 BOOKS

1. Quark X-Press Manual
"I haven't had time to read anything else"

TOP 5 MUSIC

1. Elton Connors
2. RUSH
3. Lloyd Cole and the Commotions
4. Talking Heads
5. Love Justice

TOP 5 FOOD/DRINK

1. Jack Daniels

2. Hicks Special Draft
3. Chinese Menu of all variety
4. Maltis
5. Rice-Pudding and Jam sandwiches

Garry Williams

Advertising Manager

Age: 28
Born: Warwick

TOP 5 MOVIES

1. Golden Dawn Teller
2. Excess Heat
3. Predator
4. Breakfast Club
5. Clockwork Orange

TOP 5 BOOKS

1. The Waste Factory
2. Ransom
3. Bright Lights, Big City
4. Rules of Attraction
5. Less Than Zero

TOP 5 MUSIC

1. Rick Lee Jones
2. Five Young Combats
3. Barry White
4. George Benson
5. Colby Johnson

TOP 5 FOOD/MUSIC

1. Tennent's Lager
2. Keats
3. Murphy's Irish Stout
4. Higgins Mints
5. Fish and Chips

Jerry Hall

Deputy Advertising Manager

Age: 32
Born: Sheffield

TOP 5 MOVIES

1. Close Encounters of the Third Kind
2. Close Encounters of the Third Kind Special Edition '87
4. Star Dust
5. Sound of Music

TOP 5 BOOKS

1. Wind in the Willows
2. Complete Works of William Shakespeare
3. Mycroft Autobiography
4. Any Doctor Who looks like Peter Haining
5. The complete works of Tom Sharpe

TOP 5 MUSIC

1. Beatles
2. Rolling Stones
3. Motley's

4. ABBA
5. Rory Blue

TOP 5 FOOD/DRINK

1. Steak in Red Wine
2. Tandoori Mutton-Lent
3. Bottle of Southern Comfort
4. Chips and Soft Sugar Beer
5. More Chips with Beans

Melanie Costin

Production Controller

Age: 18
Born: London

TOP 5 MOVIES

1. Dead Poets Society
2. The Goonies
3. Batman
4. Cocktail
5. GI Hatto and Hun

TOP 5 BOOKS

1. Active Norm
2. China Town
3. Any Mills and Boon book
4. GI Hatto and Hun
5. Any Agatha Christie book

TOP 5 MUSIC

1. UB
2. Credence Clearwater
3. Eric Clapton
4. Victor Little
5. George Hermon

TOP 5 FOOD/DRINK

1. McDonald's
2. Champagne
3. Salmon
4. Cheese
5. Fish and Chips

YOUR WEREWOLF PLEASE...

You'll now get all the data needed for a complete psycho-analysis of the ACE team. Are we completely crazy, very sensible or just plain boring? Write now and tell us your comments. Reviews in all our outlets.

The most informative, funny or bizarre set of results will win a special ACE Psycho-Profile booklets certificate signed by professors Cooke, Haynes, Scotland and Mills in a very limited edition of one.

Write to: ACE Profile, Priority Court, 20/21 Farnington Lane, London EC2P 3BA.

THE ACE STOCKMARKET ENTRY FORM

**WHAT YOU
HAVE TO DO**

ROUND ONE

Post this form or a photo copy to ACE, Stock market, Trinity Court, 55-57 Farnington Lane, EC3P 3AJ. Closing date 27th November 1995.

First, you need to check the ACE Index pages to get an idea of the way games and software houses are moving up or down the charts. In future months, you'll also be able to keep a running record of the movements of the software house indices starting this month of 1995 to help you determine long term patterns.

There's £25.00 worth of software for your machine waiting for the first winner in each category each month picked at random from the qualifying entries. If the prize goes unclaimed for any category, we'll add a bonus mystery prize on for the next month - so there'll be some real goodies to get your hands on if you can get it right when others can't!

