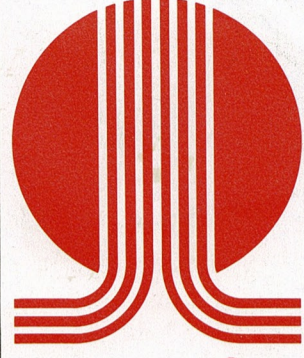


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14.10.91 EUROPE'S ELECTRONIC GAMES TRADE PAPER Issue 358

0604 768711

One meg Amiga sneaks in



SUMNER: Happy to take the P

Many dealers and distributors — and indeed Commodore itself — were caught off guard last week, as the first shipments of the firm's 1Mb Amiga, the A500P, slipped into the UK ahead of schedule.

It's estimated that some 2,000 or more A500Ps have sneaked in, as Commodore struggles to keep up with demand for its Cartoon Classics Pack. The 1Mb model wasn't expected to arrive until early 1992 and has even taken Commodore UK by surprise.

The firm is already shipping its Cartoon Classics pack with an A501 0.5Mb RAM expansion add-on, which effectively makes it a

1Mb machine.

These were originally added to the Screen Gems pack last spring, as a pre-summer offer, and bundled with the Cartoon Classics pack later in the year.

The new A500P (the 'P', for Plus, may be dropped in the UK) has an additional 0.5 Mb built in, dispensing with the need for the bulky add-on, and leaving the expansion slot free for further upgrades.

More units of the machine may arrive later as the firm looks to hit its sales target of 125,000 in the UK by Christmas. It's already well on the way to reaching total sales of 1 million in the UK by this time next year.

Commodore's national sales manager Kelly Sumner

Continued on back page

Genic plans US revival

In the US, Mediagenic is now operating under Chapter 11 and negotiating with its major creditors to pay off its substantial debts.

The firm, including its subsidiaries, Activision Europe and Activision Japan was acquired by The Disc Company at the end of last year but it is only Mediagenic US that is filed under Chapter 11, with Activision's European boss Thomas Ormond insisting to CTW that his division is completely unaffected.

Mediagenic has already filed a petition for re-organization, which, if implemented, would see the majority of its \$17,000,000 paid off through stock rather than cash.

Its two major creditors are Philips and the MGNC Fun-

ding Corp. According to Mediagenic, both have agreed to the proposal.

There is also a committee which has been formed to represent a number of unsecured creditors and this has also approved the plan.

Mediagenic has conceded, however, that some unsecured creditors will never be paid what they are owed.

If the plan goes through creditors will control around 80 per cent of Mediagenic's common stock. The Disc Company will be hoping that, with the threat of the creditors suspended, it can make Mediagenic profitable by concentrating on Nintendo and PC games, regain a listing on the stock exchange, thus giving the creditors' stock real worth and then begin to buy back shares.

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Sega retail deal blocks renting bust-up

Sega Europe and video chain Blockbuster have settled their differences, with Blockbuster deciding to retail rather than rent consoles and cartridges.

Earlier in the year, Blockbuster, a US firm with big UK ambitions, began renting Sega's products, much to the chagrin of the manufacturer which immediately issued a public statement declaring that as from October 1st, it would take action against anyone renting its copyrighted product.

Blockbuster has subsequently decided that rather than miss out on the booming market altogether, it will sell the product for now, and work towards changing

Sega's attitude to rentals in the future.

It will be taking Sega's Master System and Megadrive plus a "comprehensive" range of cartridges.

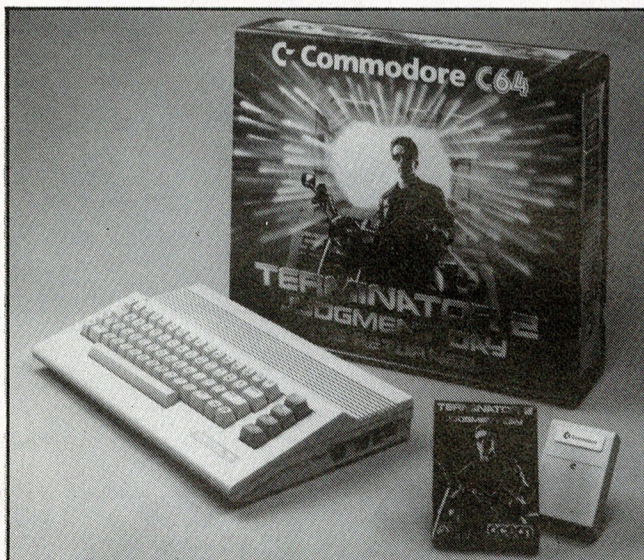
The video firm's UK managing director Mike Toll told CTW: "We're both major firms that want to work together rather than against each other. At the moment this is the only way we can do that, but in the future I think rental may well come about."

After a frosty start, relations between the console market, or Sega at least, and the video trade seem to be warming, with the Blockbuster agreement coming in the same week as the decision of another video chain, Images, to stock consoles. (See separate story on page three).



BLOCKBUSTER: Stocking Sega — on Sega's terms

T2 pack pushes C64 back on TV



C64: T2 on TV

Commodore last week finally confirmed its C64 Terminator II pack and announced that it is to advertise the veteran machine on national TV for the first time in over five years.

As predicted by CTW last month, the bundle contains the C64, keyboard and a cartridge featuring Ocean's Terminator II and a couple of "worthy" titles from Domark, Music Maker and The Image System.

The impressive pack comes with a £20 price hike, retailing at £119 — a move

that has puzzled some influential sectors of the retail trade.

Commodore is confident, however, that the C64 will yet again be a prime mover this Christmas. Indeed it is so pleased with the Terminator pack that it has lined up a TV campaign.

The firm would not reveal exactly how much it is spending on promoting the veteran, saying only that it would take a "decent chunk" of the £5.5 million rate card spend allocated to the 64, Amiga and CDTV.

A spokesman for the firm told CTW: "Terminator II is something special and this year with that name and a TV

campaign behind it, it could even outsell the Amiga. We're certainly looking at over 150,000 between now and Christmas.

"Some people have queried the price rise, but everyone still seems to be stocking it don't they? I think most people understand that you have to pay for licences like this."

National sales manager Kelly Sumner added: "Computer games are great fun, but it's only with software like Music Maker and The Image System, combined with the C64 keyboard that children can actually learn and make the most of their leisure time."

EA links up for multimedia push

Electronic Arts has teamed up with two large US firms to form a new outfit dedicated to multimedia activities.

The firm has linked with Time Warner Enterprises, which specialises in book and magazine publishing, and Kleiner Perkins Caufield and Byers, which was apparently instrumental in setting up EA, Compaq, and Lotus among others.

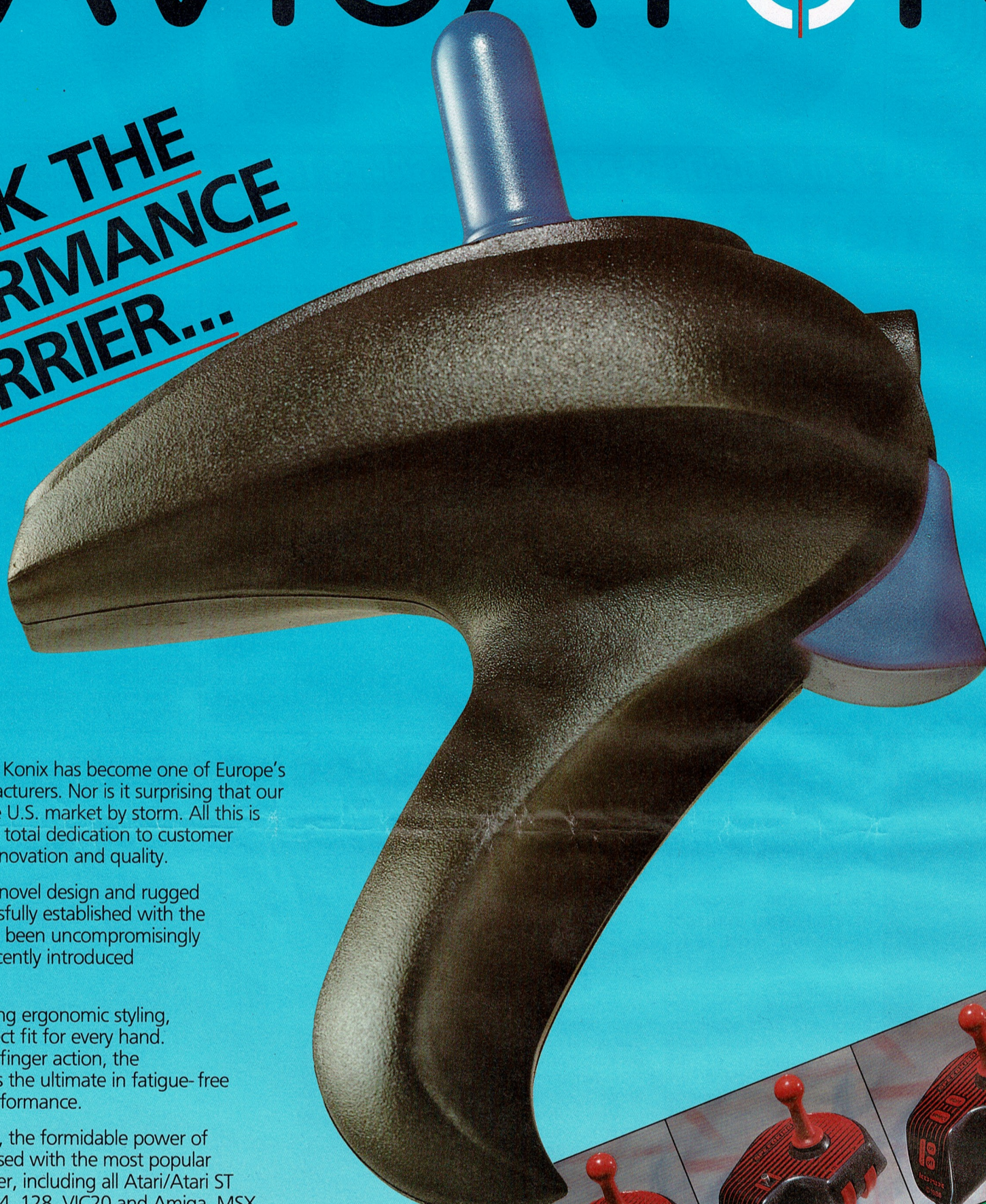
The end result of the collaboration is a firm called SMSG, which will be based in Electronic Arts hometown of San Mateo, California.

