

ACE

MAGAZINE OF THE YEAR

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

ADVANCED COMPUTER ENTERTAINMENT

CDI AND BEYOND

MIKI KAWAHARA

PC BURN UP

▼ Which game's got pole position?



DESKTOP DISNEY

Instant animation on your micro

◀ **LORDS of the
Biting Sun**



GRILLED!

▲ The heat is on
for over 30 new
releases



◀ **KULT
Status?**

IN THE PINK

Games Design Explained, Ace Visitors - a Life In The Week of Us, Puzzles, Compos, and Results.

CHECK OUT THE NAMES!

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For the first time ever, you can experience the excitement of the fantasy world of Dungeons & Dragons with a computer game that will challenge your skills, test your imagination, and reward your adventures with a variety of rewards. For the first time, you can experience the excitement of the fantasy world of Dungeons & Dragons with a computer game that will challenge your skills, test your imagination, and reward your adventures with a variety of rewards. For the first time, you can experience the excitement of the fantasy world of Dungeons & Dragons with a computer game that will challenge your skills, test your imagination, and reward your adventures with a variety of rewards.



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COMPETE!

Fancy a spin in Ferrari? Or a champagne day out at Biggin Hill with a free flight for extra kicks? Then check out this month's ACE competitions: System 3's Mark Cole is offering to take you for a spin on page 31, while Digital Integration could get you airborne on page 25. Book early to avoid disappointment.



Advancing with ACE

Cast an eye over this month's masthead and you'll notice that ACE has changed hands. The magazine has been bought by ENAP, because they recognize ACE's position as the leading magazine in computer entertainment, bringing intelligent, lively, informative news, reviews and features to you - the avid, discerning computer entertainment audience there in.

And that's the way ACE is going to stay! We are committed to keeping it the leading magazine for anyone interested in what's new in computer entertainment hardware and software. ACE will continue to bring you state-of-the-art features on state-of-the-art technology wherever it applies to computer entertainment. And we're committed to doing whatever we need to get you the best - just take a look at next month's report from the massive Consumer Electronics Show in the U.S.A.

Cast another eye over the masthead and you might notice a couple of familiar names near the top; yes, folks, Pete Connor and Steve Cook - launch editors of ACE back in August 1987 - are back at the helm, ensuring that ACE stays at the cutting edge of the market. And our commitment to Advanced Computer Entertainment means that ACE will be bringing you some really special issues over the months to come. Stay with us - it's going to be an exciting time!



ROAD RACER



THE RACING JOY



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Road racers on the PC - have they got it under the bonnet? Claran Brennan road tests The Duel, CarRun and Lombard RAC Rally, and comes to some encouraging conclusions.

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So do - treat yourself to a year's worth of ACE - you know it makes sense.

IN THE PINK

Right from Right, the screeny scribble N-Gate Teenbooks, some really odd ACE Odd Facts, competitive results, the Crossroads, the Puzzle, a Week in The Life of ACE and what a week! your small ads, readers' helpings and finally, in the end, ultimately and so on, you arrive at the The Bit for Us, where we hand off this month's transmission with some not-to-be-overlooked stuff - including some stunning shots of those darling Demands lying, not very successfully, in water (oh, that's not what I had a long sentence, Marcell)

He's used to getting what he wants . . .

He's big. He's back. He's James Bond 007 . . . and now in a thrilling adaptation from the new movie Licence to Kill, you can take his place.

Licence to Kill is a multi-level, multi-role game - you take the controls of helicopters, boats and tankers, perform some death-defying parachute stunts and take to the seas for a spot of barefoot water-skiing. A steady aim and steady fire is needed - shoot from the hip and take out the 'badies'.

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ts . . This time he wants revenge.



James Bond (Timothy Dalton) and
Pam Bouvier (Cary Lowell) in
a scene from LICENSE TO KILL

GERRY ANDERSON'S

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ACE NEWS

IMMORTAL PROSE?

Microprose's purchase of Tele-soft, as revealed in a last month's report in last month's issue, has now made them one of the largest US-based software companies.

The immediate effects of this will be the release of vast amounts of software onto the market that was previously held up by Tele-soft while the sale was being negotiated. Titles coming onto the market in the next couple of weeks include *World Dreams*, *Rock Ranger*, *Old Star Trek*, and *Center Command* for Spectrum owners.

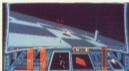
The long term effects, however, are less certain. The three labels - Banderd, Firebird, and Starbird - are each highly individual. How will Microprose handle them, and what sort of products will they be bringing out?

Stuart Bell, Microprose MD, is totally confident that Banderd and Firebird will continue to release 'top-quality' games. 'We're delight-

ed to have the opportunity to give these labels our support and to give the games greater coverage. Our intentions from the States are not to release ANY product until we're absolutely certain that it will maintain our reputation for quality software.'

When it comes to the budget range Starbird, however, Stuart isn't quite so forthcoming. This is something of a problem for us, he admits. Microprose are used to selling games in the top end of the market, costing over £25. It's a big jump from there down to the £5-9.99 category. It's early days at the moment and we're still not sure what we're going to do.' Rumour has it that Starbird may well be sold onto another company.

Rumour also has it that Microprose paid only £480,000 for the entire Tele-soft empire. If this is correct it would seem to be remarkably cheap. ACE has in the past investigated the economics of Tele-



ST Starfighter - just one of the titles bought by Microprose when it snapped up Tele-soft.

soft and rumours that the operation was running at a heavy loss were freely denied by Tele-soft's Paula Byrne. The circumstances of the Tele-soft sale could well suggest that the company was indeed being substantial amounts of money. 'I'm contractually bound,' said Stuart Bell, 'not to discuss the financial performance of the company.' Paula Byrne was not available to comment.

LOOKING AHEAD

Meanwhile, ST owners can leave a sigh of relief: many American companies give their support to the ST format than they do the Amiga because the ST has not yet taken off in the US - and many believe that it never will. Microprose, however, are adamant that they will be going both ST and Amiga owners in the UK completely, and could, perhaps.

Technicians will also be glad to know that the 'buds are in the hands of a company committed to new technology. Microprose are investing heavily in custom hardware under the direction of ex-Mar founder Gene Lighter and are also, according to Stuart Bell, 'maintaining a close watch over the CD scene.'

The Microprose company system is due for launch in July. Will we see the first ever Banderd console game in 1990?

GAMES MAD

Stuart Bell, the man who's at the head of Microprose UK - and now of the Bird labels - has at least one thing in his favour. Unusually for a company director he's mad about playing games.

'I've got an ST, an Amiga, a 286 PC-computer, a C64, and a Spectrum,' boasted Stuart. '... and an Atari 400 for playing older games.'

One reason Stuart was pleased to get his hands on Tele-soft was that it meant he got a free copy of *World Dreams*. 'I got it four-hour hours on it over the weekend,' he enthused. Obviously a case of a man who loved the game so much he bought the company.



Stuart Bell

SCROLLED OFF...

The new line up of product from Banderd, including Spectrum updates of *Center Command* and other long-awaited titles, is everything one could have expected, except for *Magnific Scrolls*.

According to MS' Anita Sinclair, Scrolls' contract with ST was not 'irrevocable', that is, in the event of ST being sold, the rights to distribute Scrolls' product was not to be sold with it. Will Microprose be able to get their hands on the Magnific Scrolls games?

'Microprose are a very consistent organisation,' says Anita, 'and I've got the greatest respect for Stuart. We are ready to discuss the situation at any time.' Stuart Bell, for his part, believes that the Scrolls' games are 'quality adventures that are fit to be proud to sell'. Despite the glowing evidence of mutual admiration, selling seems to be done - and Magnific Scrolls are known to have been commissioning software houses around the country in a bid to secure a new publisher.

Meanwhile, Anita Sinclair is not a happy woman. 'For the last four months,' she claims, 'we've been in complete turmoil and have suffered serious losses as a result. Our products were not properly distributed during the time and Fair in particular was very badly affected. As far as we're concerned, the whole story is one of complete mismanagement by Tele-soft. We never knew what was going on and we were never consulted.'

ARCHIE GOES TO WAR...

...against the Amiga and ST as Acorn announce 'cheaper' model.

Acorn have at long last announced a lower cost Archimedes - but it's still going to cost you £549.00, and that's without the monitor. The A3000 actually bears the BBC name on the box, but to all intents and purposes it's a cut-down Archimedes and is fully compatible with software for the Archimedes 300 and 400 - and

that means it will run Zarch, 3D Post and any other Archimedes program you can remember. Emulators are expected to be available soon to allow the machine to run BBC and MS-DOS packages.

The A3000 is being aimed at the education market and at what Acorn's Michael Page describes as the 'serious home user'. Page

responded to questions on the machine's price by describing it as 'better than a Macintosh, it's very affordable for the facilities.'

Acorn are unlikely to make much of a dent in the Amiga/ST market at the price tag they have chosen. Rather, as Michael Page says, they hope to 'create a new market, to encourage those who may not have thought about buying a computer before' by expecting to do this by emphasising the machine's 'flexibility', with its built-in sound facilities and powerful graphics.

SHOULD YOU MESS WITH ARCHIE?

There's no doubt that the A3000 (and other Archimedes) matched specifications for anything available on other home markets: it's faster, has superb graphics, built-in stereo sound, and offers MS-DOS emulation (with a £29.00 software package).

So if it's easier than an ST or an Amiga, should you leave the piggy bank and rush down to your local Acorn dealer? Well, hang on just a minute. The basic A3000 costs £176.95 by the time you've paid VAT, and on top of that you're going to get a desired more for itself! At the point of £295 colours if you can't see them!, which could set you back another few hundred quid, so we're talking an total price of getting on for £1800.00, which isn't chicken-feed.

Then there's software - although there are, according to Acorn, approaching 1000 software packages available for the Archimedes range, not many of these fall in the area of entertainment. Not too many problems if you want to do graphics or music or simply word processing, but if you want a good, wide choice of games then just isn't a bit around. This situation may change - if the A3000 takes off. But given the market Acorn are aiming at - education and the 'serious home user' - it seems unlikely that the A3000 will ever have the range of entertainment titles of, say, the ST or the Amiga.

CHEAP ARCHIE, CHEAPER MAC?

When is an Apple not an Apple? When it's an Amiga fitted out with A-Max, a Macintosh emulator from US-based software publisher Readysoft, the team behind Dragon's Lair.

By utilising a set of Apple ROMs (either 64K for a standard Mac or 128K for a Mac Plus) in conjunction with a cartridge and software package, Readysoft claim that A-Max will run 'many' Mac software packages at full Mac speed.

If it lives up to its manufacturer's claims, A-Max would allow Amiga users access to a range of powerful software products, including some stunning Mac RPGs (see *Quarterstaff* review on page 88).

The package costs £134.99 - about £200 cheaper than a low-end Mac. Not surprisingly, Apple have put the offer '...in the hands of our lawyers.'

A3000 - THE SPEC

CPU	68010 (Acorn Ric. Macintosh), 32 bit bus
RAM	1 Mbytes, internally expandable to 2 Mbytes
ROM	0.5 Mbytes; contains RISC Operating System
DISC DRIVES	Single 3.5" floppy drive; second floppy drive and hard disc can be fitted.
GRAPHICS	640x400 resolution 256 colours 4096 palette
SOUND (EXPANSION CARDS)	Stereo; two built-in speakers Internal MIDI and User Port card External slot bus
FOOTPRINT	47cm x 33cm x 8.5cm
PRICE	£146.95 inc. VAT



The A3000 - new prices, but still a rich man's toy.

ST SHOW EXTRAS

This month's Atari Computer Show - opening at London's Alexandra Palace on June 23rd - has special events to cater for both the dedicated devotee and the handied games player.

On the family side there'll be seminars on making music with the ST, a DTP workshop and a programmers' workshop. For the games players there's the Games League, which will be the venue for a Game-A-Thon in which school teams will compete against one another for a prize to be donated to charity.

NEW GEOS

A new version of the Commodore 64/128 disk operating system GEOS is now available in the UK from Monodrive International.

GEOS (Graphics Environment Operating System) offers 64 and 128 users the benefits of AMIB's environments, including pull-down menus and on-screen disk accessories.

GEOS is endorsed by Commodore as the official disk operating system for 64 and 128 machines. Bundled with the operating system software are two utilities, geoPrint and geoWrite.

LOAD-IT?

Prevention was hardly tape loading has been the bane of many a C64 owner's life. The Load-It disk emulator aims to ease C64 users by offering an on-line-on-line emulator with signal strength indicator and adjustable head alignment.

We haven't tested one yet, so we can't tell you if it really is just what the doctor orders. But it's not a cheap prescription - the Load-It will cost you £79.99. Maybe you should give up tape loading altogether - the UK market is still suffering from its over-dependence on tape software.



The Load-It disk emulator could it ease C64 headaches?

DI'S SECRET WEAPON

In the first installment of a new regular column featuring hot topics and personalities, ACE turns the spotlight this month on Dave Marshall — the man who designed Digital Integration's \$52-rated *F16 Combat Pilot*...

The F16C Fighting Falcon is very much the focus of the month these days as far as flight simulations go. As the aircraft is an American design, it's not really surprising that most of these simulations were originated by American programmers... except, that is, for our very own Digital Integration's *F16 Combat Pilot*. With the Argo version due out in the latter half of June, we went to Cambridge to find out how DI pulled it off...

What emerged there was that DI have a secret weapon of their own — none other than programming/game designer Dave Marshall. Dave's experience stems not only from his work as a gamer, but also from his work as the lead F16 on-board software systems.

In modern fighters, these onboard systems are awfully complex. By means of sophisticated software a pilot is able to select instantly any weapon, radar system, or other in-flight option. Until recently, however, these systems suffered from the same problems as home computer software — massive incompatibilities of design and implementation. Around five years ago, the American Department of Defense felt, just like the Japanese did before MDI came out, that it was unacceptably complicated to have so many different operating systems as they developed a concept that came to be known as I150. The standard was just a mere 50 more successful than MS2, and it is now implemented on many NATO aircraft, including the F16.

The British Ministry of Defense contacted DI's Dave Marshall as their chief representative within the I150 working group. With a degree from Bath University in control systems engineering, he worked at BAC Bedford for three years designing flight simulators — a natural outlet for someone who started flying at the tender age of 13 and went solo at his 14th birthday.

"Of course, in those days," says Dave, "computers were a bit more primitive than they are now. So the flight simulators we used were essentially electromechanical, typically consisting of a cockpit mounted on hydraulic jacks in a dome with a TV in front. The TV was linked to a computer-con-



rolled camera by closed circuits and this was positioned over a huge man-made model of a flying area. As the pilot flew his aircraft, the camera moved over the terrain. We achieved a hit using this system, simulating many different types of aircraft, even imaginary ones."

"When home computers started to emerge, I was intrigued by the idea of how much of the simulation we could capture on a computer. I wrote a program on the D88 which really just consisted of numbers, there were no graphics at all. But amazingly after we had tweaked the program a bit, we found it had a potential market — and that was how DI was born."

"Of course the program looked a lot better on the Spectrum and even today *Fighting Pilot* is our most successful title ever. Actually we were amazed at how much could be achieved — the D88 is very good with vector graphics and the view a game player could get looking on his TV gave a good idea as to what we could see back in my days at Bedford; the main difference being the actual cockpit — and we still haven't come close to capturing that yet!"



LOGO A-GO-GO!



DI may be a genuine old UK Guild one — in their own words — member a company to stand still. The software giant's latest game and unusual 'non-graphics corporate logo' has been hit quite hard. Capgem will, they hope, will introduce a new image designed to further establish the brand through the 1990s.

ACE LETTERS

This month we receive our first ever letter from the Supreme Being (does He really live in Redcar?) and hear how you can earn five million smackers for the price of a stamp. Honest. Even letters from minor Gods are appreciated, so get writing (or dictate to an Angel) and send your missives to ACE LETTERS, 34 FARRINGTON LANE, LONDON, EC1R 3AU. And remember - even the Gods have the chance of winning a £25 prize...

HIGH TREASON

I have recently moved into the world of communications and find there is a big argument going on about SECURITY.

When the case about the RUCSAPS - paying some teenagers thousands of pounds to hack into the NASA computer hit the headlines people seemed to be shocked. I even heard people saying that the teenagers should have been sent to prison for life as though it was murder. I got the feeling that a lot of people think that only the RUCSAPS attempt to get information to illegal firms, and that they think that good old BRITAIN and AMERICA are so smart and innocent. When in fact they are doing exactly the same thing. As you can see, it is not because any information held on computer can never be safe because someone can always

be found out. The chances are, even the AMERICANS are hacking into our computers and vice versa because even though we seem to be best of jobs we have always got some secrets that will never be made known.

If it had been the AMERICANS doing the hacking to the RUCSAPS do you think there would have been as much fuss? Of course not. In fact everybody would have clapped their hands and said it was a pity they were caught.

My conclusion is that hacking will always carry on from the 14 year old kid who tries to hack into the old bank to the professional who hack into the supercomputers. As I said before, passwords are always in, used on, the only way to keep any private information safe is to store it in the brain.

J. Thomson, Blackpool

If your brain's anything like the ones around here, it's about the last place you should keep important information. (Don't worry about, you seem to be just a little naive about what goes on in the world of politics and espionage. Don't remember - if you go about passing sensitive information to foreign powers (ah, foreign powers!) it's treason. And that could get you banged up for 40 years.

OVER THE TOP AGAIN

Daniel Holdings' letter in your last issue (bearing that the Spacety was better than the Archimedes) was either a bad joke or the work of a lunatic. How could anyone in their right mind claim that the Spacety,

with its pathetic (bony sound and poor graphics) could be a match for the mighty Arch? I've owned an Archimedes for six months now and I think it's the best machine around - and that includes the Amiga and the ST.

Oh, so it's a bit more expensive, but just look what you're getting - amazing colours, stunning animation, brilliant sound, and some great software. And Daniel Holdings can't understand it? He should stick to the dead flesh of his noble spotty keys.

Jo Smith, Gwent

In reply to Daniel Holdings' biased view of the Spacety, I could start digging into his Spacety but that is to point in more mud to his already dying machine. The Archimedes specifications are above that of the Amiga, basically meaning that there is no comparison between 16/32 bit games and the ageing 8 bit, unless you like the beep, mono, slow and unplayable games Spacety had to insult the Spacety sometimes!

Games quality can't go on if we still have to cater for the stubborn 8 letters who want a version for their machines. Inside they already get cut down versions of LG, GMS and myself don't make any more for the 8 bit, as the 16 bits are selling well enough to make specifically for them. Oh, the Archimedes hasn't got a big enough software market for us coders to start coding for, but when it does you'll see I will make use of the best hardware available for games!

Daniel Chapman, Methuen

Some tough talking, but perhaps it's needed - Daniel Holdings was just a little on the abusive side. However, let's not overlook the Spacety's noble contribution to the creator of the computer games market: they probably

EASY MONEY!

After personal experience I feel that I should let other readers know what they are getting themselves into by advertising in your classified advertisement section.

Recently, I advertised in your magazine and only received genuine replies - until now. As an mail envelope came through my letterbox, and when I opened it I found that it was from an Arthur G. Maricica in Malta offering me the opportunity to become rich through an easy-money game.

In this game you are sent a list with six names on it. When you get this list, you send £5.00 to the person at the top of the list, then cross his name out. You then add your own name and address to the bottom of the list and send out copies of the letter and the list to 50 people, who will, hopefully, repeat the process. Thereby, by the time your name is at the top of the list, and providing that everyone sends you the money, you should be £2,000,000 richer. Sounds wonderful!

I would recommend that under no circumstances should anyone send money to a stranger because of a letter like this. Life is not simple enough to become a millionaire by handing out ten pieces of paper and doing a few.

As a conclusion to this letter I would like to advise your readers - most of whom, like myself, will be teenagers - to get their money in a bank, and not make other people rich.

I enclose the letter and the list with the knowledge that they won't be getting any money off me.

Grant Robson Bridge of Weir

Many thanks for bringing this chain letter to the attention of other readers. You've done the right thing by revealing what at first glance seems to be a very tempting offer. As you point out, a £5,000,000 return for a £5.00 investment looks like pretty good going. Of course, some people do take quite well out of such schemes - usually those who get in right at the beginning, since the longer the chain gets, the more likely it is to break down.

Any other readers who receive chain letters offering their instant riches should treat them with great suspicion. And anyone who, like Mr. Maricica of Malta, wants to start circulating a letter - just lower ACE readers about, will you?

PRIZE
LETTER

wouldn't be an Archimedes today if it hadn't been for Sir Clew's ill-fate robotized body. And it's all very well for Daniel Clapton to say he'll start writing for the Archimedes when people start buying it — but what about the people who won't buy it until codes start writing for it? It could be a seriously crippling chicken and egg situation.

PERSON TO PERSON

Scott Rowley is keeping up the wrong tree in his letter about multiple-player games in the June issue. As a publisher of many years standing (ENR, Specialty ST, Amiga) I find that computer gaming is nearly a solitary pursuit.

I play a lot of RPGs and adventures, and I've tried multi-player games such as MUD. They're boring in comparison to the challenge and excitement offered by the lone player.

Games players like me get few alternatives from the pages of magazines like ACE. It's there that we find out where we went wrong and can swap tips and opinions with other enthusiasts. I don't want to play against other people — I want to have the challenge all for myself, just like spending the computer and the programmer.

James Tracy London

Thanks to M. Ramsey for slumming as an interesting world of discussion. I own an Atari ST and formerly owned a C64, which could also be used for dual player games. I only ever had one program that did this on Commodore and that was "Ten Tomatoes," an excellent piece of 8-bit simulation programming. Unfortunately, this does not appear to be available any more. However, the ST has more multiple-player games than ever now and more planned for the near future, so about.

What people really want is a cheap way of talking to anyone with a computer. I think that if you use a modem or a phone line

there are many things that can happen or go wrong which makes you have to start all over again. Before you know where you are you have a bill for £100 or so because you have accumulated several hours of user time on the phone (unless someone phones you for money). If you're a food-money type you could invest in a pocket radio system. Unfortunately, you have to do a Radio Amateur exam to get a transmitting license. And then you need to get planning permission to erect large aerials in the back garden. Then there's the radio equipment itself — a thick fall of the stuff could set you back a few thousand. I have had the thought using CB radio to send data, which is particularly free communication after the initial cost of buying. Unfortunately there are an old problem of interference and people cutting in or talking out your transmission.

A better solution would be CB system for computer users with a relatively interference-free band allocation would be a better idea. Perhaps we could all meet at Telecom to get them to create a cheaper network. They do make basic radios, of quad price a year — so let's have some of it back.

S.P. Law Warwick

The lone games player has certain satisfactions but I can't believe as an RPG player that you wouldn't find it easy to be satisfied. If not more so, to compete against another human.

Oh, I thought CE had snuffed it years ago. I must say your suggestions sound pretty respectable to me. What would be the effect on the country's motorways if all those Foster-clamping truckers were playing Falcion as they sped down the fast lane?

LEGAL, DECENT HONESTY?

As software retailers we should like to express our concern that certain software houses seem to

be prepared to publish substandard games to an unsuspecting public. At Christmas 1987 we saw US Gold push out Gal Blax very hard, it only then appeared a short while before Christmas when it was too late for most magazines to review it. Whether this was planned or coincidental, we shall never know. The result however was a hugely disappointing game.

We have recently taken into stock the Araya version of After Summer from Softdisk. For any body to charge £25 for this initial stage of the Araya's capabilities is, in our view, outrageous.

The point we are trying to make is that it is not the software houses that the customer remembers letting him down, but the retailer — us.

It surely must be time for the advertising authorities to look into the claims made by the games publishers, as in many cases they prove to be very misleading.

Michael Farmer EPS, Computers, Redwoodville

Truly hope for the 4d standards people how would you think on the intelligibility of a claim such as "This is the toughest and most realistic Morris Minor simulation you've ever seen" if there are 30 such games in existence? Extraneous claims are made for the excitement, fun, pleasure etc you might get from books or films and, as far as we know, no publisher or film maker has ever got into trouble for overrepresentation. The best that can be done is for consumers to exercise their judgement when buying games by reading reviews first — and if they can't find a review they should buy before they buy.

SUPPERNO BINGO

I am writing in protest at the "reviving" (repackaging) game that has recently caused computer shops and magazine reviews.

Unashamedly promotional, it is the most blatantly dishonest

piece of software propaganda yet to have disgraced the industry.

The program in question (which I dare not name for fear of being struck down by a boot from the heavens) positively encourages the innocent youths who play the game to go around questioning cartographers, volcanoes, floods and earthquakes against defensible, peace-loving people.

I have set up an action group called F.O.P.M.L.O.A.S. (Protection Of People Unhappy with Unashamedly Obnoxious Unfairly Unpleasant) and I would be extremely grateful if you could forward any spare copies of this note immediately for our ritual burning ceremony.

David Green (Superno founder and advertising dandy of F.O.P.M.L.O.A.S.) Redbus, Cleveland

Allowing dates come in many shapes and sizes but this is the first time I've heard of one being in Redbus, Cleveland. How does it compare to Olympus? Or our "Houses"? Please let us know more... As far as the aims of your society are concerned, I really don't think you'll have much success, allowing or not. Please — there, so it named it — is just too good and too possible to succeed.

WILLING

Reading through the March edition of ACE letters I was intrigued at the global amount of money being awarded and I cannot see how the editor has slept since. To remedy this terrible situation and sleepless nights, I feel it is my duty as a regular ACE reader to let you know that I am willing to receive £25 worth of software.

Stephen Cook Gloucestershire

I trust this isn't a serious attempt to take advantage of our good will.

NEXT MONTH....

ACE goes GLOBAL on the 6th July! With news from

- the USA, where the massive summer CES show in Chicago showcases the latest in entertainment hardware and software
 - Germany, where we meet the cream of Teutonic games designers and programmers
 - Japan, where we discover some weird and wonderful widgets
- Plus Screen Test, Graphics, Music, News, Competitions...

Cambidge is well known for its computer connections but its great advertising rival, Oxford, has never quite managed to equal that success... until now. Oxford Digital Enterprises have already written successful games like *Trivial Pursuit* — now they are about to launch a new label, Empire, with an original and unlicensed game on the ST and Amiga: *Sleeping Gods* is.

It's a total departure from their previous games, combining role-playing and adventuring with arcade elements. It mixes Freespace-style landscapes with bitmapped graphics to create a 3D world even more realistic and interactive than *Dagger* or *Mercurian*. All the characters are animated, over five megabytes of bitmapped graphics being used in all. Their claim is that it "surpasses a new generation of real-time fantasy".

The code for the game, developed by Steve Coon, places the animated characters in a 3D environment, chooses which angle to display and dynamically squashes as the bitmapped image to the correct size. ODE claim that this technique creates a believable 3D world which, for the first time, displays realistic animated characters in real time.

To get the character sprite designs exactly right, they ended up by putting a small animated model on a turntable and viewing

ODE ON THE ROAD

Oxford Digital Enterprises, programmers of *Trivial Pursuit* and *The Hunt for Red October*, are about to build a whole new solid-3D Empire...

it from eight different angles through a video-camera.

ODE takes place in eight long domains full of characters to fight, talk to and befriend. To save the world of *Tennors*, its one remaining god has to be woken to deliver the land from the evil Archmage. So it's going to be a long trip through all eight kingdoms.

The almost-complete version of ODE on show had plenty of action and adventure and there is already talk of an ODE 2, particularly if the first one does well. The programming techniques will certainly be used again, probably first in the game/strategy hybrid *Tears of the Gods* by Harold Coyle. ODE have already successfully converted a novel by Tom Clancy, *The Hunt for Red October*, so tackling a second comes naturally. *Tears of the Gods* is concerned mostly with tank warfare, which ODE think is an "ideal starting point for a game design".

They are aiming for a combination of strategy and tank simula-

tion, using much of the technical detail and battle planning from the novel. The prospect of bitmapped animated tanks battling on a 3D landscape is exciting, but some

ODE Shipping Gods is has been under development for over 18 months. Steve Coon devised new routines for the rapid display and animation of bit-mapped images viewed from eight different angles.



was off. This one will be available on the 8-bit machines as well as 16-bit.

Before that will be the appearance of two other games, *Fire* and *Pericles*. *Fire* is an animated adventure, on the 16-bit machines, in which a rifty character-generator allows over 200 animated characters to interact. It looks like offering the same sort of greater detail and presentation as the *Trivial* but using more control and many more characters and locations. It's still in mid-development but the signs are good for a very involving and challenging game.

Pericles is being developed on the 8-bit machines and can only be described as a 3D derivative of *Tennors*. Not that the comparison can do it anything but good. It's much more complicated than its 2D predecessor because spinning three-dimensional shapes around and fitting them into a grid requires much more thought. Both the Spectrum and Amiga versions were progressing well, but there is no release date as yet.

Later on in the year we will be treated to *Paul Gascoigne's Soccer Simulation* on all formats; presumably a mixture of scoring goals for England and staffing Mark's bar in your face.

