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IT'S A SHATTERING EXPERIENCE

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ACE ³

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ACE rules the road of *Digipoint* and *Deluxe Point II*

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The shogun steps to victory... Post us for the proposition to take 688.

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120 Special Offers

We must be mad to offer you up to £4 discount on these games. Get your order in before the deal is while costs arrive to take us away...

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Join the elite band of readers who are gifting over a year's subscription to ACE and an extra £10 off their amazing real order bargains.

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36 Emergency eye treatment!

You've seen the competition on the cover and you can't believe your eyes. Don't panic. Do not adjust your set. Just grab a pen and go to it.

Now we are three...

School Report

Pupil: ACE Magazine

News: Good to see young ACE broadening its coverage to include important issues of concern to games players, and not just new releases. Am shocked to read how much these programmers earn. Must apply for a fee...

Specials: Excellent coverage, but cannot agree with the *Upgrades* article - still maintain that my M68K machine is *yonka* better than Amiga or ST.

New Sections: New dedicated sections for music and graphics?? Cannot remember authorizing this shocking extravagance. See me behind the gym tomorrow morning. (PS bring cogs of *Star Trek* with you).

Strategy Buyers' Guide: Rubbish. If *Space Invaders* was good enough for me, it's good enough for the readers. The only strategy around here is a swift, sharp strike of the birch. See me behind the gym tomorrow morning. (PS bring an ST to run it on as well).

Games: Very distressed about this. I thought I had made it quite clear that at least 90% of the coverage should be devoted to educational software for the under 5's. Bitterly resent inclusion of colour preview pages, play-by-mail, and complete waste of six colour pages on *tricks'n'tactics*. See me behind the gym tomorrow morning. (PS bring colour monitor while you're about it).

Great Computing Disasters: At last! A serious article, despite wicked slur on reputation of *Oric Atmos* - an excellent machine which I had the good fortune to purchase. Still play *FacPerson* on it every evening. (Note: How about including the *Oric* in the *Release Dates*?).

Never!

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Multi-load mania



Game (Aminal) like with you are.

Even 8-bit machine games are beginning to benefit from the 16-bit software market, though the advantages may be offset by increased loading times. Realizing that the market is being bombarded by discounted 16-bit programs featuring multiple graphics and extended gameplay, 8-bit programmers are falling back in the only way they can—multi-load games.

Check out Indiana Jones from US Gold (reviewed this issue), Road Runner, Intergames' Passions and the Wild and others released to date, but the real op-



Spectre (Spectrum) load the security guards to track out the hardware.



Spectre (Spectrum) load the different computer screens...you can't get you this.

tion that multi-load may soon be standard for high-price releases comes from Ocean, who are pulling their weight behind extended 8-bit software with this year's big winter releases.

The impressive graphics of Game Over and Penegate were too bulky to fit into a low-memory 8-bit machine in one go, and Ocean's new titles continue this trend: three big come-up conversions—Combat School, Cylon and KastenHagen—and the film tie-in Platform will all load in several separate stages on the C64, 48K Spectrum and Aminal 484004. For people with disk drives or 128K Spectrums this doesn't pose too much of a problem, but the rest of you will just have to put up with real-game loading delays. "You just can't do justice to games like Cylon or Combat School without multi-load," explained software manager Gary Sharpe. "It's the only way to get the graphics and the game size."

There's another side to the multi-load game that's worth bearing in mind. Competition between budget labels and full-price companies has been heating up in the last few months, with the latter consistently being called upon to justify their higher prices. Given the economics of budget companies, multi-load is a promise that could sustain the profitability of the full-price merchants and add value to their products without necessarily adding too much in the way of programming costs.

ACE NEWS

Mastertronic empire building

Mastertronic are getting their hands on some hot properties these days—not content with the Sega machine, Williams House, and Aminal, the company will now be producing the 8-bit versions of Progress games.

