

ACE

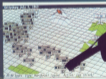
MAGAZINE OF THE YEAR

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- GPC ■ SPECTRUM ■ PC
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Roll 104-1
"Yancy"

\$6000 A SECOND!
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Meet John Lazarus. Meet his op-art. Find out how they won an Oscar.

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91

From the dawn of computing history, another barrage of facts, fantasy, and nostalgia as we check out 1984 and 1990: two make-or-buy years for the world of computer entertainment.

'ERE WE GO!
60

Are football games just a load of old balls? Not these ones, chum. We present 50 programs that kick off via 1990 at the very top of the Micro Football League.



Screen-crazer John O'Brien holding out unimpressed!

OCEAN'S APART
84

Our columnist is carrying out a vicious attack on British Rail's Custom ticket office. The objective is to secure travel automation to Dyer Marwickie, where an obscure secret plan for a total wave of new games from Ocean.

ALL OUT WAR!

The Pentagon are using IBM to study military tactics. However, know what they'd do with IBM? J. John Mison interviews some of the world's top videogame programmers, including Eric Witt, Stefan, Peter Toren of Boustrophemoid, and others. Grab a fish packet and take cover!


RED HOT!

It may be the middle of the Chilly Season, but this month's Screenfantasy section has to be one of the hottest for a long time. There are more ACE-Rated games than anyone has a right to expect after Christmas, including the superlative Chase Strike Back, successor to Dungeons Master; X-Out, a knee-cracking shoot-em-up that must be one of the best blasts ever to hit a home video; and for those of you who prefer brains to brawn, there's the intriguingly addictive, night-challenging Tower of Babel from Micropress. In fact, the only thing you won't find is our promised review of Mike Singleton's Masterline. It's coming...It's coming...

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BONANZA!

Want to upgrade to an ST or Amiga? You can grab some great bargains!

DEAR DIARY,

Here are our New Year Resolutions for 1990.

Firstly, we promise not to play Tetris or Kick Off during office hours.

Secondly, we promise not to take the Gameboy to the lavatory.

Thirdly, we undertake not to bully people who like adventure games.

And on no account will we mention anything to do with hair between the toes.

We shall be kind to software houses.

(sometimes).

We shall be unstinting in our search for The Perfect Game.

We shall make every effort to convince Joe Public that computer games are deserving of his serious attention.

We reserve the right to use force if necessary.

Finally, we will let our daughters marry aliens, if they absolutely insist.

(...and for some more serious New Year Resolutions, see page 8.)

THE FOOD OF LOVE 87

No, not powdered rhinoceros flare, but instead a whole collection of inexpensive but powerful magical wands to link up to your mouse. You need to be a pop star - why wait?

FACE THE CHALLENGE 27

Two young men think they've got a state-of-the-art release design that makes the Amiga seem like a techno-dinosaur. Only problem is, can they build it? Or are they wasting their time?

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Enter 1990 with some of the best games ever!

AAAGHHGH! 71

You're in big trouble. Your only hope: the ACE Trickerin-Turbin section, which this month includes the Totally Comprehensive Dungeon Master Guide.

ACE NEW WORLDS 96

It's horrific. Put Nintendo sharks with fear in this - or Mission.

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John Cook savages the Technoquest Block Out and says how he, loose change in the latest coin ops, is for \$20, is for a penny.

TOP SECRET 18

ACE goes undercover and discovers an electrifying new game of Amigaism in David Wolf's Secret Agent the nearest thing yet to a true computer movie!



David Wolf's Secret Agent from Activision.

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Another ACE Challenger, a new Wolf Blaxy game on the Nintendo, plus the advent of Teenage Mutant Ninja Turles.

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Subscribers not only get a free issue, they receive a whole new range of benefits, including InterFACE - an exclusive subscribers' newsletter.

ACE STOCKMARKET 15

Enter a only games chart that goes by authoritative opinion, and not fyped sales.

IN THE PINK 99

Games you have to have: the ACE Goodwood the first bookmarket winners, the ACE Diary, special offers from dealers, email ads, all pick and proud of it.

SHOCKS AND SHARES

The ACE Stockmarket is really getting into the swing this month. We can feel our fees Creomaxure board into the Number One position on the Company Counter with new reviews of it. Game From The Desert, which games are top for your machine, and whether you're going to win one of the great software prizes on offer.

WISH YOU WERE HERE



System: It's Myth is taking top honors this month for the title and Specimen status - but where taking the gold in the 1990 ratings? Find out on pages 15 and 16.

ACE UPGRADE VOUCHERS

with the ACE Upgrade Vouchers. And there's something for 16-bit owners too on p.113

ACE NEWS

A NEW CONTENDER FOR THE ACE CHALLENGE...

WONDERFUL WORLD OF DISNEY

Nintendo NES gamers will be able to "experience" the fun of Walt Disney's spectacular theme park thanks to Japanese game developer, Capcom. Adventure in the Magic Kingdom is out in LAs (Shopyard) and includes all the world famous attractions found there such as the Haunted Mansion, Space Mountain and her perennial favourite Pirates of the Caribbean. If the game comes out in the handheld Nintendo Game Boy you'll be able to play Photo



Mickey and Co. can't wait to get their hands on a Nintendo NES console!

of the Nintendo while riding the railroad! Also from Capcom is a Nintendo NES game based around the California faunas - the cut characters from the brilliant "Beard it through the Grapes" TV advert - appropriately called The Grapes Escape. Both titles should be out during the Autumn.

Domark and Incentive should be able for following



CYBER CHALLENGE

Not on the heels of the IBMPC (see page 27 for full details), comes another hardware design team to take up the £20000 ACE Challenge. Cybercube Research from Canada designs 32-bit parallel computer systems, does computer entertainment software research and development, produces custom designed computer systems, and thinks it can meet our challenge for the 90's.

Back in ACE 26 we issued the ACE Challenge to all hardware hacks out there it mentioned to design a game machine that killed our top products, which included processing a trigger, trigger and detrigger (check out the ACE Challenge Board for the full spec). The guys from Cybercube were

pleased to see our approach to solving the problem of aging entertainment hardware, and has offered us their prototype Cybercube 8889 system and Cybercube Phantom arcade deck as possible contenders. The current version of 8889 has three 32-bit 80C86 main processors each running at 30MHz, up to 32MB RAM, air-fing of Intel 9844, up to 7MB ROM, screen resolution of 320x193 with 16 on-screen colours out of a palette of 768 up to 1024x1024 pixels from a palette of 256, and 16 FM stereo sound channels with 16-bit DSP with CD and AD converters.

Look out for a full update on Cybercube in a future issue.

of Incentive's new release Castle Wrecker, leaving the progress to concentrate on code-cruising. Castle Wrecker is an arcade puzzle adventure set in 16th Century England, and according to Incentive's founder Ian Andrew, "is the first action adventure to use 3D solid polygons". Expect to see it in an official retail box in early April.

CREATE THE CARTOON...

Incentive 80 software house Electronic Arts has announced the release of Cartooners for the PC. A previous award winner on the Apple IIGX, Cartooners is a cartoon studio which lets you create and animate cartoons with colourful characters, scenery and musical accompaniment. This is the first EA product to specifically target the 5-12 year-old user and quips: "It sparks the imagination, develops self-confidence and provides a playful, constructive environment for parent/child or teacher/student interaction". Let's just hope it provides a little fun! Cartooners is compatible with DeluxePaint, DeluxePaint II, DeluxePaint II Enhanced and also contains a printing option allowing



Cartooners on the Apple IIIGX.



you to create your own folktales, illustrated storybooks - provided you've got a colour printer of course! Cartooners should be out later this month for £24.99db.

...OR PLAY IT!

Meanwhile MicroIllusions, the US software company famous for its Micro-It Amiga music utility is about to release four games based around their "Incentive" American Home Barbara TV car-



tooners: Scooby Doo, Flintstones, Jefferson and Johnny Quest. ACE gamers will already know of a Scooby Doo game from Edo and Grandis's Flintstones arcade adventures. All graphic adventures, the first title Leonardo is due out in February on the PC.

TEENAGE MUTANT NINJA TURTLE MANIA

These crazy tanks are at it again. First it was *Colony*, then came *He-Man* and the *Masters of the Universe*, now the latest tale kudos must go to the good old USA. A Teenage Mutant Ninja Turtle that only can run walks the TMNT TV cartoon series as a Saturday morning, but TMNT boys from the local Toys'R'RUs store or other TMNT hotspots in a variety of formats — and you can now play the TMNT game on color-TV console or computer.

Leading Japanese console manufacturers, Konami has produced an TMNT arcade game.

Nintendo NES cartridge and a special one-off handheld LCD game. Versions of TMNT are also available for the C64, Amiga and PC. No one in this country is admitting to owning a UK TMNT license — though time will tell, especially if Teenage Mutant Ninja Turtles get big over here.



Buy this way, Teenage Mutant Ninja Turtles live in the snow (right)

A-HA: NORWEGIAN SOFTWARE!

Baseline Software, a new software company set up in August '88, is claiming to be the first 16-bit software house in Norway. The team is made up of 13 members, including programmers, graphic artists and musicians.

Baseline got a growing band of Scandinavian programming teams. First off was the Danish *Swords of Steel*, and since then an army of liking Amiga programmers have been contributing all their best games. *Ashtar's Magic Lamp* was released on the Amiga last month for £3.99pb.



"Like a fish brain, the Baseline software," says the press release

Baseline has another two games due for release in early 1990: *Ironclad* for the ST, Amiga and

MAG SCROLLS — LIKE A VIRGIN

Magnetic Scrolls, the UK's premier adventure writer, has signed by with Virgin/Microbrew and is promising the debut of a one-style adventure game in mid-June on ST, Amiga, PC and Archimedes.

Details are very scarce at present, but David Bishop — Product Manager of Virgin/Microbrew — told ACE: "Magnetic Scrolls has upgraded its facilities... the days of the one text adventure are over, you have to offer the user a lot more these days". Mag Scrolls was set up in 1984 by Anita Sinclair and Ben Sinden (producing programs for the ill-fated Sinclair QL). Fortunately it ditched the Sinclair deal and produced its first commercial hit on the ST in late '88. The team combined a powerful text parser with truly beautiful graphics. The release of *The*



Magnetic Scrolls (Anita Sinclair) and Virgin/Microbrew (Ben Sinden) founders announce their new deal

Pass on every conceivable format — including the Mac and PC, thanks to the use of a VAG file to describe the games — confirmed the award-winning Mag Scrolls as the leading adventure creator. Despite being paid, late, adventure players must surely be looking forward to its next release.

BRAVE NEW YEAR

New that you've made your New Year Resolutions but that Tere cartridge away. Guys, perhaps you'd like to hear a few of ours. The serious ones...

ACE is going to be introducing some important additions and alterations to its already full-sized pages next month, as we want to press we were busy celebrating the award of Magazine of the Year

to our older magazine *The One* — and secretly plotting how we could get it back from the next year!

The update of all this is that we have, after a lot of consideration, decided to introduce some new pages in the magazine. They'll be there for the first time in the next issue, and we're not going too much away, but we know you'll be pleasantly surprised.

On other, equally serious matters, we've decided to make 1990 the year ACE really comes into its own as a magazine for computer gaming in the world at large. During 1990 we'll be running a series of ACE Conferences to promote contact between readers and software houses, and at the same time we'll be organising conferences with the world at large to tell them about computer entertainment and the implications it has for the future of leisure technology.

This means two things. First, as an ACE reader, you'll be able to take part. Attendance at conferences will be free to subscribers and readers will pay only a nominal charge. It also means that as an ACE reader you can be proud to be seen making the magazine. Don't miss next month's issue.

Plus, the *Time Traveller* for the ST, Amiga and PC.

ACE ON THE AUTOBAHN

ACE VISITS A BUNCH OF COOL CODE CRUISERS IN WEST GERMANY

What do you get when a group of young ex-hackers decide to produce their own games? A software company with the expertise and potential to write a major blockbusting game....



Below: Some of the ACE staff's team, some of the team includes: Edgar Barmann (E), Bill Voss (V), Michael Schneider (S), Michael Krenkel (K), Alexander Kahl (A) and Stefan Krenkel (S). The highly interesting idea for you got on the ACE is to become "video thief" because the developers - they build their products over in the US.

The team was set up in 1990. Its origins are firmly rooted in the underground subculture of the games hacking and cracking circuit - it's oldest member is aged only 25. Thakker's cofounder, Erik Simon explained to ACE: "most of our programmers came from the hacking circuit, these crackers are technically experts - but they find it more interesting to code rather than crack".

The company is based in Göttingen, a picturesque - and perhaps slightly clichéd - German town approximately two hours drive from Düsseldorf airport. Every thing you'd expect in a German town is here; the squares complete with German brass band, market stalls selling warm wine and spicy sausages, and of course the obligatory tavern with portable legs and beer served in a glass full of strawbees. It's little wonder that the Thakker team not only work together but also vacation in a local bar where programming themselves, only a few minutes walk from their offices.

Getting its name from



The Second Place probably Thakker's greatest game. In fantasy program, Thakker's target has reached the ACE staff were content to an amazing full screen display one of 3D.

the end of the last battle from some form of battle. All Thakker games are developed in an old style - combination of text, graphics and 3D like graphics - don't own themselves with looking to create their all the graphics. Thakker is currently in the process of developing its own set of utility classes. "You are not only involved with any of these programs - you had all kind of things over and up?"



Chambers of Shado has made the last world really hard to see if game looks Thakker to the most complex with the new background color. It also includes the complete effects that were in Thakker's releases.



Stefan Krenkel is an exciting code programmer who creates the ACE staff and games team's most efforts per for the ACE. His most recent complete finished one is a classic full-screen 3D game in a number of releases - selling only the screen-graphics and other releases. The game is being expanded to three full screen with very impressive, as was the Thakker's standards.

Dragonlight most of the Thakker team are still playing games, after all the company gets to have some a follow next....



it should be out on ST, Amiga and PC in late Autumn.

Thakker is made of an enthusiastic, stable and very technically competent group of dedicated games developers. ACE is sure you'll be hearing more of them over the coming year....



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TRUCKS ON ROLL



SHAR-DWAR



ACE LETTERS

While our illustrious Editor recovers from the turbulence of a holiday in Jamaica (don't you feel sorry for him?), he's loathingly let Rick "Himself" Haynes loose on the LETTERS pages this month...

A PLEA FOR NICARAGUA

My mother is getting me either an Amiga or a Commodore. It's a toss-up as to which one's better - the Amiga is technically, but the Amiga has a tormented future. Anyway I'd like to ask some questions about both of them. First the Amiga, what audio ports does it have? Are they the standard 3.5mm jacks? To what extent is the Amiga PC compatible? Can it just read PC disks or run MS-DOS programs? If it can run programs, would it be able to display CGA, EGA or VGA graphics? How fast would it run compared with a normal PC? Now the Commodore, will ACE be reviewing Commodore games? I just my little dream (well my main aim) for a Commodore on Amiga and TeDeja. Also, if they are ready before 25th December, I got one. What about its stereo ports? If it has one jack it's fine for my Walkman 'phones, but not for my stereo system (it needs right and left phone sockets).

I think ACE is cool and has a very good modern layout (unlike other magazines). It's also got a great good cover (Illustrated) and readable reviews, although I think it should have two reviewers comments.

PC Nicaragua must survive.

John Wood, Glasgow

• Pencil and paper at the ready! Here we go: (1) left and right stereo jacks (2) yes (3) 4, 5 yes, if you buy a sophisticated hard-wire add-on costing mega-dosh (4) anything but VGA is not very fast (5) ahead (7) yes, as soon as they're generally available (8) the Amiga has a standard single 3.5mm Walkman-type

HELP AT HAND

I would be delighted to render my services to all Amiga, Spectrum and C64 owners that read ACE. I have a team of friends ready to answer letters via your Mailbox in The Pink Pages. So please could you print the following:

Never fear we are fast, we are ready to answer all letters from people needing help on the C64, Amiga and Spectrum. I have a team ready and waiting to answer your letters and their dispatch replies within 24 hours! We have the complete solutions to Memory, maps for Galaxus, tips for obtaining the Movie, Robocop maps, Birth Day 8 files, Power-up codes, Career Command tips, Mayfield add-ons and loads more games solutions. We will also do our best with utilities, etc. Send a large SAE to 38 Westover Road, Downley, High Wycombe, Bucks, HP10 9AF. But please no telephoning, we are going to be laid-deep in tips as it is!

Also please send any Public Domain programs or MS-DOS scenarios, as we have some too! If you've got any tips send them in, or just any letters, that they're the end, thanks for a great mag at the best price.

Stephen Oldman (plus Neil, Lee and Justin), High Wycombe, Bucks

• In the next issue of ACE we're introducing a revolutionary new way to **Take the Game** - in addition to our 'Take it' Tactics section. In the meantime, good luck with the tips service guys, it's nice to see some of our readers taking time out to help other gamers too. We hope you feel the ACE world!

handphone socket.

Thanks for the comments, we an ACE try to stay at a level 0-FC and the best studios (it is - then its 450-1 at the end) Especially on ACE takes a cut-over at all of the games we review - if anybody radically disagrees with the reviewer's opinion on a game we give them space to air their own views.

PC of course Nicaragua must survive - along with the MSX, child benefit and student grants (a bit of politics, my name's Rick Haynes, thank you and goodnight).

TAKE TO THE SKIES

I have just read your review of *Star Flight II: The Battle of Britain* flight simulator from Leisure ACE 28, page 298, and very interesting it was too. I especially liked the little sections on the pilots and leaders, and the technical aspects on the two main aircraft involved, but your information on the Spitfire was flawed. You stated that it was the only fighter to maintain its superiority for the whole duration. In fact even in its final and most advanced form it was still outclassed by a handful of fighters, the Messerschmitt 262, Fokker-190 Long Nose and the Dutch Hellcat to name but a few.

So please don't print things without checking out the facts first.

J. Roe, Ingleson, North Yorks

• Humble beginnings begin, though I think you've misheard me: we meant the Spitfire was the only fighter to maintain its superiority during the war in its class. i.e. single prop fighter - not turbo motor propellers as you've cited in your examples. But then again what should I know, I was born thirty years after these disastrous first year Britain. Anyway, we're glad you enjoyed the review. Look out for more articles of this type in future issues of ACE...

IT'S A BIND!

Please can you inform me of the following:

- (1) Whether ACE binders are still available?
- (2) If they are, how much are they?
- (3) If they are not available yet, when will they be available, and how much will they be?

I enclose a SAE for your answers, and would greatly appreciate a prompt reply.

Andrew Bryan, Bainton, Surrey

• Sorry Andrew, although we'd love to answer all your letters



individually, we just haven't got the time - unless you want to read the next issue of ACE in three months time! As for ACE binders, I'm afraid our marketing department has run out of the money (because had to pay for the ACE Christmas Lunch), but expect to see something come the new financial year in April.

ARCHIE AWARENESS

Your review of Intelektor ACE 28, page 54 was unfair and biased, you gave Intelektor MS-DOS altogether. This is totally unrealistic. Intelektor is one of the best flight simulators available on the market - there is only one flight simulator which I would rate as being better than Intelektor and that is F-25 Retaliator. The screen shot you showed with the review of Intelektor was very correct, I have seen Intelektor being played in real life and the cockpit does not look at all like the picture you showed.

Your magazine hardly reviews games by the thousands and when you do review an Action game you never spend time citing the game properly. There should be a section in your magazine for the Action Director, BBC series and Archie series. You use as much space reviewing PC

GHOSTBUSTERS 2 CONTROVERSY

After five years in the games writing business from Kayleth through *ISS* (a game which you ACE Rated and feature in your Pick Pages each month but said *Stobberkopf*) We have learnt 1) to be tolerant of all reviews, good and bad.

We realise and accept that an opinion of a game is a very personal view. It can be hard on occasion when a project such as *Ghostbusters 2* - written in six months from the script without benefit of the film, which was still in production when we set to work - is finished so quickly, but there you go!

However we believe would like to point out a few inaccuracies to your review.

The Amiga version runs on two disks, not three as stated. Perhaps your reviewer - not up with the programming side - has difficulty with this. So as a guide (sic) two is generally identified in the following manner - hold a disk in each hand, if there are two disks left in the box then you have two disks to play with! Yay!

The ST runs on four single-sided disks, we could have produced two double-sided disks but this would not have been helpful to those owners of a single-sided drive. But one can't assume that a reviewer would see this difficulty.

We also wonder about the comment that "The Sound is very impressive sampled stuff - the *Ghostbusters* theme" and yet rates 0 in the rating box. Perhaps this discrepancy is indicative of the review or perhaps it isn't, who knows?

Many of the team at Fourfield take this opportunity to wish you all a Happy Christmas and a Prosperous New Year. We could we will meet again in the review columns of 1990!

A note to Gary, who I am led to believe actually wrote the review. My real name appears at the bottom of the letter and in the spirit of free speech I will print this letter in full. If you are confident that you are speaking the truth, one does not need to add an alias.

**Steve (Whimble),
Fourfield (programmers of
Ghostbusters 2)**

• The version of *Ghostbusters 2* that we were sent consisted of three disks. We can only conclude that it was not a production copy. See the *Bitnet* Etc this month for the correct Audio Flaming - mistakes do sometimes happen and if they do, we will always rectify them at the earliest possible opportunity.

As for our review of *Ghostbusters 2* or any game, we always stand by what we write. If anybody agrees or disagrees with what we say, we always welcome their comments and opinions. We do, however, agree with you on the subject of pseudonyms. These will not be used again in this magazine under any circumstances.

Well it looks like ACE has got itself in a spot of bother. Reading an article in the computer press, Activision are seemingly letters with ACE's review of *Ghostbusters 2*, which is understandable. But to be quite honest, the game's really not very good. And you were right to rate it as 2/4. I really think that game companies who don't like the rating a magazine gives, then they should shut-up and not start getting petty. It certainly puts attention on the game with a terrible rating, giving non-ACE buyers like these any? - (See, Ed the ACE Verdict, and that should definitely make an impression of the sales of the game. What happened to free speech? I think that Activision will see on this matter and I personally congratulate the reviewer for giving a true opinion.

On a slightly lighter note, why the price of £1.90 on the January issue? Don't start putting prices up... magazines are dear enough already! By the way, the ACE Stockmarket is a great idea.

Neil Carr, Doncaster, S. Yorks

• There you go like the ACE Stockmarket - we've had a great response from industry and public alike. As for the 15p price increase, we believe ACE is tremendous value for money, but then we would! But that extra 15p is buying you a multitude of new features to be introduced into ACE over the next three months (see pages 8 and 120 for further details)...

Engin and Sega Megadrive-games. There are thousands of people with Derco's, BBC's and Amstrads! Now tell me who many people have a PC Engine or a Sega Megadrive.

**Sandy Lacheta (we think),
Walthamstow, London**

• Although no official figures are available, there are at least three million PC Engine and Sega Megadrive owners in the world - and that figure is growing at a phenomenal rate. The range of

games released on these consoles is staggering, and they are always entertaining and superbly programmed! Can the same be said for games on the Amstrad, BBC or Amstrad? Now don't get us wrong, we like those machines and try to cover all their exciting and interesting developments, but if we start giving the Electron special coverage shouldn't we then give at most space over to the Commodore C64/4, Dragon 32 or BBC? And that we're talking these machines either - if there's a ser-

ious! development in Advanced Computer Entertainment then we will cover it - for whatever machine, and not more to BBC machines inclusive.

As for the Activision review, we commissioned a seasoned Amstrad gamester to review the game and we stand by his comments - don't forget weekly bytes and opinions do vary! ACE always spends time on each game - no matter how good or bad it is. But your critic right, we did make a copy of the advertisement, in fact we gave you

a sneak peak at Activision's new gaming epic, *Droid Noid*. Secret Agent: (see page 18 for further info).

TOP TEN ADVERTS

Here's my Top Ten Adverts for games. I looked for colour, style and generally being able to read it.

- | | |
|---------------------------|---------------------|
| (1) Precision | Electronic Arts 57% |
| (2) Test Drive 3 | Accolade 56% |
| (3) Babylon | Ocean 55% |
| (4) Operation Thunderbolt | Cosmi 55% |
| (5) Thunderbolt | Grandtrot 54% |
| (6) Star Quest 2 | Virgin 54% |
| (7) The Untouchables | Cosmi 51% |
| (8) Ocean HQ | Cosmi 50% |
| (9) Ghostbusters 2 | Activision 50% |
| (10) Robinson | Cosmi 50% |
- No name supplied, Mercury, Cornwall**

• Do you agree with these choices? If not, send in your own list.

HOT ENOUGH PORNOGRAPHY?

Such everybody on ACE, employ a load of photographers and turn it into a porn mag.

Lee Barrows, Doncaster, S. Yorks

• Etc, well I don't really think so - although our Advertising Manager, Gary Williams, may disagree with me on this one.

YOU COULD WIN £25!

Are you **unemployed** or **underemployed** with your latest games purchase? What do you think should be done about software prices, the price of games software or the next generation of computer entertainment hardware? Tell us **YOUR** views on any subject connected with Advanced Computer Entertainment and you stand to **WIN** yourself a prize of **£25**! What are you waiting for? Just writing to: **ACE LETTERS, Priority Court, 20-22 Farringdon Lane, London EC2P 2BA.**

CYBERBALL™



October 1994 Two "Balls" have teamed for world domination.

November 1994 A new team has been formed.

October 1995 Suddenly, a new player has appeared on the field.

November 1995 League officials announced that a new rule would be implemented for the game. All players must be in the field for the game. No more substitutions.

January 1996 The "Ball" team is now the "Ball" team. "Ball" has been replaced by "Ball" making a change.



FOOTBALL IN THE
THE CONCEPT



Programmed by Gamin

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TENGEN

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THE ACE STOCK MARKET

NEWS OF BIGGER AND BETTER PRIZES THIS MONTH, PLUS THE FIRST WINNERS. THE ACE STOCKMARKET NOT ONLY GIVES YOU THE CHANCE TO WIN, IT ALSO TELLS YOU WHICH GAMES THE REVIEWERS IN ALL MAGAZINES ARE FAVORING WITH HIGH MARKS - AND THEREFORE WHICH GAMES TO GO FOR WITH CONFIDENCE.

As more and more people are getting into the Stockmarket, we've decided to introduce some improvements from next month. First, we're going to give away MORE prizes! Secondly, we've decided to make some changes to the way the Company Counter is set.

Up till now, we've only printed the ratings for companies who have had products reviewed during the current month. However, the system includes a 'devaluation system' that reduces the share prices over a period of time for companies who don't publish any games. It would obviously be good, therefore, to see as many companies quoted as possible, so from next month we'll be printing ALL share prices. Rightly.

That's not all, however. We will also be introducing a Software Index, which will affect the way companies are rated. We believe it will make the charts even more authoritative. You can find out all about it next month.

THE WINNERS

So timely! What a helpless lot you are. Not ONE person got ANY of the listings completely correct. However, since the whole idea is to actually GIVE some of these prizes away, so though we'd make a couple of changes to the prize giving system.

From now on, we'll give the prizes not to those who predict ALL the entries of a category, but to those who get the most right. So, for example, you could win a prize if you predict only the first five in a category, if that's the only one to a completely correct list. In the event of a draw, we'll set all the correct entries in a hat and draw out a winner.

But not only that. We've also decided to introduce a JACKPOT. This means that if anyone DOES manage to predict all five entries in any category correctly, we'll give them a shopping jackpot worth of £150 worth of software! The 'jackpot' scheme will start this month with Round 1, so get your entries in now!

As a result of the new prize regulations, however, we have three winners this month! Dean Walker of Printer was one of several candidates who correctly predicted that P18 Combat Pilot would top the Amiga charts (we've got the second entry right - Rock'n'Roll - though Dean had it in at number 5). Dean Smith of Monkey Health was one of several who got entries one and two in the ST chart, and John Horvath was one of many selected at random who pinpointed Saboteur at number one in the Amiga charts. There were no correct qualifying entries for the other sections.

THE COMPANY COUNTER

There are three columns of ratings for companies in the ACE Stock Market. The first shows the overall score for this month only, statistically calculated from hundreds of reviews in magazines during the current month. The second shows the amount of change - up or down - from the previous month. The third is the share price: the company's rating relative to its past performance. This month, Dolphin is looking on to its top slot despite a slight drop in items, while Rock and Monkey have seen their fortunes rise steadily with their latest releases.

Important! In line with other improvements we're making to the magazine (see page 88), we shall be introducing a new element to the company counter next month, the Software Index. This will also have the effect of altering the way in which companies share prices will be presented, so we thought it best to suspend share dealings. I.e. Company Counter forecast entries from next month. Every last is normal, and better, next month. And of course you can still try your luck on the other counters.

Position	This mth	4 wks	Rating	Improvement	4-75	-4-75	95-25
Dolphin/Police	81.25	-1.5	146.48	Level 9	82.29	-6.58	94.88
Rock	73.79	31.12	138.12	Baroque Arts	68.68	6.5	94.5
Spindle	73.23	1.88	120.87	Pygmy	71.55	-8.11	94.1
Strain	63.88	15.47	113.87	Indigo	71.07	12.87	94.11
System 2	62.78	3.20	112.48	Wave Style	74.12	5.75	93.77
				Legionaire	69.1	-7.8	93.2
				Wave	78.47	-8.85	93.24
				Kiss	57	-14.1	89.58
				GG/ST/Goal	61.85	-13.47	87.74
				Thames	84.44	-12.56	87.44
				Unifun	64.55	-12.45	86.1
				Speedy	81.56	-16.69	83.2
				Excuse	47.12	-13.89	83.26
				GG	63.47	15.67	79.29
				Player's Review	41.67	-21.68	76.12
				Hi-Speed	69.29	-2.93	76.58
				Alternative	68	15	68.01
				100%	68	-18.47	57.57



Choose Software Stock - should start pushing themselves up the charts next month.

Company	1st	2nd	3rd
Topix	79.28	6.84	133.48
Accolade	78.56	26.09	128.46
US Goal	76.6	-3.95	126.24
Electronic Arts	60.89	4.81	125.12
Orion	67.04	3.56	125.1
Novgor	60.5	-0.48	124.73
Micrograph	60.41	0.55	123.88
Image Works	63.44	-0.59	123.34
Comcast	51.88	0.0	122.7
Edg	64.75	0.0	122.7
Smooth 3D	61	0.0	122.7
Fantasy	71.05	11.33	99.74
Storm	71.01	6.1	99.12
Microphone	62.83	7.63	98.26
Adventure	70.47	-3.43	96.3
Life	69.77	4.01	95.48

Editors marked? are new this month.



Myth - doing wonders for System 2 in the 64bit charts.

THE MACHINE COUNTER

AMIGA

FPS Analyzer	Comox	93.8
Sea-Clay	Image Arts	94.29
It Came from the Desert	Commax	
93.88		
Smart Car Race	Micro Style	94.75
Switchblade	Commax	97.89

Comax's move towards "madder" games has got off to an excellent start, with FPS Analyzer gaining awards all over the place.

COMMODORE 64

Myth	System 3	93.13
SuperSports	Hi Squad	88.25
Super Outrun	US Gold	87.3
Power Belt	Activision	87.23
Mixed	Activision	86.29

Myth takes over the top slot as Turbo Outrun slips, and Power Belt continues to score highly.

AMSTRAD CPC

Ghostbusters II	Activision	86
Dynastar Doc	Activision	84.5
Ghost'n'Goblins	US Gold	81
Sea Wars Trilogy	Commax	79
Spawning Mangler	CCC	78

Ghostbusters II gains its right most number one while Dynastar Doc is stabilizing its seat.

PC-COMPATIBLE

Quarter Commercial	Parade	79.13
Space Roper	Orion	83.63
Cyber	Acropolis	81.77

Only a top three-five slot, in a less month for PC releases, Quarter Commercial looks even more like a "must buy" than ever, and Cyber seems to be keeping up to its high standards with its latest release. Come on everyone, let's have more PC games with 684 and over VGA-support, or there's no excuse for it.

SPECTRUM

Myth	System 3	95
Chase HQ	Comax	93.5
Hard Drive	Commax	90.7
Operation Thunderbolt	Comax	88.75
Ghost'n'Goblins	US Gold	87.17

Myth continues to get a thumbs up from everyone, but the impact of the sliding games is beginning to be felt as Chase HQ and Hard Drive make it to over 90 per cent.

AGARI 87

Hard Drive	Commax	90.07
Myth Warriors	Virgin	87
Ghost'n'Goblins	US Gold	86.18
Interphase	Image Works	85.8
Super Wonder Boy	Activision	85.67

Hard Drive falls up to the top, while 87 is definitely the best format for Myth Warriors to sit.

THE 16-BIT COUNTER

Myth Warriors and Indiana Jones, adding under last month, make it into the top 10 for the Amiga games are being consistently higher than those on the 65, and it's the strength of the Amiga version which is filling up the top three slots.

FPS Analyzer	Comox	94.8
Sea-Clay	Image Arts	93.15
It Came from the Desert	Commax	91.88
Hard Drive	Commax	89.12
Myth Warriors	Virgin	87.28
Hard Line Threat	Electronic Arts	87.04
Smart Car Race	Micro Style	86.74
Super Wonder Boy	Activision	85.87
Indiana J/L and Onslaught	Amiga	85.5
Switchblade	Commax	85.35

Building under: Future Wars, Dragons of Flame, Ghost'n'Ghosts

THE 8-BIT COUNTER

Myth and Hard Drive's success in the US Gold's Ghost'n'Goblins (the 684 release), although Ghost has been around for a while, it could still feature a next month's chart as the Commodore version picks up more reviews.