CLAIMS TO FAME

ODE's first ever game was the adventure *Macbeth* published by Creative Sparks. Since then they have tackled a wide range of game styles for various software houses. There was *1945 Stars* and *Salting for Activision*, *Trivial Pursuit*, *17: A New Beginning* and *Blockbusters* for Domark, *His Prime Minister* for Mosaic, *The Hunt for Red October* for Grand Slam and *Better Dead* than *Alive* for Entertainment International (E) are handling the Empire label which will initially be solely ODE games.

Their other claim to fame is getting the White Daphnet of All Time award in the Dec 198 issue

ROLL UP CHAPS

In fact, roll up as many chaps as you like. ODE claim that their new techniques for animating characters are "...very exciting. From a library of about 1000 in size, we can create any number of new characters utilizing only about 100 bytes of extra memory. These characters may be viewed either in side-on animation with 3D features, or high detailed facial views with a wide range of animated expressions". Said by Desmond Morris, the computer game characterisation consultant could be just round the corner.

of ACE. It was for the development work on *Beach* for the Moon intended to be published by Rainbird. ODE claim the award is rightly theirs and that the disappearing game certainly didn't cost us a penny. How about five, then?



The team at ODE (left to right): Leslie Bell, graphics; John Wood, 16-bit game designer; Steve Coon, programmer — the main brains at the time; an something else about to be done; Kevin Bayne; David Phillips; Richard Yapp; and Michael Horrocks (16-bit Amiga version programmer).

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A popular title is now back with a brand new plot, an unbeatable female, a bonus to be won, and a new look for the game.



An unbeatable opponent of the ninjas.

There is more than a single boss in this one.

A must-have for each addict.

BATMAN

ATARI ST £19.95 CBM AMIGA £24.95



INTELLIGENCE



"Special FX perfectly summed the game and have made a great job, recasting the character of the original with a host of features."
Amiga User 89

"The graphics and sound are excellent... Amiga has again a really top class game without a doubt."
The Top

"Included in every issue... From the numbers to the end of the board...
The Games Machine, Sep 1989

"... the most top class strategy game in a generation... 30 boards of absorbing play... you'll love it... Voyager's got it... And that's not all... You can enjoy it in a Commodore spreadsheet which has to be one of the most useful... how long pieces of music I've ever..."
Amiga User 89

"... scoring 88 graphics, the most impressive I've seen in the ST... a great...
ST Action 89



STAI



con

ROBOCOP
DRAGON NINJA
VOYAGER



ATARI ST



CBM AMIGA

£19.99 **£24.99**

HOTTER THAN THE SUN...

...and cooler than ice-cream. This month's up-and-coming titles are already fighting for space on next month's reviews pages. Here's your ringside seat...



Harrison Ford's digitized mug shot - does he get a royalty for this, or not?

FALCON Mirrorsoft/Spectrum Holobyte



Falcon has already been awarded a new Windows title for the second-winning Microsoft Flight Simulator 4.00 competition.

The title will be available for the ST and Amiga versions of Falcon with PC versions to follow later in the year.

The new title replaces the original title in one and will provide users with a totally new world - set in real-time

environment's and including an eye-on-view feature for the pilot's eyes. Some of these include: identifying enemy jets in real-time; tracking enemy movements; attacking enemy shipping; the bonus used for the STs. The enemy base of an international base will be attacked, made safe, and fighting will proceed daily in the process.

INDIANA JONES AND THE LAST CRUSADE U S Gold

Indiana Jones is about to leap back into action on the computer screen as U S Gold launch their latest game based on the adventures of Hollywood's favorite hero. The game takes its name from the title of the film, in support of which two different games will be released: an arcade adventure from Lucasfilm in America and an action game that U S Gold will develop themselves in the UK. Details are scarce about both games but the Lucasfilm title is believed to feature much platform jumping, maze climbing and cracking of whips.

U S Gold are not going to have all the Summer film titles written to themselves as it's back in with the conversion of the latest Bond movie. The race is on to get the first film blockbuster on the screens. Both games will be covered in the next couple of issues of Screen Test.

BLOODWYCH

Mirrorsoft

Other full titles in Mirrorsoft's Summer catalogue are a split screen, 3D roller coaster game called Bloodwynd. The Mirrorsoft software house has a lot to live up to - being the focus of the award winning *Intergame* series.



P-47 Jaleco

The classic World War II combat shoot 'em up is finally born - through not from Finland - but various home computer versions. The PC Engine just gives it the push. It looks pretty special too - judging from three screen shots. You take the role in a fighter plane whizzing over busy streets Germany attempting to demolish bombs and the combined air and ground forces of the Third Reich. Move the planes at the end of each level - and stacks of power-ups - make this in a scrolling shoot 'em up of extraordinary smoothness and speed. The word from Finland is not to expect the home computer version of P47 until the Autumn. Ah - what a shame.



P47: bomb hitting Berlin level 2.



P47: (below) Computer versions will struggle to beat this PC Engine offering.



XYBOTS Domark

Domark's latest Tengen license introduces the aptly named house effect *Rocksteady* and *Captain Ace* team.

This split screen two player shoot 'em up challenges you to penetrate a vast underground complex and destroy the Mad scientist Xybot.

Although Xybots can be played as a solo game it really comes into the most as a two player challenge - each player taking it separately enables of the mass, glistening up here, energy pods, super weapons and special no frills.

The cash is used at the end of a level to purchase extra fire power for your Xybots. Full versions next issue.



MARS COPS Arcana

It's the year 2028 and there is trouble on the Earth colony of Mars. Apart from the general lawlessness of the mining colony there is an increasing number of UFO sightings. Three UFO's take to bring asteroids of planet Earth - which is where the Mars Cops - also Charley Matthews and Miquel Lopez come into it. In a series of missions it is your aim to bring back the UFO's.

The split screen presentation of Mars Cops looks like a cross between *Star Wars* the old colony classic *Asteroids* and *Star Wars*. Arcana are known as the Starfighter studio. They are the studio that has the game has a lot more to it than just shoot space pyrotechnics. All of the controls that took the control console work and serve a purpose in the game. Arcana assure us. SP and Arca reviews will be launched in June. The British space extreme team have not yet decided whether or not they will be split versions of the game.



ASTAROT



beware
The Angel of Death

AVAILABLE SOON ON COMMODORE
AMIGA AND ATARI ST.

HEWSON

ARCADE ACE

ANDY SMITH CHECKS OUT ALL LATEST ARCADE ACTION MACHINES

FIGHTING FANTASY



A final round encounter gets too close to that tail and you'll feel like pinch.



Keep at it and you'll soon learn its weak points, which you can exploit.



Still in the first round, keep hitting the chest as it shatters and you'll find this fairly much easier to deal with.

(Right) Round Two: having bought a mean whip your advantage from the first round, it'll be more of that dragon round thing. Keeping its wings and tail give you more enough to hit it.

Data East



In the Hippodrome Arena an annual contest is held to find the maddest, boldest son of a monster on this side of the Sederlands Galaxy. Guess what: you've been picked to represent us in the contest.

This side viewed cheap-en-up has you hacking and slaying through a maximum of nine rounds in three legs, collecting prize money along the way, buying better equipment at the end of the round such as a stone or sword. However, a punky weapon does have its drawbacks: a half-head has greater hitting power, but it's also shorter than a sword, so you have to get closer to the kabbie in order to use it.

The various battles get predictably tougher with progress through the rounds; for example, the first three kabbies making up the first leg are all pretty simple and have only one main advantage - the Redonkillo creature has a sword and a

long tail with which to attack you - while the three in the next round have two main advantages - there is a dragon that breathes fire and can flap its wings, the resulting wind ensuring you don't get close enough to hit it, and a sword with a magic shield who can call an acid rain and lightning to come from the heavens to give you a short, sharp shock.

As you might expect, the final three contestants have these advantages, but having got that far, you'll probably have earned enough money to purchase extra energy and better weapons.

Controls are decided in classic beat-'em-up style, with an energy bar for each character at the top of the screen which diminishes every time that character takes a hit. The first to hit his opponent enough times to reduce the bar to zero, wins. Simple stuff with four hits and time to keep you playing.



Round Two: that magic fire and sword to copes up some acid rain, so make ready to dodge the victory-lapping dragons.



EXTENDED PLAY

CRACK DOWN ■ Sega 32p

It's a dry job, but someone's got to do it. As Special Agent Ben or Andy you must infiltrate an enemy city and blow it to kingdom come. No wonder round small areas of the city dropping fire bombs on large red 'X's that are posted on the floor. To make life tricky, the city is crawling with guards who occasionally shoot first and ask questions later. But, you're immune. Great fun, and a fun place to lose some battles.

GOLDEN AXE ■ Sega 32p

Warren started the adventures lined with Pines and now Sega are continuing it, part of the life screen is embroiled with Warren's dual-use traps.

The game is a one or two player, horizontally scrolling chop-rop with a fantasy theme. You can play one of three characters, including an unwearying dwarf, aiming to chop up nasty Goblins critics that are harassing children and leading to orphans. There are dragons to ride and magic to use, making this a great game that'll keep you playing.

PREHISTORIC TIME IN 1930

■ Sega 32p

Prehistoric time is a horizontally-scrolling action-adventure that makes being a pilot over a recently discovered island involving dual perspective controllers. Extra weapons include a rotating drone that shoots directly down to take out specimen haulers. The graphics are great as you fly a float of red beamed trails, giving a good 3D impression, and the rest of level designers are tough. Another winner from DMA.

BATTLE RANGERS

■ Data East 32p

Following firmly in the footsteps of Commando and the Air Wings, the conventional two player, level and shoot-em-up boasts a terrific example of Japan's 4 player genre set to help the top ranked ones of the roster to you better start shooting and taking those enemy guards! Oh, but has the new to offer.

RAY ROUTE ■ Sega/Carroll 32p

A horizontally-scrolling simultaneous two player shoot-em-up in the flying Thunder mode. Platform elements come in as you trail about shooting bad guys, collecting extra weapons, and avoiding parts of the scenery that fly to destroy it. Good, but...

SHIPPETS...

DMG and its multi-legal partnership with a worldwide fan player magazine called International Attack Good for publisher confidence and the best of a machine gun in your hands. At the time of going to press an incident led the name of a company that's most in the Shippets, Alpha and Omega Dragger, but not just for some other odd looking birds (and birds) with distinct characters and subalternating names a black language, there are ships who come after you with amazing jobs (though) 'Not every time it does it... well, you'll recognize it.

BONDEAL CHART

The Bondeal Chart is supplied by Bondeal Limited, Long King and is based on games reported in Funkech, the world's largest video-only guide. The chart is reproduced with kind permission from Core Data International.

TOP TEN VIDEOS ■

Snake Attack, Bowling Cupoon, Heat III 2nd, Global 401, Part Tough, Sega
Narcissus, Outrun III, PopMing,
Fantasia 2000-Dual, Ace 21000er, Sega,
Mindwalkers II, Superman Returns

TOP FIVE CREDITED GAMES ■

Space 2000, Roadrunner, Asterix II,
Tomb Raider, Outrun III, Street
Fighter Cupoon, Road, Leg, Star



Well into a level, and equipped with plenty of firepower. In this stage, the aliens are still coming on from the front, so sticking to front-firing is the intelligent move.

Toaplan/Taito



Single front-firing, single backwards-firing, double side-firing or quadruple diagonal-firing: these are the weapons options in Hellfire, Taito's and Toaplan's latest horizontally-scrolling shoot-em-up.

You fly a spaceship, viewed from the side, blasting through several stages of alien territory, ground, flying aliens and destroying ground installations. Controls include two buttons: one is a fire button and the other's a fire direction selector. You start the game firing forwards, but soon alien ships appear with gun emplacements on the front and back, taking the front view out to be a problem, but you simply can't let the rear view, so you have to

These wall installations mean you're going to have to switch your firing direction to diagonals to get them. The symbol in front is a spaceship worth collecting.



The start of Laser Chess blast the front of the front of that alien ship, and a power-up will be revealed.

hit the selector and switch to either side or backwards firing to get at them. Simple.

Why is it worth going to the trouble?

Why not just let them roll past? Extra weapons, that's why. Some installations release systems which, when collected, increase fire power, speed the ship up or give a points bonus. So it's well worth going for them, especially when the firepower's increased from single single shots to powerful laser beams that can cut a swath through the enemies.

Hellfire's a fun shoot-em-up. It's not going to set the arcade world alight, but the fire direction control is novel and it's certainly tough and addictive enough to keep you pouring the coins in for 'one more go'.

SPACE QUEST SERIES



Available on

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IN COALITION WITH ACE, DIGITAL INTEGRATION ARE GIVING YOU THE CHANCE OF THE FLIGHT OF A LIFETIME - ALL TO CELEBRATE THE LAUNCH OF 950-RATED F16 COMBAT PILOT.

COMPETITION

SKY HIGH!

Our F16 Combat Pilot knocked up a 950 rating in our May issue. It's burning the sholes at your local software shop right now, waiting for takeoff on CD, CD4, and PC formats. Thanks to CD, you could be taking off as well this month - we've managed to fit up a last-minute coupon to send a lucky ACE reader into space (well, into sub-orbital) at the Biggin Hill airbase, as well as updating the best games and 200 other aircraft that will be on parade at the event.

There's just one tricky problem here. The Biggin Hill airbase takes off in the middle of the month during which this issue of ACE goes on sale. We don't want to pass up the opportunity, however, so we've arranged a special telephone hot-line for entrants. All you have to do is telephone the CD Competition Line on the date indicated in the panel below and follow the procedure described. The lucky winner will be sky-bound two days later.

If you're unlucky enough to miss the dead line and be unable to make your call, you can still try for one of 20 F16 Fighting Falcon colour books. These will be awarded to the sender of the first 20 postcards naming THREE previous Digital Integration titles. Just cut down your name and address together with the three titles, and pop it in the post to ACE CD COMBO, Pteryx Court, 30-32 Farringdon Lane, London, EC2R 8BJ.

And if you miss out on all counts, don't forget you can still get hold of the game itself!

Those of you with your finger on the button can win a champagne flight for two at Biggin Hill... And for latecomers, we've got 20 F16 books to give away in our great Digital Integration competition.

WHAT YOU HAVE TO DO...

It couldn't be easier:

1. Use your mindboggling intuition, skill, and judgement to guess the **exact number** (in bytes of data used by Digital Integration in their source file for F16-Combat Pilot).
2. **WAIT** until **FRIDAY, 16TH MAY**. The CD Competition will not be available before this date.
3. Telephone either 0275 582067 or 0275 679603 between the hours of 9:00am and 5:00pm **ONLY**. Those calling outside these times will not be eligible for entry.
4. When asked, give your answer **only**. You will be asked for your telephone number.
5. Stand by the phone at 8pm that day. If your answer was the nearest to the correct number as supplied by Digital Integration, or, in the case of several correct answers being received, it is the first out of the hat, you will be notified by phone at 8pm.
6. Keep Sunday 18th June (two days later) free - just in case you're the Lucky winner!



Your head-set displaying in F16 Combat Pilot - just one of many excellent graphics screens.

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AVIATION

BEYOND CD-ROM...



Death Striker running on the Sharp X68000 — one of a new breed of powerful Japanese games machines. Find out more on page 37.

The introduction of CD-I and VDI technologies is currently the subject of intense debate throughout the world's computer entertainment fraternity. What's the message for those of us who will be playing the games of the future?

Less than a month ago reported on the vision of computers like Commodore and Electronic Arts who envisage teams of script writers, animators, and video experts all working under the direction of a producer — an interactive entertainment takes on the scale and grandeur of movie making.

The systems that these interactive visions will run on are being kept strictly under wraps by the hardware manufacturers and chip designers. It is by no means clear what systems will be the standard for the nineties — but at least the battle lines are now cast. Video Disk Interactive, Compact Disk Interaction (VDI and CDI) and the CD-ROM (already here) now are the likeliest contenders.

While VDI and CDI systems have in common is the potential to provide windows into which game designers can slot real time action — be it Star Wars, Daring Dungeoneers or whatever else. This material can then be used interactively to provide entertainment — as well as training, education and business applications.

Meanwhile, Compact Disks are getting a

strong foothold in the games market in some areas outside Europe, and in Japan in particular. CD has now almost completely replaced vinyl and tape for music — and games fanatics in Japan can purchase the usual tracks from their favorite computer and coin op games alongside the latest from Madonna and Def Leppard in their equivalent of the Virgin Megastore. And even if the Japanese don't bring the world its first genuine CDI game they are certainly creating ahead in the CD sound and music accompaniment stakes.

Sharp machines can be linked to CD sound systems. Take the latest RPG mega game for the Sharp X68000 (see our MALE IN JAPAN box). Not only does Death Striker have amazing audio bang game play and graphics as you would expect from the Sharp X68000 but it also has a CD story and music score that can be used in conjunction with the game through an interface.

UK NOT ON?

Atkinson's top man in development in the UK — Charles Cecil — is not optimistic about the role

of Europe in these developments. Turner will beg to differ: he warns, 'It's incredible to think that the floppy disk has not even caught on properly in the UK yet, never mind CDI. People still prefer to buy their games on cassette'.

Cecil also expresses doubts about the state of affairs and how much of CDI. 'There is little doubt that some form of CDI as a storage and reproduction system for computer audio will be with us in the next decade. The problem is that the processing power technology — the chips needed to handle the switching around of these vast amounts of data is not moving nearly as fast. The storage medium is one thing — the computing power required to organize and use it is another.'

Part of the problem is that the processor industry itself is in something of a conflict over conventional and RISC technology: the latter read files in Pentium's one of five in the new file in Pentium's box. Meanwhile, consider the fastest coin-op game of the moment to illustrate the point. Galaxi Force from Sega is to be released later this year by Atkinson in Germany, CHA-01, Amiga, PC, all all soon the



Shovelknights on CD-ROM for the PC Engine. These graphics are hand-drawn - future releases could use the vast capacity of CDs to offer fully digitized natural landscapes.

multi-processor approach advocated by Atari (though the chips aren't ASIC models). It features two 32-bit processors and a 16-bit processor handling its computer graphics. With the degree of muscle being thrown at a 'mere' console, it's rather daunting to realize that CD demands processing power several orders of magnitude in advance grades.

GAME DESIGN

Clearly if we are going to have fun (or a hundred times the storage capacity for loads through hard disk or CD-Rom then we are going to need a breakthrough in game design. Forget the technology for a second. Stand 'em up, best 'em up, arcade adventures and even hybrids like Defender of the Crown with its CD sound enhancement wouldn't do the hardware justice - computer game design needs to move forward fast.

In this area everything is in the melting pot. For example, although the Japanese are definitely in a strong position to take a lead in CD, that doesn't necessarily mean that Japan's software houses will also take a lead in CD games. SDCM are developing CD games in Chicago low as an Commodore and Electronic Arts in California," says Akihiro Yabu.

It's perhaps troubling that here in the UK, all things computers are falling behind in game design while US companies move into the lead. One of the reasons for this is that there is already a strong tradition of entertainment design in America thanks to the movie industry, and it's no coincidence that much of the computer entertainment design being done there is heavily influenced by the cinema. Why not here in the UK, too, well?

The first and foremost problem is one of cost. UK companies are used to paying advances of around \$1.5-25000 for the production of a top rate game, with more in exceptional circumstances. Whatever the figure, however - and the figures vary enormously from one company to another - it has to pay not only for coding, but also for graphic design, which is becoming more and more important on 16-bit machines.

This doesn't leave as much left for the game designer. What's more, most people still have very primitive ideas as to what constitutes a proper game design - in the old days programmers did their own design, and most games featured simple storylines or scenarios with lots of action. Novel games still do just that. The alternative, now being explored in the States, is very different.

Take sportsmen, for example. Individual sport games like Soccer in on record as selling

But it takes a professional sportsman at least six months solid work simply to work out the plan for a standard feature-length movie...and that's before he's even started writing the dialogue.

Far from being simpler, the case with computer games is even more complex. A title starts at A and moves through to Z, with the audience sitting submissively in their seats. In a computer game, the player interacts constantly with the game and the designer needs to adjust accordingly.

With the advent of CD-ROM, this situation is going to get even more critical. Even with standard disk-based games, there is a rapidly growing need to tackle the problem of game design, making the associated activities of pre-research, source material gathering, and so on.

If computer games are to woo an audience

large enough to pay for the costs involved in their production using CD technology, then they will have to invest more in design. To give you some idea of the costs involved, to plan a complete historical simulation to run on a 16-bit machine and provide extended graphics, you could be looking at up to four man years of work. At the moment the UK industry just isn't able to meet this sort of expense.

THE FUTURE

By now you should have got the idea that the future of games using new technology - CD or otherwise - is far from being clear-cut. There's a real danger that, far from entering a golden age of advanced computer entertainment, we may be entering a period of conflict between different standards, viewpoints, and technologies. CD is certainly promising, but it could be a long time before we can afford it - and

MADE IN JAPAN

VDI and CD-I, although preferred by the Americans, are by no means the only contenders for the Number One slot in future game technology - nor are the game developers of Silicon Valley the only players in the field - despite often carrying names as self appointed spokesmen for the genre. ACE got onto its Japanese counterpart for a rather different viewpoint on the next generation of gaming...

Akihiro Yabu is Editor of Japan's premiere computer games magazine, The fortnightly Logos-magazine ACE, G-PC, and The One put together. This domestic-like publication is the bible of Japanese computer gaming - and CD-I and CD-ROM have been a hotbed ground for the magazine in the last few issues.

"There are five games available for the PC Engine CD Rom and NEC have sold about ten thousand units," reports Akihiro. "I guess you could call it a successful start but the games are not as interesting as we expected. The PC Engine, it seems, may be a dream machine for most UK game players, but it is not the stuff of which dreams are made in Japan.

Far easier than the Engine is Fujitsu's FM Towns computer - which has a CD-ROM built in as standard. This amazing looking 32 bit computer has a powerful 80386 processor at its heart, producing 8 channel stereo sound and has a CAD-quality graphical capability, offering up an amazing one million possible colour combinations.

Super cool - and the computer uses the Logos readers' favourite - is the Sharp 68000. It's not quite in the home market at a whirling £2,500 but that doesn't stop Logos's readers buying after it - easy to see why when you consider its super fast 20 meg 16-bit processor and an even more powerful graphics capability than the FM Towns. There's a growing library of CD-based software to go with it. Like the FM Towns and PC Engine the Sharp 68,000 has its own CD Rom device, interestingly, Akihiro confirms that the much talked about 16-bit Nintendo games machine will not have a CD Rom slot.

The Fujitsu FM Towns machines are million colours with 32 bit sounds and 8 channel stereo sound.



"THE FUTURE IS DIGITAL..."

...says DMA Design's David Jones, programmer of Psygnosis' *Blood Money* and *Mirace*.

Blood Money (see page 58) makes excellent use of digitized sound and graphics. We asked programmer David Jones to give us his view of the future of gaming...

"Most game scenarios consist of two distinct elements, similar to a scene in a film. There is the setting, or background, and the characters and objects that may move about against that background.

"Until now, animated characters in games have been drawn by a graphic artist using a normal paint package. This does not always produce decent results and there are many games with poor graphics and rough animations. It is in this area that we see one of the biggest changes in games programming occurring, with a consequent quantum leap in games graphics quality. We're speaking, of course, about digitized graphics.

"Frames from a video or cine film of live models can be digitized one at a time and a file-like set of animations are built up. This gives us a real figure to work with in a relatively short amount of time. The artist can then go over the animations by hand, making changes or adding features to suit the game. A digitized person walking along the street isn't very interesting, but with a large sword in his hand and both on some armour and you've got a medieval knight out for a stroll.

"This sort of technique was employed in the film *Tron*, where the computer graphics were overlaid onto traditional cine sequences to produce a similar effect. At present, the same technique can be used in games, but only in a limited way. The prob-

lem you come up against is lack of memory, but as soon as machines start coming with 2 megabytes of RAM as standard we can look forward to some very realistic action in games — and action is what it's all about. If you're in any doubt about how important good animation is in an arcade game, look back to the original *Impossible Mission*, whose main character did a lot for the 'feel' of the program by virtue of his — for the time — excellent animation.

The second element of a game — the background or scenery graphics — can also be a candidate for digitizing. Most games, however, tend to have large areas over which the action takes place, often running into hundreds or even thousands of screens. This requires far too much memory. One method, however, that can produce very realistic and complex scenery is the use of Fractal Landscapes. Fractals, as you may know, are algorithms that mimic the naturally occurring patterns of almost everything from your local shoreline to the fibres of a spider's web. The only drawback is the processor speed that's required to generate the graphics using this method, but as with limited RAM, this is an obstacle that can soon be overcome by the continuously dropping price of technology.

As a designer of good arcade software, I'm convinced that the future of games technology lies nearer than we think. We need only a few more steps of memory and processor with a bit more compi — both achievable and affordable within the next few years. A new emphasis on realism will give birth to the games of tomorrow."



Earlier *Blood Money* simulated fractal landscapes. Despite their in-built 3D with advanced algorithms to generate varied landscapes including forests, mountains, and seas...



The later sequences from *Blood Money*... digitized graphics in action. 320 have also experimented with digitized animal life models: see the article on page 18.



The Americans are already pouring multi-industry money at game development — this *Mirace* title is a typical example.

possibly even longer before we can all go out and buy a well-supported standard system.

Right now, it seems that RISC technology (see *Strength in Numbers* above) is the stand-out to become a new high-performance standard for all games players. You can read more about it in ACE next month, along with details Philips/Toshiba's recent CD weapon.

PC HARD DISKS RULE OK?*

There is undoubtedly going to be an interim stage before we make the full leap to CD-I for sound enhancements will be part of it. More immediately we are likely to see the use of hard disk for home machines — to store the vast amounts of graphics data that are used in the latest 16-bit games designs.

According to Haruki Tera of American company Accolade this is "...already happening in the PC home market. We are seeing people buying 50 meg hard drives just for home use — pretty soon game designers are going to start taking advantage of memory capacity that would have been thought of as totally outlandish just a couple of years ago." Tera agrees with everyone else in the game business that CD-I will be the storage medium for the mid to late 1990's, but just a medium-term period when PC's will become a word standard — even in Japan.



320 *Mirace* has (see page 58) decompresses the files when it installs them on a PC's hard disk. Future game releases may well make more use of hard disks, both for graphics storage and also as 'virtual memory' for other game data.

'STRENGTH IN NUMBERS...'

John Matheson of Flare Technology, co-designer of the Konix Multi-system, reckons that the future of games technology does not lie with more powerful processors, but with multiple processor designs...

"We are on the verge of a revolution in computing. Within a year we will not ask how many K a computer has, not how many bits wide it is, not how fast it is clocked, but how many processors has it got? Games-computer architecture will leap ahead of the business computer world in its use of silicon.

"The silicon chip industry consistently achieves a quadrupling of density every two years, but this has so far shown up mostly as bigger memory chips and faster, wider processors. In the business computer world, with its massive requirement of compatibility with the IBM PC, staying true to it, this is all that can be done.

"Games computers are not so restricted. Innovative computer architectures are welcomed by games programmers as a means to make their games faster and more realistic. The tempo goes some way towards this, but lies in its design such as color sound, and its over-complex architecture, reduce its capabilities.

"The Konix Multi-System, however, contains not one but three processors. With both a graphics processor for fast and smooth graphics, and a sound processor for realistic and pressure sound, the third processor, an 8086, is left with purely a management role controlling the other two processors. Because of this, the system comfortably outperforms all other 16-bit games computers.

"The graphics system of this, our first Flare One, was based on a humble 280 in place of the 8086, but could still outperform the Amiga! This system proved the power of multiple processor architectures.



The Konix Multi-System, flying the flag for multiprocessor technology.

"We can, however, make further improvements through your choice of processor design. Computer processors have traditionally been jacks of all trades. The evolution from the 8000280 via the 8086/80000 era, to the current state-of-the-art of the 80386/80387 has produced massive pieces of silicon, with vast instruction sets. These processors, however, will soon be as obsolescent as dinosaurs. The amazing speeds of FPU's, processors such as the ARM, the 8053, and the 8098C machines show the future.

"When we at Flare looked at how to design a better games computer, we soon realized that specialized FPU's, processors, designed specifically for graphics and sound, would always be able to outperform general purpose processors. This principle was adopted in the Flare One and allows us, amongst other things, to use extremely high processor speeds for sound reproduction, giving the Flare (and the hence the



Konix Multi-System, which uses the Flare technology) the ability to emulate several different, and powerful, sound synthesis techniques.

"And what of the future? We've got a lot of ideas. Clearly more processors are called for. Sound generation is a natural rate for parallel processing. Graphics processors will allow real-time rendering, shading and 3D animation. The revolutions in storage media will bring games (based on tens or hundreds of megabytes of data and code.

"In ten years time, 32 megabit RAM chips will be in production. The same will apply to all silicon. The Flare Ten system might contain 64 processors (or less!) The games (or system) produced on your HDTV set will have images of the quality of a feature film. Home computers will run games with graphics such as those of feature films like Top Gun, which currently require the power of a Cray computer.