If you've got a Spectrum, Aminal or C64, therefore, and have been drooling over 16-bit titles like Deep Space, Barbarian (not the Marx Whitman ones) or Terraplane, then don't be more than 8-bit conversions are due real soon now. The games will carry the name Progress, but this is largely a matter of 'badge engineering' since they will be written, packaged and marketed by the budget labels.

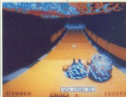
Meanwhile, on the licensing front, Aminal have managed to pick up veteran programmers Andy Walker and Paul Hodg-

son—the duo behind deluxe C64 software house Tardus of Super Alpine fame. With their first title for the system, Road Wars, their programming careers come full circle: to get Tardus' days they write coin-up games, both when they normally meant Progress or Cambridge clones.

Walker described working for the clones again as 'redundant', and said of the Aminal's console "It's not an ideal piece of hardware—it only really has eight sprites, for example—but there's a lot to be thankful for. The Aminal is definitely a games machine at heart even if Commodore don't want to present it as such. I'm well pleased that there's a good future for the machine now, after the rough patch it went through."



Progress and using Barbarian in the 8-bit Aminal version of the game.



Walker is helping Road Wars, the first Aminal title...and on home there now, too!

PROGRAMMERS – RICH & FAMOUS?



David Straben - 19880 good reason to be considered you.

You too can make a fortune working from home! Turn your hobby into a profitable profession! Yes, writing computer games can make you rich and famous!

Well, can 97 Hundreds, if not Thousands, of people are hard at work coding games in this country, but how many of them make a decent living? How many are rich? How many are seeing little or no return for their labors?

Let's start with one of these success stories that list of all warns the very readers of your heart and then tells you is thinking you could do that too - David Straben. He's 33, and for the past two years has earned \$190,000.

From - yes, you guessed - Illinois did he do it? Straben is an engineering type of chap, he just noticed he was in the right place at the right time, although he does think his science background (he's a Cambridge man) has made him more familiar with the math needed for 3D programs.

One reason why David Straben might have got a slightly better deal than some other programmers - apart from writing a superb game, of course - is that his business interests are handled by an agent, along with 50 or so more of the UK's top programmers David Straben is handled by Jacqui Lyons of the Marjany Agency, she negotiates

contracts and places any original games for clients come up with.

The advantages for the programmer are clear; you get on with the job while a toughy soaks with years of deal-making experience sorts out the financial and contractual side (in a percentage, naturally). Jacqui Lyons is, of course, pretty relaxed about what her bill

are, but what if you're just a kid - some figure running your own freelance life? The worries here are plentiful, that you just can't get your act together, that you don't get a good price for the job or even that you get ripped off when you're done. The last of these happens much more rarely now than a few years ago, but there are still real risks of

The Professionals

What have the great programmers got that the others haven't? Jacqui Lyons of Marjany has brought news of the kind of people that are of interest. They must be machine code programmers. They must understand what it means to be professional in the market. We do not deal with amateurs - that title means a knowing what you're doing and then doing it - properly and on time. So if you can't get your act together - forget it.

The final people who have got their act together and are signed up as clients include the distinguished David Straben, the Electric PowerCo. of Zed and Four, Powerforms, and Original Software of Brighton.

individuals or teams start, but she did say that £5-7.50 would be a reasonable fee for a game conversion from DOS to EGA by a programmer with a good reputation. She also added that Marjany clients could expect to earn a good professional salary - in excess of £20,000 a year.

That's Marjany clients - see the box for what kind of people they

programmers being taken for a ride.

Nigel Brooks of search agent system house Smart Egg thinks the best way to start off is by making a little money from your hobby - a budget small labels might set you £1000. It doesn't sound much, but when you consider that out of the £1.99 retail price the programmer gets around 10-15p it's a lot of copies to sell. Things change if you have a budget bestseller - 50 Mastertronics games are reputed to have sold in excess of 100,000 copies - but then we're talking about something a bit special.

The professional programmer's life, says Nigel, is hard, very hard work. A game doesn't sell itself. You're got to go around the publishers selling yourself and your work. Unless you're prepared to put that bit of effort in, you're unlikely to make that £20k salary that seems to be the point where you start to be an amateur and start to be a pro.

