

ST ACTION

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ST GAMES MAGAZINE

ISSUE 19 NOVEMBER 1989
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**THE LATEST ST GAMES REVIEWED, INCLUDING: CONTINENTAL CIRCUS
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MIRRORSOFT COMPETITION. FTL INTERVIEWED. BLADE WARRIOR PROFILE**

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DRAGONS OF FLAME

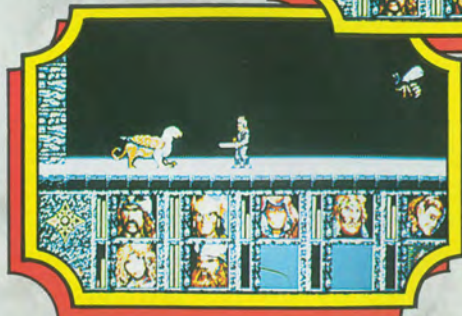
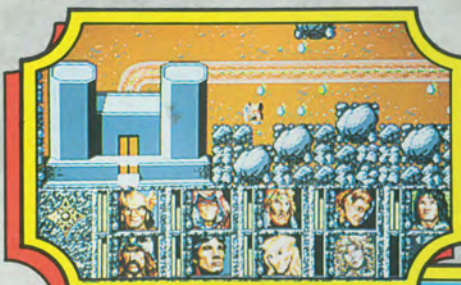
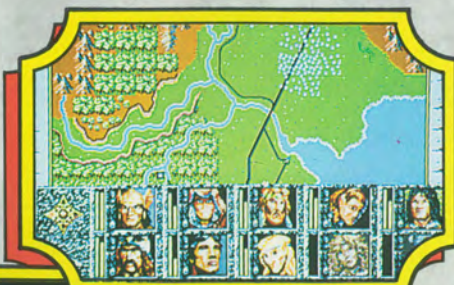


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Screen shots from various systems.

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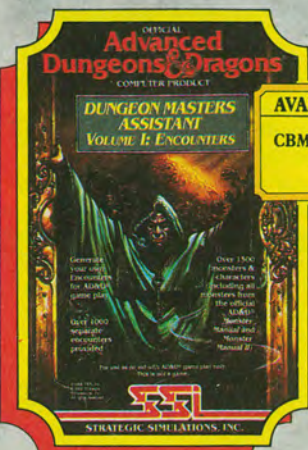
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ACTION PACKED

INTERVIEW: FTL 20

Mitch, the Dragon and the green warty one were prepared for anything - except what they met. Wayne, Doug and Russ are not the long-haired, laid-back Californians I had believed I was going to meet. Instead, three conservatively dressed, and quietly spoken guys looked up in surprise when I threw myself into the room, bursting with excitement to meet the creators of my all-time favourite game - Dungeon Master. But, what, I hear you cry, about the long awaited follow up - Chaos Strikes Back? Turn to page 20 for the latest update.



MIRRORSOFT COMP 26

Dungeon Masters, Falcon, Xenon, Speedball, Rocket Ranger - the list of excellent, best-selling computer entertainment released under the Mirrorsoft banner is formidable, and they look set to add to it in the future. To celebrate their success, Mirrorsoft are offering you the chance to acquire some highly fashionable electrical ware. So, if you fancy winning a mini TV, an Imageworks personal stereo or camera, then hurry up and send in your entries.

YAK'S YAK 96

Once again, the Hairy One gets down to all that's happening in the world of the ST and computers in general. This month the YaK talks of many wierd and wonderful things, including; Stargate, Andes Attack, Guns'n'Roses, Konix, his holiday, Blood Money, the Amiga and Peter Gabriel. Boy, this guy leads a full and varied life!

INTERVIEW: JASON KINGSLEY 59

In the midst of the brightly-coloured pixels and sprites at Mirrorsoft's software launch in Amsterdam, a dark and murky game stood out from the rest. Intrigued by this mysterious, silhouetted visual effect, Jason Spiller travelled to the dreaming spires of Oxford to find out who, or what, was hidden in the shadows.



DUNGEONS & DISK DRIVES 22



Uh oh, the Dungeon Crew are back for another month. Sure, we all like Mitch and the Dragon, even Edna's ok. It's the green and warty one that's the real pain. You just wouldn't believe all the letters we get complaining about his rudeness and lack of manners. Still, he is helpful, this month he actually bothers to answer questions about Police Quest II, Corruption, Space Quest II, Deja Vu and Kings Quest IV.

GTGA 78

Our resident cheater, tipster, call him what you will, Steve Merrett, has been hard at work this month. This issue's Giving the Game away is simply bursting with hints, including pokes for the last ST Action Games Disk! Also featured in this month's column are playing guides for Grand Monster Slam and Blasteroids. Plus, help and cheats for Xybots, Indiana Jones and the Last Crusade, and Leonardo.

NEWS 4

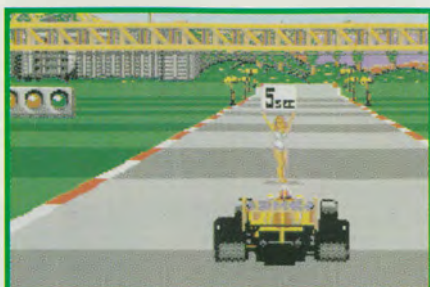
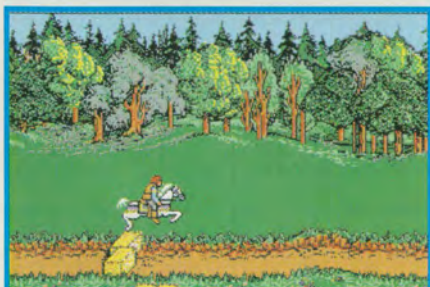
This month's news is big, really big. We've got ten whole pages covering what's new on the ST games scene. Not to mention a full report from this year's PC Show. We've all the latest info. from; Empire, Dinamic, Impressions, Elite, Mastertronic, Activision, Sierra, Novagen, Microprose, Microdeal, Hewson, Domark, Ocean, The Edge, Grandslam, Rainbow Arts and U.S. Gold; to name but a few.

REVIEWS! REVIEWS! REVIEWS! REVIEWS!



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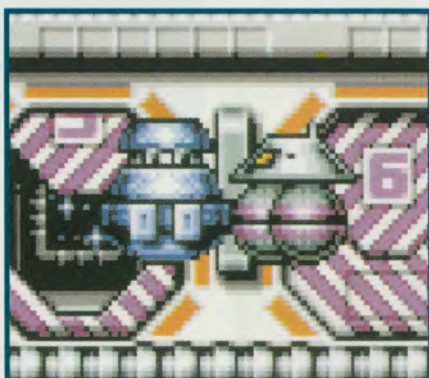


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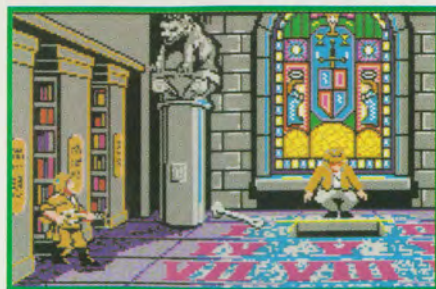
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ACTION NEWS

MICRODEAL STRIKE GOLD

Microdeal's big release this Autumn is the hotly-awaited addition to the Gold Runner trilogy, Gold Runner III. Microdeal reckon this heralds a brand new and exciting era, by the looks of the graphics we're inclined to agree here at STA. GR3 maintains the traditional 'blast'em all' theme, but this time from the cockpit-view with a truly incredible 3D terrain and enemy vessels and the animation is incredible. In addition to the immeasurably improved graphics the gameplay has been enhanced with more taxing and varied missions and there are eight separate scenarios to choose from. To say that GR3 is impressive is an understatement.

Hello and welcome to the nineteenth issue of ST Action. As you may have already guessed from this edition's front cover, we've recently attended the 1989 PC show. To bring you a full report we've allocated no less than ten whole pages on what's new on the ST scene. One thing's for sure, ST owners are certainly in for the best Christmas ever. Even Dungeon Master fanatics will have something to cheer about. The long awaited Chaos should arrive just after the festive season! This issue contains an exclusive interview with the game's programmers, FTL. Meanwhile, we've also got pokes for the ST Action cover disk and a whole host of mega-reviews. Well, what are you waiting for? Get going!



EMPIRE PLAY AN ACE

Empire pulled off a bit of a coup by getting Paul (Gazza) Gascoigne to endorse their football offering, entitled, Gazza's Super Soccer. In an in-depth interview, an Empire spokesman stated: 'Just as Gazza is one of the most exciting players today, so is this game. It'll all be down to control, and you'll be able to choose which player you wish to control off the ball, rather than have the computer designate the nearest-man-on. Additionally, the player can choose exactly what to do during set-pieces such as: Free-kicks and The goalkeeper

is fully controllable with dramatic dives and lunges.' The piece-de-resistance in this simulation is the Boot-o-meter which controls the kick with great accuracy - apparently, Gazza, is 'over-the-moon' with the game!

We also managed to get a sneak preview of Team Yankee. As of yet the game is still a long way off but Empire seemed proud enough to show off some of its preliminary graphics. The game is neither a strategic tank simulator nor an out and out blast'em-up and, as such, should appeal to most players.

Next, we took a look at

Gazza's Super Soccer is still in development but judging by this screenshot it is nearing completion and should be ready by Christmas.



time, a highly detailed, animated, icon-driven, adventure game. Nick seemed to think it was highly original and reckons most adventurers will lap it up. Expect to see Time around November.

Finally we we amazed to spot a running demo of Space-Ace. The game's graphics really knock your eyes out, just look at these shots and imagine them moving with full, fluid animation. No real date for Space Ace, but we reckon it won't be until after Christmas.

Entertainment International's main stand was taken up by Titus. Dark Century is the next title we can expect. The game features one and two player modes, simultaneous split screen action and full 3D ray-traced

graphics. The scenario sees you in charge of six fully-programmable armoured assault craft in an attempt to thwart the aims of for escaped convicts who seem hell bent on destroying the Earth. Available towards the end of October or beginning of November, Dark Century should cost around £19.95



Don Bluth's Space Ace features some of the most stunning animated graphics ever seen on the ST.



The Two Rons? No, publisher Hugh Gollner with Jez San.

KENNY DALGLISH SOCCER MATCH

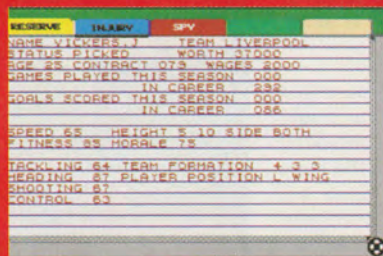


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ELITE CALL IN THE DOGS OF WAR

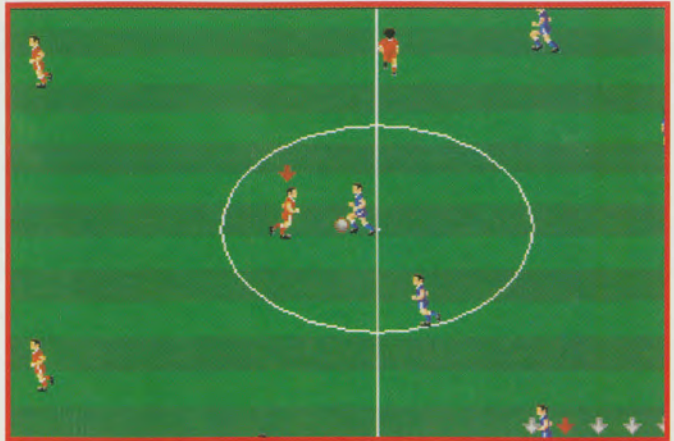
With a stand slightly larger than the one they had last year, Elite were promoting Paperboy, Commando and Dogs of War. Paperboy we have already reviewed, but Dogs of War and Commando are very similar in their gameplay. Of the two, Dogs of War was being promoted the most. Programmed by Steve Bak, Dogs of War is a vertically-scrolling shoot'em-up in which you take the role of a soldier of fortune as he sets out on a number of dangerous missions all over the world. As well as a wide choice of missions, there are a number of weapons at your disposal, and careful selection of these must be taken before you set off - after all, you don't want to take an elephant gun, and find you haven't got any ammo for it, do you? The game is a one or two-player affair, and features a number of different backdrops. It looks similar to Microdeal's Leatherneck, but you can see for yourself next month.

IMPRESSIONS SIGN UP WITH DALGLISH

Impressions certainly caused a bit of a stir this year with Chariots of Wrath, but they're back with 'a major new release', Emperor of the Mines. This is described as a 'realtime' wargame-cum-mercenary adventure, set in a hostile environment. There are ten episodes, each with a bewildering puzzle and you have a choice of over a hundred different vehicles to control in pursuit of wealth. Impressions promise a substantial and absorbing adventure in 'Emperor' with a combination of arcade, strategy and adventure.

In anticipation of the start of the season, soccer games are ten a penny and Impression's contender is called Superleague Soccer. They describe it as the most realistic management simulation yet, which will appeal to everyone, fan or not. It dispenses with the lower divisions and concentrates on the exciting wheeler-dealer world in the first division.

Impressions are also releasing Kenny Dalglish, Soccer Manager. Endorsed by the Liverpool Manager, this game also concentrates on team management but this time you've got to work your way up from the fourth division.



Kenny Dalglish, Soccer Manager. Looks as though the mighty reds are losing the midfield battle.



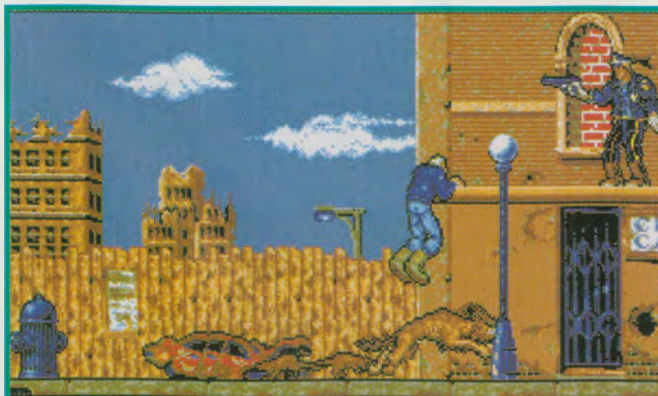
Emperor of the Mines, a 'realtime' wargame-cum-mercenary adventure.

DINAMIC PREPARE FOR 1992

The Spanish company, Dinamic, have been operating for just over four years now. Their more recent ST games include Army Moves, Navy Moves and Game Over II (what ever happened to Game Over I?) This Christmas our European friends intend to release two major products into the software arena. Both games will be available before Christmas, and both will cost

£19.95.

The first game will be called Grand Prix Master. Obviously the title will feature high-speed racing, but this time in the form of motorcycles. The game will take part over seven European race tracks, including, Jerez in Spain, Imola in Italy and Nurburgring in West Germany. As a rider your task will be to win the championship and thus topple Jorge Martinze "Aspar",



After The War, our hero narrowly misses being savaged by a mutant hound but leaps into the path of an irritated cop.



Way out in front, you manage to negotiate a right hand bend before hurtling down the straight in Grand Prix.

the current world champion, from his throne. The game carries a number of features including qualifying rounds, warm-up sessions and full statistical reports of all the tracks. Wednesday 25th October will see the launch of the game.

The second half of November should see the arrival of After the War. Billed as, 'a mean arcade-inspired survival game', the title is best described as a scrolling beat/shoot'em-up in the same mold as the classic coin-op, Green Beret. The game's

storyline goes something like this: apparently there has been a nuclear war and, as an inhabitant of Manhattan, you must somehow find a way of escaping from Earth and, more importantly, from the deadly levels of radiation. The game will feature a number of mutated beasts which you must either destroy or out-smart in order to complete your mission. Countless obstacles will block your way and only the toughest will survive.

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A808

16 BLITZ BUDGET TITLES

Once again Mastertronic are about to take the software industry by storm. Veteran, Frank Herman, recently commented: "We established the eight-bit budget market back in 1984 by introducing quality software at under two pounds. We now feel the time is right to attack the sixteen-bit market in the same way and once again set a precedent

that the rest of the industry will follow. We looked at a variety of price points and decided that this was the one that would set the market alight." And so, the 16 Blitz label was born. ST owners will be able to see the first £4.99 budget titles sometime towards the end of October.

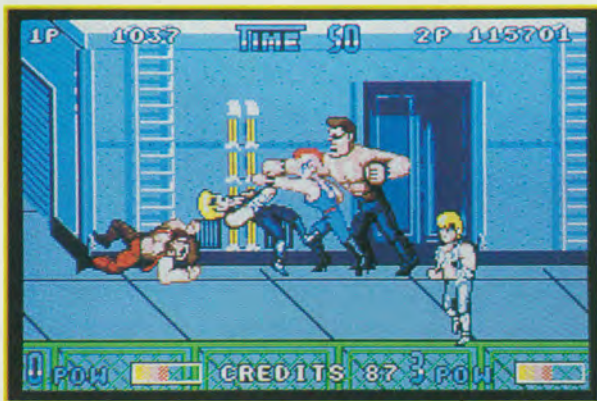
One of the first games to appear on the ST will be called Kelly X. Programmed by our old friend, Paul Hellier, the game is basically a 3D shoot'em-up along the same lines as Elite but without any of the trading. Having played the game my initial reactions were good and sixteen-bit owners can expect real value for money in the future.

Meanwhile, Virgin Mastertronic are also due to launch a number full-priced titles. Once again, we can



Demon's Tomb is a very atmospheric adventure played in the seemingly harmless Devonshire countryside.

Double Dragon II features bigger, more vicious thugs. Hopefully the gameplay will offer more of a challenge, too.



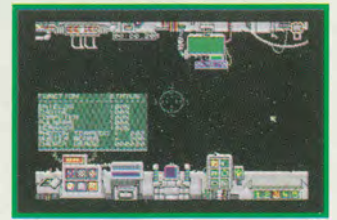
Touch Down! Quarterback, an animated American Football simulator.

expect to see the imminent arrival of Quarterback, an American Football simulator and Demon's Tomb, a chilling graphical adventure game programmed by a team in the States. Apparently, your father has disappeared whilst exploring an ancient burial tomb in Devon. As his son, you decide to do the decent thing and go to his aid. Also expect to see the follow-up to last year's smash-hit, Double Dragon, Double Dragon II. Watch out for next month's full review. Finally, Ninja Warriors should appear just after Christmas. The game is being converted by the Random Access team and follows the same format as its coin-op parent.



Ninja Warriors, the ST version of this classic coin-op is being converted by Random Access.

Deep Space prepares to go where no Psygnosis game has gone before - budget price.



KLASSIX RANGE GROWS

U.S. Gold have recently added two more titles to the growing ranks of budget sixteen-bit software. The Klassix label will now carry the names of both Solomon's Key and Deep Space. Solomon's Key was programmed by the probe team and is a direct conversion of a lesser known coin-op. The game features many intriguing puzzles and should appeal to most thinkers. Meanwhile, Deep Space was originally available from Liverpool-based, Psygnosis. The game is basically an interstellar wargame which features some rather nice graphics. Both titles should be available from your local software store now, and carry the amazing price tag of only £9.99

THE EDGE

Not a lot on show from The Edge, really. The X-men will be blasting their way to us soon, and apparently are looking good, but first we can expect to see Snoopy, Charlie Brown, Linus and Co appear, when the Peanuts licence arrives next month. The game is an arcade/adventure in the style of Garfield's Big, Fat, Hairy Deal, but features better graphics and more gameplay - should be good. In addition, Darius, the three-screen shoot'em-up epic, is also nearly complete and as soon as the programmers stop putting finishing touches to it and changing the graphics, we will be taking a look at it. Actually, Darius is now called Darius +, because The Edge claim it enhances the original coin-op; but how much, remains to be seen. Finally, the ST movie tie-in of Dolph Lungren's new comic-based movie, The Punisher, will be out in the new year to coincide with the launch of the movie. The film is said to be really good, with lots of death and mayhem going on, and The Edge are confident that their programmers can capture the feel of both the film and the comics in their game.

The German-based software house, Rainbow Arts, attended the show. With them they bought two noteworthy ST games namely, Day of The Pharaohs and Rock'n'Roll. The first is an action adventure set in ancient Egypt. After the death of your father, the Pharaoh, there was great rivalry between the gods. All the heirs of the late king were condemned to death but somehow the sun god managed to save you from your fateful end. The task that lies ahead of you is to prove yourself worthy of inheriting the throne.

In the meantime, Rock'n'Roll sees you guiding a ball through thirty-two complex levels, trying to avoid obstacles and traps as you go. Although simple in design the game is utterly addictive. It is also accompanied by a number of your all-time favourite rock'n'roll tunes.

Both titles should be available from the end of October, priced £19.95.

RAINBOW ARTS



Chariot racing is only one of the disciplines you must learn in order to become Pharaoh.

Rock'n'Roll is a maddeningly addictive arcade/strategy game featuring a number of classic Rock'n'Roll tracks.



HEWSON LAUNCH

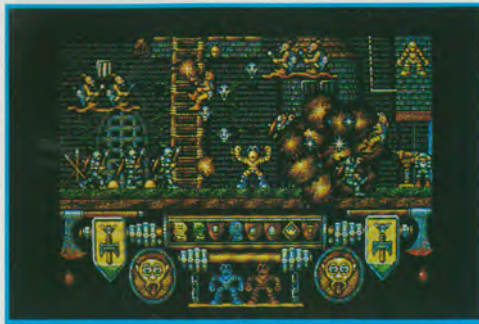
Hewson chose the beautiful and historic setting of Warwick Castle to launch their autumn titles, and to announce their plans for the new year. Eponymous boss, Andrew Hewson, had gone to great lengths to get a crown on his head and he was going to make the most of it. To a rowdy but jocular court, King Hewson described the plans like a medieval battle strategy, while the software fraternity and a lone sixteen-bit scribe, myself, washed down the mead with flagons of wine. Then, as the food was served - overarm - a medieval Rod, Jane and Freddy 'Hey Nonny Nonnyed' the night away.

Warwick castle was an appropriate venue for the launch of Onslaught. Due for release this month, this role-playing adventure with four arcade sequences is set in the warring medieval times. The game is set in a large campaign map consisting of ten kingdoms and hundreds of locations. The game is a combination of field battles and sieges and the objective is to defeat tribes and claim kingdoms.

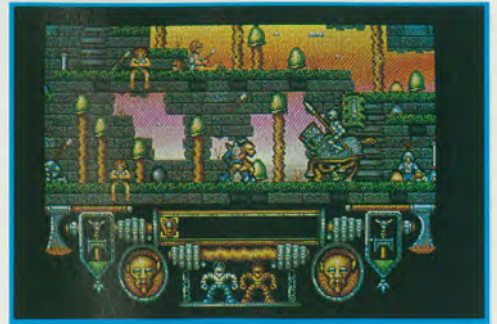
In great contrast, 'Steel' is set in the future where rogue robots are causing havoc and your task is to infiltrate a space ship and destroy the droids. Moving through the rooms and corridors in this vast vessel,



Your very good health squire. King Andy Hewson raises his mug in a toast to Hewson's new games.



Hewson's next big release is to be Onslaught. The game features both role-playing and arcade elements - Watch out for a full review next month.



Onslaught is a combination of field battles and sieges and the objective is to defeat tribes and claim kingdoms.

you must search for cartridges, computers and refueling areas. Designed by Imperial Software Design, Steel's gameplay is described as a strategy shoot'em-up with arcade/adventure elements.

Back to folklore and ancient times, Stormlord, by Raffaele Cecco of Cybernoid fame, is a mission to return tranquillity to your kingdom. Here's variety for you, boyo! Hewson's contribution to the current car-

racing trend is 5th Gear. Billed as; 'an illegal car race' 5th Gear is typical of the shoot'n'drive genre, in which you must blast everything off the road to survive.

Ken and Roberta Williams, founders of Sierra On-Line.



SIERRA ON-LINE AND READY FOR BUSINESS

Another company nearly a decade old is the Californian-based Sierra On-line. Set up back in May 1980 Sierra produced their first 3D animated adventure game in 1984 and since then haven't looked back. Indeed, the last two years have seen the company's games become some of the most eagerly awaited software titles. The company's cult following has also been echoed by its acceptance of over two-hundred major industry awards over the past seven years. The company's latest projects were on show at Earls Court and, once again, Nick managed to

pick the short straw.

All of Sierra's 3D adventure games are now produced using the company's very own language, SCI (Sierra Creative Interpreter), a system by which they are able to produce titles across all leading formats with the minimum of fuss. Of course, we were only really interested in the ST versions but Nick still went to see what we can expect. ST owners are in for a real treat between now and about Easter. Games such as: Hero's Quest; Code Name: Ice Man; Leisure Suit Larry III; The Colonel's Bequest; Castles of Camelot; and Hoyle's Book of Games were all on show. Nick, himself a big Sierra fan, seemed genuinely impressed by what he saw. We printed details of the games' storylines in our ST Action exclusive last month. Meanwhile, here are yet more screen shots of what there is on offer, and if that doesn't make you turn green with envy, our jammy Ed.

The Colonel's Bequest is a tale of murder, mystery and intrigue.



managed to talk himself into getting a review copy of the first available game on the ST, Manhunter 2: San Francisco. Watch out for next month's comprehensive review.



Castles of Camelot sees you embarking on a quest to locate the holy grail.



Everyone's favourite nurd, Leisure Suit Larry, is back. This time finding himself the butt of a stand-up comics' one-liners.



Hoyle's Book Of Cards sees a bit of a departure for Sierra. Still, it's nice they've included one or two of their older characters.

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Commodore Amiga screenshot



Commodore Amiga screenshot



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**RELEASE DATE:
29th NOV. '89**

**EUROPEAN RELEASE DATE
13TH NOV. '89**



Also, just released Steve Bak's 'Dogs of War'.

Steve Bak, author of the highly acclaimed 'Goldrunner' and 'Leatherneck', has joined forces with Elite, publishers of the definitive arcade war games; 'Ikari Warriors' and 'Commando', to produce the ultimate game in this classic genre. Drawing on the comments made by thousands of 'Ikari/Commando' enthusiasts, Steve has designed a totally new action-war game incorporating features that these classics SHOULD have had:

- Simultaneous 2-player action.
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- Bistating, arcade action.
- Flawless multi-directional scrolling.
- Totally designed to utilise the capabilities of advanced 16-bit computers – no 8-bit limitations.

Steve Bak's DOGS OF WAR



Release date: Europe 16th Oct.
UK 1st Nov.

£19.99 ST/Amiga

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MICROPROSE

This year the show didn't seem quite the same without Microprose's hydraulic flight simulator parting people from their lunches. However, the ex-warmongers, now green, yuppie bikers, have been busily buying up companies and games - they must have been the most prolific software house this year. Their Yuppie label, Micro Status, has two new releases for the autumn collection, Midwinter and Survivor.

Programmed by Mike Singleton's Maelstrom Software, who are renowned for their solid 3D graphic production, with Midwinter, Maelstrom have 'expanded the frontiers of 3D graphics' with texture and shadow which is most effective in this wintery environment. Seen through ski goggles, this icon-activated action/adventure game sports some of the most impressive graphics to be seen at the show.

Another 'Status' release is Survivor - no, it's not coping

without your Filofax or GTI, this is pure strategy in a 3D environment again created by graphic leaders, Maelstrom. In this strategy war environment, which concentrates on the strategy, supplies, politics and battle action. Your task is to seek out supplies for your armies, turn arid desert into farms and combat a highly intelligent and powerful robotic enemy. Ultimately, your aim is to survive.

Meanwhile, the Microprose stable is releasing just too many games to describe in detail. So here's a brief description and predicted release dates.

Now available, Stunt Car Racer, consists of eight gruelling tracks fraught with ramps and jumps. There is also a dual-computer link-up for two-player participation.

Microprose are venturing into space for the first time in a new game called Starlord. This is billed as a space simulation which is based on a play-by-



The team behind Midwinter, Maelstrom, have 'expanded the frontiers of 3D graphics' with texture and shadow which is most effective in this wintery environment.

mail game designed by Singleton in the early 1980's. Set in a mythical galaxy, your task is to become emperor by locating the Throne Star and taking the throne. This is Battle and Strategy, Microprose-style, only this time in space. It is due for release in early 1990.

Beneath the waves, Sid Meier of Silent Service and Red October fame, has taken Tom Clancy's sub saga, Red Storm Rising and turned it into a sub simulation - see this issue of STA for a full review.

In the meantime, Microprose's rough-and-ready image, Microstyle, have been converting the Bally Midway coin-op hit, Xenophobe. Set on a derelict space-ship, this is a two-player horizontally split-screen in which you and a partner or opponent search for the common enemy, the Xenos. In the arcades, this game is pure addiction with all the suspense of Aliens - I look forward to playing this particular conversion.

In blinding contrast, Microprose are releasing the complete martial-arts simulator in Oriental Games. You can choose to fight in any style including Kung Fu, Sumo and Kendo and your task is to qualify for the grand tournament. It's been a long time since a decent combat game was released, let's hope its a goody - especially for £24.99!

After Weird Dreams, Microprose are unleashing another Rainbird game, Tower of Babel. The game is set in a number of towers all rendered in 3D, with impressive light and shade detail. You control up to three robotic spiders with various abilities and strengths; for example, one may be able to grab things, another can blast the enemy. The spider interacts with strange droids which creates bewildering

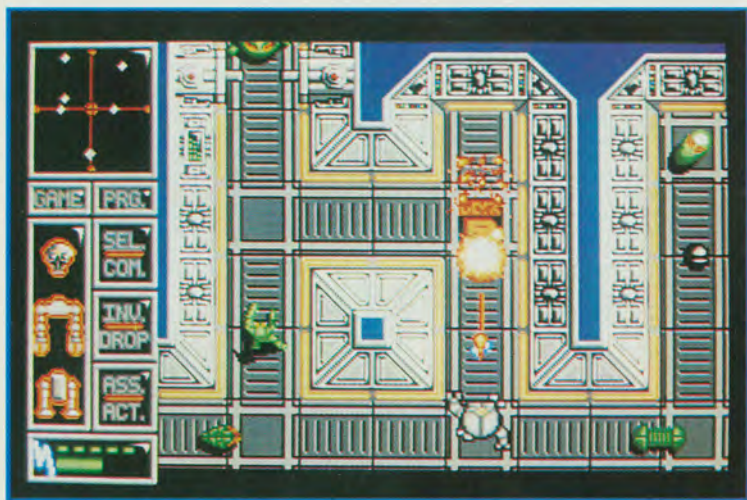
puzzles which require complex sequences, bluffs and sacrifices to solve - looks like another off-the-wall Rainbird production.

Back to what Microprose do best, warmongering! Rat Pack is the sequel to Airborne Ranger, and again, the theme is commando warfare. The man-to-man combat has been expanded upon and this time you control a team of four. Your task is to infiltrate enemy territory, blow up bridges, lay mines, slit throats, snipe and generally cause mayhem.

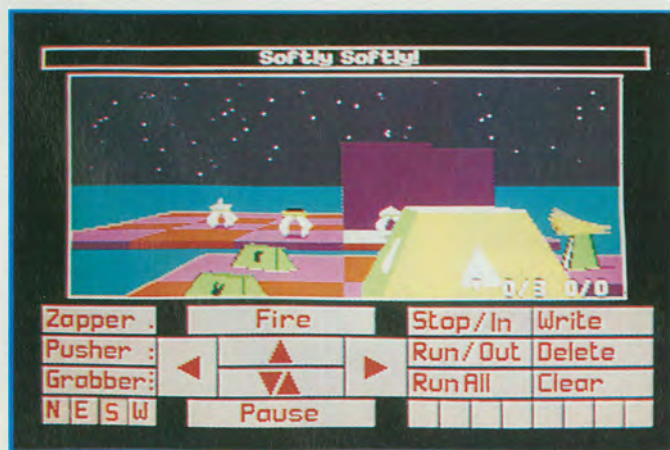
Now here's variety for you! 'Epoch' is described as an intricate web of possibilities bound together by simple realistic relationships between the three areas of interest in the game: economic, military and political. Or in English, this is set in medieval times of war, economic strife and political intrigue. It promises a combination of fighting and strategy. Release schedule imminent.

In First Contact, Rainbird transport us to the stars in a monstrous great game which can be played either as a shoot'em-up or a strategy. Taking control of a space station's computer you guide a weird droid around the endless corridors searching for maps and instructions and maps and clues in order to stay ahead of the alien force.

Finally, back to the war, in Universal Military Simulator II. Described as the definitive military campaign simulation, this program ranges from individual theatre battles to full scale campaigns. The subjects are as diverse as The Roman Empire, Napoleonic times and World War II, or you can create your own world and armies. The statistics to this game are impressive. Up to 127 players can simultaneously control 525 provinces and 32000 individual units - blimey!



Tower of Babel - you control up to three robotic spiders and must solve bewildering puzzles which require complex sequences, bluffs and sacrifices.

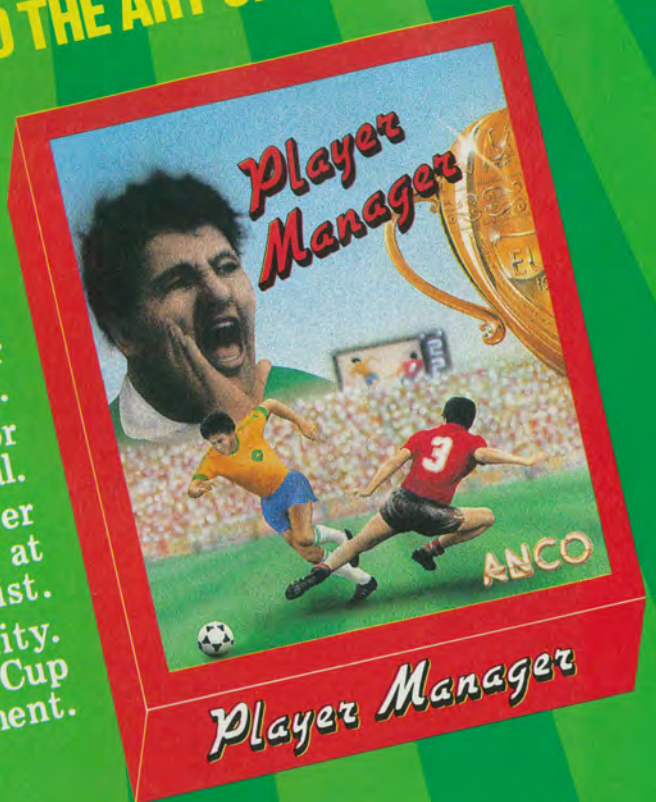


Survivor - Your task is to seek out supplies for your armies, turn arid desert into farms and combat a highly intelligent and powerful robotic enemy.

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Bring Back The Glory Days. That's the brief of the newly appointed PLAYER MANAGER, an international class player, as he takes charge of a third division club. His success depends on four distinct aspects of the game.

PLAYING SKILLS OF THE MANAGER

This part of the game is a refined version of the KICK OFF, retaining it's pace, flavour and the universally acclaimed game play. Play in your position or control the nearest player. The first option combined with a tailor made tactics can play havoc in the opposition goal mouth.

MANAGERIAL SKILLS

Devising winning tactics, acquiring players with right skills from the Transfer market and selecting a team with the right balance is the test of the Managerial skills. He must aim to get promotion as quickly as possible while he can still influence the results as a player and before the age starts to effect his pace and stamina. When to hang his boots up is the toughest decision he has to make.

TACTICS

Four well proven tactics are provided to suit most situations but you can design your own tactics. The pitch is divided in blocks. Place the ball in a block and move the players to the required position. Repeat the process for each block. See the tactics in action using the Ray Trace facility.

THE PLAYERS

Over a thousand players in the four division league. Each player with a unique combination of the following attributes: SHOOTING ACCURACY, PASSING ACCURACY, PACE, STAMINA, APPLICATION, AGGRESSION, HEIGHT and TACKLING SKILL. These attributes are influenced by the player's Age, Mental and Physical Dexterity, Quality of Experience, Weight, Temperament and Morale. There are several other factors such as injury, disciplinary points, unsuitable playing position which influence a player's performance.

Hosts of other factors like referees, injuries, disciplinary problems, team morale etc. can lay to waste the best laid plans of a manager. The PLAYER MANAGER brings everyday realities of a Manager's life, his talents as a manager and a player into a sharp FOCUS. THE FOCUS IS ON YOU.

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Possibly the most eagerly awaited coin-op conversion of the year. *Hard Drivin'* is the closest thing to real driving computer owners will ever come.

DOMARK

Well, last year they had a huge double-decker bus with Maggie Thatcher outside, but this year Domark's emphasis was on driving, to tie in, of course, with *Hard Drivin'*. With all of their staff dressed up in red overalls (much to a couple of them's distaste!), the stand was a large affair, with coin-ops stuck to its sides. On free-play were numerous *Hard Drivin'*, *Toobin'*, *APB* and *Cyberball* machines, and trying to get on these machines was practically impossible. ST-wise, most of the aforementioned games were on show. Of them all, the most eagerly anticipated is *Hard Drivin'*. Written by Jeurgan Friedrich (the guy who converted *Star Wars* to the ST from memory), *Hard Drivin'* is boasting all of the features of the coin-op. The game is a 'true to life' driving sim, with the player at the wheel of a

a speed course and a stunt track. The race track is built for speed, and some pretty good times can be attained when racing; whilst the stunt course is altogether more fun. By now, you will have seen countless screenshots of the ST version's loop-the-loop, but it is the speed with which the game runs that is most impressive. The game allows you to jump over broken bridges and the like, but all must be taken at the right speed or you'll come a cropper. If you die, an action replay will show you where you have gone wrong, and it is hoped that even this will be retained. There has been a lot of hype for *Hard Drivin'*, especially when you consider that, until now, the game only existed as a ten-second demo! Still, you'll be able to judge for yourself in November.