PLAYING YOUR CARDS RIGHT

Smart cards offer the portability of magnetic cards, but with the rapid access times of RAM. Early cards were available and could hold only around 64K of memory, but we're now talking about 512Kbyte cards within the next year. What's more, the latest models - like the one pictured here, manufactured by IBM and distributed in this country by Comtek - are completely electronically tested, communicating their data via magnetic fields generated by circuitry within the card. Unlike floppy, they are - in normal use - totally indestructible. Cards offer a promising form of secure distribution for the most sensitive - they've already been used for drugs - but the price must fall further before they become really practical. At the moment a small 512K card could cost you as much as £100!

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"Do an ad" they said. "We wanna get over to the punters how **totally cool** our games are" they said. So I sat **and** thought and thought... and thought... and nothing came. Ahhh, well I'm **not** really a copy writer and there are geozers getting paid



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ACE AND SYSTEM 3 PUT YOU IN THE DRIVING SEAT... AND INTRODUCE YOU TO VENDETTA, THE LATEST GAME FROM THE COMPANY THAT BROUGHT YOU INTERNATIONAL KARATE.

COMPETITION

HOT ROD!

Anyone who considers himself an arcade connoisseur must rate System 3-one of the hottest software houses around. Not content with their first hit, *Parody*, they went ahead and produced *Leaf Wings*, *International Karate*, *Knight's Knight*, and now... *Vendetta*.

Mark Cale's the man who makes System 3 tick - he's a self-confessed games addict and spends most of his time popping 15p coins into the machines at his local arcade. Ever since *International Karate* landed for the top of the charts in the UK he's one of the first UK games men to do so! Mark's had quite a few 15ps to spend at his favourite hobby.

Now he's putting his experience to work with *Vendetta*. The key to the game is its combination of two arcade ideas: the arcade/adventure and the almost action race scenario. You must drive your Ferrari F40 in a mad chase from one exotic location to another as you gather evidence against a gang of terrorism and attempt to rescue your girlfriend.

"The idea behind *Vendetta*," says Mark, "is to give people two games in one. We've also put a lot of effort into the graphics, so the game not only plays well but looks great too."

Vendetta will be reviewed in ACE in 1988 so we get a playable copy. Watch out for it soon at Goodwin, Amrad, Commodore 64, ST, and Amiga...

Meet Mark Cale, the driving force behind System 3 Software, and then experience some REAL driving force as you zoom off in his Ferrari for a VIP meal and some great prizes.

WHAT YOU HAVE TO DO...

Fill in the correct answers to the three questions on the form below and complete the details on the right. Then post the form in the post to ACE System 3 Centre, Priority Court, 20-22 Farringham Lane, London, EC1R 3AE. Closing date for entries is July 2nd 1988 and the winner will be the first correct entry drawn from the hat.

THE PRIZE

The winner will be selected from his home by Mark Cale and driven in his Ferrari to a mystery location where they will receive a VIP meal together with a representative of ACE magazine. The winner will also be awarded a goody bag containing System 3 souvenirs and software and be invited to contribute to ACE's next issue. So you not only get the grub, you get the goodies and the fame as well!



Mark Cale and two of the fruits of his success in gamesmanship. Soon you could join him in a spin to an unfamiliar location and a VIP meal...

1 What was the name of System 3's first game?

2 Which System 3 game features a spy in Thailand?

3 How many Ferrari's does Mark Cale own?

NAME _____ AGE _____

ADDRESS _____

TELEPHONE NUMBER _____

COMPUTER OWNED _____

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Let *Shining Force* hit your console with more innovative methods to provide the necessary inspiration. *Shining Force* has already got the home about their programming techniques on page 14 - but not what the game's like on page 15.



Super Nintendo Baseball - a game of fun, good graphics, and lotsa baseballs in *Shining Force's* back with a pitch on page 14.

Forgotten Worlds, '95 Gold's latest Capcom conversion features an amount of worlds equal to you grab your joystick and there yourself back into combat action on page 26.

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THE ACE REVIEWING SYSTEM

COVERS

It's never better to be the ACE cover feature than the ACE cover feature. It's never better to be the ACE cover feature than the ACE cover feature. It's never better to be the ACE cover feature than the ACE cover feature.

REVIEWS

Reviewing is a complex task. It's not just about the game, it's about the reviewer. It's not just about the game, it's about the reviewer. It's not just about the game, it's about the reviewer.

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KULT

EXXOS get more weird and wonderful



'Aah, an old girl' comes in useful.

at the bubble and already driven that Exxos games come wrapped in, there's generally a well-crafted and intelligently constructed game. This one - their third release - is no exception. A fast and entertaining 300-driven arcade adventure links beneath the almost indecipherable manual, with its insistence on pain-free sex it scores well.

In clunky things a little, you play the part of Raven, a 'fame' - which means you have special powers. You have been cast a task by some unpleasant types called Psychons. Oh, and there's the obligatory slip off somewhere to reveal your abashed girlfriend.

The task consists, involving five skulls concealed in various rooms which run off a circular area known as The Ring. Not all of the rooms contain skulls; sometimes they conceal something much more unpleasant, but it's down to you to work out which is which. Some rooms contain objects which might come in useful on your travels and many have some kind of puzzle that you'll have to solve by examination and logical thinking.

In the room known as De Profundis there is a pod of boiling slime which you can't get round. To make matters worse the stone you're standing on starts to sink; a hook hanging from the ceiling should be an escape route - but how

to reach it and which object is apply? And there's a time limit, so you can't spend all day taking it.

To help you in your quest you have a number of 'you covers'. These include Solar Eyes, to be used when you enter the darkened room, sticky fingers which allow you to walk around walls and ceilings, a Zone Scan which triggers a horizontal line that moves down the screen highlighting interesting things in a particular room, and EX, which stands for Extreme Violence.

The various powers, movement and action are all controlled via the mouse either by clicking the cursor on the playing area or by clicking on the icons which run down the side.

ST VERSION

The handy switches the TV, but nevertheless its construction and look are very well indeed; it's great combination of problem solving and fast, detailed artwork give the impression of a quality game.

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

AGE RATING: 8/4



All the fountain - get your golden hands?

The system is logical and efficient. When you click on something in the playing area, a kind of 'beam' appears; clicking further on the beam makes reveals possible actions at that time.

Kult has enough atmosphere and perceptiveness to absorb any hardened arcade adventurer, and it's also constructed imaginatively enough to attract the less committed to graphics art, like Purple Cyber Day's, colourful and finely detailed. The texture of the atmosphere and the brain are excellent and the artwork has lots of typically Celtic patch-fused feel is good; looking used rather than lush, it includes some solid effects and intelligent aim-target, digitised for effect.

Whether the appeal of Kult will be limited to being up to its frame will depend on how appreciative people find it. Beneath the expensive otherworld mysticism of the packaging is a game of some quality.

Mike Pinder

RELEASE BOX

ATARI ST	CD-ROM	MARKET
AMIGA	CD-ROM	MARKET
IBM PC	CD-ROM	MARKET

PREDICTED INTEREST CURVE



Gameplay may suffer once you've cracked all the puzzles - but that will take a while.



Will you get, lose, and by the way, what's the story?

THE DUEL

Will ACCOLADE burn off the opposition?

THE Duel is the follow-up to Test Drive, a game which aroused some of the most heated opinions ever witnessed. "Yes, I know the scrolling's slow but look at the cars you get!" "Well I think the scrolling's OK, it's the view from the car that spoils it..."

Test Drive allowed you to choose from a range of the world's top sports cars, including Ferraris and Porsches, then go out and prove them against a mountain, or burn off some other boy racer's high-performance vehicle.

The folks of Test Drive became appalled through the lack of variety in the scenery and a subsequent lack of speed - enough to provoke scathing comments about a "Bolted Nascar" simulator (OK, it appeared to be a few people...)

Meanwhile, back at the Bat Cave, three clever little guys at Accolade were thinking to themselves "Well, the scrolling's too slow and there's not enough variety in the scenery". So they set about their work and lol. The Duel was created.

The first apparent change is the lack of cars - only two this time as opposed to five before. But there are now two modes of play, the traditional against the clock game, or head to head against another car. The scenery has been totally redesigned with fields, forests, mountain-passes, tunnels and much more.

Even the perspective view from the driver's seat has been loosened a little, which gives a better feeling when you're weaving through oncoming traffic. Speed is also an essential in any car game, and boy is it here - and the road scrolls far faster too.

Already on the Amiga people are trying to find ways around memory restrictions and

Accolade are more than a little proud of their new system - "expensive packs". Each pack contains a disk and a manual, the first two packs are available now, one containing the scenery for a trans-California race, the other with five super cars. Each pack will retail at \$11.99, and according to the head honcho at Accolade the next series of disks will contain some really hot stuff.

The sound has been improved too, with a nicey thrumme tune to start with and some really meany engine roars. All through there are loads of extra features, such as the cap who tries flipping you down (are any speeding aren't you?) - when you keep going, check in the rear view mirror and you can watch him scrambling into his car. The funniest thing has to be the look of sheer panic as you blunder into the oncoming traffic at twice the speed of sound.

The Duel is not quite a classic piece of software, but it does come very close - climb aboard and experience some high-class, high-speed riva.

Mark Patterson



DATASTORM

VISIONARY DESIGN TECHNOLOGY whip up a storm



THEY say you can't beat the old 'uns, and once you've seen *Datastorm*, you'll have to agree. *Datastorm* is one of the best shoot-'em-ups (we ever played, based on a warm and fuzzy idea, it takes somewhere between *StarGate*, *Dropzone* and *Defender*, in both gameplay and design.

Just to jog your memory, as if it needed it, you are on a rescue mission. For each level, there are eight pods orbiting around on the surface of the planet. You have to fly out and bring them back to the base, while in it's large radar antenna. That's the simple bit. The only problem is that you ain't the only one that wants to get the pods. An attacking alien force is also out to get them, and so you also have to wipe them out.

As you zip about the horizontally scrolling laser landscapes, you come across many different kinds of enemy. There are the regular troops, not completely dissimilar to ye olde Space Invaders. There hover about a bit, occasionally taking a pot shot or two in your direction. Every now and then one will swoop down and take a pod. These have to be shot - but be careful not to hit the pod. Other aliens include small spacebots that fire rapidly, clusters that hang from the ceiling and small diamonds that, when shot, transform into three firing missiles.

Major problems appear in the form of large mother ships. These can be either hit a few of very fast lightning ships that travel in one and shoot a lot (it's legs sound whose legs have to be blown off piece by piece or hit a huge deal that takes quite a few hits, to say the least.

At first glance, *Datastorm* is a game that most people will find themselves saying 'been it all before' - even so, they'll get hooked. That was the secret to all the classic games - they were incredibly addictive and addictive, it's a quality missing in so many games these days.

Datastorm is simple to play, easy to get hooked on, and a damn sight harder to let go of.

by Guy East

PREDICTED-INTEREST CURVE



Instant gameplay and attractiveness get the ball in motion - and from the bag below.

AMIGA VERSION

Speedy it looks great, with well designed graphics and an exciting game-over screen - you also see a logo on the floor, which isn't too different but behind the engine lies a wall of lead, slowing the objects on the wall behind it. It all sounds excellent and it plays like a dream.

GRAPHICS ID FACTOR
AUDIO FUN FACTOR

ACE RATING 870

RELEASE BOX

AMIGA Title AMIGOS



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Get Ted Egan in battle, you can still spot the clever combination of tiled vectors and sprites.

SLEEPING GODS LIE

Should ENTERTAINMENT INTERNATIONAL be left asleep?

3D first person perspective worlds have been seen and done before, which means that *Sleeping Gods Lie* is a wee bit disappointing. Against that, it is one of the most realistic games of its kind around, by using a clever mixture of vectors and tiled vectors, where there have to be straight lines, and some clever sprite expansion and intelligent routines elsewhere. Developers have come up with something that is, at the very least, an eye opener.

A crisis in the country of Tossara provides the scenario for the fancy graphics. Harvests are bad, famine lines is swamping the land. Only one thing can save the world - the sleeping god M'Gist, who is rumored to be slumber-

ing somewhere out in the suburbs. You have to find him, this is not the easiest of jobs, given that you don't know where he is and that, due to the bad times, a lot of folk are against you.

You begin the game in your home. A painting hangs on one wall. On the floor lie a sack of pebbles and an earthenware bowl (better get those pebbles - they're what you'll do your fighting with). Of the two doors, the one to the north is open but the one leading south is locked. All you know is that somewhere to the north is a hand that will give you your first clue to finding M'Gist.

As already said, the graphics are pretty realistic. All doors, rooms, paths, or in fact anything that should be squared is composed of vectors. All other items are displayed as solid sprites that are expanded and twisted to suit their current 3D environment - even the painting on the wall is distorted when you look at it from different angles.

Unfortunately, the game is dull - sometimes unpleasantly so. Death comes quickly, and more often than not there isn't a lot you can do about it. Bonuses run from every direction, and for some reason are able to hit and damage you long before you can ever see them; your pointers aren't much good against this lot. It's not fair, is it?

There are also too many stretches in *Sleeping Gods Lie* where you aren't actually doing anything. Many times you are left outside, just mooring around in Tossara waiting for something to happen or somebody to arrive. This is a real shame, since with a little more planning and a bit less busy farm arcade toward 100%, *Sleeping Gods Lie* could have been a real corker. As it is... it falls squarely between two stools.



I think he's trying to tell me something...

RELEASE BOX

AMIGA ST	DISK	DISK	DISK
AMIGA	DISK	DISK	DISK
IBM PC	DISK	DISK	DISK

To other systems check.

PREDICTED INTEREST CURVE



The attractiveness generates huge amounts of interest, but lack of gameplay soon shows.



Teachers of Word Dreams here. Remember that you're only going to get anywhere in this game by co-operating with the in-game characters.

BT VERSION

Extremely poorly graded, produced in some very clever programming means this is a joy to look at. Sadly the graphics doesn't match the results - it's ultimately a disappointing program.

GRAPHICS	9	IQ FACTOR	6
AMIGA	7	IBM FACTOR	6
ACE RATING 60%			

• Terry O'Neil

FORGOTTEN WORLDS

US GOLD go multi-directional

It must have come as no surprise to anyone when US Gold announced their latest archery using a short while back. Forgotten Worlds had already made a name for itself in the arcade all over the globe, and quite rightly so. It had stunning graphics, a simultaneous two player option (and let's face it, simultaneous player games do alright for themselves in the arcade) and a unique control system. US Gold, thankfully, have not only managed to do the game justice, they've come up with a near perfect conversion.

The idea behind Forgotten Worlds (and isn't it always?) is to rid the universe from some tedious evil... Have other ways of attacking, sweeping, diving, slings. They're mostly unfair odds. A fair maiden or two. Luscious scrolling backgrounds and loads of damage. What?

The most unusual thing about

Forgotten Worlds is the control system. On the original coin-op, as well as being able to move in eight directions, you could also fire in eight directions, completely independent of current direction of movement, a la Star Wars. As far as hardware was concerned, you were provided with a rotational joystick and a fire button. Now, no matter who US Gold got to do the conversion, there is no way they could have successfully converted that idea, short of supplying a special joystick.

There's only seen to be two ways of converting it. The first, and most obvious, is to use two keys on the keyboard. However, this might have made the game a little too difficult. So, US Gold have opted to make the game completely joystick controlled. Now, tapping the fire button fires a group of bullets, for whatever weapon you are currently using (but, holding down the fire button



These spiders look a bit nasty, the chance you don't shoot their heads off, because that results in their legs crawling wild.



It's not exactly fair odds is it?

SO,
YOU THOUGHT
CHESS WAS DULL?



ELECTRONIC ARTS™

WICKED

ACTIVISION'S fast breeder

OO-ER! I can see the PMMC (the computer) based in the USA, references for hating each other) having a lot of a problem with this one. Talk about dabbling in the occult! Wicked is just soooo strange, it even has an oja board as a high score table entry system!

Once you were a soldier. One of the bravest warriors ever to tread the, um, well, trodden earth. But you are no more. You are deceased. Now you are but a lost soul, drifting through the endless void.

But what is this? The sun-god is summoning you. The Zodiac is in chaos! You have taken over the twelve signs. Thus must enter the constellations of Pegasus, Sagittarius and red them of the invading evil by spreading goodness and kindness and all those other glib things.

First thing you must do is choose which constellation to "purify". To win the game, you have to take the health sign, Sagittarius. You are offered a choice of three signs, the three immediately following the last sign you see. Once done, you are presented with a map of the constellation of the current sign. These of the stars are highlighted. These are the three you have to redress. Click the pointer on one of them, and away you go.

Probably the best way to describe the game itself is as a fast paced breeding race. Both you (good) and a computer opponent (bad) have a number of PORTALS. Yours are red and his are blue. From these PORTALS come SPORES. It's from the SPORES that the GROWTHS grow. You have to pick up the SPORES and drop them on existing GROWTHS to create more GROWTH. You then have to shoot away his GROWTH to allow yours to grow with the final intention of growing over his PORTALS to rid the star of him and his presence... He has to do the same to you.

Once every day and night, a tarot card will appear and stop a token. This can be either good or bad depending on the card, and can range from an extra life for you, or a spurt of growth for him. Hint: Examine the card before you collect anything.

A cute, happy, friendly, fluffy idea, yet original. Yes, at least an original idea. This isn't surprising, considering the game's from Binary Vision, authors of Zoids and The Fourth Protocol.

Both graphically and sonically, Wicked lives up to it's name. The graphics are nothing short of stunning in places. The intro sequence, where the sun sets (behind the world WICKED, set out in stone letters, looks very similar to a scene from Starwings). Then there's the Eye of Infinity, where you choose which constellation to battle over. The eye is continually rising, red veins pulsing, and occasionally it cries a silent tear of blood. The game over effect is pretty amazing too, when blood runs down from the top of the screen. Great stuff.

A brilliant game. Original, addictive, but, most importantly, weird. Check it out.

— Tony Dillon

PREDICTED INTEREST CURVE



Increasingly complex gameplay gives way to addictions (but, hey, all simple games, the fun wears off all too quickly).

RELEASE BOX

STARS 97	2-1/2 disk	URGENT
AMIGA	2-1/2 disk	URGENT

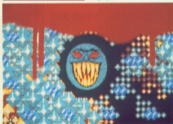
Other versions possible



You're in the lead, judging by the large splash of yellow and red, but that could all too easily change. The moon is up...



Shades of Cancer? Looks like it's time to get up.



Told you it could all change. That's your blood running down the screen.

ST VERSION

With graphics identical to the Amiga, and a difficulty level to match, what else can I say? Best buy.

GRAPHICS	B	IQ FACTOR	7
MUSIC	B	FUN FACTOR	B

AGE RATING: 9-17

AMIGA VERSION

The graphics and an atmospheric and fitting soundtrack by Richard Joseph (composer for most of Planet's releases) make the game an attractive prospect, and the playability only helps to strengthen that. A must buy.

GRAPHICS	B	IQ FACTOR	7
MUSIC	B	FUN FACTOR	B

AGE RATING: 9-17

RELEASE BOX

AGEBY	CD-ROM	OUT NOW
AMIGA	CD-ROM	IMMINENT
SPECTRUM	3.5" Dis - [14,995]	IMMINENT
AMSTRAD	3.5" Dis - [14,995]	IMMINENT
CGI/CD	3.5" Dis - [14,995]	IMMINENT
IBM PC	3.5" Dis	IMMINENT

ST VERSION

32 screen per second scrolling complements the 32-bit graphics perfectly, and gives a very colorful look to the game. The sound effects aren't the best in the game, but they are functional and may do it for you. Control via a little joystick, and you do feel yourself moving when you don't want to. That adds the action feel and tension, and the game addition is not.

GRAPHICS: 8 10 FACTOR: 7

SOUND: 6 #US FACTOR: 6

AGE RATING: GBS

and moving left or right rotates your man. This sort of control is no cause for problems. For a start, neither joy sticks are out. Seriously, you have to be very careful when moving about as it's all too easy to rotate by accident when leaning into an approaching fleet.

At various points along the levels, shops will erupt from the floor. Fly into these, and an attractive young lady will try to sell you some weapons. The amount you can afford depends on the amount of items you have killed. It's a pretty simple form of financial transaction. The weapons you can buy range from higher powered lasers to a mallet that hits where you fly and fires where you fire. Aren't pets lovely?

That's about the size of it. When it comes down to it, *Interplay's Atlantis* doesn't actually offer anything new. But why should it? After all, it's great fun, and that counts for an awful lot.

by Dave



THINK AGAIN!



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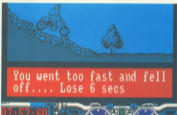


ELECTRONIC ARTS™

SUPER SCRAMBLE SIMULATOR

GREMLIN count the rev up the gameplay

If you're going to ride a bike in these conditions you better be damn sure the handle is steady over bumps, remember?



THIS is a bit of a let-up for the bike and its controls. It's been a while since we saw anything this good from Gremlin, or should I say since we saw anything good from Gremlin. Let's face it - they've had a bit of a bad spell recently. Even titles like *POW!* and *Parade Complex* that promised to be first-rate flopped on release. But now it seems that Gremlin have finally pulled their socks up and caught up with the rest of the software industry. *Super Scramble Simulator* is great.

Super Scramble Simulator (hereafter known as *SSS*) doesn't actually offer anything new to the land of computer gaming. It has no quest, no plot, no violence, no sex, no political message and it isn't even a license. So what are Gremlin playing at? Well, rather than say it will lose, they've spent more time and effort just making the game fun and playable and less time talking everybody how great it's going to be. And it certainly shows.

The idea is simple. Get on your scrambler and try to complete nine off-road tracks of increasing difficulty against the clock. That's it.

Sounds a bit dull, doesn't it?

But of course, it isn't. The main draw is fun, followed by a jumble pile of playability with a generous side order of detail. While still classing itself as a simulator, it isn't a true sim, but lays more emphasis on machine's handling than on an exact representation of how it works: you know what I mean, keep revs at an optimum when climbing a slope, go slowly over rocky or lumpy areas etc.

The game is viewed side-on, as it is meant to be then there's more. Just below the main window there is an overhead view of the course you're riding on. As you go onto the harder tracks, obstacles no longer appear in the centre of the track, lanes of obstacles have to be cleared through, and there's no going around, try to maneuver past an obstacle and you'll be set back with a time penalty.

Perhaps it's not the most inspired game in the world. Probably it's not the most original either, but who needs either of those when you've got a title as funny as *SSS*. So on, take it for a spin.

Try It!

SPECTRUM VERSION

A mono-screen colour system doesn't even begin to hint at a very impressive looking game. It's large, well animated and detailed sports title along a smoothly scrolling backdrop. The controls are tight and responsive and the best of the game is just right. Check the one out.

GRAPHICS IS FACTOR
 AUDIO FUN FACTOR

ACE RATING **B30**

RELEASE BOX

ATARI ST	£10.999	MARKET
AMIGA	£10.999	MARKET
SPECTRUM	£9.999	OUT NOW
AMSTRAD	£9.999	MARKET
ORION	£9.999	MARKET

PREDICTED INTEREST CURVE



Well thought-out controls and enough variations in objects make *Super Scramble* hard to put down. Just goes to show that old game formula never dies.



Preparing to jump over the hump that's 1775 feet high.



Even in that wind-torn! Oh well, never mind. Shouldn't drive a Buick.

Be part of the action

at the

ATARI

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LORDS OF THE RISING SUN

Shogun showdown from CINEMAWARE

THEY are certainly enjoying the changes at Cinemaware, from comic strip hero Model Plunger to TF Sports Football, and now a delve into oriental history. The setting is the Genpei War in 12th century Japan, the task is to conquer the whole country, and the forces at your disposal are those of the Minamoto brothers.

You can take the role of Yoritomo or Yoshitomo — the difference between the two is that as Yoritomo the arcade sequences have to be played, as Yoshitomo they are optional. The brothers also have different political and fighting abilities. Yui is good at forming alliances, while Yoritomo is much the better battle tactician and fighter.

At the start of the game you control two other generals of varying abilities. These three leaders, between them, have to conquer and defend all 75 castles in the land. Movement takes place on a large, scrolling map of Japan, featuring castles, towns, monasteries and other armies. Armies move slowly in real time, using connecting roads or taking between ports.

Each army has ratings for size and strength, and the general is also rated for archery, sword, sieging and leadership abilities. These ratings affect the performance of his men in the various encounters.

There are a number of arcade sequences. Armies can be encountered and engaged in battle — the result of which depends more on numbers and strength than on any tactical decisions on the battle screen. After a victory you can pursue the routed troops on horseback — a scrolling sequence reminiscent of avoiding the trees in Return of the Jedi. Samurai appear at intervals and can be backed down with a sword or trampled on. Do well enough and the opposing general can be killed too.

Sieging castles gives the opportunity for some soundtrack-style action. You get an overhead view as you try to break through the outer and inner of the castle on the way to the keep. There is a time limit, however, and the more you get hit, the less time you have. The main difficulty is the mouse control — it's very difficult to fight off a horde of soldiers coming from all directions when aiming can only be achieved sluggishly via the mouse. Why not joy stick or keyboard control which would have been much less frustrating?

If your own castles are besieged while you're at them, then some thoughtless results. It sturdy base and endless armies are used to smash down the opposing warriors as they climb the castle walls. If you're not at the castle, the result is simply banded across across the map screen.

News attacks can be used to assassinate other characters, but if it fails no arcade

sequence for that seppuku is the only option. Ninja may also attack you, in which case there is an action sequence where shurikens have to be deflected with a sword.

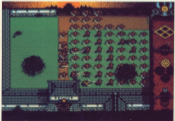
As the characters move around the map they can get into and rest at their own castles. Strength can also be built up at monasteries

and towns. Plenty of recuperating has to be done after sieges and battles in order to restore full strength. Of course you don't always have to fight — towns and castles may form alliances voluntarily, and characters may even be persuaded over to your side.

■ Bob Wade



The map screen is where most of the tactical thinking goes on. Your forces and castles are identified by banners. Clicking on characters and settlements gives you information on their population and strength, tells on events occurring to your generals and towns appears at the bottom of the display.



During a siege you have to explore the castle to find the keep, and then kill the leader. The time available depends on the number of men and sieging skill you have, and is indicated by the rising and setting of the sun.

GREAT GRAPHICS, SHAME ABOUT...

This is clearly an oriental Defender of the Crown with enhancements. Unfortunately it still suffers from all the old problems — endless disk accessing and swapping, and gameplay that could quite easily be reproduced on a Spectrum in one load. What it has got is superb presentation, atmosphere and stunning graphics — but you still get the feeling that it's more like a demonstration intended for CD-ROM than a game.

Two questions need to be asked here. First, should games be pursuing this direction with graphics and sound (of which this is not the only example in this issue), or should the quest be for more creative gameplay?

Second, WHY do so many so-called 16-bit mega-games fall into this trap? We look on the answer to both questions left in the way software houses spend their money. The typical budget on games development used to go almost entirely to the programmer — after all, he did most of the work. In fact, in the good old, bad old days, he did

ALL the work: the Jeff Minter, and Tony Crowthers of five years ago designed their games, their graphics, and their code single-handed.

When 16-bit machines arrived, the easiest way to show off their exalted status was through impressive (but often static) graphic images — Defender of the Crown is the best early example. This led to a situation where software houses were competing by spending more of their developers' budget on graphics — and as you can see in the piece on CDT (page 14) creating good graphical displays is still one of the chief priorities in writing so-called "state-of-the-art" software.

Here at ACE we reckon all this will change. Programming skills are becoming easier to find, graphics artists are becoming more computer literate: in five years time, software houses will be spending as much on the gameplay designers as they will on the rest of the development team. If that situation existed now, Lords of the Rising Sun would have benefitted enormously.



On the field of battle you have only limited control over the soldiers. They can be directed to certain spots, but victory depends mostly on having the stronger force going in.



After a vicious battle you can pursue the fleeing enemy on horseback. Mind the trees, slash the animals and hopefully you will gain a credit at heading up the opposing general. Unfortunately you've just fallen off.

AMIGA VERSION

Two disk drives or 1 megabyte memory required for full enjoyment, i.e. the majority of this country. The graphics are stunning — early scene changes with the camera, and sequences like the horseback pursuit and castle defence are memorable viewing. There isn't much music but what there is, along with effects, fits the action well.

GRAPHICS 9 IS FACTOR 9
AUDIO 7 FUN FACTOR 9

ACE RATING TOO

RELEASE BOX

ATARI ST	CD-ROM	UNDER DEV
AMIGA	CD-ROM	OUT NOW
CD-ROM	CD-ROM	UNDER DEV
IBM PC	CD-ROM	OUT IN

PREDICTED INTEREST CURVE



Ripples over disk accessing and swapping, along with low gameplay keep the marks down, but there is enough difficulty in the strategy and arcade sequences to keep it interesting.



RVF

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Micro
Style



MIKE READ'S POP QUIZ

ELITE ask the same old question

SO who cares about clones? So what if Alan Death Waster From Jarg looks just like any other Waster? It might still be a good game. At least it has on a note called trend and trend-ies. But the one? To say that Mike Read's Pop Quiz is similar to A Question of Sport can only be described as the understatement of the year.

