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ACE

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EXPLODE INTO CHRISTMAS...

Reviewed
AFTERBURNER & THUNDERBLADE
plus a full supporting cast

XMAS PRESENT

FULL GAME INSTRUCTIONS ON PAGE 15

WOT? NO CASSETTE?
ASK THE NEWSAGENT FOR
YOUR FESTIVE SURPRISE...

16-BIT OWNERS ● SEE PAGE 15 ON HOW TO GET HOLD OF YOUR *DRAGON NINJA* DISK

...AND BEYOND

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TIGER ROAD

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Screen shots from various systems

GIANTS OF THE VIDEO GAMES INDUSTRY

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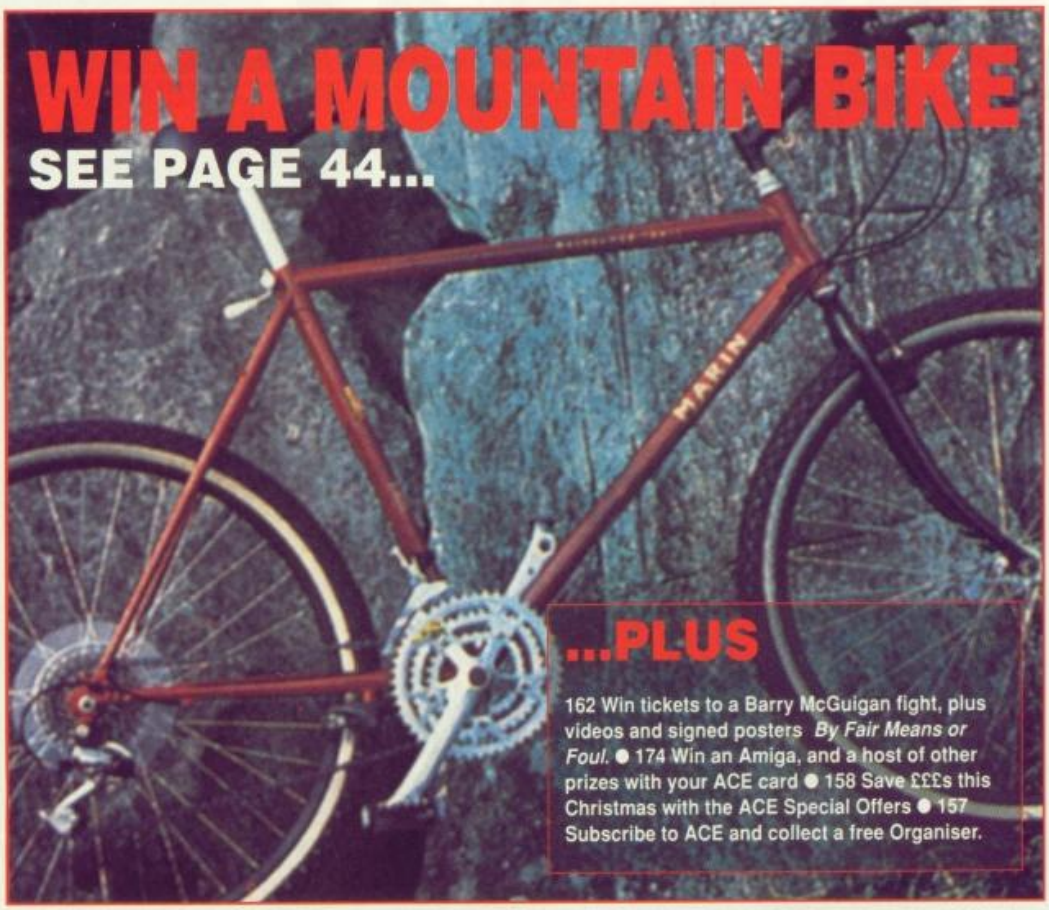
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Bath BA1 1EJ
Tel 0225 446034
Fax 0225 446019
Telecom Gold 84:TXT152
Prestel/Micronet: 0458 74011

Editor
Graeme Kidd
Reviews Editor
Bob Wade
Features Editor
Andy Smith
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Kevin Cox

Cover by Sebastian Quigley

SUBSCRIPTIONS
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SPECIALS

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More previews than the Cannes Film Festival. Winter is **the busiest time** for software releases, and a host of new titles are poised to flood into the shops over the coming months. Come with us on a tour of what's promised...



SOFTWARE BARGAINS 116
Something old, something new...Phil South casts his experienced eye over the **Christmas compilations**, and checks out what's new on the budget front.



ARCADE ACE 16
A trip to **Preview '89** reveals what is in store for the coin-ops next year – including *Robocop*.

SCREENTEST SUPPLEMENT 115
A new section comes into being. We kick off regular coverage of the budget scene as part of a special look at compilations, and *Tricks 'N' Tactics* grows.

TRICKS 'N' TACTICS 129
Expanded this month to make room for **official tips** on *Powerdrome* from the man who wrote it, a player's guide to *Space Harrier* and hints on *Bombuzal* from the people who know. Plus the usual extravaganza of hints supplied by you, the readers.

GAMEPLAY

SCREEN TEST 53
Bigger than ever, including the full treatment to *After Burner* and *Thunderblade*, *Batman*, *Total Eclipse* and a cast of, well not quite thousands, you understand...

ADVENTURES 139
The Pilgrim passes on, leaving the way clear for **Steve Cooke** to go *Fishing*, and take a festive look at the world where a young man should Go North.









IT'S A CRACKER

Welcome to a bumper Christmas Special issue, packed with the low-down on the games market. A market that is hotting up for 1989, as our massive Previews Special reveals.

Within a month or so, you'll not just be spoiled for choice with the volume of software arriving in the shops, you'll be positively devastated by the range of games available. A European blitz is just around the corner, with German and French programmers set to join the Americans in an invasion that should take software retailers by storm. We're on the case, and you can look forward to receiving sound opinions on all the games software throughout 1989 – next month **Steve Jarratt** (ex ZZAP!, CRASH, Commodore User) will be adding his weight to ACE to help us cope with the volume of work we've got cut out for ourselves.

On the hardware front, too, things look rosy for 1989. Sega and Nintendo are polishing their acts in time for this Christmas, and beyond. Konix will be launching a console early in the New Year, and 16-bit consoles are already half-promised for the UK by Atari, Commodore, Sega and Nintendo. SAM from Miles Gordon Technology has evolved in to an even more powerful machine, and of course the Flare machine hasn't faded away. 1989 is going to be a hot year for hardware, with Compact Disc Interactive on the horizon for next Christmas.

Join us next month, as we burst into the New Year with all the details of what you can expect by next Christmas. Meanwhile relax, enjoy and have a good one...

THE ACE TEAM.



REGULARS

NEWS 9

News of a brand new arcade system from **Rare Ltd** – John *Matchday* Ritman has forsaken the home computer to write for the arcades... Find out what's going down.

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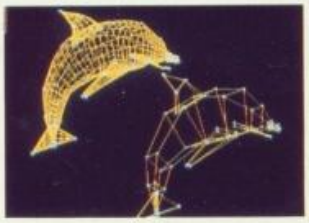
Opinions and arguments from around the world.

THE BLITTER END 194

Wrapping up another bumper issue in a style all of its own.

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Our resident expert takes a close look at *Forms in Flight*, and rounds up the news in the world of computer graphics.



PINKS

Check out the full SP on **Nintendo** and **Sega** games in this month's round-up of software titles available – page 164; look over the hardware options in the ACE Upgrade Guide – page 172; have fun and games with Random Access - check out what **N'Gar Thrombobo** is up to, marvel at **Nigel from Rigel** and enter the ACE competition, page 178; scan the pages of the ACE market, open every month for a software or hardware bargain with the **Adventure Helpline** going strong – page 185.

★ RED STAR awarded this month to Amanda Barry for not being able to tell her Kings from her Queens!

turbo



ATARI





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Paris-Dakar 1986 : 1st
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Atari ST screen shots

THE ULTIMATE ARCADE MACHINE

John Ritman, programmer of such classics as *MatchDay*, *Head Over Heels* and *Batman*, has forsaken the home computer to work on arcade machines. Not any old arcade machines, mind you, but a new system developed by **Rare Ltd**, the people who brought you Ultimate games.

Based on a custom chunk of hardware called the Razz Board, Rare's new arcade machine should find its way into the arcades during 1989. Among the first games to appear will be one written by John, with graphics provided by Bernie Drummond, his pixel collaborator in projects like *Batman* and *MatchDay 2*.

It shouldn't come as too much of a surprise to learn that John's first arcade game is to be an eleven-a-side, four-way-scrolling football game. A one or two player game, *Final Whistle* is a four-round World Cup competition, played with a joystick and three fire buttons. The *MatchDay* kick-meter has been dispensed with, and using combinations of the three fire buttons and joystick moves, over 600 different moves could be available...

"It's blindingly fast as compared to *MatchDay*," John explains, "with eleven players on a side there is less time to think and much more adrenalin is going than in *MatchDay*."

Although intimate familiarity with both Z80 code and the routines needed to handle a football game came in handy when John was writing his arcade game, the transition from Spectrum to arcade board was a giant leap: "It's a weird concept... working on the 48K Spectrum trying to cram as much in as possible, then suddenly people give me Megabytes to play with. It's great to have gone into an area where I can let my imagination run riot because of all the RAM and technology available to me as a programmer."

It looks as if the home computer world has lost John and Bernie permanently – they're already half-way through two more arcade games for the Razz board.

It's too early yet to tell exactly when *Final Whistle* will make it into your local arcade, as Rare Ltd are currently tying up deals with distributors. As soon as the details are firm, we'll be able to bring you screenshots and the full run-down on Jon Ritman's latest game.

Meanwhile, by way of light entertainment, John is writing a CP/M version of *Core Wars*, the game mentioned last issue in Andy Wilton's Get Smart feature. Not as a commercial project, mind you, more as a bit of light entertainment. You might yet be able to play a new John Ritman game on your computer...

RAZZ AMATAZZ

Based on a jazzed-up Z80 chip, the Hitachi HD64180, the Razz Board has 500K or 1Mb of memory, depending on the needs of the game it is running. An extended address bus allows the processor to address all this memory, which can be folded into Z80 address space in 4K chunks.

Running at 8MHz, the chip appears to run at 10MHz on account of the increased speed of many instructions – the most useful of which is an 8-bit multiply in 17 t/states. An extended interrupt system allows onboard counters to be programmed to count down to zero and then cause an interrupt.

According to John Ritman, one of the best features of the processor is the onboard DMA that allows direct memory to memory transfers (like LDIR instructions), but achieves them without using registers, only takes 6 t/states per byte and can access all memory without it being folded into Z80 address space.

The graphics power of the board is simply stunning. The system supports a screen made up from 4 64K screens, each with a resolution of 256x222 where individual pixels can be set to one of 64 colours. 262,144 shades are available in a palette, and each screen can use a different palette selection.

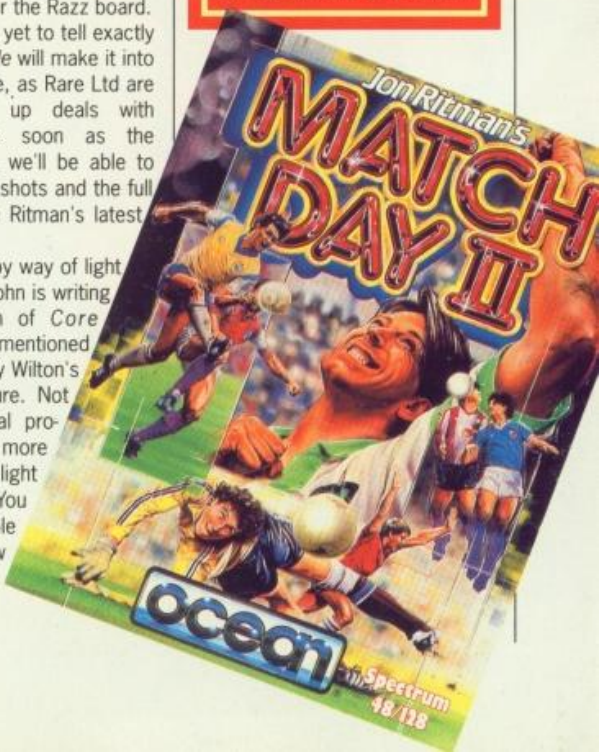
Two of the screens are background screens, and have hardware scrolls in both X and Y directions, while the other two screens are sprite screens. Only one sprite screen is displayed at a time – the other one is updated, then they are swapped during frame flyback, ready for the next update. Using the video output chip, a screen can be cleared during flyback.

The most cunning part of the screen, however, is the Razz system. When activated, it allows the programmer to use the DMA function to transfer sprite data to the screen.

A sprite routine need only be 15 lines of code, and yet it can handle any size sprite, which not only simplifies programming, but also increases speed. No more pixels are drawn than are needed – on most machines, a square is drawn to keep things simple, even though most sprites don't fill it. An empty circle 20 pixels in diameter, for instance, requires 400 pixels to be drawn on most computers (20x20 square), but on the Razz board only 80 pixels are drawn.

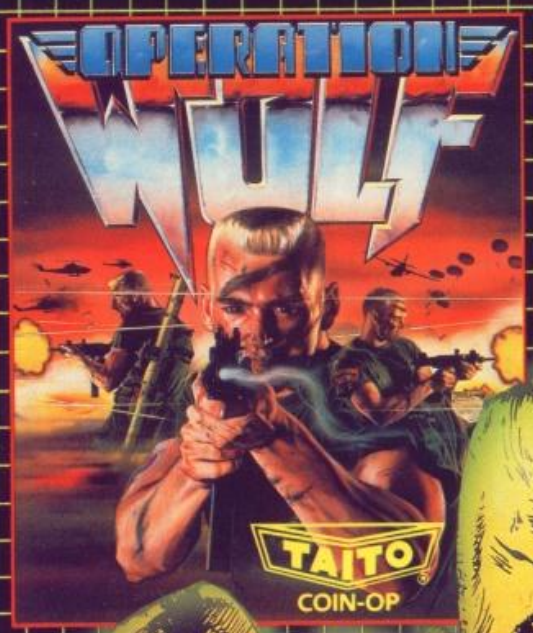
Sound is taken care of on a separate board with its own HD64180 processor supported by 500K of memory, 2 FM sound chips, and stereo and sampled sound outputs.





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DATA EAST





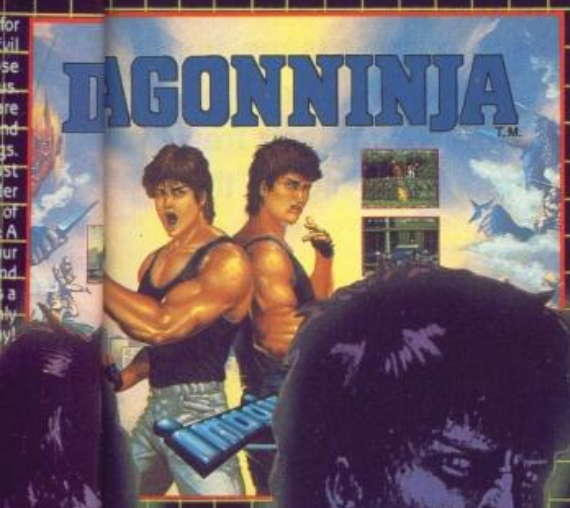
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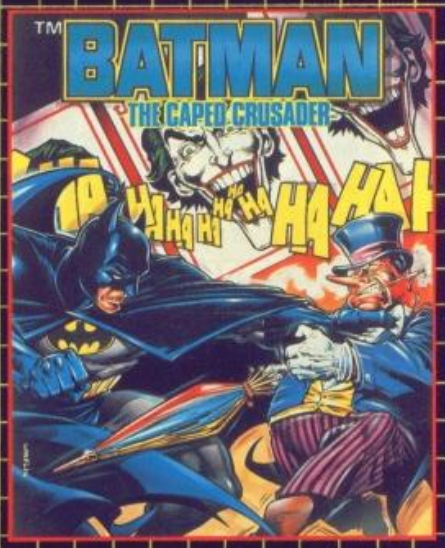
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True to his word, the new Editor has scanned this month's collection of readers' letters, double-checked a combination lock on his wallet that would baffle even the most hardened adventure games fan, and declared that no current offering lives up to the standard set for his star prize of £100 in software.

There is, however, a spot prize of fifty quid's worth flying out this issue, just to prove that no-one can be in Jasper the Grasper mode for 24 hours a day.

Readers keen on copping a ton of software should scrawl down their fresh ideas (no more 'I hate pirates/ prices are too high/ my machine's bigger than yours – yah boo sucks' letters, please) and send them to:
ACE LETTERS, THE EDITOR, 4 QUEEN STREET, BATH BA1 1EJ

IN A JAM OVER JARRE...

I was interested to read your reporter's account of the Jean-Michel Jarre Docklands concert in last month's ACE. You see, I was there. My own opinion is that Jarre makes the Pet Shop Boys' music sound as if it was made on a couple of tin cans. I have been to a few (large) concerts, and it appears to me utter tosh to suggest that Jarre's music was 'uneasy'.

If your reporter had spent less time debating the deprecating way in which to apply his literary genius, and more time in which to study how the effects were mixed with the tiny nuances and explosive movements of Jarre's music, then perhaps the review might have been more favourable.

I think the fact that a record number of (paying) people passed through the gates to view the concert of the century is testimony to the musical brilliance of Jarre, the appeal of his music and the stunning displays which accompany it.

Richard J Browning
Southsea, Hants

JARRE-ING CONTINUES...

In reply to your article in the December issue of ACE about Jean-Michel Jarre's 'Destination Docklands', you were out of line to put it down as you did. It seems to me (and a lot of others) that people used it as a publicity stunt, and I was surprised to see you join the bandwagon.

If all the stars who turned up that Sunday were interested they would have booked their tickets way before the second concert was announced (after the original performance was postponed). But no – they all decided to go just to get some publicity

In all I think Jarre's had a bum deal from the popular press when he deserved better – would you be able to organise such an event? If so, then fine. But if you can't, don't slag off the people who are willing to try.

Michael Davies
Cardiff

...STILL ON THE JARRE

As a very big fan of Jean-Michel Jarre I must totally disagree with the way your reviewer put down this concert. I thought the concert was so good I went on both days. The weather did not spoil it – in a way, the rain made the lasers sparkle a little bit, thus adding to the effect.

How you could say "there's little in the way of memorable melody there" is beyond me – it's the most memorable weekend of my life until I see another of his spectacular concerts. Neither do I agree with the last paragraph, "Hardly bringing high-tech music to the people". I'd like to see one of you writing/playing/conducting and producing music of that unbelievable standard.

Colin Groombridge
Catford, London

Sorry to have caused offence. Mark Jenkins has been reprimanded for destroying heroes.

GK

KLEVER KONIX

At last someone has had the gumption, common-sense and sheer native cunning (not to say courage) to give the game-playing world just what it has wanted and needed for a very long time!

Not everyone wants or indeed can afford to shell out £300 for a complicated and cumbersome programmable games machine with a nasty keyboard stuck out front just to remind you of the 'serious side' of computing you are trying so hard to forget.

Oh Joy! Could it be KONIX to the rescue?

At last we gamers will have a machine to be proud of, and not be made to feel like second-class citizens because we don't own a 'proper' machine: soon we will own something which in many ways will be superior to an ST or Amiga! Power to your arm KONIX!

Mr David A Austin
Clayton

NO COMPARISON

Love the mag, but for one tiny detail as mentioned by Mr Toms of Melsham.

Although I do disagree with him on having different sections for different machines, I agree on the system being unfair. Why, I hear you asking. Well, you only show the graphics for one machine on each review. Being a Commodore 64 owner, when I see a game like *Heroes of the Lance* for my machine I would like to see how the graphics compare. I'm sure Spectrum owners would as well. So, if possible, print small inserts showing the different graphics of each machine.

David Clowe
Ipswich

We do try to print as many shots as we can, but release schedules of software houses and our own print lead times sometimes mean we can't print a shot of every game that we state is OUT NOW.

GK

A BIT OF A ONE

I regularly take your mag and a few others, primarily to read things from a different point of view, and I have been very pleased to see the release of a new 16-bit games mag (*The One*), but I didn't realise that after the first issue they were to rename it! I am referring to the yellow centre pieces on page 53 about playing *Starglider 2* which read, "The pleas for help have been flooding in thick and fast, which is why this issue of *Starglider 2* gets the full treatment."

Simon Robbins
Spalding

Tee hee! **GK**

TOTALLY AEROSOLED?

As you now have a new editor I thought I'd bring up a totally new debate – peripheral (that's add-ons to you and me) superiority. Why all these joysticks, joyballs and joywhatevers?

I mean, some of them can give a slight amount of joy, but others (eg name deleted for fear of lawsuit) are a pain in the proverbial ?%^^% and break after two days of playing *Menace*. There's another thing. Why are all peripherals either black, cream or white? OK, there's the occasional red button or gold logo, but why no outrageous designer colours?

I think we're a bunch of racists myself. I mean how would you like it if you were a beautiful green Martian visiting your Earth cousin Alan Sugar (no!!!!) wanting a good game of beat the zarquangle out of the human grimbleplobs, and all the joysticks are horribly boring as human skin is. No putrid pink, no marvellous mauve. So, joystick freaks, paint those add-ons to totally crucial joystick! (That's French for yellow). A red rampack! Anyway I own an Amiga 500 and intend to paint it neon yellow with black stripes, so it is dazzling in visuals as well as sound, graphics etc.

Philip Lukeman
Liverpool

This reader wins a spot prize of a tin of tartan paint and a bottle of Alka Seltzer **GK**

MORE INTELLIGENT THAN SNAILS

As has been said before, many

people consider the playing of computer and video games to be at best a trivial pastime undertaken by spotty teenagers and at worst a front for drug abuse.

To these people I say this: computer gaming is a sport. It you want examples of really trivial pastimes, or so-called 'sports', then look no further than the Guinness Book of Records. In it you find records relating to games such as tiddly-winks and marbles. Both of these pointless games have a national following, with competitions and meetings. And what of the much more bizarre 'sport' of snail racing? I hasten (unlike the snails) to add that this strange activity is taken very seriously by some people!

And so back to computers. Surely no-one would put computer games in the same class as the above activities? Personally, I think they are an excellent test of skill and hand-to-eye co-ordination, not to mention intelligence.

Richard Davis
Woodside Park, London

Pass me a GTi snail. **GK**

RACE HATRED

I waited expectantly for the arrival of *Nigel Mansell's Grand Prix* for the Atari ST after playing it on the Spectrum.

After 10 minutes playing the game, though, I was absolutely appalled at the conversion from 8-bit to 16. There was no sound worthy of the name, and the game strategy (ie circuits, steering and gear changing) was pathetic.

Also the scenery didn't provide any help in changing gear – at least the Spectrum version gave you some incentive to try.

Whoever was paid to convert this is stealing the money he obtained.

D M Brown
Chorley, Lancs

If space had allowed, we would have said much the same thing this month. **GK**

BRAIN DAMAGE

The brain is like an incredibly powerful computer. How our parents, our environment, and we ourselves programme it ultimately decides the reality of our everyday lives.

Accepting this is the case, and other readers may disagree, am I alone in being concerned at the number of action, strategy and simulation games which depict the enemy as either third world people or nations who live under a different political system to our own? For example: *Red Storm Rising, Raid Over Moscow, Stealth Fighter, Hunt For Red October, Platoon, Battalion Commander, Gunship.* I could go on.

This kind of stereotyping prepares our minds to regard certain people as OK to hate and kill. Thoughts programme our minds for action. Surely this type of programming cannot be right?

V C Botterill
Hertford

Anyone else like to comment? **GK**

POSTAL CODE

While reading last month's letter about a certain mail order firm, I thought that it might be a good idea if ACE ran a 'Top Mail Order Firms' list. Readers disgruntled or encouraged by a mail order company's service could write to ACE explaining the situation, and ACE would award the firm a mark, say -2 (appalling service) to +2 (excellent).

A table could then be compiled so anybody thinking of buying a product through one of the mail order companies advertising in your magazine could see if they were on the list. If they were not, the reader could decide to use a company listed or try the company out, and possibly write to ACE telling you of their experience.

Of course it would not be possible for ACE to guarantee anything, but it would give readers some confidence when ordering, and motivate companies to upgrade their service. Tanks for the time (oops!)

Brhum Bhatia
Brighton

Could prove tricky. We'd only get to hear from disgruntled customers, so a mail order house that did ten times the business could have a highly efficient service but a larger number of disgruntled customers than its low-volume competitors. **GK**

LAAGER LOUTS?

We have one big software distributor in the Republic of South Africa, but they don't support the ST or Amiga any more. They used to have a few titles, but at prices which meant that none of us could afford to buy more than a title every 3 months. A few of us decided to get stuff by mail order. I wrote to no less than 12 companies to enquire if they would consider orders from us and charge the extra postage on parcels to us. I did not receive any answer except for one company. In short it stated that they refuse to sell to South Africans. The tone of the letter was also very hostile.

We were very disappointed. We have formed a small ST User Group where racism plays no part. There are people of every race in our club and there is NO discrimination. Why should the mail order companies discriminate against us?

Charles Swart
(South African ST User Group)
Johannesburg

COURT IN THE ACT

I have watched with interest the recent spate of, as one computer journal put it, 'Software House Paranoia'. I refer to games, such as *Katakis*, being stopped due to their distinct likeness to a recently-acquired licence.

Whilst I realise and understand that companies which have paid large sums of money for licences do not want rival companies 'cashing in' on them, surely there must be a better and more mature way of settling things than the company hot-footing their way to lawyers every time a clone is released.

Surely the software houses are mature enough to get round a table and talk, instead of slapping an injunction on the game the day of its announcement.

Perhaps, once seated round the table, they can discuss the idea of allowing the other company to release their clone so long as they pay a certain percentage of their profits to the licence-holding company.

This would mean everyone could benefit: the licence-holding company could sit back and get on with writing software rather than spending days putting together a court case, and they would still earn large profits from their own game and all their rivals' versions!

Rival companies would benefit by not having to throw 6 months' coding in the bin, and the consumer would benefit from the fact that there would be several versions to choose from - instead of having to have the version that won the court case (not always the best one!)

Mitch Pomfret
Bramhall

I suspect there's more chance of pigs flying, but it's a nice thought. In this festive spirit of good will, I'm awarding Mr Pomfret a spot prize of £50 worth of software **GK**

ACE LETTERS

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Courtesy of ACE and Ocean, this issue comes complete with playable demos of the arcade beat-em-up DRAGON NINJA. Load the demo into your machine, and get a taste of what it will be like punching and kicking your way to victory in the full game.

EXPLOSIVE ACTION WITH BAD DUDES v DRAGON NINJA

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Side 1 contains the C64 version of the demo, followed by the Spectrum version, while Side 2 holds the Amstrad CPC demo. Simply set up your machine as if you were going to load a tape game, put the cassette in the player, load in the normal way and get punching.

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If you own an Amiga or an Atari ST, turn the computer off, pop the disk in the drive and switch on. The **DRAGON NINJA** demo will autoboot and you can get down to the action.

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An all-round view of the Deluxe Power-drift console, continuing the Out Run trend.



Coin mechanism manufacturers, fruit machine distributors, arcade game suppliers, they were all there – entertaining the crowds...

COIN-OP CARNIVAL!

The home computer industry's biggest show of the year was held in September at Earl's Court. The arcade industry's equivalent, The Associated Leisure Preview '89 Show, took place the following month at London's Novotel. So one afternoon, Andy Smith entered an arcade freak's heaven and found everything set on free play...

The venue: London's Novotel. The show – Preview '89; the equipment – anything that accepts coins and provides short-term entertainment. A trade show, crammed with arcade machines, jukeboxes, fruit machines and the odd 'fairground' sideshow. All set to continuous free play for the benefit of the visitors.



Just like any computer-related show, the noise in the hall is deafening. Arcade machines by the score pump out music and sound effects at full volume, but unlike most shows the racket produced by the demo hardware isn't augmented by the clamour of eager young visitors scurrying from stand to stand in search of freebies. The visitors are of an altogether different breed.

The machines are far from idle. Suited businessmen stand in huddles, queuing for their turn at the joystick of the latest arcade wonder-machine: even if you are wearing a suit, it's sometimes difficult to maintain your decorum. Attending a trade show has its benefits – after all, it's not often you get the chance to see paunchy forty-year olds clambering into the bizarre cockpits and cabinets of arcade machines with all the enthusiasm of ten year olds clutching ten pees in their sweaty palms...

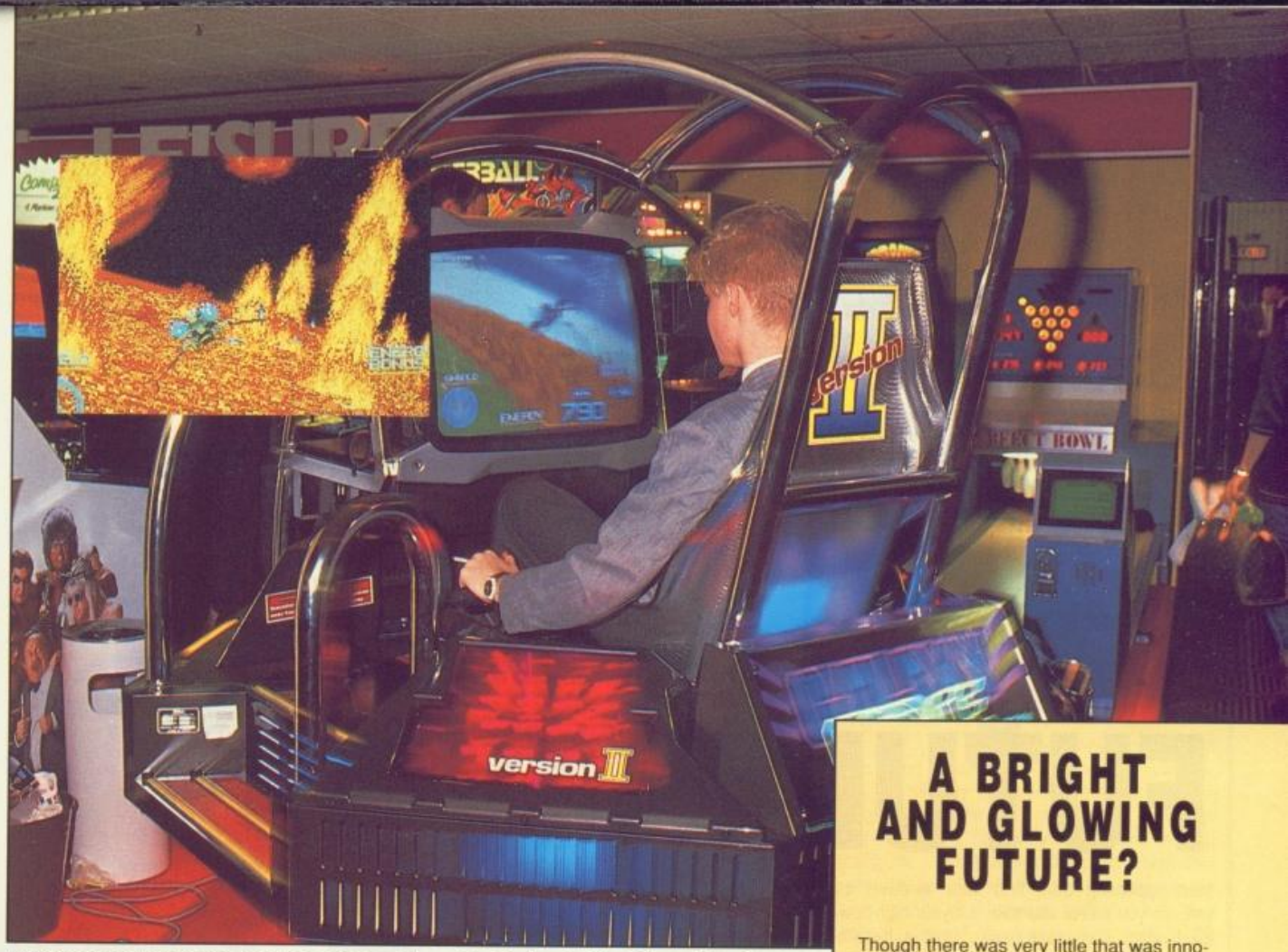


Getting to grips with Viper. This is a physical as well as mental excercise as you swing the monitor around blasting all and sundry. Complete a stage and you're allowed to pull as many silly faces as you like - within the time limit of course!

Sega's *Galaxy Force II* was one of the show's star attractions – mainly because of its cabinet. Bottom of the range is the standard upright with two joysticks sticking out of the cabinet. One controls speed while the other moves your on-screen spacecraft around, on the mission to dodge and shoot enemy ships and missiles. Two fire buttons on the joystick allow you to fire either laser bolts or homing missiles, rather like *Afterburner*. The mid-range *Galaxy Force* cabinet is a sit-in affair with the joysticks located on either side of the seat. The cabinet banks, dives and climbs in during the game, emulating the moves of your fighter. Then at the top of the *GF II* range is the Super Deluxe model – another sit-in, but this time one surrounded by a huge roll-cage of aluminium tubing. This huge beast inclines 15 degrees in two directions, and can whip through a 335 degree spin to left or right. Stand clear of this beast when someone has got their money in the slot!

Creating almost as much of a stir was Sega's *Power Drift*. This comes in two cabinets, the upright and a Deluxe model that is shaped like a cross between a jet-bike and a racing car. You drive a small buggy around a circuit and have to finish in the first three places to qualify for the next circuit in the series of twenty-five. Skill, rather than luck, plays a major part in *Power Drift* because the courses are small and you have to do several laps per circuit. A good driver soon learns where to brake, accelerate and shift gears.

Best of the rest included a game called *Viper*, which has the monitor swivelling independently of the rest of the cabinet. You're in a helicopter for this one, being attacked by a whole



(Above) The Super Deluxe version of Galaxy Force II with (inset) the 26" monitor display and (below) the Deluxe version – cheaper cabinet, same game.

bunch of enemy aircraft and have to move the monitor to line up the shots on the enemy – weird stuff! *Gang Hunter* features the machine gun from *Operation Wolf* and a game very similar to *Dead Angle*. Moving the gun mounted on the cabinet moves a small sight around the screen, and the obvious idea is to shoot anyone that gets in the way. The player is represented by a large outline of a man with a gun.

Chase HQ from Taito (who are sporting a new logo these days) takes the *Out Run* genre a step further. As a top driver in the police force, you're out on patrol when a message comes through from HQ... 'This is Nancy here, armed bankrobbers have been spotted fleeing towards the suburbs in a white sports car- ...please intercept, over'. It's then down to you to arrest the criminals by catching up with them and ramming their car – you won't have any trouble spotting the criminals, once they're in range a large arrow points out the baddies for you. Apprehend the villains and it's no time at all before the next assignment comes over the radio from Nancy. ●



A BRIGHT AND GLOWING FUTURE?

Though there was very little that was innovative on the game design front at Preview '89, arcade game manufacturers are currently getting very excited about the new ways of presenting games. It seems to be the standard thing now to produce a game in several, increasingly expensive and increasingly mobile cabinets. Could this mean that arcade designers are running out of ideas and have to resort to gimmickry to sell their wares? Mary Hynes of Electrocoin agrees to a certain extent and points that the "biggest news in the coin-op business at the moment is the introduction of the 26-inch monitor". Going out is the 22-inch monitor that's been the standard for the last few years and coming in is the 26-inch screen that has better definition and allows bigger sprites and playing areas.

Even bigger news, and set to revolutionise the whole arcade industry is the advent of the High Definition monitor. The first dedicated consoles featuring the monitors which display near photographic quality pictures are due to arrive within two years. Namco recently launched their first game (*Home Run*) for the system at an arcade fair in Japan.





ROBOCOP

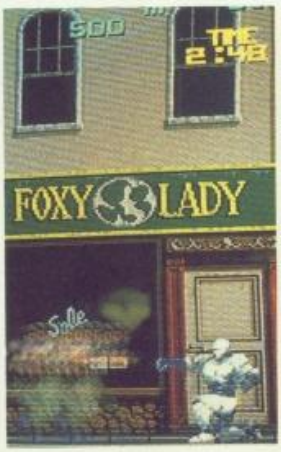
Data East.

Home computer games based on hit films are nothing new, we've had *Rambo*, *Friday the 13th*, *Platoon* and so on. It's not often a hit movie becomes an arcade game though. The Star Wars series made it into the land of the coin-slot, and now so has *Robocop*.

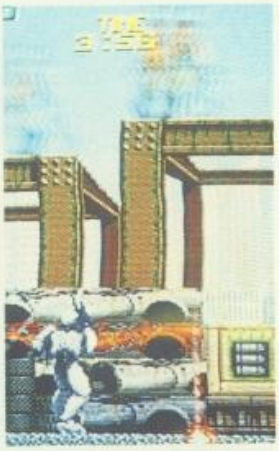
The player takes control of the main character from the film and has to work through several stages, clearing the streets of law breakers and general no-gooders. The action starts with a report from HQ announcing that a riot has broken out downtown. As the toughest, fairest and overall best-egg copper since Dixon of Dock Green, the assignment falls to you. Walk the lawgiver left-right across the 2D playing area, and baddies come running in from either side of the screen. Use fists and feet to dole out bashings.

Half way through the stage, the bad guys start appearing from first floor windows as well, so you pause and take out your high-powered pistol. Gameplay moves from a *Karate Champ*-type beat-em-up to a straight shoot-em-up, where extra weapons, including a three-way pistol and a laser gun, can be collected by smashing open large crates that appear on the sidewalk. Before completing the stage, the end of-level-guardian has to be taken care of and the first one you have to slug it out with is the ED209, a monster prototype law enforcement machine, that has a few problems with criminal recognition to say the least!

Stage Two is similar to Stage One, but tougher. Platforms make an appearance and the baddies are more numerous and start using innocent passers by as shields. This could pose serious problems because your prime directives: 1. Serve the public trust. 2. Protect the innocent and 3. Uphold the law, state quite clearly that shooting innocent people is worse than letting criminals escape. Fortunately, hitting the innocent people is a lot tougher than it sounds,so you need not worry too much. Destroy the Stage Two end-of-level guardian – a truck load of





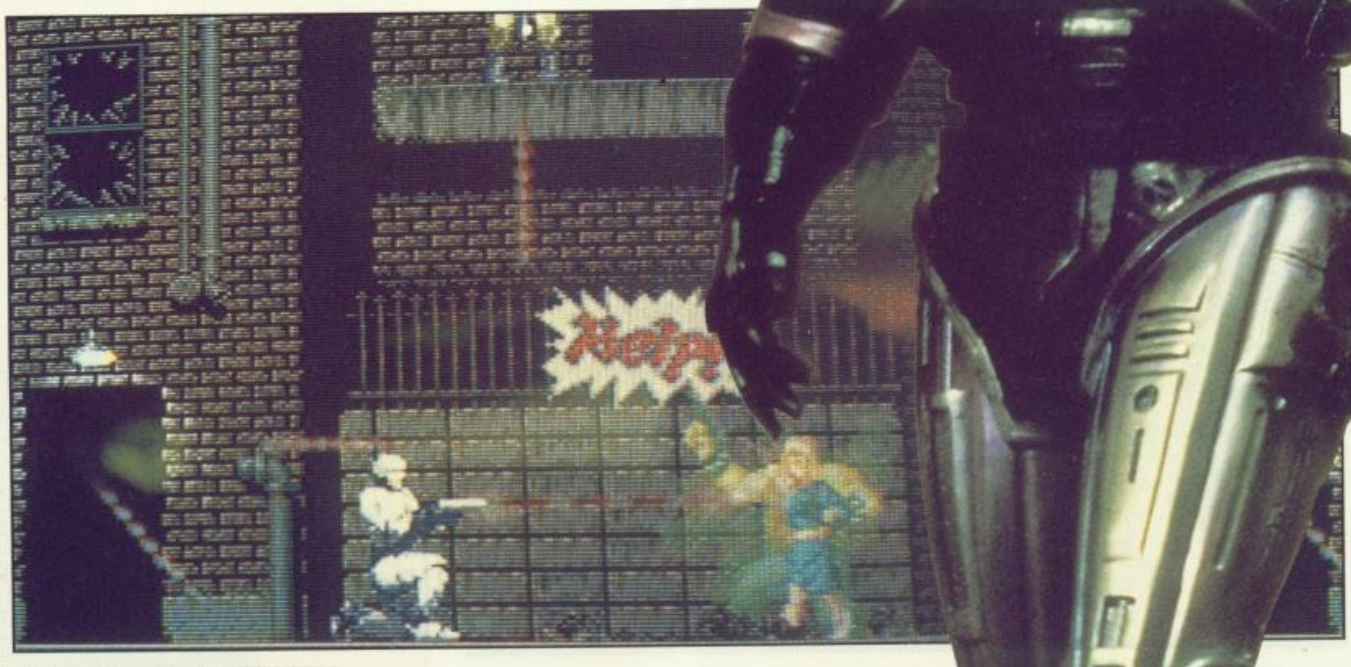


Going from left to right. At the start of Level One, even the baddest baddies are no match for your high-powered right arm. On Level Two – it's time to get your gun out. Smash the crate to pick up the three-way extra weapon. Level Three and things are starting to get very mean. Get caught under that crusher and you'll end up in worse condition than those cars!

FUTURE COPS

Half man half machine *Robocop* patrols the streets of tommorrow. Only the criminals need fear his form of justice.

(Below) The baddies don't stand a chance as you execute Directive No2.

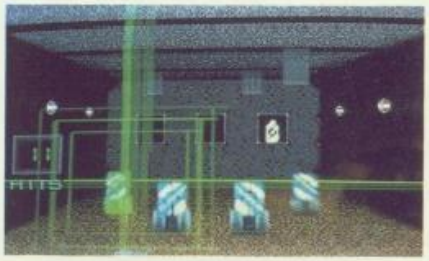


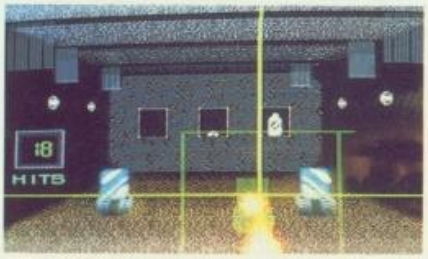


The ED209 guarding the end of the first level. The odds are not in your favour here, so you've got to be quick to shoot it and avoid its shots. Move too slowly and you'll soon discover it doesn't know the meaning of the word mercy...

chain-saw-wielding baddies – and it's time for some target practice.

The display changes to show a shooting range through the eyes of Robocop. Horizontal and vertical sighting lines appear, and manipulating the joystick allows the point where they meet to be moved. Position the intersection over targets that appear and a lock-on box appears around the target. This part of the





On the firing range. Lock onto the targets as they trundle towards you – then let 'em have it!

game is not tough, but quick reactions are essential if you're to have any chance of destroying the small robot targets that trundle from background to foreground.

Things start to get really difficult on the stage that follows the firing range. Not only are baddies shooting and throwing grenades, but there are pieces of moving scenery to contend with... like huge car crushers, and more.

Data East have done a great job in capturing the flavour of the film – the digitised speech is especially good (clear a level and Robocop "thanks you for your co- operation"). They have produced a very playable, shoot-cum-beat-em-up. ●

■ ACE WOULD LIKE TO THANK BRENT LEISURE, ELECTROCOIN, DEITH LEISURE PLC, AND AMUSEMENT BUSINESS MAGAZINE FOR THEIR ASSISTANCE.

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Screenshots from Atari ST version

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ACE GOES PREVIEWS CRAZY



Never before in the history of ACE magazine has there been so much to write about on the games front. Christmas every year is a bumper time for software releases, but this year more games than ever are due for release over the Festive Season itself and into the New Year. 1989 is going to provide a rich harvest of top-quality entertainment software.

Join us as we take a trip into the near future...

FORWARD INTO 1989

Apart from the rush to get games into the shops in time for the annual buying spree colloquially known as The Festive Season, software houses are looking firmly to the future. After a bit of a slow start, it looks as if programmers and game designers are finally about to start producing 16-bit games that really utilise the capabilities of the 'new generation' of computers. And plenty of good stuff is on the horizon for 8-bit games in 1989.



Palace, for instance, should have *Barbarian II* tied up for the ST by the time you read this, and be stepping into the New Year with a well-filled portfolio of products under development. Andy Wilson (of *Dan Dare* fame, amongst other programs) and Gary Carr (graphics for *Barbarian I*) have got their heads down on *Monster Museum*, a combat-arcade-adventure in the *Impossible Mission* mould, set in a museum where all the exhibits have come to life.

Palace stablemates **Outlaw** are getting ready to publish *Cosmic Pirate* from Zippo Games, a company that specialises in writing for Japanese consoles. In order to become a fully-fledged pirate of the cosmos you have to prove your abilities to the space mafia by undertaking missions, and to undertake missions you have to earn piracy status by spending time on simulators. Simulators hone the skills needed at the helm of a pirate spaceship and bear remarkable similarities to classic arcade games. After a while, the simulators cost money to play, so it's a matter of investing some of your ill-gotten gains from missions in further training... or buying add-ons to upgrade the performance of the basic pirate ship. ST and Amiga owners should be able to enjoy *Cosmic Pirate* early next year with PC and 8-bit versions following later.

FIRE BEING HELD

System 3, avoiding the mad rush to release games in December, is holding fire on *Dominator*, due for release in January, and *Tusker*, which should trumpet into the shops early in March. *Last Ninja* (I) on the ST and PC is imminent, and "By popular demand," according to bossman **Mark Cale**, *Last Ninja III* should be out and about by Easter.

SLOW TRADERS A' COMING...

Despite reviews elsewhere which might suggest

PRISON ● Chrysalis

First brand-new game due from brand-new software house Chrysalis is this arcade adventure for the ST and Amiga which challenges the player to escape from a penal colony on a planet deep in space. Sections of a hidden ship have to be found and then assembled before escape is possible. Also in the pipeline from the same company are 16-bit versions of the Ultimate classics Atic Atac and Sabre Wulf, due by Easter, and a brand new licensed version of 2000AD's Rogue Trooper.

(Below) ST – strolling causally along the planet's surface in Prisoner, in search of vital components that can be used to make good an escape.



ST – Not just Munsters, but monsters as well.

THE MUNSTERS

● Again Again

Last month we showed you a picture from the TV series, this month we reveal a shot of the game and next month you can read the review. Due very soon on all five major formats, and if a pal has got an MSX machine, give him the good news too...







STORM WARRIOR; SUPERTRUX

● Elite Systems

On the 8-bit front, Storm Warrior offers hack 'n' slay fantasy combat through caves, ruined cities and inhospitable terrain during the quest to overthrow the Queen of Darkness. On the C64 and Amstrad. Race action fans can get behind the wheel in another scrolling road driving game which puts the player behind the wheel of souped-up truck tractor units. C64, Spectrum and Amstrad owners will have to supply their own Yorkie bars for added realism. On top of that, Elite plan two quizzes for Christmas – Mike Read's Computer Pop Quiz, which features over 1,000 questions, and A Question of Sport.

Early next year, look out for Galactic Wanderer from Elite, a 3D intergalactic trading game that involves strategy and arcade adventure elements – due on all formats.

(Above) C64 – roaming along the Euro road in Supertrux.

(Below) C64 – mind that dragon creature... hack 'n' slay the Storm Warrior way.

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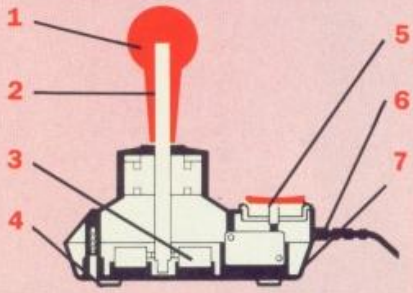
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Atari ST. screen shots.

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FREEDOM ● Coktel Vision

French software house Coktel plan a host of 16-bit releases which should be arriving on these shores very shortly. There's Freedom, a role playing, strategy wargame in which you attempt to escape from slavery in an C18th sugar plantation. Dogs, guards and the plantation manager are all on your trail; out on the ST any day now.

Also from Coktel, look out for imminent IBM, Amiga and ST releases: Emanuelle (no sex and violence, just the quest to rescue Emanuelle from Brazil); Terrific Land, an arcade adventure in which the aim is to escape from a weird island; and 20,000 Leagues Under the Sea, an arcade adventure based on the Jules Verne novel in which you try to escape from being enslaved on the Nautilus. Finally, in the first part of 1989, keep your eyes peeled for the official Jungle Book game, licensed from Walt Disney, as and a Peter Pan licence too.

ST – fighting your way out of slavery, in Freedom.



CARRIER COMMAND

● Rainbird

IBM, Amstrad and Spectrum (including 48K) versions of this amazing 3D Realtime production are just around the corner. The complete set of Carrier Commands should be available by the end of January, no matter which machine you own.

Carrier Command – the IBM PC EGA version and below...



...the Spectrum version.





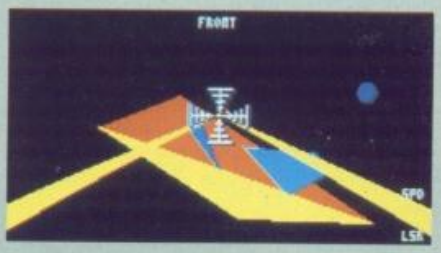
ST – Working as an agent for the computer that controls a subterranean city, life can get hard. Especially if you do too well, and become a threat to your master. That's Paranoia for you...

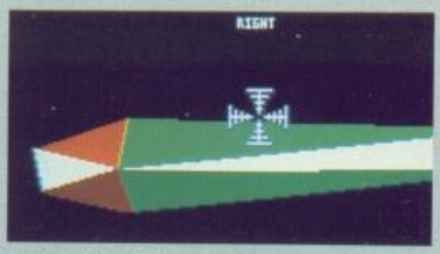
PARANOIA COMPLEX

● Magic Bytes/Gremlin

In a futuristic subterranean city, the computer rules. To retain power, it needs a few human friends to take out people who are getting over-powerful, so if you fancy being an agent for the computer, your career prospects could start improving rapidly. Be careful out there, though. Get too powerful, and you become the hunted rather than the hunter... so the ultimate aim is to escape from the city. Due on all major formats sometime around February.

Around the same time, look out for Tom and Jerry, frantic cartoon-action from German programming wizards Magic Bytes, again due on all major formats. Nightdawn, Wall Street, USS John Young and Persian Gulf Inferno should follow between March and June 1989.





Federation of Free Traders

otherwise, **Gremlin** are still beavering away at *Federation of Free Traders* – as this issue went to press, there was still no sign of the game escaping from their Sheffield programming lair, so a full review of the completed version should find its way into the next issue. *Dark Fusion*, for the Spectrum, C64 and Amstrad is due before Christmas and should appeal to shoot-em-up fans who fancy zooming across a scrolling subterranean landscape, using a jetpack for propulsion, and destroying aliens on the way.

If driving and killing is more to your taste, then check out *Motor Massacre*, another pre-Christmas release promised by **Gremlin** for all major formats – leap behind the wheel of a tooled-up motor in post-holocaust times and deal death to anything else with wheels.



Motor Massacre

Turning the classic concept of computer game design on its head, **Gremlin** have come up with *Ramrod*. Rather than playing on a computer to stop yourself getting bored, you choose between a robot and a man and then try to stop them getting bored inside your computer. Both characters are mindless music freaks, who never stop running in the quest for entertainment. Guide Ramrod or Rambot across a hostile landscape in the hunt for new compact disks to listen to, or stop off for a glass of pop or a quick blast on a coin-op. Just keep that boredom meter from rising so high that your chum gets bored to death... ST and Amiga sometime in February, other formats may follow.

FOOTBALL FRENZY

Football fans, it seems, are going to be well-catered for in the New Year – **Kevin Toms** is putting the finishing touches to an upgrade kit that allows the player to re-mix *Football Manager II*, and he's not the only fellow actively working on footie software... Budget house **Zeppelin** are readying themselves for the launch of *Kenny Dalglish Football Challenge* – the first full-price game on their **Cognito** label. Rather than sweat it out on the field, you take the role of a team manager who is trying to get to the top – it helps if your team gets promotion at the end

of the season, but it's not vital: good managers wasted in the lower divisions tend to get head-hunted by teams in the top divisions.

Not forgetting *Emlyn Hughes' International Soccer* which should be out and about by the time you read this from **Audiogenic**, and the Darlings of Codemasters couldn't resist the temptation to put four, yes four footie games in one package: *11 A Side Soccer*, *Indoor Soccer*, *Soccer Skills* and *Street Soccer*. It's not a budget package, though, coming in at £9.99 on the C64 and Amstrad, £8.99 on the Spectrum and £19.99 for 16-bit machines. Then there's **CRL's** *Professional Football*, due for the Spectrum.

NINJA TREE SIMULATOR?

The massive **Virgin/Mastertronic/Melbourne House/Leisure Genius** combo is being a little coy about its plans for 1989 – after reading this issue of ACE you'll be as well clued in about their releases as anyone. Of course there's *Double Dragon*, due soon now on the Sega and on home machines, *Quarterback*, an American Football game ready for the C64 any day now, *Monopoly Deluxe* for the ST, and C64 *Diplomacy* all due early next year.

One little clue about future plans though... **Virgin** programmers and graphics artists are apparently reading books about **British Trees** and studying the Ladybird edition of the legend of **Robin Hood**. *BMX Ninja Tree Simulator* in the pipeline maybe? No, that's more Codemasters' style. Watch out for a game set in Sherwood, featuring the odd band of merry men...

A PHOENICIAN GOD OF A GAME

Psygnosis are getting thoroughly excited about *Baal*, an eight-way-scrolling shoot-em-up with strategic overtones. Do battle with the forces of the God of Evil, fighting through 250 screens split into three multi-level domains. No less than 18 sections of a War Machine need to be found and assembled if the ultimate bad guy is to be defeated. On an ST or Amiga near you in time for Christmas.

Captain Fizz Meets the Blasteroids is another Psygnosis shoot-em-up, due very soon, and is set in a maze viewed from above in plan format. It can be played by one person, but it has been designed as a two-player game for chums to have fun on together. Friendly, huh?

The long-awaited game of '**cubic destruction**' from Psygnosis, *Aqua Ventura*, should be out and about come January. Featuring fast-moving solids, it's another shoot-em-up with eight-way scrolling, but the interesting difference is that some of the aliens are harmless until you start shooting at them. Which is when things start getting hectic. A follow-on to *Chrono Quest* is on the cards, which completes the Psygnosis round-up along with another game from the man who brought you *Menace* – both due before Easter '89.



Aqua Ventura

MORE LABELS THAN ALAN WHICKER'S SUITCASE

The **Activision, Mediagenic** and **Electric Dreams** combine has just announced the for-



Amiga – dealing death from a Phantom Fighter over a blue landscape.

PHANTOM FIGHTER

● Martech

High-powered graphics complement the Amiga and PC action in this stunning shoot-em-up due any day now from Martech via their Irish connection, Emerald Software. The rolling demo looks amazing, and the team can't wait to get a joystick plugged in and firing. Sadly, Phantom Fighter is a pleasure that is going to be denied to ST owners – Martech say the ST can't handle the graphics.

PURPLE SATURN DAY

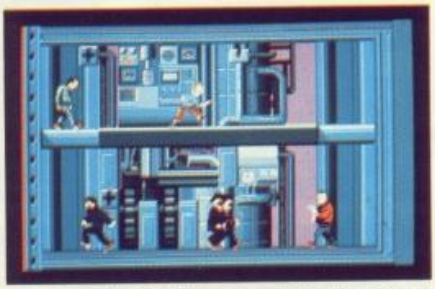
● Infogrames

On Saturn, so the story goes, everything turns purple for one day a year. On that day neighbouring planets hold a four-event Olympiad and the action has been captured in Purple Saturn Day – due soon on 16-bit formats, with 8-bit to follow. Brain Bowler involves fighting with an opponent for control of two hemispheres of a brain – aiming a continuously-firing pulse gun at strategic points in the brain itself. Tronic Slider involves romping round a triangular play area on a skimmer, collecting energy and avoiding monoliths. You also to shoot an opponent, nudge him into a monolith or off the platform. Ring Pursuit is a slalom in space: set in the rings that surround Saturn, a course has to be steered between orbiting satellites. Finally, Time Jump catapults the contestant into the future...

Also due from Infogrames early next year on their new Exxos label is a game based on two Tin Tin books – Journey to the Moon and Explorers on the Moon. Expect an arcade adventure.



ST – the start of Tronic Slider: the play area zooms forward from deepest space before the contest begins...



ST – Tin Tin finally makes it to the home computer, courtesy of Infogrames.

HELLBENT ● Novagen

The third 16-bit release for Novagen should arrive any day now, not from Paul Woakes, but programmed by Donovan Prince with graphics from Mo Warden, the person whose screen graphics flashed past your eyes in Backlash. Still no firm release date for Mr Woakes' third 16-bit offering, Damocles, though...

ST – there should be time to get a good look at the graphics in Hellbent, the latest from Novagen.