Myth	System 3	Sp. Gold	93.13
Hard Drive	Commax	Spectrum	90.7
Ghost'n'Goblins	US Gold	Sp. Gold, CPC	88.18
Interphase	Image Arts	Q4	86
Operation Thunderbolt	Comax	Sp. Gold, CPC	85.8
Power	Thalman	CM	85.88
Smart Car Race	Micro Style	Sp. Gold	85.5
Chase	Comax	Sp. Gold	85.75
Turbo Outrun	US Gold	Q4	79.8
Super Wonder Boy	Activision	Sp. Gold	79.75

Building under: Double Dragon 2 Turbo!, Ghost'n'Ghosts II

THE ACE STOCKMARKET ENTRY FORM

NAME

ADDRESS

Telephone No.

ROUND THREE

Fill in this form if a prediction is
 100 Stockmarket, Priority Court, 35
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 Closing date 1st February 1995.

My prediction for next month's top five
 game on the Commodore 64 is:

1. _____
2. _____
3. _____
4. _____
5. _____

My prediction for next month's top five
 games on the Spectrum is:

1. _____
2. _____
3. _____
4. _____
5. _____

My prediction for next month's top five
 games on the Amstrad CPC is:

1. _____
2. _____
3. _____
4. _____
5. _____

My prediction for next month's top five
 games on the Agari 87 is:

1. _____
2. _____
3. _____
4. _____
5. _____

Notes:
 Answers must be received by the closing
 date for this round (1st February 1995).

All employees of ACEF or if you complete
 instead of the publisher, distributor, or sale
 of ACE Magazine are eligible for entry.

Only one entry per household.

The decision of the judges is final and com-
 petence cannot be referred into.

NEW! FROM ENCORE...



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Game	Format	Price	Release Date
BLADDY BOY	Sega	£14.95	28.09.89
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	MSX	£14.95	
CRITICAL MASS	Sega	£19.95	22.02.89
	Com	£19.95	
	MSX	£19.95	
CRITICAL MASS	Sega	£19.95	22.02.89
	Com	£19.95	
	MSX	£19.95	



ENCORE

TOP SECRET

JOHN COOK GOES UNDERCOVER AT ACTIVISION...

This month our in-depth report on Activision finds out what's really going on at Activision with the imminent release of *Wolfenstein 3D*.



Yes, thinking about it, the aims of a film maker and a games programmer are, fundamentally, very similar. Both are trying to provide a film or a game, suspend the audience's belief, create a world which completely involves them. They're usually trying to tell a story too, one way or another.

In a game, the story is usually simple and unobscured - it is the player who decides the ending, either by failing in a quest or dying, or succeeding in a particular task. It is the uncertainty and challenge involved in this interaction that makes the computer game so compelling.

How come more people go to movies than play computer games then? Well, let's admit it - movies look a whole lot better than most computer games. Totally smooth animation, great resolution, almost infinite palette, great sound-effects. The competition will even the most expensive computer hardware.

Subject matter too - there are films made on a variety of subjects while the lack of imagination involved in the basic concepts and design of most games is rarely lamentable.



Editor's Note

Wolfenstein 3D is only one level in a series that will continue to be published under its Activision label. Don't worry! It'll be in the white or over the background for a replacement.

Most are still devoted largely at introductory, young males. Linear plots, simple goal oriented action.

This too is a functional decline ordered by the hardware. Not enough memory, not enough processing power, not enough storage. In a few years time, naturally, this will all be different. But instead of writing games, our programmers will be making movies.

Here and here though, the personal hard-ware limitations don't stop some people out there striving to overcome these limitations and close the gap between film and games.

First to come to the fore were Cinemascope - bringing cinematographic features and using decorative animated scenes in its games. Next



work that sometimes falls down in its implementation, but at least there is moving towards a goal. But you can only go so far using sports technology. Enter Dynamics.



DynamiX, an American programming house, previously best known for Arctic Fox and more recently Adams Battle Tank, have just finished a work using digitized stills for narrative and filled polygon techniques for action sequences, mixing sprites and 3-D techniques in a unique fashion. The game is called David Wolf: Secret Agent.

You control several of the actions of said hero, working for good guys Perseus, in his set piece fight against the evil Dr. Von's Super-Boat. The scene is this - Wolf exclaims: Gatti Stock has defected to Ripper taking with him some new super Stealth Fighter and it's safety proof designer, the spunky Rolly Official. There are five set piece arcade sequences that determine the fate of Wolf and the World - as

Ripper got away blackmailing the US Government to the tune of \$5 Billion.

You start off with a hang-glider sequence over the cliffs of Dover, then on to two car chases, a foot fall game, which if you rip the chute off your adversary you go on to attempt to infiltrate the secret base by landing on a floating ferry. Once in the base, you have to capture the plane, then fly it to safety - avoiding fast seeking missiles by flying through an empty hangar in the momentary very James Bond.

The plot is completely linear, with the digitized scenes (complete with real actors expressing suitability from emotions), but the humor of the thing is very much in the spirit of the game. These digitized scenes would be



novel enough, but the really original thing about David Wolf is the way the 3-D is used.

Not only is it often mixed with some sprites to produce a novel effect like the swinging training shoes when you look down from the parachuted but another, even more cinematic device is used.

Within a 3-D graphics system, the view point of the player is just another object in the system. It's called the "Camera". The view of the Camera can be moved just as easily as any other object in the system. But for the first time, DynamiX use this 3-D "Camera" as - a film camera, using it to pan, zoom and sweep across certain set 3-D pieces - just like a real movie.

The effect is electrifying. For the first time the real feel of the movie has been captured by the programmer. The game itself can be reviewed by others. Some will love it. Some not. But the conceptual breakthrough has been made. Who cares if you need a hard disc and a fast PC? DynamiX have done it, who hope everyone else can catch-up. Paul

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PILATION PACKS



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CALIBRE 50

Atari Corp.

But never taken a great fan of Commodore-format shooters kind of games, but the one may well convert me - even though, in principle, I remain opposed to titles with this tight a body count.

Yes, you control a soldier spritzed with a machine gun and have to wade your way through solid masses of cannon fodder - but there's something in the thing that gives it an edge over most of its competitors.

Get it, guys, Veterans - with you out to liberate POWs for real, that motivated lead Pecker's scroll follows you about as you



wade through the jungle. Ammunition is limited - with you collecting extra bullets from the people you kill. You also have grenades and can pick up really interesting hardware further in the game.

Yes, I know it sounds hackneyed, all I can say is that I started playing it sceptical and finished up - much later - in glowing admiration. Good technical implementation and great game balance pull this out of the mire and make it a must for the boys. And, as they say, check your ideological soundness in at the door.

PANG

Midway Corp.

Crack Asteroids with Bomb Jack and what do you get? Well, who knows - but if Pang came out as a result, I wouldn't be at all surprised.

Single screen action, with your little man moving left-right along the bottom, it's your job to clear the level of the balloons that are floating around, by shooting them with your little bow and arrow.

Problem is, burst the big ones - and they turn into two medium sized ones. Burst them - and you get lots off teenie ones. These are the ones that disappear on demand, but meanwhile, if you've been touched by one as it bounces around the place, you loose a life.

Reasonably original, quite addictive once you get into it. Expect to see a lot of this one around later in the year.



SWEET LICKS

"To score in Sweet Licks, you have to hit plastic mokes on the head with rubber mallet."

A long time ago... in a arcade resort far, far away... I can remember entering the parents for small change and scurrying off to the arcade at the end of the gear. To blast away at R-Type perhaps? Noooo. To experience total synthesis with the machine while playing Defender? Naaaa. It was to put big games (see, we're talking old money, granddaddy era analog mechanical devices) to - at get my fortune told, to see what the future saw and finally to test my strength against a disembodied arm.

They few led never produced the result. "You will soon face a disappointment and then be beaten to a pulp by an antique" but, in those days, the fact that things only worked if you changed 'em had even less any intermittently was taken for granted.

There's no denying that those old novelty amusement machines had a certain charm, however, but as soon as Pang and leaders turned up, they were the first to hit the scrap heap and are now only found at such places as the Amusement Museum along the promenade in Brighton. But want to hear the saddest news? Mechanical novelty games are back - and the first the lead is coming from Japan.

All too soon the Japanese are here, right? We're all soon and head of the infamous *Bullwinkle*, with Clay James going on the low down on scores of ornate slotmachines being pulled along grand paths... as they follow. And here's the cocktail of Tobacco sauce and liquidized monkey brain. (On the other hand what the hell can they think of *Beastie's Blood*!). But the arrival of the first of the new wave of Japanese novelty games confirmed all we ever suspected.

Called Sweet Licks from Namco it consisted of a flat table at waist height, out of which popped, from base to base, plastic mokes wearing

goggles. To score, you had to hit them on the head with a potted mallet. As the game goes on and time counts down, the pace gets faster and faster. The player is seen to hit around wildly and - particularly if that person is a middle aged housewife - the thing can suitably be described as much as a Spectator as a Participant sport.

Sweet Licks was a great success and started the manufacturers there was a new market to be exploited. Two player versions were made, other variant games constructed, but the big surprise came at the recent JAMMA show in Tokyo. Heavily dominated by video games, there was, for the first time, a very significant number of brand novelty machines.

Miraculous Golf? Car Racing? Air Wrestling? Ten Pin Bowling? Ice Hockey? All these were subjects of copyright, yet mechanically based machines on display. Talk is of falling revenues but the fact is that video dominated Japanese arcades - as they're trying to find something new to bring in the crowds. It's interesting to see whether that strategy succeeds and if it has any significant effect on the machine spread found in UK arcades and year.

But my guess is that the fall off of its video-only arcade revenue is more the punters voting with their feet against the frequently banal and even the more... that are released. Novelty offer something different to attract a much more varied social mix into arcades than the... that just teenage males.

How interesting if game designers could come up with... more than this single social grouping! But that would be... away from simple, violent, goal orientated games.

And it's easier for a programmer to write a whole fancy sprite routine for the next R-Type than to come up with anything that is more sophisticated, original. And the market is what you want.



SWEET LICKS

3D TETRIS-STYLE COIN-OP GAMEPLAY IN BLOCK OUT...

Remember 'novelty games' – mechanical cabinets that told your fortune, armwrestled you, and generally popped and wheezed after you thrust your pennies into them? John Cook muses on their reappearance and picks the best of the bunch of new coin-op releases...

TOKI

Fox Corp

OK, if you're the kind of guy that goes round re-reading Proust, the you have to face up to the fact that the job has certain occupational hazards. Like being turned into a frog. But when you're turned into a thing? Well, it's not in the job description, but it's what happens in the opening sequence of Toki, as some fellow gets carried away by an evil magician and you get devoured to around \$10 million years. And it does make a jolly entertaining game.

OK, so it's just another 'colony/planet/shoot scenario, but at least it's done with a little bit of imagination, fun, and humor. Controls are standard PCB joystick and two fire buttons, one being to jump the other to fire. Firing assumed balls of flaming jib, that is.

Toki does get rather surreal at times – such that playing it under the influence of a heavy hangover could cause a full blown propensio to develop. Collect one power-up – and Toki gets to wear an American Football helmet for pro-

tection. Very useful when he comes up against, um...the blue greys and orange flying...space!

However, it's the large sprites and the excellent graphics job – almost reminiscent of PlayStation title – that raise it way above the rest of the mill and into the recommended category. Give it a try.



BLOCK OUT

American Technix

This one was previewed in ACE after we'd produced a quick glimpse over in America around October time, but has only now reached these shores, so late. Basically, just imagine Tetris, but played in full three dimensions.



In Block Out you have a perspective view looking down into a box, Dimensions 4 by 4 by 12, in the One Player mode. Outline shapes appear one at a time and fall down, slowing, under gravity. You can manipulate them in the X, Y and Z axes. When they hit the bottom of the box, or another shape, they turn solid. Like in Tetris, you have to make a full horizontal line (in this case, it's square) to make a level of tetris disappear. Easy eh?

Well, no.

What adds Tetris so addictive, partly and it's immediate. You can pick it up and understand it immediately. When you add a third dimension, it starts losing that – partly because performing X, Y and Z transformations on an outline object makes your brain go funny and partly because if you make a molecule and stack an object right on top of the other, anything underneath it is now obscured, until you clear that object away.

How big, however, and it's bound to pick up some fans from the Tetris cognoscenti, but it's unlikely that most people will want to play it more than a couple of times. My advice? Try Steve Hair from Konami instead.



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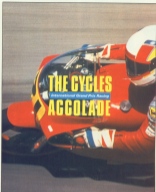
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You'll have to work hard, though. Blasting hordes of the revolting creatures (such a sad waste of scrap metal) and rescuing the keys to the Lifeline.

So, Stryx, you'd better get you get paid-on for some real sweet robot stomping through the impenetrably complex underground world of the Dome cities. It's a tough assignment, and time is running out.

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DREAM MACHINE



The five young guys that make up The Wild Boggles Development Team are an enthusiastic bunch of programmers and hardware hackers who have one simple dream — they want to develop the perfect game computer, both in terms of programming and audio-visual quality. The TM8 team are taking the concept of the modern day arcade video machine — powerful 16/32-bit processors backed up with loads of dedicated custom chips for sound and graphics — and aiming to put this baby under into the home. And, of course, they're wondering whether they'll be picking up the ACE Challenge Trophy as a result...

In dedicated Amiga programming, TM8 have experienced all the mistakes that the original developers made with the Amiga's internal custom chips design. They now hope to radically improve on these deficiencies. The TM8PC is currently configured with not one but two processors: the main CPU, an intelligent programmable keyboard processor, a memory management processor, and a graphics processor better than the Amiga's Copper, as well as smaller processing hardware to produce the other hardware effects — multiple playfields, automatic M80 hardware, 32 voice quadruplex audio, sprites, border and poly-painted tile game states.

BACKGROUND GRAPHICS

The TM8PC is designed to manipulate up to six playfields (see box). An example of the use of the usual 64 x 64-tiled background picture, a foreground where all the action takes place, and a foreground - all field together automatically by the hardware.

On the graphics side, the TM8PC design currently features three basic resolutions, each available in three formats giving nine in total. The basic resolutions are 320x256, 640x356 and 1280x794. The three formats are: Normal 256 lines deep, Multiview 1 (312 lines deep) and Multiview 2 (1 024 lines deep).

PLAYFIELDS EXPLAINED

A playfield is a display area. It could be bigger than the main display area and need around 16-bit scrolling ability. A playfield is made up of a number of bit planes, where a bitplane is a binary image held in memory corresponding to what is displayed on the screen, where a 1 means pixel on, 0 means pixel off. The bitplanes combined give four coordinates (00, 01, 10 and 11) — thus giving four colours. These bit planes combined give eight combinations (000, 001, 010, 011, 100, 101, 110, 111) — thus giving eight colours, and so forth until 16 bitplanes which give 65536 colours. The TM8-PC contains hardware to support up to 16 bitplanes on a playfield. It's also possible to have more than one playfield overlaid — colour 0 on the top playfield acts as transparent, so you can see the second playfield underneath it.

The borders on the screen will be set by the program, not the above resolutions (include the border). If the border is removed, the screen can be expanded, giving higher resolution — up to 1400x1000. The feasibility of these resolutions will depend largely on the availability of fast memory and what internal TM8 decodes to use. It's unlikely, for example, that a 1280x1024 playfield could have 65536 colours.

IT ALL SHAPES UP

The Shaper hardware includes the Blitter, Dot Generator, Line Drawer and Polygon Generator — everything possible is handled by the hardware. The Blitter supports eight channels and using simple multiple-plane registers it can access up to 16 plane images with ease and reduced setting-up time. Simple logic operations are possible on all eight channels as data passes through the blitter, including pixel shifting and special logic operations applying to source 0 channel allowing masks to be generated.

The dot generator may not be developed, but it can draw dots faster than the processor and automatically every frame in any given playfield/bitplane. It processes a HALL terminated list of co-ordinates during the vertical blanking period, drawing them on the required display area. The processor can manipulate the dots via the bit to create spectacular effects such as a starfield. The Line Drawer can use any pattern to generate lines and can be programmed to draw directly or apply a simple logic operation to the screen as it draws. The Polygon Generator is the most sophisticated part of the generation game — it can draw shapes and fill them if required. It can also act as a general purpose filler and draw spaced or free-sided shapes.

SOUND'S GOOD

TM8 claims that "...the audio hardware will be perhaps the most advanced ever seen on a micro, putting most synthesizers to shame". To back up this statement they cite the TM8-PC's 32 voices capable of playing back a 16/32bit sound sample in quadruplex sound. There is also a complex machine allowing the custom hardware to interrupt the processor should certain MIDI-messages arrive. 256 levels of volume are provided and there are three audio output connectors: a special 32 voice connector for studios wishing to mix down individual voices, a four way line out connector for the quadruplex sound (providing a signal to go straight into 16:1 A/D, 1/32 inputs), and a digital output.

BUYING THE DREAM

The TM8-PC is still at the paper stage with the company currently looking for the financial backing needed to help them build a few prototype decks. The TM8ers also have an interesting scheme for any hardware fanatics and code creators out there. For an as yet undated price, TM8 will build you a custom designed

We issued the ACE E20000 challenge (see issue 26) to encourage the frank and free discussion of games hardware. This month, a young team of programmers think they've come up with a games player's dream machine. But will the dream come true...?



The original ACE Challenge specification for an "ideal" game machine shows in the schematic above.



John Matheson, of Flare Technology, with the TMB Development Team. On the floor, the original prototype Flare PC.

TMB-PC SPECS

Processor	Paradise 32-bit 68000-16/20
Memory	16k custom RAM, 128K program RAM
Graphics	16 million colours (24-bit palette resolution), 512x512, 640x480, 800x600, 1024x768, 1280x1024, 1600x1200
Sound	16/12-bit 16-voice quad-processor sound with 256-voice levels
Custom hardware	Graphics co-processor, eight 16-plane playfields, 128 hardware sprites, 16-bit character-set line driver and colour generator
Expansion ports	CGA, EGA or VGA, disk drives, audio out, SCSI, two-WD32, parallel, two MIDI, four joystick, mouse

development system which you can take into of your own house. TMB hope this idea will lead to all the underground fringe markets and hacktack out there in cyberspace. The ultimate goal is to create a huge software base of state of the art games and utilities available for the machine before it hits the games developer and general public.

DISCUSSING THE DREAM

ACE organised a conference between TMB and Flare Technology - the designers of the Icons Console - to discuss the feasibility of the TMB-PC. Those attending the conference at Flare's offices in Cambridge were John Matheson (Flare Technology), Rick Hayes (ROEL Toys Services (TMB chairman), Stephen Mayo (TMB secretary) and Mark Crossland (TMB). After the usual hardware banter, crossed engineering chip-kiss the conference got down to the nitty-gritty...

On the tech-specs:

[TJ] We've split the 32-bit system into half with a full 32-bit address bus. We'll have a DCS communications processor with programmable priority over graphics. 16-bit and audio hardware registers. This DCS will be based around 68000 architecture and could have an instant cranking facility using on-board memory.

[JM] It wouldn't take a 68000 to do that - it's a pretty simple task. Parallelism is very useful if you can access it. The other great problem you come across with custom chips is pins - all of it is dominated by how many pins you can have on the board.

[SC] That's something else we hadn't thought about.

On the audio hardware:

[JM] Sound sampling is apparently efficient and

uses lots of memory.

[TJ] We hope professional sound studios will be able to use our machine, it could be hooked up to every thing and it's going to have ten complete MIDI systems. You can just discount what the Amiga does.

On the range of machines currently available:

[TJ] Unfortunately nobody's coming up with anything new on the market. The last spectacular thing to appear was the Amiga and that's ridiculously dated now. There is nothing that seems to stand up to the 30x.

[JM] The software base is a very hard nut to crack,

that's why there has only been two generations of machines since 1981.

On the ACE Challenge Specs:

■ A buffer capable of refreshing the entire screen area twice every 50th of a second...

[JM] The Icons System can do that!

■ A trigger that can rotate, translate, or scale at a rate of 10000 vertices per frame...

[JM] I think the Icons can do that as well - but it wouldn't be able to do much else at the same time.

■ Two identical CPUs, each 32-bit wide and capable of accessing memory at 10MHz...

[JM] Parallelism is one of those things that's a wonderful idea provided you can write the software to do it. That's one of the reasons why we won't be missing the 68000!

■ One million internal pixels and 256 colours on-screen drawn from an 18-bit palette (0.25 million colours)...

[JM] You need a 24-bit palette to get smooth shading that's broadcast quality...

■ A display - must produce a TV-compatible signal and be able to reduce a square grid to a TV pixel...

[JM] Absolutely essential if you can do it for the price.

■ A supergraphics chip capable of drawing 1000 sprites images per frame, with each one scaled, rotated, and duplicated as required

[TJ] There seems to be very little point of sprites with a buffer or multiple playfields.

[JM] I agree, why waste your money doing the same thing, sprites are an old fashioned way to solve a problem.

VERDICT ON THE DREAM:

[TJ] We hope to have three models of the TMB-PC priced from just under £400 to just over £1000.

[SC] Your machine is going to cost too much - you're talking about a lot of slices. Price is absolutely all in the game, it's a great theme, it does sound very good and I think you've done your work very well - but you haven't engineered the price in. It's a lovely idea, but you won't be able to sell it because it's too expensive. Our skill is cost engineering - doing as much as possible for as little as possible.

ACE would like to say a special thanks to John Matheson and all at Flare Technology for taking the time out for the conference. All the best for the future!

THE MIND BOGGLES DEVELOPMENT LIMITED

NAME	AGE	CURRENT JOB
Stephen Mayo	19	Freelance Programmer
Stephen Mayo	19	Computer Systems Manager
Mark Crossland	18	Computer Science
Stephen Loughran	22	MSV Trainee
Marlyn Oakley	22	Computer Salesman

"Normally people die laughing when they hear our company name."

THE ORIGINAL ACE CHALLENGE SPEC (see issue 28)

1. A buffer capable of refreshing the entire screen area twice every 50th of a second.

2. A trigger that can rotate, translate, or scale at a rate of 10000 vertices per frame.

3. Two identical CPUs, each 32-bit wide and capable of accessing memory at 10MHz.

4. 1 million internal pixels and 256 colours on-screen drawn from an 18-bit palette (0.25 million colours).

5. A display - must produce a TV-compatible signal and be able to reduce a square grid to a TV pixel.

6. 100 of pixels (RAM) for each processor.

7. At least 16k of main memory.

8. A supergraphics chip capable of drawing 1000 sprite images per frame, with each one scaled, rotated, and duplicated as required.

9. Development systems must be self-sufficient hardware at least six months prior to launch, enabling a responsible software base to be generated for the machine.

10. Production levels must be gained to satisfy demand and deliver machines on-time!

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Play **AUSTERLITZ**, and step up the challenge that gives you the chance to rewrite the history books!

Written and designed by Dr Peter Tarcas. Illustration by Peter Carrara.



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WAR!

War — what is it good for? Absolutely nothing... except computer games, as John Minson discovers...and just what is a granddaddy war?

If war is at all, it's at markets. The wargaming can easily be judged. From tabletop playing with lead soldiers through warlike board games like chess to classic genre titles of classic encounters, being an armchair general seems to have remained widespread appeal throughout the ages.

It's no surprise, therefore, that war games should make the leap from the tabletop to computers. After all, anybody who has just played a board wargame will agree that much of the player's time is spent rolling dice and consulting various tables or movement charts. How much longer it is the calculation could be left to a computer's number crunching.

DEFENDING SPOTS

The first wargames were often more than straight simulations of their tabletop counterparts as classic strategy simulations like *Advanced Squad* still command their full glory for the Apple and IBM. Even if the two great trench wars board wargames to make it into the 21st century weren't actually viable, the computer might have been a good idea.

What they did by product of the war of games. The most interesting political consideration is a journal of computer-based wargames. Let us have a little idea of how the war was and a little more of that elemental doctrine that is the strategy of war.

One reason the first wargames were simulations of board wargames rather than the games themselves was the background of the writers. Peter Tarran (brother,

William had started a wargames club when he was 14. Steve Thompson (brother of Tom) had ample time to play Avalon Hill's games while he was on the job. Jonathan Griffin (Congressional correspondent from *Arctic* later by writing manuals) and John Lamb (chief of North Federal) was a university wargamer before editing *The Gamer* magazine.

Traditional gamers were reassured by this recognizable link to their hobby. In fact the popularity of computer battles seems to have at last stimulated the board variety. But for the less committed computer gamer it could have seemed a far remove from the relaxing simplicity of arcade games. Despite the best efforts of companies such as TSR in the 1980s and PWS over here, wargaming remained very much a niche market.

THE ULTIMATE CHALLENGE

To what is the appeal of going from a token representing so many feet or hundreds of men? Don't you have to be a lot of a guy to military to want to prove that you can kill more of the enemy than he can? Not according to the wargame designers. It's

the ultimate challenge," says Peter Tarran. Steve Thompson supports him. "There is something very satisfying about leading an opponent in a wargame. It's a kind of mental thing." But there are plenty of other ways to stimulate your brain cells, why this particular one?

To start with, wargamers are giving themselves against history. Eric Soren of Intergraphic Developments, creator of *UMS: The Universal Military Simulator*, was an American

MAGNETISM



The Battle of Marathon in 490 BC was won by the Greeks, rather by luck than by judgement. Attacking at a quick pace the Hoplites (heavily armed infantry) of both wings forced back the Persians in their path. Meanwhile, the centre of their line, taking the full brunt of the Persian advance, fell back. This retreat, although unplanned, allowed the Hoplites on the flanks to fall on the rear and sides of the Persian force, thus routing them.

It's not to have looked at other computer wargames. I took what I wanted.' What he wanted was a radically different approach to the genre. 'People had been treating it as board wargaming and it was all in 2D. They were just using the computer as a referee.' Scher realized that this was underusing the microchip.

The most striking aspect of UMS is its wireframe graphic display which allows you to see the contours of the land. Taking the high ground can be of crucial strategic importance and UMS is able to present this without resorting to techniques more suited to third year geography classes. There's also a drop-down menu-command system which saves the novice gamer's time.

Developing a basic system into which you can add new scenarios for USMS seems sensible but Peter Tanskanen has reservations. His initial idea was to use the core of Dendro for a series of games but I don't quite work out like that. 'You can't use it for anything because of historical details and quirks of the genre, such as the frozen lakes at Austerlitz. The UMS approach in my opinion doesn't really work. You have to research the battle fully and it can't cope with all those details. For instance, when the Persians arrive at Marathon you have a third force on your side but they're not under your control.'

'We use the diagrams next, and that they were gaudy and in abundance. We knew they could not withstand an attack - knew there was only that retreat, and if he let it slip it would not return. The battle was exciting and unfolding in a stimulating, highly-visualized form and his focus was on major things that he could not contain himself.'

See Making History (page 66) and Dendro (page 68) in *WAR AND PEACE*



Magna Graecia's Midwinter is a typical Mike Singleton (Lords of Midnight) scenario which runs a lot to the wargame concept. Strategy involves more the manipulation of human resources than the deployment of hardware (see in, for example, *BT Think Magazine*).

While none of this should send the hardened (traditional) wargamer into apoplexy, it may come as a relief that Australian Strategic Studies Group still prefer the 'counters and map' approach to accurate simulation. The ethos of the wargaming society can still be found in their programs and accompanying magazines, but it's with its maps and diagrams, none of which will look odd to a devotee of The General.

However the editorial in issue 12 of Box 5 contains a cry for help: it seems that a number of the large software distribution chains in the US have decided to reduce the number of titles they carry. 'Don't worry', 'Extempore'. But is this a realistic alternative or will the historical hardware devotee take a select, specialist band? It could be said to see computers such as IBM forced out by a sea of attention if only because they are able to treat themselves after their parents like Nintendo with the accuracy they deserve. In their back catalogue you'll find battles from MacArthur's Korean campaign in the MARS to three volumes taking you through the American Civil War.

Retired for two years, IBM is facing something of the same problem but has chosen a different solution. Pick up an IBM catalogue and you'll pass through pages of Diagrams and Diagrams before you reach the first of the wargames - or reach the compu-

UMS II OPENS FIRE

It's not that the US Navy bought the rights to the second game (UMS II) for the battles in the First World War. But even so it's a surprise that the magazine's choice was an American, particularly as Dendro had been well regarded in the past.

The idea for UMS II came from Peter Tanskanen, who had been working on an alternate history scenario called 'The Spartans' (see a page in *Computer Graphics* for further information) that requires only the conventional wargaming units such as sea, ground, air, and space. The last was a particular requirement. As it is based on microchips which means it deals with computers rather than graphics, the computer can take care of calculating the game's design (see review here for more).

Other approaches have been used as an extension. On a computer this is easy to do. Coming up with a scenario for the game is simple. But UMS II - before all the counts get into imaginative wargaming into a new dimension. However, has increased from the battles to the whole world and what better scenario to choose than the game wargame in America. The result is a scenario project which will comprise a volume 01 and two 02s.

Over the years we have built a series of similar virtual scenarios to give ourselves a virtual world. UMS II, if you take it America you might find some things. You can then become one of America's politicians or go further and become a general commander. You can become the leader of the American people.

UMS II has just entered its final territory. There are three psychological systems to take the scenario when the world's your oyster. The first two are more suitable for UMS II. One is the military and the second is the political. As a political system you can take the game down and to see the results. Implementation involves four volumes now UMS II (Volume 01) in the next few months.

my built-in reputation. Just as role playing seduced the less committed board simulationists, SDI is selling Panzer Strike and Attack on the back of words and scenery.

Steve Thompson confirms the attraction of fantasy scenarios — he's currently working on one called *Masterpiece* — but has some caveats. "People are more likely to accept them rather than a recreation, which they tend to think is a slog. If it's fantasy they can relate it to their arcade experience. But you have to be careful in the way you handle magic systems." He refers to *Advanced Dungeons and Dragons* above a complex set of gimmick rules are made redundant because a high-level wizard can wipe out armies with his powers.

So how will the warriors of the future fight? Will they stay on the strategic level of mental challenge. Or will games come ever closer to the experience of war? Peter Lucas believes we've gone about as far as we can in the recreation status. "You're not going to get close to the emotions unless there are

"...to raise his eyebrow and inquire, 'Is it an anti-war deal?'"

"Yes, I said, 'I guess.'"
 "You know what I say to people when I hear they're writing anti-war books?"

"No. What do you say, American Star?"

"I say, 'Why don't you write an anti-glacier book instead?'"

— *War and Peace* — *PlayStation 2*



people, or computer-generated people, involved, if you get simulated reports and build up a report. I can see it going that way but not very quickly. There is a computing obstacle that home computers are not powerful enough and screen resolution is not high enough."

But the more believable a simulation becomes, the less of a game it becomes, because it becomes more boring," he continues, "...and maybe that's not a bad thing." Considering that the superpowers now prepare for real war by running computerized training military exercises, high in tactical content but lacking the human level of sending another hundred 19 year olds to be blown down, it could be a very good thing indeed!

BLOOD AND GUTS?

Peter Lucas is one of many who play the historical aspects of wargaming. "With a computer there is no limit on how much you're able to incorporate between two men or between one man and a man." The scale of each unit helps determine the combat. Steve Thompson mentions that in a game called *Panzer*, which was based around man to man combat, it was just entering, "Somebody getting their arms..."

"I understand you a better level," he continues. "It's just a general idea to work on the emotional level. There are a personal reason. You're not getting dirty. I understand that Peter Lucas retains a few other titles, computer titles. One example is a title on a console. They play the same."

So it's still a few general as long as you remember the idea of a challenge and it's not actually working most in their hearts, it's not getting any more intense and/or disturbing of the battle, it's more on the level of the possibility of the loss of life. "That said, the distinction between it, independence of blood and death challenges, it's not the case, going to be an issue for it."

"...and professors in England, now asked,

"Should think themselves honored if they were not here;

And should their standards sleep while any speak

That plague will so open
 England's day."

— *Henry 5* — *Wargame: The Empire*
Macintosh 3 — *Henry 5*

UMS SCENARIOS

Don't expect the UMS-UMS either. It's covered because the battle data can be instantly loaded instead you're fighting from the top down in fiction. It will be the few scenarios that will be based from an already tested of computer studies in the field, then on a computer, according to Peter. "So get the idea on right now to build a platform," he checks.

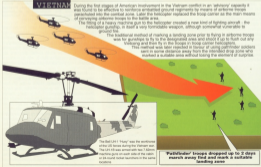
VIETNAM

During the first stages of American involvement in the Vietnam conflict in an "airship" capacity it was found to be effective to transport embarked ground elements by means of airborne troops paratroopers into the combat zone. Later the helicopter replaced the troop carrier as the main means of conveying airborne troops to the battle area.

The fitting of a heavy machine gun to the helicopter created a new kind of fighting aircraft — the helicopter gunship, in itself a very formidable weapon, although somewhat vulnerable to ground fire.

The traditional method of marking a landing zone prior to flying in airborne troops was for gunships to fly to the designated area, and shoot it up to flush out any Vietcong and then fly in the troops in troop carrier helicopters.

This method was later rejected in favor of using Pathfinder cockpits sent in some distance away from the intended drop zone who marked a suitable area without losing the element of surprise.



"The old L-19 'Hoop' was the machine that did most during Vietnam war. The L-19 was a small aircraft. I believe machine guns on each side of the cabin, or 30 round rocket launchers in the same position.

"Pathfinder" troops dropped up to 10 days march away that and mark a suitable landing zone.