Right from the start, when you pick your team members (presumably staff members at Elite you can feel Mike cooing his "charm" all over the place. The one thing you have to look out for when choosing your team is each person's specialist subject. After all, you don't want to end up with a team full of supposed chess-chess experts.

So, you've chosen your three ugly mugs and which of the five question blocks to load. Then you spot the familiar layout of A Question of Sport: three team members on either side, Mike in the middle, and a speech bubble above Mike's head containing an almost endless scrolling message.

The format is the same of the way through the game. The question is printed on screen,

and then you are shown four possible answers. You have five seconds to answer, but if you get it wrong or if you fail to answer in time, the question goes to the other team for a bonus point.

The interesting thing about Mike Read's Pop Quiz is that, not only does it look like A Question of Sport... and have the same format of game, but that the rounds are the same too. You know round one is the question block with all the photographs on it, then you have sport, the star-reporting personality, home or away/away or hard, guess the year...the whole shooting match. And Elite perhaps taking the mickey just a little bit?

Mike Read's Pop Quiz is still as a one player game, and even as two player doesn't contain much of a challenge. It's clearly, but not quite, accurate - after all, everybody knows that "Mister Mad A Good Year" was by Poison, not the Queensry.

■ Tony Olson

AMIGA VERSION

Most digital stars and a wealth of happy faces like to be put to test thanks to an incredibly old computer quiz game. And it's got Mike Read in it.

GRAPHICS 7 HD FACTOR 8
SOUND 10 FUN FACTOR 8
AGE RATING 10T

SPECTRUM VERSION

Headlines pictures take the place of digital stars, which when considering the 256 resolution is no bad thing. Still, it looks like Elite have come up with a somewhat odd idea, because it plays identically across all formats, including certain question discrepancies.

GRAPHICS 5 HD FACTOR 8
SOUND 4 FUN FACTOR 8
AGE RATING 10G

RELEASE BOX

ATARI ST	£14.999	RELEASIT
AMIGA	£14.999	OUT NOW
SPEC 128	£7.999 + £7.999	OUT NOW
AMSTRAD	£9.999 + £7.999	RELEASIT
CGA/128	£9.999 + £7.999	RELEASIT
IBM PC	£14.999	RELEASIT

POP QUIZ TEASERS

Why not try out a few of Mike's questions and see if you're up to the challenge? Answers in The Elite Unit.

1. WHO WERE WASTED IN 79 AND MADE A BIG COMEBACK IN 1987?

- (a) W.A.S.P.
(b) Mötley Crüe?
(c) Def Leppard
(d) Guns'n'Roses?

2. WHO PROCLAIMED THAT 'SCHOOL'S OUT'?

- (a) Mike Salsbery?
(b) Alice Cooper?
(c) Ozzy
(d) Scorpions?



BLOOD MONEY

PSYGNOSIS menace again...

FROM the author of *Menace*, David Jones (and to do with the Magic Knight Club, comes a sequel in the same vein. It takes you on an alien safari through four hostile worlds. You have to pay for the privilege of getting blown to pieces, but at least there are lots of in-tech, no-nonsense, take-that-you-alright weapons to be bought along the way.

To begin with only the first two safaris can be afforded - the cash to pay for the other two has to be earned the hard way. Each safari is tackled using a different type of craft, but they are all controlled in exactly the same way.

Each level features a combination of horizontal and vertical scrolling that changes gently along revealing the new terrain that lies in store. Meanwhile, you have to charge around the screen shooting everything, avoiding every thing and collecting lots of shiny, lovely, big gold cash.

Where does all this pecuniary gongooziness come from? From vending, alien to alien battles, that's where. Lots of the bad guys magically turn themselves into spinning coins of varying value when spotted. Collect the coins and then spend them again at the shops that appear en route.

The extra weapons are familiar enough in nature - bullets arch up and down, backwards firing, extra speed, longer range bullets and bombs. They are not overly abundant, particularly extra lives, so collecting as much money as

PREDICTED INTEREST CURVE



High initial excitement gives way to frustration because of the difficulty level. Conventional practice pays off as you confront varied challenges. Like all short-on-age it loses all badly used excitement.

provides a important.

Perhaps, the most important thing for shoot-em-up fans is the variety of aliens and their behaviour patterns. Ranging from static gun emplacements to nasty flying things that perform aerial acrobatics. Some of them take several hits to destroy - but the financial reward for them is commensurately higher.

The fun is heavy everywhere, but one of the worst obstacles does not even move until you shoot it. It's a barrier that punts about its middle when shot. In several places these prove a real problem because you have to

AMIGA VERSION

Graphics and sound are exceptionally good, at last come to be expected of Psygnosis. The bank accounts and money don't seem quite as nice as *Menace*, but then again it's much easier to see what's going on in *Menace* itself.

GRAPHICS 9 10 FACTOR 1
AUDIO 8 FUN FACTOR 9

AGE RATING 700

RELEASE BOX

AT&T ST	CU 3000	AUG 89
AMIGA	CU 3000	OCT NOV 89
OS/400	CTSA	NOV 89
IBM PC	CTSA	NOV 89

shoot a way through them while trying not to get shot from elsewhere.

If it's a tough shoot-em-up you're after then this fits the bill. Even the simultaneous keypad or coinset does not make things much easier - it's hard graft all the way. It certainly is not shrinking the bounds of computer entertainment - shoot-em-up gamblers never cease much. However, it's addictive and testing, guaranteed to give a lot of short-term pleasure.

by Dave Wood

Aaaghgh!

There are times in *Blood Money* when killing aliens just isn't enough - you'd much rather kill the programmer! Here's one of those sequences where even the most steadfast shoot-em-up fan begins to wonder whether he's only adventures aren't such a bad idea after all...



1. No problems here...well, not many.



2. The gun emplacements get nasty...



3. And so do the rocket launchers...



4. And now you've got to get past them!



J.R.R. Tolkien's

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Setting New Standards
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THE KRISTAL

A gem of a game from ADDICTIVE?

BASED upon a stage production that never materialized, *The Kristal* follows the fate of space pilot Gencis Frase (you), who is set the unenviable task of retrieving the legendary Kristal of Kosos (he means that one only made *Kristal* clear upon actually playing the game). This mysterious gem previously held together the forces of harmony in the universe, but due to a complicated series of events now lies hidden in a secret chamber... er... somewhere.

Captain Frase's mission first takes place in the Cosmos system where, armed with little more than his wits, 25 Slangles (the local monetary unit) and a larger spacegalleon, he sets out to explore the system's ten different planets. Journeys between the planets are made by means of a "17th century" spaceship, entering a brief hyperspace jaunt before reappearing in the vicinity of the target planet. The intervening space is then crisscrossed using more conventional propulsion, whereas a number of hazardous aliens must be dealt with (which, of course, means blasted before planetary can be met).

Gencis then explores on foot against a mixture of static and scrolling backdrops, and can move up and out of the screen to allow off the roads and premises to be revisited at close quarters. Any collectible items appear in a slot at the bottom of the screen and can be added to Gencis' current store with the jab of a function key.

The world of *Freema* are populated by a variety of beings, some friendly, some not. Gencis converses with the more talkative species using text input, in order to obtain information about his quest and the location of clues. Any hostiles encountered are searched and looted as necessary, in a swordfight to the death.

Without doubt, *The Kristal* is an impressive visual treat as 16-bit centers are likely to get the year's top superb backdrops by David Hardy and Michael Hught are beautifully etched and simply dripping with atmosphere.

But although the gameplay is very straightforward — much in the *Senna Deluxe* mode of wandering — solutions to set problems vary between the game's obvious and remarkably obscure. And the process of obtaining information or items can be oddly convoluted, such as having to do the same action twice to get the desired effect. Even when armed with a hint sheet (viewer's prerogative) progress is surprisingly hard-won, and the save game option should get plenty of use before the jewel is retrieved.

Ultimately, however, the game's major flaw seems to be its limited genre, which can be irritatingly unhelpful to those unfamiliar with whatever methodology (for instance, characters are able to take offense at a foot of swear words, but become amazingly serene when asked a pertinent question. Conversely,

hardened adventurers who can handle the staged replies will probably curse the *Kristal*'s sparse fight and combat sequences which intrude upon the flow of the game, and seriously hamper progress in the later stages.

The Kristal doesn't quite match up to expectations due to its flawed gameplay, but still manages to captivate and entertain, simply on the strength of its graphics: the only way to see more is to keep playing! Recommended only for arcade adventurers with large amounts of patience and dogged determination.

■ **Steve Dentel**



Kristal 67 - stunning backdrops are an obvious attraction, but some of the puzzles are pretty obvious too.



Kristal 67 - Gencis Frase embarks on a new encounter.

AMIGA VERSION

Screens and screens of gorgeous backdrops are supplemented by a variety of nicely (but not too-often) animated characters. Thankfully, the graph (it only descends to an average state) during the game's brief session. As for sound, once Patrick Moore's sampled (and conventionally homotoned) intro sequence has disappeared, the game becomes aurally more akin to cloning weapons and growing tools during the second flying section.

GRAPHICS: 8 16 FACTOR: 8
AMIGA: 2 FUN FACTOR: 8
AGE RATING: 704

RELEASE BOX

AMIGA BY	OS/2 BY	MS-DOS BY
ADDICTIVE	ADDICTIVE	ADDICTIVE
No other versions planned.		



Brief expectations soon begin to dwindle due to limited progress. Familiarity overcomes every hurdle, but once finished, *The Kristal* offers very little extended playability.

H.A.T.E.

GREMLIN launch ground and air attack

COSTA Panaji's name may not be familiar to many people, but every Spectrum owner probably has one of his games in their collection. Under the banner of Vertex Software, hits such as Highway Encounter, Alien Encounter and Contact Core Level made their mark on the ZX scene.

Mr Panaji has returned in the diagonal scrolling world to such great effect in his previous releases and, incorporating a heap dose of Zaxxon, H.A.T.E. - *Horde Alien Terrain Encounter* - is the result.

The player takes alternate control of a low-level starfighter and ground-based assault vehicles which are guided across continuously scrolling geometric landscapes. Both craft are constantly assailed by an array of alien vehicles, but are armed and the tank also sports a useful missile launcher.

The aim on each level is to collect plasma cells from pods by destroying their outer casing and making contact with the exposed unit. Doing the level, cells act as an 'extra life', being destroyed instead of the current craft on

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Works on lower base.



sustaining a hit. The number of cells transported to the next level determines the number of craft available in the next phase on a subsequent landscape; ones the mission reverts from the last level with craft to spare.

There are 30 levels to conquer, split into three stages. Should the mission fail on a later stage, it restarts from the beginning of that stage.

Highly original in its concept and execution, H.A.T.E. still manages to provide a quality blast. However, the two-on-level system means that games can last for ages, and it also facilitates a high repetition-factor, with levels being constantly re-played.

PREDICTED INTEREST CURVE



Initial resistance to yet another Star-ship game may lead to excitement and in the long run to boredom.

SPECTRUM VERSION

The immediate play area scrolls smoothly and the craft are all nicely detailed, with animated stars and realistic shadows throughout. The background doesn't accommodate the 'L' screen round the edge though, and the split effects only work for landscapes.

GRAPHICS 7 IQ FACTOR 8
AUDIO 2 FUN FACTOR 7

AGE RATING 8/15

AMSTRAD VERSION

Runs. Quick and smooth - with all the features of the Spectrum but with little use made of the machine's higher spec. Graphics and fonts prove more again that they have '80 cell control in those 8 bit machines but can they do it properly on things and ST?

GRAPHICS 6 IQ FACTOR 8
AUDIO 4 FUN FACTOR 7

AGE RATING 8/15

RELEASE BOX

AMN 87	£10.999	MARKET
AMPA	£10.999	MARKET
SPIC 128	£8.999 + £14.999	OUT NOW
AMSTRAD	£8.999 + £14.999	OUT NOW
ORAZ 28	£8.999 + £14.999	MARKET

TOM AND JERRY

■ Magic Bytes, Amiga version reviewed, price TBA.

Children and adults the world over have marvelled and laughed at the antics of this cartoon couple over the years, and now, thanks to Magic Bytes, you can play the games.

Taking control of Jerry you've got to run around Tom's house collecting large pieces of cheese from various caddy holes and then exit to another room via a mousehole. Getting at some of the pieces of cheese - those on top of bookcases and so on - can be a little tricky for such a small mouse, so bouncing on some of the furniture helps. Then, of course, there's Tom. If the growling, peevy maverick is off Jerry is sent on spinning to the floor where he has a second to quickly flee or get grabbed by Tom and have 30 seconds knocked off of

the time limit. To defend yourself you can pick up objects such as stars and bowling balls and drop 'em on Tom before he gets you.

Being into a mousehole brings you into a sub-game where Jerry's running along a continuously scrolling roadway, avoiding the bombs and collecting the cheeses.

To call Tom and Jerry completely unplayable would not be fair. Almost completely unplayable would, in our opinion, be closer to the truth. T&J fans the world over will be very disappointed that the chance to produce a game based on the legendary cartoon seems lost, it would appear, been really missed.

■ Andy Gault



Tom and Jerry - not much fun, not much game, not much rep.

GRAPHICS 4 IQ FACTOR 5
AUDIO 2 FUN FACTOR 5

AGE RATING 17/5

Bloodwycch



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



Best Of Award Winner



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

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

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

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

We review two PC Engine games using the five-player joystick interface

WORLD COURT TENNIS

A nice little racquet on the PC Engine

WORLD Court Tennis is quite simply the best tennis simulation available for any machine. The graphics and sound might not be exactly awe-inspiring, but the gameplay is in a class of its own, and better still — up to four players can participate in either singles or doubles matches.

Where the game scores highly is in the level of the playability — you can do everything you would normally do playing a real game of tennis, with drop shots, lobs, backspins, lippers, cross-court, deep shots, volleys and smashes. There are similar choices with serves, which you can spin left or right, send deep, hit hard and fast, or even feint to your opponent with a duffer.

This all sounds a bit complicated, but WCT's controls are superb, and within a few games playing all the shots becomes second nature.

On-screen presentation is also superb. At the start of a game, the players choose a character. Each one has his or her own, for example, one character has a very strong service but a weak backhand, while another has a strong forehand and service but is pretty slow around the court. There are many characters to choose from and no problem in finding one to suit your style of play.

Practically the whole of the court is viewed

from the baseline, with the screen scrolling a little to keep the ball central. This sounds a little odd, but it works brilliantly, giving an almost lifelike feel to the game.

The rules of tennis are strictly adhered to, with changes of ends, lobs and set balls, and there's even a status screen which tells you the percentage of successful first serves, the number of aces, and the amount of points scored.

Also included on the card is a funny sort of RPG tennis game where you go on a court and play tennis with all the buddies you meet. There's loads of text — but unfortunately this all is in Japanese, which probably rules most of us out.

World Court Tennis is a charming game, if you buy it you won't need to worry about not stopping play at Wimbledon — you can play it yourself.

■ Julian Rignall

RELEASE BOX

PC ENGINE CD-ROM OUT NOW

No other version planned

GRAPHICS 9 IQ FACTOR 9
 AUDIO 9 FUN FACTOR 9

ACE RATINGS 895



But your heart's out Wimbledon — this game will take some beating



Drive, lob, smash, drop shots...WCT's got the lot.

DUNGEON EXPLORER

PC Engine out-Gauntlets Gauntlet

This is a superlative Gauntlet clone in which from one to four players embark on a quest to depose the evil king from his throne.

At the start of the game each player chooses a character — either fighter, bard, wizard, witch, elf, dwarf, dwarf, or thief. Each has different strengths, weaknesses and capabilities. Once your merry band is assembled, the quest begins.

The game is played over a set map split into 14 different levels. Some levels are instantly accessible from the start, but it's advisable to head for the level one zone — higher levels are populated by creatures which make measurement of noses.

The idea is to hunt down and destroy the great creature which resides on each level. Doing so gives each character extra strength and opens up new parts of the map. It's vital that extra strength is accrued, as the going gets very tough indeed later on.

The key to Dungeon Explorer's brilliance is the way that the gameplay unfolds as you go further and further, with secret doors coming up and new screens becoming accessible. It's

not just a straightforward beat-'em-up either — there are sub-sections to complete and puzzles to solve. The gameplay is incredibly rewarding, and the fact that you're given a password so that you can continue at another time keeps you coming back for more.

Both graphics and sound are stunning, with small but beautifully detailed sprites, imaginative backgrounds and some of the best tunes you'll hear this side of an Amiga.

■ Julian Rignall



Even better than soloing Gauntlet!

GRAPHICS 9 IQ FACTOR 7
 AUDIO 9 FUN FACTOR 9

ACE RATINGS 890

RELEASE BOX

PC ENGINE CD-ROM OUT NOW

No other version planned



You must have five-player joystick interface

GALAXY FORCE II

SEGA give us a big one...

SEGA'S Galaxy Force II is a marvel in a machine hydraulic arcade machine which appeared towards the end of last year. It's one of the of the most impressive games yet to appear, and boasts state-of-the-art 3D graphics controlled by no less than six 16-bit and two 32-bit processors.

We were, therefore, naturally skeptical about a large conversion. Had they bitten off more than they could chew? The answer, miraculously, appears to be no. It's an excellent conversion that fully captures the spirit and atmosphere of the original machine.

The player takes control of an attack craft and flies a series of solo outside missions. Atomsburg-style into four different enemy base forms: three planet colonies (volcanic, arctic and jungle) and also heavily trafficked space.

At the start of a game, one of these levels is selected and the mission begins. First of all you battle with squadrons of enemy craft, which launch missiles at you. If you're attempting a planet run, the ground scrolls rapidly beneath you and you also have to watch out for natural hazards pertaining to that particular world - volcanoes on the arctic planet and great plumes of fire in the volcanic world, for example.

Contact with an enemy craft or natural hazard depletes your shield shield, shown at the bottom left of the screen if the shield is deteriorated entirely, the mission ends.

Fortunately the ship can give as good as it gets, and is capable of firing an endless stream of bullets and homing missiles, which lock onto to enemy targets that are in range.

If you manage to survive long enough, you reach the second part of the mission - the bonus. Here you have to fly down a twisting and well-lit tunnel, avoiding missiles and walls. Doing this takes very large chunks of your shield, to reach the main credits, which you should take out with a volley of homing missiles to complete that level. Bonus points are awarded for the amount of enemy craft destroyed, your shields are topped up, and it's on to the next mission.

Sega have certainly managed to fit a gallon into a pint pot with this conversion. Galaxy Force II has all the thrills and spills of the original machine, and although a few corners have been cut, just about all the game features of the 1982-83 have been included.

The graphics are coloristically arty, but the sprites are colorful and the 3D effect is fast and convincing - the fiery planet scene is particularly good. Sound is also neat, with far too many effects.

Four levels might not sound like very much - but Galaxy Force II is a tough game and will keep even the toughest fingersed about 'em up for hours on end.

● Julian Rignall



GRAPHICS 7 16 BIT FACTOR 1
 AGEED 7 FUN FACTOR 9

ACE RATING 8.5

RELEASE BOX

SEGA OLIV OUT NOW

No other versions planned

688 ATTACK SUB

ELECTRONIC ARTS bubbling under

\$1 BILLION submarines are not toys, and its almost the average machine-powered sub can be dull even in wartime, which provokes doubts as to the point of making simulations of them.

Unlike fight/combat sims, where the action comes fast and furious (in the good ones anyway), submarine sims are inevitably about stealth, tactics and edge-of-the-seat anticipation. Just how do you escape a battleship that has an accurate handle on your position? And is armed with anti-submarine torpedoes? And can effectively move faster than you?

Not easily, but it can be done. Success brings feelings of relief and achievement that are hard to match in almost any other simulators, and that is where the excitement lies.

688 Attack Sub is based on a Los Angeles class sub—though the player can choose to captain a Soviet Alpha class sub if he so desires—with 20 missions included. Once you've decided which mission you're to undertake, and whether you want to play an American or Soviet captain, you're presented with the main screen: a view of everyday life 1,500 feet below the surface.

From the main screen, other sections of the sub are accessed (torpedoes, mines, sonar, periscope, and so on) and the game is played by switching from room to room to set up information received.

The missions are varied (though the pill-fins are a bit tedious and range is difficult). Every aspect of the game has been well thought out. Plenty of action and non-stopping excitement make this one of the best sub sims around.

Playing solo is great, but playing against another, remote, person via modem is even better, although even then it probably won't appeal to death-ramp fans.

■Andy Kelly

PREDICTED INTEREST CURVE



You'll be familiar with the controls after an hour, but will find the operation tough until you've learned some basic manoeuvres. Then the fun really starts and you'll be coming back for more for weeks.

RELEASE BOX

IBM PC CD-ROM 68886/101

No other systems planned

PC VERSION

The VGA graphics are excellent, the VGA graphics are good and the CGA graphics are reasonable. Sound is nothing special but that doesn't detract from the fun. It's easy to get into, for a sim, and it's free at all times. You can't blast ship out of the water every 20 seconds, but then again you can't fire a real sub.

GRAPHICS 9 IQ FACTOR 7

AUDIO 5 FUN FACTOR 8

AGE RATING 8-17

SETTING THE PC STANDARD

Software houses writing for the PC have got a problem. Which graphics standard should they support? Everyone has VGA, but it doesn't exactly impress in the colours on screen department. VGA is a lot better, and is now the standard for the US market, but fewer UK games have access to it. VGA is the top, but who can afford the extra 1500 for a VGA card and its no-colour monitor? EA have covered all the options here—it would be nice if other software houses began to follow suit. The sooner we can drive the market to VGA and beyond, the better.



IBM Attack Sub for the masses.



VGA Attack Sub for the lucky few.

THE MUNCHER

■ Gemlin, C64 version reviewed, £9.99cs, £14.99cb

'COME back Chuck, come back...' There can't be too many games based on characters from TV adverts, especially adverts for sweets, but here's one starring The Muncher - the monster from the Choclets ads who is 'tasting everything it's got!'

The action takes place in Japan where some scientists have stolen a clutch of your egg. To get them back you'll have to fight your way through the streets, demolishing buildings, eating people and generally killing the world (even your own) until you find and take them to a nuclear waste dump, where they can hatch (giving you extra lives).

Obviously, the Japanese aren't too thrilled

at the idea of a huge people-chomping monster tramping around destroying all that fine architecture and gobbling their citizens, so they've called in the army, tanks, helicopters and parachutists all at the same time - each bit reducing your limited amount of energy - unless you can grab 'em and gobble 'em up.

The Muncher just goes to show that you don't need a 300-page manual and Full Frontal Animation to make a good game. It's fun to play, and will appeal especially to younger games players. The game style is old but newsworthy, but what it lacks in originality it makes up for in enjoyment value and good presentation.



Site it, munch it, Choclet...

GRAPHICS 7 IQ FACTOR 5

AUDIO 5 FUN FACTOR 7

AGE RATING 8-10

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April, 1987, Issue 19, 1987



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Circle 10 on PC



"Adventure Game of the
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Awards '88

"8/10" - Total Games,
"80%" - Amstrad Action

Amiga, April 22, 1988, Issue
145, Spectrum & Amstrad



"4.5 Rating, Graphics,
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ABRAMS BATTLE TANK

ELECTRONIC ARTS in Europe

WEST Germany is being invaded by the Soviet Union in this tank sim set sometime during the Third World War. Luckily for the free nations, the Americans have put you in command of an Abrams M1 battle tank, fighting in the front line to protect democracy, liberty and freedom of choice from their fascist commie, pinko allies.

There are eight scenarios in the game which can be played either individually, or one after the other to make a campaign game. For each scenario there is an objective to achieve, although typically there's no time limit, before returning to base for a debriefing.

You control the tank from four stations: the driver's, the gunner's, the commander's and the cupola (head) sitting through the hull in the top. Ammunition is limited to three types at round which you have to select for loading depending on the target: heat seeking, armour piercing and so on. Since you exhaust your ammo supplies, or need repairs, you'll have to return to base for a topup.

Driving the tank is fairly easy. From the driver's seat you can switch control between the hull and turret at the touch of a button, so if you're driving along and want to bring the turret round to look behind you, simply hit the key



There are a number of display options in *ABT*. The 3D landscape is particularly overlaid with map-views of other game operations and you can look through your viewing window or peep your head through the hatch for a quick view of your surroundings.

KINGS OF THE BEACH

Electronic Arts, PC version reviewed, £24.99pb

Step Smith and Randy Stodolski may not be famous surfers here, but on the beaches of California they're heroes: but that, isn't everyone! Their game are the top two beach volleyball players, and have lent their names to this EA version of the game.

When playing on the beach, only two players per team compete, so in this game you control one while the computer looks after the other three (you can play with or against a friend if you so desire though). You can practice the three main moves of the game — bump, set and spike — before playing single matches or competing in a tournament of 15.

As in all, *KOTB* suffers from the same problems as most ball game sims: the perspective makes it very difficult to see where the ball is going to land (the shadow on the floor is a little help, but not much) and so get your player in position. The computer does help occasionally by placing your player in the right place if you get him vaguely near the right spot, then all you have to concentrate on is hitting the ball at the right moment.

Even with help you'll find it tough to play consistently, so it's probably best left to dedicated fans of the sport.

● Andy Smith

PC VERSION

Great in VGA, not so hot in VGA but 3D players. Fast, smooth and enjoyable. Sound effects are — surprise, surprise — not outstanding, but they are certainly adequate. *Star Trek* is fun, but slightly lacking in variety.

GRAPHICS 8 IQ FACTOR 8

AMMO 3 FUN FACTOR 7

AGE RATING 7/55

RELEASE BOX

IBM PC CD-ROM OUT NOW

No other version planned

PREDICTED INTEREST CURVE



The controls make it easy to pick up, and the various scenarios and skill levels keep you entertained for a while, but a bit more variety in the scenarios would have sustained the interest for longer.

and then using the turret) but if you now switch control back to the hull, the turret will keep revoluting until you rotate control and stop it. Actually looking at the enemy isn't tough either, because you have a TACS system and thermal imaging and the like, but their sheer weight of numbers means you'll run home for repairs at least once in every scenario.

Abrams Battle Tank is well presented and put together. The switching between screens is slow, but the rest of the game is plenty fast enough. Unfortunately, it won't take very long to work through the scenarios, but the changeable skill levels will keep you playing. And, of course, you can exercise your imagination during play by reimagining your self that FM Government have recently placed a controversial order for the tank in question.

● Andy Smith



KOTB — for volleyball fans only.

GRAPHICS 7 IQ FACTOR 3

AMMO 8 FUN FACTOR 8

AGE RATING 5/15

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R
V
F

MICROSTYLE roars into gear.

Caution... these roads are a little high, and the lights are slow to change at any crossroad.

FINDING the right balance between realistic simulation and entertaining arcade action is a complex task—often attempted, rarely accomplished. This ideal seems even more difficult to achieve when the aim is to simulate the adrenaline-generating effect of pushing a high-speed racing motorcycle to its limits around some of Europe's most ferocious circuits.

(But it seems that Microstyle's got it just right.)

RVF is a simulation of Honda's world-famous RVF 750 production racer, which carried Joey Dunlop to numerous world championship victories—and even the world crown itself. Microstyle's simulation takes the novice rider right through a racing career—from local Dubman (competing on imaginary tracks including Telford) all the way to the dizzy heights of international competition played out on legendary circuits including Silverstone and Knockenoh.

Before you put on your leathers though, check out the options menu which allows the length of race to be altered, the rider's name to be changed and other, cosmetic, tweaks such as changing the spools from miles to kilometers per hour (only 1992). A database option is also included allowing two RVF riders to compete head to head.

There's one other thing, that's more important than the rest combined—Practice. Remember that RVF is a simulation, so it's no good just leaping into the saddle and powering off down the straight. Take a little time to acclimatize yourself to the bike's controls—and make sure to get a feel for each circuit before the race begins.

And so to the starting grid...

Right from the beginning, the correct speeds and disciplines have to be observed. As the lineup waits for the starting lights to turn from red to green, the engine has to be kept at a steady 3,500rpm—press fire when

the signal changes to take off, but if you've overrevved all you'll succeed in doing is pulling a wheelie for the first straight while the coo-coo-for-leads for the opening bend.

Staying with the opposition is horrendously difficult, but if you can manage it you'll be able to take their lead when heading into corners. Otherwise it's a lonely life speeding around with nothing for company other than the computer-generated status display.

Even if you're no chance of catching the lead, completing a lap without losing your mount is enough of a challenge to be getting on with. Those hours of solitary practice come into their own now as you have a fair idea of which gear to take each corner (if you don't succumb to temptation by leaping straight in to the race, did you?)

Should the worst come to the worst, a fall does considerably more than damage your ego. The bike's fully working controls are fairly robust, but a tumble can damage other bits



The pit crew's clipboard may not be the most visually stunning of objects, but it's worth taking a quick peek before heading off into the sunset. By the way, how do you fancy your chances against that top racer?



The final bend looms, but don't try too hard to move up the pack just yet as you're likely to come a cropper. Just keep the tail-enders in sight and take them on in the straight.



Rampage Told you so. This tumble will probably lose you vital seconds, but worse still your opponent looks a little worse for wear.



