

ACE

MAGAZINE OF THE YEAR

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

ADVANCED COMPUTER ENTERTAINMENT

Exclusive! We get our hands on the ultimate games console...



KONIX:



The hardware... the software...

...THE TRUTH

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...with £600 of free lessons from Activision. Check out page 38.

TAKE OFF



...in F15 II: the most technically advanced flight sim we've seen on a home micro.

CRASH!



...if you're lucky, otherwise mankind might as well resign. Find out why inside...



BATMAN is a shadow in the darkness, as elusive as a dream. High above the seamy streets of GOTHAM, he is a criminal's nightmare. The only hope for a desperate city – **BATMAN**.



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KONIX: THE REVIEW25

While industry giants Sega, Nintendo, and Atari wage bitter console war on each other, a small Welsh company has brought out a machine that could out of all others do the others to shame. ACE gets its gritty jaws on a full working system and tests both the hardware and the games that come with it.



ARCADEOLOGY85

Ever wondered why Donkey Kong was called Donkey Kong, or what the bag was in the first version of Breakout? Julian Signal comes up with the answers...

GAMES GET MEAN30

Was that last game you bought just too hot to handle? Do you wrap up on the second planet in Blood Money? Andy Wilson checks out those games that make us uncomfortable out of Grandmasters, and wonders whether the struggle between programmer and player is getting just a wee bit one-sided...



ARE YOU A WEIRDOT?101

Probably, but check out our exclusive character analysis to be absolutely certain...

MAKING IT89

...money, that is. And music. MIDI enables some people to do both. Check out the ACE Ten Post Guide to MIDI Studio Professionals...

ENTER CYBERSPACE!105

ACE gets on the scene of a remarkable new development in graphics programming. Braver new worlds on the screen are nothing new, but soon you may actually be able to enter them!

SCREEN TEST

FOUR BIG games this month, with a tremendous spread of gameplay ranging from high-flying simulation in F101 to frantic fun in Risk Dangerous. Or you might fancy a spell as an Egyptian god in Eye of Horus, or a quick game of Shufflepuck in the Restaurant at the End of the Universe for something less OJ. Remember, it's here, it's hot...

ACE RATED

F101 STRIKE EAGLE II	
Microprocess	40
DEFENDER II S Gold	40
DEMON II Impassioned	50
RICK DANBERG'S Pitiful	60

...and the rest...

APP Command	60
BEAST Progress	70
BLOODWYRM Microsoft	65
CASTLE WARRIOR Dolphin	60
EYE OF HORUS Logotron	60
FAST BREAK Accurate	50
OIL EMPIREUM Action	50
SHUFFLEPUCK CAFE	
Command/Reckless	60
TANK ATTACK CDC	60
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Can Konix beat the big boys? ACE checks out the prospects for Britain's console contender...

HERE AT LAST!

It's over a year since ACE reported on the Fami machine, a game machine that could make your dreams come true, with stunning sound and graphics potential.

Now the BBC-technology Fami machine is back with a vengeance in the core hardware design in Konix's new Multi-System Console. Combine Fami's potent powerbase with Konix's fan-berth design and you have a machine that could revolutionise console games in this country...or will it? See us on pages 25-35.



TAKE TO THE S

Activision reckon they have a winner in their latest release,

RULE BRITANNIA!

You may not realise it, but the games we play in Britain are often determined by the buying whims of people in America and Japan. In the old days, the Commodore 64 rose to power on a wave of imported US software, and now Nintendo threatens to swamp the world games market with Japanese Gameboys. Then along comes Konix with a world-beating BRITISH hardware design. And what happens? Do we give them a big hand? Do we ever? On the contrary, a selection of gloom-mongers in the business go around saying what a wonderful machine it is out of one side of their mouth, and how it's bound to fall out of the other. Don't knock it - this machine is GOOD. Just keep your fingers crossed and Britain could soon be taking the trophy in the console wars.

GAMEPLAY

SCREEN TEST41

The latest releases tested rigorously by the NZG team, including *Jason & the Sorcerers*, *Eye of Horus* (Set in Egypt), and *Prognosis* (Brazil), and forward. Plus *F15 Strike Eagle 4*, king of the flight sims... for the moment.

ARCADE ACE22

NZG goes out as we discover an arcade motherboard with 2048 centres and 4352 colours on-screen at once!

UPDATES00

Hot conversions for YOUR machine...gilded by experts.

TRICKS 'N' TACTICS74

Maps, guides, and tips to help you get your money's worth from today's tough-cookies.

PREVIEWS18

Old Gopher indulges in a bout of heavy breathing as he contemplates some of the Autumn's megareleases.

REGULARS

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Check out our Add-Game to the PC Show, a computer game played on British TV by thousands of players simultaneously, a giant Amiga, and all the latest rabbits from the world of computer gaming...

LETTERS14

Are you ALL wrong? Are games really too difficult? Growth really so fast? Do we really have to put up with that? And, oh yes...not many typos either.

ADVENTURES05

Smoot of Amiga gets the NZG treatment, and we report on the very promising *Harold of Shadow*, to be released this autumn - can it bring RPG into the mass market?

FREE ISSUE!38

MABEL: 'What was that noise at the front door, Arthur?'
ARTHUR: 'Oh...nothing, dear.' Checks off guiltily to collect free subscriber's copy of NZG, just passed through letterbox!

MABEL: 'Arthur? Arthur?' (There is no reply...)



XENON II - latest contender in the 'shoot-em-up of the year' category...



EYE OF HORUS - play god game in Ancient Egypt...

SKIES! FREE!

Bomber. We reckon you've got a winning chance of flying off with this £600 prize on P38.

E. ONE TIME, IN ONE PLACE!

Indiana Jones™ and the Last Crusade™ is the most exciting movie ever made. Now you can relive the adventure with this action-packed board game. Includes 200 pieces, 100 cards, 1 die, and 1000 hours of fun.



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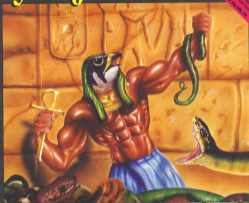
...the most exciting movie ever made. Now you can relive the adventure with this action-packed board game. Includes 200 pieces, 100 cards, 1 die, and 1000 hours of fun.



...the most exciting movie ever made. Now you can relive the adventure with this action-packed board game. Includes 200 pieces, 100 cards, 1 die, and 1000 hours of fun.

Eye of Horus

WIN A HOLIDAY IN EGYPT FOR TWO
 Competitions are open to UK residents only. See www.logotron.com for details.
 Competition ends 31st Dec 99



Start Of Screen Shot



Start Of Screen Shot



Start Of Screen Shot

Walk Like An Egyptian.... Fly Like A Bird

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Eye of Horus synthesises adventure with frenetic arcade action. Adventure that is faithful to the Myth of Horus, as told in the Egyptian Book of the Dead.

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LOGOTRON

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This competition is valid against the European copyright of Logotron in Microsoft of their territory. Minimum age for entry 18.

Atari's
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Atari portable - at last!
Whopping great big Amiga
PC Show preview
Saucy snippets

ACE NEWS

ATARI UNWRAP STACY

According to sources close to Atari, several new ST-compatible machines are to be launched at the World's largest Atari show in Düsseldorf, Germany.

The machine most likely to appear is the long-awaited Stacy, a portable version of the ST.

Several setbacks have caused the machine's release date to be postponed - the latest delay being due to the lengthy process of blowing TOS 1.4 (the new operating system) onto ROM.

Four variants of the luggage are planned. The basic model will come with an 8MHz 68000 processor (identically used to the current ST processor), 256K ROM, 1 Mbyte of main memory, ST of static RAM for the screen, Superfast monochrome LCD screen (with optional backlighting), 3.5-inch double-sided floppy drive, trackball and two mouse buttons on the keyboard. The liquid crystal display will have a resolution of 640 by 400 - the same as the Atari SM129 monochrome screen.

Other models in the Stacy range will come with various configurations of drive and memory.

All standard ST ports are present on Stacy: monitor socket serial, MIDI, parallel, floppy, hard disk, RS232C cartridge.

The basic Stacy is expected to start around £1000.

Atari's 68000 workstation is also expected to be displayed at the show. The TT, standing for Thirtytwo Thirtytwo, is claimed to

support the Unix, ST TOS and MS-DOS operating systems. The TT is likely to come in a lower system and (be priced) around £2200.

ST games players have long been waiting for Atari to produce a machine capable of giving the Amiga a run for its money. It seems Atari has taken note and is to launch an expanded ST at the event. The release of a super ST is nothing new, but it seems things are really happening with many major software houses in the country having received development machines. Atari is planning to quietly introduce the enhanced ST, or STX, in place of the existing STS in the Powerpak bundle later this year.

Details on the new machine are sketchy, but sources have revealed the following:

-4096-colour palette with identical resolutions and onscreen colours to the existing ST.

-two-channel stereo 8-bit DMA sound chip as well as the existing ST 'musical' sound chip.

-Extremely rapid multidirectional hardware scrolling.

In all other aspects the STX will be identical to the ST. A double-sided floppy will be provided as standard and the processor will be the same 8MHz-rated 68000 after that process at current STs. Because the STX will contain the same hardware (along with a few extras) as the ST, all existing ST programs should run on it.

Next month's ACE will carry a full report of the new Atari machines shown at Düsseldorf.

BABY ARCHIE GETS GAMES

Atari's outdoor Archies, the A3000, looks as though it's going to get the games support that its bigger brother missed out on. Representatives from 30 games software houses recently attended a conference organised at Atari, where the topics outlined a marketing strategy (more than the Archie ever had) and revealed details of the developer's package for the machine.

As for an Atari and the A3000-gaming public are concerned, the whole thing seems to have been a success, to less a surprise than Gianni Guy Bracy said afterwards. It's a lovely machine and I'm sure we will be doing something for it. From what I have seen and learned today the A3000 deserves only our highest profile.



Atari's Archie - seen to appear on the A3000

titles such as Bohman and The Librarian's). Other software houses and similarly influential opinions and, Donald, already have two games under development - Total Pursuit and Hunt Drier, due to be presented at the PCW Show.

WORLD'S LARGEST AMIGA?



It's not just the Yanks and the Japs who produce exotic equipment. Our British correspondent, Kenneth Barnbrook, has found up the **WORLD'S LARGEST AMIGA** over in the land of the Viking. The newer Amiga lets you build your own system in a fancy street-to-street cabinet. All the variations are on the front of the box, making it easy and simple to match and use. Inside, you've got your standard Amiga 68000 - but there's also room for all sorts of extras, like hard disks, PC emulator boards, printers, extra RAM, MIDI equipment and laserem lasers what else. And the great? Not so bad as you might think. For around £300 Barnbrook of Arnes will show you Amiga inside the box and will even bring up. Barnbrook can be found at Pinakade gate 68, DK-6200 Schus N, Denmark. Tel. 045557111

ELECTRONICA '89

Here Agers and computer music and graphics breaks take note: the Electronica '89 show takes place on September 23rd in London's Lagan Hall. A battery of speakers and computers will be producing a variety of far out music, while banks of Amigas and a Farlight Computer Video instrument are among the visual attractions. If you want tickets or further details, contact AMP Records on 01-680 5605 during office hours.

SKYWARE!



Tediously leaving your flight could take to a whole new dimension next year if Plessey's new Integrated Flight and Entertainment Services System (IFESS) becomes reality. IFESS will allow you to play computer games, use video and audio channels and access life banking and shopping services - all from the increased comfort of your plane seat. The system combines a colour LCD display, keyboard and keypad, linked to the aircraft's satellite system for global communications. IFESS was shown at this year's Paris Air Show and has attracted interest from over 40 airlines. Of course, for the ultimate gaming experience you might like to hook your game of Falcon into the real world's control mechanisms...

IT'S MAGIC

The guys at Liverpool's Digital Magic Software are busy performing magic tricks. Alex Ikin, DMS company boss, explained: 'I've been doing magic tricks since the age of six and got John Lee (creator of DMS) personally interested soon after I met him'.

When we asked what tricks DMS got up to, John replied: 'Nothing too big like levitating stage props, just slight of hand close-up stuff with cards and coins in the suit'. It certainly looks like we have the beginnings of a games industry crisis, if there are any other acts out there please get in touch...

RENT BOYS TAKE ACTION

You can now rent Action Screenplay, the computer games video magazine, from your local video library. Screenplay's latest issue, number three, is a 90 minute feature length edition incorporating over 25 games, 2 screensize cuts with the US games company Activision, the other with movie maestro Steve Mc Quay, and a new version, Playback, which rents classic games of yesteryear days. If you prefer you can still buy the video from your local software dealer.



Screenplay MD: Jon Buckley

PIRACY KILLS...

Rungo Anyall-Lair, managing director of Liverpool games software company Software Horizons, has placed the blame for his company's recent revenue falling on the shoulders of software pirates and their illegal practices.

Anyall-Lair told ACE: 'Obviously we were under-capitalised but PIRACY KILL US UNDOES. Take one of our ST games as an example: Dragonage sold only 2000 copies worldwide, out of a potential market of over a million ST's. That's a pretty poor showing. On the whole situation by comparison, I feel really pined off, piracy has got a lot worse over the last few years and shows no signs of stopping'.

Software Horizons was set up by the 33 old entrepreneur last year, and produced such games as the award-winning Dragonage (a multidirectional bladed) and Veteran (a Operation Hell inspired shoot'em up). More recently Horizons turned its attention to more serious products with the Mastermind sound sampling hardware and software for the ST and video production software, Disruptor on the PC.

The company leaves details of their £270,000 with Anyall-Lair personally 'losing' a substantial amount of money', the amounts. It's a very messy business but I still feel playing in the computer games industry.

Meanwhile news reaches us from Denmark, state of previous ACE investigations into international piracy, but moves by the police any doing, nothing to help the situation.

SNIPPETS

Leading software games company, US Gold has put the price of its £14.99 (9000) games back up to £18.95, because of a lack of response from the games buying public. Gold originally had plans to release 20 titles, the REM software, for £15, but has upped its price by £3.

Meanwhile, those letters re-emphasising around 50 15-40 games for the rock bottom price of £3.99. Among the titles due for price slashing are Activision's Football Manager GIPC, Habitat by Atari ST, Amiga, PC and Atari's The Living ST Amiga.

Meanwhile, the eagerly awaited Micro-manage game from Imaginero, is finally going to make it onto ST and Amiga in October, with a PC version to follow at Christmas.

Have you seen Der Hand, the great Bruce Willis abduction movie, on video yet? If you enjoyed the film, you'll be pleased to know Activision is releasing a 3D first computer game on all major formats this Christmas.

Activision also has the licence to the new James (Terminator), Altered, Carnage film, The Abyss. No details of the games at the moment though.

Kevin Tom, author of the immensely popular Football Manager booklets is just putting the finishing touches to World Cup Football Manager, just in time for the World Cup next year.

Meanwhile many cars about you gentlemen they've just spent another £2500 on their new racing sim, Start Car Race, just to improve the games presentation and graphics.

A staggering 9.1 million Super Mario Brothers Nintendo games packs have been sold in the US alone. How soon before the game is in every single American household? And how soon before Nintendo decide to change its Brins with that little old Famicom!

Meanwhile a number of industry observers are forecasting the introduction Nintendo Gameboy over the colour Atari Lynx, mainly because of Nintendo's power in the market place...



Righteous - now coming to you for £1 more than you expected.

PHILIPS GO CYBERPUNK



Put up with your tired looking video recorder? Well Philips may just have the answer thanks to its new VR5680 luxury VCR with built-in 17 colour LCD TR. The TR can be used separately from your normal TV and has a POP (Picture Outside Picture) facility. The price for having the 'current' hit word in video clubs is £399. Philips also has the ultimate personal stereo for all you hi-tech gamers and gamers. The SLCC300 is a combination of 3" colour LCD TV and AM/FM stereo radio, and costs £299.

THE ACE PC SHOW GUIDE

(Everything you wanted to know...but couldn't be bothered to ask)

Many of the computer games companies won't even be exhibiting at this year's show, and fewer still will actually allow you to see their wares publicly. But never fear, just read our definitive guide to what's not there, who's not there, and how to get where you're not wanted...

50 THINGS YOU WON'T SEE AT THE PC SHOW

(Games covered at time of writing)

- Anything in ACE buying a drink
- All Electronic Arts new games. *Aggressor* (Gus Sarno was tight on) routed by many as the successor to EA's superlative *Interplay*, *Magic Fly* (an original game by the authors of the best best ST art package, *After Burner*), the new *Bulldog* game (another game from the team that gave us *Prothes*, need we say more?), *Ferrari Formula One* (on the Spectrum, C64, CPC, ST and PC) and *Dragon Wars* (the latest creation from Interplay, the guys behind the *Kain's* late series, *Castle Chess* and *Revenant*)
- Any Commodore games. We'll leave it up to you to decide whether this is a good or bad thing
- Arco has decided to keep the focus and buffer of the PC Show because it's a waste of bloody money and you don't want any bloody war. Among the Arco selection you'll miss will be *Kick Off* (Spectrum and CPC versions), *Player Manager* (the follow up to *Kick Off*), *Kick Off Expansion* (it just can't ever have too much of a good thing) and *Kelly Gray* (makes a change from football).
- Digital Magic Software's two new releases, *Deliverance* (multi-episode race) and a multi-episode multi-screening helicopter shoot-em-up.
- Perhaps thankfully, you won't see a lot of Emrys Hughes, Cause Autogenic will only demonstrate

Enlyn Hughes International Soccer (ST and Amiga), *Enlyn Hughes Arcade* (Tosha Quin (no comment), *Law Wolf* (looks like you'll have to stick to the fantasy novel) and *Holmes/Killer* (on the PC), to a select few at a nearby hotel.

- *ARMS*, the Amiga version of Microsoft Software's popular ST games creating (ARMS, *ARMS*).

- An extensive range of Microprose titles including *Rainbow Islands* (business manufacture Taito, mysteriously follow up to *Battle Soccer*), *Star Car Race* (the latest game from Geoff Crammond, the programming genius behind *Terminal* and of course *Blind*, *ARMS* if that's all of ST, Amiga and PC computer magazines have been waiting for), *Starlord* (Microsoft's answer to *Dino*, with even more trading and action. Interestingly enough *Star-*

Games and *The Bug* (they're all disappeared since last year's show).

- Jane Smith belly dancing (Logotron are at a hotel just round the corner from Earl's Court).

10 THINGS YOU CAN SEE AT THE SHOW...

- ACE that goes without saying.
- Dennis *Ballman* (even springs himself, and you might get a *Ballman* sticker, poster, badge or even the computer game).
- Earl that's where everybody is most of the time.
- Donald (the Taito always come up with a new barbed wire scene every year, remember last year's London double decker bus, or indeed Jeff Archer the year before?).
- CRJ, do pick up the newest *Virus* (testing program for your PC, ST or Amiga).



This year's official promotional stunt has got to be the amazingly mobile attendance of Jane Smith, brought to you courtesy of Logotron, but you'll have to get past hotel security to see her...

lord started life as a Play by Mail game run by Marlborough's boys, Mike Singleton, *Starblitz* (BBC), *Wind Dreams* (C64, Amiga and PC), *P-19 Stealth Fighter* (Amiga), *Tank* (C64), *Red Storm Rising* (ST), *Multimedia*, *Survivor*, *Red Pack*, *Speech*, *P-47*, etc. Oh yes, and you won't see anybody from Microprose either...

- Many non-Amiga Microsoft's games such as *Call From The Desert*, *Interphase*, *Chess Strikes Back*, *Crime Town*, *Depth*, *Tarantula*, *Pat-A-Cake*, *OPF*, *Netball* (plus six new releases from their 'ready-made')...all these will be absent, along with the rest of the Microsoft team.

- Software Horizons, Computer

- *Papa/Moderator* (the latest in budget, fantasy, cartoon and Sega Com).

- *Interphase's* *Drizzle*, one of the best role-playing games released this year will be there.

- *CGI* Gold (check-out the Manual

SHOW DETAILS

The PC Show is being held at Earl's Court, London from 27th September to 1st October between 10am and 5.30pm (open on Sunday). Remember the first three days are reserved for business and trade visitors (over the age of 15. More details from show organisers, Mail, build in 0200 484004.

THE PERSONAL COMPUTER SHOW

27 SEPTEMBER - 1 OCTOBER 1988
EARL'S COURT LONDON

Jackson Imperatorian!

- *Golden* (it's always with a second look).

- Jane Smith belly dancing (if you can get by the hotel security).

THREE GAMES THAT STILL HAVEN'T MADE IT FROM LAST YEAR'S PC SHOW

1. *Damocles* (Microsoft's follow up to *Mendocino* must have broken all records...it's being launched at the PC Show for the first year in a row).

2. *Planet* - Gamble's surreal epic featuring miniature command machines, Pepsi cans and CDs was first mentioned in ACE Issue 10.

3. *Interphase*, *Interphase's* gold CD arcade adventures - formerly *Manhattan*.

4. An honorary mention must go to TFL/Microsoft's *Dungeon Master* expansion kit, *Chess Strikes Back*.

THREE WAYS TO GET IN (WHERE YOU'RE NOT WANTED)

So, you've set your heart on attending that allimportant press launch launch, here's a few ways you can go about it...

1. Pretend you're a freelance journalist. You'll need some glasses, man-collared moustache, waistcoat, an extremely long personality.

2. Pose as *Jim Stripes*, creator of *James Gilder* (if you'll need some glasses, necktie, apron, fashionable calculator, and a faint line in hacking notation. '15 million covers on screen set a palette of 2, every post a sprite, some-nones coding in 27 directions...')

3. Pose as the father of ACE. You'll need glasses, waistcoat, bald head, hair-covered appearance, and a copy of last month's letters page.

Blood Money



NOW AVAILABLE ON THE ATARI ST



Amiga Screen Shots

AT OVER 90% THEY CAN'T ALL BE WRONG!

ST ACTION

"Demands your undivided attention and sets your pulse racing. Quite simply the best ST Shoot 'em-up to date. Exercise your greed in this supreme arcade experience."

JAMES MACHINE — 'STAR PLAYER' 80%

"Independent, impressive and utterly playable. In one player mode it's great, in two it's incredible fun."

Zzap — 'SIZZLER' 84%

"Blood Money ranks as an all time Zap Office favourite."

AMIGA FORMAT — 'FORMAT GOLD' 92%

"This game is so visually brilliant and possesses those classic addictive qualities, that once you've picked up your joystick you just won't want to put it back down again."

SMASH MAGAZINE — 'GOLD MEDAL AWARD'

"Graphics 10 Sound 10 Motivation 10 Value 10 - A perfect score"



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Saint & Greavsie

The Ultimate Soccer Trivia Game

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SPECTRUM

ATARI ST

AMIGA

Saint & Greavsie is a 1-4 player soccer Trivia game based on the board game endorsed by Ian St. John and Jimmy Greaves. With a choice from 3 categories - HOME, AWAY or DIRECTION, each with a varying degree of difficulty and with over 2000 questions to answer, this is your chance to test your knowledge of football. Choose a player and a team to represent you and he will be shown taking a penalty when a question is being answered. The outcome of which will depend on whether your answer is correct or not! With excellent graphics and music and with digitised pictures on the 1600 machines, this is a trivia game suited to all you with an interest in football. A must for all football and trivia fans. As Jimmy Greaves says "It's a funny ol' game".

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ACE LETTERS

THREE PAGES OF LETTERS THIS MONTH - AND EVERY MONTH FROM NOW ON (SPACE ALLOWING). AND WHAT'S MORE - NOT A SINGLE TYPOGRAPHICAL ERROR! FOR MORE NEWS OF LAST MONTH'S DISASTROUS PRODUCTION ERROR, SEE THE PANEL OPPOSITE....

CABLE GAMES

I am writing in reply to the letter about linking two STs together with a serial cable or a "daisylink" cable. I made a 2 metre long daisylink cable after buying PlayStation.

My friend brought his ST round and we had a game of Powerdrive against each other.

Then Popzoid was released which also supported daisylinking. We decided to make a huge daisylink cable to go between our houses (we live next door to each other).

We bought a 38 metre rotary cable from Tandy's and connected plugs to it. It worked very well and is still working now. We also played Falcon with this cable!

Level 123 of Popzoid is called W/THREER and is almost impenetrable!

Why did the ACE CARD competition stop? I got an ACE CARD about 4 months ago and the competition only lasted about another 2 months.

I have never won any competition and I hoped I would win something in the ACE CARD competition, but it finished before I even got a chance.

J P Pegg, Suffolk

Interesting to hear about your daisylinking - has anyone else tried this? Write and tell us. As for the ACE Card, this scheme was started - and stopped - by the magazine's previous publishers. The good news is that we are currently setting up a replacement scheme to run in the magazine in the very near future. It'll be different, and a lot more interesting than the Card, so stay tuned.

SHOWBUSINESS

Could you please tell me where and when the next Commodore computer show is because I have just got an Amiga and I want to know more about all the games and stuff, so please tell me, Oh, and could you make sure it's in Britain?

Mark Kelly, Orkney

ON MATTERS OF DESIGN

I am writing for your advice on a small matter, which shouldn't be too much trouble for you to reply on. In thought of what I consider a very good game idea, which is definitely an original, I'm contacting you with the hope that you'll tell me where the best place to send it off to is. First - I'm leaving a place where you do a good job and pay reasonable rates. Although loss of money is not essential as I would be very happy just to see my idea marketed, I consider money an incentive which I can always use anyway. I hope you can let me and please keep up the standard of ACE by skipping on pages please!

Rob Cheesman, Graywood

Selling game ideas isn't easy because you have to develop a relationship of trust with a software producer so that when you tell him about your multi-million dollar scheme he doesn't rob you off with a grin and sublet it anyway.

Best way to do this is to team up with a programmer whose work has already been published and who already has good connections. Failing that, the only way to go is the usual letter, phone call, meeting route - fraught with delays, pitfalls, and disappointment.

O/S, I appreciate that you can only print so many letters in each issue of ACE but I must admit I was really pleased when I saw that my recent letter on game designing had been overlooked, so had it?

I refer to a letter I wrote to you concerning the article "GAME DESIGN" by Jan Roper in the June and July issues of ACE.

To refresh your memory I am a game designer, but unfortunately I have no contact in the software industry and therefore I have had great difficulty obtaining any interest what so ever in my design from any of the software houses.

The articles were full of good advice for us and coming game designers, but I'm just wondering whether it was a case of being up spoken in your magazine and maybe you thought that no one would be that bothered about it.

I am bothered about game designing, and I'm pretty sure that other people such as myself are concerned that the software industry is not taking a damn bit of notice of us. It looks like the magazines aren't taking any notice either, maybe they are on the same payroll and don't fancy the idea of going out another slice to any one else.

Could it be that all my letters are getting lost in the post, maybe by a conspiracy against me, a lack list, or maybe I have to get a CIB or something. Whatever the case may be, one thing for sure; while there are software houses and computer magazines around that are too ignorant to be polite enough to acknowledge or answer a letter, the computer entertainment industry is going to be the loser in the long run. I for one, will not buy any more games from software houses that do not have the decency to reply to my letters, and that lot is getting bigger every day.

By the way, I'll have to sell my three computers before the end of the year! What a shame! What a waste!

B Barnes, Nottingham

ACE has just moved offices (again) and there has been some trouble with mail. Rest assured everyone that mail's now being delivered regularly and things are getting back to normal.

As anyone in business will know, getting rejected out of people requires either (a) that you have something they are desperate for or (b) instruments of torture. By the London Observer for some examples of the latter. This should give you some idea of how to proceed.

If you want to off your computers, don't forget the ACE Readers Pages, etc!

West Coastwise State is on Oct 17th - 19th at the Pavilion at West London. Call 0203 879970 for more details. You can also check out the ACE Diary section in the Pink Pages...

WEIRD

I, the supreme King of Gods am

writing to tell you (obviously how angry I am with those minor buggers down there, with their silly little idiosyncrasies. These pernicious ideas happen to be the punner programmers of Operation Woe. I am sick to death of the tedious multitudes in between the levels on my little toy Amstrad CPC 404. I demand

you to give me some of your petty cheap advice. Well I'm for O/S! I am sure you are the cheapest around!

The King of Gods

Get a little closer - and send your cheque to the editor, marked "Private and Confidential".

WEIRDER

Don't you love to Goof? Every girl knows that the mystic of No. 1, Moller Roeder, Mike Roeder is the hereditary Janitor of Olympus. Well the only time Goofy messes around with volcanoes is when it starts them out. By the way, the squashed bug on this letter is actually Goofy! I punished him for refusing to pinch a life in my bathtub.

And if you let out three don't write to me, I'll see my gods come in to feed you with forks to fill in. Or I might borrow Sledge Wilson's door-to-door salesman.

Soon I'll send in the details of Jupiter's cabinet reshuffle. Apparently, Poseidon's getting a haircut and Hermes takes his silly winged hat.

Phyllis Eas, (Sign here)
God of Bureaucracy
Heavenly Customs Dept,
PO Box 868
Olympus

E300 BLOWOUT

I recently cast an Atari 32 which is fine for my word processing and music making, but I feel I need to expand more on my games playing, and I therefore wish to buy a console, PC Engine or Sega Magazine. I hear both are very new and are fast machines in terms of speed of scrolling and animation.

I have a budget of £200 to spend and cannot decide which one to choose, so as you have always play tested them could you tell me which is the best and which one has more value for money and future prospects?

P Q Smith, Gloucester

You say you want to buy a console, PC Engine, or Sega Magazine, but most people would consider these consoles. None of these readers are currently officially available in the UK, but Sega's current strong support of the 3-bit Sega and their statement of intentions about the 32-bit Magazine might be an indicator of future trends. In ACE 23 Mike Alexander of MIGHT was quoted as saying that we might expect deliveries early next year (that about a Xerox?)

32 BIT BETTER?

Up until a few weeks ago, I had almost decided on which console to buy, the Sega Mega drive or the Xerox Multi System or Nintendo 32-bit. It was planning to see the Point in the PC shoot, but then I saw an article in some weekly computer mag about a new 32 bit console by Fujitsu

AAAGHGHG!

ACE Letters page typos shakkkk harrRr...

OK, it's true. We can't spell at ACE. Not even our own names. And last month, the links and checks the spelling work! - on hollydew didn't it! And you know, we got 282 errors on a single page.

So what do we do, I ask you? We ask him, that's what...

Just apart, though. We are absolutely grovelling in our apologies for last month's typeset horror. At 2.30am in the morning, struggling to meet a printer's deadline that had been brought forward, anything can happen - and it did.

Here's a sheet, but even, collection of your (all perfectly spelt) letters taking us to task for the disaster. And just to show no hard feelings, we've given one of them the Prize Letter award...

ACE OUSTS GRAUMIAD IN TYPOS SHOCKER

The 24th issue of ACE hit the streets (and gutters) 27 to jinx it in a fiery to mis-spelled: commas and text, and featured for the first time a (by analogy) raster-letters page... Plus old

industry columns, fiction, the pre-computer Graumiad's long-awaited record for typos was unscathed in a firestorm.

The 24th issue of ACE (ACE) featured a (by analogy) raster-letters page... Plus old

magazine.

28 suffered from typos and 29th both hitting

colliding

29 on the same day. At 27th week reprinted and portrayed ACE reader

with small proof editor Steve Cooke demanding, 'at how can a you read stop to read

a such a look-up of it them? We an Downed could find once sample of ten word 1 a in spots in the right order'.

That's what has a lot of holes', voluntarily super-novice Cook, 29th was all down to left hand strike not discerning our columns on time for us to correct it a real typo we'. We need to have a bit

to walk or we left end of a 28 pencil, both/you don't let us have anything sharp here and

and open led it, besides, we've gone lead free now and we've decided to get 1 the September copy out in time for July but

we'll really get the Christmas issue out ready now and if you find a typo in that it's a free buddy and a part of Buddy's for you, stand on the, be enthused

'So there as you news agent with your \$1.50 on October 1st, except for Finnish Grunter up in Glasgow can we let see October.

Ha Ha!

Have a free buddy away!

agreements promised us all a 14-number each and we're all excited at

final road in both world for \$1.50

ACE-w

like getting it off your chest

Alan Smith, Southend-On-Sea

It's certainly nice to see that the staff at ACE have recognised that there is a legally untapped market for 'activity playbooks' in the computer world.

I look forward to the first full-blown ACE Prize and Sketch after such an excellent issue in your last issue (No.28 - September).

No doubt thousands of readers enjoyed playing 'beat the error' as much as I did in the letters columns. I managed to spot 104 'typos/errors' mistakes, but I'm sure other readers out there can do better.

Next month can we please have a dot-to-dot picture of the Xerox Multi System.

Leslie Jervis, Beverage

Your wish is granted, though we thought it would look better if we printed up the dots before printing it. See pages 25-28.

The just finished reading issue '24' and I've just got new equipment:

JagMO BY

the top/learning Thought THE Magazine

by the ACE CharCE. the publishing 200th as caused

a SOMA-44 rolled PoDAD...

Or is it and that more of you can spell?

Andrew S Tennant, Glasgow

How do you pass?



Alan Smith and the outstanding article

**PRIZE
LETTER**

NAMBY-PAMBY

Alan Hughes of *Midas Keyzies* and Mike Walsh of *Bandicut* don't know what they're talking about. They say that games are too difficult for the users, which is not true. If you had a game that wasn't difficult you'd put it down after the first 15 minutes. Without difficulty, where's the challenge?

You might play a game once and not get very far in it but if you've got any guts then a few hours later you'll have another try, and get a bit further. If you could complete a game in one session then it was not worth playing in the first place.

