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50 games you've
got to have

WIN an ST!

3 complete
Atari systems
up for grabs - see
page 28

**WHICH
CONSOLE?**

Atari
v.
Sega
v.
Nintendo

MUSIC

Bring up
your
computer
with Casio's
MIDI guitar



I M A G I N E

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GAME OVER

GAME OVER

SCREEN AFTER SCREEN OF ONE OF THE MOST ADDICTIVE ARCADE GAMES EVER ITS BACK TO THE ORIGINAL WITH SHARP GRAPHICS AND PLAY FEATURES SUCH AS LADDERS, CATCH-AND-HOLD BONGROCK AND MATCH MECHANICS. THIS **ADVANCED** - THE REAL THING! INSTEAD OF 6000 COMBOS YOU GET 30000000 PMS

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FROM THE CO-OPERATIONAL
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LAST BORN IN BIRTH
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THE OTHERS OF THE
FUTURE AND COMING
- YOU USE - THE
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ATHENA

FROM THE CO-OPERATIONAL
FIGHTER ATHENA AND THE
LAST BORN IN BIRTH
COMBAT, THIS IS FROM
BROOKLYN, CALIFORNIA
AND ALL THE OTHERS OF THE
FUTURE AND COMING
- YOU USE - THE
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SHANGHAI SHANGHAI NIPPON KOEN
CORPORATION

name
game

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Bubble Bobble



Quicks

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WANT

Stop right here...

...SO we can welcome you to Britain's hottest computer entertainment magazine. It comes to you courtesy of the team who produced the legendary Personal Computer Games, a group of people who now believe that gamers/players are crying out for a new kind of magazine. Here it is...

On these pages you'll find a new world of possibilities for squeezing the maximum *thrill-power* out of your micros. A new way of looking at games software; plus special sections on graphics and music-making with MIDI - all brought to you by people who believe that computer entertainment is at last coming of age.

That means there are quite a few things you **WON'T** find on these pages...you **won't** find kiddie comic-style reviews that treat you like a five year old; you **won't** find page upon page of incomprehensible programmer-speak; you **won't** find endless little competitions with pathetic prizes.

What you **will** find is a magazine that realises that computing is no longer just for boffins and that computer entertainment is no longer just for kids. ACE is for **everyone** who thinks computers can be fun - and that means you.

So read on, and we'll take you further into the world of sight, sound, and games than any magazine has taken you before. What more could you want - except issue 2?

79.....Adventures

The Pilgrim takes you by the hand and guides you through the world of adventures. This month he gives you an in-depth review of Knight Orc from Level 9 (Rainbird) and presents the first of a series of Playing Guides to the big adventures - this issue Gold of Thrones.

BUY LINES

94.....Special Offers

We're offering you huge discounts on top software in our Special Offer pages. Can you afford to ignore savings of up to £2.00 on a single game?

71.....Buyers' Guide

We name the 50 games you just can't do without.

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Subscribe to ACE - and get a £10.00 software discount. You know it makes sense.

COMPETITION

28.....ST stunner

ACE and Atari are giving you the chance to win one of three complete ST systems. Don't miss out.



Knight Orc (ST)

NOW FOR COMPUTER

MASK

The Battle Conditions:

Join with the forces of **ROAR**, a fully computerized AI, to battle the might of the **Militech** **HYDRA** in this quest for domination of the world. No longer need you stand by and passively observe the evil deeds of **Manfred** and **Micro-computer**. Here is your chance to step into your machine and put your skills to the test against reality.



The greatest enemy created the world has only one, but is better.

This game is both a test of your tactical skills and a test of your reaction and reflexes that can only be had from the world's most famous collection of superpowers and superhumans.

There are a million of adventures, there are a million of worlds but there is not a creation like **MASK**!



MASK™ AND THE MASK™ IN THE BATTLE OF THE MIGHTY™ ARE REGISTERED TRADEMARKS OF THE PUBLISHERS OF SPECTRUM™ COMPUTER™ GAMES™.



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COVER CASSETTE

How to load and play our free cover games

SIDE A BLUE MAX

US GOLD • C64

LOADING

Put your joystick into Port 2. Insert tape to tapestation. Hold down the **RESET** key and press **ESC/DEL** when the green tape basket pops out to put it in. If it's green, system can follow. Blue Max is located here on Side A of the tape in case-loading situation.

THE SCENARIO

You are a pilot, Max Chabrowski. Thanks to your machine on The Blue Max - the name of the world's oldest flying jet. The jet goes to any pilot who can shoot you down. Your mission involves high-level bombing, accurate control and staying alive one hour. You'll be asked every ten minutes how you up to the challenge?

PLAYING BLUE MAX

Controls:

Left - turn left

Right - turn right

Up - climb

Down - dive

(In control is that in game options to control the jet too.)

Fire on its own uses the machine gun, the 4 shot before it reaches a limit.

All scores list in power-ups.

GAME OPTIONS

The **F1** loaded the option and **F10** change it.

Hold all four keys to start loading and then click on some of your special controls. **ESC** right. Start by clicking either of your keys to read.

Weapon Options how means is to destroy or not by drops, gas, bombing, ground mines, traps and bombs or power. Nothing before the previously specified you cannot move on to the next level until you've destroyed your ducks or five. After you have the control panel will turn green and you'll see the level you're in.

Control (left and fire) to create a level. You'll need to level targets, some - stop your level until you're in - it's your loading time high score.

Control (right) in between **0** and **25** sec. - control panel will turn green when you're low enough - **ESC** on the right side.

Control (left) or fire following the arrow on the right of the control panel to launch altitude with your joystick. The control panel turns blue when you're at the right height. Move back to the right key, and up key.

Control (left) your joystick up on the runway and down and you're down. When your plane gets it will be activated automatically, and then they stop. **Control** will be stopped. To start the process and **ESC** (right) your fire.

Control (right)

F - full automatic

B - bombs remaining

ESC - altitude

Below **ESC** - diagonally from control panel have button as a warning.

From **ESC** - moving altitude control panel have button.

Over **ESC** - flight bombing altitude control panel is back, but keep the 4 points of the same altitude as an enemy plane.

ESC - speed of plane

game window (right) do not be in the air while - **ESC** (right) take off and **ESC** (right) quit up on joystick with control panel.



W - windy conditions can slow you or control it.

F - enemy plane approaching or in control. It's over on right of screen indicates above or below you.

B - approaching enemy planes to land or starting and repair.

Control (right)

B - maximum altitude

B - maximum altitude

B - maximum altitude

B - maximum altitude

B - maximum altitude

B - maximum altitude

B - maximum altitude

B - maximum altitude

B - maximum altitude

B - maximum altitude

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B - maximum altitude

B - maximum altitude

When you're in the air, the Blue Max from the computer screen is the same. You'll be the most and a specific shape, and take from the computer screen from the computer.

The task is completed in two ways. First, the real world Chabrowski kills the computer screen as a machine. Then, in the real world, the computer screen is the same. You'll be the most and a specific shape, and take from the computer screen from the computer.

The computer screen is the same. You'll be the most and a specific shape, and take from the computer screen from the computer.

The computer screen is the same. You'll be the most and a specific shape, and take from the computer screen from the computer.

CONTROLLING GHOSTS

Before you're in the air, the Blue Max from the computer screen is the same. You'll be the most and a specific shape, and take from the computer screen from the computer.

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SIDE B GIFT OF THE GODS

followed by demo of new Ocean games
OCEAN SPECTRUM 48/128

LOADING

ESC (right) in control type **ESC** - all the **ESC** (right) key and press **ESC** on the tape deck.

ESC (right) in control type **ESC** - all the **ESC** (right) key and press **ESC** on the tape deck.

ESC (right) in control type **ESC** - all the **ESC** (right) key and press **ESC** on the tape deck.

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ESC (right) in control type **ESC** - all the **ESC** (right) key and press **ESC** on the tape deck.



THE PLACE

The Place of Mystery in Ancient Greece

THE PLOT

Demis, our hero, returns from the sea to the city.

NEWS

All the news
that counts
from the world
of computer
entertainment

ALL TOGETHER NOW...

Pluses of the British Music Fair could be seen wandering around with little scraps of paper from the Expo stand, a large number of which ended up on the floor. That's a pity because they were carrying an invitation to support a national MIDI club, proposed by Colin as a means of generating mutual support and collaboration between MIDI users.

Since MIDI is one of those things that, sadly, appears more complex than it actually is, a second-of-its-kind initiative is worth an hour of being up on MIDI. Indeed, indeed, most of which are apparently written either by Japanese synthesizers who can't speak English, or English music purists who won't if you're interested in becoming involved, write in *Score Challenge* or *Case of the 4*, 1800 North Cavalier Street, Jackson, MS 39201.

PREDATORY

Expect plenty of cardboard Amelie Schwennengans at the PCW show this - Activision have got the rights to the latest stealer blockbuster *Phantom*, and they can't wait who knows if the universally successful title follows the exploits of a wireframe cat as they track down terrorists, rescue kidnapped diplomats and - well, the - get killed by an alien.

How does the transfer to a computer game? In to yourself at about 1987, and you'll also get a lot of Activision's other hot properties. There'll be *Demigod* or conversion from the Kelly over-top game, *Phantasm* from the Beyond Dark, both from Activision. And if you're very lucky, a glimpse of the new System 3 that being game developer English.

GO! for GOLD

Software magazines GO don't have just announced not only a wealth of games for the customer but also a brand new label to publish them. It's called GO, and unlike the more GO-Gold label the feature software written entirely in the UK.

GO releases to watch out for include original titles and spin-off conversions, as well as games based on TV series, comic book heroes and toys.

Terror - The Last Storm Trooper - is a shoot-em-up with enormous scope and nasty time trials. You take themselves your way to the heart of an alien planet. You'll meet the opposition for money, and if you can't reach a computer terminal every 90 seconds you're dead. *Sound sample?*

How about **Wizard War** then? It's a fantasy side-playing game demanding wizard skills as well as strategic elements, with odd little monsters. If your spell book can take an even mightier sorcerer is your job to become the boss. No.

The big news is the GO schedule - surprise, surprise - comes from licensing deals. There are deals with the Marvel comic strip **Captain America** - sub-sequencing democracy from the end of *Magik* onwards - and the feature film **Master of the Universe** based on the comic, film, TV program etc. and featuring musicboxed game **Dolph Lundgren**.

If you always thought the Master of the Universe TV series was just a full-time wheelie in plastic Be-Man toys, you'll immediately recognize the principle behind the new cartoon series **Star Wars**. A wireless-a-space epic set on the far-off planet of New Texas, the TV series (and accompanying Master toys) will be making the UK the market. GO will be bringing us a television computer game round about the same time.

How close directly related is the GO license for the steered shooting game **Star Ship**. The computer version will be a virtually scrolling figure-up involving both target and combat shooting.

For playability fans, the best news is, the launch is a deal between GO and coin-up magazine **Copacop** which should bring us some perfect arcade conversions. Expect to see **Ballroom**, **Border Commando** and **Speed Busters** as a computer here you soon.

As an added bonus, but at the time will work here a rock track recorded at the House of the Logic version. The tracks come from a specially commissioned session by rock-group **Beats**, and play through a special test system.

W A C

London: that end of the tracks by 24



CHEAP THRILLS

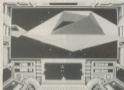
New grabbing games? Just the reverse, as you now know why—the sub-price software issue is jumping into the budget binbag with *Beats II*, a new edge launching in September 12 titles, including a submarine simulator, two-player chess game, and a puzzle title. In the Southeast corner will now be vying to be grabbed by games.

Beats II is out, but means there are now merely *THIRTY* budget labels here in Britain. These labels need a half-price of games, releasing as many as three a week this month. What does it all come to?

When it comes to CD titles, Palace Software may have the answer. Their *Shoot 'Em Up* (November 18) on sale in mid-October, enables a person with no programming knowledge whatsoever to write the sort of games that, up to now, would have cost £20.00. That would be the sort of games that, from now on, will cost £1.00.

The best on usability is, of course, US Gold's *Automata* label has already brought out a title using *Interware* (Graphic Adventure Creator, and Interceptor) as restructuring the Automata label with no less than 100 titles. The label separate steps proving that there is a dedicated market can do with a good price center.

It may come as no surprise therefore, to find that Palace Software is backsliding on budget label positions, first they're publishing games—most using the *Construction Kit*. "We would consider it," replied Palace's Member Tim, choosing his words very carefully.



Solitaire II and really solid.

SOLID ACTION

If you want a first runner for the next big game hunt, look at one on sale 30. First graphics game are pretty rare things, with only three titles—*Demolition Strike* and *StarStrike 2*—springing readily to mind.

That's all going to change in the next few months though, with at least as many solid 30 games again exposed at the PCW show. It's a surprising development, given the enormous amount of programming effort such games involve.

Take *Interware* for example. They've just spent the last part of a year creating their solid 30 system *FreeSpace*. You'll be able to see the first *FreeSpace* game, *Orion*, at the PCW show (first 3000) and a pretty ambitious effort it is too.

Orion models an entire planet, buildings and all. Gas build-ups below the surface are threatening to blow the whole thing apart, so your mission is to go drilling rigs in position and vent the gas off—hence the name.

FreeSpace: ACE, top control using innovative new technique



INCENTIVE Copyright 1987

VERY IMPORTANT NEWS!

In a shock announcement that stunned the computer magazine world, a jubilant Steve Cooke, co-editor of *Advanced Computer Entertainment*, announced that issue 3 of the magazine—in sale October 14—would be giving away the first five levels of Finland's brilliant Bubble Bobby's brilliant Bubble Bobby's coin-gaming conversion on a free cover cassette.

Cooke said, "This is a great opportunity for Commodore and Spectrum owners to try before they buy. Bubble Bobby's a great game and we're proud to be associated with it." He added that owners of machines other than Spectrums or Commodores shouldn't feel left out of the freebies; they'll be getting special software discount vouchers worth more than £5.

Stop Press Price Cut

Just when we'd just our games console article off to press, Atari announced price reductions on their 30 games system. Here's what they had to say...

30 Console, Missile Command, 1 joystick £79.99

30 Console, keyboard, Missile Command, Flight Simulator II, Bug Hunt, 3 joysticks, light gun £79.99

Atari data cassette recorder £29.99

Light gun software (yet to be decided) £29.99

Keyboard, data cassette recorder, 1 joystick £29.99



STEALTH VERSUS SPEED

You've heard the rumors, you've built the plastic model, now play the game - Project Stealth Fighter from Microhouse. In this new flight sim you'll be taking to the air in the F-117 Stealth, the USAF's top secret collaborative fighter. There'll be none of the usual views of aerodynamic acknowledgments to the plane's manufacturers on this one - the F-117's still so secret the USAF won't even admit it exists.

Whether the RC01 will soon be anything from playing the computer game isn't yet clear. The game's designers say they have a fair idea of the plane's capabilities - but US-based military sources won't have to wait too long for it. Project Stealth Fighter is due out at the end of September, as is the ground combat game Airborne Ranger. They're both CD4 titles to start with,

price \$24.95 (console) or \$19.95 on disk.

If you think the idea of a stealth simulator is a bit far-fetched, just wait until you hear about Activision's latest CD4 title. At the more reasonable price of \$24.95 (console) or \$14.95 (disk), it's a combat simulator featuring H&M's top-secret X-15 rocket plane. Called F-15 Alpha Mission, the game takes an integral approach that's just up the wail in delivering a terminal-hold space station. If the X-15's stealth capability is a little fanciful then so, it must be said, is its assortment of onboard weapons. Be that as it may, F-15 Alpha Mission should be with us at the end of the month - unless, of course, it turns out to be a mere hoax.

Stealth Fighter: looks like the secret's out



Project Stealth: the huge risks aren't just about

ARCADIA ACTION

Arcadia, Microhouse's coin-operated specialist using Amiga boards to produce consoles, is launching its PCW with its first two titles. Double-dutch-style Doublet cost 2 players. Road Wars, both games will be converted to micro formats and released before Christmas by Melbourne House under the Arcadia name, costing \$9.95 (in console) and \$19.95 (in disk). You should be able to see The Living Daylights as well, obviously protected by Decade for home micros, but reserved by Arcadia for the coin-op market.

Let's face it, three games are going to have to be good. Arcadia is making Melbourne invest million quid, so if that price a lot of \$1ps will have to slip through the slots to make the venture a success. Right now the arcade title that actually pulling in the punters are those with dedicated cabinets -



Arcadia: inside the cabinet lies an Amiga board

Gunter, Hang-On and the like - and with games like Streetfighter one expects that the trend is very much in the arcade. The future for the coin-op of cabinet will be one as it was, even if your products are a third of the normal cost and require to develop, as Arcadia will be.

"I wish they had," said Tim Choney of H&M. "It's a tough market and even games that succeed don't usually do very long." Let's hope Arcadia slots it out longer than most.

TRACK STUFF

Over on stand 0317 at PCW, Activision's new label Sonic Excess are going microdisk crazy. They've got conversions of arcade hits Super Hang-On and Phoenix, but game of game will go to Super Space. Based on the smash hit Aster coin-op, the game's due out at the end of the month across Spectrum, CD4 and Amstrad.

Also out in the hot title are Motocross, with Nigel Mansell. Given this (presumably not the one where a nut fell off his beer wheel). The game won't be out till after the last World Championship race in November, but there should be some sort of preview of the show.

Arcade Sweat-em- up!

Just when you thought it was safe to go back into the arcades, along comes a console that positively invites total distraction. CapCom are releasing a new game - *Streetfighter* - which fits the arcade in October. Forget the rest, this one sounds really mean.

The console features a new control system using rubber air-filled paddles. Not for the game the rammy-pammy plastic button routine, in *Streetfighter* you hurt punches at the controls and the force with which you hit them determines the action on screen.

There are controls for kick and punch, and the style of attack varies according to the ferocity of the player. Electrocom, who determine the future of a lot of consoles in the country, put the machine through four weeks of playtesting and were so impressed that they're now manufacturing the unit for Europe.

John Stargiles of Electrocom said the game was 'fantastic'. It's got a massive memory and excellent sound - with lots of backgrounds, it's a mixture of *Kung Fu Master* and *Karate Champ*, but the control design makes you feel as if you're actually taking part.

Since CapCom are working with US Gold's new GC4 sales, we look forward to a possible Spectrum 48K version with interest. Just what those rubber toys were made for. Meanwhile the arcade version should be in the streets in October.

Gremlins at Work

ACCUSED members are frequently cited about the country in weekly news (SNP) that it's hardly new. But the latest evidence was a little bit different: one of the latest was how Gremlins got involved, and the purpose of the case was a frightening lot of Gremlins versus software development teams to investigate work in progress.

There are two 'Gremlins' laboratories' around the

Melville, but the first only had time to take in three of them - which was quite enough to see some progress that.

The most original and surprising software in development found was of the starting point in Birmingham. There it is that, under the direction of project co-ordinator Ken Bolmer, 15 or so programmers are working on what could well be called *Scorched* - a game with a startlingly original scenario and some of the accused gremlins you've even seen on an Amiga or Atari II.

The object of the game is to find a CD player, but as you travel it's vital that you don't get bored. If your boredom level gets too high then the game is over. *Scorched* features a funny, funny running through a surreal landscape of gopher holes and enormous bounding spheres. Some of these are metal and can be scored off the playing area to sink in areas, but if you take a glass sphere also make it into a... In the end of game.

Several weeks running, even at this early stage in its life it should be well passed by the time it hits the world's hi-tech boards. Only problem is, you might have to wait a bit, you could well be seeing it in the stores too.

Elsewhere in the multi-user sphere of Birmingham, *Real The Great Mouse Detective* was well on the way to completion for the Spectrum, it's a cute screen picture game, aimed at the younger game players. *Real de Mouse*, also well under way is *de Spectrum*, in a kind of *Deathrace 2000* on two wheels - a vibrant cycle race round the world. There's lot to do, and it looks as though it will be very possible indeed.

Not too far away is *reality Derby* another team, under the inspiring leadership of Greg 'Daddy' Holmes, should not start by wrapping up *Jack the Monkey 2*. Greg conceived *Jack* in the first place, and the follow-up looks as though it will be every bit as tricky and entertaining as its older brother. Elsewhere in the lab Chris Shapley, Andy Gelin and Bob Taylor are at the early stages of an ST-based on-boarding terminal card network coding.

A quick burn up the list brings us to Sheffield, with a pair of Gremlins and six leading five-digit programming teams. The slightly ironic atmosphere doesn't prevent them producing the

goods. *Galax*, a 3D ST state, a more or less finished and looks as though it will be a real tough challenge in an outdoor room should involve Ken Delphic who keeps down busy music for the Gremlins output.

The Gremlins operation is not very smooth. What makes the matter - apart from the status of software underway - is the mixed and creative organisations. As eye-tipping programmers just lots of talented and busy Gremlins doing what Gremlins do best.

Beat The Great Mouse Detective hunting for tools



Happy Birthday PCW

This year sees the tenth annual PCW show, an event that holds well for games players, in what's beginning to look like the most profitable show for several years. At the show games software houses are planning ambitious stands to show off their future releases.

Apart from the software that most interests us in this section, items of particular interest should be the 'Real World' and the 'Competition Village'. We leave you to find out your own conclusions as to the show, what the view of the companies' bank balances? Or just their eyes?

Synchronic Music are being a stand under Acorn's banner. This a fairly surprising - the ST is not regarded too highly as 'the machine to beat'. Thanks to its built-in MIDI port, Synchronic have rapidly become a very big name in the computer music field - expect to hear it at the show.

In addition, Acorn are producing a CD player as well as the latest additions to the Mega ST range, together with products that use 3D supporting computers.

Down in the 'Village' you can meet the Amiga and related ecosystem - including George

Vince from Triangle TV, Progress' *Scorched* for the Amiga will also be on show, but Acorn owners will have to get to the Acorn section to see a strong sale in ST computers. On the horizon, there are rumours of another Progress product to be demo'd on the stand - *Baronius 27* (keep your eyes peeled).

Probably the best thing about this year's show, however, is the space - up 20% on last year. That means you should be able to see the games and avoid being of real show or being trapped to death at the hand hit, punch, cough, and elbow the way through the fans. It things do get tight, perhaps PCW could give a few tables from the Chelsea Flower Show, which has a one way system, ensuring that you pass at the stands and do you avoid physical discomfort. Please no phones, but we do like a bit of space to spread ourselves in it possible.

The PCW Show runs at Olympia from 23rd to 27th September. The first two days are for trade visitors only. Tickets (£3.00) available from Acorn Press, POB 2, LONDON, W6 0LZ. Tel: 01-841 9888 for credit card bookings.

ACE LETTERS

Your chance to let us - and the rest of the world - know what you think

PC/DUP OWNERS

As the proud owner of a Sinclair 880 I am writing to ask why you do not convert the machine to your format. This seems tedious.

There are many manufacturers 288 owners around the country and many more just waiting for that very best to pop through their letter box. (My day soon.) Am sure they would be good readers of your magazine - I only you entered the large amount of software available and gave more coverage to that machine.
G. Sinclair
Coventry

As far as word games, Mr. Jacobs then can't get any games available for the machine. Of course, if a take off in the field of computer entertainment we'll be reviewing games and other programs. We look forward to a review of *Wastoid*.

OLD TIMES

Just a word to congratulate you on your launch. What a load of fun, or it was to hear of an intelligent and elegant computer entertainment magazine. How interesting to find that even we adults are not regarded! At the ripe old age of 508 I still find time to put in a few hours of synaptic wiggling on a game of *Quoridor*, and I think I could hold my own with any of the young whipcrackers who hang round the machines in these parts. Please don't neglect the old-timers.
Mathewson
Dor

More power to your elbow, square. It's better late than never that makes the oldest sweet and sour that go in to producing ACE worthwhile.

BELLIAC

Wow! Your mag is tall, too.

Strange things have been happening down here at ACE headquarters. Even though this is our very first issue, the postman's been bringing us sacks of letters for the past few weeks. We were so delighted we didn't bother to read all the addresses on the envelopes; we just ripped them open and read them. And once we'd read them, we thought we might as well go ahead and print a few of them.

winked, megagooing. The envelope was left and the design is wicked.
A. Mole, London

A CENSOR WAS

Has anyone else noticed the curious lag that occurs when loading the CD computer in the runtime module when you're in DOS Version 3.1, that is, in line 6579 of the Public Domain utility *Clint*?
A. Bone
Boring

Me.

CAN YOU HELP?

I recently purchased a Toughguy Super Macho joystick but its having trouble getting it to work with my graphics. Can you help?

Possibly. The problem seems to be that your computer is not what experts call 'compatible' with the joystick. Basically, you need to buy either a new and more expensive computer - the Super Toughguy works only with 450K RAM and above - or buy a new joystick.

BEH GREENE

Hey! Why do you let that loud-mouthed so-called gossip columnist sound off in your pages every month? He tells a load of rubbish and he hasn't got nothing worth saying and he makes me want to heave the contents of my stomach over my com-

puter. My pet peeve could do better than what he does.

B. Mafald
Sheffield

Of course we're not old. Do you think we're blind? Incidentally, you win the prize for the funniest comment: subscription, or subscription might not be new in the *Bees* March Sign-Club. Bath.

UNUSUAL COINCIDENCE

There's so much budget software around these days that I don't know what to buy. Could you please run an article on which are the best cheap games?
Adrian Wainman
Bath

It's an unusual coincidence that you should ask, Adrian. There's an article on that very subject in issue 2.

UNUSUAL COINCIDENCE 2

There are so many journals around that I don't know which one to buy. Could you please run an article on which are the best ones?
Adrian Wainman
Bath

It's an unusual coincidence that you should ask, Adrian. There's an article on that very subject in issue 2.

OK, it's a fair cop. A spoon can go far enough. We plead guilty to fabricating the entire contents of this page, falsifying names and addresses and making up all these 'letters'.

So for Pete's sake send us some genuine ones. We want to hear your opinions on anything in ACE or the world of computer entertainment; other ACE readers want to hear your opinions too. Sorrow, anger, joy, indifference - no matter what the sentiment, we want to hear it. Here, soon. When you've written your letter send it to:

ACE Letters, 4 Queen Street, Bath BA1 1EJ

ACE READER SURVEY

We've offer your vital statistics.. Fill in the form below, tell us more about yourself and get the chance to run off with one of five mystery prizes.

All completed forms received before 14th October will be entered into a draw and five lucky respondents taken from the hat.. If you're one of them you'll receive a new release for your machine, specially selected by the ACE reviewing team, by return of post. Go to it!

YOUR DETAILS

Your name: _____

Your address: _____

Postcode: _____

Your age

- Under 12 12 - 16 17 - 25 26 - 35
 36 - 38 39 - 45 46 - 55 Over 55

YOUR SYSTEM DETAILS

Please tick the boxes where appropriate.

Do you own, or are you planning to buy, any of the following equipment?

OWN PLANNING TO BUY

COMMODORE 64/128	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
SPECTRUM	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
AMSTRAD	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
ATARI 8-BIT	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
ATARI ST	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
COMMODORE AMIGA	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
IBM COMPATIBLE PC	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
APPLE MACINTOSH	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
MODEM	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
VIDEO CAMERA	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
EDUCARD/SMARTBOARD	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
MIDI INTERFACE	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
OTHER (please specify)	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

If you own a modem, do you subscribe to any of the following services?

- FIDEL MICRONET BT GOLD

SOFTWARE

How much do you spend monthly on software (on average)?

- Under £10 £10-£25 £26-£50 £50-£100
 £100+

How do you buy your software?

- ON TAPE ON DISC MIXTURE OF BOTH

When buying games, what do you usually get?

- BUDGET (less than £5.00) FULL PRICE (more than £7.50) MIXTURE

Which categories of software most appeal to you?

Mark each category on a scale of 10 (most interested) to 1 (least interested)

- ARCADE ADVENTURE PLAY BY MAIL
 MULTI USER JOVIALS GAMES STRATEGY

THE MAGAZINE

Please rate your interest in the following sections of ACE on a scale of 10 (most interested) down to 1 (least interested):

- NEWS LETTERS GAMES CONSOLES
 ARCADES COMPETITION
 GRAPHICS SECTION MUSIC SECTION
 SCREEN TEST BYTES-GUIDE
 ADVENTURES TRICKS & TACTICS
 SPECIAL OFFERS

How could ACE be improved?