Daring Code Masters

Programming might be one way to earn a living, but if you want to make a real fortune wouldn't you be better off starting your own software house? That's what Richard and David Darling did with Code Masters - and haven't they done well? The software conglomerate started off programming for Mastertronics. In the space of two years they wrote 20 games and, estimates David Darling, made around £700,000. Their own budget label rapidly acquired a reputation for quality



David and Richard - Settings of the budget industry.

games, and it now works, David reckons, over a million pounds. And business is still booming; the

recently released Spectrum version of Grand Prix Simulator sold 12,000 copies - all in five days.

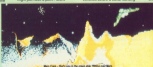
Tough Talkin' Arcana

Making bold claims about the quality of your software before it actually hits the shops is a strategy of marketing yourself up to be best with your own product. But it doesn't bother British-based software house Arcana. They're claiming that their imminent Amiga and ST release Wars Cops is destined to set the standard for 16-bit software that others will have to meet.

There's lighter words, boys - but if the game plays as well as this promise-saturated blurb, they might just have a point. Wars

Cops is a 3 phase space shoot-em-up which involves you in chasing UFOs through space and down trenches before a Lunar Landing.

style sequence stands it off. No, the scenario isn't exactly original, but who cares? If the action is slick and exciting an advertiser could be one to watch. They should be a review in your next issue of ACE. Also coming from Arcana are the 16-bit versions of Powerplay. This is a quit strategy game, originally released to good reviews on Amstrad and C64 about a year ago. Arcana say the game has been picked up considerably in terms of graphics and number of questions.



Wars Cops - that's you at the controls, boys!

Don't forget your LipStik

I you thought November's place was the last you'd hear for a while on the subject of joysticks, you'd be wrong. Adverts are now appearing in US mags for yet another 'revolutionary' game control device - the LipStik Plus, a voice-activated control headset. The headset with microphone sits at an angle for better, you should "Feel", or "The sting alone", or whatever takes your fancy instead of fiddling the trigger.

The manufacturers, Access Software, claim that it works with 95% of games that use a joystick and with machines including CD-i, Amiga, Am 387 and IBM PC. In the States it's sold at \$24.95 or \$29.95. UK Gold will be distributing the

LipStik over here from next spring, but as yet there's no word on the likely price.

Access Software are promoting the LipStik by including it with their game *Exotica*, a flight sim based on the Lockheed C-130 Tomahawk fighter, that too will touch-down here from US Gold next year.



All Access by *marky@lipik*

Upgrading your TV...

It's true it, there are times when the deep, clearly, fuzzy image on your telly just doesn't do justice to your latest copy of Multi-Colour Master Mission. Shelling out on the latest hi-res colour monitor will solve the problem, but it will probably bankrupt you as well. What's the solution?

The answer at the moment is a visit to the optician, but take heart because just round the corner lies a revolution in TV display standards. Sony have developed a high-definition video standard that uses a display of 1125 lines, instead of the normal 625 lines-on-per average British telly. The screen display is 5/4 ratio, which gives it a cinema-like display format as opposed to the normal equal, square ratio of standard TVs.

The quality is so good that although the system has yet to be adopted by the world's soap corporations, the film business has already started to use it for shooting movies. Rather than film your next block-buster on expensive celluloid, you can now use the Sony system to film or video, edit it far more cheaply, and then transfer the results to film for the cinema. **Julie Julia**, starring Sting and Kathleen Turner, used this system and it is now on general release in the States.

Implementing the system on a national basis is going to present problems, since we're talking about a completely new approach to TV broadcasting that demands more than a simple upgrade of existing equipment. There's little doubt, however, that the system, or an equivalent, will eventually be adopted, though it may take one of the new independent organisations to take the leap first.