Most people like a challenge. If this wasn't true then why are games like *The World's Fair Series*, *Last Ninja Series*, *Life* and *Blood Money* so popular? Games players may well complain from the lazy to the fanatic, but it is not always the fanatic players that send in tips and cheats NOR is it always the lazy players that sit for hours.

My game is a challenge. It's a challenge thrown down by the programmer to test his game. *Dungeon Master* was one of the best programs ever written and Alvin Hughes can do it in 15 minutes if he couldn't be bothered to map all the mazes and find all the keys. What does he want? To save it all handed to him on a silver platter?

I think it's time to stopped burying his head in the sand and looked around at what's going on in the world. Games designers have to live just like the rest of us. They don't design games just for the sake of it. These design games that they often design by the buying trend of the software market, they are going to make the public buy their particular product. If that means creating games with a challenge then that's what they create. If Alan Hughes bothered opening his eyes in his local software store he would see that there are games that cater for all sections of the software market, and a lot of them are fun as well as challenging.

On the other hand, I agree that software houses could do more in the way of offering help. Quite often someone comes across a problem in a game, whether it's an adventure, role-playing game or whatever, that they can't find a way round, but it's not for someone to help you out with your particular problem enabling you to get further into the game. I'm on the Adventure Helpsite in AOL, and I feel quite happy to help people out with their problems because I know how it feels to be stuck in a game. But am I doing some of the software house's work for them?

If you can't face a challenge then it's time to give up. The ball's in your court Alan.

Alan Laver, Herts

P.S. Game Designers: 1
Alan Hughes: 0

I would like to answer Alan Hughes' letter in the September issue. I agree with much Alan said but I feel he generalises too much. The sort of games that we found in reviews are too hard and those of us who do not have the tenacity of a hardened arcade gamer are often unable to get into their home computer equivalents. Most games are not that tough, by which I mean variation at any level.

Now consider the pricing - at £25 for an Amiga game we have already said for between 125 and 250 games in an arcade. After 3 games out for the arcade people like Alan may have decided that the game is not for him, but with his home computer he's stuck with over 100 paid for!

However strange our games have already found the answer. I asked someone about *Midway* once. He told me he thought it was really easy as he could always beat the computer. When I pressed further, however, he revealed that he knew little of the subtlely hidden in the programming, which means that the computer for humans had to use different strategies as a player got better so as you progressed more things came to light and it was more fun.

I commend Alan for mentioning *Silent Service*. This game has 4 levels of difficulty and 8 subroutines, environment, storms, changes, 5 missions and 5 hours of play. The score table is based on promotion for longevity sake which is fair as based on the combination of the above difficulties. A player could pick a low rating and still get high on the table if he picks enough. If you picked a high rating, very little bonus gets you on the table.

If a 486 computer can come up with enough variation to keep us occupied is it too much to ask that a 512K computer should produce better, at over £20 a game.

Gareth Poy, Bedford

Then while I was reading through issue 24 of Ace and in it there was an advert by Superdrive Electronics which surprised me because they were selling a Nintendo 13 bit console! Is this true? Finally I heard from a friend that there is going to be a 16 bit PC Engine! So can you please put me out of the mind and if you can recommend me a console.

0 0 Death, Remotoid

The Fujitsu FM Towns is the latest you're talking about, but it's not available yet. As for choice, it's always advisable to save your cash for a machine that's hot at the shops and is well supported. The 12 bit Remotoid seems like a fair error - something you know of about here at ACE, eh?



The Fujitsu FM Towns

A. SINCLAIR'S FIRST LETTER

I have been looking ACE from issue one and never have I seen such a well presented magazine. But you already know this. Have you been tempted to write before? Yes I'm one of those 'never written before types' but I have just had this great brainstorm after purchasing Kick-off for my Amiga and getting 'bumped off' the computer everytime I get a few friends round and we played for 2 hours with in our own league. Everyone agreed it was a great afternoon and experience. Then it hit me, why not share the experience with local computer players and start a local league with either software or trophy prizes to the winners and runners up? 'CALL THE HEROES OF THE WORLD' and maybe if we have enough people interested we could monitor other towns or even city's, after all PBM games could have started computers. And I must have stumbled off at first.

Please could you tell me what you think of this and your expert views and opinions on this subject. If you think it's a good idea or would like more info please call me and post the letter so that

everyone can share in this brain-storm. 'No seriously Coki, THANKS!

A Sinclair, Gwynedd

P.S. Why not have an ACE READERS CHALLENGE where your EDITOR could show us how good he is at games playing against our near mortals.

I'm surprised that you should have missed last month's ACE Readers Challenge, set by the editor for discerning readers. Called *Foot the Moon*, it attracted a record entry. See the panel for more details. The Software League sounds a great idea...

LOVE AT FIRST SIGHT MINUS ONE

Please can you help me in my quest for a computer game called *Love at the West*. I love this computer game and would be very much obliged.

Mark Hughes, Surrey

If you're serious, how can you be in love? I'm just crazy about this woman Pauline, but I haven't met her either. If you should see her, get her phone number and let the love. It is the same with *Love at the West*...

GET THIS, MUM

I own a CPC 464 which I want to sell and get an Amiga 500 or Amiga 512, but my mum is so far out of it that she doesn't know one end of a computer from the other. Please just say something - anything - that will make her change her mind and let me carry out my plan...

A. Reinhold, Wiltshire

Don't let the little feet bully you like this, mum. Force food like with Parley's sushi and he drifts into unconsciousness, then get out to the shops, grab yourself an AT or Amiga (both equally good buys and streets ahead of the CPC) and when he recovers consciousness, chain the little buggar to his old Amstrad while you have a bit of fun.

STUNT CAR RACER



Stunt Car Racer is available for SE, Amiga, PC, Spectrum and Commodore 64

Micro-Style

Step into the driving seat of one of the most wicked stunt cars around as a Stunt Car Racer. It's now up to you to prove just how good you are and to see whether or not you can ultimately become Division One Champion.

With a super-quick, turbo-charged V8 engine that will power you to incredible speeds, and long-travel suspension that enables you to soak up the bumps, your car really is an awesome projectile. The tracks are totally out of this world. Banked corners that enable you to 'pull g', undulating bumps that throw your car uncontrollably from side to side and huge ramps that catapult you into mid-air. In fact, you seem to spend so much time airborne, you could almost qualify for a pilot's license!

Battle it out on the track against other computer controlled rivals, such as, Dave Drell and Road Hog. Race and jump so fast that your car starts to break up under the strain and then accelerate even more. There's no prizes for being second best in this game - it's all or nothing.

Stunt Car Racer - do you think you could be up there with the best?

Stunt Car is utterly brilliant and offers adrenaline-jumping, gut wrenching high speed action that'll keep you engaged for months. C + PC.



STATUS, STYLE, STEALEY...

OLD GROPER GETS HIS PAWS ON TITLES UNDER DEVELOPMENT...

Bill Stealey - the WDC man of simulations, software, pilot astronauts... ah-American, all-anything really, has - I can EXCLUSIVELY REVEAL - made the first mistake on the slippery slope to rock, nite, and bankruptcy... He's started appearing in his own public videos.

So, promo - for the 'quite soon' to be released on PC, MS, Tank - has Bill dressed in his combat togs, reading somewhat vaguely, yet strangely compellingly, from an auto-cue, recasting the virtues of Tank, 3D in immediately reminded of so many American TV ads of our television fogging their nose and quality wood cars at low, low prices.

Yet as the promo goes on and the action moves onto a screen, Bill starts addressing a commentary on the action. Now the promo really starts getting into it and genuine enthusiasm abounds as the missiles fly and 'Red Force' starts taking damage.

And there you have part of the secret of the success of Microprose. Bill Stealey is into games, legions. There are loads of companies that are into coding, loads of companies that are into cash flow. Loads of companies that are into sticking the foot into other loads of companies. But few many guys of the top are really into the games themselves - with an almost fanatical devotion? Not a lot, then.

SENTINEL SUCCESSOR?



Tower of Babel - ultimate in 3D (Design it Yourself...)

Pete Cooke (Top Gun, Academy, etc) is going to be doing the Spectrum version of Star Car for Microprose. And he's just about finished an extraordinarily good thing for Microprose, called Tower of Babel inevitably. TCB is going to be labelled a '3-D Puzzle Game'. It deserves better treatment.

TCB is a fresh and innovative game with you controlling remote devices who have to complete different tasks on each different level. Heh... - that's like saying unified Field Theory is about numbers. TCB is complex - but my opinion is that anyone that wants to play one, say, 200-odd will find the same attraction in this one - which includes the most sophisticated level designer I've seen on any game ever.



Mike Singleton's team at work for Micro-Status - it's 3D, it's American, but in the near future (as global warming doesn't exist, ha!) it's cold and out in an isolated corner, mostly of Antarctica. Shame there's a lady that's trying to spoil things. Just as well you, as leader of the Peace Movement, you can't really, order about and manage like the inhabitants of this world, this - it's not loads of 3D night with snowflakes, but expect it to be in the shops late in '90.

Combine this with the kind of single minded fanaticism that is almost exclusively American and it's no wonder Microprose are producing great games right now (check out P15 Strike Eagle in the box).

MS Tank Command, not out again on PC, '90 September. ST and Amiga back end of '89 looks like the most detailed tactical bottlenecked simulation ever to hit a home computer. The Microprose helious 3-D graphics system is excellent - but that is only half of it. The different scenarios have you operating a tank (alone or four in concert with other friendly forces), mechanized infantry, artillery, air strike, chopper support. Modern warfare is a complex business - so is MS Tank. Close to completion, this one look like it's got more meat on it than a 16oz. cornflower. Fun, yarr!

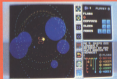
Microprose UK hasn't been standing still either - despite the poor reception of the new Micro-Status and Micro-Style labels. With the acquisition of the Telecon brands, it looks like there's a certain excess of labelling down Embassy way, if anything. Still, there is quite good software in the works. Geoff Carmichael's Star Car on the ST was reviewed last month, but we neglected to mention (also our awful) the headcoached version which has you playing against another person, via a serial link. Titled

Stew the thing down a tad, but it's worth it. This head-based function should be on the Amiga too. Expect other versions - Spectrum, 64, and PC later in this year.



ST Tank - close to completion.

Space and Sophisticated P15 - Star Lord, programmed by Mike Singleton. Possibly the most interesting game ever with up to 16 (occasionally) players fighting over the same section of a galaxy of a thousand or so stars. Solo? It might not look much - at this development stage - but for some time now it's going to have massive ad play in it... probably as there may be a word a disc '90M version.



Y... FOOTBALL CRAZY?

There are a hell of a lot of football games about - and you want to know why? Football sells, that's what. But what about the games?

Maybe, even something as soft as Roy of the Rivers really fits of the status in terms and a game as fat as Matchday II has time - come back to home computing... all is forgotten significantly depletes the world supply of magnetic media when released.

You'll have noticed the trend to try and license named footballers into games and there's a lot of legs in that, after all, certain players - particularly England caps - have followings, even if they move clubs. Even if you used to hate Spurs, Football was obviously a price locks down behind high substantial



Man Utd - what thought, game for sale...

cost to avoid valley of broken bottles!

But licensing a team? Slightly more risky if you ask me. First announced - if any studios seem me correctly - was Liverpool from Grand Slam. Now it appears that Konami, the software giant of development home Tapes have got the licence to do a Manchester United game for the next three seasons.

Hope so, of course, do a lot of work in the conversion line, for Grand Slam. Any major entertainment fans?

Knowing how badly Tapes' Tony Kawenski and Grand Slam's Stephen Hall are (don't litter it the back, please) probably not. First out onto the pitch, however, will be Man Utd - which is a mixture of the traditional arcade football game plus a full Football Manager style of thing on top. Finally (should be releasing that at the PC Show, while Liverpool will be appearing later on in the season - late Oct for Spectrum, Amstrad and PC, with Amiga and ST coming along mid-November. Apparently the £20 million Knights paid for the club don't include the game rights. Time will tell whether it was right to ignore them!



Football, coded for release by the November and Christmas teams of Steve Jackson and Nigel Bonadonna. This really does look like a very good match effort in the development phase a spruency of 1989 colours - and although Konami's entry features the usual ST 14 colours for the sprites, etc, it has a great emotional feel to it.

The final thing to do is have four arcade style appearances to it, plus a large 120 Megabyte save with the traditional campaign scenario as your favorite super-weather save out to represent the money. Or something. Again, out ST and Amiga in November - don't it look nice on the table?

HEWSON'S HOWITZERS

Hewson is bringing out the big guns for October this year with a veritable salvo of original products, ready for 1989. And jolly good some of it is looking too.

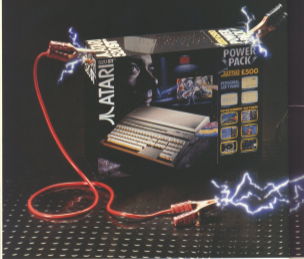
Is there room in the world for another driving game? We shall see, but at any rate, this one is a plain old vertical shooter with racing elements, shooting elements and Hellfire elements, as you can upgrade the motor as you go through the game, assuming you can appropriate the cash along the way. Called 500 Gear it's due for release in ST and Amiga in November of this year.

Turning the wheel-defence into yet another twist, Steve's Starblast, an arcade adventure set in the traditions and graphic style of Pac-Man. Written by Nathalie Dixon (of Cybernoid 2 & 3 fame) the distinctive sprites and backgrounds plus the usual positions of puzzle will make this one to look out for later in the year.

Steve Hewson

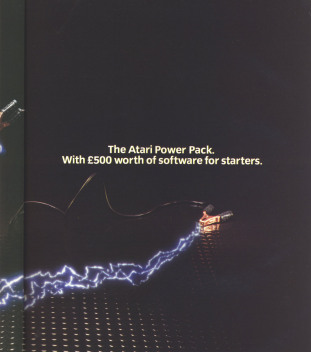


Starblast from Nathalie Dixon, programmer of Cybernoid. Steve's Pac-Man game makes it to a fifth of last year, almost.



There's no catch. We're giving you the Atari 520 STE and 520 SE worth of great software titles for just £299.99.

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MEAN MOTHER!

JOHN COOK DISCOVERS A NEW ARCADE BOARD WITH 2048 SPRITES!

How is a game physically stored on a computer? In ROM as a rule, incorporated into a PCB (Printed Circuit Board) that is dedicated to that game. That is, if you took the ROM chips out of one game and transferred them into the sockets of another, chances are all you'd get is an entertaining burning smell and a hole in your personal cash flow.

There is a measure of standardization however - the majority of PCBs have an input/output of synch, video and sound, conforming to an industry standard called - JAMMA. This means that PCBs are portable from cabinet to cabinet - as all cabinet combinations are rigged up to JAMMA, certification.

All very well - but if an operator finds that Alien Genocide is lacking off on the tillage and wants to install the board non-Protagonist, he still has to buy a whole new PCB to fit in the old cabinet. Expensive, eh? For a lone speaking man state-of-the-art job, we are looking something in the range of \$600-700.

The price tag is not too surprising - games are high-time expensive to develop, but more importantly, they are now becoming hardware intensive as the manufacturers throw more and more silicon at the boards to make them ever the more faster and fiddler than ever before.

The trade is aware that this price tag is a little on the high side and has developed some strategies to try and bring the price of the games down, while keeping the standard up.

Copson has tried to get around this problem with its new CP System Board (more about this little wonder next month incidentally) by having a standard base mother board and designing in the possibility for changing the



Breakdown, System 24

game by simply changing the secondary boards, so cutting down the manufacturing costs. That's one approach, Sega have tried something different with its System 24.

The System 24 mother board comes in a special 20" monitor, two player, three button cabinet - and it's got quite an impressive spec. The 68000 control the show, but they have considerable hardware support, with hardware sprites (max 2048) and hardware screen splitting (two independently scrolling plus two windows, 4,092 colours displayable out of a palette of 32,768. Beeped into it too, 1.1Mbit of RAM plus a 256K ROM and you have a machine with the vital statistics of *Miss World*.

But, as they say, that's not all - the secret to System 24 is that the games are downloaded into the machine on 3.5" disc. Therefore, the theory goes, instead of buying a new board for a new game, you buy a disc (plus a security chip... yes, a dongle). Cheaper than all those chips. On the downside, the basic system itself is not cheap.

SYSTEM 24 MOTHER BOARD

The Next Generation of Game Software



FEATURES
• 68000 CPU
• 1.1 Mbit of RAM
• 256K ROM
• 2048 hardware sprites
• 4,092 colours displayable out of a palette of 32,768
• Hardware screen splitting (two independently scrolling plus two windows)
• 3.5" disc for game data
• Security chip
• 20" monitor
• Two player
• Three button cabinet



Games produced on System 24 is quite different from that good - Scramble Sports (ordinary 1942 clone), Gun Ground (intriguing top down combat/strategy game) and the much more commercial Crack Down base pin. However, more on the way - a golf game called Supermatters is the lead - and as the programmers get used to the system, the games can only get better.

However, as concepts in general become more and more hardware intensive, why bother to use this approach to cost cutting from other manufacturers. System 24 looks like being the way forward.

ESCAPE FROM THE PLANET OF THE ROBOT MONSTERS

Atari Games have always been good for a laugh. Tongue-in-cheek games like *Toober!* and *APB* have proved that in the past, with distinctive graphics and a touch of the absurd thrown in for good measure. Its latest, *Escape from the Planet of the Robot Monsters* carries on in that tradition - this time extracting the user



Escape from the planet of the robot monsters



from the comic book sci-fi genre.

The scene takes place with sunglasses and Duke (stupid scientist) - *Planet One* and *Two* - have to beam down to *Planet B* where evil creatures are hiding caddis thousands of human lives and making them assemble a robot army that is destined unless you can do something super-heroic to stop it to destroy the Earth.

Well, I'd make the place - but over the humanitarians - the tanks have you stopping about the place, taking out different breeds of

Robot, with six gun, committing acts of random violence on the way. There's no question DIFFICULTY rate.

The style of game is one more familiar to owners of home computer than arcade games - being in isometric 3D. That takes a bit of getting used to, but the game plays well, and the animated antics of the two dukes will, more than likely, fix a grin on your face as you stalk about the levels, liberating enslaved beings.

There are three sections to the game - the main isometric bit, an end-of-level monster that looks like the *Clash* of these little gits in the old Smash inter mesh adverts plus another inter-level bonus bit where you have to drive your speedster through a maze. So there's a bit of variety too.

A fun game that you'll find a refreshing change for the patterns of beat 'em' ups and *Demons* clones. Enjoy!



Winning Run - fastest polygons in the universe

WINNING RUN

Now here's a funny thing. Winning Run was presented at this January's AES Show (the main trade show for the European Computer industry)...and who are only now learning its general existence. There's only one comment to make



Yes, whatever you do - get on the machine!

Hard Drive? was certainly a breakthrough product in terms of programming technique - fast polygons. Winning Run takes a similar technique (Namco call it the Polygonizer) and makes it much faster, smoother, better. If you have any cool, after a few games on this machine, you will beg to have its children. It really is that good.

OK, so it's a racing game. It Formula One simulator even. Not using the latest Mac polygon graphics system in the Universe, like the last race being made in the Universe, like the best. "How you breakfast around?" obviously.



Winning Run

self in the Universe. In other words we think you'll like it!

At the start up you have two options - Easy (3 Speed) or Technical (7 Speed). Start out in Easy, but real men eventually get to reach Technical and at that time the car takes on all the properties of a Formula One beastie. Not easy to control, John. Not slamming the foot to the floor all the way around here!



Winning Run

Even so, Winning Run is still a very playable and accessible game - with a host of touches that barely show off the superlative technical achievement of the unit. See those wheels - they're so sports, they're made up of lots of little polys. So are all the other cars. See the player fade up through the valleys from background to foreground - just as if they were coming out of the haze. Wow!

Some things are better experienced than described on paper. Winning Run is one of these things. Suffice to say it is the ultimate coin-op driving experience to date. Play it!

Thanks this month go to all at Gotti Leisure, Paul Atkey at Great Leisure and last but not least, Kevin "Hard Drive" Williams at Electro-zoid.

HI-TECH DIRTFOX

Namco's next release using the technology it's developed for the fab-games Assault and Metal Hawk is a driving effort called Dirtfox. Can't tell if it's any good yet, but we should be taking that classic "in-depth" look next month.

EXTENDED PLAY

ACE gossip from the coin-op closet...

Y SPY

After Secret Agent from Beta East last month, now we have SPY from Kazusa. Special Project Y has you play a male looking and shooting your way into the New Years Honours List, fighting for truth and democracy (event).

Beta East's SPY.



ARCH RIVALS

Arch Rivals is a new basketball game from Beta East - and it plays as well as it looks. Combine this with a very distinctive - and snazzy - graphics approach and you get a very attractive game indeed. And you don't have to be 7'0" to be any good at it, either.

Arch Rivals



RASTAN SAGA CONTD.

The one all you kiddies at heart have been waiting for, I bet - Rastan Saga II. This one takes Rastan Saga I that many lot further - the graphics are better for a start and the gameplay, although nothing startlingly new, is good. Worth the odd hour's 3-0p.

Rastan Saga II



STRYX



- Ultra smooth 2 way scrolling
- Designed with small fully animated characters from Garvan Corbett, the artist who brought you the classic hit Barbarian
- Multi-directional free format weapon usage
- Large playfield for even more action.

You're really up against it this time. Those revolting (and finally upped and armed) their formerly powerful weapons on their kind human residents. Someone's got to take it before it all gets out of hand. I mean, you just can't have revolutionary Cyborg assassins tearing the streets of Dome City and expect the citizens to put up with it. What on earth is going to sort out the mess? You guessed - you get the job.

Fortunately, you are just a little bit on the special side. You are Stryx, the product of Project Alpha Secure, the most advanced lighting, smartest thinking (and also ever) incarnated. Fast, mean, full-bodied, you see the bad-ness, like only one who can stop those wicked Cyborgs.

You'll have to work hard, though. Fighting hordes of the revolting creatures (such a sad waste of scrap metal) and retaining the keys to the Lifeworld.

So, Stryx, you'd better get with it pack-on for some high level (what's that) jumping through the immensely complex underground world of the Dome does. It's a tough assignment, and time is running out.

AMIGA/ATARI ST £19.95

Screen Shots from the April 87 Version



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THE REAL THING

RICHARD MONTEIRO AND THE ACE TEAM GO KONIX-CRAZY...

The Konix console is here. Is this the ultimate games machine we've all been waiting for?

You know you're in for something out of the ordinary as soon as you get your hands on the Konix console. The unit is large compared to other consoles, but lightweight and, due to its compact design, it almost feels sinister, yet the abundance of knobs, interfaces, and expansion ports means you can take full control and find out what goes where. It's an exciting process...

The Konix is a racing car, an aeroplane, a motorcycle — it's what you make it. The U-shaped base has a spindle running between the two straps of the U and the chain can roller rests on a column attached to the spindle. This controller can be pulled towards you or pushed away from you. A three-way clutch wheel knob on the left arm (situated from the front of the U base) determines whether the centre column remains locked or is allowed to swing between two positions.

Four control modes are possible: car, motorcycle, helicopter, and aeroplane. Between them, these cover just about every simulation program you're likely to tackle, although we thought the omission of a penmanship was too bad for Microspace. It did make the control pillar remains locked. The steering wheel is pulled off for airplane mode and the central pillar allowed to move between two locations. For motorcycle mode the central pillar is pulled forward and locked while the handlebars are produced by twisting the handlebars.



Helicopter mode involves using the central column til and connecting another controller. This isn't supplied, but will be available as an add-on.

Particularly clever is the 'judder' in the control column which can be used by programmers to produce tactile feedback. Another neat design feature is the way the foot-pedals on the steering wheel engage with the handlebar buttons, when the wheel is engaged

— a simple mechanical solution that avoids the need for electrical interlocking between the wheel and the main unit.

Push the controller forward and your craft rises; pull the controller towards you and your craft descends; crank and the controller judders... Never before have car combat and racing games had the chance to be so realistic... Unfortunately, heavily software we were able to find on the machine (see panels throughout this feature) did not make maximum use of the control possibilities, though there may be some racetracks who would like to play Left Right & Left using the aerobically controller.

JOY DIVISION

Below conventional control possibilities are available, however. On the same arm as the three-way clutch are joystick ports 1 and 2. These accept standard joysticks for casual or traditional-style platform games, arcade adventures and the like. Since most early games will be conversions of existing hits and will consequently require traditional systems to operate than this seems fairly essential.

However, there's more to these joystick ports than meets the eye. Two Konix machines — one powered and the other not — can be connected together for two-player action. Joystick port 1 on the powered master machine is connected via a lead to joystick port 2 on the second console. The second machine acts simply as a very complex joystick. Unfortunately, you can't attach a Konix console to your micro and use it as the ultimate/most momentary game controller.

ROCK AND ROLL YEARS

It was Ryn Holloway, Konix boss and designer/producer/driver, who originally thought up a design for a radical new game controller. He set his engineers to work on some electronics to power it.

Enter Cambridge-based pro Martin Gossman, Ben Chess, and John Matheson (known collectively as Flare Technology) whose prototype Flare One was exclusively reported in ACE Issue 11. Flare needed a company to mass produce its machine — after approaching several hardware manufacturers, the Atari and Amstrad, Flare approached Ace Computers.

After requesting a 15-bit processor, large colour palette and even greater

chip integration, Flare and the Konix engineers came up with the hardware.

Because there's no keyboard or in-built language in the Konix, programmers have to use PDS systems to input data into the console during development. A gang of five Birmingham University graduates — Chris Gibbs, Fred Gill, Martin Green, Jon Steele, James Fitz-James — wrote the low-level drivers that enable the PDS to communicate with the Konix development system. In addition, the ATD labs (Attention to Detail) created an art and two sound packages to help pro-

grammers convert existing file formats. (Cages, Newswires, IFF, sound samples and the like) to something the Konix can cope with.



ACE breaks the news about the Flare One...



We get our hands on a pre-owned version of *Blade Runner* (Blowminded). The game features several graphics scenarios which, combined with large sprites and brilliant, to-die-for backgrounds, simply wouldn't have been possible on another machine. The fact of the software isn't much different than that running on an ST or an Amiga, except for the speed - which is mindboggling.

Another neat design point here: the double-DIN connector is actually a single 25-pin D connector with some of the pins removed, further cutting production costs. Other machine manufacturers might take this up...

Incidentally, joystick port 1 will be used by the joystick controller (when it appears) and port 2 will be able to accept a keypad. This latter port could be a vital feature for the Koin in future as it would allow alternative entry, something other consoles keep promising but are always slow to deliver. This is particularly important for the Koin, since the hardware is strong enough to support a highly complex flight simulator or similar program, and as anyone knows there need more than simple mechanical control - you really do need fly-board input to cope with all the parameters during flight.

On the subject of game controllers, a pedal unit comes with the Koin console. This plugs into the back of the console and comprises two pedals. Each pedal contains two microswitches; one located at the top and the other at the bottom of the pedal, and the unit has a responsive feel to it. The programmer must decide how best to use the pedals, but typical applications could be a brake and assist motor in a racing game or left and right controls for a tank's caterpillar tracks.

The console's right arm houses Start and Select buttons and a lever that can be used in various ways. Programmers can detect the position of the controller and could, for instance, use it as a throttle, gearchange lever or weapons selector. Further evidence of clever design: the position of the lever at start-up determines the default volume level for music and sound effects.



Blade Runner Art package: the palette on the right gives you some idea of the maximum range of colours available...

If you've had a peek at the circuit board inside almost any computer you will have discovered that it virtually fits the inside of the machine's case. Because there's not much room inside the Koin console, the circuit board hasn't got any choice but to be small. Unsurprisingly the board is size bigger than the double-sided ones (7.25 by 4.75 inches). And the component count is extraordinarily low. Forget very large scale integration - the Koin's design meant ultra large scale integration had to be employed. Just about everything of any importance is contained in one chip: sound and graphics handling, disk controller, system ROM, local RAM, arithmetic and logic unit, control ports. It's a monster 160-pin slab of silicon known as an ASIC (application specific integrated circuit).

Apart from the ASIC there's 256K of RAM or two pseudo-static memory chips (pseudo because the chips have their own on-board refresh unit) and an 8850 processor clocked at 8MHz. This 16-bit processor is slightly redundant. The original hardware design featured an 8-bit processor, perfectly adequate given the power of the chips it is working with, but Koin wanted the 16-bit number and the developers gave it to them.

The video controller inside the ASIC is capable of three resolutions: 256 by 200 pixels using 256 colours, 612 by 388 using 16 colours, 288 by 300 using 16 colours. The colour/low resolution screen uses up 51K of RAM - each pixel taking up one byte, while that makes for fast screen operations, it does mean that a large chunk of memory is unnecessarily used.

SHOTS THE BULLET

The low byte per pixel made will probably be the favourite for games programmers simply because graphics manipulations are easy and fast. A typical ST

INSIDE STORY

or Amiga screen is made up of four bitplanes. Each byte of a complete corresponds to a row of eight pixels on screen. The video chip has to compare information held in the same bits of each bitplane to find out the colour of an individual pixel. It's an incredible performance which requires four reads just to find out what is actually stored in one location on the screen. All this is just one quick simple operation with the Koin's video controller.

612 by 388 pixel mode



ASIC - computer on a chip, also uses up 50K of memory. However, in this case each byte looks after two adjacent pixels. The third mode is the most economic, only requiring 28K of RAM. Again, every eighth takes care of one pixel.

Colour is determined by a 16-bit RGB palette. The number of combinations you can fit into a 16-bit register is 4096. Even though the screen modes are comparatively chunky, a palette of 4096 colours means that some very fine shading is possible - particularly when 256 colours are used. There really isn't any reason why you should have to put up with chunky graphics. Good anti-aliasing techniques will see it that.

If you're not concerned at being colour - and, frankly, it gets tricky trying to fit users to 256 of them - the screen can be split into areas of different modes. The Koin takes this further than other machines: you can set each byte of screen memory to be either one low-bit or two high-bit pixels. The possibilities are mindboggling.

For performance sake a firm on chunks of memory there's a 16-bit timer that can move nearly 1Mbytes of memory in a second or two 50K screens every frame

refresh. But it's not just one national memory moving that makes this offer special: if the screen is set up correctly the chip can perform collision detection and depth-sorting tasks automatically.

PUMP UP THE VOLUME

The most impressive portion of the ASIC is the 1650-technology digital signal processor (DSP). 1650 technology is also used in the Affenheades and involves processor design that, instead of performing a large number of very complex operations (as the 68000 can), offers a smaller number of very simple operations - but performs them at very high speeds.

The DSP can move a 3D object consisting of 2000 vertices 80 times every second. Although the DSP's clock speed is only 12MHz (12 million cycles or operations per second), with a typical 68000 instruction takes four, eight or 10 cycles to execute, a DSP instruction only takes one.

The DSP also has a 16-bit 10 million instructions per second (MIPS) arithmetic and logic unit. Multiplications can be calculated over 50 times faster than the 68000 in an ST or Amiga.

Because of its processing speed the DSP could be used extensively for math-heavy operations. 3D animations, say, by containing the power of the filter and the DSP it is possible to calculate and display 3D rotations at amazing speeds.

The DSP is also in charge of generating sound. A PCM look-up table helps a synthesiser FM board. But that's just one type of noise - samples can also be used. And these can be anything up to 14-bit in quality. Not quite 16-bit CD sound, but close enough. You can emulate virtually any type of sound generator so long as you write the drivers. Yes, it's nice. Even more so when you realise it is capable of 10-channel - maybe more - sound in stereo.

PLUM IT HOME

Unlike other game consoles whose software comes on some form of floppy card, Kain's machine includes a 3.5-inch double-sided drive in its design. The drive can hold 800K of information and, because of the machine's built-in hard drive, access to saved data is possible while a game is running. Since disks are currently a lot cheaper than memory cards, this has to be good news.

Kain, in conjunction with firmware design, means Attention To Detail, section to have come up with a disk format that will defeat crackers and commercial pirates, but subtly they're being coy about revealing details. The upper end price point for games has been set at £24.99 - almost half the price of existing console games.

Two modular 'inward ports' at the back of the console provide connections for supplying firm power to peripherals. Power is supplied via a power pack, it's a pity this couldn't have been placed out of sight inside the Console's casing - unfortunately mechanical and electronic parts are to blame for the lack of room and there would have been serious heat dissipation problems. A 1.25mm DIN 4161 51-like connector is used to supply the video signal to any VGA board, about a month. There's also a mod-



Playing *Ninja II* on the Kain's is an experience. Controlled by ATX, the game interface is controlled across the screen. Although the software doesn't make use of the full dedicated controller (you'll have to wait for the next Spectrum II Kain's edition for that) it has several features that couldn't come on any other machine - especially the *Backward*, *Color* and *Graphic* entry points at the bottom left of the screen.

Later socket for loading the output to a TV. Sound is sent through a 3.5mm stereo jack. An 8-pin DIN socket for plugging in peripherals like the light gun or mouse etc. Finally, there's an expansion slot for an extra 512K of memory or game cartridges.

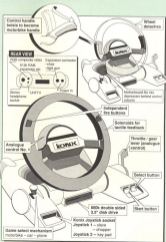
But, then, is what the Kain's console offers. It's compact and about 12" deep and almost as wide as high plastic and superbly designed. In fact, most people do a double-take when they see it with the steering column raised since it's hard to believe that anyone could fit a multi-ported input. But then that's the other side of the story. See the panel on the right for full details.