Next, we saw *Toobin'*,

burst your 'toob. Extra points can be gained by throwing cans at these hazards and by passing through gates, and your ultimate aim is to make it to the bottom having collected as many points as possible. Teque are handling the conversion, and it is looking very close to the coin-op, complete with all the warps and cheats of the coin-op, along with a credit system. *Toobin'*, too, will be available in November.

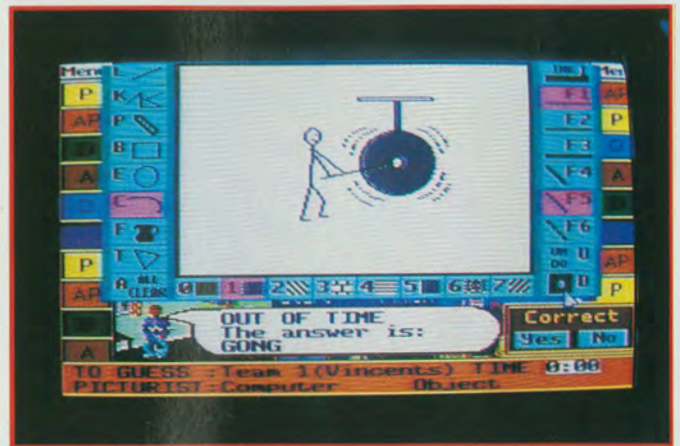
Cyberball was, unfortunately, only available in coin-op form, but will be released in the new year. The year is 2022, and humans have been squeezed out of the popular sport of *Cyberball*, replaced by robots five times their size. *Cyberball* is essentially a 2022 version of American Football, only rougher, tougher and deadlier! You take control of a team of these robots, and must fight your way through match after



Mallett's Mag-ett! Look at the camera and say BLAHH!

addition of escalators and switch-related problems, but you won't see it until into the new year, I'm afraid.

We close this look at Domark with two new Broderbund releases. The first is *Shufflepuck Cafe*, a game which the Amiga Action crew raved about (what do they know. Ed.). It is, basically, a game of *Shufflepuck* played



Hot on the heels of Domark's *Trivial Pursuits* games, *Pictionary* is yet another yuppy-style game. Basically it's a graphical type of charades.

match in an attempt to win the cherished cup. Factors such as planning your strategies all come into play, and the violent sport can see the many players exploding into a ball of flames. This can be stopped by replacing the player at half-time - providing they make it, that is! The coin-op had a really fancy cabinet which stopped the two competitors jostling each other, and this two-player option will be retained in the conversion.

Finally, from their Tengen deal, Domark will be releasing *Escape From The Planet Of The Robot Monsters*. Looking like an isometric version of *Xybots*, once again one or two players must make their way through a robot-infested complex, shooting the rampant robots, and collecting goodies along the way. The evil Reptilons are holding a group of humans hostage, and your final aim is to free them. *EFTPOTRM* takes the *Xybots* story one step further with the

against the weirdest bunch of aliens you are ever likely to see. Your aim is to beat each of the ten opponents in a game so that you can repair your crashed spaceship, but it is going to take a lot of practice before you manage it. Some of the players have magic powers, whilst others just use brute force, but the simplicity of the game will ensure that you return to it again and again. There are no rules in the *Shufflepuck Cafe* except that first one up to fifteen wins - oh, and that you only win if you actually get out of the door alive! *Wings of Fury* is an extension of Broderbund's ancient classic, *Choplifter*, and involves providing support for the *USS Wasp*. The game is a horizontal scroller, and the plane zooms over the smoothly-scrolling terrain, engaging the enemy in combat and rescuing your people. There are seven missions on offer, each getting harder, and it will be available in January.

Tengen's conversion of *Toobin'* has just been completed. Featuring great playability and watery graphics ST owners are in for a real treat.



high-performance Ferrari. The game has the option of either using manual gears or automatic, and watching some of the fourteen year-olds coming to grips with these was hilarious - mind you, even watching Nick Clarkson, who has been driving for years, trying to play it was a laugh! There are two courses to play:

another game without a 'g' on the end. This Tengen coin-op conversion involves floating down a vertically-scrolling river, with nothing but an innertube between your bum and the rocks on the sea bed! There are five rivers to float down, including the Rio Grande and the Amazon, and along the way various hazards attempt to

ACTIVISION'S BIG THREE

It hardly seems like yesterday since Activision was founded. Indeed, the company was born way back in October 1979 and even then the name Activision was synonymous with first-class computer entertainments software. Since their humble beginnings back at the start of the decade, Activision have strived to set themselves levels of excellence unsurpassed in the software industry. From early titles, such as David Crane's Pitfall to the more recent R-type and Super Hang-on, all of the company's releases have been met by positive responses from both software reviewers and the games-playing public.

Just over ten years on, Activision are still at the forefront of the computer entertainments industry. Now, however, the company also have licencing agreements with a number of other software giants: Sierra On-Line, Electric Dreams and Infocom, to name but three. Software Studios are yet another off-shoot of Activision. Housed within the main Activision complex, Software Studios are directly responsible for programming most of the company's top games.

Christmas has always been the high-point of the software industry's year and the PC Show is where most of the top software producers gather to display their big forthcoming releases. This year Activision are pinning their hopes on three titles: Bomber, a state-of-the-art flight/combat simulator; Power Drift, the arcade conversion of the immensely popular coin-op; and Ghostbusters II, the game based around the million dollar-earning film.

Bomber was previewed at the Royal Air Force Club, Piccadilly, in the West End of London. Normally this exclusive venue can only be attended by cravat-wearing

members, but, just this once, members of the software press were granted access in order to see Bomber. "Forget the rest... No more Toytown aircraft... You won't be able to resist Bomber." Extravagant claims such as these have all been made before.

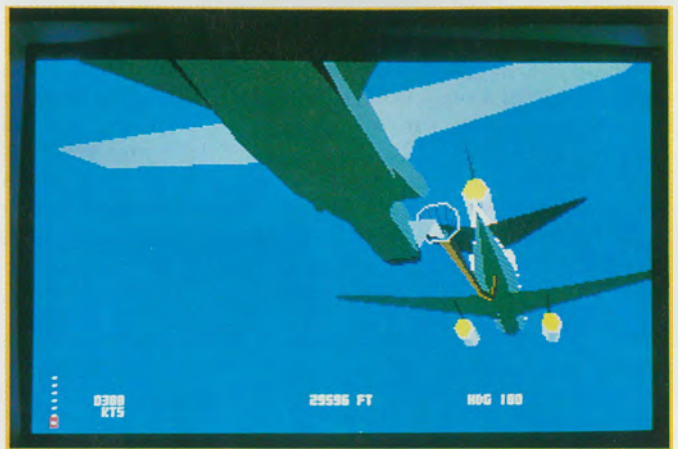
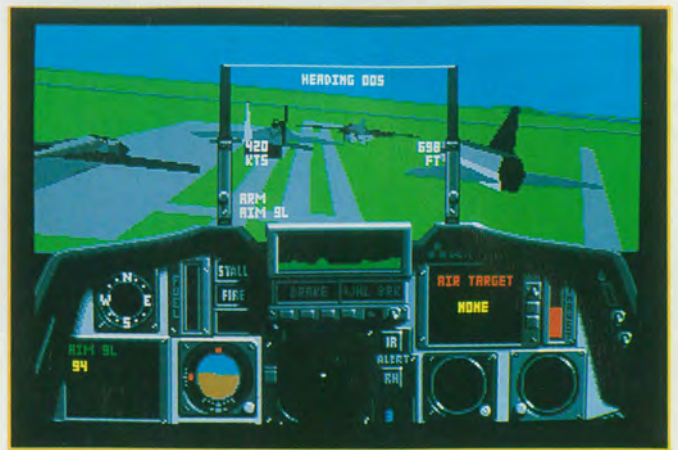
Having been called to order, the lights were lowered and everyone's heads turned towards the screen at the end of the room. The Vektor Grafix team behind the game, John Lewis and Andy Craven, took us through a few missions, explaining the finer points of the game as they went. The game's aim is to pit you against a number of other top pilots as you attempt to win the coveted Curtis E. LeMay Bombing Trophy - a real feat! About fifteen minutes later the house lights were relit and the murmuring started. "Wow!" seemed to be the general consensus of opinion.

Smooth vectors

The game we had witnessed was incredibly detailed with ultra smooth graphics and exceptional gameplay. It wasn't until some minutes later that we decided to take a look at the game for ourselves. Indeed, the game had been played on a Compaq computer which was running at about sixteen times the speed of the humble ST! The ST Action troop reported directly to Andy Craven who went on to explain about the game. He demonstrated the ST version to us. Sure enough, it did seem slower, although there was an option to decrease the detail on the landscape.

Our host also went on to leak some rather confidential information. Vektor have apparently been signed to produce no less than four titles for Activision. Bomber is the first, Bomber II will be the second, a graphical role-playing

Activision's state-of-the-art flight simulator, Bomber, features some of the smoothest filled 3D images ever to appear on the ST.



Talented Bomber pilots will be able to perform time saving manoeuvres such as mid-air refueling.

game will be the third and the fourth is still, as yet, undecided. One thing's for certain, Bomber is undoubtedly one of the 'new' flight simulators to appear and, from what we saw, it looks set to fly high in the software charts.

Activision's other two titles were put under the scrutiny of Nick. High up in the lofty bowers of Earl's Court our Editor attended the Activision suite. Huddled around a bench of computers were a number of other software hacks who mingled freely amongst Activision's top men, such as Rod Cousins and Larry Sparks. Power Drift was the first game Nick was introduced to. The game has already proved itself as a smash-hit in the arcades but there were doubts as to

whether Activision could faithfully reproduce the stunning graphics of the coin-op.

The company has called upon the talents of programmer ZKJ to produce the game - not a bad decision when you consider he was responsible for the company's earlier race success, Super Hang-On. Indeed, the game does bear one or two similarities, such as the ability to use either mouse or joystick. ZKJ went on to demonstrate his prowess at the game as Nick looked on in amazement; the talented programmer went on to explain he still had to do some work on the background graphics, but Nick seemed convinced that Activision had yet another resounding success on the hands.

A bright future

Turning away from both Power Drift and comments such as, "...splendid product!" from its Development Manager, Charles Cecil, Nick was delivered into the care of ForceFour, the team responsible for Electric Dreams, Incredible Shrinking Sphere and, more importantly, Ghostbusters II. The team explained how they had based the game entirely around three



Programmer ZKJ has performed miracles with the ST. Power Drift is undoubtedly a first-class coin-op conversion.



Negotiating tall bridges is simply a way of life, get it wrong and you could get more than just a headache.

Who ya gonna call? The Ghostbusters are back in action and soon to be back on your computer screens.



parts of the film.

Once again, Nick was shown the action from start to finish, the programmers filling him in on the storyline as they went. First of the three sections sees the player making his way down an old air shaft whilst suspended from a rope. During the descent the player's character is attacked by all manner of ghoulies and

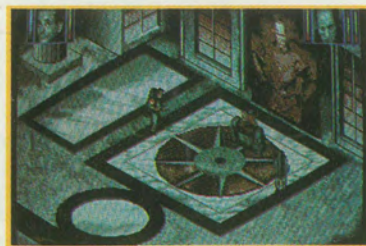
ghosties who attempt to thwart his plans.

Who ya gonna call?

Of course, there are a number of preventive actions open to would-be Ghostbusters and these must be employed wisely if you are to make it to the bottom of the shaft. The second section sees players taking

control of the Statue of Liberty as they try and make their way across New York whilst fending off yet more nasties. Finally, the third section sees the Ghostbusters coming face to face with the game's main villain. Nick, despite having the film ruined for him, refuses to say what happens at the end of the game, except to say it follows the film very closely.

Finally, Nick viewed some of Activision's other products due for imminent release, amongst them, Galaxy Force. Software Development Manager, Stuart Hibbard (who incidentally went to school with our very own Ed.), demonstrated the graphics shoot'em-up. He also went on to confirm our suspicions that the company's other coin-op conversion, Super Wonderboy in Monsterland, had had some problems. The game has now been placed under his direct



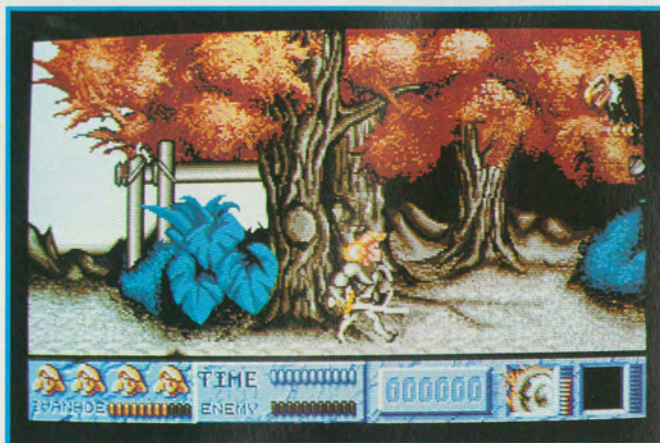
Once they've absailed into the building the fearless four must get to work on the impatient demon before he manages to possess the innocent child.

supervision and should appear in time for Christmas.

Having spent nearly two hours in the company of Activision, Nick emerged, his eyes full of wonder. Going by what he's been gibbering on about, this Christmas looks set to be Activision's best yet. ST owners will have to wait a little while longer, but shouldn't be disappointed.

OCEAN

Ocean's enormous stand featured a huge wall of TV screens, showing all of their new releases, and also two 1956 Cadillacs. Also on show, were all the coin-ops we can expect conversions for, including Operation Thunderbolt and Chase H.Q. If you hung around long enough, you may also have seen a few previews of these games. Of them all, Chase H.Q. and Batman are looking the best, but Batman is still quite a way from completion. Operation Thunderbolt is also in a very early stage, but we can hope to see a review in a month or two's time. Finally, we close our look at Ocean's forthcoming conversions, with Cabal. Converted by Special FX, who recently gave us Red Heat, Cabal is a two-player shoot'em-up with you in charge of a

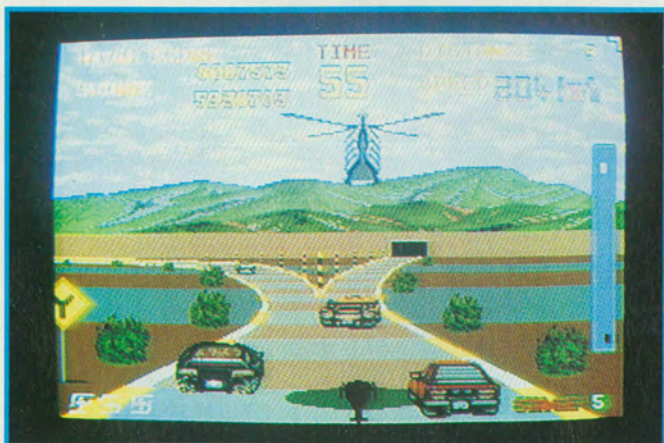


Ivanhoe, a hack'n'slay romp set in the days of King Arthur. The game features some really nice graphics and sound, is looking really good

crack commando. The action is viewed from behind your onscreen persona, with the enemy approaching from the sides and the top of the screen. As you blast away with your gun, tanks and helicopters and the like attempt to sap your energy. There are twenty of these levels, each getting harder, and your mission ends

when you rescue a group of kidnapped hostages.

There are also a batch of original titles due from Ocean, too. First of all, we have Ivanhoe, a hack'n'slay romp set in the days of King Arthur. The game features some really nice graphics and sound. The main sprite looks well animated, and he also has the option to save himself walking by stealing a horse. It won't be ready for a while, but expect it within the new year. Finally, the ST conversion of The Untouchables will be hitting your monitors before Christmas. Following the film's story extremely closely, The Untouchables is a five-stage game where you assume the role of Eliot Ness. The stages include a scene where Ness and his gang must save a runaway baby's pram whilst having a shoot-out with Capone's guys, and a hostage scene similar to the one in Robocop. Your ultimate aim is to gain enough evidence to stick Capone behind bars, but it won't be easy.



Chase HQ has wowed arcade players and Ocean's conversion is every bit as spectacular as its coin-op parent.

GRANDSLAM ENTERTAINMENTS

On display were some of the group's successes over the past year, such as, Thunderbirds and PacMania. But most interest was being payed to such forthcoming attractions as Liverpool, Space Harrier II and Scramble Spirits.

'Liverpool' is billed as 'the ultimate football simulation' and boasts realistic game action in pursuit of the First Division league championship and the FA cup. In fact, the Liverpool team were so impressed that the entire squad have endorsed the game! Liverpool's release is imminent.

Meanwhile, Grandslam announced their joint venture label, Thalion, and demonstrated the result of this recent coalition. Developed by one of Europe's finest design teams, Chambers of Shaolin is the result of two years development and it is reputed to be the most stunning and explosive martial arts beat'em-up ever. Shaolin consists of a training programme, and a selection of combat scenarios. The ability to design the fighters and endow them with various strengths and skills is a particularly innovative feature.

From battles in the Far East to feuds in far-off galaxies, the original Space Harrier coin-op conversion was acclaimed for its likeness to the original, but criticized for the game-play, which, in the arcade relied heavily on the hydraulics. Now comes the sequel, Space Harrier II, and Grandslam's boast of improvements

graphically, sonically and, more importantly, to the gameplay. The console version has received rave reviews but the ST version is not due until early in the new year.

Another imminent release on the Thalion label is Dragon Flight. Another two-year project, this graphic adventure boasts stunning animated sequences and film extracts.

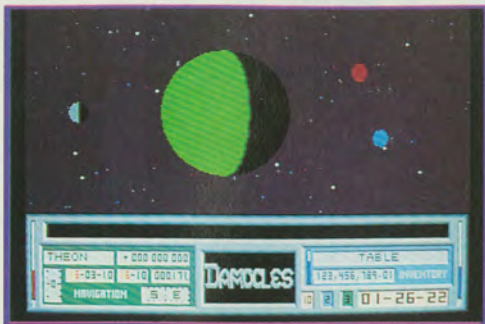
Controlling one of four heroes you must rediscover the lost magic and determine the fate of the wizened dragons.

Scramble Spirit harkens back to the slower-paced, but no less exciting battles of WW II. Piloting a vintage fighter you must face a furious attack from the air and sea. Pure arcade action, Scramble Spirit is to be released in the new year.

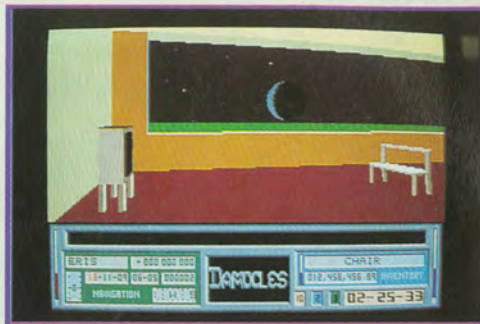
In bewildering contrast is Saint and Greavsie. Proving that old soccer players never die, Saint and Greavsie make the transition to the computer quiz game boasting some 2,000 questions about football facts and figures, trivia and, of course, fun. The game is punctuated by Greavsie's inimitable humorous observations, making this 'a funny

new game' - sorry!

Another label nestling beneath Grandslam Entertainment's wing, is a newly launched publishing off-shoot, called Shades. By the looks of their first releases, they're set to release a real mixed bag of games, ranging from a typical arcade game called Terry's Big Adventure, to Pub/style trivia, imaginatively entitled... Trivia.



Without your help the planet Eris is destined to become just another asteroid belt.



of the best places to to gather clues is on each of the nineteen planets' surfaces.

DAMOCLES NEARLY READY

Novagen are, at last, to release their mega-game, Damocles. Novagen's manager, Bruce Jordan, explained the huge time delay by commenting:

"It's completely over the top - but what a result". The ambitious project was programmed by Paul Woakes, the man behind the company's other smash-hits, Mercenary and Backlash. Players will be put in charge of saving the planet, Eris. Apparently the comet Damocles is heading straight for the doomed planet and your task is to stop the impending disaster.

The game features solid 3D graphics in which players will have complete freedom of movement. The playfield consists of nine planets and nineteen moons. Players are advised to visit all the planets' surfaces in order to find bounty, useful objects and clues.

Set for a release around the end of October or the beginning of November, Damocles is billed as 'the programming event of 1989'. One thing's for certain, it will definitely be interesting. Damocles will carry the asking price of £24.95.



PCW Show well attended as usual by the games playing public.

COMPETITION WINNERS

Many of you will have been waiting to see whether you've won our Indiana Jones competition. Wait no longer: the lucky winner is Jonathan Hughes from Halesowen, West Midlands. Congratulations, Jonathan! Meanwhile, the twenty lucky runners-up, who each receive an Indy T-shirt, a copy of the Indy action game and a movie poster are: S. Brothwood from Billericay; Peter Bell from Greenhill; Dettmer Forsyth from Greenwich; Mark Lawrence from Southsea; Rupert Morris from Shreasury; C. Chill from London; Steve Peiris from Acton; Ryan Templeton from Ayrshire; Danny Boyes from Braintree; Paul Gordon from Middlesbrough; Caroline Hall from London; Gerard McVeigh from Warrenpoint; Tony Tesone from Canada; R. Hislop from Ayrshire; Matthew Dodd from Braunstone; Peter Cavanagh from Sunderland; Neil Danziger from London; G. Trotman from Lancing; Tim Allen from Camforth; David Smallbrook from Manchester; and Gary O'Brien from Hayes End.

ELVIRA, MISTRESS OF THE DARK

We may have only just heard of Elvira over here, but in the States, she's superstar status. Her real name is Cassandra Peterson, but she named her stage character after Elvis Presley, who encouraged her to pursue a career in show business. Elvira first came to public awareness when she hosted an L.A. horror show called 'Movie Macabre', which was so popular that it was soon broadcast nationwide with horror stars such as, Vincent Price and John Carradine, making regular guest appearances. Her character is in the style of Rocky Horror, combining humour, innuendo and sex, with horror which is too over-the-top to be taken seriously. It has proved to be a

winning formula, as she is now the head of a multi-million dollar film and merchandising company.

Elvira's 'coming out party', here in Britain, was staged at the West End Nightclub in London and it was a joint launch of the video, Elvira Mistress of the Dark, and the game of the same name. I chatted with the Mistress of the Dark and I asked whether she expected to receive an Oscar for best actress next year: 'If Meryl Streep doesn't make a film from now until then, I'd say it was pretty much a foregone conclusion,' she quipped. The game is being designed by Horrorsoft, who were responsible for the excellent Personal Nightmare.



Elvira, Mistress of the Dark, used to be pictured with an enormous great python around her shoulders. Nowadays she seems a little bit more choosy about the company she keeps.

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IRON LORD



UBI
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The Age of Chivalry



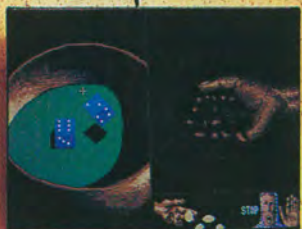
Screenshot on ST



Screenshot on C 64



Screenshot on Amiga



Screenshot on ST



Screenshot on ST



Screenshot on ST

"The Crusader Of Justice."

For the past 5 years you have been away fighting in the Holy Land. When you finally return home, your father, The King, has been deposed by your brutal uncle, and terror and oppression now rule this once serene Kingdom.

You must recover the throne.

However, deceit and treachery are everywhere and you must prove your birthright through guile and trials of combat in archery, arm-wrestling and sword-play...

This is a magnificent adventure set in a medieval world, where your strategy is as important as your strength.

Available on Amiga, ST,
PC, Amstrad, C 64 and
Spectrum

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FASTER THAN LIGHT

At last, Mitch's dreams come true as he comes face to face with the FTL - the creators of DUNGEON MASTER.

I was prepared for anything - except what I met. Wayne, Doug and Russ are not the long-haired, laid-back Californians I had believed I was going to meet. Instead, three conservatively dressed, and quietly spoken guys looked up in surprise when I threw myself into the room, bursting with excitement to meet the creators of my all-time favourite game.

Wayne Holder is the president and leader of the FTL team. Doug Bell is Technical Director and is responsible for much of the program-

as fast as the player wants it to move. Why then, I asked, does my disk drive sometimes whirr when I'm advancing down a corridor. Wayne smiled and told me that this was a deliberate trick they had introduced. Nothing actually happens. We know players are computer literate and we thought it would be fun to build-in a random disk access to make them wonder what was being loaded into the corridor up ahead. It's just a 'fear device'!

Wayne was responsible



Wayne Holder, the president and leader of the FTL team.

words they could think of on the office bulletin board to give them inspiration for new monsters. By chance, three words in a line caught their eye. PAIN, RATS and HELL. The idea for 'Punk' rats who liked pain was born. At first they considered drawing them with pins in their faces (shades of Hellraiser), but decided that would be too much! Instead, we got those evil beasts which fight like the devil, but make lovely rat drumsticks when killed.

Wayne then went on to list what he considered the sneakiest parts of the Dungeon - finding all four pairs of Speed Boots and the Helmet of Darc. It appears that if you can find and equip your group with the boots, you can move at a fantastic

pace and really run rings round the monsters. In fact, finding the boots was used as a small test for anyone who wanted to be a play-tester for their latest game - CHAOS STRIKES BACK. The Helmet's secret hiding place is on the same level as the knights, so if you haven't found it, there's a challenge for you.

Speaking of CHAOS, the question everyone is asking is "WHEN WILL WE SEE IT?" Wayne swears that they want to 'ship' it just before Christmas. The game was finished, but they couldn't resist the temptation to add just a few new monsters, and this is what they are now desperately trying to complete. Lockpicks are used in earnest this time, but they have nasty side-effects. The route through the game is also not as easy as DM. A 3D world which uses lots of sound has been devised and

Doug Bell, the FTL Technical Director and the main force behind much of the programming and artwork.



ming and artwork. Russ Boelhauf is the Marketing Director who promotes the game and is used by the team as a 'sounding board' for the crazy ideas that they want to implement.

On the game's technical background, Doug explained that using the 'C' language and art package called Paintworks, it took two years to create Dungeon Master on the Atari ST before porting it to other machines. While they feel that the ST will remain one of their prime target machines, they intend to use Apple Macs for future development work. The aim was to create, not an RPG, but a Real Time Graphic Adventure - with an emphasis on the 'Real Time'. Nothing should interrupt the player and break the spell - (e.g. disk changes or slow graphic fills). The game must move

for the game controls and 'User View'. He insisted that the game must be like a screwdriver - i.e. the controls must be instinctive and require as little instructions as possible. He was also responsible for the 'Backwards' area of the Dungeon where the player is constantly being turned around and moved off into secret areas. Doug is the heartbreaker who is responsible for the cursed knights with the two-swords which cause the deaths of many Dungeoneers on the lower levels. He also built and programmed the room full of pits which takes so long to map.

Whilst another member of the team - Andy Jaros - designed most of the monsters, Doug explained the creation of the PAIN RATS from HELL! Each day the team wrote all the nasty

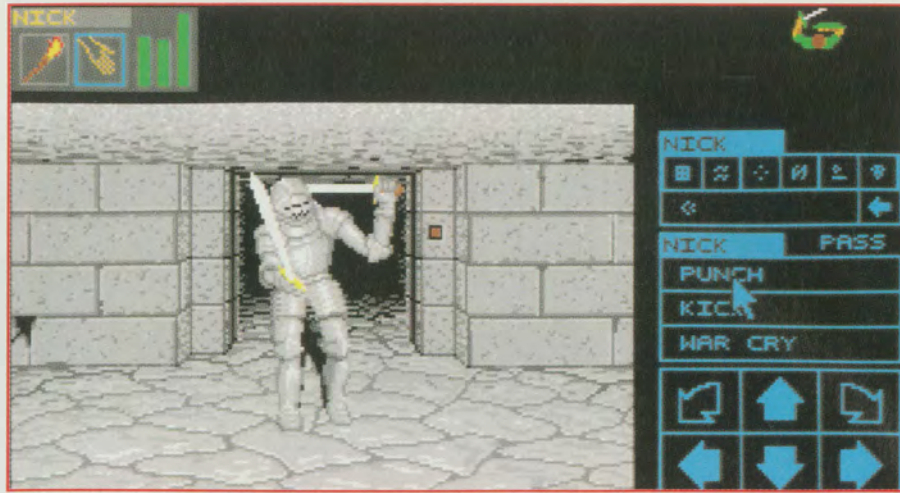


Russ Boelhauf, the Marketing Director who promotes the game and is used by the team as a 'sounding board' for the crazy ideas that they want to implement.

it's designed to change its shape depending on your actions. Now your dungeon will be strangely different to your friends'. The team liked this idea because it enables players to tell 'tall' stories when they meet to recount their previous night's adventures.

CHAOS has been designed to be tricky and therefore they have included a 'built-in' Hint system. The hints given, will themselves be tricky, and even with their help Wayne believes that only the dedicated will ever see all of the sights in their masterpiece.

And what games does the team like to play in their off-duty hours? Wayne is a



flight simulator enthusiast and he loves logic games like Tetris. Doug used to be an RPG fan, but now prefers something with more instant

appeal. He is in fact a great player of FTL's own arcade game OIDS - using the game's editor to create new and even more difficult landscapes to conquer. All of the team agreed that play-testing OIDS helped keep them sane in the early days of the Dungeon Master project when things were tough.

After CHAOS, the plan is to work on two games. One will be a 3D Space Adventure which will be a follow-up to their previous hit - SUN-DOG, and the other is to create a horror game. Wayne believes that they now have

the expertise to build a game with '3D type' sound and graphics which will really scare you - and I for one believe him!

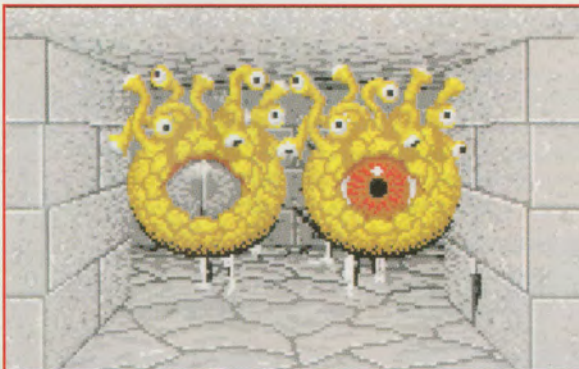
The team were surprised and delighted when I told them how much D.M. was loved by the British fans and they urge you to write to them. They really like the feedback from players and all letters are posted on their office boards for the whole team to read. So what are you waiting for?

STA



Lord Chaos, your evil arch-enemy and the inspiration behind the game.

Level 5 of Dungeon Master saw the appearance of the giant eyes. These magical monsters were once again inspired by Russ.



Pain Rats from Hell, just one of Doug's creations. These creatures were inspired by scraps of paper on the office notice board.



The Dragon was considered by the team as a classic beast. With his fiery breath, this awesome beast proved to be a real pain for some adventurers.

Dungeons & Disk Drives

Hooray, hooray, it's time for the mega-brilliant PC Show at Earl's Court again, and you can be sure the Dungeon Crew will be there to beg, borrow and steal all the new adventure and RPG software that's not nailed down. The lull in the new releases will end with a bang as the software houses display their glittering prizes for the coming Christmas bonanza. One exciting piece of news for RPG players has already arrived in the Dungeon and it concerns a new game called ANIKA.

Software publishers believe that what the gaming world needs is a RPG game which can truly cross the boundary between arcade and fantasy playing. In other words, a Dungeon Master game with true arcade action. Accordingly, non-other than the celebrated BITMAP BROTHERS who produced the spectacular Xenon and Xenon II games, have been lined up to fill the gap. Based around the slogan, 'Forget the Food - Let's get on with the Fighting', the new game will be joystick controlled and feature a plethora of spells and weapons with which you will be able to 'hack and slay' the opposition. Set in a ten-sectioned castle, you will be sent to seek out the fate of a previous party of adventurers who disappeared while searching for an arch villain called COLIN. Yep, that's what I thought when I

heard the name. Still, 'A rose by any other name may still smell as sweet'. The game will be set in a 3D world and, while there will be puzzles and strategy, the emphasis will be towards the arcade fighting sequences. Sounds like fun, anyway.

DEMONS TOMB from Melbourne House is another game which has peeked out from behind the curtain of secrecy surrounding the new releases. Again, there are only scant details to be found about this game. It is an American import which has only just been finished and is due for release in mid-October. The press release which tumbled down the brass tube into the IN-TRAY tells of an archeologist professor who stumbles upon a terrible secret hidden in a tomb in deepest Devon. Although he meets with a ghastly demise, you, in the guise

of his son, are able to take up the challenge of dealing with the horror which he has uncovered. I can decipher little else from the scraps of paper that accompanied the screen-shots as, unfortunately, the Dragon found the press-release before I did and has been kicking it around the Dungeon all morning!

Fans of the LEGEND OF THE SWORD adventure will be pleased to know that its sequel, THE FINAL BATTLE, is to be released any day now from Mirrorsoft. The original was a huge hit and I've no doubt the follow-up will be equally interesting.

Finally, yet another tit-bit from the SECRETS OF DUNGEON MASTERY (available direct from Mirrorsoft Sales at £4.99) Do you remember the dreaded puzzle to which this riddle refers?

**NEAR MIDAS COMES A PUZZLE
QUEER WITH GEM AND PIT AND
PORTCULLIS STRONG.**

**YET CASTING MIGHT AVAILS YOU
NOT, BUT GENTLY LAID GIFTS SENT
BY MAGIC WAYS.**

Troll Letters

Dial-a-Date in Police Quest II

I'm stuck with Police Quest II. Where do I find the Diving Certificate which will allow me to go swimming in the river? Also, what is Maria's phone number and address?

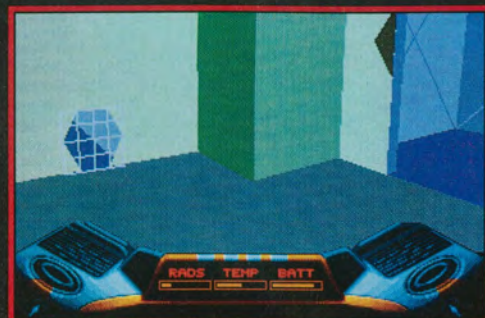
R. Ward, Essex

I have had many requests from humans regarding this information and it's quite easy really. When you found your wallet



Before you can search the riverbed for suspicious items you must first prove you're a fully qualified diver. But just where is your permit?

INFESTATION



INFESTATION

Are you ready for a new level of realism in computer games? Are you prepared for an atmospheric experience you will never forget? Can you cope with super-fast solid 3D vector graphics? Will you venture into the unknown, alone, and armed only with a single pulse rifle? Can you overcome the INFESTATION?

INFESTATION takes computer games to a new level of realism. It creates a complete environment stunningly rendered in super-fast solid 3D vector graphics. You are completely free to move within the game world, examining and manipulating objects just as you would in a real world. And, as in reality, you are not alone. Only, unlike those on Earth, the other occupants of Infestation's world are not very friendly at all . . .

Your task as Kal Solar, Agent of the Interplanetary Federation, is to travel to Alpha II, investigate and end the alien threat. Your mission will not be an easy one. As well as the mother alien and its eggs, you will have to deal with hostile droids and computer systems, radioactive areas, and things unknown.

INFESTATION is a truly atmospheric experience. Don't play this game when you're alone . . . it may well be your last!

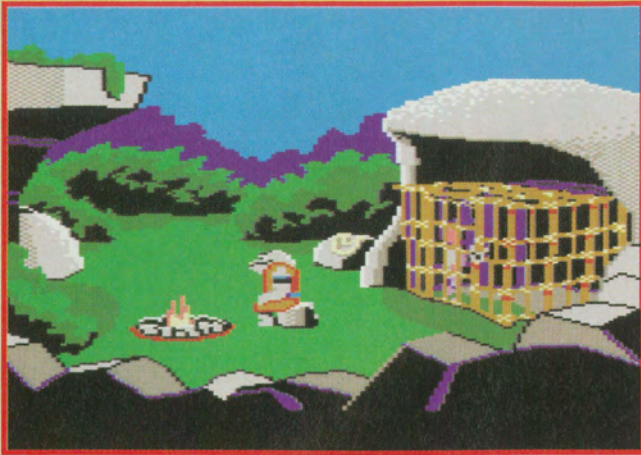
Screen Shots from the Atari ST version AMIGA/ATARI ST £24.95

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Horror of horrors, so early in the game and your in trouble already. If only he'd come close enough so you could pick his pocket.



in your desk drawer I assume you thought to open it? If you did, the game did a naughty and said:- 'You INITIALLY see your badge and (something else which I've forgotten!). What the game was trying to tell you was that if you examined your wallet further, there was something else to be found. And guess what that is! As for finding Maria's address and phone number. Well your initial problem is that you can't spell. Her name is MARIE not MARIA. Finding her telephone number is simply a matter of picking up the phone and dialling '0' for Enquiries. The operator will require you to give her full name. This information, plus her address, is found in her file on the computer - remember she is a girl with a 'past'! Let me guess what you are going to say next.... 'But if you please Troll, I don't know the passwords for the computer'. The passwords are in the papers lying on the Captain's desk. Don't attempt to pick them up just read them where they are.