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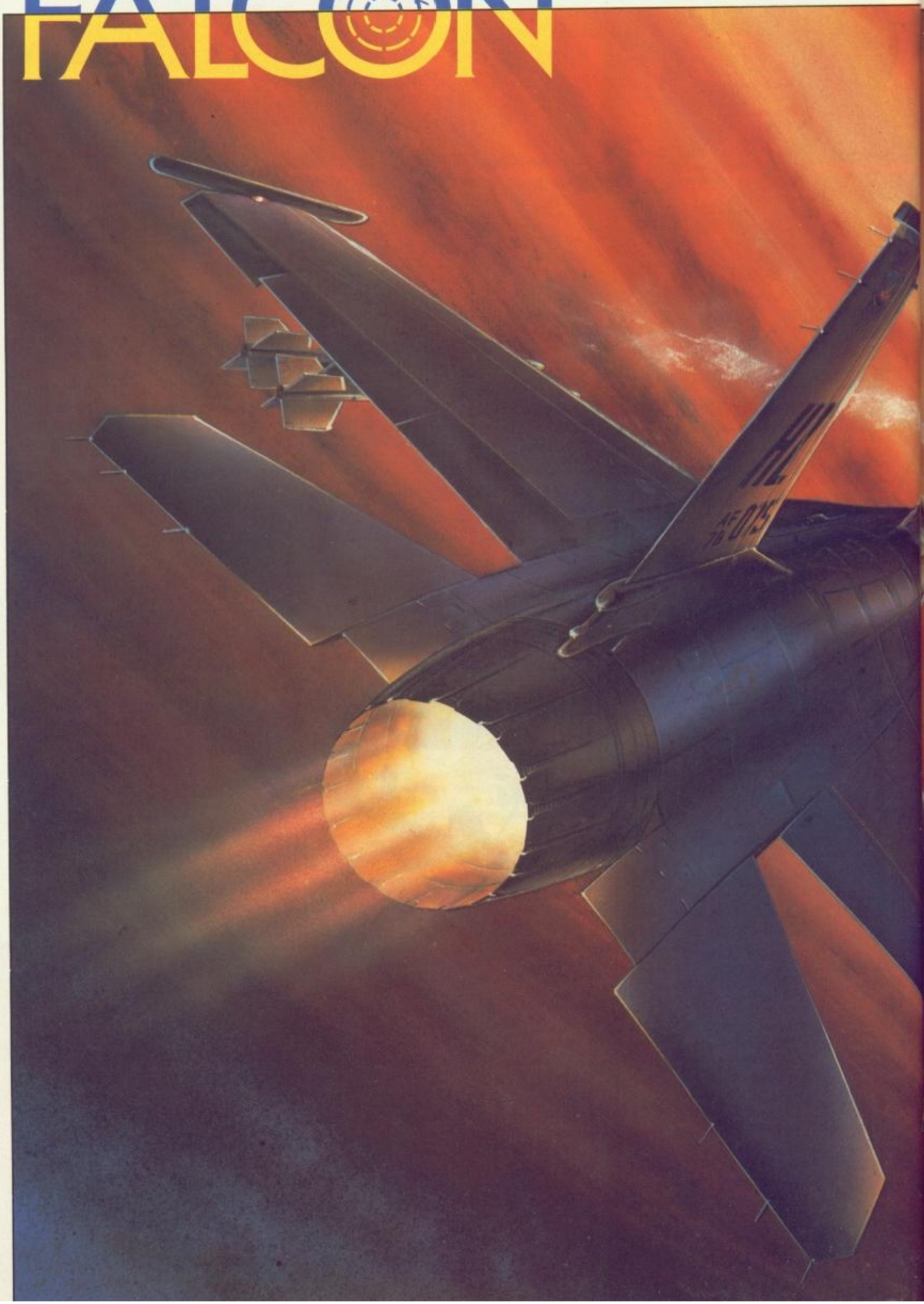
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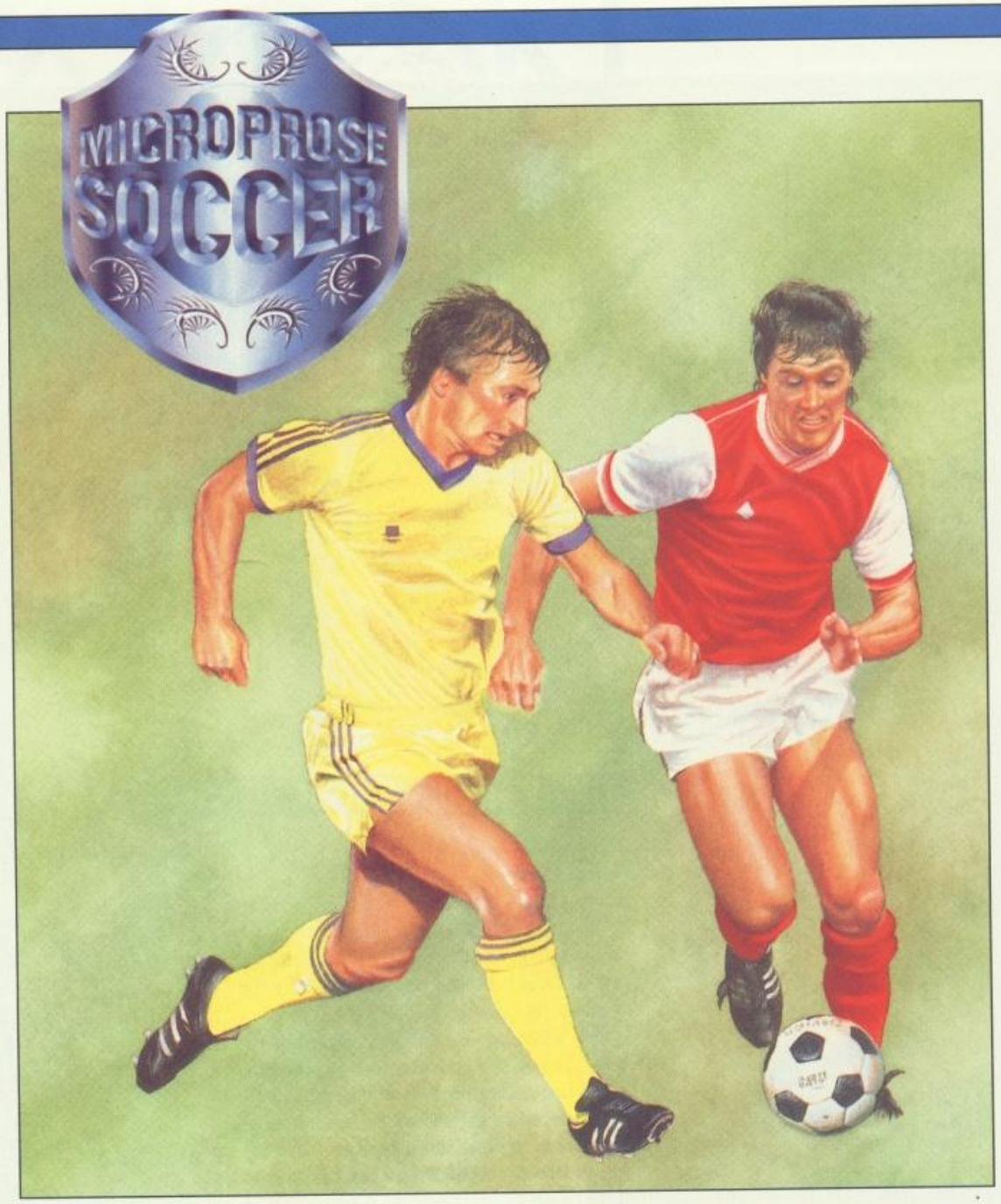
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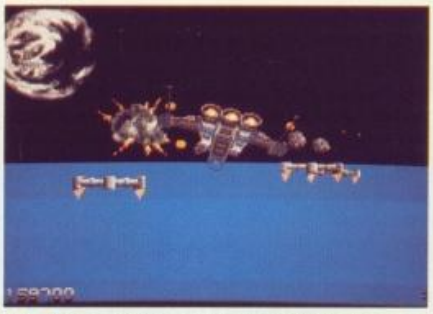
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GALACTIC CONQUEROR

● Titus

Strategy meets 3D arcade action in Galactic Conqueror... a sort of After Burner in space, with ground and aerial fights leading up to the space combat. As Conqueror, the aim is to protect 416 planets in an interstellar group that is under attack – choose which planets are most at risk and defend them. Due between now and February on the five main formats. The same release schedule applies to Crazy Cars II from Titus, the sequel to... yes, you've guessed it.



ST – not just After Burner in space: Galactic Conqueror from Titus.

KRISTAL ● Prism



Amiga – things start hotting up for the intrepid space pirate, Drancis Frake, as he continues his quest to discover the whereabouts of The Krystal.

Not too many computer games have their origins in stage musicals – particularly un-produced stage musicals – but that's the background to *The Kristal*, a January release for the ST and Amiga, written by ***Fissionchip Software*** and published by Prism.

The storyline originally belonged to a show written by Micky Keen, Rod Wyatt and Mike Sutin – a special effects extravaganza which almost made it to the West End but fell victim to the perils of production. Fast forward ten years and the three creators had gone their separate ways when Mike, had a bright idea – why not revive the story of space pirate Drancis Frake for the 16-bit computers which could do it justice?

But how to describe *The Kristal?* It's more complex than an arcade game but there's more action than you'd expect in an adventure. With its four disks, sword fights, non-player character interaction and space battles, the most accurate epithet seems to be 'mega-epic'. This could be the *Lords of Midnight* or *Dun Darach* for the 16-bit generation, offering fast action and deep gameplay all in one.

Frake's adventures start with him hungover on an alien planet. Walk a little way and he's accosted by a talking plant – just the first of a series of bizarre encounters. But stop to chat to everyone, however odd, because this is the only way you'll find out where you are and, more importantly, what to do. Fissionchip is keeping quiet about the plot but we can reveal that it concerns a Princess who's to marry the wrong guy in just three days time.

Variety the spice of a space pirate's life and each of the planets is highly distinctive, thanks to the 60 beautifully drawn backgrounds by Michael Haigh and David Hardy. The characters are by Chris Petts, Julian Edkins and Rodney Wyatt, and each is carefully animated to express their character, so that a hippy slopes around, a beggar limps and the like. The sword fights are even more impressive, with 150 frames of animation by Neill Glancy.

Programming director Alex Mills with assistants Justin, Giulio Zicchi and John Edwards pulled the whole thing together.

The ingenious blend of space travel and sea-going piracy lets you fly between planets in a space sailing ship which fires cannonballs at insect-like alien invaders. There are high-tech environments, grassy paradise planets and molten worlds in which you have to find a way of avoiding a fatal hot foot! Even the conversation parser is sophisticated enough to provide convincing replies to most remarks we tried.

Though the game was still in the stage when all its elements are coming together, it looks as if it will be a major January title and at £29.95 should provide hours of engrossing entertainment of a kind seldom seen on micros.

mation and signing of two new labels: **Vivid Images** and **Motion Picture House**.

From **Electric Dreams** in the not-too-distant future, look out for *Incredible Shrinking Sphere*, a shoot-em-up/strategy game with isometric, multi-directional scrolling in which you pilot a sphere of varying mass through a maze. Traps, prison squares and assassin spheres do their best to hinder progress, and given that the velocity of the sphere varies according to its mass, driving isn't all that straightforward. No release date for that one, but *Time Scanner*, the **Sega coin-op** pinball conversion should become electric reality in January.

And of course, a quintet of Sega coin-ops is due from **Mediagenic** during 1989: *Galaxy Force, Altered Beast, Hot Rod, Sonic Boom* and *Ace Attacker*. Just remains to be seen, in the light of *After Burner* (which required 'achieving the impossible'), how *Galaxy Force* will fare as a computer game.

Adventure fans with 16-bit machines can look forward to **Sierra**'s latest – *Manhunter: New York*. Aliens have invaded New York and you take on the role of a human detective contracted to the alien dictatorship. Throughout the game, the player can switch sides between good and evil, and develop into a friend of the aliens or a supporter of the human resistance. Those of you who like the *Kings Quest* series will be pleased to learn that 16-bit versions of *Kings Quest IV, The Perils of Rosella* are due very soon.

MYSTERY TITLES

Down at **Hewson HQ** David Jones is slaving over a new Amiga game, due around April, and John Phillips (*Eliminator*, working title *JMP3*) is beavering away on a project for the ST and Amiga. It has the cryptic working title of *JMP4* at the moment and should see the light of High Street shelves April-time.



Astaroth

Apart from those mystery titles, *Astaroth The Angel of Death* for the ST and Amiga is due real soon – it's a room-based arcade adventure programmed by **Mark Dawson**, the man who gave you *Robin of the Wood* and *Nodes of Yesod*. Not forgetting a really violent shoot-em-up with three levels and some 750 screens of multi-directional scrolling action: *Kalashnikov*, again for the ST and Amiga and due in January. 8-bit gamesters can look forward to *Stormlord* in the same month, **Raffaelle Cecco**'s latest opus which will also find its way onto the ST and Amiga later next year.



Kalasknikov

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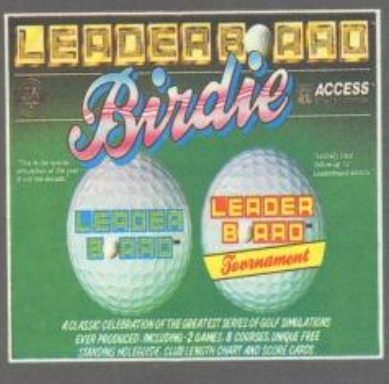
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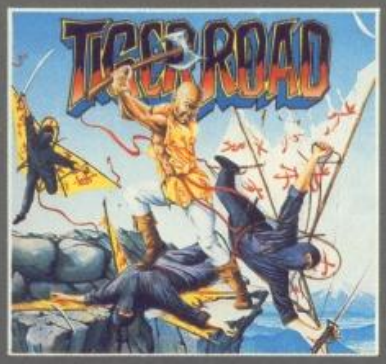
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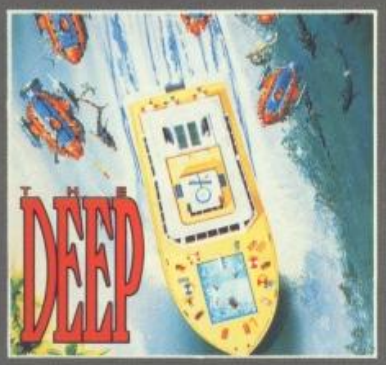


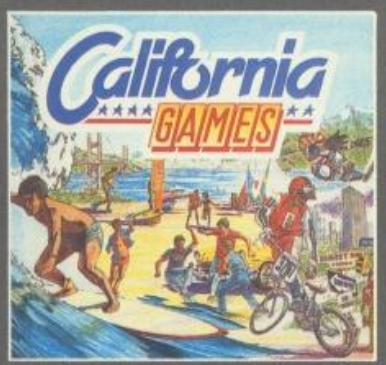
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ARMCHAIR SPORTSWARE

Sports fans are in for a pre-Christmas treat from **Accolade**, and should be able to enjoy tennis, snooker/pool/billiards, basketball and boxing along with their mince pies if they have a mind to. *Serve and Volley*, for the PC and C64, is a well-complex tennis simulation that requires players to move around on court, select the shots they intend to play and aim their strokes via a pop-up menu system. All in real time, too... And anyone with the slightest interest in using a cue, be it for snooker, pool, billiards or a 'designer' game on the baize with a custom set of rules, should find plenty to amuse in the PC and C64 versions of *Rack 'em*. Then there's C64 basketball in the form of *Fast Break*, a full-court three-on-three simulation, and *TKO (Technical Knock Out)*, a split-screen boxing simulation for the C64 that gives the player a first-person perspective of the action. Watch those punches come at you!

FORMAT FRENZY

Electronic Arts, not to be outdone, have decided to extend the number of formats on which *Skate or Die*, a 'street surfing' simulator, is to appear. Between now and Spring next year IBM, Spectrum, Amstrad and then Amiga and ST owners will be able to thrill to Ramp Freestyle, Downhill Races and Ramp Hill Jumps. Up to eight Rad players can compete together, or two players can go head-to-head in Pool Jousting and Downhill Battle. Skate crayzeee.



Skate or Die

And a weird and freaky version of crazy golf – *Zany Golf* – is set to amaze and amuse PC owners any day now. Early next year ST and Amiga gamesters will be able to join in the nine-hole fun, which has less to do with golf than you might imagine from the title. Moving walls, magic carpets, transporter pads, particle rays and laser beams are just a few of the *Zany Golf* obstacles that boring old has-beens like Lloyd Mangrum never had to cope with.



Zany Golf

EUROBOXING

As if that wasn't enough in the way of armchair sporting action, German bytemasters **EAS** are on the verge of releasing Amiga *Ringside*, another boxing simulator and one that allows the player to 'build' a fighter and then punch past ten opponents. ST and PC versions are due in the New Year. Euro software house **Linel** promise 1,500 frames of animation and 11 different offensive and defensive moves in THEIR Amiga



Could that be a phial of potion nestling in the grass?

WAR IN MIDDLE EARTH ● Melbourne House

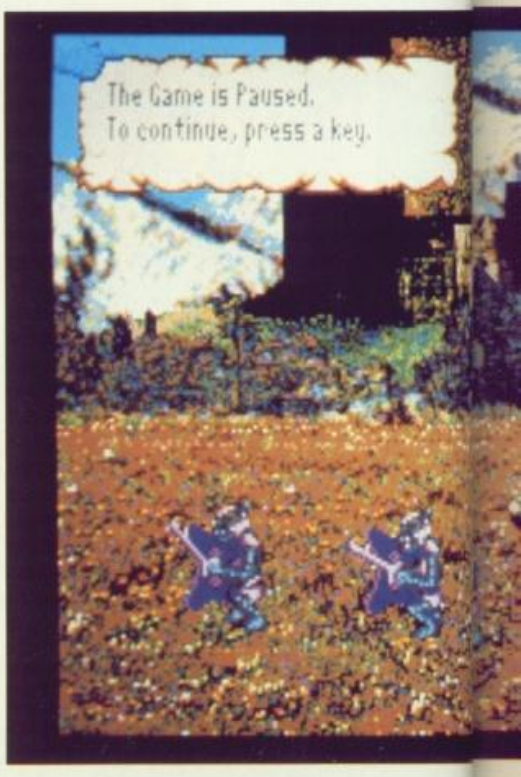
No, not the sequel to *The Lord of the Rings* adventure, but a completely new product that spans the entire Tolkien trilogy, Lord of the Rings – and pretty amazing it looks too.

Around 14 months in the preparation, every location in the 16-bit versions has its own graphic and tune – both music and pictures have been digitised. The pictures were given a special treatment to make them look like part of a fantasy game rather than a TV programme, according to Producer Ron Harris.

The 16-bit game runs on three levels: at the Character Level, the player can see individual game characters wandering around locations; using a scrolling Overall Plan map, the main characters and forces can be seen moving over Middle Earth; and then a less detailed Top Level map showing all of Middle Earth on a single screen can be accessed. Moving a pointer over the plan map reveals more detail, and allows play to return to the Character Level at a selected location. Similarly, the Top Level map can be viewed to give an overall picture of what is happening in the land, and then control passed to the Overall Plan mapping level by clicking a pointer. 8-bit versions won't have the Character Level, but to make up for the loss, the player can get directly involved in fight sequences, directing moves.

There are thousands of ways to lose the game, but the only way to win is by dropping the ring into the Crack of Doom. *War in Middle Earth* can be approached as a role-playing adventure, as a strategy game or as a wargame – the plot remains the same, but the way in which the player decides to approach the problems faced by Frodo in his quest governs gameplay. Really idle gamesters can do nothing, just sit back and watch events unfold as if they were watching a computerised movie of the Tolkien Trilogy.

The computer-controlled characters have their own decision systems, and will do what they do in the books – but the player's actions will affect the plot. And the characters are intelligent – for instance, if the Nazgul get the ring from Frodo, they head back to Sauron's Lair moving like a row of Rugby forwards, feinting and weaving in an attempt to disguise which of them holds the ring. All the characters' decision systems are inter-related, so taking control of one character modifies the actions of all the others.



A couple of characters get down to slugging it out in a combat sequence taking place at Character Level. If armies are involved, they are represented by single characters.



The top level map of Middle Earth



Getting close to Sauron's hideout at Character Level.



Another fantasy scene – this time a castle looms up in the background.



boxing game, *The Champ*, which has won endorsement from the **World Boxing Council**. Starting out with brawls in the street, the would-be boxer has to get recognised by a talent spotter and then train and fight his way to the World Championship. All this to the theme tune of Rocky. ST and C64 versions should follow after Christmas.

If the rigours of the ring haven't turned you into a Stallone-clone by the New Year, then Linel's more intellectually demanding offerings should be available, including *Dragonslayer*, an arcade adventure for the ST and Amiga which involves battling past over fifty enemies, finding fragments of a medallion and then slaying a... wait for it, wait for it... a dragon.

OUTPOST AT THE NEW FRONTIER

Brand new software house **Frontier Games** are about to burst into life with a C64 original – *Outpost*. Described as a tactical game, the aim is to move four marine units and infiltrate a guarded enemy outpost. Detailed characterisation is promised, along with six interlocked missions per game – plan your strategy, polish up your tactics, make the moves and then sit back and watch the outcome in an arcade-style animated sequence. Other 8 and 16-bit formats are promised soon after the C64 version.



Outpost

EXCUSE-FREE-ZONE

Arcana, for some strange reason, seem to think that *No Excuses* is just the sort of game a thrusting young executive needs to play in order to acquire the mental capacities to succeed. Whether the **Arcana** crew played their own game and are themselves now bound to succeed with the title in the cut-and-thrust commercial world of the software industry remains to be seen. ST and Amiga owners should be able to pit their non-executive minds against the fifty tests contained in *No Excuses* in time to start the New Year with finely-honed minds.

MULTITASKING MAYHEM

Just in time to keep *No Excuses*-trained executives happy in the Amiga workplace, **Logotron** plan to release *Prospector in the Mazes of XOR* on the Amiga early in January. A 16-bit version of *Xor*, there will be thirty levels, a digitised soundtrack and completely new graphics – apparently you'll be collecting hot-air balloons rather than masks. Ideally for the budding exec, *Prospector* should multitask with utilities like *Sculpt 3D* and *Excellence*. Should prove great for light entertainment, both in the yuppie office environment and at home.

SO SCARY, IT DAREN'T COME OUT?

Microdeal planned to show *Frightnight* (wherever IS it?) at Comdex in Las Vegas a few weeks ago, along with *J.U.G.* for the ST (defies description, just get in there and kill that virus), *Time Bandit* – an arcade adventure for the PC – and *Turbotrax*, a screen-based slot-racing game in the mould of the classic Scalextric for the Amiga.

TRAVELLING IN THE ROLES

Roleplayers have plenty to look forward to over the coming month or so, too. **Origin**'s first cassette release is imminent for the C64, Amstrad and Spectrum – *Times of Lore* should be in the shops by the time you read this, visiting the UK courtesy of **Microprose**, to be followed in January by ST and Amiga versions. **Electronic Arts** are about to release *Neuromancer* on the C64 on behalf of **Interplay**, the people behind the *Bard's Tale* series of role-playing games. Based on the 'cyberpunk' classic by William Gibson, the game features an original soundtrack by Devo and pits you as a software pirate of the future, entering a huge computer system. C64 only, for the time being cyberfreaks.

HELPS YOU WORK, REST AND PLAY

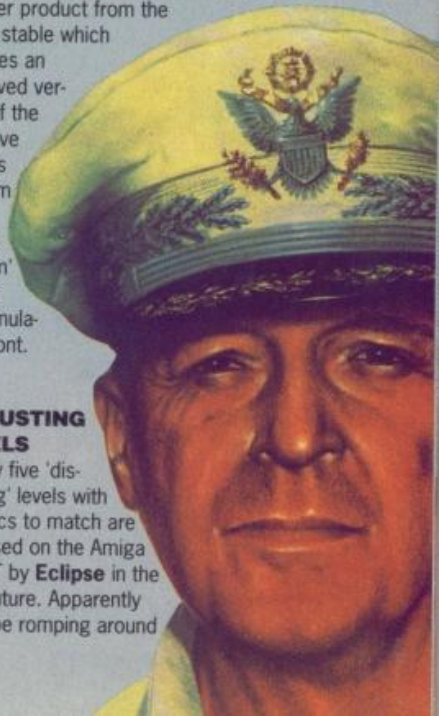
Another role-playing treat lies in store from **Electronic Arts** in the form of *Mars Saga*, which casts you onto a prison colony on Mars. Life is cheap, and survival isn't easy, as C64 owners will soon be able to discover for themselves. And if you are the type that likes a good role, look out for *Deathlord too*.

Of course there's *Dungeon Master's Assistant* from **US Gold**, a utility that's a must for serious users of the **AD&D** system – with a database of over 1,000 encounters and some 1,300 monsters, it makes a DM's life a lot easier on the C64 and PC.

With this level of activity, a role-playing special could well be on the cards for next issue...

TELECOM TUSSLING

If huge telephone bills hold no fear for you, *Modem Wars* allows C64, PC and Apple II owners to dial each other up and do battle over the phone, fighting across randomly-generated battlefields on computer screen. If you haven't got shares in BT and a vested interest in seeing their profits soar, there's always the option to play against your own computer... Also on the battle front, **Strategic Studies Group** (SSG to those in the know) are about to complete their trilogy of American Civil War games for C64 owners with *Wilderness to Nashville*. Then there's *MacArthur's War*, *Battle for Korea*, another product from the same stable which features an improved version of the Decisive Battles System 'for added realism' on the the simulation front.



DISGUSTING LEVELS

Twenty five 'disgusting' levels with graphics to match are promised on the Amiga and ST by **Eclipse** in the near future. Apparently you'll be romping around

inside the stringy bits of a giant alien life form in *Growth*, taking part in a frantic battle to destroy a tumour. Ugh. If alien biology proves a bit too stomach-churning, ST and Amiga softies can leap into a low-level skimmer and do battle with the forces of an oppressive regime in **Eclipse**'s other pending release, *Atax*. Priced at £14.95 each, this duet of blasters should be around now(ish).

LOOKING BEYOND THE DARK SIDE

Incentive are keeping quiet about their forward plans for 1989 – they'll admit to *Dark Side* on the ST and Amiga being scheduled for a February release, and hint that quite considerable advancements have been made in the **Freescape** system. Other than stating that they are completely committed to solid 3D games, their spokesman would give little else away. So make do with this issue's review of *Total Eclipse* for the time being.



Total Eclipse

FER GAME?

French software people **Ubi Soft** are readying themselves for the release of *Iron Lord* on the Amiga, ST, Amstrad and Spectrum. You take the part of a warrior stranded in a country packed with traitors, spies and assassins. A wicked uncle has turfed your Dad off his throne, and after raising an army the aim is to re-establish your birthright by winning trials of combat and being a generally sneaky fellow. Also from **Ubi Soft**, look out for *Skateball* on the five major formats – it's a futuristic sports simulator that combines football with roller-derby, all played in an ice rink.

8-BIT PRICE, 16-BIT GAMES?

New label **Axxiom** promise nine 16-bit titles over the coming months, the first of which, *Powerstyx*, gets a review this month. For the ST and Amiga, look out for *Mission Elevator*, in which a hotel has to be searched for terrorist bombs which need defusing; *Spaceport*, which involves saving innocent people in a subterranean network by piloting a spacecopter and destroying an alien brain; and *Skyblaster*, a helicopter 3D air-to-air combat simulation.

Five more Amiga-only games are scheduled from **Axxiom**: *Final Mission*, in which the spirit controlling a labyrinth needs a good seeing-to;

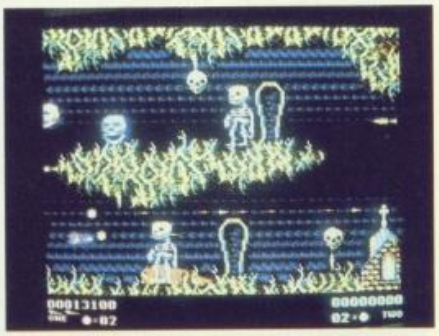
Mission Elevator



MIRRORSOFT AND IMAGEWORKS

"The biggest C64 game ever", and "we're going for the ultimate C64 shoot-em-up" were phrases bandied around by the Mirrorsoft crew as they revealed *Phobia*, a fast scroller from the team of **Crowther** and **Bishop**. In the finished version, at least fifteen three-stage levels will be there to blast through, presented in the form of a linked network of planets. The overall aim is to fight through planet levels in order to collect nine sections of a heatshield that allows your craft to penetrate and destroy a sun at the centre of a galaxy.

Messrs Crowther and Bishop have let the foetid side to their imaginations run riot along the phobia theme – already a nasty handful of scary levels have been put together, including one representing death. Levels for electricity, water, birds, fire, and darkness are already well underway, and the whole caboodle should be complete in time for a February release. Plans are afoot to produce Amiga and ST versions.



C64 – the 'fear of death' level from Phobia, featuring heads that rot away into skulls, ravens of doom, ghosts, hanging men, guillotines and coffins that release skeletons when they are shot. Scare-ey.



ST – picking off invading troops with a trusty bow and arrow from the safety of a fortress window. Despite the action being set in ancient Japan, Cinemaware thoughtfully provide the archer with a laser dot sight in Lords of the Rising Sun!

Also expected around February time is a Japanese epic from **Cinemaware** – *Lords of the Rising Sun*. Played over a scrolling map of Japan, the aim is take control of the entire country, wresting it from the grasp of an evil man. Gathering forces to your side and planning a winning strategy is only part of the game – arcade sequences punctuate the campaign, including a sequence where shuriken stars hurled at you by a Ninja have to be deflected with a sword, and another that involves galloping a horse across fields, dispatching footsoldiers.

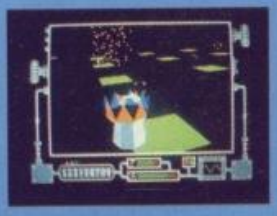
Other up-and-coming titles in the **Imageworks** pipeline include *Crimetown Depths*, a mission in which you are a killer hired to defend a Bladerunner-ish, futuristic city, *Palladin*, an arcade adventure that

INTERPHASE

Stunning solid 3D animation is the strength of *Interphase* – which has a 'cyberpunk' plot. Your assistant is trying to penetrate a large headquarters building that is defended by a massive computer. You have entered the internal architecture of the machine, and attempt to deactivate the software controlling security systems in order to make your colleague's progress to the nerve centre of the building possible.

Piloting a craft through the computer, you try to interface with software – represented in the game world by solid objects – and solve 3D-puzzles in order to deactivate programs. Programs hover, defended by highly manoeuvrable security modules and strange snake-like apparitions. Skimming through a level, the floor and ceiling are represented by different coloured tiles – flying into a tile allows you to move through a floor or ceiling, into the adjacent level of the computer's architecture.





ST – strange chimney-pot structures are part of the computer's internal security system – no matter how many of the defensive fighter programs you destroy, more are generated by these pots. The lid opens, and a burst of sparkling light emerges, revealing a small fighter module which rapidly grows to full size...

ACE ON THE ROAD

utilises a silhouette graphic style, and *Terrarium*, another arcade adventure played across the landscapes contained inside a terrarium – the aim is to get to a fortress,







(From the top) Amiga – Crime Town Depths, Palladin and Terrarium, a trio of releases due soon on the Imageworks label.

from which you can escape to the outside world. Work is currently proceeding on the Amiga for 1989 release.

Perhaps the most exciting project on the **Imageworks** label at the moment is *Interphase*, as the game you might have heard of as *Mainframe* is now called. Check out the box for details...

Finally, to round off the Mirrorsoft portfolio of 1989 products, there's a neat coin-op conversion of Atari's *Blasteroids* – 3D colour graphics meet the classic Asteroids gameplay. ●

ST – classic rock-bustin' action in Blasteroids





The Way of the Little Dragon

Way of the Little Dragon (aaah!), a one or two player karate bash-em-up; *Crystal Hammer*, a nice, noisy 'breakout' game with 30 levels and lots more; *Gunshoot*, in which you sit at a bank's cashdesk facing twelve doors through which customers and baddies enter the premises (sounds a bit reminiscent of an old **Dinamic/Gremlin** Spectrum game, that one); and *Spinworld*, a seven-level shoot-em-up where the object is to duff up a bunch of aliens whose weird planet looks like it might be menacing Earth.



Crystal Hammer

It might be a bit cruel to suggest that **Axxiom** is short of original ideas, but if they can re-work the old ones as well as they have with *Powerstyx*, and keep charging under fifteen quid, 16-bit owners should be kept happy next year. Only time and the reviews will tell.

A RIPE HANDFUL

Apart from *Phantom Fighter* (previewed elsewhere on these pages) and *Circus Circus*, **Martech** have a ripe handful of releases lined up for the months of December and January. Gun-totin' shoot-em-up fans should enjoy *Shoot Out*, an 8-bit six-shooter extravaganza in which you aim to rid Gulch Creek of some real mean dudes by dint of applying your trusty side-iron to the problem. At the end of January, **Martech** should have *Program Wars* for the ST, Amiga and PC – an entertainment written by the programmer of *Zoids* which apparently allows the player to generate *Life*-like games.

REALLY LOVE THOSE TIGER FEATS

On the **Capcom** coin-op conversion front, the **Go!** label completed *Tiger Road* just days too late for it to be reviewed this issue, and promise *LED Storm* for January, *Black Tiger* for February and *Last Duel* for March. Videos of brand new arcade games have just found their way into the **Go!** offices, we learn, and according to their Product Manager some 'really good stuff' should be out and about for home machines in April and May. **Rainbow Arts**, also published by **Go!**, are about to unleash *Spaceball* on the Amiga and ST, accompanied on the journey to the shops by another pre-Xmas title, *Realm of the Trolls*.



IT"S PARTY TIME!

Garfield's friends, **Softek**, plan a 10th Birthday bash for the fat feline and are celebrating by releasing a party. Yes, releasing a party – on ST, Amiga and 8-bit machines in January, it will be a collection of game sequences with a wintry theme. Currently the working title is *Winter's Tale*, but it is *Garfield II* by any name. February should see the arrival of *Darius*, a coin-op conversion – how will they fit those three screens and vibrating seat onto a home machine? Wait and see. Finally, by Easter, **Softek** plan to wow the world with a Peanuts licence – apparently the people who own the rights to Charlie Brown, Snoopy and their chums were so impressed by the treatment given to *Garfield* that they approached the company and asked them to do a computer game! Of course *Inside Outing*, the zany 3D isometric perspective adventure, should have made it to the ST and Amiga by now, together with a C64 and ST version of *Soldier of Light*.

MUCH MORE THAN JUST ORANGE...

Never before in the history of computer games have so many colours been crammed onto a single screen, according to **Mandarin**, who are remarkably pleased about *Pioneer Plague*. Using the Amiga's **H**old **A**nd **M**odify graphics facility, programmer Bill Williams (*Mindwalker* and *Sinbad the Sailor*) has produced an arcade strategy game which sets the player on a quest to disable a self-replicating robotic spaceship that has run amok. As if all those colours (up to 4,096 on screen at once) weren't enough, original music, eight-way scrolling and digitised humanoid speech complement the prettiness. It sure looks good, but was there room for a game there too or is this just a mediocre game HAMmed up? Find out next issue...

SPORTS IN THE STREET

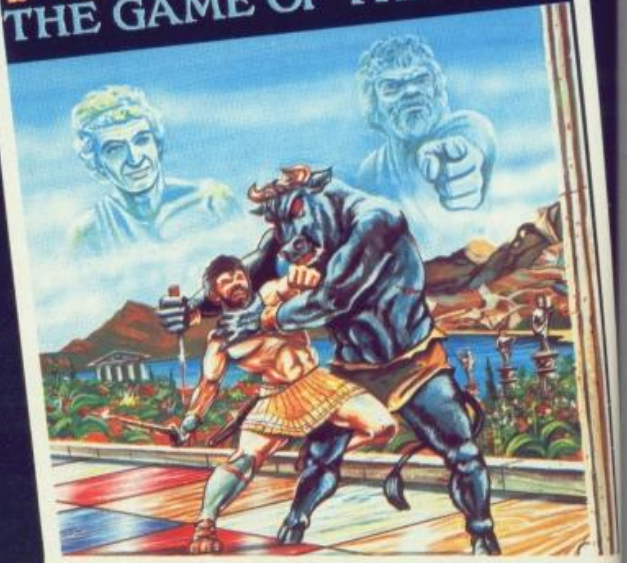
Epyx, having done a distribution deal with **Infogrames** are spending a month or so catching up with other versions of titles like *Games Summer Edition* and *California Games*, already released and reviewed on some formats. On the brand

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new titles front, they promise *Street Sports Football* for the C64 any day now – an American Football game – and a text and graphics adventure by the name of *Legend of Black Silver* early next Spring.

THREE BIRDS IN FULL SONG



Billboard

The Telecom team of **Firebird** and **Rainbird** are proving no shirkers in the race for 1989 releases. From **Rainbird**, expect to see *Verminator* by February – remember, it's the game that involves making money as a vermin catcher working in a tree. Around 250 levels are promised, and catching vermin isn't the only way to get rich: popping into casinos and trying to make a fast buck is just one of the get-rich-quick schemes on offer in the tree. *Weird Dreams* is due on ST and Amiga around March with 8-bit versions to follow (we've been talking to the designers of the game and have interesting things to tell you next month.). Hot news on the **Geoff** (*Sentinel*) **Crammond** front: he's working on a brand new game called *Stunt Car Racer*, planned for around Easter on all five major formats.

Firebird too, have loads of projects underway, including a game from the **Original Fatboy Himself**, Gary 'Gigglyworks' Liddon, who moves into the full-price realm with *Tyger, Tyger*. Also look out for *Dynamic Duo* by **Probe Software** on 8-bit machines around the same time.

Moving one stage further down the price ladder, plenty of 'pocket money' games are planned by **Silverbird** at £1.99 on most formats. Look out for *Video Classics, Skuba Kidz, Peter Pack Rat, Cauldron II, International Speedway, Motocross Mania* and *Billboard*. Okay Kidz? Further details in the budget and compilations round-up after this month's SCREENTEST.

THUNDERBIRDS ARE GO! ER.., GRANDSLAM!

Fans of Virgil, Brains, Parker and Lady Penelope can look forward to a real *Thunderbirds* game from **Grandslam** in February on 'all major formats' (**Firebird** rather wasted their *Thunderbirds* licence a few years ago on a neat puzzle game).

This time, a slightly less wooden game is planned – a four-way-scrolling role-playing graphic adventure is promised, which actually features Gerry Anderson's characters and sets the player on the trail of **The Hood,** the Tracey family's arch enemy who has managed to video the Thunderbirds vehicles and threatens to expose the Traceys to the glare of publicity. Further missions for the *Thunderbirds* characters are promised later in the year.

Other licences acquired by **Grandslam** that should lead to 1989 releases include the rights to Arnie Schwarzenegger's new movie, The Running Man. The hero finds himself as a contestant in a futuristic TV gameshow which follows a similar pattern to the Roman Arena – players are put in a labyrinth and pursued to their deaths while millions of couch potatoes look on. A five-section, sideways-scrolling game, *Running Man* is also promised 'on all major formats' in the first months of 1989. On a more cutesy level, **Grandslam** are also working on a **Dandy** licence, in which over 30 of DC Thompson's famous comic characters have to be helped to achieve appropriate tasks. Brassneck, for instance is trying to bake a cake, while Desperate Dan needs help to fill his Gag Bag. 'What, no Cow Pie?' we hear you cry... Due around Christmas, or shortly thereafter.

UNDERPANTS AS OVERTROUSERS

Still on the comic character front, **Tynesoft** are putting the finishing touches to *Superman*, which should appear on the five major formats in time for Christmas, complete with the hero wearing his red knickers publisher-style outside his trousers, (obscure, ACE-style in-joke) as should *Barnum and Bailey's* a set of circus games, in a package that includes Trapeze, High Wire, Tiger Taming and Bareback Riding.

The lure of the sawdust ring and circus action seems to be a popular theme suddenly – **Martech** are about to pop *Circus Circus* out on the Spectrum, while programmers working for the **Golden Goblin** label in Germany should have their six-sequence *Circus Attractions* game ready for March on the IBM, Amiga, ST and C64. Still, it's better than caging real animals and making them do tricks in front of an audience...



Superman

GERMAN PRINCES IN PALACE DASH

If trading simulations appeal, those wily Swiss people at **Linel** are offering the opportunity for up to eight people to take on the role of princes in ancient Germany. In *Kaiser*, the aim is to rule a country, nurturing the population, building an army and forming alliances with the rulers of neighbouring territories. Only one prince can become Kaiser, and everyone knows it...

Keeping the adventure world covered, Linel should be releasing *Ice and Fire* early in 1989, an ST, Amiga and IBM PC opus two years in the making. With three days to live, you can assume one of nine personas before attempting to find a cure for the disease that is killing you AND have a go at saving the world. Just to show that strategy games aren't beyond the wit of the Swiss, Linel plan to complete their coverage of game genres in February with *Crown*, which features a detailed 16-screen landscape over which the player manipulates an army.

OPENING THE BOX

Pandora have a trio of releases due between now and February. There's *Outland*, an unashamed vertically-scrolling shoot-em-up in which two small fighters attempt to save Earth from a destructive invasion – due any day now for the ST and Amiga. On a slightly more cerebral level, *Debut* sets the player the task of stabilising a planet's ecosytem – controlling weather systems, moving the population and tinkering with food chains, the aim is to prevent wars and pollution down on the planet's surface. Arcade action, simulation and strategy are all combined in *Debut*, according to Pandora, and you should be able to test their claim early in the New Year. Finally from Pandora there's *Galdregon's Domain*, a role-playing simulation in which you, as a barbarian hero, go in search of five gems. ST and Amiga versions are due any day now, with Amstrad and Spectrum versions planned for the first part of 1989; there's no target date set for the C64 version.

COMPUTER MANIACS

The **Domark** team leap into 1989 with their **Tengen coin-op** deal (see News, last issue) which should start producing results in the Spring, and of course the wacky and zany *Spitting Image* beat-em-up is due to arrive in good time to find its way into Christmas stockings throughout the land.

If boring old **1989 Trainspotter's Diaries** are all your maiden aunties buy you at Christmas, and you own a C64, Spectrum or Amstrad, why not drop some strong hints about the cassette-based *Computer Maniac's 1989 Diary* this year? Another piece of witty software from the Twits.

CLOSING ON CONSOLE THOUGHTS

Finally, on the console front, **Sega** have been fairly active of late introducing a batch of games (reviewed in SCREENTEST, save *Double Dragon* which came at Single Speed, arriving too late for review). Not to be outdone, **Nintendo** are making a new push into the UK market this Christmas and plan to release between two and four games per month throughout 1989. Apart from the the **Nintendo** games reviewed this issue, look out for *Gradius, Top Gun, Castlevania* and *Goonies II* in the near future. Meanwhile, if you're thinking about splashing out on a console this Christmas, check out the Pink Pages to find out what you could be letting yourself in for...



Desperate Dan goes Gag Bag stuffing...

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Fight off T.I.E. Fighters, survive the lethal tube, blast the reactor and turnaround from the exploding Death Star.





A MAJOR ARCADE COIN-OP HIT





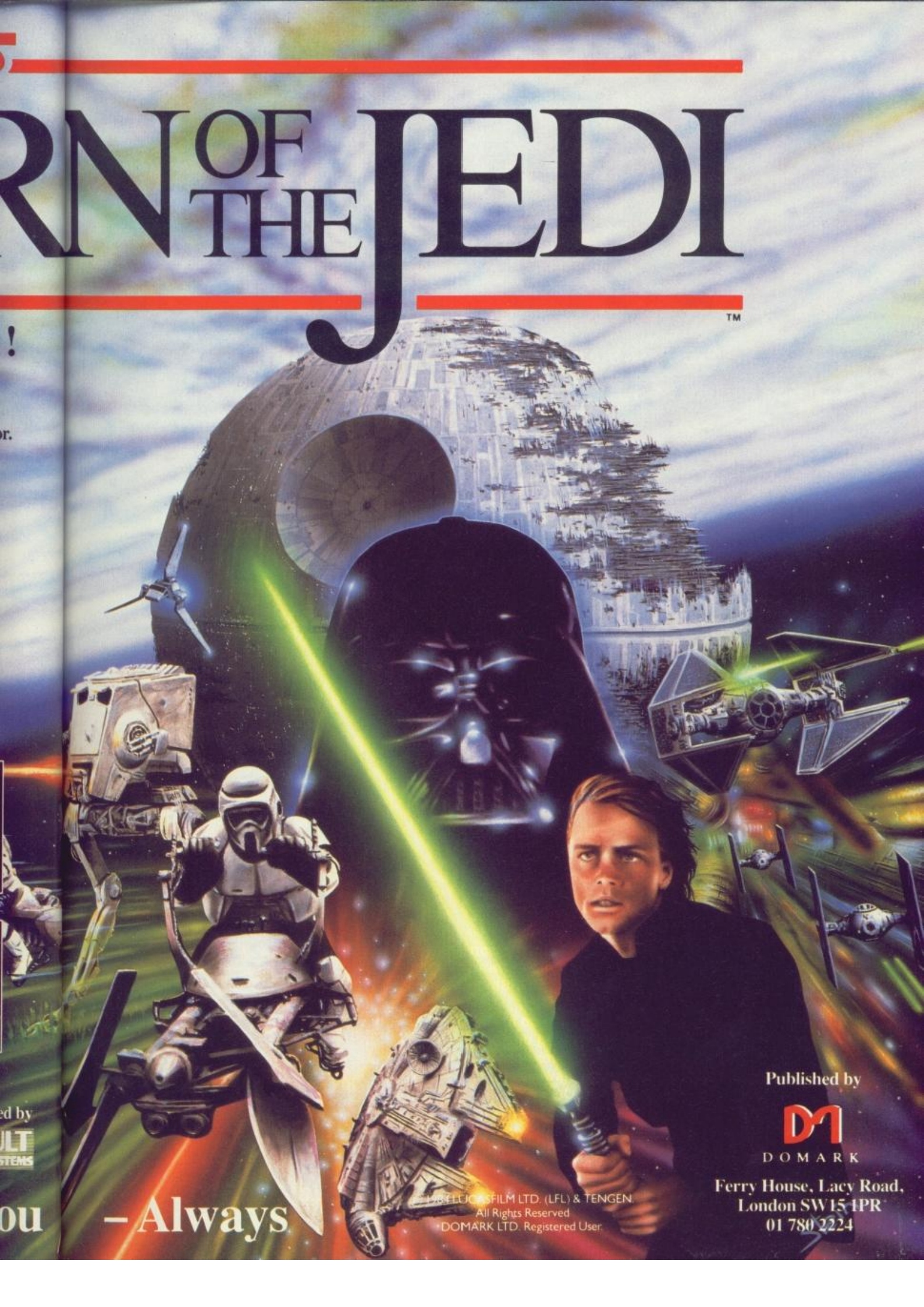




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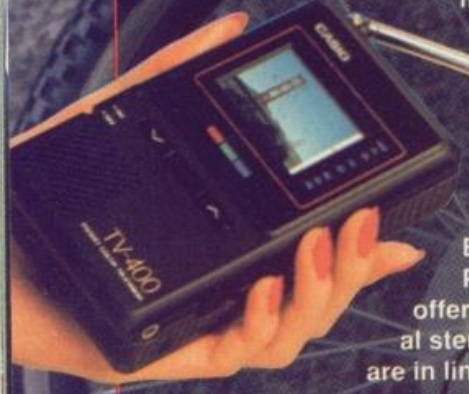
COMPETITION

CLIMB EVERY MOUNTAIN

ACE and Telecomsoft join forces to present an amazing Christmas competition.

FIRST PRIZE is a specially-imported Palisades Trail mountain bike, from Marin. Built from double-butted Tange tubing, the Palisades Trail bike features Shimano Exage Trail components, including the Shimano Bio-Pace for maximum efficiency when pedalling, sprung loaded derailleurs that make index shifting easy, and hard anodised Araya rims.
Collect this valuable prize and you'll be the envy of mountain-biking style merchants throughout the land – and you can go trekking across the most daunting terrain with confidence and ease.

SECOND PRIZE is a Casio TV-400 liquid crystal colour TV that weighs less than 12 ounces, fits comfortably into the hand and runs off batteries. Wherever you are, no matter what you are doing, as the owner of the TV-400 there should be no reason to miss the latest episode of Neighbours. Or Mastermind, if that's more to your viewing taste.



By way of RUNNER-UP PRIZES, Telecomsoft are offering no less than ten personal stereos, and ten more entrants are in line for a Telecomsoft T-Shirt.

As this is the festive season, all you have to do in order to enter and stand a chance of winning one of the twenty-two prizes on offer is ponder over our festive Telecomsoft Trivia Quiz. Fill in the answers and post them to TELECOM TRIVIA, ACE, 4 Queen Street, BATH, Avon BA1 1EJ to arrive before 5th January, when the draw will be made – in the unlikely event that no-one gets ALL the questions right, we'll award prizes to people who get closest to a full set of answers. Usual ACE competition rules apply.



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COMPUTER OWNED.....

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T-SHIRT SIZE

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2) Name one thing of which St Nicholas is the patron saint.

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4) Who played Santa's little helper in Santa Claus: The Movie

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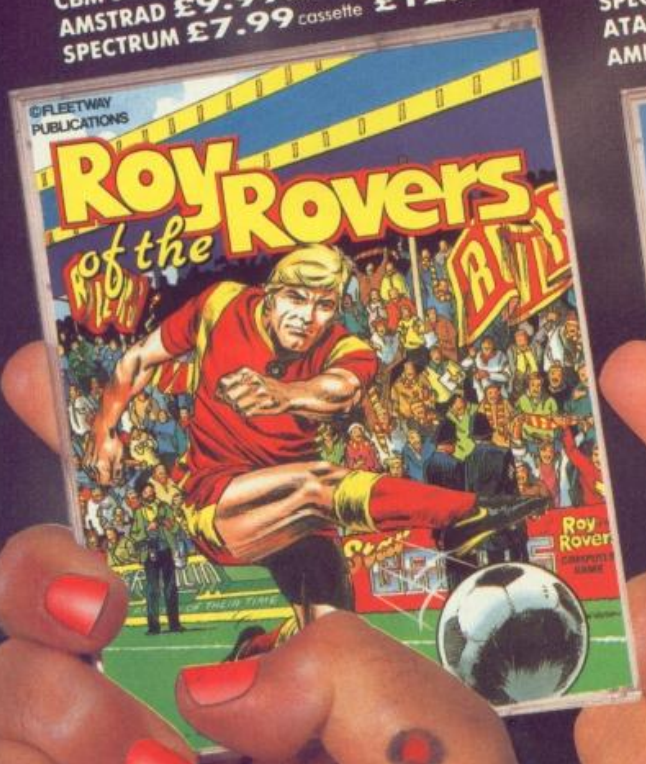
GARY LINEKER'S HOT SHOT

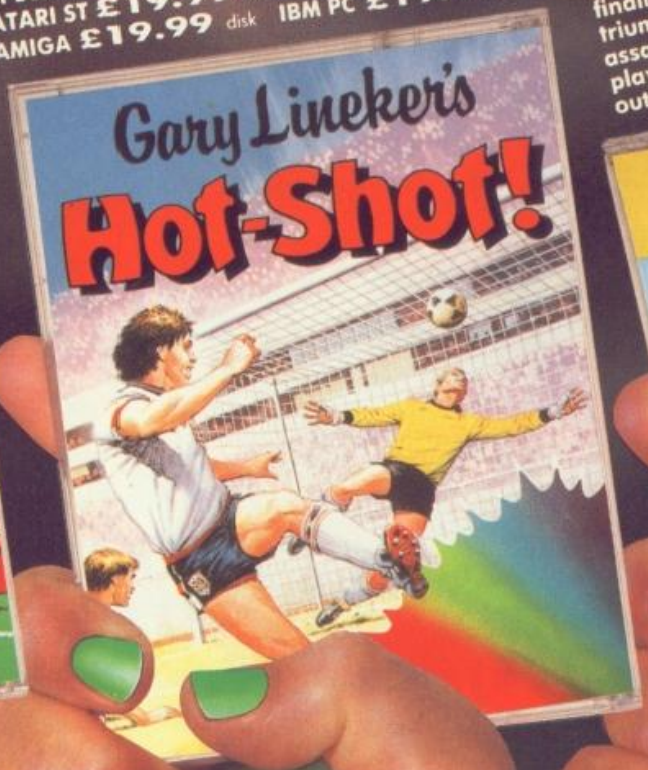
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Screenshots from various formats.

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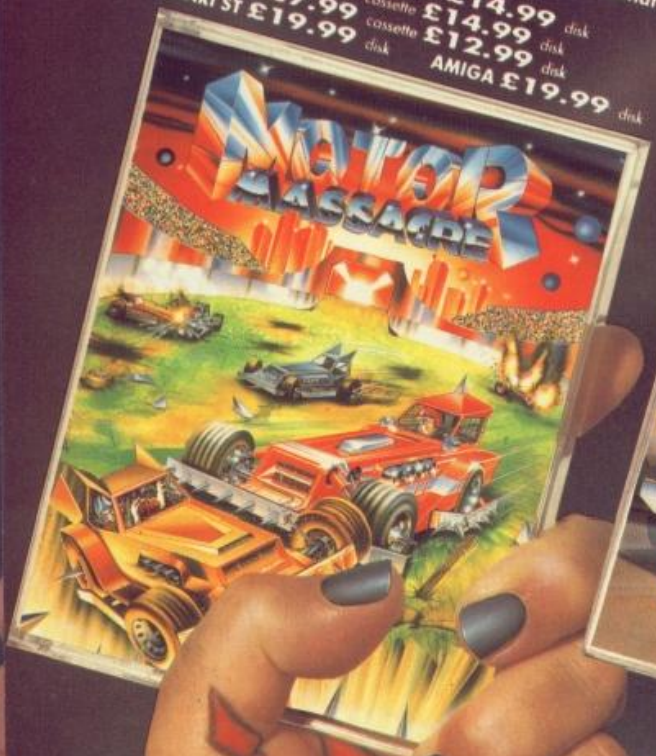
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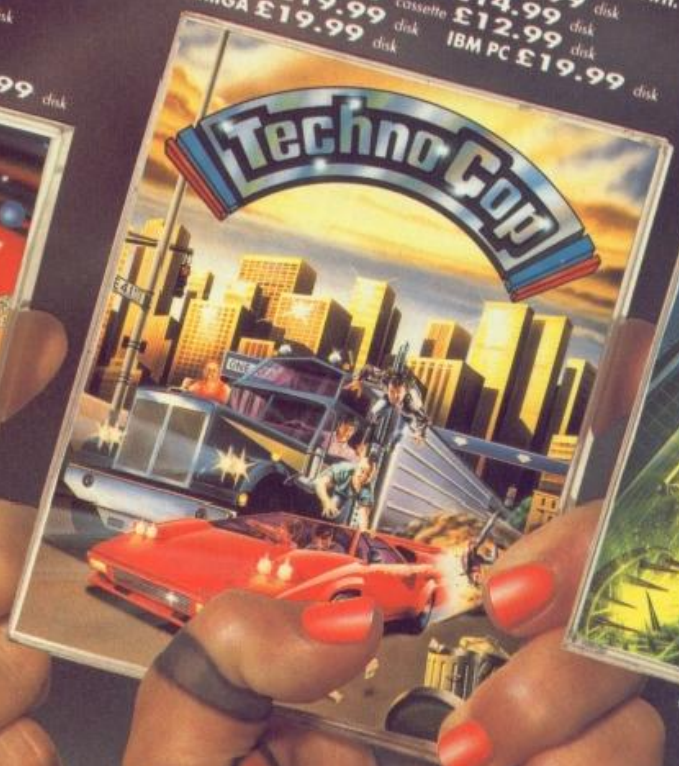
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Step into the future... technology has overtaken society – the rich are richer, the poor are poorer – chaos, unrest, destruction... lawlessness reigns, terror rules. But this is your territory, your assignment with death. These are your streets and you have volunteered to clean out the scum, destroy the streetgangs and eliminate the deviants that pollute your city. Yes you have your beloved sleek racer, but armed with only stun gun and keep net what skills do you possess to neutralize the many hundreds who lie in wait for you? Being a cop is always dangerous, being a cop of the future is a step into the unknown.

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GREMLIN











Screen shots from various formats.

Gremlin Graphics Software Ltd., Alpha H

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Only the elite pass the three phase test of the Corps of Guardian Warriors – co-ordinated fury in destruction of the mutant hordes of the underworld; supreme command skills in frantic defence against the invading alien space fleets and merciless nerve in bloody battle against the monster of the Pit of Despair. Then the final chilling decision – enter the Metamorphosis Chamber to fuse reforms with your vanquished or face your next challenge with only the powers your mortal form bestows on you.

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Stand proud Artura – son of Pendragon – and set forth on your quest to unite the warring kingdoms of Albion in this age of bloody war and mysterious magickes. Your task is to rescue Nimue from the clutches of your evil half-sister, Morgause for which only your fearless nerve and superior fighting skills and the mystical wheel of Cerriddwen will overcome the ghouls, spiders, soldiers and giant rats you encounter.

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AMIGA

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MAGIC BYTES



ATARI ST

SCREEN TEST

Welcome to the biggest Screen Test section ever. We said that last month, and after adding even more extra pages we're saying it again.

The peak selling period of December and January is about to begin – even with our huge preview section, we still had to up the size of Screen Test again to cope with the volume of new releases.

Which game is going to top the charts over the festive season? Hard to tell, but as you might expect **Thunderblade** and **After Burner** are both hot contenders, reviewed this issue, but **WEC Le Mans** could give them a good run for their money. As we went to press, WEC Le Mans hadn't made it out of the Ocean Pits, so it remains an unknown quantity.

Two original titles, **Batman** and **Total Eclipse** get Ace Rated this month. It's good to see that originality is far from dead in the wake of arcade conversions.

It's worth repeating last month's message, once again: **it's the biggest and it's full of the best – enjoy!**






THE RATINGS

HOW THEY'RE CALCULATED...

If you buy a game, how much enjoyment will you get out of it, and for how long? Just check out our revolutionary PIC (Predicted Interest Curve) for the full story. Brilliant arcade games start high on the curve, and then steadily tail off as you lose interest; powerful puzzle games may ride the crest of the curve for months – but the moment you solve them they'll come tumbling down; complex strategy games may stump you at first – but climb up the scale as you begin to appreciate the scope of the gameplay. And as for the turkeys – they start low, stay low, and have nowhere to go but down, down, down.

Once you've seen how long the game can hold your attention, all you need to glance at is the renowned ACE RATING. This is calculated according to the area under the PIC. The bigger it is, the better the game. Add to that our definitive ratings for IQ Factor (will it give your brain cells a work-out?) and Fun Factor – a measure of instant appeal and exhilaration as you dive into the game. Then there's the ARCADE ACCURACY rating, used where appropriate, to report on how good a job the programmers have done with the conversion job on a game that began life in the coin-op arcade. Of course, we rate the Graphics and Audio effects too...for EVERY machine the game's available on, giving the full picture, no matter which machine you own

WHY YOU CAN RELY ON THEM...

The ACE reviewing team covers a broad spectrum of computer entertainment talent. Andy Wilton – now moved on to be permanent technical wizz on our sister magazine PC Plus – is as handy with a smart bomb as he is with hexadecimal. Andy Smith wouldn't know hexadecimal from a hole in the ground, but can wipe the floor with any number of aliens. Bob Wade (ex-Personal Computer Games, Zzap!64 and Amstrad Action) has played more computer games than any sane person ought to. Add Steve Cooke (ex-PCG and formerly columnist for magazines ranging from Zzap!64 to Your Sinclair) and count in our new Editor, Graeme Kidd, who has over five years' worth of professional gameplaying under his ample belt, and you've got age and experience as well as youthful enthusiasm.

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

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ST – stage one and some enemy planes come screaming past you. Get 'em in your sights and fire off a missile.

ARCADE ACCURACY

It's fast, colourful and has all the features of the arcade game that you could reasonably expect.

COIN OP SCORE 8

plane indicates where the machine gun is firing, and if an enemy plane wanders into the sight, it locks on to the enemy plane. You then let loose with a missile which will rocket towards the target – meanwhile, your small sight's still out in front so you can end up with half a dozen or more targeted enemy planes at once.

Dealing with the enemy like that is not such a problem at the start of the game as long as your reactions are swift enough to bank left-right to avoid the incoming missiles. The problems start when enemy planes and enemy heat-seeking missiles start coming from in front and behind. The best way out of this kind of situation is to start using the throttle control to speed away from (or slow down and sneak in behind) the enemy. In later stages the skies are

AFTER BURNER

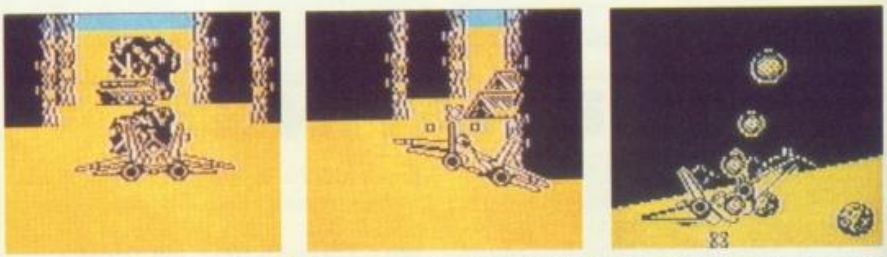
ACTIVISION Lock On

TAKE a game, almost any game, put it in a large, colourful and very animated cabinet then plonk it in an amusement arcade and what have you got? Large queues waiting for their turn on the latest sure-fire arcade hit.