Meanwhile, you can try out SD-lets, another Sony development that gives them the resolution of normal video tape recorders and rock-steady freeze frames - should be available here in the New Year. Or the DVP1000, pictured here, which uses the MSA standard as the heart of a camcorder, allowing you to scan images and edit them on a 15 colour, 330,000 pixel display. If you can afford the £800 for it, however, you can probably afford a decent hi-res monitor, so perhaps better to wait for the new TV standard after all.

Snippets...

Captain Courageous English software

£14.95 (US) £12.95 (UK)



Starting single combat game - but view sniper and machine attacks and view for the helicopter. Unfinished release expected.

The Situation Air Terminal CDL

£14.95 (US) £14.95 (UK)

A fully computer controlled air terminal has been built by amateurs and is in a chamber. One out in this month, the player must deactivate the control computer and release the trapped passengers.

Night Raider Gremlin

£14.95 (US) £14.95 (UK)

Am 387 £16.95 (UK)

Combating night air with shoot-up, your objective is to sink the merchant, dodge the fake and return safely. Spectrum and Aminal versions are due in the next year.

He-Man Gremlin

£14.95 (US) £19.95 (UK)

Spectrum £7.99 (US) £14.95 (UK)

Aminal £9.95 (US) £14.95 (UK)

Join He-Man in this good versus evil arcade adventure. Gremlin try to recreate the forthcoming feature film for the benefit of home movie parents. Due mid-December.

Gary Lineker's Superstar Soccer Gremlin

Spectrum £7.99 (US) £14.95 (UK)

Aminal £9.95 (US) £14.95 (UK)

£14.95 (US) £14.95 (UK)

A football sim that tests the player's management, coaching and goal scoring abilities. Imminent release expected - could well be out at you read this.

Paranormal Gremlin

Play the part of Albert Frydman in this action packed arcade adventure game that is made with tortuous puzzles. Avoid the dice throwing Paranormalists and dodge the wall spin. Price unknown but should be available in January for Am 387, Amiga, Spectrum, Commodore and Aminal.

Power Pyramids Gremlin

Spectrum £7.95 (US)

Send your opponent through 128 screens of arcade adventure where you start more the ball but more the hemisphere instead. Dash across the space - time continuum for a few light years, deliver your goods and get your stock signed before you return to pick up your pay cheque. Expect to get your hands

Electric Dreams throttle up....

The leader to begin, King-of-the-hill has been licensed by Electric Dreams for the conversion to home movie. Four different courses, four skill levels and conversions for 16 monitors are well under way with the Spectrum version likely to be the first, early followed by CD-i and Aminal. Prices around £9.95 for cassette versions and £14.95 for Commodore and Aminal disks. There are plans for 16 bit versions but these are a while off yet.

Meanwhile

with the new open-up conversion.

Electric Dreams

are also converting the

Die Cast Ball

games. For Play

and Aminal due to

appear in early '88

with price tags of

£9.95 and £14.95

for cassette and

disk respectively.



King-of-the-hill by Electric Dreams



Sony's DVP1000 - HD in with editing



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ELECTRONIC ARTS

Infocom shorts out

Months later release, Nord and Bert Couldn't Make Head or Tail of It must be an all-time adventure best. Instead of the usual adventure scenario, they're come up with a series of eight short stories on one disc.

There are eight scenarios involved, and you can move at will between scenes of them. To play the right, however, you need some passwords, gathered by successfully completing the other scenes.

There are, however, even more tricks for the hardened adventurer. Instead of solving puzzles based around using objects or commanding characters, you'll be comforted by telling puns, wordplay, and verbal tics. For example: There are

some laughing installers here', to which you might reply, 'Mauling Lubbers'. Of course, you would, wouldn't you?

Other changes include the absence of directions to go in. The program simply names adjacent rooms, and you type "Kitchen" or "Bath" to go there.

We'd like to promise a review for next month, but the Pigpen has been behaving a little strangely since releasing the game.

Nord and Bert Couldn't Make Head or Tail of It

Five scenarios, adventures and other verbal tics



Next year's top charts will be loaded with Tolkien games



3-D Digital Integration

Just around the corner from Army simulation lands, Digital Integration are three winter simulators, all in growing 3D. For the 8-bit micros there'll be the highly seasonal *Blizzard*, a sports game involving team funding as well as sleigh control, and *417*, an aerial combat game based on Lockheed's F-102 advanced tactical fighter.