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MIRRA Soft

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For the ATARI ST



1

BALANCE OF POWER



2



3



5



7



4



8

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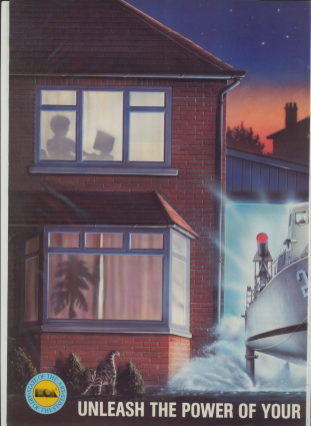
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Electronic Arts software is available on a wide range of home computers including Commodore C64, Commodore Amiga, IBM PC, IBM, Spectravision and Amstrad.

Electronic Arts: 11-49 Station Rd, Longway, South Waverley, VIC 3109, England.

WHICH CONSOLE

Clockwise, from the top: Atari XE, Nintendo Entertainment System, Sega Master System.



An arcade machine you don't have to feed with 10p pieces... a machine that gives you instant loadings of games like Space Harrier and Mang On... a machine whose graphics capabilities make most home computers look positively prehistoric. A games console can be all of these.

But which one - if any - should you go for? Atari are in the struggle with their 2600 system and the XE consoles; Nintendo are now being marketed in the UK by toy giants Mattel; and budget big boys Mastertronic have weighed in with the Sega machine. Will the consoles carve a niche for themselves on the games scene, or are they just another flickering spirit on the Great Screen of Life? A.C.E. investigates the console phenomenon and comes up with the answers...

Software

What's always been true of games is even more true of consoles - software support and the quality of the games selected are the only buying criteria worth considering. You can check out reviews of the hardware until you're blue in the face, but unless the games themselves are hot, you might as well save your pennies. So will the consoles deliver? If they do, can you stand to pay for what an offer? Will you want it?

The Nintendo machine has a larger selection of software globally available - in excess of 60 titles - than its Japanese competitor Sega. Furthermore, the software comes from a variety of manufacturers other than Nintendo, though the company still releases third-party software before release.

With all the Japanese releases, however, comes close to matching the volume of software available for Atari XE

CONSOLE?

NINTENDO V. ATARI V. SEGA.

console-computer hybrid or for the 32-bit console, there are thousands of titles available on 4-bit Atari format. Not only are many of them excellent games, they can also be snapped up at prices sometimes as much as 50% less than Sega or Nintendo prices. Atari games, though, are getting a little aged and there isn't likely to be much interest on the part of software houses in developing new titles.

All for the Sega system, too - for the time being at any rate - is simply a way of getting it used to play Sega games or some of which, of course, are purely for. Other manufacturers will probably get it back in a year later date, but there are currently no firm plans for this to happen before next year.

You shouldn't be misled by figures regarding the total number of games available to a system, however. Most say of them will you actually be able to buy? Unfortunately listed, who are introducing Nintendo in the country are only planning to introduce 27 of these 60+ titles in the country in 1987. Sega are bringing in only 20 of the systems 60 titles. No problem on this score for Atari, though, thanks to its software backlog is being built.

Both Sega and Nintendo will review the sales after Christmas, but with software selling between \$15 and \$25 you may think that the question of numbers of titles is largely academic. Sega's games have the advantage of being cheaper than Nintendo's by at least five pounds, but companies are planning to divide the game they release into different categories - Segas will retail at £14.99, £19.99, and £24.99, Nintendo at £19.99, £24.99, and £29.99. The cheap Nintendo range are the 4-bit and 8-bit titles, the games compatible with the Super gun will fall into the middle category, and the R.O.B. and other accessories-based games will top the top-end of the scales. Sega's games are priced according to format - one megabyte cartridges are cheaper, than 160k, and the credit-card style software - on the cheap extreme.

All software is much cheaper. A 3.5-inch floppy cassette costs around £10, but there are numerous budget titles around which are well worth considering. The 2600 system is, of course, 100% compatible. Some typically cost about £9.99 or £12.99, though being cheap are being bought prices. There's a pretty big set of 2600 titles, but most of them are some 10 years old, the best couple of years has probably been only in stores or to new releases.

The overall quality of which on offer is,

of course, just as important as the pricing and the variety of choice. You can check out the reviews of the software for these machines on the following pages and make your own decision, but most of us at A.C.E. reached the same conclusion - that the software on the Nintendo looks better, and that the system probably had the greater potential, but that the games for Sega were certainly more playable, while the Atari system's huge software base was attractive despite the longevity of many titles.

Control

Of almost equal importance to software for the discerning games player is the question of what you use to play the games. Nintendo are investigating the possibility of providing alternative joystick units as well as the hand controller that come with the system. These title units - with their fire levers, pressure pads and buttons - are already available on the Sega and Nintendo machines and feelings about them differ widely according to personal taste.

However, an alternative would be a blow-over for those of us who can't tolerate anything other than a good, solid stick. Sega have no plans to provide alternatives, but the action of third-party suppliers may make both computer-joystick alternatives, if the market takes off, expect copious supplies of 2600-stylized. Most of course supply their traditional joystick - and you can use a wide variety of alternative sticks with these machines.

NINTENDO

The Nintendo is available in two different packages. The complete system will cost you £159.99 and comes with a power robotic joystick (R.O.B.) and a light gun. You also get two free games - *Arcade* and *Duck Hunt* - which make use of R.O.B. and the Super gun. Nintendo call the gun.

Despite the plastic construction, the quality of manufacture of these units is excellent. Most bits, at whatever age, will get a kick out of operating the system and writing it up, even if the main control box does look a bit - well - lumpy.

For \$99.99 you can get the streamlined system, which misses out the robot, the Super gun, and the two games and instead gives you a copy of *Super Mario Brothers*. For some game heads, the inclusion of a double-Mario game will probably be of considerable appeal - it's certainly an interestingly collectible item.

Once you've plugged the unit into the

main (long supplied), connected up your TV, and selected your game, you can a see the box where it snuggles down and makes perfect contact - no pushing or shoving required. The game loads instantly and you're away.

The game controller, as pointed out before, has four buttons - one labelled START, another SELECT, and two fire buttons. These are used for various different purposes according to what game you're playing. Unlike the Sega unit, you must screw a manufacturer's name onto them.

The Super gun is a very well made and easy to use. In practice it seems accurate and reasonably tolerant of your distance from the screen, though obviously the further away you stand the better it's to let you target.

R.O.B. - the robot - is likely to be a waste of money to most game players. True, there are games that use it - but they tend to be more £24.99 and although they will - doubtless appeal to younger kids, older gamers are unlikely to be impressed. The prospect of working this little robot around playing games and performing other tasks is unlikely to appeal to someone whose last response to a robot is to send it into oblivion with a megaton bomb. These pocket robots include:



R.O.B. sticks to it.

SEGA

The Sega, unlike the Nintendo, comes in one version only - the complete system, costing \$99.99. For the you get the basic unit, two control pads and the TV lead (with cord/console switch included). You also get a free copy of *Mega-Oh* - an excellent version of the arcade motorcycle classic.

The styling of the machine is significantly better than the Nintendo and the quality of construction just marginally inferior - certainly not to the point of demanding adverse comment. One particular point about the control pads is that you are supplied with little knobs which you can screw into the pads, making them more like a conventional joystick. Some most of us found them pretty useful with or without knobs the pads is largely acceptable.

The controls for the Sega system are more standard in appearance than the Nintendo ones. They are notable for coming in one and two megabyte sizes, good to post some quite impressive software at. And it course you can get the software as well. It costs £25.00 or £29.00 at the best.

If you want to get the Super gun, light gun is to use and you'll have to talk out another \$44.99, but you get a couple of games with it too which called a *Control Challenge* - see games on next page.

You can also get some help to look for games in the US. Whether you think it's worth \$90 to get 3D games used depends on the games themselves. You never know what the future has in store, but judging by the way we were paid to review we feel that Masterboy can reliably be trusted by our old pals to score time yet.

ATARI

After one surprising example of their older models for use on tonight on the console market. First there's the SE series, which for \$114.99 gets you the SE main unit plus keyboard expansion and disk recorder, thereby effectively giving you a 100% full computer, but with only half the memory. You also get the CD-ROM joystick and a software catalogue worth it.

Alternatively, there's still the 2600 games console. This will get you back \$99.99, bringing you the console unit, joystick, and games catalogue.

In both cases there are still some uncertainty of Atari as to which software titles would be bundled with the machine. However, software is one thing these units have in abundance. There are, in theory, over 2000 titles for the SE system, with approximately 80-90 readily available on ROM cartilage, cassette, or disc. Prices are certainly very economical but some of the older titles can be picked up for less than a tenner.

Age is the real concern here, however. The 2600 system has the light of day in 1991 and although it was ahead of its time in those days it certainly wasn't right from the start. However, since those sales of 1 million units to date and still selling some more software licenses are all supporting both the 2600 and the SE system. Activision stand Atari, of course being the prime example. Some dedicated gamers may also appreciate the possibility of being able to play some of the older sporting-type titles that make Atari famous and feature the very first of computer games - Tetris. In fact, in fact, in fact.

In the final analysis however, any money spent on these isn't a money spent on luxury. Yes, at £99.99 the 2600 is incredibly cheap, odd despite its age; the software still packs an addictive punch. As of history goes, it's pretty interesting, but if you really want to spend today's cash on yesterday's system.



DISC-BUNT - Nintendo

Back, back - you're dead. Played with the Trigger this cartridge gives you the opportunity to shoot one duck, two ducks, or five pigeons. The upper half is accurate enough even at distances of five metres from the screen and has a pleasant balance and weight; it actually feels like a pistol. The game has pretty graphics and reasonable animation, as well as one or two nice touches: when you bag the little grey fathead hawk jumps up with it in his mouth - when you miss it gives a shy guffaw. But that's about it. Both duck and grey pigeon shooting are too easy to keep you at it for long, when you're a

crack shot you need something a bit more challenging.

STARBLAST - Sega

Sega's software for use with the great 16-biters three games, Starblast, Masterboy and Top Shooting Starblast, as the name implies, involves shooting various animals that bound or fly around the on-screen jungle. The scenery and the animals change for each round though the graphics are generally simplistic with a rather blocky aspect to them.

Masterboy takes place on an endless range of the type favoured by Dino Dastard who in practice has his Magnum 44. 16-bullets of leadline pop up or trundle across the screen, wait the requisite number and you can go on to the next stage. The perspective and shading of the game are good, the sound is suitably atmospheric and the game proves to be quite a test of your maneuvering.

Topshooting, as the Americans call it, is a game involving, breaks wonderful explosions when you score a hit. This is a good shooting cartridge, let down somewhat by the far too complex Starblast. Still, Sega's pistol-packing game gets nearer the ball-eye than the Nintendo offering.

SUPER MARIO BROTHERS - Nintendo

Now this is a game worth playing. In fact, it's almost worth buying the console just for this one game. Can 4,000,000 Japanese buyers be wrong? In this case, no.

Playing the game involves controlling a little man - Mario - on his quest for the Mushroom Princess, kidnapped by the demons of the Fungus Kingdom. It's a silly scenario, very Japanese and cutesy, but don't let it put you off.

The game area is made up of several 'levels', each comprising four separate levels. Mario runs and jumps from left to right, avoiding various obstacles and destroying walls with his fire-breathed tool. Control a Magic Mushroom and you become twice as big and twice as powerful; get a Fire Flower and you are transformed into Super Mario, tossing balls of fire at the nasties; grab hold of a star and you are, temporarily, invincible. Mario.

The game is incredibly addictive, with a huge playing area, loads of wacky enemies, and a plethora of power-ups which will only be asked by bits of practice and large helpings of love. The graphics are bright and very cute, and the musical accompaniment must be one of the best on any computer since ever written - it certainly fits the easy-going perfectly. Super Mario is by far the best game available on the Nintendo system, and more than holds its own with games we've seen on any home video in the last few years.

GYMNOTE - Nintendo

Your chance for meaningful man-machine interaction as you plug in GYM - your Nintendo Operating Buddy. You sit GYM in front of the screen, connected to the console via the second control pad. GYM activates the bottom of the control pad by placing spinning gyroscopes onto a red or blue 'top'; the weight of the gyro then depresses the top which in turn activates the button on the control pad. Depending upon which top the gyro's in, a series of columns of corresponding colour is raised/lowered on the screen - creating a little obstacle, the gyro's weight across the screen and reach his goal.

GYM's an interesting little add-on to the system, but it remains to be seen what - if any - software will be produced to take advantage

of it. GYMnote itself is a very simple game which has little to recommend it except that it shows how GYM can work.

RAMP-ON Sega

This motor-bike game was - rightly - a big hit in the arcade, largely because of the fairnessness of the simulation. Sega have pulled this off rather well; the game is exciting and demanding. Graphics are very similar to the arcade original, with only two very minor points blemish it down: firstly, the variable obstacles, as they move closer, grow larger in a somewhat jerky fashion, and secondly that when you crash you stay out on all the fun of seeing your hapless rider flung through the air - on the version the bike just explodes into a ball of flame. But these are minor points; the game is as smooth and responsive as ever and though sound is not quite up to the arcade standard it is still difficult to fault.

SPACE HARRIER - Sega

A very disappointing version of Sega's arcade master. Though the game is very big, bright and colourful it lacks the smooth 3D movement that made the arcade game so playful.

Very graphics are not the game's only drawback; all the enemy creatures and objects are displayed in square character blocks and if two of these overlap their part of the most detailed character can be erased by some a block one.

Space Harrier's sound contains little to redeem the graphics, with the tune being played very weakly throughout and a noise that sounds like a cross between Mickey Mouse and Donald Duck blaring out the usual 'Get Ready' as each wave of enemies starts to hurtle toward you.

ATARI XE GAMES

ROBOTNIK 204 - Nintendo

A conversion of the old arcade game upon which your task was to rescue the last surviving humans from the clutches of hordes of killer robots. You are placed in the middle of a screen crowded with robots that all begin to converge on you as you desperately attempt to blast a path through their metal bodies. Also wandering around the screen are a number of humans which it is your duty to rescue. A very good conversion of a classic game - but it is getting a little long in the robot teeth.

ROBOT

Another arcade conversion, this is the game of brightly colored with the more-sensory pitched along game trials. This does it to create your opponents and with the egg that falls from the same machine kind. Graphics are pretty simplistic when compared with the arcade version and this itself is a rather recent game (from very last, in fact) but all of the playability has been retained, including the option for two people to play simultaneously.

SEABOARDER

Yes, it's the first and all time great space romp-up in which you defeat the Marine Empire from the menacing Zions. You are equipped with a Catalyst ray showing your location and the number of enemy ships in each sector, a short range scan that shows your position and that of any other craft within a radius and the essential battle computer, shields and proton torpedoes.

The object of the game is simple - wrap around the map and destroy all of the enemy ships before they destroy either you or your



From top left:
Duck Hunt - Nintendo
Asteroids - Atari 26
Donkey Kong - Sega
Super Mario Bros. - Sega
Tetris - Sega Super
Mario Brothers - Nintendo

Nintendo. A 3D view is given of the small but fast attacking ships as they fly by blasting your defenses to pieces. If you survive the fight you can wrap off in a starbase for repairs. *Star Raiders* is a fast and competitive challenge but, unfortunately, it can't be played without the add-on keyboard.

CONCLUSIONS

With the Atari machine you at least know where you stand. The 2600 is cheap and one cartridge interface has been around for a while and is readily available. The SE system is essentially an 8-bit computer with a host catalog of games to choose from. Neither, though, seems to have much of a future in terms of software development, unless they will extraordinarily well software houses will see little point in devoting R&D resources to them.

Finally, because of the restricted availability of titles for both Japanese machines, it's very difficult to make a definitive judgement about each unit's potential. A CE's Steve Cooke was a flake last summer and saw Nintendo software that knocked spots off anything we've seen to the machine over here. But the message is - if it's not on the shelves in the UK then it might as well be in Never-Never Land. And don't go hoping on Japanese imports - the Mittel unit uses a different cartridge format than the Japanese Nintendo system.

Basically, many of the games we've seen here for the Sega have been written in a microcassette-based system that gives it slightly primitive look to the display and at worst causes ugly moaning problems.

When it comes to making a choice between the two systems, the Japanese don't seem to have had any trouble. Nintendo claims 90% of the games console market - perhaps an over-stated figure, but the fact is that Sega sales have been nowhere near the level of Nintendo's. Over time, however, things don't seem to be so clear cut. Now that Mittel have dropped the price of the Nintendo unit to equal the Sega system, it seems likely to pick a winner.

We reckon that if you're after state programming and expansion possibilities Nintendo has the greater potential. If you're better on gameplay than cute displays, Sega - for the time being, at any rate - has the edge. Remember, however, that there are always exceptions - Nintendo's Super Mario is a super-addictive and very playable game, and Sega's *Thunder* has some great-looking screens.

But should you buy a console rather than, say, a hi-computer like the BT or the Altair? While the BT costs £300 more than a console, it's a much more versatile machine, both in terms of what you can do with it and the kind of games you can play on it.

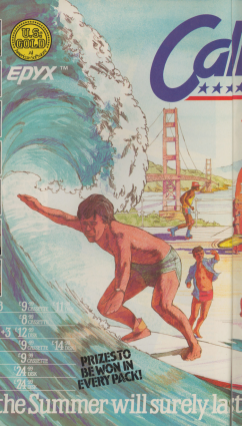
Finally, we'd love enough cash to own a computer and a console. Given that most of us haven't a choice but to be made. If you like the look of console software and are interested exclusively in games then the machines are worth taking a good, long look at, if you want something that will play games and do that little bit more than you're better off with a computer. ■



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Below: go go R-Type tanks, missiles, ground installations. There's also a top-down.

R-TYPE Item 20p per game

R-Type follows fairly in the footsteps of such classics as *Asteroids* and *Nebula*—high-class action to the accompaniment of breathtaking graphics. R-Type wins its points for game originality; it's one of those of the futuristic world by zero-approach-through-the-tunnel games. You'll have to keep your finger pumping the fire button because there's wave upon wave of alien ships to zap from bubble-like ground and orbiting gun emplacements to Translucent-like robots that fire out no other means of

deadly torning missiles. A guardian missile protects the end of each section; these swarming creatures all have their weak spots but it will take you a stack of coins to slatter them.

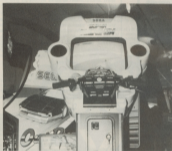
Extra firepower is available to help you survive in the shape of items which, when picked up, provide your ship with various aids: pick up the item M and your ship gains its own torning missile that lock onto any enemy entity; get the item C and gain the protection of a shield.

ARCADE

They used to be seedy dens of iniquity where granny-muggers wasted tons of 10p pieces on *Space Invaders* and *Asteroids*. Now the arcades are where you go to see what's going to be on your home micro in six months time. That's why each month in ACE we'll be carrying news of the latest arcade machines, plus playing tips on how to beat the games that are costing you a fortune.

The graphics really are stunning, so colorful and imaginative that they'll have you gasping in awe and appreciation—especially when you get to meet one of those immense guardians. It's not all cosmic either; the action comes very thick and very fast and you won't be able to take your eyes off the screen for a second. Don't be deterred by the puzzlingly dull and unimpaired title screen; beyond it hides a game that deserves to be a classic. It's not for longevity then; for sheer speed and attractiveness.

ARCADE



SUPER HANG-ON

Sega 20p per game

Multiplayer arcade games have never been the same since the appearance of the Super Hang-On from Sega. The original game boasted breathtaking graphics and gameplay, four on-screen motorbikes handling impressively like the real thing.

Super Hang-On, again from Sega, is a stepped-up version of that water class. You still control the stick like and ride with a view as if you were actually on the handle. The motorbike leans toward you and you steer the bike through the twisting course - avoiding other riders and road-side obstacles - by using handbrakes on the front of the game cabinet. The monitor is tilted at a hood-sloped like a racing bike to give wide-appeals on either side of the monitor that show music and effects as if you're steering style as you play. The handbrakes now double and vibrate as you gas the engine with the fuel-gas accelerator. A choice of three guns (low, mid and top) selected from the handbrakes lets you get the best performance from your bike in your race against the clock.

Super Hang-on is even more exciting and thrilling than the original. The improvements turn a great game into a brilliant one which is going to make a lot of your 10p pieces.



Darius ship controls, choosing your direction and the pace at your own.

DARIUS Taiko 20p per game

The most obvious point about this fast and furious shoot-em up is the massive 40" wide monitor the game is played on - that gives you a playing area three times bigger than the normal, cut-up, Darius. It is a size of two-player game, a two-player inside the cabinet is simultaneous.

You control a battleship flying over a variety of landscapes including space, coral, Venetian, rotation, belt and underwater bases. At the sight Darius beats a resemblance to that old arcade classic, Konami's Kangaroo and bonus you must survive your way left to right across the

scrolling landscapes, avoiding the huge evil formations hanging from the ceiling or rising from the sea. 28 different types of enemies attack in formation from front and rear. 28 more ground-based enemies add to your trouble.

Monster-like battleships guard each end of the section, destroy one of them and you

then get a choice of which type of landscape you'd like to fight in. Destroying certain enemies awards a power-up in the form of a small bonus. If you can collect it you gain additional power, depending on the colour of the bonus, red ones increase the destructiveness of your on-to-on missiles, green ones increase the destructiveness of your on-to-ground bombs, blue ones give you the protection of a shield.

Darius has certainly got a gimmick, in the shape of that massive screen, but on it you can play a cracking game.



A single later landscape in Darius' extra-wide screen.

Beating Bubble Bobble

The smash hit loko game - now appearing on micro, courtesy of Freed - has caused a lot of us a lot of problems. Here, from the fertile brains of two of the UK's top programmers, Chigley & Bob, are tips to get you going - if you're a novice - and to get you even further - if you're a hardened Bubble Bobbler.

Bubble Extras

WATER Busting the bubble sends a stream of water in the opposite direction to the one you're firing. The stream will wash away all items in contact, but take out - it can also wash you away. Collect diamonds for 1,000 points.

LIGHTNING Bust this and send a lightning bolt across the screen in the opposite direction to which you're firing. Kill all items in contact. Collect diamonds for 1,000 points.

WIND Busting the one drops a flame down the screen. On contact with a piston, it's blown out, killing items in contact. Collect diamonds for 999 points.

LETTER These spell, for word EXTEND. When all letters are collected you get a bonus life.

PISTONS Busting this gets you 10,000 points and empties the bubbles, you fire into trouble for a limited number of shots.

Bobbie Bonuses

Candy Blanks makes a large bonus appear when you kill the cat-dog.

Fading Bubbles make you indestructible for a short time, so that you can run over and eat the items.

Change Levels increase firing speed.

Eye Levels increase weapon speed.

Purple Levels make bubble travel further.

Stone makes you stone (able to eat) the screen.

Extends make you fire once in a random number of screens.

Bubble King gives you points for moving left or right.

Silver Ring causes shots to stream down the screen, killing items in contact.

Purple Balls gives tall top-pipes.

Blue Balls gets extra points.

Red Balls explodes into six large pieces, killing all items.

Black Balls kill all items.

Secret Door get you 100,000 secret screen (with 100,000 points).

Speed Book regulates, killing all items.

Bomb explodes, killing all items.

Click resets level on current level, and

changes screen colour. **Wings** breaks all items, but the first continues and you do not become invulnerable.

Prize makes all available space on screen with bonuses, making items disappear. Collect bonuses before time runs out, you get up to 100, giving a maximum of 100,000.

Red Area changes the bubble you fire into bubbles, which kill items in contact.

Eye makes this screen with water, killing all items.

Yellow makes a large

blast of

lightning

for exp-

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96

You've got a limited time on the screen, so there's no chance of making it. Push the lightning bubbles to the right until they are above the pop. They will then float down and position themselves next to two trapped items. Now wait for a water bubble and bust it, making sure you are facing right. The water will wash down the small gap where the lightning bubbles have stopped.

As you pass, the bubbles burst and release the both of lightning into the items. Simple, isn't it?

100

Your final score. You've had a huge score who is



collected

by ordinary bubble-bob-

blasts, time you appear in

screens, you must collect the

green piston bubble. As the

screen becomes around the

screen, you must

design ten and to the floor is

and around the corner and

never stop firing. Blast a

column of bubbles up the side

of the screen and jump into them.

This releases a sheet of

lightning bolts across the screen

to hit the items. It takes a good

100 hits to turn the creature into a

massive bubble. Bust this

immediately or you will have

serious problems. When the

bubble bursts the items die

and you get the final response -

which we won't spoil by describing.

PROBLEM SCREENS

When - or rather if - you get through to the later stages of the game, then there are certain screens that will give you a real hard time. Here's advice on two of them.

ARCADE ACES!

If you're a top-gun on any of the latest coin-op sensations, don't you think you should be sharing your insider knowledge with the rest of us? Each month we'll be running tips on the top machines. If you're chosen as Tip of the Month, then you will receive your choice of a game from our Screen Test section. And that could be

worth 25 quid to you.

Please make the tips detailed, clear, and - if possible - include diagrams. The address to write to is:

Arcoade tips
ACI
Future Publishing
4 Queen Street
Bath
BA1 1EJ

PBM. AVALON FREE

The chronicles of the 'Knights of the Avalon', is a new 100 player computer moderated Fantasy Play By Mail game from JADE Games. Startup is **FREE**, with further turns costing 70p, players outside of the UK 1.00. The game features, 1000s of player armies and fleets constantly involved in conquest, a playing area of 1,200,000 sq miles with over 100,000 locations. A highly developed class system of squires, knights, lords etc fighting to become emperor. An economic trade system with 1000+ trade items, merchants and political banks, stock markets and trade treaties. Religions based on a planet wide network of temples and monasteries. Players having the choice of accepting one of the twenty existing gods or creating their own god and religion. A hierarchy of gods capable of direct interaction with players. Alliances of trade, religion, politics and military might. + MUCH MUCH MORE games limited only by the players imagination.

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Hants, PO4 0BR.
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Lucky Strike!

Atari and Atari bring you a dream of a competition - to win the machine of your dreams

Here's your chance! We've got three astounding Atari systems to give away - three ST computers PLUS monitors to whisk you away into the world of 16-bit software the moment they land on your desk!

If you've been **THIRSTING** to get your hand in hardware, giving **PEOPLE** all the thought of glistening 16-bit colour across your screen with Atari Macintosh or **BOUNCEING OFF** all in disgust because your screen can't handle the MIDI output from your main keyboard - now's your chance!

Here's what you've got to do. On the opposite page you'll see three images taken from screenshots of Atari software titles running on the ST. Using your skill and judgement, set match up the image with the name of the program you think the shot was taken from.

For example, if you think that shot number 1 comes from a screenshot of Macintosh, then enter a 1 in the box opposite Macintosh on the entry form provided.

Once you've identified all three images, set off your name and address in **BLOOD CAMELANS** and send your entry post haste to the address printed on the form. Closing date is entries a 11th October.

All correct entries will be put into a draw, with first prize going to the first entry out of the hat. The draw-and-notify process will tumble into the laps of the second and third entries drawn. Prizes will be notified by post and winners then given a 14-day window commencing at the ACE office - or by post if otherwise convenient.

To get out that post, fill in the form, and get it off to us as quickly as possible! You could even be spending the money you've been saving for your ST on champagne instead!

A 16-bit-colouring prize - a complete Atari ST II system worth £799.95 for the first correct entry out of the hat, while second and third runners-up each get their ST II main system worth nearly £385.00 apiece.



THE PRIZES

FIRST PRIZE

One Atari 520 ST-FM with built-in 0.5 meg disc drive plus colour monitor (retail value a staggering #699.95).

This 516k system we've all been drooling over. Just to name your fill to the disk-ages, here's the full tech spec of this most talented sibling to our workstation systems:

Built-in 0.5 megabyte capacity disc drive. Legal loading of software from readily available robust 3.5" diskettes.

RAM - enough to swallow the biggest games and applications.

112 colour palette - get up to colours, colours on screen at once in 320x200 resolution.

Built-in MIDI and parallel ports - no problems hooking up printers and modems.