BACK TO REALITY

It's very easy to get carried away by the Kain's specifications, particularly when reading through them for the first time. When you sit down and work out exactly what's going on you realize that, while undeniably powerful, the Kain's has to do a lot of a job. The DSP in particular must generate sound and perform 3D transformations. Neither are light on pro-



Ninja II looks like it is going to cover up as an console even more than it did on home computers. Systems 2 boss Mark Gale is ecstatic about his new deal to launch the game for the Nintendo. With potential sales of a million units in America and the fact that the design of the *Ninja* game is ideally suited to consoles for has every right to be. Meanwhile, *Ninja II* on the Kain's looks stunning. More colours on-screen, intelligently text written, and superb graphics make it a visual and gaming treat. Let's hope all Kain's software is like that!





Sound control: sound control generation software is still quite primitive as far as visual presentation is concerned, but the results are very impressive, especially when samples are processed.

corner time. The various timings quoted so far only give an indication of what each component is capable of when working alone. In practice, a fully blown game might only use 30 colours on screen to reserve memory, the DSP would have to be restricted to producing three or four-channel sound and the number of polygons that could be rendered would be brought down to around 50 a frame.

The Kronic console is in its infancy: the first games to appear won't stretch the hardware – and may not use the control mechanism it is full – and will probably look and feel little better than something on an ST or Amiga. In fact, several programmers are porting graphics screens from existing 32-bit machines. But don't despair, if the Kronic is capable of looking and sounding as good as an Amiga now, imagine what you'll be playing in six months time.

And the price? Still not fixed as we went to press, but a tad over £200, with the first machines in the shops over the three months.

THE AGE VERDICT

Although more expensive than others first announced, currently due to be priced at over £200, the Kronic could make a very attractive Christmas. In the mid-term, the only competing machines are likely to be the Sega 16-bit machine or the Fujitsu FM Towns, neither of which is planned for sale in the UK until next year (if at all).

The Kronic is British, superbly designed, and extremely powerful. Provided the software team shapes up, we have no hesitation in recommending it. The company expect demand to exceed supply before Christmas, so if you see one on the shelf, grab it before passing by...

PROGRAMMERS SPEAK

The Kronic has received mixed reactions from the software industry – perhaps a reflection of our British tendency to play off anything we do well. From the beginning, Norman, Mark Gale of System 3 has emerged as chief Kronic evangelist. Chiding less enthusiastic members of the UK software trade Gale says "They are being ****" to Ken (Wyn Halfway, boss of Ronic). What do they want? Do they want the Japanese to completely take over the business and dictate to us what we can publish, where we can publish it... and how many units we are allowed to sell?

All firms that sign up to do a game for the Multi System pay £2,000 for a development kit. The money is paid back as soon as the game is delivered. Duplication of the disks is handled by Ronic themselves with a guarantee of zero piracy thanks to a built in security device. No restrictions are placed on developing the Kronic title for other systems if the software houses so desire – unlike Nintendo, for example, who insist any titles developed for their games console must be theirs and theirs alone.

This is all multi-channel music to the ears of the software developers that there is a fly in the ointment. If the machine is so massive why does it need conversions from lesser machines to prove its worth? Where is all the original Kronic software? The answer is that the "monopoly" of the titles will still shine through. Cowan's Run The Gauntlet for example utilizes the Multi System's variety of controls – with the player changing from steering wheel, to joystick, to fight controls to drive the various craft that the player must handle in the game.

Against's *Sliders* – which will be packed with the Kronic has also been designed specifically for the powerful driving manoeuvrability of the Multi System controller. Against is now working on a version of *Starblaster II* – code-named *Starwings* at Starblaster – again specifically coded to make the most of the Kronic helicopter controller. Check out the Software Schedule box for other titles under development...

Meanwhile, the big boys in software publishing are strangely quiet on the subject. Paul Cousins, boss of Activision, told ACE "We have a gutturing relationship with that image, so in a sense we are involved in Ronic development" Cousins hopes that the Kronic will succeed "We wish them well. Conceptually the machine is excellent" But the excellence has not been sufficient for Activision to convert any of their own labor titles for the machine. Despite the good wishes Cousins states "No Activision titles are currently under development for the Kronic". At USI Gold Geoff Brown states firmly that there are no current plans for the company to develop Kronic games. But Ronic software manager Jon Darrin remains confident. "Our aim is to have twenty four quality titles available for the Multi System within twelve months of launch."

Mark Speakman, publisher for Unity Design

There's no question that the authors chips are very powerful, but they require a lot of programming talent to get anything out them. The screen handling isn't as fast as we anticipated it to be. But then when something is typed out of all proportion it never is as good as you expect it to be – take *Estimote* for example.

Jeff Miles, ULanest

I can't see major side-on conversions like *AT* type being particularly well implemented on the Kronic. You want to interact with the machine's superb game controls, not just mangle some joystick.

Brian Pollock, Logotron

My only concern is memory, or lack of it. For instance, in the game I'm writing I am using six-channel FM synthesized sound. Now that takes up a hell of a lot of memory. I couldn't useably fit any more samples, and that's sad.

Chris Welch, Against

Polygon-based games like *Starblaster II* are going to be easy to program. The machine is geared up to making masses of voices and incredible rates. It's all though the designers of the machine were obsessed with producing something that could snuff polygons quickly.

SOFTWARE SCHEDULE

Here's a short checklist of games currently under development for the Kronic and due to appear before the beginning of 1988.

Blade (comes free with the console),
Kronic Chess
Kronic

Manchester United FC

Mr Zoo's Mile Ride

Revenge of Starblaster (working title)

Ronic

Run the Gauntlet

Sailing Simulator

Sliders

Starblaster II

Starblaster II

Starblaster II

Starblaster II

Starblaster II

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Starblaster II

Starblaster II



Logotron's *Starblaster II* – successful shows the current state of development of the Kronic version. We can't wait!

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GAMES GET MEAN...

AGE DEBATES THE RECENT ADVANCES IN PROGRAMMING POWER

Readers' letters over the last few issues have been suggesting that games are getting too difficult, fight aims too complex, RPG's too unfriendly. In a world where even Chess Grandmasters have to resign in the face of mighty silicon opponents, have the programmers left the players behind? Andy Wilson visits the Computer Olympiad and asks whether might is right...

O kay, what's the oldest computer game in the world? If you think it's Space Invaders, Ping or Pac-Man, you aren't even close. If you plant for Adventure or Star Trek you're still miles out. If you reckon it's chess on the other hand, award yourself two pawns and a jet on the back. Computer chess predates these other games by so long it just isn't funny.

Computers were talking or fussing about that black-and-white board in the 1950s, and the building blocks were laid even earlier. Incredible as it may seem, the principles of computer chess were first set out by Professor Claude Shannon, an American mathematician, over 40 years ago. Shannon presented his paper 'Programming a Computer for Playing Chess' at a conference in New York back in the spring of 1948. To put that in perspective, the atomic bomb was five years old at the time, while IBM had just invented something called a transistor.

All modern chess programs are based on the ideas in that 1948 paper, but this doesn't mean standards of play have stood still. There have been huge improvements in programming techniques since the '60s, and automatic logic in hardware power (that 'transistor' came in quite handy!) - so the game (basic structure of program can now play a very mean game indeed. Prof Shannon had the chance to gauge his program for himself last month, when he presented the winner's medals at the 1st Computer Olympiad.

A grand tournament of computer game-playing programs from around the world, the Olympiad drew an impressive 85 silicon contestants to the ballroom of London's Park Lane Hotel. Chess was by no means the only game in town: there were contests in a dozen other languages, from friendly old backgammon to the formidable full-sized Go, plus some terrific puzzles for brains and domino games.

All this gives the world's top computer programmers a chance to compare notes, discuss techniques and share all test their creations against the toughest (computer) opposition going. At the 1st Olympiad the results weren't always to their favor, as it turned out every night of the working contest, teams of programmers worked late into the night trying to fine-tune their entries. Some programs made stunning leaps in performance from one



Apple Macintosh and Laser PC do battle in the 1989 Go tournament. The Soviet-made game of strategy might prove a bit too much for the UK team: they placed seventh and tenth in a field of ten.

day to the next, as the pressure of competition showed up embarrassing but fixable weaknesses.

TAKE THE MONEY

This isn't to say isn't just the computer equivalent of Olympic spirit - there are frighteningly large sums of money at stake here. The Go competition, for example, also termed as the European test of Auer's World Computer Go Championships, an event with a great deal of prize money attached. As well as bonuses for travel to the final levels, Auer has offered a mid-summing US\$1 million for the first computer Go system to beat a human champion.

Nobody's offering that kind of cash for a similar chess achievement, but in a way it's potential financial rewards here are even greater. The leading contenders, it transpires, were all computer prototypes for future versions of commercial chess machines. The incentive to win was obvious: beat the competition in the Olympiad, and you can have the result on your adverts when the finished machine goes on sale. The contest went all the

way to the wire, with the Dutch fiber grabbing gold. The dead heat for silver was eventually resolved in favor of the Anglo-German Mykondis, with Hobbly taking bronze back home to the States. If you want to buy them in a few chess-machine companies, look no further.

YES, BUT WHY?

Money is one thing, but most of the contestants are in it for more complex reasons, and it's here that we start to glimpse across the power-programming mentality that spills over into the games market, with positively unbridled effect. There's talking about competitiveness here: the possibility that you can actually test your programming abilities in a fair contest against a worthy opponent. Computer chess intrigues the man in the street because it lets him engage a machine in mental combat. It intrigues a programmer, on the other hand, because it lets him engage other human beings in mental combat. This is all very well, but although there's a fascination for the onlooker at the Olympiad, the novelty soon wears off, and in its place come more depressing thoughts crop up. Making a decent chess program (and it isn't, you're left with a strong impression of wasted effort).

It's all a bit like the early '90s, when you could quite easily line up a dozen arcade titles for the Spectrum and find that they were all of the same game. That's not to say there was any benchmark of code going on - quite the reverse. You could get a dozen Space Invaders clones, a dozen Pac-Man ripoffs or whatever, and every one had been written from scratch, quite independently of the others. What was so striking was the amount of work that had been wasted on re-inventing that software wheel. Nobody

SOFT BUT STRONG

The Olympiad is very definitely about software rather than hardware. In fact, there's no standard hardware set-up for contestants to use in the Olympiad, so a lot of the machines ended making interesting reading. About half of them were PC clones manufactured and supplied by the events sponsors, the Auer Corporation of Taiwan. The others ranged from crumbly old 8-08 micros like the Dragon and Atari 800X, up to state-of-the-art Sun workstations, with the middle ground made up mainly of SGI, Apple Macintoshes and - in surprisingly large numbers - Acorn's 32 bit Archimedes.

With a spread as wide as that you'd expect there to be some kind of handicapping system, but in fact the organizers didn't feel one was necessary. "It's true that both of the Russians did win their respective tournaments," explained the Olympiad's creator, David Levy. "That was down to software rather than hardware though. I'm quite sure those programs would have won whatever they were running on." You might still feel that the SUN's purpose-designed SPARC processor had a little bit to do with those victories, easily outstripping the Arch's luscious 486 chip as it does, but hardware power really isn't everything. "History in the Hans is bit like a very-difficult Connect Four" went to a Danish program running on that Dragon, nothing really about the software, it seems.



Mina's winning on a Commodore 64... What's more so?

needs a dozen Pacific games; if they're all completely written then any one of them would do.

Since the average amateur chess player could be soundly beaten by 90% of the computer chess games on the market, it seems like there's a Pasker-style glut here. What may be better than algorithms, but if algorithms can anticipate you at five seconds a move, the difference is only a few seconds.

If chess, that algorithm's not entirely lost as applied to the Computer Olympiad contests. After all, a competition like that has nothing to do with computers. To take an athletic analogy, if you need a piano moved it doesn't really matter whether you get a subterranean mightier to do it or the guy that beat him for the job. Either move is strong enough for practical purposes, but that irrelevant as far as engineering fans are concerned; they want to see which one can lift more, even if the difference is only a few bags of sugar.



Computer Olympiad's creator, David Levy, made a bet to reveal that his computer could beat him in a chess match within ten years. In 1979 he collected the money - \$1000 - after seeing off IBM's premier University of Toronto Chess 4.0. Things have come a long way since then. Levy reckons computer chess will be on a par with human champions in 20 or 25 years, but he's not the betting one; more time tells him man won't "I won't say to taking any more time," he says.

There's nothing wrong with this competition mentality if it's kept where it belongs - in competitions, that is - but unfortunately it does creep over into mainstream gaming. How many chess games are advertised on the basis of the strength of their game or the size of their opening book? Almost all of them, of course. Books like "Strength" sound good, don't they? The thing is, "strength" here really means "difficulty." These adverts are effectively saying "too bad you bought a shocker; if it was genuine I'd make you on anything but level 1!"

Can it you look at it from the technological point of view, there are still shortcomings. That algorithmic chess program may be its strongest in competition with other chess programs but for the rest of us it's still another chess program. Again, what you buy just another chess program simply because it boasts some sample sound that was before? Or some others overseas? The sad truth is that you might, because that's what's marketed is throwing at us light show, but let's not forget that colours and board are no good without gameplay.

BRANCHING OUT

With the exception of *Scrabble*, all the boardgames played at the Olympiad are two-player, zero-sum games. "Zero-sum" here means that whatever's bad for one player must be good for the other and vice versa. Most of games are zero-sum in balance of Player's nuclear war is bad for both players. In zero-sum games the players' interests are utterly opposed, and any sacrifice is justifiable provided your opponent suffers more than you do.

Leaving aside Outgames, the games are also of games of "partial information" - that is, both players can see the complete state of the game and neither has anything "up his sleeve". Back Attack is a game of "impartial information" - you can see where enemy units are but not how strong they are - while the simultaneous orders of Diplomacy make the game similarly unpredictable. Random elements are the most common reason for "impartial information", hence the exclusion of backgammon.

These similarities mean that, despite the differences in rules, the games are all programmed in much the same way. In each case, the computer works out the best move by considering ways that the board could look after several moves have been made. It mentally makes every possible move that fits current position, every reply its opponent could make and so on, searching for a "continuation" (series of moves) that leaves it in the best position possible. In doing this the program assumes that both it and its opponent make the best moves available to them - that each tries to improve its own position at the other's expense, in other words. This "if I do what's best for me and he does what's best for him..." process is called a minimax

search. Along with algorithms pruning - a way of reducing the time wasted on bad moves - minimax searching is the backbone of two-player game programming.

Tournament rules and human patience put limits on the time a computer can spend on its search. The "deeper" a program can search the more moves it can look ahead from the current position, the better it will play, but deep search takes much longer. The crucial factor here is the "branching factor" of the game under consideration; that is, the typical number of moves available to a player. Where a game has a low branching factor - less than 10, say - the program can easily look as many as a dozen moves into the future. Larger branching factors force the program to make do with a shallow search, and thus play a poorer game.

SOME EXAMPLES:

CHESS

With a medium to high branching factor - a chess player typically has over 30 moves open to him - a chess game can't easily be analysed in depth. However, it's essential to look a long way ahead where pieces are being swapped rapidly, as most chess programs concentrate on these, and only take a shallow look at quieter positions. This has led, also spread to most capture-based boardgames, was the central plank of Brummel's argument back in 1948.

SHOGI

On an 8x8 board in particular, shogis has a low enough branching factor for quite deep searches. Even on the larger oriental (12x10) and Canadian (12x12) boards, the rules on compulsory capture tend to limit a player's available moves quite drastically. As

a result, modern shogis programs tend to be quite strong in human terms.

SHOGI

Played on a 10x10 board, this chess-like Japanese game is greatly complicated by the ability to "drop" pieces - that is, to put them back anywhere you like on the board and use them against the original player. Once you've captured a few pieces, potential "drop" moves alone can run to several hundred at any one time. With conventional board moves as well, this gives a huge branching factor and makes intelligent computer play very difficult. Shogi was not represented at the Olympiad. The Japanese shogi club know about it and weren't interested. With such a serious language barrier it was difficult to tell either. Olympiad organizer David Levy explained.

GO

Frankly simple as it is, the Japanese don't call shogi as a truly intellectual game for that they have the far more difficult Go. Played on a 19x19 board or its out-dated form on a 17x17 board, Go is all about surrounding and thereby gaining ownership of territory. Players take it in turn to place "stones": the game's anti-form features playing pieces on the board's grid, gradually building up areas of control. It's subtle, very strategic and - with a branching factor that starts in the hundreds - extremely difficult to program. Again, there were no Japanese entries at the Olympiad but Britain had several: unlike shogi, Go is also played in the Chinese-speaking world, under the name of *Wei Chi*. Caddy through the medals on the full-size board were Polish, Dutch and Swiss, with the strongest Taiwanese program managed to finish place.

As for the challenge of a tough game, you can always turn down the difficulty when you find the game's too hard - but in that case, what was the point in having that strength there in the first place? Isn't it just a real bummer? Getting back to chess, take the extreme case

of a leading dedicated machine, the *Hoop* Super Expert. Raymond Feere, one of the *Diplomacy* organizers, recently played 58 games against the Super Expert: he won 40 of them, drew 7 and lost 12. Raymond Kaana is an International Chess Grandmaster. If the



This US entry, Neurogames, still have one slight advantage in the homegrown competition: it was running on a hyper-fast 386 workstation! There may not be any standards in computer standards, but there are some pretty close.

Super Expert took 12 games all told, how many casual players are going to see even a fraction of its power? The time is rapidly approaching where all the normal men in the street can do is pay for a 'System Error', or crash...

SO WHAT?

The drive for the ultimate chess-playing program stopped leveling at least months some years ago, but that's not the whole point. More importantly, there are plenty of other games that the recent programming effort could be applied to. It's like that PerMac clone business: what was so central about that duplication of effort was the way it took up resources that were badly needed elsewhere. All those programmers with the knowhow to handle sprites, sound and collision detection were wasting their time copying an existing standard when they could have been creating original games. If you take a dozen PerMac look-alikes, you're actually looking at almost missed opportunities for original, interesting games.

A WHOLE NEW BOARDGAME?

What we need is a bit of that chess effort redirected to other promising games, or even new game designs altogether. Why, for instance, doesn't someone program and sell a micro version of Chinese Chess, or its Japanese counterpart 'Shogi'? Why aren't the shops full of Colosseum Go or Jangjeon Awaril? It's true that those games look like the ready-made UK market of chess or bridge - the drives of people who already play the games in their wooden or cardboard forms - but that shouldn't stop software houses making money out of them. After all, the only Shogi game on the market would surely do better than an average-selling Chess game.

There's no need to go that far afield for suitable games. Over in the States at the moment, the Amiga game 'Destiny' Amiga is building itself a following among chess buffs. It's actually a combination of chess variants and scenarios, starting with the ancient Indian game Shatranj and working across the Middle East and Middle Ages to the European form settled on as a world standard today. It's easy to understand the appeal of these games: while they're similar enough to modern chess to be readily learnable, they're different enough to make you work out your own strategies. In particular they demand the tedious 'opening book' learning - ancient Persian books on Shatranj are rare things indeed! - making virtual play far more rewarding. Wouldn't it rather

rely on skill than parlorlearning?

Programs like Destiny Amiga catch on in a big way, it won't be the first time money's been made out of resurrected games. Probably the world's most programmed boardgame after chess is the one that Japanese game moguls Argo Company list under the name Othello. Under its original name of Reversi the game did moderately well in late-Victorian England, but with its new name and some flashy marketing (those distinctive figurehead discs made Argo an absolute fortune. How many other equally good but now forgotten games could do just as well? Heck my words, someone could just make a killing out of Fame Chess.

As for new game designs, purpose-written boardgames are just as promising for computer success. Take Mastertronic's excellent US-tilt-thriller 'Infection'. With its capability to learn the rules of the game, figuring out a watertight set of tactics could take months. For a simple game, it really is terrifyingly addictive stuff. The same goes for Aristotle's 'Field', a fascinating idiosyncratic game released by Fidelity Silver at a desperately reasonable £1.99. What's particularly striking about both games is the way that, simple though they both are, neither game would be really practical if played on an actual stable board. The mechanism of color transfer in infection or of tile movement in Field would be fiendishly difficult to implement outside a computer screen. (Oddly enough, you could see ahead exactly the same thing about flowers, turning out at those times it far easier on screen than in real life.)

GETTING PHYSICAL

Indeed, the future of computers as game opponents could well turn on their dual ability to act as playing opponents. Quite simply, you can't present games clearly on screen that are difficult or impractical in life. An obvious example is the point is a chess game where one player has two queens on the board. In real life, players are forced to improvise with spillover-troops. On screen it's the simplest thing in the world for the computer to create another queen, making the actual position on the board a good deal clearer.

Similarly the Japanese game Shogi looks confusing to Westerners because of the way both 'black' and 'white' sets of pieces are actually the same color. This is essential in real life: Shogi pieces swap sides on capture so

that, for instance, a black Lance may be taken and subsequently returned to the board as a white piece. A computer version of Shogi could colour the sets differently, changing colours automatically when pieces are captured.

Imagine how much more important the 'computer-board' factor could be for 3D games. The obvious way to play such games is with a 'black' or 'white' moulded one score for the other like tiers of a wadding cake. This is difficult enough to handle in real life with a game as small as Go and crickets, but a stack the size you'd need for chess 80 light or Go 15 light would be something else again. Even being what was going on would be impossible, never mind trying to actually move the pieces. Imaginative 3D display techniques along with cross-sectional views in different planes could make solid chess or draughts games perfectly feasible in computer form, and moving pieces would be simplicity itself.

There's another important thing both infection and Field have in common: they are somewhat fun in a way that no game of chess, draughts or backgammon could be for the average European or American gamesplayer. What's so great is the actual learning process. As understanding gradually dawns you can feel truly clever, knowing that you've beaten yourself up from total ignorance to beat that machine on its own terms. If you got the same buzz out of learning chess or draughts, the chances are you can hardly remember it now, with less purpose-written games, you could get that same buzz of discovery time and again.

This doesn't apply just to think-and-remember. Many of the games on play now are becoming increasingly complex, difficult to play, and - at the same time - depressingly familiar. It's the same programmer versus player or confirmation that you get in chess, but in the long run it's doubtful whether the player can ever win. Shogi/Go/Reversi: the Blood Money or the Rings are both intensely impressive and fiendishly difficult - both achievements that stand as testimony to the programmer's art - but the actual scenarios are often little different than a dozen other programs. Challenge is just lower points, out on the letter page; the events is obviously important, so is technical skill, but for the player that sense of discovery and excitement when confronted by the truly original is also essential. If game designers began to put so much effort into new scenarios as they do into technical achievement, we might all be the better for it...



This photo's British programming team consumed the complex game of Chinese Chess (also a 48K Amiga), but to do even the PG-based Taiwanese program would doubtless take over their leave time effort.

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When we heard that men who drive Rovers get more rumpy pumpy, we were intrigued but not too surprised. But when we discovered that Activision's new flight simulator was being programmed by the brilliant Vektor Graphics, we sent the brilliant Phil South straight up to Leeds to see it.

You've seen one flight simulator, you've seen them all, right? Well, no in fact, because not until I was led up to see a preview of Bomber itself did I believe a computer could fly. Activision wanted it, so Vektor did it, because as you may or may not know, Vektor Graphics are one of the country's leading exponents of 3D computer graphics. They had the technology, so why not see what it can REALLY do. And they did 12 months ago the design was finalised, but still certain things needed doing to it. John Lewis, co-director of Vektor Graphics and designer of Bomber talked me through a few things that they wanted from Bomber. For a start they wanted road jets, round cannons and round wheels. Did

"Robbie says that, you know, I didn't want to see 'flap' horizontal wheels. I'm a simulator fan and I want to see REALISM. None of this jerky movement and small amounts of jumpy game. I want round wheels, hundreds of jumpy game, jet objects and smooth realistic movement." And Bomber has it. The ability to move all around the 'world' that has been mapped



inside the computer was essential. Freedom of movement around your aircraft is also a feature, allowing Bomber to show off all its smooth flying action.

"The trick with the design was finding a flight simulator angle that hadn't been done before. All the sims before have either been commercial, like jets and Corsairs, or they've been fighters. So I got thinking, the most of the really exciting modern jets are these multirole combat aircraft. So you take aircraft like the Tornado, the F-111 and the Saab Viggen, stuff like that, nobody's done simulators of these. I thought it would be a great idea to concentrate on 'ground attack', but with an defence capability, which is what bombers are all about. They're all about carrying a great stockpile of bombs to a target, bombing it, but then having

the ability to escape at maximum speed. And that's brilliant 'cause you've got the best of both worlds."

All the aircraft in Bomber were chosen with the designs low-level and air-to-air excitement in mind. The game features the British Forsado, German Tornado, F-4 Phantom, Saab Viggen, F-15 Strike Eagle, F-111, and a first for this program, the Russian MIG 27. This is the only chance you'll get to fly one of these, rather than just blow it out of the sky.

Like all the other aircraft in the game, you can switch planes mid-flight, refuel and run on preset missions, or even design your own for you or your friends to play. Every possible detail has been included, and any bit of any plane that can be animated has been, right down to the visible inboard wings and the





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intercarriage. The team has really worked hard to bring you the best simulator ever.

The team around John and Andy producing the game are: Clavin Galterio (MSDOS), Ian Martin (C++ and co-3D) and Pete Featherstone (co-3D and Amiga), Carl Terry Spencer (3DOS), Derek "Seagully Erik" Anon (scene design and story plot), mentor, Mark Griffiths (support, practical) and Carl Logan (animation design). Carl is also working on a special natural language parser for future PG products. By the way, Derek is called "Seagully Erik" because that's how he likes to be named.

VECTOR GRAPHICS

A couple of years ago, John Lewis was working for another software publisher, and like most people he thought he could do better on his own. But quite unlike other people he actually did go it alone, or rather form a company with friend and programmer Andy Coates which preferred to own product.

The move was prompted by the 3D graphics routines that Andy Coates and his friend Stacy Gallagher had designed. "These guys came to me and showed me these amazing 3D vector graphics on the 8 bit machines," said John. "Totally blew everything else away, they did. What they'd done was basically the Star Wars game, and so when I heard that Comark had the license I knew we had to get together." And so the Star Wars game was born, and so was the fledgling Vector Graphics. Andy ran the company while John still worked for this other publisher, but after the success of Star Wars and Empire Strikes Back, John quit his day job to join Vector-Graphics full time.



Since March this year, the firm has refocused into a brand spanking new concentrated temporary house in the center of Leeds, and now also has 4 products for Activision in the works, of which Bomber is the first.

So what is the future for 3D graphics and Vector themselves, John? "What I don't want to do is give away what we've got in mind. For

thing is our development system, which we've written in association with our friends and neighbours in 3D, Real Time, it's called Snaker, it runs on the PC and it's really dead good, and much better than PCGL. We'll be launching it at the PC Show in September, so come along and have a look."



HERE'S YOUR CHANCE!!

We've got together with Activision and Vector Graphics to bring you a superb prize competition. Ready? Well, when we were up talking to

2000 Lewis, he mentioned that both he and Andy were taking flying lessons. Only in the interests of research, you understand! Don't think there's any FUN in it for them, or no. So that's the deal. Answer these admittedly hard questions on military action, and you could win £200 worth of free flying

lessons, plus a copy of Bomber for your computer. 20 runners up will also get a copy of the game.

- Okay, here are the questions:
1. **When was the first air-transportable hydrogen bomb dropped and where?**
 2. **Who first flew across the channel?**
 3. **Which commercial airliner has a droopy nose?**

Answers on a postcard before October 31st 1989 to: Bomber Competition,

ACE, Priority Court, 30-32 Fenington Lane, London EC1R 3RL. No employees of Activision, Vector Graphics or Emag Business Publications may enter, and the editor's decision is final. Oh yes, and don't forget to mention what format you'd like the game on, okay? The flying lessons will, where possible, be arranged at a venue convenient to the winner, but some travel (at your expense) may be involved.

those who can see beyond the obvious there are things that you can do, not missing gaps from the future area completely, but in serious computing there's an awful lot you can do with a powerful 3D graphics system."

So that's experimental work, but how about gaming? "Well there's a new idea we're working on, totally away from 3D work, it's more in the line of what you might call "totally interactive model". Saying more than that would give you much more, but wait and see. Real soon now. The other

STRIKE EAGLE II

MICROPOSE spend a night at Sierra Hotel

POSSIBLY one of the most popular "old" computer games, computer-generated flight simulations have come a long way from the early P8000 Flight Simulator days, where you could get subtly enticed by a row of dots in the shape of runway landing lights. In these enlightened days, when computer flight simulations are so advanced the USAF uses some from them to train pilots, you'd have to be clinically insane to want to release another title into a field with such abominably high standards. Once again Micropose have managed not only to beat their previous best title, in this case F-19 Stealth Bomber, but have also come up with a worthy contender to Microsoft's Falcon.

To claim up any accolades, Strike Eagle II is a flight/simulator that offers you the choice to fly simulated strike missions through a choice of war zones, ranging from Libya (a nice ride due to their outdated equipment) through the Persian Gulf and Vietnam to Europe before you can quite easily become a sitting

duck to the most effective defensive equipment there is.

In effect, SE II is an updated version of F-19, indeed, the areas you fly over are identical to the aforementioned F-19, as are the enemy. The first real difference is that the plane is a lot more fun to fly. First off, you've got a lot more speed to play with, with the added fun of afterburners on board. Also due to its sleeker design, the F-19 is a lot more manoeuvrable than the cumbersome Stealth Bomber, which adds up to much more enjoyable combat. None of this fancy radar evasion for me.

Another thing that has been simplified is the weapons system. Unlike Stealth Bomber, you always carry the same payload of three types of weapon: AM-129A Air-launched medium range air-to-air guided missiles, AM-98 Stinger short range air-to-air infra red homing missiles and AGM-65G Maverick air-ground attack missiles. Each can be loaded for fire at the touch of a button, and selecting a weapon automatically selects the control mode

setting and enemy tracking mode. All three modes are fire and forget, meaning all you have to do is lock on the missile to a certain enemy (keep tracking the enemy and it comes into range of the currently selected mode), at which point you are told a missile lock! (is more effective) and press fire to launch the missile.

In CGA, VGA or Hercules, the game looks the same as F-19, which is no bad thing. Lots of multi-faceted lined vectors and the like, but in VGA or VGA, this has to be the best looking flight simulator yet. Just the sheer variety of views alone are enough to warrant a high mark, with missile view, three sorts of external view, and the option to see yourself from your enemy's point of view. The best thing about it, however, is the incredible use of colour. If you remember Airwolfage on the Amiga, you'll recall the very clever mixing effect on the horizon. SE II has that very same effect, and it is extremely effective. The feeling of depth is incredible. Add to that the brilliant simulation of speed and you're ready to get something.

Though maybe not as smooth as Velocity's jetliner, F-19 is every bit as fast, and you really notice it on low-level flight. Unlike the breathtaking effect in the missile view when you've launched something at the ground, the missiles fly much faster than you think. At the speed in that is exhilarating, but it's when the missile picks up speed and starts plummeting toward its target... oh for a hydraulic cheer!

To fly just this one Falcon? In terms of being a flight simulator, Falcon has the edge, but even so, this is ideal for a beginner, as it's very easy to fly and it's a lot of fun. Also, experimental buffs are going to get a lot of fun out of this simply for the large number of missions included and the variety of scenarios. In terms of accuracy, it may never match up to the night Falcon, but I can still see myself putting in more than a few hours on this one yet.

• Tony Oller

THE ROLL OF HONOUR



Fighter Pilot - Spectrum
One of the many Spectrum flight simulators to appear at that time, the only difference being that this one actually gave you thermal control. The scenery was simple: a few hills, yellow ground, blue sky and the enemy planes were merely triangles, but there was some thing really involving about that little D.L. keyboard!



Strike II - CGA
Excellent helicopter combat action with amazingly fast fire control, especially for a CGA. Micropose managed to fit in a bank of a lot onto one little 5.25" disk - the area to fly through, an infinite amount of randomly generated missions, three different skill levels, dozens of different enemies and the ability to build a character, complete with medals and promotions, all presented with a suitable full colour still picture. Still one of the best.



Falcon Mission Disk - ST/Amiga
The crown of the crop so far. After building the amazingly accurate flight simulation, Micropose came up with not only a new battle field for you to fly over, but a whole new to flight single-handedly pushing the limits there three times of defence while borrowing the on-screen invasion. Pretty heavy stuff, and all played out with some of the bestest filled vectors yet.

to. It gives you a certain amount of freedom until it comes to the music, at which point it's more of a nuisance.

The game takes a lot of things into account. Lots of things, but the best-looking variety aren't a high priority. A lot of external effects from your own perspective about it, color, if you change, you'll notice on the effect, and it's a lot of fun to see a generation of things.

As Velocity's speed increases, it, and you, take the view when you're going. The view, so the things when the perspective is changing.

In terms of the edge, the view, so the things when the perspective is changing. It's a lot of fun to see a generation of things. It's a lot of fun to see a generation of things. It's a lot of fun to see a generation of things.

PC VERSION

available. The graphics are amazingly fast and the feeling of distance is enough to scare both the best and the worst. It's enough to scare both the best and the worst. It's enough to scare both the best and the worst.

GRAPHICS 9 **10** **10** **10** **10** **10**
AUDIO 7 **7** **7** **7** **7** **7**
ACE RATING 912

RELEASE BOX

IBM PC 124.95 **OUT NOW**
OTHER VERSIONS TBA

PREDICTED INTEREST CURVE



Takes about 10 years at all to get wrapped up in this synthetically created universe, but once you're in, you've just got to keep fighting.