After Burner was THE machine to play in the arcades earlier this year. It came in three versions: The upright cabinet, which is the standard arcade machine, the sit-in version, which shook and rattled as you played, and the Deluxe version, which shook and rattled enough to knock your false teeth into your lap. Now Activision bring us the home micro versions of the game – which come without a cabinet, so you'll have to do your own gyrating console impressions.

The object of the game is very simple – fly your F-14 Thunder Cat through stage after stage of enemy territory and survive for as long as possible. Chances of survival are increased by shooting down as many of the enemy aircraft as you can before they shoot you. Your plane is armed with a continually front-firing machine gun and heat-seeking missiles. A small square sight just in front of your

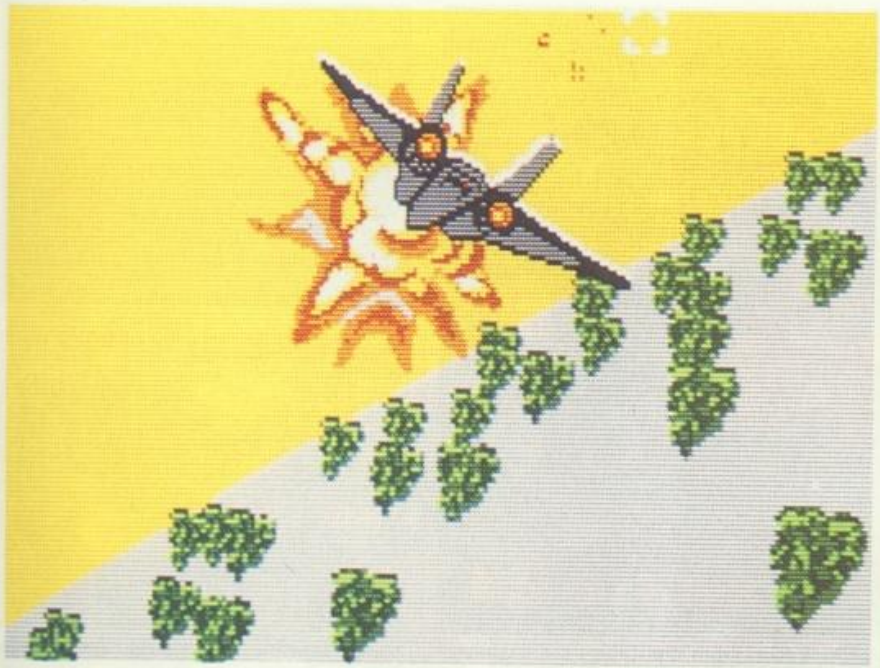
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IBM PC	No plans	



Spectrum – powering through the canyon in stage eight. There are no enemy planes to worry about as you blast everything on the ground. Mind the walls though! Far right – you're hit! You're going down! You've only got eight lives left! Oh no!

Below – C64 version, notice how blocky the graphics are.

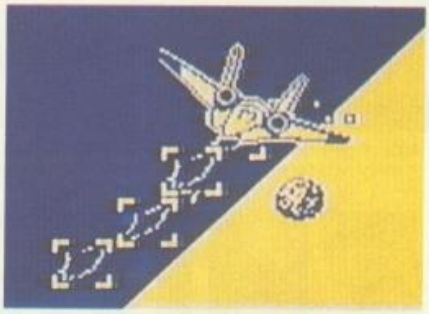




ST – Blam! A missile hits home. Watch out for that incoming missile at the top of the screen though or you'll go crashing to the ground.



Blasting off at the start of the game on the Spectrum. Tilt your chair back as you power skywards(not too far!).



Spectrum – in the thick of the action. You're locked onto four planes so let them missiles fly!



Re-fuelling and re-arming on the Spectrum. The player takes no part in this so it comes as a welcome break.

RIPE FOR CONVERSION?

The programming team who converted After Burner have done a first rate job – very little, if anything, has been left out and the game plays very well. The only problem is, was After Burner really suitable for the home micro? Unlike R-Type, which is a challenging and enjoyable shoot-em-up, A.B. outside of the sit-in cabinet is dull. The cabinet made the game popular in the arcades and, without the frills, the home computer versions are poor cousins. Operation Wolf is another great arcade game, and although the coin-op featured a huge rattling machine gun mounted on the front of the cabinet that couldn't be emulated on the home micro versions, the game itself was good, and a competent conversion that compensates for the lack of machine gun should be (and is) a good computer game. Can the same be said for After Burner?



At the start of a new stage on the arcade machine.

empty of enemy craft and it's a simple case of blasting away at ground targets such as oil tankers and look-out towers – occasionally you have to do this whilst flying through a narrow canyon.

Although your machine gun has an inexhaustible magazine and keeps firing away happily, the number of missiles is limited and should you be so foolish to use up all your missiles early on, you'll have to survive without them until the refuelling stage, when either a large tanker plane comes flying over and drops a cable which your plane attaches itself to automatically, or a landing strip comes into view and the plane lands and gets refuelled.

After Burner is pure sky-high mayhem, the ol' brain cells won't get a work-out but your joystick arm certainly will. It's playable stuff, but once the novelty has worn off you'll soon realise it is just a standard scrolling shoot-em-up with little in it to keep you interested and playing for any great length of time.

● Andy Smith

C64 VERSION

The graphics are the worst of the bunch. They're colourful but very blocky – to the extent that it's often very difficult to see what is going on and where the missiles are coming from. The sound too is poor – the effects especially.

GRAPHICS	4	IQ FACTOR	1
AUDIO	5	FUN FACTOR	4

ACE RATING 519

SPECTRUM VERSION

Great graphics, great gameplay and OK sound effects and music. Unfortunately the game soon gets repetitive and you'll see your interest waning fast.

GRAPHICS	8	IQ FACTOR	1
AUDIO	7	FUN FACTOR	7

ACE RATING 656

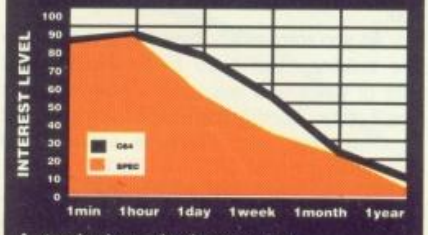
ATARI ST VERSION

The sound effects are good as are the graphics and gameplay. It's still not a stunning game though and you're liable to bored sooner rather than later.

GRAPHICS	8	IQ FACTOR	1
AUDIO	7	FUN FACTOR	6

ACE RATING 687

PREDICTED INTEREST CURVE

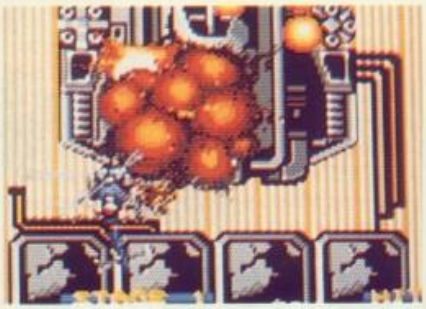


A standard arcade shoot-em-up.



Amiga preview shot – Here's what the graphics look like. From the demos we've played it appears to play well too. Wait for the update review in a future ACE.

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Amiga preview shot – keep firing! Keep firing!

THUNDER BLADE

US GOLD go to the rotors

TOP dog in the software chart battle last Christmas was US Gold's *Out Run*, and they're hoping to repeat the feat by taking to the air this year. The competition is much hotter these days though – so have they managed to come up with the gameplay goods?

To start with, the helicopter you fly is viewed from above. It sits on a roadway waiting to rise up and launch itself forward. Both speed and height can be controlled by the joystick, but it's easier to change speed using the keyboard. As you change height the chopper stays the same size, but the buildings, scenery and enemy weapons loom larger or shrink away – and very nice it looks too.

As you rotor-motor over the ground there are buildings that have to be avoided and lots of tanks and helicopters letting fly with shellbursts. Bombs and bullets will put paid to them, but violent evasive action in all directions is essential.

The second stage is just like the first, except for one crucial factor – the view is from behind the helicopter. Instead of everything passing by underneath it all comes straight on – bullets, buildings, trees and all. It's still a matter of weaving through the buildings and flak, pouring high-explosive death at anything in the way.

Stage three takes place out in the ocean, where the copter overflies a ship at a set speed. It can still be moved all over the screen, but the height remains at a set level. As the ship scrolls by, gun emplacements come into view and are dealt with in the same manner as ground objects in stage one.

ARCADE ACCURACY

Faithful reproduction of all the arcade features and admirably close graphics and gameplay.

COIN OP SCORE 9

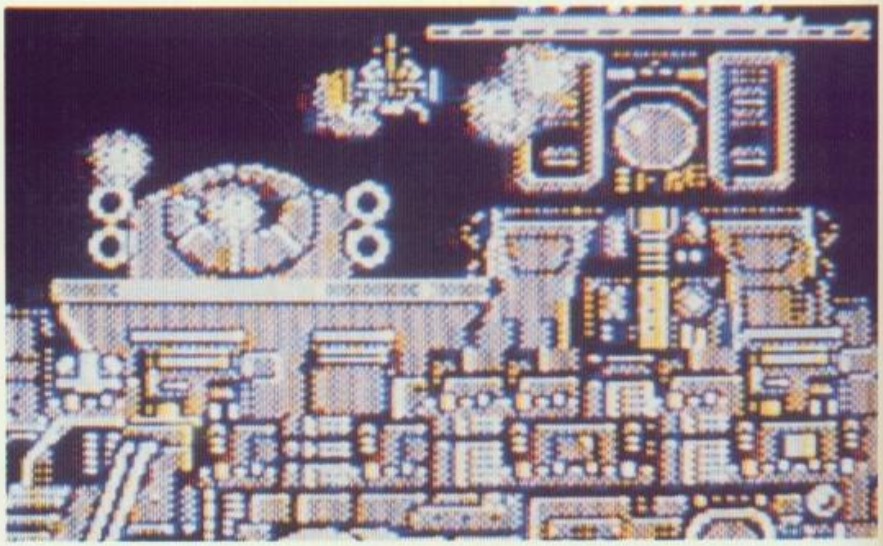
SPECTRUM VERSION

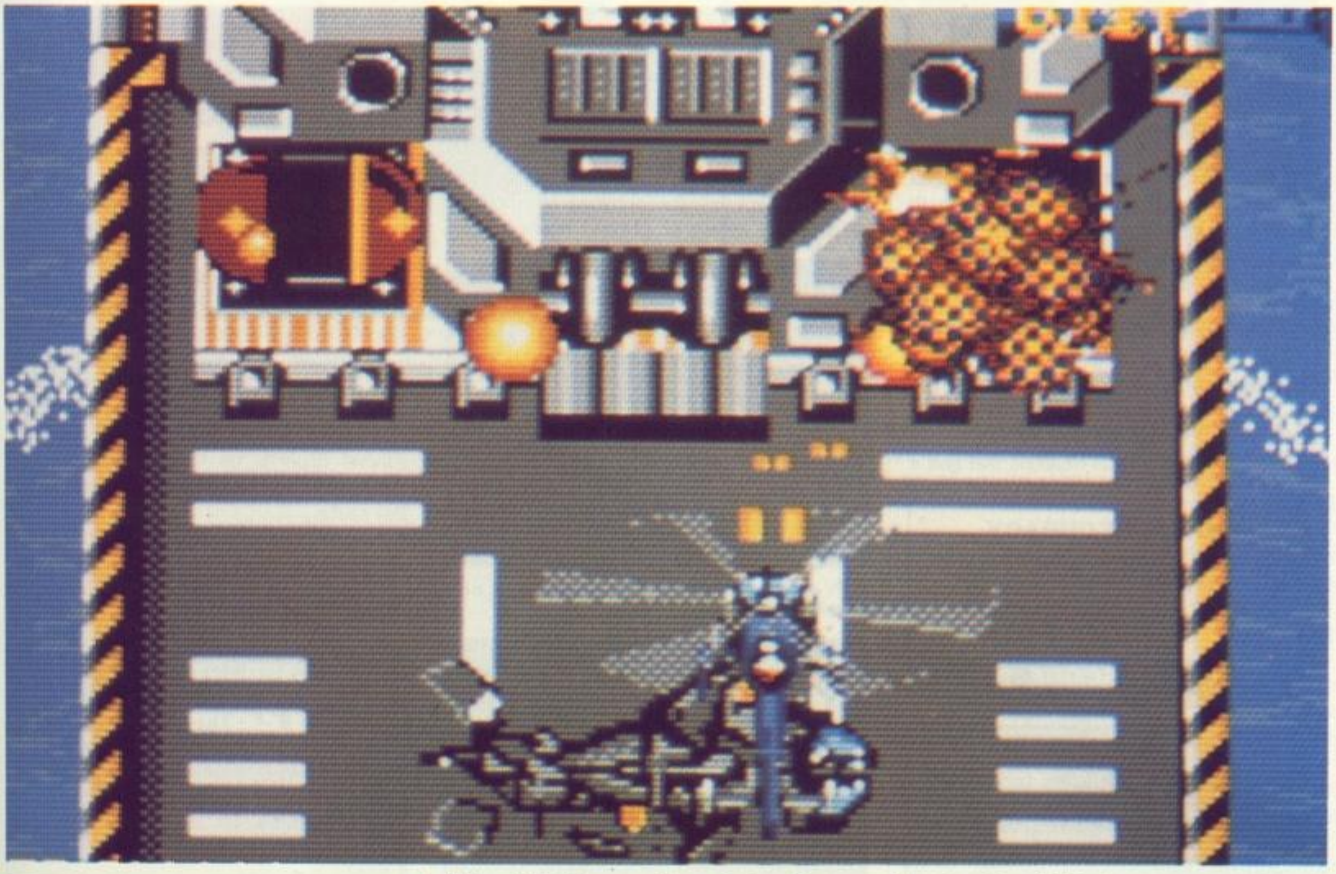
The graphics are fast and impressive. Loads of detail and meaty explosions. It's tough to see what's going on in the head-on sequences, and the collision detection is questionable at times. The chopper noise is acceptable and goes nicely with the bangs and booms.

GRAPHICS	8	IQ FACTOR	1
AUDIO	6	FUN FACTOR	8

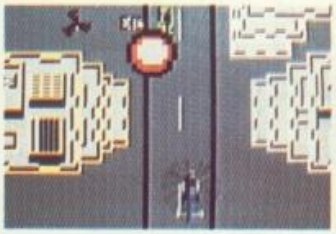
ACE RATING 793

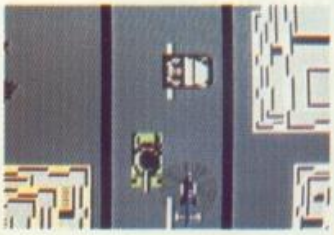
SPEC – The final fortress is packed to the gunwales with weaponry – an awesome prospect for your little helicopter.

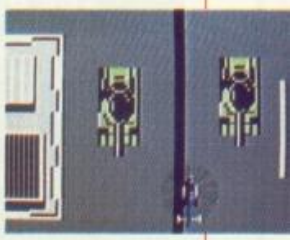




(Above) Amiga preview shot – the game's not quite finished yet, so we haven't reviewed it. We couldn't resist printing a couple of shots to whet your appetite though...







C64 – 1.Those tanks look tiny but their firepower is deadly. 2.diving downwards, the detail increases on the tanks and the buildings loom threateningly near. 3.Two tanks in glorious close-up.

RIPE FOR CONVERSION?

Thunder Blade is another coin-op that relies heavily on physical effects for thrilling and shaking up the player. Once again that all goes out the window for the computer versions, resulting in a loss of much of the adrenalin rush from the arcade.

Having said that, it isn't in as difficult a position as After Burner because there's more variety and skill required in the gameplay. The conversion is excellent, even on the humble Spectrum, but only time zwill tell whether coin-ops are soon going to be completely impossible to convert.



Approaching the fortress in the arcade game.

Get as far as stage four and the controls are exactly the same as stage one. However, things have been complicated by having to fly down a canyon. Clipping the walls with the rotor blades isn't very healthy and results in a large lump of scrap metal on the ground.

There are 12 stages in all, and none of them are easy. Jets will fly across the screen, letting fly with everything they've got. Flotillas of boats will blast concentrated fire in similar devastating manner to the tanks. Head-on flights across open country will get increasingly hazardous for the health. Finally the target of your destructive aspirations will appear – an enormous fortress tooled up with lots of deadly weapons. Just getting this far will be tough enough, and taking it out even harder.

This is still a good shoot-em-up on computers as opposed to the coin-op. It lacks any strategy or depth, but you can't have everything. The switching of views and the types of problem that are thrown at you will provide no shortage of interest.

● Bob Wade

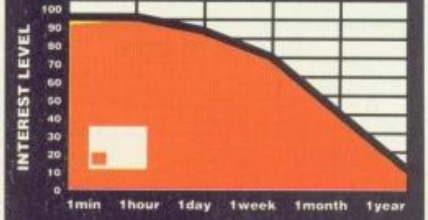
C64 VERSION

Graphics are on the chunky side but move with speed. Much easier to tell what's going on than on the Spectrum. Good music and effects too.

GRAPHICS	8	IQ FACTOR	1
AUDIO	7	FUN FACTOR	8

ACE RATING 800

PREDICTED INTEREST CURVE



Bags of entertainment, blasting through the stages.

FLYING SHARK

UPDATE SPECIAL

ATARI ST ● Firebird £24.99dk

HERE'S a game that shoot-em-up freaks really got their teeth into on the 8-bit computers. ST owners might have given up hope of ever seeing their version, but it's finally here. Has it been worth the wait, or will it be just another game forgotten about after Christmas morning?

The 'Flying Shark' is a biplane that doesn't behave like anything out of Dawn Patrol or The Blue Max. It flies over a vertically-scrolling landscape, blowing to bits the best the enemy has to offer. It can arm up with weapons that give it a very impressive forward field of fire. The power-up capsules are obtained by shooting defenceless waves of planes. However, the rest of the enemy isn't so helpless.

First to be encountered are the groups of two or three planes that loose off shells at you and can crash into you as well. Then there are tanks which take two hits to destroy - the first taking out the turret and the second finishing the job. Gunboats, too, take two hits.

From there on things just get tougher - multiple hit gun emplacements, massive ships and aircraft carriers, and ever more complex lines of defence. Smart bombs come in handy, but survival depends on hanging onto the extra weapons. Lose one life and it's something of a lost cause.

A smashing shoot-em-up that verges on being a bit too difficult.

● Bob Wade

ARCADE ACCURACY

Exceptionally good conversion that will delight the coin-op's fans.

COIN OP SCORE 9

ATARI ST VERSION

Fantastic backgrounds and sprites, combined with OK scrolling, make this a great looking game. The accompanying music and explosions make it sound good too.

GRAPHICS	9	IQ FACTOR	1
AUDIO	6	FUN FACTOR	9

ACE RATING 895

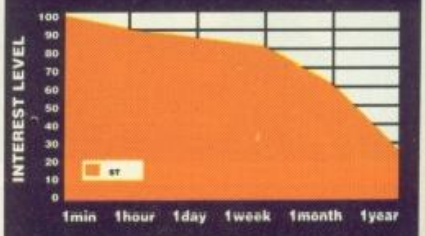


ST - destroy that wave of planes and collect the power-up symbol.



ST - grab that B and you'll have an extra smart bomb (very handy!).

PREDICTED INTEREST CURVE



Highly addictive and very tough

LIVE AND LET DIE

ELITE and DOMARK join forces



C64 - that helicopter has just dropped some valuable fuel and ammo into the water for you.

JIMMY Bond's back. Having survived the mayhem of The Living Daylights (doesn't he always?) he's ready for some fresh adventures, this time based on an earlier film.

Live and Let Die, the computer game, draws its inspiration from the speedboat sequence from the film, and as Bond you've got to thwart the evil plans of one Dr. Kananga. This rogue is planning to flood the US with heroin that he cultivates on his Caribbean island of San Monique. To foil him you have climb aboard your speedboat and travel along a waterway in Florida, avoiding various obstacles including mines, rocks and riverside gun emplacements, before reaching the refining plant and destroying it with a missile.

Before attempting this, it's best to get some training under your belt on the three practice courses.

How far you progress in the game not only depends on how many times you get killed, but how much fuel you have as well. Fuel cannisters in the water need to be collected as you go - the faster the boat travels the less fuel it uses, so don't rely on taking things easy.

Live and Let Die is a curious mix of game styles. It's a lot like *Buggy Boy* on water (not really that surprising, considering Elite produced both games), but there's a bit of *Out Run* and *Road Blasters* in there too. More courses would have been appreciated, but the game plays well and is a tough challenge.

● Andy Smith

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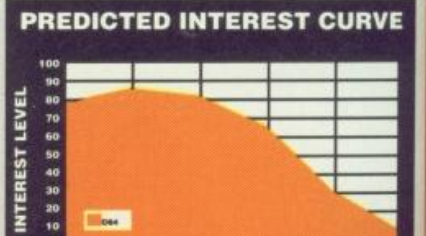
C64 VERSION

Fast, colourful graphics and good gameplay make this an enjoyable game to play. You'll have fun getting to know the courses – but with only four, that won't take too long.

GRAPHICS	8	IQ FACTOR	2
AUDIO	70	FUN FACTOR	8

ACE RATING 723

PREDICTED INTEREST CURVE



Enjoyable while it lasts

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ALTER TICKET PRICES

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TEAM SHIRTS
LOAN PLAYERS
TRANSFER LIST
CLUB LOTTERY
POLICE BILLS
DIRECTORS
★TAX REBATE
SEE ALL FOUR DIV'S
★HISTORY PAGE
REPAY BANK
TEAM MORAL
SACK PLAYERS
SEE POSTPONEMENTS
MANAGER OF THE MONTH
POOLS PANEL
VAT RETURNS
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INJURY TIME

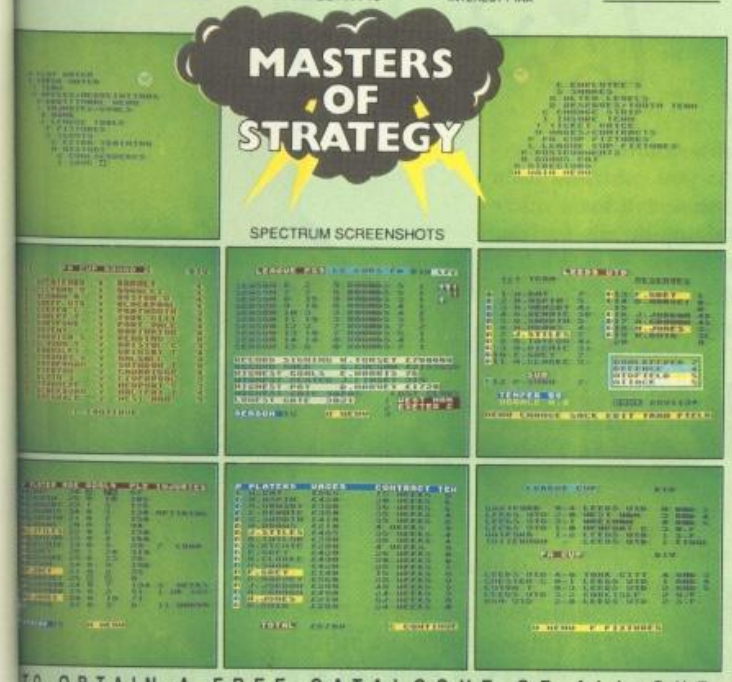
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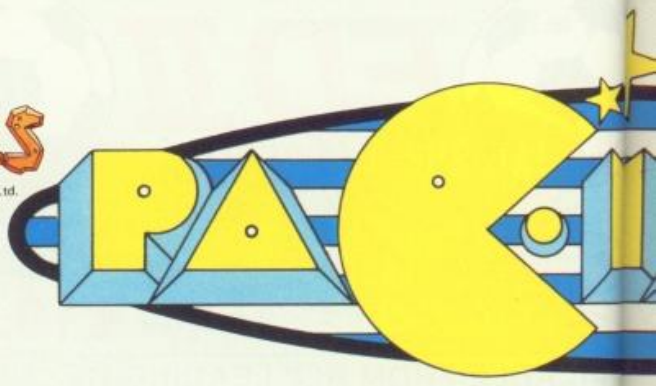
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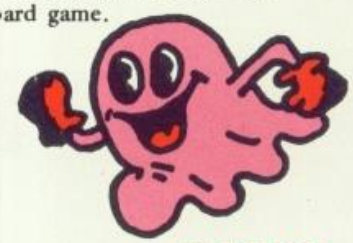




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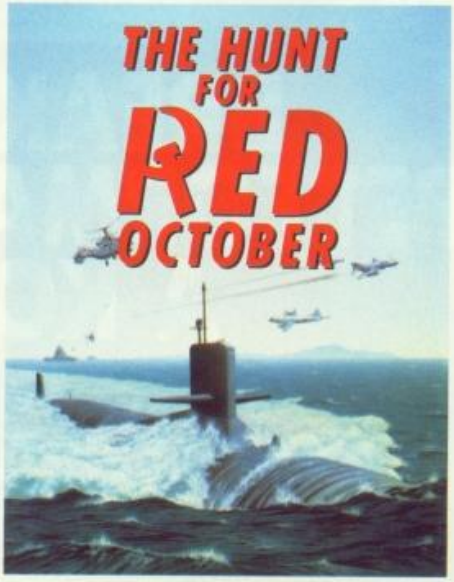


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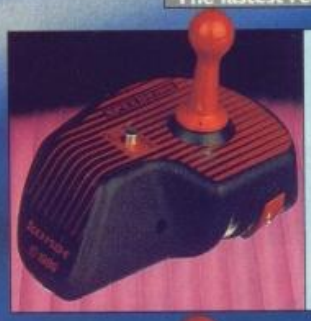
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On the starting grid at the Dijon circuit. A good start is essential, so keep an eye on the lights.

TURBOCUP

LORICIELS step on it

RENE Metge may not be as famous over here as say, Nigel Mansell, but in France he's a big cheese on the driving circuit. Rene specialises in driving Porsches – 944 Turbo Porsches. French software house Loriciels like Porsches. They also like Rene, which is why they've got him not only to endorse, but to help design a driving simulation based on France's popular series of 944 Turbo Cup races.

The player competes in four races, each at a different track. The real races last two days – practice takes place on the first day, and the race proper starts on the second. In *Turbo Cup* you get a practice lap of the course, which determines your grid position for the two-lap race that follows. Obviously, the object is to get round the circuit as fast as possible, so it's a jolly good idea to avoid crashing into the other cars or roadside obstacles.

The other cars are much more likely to cause problems than the roadside obstacles, because they tend to weave across the track at just the wrong moment. Just bumping a car is not always disastrous – quick reactions usually allow the resulting spin to be controlled. Rear-end another car though, and you're in big trouble: the car goes bouncing all over the track before coming to rest, which loses vital seconds that are very hard to recover.

A neat feature of the game is the way in which other cars can be prevented from overtaking if you weave all over the road – it's not cricket, but it does work! Cornering correctly is vitally important; go too slowly round a corner and valuable time is lost, go too fast and you're likely to spin off – again losing time. To put in anything like a decent time takes practice and a sound knowledge of the circuit.

Turbo Cup doesn't offer many courses, but it does have a choice of several gear changing options. Fancy an automatic gearbox that leaves you to concentrate on accelerating, braking and steering? No problem. Fancy indicating a gear change by pressing the fire button on the joystick? Again, no problem. There's even the option to use the fire button as the clutch, which means the joystick handle is used as if it were a real gear stick – hold the fire button, move the joystick to the correct position and release the fire button. All this while concentrating on accelerating, braking and steering and keeping an eye out for the other cars...

Loriciels have produced a great driving simulation in *Turbo Cup*. The competition is tough, the courses vary in difficulty and the gear change options add some lasting interest. Unfortunately, they don't add enough to compensate for the limited number of courses or the annoyingly short races.

● Andy Smith

On the Paul Ricard circuit. You always come off worst when you rear-end the other cars.



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ATARI ST VERSION

The perspective chosen for the game is great, along with the graphics, scrolling and sound effects. All in all this is a terrific driving game that will keep you entertained for a long time. A shame then that its potential wasn't fully realised.

GRAPHICS	8	IQ FACTOR	2
AUDIO	8	FUN FACTOR	8

ACE RATING 796

PREDICTED INTEREST CURVE



Great fun, but lacks variety.

POWERSTYX

Get a qix out of AXXIOM

QIX was one of the most original titles in the arcades when it appeared during the early 80's. It was one of those unique concepts that appeared in the early days – one of a number of games that used just one screen, didn't have great graphics, but had sparkling gameplay.

This isn't a faithful reproduction, but has the same central idea which calls for the player to close off a chunk of the screen in order to progress to the next one. Controlling a cursor that starts at the edge of the screen, and which can move into the centre drawing a line behind it, the aim is to draw a line that encloses part of the screen. When the line joins back up with the edge or another line, the area enclosed is filled with part of the main background picture.

Two main hazards have to be contended with in the quest to enclose and fill 75 per cent of the screen. Two skulls circle the unfilled area of the screen, following the edges and destroying the cursor on contact. A swirling chain of objects bounces around the screen, remaining harmless until you start drawing a line. If the chain touches the line being drawn by the cursor before a section of screen is safely boxed in, then a life is lost and the cursor returns to the point from which you started drawing the line of death.

Bonuses fly across the screen and confer such things as extra speed, time freeze, level skip or an instant death when touched by the cursor. On subsequent screens, the edge-followers get faster, making it much tougher when you've only got a small amount of screen left to enclose.

A simple, addictive game that doesn't quite match up to *Qix*, but still proves tough to put down.

● Bob Wade



Amiga – complete the first screen and you're rewarded with this pretty picture of a cool dude resting on his car.

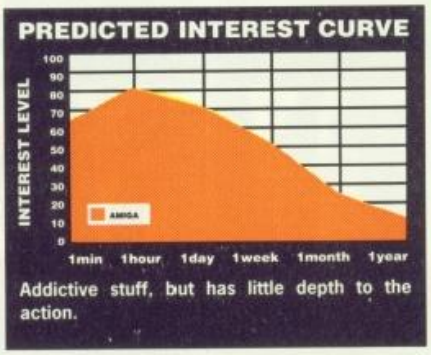
AMIGA VERSION

The backgrounds revealed by filling in boxes build up to lovely pictures. The music is horribly repetitive and the rest of the graphics and effects are ordinary.

GRAPHICS	6	IQ FACTOR	3
AUDIO	3	FUN FACTOR	6

ACE RATING 621

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Addictive stuff, but has little depth to the action.

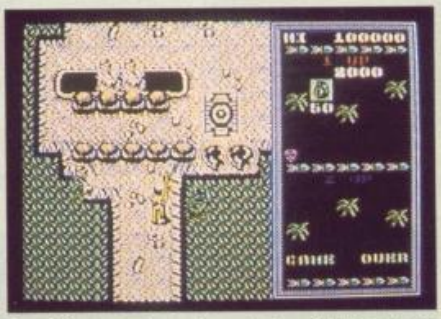
GUERRILLA WAR

IMAGINE's armed resistance

LIBERATING an entire nation with just two marines is a pretty tall order. Even if they are equipped with all the guns, grenades, bazookas, flamethrowers and tanks available, it's still going to be a battle against the odds – the enemy forces are well-equipped and are often found well-dug-in.

Play is very much in the *Ikari Warriors* and *Leathernecks* death-dealing mould, with lots of vertical scrolling and hammering away at enemies coming on from the top and sides of the screen. The simultaneous two-player option (where you can't shoot one another) leads to faster progress in the mission, but the need for co-operation brings its own problems.

Fighting through the five levels you encounter riflemen, troops throwing grenades, tanks, men with flamethowers and bazookas and then a large enemy at the end of each stage that takes multiple hits to destroy.



Spectrum – close to a tank which can be commandeered. Watch out for soldiers throwing the grenades that are exploding on the right of the screen.

Bazookas and flamethrowers dropped by dead soldiers, can be collected and used, and it is possible to clamber into abandoned tanks and drive around. Tanks have excellent firepower, and make blasting through walls, fences and sandbags much easier.

There's nothing here we haven't seen in previous *Commando* derivatives, but the elements are combined to make a tough game. Plenty of action for jungle-hungry combat veterans to fight their way through.

● Bob Wade

ARCADE ACCURACY



It's about the best you can expect out of a Spectrum, but it doesn't convey everything the arcade does.

COIN OP SCORE 6

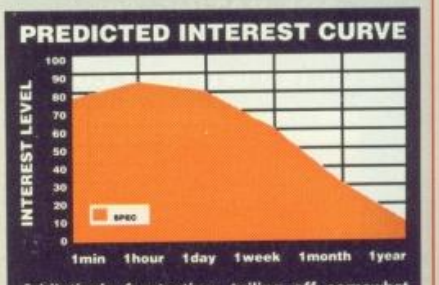
SPECTRUM VERSION

Lots of detail to the graphics, although the bullets can be hard to spot in the thick of the action.

GRAPHICS	7	IQ FACTOR	2
AUDIO	3	FUN FACTOR	7

ACE RATING 704

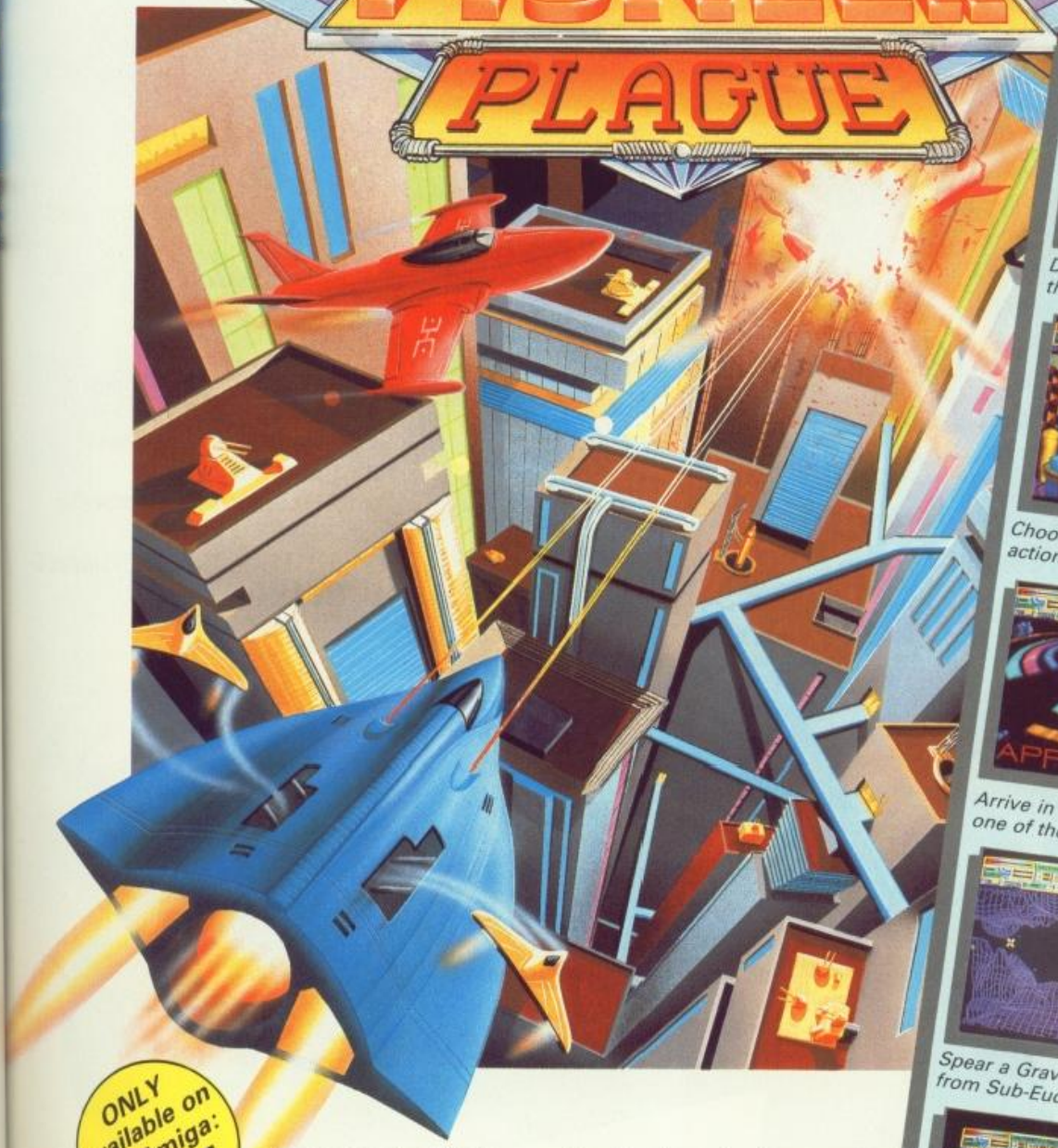
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Addictively frustrating, tailing off somewhat when you get through a level or two.

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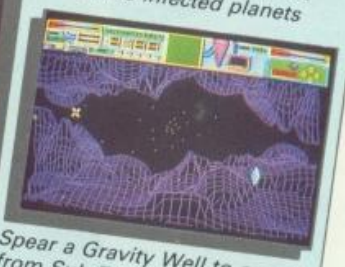
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PHANTOM FIGHTER



ESPIONAGE

Tinker, tailor, soldier, GRANDSLAM

FURTIVE dealings are afoot in the murky world of international spying. Which is, of course, perfectly true, but the spying theme has nothing to do with this game. If anything, the scenario serves to complicate matters unnecessarily so let's forget the cloak and dagger stuff and get down to the board game.

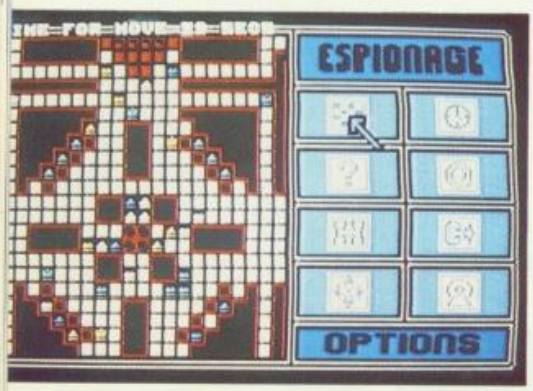
It's basically a cross between chess and draughts, with a more intricate playing area and a different game objective. Up to four players can take part, any or all of which can be controlled by the computer. Each player controls three types of pieces – or agents: six couriers that move diagonally like bishops in chess, four secret agents that move like queens and two surveillance agents that move like rooks.

At the start, in the detente phase, players distribute their 12 agents across the board. There is no preset arrangement for pieces, so setting up the board at the start is an important element of gameplay. The overall aim is to end up with the most money – cash is earned by retrieving microfilms from the middle of the board and getting them back to your base, and also by capturing agents. Agents can be captured and removed from play in much the same way as pieces are taken in draughts.

A few games will be needed to appreciate the tactics required, but play is very involving and enjoyable once you've learnt the rules. The computer opponents aren't that skillful, but they provide reasonably testing opposition.

● Bob Wade

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C64/128	£9.95cs • £14.95dk	OUT NOW
IBM PC	£19.95dk	IMMINENT



C64 – detente is over and now the capturing begins. If you find it difficult to distinguish between the pieces, you can zoom in on the board for a clearer view.

C64 VERSION

The graphics and sound effects are on the minimal side, but this doesn't really make much difference to the game.

GRAPHICS	3	IQ FACTOR	8
AUDIO	2	FUN FACTOR	6

ACE RATING 780

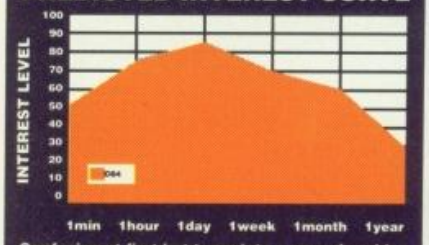
SPECTRUM VERSION

Functional graphics and minimal sound effects.

GRAPHICS	3	IQ FACTOR	8
AUDIO	2	FUN FACTOR	6

ACE RATING 780

PREDICTED INTEREST CURVE



Confusing at first but turns into a very absorbing tactical game.

TRIVIAL PURSUIT

A NEW BEGINNING

DOMARK's new beginning

HAVING cleaned up with the Trivial Pursuit licence once already, Domark are clearly intent on milking it for all it is worth. (And why not?) This new version isn't the familiar board game that was imitated first time round, but an attempt at making the basic game more computer-orientated.

Play is still based on answering trivia questions, but the action is transferred to a 'save the world in deep space' scenario. Up to six players can take part in a trip through six galaxies on a journey to the world of Genus II.

In each galaxy one planet contains an object. After landing on a planet you are asked a question: get it right and you destroy the planet (or collect an object if one is present) before moving on to another planet; fail and it's the next player's turn.

After collecting the six objects, the six elders on Genus II each ask you a question. One of them asks the 'ace' question – get the right answer, and you have won.

This is hardly a revolutionary new style for trivia, but if you liked the first one you'll like the sequel.

● Bob Wade

RELEASE BOX		
ATARI ST	£19.95dk	IMMINENT
AMIGA	£19.95dk	OUT NOW
SPECTRUM	£14.95cs • £19.95dk	IMMINENT
AMSTRAD	£14.95cs • £19.95dk	IMMINENT
C64/128	£14.95cs • £19.95dk	REVIEWED
IBM PC	Under development	



Amiga – you're being quizzed by an alien life form. Get the question right and you trash its planet – nice huh?

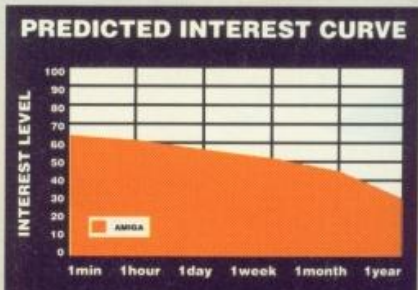
AMIGA VERSION

Graphics and sound effects are okay. The planet scenery is pretty but there's not much in the way of animation.

GRAPHICS	6	IQ FACTOR	6
AUDIO	2	FUN FACTOR	6

ACE RATING 614

PREDICTED INTEREST CURVE



Never very new or exciting, but contains lost more trivial entertainment.



The information screen that a player can call up to see how well he is doing – and how well everyone else is faring in the quest for world domination...

RISK

LEISURE GENIUS on the campaign trail

WHAT more could a megalomaniac want than world domination? (A whole lot of money to spend as well perhaps?) There's no money in this conversion of the hugely popular board game so that just leaves the world to conquer. Up to six players, computer or human, can compete for control of the 50-odd countries that make up the world.

At the start, players divvy up the countries – or the computer can be told to dish out countries at random – and then each player takes it in turn to distribute armies. Now comes the attacking phase. Whoever starts is awarded extra armies, the number depending on how many countries the player owns. If the player has total control over a continent, extra armies above the normal rate are supplied, in proportion to the size of the continent held. Then the new armies are stationed and attacks mounted on neighbouring countries, one at a time. An invasion requires at least two armies to mount.

Battles are resolved by rolling dice. The number of dice rolled depends on the number of armies involved in the conflict – an attacker rolls two dice unless he has more than two armies attacking, in which case he can roll three. The defender always rolls two dice, and goes first.

The values showing on each die are used to decide the fate of armies – the defender always wins ties. For instance, if the defender rolled a one and a four and an attacker with four armies rolled a two ones and a six, the defender would lose an army (the attacker's six beats his four) and the attacker would lose an army (the defender's advantage means his one beats the attacker's ones).

The battle continues until either the attacking force is reduced to one army or the defender is booted out of the country, in which case the attacker moves some of his armies into the conquered country and can either continue the attack against another country or retire and collect a card.

There are three types of card: artillery, cavalry and infantry. Three cards of the same 'suit', or three cards, one from each suit, count as a set. Sets are exchanged at the start of an attack phase for extra armies.

All the features of the board game have been included, and the computer version plays well. *Risk* never was a complicated game, and seasoned strategists will find it too simplistic and too reliant on luck to really test them. For everyone else though, it's an easy and enjoyable entertainment which you'll come back to time and time again.

● Andy Smith

RELEASE BOX		
SPECTRUM	£9.95cs • £14.95dk	IMMINENT
AMSTRAD	£9.95cs • £14.95dk	IMMINENT
C64/128	£12.95cs • £14.95dk	OUT NOW
IBM PC	£24.95dk	IMMINENT
ST and AMIGA versions not planned		



The red player prepares to launch an attack on Great Britain from Scandinavia. (Inset) Britain fell after the first dice throw. The red player moved two armies in and decided to end the turn with a free move which means he can move armies from any territory into an adjacent territory. The red player is now in a strong position to capture the rest of Europe.

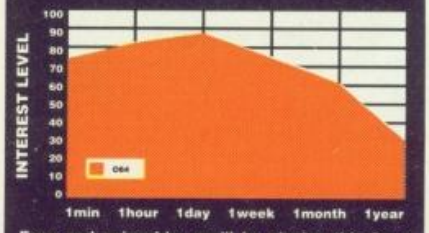
C64 VERSION

The wrap-round world scrolls frustratingly slowly, and the dice rolling sequence would have benefited from being more rapid, but apart from that it plays well and will keep you (and many of your friends) happy for months to come.

GRAPHICS	7	IQ FACTOR	5
AUDIO	N/A	FUN FACTOR	7

ACE RATING 840

PREDICTED INTEREST CURVE



Easy and enjoyable, you'll be playing this for a long time to come.

TANK ATTACK

Boardgame Blitzkreig from CDS

FOLLOWING on from the success of their first computer-moderated boardgame, *Brian Clough's Football Fortunes*, CDS are now taking the concept into the strategy/wargame market.

Tank Attack comes complete with a fold-out board which features a hex map presented in board-wargaming style. Four countries are represented, and the play area includes a variety of terrain – rivers, lakes, forests, mountains and towns.

Two, three or four human players can settle round a table with the computer and do battle – the number of players doesn't affect the basic gameplay, but determines a pattern of alliances between the countries on the board.

Once the nature of the basic conflict has been determined, the computer has to be told who is allied with whom, and then players can deploy their forces on the board.

Four armoured divisions, each comprising four armoured cars and eight tanks, are supplied as small plastic playing pieces. Notches on the rear of a piece indicate the firepower of the unit it represents: there are two grades of armoured car and three grades of tank.

The overall aim is to destroy the bases of opposing countries by moving armoured units within range and blasting the HQs to smithereens – but first hostile territory has to be covered and opposing forces destroyed while defending your own base. The computer acts as game moderator, deciding the outcome of fire-fights, keeping track of the status of each of the forces locked in combat and providing a bulletin after each completed round.

At the start of a turn, a computerised die is cast which determines how many movement units a player can use. After moving the player can opt to start shooting at forces that are in range by clicking on the appropriate window on the turn screen. Moving a pointer allows the allegiance of the target and its distance from the firing unit to be input to the computer, and both sides then have to reveal the firepower and armour of the two units about to be locked in combat. While a light armoured car can take out a battle tank, the odds are against it..

If the attacker confirms the order to fire, a short animated sequence follows, in which the attacker and attacked units trade a single shot before the computer reports on the outcome. Sometimes, a unit may be damaged but capable of being repaired or rebuilt, in which case the player can remove it to the appropriate depot where it remains until the computer allows it back into play. A unit is removed from the board if it is destroyed.

Tank Attack doesn't appear to have the intricate decision-making systems that would satisfy a wargaming purist, relying fairly heavily on luck, but there is plenty of opportunity for modifying attack and defensive strategies. A good game for sitting around having fun .

● Graeme Kidd



C64 – the animated battle sequence. At the foot of the screen are the control icons, from left to right: Move, Fire on Enemy HQ, Fire on Enemy Unit, Go to Next Player's Turn.



The Tank Attack board, with units in position...

RELEASE BOX		
SPECTRUM	£12.99cs • £14.99dk	IMMINENT
AMSTRAD	£12.99cs • £14.99dk	IMMINENT
C64/128	£12.99cs • £14.99dk	IMMINENT
16-bit versions under development		

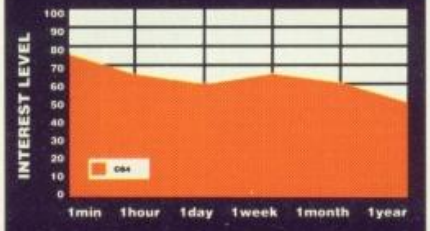
C64 VERSION

The graphics and sound effects are adequate rather than flashy – but then the real display and action is on the board. All versions will appear remarkably similar, with 16-bit machines offering slightly flashier presentation.

GRAPHICS	3	**IQ FACTOR**	8
AUDIO	3	**FUN FACTOR**	8

ACE RATING 743

PREDICTED INTEREST CURVE



An enduring game; one that offers an opportunity for people to have fun together. You'll come back to it from time to time for ages.



Blasting away on level two. Those incoming missiles should pose you a few problems, but it doesn't take long to learn how to dodge them. They then become more of a nuisance than threat and that adds nothing to the game's lasting interest.

HELLFIRE ATTACK

High-flying flames from MARTECH

LOOKS like *After Burner* and plays like it too. The major difference is that instead of a plane you're flying a helicopter.

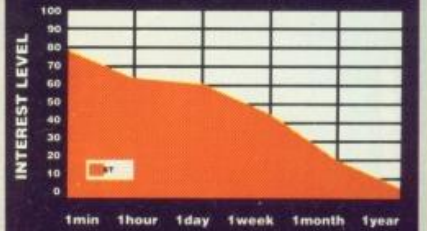
The graphics are disappointing because the scenery scrolls by in rows, looking like cardboard cut-outs. The attacking craft can be blasted with cannon fire or homing missiles, but have rockets of their own. The problem is that avoiding them is a rather simple manoeuvre.

It's another game that fairly accurately reproduces what there is in the arcades, but wasn't really much of a game in the first place.

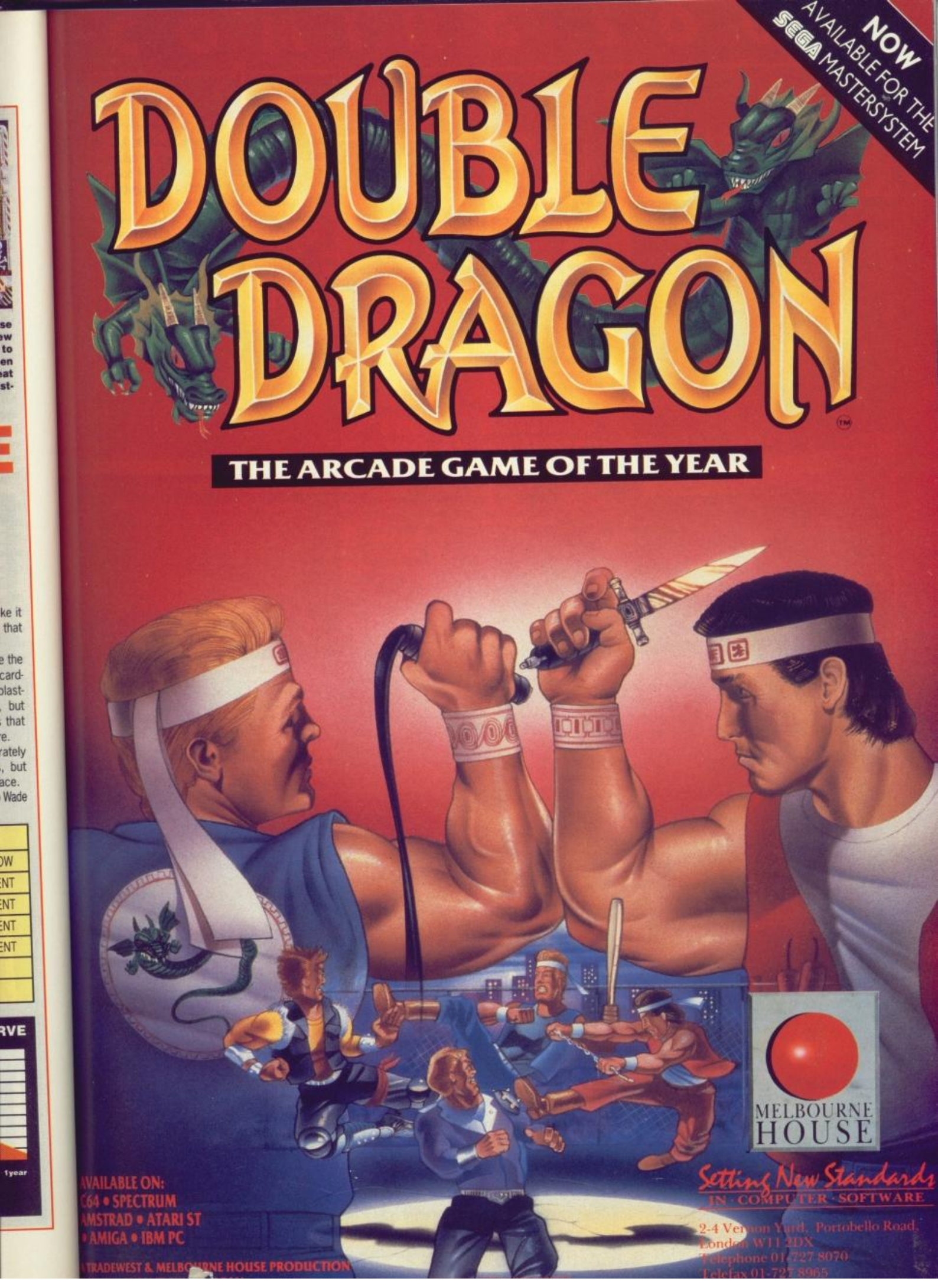
● Bob Wade

RELEASE BOX		
ATARI ST	£19.99dk	OUT NOW
AMIGA	£19.99dk	IMMINENT
SPECTRUM	£8.99cs • £14.99dk	IMMINENT
AMSTRAD	£9.99cs • £14.99dk	IMMINENT
C64/128	£9.99cs • £14.99dk	IMMINENT
IBM PC	No plans	

PREDICTED INTEREST CURVE



ACE RATING 554


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BLACK ORCHID

Another MUNDANE morning...



The Benign and Malign forces move in for the kill...

STAFF problems are always worrying. Fortunately the staff in *The Black Orchid* is a thing and not people. The staff still causes problems, because it's broken in two, and the forces of Good and Evil are about to start slugging it out in an attempt to gain control of the other side's piece.

Why all the fuss over a staff? Because it's a magical one that allows whoever is holding it full control over the elements. At the start, the two halves are kept under lock and key in each side's citadel: the only way to gain the power of the staff is to capture the other piece. Two people can wrangle for the staff, or a single player can take on the computer.

Play begins with neither player controlling characters or armies – each player controls just one of the 21 sectors that make up the island over which the conflict ranges. Money has to be spent to recruit characters and troops to your cause, and the amount available to spend fluctuates, depending on which and how many sectors of the island you control. After spending money, characters and troops are deployed by the player in his sector and then it's on to the movement phase. Armies and characters can only move into adjacent territories, and move once per turn.

Combat is resolved after a move, and then the whole process starts again. Over 60 individual characters wander across the island, each with differing attributes that effect their combat efficiency and other factors. As with most fantasy games, magic plays an important part and there's an impressive list of spells to hit the enemy with – providing sufficient magic points have been accumulated.

The computer opponent is weak, even on the higher of the two settings, and the game is far too simplistic and limited to really test powers of strategic planning. Tussle with a friend for the staff, though, and play becomes involving and fun.

● Andy Smith

ATARI ST VERSION

The graphics are colourful but the sound effects are dull. Black Orchid is a simple, playable fantasy-wargame that's best enjoyed with a human opponent.

GRAPHICS	7	IQ FACTOR	4
AUDIO	5	FUN FACTOR	6

ACE RATING 643

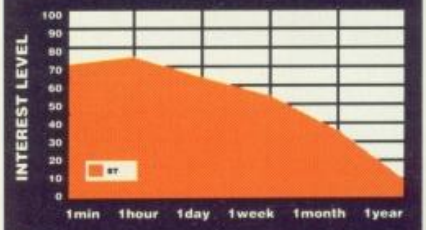
RELEASE BOX

ATARI ST	£19.99dk	OUT NOW*

Other versions under consideration

*Available from Mundane Software
PO Box 180, Bath BA1 2WF (0225) 25692

PREDICTED INTEREST CURVE



Fun to play, but too limited to keep you playing.

UGH-LYMPICS

Go clubbing with ELECTRONIC ARTS

GRONK Glunk, Crudla, Thag, Ugha and Vincent are not names that spring immediately to mind when you think of the world's top sports personalities. They are however, the stars of the six-event Neanderthal Olympics.

If you're thinking of the usual 100m dash, or 4x400m relay, forget it. The events here are unlike anything you've seen before.

Mate Tossing is the first event (not as offensive as dwarf-throwing, but a sport that would be frowned on by today's Modern Woman). By rotating the joystick – slowly at first then increasing the speed, your character starts to go into a spin with his mate (he holds her by the feet). Press the fire button and she goes sailing through the air. A straight waggle-em-up follows, as you try to run away from a hungry sabre-toothed tiger. Survive that and it's waggle time again in the fire-lighting contest.

After starting a good blaze, it's on to a nice spot of Clubbing. A straightforward beat-em-up set on top of a high platform, clubbing simply involves bashing your opponent until he falls off the platform or runs out of energy. With no respect for historical accuracy, caveman meets dinosaur in the last two events. Dino Racing calls for Lester Piggot type skills – you sit astride a dinosaur waggling the joystick to make it run, hitting the fire button at the right moment to make it jump obstacles.



The Dino Vaulting event. It looks like Gronk is about to go into early retirement!

The caveman competition finally ends with a game in which a hungry dinosaur lurks on the screen, and contestants have to pole vault over it in order to survive.

Caveman Ugh-Lympics is full of humour and is great fun to play – especially with a group of friends. The events are not hard to master though; once the novelty has worn off you're left with a standard multi-event waggler.

● Andy Smith

RELEASE BOX

C64/128	£9.95cs • £14.95dk	OUT NOW

No other versions under development

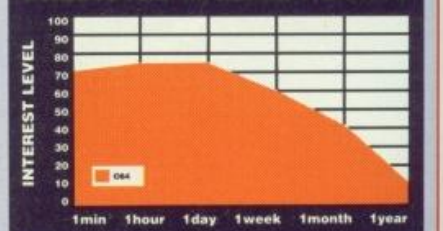
C64 VERSION

The graphics are big and colourful. The gameplay is good and the sound effects are passable. A fun game to play, and one that is bound to appeal to younger games players. If you're looking for a serious long-term sporting challenge, you're probably better off with something else.

GRAPHICS	7	IQ FACTOR	2
AUDIO	5	FUN FACTOR	7

ACE RATING 689

PREDICTED INTEREST CURVE



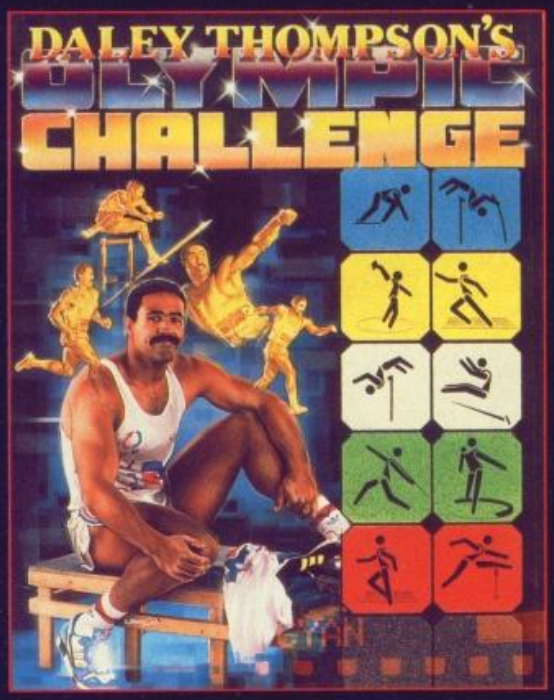
A humorous and fun game to play – until the novelty wears off.