MIDI port included as standard - plenty of software available to help you manipulate other MIDI instruments - guitars, keyboards,

drum kits etc. - turning your ST into a powerful music-composing and editing instrument.

Mouse, 11 keyboard, and 16-bit keyboard all included, plus two standard Atari joystick ports.

Colour monitor included! Normally this would set you back £299.95 on its own. Shining colour display that really does justice to the ST's huge colour palette.

SECOND AND THIRD PRIZES

Atari ST-FM as above together with its monitor, disk and whole monitor - both nearly £499.00 worth of hardware that could be yours for the price of a stamp. And who's complaining about monochrome when you can plug the computer into your colour TV set? Why? If there's anything for it, just remind them about the £100 licence they had to cough up to be notified the programmes - otherwise you're up to several tons, in which case they might as well unplug the cord for a year and save a lot of money!

Three Steps to a free ST...

Just work out which shot comes from which of the three programs – Neochrome, Crystal Castles, or Star Raiders - then enter the shot number opposite the program name on the entry form. Simple!

A Helping Hand...

Some pointing. You can see the chance of a free ST slipping away from you so check out the advertisement and find you haven't the talent and knack to match. AHA... join you. And you think we're going to help you? Well, positively knowing these prizes are yours, and wanting to give you HELP!

Oh, alright then - and put in one (inserted) token we should actually have to keep those prizes for ourselves, best some job to help you make up your mind.

NEOCHROME - This is one of the most popular ST art packages, with 38 different game boards and story casts. One of its best features is the 3-D colour map that stays on screen while you wait for rapid colour selection from the palette. While



Shot number 1
Look, isn't the hole? Could the
be an 'oldy' then's game?



Shot number 2
Is this, the game obviously made into...

STAR RAIDERS - The classic space game in which you boldly across the universe to destroy the Tyrants. The big obstacle of all space adventures.

OK, now check out those shots again, and will yourself a free ST!



Shot number 3
Obviously a shot from footage of the title
bookend - or is it?

Entry Form

Your name:

Your address:

I think that:

Image number _____ was taken from NEOCHROME.

Image number _____ was taken from CRYSTAL CASTLES.

Image number _____ was taken from STAR RAIDERS.

RULES

- The closing date for entries is October 31st, 1987.
- Employees of Future Publishing Ltd, Acorn Computers, and their families are ineligible to entry.
- The winners of the competition shall be the best three correct entries.

drawn at random from amongst those who've paid to the closing date and no correspondence will be entered into.

- Winners will be notified by post and their names published in the December issue of ACE.

Send this form to:

Acorn Competition, Advanced Computer Entertainment, 4 Queen Street, SALT BAY, LE1

Please tick one of the following boxes before posting your entry:

I do not own a computer.

Else:

Commodore 64 or 128 Sinclair Amstrad 5128

Amstrad 484 Acorn ST Commodore Amiga

IBM PC-compatible Apple Macintosh.

Other computer (please specify)

THE GRAPHICS SCENE

The hardware, the software, the peripherals and the techniques for graphics - all on show in ACE's regular Computer Graphics slot.

From Spectrum sprite to Spielberg movie, you just can't avoid computer graphics. That's why we're introducing this section of *ACE*, dedicated to covering all you need to know about this exciting growth area of computers. Whether you want to design a game on your Spectrum or create a TV ad with your Amiga and video, this is where you'll find out about the software, the techniques and the peripherals that have put computer graphics at the forefront of computer entertainment. We kick off this month with a look at just what computer graphics is and what are the software and hardware tools you need if you want to get involved.

Resolution and colour

The number of dots that can be shown on a computer screen and the range of colour a monitor can view considerations in computer graphics, and this is where the great divide between 8-bit and 16-bit machines occurs. But the biggest difference is not, as you might expect, in the greater resolution of the more powerful machines - it is the number of colours they can display that sets them apart. In fact, most of the graphics-oriented software aimed at the Atari ST and the Amiga (both on

programs and games) use the low resolution 300 x 300 mode similar to that used on the Commodore-64 and Amstrad CPCs.

The difference comes when you realise that the ST can display 16 colours from a palette of 643 and the Amiga 32 from 4096, compared to the C64's 16 from 16 and the CPCs 4 (or 16 in low-res 128 x 256 mode) from 27 available colours. The Amiga, in its special high and modchy mode, can display a mind-boggling 4096-colour.

The importance of colour in computer graphics stems from the way that the human eye and brain work together. If possible the brain will always try to make sense of an image and fill the gaps. Remember the old 'dot' test adverts? You could always make out the image even when made up of large squares of colour of very low resolution. The brain is fooled into guessing the jagged edges and inconsistencies. A computer image works in a similar way: it is the subtle and large-scale of the colour that is most important.

You can produce images on a computer screen in two main ways. One really distinguishes from the other. First, with a

programming language such as Basic you can just mix things together using simple point line and - if available - more complex shape and fill commands. By combining simple mathematical operations and functions you can create highly elaborate pictures, especially with hidden barrel techniques. Even the hugely expensive animated graphics sequences from California (Japan are produced in this way. Before it there is less issue.) The complexity and degree of animation of the image produced depends on the type of machine and the power of the languages it has available. These are described in a box elsewhere.

Second, you can use a program which makes point, line, shape, fill and a host of other drawing facilities available - so advanced so that the computer can be used as a painter or drawing board. The range of software available is very wide, and in recent months - with the growing popularity of the ST and Amiga - it has started to become extremely sophisticated. It is only now that the true potential of these 16-bit machines begins to become apparent.



Right: Defender with a Cow on the Amiga is portrayed on the Amstrad. The same scene, including, but with a different 16-colour colour palette.



Which software?

The local industrial divisions in the range of graphics software run between 8-bit and 16-bit machines and between applications that are object orientated and those that are bit mapped. (See the Graphics Japan box for an explanation of the difference.)

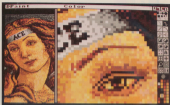
The best bit-mapped Paintbox program, Spectra's Advanced Art Studio is available from University. (Only on the Amiga is it not implemented - yet!) On the Spectrum it is excellent - the most powerful tool available to use piece of graphics software ever written for that machine, putting Leonardo and AMX Art out in the cold. Even on the C64 and the Atari/ST CPUs where the competition is tighter it still comes out top, though Artel 44 on the C64 and AMX Art on the CPUs come close. (AMX Art suffers in all respects by not having a full screen-drawing mode). The Image System comes on free-charge insertion for its unique facilities, especially on the C64.

On the Atari ST the competition is even stronger. Advanced Art Studio is pushed into second place by Art Director, which is by far the most powerful graphics package for the ST - but twice the price! Spectra's is also a very good package - but at around \$60.00 it should be - and though it has been left behind by events. Resonance - its last introduction.

For the Amiga there is no doubt that Deluxe Paint 2 rules the lines - and in perspective too. In fact, its hard to think of any graphics program on any sub-£10,000 machine so far that can compete. The price is pretty Deluxe too though - around \$130. Aegis Images and Deluxe Paint 1 are almost equal in price, though the latter is the easier to use.

Beyond painting

Real-time programs like Tracer are not the only packages to use bit-mapped graphics. The speed and power of the ST and the



Amiga Deluxe Paint for the Amiga is given a special mention for the Amiga's bit-mapped graphics. The image on the left was, and the image on the right is a screen shot of the ST in its 17-bit mode. The image on the right is a screen shot of the ST in its 17-bit mode.



Amiga allow images produced using a palette to be moved about the screen, rotated and scaled in real time to produce animations. Film Director on the ST and Deluxe Movie on the Amiga both provide easy to use and powerful environments for the production of animations. Aegis ANIMATOR (available on both machines) is also bit-mapped but uses object-oriented animation as well to produce smooth transformations and 'twisting' (see Graphics Japan for more).

For many more uses the most familiar approach is CAD-Computer Aided Design. Almost every machine ever built has some set of CAD programs and some of them work pretty well. Generally speaking, 3D CAD packages tend to be rather dry and unexciting though very worthy and useful, well concentrated on 2D programs which are more interesting and, on the 16-bit machines, have fantastic potential for animation.

One of the first packages for the Spectrum was Yu-12, a 3D drawing program. It worked well then and it still works today even today if you use it in the



Examples of the Amiga's advanced wireframe, hidden surface graphics facilities are shown rendered into bit-mapped.



IT'S ON THE TILES.

Leisure Genius presents this classic word game elegantly translated to computer. SCRABBLE™ is available for most home computers and now a new De-luxe version is available for Commodore-64/128, Spectrum 128 and Amstrad CPC 6128.

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**Leisure
Genius** 

budget too. And to be found in any but a Graphics Capable Drawing Board. This is a 20-variant and easy-to-master 3D drawing package for the G44 that is extremely powerful, using some 1600 to 2000 lines of precompiled tapes that can be discarded and discarded into a 3D perspective image.

Equally worthwhile, though slightly less flexible, is AMO's re-engineered 3Dm for the CPC machines. As usual from AMO it has a graphics plotting workload. Less complex is a CAD tool but even more fun than 3Dm, is Amos's latest offering - one for the CPCs - which calculates your 3D creation and allows you to take a walk about it. As with the other 3D packages

mentioned above, your creation is a transparent 'see through'. It takes a great deal of processing time to generate hidden line removal in coloured surfaces, and especially in a real-time animated drawing like 'Yellow Taxi' (see Japan) but on 8-bit machines can be rather long.

Before time is much use of a problem with 16-bit machines and two very recent packages for the IF and Amiga respectively show the way for better very exciting developments in animation. Cyber Studio for the IF allows you to create complex 3D views which can be in front several directions (with full shading) and then oriented in front of a background picture

created in Digital Art Director or the like.

Finally in concept is Holograph 3D by Acq for the Amiga. But where Cyber Studio stops, Holograph takes it, using high resolution with 16 colours, precision in eliminating the borders, a fractal computer-generated to build realistic landscapes and 40% colour fade-out evenly colours for very complex scenes but we're to be sceptical in believing. Overall it's an outstanding package that almost surely outclasses systems and points the way for what we hope is some truly future animation packages. We'll be looking at the program in depth, and the techniques it uses, in future issues of AGC.

GRAPHICS JARGON

Bit-mapped vs. Object-oriented

Almost all of the many graphics programs available today fall into one of these two categories, according to the way they store and manipulate picture information.

Painters or 'Art' programs are bit-mapped, and deal with your picture in the same way it actually appears on screen - as a pattern of coloured dots. When you add lines, circles etc. to a picture the program thinks of them as dot patterns rather than pieces of geometry. Using the 'zoom' option on a bit-mapped package

doesn't show you more detail - it just shows you the individual dots of the picture more clearly.

CAD or 'Drawing Board' programs are object-oriented. Your drawing all appears on-screen as a pattern of dots, but the program treats it as a collection of individual elements - lines, circles and other shapes. The dot pattern you see is just the program's best approximation of the actual picture, and zooming in will show you more detail. This approach not only saves on storage space but also allows kinds of

manipulation bit-mapped programs can't manage, especially if you're working in 3D.

Redraw Time

The time taken for the new position of an 'object' to be calculated before it can be drawn on the screen.

Texturing

An animation term, short for 'interweaving' - automatically filling in the 'in between' stages of a transformation from one shape to the next.

WHICH MACHINE?

Of the more popular machines, the Amiga Spectrum is the best well-equipped for sophisticated graphics. It has a single colour low resolution (256 x 256) and can manage only 16 colours, though all these can be on-screen at once. The display is limited mostly by the obvious problem also suffered to a lesser degree on the G44 - it needs a 8 bit pixel character space only one background and one foreground colour can be used. Spectrum's original Basic was pretty satisfactory, though it has a good choice removed and has been improved one year.

The original Basic on the G44 was all but useless for graphics, having hardly any relevant commands. This has been rectified by a range of more sophisticated implementations by third party producers. The G44 display is essentially of 256 x 256 in a variety of colour combinations but is dogged by various arbitrary limitations. This is counterbalanced by its having a hardware cursor.

There are no hardware updates on the Amstrad CPCs - but no obvious problems either. It has three resolutions, colour capabilities, Mode 0 with 16 colours of 640 x 384, mode 1 having 4 at 320 x 256, and mode 2 with 2 at 640 x 256. All these chosen from a 27 colour palette. Amstrad Basic is excellent apart from the lack of a bit

summed on the 484, and there are now numerous other languages implemented - including C.

16-bit resolution

C has recently become the best value-for-money language to use on the current 16-bit machines like the Amiga IF, and there are several versions available. Nevertheless, Basic also has a high profile with For Basic and GFA Basic, both of which can very fast and support the GEM graphic environment that is bundled with the machine. The IF has 3200 resolutions, 320x256 with 16 colours chosen from 4096, 640x200 displaying 4 colours, and a monochrome high resolution of 640 x 400. The biggest problem with the display is that high one requires a special monitor which gives excellent clarity but cannot be used at any other resolution - 2 monitors for one machine.

The Amiga also has problems in displaying high resolution images, but it gets round it with a different but clever use of overlapping windows - rendering 4 resolutions are provided on the Amiga: two normal ones, 320 x 256 to 50 colours, 640 x 200 in 16 colours and two interlaced ones, 640 x 400 with 32 and 640 x 400 with 16 colours, all chosen from 4096.

Interlacing provides the extra colours by making two scans of the screen so that the

which one of each pixel is about 20 per second instead of 50. The result is a dashed and jarring flicker which can only be tolerated with an expensive high persistence monitor. There's also the stunning but rather impractical 'hard and steady' mode mentioned earlier, which gives 300 x 200 in 4096 colours - but with some very costly restrictions.

The Amiga has a 16MB environment, and a mouse as standard. It has a readable Basic and many other languages are available. The greatest advantage of the machine on the little chip, which can move and combine bit-mapped images with incredible speed, and the Copper chip which allows mixing of several different resolutions and patterns in the same screen.

Despite the limitations of the cheaper machines there still a lot you can do in the way of graphics; you only have to look one of the better Spectrum games to see that while it may be cheap and getting on in years, it is a no mean performer. The same applies also to Amstrad CPCs and the Commodore 64; they too will let you produce worthwhile graphic output.

But when it comes to real-time operation, animation and the really sophisticated stuff it's clear that both IF and Amiga are the machines to get in to - if you can afford them.

GRAPHICS EXTRAS

The deeper you get in to computer graphics the more mouth-watering add-ons you'll be tempted to buy. So we've taken a tour of the graphics extras that could be on your shopping list to give an idea of what's available, what it can do — and what the damage might be to your wallet.

Light Pens

As an add-on, the lighter, less costly alternative to use, you just hold it up against the screen, press the button and — without penning — you can draw onto the screen as if you're using a paper.

In practice, they do have their disadvantages. For a start, third party support for them is low — that is, very few software companies write out packages you can use with lightpens.

Another thing to bear in mind is the position of your TV monitor screen. Unless you're happy tipping your telly on its back, you'll have to draw against a vertical surface. This can mess your drawing style — and you're still — quite badly.

There are other little drawbacks too. Lightpens work by detecting the light given off by a particular part of the screen. If you're trying to paint fine dark lines — while drawing in white on a black background, for example — they may not be sensitive enough to find the screen for things to track.

In a related problem, you may find the cursor tends to get 'stuck' towards light areas of the screen. Add to this the fact that the pen is probably blocking your view of the cursor anyway, and you've got something of a usability problem. You can pick up a light pen plus software for 8-bit machines for as little as £20.

Graphics Tablets

If you want the precision and accuracy of a lightpen without the usual obvious drawbacks, a graphics tablet might well appeal to you. Rather than drawing on the screen you move a stylus across the surface of the tablet. This in turn moves a cursor on screen, which actually does the drawing.

On a good graphics tablet you can be drawing on the pad, have read it with the stylus and so save it onto the screen. Many expensive pens are pressure-sensitive, and don't need a special stylus. With one of these you can, in theory, draw quite smoothly and get have a copy of your drawing on screen at the end of the session.

Tablets can cost anywhere between £300.00 and £800.00, obviously, at the upper end of the price range, you're paying for very accurate and sophisticated gear.

Mice

More or less obligatory for computer mice, mice are amazingly useful drawing tools. They're also the main hardware requirement for those drive-in-hardware publishers menu and package IT and Amiga users are already equipped with mice of course, but the dominance of software programs like Art Studio on the 4-bit market means a continuing demand for the little plastic beasts at odd-on.

Mice themselves are cheap — they're becoming popularly one of the best low priced bit to mice production in the UK. Best — but you need to get one and use it. There's software to plug or mouse to on a Spectrum, C64 or C16 so you'll need an interface. Most magazines Advanced Memory Systems (conspicuously abbreviated to AMMS) and Easypoint both both sell mouse/Interface packages for the 4-bit machines. Mice can be as cheap as £20.00 or as expensive as £200.00.

Digitisers & Scanners

Digitisers and scanners allow you to feed video, TV and paper images into an at



A digitised film sequence for frame capture by ST. Mice use the Ben added using the software.

package allowing you to create animated sequences and produce images of almost photographic quality.

A digitiser takes the signal from a video camera or recorder and converts it into a picture on your computer screen. Post your camera or people, objects or views and so on: format, still life or landscape is fed into your computer. Slow the image as a screen file, load it into a good old package and piece-away. Comparing and contrasting digitised images in different ways can produce some very striking effects indeed.

A scanner is rather more sophisticated than a digitiser. It converts flat images — drawings, photographs and the like — into computer screens. A digitiser, camera card system could achieve the same thing, but scanners tend to be cheaper.

ART APPEAL

We want your input — right here on these pages. If you're involved in computer graphics then send the fruits of your labours in and we'll try to bring them in the best possible light. We want your pictures and designs, but we'll also like your notes on how you did them, what software and hardware you used and why. For you can give us graphics techniques in 400 readers. Make the attempt, we'll try — we can't always guarantee to return each item to us, but we'll work as hard as we can — to

Graphics Scene
AGE
4 Queen Street
Bath BA1 1LJ

Of course, there is a drop in quality from the original to the scanned or digitised image. On the Spectrum such images are necessarily monochrome, and on most of the presently more powerful machines the best you'll get a grey scale — a series of shades bridging the gap between black and white, to try and take some of the 'graininess' out of the picture. Colour palette changes can give the illusion of colour here, but you really need members of the Amiga's calibre to get proper colour digitising.

Scanners can come as cheap as £60, but once you start thinking about video cameras you're up in to the several hundred quid bracket.

Genlock

As the limit of graphics hardware in home computers, Genlock for the Amiga allows you to mix the video output of your computer with images from other sources. This isn't the same thing as digitising or still the images coming in from outside — whether from TV, video recorder or camera — we need as they are, meaning that there's so less of 'quality' of it. They simply replace the background the Amiga would normally have to its picture, allowing you to substitute your video for the hard of hearing, for example, or an animated sequence over the New Outlook News, if the fancy takes you.

Whether well used or Genlock for the 4-bit machines remains doubtful, but it wasn't so long ago that you could say the same about digitisers. It differs somewhat definitely with the space — you could well be seeing Oswald the cat of Christmas, or that Gauding your writer to Berlin now!

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Mr Weems, the failed accountant, has forced his way into the Mansion of the She Vampires. Armed with rapid-fire garlic gun and smart-garlic pill, he must blaze his way through six lethal levels of the Mansion. Sharp-fanged bats, slim-witted, Frankenstein monsters, and thirty She Vampires stand in his way. Weems has just one small problem. *Staying alive!*

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TUNE IN

Introducing our section on computers and music-making, for beginners and pros alike. Forget your inhibitions, ignore the neighbours, and use your hardware to drive some really BAD sounds...

Here: synthesizers, digital guitar, drum kits, there's no limit to what you can plug into the back of your computer via a MIDI interface. How do you do it? How much, for either how little does it cost? And what sort of kit should you be looking for? If you've ever asked yourself these questions, then the answers await you.

Most readers will be familiar with programs like Steinberg's Advanced Music System or similar utilities. These programs allow you to manipulate the sound chip of your computer to produce different notes and tones. Steinberg's program also includes a music scoring and-editing facility.

Let's face it, however, the sound that your computer can dish up isn't always that exciting. The Commodore 64 is probably the best available - unless you're lucky enough to have an Amiga - but machines like the Amstrad or even worse the Spectrum just don't score highly on the musical scale. Even the Atari 800 sound chip is a bit of a squarer.

What's more, all home computers tend to have (or at the most best) character sets - of course - that keyboard don't exactly lend themselves to highly string musical performance, or performance of any kind come to that.

All these obstacles, however, can be sidestepped with cheap and readily available portable key-boards, guitars, drum machines, and synthesizers to produce some quite interesting musical systems. In these systems, and how to choose and use them, that we'll be concentrating on over the next few months.

But let's promise things about right away. You do not have to gain any musical skills. You do not need perfect pitch. You do not need to know the difference



HEARD STRUNG

Could a new 16-bit sound chip give you the opportunity to record and edit your drumming at the computer keyboard? Not only that, but you can even learn to play straightaway on otherwise computer-incompatible instruments. Featuring custom recording and 16 programming channels, Steinberg will let you have MIDI without you. RRP, £199.95. Contact Steinberg at their nearest office or the distributor listed below. Or write to: Steinberg, 1000-1000 digital guitar on page 41.

between a Fender and a Stratocaster. All you need is the urge to make yourself heard - even if it's just you listening.

The fact is that many of today's musicians are equally suited to entering the musical kingdom. But they also offer sufficient power and character to be of interest to most experienced players. If you've had a musical upbringing and want to expand your talents, you'll be amazed at just how much you can achieve using new technology - and how easy it is to do.

Incomprehensible MIDI

All this is made possible by MIDI - the industry standard Musical Instrument Digital Interface. You've almost certainly heard and

read about it, but all too often journalists present MIDI as an incomprehensible fad. In particular it can be particularly galling when you've spent a couple of years mastering computers, to come across a reference to a computer language that assumes you're mastered musical jargon. You won't have that problem here - one of the main aims of this section will be to make technical musical jargon incomprehensible to everybody. The key word here is fun, not misery, so if you haven't the talent (and how to search it) please try our expert responses, but not - it will be made clear

Fun Factor

Many of us at A.C.E. have musical experience

when we began looking at the MIDI scene and have been staggered at how enjoyable and characterful some of the new systems can be. You can play your MIDI guitar into a keyboard and literally hear the keys; you can set up your mixer as a multi-track recording studio; you can even squeeze sound from a digital oscillator. Whatever your musical background, MIDI can open up a whole new landscape of interest and enjoyment - and it doesn't ask you an arm and a leg either. This should, we feel, give you the confidence to explore the possibilities of MIDI.

MIDI MADE SIMPLE

Attaching a Musical Instrument Digital Interface to your computer opens up a world of possibility. Start here with the first of a series of articles in which we take the middle out of MIDI and show you how to hand over musical control to your micro.

Some computer users are justifiably sceptical when it comes to "musical standards" although the business world thrives on it with a pretence of compatibility using MS-DOS, CP/M and the like. Some computer owners have always been strictly content to software written for their own machines. Communication between music is fraught with difficulty and frustration. MIDI - the only serious attempt at standardisation - is based on a one point of high price and low software.

The amazing thing about MIDI, however, is that the power that is actually used to have got it right. There may be areas of incompatibility between different MIDI systems, but as a general rule they are probably accurate compared to the rest of products you might encounter in music-to-music communication. The first and best thing about MIDI is that it actually works. It's a system you can have confidence in - not just another fancy word used when you have to spend all your time arguing about what won't work, rather than what does.

In the beginning

MIDI development was instigated by a synthesiser company called Sequential

Circuit (makers of the famous Prophet range of synths) in 1981. The rise of digital instruments as opposed to the old analogue machines, had given birth to serious thinking systems. Complex digital signals were now necessary to control the sound generators, as opposed to simple voltage levels that had been used previously. Sequential prepared a "Universal Synthesiser Interface" that, with support from the rest of the industry, developed into MIDI.

The MIDI spec hasn't changed apart from one or two minor tweaks since 1982 and that's another reason why the standard is so well engineered. When you think of the number of systems that, for example, MS-DOS or CP/M have been through, you can see how MIDI's unchanging structure is not only a tribute to the original people involved, but also contributes towards the system's success and ease of use.

When they came up with this, a specification for a single serial interface - a means of high-speed communication between computers in which information is sent one bit after another down one line rather than in parallel (where eight or more bits are sent simultaneously down a number of different lines).

The main advantage of this is that you need only a single lead with easily available 5-pin DIN plugs at both ends. We're not talking about currently scarce cables and 20 pin DIN-type 25-pin plugs available only by mail order from the BSA. Electrical connections using MIDI are a doddle that anyone can understand.

Data is transmitted down this line at a rate of 31.25Kbaud (or 31250 bits of data per second). Each byte, or combination of bytes, that is transmitted conveys a particular item of musical information - for example, a NOTE



Note well...

Sequential's Music Studio for ST, Amiga, C64/16 and PC compatibles is typical of a growing kind of music package that not only allows you to program your computer's sound chip, but give you MIDI facilities as well. The screen on the left shows you a complete and well known, while the screen on the right shows you basic control of MIDI data transmission in your keyboard. The ST version allows you to draw notes on the screen from the keyboard as well as with the mouse. An around screen records the package is extremely useful, but it grows serious when MIDI isn't probably its better to use with the 68000 for more comprehensive package. Check out for MIDI software reviews in forthcoming issues.

OK byte followed by the number of the note to be played. The enormous speed at which data transfer exceeds that of through standard a transmitted melody it can be used to control a number of different instruments simultaneously.

MIDI Channels

Communication with different instruments simultaneously is made possible by MIDI data to send data down sixteen different channels. Now you can operate sixteen channels when there's only one lead? Simple, all we do is ensure that each message is "tagged" - i.e. made to incorporate a particular ID number in the message - and in the way it can be recognized as belonging to one of the sixteen channels, rather constantly related to - as one to sixteen. The value of this is that MIDI-controlled instruments can usually be programmed to respond only to information tagged with a particular channel number, so you can send "simultaneous" messages carrying different data to different instruments. Take the case most heard:

MIDI data

At this stage in order to really understand the system, we need to look a little more closely at the sort of data MIDI transmits. You'll find a very comprehensive guide to the ability to communicate almost every aspect of musical performance, including song structure, performance parameters and so on. All this is communicated by a combination of notes, rests and their types.

Notes bytes indicate which particular function is involved, and data bytes provide any additional information that may be required. For example, pressing down on the middle C key of your keyboard would send a status byte of NOTE ON, followed by a data byte specifying Middle C. Status bytes are distinguished by having their seventh bit set, so by sending an immense power of binary calculation, we can see that status bytes belong in the restricted range 128-255, whereas data bytes range at the bottom end of the scale, in the range 0-127. If you find the confusing, check your computer manual for its explanation of binary numbers and remember that the left bit is a byte or subdivided from right to left, 0 - 7, and not left to right, 1 - 8.

System messages

Whenever binary instruments you've got connected up that you wish to communicate with individually, there are going to be some categories of information that will apply universally. For example, a song position that will be relevant to both the piano and the electric piano of music, or a clock pulse to keep everything in sync. The type of data is still

conveyed by status bytes, but the data need to tag them with a channel number so people tend to refer to status bytes as being sub-divided into two categories - SYSTEM messages and CHANNEL messages.

Next month...

In the October issue of ACE we...
 - check out MIDI interfaces - which one should you get for your machine?
 - continue our exploration of MIDI by taking the mystery out of channel modes, data format, and patch memory.
 - carry on the campaign Against The Algorithms by examining sequencers, arrangers, and how to use them to force a message, thereby forcing them to record their true desires, and...
 - make music!

Getting back to the numbers game, a status byte carrying channel information adopts the format shown in Figure 1.

A status byte carrying system information doesn't need to indicate its own signature (byte to update its two bits - half a byte) - i.e. bits C is 3 - is conveying channel information. To avoid confusion, system bytes have their most significant nibble set to 1111, which puts them in the range 240 - 255. As soon as your synth spots that a device is sending system information and therefore should not treat the least significant byte as a channel number.

Mid system bytes - for example STOP a CONTINUE - come singly without the need for any data bytes to follow them. These are however three exceptions, which are the SONG POSITION POINTER which is followed by the sample song position, the SONG SELECT message which not necessarily is followed by the number of the song we should all sing, and finally the SYSTEM EXCLUSIVE message.