BATTLES YOU MUST FIGHT

You could do a lot worse than look out with UMS, though the forthcoming release of UMS II might be a cause for hesitation. UMS costs \$24.95 for the ST, PC, and Amiga and of course you get all the additional scenario options as well.

More conventionally themed, *Australia* from PDS distributed by Microsoft at \$24.95 for ST, Amiga, and PC. You could be a more up-to-date presentation of the old-style games with *Conflict Europe* (game available as *Australia*).

Halls of Montecarlo is another traditional scenario from SSG and available here from EA at £18.95 or \$24.95 for the PC, and an Amiga version to come in the New Year.

Five-Regade is another Australian title to look out for, and US Gold have many good \$24.95 titles including *Panzer Strike* and *Slain*. Phone them on 021 625 0268 for details.

OTHER TARGETS

There are more ways of waging war than ordering armies around a battlefield. You could say that a game like *Clif's* coding conversion *Commander* is a wargame. But this is forcing a point. Strip away the battlefield graphics and they can be replaced with anything from countries to role gamers. The pure arcade shoot 'em up is too far removed from the reality of war to be considered a serious approach to the topic.

A map in the right direction is a game like Microsoft's *Arctic Ranger* which combines the machine skills of the arcade game with a modicum of realistic detail. You are not just a sniper with several lives but how to act as a soldier would in a covert mission behind enemy lines.

A similar element of strategy has entered the same company's simulations. It's no longer enough to be able to fly an F-15 and shoot down anonymous enemy jets. Nowadays the obflights have a context and you'll plan a mission from and hopefully back to base, taking in the surrounding landscape. To survive in the recent *W1* *Task Platoon* you'll need to use your brain as well as your big guns.

Another interesting approach comes from *Joan's Last Patrol*, a *Commander*-style Vietnam scenario. Designer Ian Hasting put in months of research, actually obtaining original training manuals, so that the player's experience would come as close to that of troops in the field as could be desirable. In fact, as he read more about the battles of Nam he seriously started to question whether it was a better topic for a game.

His solution was to add another dimension to the arcade skills required to take out a guard in unarmored combat or cross a minefield with only your knife as a probe, and the tactics you'll need to choose to make your way back to base. At points in the game you'll also have to make tough human decisions, such as which of your troops is the most expendable. And how will you choose to interrogate villagers to discover if they belong to the Viet Cong? Question them kindly or apply the use of force that eventually shocked the world. It's not the wargamer will face serious moral decisions.



Microsoft's *W1* *Task Platoon* involves many strategic elements that derive from traditional wargaming. You don't get a 3D map, simple cooperative weapon systems, and a vast, detailed manual. Specialisation of this sort could be one of the future specialties of computer wargaming.

BEWARE



THE HOUND OF SHADOW

The Hound of Shadow is set in London in the 1920s and is rich in the atmosphere of the era. It features "Theater" a new role-playing system.

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ST Format-Gold

"The game's storyline is well-researched and absolutely worth attempting." ST Action

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ACE CONFERENCES

ACE will also be acting as a communications link between you, the readers, and software houses during 1990. We're setting up a series of ACE conferences in which readers will be given the opportunity to meet software houses and talk to them about their games (and you don't have to be polite either!) on an informal basis. Lunch will be supplied and admission will be free to subscribers, who will also receive priority allocation – a valuable bonus since space at conferences will be strictly limited. Each event will be fully covered in the magazine, so you could get your mug in the mag as a bonus!

InterFACE

Subscribers will receive, completely free of charge, a special quarterly newsletter put together exclusively for them by the ACE Team. This will bring you details of some of the topics that we can't, for reasons of space or security (3), mention in the magazine itself. Subscribers will have the chance to contribute to it if they wish. With ACE every month, and InterFACE every three months, you'll really be at the cutting edge of the computer entertainment revolution.

THE ACE

Subscribe – and the ACE Team will plunge you into a maelstrom of discovery and excitement. Reporting direct from the heart of the entertainment inferno, the ACE Team have ensured that their readers have been the FIRST to find out about many startling new developments in the games-playing world. Here's what you've been missing...

THE TRAIL-BLAZING PAST

ACE was launched in 1989 by a small team of dedicated computer entertainment journalists. They wanted to produce a game magazine that would, for the first time, appeal to people who really took their games seriously and who, like the ACE Team, wanted to go beyond game reviews into the world of advanced entertainment technology.

One year later and the magazine was, without it's rivals and being voted Magazine of the Year, in recent months, ACE has brought you exclusive coverage of:



Hypergames: the game style that began with *Manhole* and *Cosmic Demos* and is paving the way for CD-I entertainment – defined and described for the first time in ACE.

The Flame Mon: the state-of-the-art games hardware that later became the heart of the *Korix* console revealed for the first time exclusively in ACE.

Interactive Compact Disk Entertainment: the Philips CD-I unit, previewed exclusively in ACE and due for release in the next few months at under £1000.

File Yozm: a 3D-bit Japanese games monster with a built-in CD-ROM that carries a mean Atari/Linux conversion and a staggering technical specification.



pACE setting

One of ACE's prime roles over the last few years is to campaign for wider acceptance and coverage of computer entertainment. We've set up a breathtaking working party to take on TV and Radio on behalf of our readers and we'll be keeping you updated on our progress throughout the year.

ACE will also be running a unique reader campaign in early 1990. If you've got a copy of the relevant issue, you'll be able to take part in the largest computer games publicity exercise ever. Don't miss it! What's more, if you subscribe, you can take part in person at one of the ACE Conferences (see the Subscribers' Events box for more details....)

The ACE Challenge: a £10,000 challenge to the hardware industry to give us a dedicated games machine which can deliver truly advanced computer entertainment. The first of the ACE Challenges will be giving us the full specs of their **next breaking piece** in the next issue of ACE.

Interactive Video Tapes: a new games standard in the USA that is turning video tape recorders into powerful **interactive games systems**....

...and much much more....

THE GLORIOUS FUTURE

By subscribing to ACE, you inherit a great tradition of in-depth coverage of computer and electronic entertainment, from the latest on-top blockbuster to **hypergames** and **MIDI music**. Here are just some of the topics you'll be able to catch up on in forthcoming issues:

Now in the USA: an exclusive look at the latest state-of-the-art games software currently under development in the States for the new CD4 and CD41 game systems.

Wynona! Tante! an ACE exclusive report from the heart of Russia on Soviet computer entertainment.

Inside the Machine: full technical details on the latest generation of intelligent main-op consoles.

Dear Alan: an in-depth examination of human game psychology and the software, both established and under development, that could make this the **fastest growing games area of 1990**.

...plus a host of other exclusive, in-depth articles on the **cutting edge** of computer entertainment.

New fACEs

Ever since EMAP bought ACE, we've been preparing for ACE's best ever year....



We've now got **Steve Corbett**, the original editor who, in conjunction with Peter Carnac, was responsible for the early success of the magazine. Steve will be supporting the magazine on a regular basis as a valued freelance contributor.

Steve knows the entertainment industry backwards. Not only was he one of the original Persons of Computer Games team back in the early 80's, but he's also involved in script production for stage and film. His knowledge of these other industries will bring ACE readers exclusive highlights in the rapidly emerging world of CD4 and multi media entertainment.

Rob Haynes

Rob is ACE's deputy editor and the man who really keeps his finger on the pulse of the computer games scene. He was previously the Reviews Editor for the weekly magazine *New Computer Express* and his background of investigative journalism will be bringing ACE readers the latest developments in entertainment technology every month, maintaining the magazine's excellent reputation for breaking the biggest stories first....



Laurence Scotland

Laurence was chosen from over 100 highly qualified applicants (including many familiar names in the games business) because, as the new Reviews Editor, he demonstrated to us all that he was not only a highly experienced games player, but also a superb organiser. Each month, he'll be coordinating reviewers from around the country (and even from abroad), bringing you the authoritative reviews you expect from Britain's leading games magazine.

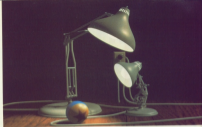


Jim Willis

Now that we've got Jim as our Design Editor, we'll be ensuring each month that you not only get the best coverage, but that the design of the magazine also meets your demanding expectations. Jim's an expert in desktop publishing systems and is rapidly developing an individual style for the magazine using the latest state-of-the-art DTP technology. The way ACE is actually produced makes an interesting topic in itself - you'll be finding out more from Jim over the next few months as he lets you into some of his graphic secrets....



Lucas Jr. introduced several new technical achievements by Pixar's computer animation group, most notably, self-shading, where an object's appearance changes itself as it turns itself. The film was designed using a keyframe system that operates with professional-quality motion picture cameras and a Digital Equipment Corp. 486 1/330 computer and an Evans & Sutherland Pic-Time Raytrace & Final Image system rendered with multiple light sources and procedural shading on four Decade Power 486 PCs. © 1994 Pixar



Pushing the Boundaries

The 1994 International
Digital Animation Festival,
recently held at
Channel Four, acted as a
showcase for the current
state of the animated
arts. Robert Myers took
out time to start up
with Oscar-winning
John Lasseter...

John Lasseter is an amiable Californian in his mid-thirties who, perhaps more than anyone, has been responsible for changing the art of computer animation. His one-film career with computer graphics will have failed to have been impressed by the pioneering work by which he should be known as the Digital Disney. Instead, Lasseter's remarkable track record is so big a testament to innovation in the art of entertainment as the master himself.

"One thing I've always tried really hard to do is to understand the limitations of computer graphics... when you understand those limits you can create something really good and use all the aspects of the medium. And also, once understood, you can start working to push those limitations further... but first you have to define the boundaries in order to push them."

And Lasseter has pushed them farther than most. Lucas Jr., the much acclaimed, and much copied, short featuring two stereographed desk lamps, and *Red's Dream*, the satirical re-imagining of a motorcycle, proved that sophisticated animations could be generated by computers alone. Last year's *Tin Toy*, a comic encounter between a tin soldier and a giant baby, won him an Academy Award for his efforts and his most recent work *Rock-a-Doodle*, a tale of unrequited love between a crowman and a plastic, life-sized beauty, took us to see him another. Both *Tin Toy* and *Rock-a-Doodle* are instantly witty, ingenious and flawlessly executed, taking the viewer into compelling, four-minute worlds of movie magic.

COMPUTER FRUSTRATION

But although Lasseter works with some of the most sophisticated computer animation systems available he's at pains to point out that for the time being computers are still not powerful enough to enable even an award-winning animator to work anywhere near as fast as he'd like.

"It's a little like working on a word processor and having to wait ten seconds for the first word just typed to show up... though it's slowly getting better, but the bottom's learning to cope with frustration."

But one of the main changes he's addressing in the production process of animation is the increasing cost-effectiveness provided by today's animation systems.

"It's now possible to do longer format films... it used to be very prohibitive to do anything longer than about five minutes as it would take you six or seven months. Now we can do thirty minute films in a year or so... it seems computer technology is now remarkably powerful for less and less money."

Part of that cost-effectiveness is supplied by the advent of personal computers which allow you to plan storyboards and film sequences without recourse to expensive on-line systems. Personal computers like the Apple Macintosh which come free with sophisticated animation packages. For Lasseter was in this too for a couple of days as the guest of Apple who were using the opportunity to showcase the Mac as the leading platform for computer animation. Indeed, Apple is so convinced of its master's pre-eminence in the field that it went so far as to co-sponsor the six day festival.



Knickerbocker was storyboarded entirely on a Mac II and Lauerer looks forward to the day when he can create high-end computer graphics on a Macintosh at home. The key to home animation on the Mac is the HyperCard package Apple bundles free with the machine. It's a mouse-driven application that enables an animator to create clickable buttons which drive sequences based on individual frames. A range of screen transitions and drawing tools, coupled with the ability to load in digitized images, allow a user full control over motion control. If the duration of an event needs changing it's simply a question of reading a new event time - the controlling software alters the frame rate accordingly and precise timing is ensured. Lauerer uses HyperCard in conjunction with a simple Thunderbolt digitizer that clips to the head of his dot matrix printer. Animated pictures can then be scanned into HyperCard and easily manipulated and incorporated into animations using straightforward cut and paste facilities. The arrangement may be simple but the results are sufficiently good to have Lauerer hooked.

"HyperCard gives me a rough idea of the timing and story line - good enough so that the final product, translated on my custom systems, changes very little. Knockback took only a week to be converted to storyboard form."

DIGITAL ART

Creating computer animations at home is, of course, tricky in as much as perspective, rotation, animation has always been the most labour intensive of the visual arts requiring immense patience and the perseverance of retaining the idea of perhaps breathtaking visual action with a view's pace of execution. Part of the problem has been the differing requirements of foreground and background action. The latter is by far the most part relatively static - sitting as a mere stage for a complex array of character activity in the foreground. Early television animators relied on the possibilities of composing the largely geometric functions of backgrounds to the existing computer software. Foreground or character action demanded more ingenuity or talent to hand-draw and carefully re-animated frame by frame in the presence of hand-drawn animation.

As Lauerer, computers introduced a means of bypassing a traditional trap toward bordering on the traditional.

"I started work at Disney after graduating and I saw some notes from a film they were making at the time... and I thought 'This is it. I see this tremendous potential to expand animation... to get computers to do the backgrounds and use traditional hand-drawn art for the foregrounds."

The movie was *Tarzan* and it was to change John Lauerer from a mere team member on the latest

film. It was the first computer-generated film to ever win an Oscar, and now Pixar's best work to date for the animation of a human character. To accomplish this a 3D model of the baby's body was digitized from video frames and composed with a detailed description of the character. General software listed the baby's facial expressions as the skeleton, so that his body moved and flexed according to the video frame directions. The animation of the baby's facial expressions required the definition of more than 60 facial muscles which were grouped by function to allow the animator fine control of facial expression, direction of the whisker hair was represented through the use of procedural animation and general rendering systems. Animation of the facial system began via performance using Pixar's existing systems, implementing the RenderMan framework for 800 scenes description. The film utilized such techniques as procedural shading, ray-tracing, motion blur and hair rendering. © 1989 Pixar



A number of scenes in *Toy Story* were rendered with some of the most striking techniques, such as shading, and motion blur, and in some scenes, particle systems.

RenderMan files are now composed as a Pixar RenderMan and two Pixar RIBs. Animation was created using RenderMan 1.0/1.1 and the RIBs - using Pixar's own RIBs animation system implemented by procedural animation software. © 1989 Pixar



Pixar's scene rendering and animation software was used to create *Knickerbocker*, running on two workstations, each composed of a Power PCII and P100. The entire film was rendered using Pixar's rendering system, implementing the RenderMan framework for 800 scenes description, employing such techniques as procedural shading and hair rendering, ray-tracing, motion blur and hair rendering. © 1989 Pixar and has been composed by Sherman Dykstra, Jim Parsons, Stephen Soderbergh and used to produce the film *Toy Story*. Pixar animation was rendered via the digital rendering system. © 1989 Pixar

Merkey's Christmas Carol to an Oscar-winning movie for with perhaps the most advanced animation company in the world. Within weeks he'd completed a thirty second test called *Wild Things* which Lauerer's Computer Graphics Group got wind of and he was in.

Surprisingly, Lauerer's always written to computer animation control software in the IBM programming environment normally thought of as the language of networking. But the reasons historical rather than national - all the Hollywood animators and special effect divisions were using VHS and UNIX was the order of the day. But when the Disney's and Lucasfilms of the world went on to move into the Cray 900 SuperLeague, Lauerer joined up with a handful of Lucasfilm buddies and formed Pixar, a company devoted to extending the art of animation through custom hardware, software and endless innovation.

"We use all our own software running on powerful Computer Concepts UNIX machines and our own Pixar Image Computer... dedicated animation hardware."

For the modeling we use an Evans and Sutherland Picture System 350 - this is a vector machine that can do things in one frame in real time. Once we have our models and animation worked out all we bring in our rendering software. Pixar's RenderMan - and fill all the color, texture, lighting and reflection. Sometimes it's appropriate to use models as sources to set digital image shapes we've made from clay. Like the baby in *Toy Story*, and incorporate them into the modeling systems. But for wholly geometric shapes, like all the characters in *Knickerbocker* and *Lionel J.*, we use our modeling systems."

Lauerer also points out that regardless of the hardware you have at hand, the key to effective animation of human character is good observation.

"For the baby in *Toy Story* I shot nine hours of my nephew's baby just sitting doing various things or waving. Days and spent I don't know how long replaying the sequences. I get a feel for how babies behave."

WHAT NEXT?

Indeed, Pixar's strength is in character work, whether it's babies bumping in soldiers or snowmen using pneumatic drills to escape from glass bubbles to postcard parties, and it's shortly signing a deal with Colossal Pictures to produce feature length films employing a mix of live and animated techniques. In-between times, Lauerer is looking to produce some half-hour TV specials but he wants to return to his original notion of producing hand-drawn characters in computerized backgrounds.

"There are certain things that computers are unable to do... you can only get real organic shapes to move separately through hand-animation but for applications where geometry and perspective are required computers are more than ideal. They're essential. We have to try and combine the best of both-worlds."

Noting just completed *Knickerbocker*, Lauerer's just about to start working on a few TV commercials. First off is a thirty second ad for 'Fragrance orange juice' shortly to be followed by one for an as yet unnamed chocolate company. It seems that even the most famous artists have to pay the rent, but then commercials are where the money is. For sophisticated animations that can cost up to \$5000 a second, you need it

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SCREEN SHOTS FROM AMIGA VERSION

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SCREEN TEST

PIC CURVE POWER

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

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

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

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

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

PIC curve construction takes a lot of playing on the part of ACE reviewers. PIC Curve analysis is an art in itself. The reward to knowing just what you're getting when you make the decision to splash out on *Mutari Maximus* (*Softscape*)... or *Clash Strike Back*, this month's ACE rated shining example of 15-bit playability.



Remember Defender of the Crown? Now Ubisoft have come out with a contender that's taken over a year to program - but does it make the grade? Find out on page 63.

C64 TURBO GETS 926!

Check out this month's test-bed conversions on pages 76 & 77, including *C64 Turbo Courier*, ACE-rated at 926! and *Amiga Hard Courier*. Fans of *Clash Strike Back* should be kept busy too.

THE ACE REVIEWING SYSTEM

PIC CURVES

The curve relates to the ACE rating system. Each bit interest level that begins diminishes over a period of time. The curve is constructed by a computer to represent what the ACE test editors in the ACE test team consider the best.

Each review also gives you the status of the game's implementation on a specific machine. These bits include ratings for...

GRAPHICS

It depicts if the game's graphics will be impressive if each machine. Some also depict, highlighting specific bits of their own computer for an accompanying help file.

AI

The most and many others are reviewed in a high rating is

available on even limited machines. But the location and PC file-computer's status among are viewed as important.

AI PROVISION

Yes, sometimes you have to use your brain. This rating evaluates the rate of mental effort - which is some average actually easy. Note that ACE readers are generally required to be more than just plain-old human beings, in the ratings they have to be keen that you're not!

AIW PROVISION

Basically a measure of mindless addressiveness. Games like *Clash Strike Back* and *Pong* don't require actually use your power but can still remarkably addictive. Also strategy games and few others because they are designed for instant satisfaction.

Games don't have to be more fun or intelligent - they can be both.

ACE RATING

This is not just picked out of the air but a calculated score that uses under the PIC Curve. To get a really high rating a game will not only have to be very addictive but stand the test of time as well. And because a game does not get over 100 items and most are not very interesting - the following is a general guide to what the ratings mean.

1000 - A classic game, recommended without reservations.

800-999 - A superb game, but perhaps lacking the long-term depth to last into the month and your own game.

500-799 - Not highly recommended, but probably has a couple of aspects to the gameplay that led the reviewer to it.

300-499 - The 'fair' zone, where it tends to be very good if you like that sort of thing.

200-299 - This will be good things going for it, but the game clearly has some noticeable problems.

100-199 - Programs with graphics and programming that are, at best, average.

50-99 - Not only is the gameplay bad but the design was seriously flawed in the first place.

20-49 - Things are getting really serious now... **100-999** (300) games ratings in an Amiga **Under 100** (nothing but over) (nothing) the appealing level of rating. If anything, your 1000, it would be a waste of time to buy it.

VERSION ERRORS - This means some specific information to graphics, audio, loading problems, etc. If there's a new issue for your machine but a version is planned, it'll be covered as an update in a later issue.

THE REVIEW

Reviewers - ACE's new Review Editor - *Clash Strike Back* has been playing games since he was a toddler, but some of these we probably might not mention. There are not competition for the ACE Reviewer job for position from gamesters at most the country, but as review opportunities at the top by showing that the candidate only took a game to the limit, but he could push a game to its absolute end at about 4.

Steve Collins, one of the Original Editors of the award winning magazine, known to thousands through his more recent previous identities, including *Amiga World*, *The Magazine*, and *ACE*.

Mike Hayes was founder of *Amiga World* magazine, writing computer news and has been involved on computer games since starting a game magazine in 1984.

The cover of a game is *Clash Strike Back* has been in '86. It's a year ago reviewed for being fast-paced and often addictive. *Clash Strike Back* is the first with a 15-bit rating. The ACE magazine is one of the most important games magazines in the world, but it's not the only one. There are many other magazines out there, but the ACE magazine is the one that's the most important. It's the one that's the most important. It's the one that's the most important.

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



CHASE HQ

CHASE HQ is dead simple. Put your foot down, catch up with the criminals, and keep scorching their car until it bursts into flames and you can apprehend them. That's all there is to it.

But if *Chase HQ* is simple to learn — how to play it is not nearly so simple to master. Most people will catch the first criminal after a few attempts but this is only the beginning. The next four are much better drivers, have faster vehicles, and the clock ticks away constantly — giving you just one short minute to catch them and inflict sufficient damage to stop them.

The simplicity of *Chase HQ* comes as something of a surprise. After all the hype and the buzz that preceded it as being 'the arcade conversion of 1989 you had expected it to have more features. All you have to do is catch up with the baddest, burly into them a few times, and apprehend them on behalf of the forces of law and order. No power-ups (apart from a booster), no flashy bullet destruction, just plain playability all the way.

The basic simplicity of *Chase* is compensated for by the briefing screens and the graphical displays at the end of each mission.

The briefings are particularly neat. A screen display shows a message print out from Nancy at HQ who tells you about the next criminal

OCEAN outrun the field in a hard drivin' Christmas race



John O'Brien, programmer of *Spectrum Ocean HQ*

to be apprehended and shows you a photo of his car.

The end level screens are pretty impressive as well — showing your patrol car stopped in front of the criminals' vehicle with the villain

AMIGA VERSION

Speedy use of sound FX — great thrills, growth as you pass the other cars on the road, swerves and breaks, and roar of engines as the game shifts and the Porsche accelerates. Graphics are fairly basic — the other cars on the road being particularly disappointing. No comments about the speed of animation though. It really matters along and has a noticeable game lag when you press space to engage the turbo power.

GRAPHICS 7 IQ FACTOR 9
 AUDIO 8 FUN FACTOR 8
 ACE RATING 84%

SPECTRUM VERSION

Spectrum Chase HQ is really fast — thanks to the programming talents of John O'Brien (see page 44 for further info). All the neat touches of the cartridge are included, such as the helicopter showing you the way and your car engine's sound changing when you enter a tunnel. One of the best Spectrum speed games.

GRAPHICS 8 IQ FACTOR 9
 AUDIO 8 FUN FACTOR 8
 ACE RATING 88%

► bumper to bumper in *Amiga Chase HQ*.



Track like a champ

lying on the road in handouts.

Setting to those mid-level screens is largely a matter of perfecting your control techniques. Although you only have two gears—high and low—mastering them is the key to success in *Chase*. By switching down you can rattle the car's position when it is about to spin out on a particularly difficult bend. You lose your speed, but of course not as much as if you spin right off the track.

Chase also features plenty of graphical fluff in the game itself—like the floating light on top of your Porsche that starts blinking when the criminal car comes into view.

Chase is challenging and good fun. It will also leave you tearing your hair out in frustration at certain points—for example, running out of time just before you make the final run



Using the helicopter to show you the way

on a criminal vehicle to make it pull up. You know how many hits you need to get by the job of flyers that fill up in a grid that appears to the left of the screen. When the grid is completely full the criminal car will pull up and you can make your arrest.

Chase HQ was enormously popular in the arcades and will undoubtedly prove just as big a hit on home machines. The gameplay may be

a bit limited for some testers—testers that prefer a Stunt Car or Fiero type of challenge for example—but for those of you who prefer your racing pure and simple, with a touch of motor way block car jostling thrown in, it is perfect. Fans of the coin-op should have no hesitation.

◆ Eugene Lacey

...AND CHASE HQ 2?

Doesn't have yet to confirm if they will be converting *Chase HQ II*—Special Criminal Investigation. If its arcade performance is anything to judge by it seems likely as the game is doing particularly well right now. It is easy to see why.

Special Criminal Investigation takes the same basic idea of *Chase HQ*—catch up with criminal cars and apprehend them. But this time it is not necessary to run the baddest cars to make them crash; instead you can pop up out your sun roof and take pot shots at them with your pistol instead.

The gameplay has been further embellished with the addition of several power-ups dropped out of the sky by the police stopper. Extra weapons, fuel, and communications equipment greatly enhances the game play. Much more to do and therefore double the fun.

Upright and sit down versions of *Special Criminal Investigation* are in your local arcade now at about 50p a go. Start the countdown for a conversion...



RELEASE BOX		
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Burning some serious rubber



VENDETTA

SYSTEM 3 exact their revenge on 16-bit cynics

In last month's issue we looked at the 32-bit version of Matt Foster's System 3, and we were suitably impressed. Why were we so excited by the product? For two very good reasons. Firstly, in the face of increasing cynicism from 16-bit users who believe that 32-bit machines are simply hoarding the city of the gods, System 3 have seen fit to continue the development of original games on those same great formats. Secondly, the resulting product is as good, if not better, than a lot of the so-called 'advanced' software being churned out for the likes of the ST and Amiga. Now System 3 are close to the completion of *Vendetta*, a game that has been developed for the C64, and once again proves that 32-bit technology is far from dead.

The game is based around the theoretically possible development of an atomic weapon that could be constructed by anyone able to lay their hands on the necessary plutonium. In the game scenario, the professor who has succeeded in designing such a weapon has been kidnapped, along with his daughter, by a terrorist organisation. Your task, as a vigilante, is to rescue the professor and his daughter. Because of your status, however, not only do you have to deal with the terrorists, you must also keep the ever zealous police force convinced that you are on the side of law and order, and not just out to make a quick buck. To this end, you must collect weapons and other useful items to assist you in your task, as

Our hero, Matt Foster, has been the subject of a lot of criticism. But our hero has a secret: he's a 32-bit machine, and he's doing just fine.

A 32-bit machine, Matt Foster has designed - the title of his mission game also found few dangers for Matt Foster.



The word 'Vendetta' means 'to get your revenge on someone who has wronged you'.

The first scene of the game shows you are a vigilante, forming a sort of 'hunting team'.

That's right, you will be taking some 'hunting team' members. To find out more, go to the 'Team Effort' section.

The network shows you are currently using a 'hunting team' to find your way.

well as accumulating the necessary pieces of evidence with which to corroborate your story.

The game begins with an extremely sexy title sequence in which you are shown a ribbon of the layout - this sets the scene for the game. The sequence is accompanied by a superbly atmospheric soundtrack put together by Matt Gray.

'Sound good so far? Well, it girl's better. What you get in *Vendetta* is two games in one. In fact of the sections you must explore areas rendered in gorgeous 3D, in which you have complete freedom to move in front of, or behind objects, as well as picking up and dropping items, and interacting with the characters you encounter (which usually means bumping them off before they do the same thing with you) it is in this part you will begin to wonder if your C64 hasn't metamorphosed into an FPGA computer - yes, the graphics are that impressive!

The second section of the game is a diving simulation, again in 3D. This was still being developed after ACE took a look at *Vendetta*, but it looks good so far. You not only have to keep yourself on the road, but also contend with the villain's car, police cars, and obstacles. Unlike some other diving simulations we could mention, this one features a properly implemented fork in the road, as well as dips and hills and so on.



You begin in a deserted warehouse, and have just an hour to complete the game, so the action gets pretty frantic at times. You are soon beset by terrorists, and they're not the sort to stop and ask questions, they just come straight at you. It is here that the full 360° movement comes in handy, especially the ability to run backwards while firing a weapon (assuming you have one that is). Even if you do manage to find a gun, you still need to acquire some ammo before it is of any use. A weapon of some sort soon becomes essential, as most of the later terrorists are armed.

It's up to you now to find the car, and then go on to rescue the girl and her father. However well you do, we're sure that you'll find *Vendetta* as impressive as we did. Look out for a full review soon.

TEAM EFFORT

When we talked to System 3 about *Vendetta* it quickly became apparent that the project has been very much a team effort - a statement that has their say on the matter is clear in that the project has been consistently working to a stage that is far from its original conception.

The resulting game is huge. Everything has been tightly compressed, and yet the 32-bit version is still used completely down to the last byte. The tremendous graphics have been created by Dale and Tony Hager (System 3's in-house man, currently working on the graphics for the ST version of Matt's *Masterblaster*), of those few that have appeared as main games as they can not of the sound generating hardware on the 3D chip, in order to provide suitable graphics, characters, and graphics.

The man behind the coding is C64 systems specialist Sebastian. He has been developing *Vendetta* on System 3's PC-using Programmer's Development System for the 6000, alongside a 640- or 640K cartridge.

In this project, Matt had pulled a heavy weight on the 32-bit hardware. The hardware system is great, but they have to be treated to almost the game's 3D aspect. The remaining graphics are all handled by complex software graphics drivers. These combine the graphics with compressed graphics and vector line drawing to produce the best effect - and very good it looks too.

AND NOW FOR SOMETHING COMPLETELY DIFFERENT

Here's a quick peek at the title offering that System 3 plan to release after *Vendetta*. This colourful wonder is codenamed 'Timber's Quest' at the moment, although it may well appear under a different name when it finally hits the streets. ACE was lucky enough to get a glimpse of the game when we visited System 3 recently and it looks very, very nice. It's a low platform game with more than the usual dose of violence. Want to know more? Contact you (0) 50 which can be further details on *Timber's Quest* in ACE news.



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X-OUT

RAINBOW ARTS cross out the competition

IREM are currently at the head of the shoot-em-up technology revolution with two of the best blasters to hit the arcade in '88: *Dragon's Blood*, and *3-Multiply* - the sequel to *R-Type*.

Apart from larger screens, faster processors and superior graphics, these two games also feature far more sophisticated use of power-ups. Certain of them can be used repeatedly (e.g. you can load pseudo-ships off to perform mini-missions for you) and their selection and use needs careful thought.

However what really makes these games so successful is the design of the gameplay: flight paths of aliens have to be carefully analysed, huge aliens need to be destroyed piece by piece, and a varying of pace throughout the mission are typical hallmarks of careful design.

X-Out is the first home version to emulate the new style of concept and provides proof that on 16-bit, at least, homebrews are catching up with the arcades. To illustrate the point let us say that *Berion* is probably on a par with some of the better shoot 'em ups coming out of the arcade developers around about 1985. *X-Out*, on the other hand, has the definite look of some of the very latest games currently in the arcades - shoot not at first, wait, or load. In its design terms *X-Out* has its roots firmly in *Dragon's Blood*, *3-Multiply*, and *R-Type*.

Rainbow Arts are traditionally eclectic in their designs - and apart from the overall feel of an *Iron Horse* game *X-Out* also has one or two features that are copied straight from the home games. The firing, multi-segmented serpent with a laser-tongue alien or its built-in laser very *Dragon's Blood* and the rotating bulb and multiplying worms are level four boss straight out of *R-Type*.

But don't let any of this put you off as it is worth it. The fact that *X-Out* can look and play like an *Iron Horse* is the highest praise you could possibly level at any shoot 'em up and this particular one has plenty of original ideas of its own as well.

The action takes place under water where



Backgrounds aren't spectacular in *X-Out*. It's what you can't see that counts: gameplay.

you have to fight your way through eight progressively difficult levels - sorting out the end of level early at the end of each one before progressing to the next. Having particularly wondrous about that, what sets *X-Out* apart is

the weapons. You have a choice of four ships which you can arm with no less than a choice of twenty six different weapons. The armory screen is called the shop - where you purchase your additional weaponry with the points you have earned by shooting out aliens in the previous levels.

Just about every possible feature has been catered for in the armory of power-ups. There are multi-directional missiles, long ranging lasers, flame throwers, quick fire machine guns, healing missiles, the laser, fire lasers, and rotating satellites.

The temptation is to go on 'em all at once and let rip - but the game sensibly prevents you from doing this due to the purchase system. As in *Progressive Blood Money* you only have a certain number of points to start with and if you took on too much expensive equip-



ty you will only be able to afford one ship. Levels are therefore better studied to exit what they have earned a good few points before reaching for the deluxe power-up.

The backgrounds of the eight levels are not spectacular. Basic, with little detail, but this doesn't matter a jot as the alien, mid level and end level enemies are so stunning that all of your concentration is registered on them.

X-Out is going to please a lot of gamers. The carmel of selecting and purchasing the wide variety of weapons is irresistible and there is so much to spend at any one time, so much movement and colour that the game is a real visual delight. This is definitely one of the best shoot 'em ups produced so far. I would rate it on a par with the PC Engine version of *R-Type* and ahead of things like *Kobayashi* and *Xenon II*.

