VOLUME 2 ISSUE 13 MAY 1989
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ST ACTION

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POLICE QUEST II, COSMIC PIRATE, F-16 & THE RUNNING MAN
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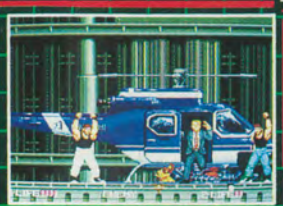

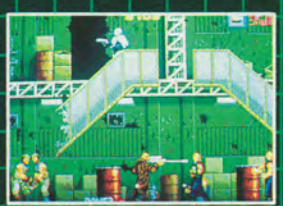

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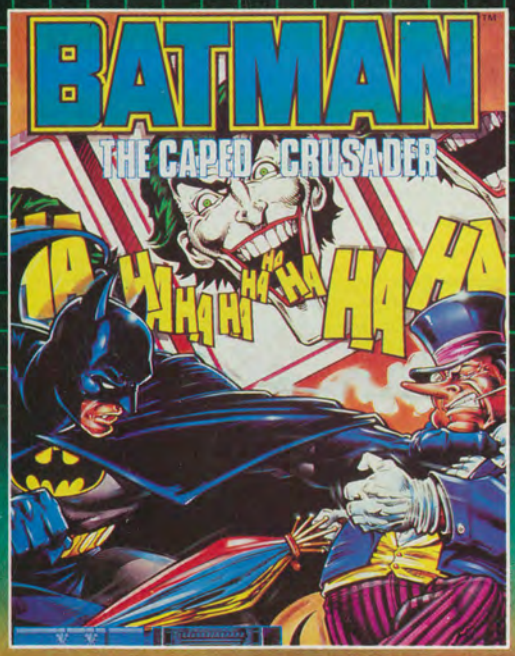

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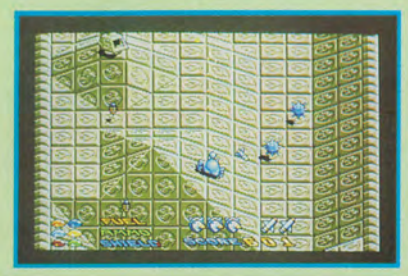
ACTION PACKED

INTERVIEW: LOGOTRON - p.66

Entertainment software development is a competitive business with many software houses vying for few lucrative arcade conversions and licences. Logotron, however, choose to pursue more original concepts - Jason Spiller went to find out why.



YAK'S YAK - p.88

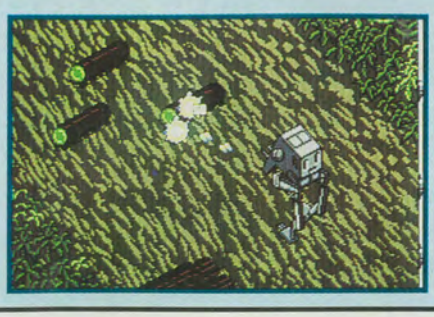
Software guru, Jeff Minter knows a good blast when he sees one. What, however, does the hairy one think of the ST scene? Yes, we've enlisted the aid of Llamasoft's founder, read his views in his new anything-goes back-page column.

MEGA POKES - p.76

The Basildon Bandit, Mark Lawrence, has yet again come up with the goods. This month sees pokes for Incentive's Driller, Hewson's Eliminator, Firebird's Flying Shark and Gremlin's Master Of The Universe.

GIVING THE GAME AWAY - p.72

Our very own boy-wonder, Steve Merrett, gets a break from making the tea and brings you the latest hints'n'tips. This month he presents a step-by-step guide to Barbarian II, everything you'd ever want to know about the Lombard RAC rally and a fine concoction of level skips and infinite lives cheats.



PROGRAMMER PROFILE - p.70

You've all heard of him, but what makes the guy tick? We talk to software programmer extrodinare Pete Johnson, the creator of such classics as Robocop, Arkanoid I & II and Wizball.

LETTERS DESK - p.12

Unfair, not true, scandal! The ST Action Letters Desk voices the opinion of you, our readers. What annoys you about computing? Write in an air you problems.

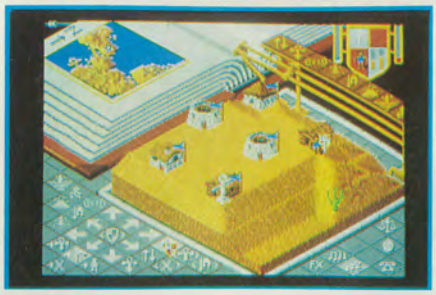
COMPETITION - p.78

The General Dynamics F-16 is a fearsome bird. To celebrate the launch of their F-16 Combat Pilot, Digital Integration are offering you the chance to win your own remote-control aeroplane. A lucky runner-up will also win two VIP tickets to the Biggin Hill airshow.

DUNGEON'S AND DISK DRIVES - p.82

Mitch, the Dragon and the Troll recently visited the Adventurers' awards ceremony. Whilst apologizing for the slimy ones' behavior Mitch reports on the winners. Meanwhile, back in his dungeon, the Troll wades through your latest pleas for help and announces the names of yet more humans who have achieved honoury satus.

REVIEWS! REVIEWS! REVIEWS!



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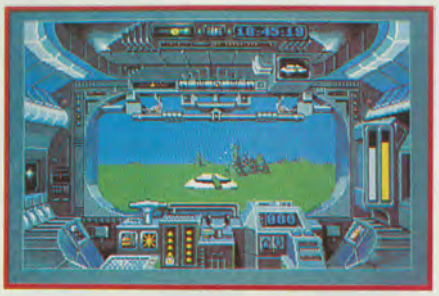

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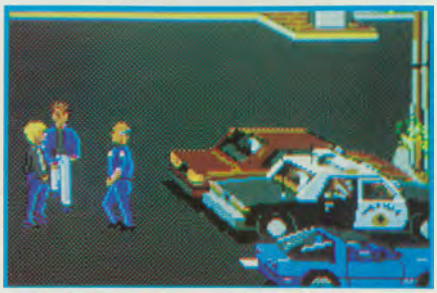

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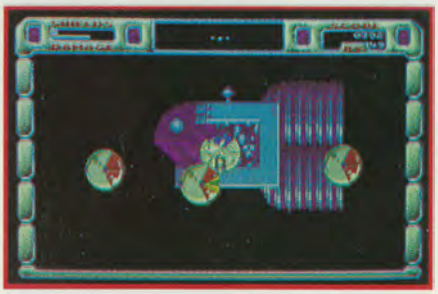

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WAR IN MIDDLE EARTH - p.62

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ACTION NEWS

Welcome to the first ST Action of volume 2. Firstly I would like to thank all of you who entered our birthday bonanza competition. The editorial staff are still wading through all the entry forms and because of the response I would appreciate your patience in the matter. Many of you have also tried ringing up the STA office for adventure help. I'm afraid that the Troll hasn't been taught any telephone manners, and as a result we cannot answer all your telephone queries.

This month sees a whole host of great games. Yes, there's something for everyone. Adventure players can hunt down the Death Angel in Police Quest II, Shoot'em-up fans will love to play Cosmic Pirate, the thinkers amongst you will go ape over Archipelagos, budding pilots will gasp in awe at F-16 and just about everybody will enjoy this month's highest rated game, Populous.

PSST, WANT TO KNOW A SECRET?

The Official Secrets' field kit. Yep, you get all this! (Official Secrets would like to point out that the lamp, telephone, hat and briefcase are not included.)

Listen very carefully, I will say this only once. Official Secrets has been formed to help any lost and lonely adventurers. For a modest registration fee, £19.95 per year, members will receive a myriad of exciting items:

An exclusive copy of Myth, a game written by the team responsible for classics such as, The Pawn, Guild of Thieves, Fish! and Corruption. Myth is set against a backdrop of Greek Mythology and has a most ingenious plot.

A copy of Level 9's award-winning Gnome Ranger (which, incidentally, received the Golden Chalice for being the best adventure of 1988).

A copy of Confidential, Official Secrets' own bi-monthly magazine. Packed full of news, views and inside information, Confidential is the main forum of the club and members are encouraged to write in with their own opinions.

The chance to enter the Official Secrets' competition, where members have the chance to win £500 worth of computer equipment of their choice.

Official Secrets also offer a phone helpline to which any bemused members can turn for help.

For those non-intellectual moments the price also includes full membership to Special Reserve, Official Secrets' sister company, from whom all the latest games information can be gleaned.

In addition to their regular features, Official Secrets also produce handy help-booklets. I've been sent a copy of their guide to FTL's Dungeon Master. For a meagre £1.50 Official Secrets are offering to divulge the Grey Lord's darkest secrets.

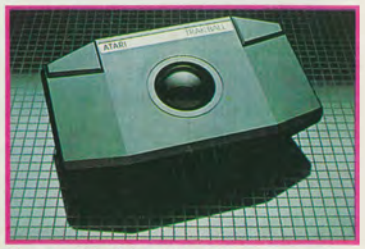
SPICED-UP MOTOR

Spice Engineering's C1-class car, can they beat the might of Jaguar?

Artronic have joined forces with the Racing World Championship winning sports car team, Spice Engineering. The Spice team have been racing C2-class cars for some years now; this year, however, they will enter the C1 arena and race against established names such as Jaguar and Porsche. Artronic's game will feature tracks such as Nurburgring and Le Mans and promises to be both technically and visually accurate.

MOUSE TRAP

Hard Edge communications have announced an alternative to the ST's mouse. The Atari Trak-Ball has been modified to act just like a normal rodent. Just think of it, no more mats or droppings! (That's dropping off the mat's edge when you run out of room.) What's more, the Trak-Ball is switchable between both mouse and joystick modes. Priced at £28.99 the Trak-Ball looks to be the answer to our prayers. Contact Hard Edge Communications on 0742 665719 for further details.

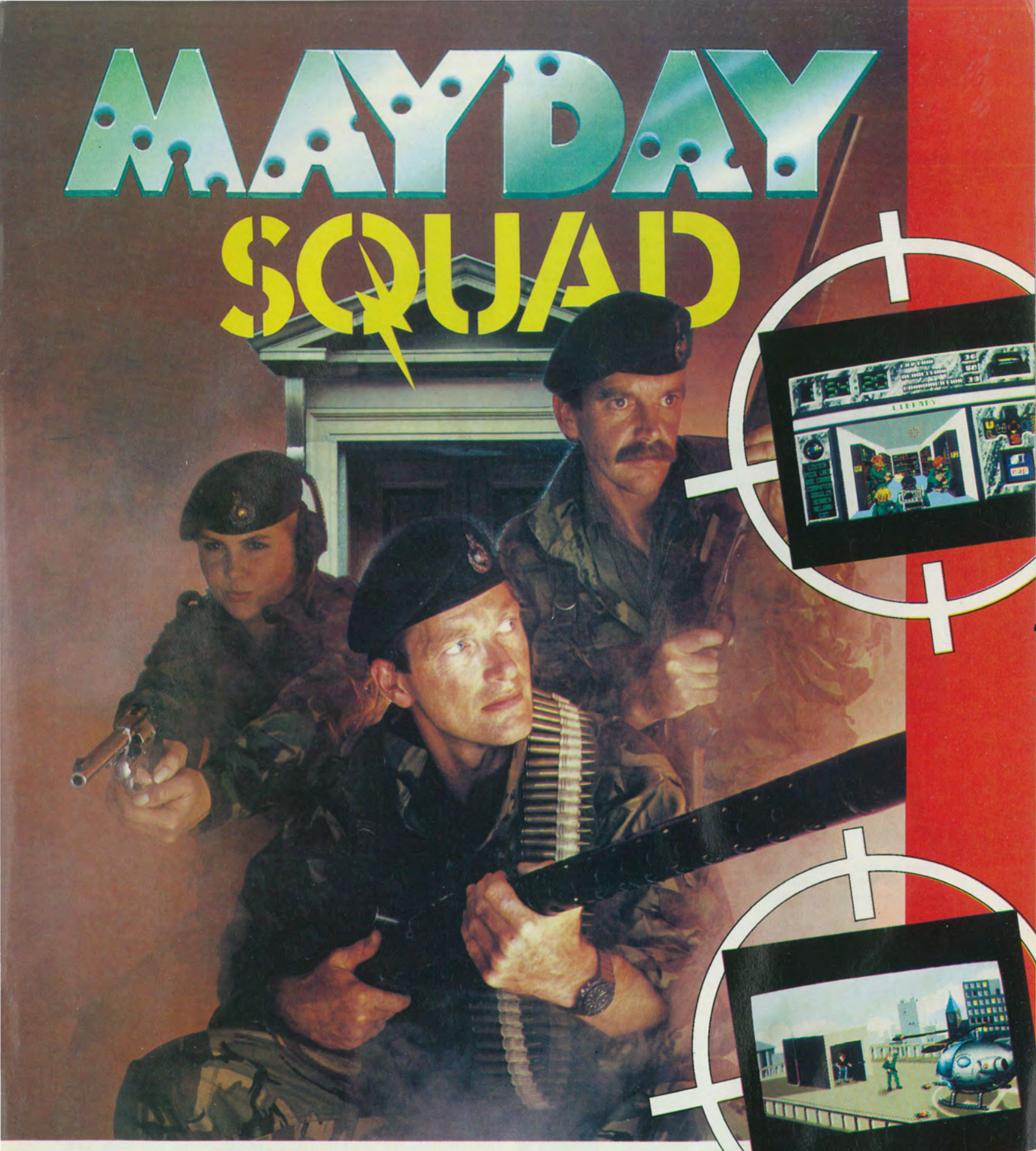


The modified Atari Trak-Ball - guaranteed dropping free!

CROSSWORDS

Akom Ltd, the company responsible for the challenging Times and Sun computer crosswords, have announced a new development. A new team facility has been incorporated into the games to allow a number of players to compete together. The new version will cost £19.95 for the Times version and £18.95 for the Sun version.

MAYDAY SQUAD



When the Diplomats stop talking, there's only one alternative - the **Mayday Squad**

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Modified 1st Person Perspective shows all the blazing combat action as the Mayday Squad battles the Red Legion in a life or death race against a sunset deadline.

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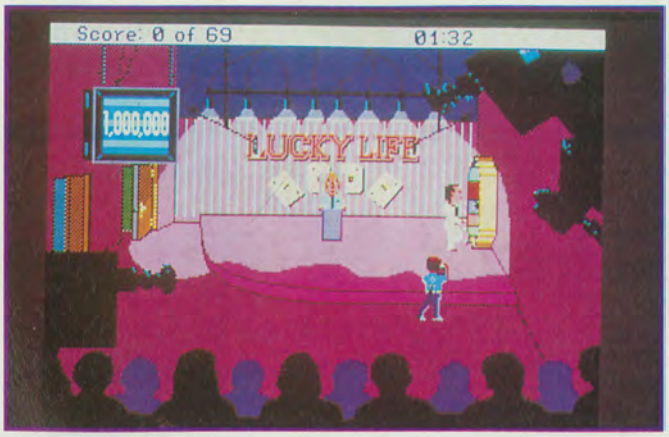
ON-LINE HELP!

Sierra are proving to be busy just lately. As a result, Activision, Sierra's UK distributors, have decided to set up a special phone helpline. So, if you can't find the bikini top in Leisure Suit Larry 2 or you're not sure how to deal with the infamous Jesse Bains in Police Quest, then try giving Activision a ring. Calls made before 2.00pm will be answered by a machine which play a recorded message telling players of the latest hints, tips and news. If you dial after 2.00pm and before 6.00pm Activision's very own Julie Barwick will try and answer your call. As well as Sierra games, Julie will also try and help with both Infocom and Micro-Illusions games. The number to call is 0734 310003. Meanwhile, back at the ranch, Sierra's Gold Rush has just ambled into the office. Can you travel from your comfortable homestead in Brooklyn to join your brother in California? Many perils stand in your way, but if you make it, untold riches will be yours. See next month's issue for a full review.

Hold the line please! It's Julie Barwick, Activision's customer support girl, in action.

Not having much luck with Leisure Suit Larry (or any other Sierra game)? Fear not, just dial 0734 310003 for instant relief.



Other news concerns the antics of Roger Wilco. Space Quest III (the Pirates of Pestulon) will beam down to planet earth sometime in May. Unfortunately, that will be it for a while as far as ST owners are concerned. But don't worry, the American kings of adventure are working on several new projects. Roberta Williams, responsible for the King's Quest series, is working on The Plantation Murders, a game set in the 1920's where you have to take refuge in an old plantation mansion. Can you solve the mystery of the murders that take place there?

Jim Walls, creator of the Police Quest series, is working on Code Name: Ice Man. The storyline surrounds the abduction of a US ambassador. Can you penetrate the enemy base undetected and get him out alive?

King Arthur is also making an appearance at Sierra. The game promises to include all the usual characters, such as Queen Gwenhyver, Sir Lancelot and even Merlin the wizard. Sierra are currently working on all of these games but I don't think we'll see anything of them until next year. Still, they've left us more than enough to be getting on with.

IT'S SNOT FUNNY

Gilbert the Alien ponders as to whether his first video game will be accompanied by his favourite theme tune - Colonel Bogey.

Yuck! A slimy green envelope flopped onto the ST Action doormat last week. Two days later someone dared to open it. Guess what? Inside was all the latest news about Again Again's latest star signing, Gilbert the alien. Yes, TV's very own star of Get Fresh and Gilbert's Fridge is about to snot onto your screen.

The game, called "Gilbert - Escape from Drill", concerns our phlegm-ridden hero's attempts to sign his superstar contract for another new TV series. The Drillians, however, have other ideas. The only way to stop Gilbert bragging about his new-found status would be to stop him from arriving at the Tyne Tees Television studios in time. In an attempt to halt his progress the scheming Drillians sabotaged the Millenium Dustbin and scattered various parts of it around the planet. Stepping into the tentacles of Gilbert, you must recover all of the missing pieces in time to blast off to planet Earth. Being a jolly sporting lot, however, the Drillians are prepared to give Gilbert a number of clues; that is if he can beat them at their favourite arcade games. So as well as having to find parts of the Dustbin, Gilbert will also have to try his hand at games such as Sprout Wars, Snotfight at the OK Corral and Earth Invaders. Can Gilbert reach Earth within 24 hours?

Gilbert - Escape from Drill, should be available any day now and will cost 1,594,264 Drillings or £19.95 in Earth money.

MUSIC MAESTRO

Rob Hubbard, the creator of such memorable tunes as Monty on the Run, Sanxion and Knucklebusters on the Commodore 64, left our shores to work at Electronic Arts in sunny California. Now, however, Electronic Arts are proud to announce that he's back. After all, a mega game must have mega sound, so Rob has been called up to produce the sound for Bullfrog's latest divine game, Populous (see the full review in this month's issue).

Electronic Arts themselves are rather busy just lately. Last month we saw the talented Bullfrog's incredibly addictive shoot'em-up, Fusion; this month it's Bullfrog's STA1 rated godly game, Populous; and next month all you Grand Prix fanatics are in for a real treat as Electronic Arts release Ferrari Formula One. Watch out for next month's review.

Also in the pipeline from Electronic Arts, next month should see major releases from French company UBI Soft, look out for Iron Lord next month!

TELECOMSOFT'S 3D POOL

"Maltese" Joe Barbara at the Angel Pool Club taking on and defeating all-comers "I didn't hesitate in putting my name to 3D Pool - it's so realistic".

Nick Pelling, programmer of 3D Pool, losing fair and square to Maltese Joe.

It has been an exciting month for Telecomsoft, in more ways than one, with the release of two major titles, 3D Pool and Weird Dreams.

A new pool game is not the most exciting news, and so Firebird set out to prove that 3D Pool was really something different. They invited representatives from selected journals to the launch at the Angel Pool Club in London. The game has been endorsed by the British and European pool champion, 'Maltese' Joe Barbera and I asked him if he had advised the programmers on the game: 'I became aware of the game late in its development and I couldn't believe how realistic the simulation was. I didn't hesitate in putting my name to the game.' Maltese Joe played a couple of frames with some hopeful journalists and beat them with ease... I lasted for a good three minutes!

I spoke to the ST programmer of 3D Pool, Nick Pelling: 'The table comprises 104 polygons and, using the mouse, you can view the table from any angle and at any distance. Believe it or not, the most difficult thing was to get the balls round and the pockets the right size and in perspective.' It has taken the team a year to complete the project and the result is the most realistic simulation. But they have also achieved the seemingly impossible in making a pool simulation graphically stunning: 'Until now, pool simulations have always been overhead views of the table, but this just did not give an accurate interpretation of the game. Being able to view 3D pool from any angle presents you with the problem of angle, distance and perspective which is the skill factor of the game.' But how did Pelling achieve this realistic and smooth scrolling movement around the table: 'The polygons were drawn in perspective and we used 3D projection routines and parametric abstract models to create the effect. 3D Pool should be available this month, priced £19.99.

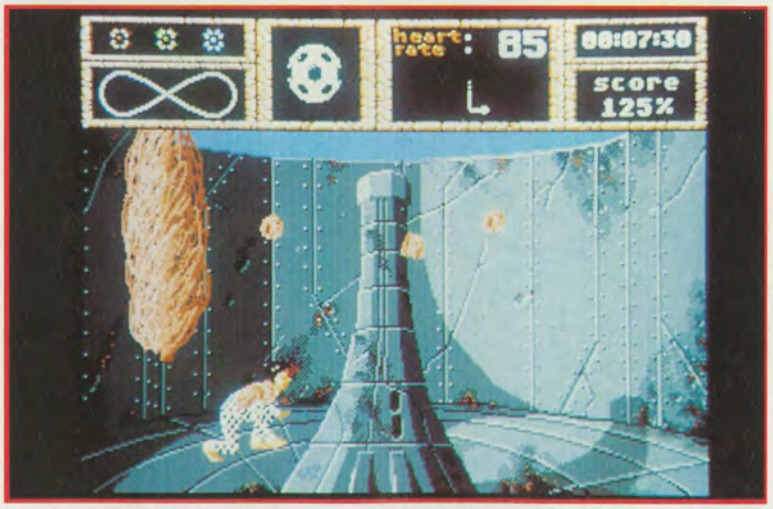
CABAL CONVERTED

Fans of horror genius, Clive Barker will already know that the film version of his book, Cabal, is being made into a film. Although the title has changed to Nightbreed, the film is reckoned to capture the gory and weird goings-on of a ghost town called Median; but what you may not know is that the film is also going to be converted to the ST, via Ocean. In case you are not familiar with the story, allow me to give you a brief description: It follows the journeys of a wrongly-persecuted guy called Boone, as he makes his way to a little village called Median. When he gets there, he is killed by the police and the actual killer, his Psychiatrist. However, before any tests can be run on Boone's corpse, it mysteriously vanishes, prompting his girlfriend to go looking for him. It is here that she meets Boone and the rest of his kin - the Nightbreed...

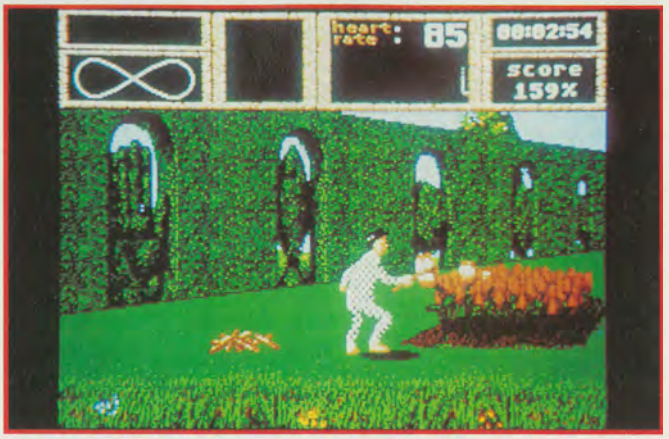
After such close conversions as Platoon and the forthcoming Robocop, Ocean assure us horror fans that the conversion will be a close one, featuring incredible graphical representations of the shape-shifting Nightbreed. Apparently, Clive himself is overseeing the writing of the game, so who knows the fate of the programmers if they get it wrong!

WONDERFULLY WIERD DREAMS

Weird Dreams has proved to be a real hit on the Saturday morning program, Motor Mouth, and on a recent visit to Rainbird I checked on the progress of the ST version. James Hutchby explained: 'The game is based on real dreams, if there is such a thing, and we had to take certain sexually suggestive elements out for Motor Mouth. The dream begins with you looking up from an operating table with surgeons and anesthetists crowding round. As the anesthetic takes effect, you drift into clouds and re-appear in a hall of mirrors. Each mirror takes you to a weird and crazy scene, such as the inside of a candy-floss machine, a garden with beds of killer tulips or a fairground where you are attacked by a giant wasp. 'Like real dreams, there are dozens of strange situations and none of them seem to be even remotely related: 'Weird Dreams is a collection of nightmares that myself and Herman can remember. Our phobias play a large part in the game.' Weird Dreams is scheduled for release within the next month.



A collection of man's greatest fears, phobias and nighmares in a weird adventure.



Attacked by man-eating tulips in the ornamental garden.

Top Ten Scoring Games This Month

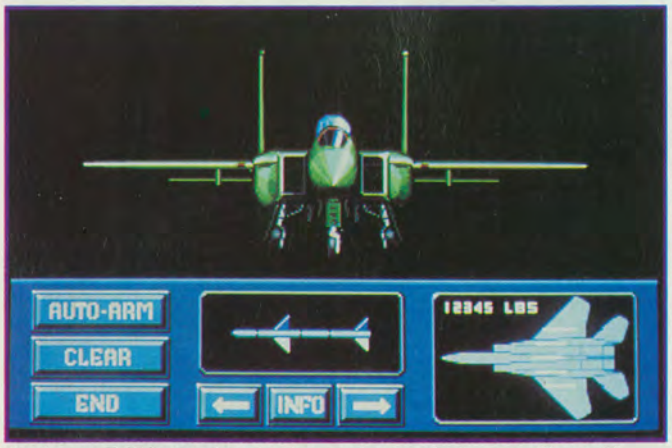
1.	Populous	89%
2.	Police Quest II	84%
3.	Pacland	81%
4.	Cosmic Pirate	80%
5.	F-16	79%
6.	Vindicators	75%
7.	Archipelago	71%
8.	Shardes Of Time	68%
=9.	Running Man	67%
=9.	War In Middle Earth	67%

Bombs Away

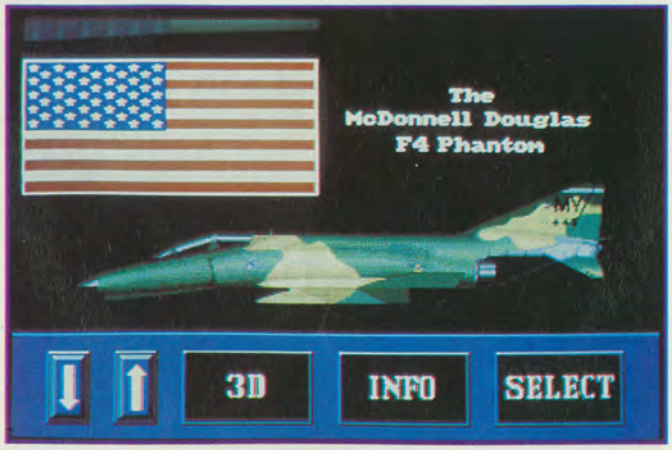
Vektor Grafix, the company responsible for Domark's Star Wars and Empire Strikes Back, have moved to Leeds. We, however, are proud to announce their first solo project, Bomber. The game features no less than four different aircraft: the Tornado (Britain's front-line strike plane); the F-4 Phantom; the F-111F Aardvark (the bomber used in the attack against Libya); and, uniquely, the Soviet's low-level attack plane, the MiG-27 Flogger D.

Unlike most other flight simulators, Bomber is angled more towards the interdictor/multi-role aeroplane. With Bomber more emphasis is being placed on the fun element; players will be able to decide whether to play a strategy-type game or a straightforward shoot'em-up.

So far, a release date has not been set for Bomber, but its first showing looks set to be at the CES show in Chicago. The game will, however, be appearing under Activision's banner. More news as we receive it.



Arming an F-15 is a serious business; choose wisely - your life could depend on it.

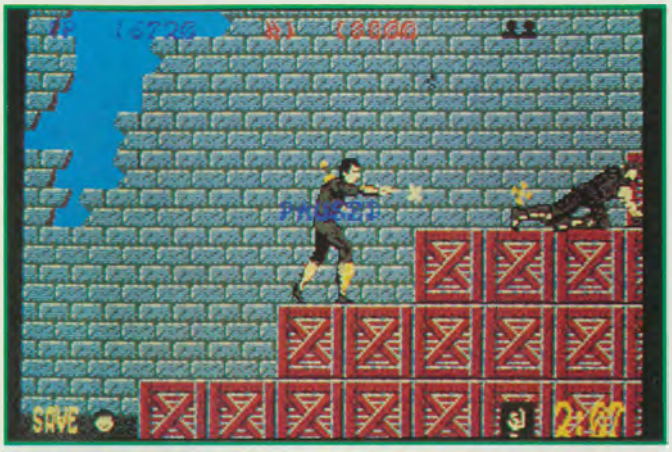


The Phantom F-4 can pack a hefty punch, especially when armed to the teeth.

Shinobi On Its Way

The Virgin/Mastertronic group will be launching the ST version of the Sega coin-op, Shinobi. As a master ninja, you must use all of your martial arts skills to fight your way through the gang of an evil tong. The tong has kidnapped lots of small children and you are their only help. Along the way you will find Shruiken, swords and nunchaka to help you dispose of the evil warriors, but, eventually, only your skill will see you through. There are five levels, and at the end of each one you must fight one of the kidnappers. No release date as of yet, but it could be out in May.

Also, news is just coming in about Melbourne house grabbing the licence to Continental Circus. It's in the very early stages at the moment but the conversion has been given to those very capable chaps at Teque, who gave us the excellent Blasteroids last month.



As a master ninja, can you fight your way through Shinobi's five levels and rescue the hostages?

Hewson's Onslaught

Coming soon from those binary wizards at Hewson, are a number of new releases at both full and budget prices. First of all, there is the latest game written by the guy who wrote Custodian, and it goes by the name of Onslaught. Taking control of a magical warrior, you must run around the eight-way scrolling play area, attempting to take on whole armies. Next, we have the long-awaited Astaroth. Featuring some of Pete Lyon's best graphics yet, this flick-screen psychic escapade features a cute figure as he runs around collecting various brain-enhancing powers. Only when he has collected all of the powerful items can he face the evil Asteroth herself. Once this is managed, the game's finale features a graphically attractive 'mind-bending' fight. Sounds promising.

On their Rack-it label, Hewson are promising some 16-bit conversions of some of out favourite 8-bit games. Shockway Rider is going to be the first, and is set in the very violent future. The normal pathways have been replaced by moving walkways, but, unfortunately, these moving paths are also the haunting places of vicious weapon-wielding muggers. As a vigilante-style punk, it is up to you to traverse these walkways, killing the attacking punks with either your fists or whatever weapon comes to hand. Amongst other features, you will find mutating grannies(!) and head-lopping low beams - sounds like our kind of game! After that, there is a conversion of Steve Crow's maze game, Firelord. Controlling a helmetted knight, you must run around a large, sprawling village, collecting magic items and stealing from the locals. Finally, there are a couple more 8-bit conversions: Steel, which looks a bit like a sideways-scrolling Paradroid; and Mazemania, which is described as 'painfully addictive' and 'requiring great skill and co-ordination'.

Be part of the action

at the

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Fri & Sat: 10am – 6pm,
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Expiry date: |__/__|

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A684

ST ACTION SPECIAL REPORT

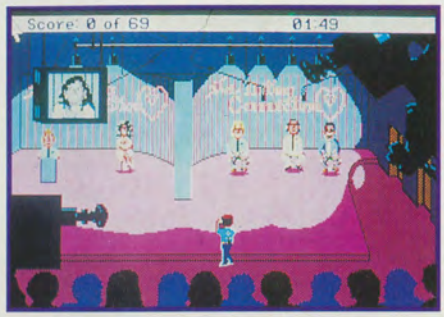
SIERRA on-line

"Sierra On-Line is America's longest surviving entertainments software company. With titles like King's Quest IV and Police Quest II, 1989 looks set to become their most successful year yet. Nick Clarkson and Andy Mitchell escorted the Troll aboard HMS Belfast, to meet Al Lowe, author of the Leisure Suit Larry series."

The lights dimmed, the large monitor at the far end of the room flickered into life and in the background began the low throbbing noise of an electronic organ bringing sounds which seemed to emanate from the dark reaches of space. Initially the blackness of the screen was pierced only by pinpricks of starlight, but it slowly lightened as into view swam a small interstellar craft. The music from the background synthesizer shattered with sharp, crystal chimes as the ship shuddered to a halt, caught in the grip of the tractor beam which flashed from a previously unseen Space Cruiser. As the small craft was pulled irresistibly upwards into the black, open maw of the gigantic ship, the screen dissolved to reveal the title 'Space Quest III' - before returning to the ink-black darkness of space. In the ensuing silence, journalists sat open-mouthed, temporarily forgetting to gulp at the large glasses of free wine which they were holding in both hands. Sierra had scored a bull's eye! I liked Space Quest I. I loved Space Quest II. I think I'm going to go 'ape' over Space Quest III.

H.M.S. Belfast, the last of the great Battleships, is moored in the Thames opposite the Tower of London. It was here on March 14th that Activision held a long, overdue celebration of the Sierra-On-Line games. Representatives of Sierra had flown in from California to help launch Leisure Suit Larry II and Kings Quest IV, and to bring news of their future games to the British market. We have already seen that the standard of the graphics in the new games has been dramatically improved, it now appears that the quality of the music is also about to take a quantum leap. ST owners who use the midi-output can take advantage of this great new sound which brings a whole new dimension to the games. Sierra games are written on, and tailor-made for, IBM PC computers, although, happily for other users,

Nick and Mitch (left) chat to Sierra's Al Lowe, creator of the loveless Leisure Suit Larry.



Sierra intend supporting Atari ST and Amiga systems for the foreseeable future. I was surprised to hear that the ST, rather than the Amiga, is a larger market for Sierra games in the States. The demonstration of the new sound and graphics on a high quality IBM system was quite awe-inspiring. The Sierra representatives went on to explain that a complete team of cartoon artists, who were formerly employed in producing TV cartoon strips for the likes of Disney and Hanna Barbara, were now being employed to design the new backdrops for all their future games.

To excite the audience even further, a raffle then took place. The winner would receive an expenses-paid trip to California to meet the creators of the Quest games. Guess what? - I didn't win!

Sobbing manfully into a dirty hanky, I left the room looking for a porthole through which I could drown both my disappointment and myself! However, stumbling along the gangway, I noted through tear-filled eyes that the bar next door was empty and decided that it might be a better idea to drown in a large bottle instead! Going down for the third time, I noted that I was not alone and that a large, bearded gentleman was sitting in the corner of the room eyeing me sympathetically. Deciding that what he needed to make his life complete was a tearful journalist, I moved over and

introduced myself. When he revealed that his name was Al Lowe, I decided that perhaps life just might be worth living after all. Al Lowe is the creator of Leisure Suit Larry and right now he was all mine!

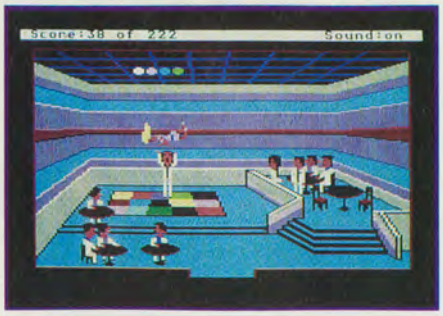
The first question to be asked was obviously, 'Is there going to be a Larry III?'

"Yes, Larry III is already on the drawing board and plans are well underway" said Al.

Remembering the question that the Troll has been so desperate for an answer to, I brazenly looked Al full in the face and blurted, "Is it going to have more smut than Larry II?"

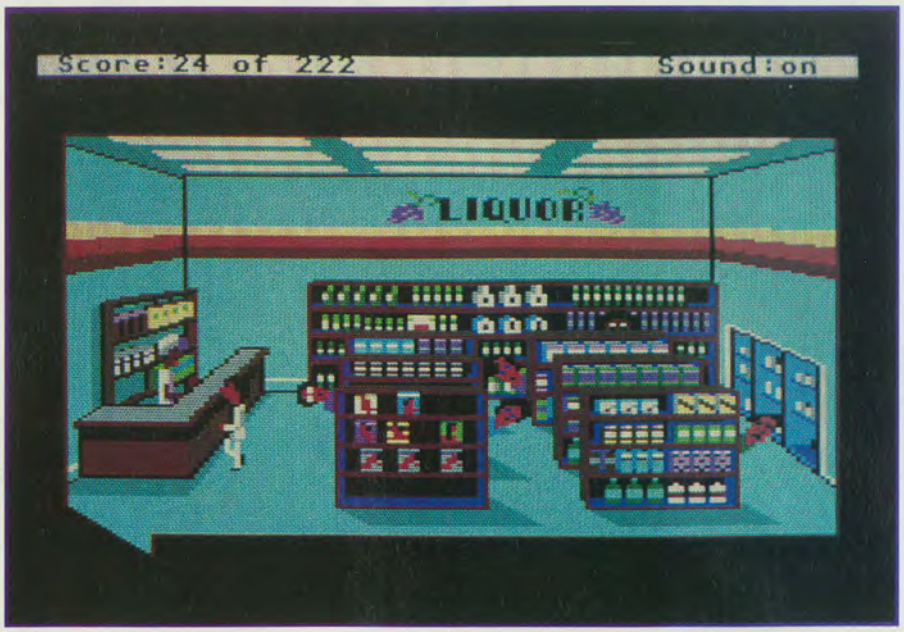
Al winced and explained that he had been suffering from that question ever since he arrived. It appears that Sierra took a lot of complaints over the saucy bits in Larry I and therefore decided to tone things down in the follow-up game. However, ever since arriving in Britain he had been told repeatedly that the British fans preferred a stronger brew. For this reason he decided that Larry III will definitely be spiced up once again.

I also asked Al what other computer games he spent his time playing and it appears that he is a Flight Simulator fan. At present his favourite games are the 'F19 Stealth Bomber' from Microprose, the 'Zak McKracken' Adventure from Lucas Films and the 'Mean 18' golf game. Al's early introduction to programming was writing educational



games in which he tried to add some animation sequences. Whilst demonstrating these games at an exhibition, he was spotted by the founder members of the Sierra company (Roberta and Ken Williams) who liked his work so much they invited him to join them. Al sees the future games from Sierra moving towards the concept of an interactive movie with more and more animation. At this point I felt I must

Leisure Suit Larry 1 was said to be a bit close to the bone. Larry 2 was tamer; too tame for the Troll.



put forward the complaint that some animation sequences in Larry II did tend to go on rather too long. Al conceded that the jungle episode was not right and that a new version of the game was now on release which cut that sequence down to size.

Another complaint often voiced by British players is the difficulty they experience in getting help when they are stuck in the Sierra adventures. Hint books are almost impossible to obtain over here and players are reduced to writing to bad-tempered Trolls for help! Al agreed and promised that things would be put right as soon as possible. Hint books and telephone help services will probably be made available for Britain and the Continent in the near future. However, in the meantime, writing to Trolls didn't seem such a bad idea - "Providing you enclose a S.A.E !"

Al's vision of future adventures includes the disappearance of all text, to be replaced by digital speech. Television-quality graphics, digitised music, 256 colours and all games on CD Roms. Perhaps even a digitised photograph of yourself brought into the adventure. Future games include titles such as 'King Arthur' and 'The Plantation Murders'. This latter game is being written by Roberta Williams and will concern the discovery of murder victims on a Southern Colonel's Plantation. In addition to creating the story line for his adventures, Al actually carries out much of the programming himself using Sierra's development system called SCI. When I asked Al what 'SCI' stood for, he gave me a knowing smile and said, "Sierra's Creator Interpreter." From the twinkle in his eyes, I have a suspicion that there is another meaning for "SCI", but he would not be drawn on that one.

At this point the door opened and a body slumped into the room. It was none other than ST Action's own boy-wonder editor! Grief at his failure to win a trip to California had obviously turned his legs to jelly, although I'm not sure what was responsible for him singing that song about the Eskimo lady! Fate had decided that it was time to leave.

While we were assisting our leader to stand up, (he had suddenly become extremely tired!) I noticed that the twinkle had reappeared in Al's eye. If Larry III includes an animated character kissing the floor of the bar, you'll know where the inspiration came from!

STA

Al Lowe, Leisure Suit Larry's alter ego.

THE LETTERS DESK

Got any interesting views about the software industry?
Want to air your anger? If so, then write to us at:
The Letters Desk, ST Action, 10 Theatre Lane,
Chichester, West Sussex. PO19 1SR.
And don't forget, we offer prizes for the most interesting letter.

From The Editor

I have had pleas from many readers who would like to obtain back-issues. There are some back-issues available, but they are depleting rapidly. So, if you would like a particular copy, you should telephone Mrs. B. Skinner on (0243) 533575, or write to her at the usual address.

Ah yes, I am also receiving letters addressed to the Troll. Up until now he hasn't managed to sweet-talk his way into getting his own plush office. As a result, the Troll has to cohabit with Mitch and the Dragon in the Dungeon. So, in future, could you please send the Troll's letters to:

The Dungeon
29 Blackthorn Drive
Larkfield
Kent
ME20 6NR

Illegal Content?

After studying the evidence (X-rated games slammed - STA11), and with due consideration, I find S. Farnsworth guilty on four counts.

1. Overreaction. She didn't say how old her son is, but how many children do you know who have a "bloodlust" that needs satisfying? Is she saying her son is nothing but a barbaric heathen for wanting to play these sort of games? Surely not.
2. Hypocrisy. Why wasn't she alerted by the scantily clad man? Or does she find near-naked men acceptable?
3. Feminism. There is nothing "degrading" about what these women do. They are not forced to remove their clothes and, what'smore, they get paid to do so.
4. Commonsense. Censoring her child's software, which is what she should have been doing in the first place.

Don't get me wrong, I am not condoning Anco's smutty little antics but if anyone wants to get their thrills by manipulating mice with hairy-palmed hands then that's their business.

What I find "horrific" (to use S. Farnsworth's words) is the face that a minor can buy this type of software. I'll bet neither Anco nor any mail-order company ask for proof of age when they sell this stuff. Not having see it personally, I don't know the pornographic content. But I think we may be bordering on illegality here. I can assure Anco I will be looking further into this matter.

Stephen Bryant,
Bristol.

Computer Violence Bad?

I am writing in reply to S. Farnsworth (X-rated games slammed - STA11), who complained that "sex and violence are becoming all too frequent in computer games."

I think this statement was, at the very least, exaggerated. There may be the occasional violent game, but what is the extent of this violence? I don't think games such as "Dragon Ninja" will warp the minds of young children, or even adults for that matter. Games of this genre are enjoyable to say the least and your son should not be deprived of this enjoyment. Perhaps you would like your son to play "Crosswords" instead of "Starglider II" because of the mass murders that take place!

A.Machin,
Eckington, Sheffield.

Auto Folder

I have recently purchased an Atari 520 ST and wanted to make use of some of the cheats in your magazine. However, I have looked through the ST Basic manual and cannot find any information on how to create an "auto" folder. Please could you enlighten me.

Mark Webb,
Hornchurch, Essex.

Okay, Mark. Insert the formatted disk onto which you want to create the folder. Point the mouse at the FILE menu and then highlight the NEW FOLDER option. To create an auto folder simply name the folder "AUTO" and click on the OK box. Simple, eh?