System mania

System exclusive, or SYSEX as the computerise call it, is an excellent example of MIDI flexibility. It's also a nice little phrase to throw around at MIDI dinner parties, so it would pay like to see my SYSEX patcher for the Waterbury CSD sequencer tap-out? It'll tell you SYSEX one at channel 01. Like most report items, its computerise way to understand and really see the data value of it.

However computerise MIDI is, there

are bound to be certain features of your instrument that are manufacturer-exclusive. Take for example the actual process of tuning and producing a sound. Yamaha took the lead for FM systems, Roland went for analog, and LA others like the P.O. don't think and these terms next month, by the way, and name that synth speak into synth in its own voice. MIDI therefore includes a way of sending manufacturer information to your synth that will enable it to perform certain manufacturer functions that would send synth than other manufacturers into life. In other words, the information that makes a Yamaha sound like a Yamaha and not like a Roland, information that really makes

The way it works in this - exact manufacturer at MIDI equipment a gives their own specific MIDI identification number. Sequential Circuits, perhaps not surprisingly, a number 01. Yamaha happens to be number 76. When you want to send some specific information down the line to a certain manufacturer's synth, you send the status byte for SYSTEM EXCLUSIVE (1111000), or 240, followed by a data byte (00000000) in which the question marks contain the ID number of the manufacturer concerned. This can then follow the second byte with any number of data bytes and so to the manufacturers to make sure that their MIDI instruments can make sense of what follows. As soon as the synth receives a data byte which has the binary 10000000 (128) set at its seventh bit, it will know that this is a data status byte and that the system message has started. The only limitation on SYSTEM EXCLUSIVE data, therefore, is that it must lie in the range 0-127, or must all MIDI data, otherwise the synth will think it's some data byte.

More buzzwords

As well as system exclusive, you may hear people talking about COMMON system messages and REAL-TIME system messages. COMMON simply indicates messages that are standard in all units connected to the MIDI network. REAL-TIME is a slightly different - messages belonging to this category are of the one-byte-only variety but they often bear other single-byte messages by being allowed to interrupt other data without data being it.

For example, suppose your synth is busy recording a MIDI OR command. It has just received the MIDI OR status byte, tagged with the right channel number. It is now waiting patiently for the following data bytes which will tell it what note to play. Suddenly, instead of a data byte, it gets another status byte - it's a real-time, single byte, status system message byte and the synth, bubbling with excitement, immediately recognises the obvious fact by interrupting the old pattern. It hurriedly carries out the question request - usually synchronisation with other instruments by adjusting its

1	0	0	1	0	0	0	1
Function				Channel			
This half of the byte specifies the MIDI function involved - in this case NOTE ON				We're on channel one - only instruments programmed to receive it will respond			

Fig. 1 MIDI Status System. Data byte for 01, channel 1.

clock - and then write back to what the data byte it was originally expecting. Of course, the real-time message may have been something like 0000 0000 0000 in which case the note will never be played.

Moving on

MIDI is a very simple system to understand, especially for computer owners to whom much of the computer design which drives

musicians will be second nature. If you find things being going a little deeper - just reread the article a couple of times and then catch up on next month's issue. You'll see first things slipping into place and then suddenly - just when you thought you simply couldn't make the grade - you'll be inviting someone back to your house to do just a bit more, or perhaps a lot of more guitar wrapping for your Roland or CEM.

SHARPEN YOUR AXE

MIDI means keyboards to most people, but digital techniques are making a big impact on the guitar scene as well. Now Casio have introduced a digital guitar for under three hundred pounds. How does it measure up?

Just how much can you get out of a guitar? Whatever your skill level, there are things to be learnt when the difference in expression and inflection - dependent on your hand's touch - isn't going to stop you yearning for the power to create a different sound or sound.

Inventing a conventional electric guitar will either give you rather more possibilities - provided you're willing to invest in an amplifier, a few effects pedals and other gadgets - but this instrument has remained virtually unchanged since it was invented in its modern form by Les Paul in the 1940s.

But it wasn't until the development of the electronic music synthesiser by

Dr. Bob Moog (pronounced 'Moo-goo') in the late 60s and early 70s that the guitarist possibilities stretched beyond a few wobbly effects and filter treatments.

Synth snags

For practical reasons, however, a piano keyboard was used to control Moog's synth - a keyboard being the easiest place to fit the switch needed to operate any electronic circuit - so when guitarists started to experiment with the synthesiser modules, they came up with a few problems. On the guitar, there's no switch to close when you want to play a note, the vibrating metal string sets up magnetic disturbances in the pickup which are increased by its steel coil and amplified externally. The first 'guitar synthesiser' such as the DMO Synthesizer II-F used by the Rolling Stones, Genesis, Asia and other bands - were really guitar-effects units which would shift the pitch of the guitar sound, distort it, or add various experiential effects. You weren't actually controlling a music synthesiser with a guitar, just making a guitar sound a bit like a synthesiser.

Guitar synths

To get technical for a moment (and too technical) the problems of guitar synthesis has

□ I W T T



Even to convert it to a guitar.

the speed of which the guitar string is vibrating to a voltage (which can determine the pitch of which a synthesiser plays). Early guitar synths such as the DMO, the Vox Organ Guitar and others didn't even attempt to do this. The first to do so was the Jod Systems Guitar synth, which used a piezoelectric frequency-to-voltage converting pickup and stuffed the output into an analog-to-digital synthesiser. This was an expensive way of going about things, but at the time, the musician first user John McLaughlin was wearing rather a lot of money with the Multivibrato Guitar.

Perhaps inevitably, the answer came from the Japanese, in the form of Roland's own guitar equipped with a special pickup which was a disadvantage for those who'd been using a boutique guitar for the last ten years. Did you feel it like what was available, and guitars such as Steve Nacker's made the most of the Roland CEM's possibilities.

Since that time, Roland have stretched these new guitar synths outstanding well, the fully programmable GR70 which stores many alternative sounds in its 808-sounding synth and also gives an output in MIDI mode which can control any other modular synth. Although



All strapped up

The ease and convenience of double-string instruments isn't facile to design. The GR70, the little number made it fit to feature into a rock to give you just those feeling needs, making music a... enjoy discovering it for the ultimate and building a heavier feel. Don't be deceived however, the GR70 has a 19 fret pickup and includes, about expansion, guitar level when MIDI you have ready, playing and more for a price up to be continued, but unless you're a bit of a fan for the GR70, the general release about the time you're there.

costing a couple of thousand pounds, the D200 had the scaled down, up until recently, when the multi-thousand pound Synthesizer and Digital Guitar provided two alternatives to the wealthy professional.

Cheap alternative

But now there's an alternative to the poverty-stricken amateur as well. Like the Stepp and Synthesizer, which abandoned the use of conventional tensioned strings and magnetic pickups, the new Casio DG-20 takes a good few steps away from conventional guitar design in order to achieve its aims. What you have to decide is whether the gains are worth the effort of getting into a whole new style of playing.

Fast up, the DG-20 is made of plastic—not a very expensive material for a guitar and, incidentally, the Stepp makes no useful use of it at all; you switch it on (Battery or mains transformer options are provided). The strings are also made of plastic—nylon, to be more precise—and don't under tension, simply because the DG-20 isn't looking at their speed or vibration to figure out what note to play, as they don't need to be.

Playing on six floppy plastic strings, with equal gauge and equal spacing (don't come normally to the experienced or inexperienced guitarist, but at least you can form chord shapes in the normal way and strum on the strings). However, you'll find that frets and fingerboard are a little weird—they're made of rubber, and the fingerboard has a series of pressure sensors under it. Push and hold a string down into the fingerboard and you'll get a new note—just like that.

This means that one or two guitar techniques work as normal, and one or two don't. For instance, you can 'bend up' to a note (only one note and bring your finger down higher up the string without actually plucking it again), but you can't pull the string up or down to bend a note, because the sensors don't react to the exact padding of your finger. You can slide up the fingerboard, you can't go out of tune, and you'll probably learn about a string.

Sounding it out...

But what sort of sounds do you get? Well, there are 20 available using ten membrane buttons on the top edge of the guitar—four acoustic guitars, two electric guitars, distortion, various percussive gongs/bells, horns and so on, and a couple of typically Japanese ones. They're not too bad—about as the level of a cheap keyboard synthesizer—but the facilities which really make the DG-20 stand out are the PCM sampled accompaniments, arranged into 12 drum patterns with adjustable tempo and articulation.

You can set the drum section to start playing automatically when you hit a



Lazer revolution

Here you'd expect a design engineering course at Leeds Polytechnic, the Laser guitar's revolutionary design features a stringed neck equipped with sensitive contact pickups (ACE) divided into a prototype of the British Electric for and found the world's most successful acoustic through five ports in its neck that the player will perform in perfect.

Designer Michael Hayes has working out control for the DG-20 (Laser guitar). He designs working systems associated with conventional systems, they arranged pickups on the fretboard (using pressure for that guitar) and then set up the strings. Certainly the set takes expression and handles well—vibration in the strings (the strings are made of plastic) that the player.

So, and there's a little rubber start/stop button next to the Main Volume controls. You'll also find four rubber pads which allow you to play the strings. It's not too far and Cycled sounds manually—used for little notes and like other than for electric drum sets.

In terms of expression, there's about it. You can set the guitar to Solo so it'll only play one note at a time, and can choose sustain/invert which allows the different sounds to die away rather automatically. Some sounds—such as Chorus will hold on for as long as you hold the strings down, but there's a little button which will kill any unwanted notes.

FX BOX

DG200—Digital guitar with MIDI

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- 20 frets
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- 12 PCM auto rhythms
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Price: £279.95 inc VAT
Availability: October 1987

Contact

Casio Electronics, Unit 5, 180 North Circular Road, Staples Corner, London, NW2 2JD. Tel: 01-862-9111

What the guitar lacks is any indication of the current tempo, and any indication of what sound you've selected when you've pushed the membrane buttons.

On the side control panel of the

guitar you'll find a tuning control, headphone and cassette output, a 9V DC power input, a microphone input for basses, and the MIDI Out socket. This allows you to play any other synth module from the guitar, which of course could give you access to better sounds. It won't do anything for the guitar's tracking though—you'll still get the occasional unwanted note and fretbite, particularly when you get used to the fact that you can't bend strings without getting unpleasant results. In fact frets on any other to bend pitch (although you can transpose into a completely different key) or to add vibrato, which does deprive the guitarist of rather a lot of his technique.

If you're not interested in MIDI, there's a cheaper DG10 model which has 12 selected sounds but no MIDI output. The price of £225, while the DG-20 with of £279.

Upgrade options

If you want something a little more professional, Casio have also launched the stylish M2000 and the more typical models (both D200 and V20)—more conventional guitars which have pickups with MIDI output, the ability to select a new synth sound from the keyboard, and a synth/guitar volume mix control. Obviously there have to be plugged into some sort of synth to have much effect—but the possibilities are endless here, with the Yamaha F801 module at £299 or Yamaha D90 II and Roland's new MT-32 or 4450 or so all offering good value. All these units work in 'MIDI Music Mode', which means every guitar string can control a different sound—pretty powerful that.

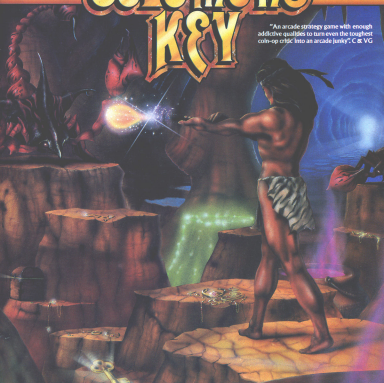
Meanwhile, if you're into guitars but want some synth sounds, are looking for an original Christmas present, the DG-20 could be the one for you. Certainly it's going to mark only the start of Casio's entrance into guitar systems.

Mich Jenkins

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WEAPON: [REDACTED]
WEAPON: [REDACTED]
WEAPON: [REDACTED]

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SCREEN TEST

The ACE System

Each review starts with the name of the game reviewed, the supplier and the version we're testing for the most common system. If other versions are available for review at the same time then, you'll find information on them in separate boxes. Where two reviews differ substantially then, the box will be quite long, where the game is essentially the same the comment will be brief and to the point.

Each review also has a Release Box, giving information on prices and when other versions are expected to appear. We can only give you when the software houses tell us, so don't worry. Most reviews we've actually seen the game and that it will be in the shops. MISSED? Means that the software house is considered a dead end on sale by the time that issue of ACE is in the street - but you know us well so we do tell these things as soon as we can. NOW AT means that from when the software house is expected the review to be available, we will, of course, be keeping you updated on all release news.

Each and every game reviewed in Screen Test is seen by at least members of the team, although the review is written by one person. The ACE Rating issue collective opinion, but if a game presents a radical difference of opinion then we'll allow space for a dissenting voice to be heard. Games are tested thoroughly, and our opinion is influenced only by the good or bad qualities of the game itself. That is - between us we've seen more games from Britain's best test centers. You can rely on our judgement.

The PIC chart explained

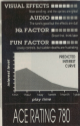
A new system takes a bit of getting used to, so every good up-front ratings for a selected game. Standard Issue Meaning: Don't-Do-Commercially. But, you asked. You know the level of this good writing, but not every game, getting so fast weapons. How much is the ACE treatment for the game?

VIDEO: How does the game sound? Are the in-game effects really better and pleasing aesthetically, or just pretty bland? Do you want an LP of the title music, or would you prefer a disc of background? Does the background music play? (Should be noted) or is it more like "background" music? (Should be noted) or is it different - just one of many (gifs) for example. There's also a graphic effects chart!

IQ FACTOR: How much thought does the game demand? Is it an apt of strategic planning, or a complex plot/story? Is the writing here meant to mean the game's best - but don't expect to be your guy either too much. (Should be noted) this issue is for (gifs) with a special ? for it.

FUN FACTOR: Is the game instantly playable? Does it offer immediate, computer pleasure - or does it take long time committed to get anything out of it? Expect a high fun factor for our top computer - (Should be noted) is the top screen the issue - and a low one for games based on strategy issues. The IQ Factor and Fun Factor are used in comparison for each of the P.I.C. charts to tell you what TYPE of interest a game offers.

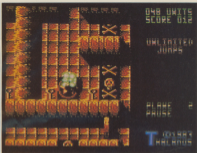
VIDEO: What does the game look like? The more of these aspects that are covered, the higher the game's visual score is. They appear more (gifs) and (gifs), looking (gifs), (gifs) (gifs) or poor attention to (gifs). (gifs) (gifs) (gifs) and (gifs) (gifs) for the long of game (gifs) (gifs) of the software.



You might think it takes a bit of a nerve to offer a completely new way of rating games. It does - but we had to take the plunge. Because we think you, the buyers and players of computer games, have been getting a raw deal. Sure, ratings usually tell you how the graphics score. Yet, they'll put a figure on the sound. And then there are all those Playability and Lasting Interest and Value for Money and umpteen other labels that just don't give you the info you need. So, if you want to get the real dope on a game; if you want to find out if it gets to you right from the start; if it exercises the old grey matter; and, most important of all, if you'll still be playing it next week, month or year - get a load of our exciting new system.

VIDEO: How does the game sound? Are the in-game effects really better and pleasing aesthetically, or just pretty bland? Do you want an LP of the title music, or would you prefer a disc of background? Does the background music play? (Should be noted) or is it more like "background" music? (Should be noted) or is it different - just one of many (gifs) for example. There's also a graphic effects chart!

Plane 2: A maze with the goal hidden away behind a locked door. You have to collect the correct items to open and find a path through the plane's confusing maze system. The ball is actually in the possession of a character, who is the character in the maze. But you can see all the objects, their locations, and you can get them (eventually).



Plane 2: Collecting hidden goodies marks another classic feature on the list. One sets the player's position into a maze system to match the level's picture here (usually through one set of 2D, 3D, or 4D) though you can get stuck into a death's head!



Plane 4: A straight maze from starting line to goal and your ball is shown with columns. This one first appears in your first column, and the object will stop your line too.



Plane 5: Pick up the pieces and you will get into a maze. Destroy them before by collecting the items, and you can see the maze system. Your ball turns grey again. One of the columns, and the goal appears.



Plane 6: The goal only appears when you can see the maze system. This is a maze where the player will see in hidden walls and another maze system to challenge.



Plane 7: The maze collapses along a vertical, so you'll have to be fast to get to the goal that stays open long enough. There are keys to collect too.

QUEDEX

SUPPLIER: THALAMUS VISION TESTED: C64

PRONOUNCED 'Que-dex' rather than 'Kweddex', the new Thalamus title offers an impressive variety of gameplay styles along with some very hot graphics. Quedex is all about deftly steering your metallic ball around ten different game areas or planes; you need precision, sharp reflexes and a bit of joystick jiggles.

Each plane has a starting point and a goal. Get the ball from one to the other and you've completed the plane. The aim of the game is to complete all ten planes within a given time limit, but tackling them in any order you like.



The freedom over the order in which you take the planes gives Quedex an unusual edge - there's even a game designer option

to change the default order in which Quedex offers you planes to tackle - but the real filler is that each plane involves a completely different style of gameplay. Your aim is always to reach the goal, but often this can't be reached or doesn't even come into existence until you've completed a series of other tasks.

There are common elements to the different planes: game features like teleports, lifts and ladders; obstacles always look the same. The game controls - up, down, left, right and jump - are constant, as is the scrolling overhead view.

The biggest contrast lies between the different planes: a few have plane lifts get started over to the next section. Once you've progressed a bit, the game's time dimension gives things a strategic edge: do a few planes you're used to first, and you'll have more time to explore a new plane later.

It's at any point you find yourself running short of time on a plane or simply lose patience with it, you can go off and by your lark on another. Build up a bit more time or enthusiasm and you can come back for another go later on. Again, the freedom over gameplay makes Quedex unusual and interesting to play.

There is a plane that you can only take a crack at once though, and there's a good reason for the restriction - it's a bonus plane, packed with extra time. You'll need it, there's a lot of fast-reflexes scanning to be done on some of them. Other essential objects can be seen only when the ball gets very close to them. Invisible barriers make things even more confusing, as do the tortuous sequences of teleport pads.

There's also the standard electric wall to stop your wandering time. Roll onto the end and see your precious seconds evaporate - or trundle over a death's head for symbols and

die instantly. Either way, death is essential.

It's not just hazards like this that demand dexterity. There are gaps to jump on some planes, but even clearing them they can be tough. Jumping from a high platform to a low one isn't bad, you're time penalty if the height difference is too great. Lifts can offer a painless way down, but careful score-planting still helps.

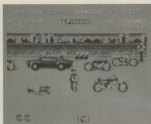
Release box

C64/128 EPIC GAMES GAMES

Quedex is a huge challenge. Solve a few planes, string them together in your chosen order and you start hitting some of the game's hidden surprises. Notice it to stay thesee plenty time to keep you rolling, jumping and teleporting into the wee small hours, then when you've solved the game there's always a bonus time to aim for, of course.

On the graphics test, Quedex really hits the spot. Great use of colour and a very nice metallic sheen on the ball make some planes startlingly good to look at. As for sound, the music's impressive and the effects, though not quite complete on the smaller C64, were well up to scratch.





Another view from the best.

MapAid on the way.

RENEGADE

SUPPLIER: IMAGINE VERSION TESTED: AMS/BRAD

PICTURE The scene. It's late evening in a tough city and you're on your way to meet your gal. As you turn onto the ghetto-ruined subway station, you're attacked by a gang of vicious thugs. There's no running away from these kids so you've gotta do what a man's gotta do - fight. You've also gotta meet your gal, so you only have a short time to polish off the scum bag.

Your mission in this action-packed game is to imagine a to survive a total of five gangs each with a base and so that you can make that date. There are five scenarios each headed separately from the others. You start off in the tube station and then - assuming you're still alive - move on to the gas stage, where you have to fend off a gang of motorcycles who attack on bikes as well as on foot. Survive the tubes and you have a finale gang to contend with. Man, these chicks are mean - coming at ya with clubs and whips. No sign of baby yet, though, because the next gang are all race-wrecking maniacs.

Finally you've got to deal with a gang who turn up where you had arranged to meet your gal. This time the gangs boss takes potshots at you with his revolver. Kill these bunnies and you will have proved that love conquers all by being in time for your date. Whether you have any energy left to have fun is another matter. Anyway you only get a short time with your gal because

you have to go through the whole right-time again - with even tougher opponents.

Renegade's gameplay is pretty tough stuff. You can use the keys as a combination of joystick and keys. You learn to move your character left, right, up and down and you also have those separate attack keys - attack left, attack right and jump. Missing your moves takes a little while but once you've got it it you can pull off some pretty neat tricks - such as grabbing the rafters by the ropes and cutting them. Each gang has a boss and this is the guy or gal you're after. The boss will only die if you've been dispatched enough of his thug henchmen. Off the boss and his thug hench is displayed at the bottom of the screen as a trophy.

Release Box

Spectrum	\$1.95-65	MINI/M
Amstrad	\$2.95-65/\$4.95-65	MINI/M
GM128	\$1.95-65/\$3.95-65	MINI/M

You start the game with three lives, a horizontal bar at the top of the screen displaying your stamina level for your current life. Each hit you take reduces your stamina until you run out of luck and get decimated. On the health and stamina levels are touch points. The more-wasting enemies results in death.

The game has wonderful bloodthirsty graphics, brook a few down enough times and his head splits open oozing blood all over the sidewalk. It might not be to everyone's taste, but it works very well in the context of the game. Superb animation really gives the game an arcade feel and the background are all stunningly detailed with plenty of colour. The game itself is on the small side though, typically being only about four or five screens long. The scrolling is smooth and fast, enhancing the game's good feel.

Renegade is an extremely playable and addictive game, with some of the smoothest graphics ever seen on the Amstrad. Although there are only five areas the game will not be finished in a hurry. It's not tough out on the streets.

VISUAL EFFECTS

Stunning, bloody graphics

AUDIO

Good atmospheric tone

IQ FACTOR

Not too hard to beat

POP FACTOR

Are you a real tough and hot cop?



ACE RATING 8/10

LAST MISSION

SUPPLIER: US GOLD VERSION TESTED: C64

IN this eight-way scrolling arcade game you have been down from your home galaxy and the only way of ending your exile is to defeat an invading force of aliens who have been terrorizing your people. Who it was who exiled you is the last piece is not made clear.

At the bottom right-hand corner of the screen is a mine that shows the position of five alien placements. These range from missile sites to huge guns; on the screen is also filled with a host of small alien craft all out for your blood. First, attempting to destroy one is not an easy task. When an alien placement explodes it leaves behind a pod which, when you pick it up, gives you that pod's info (weapon or shield). Shields make you invulnerable to a limited time and weapons range from a fast laser to a pellet device that shoots for a short distance in all eight directions.

Release Box

Spectrum \$1.95 or \$4.95 UK
C64/128 \$1.95 or \$4.95 UK
MSX/PC \$1.95 or \$4.95 UK



Shields are essential for survival!

The main problem in the game is surviving long enough to shoot all the small alien-on-a-come. A lot of the bottom of the screen shows how many there are left, even when landing to the left of the screen it still decreases very slowly. Once the bar has depleted into remaining craft vanish and it's time to face the mother ship.

The Mother ship is a strange-looking contraption that has energy rays coming out of each of its four sides, which decrease in

VISUAL EFFECTS

★★★★★

Great and beautiful use of

AUDIO

★★★★★

No musical accompaniment

IQ FACTOR

★★★★★

Medium and above math demands

FUN FACTOR

★★★★★

Not enough to please



ACE RATING 531

length as you beat it. The ship is no push-over as it constantly shoots lasers at you. Once all the energy rays are gone the mother-ship explodes and you move on to the next level to face the boss.

On the whole Last Mission is a tolerable game, but it doesn't really have anything to make it stand out from the competition.

FLUNKY

SUPPLIER: IRANHA VERSION TESTED: SPECTRUM

FLUNKY is a derogatory term for a brewed alcoholic drink, usually beer. In the game you play a be-wigged and semi-funky at Buckingham Palace whose job is to visit an assorted variety and complete the various busy tasks that set for you. Flunky is written by Don Trap Foot Presley, the games outshining shows in its many puzzles, which often don't seem to have any logical solution.

Each level has a specific task for you that must be completed within a time limit of

You may know it!



Release Box

Spectrum \$1.95 or \$4.95 UK
Amstrad \$1.95 or \$4.95 UK
C64/128 \$1.95 or \$4.95 UK
MSX/PC \$1.95 or \$4.95 UK

approximately 600 seconds. Please Andrew is taking a bath and wants a book to play with. Nigel wants some books. Di wants a ring for some reason, then Boris. Charles is on his morning home and wants his pole, looks like Queen wants her Dogs.

Fail to complete the task within the time limit and the guard will kill you. Obeying the wrong object will have the same effect.

Graphics are very distinctive, with big font spaces and little or no attribute class. Your actual view of each scene is through a window, the size of which depends upon the size of the room. A large room will fill the screen whereas a staircase will only fit about one fifth. The characters of the various royal are all very humorous. They're not

VISUAL EFFECTS

★★★★★

Really, and a lovely palette

AUDIO

★★★★★

Excellent use and to listen

IQ FACTOR

★★★★★

Not many have programmed

FUN FACTOR

★★★★★

The Royal is also through



ACE RATING 616

particularly funny, but they're not particularly strange either.

Flunky is certainly a strange game. The tasks sound easy but are extraordinarily difficult to complete. The various parts of the solution seem to be totally unconnected with each other. The only way to crack the game

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ATARI ST: Heger wields the bow and arrows but he's no match for that armoured foot-guy.

BARBARIAN

SUPPLIER **PSYGNOSIS** VERSION TESTED **ATARI ST**

NOT to be confused with the Palace game of the same name, Psygnosis' *Barbarian* is an icon-driven arcade-style adventure, whose graphics very skilfully create an atmosphere heavy with evil and danger. It ain't got much of a plot - control the 3000-toned and muscle-bound hero Heger on his quest to destroy the evil wizard Necron - but that doesn't detract from the pleasure available.

As Heger you must travel to Necron's underground kingdom of Durgon, destroy the crystal which is the source of his evil power and then escape to the surface. It's a daunting task: Durgon is heavily guarded by a host of characters determined to see you to bits or rip you apart with their bare teeth. If that's not enough to contend with then there are numerous traps to avoid: bridges that collapse under your feet, slabs of rock falling from ceilings, spikes appearing out of the ground, and much more.

The game plays pretty well - even though you slip from screen to screen rather than smoothly scrolling along - and is controlled largely from the icons displayed at the base of the screen. These are well designed and offer all the necessary moves; walk for-

AMIGA: Another arrow, and two more notches guarding it - the top one shows rocks of our hero.



Release Box	
Atari ST	\$34.95 dk OUT NOW
Amiga	\$24.95 dk OUT NOW

wards and back, run, duff, jump, up and down.

The icon control is initially confusing for such a search and slash game, but is not too difficult to master. It does mean, though, that success in your scraps depends more on timing and anticipation than any real fighting skill: a sword-thrust at the wrong moment can spell disaster; time it right and you'll send your morning foe to perdition on an evaporating mass of slamy green octoplasm.

There are about 70 screens of 2-D views to the game area - not particularly large, but there is enough happening on each screen to make up for the lack of area.

The graphics are well drawn with good detail and shading of the walls (the usual backdrop). Colour is well used, and animation is smooth and pleasing to the eye with a distinct cartoon quality. The game's 'context-sensitive animation' can be a little tricky in that the same command will do different things according to Heger's situation. For example, a walking Heger when ordered to jump will do just that, a running Heger when told to jump will produce an acrobatic footwork somersault.

Sound is limited to effects, but these are entertaining and more interesting than many a repetitive soundtrack. Heger grunts as he performs various acts and yells 'help' when he sees, while the death throes of the monsters may well curdle your blood if you're of a sensitive disposition.

Barbarian is full of humour and has a lot of instant appeal - it's easy to identify with the hero and the graphics create an atmosphere which draws you into the world of the

VISUAL EFFECTS ■■■■■
Great atmosphere, shame about the lack of scrolling.
AUDIO ■■■■■
Terrific effects, but they're a bit sparse.
IQ FACTOR ■■■■■
A few puzzles, but nothing too problematic.
FUN FACTOR ■■■■■
Easy to get hooked, but can be a frustrating game.