■ Eugene Lane

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AMIGA VERSION

The Amiga is working over time to produce all of the graphics and moving objects that are on screen - our list of them at certain points. There is a price to be paid for this in the shape of the maximum amount of time it takes to load and an occasional chattering and 'low water' effect when the computer becomes cramped with too many instructions.

GRAPHICS 9 **ID FACTOR 8**
ARCADE 7 **FUN FACTOR 9**
ACE RATING 939

OPERATION THUNDERBOLT

OCEAN are getting good mileage out of their Tals to go. So far the Japanese coin-up manufacturers have provided the company with four versions into of New Zealand Story, Operation Wolf, Chase HQ and now the follow up to Operation Wolf, the best selling game of Christmas '85.

Thunderbolt's two Uzi sub machine guns mounted atop its massive cabinet have made it a favourite amongst younger gamers. But this is no toy for tiny Tals - there is a tough game challenge in there that will appeal to players of all ages.

Your mission for pulling the trigger is that assault troopers are holding hostages deep in the Amazon jungle. The government decides to get tough and sends in the commandos, which is where you come into it, slugging your joystick in lightning.

The game improves on the original formula by scoring levels of Op Wolf by featuring some 3D scenarios, the depressing truth, however, is that the real appeal still lies in simple gun fun. This is not a game for pacifists, or indeed for anyone with the slightest moral qualms about armed combat.

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AMSTRAD	£10.00	OUT NOW
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AMSTRAD VERSION

All eight levels are included on a modified cartridge. Much better graphics and animation than in Op Wolf and featuring full colour in the battle sequences. A good variety of sound FX have been incorporated in synchronism with the variety of weapons at your disposal.

GRAPHICS	8	IQ FACTOR	4
SOUND	7	FUN FACTOR	8
AGE RATING 015			

AMIGA VERSION

A massive improvement on Operation Wolf and Scudies Chase to the console. Absolutely every thing has been included, right down to the computerisation system which you find the manual. Smooth controls to the console when you turn it up fast and play normally with the mouse. Equally smooth to the console when you turn it up fast and play normally with the mouse. Equally smooth to the console when you turn it up fast and play normally with the mouse.

GRAPHICS	8	IQ FACTOR	4
SOUND	8	FUN FACTOR	8
AGE RATING 027			

To succeed in rescuing the hostages you have to battle through eight tough levels without letting your life barometer tick down to zero. Your on-screen presence is no more than the gun sights of your machine gun, and during the fusillade, rocket launchers, additional ammunition, bullet proof vests, grenades, and medical packs can be picked up by shooting these items as they appear.

The first level challenges you to blast your way through various foot soldiers until you find the enemy spy. Pump him for information and then you are on to level two - the Ammunition Dump. The simple aim here is to replenish your supplies.

Level Three places you at the wheels of a jeep and is one of the more impressive 3D levels. You aim here to reach the enemy hold-out where some of the hostages have been taken.

Level Four gives you your chance to rescue the first of the hostages - but you will need to be an accurate shot to do so - you liberate the unfortunate fellows by shooting the locks off the doors. There is a heavily armed officer at the end of this level who is out to stop you.

You take to the water in a gun boat in Level Five in an attempt to reach the enemy HQ. You will need to save some rockets for this level to take out the heavily armed enemy craft that speed towards you. Level Six takes you inside the HQ where more hostages are to be held by heavily armed senior officers.

The last two levels take you to the airport where you battle your way to the remains of the hijacked DC 10 and free the remainder of the hostages. The climax calls for accurate shooting as you fight your way down the central aisle of the jetliner shooting the terrorists without hitting any of the hostages.

Apart from the attractive static screens between levels, there are plenty of surprises to be had by shooting incidental things that appear in your line of vision. All too often these turn out to be unfortunate animals who have strayed into the battle zone.

Operation Thunderbolt is at its best with a light gun - although the feel of the coin-op original far better than using the joystick to move your cross hair around the screen. Its relatively simple screen presentation and levels that vary well to some conversion - even on 5.66 the game plays respectably like the arcade machine. This is a fast and furious shoot 'em up with a good, planned, increase in difficulty and graphical rewards to sustain interest.

OCEAN prove that two guns are better than one in this Op Wolf sequel

SPECTRUM VERSION

Very impressive graphics - despite being in black and white in the main action window. Loads the feel of the coin-op sights in the usual FO department. Op Thunderbolt is heavily dependent on sound to create the impression of hurried matters and the Spexy struggles a bit with this. All of the levels are here though - and the game is every bit as playable as some of the bigger machine versions.

GRAPHICS	8	IQ FACTOR	4
SOUND	8	FUN FACTOR	8
AGE RATING 005			

PREDICTED INTEREST CURVE



This will keep you amused for a while but doesn't really have long-term staying power.



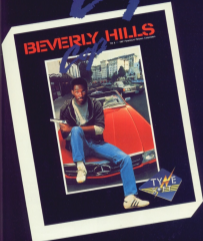
After Operation Wolf the going is about to get tougher, so the tough had better get going!

By Eugene Lacey

BEVERLY HILLS

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Cop



Look out, Beverly Hills.
Here comes Axel Foley!

The hero of "Beverly Hills Cop" and "Beverly Hills Cop II" is back in Beverly Hills - and this time he's working as a cop that's a real stunner! He's going to stop the crime of the year, unless an army of trigger-happy gunmen stop him first!

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HORDES of keen gamers were attracted to The Edge's stand at the PC Show by a monitor, three screens. Darius machine switched to free play - but that was two years ago and we've been a long time waiting for the home box. Was it worth it?

Darius was one of the first machines to use three screens welded together to give a very wide field of view. The technique was used again in the excellent beat 'em up Ninja Warriors and, more recently, in the sequel to Warriors - Daga!

The screens were set deep inside the cabinet giving the graphics a very sharp, glowing, almost holographic feel. At the start of the game you are shown a panoramic map which enables you to pick your route. After a few goes you soon learn which routes to avoid. The scenario is typical shoot-em-up fare with a few player options, power-ups, and underwater terrain.

Unfortunately the Edge have not been able to emulate the wide three screen feel of Dar-



Impressive isn't it, Steve? But the screen compression doesn't quite work!

DARIUS

ius - presenting what looks like just another horizontally scrolling shoot 'em up. Luckily, Darius was not entirely dependent on the triple screen effect for its playability - it's a good shoot 'em up in its own right and its essential addictive qualities shine through in this conversion. The main thing about Darius is that it is VERY tough - be prepared to die, die, and die again before you get anywhere against the ugly underwater monsters it sends at you.

The first really nasty opponent comes at the end of the first level. A message comes up on screen informing you that a 'huge space ship' - Faty Gutton is approaching. A great tension builder this, as you wait for the monster to materialise. It turns out to be a giant green fish whose fins have to be blasted off one by one before it blows and allows you to proceed to the end level.

There are twenty eight different levels to battle through in order to clock Darius. It is more or less pointless (tackling the end of level routes unless you are well loaded with power ups). They move around so much and take a life

THE EDGE prove that three screens can go into one



The original may look terrific, but it proves to be a little slow

every time you touch you, or unless you can do sufficient damage with your first few blasts of fat there is little point in taking them at all.

Darius offers sophisticated control over the power ups with a token-collect system for building them up and the ability to veto the position of some of the cannons.

Signs of the original will not be disappointed by this conversion. It doesn't quite stand up by comparison with some of the very best horizontally scrolling shoot 'em ups currently available - Kabuto, Immortal, and the splendid new X-Set for example - but it does manage to recreate the feel of Darius on a home machine and this in itself is a considerable achievement.

ST VERSION

Some really exciting ship scans slightly via ST Darius. You have to swap disks to bring up the end of level numbers - and then swap back again after they've killed you, or you float. Apart from that the game reaches a high standard in sound and graphics. Score out of 100 out of 100 (more storage to send you and possibly. Read here been expressed by a fourth more speed.

GRAPHICS	T	IS FACTOR	4
SOUND	T	PER FACTOR	4
AGE RATING 728			

RELEASE BOX

GAME ST	C10 100	OUT NOW
WIRE	C10 100	IMMANT
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D4128	C1000 C14 100	OUT NOW

CD-ROM VERSION

This one version going to be the toughest format for Darius to run its keep on as the CD already has arguably the best range of horizontally scrolling shoot 'em ups of any market (Immortal, Kabuto, Dynamis and many more). Despite this it looks up pretty well. It is still recognizable and possibly Darius. Test, colorful, and shiny smooth.

GRAPHICS	T	IS FACTOR	4
SOUND	T	PER FACTOR	T
AGE RATING 708			

PREDICTED INTEREST CURVE



Darius appeals so long, so there is an end of level every you haven't beaten yet - and that is likely to be a very long time indeed.

THE NEW ICE AGE DAWNS



THE STRATEGY GAME

MIDWINTER

OF THE DECADE ARRIVES

As a new ice Age dawns in Reinhard's gigantic new classic, strategy gaming also enters a new era. For Midwinter is a genuinely original concept that branches revolutionary techniques onto the home computer screen.

The scenario is convincingly realistic as a new ice Age grips the world. Together with a small group of pioneers you have colonized the Midwinter Isle, a 100,000 square mile land mass now under threat from invaders intent on seizing your sanctuary.

Compelling action and strategy take place across a spectacular 3D fractal generated landscape with its stunning geographical



accuracy. You control 32 personalities, each with different qualities, skills and complex personal relationships. Enemy movements can be tracked, and battle plans made, using the incredibly detailed on-screen map.

In your bid to defend the life-supporting heat mines, you can ski, hang-glide, travel by snow buggy or cable car, snipe and sabotage the enemy. There is no easy way to win, but the game's unique depth and absorbing complexity will keep you trying until you do.

The deep Midwinter is upon us. Be prepared for a long and exciting battle against its elements.



NEVERMIND



The Amiga screens, an eye for an eye, look very pretty, and also provide food for thought.

PERHAPS it's the Tetris team, or maybe it's just that people are tired of shooting things and driving computerized super cars. Whatever the cause, puzzle games are back with a vengeance and ten of them come from puzzling than the laptops offering from Psyclipse.

Never Mind is a lot of 3D animated isometric puzzle races against the clock with rich 3D graphics and sound effects. If that description sounds a little heavy then brace your self as it gets worse.

You control a cave man in a suit coat who can walk up walls and through "warp" to positive levels if in the correct plane. Getting the Nevermind waking correctly takes a lot of

PSYCLAPSE send
you up the walls with
this original puzzler

practice. Left and right swivel him on the spot - pointing in whatever direction you want him to walk, and then pushing forward makes him do it. Not so good.

His aim is to complete isometric puzzles by picking up missing pieces of the wall and placing them in the correct order. Sometimes he has to jump through the walls to get in to the right position and at all the while time is running out.

Psyclipse have embellished this basic idea by adding animated pictures, chess pieces that move Donkey-like around the tiles to bump you out of position, deactivating tiles, transporter tiles, and even islands and caveaways.

All of this is hellishly addictive. It's the sort of game you idly drop into conversations - a quick remark about the weather and then, casually, your recent triumph over level 93. Games that inspire this sort of co-dependency between players are almost always good games and this is certainly the case with Never Mind.

Actually reaching level 300-yes, there are 300 levels! would probably require the combined brain power of the entire Mensa membership of the world if the progression is difficult from levels one to five is anything to get by. Fortunately there is a help key to assist you as well as a password system that enables you to begin on the level where you left off.

AMIGA VERSION

Prepared with the kind of graphics delights that seem to have become the Psyclipse trade mark. Particularly impressive are the animated 3D isometric puzzles - with segments that can be removed and moved around while retaining the overall shape of the puzzle. Adequate musical accompaniment and sound FX enhance the main business of solving the puzzles.

GRAPHICS **T** IS FACTOR **B**
SOUND **C** FUN FACTOR **B**
AGE RATING **870**

PC VERSION

Requires 128 and 1024 bits - requiring between 1,040 and above. Levels 1,000, 2,000, 4,000, and 6,000, plus various figures are required on the PC to travel the cave man around and complete the puzzles before the time runs out. The animation is competent and the graphics are good - even if the colors are a little garish against the black background. Good selection of game play options. Available in three and a half inch disks as well as five and a quarter.

GRAPHICS **B** IS FACTOR **B**
SOUND **C** FUN FACTOR **B**
AGE RATING **860**

The help key shows you the completed picture for a few brief seconds - so at least you know what you have to achieve.

Psyclipse are obviously aware that Never Mind's going to appeal to older games players as it features a "Boss" key which you can press to bring up tables of charts and figures on screen to give the impression you're actually doing something, productive (you are - solving level 60).

Never Mind is an absorbing and addictive puzzle game that, along with games like Superwar, Bioshocker, or even the legendary Boulderdash, reminds you how nice it is to get the opportunity to use your brain as well as your reflexes. Intriguingly different.

• **Expert Labs**

PREDICTED INTEREST CURVE



This is not the sort of game you can likely to play through in the minutes - a good thing!

RELEASE BOX

STAR 87	£19.999	OUT NOW
AMIGA	£19.999	OUT NOW
IBM PC	£24.999	OUT NOW

No other versions planned



The PC version may not look quite as nice as the game on the Amiga, but plays just as well.

BEVERLY HILLS COP

TYNESOFT go villain-nabbing with Eddie Murphy

AXEL Tally is into a group of arms smugglers headed by the sinister Mr. Big. There are four sections to the game, each in a different style.

First you confront the gang in the arms depot. This is a left to right scrolling affair with some nicely executed parallax scrolling giving an illusion of depth. To kill the villains you must press the fire button twice. Best to get into gun

mode and aim, and occasionally to fire. This takes a little getting used to, but you will soon be popping off bad guys quite successfully. As well as the fast gun shooting back at you, they also throw sticks of dynamite and bombs.

The second, most impressive, section of the game has you chasing three cars loaded with crates of arms. You must remain in and out of the other traffic while trying - not there enough times and they will explode. If you manage to overcome the tricky handling of the vehicle in Mr. Big's mansion is the final two parts of the game.

Beverly Hills Cop is saved by the variety of



The extra driving section in the CD-ROM version looks mediocre, but plays much the same.

the gameplay. There's nothing spectacular here, but the product as a whole is quite entertaining and should stand up to quite a few hours of play.

— Laurence Coombe

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IBM AT	CD-ROM	OUT NOW
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MSX	CD-ROM + Disk	AVAILABLE
SPARC	CD-ROM + Disk	AVAILABLE
OS/2	CD-ROM + Disk	OUT NOW

ST VERSION		
Nothing special, with the exception of the driving section which looks better than most (see 'On a 4'). Entertaining, with good presentation, but no absolute wow here...		
GRAPHICS	5	10 FACTOR
SOUND	7	FUN FACTOR
— ACE RATING 746		

PREDICTED INTEREST CURVE		
Takes quite a while to get accustomed to the controls, but should enable you to obtain some entertainment once you have done so.		

CD-ROM VERSION		
A completely different game to that on the ST. There is an extra driving section to begin with, but this doesn't make up for the poor playability of the game as a whole. Certainly nothing to write home about.		
GRAPHICS	5	10 FACTOR
SOUND	5	FUN FACTOR
— ACE RATING 550		

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THE UNTOUCHABLES

OCEAN demonstrate that no one messes with Elliot Ness and gets away with it

THE legendary Elliot Ness, inimitable opponent of the infamous Al Capone, was the subject of a classic television serial of the 1930s starring Robert Stack as the great man himself. At that time there was a great deal of interest in twenties Chicago. There were innumerable films and television treatments of gangster action, and, of course, great names like Cagney, Lorne, Bogart, and poor old Edward G. made themselves famous by playing mobsters.

Recently there has been something of a revival in this period of Chicago's history, with several new treatments of old gangland themes. As well as a revival of the Robert Stack serials there has also been a long overdue and very successful film of *The Untouchables* starring Sean Connery and Kevin Costner. Ocean's game is based quite closely on the plot of the film.

Perhaps as Elliot Ness in a warehouse full of crates of liquor due for bootlegging, your task is to collect ten pieces of evidence that prove the bootlegging is taking place. This involves shooting Capone's henchmen (distinguishable by their brown aviator and col-

lecting the documents they drop. At the same time you also have to contend with the other members of the gang who are all intent on sending you to an early grave.

When gang members see that they occasionally lose battles behind their backs, collecting them does awful things like tripping up your enemy and aiming, and getting you limited continuous fire. As if you don't already have quite enough to cope with, you also have a limited amount of time to collect all ten pieces of evidence. The trick is to split your time between collecting the necessary henchmen and chasing the bootleggers.

Next it is onto a trolley bridge in an attempt to stop an illegal liquor run, and here some very sharp shooting is required. The same is also true of the alleys game. Here you are treated to a very slick, and very difficult shooting. The character you select to play is locked against a wall at the end of an alleyway. On the freestation and he (always) moves the corner to face a volley of gunfire from gangsters shooting out of windows. He has only a moment to aim and fire before ducking back to the safety of the wall again. There need follow more shoot-outs at a railway station and finally on a rooftop, why you now have hangars to avoid which makes sharpshooting not only a useful attribute, but absolutely essential.

The one thing which soon becomes clear about *The Untouchables* is the similarity in concept and execution between this product and *Batman*. The graphics and gameplay in the first section especially are reminiscent of the first and last sections of *Batman*. Unfortunately, while *The Untouchables* is a very competent game, it doesn't quite have playability of the other licenses. While *Batman* was superbly played and had plenty of variety, *The Untouchables*

has more difficulty about every step of the way.



The scene in the warehouse - there's a nice bonus streaky...

ST VERSION

The subvisual element in *The Untouchables* is extremely polished; as we have come to expect from Ocean, it is a shame that the gameplay is a little difficult, especially in the earlier sections, as this prevents the game from being quite as accessible as it might have been to the average games player. Nevertheless, that is a minor blemish against what is otherwise a superb game.

GRAPHICS: 4 PG FACTOR: 3
 MUSIC: 4 FUN FACTOR: 3

AGE RATING: 8-10



RELEASE BOX

ATARI ST	1989	CUT NOW
AMIGA	1989	MARKET
SPECTRUM	1989	MARKET
AMSTRAD	1989	MARKET
CD-ROM	1989	MARKET
IBM PC	NOT AVAILABLE	

PREDICTED INTEREST CURVE



Difficult to get into, but this should keep you occupied for some time before your interest wanes.

is a little too difficult, and there is not really that much difference between the sections.

Despite all that, it is perhaps a little earlier to draw too many parallels between the two licenses. *The Untouchables* is a good game compared with some other recent licenses I could mention, while it may not have a lot of immediate impact, this is a game that is likely to grow on you provided you take the time and trouble to overcome its level of difficulty.

Lawrence Coombe

AQUANAUT

ADDICTIVE'S underwater world

ROLL UP, roll up. Travel to exotic underwater worlds. Meet strangely beautiful creatures — and kill them.

Actually it's not all pointless killing in this three-disk epic from the same team who designed *The Kraken*. It has a point to it. A highly developed plot no less — in the style of a 1950's B Movie.

In a last-ditch attempt to rally their forces following a failed attempt to colonize Earth, the Dominion aliens have landed in the Atlantic Ocean where they are hiding out awaiting further instructions. You are the super hero RC Flar — the only man deemed tough enough to make his to take on this challenge.

You are dropped in the area by a high speed launch. Your mission is locate Commander Jawsack's ship and destroy it. Not just so with a good 'W' moves there is a lot more to it than that. It's, um, Zeebo and his cohorts have been transmitting messages to some other thing or things on Earth. But to what?

That may sound like a pastiche of a mission for a man with such a prodigious appetite for Nintendo as the Flar — but things have been made rather difficult for him.

For to start there are the cavefish. These have a tendency to swim towards you at great speed — impaling you on their proboscis and turning you into a "sawfish tentacle" as the conversation screen so graciously puts it.

The sharks are pretty picky as well — having undergone a mutation caused by radioactive pollution. Jelly fish, alien eels, and radioactive water are also hazards that have to be avoided. Each RC Flar is helped by a screen explaining what grizzly fate befall us here.

But it is not all hazards and problems for RC. The Aquanaut Division have deposited several canisters in the ocean packed with equipment to help you complete your mission. By floating open these canisters you can then



Flar, looks like you've got company...

swim into them to pick up extra ammunition, a booster to propel you through the water at great speed, transmitter, first aid kit, cross bar, mine cutters, and super Aquan Pills. All of these items need to be used at the right time to complete the mission. Only a limited supply of oxygen can be taken with you so your mission as you will have to avoid your tank of the deep sea diving bells to replenish your supply from time to time.

Level two is a good deal tougher than the first one. There is much more to worry about than simply swimming along, tentacles — bleeding everything that comes your way with your Aquanaut gun. You have to work your way through a convoluted system of flooded caves beneath the Ocean floor. Some very strange creatures live down here. There is the rock monster that pops up cricoid-like from underneath a rock and swallow you whole. To make matters worse, some of the caves are blocked by boulders so you have to pick up and use the stacks of dynamite to blast a passage.

If you survive this far, it's time for another disk ramp and level three proceeds you with the final showdown against the Jawsack alien as you seek to destroy their flag ship.

Previews of *Aquanaut* have put a lot of love and care into *Aquanaut*. The close attention paid to graphics and animation pays real

BT VERSION

Three disks packed with great graphics, full music for cutting down an unnecessary and annoying disk count. The sound FX are adequate, if a little unimpressive. Innovation is very smooth, even in the horrendously scolding parts of the game — something that is not too easy to achieve on the BT.

GRAPHICS: B IQ FACTOR: B
 SOUND: B FUN FACTOR: T
 AGE RATING: 7-10

PREDICTED INTEREST CURVE



The problems of *Aquanaut* will assure that you will want to explore all of it. Once you have been everywhere, seen everything, and done everything, though — that may well be the end of it for most gamers.

RELEASE BOX

KIMCHI BT	CD ROM	OUT NOW
AMIGA	CD ROM	IMMINENT

Other versions planned

dividends — lending the whole package the feel of a Cinemascope game. Unlike many some graphics-heavy games, however, *Aquanaut* is not at all lacking in playability. The animation of the tunnel is a case in point; he moves through the water with the real look and feel of an underwater commando. Another very touch is the ability to be able to choose which level you wish to start on right at the beginning of the game.

Only two criticisms have to be made. The first is the lack of creatures in level two. The ones that are there are formidable, but they are a bit too few and far between — making the cave sequence of *Aquanaut* very hard by comparison with the rest of the game. The second criticism is that *Aquanaut* is very much a 'do it, and leave it' type of game, and for a shoot 'em up of this price a lot more longevity would have impressed it even further.

Despite these niggles, *Aquanaut* is an entertaining, pretty, and absorbing game, certainly better than *The Kraken* — and strong evidence that Fitzpatrick are indeed a development house of much promise and more than capable of living up to all the hype that surrounded their previous release.

— Eugene Lee





OUT OF THIS WORLD

TOWER OF BABEL

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



WEIRD DREAMS

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IRONLORD

UBI SOFT joust with *Defender of the Crown*... and lose!

AFTER a grueling 10 years that a prince, now King, has finally emerged from his father's shadow to challenge the old and American contenders for the soft-ware crown, if you haven't already heard about how *Iron Lord* hasn't been reading the previous pages built than so no enlighten you.

You play the part of a disreputable prince, once heir to a great kingdom—but your lands have been killed and your chateau destroyed by your villainous uncle. Now he is gathering a conquest army from the towers of darkness, and is about to descend on the land and set it under a perpetual shadow of evil. Only one man is capable of gathering an army to defeat the enemy—that man is not yourself, you! But first you must convince the kingdom's citizens of your worthiness.

If you are a *Demomaniac* fan then you will recognize in this game many elements of *Defender of the Crown*. In fact the product does have a very similar feel to the *Demomaniac* titles. A great deal of time has obviously been spent on the presentation of this game, and the result is a very slick looking piece of software. Unfortunately I have the same criticism of *Iron Lord* as I do of some of the *Demomaniac* titles: nice graphics and sound... shame about the game!

Accompanied by suitable medieval sound

ing effects you must ride from your ruined Chateau into the surrounding countryside where there are a number of locations for you to visit. When you arrive at a new location you are presented with a miniature overhead view of the village, abbey, or whatever area you are exploring. You must then guide your little man (with rapidly moving legs) around in an attempt to find something remotely interesting to do.

Whenever you come across somebody



Not usual! The only guy indicates you're one step nearer the finish.



A typical village—pretty nice! BT (Shame there's not really that much to do here.)

else in the game a standard menu is called up giving you various options such as talking, buying, giving, and so forth, along with amusing animated pictures of the person you are talking to. These sequences can be a bit repetitive (you always seem to have the same repertoire of questions and tall tales), but there are some delicious moments—by chatting up the poring merchant for an extremely eye-opening response.

Occasionally you will have an opportunity to play one of the sub-games: archery, sword-fencing, jousting, and fencing, which all come as a welcome relief from aimless wandering. The archery and fencing both require a measurable amount of skill, and these are the two you will have to practice fairly intensively if you are to make any progress. The dice throwing is a game of luck, and the only element you have any real control over in the amount you



AMIGA VERSION

This program makes obvious use of the Amiga's graphics and sound abilities, but in all other respects the machine is greatly underused. I can see the a lot of work has gone into *Iron Lord*, but there really isn't enough of a game here to justify the pretty presentation. Having said that, if you enjoy *Demomaniac*'s stuff then it might be worth perusing with this.

GRAPHICS: 8 IQ FACTOR: 9
 AUDIO: 8 FUN FACTOR: 9

ACE RATING 6/10

state. Finally, an ending involves a bit of good old-fashioned system-kniggling—to have your headless knight plugged in rather than your hand and spanning new model.

There are two ways to master an army, and ideally you need to make use of both approaches. The first, and easiest, is to gain control by doing well in the sub-games. The second, and ultimately more effective, is to win the sympathy and cooperation of the other characters in the game by undertaking quests for them.

Once you have built up an army of a suitable size you can return to your ruined Chateau and declare war. You use either the final phase of *Iron Lord* which takes the form of a miniature war-game with a graphical command system.

At first sight *Iron Lord* looks like an extremely exciting product. The presentation can't be faulted, but unfortunately it is really lacking in real substance. A brave, but failed, attempt to play *Demomaniac* at their own peril.

■ Lawrence Coates

PREDICTED INTEREST CURVE



Initially impressive but ultimately a disappointment.

RELEASE BOX

ATARI ST	CD-ROM	IMMEDIATE
AMIGA	CD-ROM	OUT NOW
MS-DOS	CD-ROM • CD-ROM	IMMEDIATE
SPARC	CD-ROM • CD-ROM	IMMEDIATE
EGA/CGA	CD-ROM	IMMEDIATE
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INDY 500

THERE have been so many racing/driving games recently that to even list games with driving features is third that the prospect of yet another one is enough to make you wince. And so, in an attempt to avoid rights of misapprehension and despair, one look at Indy 500 is all that it takes to turn lights into gasps of amazement. If you thought you had been state of the art driving simulations, then think again. Indy 500 does for this type of game what Activision's Border did for flight simulations: revolutionizes them!

As you have probably gathered by now the game is based around the world famous Indianapolis 500 race - a competition always guaranteed to provide plenty of thrills and spills. You have the option of either doing a few practice laps or qualifying for the proper race. There is also an option to race without car damage so that if you hit barriers or other cars, you're in all control.

From the cockpit of your car you can see the road ahead of you in spectacular solid 3D vector graphics, as well as the road behind in your wing mirrors. Right, we've all seen plenty of games employing solid 3D vector graphics, so what is so special about this one? In a nutshell - speed! It is very very fast. In fact it has to be the fastest PC driving sim ever.

The sheer feeling of being there that you get from this program is incredible - take a corner too fast and you will go sliding across the road into the barriers. Hit another car at high speed and both cars will disintegrate in a spectacular shower of debris while the wrecked bodies of the cars spin across the track. The realism gets better yet. If there is a

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sim ever!



The view from the cockpit. When you can't see here is the speed!

crash, the wreckage does not just mysteriously disappear as it does in so many other programs, but the stranded cars will still be there when you pass them on the next lap.

You can intervene the race after a crash by pressing the Escape key. You are then able to select a replay camera which shows the momentary leading up to the crash from a number of different viewpoints. These include televi-

PC VERSION

If you have access to a PC or compatible, then this is one of those stellar-flight programs. The number that you just have to race. The vector graphics will astound you, and the speed will impress you even more. Of course 386 owners will really feel the speed benefits, but don't ignore the program if you have a slower machine. On a top-of-the-line PC you will have to make do with the usual cycling test sounds, but the program does drive some of the action sound levels available for the PC if you really want a punt at you're up. Luckily one of the best PC files is always this year.

GRAPHICS	5	FM FACTOR	4
AUDIO	4	FUN FACTOR	5
ACE RATING 93%			

PREDICTED INTEREST CURVE



A spectacular game that you will not tire of easily. (sorry, just that!)

tion and satellite style views which allow you to see the action from above. There is another similarity here with Activision's Border, in that the replays viewed have a very similar feel to Border's 'split-viewport' view - not strictly essential, but nevertheless a welcome feature.

Right, we've established that the game looks great, but how does it play? Well, er... great! I played it using the keyboard and found the controls to be very responsive. Having said that, the game is no slouch. It is all too easy to misjudge those corners and feel yourself spinning into the verge after attempting to take a corner too tightly. And when you spin, hey do you spin - it shakes you down! There is also a danger of under steering and scraping the barrier on the outside of the track. This, more often than not, results in a blown tyre and disqualification.

Indy 500 is, without a doubt, the best racing simulation yet produced on a micro. It has all of the qualities and features that make a really good game and more besides. Even if you don't normally like this sort of game I'm convinced that you take a look at this one - you'll be impressed. With its tremendous graphics and levels of playability this is sure to be a clear winner.

RELEASE BOX

IBM PC	ON BOX	OUT NOW
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A trackside view of the race: the blue car is going - the yellow car is in trouble!

4 **IGNITE** 10/93

TOWER OF BABEL



MICROPROSE cause brain-ache with their stunning 3D puzzler

PETE Cooke will be remembered as having originated some of the most original and innovative games to emerge during popular computing's first decade. *Tau Ceti*, for instance, broke new ground in terms of graphical superiority and design. It was followed by several other titles, all state-of-the-art pieces of software, and all having one thing in common: high creative originality.

Tower of Babel, the latest program to evolve Mr Cooke's no less stunning than any of his earlier work. Once again, it is characterized by superb hi-tech graphics, absorbing gameplay, and an imaginative scenario. In this instance the people of earth have built a tall tower for the purpose of communicating with God — the Tower of Babel. Although rather unsuccessful at attracting the attention of God, the tower did generate interest among the alien Zartarians. These benevolent beings left behind three Zartian types of spider-like robots: Zappers, Grabbers, and Pushers.

The peaceful coexistence between the inhabitants of the tower and the spiders does not last long, however, and soon the Zartarians, as they are known, begin to build traps to destroy the spiders. Your task is to overcome these traps and guide the spiders through the various towers in order to get them home to Zartia.

The towers are presented using extremely nice, three-dimensional, 3D vector graphics. The towers are occupied by a variety of devices designed by the Zartarians. These range from Zappers, which fire deadly laser beams to Pushers which move any objects in line with them, and a whole host

of other entities to hamper your progress.

For each tower you are given a set objective, which is usually a combination of collecting Zartian power packs and destroying hostile objects. Using the mouse to access rooms on a floor panel you must control the spiders available

to you so that the desired objective is achieved. As you might have guessed by their names, each of the spiders has a different function. The Zapper is your offensive robot, and is used for destroying other objects. The Pusher is used for moving objects around the tower, and the Grabber is for collecting Zartianes, and performing various manipulative functions.

You do not have to have great arcade skills to complete any of the towers — teamwork is all that is required. Your viewpoint can be from any of the spiders or one of four cameras placed on each side of the tower. So solving a tower often requires a great deal of thought and observation before you start to move or do anything. Once you do so you may start a chain of events that cannot be stopped, and one wrong move could mean the difference between solving a tower or failing.

On the early towers it is a simple matter to move each of the towers separately and solve



A combination of one of the early towers. It may look simple but you still have to pause for thought.

it at leisure. On later towers things get a bit trickier because you have a limited amount of time to complete them. Fortunately the counter doesn't begin until you move or fire, so you have plenty of time to look round the tower and work out an ideal solution to attempt. You will soon discover that moving the spiders individually is 'too slow and tedious' a process, so enable you to complete the tower in time — this is when the unique mouse facility comes into play. For each spider you can preselect a series of up to eight moves which can then be executed simultaneously to complete your objective in the allowed time.

Tower of Babel is highly original and very addictive. Its pleasant graphics and user-driven control system make it very accessible and it should provide lasting entertainment. There's even a tower designer included so that you can have a go at creating your own puzzles. Highly recommended.

— Lawrence Guitard



A view from your Zapper, showing the Grabber and Pusher. Notice the attractive control panel.



Once you've found your way around it, this one'll run and run!

RELEASE BOX

STAR 87	CD-ROM	386/NT
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AMES	CD-ROM	PC/XT
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(No other versions planned)

BT VERSION

A superbly implemented game — the graphics and sound effects are top right and the controls is absorbing enough to keep you coming back for more. If you're an ST owner who enjoys putting the old pros matter into your hand I can confidently say that this is the best offering of its type for over a year — so get it!

GRAPHICS	5	3D FACTOR	10
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ADDN	7	FM FACTOR	8
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ACE RATING 930

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MECHWARRIOR

Battle through the 31st century with ACTIVISION

BATTLETECH is a highly successful and role-playing board game inspired by a cult Japanese cartoon series from the early 80s called *Mechazoo* - satellite viewers may have seen the American version, *Robotech*. *MechWarrior* is the second computer game based around *BattleTech* - the first, *The Crescent Hawk's Inception*, was a role-player from Infocom. The new game is a fusion of role-player and simulator from American software developers Quantum whose previous work includes *Castle Aia*, *F14 Tomcat* and *Abrams Battle Tank*.