Check Yourself out in Corruption

Hi, I am from Norway and I am playing CORRUPTION from Magnetic Scrolls. I am at St Lawrence Hospital and I can't get out. HELP ME! The nurse won't leave me alone. What do I have to do?

Rune Hansen, Bergen, Norway

Drat! I can't think of a single rude thing to say about Norwegians. I can, however, tell you how to escape. The trick, as you've no doubt guessed, is to lie on the stretcher and take the place of another patient who is about to be transferred from the hospital. To enable you to do this, you must avoid the wandering nurse and not let the patient in the bed opposite you see which way you went. In addition, there are some things that you must take with you. Namely, the stethoscope and papers. Once the nurse disappears, carry out the following moves: WAIT, WAIT, WAIT, WAIT, WAIT, STAND, GET PILLOW,PAPERS, S, S, PUT STETHOSCOPE IN PILLOW CASE,

There's definately something in that window. Maybe if you just reach out a little - then again, maybe not.



N, W, WEAR BANDAGE, LIE ON BED, WEAR STETHOSCOPE, Then give 10 WAIT's.

One for the Pot with Space Quest II

Having recently bought and completed Space Quest III, I thought I should try something a bit uhm...meatier! So, I bought Space Quest II and,... you guessed it, I'm stuck already. I have reached the bit where the hunter imprisons me and I have talked to him and thrown the poisonous spore which paralysed him. BUT, half a minute later he gets up and cooks me anyway. I know I am a mere mortal, but please.... What am I doing wrong (apart from living)?

Graham Cope, Planet Chi (Near planet Coojob)

So, you now have the hunter who LOCKED you up, lying within arms' reach of you - and you can't figure out what to do next. I assume he is within arm's reach? If not, you didn't speak to him often enough before throwing the mushroom spore. But let us assume you did, and he is. Even a human should have figured out that if he locked the cage - he must have the key! Get your pastey, white arm through the bars and grab the key before he wakes up, stupid. P.S. For those who can't find them, the mushrooms are under the trees - to the right of the root maze. P.P.S. The Dragon loved the illustrations on your envelope and letter. He thinks they are the best he's ever seen. Mind you - I thought they were rotten!

Don't Let Sleeping Trolls Lie in Legend of the Sword

How do you get past the cave-in, I think it has something to do with a shovel? How do you kill the humanoids with the tinderbox? Or do you have to kill

the humanoids? Is it possible to get objects back from your companions when they pick things up first? P.S. If you are a Troll, how is it that you can speak the Queen's English?

L. Jeffs, Chester

There is a sleeping Troll in this game. Wake him up, you'll be surprised what he knows. There is more than one party of humanoids. The first nasty lot can be dispatched with the knife from the tower. When they are dead you'll find that they are carrying an even more deadly weapon, which can then be used to knock the stuffing out of the second lot with the tinderbox. Persuading humans to give you things is very easy. Give them a good, hard kick then they'll realise you ain't joking. It works every time with the editor. (Yes, and I've got the bruises to prove it! Ed.)

When you are as smart as I am you can speak in any language. Mind you, if my dear old mum hears me speaking English, she still tries to wash my mouth out with soap.

Larry I - The Final Solution

I am exhausted trying to reach the pills on the window-sill in the alley of Leisure Suit Larry and I can't find the membership card to get into the disco. Don't repeat the clue about being 'too strung-up' in Issue 15 - 'cos it didn't help. Cheers Ears!

Gordon Anderson, Ayr

O.K. let's kill this problem once and for all. By reading the mucky mags in the Drug-store, you get the clue about tying yourself onto the building by means of a rope. With a rope tied round your waist, and the other end tied to the right-hand side of the fire-escape, you will be able to reach out as far as the window. The two problems which now remain are: a) Where do I get a rope? b) How do I break the window? The rope need not be searched for, it will turn up once you get married. The solution to the second

part is in the garbage skip below you. These problems are of no interest to you yet because it's the Disco where you should be. The Disco pass has been thrown away by someone who went to the Casino instead, and it's into an ash-tray that they threw it. Go search the Casino for an ashtray.

Entrance Fee to Manhunter's Museum

Please answer my problem in Sierra's Manhunter - New York, or I'll go psycho. How do you get past the big, wooden door in the Museum?

Jon Burman, Ontario, Canada

Before you go ferreting around inside the museum, you must first find the dead body in Central Park. If you have done this, then take one more step in the right direction and you will find the murder weapon. In addition to smashing human's skulls, this handy object is just the thing for dealing with wooden doors.

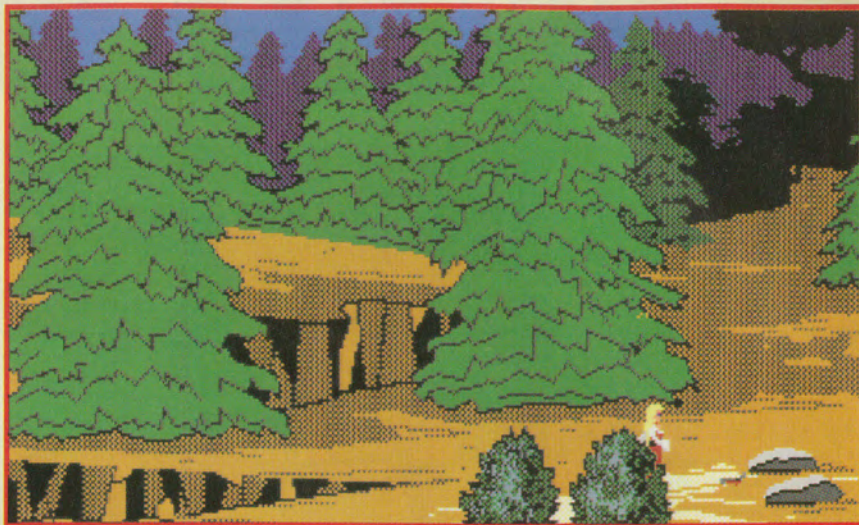
Kings Quest IV Goes Fishing

When we were on holiday we looked under every bridge in order to ask you these questions. How do we catch the frog, it keeps jumping away? How do we catch a fish with the fisherman's pole? Hope you can help a poor, struggling, middle-aged mum and her 11-year-old son. Regards to all at such a brilliant magazine.

Lesley and Daniel Powley, Lancs

Didn't look under all the bridges did you? If you had, you might not have found me, but you would have found the golden ball. For under the little bridge is the princess's gold ball from the fairy story. Just like the story, if you drop the ball in the pond, the frog will retrieve it and bring it back to you. Guess what you can then do with the frog. That's right, you can stamp on it! The nasty, squelchy thing. That might not be the right answer, but I enjoyed it. Bet you've been fishing without any bait on your hook. Take a walk back towards the

Aha, a liddle wiggly worm. Just the thing for tempting a big juicy fish, but hurry or that bird will get it first.



waterfall. Somewhere along the banks of the stream you should spot a wiggly worm in the grass. Pick it, restrain the urge to eat it (very difficult as it does look tasty), then return to the pier for a spot of worm drowning.

Deja Vu - The Finale

With reference to G. Morgan's letter (Aug. Issue) about one of his D.M. characters being an Arch-Master (999). He thinks he's the best Dungeon Master. ALL of my team are Arch Masters for everything! All have '214' Load and ALL have 255 for Wisdom, Strength etc. Let Chaos come, me and Dabs are ready for him.

I am, however, stuck with Deja Vu. What do I do after I have been to the big house?

A. Hussain & Dabs, Southall

Assuming you mean the Mansion, your only task is now to go to the police and show them the evidence. All the false evidence tying you to the murder and kidnapping needs to be disposed of. If you are arrested, read the final text carefully to find out why. Final evidence requirements are:

Marsha's diary, Siegel's notes to Sternwood and The Timetable.

Space Quest III's most asked Question

I know it's supposed to be easy, but I'm stuck in Space Quest III. I've got the wire and the reactor to power my space ship. Every time I pass through the tunnel a giant rat jumps down and steals both of them. How can I get past him whilst keeping them? If he is supposed to steal them, where does he hide them?

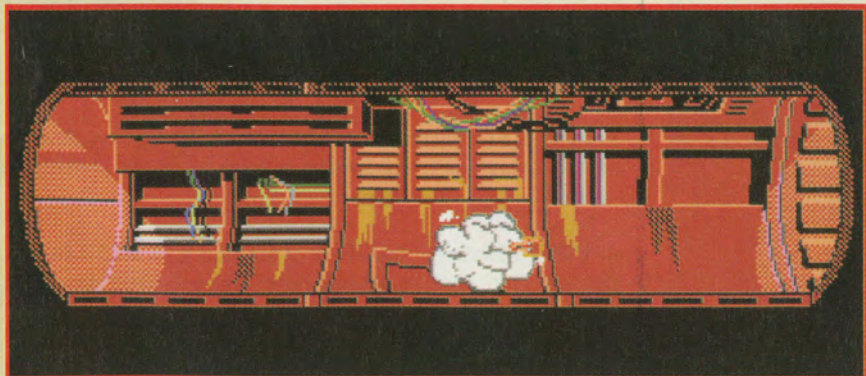
David Mateen, Belfast

What do you expect him to do? Without so much as a by-your-leave or kiss-my-elbow, you steal the reactor which powers the rat's lighting and then come whining to me because he takes it back! And where do you think he would put the reactor that keeps his lights burning? Why, back where it came from, of course. Contrary to what Mitch thought when he reviewed this game, stupid humans are having more trouble with it than he thought. The most often-asked question is: 'Where's the power source for the ship to be found?' Try sliding down the chute below the mechanical grabber and then search the basement thoroughly. That's where it is.

Yet again, the Honorary Troll Award must be made to certain humans, including Adrian Zylawy (Ontaria) for his Black Cauldron solution, Franc Brvar (Holland) for pointing out that I got something wrong (rasp!) and Pat Nevison (Durham) for a Larry II solution.

Send your questions, bouquets and brickbats with a S.A.E. to:

**The TROLL
29, Blackthorn Drive
Larkfield
Kent ME20 6NR**



Rats! Gets me every time. Poor Roger seems to be having some trouble with the vermin onboard the junkship.

MICRO-TELLY, CAMERAS &

Dungeon Masters, Falcon, Xenon, Speedball, Rocket Ranger - the list of excellent, best-selling computer entertainment released under the Mirrorsoft banner is formidable, and they look set to add to it in the future. Today, the group is at the forefront of the software industry, but that sort of achievement in such a brutally competitive industry doesn't occur by accident. This success is due as much to the diversity within the range as to the quality of the games. Mirrorsoft is the UK publicity machine behind some of the most innovative and advanced game designers and programmers in the world, ranging from top arcade entertainment from the likes of, The Bitmap Brothers, to specialist genres, such as air/sim, experts Spectrum Holobyte, war and strategy from PSS and, of course, Dungeon adventuring from FTL. Steering away from high-profile licences and coin-op conversions, Mirrorsoft have marketed totally original concepts which rely on the quality of the content rather than the name.

With such an incredible track record, the real dilemma is how to maintain this quality? Mirrorsoft are always on the lookout for good ideas for games as well as specific talent in game design - but it doesn't stop there.

Keeping a finger on the pulse of the market is of paramount importance and so they run ingenious polls, collate the information and use it to produce exactly what the market wants. A prime example of this is the success of the Imageworks label, which has exceeded all expectations both commercially and for quality. The games doing battle on the soft-



ware shelves this Christmas include: the Bitmap Bros' masterpiece, Xenon II; the mysterious and original 'Lord of the Dancing Blades'; the hotly-awaited Dungeon Masters sequel, Chaos Strikes Back; and realistic driving action in 'Vette'.

This great competition, courtesy of Mirrorsoft, relates to the five software houses in the group and the prizes are well worth trying for. The winner will receive a Casio 400 pocket colour television while two runners up will win a Vivitar 35mm camera, with auto-focus, auto-exposure, auto-load and wind, auto ISO setting and a fast-recycle, built-in flash. The next four names out of the

hat will not be missing out as they will win a brilliant Imageworks, all-weather personal stereo.

To be in with a chance of winning one of these corking prizes answer the five questions below. Remember, all entries should arrive no later than 24th December, 1989.

Send your entries to:

Mirrorsoft Competition
ST Action
Latham House
Quarry Lane
Chichester
West Sussex, PO19 2NY

MIRRORSOFT COMPETITION QUESTIONS

1: Spectrum Holobyte produced what many believe to be the most realistic and action-packed aircraft simulation ever. Can you name the aircraft in question and the US factory that builds it?

2: Under the Imageworks label, the Bitmap Brothers shoot'em-ups, Xenon and Xenon II, pitted us against the nastiest bunch of aliens ever to grace an arcade game. Can you name this slimy race of beings?

3: In the FTL smash hit adventure, Dungeon Master, name the character under whose apprenticeship you serve?

4: Which historic battle is portrayed in PSS's latest simulation, and in which country was this deciding feud fought?

5: Cinemaware bring the movies to our screens. Can you name the old Saturday matinee, B-movie series which their recent release, Rocket Rangers, was based on?



PERSONAL HI-FI'S TO BE WON!!



CLASS PRIZES

WINNER

**CASIO 400 POCKET
COLOUR TV**

TWO RUNNERS-UP

**VIVITAR 35MM
CAMERA**

FOUR

NEXT-OUT-OF-THE-HAT

IMAGEWORKS

ALL-WEATHER

PERSONAL STEREO'S

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.

The answers to the Mirrorsoft competition are:

Answer 1
Answer 2
Answer 3
Answer 4
Answer 5

Name

Address

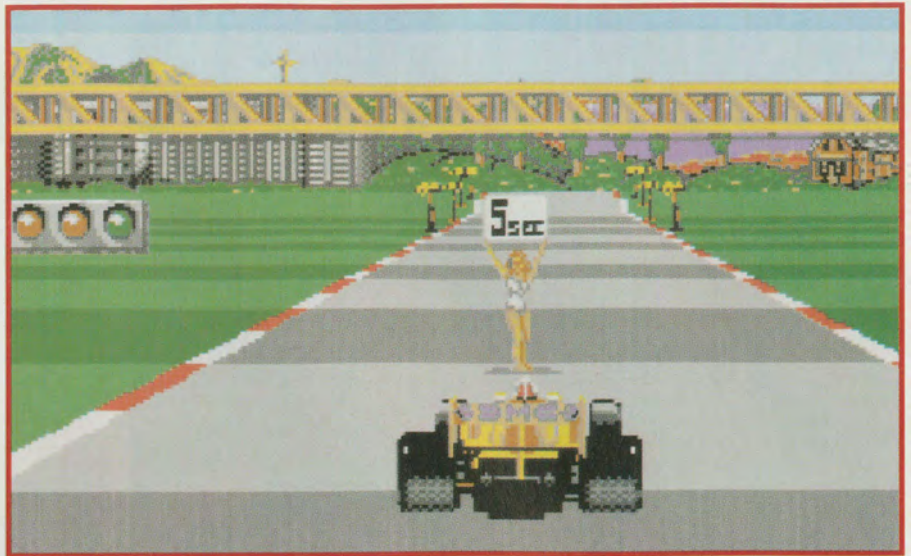
Post code

Daytime telephone number

Coin-op conversions are getting more and more accurate, and Teque have done a cracking job on Continental Circus. This is a direct conversion from arcade machine to ST, and from the graphics and animation to the racing action and arcade features, you'd be hard-pressed to tell one from the other. C.C. is an immensely playable game which is set at a level that will always win in the end, but that doesn't stop you trying again and again - and now you don't have to keep pumping money in the coin-op machine. As described, the graphics are fantastic, and the sounds of the racing cars is astounding, ranging from deep rumbles to high speed whines, and there's even a 'Doppler effect' as the cars whip past. The game-play is straightforward with no fuss and nonsense, and so if you want to get greasy in the garage, best choose another title. C.C. is pure uninterrupted race action!

JS

You're in pole position with the other cars dangerously out of view. The obligatory curvaceous cuty holds up a card to signal the start of the race and all eyes turn to the start lights. Red, amber... green - GO!



"Since Pole Position first scorched the carpets in the arcades, car racing games have always been firm favourites, and Continental Circus is no exception."

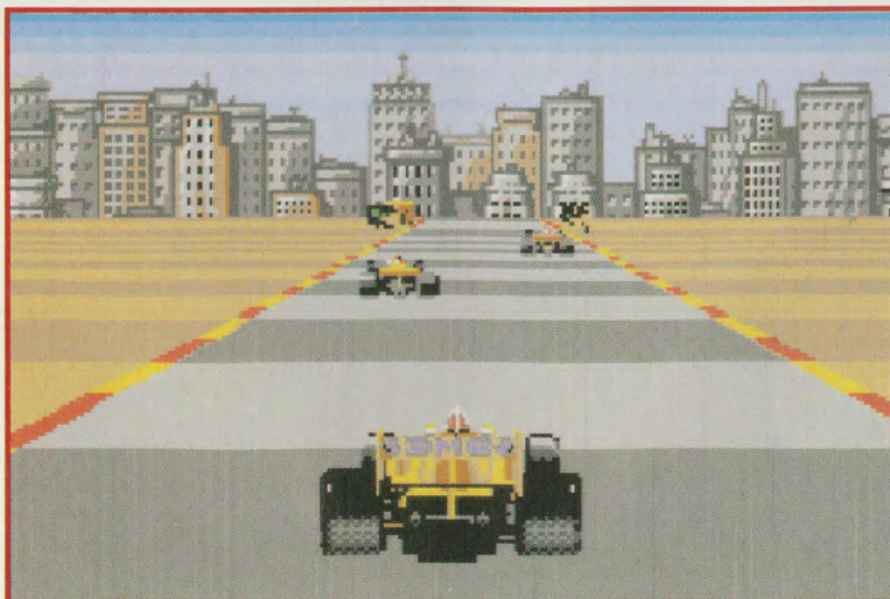
CONTINENTAL CIRCUS

VIRGIN (£19.95)

Continental Circus is the latest in a long line of car-racing games which adopt the rear-view racing perspective, originally inspired by Atari's Pole Position. Converted from the arcade version, licensed game specialists, Teque, have endeavoured to reproduce all the key aspects of the original. Arcade machines are designed to tempt you to reach in your

pocket for more coins and this conversion sticks with that formula, with a seemingly impossible level of difficulty, an unattainable lap time and an infuriating field of computer-controlled competitor cars, which stand between you and the finishing line. C.C. is 100 percent arcade-style racing, with no time for tweeking the carbs in the pits. The first screen shows a list of

the best drivers to date, another typical arcade feature, and you begin with nine credits which represent the number of cars you can leave littered around the race tracks of the world. The first race is set in Brazil and a map of the track highlights features such as corners, chicanes and pitstops, and pressing the firebutton transports you to the heat of the South

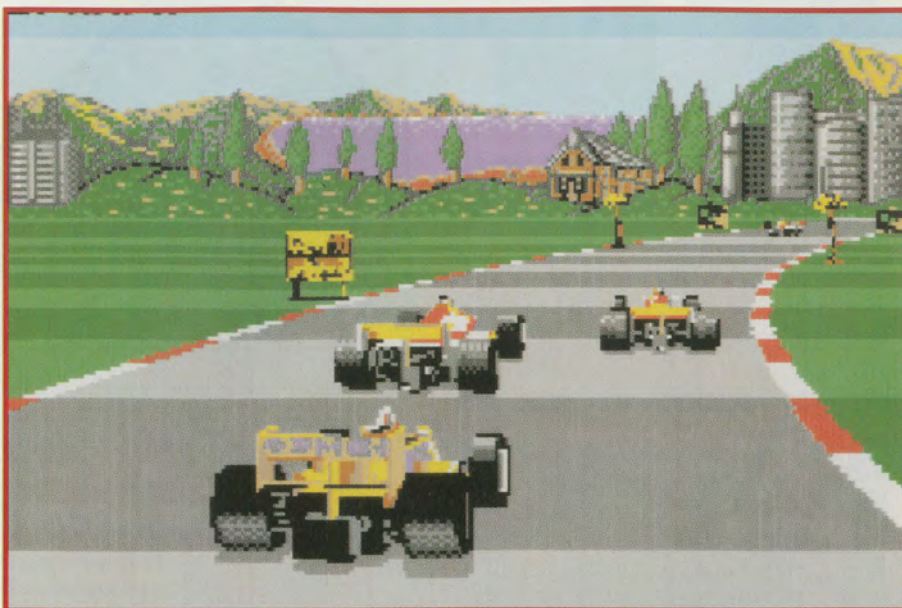


Pushing the joystick forward activates the throttle and the car surges forward. Back markers try to overtake as you pick up speed. The revs build to a crescendo and pressing the firebutton changes to top - the acceleration is incredible!

Never having seen this game in the arcades, I can't tell you how good a conversion it is. However, as a race-game it is a joy to play. The presentation is very good, the sprites being very well drawn. The sound, as you may expect, is rather basic - the continuous droning sound of the cars' engines being the main part. The game-play itself is a little annoying. As long as you don't manage to hit another car the game is quite easy; hit one and it becomes a challenge; hit more and it's neigh on impossible. The disk access between games also annoyed me, especially if I'd crashed shortly after starting. Still, to summarize, Continental Circus is a challenging arcade race-game that's worth checking out.

NC

Coming into a corner, you change down a gear, decelerate and jockey for position. Each computer-controlled car follows different track pattern and has its own racing tactic which really puts an edge on the race.

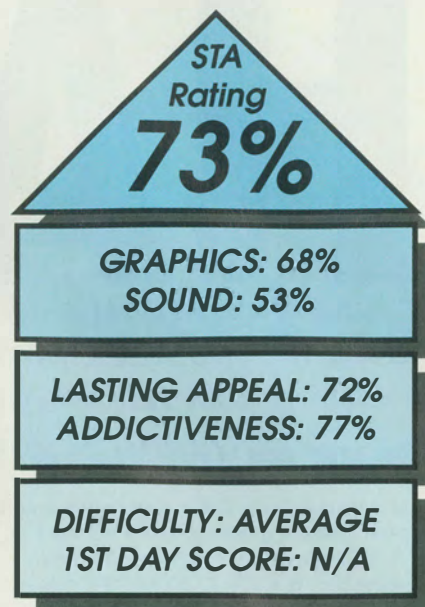


American track.

As if from a camera boom, the screen shows an aerial view of the track which descends, spectacularly, down to track level. Each venue is emphasized by the sky-line, and in Brazil, you can see the mirrored skyscrapers and the massive statue of Christ. There are no test laps or qualifying rounds, but somehow, your car always makes pole position on the starting grid. The driver revs the engine anxiously as a curvaceous cuty steps out onto the track holding a card which says '5 SECONDS'. Now all eyes turn to the starting lights - it seems like an eternity as red light turns to amber and, finally, green. GO! With joystick controls, pushing forward punches the throttle and the car accelerates away from the grid. At first, it seems as if the car will never get going, as back-marker cars begin to overtake, but then the engine relinquishes a massive surge of power. As the revs build up to a crescendo, pressing the firebutton changes to top gear and the engine responds with a deeper growl. Now the acceleration is astounding as your car closes in on the pack. The effect of speed

I must confess to being a bit partial to zooming around the race tracks of the world at high speed - providing there aren't any complex controls, that is. As a big fan of the coin-op, I was expecting a big disappointment in the conversion. Luckily, I was wrong. Continental Circus isn't a perfect conversion: the graphics aren't especially brilliant, neither is the below average sound - but it plays well and at a fast speed, and that's what counts. The times you race against allow no room for mistakes, and as a result, it will have you on the edge of your seat. Apart from Super Hang-on, the ST lacks a decent race game - but no longer.

SM



◀ The slightest contact with another car leaves the engine billowing smoke and, quickly, you must find a pit before the car bursts into flames.

▶ In the pit, the clock stops and the crew douses the flames, checks the car over and sends you back out on the circuit. You have less than 30 seconds to complete the lap.



and motion is created with two-tone tarmac stripes, striped curbstones and a woosh of continuous and changing track-side objects.

The computer controls at least a dozen other cars which follow various track patterns and adopt different racing tactics, and you must avoid even the slightest contact. But as you fight for a better position in the race, spectacular crashes are inevitable. One smash, and smoke billows from the engine and you must quickly get to a pit before it bursts into flames. Once in the pit, the timer stops and you can rest while the pit crew extinguish the flames and patch the car

up, then its back out on the track. Like the arcade version, if you make a full lap before time runs out, you get an extended play which adds thirty seconds to your time. Success on the Brazilian track takes you to the next leg in North America. Each track is quite different and the computer-controlled cars are tuned that bit higher for each progressive race. Crashes are a regular occurrence and time delays take you further away from the finishing line. A competitor car whips past with a whine of turbo engine, clips your car. You spin and the engine bursts into flames - for you, the race is over!

STA

HATE

"Ever had a Hostile All Terrain Encounter? Well, Gremlin Graphics, present that opportunity with their latest release, subtly entitled, H.A.T.E.!"

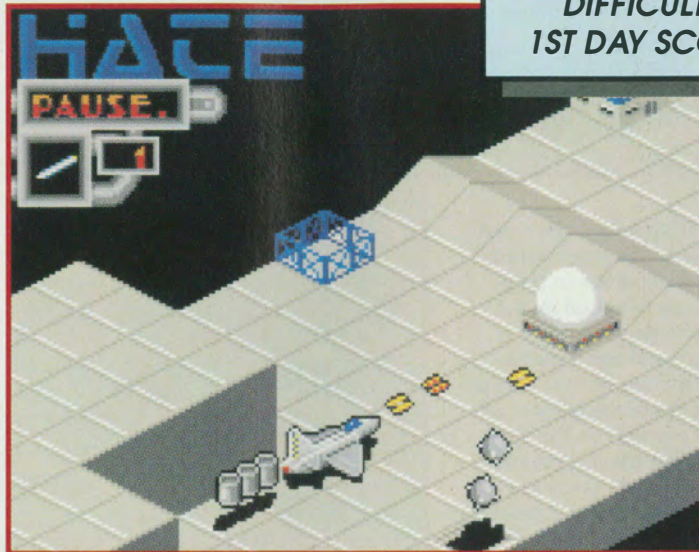
GREMLIN (£19.95)

Abbreviations rule OK in this game, and it doesn't take a genius to work out that H.A.T.E. stands for: 'Hostile All Terrain Encounter'. It's AD-2320 and the galaxy is in turmoil, with the threat of an alien assault looming on the horizon. Your task is to repel this marauding alien force, but first you must qualify for your assault-craft pilot's licence. The screen is blank, until a strip of tile graphics moves slowly into view from the right, at roughly a thirty-degree angle. Then, a large and colourful spacecraft flies from the opposite direction, hovers briefly and deposits a smaller craft on the take-off strip. The scrolling continues and the craft automatically speeds down the runway, takes off and moves with the speed of the scroll. With joystick control, you can steer left and right, dive and climb, but there is limited control over speed.

Flat terrain runs into mounds and valleys as you encounter the first signs of hostility. A door slides open on the terrain and spits out spiked mines which are drawn to your craft as if it were a magnet, and with the limited weaponry you have, these mines must be blasted before they get too close. Then, a squadron of alien salvos whisk onto the screen and swirl around like the cars on a Waltzer, followed by even smaller and swifter saucers which

Veteran gamers will no doubt spot the similarities between the aerial assault section in HATE, and an old, eight-bit shoot'em-up called Zaxxon. What with its physical similarities with an old eight-bit game and an agonizingly slow intro, HATE doesn't ooze immediate appeal. It is not until you get into full swing that you can enjoy a competent, if limited, shoot'em-up. The game-play is enjoyable, but rather simplistic and repetitive, and the slow pace of the scroll gives it an air of predictability. I like the idea of changing from air to ground assault, but the game-play is practically identical in both, which makes this attempt at variety rather futile. Nevertheless, I enjoyed playing the game, even if it did remind me of the ol' eight-bit days - you'll either like it or hate it!

JS



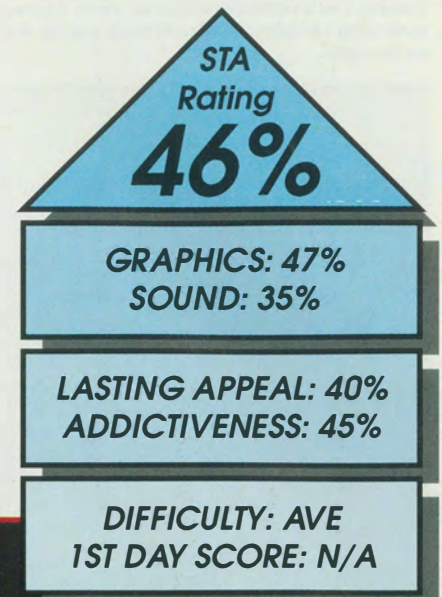
Piloting the assault craft over this tiled terrain, you must avoid a variety of alien craft and missiles. Dodging a swirl of salvos, you blast a nuclear station and pick up the plasma cell from the debris. These cells either represent extra life or extra weaponry.

can smash the ship's shields with equal strength. In addition to self-preservation, your main objective is to blast the many nuclear generators which are dotted across the terrain and collect the plasma cells which are left in the debris. These cells then adhere themselves to the rear of the craft and you must transport them safely to the landing strip at the end of the level. These pods represent lives and so, if you are hit, you lose a pod rather than a life. The large mothership swoops down, picks up the smaller craft and transports it to the next level.

On board the mothership, some major changes are made to the assault craft and it emerges in the next level as a 'GAV', or 'Ground Assault Vehicle'. Again, the mothership drops its consignment and disappears. The number of plasma cells



The Mothership whisks you away to the desert where control changes to a 'GAV' or 'Ground Assault Vehicle'. The vehicle may have changed dramatically but the game-play and objectives of the game remain the same.



collected in the previous level, determines how many lives you have in the next. The desert terrain undulates past sphinx and pyramids as you steer the land craft across the terrain, and the only noticeable difference is that you can accelerate and decelerate in the land vehicle. Both the speed of the scroll, the game-play and the objectives remain the same. The strength of the opposition is stepped up with even more ground-skimming projectiles, intelligent missiles, salvos and mine barriers. But some of the reactors house weaponry which boosts your fire-power to compensate. As the desert terrain ends, you must once again take to the skies for another air assault.

STA

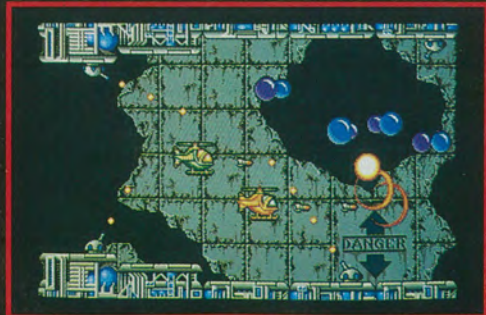
Initial screenshots of H.A.T.E. made it look like a 16-bit version of Zaxxon - if only it was! The controls over your fighter are, to the least, abysmal, and the game plays at such a sluggish rate it is unbelievable. Add to this the fact that you die for apparently no reason a lot of the time, and already you know you're playing a bummer. I really liked Sega's ancient Zaxxon, as it had responsive controls and, above all, was playable. If Gremlin have tried to emulate or improve on its concept, I am sad to say they have failed.

SM

Blood Money



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SMASH MAGAZINE—'GOLD MEDAL AWARD'

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AMIGA/ATARI ST £24.95

Ah so! Or rather, Ah no! Shinobi certainly won't be taking any prizes for being the best arcade conversion of 1989. Graphically, the game suffers from some appalling scrolling. The actual sprites aren't too bad, but even they seem poorly coloured. Sadly, the sound isn't much better, the odd sampled speech effects being rather muffled. However, it is the gameplay with which I became most annoyed. The joystick controls seemed somewhat unresponsive and slow. To sum up, Shinobi has unfortunately failed to convert well onto the ST. I couldn't really recommend this to anyone.

NC

The evil Ring of Five have kidnapped a group of local children and are holding them to ransom. As a lone ninja, you must make your way through the fifteen stages that make up the Ring's lair, and free them. However, guarding the hostages are bands of armed oriental warriors, so you must use all of your martial-arts skills, along with your unlimited supply of throwing stars, to defeat them in combat. Converted from the popular Sega coin-op, Shinobi is a fifteen-stage horizontally-scrolling beat'em-up set against a variety of backdrops and locations. Assuming the role of the ninja, you have access to a wide variety of kicks and punches, with which you must fell your enemy. The joystick is used to control your ninja, with left and right movements changing his direction, and pushing up prompting him to jump. In addition, the ninja can also be made to duck and jump between floors. The fighting moves are also accessed via the joystick, with the directional controls and fire being used to perform low sweeps, punches and kicks, as well as to throw a stream of the deadly stars.

You begin your quest with three lives, waiting at the entrance of the lair. As you pad through the level, you are instantly attacked by groups of warriors. Some appear carrying swords and guns, whilst others simply attempt to collide with you. Contact with the enemy results in your ninja falling backwards, stunned; following that, a second hit costs you a life. However, if at any time you are hit by an

Featuring bland graphics and very little sound, Shinobi is a very flawed conversion. The game trots along at a very sedate pace, with wave after wave of enemy ninjas lining up to have a throwing star thrown at them. In fact, the only challenging thing about Shinobi is making sure that, when you leap up and down between floors, you don't touch one of the enemy. The end-of-level guardians add a little challenge to the game, but overall it remains uninspiring.

SM

In between stages, you are given the chance to gain some bonus points. Viewed from through your ninja's eyes, you must throw stars at the oncoming enemy as they leap from platform to platform. If one gets to you, however, then it is straight back to your main task.



"Ah-so, Virgin deliver a honorable smack in de face, as they release their conversion of Sega's..."

SHINOBI

VIRGIN (£19.95)

assailant's weapon, you will be killed instantly. Each member of the Ring governs over three screens, and as you walk through his lair, the kidnapped children are dotted across the levels. When you have collected the five that have been left in each level, the screen can be exited. This pattern then continues until you come face to face with a member of the Ring. These guys are the equivalent to end-of-level guardians, and require several hits before they expire. Each one has a magic power which proves deadly to your warrior, but if you evade these and successfully kill them, a bonus stage unfolds.

Within the bonus screen, the view switches to that of one seen through your black mask. Spritely ninjas rush around on two platforms that stand before you, and your aim is to stop them in their tracks with a throwing star. Points are gained for every one of the enemy killed, but if they break through your defences, you will be returned to the main action.

STA



The brave ninja comes face to face with one of the ringleaders. Each leader has his own special tactic or weapon, and the key to destroying them is learning the pattern they move in. This guardian throws fireballs at our hero, and these must be avoided while you throw shuriken at his face.

STA
Rating
38%

GRAPHICS: 31%
SOUND: 35%

LASTING APPEAL: 30%
ADDICTIVENESS: 49%

DIFFICULTY: AVERAGE
1ST DAY SCORE: N/A

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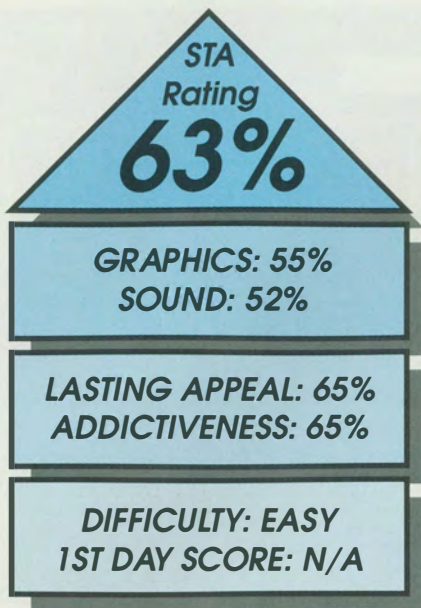


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It had been a long and weary journey and Granite was glad to see the welcoming lights of Hillsfar shining in the distance. Having returned from a wild adventure from within the Forgotten Realms, Granite was now tired, cold and hungry. Slowly surveying the area around him, the great Dwarven fighter decided that he'd best



Riding between locations is only one of the numerous arcade sequences. Moving the joystick either up or down will cause the rider to jump or duck. The trick is timing it right.

SSI's Hillsfar is definitely not a proper RPG. The game is more of a graphical adventure with RPG overtones and is aimed at anyone new to the world of role-playing. That's not to say that seasoned adventurers, like myself, cannot enjoy it. I played for hours solving the various quests. The game is well presented and the graphics, whilst not being the most sophisticated I have seen, are more than adequate for a game of this genre. Gameplay is undoubtedly arcade orientated but the inclusion of hit-points and the like help to slowly break in those unfamiliar with the world of RPG games. In a nutshell, Hillsfar is a well-presented package which, despite being rather easy to complete, should provide and excellent stepping stone for anyone wanting to take an interest in role-playing games.

NC

"It's true to say that fantasy role-playing is something of a specialized subject. Now, however, SSI are trying to recruit more followers. Hillsfar is how they're going to do it."