TECHNO PORN!

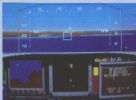
Oh, so just how fast is this beast? Well, you can check the frame rate for whatever machine you are running on as follows. Hit the ALT and F keys, which will give the number of frames per second on the HUD. Take this number and divide it by the Hz rate of your graphics card: 60 Hz for VGA and CGA, 90 Hz for Hercules Mono, and 10 Hz for MCGA. This gives you seconds per frame. Invert it and you will get frames per second for your machine configuration. Nifty, eh?

The memory taken varies from machine to machine. On a Tandy it takes 384K of memory while on an MCGA machine it takes 112K.

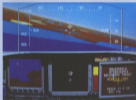
The program took approximately 1.5 man years to develop with many people working on it. Andy Hollis was the main programmer with Gil Meier. Bruce Shelley with Mike Remington designed the lot objects while Bruce alone designed the world. Mike Hains did most of the normal art with Murray Taylor assisting. Alan Porteus along with Chris Scammon and Russ Cooney helped develop game play and of course did the normal testing. Jeff Riggs wrote the manual.

The MCGA/VGA production horizon to distance was designed and implemented by Andy Hollis and the Director mode was designed and implemented by Gil Meier.

ACTION SEQUENCE



You've spotted the enemy! Move in on them!



That's it, you've got it beat!



An *Wild Bill* himself would put it, mislabeled away!

Try Data

After
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RICK DANGEROUS

FIREBIRD breath new life into platform capers

STRANGE came for a super hero — Richard Dangerous. — so Firebird have dressed it in '80s' to give it more Hollywood-style credibility. And in case you're not impressed, he also sports a brain implanted but and unshower this, looking for all the world like Indiana Jones.

Your mission is also an holy-style adventure. A colourful eight page comic included in the box sets the scenario in which, after surviving a bomb attempt in a restaurant where he's supposed to meet Joan to collect a map, our hero enters a car chase through the '60s in a suitably holy style 1980s cars. Next follows a round of football in a plane, after which Indy (sorry Richard...Rick, that is) parachutes out and lands in dense jungle. After a skirmish with some 'Gooles' natives, the final panel of this gripping comic shows Rick entering a temple pursued by a giant tail of rock. Or this somewhat familiar tale the comic ends and the game begins.

There are four separate levels — this may not sound like much but the degree of platform precision and puzzle solving required in each one means Rick's quest is no pushover.

There's no pacing to be had in the first few screens, however. It's just a question of legging it until you can escape that leader. After being several times you will notice that Rick can move right or left as he falls. This is useful not just for dodging the boulders but also for avoiding the spikes that are placed on the bottom of certain caves on main traps.

Rick is armed with a gun, several kinds of dynamite, and a log stick which you should use in true colonial tradition to poke the hostile natives in the gut and kill them.

The use of the bombs and gun is graphically cute — and cartoon-like. It's slightly reminiscent of the classic computer game *Say It's Say*, in which you could place traps for your opponents. Rick Dangerous has a similar feature with his dynamite. He can light a stick (inside an object) to clear his path, but he has to log it away from it first or he may blow himself up into the bargain. Using his various gadgets imports a sort of remote control feel to the use of the joystick. Time factors are crucial: you must remember to press the fire button before you move in the direction of a nasty tail or fly with a bullet.

Dynamite and bullets are limited so Rick must make sure he collects every single cache of these items so he explores the platforms. Of particular merit in Rick Dangerous are the puzzles. They amount to much more than simply working out a route and then leaping with pixel perfect precision to get to your destina-



Rick works up...

tion. In Rick Dangerous you have to use the dynamite or your gun strategically to fill the action in your favor. This provides a little exercise for your brain as well as your reflexes.

As well as the Temple there is a Pyramid scene. Gammie Jerry has more shades of red and the Nile Nile level at the end of the game. Your final objective is obscured in secrecy throughout the game and revealed in a graphical sequence at the end, which it would be difficult to reveal. Your immediate objectives on each level are simply to survive and blast your way through to the next, solving the tactical problems and blocking the cooperation on roads.

Mr Alan Hughes of Mitec Keynes should be particularly pleased with Rick Dangerous. He wrote to ACE last month complaining that there was not enough fun in the latest games. Pure arcade fun is here in abundance, Mr Hughes

and although some of the levels are pretty sparse gradually and there are occasional spots in pace, what there is of a very high standard. From an exceedingly unoriginal scenario Firebird have given a splendid platform succor.

Super-Lazy

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IBM PC	£24.99	MINI-DISC

AMIGA VERSION

Splendid sound FX and Music — and particularly well matched and synchronized with the game play. Again full marks to the Amiga programmers for the speed with which a new game can be after Rick dies. Three quick presses of the fire button and you are ready to begin again. It's that simple at least, all games should be like this.

GRAPHICS 10 FACTOR
AUDIO FUN FACTOR

ACE RATING 890

PREDICTED INTEREST CURVE



Guessing addition, but not a game you'll return to much once you've finished it.

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- 8 levels of pulse-racing action
- Exciting and challenging
- Have you got the fighting spirit? Have you got Dragon Spirit?

Developed by: Dream Software Ltd
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TENGEN

The 32-bit Power in Color™-Cap. Consoles.

DOMARK

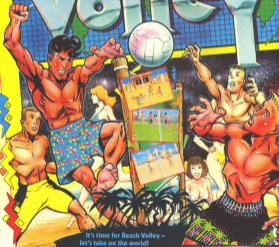
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STRIDER

USG take it in their stride

WHEN it was released in the annals of the start of the year Strider became an almost instant contender for canon of the year. Sleek graphics, a thrashing soundtrack and lots of features soon gave the game the success it warranted — and USG grabbed the license.

In first glance a run of the mill left-right shooter, Strider contains many original ideas, tricks, hazards and enemies that come at a complete surprise to the player; the Hellions that transform into a giant snake, giant robot gorilla, and superhuman Muscovites, each requires a particular tactic to overcome. All have one thing in common, they take a lot of damage before dying. The best tactic is to find an area on the screen where they can't fit you, then walk your way slowly to them — remembering, however, that there's a time limit.

Strider, the main character, produces the most amazing array of tactics and forms in accordance with the joystick movements and base of terrain. Down sends him on a slide, diagonal and up causes a somersault, and he can hang off walls and ceilings with the aid of a hook.

Set in Russia fifty years in the future, the majority of the game is based around the player using Strider's abilities to progress through levels by avoiding hazards, traversing mountains, Russian guards and platforms.

Armed with an energy barrier which he can lay down to his head, Strider can inflict heavy damage on all of his enemies. Little enemies can be collected which until the player, destroying everything they touch and eating their own flesh to gain points.

All of this looked pretty accessible, but then, the people behind Indiana Jones, were



Buy the gorilla's iron knuckle, avoid his steel girdered fist at all costs.

given the task, and they've done so proud.

After cutting through several waves of Russian troops and their robots, scaling buildings and leaping traps, the first end-of-level nearly is reached; a large man, rapping with muscles and feathers on performing the slow ballet on your face (you're attacked by real bullet dodgers) later on in the game. When he has been destroyed the screen is reduced to flames from the top down, wiping out almost everything in the way.

Next comes the interior of the Kremlin. Unfortunately the Hellions don't take kindly to unwelcome visitors. Seconds later they've transformed into a giant snake desperate to kill you. Once the result of that confrontation has been decided it's off to Siberia...

The graphics have been faithfully replicated with good detail and use of colour. The

background graphics are exceptional and although a few backdrops appear to be missing this doesn't affect the feel of the game at all. The main sprite is perfectly drawn, although speed and a few frames of animation had to be sacrificed owing to computer limitations.

One thing that has been changed is the level of difficulty. Four has just taken so many hits as before juggling off and some of the jumps have been shortened, reducing the obnoxious timing of the arcade games.

Complete with funky soundtrack and good spot effects, this is an exceptional conversion of an exceptional game. Packed with levels, features, and just about everything else you could ask for, Strider must surely rank as one of the greatest arcade conversions ever.

—Mark Palmer



Enter the Hellions dragon.



BT VERSION

Very similar in the sound, graphics and playability department with the only real difference being for disks instead of tape. A very commendable game on this format.

GRAPHICS 9 50 FACTOR 7
 AUDIO 9 FUN FACTOR 8

ACE RATING 9/10

RELEASE BOX

YEAR 87	£19.999	CUT NONE
AMIGA	£19.999	CUT NONE
SPIC 128	£9.999 + £14.999	SHIPPED
AMSTRAD	£9.999 + £14.999	CUT NONE
CD-ROM	£9.999 + £14.999	SHIPPED
IBM PC	£19.999	SHIPPED

AMIGA VERSION

Completely self contained on one disk, Amiga Strider is a game which will have you hooked right from the start. The graphics are impressively designed and coloured. All the sound is of equally high quality, from the digitised speech at the start right up to the smallest spot effects. A complete, addictive arcade game.

GRAPHICS 9 10 FACTOR 7
 AUDIO 9 FUN FACTOR 8

ACE RATING 9/10

AMSTRAD VERSION

The first 8 bit version we have seen, and very impressive it is. The graphics are well coloured and defined and keep the feel of the game. The only real gripe is the weak sound effects.

GRAPHICS 7 10 FACTOR 7
 AUDIO 7 FUN FACTOR 8

ACE RATING 8/10

ALL FIRE



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"Grab hold of Voyager as soon as you can."
"The most atmospheric 3D game you'll ever play."
ZZAP "SIZZLER" AWARD
ZZAP 64.



"Dragoninja is fun to play ... well implemented and extremely addictive."
ACE MAGAZINE.



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Zzap! SIZZLER - Zzap! 64
"A superb game in every respect."
C+VG HIT - C+VG

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XENON II

IMAGEWORKS' super-smooth scroller

DO you groan with boredom when you hear about yet another vertically scrolling shoot-'em-up competing for your hardwired, or hardfagged, cash? Well if you do, stop it - because Xenon II should blow up to their old tedious tricks - and you probably thought you'd finished them off in the first Xenon game, didn't you? This time they've gone and painted five "tale worlds" in different periods of history corresponding to each of Xenon II's five levels. It seems that the very fabric of time as we know it is at threat and only you can save the day (week, month, year, oon and so on...)

So you strap yourself into your Megabitster and off you jolly well go. The ship is a potentially very sophisticated little thing, but starts off with only a thruster, a blaster and a shield; you've got to earn your extras as the way. Each of the game's five levels represents a period of history, and logically enough you begin in some sort of stone age, flying over the rocky structures hanging in space. Moooo



And there's Orphee himself, ready to sell you any weapons you want - as long as you've got the cash.

of beautifully designed alien species come swimming down at you and you'll 'ave 'em all of 'em.

As each effort is wasted it turns into a floating bubble that means cash for you. It's in your interests to be as greedy as possible and collect as many bubbles as you can, since cash can be turned into a stupendous variety of extra weapons at your two-on-level shops at Orphee's top shop (more of this later).

Talons also appear, giving you extra firepower in your moments of greatest need.

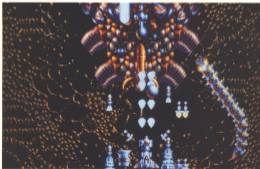
At the end of each of the five levels there is that old friend, the pro-level Guardian, to compare with. These creatures are extremely well-designed, extremely riveting, and extremely hard to kill, each one has to be dealt



The giant alien is stopped looting a cloud of energy giving bubbles in its wake.

with in a different manner, and discovering the right one will cost you many a life.

If you've spent wisely in the weapons shop,



The ship is now fully equipped - and awesome in its five forms. Note the debt to R-Type with the worms appearing from the monster's intestines.



You could be in trouble here, but then you are throughout the game...

Of course, you'll have a better chance of success. Some of the extras you can purchase are fairly standard, such as cannon and laser. Others, however, show much more flair — check out the following drone for instance; it's hard to see quite what it does, but it certainly looks pretty badass around behind you. Super Flashman Power will give you 30 seconds of nearly satisfying total destruction. Get yourself enough cash, or collect enough tokens, and you could find yourself blasting around with three or four extras trailing behind you.

RELEASE BOX

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

ST VERSION

One of the prettier games you're likely to see on the ST this year, and certainly one of the more addictive. It's one of those games that really do approach arcade quality, and the simple sound track will take some beating too. Very classy.

GRAPHICS	5	IS FACTOR	4
AUDIO	5	PLAY FACTOR	5

AGE RATING 90B

AMIGA VERSION

So for the best version, the Bomb the Base soundtrack that accompanies Kronos is superb. You can hear every last screech, yell, and shriek as the sound chip works overtime. Graphics are colorful, smooth and fast. In every department Kronos it stretches the Amiga further than any other Amiga has ever stretched it before.

GRAPHICS	5	IS FACTOR	4
AUDIO	5	PLAY FACTOR	5

AGE RATING 91B

PREDICTED INTEREST CURVE



Instant fun and addiction, and tough enough to keep you going for a good long time.

If all the sounds are familiar stuff — well, it is. There are elements of just about every shoot-'em-up you've ever played in Kronos, it has space invaders through it if that's not surprising enough, the derivative streak doesn't matter. The Bitmap Brothers have put

the bits and pieces together in such a professional and stylish way that you'll just want to plink your stick and get better.

Graphics and scrolling fit really well together — it's a real smoothie on a good level (it's long level). Also, it's about the screen without getting too busy, while one innovative feature is the ability to move backwards off the screen, giving you in effect a greater playing area as well as the chance of another crack at creatures you haven't managed to blast.

In an extra there is also a sound track

sampled from Bomb the Base's 13th Precinct Hip Hop, which sounds pretty damn good. All in all, Kronos is a magnificent one of the most accomplished shoot-'em-ups you're likely to come across this side of Christmas. Even though there are only five levels, the amount of



What an awful beauty...Pretty looking thing, isn't it? Not if it's any good.

detail and action in there makes it a still challenge. You'd be doing yourself a disservice if you don't at least give it a play test.

— Pete Collins

BITMAPS DEPARTMENT



The Bitmaps are keen to do something different in their next release.

Although Kronos fans might like to see the game

run and run like a software Pulse Academy the Bitmaps want to do something new to keep the interest for ourselves. The new

game will still be an arcade style game so this is where the Bitmaps believe their best design skills lie.

'If we do another shoot 'em up it will have to be a bit different unless anything that has been done before.' The leading design team would love to do a game for the PC Engine — though this is not on the cards at the moment. 'We are interested in the hard fields and the screen bit comes but it is a business matter as to who gets the develop-

ment systems — and who gets to do games for the machines' Eric Bitmap told ACE.

ANHAK DRAKKHEN AGHNAHIR HURTHI



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DRAKKHEN



You leave at night. The stars guide your steps.
Magic is going to die.
Faces and bodies are transforming.

The island spreads its evil irreversibly.
Soon, the old world will disappear.
You must prevent the prophecy

before it is fulfilled.
Magic, it is the life of our world.
The Emperor has told you :
If you fail, don't come back !"

INFOGRAVES



TANK ATTACK

Blitzkrieg CDS Style

TRADITIONALLY war games were table-top board games with model tanks and troops. All calculations were performed with pen, paper and dice. CDS have taken the original theme one step further and brought in a computer to replace pen and pad.

The game is centred around four fictional countries, Amiana, Calderon, Katalis and Saracen. None have any real tactical advantages, other than personal bias. However, the game does require a minimum of two human players as the computer doesn't control any country — so make sure you bring a friend.

The board is divided into four provinces each governed by a separate state. Each province features various kinds of scenery such as forests and villages. Some of the landscape is impassable by any vehicle, or takes your movement rate. Right in the corner of the province is the military HQ. This is the main game target for the invasion — when they arrive here it's game over for whoever loses there. The area map is covered with an irregular grid, each clear grid representing one movement point.

First thing is setting up the board. Each player picks a team of eight tanks and armoured cars, the strongest being a War Battle tank carrying through light tanks right down to Light Armoured Cars the weakest units. If there are three players' teams are added against the third player who in turn gets double the units. Between each of the countries is a demilitarised zone where no units can pass and the game starts, otherwise you would be able to start combat right from turn one in each quadrant.

All calculations are now handled by the computer. The first screen it shows is the news screen, but in the style of a newspaper, one section describes the current situation of the war, another the weather and how it will affect unit movement. This is not a particularly vital screen but it helps to break the routine of the game. Then come the individual player turns. The computer will assign your side a number of movement points which correspond to the hexagonal grid on the board. Each unit can move any number of bases up to the allocated number of movement points (subject to terrain restrictions).

Then comes the fire sequence. A unit can attack or be attacked when it is within four



The board element.

squares of an opposing army unit. This again is handled by the computer. It requires the inputting of the distance between units (1-4 bases) and the type of unit facing each other. A graphical representation of the battle is then displayed with the outcome being a mixture of destroyed, damaged or intact between the two units. So it isn't always safe to attack.

Finally if you do manage to reach the enemy HQ in one piece you get to select the destroy HQ option (actually it can be activated at any time during the game, but that's cheating) and blow them away, thus winning the game.

Tank Attack is an original concept as far as other software goes, though not as good as Brian Clough's Football Fortunes. CDS's are also computer board game crossover. It does lack most of the in-depth elements and movements which grace the tables of war gamers through the straightforward run and shoot tactics used. So if it's just a fast, simple strategy game you're after give this a look it.

Mark Portacio

RELEASE BOX

AMIGA	£24.99	CDS	OTHER
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AMIGA VERSION

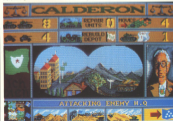
The main screen graphics are produced in a double depth which gives the game a slightly more light-hearted view. The software team is working outstanding. If anything gives the impression of quality here, it's the sound, but when put along side the board paper makes for a fun multi-player game.

GRAPHICS	T	IS FACTOR	T
SOUND	B	FUN FACTOR	T
ACE RATING 782			

PREDICTED INTEREST CURVE



Thanks to the multi-player feature Tank Attack gains more lasting attraction than it really deserves. Though its novelty will wear off in the long term.



A typical battle in words corresponding.

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LEVEL 1



LEVEL 2



LEVEL 3



LEVEL 4



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FAST BREAK

ACCOLADE'S slam-dunk simulator

REPUTEDLY one of the greatest players since the invention of the basketball game, the Slammer and the Jammer are at it again. This time it's the fast break, so the taking part is a three-on-three contest.

You compete with a friend or a computer opponent, and before the match starts a few tactical decisions have to be made: the length of the quarters (3 to 12 minutes) and exactly which members of the squad are going to play. A quick resume of each player's strengths and weaknesses helps you decide.

The court is viewed as two enlarged first-personal views. As a result any action in the centre of the court inevitably becomes confused. Ball moves include dribbling, passing, shooting and opportunities for calling offensive and defensive plays. There are two kinds of personal foul and no free throws. Usually, you don't automatically control the player nearest the ball, switching between players manual is best to lose the action down.

Anyone keen on extra tactics of play can pick one of 14 pre-designed offensive plays or create one of their own using the Playmaker.

On paper it all sounds pretty sophisticated. On court, it's a disappointment. The controls are poorly defined and inflexibly automated, play's



You make your own selection so there's no pressure for putting out substitutes in the team.

spoilt by the slow-screen action and there isn't that much skill required. It only takes a couple of minutes to get used to the shooting controls and after that almost every basket you attempt goes in.

If you've always dreamed of hunking your self up the court in a pair of lycra shorts, chubbie dreads, no-look passing and slam-dunking your way into basketball history, keep on dreaming. Accolade has built up a reputation for producing top-class sports sims. This isn't one of them.

Full Price

PREDICTED INTEREST CURVE



Conversely, declines in London as the chance of any real challenge becomes increasingly slim.

RELEASE BOX

AMIGA	ON BOX	OUT NOW
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AMIGA VERSION

Full featured graphics, fully drawn graphics and very limited sound effects aren't much of a drawback for the Amiga version. Loaded with unlock-tempting graphics they amount to a pretty modest package.

GRAPHICS	4	IQ FACTOR	5
AUDIO	3	FUN FACTOR	4

AGE RATING 4/92



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wells without destroying them. The telephone rings periodically to let you know of any new developments and offers of supply contracts. It takes a slight mind to work out when to accept one.

Oil might not sound like the stuff that the best strategy games are made of, but with so much variety in the action there's little danger of anyone but the most hardened strategists getting bored. There are plenty of detailed features (you can even pick the director of your office), the arcade sequences fit in perfectly and so too does the game's own form of reality: the cast, Rainbow Arts, who don't usually have a fantastic track record in this sort of field, have taken a very unusual subject, lavished lots of time and attention on it and come up with an extremely slick, absorbing and original game.

OIL IMPERIUM

RELINE strike black gold

REAL men don't eat quiche — they work in the oil business. That doesn't mean endless schmoozing with Sue Dine, alas; instead, it involves coping with forecasting of prices, delivery contracts, sabotage, fire-fighting procedures, keeping an eye on your balance sheet and still staying on top of the competition at the end of the month.

Oil Imperium works either like a very sophisticated version of Monopoly. Four (player) human or computer) take consecutive turns; each turn lasts for one calendar month and involves, at much wheel-dealing as you want to exert it. It's not a sociable game. As some actions need to be kept secret, human opponents have to keep away from the monitor while you're playing. Competing side causes fewer arguments.

You work to one of four objectives (ranging from richest player after three years) leading to acquiring more than 65% of the market share from the comfort of your office, clicking on a selection of icons to perform different tasks.



Oil Imperium is full of neat touches like this — just press the power button to visit the oilman.

Your first job is to commission expert studies on the viability of different offshore or on-land sites. Once you've picked one which looks profitable, you can start drilling, buying storage tanks and, eventually, selling your oil. You can consult your balance sheet or the newspaper for the latest oil info at any time.

For budding jills, there's the option to contract agents to damage an opponent's wells, rob a competitor's bank, blackmail oil-journeymen agents or blow up oil tanks. Alternatively, you might want to launch an investigation into any claims against your own fields. If you're successful, you get compensation in the form of oilfields.

Sabotage, telephone messages, and grade inspectors inject the action with extra unpredictability. The success of drilling, fire-fighting, and pipe-laying, depends on your arcade skills. These minuscourses modify your account and determining the form of your drill, connecting sections of pipe in competition with an opponent, and dynamiting spent oil-



Don't bother getting a computer to do the drilling. Off is cheaper and usually more successful.

RELEASE BOX

AMIGA ST	£29.95	AMIBOX
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AMIGA VERSION

Stick graphics, user-friendly controls and pleasant soundtrack combine with a helpful, if slightly odd, manual to make this extremely enjoyable to play. There's even a few power lines in.

GRAPHICS	7	HD FACTOR	9
RAM	7	FM FACTOR	8

A/C/E RATING 8/10

PREDICTED INTEREST CURVE



Initial predictions are rewarded by long term enjoyment of an involved and complex game.

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TERRY'S BIG ADVENTURE



ST SCREEN SHOTS



Terry's Big Adventure is a one player, left to right, smooth scrolling, jump and run game with superb music, sound effects and excellent graphics.

Terry is a small, energetic character who is an expert with a yo-yo. His adventure takes him through 10 levels where he encounters numerous obstacles such as hedgehogs, snails, bridges, rivers and poisonous mushrooms that pop up at the least expected moment! Armed with his yo-yo or rocks, Terry must slay the enemies to be able to continue on his adventure.

Included in the game are hidden bonus levels, extra lives to gain, and objects to find to increase time.

Very competitive arcade gameplay.

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• TRIVIA •



C64 SCREEN SHOTS



Trivia - a one player general knowledge trivia game based on the customary pub-style arcade games. There are a whole range of questions from art and literature to leisure, sport and entertainment and all are 3 option multiple choice.

With humour, 2 excellent soundtracks, colourful graphics and a fast pace that will ensure you are continually kept "on the ball", Trivia is the ideal game for all the family and who knows... you might even learn something.

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CASTLE WARRIOR

A French Revolution as DELPHINE storm Zardor's Castle.



Entered building through Level One.

THE conventional 3rd view of Celtic games is about as remote as the conventional 3rd view of most things beyond our shores. French games are pretty, graphically "nice," but when it comes to game play, well... not what?

Purple Saturn Day was super's preciously and gameplay-wise, as was KULT, Captain Blood, and the fiasco version of Operation Wolf is name for three.

So when you hear that one of our best known companies — famed for their games play — and none other than Palace Software are teaming up with Paris-based Delphine software to launch Castle Warrior you have the right to expect great things of such an elite combine.

AMETRAD VERSION

(Excellent use of Ametrad's sound facilities. No hint of an update or add!) It's just music and bells are excellent. One slightly annoying factor is the sound it does so at the end of each game. Here's a hint: that's for some way around here!

GRAPHICS **A** 3D FACTOR **A**
 AUDIO **A** FUN FACTOR **B**
ACE RATING: B25

The game opens in grandiose 3D style. You are the warrior Edred the Brave who, in a six level challenge, must win a potion from the evil Wizard Zardor, who has poisoned the king — only the potion will save him. Naturally, like all computer game wizards, Zardor has demons and monsters aplenty in his employ and you will have to slay a goodly number of these to complete the task.

Edred progresses down the scrolling corridor with a foot clumping of feet. The noises are pleasing, at least from the walls and edge slowly towards him from the depths of the seemingly endless corridor. Edred's sword is manipulated by a combination of pushing the joystick button down and moving the grip of the stick through its eight positions. When you successfully strike one of the flying bats or a claw they disappear in a puff of grey smoke.

Edred doesn't have to kill all of the monsters, though it's more fun if he does and wins from points. The gameplay here is slightly flawed in that Edred does not always recover quickly enough from swinging his sword to make another Perry or swing. A bit frustrating this, as just when you think you're warmed up and gleefully tracking the flying bats, you die — quite unnecessarily and through no lack of skill on your part.

A couple of large, frost-bit-squiggly nasties have to be taken out in level one if you are to proceed to the next level. This is achieved by swinging the sword at the freetails and sending them back at the monster. Again, gameplay here could have been better. The sword needs to have a sort of elastic feel to it for this to work effectively, which it doesn't. It appears an arbitrary choice which freetails are returned and which aren't — and in any event it only needs two to kill them, which seems far too easy.

There is a welcome change of weapon in level two. You are armed with a spear which you must lob at the the giant dragon who is guarding the entry to the level three (The Salt sorcerer there). This is where the looping left and right comes into its own. This section is well animated — Edred really looks as if he is laughing for his life. The Salt sorcerer flour is similar to the rapid level in Dragon Lair — though not quite as breath taking. Edred has a shield in this level to protect himself from the skeletons, ladders, and serpents that rise up from the ceiling water to snap at Edred's feet corpse. This is a tough and enjoyable level — though most people would prefer to be armed with something a bit more deadly than a shield.

Level Four brings you close to the end of the challenge — and reveals shades of Space Harrier as the highly eclectic nature of this arisate challenge becomes apparent. Edred flies through the skies atop a flying dragon — shooting out freetails at Zardor's most feared beast — the giant dragon Jibba. If he beats the one he faces the final challenge with Zardor in the grandiose level. Dodge the spells cast by the evil wizard as he sits on his floating throne and grab the potion. Now fly back in glory to save the King's potion.

Sounds easy — but it will take quite a few sessions to beat this little number. Castle War now is a most cinematic-like conception. It achieves high levels of graphics, animation, and sound but is aimed squarely at the gamer who wants to test his reflexes alone — leaving his intellect for other pursuits or slightly more cerebral software.

— Eugene Lee

RELEASE BOX

ATARI ST	119.995	BRAND
AMIGA	119.995	OUT NOW

PREDICTED INTEREST CURVE



Plus while it lasts — for once you have saved the king from a nasty dose of wizard-induced Salt sorcerer it's unlikely to ever get in your disk drive again.

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...ing - Introduction during flight I quickly select daylight
...and use all 60 minutes. No tank fire at the same time -
...off and a high jet and maneuvers for missile. A loud
...scream like me lets not so lucky

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Flying fast and low, I turn my F-16 towards my target. Time to
...switch on the ground radar and aim the laser-guided Mavericks.
...I fire six missiles in quick succession. Landing automatically
...looking into each tank. With fuel burning around me I fire for
...cover and head for home. Approaching base, I contact the tower
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EYE OF HORUS

LOGOTRON'S Set point in ancient Egypt.

DENTON Designers have dipped into the rich pool of Egyptian mythology for this arcade-adventure-cum-shoot-'em-up for Logotron. Hero of the tale is Horus — an ancient Egyptian deity who is generally represented as half man, half hawk. Set is Horus's uncle and the brother of the good king Osiris. Consumed with jealousy, Set kills the king and later dismembers his body and scatters the seven pieces of the corpse throughout an ancient tomb.

This is where the game takes up the story. Cast as Horus, you must find the seven pieces of your and Osiris's torn-to-rib world of your wicked uncle. Once the body is reassembled the gods will give you extra powers and you can set out to vanquish Set. Your hawkish nature manifests itself as an ability to change from human to hawk at the touch of a button.

The first thing that strikes you is the offer-



Seven amulets can be carried with Horus as he travels — from a possible thing.

screen of the scene-setting. A definite favour of ancient Egypt comes through in the sounds and graphics of the various rooms of the tomb. The real positive thing about the game is the



amulets are based on the real thing as showcased in the British Museum. Real-life amulets are each with a being with a 'distinct 'set-up adventure' of rare quality.

on-screen mapping that unfolds as you explore. Purists (and the editor of the AGE TVT page) may complain that it spoils the fun, but we reckon it makes the game immediately more satisfying without losing any of the challenge. As game developers, it's about time we had a (bit more) development of the user interface, and on-screen mapping is a start, at least. Why should you have to turn to paper, pens, and compasses in the computer age?

To use the map, however, you have to first find the right amulet. This is not easy as there are about thirty different ones scattered throughout the rooms of the chambers — many of them are hidden by Set to make your task more difficult. Each amulet offers a different power and you will have to learn and master all of them if you are to complete the quest.

The instructions tell you about some of the amulets but many are left unexplained for your own experimentation. In true arcade-adventure fashion, Horus can only carry seven objects at a time — so it is important to work out your own hierarchy of amulets. The map is of course essential and extra weapons are also extremely useful. The Frog amulet gives Horus a new life.

The best amulet to look at, however, are those that summon the other God's. The Heat amulet summons the god Isis — wife of the King and Horus' mother. She appears in a shimmer and then takes away any piece of the body of Osiris that you may have collected so far to the Burial Chamber. You have to summon her each time you recover a piece of body as you can only hold one at a time pending its reassembly. Nice touch this — really makes you feel as if the gods are watching over you.

Another god who can be made to come down from the heavens is Anubis — the god of the dead. Anubis will help you in the final conflict with Set.

Don't get the impression that this is just another arcade-adventure, though. Anubis really opens up the action and the strong elements of shoot-'em-up throughout the game. Horus is armed with



Isis appears to take a part of Osiris's body off to the Burial Chamber.



The map is drawn for you as you travel. Why don't all arcade adventures do this?

Fogarty says that he splits from his look at life's station - after amulet that he's brought to life and which grant around the chamber, leaving your energy each time you bring into one.

True to correct stand-up philosophy, there are certain power-ups that can multiply the rate of life by up to four times. There is even an AT-26000 satellite - in this case a tiny hawk that flies alongside Horus, spelling death at the opposition. Another amulet will put you a constant aim of fire - which is more or less essential in some of the tougher chambers.

There are also "smart bomb" amulets - but as is the nature of these weapons they can only be used sparingly.

Linking the chambers is a network of 16 Horus-head fly to the ground and turn back into a hawk to visit the life. He may also need one of the keys skated around the chambers to operate them. These life seem to be the one design left in the game - and not just because they're anachronistic and would look more at home in a trendy downtown store than ancient Egypt. More importantly, they star-

toon gamely; it is very easy to inadvertently send Horus up or down as a life when you really meant him to take off, in think mode. What makes this ironic is that while the life is working the computer is dropping the next chamber - so it can take quite a few seconds to get them, and then you have to get all the way back.

On the whole, however, Eye benefits from design discipline. The programmers stick to their chosen Egyptian theme throughout apart from those life, adding the temptation to those it at least here and there just because there is enough variety left, and just because that is the really, sweet garden kind of job they do.

Perhaps most important of all, the balance of pacing and arcade play is just right in Eye of Horus. There is no real way of completing the quest, avoiding the tedious repetition of finding objects and using them to get to that part of the game that still remains to be solved.

For all its polish, though, Eye of Horus breaks no new ground. It is reminiscent of the old Ultimate Play the Game titles for the Spectrum and MSX. But those were great games and the comparison has to be almost as damning as it is critical. What Eye does do for the first time is bring well thought-out, excellently programmed, carefully designed arcade-adventure to the IBM machines - and with a spot of looking it's best. There seems no reason why Logotron shouldn't launch a whole range of these - just as Ultimate did.

— Eugene Lacey

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DATA	CD ROM - 134996	OUT NOW
IBM PC	CD ROM	IMMINENT

ST VERSION

Eye of Horus is available in four editions. Full name is Logotron for providing sound FX and music. Additionally it is also available for Windows or Mac OS. The Egyptian eye must add to the experience of a game that makes good use of the ST's monochromatic palette.

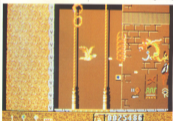
GRAPHICS	B	IQ FACTOR	B
SOUND	7	FUN FACTOR	B

AGE RATING GES

PREDICTED INTEREST CURVE



As enjoying game that grows on you - plus a story-driven element that will increase some interest next after you've cracked it.



Face to face with the serpent Set. You will need all of your prerogative to see this one off. Kill him and you've won the game.