Set in the 31st century, *BattleTech* sees the known universe controlled by five Successor States: House Steiner, House Kurita, House Marik, House Liao and House Davion. Each House has been battling for hundreds of years for the control of individual planets or whole planetary systems. This constant warfare has destroyed all technological advancements. A brutal regime of techno-savagery is maintained where everyday conveniences such as equipment is used to maintain their forces. The *BattleTech* itself is dominated by monstrous robots known as Mechs, each as tall as a building and more powerful than a division of 20th century tanks. Enter you, as a star-war mercenary looking for easy work with high rewards - playing the House off against the other.

You start the game as an 18 year-old merc with a fully equipped, heavy-duty *Jumped* *Inner Mech* and one million credits. The gameplay is split between the simulation role-playing



Inspecting the battle damage on your *Jumped Mech*.

(JRP) - where you get a crew, buy equipment and negotiate a contract (mission) - and the simulation of the actual mission which is portrayed in the classic flight simulator fashion.

First order of business (of course) is to head for the bar. There you get up to date with the local gossip and check out the local talent - potential crew talents, that is! For more detailed information about where the action is you must jack into the *NewsNet* Comrade news service. Once you've got the situation sorted, you'll be ready to take on a contract from one of the *Big Houses*. You can choose from a variety of missions, from rescuing a kidnapping victim to capturing an enemy base. You can even go on an extended campaign with various sub-missions - if you can handle it.

Obviously you must take note of how each

House feels about you after all, if you've just been set up as a Steiner military complex then unlikely to offer you a very lucrative deal for your next mission! Negotiation is the name of the game here, don't accept your first offer, haggle a little and you might be pleasantly surprised. And if you don't like what's on offer you can also jump to another planet or solar system. Finally it's down to the fun bit, sorting out your Mech and then sorting out your opponent...

Sorting the opponent's Mech complex allows you to buy, sell, retreat or repair your complement of Mechs, which can range from one to four.

MechWarrior supports up to eight Mechs: from the 20-ton recon *Locust* to the heavy duty *Battlemech*, weighing in at a cool 85 tons. Each Mech has its own strengths and weaknesses - as you'll find out in the heat of the action. Taking of heat - this is the single most important factor when playing a Mech. Every time you fire a weapon or get hit your Mech heats up. When the temperature rises beyond a certain level your Mech will start to malfunction until it actually shuts-down.

The mission itself is portrayed from inside your Mech's cockpit - like a flight simulator - with a solid 3D realistic environment processed through the *video-card*. Among the facilities available to you are radar and map sensors, damage scanners and weapon status. You really feel you're there -



Up against a *Marauder* the meanest Mech on the *BattleTech*. The pile of junk in the background used to be the site of your former opponent piloting a *Assault Mech* - before the *Marauder* killed it with the main *Magnum* *Thruster* *Drive* and *100* *Missile* *Warhead* *Autocannon*. (Don't worry about the *main* *Magnum* *Thruster* *Drive* - we don't see the *main* *Magnum* *Thruster* *Drive*.)

PREDICTED INTEREST CURVE



Accurate fusion of flight sim and role player - an absolute must for *BattleTech* fans.

Mechs to accurately and realistic representations of the Mechs and the many different play situations.

During play I started with a lightweight *Locust*, but I made up for my lack of power with particularly vicious tactics. The great thing about the *Locust* is its immense staying power - you can continually pump your twin *Sperry/Browning* machine guns and medium *Maraud* laser without having to worry about your fuel build-up. Another great tactic I used was obtaining up to its opponent's Mech and using 'em like a ball into their legs - most Mechs have reinforced struts and weapons. They who slow a and I even managed to knock out two *Marauders* in one mission with this tactic - picking up a hefty reward into the bargain. One of the most important things to note and master is issuing orders to your *Lance*. Your crew can be tricky - you might send them to attack a *Battlemech*, they might have different ideas.

MechWarrior had me looking right from the start, it's a near perfect fusion of flight, battle simulation and role-playing game. Look and account.

© Rick Hayes

PC VERSION

The worlds throughout *MechWarrior* are expertly drawn, with full CGA, EGA and Tandy 16 graphics modes support. The only *Word* versions have strong of a far past even on an *80386*! Although the lowest MS-DOS and Ad Lib sound cards are supported they haven't been implemented so well - at least the main sound card effects are functional and do the business. The worst aspect of the audio are the speaking sound effects that crop up during the game. *MechWarrior* will not only appeal to fans of the board game, but also deserves a look from any sci-fi fan trying to get into game or simulation play.

GRAPHICS: 0 10 FACTOR 7
AGENTS: 0 10 FACTOR 0

ACE RATING: 887

RELEASE BOX

YEAR	OS	TYPE
1988	OS	150
1989	OS	150
1990	OS	150

CHAOS STRIKES BACK



FTL/MIRRORSOFT finally bring relief to starved Dungeon Masters

THIS is the moment that thousands of Dungeon Master fans have been holding their breath for - Chaos Strikes Back has finally arrived. The question that will now be on the lips of all those fanatics is: was it worth the wait? So let me put you all out of your misery right now and let you know the answer: most definitely YES!

The first thing to point out about Chaos is that it has been produced as a stand alone product, so you can still use it even if you don't have the original Dungeon Master disk. You don't even have to have a saved game disk with characters who have walked through Dungeon Master, although you will find Chaos here as difficult without them.

Chaos Strikes Back actually comes in two disks: the game disk and a utility disk. The utility disk is something that DM fans won't be familiar with, but you will take to it like a duck to water. As well as containing an animated sequence that introduces the module it also contains a character editor. This allows you to load up your saved characters and reuse them. There is also a picture editor with which you can change your character's appearance to suit the way you imagine them to be. You may also change their names as you wish.

Aside from this function, the utility disk is also used to create the saved game that you must begin Chaos Strikes Back with. This process allows you to use your existing DM party but strips them of all their possessions etc.

If you don't have any characters from the first DM game you can select the option option on the main game disk. This allows you to enter the Hall of Mirrors and select a new party from the images captured there. The characters available are a lot more powerful than

those that were available at the start of Dungeon Master, but don't get too excited - Chaos is not a quest for gloryholes. At one stage while I was wandering through the halls I managed to stumble down a staircase into a darkened chamber full of mummies, who made short work of the characters I had just recruited and I still haven't figured out quite what happened, but it's something to watch out for!

Once you have created a new saved game with your characters, you can load up the game disk and begin. If you are anticipating a nice gentle start to Chaos you can forget it right now. As the game begins you find yourself in a huge anti chamber. There are full a dozen hungry poisonous worms heading straight for you. You're unarmed and the only exit is locked. What now? Well, unless you're pretty good at thinking as your feet the answer is: going to be a particularly nasty death.

The message here is quite clearly that Chaos Strikes Back is a game for experienced Dungeon Master players rather than anyone who is new to the system. So if you haven't played Dungeon Master, then why not give that a try before you tackle this module? You'll see see what you've been missing!

It could be said that Chaos might be a bit too daunting for anyone with a brain smaller than a planet, don't worry - even if you get completely stuck, help is at hand. For less you come to the final application of the Chaos Utility disk - a text stack. When you select the text oracle it reads your saved position and deter-



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mine where you are in the dungeon. It will then provide you with a number of clues for the level, together with descriptions of the creatures you can expect to encounter. This system works well because it is simply up to you how many hints you use, and consequently, how much to give away by the stack.

As far as presentation is concerned Chaos looks much the same as the original Dungeon Master. The interface, however, is only superficial - in terms of challenge and atmosphere, Chaos is streets ahead of its prey. "Find that hard to believe?" And by it and me. When you've got this out of the shelves and fired up, you'll know the real me, with every muscle. Unreservedly recommended to all those who feel in love with the first game and are now looking for something more to extend their interest.

• Laurence Sebber

ATARI BY VERSION

There will really only be a subtle change in the graphics in the version, and the sound is limited to the usual speed effects although they are all very considerably new - but aside to those hearing screens when you install it that the original DM graphics and sound managed to create a tremendous atmosphere, and the game is one of Chaos. What is more important though is that it's been let us down on the graphics front. I guarantee that this game will have thousands of ST owners being the weight of it as they attempt to state if the standard worms or use the mundanely non-logging quality. Wait for it!

DISPATCH 8 **EQ FACTOR** 8
PRICE 7 **FUN FACTOR** 9
ACE RATING 945

PREDICTED INTEREST CURVE



People are still playing Dungeon Master fervently. I don't expect anything less from Chaos Strikes Back.

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Screenshots taken from the Amiga and PC Versions

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PSYGNOSIS

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BAD COMPANY

LOGOTRON send in the heavy mob

LOGOTRON introduce to you the bravest, toughest, toughest eight stars of death since the ACE revere him! Bad crew Newtable. The action takes place in deep space where the "Cain murder" is pulling his new recruits through their paces - on a mission to destroy the alien Mefians on four distant planets.

You select your warrior from a special-able eight figures gallery which shows you a map view of each and provides a brief biography. The favourite choice is Athena de Sontag - who is low on strength and stamina but is very agile and therefore good at dodging the foe. If you don't fancy her there is Lance "Flash" Gordon, Larry "Shades" Henderson, Stefan "Ironside" Hunter, Matt "Starburst" Chronos Marchak, Sand "Kathleen", and Bruce "Warrior" North.

In practice your choices are pretty accurate, as since you start blasting the weird creatures of alien that inhabit the four levels of Bad Company success depends more on your own reflexes than on anything else. There is no strategic element involved in the options - apart from the availability of some of them to carry the heavier weapons. Even this doesn't matter too much as whatever weapon you grab can be bolstered by gathering the power ups.

But if the selection of warriors has little bearing on the game it does at least provide atmosphere - something Bad Company is strong on. Its colourful 3D scrolling terrain shows lush landscapes as well as fire-wards and features a unique patterned floor surface.

At first glance Bad Company looks a bit like Space Harrier but it does have one important difference - your warriors step on the ground.

Four levels of play offer a variety of challenges, terrain, and alien and any of the four can be selected right at the beginning of the game. There is no need to reach the end of a level before progressing to the next. You decide for yourself when you feel you are ready to go onto a tougher level and make that choice at the beginning of the game.

The four levels feature some impressive alien - particularly the bug eyes, jelly fish, and tadpoles. Grinding power-ups and useful things is fun - particularly when you are well loaded and the larger enemies appear in load four. There are difficult to kill and there is a considerable sense of achievement if you can register enough direct hits and avoid their laser fire for long enough to make them fall.

The action takes place in a central window flanked by two displays which show you the weapon you are currently holding, you can switch between weapons to try out their



The Heavy Gang: Choose a Warrior



Athena hides behind the walls

injection strengths and weaknesses at various lengths by tapping the space bar.

Additional weapons are dropped down to your command ship, which also beams you down into the game in an impressive coating sequence. As you absorb fire from your shield energy is reduced and you will need to walk into one of the electric showers left at convenient intervals for you by your command ship, replenishing your weapons and shields.

The only problem with Bad Company is there is not enough to it. It is over-reliance on graphics and effects to provide the game challenge. At least in Space Harrier there was the end of level stages, and the desire to complete levels progressively. Bad Company lacks an overriding objective or series of mini-objectives to sustain interest. Pretty and all as it is, you soon tire of the simple pleasure of watching things.

Eugene Lacey

RELEASE BOX

ATARI ST £24.95b OUT NOW

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No other versions planned.

ST VERSION

Technically excellent, these Atari graphics and animation are impressive, fast and imaginative - from the characterisation of the alien's right down to the minimal detail on the moxies. Everything has obviously had a great deal of attention. The sound (Mefian sound track and FX) are also difficult to fault, the whole package deserves a firm vote in the design department.

GRAPHICS 5 3D FACTOR 5

AUDIO 5 FUN FACTOR 5

AGE RATING 6/10

PREDICTED INTEREST CURVE



Very pretty, sounds good, too, but ultimately lacks the depth to keep you coming back for more.

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TRICKS 'N' TACTICS

MORE HELP FOR THE HOPELESS FROM ACE READING WIZZES!

DUNGEON MASTER

- The TNT Serial Part One



Les Rigney - a major fan of D&D's Dungeon Master Series is with has compiled what must be the ultimate guide to that game. It's a huge tome, but it does provide all you DM's out there with all the information you are likely to need. TNT will be publishing as much of the guide as we can in serial form over the next few months. If you just can't wait, however, Les will provide you with a printed copy of the guide for a pound. To cover the cost of paper and printer ribbons. Alternatively, if you are an ST owner, send him a blank disk and suitable return postage and packing, and Les will copy the file for you, along with a copy of ST writer with which to read it. Money, disks, thanks, etc. to:

Les Rigney,
25 Summerville Close,
Faversham,
Kent,
ME13 9EP.

Well, that's enough from me, now on with the first instalment.

The Guide to the Dungeon

WEAPONS

BLORNON - To be found. Skeletons drop these when killed.
RAPID - One to be found.
SABRE - Two to be found.
SWORD - To be found. Chaos Knights drop these when killed.
DELTA - One to be found on a coin in level 8.
HARD CLEAVE - One to be found on level 10. Does extra damage.
DAMNED EDGE - One to be found on level 11. Does extra damage.
ACQUISITION - One to be found on level 7. +2 to Mana & Extra damage.
WYRAL BLADE - Two to be found. +4 to Mana & Strain Score.
RAE - One to be found on level 8, also carried by Statues if you choose him.
SAMSON SWORD - Carried by bats if you choose him.
BOLE BLADE - Fires lightning bolts also used as a sword. Limited in number of bolts. Found on level 11.
FURY - As above but fires fire bolts. Found on level 11.

FLAMIT - One to be found on level 13. Fires fireballs but is limited.
STORM PNO - One to be found on level 9. Fires lightning bolts but is limited.
STONE CLUB - Dropped by Stone Statues when killed. Level 7.
CLUB - To be found. Blue Gnomes drop these when killed. Half carries one if you choose him.
BOOM - One to be found on level 8. Fires arrows and slays.
CROSS BOW - One to be found on level 8. Fires arrows and slays.
SPEEDORROW - One to be found on level 10. Fires arrows and slays faster than crossbows.
SLEMS - One to be found on level 3. Launches small rocks.
TERRIBLE STAFF - Appears. 4 to be found. Reduces scores. 3 if you choose him.
POISON STAFF - Appears. 5 to be found.
ARROWS - Six to be found.
SLAYERS - Four to be found.
SMALL ROCKS - For use with sling. Found on levels 2 & 3.
MORNINGSTAR - Two to be found on levels 11 & 12.
MAZE - One to be found.
MAZE OF ORDER - One to be found on level 8.
FUL BOMBS - Many to be found throughout levels.
SEN BOMBS - As Above. Can also be made using magic.
BLUE BASIC ROCKS - Found in numerous places. Projects fire for a short while.
GREEN BASIC ROCKS - As Above, but for a greater time.

WAPOR AND STAFFS

WAND - Cast, Spellshield, Heal.

Found in the 'Vault' level 3.
OBAGON SPT - +7 to Mana. Found on level 7.
FRCS STAFF - Breaks or Slays.
FRCS STAFF - POWER GEM - +2 Wizard Level, +2 Priest level, Ice, Fire, Poison, Thunder produces other spells. Cloud of Poison, or Lamp of Poison.
SCOTTIE OF LIFE - +5 to Mana, Health & Light. Found on Level 7.
SNAGE STAFF - +8 to Mana & Health, Casts. Found on Level 12.
STAFF OF CLAMS - +4 to Mana.
STAFF OF MAPS - +10 to Mana & Digger Spell. Fireshield. Found on Level 10.
TEO WAND - +6 to Mana & Casts Spell, Spellshield, Fireshield.
TEO STAFF - +4 to Mana & Digger Spell, Light. Found on Levels 8 & 9.

Many of the above items also contain an option to kill.

NECKLACES

ERIAL PENDANT - +1 Wizard Level.
ELUMULET - Two to be found. Provides Light.
GRACIOUSONE - +3 to Mana. Casts also carries one.
THE HELLION - An apparent use.
GRAND CROSS - No apparent use.
GEM OF AGES - 2 to be found. No apparent use.
JEWEL SYMBOL - No apparent use.

OTHER VALUABLES

ORANGE GEM - No use.
GREEN GEM - No use.
BLUE GEM - Opens door on level three.
GOLD, SILVER, & COPPER COINS - Open various doors and



The Poor Man's Guide to AD&D and BARD'S TALE

Colin Taylor from Anfield, Liverpool has sent me an absolutely huge list of pointers for the CBA, which is unfortunately too long to reproduce here, but that's all the Little Cole. He also provides the usual tip for your adventures. The tip allows you to easily keep cash items and money, and will work for Paths of Adventure and Bard's Tale, and possibly with Bard's Tale 2 & 3 and the rest of the AD&D series.



Bard's Tale

When you start a new game, you will be asked to enter your name and level. Enter your name and level, then press the space bar to continue.

You first need three disks - your Save game disk plus two more Blank ones. We shall call the Blank disks disk 1 and 2.

Load your saved game and remove all the characters one by one onto all three disks. (This may mean reloading the saved game).

Now, we shall call your party MrA, MrB, MrC, MrE, etc.

MrA has, for instance, a long sword +3. Trade the sword to MrB then remove MrA to the Poor Man.

Reload MrA from the Rich disk and trade sword to MrC, and so on with the rest of the party.

When all your men have everything they require then save the game to the last game disk - and that's it!

Another hint when playing AD&D: When creating a character do not choose a female or an elf. (Sword and magic users). Females are too weak and elves can't be resurrected after a run in with undead. (Do you realize how much hate mail I'm going to receive from female elves after printing this?)

BATMAN - THE MOVIE

This month's megapic comes from one of our regular contributors, 20-H author, **Adam Morley**

From Lakewood: I know that there are a lot of people out there who have become hooked on Gotham's great game, *Batman - The Movie*, and there must be many who are anxious for a little help, especially with the later sections. For all those people, Adam has compiled some tips and tricks for all the sections, as well as maps for the Ace Chemical Plant Level One, and Gotham Cathedral Level Five. G.K. That's enough waffle from the feet-walks.

Level One

Level one is quite simple after a bit of practice, and requires you to traverse the Ace Chemical Plant from left to right, where you should meet and defeat Jack Napier.

Along the way you will need Napier's grenade throwing specialists, who, given the chance, will deplete your strength swiftly. If you reach a part where they are above you, walk directly beneath them; this way they can never hit you. Use your "blasting" to go up underneath them, and then dispatch them with your "blasting". If you come face to face with them, fire and retreat, or wait until they throw a grenade, walk towards them and fire; with any luck the grenade will go over your head. The other grenading mobsters should be shot or jumped on as soon as you see them, it's actually quite a good idea to fire your blasting occasionally as you walk along.

The acid drops and gas jets can also deplete your strength quickly, and must be watched for and avoided carefully. In general, stay under the first drop after it has fallen, wait for the second to



fall, and then walk forwards again. To get past gas jets you must simply time your moves carefully: when you come to the six leaking pipes, wait until the nearest pipe has emitted an acid droplet, flick out your batrope diagonally to the right and push up hard on your joystick; this should carry you upwards without too much damage. When you reach the last section of the main, go upwards, and fire a blasting at Jack. He should then fall into the acid vat.

Level Two

This level is one of the most difficult and requires a certain amount of driving skill. In order to negotiate it successfully stay roughly in the middle of the road at a little less than full speed, using some acceleration to move left and right past the cars in front. Drift to the inside of bends and accelerate round them; this will cause you to drift back out towards the middle of the road. Don't be afraid to stamp on the brakes to avoid heavily crashing down into pits or damage.

When a fan comes up, indicated by the red arrow, don't panic; you have three attempts before being stopped by the police roadblock. If another car blocks your first chance to turn off, go round it and move into position for the next. To make sure of turning, flick out the Batmobile's grenade a second or so before you reach the lampost on

Level 5 Gotham Cathedral



Direction of Batmobile Where to land Joker's hidden path
 Escaping batrope Place to attach batrope Batmobile



Level 1 Axis Chemical Plant

Generate threats

Send exploits



In course of the puzzle, it is better in terms of time, if you can complete two in one go, but if this proves too hard, make sure you at least pass the fifty mile mark. Then, if you loose a life, you will start again only fifty miles away from the Batcave.

Level Three

Here you have sixty seconds to select the correct three objects out of eight which form "Gossip".

To do this choose the first three objects from the left hand column and check how many you are right. Then take one object from the first three and add two more from those which remain. Check the number that are correct and try to determine which objects are the right ones out of the two rows of three. Put these together and add a third item, if required; continue until you get the right answer.

If your first row of three starts 0 or 1, choose three new items, ignoring those previously chosen. A score of 0 is particularly helpful in that it rubs down your options to five items, and therefore makes things much easier. A score of 2 means you only need

one more, so try and isolate quickly which two are correct.

The three objects seem to be selected by the computer at random from those available, but some occur in the solution more often than others. (Soap almost never appears). If you number the items, starting at the top of the leftmost column, from 1 to 8, the frequency in which they appear seems to be: 4,1,7,2,6,1,5,8.

Level Four

If you keep a cool head and a steady hand, level four should prove relatively easy. Fly the "Batwing" at between 100-111 mph and try to stay at a more or less constant height above the ground. Hit the ropes holding the balloons as close to the middle as possible and as soon as you have cut one free, look ahead towards the next, (it helps to anticipate where the next balloon might be, and so move accordingly).

Try to avoid hitting the buses, as these slow you down as well as damaging you. Missing one or two balloons is fairly harmless, unless you make a habit of it, as it popping the odd one. Many of the balloons can be cut free from a

steady height, but there are those which require you to duck and dive a bit. Some forethought and a bit of early movement should avoid an explosive ending for your "Batwing", try with the Batmobile section. If you manage to get past fifty balloons but can't make it to the end, you will start again with only fifty balloons to get free.

Level Five

Set inside Gotham's Cathedral, this is the final and most difficult level containing borders of the Joker's mad headquarters, crumbling floors, wicked spikes, and walled roads.

To reach the goal you must negotiate the multitude of dangers and work your way from floor to floor towards the top. There are several routes to take, but they all, ultimately, lead in the same direction. Some, however, are more perilous than others.

The rats are troublesome but can be avoided with care and the quick use of the Batcscope. In this level the Batcscope comes into its own, as you need to use it to bring serious gaps in the floor and make it from one level to another,

or just to avoid those dirty little rats. The Jokers' headlamps should be dealt with as in the first level. They are more trigger happy here and need to be dealt with quickly.

At the top of the cathedral you will see something like a usual house with a door at the centre. Walk a little way past this and flick out your Batcscope diagonally upwards towards the rope ladder which leads to a wailing helicopter. If you have timed it right you should hit the Joker and knock him off, making him fall rather a long way to the ground below - SPLAT!

Map of Level Five

The map shows quite clearly the passages and ladders leading from the bottom of the cathedral to the top. Crumbling floorboards and spikes are shown in red. Also shown is the route which I think is easiest, complete with places to swing and land. The dotted line shows how to shoot out the Batcscope and the arrow shows where to land. The position of the various rats is also shown.



SECRET PANELS
ORDER (AUGUST) - Found on level 14. No use.
ORDER OF MERIT - Found on level 7. -30 to 0/10000.

OTHER MISCELLANEOUS ITEMS

COMBATE - Found on levels 9 & 3. Opens a door on level 9.
DIMOR - Found on level 5. Also carried by Soga. No apparent

use.
MAGPHEE - Found on Level 13. Opens secret door on level 11.
ODIBASS - Found on level 3. Helps you find your way around some unappreciated rooms: The Matrix (Level 3) & beginning of Level 11.
ORDER OF DASH - Two to be found, Levels 2 & 5. Open secret room in "Chambers of the Queen" on level 3.

ROBETTA FOOT - 3 to be found. Increase your luck during combat. Also carried by Boris.
ROPE - Found on level 9. Not essential but useful for exploring pits. Also carried by Lyla.
ROBIN OF PEASE - Found at end of level 4. When down will raise water elements to retreat.
BOOTS OF SPEED - 4 pairs to be found. Increase movement speed when worn.

SECRET 5 - Read all scrolls that you find. They offer important clues.
 Right, that's per lot for this month. In the next instalment we will print details of more useful items, more rare items, spells, potions, books, combat tips and character tips. So if you don't want to be left as monster fodder, make sure you get next month's issue of your favourite computer monthly.

SEGA SEAWORNS

Just to keep Sega owners happy, here are a whole load of tips and tricks to keep you going well into 1993.

WOLANDE

David Gaden of London explains how to gain access to all five inv-



its, all you have to do is press the top left corner of the controller and then press the start button.

B-TYPE

When you die and the countdown appears, run your finger around the D-pad in a clockwise direction for 13 credits. When you next die, run your finger around the D-pad anticlockwise to get the sound test. Play all 86 sounds (press)



Now return to the countdown and run the D-pad clockwise again and you will get 99 Gyns, count 'em! and cool credits. (George Jumpers, Borehole, Linnex)

BLACK BELT

After the Soga sign appears, the screen flashes blue for less than a second. Press the reset button and you will have infinite lives if the beginning of level 3 is a bit mucked up, don't worry - this is part of the cheat. (Elihu Teitelbaum, Ashby, Linnex)

SAFARI HUNT

When you shoot the panther or

any other wild animal, keep shooting it to gain more points. Give a rapid fire and it makes it easier! (Gavin Teitelbaum)

BOOY!

This tip is only for people with rapid fire! During the bonus stage before Drago, pug rapid fire and into port 1 and you should keep both fingers on the buttons. You will now be able to beat Drago easily because of the power you built up. (Gavin Teitelbaum)

RAMBO II

When you reach the end of level bad guy on level 2, keep firing in the middle of the screen and throw your grenade at the mini helicopter. You should now complete the screen with ease. (Gavin Teitelbaum)

SECRET COMMAND

From level 3 onwards you can continue the game (provided the 3-player option is selected). Just press left to right, left to right, and so on while pressing left fire buttons. (Gavin Teitelbaum)

ZLORD I

Refer to the blank map in your instructions, or load the "map" command into a computer. Go to room 03 without obtaining any "top-opens". Go to the three cylinders on the top deck. Shoot the one furthest to the right. Goo-goo should appear at the top of it. Take this, and your life power will be at 750. Now go into the middle of the 03 and it will show up on the screen. Now go full-out so that the 03 is still visible. Go up in the 03 and let the yellow barrier tap your life until it is at 330. Now quickly pull down on the joy-

stick and you should go back down into the room you started off with, and your life power should be at zero, but you will not die. You are now invincible! (Gavin Teitelbaum)

GHOST HOUSE

These tips are to explain the items like candles and the pieces etc.
 Candles: if you jump next to them, a flying tent will appear.
 Fireplaces with lamps: if you pass them, an arrow will appear.
 Light hanging from ceiling: if you jump and touch this the three most of everything will stop for a while and you can run freely, without being harmed, until the screen goes back to normal.
 Flying arrows: if you jump on 16-ton of these the screen will flash yellow and you can gain extra points for arrows and knives.

Flying arrows: jump on these and you can use them for a while.
 (Gavin Teitelbaum)

B-TYPE

For invincibility turn off the power. Plug in both systems. Hold joystick 1 diagonally down right. Hold joystick 2 diagonally up-left, and hold button 12. Now turn on the power and hold down everything and the Soga logo appears and B-Type comes up.



Now press button 2 on control 1. You are now invincible.
 (Gavin Teitelbaum)

Whoopee!

Regular readers of Console Corner may have noticed that some of the maps we printed last month for Sog vs. Sog II on the Sega were a little lacking in colour. This does make it slightly difficult to determine which stairway links with which. Let me assure you that the colour coding was there to begin with, but seems to have got lost somewhere in the reproduction process. Unfortunately we don't have room to reprint the offending diagrams, but don't worry, a bit of trial and error should soon identify the linkages.

CORNER

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Screen shots from Amiga version.



ALL THE LATEST

ACE TELLS YOU ABOUT THE NEWEST MAJOR CONVERSIONS

GHOULS 'N' GHOSTS

USG's Shoot'em up in
Shining Armour



U.S. Gold £9.95ms - £12.95ms - ST version
re-released in issue 28 - ACE Rating 90%

Of the wealth of good games USG have licensed from the leading Japanese coin-op manufacturer - Capcom - *Ghouls 'n' Ghosts* is one of the very best.

The sequel to *Ghosts and Goblins* - *Ghouls 'n' Ghosts* is a fairly late arcade adventure in which you play a knight in shining armour on a mission to rescue a princess who has been abducted by Satan.

The game begins just as its predecessor did in an eerie grave yard where pretty soon ghouls with outstretched arms start moving towards you and the living dead begin to well up out of their graves. The good knight is armed with a limitless variety of weapons which he can throw at the nasties.

The knight needs to be feet of lead as the slightest touch against a nasty will first cause him to lose his armour and a life every time then after.

Every level has a nasty at the end to stop you going on to the next - and pretty tough adversaries they make as well.

Should it not be beginners, it is a tough challenge which requires speedy reactions, careful planning, and persistence - as it will take the average player ages to get anywhere.

But this is in no way a criticism, its tightness is true to the arcade original and in the old saying

gives - the tougher the game the sweeter the reward.

C64

All of the game play is here - and the C64 interpretation of it is every bit as tough as the 16-bit version. Slightly let down by some of the animation, it's certain points in the game the knight appears to be running on the air. The sound effects also leave a bit to be desired - appearing to switch themselves on and off at will in the version ACE had.

ACE RATING 73%

AMSTRAD

The action takes place in a relatively narrow strip of screen and scrolls very gently. All of the play levels are here and the sound effect reach a high standard, it's particularly good that as the air and lance find their targets.

ACE RATING 73%

C64

Moonwalker

ES Gold, £9.95ms - £12.95ms
- ST version re-released in issue
28 - ACE Rating 85%

Moonwalker couldn't have a more absurd plot if it tried. It starts off with MJ tagging it around a maze searching for the various bits of a funny rabbit but that he must do so before jumping onto a motor bike and zooming off to the next level.

The aim of this multi-level arcade adventure is to rescue the girl who has been kidnapped by the drug baron - Mr. Big. You can win by destroying Mr. Big's giant lair in the shoot 'em up in the last level. If you manage to MJ zooms off into outer space just as in the video.

This is all very well for the video where the plot is no more than a hook to hang the tedious game routines on. For the game though it all appears a touch contrived - even ending on the ridiculous.



Featuring an overhead view of the scrolling action the player must make careful use of the radar screen which represents Michael and the nasties that are pursuing him as they moving dots. To make things a shade easier the bits of the wall are shown as flashing dots.

Getting dressed up in the suit bit isn't not as easy as it sounds. You have to put on all the pieces in the correct order: it's no good trying to put on the boots before the socks and so on.

Once you get to level ten it is slightly disappointing to discover that it is almost exactly the same as the previous level. The same overhead view, the radar, only this time you are on the bike. Your job here is to grab all of the extra bits

C64

Turbo Out Run

US Gold, C64/128, \$9.99 vs. \$12.99 vs. - Amiga and ST variants reviewed in issue 28 - ACE Rating 80%

Way back before ST's and Amiga's ruled the world the best racing games that hard earned could buy were played on the C64.

Fit Stop by Eyes stayed in pole position for about two years, fighting off lesser challenges from *Rally Racer*, *Out Run*, and *Super Hang On*.

Now as 1993 gathers speed the old Commodore path is fast down again and switches up a gear with a bevy of new race games.

The problem for Turbo Out Run is that as far as the C64 is concerned it follows on from a decidedly rocky *Out Run*. If you bought this and were less than impressed then don't despair, the sequel out of hand. It is much more than a quick heads of the old code with go faster stripes grafted onto the graphics. It is in fact a complete rewrite from scratch, of which development house Phobos are probably proud.

You take the wheel of a super fast Ferrari F40 in a race across America against a Porsche 911.

The battle of the super cars starts in New York city - heading west across America to California. The race is strictly illegal and the two cars will attempt to burn you off the road - but who takes out who? For a macho what kid like you the only thing that matters is to prove to the blonde babe in your passenger seat that your Ferrari F40 can burn off a Porsche any day.

At the start you can choose between automatic and manual gears. Once the race is under way there



are opportunities to increase the performance of your car by purchasing extra grip tyres, high speed engine, and special turbo.

The race itself is split into six teen levels - on four separate tracks. The different levels take you through a great variety of landscapes including snow, deserts, and the particularly tricky level with logs lying across the road.

The speed and smoothness of Turbo Out Run on the C64 has to be taken to be forgiven. It is a major improvement on anything that has gone before. No pensance, none of the wobbly tyres that have characterised C64 racing games in the past. The conversion is the work of Steve Cross and Mark Kelly - two experienced programmers with classics like *Star Quake* from Middle East and the excellent conversion of C64 Mr. Hell already under their belts.

All of the bells from the coin-op are here - including the progress trail, work shops, opening sequences in which the blonde abandons the Ferrari and joins your rival in his Porsche, turbo mode, and some superb sound samples. Probably the best C64 sports conversion of the year.

and destroy as many bags of chips as you can. Once you do this you burn into the Statue, car and/or boom on to level three.

At last a genuinely new challenge. This horizontally scrolling shoot 'em up takes place in a night club where Michael has to shoot it out with Mr. Big's storm troopers.

This is the penultimate level before the final show down against Mr. Big's giant tent.