Pricey Prices

At last a software company (U.S. Gold) have decided to sell some of their titles for less than the now all-too-common price of twenty pounds. Is it, however, the fault of either pirates, production costs and the alike that force such riilculous prices? I think perhaps not. Surely when selling a game of the calibre of say, Thunderblade, the company responsible would forecast very high sales and therefore drop the price to encourage yet more potential customers. I think that software houses would do this if they were allowed. The major high street stores, such as W.H.Smith and Boots, now seem to dictate to software companies. The size of the packaging, the game's artwork and, perhaps more disturbingly, the price, can all be set by the major stores. Ultimately we, the games players, are the losers, but just think of all the other negative aspects. Perhaps we will only see the big software houses' games, small independent computer shops may disappear and new programming talent could become scarce. Will this hold on the market eventually kill of the future off the home computer market? Only time will tell.

Norman Winstanley,
Macclesfield.

Satisfactory Service

I am writing in response to R.A. Spiller's letter (More unfair trading - STA11), I have encountered problems with "tested" software. The two games I have had trouble with are "Tanglewood" by Microdeal, who told me there were no problems, and "R-Type" by Electric dreams, who are currently dealing with my troubles.

On both occasions the problem has been hinted at being caused by the new 1 meg drive fitted to the "Summer Pack" or later STs. Whether this is the case or not, I have been unable to determine, but I would appreciate any information regarding this matter. Like R.A. Spiller I have numerous games, including RAC Rally (which works), and utility software that cause no problems. The point here is that I'm less than enthusiastic when handing over my cash for the latest release just in case it refuses to load.

To further comment on Mr. Spiller's experience, I would like to say that a certain belligerence and not being frightened of creating a scene helps when dealing with awkward shop assistants. The alternative method is to inform them that you will be contacting the local Citizen's Advice Bureau. I find both of these methods bring both speedy and satisfactory results.

Clive Rimmer,
Urmston, Manchester.

Read The Reviews First

I have noticed a trend in the software industry, not only the 16-bit market, but across all formats. Major companies, such as Activision, are buying lucrative licences, such as Afterburner, and producing rubbish games which wouldn't sell well at budget prices. The only reason such games sell well is because of the highly successful arcade game around which it is supposedly based. Because of the game's name, everybody clambers to get a copy from their local store; or borrow it from a friend to make a pirate copy. As a result of such frenzied buying the sales of what are often better games from smaller companies, such as Players, suffer. Nobody seems to wait to read the reviews of supposed "mega-games", people (quite wrongly) just assume that because a game was a big hit in the arcades it will be an equally good game on their computer. Only when they have loaded the game and played it for a few minutes do they realise the mistake they have made. Because of this trend the software industry is starting to get a bad name. Major companies bring out poor games which get poor reviews, but still sell well, while the smaller independent developers release good games that also receive good reviews but don't sell because they aren't advertised as "the games to have". That's not to say that licensed games can't be good conversions; take Operation Wolf for instance. Why can't game producers hire companies with the most talented programmers to tackle the more tricky conversions. We, the games players, are the party who ultimately suffer most.

M. Richardson,
Barton-on-Humber.

Well, Mr. Richardson, I'm not totally sure whether Activision's Afterburner was released before we were allowed to review it; maybe it was simply close to Christmas, and Activision wanted to catch the market. I will, however, agree with the fact that people should read a game's review before they buy it; better still, try to play-test the game in your local store before you commit yourself.

Virus Warning

I am writing to give all ST owners a warning, but first I must say that all virus writers are completely ignorant of all responsibility and are B@$!@%£S.

I've only had my ST for four weeks and I bought a magazine with a free disk on it. Anyway, I tried this disk and afterwards I noticed my games had began to crash!

I told my local computer shop owner

and he gave me a disk which checks for viruses. I checked my free disk that I had got with my magazine, and it was infected with a virus called Signum (#1)! I immunized this disk but the virus had got onto my boot sector.

I wanted to send you a copy of this virus killer for you to put out with the mag, but the virus disallows me to load it, so I couldn't copy it. So, please mention to everyone who buys a magazine that carries a free disk to check for viruses. Your local computer shop owner should know of virus killers, but if he doesn't make your own: simply get a gun and then hunt down the bloke who dreamed up the irritating program in the first place.

W. Hansford,
Poole, Dorset.

Thank you, Mr. Hansford. Although I don't entirely agree with your alternative method of virus control I do recognise the problem. There are certain precautions you can also take to prevent the spread of the virus: write-protect your disks; always switch off your machine for at least half a minute before loading another game; and only buy ST Action.

MUD Slinging

I recently saw a letter in your magazine about how to become a wizard in M.U.D., but I think my mum has thrown it away because, after years of searching, I still haven't found it. Please, please, please could you send me a copy of the issue or, if this is not possible, tell me in which issue it appeared and I will buy a back-issue.

Mark Grimes,
Leigh, Lancs.

Well, I'm sorry Mark, but I couldn't find the actual letter. However, it does appear in Issue 7 of ST Action. Meanwhile, if you still encounter modem problems then try dropping ST World's expert, Lee Cooke, a line at:
Lee Cooke (STW)
117 Limbrick Lane
Goring-by-Sea
Worthing
West Sussex

How Much Hard Disks?

I am a great fan of Sierra adventures (I've got them all you know), having read the accompanying technical data sheet, I noticed that it is possible to install the games onto a hard disk. I believe that this would enhance gameplay, as I would not have to wait for ages while the computer loaded in the next file from the floppy. What I would like to know, is just how much would a hard disk set me back and how much storage capacity would I really need? Also, is it at all possible to put any game onto a hard disk?

Lisa Hamill,
Tavistock, Cornwall.

Yes Lisa, it is possible to put Sierra games onto a hard disk, however, most other commercial games do not allow this unless special provisions have been made. As for the storage capacity you would need and the cost involved, I'm not sure. However, Mr. Ian K. Tindale of ST World, has this to say: "Recently, it has come to pass, that the seeking of second-hand Supradrive or Atari SH204/205's can prove to be financially more beneficial than buying new. Using a hard disk is to be recommended, and for most individuals, 20Mb is plenty. For more and better information, read (or just subscribe to) ST World, the seriously serious ST Mag."

Listen Up

I have owned an Atari 520ST for almost 18 months and have been very impressed with the standard of software available for it. I also feel that the spot effects and music contribute greatly towards the overall quality and "lastability" of a piece of entertainment software. The questions I wish to ask are: Is it true that computers such as the Commodore 64 and Spectrum have better sound chips than the ST and are, therefore, more capable when it comes to producing sound effects and music?

I owned a Commodore 64 for two years before I bought my ST. However, I have to admit that the music from games such as Carrier Command and Captain Blood is very good; in fact, the music on some ST games is the best I've ever heard. So why do many magazines imply that the ST's sound chip is pretty naff? And what is Sampled Music? Many reviews claim that games have it, but fail to explain what exactly it is.

Sam Halligan,
West Germany.

Thank you for your letter, Sam. In answer to your questions; Yes, the Commodore 64 does have a more capable sound chip and its SID chip is very versatile. The Spectrum, however, uses exactly the same sound chip as the ST and, from what I've heard, its music and sound effects are somewhat limited. Remember, your ST has a much larger memory capacity than either a Spectrum or a Commodore 64. Therefore, the programmers have much more memory available to them for the game's sound. Don't forget, the ST also has the bonus of having an inbuilt midi facility. At the end of the day it doesn't really matter what the com-

puter magazines say, it's whether or not you, the user, are satisfied.

Oh yes, sampled music. These sounds are ones that have not originally been produced on your ST; speech is a good example. The programmer takes a record - ed piece and digitizes, or samples, it into your ST.

Syntax Error

I've got a problem, it's confusing me so much just had to put pen to paper and ask you about it. I get your magazine every month and go straight to your "Giving The Game Away" section for the latest hints, tips and pokes. Anyway what's bothering me is the "Universal Cheat Routine". When I type in the line which says; "DEF SEG = 0", my computer reports a syntax error and points an arrow under the "S", can you please tell me what's wrong.
Daniel Wallis

Simple, Daniel. You have the new version of ST Basic and do not, therefore, need to use this line; in fact, your ST won't understand it, hence the syntax error. In future , just leave out this line. The program will still work without it.

Sounds Good

I am writing in reply to Johnathan Dickinson's letter (Sound Advice - STA12). I have found a better solution to using a headphone socket. Whilst looking through a book that came with my ST, I noticed that the "monitor" port has an audio out pin. I connected this pin to my Hi-Fi equipment an managed to obtain high quality sound - loud too! I also believe this output to be in stereo.

Try attaching a small piece of wire or a pin into the top right hand hole and then connect that to your Hi-Fi, wow!
Hac Minz,
Tasburgh, Norfolk.

Check Before You Order

Having read M.A. Collins' letter (Illegal Trading? STA11), I decided, in conjunction with my local Trading Standards Office, to see whether or not the allegations were true.

I ordered ST games from two companies who will remain nameless. The two items of software were Ocean's Robocop and Imagine's Wec Le Mans (both, as you know, unreleased!).

I sent cheques to both companies. Both companies advertised a speedy delivery of the game. Having waited for over five days I called them both. One hadn't received my cheque, the other had and promised to send me a copy of Robocop by return of post. Another three days passed and still I received nothing. I phoned to confirm whether my copy of Robocop had been dispatched, only to be informed that the game hadn't been released. I politely asked for a refund and was told that the cheque would be put in the post that evening. Nearly three weeks passed before I received a refund. Meanwhile, I telephoned the other company to see if my cheque had arrived, it had. I was then informed that the game wasn't actually available. I asked for a full refund and was told that I must write in full explaining why I wanted one. Two days passed before I rang again. I explained that my local Citizen's Advice Bureau seemed to think that they should be writing to me telling me why I couldn't have one. Seventeen days later my cheque arrived.

People may think I'm a "moaning minnie", but I am looking after their interests as well as my own. Lastly, I know magazines make some of their revenue from carrying these adverts, but I think you have an obligation to us, your readers. After all, you'd all be out of a job without us.
Bryan Stevens
Andover, Hants.

I'm sorry to hear you had so much tro u- ble, and I must report that you are not alone. However, I would like to point out that I have also received letters regarding excellent service from the two companies you mentioned. If any readers are in doubt about the availability of software they should contact the software house responsible for the game. Only order the game if you know it has been released

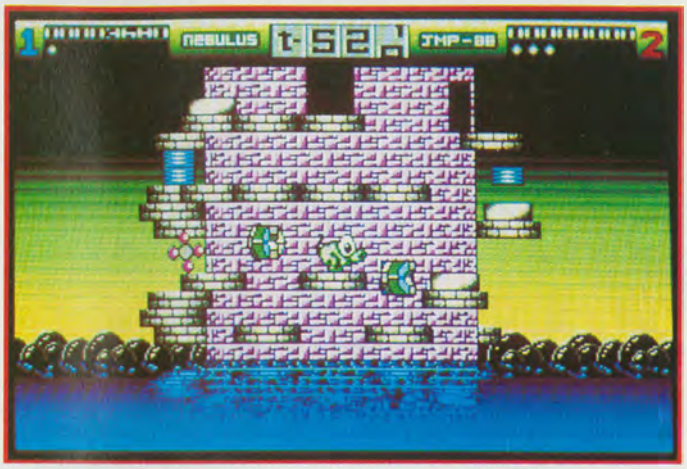
Birthday Suggestions

I really enjoyed the article on the different members of the team and have come up with some suggestions for birthday presents you could buy each other.
Hugh Gollner - An RSJ for his falling towers in Nebulus!
Jason Spiller - A bionic arm, not only for his joystick wrenching activities but for his gutar playing as well.
Nick Clarkson - A decent bed. He deserves it after his monumantal efforts on Dungeon Master, thanks Nick couldn't have done it without you.
Paula Mabe - Possibly me. I'm not short, do not drink and don't drive a Ford Capris nor do I wear mini skirts (or was she referring to mini cars?)
Steve Merrett - Boys Own annual or a rubber Rambo knife, judging by his picture in the article.
Chris Cruickshank
Dorking, Surrey.

ATARI: DID THEY DESERVE IT?

"In part two of our look-back, Steve Merrett takes a retrospective glance at the top games, and once again asks the question, "Did they really deserve the accolade?"

ISSUE 6



Hewson reigned supreme in October with no less than four of their games being reviewed. Two of these, the tower-toppling Nebulus and the fast-moving Eliminator, scored STA1s - pleasing their author, John Philips, immensely. Of the two, Nebulus scored highest, gaining a massive 92% - the highest score ever given to a game in STA. But Eliminator raced in with 80%. Also reviewed that month was Audiogenic's Helter Skelter which, although scoring 82%, wasn't thought good enough for an STA1. However, one game that did get and deserve the award was Electric Dream's Super Hang On conversion. A firm favourite with all in the office, Jason can be quoted as saying that "It is a great race game, and no doubt about it!". And who are we to argue! Incidentally, it is interesting to see that on the 'Next Month' page, I Ludicrus was intended for review. Six months later, and we have only just seen it!

"Out of this lot I slightly prefer Super Hang On. Nebulus was good, but Hang On was a lot easier to get into. In retrospect, I would say that Nebulus should come down to about 90%, Eliminator up to about 83%, and Super Hang On should go up from 84% to about 87%." - SM

"No, I think for me, issue six was dominated by the brilliant Nebulus - the only game that kept me on the edge of my seat for ages." - HG

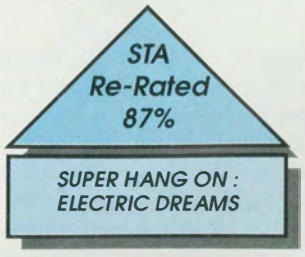
"I never got to see Nebulus that much, but the time I spent with Super Hang On was great fun, and I still go back to it now. Mind you, I think that Eliminator has sunk in my estimations now, deserving only about 75%." - JS

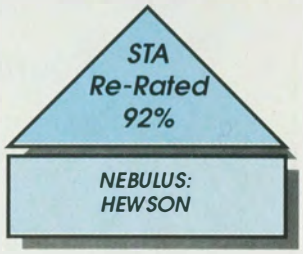
"No way, I think the speed and simplicity of Eliminator is brilliant - it hasn't aged one jot!" - SM

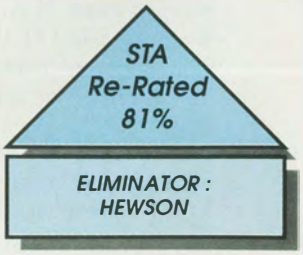
"God, the time I wasted on Eliminator..." - HG

"And me? Basically, I think that the scores were spot on, with the exception of Super Hang On which should rise to 88%." - NC

"Yes, Super Hang On should have definitely scored higher." - JS







ISSUE SEVEN

The PC Show interrupted the writing of this issue, but there were some good

ADVERTISEMENT

AIRBORNE RANGER

RATING OUT OF TEN	
GRAPHICS	8
SOUND	7
STRATEGY	9
PLAYABILITY	9
OVERALL RATING	915

'Airborne Ranger is a move away from the simulation side of MicroProse releases but is still a step above the normal Rambo/ Commando style of shoot-'em-up. An effective combination which should attract those looking for a thought- provoking game'

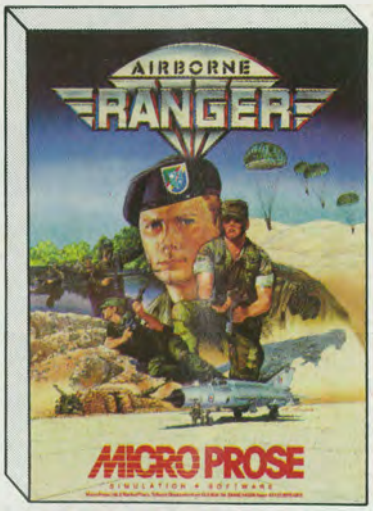
– TGM

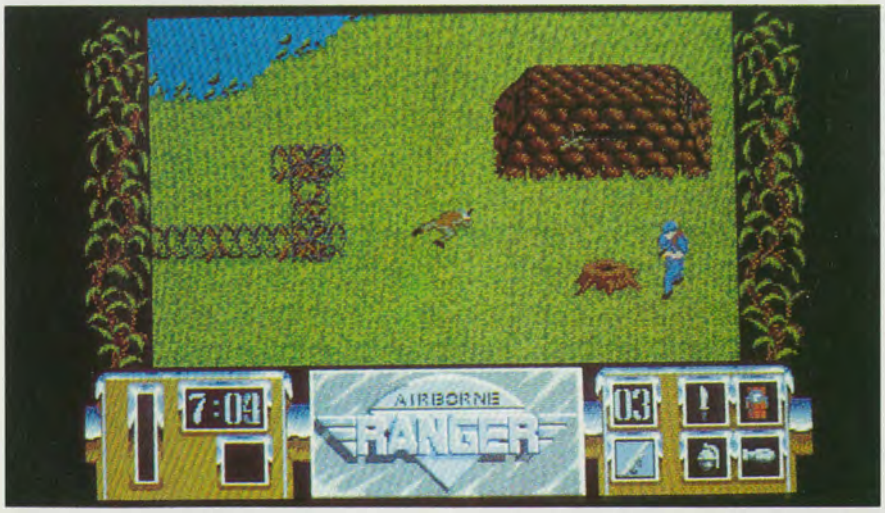
Not content with the purely lifelike, militaristic simulations that MicroProse have brought out in recent times, Major Bill Stealey decided to take a step out of the line and introduce some of the Strategy and quick reaction thinking that MicroProse simulations are renowned for and pump them into an 'action strategy' game. The result? Airborne Ranger, an addictive game combining the best of MicroProse strategy with fast arcade action where you control one of the troops belonging to that crack American combat unit who have earned the privilege to wear the exclusive black beret.

Once packed you are flown to your destination in an Osprey aircraft. Having parachuted safely down to terra firma, the action really starts to hot up as you run, walk or crawl your way towards your objective, picking up the dropped supplies as you go. The difficulty can be altered before each mission, thus affecting your chances of survival. However, those with experience can go for higher risk and the greater glory that ensures on return from a successful mission.

Although providing popular with simulation die-hards, seasoned arcade players will also enjoy getting to grips with Airborne Ranger. The game can be played as a fast-moving, hit-and-run action game, but players will soon find that it will require some thought and pre-mission planning if one is to succeed in achieving each objective. This is where MicroProse's reputation for excellence in strategy and simulation games comes in. Often it is a matter of getting to your objective in as quiet a manner as possible, thereby ensuring that the enemy remains unaware of your presence.

The action is real – the suspense triggers the adrenalin rush that starts your senses working overtime. Airborne Ranger is an addictive strategy game in an effort to complete the next mission and get back in one piece.





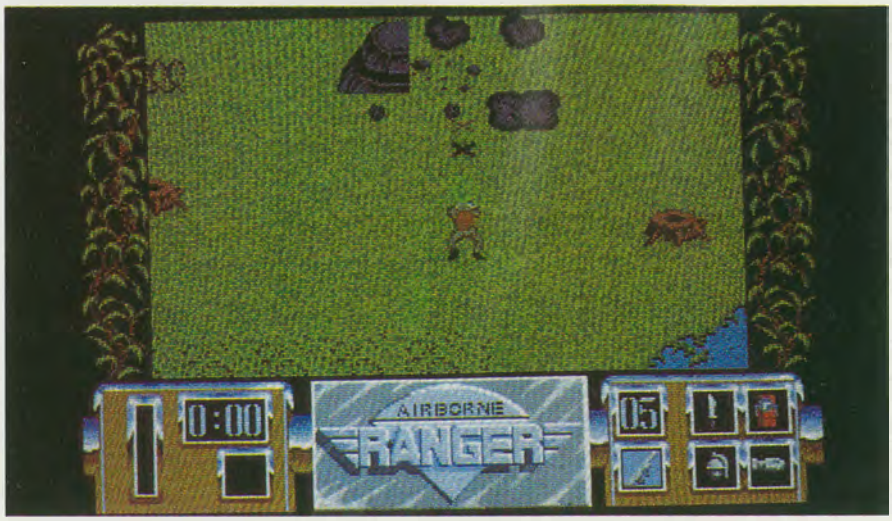
'Basically, Airborne Ranger is a straight forward commando-style game. It is the added extras, however, that make it something special.
Airborne Ranger will appeal to those who enjoy games that require a modicum of quick reflexes.'

– ST Action

As the best of the best, you are chosen to single-handedly accomplish twelve missions, set in the three difficult parts of the world.

Amongst the frozen wastes of the Artic, you must beware the pitfalls of walking on thin ice. In the more temperate climate of Central Europe, you are faced with the prospect of coming up against the best frontline troops that the massed Communist hordes can produce. Alternatively, you could end up somewhere in the Persian Gulf taking out a fuel dump where, if the enemy doesn't get you, the heat and fatigue almost certainly will.

On each mission, you can choose from an impressive array of weaponry and supplies that will form the contents of three supply canisters that will be your lifeline on your mission. Grenades, magazines for your carbine, LAW missiles, knifes, time charges and first aid packs can all be selected to best suit your needs for the coming mission.

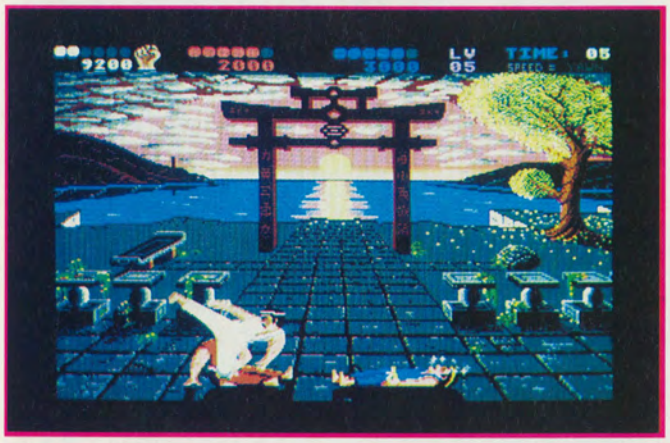


MICRO PROSE

MicroProse Software, 2, Market Place, Tetbury, Glos GL8 8DA. Tel: 0666 54326 Fax: 0666 54331 Telex: 43422 MPS UKG

games up for review. The Bitmap Brother's Speedball received 75%, but failed to get the STA1 which I think it deserved. A lot of games scored highly in issue seven, including the Freescape using Driller and Hewson's ST version of Cybernoid, but only two games attained the STA1 award. The first was SDI, Electric Dream's conversion of a Sega coin-op. Receiving 83%, I can be quoted as saying "it is a beauty to play".

"On reflection, I feel that SDI only deserves about 72%. Although the conversion is practically perfect,



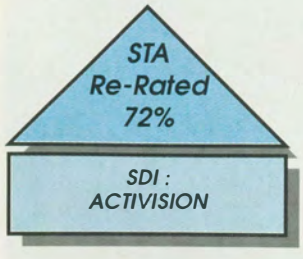
the game can be repetitive. Something that was mentioned by a disgruntled reader in the letters page." - SM

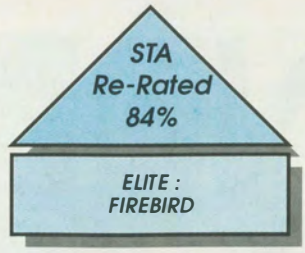
"I really wondered why this scored so high - it is so repetitive! True, the graphics are good, but the action isn't. I'd knock it down to about 70%" - NC

"Yeah OK, let's rerate it at about 72% then." - SM

"OK, but I still think it doesn't deserve that." - NC

The other STA1-awarded game needs no introduction, it was the long-awaited version of Braben and Bells' classic space-trading game,





Elite. Complete with speedy filled-in graphics and gameplay deeper than the Pacific Ocean, Elite scored 78%, causing Nick to spout "It is an incredible experience that shouldn't be missed."

"How this only got 78% I'll never know! There is just so much to see and do, it's unbelievable. The 3D is incredibly fast, and sound is also above average. Taking these factors into consideration, Elite should get around the middle eighties." - SM

"I've only recently started playing Elite properly, so only now can I say that this was severely underrated. As Steve mentioned, the graphics befit the ST perfectly, using speedy 3D, whereas the other versions only had slow, tiresome vectors. I also agree with Steve that it should have scored higher." - NC

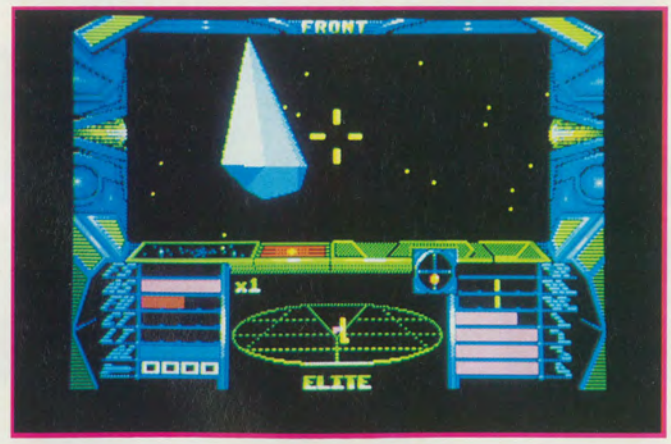
"Well, we're unanimous on this one. Elite was underrated. I haven't had a lot of chance to play this, which is a great pity. I'd give it about 84%, I think." - JS

"So we're agreed, about 84% for Elite then." - NC

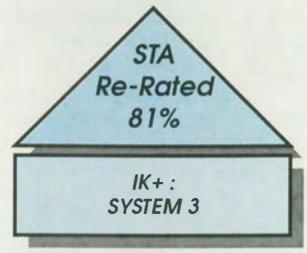
"Seems alright to us!" - JS and SM

ISSUE EIGHT

A varied month in terms of game quality, from the high-scoring STA1s, IK+ and Hostages, to the abysmal Around the World in Eighty Days and Elf. IK+ was a conversion from the much-her-



alded 8-bit game, and the conversion much improved on it. With sampled sound, an animated backdrop and two opponents, it soon became a firm favourite,



prompting me to say that it was "brilliant!" With the other two's favourable comments, IK+ collected 81%.

"IK+ is every bit as playable now as it was then. Nothing has aged and I think that IK+ is still the best of the beat'em-ups." - SM

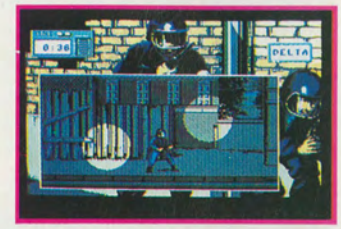
"Yeah, IK+ still has no real competition in its field. The novel three-opponent feature makes the game just that little bit different. I think the mark was spot-on." - NC

"Well, true it is the best of its kind, but I think that its lasting appeal is dubious - mind you, the same can be said of any beat'em-up. I also think the marks still stand." - JS

"I think perhaps the score should go up, but remain the same it shall." - SM

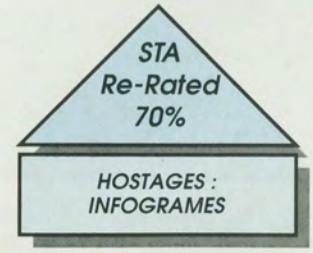
Hostages, on the other hand, was a visually impressive game, featuring three different stages of action. With its atmospheric gameplay, this French epic caused Jason to go all continental and shout "Vive la France!". Just missing the accolade that month were Logotron's action-packed Defender clone, Starray, and the very unusual Elemental, from Lankhor, which I couldn't stand.

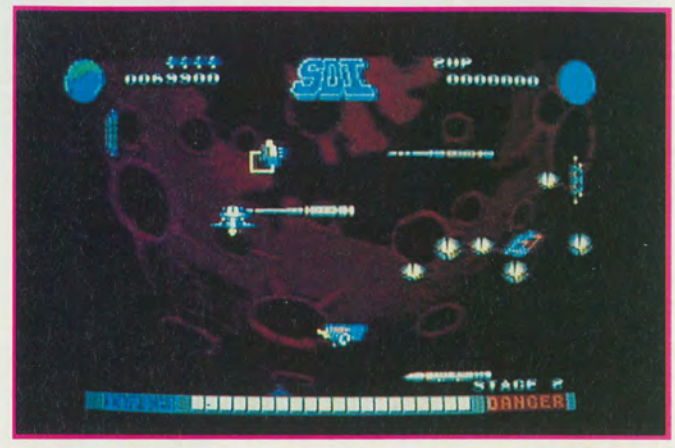
"At the time, the graphics and atmosphere blinded

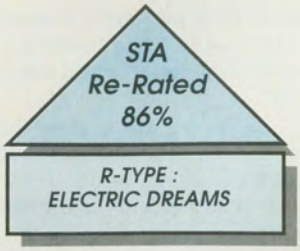


us a bit, as Hostages suffers from a lack of variety. There is an annoying pause between the levels, and this put me off a bit. Overall, I'd lower Hostages' score to 68%" - NC

"Like Nick, I feel that the lack in variety stifled my enjoyment, and killed its lastability. The game looked







really good, but it doesn't really have that 'one more go' feel about it. On reflection, I think Hostages would now get around 65%." - SM

"I disagree totally. Hostages is every bit as good now as it was then. Yes, there aren't many levels, but the action is both involving and playable. I think that, on reflection, we slightly underrated Hostages, and that it deserves around the 85% mark" - JS

"No way! I reckon that the mid 60s is fair." - SM

ISSUE NINE

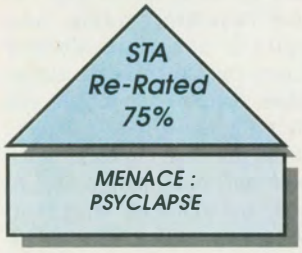
With the run up to Christmas well under way, the January issue of ST Action hosted reviews of the conversions of R-Type, Double Dragon and Flying Shark, along with the mega-licence, Afterburner. All of these games did relatively well, with R-Type receiving the STA1 badge, but Afterburner was a great disappointment. We all thought that it would be a hard task for any programming team to perform, but Jez San and his team did a worthy job, reaching an average 65%. R-Type was the biggy of the issue though, and scooped 90%. Converted from the Irem original, R-Type was another in the long line of progressive shoot'em-ups. It was a very close conversion, prompting Hugh and myself to trot along to the local arcade to test just how close it was. Having done this, Hugh bellowed that it was "the definition of a top-notch conversion.", while I agreed, stating it was "a shoot'em-up no arcade fan should be without."

"Now this is what I call a shoot'em-up!" - HG

"Yeah, it was one of the best arcade conversions of last year." - SM

"Granted it's good, but you have to agree the multi-load was a bit tortuous." - NC

"I suppose so, but I don't feel it detracted that much. I mean, let's not forget the

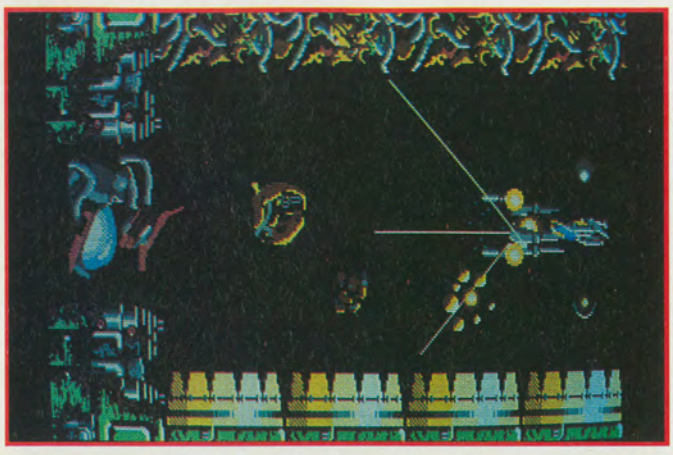


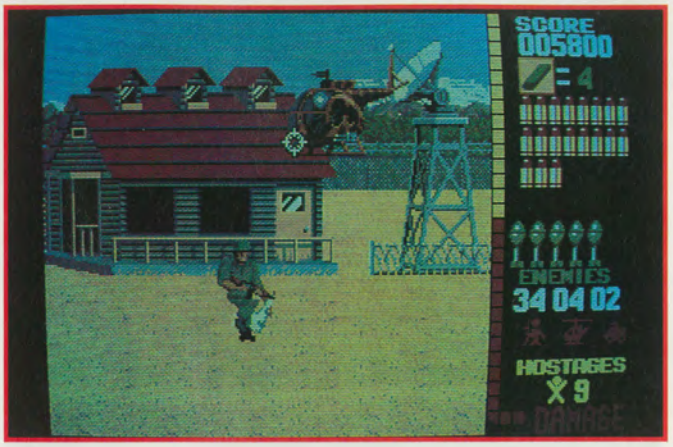
brilliant graphics and the noisy sound!" - HG

"Looking back, I feel that it should now get about 87%. As Nick says, the multi-load is intrusive." - SM

"The scrolling's a bit jerky as well." - NC

"Peasant, I feel the original score is about right!" - HG





"Nah, bring it down to about 85%" - NC

Funnily enough, the next STA1 was also a horizontal-scroller, this time Psyclapse's Menace. Abandoning their icon-driven arcade/adventures for a while, the new Pysgnosis label provided a brilliant little blast which caused me to call it a "classic", and Nick to state that "it filled a gap in the shoot'em-up market."

"This, I feel, had slightly more playability than R-Type, and I much preferred having an energy bar rather than three or four lives." - SM

"Definitely. The graphics aren't particularly colourful, but the screen is uncluttered and the action a tad more enjoyable." - NC

"I enjoyed Menace, too; it is simply good arcade fare!" - JS

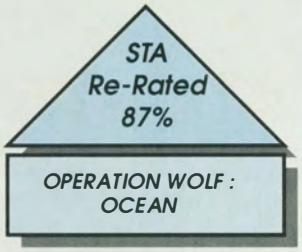
"I reckon that the score should come down by about 2%, but it would still get STA1." - SM

"Well... no, I'd leave the scores how they are." - NC

"And me." - JS

ISSUE TEN

Still reeling from the wealth of software that landed on our doormat each day, Operation Wolf, Barbarian II, Falcon and Thunderblade all



romped home to an STA1 award. Operation Wolf was a practically spot-on conversion of the Uzi-housing arcade machine. Viewed through your own eyes, you controlled a floating cross-hair, and had to mow down the unfortunate guerillas before they got you. The ability to kill hundreds of soldiers appealed to our perverse nature, and we gave Op. Wolf a whacking 90%, with me saying that it was "arcade perfect", and always ready to slip in an awful joke (ie: unsur'mountain'able for Epyx's Final Assault) Nick said it was a "sure-'fire' winner" with him!

"If it wasn't for the totally over-the-top disk swapping, this would have been brilliant!" - JS

"I didn't think it ruined the game." - SM

"Not ruined, but it definitely wrecked the fluidity. I mean, after every stage you were swapping disks, surely they could have used a bet-

STA Re-Rated 85%

FALCON : MIRRORSOFT

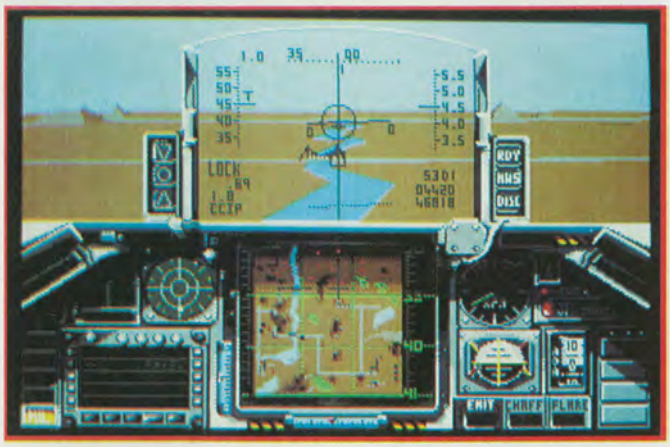
ter system." - JS

"Maybe, but the game itself more than made up for it, although it was a touch easy." - SM

the socks off any other flight sim, but perhaps the controls were a little too responsive." - NC

"The controls never proved a problem for me, I think that Falcon is simply the epitome of flight sims." - JS

"There isn't a lot we can say really, only that I feel it deserved slightly higher - perhaps about 85%, bearing in mind its lasting appeal." - NC



"It was a bit repetitive though." - NC

"Yeah, but so was the coin-op, and as a conversion it was excellent." - SM

"I'd give it about 84% now." - JS

"No, I think that the original 90% is OK." - SM

Nick's fave rave came along next - Spectrum Holobyte's Falcon. Controlling a fearsome F-16, Falcon had you dog-fighting MiGs over what looked to be Egypt or somewhere in the Middle East. Its wealth of options and missions gave it great staying power, causing Martin to say it was "only bettered by real flight" - so spoke the voice of experience! Not a bad word was written about Falcon and it gained a surprisingly low 82%

"For me, Falcon knocked

"Agreed, 85% it is." - JS

After a seemingly endless wait, Palace released Barbarian II. Featuring even more decapitations and disembowelling, Barb II scored 85%, and someone left its STA1 badge off! I loved this game and had followed its development, seeing each level as it was completed. Despite being reviewed in mags way before its completion, we were the first to see the complete game and were suitably impressed, with me saying "that the creatures were imaginative" and that the gameplay was "satisfying and compelling". Nick agreed, raving that the monsters almost came to life, and Jason completed the appraisal stating that he "hadn't enjoyed a game so much for ages!"

"A classic game if ever

STA Re-Rated 85%

BARBARIAN II : PALACE

there was one, this. I think that, as beat'em-ups go, this is the business." - SM

"Definitely, Barb II was brilliant, featuring a long and difficult task with excellent hack'n'slay gameplay." - JS

"Yeah, the only thing I felt was lacking, was that the main character was a bit difficult to turn around. Nothing that should lower the score though." - NC

Finally, STA10 closed

STA Re-Rated 73%

THUNDERBLADE : U.S. GOLD

with U.S. Gold's conversion of the Sega coin-op, Thunderblade. To be truthful, we weren't expecting this to be a lot of cop, so the resulting game was quite a surprise. Viewed from two different directions, Thunderblade had you flying your super chopper through four levels, with your ultimate aim being to kill a ruthless dictator. Despite some finicky control, Thunderblade scored 78% and Jason spouted on endlessly about U.S. Gold being the "pride of Birmingham", and that "each time they (U.S. Gold) produce a coin-op conversion, they set a new standard of excellence." Jason had obviously had a brainstorm though, which had caused him to forget toadies such as 1943 (44%), LED Storm (55%) and the diabolical Desolator (40%).

"Although Thunderblade was a good conversion, I feel the controls were a little too difficult to come to terms with." - NC

"Yes, I agree. For me, the controls were too finicky, I would have preferred to have used a key to accelerate rather than forward and fire." - SM

"Yeah, but once you had sussed the controls, the rest came naturally..." - JS

"I also think it was a tad hard, thanks to the undergenerous collision detection." - SM

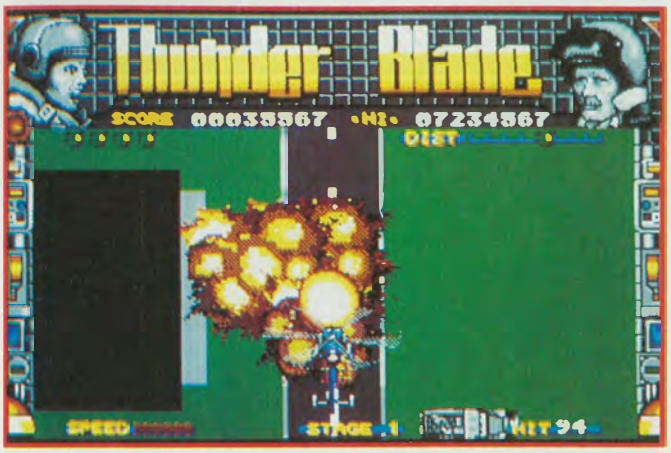
"That never really bothered me, but I don't think it would get STA1 now. Instead I would give it 71%" - NC

"No way! I think the score was spot on." - JS

"I'm inclined to agree with Nick - bring it down to the lower 70s." - SM

Well, that's it - 1988 in STA's eyes. Undoubtedly, it was a turbulent year in terms of game quality, with games like Dungeon Master showing the potential of 16-bit computers, yet toadies like Shackled showing that software companies would too often just port over an 8-bit version. 1989 will, hopefully, see the end of such practices and the state of ST software will continue to improve. With games, such as, Chaos Strikes Back and Forgotten Worlds only just round the corner, one thing is sure: this year will be just as varied!

STA



ARCHIPELAGOS

MASTERWORKS FOR THE MILLENIUM

Atari ST screen shots

Imagine a game without violence, yet as chilling as abandoned places where people have died and never returned.

Imagine a 3D world, yet the only forces are those that come from the ground.

Imagine the danger of a tormented soul, carried aloft by nothing greater than the wind.

Archipelagos is a completely new sort of game. It offers 9,999 living landscapes, in 3D, with continuous smooth movement and scanning. It is so extraordinary it defies classification. It is the experience of the metaphysical.

Archipelagos is conceived and coded by Astral Software.

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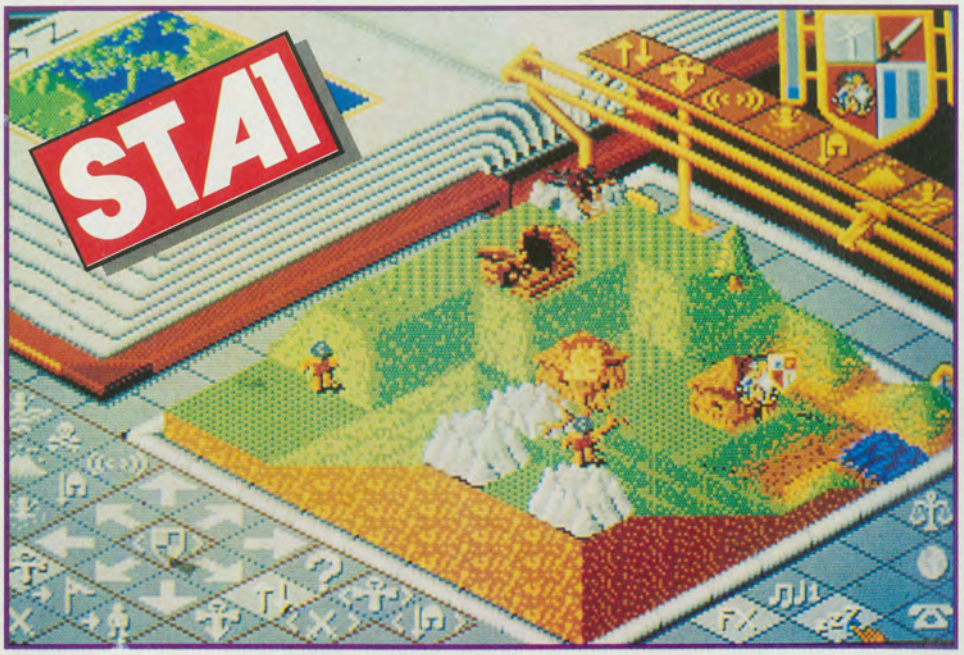
ATARI ST VERSION £24.99



Populous is a quirky, yet remarkably accurate, interpretation of our world, civilization, religion and the structure of human society. This is a thoroughly enjoyable and absorbing game, similar in concept to chess, yet on a much grander scale and with an exciting graphical interpretation. As your skills as a divine being grow, so does your enjoyment for the game. There is nothing more satisfying than monitoring the progress of a settlement, waiting until the people are content and then wreaking devastation. Populous's presentation is fantastic and the concept is original and ingenious. But the most exciting facility is the modem link-up, although it could be expensive. Truly a 'divine' game!.