HILLSFAR

US GOLD/SSI (£19.95)

make up camp and rest before moving on to the busy city at daybreak. Having made a campfire, Granite settled down for the night and soon entered a shallow slumber. He awoke early in the morning and headed for the city. His path was strewn with numerous obstacles over which his trusty steed, Lightning, had to jump. The rough journey did nothing for Granite's temper; he thumped on the city gates and hollered until the still sleepy guard let him in. Once inside, Granite made straight for the Fighters' Guild, a place he knew he'd be welcome to rest at. The battle-scarred warrior beckoned to the Guild's doorman and asked for an audience with the old and wizened master. He was granted board and lodgings but only if he could perform a special task. He was to recover some very important documents that had been stolen from the Guild. So, having had a peaceful night's sleep, Granite embarked on his quest.

Hillsfar is another game in the Advanced Dungeons and Dragons range. Billed as an Action Adventure, the game is obviously aimed at those new to the exciting world of computer role playing. Much of the game's action is arcade orientated in an attempt to lure novices. The first task players must perform is to actually choose a character. This involves deciding on the race, sex, name, profession and

characteristics of the hero. Once picked, the player must ride from his campsite to the grand city of Hillsfar. This is performed by riding your character's horse along a weathered track, manipulating the joystick to control the beast.

Once inside the city the first place to visit is the appropriate Guild where players should seek an audience with the Guild Master. There are three quests for each character class, making a total of twelve in all. The master will inform you where to begin and what to look for. From there on it's merely a question of following the clues.

Once again, players are faced with an arcade element as they search various buildings. Certain clues can only be found within locked chests which must be located and then opened. Gold, potions and knock rings (lock-picking devices) are the most commonly found objects. Players must search the various locations, find whatever they have to and escape before a time runs out. Like being dismounted from your horse, running into guards also costs your character hit points. Lose all your points and your character dies. Within the city of Hillsfar it is also possible to recruit a lock picker who will open any chests you encounter for a half share of any gold you may find. This character is of great assistance in both disarming and opening par-



Players may decide where they wish to go by using the overhead map of the lands around Hillsfar.

Hillsfar is undoubtedly aimed at people like me - gamers who thrive on fast-scrolling shoot'em-ups. As a rule, RPGs have never appealed to me and, to be honest, I was rather sceptical about Hillsfar. The game isn't really a true role-playing game, more an arcade-adventure aimed to lure people like myself into the weird and wonderful world of Dungeons and Dragons. The arcade sequences did help break up the adventure and, despite being easy to play, were quite fun. The more serious quest side of the game was again well presented, not to mention rather easy. All in all, Hillsfar is a fun game. RPG veterans will probably hate it, but for a novice like myself it provided a good starting point.

SM

ticularly difficult chests.

It is also possible to improve your archery and fighting skills. A visit to the archery range provides the perfect opportunity to improve skills with sling shot, arrows and the like. Winning the various competitions not only provides you with more gold but also increases your character status - sometimes the key to the next clue. The Arena is the place to go if you want to polish up on your quarter-staff fighting. Numerous opponents will take you on, each having a different style of attack and defence. Careful control of the joystick will enable you to defeat your opponent, possibly extracting some useful information in the process.

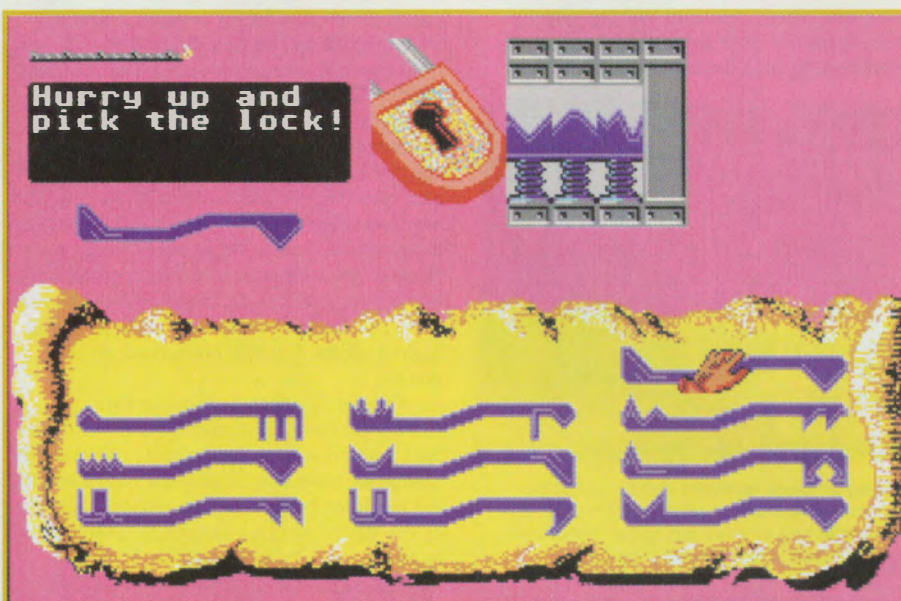
So your quest continues until you finally follow the clues to the elusive item you have been sent to find. Having collected the item you should next return to the master where you will be rewarded for your valiant effort and issued with the next task. The three missions get progressively more difficult and your reward for completing all three is great. **STA**

Nick's your man for fantasy role-playing games. Still, he insisted I gave this one a bash and I'm quite glad I did. The actual role-playing element has been cut down to a bare minimum and SSI have decided to include several action elements in an attempt to win over less fanatical followers. The graphics are very colourful and nicely drawn, especially for a game of this type. The sound is somewhat sparse, but there's nothing that actually detracts from the gameplay. I must say, I found some of the quest somewhat simple. Still, that's no bad thing as it compelled me to continue playing even more. To sum up, Hillsfar is definitely set at a novice level and those interested in trying a simple RPG could do far worse.

JS

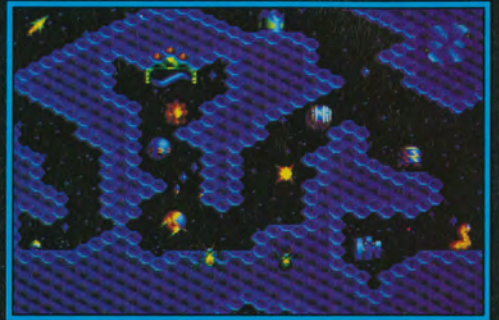
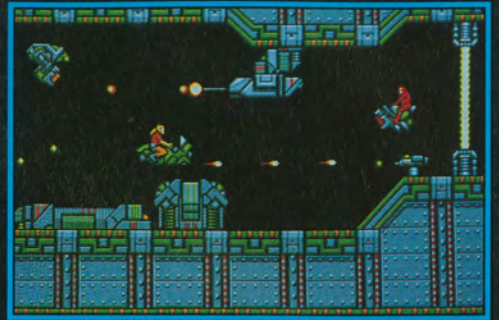
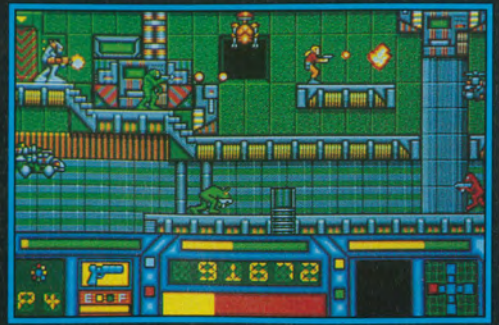


Many objects are to be found held within dungeons. Having entered the area the player must attempt to find various locked chests, many of which have to be successfully picked before the contents may be grabbed.



The city of Hillsfar is a sprawling mass of houses. It is wise to note down and important buildings for future reference. Warriors may take delight in entering the arena for a spot of one-on-one combat.

STRYX



- ★ **Ultra smooth 8 way scrolling**
- ★ **Designed with small fully animated characters from Garvan Corbett, the artist who brought you the classic hit Barbarian**
- ★ **Multi-directional free format weapon usage**
- ★ **Large playfield for even more action.**

You're really up against it this time. Those revolting robots have finally upped and turned their horribly powerful weapons on their kind human masters. Someone's got to stop it before it all gets out of hand. I mean, you just can't have bloodthirsty Cyborg assassins roaming the streets of Dome City and expect the citizens to put up with it. Who on earth is going to sort out the mess? You guessed - you get the job.

Fortunately, you are just a little bit on the special side. You are Stryx, the product of Project Alpha Secure, the meanest fighting, smartest thinking machine ever invented. Half-man, half-robot, you are the business, the only one who can stop those wicked Cyborgs.

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

So, Stryx, you'd better get your jetpack on for some high level robot stomping through the immensely complex underground world of the Dome cities. It's a tough assignment, and time is running out.

AMIGA/ATARI ST £19.95

Screen Shots from the Atari ST Version

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Before embarking on their quest players must first choose their champion. Playing-card symbols represent the four classes of heroes. Hearts - Adventurers. Spades - Fighters. Diamonds - Assassins. Clubs - Wizards.



STAI

BLOODWYCH

MIRRORSOFT (£24.95)

The release of every Fantasy Role Playing Game this year has been preceded by this question: 'Is this the game which will be the successor to Dungeon Master?' Well, we all know the answer to that - they have got to be joking!

At last, with the coming of BLOODWYCH, it looks as if someone is getting serious.

With apologies to Mirrorsoft (who I know don't wish this game to be continually compared with DM), it will be quicker to explain the game's features using the DM terminology that the fans already understand.

Although this game's scenario is set in the corridors of a huge castle, the doors, portcullises, pits and staircases are to all intents a similar setup. With subtle differences, we also have Altars of Rebirth, a list of magical spells, weapons, armour, hidden wall buttons and a Hall of Champions. Your four man/woman party can be selected from the familiar classes of warriors and magicians, with the added advantage that should you meet someone who is more to your liking later on, you can swap. Casting of magical missiles or throwing weapons gives a familiar (if less detailed) animated display.

There are puzzles to be solved and battles to be fought. The fighting sequence is different in that you can only directly control the action of the leader of the group, whilst the remainder fight automatically. Initially this is not as satisfying as the DM method, as it calls for a different strategy.

The big, new feature is the two-player option requiring two joysticks. Control of the game is also in the DM tradition - using icons and pointers. Mouse control in the one-player mode is quick and easy to use, but the two-joystick mode is initially awkward to cope with. Again, the champions fight or use the items placed in their action hand, whilst bow and arrows require the use of both hands. Flickering torches

It must be said that the sound and game controls are weaker than DM, and the smaller graphics are not as distinct on a tv screen. However, praise the Lord, the game does have the same magical power to grip the imagination. Other than the aforementioned masterpiece, I don't believe any other RPG game comes close to BLOODWYCH. It has got all the ingredients for another blockbuster. No question about it, if you liked Dungeon Master, you'll like this. I've played almost every other game RPG on the Atari and most are pretty uninspiring. This game has got the 'real stuff'.

AM

"We've gazed at the advert for months, we've read the so-called 'Scoop Previews' by lesser authorities; now it's time for ST ACTION'S Dungeon Crew to get to grips with this long-awaited RPG."

and the need to use up your precious magic for light have been omitted from these brightly-lit corridors.

Each player controls a separate group of four which can either help or hinder each other. You may play the game as a straight 'first past the post' race to the finish. Or find out that it's as much fun ambushing your partner, as it is getting on with the serious business of finding the



In the two-player mode both participants may work as a team. Choosing either to help or hinder each other in their quests.

**STA
Rating
82%**

**TEXT/GRAPHICS: 78%
GAMEPLAY: 79%**

**LASTING APPEAL: 85%
ADDICTIVENESS: 88%**

fabled crystals.

Another plus is the chance to buy weapons from passing strangers, or to pass the time of day with them in the hope that you will hear useful gossip. The nastiest of strangers will sometimes sell you a deadly weapon if you 'chat before you blat'!

The game uses the usual health, mana, hit-point type stats which increase with experience and the passage of time. Instead of finding scrolls which 'spell-out' new charms, your own spell book magically writes itself whilst you sleep. The different classes of heroes are also more adept with differing kinds of magic, including healing, defence and charming other creatures. All of which makes life more complicated and hence lots more fun. Yet again, food and drink must be found to keep your heroes mobile, and these include biscuits and mead. Unfortunately, we have not as yet uncovered any delicious rat drumsticks or Dragon Steaks!

Because of the two-player option, plus a single screen layout instead of the dual screens of DM, the graphics are much smaller than we are used to. Time will tell if the bonus of the two-player option is used sufficiently to compensate for this. **STA**

If you ask gamers the names of two really good RPG games, their second choice will always be different. Now there will be no argument. BLOODWYCH is a brilliant DM clone, and I for one am glad of it. They have adopted the best and then added some more. The two-player mode could be a great bonus and it's a welcome change to the old format. Until CHAOS turns up, this will do very nicely.

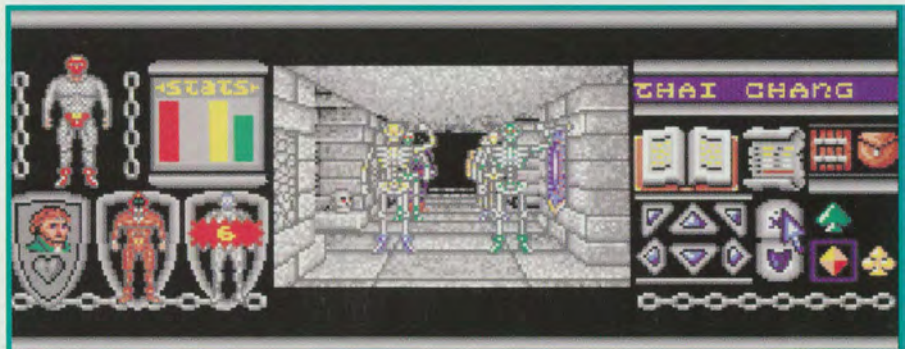
SK

At last, the much talked about Bloodwych is here. Undoubtedly Dungeon Master is the game to which it will be compared and, as a keen follower of the aforementioned game, I eagerly loaded up Bloodwych. My first reactions were mixed. The graphics are much smaller than those featured in DM, although startling similarities can still be found. The sound is adequate, with various effects adding extra atmosphere. Unlike DM, the gameplay seemed rather complicated at first and I found the mouse controls somewhat unforgiving. However, after about three hours I really began to enjoy the action. The two-player mode added to the fun immensely and I soon found the hours flying by. Bloodwych is definitely the best RPG to appear since Dungeon Master.

NC



Festooned about the castle are many colourful pennants. Some of which contain useful and often secret information.



Monsters freely roam within the bowels of the great castle. Having only just descended to a lower level our party is met by a particularly vicious band of undead skeletons.

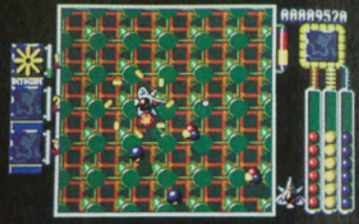
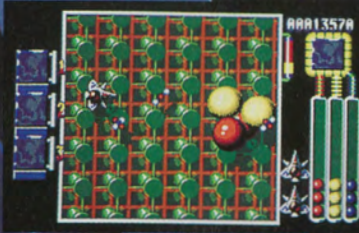


Scattered around the castle there are a number of Resurrection Rooms, in which members of your party who have passed away may be brought back to life.

It is essential to gain energy and obtain extra spells by sleeping. Wise warriors will only sleep in safe areas, usually denoted by the presence of a bed.



QUARTZ



Quartz – an all-action, eight-way scrolling, graphical extravaganza blast-'em-up. Featuring some of the most lurid graphics this side of Andy Warhol's Pop Art, the action takes place in the lattice layers of a crystal, flying through a cloud of sub-atomic particles. Blast everything in your way and collect 'quarks' that are released by the destruction of particles. These can be used to upgrade your ships weapons when critical density is reached. With eleven different 'powerups' available to you, such as flame thrower and octogun, life is never dull. Quartz – fast action, vivid graphics and exciting gameplay. Another smash hit from Firebird.

Available on the following formats, Atari ST and Commodore Amiga at £24.99.



Unit 1, Hampton Road Industrial Estate, Tetbury, Glos. GL8 8LD. Tel: 0666 504326/504412

As the enemy tank moves from over the hill it takes careful aim - a near miss! That was a little too close for comfort.



'Target Tank - Load Sabot - Fire'

TANK ATTACK

CDS (£19.99)

Tank Attack is not a computerised war game. It is a board game in which the computer is used as an umpire.

The game is played on a hex-board that is 40cm x 40cm which is split into four different countries. Each country has a tank force consisting of 8 tanks and 4 armoured cars. There are three main battle tanks, three medium and two light tanks. The armoured cars are split two and two, two light and two medium. Within each country are a number of repair and rebuild facilities and an HQ. The object of the game is to destroy the enemy's HQ.

The game is for two to four players with each player handling one country's tank force. There is no option for the computer to play one of the countries: live opponents only. In a two player game each player can, if so desired, command two forces.

To start the game the players make initial dispositions of their forces, within their own country and outside a demilitarised zone around the border. The computer then comes into the game. For first one player then the rest, it allows you to carry out the following sequence of events: Movement then Firing - each sequence of events being equivalent to one day.

The computer controls the number of movement points a player has available for each day. At each movement phase it displays the number of movement points. The player can then allocate them, as they see fit, to the elements of their Tank force. Upon completion of the movement phase the player can initiate a firing phase.

There are two possible types of fire missions. The first is an engagement between armoured units, the second is bombardment of the enemy's HQ. In the former, the player selects, on the comput-

To me, Tank Attack is neither fish nor fowl. As a board war game it is too simple to offer much enjoyment to the experienced gamers. As with the board game, the computer side of this game, that of umpire, is very simplistic. The computer graphics are well done and I quite enjoyed the little animated action sequences when firing on another tank or the enemy's HQ. On the whole I found the game too basic and not very addictive.

AM

This is a simple little game that has some very nice animated graphic sequences to it. However, it does have a number of drawbacks. It is not possible for the computer to play the opposition, you need a live opponent. The interaction between the board game and the computer is so simple that it is possible, by accident, to attack and destroy the enemy HQ without having a unit anywhere near it. When this happens the game is over and you have to restart from the beginning.

SK

er, the range of the target, the type of vehicle firing and the type of target vehicle. The computer then calculates who hit who. It also displays a little animated picture of the battle. In the case of firing on an HQ, an animated sequence of a tank firing on buildings is shown. Upon completion of the firing phase the next player goes through the same sequence of events.

In addition to refereeing both Movement and Firing the computer provides a 'Newspaper' that details the results of the previous day's events, gives political news and also a weather forecast for the next day. This last affects the number of movement points that will be allocated to each player.

The game is completed when the opposition's HQ has been destroyed.

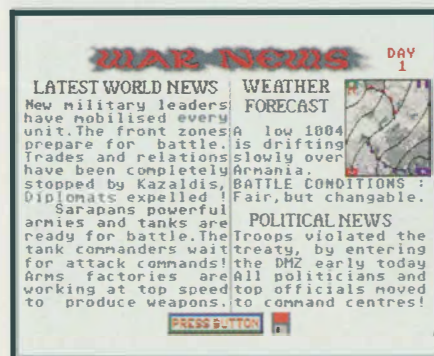
PS. Sabot is a special type of anti-tank shell

STA

STA
Rating
56%

TEXT/GRAPHICS: 64%
GAMEPLAY: 58%

LASTING APPEAL: 48%
ADDICTIVENESS: 46%



War has been declared. You must now alert your forces and take up any strategic strongholds.



Orders must be given from your HQ, and are displayed via your on-line printer

RED STORM RISING

MICROPROSE (£24.95)

Some eighteen months after the simulation of Tom Clancy's sub drama, Red October, Sid Meier, creator of F16 Strike Eagle and Silent Service, has collaborated with Clancy, to produce the sequel, Red Storm Rising. The Soviets are planning to take the Middle Eastern oil-fields and Red Storm is the simulation of an imminent, full-scale collision between the two super powers, although there are many other scenario options in the program. You control one of a range of U.S. nuclear subs and the program comprises training missions and a number of possible battle scenarios against a computer-intelligent opposition. The scenarios are set in different periods and range from a training

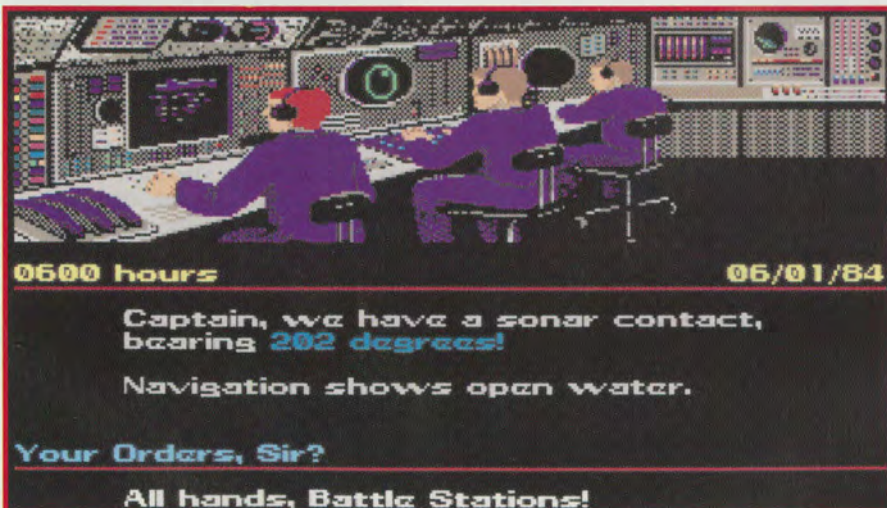
engagement, to a full-scale campaign, from first invasion to victory or defeat. After selecting a mission, the screen displays your orders, mission details and objectives.

An example of a possible training mission and configuration could be: year - 1992; sub - Improved Los Angeles class; scenario - Training Action against a November-class sub or Kashin-class destroyer. You're placed in a battle situation and your first objective is to seek and identify the enemy. The Tactical display screens comprise a navigation and radar, or you can switch to a Secondary display for other facilities. The Tactical display resembles a radar screen which shows

"Stealthlike, silent, unseen, the submarine glides effortlessly through the black depths. Emerging momentarily, striking mercilessly, it submerges again like some all-powerful sea monster."

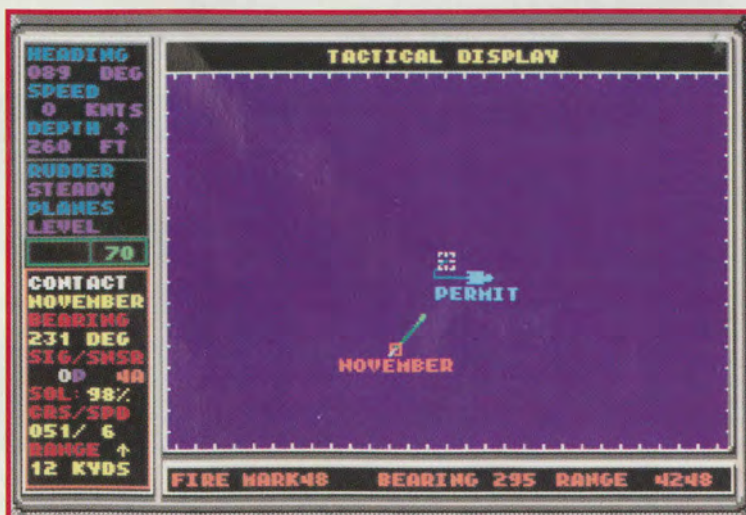
your position in relation to the enemy and there are five scales, ranging from a localized close-up, to a wide-scale mapping. At its biggest scale, the display shows ellipses around the vessels which represent possible zones that the enemy vessel could be occupying. But as you move closer to the enemy, the information is more accurate. Once the enemy has been spotted on the Tactical display, you set a course by entering in a three-digit degree number and then navigate towards the vessel, monitoring the heading and speed read-outs. You can also alter depth and speed as you travel.

As you draw near to the enemy, the sensors can determine whether it is a sub or a ship and, eventually, even the class of the vessel. As you close in on your target, stealth and secrecy must be kept and so switching to Sonar Analysis shows detection thresholds and tracking ranges in



The primary screen shows the control centre of the sub. From here, you can access numerous screens for navigation and weaponry systems.

Here the tactical display shows your enemy's position, and the ellipses represent uncertainty zones where the vessels could be.



It must be very difficult to base a novel within the confines of a submarine - I'd run out of scenario possibilities within the first few pages. Nevertheless, Clancy's salty sub tales translate well into computer entertainment. At best, this is a complex and detailed simulation which requires your undivided attention at all times. Additionally, the informative novella works well with the program and it is in itself entertaining to read. My criticisms lie not with the simulation: it is, to all intents and purposes, a very thorough one, (although, I don't profess to be any sort of authority on subterranean warfare.) In my book, 'Red Storm' is too detailed, almost to the point of being suffocating - I much prefer Meier's less involved and visually more attractive sub/sim, Silent Service. However, given the time that this simulation deserves - months rather than days - I am certain that those enthusiastic enough to become accustomed to the complexities of submarining, will benefit from an obviously thoughtful, detailed and professional program.

JS

Simulation experts are going to love this one. Red Storm Rising shows Microprose doing what they do best. Prior to this, the only other submarine simulation I ever played was the now much dated silent service. Bringing us bang up to date, Red Storm Rising features well presented graphics with minimal spot effects. The gameplay is excellent and players may either decide their encounters of try for the ultimate world war III confrontation. Overall, Red Storm Rising is a superb simulation that will keep players occupied for hours.

NC

comparison to the strength and range of the enemy's radar systems are shown. Meanwhile, 'Tactics' shows graphically how good your contact and the effectiveness of the enemy's equipment. There is a wealth of information and data available to you in the simulation, but success depends on your ability to use it effectively. As you close in, the enemy will eventually become aware of your presence, which will alert them to Battle Stations. You will have already selected weaponry configuration and the screen displays a complex array of instrumentation. The Attack Center Console, shows three display areas: Navigation, Primary and Secondary. Here you can monitor your progress as you engage the enemy. Now it's time to engage weapon control which

I never really got into Microprose's Silent Service, it all seemed a little dated. Red Storm Rising, however, brings submarine warfare bang up to date. Graphically the game is a little uninspiring looking rather like an eight-bit conversion. The sound, too, is rather limited. However, it is the gameplay and realism that's important and Red Storm Rising practically oozes with that. Missions range from incredibly easy, the ones I like, to the damn near impossible World War III situation. To sum up, Red Storm Rising is an excellent submarine simulation, and something all you pilots should have a go at.

SM



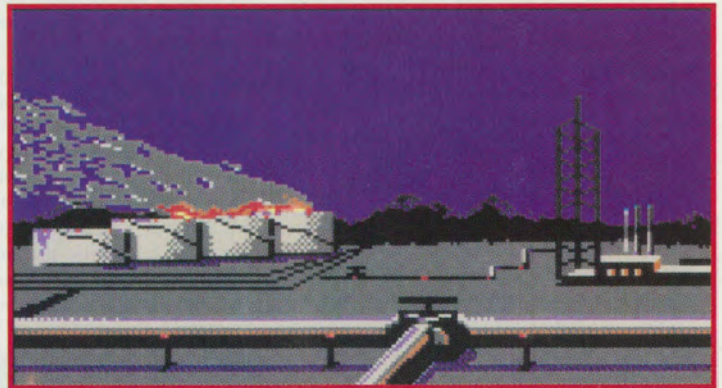
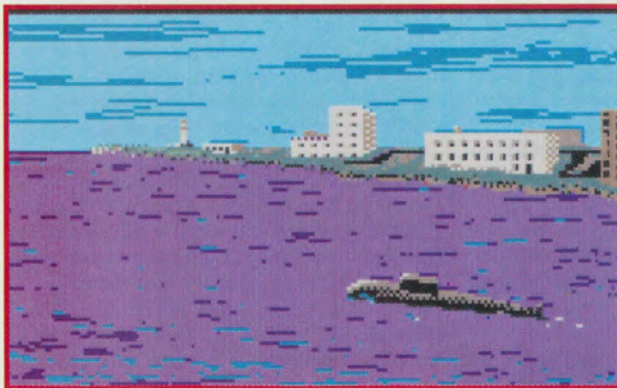
Sonar Analysis: This sonar detection shows your effective radar range as well as your enemy.

is displayed in the primary screen area. It begins on a factor-3 scale and shows torpedoes in transit.

The enemy can launch torpedoes from an incredible distance, but as soon as they are traced on the radar you must take immediate evasive action. You're equipped with various decoys and noisemakers which can avert the torpedo away from the

sub as you make your escape. Success! You have administered a punishing blow on the enemy vessel, avoided retaliatory fire and escaped unscathed. Now it's time to take on a more demanding mission.

STA

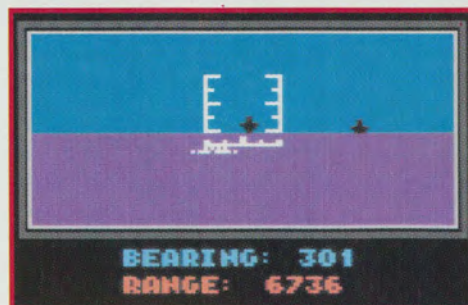


STA Rating
68%

GRAPHICS: 55%
SOUND: 50%

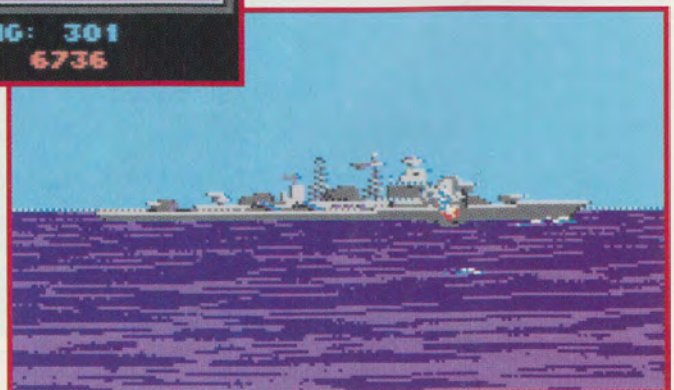
LASTING APPEAL: 81%
ADDICTIVENESS: 63%

DIFFICULTY: HARD
1ST DAY SCORE: N/A



The sub surfaces to see BCGN Kirov, Missile-Launcher - Battle Stations. The Kirov is well equipped and so its best to keep a distance launch a couple of torpedoes and make best your escape.

Religious radicals sabotage Russia's huge oil refinery at Nizhnevartovsk in Siberia. This destroys one-third of the nation's capacity. The USSR faces years of crippling energy shortages and an immobilised military.



"It is said that, within each of us, there is a dormant beast just waiting to escape. Now is the chance to let yours escape prematurely, in this conversion of Sega's popular coin-op."

ALTERED BEAST

ACTIVISION (£19.95)

In each level, a variety of strange creatures attack our hero. They range from zombies with their heads under their arms, to pink lizards and turtles, but all can be despatched with a single kick or punch.



Converted from the popular Sega coin-op, Altered Beast is a horizontally-scrolling beat'em-up set over five levels. Assuming the role of a Roman centurion, you have been summoned from your grave by the mighty Zeus, to rescue his kidnapped daughter. Zeus's daughter, the beautiful Athena, has been taken away by the evil Nelf - lord of the underworld - and she will remain in Nelf's dark domain unless someone can reach her. Your rescue attempt begins with Zeus appearing amidst a clap of thunder and freeing you from your stone tomb with a powerful lightning bolt. As the rock shatters, the joystick takes immediate control and you are ready to face Nelf. Moving from left to right is achieved in the normal way with the joystick, and pushing the stick up and pulling down, effects both a leap and a duck. In addition, a number of fighting moves are available by positioning the joystick whilst keeping the firebutton depressed.

To hinder your attempts, Nelf has sent his acolytes out to destroy you. These strange hybrids of the walking dead and mutated animals appear from both sides of the screen, and, on contact with the centurion, sap his strength. If at any time his energy expires, then one of his three

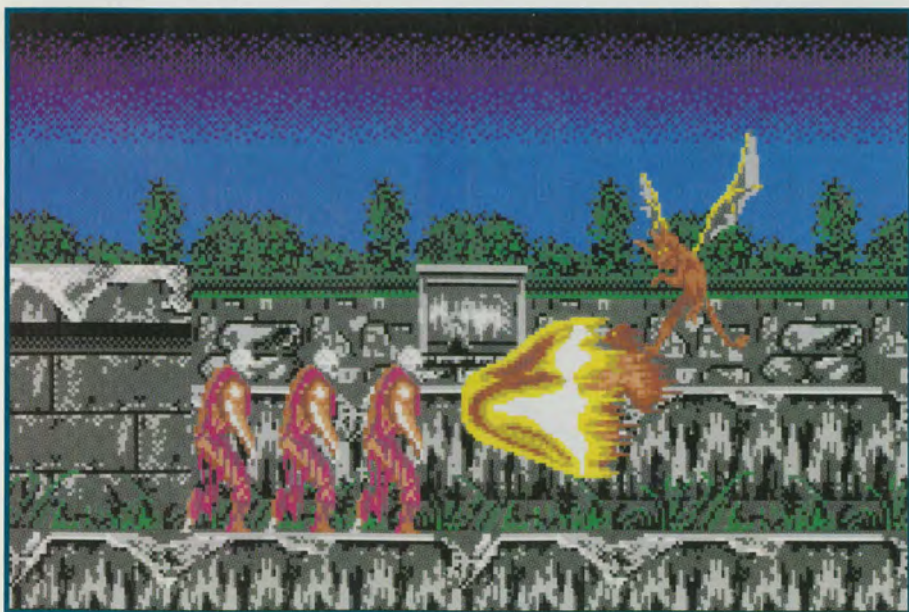
Altered Beast is, admittedly, a very good conversion, but the gameplay can get a touch repetitive. Everything from the coin-op is there - with the exception of the transformation scene - and the graphics are on a par with those of the coin-op. The animation seems a little stilted, and the responsiveness of the controls leaves a little to be desired, but these don't spoil the game too much. Sound, too, is fine, although the background tune started to grate, but the ingame effects are great. Basically, if you are a fan of the Altered Beast coin-op, Activision have come up with a near-perfect conversion. I just feel it is a touch too repetitive.

SM

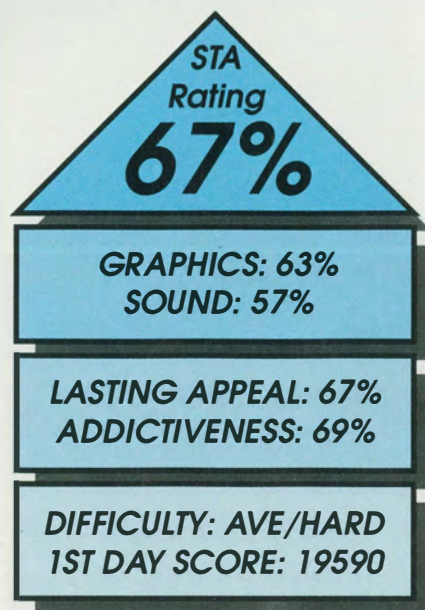
lives will be lost. However, contact with these foul creatures can be prevented with one of the many offensive moves available. Every now and then, the constant barrage of enemy will be interrupted by the appearance of a number of boars. These appear to be much the same as any other of the enemy, but on closer inspection, you will notice that one of them seems to glow. Killing the pulsating boar is the key to progress, as it will relinquish a floating yellow pill. Collecting this pill boosts your centurion's strength with a digitised roar of "Power!", and collecting three pills, prompts a strange metamorphosis from human to beast. There are two forms that you are able to change into: a shape-shift-

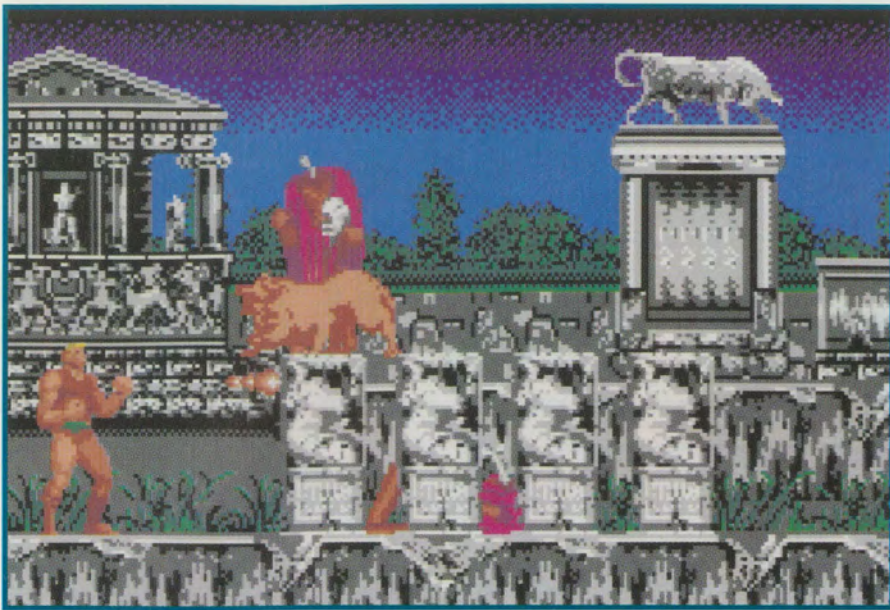
ing werewolf, and a flying dragon. When you are in the guise of either the wolf or the dragon, not only is the strength of your punches and kicks increased, but you gain an extra offensive capability. The wolf, for instance, is given the power to transform himself into a powerful energy bolt which can clear the screen of assailants, whilst the scaly dragon has the ability to emit and fire bolts of pure electricity.