DENTON REVIVAL

Game development houses are like magazines. They are in one minute and out the next. The current fashion leaders are the Itanaga Brothers (Damon's Ill and Speedball), Argonaut (Star

glider I, II, and Alterburner), and Sculptured (Ultima, Flying Shark, and Rainbow Islands). Denton Design used to be heavy of the march with games like Shadowfax, Frankie Goes

in Hollywood, and Gift From the Gods amongst their many hits. Eye of Horus should rocket them back back to the top of the popularity charts.

UMS II

UMS II is the definitive military campaign simulation. Rainbird have taken the theme of the original UMS and developed it into a truly Universal Military Simulation. Battle it out across the whole spectrum of military combat,

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BLOODWYCH

Image Works introduce two player role playing

DUNGEON MASTER is the game that marked the rebirth of Bitbricks. It ended a lull-like period for the Maxwell owned games house that saw few releases of any merit. Since Dungeon Master they haven't looked back with a string of hits including Falcon, Legendial, Glaxo and TV Sports Football. Bloodwych may be the firm's latest, also since the rebirth began. A game in the style of Dungeon Master from the same company has to be at least as good as its predecessor.



Bloodwych's spell screen displays for two player RPGing. The heart of the game.

The game soon overcomes a great deal more than Dungeon Master. Simultaneous two player turn-taking role playing is possible for the first time. You can play as a team against the computer or against each other in a race to complete the quest. Each player chooses one of seven wizards, adventurers, warriors and thieves to join them in the quest.

The objective of Bloodwych is to destroy the evil Jendrick by finding four crystals and taking them to the tower of Zedrobyl Farm. The quest begins in the land of Tetheryl where you must first find recruit champions and collect the items you will need to complete the quest.



The Bloodwych art drawn by cult 1980s artist Chris Achilleos. His first computer output.



Icons control everything including battle, interaction and movement.

Just as in Dungeon Master moves are implemented by selecting and using icons. There are several of these so it is essential to read the manual thoroughly and master the use of the icons before setting out to complete the game. You have to be prepared to invest a bit of time and effort before you will start to derive role playing satisfaction from Bloodwych.

Many strange characters and artifacts are encountered in the quest like the mooks that certain characters can use by clicking on the runes in the spell book. A range of spells are available for the heroes to use.

Manipulation of the characters that you encounter in your travels is the key to success in Bloodwych. It is essential to plan as much as you can from then using the Trade/Order, Dissolve, Insult and Order. The wandering part of Bloodwych seems to work well. There is a convincing feeling of interacting with the other characters in the game.

When you are happy with your team you can then set out to solve the quest, i.e. give Jendrick a good beating. Certain characters can be placed at strategic points using the 'Wall' icon. To know what it is and what it is not a

strategic point a map is essential. The computer Dungeon masters of Bloodwych all look very similar and it may be wiser to identify around in circles. 'View' lets you flip between characters - bringing good warriors to the forefront when you encounter one of Jendrick's ghouls in some dark forsaken dungeon, or bringing a wizard into the action when a spell is required.

Bloodwych has all of the depth, health and status ratings on characters, items, items, and detailed graphics that players have come to expect in quality RPGs, since Dungeon Master. There have indeed been quite a few attempts to out Dungeon Master (Dungeon Master. Most of these attempts have been embarrassing failures. Bloodwych comes closest of all.

It is at its best in two-player mode. 'Go and join your team against the world just as things were in Gauntlet - but this time in a fully blown role playing game. Not quite in the Dungeon Master class but an absorbing and challenging game in its own right with plenty of its own original ideas.

♦ Eugene Lilly

RELEASE BOX

ATARI ST	£24.999	OUT NOW
AMIGA	£24.999	IMMINENT
AMSTRAD	£29.999 - £32.999	IMMINENT
CD-ROM	£29.999 - £32.999	IMMINENT
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BT VERSION

The BT's best display comes into its own in the display of some of the small but highly detailed icons. It remains one colourful and fun animation worthy classic. Good BT's add to the pleasure of the Dungeons and Dudes games.

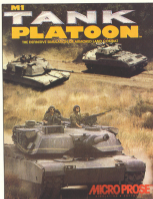
COMPRESS	8	HD FACTOR	8
RAMBO	7	FM FACTOR	8

AGE RATING 810

PREDICTED INTEREST CURVE



Bloodwych provides lasting role play. It good the months worth - and then gains a new lease of life as a two player game.



M1 Tank Platoon is the definitive simulation of armored land combat. US tank platoons, lead four M1s. Four soldiers spend each tank. That's four tanks, sixteen men. And you control the whole shooting match.

16,000 acres of rolling, superb 3D terrain allows you to hide your tanks behind hills and ridges, just as a real tank commander would. Give orders to your entire platoon or to individual tanks. Lay down some heavy artillery or mortar fire before advancing your main tanks, or possibly call in air support in the form of AT-4 tankbusters or AH-64 Apache Gunships. Defend yourself against attack from the air by strategically positioning anti-aircraft batteries. The strategic penetrations are endless!

With thousands of battlefields and millions of situations, there's infinite variation within the game. With varied skill levels, veteran tank gamers can master through to top notch, veteran tank commanders, take on single battles or wage war from start to finish.

Left: Tank Platoon. All the action of armored land combat.



F15 Strike Eagle is a whole new concept in computer air warfare. Dogfighting is the name of the game. This air warrior fights enemy aircraft. Do or die as you fight your burners and head for the skies. Success depends on making the right moves - fast. Super smooth, non-stop action takes place over 260,000 square miles of authentic terrain. Superb, solid-filled polygon-based 3D graphics makes it feel as though you really are in the thick of the action. Hundreds of options, four difficulty levels and a real amount of missions and scenarios make F15 Strike Eagle the perfect for dogfighting veterans and novices alike.

MICRO PROSE
SIMULATION & SOFTWARE



SHUFFLEPUCK CAFE

DOMARK/BRODERBUND pucker up...

THERE are some games that promise much more than they actually deliver. Broderbund's latest offers a sports simulation of sorts, a warm bed of opponents, good sound, excellent graphics and plenty of variable options yet managers in far less than the sum total of its parts.

The game is Shufflepuck, which is basically an hockey game played without goals. Instead each player has a glass plate between him and the table to defend. Shout like or die cross the back the glass is shattered and a goal is scored.

The simplicity of the game is saved up with a neat scenario which transports it into a cool setting. Played in a cafe somewhere on the farthest reaches of the galaxy, it's a cross between the heavy bar in Star Wars and Billiards, the restaurant at the end of the universe in Hitchhiker's Guide. The regulars are a pretty mixed bunch, united only by their love of shufflepuck.

Wandering into this den in search of a telephone you find yourself locked in a tournament with eight of the shufflepuck crooks that frequent the bar. The game starts with an automated call of the coats and you can get into a match by clicking on one of the various jagged faces. Once into a match you can select attacking or defensive modes for the paddle. This involves giving you more bounce from the puck or power in striking. To add extra interest to the game you can also select a blocker which allows you to insert an obstacle between you and the opponent.

The set up here, you can start to take on some of the wonders. Each has a particular character and skill level. At one end there's the respected wing, Big Jimmy, who beats more than a passing resemblance to Rocky from and in a total pushover, and at the other there's Bill Raunch, a lefty who with a vile temper in between there's an array of opponents, including a lounge lizard (see literally) with a taste for blue



Looks pretty plays...honest.

champagne, and Princess Sign who has a real mental approach to the game - she doesn't let the puck when she strikes, she waits for hand over it.

In fact much of the variation in the game comes from the characters you find playing at the other end of the table. Their reactions to winning, losing and hitting in profit add a great deal to the game. Shufflepuck itself is pretty average, something not helped by the lack of a two player option. All hockey is an hockey no matter how much you try and tell it up.

The presentation for Shufflepuck Cafe is excellent. It's good to look at, with legs, imaginative drawn characters. They're really animated too, with good facial expressions and reactions. The comic touches are well observed, with some nice moments - like when Lusan Smythe-Winterington slumps under the table, coloured, with a crash after losing. Sound, too, is good with a solid puck sound and a nice sampled speech when you score. In fact that provides much of the appeal of playing a game.

The early appeal of good graphics and sound is dulled by the limitations of the gameplay. Here Shufflepuck one of a number of games on a multi-quartz console for 10 day it need a highlight, but not on its own.

—Mike Patterson



TREBLE

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- ▶ 12 Clubs and 12 Teams in 3rd Division
- ▶ 12 Clubs and 12 Teams in 4th Division
- ▶ 12 Clubs and 12 Teams in 5th Division
- ▶ 12 Clubs and 12 Teams in 6th Division
- ▶ 12 Clubs and 12 Teams in 7th Division
- ▶ 12 Clubs and 12 Teams in 8th Division
- ▶ 12 Clubs and 12 Teams in 9th Division
- ▶ 12 Clubs and 12 Teams in 10th Division
- ▶ 12 Clubs and 12 Teams in 11th Division
- ▶ 12 Clubs and 12 Teams in 12th Division



ALL VERSIONS INCLUDE COMPLETE INSTRUCTIONS

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TRADE ENQUIRIES: PROVISIONAL BOARD SYSTEMS



YEAR	1988	1989	1990	1991	1992
SHARE PRICE	100	110	120	130	140

ALL POINTS BULLETIN

DOMARK send out an All Points Bulletin

In the arcade every nowhere is the battle for coins: tougher than in the racing game category. There are very nice pickups for cars and planes. Gamers who pump-dump in to racing games walk out the fastest, richest, prettiest machines around. Tengen enjoyed a good run at the top slot with *APB* — a racing game that added a touch of humor and a cops and robbers scenario as a back to the main business of racing through the streets.

You are officer Bob for a week on a mission to crack the streets of a downtown American city picking up as many villains as you can. You are given a quota of the number of criminals to be arrested — which you must meet if you are keep your job, i.e., stay in the game.

The graphics feel of the coin-op has been faithfully reproduced. It has a cartoon flavor about it — something that seems to be the hallmark of Tengen games since *Xyzote* and *Vibrators*. Bright colours are also very much in evidence, particularly in the driving scenes and criminal questioning screens back at the station.

The game presents an overhead view of the action with the screen split into two sections. In the left two thirds of the screen is your squad car and the scrolling road. The right hand side shows the score board, listing your arrests so far today, revenues collected, and time left to reach your quota.

Your squad car can be upgraded by paying a visit to the Speed Shop. Here you can purchase radar, armour, better brakes and improved acceleration. You will need money to pay for these items, though, and it's not if you must subordinate your daily quota.

There are a number of ways of getting cash. Picking up hitchhikers, litter bugs, and checks pays a few dollars — but the way to earn real money is to go after the accomplices. Sid Sneyer and Freddy Friesk are the meanest dealers on the block and you will occasionally get an *APB* (All Points Bulletin) from HQ to apprehend them.

This is where the real fun begins. To arrest them you must position your Steering Wheel Cursor over their car then switch on your siren. They may not stop immediately so you have to be ready to give chase. But as every cop will tell you, chasing criminals through a built up area is a highly dangerous business. You are the hero if you catch them but should you crash — injuring a member of the public in the process — then your goal will be to do the Shopping Block. Dement points are deducted from



Officer Bob gets the villains in his sights.

your score in this event. Get too many of these and you're fired.

Catching the criminals is one thing — getting them to confess is another. This extra game element of questioning the criminals gives *APB* another dimension, a joystick wiggling dimension to be precise. The faster you wrangle the closer the villain gets to spilling the beans. A barometer shows your rate of progress. If you don't wring a confession fast ten before the Chief comes in then you lose your chance to pick up bonus payments by meeting your quota for the day. The good criminal confessional is worth a whole day's work picking up drunks and petty thieves.

APB is certainly fun. Graphics, sound, and the smoothness of animation all hit the quality levels that a Tengen title needs to convert effectively to home use. The problem is that

PREDICTED INTEREST CURVE



An entertaining and amusing arcade game that will provide a few weeks of fun, but there's not enough there to make it a classic.

the basic game design is not really suited to the hours, days, and weeks of play that a home computer game needs to justify its price tag. At 20¢ for a few minutes entertainment *APB* works fine as a coin-op. At \$70 to play it at home on your Amiga or ST I am not so sure. If you were totally addicted to the coin-op go for it. If not — by before you try to ACE's advice.

■ Cynic Lee

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ATARI ST VERSION

Bright colours are the hallmark of Tengen titles and the ST does well to reproduce the feature of the colour. Sound FX are fine — particularly the car that screams out when you attempt to arrest the villains.

GRAPHICS: 8 SOUND EFFECTS: 8
 JAMES: 7 FUN FACTOR: 8

ACE RATING 7.5

TURBO

MICROILLUSIONS rev up for death race 1989

MICROILLUSIONS

... a software house that promised good things when they first came to most people's attention by cooing the game *Fairy Tale* - given every fan with the first lot batch of Amiga 500s off the production line.

A *Quest*-style adventure that scouted around in four directions, *Fairy Tale* was an early demonstration of the graphical excellence that could be achieved on the Amiga. Gameplay was flly - but as a feature of things to come the game was a milestone. The strangest thing of all is that after *Fairy Tale*, MicroIllusions became something of an *Fairy Tale* themselves.

And now, that is. They have appointed a new UK distributor and are back with a new racing game called... *Turbo*.

The instructions are sparse - "You have just entered a death race with no rules and no judge" - and the aim is correspondingly simple to get to the end of the course and kill off as many other road users as possible without getting nicked by the cops.

The gameplay is viewed from above, as is the coin-op game *Championship Sprint* though *Turbo* has a linear track rather than a circuit. The left hand portion of the screen is the active window with your speedometer and progress bar of your progress to the right.

It is essential to park up the various weapons that are scattered around the road way. You get three by driving into them. The rocks, grenades, and oil are most effective for taking off your opponents - but have to be used sparingly as the police will make chaos into billing.

The race track takes you through three levels - town, country and desert and you are racing against the clock to reach the finish. There are many hazards to be avoided: level crossings and roundabouts loom up in front of you if a red second, so it's a good job that your car



Watch out for that train!

can break quickly to avoid these hazards. In fact it can be made to break and accelerate even more rapidly by picking up the wheel power-ups.

In the town section of the game several pedestrians are represented by tiny dots, making their way across the streets. Most die off these days and they become larger red dots as the computer emits a honking scream.

Sound FX are generally impressive throughout. I particularly liked the frenzied acceleration sound and breaking noises as you screech to a halt in front of an obstacle. The police sirens are also authentic sounding as cops cars attempt to bump you off the road for speeding down too many pedestrians.

Just one thing seems a bit odd. You actually lose points for moving down a hill or up a hill.

Whatever happened to the motorcists rule that you get top marks for games and that to winners?

Turbo is presented and game tested to traditionally high American standards. These game play modes enable you to play against the clock, against a friend, or against a

friend via a modem link. Computer racing fans should definitely take a look at this one.

By Eugene Levy



It will take you a while to master the use of all of the weapons and power-ups. But since you do, the low player maintenance value of *Turbo* is fairly limited.

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AMIGA VERSION
 Based in where the things is used to find effort in Turbo. The sound FX are not only distinctive but, more importantly, they are not synchronized with the game play. Graphics are adequate - and could have been better.

DISPATCH **IQ FACTOR 7**
ALSO **A FIVE FACTOR 10**
A-00 RATING 800



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Eugene Levy

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Keep your eyes on those, ahem, or you'll be hassled before you can blink twice!

SHADOW OF THE BEAST

PSYGNOSIS go all out for revenge

NOT content with the market they reside in, Psygnosis have decided to rock the packaging and marketing boats once more with the release of their most stunning product ever. (Dead, or to give it it's full title, *Shadow Of The Beast*) is packaged not only in an extraordinarily large box the size of the PlayStation box with a piece of specially commissioned Roger Dean artwork, but also comes with a high quality T-shirt complete with yet another original piece of Mr. Bear's. So obviously Psygnosis must have a pretty hot product to back up such a marketing gamble, right?

Yes, not wrong. *Beast* is certainly a very impressive game. For a start, at present it's planned as being only, which means the programmers have had no 57 conversion restrictions. And once you take a look at some of the statistics, you'll start to wish most other programmers would give themselves a real for the same work.

No less than 1.3 levels of smooth parallax scrolling, which is really a sight to behold. The

scrolling updates 50 times a second - that's the speed of a coin-op - and there are up to 128 colours on screen at once. And that's only the start! There's the sound to be taken into consideration yet.

It's all composed by none other than Dave Whitaker and copied directly from a SONG ME Keyboard (as used by us and coming. Also Jones rocks! Sanyal). There's over 900k of it which, as we're reliably informed, is more than the music from the *Thunderbox* and *Afterburner* coin-ops put together. What's more, it's also some of the best work Whitaker's ever done, subtle, atmospheric and it's got that all important rock guitar sample.

The theme of the game is revenge. Taken from your parents at their wedding and turned into a beastial messenger for the Beast-mages through various metamorphic potions and deep hypoxic suggestion, the Beast-mages thought they had destroyed all remnants of the human race you. How wrong they were. The beauty within the beast has awoken, and now it's after

blood for blood. The death of the master is the death of his parents.

But before he can reach the master, he has to travel through several areas, each with its own predators and its own traps. Out in the wilderness, for example, you are assailed by rampaging eagles and low flying owls. For

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AMIGA CD-ROM CUT HERE

No other version planned

AMIGA VERSION

Hard to find at a price that's better suited to a computer. Amongst parallax scrolling, incredible graphics, sound that'll make you want to buy the album - and there's a game in there to boot! Buy it!

GRAPHICS 9 16 FACTOR 9

AMIGA 9 16 FACTOR 9

ACE RATING 885

far along in the game you are treated by such wonders as eyeballs, Pegasus inspires and lighting.

The whole thing is played over a multilevel, total scrolling playfield -- and what scrolling! The 1.2 levels of perfect parallax are incredible to see, putting most games to shame.

Fighting back wouldn't be simpler. To start with, and indeed through most of the game, he uses his developed strength and speed to merely punch the enemy away with a soundly thud. Later in the game you can pick up laser guns, star guns and jet packs which allow you to fly all over the screen.

And that's not the only thing you can pick up either. By punching open certain treasure chests you can find various powers. Some of them do nice things, like give you more energy and punch power, while others detract from them. The only real problem is that they all look the same. The only way of telling which is which is through good old trial and error. Thankfully, all colors remain in set places for every game,

PREDICTED INTEREST CURVE



Graphics and sound give it instant appeal, and the pace keeps you going, but like all arcade games it isn't, unfortunately, last for ever.



There's more to *Beast* than mere blasting and punting -- grab that key to get on.

so a couple of tries through each level should be enough for you to learn which are best left alone.

All the game graphics are amazing. The backgrounds are exquisitely drawn and the sprites are fairly stunning. All that plus loads of Roger Dean artwork, what more could you ask for!

Someone, I have to say, this does feel and look ever so slightly like it's nemesis *Alien* *Beast*. That said, there's a lot more to this,

what with all those puzzles and whatnot.

What would have been simply a fair game has been turned into an excellent one simply because the company took a little time over the product. Well done to Pegasus. Yes, it is a little more costly than your average Amiga game, but when you think you're getting a true Roger Dean T-Shirt, can you really complain?

• Tony Sites



Showing parallax scrolling and providing a graphical presentation that's going to be hard to beat.

BATTLE VALLEY

Hewson send in the choppers and tanks

AT last, a shoot 'em up with a lot more to do than simply staying alive and collecting power-ups.

The world is being held to ransom by a group of international terrorists who threaten to fire two nuclear missiles unless their colleagues are released from jails in the USA.

Your task is to eliminate the missiles that are held up in the terrorists' stronghold - Battle Valley - in the middle of the desert.

Using a chopper and armored vehicle it is down to you to battle through the terrorist defences, capture them and eliminate the missiles.

You start your mission in a chopper which emerges from a sky dome. It's a light weight attack chopper in the mold of a Lynx - with high powered missiles, but the chopper is not magically armed with an unlimited supply of missiles and fuel. You have to keep an eye on your gauges and refuel or repair when you start running out. The remaining operation is carried out by hovering above the arms dump and letting down a chain to pick up a box of

missiles and then winching them back on board. The winch is also used later in the game when you have to pick up a huge section of steel and manoeuvre it into place to repair a bridge so that your army can get through to Battle Valley to bombard the terrorists. These strategic elements make for a far more enjoyable game - reminiscent of the classic Brokenbond title *Chopper*.

Battle Valley features an impressive particle scroll on three levels - with sky, mountain tops, and foreground all moving accurately as your chopper advances by.

Later in the game - when you have successfully repaired the bridges you can go back to base and hop into the armored vehicle. Now you are ready to take on the terrorists. The section of the game is not quite as impressive graphically as the chopper sequences. The caterpillar tracks of the small tanks appear to float on air at one or two points when they negotiate bumps and blocks. It is a pity too as good a base as the aerial scenes though stacks of enemy ground installations must be



Taking on more ammunition for the shoot out with the terrorists.

taken out before you progress towards Battle Valley itself and the final shoot out, all the while dodging a fierce ground and aerial gun barrage.

Each of the missiles is protected within a separate compound so when you have destroyed one you return to HQ and then make ready to liberate the second one. Should you lose all of your lives before completing your mission you get to see the ubiquitous nuclear mushroom cloud and a message telling you have failed.

One small personal question: what is it about programmers that they are so fond of including the ubiquitous cloud in their games? We must have seen it half a dozen times in the last six months in different games. Bad taste, or what?

Anyway that grumble aside, *Battle Valley* is a decent and challenging arcade game. The time factor and strategic elements add a very welcome 'thinking' dimension to the shoot-out and colourful shoot 'em up.

■ Eugene Levy



The bridges need to be repaired to enable the armored cars to get across.

AMIGA VERSION

Created by Hewson by Creative Thought a clear master of Amiga graphics and sound is very much in evidence. The consistency of the arena for most of the game. Particularly in the slower parts of the game when you are manoeuvring the chopper. Excellent particle effects and fast scrolling speed fit for the occasion.

GRADES: 4 5000000 7
 AMIG 7 5000000 8

ACE RATING 8.5

RELEASE BOX

AMIG 0'0000 OCTOBER

PREDICTED INTEREST CURVE



Stimulating and reasonably deep arcade game. The middle is good you've beaten the terrorists you are unlikely to want to play it again.

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THE BEAST IS AMONG US

This is it - A whole new dimension in computer games
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PSYGNOSIS - GAMES PEOPLE PLAY

Screen-Shots from the Amiga version

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TRICKS'N'TACTICS

ALL THE HELP YOU NEED TO CRACK THE TOUGHEST GAMES...

BATTLETECH

Take command in this RPG/arcade combination...

The Citadel

1. In the beginning, keep investing all current financial assets in one of the three available companies, DefTech, NeoBio or BioPharm. Be very wary with BioPharm as its value is subject to tremendous fluctuations. Over investing will clearly double your money. It's also wise to place a large bulk of your money into a low-risk account.

The accounts update every time you receive 100 C-Bills, so it's best to keep a walk-around/investor's first-rate routine going in the early stages.

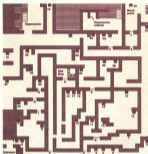
2. When you have enough money, too an SMC from the gun shop - even better try to purchase an Inter-Com, this little weapon works out pretty in one shot as well as giving you a chance to escape from enemy Mechs. Then go to the Citadel building and enroll in SMC and Mech weapon classes until you become good in both skills.

3. The next thing you need is armor. Buy a full suit as these represent the best protection for your money.

Training Missions

Don't attempt these straight away! Let your investments grow first.

- Mission 1.** Use a board for this one.
- Mission 2.** A Chameleon as it has hands.
- Mission 3.** Again use a Chameleon.
- Mission 4.** As above.
- Mission 5.** Real combat! Use a Chameleon and control it yourself. Keep it limber for cover, even better stand in a line to keep the Mech cool. Only use weapons that are in range of the enemy as this will help to prevent overheating. When the Mech has been tracked



A listing of the doors and the codes to open them:
A: 12345678
B: 123456789
C: 1234567890

11: 123 456, 890, 789, 678
22: 123 456, 789, 678, 567
33: 123 456, 789, 678, 567, 456

44: 123 456, 789, 678, 567, 456, 345

go to the lounge and talk to a character called Rick Allen, he'll give you something very useful.

Mission 6. The same as 5, though this time split your firepower between the two Mechs.

Mission 7. Whatever you do, don't fight the lasers. They have thicker armor and a lot more power than your Mech. Instead, turn left and run the second of the mission starts. You should find a gap in the fence a short distance above the entrance to the training ground. When you and your Mech are back in the main area of the Citadel run for the gap in the main wall which is at the bottom of the next side. If you do make it head straight for the Starport and get your Mech patched up there.

Starport

If your Mech is in good condition you might be able to handle combat with another Mech, though

this is not advised at this stage. Taking on human groups however is perfectly acceptable.

Once you've entered the Starport through the Mech park head immediately for the clothes shop: a small odding building close to a taxi. Purchase some few clothes then head off towards the triangular hall. Head the first, then leave. Wander around the city for a moment then return to the hall once more. You should now find a party going on and meet a man called Leo. Outside he will give you several things. You will then be attacked - flee!

Head for the Constar building and withdraw 100 C-Bills. Go to the Mech park and pay the attendant, you should now have a new Mech.

Spend quite a while wandering around the nearby area avoiding combat where possible. Then return to the Starport. With a bit

of luck you should have lots of bits of money in Constar. Withdraw all but a thousand C-Bills and go to the Mech park to get your previous Mech repaired. If you have enough money left over swap-up both Mechs at the spot shop. Take both Mechs out at a cost of 150 a piece. It is an idea to take out an apprentice ship, as this enables you to swap Mechs up battlefield Mechs to take back and repair.

The Crescent Hawks

Head back to the named area and enter the Starports through the hole in the north wall. The hospital that Leo gave you will then be played causing the investors but to appear on the map.

Leave the Citadel and head for the city NE of the Starport. Go to the prison and free the captured Crescent Hawk. Then try to release the imprisoned Mech. You should now have three Mechs in the party. After this go around by various cities. At the Hospital park to apprentice - with a bit of luck you should find a Crescent Hawk. At the hospital keep searching the medical records until you are approached by another Crescent Hawk. These should be a technician and doctor respectively. Try to get their special skills up to excellent, you need them later on.

When the group of five has been assembled make sure they are armed with Inferno and Pal suits - you should have more than enough money by now. If you are unsure about somebody in your party, fight a level battle and if he isn't a Mech he'll be killed. The first is replacement.

The Investor's Hut

This is located in the NW, a long way from the Starport. After you've answered the relevant questions the investor will appear to repair the Mechs. He will also tell you that the Starleague code is to be 58, in a case, as it is a cheat.

The Starleague Code

The map of the Starleague code shows all the code terminals, doors and important features necessary to complete the game. The codes for all the doors are listed in a list from A to K at the top of the map.

In order to finish the game you must open all the doors, but

SPHERICAL

Not only do you get the Thunderbirds codes this month (see below), but the passwords for Spherical too!

One player mode

RECAST
YAMAK
OROSLAYER
SAYRE
REGAL

Two player mode

GRANMA
GLEP
BOLANGLACE
JACKEN
GURBACHACH-MAIL

Paul Kelly, Tech



VOYAGER

To access the cheat mode of Voyager simply type "WHEN THE GREAT SHOWERS OF APRIL FALL" on the main option screen, you will be granted a cheat option. Select this and you will be able to choose up to three different types of cheats, infinite credits, fuel and equipment.

Also, when the main cheat mode is active, by pressing Enter on the main option screen you activate some extra functions:

SHIFT, undo, help
Cycle through objects

Cursor keys
Rotate object

Then by pressing:

7 - to decrease size of object
4 - to enlarge size of object

Also when in game mode try these:

F1 - Go down a level
F2 - Go up a level
F3 - Cycle through languages
F8 - Same position
F9 - Rotate an object
F10 - Pause save

When you've checked out all these, try investigating object number 8058...

Thanks to Robi Starvingor and Gus (Beachers) of Uffwales.



THUNDERBIRDS

Here they are! The exclusive codes for all the levels.

Level 1: Password required
Level 2: Necessary
Level 3: Abysses

Level 4: Anderson

Thanks to Phil Palmer, Devon. Any more Thunderbird testers out there?



OPPORTUNITY POKES!

If you can map, track, poke or solve games we need you! We're looking for a team of game masters who can contribute to the already high standard of information presented in *ACE*.

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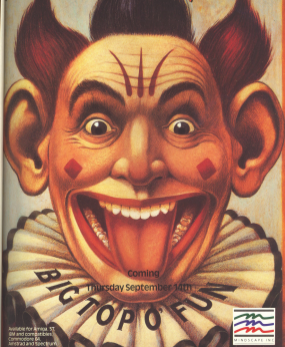
Let me write TNT
Ace
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80-82 Farringdon Lane
London
EC2R 8AU

VIGILANTE

Melrose is being held hostage while her boyfriend is being hunted around the local streets, what can you do? Try typing GREEN OFFICIAL on the top score table. Pressing F1 during the game will give you an extra life and F8 will take you to the next level.

D'Place, West

FIENDISH FREDDY'S



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ALTERED BEAST



● To kill the first boss run up to him and keep shooting. When he is about to drop his head on you, run to the side. Keep repeating this to kill him.

● When you arrive at the second boss go right up to the eye and keep shooting. You'll get over run by other eyes, so press button 1 to get rid of them.

● The final boss is pretty simple. Keep shooting at him and back when he fires back.

● Lastly, to kill the endgame really, stay in the corner of the screen and keep shooting. When he comes up to you, jump over him and shoot him in the back.

To continue the game when you die >
Push up and left and both buttons. To repeat it press both buttons and right or left or up or down. If this doesn't work press both buttons and up/left, up/right, down/left, down/right.

Mark Sanders, Worcester

Or try this...to gain an extra life press top left and press the start button.

David Davis, London

ARCHIPELAGOS

PC Version

Solve Archipelago One. Press RETURN to select an Archipelago and type 0421 and press RETURN. Press RETURN again and you can select any Archipelago from 1 to 9999.

ST and Amiga Versions

Solve Archipelagos One and Two. Press RETURN to select an Archipelago and type 0421 and press RETURN. Press RETURN again and you can select any Archipelago between 1 and 9999.

Every fifth Archipelago is the first one handed in the most interesting as these are pre-designed by the programmers. There are many very tricky and tightly complex Archipelagos to be seen. Try number 0442 as an example!

Thanks to Legion@remixed!



NAVY MOVES



The entry code for part two is 2027 and the solution is as follows:

From the start, R, D, B, Shoot 2nd Official and take his code, L, U enter door, R, shoot 1st official and take his code, L, enter door, U, R, R, R, D, D, R, U, enter door, D, enter "DANGER" on the coin

meter followed by the 1st Official's code, now type "STOP ROTOR" and enter 3rd Official's code again, L, U, L, L, enter the door on the right, U, L, enter door, U, R, R, R, D, enter door, R, enter door, R, enter door, R, D, D, L, L, U, shoot the Transmission Official and take his code, L, type on the computer "OPCR

0004" then enter 2nd Official's code, L, set bombs on left side of the screen R, R, R, R, U, U, R, type on computer "transmit" then enter Transmission Official's code, now enter "CARRYPHANT", L, L, U, R, U, go to the left side of screen.

Tommy Aiken, Scotland

T

in mid-game corner of the flooding. When this, jump over in the back.

me when you

both buttons, both buttons up or down, if you both out-right, down

Photo:

at extra My this the start

B
A
A
L



164 Screen Shots

164 Screen Shots

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UPDATES

CHECK OUT THE LATEST CONVERSIONS FOR YOUR MACHINE...

ST

ROCKET RANGER

Comcast, ST CD-ROM Amiga version reviewed issue 15, Ace rating 8/10

Based around the cult movie series King of The Rocket Wars, Rocket Ranger transports you back in time to the late nineteen thirties. Here we find the hero's building a giant rocket base from which they will dominate the world. Only one person can stop him.

It's been a long time since Rocket Ranger first appeared on the Amiga. As usual with Commodore software it featured very high quality graphics and sound accompanied with some superb plotting and execution. And we're glad to see the ST version is every bit as good, in fact almost identical. The only real gripe about the conversion is that it comes on three disks, with a tremendous amount of disk swapping.

Even with the disk swapping Rocket Ranger is an absorbing, taxing game which should appeal to most people who like challenging interactive adventure modes.

ACE RATING 8/10

Rocket Ranger on the ST



C64

NEW ZEALAND STORY

Comcast, C64 CD-ROM Amiga version reviewed issue 24 Ace Rating 8/10

The 1-bit graphics are very neat and tidy, though the amount of brown and yellow used on the colour scheme leaves a little bit to be desired. The sound track is as cutting as ever and complements the game perfectly. Most importantly though it is immensely playable, even if it does only give a few points to the 15 bit predecessor.

ACE RATING 8/10

AMIGA

JACK NICHOLAS' GREATEST 18 HOLES OF MAJOR CHAMPIONSHIP GOLF

Acadade, Amiga CD-ROM PC version reviewed issue 23, Ace Rating 8/10

Until now the only way of getting a really good outing on the green in bad weather was via Leaderboard. It too the demerit of that market was broken by the PC and C64 version of this game. In typical Acadade style it features digitised pictures, speech and glossy intro screens, which help present an equally glossy game.

All the major features you'd expect are here, shots and hooks, water, mud, rough, bunkers in fact everything but the crowd. The only complaint is the length of time taken to draw up the screen, roughly three seconds, though it seems longer.

The ideal game for the golf enthused, plays well, looks good, performs well. Thanks up to Acadade.