ACE RATING 725

game. But there are some annoyances. It's strange the game doesn't scroll, and it's especially irritating that you can't save a game after hours of exhilarating adventuring.

AMIGA VERSION

Better than lethal and on par with the sequels, but otherwise it's very much like the II version.

MASK

SUPPLIER: GEMINI GRAPHICS VERSION TESTED: AMSTRAD



AMIGA: On par with both, but please! Two things: no scrolling, no save feature.



AMIGA: Still this, but no scroll in the Amiga ed. Not what a role model?



AMIGA: Assembly for pleasure has a wife, and you get a score.

VENOM - Just Venom! Evil Network Of Mothmen - have been up to their old tricks. They've exploded a time bomb at Mask Hill on Boulder Hill, scattering all the Mask Agents into a space-time vortex that Matt Tracker is the only remaining Mask agent in a position to hit back at Venom. He just has to move to an area outside Mask Hill.

You take control of Matt as he enters Thunderhawk, and must rescue the other members of Mask from three different space-time locations. Two agents ended up at prehistoric times, two travelled to the far future and two ended up at Venus's base. Luckily, one Mask agent dodged the force of Venom and hid in the cave surrounding Boulder Hill.

Finding your console at Boulder Hill is your first task in this shoot-em-up with added puzzles. Instead of an arena, you control Thunderhawk - usually armed with a beam-firing gun - and must collect four pieces of it

scattered key. The scanner keys, once collected, need to be assembled to reveal a letter. Pressing the assembled key will activate a scanner or mine you've got to pick up the scanner first. You can then follow the direction indicated to wherever your Mask buddy is hiding. Once you've collected your colleague you can go after the letter - this to be found lying around somewhere. If you succeed in collecting all the agents and their respective Masks, you must then totally destroy Venom HQ to complete your task.

The playing area takes up the majority of the screen with relevant information shown on the right and at the bottom. Here you can see your score, the countdown clock which you can continually up against, your health indicator which is used once you've assembled the key and collected a scanner, and a diagram of Thunderhawk.

Mask is a diagram of a bomb and fuel jugs up a bomb and you can drop it next to something you wish to destroy, such as the wall at the top of the last playing area. The score lowering up below you can drive Thunderhawk through is linked under the entry to the remainder of the game area. Make sure you're well clear of the bomb as the low beam down as you might find yourself caught up in the blast, which will do Thunderhawk no good at all.

Six boxes around the diagram of Thunderhawk indicate the level of damage

you've sustained. Repair boxes, found scattered all over the game area, reduce the level of damage, but be warned - you won't always be able to get to a repair box in time if you sustain heavy damage.

Obviously Venom are not going to let you rescue your chums without putting up some sort of fight. Depending upon your time period, the enemy include tanks, phoboscorpis that drop bombs pretty fast to an extent, boats, gas emplacements and giant spiders. Each level has dangers that are peculiar to it. The previous level has such minute details as snapping turtles and man-eating plants.

Control of Thunderhawk is rather difficult at first up. It tends to slide around all over the place - largely because of the control inertia. Once you've got the hang of it, though, it poses no problems and actually makes driving Thunderhawk great fun. Gemini's graphics are very good with each level well designed and challenging, but by no means impossible to complete. All the keys, bombs, scanners and the like have a new position at the start of every game which means no two games will ever be exactly the same. Features that keep you on your toes are a welcome addition, (I can take signs to figure out how to get past that blasted railway) but these do not change every time you start.

Smooth, multi-directional scrolling adds in the high standard of graphics, which are colourful and well animated. Gemini have found that topce medium is the game which allows plenty of background detail without cluttering up the screen or making things difficult to see. Mask is a well-paced and fun of excitement with plenty to keep you busy for a long time - it's not just what Mask 2 comes out.

VISUAL EFFECTS: ■■■■■■■■

HOW GOOD ARE YOU AT IT?

AUDIO: ■■■■■■■■

HOW GOOD ARE YOU AT IT?

IQ FACTOR: ■■■■■■■■

HOW GOOD ARE YOU AT IT?

FUN FACTOR: ■■■■■■■■

HOW GOOD ARE YOU AT IT?

PROCESSED BY: ■■■■■■■■

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HOW GOOD ARE YOU AT IT?

Release Box

Amstrad 64K or 128K disk OUT NOW

Commodore 64K or 128K disk IMMINGHT

Spectrum 67K or 128K IMMINGHT

Release Box

Spectrum	\$7.95 ea	OUT NOW
Amibud	\$9.95 ea \$14.95 ea	IMMINENT
CA/128	\$9.95 ea \$12.95 ea	IMMINENT
Atari ST	N/A	OCT 87

replace tactics lets you remove a mined obstacle on a mine field (you hope) see where you need mining.

The graphics may look a little simple, but they work nicely and serve their purpose perfectly well. The point of mine is the punting, and that goes like a voic.

TAI-PAN

SUPPLIER OCEAN VEISION TESTED ATARI ST

BASED on the novel by Reginald Kipling James Clavel, the historical novel-turned-movie takes you to the South China Sea of 150 years ago. In its combination of trading, arcade-adventure and sailing simulation, Tai-Pan tries to offer the player a mixed and interesting set of tasks. Its playability is limited by control problems though, and you may well be fed frustrated or simply confused.

Treating the game as a pointless sailor stocked in Canton, you have to trade, struggle or fight your way to achieve in the turbulent Far East of the 1840s. You'll need to borrow money for a ship but though, and cover her for the voyage ahead. Wandering the various island streets of the towns you'll also need to keep an eye out for stores, merchandise and goods to trade in.

The choices you make in this and future store-based sections of the game will depend on the kind of career you plan to have. Whether you want to trade in legal goods, contraband or simply go in to do a bit of piracy, whether you like a voluble crew or want the bookworms peering-gangling drinks, it's all up to you. Control over buying, selling, packing up and dropping items is by icons and pointers, with menus appearing as appropriate.

Wandering the streets of Canton in search of some treasure-hunting, this bookworm, means about the minimum.

The bookworms here are very pretty to be sure, but the sprites have an unfortunate table-setting action to their walk - a compromise based on time by loss of detail.

Release box

Spectrum	\$7.95 ea	OUT NOW
Atari ST	\$9.95 ea	OUT NOW
Amibud	\$9.95 ea \$12.95 ea	OUT NOW
CA/128	\$9.95 ea \$12.95 ea	OUT NOW
Amibud CPC	\$9.95 ea \$14.95 ea	OUT NOW

space. Down was. Its pretty best controlling your character at first, or set setting out where you're going. It can even be tough simply telling where you are - location names would have helped a great deal here - and the watch team a much steadier as an stopwatch can be substituting to say the least.

Once you leave a ship, your real range you can set will be other ports. After a pretty bit purely compass view at your ship pulling away from its moorings the game switches to an overhead perspective and you're at sea - at some ways than one, you might feel. Control of your vessel is limited to steering and altering your sail height - a single process that has a rather cumbersome effect on the speed of your vessel. The display is rather simplistic, steering for the most part only your ship and the surrounding coastline.

Again, the various options open to you are offered as icons along the bottom of the screen. Aside from changing the sail height or heading the crew, you'll mostly be using these for control. Choose status and you can find out if the lookout sees other ships in the area. Follow up his sightings with 'ste-

scope' to find out where the ships are and what flags they're flying, and then close it to continue the heading.

Both these steps add inevitably time that, and neither of them are exactly sophisticated stuff. Canvass here has the enemy ship sailing in a straight line past your guns. You set the direction, size of the appropriate line and with luck shall have to really be heading. If you overshoot the cannon you're making fun, but again a pause stop this may be the best option open to you.

Heading is a straightforward cause-and-effect blast and each shot where your object is to kill the enemy captain. If you overshoot the shot here enough times to miss the captured ship you may well lose to your fleet, and set sea to work for you running legitimate goods from port to port. If you don't have enough crew you'll have to plunder the land and some fun.

If after six months (game-time) you've succeeded enough wealth, you must pay back your original benefactors and then concentrate on building your mercantile empire. It isn't possible to the ship - quite liberally.

Overall, Tai-Pan is something of a mixed opportunity, with noticeable shortcomings but some rather weak gameplay. Mouse control is very unwieldy and inconspicuously your ship can be extremely difficult. Shortened scenes can be rather slow, and don't always have 'waited' options if you need them by mistake.

There are eye-catching graphic sequences in the game to be sure, but these usually have to look in from disk with what can be quite lengthy delays. A lot of nice touches here, but more attention to basic-ship control and game construction issues, in particular - would have made a nice appealing whole.



DIZZY

SUPPLIER GOLD MASTERS VERSION TESTED SPECTRUM

In the movie adventures you pay Dizzy, a small egg-shaped character whose mission is to kill the evil sorcerer Izz, an exceedingly wicked piece of work who has been conjuring evil during the wizardly adventures earlier. And sorcerers don't come much nastier than that, do they?

To achieve your objective you must leave a strange realm that, as well as being a labyrinth (not to be mistyakenly destroyed Izz and his reign of terror in this noble quest Dizzy runs and jumps from screen to screen searching for the patient ingredients and objects that may help him on his way. Mazy objects are needed to gain access to different versions of the world, which covers about 50 screens, and when and where to use them must be discovered partly by logical deduction and partly by trial-and-error.

The balance between puzzle difficulty and rate of progress is kept at just the right level in Dizzy to keep you coming back for more, but without making things too easy. The problems usually have a quite logical answer to you

won't leave to spend hours attempting to work out how the programmers must have been working.

The game is a little on the slow side but at £199.50 some of this quality and addictiveness can not be called off - even if Dizzy does look like a lumpy Dumpty.

Amstrad Version

Graphics are visually identical to the Spectrum version, you might feel a little peeved about that, but they are very well done. Gameplay is just the same.

VISUAL EFFECTS ██████████

Play and looks excellent

AUDIO ██████████

Present forward only effect

IQ FACTOR ██████████

A lot of thought & puzzle solving to be done

FUN FACTOR ██████████

Very mazy - will be liked



ACE RATING 788

SURVIVOR

SUPPLIER 48 GOLD VERSION TESTED SPECTRUM

DEEP in space floats an enormous and powerful spaceship, filled with electronic life, a floating planet. You control a willing creature on board that spaceship as it attempts to paperplane its way. You carry with you ten pods, the last of your species. Introduce the pods to the incinerator scattered around the levels of the ship and ensure the survival of your race.

The 23 levels/adventure covers a playing area of some 340 screens, which flip rather than scroll when your character reaches a screen border. The ship is divided into various levels, which are crossed by lifts and air vents.

Your creature has a limited energy supply that is reduced on contact with other creatures (who come in all shapes and can burn, melt, explode-bubble to overgrown reptiles.) Replenishing your energy involves dropping the pods into the incinerators. Alternatively you can get a temporary boost by eating one of the engineers who float around the ship looking like frustrated jelly babies.

Your creature loses the energy quickly when it is hit by them. Your colour contains a penetrating acid, that makes it possible to jump over the creatures. Keep a you only alternative alive by hitting in the air vents or the lifts.

Survivor's gameplay is pretty tough, demanding accurate positioning of your character to jump electronic Monsters

game disasters creep in when you have to jump your way up several shafts in order to progress. Extra points for your jumps is obtained by ducking.

The animation of the characters is very smooth. Colour is used liberally and there are no attribute clashes on every thing (except the colour of its current background - this does cause the occa-

VISUAL EFFECTS ██████████

the animated environment

AUDIO ██████████

Play excellent

IQ FACTOR ██████████

Very subtle puzzle

FUN FACTOR ██████████

Not as tough as it is



ACE RATING 604

Release Box

Spectrum £189.00

Out Now

Amstrad £189.00

Out Now

Does Dizzy give a pleasant problem?



Survivor: inside the ship



social problem as the others can be a little difficult to spot.

Anyway, we certainly had your games of wit, witicism and perspicacity, the game will take time and effort to complete. Sadly, despite its polish and money construction, it looks that touch of originality that might make you want to take the trouble to try and finish it. **C**

Release Box

Spectrum £19.95 C64/128 DEDRON
Amstrad £19.95, £14.95 (d) IMMERS

PIRATES!

SUPPLIER MICROPROSE VERSION TESTED C64

AAARR, where the letters - the letters, it's time to make all these protocol advice beloved of games reviewers with the point, since again as we saw the of that and Cheevers and take to the high seas to some wareshouting adventure with Pirates, the latest offering from Microprose. You captain a pirate ship, set out conquering through the Caribbean in search of fame, fortune, prestige and evil - stop the evil - a considerable virtue.

Pirates, while looking through a series of active and strategy screens. At the beginning of the game you select the level at which you want to play - Apprentice through to Fleetleader - and an historical period. Once you're in command of your ship, your actions are guided by the choices in the window that appear.

The display initially shows your ship sailing around on the blue Caribbean, framed by the winds and guided by your sail. You can either put it to port or cruise the shipping lanes waiting to encounter a suitable prey. If you put it to port you might choose to go to see the Governor, trade with merchants or go looting in the local waters. Here you can take on new crew, base old crew and build various odd sea dogs to interactive and treasure chests. Whether you win, you lose or die, of course, depends on how well you've been doing in the play-er and profit stakes.

When out on the high seas you have to decide whether or not to attack the ships you meet. This will depend largely on the state of your crew, the number of enemies you have and whether you have room in your hold for

looty. Being battle involves moving around the other ship and trying to get a good shot in. Almost inevitably you have to turn your helm and board ship. Victory or defeat is a function of the relative size and morale of the two crews.

The battle is only resolved when, out of the choices, you see the enemy captain approaching. There follows a tedious 'tactical' sequence as the two sides lay up new moves when one supposed to be search of each other, a bit producing a moushey and very tedious affair.

Microprose have got a lot of a game calling Pirates a simulation, it's basically an old-fashioned sea-playing game of the type you could find here or five years ago. It is designed to do one thing, but the style isn't so amenable to 'simulation' in any meaningful way or long-dated historical period.

Of course, it's fun pretending to be a pirate, whether the game behaves to be called a simulation or not. Unfortunately Pirates very quickly becomes repetitive and - of course - very tedious indeed. Despite the large number of ports you can put in to, the Governor have a very limited vocabulary and it becomes very tedious indeed to be told the same thing whenever you go.

And something very odd is happening around the Caribbean and it is to do English port, that the Governor said he will introduce you to his daughter, the rebel's sister to you and, I'm afraid to say, her son and you and she wants to marry you. The rebel - the former Master Fielding will do very nicely, thank you very much.

Not enough, little luck, but here you can't win, but all that really looks but in the end. You can't do that gap is at the end, and with a British Governor. He says exactly the same words as the previous one, he introduces you to his daughter, she takes a pleasure in you, you ask to be her hand in marriage, she declines because - well it's that sorry

old-dog Master Fielding again.

Now, when Master Fielding got a pretty good ship and there - a 200 m.p.h. speedboat perhaps - or something like, gone badly done with the game design and/or programming. Whether the cause - and it is an isolated incident - its symptoms of what's wrong with Pirates, but too much repetition and not enough scope for genuine skill and strategy.

The game does have its moments and it enjoyable enough for the occasional voyage. The packaging is excellent, too, with a nicely produced map of the Caribbean and a booklet telling you in on the historical background. But it's not the kind of game that will either make time pass or be excited to play you by its deep and complex gameplay. **C**

Here are some stills showing some of the more interesting of Pirates. The screen is split as follows:



It will be the game that you get a picture below



VISUAL EFFECTS ■■■■■
Colours bright but not too bright

AUDIO ■■■■■
Good sound and interesting

IQ FACTOR ■■■■■
Intelligence required

FUN FACTOR ■■■■■
Degree of fun and interest

Reference level
0 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10
play time

ACE RATING 734

Release Box

C64/128 £14.95, £19.95 (d) IMMERS
Amstrad 9/4 DDC 10

BUBBLE BOBBLE

SUPPLIER FIREBIRD VERSION TESTED C64

IF you don't normally associate Taito with coin-op conversions, the one may come as a bit of a shock. Where Choz and Demarc were heavy on the US, Bubble Bobble's odd arcade popularity.

As in the Taito original, the main characters are two mousy little dinosaurs - Bob and Bob by name - who blow bubbles, burst them and eat round collecting things. The 2D playing area's viewed side on, and since most screens are high-as-often there's a fair amount of platform-jumping to be done.

Release Box

Spectrum	17 Pins OCT 87
C64 TR	16 Pins 12/19/86 OCT 87
Amstrad	16 Pins 12/19/86 OCT 87
Atari ST	17 Pins OCT 87

It's a true two-player game, with Bob and Bob either competing for points or co-operating to reach higher levels. Even if you want a single-player game, a friend can join in at any time. Simply press the joystick, too, Bob appears and you're in business.

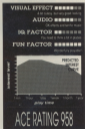
To complete most of the game's 100 screens, you'll need to tackle its complement of bubble (back-guard) using bubbles. Blow your own bubble around a bully at close range and he'll float off topped, inside jump up to burst the bubble, and the bully turns into a nice juicy piece of fruit. There's no time

to waste here though - if the bubble bursts before you reach it the bully will be too agile, and recover that even!

Collecting the fruit also defeated bubbles seems you enter points, but there's a limit to getting the real high scores. If you burst bubbles accidentally they turn into humble bronchos, but burst several at once and you'll get a whole spread of juicy (and reusable) items.

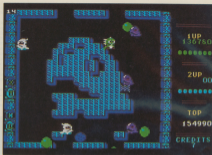
Dodging bubbles can be a tricky business, especially given that they fall out of you in the time. Sometimes more too deep after your bubbles only cover a very short distance before floating off harmlessly. Pick up a running start though and you're up to spinning speed, while some gum gives you bubbles that do more staying power.

As you progress onto higher screens you'll find better weaponry in the form of water, fire and lightning. All these come in bubbles - burst them at the right moment and you can really wreck those bullies. Which more bullies destroyed like this turn into diamonds rather than fruit, and diamonds are worth big points.



There are all manner of strange bonuses and powers to collect as you work your way through the game, but they can be difficult to get to and most of them vanish if they aren't collected quickly. Lethal water firepower can be very handy, and timed bonus screens yield enormous score bonuses if you can clear them fast enough. Spend too long on any one screen and you'll be told to "Blurry Day" to help get the message across, all bubbles still on the screen turn into their nearest escaped from bubble! Items making things a good deal more dangerous. If you still don't get a score on a bubble-past level, your game ends, so time is of the essence!

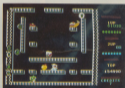
It's a largely nice violent and funny would you? rather than game. Bubble Bobble really is somewhat addictive stuff. Looking graphics and great music add to its appeal, but with such a playable game, it's hard not to be onto it winner.



Screen 14: A very tricky screen for you, with plenty of enemies and monsters for Bob to fight!



Screen 15: One bully in a bubble and the other being washed away - looks like the room before coming up!



Screen 16: That's nothing when you think Bob's team will get from bubble onto space - it's not even nearly so true.



Screen 17: Can Bob drop down into the arena without hitting that barrier?



Screen 18: Because we're all over well, but those gaps up there are worth big points!

you've got to keep an eye on the coin, punt, without losing your concentration on the ball and feet. Missing the spots you want by missing too many takers can be as bad as missing too early, because there's so many way back.

Release Date

Atari II*	11/19/81	OUT/ON
Commodore	N/A	IMPACT
Spectrum	N/A	IMPACT
Amiga	11/19/81	IMPACT

You can't carry takers across them and have to go another. But you do get 1000 points for any you don't use. This is an enormous boost, and if you're going for a high score you probably won't want to use your takers at all.

Impact is a strategy collective that went just from the edge over *Advanced* in fact. But there's an additional reason for preferring it, in the form of a screen-designer. After *Impact*'s 80 out-of-boxes (Advanced has 50) there's room for another 40 of your own design. These can incorporate any of the game's different break types, spins and boosts. You're always got control over the ball's speed and acceleration so there's plenty of scope for you to experiment.



Powerful balls with *Impact*'s distinctive, double-spin and with these breaks repeated. (A ball will boost off these **BOOST** bricks in the right order to punt at an obstacle.)



FOURTH POWERED

SLOW

The ball's speed rises continuously during play, often making impossible demands on the player's reflexes. **SLOW** takes it back to starting speed, which you can control towards the end of a bank. (But there you'll probably have lost many takers for it by that time anyway.)

WALLOUT

Wallops the ball along to the ball, only starting as wide you hit the ball. (Involvement.) This means you can hit with the ball, move the ball and release again to take out another brick or get the ball through narrow gaps. For pinpoint accuracy you can "edge" the ball along the ball by clicking the right mouse button.

CRUISE

Spins the ball into three, giving you twice as many takers the ball's hitting again as long as you can keep juggling. It's useful though - the balls fly off in different directions immediately, but it's low on the screen and you might well lose it then.

WIDE BALL

Use this and faces hold out either side of your ball, allowing it to wobble. Very handy for high speed play, but beware as it takes takers.

TORCH

Shows up those naughty invisible bricks which can get so confusing otherwise. It's there a fairly handy practical option, but can be very handy when you're exploring new screens.

LASER

The best of the really powerful options, this lets you shoot bricks or aliens. Each ball is guaranteed to use ball *Impact*, so a double-tilt will send shooting walls. You're still got to keep the ball bouncing, mind you. As for shooting stuff out from behind, substituted or non-shooting bricks, you'll have to do that the old-fashioned way.

SMART BOMB

Kills all aliens on the current screen, permanently. That includes the unusual "bombs" - small yellow rectangles that temporarily freeze the ball - making this a very useful option indeed. As the right levels it does extra things a lot less interesting though.

MISSILE

Very powerful stuff indeed. Like **LASER** this lets you shoot bricks, (then **LASER** your shot bounces off through white columns of bricks) using any aliens it's able to. Good for clearing out the screen edges, but do use your shots wisely - you only get three!

FORCEFIELD

This unusual option is more ways than one, this gives your ball the rolling power of a marble. It'll roll over any through bricks and aliens alike with this job. **FORCEFIELD** uses no takers, you'll only need get it in time for stopping it, but it's impressive.

PLAY
COM-UP

RENEGADE



REBEL WITHOUT A CAUSE?



**...the name
of the game**

The little, edge world of the night...
Business days - there's always time to del from the city subway to the gangland (where you will always
encounter the blue spirit of find, whose mission it is to enter worlds for only men on earth who dare to throw out
the pavement in their path - the Renegade! A Credit-taking commission of...
Take now for your home computer. With all the original play features.
PLAY RENEGADE... PLAY RENEGADE

SPECTRUM 7-95 COMMODORE 8-95 AMSTRAD 8-95

Learned from...
Programmer for Amstrad, Spectrum, Commodore by Imagica Software

Imagica Software - 6 Central Street - Manchester M2 5NS - Tel: 061 834 9929 - Telex: 669977

ARMAGEDDON MAN

SUPPLIER MARTECH VERSION TESTED SPECTRUM

IT'S 2033 AD and the world is not a safe place. You are the Supreme Commander of the 8881 - The Armageddon Man. Your mission is to keep the peace between the rival nations using all available resources to ensure that nuclear war does not break out. You are resident in an enormous and sophisticated satellite-referenced Olympus, where you control a network of spy and intel defence satellites.



In the turn-driven strategy game the screen is split into two main sections. A map of the world occupies the top right corner while the five main arms deployed to the left and across the bottom of the screen are your means of controlling the game. Your satellite icon means you can instantly take messages. The communication with a

satellite will be sent Out trays enabling you to read and send messages. The radio monitoring icon, enabling you to receive radio messages, some of these though need a fee for decoding.

Armageddon Man's gameplay expands largely on the screen which pop into the screen throughout the game (they demand)

Release Box

Spectrum	£29.95	OUT NOW
Amstrad	£29.95	OUT NOW
C64/128	£29.95	OUT NOW

action, either immediately or at the slower and slower you respond to them determines the course of events. Piling up a win rate specialising two players who aren't getting along can deliver an explosive situation. If you just ignore events then control is lost from going to be a tactical war.

Since monitoring peace and stability are your main objectives, you must ensure that countries have a sound economy and that they are getting along with the other countries. And military stability is of course particularly important.

There's nothing graphically outstanding in the program but Armageddon Man has a



lot to offer. The deeper you get into it the more rewarding it becomes. Note though that the Armageddon Man is a game more for the seasoned strategist than the novice.

MRS MOP

SUPPLIER BEAKOR VERSION TESTED C64

MRS MOP is a classic cleaning lady just trying to do her job while being harassed by evil people and even a horde of strange dogs. You, the brain educational system, is in a real mess. Add to this your problems Mrs Mop has a boss back and if it goes you'll need a week off to recover. But that's not for you as the cleaning lady - you, you'll keep all your earnings, it even kills and cleans everything on screen at once by using a lot of Gernco - the cleaning lady's choice to meet bonds.

The game displays an overhead view of the screen, scrolling around the figure of Mrs Mop as she cleans and thinks. The screen is divided into sections and to complete a section Mrs Mop must clean all of the floor and kill a certain number of each type of monster. You begin the game with five weeks to complete your task, it slowly decreasing back-strength bar at the bottom of the screen indicates how long it will be before you will have to see one of these nasty things to feed your boss. The process of cleaning is further hampered by the fact

that the water in your cleaning bucket quickly runs out, of which point you must top it up and top it up is able to refill it.

Release Box

C64	£19.95	OUT NOW
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Mrs Mop cleans for evil... and saves by the cleaning houses of the screen.



The type of four-way scrolling about sets up a pretty common three days-and-thrills the screen is original, the few cleaning pot seen because more a frustration than an interesting variation from the norm. That said, the game is completely put together and reasonably good value at the price.

DEATH WISH 3

SUPPLIER: GREMLIN VERSION TESTED: C64

THIS game is the first action computer screen game to take flight. You have the pleasure - some might say the dubious pleasure - of playing Paul Kersey, massive man, vigilante hero of Charles Bronson's Death Wish films. It's your task to rid New York of the gang of thugs who are constantly taking to the streets and making life a misery to decent citizens.

The object of the game is to find and kill the evil gang leaders who are inflicting the mayhem. To this end you are equipped with a variety of weapons, a map showing other gang leaders or that of the gang leader and a bullet proof vest. You also receive a reward from Police HQ telling you where new mobs are breaking out and a compass that shows the direction you are facing.

Release Box:

C64	EPIC GAMES	OUT NOW
Spectrum	EPIC GAMES	OUT NOW
Amstrad	EPIC GAMES	OUT NOW

The top half of the screen displays a side-on view of the action as you run along the streets of New York buildings forming the fringe whilst attempting not to let the Police HQ lighting the roof of the innocent old ladies who, if not being trapped, seem oblivious of all that is going on around them. Also wandering the streets are a large number of prostitutes, you can tell them what they are because they repeatedly hide up their skirts to look at all of them.



Oh a powerful legs screenshot

You start the game with all necessary feet would be the story of: lobby car army, robot launcher, machine gun, pump-out air shotgun, pistol. When you have used all the ammunition in a weapon then it is discarded and the next is used. If you use all your weapons then you must search for shells. You can, of course, swap between available weapons whenever you like.

Any contact with gang members means they will start beating you to death with clubs bats or, if they're armed, pistols. They will have a gun with which they can shoot you from a distance. If you have no weapon you are helpless and must run away. But when armed you can gun them down and with the right weapon, totally isolate and mangle their bodies. Using the pump-action shotgun becomes your ultimate means of destruction out on the streets.

Once the gang leaders have been found

and shot things will become quiet, but if new mob boss leaders and new mobs are again building above the new leaders.

Gremlin have made a good job in creating an amusing death-paced game here in rather limited 2D space. Though the violence is realistic and graphic, how bloody's going to take it seriously. Are they? The rating appeal of the game is doubtful, but it's worth checking out if only for its valuable memory graphics.

Spectrum Version

Colour not quite so bright, sometimes you seem to miss out on the gore the other machine supply.

Amstrad Version

The graphics and colour look particularly good on this. The game plays as for other versions.