Nelf himself appears twice in every level. He first makes his presence known midway through the level, before scuttling off again, and it isn't until the end of each stage that he reappears. This time, he stands his ground, and as you approach him, he increases his size tenfold, before changing his form into something more



Extra powers are bestowed upon the transformed centurion. Here we see the werewolf using his ability to change into a bolt of energy to his advantage.





Activision almost seem to have a monopoly on Sega games. *Altered Beast* was a fairly popular game in our local arcade and this conversion has been quite eagerly awaited. Unfortunately, *Altered Beast* is not quite as good a conversion as I would have expected. Graphically, the game is near perfect, the scrolling being amongst the smoothest I've seen on the ST. The sound, too, is good. However, the somewhat questionable sprite detection spoilt the action. Life and energy was easily lost and thus the game became tedious to play. In a nutshell, *Altered Beast* is a plausible conversion, let down by some unforgiving gameplay.

NC



▲ The glowing boars are the key to a successful transformation. As they leap towards you, they must be killed with a well-timed kick. When dead, they relinquish a floating yellow pill which boosts your strength. Collect three of these, and you will be transformed into the Altered Beast of the title. ▼



deadly. To begin with, he changes into a clay statue and throws energy-sapping heads at you; but on later levels, he changes into eye-spewing plants and into a stone monster. To defeat each of Nelf's personas, you must continually attack him with a barrage of punches and kicks. As he grows weaker, his form will begin to flash, until he eventually disintegrates in a shower of dust. However, the initial defeats in the first four levels only weaken Nelf's overall power, and it isn't until his demise on level five, that his evil will finally be vanquished, and Athena freed. Once an end-of-level guardian is destroyed, a portal to the next level is opened, but not before Nelf briefly appears and steals your transformation powers for himself.

STA

Although coin-op games are becoming more spectacular and therefore even more difficult to convert, graphics-porting techniques enable developers to interpret a game even more accurately. This is certainly the case for *Altered Beast* and fans of the arcade version can now enjoy a game which manages to capture most of the visual effects and gameplay. In scale, the sprites are the same size and move fluidly with a clever change sequence, while the joystick controls remain clean and responsive, most of the time. Personally, I'm not a great fan of the arcade version, but the accuracy of interpretation and its likeness to the original cannot be faulted.

JS

(Top right, centre right, bottom right). Nelf appears at the end of each level, and must be defeated before you are allowed access to the next stage. As you approach him, he protects himself with an aura of energy-sapping power before disappearing in a cloud of dust. As the cloud evaporates, Nelf's size grows and grows, until he is towering above you. As you rush in to attack, a final transformation takes place, this time with Nelf changing into an eye-spitting plant. Several shots are needed from your dragon to the eye, and when sufficient shots have hit home, Nelf will retreat to the next stage.



"Microprose have swapped their Armalites and battle strategies for anoraks and Peace campaigns."

RAINBOW WARRIOR

MICROSTYLE (£24.95)



With limited resources, Greenpeace relentlessly tackle billion-dollar industries who are destroying our world with their waste. Now, Microprose, whose games are not renowned peacemakers, have taken on the seemingly impossible task of turning Greenpeace's environmental campaigns into a computer game. The game, *Rainbow Warrior*, is accompanied by a very readable history of the Greenpeace organization and its tireless work for the environment, with the instructions for the various games clearly described - on recycled paper, of course. But just how have these environmental issues been turned

into computer entertainment? A menu screen displays the eight issues in question, and by moving a dinghy-shaped cursor, you can select which campaign you wish to embark on. There are three disks which have to be changed to access the various games.

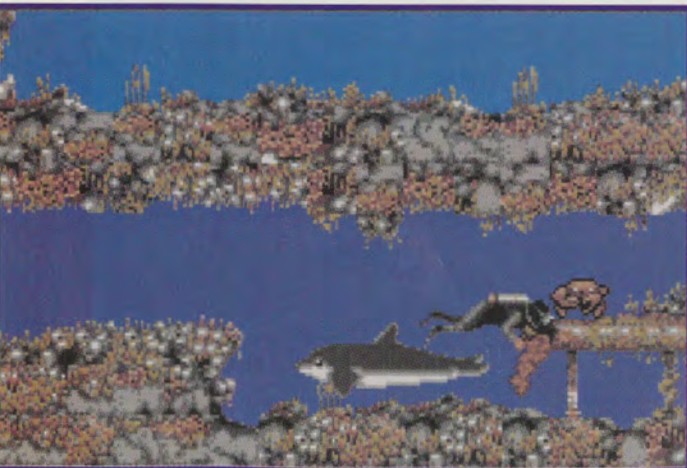
Seal culling is a particularly emotive issue, undoubtedly because of the brutal way the young seal pups are clubbed to death for their pure white coats. All of the Greenpeace campaigns are carried out without force or violence, using ingenious but peaceful methods. For example, they combat seal clubbing by spraying the pups with indelible dye which is harmless to the seal, but makes the pelts worthless to the sealers. Controlling a Greenpeace worker, you must move across drifting ice flows, collect pots of dye and spray the seals, before the clubbers can get to the pups. The joystick

Was this game designed as a promotion for the Greenpeace organization, or to provide the purchaser with entertaining game-play? In the first instance, the program and booklet succeed admirably, but in the second it fails miserably. Admittedly, turning the group's pacificatory campaigns and demonstrations into an arcade game is a bit of a tall order. But their campaigns are full of heroism and action and this just was not conveyed. What you've got here are six separate environmental issues which have been forced into an arcade game and it simply does not work. It would have been more appropriate for this to be a game of strategy where you could plan the campaigns.

JS

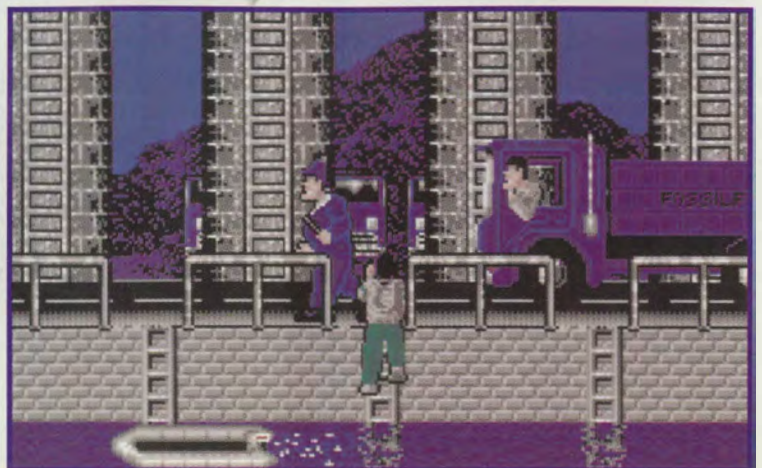
controls enable you to move the peace worker left or right, nudging up makes him jump and the spray is operated by pulling back on the joystick. If the sealers get to the pups, they smash their skulls with clubs. Meanwhile, a submarine moves beneath the ice floes and fires missiles at the Greenpeace campaigners.

News comes through of four off-shore pipelines which are pumping out radioactive waste from a nuclear power station and your mission is to block these pipelines. Controlling a dolphin, you must escort the Greenpeace diver through rocky caves to the pipe openings, avoiding giant squid, sharks and jellyfish. Once the diver reaches a pipe, the dolphin must return to the surface for air and then rejoin the diver to take him to the next pipeline.



Controlling a friendly dolphin, you must guide a Greenpeace diver through subterranean caves to pipe openings. The waste is pouring out of the pipe, and while the diver seals the pipe, you must direct the dolphin back to the surface for air.

A cocktail of toxic waste has been billowing out of the Muckybridge power-plant and it's time to make a stand. Controlling a peacemaker, you must grab a letter from the passing dinghy, and hang it on the pipes. Meanwhile, angry plant-workers throw spanners and coal at you.



Jumping from ice-floe to ice floe, you must collect pots of dye and spray the seals before the hunters get to the pups and club them to death.



The Greenpeace movement plays a very important role in world conservation and deserves all the publicity it gets. However, I wonder just how they view this - a game based around their heroic escapades. It seems ironic that a company usually remembered for their Commie-bashing simulations should produce a game such as this. Rainbow Warrior contains six campaigns, all of which contain adequate sound, well drawn sprites but very little lasting gameplay. In fact, for me, the best part of the whole package is the superbly presented manual which highlights the work Greenpeace perform. To sum up: Rainbow Warrior is a brave attempt at portraying the invaluable work performed by the Greenpeace movement. Unfortunately, as a game, it fails miserably.

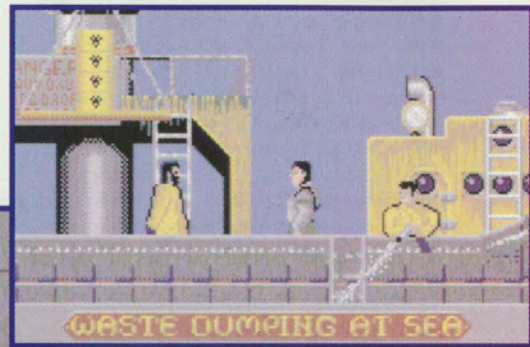
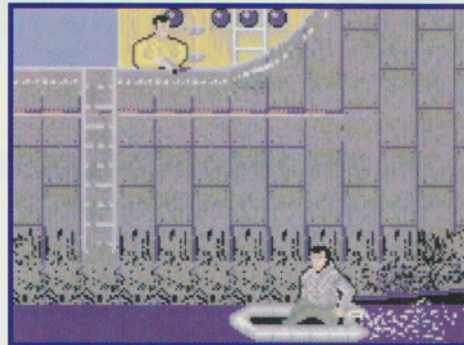
NC

Although I think the principles behind the Greenpeace game are sound, I'm not going to recommend it on that basis. In fact, despite having a nice selection of varied gamestyles to play, Greenpeace seems to me to be a hot-potch of different sub-games linked in to fit in with the Greenpeace theme. Admittedly, some of the games are playable, but a couple suffer from unresponsive controls and require too much pixel-perfect accuracy. My favourite, though, was the 'Save the Ozone Layer' game. Not because it was playable, but because it had you throwing snowballs at ozone layer-eating cans of Mum deoderant - hardly serious stuff! Overall, Greenpeace offers a couple of short-term interest games, but enough to warrant the outlay.

SM

Additional hazards are fishing nets which can trap the dolphin, seaweed poisoned by the waste and mutated crabs which can nip holes in the diver's wetsuit. There is another campaign to thwart the dumping of nuclear waste. Drums containing radioactive material are being tipped over the side of a ship and the objective is to occupy the three cranes onboard. Guiding a dinghy alongside the ship, you must avoid the falling barrels, water cannons and various missiles thrown by the crew. Control then switches to a campaigner who must scramble up a ladder to the cranes. When all the cranes have been occupied, the barrel-dumping stops.

At the 'Muckybridge' power station, a cocktail of chemicals continuously billows out of the great chimneys and so it's time to make a stand. The screen shows four



Barrels of nuclear waste are being dumped in the sea and, dwarfed by the massive dumping vessel. You must guide the dinghy alongside and clamber up the side of the hull, to get to the cranes to stop the dumping, avoiding the falling barrels and missiles thrown by the crew.

chimneys with ladders up the sides and, beneath, the Greenpeace dinghy passes with large letters which spell out 'STOP ACID RAIN'. Controlling a peaceworker, you must go down the water, snatch a letter as the dinghy passes, climb up the chimneys and hang it up. But you must avoid the spanners and coal thrown by the plant workers. All twelve letters must be placed in the right order. Finally, Rainbow Warrior turns its bows to the open sea to highlight the plight of the hunted whale.

This is the oddest of all the games because it is symbolic: the objective is to reveal a hidden picture on screen. You control the whale which swims around at the base of the screen. Above, whaling ships go by, firing harpoons, while tubs of margarine and bottles of perfume fall down towards the whale. Pressing the firebutton spits waterballs which reveals the picture.

STA

STA
Rating

56%

GRAPHICS: 56%
SOUND: 52%

LASTING APPEAL: 60%
ADDICTIVENESS: 59%

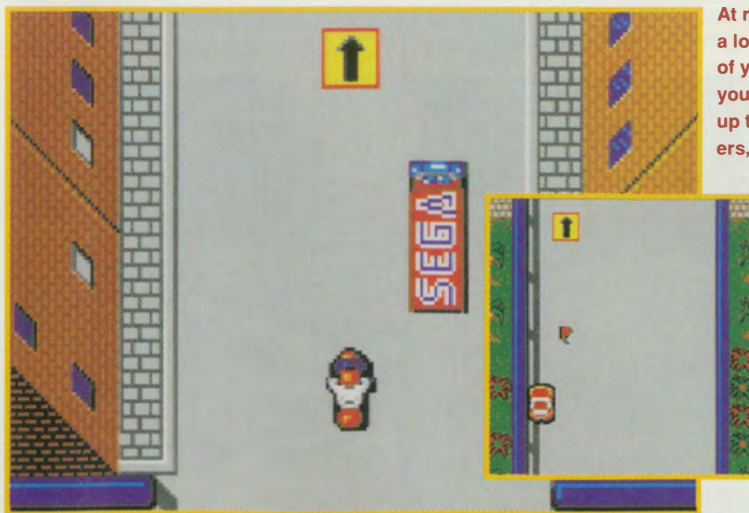
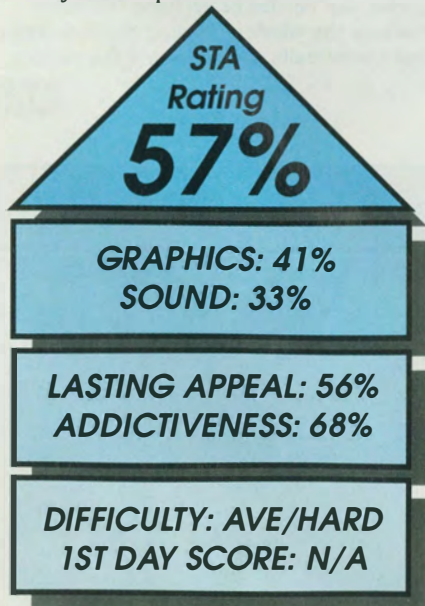
DIFFICULTY: AVERAGE
1ST DAY SCORE: N/A



“Released years ago by Sega to follow up the success of the classic Spy Hunter, Action Fighter has only just made it to the ST. Can its tried and tested gameplay stand up alongside other vertically-scrolling shoot'em-ups, such as Xenon II?”

Drawing its inspiration from Sega's aged Spy Hunter coin-op, Action Fighter is another Sega coin-op conversion. It is a vertically-scrolling shoot'em-up which involves haring along tortuous roads, avoiding the evil intentions of other road-dwellers. You take these risks because you are a top-status government agent, sent out on several daring missions to save your country. Each mission involves taking your powerful motorbike and storming up screen, enhancing your vehicle, and shooting the enemy agents who will attempt to ram you off the road. You begin the game seated on your mean machine, with four lives and a single-firing gun mounted on your bike. Pushing the joystick forward starts the bike, and you pull away with a tyre-burning squeal. Once moving, normal directional controls steer your bike from side to side, whilst forwards and backwards accelerate and decelerate, respectively. Finally, pressing fire activates your forward-firing gun.

No sooner have you pulled away, than the other road inhabitants make their presence known. As they roar up behind you and alongside you, care must be taken to avoid contact with them or the scenery. Colliding with one of the many cars or a wall costs you one of your lives, but if a motorbike attempts to squeeze you off the road, it can be rammed into a nearby wall simply by moving into it at speed. The destruction of your enemy earns you both points and a bike-



At regular intervals, a lorry slows in front of your bike, enticing you inside. Driving up the ramp it lowers, you must then wait a couple of seconds while it adds weapons, such as rear-firing bullets or homing missiles, to your inventory.

ACTION FIGHTER

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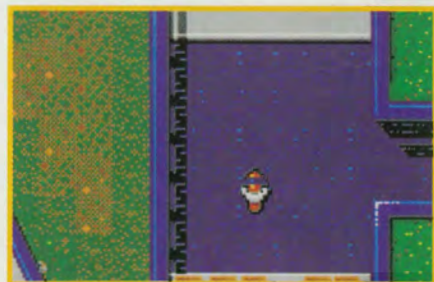
Spy Hunter is undoubtedly a classic coin-op, but, even so, in these days of quality conversions, such as Strider and Rainbow Islands, a variant should not be released at full-price. Action Fighter is a fast'n'furious shoot'em-up, with a long and difficult task, but it just doesn't offer the player enough for his money. The graphics are of a decidedly 8-bit style as is the sound, and I feel these could have been enhanced while still maintaining the basic 'essence' of the coin-op. I must concede that Action Fighter IS very playable, and its difficulty is set at just the right level to keep you playing, but I could only recommend it if it was a budget release.

SM

enhancement bonus, which appears in the form of a letter icon when a set number of the enemy are killed. Collect four of these icons, and your bike will be transformed into a powerful car; collect a further two, and the car will become a jet-car. In addition, you can upgrade your vehicle by driving into the back of a handy Sega-endorsed HGV. These appear at regular intervals and lower a ramp, allowing you to enter them. Once in, the game will slow down slightly and your bike will reverse out, complete with improved weaponry.

Each time you enter the lorry, an extra facility will become available, including rear-firing lasers and missiles, but if you should lose a life, you will have to start collecting them again from scratch.

STA



Occasionally, your mission will be interrupted by seemingly impassable holes in the road. However, get a long run up, and you can use the handy ramps to leap over the problem.



Shooting a set number of enemy cars and bikes reveals a lettered icon. There are six to collect and on collecting the fourth, you will be transformed into a more resilient car, and, following that, a helicopter.

NC

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THE LETTERS DESK

Are ST users getting value for money?
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 Do you know how to get rid of that annoying virus?
 How do you scroll screens in STOS? If you have any thoughts or questions then write to us at: The Letters Desk, ST Action, Latham House, Chichester, West Sussex, PO19 2NY.

Greetings, and a hearty welcome to yet another jam-packed edition of ST Action, the world's only dedicated ST games magazine. Still, the never sleeping computer games producing machine trundles on relentlessly. This month is a bumper issue for adventures. Lucasfilm Games' Maniac Mansion and Indy Adventure are both finished and Imageworks long-awaited Dungeon Master game, Bloodwych, is also up on us. With these and all the mega arcade licences that are due for release it looks set to be perhaps the best Christmas yet.

Companies are juST as bad, FirST Basic etc.. They should STEer away from this STark humour.

I hope you will take a STance and STEamroller such puns which STEal their way into reviews STRaight away. I truST you'll liSTen to my STaunch advice.

**Leon O'Reilly,
 Montgomery, Powys.**

You again, Leon? Well, I certainly think you've made yourself clear on this matter. I'm sure we're all getting a little tired of these STatements.

Ode to Action

The release date's here, the atmosphere's tense.
 I stare at the letterbox, full of suspense.
 I have a fear - will it appear?
 Then, joy, rapture, satisfaction.
 What brings to me this reaction?
 The arrival of my ST Action.
 Thumbing through the pages at leisure,
 Gives everyone enormous pleasure.
 With Dungeons and Disk Drives and YaK's Yak,
 There's no area where it does lack.
 They say no news is good news,
 But then I read your ace reviews.
 Just when I think I've had my chips,
 You leap in there with all your tips.
 With this mag I could never part,
 With its glossy cover and ace art.
 ST Action, beyond all doubt,
 Is what no ST owner should be without!
**Cathy and Paul Schweiger,
 Nuneaton, Warks.**

Brilliant, Cathy and Paul. Your verses certainly made us laugh so we thought we'd include them for the benefit of all our readers.

STupid Statements

Please can you STop those STupid ST puns. The STaffs of all computer magazines always SToop low enough to STick these puns in their reviews - it's the STatus Quo. They STink! I want these puns STamped out of ST Action or I'll go on STRike, STay at home and STir up trouble.

I know mags can be STARved of humour, but journaliSTs who put such puns in their STories should be SToned.

Yo, ho, ho!

Whether people like it or not, software piracy is not going to disappear, and if you had any involvement with this shady underworld, you would know this is true!

Firstly, it's so amazingly easy to copy software. As a test I tried copying all my collection of originals. Only two of them wouldn't copy and one of them wasn't protected at all! I copied them all with commercially available copiers, which doesn't include the secret pirate specialist copiers that are floating around. A couple of my friends are working on a super-duper copier capable of copying the very latest sneaky disk programming.

Then there are the hackers, who do pretty little demos with large, awful scrolling messages. They are the ones who compress large games onto one disk and then do an introduction saying "Hello to Zaphod, Was Not Was, TNT Crew...". The copies of Operation Wolf, R-Type, Menace and the 7-game disk mentioned in your letters page recently have been floating around my area for ages, and I was very interested to hear it had reached the Netherlands. I have a 'hacked'n'packed' version of Falcon, all on one disk - and there's still space for Bombuzal!

But I don't think that this sort of stuff is going to kill off the software industry. Firstly, there is the fear of viruses spreading via pirate disks (I bet pirates are thoroughly cheesed off with them too). Then there are the types of software that use large documentation. Copying stuff like STOS isn't much use if you don't have the manuals. Also, when people want to sell their computers they would like to sell their software as well; what looks better, a

boxed original in good condition or a grubby little pirate disk?

The fact that most software companies are still making profits show that pirates are not making much of a dent. But you can't expect them just to lie down and die!
Roger Wilco,
Glasgow.

Hello, Roger. Recent letters I have received about piracy have lead me to wonder on just what scale are we talking? If it's on the same scale as it became on the C64 and Spectrum then I can assure you that the pirates are making the software companies feel the pinch. Don't you think that if these hackers were to work within the industry, the winners would be the users? For instance, I'm sure that Ocean's Operation Wolf would have cost less if it had been available on a single disk.

Arcade Conversions Rule, OK?

What is wrong with conversions? Being a reader of STA since issue 3, I thought it was time to put pen to paper to silence those critics of these genre leaders. Have not arcade games led the way in computer games ever since Space Invaders? Every major software success has been a conversion of some sort, because these games are quite simply the most popular, and justly so. How much harder it must be to have to convert a game onto a home micro with only a fifth of the coin-op's memory, knowing that every single buyer has the advanced graphic, megabyte original in their local arcade with which to compare it. Original games may be novel but, when compared to well-trying and popular arcade conversions, they're not in the same league.

Changing direction slightly, how about some articles on big arcade manufacturers, such as Sega or even Atari themselves? I mean, who are these people who think up these games? Where are they based? On what do they develop their games? And, what does Sega stand for anyway?

Paul Marson,
Hull, North Humberside.

Thanks, Paul, for your comments. I agree that some arcade conversions are excellent. Where they are not, it is largely due to the original coin-op being poor or the inability of the user's humble home micro to keep up. Meanwhile, an article on arcade manufacturers would be great. And, as for your last question, how's about: Sound Exceptional, Graphics Awesome!

Censorship In Games?

I would like to put forward a viewpoint on the subject of violence in computer games

and the possible introduction of censorship. The viewpoint which I propose is one which I believe has been overlooked by this entire debate. Even before it passed into the computer games sphere, I put forward this view initially as a question.

Why must it be automatically assumed that leisure pastimes which involve a degree of violence (films, games, magazines etc.) will result in violent behaviour on the part of anyone who is foolish enough to admit they enjoy playing these games?

This assumption is not made of sportsmen who are involved in dangerous/violent sports, such as boxing, wrestling, motor racing, shooting, etc.. These men and women are surely closer to real violence than gamers. OK, it can be said that these sportsmen/women purge themselves of their violent tendencies (if such they have) by taking part in those very sports. This argument, of course, does not work for violent films or computer games. Why not, is beyond my understanding.

Finally, when someone steps beyond the normal behaviour patterns, there is an outcry against violence in films (and now computer games). It seems to me that these individuals are not under the influence of any desire to live out their fantasies brought on by fiction or games they played, but more by a desire to emulate a real-life hero they have been exposed to by the medium of television news, reporting on the occurrence of similar atrocities to the one they will eventually commit.

At the end of the day, which hero would you rather emulate: an imaginary character or a real person who has taken your wildest fantasies and acted them out and been rewarded with worldwide fame?

Chris Grey,
Lovedean, Hants.

Thanks, Chris, for your views. I would certainly be interested to hear what other readers think of censorship in games - not only because of violence but also because of their sexual content. I mean, games like Barbarian have been banned in Germany, but what about the likes of Anco's, Strip Poker II+, or even Sierra's, Leisure Suit Larry?

Ah, Those Were The Days

I would like to endorse Selwyn Ho's letter in the August issue of ST Action about the non-playability of many games for the Atari. I recently purchased Chuckie Egg 2 which I thought would be worthwhile as we had the game on our old Spectrum 48K which gave days of fun. Imagine the disappointment when I loaded it up to find that, unlike the old Spectrum version, it had no save facility! Okay, the graphics are better than the Spectrum version, but what's the use of good graphics if you can't finish the game without a save game facility?

I phoned Pick'n'Choose complaining, and was referred to the game's programmer who said he was not told to put in a save game facility. I assume the buck stops there.

I, and I am sure that there are many others, am rapidly becoming disappointed about the games on offer for the Atari, they are nearly all of the same type, and many are bought and then cast aside. Where are the old Spectrum games like Xor, Lode Runner, Down to Earth, Think, Molecule Man, etc.. The only one done for the Atari is Boulderdash; many of the games I mention had design or save game facilities. I admit that some of the Spectrum games were rubbish, but at least I hadn't paid twenty quid for them!

I think with any other commodity where you paid nearly £20 for it and it was poor or would not work, it would not be tolerated. Being retired, no we aren't all young, I can remember the days when we received value for money. I guess I'll have to once again unveil my Spectrum and its playable games, using my 16-bit Atari for writing letters and maybe the odd game of Boulderdash.

R.E. Riches,
Southampton, Hampshire.

Quite so, Mr. Riches. I used to own a Commodore 64 and still think that many of the games I had for it were better than many of those on the ST. Just for your benefit, Xor is available on the ST from Atari Games. But, in the meantime, what does anyone else think about the standard of ST games?

Action Cover Disk

After having spent a wonderful night's sleep in bed, I was woken up by having your magazine shoved in front of my face. To my surprise I spotted the cover disk had two fully playable games on the front. Oh no, three quid spent on another load of old rubbish, I thought. Anyway, I loaded up my disk (still with my boxer-shorts on) - I don't believe it. Brilliant! Two great playable games, fantastic. Keep up the good work, ST Action, well done!

Billy Smith,
London.

I'm glad you liked the disk, Billy. However, I have had one or two letters from people who were a little upset having to pay nearly three pounds for their latest copy of ST Action. I do realise that the disk was a surprise to you all, but really, two full games for only an extra one pound forty-five pence isn't bad value at all - especially when you consider that a blank disk would cost you around a pound! Future disks are a real possibility and from the response to the Reader's Survey, nearly all of you want one. Meanwhile, I'll let you all into a little secret. All of our subscribers only paid the

usual one pound fifty for their copy of ST Action (hint, hint).

Xenon Moans

I've got a complaint about Xenon! For weeks and weeks I've been playing this game to death, slowly getting further and further. Xenon had me hooked; I was determined to get to the end of sector four and, I thought, finish the game. Eventually, with my blistered, sore and aching thumb going nineteen-to-the-dozen on the fire button, and my long-suffering Competition Pro-5000 screaming for mercy, I reached the end of sector four and, after much dodging and blasting, sent the eighth sentinel into oblivion. After a spectacular explosion, I was expecting something good to reward my efforts. But what happened? Before you could say 'Bitmap', I was sent straight back to the beginning of sector one, without even a word of thanks from General Xod!

In issue one of STA, you did a useful shoot'em-up megatest, and in the review of Xenon, you said to rescue General Xod: "...you have to negotiate four enemy sectors, each sector consisting of four further zones." Does that mean I have to go through all four sectors four times?

Don't get me wrong - Xenon is a great game that I really enjoyed playing, but I was expecting something after the end of sector four. To have to go back to square-one was a disappointing anti-climax to all that hard slog beforehand. I hope Xenon II - Megablast has some sort of end sequence or message.

Mark Powell,
Lewes, East Sussex.

Hello, Mark, and thanks for your letter. In answer to your question: no, there isn't an end sequence in Xenon. Jason Spiller telephoned the Bitmaps to ask them why there was no congratulatory screen.

Apparently they didn't figure on any one actually completing the game. It therefore seems that you are one of only a handful of people to actually finish the game, and for that the Bitmap Brothers wish to congratulate you on a job well done.

Meanwhile, Mike of the Bitmaps did say: "just wait until you get to the end of Xenon II..."

'er Indoors

Having read the letter from Steve Bates in September's issue, I'm writing to commiserate with him in his tale of woe. I, too, had to cajole, bribe and generally creep in order to get 'er indoors' permission to buy an ST. What really swung the balance was pointing out that duties on various committees would be considerably eased with the aid of an ST and a decent printer. She could run off leaflets and reports by the score without the use of reams of carbon paper. Unfortunately, by the time I had

purchased the computer and all the essential 'classic' games, there was no money left for a printer! My pennance - a new freezer, bunk beds for the kids, rations as mentioned in Steve's letter (I'm too busy playing games anyway), new bushes for the garden... the list is endless. But my whole point is, isn't it worth it to secure the superior games system!

Steve Mitchell,
Peterborough.

Thanks for your words, Steve. It seems from the response to Mr. Bates' letter that there are quite a few hen-pecked husbands out there, I for one get moaned at all the time for my games playing - and I've got a decent excuse! The point is that these women can't see that all this games playing is good for us - instead of sitting in front of the TV watching the latest episode of their favourite soap, we tighten up our reflexes and exercise our minds with our STs. Still, I guess it's a simple error to make - bless 'em.

STE Puzzle

Whilst glancing through the newspaper (Daily Mirror) I came across a section called 'Computer Club' which tells you about recent releases. Then it said that Atari are going to phase out the 520STFM and replace it with the STE which will have 4096 colours like the Amiga, plus four-channel stereo and all for under £400 (looks like a Christmas winner). Could you tell me if this is true or just a newspaper misprint? Also, could you tell me where to get one.

Pat Li,
Timperley, Cheshire.

Hi, Pat. Well, you know what they say, 'you can't believe everything that you read in the papers'. But seriously, there have been many rumours relating to the Atari STE. Hopefully, this new beast will arrive before the new year. There are, however, no plans yet to replace the existing 520 STFM with the new STE. Instead, the STE will replace the larger 1040 machine. As for this new machine costing £400, I'm not sure about that one at the moment - more news as it arrives.

Trollop

I think ST Action is a fab mag. I also reckon that Dungeons and Disk Drives is the best bit and should be doubled in length. Meanwhile, the real reason for writing is to reply to some of the questions which appeared on the reader's survey sheet. (I don't want to cut it out you see). First off, yes, I would like a free mystery supplement in next month's mag, but only if the troll writes it. Secondly, two hundred other people read my copy of the mag. (we don't get it free like you do). Finally,

please tell me where I can get hold of all the back-issues of the 'Dungeon' (don't bother sending the rest of the mag.) Oh, one more thing, where can I buy an ST Action 'Troll' T-shirt?

A. Sincere Fan.
Larkfield, Kent.

Hmmm, a Troll T-Shirt eh? Not a bad idea. But seriously, you reckon you're a sincere fan do you? Well, if you can answer this really easy question I'll let you have a year's free subscription: 'What is the name of the Troll's first-born?' Easy eh?

Poor Packaging?

I have come up with a new theory as to why ST games are so expensive. The answer is quite simple - packaging. Many ST owners may agree but so far no-one seems to have mentioned it - so here I am.

Take for instance, Licence to Kill. The size of a floppy is a mere 90mm by 93mm by 3mm, yet the size of the box is 153mm by 183 mm by 36mm - and it's made of plastic. I mean, it's almost possible to fit a VHS video cassette in it, and why? Simply to make the games look better on the shelf - who cares? My guess is that most ST owners store their games in a disk storage box anyway. So, why do we have to pay for this useless packaging?

Games like Carrier Command and Elite are not quite as bad, their boxes are oversized but they're made of cardboard. Still, all of this unnecessary packaging must add a few pounds onto a game. So why don't software houses package their games in smaller, cheaper boxes and price them accordingly? After all, if a game's rubbish, smart packaging won't make it any better.

Justin Yarrer,
Ballymoney, Co. Antrim.

Hi, Justin. I guess you've got a point there. Personally, I think that the packaging is an important part of the deal - it's great to have your games all lined up in the boxes. Software companies produce thousands of copies of their games and, as a result, can afford to produce the packaging in bulk. Therefore I don't agree that the users are having to fork-out an extra couple of quid just for the pleasure of owning a plastic box. Still, what do other readers think? Is software packaging all it's cracked up to be?

Finally, many of you will have attended the 1989 PC Show. What exactly did you think of it? Did you find it too overcrowded? What did you think of the venue? Did you find it worth your while attending? We'd be very interested by your replies, so get writing, now!

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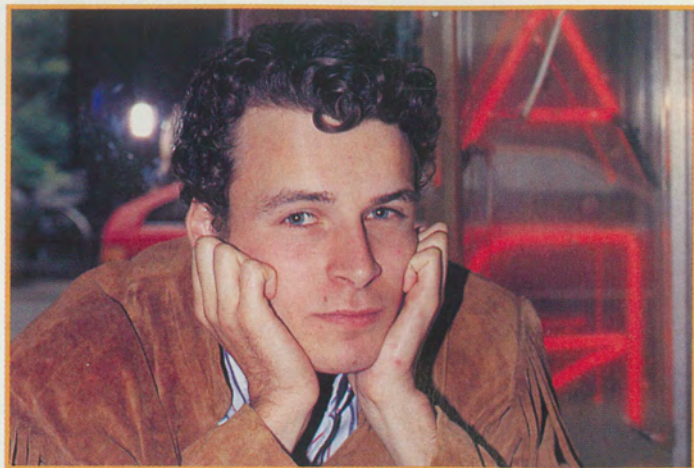
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Profile: Jason Kingsley - Lord of the Dancing Blades



"In the midst of the brightly-coloured pixels and sprites at Mirrorsoft's software launch in Amsterdam, a dark and murky game stood out from the rest. Intrigued by this mysterious, silhouetted visual effect, Jason Spiller travelled to the dreaming spires of Oxford to find out who, or what, was hidden in the shadows."

Oxford Blue, Jason Kingsley: His involvement in film and role-playing adventures was instrumental in the design of Lord of the Dancing Blades.



'With black and white film, it's not so much what you see as what you don't see.' In 'Blades' Kingsley used the light and dark of black and white film to create the eerie atmosphere.

Hitchcock used light and dark in his film shot in black and white to create mystery and suspense. But he had to rely on other methods when filming in colour, and the unseen menace was never so effectively portrayed. Working on this premise, Oxford University graduate, Jason Kingsley, had an idea for a computer game: 'Black and white horror films are much more effective than colour, because the element of good and evil is represented by light and dark. Menace lurked in the shadows, but it was always suggested and rarely seen. Colour horror movies, on the other hand, tend to compensate for this by bludgeoning the audience with gory, special-effects. But this is the element of shock rather than suspense! Why is the suspense so much more effective in monotone? 'With black and

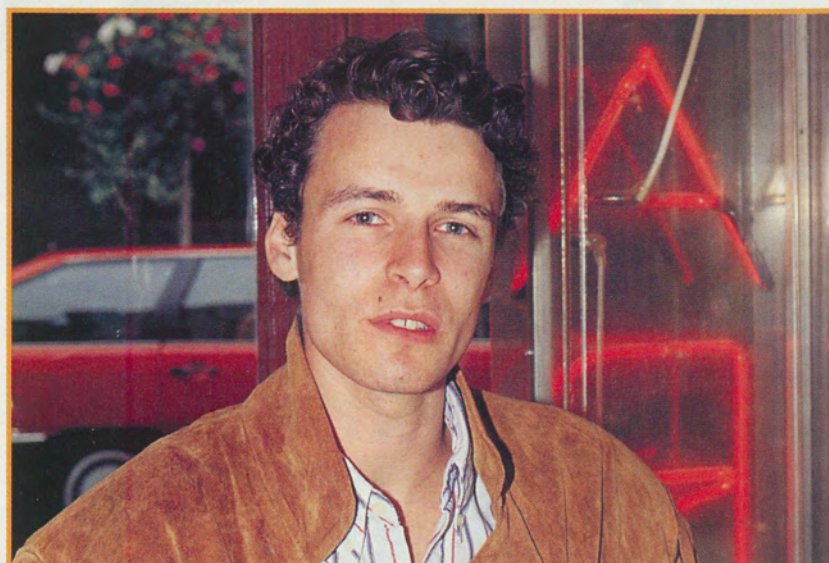
white, it's not so much what you see as what you don't see. Your imagination makes up the unseen detail, and when the medium is used effectively, like in "Psycho", it is far more intense and memorable than a colour movie. Also, I think black

and white photography has much greater impact than colour, because colour film has the same palette as what you normally see in everyday life.'