NAME: _____ Telephone Number: _____

ADDRESS: _____

Computer owned: _____

My prediction for next month's top five software houses on the Com-pact Counter is:

4. _____ 2. _____

5. _____ 3. _____

1. _____

3. _____

2. _____

4. _____

5. _____

My prediction for next month's top five games on the Spectrum is:

4. _____

5. _____

My prediction for next month's top five games on the Atari ST is:

4. _____

5. _____

My prediction for next month's top five games on the Commodore 64 is:

4. _____

5. _____

My prediction for next month's top five games on the Amiga is:

4. _____

5. _____

1. _____

2. _____

3. _____

My prediction for next month's top five games on the Amstrad CPC is:

4. _____

5. _____

1. _____

My prediction for next month's top

five games on the Amiga is:

1. _____

2. _____

3. _____

4. _____

5. _____

Notes:

All entries must be received by the closing date for the month of November 27th 1995.

No winners of 1995 or of any category included in the production, distribution, or sale of ACE Magazine are eligible for entry.

Play one entry per household.

The decision of the judges is final and correspondence cannot be entered into.

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The BLITTER END

IF YOU CAN'T BEAT THEM - EAT 'EM!

While you can't stomach the one. After indulging in hearty parties with the Power Glove, and dancing up and down on NEO's exercise pads, we have now been subsisting to - well for it - the Nintendo canal.

No, this is not a cartoon, it's a very serious business, involving megabucks of license money and yet more income for the Japanese game gurus who could care, if they wanted to, give every gamer/player in Europe a free 128-soft and still show a profit. In fact, the latter tactic has been quite seriously suggested in some corners, who reckon that Nintendo would thus make even more money by flinging us all expensive games to play on our free machines.

Well, that's something to think about over breakfast isn't it? Especially as you stare at the officially licensed canal, the Simpson of South Woodford was so shocked to write in to tell us all about it. The advert reads 'Nintendo is just carbs in a tin. Super Mario Bros! and Tetris! the rescued breakfast if you can't beat them, eat them.' I swear, writes Mat, that this is true.

Don't worry - we believe you. Sigh...

You may by now have heard of the 'difficulties' behind the PC Show. The whole affair is clouded in litigation, but numerous parties are trying to stake their claim to the industry's number one show and the one thing that seems certain is that the PC Show, as you and I know it, will never happen again.

Three-minute silence.

Right, now for the plug. One of the parties attempting to invade it on the ad is none other than ACE's publisher, and blither is therefore perfectly well aware that most people will claim that anything I write in this column will be heard. However, anyone who's known me (and that includes Max Farnon in Brighton) for any reasonable length of time will testify that I have always strongly supported the idea of gamers only show during the Autumn period - and it is a happy coincidence that this is exactly what our publishers are trying to do at now.

The reason for this is devastatingly simple. Computer games have a bad press generally, however self-important the software industry may sometimes feel. Thankfully that's becoming, and good publicity is absolutely vital if the market is to increase. In fact publicity of any kind is better than the massive ignorance most other media show when confronted with the subject of computer entertainment.

The only way we can get publicity is by having a large public show in the country's biggest city or a regular basis, but before Christmas, we need TV coverage, radio coverage, and press coverage. And we ain't going to get that any other way.

There's also the question of new users. I

bought my first computer after seeing the spectrum at the PC Show, I was enticed there by the advertisements in the local press, firing a public showcase for entertainment technology is going to win us more converts than ever before these days with the advent of more impressive products. And it's especially important at a time when so many people are preparing to invest in the industry for the long-term benefits of CEA and other potential professional.

See you at the show, where you can account me to your heart's content of being lapsed. It'll be too busy slipping myself to take much notice.

Pineview Computers in Brighton are busy shifting Public Domain disks by the dozen at only £1.50 each. Use any responsible duplicating house, they obviously have to take stringent precautions against viruses.

Unfortunately, someone in the marketing department has obviously misinterpreted company policy here as the company plan to give away a free condom with each order. When all else fails...

When things get hectic in the ACE office, a 30-day sabbatical period is declared and for a few bleary minutes at you can hear in the thick, thick of desks leaving themselves at an exponential rate behind. Scores of 180 and more are, of course, commonplace.

What is perhaps less impressive in the scores department, and which leads one to suspect that people (particularly computer games players) have abandoned the traditional darts game, is the manner in which the darts board came to grace our office.