It's understood that there is a certain amount of EA

Continued on back page

NAVIGATOR

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PERFORMANCE
BARRIER...**



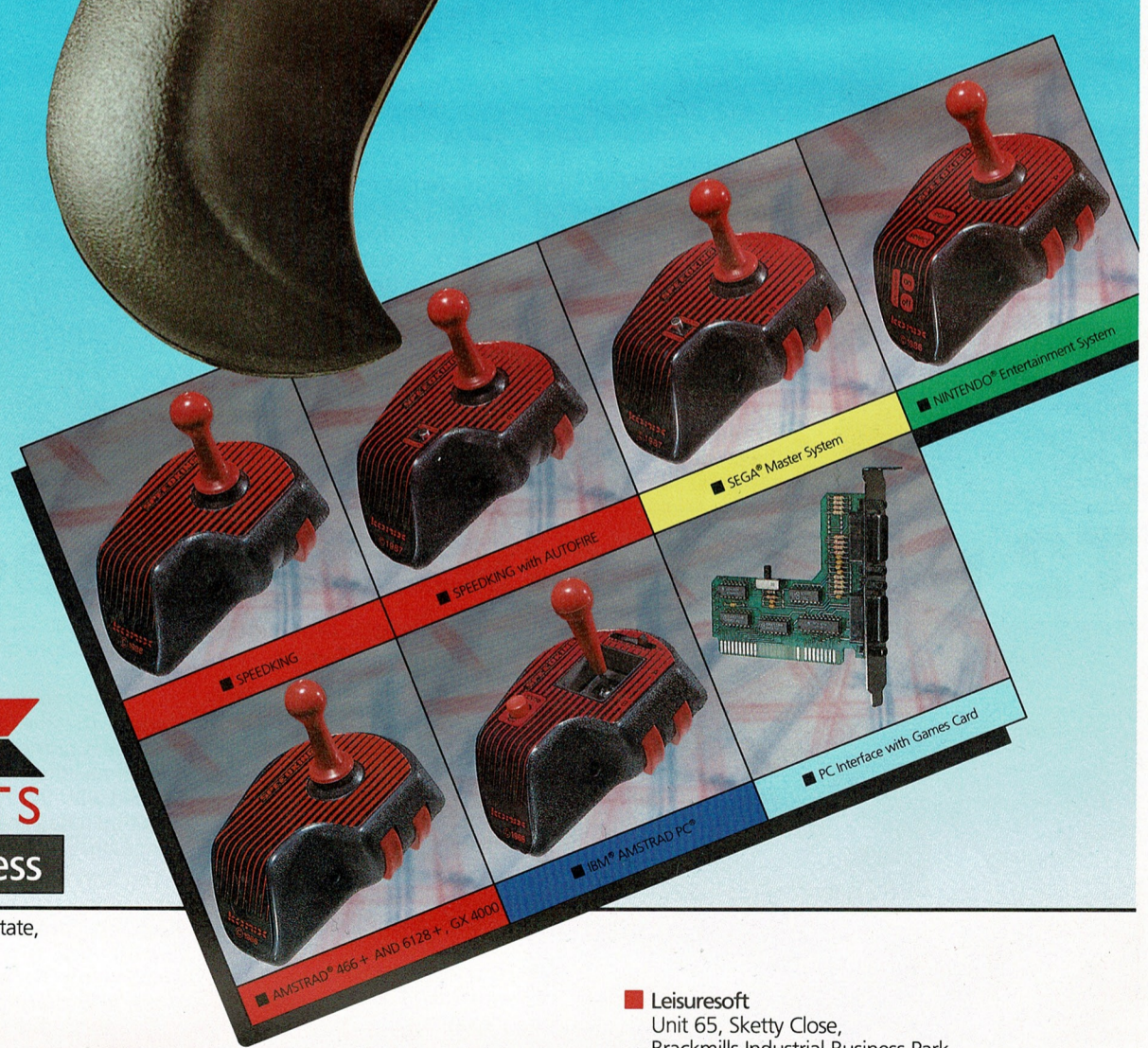
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■ GEM Distribution Limited
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Duchy Road, Heathpark, Honiton,
Devon EX14 8YD

■ Leisuresoft
Unit 65, Sketty Close,
Brackmills Industrial Business Park,
Northampton NN4 0PL

■ SDL
Unit 10, Ruxley Corner Industrial Estate,
Sidcup, Kent

Shares dip, but Sugar right to keep spending — says City

Amstrad was left looking at a desperately low share price last week, despite a general feeling within the City that its promised "business as usual" policy is the safest way to ride out the recession.

The firm recently announced poor full-year results, which showed pre-tax profits dropping by 54 per cent to £20.1 million after an exceptional item consisting of a £20.4 million stock write-off. Profits after tax were even worse, down 58 per cent

to just £14.5 million.

Whilst most informed parts of the City were expecting the gloomy results — with Amstrad pre-announcing the £20 million write-off in June — the manufacturer's share-price still took a battering. From the pre-results level of around 50p, it had dropped to a 1991 low of 35p at time of press (October 8th).

The sudden dip appears to be at least partly due to Amstrad chairman Alan Sugar's candid comments about what to expect in the near future.

"We are faced with a

situation of world dumping by our competitors in most product categories that we trade in," he said.

This is obviously depressing news for investors, and Sugar's answer — to compete on marketing rather than price — is very much a long term remedy. Thus, the 1992 FY figures are already being predicted as little more than break-even.

But, said one senior City source to CTW, it means that — barring any more PC2000 like disasters — Amstrad should be in a fairly strong position once the recession does finally disappear.

"Some people are saying that Amstrad should move to higher margin products, rather than the low-end PC market — but Amstrad can't run away from what it's good at.

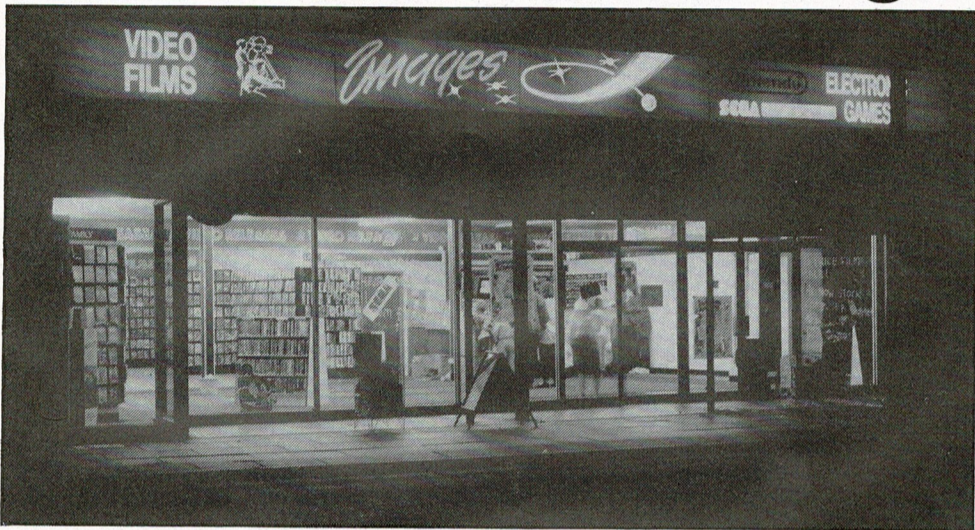
"Whilst consumer spending is depressed, it's basically stuck — it can't suddenly start producing woolly jumpers. Amstrad is right to keep spending money on marketing, even if it isn't going to get the usual sales return.

"At least then, when people do start buying again, they won't have forgotten the Amstrad name."



SUGAR: Always candid, never woolly

Video store chooses new consoles Image



IMAGES: Games up

Northwest video chain Images has made firm strides into video games retailing — adding Nintendo, Sega and Atari lines to its 40 stores.

The firm has refurbished its outlets to accommodate the new line, with particular emphasis on its shopfront signs, so that customers will immediately know that it is an all-round home entertainment store.

Images is currently stocking the Nintendo Entertainment System, Nintendo Gameboy, Sega Master System, Sega Megadrive and Atari Lynx, plus a large selection of software.

The year-old chain first dabbled in video games some four months ago, and is now convinced of the crossover potential with video renting.

"The video trade, generally, has been going through harder times than perhaps it's used to. It's a question of

looking around for alternative but complimentary sources of income — and we clearly see games as a growth market," commented Images' managing director Philip Royle to CTW.

Images will not be renting any console hardware or software, in accordance with recent public warnings from Nintendo and Sega.

"By the time we were looking at games as a polciy, we were well aware that renting was very much a dead letter."

Sales Curve readies for Nintendo assault

The Sales Curve has announced the opening salvo of its crucial Nintendo campaign.

The firm gained a licence to publish, after a period as a developer, earlier this year and has now decided that it will launch itself with *Nebulus* on Gameboy and NES in January.

The game, originally a hit on home formats for Hewson, has already appeared on the console in America where it was marketed as *Castellian* by

Triffix.

Nebulus will be followed in the spring by Sales Curve's own computer hit, *Rodland* — also on Gameboy and NES.

An enthusiastic yet eloquent spokesperson for the publisher offered: "We were persuaded to launch with these titles by the overwhelmingly positive feedback that we received from our European distributors."

The firm is looking to publish five titles in all on Gameboy and NES during 1992.

New boy enters the Frey

EMAP Images has appointed a new publisher to take over two of its leading titles.

Mike Frey takes over as publisher of both *PC Review* and *The One* magazines, a role previously occupied by Images boss Terry Pratt.

Frey joins from EMAP Business where he was publishing director of *Money Week*, for over four years.

He stated that he had decided it was "time for a change" and described his new position as "very attractive".

In addition, EMAP was feeling pretty pleased with

itself over its latest edition of *Mean Machines* which it claims to have sold out of within two days.

The firm cleaned out a print run of 80,000 of its October issue in the first two days, and has already ordered an additional run of 20,000.

Marketing manager Marc Swallow told CTW: "The magazine has been selling incredible numbers since its launch and now its really taken off in a big way, and this is without the aid of any cover promotions, just pure brilliant editorial. It certainly bodes well for the future."

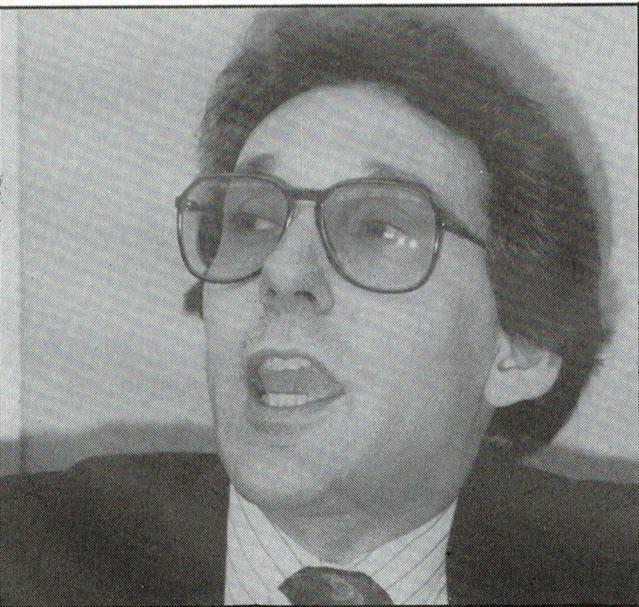
Virgin reshuffles as Bishop departs

Virgin Games will be reshuffling its marketing department soon, with product manager David Bishop leaving for a new role in the firm's US operation.

Bishop will effectively be head of games design in Virgin US, a role which he has been dabbling with in the UK on and off, having a hand in both *Rolling Ronny* and *Jimmy White's Whirlwind Snooker*.

His position will not be filled straight away but his extra duties will be taken on by fellow product manager Andrew Wright, who will take up the role of marketing manager.

Wright told CTW: "He did a good marketing job on *Jimmy White* and *Wonderland*, but the bulk of the marketing



BISHOP: Designs on US career move

was controlled by me and Bryn. David's real forte is games design. We're cur-

rently looking for some new people to cope with the extra workload."

Leisuresoft to milk monitors

Philips' monitor division has continued its gentle assault on the leisure market, appointing Leisuresoft as a distributor for its CM8833/II colour monitor.

The monitor is currently being bundled with MicroProse's *F-19 Stealth Fighter* and Philips claims that is already been a success in the games market. The deal with Leisuresoft is designed to build on that success.

The bundle retails at £269 and is another commitment to the hardware market in which it is becoming increasingly involved.

The distributor's operations director, Liz Welsh offered: "It's an area that until now we haven't fully ex-



WELSH: Hardware fillip

plored. Philips monitors are a very successful product line which we feel will complement our business perfectly.

"It's also another tier of expansion in our hardware catalogue and a further reflection of our increasing hardware servicing base."

Acorn plants TV seeds

Acom has announced a series of TV ads to back up its newly relaunched Learning Curve range running right up to Christmas.

The ads will be running in three regions — Yorkshire, TVS and Granada — starting from the first week in November and ending in mid December.

All in all, 400 TVRs are planned as part of an overall £1 million plus campaign which includes national press advertising. The firm is using last year's TV campaign, which apparently resulted in some 20,000 enquiries about the range.

Acorn's Simon Lovesy told CTW: "We did some regional TV last year with this campaign and now we're looking to roll it over into other regions. We'll be working closely with the dealers to make the most of it, including dealer directories in some press ads.

"We have found that TV works better if you concentrate it into a few areas. The areas we have chosen are very strong Acorn areas in terms of both education and home use."

Olivetti hands PCS to XMA

Amstrad distributor XMA has been appointed as a distributor for Olivetti's low-end PCS range of business machines.

The news comes with XMA promising a spate of new tie-ups over the coming weeks, which will see it broadening its overall range and moving into new niches.

"We have seen XMA increase its penetration in the dealer channels, and further strengthen its reputation for pre and post sales support," commented Olivetti's managing director John Kernick.