Four games - all reasonably entertaining, even if levels one and two are a bit boring. The opening levels have a feel of Pacman about them with the fans chasing Michael around the maze. It's a shame there isn't the equivalent of the Pacman game gals - as it would have been nice

to be able to have a go back at the cracked fans.

The business of gathering the bits of the tent and the emeralds has a certain appeal despite the fact that they are placed in the same place every time you play the game.

Two options - one, you have to reload it every time you run out of lives, and, two, the music it's awful - which is unfortunate for a game based around Michael Jackson.

All in all - a treat for Mr fans, but an average title number for everyone else.

ACE RATING: 61%



get to an arcade Tengen's *Hard Drivin'* has been one of the coin-op sensations of the year. With more racing games than ever before being far gamers coins *Hard Drivin'* managed to edge ahead of the rest by offering a very real driving experience. The game plays more like a simulator than an arcade game. Very responsive controls make the car act like the real thing. If the car veers out of control you have to really wrangle with the controls to get it back on the right track.



A choice of two tracks - speed racing or the stunt track - can be selected by following the sign posts once you start driving. Although the speed track is good for practising your steering and mastering the gears the real fun is to be had on the stunt track.

Three stunts are on offer - Loop the Loop, Bridge Loop, and the Bank. You are racing against the clock so you need to keep your foot down as much as possible.

When you have mastered both courses you can take the ultimate challenge and race against the computer controlled Phantom Photos.

Overall the Amiga version is a most convincing conversion of *Hard Drivin'* - having the edge of the ST for smoothness and with the added appeal of its 32 sampled sounds.

One slight glitch in the graphics gives the effect of the other cars in the race appearing as if in miniature at certain points in the game. But this is a minor irritation and does not detract from the games playability.

Jürgen Friedrich can be reached at his away-day conversion job in Putney.

ACE RATING: 93%

AMIGA

Hard Drivin'

Demonstrator, Tengen, \$19.99 vs. - ST Version ACE rated 93% and Spectrum Version ACE rated 92% in issue 28

The first thing you notice when the Amiga version of *Hard Drivin'* boots is a screech of tyres and the sound of a throaty engine moving through its gears.

The music and sound FX are what sets this version apart from the others and places it in a league of its own.

For those of you who wear

1



The Untouchables from Ocean

Relive the late moments of Eliot Ness in his struggle against the retribution of mobster Capone.

The ultimate in exciting action sequences put you in control of Eliot Ness in this sequel of crime battles.

Wildway shootouts, The Border Guard, The Galaxy Station confrontation and Horsehoe Court culminating at the thrilling rooftop duel as you ride the late edge into town of Ness in his struggle against the retribution of Capone!



The Untouchables

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Spectrum 486	Cass £ 9.99	8F92CE
Spectrum +3	Cass £14.99	8F92CF
Amstrad CPC	Cass £ 9.99	8F92CG
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3

Michael Jackson Moonwalker from U S Gold

After conquering the world of pop music, Michael Jackson channelled his energy and talent into making his first film. Now U S Gold present the same computer version of that film, endorsed by the Superstar himself. Feed the rhythm in Ono 80, transform into a futuristic alien world and ultimately beat the drug peddling MR (M) in the drug world of MORGANPOST - a game like no other.

This will be usable to test your self away from the screen even when it's not your "highlight".
Mark Rhythm - ST Format



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Moonwalker

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Amstrad CPC	Cass £14.95	8F92CH
Atari ST	Cass £19.95	8F92CI
Amiga	Cass £24.95	8F92CJ





2

Laser Squad from Bladesoft

Laser Squad combines strategy with the use of grenades and a variety of automatic weapons to defeat your foe. You control the point of transfer on forward - play with a friend and take turns at opposing sides. One player takes play against artificial intelligence or highly developed friend.

Laser Squad is a terrific game that is superbly playable and we definitely recommend it as one for the library of any gamer. **Andy Smith, Amiga Force**



Laser Squad

	PRICE	CODE
Spectrum 48	Cass. £ 9.95	978299C
Amstrad CPC	Cass. £ 9.95	978299C
Amstrad CPC	Disk £14.95	978114D
Commodore 64	Cass. £ 9.95	978139C
Commodore 128	Disk £14.95	978139D
Acorn ST	Disk £19.95	978144E
Image	Disk £19.95	978144E

GET ONE FREE!

4

Operation Thunderbolt from Ocean

Fly up to hot zone No 1 in 'Operation Bolt'. The game brings you enhanced 3D action for one or two players. Thunderbolt not only represents the first totally realistic game of flight, but adds 3D action to the scenario as you fend your nose against numerous anti-aircraft's tanks and many more awesome obstacles. Use the laser sight, or the helicopter view, but watch out for those air-to-ground missiles.

What is the only way to describe 'Thunderbolt' - not a game for the faint-hearted!

Travis Wells, Amstrad Action

Operation Thunderbolt

	PRICE	CODE
Spectrum 486	Cass. £ 9.95	978299C
Spectrum 486	Disk £14.95	978299D
Amstrad CPC	Cass. £ 9.95	978299C
Amstrad CPC	Disk £14.95	978299D
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POST CODE



A Kick up the 90s

While 1990 shaping up to be the best World Cup for decades, most football-friendly software have been sharpening their footy skills on computers. Several games have been launched this year already and several more are in the works for 1990. The official World Cup game will of course be appearing, with at least one major company already negotiating with FIFA for the licence. Meanwhile, just about every man and his dog who can kick a ball has already been licensed and stacks more are sure to follow.

Computer soccer games right back to the very beginnings of home computing. The earliest home computers had soccer games - albeit rudimentary ones, and the very latest machines, such as the Mega Drive offer strong and strong computer footy with gasp-worthy sound and graphics.

It's questionable, however, to what extent the new 16-bit technology has really improved football software. There are two reasons for this. First, much footy for mooks around strategy rather than reactive skills. Secondly, the essence of any arcade-style footy game is playability rather than awesome special effects. You can, therefore, get just as much passing pleasure from a clapped out Spectrum as you can from a spanking new Amiga 2000.

What will really count in the sports arena is the development of software skills. To a certain extent these are underpinned by new technology, but the real bonuses are going to come from continued experimentation 'on the field'. With so many football games currently being released, the jiff can only improve. And of course larger memories, and - ultimately - CD-ROM should radically enhance the prospect of things, which to date has been the area where many of the games could do with a touch of improvement.

Clint Yates at Gamble Software (the Developer of Menzies Soccer) is obviously a believer, however. He reckons that the games will become widespread if they make people want to play footy for real. "Footy games will become more like simulations up to a

1989 saw an explosion of computer footy games with more launches than in the previous three years combined. ACE examines the appeal of the game on the small screen, rates the latest offerings, and looks at how future computers will improve on-screen footy

point where people will make that playing footy for real is a lot more fun."

Meanwhile, are there simply too many players in the field? Doubts have been seen. Some games still sell throughout 1989 but they believe there are plenty of fans still up to the task for the consumer yet to launch new games. "My advice is don't worry about making something new to the market each football game will always be sold," he worries differently.

Yates believes that the great games of the future will present the player with the kind of power at his earliest moment. "This would be achieved by taking some of the control from the player and letting the programming make a game spectacular. The best way would be to have just bits of what is in the control, then depending on what sort of player the computer would decide into their class, to how well they do it, whether they may shoot, whether of pass, speed factor and how good the shot are. Things like following up the ball when the shot is taken are automatic, as are setting rebounds."

Both CD and CD-ROM might bring interactive opportunities, but your potential for the ultimate 'real game' really lies in management games, will be the cornerstone of these developments, making use of the vast library of video footage, statistics, and documentaries (material that has been compiled since the first ball was kicked over a hundred years ago) improved communications links for consumers will also make possible full-swing, video games, with each player controlling a computer controller. Computer-games and challenge trophies would seem like an obvious extension of this.

In the medium term there remains a good deal of mileage to be had out of existing 16-bit machines. Nothing has yet replaced a Commodore-style mix of management and arcade football with stunning graphics. 1990 and the World Cup should provide the impetus for this to happen.

A year ago, with the fan, his five years has been Amiga's Kick Off, with its super fast shots, crisp passing, and complete with Topsy responses! Some great kicking you has come close. Our league playoffs will be based on a points for positive reviews



system of games launched in the last three seasons—tempored by the ACE review teams' own opinions.

Watch out for future footy updates in the maps from Sega (Soccer), Manchester United, and Liverpool are all about to come out as computer games. Next year's World Cup will have an officially licensed computer game and there seems little doubt that the popularity of computer soccer is set to continue.

ACE REVIEWERS' STATE OF PLAY VERDICT ON ARCADE/COMPUTER FOOTBALL

Kick Off

BT £19.9999 • Amiga £39.9999 • PC (Soft Disc) • Spectrum £9.9999, £14.9999 • C64 £9.9999, £14.9999 • CPC £9.9999, £14.9999

Amiga's championship-winning performance with Kick Off is down to the programming brilliance of Dave Doo, an Italian programming hero who changed the rules of computer footy games. His revolutionary approach offered wide expanses of green grass, tiny footballers, but a very fast moving game. The effect was a match that appeared to be realistic in scale, unlike other handkerchief-sized pitches that characterized so many other games.



Kick Off also offers a totally new method of trapping and passing—which again introduced a new level of realism. Flat as pretty as most other computer soccer games but far more playable—and in this type of game the playability is everything.

There's just one bug in the interface here. The 8-bit version of Kick Off, recently released, simply don't cut the mustard.

ACE Rating 9/10

World Soccer

Sega Master £39.99

Sega's superb soccer cartridge for the Master System offers very sophisticated control over the ball. It performs well in the three vital departments of passing, shooting, and dribbling. There are also lots of extras such as a penalty shoot-out/decider sequence and stacks of world team options to choose from. A very close runner-up for the ACE Championship, it could have gone either way. John.

ACE Rating 9/10

Microprose Soccer

BT £24.9999 • Amiga £39.9999 • PC £24.9999 • Spectrum £9.9999, £14.9999 • C64 £19.9999, £19.9999 • CPC £9.9999, £14.9999

Contributes to the fun and championship of soccer. This is the computer footy game that might be licensed by Rodney Marsh and George Best. All sorts of bits and bobs have been added like Banana shots and action replay. Its league performance was



slightly impaired by a lack of consistency in some of the versions (the Amiga version in particular didn't quite make the grade).

ACE Rating 9/10

Emili Hughes International Soccer

BT Amiga (Soft Disc) • Spectrum £9.9999, £14.9999 • C64 £9.9999, £14.9999 • CPC £9.9999, £14.9999

Performed well on 8-bit machines and might have challenged for top honors had the 16-bit versions been launched earlier in the season. Don't let us get off to the fact that the game carries the name of that amazing hero—Emili 'Crash Home' Hughes. It is an excellent game despite this. Provides for good quick attacks and enjoyable shots at goal. Manual control over the keeper is another nice touch.

ACE Rating 9/10

International Soccer

C64 £9.9999, £14.9999 • 8-bit Commodore (Cartridge) £14.99

This was the first good computer footy game. Originally rated by Andrew Spencer (of International Soccer fame) and produced on cartridge for the C64. Dave managed a bit of a Championship run with the game by bringing it out on cassette for the first time. If you own a C64 you really shouldn't be without it.

ACE Rating 9/10

Match Day II

Spectrum £7.9999, £14.9999 • C64 £9.9999, £14.9999 • CPC £9.9999, £14.9999

Jim Rittman's award winning Soccer footy game for Ocean restored some pride to the Sinclair hardware—for so long ridiculed by Commodore fans for the lack of decent Spectrum football. The Match Day games changed all this. With stacks of game play options like changing the view, altering the length of the game and many others. The game play was the horizontal perspective type—on the lines of Andrew Spencer's International Soccer.

ACE Rating 9/10

Match Day

Spectrum £9.9999 • C64 £9.9999 • CPC £9.9999

Similar to the above—but with less detailed graphics and fewer options.

ACE Rating 8/10

World Cup Soccer

Sega Mega/Genesis/32x Impact/Amiga. £39

Platform	Year Released	Rating
Amiga	1989	900
Atari ST	1989	900
Commodore 64	1989	900
IBM PC	1989	900
Macintosh	1989	900
MS-DOS	1989	900
OS/2	1989	900
PlayStation	1990	900
Sega Genesis	1990	900
Super Nintendo	1990	900
TurboGrafx-16	1990	900
Xbox	2001	900
Xbox 360	2005	900
Xbox One	2013	900
Xbox Series X/S	2020	900
PlayStation 2	2000	900
PlayStation 3	2006	900
PlayStation 4	2013	900
PlayStation 5	2020	900
Wii	2006	900
Wii U	2012	900
Nintendo Switch	2017	900
Game Boy Advance	2001	900
Game Boy Color	2000	900
Game Boy Advance SP	2003	900
Game Boy Advance 2G	2003	900
Game Boy Advance 3G	2003	900
Game Boy Advance 4G	2003	900
Game Boy Advance 5G	2003	900
Game Boy Advance 6G	2003	900
Game Boy Advance 7G	2003	900
Game Boy Advance 8G	2003	900
Game Boy Advance 9G	2003	900
Game Boy Advance 10G	2003	900
Game Boy Advance 11G	2003	900
Game Boy Advance 12G	2003	900
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MegaDrive footy comes in with excellent graphics, a kick off style camera showing the whole of the pitch, and several spectacular attacking options like heading the ball in the air and overhead kicks. Never really looked like topping the league because its playability failed to improve to the same degree as its sound and graphics. 16-bit consoles might be sweeping top honours in the arcade conversion league but they need to pull their socks up as far as footy is concerned.

ACE Rating 900

ACE ROUNDRING: STATE OF PLAY REPORT ON COMPUTER STRATEGY GAMES

European Five Aside

Spectrum 62.0000 • C64 62.0000 • CPC 62.0000
This budget kick around for 8-bit machines started the season strongly - topping the league in the early part of the year. Unfortunately it was knocked off the top when the big cheque books came out for a series of superior but price footy battles later in the year. Provided good end to end entertainment with an efficient dribbling and passing mechanism.

ACE Rating 860

Tracksoft Manager

Spectrum 62.0000 • C64 62.0000 • CPC 62.0000 • ST 62.0000 • Amiga 62.0000 • PC 62.0000
The ultimate management game will put about every possible situation that might confront a manager covered. Tactically astute and offering all sorts of features, including things like newspaper reports, match tactics, manager's diary, awards, a choice of one thousand players from fifty five countries. Plays very slickly and with a good deal of humour.

ACE Rating 820

Football Manager II

Spectrum 62.0000, 62.0000 • C64 62.0000, 62.0000 • CPC 62.0000, 62.0000 • ST 62.0000 • Amiga 62.0000 • PC 62.0000

The sequel to the biggest selling footy management game ever, FM II offers a deluxe reworking of Football Manager - the original soccer management game, with loads more options and features. Enables you to make key management decisions such as buying and selling players, picking the team, deciding on play formations, commercial decisions and stocks etc.

ACE Rating 820

Football Manager

Spectrum 62.0000, 62.0000 • C64 62.0000, 62.0000 • CPC 62.0000, 62.0000 • ST 62.0000 • Amiga 62.0000 • PC 62.0000 • DOS/Windows



CELEBRATE • Atari 6400 62.0000 • MSX 62.0000 • C64 62.0000 • PC 62.0000

The first, and some would say still the best football management game. It's the game that made its developer - *Stratagem* giant Kevin Tomlin - a part of computer game history, as his trademark mug shot appeared on all of the hundreds of thousands of games that were sold. Quite a photo star was 'Our Tom'.

ACE Rating 900

Brian Clough's Football Fortunes

Spectrum 62.0000, 62.0000 • C64 62.0000, 62.0000 • CPC 62.0000, 62.0000 • ST 62.0000 • Amiga 62.0000 • PC 62.0000 • DOS/Windows 62.0000, 62.0000 • MSX 62.0000 • PCW 62.0000 • 48 62.0000 • Apple II 62.0000

Now this man good. Clough's footy was a found game come computer game. Several management options enabled you to manage your team in league and international competitions.

ACE Rating 900

Superleague Soccer

ST 62.0000 • Amiga 62.0000

This new footy title is the best attempt yet to combine strategy with arcade computer simulated soccer.



Yes, you can manage a squad of up to thirty players with the program providing information on over four hundred soccer stars. FA Cup, Football League and international campaigns can be fought.

ACE Rating 850

Football Director

Spectrum 62.0000 • C64 62.0000 • CPC 62.0000

D&H have been making footy games for donkeys' years. Football Director is one of the their first and remains one of the best. Sophisticated game play makes it suitable for the serious soccer strategist. Football Director II is now also available with even more options, plus ST (62.0000) and Amiga (62.0000) and PC (62.0000) versions. Available for all computers.

ACE Rating 820

The Double

Spectrum 62.0000 • C64 62.0000

Start off in the Third Division (nothing wrong with that, you'll be in excellent company with first rate sides like Bristol City) and work your way up to the First. Once there your aim is to pull off the double. Takes a bit of doing as only five teams have managed it in the history of the Football League. Pulling it off on computer is equally difficult.

ACE Rating 81

AN OCEAN APART

ACE discovers plans for Robocop II, F-29 Retaliator II and Carrier Command II...

With Robocop breaking all chart records and Batman - The Movie, Chase HQ and Unstoppable looking set to do the same, Ocean has a claim to be the UK's top software house. ACE went on the road to Manchester - via the piton-tousc A6 M60, Antiparis, at all - to find out how Ocean does it.

A DROP IN THE OCEAN

Perhaps the secret of Ocean's success lies in its in-house Software Manager, Gary Bracey. 35-year-old Bracey, joined Ocean four years ago and oversees the development of every Ocean title - deciding on who works on what and how much they get paid. The hardest part of his job is the high pressure involved in meeting deadlines while maintaining quality. "We feel Ocean's quality is OK now, but the (things and) deadlines are always a problem". The most difficult game Ocean has ever produced was Batman - The Movie on the Amiga, which was written in an amazing 7 weeks. Ironically, there was a team of 8 people working solely on the project. "Luckily we were able to allocate various sections to different programmers - allowing them to work simultaneously," signed Bracey. Bracey is backed up by a very strong team of 30 highly-qualified in-house game developers, and even has people working out in France. Ocean funded a French development team after some French guys wrote ST Guerrilla Wars for them. The French connection from producer Operation Wolf, Dragon Mike, Cabal, Beach Volley and is currently working on Lurcio and a soccer game. Bracey quipped, "we've had some very nice coding from them, and it gives me the chance to pop over to Paris every once in a while".

SMALL FISH IN A BIG OCEAN

While ACE visited Ocean, we were introduced to some of the programmers behind Operation Thunderbolt and Chase HQ. Lee reviews on pages 68 and 69 as they were putting the finishing touches to their masterpiece.

John Brandwood was an extremely tired and irritable programmer, tucked up in a Mega CD and Sony CD Walkman, writing the ST and Amiga versions of 'Tale's blood 'n' guts coin-op slasher, Operation Thunderbolt. Brandwood told us



Johnie: from playing in a Dublin band to being an Ocean proppie.

that Ocean is a test-site for the Senior Developer assembler from Hooft, "It's very much tailored for the games developer, and for cross-debugging it's extremely easy to use". Brandwood's most arduous task - apart from getting the company's 30 sequences right - was transferring the 20+ PC disks crammed full of sprites from the original comp. "We got the original sprites from Gals, transferred them over,

recoloured them and placed them together if they were originally 64x64 (64x64)". Missing the company's hardware sprite shrink capability was also difficult, but Brandwood has managed 17,200 levels of shrinkage per sprite, with a maximum size of 64x32 and 32 frames of animation. Operation Thunderbolt took him 5 months to write, but he says it as "both my original, just a good brain-fixer". When asked, Brandwood refused to comment on the music, he was listening to, and after our eye-patched ACE sports spotted a letter 'E' fall ED we could understand why.

Subtle-tones John O'Brien was just as exhausted but is a far better frame of mind than Brandwood. 22-year-old Johnie - as he's known around the Ocean programming dungeons - wrote the Spectrum and CPC versions of Chase HQ. He's particularly proud of



Gary Bracey: "Software manager, developer and escapee."

"Computer entertainment will continue to thrive for a very long time."

Gary Bracey, ACE

Shadow Warrior does not feature in Ocean at Hooft



the speed he's managed to squeeze out of the Spectrum's 28K. Before joining Ocean, Jobbe worked for Gemini where he produced the Spectrum, CPC and MSX versions of *Arcstrator* and *Dark Fusion* on the Spectrum and CPC. For Ocean he has written *Way to Mars* on the CPC and the 16-bit versions of *Raid Man - The Movie*. Typically, for a programmer, Jobbe had the best of both of (Clare HQ on) playble and additive gameplay but the moving, lights on the title screen coupled with 6 channel sound.

LIFE ON THE OCEAN WAVE

On the subject of future games releases, Bracey confirmed Ocean's increased commitment to original software. "We're going to be far more selective than in previous years - more of the *Batman*, *Robocop* and *Clare HQ*... less of the *Short Circuit*. Our range has shrunk in terms of titles, but we've increased the number of formats".

Over the next six months Ocean will be bringing out: *Flight Squad* - a twin file location, the movie actually stars Bracey as an "actor", *Robocop 2* - "the



John Bracey has written *Archer*, *Managata*, *Mano 10* and *Operation Thunderbolt*

movie is out in Autumn, the game of Christmas, and the film script's better than the original *Robocop*", *Battle Command* - the follow up to the classic *Command* programmed by Realtime Games (see AGE 27 for further details), *Mad Max* - a sophisticated martial arts coming from Techno due for release at Easter, *Secret Agent* - Data East copy featuring James Bondlike action sequences; plus "some big movie titles which we are currently in the process of negotiating".

Bracey added, "We're going heavily into original 16-bit software, headed by *F-29 Retaliator*, plus other strong product like *Lost Patrol* and *Kuonin*. *F-29* will be out on PC in the first quarter of 1989 - we're currently mulling over a games design for the followup to *F-29* which will be programmed by the same team and should be very special".

Although Bracey is a big games fan he keeps his feet firmly on the ground when producing them, "I'm usually sick to the back teeth of most titles by the time they're released".

"People just want to shove a game in and play."

John Clifton, 1988



Operation Thunderbolt plays over the Amiga

KEY SERIES	OTHER
1. <i>Blazing</i>	1. <i>PC Engines</i>
2. <i>Clonix</i>	2. <i>Amiga</i>
3. <i>Blazing</i>	3. <i>ST</i>
4. <i>Blazing</i>	4. <i>Spectrum</i>
5. <i>Blazing</i>	5. <i>MSX</i>
6. <i>Blazing</i>	6. <i>MSX</i>
7. <i>Blazing</i>	7. <i>MSX</i>
8. <i>Blazing</i>	8. <i>MSX</i>
9. <i>Blazing</i>	9. <i>MSX</i>
10. <i>Blazing</i>	10. <i>MSX</i>

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MIDI MADNESS!

Check out this month's ACE Music Gift guide, and discover how for the price of a few knick-knacks you can forget Kylie Christmas carols and get into some more radical rapping



MIDI was first dreamt up by a company called Sequential Circuits. Before the implementation of the standard, most music machines were stand-alone boxes and required rarely used analogue cables, unless it was in the cumbersome language of control voltages. Nowadays MIDI allows you to link your workstation (see how you hook to your guitar) to your keyboard, and control 16 instruments simultaneously.

The festive season has a habit of leaving the budding music rather cold. No, let's not outside in the snow, but just wishes all his relatives would go home so he can sneak back to the bedroom studio for a spot of 'Deep House'. So, keep your resident semi-circles happy by joggling down your local techemporium and buying presents from the yuletide ACE Music Catalogue selection, with all the hottest sounds around for your computer. Admittedly the cheaper stuff is for the Amiga, but that's only due to the fact that the Amiga has so much stuff already built into it. But there's plenty here for users of all machines...

1. DELUXE MUSIC CONSTRUCTION SET

Electronic Arts
PC, Macintosh and Amiga £49.95

A musical notation based music 'purr' app using built in sampled sounds or any MIDI devices. Ideal for those of you who know all about jacks and tibbs, and we don't mean you like to beat fat people. As music programs go this is the optimum balance of price vs. performance.

2. CASIO MT-540

Casio Electronics
£189

Not a bad sounding little keyboard, even if the keys are a bit small. Plays fast, has 8 built-in effects (reverb and echo etc.), 230 voices, 32 drum sounds and MIDI ports too, so plugs into any MIDI interface and sequencer.

3. ROLAND LAPC-1

Roland
PC based £378

The ultimate music system for your PC. Basically the same LA synthesizer engine which sits inside the MT-32, but on a card for your computer. You can use it as a MIDI device, or for the rich of pocket you can just use it to listen to the brilliant scores in the Sierra Games.

4. CHEETAH MD16 DRUM-BOX

Cheetah-Marketing
£299

35 bit digital drum machine with everything you ever needed in a drummer. It's never late for rehearsal, it keeps time and it doesn't break wind in the back of cramped hotel vans.



Although MIDI boasts 16 channels, and the ability to control 64 units simultaneously, the system is in fact a serial line. This means signals are sent one by one along the wire. The "simultaneous" bit only seems because the data is sent so fast that each instrument appears to respond simultaneously. In fact, if you chain several MIDI instruments together, you'll notice a slight delay. You can get round this by purchasing a MIDI patch bay which accepts one input and redirects it to several units almost instantly.

5. SPACE QUEST III

Samuel Quint
Also on ST, PC, Apple II and Amiga £34.99

Brilliant graphic adventures, which along with Kings Quest IV, Silvermist and Leisure Suit Larry 3 drive the Roland MT-32 path to create unbelievable soundscapes to go with the games.

6. SOUND OASIS

New Wave Software
Amiga £199.95

Loads of exotic Mega keyboard drags directly from Amiga drives, and concert sounds to FT samples. Mega libraries are all falling their sample disks off cheap, which gives you access to an enormous library of pro samples!

7. SOUND QUEST VOICE EDITORS

Samuel Quint
Also on ST, PC and Amiga £99.99

Little Mixers for DMO, D10, D110, MF-32, T9912, T9922, K1, M1 and C2 synthesizers. Edit sounds on your synth from your computer on-screen and save them onto disk rather than expensive RAM cards.

8. ADEPT SOUND PROCESSOR

Adapt Development
Amiga £29.95

Realtime digital effects using special software and modified sampling hardware. Oversee your mixes with reverb, chorus, echo, flanging and even latched delayed pitch-bending.

9. YAMAHA PSS-500

Yamaha Corp.
£149.99

Another nifty keyboard, this time from Yamaha. Small keys, yes, but 108 big sounds from an FM tone generator, 108 PCM effects and special effects like portamento (slide) to you and out, reverb, sustain and vibrato. MIDI ports too, so it fits right into your MIDI interface.

10. PRO SOUND DESIGNER

Lotusoft
Amiga £29.99

A full featured hardware/software 16 bit sampler package. Everything you need to produce and edit your own 17 Amiga samples. Comes complete with gender bender for 4500s and 62000s, as their parallel ports are different.

11. ROLAND MT-32

Roland
£200 second-hand £230

32 voice multichannel synthesizer, a real hard-rocket. The forerunner of the current music system, like the DM16 etc., but more editible. Double with the Serial-On-Line games as well as a number of other computer games which drive MIDI.

12. MUSIC X

MicroIllusions
Amiga £229.99

MIDI 256 track sequencer with built-in voice editors for popular synths and support for SMPTE and MIDI time code. It would cost £790 for a comparable sequencer, SMPTE, MIDI timescode and editor setup (skip around for special offers).

13. FM MELODY MAKER EXPANDER

Hybrid 8-bit
Also on ST £99.99

Very flash cartridge which brings the sounds of the Yamaha FM synths to users of less fancy computers. Complete with a real Yamaha FM chip and software for editing the sounds yourself. You can address the sounds from MIDI, using an external keyboard, and it's run on any ST, even a 586cs, and at any resolution, colour or black and white.

14. MUSIC STUDIO 2.0

Artisium
Amiga £23.99

Music notation based editor with MIDI. Features some interesting sampled sounds, and far cheaper than the UK offering. Version 2.0 offers many advanced features, and compatibility with other systems.

If you want to get the MIDI Gains, check out the first few issues of ACE which carried a test-proof guide to the standards. We're actually considering issuing this and other ACE music articles as a series of special ACE Reports. If you'd be interested in getting hold of one, drop us a postcard and we'll let you know as soon as they're available. They make the subject of MIDI perfectly comprehensible and were described as one national publishing house as "the clearest introduction to MIDI I've seen...". The address to write to is Steve Cooke, ACE 1803, 20-20 Farningham Lane, London E9 6JF (UK).

15. CASIO CT-460

Casio Electronics
C209

Normal sized keys, 460 sounds, 8 effects, 42 percussion sounds (but MIDI too) A real adding little synth for the price of a Mac disk drive.

16. DATEL MIDI INTERFACE

Date Electronics
Aranga C18 89

Ok, so you bought an Aranga instead of an ST. (I'm still thinking O/S, but you moved out on a MIDI interface. Grrr. I hear about this though! A British built MIDI interface which works with all Aranga MD packages.

17. YAMAHA R100

Yamaha Corp.
C178

Excellent value reverb unit from Yamaha with 80 programmed effects. Comes complete with 35 bit quality and 800 ports from remote program changes... "Yeah, I want the reverb and echo to cut in when I hit the last chord of Star Spangled Banner, man." It's a corker.

18. AUDIOMASTER II

Sega
Aranga 158 06

A sample editor to sample from any Aranga sampler, apart from the Pro Sound that is, and edit it. And using it you can convert any file format to any other Aranga sound file format: PT, Sona, Raw, etc.



CONTACTS

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Yamaha MIDI Machines was compiled by Phil South.

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ACE FLASHBACK!

In 1984, the games computing industry underwent huge upheavals. Many software and hardware companies went to the wall; most of those which remained have survived to the present day in one way or another. Both Amstrad and the newish Atari under Jack Tramiel made their first appearance. The licensing deal became suddenly popular, and two more yet gone out of fashion, American games became affordable for the first time. Back to US Gold, which helped to raise the standard of Commodore 64 software to end, and broadened games players' horizons.

More like the OS4 and Amstrad's CPCs were intended primarily as games machines (despite the often and out-of-place business software which appeared on each), rather than the broadly 'business' image of Sinclair machines. 1984 was the decline of home computers as the preserve of the amateur programmer and electronics enthusiast, and reinforced the micro as part of the entertainment furniture, along with the video and CD players.

1984

ARRIVALS AND DEPARTURES

Enter the QL...

In January, the national press and the TV cameras jockeyed into the formal launch of the Sinclair QL, the machine which led to the decline of Sinclair Research. The real problem with the QL was that Sinclair saw it as 'the first business machine for under £400' - and the Sinclair Research spent most of 1984 desperately trying to to finish building it; the finance-hungry public wanted it to be a games machine; and the business community found it impossible to take the computer card, Microdrive-driven QL seriously.

Reef up the Spectrum!

The Spectrum, however, was still selling strongly, and Sinclair injected new life into it by upgrading the machine, with a new case and QL-style keyboard, to the Spectrum+ in October. The company also announced that it was working on a portable computer, code-named Pandora, a machine which eventually came out as the battery-powered 288.

CPC success

The most significant computer launch of the year was, without a doubt, Amstrad's entry into the market. Amired Consumer Electronics, known for its TVs and music centres, unveiled the CPC-464 in April 1984. The

contrast between the CPC launch and that of the QL, three months earlier, was starked. Large numbers of complete CPC-464s were on display, and - unusually for 1984 - they appeared in the shops nearly when Amstrad said they would be. Twenty-third software titles were ready, with 30 or so more in development. Its parts were nearly all standard, familiar components. The fact that the tape recorder and monitor were all built in was hailed as a tremendous asset (though any other manufacturer could have done it); the price £129 for a mono monitor, £129 for a colour monitor represented excellent value for money.

Cheap at £2500

Apple launched the Macintosh computer on January 24, 1984, billed as the first truly user-friendly computer for the individual. If you think there are expensive toys, consider that the original 128K Mac cost £2,500 in the UK, and that this was considerably cheaper than the Apple Lisa. Lisa was the first machine to use the now very familiar 'WIMP' interface, derived by Apple from original graphics user interfaces developed by Xerox's research centre in Palo Alto at the turn of the decade. However desirable the Macintosh, it has never become a prime home computer in this country, thanks to its pricing. But its user interface, the mouse and icons, the ease of operation, the inclusion of the larger and more practical 3.5" disk drive greatly influenced Atari and Commodore when planning the 32 bitter subtext the 'jackpot' at launch and Amiga.

MSX Mass

This year also saw the first MSX machines appear. 80 year, new manufacturers' names were added to the list that would comprise the Japanese 'triover' - 12



If last month's opening instalment of a decade in computing all seemed rather remote - strange hardware such as the Apple II, primitive games, and a lot of excitement over a desktop-shaped machine with 1K RAM - then you'll be pleased to hear that from 1984, things will become much more familiar...

The OS4, OS4+ (OS4+) - Commodore went through a period of indecision as to how to represent success at the OS4. It eventually went the OS4+ route in April. The OS4 hardware remains as a single computer, but the OS4+ hardware can be obtained as the OS4+ game playing, and as a software-only software OS4+. It can obviously make use of accessories. The OS4 was supported with software titles for computers, but in the new OS4+ machine also the OS4+ will be fully supported.

David Green, Amstrad's manager and programmer, who brought you Little Computer People and Obsolete.