These bikes weren't made for running, but that's just what they'll do. It looks as though your chances of making an impression are gone this time, but you should still try to finish the race.



Car - wrap your legs around this (then darling! Registered punters may notice that the letters on the back of this dream machine spell VFR, not VFF. That's because this is Honda's most serious of the famous veees, fitted out with headlights, side stand and other 'real' features - including a suspension which keeps the top spread down to 17mm and the bike's acceleration in hitting 100mph in 1.9 seconds from a standstill) and what am I getting for this red, white and blue beauty? To you, it's a couple of weeks' worth of fun speed - and cheap at half the price.

ST VERSION

ST version runs at a size of the better ST edition (no sound), with good sound and some excellent graphics features.

GRAPHICS: 5 16 BIT FACTOR: 5

SOUND: 5 3D FACTOR: 5

ACE RATING 910

speeds or become still the rev counter, leaving the driver to change gear by the engine's note. You may not have to worry about this for long though, as another fall will probably see off a couple of your gear.

If every cheat must have a silver lining, the one good thing to result from the crashes is the sticky animated sequence when the rider runs his bike for a few seconds before re-starting. This too is 'playable' as a quick dose of joystick wiggling is needed to get the rider back in the saddle - ignore this and the rider stops for a quick engine check before trying again.

And that's about it... except to say that four laps (or whatever length of race you've selected) seems to last both forever and for three picoseconds simultaneously - and when it's all over you've got to do it all again about a billion times before you qualify as a national driver (anyone who reaches International class before their retirement is obviously some kind of cross between Joey Dunlop and Paul Daniels).

Those of you interested in VFR need look no further than the VFR, as the package is rounded off by a full Aseel Prose sized manual courtesy of Superbike's editor Tony Hildhurst, which details the bike and all of the circuits... oh, and explains how to play the game as well.

Made us loathe about 800pounds to Barry Stevens, VFR is a near perfect blend of simulation and action - if you will, 'simulation' - which will appeal to enthusiasts and arcade speed freaks alike... and all without the hassle of wiping out numerous fields of cattle to let yourself out.

© Claren Brennan

RELEASE BOX

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PREDICTED INTEREST CURVE



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more easy tips for you this month, including the second instalment of the great *Like Singleton's Guide To Middle Earth*. Elsewhere, who could resist the lure of some spanking good advice on *The Kristal*? Or a sager snippet on *Hybris*? Or help on overcoming the the pesky aliens of *Pacland*? Or even some tips for those PC Engineers? And our last (absolutely hilarious) tip for *Robocop* on the C64.

TNT

HYBRIS

Some neat cheats for Glaxxy's kung-fu shoot-'em-up.

Load up the game and wait until the high-scoring screen comes up. Now COMMBREAK and press the fire button. Now, when you play the game, press F10 to make your character fire when cheat mode is active. Press F2/F6 when in cheat mode to get all the different attachments. You also have infinite smart bombs.

Press F8 to finish the level. Pressing F10 will turn on and turn off invincibility whenever you want.

If you don't want to be invincible but you want to modify the colour of lives, etc., hold down the space bar when the game loads and you will enter the options screen.

■ Andrew Phang, West Australia



PACLAND

Anybody having trouble with those little gobliny critters in *Pacland* should look no further for some sound and snazzy advice.

INFINITE LIVES

Start with a 2-player game, getting the first player as far as possible. Get the second player on the first journey back to push the second cart on from left to right, when a yellow circle will be released. Collect the circle and lose the second player's life. Let player one continue playing. Continue with player two pushing the second cart on from left to right and collecting the yellow circle. Due to some strange quirk, player one will not die so long as player two continues to collect the yellow circle.

TIPS

Level 1: Push the first fire hydrant you meet from right to left to get a helmet. This stops the baby ghosts from killing you. Push the third cactus you meet from right to left. This gives you temporary invisibility. It is located when Pac starts flashing from yellow to white.

Level 2: On the journey back push the first log in the forest from left to right. Balloons are released - collect these for 100 points each. Push the second small log in the forest on the journey back from left to right to advance to level 3.

Level 3: When you are in the forest for the first time push the second log from right to left and you will advance a lot further.

■ Jimmy, Ulster

REPTON MANIA

This highly converted BBC micro game features Repton 1 and 2 on the Spectrum. To access any of the 12 levels of Repton 1, the passwords are as follows:

- SCREEN 0 ASP
- SCREEN 1 CROCCOLE
- SCREEN 2 EAST MOAM
- SCREEN 3 SCORPHE
- SCREEN 4 WINDOME
- SCREEN 5 BASSOP
- SCREEN 6 CORVAL SPOO
- SCREEN 7 SWO LEO
- SCREEN 8 LEVATHAN
- SCREEN 9 OPHIDIAN
- SCREEN L KING CORBA

■ Peter Hutchinson, Halifax & Gerard Costello, Chelvy



ROBOCOP

This is definitely the LAST *Robocop* cheat for the C64, on the flapping high-score table. Type in SLEIGH OF DOG to access the second list. Then type in CRAMP FORESS on the flapping high-score table.

That's our lot. Absolutely no more. Invited.

■ Thanks to Stephen Childs, Solihull



MONEY!

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

In which tales of Battles in Times Past are told, and the Fate of the Ring Bearer is made known...

PLANNING YOUR CAMPAIGN

There are many ways to defeat Sauron and I'll not going to suggest an optimal recipe for success, most a collection of ideas that will help you on your way.

By the first logs of history came to an unfortunate campaign, I ignored the advice given at the Council of Elrond and decided to escort Frodo to the rim of Mount Doom with armies of elves, men and dwarves, as well as Gandalf and the rest of the Fellowship, leaving others at the gates of Mordor. The Fellowship headed east from Rivendell to a rendezvous with Théoden's army at the bridge over the River Anduin. From there, the army continued east into Mirkwood to a further rendezvous with the Men of Dale and the Dwarves of the Iron Hills at the place where the road turns south.

Having waited some time for all the contingents to arrive, the combined army marched south along the road through Mirkwood, keeping both a vanguard and a rearguard on the road and the Ring Bearer snug in the middle. The march was slow and watchful, the objective being set five by day to keep the many contingents in good order. Occasional assaults by orcs were fought off with relative ease and as the army finally emerged from Mirkwood, its ranks were reunited yet again by Galadriel and the Elves of Loren.

Finally, at the Gate of Morannon, after a furious battle, the army breached the defenses of Mordor and advanced across the plains towards Mount Doom. (Unwisely, the army marched the very footpaths of Mount Doom, with Frodo still bearing up well after his long journey with such an enormous burden, securing victory at last.) I decided, just for curiosity, to send Gandalf to Mordor due to find out what was happening there. As soon as he left the army I had gathered at the foot of Mount Doom, the army was attacked again and again by hordes of orcs. It weathered the first massive assault. Weakened but still standing firm, it weathered the second assault. Then, on the third assault, came the measure: all, including the Ring Bearer, perished in the battle and my hopes of victory were dashed at the very last moment! Had I been less bold and kept Gandalf with the army, I would have probably won a famous victory. So much for curiosity!

Here then, instead of risky recipes are some happy hints.

WAR IN MIDDLE-EARTH

Just in case all the 16-bit Hobbits out there were feeling a bit left out, the following list provides the locations of important items to be discovered in Middle Earth.

OBJECT

Golden Sceptre
Dawnen Hammer
Black Flask
Mithril Mail
Red Arrow
Silver Orb

Black Flask
Gnarled Staff
Elven Blade
Coil of Rope
Glowing Vial
Elven Cleak

Palantir
Ancient Sword
Mithril Mail
Mithril Mail
Blue Healing Potion

LOCATION

West of Annuninus
North of Erebor
South of Mount Gram

In ruins East of Mount
Gandabab
Tucknough
East of Buckland
Tom Bombadil's House
Lorien

South of Farland
South of Ost-in-Ethil
Bellegost
Rivendell
North of White Towers;
Small town by mouth of
Rheer Isen; Grey Havens;
Michel Delving

And, to speed the demise of the One Ring, give the Silver Orb to Thranduil at his Palace; give the Golden Sceptre to Danethor at Minas Tirith; and give the Red Arrow to Theoden at Edoras.

+ A. Thaps-Paran, Essex

GANDALF

Gandalf has staggering power in battle and is the only character you control who is capable of changing the Ring. However, in Season 1 he is single combat. Just Gandalf on his own can wipe out an entire company of orcs. So Gandalf should be used whenever the need is great. If you are trying to reach Frodo into Mordor unobserved and undisturbed, Gandalf is best employed at Minas Tirith. If you are passing through a walled Frodo, Gandalf is a magnificent help!

THE NAZGUL

The Nazgul also have staggering power in battle. The Ring Bearer, un-

compromised, can avoid Nazgul by taking paths that do not cross the routes of the steeds in Sauron's campaign plan. In the case of the Nazgul, direction is always the better part of valor and the best way to deal with them is to avoid them entirely. They are quite capable of measuring an entire army.

SAURON

Sauron, like the Nazgul, is to be avoided at all algebras. However, he spends most of his time within the confines of Mordor itself. If he does venture beyond the borders of his final realm, it will only be for a very short distance. There is no danger, for instance, of encountering him at Minas Tirith.

SARUMAN

Though not as deadly as the Nazgul, Saruman is a power to be reckoned with in battle. He is usually to be found within the temple at Orthanc, Eborac and Helm's Deep, but has occasionally attempts to seize the crown of Minas Tirith. If it is well guarded, Saruman does a unlikely to succeed.

DEFENDING MINAS TIRITH

If Minas Tirith falls before the Ring Bearer reaches Mount Doom, all is lost. So its defense is of vital importance. It is best defended by foot troops, but only as these fall of vigor and strength, they also have no singular funds of arms and hunting for them.

As soon as an army gains a victory in defense of Minas Tirith, it should be moved away of the strength of the remaining defenders alone. This will drive the remaining hordes pouring out of Middle away from the citadel and reassemble the victorious army.

Following this sort of plan, Minas Tirith should be heavily garrisoned in the early stages of the war, when most of Sauron's army are on small expeditions to move and more assaults are required. An emphasis of Sauron's attack seems to target and a much weaker garrison of foot troops can hold Minas Tirith until the original defenders, after the main enemy strength withdraws.

Always stay at least enough strength in Minas Tirith to repel a Nazgul attack.

DEFENDING ELSEWHERE

Do not be overwhelmed about defending other strongholds. When fighting from a stronghold your troops will move only. But the stronghold themselves only serve to delay the final assault on Minas Tirith. It is better to preserve your strength to hold that final assault than to have your armies immobilized in defense of a distant stronghold.

The Nazgul, for instance, should not abandon Helm's Deep lightly but since the main body of their host has gathered there as a powerful army, they should begin the ride to the defense of Minas Tirith before their strength is further worn in fighting of countless waves of orcs.

MOVEMENT IN THE OPEN

The larger the army, the more difficult it is to hold together in the war of the Rings, the armies are com-

posed not just of different units but of different races, making it so much the harder for the army to keep formation on a long march. The game simulates this, and you will find that the units of an army that's assigned a distant objective will quickly become straggled along the route, each unit trying to move at its maximum speed in the direction it would've been. Amazing, but realistic.

To keep an army together, you have to sacrifice speed and set it a series of much closer objectives, pausing at each one until the stragglers have arrived. If you want to fight a formation as possible, you must set its whole route square by square, which is slow but very safe.

If you want to support the Ring Bearer and ensure that troops are always guarding his every step of the way, the best way of doing this just keeping his speed of movement at maximum is to send armies ahead of him to live his route. Then, as he moves along, he to pass over units to army. As soon as armies fall to the rear, they are sent to the front again. Quite often, this tactic prevents attacks by orcs and the armies to the front or to the rear will repel the orcs before they can even manage to reach the Ring Bearer.

Movement by air is useful, as you would expect, but armies are likely to try for shortcuts. If the road isn't straight, to keep armies on roads, each time set their next objective to the point where the current straight section of road ends. Travel by road is also less exhausting for your troops.

BEING BOLD

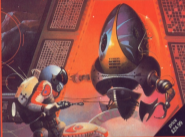
Sauron will not be defeated by attacking cities—his goal Mordor is not negotiable. The Nazgul are not invincible. Even Sauron himself can be defeated in battle. King Aragorn, Minas Tirith well guarded but look to your own objective of getting the Ring to Mount Doom. If the Ring Bearer is to succeed, the Enemy should be destroyed at every opportunity, even if this means harrying him in the stronghold of Mordor itself. The player who, like Danethor, thinks only of attacks is a mediocre player.

The Ring Bearer, in the end, reaches Mount Doom with only few companions, proceeding by stealth alone. This is not the only way. There is no guarantee, but Frodo can equally succeed in reaching Mount Doom escorted by a mighty enough army. The choice, of course, is yours. ■

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ALIEN LEGION

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TARGHAN

Far from Edengartha is the castle of the evil one. Far from your village, a lord keeps the secret, such a powerful lord that he cannot be human, a creature floating a world that dies and grows again.

Targhan is an adventure-action game with more than 120 landscapes and 40 different characters. The game is playable on either keyboard or joystick. The game offers digitized sound and outstanding graphics.

It will be released on Amiga, Atari and PC (EGA, VGA and CGA) by the end of May. The game will run on both colour and mono screens.

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POOL OF RADIANCE

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Choosing a Party

Don't bother with a thief as you only need one healer and a NPC will do.

A cleric able to reach a high level will be more useful and either will be very good.

Take two fighters - one very old, the other very good.

Do not have more than six in your party (you can make the game harder by having a smaller party).

If you're using clerics then fighter/magic users will be more useful than other combinations.

It's a fairly sexist game, so there's no point in having a weak female character.

Surviving

After the onset of your party so that the magic user is in the middle and your fighters are at the front. Also have an archer in the back too.

You will rarely suffer from lack of money so don't be a miser - start the game by making your fighters as strong as possible, forged mail and a beakard or broad sword are good. Get short

beards as soon as possible.

Don't carry items if you can't find out what they do. On the other hand, if you're stuck don't be afraid to experiment.

To not to move around in search mode unless you know that there's a lot traps around. Use a speed setting of around 5 or 6, otherwise you'll miss information.

There is no point going into caves as they don't serve G.O.

The restoration spells restore experience but is better than AD&D players don't know that.

A magic user can only get to level 6 in this game.

The dynamite is an awkward tool - Journal entry 28 is helpful although there are a few wrong walls, skulls and transporters. Also, just after you defeat the wizard and before you start to search his room, save your position in case you get transported out before you are able to get all the goodies.

Wizards don't always come in order of ease.

If you have trouble finishing a book, come back to it later.

You can lose treasure if you

leave it, even if you haven't actually found it yet. Get what you can, when you can.

Save magic items until you really need them.

Before you change anything in a room - search it.

Encounters

If you don't know whether a character is friendly or not, give him/her the benefit of the doubt and speak 'meek'. If the NPC is friendly you don't need to save it off, as you might lose valuable information.

Don't be a duncie if you meet someone apparently having a casual stroll through an evil place who wants to join you.

The madman is totally useless - talk to him a few times and then let him go.

Combat

If given the chance, attack when at a distance and hit by low and slow.

It wellplanned sleep or striking dead spell can substitute almost anything.

Don't do close up what you can do at a distance.

Cast an animate dead spell after you have killed a few bad guys and it is possible to have a small army fighting for you.

Kill any unimpaired or charmed characters that are major characters before you finish combat mode, or you'll lose any trendy items they might be carrying.

When forced to fight more than one battle in a row, cast any cure spells before you and the battle.

SHORTS

Two helpful wee cheats for the AMIGA, from SR of Hampstead, London.

OUTRUN

While playing type in RED BARCHETTA then press S for the next stage, T for 10 seconds added to the clock, B to begin the stage again.

ROADBLASTERS

While playing type in LAVILLASTRANGIATO then press 1-4 for different weapons, S for the next stage, F for the fuel complement.

And on the SPECTRUM, courtesy of Steve Haw of Warley in the West Midlands.

PETER PACK-RAT

When loaded, on the screen where it asks you if you want to scroll screen (Y/N) type CREATURES. Now, when your game has ended, you can start on the level you were on before you died.

XENON

Pause the game and press the keys T, L, N and Y. Now you will have invulnerability.



Andrew Lawson, Broomfield

THE KRISTAL

FOR ALL THE DAMNED FRAKES OUT THERE HAVING TROUBLE FINDING THE KRISTAL OF KOMOS, HERE'S A WHOLE BUNCH OF HINTS — USED TOGETHER THEY MAGICALLY TRANSFORM THEMSELVES INTO A COMPLETE SOLUTION. IF YOU DON'T WANT HELP BE CAREFUL — YOU HAVE BEEN WARNED!

● Find the beggar and give him Seranges, later. Darius automatically takes the parchment from his cup.

● Find Gargo (that's the small squeaked alien) and ask 'What do you do?' He should then divulge some information and provide an invitation to the palace.

● Head for the palace and tell the guard 'I have an invitation'. On entering the palace, proceed to Heibrod's room and

smile. When traveling in space, it is best to decelerate as soon as items appear. Try to keep them as small as possible while shooting them and their bullets. As soon as the score has been dropped, accelerate towards the planet but be ready to slam the anchors on as soon as more creatures appear. Continue like this until planetfall.

● On Zapnicka, fool Aunt Polly and ask 'Who are you?'

● Find the White Frosts and give to the Melder children's fund.

● Give Seranges to Malagar and go into the King's Head.

● Buy Gargo and Flaccuchips for extra strength.

● Go upstairs and listen to the radio.

● Steal the ship and pick any destination.

● Follow the Blue Scorpion through the Magic Ring. After the Redheaded pirate and the



ask him four questions. He will then divulge the necessary information about Captain Frakas's mission.

● Visit the King, listen, and then accept the Seranges offered.

● Meet the princess and say 'It's a secret'. Take the Ring of Iliu which she gives.

● Collect the scroll from the arch to the right of the green door and take it to the transporter room.

● Buy some Frostite and Frandites, both items in the market square town to increase strength. 5 Seranges should do it.

● Give charity to Boris the butler.

● Enter the green door, go through the centre arch and head left. Go into the spaceport and on board ship.

● Select the top icon for Zap-

Proffer the necessary Seranges and accept the Magic Ring.

● Collect the key from the left side of the lower square. Enter the King's Head, use the key to go upstairs, and collect the Heavens Tapes from by the side of the ship.

● Select the icon for Goyta. On arrival, defeat the swordsmen (the experienced) and pick up the Psychoblower at the light.

● Return to the ship and select the icon for Felinus.

● Immediately take the Heavens Tapes as protection against the head hawk story and then find the Sword of the Spheroes. This cannot be collected unless the Pommel is already in Fakra's inventory.

● Practice some more sword fighting and then return to Zapnicka.

Process have passed, use the Ring of Iliu. It won't work, unless the scroll has been collected.

● Ask Malaska 'Where are you'. Accept the Bell of the Celestial Spheres. Darius returns to his ship automatically.

● Select the icon for Ragnar.

● To survive the Brain Cell, Frake needs a minimum of 100 strength points and 20 psychic points. On being released, Darius must fly Redhead with a real sword fight.

● Confront Fire Shadok in psychic combat, he can be defeated if the Psychoblower has been collected and Frake not shoots him.

● Once Shadok has been dispatched, enter the door which opens and watch the finale. Harmony has now been restored to the universe.

SEGA STUFF

R-TYPE

Those cunning devils in Japan have built a special secret level into Sega R-Type, which is accessed from the fourth level. Half-way through the stage, head for the two pillars at the top of the screen (see picture), and fly to position the R-0 near the left-hand column. When the red alien appears at the top, reverse into the pillar, just as another red alien approaches from the left. Timing is critical: the R-0 practically has to collide with both the pillar and the red alien at the same time.

Success sees the screen flash, and the special bonus stage is entered allowing extra weapons



to be collected. If at first you don't succeed, keep trying — it does work.

If just getting to the fourth level proves too tricky, extra credits can be had by rotating the controller clockwise during the initial countdown. Up to 12 credits can be had, but this trick only works once per game.

However, if you rotate the controls anticlockwise, the R-Type sound check is entered. Here, the 17 named tracks can be heard by pushing left and right on the pad, and pressing buttons 1. After number 17, pushing button 2 and right on the pad brings up effects 18 to 25, which are again activated by pressing button 1. There, that should keep Sega owners quiet for a while...

● The ACE team & Alan Frost, Sheffield

PC ENGINE

If you look like the PC Engine is here to stay, as here's a helping hand on the games...

R-TYPE

By entering the following mission code to maximum equipment, and a full complement of lives: LS-6028HMM

CHAN AND CHAN

Halfway through the last level of world 1, a bit of bridge appears just as a group of birds fly overhead. Walk over the bridge, then turn and back as many birds as possible. Fall down the hole which is made and Chan is Chan, depending upon which character you and Darius back up and off the top of the screen, to reappear in a secret war zone, where levels 2, 3 or 4 can be entered at will.

● Brian Dick, Dorset

Announcing
the launch
of



BIG GAMES >>> f

JAWSTM



A monstrous great white shark is terrorizing the beaches of Amity Island. A pilot discovery confirms the worst – he's out there and he's hungry. It's a bid to save the island's fishing tourist trade. Mayor Vaughn engages a professional shark killer from the mainland. Unfortunately, all roads to terror start wrecked his boat, and the madness of JAW'S destruction is scattered throughout the caves and choicest of a menacing sea world.

In desperation, Mayor Vaughn turns to you, Police Chief Brody. With your two colleagues, Hooper, the shark expert, and Quint, the iconic shark hunter, you set off to retrieve the lethal weapons from the sea bed and kill the unrelenting intruder. Unfortunately, JAW'S has other ideas.

While JAW'S roams the seas water bringing a swift and terrible end to unwary swimmers, you must undertake hazardous deep sea dives into a world teeming with hostile life and full of underwater dangers. To make matters worse, Mayor Vaughn is getting impatient. As the depth toll rises, the beaches, essential for the island's tourist trade, get closed. Pretty soon, you may find yourself out of a job. (Can you at Amity Island of its insatiable visitor before it's too late?)

JAW'S, one of the greatest box office attractions in the history of motion pictures, surfaces for the first time on a computer screen near you. **WATER'S DEEPEST TEST IS GOOD.**

NEW FROM SCREEN 7



STEIGAR



Maximize. Minimize. Kill or Capture. Or both.

Maximize was death – other people's of course – and the necessary was pain... If there was a problem – any problem – someone else's problem, STEIGAR would make it his problem – at a price... He liked intense war games. He enjoyed war only if the pain was right – the job got done... Where he came from, so war should win, but STEIGAR was based for this...

The name explains. The interpretation... "The world's deadliest" the CIA said. Drafted into the US Navy, STEIGAR is trained to be a hit and run helicopter pilot. Only the Sector Command knew that STEIGAR is an ordinary recruit.

It may be a harmful training camp that needs wiping out. It may be a military doctrine de-stabilizing the area who needs attention. When the odds were impossible, STEIGAR is in town, leading death and destruction, to the chosen enemy.

STEIGAR need to work for gold, use to make for others – the job's the name.

STEIGAR is the kind of arcade-quality, multi-level, multi-weapon death or glory that's set up that wrecks pyramids. Dangerous but screen action for the necessary is you!

NEW FROM SCREEN 7



for the small screen



This is no time to feel dizzy. As you balance precariously on a narrow steel girder, hundreds of feet above the hard concrete below, a load of bricks is sent. There's a sledgehammer to be built, and the Spitters, Crawlers and metal-munching Gnomes are in hot pursuit. You step over the slippery remains of your workmates' lunch, haul your spanner or a menacing shadow... and come the day you become a high steel worker.

The sixth floor is complete. The legs cross-belted for the next girder, just as a brick smashes into your hand. Things might not be so bad if you could just feel your spanner bite.

Can you overcome all obstacles and dangers confronting you to tower above the city streets below, or will you end up updating the pavement like raspberry jam?

Almost onboard! A completely original arcade game that will keep you hooked to your computer for hour upon hour of frantic high altitude activities too.

Terrible graphics, sampled sound and a great sense of tension make HIGH STEEL one of the best new games in ages.

NEW FROM SCREEN 7



Games	JANU		FEBRUAR		MARCH	
	Cass	Disk	Cass	Disk	Cass	Disk
Jason 50	---	£19.99	---	£19.99	---	£19.99
Commando Alliance (PC CD-ROM)	---	£19.99	---	£19.99	---	£19.99
Specimen 48138	£9.99	---	£9.99	---	£9.99	---
Spectrum 1.1	---	£14.99	---	£14.99	---	£14.99
Armadillo CPC	£9.99	£14.99	£9.99	£14.99	£9.99	£14.99
Commando 84138	£9.99	£14.99	£9.99	£14.99	£9.99	£14.99
Release dates	JUNE Detailed announcements to be announced		JULY Detailed announcements to be announced		AUGUST Detailed announcements to be announced	

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UPDATES



C64/128

SPEEDBALL MAGNUMS 012.000, 10.000.

ST version reviewed issue 14
ACE rating 804

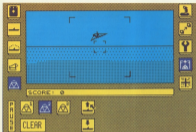
Speedball first appeared around August '86 on Amiga and ST in a rapturous reception, and was acclaimed as being the definitive sports title.

Set in the distant future the sport of Speedball is an about, half-football, anything-goes sort of game. The rules are that there are no rules. Sometimes you're in your opponent's goal and you have to go for it.

Control of the players is as easy in this OS4 version as it was in the 1980's. As with most team sport games of a similar format you control the person near the ball. Your overall team skill determines what the rest of the team do - a high rating and they'll get into good scoring and passing positions, a low skill rating and you might just find your striker wandering around at the back of the pitch.

One of the best 3D team games we've seen with a high standard for graphics and sound work. (Soleidat conversion).

ACE RATING 860



SPECTRUM

CARRIER COMMAND

RAMPARD 014.000, 015.000, Atari ST version reviewed issue 9. ACE rating 807.

Microspine must be thanking their lucky stars they now have the publishing rights to excellent strategic software: the Realtime's brilliant Carrier Command. It wages the war with anything the fetid-based outfit have come up with themselves in the last few years.

And the marvellous thing about Carrier Command is that the game play is just as brilliant on the Spectry as it is on ST and Amiga. However, it is not all seamless and light as it will only work in 128k mode.

You are in command of an enormous futuristic air craft carrier - the SS Epitax. The last news is that the enemy have taken control of the Epitax's sister ship - and are set on using it to take control of a strategically important set of 32 islands.

Using the immense weaponry of the Epitax - including its air fighters and land assault vehicles - you must defeat the new mega-gate Omega carrier.

You view the action through a central window which shows you

all of the fighting in amazingly smooth vector graphics. Commands are implemented - weapons selected and vehicles chase through a system of icons that surround the central window.

Carrier Command is that rare thing - a game that successfully blends exciting arcade game play with a serious cerebral challenge.

ACE RATING 803

AMIGA

RAMPAGE

ACTIVISION 024.000 OS4 version reviewed issue 5
ACE rating 807

I just love this game. The OS4 version fell down on the graphics side, but the Amiga version puts it into a league of its own.

It's a ring-frog type background, four giant gorilla clods smash the buildings, grab the toll collectors, smash the police cars and generally cause as much mayhem as possible in downtown New York.

The three player option makes the game a race against

the other monsters and also introduces elements of boss 'em up as you can slay your opponents in the chest and send them whizzing out of the picture.

This will never considered one of the really big Sega licenses - but for my money it may well prove to be more of a classic than the Asteroids and Galaxy Forces.

ACE RATING 808



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Commodore

AMIGA



The Amiga 500 is one of a new breed of technologically advanced computers, which are now emerging as the main standard for home computing. Based around the new 68000 68000 chip, the 5000 has 1280 KRAM and a 15" high resolution dot per inch built-in. It can be connected directly to a wide range of monitors, or to a domestic TV set through a TV modulator. Designed with the user in mind, the 5000 features a user friendly WIMP environment and comes equipped with a laser printer. And, when you buy your Amiga from Silica Shop, the UK's best Amiga specialist, you will experience an after sales service that is second to none, including a technical support hotline and free newspapers and price lists. Return the support service for our business information pack, which will give details of the Silica Shop and the very best Silica Amiga offers.

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Do you already own a computer? Yes No

**A YEAR AGO THE EXPERTS SAID IT COULDN'T
BE DONE. IT WAS TOO BIG, TOO COMPLICATED.
BUT OUR PROGRAMMING TEAM JUST SMILED AT
EACH OTHER. AND NOW HERE IT IS**

It's here and it's sensational – Domark's latest blockbusting coin-op conversion from Tengen.

Join Major Rock Hardy and Captain Ace Gunn in their battle for supremacy against an army of invading Xybots!

With a split-screen for one or two players and a unique viewing area, you'll find Xybots a challenging strategic blast 'em up.

It's non-stop action all the way and working together in two-player mode is the ultimate fun. Each player controls one character and the split-screen gives each his own playing area. A map shows the section you're battling through and the positions of the patrolling Xybots. And to keep one step ahead, pick up energy pods, super weapons, keys and coins.