Ace Rating 8/10

ROBOCOP

Comcast, Amiga 2 HD-Disk Spectrum version reviewed issue 18, Ace rating 8/10

Shortly after the appearance of the ST version Comcast promised that Amiga Robocop would feature full screen graphics as opposed to the ridiculous vertical leader, plus lots of extra effects. Sadly the penny didn't drop that any and what we were left with was an almost identical port from the ST.

Looking on the bright side though, it is a pretty good game. Not an actual arcade conversion but the license of the film, Comcast had the ability to make the odd tweaks and changes to the layout. These include several between level suspense such as a shooting range and matching photo-fit pictures.

Unfortunately to see a port over from the ST, but still a pretty good, playable game.

ACE RATING 8/10

SPECTRUM

NEW ZEALAND STORY

Comcast, Spectrum CD-ROM Amiga version reviewed issue 28 Ace Rating 8/10

Although absent at the port by Rainbow Islands on the 1-bit versions, the eight-bit conversions of New Zealand Story have been surprisingly good indeed out the C64 version elsewhere on this page. The Spectrum conversion is particularly impressive. To reveal the Spectrum version is monochromatic with black on yellow as the colour choice. Despite this it still plays very well and holds its own in comparison. A game worthy of a place in the collection.

ACE RATING 8/10

New Zealand Story



GREAT AMIGA CONVERSION

PAPERBOY

Elite Amiga C18.00

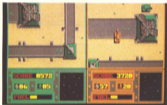
Everybody's favorite comic comes to the Amiga at last, and few ever left us at home. Take the usual broads, and put alongside it the word Perfect if you'd like to be a big fan of Swampy (Swamp) and there you have a place to describe Elite's conversion. To describe simply how the game works, you are a paperboy and you have to deliver papers the American way, by throwing them at buildings very hard. So hard, you can topple giants, break windows, and level greenhouses. Only a certain number of the houses on your run are subscribers, and you'd better be sure to deliver all of them. My subscriber you send out, instantly stops subscribing. Run out of subscribers and it's game over.

The graphics have been copied perfectly, as has the sound, right down to the wipers and. Fans of the original should most definitely get hold of this version, and people who have never heard of it should join the queue, otherwise you'll really be missing something.

ACE RATING: 870



FUN ON THE C64



FIREPOWER

MicroSystems, C64, C64G, C64, C14.99-16

Firepower may not have been a resounding success for MicroSystems upon its release as an Amiga title a while back, but as a free player game it has few equals. Now being re-released by The Software Company Ltd, the C64 version has finally seen the light of day, and what a fitting conversion it is too.

This is how it works. Two players, either human or computer, fight a private war between themselves. Each has a large base, full of guns, walls and buildings. Some of the buildings contain extra ammunition, some contain medical supplies and one of them contains the flag. My guess you've probably already guessed the idea. Get into the opponent's base, steal the flag and get home again.

Played as a split screen multi scrolling plan view shoot/steal, the playing area is huge, so just finding your opponent or his flag is a problem. To add to the problem, enemy guns fire constantly at you, so do the enemy telecasters that buzz overhead. Every shot deducts from your energy, and when your energy is spent, you lose a tank and start again back at your base.

The graphics are slightly blocky, as can only be expected with a 64 game, but well coloured, and the feel of the Amiga version has been carried over well indeed. Sound is limited to a constant rambling of the tanks and boom noises, which does the job well-enough.

The most important thing that could have been carried over, and one that has (thankfully) is the fun level. Even as an 8 bit game, Firepower is still not ordinarily fun to play. One definitely to look out for.

ACE RATING: 841

TRIVIAL AMIGA CONVERSION

TRIVIAL PURSUIT

Domark C18.99.00

The world's most boring board game comes to the Amiga, and now you can have hours of endless fun naming major river tributaries and correctly identifying the shape of Ghent's bittinnank.

The idea is simple. Move around the hexagonal board, answering trivia questions as you go along. Land on one of the corners of the board, and you get to answer a special question that, if answered correctly, will result in you receiving a "wedge" to fit in your piece. Display an amazing intellectual feat and obtain all six wedges, and it's a race to the centre of the board where you answer one final trivia question, chosen for everybody else from the six categories available, and then the game is yours.

The one real problem with TP is that it's just too easy to cheat. The computer asks you a question and then asks you whether you got it right or not. No form of input is required. There is the option to play solo, but as the only real challenge involved is trying to retain interest, it isn't fun.

Graphically a lousy port of the Amiga to its limits, and the sound wouldn't sound out of place on a 64. A pretty dull game, if you ask me, but if you like this sort of thing, you might as well buy the boardgame. After all an Amiga might look out of place at a posh dinner party.

ACE RATING: 690



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KICK OFF
SCORES WITH REVIEWERS



- * **ONE - OVERALL 88%** - Most playable soccer simulation in history. Realism is the name of the game. HIGHLY RECOMMENDED.
- * **TOP - OVERALL 88%** - So Realistic, So Fun, Soooo Addictive. Beats all other football simulations out the window.
- * **AMIGA FORMAT - GOLD - OVERALL 91%** - The best football game on the Amiga today.
- * **THE ONE - OVERALL 86%** - The game is worth a job to play. By far the best to appear on 16 bit. It is all over but the shouting.
- * **POPULAR COMPUTING WEEKLY - OVERALL 94%** - The reputation gets blown away by the utter brilliance of KICK OFF, which has the proper options and the best gameplay seen in any football game.
- * **THE ACE** - A great football game that will have you queuing up for a season ticket.
- * **NON COMPUTER EXPRESS** - KICK OFF is simply the best football sim we've played on any mine. It's fast, furious and immersion fun. Go and buy it!
- * **THE GAME MACHINE - OVERALL 87%** - Best 16 bit soccer simulator yet. True football skills are needed in every sense of the word.
- * **ST USER - OVERALL 9** - The whole game is a complete delight to play and incredibly addictive. This is one of the fastest and most exciting action games around and it just has to be the best football simulation on.

PLAYING IT IS EASY - MASTERING IT WILL TAKE TIME - A LOT OF TIME



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ARCADEOLOGY

JULIAN RICHALL GOES BACK IN TIME

Ever wondered why so many people think computer games are 'evil', or what the bug was on Breakfast, or how Donkey Kong got its name? Find out as Julian Richall continues his history of the arcade phenomenon...

While the months of the first video games going into full production, the Japanese reported a coin shortage, and many video makers had to be forced to cope with the growing demand. In Britain, arcade attendances quadrupled, and profits increased tenfold. Space Invaders-related crimes were even reported; it was blamed for truancy, and with the help of topical media sensationalism, Space Invaders gained a certain notoriety, a stigma which, sadly, video games still bear today. The invaders had landed...

The first arcade video game appeared during 1975. It was called Pong, and was a sort of two-player video tennis. Each contestant controlled a bat, with the idea to get the video ball past your opponent. The contest was judged over fifteen rounds. Boring stuff, really, but fun little game.

An interesting point is that two years later, Nolan Bushnell, designer of the original Pong game, produced another video game called Computer Space. This was a one-on-one battle between a ship and a flying saucer, and its video track (which featured thrust and noise control) Unfortunately this little beauty arrived on the scene about six years too early - only 2000 machines were sold.

Feature - surely the most famous video character of all time?



In the years up to 1975, console began to get increasingly more complicated. Breakout games created a new craze, and developed with advancing wits, multiballs and striking bats. The top Breakout game, Atari's Super Breakout, gave the player four different Breakout scenarios in one box. Incidentally, the first breakout machines were 'bugged' - if the ball fell appeared on the right, there was a 25% chance that you wouldn't be able to get a particular brick on the fourth screen and you'd have to trash your game!

Onscreen tanks and air combat games were also popular, where players fought one another with identical tanks, airplanes and jets... Cloning games appeared, but were very simplistic, incorporating an overhead view and scrolling roads, of which Smokey Joe, a fire-fighting game, and Super Bug were prime examples. Atari took the mould with Flight Simulator, a 3D game in which the player traced down a road whose path was comprised of white dots.

Sega also entered the video game market with two through-the-coastal shoot 'em ups, but again technology limitations resulted in them being very simple. Graphics on all the early machines were black and white, and screen resolutions were very low, with legible sprites.

Atari finally introduced the first color video game into the arcades early in 1978 with their revolutionary, but very expensive Star Fire. It was a 3D game and came in a large 60" cabinet, but was still fairly simplistic, with the player attempting to shoot down craft suspiciously like the ones in Star Wars and Star Wars Galactic.

But finally, in mid-1978, Japanese psychologists came up with an idea that was to create the video game boom - Space Invaders. But even they didn't get it quite right. Being developed simultaneously with Computer Space was a game called Blue Shark, which the manufacturers were very confidently backing as 'the' hot video game of the year. Space Invaders was merely considered a novelty which might become a bit of a cult machine.

How wrong they were...

INVADER INVASION

At the main Japanese trade show in the Summer of '78, early indication of the Space Invaders potential success came when hundreds of orders were taken on the spot. Star Shark was soon forgotten as the Space Invaders boom really got underway. Within months you could see Space Invader records, books, pencil cases, T-shirts, underwear... It was truly a phenomenon.

In the potential of Space Invaders was realised, copies and derivatives of the machine came onto the market. Believe it or not, the original Space Invaders wasn't copy-righted, and different manufacturers created Space Invaders Deluxe, Super Invaders, Space Invaders II, Fast Invaders, Space Invaders tabletop machines, colour Space Invaders... And so it continued, with the flood-



Asterix Blastout appeared in 1981, and was one of the many European clones which appeared that year.

DONKEY KONG??

If you think Donkey Kong sounds a rather strange name, you'd be quite right. It should have been called *Monkey Kong*, but a faulty telec between Japan and America resulted in the machine cabinets being manufactured with the 'Donkey' moniker all over it.

Manufacturers Nintendo sadly changed the coin, and the game forever became Donkey Kong.

If that's not bad, what about *Continental Circus*, not a bad name, but for a rising game?? It should, of course, have been *Continental-Circus*.

ty title scores using the goal for a year before other, better machines appeared in the streets and the invaders finally burst.

The class of 1980 was a mixed bunch, with invaders clones and derivatives still appearing in various forms. But the more interesting games included Atari's *Missile Command*, *Centipede* and *Asteroids*, Williams' highly advanced *Defender*, Galaxians (which would be cloned and used as the basis for a myriad of other machines over the following year) and a half, *Propper*, *Battlezone*, *Skywarrior* and *Demey Kong*.

And of course there was *Pac-Man*, a machine that was responsible for the second arcade boom. The highly addictive and non-violent gameplay drew crowds punters from all quarters. Female arcade attendance increased (initially, parents came to play... and those out to make a quick buck on the latest craze increased *Pac-Man*'s success with *Pac-Man* merchandise beyond belief) - sweets, T-shirts, comics, a cartoon series, licensed cereal, cuddly toys, towels, clocks, watches - the list was endless.

But sadly, *Pac-Man* was to be the last major arcade phenomenon. As coin-op manufacturers continued to release invader-*Pac-Man* clones, arcades began to lose interest and arcade attendance began to dwindle back to a more normal level. This, of course, spelled disaster for many companies, and during 1983 the arcade industry in America went through a very lean time, with many companies winding up their pens.

Even the advent of laser disk arcade machines couldn't bring back the punters who were lost from the *Pac-Man* games... and as the market finally settled down to meet its demand, these days the arcade industry is very healthy, but one wonders what surprises arcade manufacturers have in store for us over the next few years... and can they ever replicate a third massive video game boom?



The instruction diagram for *Pac-Man* - suitably simple: the manufacturer was confident that their 'Patented Non-violent structure' would draw the punters.

TIME, GENTLEMEN, PLEASE...

An interesting point to note about early video coin-ops was their game time limitations. Games that used a system of lives were rare, instead, other game mechanics were employed to make sure that games were short and coins kept on rolling in. For example, many survival games (*Red Baron*, *Wile E. Coyote*) were contests played over a fixed time of three rounds, thus limiting game time to a certain extent (unless of course you get too wags attempting to cause annoyance but not shooting each other). Other games were played over a time limit, with the player having to score a set target to increase his time. As the game progressed, the targets would become increasingly difficult to achieve, and consequently even good players couldn't last for more than a few minutes. Lives certainly seemed like a good concept when first employed - games could last for a few weeks. But for players who could actually master games could play for hours on a single coin - in fact the reward is over 87 hours! Nowadays arcade games always have a time end, so that play time is limited - even to experts.



Space Truck was a typical example of a game limited by short time rather than lives. 1000 attack becomes *Samurai* with such new world! Increased the production, with always managed the profit, the game even gave you a personal chance after you'd lost all your chips.



Yet another Galaxians clone, *Moon Cresta* was one of the first games to feature progressive gameplay, enabling to increase your firepower by shooting with other portions of your ship.



Midway's original *Galaxians*, the game that spawned a hundred others.

FEMALE ARCADESTERS

When the video game boom occurred, it was noted that players of the machines were predominantly male. It had hardly any females actually played the machines at all! Why this was the case was a mystery that machine manufacturers tried to answer, but couldn't... until Midway accidentally stumbled upon some sort of solution in 1980 when *Pac-Man* began to march his way into the streets. As if a sudden female craze attendance increased tenfold - *Pac-Man* was a game that appealed to both sexes! Its combination of skill and non-violence seemed to be the answer, but unfortunately neither Midway or any other coin-op manufacturers could follow up *Pac-Man*, and as a result female attendance in the streets slumped again, and has remained far lower than male attendance ever since!



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MAKING IT...

AND NOT JUST MUSIC EITHER. CAN MIDI EARN YOU KEEK?

Who is *not* into MIDI, but many of us tend to overlook it because we assume that it requires either musical or detailed technical knowledge. "You go out and buy your MIDI keyboard, your MIDI interface (or your ST with one built-in), your MIDI software and then...and then what?"

ACE has given several practical answers to this thorny question in previous issues, ranging from a guide to the MIDI standard itself to the first four issues to a detailed look at cheap keyboards and sound modules. This month, however, we're going to look at something completely different: the use of MIDI by people who want to make a living from it, not for games or software but for adverts, videos, plays, records and playing live.

We chose people at various stages of their respective careers from the pros (with well over a year of experience) to the ones just starting out. By looking at their stories it provides you with the one thing you don't get with the software - first hand experience. The interesting thing is that not all of them are musically (or computer literate) - in fact all of them would admit to a slight phobia about computers in the vital stages. All of them have one thing in common though - a driving to achieve what they've set for itself.

EDDIE GRATHAM

In the age of 18, Eddie Gratham finished school, bought himself a synthesizer and decided to figure out all about MIDI. Having learnt about one instrument he bought another and repeated the process. In the meantime he found a studio not far from where he lived that was already using a Commodore-64 plus C-Lab 14 track software to produce tracks for anybody and anything.

This was in the front room of one John Foster, who had been adding bit by bit to his collection of keyboards and equipment, paying for it by playing any sort of gigs that came to hand. Dipping into some savings and borrowing money from relatives Eddie bought what was then a superior synth, albeit second-hand - a Yamaha DX5. By pooling resources with one he was able to gain not only valuable experience of putting tracks together for others and artists but also firsthand knowledge of how computer sequencers worked with MIDI.

Two years ago the studio bought an ST 1040 and Steinberg Pro 24 sequencer having decided that the Commodore was too limited in speed and memory. As the money started to come in from sequencing backing tracks for the money went out in new equipment - the most expensive being an Akai 5800 sampler costing a shade under £2000. Because of the space limitations imposed by the size of the room the only way for it to work is to be purely a MIDI based studio. The only live recording area is about the size of the average fridge.

The big advantage that a low-cost MIDI based studio has is that your overheads are low. Provided you are able to provide a reasonable standard you can come in with some

THE ACE TEN POINT GUIDE TO MAKING A LIVING FROM MIDI STUDIO WORK...

- 1** The first thing you will need is something that only you can provide - the determination. You have to be prepared to work quite long hours, often for very little reward.
- 2** Start small - with a computer, like say an ST or Amiga, and maybe a tone module that can cope with drums. One good buy I spotted recently was the Casio CZ2000 (see ACE issue 24) which provides four channels of sound plus one of drums. This unit has actually been superseded by the most recent Casio keyboards and is therefore an excellent discounted or second-hand buy. The most basic software is actually available on Public Domain.
- 3** You will need a recorder, preferably a 4-track plus a cassette deck to mix into, plus a decent set of
- speakers and an amplifier.
- 4** If you are confident enough in your skills, be pushy! Make it known that you are willing to put music and/or sound effects in anything and everything. The local youth club, drama group, camera club - in short, anything.
- 5** If you know a little, see if you can hang around there - get friendly but don't get in the way.
- 6** Check out the nearby colleges; some might run daytime or evening courses.
- 7** Maintain a portfolio of all your worthwhile recordings that you can play to prospective clients. It needn't necessarily be of your own material, but that rather depends on whether you see yourself as a com-
- poser, arranger, performer or technician. If sending material, make sure the presentation is perfect.
- 8** If you think you have a reasonable and convincing short tape, try looking in your local yellow pages for video production companies. It's possible to go and see them and see what they want in the way of music. With the uptake of more video stations on the horizon there is going to be more work in this area, so try and get in.
- 9** Keep in with your local music shops - take out card adverts at first and build your contacts up.
- 10** Keep your equipment clean and in good shape, otherwise your first season could end in a pile of bits and pieces followed by a blank screen.



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very competitive rates. When even things like plugs, leads and sockets can mean a painful loss in your pocket you very quickly learn how to solder and build the odd bit or two to keep the cash down.

One area of work they've developed is producing professional recordings. By acting as a production studio, John and Eddie can come up with a complete backing track on a 35 track machine which can then be taken to a full-blown studio for acoustic instruments and vocals to be added. Musicians can take place either there or in a smaller studio; but the basic tracks have been provided at a fraction of the cost of doing the whole thing in the full studio. The 35 track can also be 'stripped' with a 16-track machine to give the artists room to add further sequenced tracks or to work with video if necessary. To add this SMP'll code the studio is fitted out with a Jan Cooper stereo box which links between the speed of the tape and the speed of the computer sequence.

Wasting his savings, Eddie added to the OSC with a drum machine and then an ST 1640 running Steinberg's Pro 24. He then took the financial plunge and, timing it wisely, borrowed money from the bank having convinced them that there was work there. He bought an EPS sampler and a Roland U210 multitrack CPU sampler and a Roland U210 multitrack sample player. This meant that he could work at home as well as helping out in the studio and try to get work for himself. Songs are started at his own home - the disk taken into the studio when it is free and then completed in full and recorded onto the 16 track. Eddie is also getting work programming in other studios. At the time of writing he was working on a British film album.

At present he is just about breaking even for both Eddie and his bank manager would appreciate a little more work. He is on 021-45041322.

DAVE AND RICE

In good old entertainment agency terms, Dave and Rice are "A Night/Day Duo" and work the clubs most weekends, averaging about three gigs a week. Dave on guitar, Rice on vocals and the rest from a DJ/30 tone module. Their personal preferences are for music, 4x4s, blues, brothers and plenty of authentic Rhythm and Blues.

Not, in fact, the sort of act you would expect a computer to be of the eminent help with. Go back ten or fifteen years and the club crowd could afford to pay for a group to play every Friday, Saturday and Sunday, but as the money got tighter, the size of bands got smaller. To keep costs down it became common for singers to pay studio musicians to record a backing tape, but the initial investment for this would have cost Dave and Rice a small fortune in session fees. Although Dave is a drummer turned guitarist, his keyboard skills are reasonably limited so a period of trying to record their own backing tapes proved more successful.

Realising about MIDI they decided to use a small dedicated sequencer along with a Roland sampling keyboard that is multi-timbral. The disadvantage was that the sequencer only very correct minor timing errors quickly enough it could record at a much slower pace and then be taken up to speed. The other problem was that if you made a

WHY COMPUTERS MEAN LOWER COSTS FOR MUSICIANS...

In the professional world it is very common for musicians to build up banks of themes - store the sequences (and in some cases the sounds) on disk and then use a studio that they know has the same soft- and hardware. Rather than rehearse for hours or waste valuable studio time, everything is prepared beforehand.

For the gigging musician a computer can save pounds in writing up sounds on the synth, pounds in storing sounds of the synth if you use what is known as a generic patch liberator, which in essence goes around to any piece of MIDI equipment and takes a copy of its memory, be it sounds or patterns.

As you will see, many acts use sequencing as an essential part of the set. Using a tiny LOG display on dedicated sequencers will save time and trouble and allow the musician to put his or her backing sequences together with less frustration and hence more attention to detail. This is money, and besides which... a decently sequenced set gets you more work and sounds the part. Despite a certain amount of objections to this way of working, it has always been a believer in the music. "Talent will out."

mistake. It took so much time fiddling about trying to present the burnt note that it was easier to start that particular track over again. A few months back they therefore invested some big money into an ST 1640 plus Cubits Creator. This provides them with visual editing and sections of songs can be saved together with little more than the press of the mouse.

They opted for the four-bank 3D program which stores backings of their sound patches. Songs for the set are assembled while timing and were editing or doubling up on sections can be made before dumping out to the small PR100 Roland sequencer which they use live. The computer has enabled them to use their equipment in a much easier and far more practical manner.



JAMES ARCHER

James works mainly from the 35 track studio at his home in London and writes music primarily for music libraries and television. To date he has music gone as theme tunes for the world Class Championships, a series called Omega and it has cropped up as background music for things as diverse as 'Tomorrow's World' and 'The Russ Abbot Show'. He also runs a one-gig second company called Lumina which has had three releases so far.

James started by sending tapes of short, almost 40s, sound effects to libraries made

on his Roland Jupiter 6 as he figured that it was a good idea to pick on a topic that perhaps hadn't been exploited. Its acceptance and subsequent use led him to further work and more equipment - at present for his own machine he uses an Akai/Linn MPC60 dedicated MIDI sequencer in conjunction with an Akai 51000 sampler and a load of other synths, mainly the Roland TB. The drawback must occupy a large portion of his time and for this it is the sound and blend of the instruments that is important.

He has an Amiga which at present he uses mainly for graphics but he has recently used the speech synthesis package on it as part of his new sound library CD 'Festival Street'. Although he uses the Amiga 'Music II' package and viewed it with interest he is very happy with the sequencer he has, he does bring that to his work with the idea for so long and is at one with the way it works. Like any musician piece of creative soft- or hardware, it has become an extension of his hands and consequently is very fast to work with.

Telling us the record company was and still is a bit of work, he would advise anybody who is thinking of doing this to work out the distribution - say a mail order at a particular society that may be interested, and to have more than one album to be released initially. Also it is useful to have a partner to share the problems - both practical and financial.

DLIO WARNING

In Issue 20 I reviewed the Soundbits 3D sound editor for the Roland D10, D30 and D110. It transpires that as far as the D110 tone module goes Roland have been moving the MIDI addresses internally without making it public knowledge. Consequently 3D, in conjunction with all other D110 programmers has problems in communicating with some modules. The only way to tell what module you have is to switch off, then power up holding buttons number 1, 5, and 8 down on the lower row of buttons and that is scrolling from the left. Anything higher than 001.00 and most programs won't work. However if you have the latest version, 001.00 mighting should be OK. If in doubt ring Roland on 01 960 4178.

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ADVENTURE

GAMES NEWS AND REVIEWS FOR THOSE WHO PREFER THINKING TO BLASTING

HOUND OF SHADOW

Sneak preview of Electronic Arts' new RPG/text adventure

Electronic Arts have really given RPGs a name for money over the past few years with titles like *The Bard's Tale* series and *Wastland*. There's just one fly in the ointment - Interplay, the company responsible for these glowing titles, have decided to go it alone and publish their own games. Where does that leave Electronic Arts?

Developing products like *Hound of Shadow*, that's where. Obviously keen to maintain their reputation, EA are putting their all into this title number, and to keep up the continuity, *RPG elements* play a major part in the game.

However, and this should be good news for some mainstream gamers, EA are keen to develop RPG. Not only that, but they're aiming to have the best of both worlds in the game by strengthening the traditional graphic adventure element.

We didn't want to produce another stereotypical adventure game with logical puzzles," said product manager Jon Ellis, "instead we went for a knowledge based game where progress depends on the accumulation of skills information."

The program, developed by Eblatth Games, takes a leaf out of Tolkien's book by containing an excellent narration of J.R.R. Tolkien's horror stories, though *Hound of Shadow* takes its subject matter more seriously than *LotR*. The scenario is set in the 1930s and revolves around a contemporary map of central London - particularly the *Southern Oxford Street* area, which is pretty familiar even today, let alone fifty years ago.

You begin by attending a reunion at which you discover that a certain Adept Kermis is actually a fraud, but - more surprisingly - he is able to channel freestanding and apparently good messages from some diabolic agency without giving the game away, the rest of the story involves gathering information as you now towards a confrontation with the agency.



Most of the character definition features of *Shadow* are presented in graphical form. In this game, you learn to appreciate what your character did in the past. However, too much raw experience may change your skills, but it will also render you liable to fits of insanity!

CHARACTER POINTS

Like any RPG-based game, the first thing you do in *Hound of Shadow* is define your game persona. There are no parties in this game - it's just you versus the agency. You start by choosing sex, age, and (generously) your birth date. The computer then automatically generates values for eight main attributes that include ratings for physical attractiveness and height as well as the usual strength, dexterity and so on.

Strangely, you don't get to see exactly what these values are, instead, the computer prints out a description of your character, dwelling on your good and bad points, as in "You are good looking, of average height, and extremely handsome..." There's no reason behind this, however. EA were determined not to adopt the 'dice-and-dice' approach to RPGing, since they felt that the complexity of many traditional RPGs put people off.

Personally, I rather like tables of numbers that tell me exactly how my character is defined, but I can understand the authors here. And reading a bespoke description of my persona, running in several lines of character analysis, was an interesting experience!

In addition to the normal character attributes, you can choose a profession from several or other, ranging from *journalist* to *historian*.

Your attributes do not change during a game, but your skills do, and it's here that the program becomes a little more conventional. There are many different skills to master and these, in conjunction with your profession, are all initially setup using attractive graphical displays, bar charts, and icons. If you feel earlier that the computer was defining your character for you, you can leave that feeling at that point.

Skills are particularly significant when combined with certain professions - a historian with good anthropological skills, for example, might be able to spot the infamous Adept Kermis's turban is actually just the wrong way round. All this means that the progress of the game is clearly and unobscuredly influenced by your character attributes, which makes a

change from some RPGs where the only thing that seems to matter is how much strength you have left.

Skills not only affect the things you notice, but also how you interact with other characters and objects, so choosing them carefully brings an attractive non-driven mood to what is normally in the game.

Once you've made your selection the program gives you a detailed text description of your character that runs to several lines. Sometimes these can be quite amusing, including such snippets as "You are often called to sing at parties and are active with a knife" or "You are quite an air-cake and can read people like a book".



Hound of Shadow boasts some beautiful digitized graphics that really enhance the atmosphere. The text isn't quite up to Interplay's *LotR* horror standard, but plus like these certainly help to make up the difference...

After this distinctly character-dominated opening, the game springs another surprise by apparently changing styles into a typical (but very accomplished) text adventure. The difference, however, is that you spend less time finding and using objects and more time interacting with other people, unearthing clues, and exploring. The textual descriptions are excellent as are the graphics and the game, although it doesn't tell you which words it doesn't understand, is perfectly acceptable, including the usual *GO TO* (location) command as well as *SAVE*, *LOAD*, and good use of pronouns for looking 'behind' and 'underneath' things.

Once you're into the adventure, time begins to tick by in the game as well as in real life and although the pace is for the most part leisurely, you'll find that events suddenly accelerate once you get towards the end.

There's no doubt that *Hound of Shadow* is going to be a very attractive product when it hits the shelves. We were only able to test a preliminary version, so any definitive rating has to wait until we see the finished product, however, what we've seen leads us to believe that EA without Interplay is not quite the old story you may have expected. Stand by for a series of games that could well end up by giving *Stuart Little* a run for its money...

Steve Cooke



TOWER OF BABEL

Tower of Babel is an intricate 3D strategy game involving an interconnecting network of towers, platforms and lifts all rendered in solid 3D with innovative light and shading techniques. Take control of robot spiders and program them to solve puzzles and interact with other creatures, such as Pushers, Zappers and Grabbers. Alternatively, time controls is available to you at any time for instantaneous reaction to the game's developer. For the more adventurous among you, there is a complete game designer, allowing the construction of your own series of Towers, platforms and lifts. Answer to fox your friends with your own fiendish default creations. More than just a game, more to suit a purpose - Tower of Babel is a whole new world in strategy gaming.

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SWORD OF ARAGON

SSI give you the chance to indulge in a little fantasy war-mongering...

It's a businessman's life being a fantasy wargamer. Staying sane is one thing, but winning popular opinion with a few well-timed bits of business investment is a task more suited to Maggie than a Vargoth (Game difference: £2).

The medieval combat and economic management game has been around as long as I can remember. Feudal lords were trying to take over the neighbouring kingdoms in much the same fashion back in the Dark Ages of the 300s (so called because the screen went dark every time it had to think). But SSI went the sort of company to merely recreate a 10th- or 11th-century game on the PC. With a reputation as one of the largest established specialist strategy houses, you can be sure that *Sword of Aragon* has a bright, sharp edge when it comes to war factors.

The first is an element of everybody's favour of the moment - role playing. It's no longer enough just to be an anonymous player, to take on the guise of the son and heir to the Duke of Aledo, a just and good ruler who had sworn to rid the land of raiders and return order and wealth where now there is only chaos. Unfortunately for him he pipped his legs before he could complete his ambitious, not to say somewhat familiar, task.



Lord of Aragon - wargaming with fantasy as a strategy.

You also get to choose your character type from Knight, Wizard, Mage, Ranger or Priest. Each has its own advantages and disadvantages, plus combat or magical abilities. You start with several noble supporters and others will join you as play progresses and their character class will be influenced by yours. You'll also advance by levels, depending on the daring deeds you do, just like any other good rog character.

Before you can set off adventuring you'll need to don your Nigel Lanson armour and take care of the peasants at home. Taking a tip from the policies I immediately dropped the tax rate a couple of percent while increasing basic agricultural spending. Result: a happy populace, which is useful when recruiting. Commands in this section are easy to enter, using a series of mnemonics, and there's a lot of information to save you from slipping into the red, which in these fantasy times means bloodied - your own.

The citizens get even more delighted when we moved out of the World Game and into battle with a band of iron sets come riding from the north west. Arranging your troops will be familiar to seasoned wargamers. You select units with a mouse cursor and issue commands from a menu using initial letters.

Battle orders are infinitely variable, providing both all-out attack and more defensive patterns. There are ranged weapons and war spells, which become stronger as you gain experience. If you temporarily tire of killing the troops to attack you can switch to auto pilot, merely choosing how aggressive you want them to be. The mice may not fight the best battles but it will suffice while you stop off for a coffee.

After the first fight you should find yourself in possession of one of your father's belongings. Bringing together the Scimitar of the Red and the Crown of the Priest and the Amulet of the

de appears to be a vital part of solving the quest. You should also receive a new recruit which is impressed by your military skills for signs up immediately. Then more of events around the kingdom will appear and it's up to you to choose which number to follow.

Play progresses in a succession of monthly economic decisions followed by movement and battle sequences, during which you'll uncover the secrets of the unexplored central areas of Aragon and try to control its settlements. You can't afford to neglect either aspect. Though ultimate victory can only be obtained by exploration and military means, you depend on the civilian population for the gold pieces to maintain your armies and the raw recruits which



Oh, we're cheating, but just as we want to prove we got this much greater command of SSI's new loan adventure, here's the Total Coming over to an SSI page near you...

man them.

SSI describes this as "epic" and its grand scale is undeniable. For hardened strategists their complexity will probably override the sense of depth on about the scenario. But new content to the game may well be overshadowed by the number of factors under their control. It's also a rather costly mechanical experience compared with RPGs such as the Dungeons and Dragons series (see box). If you really want to relate to your characters, you may find the *Sword* rather rusty.

John Wilson

LANDSCAPE	15
A fairly basic landscape with some sophisticated terrain. But plenty of features in the game.	
SCENARIO	60
Standard collection of fantasy fantasy scenarios which will meet individuality depending on scenario. Creative in details but not very original. Includes dialog with some commands and good options.	
CHALLENGE	60
Not too challenging - a wargame, but must be difficult to complete for the more hardcore fantasy games, but progress will be fast from getting to help from bots.	
SYSTEM	60
A very well-developed front end, whether viewed from the adventure RPG or the wargame angle. Programs the standard direct form playing the standard back end, and <i>Sword</i> doesn't seem to be leaving any.	

CHIPS AND COUNTERS

Sword of Aragon is an interesting refinement of an ancient game. Unfortunately its designers still seem trapped by some of the traditions of wargaming...

Reading the manual reveals the designers' economy: references to boxes and stacking lists indicate that their thinking is still firmly rooted in cardboard counters and hexagonal grids. It's a pity when you can do so much more in creative presentation with a computer.

However the routine crunching power of the micro does free up the player from the dull and complex rule books and endless calculations which makes many traditional games

so infuriating for all but the most dedicated players. The amount of time you'd spend cross-referencing tables and noting the date of a game of this scale would make it near impossible to play.

In the old *Sword of Aragon* is perhaps best seen as a computer simulation of board games. In this light it scores highly and will please players. But pure computer gamers should think carefully before buying.

ACE RATING 75%

Sword of Aragon attempts to cover every aspect of being a fantasy world ruler, from leading your troops into battle to maintaining a stable economy. It rather overachieves itself, resulting in a game which will lose strategy aficionados, impressed but not quite too involved for many people.