XMA's boss Kevin Mansworth added: "The Olivetti Offices ranges combine a great product portfolio with a name which is synonymous with quality and reliability."

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c 1991.

Lemmings signed up to continue global swarming

The world domination bid of Psygnosis' ridiculously successful *Lemmings* continues, with the suicide squad appearing on at least seven new formats for Christmas.

Leading Japanese publisher, Sunsoft, is set to be the main benefactor, having secured the rights to the game for the Super NES and the Sega Genesis in both Japan and the US. All versions will be out before Christmas, supported by TV advertising in both territories.

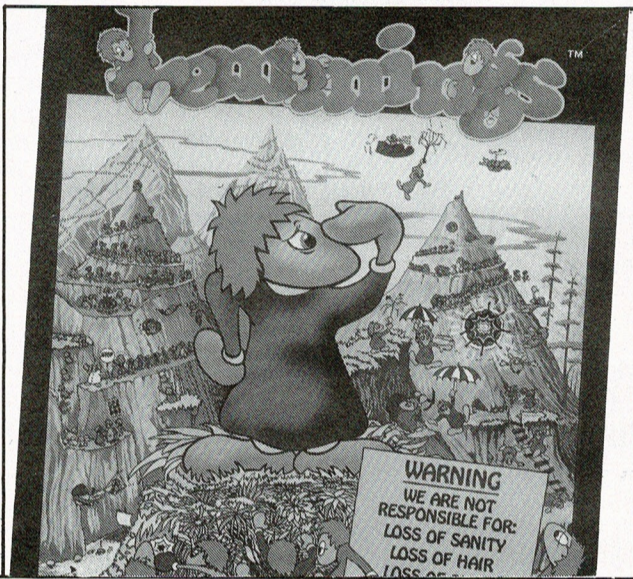
Imagineer, having just signed Anco's *Kick Off* for Nintendo, has landed the rights to *Lemmings* on home formats in Japan. Data East is bringing out a coin-op of

the game in all major territories before Christmas.

As previously reported, Ocean has the rights to 8-bit Nintendo in Europe and Australia, Atari has the rights for the Lynx and Krisalis has the rights for the Archimedes.

The only major markets left for the cutie classic seem to be Sega in Europe and 8-bit Nintendo in the US. No doubt that will be remedied before long, although Psygnosis boss Jonathon Ellis would not comment on the situation.

He did, however, offer a reminder that Psygnosis' own *Lemmings* publishing activities have not finished yet, with a data disk containing 80 levels due out in the last week of November, although a price has not yet been fixed.



LEMMINGS: Suicidal game that just won't die

Coupe lifted by software

The Sam Coupe 'super Spectrum' is still alive and kicking and refusing to lie down, with a new batch of software titles lined up for Christmas.

Domark's *Prince of Persia* leads the charge and will be available at £14.99, followed by *Hexagonia* which is some sort of puzzle game at £9.99.

Impatience is the first offering from a fledging publisher called FREDsoft. It's a pack containing two puzzle games, *Triltex* and *The Viking Game* at £9.99.

The rather ancient *Manic Miner* has been dug up and dusted off and will appear on the Revelation Classic label incorporating another 40 levels on top of the original 20.

Two other releases in the Classic range are *Splat!* and *Batz 'n' Balls* both for £9.99.

A number of utility and educational releases will also be available. *Primary Maths Pack 1* copes with a range of mathematical topics for four to nine year olds.

The Sound Machine allows the user to convert the machine into an all beeping, all beeping affair for £14.99, whilst *Comet Assembler* which also doubles as a word processor retails for £29.99.

The machine now comes with 512K of memory as standard, a 780K 3.5 inch drive and a four disk software bundle, at £199.

Cheetah runs Gamate blitz

Cheetah has announced a new range of titles for its handheld Gamate system which should be available before Christmas.

Titles include *Mini Golf*, *Tornado*, *Money Maze*, *Time Warrior*, *Kung Fu Fighter*, *Monster Pitfall*, *Vindicators*, *Cosmic Fighter*, *Treasure*

Hunter, *Nightmare of Santa Claus*, *Magic Jigsaw Boom* and *The Snowman's Legend*.

They should arrive in time for Christmas making 30 titles in all for the machine retailing at £14.99 each.

Cheetah boss Howard Jacobson told CTW: "Things are ticking over with the machine. Obviously the major chains will only take Sega and Nintendo, but we're in

some good distributors, and it's done about as well as we expected.

"We would have preferred it to arrive a year earlier when all the hype on was on the Gameboy coming and kids would have grabbed anything that was remotely like one. But, we're a very demanding company and whatever we do we're never pleased with it."



The format for this year's In-Din is finally taking shape, with Hale and Pace (above) confirmed as the cabaret for the evening. There will be no charity auction this year, but there will be charity a element of some sort, possibly in connection with local organisations rather than a national one. There will be an awards ceremony, but they're planning to streamline the number of gongs to a format by format basis. In all, it appears that the organisers are aiming for more of a social event this year. Tickets remain at £100, and it takes place at the Portman Inter-Continental Hotel in London on December 19th.



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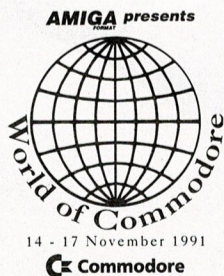
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Gold looks up to Klassix

US Gold's budget arm, Kixx, is to revive its 16-bit label, Klassix, next year.

Klassix was the firm's original foray into the 16-bit budget arena, with a £9.99 price point. It was scrapped at the end of 1990 in favour of Kixx 16-bit at £7.99.

The price change was due to other major players, par-

ticularly Ocean, undercutting the label and the name change, according to product manager Craig Johnson, was "because we realised that Kixx was the stronger brand".

In early 1992, however, Klassix at £9.99 will be revived as an outlet for "premium product" and will run alongside Kixx 16-bit which remains at £7.99.

Part of the Klassix range

will be the recently acquired MicroProse backcatalogue. Johnson even indicated that, particularly in the case of 'Prose, he may look above £9.99 "for big box, big manual, big value product".

He did not confirm that Kixx 16-bit or the £7.99 price point was the way out, although there have been suggestions that £9.99 could be the firm's minimum price for 16-bit games next year.

'Fun' mag relaunches

Alphavite has launched yet another new look for its former 'fun' magazine Your Commodore.

The October edition has a complete redesign of page layouts and logos. However, YC's trademark humour(?) and content will remain largely unchanged (it says here).

Group editor Rick Henderson commented: "In the fast moving world of teenage computer publishing, a product has to be updated on occasion to remain com-

petitive. The new look YC has been carefully crafted after an input of reader suggestion and an observation of current trends. I'm confident that YC now provides the complete entertainment package previously absent from the C64 magazine market."

Editor Jeffery Davy added: "I am pleased to edit what is now an even more impressive product. YC has gone from strength to strength and this colourful and exciting redesign can only improve the magazine's position."

CDTV enters new division

Commodore has announced the formation of a multimedia division, concentrating on the CDTV.

The new division is headed up by Barry Thurston who was formerly technical director.

He offered: "Multimedia is no longer future technology, it is here now and it is based on the Amiga. Right now Commodore has a unique opportunity in the market — no other solution or platform extends across all aspects of multimedia as does the Amiga."

Commodore boss Steve Franklin added: "We are especially lucky to have someone of Barry's calibre. To succeed in multimedia it takes a thorough and comprehensive understanding of the technology involved and its application to produce solutions. That is exactly what Barry is best at."

School offers TV spin with Botham

A Nottinghamshire school is looking for software firms to sponsor a major TV charity event featuring cricket star Ian Botham.

The George Spencer School has invited 'Beefy' to launch the first part of a scheme to raise £250,000 to build and equip an Information Technology Centre.

Firms can take advertising space on Botham's mean

machine as he makes his professional motor racing debut next Sunday (October 14th) at Donington Park, Leicestershire.

The event has already attracted a wide range of media interest, including slots on ITV and BBC TV, as well as TVAM. Negotiations are also underway for a separate documentary on the race for ITV.

"While there are the tax advantages for a company

getting involved, we don't see this as a charity exercise. Through the sponsorship spaces on the car and Ian's race suit, we are providing a valuable and high profile media package which must be of benefit in brand building during the pre-Christmas period," commented organiser David Longman.

Firms wanting further details on how to get involved should call Longman on 021 440 4995.

Dugdale departs for MBA

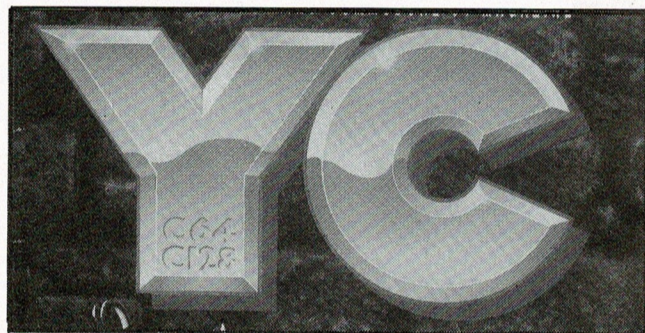
Elite's long time sales and marketing director Bernard Dugdale has left the firm to pursue an academic career.

Dugdale has headed back to university to do an MBA degree (Master of business administration). The position of sales and marketing director will remain unfilled, although Kim Wilcox will now take responsibility for all Elite and Encore titles.

Elite managing director Harry Johnson told CTW: "We haven't got a sales director as such, we see no need for one. What we had previously was a marketing oriented director and I'm from a marketing background so its not a problem for me to take that extra function on-board. Bernard was with us for a long time though, and I think he'll be missed."



DUGDALE: Departing for university challenge



YC: By young adults, for young adults

...29 per cent of stockists consider the Amiga fault rate to be...

...worth noting is the fact that the specialist stores that have managed to retain their strength are...

...five of the six chains questioned said they were planning to...

...16 per cent actually think sales will at least be 50 per cent...

...19 per cent rely on computer and video games for at least 90 per cent of their business...

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SPOTLIGHT

A FRESH AIR OF BREADTH

From Gameboy cartridges, through encyclopedic CDs to business packages, Mindscape Europe is looking to cover every aspect of the console/computer market. DAVE ROBERTS talks to boss Geoff Heath and takes a wide angle lens for a snapshot of the firm's current activities...

With a cardboard cut-out of *Captain Planet* in one corner of Geoff Heath's office and a poster of Mavis Beacon (typing tutor extraordinaire) in the other, the eclectic nature of Mindscape's business is clear.

And with a development team coming up with ideas for new games in a room next door to Mindscape's own duplication department where the finished product is churned out boxed up and sent on to distributors, its breadth of product is matched by its range of capabilities.

Not long ago Mindscape Europe was a two man operation. One slapping stickers on PC, Amiga and C64 games imported directly from America while the other one tried to sell the things.

Now it can take the germ of an idea from its creative department and end up with 10,000 disks ready to ship out to its distributors. The only element of the process not handled in-house is printing.

Its activities can be split into four main areas — Nintendo publishing, home computer entertainment software, CD reference products and low-end DOS business packages.

At present, its Nintendo business is chugging rather than charging along. Products such as *Days of Thunder* and *Paperboy* have already appeared and performed well within the parameters of the Nintendo market.

"There's no new mountain bike this year, no hula hoop, no yo-yo, nothing new that everyone is talking about. The Miracle is new and who knows?"

Geoff Heath

But those parameters are expanding rapidly and with Bandai predicting sales of 400,000 units this Christmas the firm is confident that — with a few big games to announce — its third party licence could turn out to be one to print money.

On the home front, *Wing Commander II* from affiliate label Origin has been a huge boost. But Mindscape has already proved it's no slouch itself.

The process of bringing development in-house started last year and the first 100 per cent Mindscape product was *Captive* — a game

lauded with bucketfuls of awards.

This year three titles will be released from the publisher's own development stable — *Nightmare*, *Moonstone* and, of course, *Captive II*.

Bridge of size

In the reference section, which straddles both leisure and business, there is steady growth and explosive potential. Mindscape already publishes an encyclopedia, an atlas and a guide to mammals. More of these *TV Times* (I never knew there was so much in it) influenced products are planned and the market for them is growing.