Genesis Graphics were the good sports involved - at the PC Show they offered the board and the darts to go with it plus a very nice rubber ducky to the person who got the highest score with three darts during the Show.

Competition was fierce. The highest score achieved by our very own Jerry Hall, was... 61.

As you may have noticed on this issue's front cover, ACE has entered the world of electronic retailing with the introduction of a horrible looking - but very functional - bar code.

Bar codes are already the smart thing to do in the States, but here in the UK we've been a bit slow to catch on. The big advantage, of course, is that you, the reader, will now be able to scan in the relevant details from the issues in your collection using your free computerised bar-code reader and personal filemaker. We anticipate getting this on the cover by around

NEXT MONTH...

In the next issue of ACE we'll be lavishing our annual Christmas present on you. This year it will be an essential fashion accessory which no self-respecting gamerster can afford to be without - the ACE 1990 Diary.

Packed with information on all the things you need to know, it'll be heading on the cover of next month's ACE...

Also in future issues you can look forward to exclusive coverage of hypermedia following a trip to the States, including a look at the successor to Cosmic Osmo and the first D'vil games (see page 185 of this issue).

April 1st of next year.

Fortunately, the bar code won't be quite as obvious as below. This has been an ACE publication.

Finally, just a quick welcome to the latest member of the ACE Team, Heleny Coates, who'll be in charge of ad production. And if you're wondering there isn't a picture on this month's 96 bc, it's because we didn't want to load the poor girl by printing her in black and white.

96-96c

Whoops!

The Concessions Show at the Novotel this month is on the 17th-19th November, and not as previously stated. Apologies to all concerned.

Awaken the beast within you...

ALTERED BEAST

Zeno has called upon you! Only a brave and fearless warrior can save his beloved daughter Athena, from the cunning clutches of Nefiti, evil lord of the Underworld!

Born from the gods, you are possessed with supernatural powers beyond this world. Collect the mystical spirit balls and combine them in an awesome array of weapons - an Amazonian spear and kick combo that cuts like a Windfall and Wave-Tiger up the flanks of the demons of hell! or as they break out your ultimate wish - you had heard!

You have the ultimate eyes of the beautiful Athena and in the name of the Underworld - achieve their goal, the beast within you rises to face the final battle!

ACTIVISION

SEGA

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DYNAMITE

AFTER BURNER



SKARE... RATTLE... ROLL IT!
AFTERBURNER — You've played the arcade classic — now experience the white-knuckled realism of a superpowered dogfight at home! Using your first-person cockpit and laser anti-aircraft fire, can you be top gun against superpowered enemies?

Experience brain-bending G-forces, bosses reeling with the body-jarring push and pull, join with your radar, lock on, and shoot, and FIRE!

INTRODUCING THE LEGAL & ETHICAL USE OF DATA TECHNOLOGIES LTD. This game has been manufactured under license from Sega Enterprises Ltd., Japan.

LAST NINJA 2



Once beaten, but not destroyed, the evil Shogun Kurohiko used all his mystic powers to transport himself through time and establish a new empire of tyranny in modern day Manhattan. In that of Kurohiko's growing powers, the greater gods used all their wisdom to bring you, the Last Ninja, across the steps of time and confront your arch-enemy once more. You arrive in this frightening and awesome modern world bringing nothing with you save your intelligence, skill and cunning and a burning desire for vengeance. Will this be the final battle? Can you vanquish Kurohiko once and for all?
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WEC LE MANS



The World's most famous sports car race comes to your home computer screen with this exciting simulation of the 24 hour Le Mans race. World endurance Championship sports cars battle through day and night sequences where both strategy and driving skills are required to take the winner's laurels. This stimulating challenge inspired by Renault's SE is driving simulator reproduces all the elements at the famous race with every twist and turn of the track.

© Renault

DOUBLE DRAGON



Skillful programming has taken the superb graphics and addictive game play of the monster Arcade hit and faithfully reproduced it in home computer versions.

Join in deadly combat with the savage street gang of the infamous Shadow Boss. Use whatever weapons come to hand as you pursue the gang through the slums, factories, and wooded outskirts of the city to reach the Black Warrior hideout, for the final confrontation with the Shadow Boss himself!

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