JS

Populous is wonderful, one of those games that will become more fun as you become adept as it. The feeling of power is great: there's nothing like watching your opponent create a vast civilisation only to render it useless by either causing an earthquake or a volcanic eruption. I found it was best to build a high mountain fortress and then flood the lowlands - most satisfying! The game really comes to life when you play against a fellow human. Not being able to see your opponent's moves gives a feeling of real foreboding. The graphics are really well presented, and attention to detail is excellent. Populous is definitely in a world of its own, I loved every minute of it.

NC

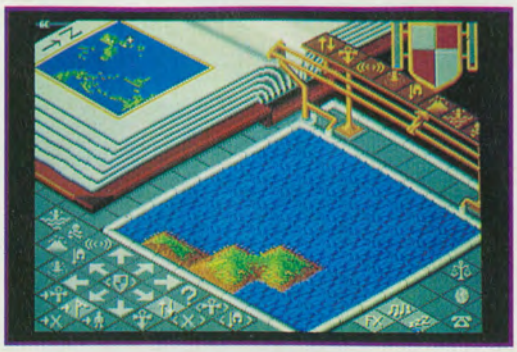
POPULOUS

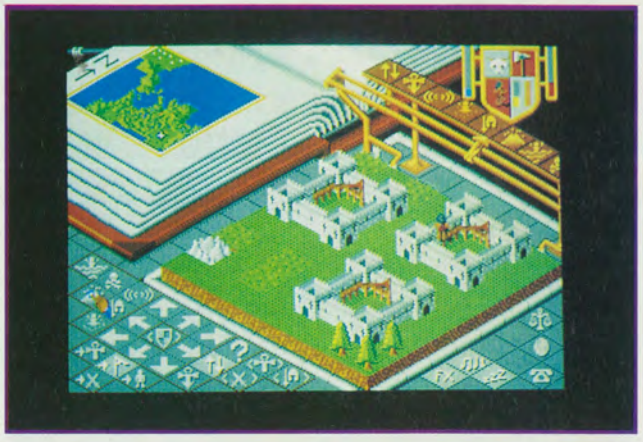
"Populous presents the opportunity to exercise divine intervention over civilization. 'Look out world... floods, earthquakes, disaster - WHAT POWER!'"

Electronic Arts (£24.95)

All civilizations, both ancient and modern, need to believe in something; be it the sun, a volcano, an inanimate object, an animal or a massive unseen being. They bribe their gods with offerings and sacrifices for bountiful harvests and good weather and beg for mercy during famines, volcano eruptions, earthquakes and floods. Populous puts you in the position of deity, and as a divine being, you derive your strength from the devotion of civilization. The more worshippers you have and the greater their achievements, the more power you wield. But there are other civilizations in the world who worship other deities, and as there could never be two gods, they must be wrong. Using your devout followers and a little divine intervention, you must destroy the misguided and blasphemous civilizations and expose their false gods. There is a predefined tutorial game which enables you to learn and exercise your various powers and abilities, or you can choose to begin a conquest. The conquest consists of 500 enemy civilizations which are progressively stronger and more devout.

The screen shows the Book of Worlds showing a map which is covered in blue dots representing your people's settlements and red dots the position of your enemy. Using the mouse you can click on the Book to select a region and a 3D projection of land shows a close-up of the area. The 3D map is surrounded by various icons and clicking on an eight-directional arrow icon scrolls across the land revealing wandering people and settlements. Clicking on an ankh or cross icon takes you to the mortal leader of your people, who can be identified by the large cross he bears. The leader is your mortal





But enemy red flags are flying over even greater castles - time for a little intervention. As the Manna-bar reaches Flood, a click of the mouse drowns the settlement - what power!

Your power is depicted by the mannabar to the right of the screen. As your power grows, an arrow moves from left to right. Selecting the knight option, you can change your leader into a fiersome fighting machine which will wreak havoc on the enemy settlements.

counterpart and he is the only character that you can directly advise and control, and who can check on the progress of your people. Then you must locate the enemy leader who carries a skull, and placing a shield icon over him reveals his strength and monitors his activities.

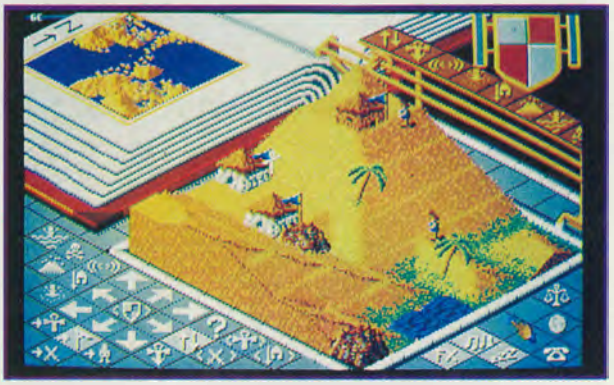
Using the left and right-hand mouse buttons, you can click on the 3D map and add and take away lumps of land to make it flat and stable for building on. You must constantly check on the activities of the two leaders who will be searching for this land. Clicking on the eight directional arrows pans across the land and you will see people wandering around looking for suitable land to build on and a variety of houses ranging from mud huts to castles. The suitability of the land and its strength and flatness, determines the type of house that can be built.

Checking on the evil leader shows that his people are also flattening the land and building bigger houses and you must quickly make more of the land in your domain suitable for building. You can also usurp houses by clicking on a 'Place Papal Magnet' icon, finding a suitable enemy building and clicking on the corner to place it. With the ankh installed, your people will follow your leader who will guide them to the Papal Magnet. You can watch as the congregation makes its way to the new place of worship. As you near the evil lands, clicking on a 'Settle' icon induces the leader to find some flat land and build a house and the people will copy him. As more settlers arrive, you must make the land flat and suitable for them to build on. As described, the better the land, the greater the buildings, and the people must build a castle for the leader.

The success and prosperity of your society is monitored on a so-called Manna-bar, and as your civilization grows, a pointer moves over icons which represent greater and more devastating powers that you can use on the enemy. As the pointer reaches a Divine Knight icon, you can choose to turn your leader into a free-spirited fighting knight. This ruthless and destructive force wanders the lands in search of enemy settlements, slaying the people and destroying the buildings. You can check on the activities of your knight at any time, and as he undermines the enemy, the pointer continues to travel up the Manna-bar increasing the effectiveness of your power. You have the ability to undermine your enemy's civilization by turning his land into a swamp so that they cannot build. But as the pointer reaches Earthquake, volcano or flood, you can find a heavily populated enemy settlement and devastate them. An Earthquake shakes the land, flattens the buildings and kills the inhabitants; a flood just covers the settlement leaving no trace; and a volcano recreates Pompeii. Finally, Armegeddon results in a mass exodus of both civilizations to a central point where they fight it out to the death.

Populous allows you to pit your powers of a deity against a human opponent via a modem link-up, and you can fight it out with your unseen opponent. You could leave the game to make a cup of tea and return to find your society devastated.

STA



Populous is set to become an all-time classic. From the moment you load up the game and look at the colourful graphics, you know it's going to be good. The graphics, though, are just the tip of Populous's iceberg, as the game itself has more depth than any other I have played before. Being able to create and destroy worlds appealed to me no end, and I was in my element as I waited for my opponent to build huge castles, only for me to wreck them with a well-timed flood! Being able to bend the game to the players requirements is also an advantage, as the game can be made as hard or as varied as you like. I could go on for ever about Populous's plus points, but with its two-player option, its total user-friendliness and its involving gameplay, I will simply say that it is a game that MUST be in every ST owner's collection.

SM

STA Rating

90%

GRAPHICS: 88%
SOUND: 72%

LASTING APPEAL: 92%
ADDICTIVENESS: 92%

DIFFICULTY: AVE
1ST DAY SCORE: N/A

With Populous, the land colouring isn't just aesthetic, it actually affects the way your people react. For instance, in the balmy climates of the desert (above), your people tend to die quicker due to dehydration. Whereas in the arctic conditions (shown on the left), your people reproduce at a slower rate so it is harder to build up a large following.

30/60 isometric projection creates incredible 3D perspective. Gone are the days of rough and blocky graphics in adventures - these rooms are spectacular.

"Most people spend their time and money trying to deter burglars. But crazy old Lady Crutcher actually advertises for them."

RAFFLES

THE EDGE (£19.95)

The title suggests that this game is about the suave and glamorous thief from the Victorian era. But one look at the main character's clobber, jeans and a garish jumper, and it just couldn't be the roguish gent. However, the two do share a common interest, they are infamous professional thieves, although celebrity is not the best attribute for a burglar. Watching the Crutcher mansion you recognise the tell-tale signs - an open widow, milk bottles collecting on the doorstep - and so you enter the building. But Old Lady Crutcher has lured you in for a reason and as you stand in the hall, you realise there is no escape. It transpires that old man Crutcher has kicked the bucket and left his widow with a problem. The old miser distrusted banks and safety deposit boxes and hid all her priceless jewelry around the mansion and neglected to tell the old bird where he put them. Your task is to guide this latter-day Raffles around the massive mansion and find those gems.

The joystick controls our hapless crook and pressing the firebutton makes him jump up. Standing in the hallway, you have four optional directions: three doors

on the ground floor and one at the top of the stairs. Moving to the stairs, pressing the firebutton makes him leap up the steps and the door at the top leads into a bedroom. A great deal of lateral and sometimes illogical thought is required to crack this game. In each room you can move furniture around and pick up a variety of objects to use later on in the adventure. You go out of the bedroom, down the stairs and into the nearest and into the dining room, where you are immediately attacked by a giant fat canary. A part of old man Crutcher's legacy is a menagerie of mutant domestic pets which he experimented on and while the overstuffed canary flaps around the dining room, large rodents scurry across the kitchen floor and gnaw our hero's heels. These mutant pets are real pests and contact with them depletes his energy.

Each room contains a seemingly insolvable puzzle or obstacle which must be overcome by using various objects. Crutcher manor must be the size of Blenheim Palace as I lost count of the rooms and each one must be searched thoroughly for usable objects, secret panels, hidden rooms and, of course, the gems. Eventually, you enter Lady Crutcher's bedroom where the old dear is tapping her foot impatiently, and every time you find a gem you must report back to the old boot and return it. The mutant pets chase you around the room making manic noises, moving furniture around and effectively obstructing your progress. But a high presence of crazy animals in a room indicates that you are close to a clue or a gem. Some doorways are obstructed by furniture and a mutant pet has been posted to make it impossible for you to remove it. Ace thief or not, you are destined to be pecked and gnawed to death by the pets or hopelessly lost in the mansion, before you even set eyes on the Crutcher jewels - mutant budgies and mice are more effective than burglar alarms and Rottweilers.

STA

Hmmm, Raffles is an odd game. It would be so easy to dismiss it as a mundane hide-and-seek game, yet there is something that keeps urging me go play it. The graphics are very well presented; they reminded me of some of the Ultimate Spectrum games. The sound is adequate, albeit a little sparse at times, and the overall presentation of the game is good. Having come to terms with the controls, Raffles soon becomes both fun and intreaging to play. The only thing that leaves me wondering is its eventual lasting appeal.

NC

The Edge have used what they call the 'World Maker' technique in Raffles, and each room in the mansion together with its contents, have been meticulously drawn in 30/60 isometric projection which has achieved perfect 3D perspective. Gone are the days of rough-edged, blocky graphics; these are smooth and rounded and the whole effect is stunning. The game is easy to play, which allows you to channel your concentration into finding those jewels. Each puzzle has been ingeniously designed to be obscure and sometimes completely bizarre, and those mutant pets are a real pest. As a 'fringe' adventurer, I found the game absorbing and compelling... a 'real' experience!

JS

STA Rating

64%

GRAPHICS: 66%
SOUND: 48%

LASTING APPEAL: 64%
ADDICTIVENESS: 64%

DIFFICULTY: HARD
1ST DAY SCORE: N/A

Talespin

BY MARK HEATON

ATARI ST
AMIGA
& IBM

THE INTER-ACTIVE PROGRAM CREATOR

AMIGA CONVERSION BY TIMOTHY PURVES

WHAT IS IT? Talespin is a package which allows the collecting together of drawings, texts and sounds onto a series of pages together to form an interactive story, guide or textbook, which is read purely by clicking the mouse on the drawings or texts. Variables may be used to control the flow of narrative or record progress made. Talespin itself is entirely mouse-driven and very user-friendly, requiring no programming skills for its use. It includes an art package as well as importing Neochrome, Degas or IFF picture files and also imports ST-Replay or Amiga A.M.A.S. created Digitised Sound. The use of sound is optional. Its facilities include giving full details of disk space usage, location of all pages referring to any particular page, drawing, sound or variable, completely interactive development allowing changes to any part of a title at any time, the copying of drawings and sounds from other titles, the 'chaining' to other titles allowing the spreading of a story or textbook across several disks, and the provision of Demo mode, which allows a title to run on its own for demonstration purposes.

WHAT IS IT FOR? It can be used to create interactive adventure games, for profit, pleasure or instruction. Or in business to create a sales demonstration, or product servicing manual. Or in education: either using Talespin itself to teach the design and logic of computer systems in a non-technical way, or using Talespin as a vehicle for the teaching of any other subject. Or create an expert system with it. Or a school magazine. Or . . .

Talespin is ideal in most applications requiring inter-linked graphics and text and usable by persons with no programming expertise. And it's fun!

IMPORT ANY NEO/DEGAS/IFF PICTURE FILE OR USE TALESPINS OWN BUILT IN ART PACKAGE

ONCE DRAWN A PICTURE CAN BE CHANGED IN HEIGHT, WIDTH & COLOUR AND CAN APPEAR MANY TIMES ON MULTIPLE PAGES

POSITION A CHARACTER BY SIMPLY CLICKING & DRAGGING WITH THE MOUSE

LINK TEXT BOXES TO CHARACTERS AND ALLOW MULTIPLE CHOICES IN THE BOXES

OVER 100 COMMANDS ARE AVAILABLE FROM THE DEVELOPMENT MENUS

SOUNDS CAN BE IMPORTED FROM REPLAY 4 AND THEN REPLAYED AT DIFFERENT SPEEDS AND LINKED »

replay 4

microdeal

·A·M·A·S·

« SOUNDS CAN BE IMPORTED FROM A.M.A.S. AND THEN REPLAYED AT DIFFERENT SPEEDS AND LINKED

CREATE YOUR OWN COMMERCIAL PROGRAMS

Once you've finished developing your program whether it's an adventure, an educational program or other you can lock your program so on one can enter the development mode.

TALESPIN comes with a public domain display program called "Telltale": with this you can distribute your own programs or offer them to pubishers.

COMPLETE AND COMPREHENSIVE MANUAL

The manual comes as a complete Tutorial with a scaled down version of "The Grail" adventure and also a comprehensive reference guide.

ATARI ST
AMIGA
£29.95

TALESPIN COMMAND FACILITIES AVAILABLE

choose/create title ✻ save position ✻ load position ✻ select drive /folder ✻ auto start ✻ demo program ✻ help ✻ drawing define ✻ page define ✻ sound define ✻ variable define ✻ turn to another page ✻ add drawing to page ✻ modify palette ✻ select backround colour ✻ page entry options ✻ list conditions ✻ list/set variables ✻ move drawing ✻ swap colour ✻ shrink/reverse drawing ✻ change drawing order ✻ add/edit/delete text ✻ replace/remove drawing ✻ locate item ✻ show disk space ✻ show drawing/sound-/page size ✻ chain to other title ✻ and more

A press of the mouse button sends you scooting across the island

Unfortunately for the creators of this game, Astral Software, their power of thought was not strong enough to think up the islands and so they had to rely on Degas and draw each one dot by dot. Because of its incredible originality, Archipelagos runs the risk of being misunderstood, which would be a great shame as this may curtail ingenuity in the future. It is a game which you must try and understand and persevere with, and the rewards will be long-term entertainment. The scrolling in this game is nothing short of a major development in computer graphics - Archipelagos deserves to be tried - you will either love it or hate it!

JS

"As we look out on rain-swept streets and dream of tropical islands, so did the 'ancients'. But their yearning for paradise was so great that the islands became 'real in time'."

ARCHIPELAGOS

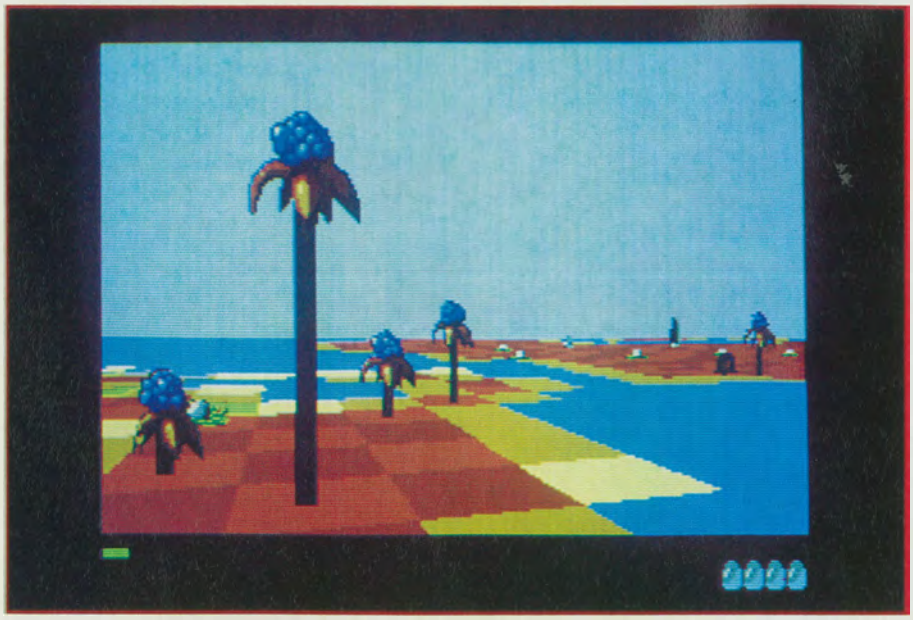
LOGOTRON (£19.95)

The story of Archipelagos is unnerving and chilling. The ancients created 'thought worlds' and the power of their minds combined, created many Archipelagos. Even as they slept, their morphogenic thought patterns generated thousands more. The ancients lived in a cold, dark and cloudy environment, but they must have known warmth and beauty to dream of the islands with such passion and vividness. These fantasy islands were perfect paradises, untainted by so-called civilization, until visitors came to the shores and staked their claim on every island by placing an obelisk of immutable granite, a symbol of their power. The ancients tried to 'de-imagine' the usurpers, but this angered them and they tracked down the hopeless dreamers, slaughtered them and drained their blood into the soil. Archipelagos was tainted, poisoned and uninhabitable, and now it is your task to clean up the islands and return them to their former beauty.

The screen displays a map of Archipelago 1, but you can choose any one of 9999 islands to begin the clean up mission. Transported to the island, it seems as if you are floating a few feet above the land, and moving the mouse to the left and right pans across the terrain. Archipelago 1 is a single patch of terrain, but other islands are made up of a number of strips and patches of land. Scattered around the terrain are stones and a variety of strange flora including trees, which at first sight seem quite benign and superficial. But some of these are the very spores which made the islands uninhabitable. To destroy the poison on the island you must destroy the stones which give power to the obelisk and once all of the energy has been absorbed from the stones, the obelisk is rendered vulnerable for 90 seconds in which you must return and destroy it. Failure to reach the monument in time results in your destruction. If an Archipelago is made up of a number of islands you must construct land bridges to connect the lands before you can destroy the obelisk.

If Logotron set out to create a strange game then they have certainly succeeded. Archipelagos isn't quite like anything I've played before, but once understood it becomes quite absorbing. The graphics are well presented, although they don't knock your eyes out. The sound, however, is little more than adequate. Movement is well portrayed, and the sensation can be likened to that of piloting a hovercraft. There are a colossal 9999 islands to conquer, each becoming just that little more taxing. Overall, Archipelagos is a fresh idea that grows on you as you play it. Full marks to the team responsible for the scenario.

NC

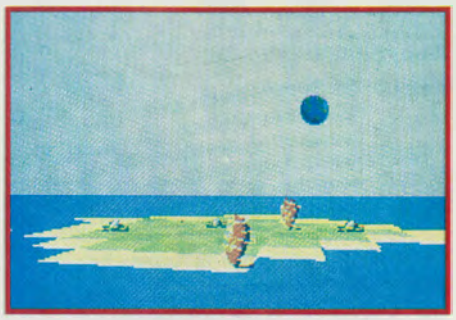


The strange trees grow and retract and lurch towards you like hideous trifids.

Because original concepts aren't exactly two-a-penny, I really feel I should like Archipelagos. Unfortunately, try as I might, I just couldn't get on with this strange game. It is extremely well presented, featuring both attractive and smooth-moving graphics and above average sound - yet it is the game's basis I can't get in to. There are a lot of islands to clear, each getting progressively harder and more devious, so the game will appeal top all you strategic thinkers out there. I'll admit to not really being a fan of this style of game, yet I do think that Archipelagos is the best of its kind - whatever that may be! If you fancy a change from the mainstream, or liked Firebird's Sentinel, take a look at this interesting offering.

SM

The patchwork terrain stretches out into the distance and runs into the sea, with green and yellow squares representing grass and sand. But the vengeful blood of the ancients is seeping through to poison the land. Tapping F2 reveals a map of the Archipelago showing your position in conjunction with the stones, the obelisk, vegetation and poisoned ground. Strange trees stand either side of the obelisk like organic sentinel. One of these arboreals is nothing more than an obstruction, but the other spins as it grows and retracts back into a spore. As it spins, it moves closer to you like a hideous trifid and the ancient's poisonous blood seems to seep from the roots and infect more of the island. Contact with this blood is fatal and with a heavy 'THUNK' noise, the tree lurches a



step closer with the poison spreading like a canker. Quickly, panning to the left and clicking the left-hand mouse button reveals a cross-hair sight which can be aimed at a square in the distance. Then pressing the right-hand button sends you hurtling across the terrain. To increase your energy and resolve against this aggressive environment, aiming the sights and clicking on small vegetation which looks like cauliflower, absorbs the energy as the shrub sinks into the ground. The greatest source of energy is within stones, the remains of the ancients. Centering the sights on the stone and clicking, saps the ancient's energy and the stone crumbles into rubble.

But the omnipresent trees move ever closer, usurping and infecting more ground. Bursting with energy you can turn your attention to the poisoned ground. The tree spins menacingly as it grows, retracts and jumps towards you. Quickly, you must aim the sights at the poisoned ground and tapping F2 disperses the poisoned blood - but this is just a temporary remedy. When an Archipelago comprises more than one island, you must join them up with a land bridge. This is achieved by moving near the shore, pointing the sight in the sea then tapping F1 places squares of sand across the water. Now you can reach stones on other islands and return quickly to the obelisk. Both the disinfection of the poison land and creating land bridges saps energy and so you must constantly find vegetation to replenish your strength.

The early Archipelagos prove to be mere holiday islands in comparison to later islands. The visitors turned a beautiful and untouched world into an evil and bitter place of death. The lost souls of the ancients are caught up in a whirlwind which wanders across Archipelagos in search of more souls. Their twisted and mutilated bodies are caught in a Necromancer which travels across the terrain making land unsafe to tread on wherever it settles. Suddenly, the skies darken and a thunder clap marks the hatching of another Blood Egg. There doesn't seem to be any permanent cure for this malignant and poisoned world.

STA

Pointing the cursor and pressing F2 disinfects the blood, but it is only a temporary remedy.

Some of the Archipelagos comprise a number of islands and in order to bring down the obelisk, you must join them up with land bridges. Pointing the cursor in the sea and tapping F2 places a square of land in the water.

Energy can be replenished by absorbing the goodness from vegetation and the rocks.

STA Rating

71%

GRAPHICS: 73%
SOUND: 55%

LASTING APPEAL: 76%
ADDICTIVENESS: 66%

DIFFICULTY: HARD
1ST DAY SCORE: N/A

This game has a few awkward problems which caused me to have a somewhat shaky start, but once I got into the meat of it I enjoyed it a lot more. In fact, after the opening sequences, I think it's probably the easiest quest game I've played. I liked the humour as well as the action, especially bumping into Leisure Suit Larry at the airport. I'm glad they changed the format from Police Quest 1, I can't begin to tell you how often I crashed that tiny car. The game has a slow start but a great ending.

SK

The driving sequence has been vastly improved. Now you simply type, "drive to ....".

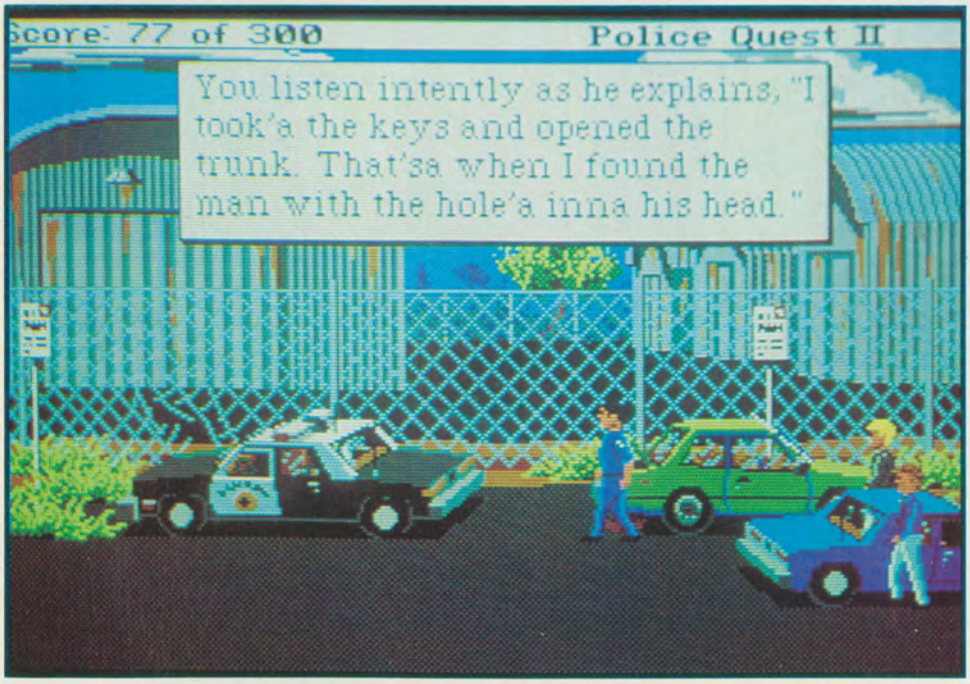
"A year has passed since you put Jesse Bains, the Death Angel, behind bars. But now he's on the loose again, looking for revenge, looking for you...."

POLICE QUEST II
THE VENGEANCE

SIERRA ON-LINE (£24.95)

A whole year has passed since you successfully managed to convict Jesse Bains. With your new-found position within the homicide division you had all but forgotten about the Death Angel. But, due to some sort of administrative error he has come up for retrial. You'll have to testify against him yet again. Still, with charges such as drug dealing, murder and attempted murder against him, it should be a quick hearing.

Having read the subpoena on your desk you think back. Whilst pondering over the past you're interrupted by Captain Fletcher: "Sonny, quit daydreaming. It appears Bains has broken out of the city jail, and what's more he's got a hostage!". No, it can't be. Bains free?



Officer Gelepsi comments on his find, it's up to you to examine the grisly sight.

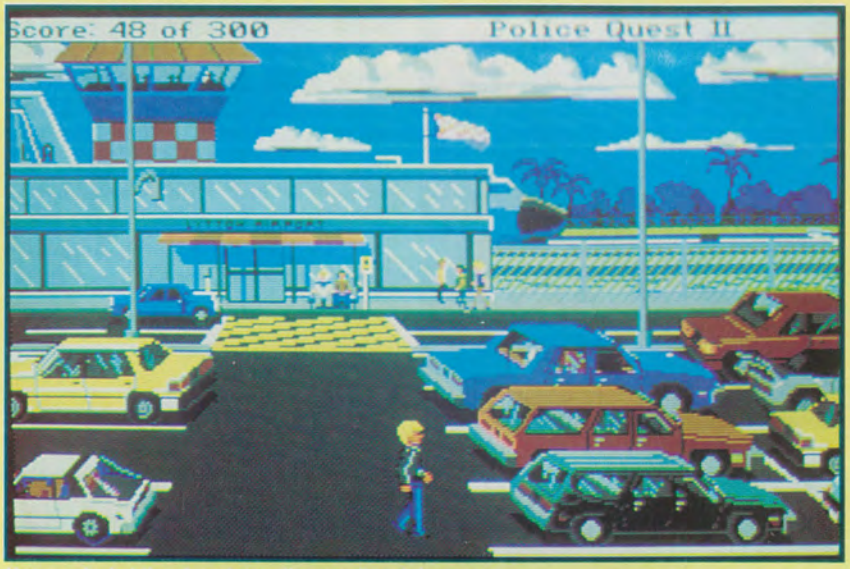
You are assigned, with your partner, Keith, to the Bains' case. Having collected your things you head for the jail. Maybe you'll get a lead there. Yep, Bains made off with the correctional officer in a blue Corvette. You head back to the office only to be redirected by dispatch. It appears the suspect's car has been found in a shopping mall car park. Upon arrival you survey the scene and gather any evidence. What's this? A rather upset lady explains how her car's been stolen.... Bains must have it; pausing to get the licence plate number, you jump back into your car.

Searching the streets for a lead, you find nothing. Suddenly, dispatch reports of something down at Cotton Cove. Pulling hard right on the wheel you turn the car around and head south-east. Upon arrival at the Cove you find a marked squad car parked near a phone booth. "About a'time too!", exclaims officer Gelepsi as he introduces you to a frightened jogger. What? Footprints, blood, rustling bushes? You head over to investigate. Carefully drawing your guns, both you and Keith survey the area. Then, from behind a bush, Bains appears. "This one's for you Pig!", he screams as he opens fire. You instinctively return a shot and....

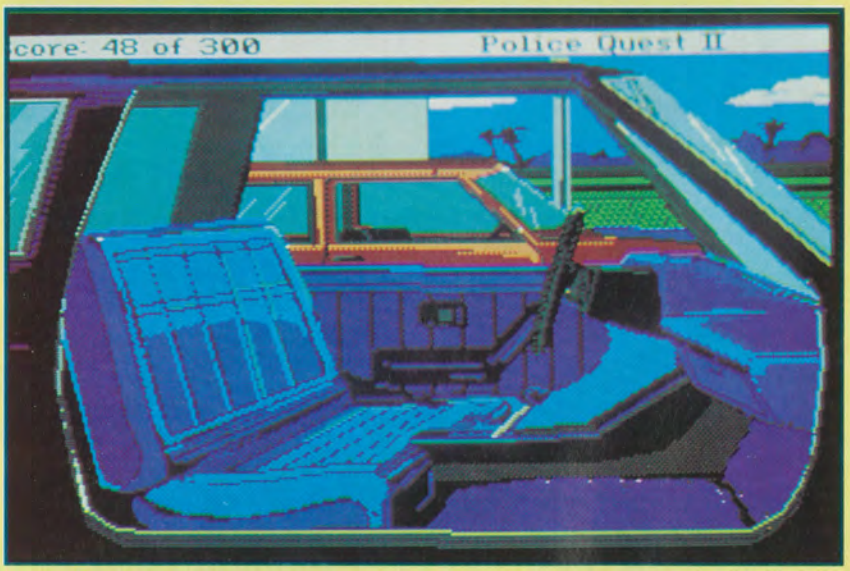
Police Quest II - The Vengeance, has finally arrived. The storyline fol-

Having played all of the recent Sierra games I must admit to this probably being the best yet. The graphics are excellent and the sound is also very good - incredible if you're using the midi option! The game was slow to start, probably due to my lack of knowledge of the US law. However, as I became more proficient the story unfolded at an exciting pace. The difficulty level seems to have been set at just the right level. Time after time I halted play, while I pondered over what to do next. Undoubtedly, I have to find Police Quest 2 guilty of engrossing gameplay and, therefore, I sentence it to remain on my software shelf for the rest of its natural life.

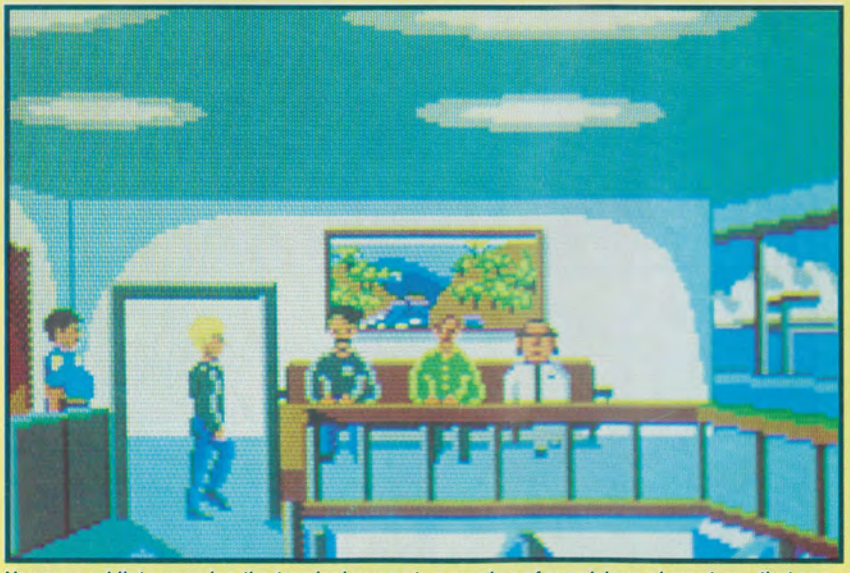
NC



Upon arrival at the airport you discover the stolen car....



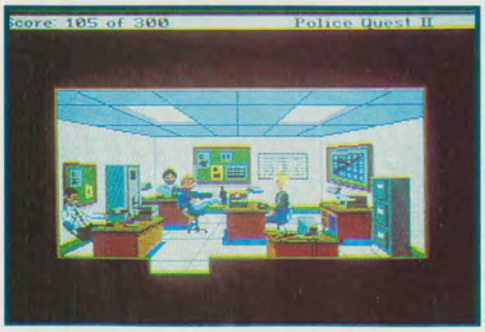
....searching inside you discover nothing noteworthy.



However, whilst surveying the terminal you note a number of suspicious characters - that one in the white suit, for instance.

lows on nicely from Sonny Bonds' beat-pounding days and oozes with atmosphere. The graphics have been created with Sierra's SCI creator, and are twice the resolution of the previous Police Quest game. The sound, too, has been improved. In fact, if you have access to either a Roland MT32 or a Casio CZ101 synthesizer then you're in for a rare treat, all of the new Sierra adventures now support full midi output.

The plot follows the antics of a homicidal maniac, namely Jesse Bains, bent on revenge. As you progress through the game it becomes apparent that this crazy will stop at nothing. Much of Police Quest II has actually been based on real cases. Author Jim Walls, himself a retired American cop, has stuck rigidly to the book. Success can only, therefore, be achieved if the correct police procedures are followed. The collection of



evidence is essential - miss one piece and you could end up barking up the wrong tree. The game package includes a detailed homicide officer's guide, within which can be found very useful information relating to how you should conduct yourself.

Of course, Police Quest II takes place within the fictitious American city of Lytton. Therefore, the game does have some quirks which will undoubtedly throw British players. For instance, there are the obvious things like a car boot being called a trunk, and the not-so-obvious ones such as directory inquiries being available on 411 instead of 192. Still, once you've managed to overcome these minor colloquialisms the game soon becomes intriguing.

Police Quest I gave you an insight into the duty of an everyday uniformed officer; this second instalment looks

Tuesday night means a can of beer, a packet of crisps and Hill Street Blues. Sadly, Hill Street is about to leave us but, this game will help mollify the pain. Riding shotgun with our hero in a black and white must be the next best thing to sharing the action with Renko. This game had me playing until the early hours and I haven't done that since the last Sierra adventure. Let's face it, Sierra games are always a good buy and this one's no exception.

AM

deeper into the world of law enforcement. If you carry out your investigations correctly you'll find yourself diving into undersea worlds, coping with panic-stricken passengers on a sky-jacked airliner, and even wondering what to do as you girlfriend has a .357 Magnum pointed at her head. Have you got what it take to be top cop? Can you live life on the edge? Or will you fall foul of the Death Angel's vengeful plans?

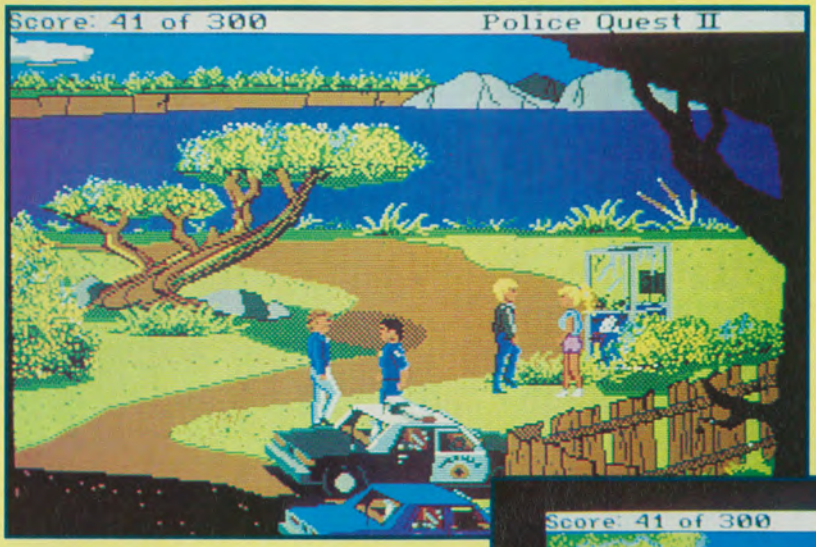
STA

STA Rating

84%

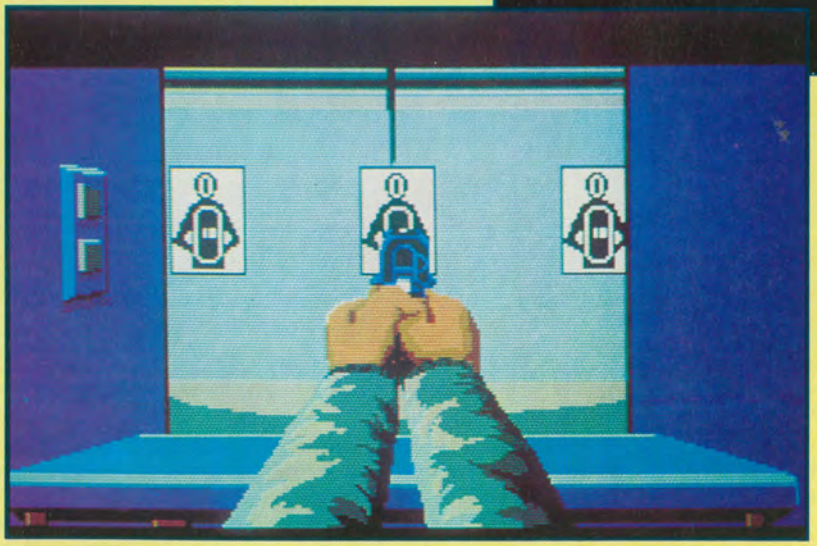
TEXT/GRAPHICS: 86%
GAMEPLAY: 79%

LASTING APPEAL: 81%
ADDICTIVENESS: 85%



A terrified jogger explains about the blood - sodden tracks next to the river. Scared out of her wits, she goes on to tell you about the suspicious rustling in the bushes.

Drawing your guns, both you and Keith search the immediate vacinity. In the confusion that follows you unfortunately take a slug in the chest.



Your suspicions are fatally confirmed. Jesse Bains, the Death Angel, certainly had his sights set on you, maybe if you had taken some time in the Police shooting gallery you'd have got him first.

CHUCKIE EGG II

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(Choccy Egg)

If you have played the classic computer game Chuckie Egg you hardly need an introduction to this "cracking" sequel, which takes us from the hen house to the chocolate Easter egg.

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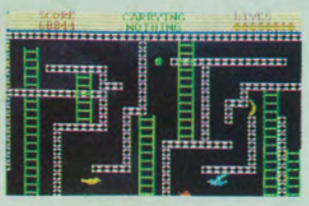

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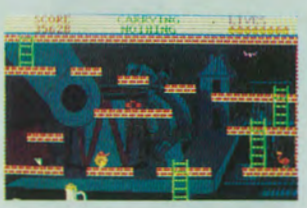

Screen shots from Amiga Version

CHUCKIE EGG

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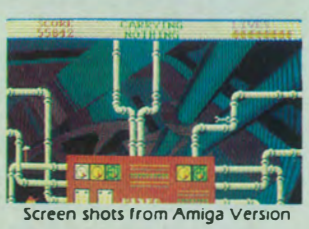

Screen shots from Amiga Version

Review of Chuckie Egg by Computer Games Week

Gameplay 90%, Grafix 85%, Overall 89%

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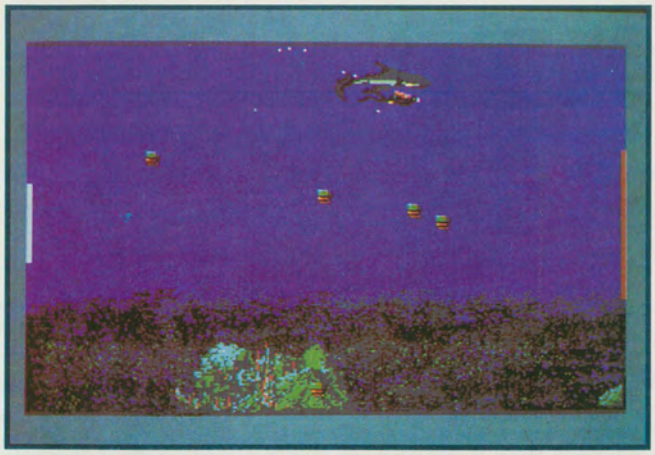
The waters are infested with sharks and octupi and contact depletes moranes energy. As the timed explosives sink to the sea bed, you have thirty seconds to return to the sub and leave.



"Glamorous nautical movies were all the rage in the sixties. But then the space age came along and diving bells and mini-subs just couldn't compete with X-wing fighters and Death Stars."

OPERATION NEPTUNE

INFOGRAMES (£19.95)

This aquatic adventure contains the obligatory evil despot with a despicable plan of global proportions, a cast of a thousand dispensable minions and an outnumbered archetypal hero. The evil one, Mr Ming, has built an underwater network which is dedicated to producing a series of killer robots. You are Bob Morane, a Free World Secret agent, whose task it is to infiltrate and destroy this underwater network and thwart Ming's plans. Frenetic digitized music sets the pace for this typical James Bond-style adventure, as two seaplanes fly across a beautiful sunset sky and disappear into the horizon. Two parachute canopies float down to the sea, and the men jump on water-jet bikes and race to the forefront of the screen. Locked in combat, the joystick controls Morane's jet bike and repeatedly pressing the firebutton eventually kicks the adversary off his bike. With the enemy left floundering in shark-infested waters, a sub emerges from the depths and Morane climbs aboard and into the tower - the mission begins!