Xybots made a challenging arcade game . . . as a computer game it can't be matched. So grab hold of the controls and help the intrepid duo, Rock and Ace, rid the labyrinth of these metallic monsters!



TENGEN

The New Name in Coin-Op Conversions.

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Developed by **DOMARK**

Super Game, Lucy Road, London SW15 1PN Tel: 780-1110

Prepared by Super Software Development Ltd

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PC RACERS

Have they got it under the bonnet? Claran Brennan test drives three PC contenders.

Motor racing games have never lived up to their potential — even in this, the age of the all-singing, all-dancing 32-bit home computer. It's difficult to know why this is — but one thing's certain, no racing game has ever managed to generate half of the sense of speed or urgency that are accepted as the norm in, say, flight simulators.

If examples are wanted, then how about *Duress*? MS Gold's Amiga and ST versions disappointed an expectant world, shedding the co-developer's awesome blend of stunning graphics and well-timed gameplay and replacing it with a red box sliding along a jolly and garish roadscape. So what hope is there for PC? *Duress*? Well, believe it or not, this is by far the best version yet — and it is so for the only computer version of an arcade racer to approach achieving the original's playability.

And strangely, this doesn't appear to be a fluke as both the other PC racers released this month, *Warlord's Lombard RAC Rally* and *Accolade's The Duel — Test Drive II*, go way above what was expected. In this brief burst of motorway madness a flash in the pan, or could these mean machines be the shape of things to come?

Delivering the power!

Lombard RAC Rally was warmly received when it first took to the modified roads of the ST and Amiga's 16-bit forests, but even here the handling and car speed left a little to be desired, but surely this exciting tanking roller-coaster ride (could it make it into the PC?) *Duress* you believe it! The CGA version's zoom and sense of everything slanted upwards are a good reason for complaint, but VGA's 16 colours remedies this fault and contributes to a well above average conversion.

Not so surprising is *Roadster's* follow-up to its original 16-bit better *Test Drive*. Built on the other side of the Atlantic where PC's rule the roost, *The Duel* is another chance to take a couple of high-performance European sports cars on a law-breaking jaunt; as the side of a mountain is a race against either the clock or another motor. The VGA version is understandably impressive, but the care and attention that's obviously been lavished on the four-colour CGA make for an equally stunning show. The only let-down here is what needs the cars — especially the Marous from phone effect that counts when the police give chase (only a whole new meaning to the expression 'mobile phone').

Round — but not hairy

But unfortunately that's the way with most majority of MS-DOS software. The IBM's sound chip isn't known for its impressive architectural capabilities — but it seems that engine sounds are also a little out of its range. Both *Duress* and *The Duel's* Ferrari replace the customary



tailflying rear with a trailblazing series of beeps (which quite disappears in the laser game) — while *Lombard RAC's* pulsed crank effect (which 'cheats' is nothing short of atrocious).

Sound effects take the credit for most of the atmosphere generated in any game, but

Speculators turn out to be fierce as you prepare to take your 1984 where it's probably never been before. CGA users wait for the lights to change from red to green — but if you're one of the lucky many who have to make do with CGA, then you get to watch them change from magenta to magenta!



The Duel incorporates a 'steering' element, where you have to shift off of regular intervals to fill 'up' — unfortunately it looks as though your Porsche-pushing buddy has got these before you.

more so when an impression of speed is needed, however it seems that until the fast-moving road boards become as widespread as VGA graphics adapters, PC owners are going to have to put up with their games sounding like gorfed microwave ovens.

Drive like hell

But heaven, let's not dwell on such sordid matters. PC games should be enjoying the release of these such cheap products - now you have the luxury of choice that other computer owners take for granted. But that's not to say that any one of these programs should be picked up exclusively. OutRun panders to the arcade player's need for speed, while the other two have aspirations towards being simulators - with Lombard RAC offering long term competition against The Duel's variable appeal.

Probably the most telling point is that up until now PC road games (and, some would agree, MS-DOS games in general) have usually come with the price of a hot lead for a PC stacked - this time may however be the first of a new wave which can hold its head up beside the other 16-bit wonders.

So well it time that you get behind the wheel?



Head for the hills in Lombard RAC Rally's competitive Sierra. Every day's a workout, but wouldn't you pay too much attention to your co-driver as his clipboard map is continuously dodgy.

SUPERCARS TAKE THE CALIFORNIA CHALLENGE

Pied up taking the same cars out for a spin on the same old roads? Well worry no more, as The Duel allows affluent drivers the opportunity to change both their vehicle and setting with two add-on packages: The Spanners and California Challenge. The former replaces The Duel's original high-speed pair with five equally mouth-watering motors - an '89 Lotus Turbo Sport, a Ferrari Testarossa, a Porsche 911 RUF, an '88 Lamborghini Countach 5000S and an '88 Corvette ZR1. Impressive sounding maybe, but these five are actually the original line-up from The Duel's predecessor program - 'Real Drive. A little more original though is the California Challenge (aka C11 85), which replaces the standard scenery with an accurate route which negotiates the West Coast between San Francisco and Mexico in seven fun-filled stages - see you in Acapulco!



Stop outside for a moment to served at the filling station of your pit's and pay - has the standing horse ever looked this good?

THE FACE-OFF

	The Duel	OutRun	Lombard RAC
Performance	***	***	***
Acceleration	**	***	***
Handling	****	***	**
Reliability	****	**	***
Optional Extras	*****	***	****

PERFORMANCE

This category reflects how the car feels - does it generate a feeling of travelling at speed, or does it just feel like a Sunday evening in a Lady's hat? The Duel's and Lombard RAC's skaggon control allowed OutRun to take the honours here - but only really by default.

ACCELERATION

And that. However, none of the cars tested managed to create any feeling of gathering speed - with The Duel easily left standing at the lights.

HANDLING

Stability is the key here - and while The Duel performed beautifully, OutRun did manage to hold the corners a little too well and Lombard RAC's poor old Sierra suffered from excessive oversteer.

RELIABILITY

Or, 'how the stacks took the road'. OutRun really doesn't count in this category, as even a complete tumble only loses a few seconds. The Duel behaves a little more respectably, but even then a fall of 1,000 still only results in a cracked windshield. By far the worst in this respect though was Lombard RAC - a short high-pitched beep is hardly enough to suggest a head-on collision with a tree.

EXTRAS

Once again OutRun doesn't really figure, weighting it with little more than the option to change the banking track. Lombard RAC performs a little better, with extras including a TV interview and full weathering. However, The Duel's extra scenery skins and add-on cars make it a clear winner - remember though, like the real thing, these optional extras are a little wearing on the pocket.

3D POOL



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THIS MONTH THE ACE PIXEL PROFESSOR REALLY LEAPS INTO ACTION!

INSTANT ANIMATION



For many children, even us quite elderly ones, a favourite cartoon sequence has always been the magic paintpot. You know the one; Roadrunner gets a bit ahead of his pursuer, pulls a pot of paint and a single brush out of thin air and paints a false road out over the cliff edge... or a door in a brick wall, which opens... or a bomb with a lighted fuse which explodes... If only we could do that, even just for fun. Well maybe the time is fast approaching when we can!

As desktop computers get more powerful AND less expensive, 3-D animation has become simpler, easier, and quicker to produce. True "Tank Top Video" is still in the realm of the rich kids and semi-professionals but those of us with straightforward off-the-shelf motion can still make (short but interesting animated sequences or at least get a bit of motion into our slide presentations.

SHOW SOME ANIMATION!

There are a whole range of ways that movement can be put into your pictures using anything



INSTANT ANIMATION



from a simple paint program to a sophisticated raytracing and dither animation system, but few of them could be described as instant.

Computer paint programs for the more advanced machines - ST, Amiga, PC, Antonides - have always let us pick up multi-coloured brushes, replacing the pointer with an object or sprite that can be moved about the screen with a mouse. This object can be pushed down once or many times to any part of the screen as if it were Rodrunner's multi-coloured paintbrush. In effect, a bank of static screen memory is copied from the bitmap and transformed into a chunk of memory that can be easily moved across the screen 'above' the bitmap, then merged back into it again.

If Instant or Exquisite Colour is available, the object can be made to appear from behind parts of the picture so that the sun rises from behind the trees or eyelids move over eyes. In this case the palette is moving 'below' part of the bitmap and 'above' the rest. Some programs can cycle the colours in the palette while the brush is drawing to give pseudo-animation. This process is used in many games to give the impression of movement, even sophisticated road-race games like *Hang-On* use colour cycling to make the road seem to move. The palette switching and order of colours can take a bit of working out but the results are fairly immediate.

SPRITES IN MOTION

Proper animation programs are available for most advanced computers, though the Amiga has by far the best selection. The simplest form of true animation also uses sprites, but rather than use just the mouse for random movement, each object is given a precise path to follow. In this way, many objects can be moved at different speeds along a variety of pathways, above and below the bitmap, and can even be scaled to give the impression of travel into and out of the picture. *Aggie Animator*, available for both the Commodore Amiga and Atari ST, Deluxe Video and Fantasticon for the Amiga and Advanced Art Studio for the ST, all use this method to great effect.

Above a certain number of objects, memory can become limited for sprite animation and the processor becomes overworked so the movement can appear to flicker and jerk. A better chip cited as standard to the Amiga, and some Atari, can help to some extent by taking over the load of sprite movement control from the main processor, but the size of objects and the length of animations is quite limited as a standard



DELUXE PAINT



First, the drawings are one-colour-bitmaps picked up from a well known source of anime film frames, Edward Muybridge. In 19th century America, Muybridge made the first series of moving pictures as a result of experiments to reveal the nature of animal and human locomotion. His photographs were scanned to aid the backgrounds removed.

Since it was first released in November 1985, Deluxe Paint has remained the premier graphics tool for the Amiga range of computers. It has also become the best 'maintained' and upgraded piece of software available for the Amiga, starting out excellent and progressing from there. The new version, Deluxe Paint 3 (DP3), has been greatly improved in a number of areas, but what makes this release really special is the addition of animation. What makes it a pain is that it only works on 1 meg Amiga.

The main program features - in their PC guise - were reviewed in detail in ACE 11, so only the new and improved features will be described here.

As a near perfect compromise between on-screen icons and menus Deluxe Paint has remained unchanged since the original version. The menus have got longer and stuffed about, but the icons have maintained a continuity that helps old users grapple with ease. DP3 has one small change; instead draw has a diagonal checker is also filled as well as line draw lines.

'Brush' or 'Painting' modes in DP have always been comprehensive, but now there are two new ones, Fill and Extra Hatching. Thinking a 'fill' into the painting, mixes the fill colour with any shade that the brush passes over. Extra Hatching (EH) - US spelling is an Amiga mode where each of the 32 low resolution colours has an equivalent that is half as bright; not really a true 64 colour mode as the extra 32 are not definable separately but on screen that is the effect. Filling in DFB mode the left mouse button puts shadows onto the picture and the right button, highlights.

If the palette is set up suitably, Fill will really produce smooth graduations that automatically include the DFB equivalents at the dark end of the fill, improving the smoothness of the colour transition. Other new fill types are: Text, Brush - allowing the current custom brush to fill the filled area, and wrap - similar to brush fill but compressing the edges to give the illusion that the brush is 'wrapping' around the shape. In effect this last fill type is simple texture mapping.

Text entry was always a weak point in



Brush Dance as it writes the drawings, the grass, clouds and their shadows and the Flying Fish all moves. This can only be accomplished here by a few solid states, which is a pity. As with all computer animations, the errors and provisions that can be done on a still, disappear as soon as the action starts. The sequence is just 28 frames long.

ANT III



Each blade of grass is an "Antibrush", the fundamental tool of AntRendering in 3D, composed of 12 frames. With each update, it cycles through the frames.



The Flying Fish is also a brush. Sweeping out of the sea, it is **MOVED** - on both x and y axes - as well as rotated. The update is called **brushend**.

Delta Paint, mainly because it was difficult to use from a different disk. A new font installer has cured this problem and provides a preview. This is especially useful when using Calibri, another new addition. You still need to know the full font directory name though.

Many other smaller changes have been made including a number of coding "speedups" that make most operations faster and smoother. This is particularly obvious in perspective mode, so much so that Dan Soto, the author of DFX, recommends using perspective rather than the brush mode for rotations.

The really big addition is animation. Many other paint programs provide a means of animating the screen (see elsewhere on this page). DFX does it with a complete and intuitive integration that makes adding movement

to a picture an obvious development in the "...why didn't I think of that before..." category. Animation is made really easy by treating each object or brush as a separate sub-animation that can be painted on - or "unpainted" to use the new jargon - in virtually the same way as an ordinary brush. Almost every tool, painting mode or brush transformation works. This approach is unique. The actual process is detailed by the illustration on this page.

What truly makes DFX truly groundbreaking is its ability to produce an animation within an animation within an animation within an ... if it is possible in fact to produce a detailed, multi-level sequence, pick up the whole animated screen and spin it screaming into the darkness of the void like *Man Soto* or *Superman's* super fans.

RENDER BENDER



A Render Bender will picklers, simply constructed from standard geometric shapes.

In the "New Computing Power x Journalism" issue later? Acorn's technologies has now only remain the early example set by the Amiga, mostly with its latest price rise. Nevertheless the software that is now beginning to appear may cause some pundits to call them north. **RENDER BENDER** from Clares is a fascinating demonstration of the potential power of

3D computing.

Most graphics enthusiasts will have realized by now that in spite of the realistic images that ray tracing can generate, the rendering times usually involved are of the same order as conventional art. That is all set to change for **Render Bender** renders **FAST** - not in 'real time' or instantly you understand, that is only possible on a setup like Acorn's *Paint Machine*, (more news of this, later next) - but at least you can see the image building up quickly down the screen, even in high resolution.

Render Bender (R3) operates in the same basic way that most 3D animation systems use; a complete model of the desired "world" is set up in memory, then the model is rendered in detail on screen. The model is called the "scene" and it includes all of the desired parameters including the colour, shape, size, surface texture, opacity density (opaqueness), and refractive index of each object plus its starting posi-

INSTANT ANIMATION



MACHINE

PAGE FLIPPING

An alternative animation method for large complex animations is page-flipping. As the name suggests this is in effect the same method as drawing the frames of an animation on successive pages of the corner of a notebook and flipping quickly through them. Each frame is a complete or partial screen bitmap, not a sprite. Animation is achieved by changing each frame's screen successively by a small amount, and saving them separately. Once all of the frames are loaded back into memory, any reasonably powerful computer can switch them backwards and forwards onto the screen at a very fast rate, in some cases faster than a speed dial. Well, more than 60 frames per second anyway. Most standard full size machines only have room for about 18 full size frames but that can be enough for a really spectacular sequence if the frames are designed to loop together.

Even longer sequences can be constructed by packing the frames using Delta compression techniques. Unless a very large object is being animated, the difference between one frame and the next (the number of pixels in the bitmap that have changed colour) is usually small. Delta compression involves storing only the first frame of a sequence in total, plus those parts of the bitmap that have changed in successive frames. The result? Much larger animations taking up much less disk space!

Pageflipping and Delta compression seem to have become very popular recently, especially in 3D paint software, probably because the 57 bitter is taking so long to materialise. Cyber Paint from Acorn, CyberSoft's Quantum Paint, and Atari's own HyperPaint all use similar compression techniques to produce simple pageflipping. Though CyberPaint is by far the most powerful, a Paint/Version system in the same mold as Delta Paint II.

On the Amiga, paint systems have tended, until recently, not to include animation, probably because there are so many excellent stand-alone animation programs. Delta Paint II has changed all this, integrating animation into the normal painting process in a seamless intuitive way. (see side box 'Version from Delta')

The most advanced 3D modelling and ray-tracing animation systems of after pageflipping and delta compression to produce smooth motion control. On the Atari 32, the Cyber Studio series (see **ACE 4**) from Acorn is by far the most well developed and fully featured animation system. The full range of software offered by Cyber Studio will be its



INSTANT ANIMATION



Studio will be dominated in an ACGI graphics feature in the near future. On the Amiga the range is much wider, including: Renaissance 3D, Script Animator 3D, Form in Flight, Calpari, and the Hawk Animator series. Most of these have already been described or reviewed on these pages so, for a change, Render Blender, a new ray-tracing animation system for the Acorn Archimedes is featured in a side box as an example of the most advanced form of animation available on a home micro. The speed and quality of the rendering is astonishing, but the modeling system is about as user friendly as a ton of fun.

POETRY IN MOTION

There will be ones of "fil" and "flair" but after trying out almost every piece of paint and animation software available in this country for a home micro, Deluxe Paint 3 stands head and shoulders above the rest for instant action as well as your friendliness, versatility, range of features and just pure fun. On the Atari ST the nearest equivalent seems to be Cyber Paint although it has not yet been given the full test treatment: see a future issue of ADZ for that. It is not as instant or as intuitive as the new Deluxe flagship but it is powerful. Render Blender is in a class all alone: instant it is not, but the speed of its rendering makes it seem instant compared to even the fastest Amiga raytracer. If the modeller was more friendly it would be brilliant. Nevertheless, for overhead, unanimated, instant animation there is no doubt that Deluxe Paint II is the best in the world, bar none. Road Runner would be RoadPuser without it.



One frame from an animation: the balls appear from the blue "box" and roll down the purple slope...



...while the small point "light source" on the corner of the blue box casts shadows of the moving balls on the floorboards behind them.

position and motion characteristics within the animation sequence.

To set up the "scene", RB uses a script file, in other words a text file which contains all of the parameters. According to Clares this method has several advantages but three seem to be totally outweighed by the big disadvantage - it is very user-unfriendly. The primary reason is the slow development time and hence cost. At £80 the package is reasonable cheap, but many of the people who might want

to use it will be put off by the difficulty. If needs, an interactive, wire frame or solid modeling interface in time Clares are bound to offer one. It will be worth waiting for because the quality of the rendering is excellent and should be made available to as many people as possible.

The interface problems notwithstanding, the images produced are quite sophisticated. Six primitive solids are provided plus three and four sided polygons. With a bit of imagination most objects could be constructed from these, though an interactive modeller would start using the polygons much more liberally especially if Phong shading were used to smooth faceted surfaces. This would probably add to the rendering time.

Three light-source types are provided, rays, points and spotlights allowing very creative and subtle lighting effects. By combining lighting effects with the various surface reflection and transparent/refraction properties it is possible to set up very realistic pictures like the illustration, listing above. The finishing touch of realism is added by the wide range of floor patterns available including wooden "floorboards" to last one can get away from the clichéd checkerboard.



ALTERNATIVE IMAGE

Although the animations that the average home micro can produce are not up to the standards required for broadcast, some companies are using Amiga and Archimedes computers to produce fast animations, quick dummies (known in the trade as "animations") and low-cost corporate videos.



Alternative Image, based in Leicester, have used Amiga to produce a number of professional quality animations including this ad for Bass. The Amiga 2000 they use is expanded to quite a high standard (and expense), but the software and techniques used are all available to any Amiga user. Provided with a standard micro and relatively cheap software, home animation could be the first step towards a professional career.

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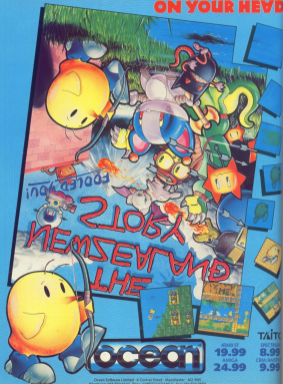
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SOUND SENSE

The second most popular musical use for your home computer — after sequencing, which we took a glance at in last month's ACE — is its ability to create, and to help you create, sounds: a capacity known as VOICING.

If you read our monster overview in Issue 20, you will recall that there are two ways in which you can encourage the computer to make sounds: either program it internally, or get it to program an external synth via MIDI. The big advantage that voicing software provides is the ability to use all the peripherals (those bits that go to make up the sound) on screen. This may be in the form of sets of numbers, but more sophisticated programs will translate these numbers into easy-to-follow graphs. The real gems are programs that will let you manipulate a graph on screen, and also offer up an endless series of random voices to give ideas to get started.

INTERNAL CHIP PROGRAMMING

Most computers are still sadly lacking in the audio department, the bottom of the heap being the 68K Spectrum with its single-channel "beep" command, the most common chip in use is the Texas Instruments AY 8912 or a cloned derivative. This is used by the 128K Spectrum, Amstrad CPC, nearly all PC models, MSX (Panasonic added a tone module to theirs), the ST, and the BBC. This is a three-channel sound chip that suffers with a basic problem is

that the tone created is a square wave, which is fairly harsh, and not too adaptable, but surprisingly many games have chosen shoving sounds out of it, and it's still to be heard suffering away in a multitude of unearned sounds.

The Commodore 64 has the SID chip with four channels of sound and vastly improved sound filtering. At the time, this was seen as a very large step for mankind, but it does pale by today's standards. However, with smart software, it can be made to play sound samples.

Computer designers have only recently started to take sound seriously and incorporate quite sophisticated chips, using the latest ideas in sound synthesis. The three most expensive are the Archimedes, SAA, and Amiga. About 386 I know very little, except that it has a six-channel stereo chip. The Archimedes has an eight-channel stereo chip, and the Amiga a four-channel stereo chip. Because these are very complex chips, they still await the development of software to turn them into synthesizers proper. However, since all of the machines have high-speed internal workings and large memories, it makes them very useful for sampling. The sounds produced by both the Amiga and the Archimedes, so far, have only been

MUSIC

samples. As yet we await the bespoke voicing software that will take full advantage of their respective sonic capabilities. There is another option: that of purchasing a dedicated bottom four generator. There are a few about, and ACE is currently testing for a few more. The results and comparisons will be reported on in a not-to-distant issue.

Meanwhile, the ST is the best bet for intermediate music. In the heyday of the home kit computer there was a fair amount of voicing software about, which is still found in the cheaper baskets of some software stalls. But if you have an ST, there are several pieces of PC software which allow to program the sound chip. By The Sound Generator from Goodman FXD, which will give you a graph display of the sound, offers quite a lot of programming facilities, and is fairly typical of its type. It's a lot easier than programming a Z80.

VOICING FOR A SYNTHESIZER

Voicing software comes into its own when used with a synthesizer organ. One advantage that the older analog synths had was knobs, lots of them. Slips, coloured, unmarked sliders, switches that you physically moved, and a sound path that was easy to follow. The 'real commercial synths were a selection of modules that you had to actually plug together in what was configuration that took your fancy.

Sound always started from the left and traveled a path through the various filters, processors and amplifiers, to emerge on the right-hand end, as it were. After the usual "Just move any of the levers and hear what happens." This was absolutely the ideal budgetary way to start off: "God the manual, let's include a few things and make some up with something," it didn't take long to test out the basic functions of the various systems, it was just endless, super-mentation - if something didn't make sense, a quick glance over the panel usually revealed the problem, and even if it didn't, you would always try moving a few things about.

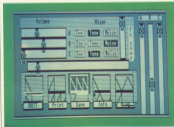
However, since we are now well into the digital age things are very different. One switch is not wired up to a particular function, say vel-

ocity; instead, it is wired up to a CPU, and consequently can be made to perform multiple of functions. The lack of hardware is inadequately compensated by an LDD. Instead of a slope that is usually predictable you have strings of numbers. To further confuse you, these numbers will almost certainly have different maximum settings, an attack level of 99 may well be flat out on the main envelope, but not necessarily on the auxiliary low frequency generator. If this applies within just one synth, think of the fun when you swap to another with a different set of arithmetic rules. Not only a different set of maths, but more than likely a whole new way of creating the sound in the first place.

Enter the voicing program. By talking to the synth via the Systems Exclusive part of the MIDI code, it should display all the parameters of the sound on screen, and offer you the facilities to change, and view the changes, at will and with ease. Unless you have the sort of brain that can cope with three dimensional maths, and can load a pretty good memory, you will find this a major boon if you can't pretty well say MIDI-voiced synths.

To program your synth you will need software specially written for it. There is no "master programmer" because there are several methods of creating sound and it would be fairly impossible to encompass these fully on one program. It follows that the more popular the synth, the greater the likelihood of finding a choice of software for it. So the chances of programming a DX7 from an ST are not simply excellent: you are spoilt for choice. If you need to program a King synth from, say, a CPC then you would be very much down on your luck.

Synth programmers exist for most home computers. It will depend on the make of your computer, interface and synth as to the availability of bespoke software, but you could try these companies for software other than PC, Amiga or ST: for the Spectrum, the Spectrum Music Group on 05242 50259, and for the Commodore, CPC, and BBC, the EMR on 0782 335417. As yet the SAM and Archer have not spawned voicing programs at all.



Public domain software to give you a head start in inorganic chip programming for the Atari ST? This is The Sound Generator from Goodman FXD. Sounds can be constructed from a number of different basic waveforms: levels are adjusted with slide controls.

PROGRAMMING SOFTWARE Two and a half pop the VOICING FOR

Starting at the low budget end is the PUKK. Domain software, although it may not seem so, is the ST, most configurations feature a voice programmer for the CZ, usually coupled with a similar program for the Yamaha DX990. These are not random voice generators coupled with a library system. Any voice programming will need to be done from the synth itself, so not by much, so, but think. Still, at the end they're not too bad, and come with a fairly detailed set of instructions which you print out. You do get quite a lot of free voices, 50, which would otherwise cost quite a lot.

CZ ANDROID Hybrid Arts 01 444 9126

Perhaps the best voice programmer for the CZ comes from the Hybrid Arts and is called the CZ Android. It has the same set for some time and has been found it very easy to use. Instead, it wasn't with downloading the program that I installed the



CZ Android: the graph in the centre of the screen shows the sound's shape.

envelope parameters of the CZ system. These synths are very complex in operation, and so you won't get much joy out of the first wiring LDD on the front panel of the instrument. The pitch, filter, and sound envelope-constructions are all complex in themselves, but there's a well-earned, too, altering any part of the envelope has the effect of altering the shape of the envelope itself and generally covering the whole effect up.

Android uses two basic screens: the library page and the editing page. The library has the internal memory in the centre with two alternate banks either side. Sounds can be transferred either singly or en masse to the edit workspace from the edit workspace you flip to the edit page where the first things you see are sets of numbers being running, below the screen and above into the various editing parameters. Eight double sets of figures in each section relate to the five envelope stages and the rate and level. You can alter these by clicking on them and depressing either mouse button.

In the corner of each section is a tiny multi-page envelope icon. Click on this and a small graph display alternate either by figures, or by toggling the editing stages/parts of the graph to reshape the sound. You don't have to do all the envelope - in fact, very few sounds need that, and you can specify where the envelope will start and end, again by clicking on the appropriate part of the screen. Alterations are instantly made and sent to the synth. Apart from hearing of the sound parameters on screen, including the main waveforms used for the pitch-bender

Two of the most popular low-budget musical items have been the Casio CZ101 and the Roland D110, a synth and a tone module respectively. Because of their popularity, there is a good supply of programming software for both, especially for the slightly older Casio.

THE CASIO CZ101 & THE ROLAND D110

method of sound creation — usually, octave setting, detune, and key follow — you have drag-over data options. These include the "redoct" feature, which is the program's word for random bits. You can also flicker up a sound by copying the "data", undo all your editing, initialize, compare with the original, and store your workings. You can format the data as real (hexary) without editing to the workbench.

All these features are very useful, and provide an easy learning-of-use figure without having that voice-over-the-voice, and that the CD does a lot of good. Yes, the CZ won't display the notes. Having used this program for some time I can thoroughly recommend it. It stands the "door" test—on to the field.

SOUNDBITS 3D PROGRAMMER

Soundbits Software 021 733 2063

Soundbits Software have come up with a third piece of software that not only covers the D110 but all other 80 for its similar cousins, the 81700, and the equivalent version D11 and D10. On loading up, you get the main-options screen. But it is default to your instrument, and then each view you through the program.

The first thing you do is to save the usual setup. In case of Mending later on, you can always return to it. During the configuration stage, you get all the information you need. To change actual voices, you click on the name of the current voice displayed in the "index" box (should call the voice "index"), and it will be different. An overlay name page up, listing all the voices in their own group. To change tone groups, return to the screen and hit the tone-group, and the other index-group point up. Any voice you want you highlight by clicking on it. This is quite simple to transfer to the configuration screen. After the loading the set-up to your requirements, select the red part to work on and repeat the process. For easy reference, a list of the current parts with their details is kept on screen. All configurations can be listed and stored.

Across the top of all the screens are the main features: data transfer, either in part or overall, the other view screens, tone and rhythm. Tone setting is similar to the "Arbitrator". It makes a very good and thorough job of displaying the sound, creating features which are pretty complex and if you know up, the fact that you made can be undone as well. Throughout the program, parameters are stored by clicking on them, rapidly changing the character. On any of the screens, the sound of the current voice can be played by clicking on the right-hand mouse button. The position of the mouse will determine the pitch and velocity, left will get to pick, up and down for velocity.

The system will store a many well-ordered set of notes. Since any drum can be assigned to any subset of any volume and degree of pan, all these are displayed, with an active piano key feature assign the drums to it. I would have liked it to be able to have a global display feature here, so that if you wanted to see the drums to come through the output, say the stereo mix, you could do it with one click instead of having to go through each and every drum. My only other gripe about

the program was that there doesn't seem to be a way of printing out a voice listing, which makes it a little difficult to remember what's where. Otherwise, SD's is a very successful program and one that any serious D110 user should start saving for now.