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AMIGA £24.95



FUEL FOR EN



Ten Olympic events include Long Jump, Shotput, High Jump, 100m Sprint, 400m, 110m Hurdles, Discus, Pole Vault, Javelin and 1500m. You will need all your skills to build on what you hope was, an impressive workout, and, as is necessary for all top flight athletes, your judgement to select the most effective equipment for each event is now vital – a decision which can win or lose you a place on the podium. This isn't just another sports simulation, this is a Daley Thompson 'event' where all his talent and humour burst through to make a thrilling and entertaining game play for all the family. Go for the Olympic Challenge!





FROM ocean



Your plane has ditched on a mountainous plateau somewhere in deepest Tibet. You and your companions are alive. A large shape moves toward you, you rub your eyes in disbelief; a Dinosaur! – where are you ... and when? Stunning, monochromatic 3D graphics and 4 way scrolling, give that '50's cinema mood as you learn not only to survive, but also that your companions are not all they first seemed!

© 1988 Ocean Software





FROM ocean



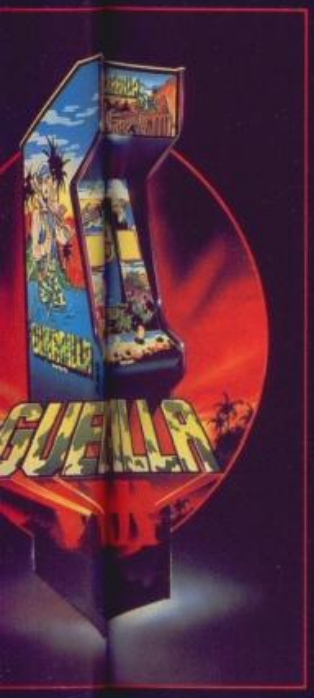
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16 BIT STATE



ATARI ST £19.95

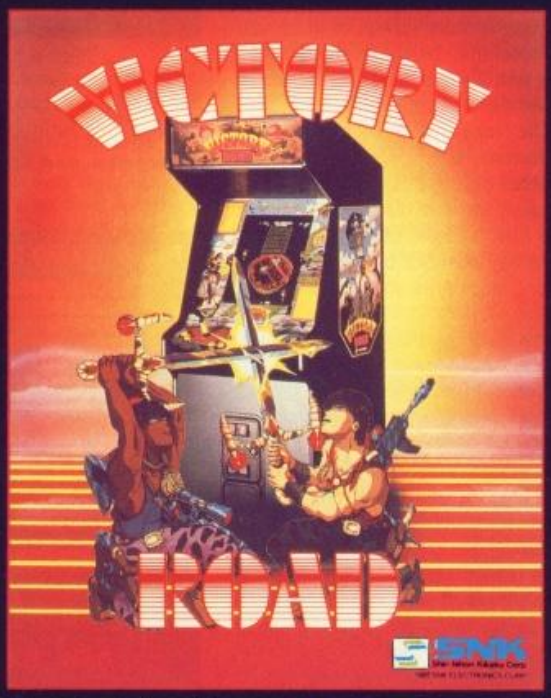
NTERTAINMENT



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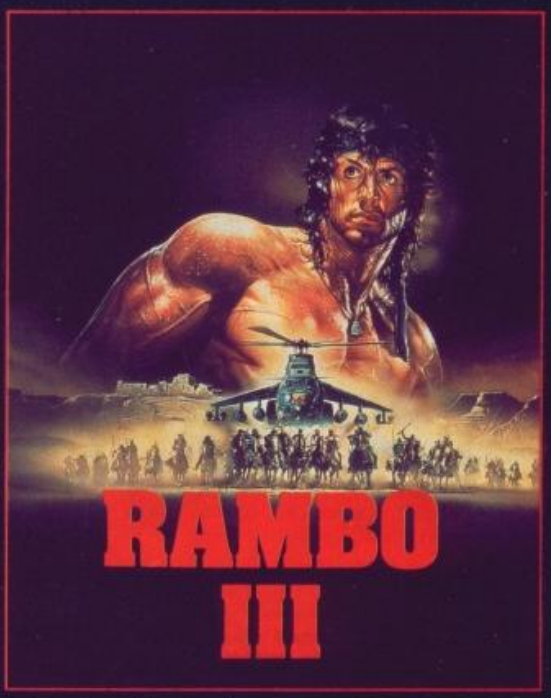


This is where the fun really begins. You will meet vampires, two and three headed monsters – the head will fly at you on its own, just when you think you are gaining the upper hand. Trapdoors and elevators transport you – sometimes to your surprise – inside ancient buildings and under lakes and oceans. Build up the firepower necessary to fight off your aggressors. Action and excitement all the way with this macabre and unusual game; which has that elusive extra something to keep you coming back for more.

© 1985 SNK ELECTRONICS CORP.







He's back and this time he's taking no prisoners. Colonel Trautman has been captured by the Russians in Afghanistan and there is only one person capable of freeing him. Negotiate the minefields, explore the Russian camp, lay boobytraps, avoid detection, free the Colonel and then ... move on to the explosive climax!
RAMBO IS BACK!

Rambo III T.M. & © 1988 CARLOCO PICTURES INC. All Rights Reserved.





FROM ocean

the name of the game

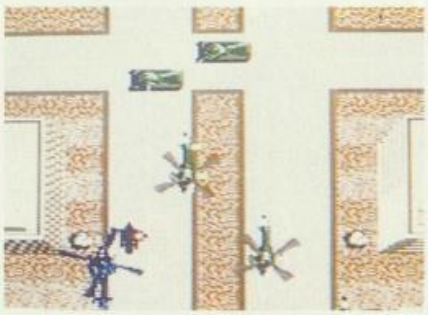
E OF THE ART

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RELEASE BOX	
LORD OF THE SWORD	£24.95ctr OUT NOW
THUNDERBLADE	£24.95ctr OUT NOW
GOLVELLIUS	£24.95ctr OUT NOW
MONOPOLY	£24.95ctr OUT NOW
CAPTAIN SILVER	£24.95ctr OUT NOW

SEGA SE

THUNDER BLADE



Sega – blasting helicopters in the overhead view stage.



Sega – in the second stage, the tanks get meaner, but the helicopters pose no threat at all.

NOT to be confused with the home computer versions which are being handled by US Gold, this offers the same combination of two types of shoot-em-up, in which you view the helicopter from behind or above.

Beginning with the overhead view, waves of helicopters and tanks appear from the top of the screen. The choppers just try to crash into you, except for one nasty guy who hovers on screen and rattles off masses of bullets.

While weaving around blasting, watch out for the tanks which loose off the odd shot. Tanks need to be taken out by using the second fire button, which fires shells down to the ground.

In the second section things work in a similar manner, but everything is viewed from behind the 'copter. The tanks on the ground have much more deadly firepower, but on the plus side, the choppers can no longer crash into you. Enemy planes are thrown in for good measure, but only those that appear a little later on can do any shooting.

Getting through the first two stages is a tall order, but the reward comes in the form of a nice easy strafing job on what looks like a large rocket. It isn't easy for long... a testing bit of obstacle dodging soon follows.

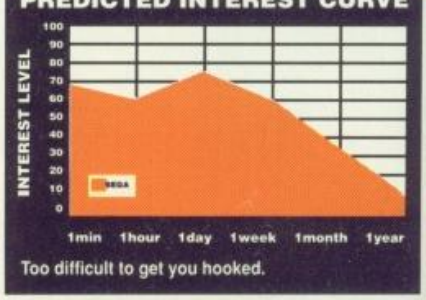
The main problem is that play is far too difficult. You can eventually learn the way through, but it takes many restarts, and ploughing through the same old start waves soon gets dull.

● Bob Wade

ARCADE ACCURACY

Surprisingly, this is not as close as the computer versions in some aspects of graphics and gameplay.

COIN OP SCORE 5



Too difficult to get you hooked.

GRAPHICS	7	IQ FACTOR	2
AUDIO	4	FUN FACTOR	7

ACE RATING 644

CAPTAIN SILVER

PLENTY more hacking about with swords in this one (and make no mistake). Armed with a cutlass, the Captain is off to fight anything fool enough to get in his way.



Sega – a purple Cheshire cat waits to pounce from atop the wall, while another hairy beast closes in from the right

The first level is just horizontally-scrolling combat – and the Captain has his hands full. Nasty, furry things charge at him, Cheshire cats leap off walls onto his head and a pied piper shoots killer musical notes...

When a baddie bites the dust it leaves behind a letter. Collect the letters that spell out 'Captain Silver' and an extra life is yours. Other objects that can be collected, or bought at shops in exchange for points, include additional firepower, jump height, shield and time.

Firepower is the most important upgrade available, because it confers stars that can kill from a distance. As you get more tokens, the number of shooting stars increases, making the Captain's volley of fire more effective.

The range of adversaries and problems is extensive. This is the sort of game, like Golvellius and Lord of the Sword, that the Sega lends itself to most easily. What is lacking is variety in the gameplay – the different cute graphics you encounter don't make amends.

● Bob Wade



An enjoyable bit of hacking and blasting made interesting by extra weapons.

GRAPHICS	7	IQ FACTOR	2
AUDIO	6	FUN FACTOR	7

ACE RATING 706

SENSATIONS ?

MONOPOLY

UNFAMILIAR names feature on a very familiar game. All the street names are different from those you would expect to find on this classic board game, but the familiar layout is used.



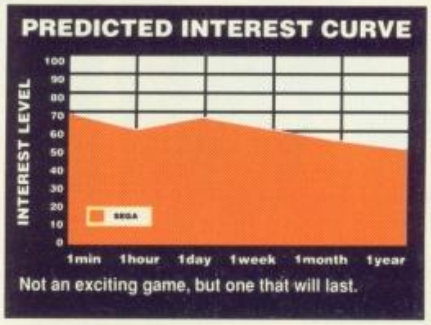
Sega – the display of the board, with your menu of options in the middle and the players' current status on the right.

The transition onto console has been achieved rather well, although there's the usual problem of not getting the whole board on screen with enough detail. However, the Sega saves you all that messing around with dice, money and title deeds.

Up to 10 players can take part, any of whom can be controlled by the computer. The computer players have three skill levels, but the setting doesn't make too much difference to performance as the game relies substantially on the luck of the dice.

The small board means it is difficult to know who owns what and what they've got on it. However, all this information is available via menus. You can't really go wrong with this one – nearly everyone likes Monopoly.

● Bob Wade



Not an exciting game, but one that will last.

GRAPHICS	3	IQ FACTOR	6
AUDIO	3	FUN FACTOR	5

ACE RATING 712

GOLVELLIUS

COMBINED game styles strike again as an arcade adventure is spiced up with scrolling platform action and shoot-em-up elements.

The overall aim is to track down seven crystals and rescue a princess – ho-hum, how original. The action is more interesting, starting with a bit of horizontal scrolling in which a sword comes in handy to hack away at a few snakes and obstacles.



Sega – these snakes on the flick screens may not look as nasty, but they still hurt your power level if touched.

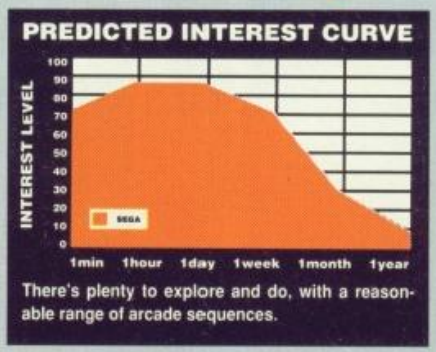


Sega – doing battle with a giant snake in the first scrolling sequence.

This leads to some flick screens, where you can freely wander around, hacking away at insects, snakes and animals. On nearly all these screens a hole appears in the ground which can be entered. People willing to give or sell objects lurk in the holes – the gold needed for trade is acquired by killing things above ground. Getting objects like extra power units, shields and so on, is crucial.

Enemies get harder to kill and objects harder to find further into the game. It all seems uninspiring at first but grows on you, not least because of the 'continue game' option which allows the exploring to continue after a disaster.

● Bob Wade



There's plenty to explore and do, with a reasonable range of arcade sequences.

GRAPHICS	5	IQ FACTOR	5
AUDIO	4	FUN FACTOR	6

ACE RATING 741

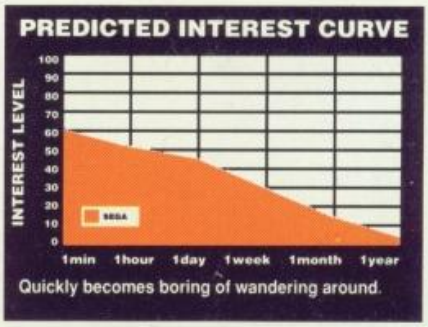
LORD OF THE SWORD

HACK through an arcade adventure where a trusty sword and bow are needed to fight off the enemy hordes.

The quest is a fairly straightforward matter of battling along horizontally-scrolling landscapes, mapping out how the locations connect and following the instructions provided at certain spots. Following instructions leads to vital objects and places.

The attacking creatures sometimes need more than one hit to kill them, and behave in different ways – flying, jumping, hovering – and crouching is the only way to kill some of them.

A continue option is offered here too, which makes it much easier to explore and work things out. Sadly, the gameplay lacks variety and the adventure element is restricted to mapping a route.



Quickly becomes boring of wandering around.

GRAPHICS	6	IQ FACTOR	2
AUDIO	6	FUN FACTOR	4

ACE RATING 412

SPRINGBOARD DIVING – Cool nerves, total concentration, split second timing, and not a small measure of artistic flair will determine your scores as you strive for as near perfect execution as is humanly possible.

CBM 64



CBM 64



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IBM PC





CBM 64



CBM 64

HURDLES – Speed, strength, rhythm. Three essentials in an event that is perhaps the toughest on the track. Be quick and judge your stride to perfection. The slightest mistake and you're not only out of the medals, you're out of the race!

IBM PC



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LOMBARD RAC RALLY

MANDARIN's muddy motoring

CARS have been sprouting all sorts of offensive weaponry lately, but RAC Rally is one race where you won't find any machine guns strapped to the cars. The only add-ons available here are fog lamps, engines and other performance improvers.

The rally is composed of 15 stages, with three stages run in a day. After practising the stages in their groups of three, the rally as a whole can be tackled.

As in real life, the stages take place under a variety of conditions and across different terrains – drivers have to cope with fog and the dark, and travel through forests and across mountains. Visibility is very bad in places because of the undulating, winding roads. Fast reactions are needed to cope with sharp bends that suddenly appear as you top the brow of a hill or race through the fog.

During practice, money can be earned by answering some rallying questions correctly and prize money is won by gaining a place in the stages of the rally. Cash is used to repair the car, or to buy add-ons such as fog lamps, better engines or four wheel drive.

This is basically *Test Drive* with a more undulating road and less traffic. As such it's good, and completing the whole rally is far from easy.

● Bob Wade

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ST – Mind the trees collisions make a nasty mess of a shiny new car... The driver is animated, moving as he steers and changes gear – very nice it is too.

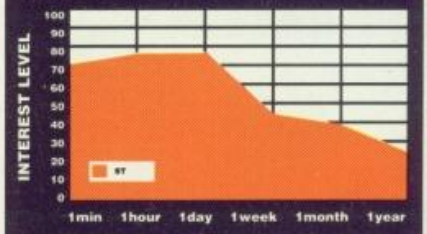
ATARI ST VERSION

Graphics are okay, but the impression of movement given by the road could have been better. The engine noise isn't very convincing.

GRAPHICS	6	**IQ FACTOR**	4
AUDIO	3	**FUN FACTOR**	6

ACE RATING 674

PREDICTED INTEREST CURVE



Excitement tails off quickly, but the challenge remains strong.

GARY LINEKER'S SUPERSKILLS

Get in training with GREMLIN

PROFESSIONAL footballers don't always lead the glamourous lives we read about. Staying fit for each match calls for hard work, and long training sessions are a must.

Three main activities keep Mr Lineker fit: gym work-outs, ball control and field work. Gym Work is divided into four disciplines – weight training, push-ups, squat thrusts and the monkey bars. In each 'event' Gaz works against the clock and either has to complete a set number of moves or cover a pre-determined distance. Pulse rate and energy levels are displayed at the side of the screen, and as the work-out progresses, the pulse rate increases and the energy level drops. Stopping to rest reduces the pulse rate, while taking a swig from a bottle of glucose boosts energy.

The ball control section simply requires the hero to keep a football bouncing off different parts of his body. For example, Gaz may have to head the ball three times, bounce it on his left knee twice and then kick it with his right foot. Out on the footie field, a dribbling test requires the ball to be guided between a set of cones, then shots at goal follow. Finally, in an accuracy test Gaz tries to shoot the ball through some suspended tyres. All the events can be practised individually, or strung together in a 'designer training programme'.

Despite the awful instruction sheet, *Superskills* is very easy to master once you know what you're supposed to be doing.. Though *Superskills* is well put together and is fun to play, it won't take you long to burn out. Still, it's an improvement on the Lineker soccer game.

● Andy Smith

ATARI ST VERSION

The graphics are fine, and the tune that plays throughout is quite jolly. Fun stuff, but too easy to keep you interested for very long.

GRAPHICS	7	**IQ FACTOR**	1
AUDIO	5	**FUN FACTOR**	6

ACE RATING 594

SPECTRUM VERSION

Multi-load and slightly tougher to play than the ST version, there is too little in it to keep you interested for long.

GRAPHICS	7	**IQ FACTOR**	1
AUDIO	4	**FUN FACTOR**	6

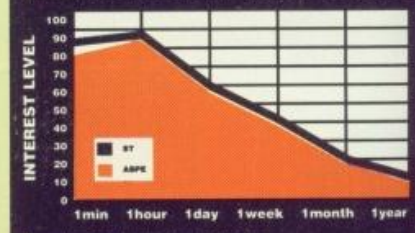
ACE RATING 590

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IBM PC	£19.99dk	IMMINENT



Working out on the ST. Come on Gary, lock those elbows..

PREDICTED INTEREST CURVE



Fun to play but lacks challenge.

PUFFY'S SAGA



Screenshot on ST



Screenshot on ST



Screenshot on ST

An arcade-style strategy game with an addictive game play and two irresistible characters.

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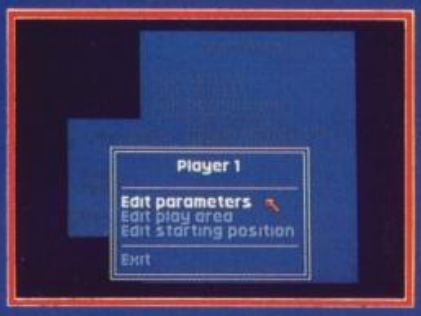
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PALACE SOFTW



ST – Speeders flash past trees, and often into them. An Ewok rope trap here will earn bonus points if you go through it... and it might take out a stormtrooper.

RETURN OF THE JEDI

DOMARK are back with the Force

TAPPING into the Star Wars trilogy of films has proved very lucrative for Domark, but unless Lucasfilm decide to make any more of the proposed nine films in the series, it looks like the gravy train ends here. The third game is also an arcade conversion, but unlike the first two, it isn't all done with vector graphics.

The action is split into different stages in which you control a variety of machines including a Speeder, a Walker and the Millenium Falcon. All the sequences involve diagonal scrolling, as in the old classic *Zaxxon*, but the direction of scroll – from top left or top right of the screen – varies according to the stage you're on.

The first phase of every level involves whizzing through the jungle on Speeders. To start with, the only problems presented are trees and stormtroopers astride Speeders. Troopers can be rammed into trees or shot if they're foolish enough get in front of you. Later on, traps set up by the Ewoks have to be avoided – ropes strung between trees, log sandwiches and hollow trees can all be negotiated for bonus points.

On later levels the positioning of the trees and Speeders gets more difficult, and additional hazards appear, like Ewok hang-gliders that drop rocks across the path. At the end of the route a welcoming committee and a tasty bonus score await the hero's arrival.

The second stage on Level One involves a trip in the Millenium Falcon to destroy a Death Star by blowing up its reactor. Weaving the Falcon between barriers, with fighters in hot pursuit, the reactor at the end of the space assault course has to be blasted. Then it's time to fly back the way you came in order to escape the exploding Death Star. On subsequent levels the tunnel becomes even more deadly with more complicated barrier layouts, descending bars and gun turrets at the tunnel sides.

From Level Two onwards an additional stage appears in between the Speeder and Falcon runs. In the extra stage, control switches between a Walker making its way through the jungle and the Falcon attacking Darth Vader's ship. The Walker encounters log piles, rolling logs, other Walkers and rock hurling catapults, while the Falcon has a couple of fighters accompanying it as drones and has to battle fighters and the gun turrets on Vader's ship.

Bonus scores are given at the end of the first jungle stage, after the reactor has been destroyed and when the Death Star blows up. Big bonus scores are also on offer at the end of the first stage if the game is played at the Medium or Hard skill levels, which start you at levels Three and Five respectively.

Jedi is a marvellous combination of slick graphics, digitised film speech, blasting action and frantic flying. It has turned out as the best of the three Star Wars games because it lends itself more easily to computers, whereas the vectors were more of a coin-op speciality.

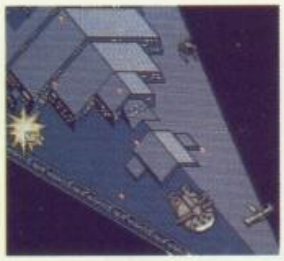
● Bob Wade

ARCADE ACCURACY

An excellent conversion that gets very close indeed to the original coin-op.

COIN OP SCORE 9







(From the left) ST – rumbling along in an Imperial Walker, watch out for the logs that can bring it crashing to the ground ; fly past Darth's ship and fighters to get to the Death Star and when inside weave between the red barriers to make it to the reactor.

ATARI ST VERSION

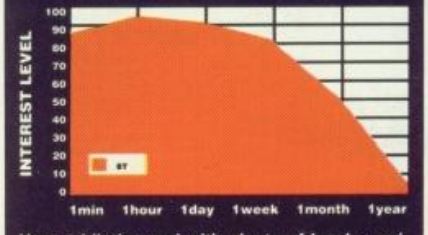
Scrolling is good for an ST, particularly considering it's diagonal. The graphics are delightful, and the animation on Walkers and other objects is also good. The digitised speech is excellent, and in-game effects are pleasingly violent and noisy.

GRAPHICS	8	IQ FACTOR	2
AUDIO	7	FUN FACTOR	9

ACE RATING 854

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PREDICTED INTEREST CURVE



Very addictive and with plenty of levels, variety and difficulty to grip you.

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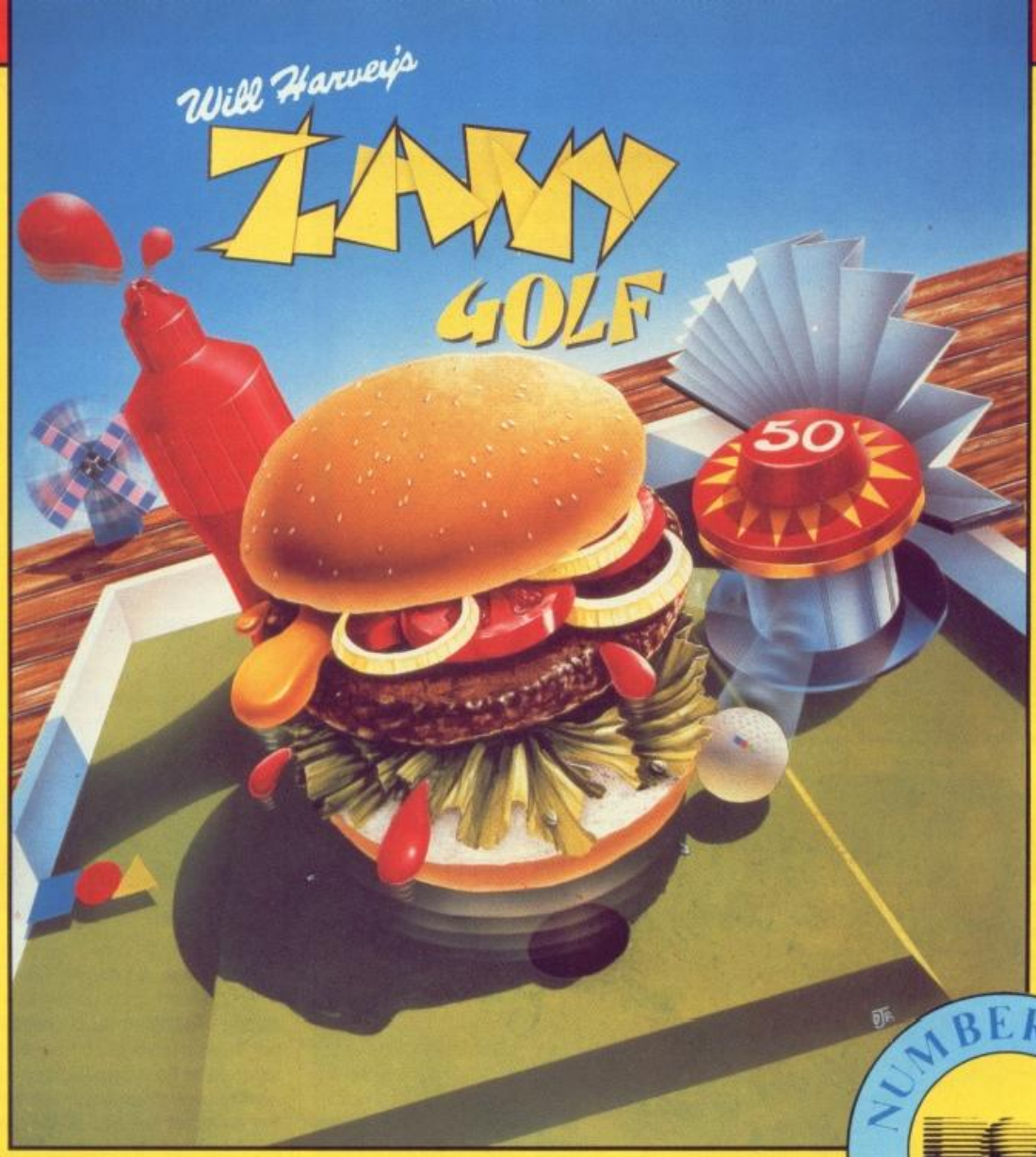
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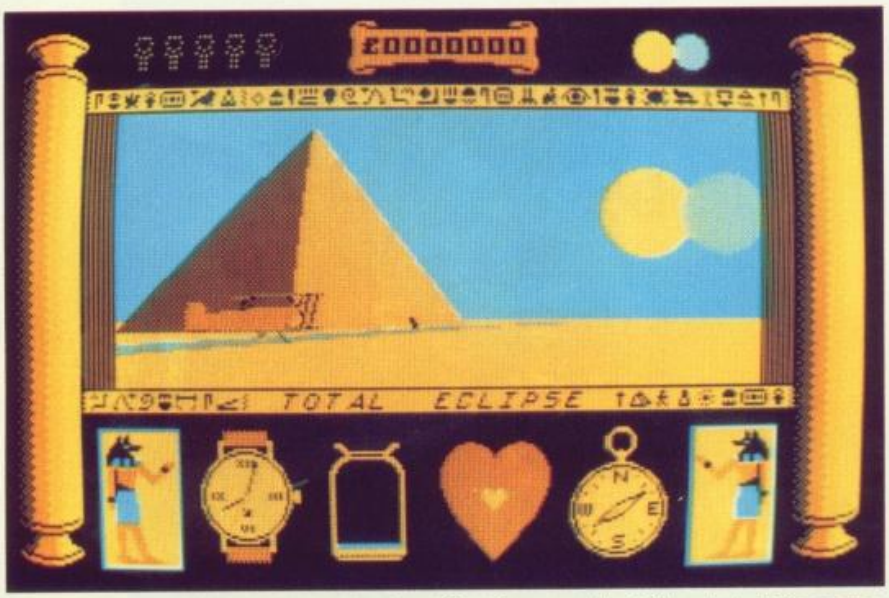
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Amstrad – that's your bi-plane parked outside the pyramid at the start of the game. Head through the door to start adventuring.

TOTAL ECLIPSE

INCENTIVE walk like an Egyptian









Amstrad – inside the pyramid. Going from top to bottom you get some idea of the massive range of views available as you wander about.

Right – the same view (different angle) on the Spectrum. It may not be as colourful, but it's as playable.

907

Anyone who hasn't heard of the Freescape programming system must have been living on the moons of Evath for the last 18 months. In the hands of the creative team at Incentive it turns out solid 3D environments in which all manner of adventures have been taking place.

Take a wander back in time to 1930, to a world in peril. Mankind is threatened by an ancient curse – if, at any time of the day, the sun is prevented from shining on an Egyptian shrine at the top of a pyramid, whatever prevents the light from reaching the shrine will go boom. Unfortunately there's about to be an eclipse, and that means it's the moon that is going to go boom, causing an awful lot of life-terminating problems for the people on Earth.

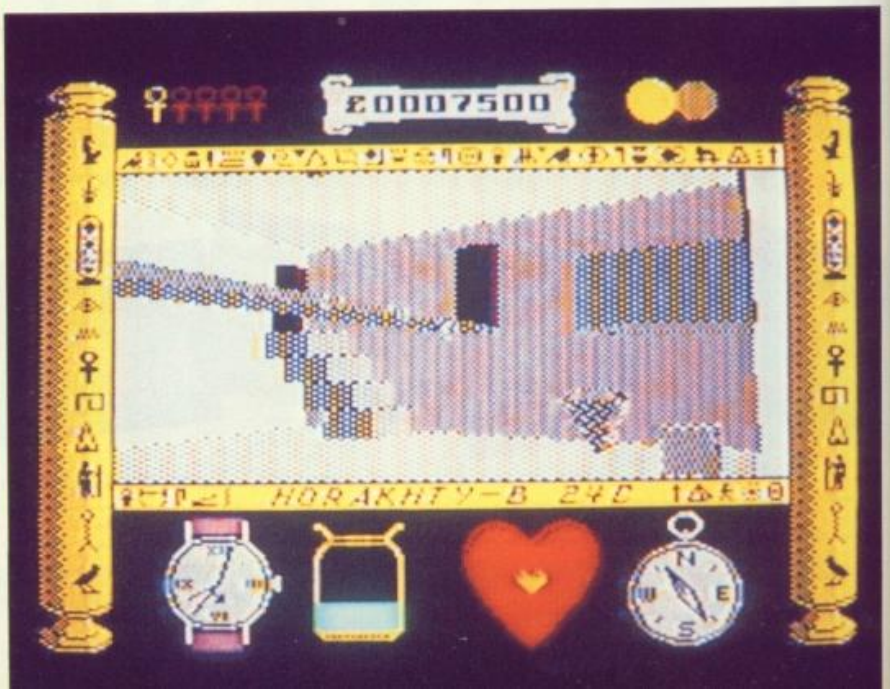
Being a right little Indiana Jones, you've flown in by biplane to the pyramid and are going to have a crack at getting to the shrine and removing the curse. All before the eclipse happens and the tea gets cold in the pot.

As well as the Freescape view of the surroundings, the main display contains a number of informative icons. The top of the screen shows the number of Ankhs being carried (these ancient artifacts act as keys) and the value of treasure collected, and contains a picture that shows how near the eclipse is. At the bottom of the screen a message window gives details of the location and reports on events as they happen, and below that is a watch that shows exactly how much time remains before disaster strikes, a water-bottle, a heartbeat meter, and a compass.

There are a number of ways of goofing things up on the quest – such as running out of time, agitating your heart so that you have a heart attack, or encountering an instantly terminal trap. The heartbeat is speeded up by falling off things, running out of water or getting attacked by the automatic defence systems.

The overall mission objective is to get to the shrine at the top of the pyramid, but in

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Amstrad – could she be the key to a puzzle?

order to provide an ongoing measure of progress (and make the adventure worthwhile) treasure can be picked up along the way.

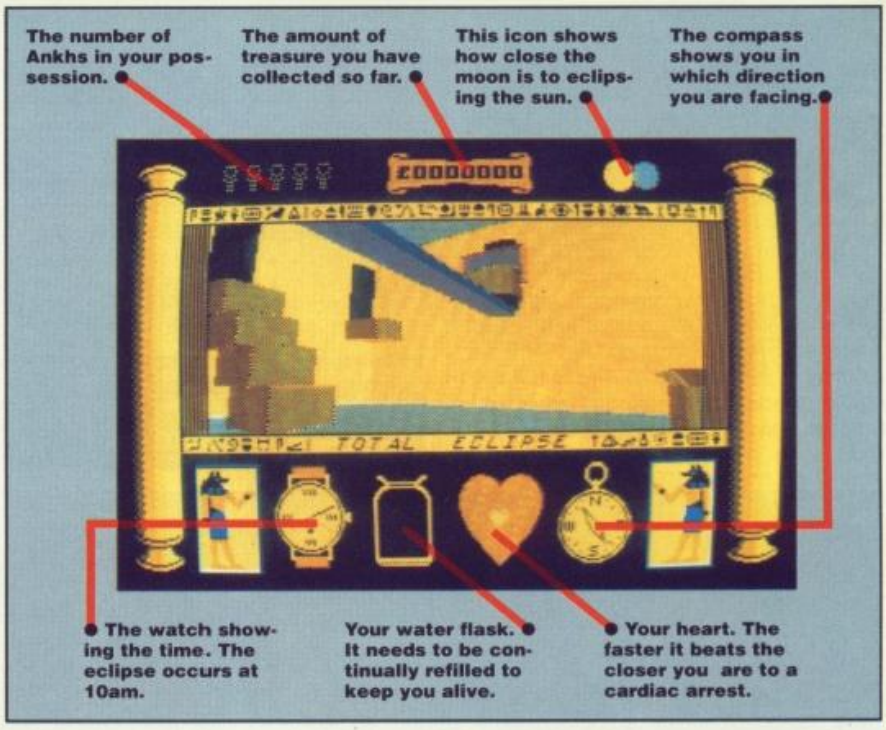
The puzzles are similar in nature to those in *Driller*, but everything is much more compact. It's not a matter of exploring large open areas, but one of mapping a complicated maze of rooms packed with objects. Much of the uneventful travel between places that you have in *Driller* and *Dark Side* is eliminated, concentrating both the mind and gameplay.

Your 'interface' with objects is again conducted in two main ways: shoot them or walk up to them. There's the same freedom of movement to look up and down, crouch or do 'U' turns and there is also a handy option to re-orientate yourself to face forward – it saves a lot of time spent messing about after having a good look round a room.

The early rooms are full of relatively easy puzzles to solve, getting you comfortably into the action. It's not just a matter of finding one correct solution either... there are a number of ways of solving most situations, giving a welcome flexibility to the gameplay.

It's hard to go wrong with the Freescape system, which is ideally suited for producing absorbing games. *Total Eclipse* is nearer to a standard arcade adventure than the previous games in terms of exploration and puzzle solving, and Freescape gives it the winning edge.

● Bob Wade



SPECTRUM VERSION

The stippling, one colour effect has never been as effective as the multi-colour modes of other versions, but it still looks good. Precious little in the way of sound effects again.

GRAPHICS	7	IQ FACTOR	7
AUDIO	2	FUN FACTOR	6

ACE RATING 902

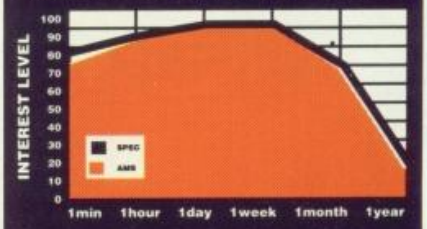
AMSTRAD VERSION

In the year or so that Freescape has been around nobody has come up with a competitor for its graphic style. It's as distinctive and impressive as ever.

GRAPHICS	8	IQ FACTOR	7
AUDIO	2	FUN FACTOR	6

ACE RATING 907

PREDICTED INTEREST CURVE



Freescape isn't as initially exciting these days, but there's all the addiction and challenge you can handle



At the start of Level Four. Those switches above and to the left of Puffy are important...



...Oops! Puffy bounced onto the wrong bit and will not be able to get at any of the food on this level.



Pufyn's turn this time. She's in training mode (hence all those health points) and has managed to collect a fire pill.

PUFFY'S SAGA

UBI SOFT launch their invasion

ZOMBI on the CPC hardly made Ubi Soft a household name in the UK, but over the coming months the French software house hopes to change the position.

Puffy's Saga, the first of a series of forthcoming UK launches from Ubi Soft, is a *Gauntlet*-ish maze game in which you control either Puffy himself or his girlfriend Pufyn. Rushing around some 30 walled levels, the aim is to collect small brown balls and avoid nasties. Both characters look like small potatoes, but have different attributes. Pufyn, for example, can move quicker than Puffy, but has weaker firepower and tends to get fewer goodies.

The nasties come in different shapes and sizes; some roam around the levels chasing you, while others remain stationary blasting the hero or heroine as they bounce past. Health points are reduced by contact with the denizens of the dungeon, so keep out of their way or shoot them before they touch you. Extra weapons are available, including super shots which greatly increase firepower, and extra speed which puts the character in athlete mode. To keep those health points up – they count down continually whether you bump into baddies or not – make sure to eat the food that's scattered around the place.

All the brown balls on the current level have to be collected before access is gained to the next stage. This process would be a lot easier if all the brown balls were out in the open – some are hidden behind walls or in chests, and the only way to get at them is by collecting keys which open chests and certain walls, or by bouncing onto trip switches which open sections of wall. Hang around too long on a level though, and the walls start disappearing on their own, which is not usually a good thing...

A form of currency – Magic Goms – exists, and can be collected and used to buy extras. For the very reasonable price of one Gom, another hundred health points can be purchased or a swap effected between the two characters.

Puffy's Saga is great fun to play – all the puzzles and traps mean it will take a long time to master. Then you can go back and do it all over again using the other character.

Andy Smith

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ATARI ST VERSION

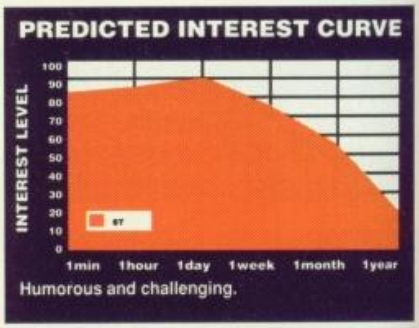
The graphics are colourful and though the scrolling is a bit naff, the animation is good. The sound effects are wonderful as is the digitised speech. Let's hope Ubi Soft keep up the good work.

GRAPHICS	8	**IQ FACTOR**	6
AUDIO	8	**FUN FACTOR**	8

ACE RATING 844



Puffy's running out of health points – he has got extra speed though, so he may be able to get past those dragons and collect the food on the way. It might be an idea to trade in that Magic Gom (blue ball below the keys) for an extra hundred health points at this stage.



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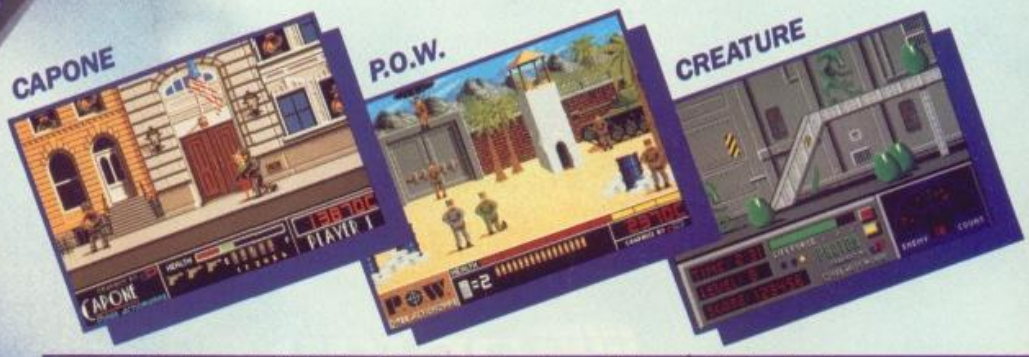
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Commodore Amiga



The Knight one of three character classes.



Atari ST

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DISCOVER AN ARCADE ADVENTURE WITH HIDDEN DEPTHS

Discover Times Of Lore, Origin's first adventure on cassette. Acclaimed British designer Chris Roberts has taken the best of arcade and adventure – fast and furious combat, stunning graphics and animation, unrelenting danger and challenge – and introduced the depth of a classic fantasy role playing game.

Entirely joystick driven, Times Of Lore continuously tests your combat skills while you gradually become involved in a compelling plot. With 13,000 screen locations, a powerful but easy-to-use menu and icon interface, scores of interactive characters and music by Martin Galway, it ventures further than other arcade adventures.

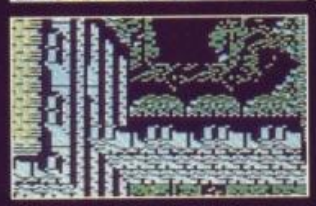
Origin have broken new ground in Times Of Lore. Isn't it time you did too? Available for: C64/128 Cassette £9.95, Disk £14.95, Spectrum 48/128K Cassette £9.95, Spectrum +3 Disk £14.95, Amstrad 464/6128 Cassette £9.95, Disk £14.95, Atari ST £24.95, IBM/PC & Compatibles £24.95, Apple £19.95, Commodore Amiga £24.95.



C64/128



Spectrum

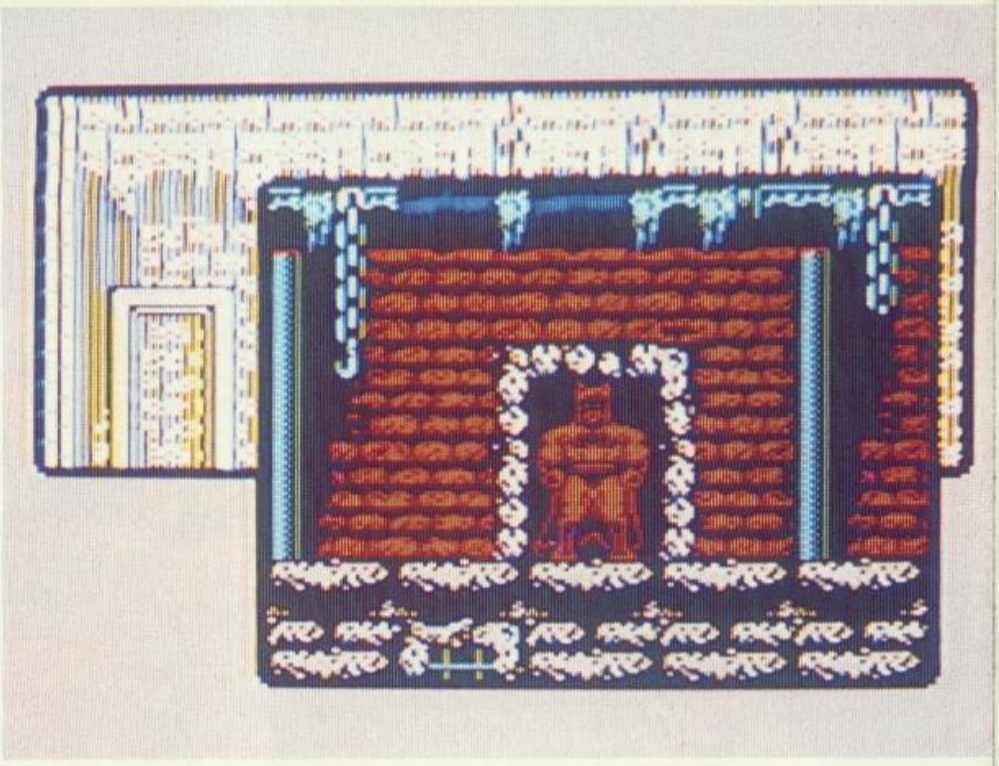


Amstrad

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BATMAN

THE CAPED CRUSADER

Batman licences? OCEAN Gotham...

The Joker game – in living colour!

903

Not a sequel to the Jon Ritman game by any means, this begins a new generation of Batman licences, the first in what is rapidly set to turn into a series – the next one is going to be *Batman The Movie*.

This comic-strip style arcade adventure is essentially two games in one. One side of the tape has you up against arch-villain The Joker in a caper called *A Fete Worse Than Death*, and the flip side of the tape pits the player against The Penguin in *A Bird In The Hand*. In the Penguin game, the dastardly criminal plans to dominate Gotham City by unleashing an army of mechanical penguins that he's manufacturing in an old umbrella factory. In the Joker game, Batman has to prevent bombs that have been placed under the Batcave from exploding while rescuing his youthful assistant Robin from the clutches of villains.

Both adventures start at the Batcave. Taking control of Batman, you wander around the game area collecting items (which sit on the floor flashing), before using them in the correct locations in order to progress. An element of combat is involved, but true to the original stories, no-one actually dies.

There are two main screen displays, and pulling down on the joystick with fire pressed toggles between them. In the main display mode, each location is viewed side-on, the size of the display depending on the size of the location and whether there are any objects in it. Leaving a location causes another frame to be laid over the old one on-screen – this continues until you either use or pick up an object, when the overlays clear and the display starts afresh. The other main screen mode is the static utilities screen which reveals health, strength, stamina and so on. It also contains a group of icons including a 'use' icon and a 'drop' icon, surrounded by the objects collected on your travels. To use an object, select it and click on the use icon.

As well as wandering around collecting objects, there are the criminal's minions to avoid or fight. Be careful though, because fighting takes energy which can only be replaced by collecting and eating (using) food, which is sometimes difficult to find.

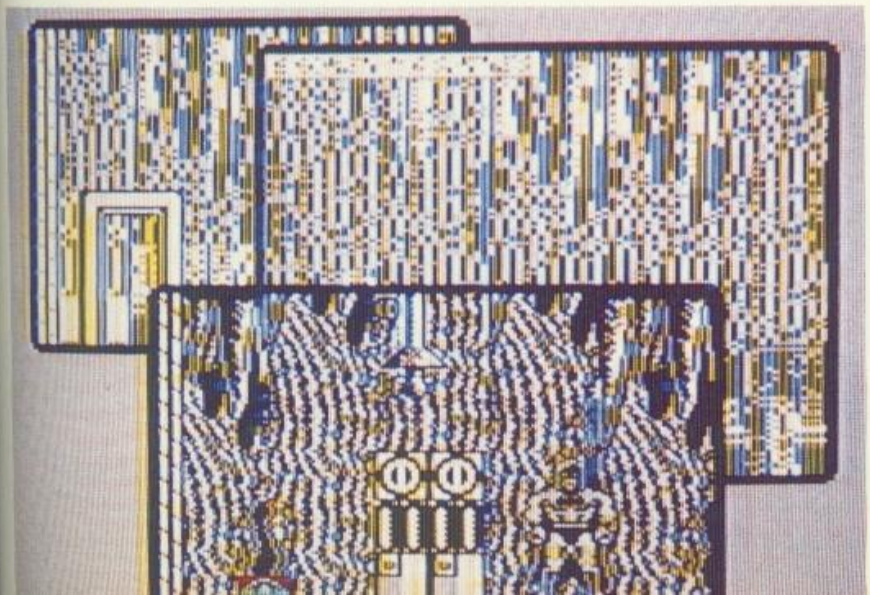
Of the two games, the Penguin one is the easier. Comic strip captions often give you clues as to which object should be used where. There aren't so many clues when you're playing against the Joker though, so beware.

Batman The Caped Crusader is great fun to play. The puzzles can be tricky but with a little bit of lateral thinking they get easier.

● Andy Smith

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The Penguin game. Knowing when and where to use objects is the key.



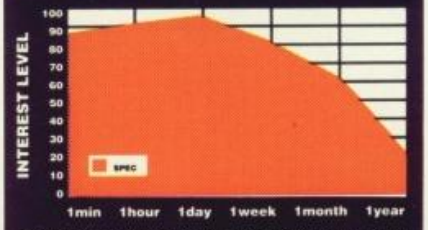
SPECTRUM VERSION

The screen display is great – there's even an option to play with the backgrounds in mono or full colour. The game plays well, though it is sometimes annoying to try a low kick on an opponent and end up in the utilities screen. Overall, it's fun to play, and will keep arcade (and Batman) fans happy for a long time.

GRAPHICS	9	IQ FACTOR	5
AUDIO	6	FUN FACTOR	8

ACE RATING 903

PREDICTED INTEREST CURVE



Start solving the puzzles, and it gets very involving.

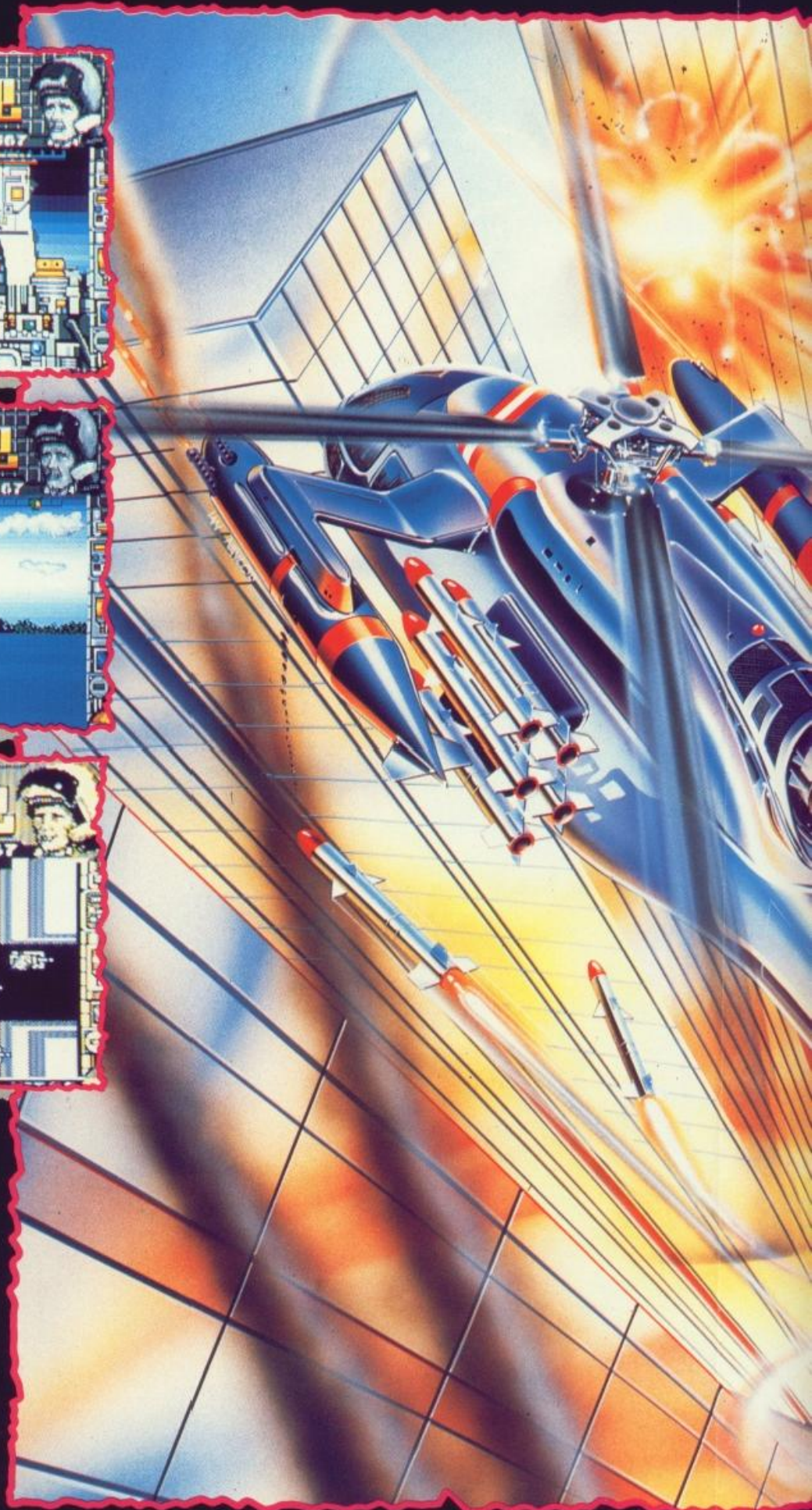
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EXPLODING FIST +

More fist-action from FIREBIRD

OVER three years have passed since *The Way Of The Exploding Fist* blasted onto the home computer, heralding a new era in combat games. Little has changed on the beat-em-up front since then though: the opponents have got uglier, meaner and more numerous, but the basic theme still hasn't changed.

Fist+ can accommodate up to three players, computer or human, and the aim is to become a 10th dan by winning two bouts per dan. Manage that without getting knocked out of a round, and you then have to defend your title against more, increasingly difficult, opponents. As you'd expect from a beat-em-up, the standard 16 moves are available – eight with the fire button pressed, and eight without. The bouts are each timed to one minute, but they can finish earlier if one player manages to clock up eight hits on the opponents.

After every two bouts, the surviving human players get to take part in a points-boosting bonus game. Placed in a dark alley, the player has to manoeuver a cross-hair sight around the screen and aim Shuriken at the dragon heads that appear. Miss one of the heads and it comes flying toward the player and the bonus game is over.

Though it's not original stuff, beat-em-up fans will find *Fist+* playable, with a degree of short-term addictiveness.

● Andy Smith



(Left) C64 – the green guy is just about to start hitting you while the red guy waits for his turn. The backgrounds are colourful with all that neon flashing away!

C64 VERSION

The graphics are good, but don't expect too much in the sound department. The opponents are tough – which is good – and the ability to accommodate up to three players is even better. All said though, it is unoriginal and you will tire of it.

GRAPHICS	8	IQ FACTOR	2
AUDIO	6	FUN FACTOR	7

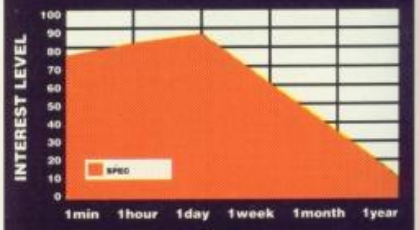
ACE RATING 719

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No other versions planned

PREDICTED INTEREST CURVE



Good, challenging fun for beat-em-up fans, but likely to wear thin after a while.

SAVAGE

FIREBIRD answers the call of the wild



Amstrad – Savage hacks his way through monstrous adversaries in the castle dungeons.

HUNKS everywhere have been envying the ad for this. Now they get the chance to strut their funky stuff in a trio of arcade challenges. But even if you are man enough for the game, is it man enough for you? Savage's muscular body only appears in the first stage, which is similar to *Trantor*. A large figure runs and bounds along scrolling corridors, battling off the denizens of the dungeons. The escape route is made deadly by the large corridor guardians and the pits which have to be jumped over.

Stage Two is totally different and is a test of reflexes. The action is viewed through Savage's eyes as he races across the Valley of Death. Monoliths come hurtling towards the

C64 VERSION

Compares well with the CPC version – super graphics and lively music and effects.

GRAPHICS	9	IQ FACTOR	1
AUDIO	6	FUN FACTOR	8

ACE RATING 704

AMSTRAD VERSION

Some of the best graphics yet seen on a CPC in all three stages. Sound effects and music are also good.

GRAPHICS	9	IQ FACTOR	1
AUDIO	6	FUN FACTOR	8

ACE RATING 704

TECHNOCOP

Highway robbery from GREMLIN

COPS sometimes have robotic attachments – but this one is going up against the evil-doers without any shiny armour plating. However lots of hi-tech gear as well as a spanking new fast car are on offer to this heroic lawgiver...

Hopping into the car, which has a machine gun mounted on the roof, you set off along the road. Traffic that gets in the way can be blasted or barged aside, and when a message comes through that a crime is being committed, speed is of the essence in order to get to the scene of the crime in time. If the traffic is a little heavy, there's always the Nuke'em missiles that act as smart bombs. Later on, additional equipment is available to deal with motorists – a turbocharger, a more powerful gun and side rams. Bonus items found on the missions help increase the score, replenish life or repair car damage.



Spectrum – inside the first building the radar scope homes in on the criminal, whose details are shown on the bottom left of the screen.

At the crime scene leave the car and proceed on foot into a building, tracking the criminal who has to be caught or killed on a radar scanner. Criminals don't have to end up in pine boxes, but can be captured using a net gun. Speed and care are called for because there's a time limit for capturing the bad guy, and innocent civilians shouldn't be shot. To get to the quarry, holes in the floor have to be leapt over and lifts used to move between floors as gangsters attack you with guns, knives and whips.

When a mission is completed, successfully or not, it's back to the car and on to the next building. Before the day's work is done, eleven criminals have to be apprehended, hiding in increasingly complicated locations – the building maps getting bigger and trickier to get around.

A very pleasing mix of driving action, which compares well with other recent car games, and exploration. There's no let-up in the action on either stage. It's annoying to have to repeat the early buildings every time you play, but otherwise it's well paced and full of things to shoot and find.

● Bob Wade

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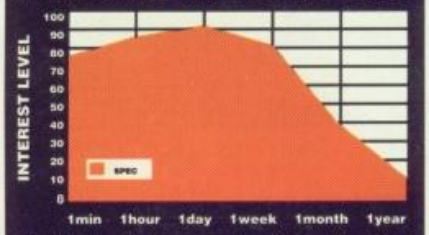
SPECTRUM VERSION

The driving stage is fast and great to look at. The building stage doesn't come across so impressively, but still looks okay. The sound effects are limited to engine and shooting noises.

GRAPHICS	7	IQ FACTOR	5
AUDIO	3	FUN FACTOR	7

ACE RATING 804

PREDICTED INTEREST CURVE



You'll be handcuffed to the joystick until most of the buildings are complete.

Spectrum – controlling the car with the gun sticking out (top right), you can shoot or barge the other cars out of the way.

screen and have to be weaved around. You've also got to shoot skulls and other monsters.

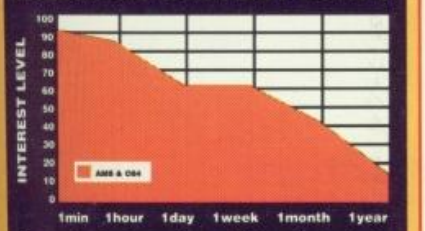
Stage Three takes play back to the dungeons, but this time, in the form of an eagle, he has to retrieve magic powers and free the imprisoned maiden. The eagle can shoot as well as fly – handy when dealing with the monsters that assail it.

The three stages offer different tests of game-playing ability, but no single one is that good. As a package, though, it hangs together well.