Super Pipeline from Spectrum was the company's greatest hit. They also produced the first environmental game *Rescue Spectre* by the programmer who was later to give us *Blindfold Maniacs*.

Partnership rights (rights are the title) came in later after partner publisher Inter-Action requested game console console support in their magazine. In June, rights lapsed in order to allow console to not merely lose, only it means means that they aren't making it such as that is people that had not realized. Rights were re-negotiated in July in a hurry of ending up later, off the shelf companies, negotiations with Inter-Action and first one. It eventually resulted in *Blindfold Maniacs*, *Unlabeled City* and other environmental magazines.

or to machines which would all follow a common standard, based on the 280 processor. Despite their success in their home market, MSX struggled in the US. The concept of the MSX "standard" was not well understood, they lacked software, they were sold through 5 outlets where browsers weren't particularly interested in computers, and they were priced ridiculously high - the 64K base, Sanyo and Mitsubishi models, for example, were £300. By Christmas, the prices were beginning to fall to near £200, and the retailers continued into the next year. The manufacturers eventually decided to launch MSX 2 and MSX 2+ in an unopposed British public.



Mark Stronach says the first cheque for Danmex on 16th May 1984

FAST Talking

1987: The Federation Against Software Theft, was set up in July. Its initial aim was to lobby Parliament to have the Copyright Act (1956) amended to include computer software as a specifically protected item, a goal which is achieved in 1985. Continuing support from the software houses, and the dedication of the current chairman, Bob Hay, has led to its expansion to encompass active investigation of software piracy.

ACTIVISION

Founded 1979 in US 1983

Initially a video game manufacturer, Activision turned its attention to Atari, Commodore and Apple II computers in 1984. The UK division was established in September 1983, and like its US parent company, began selling computer titles in 1984. The company has a strong reputation in the field of licensing games, but has also produced some of software's spicier games such as *After Egg* and *Little Computer People*. In February 1988, Activision bought out adventure specialist Infocom, which continued as a separate label within the group.

First computer titles: *Petal* and *Zax* (Atari 400/800)

Best ever seller: *Ghostbusters* (all formats), released Christmas 1986. *Ghostbusters* is the world's biggest selling computer game, with over 2 million units sold altogether to date.

OCEAN

Founded June 1983

Collaboration with US Gold in 1984 proved Ocean Software into software's first duopoly. The company was founded by David Ward, who had previously headed up mail order outlet Spectrum Games (whose name had singularly failed to delight Sinclair Research), and was his proprietor Jon Woods. Together with Superior Software, it became the first publisher to acquire a legitimate console conversion licence - for Nintendo - from Century Electronics. In 1985, it bought the rights to use the Imagine name as a label. In recent years, Ocean has become one of the most consistently successful publishers, with a string of sought-

after licences converted into high quality computer games, including this year in *Blindfold Maniacs* such as *Blunder - the Movie*, *The Unlabeled Man*, and *Chess HQ*.

First title: *Armageddon* (Spectrum)

Best ever seller: *Daisy Thompson's Decathlon*

MASTERTONIC

Founded 1984

MasterTonic invented budget software. Before MasterTonic, Spectrum software cost anything from £5 to £15. Commodore titles around £8 to £20, Atari £5, games £30 upwards. Furthermore, MasterTonic distributed its cheap games into unconventional places: railway service stations, supermarkets, garage forecourts, and supermarkets. In July 1984, MasterTonic joined forces with Galactic Software - the Darling brothers - and the first of the long running 'Simulator' series came out. The Darlings broke away to form Code Masters in 1986. In 1987, MasterTonic bought Australian publisher Bellcoome House, and in 1988 became part of the Virgin group.

First title: 12 about town, including *Hogan's Escape*, *Space War* and *Blind Man*, for the ZX, C64 and C65.

Best ever seller: *Formula One Simulator* (all formats)

US GOLD

Founded January 1984

Gold and New Brown set up Centrom in 1982 to distribute computer games. Among the titles they handled were Atari 400/800 and Commodore 64 imports from the US, which were generally superior to home-grown titles, but proved difficult to sell at £30-£40. The Browns tried to persuade the US companies to let them duplicate, package and sell their titles in the UK, under the separate brand name US Gold. They were not at that successful until Beach Head, from a tiny company called Access, sold in vast quantities, and convinced the American publishers that they were missing out. As the US Gold catalogue grew, the Browns asked Ocean to deal with conversions to British machines, and Ocean chief David Ward and Jon Woods became directors of US Gold. Beach Head was the first title to be converted on to the Spectrum, and remains one of US Gold's best sellers.



Rescuers' Rescue Effort. Later the company moved over to educational adventures.

Who said this? ...and about whom

The most prodigious inventor since Leonardo da Vinci (inventor of the wheel)

Birth of the Amiga

After John Tramiel left probe managing director of Commodore International, left the firm abruptly on January 13th 1984, it was proved to be his resignation. Now if there would have proved so that before the year was out, the reason for leaving him, the reasons Commodore had initially feared. Tramiel left US Gold because of their a hardware design company in the 1980s as a alternative alternative which had received the Commodore deal of the 1970s, and gave us to lead the world as the first deal consisting with the US 286 machine Commodore 64. It is generally accepted that Tramiel left in a dispute with chairman John Wood over bringing his three sons into managerial positions within the company.

Tramiel left his job for a few months before his name began to be linked with Warner Communications and its 486 Amiga deal. In July, an extraordinary deal was agreed in which Tramiel, in effect, sold Tramiel's money to buy IBM. Tramiel with Commodore at the point was hardly available. In 1984 Commodore executives left to join Tramiel at the new firm. Tramiel was also motivated.

The legal action concerned an unfulfilled contract which the company being developing a computer called Amiga and failed to pay their designer at the time 6000 game chips. Commodore was being to face the contract design. Main contract design had not repeat its intention to fund for a design contract.

The legal equivalent continued to set over a year, but did not prevent Commodore from acquiring Amiga, and continuing to fund development of the primary design, which Commodore



Geoff and Anna Brown - founders of Brontoseaft.

to this day. US folk introduced British gamers to Coyne's sports simulations and to (pre-rendered to Microsoft's flight simulations, to 3D's role playing games, and more recently to console conversions from Capcom and Sega. It was also the first company to make £9.99 the standard price for tape-based titles, and £14.99 on disk.

First title: *Beach Head*, Commodore 64

Best ever seller: *Duffin* (all formats), with over 500,000 sales.

EVENTS

• **Bitlink Telecom** announced in November that it was going to hold an inquiry into Prestel's security procedures following the discovery that mystery 'hackers' had broken into mailboxes, including that of the Duke of Edinburgh.

GAMES OF THE YEAR

Elite (BBC) - first of the space combat and trading games and arguably still the best British business bought the conversion rights in November.

Jed (Jet Willy Spectrums) - long-awaited follow-up to *Music Master*, *Jed* was really simple platform, and better, but it scored highly for its playability and programmer Matthew Smith's sense of humour.

Lords of Midnight - strategy suggests this game will need number of locations, star-fingly original at the time.

Single Lane - probably Ultimate's finest hour. With *Right Lane*, it revolutionised Spectrum programming by creating highly detailed solid graphics, but each screen in a single colour against black - thus avoiding the Spectrum's notorious attribute clash.

SAYINGS OF THE YEAR

Q1 predictions

'We had an idea of what price the machine was going to be sold for - what set the parameters for the hardware. We couldn't knock out something 'ready'. On the other hand, we didn't have time to produce a Q1 from scratch.'

Chris Hill, Commodore Software, on the design of the CPC644

'We want MSX to become a world standard in computers - the VHS in video'

Chris Goss, Toshiba UK product manager

1985

ARRIVALS AND DEPARTURES

In 1985, memory chips were cheap and manufacturers took advantage of this by upgrading their old machines. The Commodore 64 became the Commodore 128, the Amstrad CPC644 became the CPC664 - and four months later 644 layers at had collective approval when the CPC6128 appeared in the shops. Atari proudly unveiled its new ST technology



The original *Beach Head* game from Brontoseaft - a far cry from the recent Software Townhouse release.



Beach Head from *Pyromania* - the first British title to succeed in the US before coming to Britain.

'I've been working with the Commodore 64 for a while now and I'm really enjoying it. I've been working with the Commodore 64 for a while now and I'm really enjoying it. I've been working with the Commodore 64 for a while now and I'm really enjoying it.'

of CDS in January. The original ST series comprised two models: the 128K 130ST and 512K 500ST and the disk drive was separately routed, rather than built into the keyboard. The ST's were initially pitched as Macintosh performers at a third of the price - the 130ST was to be priced at £399 and the 500ST at \$599.

Commodore's Amiga was also launched this year, at a high-profile function in New York in July, and in the UK at the PCW show in September where it was shown in a select few behind closed doors. Like the ST, the Amiga's exact configurations remained fairly fluid until it eventually became available in 1986. Commodore, however, spent much of 1985 trying to force attention on to the C128 - with only partial success.

While Atari and Commodore were redefining the leisure computer, Amstrad took an entirely different route with the PC16386, creating a completely new market for cheap word processing. Forward to Q1, which finally gave us the fight and went into retirement.

NEWCOMERS

PYROMANIA

Founded 1985

Pyromania was set up out of the ashes of Imagine Software, with high ideals. Its stated intention was to develop software for the emerging 32-bit market, and



Beach Head is great. Amstrad original, still going strong in today's re-releases.

while the Atari ST and Amiga were being talked about, they weren't yet available. So first titles were produced for the QJ and Apple Macintosh. The success of the ST/Amiga market has meant that Puggies have had to compromise its initial philosophy, although Ian Heston says that in retrospect they were premature to start with 58000 programming straightaway, and with hindsight, wouldn't do it that way again.

First title: Bratislava, Apple Macintosh
Best ever seller: Barbarian (all formats)

EVENTS

- The generosity that characterized Band Aid and Live Aid did not leave the software industry unmoved. Soft Aid was conceived at the beginning of the year and the compilation tape appeared in March. Companies such as Elite, Astonish, Tasknet, Virgin and USI (and released their games on the tape free of charge. Soft Aid went on to become the best-selling title of the year and raised over £390,000 for the Band Aid trust.

- In April, police arrested computer journalists Steve Gold and Robert Schreier on forgery and counterfeiting charges relating to the Prestel hacking incident the previous year (see 1984).

Who said this - about what?

I was told I had six weeks to do the game. I was lucky, I'd just seen the movie and I realized straightaway that I should be able to work my car screens to fit the game somehow.

- On a rainy day in January, Sir Clive Sinclair and Sinclair Vehicles launched the CD electric vehicle. By April the production line at Roover in Bentley, York was cut back from 1,000 CDs a week to 100. In August production ceased altogether and in October the vehicle was called in to Sinclair Vehicles. Around 4,500 CDs were sold in total; Sinclair's target was 200,000 in the first year.

- Acorn had to be famously rescued by Olivetti - twice. Its shares were suspended, first in February, and were then reinstated the same month when Olivetti took a 49.9% stake in the firm. Then in June the shares were suspended again and in August Olivetti came to the rescue again: its share of Acorn rose to 75.9%.

- It was with considerable relief that magazines were able to report some good news about Acorn that same



This Warwick screen could feed a star to £25000 - see the photo at the top of the page.

month, when the beleaguered manufacturer announced that it had developed the first production models of the 32-bit 68030 processor.

- God's year broke. Clive Sinclair Research, once supreme in the UK games market, was in trouble. Production of the QJ and Spectrum were halted, development work on future machines seemed to have ground to a halt. The company admitted in June that it was looking for finance and later that month Robert Maxwell's fair learned out of every newspaper in the land to announce that he would help his old friend Sir Clive out of his present peril. This was before Maxwell had seen the Sinclair accounts. Barely six weeks later the deal was off. Sir Clive responded by saying that the latest Dixon's order for £30 million worth of Spectrums, QJs and TVs meant a rescue was no longer necessary and that Sinclair Research would soldier on on its own.

WHERE ARE THEY NOW?

Melbourne House

In 1985, Melbourne House was flying high with *Play of the Expanding Ate*, a monster success hit which was one of the first of an enduring wave of martial arts games and success. It hasn't repeated since. The original Melbourne House may not set up as a US software publishing house in 1982 for Australia-based Fred and Nancy Maguire. Fred's son was named partly from the Maguire's Beam Software. In 1986, Melbourne House became part of Mastertronics and today still exists as a label within the Virgin Mastertronics group. In Australia, Beam Software is now a Nintendo-approved developer and enters virtually exclusively on Nintendo games for the Japanese and American market.

GAMES OF THE YEAR

Why of the Expanding Ate - seminal martial arts game which did a roaring trade all summer long.

Duress - the first game to give an indication of what the 16-bit micro might be capable of.

The Fawn - greaked in on the QJ line in the year, but promised much for the future of the text-based adventure and for developer Magnetic Dreams.

SAYINGS OF THE YEAR

"Business is war"

"Business is like sex, 'You have to be involved'"
Jack Tramiel the Tramielans they don't teach you at Harvard Business School

Answer to the Quiz Test 1: The Sun, computer Sector with the Game Technology, an Address and Kennedy Program
Answer to the Quiz Test 2: David Crane, programmer of *Duress*, the first selling computer game to date, an entrepreneur in Pioneer City, selling *Trinity*, March 7, 1985.



Maxwell's *Maxwell's battle* is joined in this classic strategic chess setup.



Phishing is - one of several tremendous Egon *Phish*, but even games like this don't stop the company from seeing publication in 1985.



Computer games go, price-rising: *Barbarian* broke covered the winter £125,000

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"The biggest game ever... originally backwards."
—*Games Machine*

"An epic game with a style and content not yet matched in breadth of vision and development."
—*Mean Following*,
—*Review 1 & 2*

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Computer Games Week	90%
Computer User	86%
The One	88%
C & Y G	79%
Games Machine	98%
Emp	90%



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ACE NEW WORLDS

PAT WINSTANLEY CHECKS OUT THE LATEST FANTASY SOFTWARE

MANIAC MANSION

Here we go again, kids to talk about and only two pages to squish it all in. This month I've been shuddering at the sound of Shadow and tearing my hair out at Maniac Mansion. On top of that, the file button on my joystick goes up the glass, which put paid to any hope of attempting Dungeons of Darn - rely on north door programmers also for keyboard use as an emergency?

House of Shadow, which Steve Cohen has already previewed on these pages, was actually a bit of a disappointment, so to solve the same problem I've held it over until next month. Meanwhile, here's a blast from the Lucasfilm past - and a very nice blast it is too...

MANIAC MANSION

This game actually appeared in issue 2 of ACE on the C64 and has now resurfaced on the Amiga. It's a typical Lucasfilm animated adventure, unlike a programming style and presentation to the very successful Zak McKracken which is actually a later product. The huge sales of Zak are probably responsible for this sudden resurrection of the earlier game.

Kevin can be treated in all sorts of ways after applied to adventures. House of Shadow applies the blood-curdling, no-holds-barred approach, while Scapghost relied on a rather more tongue-in-cheek affect. Maniac Mansion shows yet another way of doing it - after business.

Set in Dr Fred's old mansion the plot revolves around a monster which landed nearby and has since caused all sorts of strange effects to the mansion's occupants, both animal and vegetable. Dr Fred appears to be chopping up bodies and now he has captured Kevin. The saved character from the local college. Your task is to control Gordy's boyfriend Dave and two of his friends in their attempt to rescue the hapless teen-ager.

The game is entirely mouse-driven using the Lucasfilm system seen in Zak and Indiana Jones. All available commands are shown on screen so all you have to do is click on the ones you want to build up a command. Each of your three characters is independently con-

trolled simply by choosing the one you want; in many parts of the game you'll need to have at least two, if not all three characters co-operating to solve problems. Thus one character is needed to hold open a door using a hidden switch while another enters the room.

Inhabitants of the mansion include Dr Fred himself, his schizophrenic wife Nurse Sals and their son Ed who has a passion for his (rightly?) modified car and his ever present hamster. If any member of this mad trio should run into you you'll need to think fast to avoid being thrown in the dungeon.

Puzzles include retrieving keys from inaccessible spots, feeding ghost green tentacles with warped appetites, mending a phone to allow you to make obscure calls and repairing broken wires sufficiently well to avoid cutting the power completely and thus (as I did) causing the nuclear reactor in the cellar to go into meltdown, devastating everything for miles around.

David's two companions are chosen from a gang of six pals, each with their own speciality. Certain puzzles in the game have different pov-

After the enormous success of Zak McKracken, U.S. Gold/Lucasfilm have revamped Maniac Mansion on the Amiga...and it's horribly good!

found them so funny that I watched them over and over again - especially one where Dr Fred is giving military commands to a giant purple tentacle.

Only one aspect of the system annoyed me - on the Amiga version tested an immense amount of disc swapping is required. Very often simply attempting an action which produces a negative response (such as OPEN DISK) produces a prompt to swap discs. If your next command gets a valid reaction you have to change discs again. I would guess that a hard drive system would get around this problem but it's annoying for us gamers with very basic systems. According to the documentation ST and PC users with larger capacity drives can combine both discs onto one and all three versions support the use of a hard disc.

RELEASE BOX

STARDUST	C64	TSR
AMIGA	GH 88K	OUT NOW
CD-ROM	GH 88K	OUT NOW
IBM PC	C64	TSR

LANDSCAPE

Beautifully vibrant and detailed graphics make the game a pleasure to play. Character movement and handling can be a little jerky but a surely not a deal breaker.

ENDGAME

Interacting with both player and non-player characters has no limited to giving objects but the responses are hilarious.

CHALLENGE

This entry-level brain-chatterer with some puzzle solutions is a good puzzle. Working out how to save your characters is enjoyable in the best way.

SYSTEM

Very easy to use with the exception of multiple disc swapping mentioned above.

ACE RATING

85%

Buy it, Play it, Charge characters and play it again...and again... This one should become a classic.

C64 version already reviewed in issue 2 - rated 80%



table solutions depending upon the characters at your disposal. Bernard the physicist is a whiz at electronics while Michael is an accomplished photographer. I haven't yet figured out what Jeff the beach-bum is good for - he certainly won't release the radio from the swimming pool as he won't get wet!

At times during the game action is suspended while a predetermined sequence elsewhere in the mansion is shown. These often provide useful clues to the way round specific problems and can be skipped at the touch of a button if you've seen them before. Personally I

Designer STAC has been available for well over a year now and very few games written with the utility have been released commercially, although quite a lot have found their way into the Public Domain. Now giving the commercial releases is Starwreck, programmed by Chris Jones of Commodore and distributed by HM Software (better known as distributors of educational programs).

Starwreck concerns the voyage of the USS USSF and her captain Jimmy Kirk. The ship needs replacement of deuterium crystals and is forced to land on a Clikar planet. You are delegated to Colonel's five crystals from the Dinkari despite being in popular with them as the Black Death.

As a spoof the scenario works well but the standard of programming levels much to be desired and causes frustration of its own

STARWRECK

Want to write your own adventure - and get it on the market? This was when adventurers everywhere were turning semi-professional using adventure generators like The Guild and GAG. The 16-bit STAC generator, however, doesn't seem to have resulted in many commercial releases. Here's an exception...

Small games frequently and short sequences leave little room for typing errors, extreme patience and lots of coffee making are required to succeed.

Enough of the bugs because on the whole Starwreck, despite its system faults, is a very enjoyable adventure. The puzzles are satisfying to solve and usually of the 'kick yourself' type. The author clearly enjoys the nature of some objects by placing them in environments, which adds an alternative meaning to their names. Careful examination of everything is a must.

The graphics are well drawn and even animated in places but easy with STAC and depend both locations and objects. Good use of colour schemes enhances the atmosphere by emphasising the contrast between the filthy messroom and a nearby bed.

My major reason though has to be the price of the game. I just can't see the justification for a £20 price tag even with the bugs removed. Starwreck is well worth playing but I'd have preferred to see it offered at around half the current asking price.

which tend to detract from the well crafted atmosphere. Your first task is simply to leave the ship and enter the relative safety of the spaceship. This entails finding and ascending a spaceport and avoiding death from flying debris on operating the airlock.

Several bugs became apparent in this early stage. For instance, a rather strange night to be discovered in the sleeping quarters which is capable of being taken and subsequently appears in the inventory. However, by dropping it and you are told you don't have it. Another interesting item is the teleporting torch - open it to be transported to an entirely different section of the game - nice short cut, but that really should have been removed before the final release version. Another problem which is due more to poor system design than anything is that when objects are dropped they do not appear in the room description.

Later in the game you must contend with shortages of air, food and drink, each leading to death if not overcome within a few moves. Unfortunately the normal trial and error approach is marred by having to reload the entire game including typing in your name and a protection password (one of which is wrong every time you die. Since

LANDSCAPE 10
Mostly a place to explore with effectively zero other features.

INVENTORY 16
Oversee interaction is very limited - mainly status and more conventional.

CHALLENGE 16
Overly generous with findings of treasure and unexplored routes cover the game from start to finish.

SYSTEM 10
Restrictions to the standard 16-bit system are fairly important and the number of bugs is noticeable.

ACE RATING

500

Despite errors and bad system design, the game is fun to play - but badly composed.



SNIPPETS

There's been some interesting developments on the chat in helping form: the Guiding Light is experiencing some turmoil at the moment having been caught in the current clean-up campaign for chatlines. Instead of its original concept of one-to-one help for anybody, others will now be greeted by a compulsory speed message and told themselves, it is typed for monitoring by the authorities. It also seems likely that group chats will be banned in the order of the day with under life banned from the lines.

The number received the same 0885 308 822 (noon to 8.30pm - 24p per min - cheap 888-28p per min other times). What a shame

to see responsible operators caught in the same net as the more unscrupulous con men.

HELP!

For those who prefer to play with help constantly at hand Mike Gerard (of 'Your Sinclair' fame) has just released a new book, "Adventures on the Spectrum" it is in two sections. The first 50 pages cover topics such as hints for beginning, adventure clubs and introductory games while the remaining 80 pages contain complete solutions to 40 of the most popular Spectrum adventures. Quite a few of the games are also available

on other machines, both 8 and 16 bit so there's something here for everyone. Certainly the introductory sections can be applied to any machine although written from the Spectrum point of view. At £4.95 the book is a good buy for any self-respecting adventure (Postage is a necessity by the UK or £1.00 elsewhere.) Available from Mike Gerard, PO Box 7, Ramsey, Huntingdon, Cambridgeshire, PE11 2JZ.

FLAME OUT

Just in time for a glimpse this month is the Amiga version of Dragons Of Flame which appears very similar to the ST version. Further comment will have to wait for a working snapshot! Also to take for review this time is Dead End from Interactive Technology which is a textographic adventure (ST, C64, Spectrum) (see Spectrum page only) inspired by the Philip Marlowe film Followed My Lovely and featuring graphics taken from the film.

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IN THE PINK

THE ACE DIARY100

Every month, we give you the dates you need to know for the coming weeks. Watch out this time for Martin Luther Game day on the 15th January and – a bit more interesting – *Dungeon Master* on the PC! Don't forget: if you've got something to shout about, let the Diary Editor know at the usual ACE address (see page 4).

ACE DEALS101

Somewhere, there's someone offering a special offer. Each month ACE tracks down the dealers who've got something to give away – and there just might be one round the corner from you. Check the ACE DEALS page to find out...

GAMES YOU HAVE TO HAVE102

A shorter section this month due to lack of space, but we've still managed to include full details and mini-reviews of arcade style games, adventures, puzzles, and 'specials'. These are the titles you just can't afford to miss.

ACE UPGRADE VOUCHERS113

This month, due to the demand from the last issue, we're extending our £20 upgrade offer,

and also including increased discounts on memory upgrades and external disk drives for 16-bit owners. We'll also be expanding the voucher system in the near future, so stand by for yet more bargains in 1990.

FICTIONARY COMPO114

Stuck for something to do on the cold, wet afternoons? What better than a game of the hugely popular Fictionary. We've got five Fictionary board games to give away to five lucky readers... all you have to do is answer some ridiculously easy questions and pop the entry form in the post. Just to keep us up to date with our readers, there are also some survey questions on the form: fill them in and you could qualify for an extra mystery software prize.

THE ACE CROSSWORD118

Back after a long absence, the infamous ACE crossword returns for another stint of regular appearances...and with the right grid!

FORTHCOMING ATTRACTIONS120

We have news for you: ACE is going places in 1990, and we want you to come too.

ACE DIARY

IMPORTANT DATES AND GAME RELEASES IN JANUARY/FEBRUARY 1990

JANUARY

**Sunday 14th -
Saturday 20th**

WEEK'S RELEASES AT A GLANCE

Belongs Home: Demco's Sims III for mac.

Another adventure with Eggenbrink scenario and big bold graphics.

Masterwork: Hunter killer duel format

Masterwork: Conflict II
50 format

Patrol: Barbarian RPG One of the more-played of the fantasy RPGs, more famous for its cover picture than the game itself.

CBM: Caliban Chess II
PC Highly rated chess program.

Grandfather: Peter Beard
July 19-84, vol. 8000
The another big name calendar set.

Frontier: Amstrad/XT,
Amiga

Magnum: Crusader
BT, Amiga, PC
Test and graphics software with mystical atmosphere.

Sunday 14
Last day of the World Computer Fair, being held on January 12-14, at the Royal Victoria's Hall, London SW8. Demco and Sanyo for ST and Amiga systems.

IMPORTANT DATES

Monday 21
Barclay Luffler King Day, 1000
11.00th anniversary of the telephone directory - the first one was published by the London area, and had a grand total of 295 names and numbers.

Tuesday 15
70th anniversary of US prohibition; the law which began 13 years in which the sale of alcohol liquor was banned throughout the country. The first was a three-year trial period, which made some countries extremely powerful and wealthy. The strict investigation of illegal liquor sales in Chicago exposed the film, The Untouchables and its computer game derivative.

Friday 19
First day of St Canada the Fourth, an 11th-century Devon long, clearly remembered for its attempted invasion of Scotland in 1070 and again in 1085.

**Sunday 21st -
Saturday 27th**

WEEK'S RELEASES AT A GLANCE

Demco: Colonial (all formats)
Futuristic American foot ball played with giant robots. A foreign science conversion.

Konrad: Meltdown (24-bit format)
Mike Singleton's interactive strategy/tutorial game, produced in last month's

ACE

Random Arts: I Ching Ltd
format

Galactic: Gunguiser Guard
Amiga

Magnum: Crusader BT, Amiga
It's been a long, long time coming, but the signs are that the follow-up to Magnum and Barbarian might just be worth the wait.

Magnum: Origin
Masterwork CIB
Market into, look and draw your way to wisdom and spiritual awakening.

Elite: Commander Amiga
Complex conversion and 2,500th racing game to appear on the Amiga.

IMPORTANT DATES

Sunday 21
50th birthday of golfer Jack Nicklaus

Tuesday 23
MacWorld/Expo opens at the Suncoast Convention Center, Arlington, London W4.

Thursday 25
Burns Night - invite your friends round for haggis and poetry reading.

Friday 26
National Day Australia
Republic Day, India

**Sunday 28th -
Saturday 2nd**

WEEK'S RELEASES AT A GLANCE

Electronic Arts: Central
Warrior CIB

Electronic Arts: Power

Games PC

Electronic Arts:
Boulder PC
Highly rated martial arts game.

Magnum: Crus and
Butler PC
Chris Crusader follow-up to Balance of Power, set in positions and dealing with economic rather than military conflicts.

Image Works: Duke
Warrior Amiga, BT, PC

Microsoft: Gunguiser
Master PC
Risk-playing game excellent for authenticity and graphic capabilities.

Microsoft: Harpoon (PC)
1987 is Harpoon Part II (ship game). If there is a Harpoon Part by the time this is released, that is.

Microsoft: Interphase
PC

Microsoft: Rollback PC
Visual software set in World War I. "Makes progress of WWI graphics", according to the company.

Empire: Five Days (all formats)
Last month's game based diary focused on the six-day book public idea.

FEBRUARY

Saturday 3
First day of St Brigid who was probably supposed to have sailed to Cornwall from Ireland on a floating boat. She is said to have landed and settled on the spot where the town of St Ives now stands.

WEEK'S

RELEASES AT A GLANCE

Acadellan: The Cyclist
CIB
Motocycling from a first person viewpoint, with authentic kit and excellent film effects programmed in.

Belongs Home: Gun
Shooter CIB format
Honor year set in futuristic Cyberpunk.

Magnum: Crusader
BT, PC
More adventures with the plot of the future and the

past. Mission in Spain's 1544
format.

IMPORTANT DATES

Monday 4
Independence Day
Carnegie Day, St Lucia

Wednesday 6
History Day, New Zealand
70th birthday of Ronald
Reagan

Friday 8
Birthday of James Dean,
1930.
Crufts Dog show opens.

ACE DIARY FORM

Please indicate the enclosed details in the earliest possible ACE DIARY.
(Please make sure you send us your details as far in advance of the event as you can.)

COMPANY
ADDRESS:

PHONE:
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NATURE OF EVENT:

DETAILS ENCLOSED

FREE PUBLICITY!

For a chance to win free publicity for your event, please send us a short article (200-300 words) about your event. We will select the best articles to publish in ACE DIARY. The deadline for entries is 15th January 1990. For more information, please contact ACE DIARY at the address below.

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Alternatively write to the Editor of
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ACE DEALERS

Great Deals and Promotions for January/February 1990

There are great offers and competitions to be found at software stores all over the country in January. Many outlets will be having sales, so check up on your local store for some discounted bargains.

JANUARY SALES

The Software Superstore chain, for example, has been digging around in the wells to come up with such catalogue games as *Weekend Wars* and *Weekend Chess*. The Software Superstore chain is also doing the sale and also discounted titles such as *Running Man*, *Thunder Jack*, *Destination I* and *Medieval* at just £2.99.

Local managers up and down the country reduce your pockets are bulging with gift-wrappers and Christmas money, and

they're not dying for one to spend it all on their stores, so there are plenty of tempting features and special offers to lure you into the shop.

DRIVE-IN GIVEAWAYS

Look out for shops giving away model Formula 1F1s and Ferrari F100s with Acorn's products, either just with *Test Drive 2* (Software Superstore again), or with any Acorn title game like *Microbyte* (Microbyte chain) also has a limited selection of Ferraris mounted on a wheel perch.

Major Games Centres up and down the country will also be having a January sale, plus a special title for free promotion with *Hero's Quest* and *Leisure Suit Larry II* - details will be being featured in

ACE next to press.

at 50p each (plus a year pass). There's a pooling bag being given away with *Tales of the Arabian Nights* and computer titles to order when you buy *Chess IQ*. Great benefits for any Microbyte title. Prices include Walkmans, VCRs, and TV sets, both full-size and hand-held.

OCEANS OF PRIZES

Prizes in Newcastle and Nottingham should make their way to the Green Barbet and Broadmarsh Centres respectively on January 13, at the Newcastle branch of Microbyte's a special Open Day. Prizes for everyone who walks through the door. It starts for everyone who buys at Ocean game. Sony Walkmans for competition winners.

Microbyte in the Bristol market Centre, fitting from the glassware aren't associated with any one particular label, but anyone who visits the store will see a complimentary

in the December issue of ACE, we reported that Microbyte was opening at stores nationwide in Top Man outlets, called Toys for the Boys. Unfortunately Toys hasn't really worked out, and these are now being closed down. So, if it's computer games you're after, don't go looking in Top Man any more.

Finally, on the hardware side, if you got a new computer for Christmas, and your nearest Software Superstore will pick up one of their credits on your machine. It will tell you all about the software

and products you can buy for your particular format. There are outlets carrying the Spectrum, CPC, Commodore 64, ZX, Amiga and PC and they're available free of charge.

Software Superstore has outlets at Morley, Wakefield, Sheffield, Luton (outlets in Blackpool and the centre of St Peter's). There are Microbyte stores in the Avonlea Centre, Manchester, Gloucester, and the Broadmarsh Centre, Nottingham Kingsgate, Newcastle, the Micro Centre, Colchester, the Greenmarket, Newcastle upon Tyne; the Kingsgate Centre, Bristol; the Bull Ring Centre, Birmingham; and the County Arcade, Leeds.

Wiggle has to Games Centre outlets in London, Oxford Street or Marble

Arch, with the Major store, and also in 1000 and Bristol, and also in Major stores in Birmingham, Brighton, Dublin, Edinburgh, Glasgow, London St and Leggett St, Leeds, and Nottingham. One of these must be near you!

All offers and promotions are subject to availability of stock.

Although we do our best to ensure our dealer promotion information is accurate at the time of going to press, ACE cannot take any responsibility for changes or cancellations to dealers' plans.

Attention dealers! Don't keep your promotions, competitions, special offers, etc., a secret, tell us at ACE and we'll tell everybody else.

ACE DEALERS FORM

Dealers - don't keep our readers in the dark: you want to sell, they want to buy. It's the perfect relationship. Send details of your promotions and events to us, and we'll let everyone know about them. Just fill in the form and send it with your press pack to: ACE DEALERS PAGE, Priory Court, 30-32 Farrington Lane, LONDON EC1R 3AU

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DETAILS ENCLOSED

THE GAMES YOU HAVE TO HAVE...