417's aimed, 3D claim, at a heavy simulation audience! Do they mean it?

Don't feel let out if you're an ST owner - you should be getting the latest, sixteen version of 3D's most winter release *F-15 Combat Pilot*. The first Fighting Falcon simulator into the shops, *Combat Pilot* used 3D again, adopting US heavy-

weights *MicroProse* on an all-American lighting machine; they previously lead *Prose* to the draw over the F-15 *Fighter Pilot's* F-15 *Strike Eagle* and the Apache attack helicopter (*Yamaha's* v. *Sunsoft's* wonder who will be first out with *Tobler*!

Yak attack!

Just after *Winter*, the Camel, Sheng, Yak and Ullans bring another of the C&A has turned his affections toward the 16-bit machines and is currently working on two Lisasoft products. The first release will probably be a game game called *Die, Fifi!* and will be available on the ST. It's an all action shoot-em-up featuring one special weapon that the player collects to enhance his firepower, including the 'forcer' which puts 15 planets around the player's ship (Yak shaped) in two *Minotaur* style. Should be ready for Christmas, and though the price is not yet fixed, the author hopes the game will retail for under a fiver.

Also in progress is the next development in the *Colobanex* series of light synthesizers. *Light Mages* for the ST allows the user to create, interactively, dazzling light displays that accompany the user's favourite music. *Light Mages* will take advantage of the ST's built in MIDI port by allowing up to five machines to be linked together. Look out for it in early '88.



Digital Integration's *Blizzard*

Dark Castle

Can you survive the Haunted House on the HIT if you think you might be able to, or have some interest in trying, *MicroProse's* latest import from the US of a classic for your cup of poison. *Dark Castle* by 3DO Pacific Inc. appears on PC, Amiga and ST. It's an arcade



adventure, a fast and very brief look includes pretty graphics, but somewhat antiquated gameplay; you can avoid caves and leap on platforms, avoiding a handful of notes at your peril. There'll be a full review in the next ACE.



Look no heads!

A *disappointment* sequenced in the follow-up to *Barbarian*, *Maya* *Whirlwind* will be greeted to hear. *Pacific* programmer Steve Brown, responsible for the aforementioned blood-buffing head-aim, has turned his attention to more conventional methods of destruction.

Whirlwind is a multi-tasking language shoot-em-up in which you control an tracked warrior in conflict with the miscreant *Apollonians*. Points bogging your killing machine from Richard Joseph accompany the action. Expect the C&A version next, with Spectrum, Amiga, and Amiga conversions shortly afterwards.



Whirlwind by Pacific is a head-on bashing of *Barbarian*

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STAND BY FOR ACTION!

Western Games Magic Bytes

It's open season on sports games...all at a sudden, with software houses falling over each other to release sport-related titles. Canine guards Anderson (weigh in with his cowboy strapper on his new Magic Bytes label, out soon on SE, Junjo, C64 and Amstrad) prove you're the nearest cat-in-hat.

tobacco-spittin' bomber north of the Rio Grande in a grueling Wild West wiggler-on-up, or look very silly in the aftermath. Can you eat rice beans? Can you milk the cow later? Can you shoot more beer? Can you Cain-Coin? First out in the full ACE review, real soon now purchase.



Anderson: Ready to shoot? (Even after you hit the DT key, so you probably won't shoot your dog.)



Anderson: Time to put your money where your mouth is (judge the distance right and you'll hit the spot; aim at your man's feet, instead, and you'll go home) (bomber in your hand).

'Real soon now' is a phrase we've all grown to know and love over the years – but the juicy stuff on these pages *is* coming soon; and most of these games should be ready for review in our next issue. So don't miss it.



Carrier Command: Not so easy on the Carrier Command's friendly spectrum.