● Bob Wade

RELEASE BOX		
SPECTRUM	£8.99cs	OUT NOW
AMSTRAD	£8.99cs • £14.99dk	OUT NOW
C64/128	£9.99cs • £12.99dk	OUT NOW
16-bit versions under development		

PREDICTED INTEREST CURVE



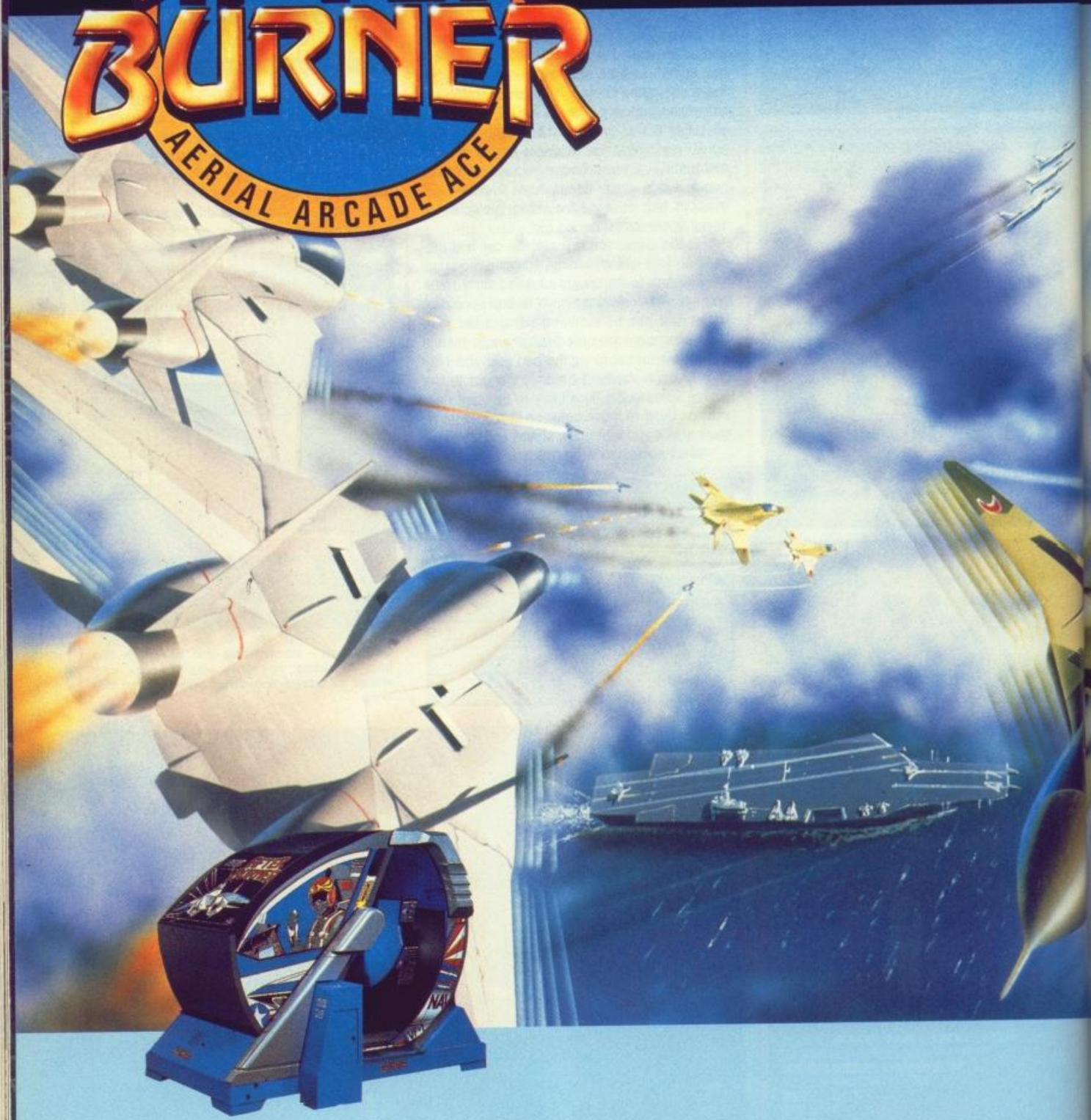
Tremendously impressive at first, palls owing to lack of depth to the gameplay.



SHAKE. IA

F-14 AFTER BURNER

AERIAL ARCADE ACE



ACTIVISION

SEGA®

AFTERBURNER – 'THE ARCA

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Available on C64 cassette (£9.99) and disk (£14.99), Spectrum (£12 Am

Amiga (£24 and

RATTLE. ROLL IT..



Amiga screen shots shown

ST screen shots shown

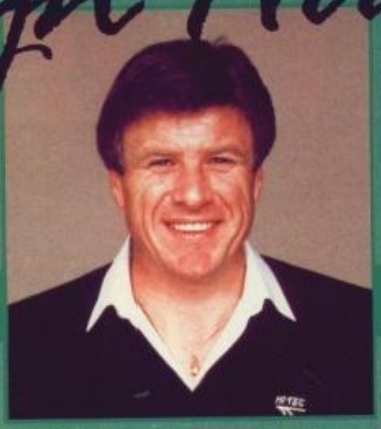
ARCADENSATION OF THE YEAR'

AFTERBURNER – You've played the arcade **smash** – now **experience** the white-knuckled **realism** of a supersonic **dogfight** at home! Using your heat-seeking **missiles** and laser anti-aircraft **fire**, can you be **top gun** against a seething supersonic **swarm?**

Experience brain-numbing **G-forces**; bones **rattling** with the body-jarring **pitch** and yaw . . . **scan** with your **radar, lock on** your target and **FIRE!**

ectrum (£12.9 Amstrad cassette (£9.99) and disk (£14.99), Atari ST (£24.99), Amiga (£24.9 and MSX (£9.99).

Emlyn Hughes



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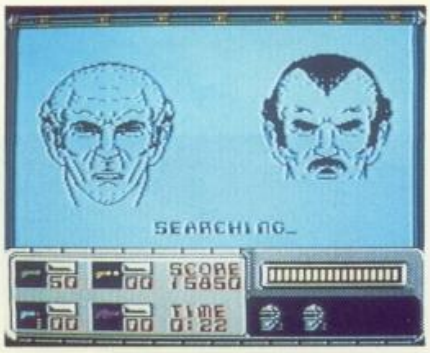
Access VISA



Robocop slugs it out with a chainsaw wielding maniac in Stage One.



Shoot the bad guy, but mind the girl. Remember Directive Number Two.



The photo-fit section. Match the face on the right to the one on the left.

ROBOCOP

Part man, part machine, all OCEAN

IT'S not often the launch of a new computer game coincides with the launch of a new coin-op machine. But that's what has happened this month with *Robocop*. Data East have just produced the coin-op machine (see Future Cops in the Arcades Section this issue), and now Ocean are poised to launch the computer game.

Obviously, both versions have their roots in the film, but Ocean – having seen early versions of the Data East game – had a choice. They could either do a straight coin-op conversion, or leave the coin-op alone completely and concentrate on turning the film plot into a playable game – something they had done previously with *Platoon*. In the end they decided to combine the two.

The game breaks down into nine main sections, each section based on sequences from the film. The first stage has the player controlling Robocop as he goes about his daily business of serving the public trust, i.e. shooting baddies. This horizontally-scrolling part of the game is heavily inspired by the coin-op. Baddies appear on street level and from first floor windows and most of them are armed with pistols or chainsaws.

You have to shoot the baddies (each baddy takes at least two shots before he dies) while avoiding their shots. To make life easier there are four types of extra weapon to pick up including three-way shots and super shots that allow you to take baddies out with one shot. The Manta Gun that is used at the end of the film also makes an appearance towards the end of the game.

You have a limited supply of energy, and every time you take a hit the meter drops a little. Fortunately, extra energy capsules can be collected, but allow the energy to drop too much and you lose one of the initial three lives. Other parts of the game include a target-shooting sequence where the player has to shoot a baddy who is holding a woman hostage – hit the woman and your health meter suffers severely (Directive Number Two: Protect the Innocent). There is also a photo-fit ID sequence with 40 seconds available to match up pieces of a face and build up an Identikit picture for the face shown on screen. Finally, there are shoot-em-up sequences in the drugs factory and the junk yard.

Combining elements from the coin-op with the Ocean interpretation of the film has worked well. There's plenty of shoot-em-up action, and the other sequences capture the feel and flavour of the film.

● Andy Smith

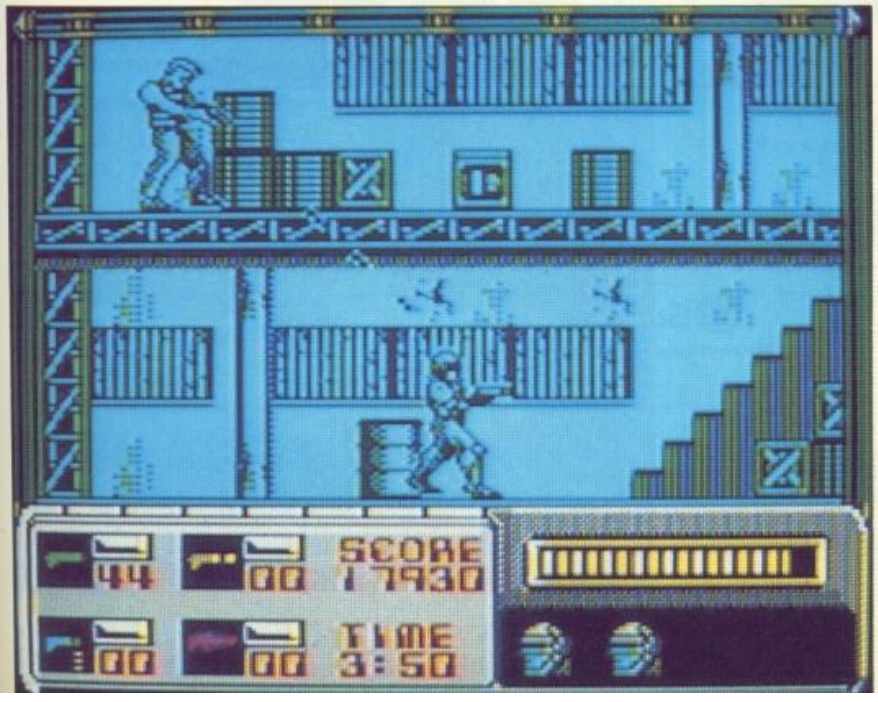
RELEASE BOX		
ATARI ST	£19.95dk	IMMINENT
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SPECTRUM	£8.95cs • £14.95dk	OUT NOW
AMSTRAD	£9.95cs • £14.95dk	IMMINENT
C64/128	£9.95cs • £14.95dk	IMMINENT
IBM PC	Under development	

SPECTRUM VERSION

The graphics are great and the music and digitised speech on the 128K version are very mood-setting. It's fun to play and, though the first few stages are a little easy, the game is tough enough to keep you playing. 48K owners will have to multi-load the game and miss out on all that speech and music, which is a shame.

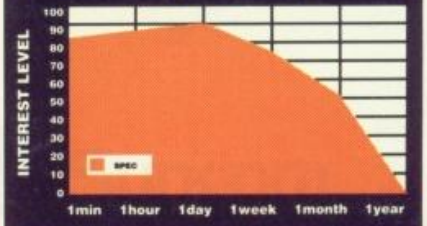
GRAPHICS	8	IQ FACTOR	2
AUDIO	8	FUN FACTOR	8

ACE RATING 807



In the drugs factory. There's an extra weapon directly above Robocop – if he can get to it...

PREDICTED INTEREST CURVE



Varied and entertaining with plenty to keep you going.



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LAST NINJA II

SYSTEM 3 goes Hnya!

YOU just can't keep a good Ninja down, especially when he's Armakuni, the chap who you helped to defeat the evil shogun in *Last Ninja*. It was only a temporary victory though, as Kunitoki has risen again, more powerful than ever.

Instead of the green and pleasant lands of the original, this time around the no-good Shogun has picked the towering skyscrapers and tough streets of New York to spread his wicked ways.

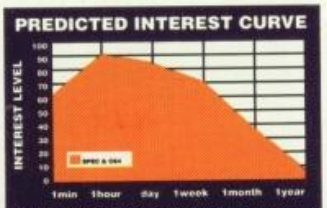
Our hero has to find his way through five different areas, each taking a load, until he reaches the baddies' retreat.

Knife-wielding muggers, punks and other Ninjas block progress on the journey to the evil Shogun, and even the police join in the battle! At the start, you fight with fists and feet – there are a few unarmed moves available, but careful exploration should soon lead to a weapon, which makes the whole fighting process a lot less painful. Sometimes it's worth avoiding battle altogether to preserve that all-important life force.

A puzzle element to the game consists mainly of finding objects and fitting them to obvious situations... nothing to really stretch the brain. The real problems come with the over-complicated control system which makes even simple tasks like picking up objects and leaving rooms difficult.

Last Ninja II is a curious mix between a beat-em-up and arcade adventure. Fans of the original will probably enjoy it, but rather than an improvement it's more of a scenery change.

● Robin Alway



Classy entertainment but doesn't add much to what went before.

C64 VERSION

Like the Spectrum version, excellent graphics feature but control isn't easy.

GRAPHICS	7	IQ FACTOR	6
AUDIO	5	FUN FACTOR	6

ACE RATING 747

SPECTRUM VERSION

Visually excellent with atmospheric graphics and detailed animation, it's a shame the difficult controls and general unplayability make this a lot less absorbing than it could be.

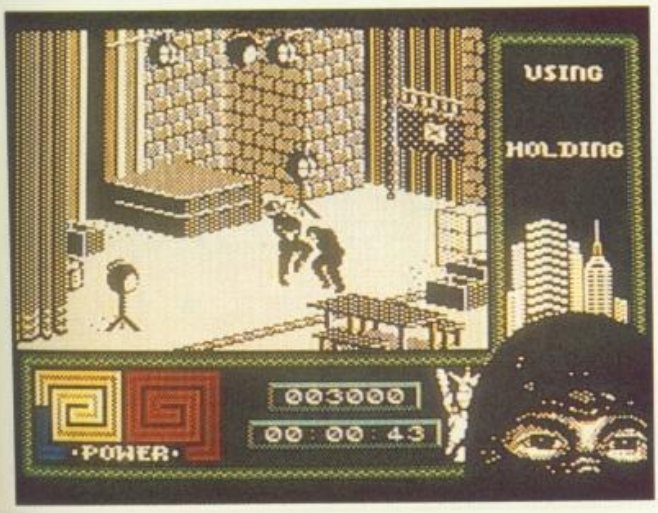
GRAPHICS	8	IQ FACTOR	6
AUDIO	4	FUN FACTOR	6

ACE RATING 747

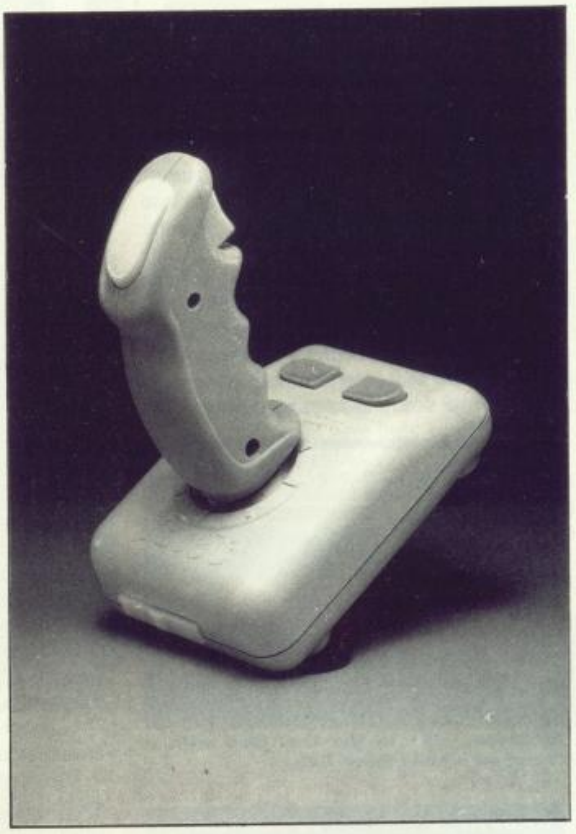
RELEASE BOX

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AMIGA	£t.b.a.	SPRING
SPECTRUM	£12.99cs • £14.99dk	OUT NOW
AMSTRAD	£12.99cs • £14.99dk	IMMINENT
C64/128	£12.99cs • £14.99dk	OUT NOW
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Spec – this is the second location you'll enter and contains the first guard to fight. On the back wall is a block, which has to be punched out to open a tradoor on the start screen.



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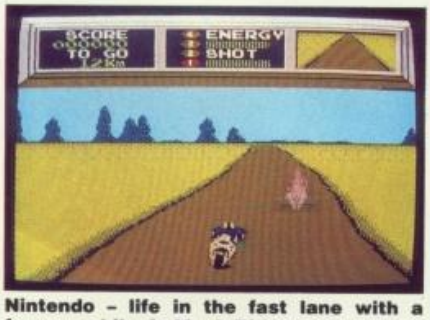
NINTEND

MACH RIDER

Hell on two wheels with NINTENDO

I don't know whether the 'mach' bit refers to the speed of the rider in this game, or to his macho qualities. I'm sure that Nintendo nintended it both ways, as usual. Don't you just love literally translated Japanese? All those cars named after bowls of fruit and flowers. Doesn't it crease you up?

Mach Rider takes you into the fast lane, via the likes of *Road Blasters* and *Super Hang On*. You drive a fast bike, with four gears, chased by evil trikes along a twisted roadway lined by oil drums. Oil and water on the road surface can lead to a skid, and anything you bump into makes bike and rider explode into little jigsaw squares. There is a choice of challenges: combat, endurance or a solo track, and even a track designed by the player.



Nintendo – life in the fast lane with a four-gear bike in Mach Rider

GRAPHICS	7	IQ FACTOR	3
AUDIO	6	FUN FACTOR	8

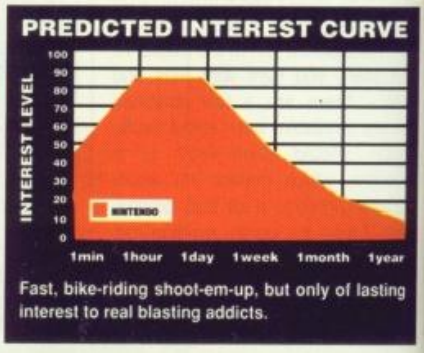
ACE RATING 636

In combat mode, points are scored for negotiating the track and offing as many of the opposition as possible without getting waxed yourself. There are two methods of attack: one involves using the twin, nose-mounted cannons on the bike, while the other technique means pushing a trike off the track until it smashes into an oil drum.

Endurance mode just involves covering the length of the track inside a time limit, slightly tight in most cases, which only allows one or two crashes and full-speed riding is called for if you want to get to the end in one piece.

Control of the bike utilises the paddle's up and down arrows to change gear, left and right to steer and the A and B buttons to accelerate and fire respectively. It's a very fast game, and although *Mach Rider*, with its fluorescent green background, doesn't promise much the first time you boot it, the play is so addictive that you'll suddenly wake up one day with a full beard and realise you just spent six months playing it and your dinner's burnt.

Once you get over the initial embarrassment caused by crashing into everything, precise control comes quite easily, and this is due to a certain amount of help from the computer. It leans you into the bends and doesn't overreact when you do. It may not sustain interest after you've got well up in the levels, but designing your own tracks will take up time in the future.



Fast, bike-riding shoot-em-up, but only of lasting interest to real blasting addicts.

PRO WRESTLING

NINTENDO pulls yer ears off

AS Bernard Cribbins would say, "It's just like the real thing!" And he'd be right too, that wacky little wombler, because *Pro Wrestling* is just one step away from smelly armpits and old grannies shouting "PULL 'IS EARS OFF!". Admittedly this isn't the English concept of what wrestling is all about, as there's a bit more actual bodily harm in this Americanised game. English wrestling is a gentle theatrical sport where skilled athletes throw each other around the ring and the audience works off its aggression by yelling its lungs out and stamping the place down.

In America there's a bit more bloodshed, it would seem, as in *Pro Wrestling* you punch, savagely kick and fling your opponent out of the ring, stamp on his neck and whirl him around your head by his groin. Well actually, if you play the console, it's the computerised player who does all these things to you. Forget three falls and a submission. Try a trip down the quack's in a minibus with a blue light on the top.

There isn't much in the instruction book about how players are supposed to deck their

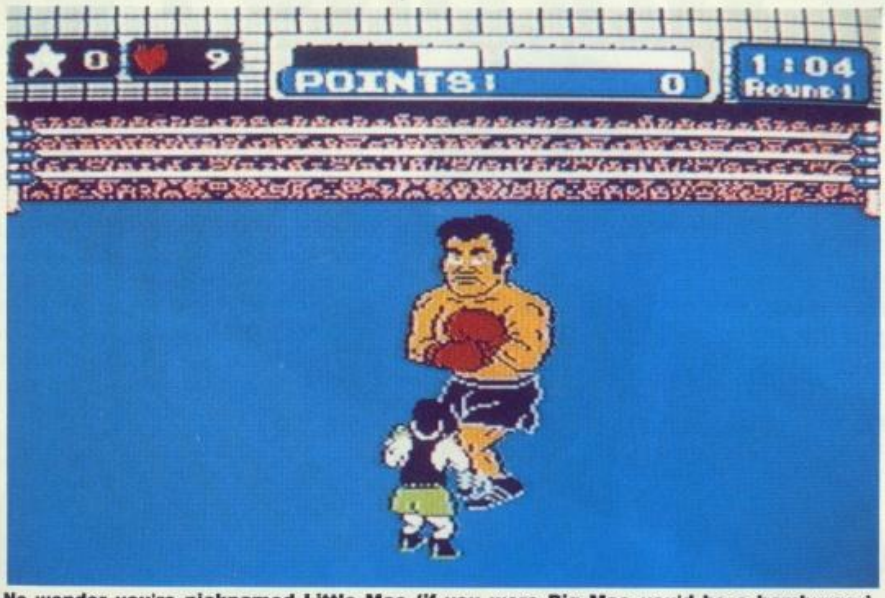
GRAPHICS	8	IQ FACTOR	2
AUDIO	7	FUN FACTOR	8

ACE RATING 794



Nintendo – punching, kicking, gripping by the goolies and stamping on your opponent's head are all fair game when you're Pro Wrestling

NOVELTIES...



No wonder you're nicknamed Little Mac (if you were Big Mac you'd be a hamburger). Here you're up against your first opponent (Piston Honda) on the World Circuit and you don't seem to be doing too well.

round results in a technical knockout. If neither boxer is KO'd, the three-round bout is awarded to the contestant who gained the most points during the fight.

Landing hits is not straightforward – only the weakest fighters relax their guard repeatedly. Little Mac can only keep punching for so long – a small heart icon at the top left of the screen shows how many punches he can afford to waste – if one of his punches is blocked, the number by the heart decreases by one. If he is hit, three hearts disappear and when all the hearts have run out, Mac can't fight back until some more hearts have been earned by dodging or blocking punches.

Punch Out! is not meant to be a serious boxing simulation, it's just a fun beat-em-up that's tough enough and enjoyable enough to keep you playing for quite some time.

● Andy Smith

GRAPHICS	8	IQ FACTOR	3
AUDIO	6	FUN FACTOR	8

ACE RATING 792

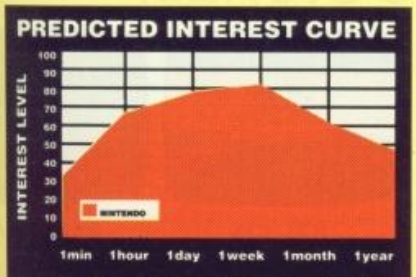
MIKE TYSON'S PUNCH OUT!

Break some heads, NINTENDO style

opponent (be it a human second player or the computer) except that you can slap the buttons and the paddle until you get some stick in for yourself. There is however a huge range of different moves available once you've learned how – about 23 according to the paperwork! That's quite a lot, really, and it all adds to the realism quotient of the game. The best bit is where you throw the bloke out of the ring, dive out of the ring while he's still down, stamp on his head, and leap back in the ring again. That way he stays out of the ring for the 20 second limit, and you win the bout.

Although it's a bit hard, this is fun. Played as a two player game it's loads of laffs.

● Phil South



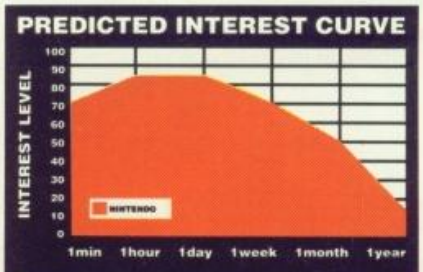
Heavyweight wrestling simulator which packs a wallop, especially for two players.

FRANK Bruno may be due to fight Mike Tyson 'real soon now', but if you can't wait for the real thing, you could always try stepping in for Frank – on the Nintendo.

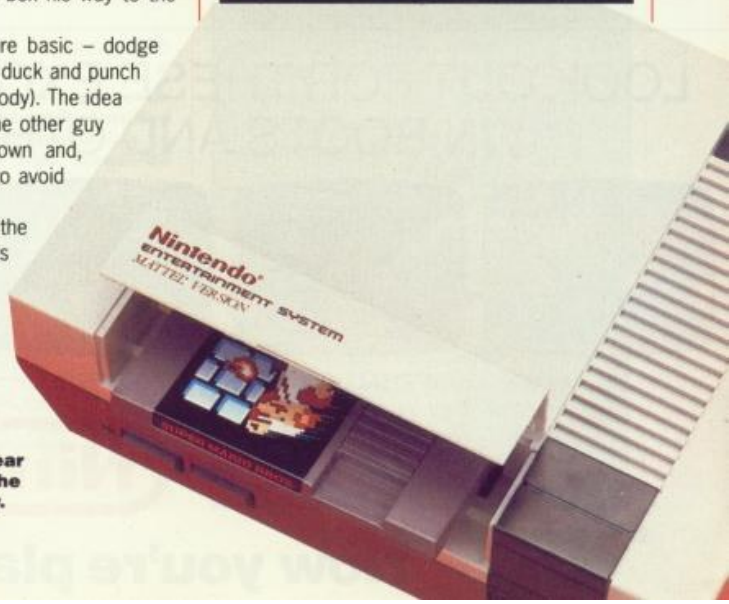
As Little Mac, you're after Mike's crown, but before you get a chance to slug it out with the Heavyweight Champion of the World, Mac has to prove himself. That means starting at the bottom of the Minor League and winning promotion by defeating three other boxers. In the Major League four more boxers need to be beaten before Mac gets into the World League, where he has a chance to box his way to the finale with Mike Tyson.

The moves available are basic – dodge (to the left or right), guard, duck and punch (to the left, right, head or body). The idea is to land enough hits on the other guy in the ring, knock him down and, hopefully, out. Remember to avoid getting slugged yourself.

A stamina meter at the top of the screen shows how much energy the fighter has left. When it reaches zero, the boxer hits the canvas – three falls in one three-minute



Enjoyable and challenging – until you work out the opponents' moves.



The Nintendo console. After a poor start last year it's now poised to give the Sega a run for its money.

MIKE TYSON: UNHURT, UNDEFEATED,
UNDISPUTED HEAVYWEIGHT CHAMPION OF THE WORLD.

HE'S TOUGH. HE'S MEAN AND HE'S WAITING FOR YOU!

OK now listen kid, and listen good. You've laid out ten opponents to get here today. If you pull this off you'll be Heavyweight Champion of the World.

Yeh, I know it's Mike Tyson sitting in the other corner. But you got the skill, the strength and the stamina. So just go in there, kid. Weave, dodge, jab; keep your guard up and your mind on that title.

And remember, this is Nintendo, right? So you might get beat, but you won't get hurt.



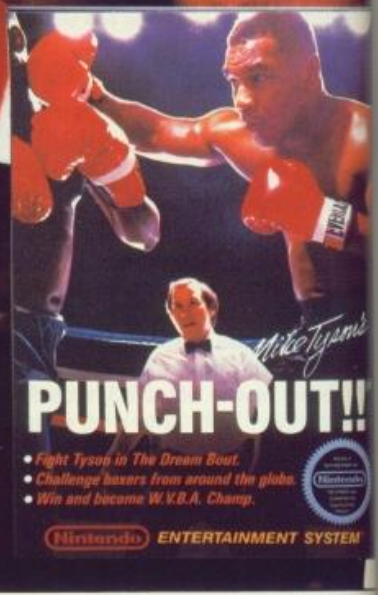
1. You're Little Mac and your first opponent is Glass Joe.



2. The bell's gone. Now it's up to you.



3. Go for it!



MIKE TYSON'S PUNCH-OUT!!

LOOK OUT FOR THESE EXCITING NEW NINTENDO TITLES IN BOOTS AND OTHER LEADING STORES:


ZELDA


SUPER MARIO BROS


METROID

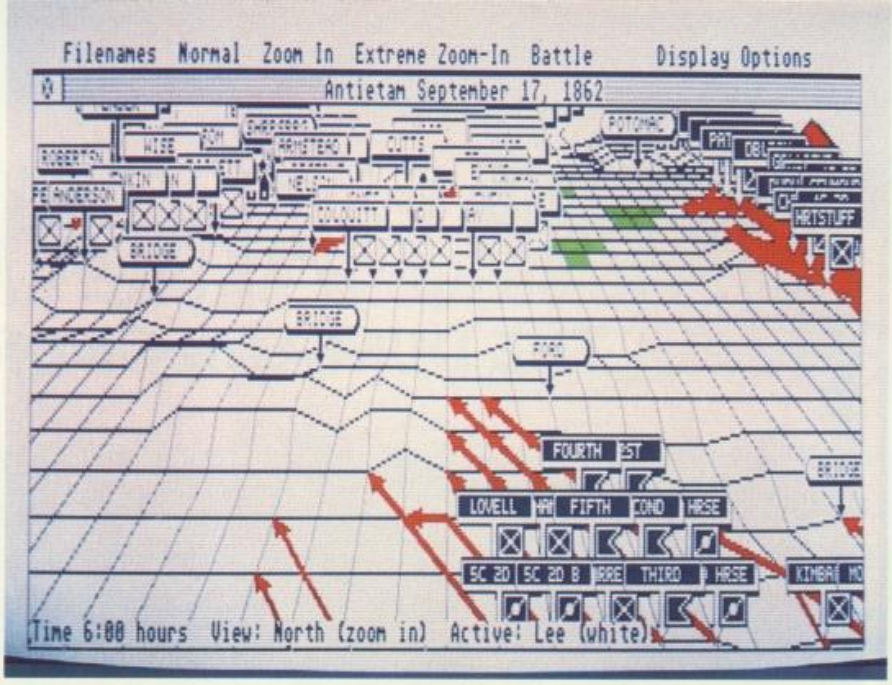

PRO-WRESTLING


TOP GUN


R.C. PRO-AM

Nintendo

Now you're playing with power.



The Union army moves in for an attack on Lee's strung out Confederacy troops at Antietam. Try commanding the Confederate troops and see if you can survive the overwhelming odds.

UMS

THE OPTIONS WIDEN...

RAINBIRD enters a new battle scenario

ONE year in the fast-moving software business is indeed a long time. Still, that's how long *UMS* has been available, and it's only now that extra scenario disks have started to appear.

Two separate scenario disks are currently available, and they load into the main program to re-create famous battles – from the Vietnam War and American Civil War respectively. The American Civil War disk contains the battles of Shiloh, Antietam and Chattanooga. The Chattanooga scenario is split into two battles, loaded individually, that each deal with one day. Chattanooga 1, the main battle, deals with the conflict on November 25th 1863 – the Assault on Missionary Ridge – while Chattanooga 2 covers the preliminary engagement that took place on November 24th 1863.

As the main *UMS* program comes complete with the battle of Gettysburg (amongst others), the American Civil War scenario disk will come as no surprise to anyone who is familiar with the original package.

Shiloh was a great victory for the Union army under Grant after several earlier shock defeats at the hands of the Confederates. Antietam was a hard-fought battle that the Union troops finally won, though Lee's Confederacy troops performed magnificently considering they were stuck behind the enemy lines, hemmed in with a large river to their rear – not only out-numbered three to one, but with their forces spread over almost 20 miles!

Chattanooga was fought over three days, with the Union army taking the eastern slope of Missionary Ridge by the evening of 24th November before capturing the rest of the ridge the next day. The Confederate army suffered a severe beating at Chattanooga, after which the number of Confederate prisoners outnumbered Union dead by over five to one.

The Vietnam disk contains three scenarios from the battles of Dak To in 1967/68 in which the Americans were fighting the North Vietnamese Army (NVA) – uniformed regulars equipped with automatic weapons and mortars, rather than the popularly-imagined Viet Cong peasant soldiers clad in black pyjamas.

In the battle for Hill 823 the NVA hit the Americans hard with sniper, mortar and grenade attacks. The Americans finally took the hill but suffered substantial losses. The second scenario on the disk is set just north of Hill 823 on the slopes of Ngoh Kam Leat, where an understrength US unit wandered into a heavily-fortified enemy position. Several other companies went to the beleaguered unit's aid eventually reinforcing it before nightfall, when the NVA disappeared. Hill 875 was another hard-fought US victory, where the NVA inflicted heavy losses on the American forces from their hidden bunker complexes even though the Americans had shelled them for hours on end – at one point the Americans were even shelling their own units during the battle.

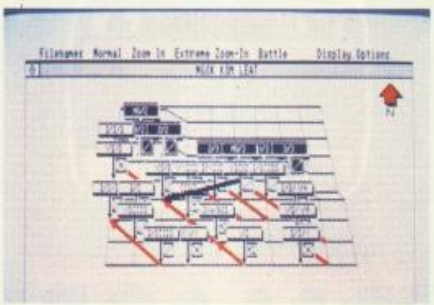
The Vietnam scenarios are interesting not only because of the highly tactical nature of the battles, but because of the introduction of F-100 fighter bombers and helicopter gunships.

Like the battles provided with the main program, you can alter the terrain and the forces to your heart's content. You can even take terrains and armies from the scenario disks and mix them with the original ones. How would William the Conqueror have fared against a handful of grunts armed with automatic weapons and supported by 155mm Howitzers? The answer is easy to discover, try it out and see for yourself...

● Andrew Smith

RELEASE BOX		
ATARI ST	£12.95 per disk	OUT NOW
IBM PC	£12.95 per disk	OUT NOW

NVA machine gunners open up on an American unit from their heavily fortified positions. The Americans are trying to reach a struggling unit that wandered into enemy territory.



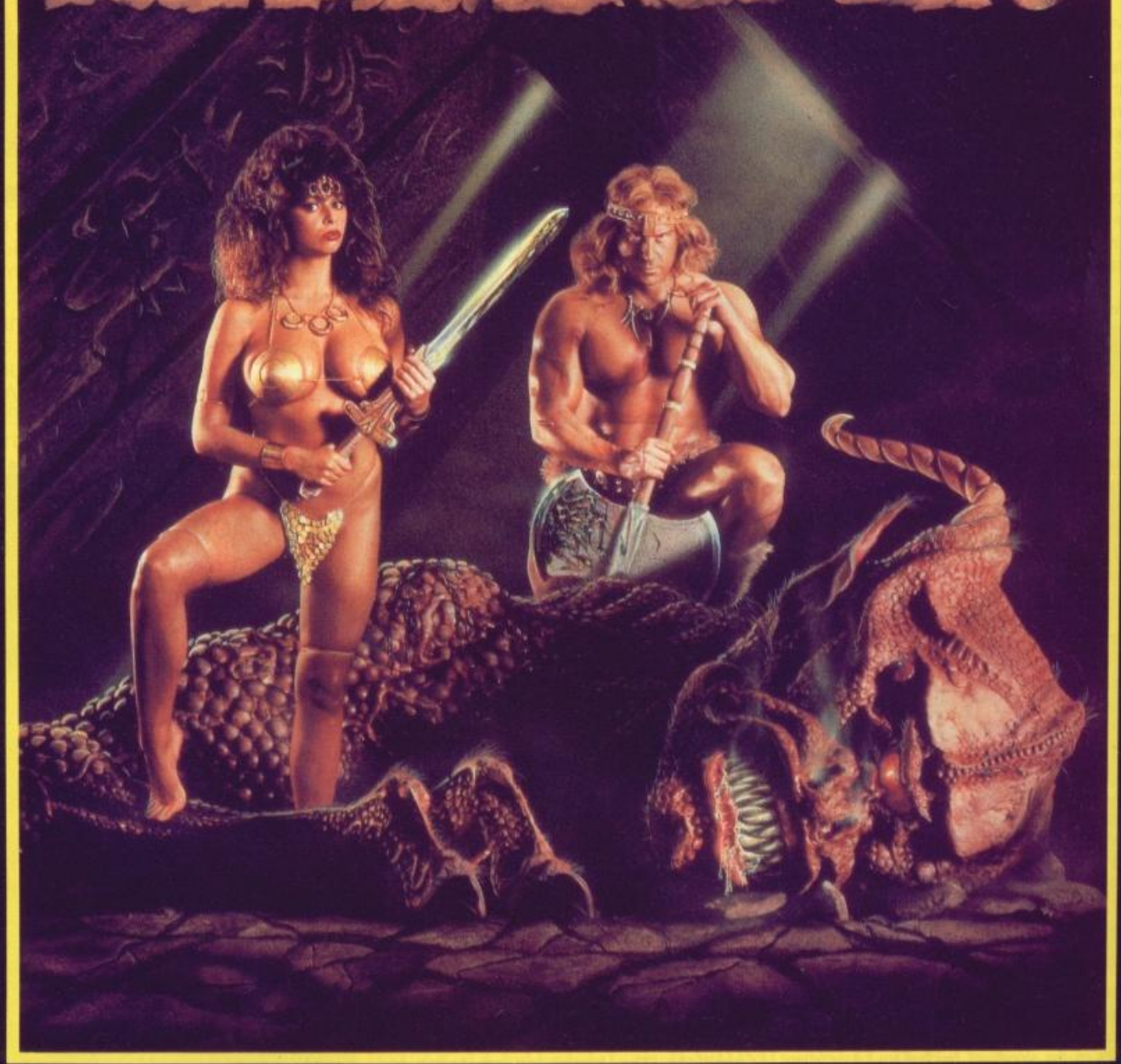
UMS AMIGA



Amiga UMS – note the movement line colour has changed from red to black.

Coming 'real soon now' is the Amiga version of the original UMS program.The two-disk package has all the features offered in the ST original – the first disk contains the main program along with the same five scenarios that come with the ST version (extra scenario disks for the Amiga are to follow). The second disk contains the program to edit the scenarios, armies and maps. Extra features included for the Amiga version are: a line of sight option, the ability to change the colours to workbench colours, and battle sounds – this last option is only available to people who own a machine with more than 512K of memory though. £24.95, Out Now.

BARBARIAN·II
THE DUNGEON OF DRAX



Spectrum Version



Atari ST Version



C64 Version



C64/128 (cassette and disk). Atari ST. Spectrum 48K and 128K (cassette and disk). Amstrad CPC (cassette and disk). Amiga. PC compatible. Check for availability of individual formats.

PALACE

Palace Software. The Old Forge. 7 Caledonian Road. London N1 9DX. Telephone 01-278 0751.

PACMANIA

GRANDSLAM go a-gobbling

ATARI ST VERSION

The display is much smaller but otherwise the graphics are up to scratch. Sound effects lose out as compared to the Amiga, but they're still good.

GRAPHICS	7	IQ FACTOR	2
AUDIO	6	FUN FACTOR	9

ACE RATING 727

AMIGA VERSION

Very impressive graphics – filling the whole screen and scrolling smoothly. The sound effects, too, are excellent.

GRAPHICS	9	IQ FACTOR	2
AUDIO	7	FUN FACTOR	9

ACE RATING 775

ARCADE ACCURACY

Very close indeed, capturing the look and feel of the coin-op version.

COIN OP SCORE 9

MUNCHING dots is an age-old hobby of computer owners which became popular again when this hit the arcades. To turn a classic old game into a popular new one, all you have to do is view the maze from a 3D perspective, make Pacman jump and change the mazes – easy.

The basic principle is the same as ever – clear a maze of dots by charging around eating them. While trying to do that you'll be pursued by a posse of ghosts. Help is at hand from power pills strategically placed around the maze – for a short time they allow you to turn the tables and munch the ghosts.

This incredibly simplistic game style has been augmented by awarding Pacman the ability to jump. No longer is there the frustration of getting trapped in corners, because you can bounce out of trouble.

The drawback with this graphic style is that only part of the maze, can be viewed on screen so it's impossible to know what's going on elsewhere in the maze but the 3D view does add a welcome, fresh perspective to the action.

It may not be very original but there's no arguing with its addictive qualities.

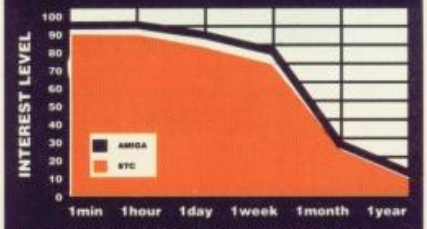
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Amiga – look at that lovely big display. It's easier to tell what's going on than on the ST version.

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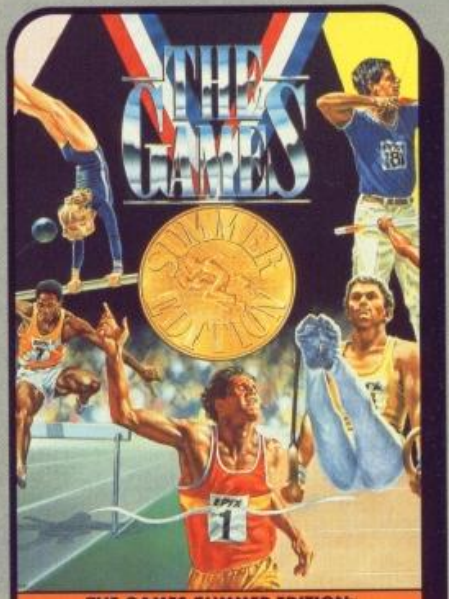
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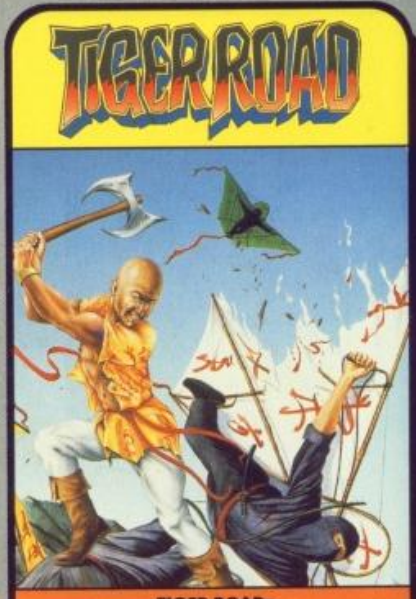




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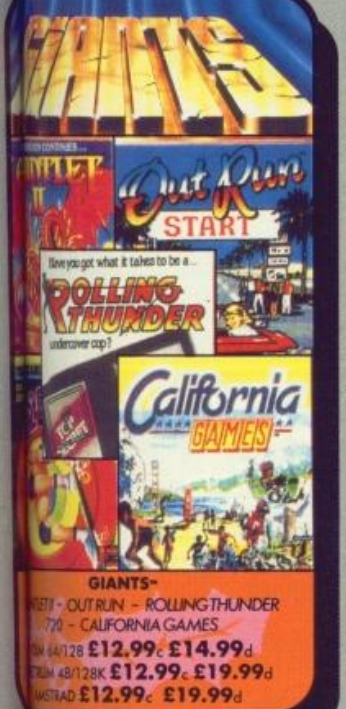


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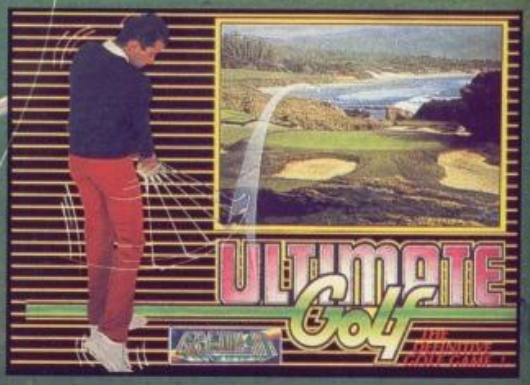
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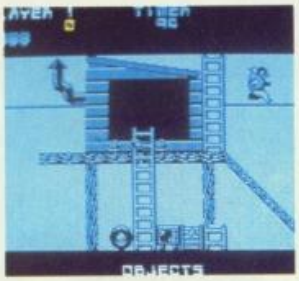
Welcome to Screen Test Supplement, the start of a whole new section within the magazine.

As this is the Christmas Special, we've crammed in extra pages of Tricks 'N' Tactics, and persuaded Phil South to provide his definitive run-down on the compilation scene this year. The budget round-up which accompanies the compilations overview will expand next year, when we'll be taking a monthly look at what is bubbling up from the world of the cheapie game.

The Screen Test Supplement will play host to Updates, as of next issue. And with the arrival of two new staffers, ACE will be able to provide the ultimate version update service. In Supplement, we'll be keeping you posted on all the updates, as they happen.

Look out for future developments in the Screen Test Supplement in 1989, and welcome to a new section in ACE!











BG

BUDGET GAMES

WE WISH YOU A... CHEAPY CHRISTMAS

Buying or receiving games as presents at this time of year used to be a hazardous process. "What cheap rubbish are they going to push on me this time?" sort of thing. But getting on the business end of some rather toothsome games is becoming cheaper, as many games have "sold through" (as they say in the video trade) to budget, increasing numbers of compilations are available containing ex-chart toppers, and more and more 16-bit budget games hit the stores. Phil South, the well known hard-nosed journalist, delves into what look to be the really good deals over the festive season, and gives us his nosy opinion...

It's quite curious how the software industry set the tone for the video revolution. The idea of budget titles was snapped up by certain smart video company bosses and the 'under-a-tenner' tape was born. But now it's come full circle and games manufacturers have seen the value of 'sell through' video. When a film has completed its main run in the cinemas it comes out on video for about 70-80 quid. A couple of months later it may well have a 'sale' price of something nearer £25 slapped on it. Finally, after it has fulfilled its 'window' at the video libraries, they rebox it and push it out for a tenner or so. Brilliant for everyone. You get a good deal, and the film companies use the income to make more films.

Now this might sound irrelevant to you as a buyer of games, but now the budget world of games is starting to creak at the seams with last year's gigagames. It's true, and it's a brilliant state of affairs. Not only do you get primo quality games for a couple of quid, but the companies who made them keep producing games for you to play in future. (On account of not going out of business!) The other noticeable thing about the year's bumper business season (you probably know it as Christmas) is the number of high quality 16-bit games which are starting to appear. Young programmers have learned how to tame the 16-bit workhorses and are rapidly cranking out as many cheap and cheerful shoot-em-ups as the average user can handle.

These trends are a good thing, especially this release craze. The games player gets first class software for a budget price, and this is good news, particularly for the first timer who has recently bought a Spectrum or a new CBM 64C and just wasn't around for the originals. People who 'collected' games – okay, STOLE them through copyright infringement – will walk out and buy legit copies of their faves just to really OWN one. And people who couldn't afford to buy a lot of games before can now catch up on the ones they missed.

So let's have a look at what's hot and what's not in the festive season – all the compilations and budget titles your little heart desires.

MASTERTRONIC

Cheapy supremo Mastertronic is launching something of an assault on the budget market this yule, with a fair selection of corking little numbers springing gaily from its various labels.

Mad X has the 8-bit releases of *Rockford* (Spec, C64 and Ams; £2.99), the Arcadia coin-op and Melbourne House 16-bit release. *Rockford* was adapted from a very popular game called *Boulder Dash*, which was brilliant on the C64 and arrived later on the Speccy about two years ago, where you dig your way through



soil, collecting gems, and try not to drop boulders on your head. A bit like life in the *ACE* office now I come to think of it.

On the Mastertronic own brand label, a number of interesting things have emerged. *Get Dexter* (ST; £14.99) was an Infogrames release, and a darling little 3D arcade adventure not unlike *Fairlight* or *Inside Outing*. You walk around a house manipulating objects to discover the dark secret. Sounds a bit like a chocolate advert to me. Very popular at the time, though. Also out now are *Majik* (Spec and C64; £1.99cs), *Sidewinder* (PC; £9.99cs) and a brand new



ELITE

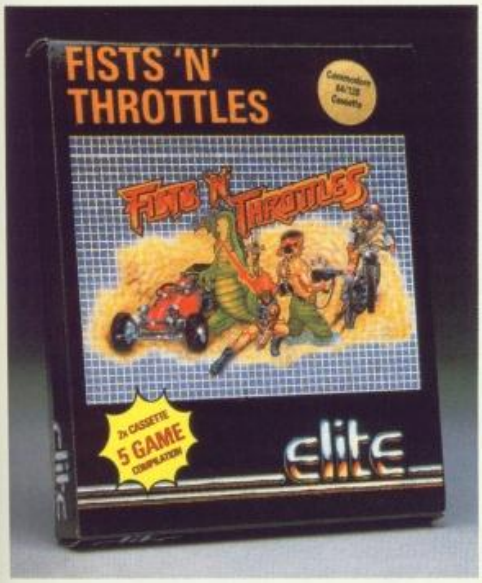
FRANK BRUNO'S BIG BOX
(Spec, C64 and Ams; £12.99cs and £17.99dk, C64 disk £14.99)

FISTS AND THROTTLES
(Spec, C64 and Ams; £12.99cs and £14.99dk)

Chief compilation station in the late eighties has to be Elite. It seems to us that it was the first firm to bring out a blockbusting compilation. Yup, leave anything lying around and they'll bung it on a tape with loads of

other big games. Literally anything that's not nailed down.

Take ***Frank Bruno's Big Box*** for example. The names sound familiar, and why not? they've been on Elite compos before, especially *Batty* and *Battleships*, and *Scooby Doo* and *1942* were already on one of its Hit Pak collections. (Who us? The same as Hit Pak? Nahhhh!!!!) Featured games on Frankie's Box are *Frank Bruno's Boxing*, *Commando*, *Scooby Doo*, *Ghosts'N'Goblins*, *Batty*, *1942*, *Airwolf*, *Bomb Jack*, *Saboteur* and *Battleships*. That's 10 originally full-priced games at 13 quid! The games haven't worn much with age. Look at *Batty*, for instance. Even on the Spectrum it's one of the best *Arkanoid* clones ever, and in a lot of ways more addictive. *Battleships* you may have seen reviewed in a couple of magazines at the time it was supposed to come out, but it never did. Elite's excuse was that it wasn't up to scratch, but how it levels that with the fact that the mags all gave it full marks I don't know. It's a reworking of the battleships game you play with pen and paper. You fire at the squares of a grid trying to guess where your opponent has placed his ships, you know the one! (Incidentally, if you see an Amiga version of this game, check it out as it's the best one of the lot!) Of the other games *1942*, *Bomb Jack*, *Ghosts'N'Goblins*, and *Commando* are fine examples of Elite's ability to spot a good coin-op license when it sees one. All four are not bad at all, although I particularly



recommend *Bomb Jack* on the Speccy, and *Ghosts'N'Goblins* on the C64. These two get my vote as past favourite games which I'd gladly play now.

Fists And Throttles isn't, as you might have thought, a purebred beat-em-up compilation, as the throttles mentioned are those on a car or bike rather than making people gargle by squeezing their necks. This is a really top flight compilation, containing *Ikari Warriors*, *Thundercats*, *Buggy Boy*, *Dragon's Lair* and *Enduro Racer*. Four coin-op conversions on this one, 900+ rated in *ACE* at the time, one of which is an ex-Activision release. *Thundercats* was also rated highly (931) and rightly so. *T'Cats* was a superb slice'n'dice game produced by star Elite contractors Roy and Greg at Gargoyle Games, who are well known for their quality gameplays and graphics. *Buggy Boy* was one of the most original driving games, and unlike so many titles there isn't much to choose between formats, although I suspect the C64 version would win by a nose.

US GOLD

GIANTS
(Spec, C64 and Ams; £12.99cs and £19.99dk, C64 disk £14.99)

HISTORY IN THE MAKING
(Spec, C64 and Ams; £24.99cs and £29.99dk)

AMIGA GOLD HITS
(Amiga only; £24.99dk)

Let's face it, if anybody's got a fair amount of good product to offer in a compilation, it's US Gold. A number of Christmas No. 1's under its belt, for sure, and ***Giants*** has most of them. This again is choc-a-bloc with coin-ops, like *Gauntlet*, *Rolling Thunder*, *720* and *OutRun*, the only fly in the ointment being *California Games*. This was hailed as the worst game of all time on certain formats, and just plain vanilla on most others. But the other crucial blockbusters in the package more than make up for *CG*'s complete lack of lustre.

Gauntlet must be one of the best-loved games of all time, in the arcades AND on the small screen. The computer version broke all sales records, and a hail of clones ensued, surely the highest honour for any computer game (imitation being the sincerest, if unwelcome, form of flattery!). *720* and *Rolling Thunder* had their moments, and to some the Spectrum versions were the best players, oddly enough, but by far the hottest property of all time in the software biz is *OutRun*. Although US Gold is attempting the same degree of hype and build up with this year's Sega licence, *Thunder Blade* (they might succeed, and why not?), nothing can really match the excitement of last year's *OutRun* fever. EVERYONE wanted the game, and most of them bought it. I have a sneaking suspicion that this isn't the last we'll see of it either. US Gold spent too much money on it to let it just die away. I feel a budget release coming on before it finally croaks.

History In The Making is the most extraordinary compilation, featuring an incredible 15 games. The collection purports to be a potted history of the great label. What it is in fact is a REALLY good excuse to flog off almost every success it has had, persuading almost everyone with a computer to fork out huge wads of cash. It has got some impressive titles on it: *Leaderboard*, *Express Raider*, *Impossible Mission*, *Super Cycle*, *Gauntlet*, *Beach Head*, *Beach Head II*, *Infiltrator*, *Kung Fu Masters*, *Spy Hunters*, *Road Runner*, *Bruce Lee*, *Goonies*, *World Games*, and *Raid*. Some of these are a bit creaky in the light of today's widespread sophistication, but for the most part they're still playable. And some of them are complete stunners; *Impossible Mission* remains an all-time favourite of mine, as do *Leaderboard* and the *Beach Head* twins. But there are also some unexpected pleasures, like *Spy Hunter*, which is an early vertically scrolling shoot-em-up, based on a coin-op I believe. *Spy Hunter*, although a bit of a throwback technically, is brilliant fun to play and, for those of us who vaguely remember it the first time around, a nostalgic experience.

Your basic Amiga nut could do severely worse than try a go at ***Amiga Gold Hits***. *Bionic Commandos*, *Rolling Thunder*, *Jinks* and *Leaderboard*... AGAIN! For my money the good feature about this one is the inclusion of *Rolling Thunder*, one of my favourite games in the slotty arcade, and the Amiga conversion being one of the most accurate in existence, if a little slow at times. There isn't really the space to look at

BG... home-grown thingy called *Star Farce* (Spec; £1.99cs), described by Andy 'Flathead' Wright as "a budget shoot-em-up hit for Christmas", but then again he would, as it's his baby.

But by far the best stuff to be had from Mastertronic is on the Ricochet label. *Little Computer People* (Amiga; £14.99dk) was originally an Activision release, the idea being that you have a little person living in your computer whom you feed and entertain to keep him alive. Well weird, but enormous laffs. *Jet Set Willy* (Spec, C64 and Ams; £1.99cs) must be the longest running game in the history of computing. This was the second game I ever bought, and must be the one I've played most over the years, if you took all the sessions and laid them end to end. *Rock-'N'Bolt* and *X15 Alpha Mission* (both C64; £1.99cs) are a pair of Activision refugees which came

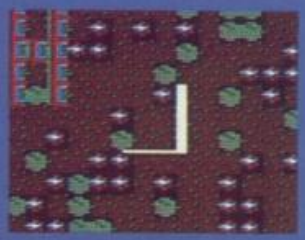


out around two years ago, in what I believe was Activision's golden era. Remember *Ghostbusters* and *Web Dimension*? And *Mindshadow* (Spec, C64 and Ams; £1.99. Amiga and ST; £14.99dk) too! This was state of the art adventure stuff – well, at the time anyway. We've come on a bit since then. And finally *Knightmare* (Spec, C64 and Ams; £1.99) last year's release based on the slightly odd TV maze series.

ZEPPELIN
This newcomer to the budget game, known to its friends as Dirigiblesoft, is positively over-



BG... flowing with new products. They have *Las Vegas Casino* (Spec, C64 and Ams; £2.99) featuring Baccarat,



Craps, Roulette and Blackjack. *Jocky Wilson's Dart Challenge* (Spec, C64 and Ams; £2.99) includes round the clock, straight competition and playing against a human player. Unfortunately there are no beer tokens or strap-on belly included in the game, so you'll have to supply those. The only other £2.99 releases on its catalogue are the plan view, scrolling *Rally Simulator* (Spec C64 and Ams; £2.99), *Para Assault Course* (Spec, C64 and Ams; £2.99) and *Zybex* (Spec; £2.99). For £1.99 on C64 only, they have *Terrafighter* and *Master Blaster* plus *Battletank Simulator* on the Spec and Amstrad. The other title which could bear some scrutiny, if only for the name, is *Bionic Ninja* (Spec, C64 and Ams; £1.99). Really, the mind boggles.

RACK-IT

Hewson's Rack-It label has scored a good few points by re-running FTL's back catalogue, with the scrolling shoot-em-up *Lightforce*, the aquatic arcade/adventure *Hydrofool*, plus the highly original beat-em-up *Shockway Rider*. All these titles are Spectrum C64 and Amstrad, and should be chunked out at £2.99. *Lightforce* was something of a celebrity on the Spectrum, as it was one of the first Spectrum games which had full colour sprites and backgrounds. (OK so *Dark Sceptre* had them, and big sprites too,



but can YOU stay awake long enough to see them?) *Hydrofool* was one of the better games that Roy and Greg did, and as an iso-all the US Gold compilations, and there are hundreds of them, but check out the listings at the end for details of all of them.

OCEAN IMAGINE

THE IN CROWD
(Spec, C64 and Ams; £12.95cs)

5 STAR
(ST only; £24.95dk)



TAITO COIN-OP HITS
(Spec, C64, Ams; £12.95cs and £17.95dk)

Two from the Ocean label and one from the once proud software house, now mere cypher label, Imagine. One of the very hottest compilations out now is *The In Crowd*, which apart from being an ancient and excellent Brian Ferry tune is also Ocean's compilation flagship this year. Firstly there's *Barbarian* (Maria's chubbies version), *Crazy Cars*, *Karnov*, *Gryzor*, *Predator*, *Combat School*, *Target: Renegade*, and *Platoon*. A good 80 quid's worth of games just one year ago, and now you can get them for £13! My personal favourite on this list must be *Target: Renegade*, the best beat-em-up I've ever played, and the only game I ever stayed up all night trying to beat on the C64. *Platoon* I found a bit disappointing, but having to produce a war game which doesn't glorify war is a bit of a tough brief, so it's only to be expected I suppose.

5 Star is a compilation which has appeared on other formats, but only now have ST games been out long enough to bundle them. *Barbarian* (once again the Palace or Maria Whittaker version), *Crazy Cars*, *Enduro Racer*, *Wizball*, and *Rampage*. These are really hot properties too, but strangely only one is an Ocean game! The others are by Palace, Titus (no jokes please!) and a pair of Activisions, in that order.



But you see there is a new rule in the compilation game (Awright my loves?) and that is: it doesn't even have to be your own games, as long as they sold moderately well, then they're fair game, see?