SOMETIMES YOU KNOW YOU'VE GOT TO FACE UP TO THE TRUTH. YOUR SOFTWARE COLLECTION IS GETTING YOU DOWN, YOUR DOG'S SICK, YOUR FRIENDS ARE CONVINCED IT WAS YOU THAT LOST THE WINNING POOLS COUPON, YOUR MOTHER HAS DECIDED YOU NEED TO CHANGE YOUR IMAGE, AND YOUR GIRLFRIEND (OR BOYFRIEND) HAS JUST BEEN EATEN BY A ROTTWEILER...THERE'S ONLY ONE THING FOR IT...GO OUT AND GET A NEW GAME. AND TO MAKE SURE YOU REALLY SEE THE BRIGHT SIDE, HERE'S A LIST OF GAMES YOU'VE JUST GOT TO ADD TO YOUR COLLECTION.

ARCADE STYLE

Including coin-op conversions, Games with a high fan factor and plenty of addictive action feature in this category.

ARKANOID

Imaginix ■ Spectrum £7.95 ■ C64 £5.95 ■ £7.95 ■ Amstrad £8.95 ■ £4.95 ■ Atari 5.95, £8.95 ■ Atari ST £14.95 ■ MSX £8.95 ■ IBM PC £3.95

Conversion from

Arkanoid the coin-op, is 60 feet the best version of the classic, Breakout. Simple to control, the player controls a ball at the base of the screen, whacking it left and right. The object is to leave a small hole in play, forcing it off the ball to destroy formations of bricks in the top half of the screen. Elements at the bottom, and move up to the rest of 33 screens. Over 100 features coin-ops to the add-on items. As a faithful coin-op conversion, Arkanoid comes out top, but for a different view on the same theme and some wily music, by 80's impact, which also builds up the difficulty levels, more generally. **ACE CLASSIC**

BOUNDER

Grainix Graphics ■ Spectrum £7.95 ■ C64 £8.95 ■ £11.95 ■ Amstrad £8.95 ■ £12.95

A great arcade shooter, and very addictive too. This game is built as if Bouncer from one player form to another, high above the vertically scrolling landscape. Land on marked squares and you can stay a bit longer at gate's mystery bonus. Fill in a gap or hit one of the game's many enemies, however, and you'll lose it. Bouncer features sections at the end of each level that vary the pace, and those tough gaps really keep you coming back for more. Bright, wily graphics, great music - and it's so playable. **ACE CLASSIC**

RUBBLE BOMBABLE

Grainix ■ Spectrum £7.95 ■ C64 £8.95 ■ £11.95 ■ Amstrad £8.95 ■ £14.95 ■ Atari ST £13.95

Playability is the essence of the two-player coin-op conversion. You and a friend play (with differing directions), travelling through 200-screen and platform screens, fighting off the baddies by using rotating fans in your back-bite to turn them into jelly fish. More treacherous and various bonuses await as you reach the more difficult late screens. Economically good too, it's like on the C64 side. Can also be played in one-player against the computer. **ACE RATED 900**

CONQUEROR

Superior ■ Amstrad £13.95 (Amiga and ST versions under development)

Don't stand in your way on your first time the strategy in Conqueror and plan your strategy for the campaign. This is a little game to get to grips with, but if you persevere you'll find you soon become mesmerized by the thing. If you can't get a little better though - target it. **ACE RATED 901**

ELIMINATOR

Hexagon ■ Spectrum £7.95 ■ £12.95 ■ C64 £1.95 ■ £14.95 ■ Amstrad £2.95 ■ £11.95 ■ Atari ST £19.95 ■ Amiga £19.95

Gradually wonderful shooter (written up by Johnathan, which will lead you quickly inside out). It's more like your driving on the rolling. Though it's tough to get to grips with at first, the action level is to great you'll keep coming back to more. **ACE RATED 904**

EXOLON

Hexagon ■ Spectrum £7.95 ■ C64 £8.95 ■ £12.95 ■ Amstrad £8.95 ■ £14.95

Gradually superb non-casual looking shoot-'em-up in which you hit, duck and jump your way onto a planet's surface (being sure of other enemies, it got and a missile launcher into orbit to blast the base, but if things are still too tough then you can grab an escape pod. **ACE CLASSIC**

NEW ZEALAND STORY

Science ■ Spectrum £8.95 ■ C64 £9.95 ■ Amstrad £8.95 ■ ST £13.95, Amiga £21.95

Although popular at the time in a head to head with Rainbow Islands, New Zealand Story is not a game to be ruled out. It is impressive for its time, provides lots of variety as it advances across many levels. Don't shy at not thinking out. **ACE RATED 905**

ODDS

Microsoft ■ Atari ST £13.95

A magnificent Thrustor stand. The Odds are riding on you to save them, but the bonuses aren't going to let them go without. Working missiles, robots 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 906**

PITSTOP 2

EyeOn Ltd ■ Available only on Apple II computers. £10.95 ■ C64 £9.95, £11.95 ■ IBM PC £19.95

In compilation with other Games and Summer Games 2. Ticking racing game where the screen is split into two and you can race the computer or a friend. Lots of different to do. Plus credits, fan stories and of course the all-important pitstop penalties to give you hand-camp and your own a real racing thrill. **ACE CLASSIC**

POWER-DRÖME

Electronic Arts ■ Atari ST £24.95

This superb arcade-style futuristic driving simulation will have you exhilarated for months to come. It may not be best by any means to get straight into it, it's well worth persevering with. Not to playing this for months. **ACE RATED 907**

PURPLE SATURN DAY

Science ■ Atari ST £18.95 ■ Amiga £28.95

A terrific mix of games that delivers punch both inside and out. The one slightly great gameplay ensures small enjoy playing each sub-game time and again. It's a 100% sticky to get the hang of, but master it and you'll be pleased you've invested. **ACE RATED 908**

RAINBOW ISLANDS

Electronic ■ Spectrum £9.95 ■ £14.95 ■ C64 £9.95 ■ £14.95 ■ Amstrad £9.95 ■ £14.95, ST £24.95, Amiga £29.95

The reason to include this is nothing about the basic. The graphics and sound are superb, as is the gameplay. One of the best level-based arcade games

sons of the year that should not be missed.
AGE RATED 10+

BYP

Microsoft, \$129.95, Mega 129.95

BYP offers a near endless supply of land-based take-aways as you race your friends BYP. Attention to detail is paid out all along the route with your ride going the like a good car after a crash. An excellent mix of arcade and simulation.
AGE RATED 10+

SPIDERTRON-IC

De International, \$149 \$129.95

Take your spider-like character around the game area, collecting related points in the correct order. The bubble construction can make you feel something as you tear through the maze game board.
AGE RATED 10+

SUMMER GAMES

Apple/MS, \$69 \$59.95 to \$14.95 \$69.95
 \$69.95, \$29.95

Five sporting simulations are of high quality but have been quite updated for playability and style of the original Summer Games and its immediate successor, Summer Games 2. One for you play on can take part in high jump, gymnastics, spring land diving, clay pigeon shooting, swimming, polo with, and others - with fairly large graphics and smooth animation throughout. Control of one athlete can be complex to practice a record.
AGE CLASSIC

SUPER SPRINT

Spinnaker Software, \$34 \$29.95 to \$14.95
 Amstrad \$29.95 Spectrum \$29.95 \$14.95

One of the better outdoor simulation games available. With up to three players all competing at once, the action is fast and furious and will take

a fairly long time to complete some of the more furious events that appear later in the game.
AGE RATED 10+

THRUST

Frontier, Spectrum \$2.95 \$1.95 to \$1.95
 Amstrad \$1.95

Thrillingly involving controls and a large selection of realistic physics make the budget title an absolute must. Flying down through the canopy of an alien planet, you have to pierce up fast and destroy hostile gun turrets without crashing into the forest walls. Tough enough at 810, but then you've got to make the exhilarating with a heavy load being under your control. Very nice, very addictive.
AGE CLASSIC

URIDIUM

Hudson, Spectrum \$2.95 \$1.95 to \$1.95
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The game is reminiscent of wandering through a maze that the straightforward and exciting shape while dodging around any large structures. Great metallic-looking backgrounds and the smoothest scrolling you'll ever see put this fast and shoulder-busting the location. It game not to be missed, particularly nice for C64 versions. Come packaged with the excellent manual.
AGE CLASSIC

ZARCH / VIRUS

Supernova Software, Amstrad \$19.95 \$19.95
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A solid three-dimensional shoot-em-up with both graphics perfection and liberally addition game play that it becomes an instant classic. Now the 1000 versions have arrived and they're just as good as the 32-bit versions.
AGE RATED 10+

ADVENTURES

After a brief surge of RPG-related popularity, the traditional text-only adventure is rapidly disappearing. But for those of you who savour the powers of the imagination, the verbal twist, and the thrill of encountering other characters, this genre still has much to recommend it. Here are some of the all-time great computer fantasies...

BEYOND ZORK

Hudson/Activision, C64 \$2.95 \$1.95 to \$1.95
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Activision's attempt to make use of the technology started in a great success. Unlike the Museum of Madness, Beyond Zork is a game that contains 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 excellent mapping facility.
AGE RATED 10+

CORRUPTION

Baron, Amstrad \$1 \$14.95 \$14.95
 \$14.95 \$14.95 to \$14.95
 \$14.95 \$14.95 to \$14.95

The tale of murder, betrayal, robbery and crossed interests, death is unlikely to appeal to adventures who prefer to wander through wet sludge and danger networks reading treasure. But for those who are fed up with traditional adventure being it's like a breath of fresh air. Superb graphics, great atmosphere and a handling system makes this a family game that goes from the 1987.
AGE RATED 10+

FISH

Magnum, Spectrum \$1 \$24.95 \$24.95
 \$24.95 \$24.95

More graphics than Corrupt, better game design than Zork, and 80% as quick as The Pass. This is definitely

one of the best releases since the dawn of Times. Good text content.
AGE RATED 10+

GUILD OF THIEVES

Frontier, C64 \$2.95 \$1.95
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 Amstrad \$2.95 \$1.95 to \$1.95
 \$2.95 \$1.95 to \$1.95

One of Britain's best adventure software houses - Magnum's Guild of Thieves - manages to produce a traditional treasure hunt with superb graphics and some very tricky puzzles. Frontiersman helps to create a convincing game world with humor and imagination.
AGE CLASSIC

INGRID'S BACK

Overline, Amstrad \$1 \$19.95

A great follow-up to Stone Dagger. Level 3 has really got to go with the use of 32-bit versions in their games and to program their very effective.
AGE RATED 10+

JEWELS OF DARKNESS

Frontier, C64 \$2.95 \$1.95
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Level 3 have put together three of their classic releases, Jewel of Darkness, Dungeon Adventure and Adventure Quest a

new bundle. The games have been updated with graphics and large modulators and are as close to the original spirit of adventuring as you can get to find.
AGE CLASSIC

LURKING MONKOR

Hotcom/Magnum, \$1 \$24.95 \$24.95
 \$24.95 \$24.95 to \$24.95
 \$24.95 \$24.95

Hotcom's tribute to R.F. Lester and the former Fantasy game sends you into a well worn as you discover something very much looking towards your college laboratory. Superb text-only game that offers you a very different experience.
AGE CLASSIC

TIME AND MAGIK

Frontier, Spectrum \$24.95 \$24.95 to \$24.95
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Amstrad \$24.95 \$24.95
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This compilation of the latest 3 games, Lord of Time, The Moor and The Price Of Magic have been reworked with better control, better visuals, better text and content. So very good. So very good. So very good. So very good. So very good.
AGE RATED 10+

ZORK ZERO

Frontier Software, Amstrad \$24.95 \$24.95 to \$24.95
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PUZZLES

If you're after a game that will give you with a real challenge, without necessarily requiring large doses of strategic thinking, then it's a puzzle game you want.

BONE-CRUNCHER

Spinnaker Software, C64 \$2.95 \$1.95 to \$1.95
 \$2.95 \$1.95 to \$1.95

As first sight the most release may appear to be nothing more than a good looking rip-off. However there are a number of innovative graphics features which give Bonecruncher a head of its own. Highly recommended for those who prefer to solve problems rather than shoot them.
AGE RATED 10+

BOULDERDASH

Frontier Software, Spectrum \$1 \$19.95 \$19.95
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A game that has everything - instant addiction, long-term challenge, in-

stant excitement as the clock ticks down and extremely tricky puzzles. The multi-colored graphics, hidden a camera, digging away walls and boulders to get far from. Boulders can drop and cause you some damage, while the walls are often hidden by seemingly impenetrable walls. Complex but great fun. Boulderdash is a classic you can't afford to miss - do budget boards.
AGE CLASSIC

DEFLIXION

Quartz/Hotcom, C64 \$2.95 \$1.95 to \$1.95
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Only you are the order of the day here but the spirit is captured as the player tries to control a laser beam to a mirror and at the same time display a

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number of sets that are on screen at any time. You'll need to make full use of the camera, filter sets, combs and panning and refracting blocks if you're to achieve your aim. Clear the first screen and you'll only have 50 more to go. Fascinating stuff that's a little addictive.

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Slide page to the top of eight rows using the top of platforms, the and bigger than from the world. It's a highly original game that allows a fine balance between frustration and addition, added to which is the silky smooth flow making it a guaranteed playable winner of a game.

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SENTINEL

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• **AGE RATED 990 - BT**

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The winning combination of strategy, focused shooting and great graphics make Space a game you'll fall in love with - what a simple formula to abide to! Ask for £1.95.

• **AGE RATED 990 - C&A**

TETRIS

Macintosh • Spectrum £8.95 (sh) • C&A £12.95 (sh)
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A fascinating geometrical ability, the Russian puzzle game turns the obscure mathematical logic of packing into a full game. Day by day, shapes fall downwards into a rectangle playing into left-to-right. New rules make them stop and stack. Then lightly so that doesn't happen, but level increases have been provided for a rather can't be in their grade aspects, but the brilliant simple rule based them means they'll still work if you take whatever your machine.

• **AGE RATED 900 - C&A**

THINK!

Macintosh • C&A £1.95 (sh) • Amiga £1.95 (sh) • Spectrum £1.95 (sh)

Originally introduced by this length of full price, but now available for a fractional that from Funsoft. It's a family address game played on a 160x160-dot color one or two player - in which you attempt to control five counters, horizontally, vertically or diagonally.

• **AGE CLASSIC**

XOR

Macintosh • BBC £9.95
£12.95 (incl. VAT)
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£12.95 (incl. VAT)

Extremely quick and game involving the player controlling two chess,

and coloring marks through 15 moves, which increase in complexity as you progress. Also in later stages, fast and choices to be made, often locking the most and not being useful to you and being

your quest to a premium end. Later still, things get up as bombs, transmitters and bits counter against you. Smooth scoring, simple graphics, this one requires playing to complete successfully.

SPECIALS

Original works that are simply unclassifiable feature in this section.

ATF

Digital Integration • C&A £8.95 (sh) • Amiga £12.95 (sh) • Amiga £12.95 (sh) • Amiga £12.95 (sh) • Amiga £12.95 (sh)

Excellent combat, light simulator that is a lot of a change for Digital Integration, the simulation aspect of it. The simulation is an excellent, the result being a sure hit.

• **AGE RATED 900 - S&M/MSA**

DARK SIDE

Macintosh • C&A £9.95
£14.95 (incl. VAT)
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£14.95 (incl. VAT)

The second game using the FreeSpace program using modes, which sets more of an arcade style game. The 3-D graphics are again superb as are the levels and puzzles.

• **AGE RATED 910 - AMIRAD**

ELITE

Macintosh • C&A £14.95
£17.95 (incl. VAT)
£14.95 (sh) • Amiga £14.95
£17.95 (incl. VAT)

Set for the last space trading game, Elite set a standard for other companies to follow. One of the first space games to use vector graphics, it's a shooting and trading effort to access several galaxies.

With plenty of variety to the game play, the can trade legal goods (initially) via space systems, or run the gamut of trades in the galaxy's danger zone with your fair bit of combat. Other way there's

a nice low in speed/lighting, and is big a look as you find yourselves.

• **AGE CLASSIC**

INCREDIBLE SHRINKING SPHERE

Electronic Dreams • C&A £8.95 (sh) • Amiga £14.95 (sh) • Amiga £14.95 (sh) • Amiga £14.95 (sh) • Amiga £14.95 (sh)

A more maze world where mops, mops and mops combine to provide wicked gaming. Trick puzzles and mops and mops and mops will have you rolling around in delight.

• **AGE RATED 900 - C&A**

M1 TANK PLATOON

Macintosh • PC £19.95

This is a fantastic tank game that features fully featured tanks even the most can public relation being, and at the same time has a breadth of challenge and combat scenarios that should satisfy the most ardent gamers. A must!

• **AGE RATED 900**

MAGNETRON

Macintosh • C&A £8.95
£12.95 (incl. VAT)
£8.95 (sh) • Spectrum £8.95 (sh) • Spectrum £8.95 (sh)

Fun and action Blast from the past! Set for the world by shooting eight worlds. Real parts from many direct-to-video your own direct-to-video fully make you go a little more. The best game for Quasar fans looking for

a minor, new challenge.

• **AGE RATED 900 - SPECTRUM**

GADEX

Macintosh • C&A £8.95
£14.95 (incl. VAT)

In this impressive challenging game you must shoot a missile, but through ten different levels of mazes, obstacles and obstacles, all with a set time limit. The simple game concept has a host of sub-tasks to make particularly shooting you can cause time to the next screen, for example, and tickle the different screens or players in any order you wish. Excellent graphics and steady shooting play.

• **AGE RATED 914 - C&A**

SPINZZY

Electronic Dreams • C&A £9.95 (sh) • Amiga £14.95 (sh) • Amiga £14.95 (sh) • Amiga £14.95 (sh) • Amiga £14.95 (sh)

Spinzzzy stuff, this spin spinning too fast tough opponent and cut back levels, against a beautiful time limit. The game language is a real system of valuable, ramps, levels and fun puzzles surrounded by letters, stars, and full sets to rally. Floor switches activate lifts and bridge traps, but stepping from the right side can be harder than it looks. A few hot guys and a lot of nice touches, but the excitement is being.

• **AGE CLASSIC**

STARGLIDER III

Macintosh • Amiga £14.95
£19.95 (incl. VAT)
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One of the first examples of a game using vector graphics to give full depth, get the best 3D treatment and includes full tracking every bit a winner. You've got a large bank to complete and there's plenty of space to drop, making this combination of shooting and exploration that stands head above the competition.

• **AGE RATED 900 - BT**

STAR TREK V

Macintosh • PC £14.95

• **AGE 114-950**

This is easily the best interpretation of Star Trek yet. The gameplay provides absorbing and that longer hours of fun. A must for Trekkers and an entertaining space strategy simulator for everyone else.

• **AGE RATED 900**

TAU CETS ACADEMY

C&A • C&A £9.95
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Eight simulations/levels in up and its appeal which are both incredibly smooth and well out together. The attention to detail is impressive, even as you get off on your learning mission, as a great choice. It's Academy you get to design your own space-station and so on.

• **AGE CLASSIC**

TOTAL ECLIPSE

Macintosh • C&A £9.95
£12.95 (incl. VAT)
£9.95 (sh) • Amiga £9.95
£14.95 (incl. VAT)

The first game using the FreeSpace system is a bit of a departure from the first two, but it's still an incredible game. It's total eclipse you're testing against time back in the 1950s to bring to present the moon exploding. For ardent astronomers who love puzzles, the FreeSpace system is a gem.

• **AGE RATED 900 - AMIGA**

WIZBALL

Macintosh • C&A £9.95
£14.95 (incl. VAT)
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£14.95 (incl. VAT)

Became Wizball and conquer the 'crazy' world where you can control your own ship, making this combination of shooting and exploration that stands head above the competition.

• **AGE RATED 900 - BT**

• **AGE 114-950**

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We had a great response last month to the ACE Upgrade offer, so we've decided to extend it and offer some even better deals. Not only that, but we're planning a regular voucher saving system in the Pink Pages which we hope to be able to kick off next month, so keep your fingers crossed!

WHAT'S ON OFFER

This month we once again have savings of £20 on both Amiga's and ST's. Not only that, but to tie the cake Shekhana will give you a free mouse mat (worth £5) to go with the machine. This means that the Amiga Outpack, which normally retails at Shekhana at £399.99 (inc. VAT) will now set you back only £379.99! For the same price, you can go for the ST Powerpack if you prefer.

If you're already in the 16-bit club, you can invest in a very useful second drive for either the ST or the Amiga, and here we've been able to further reduce the price, so that your voucher will now get you £25.00 off the normal Shekhana price of £95.95 for the drives. Amiga owners should note that the unit is a quality PICO job, complete with drive port and in/volt switch; the ST drive is also top quality, though the make may vary depending on the supplier in stock at the time of your order.

Alternatively, Amiga owners get another option: a 0.5Mbyte memory upgrade, again at a saving of £25 off the usual Shekhana price. This will set you back £74.99, or - if you want the added bonus of a built-in clock - £94.99.

Use Voucher Number One for redemption against either an ST or Amiga, and Voucher Number Two for the other option.

VOUCHER NUMBER ONE

This voucher entitles the bearer to £20 off either an ST or Amiga when purchased from Shekhana Computer Services.

Only one voucher per household. Offer expires February 28th 1990.

The voucher may be redeemed in person at:

2 gloucesters House,
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Wood Green,
London N22 (opposite Top Rank club)
Tel: 01-488 9412

or by mailorder from:

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855 Green Lane
London
N8 0DP
Tel: 01-240 8565 or 01-240 2907

VOUCHER NUMBER TWO

This voucher entitles the bearer to any ONE of the following @discounts:

- a second disk drive for Amiga or ST for £74.99 (usual price £100)
- a 0.5Mbyte Amiga RAM upgrade for £74.99 or £94.99 (with clock) (usual price £100/£110)

Only one voucher per household. Offer expires February 28th 1990.

The voucher may be redeemed in person at:

2 gloucesters House,
High Road,
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London N22 (opposite Top Rank club)
Tel: 01-488 9412

or by mailorder from:

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PICTURE THIS!

A UNIQUE CHANCE TO WIN FIVE COPIES OF THE ORIGINAL FICTIONARY BOARD GAME, COURTESY OF DOMARK, AS WELL AS SOME MYSTERY GAMES, IF YOU TAKE FIVE MINUTES OUT TO ANSWER A COUPLE OF EASY QUESTIONS...

Pictionary is the latest fast-paced game in the best form of Total Pursuit. The idea is that every player is given an object, animal, or person to portray. They then have a limited amount of time to draw a sketch which conveys this object. The other players must try to guess the object from the sketch that is drawn. The game is great fun, especially when the whole family or a group of friends are playing.

You may still remember that Domark managed to capture the atmosphere and fun of Total Pursuit in their superb computer version of the same game.

Now they have done it again with Pictionary. The game is available on all formats and is just as fun

as Total Pursuit real. As an added extra, in the computer version, you can opt to have the computer do the drawings for you - very useful if you are playing on your own.

To celebrate the successful release of the computer version of Pictionary, Domark have kind to give us five copies of the original Pictionary Board game to give away.

Well, when I say give away, you'll have to do a little thinking first. Read the rules opposite and then fill in your form and send it in to us at ACE if your entry is one of the first five correct ones out of the national but there's a copy of the game will be waiting to go to the post!

THE RULES

Take a good look at the three sketches opposite. Each one represents a famous computer-related name. All you have to do is work out what the three names are, think? Oh, here are some clues:

- The good read is best of the pack!
- A link for fast guys who DO get right when it comes to games.
- The could show the way to the biggest and best name in computer publications.

That should make it very simple how you'd expect - get those forms in!



QUESTION TIME!

Answer a couple of quick questions and you could receive a mystery gift from the ACE team... Hurry, HURRY! (H I S S S!)

We are always interested to know exactly what you, the readers, like. After all, that way we can tailor the magazine's content to suit your particular tastes and interests. For that reason, we are taking the opportunity to include two simple questions with your Contact Competition Entry Form. Oh yes, what is it for that Mail Order reader. If you complete the two questions your entry form will be entered into draw for a mystery prize of software for your machine. We won't know what it is until you get it, but you can be sure that it will be something that the ACE team were impressed with. What better recommendation do you want?

To Pictionary Compo, ACE magazine, Priory Court, 30-32 Farringdon Lane, LONDON, EC1R 3AU.

Name:

MINI QUESTIONNAIRE

Address:

Postcode:

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1. Which of the following magazines do you read? Regularly	Occasionally	Never
and	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
The One	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
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2. How do you like the features in Dommag?	Good	Excellent
ACE (p.17-20)	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
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and (p.65-68)	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
and (p.69-72)	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
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and (p.77-80)	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
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and (p.85-88)	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
and (p.89-92)	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
and (p.93-96)	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
and (p.97-100)	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

ANSWER A:

ANSWER B:

ANSWER C:

Entries must reach us by 1st February 1988.

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PRIZE CROSSWORD

Set by Mips

NO, just when you thought it was safe to put your dictionary and back issues of ACE away, it's back — the formidable Great Crossword!

Because of lack of space, we left DING out of the Prize Puzzle in any month, but we hope the welcome return of the Crossword will take care of your frustration; address our letter!

Next month we will bring you all updates with our the results and complete results, so do keep clipping the forms and sending them in to us at ACE. Don't forget we are pleased to hear your

ideas for puzzles, words, and competitors in the pink pages. Just send your ideas to:

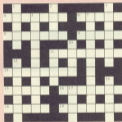
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ACE Magazines,
Priony Court,

30-32 Farringdon Lane,
LONDON
EC1R 3AA

Our first post to enter Crosswords and Puzzles are now referenced by month and year rather

than number as they were previously. The above word confusion is false; never, that's enough words — send your card this one out. Please list!

FEB. '86 PRIZE CROSSWORD By Mips



Name: _____

Address: _____

Phone: _____

Send your completed form to: Feb. '86 Prize Crossword, ACE Magazines, Priony Court, 30-32 Farringdon Lane, LONDON, EC1R 3AA, to arrive not later than 1st February 1986.

Across

4. Pester your student with computer service (7)
5. Confine to being mad about it (5)
6. First fan designed for a software house (7)
9. Swiss architect got out of game (5)
11. Arcade game to be at your disposal (3,5)
13. Chip Mona invented in a world leader (8)

25. I get began that's perfect (5)
26. Bookmaker's piece of hardware (7)

18. Is in the forefront in colored cables (5)

16. Action game in various dialect (7)

THE CLUES Down

1. Round trip by satellite (5)
2. Time-share agreement about network (4)
3. He is leading Spanish city to find game (7)
5. Chief astrologer's position in game from US Gold (4, 7)
7. Game GJ Jordan plays with Ann (5, 5)
10. Cosmic Demo's House in fancy Anglo-American setting (4)
11. One spotted briefly on the video screen (4)
12. Lute he'd played from Accolade (3,4)
14. Figure seen on screen representing software house (5)
17. Right to assist in attack (4)

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FORTHCOMING ATTRACTIONS

ACE is going places in 1990. Here's how, and why...

As a major consumer magazine, we have a duty to our readers and to the public at large to educate and inform. But as far as to gamers/players are concerned, we also have a duty to spread the word wherever possible about computer games in general. Here's how we're going to do it...

First, the ACE Conferences. These have already been mentioned a couple of times in the magazine, but here's the full story. Each month we will be arranging a conference between major software houses and ACE readers. Anyone can apply for a ticket - they're free to subscribers, other readers will have to submit a coupon taken from the magazine and pay a small nominal charge (probably around £5). Lunch and drinks are provided. The only bug in the scheme here is that places will be strictly limited so all tickets will be allocated on strictly a first-come first-served basis.

The ACE Conferences are designed to get you in closer touch with the people who produce the games - you can criticize, offer suggestions, praise, or simply tell us they tell you they do about their work. Contact our office between us all to vital for the future success of our industry.

However, we also need to communicate to the end user world. To this end, ACE is part of the EBMF (British End User Movement), working to increase the exposure of computer games on TV and Radio. Proposals are good and you'll be kept closely informed of the results of our efforts on the ACE pages.

Not only that, but ACE is also trying to set up a series of conferences with people from the film and music business, letting them all about computer games and suggesting ways in which the different industries can work together. Here at ACE we believe this to be particularly important since in a few years time compact disc games, films, and music will all be published on the same medium: compact disc. We need to start working together now to make sure that we make the best possible use of the opportunity. If you're interested in taking part and are involved in TV, film, or music, please get in touch with us at the editorial address on page 4 (contact Steve Carter).

Last, but not least, we've got some special treats in store for ACE readers in the pages of the magazine. As our efforts to promote the industry would be worth less if we don't also continue to increase the number of people who read the magazine, and the satisfaction of those who already do.

First, we're introducing new sections in the magazine designed to make ACE an even more essential purchase (so that possible) for anyone seriously inter-

ested in computer entertainment. The sections will include:

ACE REFERENCE

Two new sections in the Pink Pages every month: ACE MUSIC and ACE DATA/CD, supplemented by regular features in the main body of the magazine. The ACE MUSIC section will carry a complete featured guide to the compilation of MIDI. You DON'T have to be a music fiend to benefit from them: what they will do is give you a complete reference guide to MIDI, enabling you to make your own informed decision as to whether it's something you want to get involved with. We think you will.

NEW GAMES SECTIONS

We've already introduced new designs on the feature pages. From next month it's the turn of the Gameset section. ACE already has a reputation for innovative review techniques, including the famous PC course, and month end results blow your socks off with Lightning Analysis, a new way of assessing games that will ENSURE your money is well spent. Don't miss it!

Not content with that, we'll be also be introducing a new gaming section that takes you eight years beyond the normal field and has found in other magazines.

Next month's issue tells the details on February 18, Don't miss it!

READERS PAGES: HOW TO PLACE YOUR ENTRY

All you have to do is send off the form below, together with your payment; Entries to the Pink Pages cost just £4.00 each. (Except for Helpline, which is free).

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The BLITTER END

MICROS CAUSE SLEEPING SICKNESS!



Q uite of the month: I haven't spent two years of my life plugging my guts out, just to let the Japanese walk in here and flood the country with computers. This from Steve Franklin of Commodore fame, who promises that Commodore will be able to stop the Yellow Nintendo Park in its tracks if it should dare to mount an all-out offensive on the UK. He has, he says, a secret plan. All will be revealed, he threatens, during 1990.

ACE, however, is in a position to reveal exclusively the device in question. Commodore has come up with a software 'bugger' that sits on the back of any UK-produced machine and detects the high-frequency oscillations just sent by the Japanese MY-40 serial chip, much used by Nintendo. As soon as it picks up the frequency, it emits a modulated signal attached

to the brain frequency of the user, sending them instantly to sleep. The photograph above shows an early trial. The dongle is compact and on the left, with ribbon cables has detected..._coo..._the signals coming from NBT's SAM micro (at the right). The programmer (the Japanese) has collapsed miserably. Back to the drawing board, folks.

Talking of the NBT SAM, company PR supremo Bruce Davies has informed us that the old DI Monitor is now to be renamed the 88Format Computer Fan. It will be held at the New York Cultural Hall on February 10th, doors open 10.00am, and admission is £1.00. As machines, including, of course, the SAM, will be supported. Bruce tells us that this will be

your first time to see lots of things on SAM. A well-deserved error, to be sure.

We thought it was an impossible task, but good old Amiga Centre Scotland has managed to supply even last month's outstanding press release: 'Gibber... they tell us, "...is a software implementation of SBCD for the Amiga range of computers... At the DEC User Show, GIBBER was demonstrated on DEC Windows clients running on a VAX/3800, displaying an Amiga X server. Communication was established using an ethernet network.' Hmmm. Perhaps Commodore's secret weapon is not a dongle after all, but an Amiga Centre Scotland press release. Could it be that piece of paper under the disk in the photograph?

Jerry Hat, Deputy Advertising Manager, tells us that he recently gave birth to a loquacious baby daughter. She weighed seven pounds at arrival. Jerry's wife Cheryl was so surprised so he said: 'I never knew her had it in her,' she told us. 'Those of you who work on the magazine, however, are used to the sort of thing.' Steve Cooke goes forth at least twice every time we go to press.

88-008

NEXT MONTH...

Next month ACE brings you an armchair ticket to the greatest computer show on Earth: CES in Las Vegas. John Cook will be giving you the low down on all the latest American widgets. Check it out, or remain trapped in the '80's for ever!

We're also hoping to bring you exclusive coverage of a new CD-ROM entertainment computer, and an interview with Terry Pratchett (author of the Discworld books). Best of all, however, has got to be the new ACE sections (see page 126), including the revolutionary new Lightning Analysis: a whole new way of looking at games that takes the PIC concept originally developed by ACE right into the '90s. Get wise, get your copy, and get back to the future.

TRIALS AND TRIBULATIONS

Last month was actually a bumper issue for e-z-z-z-z. To start with, we printed two entry forms for the Blockbuster, and the second gave the deadline as January 7th 1990. So what? Well, this just happens to mean that the entries are due in AFTER the next issue has appeared in the shops, which means that predicting next month's top games and software houses' isn't going to be all that tricky, is it? You can just look them up! Well, we're such decent folks that we'll stick by our guns and enter ALL current entries in the prize draw. First one out takes the cake. Then there was the number for Amstrad in the ACE Quiz - this should read 8077 instead, and 8077 does indeed seem as precise. Apologies to all concerned.

And finally the sound testing for Chessnutlet II, which we called 'very impressive', should obviously NOT have been zero, but eight. Since this was the one bright spark in an otherwise gloomy review, it's doubly sad that we should have slipped up. The setting system defaults to zero and in the rush the correct value wasn't entered.

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Arthur returns! The fearless knight is back in this amazing sequel to Ghosts 'n' Goblins (rated among the top 10 games of 1985).

Three years have passed since the evil ones came to do their dirty work. Now they're back and they've captured Princess Mel, but our valiant knight Arthur is charging to the rescue against a formidable array of gruesome enemies and hairy beasts.



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