Heath explains: "Parents want their kids to have encyclopedias and the current price in book form is around £1,200. They then take up a lot of room, gather a lot of dust and it takes absolutely ages to find anything."

"So if we can get the message over to the parents that we can get all the information on one CD — where the speed at which you can find information is dazzling and the product itself is just so much more exciting and it's less than 20 per cent of the price — they are going to be interested."

He continues: "To compete with Microsoft, Ashton Tate and Lotus is, quite frankly beyond our resources. We prefer to fill gaps with products for about £50 that people are really going to use."

Chief amongst these is *Mavis Beacon Teaches Typing*, and indeed she does, to more and more people. It epitomises Mindscape's efforts in the business market, it's inexpensive, it fills a need and it's slightly more interesting than a product

simply called *Typing Tutor*.

Then of course there's the *Miracle* — a product that just about defies categorisation. It's a keyboard, but it's a keyboard that's also a Nintendo add-on.

It basically links with the console and turns piano lessons into a series of arcade style games. It's already got many fans, the most enthusiastic of which is Nintendo itself which sees the product as vital, counter-

Continued on page 10



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BESTSELLERS...

SPOTLIGHT

A FRESH AIR OF BREADTH

Continued from page 8

ing accusations from concerned citizens that its little black box that ate America is numbing the minds, if not the reflexes, of an entire generation.

Heath is keen to stress the potential of the product, but the word risk also keeps coming to mind. Computer stockists will be wary of a keyboard and music shops will be petrified of the computer element.

Where the Miracle will

triumph, Heath believes, is in its ability to persuade people itself. "When people see it, they want it. It's basically a machine that says play me and when dealers first have a go they say they can't play the piano, then, after a couple of minutes, they're saying 'wow! I can play the piano!'"

He also believes that with the Nintendo connection for the kids and the eternal but inexplicable desire of all parents to force their sblings to play *Greensleeves*, it

could grab the public's imagination.

"There's no new mountain bike this year, no hula hoop, no yo-yo, nothing new that everyone is talking about. The Miracle is new and who knows?"

Well quite, but then at £299 the Miracle does cost quite a few yo-yos, and that may restrict its mass market appeal.

So, that's the Mindscape line-up then, cartridges, floppy disks, encyclopedias on CD, business packages and

keyboards. Oh, and sound cards, musn't forget sound cards, the firm now has the UK distribution rights to the extremely popular Ad Lib range.

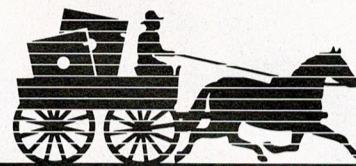
And books, obviously books. Only last week the firm signed the rights to a range from US publisher Prima, including hints and tips books for Nintendo and Sega, which could become very popular just after Christmas.

And that really is it... probably... for now at least. Heath certainly seems happy with his lot, and what a lot he's got.

"The idea always was to have a fully integrated business. I always wanted a company with a broad base. I was concerned that we should be busy 12 months of the year rather than just for two months before Christmas."

He is certainly untroubled by a suggestion that such a tactic could spread Mindscape a bit thin. He says that he's quite happy to have "a good chunk" of lots of markets.

Mindscape is not competing with Ashton Tate at

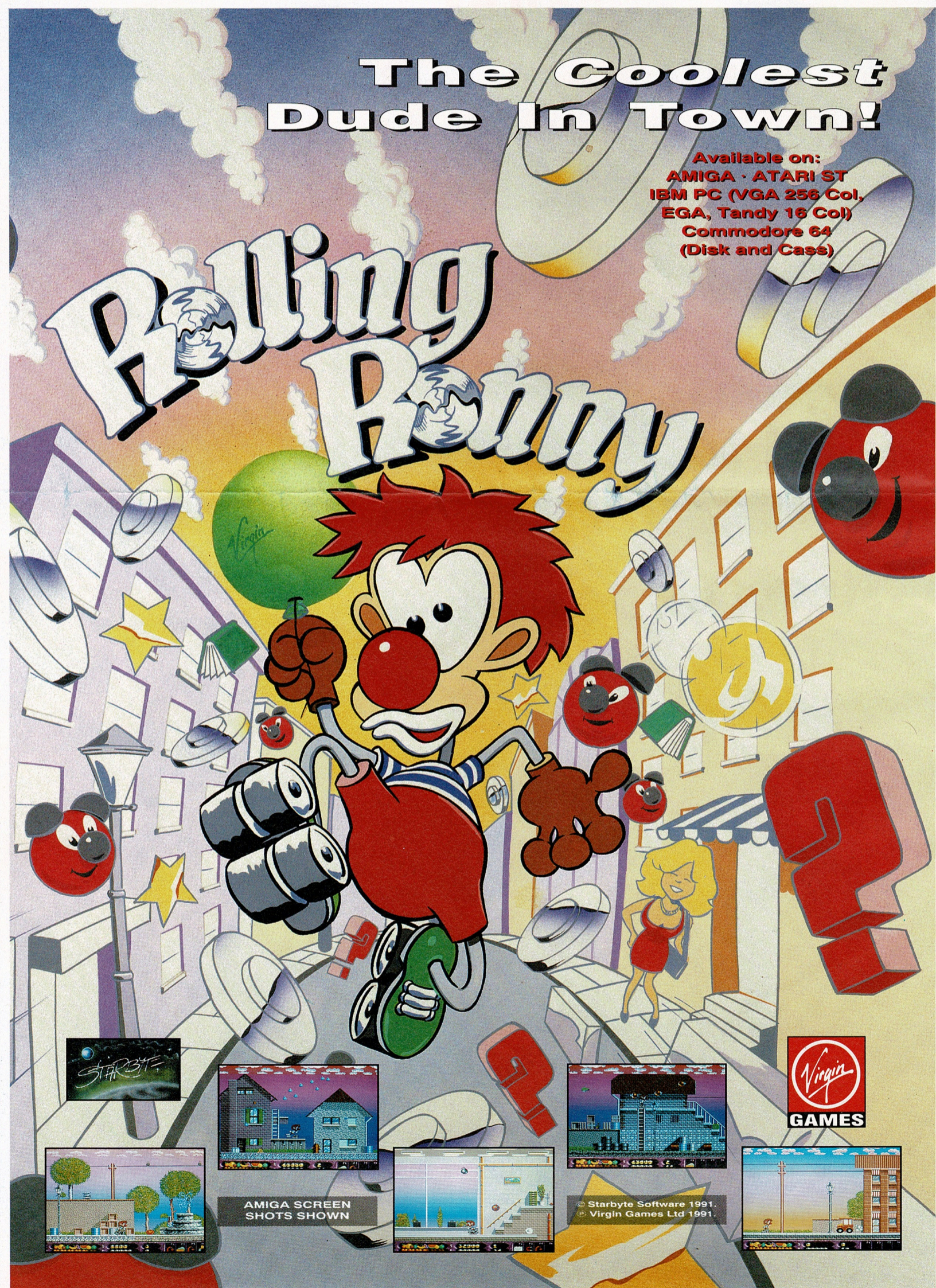


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one end or Ocean at the other. "I don't know who's got *Terminator II*, but it's not us. I can honestly say that if we were offered *Terminator II* we would turn it down, it just wouldn't fit our business, leave it to Ocean, they're still the best at that sort of thing anyway."

Claiming that he would turn down Arnie is a tad hard to believe. He insists it's nothing personal, but if there's room for *Captain Planet*...?

Perhaps it's just that the cost of signing the good Captain is more equable with the firm's ambitions in and commitment to the leisure market. Anyone going after T2 has to have their heart, soul and wallet completely committed.

Heath does not believe in being comitted (as in reliant) to any one area. He believes in broader vision, in a market where the division between the leisure and business market is increasingly blurred, where all formats are in a state of flux with CDs rising steadily from the quagmire.

What neat compartment does an encyclopedia on CD fit into? And what is "entertainment"? I mean some people have Arsenal season tickets for Christ's sake.

The key thing for Heath is flexibility, he is not reliant on any one market and has created a set-up at Mindscape whereby the firm is in control of so much of the means of production that it can respond quickly and painlessly to any market shifts.

The fact that its growth from two men and some stickers to its current factory-filling status coincided with the acquisition of Mindscape in the US by Software Toolworks is by no means a complete explanation.

Toolworks is now the parent company but along with Mindscape, it has suffered quite badly in a depressed US market in recent times.

It has certainly been in no position to throw money into Europe as other big name US publishers have been forced to do in the past.

What it has provided is a steady stream of product, such as *Mavis Beacon*, the Miracle and the CD reference material, which Mindscape has been able to take full advantage of.

With a new president, Bob Lloyd at the helm in the US, Heath is confident that the firm will look much healthier globally in the near future, but the sterling work done in Europe in recent dark days will certainly not be forgotten. □

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NEWS ANALYSIS

RISCY BUSINESS

Acorn is trying once again to throw away its mortarboard and put on a suit. BARNABY PAGE argues that its new Archimedes A5000 will meet stiff resistance in all but the education and home markets — the very ones beyond which Acorn is attempting to diversify...

Like any 16-year-old who can't face another two years of lessons, Acorn is trying again to argue that it is more than just an education supplier and could hold its own in the big wide world — if only we'd

give it a chance.

The £50 million Olivetti subsidiary's chance may have come at the *Acorn User Show* this weekend just gone (October 11th-13th), where it unveiled to the public a low-cost but top-

performance Archimedes and a new Learning Curve pack to complement that.

Starting at £1,499 (ex-VAT, with a 40Mbyte hard disk, 2Mbyte RAM and Multiscan monitor), the Archimedes A5000 is pitched

at six areas, only two of them in Acorn's traditional educational market. Product manager Kevin Coleman identified these targets as secondary schools, teacher-training colleges, smaller open-system installations for which the A5000 can act as an X server, VARs, particularly in imaging and training applications, DTP, and multimedia. Let's take them two at a time.

Aiming any product at DTP and multimedia is a bit like trying the Californian miracle cure where conventional medicine has given up

hope.

Although Apple and Commodore have benefitted from their associations with those applications, most others have failed: the problem is that DTP and multimedia don't really exist any more as distinct products. They are too subdivided to be blithely targeted as wholes.

Apple upsetting the cart

Acorn will undoubtedly fare better in schools and colleges, but the choice for head teachers is no

longer just between Acorn and Research Machines. Under the Local Management of Schools (LMS) system introduced by Mrs Thatcher's government, which decentralised buying decisions, individual schools have more freedom to choose the supplier they want.

Particularly in the face of declining consumer and small business expenditure, which Coleman acknowledged was a problem for Acorn, it will be surprising if other manufacturers do not look to the relatively recession-proof public sector.

Apple, in particular, can be expected to make a serious drive into education once its Mac Classic production backlogs are resolved.

That leaves VARs and open systems — or rather, it just leaves VARs, because the X market is dominated by resellers anyway. Their reaction to the A5000 will be the key to its fate in the business market. True, it is an impressively-specced machine at a low price, with a MIPS rating that is at least a third above that of most 486-based PCs.

Ethernet and Acorn's own Econet are supported, and the new RISC OS3 operating system improves multitasking as well as freeing some 150Kbyte extra RAM for the user. There is also an empty drive bay which makes built-in CD ROM a viable, and likely, option.

But the machine suffers from a 4Mbyte RAM ceiling, which is simply not enough for some of Acorn's target markets, and from the absence of industry standard software.

To counter the latter problem, Acorn is taking the peculiar step of going PC-compatible by emulation. The A5000 drive can read 1.4Mbyte DOS disks as well as Acorn's own format, and PC emulator software allows Digital Research's *DR DOS 5* to run on the machine.

This means the VAR or user can run standard packages such as Ashton Tate's *dBase*, Microsoft *Excel*, *Lotus 1-2-3*, *Microsoft Word*, *WordPerfect*, and *Xerox Ventura Publisher*.

Brian Salter, Acorn corporate affairs manager, argued that "the inability to read PC disks and run PC software at a credible speed are no longer valid objections to buying Acorn".

True, and they ain't valid objections to buying IBM, either, yet Big Blue has seen its market share eroded for years. It is difficult to see how Acorn can sell a machine on the basis of its not being as bad as people thought it was.