Predictably enough, *Barbarian* sold huge mounds of copies, mainly, it's thought, due to Maria's huge mounds on the cover. Although it was received with a certain amount of critical disappointment, the game ran and ran in the charts, and hints and tips were flying back and forth to mags for months afterwards. Of the other games on **5 Star**, the only slightly dubious title is *Rampage*. I dunno – some people really liked this coin-op jobby, but I can't say it ever really grabbed me. Best game on this one has to be *Enduro Racer*, but then again I like road racing games so that was inevitable.

Taito has had its fair share of coin-op conversions, and to prove it Imagine has whacked a load of them on one tape, including *Rastan*, *Slap Fight*, *Renegade*, *Arkanoid*, *Flying Shark*, *Arkanoid II: Revenge Of Doh*, *Bubble Bobble* and the *Legend Of Kage*. This collection gets the vote as second best buy, on account of being choc-a-bloc with chart toppers, none of which have really aged at all – they still play better than a lot of current releases. There isn't much to choose between formats either, with the Spectrum versions being as fast and playable as the more colourful Commodore and Amstrad programs. *Bubble Bobble*, rated 958 in Issue 1 of *ACE* by the way, was a wacky old game in the arcades, and I would have to admit to rating this over all the more obvious hits on the tape as the most addictive by far.

BEAU JOLLY

SUPREME CHALLENGE
(Spec, C64 and Ams; £12.95cs and £16.95dk)

COMPUTER HITS
(Spec, C64 and Ams; £12.95cs and £16.95dk. ST and Amiga soon)

Taking its lead from the record biz, Beau Jolly has been doing the Now That's What I Call Software game for some time. While not actually producing any software, they are adept at blagging other companies to let them produce compilations on their behalf. And so **Supreme Challenge** contains *Elite*, *Tetris*, *Starglider*, *Sentinel*, and *ACE 2*, a very strong line-up indeed. If this doesn't qualify as the best games for the least money, then my nose is a carrot. Getting hold of just *Elite* and *Starglider* 8-bit versions would be a major coup in itself, but top that off with the maddeningly addictive *Tetris*, the incredible flight/combat sim *ACE 2*, and the mind-bending *Sentinel*, this is a world-beating compilation. Anyone who doesn't agree with this must be dead from the joystick up. If you don't buy any other 8-bit games this yuletide, buy this collection. *Sentinel* is pretty odd, but it has to be the most original game of the last year. With its unique 3D perspective and surreal landscapes, it rates with me as best game of this compilation. (Hey, that means it's the best game on the best compilation! Ohh.)

And to prove that I can get even more excited without exploding or needing the assistance of a box of man-size tissues, there's **Computer Hits**... Hmm, OK so not many utterly brilliant games on this one, but there are lots of 'em. On all formats there's *Enlightenment: Druid II*, *Ninja Hamster*, *Tarzan*, *Mega Apocalypse* and *Master Of The Nile*. On the


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BG... metric arcade adventure had huge mounds of things to recommend it – not least of which are the hilarious graphics and animation. Not only that but some really stunning puzzles. Highly recommended.

CODEMASTERS
Never without at least ten new titles a week, Those Darling Boys, aka Codemasters, have got a goodly wedge of stuff too. *International Rugby Simulator* (Spec, C64, Ams; £2.99. ST; £19.99dk) for a start, with some very splendid graphics on the ST, *Pro Ski Simulator* (Amiga only; £19.99dk) finally on the 16 blitter, *BMX Freestyle* (Spec and Ams; £2.99cs) a bit like *ATV Sim*, but with more things to do, *Ninja Massacre* (Ha ha ha ha... er Spec, C64 and Ams; £2.99cs) as the ultimate *Gauntlet* clone, it sez here, the freshly renamed *SAS Combat Simulator* (Spec and Ams; £2.99cs), a yeti beat-em-up called *Bigfoot* (Spec and Ams; £2.99cs), *Skateboard Simulator* (Spec and Ams; £2.99cs) – of course, why didn't we think of that – and *Deathstalker* (Spec and Ams; £2.99cs) a super little arcade adventure of the slice'n'dice persuasion.

KIXX
A trio of ex-Gremlin and one US Gold releases – *Footballer Of The Year* (Spec, C64 and Ams;



£2.99cs), *Krakout* (Spec, C64 and Ams; £2.99cs), *Way Of The Tiger* (Spec, C64, Ams, MSX, BBC and C16; £2.99cs) and finally and most significantly *Leaderboard* (Spec, C64 and Ams; £2.99cs)! Considering that you can buy *Leaderboard* on a number of compilations, check C64 there's also *Traz*, *Samauri Warrior*, *Morpheus*, *Frightmare* and *Magnetron*. Spectrum versions carry copies of *Frightmare* and *Traz*, Amstrad versions have *Boggit*, *Activator* and *Endurance*, and both Spectrum and Amstrad versions contain extra added *Dark Sceptre* and *Catch 23*. OK, so I said they weren't all that stunning. They're good games, but standing alongside the ***Supreme Challenge*** they look pretty pale indeed.

GREMLIN GRAPHICS

10 GREAT GAMES
(Spec, C64 and Ams; £12.99cs and £14.99dk)



SPACE ACE
(Spec, C64 and Ams; £12.99cs and £14.99dk)

FLIGHT ACE
(Spec, C64 and Ams; £14.99cs and £17.99dk)

Big games, big compilations, that's fruity old Gremlin. It turns out that the company is re-releasing every game it ever made on three mega compilations. ***10 Great Games*** contains *Leaderboard*, *10th Frame*, *Last Mission*, *Rana Rama*, *Firelord* and *Fighter Pilot* on all formats. On the Speccy and Amstrad there's *Rocca*, *Impossaball*, *City Slicker* and *Dragontorc*, and on the C64 there's *Rebounder*, *Iridis Alpha*, *Eagles* and *Alley Kat*. Something for everyone, I think you'll agree. I must declare a fondness for *Leaderboard* and Jeffy Minter's *Iridis Alpha* on the the 64, and *Impossaball* on the Spectrum – these make it worth checking out ***10 Greats*** on their own.

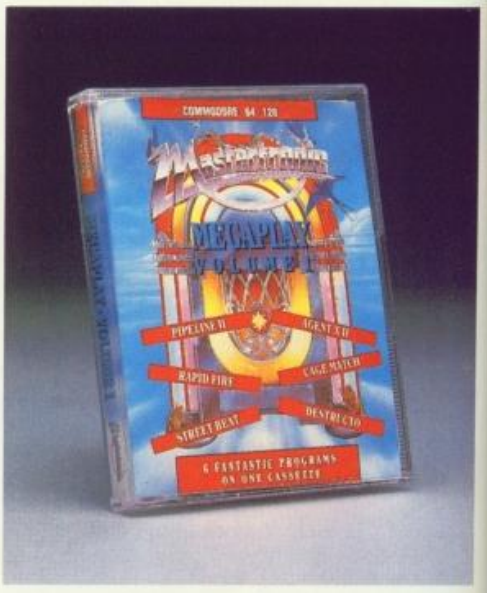
Space Ace is a collection of loosely Sci-fi based games like *Cybernoid*, *Northstar*, *Zynaps*, *Trantor*, *Exolon*, *Venom Strikes Back* and *Xevious*. *Trantor* is a pretty hot little number, not entirely removed from Probe's last job called *Savage*, I think you'll find! Fast and furious and worth a look. *Cybernoid*, *Zynaps* and *Exolon*'s reputations precede them, of course, and certainly guarantee good sales for this one.

Flight Ace is, as you'd expect, wriggling with flight sims, including *ACE*, *Spitfire 40*, *Air Traffic Control*, *Tomahawk*, *Strike Force Harrier* and *ATF*. Now then! *ATF* was a pretty amazing game, and rated huge mounds of points everywhere. It's a cross between a flight sim and an arcade game, with gripping graphics and an action-packed gameplay. You can skim the surface of the play area in the terrain-following mode, which is an exciting way of avoiding enemy radar, as any cruise missile will tell you. *Spitfire 40* was something of an award winner for its graphics at the time, as I recall, and they are impressive, especially on the C64. Makes you want to grow a moustache and say 'Chocks away, Ginger' and stuff like that. Check it out, Wing Commander.

MASTERTRONIC

MEGAPLAY
(Spec, C64 and Ams; £9.99cs. BBC version to follow)

Unsurprisingly from the home of the Budget Burger, all the titles on the Mastertronic compilation are ex-budget games themselves, more of the £2.99 class than £1.99 as I recall. The games on the C64 version



are *Pipeline II*, *Agent X II*, *Rapid Fire*, *Cage Match*, *Street Beat* (previously called *Ghetto Blaster* or something, wasn't it?) and *Destructo*. Most of these games come from the pre-*ACE* days that time forgot, all that is except *Agent X II*, which in Issue 4 rated a 616. On the Spectrum and Amstrad it's *Agent X II*, *Destructo*, *Zub*, *Rasterscan*, *Curse Of Sherwood*, and *180*. A bit of a ho hum selection really, and apart from the impressive and amazingly programmed *Zub*, a couple of quid too expensive.

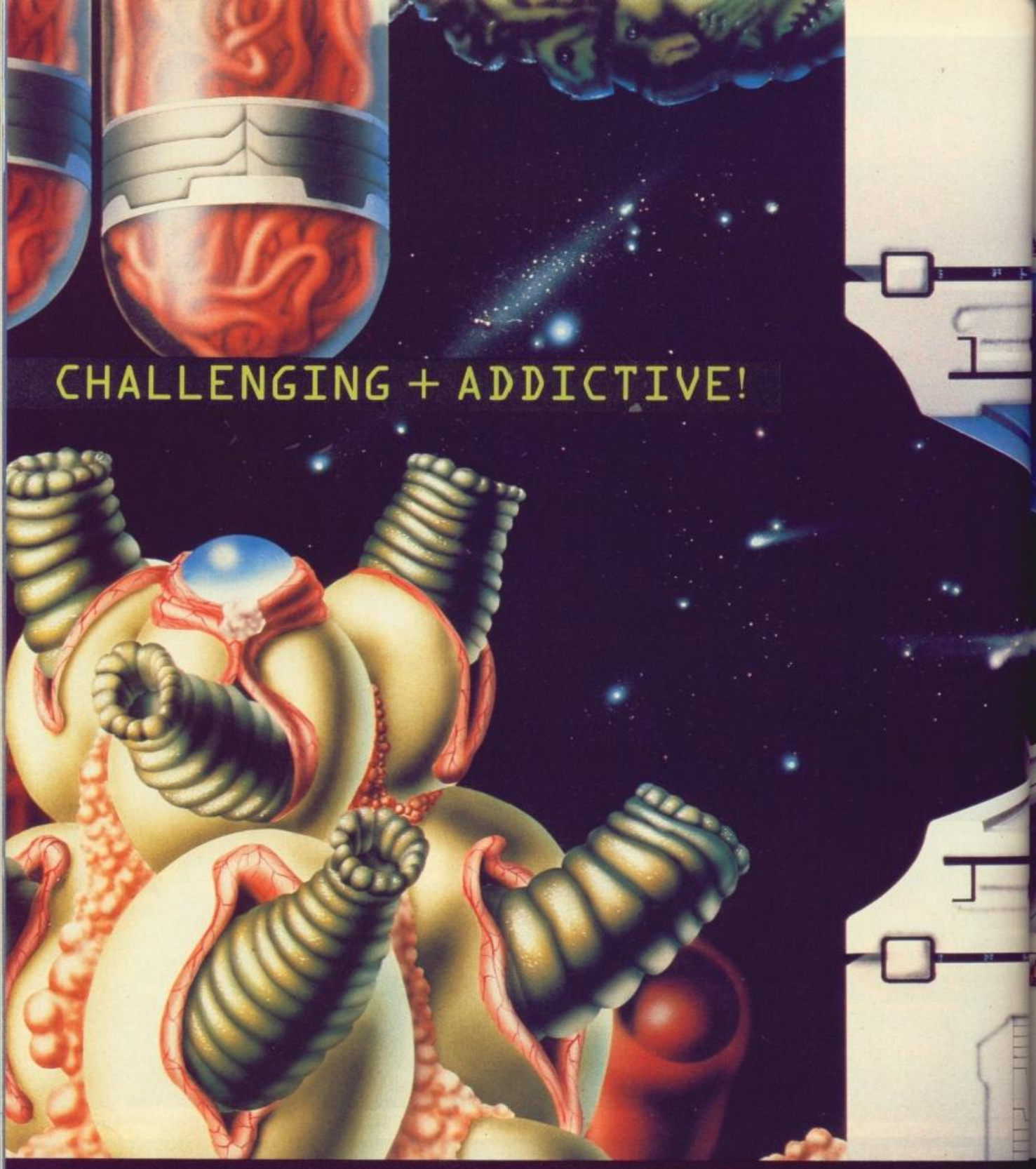
MIRRORSOFT

TRIAD
(ST, Amiga; £29.99dk)

A truly blockbusting trio of games here. If you didn't buy them the first time around, then you must now. *Starglider* was THE Amiga and ST game for a couple of years, and if you haven't heard of it you must have had your head in a bucket of sand for the last 18 months. After *Starglider* had made its impact and left to storm America, Cinemaware's *Defender Of The Crown* knocked the spots off of EVERYBODY'S boxer shorts, and was hailed as the perfect Amiga game. This is mostly due to the superbly drawn graphics, and owes nothing to the gameplay, which to my mind is just a little simplistic. Psygnosis' *Barbarian* was a peculiar little beat-em-up, which was also praised for its presentation, but gamewise it always struck me as


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Commodore 64 screen shots shown



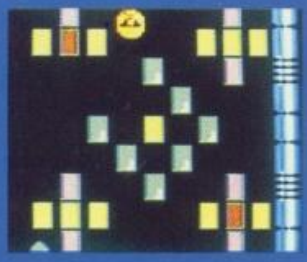
Spectrum screen shots shown

Available on Commodore 64/128 cassette (£9.99) and disk (£14.99), Spectrum (£9.99), Amstrad cassette (£9.99) and disk (£14.99), Atari ST (£19.99) and on Amiga (£24.99).

ELECTRIC DREAMS SOFTWARE

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BG... them out and see whether you'd like what it's teamed with. It is THE golf game, and if you don't have it, I suggest you avoid embarrassment by nipping



down the shop and getting it today. *Way of the Tiger* isn't bad at all, and rates with me as one of the more interesting martial arts games of the last two years. And let's face it, there have been a few quite doppy ones.

SILVERBIRD

Telecomsoft has a wedge of games that would choke a bison, not that I've tested this you understand. Firstly there's *International Speedway* (Spec, C64 and Ams; £1.99). This is a super race game which allows you to play with dirtbikes without having your neck broken, or being splattered from head to trainers in mud. You race against four other bikes and go though local competitions up to International level. *Motorcross Mania* (C64 only; £1.99), is a multiload race game which not only presents you with different hazards, but also gives you better and better bikes to choose from. *Scuba Kidz* (Spec, C64, Ams and MSX; £1.99), as well as being the 900,000th Telecomsoft release ending in a Z, is your search to rescue the nippers from the Evil Sea Lord's undersea cave. Kwar! There are eight treacherous, evil and cruel caves to navigate, and watch out for the nifty shark disguise! But the funniest release has to be *Billboard* (Spec, C64 and Ams; £1.99). Silverbird's great tradition of puzzle games, (*Huh? Ed*) puts you on a ladder on a billboard, piecing together puzzle pictures which have been split into bits, from 4 to 64 pieces depending on the level. It's your task to fit them all together again. Brill.

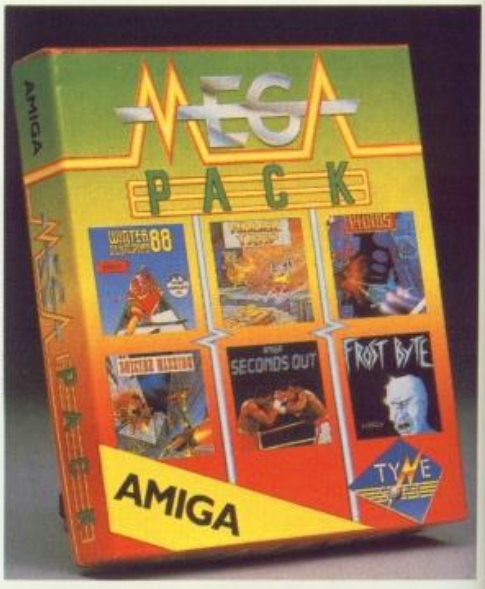


being repetitive. Having said that, we are talking some very ritzy looking games. If you like strategy games, then try before you buy is my advice. They do look very good on the monitor, and will certainly impress your 8-bit owning chums.

TYNESOFT

MEGAPACK
(ST and Amiga; £24.95dk)

One of the few other 16-bit compilations worth looking at is Tynesoft's festive collection, containing *Winter Olympiad, Mousetrap, Plutos, Seconds Out, Frost Byte*, and a previously unreleased game called *Suicide Mission*. On the ST the unreleased game is something called *Blood Fever*. *Winter Olympiad* didn't score over-well in the issue of *ACE* (around the 500-600 mark) but the graphics weren't bad at all. Although nothing different as a sports game, it will doubtless please fans of this genre.



COMPILATIONS AT A GLANCE

MASTERTRONIC

● **MEGAPLAY** (Spec, CBM, Ams. £9.99cs. Out soon on BBC.)
PIPELINE II, AGENT X II, RAPID FIRE, CAGE MATCH, STREET BEAT, DESTRUCTO

(On the Spectrum and Amstrad:)
AGENT X II, DESTRUCTO, ZUB, RASTERSCAN, CURSE OF SHERWOOD, and 180.)

US GOLD

● **GIANTS** (Spec, CBM, Ams. £12.99cs, £19.99dk. ex CBM £14.99dk.)
GAUNTLET, ROLLING THUNDER, CALIFORNIA GAMES, 720, OUTRUN

● **HISTORY IN THE MAKING** (CBM, Spec, Ams; £24.99cs, £29.99dk)
LEADERBOARD, EXPRESS RAIDER, IMPOSSIBLE MISSION, SUPER CYCLE, GAUNTLET, BEACH HEAD, BEACH HEAD II, INFILTRATOR, KUNG FU MASTERS, SPY HUNTER, ROAD RUNNER, BRUCE LEE, GOONIES, WORLD GAMES, RAID

● **AMIGA GOLD HITS** (Amiga only; £24.99dk)
BIONIC COMMANDOS, ROLLING THUNDER, JINKS, LEADERBOARD

● **SPORTSWORLD 88** (C64 only; £12.99cs and £14.99dk)
CHAMPIONSHIP WRESTLING, 10th FRAME, HARDBALL, LEADERBOARD, 4th & INCHES, SNOOKER and POOL, GO FOR GOLD, WATERPOLO

● **COMMAND PERFORMANCE** (Spec, C64 and Ams; £12.99cs and £14.99dk)
MERCENARY, HARDBALL, ARMAGEDON MAN, LEVIATHAN, BOBSLEIGH, SHACKLED, TRANTOR, CHOLO, XENO, 10th FRAME

● **TASTE OF AMERICA** (C64 only; £9.99cs)
SIDE ARMS, SOLOMON'S KEY, WORLD CLASS LEADERBOARD, SUPER CYCLE

● **GO CRAZY** (Spec, C64 and Ams; £14.99cs and £17.99dk)
SHACKLED, BAD CAT, JINKS, SIDEARMS, DESOLATOR, BEDLAM (Spectrum version contains: MISSION ELEVATOR, THUNDERCEPTOR, FAST'N'FURIOUS, DESOLATOR, SIDEARMS and SHACKLED)

● **EPYX ON PC II (PC** only; £19.99dk. 3.5" version £24.99dk)
WORLD GAMES, IMPOSSIBLE MISSION II, STREET SPORTS BASKETBALL

ACTIVE DISTRIBUTION

● **EAS COMPILATION** (Amiga only; 2 disks £9.95dk)
MOTORCYCLE RACING, BREAKOUT CLONE, CAR RACING GAME

MIRRORSOFT

● **TRIAD** (ST, Amiga; £29.99dk)
STARGLIDER, DEFENDER OF THE CROWN, BARBARIAN (US)

GREMLIN GRAPHICS

● **10 GREAT GAMES** (Spec, C64 and Ams; £12.99cs and £14.99dk)
LEADERBOARD, 10th FRAME, LAST MISSION, RANA RAMA, FIRELORD (on all formats); ROCCA, IMPOSSABALL, CITY SLICKER, DRAGONTORC (on the Spectrum and Amstrad); REBOUNDER, IRIDIS ALPHA, EAGLES , ALLEY KAT (On the 64)

● **SPACE ACE** (Spec, C64 and Ams; £12.99cs and £14.99dk)
CYBERNOID, NORTHSTAR, ZYNAPS, TRANTOR, EXOLON, VENOM STRIKES BACK, XEVIOUS

● **FLIGHT ACE** (Spec, C64 and Ams; £14.99cs and £17.99dk)
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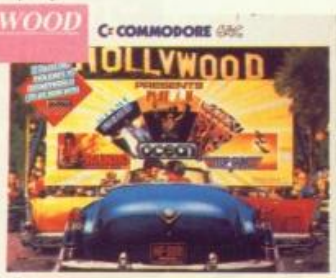
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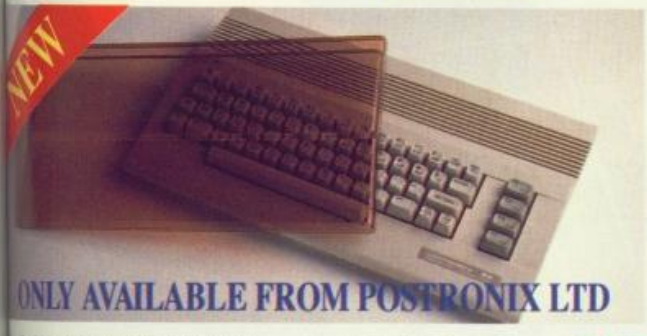
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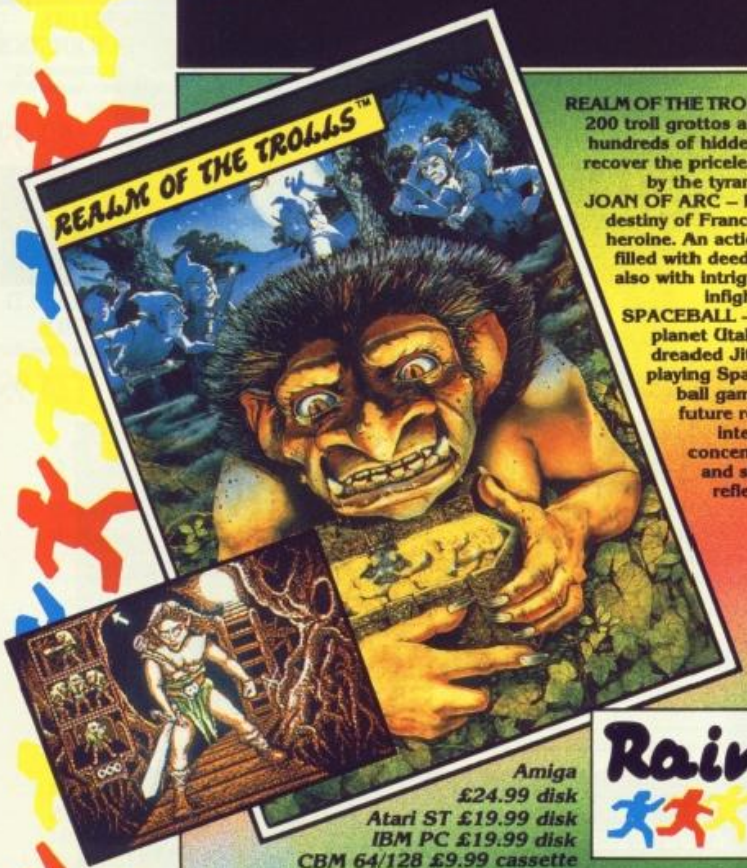
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Okay, it's the last issue of 1988, so it's time to do something a little special. We had a chat with the man who wrote POWERDROME, and as a result can bring some performance-improving tips from the author himself. Baffled by BOMBUZAL? Tony Crowther, designer of more than a few of the tortuous levels, gives part of the inside story on defusing explosives, with a few tips thrown in by the man in the Mirrorsoft office who gets away with spending most of his day in front of Bombuzal: Mark Jordan.

And to get into the New Year with a bang, we've decided to give away £150 of software to the sender of Tip of the Month, starting with the January Issue. Five more tipsters stand a chance of collecting the game of their choice every month too – so in between dealing with the turkey and mince pies this year, get going! Happy Christmas, and have a TIppy New Year!

BOMBUZAL



■ Tony Crowther (above) and Mirrorsoft's Mark Jordan give us the benefit of their inside knowledge, in the form of a dozen quick hints...

An easy way to complete a level is to blow up all the bombs on the level first, and see which squares remain undamaged. These are the squares the player should aim to finish on.

Study the map of each level carefully before trying to complete the level.

When attempting to detonate a pulsing bomb, pick it up, as it is easier to see the bomb's size when it is held up.

Remember that when you are teleporting a droid, you are impervious to the effects of the monsters on the levels.

When teleporting from square to square you are invulnerable to explosions.

Switches have three phases: Phase 1=SET. Phase 2=ON. Phase 3=OFF. Phase 1 can never be reversed after a switch has been operated.

When teleporting, the explosions occur before you teleport, so if you're teleporting onto a mine, it will be destroyed before you get there, provided the square is in the blast radius and is riveted.

On the ST and Amiga versions of *Bombuzal* the mouse makes the game even more difficult and should only be used by experienced players.

When dealing with more than one nasty, try to kill them off as quickly as possible: use the dissolving squares and switches to make the squares disappear beneath them.

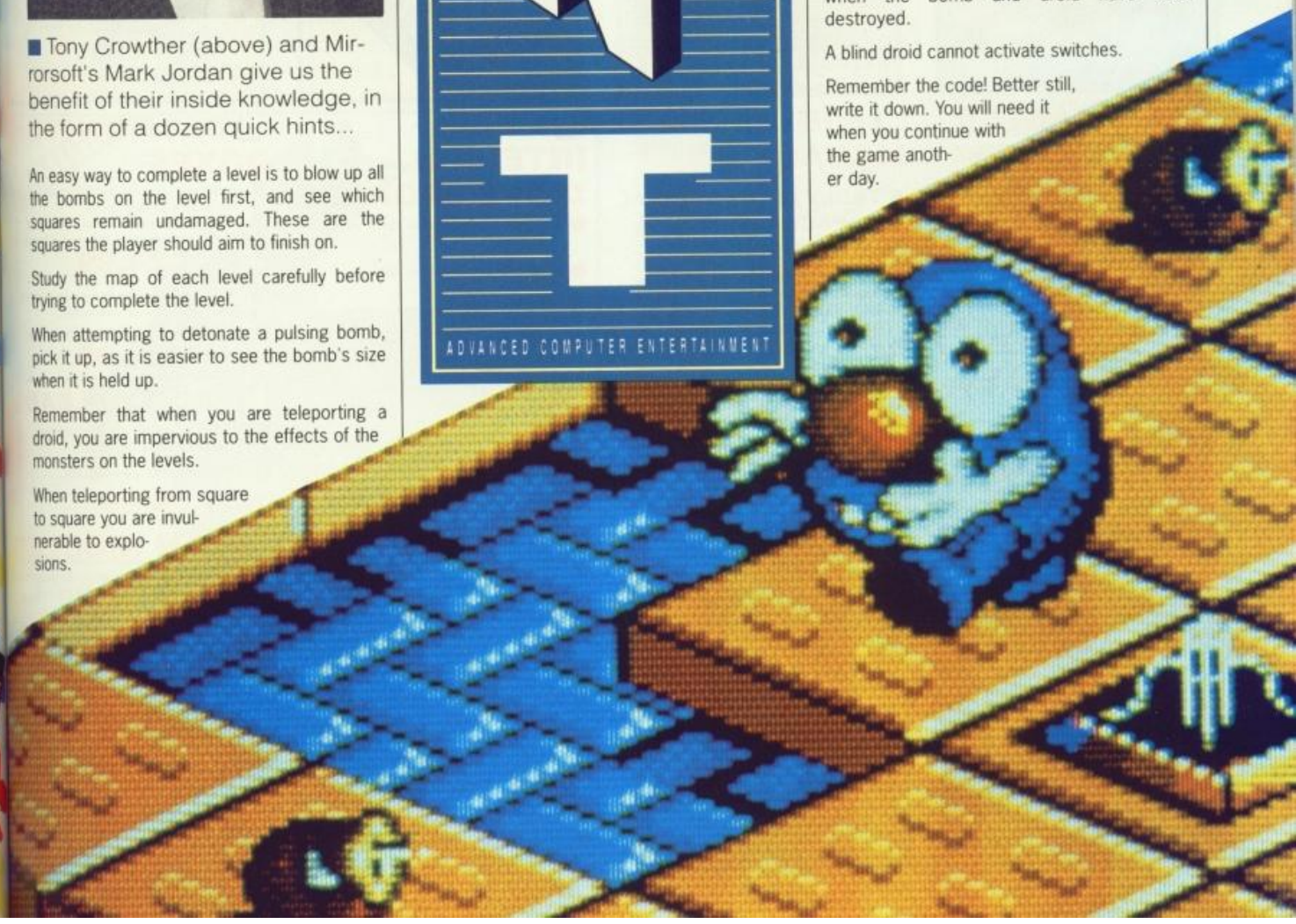
When using sighted droids you may activate switches, but when the bomb blows up the droid will die. Also, if you try to move the droid away from the bomb you will move when the bomb and droid have been destroyed.

A blind droid cannot activate switches.

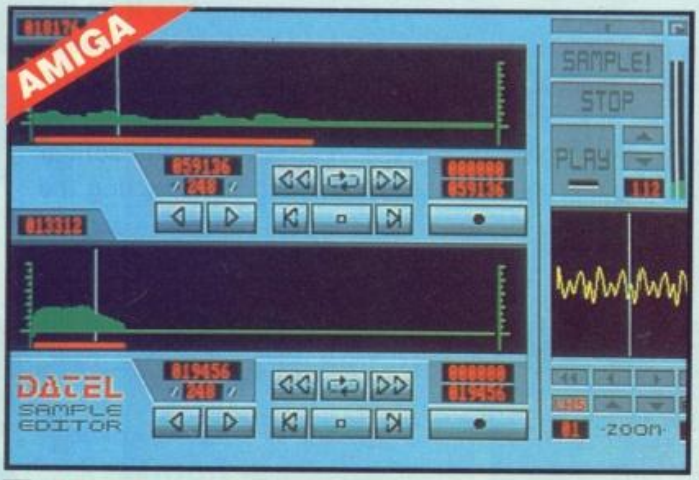
Remember the code! Better still, write it down. You will need it when you continue with the game another day.







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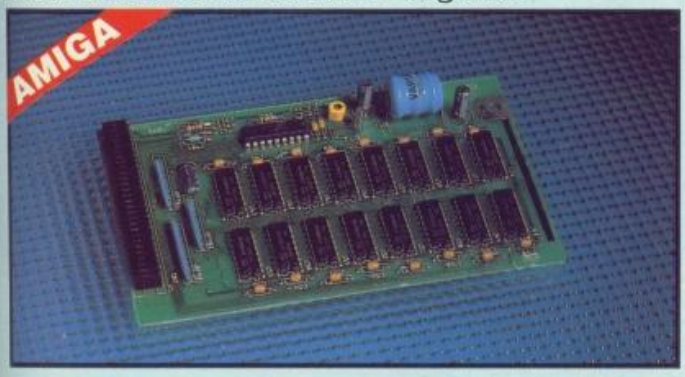
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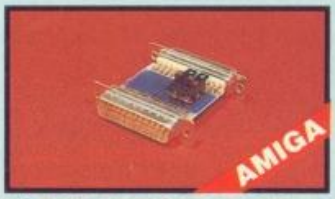


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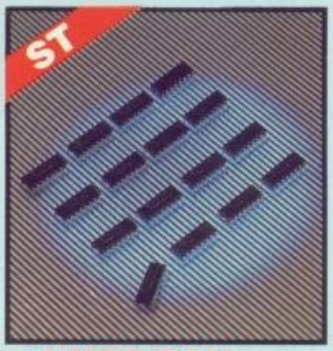
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POWER

If anyone out there knows how to get the best out of POWERDROME, it is almost certainly the man who wrote it: Mike Powell. So if you're driving the Typhoon more like a Morris Minor at the moment, check out what Mike has to say, slip on those driving gloves, grab a joystick and see if you can better the Master's personal best lap timings...



FLYING YOUR TYPHOON

Powerdrome, more so than most race games, requires a certain amount of practice before you can play it well. When a player first starts, the mouse could well appear very sensitive. It has to be like this for the harder twisty tracks, where you might want to go from full left bank to full right in 1/10th of a second. The joystick is a little easier for beginners, but for precision and fast direction changes, you have to use the mouse.

First of all, scale down the elevator response on the tune-up screen. If you still find yourself smashing into every available hard surface, turn the y-lock option on in the pits. After maybe a quarter of an hour on the oval track you should be getting the hang of it, and can increase the sensitivity.







FAST CORNERING

To turn the Typhoon, all you do is bank over. However, this isn't the fastest possible turn rate. To achieve this, first of all get the craft flipped nearly at right angles, then pull back on the mouse, using your elevators effectively as a rudder.

Use the racing line. Just as on ground-based racing, the fastest line through a corner is from the outside of the track to the inside and back to the outside as the curve ends. In this way you straighten out the turn as much as possible. In three dimensions it is a little harder to do, but the principle is the same. When on an outside section of the track, fly as close as possible to the sky force field – not only is it less damaging than hitting the ground but the track is wider at that height.

Going into an underground section is one of the most difficult manoeuvres to get right in *Powerdrome*, but also one of the most satisfying when you can get it right. The fastest way is not to brake at all but to flip the racer on its back and pull back. Then roll through 180 degrees with the natural curve of the track and pull back again.

SAFE AFTERBURNING

You won't get a really fast lap without using afterburners. However, only use them when pointing straight or you could have a bad day. Overheating engines is a problem, mainly on the test oval with its four long straights, so keep an eye on the temperature gauges; if you blow an engine it cancels out any time you might have made up.

FILTER CHANGES

When a storm is brewing up, the decision must be made as to whether to go into the pits and change filters. Weigh up how many laps are left – do you need a fuel/repair stop anyway? You can take a chance and continue without changing, but the storm may be a lot longer than you thought.

FUEL USAGE

Try to judge which type of fuel to use depending on the track you're about to race on. If you're really good on that particular track, use

THE WAY TP

Premium for maximum speed. If it's one of your weaker tracks, though, use Economy as the extra speed will probably only make you crash more often. The race length matters too; on a short one a pit stop near the end of the race may mean the difference between first and last.

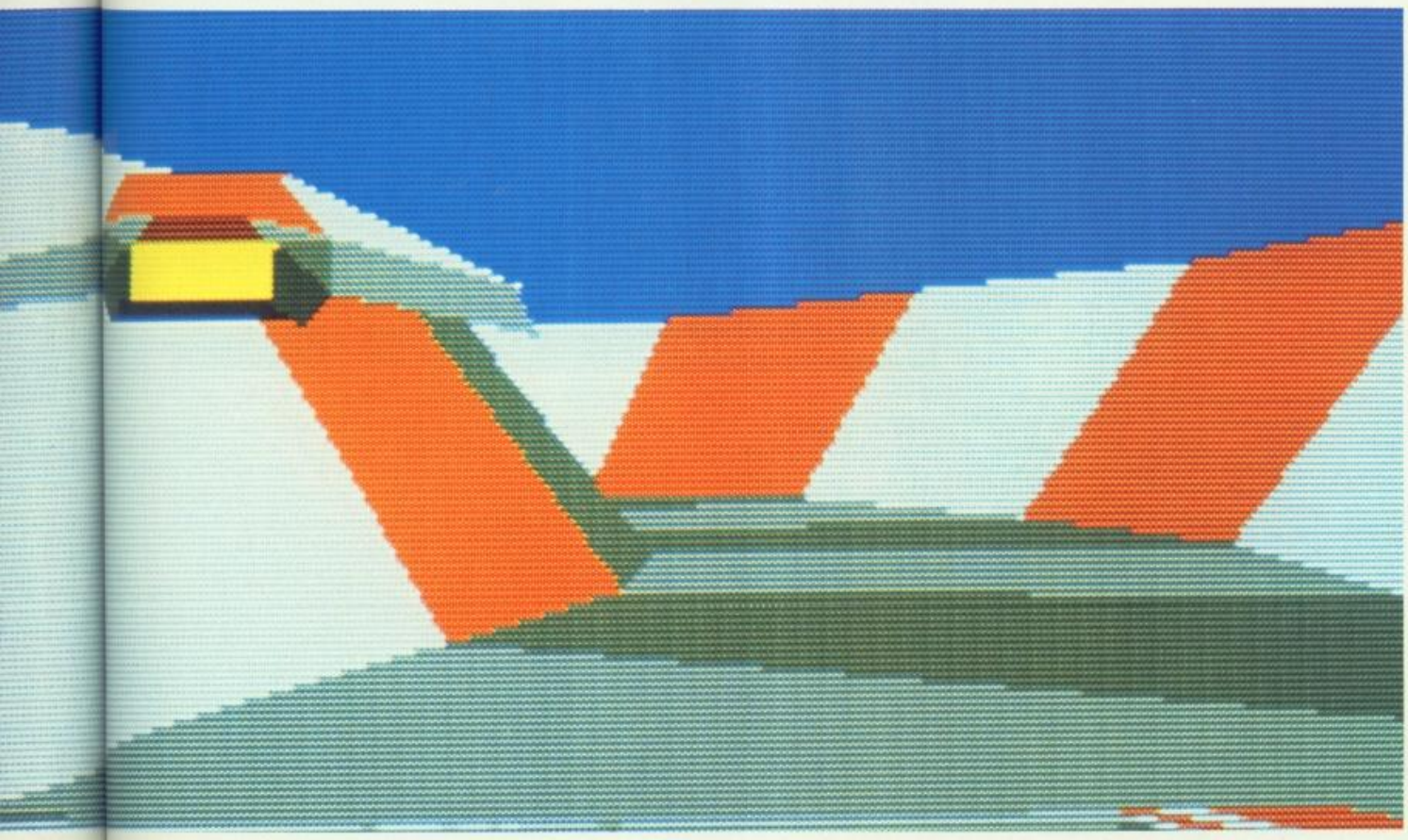
RACE TACTICS

The fastest way to enter the RoboPit is to scream down the pit lane and, timing it just right, cut the engines before you reach your pit. Alternatively, if you're going way too fast to slow down in time, smash into the nearest available wall.

DAMAGE REPAIR

If it's nearly the end of the race, don't bother to get repairs done, just try and limp round. If you have to go in the pits for fuel though, just changing the nosecone costs no extra time. Find out your lead time just before you go in, you then have an idea of what you can change.

RDROME



TO PLAY ACCORDING TO MIKE POWELL.

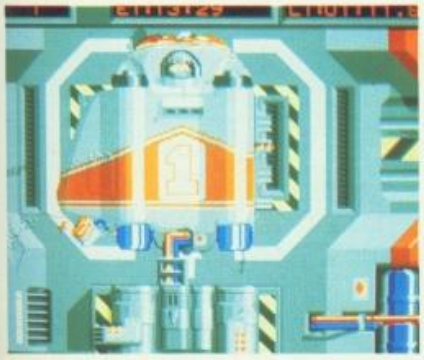
TRACK TIPS

Test Oval. No real secret to this one – just use as much afterburner as you can, short of trashing your engines.

My best lap: 11.24 secs

AntarCorp. Very narrow underground section, so try and stay in the middle of the track. Vertical underground chicane can be taken flat out – just.

My best lap: 53.17 secs



Clorotek. Entry to underground section is difficult as it's just after a right curve. Use the flip upside down technique. The section from underground exit to start line should be flown with judicious use of afterburners.

My best lap: 38.35 secs

Otyaka. This darkened underground section is difficult at first, but not as hard as it seems when you know which way the track goes. After you come out onto the surface again, the section from the exit of the right-hand hairpin to the start can be taken flat out, but only if you get your line exactly right through the series of chicanes.

My best lap: 56.58 secs

Banzai. This is probably the hardest of the six tracks. Mono Standard fuel is usually the best choice here as it is difficult to use the extra speed of Nitra. Slow down to half speed for the dip under the track as a crash here can cost a lot of time.

My best lap: 59.18 secs

Apocalyt. The very tight hairpin (third corner from the start) should be taken about 30% speed. Alternatively, if you're not too damaged already, scream straight into the corner and smash into the wall to lose the speed. The underground loop takes some practice. Use very gentle corrections on the mouse – if you crash here, it's difficult to build up speed again.

My best lap: 38.90 secs

DATALINK MODE

If you know someone with an ST, get together and play against them in Datalink Mode. For the satisfaction of beating someone you know it's worth the small cost of a cable. If one of you is a lot better than the other, you can introduce handicaps by, say, the fast one using the slowest fuel and no afterburners. If there's several of you, have a knockout competition.

LAST NINJA 2

■ To get things rolling, here's how to complete the first level on the Spectrum.

From the starting room, go behind the curtain and punch the wall box that flashes as you enter. Return to the first room and fall through the now open trap door. You should now see a key on the floor, take the key and exit. Leave the next screen by the bottom exit and on the following screen you'll find some shuriken in a box – take the shuriken.

Go through the gap in the wall and into the next room, where you'll see a knife juggler. Pass the juggler and go into the next room. Throw a shuriken at the man in this room and then take the map before climbing the wall bars and exiting by the left. Jump the gaps and pick up the pole and then jump back into the previous room. Walk backwards onto the wall bars and you will climb back down them, leave and go past the juggler again before leaving the next room by the right hand exit.

Go through the gap in the wall and enter the next room, throw a shuriken at the man and pick up the first half of the rice flail whilst in the women's toilets. Retrace your steps to



the gap in the wall and go into the next room. Throw a shuriken at the man and pick up the other half of the rice flail in the women's toilets again. Leave the room and pick up the hamburger at the hot dog stand. Leave by the top exit and you should be at the gate room. Go to the middle of the gate whilst holding the key and pick up, then go through the gate. Jump the river by using the boat (this needs practice!) and leave.

In the next room are some bees – avoid them and go up the winding path. When you get to the middle of the path, run and then jump onto the island. Go to the bushes and poke the boat with the stick and it should move away. Then move to the bottom edge of the island and run and jump back onto the path. Now cross the river by using the boat and leave the park. Now load in the second level.

■ **Jason Richardson, Wincanton.**

PLATOON

■ Here's a handy tip for ST owners.

Type in HAMBURGER – HILL when the title screen appears and the word 'CHEAT' appears below the programmers' names. Start the game and you'll find that pressing F2 takes you straight to the TNT. F3 takes you straight to the bridge and F4 takes you straight to the village.

■ **Mark Bellwood, Morecambe.**

WIN £150 WORTH OF SOFTWARE?

Bursting into 1989, we've suddenly got all generous. Throughout the year, we plan to hand out £150, yes £150 worth of software to the sender of each month's Top Tip. If you want to get a piece of the action, send in your tips, POKEs, maps or detailed playing guides, and do it now! We're not interested in second-hand tips, or detailed guides on how to play games for the ZX80 – it's brand-new tips for the games in the last couple of issues that we're looking for. And remember, you may not win the top prize, but we're also giving five people the chance to own the game of their choice for their machine. Make sure you send us a list of the games you'd like to get if your tip comes top of the pile - select titles from the last three issues to be sure that they are still available.

Send your contributions to the usual address:

TRICKS 'N' TACTICS
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BATH
BA1 1EJ

SUPER MARIO BROS

■ The classic Nintendo game has been around for quite a while, but do you know how to set off the fireworks? Or why you should destroy Super Mario? Read on...

THE WARP ZONES

There are three warp zones in SMB, the first is at the end of World 1-2. Take the elevator up and jump over to the top. Run to the right and you'll find a room containing three pipes – these lead to Worlds 2, 3 and 4. At the end of World 4-2, take the elevator to the top and run to the right where you'll find a warp zone leading to World 5. To get quickly to World 8 though, jump up in World 4-2 to make the invisible blocks appear. Get onto the blocks and hit a brick to make a vine appear. Climb the vine and run to the right while collecting coins. Then you'll come to the final warp zone that leads to Worlds 6, 7 and 8.

In World 4-2 there are other hidden blocks in



places that look empty at first. Stand on the blocks to get the 1-UP Mushroom, or other goodies.

The fireworks can be set off when you jump onto the pole at the end of each level. The secret of the fireworks lies in the last digit of the time indicator. Jump onto the pole when the number is a one, three or six and and the fireworks will go off once, three or six times. Since each explosion is worth 500 points, time your jump well!

One defensive tactic is to let Super Mario die. He then turns into a semi-transparent Mario and is invulnerable for a few seconds.

Just before the end of World 3-1 there is a stairway. When Koopa Troopa comes down the stairway and reaches the lowest step, jump on him to make him stop and then keep jumping on him and score a 1-UP for every jump – up to 100! Don't go over the 100 though, or the game will be over.

If you lose all your Marios – annoying when you've got to World 8 – press the start button while holding down the A button. You'll now be able to start on level one of the last World you visited. However, you only get another three Marios.

Remember, Mario runs faster when you press the B button, so at the end of the Bonus stage in the clouds in World 3 – at the place where every other block is in line – hold down the B button and you can collect all the coins without falling down.



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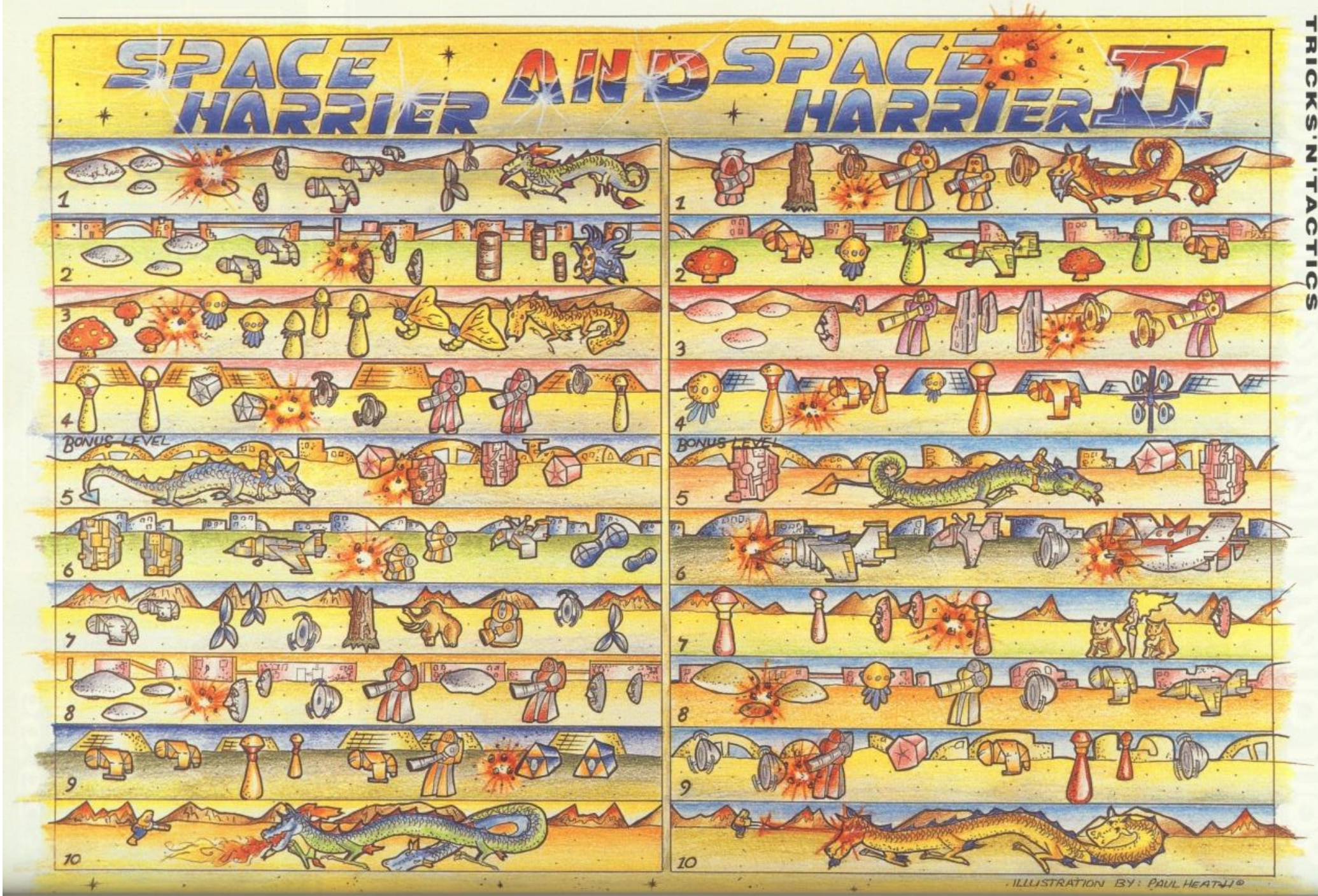
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GREMLIN

Screen shots from Atari ST version.

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SPACE HARRIER AND SPACE HARRIER II
1
2
3
4
BONUS LEVEL
5
6
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9
10
1
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4
BONUS LEVEL
5
6
7
8
9
10
ILLUSTRATION BY: PAUL HEATH ©

SPACE HARRIER

If getting through the ST version of the game is still proving too tough – despite the glorious guide on page 136 – simply type this listing in to ST basic and save it. Then insert a blank disk on which you have previously created an AUTO folder, and run the program.

Now, reset the computer with the disk still in the drive and wait until the drive motor stops. Put the Space Harrier disk 1 into the drive and hit a key. The game should load as normal but with infinite credit (you may continue playing after losing all your lives, as often as you like).

```
10 rem infinite credit for Space Harrier
20 addr=&h7fd00
30 def seg=0 '1985 version of BASIC only
40 for f=0 to 239 step 2
50 read w$: poke addr+f,val("&h"+w$)
60 next f
70 bsave "auto\shcheat.prg",addr,240
80 end
90 data 601a,0,ce,0,0,0,0,0
100 data 0,0,0,0,0,0,2a6f,4
110 data 203c,0,800,2200,d28d,281,ffff,fffe
120 data
2e41,2f00,2f0d,4267,3f3c,4a,4e41,3f3c
130 data 8,4e41,4267,4879,0,c2,3f3c,4e
140 data
4e41,4a40,66e8,42a7,42a7,4879,0,c2
150 data
2f3c,4b,3,4e41,2e40,2e00,2040,91fc
160 data 0,300,2848,203c,0,11,20e8,400
170 data 51c8,fffa,397c,42a,1a,397c,3ea,16
180 data 91fc,0,4,30bc,4e75,243c,0,200
190 data 263c,0,d4e,4eac,14,d9fc,0,444
200 data
2c6f,10,294e,98c,2f07,4eac,2fe,4eac
210 data 4e,4eac,a0,ddfc,0,bc46,2cbc,4e71
220 data
4e71,4eac,1a4,4eac,200,4eac,232,6175
230 data 746f,5c61,2e70,7267,0,0,2c,1400
```

■ **Mark Richardson, Preston**

LISTING OOPS!

The Gremlins got in the works in September's issue and managed to mess up Mark Richardson's ST *Alien Syndrome* poke.

Line 250 SHOULD have read:

```
250 data
0,10,2040,2068,8,6100,1e,2e40
```

Line 260 SHOULD have read:

```
260 data
2f00,4eef,104,2a2e,2a00,5c61,7574,6f
5c
```

The listing WILL now work.

OODLES OF SOFTWARE?

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This month there's no 'Tip of the Month' prize – well, Mike Powell and Tony Crowther don't need the games do they? Still, we'll give Paul Webster a copy of *Operation Wolf* for his ST, Jason Richardson a copy of *Total Eclipse* for his Spectrum. The two Marks (Richardson and Bellwood) earn themselves copies of *Puffy's Saga* for their troubles. Don't just sit there! Go for it!

ELITE

■ If you own an ST, if you keep getting wasted by Thargoids, and if you'd like to cheat – simply type in the following listing and run it for a few handy accessories!

Running the listing creates a saved game on a disk which offers the following: A front military laser, a beam laser on each side and a mining laser on the rear. You will also get four missiles, an energy bomb, a docking computer, fuel scoop, ECM jammer, large cargo bay, escape pod and over 10,000 credits. When you RUN the program, it will save a file onto disk called 'CHEAT.CDR'. Next time you want all the above features, simply load up Elite and then load in the saved game created. NOTE the program will not work with Hisoft Basic.

```
100 rem ELITE CHEAT
110 rem By Paul Webster
120 rem READ THE NOTES FIRST
130 def seg=0: rem 1985 basic only
140 chksum=0: addr=&h7fd00
150 for i=0 to 15
160 print "reading data: Line ";300+(i*10)
170 for j=0 to 15 step 2
180 read w$: word=val ("&h"+w$)
190 poke addr+((i*16)+j),word
200 chksum=chksum+word
210 if chksum>29875 then chksum=chk-
sum AND &hFFF
220 next j
230 read chk
240 if chk<>chksum then print "Error in
data at line ";300+(i*10): end
250 chksum=0: next i
260 print "data read ok, creating file."
270 bsave "CHEAT.CDR",addr,256
280 print "finished."
290 end
300 DATA
FFFE,A7B6,F9B2,4EAB,F7F1,D2F4,F3F3
,5445,25390
310 DATA
EFA5,EDAA,EBEE,E9FF,FFE6,65E4,63E
E,E1E1,3797
320 DATA
DFDF,DDDD,0DDA,D9D9,D7D6,55D6,53
D3,D1D0,2238
330 DATA
CFCE,CDCC,CBCA,C9C8,C7C6,C5C4,C
3C2,C1C0,1592
340 DATA
BFBE,BDBC,BBBA,B9B8,B7B6,B5B4,B3
B2,B1B0,1464
350 DATA
AFAE,ADAC,ABAA,A9A8,A7A6,A5A4,A3A
2,A1A0,1336
360 DATA
9F9E,9D9C,9B9A,9998,9796,9594,9392,9
190,1208
370 DATA
8F8E,8D8C,8B8A,8988,8786,8584,8382,8
180,1080
380 DATA
7F7E,7D7C,7B7A,7978,7514,7574,7372,7
175,347
390 DATA
6F6F,6D6C,6B6A,6928,6775,6541,6362,6
160,25317
400 DATA
133F,2B39,5B3F,5958,5756,5554,5350,51
50,21593
410 DATA
4F4E,4D4C,4B4A,4948,4746,4544,4342,4
140,568
420 DATA
3F3E,3D3C,3B3A,3938,3736,3534,3332,3
130,12728
430 DATA
2F2E,2D2C,2B2A,2928,2726,2524,2322,2
120,20792
440 DATA
1F1E,1D1C,1B1A,1918,1716,1514,1312,1
110,16568
450 DATA
0F0E,0D0C,0B0A,0908,0706,0504,0302,0
100,16440
```

■ **Paul Webster, Preston.**

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Every month we'll be asking the best writers to keep you up to date with all the news on your favourite software. We'll be carrying stories on the stories behind the stories, analysis of adventure and role-playing trends, interviews with programmers, and of course the most authoritative reviews of the latest games.

All this means that we bid a fond farewell to The Pilgrim, who heads off to pastures new. In case that should prompt you to shed a tear, cheer up – because the new column will be edited by Steve Cooke, ex-ACE editor and a man who not only knows a good adventure when he sees one but can also sniff a turkey either side of Christmas...



21 4TE.



FISH

MAGNETIC SCROLLS/ RAINBIRD bowl you over...



MAGNETIC Scrolls' latest product just missed our last issue, but we've used the time since and can bring you not only the review, but also an interview with author Phil South. Here's the low-down, straight from the codpiece...

Fish is a four-part game, with three introductory scenarios and a larger game area in which the bulk of the action takes place. The game follows in the MS tradition, featuring excellent graphics, a powerful parser, and a good deal of weird humour.

If the weird humour puts you off, don't despair. Compared to *The Pawn* – and certainly compared with *Jinxter* – *Fish* is...well...funnier. Although the laughs don't always come off, the overall feeling is of a game with a more straightforward approach. The emphasis is on humour, not silliness.

In common with games like *Lords of Time* and *Leather Goddesses of Phobos*, *Fish* creates a scenario in which you can move from one adventureworld to another. The story goes something like this:

You are an Inter-Dimensional Espionage Operative with the power to 'warp' from one body to another. Your host body can be anything from a cod to a camel to a chartered accountant. In *Fish*, you are variously a goldfish, a music technician and a rock star (among others). This allows you to explore a number of very different worlds and, interestingly, one of the technical problems MS had to overcome in the game was adapting the logic to different bodies. Fish, after all, can't always get the same things that humans can.

Your opponents in the game are the Seven

Deadly Fins. From your goldfish bowl, where you start the game, you warp first to three different locations, solve a series of puzzles, and then launch off into Fishworld to do battle with the ungodly.

Unfortunately, there are some seriously untidy programming glitches in V1.0 for the ST. When we first saw this version, we were assured that the bugs had been fixed, but they were still there in the production version we finally received for review.

Most of the time the errors are not too serious, though it is annoying to be told that there is a switch on the wall, then to be told a moment later that "There isn't a switch here to do that". Of more importance is a bug concerning the solution of one of the puzzles – so I'll put sufferers out of their misery now by advising them to play all three cassettes at once, one after the other and not to bother removing them from the player in between plays.



Those puzzles that are not afflicted by such problems (!) have a pleasing logicality to them, which is one of MS's strong points. The game as a whole is best compared to *Guild of Thieves* – it has a coherent atmosphere, a strong storyline, and a series of fairly comprehensible objectives. You couldn't really ask for much more from a basic text/graphics game...and it does look VERY pretty!

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APPLE II	£19.99dk	1989

THE ACE VERDICT

More gameplay than *Corruption*, better game design than *Jinxter*, and not as quirky as *The Pawn*. This is definitely MS's best release since *Guild of Thieves*, even if version 1.0 on the ST is spoilt by some careless programming.

LANDSCAPE	95	SYSTEM	93
CHALLENGE	92	ENCOUNTERS	90

PHIL GOES SOUTH

"...so there we were, sitting on a coach, talking as we do in an abstract fashion about peculiar things, when I said to John – 'You're a fish. Go west, and what do you see?'. From that suggestion came the idea of saving the world from your goldfish bowl. John went strangely quiet, and a few hours later he called me and said we were writing a game for Magnetic Scrolls."

So that's how it happens, eh? John Molloy, music technologist, and Phil South, mind mechanic, (aided by devil's advocate Peter Kemp and MS staffer Rob Steggles) are the first outside game designers to produce an adventure under contract for Mag Scrolls. It looks like being a great success, despite the problems of creative collaboration.

"I'm pleased it has come out so well," admits Phil, "I couldn't write in the MS style unfortunately, but the original flavour of the game has come through, although it was written by a sort of committee."

The original purpose involves creating a consistent reality in a world full of water – not an easy thing to do at all. Phil and John went all out for consistency of logic in the design of the scenario and the puzzles. Their main aim was the suspension of disbelief regarding "fish people in a fishy world".

The game owes a lot to Phil, John and Pete's early experiences with Infocom games. Sorcerer and Enchanter were their favourites. "I liked all their early stuff, but those two games I played extensively. I also played The Hobbit and solved it without help, which I was very proud of. Jewels of Darkness has been another favourite of mine."