Carrier Command Rainbird

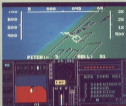
This world-strategic biggie for Spectrum, Amstrad and various 16-bit machines boils from 3D specialist Red Team, and very impressive it looks too. It's you, as aircraft carrier, four planes and a whole load of ground forces against an identically equipped enemy task force. You're fighting for control of an archipelago – 24 islands in all – and it isn't going to be easy. You don't just give orders; you actually fly the missions and fight the battles, all in real time's amazing 3D graphics. Carrier Command's ambitious goal, but if the device can anything to go by from Rainbird, one surely can't win.



(Werewolves) Steer in the safe direction at midnight, and you're hungry for steaks. Is that a steak? See below!

Werewolves of London Vic Designs

There's a touch of the gruesome about this fast title from Activision label Vic Designs, taking its inspiration in roughly equal parts from American Werewolf in London and a whole load of old Hollywood shockers. Werewolves has you scouring the capital for food. Because you're a werewolf, food means human flesh - Susan Dangers, preferably - so you can expect some trouble with the law taking the way. Your front-teeth take in scooped, fake steaks, pasta and steaks - with 100-plus locations on CD and Activision said over 200 on the SpectreX. There's room for a few odd slices of Star Trek.



You're standing in an enemy territory - but your stealth indicator (the bar) is too high, you've got to be quieter than that. The map (lower left) shows your position relative to the target, while the radar display alerts you to the presence of enemy planes. On the right is a display of the weapons you're carrying.



By the way, you can't fly back home to Bialystok for recharging and rearming. Instead, you'll be on the ground, and you'll be on your own when it comes to food.

Airborne Ranger Microprose

This is a kind of souped-up Commando, giving you 12 missions around the world on your CD. You're parachuted down into enemy territory and have to take out missile bases, locate hostages etc. Terrain differs: arctic, jungle and desert are some of the options offered. On your mission you'll have to start minefields, take out pill boxes and wriggle through trenches. As you play, you can add to your character's attributes, save them and use them in the next game. Airborne Ranger looks to have what it takes to make an exciting action game; we hope to have a full review in our next issue.



There's good reason to search for hidden 'treasure' in the forest. It's not for a good reason!



When you're on the ground, you're on the ground!

Project Stealth Fighter Microprose

From latest CD-ROM combat simulator looks pretty badly dull - assuming you can stomach 'what if?' Bill Bentley's 1980s-style Cold War politics. You pilot the awesome top-secret 33, 33-ton, 100-mission, 100-mission, using the planet's stealth technology you have to slip in, destroy installations and then slip out again.

The flight sim elements are there, but there's a whole lot of other stuff to occupy your mind as well - such as which installation from your possible 30 weapons you should take with you. Success means a return to base and a bank-stopping mission with your buddies over a few weeks of Jack Daniels. Feature means a glowing think-aloud as you fall over your magnitude.

Eco Ocean/Denton Designs

If you want a game that looks good and plays strongly, just wait till the one hits the shops. Don't build your islands if you're not on a hot location, and you'll never tell us all the CD and Amiga only a few will be about available, you don't even know it. And over successive genera-

tions must shuffle your genes around until you fit a special local habitat. Bam.

Of course, it's not all level up and mutating though. There's a lot of content of both. There's also stepping back to find food and avoid predators until feeding time, in each stage in

the evolutionary process must be done. The necessary guidelines to survival, foods designed simply to get you to move on (or give you a little extra cheap insight probably won't see the issue).

The Pink Panther Magixbytes

Another Games' pre-announced game on the new AmigaSoft label, the fully custom file in should bring that gentleman, which also comes to the rescue of all the most home-made stuff in the New York. And that can't all, take it on those pink feet will be the equally important film and Jerry Lewis.



100. Eco's engineering is a little bit of the design you're following, which is the standard for the Amiga world.

101. Eco's one of the best in a series of games from the AmigaSoft label.

SOMETHING HORRIFYING AND IN

SCHWARZENEGGER
PRED



Can you see any gold coins sitting in the chair used for money sitting a long time?