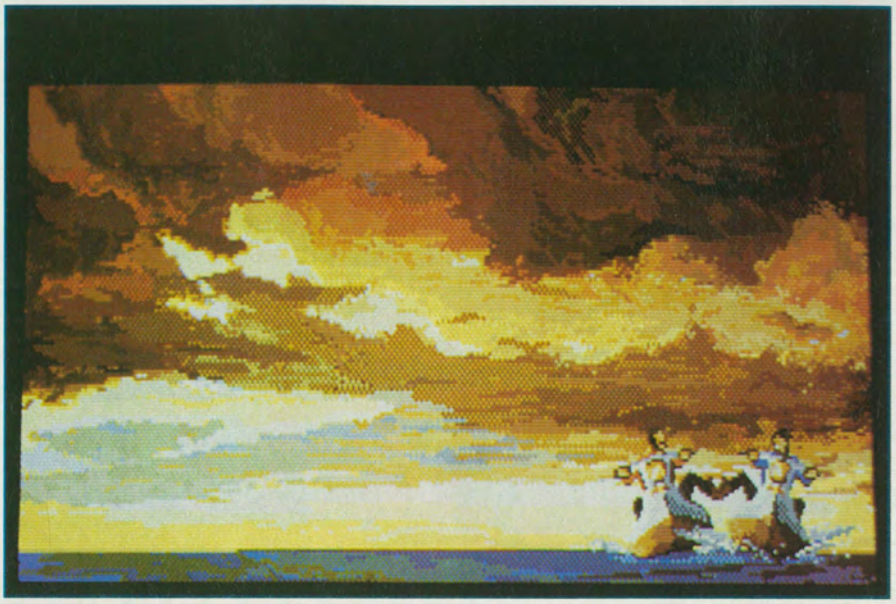
The sub descends to the sea bed and moving the joystick left and right enables you to look around the immediate area. Pushing forward sends the sub shuttling through the water and, using various navigational equipment, your task is to seek and destroy Ming's sub-aqua bases and break the energy links. The majority of the instrumentation and controls are cursor/icon activated, and clicking on the sub's radar screen reveals a map which pinpoints the position of your targets, as well as your allied bases. Moving a cross-hair sight, you can identify and select a target and the sub's automatic pilot guides you to the base, although you must steer around rocks and avoid mines. As you draw near the target, pulling back on the joystick kills the engine and that sub sonar noise begins to pulsate like a heart beat. Armed with missiles and bombs, it is tempting to blast the base, although such a blatant attack would alert the enemy

If this had a bit more to it, it would be perfect for any budding secret agents out there. Somehow, Operation Neptune smacks of Hostages. I don't know why, but what I do know is that I am doubtful of its lasting appeal. As usual, the presentation is up to Infogrames' high standard, with some atmospheric undersea battles and the film-like jet-ski opening sequence, but once you have played successfully through it, there is nothing to come back for. If you enjoyed Hostages and still play it now, I think you will like Operation Neptune. But if, like me, you have now learnt that its enjoyment was very short-lived, I recommend you try before you buy.

SM

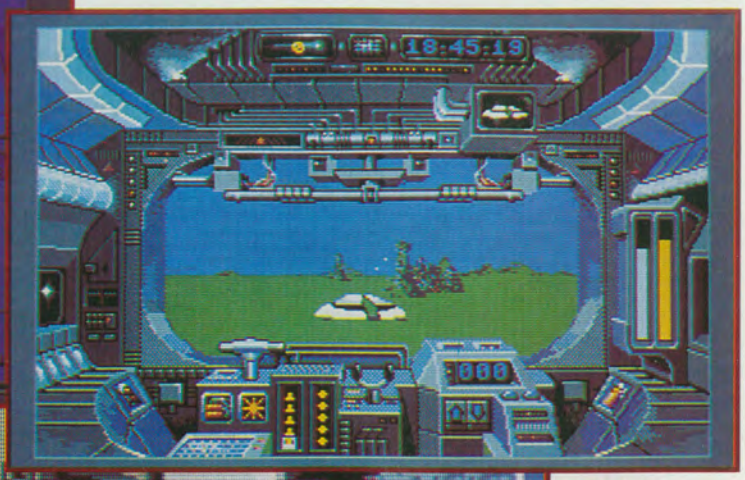
I first previewed 'rushes' of Operation Neptune a year ago, and it was obvious that the intention was to make it an interactive 'movie' game. This formula was very successful with Infogrames's last major release, Hostage, and so my expectations of 'Neptune' were high. Again, emphasis has been placed on the visual and sound effects and the controls in all the sections of the game are remarkably tangible and responsive. Also there is enough variety in the game-play to maintain your interest over the short-term. But behind a seemingly flawless facade hides a game which has its weaknesses and limitations. These faults are difficult to clarify, but after playing the game for some time, the task of blowing up Ming's underwater network became both perfunctory and menial, and for this reason I seriously doubt the long-term interest of this game.

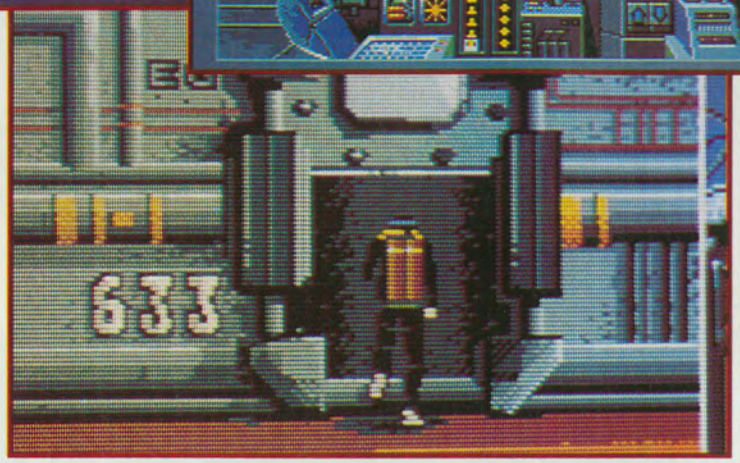
JS



The warning system warns you of an approaching patrol and selecting sea scooter, Morane must fight them face-to-face.

Using the radar screen you can identify possible targets and plot your course.





Attacking Ming's base from the sub will alert the enemy and so a more stealthy approach is required. Morane dons scuba gear and enters the diving chamber.

and so a more stealthy approach is required.

Selecting an aqualung icon motivates Morane to squeeze into his frogman gear and an animation sequence shows him entering the diving chamber. He emerges from the sub into water infested by shark, octupi and Ming's morons, who all conspire to stop him. Morane is very manoeuvrable and armed with a seemingly limitless supply of harpoons; you can keep both aquatic and human enemy at bay. Pressing the 'Return' key drops time bombs with thirty-second delay switches, and as the explosive devices sink to the seabed, you must quickly move Morane back to the safety of the sub. As the sub accelerates away, a dull explosion shakes the vessel and a hologram image of a distressed Mr Ming appears to indicate that the base has been destroyed. But there are many more bases to eliminate. The most effective method of undermining Ming's defences is to break the energy canals which link up the bases. These canals contain energy repeaters which, when destroyed, isolate the bases, leaving them to self-destruct through energy starvation.

Ming's men constantly patrol the bases and as the sub comes under fire, you must select undersea scooter and fight them face-to-face. The screen shows an Afterburner-style view of Morane scooting through the weeds, and you must guide him around the mines, fire at the patrol and avoid retaliatory fire. But this confrontation is both time and energy-consuming, and so to avoid the patrols, you can launch decoy devices which emit the same sonar signals as the sub and nearby patrols will home in on the decoys until their three-minute active period has finished. A more effective way of undermining the patrols is to locate their living quarters on the map, locate and destroy it. But Ming's malignant face constantly appears to inform you that the network has been reinforced and time is running out!

STA

STA Rating

57%

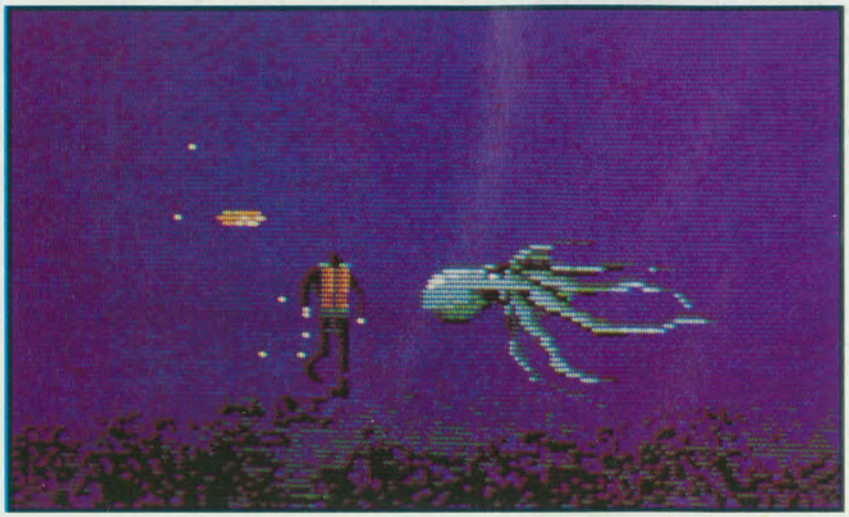
GRAPHICS: 62%
SOUND: 52%

LASTING APPEAL: 49%
ADDICTIVENESS: 56%

DIFFICULTY: AVERAGE
1ST DAY SCORE: N/A

Operation Neptune has many similarities to Infogrames' previous title, Hostages. The game's graphics are extremely well presented and most atmospheric. The sound, too, is well implemented and adds nicely to the game's overall feeling. Having said that, however, the game is lacking in something, I'm not too sure quite what it is, but the different scenes just don't seem to gel together enough. Operation Neptune is definitely an enjoyable game, although for some reason I would question its long term appeal.

NC



"U.S. Gold present Road Blasters, the most effective solution to Sunday drivers, milk floats and farming vehicles."

Who better than Outrun converters, Probe, to do a Road Blasters conversion? This is a thoroughly enjoyable game which benefits from a clear graphical presentation and responsive controls. There are enough levels which effectively increase the level of difficulty just beyond your ability and there is enough variety in the game-play to keep you interested for a while. But like its arcade counterpart, Road Blasters is designed for the occasional five-minute bash, so don't expect it to leave the disk box very often

JS.

ROADBLASTERS

U.S.GOLD (£19.95)

There is definitely something lacking in this conversion, but I can't put my finger on what it is. The graphics are nice, with the striped road flicking past without causing head aches, and the update on the other cars and vehicles is reasonably smooth. Sound, however, is minimum, with a 'burbling' tune accompanying play. Perhaps it the difficulty that is wrong - or rather, the lack of it! I spent ages racing and shooting up the three stages without ever running out of fuel, and, because of this, boredom soon crept in. As I seem to remember, the arcade version of Roadblasters was fairly difficult, relying on quick reflexes so that you could collect as much fuel as possible and avoid any of the other road hogs. I think that this is what is conspicuous by its absence in the conversion, and, because of this, I can only recommend it to the most ardent of Roadblasters fans out there.

SM

Whenever I'm driving in a blind hurry, the chances are that I'll be held up by anything from a NATO tank-training manoeuvre to an N-registered, mustard-coloured Allegro. This frustrating and all-too-frequent occurrence is probably the main reason why Road Blasters is so popular in the arcades. Imagine lifting a panel on the dash board, pressing a button and launching a couple of missiles to clear the road ahead. After an extraordinarily long loading time, you are offered a choice of three racing venues called: Bubble City, Forest Sector and Desert Region. Selecting Bubble City, the beginners' race, and the most favourable choice of control in this particular game, the mouse, the screen switches to the track. You control your futuristic racing car from a rear view, Outrun-style, facing down a road which leads to, but never arrives at, Bubble City.

There is no indication that the race has begun, but a press of the left-hand button is enough to bring the car into a wheelie and it accelerates away with a screech of tyres. The effect of movement and speed is well simulated with a striped terrain either side of the road and rows of roadside objects. The traffic on the bubble city road is very conveniently spaced out and the great mouse controls enable you to dodge, weave and blast the road clear. Time to graduate to the Forest sector! This leafy road is more winding and densely packed with fast-moving Stinger cars and command wagons that require dozens of blasts to destroy - they look like Volvo 740s! Your car gulps gas like there's no tomorrow and so you must replenish the fuel at every opportunity. This fuel is in the shape of green spheres which bounce along the track and you must drive through the greens to absorb the gas - looks like lead-free is hear to stay! As you progress through each stage, you are confronted by even more hazards; your instrumentation warns of mines on the road, then motorbikes and jeeps weave across the road throwing Spiker grenades in your path and oil slicks send you skidding across the track.

The road is long and lined with gun turrets which only have eyes for you. Fuel becomes more scarce and, like the M25, there's not a service station in sight. Then suddenly, a saviour in the shape of a support jet swoops down with a consignment of engine Boosters or weaponry beefers. These supplies could be Nitro Injectors that boost your speed, Cruise Missiles which can even blast the Volvo command cars off the road, or even Electro Shields which momentarily protect you from collisions, mines and spikers. From the forest to the desert. Usually associated with wide and empty spaces, this desert road is jammed solid with road hogs and roadside gun turrets which are as regular as Little Chefs, and there are even fewer opportunities to top up your fuel - the road just seems to go on and on and on!

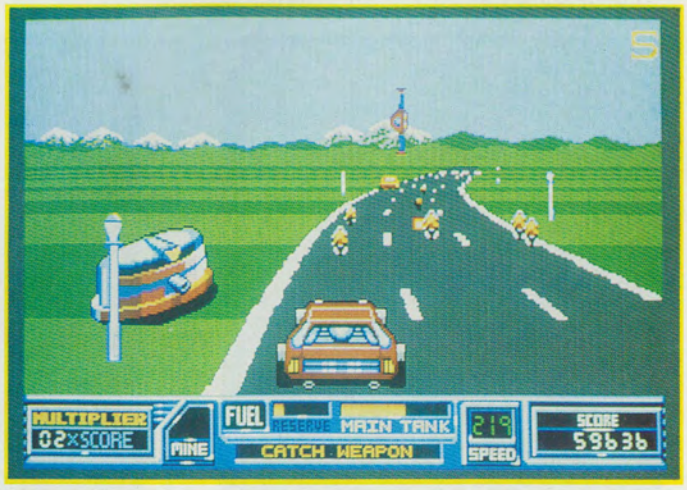
STA

STA Rating 63%

GRAPHICS: 65%
SOUND: 50%

LASTING APPEAL: 56%
ADDICTIVENESS: 67%

DIFFICULTY: AVERAGE
1ST DAY SCORE: 131740



In Road Blasters, the road really is a killer. The mouse has great control over the car as you dodge, weave and fire.

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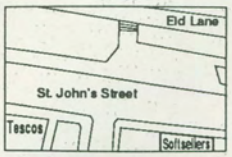

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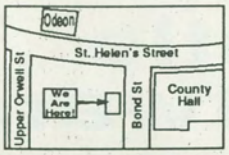

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JUG

"In their latest release, 'JUG', Microdeal pour a hearty helping of arcade refreshment - and not an E number in sight."

Microdeal (£19.95)

STA Rating **55%**

GRAPHICS: 49%
SOUND: 48%

LASTING APPEAL: 52%
ADDICTIVENESS: 58%

DIFFICULTY: AVE/HARD
1ST DAY SCORE: 20785

I enjoyed JUG, which I suppose is the main thing. Microdeal have combined two features which have proved to be popular in arcade entertainment: a puzzling maze and an absorbing shoot'em-up. The security system really steals the show as these variform machines display incredible individual intelligence, and I particularly like the limpet crabs that scurry across the ceiling, fire and scamper to safety. The controls are responsive and the task of weaponry and fuel replenishment has been well implemented. Judged on its own merit, JUG is a fine game, but it will remind you of a dozen games you have played before.

JS

In this bout of arcade fun, Microdeal suggest that you are an interactive humanoid composed of Titanium fleximetal and organic materials, and because of your barrel-chested profile you are rather unkindly nicknamed JUG - flattery will get them nowhere! The game is set beneath the surface of the planet Spiraeus, whose core is being attacked by a virus, and your

task is to pilot JUG through this perilous subterranean labyrinth and seek and destroy this swelling tumour. The planet is divided into four zones, which in turn contain four sectors connected by deep corridors and passageways. But, as usual, the planet's security and alarm system has not been informed of your mercy mission and to them, good ol' barrell-chested JUG is a danger to the planet's safety. There are three levels of difficulty to choose which progressively increase the strength, numbers and intelligence of the security system.

JUG appears at the mouth of the subterranean network and a ceiling sprinkler emits a shower of energy-sapping laser stars to welcome you. Quickly, wrenching the joystick upwards keeps JUG airborne, but the craft succumbs to the pull of gravity immediately you release. Equipped with a basic fore-mounted laser, which can be beefed up during the course of the game, you must guide JUG through the labyrinth, past piles of skeletons and skulls which sit like ominous sentinels as the security system hurls a constant barrage of opposition. All hell breaks loose as metallic limpet crabs scurry across the ceiling firing lasers in all directions; spheres spin through the corridors and a multitude of craft fly in various formation scattering laser fire. The screen scrolls in all eight directions as JUG moves across, up and down.

The craft is capable of carrying three different calibre of laser weaponry which can be collected by moving JUG over the weapon and pulling back on the joystick. Plasma Fire sends a powerful laser bolt towards its target, although this power is sacrificed for painfully slow fire speed and the Plasma cannon is a cumbersome weapon. Surrounded by a swarm of smaller craft, the quick firing cannon is effective, but the most devastating is Zeaquark partical emitter - code name 'wipeout'. With a selection of weaponry on board, you can select a calibre and use it . JUG's fuel must also be replenished at every possible opportunity by absorbing fuel pods which are scattered about the subterrain. Progress in this game relies a great deal on your ability to mentally map out this labyrinthian game and negotiate a safe path around the security system. The odds are certainly stacked against you but JUG does have one ally - a two-way teleport system which can whisk you out of danger and beam the bewildered and beaten JUG to another section. The problem with using the teleport system is that you immediately lose your bearings. While JUG fumbles around in the dark, the tumour is swelling and slowly killing the planet.

STA

The preview shots of J.U.G. made it look like a shoot'em-up set against an organic backdrop - I just wish it was! The action is set at a slow pace, yet when the alien formations do appear on screen, they are so fast you can normally only pick off one or two of them off. Additionally, the task is rather long-winded and uninspiring, offering lots of lasting appeal, but very little excitement. If the idea of combining a shoot'em-up with a maze game appeals to you, then take a look at J.U.G. But, if, like me, you're not really fussed, I think your money would be better spent elsewhere.

SM

Pot-bellied JUG must battle through a confusing maze and avoid fire from the security system.

What seperates Cosmic Pirate from the majority of shoot'em-ups is that there is a choice of game-play, but you have to earn enough credit to be able to afford the more interesting missions. There is more to this game than just keeping various shaped sprites at bay, pirate's game-play has been cleverly constructed to really test your eye-to-hand reflexes. The simulations are diverse enough to keep your interest and having to earn enough for bolt-on weaponry and hardware is an enjoyable pre-occupation. Guaranteed non-stop action in this traditional arcade game with a difference.

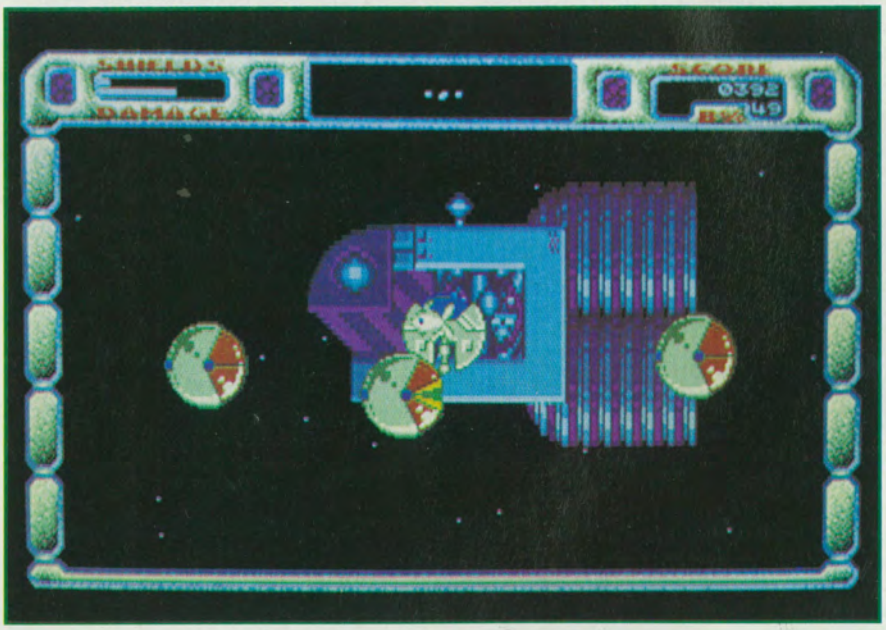
JS

"Ahoy there! Get ready to don your buckled space boots and sparkly eye-patch, as the latest from Outlaw sets you the task of becoming a..."

COSMIC PIRATE

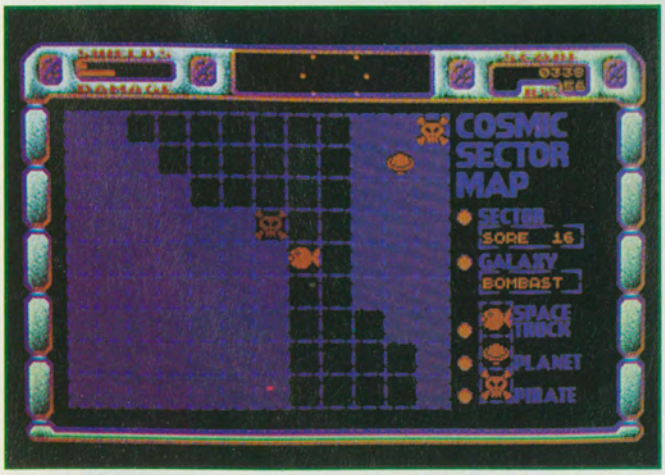
OUTLAW (£19.95)

As you prepare to disarm the Space Truck, several of its minions attempt to protect it. However, there won't put up a lot of resistance and you will soon be towing it back to NEST 51.



Guy Manly is a pirate. Not someone who rips off software, or sails the seven seas saying things like "pieces of eight" or "aha, ya pesky landlubber", you see, Guy is a space pirate. It all began a few years back when he committed a rather serious crime. Nobody knows what the crime was, as he killed all of the witnesses, but, whatever it was, it was bad enough to cause him to steal a space craft and leave the planet. After several fruitless attempts at getting a job, Guy realised that the only way he could make a (dis)honest profit would be by becoming a Cosmic Pirate. Unfortunately, even the profits gained in this profession were also limited, as the entire pirates' network was controlled by a corrupt ruling body known only as 'the Council'. Once you had joined their network, you were given the coordinates to an easy-prey cruiser, along with all the details of its armaments and cargo, so, all you had to do was fight your way to the cruiser, disable it, and bring it back to the Council. Once returned, the Council would take their 99% cut and let you keep the rest.

Once you have signed on to the central register, you are ready to begin your life of piracy as Guy Manly. Before you can blast out into space and hijack the first cruiser you come across, you must prove your destructive capabilities to the Council. To do this, you must use one of the many simulators available on the menu screen. Each simulator offers you the chance to practise on a wave of particularly dangerous inhabitants, and, once proficiency is gained, the Council will allow you the chance to take an easy mission. Each mission code is preceded by a letter, ranging from the very easy 'A', and getting harder as you progress through the alphabet. Newcomers to cosmic piracy can only take an 'A' mission, but once it is completed, you can go up to 'B' standard, and so on.



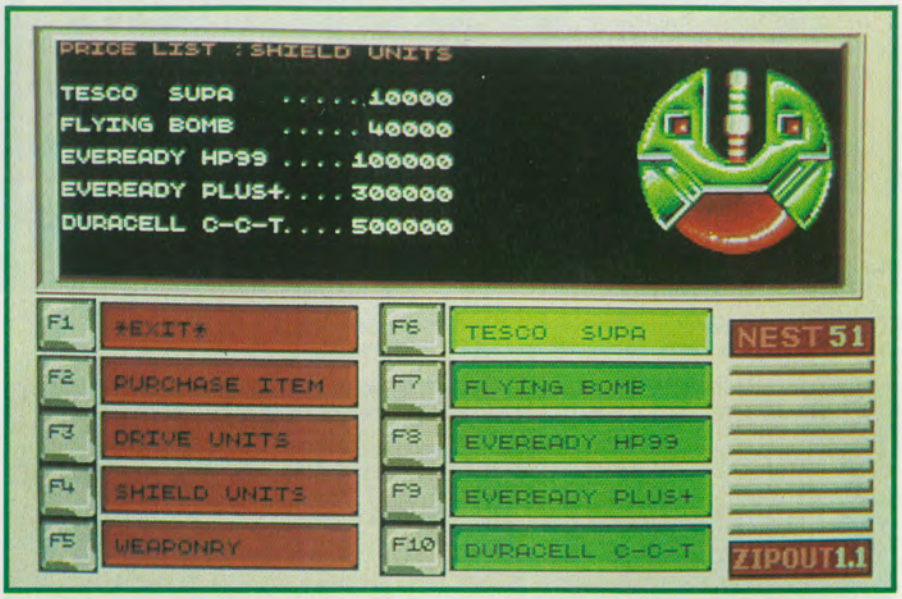
The intergalactic map. The blue squares indicate that a toll is needed, and, also shown, are the whereabouts of the Space Truck and any other pirates.

Having launched, your ship is shown flying over the NEST 51 space station. It pauses just outside its radar range, and is teleported to a sector adjacent to that of the Space Cruisers'. Once your ship has reformed, it is time to explore the eight-way scrolling playing area. Positioned on the screen is a cross-like cursor, and by following this you can make your way to the toll station which will allow you access to the next sector. To pay the toll, you must gain credits by shooting the various space ships within the area and collecting any tokens they relinquish. To

Well, what a game Cosmic Pirate is; Outlaw Productions have come up with a first-rate multi-directional scrolling shoot'em-up. What's more, there's a whole lot more to the game than originally meets the eye. Cosmic Pirate could be likened to Elite, but without the trading element. The way in which you must build up the capabilities of your ship gives the game a challenging appeal. However, once you've fully armed your ship with all the available add-ons, the game still remains challenging. The graphics are splendid, the parallax scrolling being particularly eye-catching. The thing I liked about the game was the way in which it saves your progress as you complete each level - after all it's really heartbreaking to see your ship destroyed after you've refurbished it.

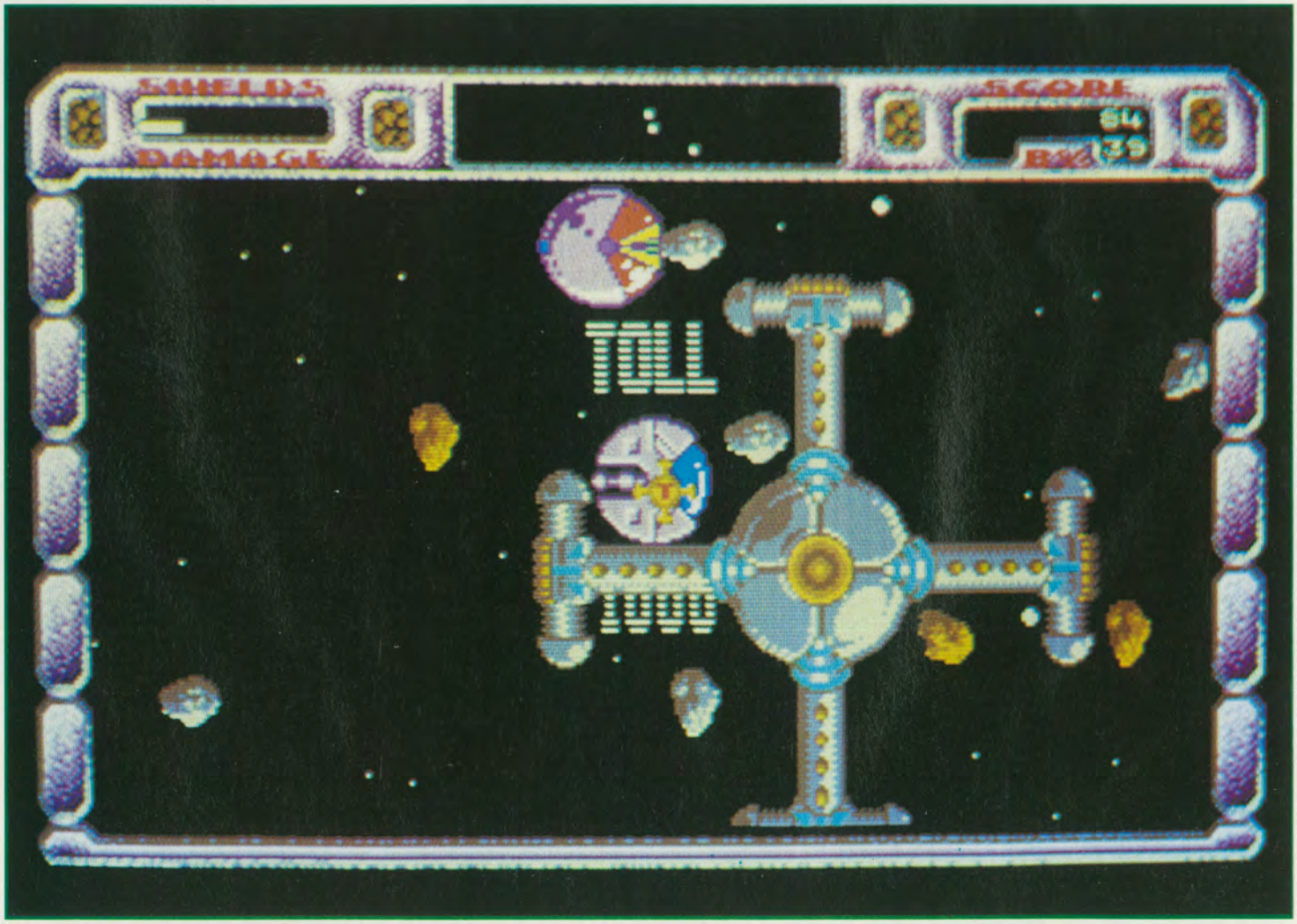
NC

Once you have made sufficient money, you can refit your ship. A sensible Cosmic Pirate's first possession should be a decent set of shields as these reduce the rate of damage, and, consequently, makes progress through the alien-infested sectors safer. However, at a later stage, better propulsion and weaponry can be added.



begin with, the toll is 1000 credits, but as you make your way through the levels it gets steadily higher. Above the main action there are two significant screens: an area map, showing the whereabouts of the enemy forces; and a status bar dictating the strength of your shields, and the ship's damage level. The ship can only be harmed when the shield level is exhausted, though, so flying away from trouble can be used to replenish any lost shields. However, should your damage meter reach 'critical', your ship will explode, and you will be sent back to base to practise on the simulators once more.

When docked, the screen changes to a galactic map. Marked on this map are the locations of any local planets, other pirates and, more importantly, the space cruisers. The position of your ship is indicated by a skull and crossbones, and this icon



As you engage the enemy in combat, the toll-gate displays its price. At this stage it is only a paltry 1000 credits, but as you progress it can reach into the tens of thousand mark!

With its sheer depth and addictive shoot'em-up gameplay, Cosmic Pirate ranks as one of the most ingenious games ever to appear on the ST. Right from the beginning it is user-friendly, allowing you to practise on the sub-game simulators, and, as it saves after each mission, you don't have to keep going through the same boring stages over and over again. Battling your way through to the fish-like Cruisers can be hard work as the number of assailants is seemingly infinite, yet with a bit of thought and a lot of firing, the stages can be whizzed through at quite a speed. The graphics throughout are excellent, and I was particularly impressed with their speed when the player's ship tows the massive cruiser behind it. If you want a game that will last you ages, get Cosmic Pirate. But, be warned, it's pretty engrossing out there in the intergalactic oceans.

SM

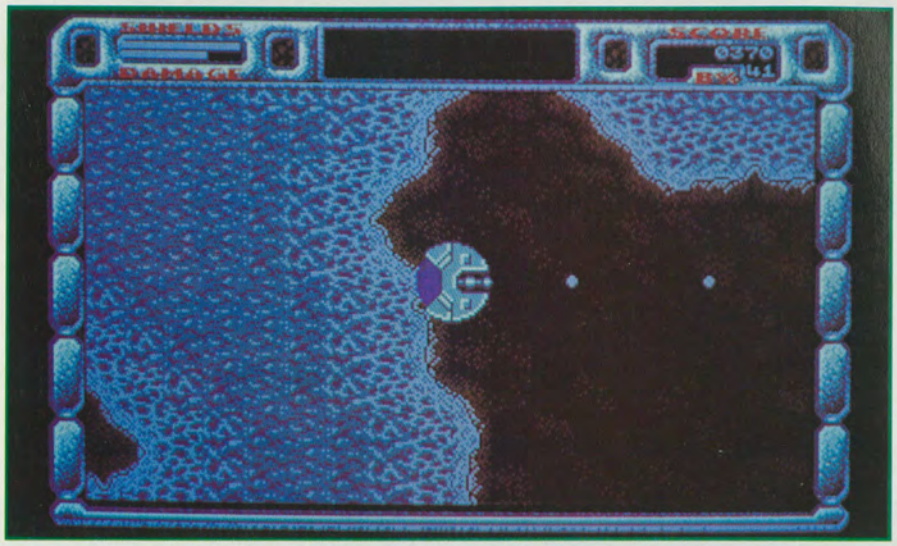
STA Rating 80%

GRAPHICS: 81%
SOUND: 65%

LASTING APPEAL: 82%
ADDICTIVENESS: 81%

DIFFICULTY: AVERAGE
1ST DAY SCORE: 18333

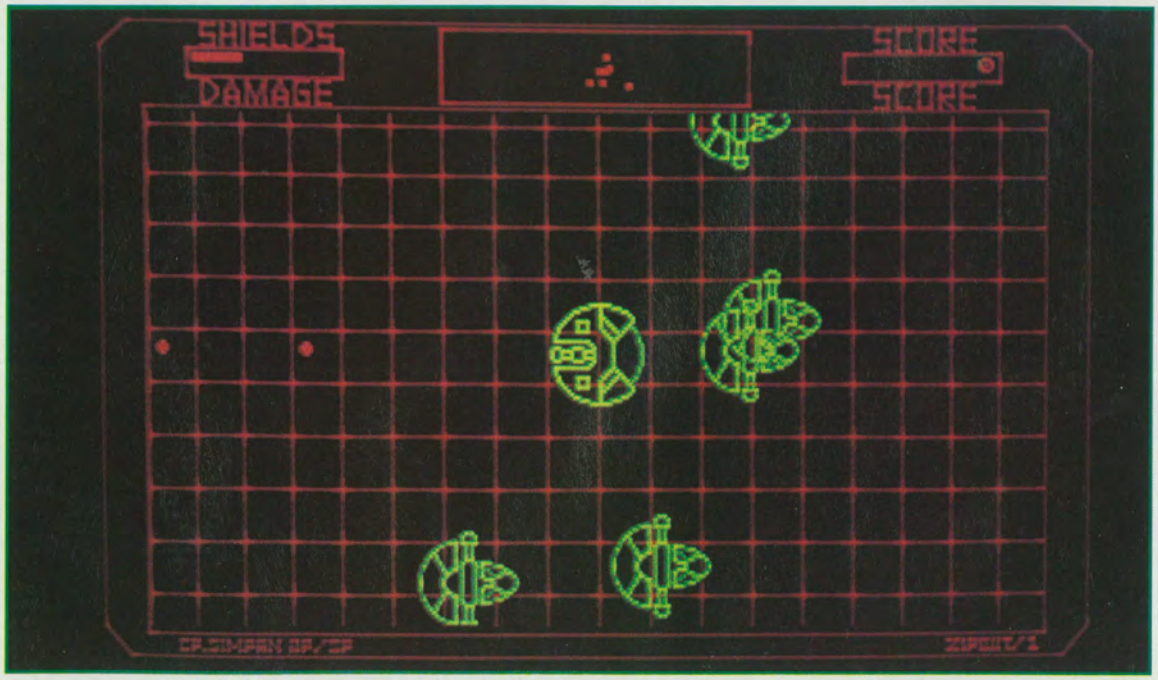
Scouring the surface of a planet in search of the massive alien ship. If a budding pirate can manage to destroy it, it can be worth up to a whopping 50,000 credits.



can be moved one square in any direction adjacent to its present position. If the square your cursor is positioned on is black, there is no toll fee and you can just pass through, but if it us blue, it will be inhabited by more enemy craft and will require another toll. When you have chosen your next stopping point, 'fire' transports you to it.

When you eventually reach the Space Cruiser's orbit, you will once again have to fight your way through the multitude of swarming aliens. Finding the enormous leviathan is achieved in the same manner as in locating the toll beacon, only the cross-like cursor has been replaced by a fish. The reason for this is that every Cruiser you attempt to disable is in the shape of a different fish - starting from a delicate minnow all the way up to a gigantic shark! Each ship requires a number of hits to destroy it, and, once successful, the immortal legend, 'Ship Destroyed', appears and it is time to dock. By positioning yourself at the helm of the Cruiser, a towing rod links you both and you begin to tow the colossus back to the NEST 51 base. During this interlude, any foolhardy ships that get in your way can be shot for a considerable bonus. Once you have reached the base, your game is automatically saved and the Council take their cut, which means you can now spend the remainder on improving your ship's weaponry, shields or speed.

STA



Before you can embark on a mission, you must prove your offensive capabilities to the Council. This particular simulator is free of charge, but ones featuring Space Trucks and harder aliens will cost you several thousand credits a go.

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"I.S.S. is yet another game in which the word 'balls' figures strongly. But in this case, it is not a derogatory comment."

I.S.S.

ELECTRIC DREAMS (£19.95)

I.S.S. is no ordinary marble or ball, and the imaginative scenario attempts to humanize what to all the world looks like a pinball. In fact, the ball is a so-called Fighter Sphere which contains a member of the Sphere Corp, and your task is to rescue your Colonel-in-Chief, Matt Ridley, who has been caught in the 'Death Run'. Your overall mission is to manoeuvre the fighting sphere through the labyrinthian 'Run' and locate Ridley, which activates an automatic Shuttle Sphere rescue. There are eight levels or so-called Plates in the Run, and each arena contains a maze more confusing than the last. The plates are set in tiers, four deep, and each floor is covered with Tectronic tiles which affect your Fighting Sphere in a variety of ways. First, the screen shows a map of the Death Run and using a cursor you can place four ammunition dumps throughout the level which can replenish your weaponry during the course of the game.

The sphere bounces into a clearing somewhere in the foreboding and unwelcoming Death Run and the joystick takes control. You must get to grips with the free-rolling action of the ball, and immediately recognise the different Tectonic tiles and how they affect your sphere. These variform tiles are the key to the game and they can either help, hinder or eliminate you. One type of tile decreases the sphere's volume which enables it to travel down narrow channels in the maze and travel up ramps, while other tiles increase its size. But if the ball has reached its maximum size and you cannot reach a volume decreaser, you remain stuck in the maze. Other tiles decrease the sphere's mass or weight and you can traverse damaged and weak areas within the Run without falling through the floor. The sphere is far more manoeuvrable when it is small, but you must also find the tiles that increase the sphere's mass and speed in order to break open some walls in the labyrinth.

As described, tiles which change the size and speed of the sphere can either help or hinder your progress, but there are some which are designed specifically to obstruct and restrain you. For example, 'Prisons' immobilize the sphere, 'Revolvers' send the ball spinning uncontrollably over other tiles, and Rebound Boosters send it bouncing into danger. You can move to the other plates in the Run by manoeuvring the sphere over the top of white or black holes and the occasional transporter can lift the sphere over walls. But there are fixed stages to the game which must be completed in a specific order, and so you must search each plate thoroughly before traversing to another level. With the sphere at its maximum volume and velocity a short cut can be achieved by busting through certain walls. While at its lightest, the sphere can be rolled up ramps to jump walls.

As if the Tectonic tiles were not enough, there are dozens of adversaries to contend with. The sphere is armed with an ineffective cannon which must keep dozens of marauders at bay, as the slightest contact with these fiends decreases your energy. Chaotic Bounce Shields afford momentary protection, but with the combination of the tiles and the limitless flow of adversaries, the odds are certainly stacked against you in this game.

STA

There have been a number of titles whose game-play relied on the unpredictable change in momentum of a sphere, but Electric Dreams have taken Incredible Shrinking Sphere quite a few steps further. The game is a combination of some highly original game-play aspects, and in particular, having to alter the sphere's volume, size and speed in order to overcome obstacles is a stroke of genius. But I must stress that I.S.S. is an unforgiving, and sometimes irritating game which was designed to stretch the boundaries of arcade entertainment - it is guaranteed to drive you up the wall!

JS

As a concept, ISS is a good one. Unfortunately its implementation isn't as hot. Graphically and sonically, ISS is more than adequate, it is just that, with the sphere's inertia-affected controls and the constant barrage from the enemy droids, completing a level is normally due to luck, rather than skill. The planes are very well designed, with some really tight niches and corners to negotiate, but unfortunately the sphere is so responsive, a lot of time is spent bouncing off the walls in an attempt to get past. Additionally, this bouncing can prove tedious if you pass over a mass-changing tile, as you bounce off of a wall, transform, only to bounce back off the wall on to the tile again. It is a pity that the control of the sphere wasn't changed, as it detracts from what is obviously a very slick and well thought out game.

SM

The Sphere is unceremoniously dropped into the Death Run.

STA Rating

63%

GRAPHICS: 63%
SOUND: 53%

LASTING APPEAL: 61%
ADDICTIVENESS: 61%

DIFFICULTY: EASY
1ST DAY SCORE: 40000

F16

Look after this bird, the F-16 is a multi-million dollar piece of equiptment. Treat it correctly, your life could depend on it!

DIGITAL INTEGRATION (£24.95)

The only limit to a flight-sim of this calibre is the skill and experience of the player, and as you improve as a simulation pilot, you become more involved and absorbed in the action. From the subtle and realistic sound effects to the action-packed missions, this is a first-rate simulation. But the market for flight simulations is competitive, with excellent titles like Microprose's Gunship and Spectrum Holobyte's Falcon. So is F-16 a legitimate addition to this small but elite squadron? The answer is in the affirmative! If Falcon is the Squadron Leader, then F-16 just outranks it as Wing Commander. I wonder who will make the rank of Air Chief Marshal.