ABOUT THE ROLAND D110...

Roland's D110 is a very sophisticated, compact piece of hardware, designed for a family keyboard or multi-channel tone modules, it has a module in reality the guts of a synthesizer, without a keyboard to play it from or pitch and modulation wheels to allow the sound to react time, and adding instead on a number keyboard to describe pitch to provide these, it is multi-functional because it can play more than one sound at once.

Like most modules of its type, you can have eight sounds responding to eight separate MIDI channels, so it is well suited to being run from a sequencer. The configuration of the values is probably the first thing that you will need to set up. There is a basic choice of 128 voices, and not only the MIDI channels but also the five tuning pitch, how far it will bend when sustained by a pitch wheel, the range it will play within, and the volume. Further complications can be added when you look at the bank of the module. There are six separate outputs, plus a stereo pair and a mono output, which divides up on one of the latter pairs. These, too, can be assigned for each sound if you choose the source, the pan from left to right can be fixed as well. The same thing comes with a moderate draw and generation facilities as well, all compatible to a MIDI channel and individual module outputs. Finally, the remote control for the whole configuration can be set, with a wide variety of modes and strengths. This is all overwhelming stuff when writing up from the front panel, with the multi-function buttons and remote controls as well. This sort of thing really writes well for someone editing, so that you can see at a glance what values you are setting others.



3D Programmer lets the patch edit...



...then selecting the instrument voice...



...and finally, having a look at the drums.

WHAT TO LOOK FOR IN A VOICING PROGRAM

- It should be pretty obvious how it operates. Try to avoid programs that give merely numerical data; graphic display is the order of the day.
- Any attention you make to the sound should be updated in the display. Preferably you should be able to drag the display around.
- All the main sound parameters must fit on one screen. It's no fun flipping between lots of two screens to fix up a sound.
- It should be able to store not just individual sounds, but banks of sound as well (the whole sound memory of the synth). Look for the magic word "librarian", it gives another way that it should also be able to transfer other single voices or whole banks, and it should be easy to create and transfer the sound banks. If it is a program for a tone module, then the playing configurations should be easily alterable.
- The sound you are creating should be playable from the query keys.
- Any "randomizer" feature is a bonus; you can use it as a basis for computer-aided inspiration when trying to create new sounds.

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ACE sorts out the RPG-old from the RPG-ross, discovers that there may NEVER be a *Barbaric Tale IV*, and that even Level 9 and *Magnetic Scrolls* are getting animated about new adventure ideas...

WHAT'S IN A WORLD?

Words of playing time, great atmosphere, strategic challenge, and a powerful storyline are just some of the attractions of a good RPG. Poor graphics, slow pace, indecipherable documentation, stodgy rules, and a lapsed plot, however, are the only reward for the wally who picks up a turkey, and probably pays at least \$20 for it. In this, the second of our RPG series, we continue our exploration of the genre, look at some of the best offerings on the way, and catch up on the latest developments, so you can be sure of ending up with a handful of gold dust and not a fistful of feathers.

We also ask - and answer - some questions

that RPG fans may find a little disturbing - like whether this current boom in RPG software is going to last, or whether it's just a flash in the pan.

There are traditionally four leading RPG-influenced game genres, each of which has

spawned numerous imitators. Two of them are already familiar to UK players and have already been extensively covered in *ACE*: the *Barbaric Tale* series from Electronic Arts/Interplay and the *Ultima* series from Origin Systems. The third, although very popular in the States, is not so common over here, it's *Wizardry* (formerly on Scenario Number 5, *The Heart of the Matter*) and reviewed on these pages.

As with a number of RPG titles, you can only get *Wizardry* from specialist importers. As we given details on one of these companies.

Computer Adventure World - later in this article. During the next few months we'll be checking out a number of important RPGs. They may be expensive, but some of the software you can get from the States is well worth the cost.

Even here in the UK, though, things are hotting up. You can find out on these pages about EA's new RPG due out this summer, about Level 9's planned RPG-influenced system, and about *Bloumen's Quarterstaff* - a multi-window, individual character costed RPG-style graphics adventure. All of which goes to show that it's the adventure/fantasy market - once considered a gameplayer's ghetto haunted by the ghost of half-loaded Hobbits - where all the action is currently taking place...

THE ACE RPG-UIDE PART 2

OK, so we didn't manage to get you *Might and Magic* if this month, but understand that although the Apple II version is available, the PC version is hot off the press and pre-production versions are still being done in the good old US of A.

What we HAVE got you, however, should more than make up for it, though. News of Level 9's new system, confirmed rumours of *Magnetic Scrolls*' animated products, and a definitive look at what's going on in RPG today...and what will be happening tomorrow.

And last month, who knew? You might just get a peek at *BRAM!* after all.



Animated action events RPG character attributes and adventure-style location descriptions in *Amulet's Prophecy* on the PC.

OLD FAVORITES

We checked out some older RPG's last month and — as you may recall — most of them didn't really make the grade. So what to look out for if you're getting started in the RPG jungle? That's easy — if you haven't already sampled the delights of the Ultima and Bard's Tale series, then you've really missed out. If you can't afford both of them, the ideal choice depends on your preferred playing style.

Bard's Tale games are essentially searching and fighting games with a bit of puzzle solving for good measure. You get a simple graphic representation of your location and your enemies during exploration and combat. The latter consists of basic attack commands for each party character, with lots of spells to master, treasure to find, and weapons to wield. These games are simple, repetitive in action, but

great fun and highly addictive nevertheless. You can dip into a SAVED game whenever you feel like a spot of hostility.

Ultima games, on the other hand, are more challenging in terms of exploration and puzzleing. You interact to a greater extent with other characters and spend much of your time trying to work out your objectives. Combat is more complex (you get to position each character individually on a special combat display) and exploration involves a good deal of object manipulation and discovery.

An Ultima game, however, is not something you just pick up every now and then for a spot of monster hunting, since you risk losing the thread through intermittent playing. On the other hand, Ultima games get you deeply involved and tempt you to stick at until you've cracked it or died in the attempt. This requires

lots of time (usually around 50-100 hours), but it's a rewarding process.

The other main difference between Ultima and the Bard's Tale lies in the variation between the different versions of each game. Bard's Tale I is still a great game, and scenario II and III have built upon it without greatly altering the nature of the gameplay. Ultima I, on the other hand, is an ancient baby that to-one in its right mind would stick out for these days. Ultima II, however, is a mega-game that its self-respecting RPR should be proud. There's a checklist for the different machines on the opposite page.

FANCY STUFF

If you're really hard to please and want some thing more exotic than the UR companies can really offer, you might want to try investigating

THE LEADING EDGE

While most companies seem to fall into the traditional ST Ultima gamestyle, Infocom seem to be experimenting more than most, some of their efforts have fallen rather flat, but we should all be impressed by the energy with which this company — once considered the ultimate purveyors of computer fantasy — are putting into their RPG games. With dedication like this, it surely can't be long before they come up with a winner.

We've already looked at Infocom's Journey in last month's issue. Another example of the company's willingness to experiment is *Quantastuff* — a graphics RPG for the dedicated with lots of cash. Although it currently runs only on the Mac, it shows several features that we can be sure will soon be implemented on other 68000 systems, including the ST and the Amiga.

As you can see from the screenshots, *Quantastuff* is something different altogether. First, it features full on-screen mapping, in two different modes, depending on your location. These can give tremendous detail and are combined with a method of mouse pointing that enables you to move quickly from location to location.

Second, *Quantastuff* — unlike most other computer RPG's — does not simply ask you for a single command. Instead, you input individual commands for each character in your party (the size of which varies as you travel around). What's more, each character has their own text window, completely separate from the others (although information of general interest is printed in all windows). This compartmentalisation does mean the game somewhat but also means that you really get a feel of playing the game from different viewpoints. And, of course, if you're playing with friends, who control the other characters, it's invaluable. You can even hide your window from the others if you wish.

Finally, *Quantastuff* is typical of most recent Infocom RPG-influenced titles in that it attempts to combine the narrative element of text adventures with the graphical interaction of some RPG's. In *Quantastuff* you can issue commands to characters either via menus of verbs, prepositions, and objects or

directly at the text cursor using traditional text adventure commands (EXAMINE, GET, and so on). In either case the program responds with location descriptions and other narrative text, sometimes at considerable length.



Drop-down menus provide commands, object manipulation facilities, and even allow you to define mouse commands to speed up gameplay.

There's a growing feeling among software houses that narrative, as opposed to graphical action alone, lies at the heart of the ultimate computer RPG. If that's the case, Infocom are likely to be the first to get there...



Two-screen mapping changes made in certain parts of the game, giving you detailed pictures of your current and our surrounding locations.



There's a lot going on in this screen. The map always appear on the left, frequently overlaid by graphic windows showing characters, locations, or other game elements. The text windows on the right accept text entry and deliver program responses for each character. All windows can be resized and moved around the screen.

FOLLOW THE BARD...

Here's a complete, up-to-date list of the availability of *Bards Tale* and *Ultima* titles. Conversations are coming out all the time but don't expect there to be too much activity in the near future. — *Origin are hard to work on Ultima World Interplay... well, read the WOT? No BTWT? See for further details.*

BARDS TALE FORMATS

	Spectrum	Amiga	CPC	BT	CGA	PC
BT1	8.000k	24.000k	8.000k	24.000k	8.000k	24.000k
	14.000k		14.000k		14.000k	
BT2	NA	24.000k	NA	NA	16.000k	24.000k
BT3	NA	NA	NA	NA	16.000k	NA

Other 16-bit versions of BT2 and BT3 may appear in the future, but don't expect any within the next three months.

ULTIMA FORMATS

	CGA	Amiga	PC	BT	Start 8-bit
U1	16.000k	NA	24.000k	NA	NA
	See note	See note	NA	NA	NA
U2	16.000k	24.000k	24.000k	24.000k	16.000k
U3	16.000k	24.000k	24.000k	24.000k	16.000k
U4	24.000k	24.000k	24.000k	24.000k	NA

Titles marked with an asterisk (*) will be available within the next three months. Note that Origin are releasing a special *Ultima Trilogy* pack, which will feature U1-U3 in one package for CGA and Amiga at a special price (to be announced).

a specialist RPG supplier. Although things are changing fast, many RPGs still make their first appearance in the States and by using a specialist importer you may get a glimpse of games not yet available in this country.

To start with, you could do worse than try *Computer Adventure World of Bards Buildings*, 38 Chiswick Cross, Brentford, U.K. 6L1, tele-

phone 01 846 1112. They're particularly helpful because they publish a dedicated RPG catalogue that includes details of each product, including storyline, difficulty level, playing time, and special features. This can be a great help, especially when you're parting with large amounts of cash! *CGA aren't always cheap, but they can get most things Stateside, many of*

which would be difficult to obtain elsewhere.

Typical examples of games currently available from *CGA* include *Mastercraft's Star Sage 1* (a multi-player SRPG), the *Phantasia* series, and numerous wargame scenarios for those with a taste for history. We'll be checking out many of these products in the next few issues.

THE REAL THING

While you're about it, why not face some *REAL* RPG challenges? Your micro can still be a help to you, particularly if you and your friends lack in the early-available *Dungeons and Dragons* scenarios.

Even since *SI* tested the *Advanced Dungeons and Dragons* computer rights, a steady flow of releases has ensued. While available through computer games, such as *Heroes of the Lance* and *Floor of Madness*, are easily appreciated by newcomers to the adventure scene — they don't need any roleplaying background to enjoy — the *Dungeons Master's Assistant* (Issue One Encounters is not of the same breed), *SI* suppose is to act as a tool to help in the creation of real role playing, the kind where you need a group of people. This grassroots role playing has been growing steadily over the past few years, but it's difficult to say just how popular this sort of semi-serious computer program will be.

BEHIND THE JOB

In roleplaying, there is always a moderator, a human related who gives decisions on actions taken. *Bards* (in *BT2*) they're called *Dungeons Masters*, or *DMS* must have all the relevant facts before their ability to place and time when the adventure takes place.

In simpler terms this means having maps of the area to be explored by the party, lists of the creatures to be encountered there, and the objectives and tasks which the party must try their best to succeed at. The *DMS* looks after the "playing area", if you like. He is the god who controls the world, and everything that happens in it.

The player's job is simply to live out the

WOT? NO BTIV?

It now seems fairly certain that there will never be a *Bards Tale IV*, although we *CGA* reveal that your existing *BT* characters will still be able to fight again. What's going on?

The *Bards Tale* series is now quite old and, unlike the *Ultima* games, has not wished to build a great extent between *BT1* and *BT2*. Interplay (who produce the *BT* games) have already launched out into other areas, exploring skill based RPGs, where each character has to master a number of different talents (e.g. *Wizardry* and animated graphic adventures in the *Bards On Line* style (*Neuroscience* is the first example). Quite naturally, the company seem keen to explore pastures new rather than flag an old horse to death, however good a horse it is.

Good news, however, is that Interplay are just about to launch a game featuring a new RPG engine, adapted from the *Champions* game system, which allows the player to choose the level of combat resolution, determine spell strength, and select tactical or strategic combat.

The game's called *Dragon Wars* and should be available at least for *CGA* and *PC* formats sometime this autumn. On a pilgrimage to the mystical land of *Dimun*, your party discovers that a malign/magical monarch has outlawed magic and started waging war on everyone in sight. Tossed into a dungeon on arrival, you find that magic is likely to be your only salvation.

Finally for those of you who are *PERILL* about the lack of *BTIV*, take heart. *Dragon Wars* supports characters from *Bards Tale IV* (if you've been friends live-on...

End of an era. Although *Bards Tale I* has recently partnered on 8-bit machines, and *Bards Tale II* was announced recently for the *CGA*, the famous series now looks as if it's coming to an end...

Party's Tale

Name	HP	MP	EXP	Level
Warrior	100	100	100	1
Wizard	100	100	100	1
Thief	100	100	100	1
Druid	100	100	100	1

Character

Name	HP	MP	EXP	Level
Warrior	100	100	100	1
Wizard	100	100	100	1
Thief	100	100	100	1
Druid	100	100	100	1



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lives of some characters within this area, trying to succeed in their quests and improve their characters' abilities.

Seen from this angle it's easy to see where play is more difficult. The DM must handle everything that is not a player, and arbitrate on what happens after the players have made their decisions. To make matters worse, those decisions, to make matters worse, although many tabletopled scenarios are built able for role-playing games, DMs like to merge their own. So you're starting to get the idea that DMs are very busy people! It is this area of creating and developing scenarios and events that the DM is designed to help with. You can find out more about it in the CLOSER ENCOUNTERS TUG box.

THE FUTURE

One year ago, here at ACE, we predicted that RPG was going to be the biggest thing since sliced pie. Well, we're right! In the future, full of old and new talents, crowded with parties all seeking the promise (not of being bounty?)

The answer, it seems, is probably not. Although almost all companies are busy announcing "RPG systems", none of them are really what we'd call role-playing software. The reason for this can be summed up in three words: *Serra-On-Line*.

Serra's animated graphic adventures have made the company one of the richest in the States. Out of every four games sold, one — the company claim — is a Serra title. Whether this is true or not, it is obvious that Serra's enormous success is spawning an other competition to follow suit. Check out the boxes elsewhere in this article on *Magic: The Sorcerer and Lord 6* to get an idea of what we mean.

Meanwhile, more than one RPG company like *Interplay* are producing *Savage* programs — *Nanomechanics* was the first and we can expect more to come. In the context of games like these, RPG means simply that the characters in the game have personal attributes that may change during play. The original RPG scenes of parties of adventurers, complex plotting, good initial descriptions, and well scenarios is therefore unlikely to replicate. What's happening instead is that

CLOSER ENCOUNTERS

Real life (as opposed to computer based) roleplay is based on the "encounter" — the set of rules and conditions that apply when your party come face to face with a monster. This is especially true at the *Advanced Dungeons and Dragons* scenario which is at least 70% encounter-driven. Note that the monster need not be a standing opposition with a face/body colour problem: a monster is any creature that is not a player, so sometimes the term NPC, for Non-Player-Character, is used instead. The other 30% (in AD&D terms in explanation, most often of a dungeon. Sometimes players explore a new level, or instead another planet) this sort of play requires a DM of a high standard to wrap well.

As a basis for planning these encounters, *UD-Dale's* DMs contain a huge list of 1300 monsters. These are drawn from the pages of *Monster Manuals 1 & 2*, both published by TSR for B&AD. The database contains entries for all the vital statistics of the monsters, including how tough they are, how much treasure they tend to have on them, and many other characteristics.

The task of changing monsters using the DM to suit different campaign areas (the "Voggon Rebirth" dragon is a much tougher creature than the "Greyhawk" variety, for instance) takes the designation "ideal easy" — inventing new monsters, such as the Hellfire race *Crystalites*, is similarly no headache.

So, you've got your monsters, and can create any specials you may want to spring on a jaded party of adventurers. What about the set piece encounters? Serra (1988 actually) have been great, and can be used as is. Mind you, players will get suspicious when they only encounter signs in groups of 50.

CRUX

An adjunct to the encounter database is the encounter table. This represents the main usage of the program: it examines entries in the monster database, and produces ready-made engagements. What makes them special is the level of detail available for customising engagements. Say you wanted to create a situation where the evil villains had attacked some hostages.

You could, within a minute or so, create the statistics of the monsters, the hostages and the treasure gained. There is also a "See Below" field for extra description. When it's time of the hour, *Interplay* is going through the AD&D books, just looking up the dice rolls for hit points, repair and loss for damage by weapon, magic resistance — and then it's time to write it all down.

Admittedly the DM's usefulness levels is to be dependent on your printer type. If you have a respectable A4 machine with MGL, then OK. Perhaps you're an unfortunate with a small thermal printer. Scanning busily through a "book" of printed might look awful. So, but it certainly isn't my idea of fun.

The bottom line of using any computer program is ease of use, and I was surprised to find how simple the DM is to master. It always displays a default for you to either accept or edit, and the manual is very good for taking you through the busy bits a step at a time.

When I consider all the factors, I must admit that the DM is a mighty impressive. OK, on the CD the drive was slow. However if you are a *Dungeons Master* with the time, money, inclination and will to be occupied by fans, using the DM will seem like a dream come true.

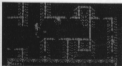
PROPHECY

Activision

Prophecy is one of those rare games that are easy to explain, beautiful to look at in VGA, or why not and great fun to play.

Now fellow gamers have all been clapped to bits by homo-dal monsters and you set out to avenge them.

Prophecy on VGA — tremendous graphics (see pp.4 and 10) combined with great gameplay.



Each screen shows a picturesque location where you meet your character using text, or picture. Prepared messages flash up on screen with relevant information about locations or events.

Superb animation, great storyline, lots of enjoyable combat with others, simple but useful spells and character attributes,

INCLUDES ARE

MM1, MM2, MM3, OUTRO

The main character

and lets to explore make this an animated RPG-influenced adventure that tests the parts of most of the opposition — and that includes many of the Serra bits. Keep an eye open for updates.

GRANDPARENTS 40

Only one in your party, but he should like reports.

SET-UP 60

Looks to install and play.

LANDSCAPE 80

Stunning graphics, lots of different types of locations, and frequent new things to see on the way.

COMBAT 80

Heck and stomp under joystick control.

with single key press spell casting.

MAGIC 70

Spells are really super. Good to be used and can be upgraded in different character types.

ENCOUNTERS 80

Not such a straightforward character, but lots of possible fights — and there is more than one way to win. The more you know the more you'll want to see. Lots of game.

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other game genres are stealing RPG concepts. If you're a purist, you'll be disappointed, but most of us can't help but enjoy the prospect.

Typical examples of this movement are Activision's *Prophecy* (reviewed below) — an action-oriented strategy game and *Ulti-Matchers* from Lucasfilm/STC (also reviewed) a previous issue which brings the "party concept" to animated *Servants*-style adventuring by giving you control over more than one character.

Traditional RPGs must share some of the responsibility. They've made life very difficult for new players by bombarding them with and less rules, poor documentation, and sticky graphics. Developers may remain loyal, but the rest of us need rather more persuasion. This combination with commercial reality may be the one encounter traditional RPG can't win. It will, however, last long enough to entertainment software a depth of gameplay that will one day be accepted as the rule and not the exception.

This is the last in the RPG-uide series of articles. But from next month onwards will be carrying regular reviews of RPG-influenced software both from the US, Europe, and abroad. Just into the year should be Electronic Arts' *Wizardry 5* — a graphical RPG with a "supernatural horror" theme set in the 1300s. Watch out for it.

NATIVE TALENT

While Infocom browser only at RPG-influenced games, what are so very new Level 3 and Mag Scrolls set up?

Level 3 have been working for some time now on their "new system" — a conversion with ACE's Stone Codes several months ago. *Prime Austin of Level 3* revealed that — at the time — he favoured the single character approach rather than the facility for building parties.

Infocom have already tried this with *Bayard Zark* and there are several other RPGs on the market (e.g. *Legend of Blackbeard*, reviewed last month) which only give you one character.

This seems a sensible step. One of the great enjoy-

ments of games like *Barbarian Tale* and *Procyon* is the identification you build up with a group of very different characters.

It's therefore rather depressing that the latest reports from Level 3, whose system is being kept under wraps but is due for release in July, indicate that the games will be single-character ones. Graphics will also play a large part in them.

Meanwhile *Isola Sirelar* of MagScroll: Scrolls is keeping newly lightpeed about their new system. Rumour has, however, that animated graphics play a large part in the game design and this, combined with other prospects of information, leads us to suspect some kind of

Servants-like type product. The same could even be true of Level 3, particularly since the rumour is that they are "just about" to sign up with an American software house.

There is of course a reason for all this. As you can read elsewhere, Servants is currently hugely popular in the States with their animated adventures. If you've never played them, then you should know that they feature pretty graphic backgrounds against which animated characters move and interact. There is a limited palette and movement, as well as most commands, are joystick controlled.

Stand by for more news of the new systems next month.

WIZARDRY

Sir-Tech

Wizardry is something of a hip and amongst US RPGers. It's been around a long time and is now on Scenario 5. As with other games of this genre, you don't have to have played any of the previous scenarios to catch up with the latest.

Wizardry 5 — The Heart of the Mountains, to give it its full title, is a very large maze-mapping and murder RPG which throws you down into the usual underground dungeon maze in search of fame and fortune.

The game comes with an excellent 56 page booklet that sets the scene for your attempt to rescue the Gatekeeper of Ulgarport, without whose spiritual aid doom is nigh and everyone will break out in spots... you know the sort of thing.

Wizardry — you can't see much of your opponents when you're in combat mode. Perhaps that's just as well...

Your opponent is the Evil Sorc whose minions inhabit the Maze beneath the Temple of the Brotherhood. These minions are of the rather unimpressive quality variety, much as in earlier versions of the *Barbarian Tale*. The maze itself is a strangely anachronistic collection of wireframe graphics that would have looked somewhat out of date in a 1983 version of *3D Monster Maze*.

As you can imagine, then, the presentation of *Wizardry* leaves not a little to be desired in these days of *Dungeons* and *Ulti-Matchers* et al. What's more, it's price — at a list over \$49.00 — is about as scary as anything out of the label/maze itself.

At this would be enough to make most players look elsewhere, and understandably so, I

have to say. But for those with a taste for underground mapping and text combat routines, *Wizardry* is probably Number One on the list.

First, the game is very large.



Unlike recent versions of other RPGs, which have expanded in terms of colour and graphics, *Wizardry* has expanded in terms of size and plot development. Although there isn't much text, there are numerous features and intricacies to be stumbled over

in the dark, and most of them set you some kind of puzzle or test objective.

Wizardry allows you up to six members in your party, but you need every one. It may not look that hot on screen, but you're certainly not if you can beat it.

RELEASES BOX

WIZARDRY	MS DOS	207100
WIZARDRY	IBM PC	207100
ADDITIONAL WIZARDRY FILES ARE		



CHARACTERS 70

As in your party, you're restricted to a few different character classes.

SETUP 50

There are eight different starting classes to choose from.

LANGUAGE 55

Very few — and very primitive — graph-ics.

COMBAT 45

Five different options and two requests only. Unlike other games of this type.

GRAPHICS 50

Lots of graphics, with a few animated ones for movement only.

ENCOUNTERS 55

Lots of encounters, some with graphics, some with graphics, some with graphics, some with graphics.

RPG-UIDE RATING 755

ADVENTURE

BOY, HAVE WE GOT PLANS FOR YOU!

The adventure section's a bit shorter than usual this month, due to the space taken up by the last part of our RPG-idea. But never fear - there's a fresh wind blowing through the computer adventure market and with Steve Cooke and Pete Connor back as editors of ACE, we've got some very adventurous ideas for the future. Starting next month, we'll be presenting a completely new section for everyone interested in adventuring. It'll be simple, direct, very opinionated, and full of information. Most important of all, it will cover a broader range of software than ever before.

That's because, as you know, the adventure scene is changing dramatically. With Infocom text and graphics adventures at one end of the scale and games like Activision's *Prophesy* (see page 99) at the other, there's a desperate need to pull it all together and give everyone a complete, reliable guide to what's available. That means regular reviews of new products, which will include a whole new way of assessing fantasy and exploration games.

In whatever world you happen to be next month, make sure you stop off at the trading post and grab a copy of ACE. After all, if they've got the guree, make sure YOU'VE got the numbers!

MAKING MUGS

The man who brought you *SHADES* has developed a 386C engine that enables him to develop multi-user games in double quick time. Not being known to some as Jason the Cooker after his role-name in the Maxwell on-line game, has developed a system called Mug-Kit. It's a special development language and runtime engine that enables other authors to turn their ideas into multi-user online games.

Not obviously thinking for system has got what it takes because he's set up a free com-

INSIDE DEALING #1

In the adventures *King's Desert II*, *Space Quest II*, and *The Black Cauldron*, press CTRL-B, then ENTER below, then TYPE (q). Having done this you will be asked ROOM NUMBER... Type your room choice and you will be instantly transported to it!

Thanks to publisher Steve Smith.

pany to promote it - Third Millennium Systems - and is busy attacking the French market with MUG based games. First off the line will be *Trash*, written by Matthew Reed, otherwise known as they're all split personalities, appear only *Amusing the Wizard*. The company are currently researching potential partners in the UK, Europe, and the USA.

Trash seems a particularly suitable title to aim at the French market, for Gallic neighbours are already demonstrating an unhealthy appetite for all things trashy by logging onto the national Minitel system and sending very French messages to each other. ACE readers may remember how our *SHADES* games that people in the UK actually got involved in the game and conducted business in-screen copies in the United States. In France they've gone several stages further than that, but we'll leave the reader details to your imagination.

HIT.....OR MYTH?

Magnate Devils haven't been entirely inactive since they launched *Flint!* Despite problems caused by the Telecoms sale to Manojose (see page 9), they've managed to find time to finish their 'mini-adventure' *Myth* for the Official Secrets adventure mail-order club.

The good news is that *Myth* is pretty good fare despite the fact that it is barely half the size of a normal Mag Swords game. Even better - it's absolutely free. So what's the bad news?

Well, there is a catch. *Myth* is only going to be available to people who join the Official Secrets adventure club. It's not for us to tell you how to spend your money, but the package is actually pretty attractive. Although you have to wade out an astonishing £10.95, you do get some pretty hefty returns, including a bi-monthly magazine, some VHS tape games and, of course, a free copy of *Myth*.

Back to the game. You play *Providence*, God of the Sea. Stripped of your godly powers by Zeus you have to earn your right to eternal life and all other divine benefits by completing a test. Zeus has commanded you to steal Hades' Helmet which is secured in the depths of his subterranean Palace. To achieve this you will need to play the Ferryman, cheat Death, and defeat the nine-headed Hydra guarding the gates to the Underworld.

The graphics are excellent, though not as good as those in, say, *Quest of Thieves*. And although the game will probably yield up most of its secrets after a couple of hours' playing it could serve as a good introduction to adventuring for those who are wondering whether the text-tappers life is the one for them.

Meanwhile, Official

Secrets have also released a 20page guide to playing *Dungeonmaster*. These guides are often a waste of money, saying things like "Watch out for the nuclear missiles, they're radioactive" and so on, but we've perused the *Dungeonmaster* specimen and have to admit it's pretty good value for only £1.99. Oh yes, there's that catch again. 'Tis you have to be a member to buy a copy.



Myth is free for you pending for a copy, then phone Official Secrets on 0275 528841 for membership details.

Before you send off your hard earned bill, better make sure *Myth* is available for your machine; it's coming out for Amiga, Atari ST, Macintosh (mouse pick only), PC DOS, OS/2 disk, and Amstrad PCW. PC CD-ROM/Windows and Spectrum +3 disk versions are also available but are test only.

THE ACE ADVENTURE CONFERENCE

Just soon the month for messages from Sarah Gurne and Phil Amstrong... The address is now ACE Adventure Conference, Priority Court, 30-32 Harrington Lane, London, EC1R 3BA. Jump to it! Remember that the best letter each month (and that doesn't necessarily mean the most letters) will get a mystery prize for their machine.