Can you see any gold coins sitting in the chair used for money sitting a long time?

Skate or Die

Electronic Arts

If you thought skateboarding was a race personal passion, EA have got a really surprise lined up for you. Their upcoming CD4 skate set includes some rather odd events alongside the standard ramp and downhill events.

How about an inner City Downhill battle against computer opponents Power Pole or Aggro Eddie? How about a Pool Jump? Just with the Unstoppable Leader? Well heck - you didn't think they would take it old age did you?



Mobile phone perfect to have with you - you hope!

UNEXPLICABLE IS GOING TO HAPPEN.....

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GREAT MICRO DISASTERS

THE NATIONAL MICRO-DISASTER AWARDS 1987

Pete Connor and Steve Cooke staggered from the Exhibitor's Bar at the PCW Show, took a wrong turning on Level 9, and stumbled into the splendour of the Sir Clive Sinclair Suite, secret venue of the National Micro-Disaster Awards. Flicking the switches on their concealed Living Daylights-style miniature tape recorders, they were able to compile this exclusive report...

The assembled company includes Jeff Winter, Tony Crombie, Richard Stanton, a Klingon, Samantha Fox, Jack Trammell, an unidentified alien, Basil the Great Mouse Detective, Gary Linnaker, Conan the Barbarian, a yak, and Maria Whittaker...

DEW **JOSSE DOYLE** (translating alienish whop)

DEATH Attention points, this meeting a rose in winter and I AM THE LAIR...

CONAN THE BARBARIAN (sings)

DEATH We are gathered here together to pass judgement on this computer industry, to judge it all cowardly, petty, inefficient, cruel, and to elect the Greatest Computer



The Sir Clive Sinclair Suite Suite and the secret venue of the National Micro-Disaster Awards. (See text for location details)

Disaster of all time. The meeting will come to order and I call upon Sir Richard Stanton to read out the nominations.

STARTRON (sings to his feet, gaining broadly) Carmina (sings), He gives (sings), depicting that perfect set of teeth. Again the carmina (sings) as he collapses a (sings) girl - but **DEATH** (sings) looks out with the mouse whip and returns order.

STARTRON The best nomination is...

EGYPTO EVANS (sings) The old (sings) company, Egypto Evans, Wholly (sings) the micro-program, the (sings) and (sings) (sings)



EGYPTO EVANS (sings) The best nomination is...

(There is a loud moaning, cut short by a quick intermission taken from the (sings) whop.)

STARTRON (I give (sings) The best nomination is...

EGYPTO EVANS Come on stage! There's no computer - what about Star Trek? There's been

Star Trek - beam me down, please!

This was going to be the feature film from all the cult TV prog was going to become a real 'mega game', turning the parties with its graphic brilliance and absorbing gameplay - all of it featuring our old pals Kirk, Spock, Scotty, Squeak, Uhura et al. Well, two years on they're still waiting to beam down to your local software store. For two successive PCW shows the program has been promised, neither show has seen it delivered. Why?

The reasons are shrouded in mystery. Some say that despite the reportedly enormous amounts of money spent on the design and programming (£20,000 is one individual, the story goes) the early versions were 'soft'. Others murmur about clauses in the licence contract giving Paramount the right to veto any part of the game, from the shape of Spock's ears to the picture on the packaging. Well we now learn the truth! Who knew, first we never saw the game? Yes, we certainly will - and not even now. The ST version will be announced before Christmas, it'll be available in the new year. In fact, if you want to see it right now, just mope in front to your friendly local game - ST versions have been available on the hapless market for quite some time, making Star Trek the most widely seen unlicensed game of all time. How this will affect the game's sales remains to be seen.

waiting for that game out in sector. Oh how the Date 1980. I distinctly remember that that fellow threatening me with it. But where is it, eh?