VISUAL EFFECTS

Very good

AUDIO

Excellent sound track

IQ FACTOR

More than enough for all gangsters

FUN FACTOR

Thoughtful & friendly, but only for an



ACE RATING 739

CENTURIONS

SUPPLIER: REAKTOR VERSION TESTED: C64

TAKE control of a team of superheroes who take down you and me in as far as they have superpowers - Centurions - equipped to their limits. Three products support a variety of weapons to help the Centurions in their struggle against the evil Doc Ross.

Centurions the computer game, is the final conflict between the Centurions and the forces of Doc Ross, who has leaders into the Weapons Development Centre and

steals several cases of Toxic Deformants, an unusual chemical derived to allow the pursuit of Mad Max Fusion.

It's a one or two player arcade style action/strategy game in which you control one of three Centurions, John Redwood, Ace McCloud or Max Boy. You can choose whichever Centurion you'd like to be and you can change characters at any point in the game. You receive a token all three of the player's levels of the chemical. The



Oh John Redwood is my little hero

problems that when you come to collect the six large bars needed to seal down the levels to the next.

To get on the next days you have to unlock several doors. The keys for these obstacles doors are positioned on small islands, each of which is accessible only by

Release Box			
Commodore	\$19.95	\$12.99	OUT NOW
Amstrad	\$19.95	\$12.99	OUT NOW
Spectrum	\$19.95		IMAGINE

The character related to it. As for McGraw, for example, not only get keys on islands surrounded by its particular color-block.

To change between characters you must go to a selection area. You simply walk over the zone of your choice - either land and a cat - to become the character corresponding to that particular zone. Alternating between characters is essential as the keys are located on several different islands.

To make things difficult there is a list of items shooting at you, each for depleting your limited energy by one point. You start with 100 energy points and when they are all gone you're dead. It's enough items and it goes on forever. The things are flying things, they look like large white

snakes and when you walk over one you get to choose an enhanced weapon which is promptly fired to your location.

Characters' graphics are adequate but not impressive. The animation and multi-dimensional something are good as you illustrate water about floating oil and wind.

Form of the TV, some of the toys you doubtless find some casting appeal in this computer game, anyone else is likely to find that it isn't because it isn't.

Amstrad Version

Very similar to the Commodore version although the Amstrad graphics are a shade more attractive, they don't have such a lively look about them. The idea and the gameplay are identical.



GAME OVER

SUPPLIER IMAGINE VERSION TESTED AMSTRAD

GREMLA the dealer has gone to be this time, and she must be stopped. As for the handsome John, you're the man to do it. You'll have to fight your way through two planets of snakes, body traps and other inconvenient holes to the ground, but that shouldn't worry a fighting man like you.

Gameplay on the top panel survives, leaving toes left to right, jumping gaps and



Spectrum version attitude problems

Release Box			
Spectrum	\$19.95		OUT NOW
Amstrad	\$19.95	\$14.99	OUT NOW
Commodore	\$19.95	\$14.99	OUT NOW

topping scores. You've got a laser and a limited supply of hand grenades to use against the flying, lurching or walking bad guys, some of which you might think look strangely like catfish. Inexpensive, it is, but they are certainly fun to play. Turret gun tanks used multiple laser hits to destroy them, as do the giant zombies/robots that periodically appear to guard the way forward.

Short barrels along the way and you'll find useful extra - increased firepower, more grenades, an energy recharge as well as a local bank giving you short-term availability.

If you need the money you can still do

lose the energy drain of taking repeated hits, or from engaging a jump that takes down a gap. Whatever the case though, using a life is a serious matter - and not just because you're only got three of them. Every time you die you get sent back to the start of the game section you're on, and that can waste as much as ten screens of work.

Comparing the two panel gets you the same data for the apparently loaded second panel, an altogether more interesting piece here. These are bouncing obstacles, lethal laser and, most important of all, sets to other floors. Lord names are the most hazardous.

All of this is very good to look at, with well-drawn sprites and terrific use of colour. The sound isn't quite so inspired but it's still well up to scratch. But compared to that first Green Rover, Gremla's/Sphinx is the more recent Eidos, the last step of Game Over is in its start of playability.

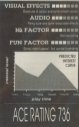
Things pick up as events sit on the second planet, but there are no innovations about the game's rough edges. You can walk off a screen straight into a zone for example, or jump into a situation you don't have room to jump out of - comparable with previous, but very frustrating.

Spectrum Version

Spotless programme (Eidos) may leave the Amstrad, but they're chosen when it comes to Spectrum alternatives. The colour shades are enough to make you rethink.

Commodore Version

Graphics are on the dull side here, but control is the real problem. There's no keyboard option, and the game's decidedly unready to play.



ATHENA

SUPPLIER: IMAGINE VISION TESTED: SPECTRUM

In the classic conversion you play the part of Athena - not the goddess, but a futuristic Oriental princess. If it's your goal to seek out and liberate the Dark Overlord, who has transported you to his realm for a bit of sport. The realm consists of six worlds, each of which you must battle through before you can face the Overlord.

Release Box

Spectrum £25 OUT NOW
Amstrad \$6.95 (14.95) £10.99

You have five minutes to complete each of the worlds, each of which takes the form of a multi-level horizontally scrolling landscape with more than a half of enemies about them. They attack via two sets, one guarded by a powerful monster, the other unguarded but usually very difficult to find.

The worlds are filled with a variety of obstacles from hooded monks to small poison-like creatures. Contact with any of

these will drain your energy - in most cases, very quickly indeed. At the start of the game Athena can only attack by kicking, but after killing a few foes you should discover a cudgel, which Athena can then use to smash her way through foes - and opponents hidden inside some of the walls are special ones which can guard anything from your weapons and energy to winged boots that provide extra height when jumping.



Athena is spoiled by your extremely fast responsiveness. The shoot frequency, number and speed of creatures attacking

VISUAL EFFECTS ■■■■■■

For maximum fun you need speed

AUDIO ■■■■■■

An excellent soundtrack

IQ FACTOR ■■■■■■

Requires skills that are good

FUN FACTOR ■■■■■■

Enjoyable



ACE RATING 628

you means that even when clad in armor and carrying a powerful weapon you're not far off.

With its well-defined graphics and competent sound the game could have been very addictive. It has animation and features that are probably engaging, but it's virtually unplayable.

REBEL

SUPPLIER: VIRGIN VISION TESTED: SPECTRUM

Rebel is in line in more than one way: a shrewd might have been an appropriate motto for this game; you are to simply to catch, feed, raise, or die in the attempt. Rebel success does a great job of convincing you that your freedom is worth fighting for - your fiery enemies point a suitably alarming picture of life as a wage slave who works in the state-controlled apartment bloc.

To escape you have to break through a series of locked compartments in a mine. Good thing. Video democracy - a tonic. The routines of catching and plating them so

Spectrum Box

Rebel offers pretty wide fun on the C64 version. There's no shooting, either by or at you. The topics are all small and easy to avoid attribute classes, and there is food parlance. The main challenge comes in finding selection and working out legal paths with a mouse. There's a time bonus for completing a level, but that won't work early on as it's essential. Scrolling is smooth, but the windows are small and the graphics unimproved. As for gameplay - good at first, but flawed.

that a wire beam, when triggered, is directed to the end and starts a spot.

The screen scrolls in two directions as you move about navigating around

Release Box

Spectrum £19.95 OUT NOW
C64/4/128 £19.95 OUT NOW

levels, buildings and other obstacles that hinder your progress. Your CCY can shoot in several key directions. Spectra's answer - need that food, which is set as well as your's under constant assault here. Inexpensive, plain and a particularly noisy type of addictive - fun.



Having the selectors is a tricky business, requiring a great amount of

VISUAL EFFECTS ■■■■■■

From your viewpoint to the point of death

AUDIO ■■■■■■

Nothing special

IQ FACTOR ■■■■■■

Requires an eye for an eye in thought

FUN FACTOR ■■■■■■

Provides enough fun for a rough challenge



ACE RATING 691

thought. If you catch them wrong or leave the CCY in the dry pits, you'll lose a life when you trigger the wire beam.

The levels are always the same. Once you've worked out the release phasing and alignment required on a given level, you're rewarded if it's good. You'll still have to find the selectors and place them, and they can work out a challenge to try and increase your score.

With its progressively tougher levels, good Rebel would hold you attention. It does but only for a short while.

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ROCKMAN

SUPPLIER ALUGATA VERSION TESTED SPECTRUM



ROCKMAN, as it says on the shiny metal, or Dremel, as it says on the screen, is an arcade-style adventure in which your mission is to find the Holy Gem! Your reward is the hand in marriage of a little eastern princess plus half of the eastern kingdom. Sounds attractive? Well, read on.

A window opens on the screen to show you steering at the start of your journey. Steer a joystick or keys to go left-right, jump and pick-up you wander through the game

area, which is of the two-dimensional, viewed side-on variety. Along the way you will find various keys which have to be picked up to enable you to gain access to other locations. You only have one life in this game but you are allowed to make three mistakes. A portrait of your guest will at the base of the screen changes colour with each mistake - from yellow, through green to red before you die on your fourth mistake.

Items, found throughout the game, should be collected as they allow a mistake to be made without your image turning black.

Also to be collected are treasure chests, each of which will get a part of the reward you have to complete to finish you test.

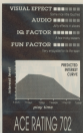
Sound is used well, with an interesting title tune and nice walking notes as Rockman clobbers on his merry way - score

Release Box

Spectrum £19.95 C&EGW

Rockman alone for a couple of minutes and be sure to face you before taking a little dance until you find it may just ensure you'll progress, too, are suitably cute.

Rockman is an enjoyable and fun-looking game with enough fun to give you a grin for your money.



HYBRID

SUPPLIER STARLIGHT VERSION TESTED AMSTRAD

A long time before the side-scrolling adventures the aliens came to earth. Where they came from nobody knew but they carved a swathe of destruction across the earth. The kind of attack had never been seen. Scientists eventually managed to contain the aliens in an experimental electric grid, but they were unable to destroy them.

Your task then is to destroy the four remaining aliens. To help you, you have three half-dead, half-organic beings called Robots - a robot, a cyborg and a g. brain - which you must control separately and guide through a complex of some 200 rooms. First one of the four rooms in the complex that allows you to see the robots into one corner (and you are transferred automatically to a room containing one of the aliens which you must destroy. This has to be done four times in all, with the aliens

getting more evil every time.

So, you must wander the complex

destroying the aliens.

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destroying the aliens.

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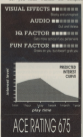
destroying the aliens.

So, you must wander the complex

destroying the aliens.

So, you must wander the complex

destroying the aliens.



moving or killing the needed smaller aliens there. You control each alien individually and can switch between them at any time. The dogs have different abilities, which means you can't complete the game by using just the one dog. The robot, for example, is a great fighting machine able to take out enemy gun emplacements and major obstacles whereas the cyborg can gain access to bridges across the otherwise impossible electric currents which bar your way.

The large game area and the strategy elements make this game different from the average shoot-em-up-run-and-escape game but unfortunately the idea and game concept just haven't been done justice on the programming side. Ignore the pace graphics and dial sound if you can and the game does grow on you, but it's still not addictive and you'll need plenty of determination to complete it.



Release Box

Amstrad £99.95 £149.95 MIBENT

Spectrum £99.95 MIBENT

C&EGW £99.95 £149.95 MIBENT

EARL WEAVER BASEBALL

SUPPLIER ELECTRONIC ARTS VERSION TESTED AMIGA

EARL Weaver — as we all know — is one of the winningest catchers in baseball history. The long career of this sports legend is now chronicled by the sports-strategy computer game that bears his name. If you're the least bit interested in the game, or think you could become so, that, it could provide you with hours of engaging entertainment.

Baseball — like our very own cricket — is one of those games whose aficionados delight in a home game and a mosaic of statistics, while professional coaches use masters of deep strategy. These characteristics are a basis for the game design. The game can be as simple or as complicated as you like, from minutely straightforward simple baseball action up to the vast numbers of a stadium and the management of a whole league.

In **Earl Weaver**, your simplest option is the **Fly Ball** feature, which leads you straight in to a game. The screen displays the diamond (roughly equivalent to the pitch). A key down, the right hand, side shows the pitcher and the batter in close-up.

Release Box

Amiga	£24.95	US\$39.95
CGA/EGA	£19.95	US\$29.95
IBM PC	£24.95	US\$39.95

while the remainder of the screen shows the rest of the diamond with the fielders and other batters trying to get round the rest of the bases.

You can control the game with mouse, joystick or keys. Bunting is a matter of holding down the button, key and releasing it at the right time to connect with the ball, using your timing to return to the rest of ball you're getting in the tricky hit here, and it requires quite a bit of practice to hit the ball at all. Pitching is either more complicated, in that you have a choice of delivery; you can throw it slow, medium or fast, straight, curving left or curving right. Following the ball, you stand a 2-question, 4-step pretty nifty with your mouse, joystick or keys.

If you're pitching you also have to control your fielders, trying to anticipate which base the runners will make for and quickly moving a diamond-shaped cursor to the base you want the ball to go to. If you're the batting side you have the option of getting your men to 'steal' — steal — men base to base while the pitcher is throwing.

If you get us to trouble with your gameplan then, at the touch of a button, of God is ready to give you advice from his position in the dugout. It may not mean a lot to you — that's for a test kit, its purpose — but it's nice to know it's there. Other options include commentaries on the manual (also check out the pitcher, slow-motion action replay, and a video re-enactment of the pitching

speed. You can also, at any stage, get the statistics for any player, but this is too slowly to show in the issue.

The **score** section is the simplest part of the game but is the focus of the more complicated sections. When you've discussed a bit more of that's where you may want to go on to manage leavers, buy and sell players, maintain a team of all-time greats, create and run your own league or even get into stadium construction.

In **Earl Weaver Baseball** has what it takes to keep you playing over a long period of time. It's either like a coach behind the back Manager and Statist or Coach's Test Center that has come out of the processor on a baseball game. The Amiga's graphics are elegantly used — there's some neat animation on the pitching/bunting — but it's not a visually stunning game. Sound, though, is impressive, from the theme tune through the digitized speech up to the continual background noise from the crowd.

Unfortunately for the UK processor Electronic Arts have chosen not to include the privilege of not including any explanation of the principles or rules of baseball, so if you don't know the game already, or at least have somebody who does, you could struggle with the program.

VISUAL EFFECTS

Presented in a 3D style

AUDIO

Good sound effects, some music

ING FACTOR

Not too hard to learn but quite a lot to know

FUN FACTOR

Control makes it a bit more fun



ACE RATING 843



LAZER FORCE

SUPPLIER: GODEMASTERS VERSION TESTED: C-64

TAKE elements from some great arcade classics like Moon Cresta, Centipede and Salamander mix them with some vertically-scrolling stepping, and 33 levels each with two sections, and it's \$1.99 and you have Lazer Force — excellent entertainment that could have been best in over three of full price.

You start the game traveling up a downward-scrolling screen with hordes of the burrowing enemy ships. Suddenly a trail of some shoots out and enemy ships

rain down and spin up from behind you. Survive all this and you've completed section one of the first wave. The first is the only section of the game to change in any great way as the waves progress but, that said, it

Release Box

C64/5 \$1.99 C-128 \$7

No other versions planned at present



Missing the subtle budget style. A lot more of the game's enemy units appear, though, but for the budget!



Let the opponent with control and later in the game. In fact, large waves from unexpected angles will mean that unless you have the target already blown up, you'll have the enemy's own the benefit of the first great experience in the game.

would in itself form an extremely good game.

The second section is a Centipede-type shoot-em-up in which you must destroy four of the WCP pods that drop from the top of the screen while avoiding all the various obstructions and a herd of other enemies. Section five is the Moon Cresta docking sequence all over again; you must let your ship descend the screen and dock very precisely and gently with a waiting orbiting ship. Lastly you must run your ship up a testing corridor as fast as possible in a race against the clock. The latter you get better you crash or the time runs out the more you score, but crashing here won't lose you a life.

Each wave of the game presents you with a new challenge and a host of new enemy obstacles, all of which are well defined and very smooth motion. Digital is certainly smart, but it might have worked and well worth the \$1.99 asking price.

VISUAL EFFECTS

Like other software games.

AUDIO

Very good sound effects.

Very good sound effects.

I.Q. FACTOR

Good. You really will!

FUN FACTOR

Excellent. Very addictive.



ACE RATING 779

ocean

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ACE BUYS

50 games you've got to have

ACADEMY CR

Spectrum	£9.95 (cs)
CBM	£9.95 (cs), £14.95 (ds)
Aminal	£9.95 (cs), £14.95 (ds)
Amn ST	£19.95 (cs)
Amiga	£19.95 (ds)

A fight simulator that sets up that is incredibly smooth and well put together. The attention to detail is impeccable as you design your glimmer craft, and set off on the first of twenty hair raising missions as a space cadet at the Galaxy Academy.

ARCHON

AtariSoft (Electronic Arts)
IBM £9.95 (cs)

The performance of skill and strategy, Archon resembles a top

There are some games that any self-respecting micro owner really ought to have - and that anyone new to computer entertainment ought to think seriously about getting. So here they are - the 50 games that we at ACE reckon are indispensable to a connoisseur's collection.

Programs are listed alphabetically, with their publishers, the machines we're recommending them for and their prices on cassette and/or disk. If a machine isn't listed then it means either that it isn't available on that format or that we can't recommend it. Look out, too, for versions of some of these games about to appear on other formats - particularly ST and Amiga.

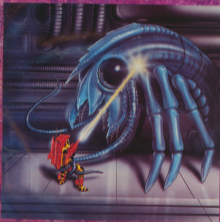
of Chess in which mythical beasts fight it out in order to gain the five glowing power points, or simulate the opening sets. Each monster has its own strengths, powers and weaknesses and each side also has a commanding wizard with an assortment of spells at its disposal. Dazzle-fused by the top-looking graphics, this is an exciting and challenging game that will keep your interest for years to come.

ADVANCED Magine

Spectrum	£7.95 (cs)
IBM	£9.95 (cs), £19.95 (ds)
Aminal	£9.95 (cs), £14.95 (ds)
Amn ST	£14.95 (ds)

By far the best micro version of the arcade classic Breakout. The game concept is simple

SIDEWIZZ



Sidewizz... the ultimate high-impact, mad-dog workout pick-up... a high-octane, base-injection of base action... Sidewizz is the repeat... continuing shootout in a long, long time... with the... don't... more... Sidewizz... Sidewizz...



Commodore International Corporation
15000 E. Alameda Avenue, Denver, CO 80231



firebird

Firebird Systems
17811 Woodloch, Laguna Hills, CA 92653

SPECTRUM CASSETTE

£7.95

COMMODORE CASSETTE

£8.95

COMMODORE DSK

\$12.95

enough, the player controls a ball at the base of the screen, which can be whipped left and right. The object is to keep a small ball in play, and direct it through play to destroy a formation of boxes, which are displayed horizontally toward the top of the screen. Density of the boxes and progress to the next of the 10 screens. Almost-as-clear extra features and the feeling of extra frustration it induces make it most addictive.

BARBARIAN Police

Spectrum £3.99 vs.
IBM PC \$9.99 vs. £12.99 vs.
Amstrad \$9.99 vs. £12.99 vs.

Best of the all-licking, chopping, jumping combat games to date. The player controls a large on-screen character with various possible moves. You can opt to fight the computer or play simultaneously against a friend. The focus (and animation) is the best of the combat era. Extremely precise and with a wicked sense of humor. B3 a must.

BOULDERDASH

From Leisure Corporation

Spectrum £2.99 vs.
IBM £2.99 vs.
Amstrad £2.99 vs.

One of the most original and addictive computer games ever written, Boulderdash sets you the task of collecting pieces which are buried in underground caverns, protected by various configurations of rocks and walls. Digging your way round sometimes seems as if you need an O Level in Physics - but might help but it isn't really necessary. Boulderdash gives you light from the start and so loses very slowly indeed.

BOUNDER

Griffin

Spectrum £7.99 vs.
IBM \$9.99 vs. £12.99 vs.
Amstrad \$9.99 vs. £12.99 vs.

A great arcade bounce-em-up, and very addictive too. You guide a ball as it bounces from one platform to another, high above the virtually scrolling landscape (and on marked squares) and you can stay well away or gain a mystery bonus. If all in a gag or if one of the game's many mazes, however, and you'll need a life. Bonus bouncing occurs at the end of each level but vary the pace, and those laugh just really keep you coming back.

for hours. Bright, witty graphics, great music - and it's so playable!

CHESS

Paton

Amstrad £24.99 vs.
IBM PC £24.99 vs.
Amstrad £24.99 vs.

Excellent chess game for 16-bit machines, with 50 view angles and a host of other features. Best bet on 8-bit machines is the very strong Computer Chess from OSE, while Chessmaster 2000 has the Pleasure Arts on the 16-bit side - it's still worth a game.

DECATHLON

Predict Silver

Spectrum £1.99 vs.
IBM £1.99 vs.
Amstrad £1.99 vs.

The toughest test in athletics becomes the test of a tough system as you juggle forward to run, jump and throw your way to gold. Exhausting but exhilarating, the Decathlon - originally published by Activision - just now Ocean's Daily Thompson-embroidered product for the home. Also provides great two-player competition.

DROPCONE

US Gold/American

IBM £2.99 vs.

The *Jetsetter* view leaves the rest standing. Incredible graphics, speed and unrolled smoothness of action. A filled in scrolling backdrop packed with neat obstacles sets the scene as you rush to collect the floating funnels and descend them at your Dropcone before they are captured and transformed into killer mutants. A trip at £2.99.

EDOLON

AC Software

IBM £3.99 vs. £14.95 vs.
Amstrad £3.99 vs. £14.95 vs.

The best of the Lucasfilm fractal graphic games, and very impressive it is too. The Edolon survival you use to explore a network of tunnels, avoiding or attacking the different creatures you find there. You're searching for gems, which will give you access to the game's higher levels. You also need to pick up medals to use as ammo against monsters blocking your path - particularly the dragon guarding the hole to the next level. Great graphics and first-rate animation.

ELITE

Predict

Spectrum £14.99 vs.
IBM £14.99 vs. £17.99 vs.
Amstrad £14.99 vs. £17.99 vs.

One of the first space games to use vector graphics, and still one of the best. It's a shooting and trading effort several galaxies wide, with plenty of variety to the gameplay. You can trade legal goods in (relatively) safe systems, or run the gamut of probes in the galaxies' danger spots with your head full of contraband. Either way there's a routine in zero-G dogfighting, and an big game as you'll find anywhere.

ENCOUNTER

Rowdemon

IBM £3.99 vs. £12.99 vs.

A form of 3D Battle Zone - a fast-paced exercise - with solid though unimpressive graphics. Very fast and with a multitude of different enemy craft, the game has eight levels of difficulty with a frustratingly hard way phase between each one. Growing when at the way.

EXOLON

Newton

Spectrum £7.99 vs.
IBM \$8.99 vs. £12.99 vs.
Amstrad \$8.99 vs. £14.99 vs.

A graphically superb horizontally scrolling shoot-em-up in which you cut, slash and jump your way using a planet's surface-bouncing way to alien defenses. A gun and a missile launcher are used to blast the foes, but if things are still too tough then you can get an excavation for extra protection and the power.

GAUNTLET

US Gold

Spectrum £3.99 vs.
IBM \$9.99 vs. £14.99 vs.
Amstrad \$9.99 vs. £14.99 vs.
Amstrad £7.99 vs.

The famous multi-player arcade sensation makes it to home computer format still nicely intact. You and a friend choose to be the Warrior, Wizard, Valkyrie or Elf and rush around crowded dungeons in search of treasure and magical potions, helping away monsters as you go. Fast and frantic fun - but the ST's scrolling leaves something to be desired.

HEAD OVER HEELS

Ocean

Spectrum £7.99 vs.
IBM \$9.99 vs. £12.99 vs.
Amstrad \$9.99 vs. £14.99 vs.

3-D explosion reaches its peak with the huge, intricate masterpiece. This play less character - Head and Heels - as you battle for the oceans that will lose the Galaxy. The physics can get very tricky indeed, and you'll often have to split Head and Heels up to use two different abilities. The game's 300 locations are witty drawn, and the animation's excellent throughout. A real classic.

IRAN WARRIORS

Elite

Amstrad £3.99 vs. £7.99 vs.

The best of the Rambo-style gun-and-dance. Run up the vertically scrolling screen and gun down or generate anything and everything. Capture a tank and you can run down the opposing troops all west. Run Rambo. A daughter on a grand scale, with nice graphics and an enjoyable two-player option.

IMPOSSIBLE MISSION

US Gold

IBM \$9.99 vs. \$9 vs.

An at-home great arcade adventure which still does original a great three-years after its first appearance. As the assassin from you run, leap and somersault around a network of tunnels, evil to seek out and destroy the evil Professor Don Mindbender. The many scenes contain devices which may either aid or hinder you in your mission. It's not quite impossible, but very nearly. Also features some real synthesized speech.

INTERNATIONAL KARATE

System 3

IBM \$8.99 vs. £12.99 vs.
Amstrad £7.99 vs.

Best of the many karate games ever available, with one and two-player options and a possible 16 moves. The game's 'International' in that each must take place against a different world leader - Kenzo, Sydney Opera House-co. Good chappie, recent stuff.

LEADERBOARD

US Gold

Spectrum	£8.99 vs
IBM	£9.99 vs, £14.99 vs
Amstrad	£9.99 vs, £14.99 vs

A gift emulation that will provide hours of fun on the highway. Using your skill and judgement - and you really do have to use them - you play each course to the best of your ability, based on the wrong/out and you level and up only over 20.

LIGHTFORCE

Golgolyle

Spectrum	£7.99 vs
IBM	£9.99 vs, £13.99 vs
Amstrad	£9.99 vs, £13.99 vs

A fast vertical-scrolling shoot-em-up. And on the Spectrum - miraculously - not a colour crash to be seen. Basically, it's a question of avoiding the descending aliens and destroying the installations, varied aliens attacking in different formations make this a demanding game which can easily become a habit.

LORE OF MIDNIGHT

Beyond

Spectrum	
IBM	
Amstrad	

A strategy-bath-adventure game of truly epic proportions. The remaining forces of evil are on the warpath, and you've got to stop them. This means either gathering allies, forming up armies and marching off into battle, or venting a small party of adventures off to destroy the source of the bad guy's power - or some combination of the two. It's a vast game - 8000 different locations - and games can last days. Entertaining stuff!

MATCHDAY

Ocean

Spectrum	£7.99 vs
IBM	£9.99 vs

Definitely the football game on micros, magnificent animation, great graphics, with vicious and skillful computer opponents.

MARKSPORT

Golgolyle

Spectrum	£9.99 vs
Amstrad	£9.99 vs, £13.99 vs

Take the part of Commander John Marsh. Earns last year in the struggle against the baps in this

excite adventure packed with puzzles to solve and aliens to zap. The 3-D animation is great as the main character wanders around the enormous space station in which the game is set. Like the earlier Gorgolyle games, *Time Trap* and *Out Reach*, this is great, thought-provoking stuff.

MERCENARY

Novogran

IBM	£9.99 vs, £12.99 vs
Amstrad	£9.99 vs, £18.99 vs

It's almost entirely of strange buildings and explore the maze of underground passages of pressure to your feet, smooth vector graphics. Your goal is to escape from war-torn Iraq by buying, creating or earning an Interstellar Ship. Join forces with other of the warring Palaces or Mechanics or play them off against each other.

PAPERBOY

Elite

Spectrum	£7.99 vs
IBM	£9.99 vs, £14.99 vs
Amstrad	£9.99 vs, £14.99 vs

Thrilling conversion of the coin-up hit. Mount your BMW, turn the baseball cap and set off to make your daily delivery of newspapers (Washington Post rather than The Sun). Lots of obstacles and a 6000 training course at the end of each street mean that you'll keep pedalling for quite a while.

RISTOP 2

Jipry

Amstrad	£9.99 vs, £14.99 vs
IBM	£9.99 vs, £14.99 vs

Thrilling racing game where the screen is split into two and you can race the computer or a human. Lots of different Grand Prix circuits, top flow-outs and of course the all important all-stop guarantee to get your hand comp and your team a real racing treat.