As an Oxford Blue, Jason's extracurricular activities were more relevant to his career than was his main subject: 'I studied zoology at St John's college, but much of my time was spent either fencing or in the film department.' How did this interest in computer games develop? 'I can't ever remember being that interested in computers at school. But later, when I got involved in film, I used computers and recognized a link between the two mediums. I love adventure games such as The Pawn, but I was aware of many

limitations - the static screens and stilted, uninteresting text, which did nothing to promote the feeling of involvement.' Before embarking on the 'Blades' project, Kingsley split his time between working on such games as, 'Better Dead than Alien', and writing fantasy role-playing books like 'Judge Dredd,' and four originals for Ladybird Publishing: 'Role-playing games are a perfect illustration of the power of imagination. If you're not spoonfed the visual and sound effects, the imagination works even harder to compensate, and the result can be incredibly intense.'

It seems as if the Lord of the Dancing Blades project derives from a juxtaposition of the three mediums that Kingsley has been involved in: film, role-playing adventures and computer games. 'I wanted to combine the most effective elements



Although the graphics are one colour and two-dimensional, the large sprites and animation gobbled up the memory. The main villain, Murk, is eighty-four pixels high and takes sixty frames to animate.

Layers of silhouettes in the foreground and background scroll at different paces to show the effect of depth.



from all three mediums, and sixteen-bit seemed like the most effective and economical way of doing it.' What did he hope to achieve? 'My intention was to take the light and dark of black and white film, the intense imagination and involvement in role-playing games, and add another dimension to computer entertainment - although I was aware of the limitations.' Lord of the Dancing Blades is visually stunning. But just how were those eerie, silhouette graphics created? 'The screen image is made up of several layers, which are black silhouettes, and as the layers go deeper into the screen, they scroll more slowly, which creates the effect of depth and distance.' Kingsley described some of the problems of working with silhouettes which would not be encountered in normal, colour-graphic production? 'Animating something like a sword swipe from the side means that a black sword is travelling across a black body, and so you temporarily lose the effect of the sword moving. Therefore, the graphical shapes have to be very strong and defined and the animation has to be completely accurate.' I wondered whether using just black saved on available memory 'Unfortunately not. Even though the game is only on one colour plane and the images are two-dimensional, I quickly ran out of memory because of the sheer size of the sprites.

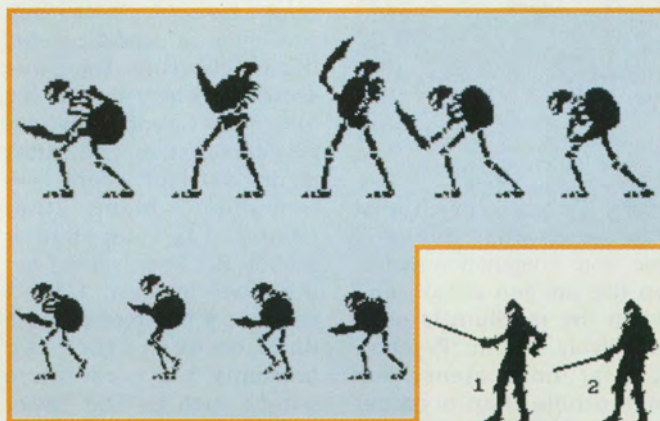
For example, the largest of the enemy, 'Murk', is eight-four pixels high and takes over sixty animation frames, and that's barely enough - well not enough for me, anyway. In the end, Mirrorsoft pointed out that if I kept on at that rate, the game would have to run on about six disks.'

Kingsley's game was to be called Paladin, but another title of the same

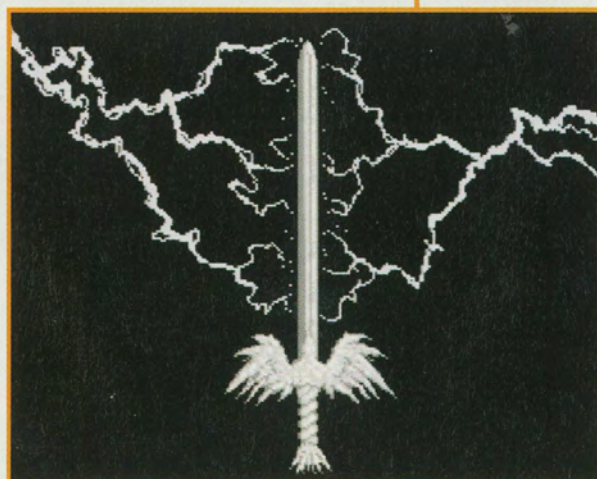
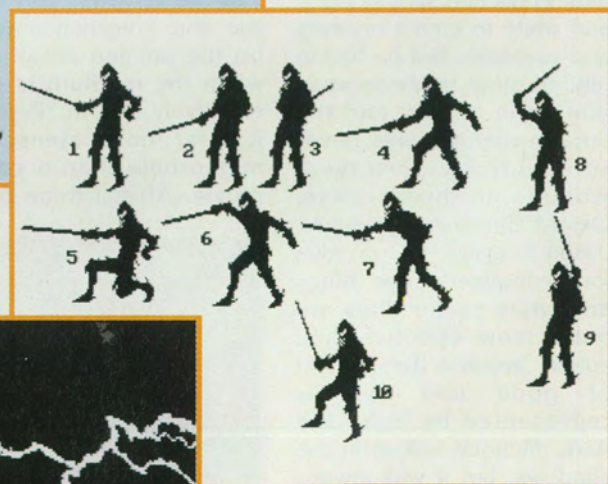
name was released beforehand, and so it had to be changed to 'Lord of the Dancing Blades'. We've spoken about the graphics, but what sort of a game is this? 'I've always had a fervent interest in horse-riding, fencing and karate, and I wanted to simulate this combat and action in the game as effectively and accurately as possible. However, I tried to emulate

realistic fencing moves by experimenting with animation. But the delicate jabs and parries just didn't match the character, and so I made the sword bigger and heavier and the movements more dramatic.' Is 'Blade' to be another Barbarian-type hack'n'slay, played in the shadows? 'Far from it! This is a combination of full-control hack'n'slay, adventure, spell-casting, set in a dark, shadowy environment which is designed to get you well and truly lost.'

Kingsley showed me rushes of the ST version, and I was as impressed by the visual impact as I had been in Amsterdam. This time, I was able to look more closely and could see all manner of creatures moving sinisterly and stealthily in the shadows. The silhouette shapes were indeed beguiling, but Kingsley was concerned that the effects might be too different? 'When you've been looking at the same graphics on the same screen for so long, you begin to wonder whether you're on the right track or not. But the response from independent people is always positive and that's encouraging.' Lord of the Dancing Blades is due for release in December.



Some of the mysterious and shadowy characters that lurk in the realms of Blade.



At first, the hero fought with precise, delicate fencing, but Kingsley realised that this didn't match the character and so more dramatic swishes and slashes were employed.

STUNT CAR RACER

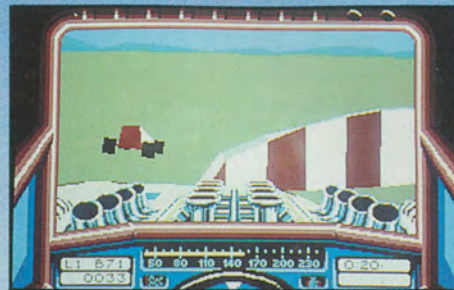
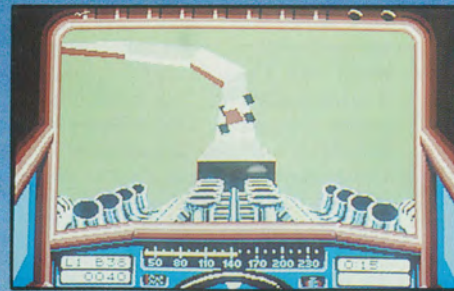
Step into the driving seat of one of the most wicked stunt cars around as a Stunt Car Racer. It's now up to you to prove just how good you are and to see whether or not you can ultimately become Division One Champion.

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

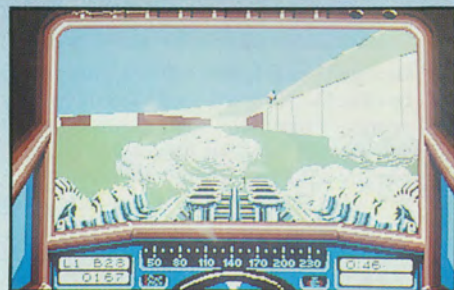
Battle it out on the track against other computer controlled rivals, such as, Dare Devil and Road Hog. Race and jump so fast that your car starts to break up under the strain and then accelerate even more. There's no prizes for being second best in this game – it's all or nothing.

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

Stunt Car is utterly brilliant and offers adrenalin-pumping, gut wrenching high speed action that'll keep you engrossed for months. C + VG.

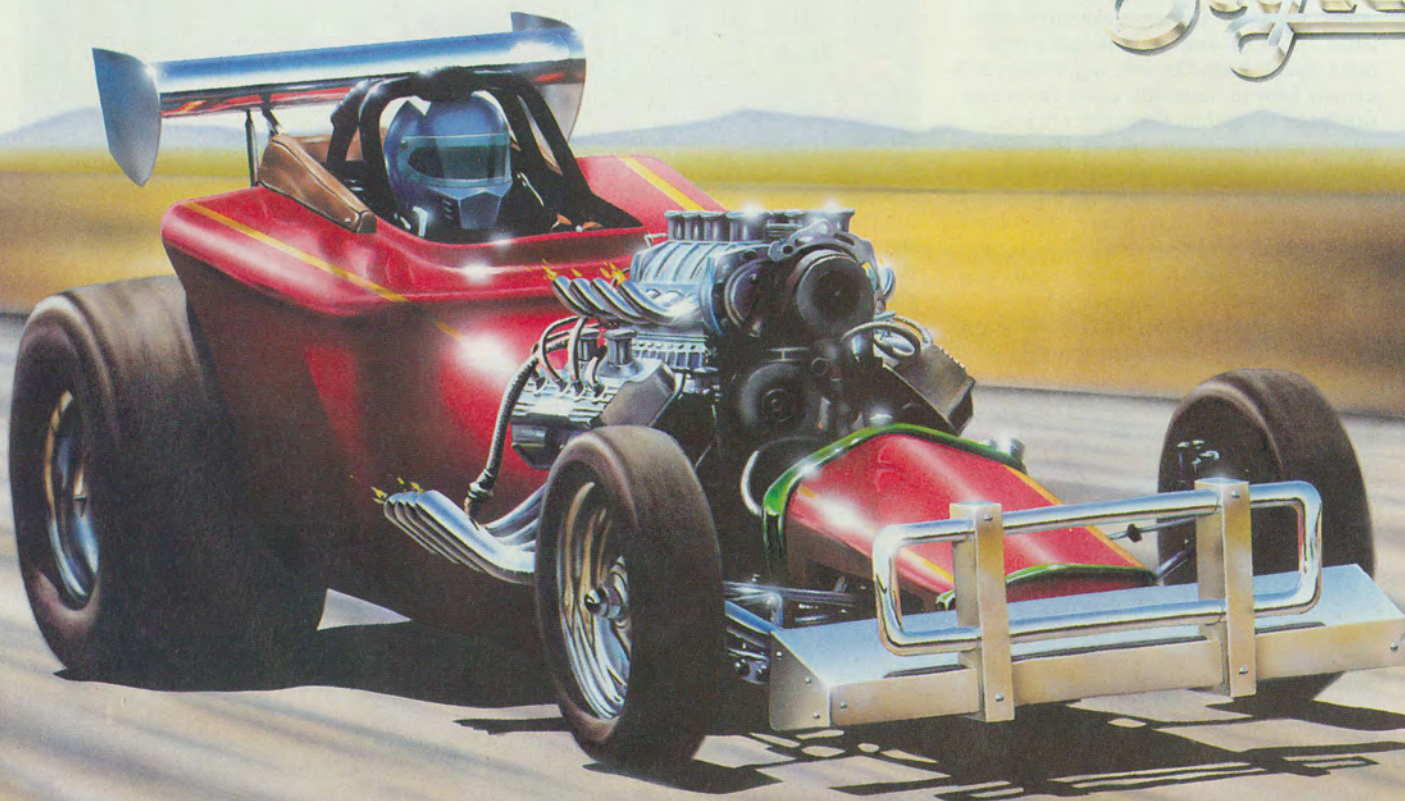


SCREEN SHOTS MAY VARY



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

Micro-Style



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stein

What can I say, except, I loved every minute of it. Graphically the game is superb, the animation excellent and the action terrific. The accompanying sound is also of a very high quality, the tunes being the most memorable. As far as the gameplay is concerned, nothing could be easier: the point and click system is brilliantly implemented. The only thing I can fault the game on is the disk accessing. The programmers have certainly tried to keep it to a minimum, but when you're hungry for action it's a little irritating. Overall, the Last Crusade is by far and away the best Indy game going. Even for non-adventurers this game is a must.

NC

George Lucas' Indiana Jones movies are terrific, the whip-wielding archeologist seems to have fans everywhere. But, have you ever wished that Indy would do things slightly differently? What would you do if you were confronted by a gun-toting Nazi guard? Well, now's your chance to find out. Indiana Jones and the Last Crusade, the graphics adventure, is here.

So, after starring in two action-packed computer games, Dr. Jones is to appear in an adventure. But, before you turn up your nose and turn the page, wait. Remember, this is a graphic adventure from Lucasfilm Games. Unlike the classic text-only Infocom games or the more recent Sierra adventures, the Last Crusade requires absolutely no typing - the entire game is controlled solely via the mouse.

Across the lower portion of the screen are fifteen verbs; 'pull', 'open', 'use' and 'give', represent the more common ones, while, 'walk to' and 'what is' are a little more specialised. On entering a room it is usually best to move the cross-hairs over the 'what is' option. Once the phrase appears on the command-line the cross can be moved around the screen and a description of any outstanding objects will also appear on the line. Items which have been picked up appear in the inventory just below the verb lists. Once again, correct manipulation of this text together with the actions will normally result in our hero performing some sort of task.

"So, you've read the book, you've seen the film, and you've even played the game. Now, prepare to try out the adventure as Lucasfilm Games present..."

STAI INDIANA JONES AND THE LAST CRUSADE

US GOLD/LUCASFILMS (£24.95)

The library in ST. Mark's square was the last place Henry Jones was seen alive. Indy's quest really starts here and it already looks as though he's hot on the trail.



Now, if, like me, you haven't yet seen the latest installment of Indy's adventures then this game will present itself as a real challenge. However, film-buffs who think they'll be able to stroll through it will be in for a big surprise.

Although following the film's plot very closely, the game's designers have deliberately changed several of the puzzles. To aid all players the game comes complete with an incredibly detailed copy of Henry



Castle Brunwald is a most imposing fortress. Using a combination of smooth-talking and head-cracking our hero must somehow find his luckless father.

STA
Rating
80%

GRAPHICS: 79%
SOUND: 53%

LASTING APPEAL: 90%
ADDICTIVENESS: 82%

DIFFICULTY: AVERAGE
1ST DAY SCORE: N/A

Jones' Grail Diary, which is packed full of very useful clues and hints.

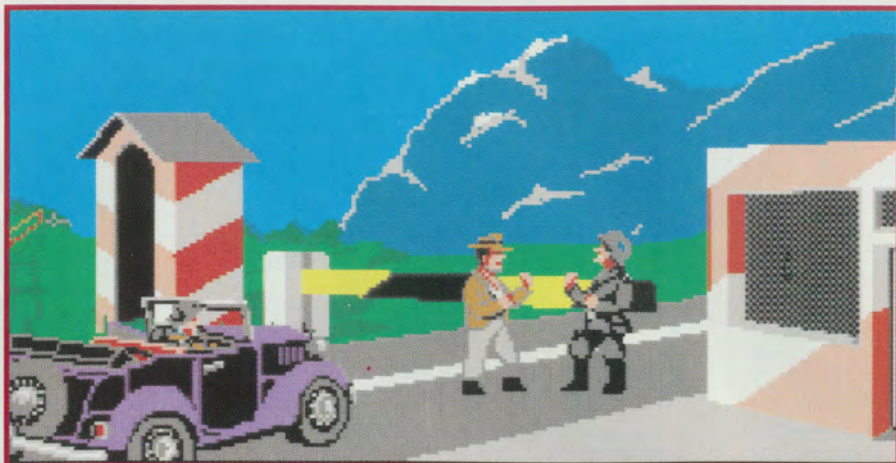
The action starts as Indy returns to college with his latest acquisition, the Cross of Coronado. Whilst at the college it is advisable to try a few rounds in the ring with the gym instructor - lessons learned here can prove invaluable later. In an attempt to avoid a mass of hysterical students, Indy finds himself at a local art dealer's apartment. Donovan, like our hero, collects ancient artefacts, his latest piece being a tablet bearing information about the Holy Grail. Providing you successfully managed to decipher Indy's notes (using the ingenious code book provided in the games packaging), you will be able to begin your arduous search for the fabled Grail.

The first stop on your journey will take you to the Queen of the Adriatic, Venice. Apparently, this was the last place your father was seen alive: it seems he, too, was involved in a search for clues regarding the Grail's whereabouts. Much of Indy's time in the grand city is spent beneath ground, his quarry: the tomb of a crusader knight and a further clue on the Grail trail.

Next, our hero must rescue his luckless father from a castle on the Austrian/German border. Henry Jones seems to have been abducted by the Nazis whose leader also seems to have an interest in the Grail. The only real way of rescuing the old man is with some real smooth talking, although fisticuffs will also provide the answers. Stopping briefly to visit the Fuhrer in Berlin, the daring duo

You wouldn't have thought that movies, like Indy, which rely so much on non-stop physical action and effects, would translate very well into an adventure game. But that is the contrary with The Last Crusade. In fact, this particular adventure actually manages to capture both the action and the adventure of the film. This Lucasfilm adventure adheres to the storyline of the film, but all the puzzle-solving adventure-play and action is left up to you. There are plenty of puzzles to solve which are crucial to your progress in the game and sub games such as fisticuffs with the Nazis, provide an arcade interest. Last but by no means least is the graphical presentation which is among the best I have seen in a graphic adventure. Finally, comprehensive and easy to use controls and instructions makes the game a joy to play - a far cry from the stayed and boring adventures of yester-year.

JS



Having made good their escape our heroes are stopped by a somewhat over zealous guard. Indy, meanwhile, has a trick or two up his sleeves. If talking to the guard won't work, punching his lights out should rectify the problem.



At last, Indy and Henry make it to the holy temple. However, due to unforeseen circumstances it is Indiana who must face the three trials. The first being the breath of God.

skyjack a zeppelin and make good their escape.

Finally, Indy and co. make it to the holy temple within which the grail is hidden. Will Indy be able to overcome the three tests of faith, namely: the Breath of God, in which he must face razor-sharp circular saws; the Word of God, an elaborate word puzzle; and the Footsteps of God, whereby showing immense faith he

must walk in mid-air? Only by performing these three tasks will Indy prove himself worthy of the Grail. Let's just hope he's prepared for the subtle twist at the end of the adventure.

STA

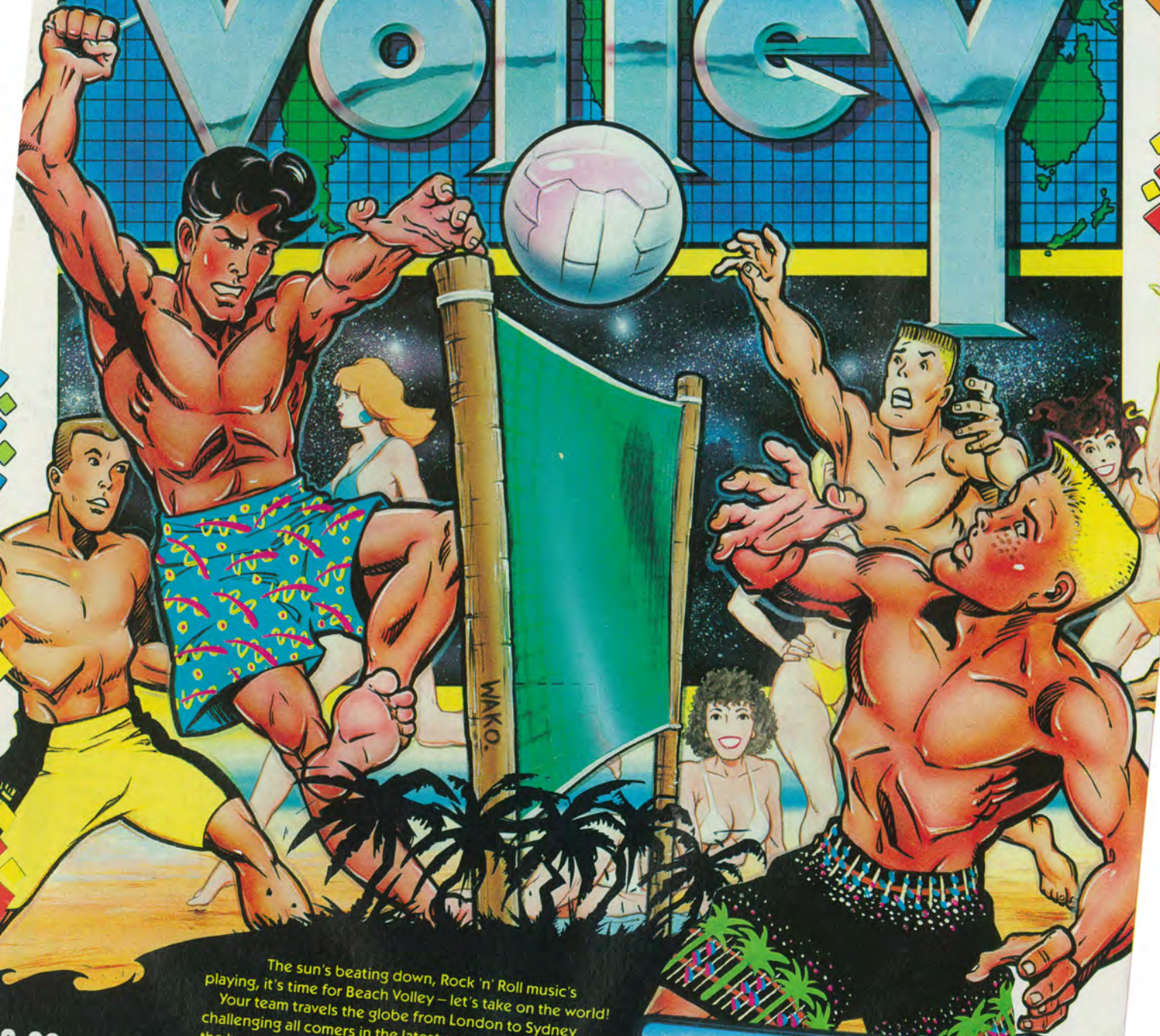
If you liked Zak McKracken, you'll absolutely flip over The Last Crusade! Using the same control system as Zak, The Last Crusade offers a larger task, set against some of the most detailed backdrops seen on the ST. Indy himself is superbly animated, although constant disk accessing is the price you pay for these privileges. The only problem I can find with the game is that, if you haven't seen the film, you may not know what you are supposed to be doing. But if you have seen the film, this is an essential piece of memorabilia.

SM



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VOLLEY



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"As that ol' devil, JR Ewing, proves, you've got to be a real basket to survive in the ol' oil business. Do you really think you could out-JR JR?"

OIL IMPERIUM

RELINE (£19.95)

This is quite obviously a well-researched and thoughtfully put together program, with a slick and professional presentation. Oil Imperium is an enjoyable and absorbing insight into the multi-faceted world of the oil business, combining sabotage, espionage and all the drama that's kept Dallas popular for a decade. Imperium really came out of the blue, and I must say that first appearances don't do it justice. But once you start playing the game, you really get wrapped up in the business. One thing it taught me was that taking massive financial risks, with nothing to lose other than the game, invariably pays off - but don't take my word for it!

JS

You gotta be greedy and you gotta be nasty in this business, and in Oil Imperium, you get to use the sort of devious tactics and manoeuvres which have kept the Barnes and the Ewings feuding for countless episodes of Dallas. Up to four oil barons can participate in this 'get rich whatever the cost' simulation and there is a choice of four objectives to aim for: be the richest player after three years trading; accumulate more than \$60 million dollars of liquid assets; make all the other players bankrupt; or own an 80 per cent share of the entire market. You can choose the decor of your office, from modern style to a traditional Blake Carrington study with log fire and silly cardy and slippers. This office is your base from which you control the entire business.

Each player begins with a month for dealing, in which he can buy and sell oil fields and storage tanks, offer oil on the world market, obtain statistics and even plot sabotage on his rivals - perhaps even employ a P.I. to dig up some dirt. A selection of icons surround your comfy office, such as a computer telephone calendar and suitcase, and clicking on an icon reveals a variety of facilities or information. For example, you can access in-depth info on your assets and investments or check on your rigs and pipelines. You only take very important calls, such as a contract for an oil delivery or news of an oil field burning. The message appears on screen and if you are out of the office, it is recorded. Meanwhile, a lockable drawer and attache case hold all your secret documents and information on your rivals.



From the comfort of your traditional, Blake Carrington-style office or a high-tech Cliff Barnes tower-block, you can keep track on your oil empire. Why not check on that contract, or study the feasibility reports?

STA
Rating
69%

GRAPHICS: 59%
SOUND: 52%

LASTING APPEAL: 76%
ADDICTIVENESS: 69%

DIFFICULTY: HARD
1ST DAY SCORE: N/A



You've dug up some dirt on a particularly unpleasant rival. Time to employ the services of a P.I. to look into it. Meanwhile, how's that new oil field doing?

So what's the gameplay all about? Whatever objective you have chosen, the primary aim is to build a profitable company and maintain the business by keeping costs down and remaining competitive. Using the statistic reports and feasibility studies, a decision has to be made to buy

You need eyes in the back of your head when playing Oil Imperium. Not only do you have to know exactly what's happening in the busy world of oil production, but you've also got to keep tabs on your competitors and, more importantly, their saboteurs. The graphics aren't exactly state-of-the-art, although they do manage to capture the essence of the game and the sound is somewhat sparse. However, it's the gameplay that's Oil Imperium's strong point. Buying and selling oil, helping your workers and keeping an eye out for industrial saboteurs is very engrossing. In a nutshell, if you fancy a neat strategy-style game within the world of high-finance, or maybe just the chance to don a ten-gallon hat, then Oil Imperium is well worth a look.

SM

Well, well, well, here's an unexpected little gem. On first inspection Oil Imperium seem to be yet another tiresome strategy game involving large numbers and little gameplay. However, don't be fooled. I started playing this game with the belief I wouldn't enjoy it. What a mistake to make! Oil Imperium is excellent. The weakest point of the game is undoubtedly the sound. Thankfully, this doesn't detract from the gameplay in any way. The graphics are clear and, for a game of this type, very well presented. The gameplay, too, is very well implemented - the majority of the controls being made with the mouse. There only seems to be one minor stumbling-block, the appalling spelling mistakes within the text. Still, it is a German product. In a nutshell: if you enjoy a playable strategy game then this is well worth a look.

NC

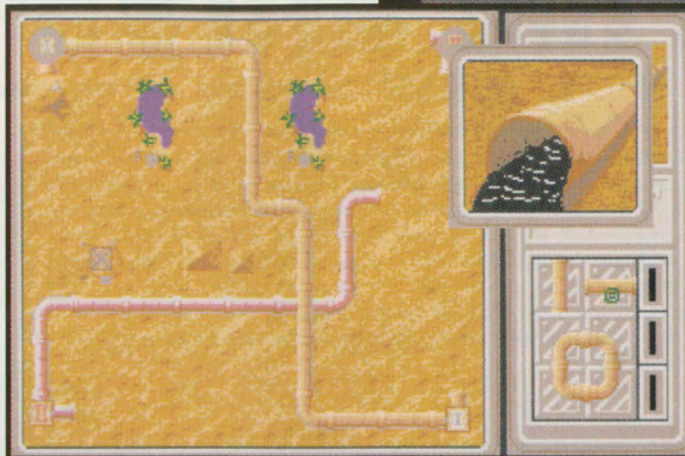
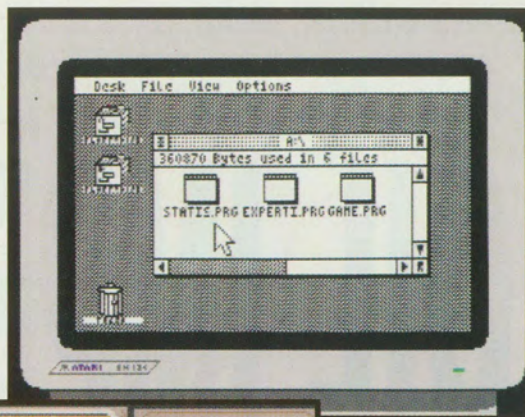
a single oil field. Next, you have to buy a storage tank in the region of the rig, and this will just about exhaust your capital. Your main concern is saboteurs who infiltrate your company as workers and then undermine the business, which could bankrupt you at this early stage. There might be a phone call about a possible contract to deliver oil, but it would be suicide to take it on if you couldn't fulfill the obligations. Therefore, it makes sense to look at the requirements of the contractor and then study the feasibility reports and then decide. And so the game commences with you checking on the production of your oil field, considering contracts and the possibility of buying more oil fields, and all the while keeping a check on your devious rivals. Best to employ a reputable firm P.I. firm like Tocket and Crubbs who will keep you informed of anything untoward. Like real-life business, the more you play Oil Imperium, the more complex it becomes, with dozens of different aspects of the oil business to keep track of.

There are times when you've got to leave the comfort of your office and get your hands dirty. A message may come through that there's a problem in one of your pipelines. The screen switches to the field, and you have to link up the pipe to let the oil pump through freely. Also, as you buy up more oil fields and rigs, you'll be called out to supervise drilling.

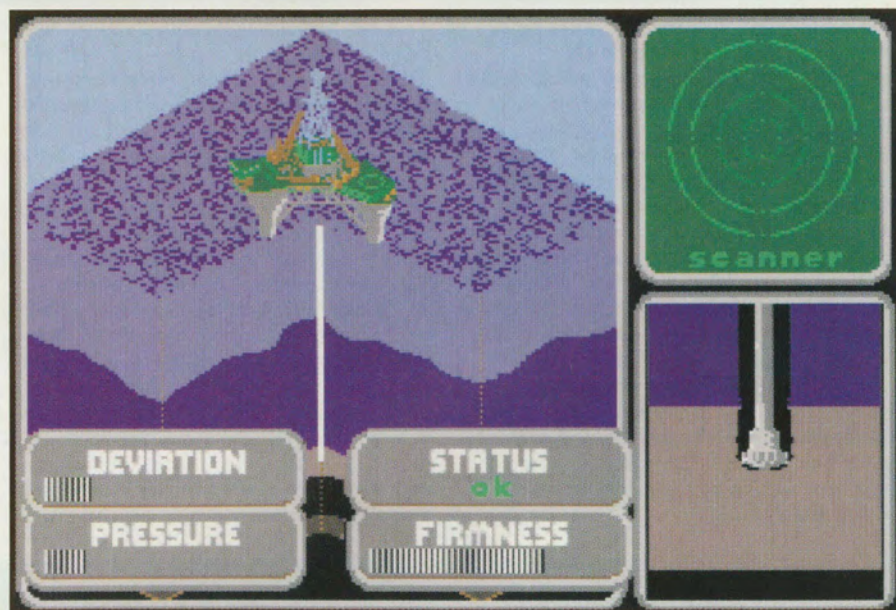
As the drill slams into the rock, you must keep it centralized with the joystick. The oil's pumping out in all your fields and so you take on more contracts. Then, suddenly, all hell breaks loose - There's a fire raging in Alaska, so you've got to employ Ted Redhair to put it out. And to make things worse, two of your most prolific producers have dried up - it's an up and down world in the oil business!

STA

Your ST in the office is connected to a modem with other computers from the Federation of Oil Traders. Clicking on the ST icon reveals a GEM screen that you might just recognise.



One of your Pipelines in Alaska needs your attention. Time to leave the safety and comfort of the office and get your hands dirty. You must link up the pipes to let the oil run through.



The riggers ask for your help on a new off shore rig. As the drill burrows into the rock, you must keep the bit centralized

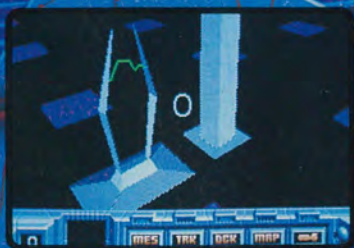


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Screenshots from ST version



Atari ST, Amiga, IBM PC and compatibles.

Mirrorsoft Limited Irwin House 118 Southwark Street London SE1 0SW Telephone 01 928 1454

STA
Rating
60%

GRAPHICS: 55%
SOUND: 48%

LASTING APPEAL: 60%
ADDICTIVENESS: 62%

DIFFICULTY: AVE
1ST DAY SCORE: N/A

"They're under starter's orders... they're off. The question is, can Nick's Nag pull off the unexpected and come in at a tremendous 25-1?"

DAILY DOUBLE

CDS (£19.95)

The Daily Double isn't strictly a sporting simulation. It's gambling at its grandest. However, there's more to this game than a simple run of good luck. The real key to success is being able to interpret the horses' form cards. From Honest John's betting counter to the trackside, the game's presentation is well thought out. I played the Daily Double both alone and with a group, the latter being far more enjoyable.

NC

Sporting simulations are now very common on our STs. However, there is one noticeable exception: the sport of kings, horse racing. Now, with the Daily Double, you too can take a trip down to the track for a little flutter on the nags.

The Daily Double simulates horse racing over the flat. Once the game has loaded, up to six would-be punters can be entered. Players may then decide how much cash they have to bet with and when this has been entered, contestants

may get down to the more serious business of studying form and placing bets.

Of course, although there are no jumps, there is a variety of ground conditions ranging from the good-going dry to the rather heavy-going muddy. Players may either choose the turf conditions for themselves, or let the computer decide.

Ten races make up each meeting, all run over a different number of furlongs. Players may place a variety of bets on the six horses which run in each race. Payouts are awarded on the first three horses to pass the winning post. The most common bets: win, place and show, are self-explanatory but punters may also try their hands at an Exacta, a Daily Double, a Quintella or a Pharlay - everyday terms for some.

The game is accompanied by the Daily Double Horse Racing guide. This newspaper-style guide includes past racing form for all of the twelve jockeys and one hundred and seventy-nine horses. As all betting men know, this is the key to success.

Having read the form, it is time to visit the bookies. Here you may place your bets - the smallest amount being two dollars,

The six horses are all raring to go; picking the winner is the tricky bit. Remember to look up the jockeys' forms as well.

10th Race	3 Furlongs
#112 3-2 Rail Runner Rick HACKNEY	#215 9-1 Trailblaze Tom MAJOR BEARD
#246 1-2 Fast Eddie BET TWICE	#188 7-1 Betting Bart MIGHTY PRETTY
#263 5-1 Pistol Pete BONNIE BLUE SKY	#184 9-1 Galloping Grant FAST PHILLIP



A variety of bets may be placed on the horses. Make sure that you've correctly studied the form, however, or you're likely to lose your shirt.

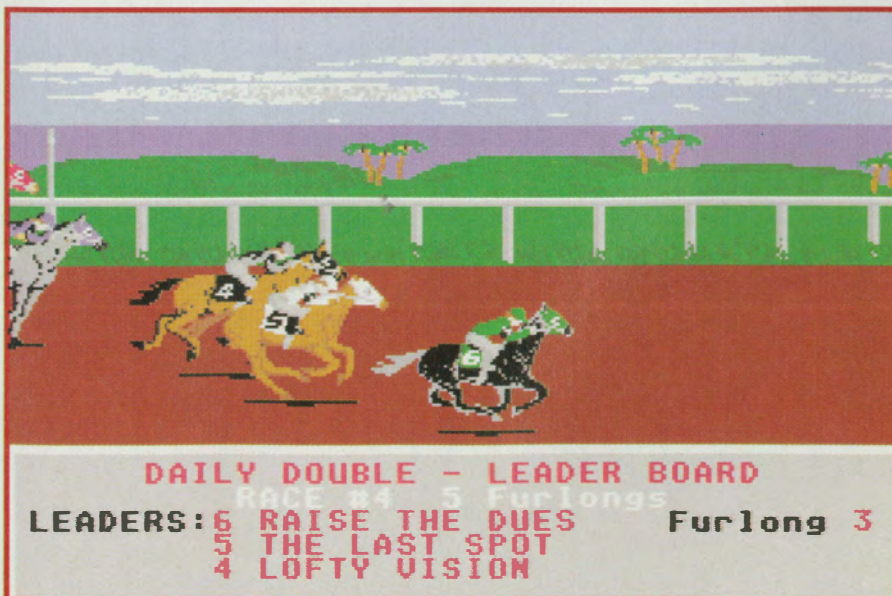
An occasional flutter on the geegees can cause real excitement, and that sense of fun is well conveyed in Daily Double. The good thing about this sort of gambling is that you don't actually lose any money. At its simplest, you can just play for fun, backing an outsider and watching it thunder home - last. But there is also a facility to study the histories and performances of both horse and jockey, and setting that against race lengths and track conditions, you can see the technical science which is required to actually win in horse racing. The program is well put together, combining attractive and easy-to-use screens, with cracking animated race action. This is an enjoyable insight into the racing world, and the best can get out of this game with group participation.

JS

the largest two hundred. Finally, when all of the players have made their wagers, it's time to visit the track.

The six horses, each in their own stable livery, are put under starter's orders, then ...they're off. Sadly, Nick's Nag didn't win, but a third place yields a small reward which is added to my winnings.