JS

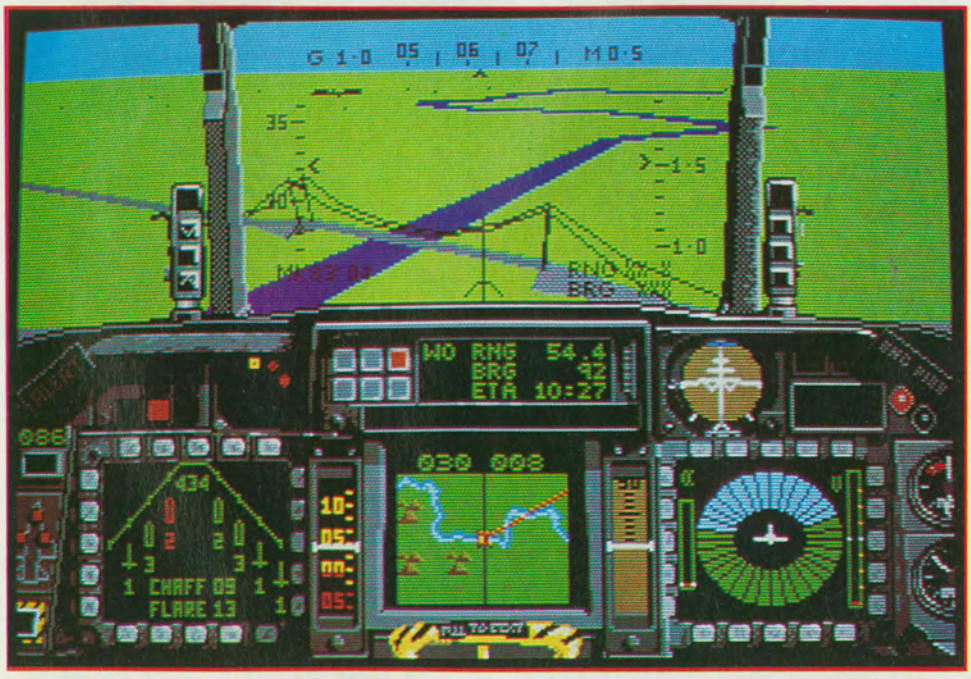
"The General Dynamics F-16 is probably the most lethal fighting machine in service today. Have you got what it takes to fly this baby to its full potential?"

The F-16 typifies the traditional concept of a fighter plane. It is a relatively small, single-seater interceptor which is designed specifically for short, lightning attacks and close-quarter dogfights, and the eight missions in the program simulate the type of operations an F-16 pilot would be called on to perform.

The screen changes to show the squadron crew-room, and pointing a cursor at various objects in the room accesses mission details and information; or you can enter straight into a mission. For example, a filing cabinet contains F-16 pilot details, a desk-top computer selects your choice of controls and design drawings on the wall give you additional aircraft and weaponry information. Additionally, a dramatic flight demonstration can be accessed by clicking on the crew-room window. Finally, details of Operation Conquest are contained in the pilot's flight case, but that is for experienced pilots. Clicking on the door moves you into mission selection which is set in the U.S. Pentagon shape.

After you have selected your mission, the next screen displays an electronic strategic display which is based on the type actually used by front line squadrons. This is a map of your operation area and clicking on various buttons reveals known enemy bases, tank battalions, power stations, factories, command centres, radar units and fuel depots. The display also shows your position, all airfield locations, habitation and geographical features. Beneath the display you can access details on mission objectives, intelligence reports and a weather up-date, and this information enables you to form your mission profile and plan for the operation. F-16 pilots do not have the luxury of a navigator in the back seat and so part of flight planning includes plotting the quickest and safest route, whether it is a simple A to B journey or a complex hi-lo-hi, zig-zag profile over enemy territory. To set a waypoint, you move the pointer to the required coordinates and you can see your proposed flight route.

The next stage is to arm the F-16, and the screen switches to the aircraft hangar. The ground crew have already



The F-16 rapidly approaches its target; an enemy bridge. Line up the sights and prepare to let loose with a couple of Mavericks.

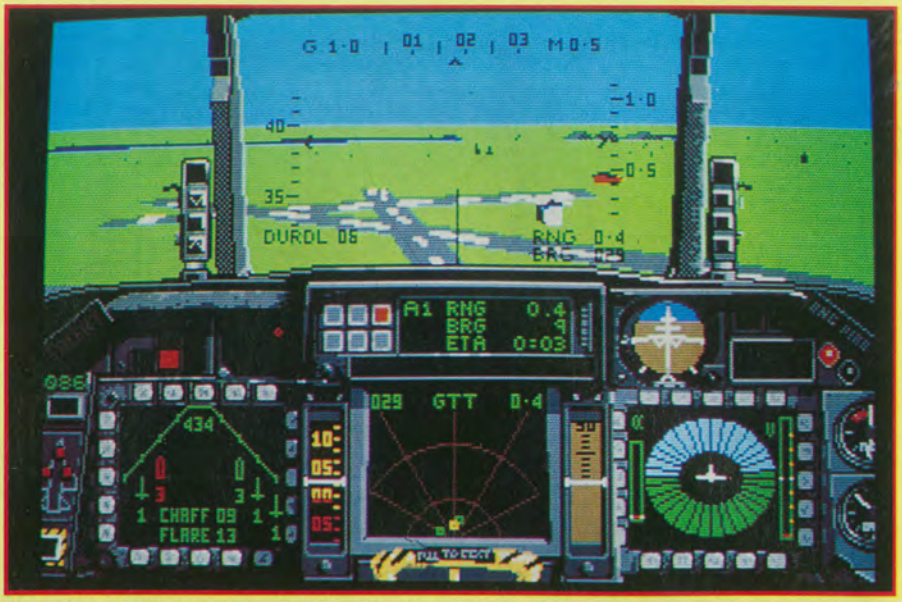
As you might already know, I'm not a great fan of this type of game. Still, you can't blame me for trying. Digital Integration's F-16 must utilize nearly every button on the ST's keyboard, and even some combinations, too! As a result I found the game a little overwhelming at times. Sure enough, F-16 seems to have everything you would expect from such a sophisticated flight simulator - more sometimes. For me, however, the game is just a little too involved. Still, if you like this kind of thing, and haven't already got a high-calibre flight-sim, then Digital Integration's F-16 is most definitely worth considering.

SM

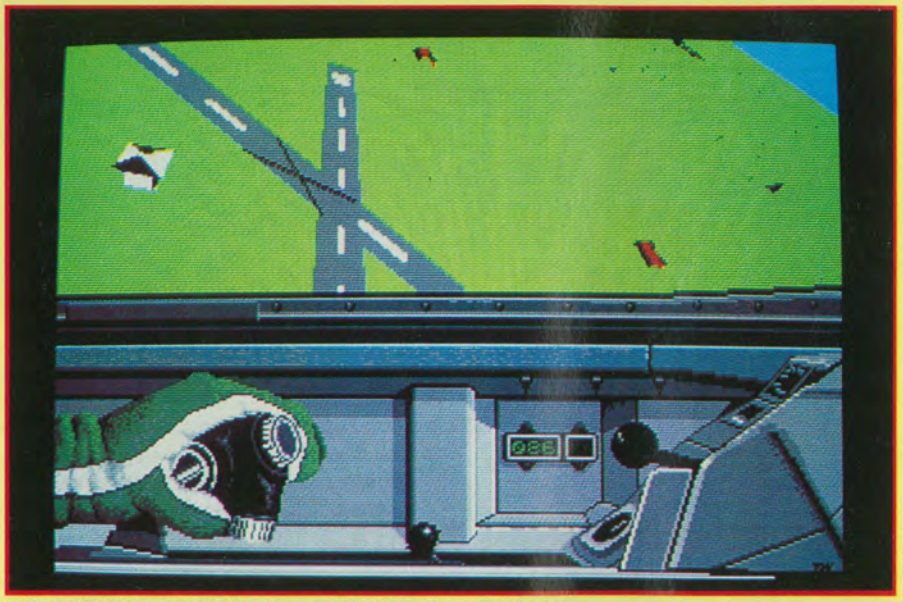
refuelled, re-armed the internal gun and run the sub-system ground check, but it is your job to select the armoury for the operation. The F-16 has nine external hard-points which can carry a selection of weaponry, including, laser-guided smart missiles and the AMRAAM air-to-air missile, which is effective beyond visual range. Additionally, you have the latest revolutionary Lantirn night-vision target, and target acquisition pods. Using the mouse, you can select the missiles and place them on the position points. You must choose the correct missiles for the mission and keep an eye on your 'All Up Weight' and balance. The more weaponry you carry, the less manoeuvrable and responsive the F-16 becomes in flight. You can skip this section and opt for one of the ground crew's three preferred configurations. Having selected your weaponry configuration, the pilot puts the thumbs up and lowers his visor.

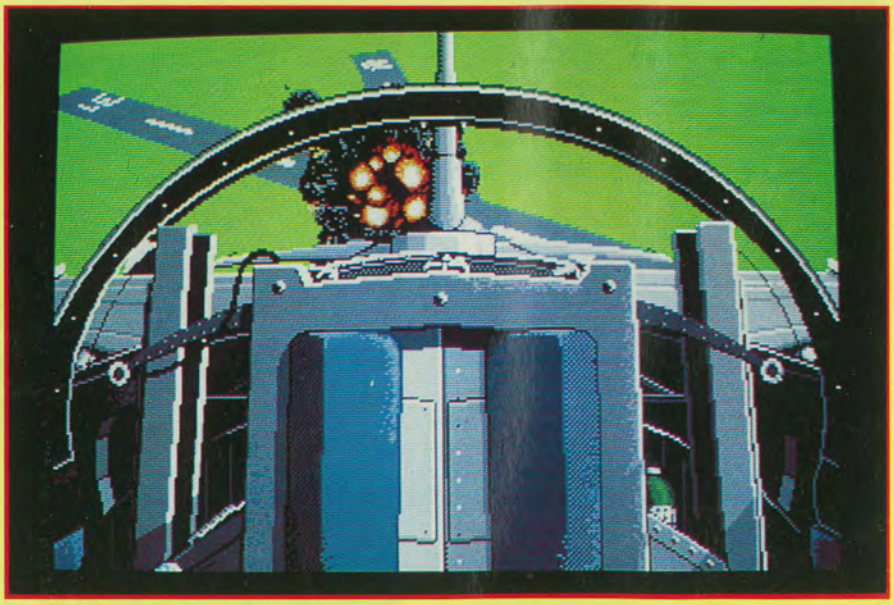
The screen switches to the cockpit view and tapping the 'B' releases the ground brakes. The throttle is controlled with the '+' key and the jet taxis out of the hangar and onto the runway and there are some subtle sound effects such as the wheels bumping over ridges on the ground. With the jet centralized on the runway, you throttle back to idle with the '-' key and re-apply the brakes. When cleared for take-off, you release the brakes, open throttle to 80 percent rpm and then 100 percent rpm, and follow through to full re-heat. The jet accelerates along the runway reaching 150 knots in a few seconds, and pulling gradually back on the joystick raises the nose and you are airborne. The speed will continue to increase and you must immediately retract the undercarriage. The F-16 benefits from fly-by-wire control which makes it remarkably responsive.

Operation Scramble is an air-to-air interception in which hostile aircraft are approaching your airspace, and your objective is to intercept and destroy. Providing the bandits are not flying too

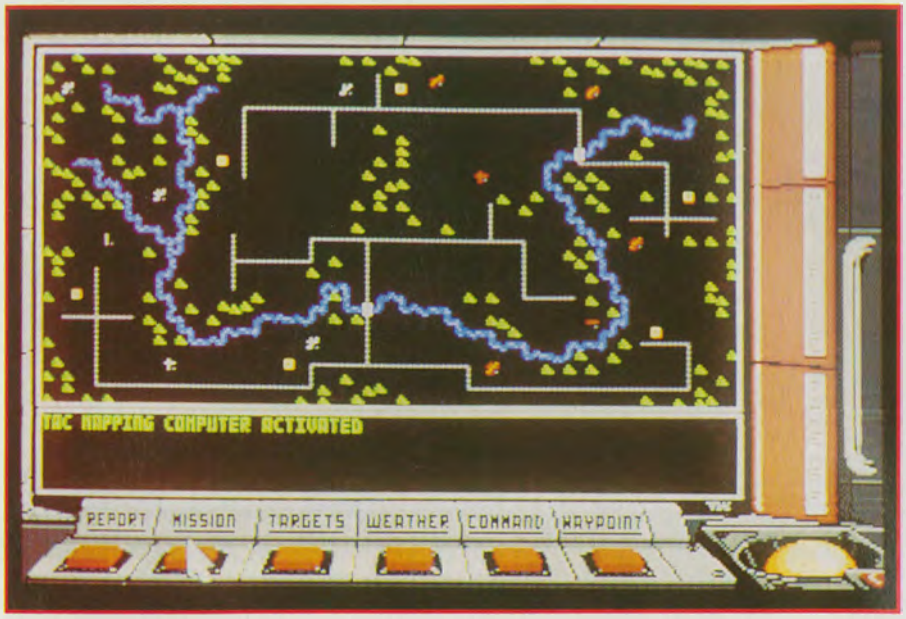


The enemy's base looms into view. Your brief is to destroy the runway.


Rolling into position, the F-16 gets ready to lay waste to the site.


Having dropped your payload, you quickly glance behind, "Bullseye!" a direct hit.

The Electronic terrain display, which based on the ones used by front line squadrons, allows you to plot your course.



Digital Integration's F-16 deals with the self same aircraft as Mirrorsoft's Falcon. Undoubtedly comparisons will be made between the two games, and having played them both I can report that they are both exceptional. The thing I particularly liked about F-16 was the fact that you could actually command a squadron, for me, this option was the icing on the cake. F-16 also seemed to be a little more involved, extra attention was given to pre-flight briefing and planning. To say that F-16 is better than Falcon wouldn't be fair, they're both first class simulations in their own right. However, if I had to choose, F-16 has got the edge.

NC

low, your early warning radar may be able to pick them up. But your air-to-air 'Track While Scan' radar is a powerful transmitter which will alert the enemy of your presence. 'He who sees first lives longer'! Your most effective weapon is the element of surprise, and so radar scan must be kept to a minimum. Once you have spotted the target it is a mistake to engage in a face-to-face dogfight, and wiser to make a wide sweeping turn to a position above and behind the enemy and prepare to attack. Select a missile and a secondary weaponry sight traces the sky and locks on. With the missile engaged, pressing the firebutton sends it screaming across the sky to meet its target and a distant explosion indicates success.

In a ground target attack, the TWS display turns into a forward-looking plan view, which differentiates installations from mobile ground targets using symbology. You can switch to Ground Target Tracker which displays the designated target as a diamond shape and all other symbols are removed from the screen. As you near the target, pushing the joystick forward sends the jet into a swift descent, dropping thousands of feet a second. With radar-guided SAMS engaged, the weaponry sight locks onto the target. A press of the downward cursor key shows the view from the rear of the jet to see if the SAM is making chase.

Operation Deepstrike - interdictor strike. The objective of this assault is to undermine specific areas of the enemy's defence by destroying powerlines, factories, fuel depots, bridges and airstrips. Your priorities are to penetrate enemy airspace at low altitude, cause as much destruction as possible and return quickly. 'Fly low, hit hard'! Having plotted the route to your target and equipped the F-16 with heavy air-to-ground missiles, this mission must be executed as a lightning strike. As you near the strike point and reduce altitude, detail of the target becomes distinguishable. A suspension bridge, crucial to the enemy's supply lorries, is a key target. Operation Hammerblow is also designed to reduce the enemy's ability to strike back and focuses primarily on military installations, hangars and runways.

As described, Operation Gladiator enables two players to engage in a dogfight. Each player pilots the jet from separate monitors which gives a very realistic effect, especially during close-quarter dogfights. Finally, Operation Conquest is a full-scale campaign in which you must intercept enemy jets, undermine their defences by putting airstrips out of action and destroying power, communication and radar installations, and stem the flow of the invading tank battalions. Gladiator demonstrates that the F-16 is truly a multi-task jet fighter.

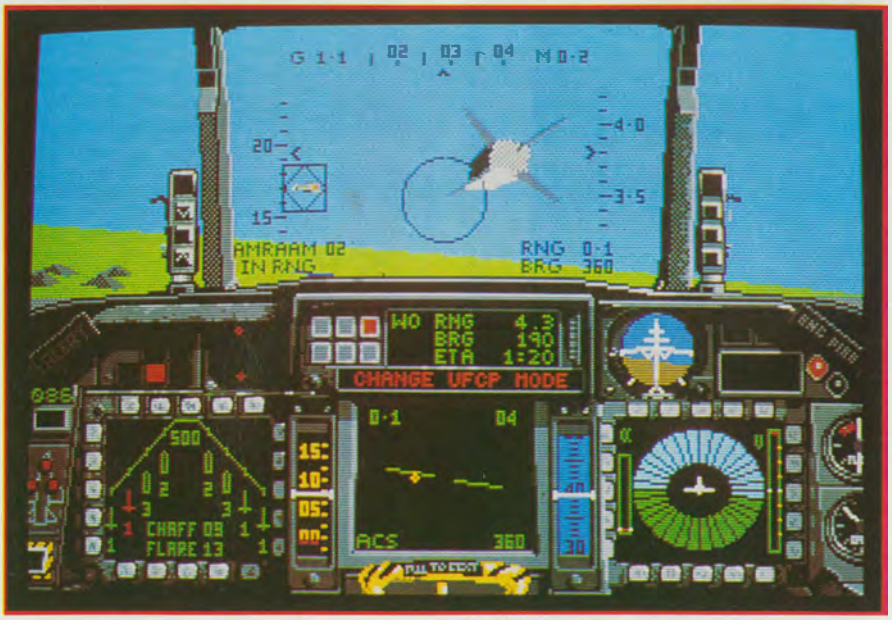
STA

STA Rating 79%

GRAPHICS: 78%
SOUND: 65%

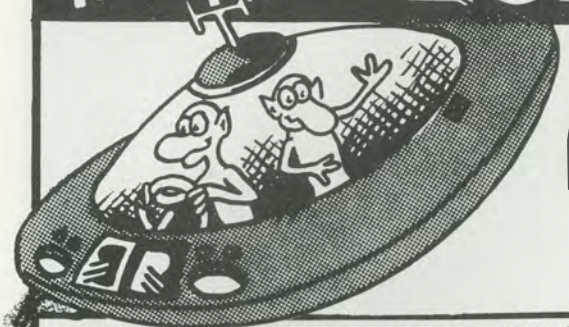
LASTING APPEAL: 85%
ADDICTIVENESS: 79%

DIFFICULTY: AVE/HARD
1ST DAY SCORE: N/A



The enemy has been sighted and locked on to. Now, having launched a sidewinder, it's only a matter of time....

NEW FROM **ROMANTIC ROBOT**



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"If the game-scene looks dire, and the outlook is blue. Who ya gonna call..."

THE REAL GHOSTBUSTERS

ACTIVISION (£19.95)

I remember seeing a review of the coin-op this was based on a couple of years back, and not being very impressed by it. Although The Real Ghostbusters doesn't look particularly brilliant, the game itself is quite playable - apart from a few niggles, that is. The game features some very dubious sprite detection, and the burst scrolling tends to cost you lives as you run into something that you cannot see. Still, if you fancy an above-average, two-player blast and can put up with its average presentation, graphics and sound, The Real Ghostbusters might be worth a look.

SM

STA Rating
63%

GRAPHICS: 58%
SOUND: 63%

LASTING APPEAL: 62%
ADDICTIVENESS: 65%

DIFFICULTY: AVERAGE
1ST DAY SCORE: 10950

Aided/hindered by Slimer, our intrepid hero prepares to kill the large end-of-level spectre.

Activision's Ghostbusters film licence was one of the highest-selling games ever. Released a few years ago (back in 1984), it sold hundreds of thousands of copies - surprising really, as the game itself wasn't really that impressive. A second game is planned, based on the forthcoming Ghostbusters II movie, but until then, Activision plan to quench our Ghostbusters thirst with The Real Ghostbusters game, based on the children's cartoon that is being shown in the afternoons. Taking up where the film left off, the cartoon depicts the exploits of the ghost-hunting quartet as they track down all manner of strange spooks, eventually trapping them with their beam guns and ghost traps. Another unusual feature changed from the film, is the fact that that gross, green ghost with the voracious appetite, Slimer, is now a member of their team.

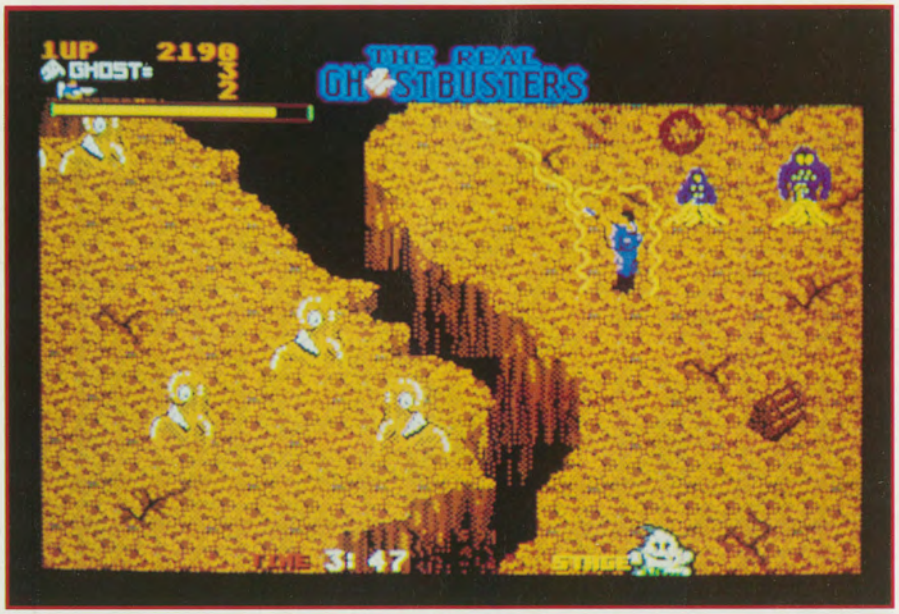
The game follows the team's adventures as they attempt to clear various buildings of their unwanted spectre inhabitants. Armed only with their lasers, one or two players must enter the area and kill any attacking ghoulies before eventually making their way to the main nasty who lurks within the level. The game begins with the Ghostbusters' hearse pulling up outside the haunted building. The members of the team then enter the building, and it's 'shoot a spook' time! The screen scrolls in eight directions, following the team's antics, and the action takes place on rooftops, deserts and other unlikely areas. No sooner are you sent into the danger area, than the legions of ghosts start to attack you. Contact with them, or the ectoplasm they spit, is deadly and costs you one of your five lives, but all of them can be killed by a shot from your laser. On shooting a ghost, another white ghost will appear, and if this is also shot, it can leave a useful addition to any Ghostbuster's kit. Items such as force-fields and power-ups can be added in your travels, and you can even rescue Slimer from the clutches of the evil ghoulies.

Having reached a certain stage in the game, you will come face to face with the main ghost of the level. Several shots are needed to destroy this dastardly masterghost, and when he dies, you must be careful to avoid being slimed by his exploding ectoplasm. Once the ghost is dead, you return back to your HQ and a bonus is given for any ghosts that you have killed. When all of the ghosts have been placed in your 'ghost prison', it is time to go on to the next level.

STA

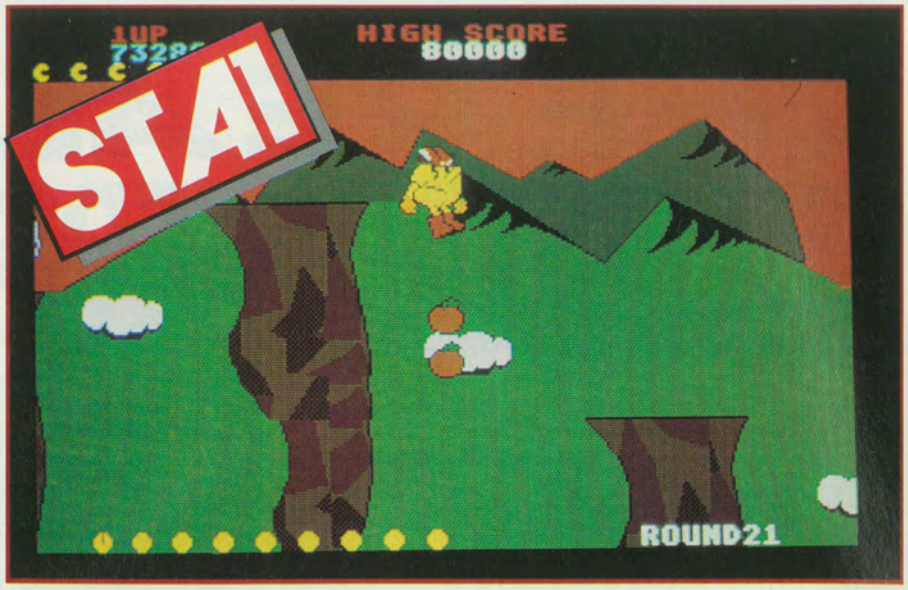
The Real Ghostbusters is based upon the highly successful cartoon which many of you may have seen on Saturday morning kids' TV. Converted from a virtually unknown coin-op, the Real Ghostbusters offers great two player action. Basically the game is a simple shoot'em-up of the Commando game genre. The graphics are colourful and move well, although some of the sprite detection is possibly a little dubious. The sound, too, is good and the programmers have taken great delight in using the old Ghostbusters theme tune. The Real Ghostbusters could so easily be dismissed as just another shooting game but, for me, something makes it stand out from the crowd

NC



That wiggly line surrounding our hero, is a force field and enables you to pass, unscathed, temporarily through any attacks.

Fruit replaces dots in Pacland, and is worth several bonus points.



This is one of the most faithful arcade-to-ST conversions I have played, with big cartoon characterizations, colourful backdrops and countless typical Pac-capers. Sure the scrolling could have been a little smoother, but the controls and the way Pac reacts to them is a fair aproximation of the original version. All the famous features which have made Pac the most enduring and popular arcade character feature in this game. What more can I say? This is arcade fun at its very best!

JS

"I wonder if the person who came up with the idea of that famous little yellow pill-gobbler, Pacman, had any inkling of the sensation he was going to cause?"

PACLAND

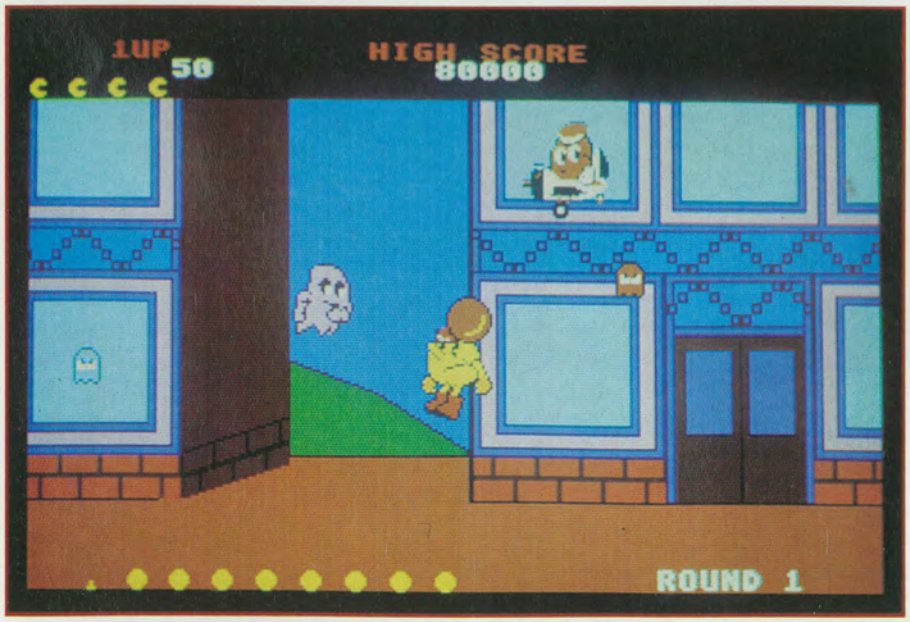
GRANDSLAM (£19.95)

Almost overnight, Namco's Pacman became a star - not bad for someone whose only claim to fame was that he starred in a video game! I won't spout on endlessly about the Pacman this, and Pacman that, memorabilia that we saw a glut of a couple of years back, but I will mention the cartoon he had on TVAM, because it was the basis for this, Grandslam's latest Pacman licence. The cartoon portrayed the exploits of our rotund hero as he, and his family, constantly thwarted the evil intentions of the ghosts - normally by use of the now-famous 'power pills'. In the cartoon, the ghosts used all manner of devices to attack Pacman: cars and sledges - even boats! And all this has been recreated in Pacland.

The basic scenario is that the Queen of the Fairies is in dire trouble, trapped behind a magic door, and it is up to you, as Pacman, to rescue her. Before he can, though, he must make his way through three stages, avoiding the ghosts that will chase and attack him, and any obstacles he may come across. The game begins with Pac standing in front of his colourful house. Using the joystick or keys, he can move left and right, causing the background to scroll along with him, and he has the ability to perform large jumps whenever the firebutton is pressed. Below our pill-popper's escapades, is a row of little yellow circles that disappear sector by sector. This is the given time limit for the level, and should these dots expire, Pacman will lose one of his four lives. No sooner has Pac started his journey through the city, than he is attacked by his arch foes: Inky, Binky, Betsy and Clyde - the terrible ghosts! Our first encounter with the quivering quartet is when they steam towards you in cars that look as if they have been stolen from the set of

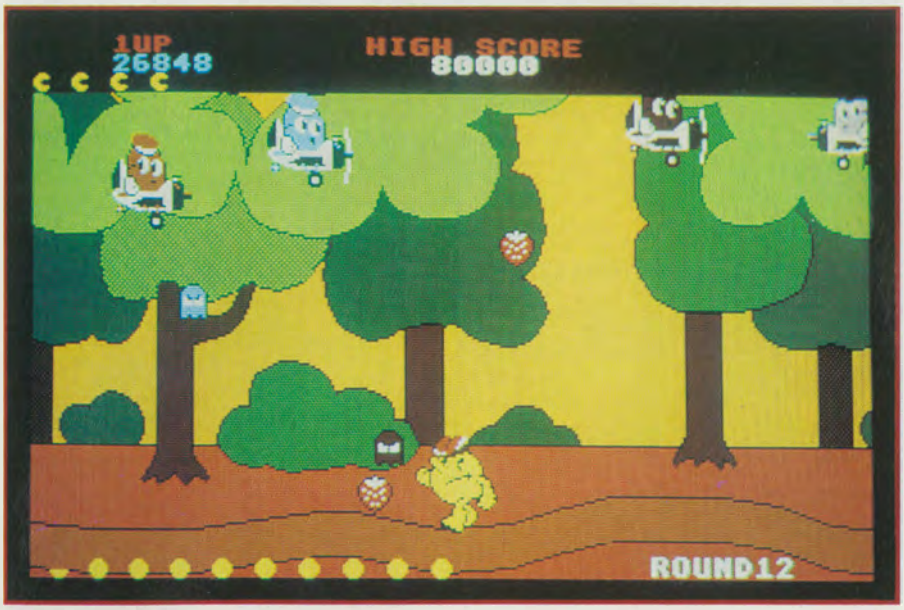
Pacman is making something of a comeback just lately, and Pacland must be his finest game yet. Looking strikingly similar to it's arcade parent, the ST version is a joy to play. The colourful graphics are well drawn and the screen scrolls well. The game's sound is also well presented, the sickly tune, however, becoming annoying after a while. Pacland has undoubtedly filled a gap in my software collection, at last I have an enjoyable, yet challenging, platform game.

NC



If Pac can get the power pill before that ghost reaches him, he'll be able to get his own back!

Whilst in the forest, Pac is bombed by Inky, Binky and Co. from the safety of the planes.



Yeah! This is what we want! Pacland is an absolutely brilliant conversion of one of my favourite coin-ops. The graphics are every bit as crisp and colourful as in the arcade parent, but the jerky scrolling detracts a little - not enough to harm the game, though. Likewise, the accompanying ditty is faithfully recreated, adding even more to what was already a fun little game. The task ahead of Pac is a long and enjoyable one, with each level housing more and more ingenious and troublesome routes. Basically, Pacland is an essential addition to anybody's software collection. And what's more - it's fun to play!

SM

a Keystone Kops movie. Contact with them is fatal, but they are easily avoided with a well-timed leap over the top. However, to combat them, and making a welcome reappearance from his previous games, are the

power pills. Larger than ever before, these globes must be jumped up at so that you can eat them. On swallowing one, the ghosts temporarily turn blue and freeze, indicating that they can now be eaten. Once a ghost has been sent back to the hereafter (again!), only his eyes will remain and these will fly back to the level's starting point, so that he can re-form again.

Once you have struggled through to the end of a level, you will reach a large sign marked 'Break Time'. At this point a tiny fairy will come out from under Pac's hat, and any remaining time will be converted into points and added to your score. Once this has been added, the next level will load, and the game will commence once more. As you progress through the levels, the ghosts' means of transport get stranger and funnier: they attack in flying saucers, buses, and they occasionally try to squash you with their pogo sticks! And as if this were not enough, there are collapsing log bridges for Pac to leap over; huge expanses of fatal water that require frantic waggling of the joystick to cross; and locked castle doors which need a key to open them.

Eventually, you will reach the magical door behind which the Fairy Queen is locked. When you go through the door, three fairies emerge from under your hat and the Queen will be freed. As a token of thanks she gives you a pair of flying boots which will make getting home easier, and you are positioned at a new starting point. The screen now scrolls from right to left as you make your way home, and any ghosts can be avoided by continually pressing fire to spark your boots into action, allowing you a relatively safe passage back to your awaiting family.

STA

Having leapt through the magic door, Pacman is rewarded with a pair of flying boots from the grateful Fairy Queen.....

.....And it's a good job she does, as on the way back, any obstacles, such as the collapsing bridge shown here can be bypassed by continual pressing of the firebutton. Causing Pac to sail with ease over the top.

STA Rating

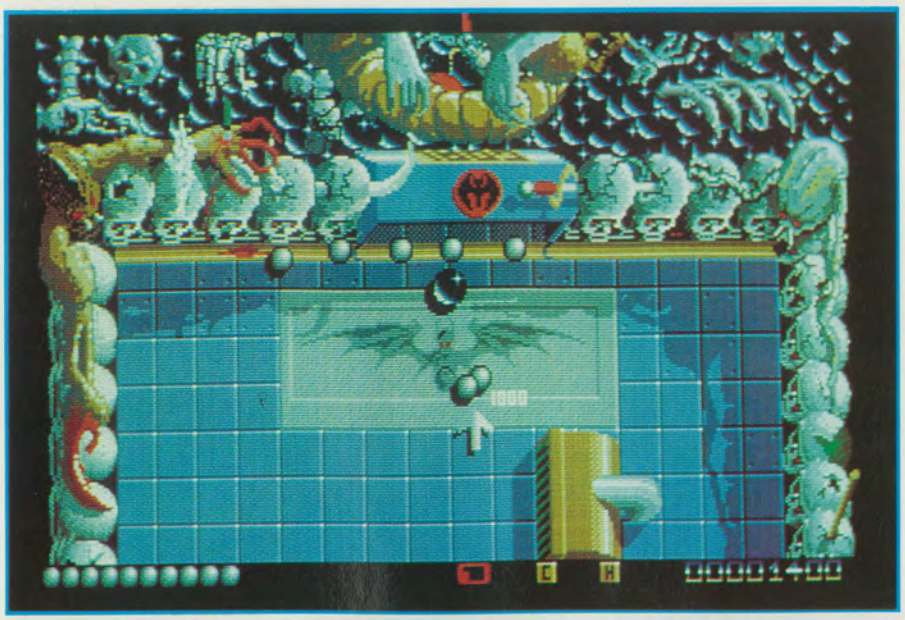
81%

GRAPHICS: 77%
SOUND: 63%

LASTING APPEAL: 80%
ADDICTIVENESS: 86%

DIFFICULTY: AVERAGE
1ST DAY SCORE:18211

"Following hot on the heels of Imageworks' Speedball and EA's Powerdrome, Psyclapse release their idea of what a future sport will be. And, surprisingly, it doesn't feature any violence!"



BALLISTIX

PSYCLAPSE (£19.95)

Ballistix must have been inspired by the table-top game, Crossfire, in which you fill guns with small ball bearings and attempt to hit a puck into your opponent's goal. Ballistix is great fun and the game benefits from Psyclapse's outstanding artwork and some impressive sound effects. The game is kept fresh by the 130 different themes in each screen and countless features which really put an edge on the game-play. The control over the ball bearings has been well designed and the game really comes to life when two players compete against each other - exciting, explosive and very competitive!

JS

Following a rather nice graphics sequence of a picture of the alien referee unfolding, there is a brief pause and one of a number of options can be chosen to sculpt Ballistix to the way you want it. There is an option for one or two players; the level you begin on; and you can even change such factors as ball speed and the strength of your shots. Once the selections have been made, the referee pronounces that the game may commence, and a rotting, near-skeletal hand places the ball on the pitch.

Ballistix is played on a strange, sloped metallic arena, with a goal at each end. Your aim is to avoid any of the obstacles within the pitch, and deflect the ball into your opponents' goal; the person who scores the designated number of goals first, being the winner. Deflecting the ball is achieved using a novel system in which there isn't a single player in sight! Instead, a cursor-like arrow is moved around the screen and is used to point in the direction you wish the ball to go. Pressing fire unleashes one of your limited supply of round globes, which, if accurately positioned, will deflect the ball in the direction intended.

As you progress through the 130 levels of Ballistix, the pitches get more and more cluttered as the computer places obstacles on it to throw you. Pipes appear that swallow the ball and cause it to reappear where you least expect it; bumpers rebound the ball at almost cannon speed, and acid pools and troughs are also there to perplex you. However, not all the odds are against you, and those aforementioned items can be used in your favour, along with the bonuses you must bounce the ball off to collect. These take the form of splitters that fill the pitch with dozens of deflecting globes, shields that cover the entrance to your goal and ball-protecting hyperspace tunnels.

STA

From the preview shots, Ballistix looked a bit like a revamped Speedball. Unfortunately, it is a simple reworking of the old kid's game, Cross-fire, in which you had to shoot the ball into your opponent's goal by deflecting the puck's direction with a volley of ball-bearings. As a computer version of this, it is fine, but, as a computer game, it is very uninspiring. The 130 levels offer a long-term challenge and the levels are fairly varied, but the lacklustre gameplay doesn't exactly give you the incentive to continue playing. A well presented game which offers a modicum of fun, but there are better games available this month.

SM

STA Rating

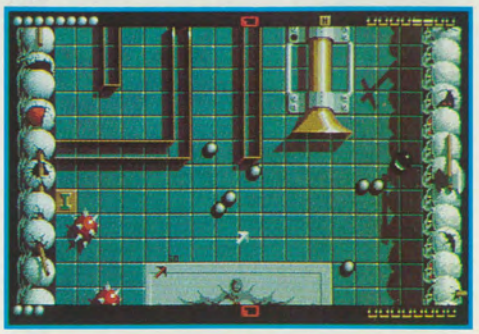
66%

GRAPHICS:68%
SOUND: 58%

LASTING APPEAL:62%
ADDICTIVENESS: 66%

DIFFICULTY: EASY/AVE
1ST DAY SCORE: 21800

Before play commences, a severely rotted hand drops the ball into play.



Player One attempts to force the ball into the tunnel with a bombardment of globes.

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EMMANUELLE

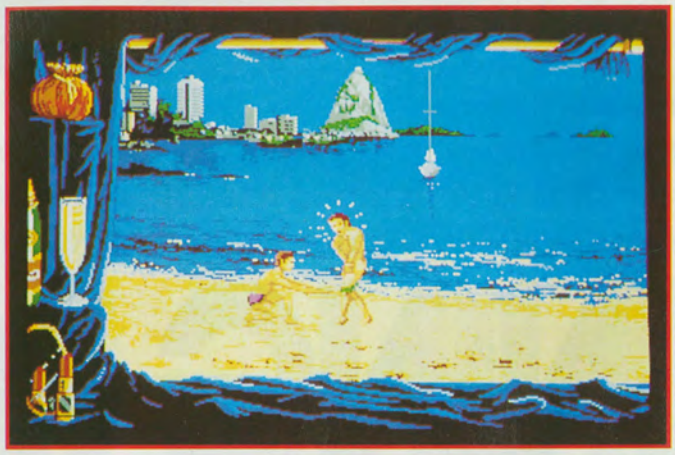
COKTEL VISION (£19.95)

If you fancy a game with a bit of spice, then Emmanuelle, the adventure, fits the bill. Based on the popular soft-porn film, the game's aim is to find Emmanuelle and fly with her to Europe. You begin your adventure in carnival town, Rio, and after a firework display, you return to your hotel. In the lobby there is a blonde by the bar and a doorman and receptionist in the distance. A cupid-shaped cursor can be pointed at various areas of the screen and clicking the left button prompts the person or object into play. Clicking on the blonde, you have a selection of opening comments ranging from the suggestive to the non-committal. Based on her answer you must choose your next question - she usually tells you to get lost.

You can choose to search the hotel by clicking on the elevator button, although the other guests might complain. Alternatively, you can ask the porter or receptionist for information. The porter asks if you want to go to the beach, the town or the airport. Meanwhile, the receptionist might tell you that Emmanuelle is on the beach. A beautiful blonde walks seductively across the sands, reveals her charms, and walks away. There is a yacht anchored off the shoreline and clicking on the boat reveals an angry crewman who accuses you of snooping and a fight on the beach usually ensues. Although your adversary is much bigger, pressing '7' on the numeric keypad distracts his attention and a tap of the '8' key sends a small, boney fist flying. But you may receive a warmer welcome on another yacht, where a seductive yachtswoman suggests that you join her on a cruise - how could you refuse? An erotic scene, discreetly hidden behind a venetian blind, indicates that you have scored and this adds points to your erotic potential scale. But remember to conserve enough energy for Emmanuelle in Europe.

I am not entirely sure that soft porn has a legitimate place in computer entertainment, but as an adventure, Emmanuelle is rather clever. The screens and interactive animation work well together and the ability to search areas of the game just by pointing and clicking is quite ingenious. It is not an adveture which is full of conundrums and puzzles, but there is enough to keep you amused. Naughty but nice!

STA



STA Rating 59%

GRAPHICS: 63%
SOUND: 45%

LASTING APPEAL:51%
ADDICTIVENESS: 63%

DIFFICULTY: AVERAGE
1ST DAY SCORE: N/A

HUMAN KILLING MACHINE

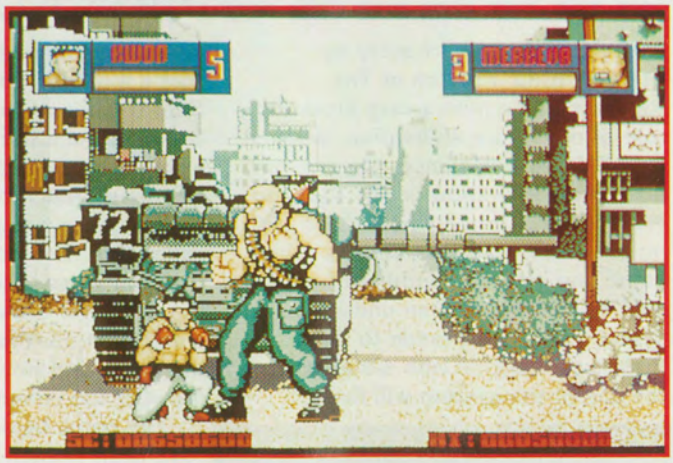
GO! (£14.95)

In a way, Human Killing Machine could be loosely termed as Street Fighter II, as it shares so many of the characteristics that this game 'enjoyed'. Controlling a rugged street fighter called Kwon, you must fight your way through five foreign cities, challenging the two fighters you will find in each. The cities you fight in range from a bull-fighting arena in sunny Spain, to a war-torn street in not-so-sunny Beirut, and, unlike Street Fighter, not all of your opponents are human.

You begin your fight with a screen depicting you and your opponent glaring at each other. You are initially armed with five lives, and your confidence is boosted when you notice your opponent only has three. Pressing fire starts the actual bout, and it is up to you to win two out of three. An energy bar is shown above the two sparring pugilists, and with every hit received this is depleted. However, it is here we find out why the opponent has only three lives compared to your five: although his energy goes down with each hit, unlike yours, it replenishes if he is not hit for a while, so the best tactic is to jump in and continually assault him with a barrage of punches. The actual graphics are every bit as good as in Street Fighter, with attractive use of subtle shading used, but, unfortunately, the animation is just as bad. The characters lurch towards each other in a jerky and spasmodic fashion, and there is virtually no animation between each move, and, in addition, you can deplete your opponent's health without your hit apparently connecting!