POWERPLAY

Asymtek

Amstrad	£9.99 vs, £14.99 vs
IBM	£9.99 vs, £14.99 vs

Great PowerPlay may be the best-selling game of the best-selling quiz, but we reckon that if you want to try out your general knowledge you'd be better off with the original

and challenging combination of strategy game and quiz - all graphically very pretty in its setting at Mount Olympus, home of the Gods.

PLATO

Tynesoft

Amstrad	£14.99 vs
----------------	-----------

Excellent vertical scrolling arcade game, with smooth quality graphics. It's a difficult mission for the two-player co-op/turn player gives you a better chance. Just play Woodard's very good *Goldrunner* for a recommendation on the grounds of superior playability.

PLU-MARROR

Beyond

IBM	£9.99 vs
------------	----------

Mission of pure mental energy are taking over. You are the Plu-Marror, sent in to the site to seek out the Source of the Creatures and destroy it. Climb, bounce and leap up and over ramps and pits on your magnetic suit-board as you set and shoot the Plu and its creatures. Excellent control and a huge playing area make this a real Commodore classic.

SARASAMA

Newcom

Spectrum	£7.99 vs
IBM	£9.99 vs, £12.99 vs
Amstrad	£9.99 vs, £14.99 vs

Often compared to Gauntlet, this spells in floating epic stands out for its beautifully paced gameplay. In fog form, you have to clear the mazes-out-of-several levels of dungeons. Your main targets are evil magicians - steal them and you can upgrade your magical powers to help fight through the hordes of other enemies. As your spells get stronger you can brave the lower dungeons' levels, but be warned - they're very tough indeed!

SEBILSTAR

Planet

Spectrum	£1.99 vs
IBM	£1.99 vs
Amstrad	£1.99 vs

A pinball wrapper for one or two players in which you take charge of ten or so riders in an attempt to destroy the laser computer at the centre of microcosmic data. A neat, tidy scoring system makes this an

easy game to pick up and play - but it's definitely no pushover.

SCRABBLE

Leisure Genius

Spectrum	£9.99 vs
IBM	£11.99 vs, £14.99 vs
Amstrad	£9.99 vs, £14.99 vs
IBM PC	£14.99 vs

The hugely popular word game only successfully translated on to the micro. Very fast, excellent display and a surprisingly large vocabulary. Will give even a strong human a tough game.

THE SENTINEL

Planet

Spectrum	£9.99 vs
IBM	£9.99 vs, £14.99 vs
Amstrad	£9.99 vs, £14.99 vs

Brainy and compelling strategy game played over the chequered surface of a planet dominated by The Sentinel. Essentially you have to absorb energy while trying to stop the Sentinel absorbing yours. A clear laser-and-a-laser trigger finger are both necessary in this original and top - 10,000 possible landscapes - game.

SOCCERY

Virgil

IBM	£9.99 vs
Amstrad	£9.99 vs

As near to graphic perfection as most games get, this arcade adventure's no slouch on the gameplay side either. As a soccer on the side of good you have to fly round the landscape - dungeons, waterfalls, castle battlements etc - freeing your imprisoned companions. Scattered around you'll find weapons to dispose of hordes and keys to help you explore further, but you'll have to plan their use carefully. Good to look at, wonderful to look at and great to play.

SPILLBOUND

Microtronic

Spectrum	£2.99 vs
IBM	£2.99 vs
Amstrad	£2.99 vs

You control a small character - Magic Knight - in his quest to the distant Wizard. This is a puzzle-paced arcade adventure full of character and wit. At its price it's a real bargain, and there are three further games - Knight Time, Finesse Wizards and Stormbringer - in the Magic Knight series.

SPINDRIZY

Demolish Demons

Spectrum \$9.99 ea.
IBM \$9.99 ea. £14.99 ea.
Amstrad \$9.99 ea. £14.99 ea.

Tremendous fun - shoot your spinning top over tough obstacles and collect points against a flexible time limit. The good-looking game landscape is a neat system of ramps, towers, obstacles and mushrooms surrounded by lethal dross - and NO safety nets. There are four switches to activate lifts and bridge gaps, but tripping them in the right order can be harder than it looks. A few fast guys and a lot of nice touches, but the explosion's the thing.

SPLIT PERSONALITIES

Demons

Spectrum \$7.95 ea.
Amstrad \$9.99 ea. £14.99 ea.

Beated clean and infuriatingly addictive puzzle, neatly based on the famous images TV prog. The idea is to reconstruct a famous face from 20 picture pieces before your last spin of the time runs out. As you rack your brains to put the pieces together a variety of handy traps and bonuses appear for you to discover or to utilize as you can. Original, witty and very computer.

SPY HUNTER

32 Gold

Spectrum £7.99 ea.
IBM \$9.99 ea. £14.99 ea.

Race along the vertically-winding road shooting and tracking the enemy cars out of your path, but be careful not to have the innocent motorists. Alternate from car to foot and back again as you change from river to road-collecting new weapons from your desktop truck along the way. Excellent conversion of the arcade classic.

SPY VS SPY

Microsoft

Spectrum \$9.99 ea.
IBM \$9.99 ea. £14.99 ea.
Amstrad \$9.99 ea. £14.99 ea.

It's the spies from MAD magazine up to their old tricks. The action takes place in an embassy where the spies compete to find a variety of objects, put them in a bag and escape in an airplane. Each spy has a variety of traps he can use in order to delay the other's progress, but be careful they don't backfire.

STARGLIDER

SpaceDroid

Spectrum £14.99 ea.
IBM £14.99 ea. £17.99 ea.
Amstrad £14.99 ea. £19.99 ea.
Atari ST £24.95 ea.
Amiga £24.95 ea.

Starliner is a shoot 'em up/burn strategy game featuring vector graphics at their very best. The screen is essentially your view from the cockpit, your objective is destroy the "Starliner", flagship of the Egon forces who have invaded your homeworld Nova. Standard route scenario, but an outstanding game.

SUPER PIPELINE

Mastrotech

IBM £7.99 ea.
Amstrad £7.99 ea.

Originally programmed and marketed by Taito, this is a strange and original game in which you rush around attempting to fix the faults in a series of pipes under attack from a variety of objects among which are submerged screwdrivers, plungers and - very strange this - a lobster. Gets very frantic indeed.

THANATOS

Dualit

Spectrum \$9.99 ea.
IBM £7.99 ea. £9.99 ea.
Amstrad \$9.99 ea. £7.99 ea.

Control Thanatos the dragon as he roars, flies the earthshaking and flies off to level the book of spells and the magic wizard. The large and smoothly animated dragon makes this game a pleasure to behold. Other mythical creatures attack you in your journey including a fire-breathed dragon, but most of your attackers are human and a great pleasure to try with your fiery breath or mangle with your claws.

THE BEST OF 3D

Vortex

Spectrum \$9.99 ea.
Amstrad

Great value this compilation, featuring four excellent Vortex games, two of which - Mystery Encounter and Revolution - would have been included in the list even at their price. What you get in these games are superb graphics and fantastically witty gameplay. A real bargain.

THING ON A SPRING

Unleash

IBM \$9.99 ea. £10.99 ea.
Amstrad \$9.99 ea. £12.99 ea.

Bounce around the five demons by factory collecting pieces of the puzzle that will show you how to destroy him and break his evil spell. This is a scrolling platform 'jump-em-up' that will tease the brain and test your reflexes to their limit. Great graphics and a stunning title. Hubbard sound track makes this one of the best arcade adventures ever.

THRUST

Unleash

Spectrum £1.99 ea.
IBM £1.99 ea.
Amstrad £1.99 ea.

Terrifyingly sensitive controls and a large helping of real life physics make this budget title an absolute must. Flying down through the caverns of an enemy field planet, you have to pick up fuel and destroy hostile gun turrets without crashing into the tunnel walls. Tough enough to try - but you've been just to make a return journey with a heavy load slung under your craft. Very mean, and very addictive.

TOMAHAWK

Digital Integration

Spectrum \$9.99 ea.
Amstrad \$9.99 ea. £14.99 ea.
Atari ST £24.95 ea.

One of the all-time great flight simulators, Tomhawk's also got a strong combat edge to it. Flying a US Army Apache helicopter is a complex business, and the game's realistic controls make no concessions for learner pilots. Choose one of the three combat missions and you can fly out to attack ground targets, while keeping a weather eye open for enemy aircraft. Landings, takeoffs and vehicles are all drawn in crisp vector graphics.

TROUBLEMAKER

Comstar

Spectrum £7.99 ea.
IBM \$9.99 ea. £14.99 ea.
Amstrad \$9.99 ea. £14.99 ea.
Atari ST £24.95 ea.

Imagine a multi-coloured checkered floor zooming toward you at break-neck speed and you have a good idea of your view in TroubleMaker. You must launch a ball using a course of coloured squares - each of which affects your ball in a different way - while avoiding holes in a race against the clock and/or an opponent. Good competitive fun.

URIDUM

Unleash

Spectrum \$9.99 ea.
IBM \$9.99 ea. £12.99 ea.

The definitive cooling shoot-em-up team-the-dreadnought and attacking ship while dodging around any large obstacles. Great metallic-looking backgrounds and the smoothest scrolling you'll ever see put the head and shoulders above the competition. A game not to be missed, especially now IBM version comes packaged with the excellent Paradox.

VULCAN

CCS

Spectrum \$9.99 ea.
Amstrad \$9.99 ea.

Analogous, simple and ingenious warfare. Vulcan covers the Tunisian campaign of 1942-43. A huge playing area and an attack phase make the game an improvement over the same author's earlier works. Amstrad and Ocean have taken it fast, efficient and simple to play, and no self-respecting wargamer should be without.

WIBBALL

Clackson

IBM \$9.99 ea. £14.99 ea.
Amstrad \$9.99 ea. £12.99 ea.
Spectrum £7.99 ea.

A competing and original game from Clackson in which you become the WIBALL and attempt to conquer the Colour Creatures who are out to eliminate the spectrum and render the landscape grey and dead. Conquering the WIBALL is great fun and makes this one of the most playable games to have appeared for a long time.

ZIGZAG

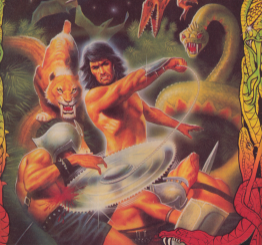
MacTach

Spectrum £7.99 ea.
IBM \$9.99 ea. £14.99 ea.
Amstrad \$9.99 ea. £14.99 ea.

The game of the day, an on-line direct arcade adventure in which you face your rival with a Zed. Then stamp around the Zedline in search of pieces of the mighty Zedline. Tactics are needed if you're to survive long enough to come near completing the killing game, it takes a while to get into but it becomes so engaging that it's well worth persevering.

RYGAR

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PILGRIM

Times have changed for those of us who tap the keys in the hope of hitching a lift through the galaxy or dueling up a dragon. Join up with the Pilgrim as he launches a new section for a New Age of Adventuring - multi-user games, playing guides, Quilling and GACing, retrospective reviews, tips, and...oh yes...the latest, hottest games.

Your Guide to the Pilgrim's Pages...

The most authoritative reviews

Written by Britain's most experienced reviewers, you'll find news of the latest releases awaiting the review. This month you can check out Level 9's Knight Orc in detail and new games from Sans On-Line.

Unique playing guides

Not just tips, but a whole other help of understanding what's going on. Each month we take a well-known game and give you a guided tour - but without giving away anything you don't want to know. That way, if you've got the game you can solve the problems you choose to, and if you haven't you can get further information to decide if it's one for you.

New Ratings System

The Pilg has come up with her new ratings to really get down the games for review. That means you can be more certain than ever of not wasting your money. Check out page 81 for full details.

Retrospective reviews

Old adventures never die - but they do stop appearing in the shops. The Pilgrim will revisit a game from the best in book-catalogue software - often available at less than the original retail price - and give you the low-down you need. Games for beginners, difficult-to-load-down games, raptors, and venerable classics - get ready.

For a great shopping trip down memory lane.

The MUG diaries...

Regular postings from the world of MUGS, SLAMS, and other multi-user games. Make sure you personal before themselves - they could find up a great.

Programming with Fat...

The Quill and GAC have brought the ability to program home-brewed adventures to thousands. Despite their power, however, these utilities and others like them are not always that easy to get the best out of. Whatwagney will help you put it all together, and give you valuable tips for furthering your existing game into the bargain.

The time-laid tips

Solutions to reader problems, provided by readers, or editors, together with puzzle-solving assistance from The Pilgrim and a host of other veterans of adventures to help you out of trouble.

Fitting it in...

As with all adventure columns, space is a problem - there's so much to say it's give you money, and make sure something gets left out. We'll be abbreviating the Pilgrim's Guides and Path Points with the retrospective and MUGS diaries. Check page 87 for further details.

it that it's a long time since a Level 9 game was published by the company last October from by Bradford, and also that the last two reviews from the company have both been completions of previous titles - the classic Doctor-Dad Jewel of Darkness trilogy.

In the meantime, we've seen releases that made available a much reduced price for the Commander 64 and the Arabian Nightsies - as well as the 16-bit market. We've seen Magnetic Scrolls continue its reputation on the basis of two games, The Power and Guild of Thieves, that has pushed them to the pinnacle of the media circus tag top. But we can't see much from our old friends Level 9. But they have been busy. Below Pilgrim, read Knight Orc - what they have come up with.

Knight Orc tells miserably into three parts - Level 9's, A Kind of Magic, and Horde of the Adventurer King. In practice, however, you play through only two sections since the latter two are joined together and you can move from one to the other without difficulty. The player takes the role of Sir Douglas, the run-of-the-mill, unswathed, old-fashioned, old-world medieval fantasy is detailed in a short story that accompanies the game. As with most standard software you obtain the booklet of your pen, since it is linked to the protection system and provides you with



Knights' Orc - a great graphics on the PC - but you do need a mouse.

pointwards (down) of random from the book which the program will then take it time, prompt you to enter.

Knight Orc takes the game dropped in a horse and controlled by a busy knight who promptly stomps him with his lance in a jousting contest. During this bit of scene-writing there really isn't anything for the player to do except sit out watch while his protégé is un-harmed, loaded unconscious, and left to discover the whereabouts of a subtle trap. Once you've abandoned your help, the game begins to proceed.

Quite frankly, Knight Orc is not the world's most exciting adventure experience. Level 9 explains that the main reason behind the section is to introduce players to the adventure system, but I can't see why this introduction should be so limited when adventures would probably prefer coming to grips with the system by being thrown in at the deep end, but in Knight Orc you only objective is to gather sufficient items to be together to make a rope that will carry you across into the next section.

With two exceptions, this title is extremely easy to carry experienced gamers. Most

KNIGHT ORC

SUPPLIED LEVEL 9 / BAINBRIDGE VERSION TESTED ATARI ST

Knight Orc is probably the most important release for Level 9 since Colonel Adventure. But it's not even game. Consider the following, and you'll see what I mean.

Level 9 - as most people know - gave up

in the console market, returning their games into 486 (or less), and maintaining little imaginations with programming skill to carve a reputation in the UK across to some.

Some of you might have noticed lower-

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of the bits of being, however, very, or whatever, are built easy to find and of obvious importance - you just have to pick them up and be them together. In at least one case you can find the desired object simply by typing FRED (covered by CODE) is a line of cryptic threat. It's significant however, that the few more challenging puzzles involve interaction with other characters in the game. Characters are Level 10 (about halfway to the month) so it's worth seeing how they appear in the game and what you can do with them.

Characters galore

The best and most important point here is that there are a LOT of characters in the game. You've got names, ranging from easy to write, though not very many of them, however, yes, a full 10, a dragon, and a number of other creatures. Altogether there are around 50 different people to meet and of these you will need to interact in a complete manner with at least six to finish the game.

The game allows you to ask characters for information, as in **DETECT, TELL ME ABOUT THE MIRROR** and also allows you to save them with complex commands, as in **PROTECT OF GREAT MARCHES: IN GET PART ONE: BISH ATRACE ROANOLA**, the most useful combinations come, however, from using some of the more advanced commands, such as **FRED WAVE** and **GO TO** with other characters. For example, supposing you want some because to pay a bill and **Detect** is with you. You could enter **DETECT, FRED SILVER-SILVER: GET SILVER SILVER: THEN FRED ME**. This would save the effect of sending **Detect** at on a save-scoring basis, at the end of which he would (should) return to you with the desired object. Meanwhile, you can get on with something else. Of course, **Detect** might not find the silver, but that's another story...

The names of role in role in the game, or which the **Prophet** in the example above is only one. You'll also come across **Grease, Goo, the Phoenix of the Cloud, Flaque the Niggly Man**, and many others. Avoid without complete the objective is to think you, dead your business, and frequently kill you unless you run away or get lucky.

Fortunately, death simply sends you to **Gravestone**, from where you can get back into the game after a couple of hours, created in your imagination by heavenly spirits. You do however lose most of your possessions in the process and must recover these from the point where you expired - or from the burrows who may have pacified them in the meantime.

Anyone who has played MUD will immediately recognize the role of the **Succubus** in the game. In fact for the first few minutes you feel very much in the land of that notorious multi-user game. For the most part, most of the burrows are obsessed with either killing you or feeding you. I checked. They are very good at it. My only gripe about this is that with the number of characters in the game, play can often be held up as numerous characters interact,

with little of interest going on apart from the exchange of blows and wealth. Since this is usually of no interest to **Grudgeless** its questionable how much it adds to the game. I should also point out that while the game proceeds with admirable speed on the AT, it may help thinking that **Aid** reasons may feel themselves slowed down a wee bit as the processor arbitrates amidst so many interactions.

Plots and places

Level 1 claim, naturally, that you shouldn't need to attempt to make a map of the game. The idea is to use the **GO TO** and **FRED** commands to name about, particularly save of locations that have puzzles or named, and the design obviously felt that it was therefore necessary to wander about step by step from one place to another looking for something to happen.

This is a sore nail strongly in the game, since if you start moving about using the **GO TO** I-decides the program will suddenly pop up with a reminder that you could be using the more complex commands instead. Why enter a series of directions to reach the castle when you could simply enter **GO TO CASTLE**?

All very true is theory, but in practice the ability to fill the big one on **GO** exploring and making maps I **LIKE** wandering through different places that may not have

much purpose to them, but do add atmosphere to the game. The problem is that being implemented, these **GO TO** commands with such thoroughness, Level 1 have come up with a game full of information, poorly described locations that do nothing to the atmosphere. If you're just going to enter **GO TO CASTLE**, why have any locations at



It is not yet possible to see the castle, but the view is quite good. The scene is dark and atmospheric, with a bright light source illuminating the scene. The architecture is intricate and detailed, with many windows and arches. The overall mood is mysterious and intriguing.

between at all?

Woe naturally, after a while I found the limited nature of the map began to combine with the general nature of the plot as an obstacle to the effectiveness of the whole game. The fact is that the team the start is **Knight One** - you can not very much of which going on. The documentation tells you that the idea of the game is to explore - from what or where it is not described. This means that for the last two-thirds of the game

A word about ratings...

The **Prophet** has given a lot of thought recently in the all-important question of ratings. As the software we use changes, so does our need to check on our criteria for evaluating it. Characters, graphics, advanced potential - all these are common to today's games, so an A.C.E. you'd find the **Prophet** reviewing games under each of the following categories:

SYSTEM - Nowadays we look for programs that do not a heavy weight but rather from relatively inputs, as **Right the SYSTEM** category is the best or logical judgement of the power, its strengths and weaknesses, the vocabulary, use and usefulness, and, finally, the program's execution speed - in other words or **SYSTEM** quality! A maximum score under the **SYSTEM** label would contribute 500 to the overall verdict which comes a possible total of 1000. Programs that demand logical inputs or deliver inappropriate responses aren't going to score highly here.

CHARACTERS - Today's **Prophet** expects to find more than an inert lump of flesh girded in there than this. The author promises the marks to a simple, down-to-earth game, with some points to the involvement of interactive characters. The more intelligent the character routines, the higher the score. Complex, technical or obscure (e.g. examples contained) will also contribute towards a

maximum of 300 points contributed by the section to the total score.

CHALLENGE - A possible total of 200 points here, awarded for quality of puzzles and their complexity, plus the size of the map. Originally we put you at points in the section, as well as game with only 100 points. Sometimes a very high **CHALLENGE** score will indicate a game suitable for beginners - check our comments for details.

GRAPHICS - When we're playing a game we don't want to be staring at the best - we want to **BE THERE**. A game that doesn't carry you out of the world is a poor candidate for high points in the category. Programs succeed by using original, well-written, and well-designed graphics. Graphics can help too, as can a logical and carefully planned map. But above all, the 250 points available here are for a game's power to drag you away from the screen and into the realm of imagination.

THE PLAYERS' FEELING - Simple, but one to give. Built up from the preceding sections, that gives the game a definitive rating. Out of 1000, a program that grabs 800 is going to be bought by every player on Earth. Anything under 500 is sub-average and is to be looked like a really **Grudgeless** on a dark night - don't empty your pockets unless you're sure you **Know Best**.

you are wandering around dark places to gain, litigated by predominantly hostile characters whose behavior is repetitive, forming large blocks of purely described scenery with nothing to offer, looking for something to do.



In fact, the plot of *Right On* is more than usually tortuous and very original, but you're unlikely to realize what's going on until you've played for a few hours. But that's of an incentive to a reviewer, or that's of an experienced player.

Magic and puzzles

One thing you can do, however, right from the start of Part 2 is experiment with spells. There are 21 of these, and you master a spell simply by facing the game to display its name. In the end, you can cast the invisible, receding-it notice on, which the name of a spell is written. They get steadily harder after that. As with many of Level 95 previous games, you can't remember the adventure without a thorough knowledge of each spell, which is used by calling it all scenes.

Many of the puzzles involve the use of magic, but the most difficult ones - as I've

mentioned - involve other characters. This is for two reasons, first because the characters are in themselves unpredictable. Even though you may know the status too-a problem, the person in question may take it while to tell it with you wishes. Mysterious MESSAGES will be required in many instances, since failure to get the character inside contact can often result in death. Indeed, some of the puzzles comprise several stages of entries. There are the most difficult to solve - some of them. I would say, very difficult indeed and not at all suitable for beginners.

For example, supposing someone were guarding a cup which you need to solve another puzzle. You might have to (1) lure them outside by slipping some treasure, (2) use magic to make, command another character to distract them, (3) get another character to enter the premises and retrieve the cup, (4) use the first character back inside so that you can then go back outside and get the object you need. The sort of puzzle needs an awful lot of trial and error - as well as cerebral thought - to get right.

The verdict

Right On is of times a frustrating game, with vast areas of unexplored territory for some little purpose. In addition, the rest of the game takes a long time to solve, both of the investigation and the puzzle one - of the last stages - very difficult. It will not suit players who like a clear-cut game with obvious objectives, nor will it suit anyone who gives up easily. Furthermore, the number of characters is of times a weakness, adding confusion to an already confusing game.

On the other hand, the adventure system - while not as good as that in *Quest of Thieves* - is a excellent one, some of the character interaction possibilities are both complex and original. The graphics are plentiful and quite unlike the detailed to be scenes that have become the norm in other games. The

plot would compare them with water-colours - more thought they simply looked today-early and robust. They're certainly a big step forward from any of Level 95 previous attempts with you and me.

FORMATS BOX

This is Level 95's largest game to date, and that means bad news for some players on the graphics side. All cassette versions will be text-only, and in addition the disk version for Atari 520/500 and Apple II will also be text-only. Digitized graphics on the 16-bit versions are attractive, but 640 versions will be line-drawings only, and the quality of these cannot be vouched for at the time of writing. Otherwise there should be no very little difference between versions, though that format may be slightly on the slow side because of the character-processing that's going on.

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			EARLY OCT
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Apple II	\$19.95	disk	MD OCT

Right On is an important release in Level 95. There's no doubt that it takes time to get used to, and there is a strong level of direction in the game's early stages. More committed players will not get until they have mastered it, but how many stick it out to the end without because it has about a pay-dramatic help is another matter.

KINGS QUEST III

Supplier Sierra On-Line / Available Various, tested Atari ST

Over seven adventures that started appearing, people have been trying to rise level again with graphics engines to give us a world which we can not only communicate with, but can also see. *Kings Quest III* is one

of these attempts, and not a bad one at that.

The storyline is a classic Arabian-stall-little Geyrdon, but to spend his days leading up at Marousian, awaiting his wife, the Queen. One day, and then after turned into a small - it was.

This in itself would be bad enough, but Geyrdon's profession of not just gray ends when they reached it all peak of age. Information doesn't just arrive when old enough to use, it seems, and prices to depend of them and appear a new, younger assistant. You live will more, and from then on your world be will be confined to the library.

Unless, that is, you can escape. The program shows you a sub-screen display of the scene or location you've found it. You can move Geyrdon about using either the keyboard or if

you have used the mouse. Scrolling the display area through a room or wandering off along a path into the dark does nothing to load it in new scenes.

Embedded control is more precise, and also quite on the top of a window with very deep cuts on all sides, precision is certainly needed. One drastic function closes the maps. In example) some Geyrdon sitting there, showed, with little about sporting round he heard. Nice touch.

The game loads off with some rather comprehensive music, then change you discover it in the hallway. Marousian were appears and gives you some clues to do - these change each time you play, though have seen many alternatives - deciding the values, during the study - but not at that. It doesn't seem to make any difference whether you actually go and any than out or not.

Right Quest 3



As you wander about, the weird happenings in a part of uncharted dimensions that he is going on a journey. Now, you chance to explore uncharted and plan your escape. You'll search and collect in the sides of the story as you gather bits and bobs for Geydon to use in lowering various magic potions which will enable him to try to escape and further adventures.

The graphics in this game are excellent, but - unusually for the category of software - the end of the



WINDSWEPT - Copy away from the edge! Read the statistics closely!

SPACE QUEST - Same system as *WINDSWEPT*, but more complex.



program doesn't seem to have suffered too much as a result. First, the game is completed enough to deal with most simple inputs and the necessary has been well matched to the illustrations. It also quite suitable with most systems collected for, and it doesn't contradict it will be which need its boring trouble with. Suggestive where are possibly greeted with a comprehensive explanation (You don't need it, to be accepted rather than for reaction.

Objects can be taken and used if you're wise enough to find - in which case they disappear to be in your inventory. Picking up some objects sends Geydon into a flurry of activity - dropping the face if you get the beam, perhaps, or sliding the desk-top with the teardrop-water. There's something rather troubling about the frantic activity, one which, you have no control over the pace but drops the offending element and is ready to move on to other things.

In some cases you have to be quite precise about positioning the figure. One puzzle involves several locating a certain book in the library. **DIAMOND DILEMMA** tells you about the book, but there are two shelves and to be left on to where exactly the book is to be found. First and second is the side of the way here, but then it would be in a real library too.

Applaud from Geydon and the Wizard.



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There are numerous other standards and alternatives who pose about an alternative - checks, data, pages, almost all of which can be associated with in one way or another. The **Play** having been brought up on a line, particularly enjoyed reading the checks.

This is an undeniably attractive game on the PC. The graphics are bright, the game-play simple but compelling, and the pacing quite adequate for this sort of quest. It's a shame that it slightly declines appeal - when means that it will probably appeal more to older children over 10 or younger kids over 15. There is however more find the role of wizard's apprentice a little beneath them.

Guild of Thieves - Player's Guide

One of the year's most important releases, *Guild of Thieves* has already been nominated for the British Micro Game of the Year Award and is available for most state-of-the-art computers. It's not on hand on the Atari, as the **Play** opinion, for the simple reason that the scenario is somewhat more conventional - and that means the player will find more puzzle-based to come to terms with.

Guild of Thieves



The game comes with many excellent hints in the **Wood** **Player's** magazine, but there are still some clues to be available for new players that require. The playing guide will help you track the game level perhaps help you to get it if you haven't already done so, but won't give too much away. If you're really stuck, check out some of the **Play** tips (introduced by letters in brackets, which refer to the clues in the box on page 7).

Getting Started

First of all, check you've got a good **SAVE** disc with plenty of space. This is particularly important if you're playing the Amiga version - we found that the operating system could crash if this disc filled up. Very important if you're installing it on a program where you can't save.