Interestingly, Phil regards adventure games as multi-player experiences. "I prefer to play with someone else around, and look on them very much as two-player games." The image you get is of someone for whom adventuring is above all a means of having fun – a feeling that definitely comes across while playing Fish. As a result he has a pragmatic attitude to games in general:

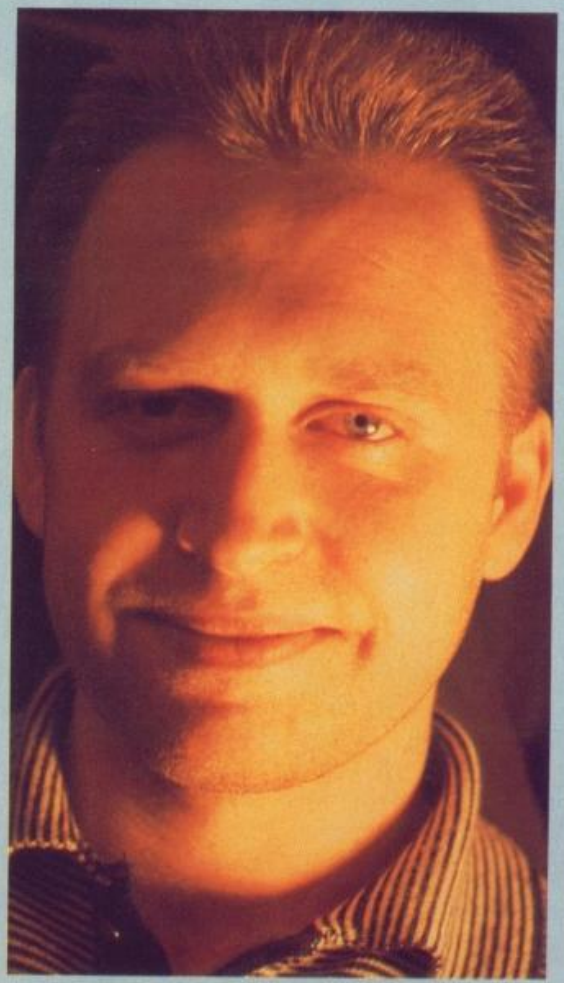
"I don't agree with over-complex parsers that can't guess misspelt words – even if it's only by evading the problem and requiring only a few letters for each word. Infocom used to have a parser that only read the first four letters, and I think I'd prefer that to something so complicated it gets in the way."

ACE certainly agrees with him about overly complex parsers. In the MS parser, for example, you can type GO NORTH and you simply bump your nose into a door if there's one there and it's closed. This doesn't actually happen in real life – people open doors (unless they're locked) – they don't walk into them. Complexity at the expense of reality is simply a waste of effort.

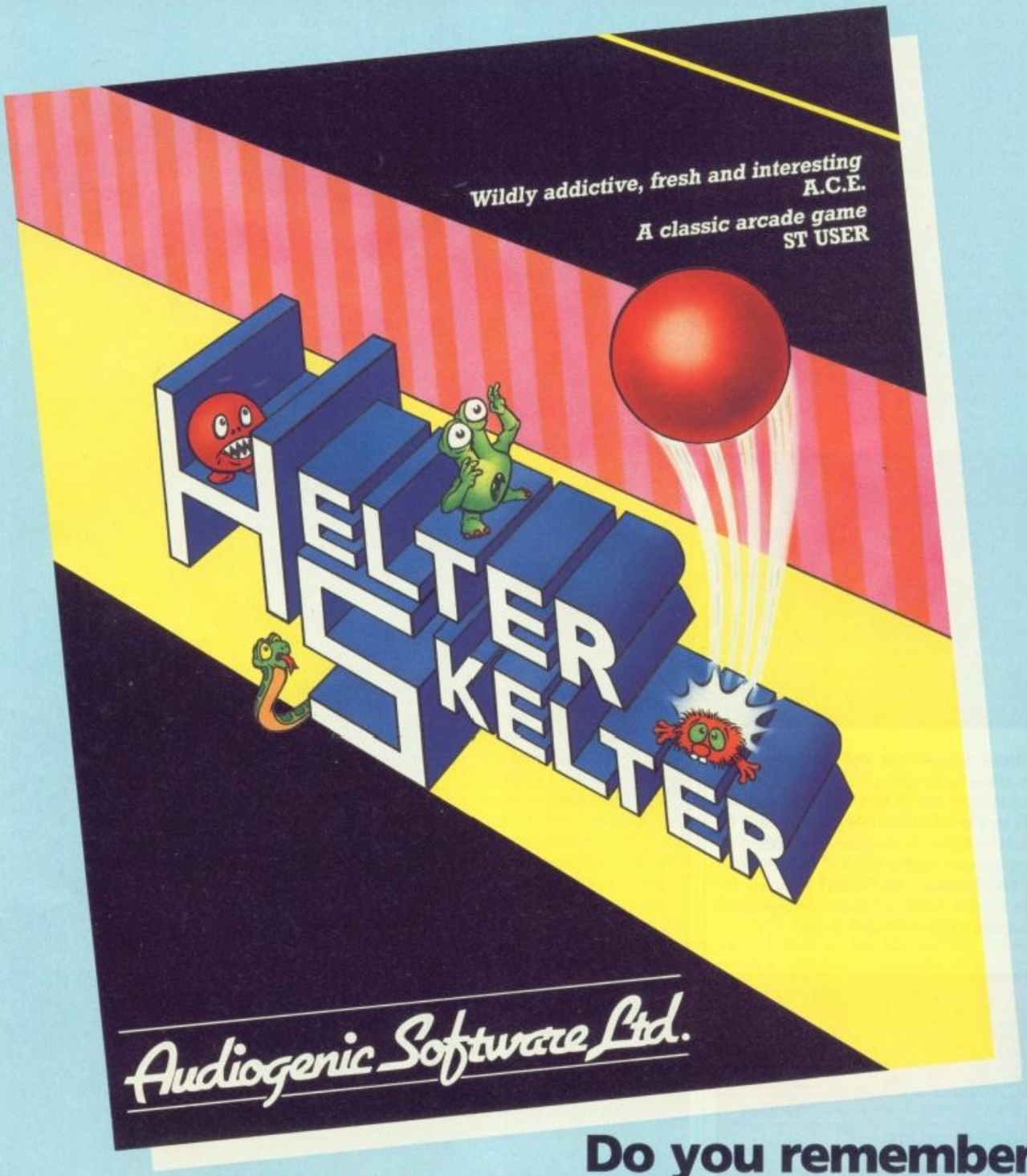
So will Phil be collaborating on any more games for Mag Scrolls? Or for anyone, come to that?

"I'm sure I will," he chirps, "I've got lots of ideas, but at the moment there are none that would make a good adventure – ideas for stories, books, but not for games." Sooner or later, however, we will doubtless be seeing more from this gent. "I did have an idea – Leather Clad Rent Boys of Doom – but oddly enough no one wanted it. Wonder why?"

Phil South. With a name like that, you just HAVE to play adventures!



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AAA 1988 - THE ACE ADVENTURE AWARDS



Mindfighter...Mono graphics, lukewarm reception.

BIGGEST DISAPPOINTMENT OF THE YEAR

Candidates for this much coveted award include Abstract Concept's *Mindfighter, Lancelot,* Infocom's *Borderzone* and *Sherlock Holmes,* plus Magnetic Scrolls' *Jinxter.* After much debate, the winner is: ***Mindfighter,*** complete with a printed guide to insomnia.

Congratulations Anna, but we know you'll pull round with release number 2.

WEIRDEST GAME OF THE YEAR

Three strong candidates here – *Beyond Zork* for its shameless pursuit of the Coconut of Quendor, together with its flirtation with role-playing; *Slaine* for a user interface that defied belief as the commands flashed through the hero's brain; and finally, the undoubted winner, Infocom's ***Nord'n'Bert Couldn't Make Head Nor Tail of It...*** and neither could anyone else!

MOST INNOVATIVE GAME OF THE YEAR

Entries here include *Plundered Hearts,* for its excursion into romance; Icom's games for their user interface; *Legend of the Sword* for its scrolling on-screen map; *Nord'n'Bert* for its game structure; and *Ingrid's Back* for its character development. There was much debate over this award, but in the end it was decided that by opening up a different approach to narrative within adventuring, ***Plundered Hearts*** should get the prize. Ingrid's Back comes a close second, but characters are only as important as the story within which they appear.



Time and Magik - best value for money around .

BEST VALUE OF THE YEAR

No contest...it's got to be ***Time and Magik*** from Level 9/Mandarin. Three games for the price of one, and not one a turkey.

BEST RPG-INFLUENCED GAME OF THE YEAR

Candidates here include *Ultima V, Bards Tale III, Pool of Radiance,* and *Wasteland.* There's a clear winner here, naturellement, and by the beard of Blackthorne, it has to be ***Ultima V*** closely followed by *Wasteland* and *Pool of Radiance.* For those who want a good chop, however, *BTIII* still ranks near the top.

PRETTIEST GAME OF THE YEAR

Up on the catwalk we have the Magnetic Scrolls products, chased petulantly off the stage by those romantic French chappies with *Mortville Manor* and *Chronoquest* (via Psygnosis). The prize finally goes to ***Mortville Manor*** with its sexy voice synthesis and alluring interior locations. Not much of a brain, though...

GAME OF THE YEAR

Again, it seems there's a clear winner. A game that has succeeded in widening the market for its own product style, is on course to sell a million copies, held the Pilgrim captive at the keyboard for weeks, and stopped much of the work in the offices of magazines around the country...***Ultima V.*** Concerning which, the best story we've heard to date is the man who rang us up about the game from the office of a famous news agency, told us he was just loading it up, and asked whether it was any good.



Ultima V: Game of the year.

When we tried to phone him back, he'd left his desk with the disk and gone home. He didn't return for three weeks! Just one among many similar tales of shameless addiction...

THE GOOD, THE BAD, AND THE UGLY OF 1988...

...and a few questions about the future of adventuring.

There's no doubt about it – we've seen more changes in the adventure scene during 1988 than during the five previous years. Not since 1983 and the launch of *The Hobbit* has there been a more significant year for the adventurer.

The keynote has been the emergence in strength of role-playing influences. ACE reviewed no less than eight RPG-influenced titles in the adventure section during the year – and that doesn't include titles (such as *Pool of Radiance* and *Heroes of the Lance*) that were reviewed elsewhere in the magazine. Even Infocom is entering the RPG arena with *Journey* – not yet seen over here in the UK but looking strong on visual presentation at least.

Apart from that, there have been two other developments which should prove highly significant. The first is Level 9's dogged pursuit of character development. Everyone knows what we think about this – characters have to be the way forward for true interactive fiction development. At present there is still too much money going into graphics and user interface development, and not enough into the mechanics of character handling. 1989 could see a change here...

The other obvious change is the move towards 16-bit. For adventurers, this simply means more concentration on disk-based games with larger scenarios and better graphics. In the case of the Amiga and the PC, it will also see greater penetration of this market by American software houses. That's not bad news – Magnetic Scrolls and Level 9 need to be kept on their toes! In the past, American games such as *Tass Times in Tonetown* and *Borrowed Time* kept reminding us of another, equally rewarding adventure tradition.

THE CRYSTAL BALL...

What does 1989 hold? Here are some predictions:

MAGNETIC SCROLLS will stop releasing titles in the autumn of 1989 while they debug their new RPG-based system...

LEVEL 9 will produce an icon-driven game for Christmas (see news story elsewhere)

SIERRA ON-LINE will produce a top-selling game for the PC that will be converted onto the ST and Amiga and make this company one of the bigger names of 1989.

INFOCOM will cut prices dramatically and produce a budget range of games.

A FRENCH ADVENTURE will reach the top ten in the charts on the Atari ST.

ABSTRACT CONCEPTS will relaunch with a new adventure development system.

US GOLD will launch a dedicated fantasy label.

A RUSSIAN ADVENTURE will enter the rumour mill but never appear.

A JAPANESE COMPANY will produce a fantasy role-playing game for the coin-op market that will be licensed and produced by **US GOLD**.

The last **TEXT ONLY** game to be commercially produced will be released by **TOPOLOGIKA**

Happy 1989!

THE MESSAGE BOARD

What?? Only one letter this month? Not for long, we hope. From next issue onwards, we'll be printing readers' letters in this space – and giving away some great prizes to the writers of those that really sparkle. The price of a stamp, together with your views on any aspect of adventuring, could put your name on these pages...so jump to it, and you might win a free game into the bargain!

SHODDY?

I enclose a solution to *Ingrid's Back* (Thanks, Rob.) which I personally consider to be infinitely superior to its predecessor, *Gnome Ranger*. Since the latter won the award for Best Adventure last year, I cannot see how *Ingrid's Back* can fail to follow up on its success. I reckon that it would even get my vote ahead of *Beyond Zork*.

However, the game is choc-a-bloc with bugs, inconsistencies, and so on. I feel that both Level 9 and Magnetic Scrolls are in too much of a rush to get their games out and are cutting too many corners in the finishing stages as a result. What say you?

By the way, I've gone back to *Lancelot* and found the missing 60 points. In the cell, give the love potion to the maid, who falls in love with you and helps you to escape. I'm sure I tried that before with no success. Ho hum...

Rob Marshall, Cheshire

I didn't feel that Ingrid's Back *was as bad as* Lancelot *in respect of untidiness, but I take your point. The problem with adventures has always been that 'commercial reality' – for which read 'need for dosh' – has outweighed creative effort and ingenuity to some extent. Remember Software Project's* Legionnaire *(or whatever it was called): trying to review it, I found that although you had to go upstairs to solve an early puzzle, the parser didn't understand any words for going downstairs. There were some interesting quotes from Software Projects about that game, none of which were printed...*

PAT'S PATCH

Pat Winstanley continues her occasional column on DIY adventure writing...This month she looks at coping with numerous different player inputs.

Modern commercial adventures have moved beyond the old verb/noun/input format, allowing the player tremendous freedom of expression. This can cause headaches for the writer trying to allow for different inputs which should produce the same result, necessitating an awful lot of conditions all of which are identical except for the input which triggers them. However, users of PAW and STAC can cheat a little by adjusting the player's input before looking at the main condition tables.

For example, think of lighting a lamp and the possible inputs which should work. Lamp on, on lamp, light lamp, turn light on, switch light on – the list is endless. If a condition is entered for each of these variations, memory will rapidly be used up. Much better is to use one condition to catch the player's input, and transform it to the input required for the condition.

With STAC this can be handled using system variables. Thus if we had a condition on the lines of:

IF VERB 'LIGHT' AND NOUN 'LAMP' AND RESET? (LIT) THEN SET (LIT) OK

Changing the player's actual input to read 'light lamp' is simply a matter of using the command x WORD y which changes the number held in one of the variables NOUN1, VERB1 etc. This is most easily done in a special condition reserved for transforming inputs and would have entries like:

IF VERB 'TURN' AND NOUN 'LIGHT' AND ADVERB 'ON' THEN 'LIGHT' WORD 3 THEN 'LAMP' WORD 1

You must make sure that 'light' is both a verb and a noun, though not necessarily the same number.

The special condition containing this should be called at the beginning of each local condition which has an entry and the beginning of the low conditions too.

PAW users can do much the same thing, setting up a process table which is called at the beginning of response, but in this case the word 'light' should have a number less than 20. The transforming entry would be something like:

TURN LIGHT
ADVERB 'ON'
LET 33 'LIGHT'
LET 34 'LAMP'

Then in response, or a process table called from there, you would have just one entry to light the lamp.

Using this method saves having to repeat the rest of the conditional and action parts of the main condition/entry and so saves more memory as the number of inputs you allow for is increased. More importantly, it helps make your game very friendly for the player.

NO PROBLEM!

Yup, it's no problem when you've got people like James Neville of Lingfield and Rob Marshall, ... bringing you tips to hustle you out of the tightest spots.

Keep the clues coming in, everyone. The best way to submit them is on a postcard, with the name of the puzzle and the solution clearly stated. Send them to: Steve Cooke, c/o 4 Queen Street, Bath, BA1 1EJ.



INGRID'S BACK

Some tips on getting signatures for your petition...

Sign it yourself.

Get eight signatures at Gnettlefield Farm – Gnoggin, Grandma, Armillaria, Bumpy, Arback Garden, Gnoah, Dimple, and Gnora.

Get Flopsy to wait outside Isfrunt's front door. Go to the back door and knock, then go back to the front...

Leave the petition on the table in the hermit's at Three Mole Hill. Return later to retrieve it (signed).

CORRUPTION

Get the stethoscope for use later in opening the safe. Turn the dial four times and take receipts, ledger and chips.

Read everything in the briefcase to get extra points.

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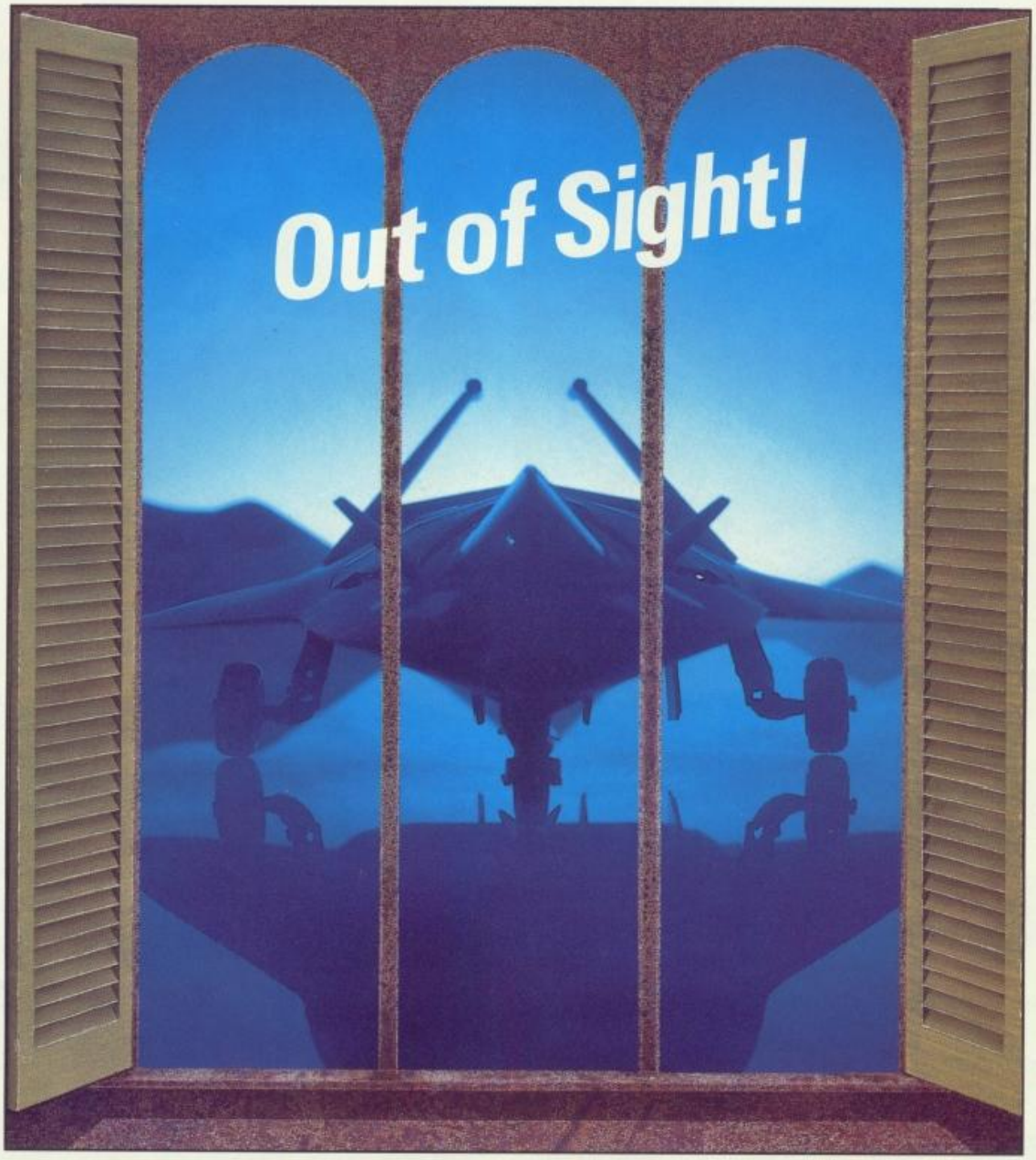
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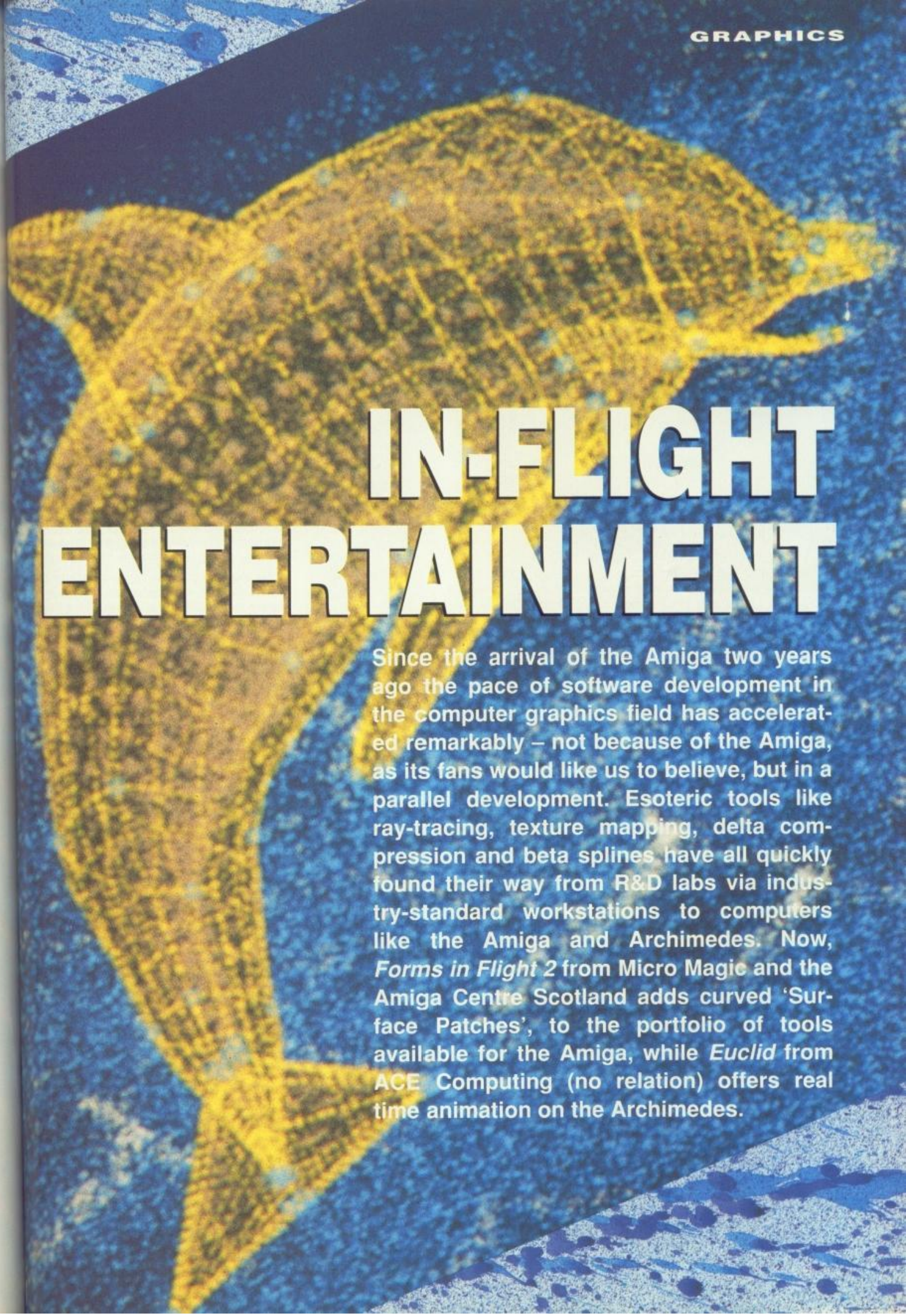
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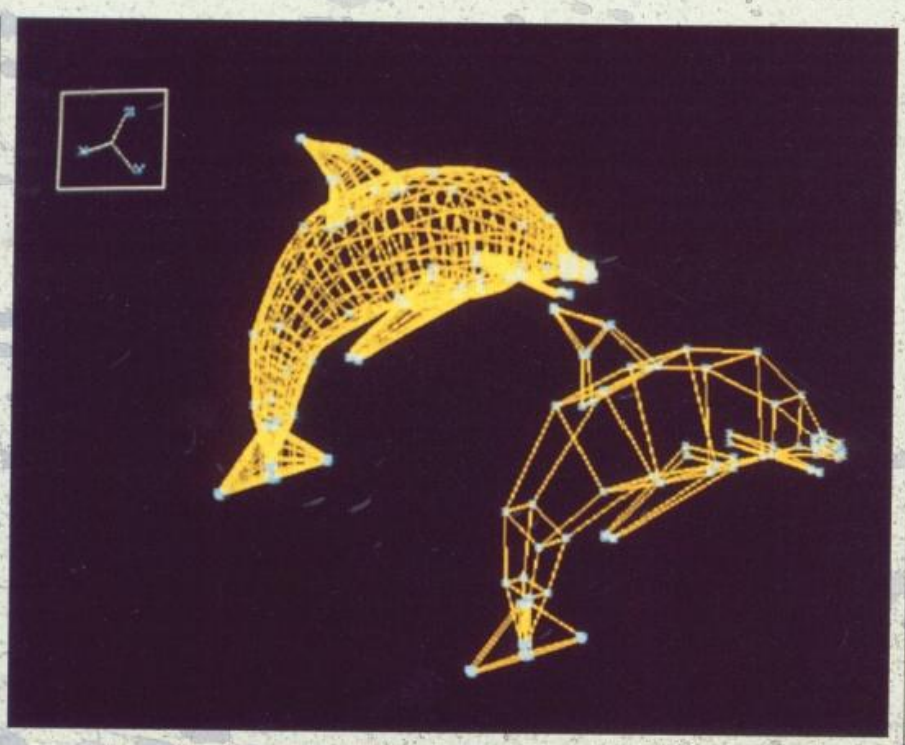
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IN-FLIGHT ENTERTAINMENT

Since the arrival of the Amiga two years ago the pace of software development in the computer graphics field has accelerated remarkably – not because of the Amiga, as its fans would like us to believe, but in a parallel development. Esoteric tools like ray-tracing, texture mapping, delta compression and beta splines have all quickly found their way from R&D labs via industry-standard workstations to computers like the Amiga and Archimedes. Now, *Forms in Flight 2* from Micro Magic and the Amiga Centre Scotland adds curved 'Surface Patches', to the portfolio of tools available for the Amiga, while *Euclid* from ACE Computing (no relation) offers real time animation on the Archimedes.



TWO YELLOW DOLPHINS – the first stage in preparing an image with Forms in Flight, a package which allows complex curved shapes to be generated from simple flat surfaces... and then animated. The dolphin on the right has curves with one 'side' the other has eight. By increasing the number of 'sides' of each curve, a basic angular skeleton (with the advantage of a fast redraw time) can be transformed to a smooth organic shape.

At first sight, *Forms in Flight 2* seems a rather homespun, MeSsDOS type of package. Certainly the interface is decidedly non-Amiga-standard, and is the worse for it. In time it is possible to get used to the movable, triple-depth menu system, but the lack of keyboard equivalents and almost total absence of any iconic interface seems a rather quirky backward step. Nevertheless, once you pass this barrier the program proves to be very powerful, offering a unique modelling system using 'surface patches' to generate complex curved shapes from very simple flat surfaces, as well as a means to animate the curved shapes once they have been created.

FORMS...

The real power of the surface patch technique is provided by its ability to change the number of sides of an object quickly and easily. The fundamental component used in *Forms in Flight 2* (*FIF2*) is the 'surface'; either a flat surface, an FSURF, with any number of control 'nodes', or a three-dimensional surface, a QSURF, always limited to four 'nodes'. For either type of surface the curve connecting two nodes can have any number of 'sides' but the more there are the smoother the curve will be. With one 'side' for instance the 'curve' would be straight, but with ten sides quite smooth curves can be generated, a principle illustrated by the two yellow wire frame dolphins above.

In practice the simple, one-sided form is very quick to render whereas the complex, multiple-sided form can take several minutes, even in wire-frame. To avoid annoying delays during construction the structure is modelled initially using a simple angular 'skeleton' that is easy to manipulate. Later, by increasing the number of sides with one straightforward command, beautifully curved objects can be generated.

Because of this ability to transform rudimentary and angular structures into smoothly curved forms there is a great temptation to 'try out' the final form as soon as possible. This should only be attempted with care as it is very easy, at least initially, for the novice to move the object or viewpoint into an awkward position, even upside-down. Recovering from this predicament can be quite difficult because of the curious method used to move the viewpoint or 'camera position'.

In many ways rotating the viewpoint is a bit like using a mouse to control the spacecraft in *Zarch/Virus* or the plane in *Flight Simulator 2*. With lots of practice it might become intuitive but for the beginner it is forbidding. Part of the problem is caused by long redraw times which delay movements. If the program replaced the object during a viewpoint/camera move by a simple rectangular 3D box with the same orientation as the object being represented, movement could take place in real time. This solution is used by *Caligari* (see Graphic Accounts this issue) and seems the ideal way to handle object or viewpoint manipulation.

As well as the wire-frame mode, there are two other rendering techniques available in *FIF2*: shading and texture mapping. Compared to *Sculpt Animate* or *Turbo Silver*, the shading mode is very limited. A maximum of 32 shades (in lo-res) are used but they are dithered very effectively, and Phong Shading is used to smooth out angular and faceted surfaces. There is no ray-tracing and only one, fixed light

(Below left) NETTED DOLPHIN
The final image (below right) is made up from a QSURF, extruded along a curved path to form a series of similar surfaces linked by patches. The size of each 'cross-section' is adjusted to give the tapering body. Several more QSURFs are given a little thickness and positioned as fins, tail, mouth parts and flippers. All surfaces are texture mapped from a single full screen IFF picture. Here, the full rendition was saved as an IFF file, brought back as a background picture and the wire frame dolphin placed in front to show the structure.





(Below right) SPOTTED DOLPHIN.
A spotted dolphin flies through the waves – the finished image created with Forms in Flight 2, this time shown in all its glory without the wireframe grid. The background is an IFF image produced using Deluxe Paint II.

source. IFF pictures can be brought in and used as foreground or background, or mapped onto any QSURF. Check the box for a description of texture mapping.

...IN FLIGHT?

Animation seems almost to have been added to the system as an afterthought – not that the motion control provided is lacking in power, but



YELLOW WIRFRAME DOLPHIN with 10 'sided' curves, placed against the same imported background used in the final image. Note how much smoother the network is, as compared to the picture of TWO YELLOW DOLPHINS.

transformations of the objects themselves are rather limited. Any selectable object, including individual FSURFs and QSURFs, can be assigned a 'frame block'. This allows the object to be moved in any plane, along any path – or none – and sized or 'rounded'. Using this method it would be possible to move the wings of a bird up and down for instance, but controlling the choreography involved would be horrendously difficult. The name of the whole package sums up the feel of the motion it allows... the forms fly – but like a frisbee rather than a bird. They don't flap their wings!

...AND LANDING.

Forms in Flight 2 has come a long way from version 1. The facilities for texture mapping and surface patches are welcome – the transformation of a crude and angular approximation of an object to its beautifully curved final version is magical, but the user interface needs a similar transformation. Camera motion would also be greatly improved if some indicator – even just the xyz axes arrows – rotated in real time.

Rendering works very well within its limitations. An extra option to render in HAM mode – or better still to ray-trace would have been wonderful. Animation of complete objects is quick and easy – an advantage of not using ray-tracing – but some sort of inbetweening is almost essential to get a real feeling of self-propulsion from the wonderfully organic and animate looking forms that this package can create.

FORMS IN FLIGHT 2
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TEXTURE MAPS AND PATCHWORK

Every flat screen image consists of an array of pixels arranged in straight vertical and horizontal rows. A texture mapping procedure examines the surface onto which this array is to be mapped and divides it up evenly into a similar, though distorted grid. The colour of each pixel on the original array is then transferred to the new grid, eventually producing a distorted 'map' of the entire image.

A number of Amiga graphics packages now offer some form of texture mapping. *Photon Paint* will map any area of any screen defined as a brush onto one of a number of pre-defined object shapes. Being a HAM program it has a wide range of shades available and so is able to tone the final object to show a light-source, which can be user-definable. *Forms In Flight 2* can only use a maximum of 32 shades, so lighting effects are not available. Nevertheless, it is capable of mapping onto the most convoluted surfaces, all of which should be completely under the control of the user. The skin of the SPOTTED DOLPHIN was originally a full screen picture of a section of this pattern, mapped onto each of the QSURF's that make up the body.

PATCHWORK

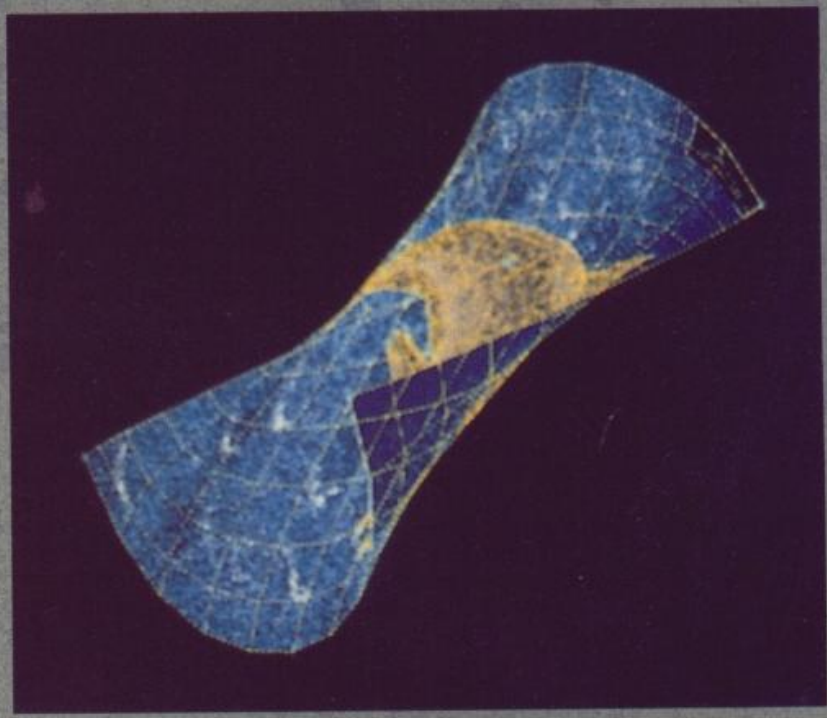
The complex curves of the dolphins shown on these pages are made up from a series of surface patches linked together. The form of each patch depends on the way that the four curves forming its boundary are distorted. Each patch can be visualised like a patch on the knee of a pair of jeans. The fabric was originally flat, but by drawing the corners back over the curve of the knee it also becomes curved in three dimensions. The effect is illustrated best by example. The two texture mapped surface patches shown here are copies of the picture NETTED DOLPHIN, texture mapped onto a single QSURF surface patch. Superimposing the yellow wireframe curves shows more clearly that one end is bowed up and the other down.

As natural forms are increasingly becoming the target of computer graphic artists and designers, organic modelling techniques like surface patches are gaining in importance. *Sculpt 4D*, the professional version of *Sculpt/Animate* will provide a similar method to generate curved surfaces.



(Left) A texture mapped surface patch of Netted Dolphin

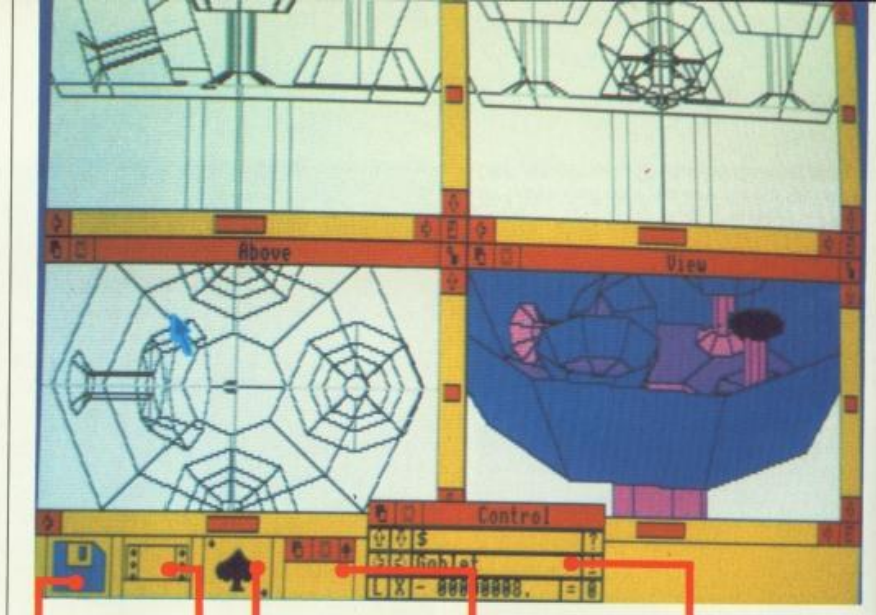
(Below) The same texture mapped surface patch with the outline of the wireframe structure superimposed for clarity...



Some of the most enduring computer entertainment programs seem to achieve their success by making demands on the user which require no little effort of the intellect. The scholar who will break into beads of perspiration at the mere mention of homework and who will do anything, even the washing up, to avoid the evening's light entertainment set by his teachers, seems to think nothing of doing intellectual battle for hours with computer adventures and puzzles. *Euclid*, which at first sight may be mistaken for a rather dull program for computer-aided-design, is quite an adventure. The deeper it is explored, the more rewarding it becomes.

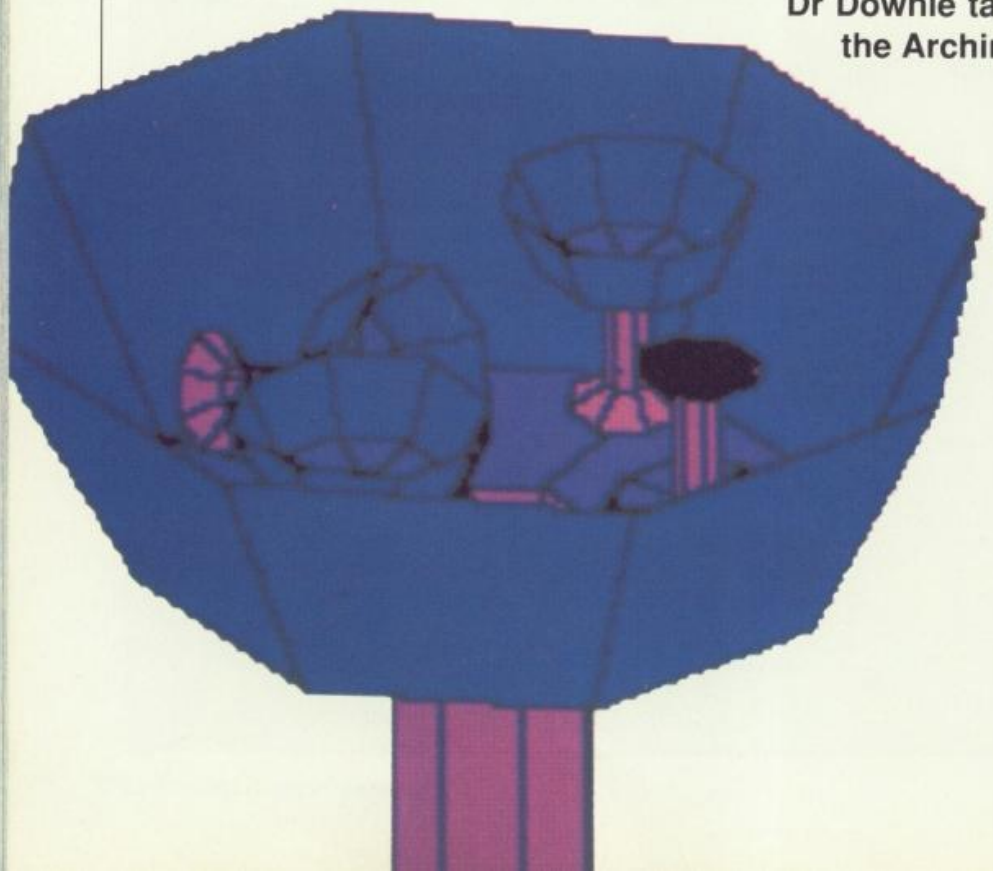
Euclid is NOT a paintbox program, and

(Right) In Euclid, you modify your design by working on the three orthogonal windows – headed up as Front, Left and Above. Move the cursor into a window, and you can start work on its contents, and to take a closer look, a window can be enlarged and popped over its brothers on screen. The View window shows the results of changes made in the orthogonal windows.



REAL TIME SOLID 3D ANIMATION THE EUCLID WAY

Dr Downie takes the first 3D package for the Archimedes through its paces...



does not produce breathtakingly realistic images with textured surfaces. It is NOT the wonderful *Sculpt 3D* (for the Amiga) with which 3D images of near-photographic realism can be laboriously generated, saved and then replayed in sequence to give the illusion of movement. What it can do, however, is produce 3D worlds with scenes being recalculated at sufficient speed to give the user total control in real time. Structures can be 'flown' through, using the demo program *Fly*. *Euclid*'s purpose is to produce solid 3D pictures of moving objects; the user with minimal programming skills can take advantage of the design program supplied, or the *Euclid* modules can be linked by BASIC or assembler code by an artist who is happy with programming...

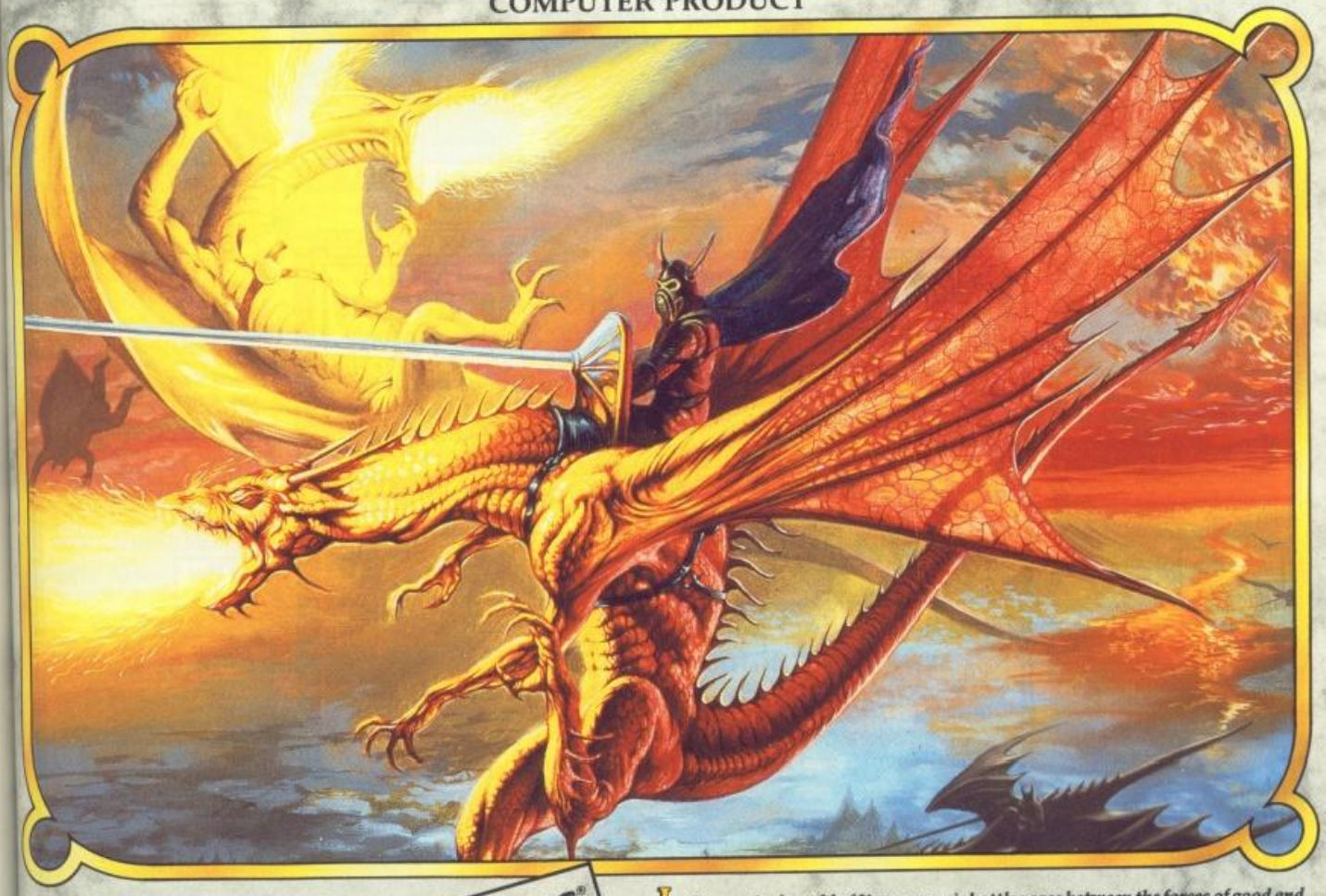
A wide variety of demonstrations and examples, BASIC program shells and utilities as well as a couple of freebies (a gigantic LIFE program and a Mandelbrot Set explorer) accompanied the package sent for review. Ace Computing have devoted all their effort to the

(Left) A closer look at the goblet featured in the View Window of the Euclid screen shown above.

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quality and extent of *Euclid*'s capabilities, dispensing with the fancy loader screens and presentation graphics that have become the norm with commercial packages – but the volume of extras makes up for this lack of superficial gloss.

Euclid is quite definitely a surface rather than a solid modeller. Objects are defined by the planes that bound them: there is no discrimination between a hollow box and a solid block, for instance. For most visible purposes this is unimportant, as a box and a block look the same from the outside. References to 'solids' in the manual can be confusing, however. Furthermore, there is no simple concept for producing cross sections, and the computer cannot readily generate 'mass properties' like weights of intersecting components and positions of centres of gravity. With true solid modellers, it is possible to build up structures by adding, subtracting and intersecting primitives like blocks, cylinders, spheres and cones – an approach that often needs considerable computing power if objects of any complexity are to be produced. In *Euclid*, the structures are built from points, lines and surfaces.

STRUCTURED DATA

The package offers an excellent opportunity to learn about graphic data structures, which are a rather like the Archimedes ADFS (disk filing system). 'Objects', like directories, can contain other Objects and Solids, which in this analogy would be like files. Unlike ADFS, *Euclid* can share objects and solids between higher level objects – change the name or nature of the same Solid contained in different Objects and its associates will also change. Change one copy of an object and all objects will change. *Euclid*'s way of structuring data is called the Directed Acyclic Graph (DAG).

The manual needs some very careful reading where it deals with data structure. Words like 'object' have have a strict meaning, but 'objects' is also a term used loosely to refer to anything in the system. The text is peppered with Siblings, Parents, objects, Objects, Solids, Primitive Objects, Children, Planes, Points, Vanes, corners and Landscapes – sometimes these words have strict meanings and sometimes they are used in a more general sense. Although capital initials are used in an attempt to differentiate between the specific and general usages, a different typeface for terms would have eased comprehension.

The first section of the manual offers a guided tour which is followed by a detailed user's guide to the Design program. The second section deals with the *Euclid* modules, and acts as a reference text. For more subtle uses of Arthur, the current Archimedes operating system, you need to browse through the REM statements lurking in the demonstration programs. An excellent WIMP environment which offers four views of the structure you are building in the Designer means that you can get quite a way into *Euclid* without referring to the manual, but you will need to explore the example demonstration with the help of the Design chapter in the manual before the full capabilities of the package can be called into play.

The real power of *Euclid* lurks in the second set of utilities on the disk. Using the SYS command in BASIC or the SWI command in assembler, structures built in the designer can be incorporated into your own programs. Full data structure details are given, so more advanced programmers could write their own design interface software, but example programs included in the package can be used as 'recipes' by the less competent programmer.

Screen dump printer drivers are supplied, and *Euclid* supports colour printers as well as HGPL and Plotmate plotters – although plotters can only produce wire frame graphics, since screen memory is used to do the final stage of the hidden-line-removal algorithm.

As a relatively easy route into 3D simulation and the creation of graphic games, *Euclid* is excellent – it can carry out perspective transformations with hidden surface removal, and allows the user to specify lighting sources which causes the resulting intensities to be correctly computed from the different surfaces on screen. But the package excels as an educational tools that offers insight into 3D CAD and scene building. Don't expect an easy ride, though – the program is absorbing but you certainly need to get the brain working...

EUCLID
Archimedes £45 inc VAT and P&P
Ace Computing
27 Victoria Road,
Cambridge CB4 3BW





Coodie – a smart cockroach who negotiates a complex landscape by referring to data on the effects of natural forces such as gravity and the movement of real, live roaches. The first intelligent animal generated by the MIT Media Lab, Coodie was doing his stuff at the CG '88 Show.

there was one. There are plans for an adult version of Knightmare and a satellite version. See what I mean about the world?

HYPERPAINT VS DEGAS ELITE

After an extended session using *Degas Elite* on an Atari 520ST I realise that I was a bit harsh on *HyperPaint* last issue. In many ways it is certainly a better program than *Degas*, not least in having a separate palette for each screen, but the Atari still needs something revolutionary in the way of software to revive interest in it as a graphics machine...

GRAPHIC ACCOUNTS

COMPUTER GRAPHICS 88 (CG88)

The CG shows at Wembley are rapidly becoming recognised as the premier annual computer graphics events in Europe. This year, as usual, a lot of extremely expensive industrial systems featured, and as ever they were somehow rendered boring in direct proportion to their price tag. The exception to this rule was AT&T's Pixel Machine on the SUN stand. CGI – the distributors – had set up this modest looking machine on the edge of the stand and until the images were glimpsed, it was difficult to see what the fuss was about: just a box on the floor, much like a storage heater, attached to a large monitor. But the images... until you have waited 36 hours for one *Sculpt 3D* render on an Amiga, the magic of real-time ray-tracing seems pretty much irrelevant.

Tektronix and Calcomp both demonstrated their wax transfer printers, both priced under £10,000 (now don't rush) but more interesting to mere mortals was the Integrex Colourcel at £3,000. Using the latest ink-jet engine from Canon, it produces astonishingly good colour images of near-photographic quality. As prices of printers fall, this sort of quality should become available to the average home user. The sooner the better!

The Amigas on the Commodore stand were the most affordable machines featured at Wembley. At the moment no-one is promoting the Atari ST or the Archimedes at this level – and the Apple Mac II wasn't at the show, so the Amiga had the field to itself. Disappointingly, Amiga Centre Scotland did not have *Sculpt 4D* on show. Eric Graham had found a few bugs at the last minute, and not wishing to display an imperfect product, didn't send it. They did have a Tektronix printer, a Honeywell slide maker and a 16 million colour scanner though – all well beyond most home users' budget, but going to prove that the Amiga is beginning to be supported by the big boys.

By far the most spectacular software on the Commodore stand was the long-awaited *Caligari*, distributed by Hi-Tension – yet another 3D animation system, but this time one designed to a really professional specification (and with a professional price too – £1,300 just for the software). For the asking price, it was a bit disappointing – no ray-tracing, only 16 colours dithered to produce 80 shades. But the interface is the best yet, offering easy creation and manipulation of objects in real time (with a 3D box used to surround objects when they get too complex for fast screen updates).

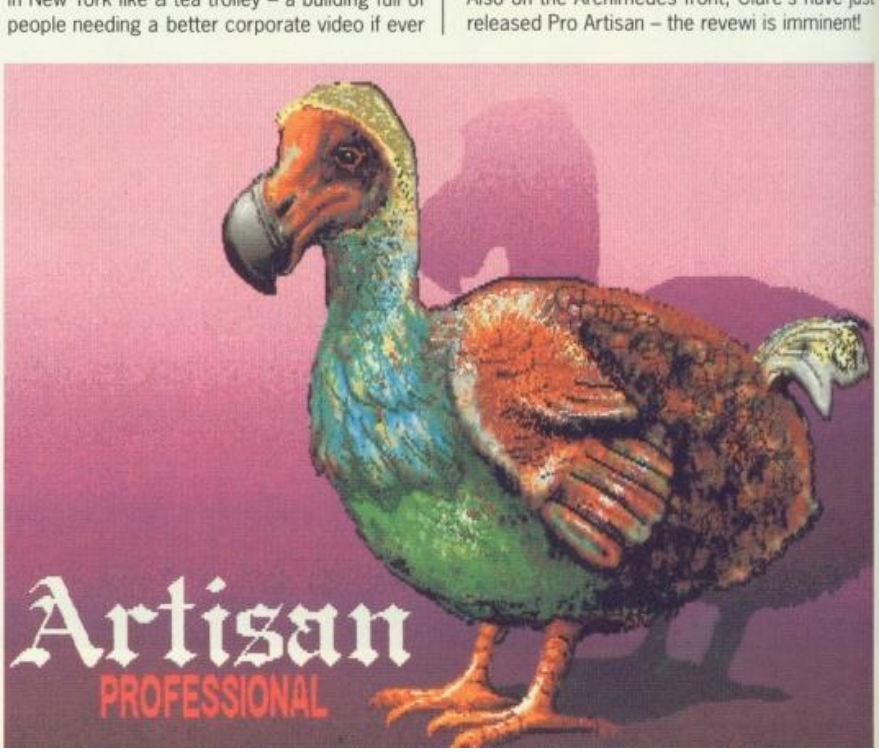
GRAPHICS TEA TROLLY!

Travelling Matte (see last issue) were there, poised it seems to take over the world! The idea of a mobile computer graphics system is a novel but intelligent one, and deserves to succeed. Their latest plan is totrundle a mobile graphics station round the World Trade Centre in New York like a tea trolley – a building full of people needing a better corporate video if ever

NEW PRODUCTS

Despite its absence from CG88 the Mac is coming up fast as its superior specification attracts a greater level of software support. Electronic Arts (0753 46465) are about to release a MacII version of *Deluxe Paint* called *Studio 8*. All the tools of *DPaint`2* and then some are promised, offered in 256 colours at high resolution: should provide some spectacular displays. A review here soon. If you need to ask the price (£349) you couldn't afford the MacII to run it! Also from EA is *Deluxe Print 2* (£49.95) for the Amiga. Full importation of IFF pictures plus ready-made borders, cards, posters, signs, labels, calendars and banners in colour should improve your image.

At the other end of the price spectrum is *Arctist Plus* (Fairhurst Instruments 0625 525694, £19.95), a drawing program for the Archimedes. It seems to provide all of the basics and a bit more – and it should be fast. Also on the Archimedes front, Clare's have just released Pro Artisan – the revewi is imminent!



(Right) Pro Artisan, just released by Clare's for the Archimedes at £169.95.

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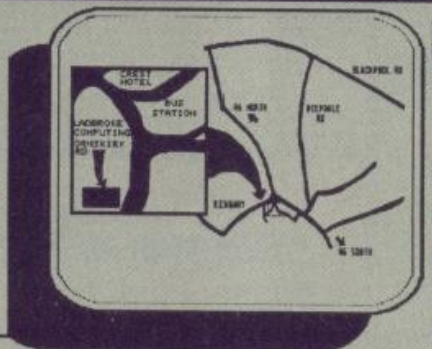
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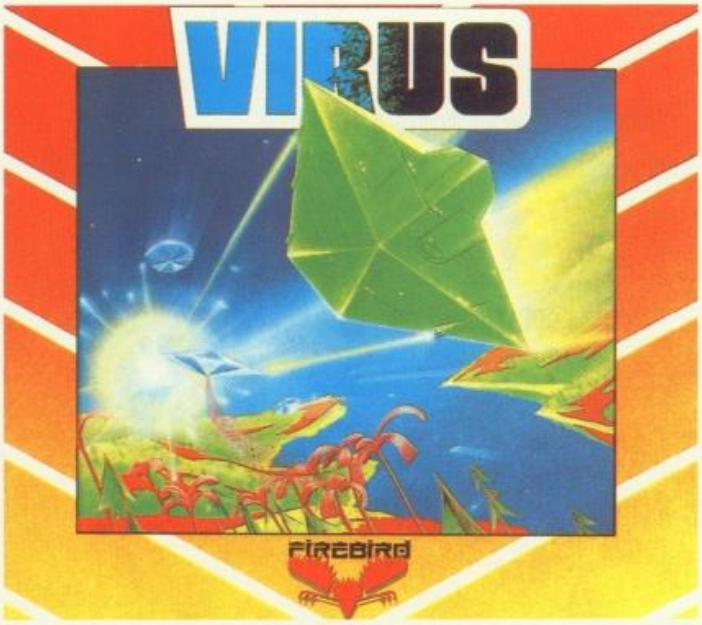
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Electronic Arts
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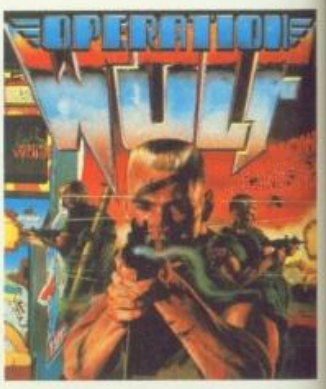
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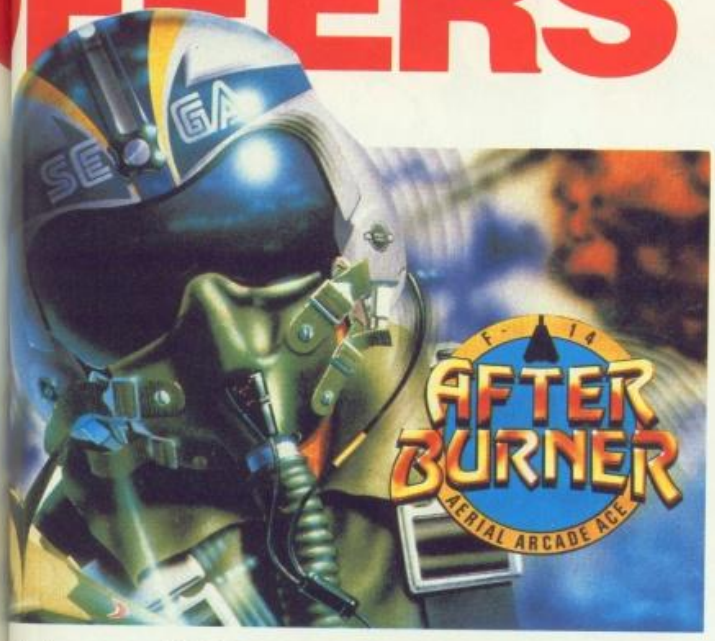
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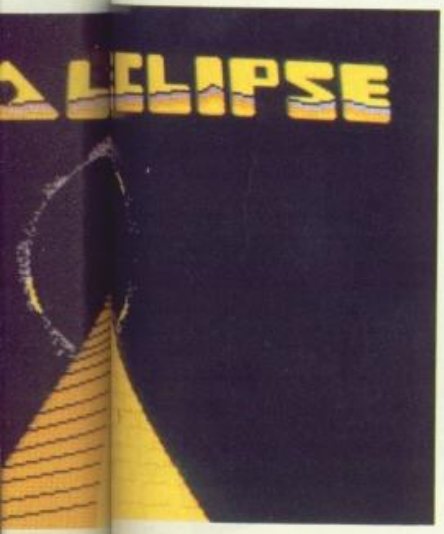
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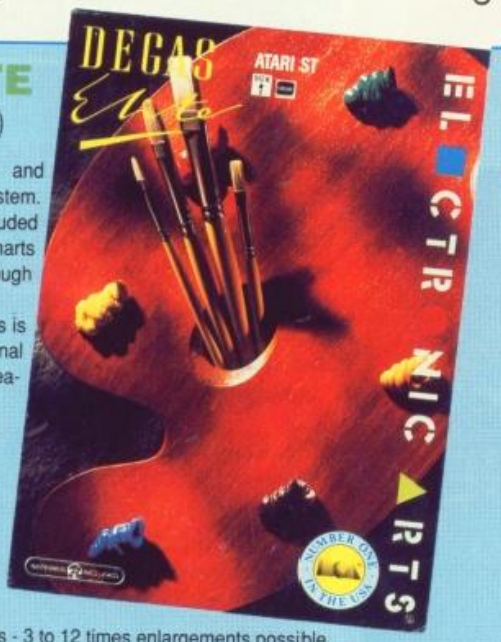
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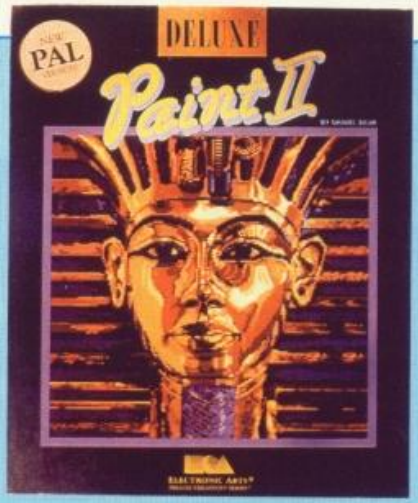
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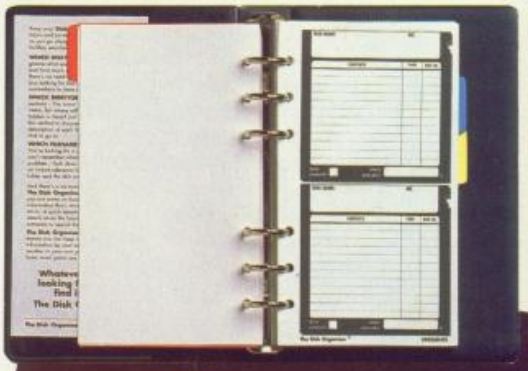
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COMPETITION

SPOT THE PUNCH AND WIN A RINGSIDE SEAT

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By Fair Means or Foul puts a new twist on the boxing game theme – of course the basic aim is to slug it out in the ring and become the World Champion, but you don't have to fight by the Marquis of Queensberry rules all the time. Head butts, groin kneeings, punches to the groin and kicks can all be used, providing the referee doesn't see you land them...