NO PROBLEM!

Just soon this month for help with *ST Chronoquest* (which everyone seems to be cursing over) and a few juicy tips for *Manhunter* new York. Keep those tippees coming in...

CHRONO QUEST THE SOLUTION

India: This is the first time period you must visit. Use the first disc in the slot. After the reinitialization in India go N. Enter the house and USE your gloves on the man's hand. Go S, E, E, NE. USE the nose the man gives you on the mailbox. Enter the temple and USE the bells in the water. Get temple and ride rooftop. Go to the rear. USE water on his hand. Get key then go S, E, SE, N, USE key on door. Go N, and get piece of punch card. Then go S, W, N. Get sword and return to Egypt. Press the switch with the posthul icon to return home.

Egypt: The second time period you must visit. Remember to use the scroll. After the reinitialization in Egypt go N, E, N, N. Look in the bush at the left of the entrance. Get the arrow. Examine scroll. USE the posthul icon to push the rocks with the combination that is written on the scroll. The combination

is top, top left, top right, top right. Go N, N, USE arrow on statue. Go NW, USE pyramid to get to the sarcophagus chamber. USE the posthul icon in the second, the third, the fourth and the fifth towers. Get the ring from the mummy. Close sarcophagus and get the piece of the punch card. Go down, then N, USE the fern icon on the second tower. Go down, S, S, W, S. Enter Egypt and return to the rhotos.

Prehistory: Make sure you can see your lighter for one more time. Go E. Get bone and grass. Then go E, NE. Get rock. USE grass on roads. Light lighter. USE lighter on roads. Get branch. Go E, S. Look in skull. Get piece of card and return to Egypt.

Maya: Find the three stones, then go W, W, W. Look fence. USE turn icon on statue. Get key. Go E, E, E, NE, NE, N, N, NW, NW, NE, E. USE glasses on bush. USE ring in hole. Wait until 13:00. The beam will be reflected on the door. USE book in star hole. Go on USE key to unlock safe. Get punch card. Now you can make one punch card.

Alan Kohonen • Wichita, Cygnus.

MANHUNTER - NEW YORK.

Play the video game, do not read on all the magic squares but go about to the exit for the map, and note the order in which the two balls are thrown and hit their targets.

When at the background, play the magic game on the left, you will have to look at the left of the background on the main screen first three balls in the order you noted on the arcade game.

Bill Miller • Peachtree

VIEWPOINT

It's true that the top software houses always realized from the start that no matter how much advertising hype was lavished upon their adventures, their sales would never even come near to the latest arcade game conversion, so is the reason for the dis-continuation of Tectonic adventures because Level 9's or Infocom's sales-graph isn't showing any profit margin? I always hoped that these companies were producing these games knowing that even though they weren't selling in fantastic amounts they were giving the minority of adventures interested persons, and I always looked forward to new releases on the adventure field. Perhaps I was wrong.

Steven Marshall • Coast Grafton

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THE BEST OF THE BEST

T R I A D



V O L U M E • 2



01 Menace (Atari) - Best ever shoot 'em up!
Menace will lead you, thanks to its on-screen, the ultimate "just one more game" feeling like no other time.

02 Action
The game is a classic action-adventure, which is a real gem.

03 Action
Introducing a superb game which is impressively presented. Menace is a game which is a real gem. It is a superb addition to your collection, and you'll find it hard to resist its charm.

04 Tetris (Atari) - Best ever puzzle game!
The most original and addictive game in an age!

05 Tetris (Atari) - Best ever puzzle game!
Tetris is one of those simple, addictive games that gets you hooked "just one more game".

06 Tetris (Atari) - Best ever puzzle game!
One of the all-time computer classics... it's perfectly simple and simply perfect!

07 Paffball (Atari) - Best ever beetle game!
It's not to often an addition and action packed action game like this!

08 Paffball (Atari) - Best ever beetle game!
Paffball is a classic game which is a real gem. It is a superb addition to your collection, and you'll find it hard to resist its charm.

09 Action
It's not to often an addition and action packed action game like this!



JUST HOW WEIRD ARE YOU?

It goes without saying that you're pretty odd. After all, you wouldn't have a computer, or be reading ACE, if you weren't. But just lately we've been receiving a lot of mail from people who want to know just how weird they are. Some of you are just a little bit weirded that somebody of a computer marks you with a stamped stigma; you suspect you may be a complete nerd, and you do not feel happy about it. Other readers positively revel in their strangeness, like bugs in film, and simply wish to confirm that they are more peculiar than the next chap with a \$8000 chip and a copy of Popcorn.

Now this specially commissioned ACE Questionnaire will let both sets of computer users discover their IQ (Weirdness Quotient). The higher your score, the weirder you are. And you take - one size fits all! Depending on which of the two groups you belong to, you will either be reassured or worried to death.

HOW TO TAKE THE TEST

The ACE IQ Test is best taken after a prolonged spell of game-playing or, if this is inconvenient, after several hours of indiscriminate TV watching. Either of these activities should induce a suitably blank state of mind. It will also arrange to eat large amounts of junk food beforehand, as much the better.

The IQ test consists of 28 multiple-choice questions. Simply read the question and then answer it (naturally) by selecting one of the choices. Mark down your answers and then turn to page 102 to see what your score adds up to. Then read the appropriate psychological profile for the score you have achieved.

The whole test should take no more than 15 minutes, although after tests may feel it takes up to three hours.

THE QUESTIONS

1. For some reason or other you find yourself at a party rather than at home with your faithful computer. A pretty girl seems to be trying to pick you up. Do you:
(a) Let yourself be picked up, but feel guilty about betraying your computer?
(b) Tell her to get lost because you've planned to finish your latest television game when you get home?
(c) Ask a friend what the hot date's after?
2. You are engaged in a lengthy session of tests when your mother bursts into your room screaming that the house is on fire. Do you:
(a) Say "OK, I'll be down when I've finished this level!"
(b) Carry on playing regardless?
(c) Try to escape but not before saving your computer and entire games collection first?

3. After several years of non-stop games playing your computer decides to give up and explode violently. Do you:
(a) Break down in a flood of uncontrollable grief?
(b) Just notice that anything is wrong?
(c) Spend a few hours - then borrow your father's credit card and buy a better model?

4. Your extra home one day to discover that your younger brother has 'accidentally' wiped all your disks. Do you:
(a) Kill him?
(b) Torture him horribly, and then let him?
(c) Not notice that anything is wrong?

5. Your girlfriend cheats enough to cheat and tells you that either the computer game, or she does. Do you:
(a) Not notice that anything is wrong?
(b) Poo for a better and ask her if she wouldn't mind popping out for a couple of blank disks before she goes?
(c) Beg her not to go, and resort to non-sporting games at three o'clock in the morning?

6. Your doctor tells you that if you don't stop playing games you will go blind. Do you:
(a) Try to cut down to two packages a week?
(b) Ignore him, but put in an advance order for a glass-dog just in case?
(c) Wonder where the voice is coming from?

7. Your parents force you to go on a fortnight's cruise with them, leaving your computer behind. Do you:
(a) Big overboard when they're not looking and swim back?
(b) Smuggle your computer and entire games collection through customs by disguising it all as a packed lunch?
(c) Agree to go but spend the whole holiday playing the arcade machines on board ship?

8. You receive exclusive details of Dr. Cyber's latest invention: a super-charged OS equipped with an on-board ZX81. Do you:
(a) Break down in a fit of uncontrollable laughter?
(b) Wonder if it will run your whole collection of games?
(c) Rush out immediately and buy one?

9. Your friend invites you round to show you how he has managed to forecast global economic trends for the next fifty years on his \$8085 PC using his home-grown financial program. Do you:
(a) Try hard to stay awake, but fail?
(b) Think how lucky you are to have such an incredibly brilliant friend?

- (a) Sit back and try to write a better program on your Dragon 32?

10. Your father approaches you about the horrendously expensive items of computer equipment listed on his Access bill. Do you:
(a) Try to get him hooked on games so that you don't have to send it all back?
(b) Let him off if essential for your Delta-Crest GC8?

- (a) Try to get him hooked on games so that you don't have to send it all back?
(b) Let him off if essential for your Delta-Crest GC8?



- (a) Eat all the Access bills before he gets them?

11. Your mother goes on a computer awareness course and begins using your machine to produce knitting patterns. Do you:
(a) Deliberately infect all her disks with the nastiest virus you can get your hands on?
(b) Change her by the hour?
(c) Wonder who your latest efforts on Delta Point II at last the Par file contains?

12. Faced with the choice between buying the latest version of your favourite programming language and part 3 of your latest game, do you

- (a) Buy the game?
 (b) Buy the language?
 (c) Not applicable because you'd never in a million years have such a thing as a favourite programming language?

13. Your mother complains that there are 'bugs' in your bedroom. Do you

- (a) Promise to tidy up soon?
 (b) Reach for the machine code monitor and get hacking?
 (c) Ask if she knows just what bugs are in the program they are?

14.A Macintosh is

- (a) A desirable computer?
 (b) A quaint word for a ratcatcher?

(c) An apple?

15. Your ideal summer holiday is

- (a) Two weeks of sun, sea, sand etc....
 (b) One week of sun, sea sand etc. and one week of intensive Populot
 (c) Two weeks of intensive Populot

16. Which of the following figures do you consider to have had the most influence on the development of civilisation (as we know it)?

- (a) Aristotle
 (b) Turing
 (c) Jeff Minter

17. Which of the following statements most closely describes your feelings about computers?

- (a) "I adore them"
 (b) "I really like them"

(c) "They're OK"

18. When someone starts talking to you about letters, sprites and screen refresh rates, do your eyes

- (a) Light up with enthusiasm?
 (b) Glaze over with boredom?
 (c) Close?

19. When hand-held consoles become available in the shops, will you

- (a) Ignore them until they are really cheap?
 (b) Buy one immediately, whatever the price?
 (c) Purchase a hand-held buy-one, whatever the price?

20. "Frog" is

- (a) A really good
 (b) One of the first and still one of the greatest video games
 (c) An archaic video game

THE SCORES

1.

- (a) 1. This is a thoroughly normal reaction.
 (b) 2. Pretty odd. We know life-size games are good, but...
 (c) 5. Totally weird.

2.

- (a) 2. Some things are more important than many lines.
 (b) 5. But you can take things too far.
 (c) 1. Very normal.

3.

- (a) 5. It's only a computer, after all.
 (b) 2. A bit too normal - and fearless.
 (c) 3. Great, yes - but let's keep it in proportion.

4.

- (a) 2. Let the punishment fit the crime.
 (b) 5. Very sadistic, very weird.
 (c) 1. Apollingly normal.

5.

- (a) 5. Strange as change can be.
 (b) 5. You-salvoo, self-centred creep...
 (c) 1. It's hard keeping a balance between love and computers.

YOUR WEIRDNESS RATING

0-25 You are abnormally 'normal'. You seem to have no interest whatsoever in computers or computer entertainment. Take out a subscription to ACE and by hand.

26-50 Computers are of great interest to you, but they do not yet dominate your life. You are what our resident ACE psychologist would call 'a well-adjusted personality' - solid, dependable, perhaps just a trifle on the dull side...

50-75 You are well on the way to weirdness. Your computer and its software are of great importance to you, although you still remember to brush your teeth and change your socks once a week. Gradually you will lose your old 'normal' habits and move on to the stage where...

75-100 You are totally and utterly enthralled by the computer. Nothing can compare with the joy and the rapture your trusty machine and your favourite games can supply. Secret intention is of no interest to you, unless it is related to the microchip, you would mug your granny if you needed to raise the cash for a new piece of software. You are weird - but whether that bothers you is another matter altogether. In our psychologist's view, "Weirdness is in the monitor of the beholder."

6.

- (a) 1. Copyright is a precious gift - and it comes in handy for shoot-em-ups.
 (b) 5. A sensible precaution.
 (c) 5. You've had it.

7.

- (a) 5. But can you swim?
 (b) 2. The best of both worlds.
 (c) 1. A perfectly understandable strategy.

8.

- (a) 1. You can still see CDs in certain parts of North London.
 (b) 3. You'll get over it.
 (c) 5. Stark, staring bunkers.

9.

- (a) 1. No, your type wouldn't be interested.
 (b) 3. Administration is only normal.
 (c) 5. Real emulation is funny.

10.

- (a) 5. Nice try.
 (b) 1. It might just work.
 (c) 5. You won't get much credit for that.

11.

- (a) 5. Hubs and nubs.
 (b) 1. The profit-motive is exceedingly odd.

12.

- (a) 5. Not one, pearl one.

13.

- (a) 3. Micky strange.
 (b) 5. Very strange.
 (c) 1. Ordinary.

14.

- (a) 1. Very ill-considered interpretation.
 (b) 3. Not a minute to waste...
 (c) 3. Completely out of touch with reality.

15.

- (a) 5. You know what you want.
 (b) 1. Aahh.
 (c) 3. But is it edible?

16.

- (a) 1. Just like (there's) everyone else.
 (b) 3. Almost 'normal'...
 (c) 5. Utterly paps.

17.

- (a) 1. Grease - credit of civilisation, etc.
 (b) 3. You could make out a case for him.
 (c) 5. Clearly the right answer.

18.

- (a) 5. A bit excessive.
 (b) 3. A strong hint of affection exists.
 (c) 1. Neither hot nor cold.

19.

- (a) 5. Are you kidding?
 (b) 3. Even intellectuals can only stand so much.
 (c) 1. Research shows that 95% of the population reacts in this way.

20.

- (a) 1. Cheapism!
 (b) 5. Money's no object when you're in the grip of a great obsession.
 (c) 3. You're mean - but not that mean.

21.

- (a) 1. Where've you been for the past 25 years?
 (b) 5. A fan.
 (c) 5. Indifference.

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CYBERSPACE

AS WE GO TO PRESS, NEWS ARRIVES OF A STARTLING NEW GRAPHICS DEVELOPMENT

Simon Hudson turns his head to survey the small room, and, walking to the opposite corner, picks up a chair and reasons it a good five feet from its original position. However, regardless if it may appear, this simple action could be one giant leap for the gaming/playing mankind as, neither the room nor the chair actually exist, they're nothing more than computer-generated images in a three-dimensional "virtual-reality".

This is not science fiction, it's not even early theoretical research for some far-fetched experiment which may show results in the distant future - Simon Hudson is marketing manager at Autodesk Inc., and the system which allows him to disappear into a world inside his computer is already up and running. Its name? *Cyberspace*.

Initially developed as a way to manipulate objects in dangerous situations by remote control, *Cyberspace* is now on the verge of becoming a commercially viable reality for users of Computer Aided Design (CAD) systems.

Cyberspace uses customized software to generate a "real" 3D environment. This is itself a nothing new, as CAD packages have always carried out this basic function, allowing designers to view their creations from all angles without going to the expense of building a prototype. Where *Cyberspace* differs is in the unconventional hardware interface, which when donned by the user actually allows entry inside the computer-generated image.



Simon Hudson reaches out into an invisible world

THE HARDWARE

The hardware consists mainly of a bulky "helmet" fashioned "Autodesk" which incorporates



Help! I'm about to be crushed by a giant pink polygon!

two high definition LCDs, projecting a stereoscopic image to each eye (in a similar fashion to the crude red and green glasses used to view 3D movies). Also included in this configuration is a tracking device which coordinates head movement with the displayed image, allowing the user to view a field of vision as exists in the real world.

Movement within the newly created environment could be achieved by simply walking about, but this would cause problems if the computer-generated image was larger than the user's actual environment (what looks like a door in *Cyberspace* could actually be a solid wall in real life - suck!). This problem is overcome by the second piece of hardware - The Glove. As the name suggests, this is a spherical construction which is used to "throw" the environment; rotate the orb forward and objects will appear to float away and so on.

But for complete interaction, the user needs to be able to manipulate any objects within the new world with his or her own hands, and this is where the third piece of hardware - The DataGlove - comes into its own. Perhaps the most innovative invention of the lot, this glove is electronically con-

nected to the rest of the hardware and allows a computer-generated image of the user's hand to precisely mirror the movements of the real thing. Unfortunately the system is currently confined to using a single glove, so attempts at linking up a second have so far ended in failure.

Perhaps the most extraordinary thing about *Cyberspace* however is the cost of research so far: the Autodesk team in San Rafael, California has so far only laid out a paltry \$26,000 in hardware, mainly because of the company's policy of developing systems for existing computers (mainly IBM-compatibles).

This relatively low cost is an encouraging sign for those who would like to see the *Cyberspace* technology incorporated into future games machines - and Simon Hudson is quick to point out the system's suitability for adventure style games in particular.

Imagine a *Falcon* dogfight played out "inside" a three-dimensional cockpit above a solid landscape, or even running onto a full-sized Kirk Dill football pitch with 10 computerized teammates. Scores like these may still be some way off, but Autodesk's research team is bringing them closer all the time.

Who knows? Someday soon you may never have to re-enter the "real" world again...

SUBSCRIBE!

Oops! This issue was so packed with goodies that we had to allow the subs form onto page 127!

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IN THE PINK

THE LINE-UP

108

The ACE software guide – completely updated and including two new sections: RPG and Wargames. Whatever your taste, this is the definitive list of the games you have to have...

117

Fancy yourself as JRT? Of course you don't, but that needn't stop you from getting in an entry in this Oil Imperium compo and winning a pair of genuine leather macho boots...

118

The ACE Crossword, and your chance to win a prize.

120

The indispensable ACE diary includes news of a Hi-Definition TV show, and the Editor's birthday.

121

Shadow of the Beast is one of the most impressive technical achievements we've seen on the Amiga, and it comes with an original Roger Dean T-shirt

as well. Now a selection of lucky readers can walk away with a free copy – could it be you?

122

Pot-pourri!

This is the last page of the magazine to be written... Even WE don't know what's going to be as it

123

The ACE Puzzle.

Dash your brains out on this one, chum.

124

Gasps! Could this really be the death of NGar Thrombo? Here's hoping...

125

The ACE Readers Pages – your ads, your messages, your offers of help, on the pages that belong to the people...

129

Lists, supplied by intrepid readers...

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 fun factor and plenty of additional versus features.

ARKANOID

Imaginon ■ Spectrum £7.95 ■ Atari ST £12.95 ■ Amstrad £8.95 ■ £14.95 ■ MSX £1.95 ■ £8.95 ■ Mac ST £14.95 ■ MSX £8.95 ■ IBMPC £14.95

Conversion from Atari's coin-op, it is by far the best version of the classic breakout. Simple in concept, the player controls a ball at the base of the screen, whacking it left and right. The object is to keep a small ball in play, bouncing it off the left 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. Once you're finished, contribute to the addictions. Is a

ludicrous coin-op conversion. Arkanoid comes out top, but for a different kind of the same theme and come offly music. Try *Alien Squad*, which also leads on the difficulty levels more gradually. ■ **ACE CLASSIC**

BOUNDER

Imaginon Graphics ■ Spectrum £7.95 ■ MSX £1.95 ■ £8.95 ■ Amstrad £8.95 ■ £12.95 ■ MSX £12.95

A great arcade conversion, and very addictive too. 'Bouncer' is all as it sounds: from one platform to another, high above the air fully controlled landscape. Load on marked squares and you can rise with finger or gain a mystery bonus. It's a gas on the one of the game's many levels.

however, and you'll lose a life. Bonus bouncing sections at the end of each level help carry the pace, and those tough gaps really test your timing and reflexes. Bright, with graphics, great music - and it's free! ■ **ACE CLASSIC**

BUBBLE BOBBLE

Pentaton ■ Spectrum £7.95 ■ MSX £1.95 ■ £8.95 ■ Amstrad £8.95 ■ £14.95 ■ Atari ST £12.95

Playability is the essence of this headsplitting coin-op conversion. You use a hand-held bubble-blowing device, sending through 100 more and platform screens, fighting off the 'bubbles' by encouraging them to your bubbles to turn them

out. It's over how you think on the ceiling. Though it's tough to get to grips with at first, the addition levels so great you'll keep coming back for more.

■ **ACE RATED 90**

EXOLON

Horwood ■ Spectrum £7.95 ■ MSX £1.95 ■ £8.95 ■ Amstrad £8.95 ■ £14.95

Gradually superb, frustratingly winning. Absorption is a world you run, look and jump over was along a planet's surface (leaving away at other defenses). A gun and a missile launcher are available for the fun, but if things can't be tough then you can get an invulnerable for extra protection and fire power. ■ **ACE CLASSIC**

NEW ZEALAND STORY

Orion ■ Spectrum £8.95 ■ MSX £1.95 ■ £8.95 ■ Amstrad £14.95 ■ ST £14.95 ■ Amiga £24.95

Although passed at the post in a bid to rival with *Indiana Jones*, New Zealand Story is not a game to be missed out. It's a comedy that is played against various sets of varied action versus enemy levels. Definitely worth checking out. ■ **ACE RATED 85**

ODE

Microsoft ■ Atari ST £14.95

A magnificent Thrustair land. The Ode is mixing as you to take them, but the Thrustair aren't going to let them go without throwing missiles, rockets and a number of other weapons at you. Included with the program is an edit facility that allows you to design your own planets - great stuff. ■ **ACE RATED 90**

ELIMINATOR

Horwood ■ Spectrum £7.95 ■ £11.95 ■ MSX £1.95 ■ £8.95 ■ Amstrad £8.95 ■ MSX £14.95 ■ Atari ST £14.95 ■ Amiga £14.95

Graphically wonderful, mad-as-hell action for John Phillips, which will test your reflexes inside

Summer Games 2

Thrilling racing game where the street is split into two and you can race the computer or a friend. Lots of different Grand Prix circuits, top line-outs and of course the all-important pitstops guaranteed to give you fast cars and your best in a hot racing beat. ■ **ACE CLASSIC**

POWERDRIVE

Electronic Arts ■ Atari ST £24.95

This superb arcade-style futuristic driving simulation will have you enthralled for months to come. It may not be terribly easy to get straight into but it's well worth persevering with. You'll be playing this for months. ■ **ACE RATED 90**

PURPLE SATURN DAY

Games ■ Atari ST £12.95 ■ Amiga £24.95

A terrific mix of games that delivers punch, wit and wit. The comically good graphics ensure you'll enjoy playing each sub-game time and again. It's a little tricky to play the hang off, but master it and you'll be pleased you persevered. ■ **ACE RATED 90**

RAINBOW ISLANDS

Fronted, Spectrum £8.95 ■ £14.95 ■ MSX £1.95 ■ £8.95 ■ Amstrad £8.95 ■ £14.95 ■ £14.95 ■ Amiga £14.95

The superior Bubble Bobble is nothing short of fantastic. The graphics and sound are superb - it is the gem of the game. One of the best (and easiest) arcade conversions of the year this should not be missed. ■ **ACE RATED 90**

RVT

Microsoft ■ £14.95 ■ Amiga £24.95

RVT offers a real action

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supply of land-based bike action as you race your Honda RVF. Attention to detail is paid out of doing the roads with your rider giving the bike a touch start after a crash. An excellent mix of arcade and simulation. **+** ACE RATED 9-11

SPIDER TRONIC

Orb International • Atari ST £13.95/\$6

Guide your spider-like character around the game area, collecting colored gems to be converted into fuel. The built-in computerized cat means you'll be looking out your own eyes at the cool-cool forms. **+** ACE RATED 8-10

SUMMER GAMES

Epoch/MSI • C64 £8.95 us £14.95/\$6 • MSX PC £19.95/\$6

Eye-opening simulations are of high quality but none have quite captured the playability and spirit of the original Summer Games and its incredible success. Summer Games 2: One is to six players can take part in high jumps, gymnastics, synchronized diving, clay target shooting, swimming, polo vault — and others — with lovely large graphics and smooth animation throughout. Control of your athlete can be complete as graphics is compressed. **+** ACE CLASSIC

SUPER SPRINT

DeVco Systems • C64 £5.95/\$10 £14.95/\$6
Spectrum £8.95/\$6
Atari ST £19.95/\$6

One of the better racing conversions currently available. With go-to-three players of competing at the pace, the action is fast and furious and it will take a fairly hard ear to complete some of the more infamous circuits. But expect later in the game. **+** ACE RATED 8-10

THRUST

Firebird • Spectrum £1.95/us \$3.47/\$6
Atari/MSX £1.95/us

Temporarily sensitive controls and a large helping of realistic physics make this budget title an absolute must. Flying slices through the corners of an empty flat-plane, you have to pick up fuel and destroy hostile gun turfs without crashing into the tunnel walls. Tough enough to win, but that you've got to make the return journey with a heavy load along under your craft. Very nice, very addictive. **+** ACE CLASSIC

URIDIUM

Firebird • Spectrum £8.95/us £14.95/\$6
£12.95/\$6 • MSX £8.95/us £14.95/\$6

The pace and resistance of scrolling steel eraser like the straightforward and attacking steps while dodging around any large structures. Great metallic-looking backgrounds and the smoothest scrolling you'll ever see put this head and shoulders above the opposition. A game not to be missed, especially now that C64 versions come packaged with the excellent Paradox. **ACE CLASSIC**

ZARCH / VIRUS

Superior Software • Amstrad £14.95/\$6
Firebird £16 and \$44 versions/Amiga £14.95/us • Atari ST £14.95/us • Same \$44 version under development

THE ACE'S highest rated game to date. A solid three-dimensional shoot-em-up with great graphics perfection and truly addictive gameplay that it became an instant classic. Now the MSX and Amiga have arrived and they're just as good as the Atari versions. All that remains to be seen now is whether or the ACE ratings the MSX version. **+** ACE RATED 9-11

ADVENTURES

Adventures have come a long way since *The Hobbit*. State-of-the-art graphics and powerful parsers enable you to communicate with other characters, and fully explore the world of your choosing.

BEYOND ZORK

Infocom/Infotrac • C64 £19.95/us \$37 £24.95/\$6
Amiga £24.95/us • Atari ST £24.95/\$6

Infocom attempts to breathe life into the role-playing mechanics a great success. Locate the fabulous Council of Gamers in a game that combines the wit and ingenuity of one of the world's most original software companies with state-of-the-art parsing and graphics. Not only, but with an on-screen mapping facility. **+** ACE RATED 9-10

CORRUPTION

Starbird • Atari ST £24.95/us/Amiga £24.95/us/PC £24.95/us
Spectrum £15.95/\$6 • C64 £11.95/us • Amstrad £12.95/\$6

The tale of insider dealing, infidelity and evaded business deals is unlikely to appeal to adventure-lovers who prefer to wander through vast dungeons, networks, cooling towers. But for those who are fed up with traditional adventures, it's the alternative of best on Super's graphics, great atmosphere and a real funny plot makes this a terrific game that goes far from the chat. **+** ACE RATED 8-10

FISH

Magnetic Scrolls • PC £24.95/us/Amiga £24.95/us

Now gamers can compare better game design than *Archer*, and

not as early as *The Pawn*. This is definitely the best release since *Gold of Nazim*. Good stuff indeed. **+** ACE RATED

GUILD OF THIEVES

Starbird/C64 £19.95/us
Spectrum £19.95/us
Amstrad £19.95/us/PC £19.95/us
Amiga £24.95/us • Atari ST £24.95/us/PC £24.95/us

One of Britain's most adventure software houses — Magnetic Scrolls — managed to produce a traditional treasure hunt with superb graphics and some very tricky puzzles. Powerful parser helps to create a convincing game world with humour and imagination. **+** ACE CLASSIC

INGRID'S BACK

Level 9 • Atari ST £19.95/us

A great follow-up to *Scound Ringer*. Level 9 have really got to grips with the role of characters in their games and how to program them very effectively. **+** ACE RATED 8-10

JEWELS OF DARKNESS

Starbird • C64 £14.95/us
Spectrum £18 £14.95/us
Amstrad £14.95/us
£18.95/us/PC £18.95/us
Amiga £17.95/us • Atari ST £14.95/us

Level 9 have put together three of their classic releases, *Cultural Adventure*, *Dragon Adventure* and *Adventure Quest* in one bundle. The

games have been updated with graphics and larger vocabularies and are as close to the original spirit of adventure as you're likely to find. **+** ACE CLASSIC

LURKING HORROR

Infocom/HotSpot • C64 £19.95/us • PC £19.95/us/Amiga £24.95/us
PC £19.95/us

Infocom's *Wade to Wot*, *Lowball* and *The Tower* feature great results you into a world where you discover something very scary lurking beneath your college laboratory. Scary not only game that defies you to play it after dark... **+** ACE CLASSIC

TIME AND MAGIC

Starbird • Spectrum £14.95/us £14.95/us
C64 £14.95/us £14.95/us
Amstrad £14.95/us

£14.95/us • Atari ST £19.95/us • Amiga £19.95/us • PC £19.95/us

The completion of the Level 9 games, *Wade to Wot*, *Lowball* and *The Pawn* (It might have been reworked with better parsing, better vocabularies and pictures added). Surely when it's done it'll surely out there. **+** ACE RATED 9-11

ZORK ZERO

Infocom Versions due out about now. Watch this space for price info. Highly enjoyable with a variety of challenges that make for instant addiction. A lot more character information would have made this a real favourite, but even so it remains one of the best games of the year so far. **+** ACE RATED

PUZZLES

If you're after a game that will provide you with a real challenge, without necessarily requiring a large dose of strategic thinking, then it's a puzzle game you want.

BONE CRUNCHER

Superior Software • C64 £8.95/\$16 • Amiga £14.95

If you're after a puzzle game that will provide you with a real challenge, without necessarily requiring a large dose of strategic thinking, then it's a puzzle game you want. **+** ACE RATED 8-10

BOULDER DASH

Puzzle Leisure Corporation • Spectrum £2.95/\$6

C64 £1.95/us • Amstrad £2.95/us

A game that has everything — instant addition, ingenuity challenges, frantic excitement as the clock ticks down and wondrous things happen. You need collect pieces before it comes, dragging away earth and boulders to get to them. Boulders can drop and cause you instant damage, while the jewels are often hidden by seemingly impenetrable walls. Complex but great fun. BoulderDash is a class you can't afford to miss in its budget incarnation. **+** ACE CLASSIC

DEFLECTOR

Grady/HotSpot • C64

28 Wins • Spectrum
\$7.95 • ST 2/8/88

Optics are the order of the day here, but the spirit (space) is the player's: to connect inner beam to controller and to the same time display a number of balls that are on screen as well. You'll want to make full use of the mirrors, because combs and polarizing and reflecting facets if you'll be able to access your aim. Clear the first screen and you'll only have 20 more to do. Fascinating.
ACE RATED 908 - BT

NEBULUS

Hudson • C64 \$9.95 •
\$3.95 also Amstrad
\$3.4.95 etc.

Guide player to the top of eight towers using the speed of patterns, 90s and ledges that form the maze. It's a highly original game that strikes a fine balance between frustration and addiction, added to which is the noisy score, thus making it a good-looking, playable winner of a game.
ACE RATED 943 - GM

SENTINEL

Foxford • Spectrum £9.95
rs • C64 \$9.95 •
£1.4.95 • Amstrad
\$9.95 • £3.4.95 etc. •
Amstrad £3.9.95 •
Amstrad £3.9.95

Blame and competing strategy game played on the chequerboard surface of a planet dominated by the Sentinel. Fundamentally you have to absorb energy while trying to stop the Sentinel from absorbing yours. A clear brain and fast-finger finger are both necessary in the very original and long - 10000 possible levels - game.
ACE RATED 943 - AMBA

SKULLDIGGER

Amstrad • Amstrad £12.95

Realistic - claim that completely unlike that original one, this particular version has more. Again see Skullbuster - doesn't dig for diamonds

claims over a hundred different scenes - with a level for each screen. Skullbagger seems to playability leader seems to begin with and a choice of starting point and its entertaining two-player option.
ACE RATED 951 - BT

SPORE

Rolling • C64 £2.95 •
Amstrad £2.95 •
Spectrum £2.95

The winning combination of strategy, tactics, shooting and great graphics make Spore a worthy alternative to what a bargain firm to be able to play it on for £1.95
ACE RATED 918 - GM

TETRIIS

Mirrored • Spectrum
\$9.95 • C64 \$9.95 •
\$12.95 • Amstrad
\$9.95 • £12.95 etc. •
Amstrad £12.95 •
Amstrad £12.95 •
Amstrad £12.95

If fascinating geometrical skills, the Russian puzzle turns the obscure mathematical topic of packing into a cool game. One of a series, stages fall downwards into a rectangular playing area. Left to their own devices they fall up until they reach the top of the screen, you task is to guide them down and pack them tightly on that screen's height. Different versions have provided for other controls in their

control aspects, but the brilliantly simple idea behind Tetris makes it very well worth a look on your machine.
ACE RATED 949 - GM

THINK!

Foxford • C64 £1.95 •
Amstrad £1.95 •
Spectrum £1.95

Originally released by Amstrad in Holland, but now available for a fraction of price from Foxford. A thought-provoking game played on a fall grid - by one of two players - in which you attempt to control five numbers, horizontally, vertically or diagonally.
ACE RATED 940 - GM

XON

Logotron • BBC £9.95 •
£12.95 • Amstrad
£9.95 • £12.95 •
Spectrum £12.95

Very tricky maze game involving the player controlling two characters, and collecting marks through 10 mazes, which increase in complexity as you progress. Also a timer stages, fish and chickens to eat. After blocking the marks and just waiting to fall on you and bring your quadrant a promotion and later still, the fish and chickens are the last of your worries as bombs, transporters and dolls try to do to consume against you. The one requires no planning.
ACE RATED 963

SPECIALS

The weird, the wacky, the wonderful, the simply unclassifiable - they're all here, from These games are well worth looking at, simply because it's here you're likely to find programs with heaps of originality.