I am a great fan of beat-'em-ups, but I'm afraid that Human Killing Machine just doesn't make the grade. Programmers, Tiertex, have totally ignored all of the criticisms made of Street Fighter, and produced a pseudo-sequel every bit as bad. Even if the animation and sprite detection problems had been solved, Human Killing Machinewould still be a substandard fighting game.

STA



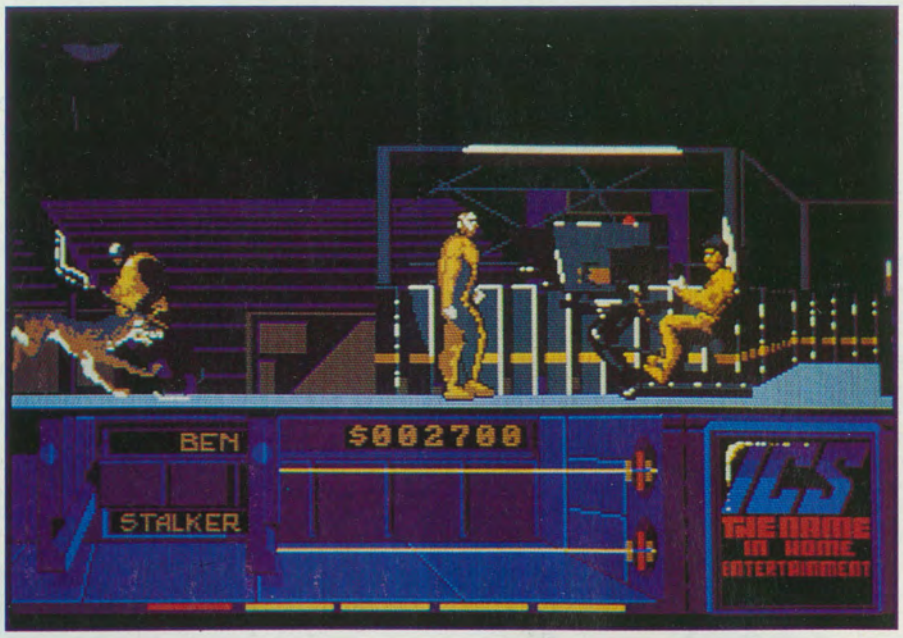
STA Rating 44%

GRAPHICS: 38%
SOUND: 40%

LASTING APPEAL: 36%
ADDICTIVENESS: 51%

DIFFICULTY: EASY
1ST DAY SCORE:707900

The camera sees all as Ben's route is blocked - just a Subzero and a non-too-friendly dog prepare to attack!



The Running Man, is supposedly a thrilling film. It's a pity, however, that the game isn't as good. Now don't get me wrong, I'm not saying that the game is just another lucrative licensing spin-off. No, The Running Man has got most of the elements which make a good game; very nice graphics, atmospheric sound and an imaginative scenario. What the game lacks, however, is a certain playability. The controls are arkward and I lost many lives whilst grappling with my joystick. It's a shame really, I was looking forward to playing The Running Man. Still, maybe perseverence will tell.

NC

"You've played at being Schwarzenegger in Predator, and hammered an alien killing machine. Now get ready to assume his role again as you take part in the craziest game-show ever - The Running Man."

RUNNING MAN

GRANDSLAM (£19.95)

Adapted from a short story by Stephen King, the film of The Running Man paints a very bleak picture of our future civilisation. Weaned on a TV diet of violence, the citizens' favourite game-show is The Running Man - a programme where there are no survivors, let alone winners. The game consists of a number of criminals being thrown in an underground system, and being made to fight for their lives. Anyone who survives to the end of the system will find an exit, and can head for freedom - that's if they survive 'the Stalkers'. Sent to kill any 'contestants', these Stalkers track the criminals down, killing them with their bizarre weapons - much to the audience's glee. Schwarzenegger plays a guy called Ben Richards, and it is as him that you prepare to enter the arena of the Stalkers. Convicted for a crime he didn't commit, Richards is sent into the arena, but not before he can growl at the compere: "I'll be back."

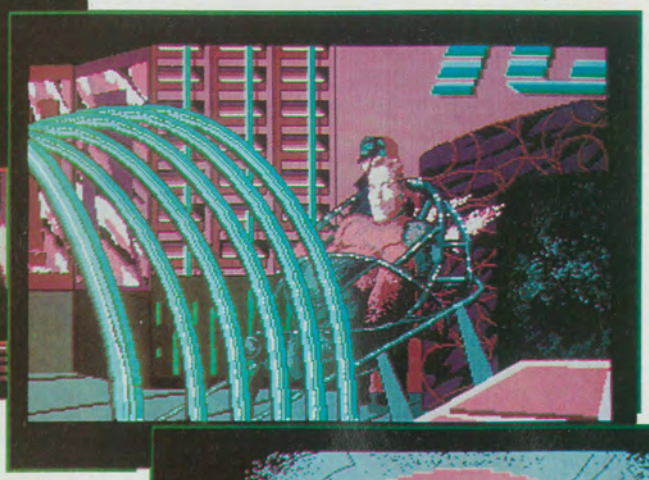
The game begins with an attractive open sequence depicting the crowds cheering as you are strapped into the drop shuttle. As they wave and scream manically, you are shot down a series of tubeways, before you come to a juddering halt at the bottom of the tube. The player now takes control of Ben, and begins to wander through the dark tunnel system that makes up the arena. Your tracksuited figure begins his running positioned in front of one of many cameras. His route back to freedom is blocked by this camera, so the only way he can go is right. Using the joystick to control him, Ben can walk, run, jump, crawl and fight as he battles his way through each of the horizontally-scrolling five levels. Along the way he will find various weapons, such as guns and bricks, that he can use against the deadly inhabitants, and there are also medipacks that can be used to restore any lost energy.

Ben comes face-to-face with Buzzsaw, and lets him have it with a massive kick - "He had to split!"

Although Grandslam's The Running Man captures the dark, claustrophobic atmosphere of the film perfectly, the controls over the Arnie sprite are a bit unresponsive. It can be very annoying when you are trying to shoot a guard only to jump in the air - straight into the path of one of his bullets. Apart from this, The Running Man is a credible conversion of the excellent film. The whole program is thoroughly polished, with some nice digitised sequences showing the hysterical crowd going loopy, and a smart opening scene where you whizz through the tunnels into the arena. If you can get used to the difficult controls and the somewhat jerky scrolling, The Running Man offers a difficult long-term challenge. It isn't perfect, but it's not bad.

SM

A digitised introduction sets the scene. The crowd is going crazy as they wait for the next 'contestant'. The compere whips them into even more of a frenzy and bellows "It's showtime!". Ben is brought in, strapped to the shuttle. "I'll be back", he growls, and then he's sent hurtling into the dark underground domain of the Stalkers.

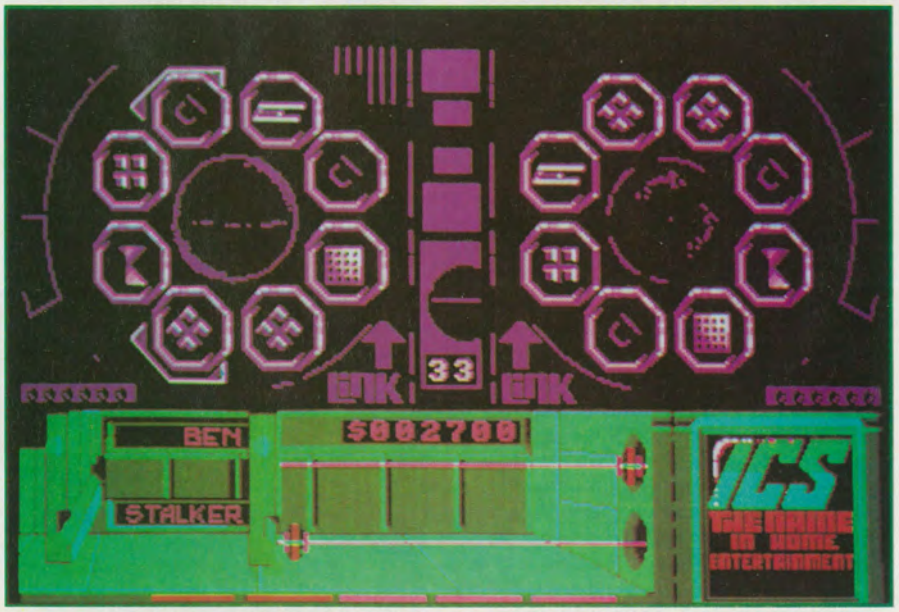


As you wander through the dark levels you will almost instantly be attacked by one of the many dogs that prowl the area. These leaping hounds can be temporarily stunned with a kick or a punch, but Ben shouldn't hang around for too long afterwards, as they soon get up again. When you have got roughly halfway through a level, you will be attacked by one of the Stalkers. There are four to fight against: Subzero, the first, attacks you on roller-skates, attempting to disembowel you with his razor-sharp hockey stick, or blow you up with his exploding pucks; Dynamo, floats around lit up like Trafalgar Square's Christmas tree and electrocutes any unwary contestants; Buzzsaw is armed with two death-dealing chainsaws; and finally, Fireball uses napalm and flames to burn his victims. Sufficient hits eventually kills these modern-day gladiators and, providing Ben doesn't die first, their demise is every bit as grisly as in the film. For instance, I won't give it away, but when Buzzsaw dies, Arnie/Ben mutters: "he had to split!" When the Stalker has been defeated, the camera blocking the exit rises off the ground, giving access to the next level. Before Ben moves on, though, there is a short intermission in which he can attempt to hack into the security system computer. Two dials featuring strange heiroglyphics are shown, and it is up to Ben to make sure that the left one matches the right one within the strict time limit. If Ben manages to crack the code within the limit, the cameras monitoring your position will be switched off. If you fail, then it's straight in to the next level.

STA

Oh no! Not ol' beefcake again? No sooner does Arnie bring out a movie than a game is made about it. In their haste to release the Running Man while the film is still popular, Grandslam appear to have made some sacrifices. The graphical presentation is stunning with some great big characterizations, atmospheric backdrops and impressive animation sequences. But this visual treat is marred by the lack of control over the big guy himself. I know it is nigh impossible to get big, bold and bulky sprites to move smoothly and responsively, but I honestly think that given the time, this very talented software house could have improved it, which would have resulted in a much better game.

JS



Having completed a level, the player has a chance to crack the Uplink code, enabling him to gain access to the ICS network.

STA Rating

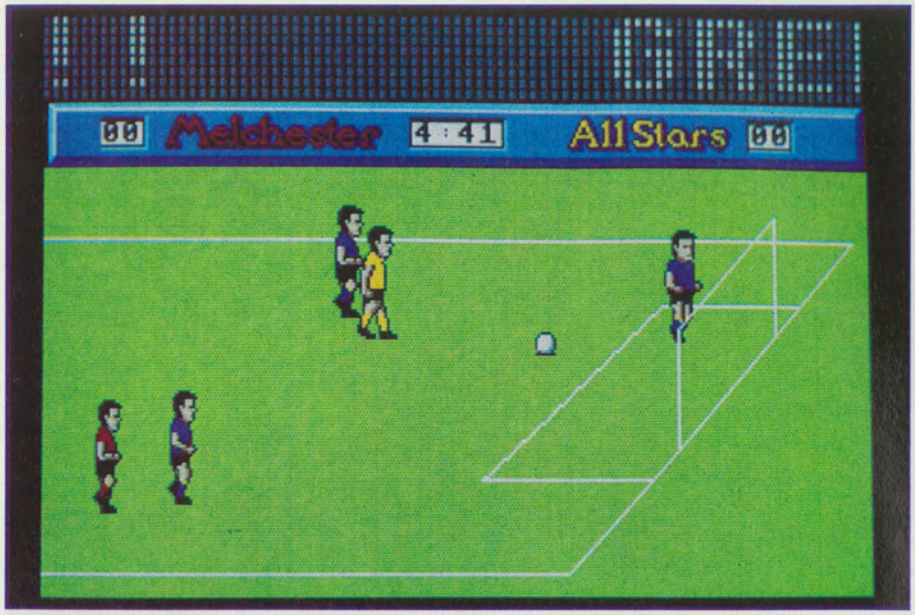
67%

GRAPHICS: 64%
SOUND:63%

LASTING APPEAL: 66%
ADDICTIVENESS: 70%

DIFFICULTY: AVE/HARD
1ST DAY SCORE: 6866

The Allstars make a break, leaving Roy and Co. lagging behind. At least the scoreboard is encouraging though!



"Of all the characters translated into pixels, Roy of the Rovers was the last one I expected to get converted. Who's going to be next - the Sun's George and Lynne?"

ROY OF THE ROVERS

GREMLIN (£19.95)

Shock, horror! Four of Melchester Rover's five-a-side team have been kidnapped! If they can't be found before seven o'clock this evening, they will miss the charity match that will earn them enough money to save their football ground. As the ground is wanted by some nasty property developers, could it be they who have kidnapped Blackie Grey and the rest of your chums who you bath with after every match? Don Roy's famous red and yellow tracksuit and find out.

Split into two sections, Roy of the Rovers offers two games in one: the first is an arcade/adventure in which you must locate your chums; the second is the charity match. Both are loaded, and can be played, individually, so let's pull our red and yellow socks up and go searching... Roy is controlled with the joystick and can move in the four usual compass positions. Below Roy's adventures there is a status panel, and this shows the direction Roy can go; the name of the street he is in at present; and how much time he has left. Supplied in the packaging, just to make a struggling Roy's life easier, is a map of Melchester, and using this he can move around, finding useful objects that can help free his friends. Collecting objects or communicating with the various people Roy meets around the streets of Melchester is achieved by the use of a menu system. Using pull-down menus, Roy can pick up, drop and use any objects in his possession, and can perform such wonders as talk, smile and - very un-Roy like this - fight. If at any time Roy gets a bit bushed, his Mum is always on stand-by to replenish any lost energy with a nice cup of tea and a sticky bun, so use this whenever possible.

Once Blackie and Co. have been retrieved, it is time for the charity match against the All-stars. Normal five-a-side rules apply, and the action takes place on a flip-screen pitch. After the whistle has blown, the action begins, and the ball is under immediate control of the player at whose feet it falls. Moving your man whilst in possession of the ball, causes him to dribble with it, and when you want to shoot, holding down fire determines its strength. Control of the players can be swapped at any time, and the controlled player's jersey changes from red to yellow. The game is played with six minutes per half. Can Melchester conquer the tragedy that saw their players kidnapped and beat the All-Stars, thus saving their ground?

STA

Just when I thought I had seen the epitome of bad games, along comes Gremlin with Roy of the Rovers! The idea of combining an arcade/adventure with a soccer simulation is quite novel, but Gremlin's game is just diabolical. The first section where you have to rescue your chums is a complete walk-over, and the football section, with its slow movement and limited controls, isn't even worth a mention. As a package, Roy of the Rovers doesn't represent good value for money, and as such, should be avoided at all costs!

SM

Roy Race has been playing for Melchester Rovers for so long he makes Peter Shilton seem like a nipper. You would have thought that a combination of the great soccer action and perilous adventures from the comic would have made excellent computer entertainment. So where did Gremlin go wrong? The football game-play is slow and boring and the adventure is weak and easy to complete. Here is a game which relies entirely on the appeal of our comic hero - Roy Race may have saved many a day for Melchester, but he can do nothing for this game.

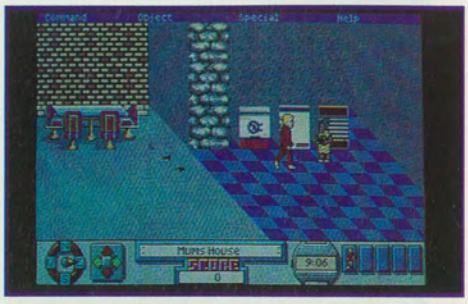
JS

STA Rating **24%**

GRAPHICS: 32%
SOUND: 30%

LASTING APPEAL: 14%
ADDICTIVENESS: 27%

DIFFICULTY: EASY
1ST DAY SCORE: N/A



In need of some refreshment, Roy visits his Mum for tea and biccies.

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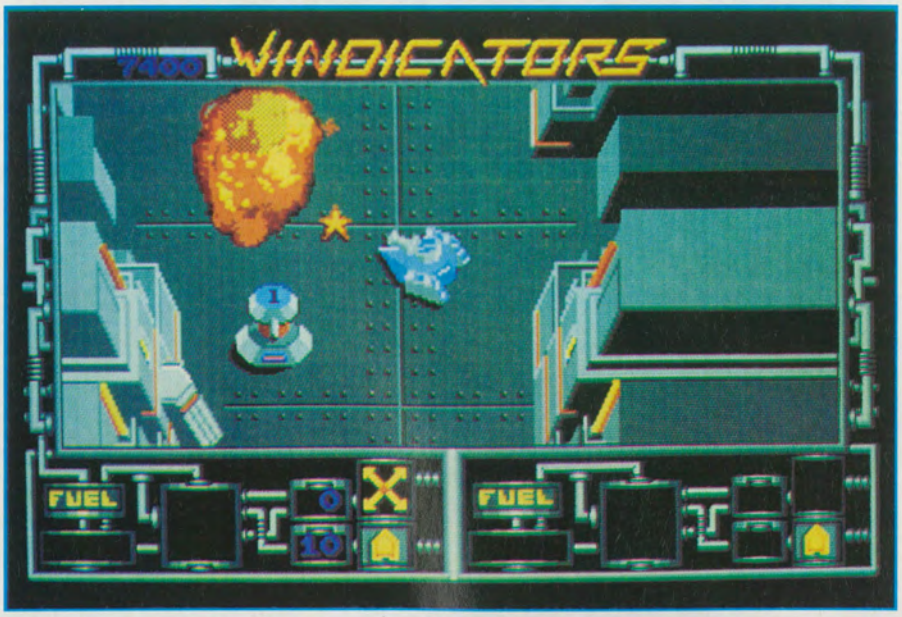
"In the first of their Tengen releases, Domark put you behind the wheel of a futuristic battle-tank. Are you ready to take part in some serious shootin' and trundlin' action?"



VINDICATORS

DOMARK/TENGEN (£19.95)

Hmmm, I'm not totally convinced by Vindicators. Sure enough, the graphics are very colourful - the explosions are amongst the best I've seen. The sound is also in tune with the game. It is the game's playability that I didn't really care for. The controls seemed to be unforgiving and I often died as a result of slow positioning. Bearing this in mind, however, Vindicators does represent good two-player action and is a very close conversion of its arcade parent. If Vindicators is the standard by which we can measure Tengen's next releases, then we should be in for a real treat.

NC

A couple of months back, Domark secured the rights to convert several of Tengen's coin-ops to computer format. Before long, we can expect to see Xybots and Toobin' arriving on our beloved STs, but first is the conversion of the tank-based shoot'em-up, Vindicators. The scenario for this latest piece of binary massacre, is that, safe within the confines of your SR-88 Strategic Battle Tank, you are the last hope of the inhabitants of Galaxy TR15. The evil forces of the Tangent Empire have taken over most of the galaxy, so it is up to you to trundle in, destroy their strongholds and bases, and thus regain the people's freedom. What are you waiting for? Let's roll on in there...

Having chosen the difficulty level of your mission and the number of players, your tank is positioned at the beginning of the first level. Each level consists of an enclosed metallic room, lying around which are various useful items, such as keys, fuel and stars. The use of fuel is pretty obvious, as it replenishes both your tank's energy and its shields, and the keys are used to exit via the large doors at the end of each level. The stars, though, are a form of monetary unit, and can be used to buy extras for your vehicle between each level. Each of the accessories has a different price, and, providing you have collected enough stars, you can add such luxuries as greater shot power, speed and special weaponry to your armoury.

Attempting to halt your advances through the many levels, are the ground and air-based forces of the Tangents. These take the form of either moving tanks that vary in the number of hits required to destroy them, or revolving gun towers that pepper the screen with flak. Both of these are harmful to your SR-88 and should be destroyed on sight. If not, it will be you who is annihilated. Additionally, some of them cannot be destroyed with your initial weaponry, so selective choosing on the enhancements screen could buy you some powerful rockets to finish them off with.

During the course of the game, there is the chance to pick up a couple of bonus stars. To begin with, you will enter a room for which there seems to be no exit, and the only feature is a massive pyramid. Shooting this, blows away one of the side panels, allowing you to get into the bonus-giving room inside. Once you have collected all of the goodies inside, exit is gained via one of the two doors in the room's corners.

STA

Vindicators in the arcades is a good blast, and this conversion captures its essence perfectly. The two-player option enhances play immensely, and it can be a real good laugh ploughing through the many levels, leaving a trail of devastation in your wake. The scrolling is near faultless, keeping your tank central at all times, and the graphics are both colourful and sharp, with the large explosions deserving a special mention - complete with suitable loud sound effects. I don't think that you could have got a closer conversion than this. Everything is as close as possible, making a really enjoyable game in the process. If you enjoyed the coin-op this is an essential purchase. If you have never seen it, still consider it, as it offers very addictive one or two-player action.

SM

Entering a bonus room gives the player the chance to collect both extra fuel and stars.

STA Rating

75%

GRAPHICS: 75%
SOUND: 70%

LASTING APPEAL: 70%
ADDICTIVENESS: 74%

DIFFICULTY: AVERAGE
1ST DAY SCORE: 16550

CREATED WITH STAC

"AMATEUR OR PROFESSIONAL? JUST HOW GOOD ARE STAC- CREATED ADVENTURES?"

THE JADE STONE

MARLIN GAMES (£8.00)

With the emergence of the STAC adventure creator came the chance for would-be adventure writers to fox us with their fiendish plots. This month, two such games have fallen on the Dungeon's doormat.

This game has been created by Linda Wright who has mixed the power of the STAC Adventure Creator with that of Degas Elite to bring us a brew of magic and foul deeds. The impressive loading screen plus the many other subtly drawn pictures which adorn the game, show that Linda's artistic abilities are not the least of her talents.

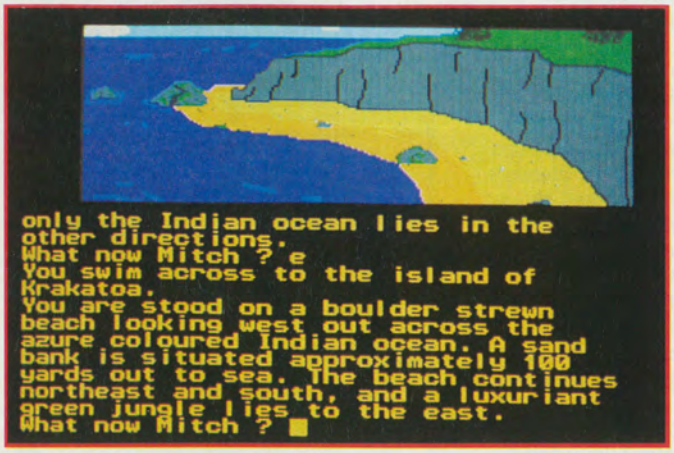
The game is seen through the eyes of a princess, who is seeking the fabled Jade Stone in a quest to save the kingdom. Having a female as the lead character means that macho tactics are not in order and you must learn to swop the knuckle-sandwich method of persuasion for that of the fluttering eyelashes. (Don't knock it, if you've never tried it!) The initial part of the game is relatively easy, but as there are a large number of other strolling players, you are soon entangled in the problems of persuading others to help solve your problems. Priests, lumberjacks, hermits and pedlars can be bought, bribed and cajoled into parting with all manner of objects. Magic features quite heavily in the game, so remember to shake, wave and rub everything in sight. Even if it turns out not to be magical, it's one way of making a lot of new friends!

STA

STA Rating 61%

TEXT/GRAPHICS:65%
GAMEPLAY: 59%

LASTINGAPPEAL: 60%
ADDICTIVENESS: 60%



Your Arrival point on the mysterious volcanic island

SHARDS OF TIME

TITAN GAMES (£14.99)

Within the safety of your time bubble you must make the first of your decisions which will influence the whole space-time continuum. With three doors to the past awaiting your decision, your choice is between the Ice Age, the Middle Ages or the Nineteenth Century. As these intriguing locations also include blood-thirsty cavemen, and the volcanic island of Krakatoa - you are obviously going to have a great time!

Located in the past are the shards of a time machine which must be recovered to ensure the world is put safely back on course. This game is written with the aid of STAC and Degas Elite. As you slowly unravel the tangled web of the past, your actions will influence the objects and locations in the future scenarios. This is a novel concept which ensures that things could get well and truly baffling. Of the few puzzles I have solved, none were as straightforward as they first appeared. Each little problem neatly dovetails into the next and adds a little sting in the tail. Additional options include, Ramsave, variable text size and hints.

This is essentially a text adventure with only a few graphics supporting the game's 100 locations, but the standard of the game is well up to that set by the larger adventure companies. More games from Titan are in production, if the standard set by this adventure is maintained, they deserve to do well.

STA

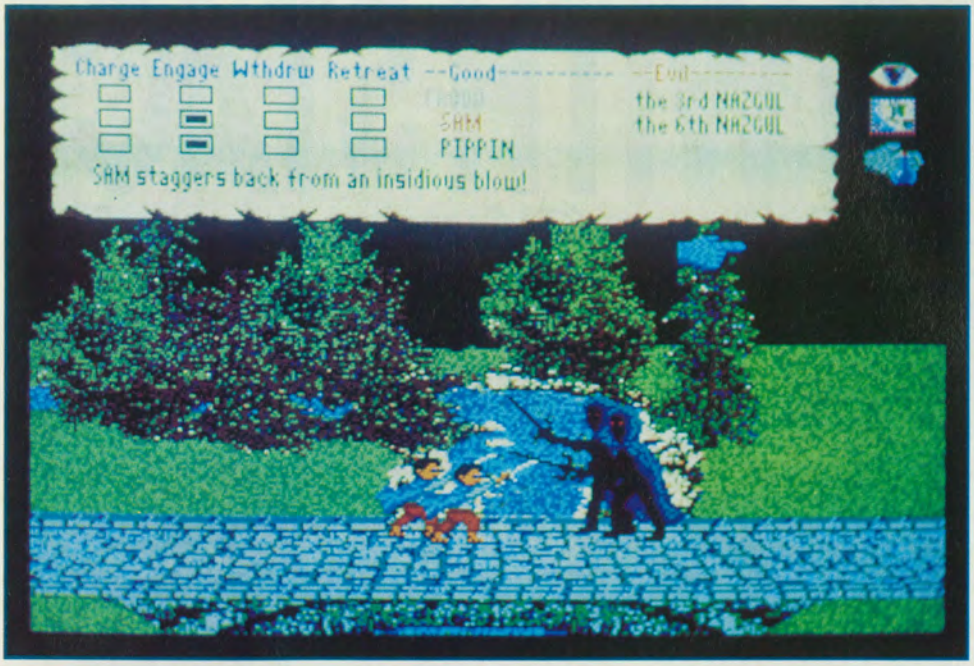
STA Rating 68%

TEXT/GRAPHICS:70%
GAMEPLAY: 68%

LASTINGAPPEAL: 65%
ADDICTIVENESS: 60%

A lone figure plays at the alter.

Confronted by the two evil Black Riders, your party prepares to stand their ground and fight it out.



WAR IN MIDDLE EARTH

"Frodo's adventures from Lord of the Rings have inspired many popular spin-offs - can this new war game succeed in becoming 'Hobbit Forming' ?"

MELBOURNE HOUSE (£19.95)

Black Riders have been seen in the Shire. We must be on the move and carry the Ring to Mount Doom in the land of Mordor.

Gandalf the wizard promised he would return to assist us in the quest, but somehow he has been delayed. If we make a run for the forest, perhaps with luck our paths will cross with his somewhere in the distant Mirkwood. Our only chance is to raise a force of dwarves in the Iron Hills, and with their help, force a path through the armies of Orcs which guard the gates of Mordor. Three small Hobbits have little chance against the legions of the wizard Sauron. Only by trusting their lives to your skill and cunning is there any hope for them. Only if you can persuade the friendlier races which inhabit the lands of Middle Earth to rise and harry the enemy, can Frobo and his two friends hope to evade death. During your dash across the kingdom you will encounter other travellers who can help with information. Their knowledge could help the Hobbits to find the rare artifacts which have the power to persuade the forces of good to take orders from you. With armies of trusty dwarves at your command, you may begin to move the various forces into strategic positions which can split the evil horde and give the ring-bearer the opportunity to slip past unnoticed.

The object of this strategy game is to guide Frobo the hobbit to Mount Doom where he can cast the magic ring into the volcano, before Sauron can use it to control Middle Earth. The game may be viewed at Full Map, Campaign and Animation Level. Full Map displays the whole of Middle Earth with all forces shown as dots. Campaign Level is a scrolling window which displays forces as icons and this level is used to issue orders to friendly forces and view the enemy's advance. The Animation Level is used to display encounters between small groups of combatants, and during these displays you can choose whether individual characters should attack or retreat. This animation shows simple movements of a few individuals, accompanied with weapon handling motions. The fact that you may have Gandalf at your side gives you no option but to select some clever piece of magic to zap the enemy, it's all very basic stuff.

The enemy forces continue to move and attack while you scratch your head and ponder, though cheats can use the 'Pause' option to dwell on their Grand Strategy. News of distant attacks is given in pop-up windows and you are then free to move to that location and make combat decisions, or you may choose to leave the computer to resolve the problem and inform you of the result. Should poor Frobo be killed, all is not lost. Providing you can use another friendly character to pick up the ring and continue - you may yet win the day.

As the Middle Earth battlefield is very large, and play can take place over many hours, a 'Save Game' option is provided. There is the opportunity to 'Pick-Up' and 'Drop' a few items which can be used in the quest. **STA**

Strip away the, albeit highly-polished, Tolkien veneer and there does not appear to be any essential difference between this and any other war strategy game. Battles are won and lost depending on your force of arms at the point of contact and the animation sequences are nothing to get excited about. I would have preferred the opportunity to select use of weaponry or magical skills during combat, instead of simple 'Thump-thump'. True, the various characters do seem to have different levels of strength, but it is all invisible to the player.

AM

I prefer thinking games to shoot'em-ups, and if they contain a touch of magic, so much the better. This game has a nice atmosphere to it and I did want to get that little Hobbit safely home. The game does show that it has been 'built down' for lesser computers, which means it could have been made a lot better for the ST. I much preferred the 'EMPIRE' war game to this. Not a great game, but adequate.

SK

STA Rating

67%

GRAPHICS: 68%
SOUND: 60%

LASTING APPEAL: 70%
ADDICTIVENESS: 65%

DIFFICULTY: AVERAGE
1ST DAY SCORE: N/A

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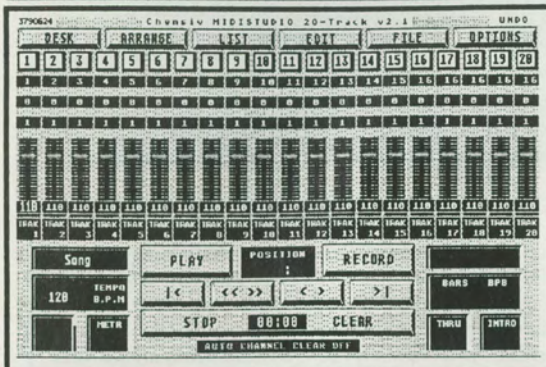


Midistudio £99.99

Midistudio is a 20 track Midi Music Studio. This Midi software package is a realistically priced introduction to Midi music processing and includes the following features.
20 tracks each assignable one of 16 midi channels, each track can be transposed up or down 2 octaves, the main screen features full tape deck controls with individual volume sliders for each track, note editing facilities including editing of pitch, octave, duration and velocity, plus full midi controller editing(pitch bend, mod wheel. etc.). Full control over phrases is offered through Quantizing, transposing, and phrase arrangement software pages. The arrangement facilities allow moving and copying phrases on any of the 20 tracks. The package is easy to use and is a strong competitor with Pro 24.

" will give Steinberg's Pro 24 a run for it's money "
ST WORLD March 89

SCAN AT UP TO 1000 DPI FOR ONLY £89.99

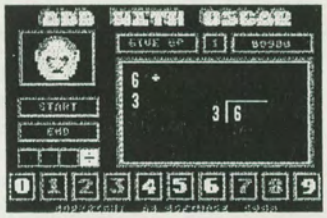
The Image Scanner is a peripheral for the ST which can provide high quality graphics digitising for a tenth of the cost of other digitisers. This simple unit plugs into the cartridge port of the ST and accepts scanned information via optical cables which fix easily to the head of any printer. Scanned images can be saved in raw data, Degas and Neochrome formats. The Software supports scanning resolutions of 75,150,216,300,360 and 1000 dots per inch horizontally. An example disk is available which contains a slide show of images scanned with this product. The cost of this disk is £3.99, £2.00 of which is redeemable on purchase of a scanner.

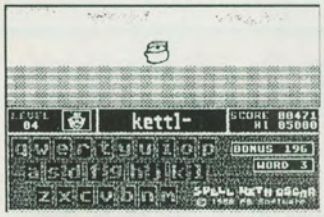
IMAGE SCANNER ONLY £89.99

EDUCATIONAL SOFTWARE

Add With Oscar £12.99

Add with Oscar is a fully mouse controlled educational game with full colour screens and sound for teaching addition, subtraction, multiplication and division to children. This program has selectable difficulty levels and a Hi-Score table.





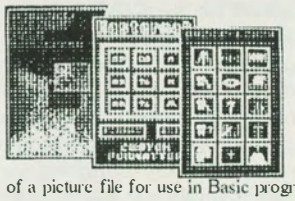
Spell With Oscar £12.99

Spell with Oscar is a game which teaches spelling, keyboard skills and motor coordination. Pictures of objects move smoothly accross the screen and the pupil should spell the name of the object while Oscar checks for mistakes. Spell also incorporates selectable dificulty levels and a Hi-score table.
Extra data disks £6.99

TRILOGY £12.99

Quick List Plus is a utility that compiles a directory of your disks. Sort on disk or name, reads any drive, including hard drive. Printer output for hard copy of databases.

Mastermat is a formatter that optimises disk space, allows non standard sector and track formats/ fast read format.



Picstrip is a utility that captures all or part of a picture file for use in Basic programs, supports GFA, FAST, HISOFT and ST Basics and is Degas, Neochrome and AB Animator compatible.

AB Animator £14.95

AB Animator is a utility for creating and animating sprites. It supports GFA, HISOFT and FAST basics and is compatible with degas and neochrome picture files.Use the full icon control to animate up to 20 big frames of 56 pixels wide by 33 pixels high.

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DRAGONSCAPE

SOFTWARE HORIZONS (£19.95)

While reading your favourite computer magazine on the bus you are suddenly transported to an unknown era. Why? Well, the elders of a magical land called Tuvania have summoned you back through time to help in a very dangerous matter. Why they have chosen someone on a bus is not made clear, and the scenario doesn't have the slightest relevance to the game until Garvan the dragon says in a small voice: 'I may not have magical powers but I do have a strong pair of wings and fiery breath.' Of all the dragons that ever appeared in stories, Garvan is perhaps the most stupid and so you agree to fight together against the Curse of Caos.

DragonScape boasts a 64-way scrolling screen, but the sacrifice for this freedom is a game-play area the size of a post card. The bus passenger cum dragon rider, doesn't appear in the game, but Garvan swoops onto the first of five levels like a Lancaster bomber. The joystick controls Garvan and he can fly in any direction until he reaches unseen parameters. A host of alien opposition buzz and crawl around the screen in various forms and formations firing lasers. In level 1, pig faces float around spitting a nasty substance, and all manner of indestructible creatures conspire to reduce Garvan's energy. But a press of the firebutton sends a fiery breath that singes their little alien asses. So as Garvan flaps around the screen for a while, you can start looking around for artifacts and objects which are scattered across the terrain. The objective is to fly over the objects, collect them and insert them in the right places on the terrain. The artifacts are protected by the aliens and Dragon Catcher traps which immobilize the dragon allowing the aliens to sap his energy.

The objective is the same in all five levels but the game-play alters slightly in each one. Level 4 is my favourite as it incorporates arcade favourites like pinball, Pacman and space invaders who conspire against our stupid dragon. Finally, level 5 is a combination of all and throws everything at you.

Replacing the usual assault craft with a dragon is an original enough idea, and the 64-way scrolling would have been great had it been full screen, but there are hundreds of games like DragonScape.

STA

STA Rating 45%

GRAPHICS: 41%
SOUND: 25%

LASTING APPEAL: 47%
ADDICTIVENESS: 52%

DIFFICULTY: AVERAGE
1ST DAY SCORE: 17000

BLACKSCAR

TITAN GAMES (£14.99)

This traditional, text adventure is the second game from Titan, using the STAC Adventure Writer. If you are a fan of Level 9 games then I think this adventure is just up your twisty, winding path. The tale is a conglomeration of extremely tricky puzzles set in the caves and crags of Blackscar Mountain. The mountain approaches are protected by Trolls, Giants, Vampires and axe-wielding Dwarves. Magic, as well as brute force, is needed to forge a path through this unholy opposition. However, sharp eyes and the need to examine everything is also essential. You will begin your quest standing by a pillar on which are written the letters MUDAZ. Unfortunately, I found that puzzle clear 'AZMUD' and spent a long night finding another way up the mountain!

There are many simple, but acceptable graphic screens to accompany the text which is both long and descriptive. Dispatching monsters usually means an increase to your gold pouch which will enable you to nip back to the village stores for useful goodies, such as lamps and axes. Your task is to recover a magical crystal skull - whilst everyone else's task is to kill you!

The game is an excellent advert for the STAC system as it proves that you can create a game of a commercial standard if you put in the time, blood and sweat. There are no gimmicks, just room after room of mind-boggling puzzles. I would not advise novice adventurers to cut their teeth on a game such as this, as there are very few easy puzzles. All the options you would wish for are built in, such as Ramsave, Help, Text Size and Oops.

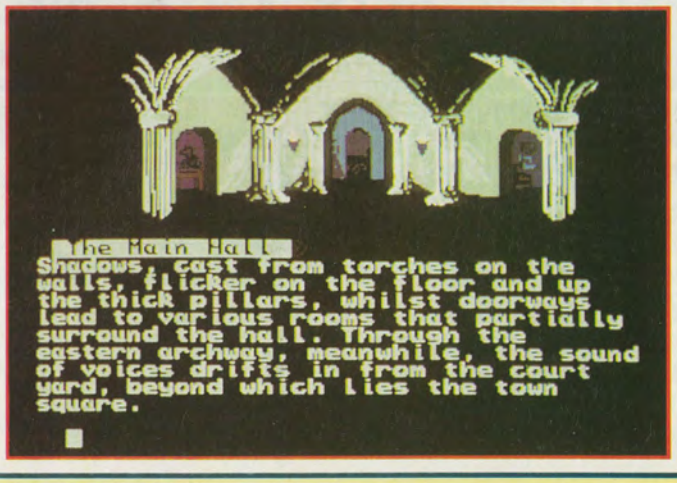
Generally speaking, the ST adventure scene is moving away from the standard text adventure, but if you want a whiff of the original this will certainly fit the bill.

STA

STA Rating 65%

TEXT/GRAPHICS: 65%
GAMEPLAY: 60%

LASTING APPEAL: 60%
DIFFICULTY: HARD



COMPETITION WINNERS

SIERRA ON-LINE COMPETITION

Pay attention James Gill from Crawley in West Sussex. You have won our Sierra competition and, more importantly, a magnificent Casio mini TV. Well done!

The 25 lucky runners-up, who win the Sierra game of their choice, are: Daniel Williams from Clacton-on-Sea, Colin Cooper from Leigh-on-Sea, Ian Rowley from Nuthall, Lan-Fin Chau from Kilmarnock, Robert Lake from Willaston, Richard Heath from Leek, Paul Luttman from Copthorne, Liam Bailey from Egremont, Simon Allen from Birmingham, Mark Charters from Wanstead, Tracy Tattum from Portsmouth, Noel Sumner from Lymm, Pete Jupp from Rushden, David Fitzgerald from Portmarnock, Bas Wiegmans from Holland, Allen Errington from Newton Hall, Stephen Jaundrill from West Bromwich, Mark Everett from West Bridgford, Ray Maidstone from Norwich, Russell Burnell from Hornchurch, Yvonne Downer from Symington, Chris Mayle from Forest Hill, Ian Rowman from Romford, Kevin Clements from Edinburgh and Warick Dixon from High Wycombe.

Congratulations! All of you.

The answers were as follows:

1. The ruler of the kingdom of Daventry is Graham (B).
2. Sludge Vohaul was going to infest the earth with door-to-door salesmen (B).
3. The Death Angel was guilty of dealing with illegal drugs (B).
4. A Manhunter's field computer is known as a MAD (B).

LOGOTRON

The small but efficient team responsible for Logotron's previous hit games.

"Entertainment software development is a competitive business with many software houses vying for few lucrative arcade conversions and licences. Logotron, however, choose to pursue more original concepts - Jason Spiller went to find out why."

Logotron's turtle logo has been synonymous with educational and business software for years. But the popularity of games in the sixteen-bit market was a big incentive to diverge, and it is this highly successful development that has created great excitement. In the past year, they have released a wide variety of software, ranging from great arcade games, such as: Quadralien, Starray and Stargoose, to the acclaimed chess program, Sargon III. Their headquarters are in Cambridge, but on the day of the interview, the games division was on the move from London's West End to larger premises in Islington. The team is small, comprising Marketing Manager, Herbert Wright, Software Development Manager, Tony Beckwith and Operations Manager, Wayne Brett. Herbie apologized for the confusion caused by the move: 'I agreed to the relocation on the condition that there were plenty of curry houses nearby.' Looking from the office window, I reckoned he wouldn't be disappointed.

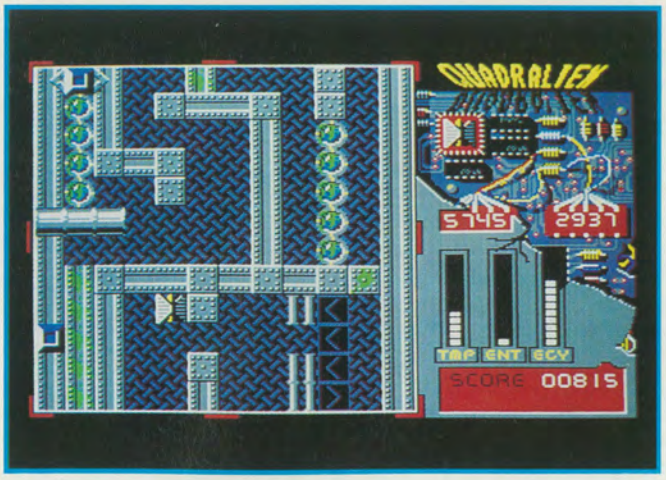
Herbie Wright: 'It would be easy to opt for lucrative arcade conversions, but we are determined to concentrate on totally original concepts.'

Tony Beckwith: 'We receive ideas for games in a variety of forms, from scribbles on the back of a fag packet to full-blown plans and descriptions.