The struggle for supremacy in the boxing world involves lots of hard work, dedication and pure determination. Qualities familiar to Barry McGuigan (who has never thrown a foul punch in his career), so Superior and Alligata asked Barry if he would go a few rounds with By Fair Means or Foul. He obliged, offering advice to programmer Michael Simpson, and then got straight back into his training schedule.

Barry McGuigan spends a fair while working out in the gym in order to stay in peak condition. So when Superior Software were putting the finishing touches to By Fair Means or Foul, they popped down to watch Barry in action. Someone had a camera, complete with motor drive, and knocked off a series of shots of Barry giving a punchbag some serious aggravation. We've printed one here – Barry McGuigan is just squaring up to the leather, deciding which punch to throw. We haven't printed the next frame in the sequence, which reveals where the punch landed...

To enter this competition, you'll need to apply skill and judgement and mark the spot where you think the centre of Mr McGuigan's glove made contact with the punchbag.

Only one cross, please, and make sure it is marked in ink.



THE PRIZES

The person (who in the opinion of the judges etc) gets closest to the spot where the punch lands collects a pair of tickets to the next convenient Barry McGuigan fight – it's a matter of talking to Superior and working out which fight you'd like to go to. You'll have to pay your own expenses to attend, but rest assured that two good seats will be reserved and waiting.

Five runners-up are in line to receive a copy of the Mike Tyson one-hour video called Boxing's Greatest Knockouts (VHS only), and then fifteen consolation prizes of *By Fair Means or Foul* posters signed by Barry McGuigan are waiting to be popped in the post to the folks who get closest without actually hitting the spot dead-on.

The closing date for entries is 1st January 1989, so get thinking – remember, you've only got one cross, so place it carefully!



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Our thanks go to Dave Bowden of London for his superb Nigel from Rigel cartoon strip.



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ACE GUIDE TO CONSOLE SOFTWARE

There's no point owning a console without owning some games to play on it. But what games are out there? Here's the ACE guide to console games that are available NOW.

SEGA GAMES

ACTION FIGHTER £22.95 cart
This shoot-em-up features a motorbike not dissimilar to the one in Hang-On that's bristling with high tech weaponry. Not only that but it can transform into an aircraft or car.

AFTER BURNER £24.95 cart
The console version of the game reviewed on page 54 of this issue. Check out the review for an idea of the game.

ALEX KIDD £22.95 cart
Journey through the planet Aries to the city of Radactian and save it from the evil Janken the Great. The game's an arcade adventure with big cartoon-like sprites. It's got loads of appeal for younger gameplayers.

ALEX KIDD – THE LOST STARS £24.95 cart
The sequel to the above game. It's in much the same vein as the original game, but this time you're out to return some stars that have been pinched from the heavens above the planet Aries. Again, one for younger gameplayers.

ALIEN SYNDROME £24.95 cart
This viewed-from-above maze-cum-shoot-em-up game is set in space. You have to rescue friends trapped on various levels of an alien spaceship. Features huge, grotesque end of level guardians.

ASTRO WARRIOR / PIT POT £22.95 cart
Two games on one cartridge here. Astro Warrior's a simple Space Invaders type shoot-em-up and Pit Pot is a simple maze game. Both games are simple but enjoyable.

AZTEC ADVENTURE £22.95 cart
You are in the legendary Aztec Paradise and have to fight your way the labyrinth inhabited by mysterious (and deadly) Aztec demons, monsters and spirits.

BANK PANIC £14.95 card
Sega's version of the ancient arcade game where you have to shoot bank robbers as they come into the bank and avoid shooting the innocent citizens who are depositing money.

BLACK BELT £22.95 cart
This is a viewed-side-on beat-em-up in which you haye to prove you're worthy of owning a black belt by defeating numerous enemies.

CAPTAIN SILVER £24.95 cart
A horizontally scrolling combat game – check out the review on page 76.

CHOPLIFTER £22.95 cart
Another old arcade game this. You're flying a helicopter across horizontally scrolling scenery, bombing baddies and rescuing goodies.

ENDURO RACER £22.95 cart
Climb aboard your dirt bike and go racing, against the clock, over several courses complete with bumps and other riders to avoid.

FANTASY ZONE £22.95 cart
Another one for younger gameplayers. Huge cartoon sprites abound as you go trolling round gathering coins to buy parts and arms for your spaceship. Then you're ready to go blasting some aliens.

FANTASY ZONE II £24.95 cart
The sequel to the above game in much the same vein, plus a few extras.

F16 FIGHTER £14.95 card
As pilot of the F16 Fighting Falcon, you mission is to seek out and destroy as many enemy aircraft as you can whilst remaining airborne.

GANGSTER TOWN £19.95 cart
For use with the Light Phaser. You're an FBI agent in the 1920s, pursuing a

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This cartoon-style beat-em-up is no pushover. The opponents are tough (fortunately you can rely on your talisman to keep you out much of the trouble) and numerous.

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Not only do you need the 3D glasses for this one, but you also need the Light Phaser as you attempt to knock out a load of missiles heading toward The City.

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The console version of the classic board game gets the ACE treatment on page 76.

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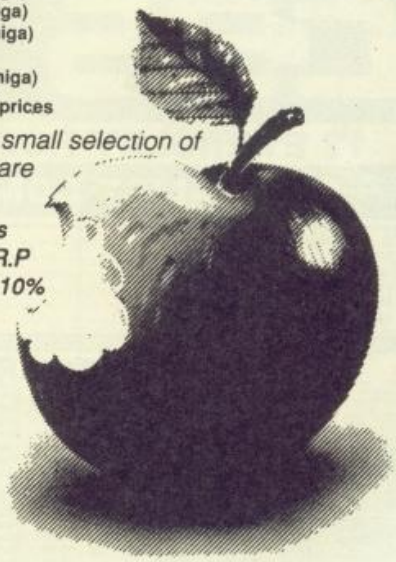
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HARDWARE UPGRADE GUIDE

	ACORN ARCHIMEDES	APPLE MACINTOSH
THE RANGE	The 305 and 310 are home machines, while the 410 and 440 are only really of interest to serious users.	The Mac SE comes in a distinctive upright monitor/system box with built-in drives, while the Mac II's system/drive box and dedicated monitor are separate. Both have separate keyboard and mouse.
MEMORY & CHIPS	The 305 has 512K of memory while the 310 has 1Mb, but both use Acorn's own super-fast 32-bit ARM chip as their central processor.	Though both machines have 1Mb of memory, the SE only has a Motorola 68000 to push it around while the II uses the much faster (but closely related) 68020.
PRICES	Recommended retail prices start at £801.60 for the 305 on its own. There's no sign of a second-hand market as yet.	Recommended retail prices start at £2,294 for the SE and £4,329 for the Mac II. Macs tend to keep their value well, so second-hand ones aren't terribly cheap. Cut-price brand new ones are rare too, so the cheapest thing can be to personally import one from the States (i.e. fly to New York, buy a Mac and bring it back with you).
GRAPHICS	Screen resolution is variable: typical modes would be 320x256 in 256 colours 640x256 in 16 colours or – with an expensive multi-sync monitor – an impressive 640x512, again in 16 colours. There's one hardware sprite – the cursor – but with that speedy ARM chip for power, the Archie's blindingly fast in software.	The mono-only SE has a screen resolution of 512x342, while the Mac II runs to a 1027x760 screen in 16 colours, chosen from a palette of more than 16 million!
MONITORS	B/w – composite video; colour – RGB + sync; no TV modulator.	As well as the built-in (SE) or dedicated (Mac II) Apple units, there are plenty of third-party monitors offering million-pixel screens and similar. Like most things Mac-ish, these get very pricey.
SOUND	The Archie's built in sound features 16 channels (in 8 stereo pairs) and a range of six octaves, all fed through a good-quality internal speaker.	The Mac's four-channel sound chip can produce some very acceptable noises – stereo on the Mac II – but you'll need a third-party MIDI port add-on if you're serious about music.
DRIVES, MICE & JOYSTICKS	The built-in drive is quiet and fast, and packs a healthy 800K onto a 3.5in disk. The Archie comes with a nice 3-button mouse – but has no joystick port!	The fast, reliable built-in drives pack 800K onto a 3.5in disk. The keyboard's very high-quality stuff, as is the one-button mouse.
SOFTWARE	Games for the Archie are rare things indeed. Superior and Grand Slam are both committed to supporting the machine, but for now the only major titles are *Zarch* and (for 310 owners) *Conqueror*, both ACE-rated games. There's still no sign of a game that really pushes the Archie to anything like its limits. The handful of graphics packages available should keep art-loving Archie owners happy for now. Other applications areas are ticking over nicely if not exactly booming.	Games software is not terribly plentiful on the Mac, though adventurers are well catered for. There's a huge amount of graphics and desk-top publishing software – most of it firmly mono – and a fine range of titles for the business user. There's also plenty of great software for the MIDI musician, but it doesn't come cheap.
PROSPECTS	The Archie's educational leanings make for a poor games outlook – there's no sign of support from any of the big-league houses – and the lack of a joystick port doesn't help. The graphics software base would mushroom if Acorn cut their prices, but until then things don't look too hot here either.	The future for the Mac is excellent, but mostly on the serious side of things.
OVERALL	The Archimedes is years ahead of its time, and vastly more powerful than the competition. A stiff bit of price-cutting would make it an unbeatable leisure machine, but Acorn just don't seem to be interested. At the current price it's a worthwhile buy for computer scientists and people with money to burn, but that's about it.	The Mac's a very upmarket machine, and is priced accordingly. Almost essential for DTP users, it's a luxury item or Yuppie toy for the rest of us.
RATINGS	Graphics 5 Sound 4 SOFTWARE: Range 1 Quality 2 Prospects 2	Graphics (SE) 3 Sound 4 SOFTWARE: Range 4 Quality 5 Prospects 4





	ATARI ST	COMMODORE AMIGA	IBM PC AND COMPATIBLES
	The 520STFM and 1040STF both come as combined keyboard/system/drive consoles.	The A500 is a single unit with built-in disk drive, while the A2000 has a separate keyboard and system box.	IBM's PC is the original, but the best buys these days are 'clones' like Amstrad's PC1512 and 1640. Specifications apply to most modern PCs, but check the details for yourself before buying.
	The 520STFM has 512K of memory, while the 1040STF has 1Mb. Both use the Motorola 68000 processor.	The A500 has 512K of memory and the A2000 a hefty 1Mb, both of them using a Motorola 68000 for processing power.	PC compatibles normally have 512K or 640K of memory, with an Intel 8086 or related processor. (The 8088 is slower, while the 80286 and 80386 are faster but more expensive.)
	Recommended retail prices are 520ST – £299.99, 520ST plus 20 free games – £399.99, 1040STF –£599.99. There's a strong second-hand market in 520ST's, but most of these are fitted with the old single-sided (360K formatted capacity) drive.	Recommended retail prices are: A500 £399, A2000 £1236. Shop around for lower prices or package deals. There's a fair old second-hand trade in unwanted A500's, though the recent drop in RRP means that prices here may not be too good. Also still available is the creaky old A1000, the first Amiga model and, with its lengthy boot-up sequence and puny (256K) memory, deservedly discontinued.	Prices start at around £400 for a mono PC, but a 640K machine with an EGA display and top-flight monitor will cost more like £1000. There's a thriving second-hand market, and even buying brand new you're well advised to shop around.
	TV or colour monitor users can get at two screen modes on the ST, medium res (640x200 in 4 colours) and low res (320x200 in 16 colours), both working from a 512-colour palette. Users with mono monitors can only access one mode, high res, which gives them a 640x400 screen in black and white.	Hardware sprites and scrolling make conventional games easy to write, while the built-in blitter greatly speeds up large-scale graphics operations. Typical screen modes are 320x200 in 16 colours for games, 320x256 in 32 or 4096 colours for art, or 640x256 in 16 colours for serious use. In all cases, colours are taken from a palette of 4096.	The three main graphics standards are CGA, EGA and Hercules. None of these offer sprites or scrolling in hardware. The main CGA (Colour Graphics Adaptor) modes are 320x200 in 4 colours and 640x200 in mono. CGA has no palette as such: the 4-colour mode comes in two colour-scheme choices, but that's all. An EGA (Enhanced Graphics Adaptor) PC can produce these two CGA modes plus a few of its own, offering displays of up to 640x350 in 16 colours from a palette of 64. Hercules graphics are mono only, but with a maximum resolution of 720x348 they can be very useful for applications like DTP (Desk-Top Publishing).
	RGB, Mono, or built-in TV modulator (520ST only – 1040ST needs separate modulator).	SCART output for e.g. Commodore's A1081 monitor (£349.99, but look out for bundling deals). TV modulators are available, but aren't included in the price.	Normally standard RGB, with no TV output.
	The internal sound chip's poor, with only three channels and no stereo, but the built-in MIDI port's made the ST a must for penny-wise musicians.	Built-in sound is excellent, with 4 channels in 2 stereo pairs offering you a nine octave range or some reasonable human-ish speech. You'll need a third party add-on to get MIDI compatibility, mind you.	A weak sound standard is very much the PC's Achilles' heel as a games machine, and speaker quality is usually low accordingly. MIDI interfaces are available, but the ST and Mac still beat the PC as machines for the musically minded.
	The internal drive stores 720K on a 3.5in disk, though there are still some old 520ST's around that can only manage half this capacity. A two-button mouse plugs into one of the inconveniently situated controller ports, leaving the other one free for a joystick.	The Amiga's built-in drive is often noisy and always slow, but it does pack 880K onto a 3.5in disk so it's not a total disaster. The two-button mouse takes up one of the machine's two controller ports.	Though 5.25in 360K disks are still the standard, the newer 3.5in 720K drives are becoming more common. There are two different joystick standards, IBM (which is analogue, and the norm for older or American games) and Amstrad (which takes a standard Atari-style stick).
	With the best games support of any machine listed here, the ST's probably still leading the upgrade race. Graphics software's some way behind the Amiga but catching up fast, with new titles stretching the ST's limited hardware quite remarkably. The ST's built-in MIDI port has earned it outstanding support on the music front, with some excellent packages from a wide range of companies. Serious software's looking up too.	On the games front the Amiga's now coming out of the ST's shadow, at least to the extent that most ST games also appear in Amiga form. Unfortunately they are still usually straight conversions, taking no account of the Amiga's extra hardware. There's a wide range of art, video and animation packages for the machine, many of them excellent. Music's less well catered for, but the built-in hardware's got great potential.	There's a vast software base for PCs, but relatively few games that are good by modern standards. This situation's rapidly improving though, as is the art side of things (especially on the EGA front). Music software is available (if rather expensive), but it's only on the serious side of things that the PC really wins out.
	Great, especially if the price cut materialises as expected. The ST's rapidly catching the 8-bit market leaders on numbers of titles, and easily outstripping them on quality.	Looking very bright now, thanks to Commodore's recent price cut.	Prospects for a PC games boom are good, especially if Amstrad's rumoured ultra-cheap PC leisure clone shows up.
	An excellent all-rounder, the ST delivers no-frills power at an affordable price. It's number one for MIDI fans, terrific for games and – with mono monitor – a great machine for serious use as well.	Though its hardware makes it a great games machine, the Amiga still lacks the software to really show it off properly. It's a must-buy for the computer artist, however.	The PC's a fine all-round machine, and the workhorse of modern computing – but if you're just interested in games or music, you'd best look elsewhere.
	Graphics 4 Sound 3 SOFTWARE: Range 4 Quality 4 Prospects 5	Graphics 5 Sound 5 SOFTWARE: Range 3 Quality 4 Prospects 5	Graphics 4 Sound 1 SOFTWARE: Range 5 Quality 5 Prospects 4

CONSOLE HARDWARE UPGRADE GUIDE

	SEGA	NINTENDO
RANGE	Mastersystem, Mastersystem Plus (includes Light Phaser and an extra game) and The Super System (includes Light Phaser and 3D glasses, plus 3D game.	The Control Deck (including Super Mario Bros), the Deluxe Set (including Robot – R.O.B. – and Zapper gun).
PRICES	The recommended retail prices are: Mastersystem £79.95, Mastersystem Plus £99.95 and the Super System £129.95. Accessories: Light Phaser £29.95 (with game cartridge £44.95), 3D glasses £39.95, control stick £14.95 and control pads £6.95 – note, the mini-sticks which were used with the control pads are no longer available. Sega have also recently released a rapid fire unit costing £5.95	The recommended retail prices are: Control Deck £99.95, Deluxe Set £149.95, Zapper gun £24.95, R.O.B. £49.95 and joystick £39.95.
MONITORS	A/V out and R/F out. The system's designed to plug straight into a T.V.	R/F out, separate audio and video out sockets. The Nintendo is designed to plug straight into a domestic T.V.
DRIVES, MICE & JOYSTICKS	The console supports two joysticks, the Light Phaser plugs into joystick port two. The 3D glasses slot into the card slot on the front of the console. Joysticks and pads have two buttons on each for game selection/firing.	The Nintendo supports two joysticks. The robot utilises the second port via the second controller.
SOFTWARE	Most of Sega's arcade games find their way onto the console, so there are plenty of action games to play. There are also a large number of games with extra appeal to younger gameplayers.	Super Mario Bros is one of the best games ever released, for either console or home computer so it's almost worth owning a system for that one game. Since the Nintendo launch in late '86 the range of software has been awful. The Japanese and Americans have had hundreds of games to choose from whereas we Brits have had precious few. Nintendo reckon that's all about to change though, and will be releasing 2-4 games per month.
PROSPECTS	The Sega console has dominated the U.K. console market for the last year-18 months, thanks to Nintendo's poor launch into the market at the end of '86. Games have since continued to come out at a steady rate of 4-5 per month for the console, and will continue to do so.	At the time of going to press the prospects look good, then again the prospects looked good when the machine was first launched.
OVERALL	If all you want to do is play games, all you need is a console. The Sega is currently the better supported machine but the Nintendo may soon start giving it a run for its money.	The Nintendo is a great machine, most of the software arcade style games, but there are some educational titles available. The Japanese machines can be fitted with extra disk drives and other widgets but the British models can't as yet, so you're still only going to be able to play games on the machine for the foreseeable future.
RATINGS	Graphics 4 Sound 3 Software: Range 3 Quality 3 Prospects 4	Graphics 4 Sound 3 Software: Range 1 Quality 3 Prospects 3

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THE ACE SERIAL

The Git In The Machine: Part 5

Doctor Slammer took off his overcoat and went outside. There was no solution but to go and visit his MP - but first he would visit his cousin in Australia. He started walking.

Horace Claghandle looked up briefly as he heard Doctor Slammer struggling with the interns outside, then returned to the keyboard of the Director's Amoeba. What Horace Claghandle was writing was no ordinary virus. The thing he was creating had a mind of its own. He called it MATAHARI (Machine-Accomodated Totally Annihilative and Horribly Active Recursive Intelligence), and was busy working on its data accumulation subroutines when a single line appeared on the screen:

"Something wonderful is about to happen to your..."

Horace Claghandle grabbed one of the meat cleavers Doctor Slammer kept hung on his office wall, and brought it down on the modem lead still plugged into the Amoeba fast enough to shave 17K of machine code off N'Gar Thrombobo's rear end as he retreated down the wire.

Now Horace Claghandle was fuming. He finished the program, saved it onto a floppy, then ran out of the asylum and down the drive towards the bus-stop.

N'Gar Thrombobo was packing his bags, and it was taking longer than he thought it would. There was a whole load of information, for a start, about the thermodynamics of sewerage compression that - well, he might need at some stage in the future...

It took him approximately three billionths of a second to work out how long it would take to save himself onto floppies (he didn't trust modems any more), and another five billionths of a second to tap into the local bus service's timetable and work out how much less time it would take an escaped lunatic with a meat cleaver to get to the sewerage works.

Horace Claghandle found Mr. Tord in the main pumping room, supervising the engineers as they tried to disconnect the pumping motors.

"Ah, you must be the lady from the software company to be sure to be sure." said Mr. Tord, who wore extremely thick, round glasses that didn't help his eyesight very much.

"Mr. Tord, I need to use your main computer terminal."

"Oh, sure you do. Here, let me take your coat first." said Mr. Tord, reaching out and grabbing Horace Claghandle by the scalp. "My, this coat, it sure has to be one of d'heaviest coats of all." muttered Mr. Tord. He opened the door to the main stairwell, thinking it was the cloakroom, and hung Horace Claghandle on a hook that wasn't there. "Now madam, what is it you were saying...?"

Mr. Tord's visitor was gone.

"Well, isn't that the strangest thing!" he said to a large red fire extinguisher. Then he noticed something small and flat on the floor. "Ah, a letter. It must have falled out of the lady's pocket." he said as he picked up the floppy disk.

N'Gar Thrombobo had gone on a drastic diet. He'd wiped out all the useless data he'd accumulated at the sewerage plant and got himself down to just over 500K of densely-packed programming. Once more he was a lean, hungry fighting machine - now all he needed was a means of escape.

Mr. Tord was sitting at what he took to be his office desk, trying to open what he thought was an envelope with his penknife. After a few moments' waggling he succeeded only in breaking the blade.

"Damned thing!" he muttered, "I'll put it in the drawer for later."

He grabbed the drive switch on the console in front of him and pulled hard enough to yank the casing six inches out from the wall, and take half the wires off the back. He peered at the sticking drawer, pushed the envelope into the little gap he could see at the top, stood up, opened the door to the coffee machine, and tried to get in.

Sure that the sick, evil, tortured mind of Horace Claghandle was threatening to defeat him at the last moment by sabotaging the mainframe, N'Gar Thrombobo saved himself onto the floppy that had by some miracle appeared in the last functioning drive a fraction of a second before it stopped spinning for good.

But he had the feeling that he was not alone. That there was something there, something lurking in the blackness just outside the range of his perception. Something so terrifying, yet so irresistible that...

MATAHARI!

SOLUTION TO PRIZE CROSSWORD No8

The first correct entry out of the bag was, **Angela Bonner** of **Falmouth** who wins £25.00 of software for her micro. Here's what the completed crossword should have looked like...



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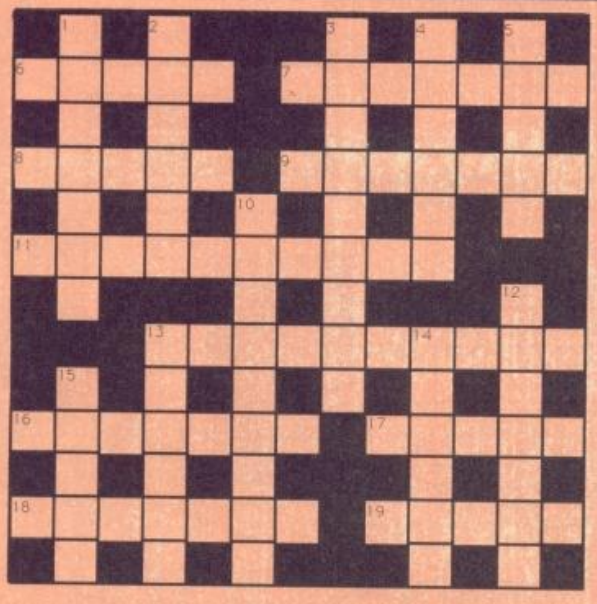
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SEND YOUR ENTRIES TO PRIZE CROSSWORD 10, ACE, 4 QUEEN STREET, BATH BAI 1EJ. CLOSING DATE JANUARY 5TH

THE ACE PRIZE CROSSWORD No10

Set by Mips

The first correct entry taken from the postbag wins software worth £25.00. Closing date for entries is January 5th. The ACE crossword is cryptic. The answer might be an anagram, or formed from the end of one word and the beginning of another, or simply hinted at by the clue. Most - but not quite all - of the answers are computer related.

ACROSS

6. Contagious game from Firebird (5)
7. Parts starved of commercials (7)
8. Give one a lesson to reform cheat (5)
9. A loud explosion from Zortech (3,4)
11. Knockout game from Hewson (10)
13. Do I have sense to form a software house? (10)
16. 'Blue Sun' - game developed by Hewson (7)
17. Game in party Peter threw (1,4)
18. Says once again they've been seen before (7)
19. Scandinavian goblin strolling around (5)

DOWN

1. Flaming winger's game (7)
2. Additional problem about officer's software house (6)
3. Habit-forming software house (9)
4. Remembered about one being in the club (6)
5. Way one put on weight (5)
10. Tells one what to do (9)
12. I compel new characters to turn into machine code (7)
13. Entertains Sue and Sam playing together (6)
14. A planet when about to revolve (6)
15. Student always at the bar (5)

Operation Wolf

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THE ACE PUZZLE No10

Set by Archie Medes

I have a copy of the latest best-selling novel which I propose to read over a number of consecutive days. In addition, I have imposed a number of extra requirements relating to the number of pages to be read on each of the days. These are as follows:

1. On no single day do I wish to read more than 300 pages.
2. On each day after the first, I intend to read as many pages as indicated by the product of the digits of the page reached the night before.
3. The final day's reading should bring me EXACTLY to the last page of the book.

For example, if the book had 62 pages I might decide to read 24 pages the first day. This would mean that I would have to read 2 times 4 pages on the second day, thus bringing me to page 32 - i.e. 24 plus 8. The third day would need only 6 pages to be read (to page 38) and I would finish the book on the fourth day by reading 24 pages bringing me exactly to page 62.

Can you say what is the longest book (i.e. number of pages) that I can read using this set of rules, and how many days will it take?

Instead of working the puzzle out with pencil and paper, why not devise a simple listing that will allow your micro to solve it for you?

NAME.....

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.....

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SEND YOUR ENTRIES TO PRIZE PUZZLE 10, ACE, 4 QUEEN STREET, BATH BAI 1EJ. CLOSING DATE JANUARY 5TH

SOLUTION TO THE ACE PUZZLE No8

The first correct entry out of the post-bag was **Larry Barnes** of **Leeds** who wins £25.00 of software for his micro.

The four aces of spades originally occupied the following positions from the top of the pack:

33 97 161 193

The listing 'shuffles' and 'deals' a pack of 208 cards in the manner described in the puzzle. The enlarged pack is represented by an array PK(), each part of which is initially seeded with its position from the top of the pack. As the position of the cards is altered these values are transferred within the array. In this way the array represents the cards as they are at each stage of the deal, but the values held in the array are the initial positions of the cards at the beginning. Thus, when the pack is reduced to just four cards, these initial positions can be determined.

Lines 100 to 120 set up the array and place the original values in place. Each step of the shuffle, i.e. top card to bottom then discard top card, is performed by removing the top card (temporarily holding its value in variable Z) and then shifting each of the units in the array up two places. This has the effect of also discarding the top card, as the card which was originally at third position is now on the top, and so on. The card held in variable Z is then replaced at the bottom of the pack (line 180). A count (C) keeps track of the number of cards currently in the pack and when this falls to 4 the program prints out the values in the remaining four sections of the array - that is, the initial positions that these cards occupied at the start.

LISTING

```
100 N=208
110 DIM PK(N)
120 FOR F=1 TO N:PK(F)=F:NEXT
130 C=N
140 Z=PK(1)
150 FOR F=1 TO C-2
160 PK(F)=PK(F+2)
170 NEXT
180 C=C-1:PK(C)=Z
190 IF C=4 THEN GOTO 210
200 GOTO 140
210 PRINT PK(1),PK(2),PK(3),PK(4)
```

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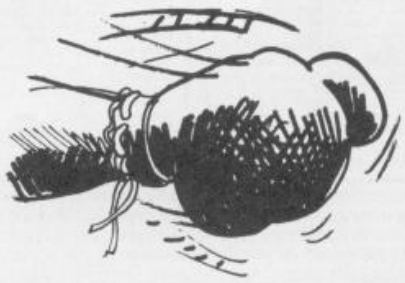
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Leaderboard	5.99	N/A	8.50	12.50	8.50	12.50	21.50	21.50

Title	Spectrum Cass	Spectrum Disc	C64 Cass	C64 Disc	AMS Cass	AMS Disc	ST	Amiga
LED Storm	6.99	10.50	7.50	10.99	7.50	10.99	14.99	17.99
Linekers Hot-Shot	6.50	10.50	8.50	12.50	8.50	12.50	16.50	16.50
Live & Let Die	6.95	9.95	6.95	10.50	6.95	10.50	12.95	12.95
Living Daylights	3.99	N/A	3.99	11.99	3.99	11.99	N/A	N/A
Manhatten Dealers	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	13.99	16.99
Mickey Mouse	6.50	10.50	8.50	12.50	8.50	12.50	16.50	16.50
Mindfighter	10.50	N/A	10.50	13.95	10.50	13.99	16.95	16.95
Nebulus	6.99	N/A	7.99	12.50	7.99	12.50	14.99	14.99
Nemesis	2.99	N/A	2.99	10.50	2.99	10.50	N/A	N/A
Netherworld	6.50	10.50	8.50	12.50	8.50	12.50	16.50	16.50
Night Raider	8.50	10.50	8.50	12.50	8.50	12.50	16.50	16.09
Not a Penny More	3.99	N/A	3.99	10.50	3.99	N/A	5.99	N/A
Operation Wolf	5.50	—	6.50	8.99	6.50	10.50	12.99	15.99
Out Run	6.99	10.50	7.50	10.99	7.50	10.99	13.99	13.99
Overlander	5.50	9.99	6.95	8.50	6.95	10.50	13.99	16.95
Pac Mania	6.50	N/A	6.99	10.99	6.50	10.99	13.95	13.95
Pacland	6.50	N/A	6.95	10.50	6.95	10.50	13.95	16.95
Pink Panther	7.50	10.50	8.50	12.50	8.50	12.50	16.50	16.50
Platoon	5.99	N/A	5.99	10.50	5.99	10.50	13.95	15.99
Pool of Radiance	N/A	N/A	8.50	12.50	N/A	N/A	21.50	21.50
Power Pyramids	6.50	N/A	6.95	9.99	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A
Psycho Pig UXB	7.50	10.50	8.50	12.50	8.50	12.50	N/A	N/A
Quadralien	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	13.95	15.95
R-Type	7.25	10.99	7.25	10.99	7.25	10.99	16.99	16.99
Rambo III	5.50	—	6.50	8.99	6.50	10.50	12.99	15.99
Renegade	3.99	N/A	3.99	10.50	3.99	10.50	N/A	N/A
Return of Jedi	6.50	N/A	6.50	10.99	6.50	10.99	12.99	12.99
Revenge of Doh	5.50	N/A	6.50	9.99	6.50	10.50	13.95	16.95
Robocop	5.99	N/A	6.50	10.99	6.50	10.99	12.99	15.99
Road Blasters	7.50	N/A	8.50	12.50	8.50	12.50	16.50	21.50
Road Runner	3.99	N/A	8.50	4.99	8.50	12.50	16.50	N/A
Rolling Thunder	7.50	10.50	8.50	9.50	8.50	12.50	16.50	21.50
SDI	7.25	—	7.25	10.99	7.25	10.99	13.99	20.99
Salamander	5.50	N/A	6.50	9.99	6.50	10.50	N/A	N/A
Savage	5.99	N/A	6.99	9.99	5.99	10.99	N/A	N/A
Scrabble Deluxe	10.50	N/A	10.50	13.99	10.50	13.99	13.99	13.99
Sentinel	6.95	N/A	6.95	10.50	6.95	10.50	10.50	13.95
Sidewinder	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	6.95	6.95
Silent Service	6.95	N/A	6.95	10.50	6.95	10.50	16.95	16.95
Silicon Dreams	10.50	12.99	10.50	12.99	10.50	12.99	10.50	13.95
Space Harrier	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	13.95	16.95
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Star Wars	4.99	N/A	4.99	10.50	4.99	10.50	10.99	10.99
Starglider II	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	16.95	16.95
Starray	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	16.95
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Stir Crazy (BOBO)	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	13.95	13.95
Strike F. Harrier	6.95	N/A	6.95	10.50	6.95	10.50	13.99	16.95
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Super Hang On	6.99	N/A	6.99	10.50	6.99	10.50	13.99	N/A
Supersprint	3.99	N/A	3.99	N/A	3.99	N/A	10.50	N/A
Supreme Challenge	7.99	12.50	7.99	12.50	7.99	12.50	—	—
T-Wrecks	6.50	10.50	8.50	12.50	N/A	N/A	16.50	16.50
Target Renegade	4.99	10.50	5.99	10.50	5.99	10.50	N/A	N/A
Techno Cop	5.99	9.50	6.99	10.99	6.99	10.99	13.99	13.99
Thunderblade	6.99	10.99	7.99	12.50	7.99	12.50	15.99	19.99
Thundercats	5.50	9.99	6.95	10.50	6.95	10.50	13.95	16.95
Tiger Road	5.99	10.50	7.50	10.99	7.50	10.99	14.99	17.99
Time & Magik	10.50	10.50	10.50	10.50	10.50	10.50	13.95	13.95
Time Stood still	5.50	9.99	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	13.95	N/A
Trivial Pursuit & New Beginning	10.50	—	10.50	12.99	10.50	12.99	13.99	13.99
Typhoon	5.50	N/A	6.50	9.99	6.50	10.50	N/A	N/A
Ultimate Golf	—	—	7.99	12.50	—	—	15.99	15.99
Vampires Empire	6.50	10.50	8.50	12.50	8.50	12.50	16.50	16.50
Victory Road	5.50	—	6.50	8.99	6.50	10.50	12.99	15.99
Vindicator	4.99	N/A	5.99	10.50	5.99	10.50	N/A	N/A
Virus	5.50	N/A	6.50	8.99	6.50	10.50	12.99	12.99
Whirligig	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	13.99	13.99
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Wizball	3.99	N/A	3.99	10.50	3.99	10.50	12.99	15.99
Winter Olympiad 88	6.95	N/A	6.95	10.50	6.95	10.50	13.95	13.95
World Darts	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	6.95	5.50
Xenon	5.50	N/A	6.95	10.50	6.95	10.50	13.95	13.95
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BBCB MICROCOMPUTER cab colour monitor, Panasonic KXP1081 print and disk drive 80/40 track £550 ono. 2B Crownlands Lane, Ossett, W Yorks. Tel: (0924) 273243.

AMSTRAD 464 colour disc drive, thermal printer, 256K memory speech Pyradev, Advanced Art Studio, Mini Office, tons of games, books, mags, tapes and discs £450. Tel: 0375 679301 after 7pm.

AMSTRAD CPC464 with colour monitor, very good condition including 40 games, manuals, boxes. Cost £600+ will sell for £150 ono. Please phone 01 530 5325 and ask for Malcolm.

SPECTRUM + 3 excellent condition boxed as new with games including Outrun and Trailblazer, Cheetah joystick and cassette leads. Will sell for £150 only! Phone 0707 54886.

SPECTRUM SOFTWARE - Game Set Match £3, Hit Pak £2.50, Solid Gold £2.50, Enduro Racer £2, Space Harrier £2, Sold a Million One £2 or exchange for Commodore games. Tel: 0935 706551.

SPECTRUM 128+ for sale, still boxed, good condition, comes with Turbo Interface, leads, joystick, cassette recorder £260 worth of games (original) £90 ono. Phone Brighton on (0273) 551975.

ATARI 520STFM (unboxed) good condition and 16 games including Elite, Starglider - £200. Write to Paul Colwell, 15 St Marys Road, Oxford, OX4 1PX.

FOR SALE Spectrum Plus Two, Kempston Mouse, speech synth, loads of games, utilities and mags, also joystick and mouse mat, worth over £300, only £150. Please phone Oxford 863766.

REAL TIME text adventure with interactive characters for Amstrad CPC's plus quiz program £4.99 disc only. Send SAE to SM Langan, 33 Dacre Crescent, Kimpton, Hitchin, Herts, SG4 8QT for details.

SEGA GAMES CONSOLE, two controllers and four games including Choplifter and Kung Fu Kid. Excellent condition, will sell for £140 ono. Tel: 01 291 7094 after 5pm.

CBM 64, 2 data cassettes, £300+ of original software, Music Maker, joystick, many books and magazines. Still 18 months insurance remaining. All for £180. Tel: 0430 423134 (Nth Humberside) after 5pm.

IMMACULATE C64, disc drive, C2N, Pro joystick, £500+ worth software, reset cartridge, programming manuals, Basic tutorial programs, loadsa magazines. Worth well over £800. Will accept £320 ono. Tel: 0923 778923 Jason.

AMSTRAD CPC6128 colour with Stop Press, light-pen, Multiface, joystick, 15 blank disks plus over 150 original games including many classics and some utilities. Excelent condition £450 ono. Tel: Gwent (0495) 213146.

SWAP 1 MEG ST with second drive + 100 discs for Mega ST. Can offer cash instead of disks or drive. Phone Billy 0236 68507 (Airdrie) after 7pm.

SEGA SYSTEM boxed, 5 games, manual, catalogues, joystick £90 ono. Spectrum + 2, 50 games, joystick, manual £90 ono or swap either or both for STFM (0332) 761633 after 3.30pm.

CBM 64, joysticks, £500 games, mouse, Freeze Frame, mags, 2 recorders, sell £300 or swap for Atari ST. Phone Alistair (036554) 574 6-10pm (Nl). Week days only call now!

SPECTRUM GAMES: originals going cheap. Prices from £4 to £1. For list send SAE to James Knowles, 21 Horsewood Road, Somersal, Chesterfield, Derbyshire, S42 7LS.

SWOP OR SELL fast ASM and Carrier Command for ST £10 each. BBC 'B' joystick, games (disk), books for sale cheap. Phone Alan 031 343 2978.

AMSTRAD 464 with colour monitor £220 ono. Joystick, 30 original titles inc Bard's Tale, World Class Leaderboard, Football Manager 2, £40 mags. Phone David after 5pm on (01) 892 9152.
CPC 464 with colour monitor, light pen, Basic manual, plus hundreds of games, worth £1050. Offer £500. Phone David (evenings) 01 657 1586 Selsdon, South Croydon, Surrey.

AMSTRAD CPC464, mono monitor with twelve games and some magazines. Only three months old. Cost £249.99. Sell £150. Reply: 29 Davaloe Terrace, Philipstown, New Tredegar, Gwent, S Wales, NP2 6BH.

C64, 1571 disc drive, 250 discs with three disc boxes, Action Replay 3, datasette, 100 tapes, latest originals, excellent condition, worth £900. Sell £345. Phone Wrexham 0978 266014.

ATARI 520STFM, mouse, disk box, loads of PD software, loads of mags, all boxed, new, £240 or with ten games worth £150, only £290 or games for £55 ono. Telephone 061 832 5809.

COMMODORE 64, C2N, Neos, mouse + over £300 software and mags, all recent titles worth over £450, accept £150 ono. Phone 0530 243968.

SPECTRUM 128 + £300 games, turbo joystick, B/W TV/monitor, interface, datacorder, £150 ono quick sale needed. Contact Stuart Annakin, 4 Ashfield Grove, Pudsey, West Yorks, LS28 6AG. Tel: 0532 573471.

ATARI 520 STFM plus over £300 of excellent software and over 30 American PD disks, boxed plus literature £350. Phone Matt on 0579 84124 weekdays 4pm onwards.

AMSTRAD 464 boxed, colour monitor, speech synthesiser, Quickshot joystick, tutorial guide package, games worth over £600. Hits include ATF etc. Will sell for only £300. If interested phone Worcester 350057.

C128, 5.25 DD Assorted discs, joysticks, games £300 ono + C64 datassette, joysticks, 50 + games £150 ono or swap for Amiga 500. tel 01 878 2130 , 01 736 3854, ask for Pete.

CBM64C including mouse, £500 worth of original games, Outrun, Test Drive, Paperboy etc. Datasette, leads, 2 joysticks, manuals, mags and box, together worth £850. £275 ono. Almost new. Tel: 0602 612391.

CBM 64, 1541 disc drive, tape deck, joystick etc, some software £150. Phone 0285 4886 after 6pm.

SPECTRUM +, all leads, transformer, manual plus additional book, approx 95 software titles, head cleaner, over 250 mins of data-free tape, recorder leads, only £100 the lot. Phone after 5pm 01 597 7220.

WANT A MICRO MSX 64K Sanyo + cassette + printer, books, mags, games. tel: George on 0707 338400 after 6pm. £150-£200.

C64 GAMES on cass, 110 all original inlcuding Barbarain 2, Elite, Gunship, Outrun plus many recent releases worth over £400. Bargain at £95. Tel: Rob 0440 61696 after 5pm.

CBM 64, datasette, modem, doubler 64, issues 1 to 35 of Zzap 64, £300+ of original software, carry case. All boxed, only £200. Phone Russell Ayres, Newbury (0635) 64605 after 6pm.

COMMODORE 128, 1541 disk drive, C2N cassette, Miracle modem, 100+ games including Flight Sim II, Renegade II, Strike Fleet etc, worth over £1500, sell for £650 ono. Horsham 61775.

ATARI 520STFM 1 mega, 11 months old, all boxed as new, 30 games, carrier Command, Virus, Dungeon Master, Xenon, Gauntlet II, Oids, Terrapods, Wizball, Flight Sim II, Degas II, £396. Tel: 0279 643107 after 5pm.

SEGA CONSOLE, all leads, control pads. Good condition. Wonder Boy, Rocky, My Hero, Wrestling, Secret Command, Hang On, Choplifter, Quartet, sell for £100 ono.
Phone Rotherham (0709) 371594.

SPECTRUM + 3, multiface 3, Brother HR-5 printer, loads of disks, cassette player, loads of cassettes, disk box, only 10 months old, all for £150. Tel: 01 529 7192.

Here's a great way of receiving free advice from public-spirited readers. If you make use of this service, please respect the Helpline code:
- **If writing for help, enclose a stamped, self-addressed envelope.**
- **Do not make phone calls at anti-social hours.**

THE ACE HELPLINE

I have completed the following: The Pawn, The Bard's Tale, Ultima IV, Phantasie I, Dracula, Never Ending Story, Zork III, Wishbringer, Enchanter, Borrowed Time, Kobyashi Naru, Heavy on the Magick, Legacy, The Prince of Magic, Claws of Despair, Wizards & The Princess.
Derek Wong, 42 Ingram Road, Thornton Heath, Surrey. CR4 8EB.

Wishbringer, Labyrinth, The Hobbit, The Hulk, Spiderman, Seabase Delta, Kobyashi Naru.
Ann Gray, 9 Alness Close, Birchwood, Lincoln, Lincs. LN6 0YX.

The Pawn, Sorcerer, Planetfall, Leather Goddesses of Phobos.
C.F.H. Bass, 21 Third Close, E Molesey, Surrey, KT8 9PW.

Heroes of Karn, Imagination, Seabase Delta, D,A,A n Everythin, Fourth Protocol I, II & III, Ship of Doom, Message from Andromeda, Kobyashi Naru, Questprobe III, Forest at Worlds End, Wild Bunch, Knight Tyme, Spellbound, The Hobbit, Bugsy Part 1 only, Mops To, Heroes of Karn, Seabase Delta, Gremlins, Lord of the Rings (Part II only), Robin of Sherwood, After Shock.
Russell Cooper, 12 Butlers Close, 52 Butlers Road, Handsworth Wood, Birmingham. B20 2PA.

Let me know your problem with Football director, The Double Soccer Boss, Premier League and Soccer Star and I'll sort you out. Send SAE to:Paul Phillips, 29 Ormestone House, Hartcliffe, Bristol.

Adventure Quest, Aftershock, Apache Gold, Arnold Goes to Somewhere Else, Boggit, Bored of the Rings, Brawn Free, Castle Blackstar, Castle of Skull Lord, Classic Adventure, Colossal Adventure, Colour of Magic, Crystal Theft, Dodgy Geezers, Dracula, Dungeon Adventure, Dungeons, A,A 'n Everythin, Emerald Isle, Enchanter, Erik The Viking, Escape from Khoshima, Espionage Island, Fantasia Diamond, Forest at Worlds Ends, Heavy on the Magick, Heroes of Karn, Hitchhikers Guide to the Galaxy, Hobbit, Imagination, Inca Curse, Jewels of Babylon, Kentilla, Lords of Time, Message of Andromeda, Mindshadow, Morden's Quest, Necris Dome,Never Ending Story, Price of Magik, Project Volcano, Qor, Questprobe III, Red Moon, Return to Eden, Seabase Delta, Seas of Blood, Smugglers Cove, Snowball, Souls of Darkon, Spellbreaker, Spytrek, Subsunk, Sydney Affair, Terrormolinos, The Case of the mixed-up Shymer, The Trial of Arnold Blackwood, Vera Cruz Affair, Very Big Cave Adventure, Warlord, Wise and Fool of Blackwood, Worm in Paradise, Zork I

Joan Pancott. Telephone 0305 784155 – Any Day – Noon to 10pm. For technical help on Commodore 64 Basic and Machine/Assembler language. Please contact Johnathan Kendall (for most problems would you please write!) I will endeavour to reply to all letters – if you enclose a stamped addressed envelope!
Johnathan Kendall, 27 Bishop Bridge Road, Norwich, Norfolk, NR1 4ES. Tel: 0603 625987

The Pawn, Sorceror, Planetfall, Leather Goddess of Phobos.

Hitchhikers Guide to the Galaxy
Colin Bass, 21 Third Close, E. Molesey, Surrey, KT8 9PW.

The Pawn plus early stages for Guild of Thieves (I've only scored 300+ points so far).
Clive, 66 Billett Lane, Berkhamsted, Herts, HP4 1DR.

Jack The Ripper (p1-3), Dracula (p1-3), Hampstead, Big Sleeze and others.
N Buzzard, 11 Faversham Drive, Weston-super-Mare, Avon, BS24 9NZ.

I can help Spectrum owner with GAC, +2 loading problems, removing attribute clash + any basic programming problems. GAC, PAW and I also have an extensive knowledge if ZX BASIC. I can help fellow P B Mers on Hade Games 'Avalon'. Just send an SAE to:
Matt Burke, 33 Brookhouse Hill, Fulwood, Sheffield, S10 3TB.

Adventure Quest, Beyond Zork, Infidel, Plundered Hearts, Starcross, Trinity, Castle Blacktar, Classic/Colossal Adventure, Dungeon Adventure, Emerald Isle, Gnome Ranger, Guild of Thieves, Hacker, H.H.G.T.G, Jinxter, Knight Orc, Leather Goddesses, Lords of Time, Mindshadow, Nord and Bert, The Pawn, Planetfall, Price of Magik, Red Moon, Return to Eden, Snowball, Wishbringer, Worm in Paradise
Phil Armstrong, 92 Dryden Road, Low Fell, Gateshead, Tyne & Wear. NE9 5TX
Tel: (091) 4875639

The Colour of Magic Part 1 and some of Part 2.
John Morris, 130 Avondale Road, Shipley, West Yorkshire. Tel: 0274 586238 weekdays 3-6pm, weekends all day.

For tech help on Dungeon Master Tel 0734 780508, ask for Chris.

Amiga owner willing to swap hints & tips on the following games:- Great Giana Sisters, Leathernecks XR35, F18 Interceptor, Test Drive, Xenon, Firepower, Hollywood Strip Poker, Tetris, ECO, Vampire Emprie, Soccer Supremo, Garrison I & II, Bubble bobble and over 100 more.
Mr S Lyle, 27 Stansted Close, Chelmsford, Essex, CM1 2TW. Tel: 0245 356641 after 8pm or weekends

Adventure Land, Colossal Adventure, Circus, Colditz, Greedy Gulch, Jewels of Babylon, Knights Quest, Magic Mountain, Pharaoh's Tomb, Eye of Bain, Planet of Death, Ship of Doom, Espionage Island, Hobbit, Invincible Island, Inca Curse, Ten Little Indians, Perseus and Andromeda, Lords of Time, SAE required with all requests for help.
Nirmal Singh, 104 Vansittart Road, London, E7 0AA.

Colossal Cave (original adventure), Guild of Thieves, Leather Goddesses of Phobos, The Pawn, Jinxter.
Clive J Mewse, 66 Billet Lane, Berkhamstead, Herts, HP4 1DR.

All aspects of BASIC especially adventures, debugging, compression and protection, simple machine code including RSXS, playtesting, poking. Please state level of understanding. Have got a CPC464, GT64, Multiface II+, DK 'tronics Speech rom. General Amstrad queries welcome but solutions not guaranteed.
Sean McManus, 226 Chertsey Rise, Stevenage, Herts. SG2 9JQ.

The Pawn and Knight Orc (part 1 and early part 2).
Shazad Ahmed, Tel: 01-340 9176 (4-10pm).

Bard's Tale I & II, Ultima IV, Phantasie 1, Gnome Ranger, Mindshadow.
Derek Wong, 42 Ingram Road, Thornton Heath, Surrey, CR4 8EB.

Dungeon Master
SAE to: Anthony Hopkins, 91 Springfield Avenue, Sandiacre Nottingham, NG10 5NA.

Commodore 64 help servcie, a new, free way 2 reviewing help on all games. Every arcade game is covered with pokes maps and tips. Old and new games send for information.
Mark Essen, 26 Thick Hollins Drive, Meltham, Huddersfield, HD7 3DL.

Jinxter, Pawn, Guild of Thieves, Leather Goddesses, Collosal Cave, Mr X. Clive Mewse, 438A Ewel Road, Tolworth, Surbiton, KT6 7EL.

The Pawn, Guild of Thieves, Jinxter, Corruption, The Hitchhikers Guide to the Galaxy, Hollywood Hijinx and I have 80+ points on Wishbringer.
Anil Tohani, 5 Orchard Avenue, Rainham, Essex RM13 9NY.

Any help on Ultima V appreciated. All letters answered. I have most character replies on disc in text files, almost complete dungeon plans, and will attempt to reciprocate on any info.
N.B.H Vickerstaff, 670 Yarm Road, Eaglescliffe, Cleveland, TS16 0DP. Tel: 0642 781073

Help on Hitchikers Guide to The Galaxy, Tasword, Qualitass, Tasprint, DMP2000. Ben Taylor, 5 Hope Street, Glossop, Derbyshire, SK13 9SB. Also help wanted on Stationfall.

C64/64/128 Help Service, write to me with a list of games that you want help on and I will send it back post haste. Please send a SAE and remember it is for your arcade type games only. Write to Mark Essen, 26 Thick Hollins Drive, Meltham, Hudderfield, HD7 3DL. Hurry!

Fed up with a crap picture on your MCOI with Atari ST? SAE for help sheet to: C Parker, 14 Cross Lanes, Pill, Bristol BS20 0JQ. Phone Pill 5242 after 6pm.

For technical help on all aspects of 68000 assembly language programming on the Atari ST, send sae. to Simon Jones, 267 Ansty Road, Wyken, Coventry CV2 3FL.

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There were and still are a couple of pools programs for the Atari ST that guarantee to you performance better than chance (?) or promise to you power? to forecast the pools the way you want. Others are asking you for disk for free demos while weeks are going by and you are missing your chance for a dividend. Nevertheless **pools-system** still remains the only one in the market that delivers the goods. Lets have a look at some facts. **Fact** user friendly and still the only one that does not require you to be some kind of a football expert or hot shot system analyser. **Fact** pools systems is the only one that performed even slightly during the difficult & unpredictable Australian season. **Fact 13/8/88.** 4 aways out of the recommended first 6. 10 homes out of the recommended first 15. **20/8/88** Start of the English season, the system trapped 9 out of the 14 score draws & all 4 no score draws. **27/8/88** 9 out of the 12 score draws & 3 out of 6 no score draws. 4 homes out of the recommended first 6. **3/9/88,** 6 homes out of the recommended first 7, 4 aways out of the recommended 6. 5 out of the 7 score draws & 2 out of the 3 no score draws. 40 correct results out of the 58 possible. **Fact**, all forecasted printouts available at any time for any checks. So do not waste your time with any other programs or systems. They are not going to entertain your hopes or wishes. And to top all the facts, we guarantee the **Pools-System** performs better than any other pools program in the market on any computer, because **we guarantee to you that using the Poolsbuster in cooperation with Poolsplanner you are going to win the pools more than once a year.**

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AMIGA DEMO CLUB? I would like to hear from any decent coders wishing to start up a demo club, contact John Stewart, 21 The Hollies, Shefford, Beds SG17 5BX.

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Needless to say, we cannot ourselves vouch for the credentials of any particular entry in this section. If you respond, it's at your own risk.

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THE BLITTER END...





JUST SAY NO TO TORTILLA CHIPS

Yes folks, even the finest brains and highest minds of the country are reduced to petty back-knifing and poor sportsmanship by those oh-so-competitive board games. Take revered ACE staff writer and all-round snuggly person Andy Smith, for instance. Andy is pictured here at Grandslam's press launch of *Espionage*, and doesn't he look pleased with himself. Small wonder: he wiped out not only the player opposite but indeed all other journalists present at the launch, thereby winning himself a bottle of champagne.

Are we elated by this victory over our rivals? Do we intend to gloat over their strategic shortcomings? In a word, no. What should be one of our proudest moments ever is instead one of deep shame. The plain truth is, Andy had played the game before. In a late night session of board games and Mexican food, the lad was intensively coached in *Espionage* tactics. It's rumoured that other ACE writers were involved: the whole team withdrew before medical tests could reveal the tell-tale traces of paprika and chillies, so we may never know for sure.

This scandal may rock the world of games journalism on its heels, but we Blitter-ites felt compelled to speak out in the interests of fair play and traditional British muddle-headedness. Naturally, we also felt compelled to strip the disgraced Smith of his champagne.

(Left) Andy Smith, still smug before his downfall: clearly, he's not a man to go hunting bubbly with.

FREE GAMES!

Mr David Willats of Clacton On Sea is pretty chuffed at the moment, so are Robert Whatcott of Evesham and Richard Moore of Leeds, why? Because they won our U.S. Gold competition, which means they'll all be getting FREE games for the next YEAR! These 25 lucky runners up each win themselves comletely brilliant ACE tee-shirts. D. Hamm, Reading. Gary Morton, Bristol. Simon Rinaldo, Bedford. Lee Kennedy, Hartlepool. D. Rutland, Sheffield. Kristian Streeter, Hampton. Edward Green, Faversham. Noel Mewish, London. Darren France, Rotherham. Richard Geddes, Ryton. Yuk Fai Simon Lai, London. Martin Grant, Rotherham. Sean Bradbury, ST Albans. A. Owens, Leicester. Noel Arrowsmith, Brandon. Michael Dorke, Swansea. J. Goman-Smith, Woking. Jason Nuell, Bristol. Jason Howes, Eastbourne. K. Naqui, Houndslow. Franco Livia, Edinburgh. Martin Forrester, Derby. G. Palfrey, ST Andrews. Gary King, Edinburgh. Chris Johnson. Northwich.

TRACK(S) AND FIELD

Truth to tell, it's been something of a month for boardgames. It only takes a casual glance at pages 68-70 to see just how far things have gone, but if further proof were needed just take a look at this picture of our esteemed editor Graeme Kidd. Firmly in the grip of boardgame fever, Graeme has actually donned a suit to meet his heroes, Ake and Henrik Andersson. In protocol terms this puts the authors of CDS's Tank Attack somewhere above HM the Queen, Sir Clive Sinclair and even ACE publisher Kevin Cox. (The addition of a hat would have afforded the Scandinavian pair a near-divine status, but mercifully Graeme stopped just short of this excess.)



Graeme Kidd, flanked (note fluent use of military jargon) by Ake and Hendrik.

Veteran Blitter End readers should note the vehicle in the background of this photo. We have it on good authority that this is in fact one of CRL's new company cars, as driven by Chief Exec Mike 'Road Warrior' Hodges. However, given that the photo was taken at the National Army Museum in Chelsea, there may just possibly be another explanation.

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ARCADE ACTION

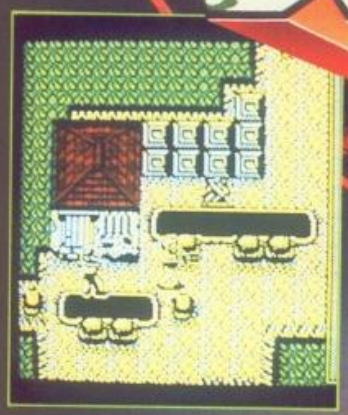
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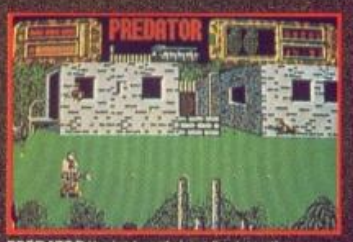
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