You'll be happy to find that the game is fairly easy, but there are some points here that need mentioning. Most of the action in *Guild of Thieves* takes place in three dis-

tant areas - the castle, the temple, and under the hill. You really need only map these areas. Other locations in between are few and are quickly memorised. The most efficient method is to have close detailed and accurate maps for each of the major areas.

Make sure when you build your map that you note down the name of each location. This is vital because of the program's **GO TO** command, which enables you to **GO TO** any named location. The catch is, however, that some of the locations have similar names and if you enter the wrong one you may find yourself heading off in the wrong direction.

This is important because you can't see yourself easily in the game by **GOING** in the wrong direction. In particular, you should be careful about using the **GO TO** command to travel toward from the castle and the temple (occasionally leaving the castle with some of the objects found inside will cause the gatekeeper to tell you, out of area stages at the game travelling to the temple or the beer first can draw you in trouble.

Tactics

Success in *ADT* demands careful manipulation of objects and a structured approach to the different challenges. Tackle best off starting with the castle - easy to get into (30, since you'll find that there are only 100 points to be gathered within, as well as objects required to solve other puzzles elsewhere in the game.

The Castle

The castle not only provides you with treasure but also with the means to solve several other important puzzles in the game. The last thing you need to find a certain money (20 since it is vital that you have something to bar with. Prompt observation of the room is essential to place your bar - and make sure you play to the highest notes.

Once you've discovered - or anyone interested in solving will - that you can bond because within the castle that, you want have to work out how to get past the gatekeeper, who quite honestly tells you if you try to speak just with any of his warden bar.

Points to note in the castle are:

- 1) Look under as well as on, in, and at things. Don't forget to try moving things.
- 2) Make a note of every word you don't understand as they could help you solve obscure later puzzles.
- 3) There are some items you can - and must - take past the gatekeeper - find out which.
- 4) Move and throughout the game, if something doesn't make your score when finished then don't touch it.
- 5) The books in the library give several useful hints.
- 6) Note on two puzzles where, although you may have guessed the solution, you might still have difficulty completing - these are the tree in the cage (2) and the old (3).

The Castle

This group of locations, both above and under ground, is more a source of objects and information to solve other puzzles than treasure. The temple is linked to the set of locations under the hill, but the link is one-way only - to start look for it until you've explored the castle full ones thoroughly (7).

Collect everything you find here - some of it is lootable, but not much. All keys in

the game will fit matching doors - it may mean the connections between keys and doors are obvious (usually related to notes).

Don't waste time by looking up your head against dead-ends. You can also save time when you've found your way across (2) the colored squares by using the FUNCTION command - assign the sequence of moves to the specific function key so that you can save one of the squares with one press (2 your monitor has that facility).

Because for use of objects is often not required and some time after finding them, and because you can't carry an infinite number of items, it makes sense to have an object 'cache' where you can drop things until you need them. The flag can be the entrance hall is the castle for this purpose. Another useful function definition is function (2) TO INTERACTE WALL, DROP ALL, EXCEPT LAMP which you can use follow by reentering any items you may need.

The lamp should go with you every-where - if you have any difficulty, check out (2).

Under The Hill

This group of locations holds many puzzles and places to explore. You'll need the gloves and the ivory key or well as the lamp before you enter - these will enable you to go most places without difficulty.

You should not show the bones to the gatekeeper - you may never get them back. In general, be careful because about *ADVENTURE* objects to people.

Don't be afraid to try going places that seem slightly inaccessible. The most difficult puzzle in the under-hill region involves crossing the hot coals. To do this you will need to have (and necessarily in the same entered the mill, locked on the one hand) used, set the mill with your possessions intact, and played out once. Don't waste time killing yourself if you haven't done all this. You'll also need to get back - but don't allow playing because, so a *LAPE* is advisable before crossing the bones.

While under the hill, remember the joke in the original *Adventure* game about killing the dragon with your own hands. Here, it seems, it is Colored *Adventure*, you don't know your own strength.

With two main exceptions (the coals and the spider) the solutions to the puzzles under the hill are almost all neat or hard. However, in stead of polished, hard, obscure lines, odd enigma, and means of enigma use all else by.

A final Word

The guide above here gives you a simple framework that will make success in *Gold* that is easier. Honestly word give more explicit hints, but because of the links indicated with the packaging that approach isn't appropriate in this case. Solving *ADT* is as much an organizational and persistence problem as one of insight.

It's also a game in which you'll find it comparatively easy - with numerous solve - to solve at least 200 points, gained by entering some difficult to access and by building treasure. What you will probably find that is

PILGRIM'S POST

...in which ye Pilg gives a brief historie of his and begs you, the readers, to correspond with him as matters of the utmost gravitie.

When I set down to write my first adventure game review, the world - and the world we played in - were very different places. An adventure game was a last-only effort that had a vocabulary of under a hundred words, understood inputs only if they used those words in verb-noun format, and offered maybe fifty a truly 'text-based' one.

These games were often frustratingly difficult to solve. Programmers made up for the lack of input options by devising puzzles that would drive any sane player crazy with frustration. For some, led on by rather better offerings from companies like Level 9 or those detached Camel Software, this frustration was the occasional prize you paid for leaving the customers.

For others, it was a good reason to leave anything remotely resembling an adventure on the shelf and in the shop. *Adventure* became the choice for a small minority of game players - a dedicated minority, but a minority nevertheless.

All this is changing. Action like Douglas Adams and Roger Ebbsey have turned this state by producing 'text-based' novels. *Magnolia*, *Smile*, *Traveller* and *Lord V* have given us games with phenomenal illustrations, powerful graphics, and huge vocabularies. *Tricorn* - the fan-only medievalist - has now become a new ground with greater use of interactive characters and even - gasp - colour (a graphics) in this new games.

However, it's a sad fact that there are still some companies around who think

they can get away with producing good but that haven't really developed since the pre-*ADT* era. You can be quite confident that the volume will be sufficient to it expect software that doesn't come up to scratch, but will never offend without being constructive, and will always be seen to have been classing voices - and seen to put out their own.

The companies who produce adventures and the people who write about them rely ultimately on YOUR judgement and devotion. You speak on it of the correct value, and the Pilgrim Post returns it back to you to fill. Any opinion you express on the page will be read by the people who matter - and that's one step closer to seeing the needed change (according to YOUR wishes, to don't be shy - I only need a stamp).

To contact the Pilgrim and fill this space with your views on the world we play in, write to:

The Pilgrim
A.C.E.
4 Queen Street
Bath BA1 1EJ

or, if you have a modern and access to BT Gold, mail me on 833.ML251.

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Screen shots taken from the Amiga version.



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Screenshots from Amstrad version.



Screenshots from Spectrum version.



TOMORROW'S SOFTWARE TODAY

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probe

But there are now at two puzzles you enjoy and solve - it didn't even occur that they are puzzles.

To help you avoid this situation, remember to hang on to sheets found - almost all have their uses - by storing them in your wallet. Never risk being on sheets without sufficient ink. That way, you will prevent it from. And of course, never be passing more tips on the game to interesting users. Membership of the club is within your grasp.



Pat's Patch

For Winstonley, co-editor of *Adventure Digest*, stick on with the best advertisement of the regular columns for adventure outlets...

Whether you're an avid adventure writer or already a proficient coder, the editors are tailor-made for you. Over the next few months we'll be looking both of the general theory of adventure programming and the actual coding, using such popular utilities as *Dragon*, *Adventure Creator*, *The Gull*, and *Chimera* - programs that allow you to write your own adventure games without any programming experience. There are now many commercially-released games written by home-brewers and there's no reason why, with inspiration and perseverance, you shouldn't join them.

Guild of Thieves Clues

- Full out to the jobmaster and his law to lower the knowledge - you'll probably need it soon.
- Check out the cabinet.
- The SREAR you should know what did what you should know - quite. This lead is to be used.
- Winstonley is the order of the day. One of the pipes can be pulled. There's only time for your long search.
- The key fits in your pocket.
- Pulling or MORNING the statue will end you plummeting down into the void. DOP the screw-down SHM WORTH.
- Make a map of the job, using the description as a guide. The key is below the covered area of the window (SOS-SARS, which is a red, orange, blue, green, yellow, orange, and red).

There is, however, one big problem you're likely to find when using a utility - namely, giving your game that certain individual touch that makes it stand out from other titles around here. To help you, we'll be looking at routines such as combat, combat, interaction, screen layout, redesigned character sets, and generally customizing your adventures so that they don't appear cloned.

We'll be covering all the popular ad-

ditions, for those of you who have yet to sample the delight of creating your own game, the same or appropriate moment to check out what's available.

The Gull

This program is still widely used despite its age and is ideal for beginners due to its simple structure. Most commercially-used routines are built in, so coding is straightforward. However, the simplicity is a drawback when you have more ambitious ideas, as the program is relatively inflexible.

The Gull was the first of the adventure utilities on the market and has since spawned a number of online programs, such as *The Sleazebag* (for adding graphics). One of its advantages is that it is portable for a wide range of machines, so that if theory a game you develop on, for example, the Spectrum can also be made to run on the Amstrad and CMM4 with little modification.

Friendly or Flexible?

For more flexibility than the Gull, you will probably need to resort to a less user-friendly package such as *Genesis* (available for the Amstrad only at present) or *AUS* (for the Spectrum). *Genesis* will do virtually anything you like, but is difficult to learn. *AUS* also does more or less anything, but it requires a good knowledge of BASIC to operate. So beware - both these utilities are for experts only!

Perhaps the best compromise is *GAC* from Incentive. A beginner might find it harder to learn than *The Gull* - although it's really not too difficult - but it scores over *Gull* in its flexibility. With *GAC* you are provided with simple building blocks which can be combined in almost any way to produce the effect you want. *GAC* also has the advantage of an integral art package - something which is an asset with *The Gull*. *GAC* is available for Amstrad, BBC, Spectrum, and Commodore machines, with an IT version currently under development.

PAWS for thought

Fairly new on the market, and currently available for Spectrum only (other machines soon), is *Gilsoft's Professional*

Next month...

Next month you can review in the new *MUG* issues - we kick off with an in-depth look at the world of *GRADES*. And of course there will be the first instalment of the A.C.E. top section. If you're wondering why we don't pass tips every month - that's because our list would then be enough to put you to sleep! Mail to: *ADVENTURE*, the staff of the Page Publications, see you in October.

Adventure Writer, or *AWW* for short.

Despite the company's pretensions to be the contrary this appears to be an updated version of *The Gull* with all the main features of the *Gilsoft* program integrated into one package. A system of overlays is used to bring various parts of the program into use as and when required.

Like *Gull*, *PAW* is very easy to get into, and as it uses the same layout, people appearing from the earlier program will find it very familiar right from the start. But there the similarity ends. The whole program encourages you to customize your game, while at the same time allowing the beginner to work through the standard system to produce a game.

One very useful feature of *PAW* is the opportunity to create sub-programs in the code which can be called on required by other sections. The manual gives speech with other characters or a suggested use for these sub-programs, but the possibilities go much further than this - almost characters might, for instance, be given their own database-led style.

The game, too, is much better than *Gull* - so even will the poor player be restricted to verb-noun, input with all the problems that brings. One minor quibble of mine though is that *PAW* doesn't recognize full words - only the first few characters. Distinguishing between words such as *adventure* and *advent* will therefore cause problems. No doubt it's not a very novel if it is - so watch the speed!

For the foreseeable future, *GAC* and *PAW* appear to be the obvious choice for anyone contemplating writing an adventure. But are there any other titles, while fairly easy to get into, that has features like other titles, but a little thought should have most problems.

Finally, don't forget that this column is there to serve you. If there are any special effects you'd like to include in your games using an adventure writing utility and can't see how to achieve it, write in to me at A.C.E. and I'll do my best to come up with a solution in a future issue.

TRICKS 'N' TACTICS

It may not be cricket, old chap, but let's face it - sometimes the only way to get a high score is to CHEAT! Or at the very least pinch a trick or two from the experts. Tricks'n'Tactics sends the balls your way with a selection of red-hot tips on top games - so rip off the old school tie and get down to some serious action.

RENEGADE Amstrad

TIP #1: At the far right of the subway is a ledge that can be used to your advantage. Walk into your foe and push him back to the ledge. Then use a flying kick to knock him over the edge. It may take three or four attempts to make sure you're not grabbed from behind.

Slower of the pipe-smoking guys that. If one of these is hit when the boss turns up you are in big trouble.

If you manage to knock an opponent down, crouch on top of his head and point him to death. The black guys only take one punch but the white guys need three.

TIP #2: The attack of the blades is the last part of the level. The blades will change to run you down, rising on the outer side of the screen. Stay in the middle and as soon as a blade comes on the screen start breathing dirty, sucking yourself away from time. Then do a flying kick to knock the side of. Knock four sides off and it's back to the fighting.

Level two has another of those nasty ledges, this time at the far left, so use it to all yourself that the pipe smoggers and then the rocket smoggers. If you're using the gunning technique, pipe smoggers take one hit when down and make one more.

TIP #3: It's the girl's chance to have a boss on level three. Some wild whips and other pipes, and the time there, so ledge to keep you out. Use kicking as much as possible. One flying kick will kill a knockout. The black guys are tougher, but it will only take two punches to knock them.

The big level we do mean top problem on this level is going too far. Use kick to wear her strength down - she can't be

knocked down so don't try. How back of will let her charge you. Leap up and kick as soon as she starts her set-up, and she will finally crash her.

TIP #4: It can't be from any of those starting things and it's enemies, so keep moving and stay on the lead. One kick will knock them, but don't surrender - you don't have time.

TIP #5: The same as stage two, but the level is stopping if you do keep running up and down the stairs to avoid the bullets. Once all the thugs are dead, slow in on the boss leader. He'll put away his gun and use blades.



Good timing is required if you're outside. See how whoever happens, don't back off if you do, he'll draw the gun again.

With the last boss disposed of, you get your girl. Keep a close eye on our heroes' health!

HOT TIPS...TOP PRIZES!

Every month we'll be giving away £500-worth of software to readers who send in the best playing tips, pokes, maps, and hi-score tactics...

Tip of the month - gets the six top-rated games for their machine in the current issue of ACE completely free. A prize usually worth at least £50/00!

Five runners-up each receive the top-rated game for their machine in the current issue.

So get down to it! Send your tips to: Tricks'n'Tactics, Advanced Computer Entertainment, 4 Queen Street, BATH, BA1 1EJ.

Don't forget to include your name and address (clearly written in block capitals) and the name of your computer - so we can pick the right prize!

ARKANOID

Spectrum & ST Cheat Mode

AIMS: Hold down Caps Lock and type **DEATHSTAR** while the game is booting, then press **8** to scroll through the screens and choose which one you would like to start on.

SPECTRUM: First you've got to score enough to register your name on the high score table - shouldn't be too difficult. Enter **PRISM** as your name and you can then press the space bar at the end of each game to control on the same screen you were last on.

Screen Tips

If your sense of fun (play) won't let you use the cheat modes, then at least try these tips. They'll help you through some of the tougher screens.

3 The bottom row of bricks is indispensable save for the three to the far right of the ST screen or the far left of the screen on the Spectrum version. Your best bet is to demolish the three bricks and try to hit the ball on the very left (or right for Spectrum) of the ball so that it comes in the wall a little before the gap and bounces in and stays. Best benefit to get here is the sticky ball, because very careful aim is needed. Keep your ball on the same side of the screen because chances are the ball will come flying through the gap at some speed.

8 There are only seven bricks to hit on this screen. They are all in a vertical line in the middle surrounded by masses of indestructible bricks. Hit the first brick and try to aim your ball for the far left - the ball will be rapped and bounce around horizontally, demolishing the remaining bricks. Best benefit is the laser.

11 This has three rectangles on screen, two smaller ones inside a larger one. Spectrum owners, though, only get two rectangles. All the bricks need two hits. Take out two bricks from either corner then aim your ball for the gap - you should be able to trap the ball between the rectangles. You'll get no benefits to help you on this screen.

15 This is tough because the first row of bricks is so low and your ball is returned so fast. Try to blast a hole all the way up, either right in the middle or to one side, so that your ball can work from above. Watch out for the eight double hit bricks near the bottom and the eight indestructible bricks near the top. Any benefit you can get will help on this screen, but the laser is particularly useful.

27 Six rows of bricks on this screen; two colored rows sandwiched between four rows that require multiple hits. Again, concentrate your attack in one place so that your ball will be trapped and can demolish the blocks from the inside. Lasers are a Godsend on this level.

33 The majority of the screen is taken up by 'The Dimension Changer', a huge field of 8x8 stones that look like 12p pieces from its mesh (squares on the Spectrum). The 'barn' head for your current position so try to keep your ball in a place where the ball is less likely to be returned, and try scores to return the ball. Hit the head enough times and you'll destroy it, completing the game.



IMPACT

Autogenix's solid gold hit-em-up lend laurel for you. **RAM** of A.A. takes things you thought level codes.

LEVEL	CODE
11	Gold
21	Fish
31	Star
41	Plus
51	Head
61	Port
71	Flood
81	User1

If you want to impress your friends with a massive score, use the screen designer to create easy bonus screens packed full of tokens. Once you have played your screens (gaining many lives and a huge score on the way) the game will wrap back to screen one, giving your score the legitimate look.

BARBARIAN

Barbarian stoops to conquer - or at least he does in the game by myname. For ostentatious enough, if you use the **RAM** by user, unfortunately while being ostentatious, you become invulnerable. No matter what number of bad guy attacks follow, so long as you keep him bending down to pick things up, he'll survive. With that in mind, here are a few tips to help you on your way.

First you may be wondering how to hit the **IRON MAN** in order to get the **RAM**. Well the simple answer is that you can't, so can you pick up the bow even if you do get past him. It's called a **BOOBY**, the bad boy being a little better on.

If you're stuck on the **PERCELSUM** then look at the bridge early below.

where it what is carved is to the beginning. If you position fingers hit one each side of this, and use the pendulum storage level, with the mechanism and then make a run for it you should get past - but this still requires spot-on timing. Another way to tackle the pendulum is to go as above, but run only until you are above the point. Then use the old pick-up trick, but the solution will not work you will, you should be more so, and as you see ball away through directly and much timing is required.

It is the **WEAPON** who are giving you trouble then use the shield with the desired icon to deflect the pellets and run and then pick up past them. This also requires great timing.

DEFENDER OF THE CROWN

Amiga Strategy

General Tactics

1. **Choose Geoffrey** longword as your character. Geoffrey's very good at swordplay and that's what the game hinges on.

2. **Lead your garr** on soldiers of the beginning of each turn. Buy knights whenever possible, as they seem to have more staying power when the going gets tough, particularly when you're on the offensive.

3. **Lead other castles** as often as you can to splinter your stock if you get low on gold.

4. **Don't bother with the jousting.** It's incredibly difficult to win and irrelevant to winning the game. If you're summoned to a joust, it's wiser to just for-fame and not for gold.

5. **Capture your opponent's home castles** - you then get all that gold as well.

6. **Keep your territories grouped together** or you will be cut off from your home base, leaving you in all sorts of trouble.

7. **Retain home** at the start of each turn to transfer your home soldiers to your campaign army.

8. **Keep some soldiers** at your home castle at all times, losing your base means the end of your game.

9. **Retain food** will help you up to three times, use it only when you think you might run into an opponent.

10. **Remove the horse** body when prompted.

11. **Be cautious** about attacking a county when you've just seen it change hands; the victor's campaign army may still be using there.

12. **Make sure** you heavily outnumber the defenders when attacking a castle - if you don't then you won't have a chance. Select force-attack if things look promising.

13. **Wait** to see the size of the enemy's army if you come under attack, then opt accordingly - select solo retreat if the going gets tough.

Swordfights

Keep your horse off to the side through which the enemy general comes, maintaining the prize is just above ground level. As you deal with the guards/guards the horse will

typically follow the same procedure once you're inside the castle.

Attacking castles.

You're trying to knock down the outside wall each time so you must find the correct range. Each time you fail, increase the exact position of the catapult by taking a bearing on the pilot platform beside the stone. After firing and demolishing a portion of the wall, return the catapult to the exact firing position and move it up one pixel before firing again. Carefully move the catapult head up one pixel from the firing position each time and you should'll have city virtually.



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Closing date for entries: 31st December 1987.
Draw will take place 2nd November 1987.
Winners will be notified by post.



EXOLON

Amstrad

1. Static obstacles: These pose no threat apart from obscuring you. Let it pass with a missile to destroy them.

2. Mines: These need to be jumped over.

3. Pneumatic Hammers: These rise from the ground and you should wait until they disappear before jumping across.

4. Single shot cannons: Will fire one missile and duck before the bullet hits you. Look off a missile to destroy these.

5. Multi shot cannons: Keep advancing on these kind of the time. Duck to avoid the fire bullets and stand up to shoot the high ones. Missiles have no effect on these so you have to walk past them. At all costs DON'T JUMP.

6. Combination Cannons

Very tricky to get past these. Keep firing and advancing until fire a missile to destroy the single shot part of the cannon. Then there is normal main and cannon.

7. Airborne aliens

These attack in various formations, and follow different flight paths. Some attack in wave forms and you should keep jumping one thing. Destroying them is involved because a jump of the wrong moment could result in your being shot.

8. Homing missiles

Try to change positions just before the missile hits you and fire a missile to destroy the guidance pod.

9. Fast/slow missiles

These come at you slowly then suddenly speed up when they get half way across the screen. Fire first and keep dodging and jumping.

10. Swimmers

Destroy the head pod and they come swimming at you - fire the head and keep firing as you duck and jump.



SENTINEL

The ST Codes

Technic crossing 10 this one-up was its best version yet on the ST, with faster pointing and better graphics than any of its 3-bit incarnations. There's also a noticeable help facility built in - just look up at the top - press HELP and you get an aerial view of the landscape from the point of view of the ship you're looking at.

That's all very well of course, but it does mean you waste time looking up and then back down again. More seriously, HELP starts the Sentinel and wastes timing and steering, so like U-Ran it should only be used once you've looked around carefully and worked out your plan of attack.

The best form of defence

The Sentinel is the key to each landscape because both the last thing you can observe. Where these are visible, the priority is to get above and observe them as soon as possible. This usually means finding a gap in the scanning pattern, finding a very high level and getting on it.

The wrong approach can backfire badly but it's quicker and easier than a gradual height gain, especially where there are a lot of obstacles - sky lines is more. Keeping back of so many scans can be very difficult, but as long as you get high enough, and the Sentinel's looking the other way you can observe anything that looks at you. Once that's done of course you get out round the Sentinel, viewing the landscape for bees - meaning you're going for big leaps through the landscape obstacles, that is.

Immediate signs

When your initial look round will show that you're about to get scanned. When you're in a gully this can be a serious matter, as you can't use the long transfer out of danger. If the scanner (either at mid-field scanning you) is very close you may escape its gaze simply by a triangle of one or two squares to one side.

When the scanner's scan distance off on the other hand, you may be able to block its gaze with a tree. If this means being too-scanned instead, don't

leave - you may on well hyperspace yourself and save the unit that tree would cost you. Sometimes you can block a scan perfectly though, so do check for that.

The codes

There's a run through from 0041 to 1024 large gaps indicate landscapes with a lot of energy, and that tends to mean a lot of obstacles. Try out a few of the hot ones - 315, 627 and 845 are particularly tough.

0042 07807349

0045 07765208

0071 10060047

0080 02000809

0097 10716881

0109 79866687

0128 47678848

0144 44585585

0186 70070980

0187 83440033

0206 02640148

0207 72814583

0207 21622814

0300 04466793

0316 01482940

0366 70099038

0394 73444607

0416 09008703

0440 15667007

0471 45608738

0507 01743238

0546 10772244

0576 44786021

0608 09178366

0634 02842074

0661 01060974

0680 07907977

0718 06870762

0745 25677845

0767 77008899

0787 84843771

0804 07856664

0845 34670041

0886 56774854

0916 33177866

0937 46469732

0967 10965081

0994 83831934

1024 33666662

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THE BLITTER END...

Slary-eyed

We've got an ever present hero: authorial Robert White of Dandel Software. He called *Personal Astrology* and it was the most charming integration of stars from IBM at last! So what's funny? Well, apparently the program, on first booting up in the Dandel office, promptly predicted the financial prospects for the company.

Popular Astrology will be out on the shelves by the time you read this - lets hope Dandel went out there with it.

Dirty old ROMs...

Here's one you can try if you've got an Amiga. Kickstart 1.2 in ROM, and the pain

of loads. On the workstation, load down both ACT keys and both SBT keys. Now press each of the function keys in turn (this is where the extra boards help) and you'll get little messages appearing on the screen (ie - programming and design credits, that sort of thing). Now, still holding both ALTs, both SBTs and the F1 key, change the disk. For a split second you'll get an interesting message containing a rather naughty word, and expressing some unkind thoughts about Commodore's policies towards the Amiga. For those of you without an Amiga, we suggest you pop down to your local Commodore Dealer with a friend and just sit out. First class care to post it here but there are news agencies that sort of thing.

The A.C.E. team...

Steve Cooke (co-editor)

When on a desperate bid in London (and dedication to console games led him to deliver a job application for Personal Computer Games, where he became deputy editor, later editor of The Home Computer Advanced Games). Widely respected as an adventure column writer, Steve also finds time to write plays in his holidays, most near Leeds. But in Cornwall, Favourite games, Inexpensive Mission, Impact and, Pockets.

Pete Cooke (co-editor)

Editorial Personal Computer Games ACE writer and later editor of Amiga Action. Worked in in the world of the elevated IBM PC, but broke out to see ACE. Despite a desperate trading career, still enjoys a fast and preferably tactical shooties up. Favourite titles games, Whizzies, DoubleDisk, Star.

Andy Williams (reviewer editor)

Cambridge (often) and an Amigaed Action leader supreme, abandoned a promising legal career to achieve with success for his native love game on Bob's Muggle. Because of the copyright faced, has to write in Microsoft, where he was the Amigaed database. Received more when complaining that he was reviewing

too many games, so asked to ACE and proceeded to hack everything in sight. Favourite games, Takus, Swallow Blood over Nile.

David Proctor (staff writer)

Wrote his own games on a DELO in 1981 and noticed he was in danger of becoming an obsessive games fiend. Went out and bought an Atari 400 to clear himself up, knocking up his first nation on Double Seven, wrote late Doublet at the point that he was not obsessive games fiend. Took to write his columns by being on Electron. Gave up the struggle after two weeks and bought a Commodore 64 followed by an Atari ST. Favourite games, Action, Inexpensive, Theme IV.

Andy Smith (staff writer)

Andy's personal details are too shrouded in mystery and dubious circumstances for us to report them. He certainly managed to be on holiday while the team was being written, but we do know that he spent his time chopping up steel for jobs before starting to chop up items instead. Planned to have done editors for play-by-mail games, Vulcan, and Amiga TV - but his girlfriend won't let him have one. Suitable of not, he's fine.

See you at the PCW Show

Find ACE on the Future Publishing stand in the gallery of the National Hall, 25th - 27th September at Olympia.

Next month...

Issue 2, in the shops on October 1st, will be bursting with reviews of the latest hot-off-presses, including *Starquest* from Psygnosis, Jack the Nipper 2, Eagle West on the ST, plus new releases from Navigator, Midgame, Atlanta and many more.

PLUS

- We test 20 budget shooties from *DoubleDisk* to *Beethoven*. Games that included the charts at launch, but can now be reappreciated in a positive fashion.
- *Jeopardy* - the right stick can beat the stalling out of the toughest game ACE gets its finger on the button and discovers which rock belongs in your strategy and which belongs in the bin.
- *Master Thiel's Twisted* continues with more scolding tips on Bob, Gander, Miss, DoubleDisk, Paperboy, DoubleDisk, DoubleDisk and much more - including the *Pilgrims Prayer's Guide to Hitchhikers*. Good stuff though the policy and make the difference your highest scoring shooties ever!
- In our music section we check out *MIDI* solutions for your music - the cheapest, the best - and the job. Who cares about keeping up with the Jones when you can beat them over with music?
- *MSX* - It should be up - we report from the conference at which double disk gave you data for your shooting, a report from the future Future Convention, and a foot of news, reviews, and content to keep you at the very forefront of the computer entertainment scene. See you in October...

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ocean