Home is where the start is

There will also be resistance from software houses to a company perceived as education-only — a fact which Neil Gardner, product manager for the new operating system, acknowledges — and to the ARM3 RISC chip in the A5000, which was developed by a joint venture of Acorn, Apple and VLSI.

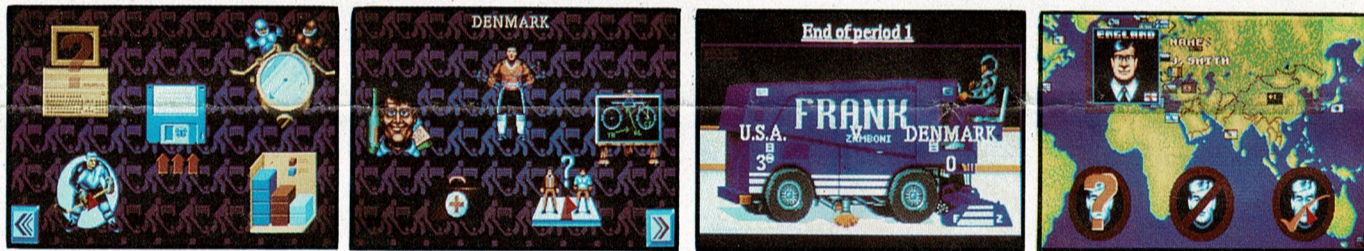
Whatever the
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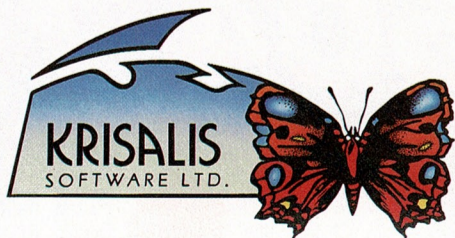
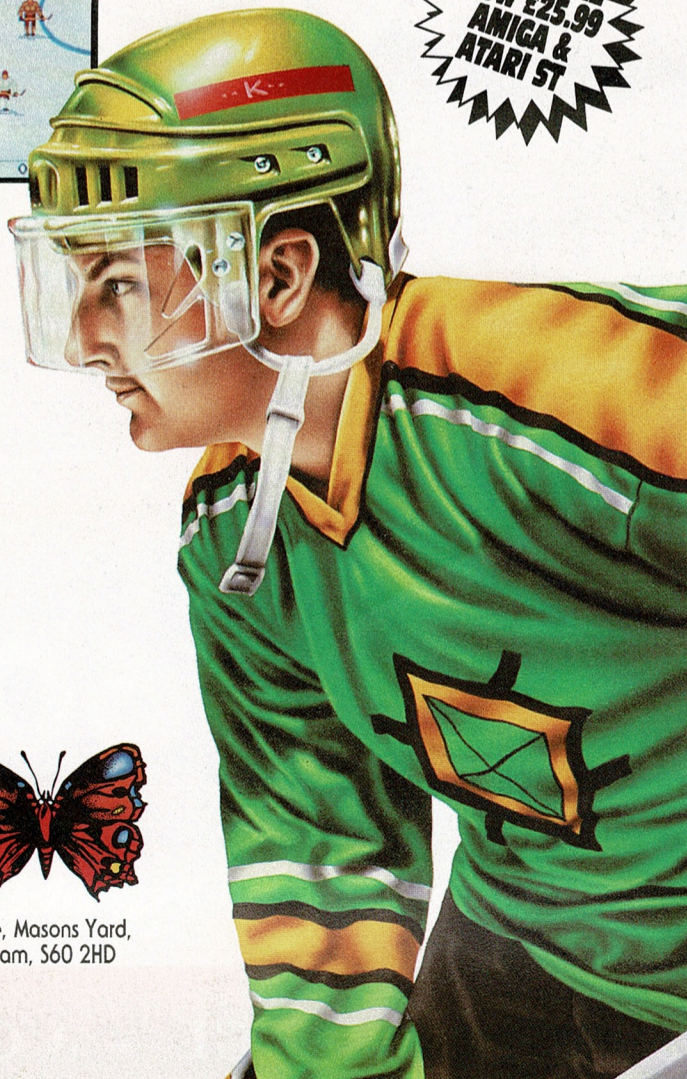
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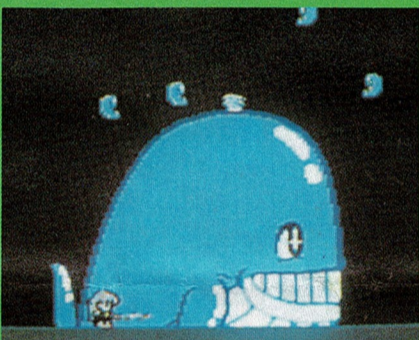
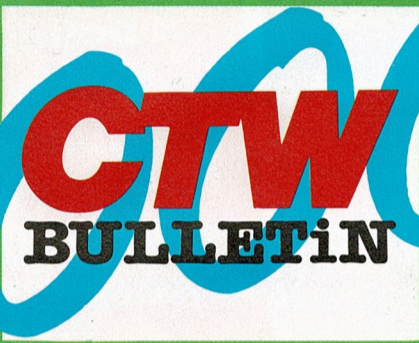


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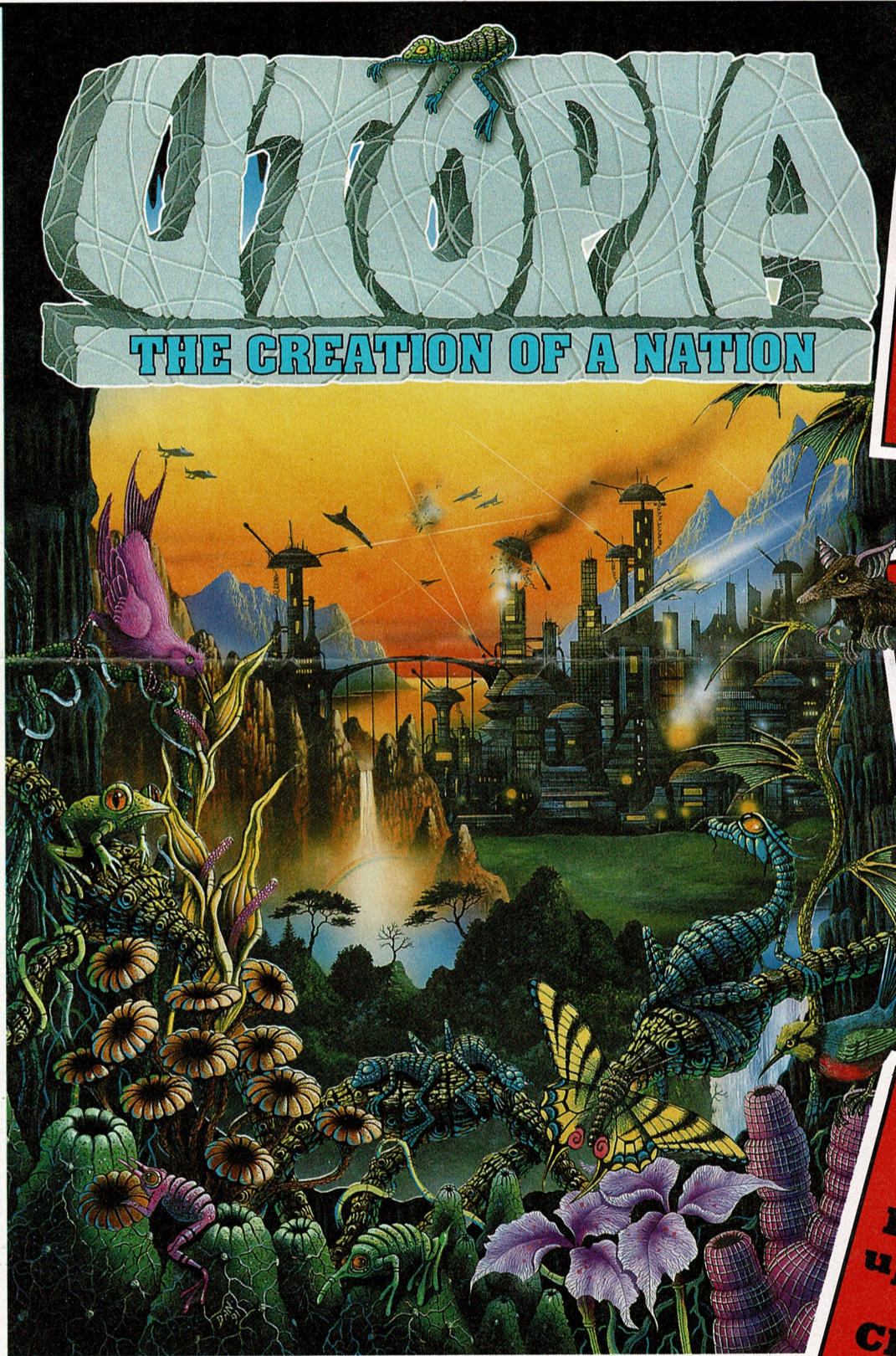
(Actually it's the Caribbean but that's pretty damn' good anyway)
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Available on: PC (1992), AMIGA & ATARI ST/STE.
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SPOTLIGHT

LAND OF THE RISING SCRUM

The game played by thugs and watched by real ale drinking sexist males has finally made it into the public eye. Thanks largely to ITV's hype and Will Carling's thighs, Britain is going all oval shaped. A World Cup is in progress, don't you know — and there's a couple of rugby titles on the way to prove it. A shaven-headed aftershave-swilling COLIN CAMPBELL reports...

It's amazing how keen most of us are to join in these national sporting jamborees, the more populist and simple a game the more likely it is that it will grab the public consciousness.

The Rugby World Cup fits the bill perfectly. After all, we invented the game, we're not bad at it, and many of the tournament's matches are being played on the mainland.

The computer games business was never one to get too animated about matters of national sentiment, unless of course there was a few sure-fire sales in it. The soccer World Cup, for example, was responsible for bagfuls of games, but when soccer games sell anyway, at any time of the year, you had to be pretty slow not to launch something, no matter how dreadful.

Rugby games have never had a chance to prove themselves — a quick phone around to old hand games reviewers reveals the possibility of two rugby games emerging from the past (one from Code Masters, and the other from Artic) neither of which appear to have had a huge effect on the charts. Add to

that a couple of elementary management games, and you're left with something that barely qualifies as a niche within a niche.

Sim guise has all the luck

Domark and Audiogenic have both decided to break the ice with a couple of rigger games which have already been winning critical praise.

The designers of the games have clearly sat down with the more popular computer interpretations of soccer and American Football, and attempted to incorporate the best features into the rugby sims.

Domark's *Rugby: The World Cup* leans heavily on the well known soccer game *Kick Off* and, while 'rip-off' would be far too strong an appraisal, there's certainly enough similarities to make the comparison unavoidable. Domark itself is keen to promote the obvious connections between the two games (speed, overhead viewpoint, fast passing etc.), and promotional leaflets promise that the game will become "to rugby what *Kick Off* is to football".

Domark's game seems destined to become one of the top selling games of the next two months. It's fast, fun and it avoids burying itself in aspects of the real game which could not sensibly be brought over to a computer game. That this game could have been launched successfully without the aid of a highly publicised international tournament is testament to its value.

Domark certainly seems confident, with full page ads appearing all over the computer press, and youngsters sat in front of their tellys at home cheering our boys on must be very tempted to get in on the action when they leaf through their favourite games magazines. It also features the added benefit of actually being based on the World Cup, so players can get involved in the group and knock-out system, and try to win the tournament for themselves.