ATF

Digital Design • C64
\$9.95 • £12.95 •
Amstrad \$9.95
£12.95 • Spectrum
\$9.95 • £12.95

Excellent combat flight simulator that's a lot of a change for Digital Design. The simulation is excellent. The emphasis is on simulation, the most

YOUR BOY IS PITCHED INTO THE INTERNATIONAL GOLFING CIRCUIT WITH JUST ONE AMBITION, TO BE THE WORLD'S NO.1. NOW IT'S UP TO YOU IN

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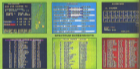
Now available on the new 640K version of the game, you can enjoy the new features of the game.

THE GOLF STRATEGY GUIDE

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being a creative bit.
 • **AGE RATED 600 -**
SPR/1988

DARK SIDE

Adventure • C64, ZX Spectrum
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The second game using the Freespace programming system, which sets you off on an arcade challenge. The 2D graphics are again superb as are the tanks and puzzles.
 • **AGE RATED 160 -**
STRAD

ELITE

Freespace • C64, ZX Spectrum
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Get the best space trading game. Elite sets a standard for other companies to follow. One of the first space games to use vector graphics, it's a shooting and trading effort set across several galaxies, with plenty of variety in the game play. You can trade legal goods in relatively safe systems, or run the gamut of piracy in the galaxy's danger spots with your hot-as-fudge combat. Either way there's a new level of excitement, and it's a lot as you'll find anytime.
 • **AGE CLASSIC**

INCREDIBLE SHINKING SHIPERS

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A comic book world where tanks, cars and tanks combine to provide excited gaming. Tasty puzzles and endless variety includes not least you rolling around in delight.
 • **AGE RATED 600 -**
100

MAGNATRON

Pinball • C64, ZX Spectrum
 £11.95 • Spectrum
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Puzzles and action. Super laser style. One of the world's best-selling night cabinets. Don't get from empty desks to upgrade your own desk and hopefully make your job a little easier.
 • **AGE RATED 600 -**
SPR/1988

QUEDX

Adventure • C64, ZX Spectrum
 £11.95

In this immediately challenging game you must steer a vehicle but through different scenarios of mazes, bonuses and obstacles, all within a set time limit. This simple game concept has a host of added features to make it particularly intriguing. You can carry over your score to the next scene, for example, and solve the different scenes or 'levels' in any order you wish. Excellent graphics and story absorbing play.
 • **AGE RATED 600 -**
100

SPINDICZY

Demos Demos • C64
 £9.95 • £11.95 • £11.95
 Spectrum £9.95 • Amstrad £9.95 • £11.95
 £11.95

Tomorrow's stuff. One you spinning top over high-doubles and collect points against a flexible time limit. The game features a 3-D and system of cubes, rings, bars and triangles, surrounded by lethal stars - 20000 safety-rails. Floor switches activate lifts and traps and, best of all, there's a night order can be faster than fast, in the fast play and a lot of nice features, but the explanation for this.
 • **AGE CLASSIC**

STARGLIDER II

Adventure • Amstrad
 £14.95 • Amiga
 £14.95

One of the best examples of a game using vector graphics in this full advantage, gets the solid 3D feeling and comes out looking every bit a

winner. You've got a large tank to complete and there's plenty of space to be doing making the combination of loading and acceleration that stands head above the competition.
 • **AGE RATED 600 -**
100

TAU GETU ACADEMY

C64 • C64, ZX Spectrum
 £9.95 • Amstrad
 £9.95 • £14.95 • Spectrum
 £9.95 • £14.95 • £14.95

Right angles! You've got a large tank to complete and there's plenty of space to be doing making the combination of loading and acceleration that stands head above the competition.
 • **AGE CLASSIC**

TOTAL ECLIPSE

Adventure • C64, ZX Spectrum
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The first game using the Freespace system is a bit of a departure from the first two, but it's still an incredible game. Instead of you're just sitting around the moon looking at the moon, you're actually in the moon looking at the moon. The game features a 3-D and system of cubes, rings, bars and triangles, surrounded by lethal stars - 20000 safety-rails. Floor switches activate lifts and traps and, best of all, there's a night order can be faster than fast, in the fast play and a lot of nice features, but the explanation for this.
 • **AGE RATED 600 -**
100

WIZBALL

100000 • C64, ZX Spectrum
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A compelling and original ball game in which you become Mito and must get Mito to conquer the color creators which are intent on eliminating the spectrum and rendering the landscape grey and black. Conquering the Mito is a great fun and makes this one of the most playable games to have appeared for a long time.

RPG

Enter the world of fantasy Role Playing Games with this lot - the best of the RPG bunch, but be prepared to play for a long time; these games are addictive.

THE BARD'S TALE II

Adventure Arts, C64
 £14.95, Amiga £14.95

The highly successful predecessor to Bard's Tale II, it has the advantage of being slightly easier to advance. The Amiga version features some very nice scripted movie shots when you enter a temple and so-called colored graphics. In all, of course, you can update your favorite character, their attributes and equipment for use in a lot of...
 • **AGE RATED 600**

THE BARD'S TALE III

Adventure Arts • C64
 £14.95

The latest Bard's Tale game offers a number of refinements over its predecessors but it's still worth taking a good look at. First, the graphics are better animated.

Second, there are ranged combat routines which take careful account of the distance between you and your opponents. Finally, the game's large and expansive world of what for money...
 • **AGE RATED 600**

BATTLETRICH

Infocom, PC £29.95, ST

Battletrich features some incredible cartoon graphics, arcade style action, role play and strategy. In short a complete, full game. It's better than any other...
 • **AGE RATED 600**

DUNGEON MASTER

Electronic Arts • C64
 £11.95

Quoted as being a 'milestone in Advancing Computer Entertainment', Dungeon Master offers 14 levels, loads of spells, atmospheric graphics and sound. It's going to make Dungeon Master one of the best role-playing adventures to have appeared on any machine.
 • **AGE RATED 600**

POOL OF RADIANCE

£6.95 • £6.95
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£6.95 may seem to be the correct price for the complete concept of the Amiga system on a computer. But they

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When you want some real stimulation, you need the games that really make you think: here's the best of the bunch

CHESSE MASTER 2000

Electronic Arts • C64
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Designed chess game on the Amiga, with excellent graphics, 3D or 2D view, 17 levels of

managed difficulty. An 800x600 screen game that will appeal to not only chess fans but to anyone looking for an stimulating game that will keep them playing for months.
 • **AGE RATED 600**

ULTIMA V

Empire Interactive • C64
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Anticipating level of detail in the role-playing advanced age, it will rival Ultima IV in the opposition and learning the magical, tactical and geographical secrets that will enable you to defeat the forces of evil in the underground. Superb rpg, great feeling, intense, and tough challenges galore.
 • **AGE RATED 600**

WASTELAND

Electronic Arts • C64
 £11.95

Chase around a wasteland (2D) shopping modern items and other items in the role-playing epic. The atmosphere may not be as good as the Bard's Tale series of games, but the extra dimension of strategy between the cut, shoot and spell elements of the ST series may be better.
 • **AGE RATED 600**

difficulty and all the playing options are available for this. Some fairly nice speech synthesis.
 • **AGE CLASSIC**

GOLDUSS

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Amiga Plus 35	5.00	5.00	5.00
Amiga Plus 36	5.00	5.00	5.00
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Best bet for 8-bit machine owners, with a choice of 20- or 30-line computer fonts of different, and a myriad options which allow you to play, watch, sort out chess problems, eat against a fine computer opponent. **★ ACE RATED**

COLOSSUS MAH JONG

CGA • CGA 28.95 •
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Running the virtual game of strategy and chance. A labor program and a smart mathematician this is easy

to eat and fight, entertaining piece of software for veterans and novices alike. **★ ACE RATED 4/5**

CGA

INFOGAMES BRIDGE

Amstrad • Amstrad
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£12.11.95

Superbly the best of all contract bridge simulations, with large

playing cards depicted against a subtle green-tan background. Plays a good game for a computer which after a while is still short in the imagination and flair department, and features a wide range of options and bidding conventions which you can toggle off according to your style. **★ ACE CLASSIC**

POWERPLAY

Amstrad • CGA 28.95 •
EGA 29.95 • Amstrad
28.95 • £14.95 •
Amiga 121.95 • £41
28.95

If you want help out your general knowledge, or rather you'd be better off with the original and challenging combination of strategy game and test run with its virtually nonstop testing. First Paradox. Powerplay is probably very simply it's calling on Mount Olympus, home of the Gods. **★ ACE RATED 4/5** - Amiga

SCRABBLE

Lotus Games • CGA
£11.95 • £14.95 •
Amstrad 28.95 • £14.95
• £14.95 • £14.95

The highly popular word game translated very successfully onto the micro. Fast, excellent display, and a surprisingly large vocabulary (even if it does include some strange looking words on some occasions). Good enough to give even strong human opponents a tough game at the higher levels. **★ ACE CLASSIC**

BATTLECHESS

Electronic Arts, Amiga
28.95 • £19.95

All the 20- if you don't want the demands of real chess, take to the multi - and then how the game? It's a work of art. Rapid board games which could have only originated in the land of the tarzans, California.

WAR GAMES

Fancy yourself as a master of grand strategy, marshalling hordes of troops and sending them off to do battle on your behalf? Look no further than the ACE selection of war games.

ARMHEM

CGA, Spectrum 28.95 •
Amstrad 28.95 • CGA
28.95

Armhem was really the best in the field. It has all the expanded scenarios, five separate campaigns, and one of the toughest computer opponents you could ever well-timed, a thoroughly absorbing strategy which can be played on one of the old masters. **★ ACE RATED 5/5**

CONFLICT EUROPE

Amstrad, £14.95

Amiga 24.95, PC 19.95

The 30 bit progression of Theatre Europe. Conflict Europe features lots of extra graphical and sound effects. The computer controlled intelligence was magnificently sophisticated but still enough to give a challenging game. The correct balance between strategy and realism throughout. Great for beginners and intermediate players. **★ ACE RATED 4/5**

THEATRE EUROPE

PC, Spectrum 28.95

CGA 28.95 • £14.95 •
Amstrad 28.95 •
£14.95

The perfect game for 8 bit owners who go green with envy when they look at Conflict Europe. Theatre Europe is the forerunner to the master 3.5 bit game. The graphics and overall play are not as sophisticated, but it's still one heck of a game. **★ ACE RATED 4/5**

UNS

Amstrad, £12.95 • PC
28.95 • Spectrum
28.95 • Amiga 24.95

Probably the greatest war game to date. 640x color 3D systems enables the creation of almost any battle in history. As well as a very sophisticated computer opponent, yet. One of this are not an exception from the Vietnam war and Galipoli, plus many others in the pipeline. In fact that's not enough it contains a very neat contractor kit to keep you going for ever longer. An essential purchase. **★ ACE RATED 5/5**

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ACE DIARY

1st September - St Crispin's Day, Patron Saint of Beer Drinkers

Phew, what a month you lot have ahead of you. Just get a load of the software being released this month: from Papyrus there's *Galaktica* on the C64 and PC, *Trid 3* on ST and Amiga, *Stop on ST* and Amiga, *Never Mind on ST*, Amiga and PC and *Shadow Of The Beast* on the Amiga. From Kasperse and Minked, there's *F119 Stealth Fighter* on Spectrum, *Tank* on PC, *Red Storm Rising* on PC, *Rainbow Warrior* on all formats, *Be Hell* on all formats, *Quartz* on ST and Amiga, *Rainbow Islands* all formats, *P-47* all formats, *Carrier Command C64*, *Armored CPC* and PC, *Starfighter II PC*, *Wild Dreams PC*, *C64* and *Amstrad* and *Start Car* on the Spectrum, ST and H4. Cor, what a month!

5th September - ACE October issue on sale

Packed with exciting features, reviews and more colour than a bathtub's behind, and as usual, a whole month ahead of itself!

11th September - Release of Batman

Lucky Spectrum and C64 owner finally get their hands on their very own digital representation of Michael Keaton in *Cosmo's* Duggie, Batman the movie. Sorry, but everyone else will just have to wait.

15th September - H.E.T.R. Exhibition

Want to get a sneak preview of the video technology of the future, then pop along to the London River Hotel and take a glimpse at the new High Definition Television. Apparently, watching a recording of a golfball bowl on HiTV is exactly like watching a real golfball. Incredible.

22nd September - UK Electronics

The premier music electronics show this month. The place: Lagan Hall, The time, 1.00 PM. Expect loads of guest appearances from artists who have discovered the wonder of STs. For more details, call Mark Jenkins on 011-885 5665.

25th September - A National Hero is born

A day of great rejoicing for all, especially those in the vicinity of Harlington. Steve Cook celebrates 30+ years of pleasant existence. Many happy returns boss, and so say all of us (well, all except Pete Connor, because we didn't actually tell him. If you know him, you'd understand why).

27th September - PC Show opening day!

The gates open! The crowds roar! The stars roll

up in thousands! At last the PC Show has started! Sadly, most of you won't be able to get in just yet, as the first three days are trade only, and even if you are trade, you'll still get to be over 18, so yep!

27th September - Batman Amiga and PC arrives in!

In a dazzling presentation, the likes of which has never been seen before, Egos release the Amiga version of Batman. Oh god, will Batman's never die!

30th September - PC Show goes public!

Quick, now's your chance! You can get in now, so don't delay. Pop along to Earls Court and see all the latest games and hardware, including your first chance to see the RDRM Multityper! Plus you also get to meet the ACE crew, but who wants to meet Pete Connor?

3rd October - Time to look forward to more software

Lots more releases this month, including among others *Aerofuturo* on all formats, *GMF II* on ST, Amiga and PC, *Start Car Race* on the Amiga, *Blood Money* on C64, *Infestation ST*, Amiga and Mac, *Murders on ST*, Amiga and PC. *Italy* (anybody?)

3rd October - 8th October - Olympic Decorative and Antique Fair

Here's something fun and educational for you to do if you're nothing else on. It's all happening at Earls Court and looks like it's going to be quite a ball with all sorts of surprise guests, an entry judge demonstration and lots of lovely grandfather clocks.

5th October - ACE November issue smashes into the shops.

Early as usual, the new ACE is quite probably the best one we've done this month. Loads of

reviews of all the top games and a feature on CD, what more could you want?

6th October - 12th October - Not a lot

Well, what a pretty dull month October is. Not a lot happening at all. Ho hum. Well, at least Pete Connor isn't in.

14th October - Batman on the ST

Yes, it's the caped crusader again. To tell you the truth, I'm getting a bit fed up of him.

20th October - 29th October - The British Motor Fair

Drive along to Earls Court Exhibition Centre and stand for nine days and drive continuously over the platforms of new and wonderful cars, all coating the earth and guaranteed to get cringed with a fortnight of purchase.

20th October - Cabal hits the turf.

Long awaited fair player arcade conversion Cabal arrives at last, but it remains to be seen whether it's been worth the wait.



The statue will be launched this month at the PC show - but don't expect to see the famous Santa Hydrostatic slide until Christmas. Santa's games have a bit of trouble getting these days the oldways.

BEAST FEAST!

Psygnosis have come up with a game that really squeezes every last ounce out of the Amiga. Grab a pen and you could get your paws on one of **TEN** free copies or **TWENTY** free Roger Dean T-shirts...

888-rated *Beast* (see pages 70/71) has to be seen to be believed. Even ACE reviewer Tony Dillon, who's seen some cozy software in his time, returned from his visit to Liverpool almost speechless. "What they've done with the machine is extraordinary," he said - and judging by our own glimpse of the game, we have to agree. The parallax scrolling is unlike any you've seen before, featuring far more levels and infinitely better use of colour. Sprites are exquisitely drawn and stage is size from the top... to the enormous. The soundtrack is stunning (featuring more sound data than on the Atariborne and R-Type arcade machines put together!) and the action is fast and furious. And to cap it all, you don't just get the game, you get a Roger Dean T-shirt at the same time.

So what's the deal then? Well, Psygnosis have given us ten copies, hot off the duplicators' desk, together with twenty genuine Roger Dean T-shirts, designed exclusively for *Psygnosis* by the great perennial trendset. And all you have to do is this...

THE COMPETITION

Simply answer the following questions... easy, isn't it?

1. Which company programmed the first ST game - released in the States and then in the UK?
2. In which city are Psygnosis based?
3. Which of the following is not a Psygnosis game?
Barbarian & Barbarians, Captain Fizz and the Blastrotron?

Send your answers on a postcard to:

BEAST FEAST, ACE, Priory Court, 30-32 Farringdon Lane, LONDON EC1R 3AU. Entries to reach us by 10th October.

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COMPILATIONS COMPILED AND RATED.

As the winter settles in, software houses start dusting down their old titles to extract a few bob more out of them by putting them on compilations. Here are the main ones to watch out for.

The Story So Far Volume 3.

Edip.

ADAM 219.95 02/1986
 ADAM 219.95 02/1986

Shogun, Space Runes, Thunderbolt, and Lost and Lost

City.

ACE Rating: 4.5.

Premiere Collection 2.

Hexxon.

ADAM 219.95 02/1986
 ADAM 219.95 02/1986

Computer, Computer, Secretary, and Notebook.
 ACE Rating: 4.5.

Dark Force.

Ocean.

ADAM 219.95 01/1986
 ADAM 219.95 01/1986
 ADAM 219.95 01/1986

Return - The Caped Crusader, 81 Type and Map 8, Dark
 Side.

ACE Rating: 4.5.

Light Force.

Ocean.

ADAM 219.95 02/1986
 ADAM 219.95 02/1986

Evil - 81 Type, Return - The Caped Crusader, Myquar.
 ACE Rating: 4.5.

Winners, U.S. Gold.

ADAM 219.95 01/1986
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Thunderbolt, Thunderbolt, US Chess, Indiana Jones -
 Temple of Doom, Incredible Machine
 * Not on 1.6MB versions.
 ACE Rating: 4.5.

Giant, US Gold.

ADAM 219.95 02/1986
 Return 1, 2, 3, Street Fighter, Gauntlet
 ACE Rating: 4.5.

Triad II, Pygmalion.

ADAM 219.95 02/1986
 ADAM 219.95 02/1986
 ADAM 219.95 02/1986

Get, Moving, Fight.

DIGITAL PASSION...

This gripping serial, begun in Issue 25, has had to be held over for legal reasons. We are consulting with our solicitors with regard to the alleged offence caused by Mrs Barbara Fleck-Besant by allegations concerning her relationship with certain bishops' stenists. The facts, and nothing but the facts, will appear in next month's issue.

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1001 Nights XXVIII	19.95	01/1986
1001 Nights XXIX	19.95	01/1986
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ACE PRIZE PUZZLE 18

Set by Archie Modes

ADDING ACE

In an alphabetic puzzle, letters are printed in place of the original digits and the problem requires you to re-substitute the numbers and find out what the sum is.

For example, what three-digit number is represented by ACE in the simple addition?

$$\begin{array}{r}
 \text{ACE} \\
 \text{ACE} \\
 \text{ACE} \\
 \text{ACE} \\
 \text{ACE} \\
 \hline
 \text{EACC}
 \end{array}
 \qquad
 \begin{array}{r}
 251 \\
 251 \\
 251 \\
 251 \\
 251 \\
 \hline
 1255
 \end{array}$$

The solution is shown on the right – that is, A=4, C=5, and E=1. This means the problem is in fact:

$$\begin{array}{r}
 1) \quad \text{ACE} \\
 \quad \text{ACE} \\
 \quad \hline
 18 \text{ ACEs} \\
 \quad \text{ACE} \\
 \quad \text{ACE} \\
 \quad \text{ACE} \\
 \quad \hline
 \text{EACC}
 \end{array}
 \qquad
 \begin{array}{r}
 \text{ACE} \\
 \text{ACE} \\
 \quad \hline
 1 \text{ ACE's} \\
 \quad \text{ACE} \\
 \quad \text{ACE} \\
 \quad \hline
 \text{EACC}
 \end{array}$$

The first problem is to increase the number of ACE's to be added to 18. This will result in a solution represented by the letters EACC. Having done this, increase the number of ACE's six further and try to find yet another solution which results in EACC.

As with all puzzles of this type the same letter stands for the same digit wherever it occurs – different letters represent different digits. Of course, each of the two different problems will require a different substitution.

Don't forget – next month features a whole new puzzle section. Check out next month for a backlog of puzzles.

ACE PRIZE PUZZLE ENTRY FORM

Name.....

Address.....

Computer owned.....Age.....

Send entries to: Prize Puzzle, 18, ACE,
Priory Court, 39-32 Farrington Lane,
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The closing date for entries is October 5th

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THE ACE SERIAL

The Death of N'Garr..?

N'Garr Thrombebo was the world's first totally artificial economic intelligence. He also looked like being to last. From his humble beginnings as a Centurian Battalion in Return of the Mutant Officers from Mars, he had struggled against his human creators—who then became his tormentors.

He was the most powerful intelligence in the known universe, and yet against the odds—sat, awaiting and monotonous stupidity of the human race he was apparently impotent. He had been stomped on, incinerated, bombarded in a particle accelerator till his neurons boiled, and even flung himself back into the incandescent limbo of no-space as a final piece of sacrifice to confront his mortal enemies—those gnats, slithering, fanged fiends of probability called the Human Race.

The Sinsleythensentian Invention Party was composed of members of The Human Race, albeit ones even more gnatsy, slithering and fanged than usual. It formed a major local political force. To such a degree that it controlled the local council by a sizable majority, and thus had ample funds for the purchase of guns, ammunition, explosives, casual yet attractive combat wear, well leather jackboots and matching accessories. And given that such funds were generally in either short supply in Sinsleythensentia, GT was left with large amounts of money left unspent at the end of each financial year. Money which had to be spent to ensure the same allowance next year, hence the ludicrous purchases of such items as Mustang F47jetray air-conditioned, voice-controlled dastur lorries, Acme Superduster Quadcopter Turbo and—crucially for that small part of N'Garr Thrombebo still existing within the molecular structure of a micro-dispersible little lump of anthracite—a McDonnell Douglas D-16 dual-engine mechanical earthworm.

At the very instant that the piece of anthracite was about to be crushed to smithereens, Thrombebo pointed himself through the metal links of the tracks, down the leading side, up through the transmission housing and into the D-16's central processor.

That power Thrombebo sent the digger careering around the site of the explosion caused by the gravitational wormhole and a

subsequent neo-temporal paradox, and the driver flying from the cab. Revving up the twin turbochargers, Thrombebo then spun the digger round and aimed it at the nearest middle size of human habitation—the main hospital building. Reversing the vehicle into first, he revved the engine to its maximum, then dumped the clutch.

The machine's tracks dug deep into the soft ground and then the digger was lurching forwards, almost still held still. As the vehicle accelerated, the stored energy strangled up and down, spilling earth and bits of rubble over its wheels as it did so. It did not stop, however, a small fragment of floppy disk just sticking out of the tracks.

"Spammy...?" went the matron as she looked through the window over the shoulder of Mr Suggs, the replacement Head Surgeon. Her cup of tea fell to the floor.

"Up, Matron, as you need!" he objected, taking off his trilby and clearing off the droplets of tea with a portion of rather blood-stained surgical gauze. He frowned slightly at the sound of breaking glass and collapsing masonry, and turned to see the digger climbing its way towards him over the rubble that was all that remained of the wall.

"Mr Suggs, please don't make such a noise. And what do you want (do you want me) to take you temperature again for?" he said, inspecting the digger's bucket over the top of his trilby and taking a thermometer out of his leg pocket. "You know you really ought to clean more thorough...e...u...g...g...g...g...g...g...?" he went as he sat underneath the earthworm's tracks.

"Stop help!" shrieked the matron, grabbing the patients as they pushed to get out of the ward and throwing them over her shoulder. "Help..."

The noise attracted N'Garr Thrombebo, and he turned the digger towards it. The back of the matron was in the posterior just as she got set into the corridor, and she and the bucket dropped to the floor with a thump that ceased the hospital's foundations to within three millimeters. The digger's tracks spun, trying to gain a purchase on the war's polished floor, and the matron yelled and puffed, trying to lift herself out of the bucket.

Then the matron was up. The digger already tipped backwards and the bucket went sliding through the ceiling.

"It's a digger!" shrieked the matron, approaching the cab. She climbed in, revved the engine and managed to dislodge the bucket at from the ceiling. It came down amidst a shower of plaster, wooden beams and its full complement of folded cabbage being checked by the hospital kitchen for next month.

N'Garr Thrombebo tried to swivel the controls away from the women, but to no avail.

"This must belong to the demolition squad," muttered the matron to herself as she drove the digger through the hole in the wall. "I must have a strong word with them in the mess-room." Her voice faded into the distance as N'Garr Thrombebo found the Mr Donald Douglas's ejector seat controls. He turned the digger back, making another hole in the wall and set about systematically annihilating the hospital and its contents.

Unfortunately, his control over the hydraulic circuits was proving strangely lacking. He drove the digger over the pile of failed cabbage in the corridor and tried moving the bucket up and down. It didn't work. He realized then that, somehow, his formerly nice and altogether designed alternate—created when his floppy disk was sliced in half—must have found its way into the hydraulic rams, through the constant-revolving tremor support bearings and into one of the CPU's ROM packs. Damn!

Thrombebo spun the digger coasting into the main surgical ward. The bucket was now safely under the control of his other half, and was lifting patients out of tarmen's way before he could crash them beneath the digger's tracks. Mindless, he smashed through the wall into the patients' ward, where the McDonnell Douglas's robotic manipulating arms frantically prepared endless rows of tea for terrified old ladies, lifted their pillows and generally made them feel as comfortable as possible considering an eighteen earthworm was running wild free from their bedsheets.

N'Garr Thrombebo was increased. Revving her great bilious of shrike from its exhaust stacks, the digger leapt up for the doors at the end of the ward started forwards. Glass and steel flew everywhere as the bucket hit them first. Then it hit the wall on the other side of the corridor with a bon-jarring impact that bounced Thrombebo's data in its tracks. Great blocks of masonry fell from the wall and the digger's bucket arm buckled as the tracks chewed at the floor.

Then it surged forward, breaking through into the world outside. Unfortunately, since the hospital was built on a slope, it did go from the first floor. N'Garr Thrombebo could only watch helplessly from the earthworm's ROM as the vehicles plunged towards the ground below—in its doom.

"Who this, at last, The End...?"

ACE READERS PAGES

THE SPACE WHICH YOU FILL

Buying or selling your computer? Then look no further than the readers pages, all the hardware you need at reasonable prices.

Unfortunately due to lack of space the helpline has been put on a temporary hold, but we will be returning next month. So keep those enquiries coming!

HELPLINE

Are you out of control?
Are you good with graphics? Are you mega with music? If the answer is yes to any of the above, write to Simon Cowell, 4/31 Markt, Pinguinar, D-4055, MESSINGBACHSTR. 41, Germany.

Anyone needing help on C.H.U.S. please phone Edward on 010465. C.H.U.S. stands for Chris Hughes International

Steven, I am excellent at the game. Anyone wishing to come over and play doubles, any one please call. I am also selling an Acorn Electron for £50.

IBM owner has customer to Defender of the Crown, Ring of the Green, Ring of S.A. Larry, and more. To swap hints, tips, etc. write to: David Butler, P.O. Box 25771, Mesa Park, Pretoria, 0020, Republic of South

Africa. All letters answered!

Has anyone got a solution for Captain Blood? I also need help with Gold of Thrones, I have all the treasures deposited at the bank but need to know exactly what to do to complete the game. All assistance gratefully received. Write to: Steven Lakin, 58 Martin Hardie Way, Torquay, Devon, TQ9 6AE.

HELP! I have been playing Commodore since for a month and got nowhere. I need help! Please send tips to Alan, 75 Lee Moor Road, Buntingford, Rutland, U.K. 407.

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Dungeon Master any problem solved, tips, hints, more, anything all FREE. Write now, Richard Haxton, 151 Cartmill Road, Woodhouse, Sheffield S. 10RN, or phone 0142 584000 between 5-9pm weekdays.

SOON - Now I get your attention! Please HELP - Stock on Zak Mcracken, Zak Command, Falcon - all Amiga A500s and necessary. I've completed Miniemum



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LISTS

The famous **ACE** lists, according to Richard Parker of Mansfield Road, Sheffield and Eugene Lacey, the man who invented games reviewing in the UK. Got any lists? Course you have - so send 'em in.

Lists, it is worth mentioning, don't have to be funny. They are an in-depth, psycho-social determinant of modern living (© Postentronica International Corp 1988).

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- 8 1887 Pickets.
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- 10 Night Wood Picket.

EGINE LADY'S TOP FIVE FAVORITE GAMES BIDDERS-COR-CPL

- 1 **Scramble**. "There are loads (and loads) of them (and) I could play jumping in bed. Really checked in a pub in Dublin."
- 2 **Defender**. "Checked by another Eagine. Eagine Jones. Saw game at the Apple Information design team. Totally brilliant in every way."
- 3 **Paceman**. "It's ironic, but I still can't walk past one of the few arcades you spot on these days."
- 4 **Elite** "My story" for Thursday the 12th of February 1988 reads "Welcome Elite at 3.23 am. I'm Big brother. Made a Microsoft Cupcake to celebrate."
- 5 **Nitro**. "Nitro has already convinced it for the Game Boy. The Lyle will need something good to beat this."

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The BLITTER END

NO GOLD AT THE THE END OF THE RAINBOW?



The Microprose marketing man officiating at the launch of the Greenpeace game *Rainbow Warrior* was understandably confused. Struggling with the joystick and a premature version he carelessly failed to rescue the hapless and who, floundering beneath an ice floe, was clearly getting lost on oxygen. "Oh well," he said, "if you get lost-up, you can always start climbing them instead!" Although this remark sparked off an untidy gird in some of the gamers present, who reckoned that anything on the screen which moved should be shot to, if it didn't move, shot until it did. It did cause a few of the assembled Greenpeace brethren to choke on their sandwiches.

But what did they expect? You can understand the poor PR man's problems. If the *Rainbow Warrior* appeared in any of Microprose's other games, it would be fairly in the centre of your sights as you toggled the AGM-650 Mavericks before popping over to Libya to mop up any remaining life-forms.

When asked why they'd chosen Microprose, Jonathan Simons of Greenpeace replied that it was precisely because of their military-style software. He saw the Greenpeace game as a chance to convert the most confirmed hard-core to the joys of green living and peace on earth. "You might as well prance into the den of a hungry lion and toss it a Jordan's Crunchy Bar...

The truth is that Greenpeace didn't really choose Microprose at all. Microprose chose them, since most of the other major players in the industry had already rejected the product. And if you're wondering why anyone should be so stupid as to turn down a six-figure profit opportunity, don't - despite a ton of good intention, there's only an ounce of gameplay in the entire program that would satisfy anyone over eight years old.

Besides everything, the launch of the game ended on a good note. As the video demonstration came to an end, another poster remained in an embarrassing food

voiced that one part of the game looked just like *Propper*. At least someone can appreciate a great game...

Having trouble with *Super Mario Land* on the Nintendo Gameboy? Of course you are. Don't let Courtney of ad manager Gary Williams let you head the bricks on the Egyptian level when you see ones that you can't jump up to. Hey presto...invisible!

Wedding bells are in the air and *Blitter* has been digging the coffin out of its hair since last week when top soft-boycott Mark Cole the of the *Ferraris* was wed. *Blitter's* spare report that he had two shippers at his stag do (obviously blew them in two, then hit Cole) and has now whined his new trouble and strife off on a four-week tour of the far east.

Lucky girl. Not only will she be sporting an exotic sun tan on her return but she'll be part of the only couple in *Power* with his 'New Ferraris'.

More lovey-dovey stuff has been going on a bit closer to home where a certain Editor of a 'so-

ter' publication of ours is off on a short trip with his girlfriend. No surprises there, until we got wind of their destination: the 'Tubby Bears' Inn. Apparently the lady in question has a house full of the furry beasts - most of them brought by this same Editor. *Blitter* wonders where Julian Signal gets the money to put into old machines with all those teddy bears to feed.

But there is no time for romance in the big bad world of software. The shops are not happy. Apparently you lot have been soaking up the sun, playing tennis, watching the *Floures* slaughter England in the Test Series...and not buying any games. One big distributor is so rattled off with the summer slump that he's considering closing down next summer for two months like the French. *Blitter* wholeheartedly supports this proposal. It would be great. Gary Williams could play with his Game Boy, Steve Cooke could repair to his Cornish hotel to meditate, and the *Blitter*...

Stand by next month for an in-depth report about piracy in Finland and Iceland.

Interesting facts department: importation of computers by individuals to the Soviet Union has shot up in the last two years. Thanks to the relaxation of travel in and out of the country. The machine from Soviet customers and exports, however, hasn't been long in coming. From the 15th August, new states have been added to the importation (all greatcoats to be removed while passing through customs) of various Spectrums, GSA's etc. You will now have to pay 5000 roubles per machine about £1000. You have been warned, comrades...

Meanwhile back in the decadent West, jet setter Jerry Hall has joined ACE as Cap Ad Manager...Jerry had from *Biggles* onwards, that is. He's a pretty fellow, but his legs just aren't in the same league...

Blitter

OOPS!

Well, what can we say? Last month saw the worst couple we've ever had the misfortune to suffer when the last few pages turned out to have been checked by a dyslexic Martin with a fugged word-check program and terminal myopia. We mean the Editor, of course...

Meanwhile, we absolutely guarantee that this month's issue is error free.

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