THERE'S NOTHING WRONG...

...with simple video input. I'd hazard a guess that most game players aren't gamers and aren't likely to keep their commands brief... input is nowhere near as important as the content of the text; if the spelling is sloppy (I once found myself near 'a small steam floating'), the grammar bad, the descriptions poor, then the atmosphere suffers. When dealing with a world of fantasy here, and it should maintain its own internal logic, including Geography 101. When you go South you ought to end up in the same place that you came North from, unless the text clearly states that the road, passage, tunnel, or whatever

leads, or turns...

THE LEVEL 9 ADVENTURES...

...I originally played were contained into 20K and yet they contained all of the elements necessary to satisfy the adventure: good plots, strong story lines, vivid prose, detailed descriptions, lots of locations, a reasonably flexible and witty parser, tricky puzzles, an attractive package and even sometimes — graphics. My only gripe was the lack of a suspension feature on completion of a game (the equivalent of this has only appeared in three adventures that I know of, namely Beyond Zork, Treks, and Legend (Bill Levy). How come with 200K to play with the only real improvement is in the quality of the graphics?

Alas... the sad truth is that with 600K is a lot of a distraction for us adventures. It's easy to fit 200K with superb full-color pics. It takes about two days. It isn't easy to fit a state-of-the-art character handler. That takes about two years.

MOST OF THE PACKAGING IS TOTALLY UNRELEVANT...

...in the case of Irishman titles, to the actual game. Recently I purchased Spellbreaker for £29.99 and when I opened it there was a badge and a booklet which didn't tell me anything about the game at all.

Level 9 are really as bad, with Jewels of Darkness and Silicon Dreams you receive large booklets which don't really add to the scene for the game at all. In my opinion, the Rings Quest (Gons-De-Lo) titles are the best. Their packaging only contains the disks, a small booklet, and loading instructions. After reading the booklet, the rest is up to your own imagination.

All in all, I think that all games' packaging should be like the Rings Quest series... that way the price of the other games would fall too. Do others agree?

What do they? And while we're about it — Sarah gets this month's software prize for the best conference contribution. Will it be you next month?

HIT-LISTING

Here's a real little listing for Amiga owners who want to get ahead in Darts Tale II. The program creates a character who is "very rich and very intractable," says programmer Chris Fitch of Walthamstow. Use in the listing and save it to disk for later use. When you want to change a character, simply replace the characters CHARACTER NAME CODE HERE with the name of your new character — but make sure you don't delete the `name` or the `id`. Then run the program and follow the on-screen prompts.

ROM/ROMMA 80/000

8000 Dots High

PRNT "Please enter the RTD Character disk file ID."

PRNT "Then press a key"

key

id=888758 id=... THEN key

CHAR Y' #1 type CHARACTER NAME CODE

HERE # 1

FIELD #1,1,AS #0

DATE

5.6 7.8 9.10 11.12 13.14 15.16 17.18 19.20.21

22.23.24.25

id=XXXXXXXX

loop

READ #

TEXT #0 #0

PUT #1 #

FOR #1 TO 8000 NEXT #

IF #0=00 THEN loop

PRNT "our character is one more matter now"

INSIDE DEALING #3

In Walthamstow, a stone in the road is better than a coin in the hand.

Thanks to Ray Bell, Newcastle

MIGHT AND MAGIC II

Activision's MII hasn't brought us MMAR as planned for this month, but just to get you excited we'll tell you that it has over 250 (estimated) monsters, 95 spells, more than 250 weapons, two new character classes, bindings, and 15 secondary skills for your character.

The inclusion of skill is further evidence that this generation of RPGs/ARPGs games is now becoming an essential part of our lives. Skills can add to strategy and tactical interest, and can also contribute something to the feeling that your characters have an existence all of their own. Watch out for a full review next month.

INSIDE DEALING #2

In Leisure Suit Larry 2, meet your wily as the lifeboat hits the water, then use touchscreen. While on board ship, keep away from the captain or he will put you in the brig. Move to the center of the pool and also in to get the blood.

Thanks to Ray Bell, Newcastle

CATACOMB CARTOGRAPHY

Thanks to The Compycrafter and Madcat of Australia for this mini map of Level 3 of the Catacombs in Darts Tale II. This should encourage you when you need it most... and next month we'll give the beginner's Level 1, plus Underflow 1 and 2. The 'W' marks the walls...



CATACOMBS 3

ARCHIPELAGOS



Atari ST screen shots

*Imagine a game without violence,
yet as chilling as abandoned
places where people have died and
never returned.
Imagine a 3D world, yet the only
forces are those that come from
the ground.
Imagine the danger of a tormented
soul, carried aloft by nothing
greater than the wind.*

*Archipelagos is a completely new
sort of game. It offers 9,999 living
landscapes, in 3D, with continuous
smooth movement and scanning. It
is so extraordinary it defies
classification. It is the experience
of the metaphysical.*

*Archipelagos is conceived and
coded by Astral Software.*



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Midistudio £99.99

Midistudio is a 32 track MIDI Music Studio. This MIDI software package is a realisable price alternative to MIDI music programming and includes the following features: 32 tracks each comprising one of 32 MIDI channels, each track can be programmed up to three 1 minute 30 second scenes. Includes full time clock control with individual volume sliders for each track, auto editing facilities including editing of pitch, notes, duration and velocity, also full MIDI controller assignment table. Full control over scenes to allow the user to edit through Quicktime, keyboard and game controller software. 16 arrangement facilities allowing a working tape strategy allowing up to one of the 32 tracks. This package is easy to use within a working computer with PC 28.

"will give Steinberg's Pro 24 a run for it's money"
ST WORLD March 89



SCAN IT UP TO 600 DPI FOR ONLY £99.99

The Image Scanner is a peripheral to the AT which can provide high quality, accurate digitising for a host of other applications. This simple and easy to use, portable part of the AT is capable of scanning information in digital colour, white or black and is capable of scanning up to 600 DPI. It is controlled by software requiring installation of 75,000, 256,000, 500,000 and 1,000,000 bit resolutions. An example disk is included which contains a table of image resolutions and the resolution for each of the different image resolutions. The cost of this disk is £20.00. £270.00 of articles is refundable on purchase of a scanner in £200. £270.00 of articles is refundable on purchase of a scanner in £200.



Add With Care £12.99

Add With Care is a fully remote controlled educational game with full colour screen and sound. The teaching addition, subtraction, multiplication and division is interactive. This program has educational 80-track levels and a 40-track table.

EDUCATIONAL SOFTWARE

Spell With Care £12.99



Spell With Care is a game which tests spelling, keyboard skills, and mouse operation. Pictures of objects have captions across the screen and the pupil should get the name of the object while these display the characters. Spell also incorporates word play, difficulty levels and a 40-track table. Game disk table \$4.99

Quick List Plus is a utility that completes a directory of your disks. Sort on disk or name, reads on disks, including hard disks. Useful utility for backing up of software.

TRIOLOGY £12.99



Maximal is a program that optimises disk space, utilises and optimises word and track forward and back location.

Postrip is a utility that captures all or part of a picture file for use in other programs. Supports CGA, EGA, VGA, SVGA and AT Series and is English, French and full language compatible.

All Animator £14.95

All Animator is a utility for creating and animating up to 16 objects. GIF, MOVIE and POST files, and is compatible with other and non-PC graphics programs. Also has full time control to animate up to 20 key frames of 30 pixels wide by 30 pixels high.



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IN THE PINK

OK - shoot us down in flames. We've had to reduce the size of the Pink Pages section this month due to administrative difficulties involved in the transfer of ownership of the magazine. Shoot us down - but trust us to get the section back in the best of health for next month, with a host of essential trivia for the seriously dedicated gamer.

THE LINE-UP

108

ACE software guide - Arcades and Adventures - We present the latest developments and look at the excellent played fare to wit.

122

The ACE guide

The do or do not - but in what position? Plus the solution to last month's brain buster.

123

Game design continued - Amiga/Apple and the creative bit.

124

The ACE Crossword - and yet more ACE trivia facts.

125

WIN... 25 Good games

125

Subscribe!

Editor's Note: the game technology magazine.

NIGEL FROM RIGEL

By Steve Boston



GAMES YOU'VE GOT TO HAVE

All of the following games are **ACE RATED**: that means they're all red hot masterpieces of computer entertainment. Some of the games have been around a long time: these games are simply marked with the **ACE CLASSIC** flash, and rest assured, they're all superb pieces of software and are well deserving of the title.

ARCADE STYLE

Including coin-op conversions. Games with a high fan factor and plenty of addictiveness feature here.

ARKANOID

Magpie • Spectrum
£7.95 • £14.95 (95)
£12.95 • £19.95
£8.95 • £14.95
£11.95 (95) • £19.95
£11.95 (95) • £19.95
£11.95 (95) • £19.95
£11.95 (95) • £19.95

Arkanoïd the way, in its last the best version of the classic (breakout). Simple in concept, the player controls a ball at the base of the screen, hitting it left and right. The object is to keep a small ball in play, bouncing it off the ball to destroy formations of bricks in the top half of the screen. Eliminate all the bricks and move on to the next of 33 screens. Clever extra features contribute to the addictive fun. As a faithful coin-op conversion, Arkanoïd offers old top ball for a different slant on the same theme, which also adds up the difficulty levels more gradually.

ACE CLASSIC

BIO CHALLENGE

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£11.95 • £19.95
£8.95 • £14.95

A graphically superb horizontally scrolling shoot-'em-up without the shooting, in which you dash and jump around a planet's surface. See the full review on Page 44. **ACE RATED 95**

BOUNDER

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of the two-player 128K-SD conversion. You and a friend play bubbleblowing duels, floating through 130 maze and platform screens, fighting off the "demon" by transporting them in your bubble to safe areas into play that. More frequent without bonuses, and so you reach the more difficult level screens. Commonly great fun, it is like on the cabinet look. Can also be played on one player against the computer.
★ ACE RATED 900

BUGGY BOY
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Simple and/or driving game that will have you the most excited. Car has fun too for a long while. Collect the time bonus, it is the fastest to complete the five grading levels. Mostly playable and

rightly addictive. Tuggy Boy should be on any racing fan's shopping list.
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Superior • £24.95 • £24.95 • £24.95 • £24.95

Drive around in your city own land. Beat the enemy in close combat and plan your strategy for the campaign. This is a 16Ks game to get to grips with, but 7 years per screen you find you soon become mesmerized by the thing. If you can't get a 150. Action though - Super II.
★ ACE RATED 921

ELIMINATOR
Hudson • £24.95 • £24.95 • £24.95 • £24.95

Graphically wonderful

looking. Stratospheric by John Phillips, which will test your joystick control. It's fun when you're riding on the ceiling. Though it's tough to get to grips with at first, the addictive level's on great you'll keep coming back for more.
★ ACE RATED 900

EXOLON
Hudson • £24.95 • £24.95 • £24.95 • £24.95

Graphically superb. Absolutely wonderful. What a game in which you can, dash and jump your way along a planetary surface. Biting, easy to play. It's a gem.
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GRAND MONSTER SLAM
Sunsoft • £24.95 • £24.95 • £24.95 • £24.95

Get on the mythical world of Gaid, where the warring creatures take their visitors to the land of play. It is a competition to kick small furry beasts from one end of the planet to another. See the full review in Tugs 62.
★ ACE RATED 900

OIDS
Sunsoft • £24.95 • £24.95 • £24.95 • £24.95

A magnificent. Thrust-on stick. The kids are riding on you to save them, but the bonuses aren't going to let them go without. Thrilling modes, realistic and a number of other weapons at your disposal with the program on, an odd facility that allows you to design your own

character - great stuff!
★ ACE RATED 900

PITSTOP 2
Eyes On Gold • £24.95 • £24.95 • £24.95 • £24.95

Thrilling racing game where the screen is split into two and you can take the computer in a head-to-head. Lots of different Grand Prix circuits, top line cars and of course the ubiquitous pitstop. Guarantee to give you a thrill every time you're in it with a racing team.
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POWERDROME
Electronic Arts • £24.95 • £24.95 • £24.95 • £24.95

The sport's most realistic. Thrilling simulation software you're entitled to be excited to come. It may not be family easy to get

straight into but it's well worth persevering with. You'll be playing this for months.
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PURPLE SATURN DAY
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A terrific mix of games that delivers punch both local and visual. The consistently good gameplay ensures you'll enjoy playing each sub-game time and again. It's a little tricky to get the hang of, but master it and you'll be pleased you persevered.
★ ACE RATED 910

SPIDERTRONIC
Sunsoft • £24.95 • £24.95 • £24.95 • £24.95

Guide your spider-like character around the game area, collecting colored ponds in the correct order. The look

found in or the side-slipping market is a great feature. Locate the historical Colonel of Quater in a game that combines the wit and ingenuity of one of the world's most original software companies with values of honest earning and generosity.

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CORRUPTION

Master • IBM ST
 £25.95 • Amiga £24.95 • PC £24.95
 • Spectrum £17.95 • C64 £17.95 • Amstrad £1.25 £13.95

The tale of modern dealings, ethnicity and Crooked Commerce deals in utility is equal to adventures who prefer to wander through vast desolate networks, seeking treasure. But for those who are fed up with traditional adventuring, it's like a breath of fresh air. Super graphics, great atmosphere and a hot-ting pot makes this a terrific game for pros.

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FISH

Master • IBM ST
 £28.95 • Amiga £28.95

More generous than Commodore, better game design than Amiga, and not so dinky to the Plot. This is definitely MSX's best value since Quest II. There's

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GUILD OF THIEVES

Spectrum • C64 £13.95
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One of Britain's newer adventure software houses - Magenta Levels - manages to produce a traditional treasure hunt with superb graphics and some very tricky puzzles. Powerful puzzle hints to create a convincing game with wit, humour and imagination.

ACE CLASSIC INGRID'S BACK

Level 8 • IBM ST
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A great follow-up to Stone Ranger. Level 8 has really got to give you the use of characters in their games and how to program them very effectively.

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JEWELS OF DARKNESS

Master • C64 £14.95
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Used to work together first of their kind releases. Colour Adventure, Dungeon Adventure and Adventure Quest in one bundle. The games have been updated with graphics and larger soundfiles and are as close to the original spirit of adventuring as you're likely to find.

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LURKING HORROR

Master • Spectrum • C64 £13.95 • Amiga £13.95 • £13.95 • Amiga £13.95 • PC £13.95

Intense tribute to HP Lovecraft and the horror-fantasy genre sends you into a cold sweat as you discover something very nasty living beneath your cottage's identity. Superb text only game that makes you to play it after dark.

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POOL OF RADIANCE

IBM ST £13.95
 • C64 £13.95

£20 were very keen to attempt to capture the complete concept of the RISC systems on a computer, but they managed superbly. An RPG/Adventure game that will appeal to not only RPG fans but to anyone looking for an extraordinary game that will keep them playing for months.

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TIME AND MAGIC

Master • Spectrum £13.95 • £13.95 • C64 £13.95 • Amiga £13.95 • Amstrad £13.95 • £13.95 • Amiga £13.95 • PC £13.95

The completion of the Level 8 games, Lords Of Time, Red Moon and The Price Of Magic have been developed with better pacing, bigger soundfiles and pictures added. Superb value if you don't already own them.

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ULTIMA V

Originals/Re-release • C64 £24.95 • Amiga £24.95 • PC £24.95

Amazing level of detail in the redeveloped enhanced version. Superb soundfiles and pacing for magical, tactical and geographical scenes that will make you debate the merits of evil for underground. Superb

total great looking interface, and tough challenge game.

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WASTELAND

Electronic Arts • C64 £24.95

Charge around isolated US shopping centre centres and alien towns in this redefining epic. The atmosphere may not be as good as the Bard's Tale series of games, but the extra dimension of strategy-based the cut, dash and split screens of the ST series was behind.

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ZORK ZERO

Infocom • IBM ST • £24.95 • Amiga £24.95 • PC £24.95

Highly enjoyable with a variety of challenges that make for instant reaction. A lot more character interaction would have made this a real home-grown, but even so it remains one of the best games of the year.

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2	Operation Wolf (Ocean)	12.47	12.97	6.27	6.97	6.97
3	Kubecap (Ocean)	12.47	12.97	6.97	6.97	6.97
4	Afterburner (Activision)	12.47	12.47	6.97	6.97	6.97
5	Populous (Electronic Arts)	12.47	12.47	N.A.	N.A.	N.A.
6	Real Ghostbusters (Activision)	12.47	12.97	6.97	6.97	6.97
7	War in Middle Earth (Talisman)	12.97	12.97	6.97	6.97	6.97
8	Double Dragon (Malibu House)	12.97	12.97	6.97	6.97	6.97
9	Dragon Ninja (Ocean)	12.47	12.47	6.97	6.97	6.97
10	Running Man (Grand Slam)	12.47	12.47	6.27	6.97	6.97
11	WEC La Mosa (Imagine)	12.47	12.97	6.97	6.97	6.97
12	Falcon (Microsoft)	19.97	12.47	N.A.	N.A.	N.A.
13	Barbarian 2 (Palace)	N.A.	12.97	6.97	6.97	N.A.
14	R-Type (Electric Dreams)	12.47	12.99	6.97	6.97	6.97
15	Roadgate 2 (Ocean)	12.47	12.99	6.21	6.97	6.97
16	Pacmania (Grand Slam)	12.97	12.97	6.21	6.21	6.21
17	Lambert RAC Rally (Mandarin)	12.47	12.47	N.A.	N.A.	N.A.
18	Strip Poker 2 (Acan)	10.47	10.47	5.57	5.57	5.57
19	Vindicators (Eonson)	12.47	12.97	5.57	6.27	6.27
20	Cray Cars 2 (Titus)	12.47	12.47	6.97	6.97	6.97

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ACE PRIZE PUZZLE 16

Set by Archie Medes

THE DIE IS CAST

Janie had acquired a number of ordinary dice and was arranging them in the form of long multiplication sums. For example, she had arranged them as shown - the multiplication of 200 by 465. Note that not only has she been able to represent the first product with the dice, but also the three subtotals as well.



Janie was able to find quite a few other examples that could be similarly displayed by using dice. One of these is shown below.



Here we have the multiplication of two three-digit numbers, and, as you can see, one die - a one spot - has already been placed in the bottom line. The positions of the other dice have been indicated, but note the three dice denoted in dotted lines at the left-hand end of the three subtotals. This is to indicate that there may be four of these positions, this depending of course on the values of the numbers being multiplied.

Can you complete the rest of the sum?

ACE PRIZE PUZZLE ENTRY FORM

The answer is _____

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Send your entries to: Pink Pages, ACE, Play Centre, 60 Northgate Lane, London EC3N 2DB. Closing date July 31st '85.

SOLUTION TO ACE PUZZLE 14

Answer: A = 760, C = 480, E = 680. Once these numbers are known the other values can be filled easily in to the grid.

SOLUTION

The three unknown values A, C, and E each have six-digit squares, as denoted by positions 1, 8 and 9 in the grid. Therefore A, C, and E must all be in the range 317 to 999. This may indicate that it would be necessary to test each of the 682 times 682 times 682 permutations of these values - a total of over 318 million possibilities! Fortunately this is not the case.

Due to the fact that in the grid there is a certain amount of interaction between any two of the three values a great many of these tests can be eliminated. In the first we consider first all possible values for A and its square. The range for A can be further narrowed to between 332 to 999 inclusive, as we know that the second digit of its square cannot be zero (as the digit is also the first digit of its square).

Once we have a possible value for A and its square we can determine the first digit of its square (this being the same as the first digit of A squared), and hence the range for the value of E. This is done at lines 120 to 140 allowing the FOR/NEXT loop for the value of E to be set. In a similar way, once we have a possible value for E squared (also A in the grid) we know the first digit of C squared, and hence can calculate the range for C.

Once a possible set of values has been found the missing numbers in the grid are computed and converted to string form (lines 150 to 200). Finally, lines 200 to 260 check each pair of matching digits from the grid and select those which are desirable key-values which pass all of these tests are printed out corresponding to each of the clues given in the questions at lines 270 to 300.

THE LISTING

```

100 FOR A=332 TO 999:AS=STR$(A)
110 ZS=STR$(A^2)
120 J=VAL(MID$(ZS,2,1))-IF Z=0 THEN 330
130 V1=Z^100000:V2=V1+999999
140 FOR C=INT (SQ# V1) + 1 TO INT (SQ# V2)
150 ES=STR$(C):V3=STR$(E^2)
160 IF MID$(ES,4,1)=MID$(ES,2,1) THEN 320
170 J=VAL (MID$(V3,5,1))-IF Z=0 THEN 320
180 V3=Z^100000:V4=V3+999999
190 FOR E=INT (SQ# V3)+1 TO INT (SQ# V4)
200 X2=STR$(E^2):V5=STR$(A^2):V6=STR$(A+C)
210 IF LEN(V5) < 3 THEN 310
220 IF MID$(V5,5,1)=MID$(V5,2,1) THEN 310
230 IF MID$(V5,2,1)=MID$(V5,5,1) THEN 310
240 IF MID$(V5,2,1)=MID$(V5,4,1) THEN 300
250 IF MID$(V5,3,1)=MID$(V5,2,1) THEN 310
260 IF MID$(V5,3,1)=MID$(V5,6,1) THEN 310
270 PRINT "1 "ES:PRINT "2 "V6
280 PRINT "3 "ZS:PRINT "4 "V5
290 PRINT "5 "V5:PRINT "6 "V5
300 PRINT "7 "AS:PRINT "8 "X5
310 NEXT C
320 NEXT E
330 NEXT A

```

■ The prize winner for this competition will be announced in the next issue of ACE.

GAME DESIGN II

BY JON RIGLER

Game Design - what does it involve? How do you do it? What are the pitfalls? We answer some common questions in Part II of Jon Rigler's Introduction to the ancient art.

Totally original games designs are a very rare commodity these days. You may be sitting at home right now with an idea swirling away in the old grey matter - an idea which, your mum, your best mate, your gran and even the dog all agree is 'the bit', and yet is totally unfeasible because it looks like a carbon copy of the latest release from Hammer Software. But don't despair - even if your software ideas lack originality you may still get it accepted for publication by a software house if you present it in an attractive, clear, and concise manner. Here are some tips to help you do just that.

The Background

You must give this a good deal of thought. Some of the story-line you find on relay cards - and even on long page 'novellas' are so predictable that you could probably write their plots in your sleep. Invariably shoot 'em ups have two main components - killing items and collecting mystical objects to enhance your firepower. If your game is one of these, avoid starting your story-line with the obligatory 'The year is 2977...'. 'Borb'. Indeed, keep it really short and make sure it contains information that is use-

ful to the playing of the game. After all, people know what they are supposed to do in a shoot 'em up and you really ought to leave the business of science fiction writing to Michael Moorcock and Douglas Adams. Get on to the instructions as quickly as you can. Players are more interested in that than in your purple prose.

Designs in Perspective

2D or not, 3D is a question to consider right at the beginning. Of course your options are not infinite wide either. Some games adopt the sideways scrolling technique used recently to good effect in Ocean's *Robotcop*. Other perspective techniques include the isometric 3D technique made famous by *Ultimate Play the Game* in games like *Angfire* and copied by literally thousands of others. So called real 3D - (is a most point I know) involves the use of glasses, but never worked effectively (with the one possible exception of Nintendo's *Red Blood* and is strongly advised against - even if you had the resources to make it a practical consideration.

Best keep things simple. There's the overhead view which has worked nicely in games like *Pacman*, *Gauntlet* and all their clones, though you need to be confident of your four-way scrolling routines. Platform games can be attempted, but unless you can do better than *Super Mario Bros* it is a Nintendo *Don't buy* either! The same can be said of beat 'em ups really - *Archer McClear's K* - is the stan-

dard. Get close to it or have something really quirky as a gimmick, otherwise opt for a less competitive area - if you can find one. Motor racing may still have gaps that need filling - but be prepared for smart arse writers who will say 'the best it all before in *blast, blast, blast*', whichever game-type you plump for.

Anyway don't be put off by the smart arse - everyone had to start somewhere - even Mark Cole, and look at him now.

Storyboards

These are a sequence of drawings that the player might expect to see on screen in the finished game. They add a touch of professionalisation and may help you seeing the deal. Usually consisting of detailed maps of each level in the game or detailed sketches of sampled screens showing items, monsters, and characters.

You don't have to be a brilliant artist - *bullet* make sure they are understandable and sell the storyline effectively. Try them out on your friends before you show them to the pros. Bear in mind that at some stage your chosen publisher is going to hand your design over to a programmer so your storyboard must be as comprehensive as possible. Also, use this checklist before sending off your storyboard. It should contain typical screen drawings; sketches of characters in the game; guide drawings for other screens such as high score tables and title screens; and a full explanation of the scoring system and how the

game is won or lost.

Producing the Action

The good news is that you don't necessarily have to code the game your self - although it would improve your chances of publication if you could knock up some demo screens - even still graphics using an art package. The software house may prefer to use their own development teams and in-house programmers. However, to assist the programmers give clear guidelines in your proposal about what the player will need to achieve when the game is being played. Be warned also that nowadays more and more software houses prefer either to buy in completed games or else to cover all aspects of production, including design, in-house. There is more freelance work for computer programmers, musicians, and graphic artists than there is for game designers.

Most games involve some basic goal - such as collecting a certain number of objects. Don't be too coy about their details. Publishers worth their salt know what makes the buyers tick. Be honest with the company, don't worry about revealing your influences but DO make sure you give the impression that you consider the game commercially viable and that if they can't publish it you won't be too put out.

A word of warning - there are enormous legal, contractual, and financial pitfalls that the unexperienced games designer could fall into. We went in to some of these last month - but if you missed them, here are the key DO NOTS once again: do not send out your design (at all) until you have signed up with a publisher; do not sign anything without taking financial and legal advice; do not make any verbal agreements; and do not speak with your mouth full.

IT'S THOSE LISTS AGAIN

Ten Things That Keep Us Going While We Produce This Issue

1. Breakfast at 1.00am in Smithfield.
2. Breakfast at 7.00am in Smithfield.
3. Thinking about breakfast at 8.00am.
4. Breakfast at 8.01am in Smithfield.
5. Exploring East London.
6. Breakfast at 9.00am in British Town.
7. Thinking up (invented) at 8.00am.
8. Love, honour, duty.
9. The Spanish-Sambark Girl.
10. The Wonly.

Pete Connor's Top Nine Cigarette Brands Of His Time

1. Capstan Full Strength
2. Gauloises (Noviltor)
3. Redwings
4. Senior Service
5. Comets
6. Ducatons
7. No 8
8. Lucky Strike (soft pack)
9. Peter Spassant (The International Passenger)
10. Smoking Pressure!

ACE's Top Ten Royals

1. King Dag of Albans
2. The Duke of York/Ber
3. Clarence Pappano
4. King Boudier of Belgium
5. The Sultan of Brunei.
6. The Queen
7. King Tarsak of Egypt
8. The Danish Monarch
9. The King of the Jungle
10. Duke Dingon
10. The Monarch of the Seas

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The BLITTER END

GORGEOUS, POUTING, ETC...

When people visit ACE we show them. No messing. And when a single week brought not one, not just two, but three of the UK's top software house spokespersons basking at our door, we thought we'd show you the results.



Marissa Coates is that rare creature in the software industry - a Belgian. Nevertheless, Marissa once shook hands with Charlton Heston and is now big in Entertainment International (not that there's any connection). Singing is a subject close to her heart; she once went on a tour of China. Now there must be a game in here somewhere...



The name is Edgely. Clara Edgely. She's a dangerous toy in the play of DOMARK, the most serious threat to the future of calculation as we know it since The Blitter End was invented. She'll probably try to give you photographs - probably of two men posing as water-skiers. Don't take them; it's just a publicity stunt for DOMARK's latest game...



Who could this be clinging to a pillar in what was, until a couple of weeks ago, the ACE office? Why, it's none other than g.p.etc. (see headline on this page) Amanda Barry, aka The Voice of Robinson. Amanda once met Shakin' Stevens, which is OK, but doesn't seem that impressive.

Once with Telecomart, now with Microprose - but Julia Coates still thinks Jason Donovan is prettier than Kyle MacLack. But does rugby-loving Julia think that 16bit software is just a mile on the expensive side? Not, she maintains, when you consider the superior quality of Microprose software.



GAME FOR A BATH

Yes, you can rely on those daffy Donarks to fill up a bit of space on The Blitter End when you need them - it's just that they're so photogenic. This amusing, but not too-pretentious, life sequence shows them trying to water-ski, which is apparently something to do with James Bond and a computer game. Note the Bondlike grimaces of determination as the Twins - that's Mark Strachan and Dominic Wheadley, you dobs - start off in tandem, and the stoical insouciance with which they meet their watery end. It would have been proud of them, but Q could surely have found the boys some rather more technologically advanced means of transport!



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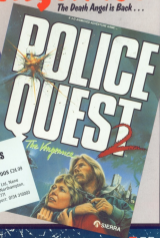
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