Logotron have an enviable catalogue of games, but it is the projects which are currently in progress which will really demonstrate the company's remarkable ingenuity and originality. Herbie Wright is an enthusiastic and energetic character, and I remember him at various computer shows, a few years back, bustling around the Firebird stand: 'I left university with no aspirations for computer games and my career occurred more through providence than planning. I got a job selling advertising space in a computer journal and quite by chance, an old school friend of mine, James Schooler, was working for the same company. At this time, British Telecom were announcing the launch of their software label and James answered their advertisement for personnel and promptly got the job as head of Firebird Software.' Under Schooler's management, Firebird's budget label was successfully established. But they wanted to shrug off the cheap game image and launch a full price range: 'Some time later, James called and offered me the job of Project Manager. He had pulled off a bit of coup by negotiating the licence to convert Elite onto the Commodore 64, and with his guidance, it was my job to direct the project. Then suddenly, at the age of 26, James had a fatal heart attack.'

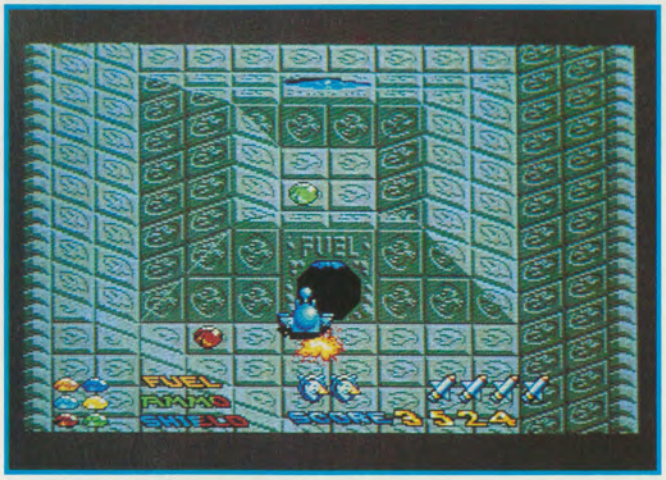
Eight Bit Demise Inevitable

Schooler's death caused a void in the ranks at Firebird, but Wright instinctively took hold of the reins, and without any previous experience in software development, he successfully completed the Elite project: 'I had to do everything from organizing the artwork and literature to sorting out technical problems. It was baptism by fire, but experiencing every aspect of software development has proved invaluable. Fortunately, I was working with two of the most experienced and talented people, Messrs Bell and Braben, and the project was a resounding success.' Over the next two years, he was responsible for games like Sentinel and Star



While Atari sat on Xor, the game inspired Astral to develop the highly successful Quadralian.

Trek which established Firebird as a leading software house: 'You couldn't choose a better game than Elite to show that you mean business, and it was a hard act to follow. The success of games like Elite and Sentinel demonstrates the popularity of cerebral games with long-term interest and these are aspects that we apply at Logotron.



Stargoose went from near-scuppered project to success - thanks to Steve Kane and 'Kenny' Everrett.

Wright reckons the demise of the eight-bit machines is inevitable, however long software companies try to delay it, and he left Firebird specifically to concentrate on the sixteen-bit market: 'Large corporations may have financial muscle, but they lack flexibility and corporate decisions are qualified by the hierarchy which I found very restricting.' Using his experience, Wright worked on some ideas for games and analyzed the market: 'For the next few months, I visited a number of smaller, independent companies and finally came across Logotron in Cambridge. Coincidentally, they had arrived at similar conclusions to me about sixteen-bit entertainment and they asked if I would like to launch a game label and I said, "you bet!"' Wright had set a certain criteria for software and his first task was to look for games, programmers and graphic artists that reached them: 'I was impressed with Astral Software, who were developing Xor at the time, and I also signed up Steve Kane and Ken Everrett, who I had worked with before on Star Trek and Black Lamp, to do Star Goose.

The acclaimed and popular chess game, Sargon III, was a strange contrast to the arcade-orientated Quadralien and Stargoose, but Herbie recognized it as an exceptional program: 'The word 'ultimate' is bandied about with great abandon in this business, but I checked out existing chess programs on the market and nothing could touch Sargon III. It's very popular... a perennial good seller!' Inspired by Defender, Starray is an exception to Logotron's 'cerebral' and 'originality' policy, but this is no run-of-the-mill arcade shoot'em-up: Defender is a timeless arcade game and we wanted to pay homage to it with an updated version. It was a game which really exploited the capabilities of the Amiga with incredibly smooth horizontal scrolling and deep parallax effect - two aspects which at the time seemed impossible to emulate on the ST. There was only one man to my knowledge who could do the game justice and that was Steve Bak' Bak had gained the reputation as being the master of the 68000 scroll and set a standard for vertical-scrolling shoot'em ups with Gold Runner and had achieved continuous horizontal smooth scrolling on the ST.

The search for good ideas, projects and personnel was very much a question of Wright relying on what he calls 'ingredient X' - a little something different. But today, the process is far more thorough and selective. Logotron now has a selection of talented, economical and reliable software developers and this, Wright acknowledges, is very much attributed to the influence of Project Manager, Tony Beckwith: 'I worked with Tony at Telecomsoft. He is very aware of how expensive and time-consuming software development is and he applies a very methodical approach to his selection process. He spends a lot of time studying all aspects, from previous track records to programming techniques, in order to avoid expensive mistakes.'

Tony is a seasoned programmer who cut his teeth on the big projects at Telecomsoft. Using his experience, he now selects projects for Logotron and directs, advises and synchronizes production. He explained the process from initial selection to finished product: 'Concepts for games come to us in a variety of forms, from scribbles on the back of a fag packet to lengthy and detailed descriptions. When Denton Designs approached us with the plans for Eye of Horus, which is now near completion, they presented a complete fifty-page document, with detailed colour illustration of characterization and background graphics, memory maps, sprite behaviour and in-depth

Steve Bak, 'The Master of the Scroll' converted the excellent Starray onto the ST.

The ancients have been slaughtered by the visitors and now the 10,000 islands of Archipelagos are uninhabitable.

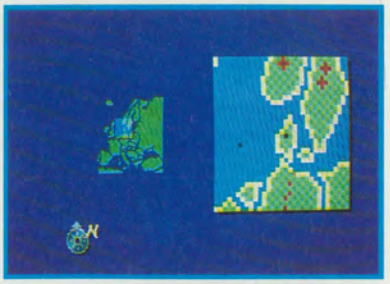
descriptions of storyboards and game-play. So we knew exactly what the game was going to be like before a single sprite was programmed. Of course, when a project is accepted, we are flexible to any changes and acceptable compromises, and if a problem arises during production, we will meet and work out a way of overcoming it.'

" Ingredient X"

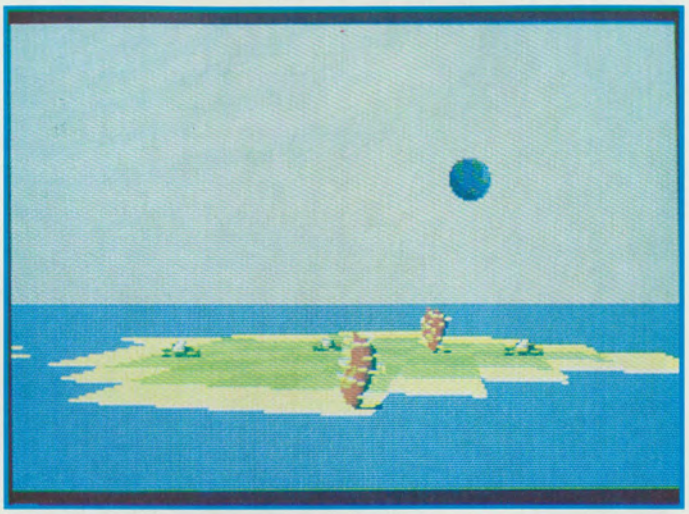
This selection process has resulted in some great games and an elite troop of programmers. But surely it hasn't all been a bed of roses? Wright answered: 'Sure, and I don't mind admitting it! There have been occasions when we have agreed on the structure of the game, and three months later have been presented with something that was not just a vague approximation, but a totally different game.' Tony continued: 'Another problem occurs when we agree on a game in theory which proves impossible in practice. For example, originally, Stargoose was to be played from a cockpit perspective moving into the terrain and down tunnels and trenches. But to create the effect of distance perspective you would have to draw lots of sprites of different sizes, and when a sprite is more than half of the screen it is impossible to cope with. The solutions were to either slow the scrolling down to a snail's pace or blank out the screen, which were both unacceptable. Thankfully, Bak and Everett think on their feet and they suggested that the content and aim of the original game could be wrapped in an overhead-view, vertically-scrolling game. We had our reservations, but when we saw what they had in mind, we didn't hesitate.' The effect of sweeping over undulating terrain was the 'ingredient X' that Wright was looking for, and Stargoose made the transition from being nearly scuppered to veritable hit.

A part of Logotron's success is that they are receptive to the most original and sometimes bizarre ideas and concepts. Astral Software have been able to use Logotron as a vehicle for their unique ingenuity, as I found out when I spoke to the team, Paul Carruthers and Ian Downend: 'We were developing educational software for Logotron in Cambridge when we heard that Herbie was starting up a game label. He visited the office and we showed him the ideas we had been working on and, suddenly, we weren't doing educational software anymore.'

Astral Software, flanked by an Obelisk, look wearily at some poisonous vegetation. Hold on, they're cauliflowers.



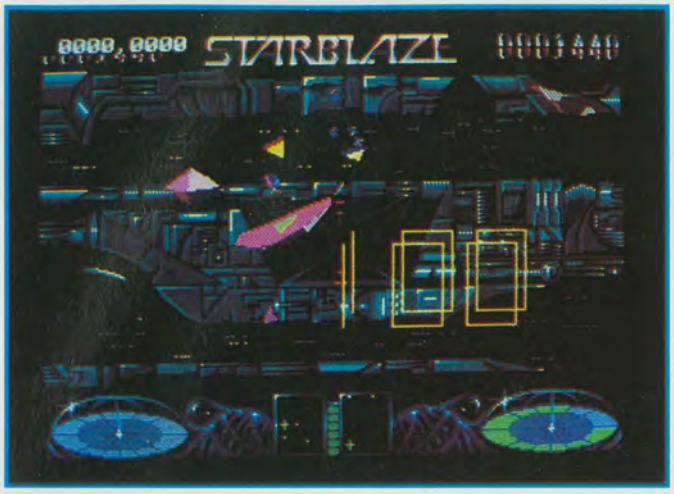
Astral used Degas to create Archipelagos, and their own invention, 'Engine', carries you across sea and land.



Archipelagos

Astral have been working on the unique, strange and exciting game called Archipelagos. The dictionary defines 'Archipelagos' as a group of scattered islands, and one look at the game shows that it was aptly named. The magnificent graphics paint a picture of large and lush island vegetation and a click of a mouse button actions an unbelievable scrolling effect. But there is more to this game than its incredible visual effect. Carruthers described this unique game: 'Both Ian and I have mathematical backgrounds and Archipelagos is really a concept we have been working on since we were at Loughborough University. The game is an interpretation of man's destructive influence on the environment and it is based on an ancient civilization's imaginary far off paradise islands called Archipelagos. The islands became 'real in times' and visitors invaded them and staked their claim by placing an obelisk of immutable

granite. The ancients tried to de-imagine the visitors, but the obelisks fortified their claim and so the visitors decided to taint the paradise by slaughtering the ancients and draining their blood into the soil, and their lifeless bodies lay strewn over the islands. Now, if the ancients awoke, they would not be the harmless dreamers of before, but hideous mutations and the islands would be perverted by egg spores which spread poison. The visitors were finally driven away by the results of their own actions and it is now your task to free the islands by breaking the link between the obelisks, the dead ancients and the poison eggs.'



The creators of the 68000 versions of Elite, Mr Micro, are working on a non-stop battle action game, Star Blaze. The speed that those 3D solid vessels come at you is astounding!

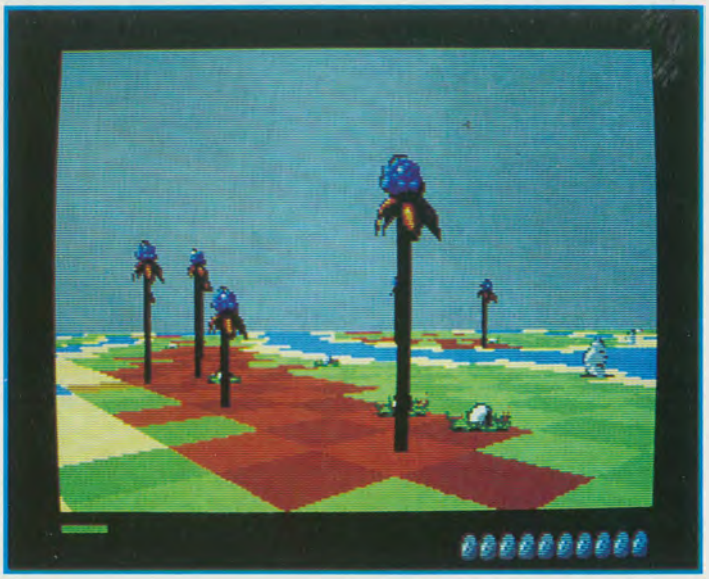
"Engine"

Astral used Degas to draw the graphics in Archipelago, but the incredible scrolling effect was created by their own graphics program invention which they call, 'Engine'. 'Using Engine, we can do full-screen scrolling which can be fully controlled by the player. It handles a 256-by-256 chequered board and the game can continue to scroll from any viewpoint and show sprites from different angles. You can also replicate it to give a tunnel effect. 'I suggested that Engine could be used for a number of applications, perhaps an aircraft simulation? 'The only drawback with Engine is that it doesn't bank or tilt. But we discovered that the effect of the scroll is to give a feeling similar to the movement of a hovercraft, and so we are working on a hovercraft blast-and-race game which we reckon Engine will handle very well.' Tony described another indispensable programmer's aid which was designed by Steve Bak: 'The program enables you to draw large sprites and reduce them to any size in perfect perspective and then replicate them.'

Eye of Horus. Logotron accepted the project on the basis of the detailed presentation, before a single sprite had been drawn.

Eye of Horus

The creators of the excellent 68000 conversions of Elite, Mr Micro, are working on an outstanding 3D arcade battle called Star Blaze. Solid 3D space craft hurtle out of the darkness towards you in a variety of formations. Tony described the game: 'Mr Micro have mastered smooth scrolling with solid 3D graphics in Elite but the speed at which these large sprites move around the screen is astounding.' In great contrast to 3D alien blasting is Eye of Horus from Denton Design. Tony describes: 'We receive ideas for games all the time, but the plans for Eye of Horus were something else! This is the first time we have worked with Denton Design and we were so impressed with the presentation we that agreed to the game on the basis of the plans before a single sprite had been drawn.' Eye of Horus is a heavily researched adventure based on a traditional Egyptian story set within pyramids in which Horus must find fourteen parts of his father's dismembered body and avenge his killer.



Isles of the mind, Archipelagos demonstrates Logotron's commitment to completely original and often strange ideas.

Recently, Logotron 'WOWed'em' in the States at the CES show, and Herbie talked of his strategies for the European, Scandinavian and Japanese markets. But in such a competitive business, what makes Logotron different? Herbie Wright answered: 'Independents, like ourselves, seem to be opting for lucrative and high-profile arcade conversions and name games. We are quite capable of taking on conversion projects, but we are determined to concentrate on original ideas.' It is very easy for software companies to stick with the tried and trusted formulas and I was particularly impressed by Logotron's prescience in taking on very different concepts. But perhaps their success is due to that 'ingredient X - that little something different,' as Herbie Wright would say.

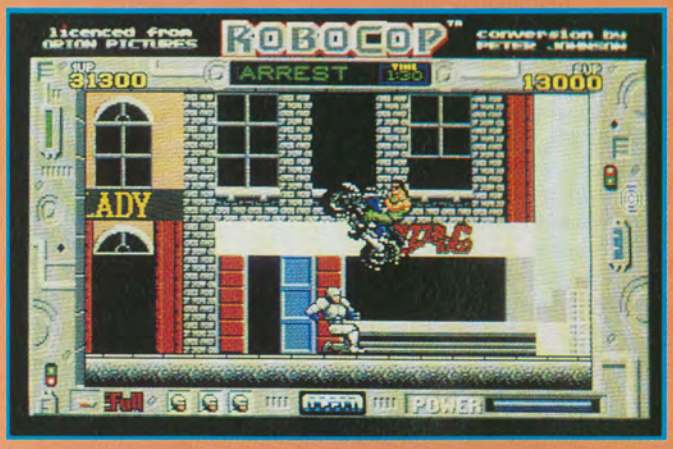
STA

ACTION PROGRAMMER PROFILE

PETE JOHNSON

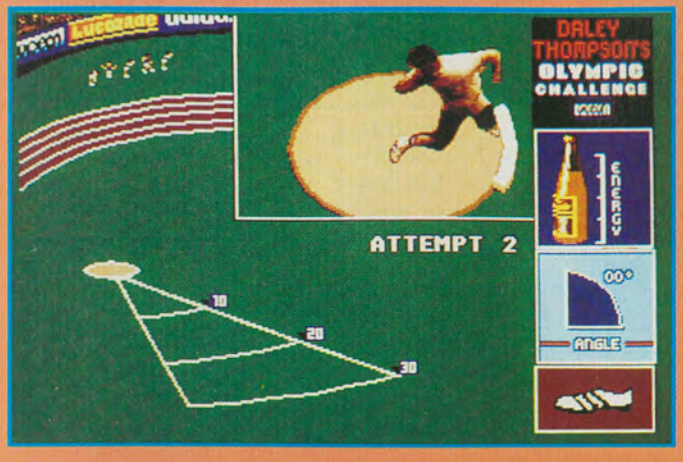
Games written to date:

"Loads! On the BBC Micro I wrote a lot for the likes of Ocean, Superior and U.S. Gold, and these include Overdrive, which sold hundreds because it was the only decent driving game on the Beeb and Electron; Deathstar, a clone of a classic coin-op called Sinistar; Beach Head; Yie Ar Kung Fu I and II; Mikie; Crystal Castles (released about six months after I wrote it!); Impossible Mission, my personal favourite; and the BBC conversion of Arkanoid. On the 16-bit, I write for both the Amiga and ST and my previous works include Arkanoid I and Revenge of Doh, Wizball, half of Daley Thompson's Olympic Challenge, and the forthcoming Robocop."



Fave Games:

"I don't know really. I tend to look at any new stuff that comes out, play it a couple of times, and then forget about them. Nothing really sticks in my mind, apart from Buggy Boy."



Other Interests:

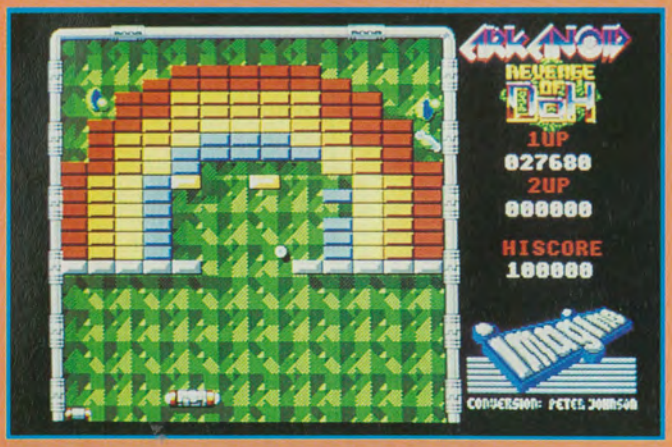
"I play the guitar and keyboards for a group I'm in called 'Startled by the Sun', and I also write songs. Also I like going to, and acting in, the theatre."

Programmer he most admires:

"John Philips (programmer of Nebulus and Eliminator), I'm looking forward to seeing what he does next."

Development Tools:

K-Seka (despite all the bugs!) and Degas Elite. Though he did specify that he does the animation routines himself.



What annoys him about the industry:

"Well, the thing that annoys me the most is when a magazine reviews a game, and seems to think that the company themselves wrote it. I mean, there are a lot of guys like me, writing freelance, and getting no credit for it."

Next Project:

"Well, after I've finished Robocop I don't know! It'll be something else for Ocean, but as of yet I don't know what."

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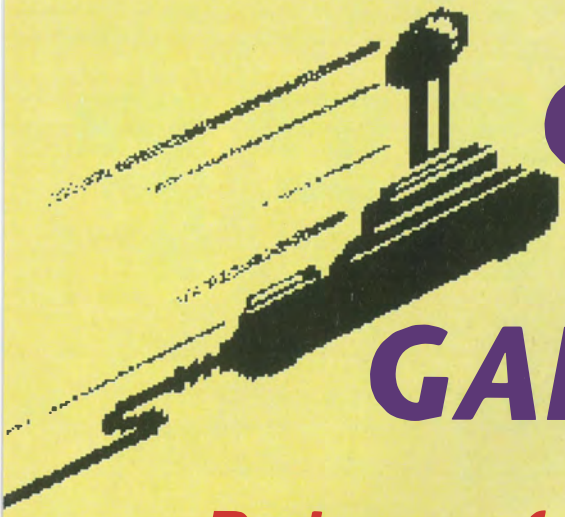
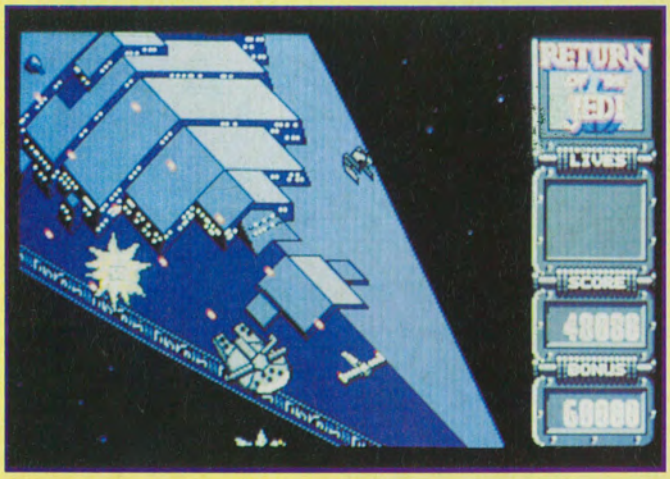


GIVING THE GAME AWAY

Well, here it is... the thirteenth edition of Giving The Game Away. Sorry about last months lack of length, but there were very few original tips sent in, and that's what happens when other mags tips are ripped off. After all, it is you that fill these pages! Anyway, the pages are looking a bit better this month, with some useful help on Shackled, Lombard RAC Rally and Barbarian II amongst others. I'll shut up now, so you can get straight into this months helping.

Return of the Jedi - Domark

If you are having problems defeating the evil empire in this, the third and final installment of the Star Wars trilogy, then help is here in the shape of Thomas Scully from Dublin. Play the game and enter Darth Vader onto the high-score table instead of your name. Start the game again and press F2 to complete a stage.



Crazy Cars II - Titus

Travelling at high speeds normally ends in your red F40 crashing, thus wasting valuable time. Simon Gleed who hails from Cowley, Oxford, however, has found a useful tip that allows you to travel at break-neck speeds without crashing. Play the game as normal, and take your speed up to 204mph. Now press F10 to pause the game, and then press fire. The game now slows down to the rate of one frame of action at a time, but the car is still controllable. So, simply by continually pressing fire and moving left and right, your car can pass the obstructing police vehicles with ease, allowing you to reach the boundaries with relative ease.

Shackled - U.S. Gold

Having trouble fighting your way through this disappointing conversion's levels? If so, help is at hand from Steven Bell of Blyth, Northumberland. Apparently, the game can be completed by using these following instructions whilst on level 1.

First of all collect the key, and then move down into a secret passage directly below the key. Although your character will not be visible, he can still move around, so move down as far as possible, and then right as far as possible. Move up, and you will reach a small room. Within this room there is a locked door, so use the key and go up into the next small room. In here, there is another door, so walk through it and, voila! The end of Shackled!

Barbarian II - Palace

Paul Masterson of Longton has sent in this useful guide to the creatures in Palace's excellent sequel. Also, in a spate of generosity, Paul has also sent in a step-by-step guide on how to reach the end of a level.

Level 1:

From the start screen, go left twice, then right seven times, left, right, left, up into the cave and right.

Creatures:

Saurian Beast - Try not to get too close as he has a nasty tendency to bite your head off! Instead, stand away from him and let him approach you. Now alternate between high and low chops.

Neanderthal Man - Whilst watching for his club, move away and deliver a flying head chop three times in a row. On the third one you always decapitate him!

Apes - No major problem here, simply repeat a low chopping action.

Chickens - A real pain in the backside! Once they've pecked you once, they will keep attacking, normally causing you to fall in a pit. Low chops help, and it is often possible to cut them in half!

Stabbers - Their chainsaw-like proboscis can easily be avoided, so simply keep kicking them to keep them at bay.

Floaters - These insects are a piece of cake. Just keep booting them and they die after about four or five hits.

Level 2:

From the starting point, go right, then up, left, up, then left twice, right, left three times, up and left to reach the exit.

Creatures:

Carnivores - Possibly the most dangerous creatures of all - if they get their teeth into you, you've had it. Attack him with a low chop, this way he won't get the chance to pounce. A useful tip to avoid the Carnivores' jaws is to trap it so that it is just out of the screen. Now repeat the low chops until it is dead.

Orc Guards - Providing there aren't any acid puddles around, use the same three-in-a-row flying head chop system used to kill the neanderthal man. If this is not possible, overhead chops or low ones will do the job.

Crabs - No problem. Just repeat a low chop action and these will disappear in no time.

Slithering Woman - A well-timed low chop removes her head almost every time.

Cave Troll - Like the Ape on the first level, these use a simple punch to attack you. Just use low chops of kicks to kill them.

Stingers - An overhead chop weakens these half crab/half snake things, so repeat the movement until it is dead. If not, use an ordinary chop to kill it.

Level 3:

First of all go up, then right twice, up again, left, then right, up, right, left twice, up, left twice again, up twice, right twice, left twice, then up to level four.

Creatures:

Pit Creatures - Cannot be killed, but to reach the other side of the pit safely, jump across just as the tentacle is retracting.

Dungeon Masters - A nasty kick from these guys can severely weaken you, so repeat an overhead chop routine. It is also possible to cut these guys' hearts out by performing a well-timed flying head chop.

Giant Grubs - Horrible these. Time your low chop as his body recoils. Then let him have it. If possible, though, jump over him at all times.

Gobblers - A single low chop kills these instantly!

Eyes - Their laser beams are a nuisance, so an overhead chop or a flying one will weaken them, so repeat the move.

Orclets - These refugees from the original Barbarian wield a hefty axe, so use plenty of low chops to make them squeal!

Level 4:

You can only go from left to right here, and the first creature you meet is the Living Idol. Hit the fire balls and then try to leap across. Another way is to face away from the Idol and let its balls and the acid puddles knock you towards it. Several low chops will now destroy it. Next we meet the large red Pit Demon. When he reaches out, use an overhead chop to hit his arms. Repeat this move and you need never lose any energy. Finally, the ultimate foe - Drax! Wait until he pauses between spells, and perform a flying head chop. Now witness the excellent end sequence of the game!

Lombard RAC Rally - Mandarin

Now, this could come in really handy! If you are having cash problems in this playable sim, then agree to do an interview and use these answers to the questions. Thanks go to Howard Lock of Arlesey for them.

1. What is curious about the Cadet GSI? B: A second footbrake
2. Who won the 1980 Lombard RAC Rally? B: H. Toihoven * P. White
3. The Ypres rally in Belgium is held over? A: 24 hrs
4. Which company provided the tyres for the 1988 rally? A: Pirhelli
5. Where is the Nurehburh 24 hour rally held? B: Germany
6. How long have Lombard sponsored the rally? C: 14 yrs
7. Who won the 1977 Olympus rally? C: Ron Richardson
8. How many levels are the RAC MSA rally held over? B: 5 graded levels
9. What is the nationality of the driver Kenith Erikson? A: Swedish
10. Carte de passage is? C: A customs document
11. How many times has the Ford Escort won the Lombard RAC rally? B: 8
12. What is the overall length of the Ford Sierra RS Cosworth? B: 4.46 m.
13. During which decade did the Lombard RAC rally not run? A: 1940-1950
14. Who won the 17th New Zealand rally? C: Franz Whittingham
15. Which car won the 1st world championship rally for group A cars? C: Lancia
16. How much does a Peugeot 205 GTi weigh? A: 880kg
17. Franz Whittingham was the first Austrian driver to?

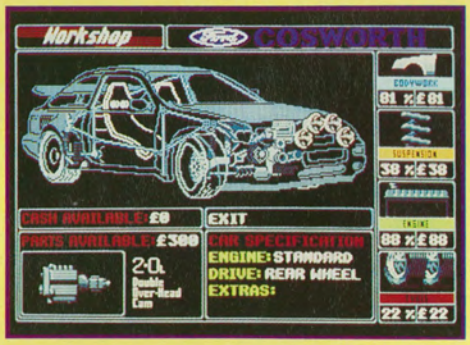
B: Win the World rally
18. Which is the only rally with more than one starting point? A: Monte Carlo
19. The time spent between arrival control and the stage start is known as? B: Dead time
20. Part of the 1987 rally was run at Clumber Park. In which county is this? A: Nottinghamshire
21. A BMW homoglated group a car in kit form. What was it? A: M3
22. How many times has the mini won the rally? A: Once
23. In what year was the rally cancelled due to foot and mouth disease? B: 1967
24. What is the RAC motosports' yearbook known as? A: The blue book
25. The Japanese Supra 3.0i had which problem in the 1987 Safari rally? A: Overheating
26. How many marshalls are involved in the running of a rally? C: 15,000
27 Who was the 1987 Soviet Union national champion? C: Ilmar Rossier
28. The Nissan 200sx made its first European rally appearance in? A: Greece
29. What is the Targa sytem? B: A route timing system
30. Who won the seventh Marlborough rally of Argentina? C: Micky Balssion
31. Are two-way radios allowed between crews and service crews? A: Yes
32. What is the maximum number of starters allowed in the 1988 Lombard RAC rally? B: 180
33. What is the alternative route defining system known as? C: The Tulip card
34. What is the engine size of the Ford RS Cosworth? B: 1993cc
35. What is the RAC MSA speed limit on the roads on road rallies? A: 30mph
36. Which manufacturer won the 1987 RAC rally? B: Lancia
37. Who was the first driver to participate in 100 WCR events? A: Hannu Mikkola
38. Lancia won the Monte Carlo rally with Aureia in? B: 1954

Howard also sent in a brief list of what he considers essential to get when you have collected your prize money:

1. Lights (not fog lights).
2. 4-wheel drive.
3. 2.8 V6 engine.
4. Fog lights.

He also mentions that the easiest course to practise on is the Harrogate - Harrogate.

Oh well, that's all I've got time for this month. Prize winners are Howard Lock, for his Lombard Rallly tips, and for those he will be receiving copies of Operation Wolf and Gauntlet II, whilst Paul Masterson's Barbarian II guide has earnt himself a copy of ISS. Finally, Simon Gleed will be receiving a copy of Batman for his Crazy Cars II cheat.



Space Harrier II - Elite

If you want to progress through the levels with minimum effort, take a peek at the second disk's directory and you will find things such as 'LEVEL1.DAT' and 'THEEND DAT'. Now, if you were to use GEM to show 'LEVEL1.DAT's' info, and change the name to...say, Steve.DAT. Then change 'THEEND.DAT' to 'LEVEL1.DAT' and Steve.DAT to 'THEEND.DAT' and load as usual, you would find that you will be able to see the end sequence without even playing!

BATMAN - OCEAN

Holy Tipsters Batman! We've been inundated with tips for our brilliant arcade/adventure! First of all here is the complete solution to the first installment - A Bird in the Hand.

Go left and collect the Bat-o-rang, then go down, through the door and then left. Collect the grenade, go right, pick up the spanner and use it. The computer will now be repaired, so now drop the spanner. Go right and collect the key and the badge. Go left and through the door you find there. Collect the disk and use it in the computer. Select the Bat-o-rang, and exit the Batcave. A useful tip here, is that if you keep throwing the Bat-o-rang at the Penguin's henchmen they relinquish health-replenishing packets of crisps. So if you get low, use this to top up your energy level. Continue left until you see the trainer. Collect it and go right. Now climb up on to the rooftop, go right and collect the torch. Now go back down and make your way to the warehouse. A policeman is on guard here, so use the badge to get past him. In the next screen there is a rope, so collect it and use it to climb onto the warehouse roof. Go right, up through the end door, and pick up the magnet. Now go right and go through the door. Right again, and down through the first or second door. Continue right until you enter a screen with the caption "Shadows everywhere", and enter the door here. Now go right, collect the food, go left until you reach a dead end and use the grenade. The wall to your left will have gone, so go left. Continue left and go down through the door. The caption should now read "Getting you down?", so use the rope.You are now in the stockrooms of the warehouse, so go left and collect the lift key, then back to the right. Now go up through the first and only door, and use the trainers. Go right, down, right and collect the knife. Now go left, and through the door so that you are in a room containing umbrellas. Use and keep holding the torch, go right and then up through the door. Go left and you will find a dart; collect it and make your way back to the lift. When there, use the lift key and you will be returned up top. Drop the torch and lift key, and go to the room where you blew up the wall. There is a dart board here, so use the dart and an open safe will be revealed. Take the pass key it holds and leave the building. Make your way to the mansion with the large front door and use the pass. You are now entering the Penguin's lair. Go left, then up and collect the key. Go back down and go back to the room you first entered. Now go up through the door, left, up the stairs and right until you reach the end of the corridor. Go down and collect the video tape you find there. Go left and back down through the door. Go right, then down, right again, and up through the door. Now left, and up, then right. Using the key, go through the large white door, and go right. Collect the virused disk, and go back through the large white door. Now go right, up, left, up through the white door with the cabinets next to it, and then go right. Get the trumpet and use it, then go up into the Penguin's computer room. Insert the virused disk and that's it!

Next we solve, "A Fete worse than Death!"...

Beginning in Gotham City park, go right, up and collect the Bat-o-rang. Select it, and go down, right, down, right. Get the light bulb, then go left until you reach a crowbar lying on the ground. Collect it, and go left until the screen is dark. Use the light bulb, and then use the crowbar to break into the workmans' hut. Get the torch and use it, go down, get the gasmask, go down through the door, left and then up through the door. Get the carrot, down through the door, right twice, up through the door and right again. Wear the gasmask, down then left, before you go down through the door. Go down the ladder, right, up the ladder, up through the door, get the teeth, use the teeth. Go down through the door, right, up through a door twice, and then left. Go down the ladder, left, up the ladder, down through the door and left. Pick up the fish, right, down, right, get the money, up through door, right, down, right then through the door. Go up the ladder, get and use the ears, drop them, and go back down the ladder. Down through the door, right, up, right, left twice, up the ladder, right, down, left, down and get the pliers. Stand beneath the explosives and use the pliers, then go right, down through the door, left, down through another door, then left until you reach another explosive. Use the pliers again, and go up through a door, left, down, then up through two doors to reach another explosive. Once again, stand under the explosive and use the pliers, then left to defuse another bomb. Go left and down through the door to collect the handcuffs, then up and right. Go down the ladder, right, and defuse the explosive with the much-used pliers. Now go right, up the ladder, right, down through two doors, left and up through one. Defuse explosives, go down through the door, down the ladder, left and defuse the explosive in the time-honoured fashion. Left again, up ladder, up through door, cut explosive with pliers. Go right, up, left, down through the door and left again. Cut explosives with pliers, up through the door, defuse even more, then go down through the door, right, up, right, down through a door, left and down through another door. Go down the ladder, right twice, up the next ladder, right again, up through the next two doors and left. Down the ladder, left twice, up ladder, down through two doors, right, up, right, down, right twice, up, right, up again and left. Up ladder right, down through door, left, down and right. Go through the door and you will be at the funfair - phew!

Go left into the tent, then up through the door. Get the camera, use it and drop it. Down twice, then right twice. Go up through the two doors, then left. Use the money, pick up the ammo, drop the money. Right, down through the two doors, right twice before going up through another door. Get the gun, and go down, right and up through the door. Get the roll, go back down and right twice. Use the ammo and then gun, and press fire to hit the ducks. Collect the sunglasses when you have shot all the ducks. If you don't manage to get the ducks, get the money again and repeat the process. When you get the sunglasses, drop the gun and go left into the mouth door. Use the sunglasses. Get the food, go left and then up the ladder. Go right, and keep duffing up the Joker, all the while avoiding his bad breath(!). He will then run away, so go up through the two doors. Beat up the Joker again and go left twice. Hit the Joker again, then go right, down, and left. Beat the Joker up again, down and left twice, down the ladder, down through door, left and up through the two doors. Up ladder, up through the door, get the dagger, down, left, down and left twice to repeat the duffings on the Joker. He will now (at last) collapse, so stand on top of him and use the handcuffs. Collect the card he drops, go right twice, up through the door and left. Use the card in front of the Joker's picture. Go right and right again, down the ladder. Go down through the door, left and down through another door. Get the harmonica, use it and drop it, then go up through the door, right and up through the other door. Next, go up the ladder, and keep going left until you walk through the card on the wall. Now go left and down, then down the ladder. Now go right, down through the two doors, left and down through another door. You should now be at the roller coaster, so go left, up the ladder, right twice, up the ladder, avoid the birds, left twice. Robin is here, so use the knife to free him and complete the game!

ST BASIC UNIVERSAL CHEAT ROUTINE

```
10    REM ***********Universal Cheat Routine*******************************
20    OPTION BASE 1: DIM A%(128):CHEAT=VARPTR(A%(1))
30    DEF SEG=0: REM  Remove this line if new ST Basic is in use
40    X=CHEAT:READ B
50    WHILE B<>99999
60    POKE X,B:X=X+2
70    READ B
80    WEND
90    REM This code is common to all cheat routines. Type in this listing
100   REM and save it for future use. To use a cheat routine replace the
110   REM lines of code in this program with those in the new listing.
120   DATA &H601A,&H0000,&H00E4,&H0000,&H0000,&H0000,&H0000,&H0000
130   DATA &H0000,&H0000,&H0000,&H0000,&H0000,&HFFFF,&H4FFA,&H01FE
140   DATA &H2F3C,&H0000,&H0300,&H487A,&HFEF4,&H4267,&H3F3C,&H004A
150   DATA &H4E41,&H4FEF,&H000C,&H487A,&H0064,&H3F3C,&H0009,&H4E41
160   DATA &H5C8F,&H3F3C,&H0007,&H4E41,&H548F,&H4267,&H487A,&H004A
170   DATA &H3F3C,&H004E,&H4E41,&H41FA,&H0068,&H3018,&HC0FC,&H0006
180   DATA &HD1C0,&H487A,&H0037,&H487A,&H0033,&H2F08,&H2F3C,&H004B
190   DATA &H0003,&H4E41,&H4FF9,&H0007,&H7FF0,&H2F40,&H0004,&H2240
200   DATA &H43E9,&H0100,&H41FA,&H003A,&H3018,&H5340,&H2458,&HD5C9
210   DATA &H3498,&H51C8,&HFFF8,&H4ED1,&H2A2E,&H2A00,&H1B45,&H496E
220   DATA &H7365,&H7274,&H2067,&H616D,&H6520,&H6469,&H736B,&H2061
230   DATA &H6E64,&H2070,&H7265,&H7373,&H2061,&H206B,&H6579,&H0000
240   REM ******************************************************
```

ST BASIC CHEAT FOR DRILLER

```
280   REM INFINITE SHIELD AND ENERGY FOR DRILLER
290   REM THIS CODE SHOULD BE ADDED TO THE UNIVERSAL CHEAT ROUTINE
300   DATA 6,0,&HA6F8,&H7A91,0,&HA0AA,&HB736,1,&H1FF4,&HEF36
310   DATA 1,&H227E,&H76B2,1,&H3B2A,&H2517,1,&H38A4,&HDFBD
320   DATA &H6175,&H746F,&H5C78,&H2E70,&H7267,0,99999
330   BSAVE "AUTO\DRILLER.PRG",CHEAT,256
340   REM THE ABOVE PROGRAM MUST BE PLACED IN AN AUTO FOLDER.
350   REM TO USE,INSERT THE CHEAT DISK IN DRIVE A THEN RESET THE ATARI.
360   REM WHEN PROMPTED INSERT DRILLER DISK AND PRESS A KEY
```

ST BASIC CHEAT FOR FLYING SHARK

```
10    REM INFINITE LIVES FOR FLYING SHARK
20    OPTION BASE 1:DIM A%(1024):CHEAT=VARPTR(A%(1))
30    DEF SEG=0:REM Remove this line if using new basic
40    FOR X=0 TO 231 STEP 2
50    READ B:POKE CHEAT+X,B
60    NEXT X
70    BSAVE "SHARKCHT.PRG",CHEAT,232
80    REM ************************************************
100   DATA &H601A,&H0000,&H00C8,&H0000,&H0000,&H0000,&H0000,&H0000
110   DATA &H0000,&H0000,&H0000,&H0000,&H0000,&H0000,&H4878,&H0200
120   DATA &H487A,&HFEFA,&H2F3C,&H004A,&H0000,&H4E41,&H3EBC,&H0007
130   DATA &H4E41,&H487A,&H00AF,&H487A,&H00AB,&H487A,&H0096,&H2F3C
140   DATA &H004B,&H0003,&H4E41,&H2F40,&H0004,&H41FA,&H0082,&H2080
150   DATA &H487A,&H0012,&H3F3C,&H0026,&H4E4E,&H5C8F,&H206F,&H0004
160   DATA &H4EE8,&H0100,&H4BF8,&H0140,&H43ED,&H001C,&H307C,&H00C0
170   DATA &H700F,&H20C9,&HD3FC,&H0400,&H0000,&H51C8,&HFFF6,&H21CD
180   DATA &H00D8,&H4DFA,&H0010,&H1ADE,&H5300,&H66FA,&H11FC,&H0038
190   DATA &HFA17,&H4E75,&H2F08,&H207A,&H0036,&H0CA8,&H6000,&H4BEC
200   DATA &H0100,&H6604,&H4268,&H3D3E,&H205F,&H2F38,&H0118,&H4E75
210   DATA &H48E7,&H40C0,&H41FA,&HFFFA,&H2208,&H4841,&HE049,&H307C
220   DATA &H0100,&H2F70,&H1000,&H0008,&H4CDF,&H0102,&H4E75,&H0000
230   DATA &H0000,&H6175,&H746F,&H5C70,&H7269,&H6D65,&H5F73,&H772E
240   DATA &H7072,&H6700,&H0000,&H0000
250   REM THE FILE PRODUCED MUST BE PLACED IN AN AUTO FOLDER
260   REM AND RUN BY RESETTING THE ATARI.INSERT GAME DISK WHEN
270   REM DISK STOPS
```

ST BASIC CHEAT FOR ELIMINATOR

```
280   REM INFINITE LIVES FOR ELIMINATOR
290   REM THIS CODE SHOULD BE ADDED TO THE UNIVERSAL CHEAT ROUTINE
300   DATA 6,0,&H0BA,&H2045,0,&H0BC,&H606E,0,&H12C,&H4268,0,&H12E,&H34AE
310   DATA 0,&H130,&H4EE8,0,&H132,8,&H4155,&H544F,&H5C4A,&H4D50,&H424F
320   DATA &H4F54,&H2E50,&H5247,0,99999
330   BSAVE "ELIM.PRG",CHEAT,320
340   REM THE ABOVE FILE MUST BE PLACED IN AN AUTO FOLDER
```

ST BASIC CHEAT FOR MASTERS OF THE UNIVERSE

```
10    REM Cheat Routine for ACTION ST version of Masters Of The Universe
20    OPTION BASE 1:DIM A%(1024):CHEAT=VARPTR(A%(1))
30    DEF SEG=0:REM Remove this line if using new basic
40    FOR X=0 TO 239 STEP 2
50    READ B:POKE CHEAT+X,B
60    NEXT X
70    BSAVE "MOTU.PRG",CHEAT,240
80    REM The file above must be placed in an auto folder and run
85    REM by resetting the Atari.
90    REM ************************************************
100   DATA &H601A,&H0000,&H00D0,&H0000,&H0000,&H0000,&H0000,&H0000
110   DATA &H0000,&H0000,&H0000,&H0000,&H0000,&H0000,&H4FFA,&H01FE
120   DATA &H4878,&H0300,&H487A,&HFEF6,&H4267,&H3F3C,&H004A,&H4E41
130   DATA &H4FEF,&H000C,&H487A,&H0086,&H3F3C,&H0009,&H4E41,&H5C8F
140   DATA &H3F3C,&H0007,&H4E41,&H548F,&H4267,&H487A,&H006C,&H3F3C
150   DATA &H004E,&H4E41,&H487A,&H0065,&H487A,&H0061,&H487A,&H0082
160   DATA &H2F3C,&H004B,&H0003,&H4E41,&H4FF9,&H0007,&HFFF0,&H2F40
170   DATA &H0004,&H2240,&H43E9,&H0100,&H41FA,&H0008,&H2348,&H00A4
180   DATA &H4ED1,&H43F9,&H0006,&H8000,&H337C,&HFC44,&H03BE,&H41E9
190   DATA &H0002,&H45FA,&H000C,&H7005,&H20DA,&H51C8,&HFFFC,&H4ED1
200   DATA &H43F9,&H0001,&H2BEA,&H303C,&H4A39,&H3280,&H3340,&H23D4
210   DATA &H3340,&H1ECE,&H6000,&H0794,&H2A2E,&H2A00,&H1B45,&H496E
220   DATA &H7365,&H7274,&H2067,&H616D,&H6520,&H6469,&H736B,&H2061
230   DATA &H6E64,&H2070,&H7265,&H7373,&H2061,&H206B,&H6579,&H0000
240   DATA &H6175,&H746F,&H5C68,&H2E70,&H7267,&H0090,&H0000,&H0000
```

ST BASIC CHEAT ROUTINE FOR 3D GALAX

```
270   REM ADD THESE LINES TO THE UNIVERSAL CHEAT ROUTINE
280   REM POKES TO GIVE INFINITE LIVES ON GALAX
290   REM ****************************************
300   DATA 10,0,&H4E4,&H6074,0,&H55A,&H317C,0,&H55C,&H4A79,0,&H55E,&H055C
320   DATA 0,&H560,&H317C,0,&H562,&H4A79,0,&H564,&H0692,0,&H566,&H4ED0
330   DATA 0,&H040,&H4E71,0,&H042,&H7003,&H6175,&H746F,&H5C61,&H6374
340   DATA &H696F,&H6E73,&H742E,&H7072,&H6700,99999
460   BSAVE "GALAXCHT.PRG",CHEAT,320
```

ST BASIC CHEAT ROUTINE FOR NORTHSTAR

```
270   REM ADD THESE LINES TO THE UNIVERSAL CHEAT ROUTINE
280   REM INFINITE LIVES FOR NORTHSTAR
300   DATA 6,0,&H4A8,&H317C,0,&H4AA,&H7200,0,&H4AC,&H0378,0,&H4AE,&H4ED0
310   DATA 0,&H40,&H4E71,0,&H42,&H7000,&H6175,&H746F,&H5C61,&H6374
320   DATA &H696F,&H6E73,&H742E,&H7072,&H6700,99999
330   BSAVE "NORTHS.PRG",CHEAT,256
340   REM THE ABOVE PROGRAM MUST BE PLACED IN AN AUTO FOLDER.
350   REM TO USE,INSERT THE CHEAT DISK IN DRIVE A THEN RESET THE ATARI.
360   REM
```

Reach for the Skies

COMPETITON

Win your own remote control aeroplane!