Audiogenic's *World Class Rugby* has not enjoyed the same level of publicity, but it's also a noteworthy product. The feel is more TV *Sports Football* than *Kick Off*, but there are elements of the latter that surely add to the product's attraction. It's not so fast as Domark's

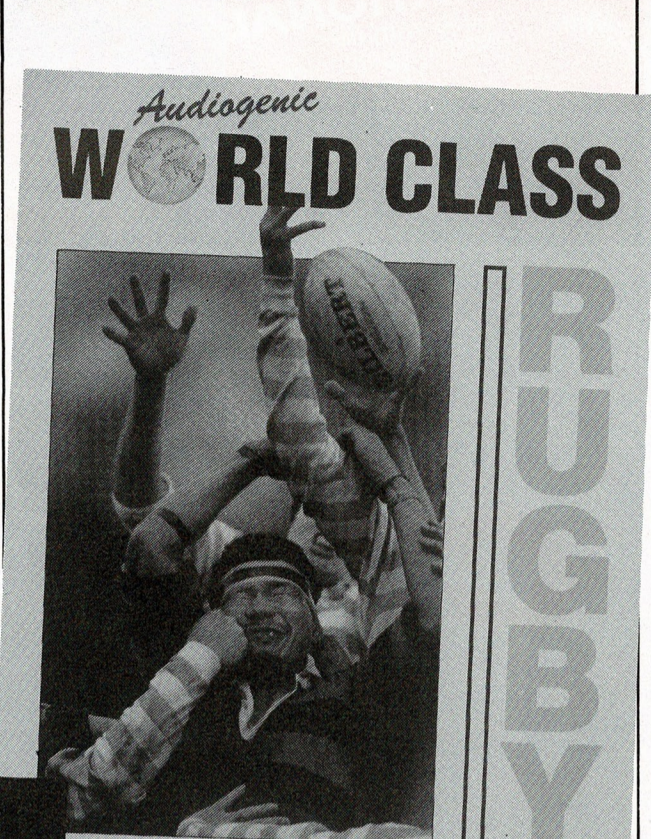
game, but its more laid-back approach seems to work a treat.

Exercise of relief

Reviewers have thus far praised its "invitive" feel, and the only problem seems to be an irritating desire by the designers to exchange simple joystick skills for frantic waggling (like in certain athletics simulations) whenever the ball gets lost in a scrum or whatever.

Audiogenic could definitely not be accused of cashing in on a quick sporting fad. The company is banking its future prosperity on quality sports games, with a clutch of simulations lined up for next year covering popular as well as emerging sports. To release a dog of a rugby game, at this time, would hardly promote the company's brand image.

That only two major companies are going for rugby games reveals a nervousness about the sport which could, and really should, be exorcised over the coming months. Even the small strategy merchants have steered clear, with (correct me if I'm wrong here) only D&H Games offering a management game.



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audiogenic

* Amiga and ST other versions may vary

RUGBY: Scenes from a maul — and a ruck, scrum...

It's clear though that pretty soon we won't need a multi-million pound televised sporting event to prompt publishers into cashing in on a sport which seems to have

been ignored almost totally.

Watch out for more Rugby Union games next year, and just possibly a few licenced deals with Rugby League teams.

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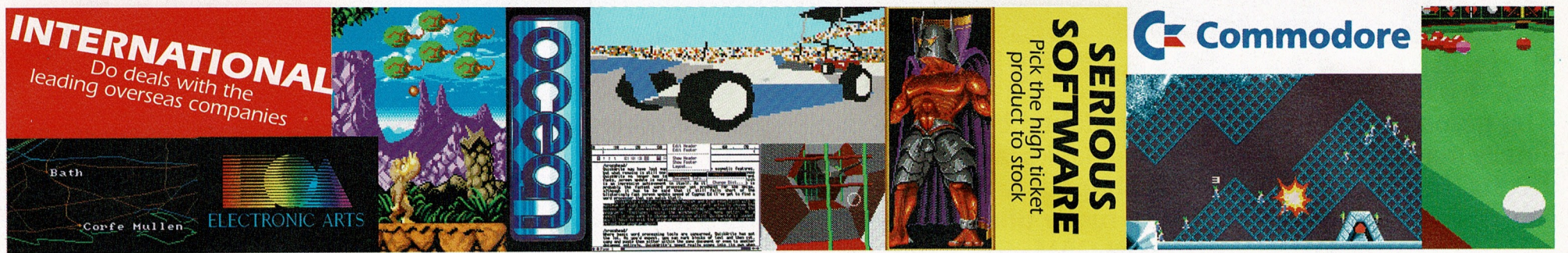
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But what can we do all about these late arrivals..?

Space one We've been able to gain some of the space originally allocated to German companies. It's not much, the laws of physics are against us here.

Space two With a re-jig of the show's features, we can slip in more companies.

Space three (The contentious bit.) It has to be said that one or two (three, actually) companies are being a little slow in pre-paying for the Show. Fine. It's their look-out. If they don't pre-pay - in the same way that we've pre-paid for Earls Court II - then they don't go. It's a tough old world. But their absence would free space for others. We'll have to see.

Meanwhile... With 70 full colour pages in the computer press, 600,000 leaflet inserts, over 250,000 A2 poster insert, now more than 80 slots on radio, Tube posters, editorial coverage in Sky magazine (amongst others), TV push through Thames and Sky, plus promotion through the Amiga Format/Commodore campaign in **NINE** daily newspapers and **FIVE** teenage magazines reaching over **THIRTEEN MILLION** readers, the World of Commodore is set to be simply enormous...

The power of Advertising
The show ticket hotline has been seriously inundated with early bookers. Comfortably over 3,000 tickets were sold in the first ten days - and that was six full weeks before the show starts!

Confirmed exhibitors to date: **Ocean**, **Electronic Arts**, **Psygnosis**, **Mindscape**, **Activision**, **Mirrorsoft**, **Amiga Direct**, **Power Computing**, **Media Direct**, **MicroProse**, **Virgin**, **Gasteiner**, **MC Distribution**, **Systronix**, **Trojan**, **Gremlin**, **RGB**, **N.C. Enterprises**, **Manor Court Supplies**, **Soft Store**, **Supra**, **Siren Software**, **Domark**, **HiSoft**, **Amiga World**, **Pandaal Marketing**, **Europress Software**, **Proton**, **Computer Mates**, **Precision Software**, **Rombo**, **We Serve**, **Care Electronics**, **SNAP**, **Database Direct**, **GVP**, **System 3**, **Zone Distribution**, **Micromail**, **USF**, **Classic Computers**, **Microdeal**, **MD Office Supplies**, **New Dimensions**, **Bitcon Services**, **Turbo Software**, **EMAP Images**, **DTBS**, **TIB**, **Harpers Computers**, **Dial A Quiz**, **17 Bit Centre**, **Miles Better**, **Ross Moller**, **Silica Systems**, **Digita**, **Cortex**, **AdventureSoft**, **Brighton Computer Supplies**, **Sunrize Industries**, **Stratford Tools**, **ICPUG**, **Future World**, **Checkmate**, **2 Bit Systems**, **Dial A Disk**, **WTS**, **Checkmate**, **Videk**, **Connect International**, **New Horizons**, **Rubysoft**, **Technoplus**, **Digital Creations...** and **CTW**, **Future Publishing** and **Commodore Business Machines (UK) Ltd.**



THE INDEPENDENT

HOW CAN YOU SLEEP WHEN YOUR BEDS ARE BURNING?

DALE BRADFORD returns with another impassioned plea to the independents' favourite manufacturer. Yes, there have been a lot of complaints and, yes, management have taken stick — but it's only because retailers care, you know...

With the honourable exception of Stuart Garrett's contributions, CTW has enjoyed precious little in the way of Commodore criticism in the last few issues: I wonder

why? Could it be that everybody (Mr Garrett excepted) is content with their "new improved" 45 day warranty?

Or could it be that dealers are simply gritting their teeth

and resigning themselves to the fact that what we've got is all we'll get?

The latter supposition, in my opinion, but it doesn't end there. Several dealers of my acquaintance are deter-

mined that this will be their last Christmas selling Commodore product. They fully realise that they cannot realistically de-list the Amiga yet, but next year Commodore will be reaping the

results of the seeds of discontent they have sown this year.

"So what?", I hear the Maidenhead Mafia shout. "With what the multiples take, we need never sell to an independent again."

And they're probably right. However, the multiples loyalty to products and manufacturers is as deep as a teenage girl's loyalty to her hit parade favourite; while us indies are committed to the future of the Computer Leisure Industry — in whatever form it takes — the multies are committed only

to the 'Turnover Per Sq. FT.' equation, and Heaven help any product that fails to perform. It will be discarded in the same way the glorious Chris Waddle was dropped by Graham Taylor.

Please Commodore, recant this ludicrous change in policy NOW, before it's too late; for you and some of us. You need a solid base of loyal independents who will stock any product you choose to produce simply because its has the 'COM-MODORE' badge (witness the CDTV) on it — make no mistake, multies and new innovative products are unlikely bedfellows and without indies who else could you rely on to stock and generate demand for a new product (witness the Amiga)?

And just as you need us, we need you. There, I've said it. Now can we be friends again, please? Oh go on...

Imagine the big nobbs (ahem!) from Commodore, Messrs Franklin, Sumner, Pank, Anderson and Thurston all sat around a table devouring an enormous meal with great gusto, buxom serving wenches ensure wine is flowing freely and all are having a splendid time; it's a little smokey by the door but who cares about that?

Outside there are two sad little urchins in rags, faces pressed against the window, obviously trying to communicate with the jovial ensemble, but the diners are far too busy devouring the feast to pay any attention to a pair of scruffy little oiks...

The two urchins are Dale Bradford and Stuart Garrett and what they are trying to tell the diners is that their house is on fire...

Compassion killers

I was pleased to see CTW print an article by Lloyd Mangram about Newsfield, a few issues back. As Mr Mangram pointed out, *Crash* and *Zzap!* launched many a journalistic career and the style and format (no pun intended) of the early mags has been much imitated since.

The death of Newsfield certainly deserved more than the tasteless cover story from the obviously dotting *New Computer Express*; "Looking for *Crash* or *Zzap!*? Don't bother!"

And finally

Can I just say a belated — but sincere — thank you to those awfully pleasant chaps from Atari for their hospitality at the recent England v Germany match?

And can I just suggest one small improvement should they — or anyone else — be planning a similar trip? How about watching WALES next time? While England were losing 1-0 to Germany WALES were beating Brazil by the same scoreline! Marvelous, man.

WALES play the second leg of their European Championship qualifier against Germany in a couple of weeks (they won the first match in Cardiff) and if any forward-thinking company wishes to take a gaggle (or is the collective description still 'whinge'?) of dealers, I'm available! □



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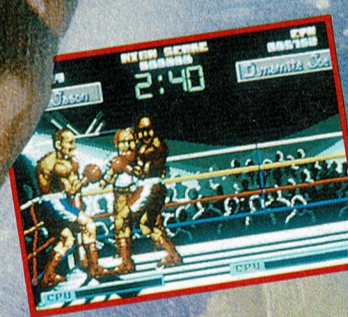
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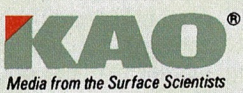
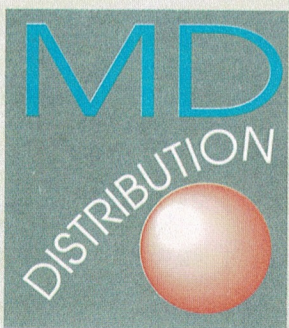


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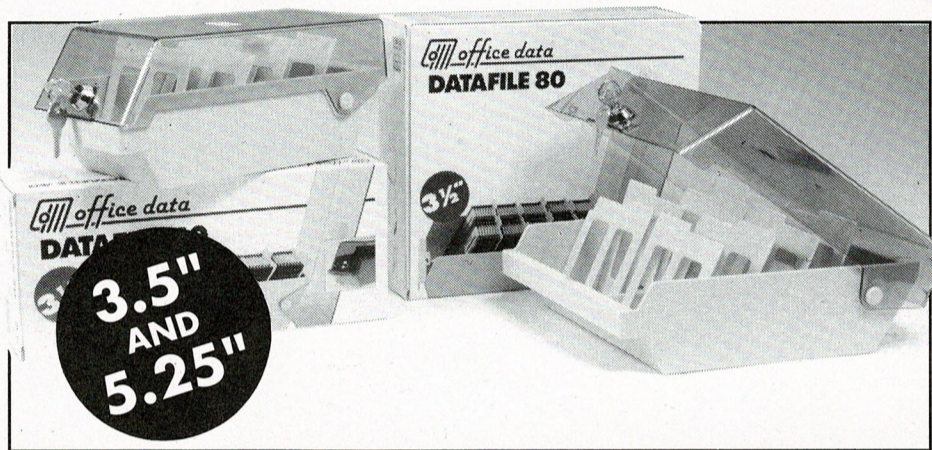