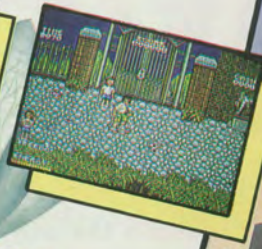
STA



B: Half-way through the race and Nick's Nag doesn't look like it's got a chance. Still, there are another four furlongs to go and anything can happen.

GO GREEN - GO GREMLIN

VENT



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 2. THE BRIDGE TRIALS
 3. THE COUNTY PLAYERS CUP
 4. THE DARTS WORLD CHAMPIONSHIP
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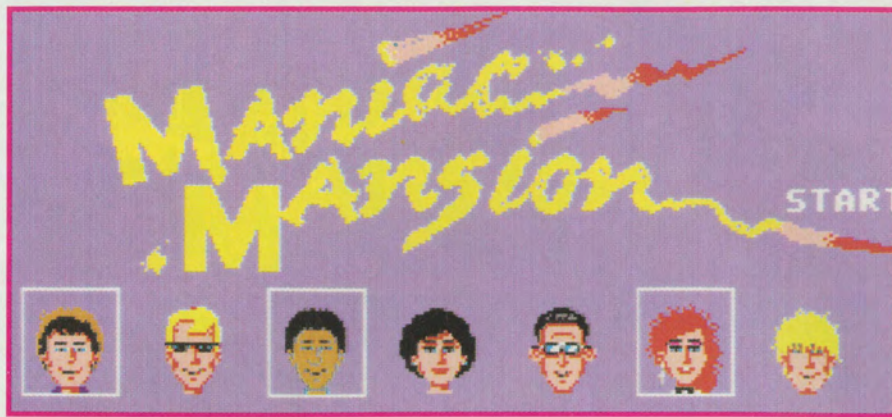
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ONE MAN – ONE SWORD – ONE FREE WORLD!

There are five different ways in which to solve Maniac Mansion, but before you can embark on your mission you must first choose two friends to accompany you.



"What's behind all the sinister goings-on in the mansion on top of the hill? Unluckily for you, you're just about to find out!"

MANIAC MANSION

US GOLD/LUCASFILMS (£24.95)

It's been twenty years to the day since that meteor crashed through the dark night sky and embedded itself in the

hillside. From then on, the town was never quite the same. Many people sold up and left, while those who chose to stay

seemed to live in constant fear of the once grand home that adorned the top of the hill. But just what was behind all the sinister goings-on? Unluckily for you, you're just about to find out.

There are some very, very strange folk living at the Maniac Mansion. The name in the phone book suggests that the owner is a Doctor Fred. The Doc is a retired physician who has recently turned into a classic mad scientist. Nurse Edna also lives at the mansion. Edna was once

seemed to live in constant fear of the once grand home that adorned the top of the hill. But just what was behind all the sinister goings-on? Unluckily for you, you're just about to find out.



Uh oh! Razor has unexpectedly caught nurse Edna preparing a midnight snack. Looks as though she's about to become the main course.

seemed to live in constant fear of the once grand home that adorned the top of the hill. But just what was behind all the sinister goings-on? Unluckily for you, you're just about to find out.

a professional health-care assistant, but that was twenty years ago. Nowadays, the naughty night nurse performs obscene acts which would make even the most travelled sailor blush. Weird Ed is the third occupant of the house. For some reason Ed seems to think he belongs to a crack commando outfit. Dressed head to foot in khaki combat clobber, Ed's only real vice in life is his strange fetish for hamsters. These three gooks normally live together with Ted, someone's dead cousin, and the Tentacle, a purple creature that defies description. I say 'normally' because tonight they have a visitor, Sandy, the school's leading cheer-leader and, more importantly, your girlfriend.

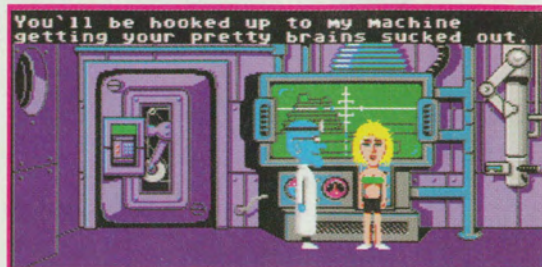
Taking on the role of Dave, you must decide which of your seven friends to take with you as you attempt to rescue the beautiful Sandy. Each of your friends have different attributes and choosing the correct ones can mean the difference between success and failure. I picked Razor, a female punk rocker whose aim in life is to form her own band, and Jeff, a cool-dude who only ever seems to be interested in partying. With the group assembled we ventured towards the Mansion.

Razor took off first, straight up to the front door. Searching the immediate vicinity, she soon found the front door key and slipped inside. Jeff casually followed and, not wanting to be left alone, I followed him. Once inside I scanned the eerie hall looking for clues and, in the tradition of all creepy films, I decided it was best to split up. Razor headed off to the right, Jeff took off up the stairs and I made for the kitchen. It was here that my suspicions were confirmed - after all, how many families do you know who keep a blood-splattered chainsaw in the knife rack? Whilst continuing my search I barely had time to discover the nasties in the refrigerator before I myself was found. What a horrible sight - Nurse Edna careering towards me - and before I had time to yell, 'naughty nymphomaniacs', she had her bony hand on my shoulder. Thankfully, instead of dragging me to her boudoir I was escorted to the mansion's dungeon. And that, I'm afraid, is where the story ends. That is, until either Razor or Jeff figure out how to rescue me.

The topmost section of the screen is taken up by the game's graphics whilst underneath this is the command input line on which the player's orders appear. Beneath the command line can be found a number of verbs. Lucasfilm have stuck to only a small number of actions, which makes life much easier. At the bottom of the screen is the player's inventory; anything that has been picked up is displayed here. Manipulation of items is

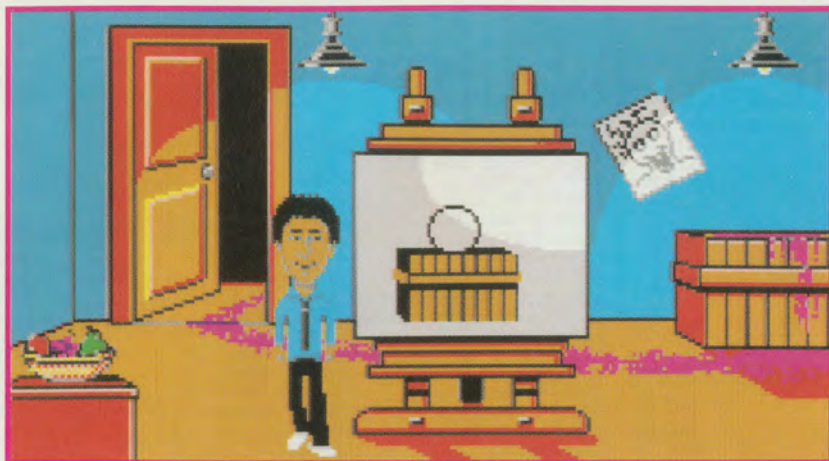
As graphical adventures go, you couldn't hope to buy better than Maniac Mansions. This is Friday the 13th, Rocky Horror Show and Frankenstein rolled into one, which means that there are as many laughs as shocks. But the real star of this show is the user-friendly controls and easy-access inventory, which allows you to search the house without interruption. Also, quick disk-accessing helps to keep the game flowing. The background graphics are superb, and the main sprites, typical teenage characters with a fascination for going into dark cellars, can be moved easily with the mouse controls. Each room in the mansion is as good as the last, with plenty of items to collect and utilize. Not the biggest or most difficult adventure I've played, but Maniac Mansions is great fun!

JS



Dr. Fred has some dastardly plans in store for poor Sandy. She's imprisoned somewhere within the mansion and only you can save her.

Michael makes a quick search of the art room. Judging by those sketches, someone sure has a vivid imagination.



**STA
Rating
72%**

GRAPHICS: 67%
SOUND: 48%

LASTING APPEAL: 76%
ADDICTIVENESS: 73%

DIFFICULTY: AVERAGE
1ST DAY SCORE: N/A

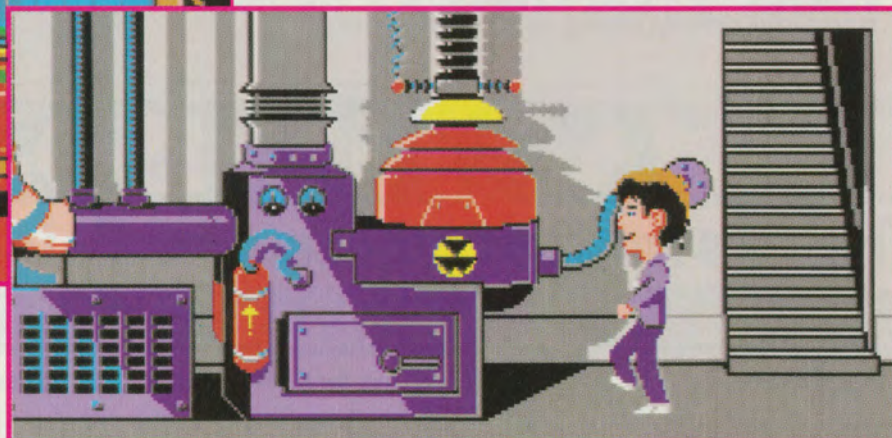
also very simple. For instance, if you want to open the front door of the mansion having found the key, you point to the 'pick-up' option and then at the key. The legend 'pick up key' then appears on the command line and once satisfied that this is the correct action the player points at the command line and clicks on the mouse button to confirm the action. The

key should then appear in the player's inventory and by simply pointing at the 'use' verb, the key and then the door will cause 'use key in door' to appear. Once again, clicking on the command line to confirm the action will see the character gingerly unlocking and opening the sinister wooden door. **STA**



While Michael pushes the gargoyle at the bottom of the stairs, Dave enters a secret room. Housed within the mysterious basement is a nuclear reactor. Perhaps it would be best if Dave left it alone.

The music room. Here Razor contemplates tinkling the old ivories with a rendition of her latest punk tune. If only she could record it somehow.



Great! Maniac Mansion is utterly brilliant. Like Lucasfilm Games' last title, Zak McKracken, Maniac Mansion is full of zany humour. The storyline is best described as a cross between the Rocky Horror Picture Show and the Munsters. The short cut-scenes add to the game nicely and allow players to see what is going on elsewhere in the game. The puzzles aren't too difficult to solve, although there are several different ways in which to finish the game. The ability to switch between characters also adds another dimension to the gameplay. In a nutshell, Maniac Mansion is a hilarious adventure game that should appeal to gamers of all persuasions.

NC

Holy secret compartments! Dave, by kicking the panels out of sheer boredom has uncovered a hidden audio tape.



It's obvious that Maniac Mansion was written before the Indy adventure. Looking at the dodgy animation and characters is like watching a seventies' pop video - complete with flares and long hair - but these factors don't stop it being a good game. The ability to swap between characters is nice - and essential - and the puzzles are slightly more logical than those in Indy. In fact, the only thing that lets the game down is the sound, which is limited to a few weak spot effects. Not as good as Indy or Zak McKracken, but worth a look all the same.

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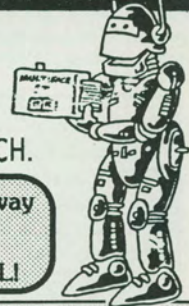
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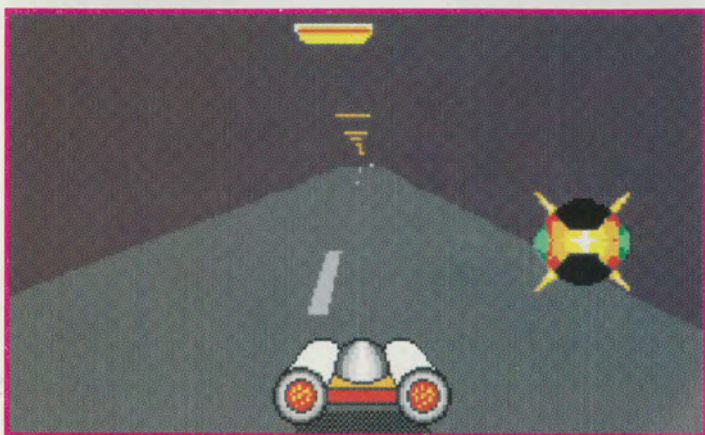


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GIVING THE GAME AWAY (GTGA)

All right, just shut up! If I receive another letter saying what a traitor I am for 'going over' to Amiga Action, I will personally take the said letter and stuff it where the sun don't shine. I have not gone traitor, I am just a games fanatic, who wants to get as broad a view of the games scene as possible. After all, I'm still writing this, aren't I? Anyway, enough of my troubles and of your hate mail, let's get on with the tips.

COVERDISK CHEATS



Martin Pugh, from Holywell, Clywd, has been a busy boy, and has knocked up two pokes for the two games on our disk. They come in the form of two ST Basic listings, and should be typed in, saved and run (making

sure that you save them first). These listings actually write on to the disk, so make sure that you make a back-up of it first.

Ammotrack Poke for all the lives and time you'll need

```
10 REM CHEAT FOR AMMOTRACK ON COVERDISK 1,
15 REM HACKED BY MARTIN PUGH
20 REM BEWARE THIS PROGRAM WRITES ON TO THE DISK SO
30 REM USE IT ON A BACK UP COPY
40 REM NB: DON'T FORGET TO WRITE-ENABLE THE DISK
50 DEF SEG = 0:REM REMOVE THIS LINE IF USING NEW BASIC
60 AMMO=&H50000
70 BLOAD"AMMO.TOS",AMMO
80 POKE AMMO+1432,999:POKE AMMO+1440,999
90 BSAVE"AMMO.TOS",AMMO,22377
```

Skulldiggery Poke which gives both players 65535 lives

```
10 REM CHEAT FOR SKULLDIGGERY ON COVERDISK 1,
15 REM HACKED BY MARTIN PUGH
20 REM BEWARE THIS PROGRAM WRITES ON TO THE DISK SO
30 REM USE IT ON A BACK UP COPY
40 REM NB: DON'T FORGET TO WRITE-ENABLE THE DISK
50 DEF SEG = 0: REM REMOVE THIS LINE IF USING NEW BASIC
60 SKULL=&H50000:A=65535
70 BLOAD"SKULLDIG.PRG",SKULL
80 POKE SKULL+6268,A:POKE SKULL+6634,A
90 BSAVE"SKULLDIG.PRG".SKULL,23063
```



BLASTEROIDS - IMAGEWORKS

I must confess to really enjoying the update of the classic Asteroids, so, just for you, I have compiled a list of handy hints.

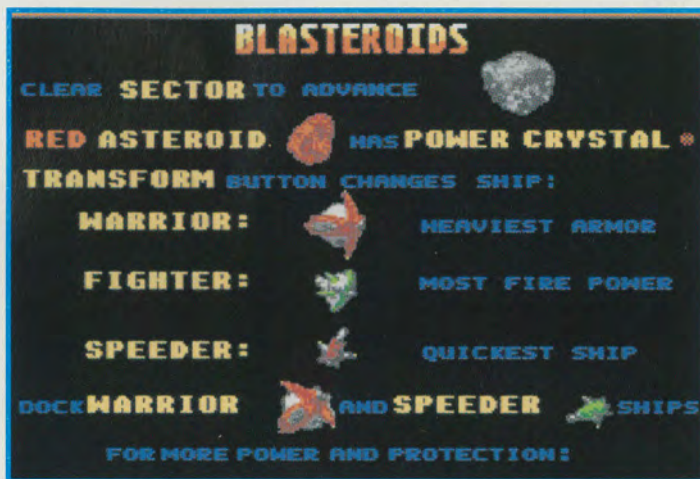
THE ASTEROIDS THEMSELVES

Ordinary Asteroids: No problem, in fact, the only time these will cause you any grief, is when you shoot them too late, and the broken segments career into you. As long as you shoot them when they are half a screen away, you'll have no problem.

Red Asteroids: These release energy-giving crystals

when shot, so follow the same pattern as in destroying the ordinary boulders, and just wait until the crystal makes its way to you. It is best if you can collect them without actually moving, as this can leave you wide open for attack, but they can only survive onscreen for about a minute before they disappear.

Popcorn Asteroids: Instantly recognisable by their blue colouring, these boulders require a barrage of shots before they actually stop. They cannot be destroyed, but can be stopped in their tracks and used for cover against space ships and the like. Don't get too close, though, or



INDIANA JONES & THE LAST CRUSADE - US GOLD

If Indy is having trouble beating the evil Nazis, simple type JIEHOVA when the title page appears. The screen will flash momentarily, indicating that the cheat is activated. Now simply press 'L' when you want to skip a level, or '1' and '2' to advance to key points within each stage. Thanks to Kenneth Shore, from Doncaster for that.



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GTGA BLASTEROIDS

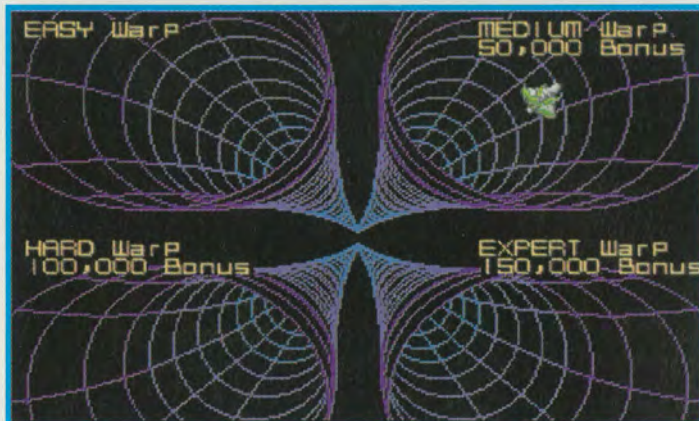
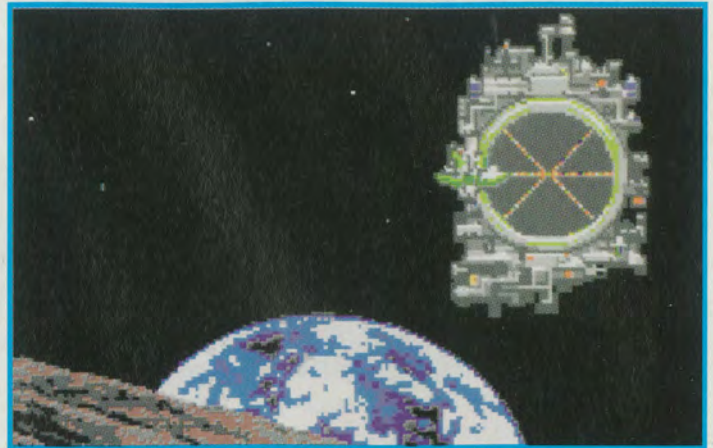
you'll bump into them and lose some of your valuable energy. The best tactic for destroying them is to get within two inches of them, and hammer the firebutton like mad.

Seeker Asteroids: The hardest of the lot! These apparently harmless red rocks, home in on you as soon as one of your bullets touches them. So, when you enter a screen with one of them on, careful shooting is of the essence, or one may catch you unawares. When you can get a clear shot at it, line up so that it will roll into your line of fire, and blast it repeatedly as soon as it is in front of you. It will then hurtle towards you, only to be obliterated by your guns.

Eggs: These appear in the later stages, normally after you have beaten Mukor once, and can prove a real nuisance. When

shot, they split open to reveal an energy-sapping leech. Using the same process as you did for the Seekers, line up with the egg, and fire repeatedly at it, hopefully catching the leech before it can get to you.

The Enemy Ships: These come in several forms, ranging from flying saucers left over from the original Asteroids, to satellites and dangerous red space craft. All can be destroyed with a number of shots, but they are more resilient to your fire than boulders, and they also fire back. It can prove very difficult to dodge their fire, and normally it is quicker to simply retaliate with more bullets than they hit you with. But if you are being cautious with your energy, fly in an arc around them, peppering them with shots.



COLLECTABLES

Whenever one of the enemy space ships is destroyed it will relinquish a goody. These may just be bonus points, but they often leave behind useful enhancements to your fighter.

Power Shots: Looking like one of those models of an atom made out of ping-pong balls, these boost the power of your ship's cannons. You can collect as many of these as you wish, and they make taking out the enemy space ships considerably easier.

Blasters: These only appear every now and then, but double your firepower. They look like metal tubes, and when added to your ship, cause its bullets to split, giving you a wider range of fire. This makes boulder-bashing much easier, and is an essential add-on.

Extra Fuel: No prizes for guessing what this does. Yes, it adds extra energy to your craft. Basically this performs the same actions as the crystals, only it gives you more, and, needless to say, is an essential item to collect.

Crystal Magnet: This can prove really useful when you are low on energy, and aren't move in case you get hit. Once collected, all of the little energy crystals instantly home in on you, and boost your strength.

Cloak: I have only ever seen these twice, and from what I could see, I think they make you invisible to the enemy space ships, allowing you to pick them off without losing any energy. Not really worth the bother of collecting.

Rip Star: Normally, these are released when you destroy Mukor. Shaped like a star, the Rip Star is activated by pulling back on the joystick. Instead of transforming its shape into one of the two other possible craft, your ship will spin furiously, unleashing a spreading arc of bullets. This should clear many of the smaller asteroids, but generally tends to split the larger one up into little ones, then run out! Only use it when you want to clear a level of small boulders, or if you simply don't want it! Again, not worth bothering with.

Shields: Another self-explanatory one. Resembling sparkly balls, these surround your ship in a coating of crackly blue lines. Every time a boulder hits you, it will come off worse, and you will remain unscathed. The only trouble is that they tend to run out just when you need them most. Generally worth having.

Booster: If, like me, you try not to move your ship, then you won't be needing these. They enhance the acceleration of your ship, and can often send you haring across the screen, without a chance of survival. Useful in a tight squeeze, but normally just end you up in trouble.

MUKOR



The evil one himself appears when every stage in the sector has been cleared, and must have each of his ten or so lugs shot off before you can continue to the next screen. The only time I ever swap between the different style craft is when I meet Mukor, and that is only in emergencies. When you appear, he homes in on you, so use the ability to 'wrap' around the screen to your advantage. Start off by shooting

his left side, then turn tail and exit the screen from the left to appear, facing him, from the right. Continue this pattern until all of his side-mounted lugs are gone, then repeat the process for his top and bottom ones. Space can be tight when shooting these, and it is possible to shoot at them from the side, but really how you do it is up to your personal preference. If he manages to trap you, quickly change to the heavily armoured ship, and thrust away as soon as possible. Then change back to the medium-size ship, and continue shooting. As soon as all of his lugs are blown off, Mukor will sink to the bottom of the screen, leaving a trail of add-ons in his wake. These normally take the form of extra fuel, Rip Stars and Blasters, and are well worth getting.

GTGA GRAND MONSTER SLAM

IN GENERAL

When playing Blasteroids, I never like playing it with a friend. Not only do they nick your credits, they can get in the way, and make the space ways very cramped. The only advantage of having two ships is that you can link them up, but this means you lose a lot of manoeuvrability. Seasoned Blasteroids players, should jump straight in at the

later levels, so that they can get leech-bashing straight away, but if it's a high-score you are after, start with the easy level, and work your way through. The first nine screens are exceedingly easy, and serve as a 'warm up' for the later levels. I can get through the first stage and beat Mukor without losing any energy, but, then again, I'm a show off! That's your lot for Blasteroids - happy boulder-bashing!



GRAND MONSTER SLAM

This is one of my all-time favourite games, and it also seems to be a fave of Keith Manson, of Blackpool, as he has sent in this useful guide to Belom booting.

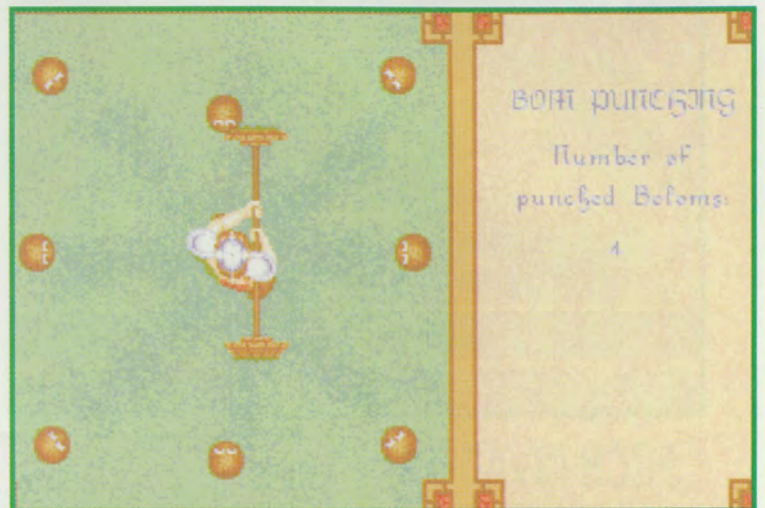
GENERAL TIPS

Basically, although each league's players are supposed to be different, they are all roughly the same when it comes to skill and tactics. The first group you meet rely on brute force and speed of kicking, but should prove a walk-over to beat. In addition, on later levels when the wall is added to make things harder, don't be tempted to boot the Beloms too hard, by the time they reach the

ground, your opponent will be waiting to return it. Finally, NEVER get caught in the corner of your side. Stay away from the edges as much as possible as even the simplest of players knows the tactic of continually knocking his opponent down while they are in a corner. And if caught, it is near impossible to get out of.

IN GAME TACTICS

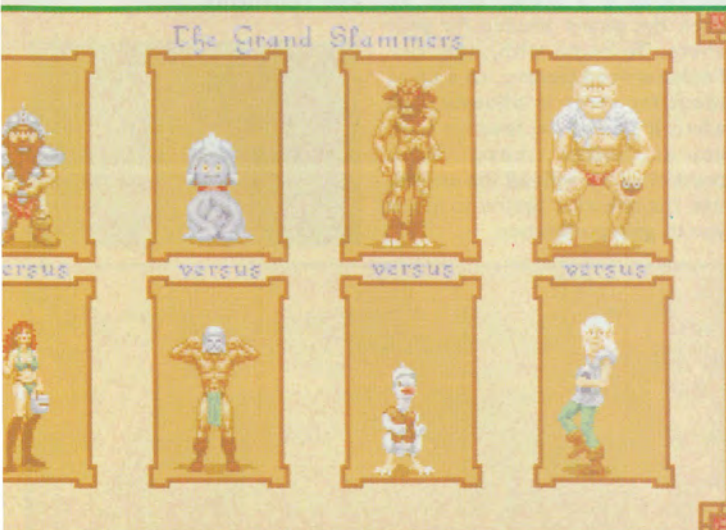
Whenever possible, always fell your opponent with the first Belom you kick. If they are straight ahead of you, just kick it and move to one side before his or hers can reach you. As they fall, kick the next Belom,



moving the joystick so that the Belom will knock them over again. If you can successfully repeat this process and get to the other side of the pitch and knock your opponent over with the Beloms there, it is possible to make your home run without a single Belom hitting your line! This process of continually knocking your opponent down is essential, but don't worry too much if you can't continue it, just clear the edges of your side and knock them down with the Beloms that are in the middle.

If at any time you start to fall behind and have a pile of

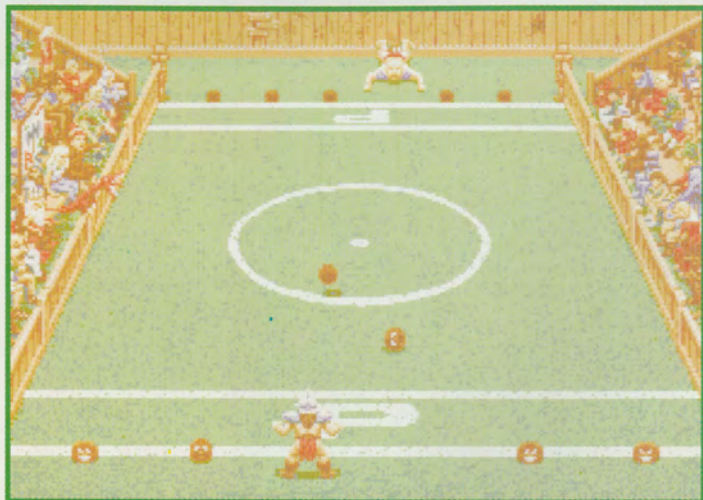
Beloms lining up to be kicked, wait until your opponent is running to the next Belom, and kick one at him. As he falls, another Belom will trundle up to replace the one you have just kicked. Repeating this kicking process, you can clear up your backlog, and push yourself into the lead again. Once you have cleared the first three opponents, you will eventually continue to a pitch with a low wall in the centre. This wall can be a real pain, and trying to knock all of your Beloms through the narrow hole in its centre is extremely difficult - impossible, even.



GTGA GRAND MONSTER SLAM

Instead, simply by holding the firebutton down for a second longer than normal, a Belom will just creep over the wall. If you can do this AND place your shot, all well and good. Once again, clear your corners first, except this time do the right-hand side first, then, as your opponent gets up again, knock him down with a Belom through the gap in the wall, and again when you get to the left-hand side of the pitch. If you manage to beat the three opponents on

this level, you then enter the semi-finals and so on. Now, however, your opponents are a cheating bunch who possess magic powers. One, for instance, zaps Beloms with a lightning bolt, sending them over to your half without even touching them, whilst another stuns you with a similar power. There is no real strategy for beating these guys, just try to stick to the patterns mentioned, and keep cool.



PITCH INVADERS

This intrusion can, and should, be used to your advantage. The pitch is invaded every time the ball is hit into the stadium, and a little white duck appears. He runs up to the player who didn't commit the foul, and can be kicked to their end. If your opponent catches the flying duck, one of his Beloms runs to your end. If you send him the wrong way, then three of yours go scurrying towards him. When you are about to kick the duck, make your decision at the very last minute. NEVER kick it straight at him, as he intercepts it every time, but instead, alternate which side you kick it at, changing the pattern irregularly.

REVENGE OF THE BELOMS

This section is extremely difficult due to the fact that it is very hard to position your oar so that you can hit the Beloms which appear from your left and right. Hitting the ones that attack from above and diagonally is a piece of cake, but pressing fire whilst holding the joystick left, swings the oar around. As soon as a Belom to your side trembles, perform this



DINNER TIME

Feeding the Beloms to the King's pet Faultons is extremely difficult, but essential for getting through to the later levels. The key is to get the height of your shots to rise in equal stages. To feed the first Faulton requires practically no power whatsoever, but as you progress, you should hold the firebutton down for approximately half a second. This is just an estimation, but as the height of the Faultons

TITAN BY TITUS

I can't say that I am too keen on this game, still, those very nice chaps at Titus have sent us in a list of passwords.

- | | | |
|------------|------------|------------|
| 1. J4JMKR | 27. MOBOPV | 53. 09UPW9 |
| 2. HBHCHC | 28. B9HH22 | 54. OVE032 |
| 3. 4492LI | 29. RN4RHH | 55. L29RHL |
| 4. OSEOEL | 30. BG6W61 | 56. 6ORROR |
| 5. 2401TO | 31. 1W1440 | 57. H95LHT |
| 6. 01LO38 | 32. 044080 | 60. 9LQHVV |
| 7. 04KJOB | 33. E396V3 | 61. HC932F |
| 8. 198075 | 34. 740330 | 62. 117938 |
| 9. OVR70 | 35. 2L41H1 | 63. 6048HG |
| 10. H67JR1 | 36. SGOWOO | 64. 4F039H |
| 11. 04JBR8 | 37. 48H093 | 65. VOMO5V |
| 12. RDL89G | 38. FU5HJ9 | 66. CO1FHT |
| 13. B8JLJ4 | 39. OGU9PI | 67. OS4500 |
| 14. DNBE08 | 40. 294JBH | 68. 2U4BO5 |
| 15. TMV281 | 41. B608S0 | 69. CF6B71 |
| 16. LO9U3H | 42. P810B9 | 70. 88H102 |
| 17. 9JHTQN | 43. KWOHME | 71. H844C3 |
| 18. UKUTB8 | 44. HC6YS8 | 72. OO5HOR |
| 19. 01HFJO | 45. 7K4703 | 73. NOTON8 |
| 20. 1R7DCG | 46. 90OPNO | 74. OD8V01 |
| 21. V30906 | 47. OOB110 | 75. AH3HD8 |
| 22. 4P4192 | 48. HOO1OK | 76. TIDDI2 |
| 23. 40RSHP | 49. 1S4LOF | 77. 43L6TV |
| 24. E4DBQP | 50. D80N6D | 78. 8HH0H3 |
| 25. LFPOBO | 51. 3010LH | 79. 111S78 |
| 26. 1H9615 | 52. K470MT | 80. OIP4GO |

XYBOTS - DOMARK

Following on from last month's tips, here is the built-in Xybots cheat, courtesy of Jason Walsh, from Sheffield. Get a high-score, and enter the name ALF. Voila, infinite lives are yours for the taking.

LEONARDO - STARBYTE

This Boulderdash-style game can give you a few headaches, if so, here are a few between level-passwords to help you on your way.
IVANHOE
MATTERHORN

Okey-doke, that's yer lot. Before I go, remember: I am not a bleedin' traitor! This is Steve Merrett signing off, ta-ra!





• NORTH & SOUTH •



CHAAARGE !!! Dive into the hilarious world of the Belgium comic book "LES TUNIKES BLEUES" (CAUVIN & LAMBIL). For one or two players, you are either Yankee or Confederate, so recreating the true atmosphere of the American Civil War.

NORTH & SOUTH, an original, explosive cocktail of strategy and arcade. Surround your enemy using the strategic map of the American East Coast. Crush them on the super arcade battle field. Send your best men to stop the gold-filled trains, and then rush the forts to free the enemy occupied towns. NORTH & SOUTH, a game filled with options. Start the game from a

choice of four different years, three levels of difficulty and a special disaster mode which includes violent storms stopping all movement of troops, re-inforcements arriving from Europe, and not forgetting the Indians and Mexicans whose only pleasure in life is attacking you!

If that wasn't enough to wet your appetite, you can also choose between a "strategy-only" game and an "strategy-arcade game", and with the superb 2 players version that has to be played to be believed, it only leaves us to give the order "To your sabres!!"



LES TUNIKES BLEUES ©
CAUVIN LAMBIL. DUPUIS.

Available on AMIGA, ATARI ST 2 DISKS, PC compatibles 2 DISKS.

INFOGRAAMES



Until now, I've never really understood the rules of American Football. However, TV Sports: Football's easy-to-use system and helpful manual have changed all that, and have made me realise how good a computer version of the popular sport this really is. The graphics are large and well animated, and the control system is simple to use. Working out strategies was confusing at first, but after a while it all fell into place and a victory soon followed. If you are a fan of the sport, then this is essential. And even if you aren't, take a look - but make sure that you read the manual first!

SM

STANDINGS										WEEK # 1	
TEAM	W	L	T	PF	PA	TEAM	W	L	T	PF	PA
WESTERN DIVISION 1						EASTERN DIVISION 1					
ATL.	12	4	0	670	452	PIT.	15	1	0	511	177
ANH.	8	8	0	702	717	CIN.	4	12	0	451	658
N.O.	3	13	0	504	739	CLE.	4	12	0	197	375
S.F.	2	14	0	540	791	HOU.	2	14	0	397	691
WESTERN DIVISION 2						EASTERN DIVISION 2					
DET.	16	0	0	612	154	S.D.	16	0	0	669	255
T.B.	12	4	0	575	349	DEN.	9	7	0	653	604
G.B.	10	6	0	482	303	L.A.	9	7	0	627	729
MIN.	5	11	0	190	398	K.C.	9	7	0	485	327
CHI.	4	12	0	299	651	SEA.	4	12	0	466	644
WESTERN DIVISION 3						EASTERN DIVISION 3					
DAL.	14	2	0	678	370	N.E.	16	0	0	664	241
WAS.	10	6	0	746	671	NYJ.	10	6	0	526	449
PHI.	6	10	0	529	664	BUF.	7	9	0	213	256
NYG.	5	11	0	630	762	MIA.	5	11	0	393	610
PHX.	4	12	0	604	775	IND.	3	13	0	380	556

MAIN MENU

"Wrestle your 275-pound frame into the padding, smear on the war paint, strap on a helmet and prepare for some 'real' Gridiron action."