After our 1st birthday software bonanza, we decided to look for a competition with a difference, and we think we've found it. In line with the release of the excellent F-16 Combat Pilot, Digital Integration have come up with a truly fantastic competition. When a software company is as devoted to their subject as Digital Integration, you can be sure that this will reflect in the prizes!

All you flight-sim addicts out there will doubtless be familiar with flying your STs, but could you handle something a little more realistic? As a first prize we have a professional, petrol driven, remote control model aircraft worth a staggering £350! The second prize is hardly a consolation! An all-

Digital Integration

expenses-paid trip to the Biggen Hill Airshow for two people, including a four course lunch in the luxury enclosure, worth £120.00!

To enter this competition you must answer these four questions set by Digital Integration.

All entries should be sent to: F-16 Competition, ST Action, 10 Theatre Lane, Chichester, West Sussex. PO19 1SR. The closing date for the competition will be 10th May 1989.

STA

THE ALL-IMPORTANT QUESTIONS

1. Which company manufactures the F-16?

A) General Dynamics B) McDonnell Douglas C) Boeing

2. Name the air-to-air missiles usually carried on the F-16 wingtips:

A) Maverick B) Sidewinder C) Snakeye

3. What instrument does the pilot use to line up with the runway during his approach?

A) FBW B) QFE C) ILS

4. What is the name of the HUD night vision system?

A) Lantrin B)Nightsight C) Spotlight

ANSWER 1 .....

ANSWER 2 .....

ANSWER 3 .....

ANSWER 4 .....

Name .....

Address: .....

.....

.....

Daytime Telephone number: .....

ST Action Competition Rules:

The Editor's decision is final and no correspondence will be entered into regarding competitions or the results of competitions. All prizes are offered believing them to be available. If, however, a prize is unavailable we reserve the right to substitute a prize of comparable value. No cash alternatives will be given. Results will be published as soon as possible and prizes despatched as quickly as possible. Please refrain from phoning regarding competition results or prize delivery. Employees of Gollner Publishing Ltd and companies participating in competitions are not eligible to enter.

Send answers to:
F-16 Competition,
ST Action, 10 Theatre Lane,
Chichester, West Sussex,
PO19 1SR.

CASE FOR CONVERSION

Continuing the theme of looking at how successful the big-name arcade conversions are, Mark and Dennis look at R-Type and Afterburner, and also look at the new arcade sequel to Operation Wolf and Sega's Powerdrift

Operation Thunderbolt - Taito

Well, it was inevitable. Taito's Operation Wolf was one hot game, so the manufacturers had little choice but to do a sequel (Yeah?). Add to

Operation Wolf another gun, different scrolling routines and then push loads of Arabs to the front, and you're left with Operation Thunderbolt.

This one's an obvious conversion choice - the original will carry the name forward and guarantee high sales - yet it isn't going to be as easy as Operation Wolf. Some of the scenes are similar to Op. Wolf, with horizontal scrolling on some stages and character likeness, but Operation Thunderbolt also includes 'true' 3-D scenes, with the enemies rushing in towards you, or swooping overhead in planes and doing an about-turn to face you head on.

As in Op. Wolf, extra ammo and grenades can be collected, some having been carelessly left around by your adversaries, and others to be found falling from dead paratroopers. With the hunt for ammo coupled with the two-player option, it can turn out to be more than the Arabs that you're trying to outsmart and outgun!

There aren't enough new ideas in Operation Thunderbolt to create any genuine excitement of a future conversion, especially if you already own Operation Wolf. The graphics are much the same, and so is the gameplay, even with the 3-D scrolling. The only real departure from the original is the two-player mode, which makes each game last generally longer, but we aren't really sure that that alone warrants forking out the money for either creating or buying a conversion.

Power Drift

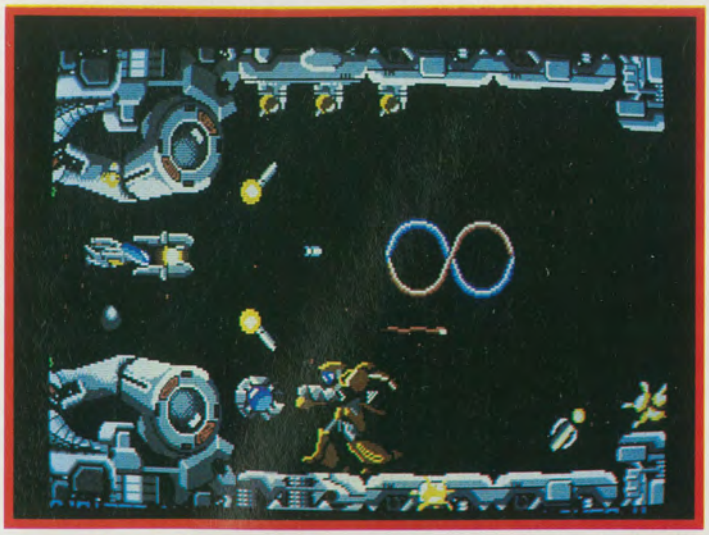
Now we're talking!! Activision have already licensed Sega's latest arcade smash, 'Power Drift', and there's no doubting that the arcade version is something else. But is it too special even for the ST?

Power Drift is a racing game like no other. You have a choice of characters to select from who will be driving your car, and a choice of five starting circuits. When driving, it feels more like being on a roller coaster than a racing track, with tricky bends, near vertical slopes and not one barrier in sight. The emphasis is obviously more on creating a fun atmosphere rather than the realism found in Sega's other driving game, 'Out Run'.

If you finish in the first three positions, then you will proceed to the next circuit, otherwise the game ends. If you can finish first in all five races then your car turns into an 'Afterburner'-style plane, and you will take part in an extra bonus stage.

The cabinet involved with 'Power Drift' tilts rather than turns (like in 'Out Run'). It kind of adds to the overall appeal of 'Power Drift', even at fifty pence per game.

Conversionwise, Activision are taking on a pretty tough job. The cars and background graphics are nice and effective, and move around at quite a nifty speed, with smooth and responsive controls adding to the gameplay. By having to take away the cabinet, part of the appeal has already been removed, so don't expect miracles.



Case For The Converted

R-Type

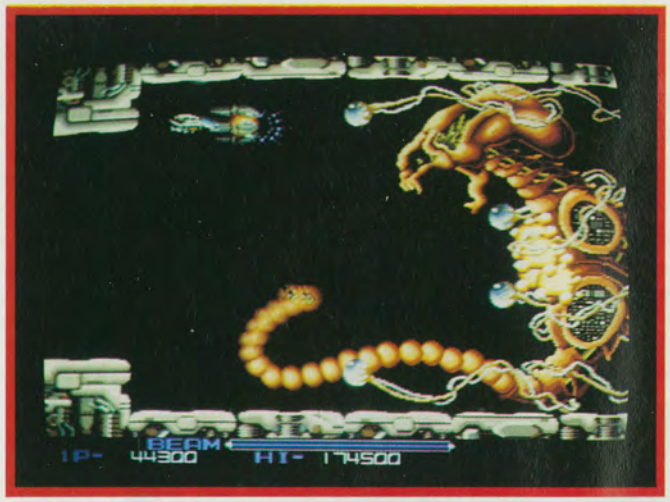
Arcade Version: Irem Corp.
ST Conversion : Electric Dreams (Activision)

Although we were a little sceptical about Activision's boasts of a first-class conversion, we still waited for the ST 'R-Type' with more than a little anticipation. When it was finally published, it was greeted with a fantastic response, and deservedly so.

Just to recap on the scenario (as if you didn't know!), you have to shoot your way through a variety of tough aliens, collecting shields and weapons as you go. The arcade version of 'R-Type' introduced the idea of having huge and superbly animated aliens in the game when it was released, cloned many times after but never really equalled. One of the levels is taken up by an enormous space ship at least three screens long and two screens up, which both impressed and frustrated games players. Other obstacles included wriggling, snake-like creatures and a gruesome

tentacled alien at the end of level one.

Detail on the graphics was impressive, and the animation second to none at the time. Activision have certainly achieved as much as is feasibly possible in re-creating the graphics whilst still keeping all of the original gameplay, but the scrolling isn't too smooth, jerking along at two or three pixels at a time. On a plus point, Activision have included almost all of the features found in the arcade original, even down to the same alien attack waves and ship weapons.



We found 'R-Type' on the ST an enjoyable game, and it will be the conversion by which all others are judged. However, friends outside the software industry (Hi Chris!) weren't as impressed, commenting on the fact that it wasn't as playable as the arcade version. It really is a matter of opinion, but our guess is that you'll really love it!

Afterburner

Arcade Version: Sega
ST Conversion : Activision

'Afterburner' is another game in Activision's colossal library of arcade conversions, but this time it isn't one to set standards by. We remember Rob Cousens saying that all murmurs that 'Afterburner' couldn't be successfully converted were to be dispelled - someone had probably spiked his drink at the time he said that, because it was never really possible.

'Afterburner', like 'R-Type' (see above) also introduced new ideas into the arcade world, this time a different graphic representation and a full-blooded 3-D shoot'em-up theme. Kids (both young and old) really loved it, enjoying the super-fast speed of the game and the simple, but fun, idea. All you really had to do was shoot the enemy before they shot you, although Sega did jazz it up by including a few refuelling sequences and a totally over-the-top scoring system.

In issue five we stated that 'Afterburner' couldn't really be converted, and the ST Action review team regretfully confirmed our suspicions. A com-

sion doesn't have the same aura as the arcade game, turning out to be just another mediocre shoot'em-up.

NEWS

Activision (who are just about to receive a prize for being mentioned the most times in one article of 'A Case For Conversion'!) have announced that they are to take on NINE (!) arcade conversions this year, with 'Altered Beast', 'Power Drift', 'Galaxy Force', 'Super Wonderboy' and 'Fighting Soccer' amongst them. For the record, Bruce Willis will be making his computer debut in Activision's (who else?!) game-of-the-film, 'Die Hard', and the Ghostbusters will be back in Activision's other film license, 'Ghostbusters 2'. Activision are also just putting the finishing touches to "The Real Ghostbusters". This arcade game never appeared in British arcades but now at least you have the chance to play it on your ST.

STA

Dungeons and Disk Drives

"Mitch, his Dragon and the Troll are back with all the news that's fit to print in the world of Adventures. If you have an adventure problem that needs solving, and you can withstand the Troll's ill temper, write to the ST Dungeon and let the Troll bash them down to size."

On February 25th the Adventurer's Guild held their annual presentation to honour the best adventures of 1988 and thank goodness it will be another year before they hold the next one. By then, with a bit of luck, the memory of the Troll's behaviour will have faded and the Dungeon Crew just might get invited back!

Unfortunately, I was at the other end of the room when he decided to impress everyone with the old 'Whipping off the Tablecloth' trick or I would have at least attempted to insert my body between him and the buffet. As for the episode with the gentleman from Rainbird Software, I still say the Troll was not totally to blame. The gentleman in question was complaining that ST Action marks too hard when they are reviewing adventures. In his view, other magazines give scores of over 90% for good games, whereas the Dungeon Crew tend to score most games around 70 - 80%. I tried to explain the ST Action marks tough and our readers realise that only a few games are ever going to break into the 90%+ range. That way they will know when they are getting something really worthwhile. Anyway, I understand that not everyone agrees with this philosophy and that many mags give scores of 100% for good, rather than great, games. Trolls, unfortunately, do not take criticism lightly and I only can apologise once again for his disgraceful behaviour. Hopefully, the gentleman is feeling better now and has managed to find a drycleaner who will agree to deal with the stains!

Ingrid's back, and claiming first prize too!

The event took place at the prestigious Sherlock Holmes Hotel in Baker Street, London. Representatives of the press, software houses and the Guild met to eat, drink and argue over their favourite adventures of the year.

It was soon revealed that the Guild had created an extra prize this year called the Golden Sword Award. To the delight of the whole Dungeon Crew this prize was presented to Dungeon Master in recognition for the impact that it has had on the Role Playing Gameworld. In conversation with the Mirrorsoft representative afterwards, I found out some very good news. Contrary to earlier reports that 'Chaos Strikes Back' will consist of five levels, it now appears that there will be many more. Mirrorsoft have been advised by the game writers that they have decided to make the package even more of a bargain and they hope to at least double their original estimate. April the first is the latest deadline for the game's release so let's hope that this time the joke is not on us and we can finally get our gauntlets upon it.

Being invisible, the Dragon managed to listen in on numerous conversations which were supposed to be secret. One item of hot news that he uncovered concerns Legend of the Sword. This game was published by Rainbird Software and proved to be a big hit with ST fans. It now appears that the game writers have sold the rights of the sequel to Mirrorsoft and there are cross words flying!

The main prizes of the evening were the presentations of the Bronze, Silver and Gold Chalice Awards for the three adventures voted as the best of 1988 by the 650 members of the Guild. As is the usual custom, I will announce the winners in reverse order.

The Bronze Chalice Legend of the Sword (Rainbird).
The Silver Chalice to Jinxter (Magnetic Scrolls).
The Gold Chalice to Level 9 for their

gnome adventure, 'Ingrid's Back', which was regarded by the Guild as both the most amusing and the best crafted adventure for both newcomer and seasoned adventurer alike.

The Dungeon Crew would like to take this opportunity to congratulate all the worthy winners. This may also be the point at which to mention that, if you look back at the reviews the Dungeon Crew carried out, we said Legend of the Sword would definitely figure in the year's list of best adventures. Perhaps we do mark too hard. If you have any views on it, why not write to the Troll and let him know. Just be very, very careful how you say it!

I would like to thank the Guild for their hospitality - and reassure them that the Editor has agreed to pay for all damages! See you next month.
Mitch.

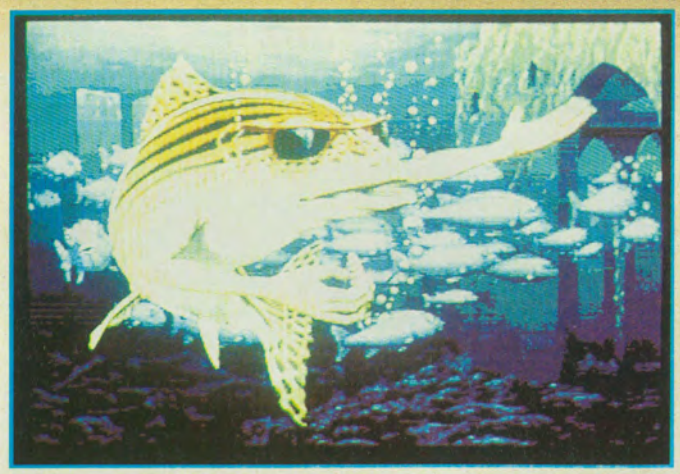
Troll letters

Discord with a Musical Fish

In the FISH mini-adventure set in the Recording Studio, I've picked up the three tapes, cleaned the player, set the amp and played the oxide tape. Then I've tried opening the 3 digit combination to the cabinet in the office with no joy. Is this random, or am I doing something wrong?
Gary Hunt, Cheltenham

Am I reading this pathetic scroll correctly? You've found three tapes, you have played one of them and now you are stuck? Here's an idea. Mind you, it's only a mad, foolish, shot in the dark. "Why don't you play the other two tapes as well!" If you do, you'll find that the manager will turn up and begin calling out a rhythm which is the combination to the safe.

As soon as the Dragon has managed to complete it, I'm sending you his two-piece jigsaw puzzle to give you a real challenge!



Hmmm, something fishy's going on here.

Getting away from it all with Larry II

I can't escape from the cruise ship. I think the lifeboat has something to do with it, but I can't lower it.
Ian Wall, Thundersley, Essex and Steven Williamson, London

The captain of the liner holds the same opinion concerning adventurers as I do. For this reason he has ensured that the lifeboat controls stay under his eye on the bridge. However, he is a busy man and tends to stare towards the bow (that's the sharp end to you!) instead of keeping an eye on the lever behind him. Try creeping behind him and pulling the lever.

Dungeon Master Combat Techniques

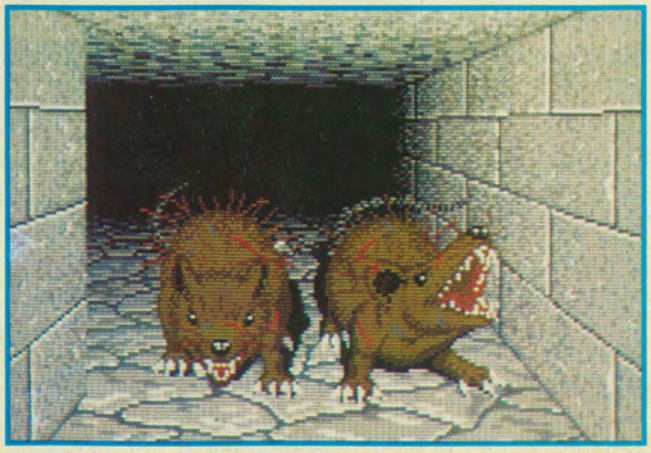
How can I kill the pink worms on Level 4?
Jan Johansson, Stockholm, Sweden

There is no special weapon needed to deal with these nasty creatures. What is needed is to develop a proper fighting technique and use this for all monsters. Firstly, don't fight fair! Always try to pick a fight beside a door. Lure the monsters into the doorway, press the close door button and then stand your ground while the door bashes them to pieces. Failing this, use the Troll's, 'Hit and Run Technique'. Most monsters will allow you to have a free hit before they respond. Don't wait for them to hit back! Retreat slowly, using all the free hits. Eventually the worm will turn and you will then have even more free hits as you follow him back down the corridor. And now the bad news. If you think the worms are hard - wait until you meet the golden scorpions!

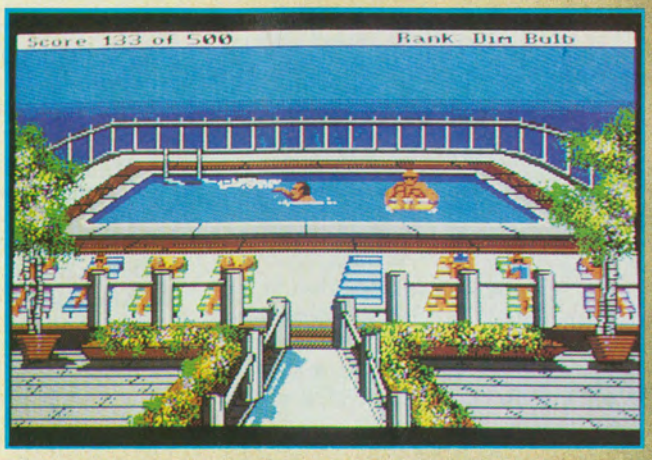
A Fireball Defence for Barbarian

I am writing to you all the way from Canada to ask for your help. Firstly, however, I would just like to let you know that I think 'The Troll' is the best column in ST Action and that is high praise since it is a great magazine. The game I am stuck on is not really an adventure, it is Barbarian from Psygnosis. At the halfway point a man in a black cloak is encountered who just laughs and throws fireballs. I've tried everything, but I can't get past him.
Rob Hansen, Canada

Fight fair! I have enough problems answering adventure queries without dealing with arcade/RPG games.

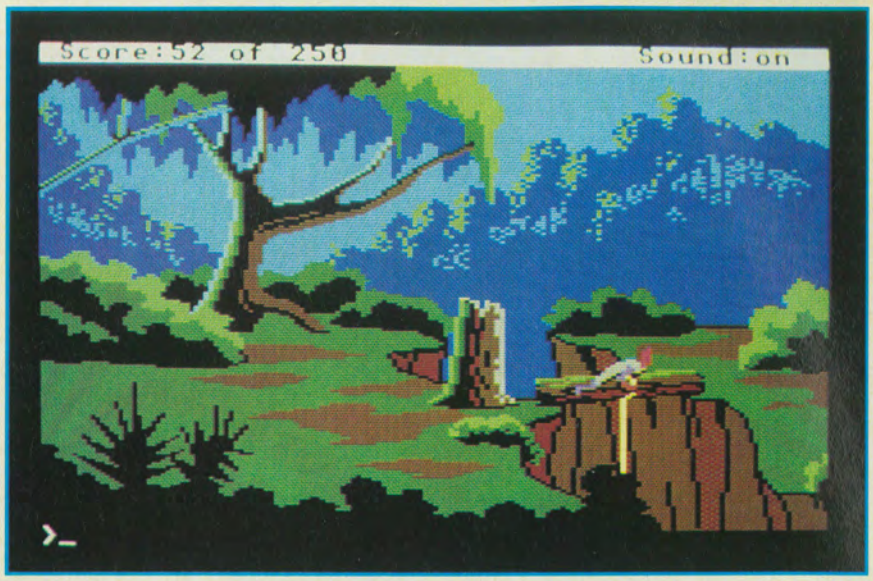


Need to know how to deal with monsters?



Who needs to know about lifeboats when life's so much fun?

Roger continues searching for Vohaul's fortress, although it looks as though he's out on a limb this time!



However, as you are obviously a 'colonial' of extremely good taste I'll break the rules just this once. Lucky for you, I am a Troll who 'always gets his man' (Canada, Mounties - geddit?). And this particular villain is best dealt with by giving him a taste of his own medicine. You must use your shield and the 'defend' icon to make the fireballs bounce back and kill him. He'll then turn into a crystal and fall into the chasm. I'll leave you to find out what happens next!

A Timely Answer to Dungeon Master

Just past the 'Time is of the Essence' problem on Level 3 of Dungeon Master I don't seem to be able to close the first pit.

Mark Cropp, Upton

If you face the blue gem on the wall, the pit is on your left. Press the gem and turn quickly to face the pit. You will see that for a few moments a blue transporter field appears at the far side of the pit. The trick is to throw an object into the field while it remains. This will transport the object around the corner and onto another pressure pad which will close the pit.

The Chrono Quest, 'Push-me/Pull-you' Switch

I can't get the wall switch, down in the Design Room, to open the bookcase. I've tried to push it, but I can't get it! Also, are there any candles around to stop the lighter going out, and me breaking my neck?

Scratch the Dragon behind the ears for me.

Chris Fivey, London

This is a silly problem because it baffled me as well. To operate the switch you must select the PUSH/PULL icon and then point at the switch. There is a candle to be found and it's on the top of a cupboard in the room at the very top of the stairs. Although you didn't ask, I'll give you a further piece of advice because you're going to need it. Remember what you did to get the switch live because you'll want to undo it again soon!

P.S. I scratched the Dragon and he scratched me back. I expect it will heal soon!

Alien Encounter of the Nasty Kind in Space Quest

In Space Quest II, I die after a long time because there is a green monster in my body. What can I do about it and what is the reason for it?

Marco Doel, Netherlands

You have obviously not seen the horror movie ALIEN. This film featured a gruesome monster who injected itself into your body where it grew to a size big enough to burst your chest open. In this game there was a point where a large lizard creature gave you a 'yucky' kiss. Now you know why!

I give that creep fair warning. If it tries to 'French Kiss' a Troll, it will be talking with a lisp for the rest of his life!

Hitching a Ride in Kings Quest I

I can't figure out how to get a ride on the Bird in Kings Quest. I would be obliged if you could help as it is driving me mad.

P. Basford, Nr. Pontefract

I suspect it will be a very short drive! I notice you live near Pontefract. It had better not be too near, or I'll want to know why you dared to write and annoy me without enclosing some Pontefract cakes. The answer to your problem will have you jumping with rage, as that's precisely what you must do. If you 'JUMP' the bird will catch you and carry you away.

Fiddling the Bank in Bureaucracy

I'm in a mess with Bureaucracy. I have done everything I can to get my mail from the bank and money as well. Please tell me how to do it.

Alan Dickie, Glasgow.

You'll have trouble getting your mail from the bank, as they haven't got it. As I recall, the mailman had a brainstorm and scattered everyones' mail in the wrong houses. You need to get into all the houses before you need bother with the bank. The bank problem is really tricky. If my memory serves me right (and ask yourself has the Troll ever lied to you?) the problem is that you have been sent a money order for -$75. The trick is to pay in the money using a withdrawal slip. As minus times a minus equals a plus, you will end up with money in your account. At least its something like that. I can't be bothered with getting every bit exactly right, can I?

Lastly. although I hate to do it, I must thank more humans. Paul Mc Donough has sent me a complete set of Dungeon Master and Bard's Tale maps. This foolish human has also kindly offered to help RPG fanatics with their Bard's Tale problems. If you send him a large A4 S.A.E. he will let you have a map for the level you are stuck with. Paul's address is:- 70 Sandy Lane, Skelmersdale, Lancs WN8 8LQ.

Ashley Williams of Chepstow in Gwent has sent in the solution to the FISH adventure which came in very useful, as I confess I had given up all hope of cracking it myself.

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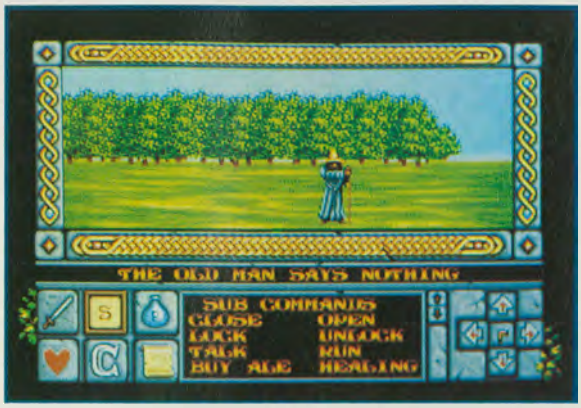
"The Land is in turmoil, the evil wizard, Azazael, has been resurrected and now seeks the five gems of Zator. Can your sword hold back the forces of evil?"

GALDREGON'S DOMAIN

PANDORA (£19.95)

Some games have got it, and some haven't. It doesn't really matter whether the graphics are excellent or rubbish: if the game's got that little something extra you just want to go on playing it. For me Galdregon's Domain falls into the category of not having it. This is a reasonable game whose graphics are of superior quality. The accompanying sound is also above average. Its drawback is that it just lacks that little something that would make me want to keep playing it hour after hour.

SK



Role playing games have come a long way in the last few years as each successive effort attempts to bring yet more realism and excitement to the genre. In this latest offering, Pandora have mixed digitised sound and colourful graphics and spread them throughout a maze of monster-filled locations. In this saga you play the part of a barbarian initially equipped with a dagger, healing potion, lamp and food. Any other items that you feel you might need must be fought for.

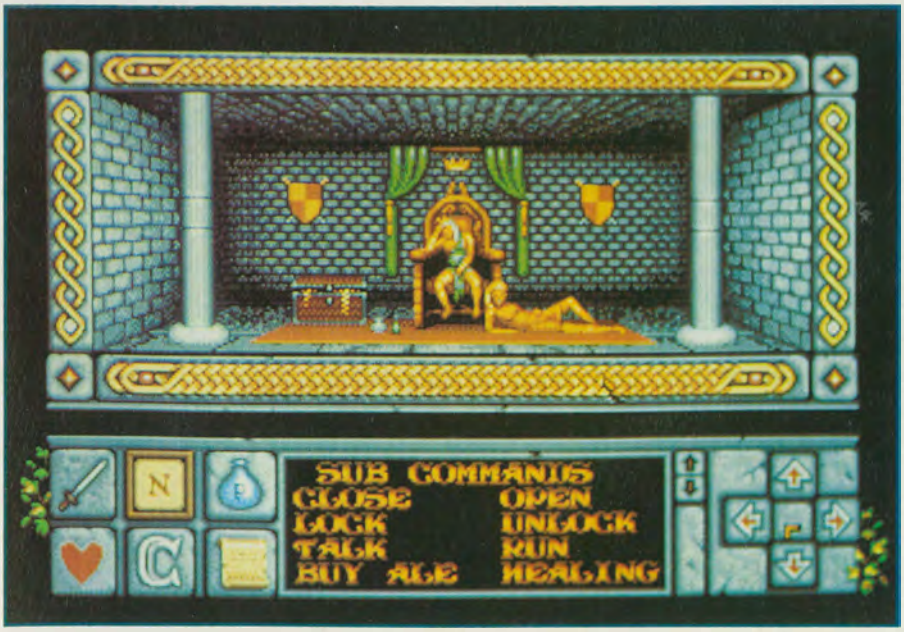
The game compares well against the likes of The Bard's Tale or the Ultima Series, but I'm afraid the Dungeon Master's crown remains unchallenged. The cardboard cut-out figures representing the opposition, and the lack of feedback during combat, fail to capitalize on the otherwise well presented game. Whilst I don't believe it's got what it takes to cross the line and interest the mainstream gameplayer, RPG fans may well enjoy losing themselves in its depths.

AM

The game is played with mouse-selected icons and these will allow you to carry out all the usual functions of combat and travel. Alternative screens display the contents of your pack and a picture of our hero wearing whatever items of armour you have managed to acquire. The playing area is divided into different dungeons and these are accessed from towers, scattered over the playing map. While moving overland you may visit inns, where you may recover your strength and gather information before returning to the dungeons or plunging into the forest. Each dungeon contains a horde of villains controlled by an 'End-of-Dungeon' bad guy who guards one of the fabled gems. Scavenging the bodies of your victims will provide you with weapons and magical items, enabling you to fight stronger opponents. Unlike most games of this type your character does not appear to gain experience as a result of conflict, nor are there any repercussions for killing good guys. Unlike the song, time does not seem to heal every wound and only expensive priests seem to possess the gift of healing. This is of little use to the beginner who will find wounds easier to find than gold. The combat sequences contain no animation and, apart from some sound, have little in the way of novelty.

Should you be killed, there is the annoying feature that the game must be reloaded from scratch without the option of allowing you to opt for a reload of your saved game position. This annoyance is doubled by the fact that the game employs a protection mechanism which involves turning your disk-drive into a coffee grinder during loading!

STA



As you stand before the King ask for the first of your five tasks. Can you collect all the five of the gems of Zator and defeat the evil wizard, Azazael?

STA Rating

63%

TEXT/GRAPHICS:63%
GAMEPLAY:64%

LASTING APPEAL: 62%
ADDICTIVENESS: 65%

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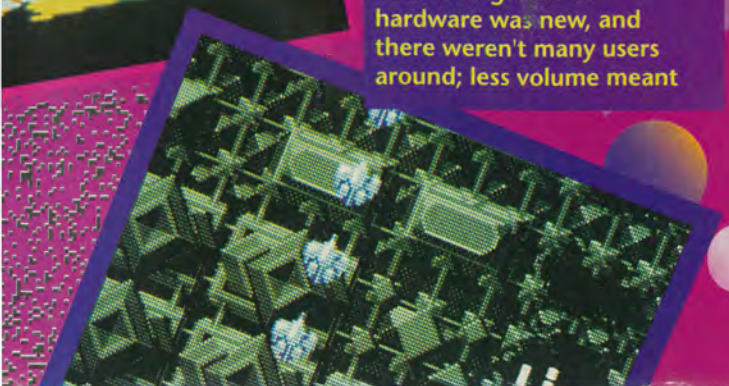

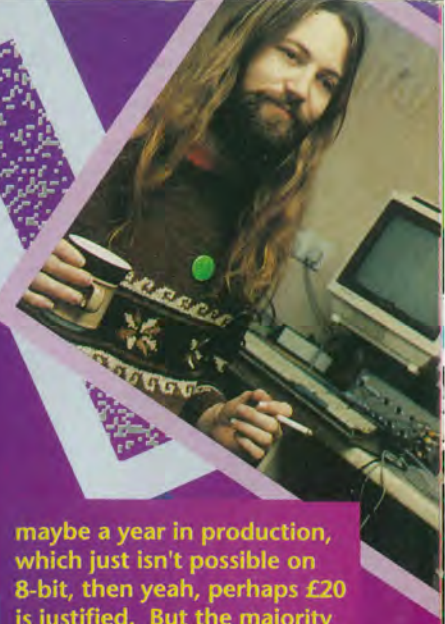

Greetings, Humanoids, and welcome to the first of (I hope) many articles concerning Life, the Universe and the ST in general, with possible excursions into other areas of interest to the 16-bit gameplaying public... I speak from a position of experience as a heavy game-user, and ST game programmer and user since the dawn of the ST era (1985: paying well over a grand for a humble 520...). I can remember the Bad Old Days when TOS was disk-loaded, and the only Steve Bak game around was 'Lands of Havoc' (ask him about it sometime if you're cruel, heartless and want to embarrass the man)....

Anyway, times have changed, 'Goldrunner' came out, the ST went down to £300 and became a mainstream machine, and gradually more and more software houses began adding ST versions of their releases... and now, as 8-bit begins the slow, steady slide down the slippery slope into budget software oblivion, the ST and (to a lesser extent) the Amiga seem set to dominate the home computer game market for the foreseeable future (or until Konix get their console out, at least).

One thing which I feel is well out of line is 16-bit software prices. I mean, when the Vic-20 was around you'd sell a game for five or six pounds; when the '64 came in and you could spend five or six months filling up the unheard-of 64K memory capacity (good games on the VIC had to be written in 3.5K, including screen and graphics RAM) the price of a blast went up to perhaps £7.50. Then, along comes the ST, and games on the new system cost £20. Acceptable, perhaps, because at that stage the ST hardware was new, and there weren't many users around; less volume meant less profits to the software houses, so the price had to be higher; fair enough. The trouble is, now that STs are so common that everyone's got one, the software prices still remain the same!

Software houses try and justify this with a variety of excuses, but basically they're all nonsense:

1: '16-bit games are harder to program, take longer to develop and therefore cost more'. Nonsense. 16-bit processors are in fact a lot easier to program than their 8-bit predecessors; operations can be performed on 16 and 32-bit memory chunks without having to split up the operation into byte-sized pieces; index registers branch +/-32K instead of 128 bytes; assemblers run off fast hard disks instead of knackered Commodore floppy drives taking 10 minutes per assembly. Programmers never had it so good.

2: 'We need to employ artists and musicians which puts the price up'. Might be more valid if the games produced were actually any good, but we've all bought games which looked excellent, only to find upon further examination that we've shelled out £20 for a graphics demo and no gameplay. There is no point in producing software with Michelangelo graphics and Mozart music if it still possesses the playability of a handful of cold mashed potato. Unless the aforementioned sound and graphics are essential parts of the gameplay, they must surely be regarded as embellishments and certainly not worth doubling the price of software for.

3: 'We have to pay for arcade/film licences'. Says who? What's so wrong with original software? And even where the licence is needed, why are the 8-bit versions still half the price of 16-bit?

4: 'You can get more depth of gameplay/advanced programming on 16- bit, and that costs money'. This I agree with, at least in part. Where a uniquely 16-bit game has been created, maybe a year in production, which just isn't possible on 8-bit, then yeah, perhaps £20 is justified. But the majority of games are just shoot'em-ups - anyone with a half-decent bunch of sprite routines and a few months can put together a shoot'em-up just as easily as on 8-bit.

I don't begrudge my twenty quid for all games; it's just that most of the output of the software majors - arcade conversions, scrolling blasters, often pretty but ultimately run-of-the-mill - these games are surely worth a tenner. Charge double that, and there's going to be a lot of people who will not bother buying games at all and just wait to acquire software for free by less legal methods. Overpricing games is an incitement to piracy.

Interestingly enough, the game which I feel most deserved its £20 price tag, out of all those I bought in 1988, had no music and what you might describe as 'minimal' graphics, being pure vector, no complex bitmaps. That game was 'Virus', and you paid the money for sheer state-of-the-art realtime 3D programming hooked into the most addictive arcade gameplay for ages. Worth every penny, and just like glandular fever, keeps on recurring periodically to infect you all over again.

Anyway, I shall finish for now - I have sheep to feed and my assembler ever beckons. Keep your fingers on those firebuttons and don't let the alien scumbags get you!

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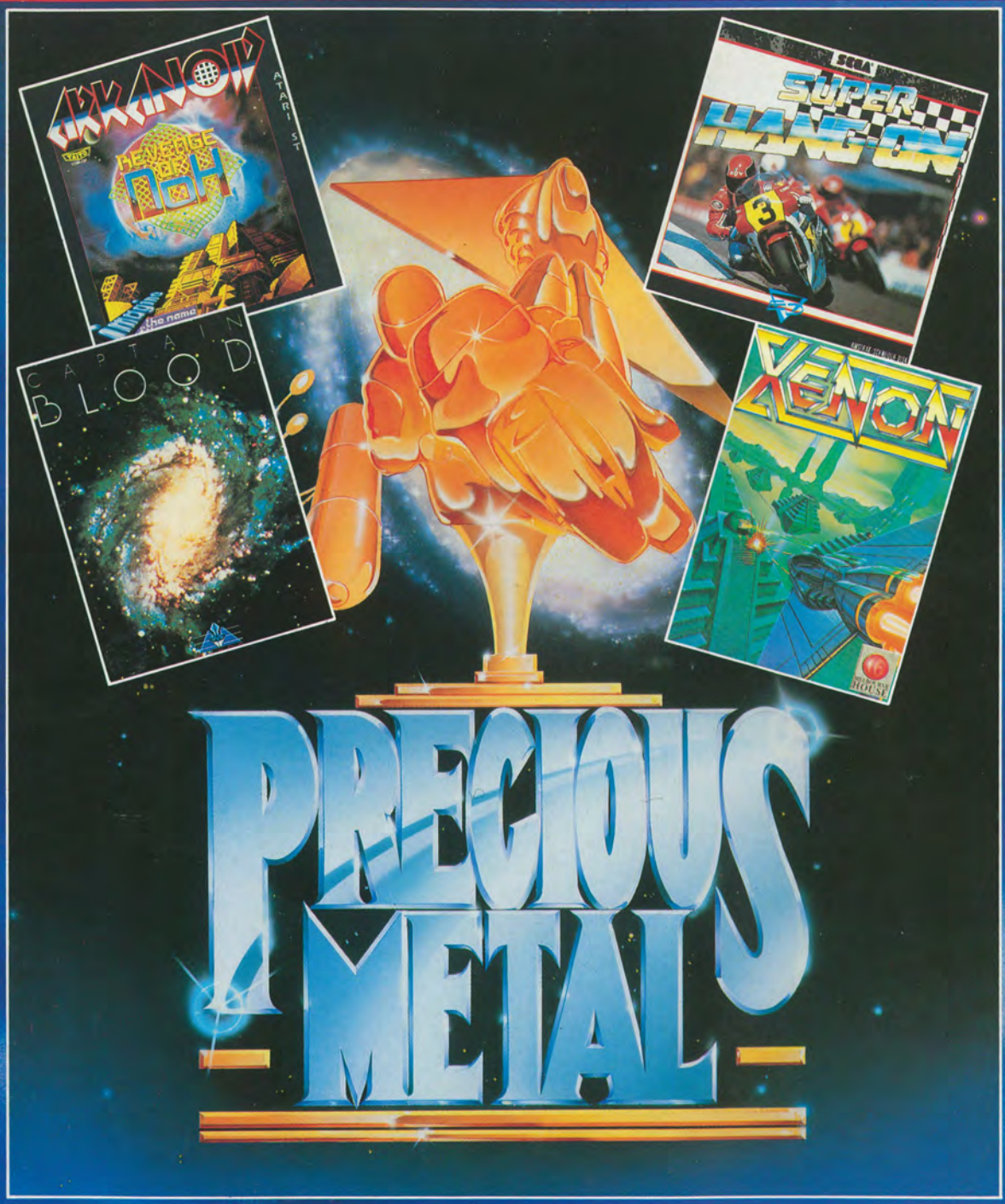

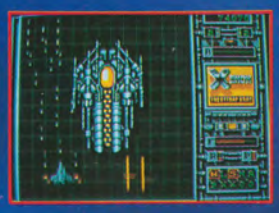

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