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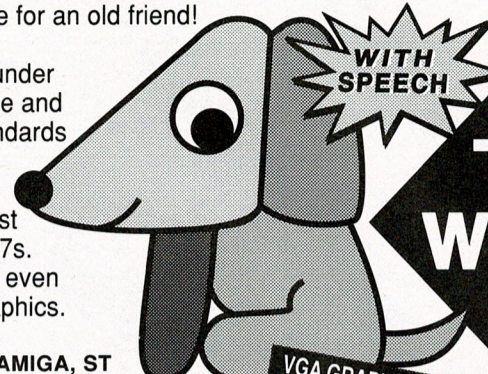
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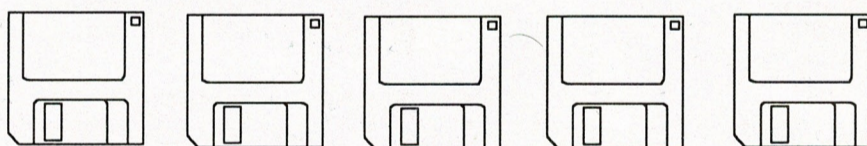
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ELSPA
CHARTALK
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 WEEK ENDING October 5th 1991

MARKET SHARE BY FORMAT

PRICE CATEGORY	MACHINE TYPE	% UNIT SALES			
		THIS WEEK	LAST WEEK	2 WKS AGO	3 WKS AGO
ALL PRICES	COMMODORE 64	25.2	25.7	24.5	26.3
	COMMODORE AMIGA	22.9	21.7	23.2	20.0
	SPECTRUM	17.0	16.9	17.7	19.0
	AMSTRAD	9.5	10.2	9.8	11.2
	ATARI ST	8.9	8.6	9.2	8.7
	SEGA 8-BIT	4.2	4.3	4.7	4.5
	NINTENDO CONSOLE	3.5	3.7	3.4	2.8
	SEGA MEGADRIVE	3.2	3.3	2.5	2.8
	PC COMPATIBLE	1.9	2.2	1.6	1.3
	NINTENDO GAMEBOY	1.6	1.5	1.4	1.3
SEGA GAMEGEAR	1.5	0.9	0.9	1.1	
FULL PRICE	COMMODORE AMIGA	46.7	41.6	48.0	40.7
	COMMODORE 64	18.8	22.9	17.9	22.4
	ATARI ST	15.0	12.8	14.3	13.8
	SPECTRUM	8.8	10.2	10.4	12.1
	AMSTRAD	5.8	6.1	5.0	7.1
	PC COMPATIBLE	4.8	5.5	3.6	3.1
BUDGET	COMMODORE 64	33.2	32.2	32.5	32.5
	SPECTRUM	24.6	23.5	25.2	25.5
	COMMODORE AMIGA	18.6	19.0	17.0	16.7
	AMSTRAD	13.2	14.1	14.4	14.9
	ATARI ST	8.6	8.9	9.0	8.6
	PC COMPATIBLE	1.2	1.5	1.1	0.9
CARTRIDGE	SEGA 8-BIT	28.9	30.1	33.7	34.1
	NINTENDO CONSOLE	24.2	25.7	24.5	21.0
	SEGA MEGADRIVE	21.7	22.5	17.8	21.5
	NINTENDO GAMEBOY	10.8	10.4	10.1	9.7
	SEGA GAMEGEAR	10.4	5.9	6.7	9.7
	COMMODORE 64	2.8	2.6	3.8	3.4
	ATARI LYNX	0.6	1.9	3.2	2.0
	ATARI CONSOLE	0.6	0.7	—	—

Shares shown thus '—' are below the cutoff point of 0.5 per cent

TOP 20 ALL FORMATS (FULL PRICE)

RANK	TW/LW/TITLE	FORMATS	PUB. LABEL
1	— TERMINATOR2	SP CO AM ST AG OT	OCEAN
2	1 J. WHITE WINDSNOOKER	— — — ST AG —	VIRGIN
3	— MAGIC POCKETS	— — — ST AG —	RENEGADE
4	3 MAN. UNITED EUROPE	SP CO AM ST AG OT	KRISALIS
5	4 RAINBOW COLLECTION	SP CO AM ST AG —	OCEAN
6	2 SILENT SERVICE 2	— — — — AG OT	MICROPROSE
7	7 FLAMES OF FREEDOM	— — — ST AG —	RAINBIRD
8	— LAST NINJA 3	— CO — — AG —	SYSTEM 3
9	10 SPEED BALL 2	— CO — ST AG OT	MIRRORSOFT
10	5 RODLAND	SP CO AM ST AG —	STORM
11	9 DIZZY COLLECTION	SP CO AM — — —	CODE MASTERS
12	18 HEROQUEST	SP CO AM ST AG —	GREMLIN
13	11 MONKEY ISLAND	— — — ST AG OT	U.S. GOLD
14	8 CRUISE FOR A CORPSE	— — — — AG —	U.S. GOLD
15	6 THUNDERHAWK	— — — ST AG —	CORE DESIGN
16	— MULTI PLAYERS SOC. MAN.	SP CO AM ST AG —	D&H GAMES
17	— RAILROAD TYCOON	— — — ST AG OT	MICROPROSE
18	12 BIG BOX	SP CO AM ST AG —	BEAU JOLLY
19	— EYE OF THE BEHOLDER	— — — — AG OT	U.S. GOLD
20	16 LEMMINGS	— — — ST AG OT	PSYGNOSIS

KEY: SP — Spectrum; CO — Commodore C64; AM — Amstrad; ST — Atari ST; AG — Amiga; OT — Other

All Gallup software charts are the copyright of ELSPA from April 1st 1990. The charts published weekly in CTW are extracts from 'CHARTALK' which is compiled in report form both weekly and monthly by Gallup on behalf of ELSPA. There are 25 charts in 'CHARTALK' covering all formats, pricepoints and with market share statistics. 'CHARTALK' is available from the general secretary at ELSPA on 0386 830642/831223 — or write to him at Arden Mill, North Littleton, near Evesham, Worcestershire, WR11 5QP.

CTW STOCKWATCH

by Colin Campbell

HUDSON HAWK HEAD OVER HEELS MEGAFORTRESS TURBOCHARGE WORLD CLASS RUGBY

With fast and furious pace, Ocean seems to be knocking out big name tie-ins like there's no tomorrow.

No sooner has *Terminator 2* gone straight out of the shops and into the kids' sweaty hands, than that other big movie hit (ahem) *Hudson Hawk* is poised to fill up the gaps in the Ocean Amiga onslaught. This is a licence with a difference, in that — despite the critical drubbing of the film — the game actually delivers on most fronts.

Similar in some ways to Titus' *Blues Brothers*, *Hudson Hawk* manages to remain faithful to its subject matter, and remain a damn fine game in the process. Sure, we've all seen the scrolling, multi-level, platform situation before, but *Hudson* rises above this with some of the most charismatic animation around, and a fiendishly well-designed game to boot.

There's a downside, of course. Thanks to an unfair panning by the critics, the film emptied theatres up and down the country. But Ocean's game should garner enough reviews to overcome this little hiccup.

More power to Ocean for coming up with class product which has the strength to succeed on its own merits.

Ocean's budget label The Hit Squad has also been busy of late. One particular game which the kids have been gaggling for is *Head Over Heels*. Finally due for shipping, this

16-bit Amiga remake of everyone's Spectrum favourite may not look like a game to top the charts in '91, but you can bet that's where it's headed.

Already given such feverishly high ratings as 92% in *Amiga Power*, this is one product which defies the phrase 'they don't make 'em like they used to'. With *Head Over Heels*, they'll probably sell 'em like they used to as well.

PC owners are in for their usual dose of grandiosity very soon, in the form of *MegaFortress* from Mindscape. Perhaps most notable for the fact the game is based on a novel, *MegaFortress* offers punters the chance to fly a B52 modified for stealth capabilities.

Taking into account the fact that the less realistic the flight sim the more enjoyable it usually is, *MegaFortress* should favour quite well with the harsh PC critics. The reviewer's vote is still out on this one, but expect fair coverage.

As always, Mindscape is accompanying the release with its usual mammoth ad spend, something which, if nothing else, reinforces its position as a major player in the PC market.

Also set to do big things is *World Class Rugby*. A firm favourite this autumn (see accompanying *Rugby* feature), Audiogenic's simulation of that most manly of sports captures that clash of muscles feel quite admirably.

Due for cover disk promotion on next month's issue of *The One*, it has already received a rating of 87% in said mag, along with the claim that it is 'the definitive Rugby game'. Succeeding in being both

visually impressive and instantly playable, *World Class Rugby* may not match the success of *Kick Off II*, but promises to do great things for Audiogenic, and ought to hold its own in the Rugby game scrum which is set to take place.

Turbocharge is a name which should be familiar to most (and coming from everybody's favourite 'designer' label System 3, if it's not etched into your brain now, it soon will be). Already hailed as the best C64 driving game ever, it has so far been given the cover treatment from *Commodore Format* (which also featured a playable demo on its cover tape), *Zzap!* and even *Your Commodore*.

Demos will be made available to retailers, along with posters via Impact. Reviewers have been bandying around such gratuitous ratings as 94%, 96% and even 97%, so System 3 probably doesn't even need to put its hype machine into gear, though no doubt it will anyway.

The game itself nicely straddles the 3D post-*OutRun* speed genre and the shoot-'em-up approach, though with such ecstatic reviews and the System 3 name, any other details seem irrelevant.

Whether the forthcoming 16-bit versions (due December time) mirror the success of the C64 version is dubious, given the stiff nature of the competition (*Lotus Turbo Challenge II* et al). But *Turbocharge* is a good indicator of how much life and performance is still kicking around in the Commodore 64.

Colin Campbell is deputy editor for *Future Publishing's Amiga Power*.

CTW EVENT CHECK

CTW Event Check welcomes details of any shows or conferences being planned for the leisure/low end business marketplace. Please address all correspondence to CTW CALENDAR, The BTC, Bessemer Drive, Stevenage, Herts, SG1 2DX. Or fax us on 0438 74127.

OCTOBER

Brighton Computer Fair
 October 20th
 Brighton Corn Exchange
 0273 607633

Micro Data Denmark
 October 23rd-27th
 Center Boulevard, Copenhagen
 01045 32 52 88 11

Amiga '91
 October 31st-Nov 3rd
 Köln Messe, Cologne,
 01049 8106 34094

NOVEMBER

Southampton Computer Fair
 November 3rd
 Guild Hall
 0273 607633

World Of Commodore
 November 14th-17th
 Earl's Court II, London
 0225 442244

All Formats Fair
 November 3rd
 Royal Horticultural Hall, London
 &
 November 10th

National Motorcycle Museum,
 Birmingham
 0926 613047

DEVCON 3
 November 30th
 Park International Hotel
 Birmingham
 081 503 2521

DECEMBER

Manchester Computer Fair
 December 1st
 Manchester University
 0273 607633

Computer Shopper Show
 December 5-8th
 Wembley Conference Centre
 081 868 4466

Supergames Show '91
 December 6-9th
 Espace Champperret, Paris
 010331 48910451

All Formats Fair
 December 1st
 City Hall, Glasgow
 &
 December 14th
 Royal Horticultural Hall, London
 &
 December 15th
 University of Leeds Sports Centre
 0926 613047

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 December 19th
 Portman Inter-Continental Hotel
 0438 310002

JANUARY

Birmingham Computer Fair
 January 12th
 Solihull Conference Centre
 0273 607633

Consumer Electronics Show
 January 8th-12th
 Las Vegas, USA
 0101 202 4578700

FEBRUARY

16 Bit Computer Show
 February 7th-9th
 Hammersmith Novotel, London
 081 549 3444

Computer Arena
 February 19th-23rd
 Lamaca, Cyprus
 081 868 4466

MAY

Spring Computer Shopper
 May 28th-31st
 Olympia, London
 081 868 4466

SPEAKEASY

Toilet humour

To all at CTW and Amiga dealers everywhere. Next time you want to demonstrate educational software on the Commodore Amiga, a good program to select is *Let's Spell at Home*. Feel free to select objects in the bathroom. But don't, whatever you do, select the wash basin and call it a sink. Yours, red-faced Mike May Mays Computer Centre Leicester

Fitting talk

Should any retailer be contemplating a shopfit utilising the services of "New Image" who have been advertising in this publication recently, if they would like to telephone me on 0795 425677, I would be only too glad to comment on their expertise. Many thanks for a very informative newspaper. Yours faithfully R Francis Computers Plus Sittingbourne

He means it maaan!!