TV SPORTS FOOTBALL

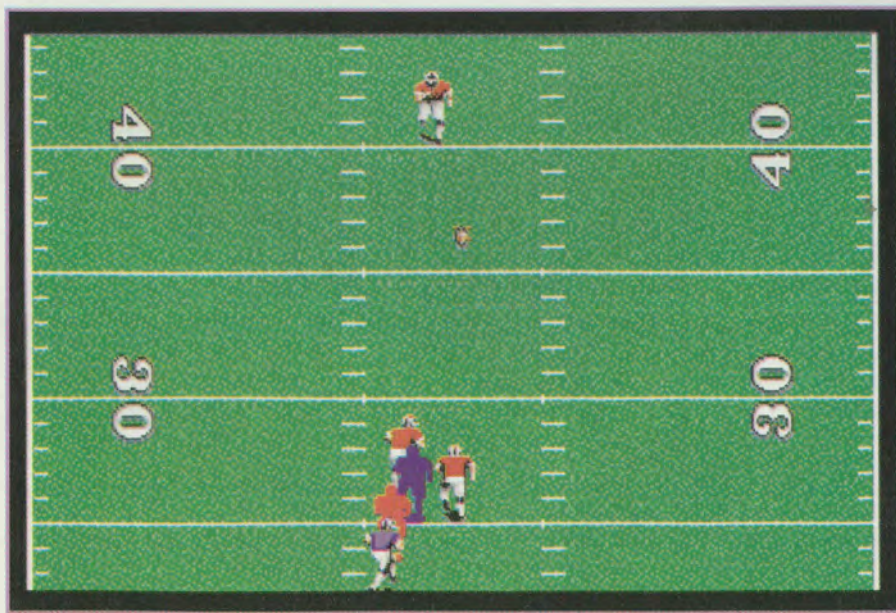
MIRRORSOFT (£24.95)

Team sports are reputed to be symbolic representations of war - American football, however, is war! In the States, football is a national preoccupation, and now, the ripple-effect from one of the Fridge's charges, is spreading all over the world. The objective of American football is, of course, to score more points than the opposition, and this is achieved by 'taking' territory and moving the ball over the opponent's goal line. Meanwhile, the team without the ball must try and

defend, block, halt and try and win possession of the ball. The offence has four attempts to gain just ten yards, and if they fail, the opposition gain possession - so you can see why the pitch, or 'gridiron', is so often termed 'the battlefield'. That's the basics of the game, although there are dozens of other rules. The question is, how has this physical action been simulated?

The menu screen provides the option of exhibition games, which are separate

from the league table, as well as practice schedules, and there are standings which analyze the play records of every team in the league. There's a one- or two-player option, and so if you want to battle through a whole league season, there are full computer and human-managed leagues to save confusion. The league consists of 28 teams and selecting 'Exhibition' reveals a clipboard and a pencil cursor with which you select your team and its opponent. Additionally, there's an 'edit team' option, which allows you to put the teams of your choice in a league.



The referee flips the coin it spins and lands on the turf - the bears choose to receive. The kicker sends the ball well into dolphin's territory.

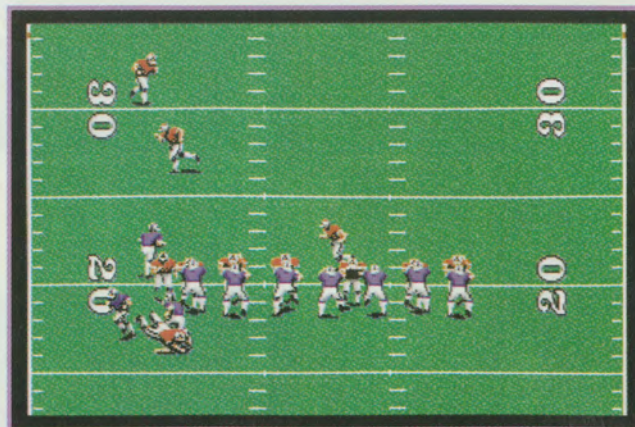
I remember this when it came out on that other sixteen-bit computer. TV Sports Football is undoubtedly a great game. However, if, like me, you're none too sure about all the rules and regulations concerning American Football, then your initial reaction could be one of utter confusion. Still, having read up on the sport and watched it on the TV, I soon began to work out what was going on. The game's graphics are excellent, just as you'd expect from Cinemaware. The sound isn't quite as good, although this doesn't detract from the action. Overall, TV Sports Football is a good-looking game that should definitely appeal to fans of the sport.

NC

Football is a team game of fundamentals, and practice is vital and so a handy practice option helps you to master handoffs, pitches, punts, field goals and passing. Meanwhile, the 'playcalling' screen allows you to analyze play diagrams. But that's enough patsying around on the sideline like a bunch of puffs - 'let's get on the gridiron and 'give 'em 'ell!'

First, the coin is tossed and the dime spins and drops on the turf to decide who kicks and receives. In true Cinemaware style, the game is presented like a TV broadcast, with different camera views and reports, but the majority of the game action is viewed from overhead. The game begins with the kickoff and, with joystick controls, you must move a player to intercept the ball. The joystick controls individual team members and you can switch control while the computer governs the movements of all the players off the ball. On 'Offence' the player with the ball flashes, and once you've taken control, the computer cannot regain its hold. The receiving team grabs the ball and regains as much ground as possible, until brought down by the opposition. Then, as play stops, the 'playcalling' screen displays the game-clock, the score by quarter, the total score, the 'Down' number to go for a first touchdown and the position of the football on the field. This playcalling screen is designed to give you an overall fix on the game, which enables you to make decisions for the next play.

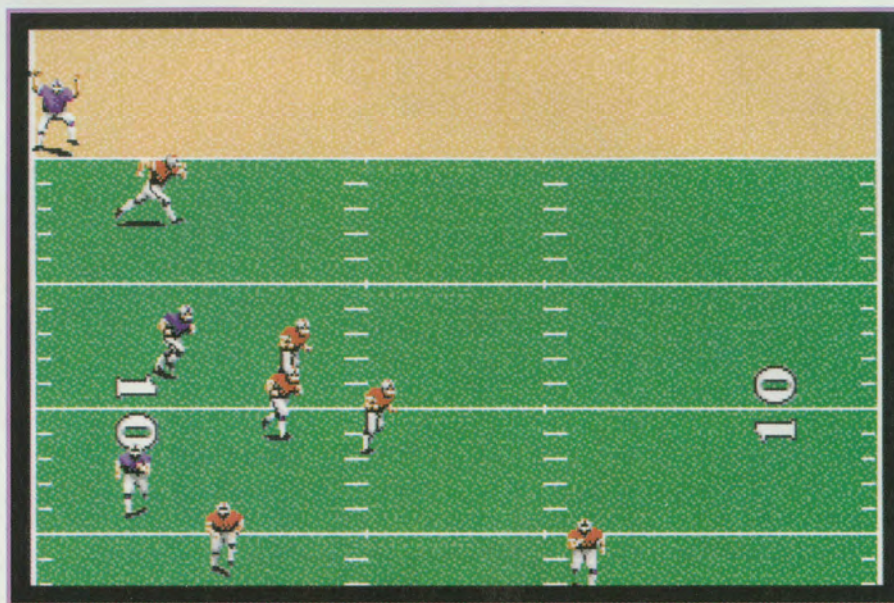
You've got possession, and the quarterback waits for your decision. Tap the firebutton and he follows the diagrammed play, makes hand-offs and pitches at the first opportunity. Pushing forward on the joystick gives him the message to forward pass and pulling back gives you control over the quarterback for a longer period. Behind the line of scrimmage, moving the joystick left or right makes him point to various positions up field, and moving the joystick up and down makes him run. Then, to pass the ball, you move the joystick left and right which makes him stop and look around, then tapping the firebutton throws the ball. An 'X' on the field marks the catchable range and, moving a player, you attempt to catch the ball - although the opposition has equal opportunity. You've got possession, but your player runs into trouble, and so moving left and right and pulling down on the stick punts it over the forwards. A player catches and runs over the touchline - 'TOUCHDOWN!' The view moves down to



◀ The quarterback receives the ball and joystick takes control. Pushing the stick left and right makes him stop and look around to pass. Then pushing forward, he runs, but the opposition forwards bring him down.

It's third down and ten and Marino runs behind the pack shouting orders. He tries a dummy - it works and the Left wide receiver sprints

▼ towards the touchline - it's a score!



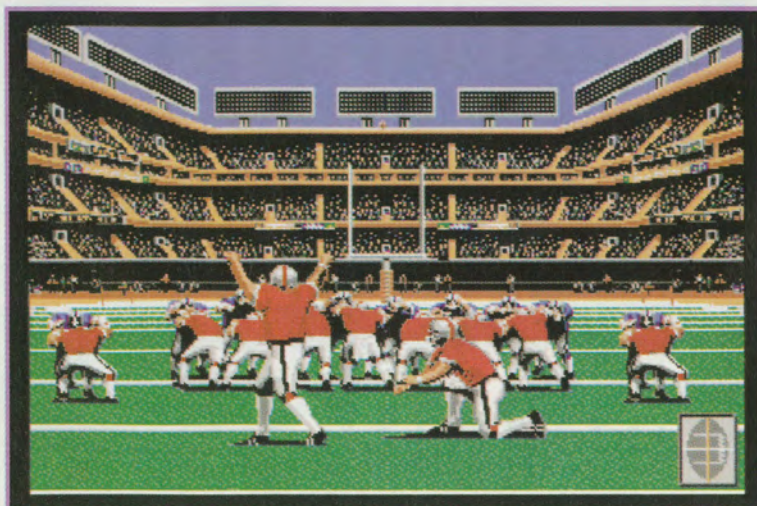
Cinemaware, have taken their expertise in the art of 'realism' and have adapted it, for the first time, to a sport simulation - the result is superb! TV Sports, Football, is the best American football simulation, if not the best team sport game ever produced for the ST. Cinemaware's unrivalled graphical production is equalled by the excellent gameplay, control and animation in the game. With their attention to detail and artistic skill, the team have really captured the carnival and spectacle of this game, from pom-pom girls to news reports. There could have been more sound effects, but apart from that, this really is a must for all Gridiron fans!

JS

pitch level to show the 'field goal' kick. Using an aiming-guide, you pull back on the joystick and the ball sails over the bar.

STA

Now it's time to try for a Field Goal and an extras 3 points the Kicker runs forward and punts the ball clean over the crossbar.



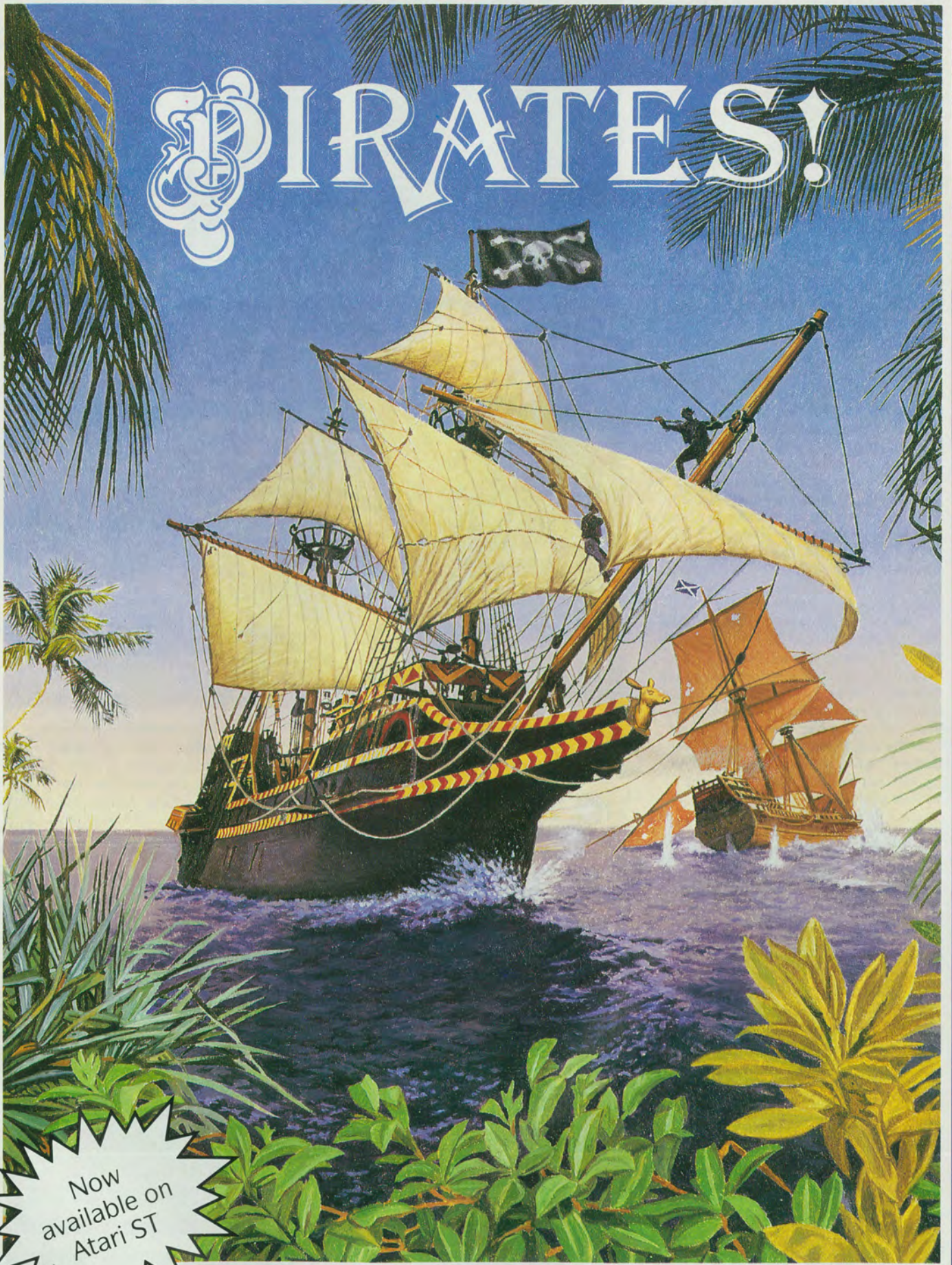
STA Rating
72%

GRAPHICS: 76%
SOUND: 45%

LASTING APPEAL: 78%
ADDICTIVENESS: 72%

DIFFICULTY: AVERAGE
1ST DAY SCORE: N/A

PIRATES!



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"In a world which relies on robots and computers, who is the master of whom?"

STEEL

HEWSON (£19.95)

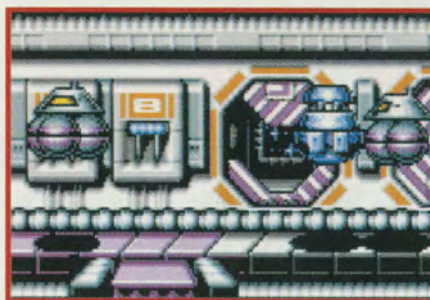
There are so many games in which you hunt around large spaceships, that it has become a genre all on its own. Steel really has nothing new to offer that existing titles haven't got, and the task of finding cartridges or whatever, and slotting them into ports, has literally been done to death. On the plus side, this is a graphically pleasing game with a generally professional presentation, but the sound effects are practically non-existent. The sub-games offer a respite from the general tedium of the search, but on the whole, this is a very lacklustre, run-of-the-mill game from the usually innovative and exciting Hewson staples.

JS

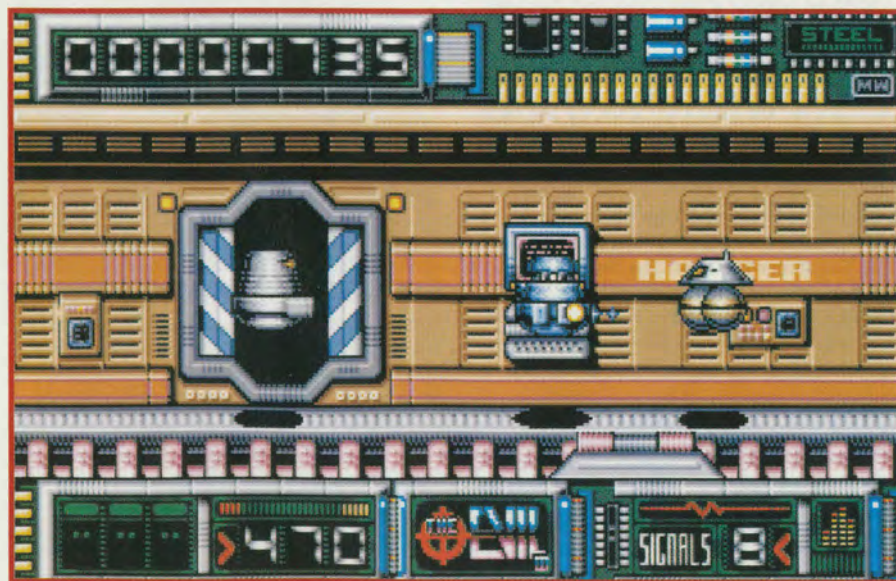
One day, the spaceship is running smoothly, not too many quarrels amongst the human crew, everything OK with the droids. The next day all hell breaks loose! Through some fault in the system, a horde of droids have gone haywire. Controlling a commando droid, your task is to systematically destroy the rogue droids and save the ship and crew from certain destruction. The joystick controls this Dusty-bin lookalike through the many corridors and rooms and, armed with a foremounted laser cannon, you must collect a number of cartridges which are located in various quarters of the vessel and insert them in cartridge ports. But these cartridge slots are locked and to open them you must link up with the ship's computer system.

Once you've found a terminal, pushing forward on the joystick accesses a sub-game in which you must shoot at rotor drives which protect a Databus, blast a hole through the barrier and blast the databus which opens up the cartridge

Looking like a cross between Dustybin and Bob from *The Blackhole*; this, believe it or not, is your crack commando droid.



slots. Meanwhile, the Databus protects itself by firing electrical pulses which deplete your droid's energy. Various objects hurtle about the ship, some containing extra weaponry, others trouncing the living daylights out of the droid or knock seconds off your allotted time limit to complete the mission. Every collision with rogue droids, every blast and laser, depletes your commando droid's energy



Controlling this reconditioned dustbin, you must crush the droid rebellion. First, you must search for cartridges, locate the cartridge room and insert. In the corridors, you must avoid contact with all rogue droids.

STA
Rating

64%

GRAPHICS: 66%
SOUND: 40%

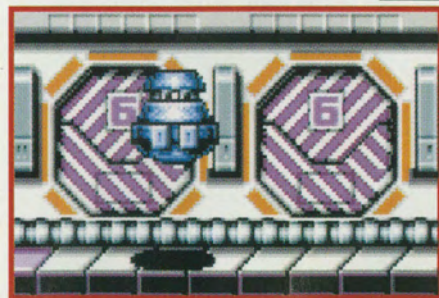
LASTING APPEAL: 69%
ADDICTIVENESS: 71%

DIFFICULTY: AVERAGE
1ST DAY SCORE: N/A

and so you must be constantly on the lookout for refuelling depots. These terminals are identifiable by the pulse flashing across the screen and you must position the droid near the screen and push the joystick forwards to absorb the fuel.

Your droid can only carry a few cartridges at a time, and so you'll have to make many journeys between the point of location and the hidden control room, before all the cartridges have been placed in the ports. The cartridge centre is heavily patrolled and protected, and it is here if anywhere that your droid will lose its energy. On nearing the cartridge room, a message at the bottom of the screen warns you that it is in this vicinity, and full concentration must be paid to finding the room and off-loading the cartridges.

STA



*The similarities between this game's central character and that of the Walt Disney sci-fi movie, *The Black Hole*, is astounding. The graphics are very well presented and the Atari's colours have been used to their full advantage. The sound, too, is good, although I feel the actual in-game effects could have been a little more imaginative. The game's strongest point, however is its undeniable playability. The action is very addictive, and had me coming back for more. Mind you, don't expect Steel to be a walk-over - the difficulty level has been set at just the right level. In a nutshell, Steel is a competent little game that deserves to do well.*

NC

STA
Rating
69%

GRAPHICS: 56%
SOUND: 43%

LASTING APPEAL: 69%
ADDICTIVENESS: 75%

DIFFICULTY: AVERAGE
1ST DAY SCORE: N/A

“They’re back! Those mega-probosced spies from MAD magazine finally return in the second part of their continual battle.”

The Spy V Spy series of games follows the adventures of two crazy spies as they attempt to thwart each other's plans with a variety of traps which always misfire. Their one goal in life is to escape with the various top-secret documents they are chasing, before their opponent, but along the way they cannot leave without humiliating their enemy in some way. As with the previous game in the series, there is an option for you to battle it out with a friend or the computer, and the action is depicted within a split screen. Each player is viewed within their own window, and to the side of the main playing areas is a

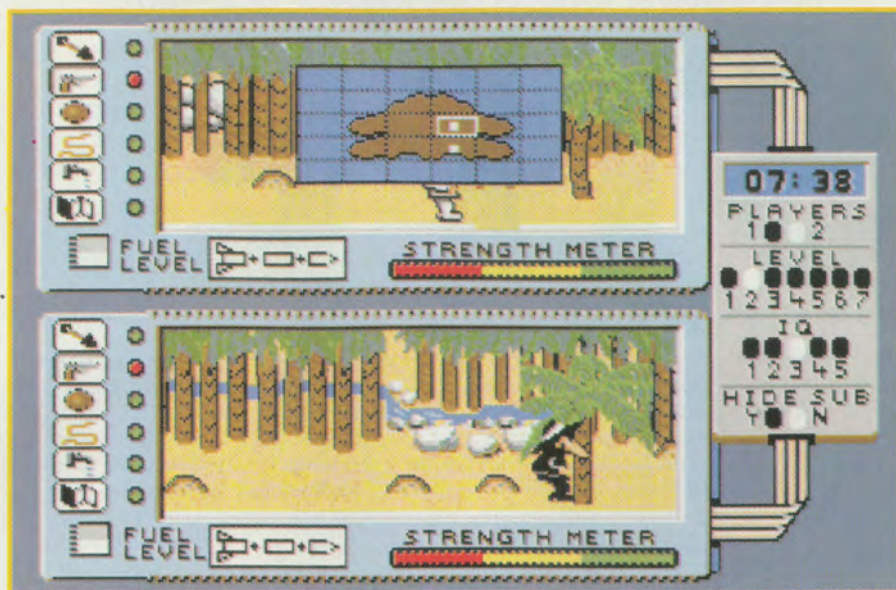


The White spy chortles away, as his nemesis treads on one of his mines.

I really like the Spy V Spy series, as they feature all of the deadly devices and features of the comic strip. The sprites of the spies themselves look as if they have walked from MAD into the ST, and some of the traps you set are brilliant. Setting traps is a real good laugh - especially in two-player mode - and watching your opponent collect the three parts of the missile, only to get caught by their own mine, is brilliant. I have no hesitation in recommending The Island Capers, as at a tanner, it is tremendous value.

SM

At any time during play, a map of the island can be called up. At the start of the game there is an option to hide the whereabouts of the three missing pieces, but if you are a beginner at spying, you can have them marked out for you.



SPY vs SPY II

WICKED SOFTWARE (£9.99)

screen, housing a number of icons. This is your spy's infamous 'Trappometer', and with this, he can lay a number of traps. The story for this escapade, is that both spies have been sent to a remote desert island with the orders to retrieve three sections of a crashed missile. However, the island is due to sink when the large volcano at its centre erupts, so speed is of the essence.

When the game has loaded, you are presented with the option of using a joystick, the mouse or keys. Once selected, the screen shows an overall view of the island, with the two spies parachuting on to it. Having landed, the game begins with your spy standing somewhere on the island. Dotted around the island are clumps of raised earth, and, somewhere under these, the three sections of the missile can be found; so your basic aim is to run around the island, searching everywhere. As you dig up the island, items such as coconuts and iron bars can be found, and these can then be stored in your Trappometer. Pressing fire twice, activates this strange contraption, and a small LED appears. Using this, you can then select one of the many traps available, or call up a map of the island. The

traps range from mines to guns, and are set simply by selecting the object you need, and pulling down on the joystick when required. Every now and then, the two spies will meet, and a fight will ensue. Drawing their sticks, the spies confront each other, and start bashing each other over the head. Wagging the joystick controls your spy's movements, and the one who loses the battle dies, losing valuable time and any objects that they have collected. All that remains then, is to collect the scattered items, and make good your escape via your handy submarine.

STA



Victorious, the White spy exits using his handy submarine, leaving his opponent to fry on the island.

I have followed the adventures of the Black and White spies for years, and have long awaited their adventures to be converted to the ST. The first game when it was converted was lousy, and looked just like the 8-bit versions, but this sequel features shaded graphics and really looks good. The game excels in two-player mode - though I doubt whether Steve will ever be beaten - but even playing the computer is a laugh. Well worth the money.

NC

520ST-FM SUPER PACK



The Atari Super Pack is ideal for you if you want to get off to a flying start with the best in entertainment software. The Pack includes a 520ST-FM with 1Mb RAM, a built-in 1Mb disk drive, over £450 of top games and a joystick. If you buy the Super Pack at Silica Shop, we will add our own ST Starter Kit (worth over £200), FREE OF CHARGE. Return the coupon for details.

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All prices correct at the time of going to press. £4.0E

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+ colour monitor = £1498

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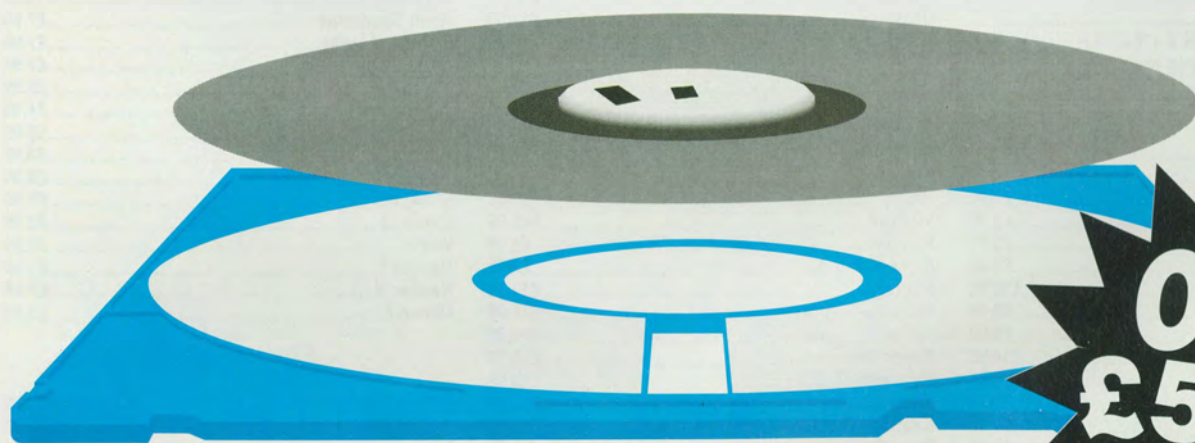
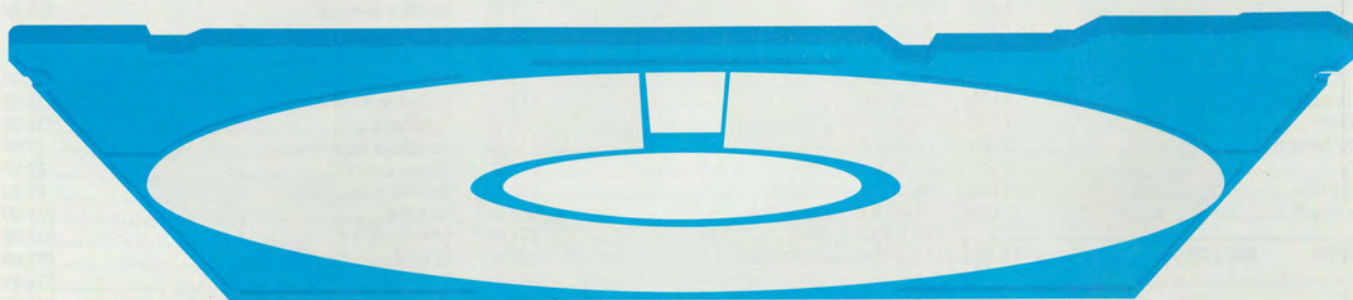
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Q: WHAT'S IN NEXT MONTH'S ISSUE?

ACTION

16-PAGE SUPPLEMENT

The December, 'Christmas' edition of ST Action, will feature a special sixteen-page supplement called: "Dear Santa...!" Yes, while you're decorating the tree and wrapping up prezies, we'll be working our fingers to the bone here at Scrooge Publishing, straining our eyes in the dim candle-light and cycling home in the snowy dusk. Why? Because when you open up your goodies on the big day, we don't want tears and disap-

pointment to ruin the festivities. So, this bumper, 'Jingle-belling', Yuletide supplement, will have all the gen on what's happening on the ST, as well as a festive festoon of features and a full guide on what to ask Santa for. In addition to the usual reviews, there'll be reports on the latest joysticks, add-ons and game compilations. Plus news on all the art, graphics and sound packages available for the ST.

COMPOS

Christmas time is a time for giving, and as we are known as, "The generous-to-a-fault magazine", or "ST Action, gosh aren't they kind, and they love their mums, publication", we have in an amazing tie-in competition with software giant, U.S. Gold. We are offering you the chance to win the bestest prize we've ever had. Unfortunately, we're not going to tell you what it is as we're not allowed to take off all the shiny paper.

Mega FEATURES!!!

Also, if we can keep Steve away from the sherry bottle, there'll be an extended, 'Giving the Game Away' feature, with hints, tips and cheats for all your favourite games. Meanwhile, the troll is dusting off last year's half-eaten turkey and between mouthfuls, he mumbled and spat that he might get round to doing an even bigger Dungeon's and Disk Drives which will include an

Indiana Jones and the Last Crusade players-guide - although he said he didn't think you deserved it.

Meanwhile, Jason has strapped on his snowboots, wriggled into his thermals and with a £5 note pinned in his dufflecoat pocket, trekked off somewhere in search of the star... programmers of the 1990's. Ever wondered just how a game is developed? Well, so did

Nick - after all, he is pretty clueless? So, in a three part article, he reports on the early stages of Activision's latest biggy, the coin-op conversion of Atomic Robokid.

So, if you're in any doubt about what to treat yourself to this Christmas, then don't miss out on December's issue of

ST Action!

PACKED

YAK'S YAK

Greetings, chipheads. I've just finished an ace session on Stargate (all lights off, some good metal on CD, fistful of Smart Bombs and let's go kick some extraterrestrial ass) so I'm feeling pretty satisfied. There is something about Williams games which just cannot be replicated in home versions. Even my own beloved Andes Attack can't hold a candle to true, raw, savage, pure, beautiful Stargate when it comes to total adrenaline-pumping mega-difficult galactic mayhem. And the aliens are so intelligent - try getting up to Level 15 and see how the Firebombers manage to completely evade devastating tirades of laser blasts whilst still aiming deadly accurate firebombs directly at you... you never see smart aliens like that in modern games. Alien IQ has taken a sharp drop just recently. Nowadays, the aliens just queue up in an orderly fashion to be fodder for your latest mega-weapon without even being bothered to dodge. If you're lucky they fire at you.

Yow - I just had a bit of trouble with this 1040 (my Mega and monitor are away being set up for lightsynth, so I'm on a 1040STFM and the multi-standard JVC I usually use for PC-Engine). The WP prog I'm in crashed weirdly (luckily not totally until after I'd managed to SAVE) and upon RESET refused to bring up the hard drive. Turn off ST, leave for 20 seconds, try again: no joy. Reset HD, reset ST, various permutations of different boot disks, no hard disk. Examine directory of boot drive, am informed rather improbably that 907515765 bytes have been used on a seemingly infinite amount of folders all named something identical involving upside-down E's and apostrophes. Turn whole lot off at wall, go and have another game of Stargate, think nice thoughts about hard drive and how head crashes really don't happen that often, come back, juice system, deep joy, HD is back although it shouldn't be in low-rez.... Weird things, these computers.

Guns'n'Roses and Stargate, yeah, go together very well. Who needs some poxy in-game ditty when you can just slap an alb on the ol' CD and get down to some serious destruction with some REAL sonix shaking the walls...

Progress on the Konix goes on. I've done all the front-end now, 44-entry hiscore table, demos, info screens.. it's great just to be able to say 'well, think I'll have a 32-colour, no, maybe a 64-colour palette-rotation in the background here, means I'll only have 192 colours left in my palette, what a shame'. I'd dearly love to implement a lightsynth on the wee beastie, 'twould be very spectacular. Loadsacolour, definitely the way to go for new machines. The new STE sounds nice but really is just a slightly-modified ST Atari have brought out in order to compete more directly with the Amiga.

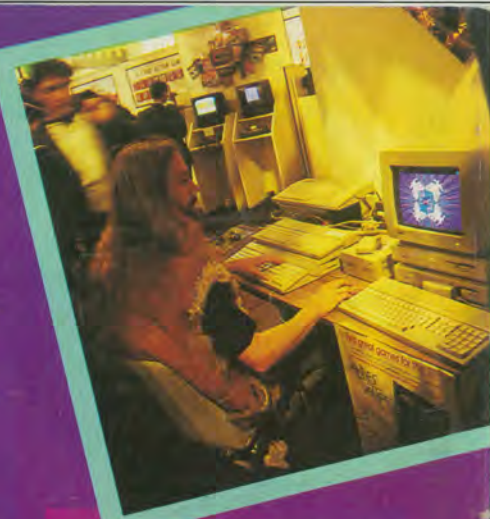
Much more interesting is the TT machine, which represents a definite step upwards in sophistication with its '030 and 256-colour graphics mode, and Genlok capability. I could do an absolutely wicked lightsynth on one of those.

I'm not long back from me hols as mentioned last month. I had a wickedly zarjaz and amazing time; met some very nice people, and our villa was in a perfect position on the beach facing the sunset, and all amenities within easy barefoot walking distance. I was severely tempted to ring Llamasoft HQ and tell them 'ship all my machines out here, I'm not coming back'. The little Nintendo was in great demand on the beach, and survived the holiday intact despite having cartridges dropped in beer, being left out all day on the beach in hundred-degree-plus heat, suffering impact by tennis ball, and sand up the FIRE buttons, which must be quite painful. There was much enquiring where the Nintendo could be purchased, but like a good Atarian I advised all enquirers to hold off and wait for the Atari colour handheld which would, I promised, be a thousand times more zarjaz.

Yes please, more extremely loud rock music NOW, it's only half three in the morning and one of the advantages of this isolated rural life, no neighbours to complain of the wailings of electric guitars at times when all sane (ie non-programmer) types are in the arms of Morpheus - this here Hawkwind will do nicely, especially as I'm still headful of those weird Michael Moorcock books I devoured on me hols. Now there's a missed opportunity for a very good game license - do the Jerry Cornelius stories as a game, I can just imagine the immaculately-dressed JC character armed with needlegun and Transmogifiers warping throughout spacetime.. chance for some seriously weird gameplay, sonix by Hawkwind (beats Bomb the Bass anyday) - unfortunately, probably a bit TOO weird for the current ultrasafe market. I'd do it myself but, me, I can't afford game licences.

Gameswise, just recently I've been having a bash at that Blood Money - very nice, slick scrolling and gameplay reminding me a lot of Mr. Heli - definitely a lot better than that earlier Psynopsis blaster (what was it? Oh, Menace, that's it.) which looked distinctly lacklustre when compared to its Amiga incarnation. BM is a pretty enjoyable example of the slow-scrolling zap-a-million-aliens-and-get-weapons kind of game. Now if they did a game like that but where you could choose which way to fly and how fast, and the aliens were all smart like the aliens in Stargate, now that would be a challenge. Oh well, if such a game doesn't come out soon I guess I'll have to do one myself.

I must admit to spending a fair bit of time on the Amiga, too, playing a Defender-variant called Datastorm. Definitely my kind of game, loadsafirepower and aliens which at least could get a couple of O-levels between them even if they're not the extraterrestrial



Einsteins of Stargate, severely challenging gameplay and extremely blasty sonix. If they port to the ST and retain the speed, definitely one to watch for. The game is closer to Dropzone than Stargate, though, (if Stargate is your aim there's another ST game which fits the bill nicely but which modesty prevents me from naming... know what I mean?)

Apparently Logotron are doing Star Ray on the Konix, and have arranged some deal whereby in the US the game goes out as Revenge of Defender, with official Williams approval. This I find odd; now Star Ray is a nice horiz-scrolling blaster and looks a bit like Defender, but it doesn't feel like Defender in play. You can't call a game Defender which only allows two shots onscreen at once and which has no Humanoids. If Eugene Jarvis were dead he'd be spinning in his grave, but he's not. Still, Star Ray does look exceptionally nice on the Konix, with 256-colour full-screen parallax scroll and all, and some very pretty sprites. It's a nice game but it just ain't Defender.

I had better finish writing now, it's four a.m. and I have to be fairly coherent tomorrow as I'm going into my Konix code to wring some extra speed out of my alien-control and sonix-driver modules. PC show looms at the end of this month - a chance to get up to London and hit up the CD shops and arcades, maybe if I'm lucky hassle one of those new STEs out of Atari to have a look at, and score some new games. Right now, maybe a couple more games of Stargate until this Hawkwind terminates...

Oh, by the way, everybody rush out and buy 'Passion' by Peter Gabriel, on CD. If you don't have a CD player, buy one. I described the album to a friend of mine as 'the sort of album you want to play in a dark room with the volume up as much as your speakers can take and four channels of lightsynth in front of you'. The music is very weird, amazingly powerful in places, and has caused me to fantasize about new and gigantic speakers for my hi-fi. If you hear of a small cottage somewhere in West Wales vanishing into Hyperspace in a mega sonic implosion, it's just me getting my new speakers and playing Passion at full whack...

May your aim be true and your FIRE button finger never atrophy!

YaK

YOU CAN RUN BUT YOU CAN'T HIDE FROM

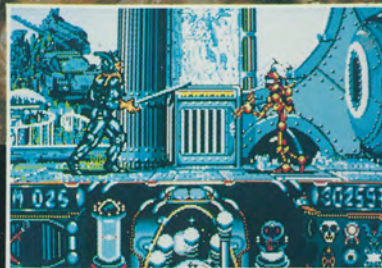
THE UNTOUCHABLES™



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