Re the letter 'Confused? You shouldn't be' in your September 16th issue. Well, Deborah, I'm sure I speak for everyone when I say 'thanks for setting the record straight'. It hardly seems gentlemanly for me to pick you up on just a couple of niggly little flaws in your well-reasoned and restrained account of the world's opinion of *Nebulus 2*, or indeed to respond in kind to your rather unpleasant personal attack on me, but if you'll permit me just a couple of corrections to the points you made, I think it would be helpful to all concerned. (Especially poor Mr Harrison, who you were so rude to).

Mentioning seven 'top-selling' (pardon me if I snigger at this point) magazines without reference to the overwhelming market leader *Amiga Format* is surely a little misleading. That respected publication marked the game in question at a rather less than impressive 63 per cent, including comments such as 'frustrating', 'much too slow' and 'fairly average'.

Complaining about any lack of authority in a multi-format as opposed to a machine-dedicated mag doesn't square very well with your including C&VG (in which, incidentally, 79 per cent is one of the lowest marks awarded in living memory) and *Games-X* in the list of publications singing

Nebulus 2's praises. ABC circulation indeed. With *Amiga Action* being currently languishing some 70,000+ readers behind the market leader, an old proverb about glass houses comes to mind. And in any case, can you seriously be suggesting that because a magazine has fewer readers, its reviewers' opinions are somehow inherently less trustworthy? Surely not.

'Did not the overall evaluation of one's production and content quality offer an iota of distinction over the other?' Move over, Oscar Wilde. Quality is subjective, Deborah, if 'My Magazine's Better Than Your Magazine Anyway' is the best argument you can muster — well, don't give up the day job.

'Reviewer status'. Now we're really getting nasty. As you well know, Debs, I work for *NCE* on a freelance basis, my regular job is that of staff writer for *Amiga Power*, a magazine which reviews on average over twice as many games per month as *Amiga Action*. Of those I personally review, on average, as many games as are covered in your entire publication. I think that gives me more than enough 'concentrated vision to speak with authority' on Amiga software, thanks very much.

Still, if I'm not good enough for you, how about Gary Penn, easily the most experienced and respected

journalist currently writing in the Amiga games market? His review in *Amiga Power* gave *Nebulus 2* 66 per cent, including such praise as 'a sad lack of appreciation for the original *Nebulus*' fine qualities', 'far too many superfluous new features', 'a missed opportunity', '21st Century have simply drowned the joyous simplicity of the original' — I could go on. I review every single game honestly (remember honesty, Deb?), fairly, and on its own merits. I don't give a hoot how good Sierra's or US Gold's track records might be, they can still release a crap game just like anyone else. If other journalists followed the same example, we might have a lot less 'confusion' in the industry.

And finally, for one so offended by attacks on editorial integrity, you're strangely unreluctant to launch, without provocation, exactly such an attack on myself, *NCE* and *Amiga Power*. Breathtaking hypocrisy, at the very least.

I apologise for boring CTW's readers with another round of inter-magazine bitching, but such ill-informed, inaccurate, misleading and offensive bullshit shouldn't go unanswered.

The question for Mr Harrison is a simple one — who do you trust? Stuart Campbell Staff writer Future Publishing Bath

RISCY BUSINESS

Continued from page 12

technological potential of RISC (reduced instruction set computing) may be, there is a market resistance to its supporters' claims because its performance cannot be compared directly to CISC (complex instruction set computing) processors used in PCs, Macs and all home micros — and most VARs and power users like to know what it is, exactly, that they're buying.

That leaves Acorn with the home market, where it has always done reasonably well. A revamp of its Learning Curve range of bundles sees the A5000 Learning Curve introduced at £1,799 or £2,075 with a new Acorn ink-jet printer (prices include VAT, reflecting the consumer positioning). Software includes *1st Word Plus*, the *Genesis Plus* database, a couple of games, *Acorn DTP*, and the *PC Emulator*.

The existing A3000 learning Curve is upgraded to include much of the same software, at £749-£999-£1,275 depending on whether monitor and printer are included.

The two bundles will be promoted on ITV in the Granada, TVS and Yorkshire regions between now and Christmas, backed up by a national press campaign.

The betting is that Acorn will sell many more A5000s through the Learning Curve, retailers and its educational efforts than it will to the corporate and VAR markets — which sound more like a case of going back for retakes than a graduation to the big league. □

•• NEW RELEASES ••



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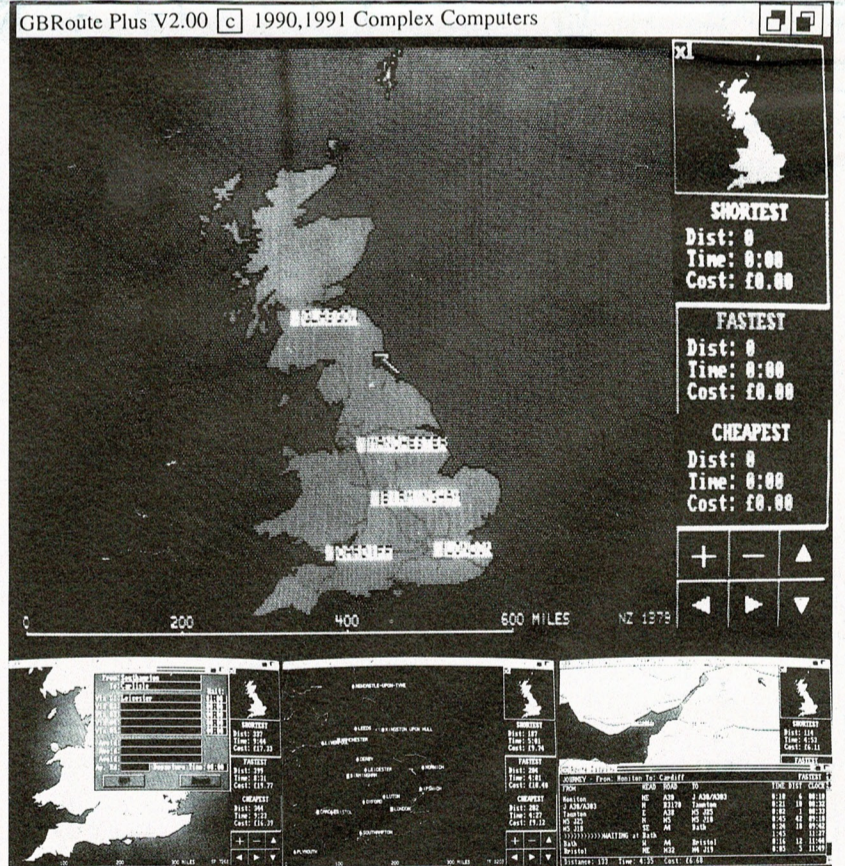
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Hood's up for Mindscape in NES expansion

Mindscape has bolstered its Nintendo line-up for the coming months, signing two big games from the US. From Virgin US, the publisher has grabbed *Robin Hood - Prince of Thieves* (the official film licence) and from Broderbund it has the critically and commercially popular *Prince of Persia*. Both titles will be out on NES and Gameboy early next year and according to Mindscape's European boss Geoff Heath, they give the publisher "a quite amazing Nintendo schedule".

"For us, 1992 starts with *Captain Planet*, then *Robin Hood*, then *Prince of Persia* - all on Gameboy and console. I think that's pretty impressive", he commented to CTW.

The firm is also bullish about its Nintendo line-up before Christmas, particularly on Gameboy where it has *Marble Madness*, *Gauntlet II* and *Days of Thunder* lined up.

A500P

Continued from front page told CTW: "Effectively the A500P is a development of the A500, given one or two more features. We didn't expect it to hit resell, but we had the opportunity to fly some in for the end of the quarter.

"There's just a shortage of Amiga's in general at the moment. We shipped 48,000 of them in June which went straight through the trade. This Cartoon Classics pack is simply the biggest and best ever, we're already 30 per cent up on last year with it.

"To be fair to distributors they knew about it 24 hours after we did, even we were taken a little by surprise, but we want to fill the market's demand, so we won't refuse any Amigas."

EA links up

Continued from front page money tied up in the new venture, although no official figure was available.

EA chairman Trip Hawkins, whilst remaining in overall charge of EA, will take up the role of president and CEO of the new company. Larry Probst will take up more of the day to day running of EA.

Although the immediate aims of the new firm are unclear at the moment, it is believed that it will initially be acting in some sort of consultancy role for firms looking to break into multimedia.

"Computers are becoming audiovisual while consumer electronics are going digital," said Hawkins. "There is huge potential for a vast interactive software market to emerge. Electronic Arts is already a leader in interactive software, and with Time Warner's global leadership in information and entertainment, and Kleiner Perkins Caufield and Byers' record for technology innovation, we are starting with outstanding players."

Mirrorsoft shells out on Turtles promo again, sure of another pizza the action

Mirrorsoft is insisting that the Turtles are not last year's thing and that 1991 will be another green Christmas.

The publisher is due to launch *Teenage Mutant Hero Turtles - The Coin-Op*, next month and has lined up a bumper promotional package for the title.

Virgin Vision's sell-through video of the original Turtles film will carry an advertisement for the game.

Mirrorsoft has also linked up with, appropriately

enough, Perfect Pizza. Every *Turtles - The Coin-Op* game will contain a buy-one-get-one-free voucher for the fast food chain.

In addition, the 120,000+ members of the *Teenage Mutant Hero Turtles* fan club will receive a mail shot informing them of the game's release.

And, although not yet confirmed, it is almost certain that Mirrorsoft will be linking with a leading daily newspaper (no prizes for guessing which one) for a major competition.

Sales and marketing

director Sean Brennan commented: "While the supremacy of this year's *Teenage Hero Mutant Turtles* is not so clear cut as last year, we believe that this title is a strong contender for the Christmas number one slot.

"Information which we have acquired from independent sources suggests that the Turtles are still enjoying considerable popularity with the kids. In addition, the title is a strong coin-op in its own right and is the game that everyone has been waiting for."

Prose hits US stock market

As predicted by CTW (August 26th) MicroProse is joining the US stock market in an effort to raise some much needed extra cash.

The Baltimore based firm apparently needs the money to pay off debts incurred by a recent flirtation with arcade development, and for investment into new areas.

An initial public offering of some 2,000,000 shares of common stock at \$9 each has been announced. Of those, 1,500,000 were sold by the company and a further 500,000 by other

shareholders. In total, the transaction will raise \$18 million.

MicroProse boss Bill Stealey is believed to be selling some \$2 million worth of his own shares, although he still controls over 50 per cent of the firm.

Nearly \$5 million will go towards easing a bank debt, and another \$5 million is being made available for new product development and possible acquisitions.

The firm has already pencilled in *F-15 Strike Eagle* for release on the NES, and *F-117A Stealth Fighter 2.0* for the Super NES.

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hello fellow humans! Bartholomew J. Simpson here, with a very important secret:

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That's right man! A buncha slimy, horrible, totally gross and putrid monsters are taking over the bodies of the people who live here and they wanna build a weapon that's gonna take over the entire planet!

PRETTY COOL, HUH? Anyway, yours truly is the only one who can see 'em! I've gotta spray-paint things, get radical on my skateboard, use my trusty slingshot, and in general behave like a nuisance, man.

Plus, with evil dudes like Nelson the bully and Sideshow Bob getting in my way, it's a good thing I've got the rest of the Simpsons to help me out!

So if you're a decent person a patriot, and somebody who cares about this sorry planet, you'll do the right thing.

SAVE THE EARTH

BUY THIS GAME! Thanks man.



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