Imagine

Back in 1981 might want big, big, big. They were one of the successful companies around, with classy packaging and more publicity than Madonna. In fact, well promotion was probably their strongest point. One of their first programmers - Eugene Evans - made the Daily Mirror as an example of the new superstar, the video-tape programmer. Eugene proved remarkably by his Cuban sports car while figures of £10,000 were bandied about on his salary. Rumours spread about amazing 'mega-games' that would allow us a new era of computer fun - on the Telly.

Well, it all ended in tears. One fine day - while the BBC just happened to be up in Liverpool filming a documentary about the company - the bubble came a-collapsing. Imagine sank under the weight of debts and drama, until the name was bought to live on as Conan's movie label. Where are they now?

Steve Everett - once the Voice of Imagine - is now working for budget-conscious Cade Warrens as a new man Think Tark.

David Linnaker and Ian Hetherington, available Imagine directors, are now directors of 19-bit software House Progress.

Egypto Evans is now programming for Microsoft. His game The Barbarian Triangle should be around before Christmas.

SOFTWARE BEAST: Two gods copied and one to yield.

BEZBOB: Yes, you said every other city gets a guide in the same system. And I found games played like we are old warriors. It's in the game, it's in the game. It's all out there.

BEANON: And the first nomination is...

THE YAK: Great God of your very first games, Mr. Beano. Do you remember how in the robot prog - written in BASIC, I might add - you had to EOT line 100 if you wanted to change your team? Do you remember how the white-on-green graphics made it that the game was virtually impossible to watch to more than five minutes? Do you remember...

World Cup Carnival

None of an embarrassment that a genuine stream. Finally, from US Gals released an old Arco game with three international - practice screens - and a stack of pretty posters and badges. The soccer game itself was pretty poor, but what made some people sick as porpoise was the fact that (I) both sides mention the game's origins, they taught the game only to discover it was the first game they really owned. And in fact there was good more than the original. Some can read.

BEANON: Oh, shut up! The first nomination is...

SOFTWARE BEAST: The Great Space Race - the only game I could never be bothered to copy.

JACK TRAMEL: Well, you guys don't know what a real disaster it gets. Lots of real technical hardware glitches here - like that great British success the Orc Atmos.

The Orc Atmos

The Orc was a truly British computer. The Atmos was an upgrade introduced to have a Spectrum-loading specification. There was a sign problem, however, the operating system ROM contained a bug. Orc clearly (I) got round this problem by loading a cassette with the machine that you loaded before loading your program. So at you had to do to load a tape into - load another tape first. Next, eh? Next, the Orc was introduced this year in France. Funny people, those French.

The Great Space Race

Launched by software house Legend after selling a substantial 100,000 copies of Valtala the game was expected to compare the charts in the Christmas of 1984. Carried away by the general mood of enthusiasm, Personal Computer Games magazine soon mentioned a £1000 estimated sales and offered the original drawing (which considerably more) as a prize in their Great Space Race Competition. Imagine the faces of Anderson, Cooke, & Connor when the game actually arrived. The industry shrieked in disbelief, buyers of the game shrieked with terror - and Legend never recovered, disappearing into obscurity a short while later.

Rumour has it that the last few remaining copies of The Great Space Race were shipped to a star-of country for an undisclosed sum, believed to be around 20p per copy. Even at that price, no-one in the UK would be likely to buy it.



Photo: Computer Trade Weekly

CHORUS: The what?

JT: The Orc Atmos, you dimwit. You know what the folks' about, next little red and black box that was supposed to take on and beat that Spectrum thing of yours.

TEAM FOX: Well how about something that combines hardware and software, big boy? Like that nice Mingsen Dangle?



The design that almost killed a company. Mingsen's failure at the market caused your family's misery in 1984, but over the company's failure. He gave them the up to offer the owner of the experience - rather than the sales.

BEANON: Let's keep it clean, please - as Mrs. T said to me only a few months ago. Now, the first nomination is...

QUART (GODS): Oh in Beano's/the time are all talking about World Cup Carnival. A well over good, but not one.



By the way

By the way



SAGE: THE GREAT SPACE DETECTIVE. Come on God. If you really want to talk about your gods try those two licensed games from Ocean - Knight Rider and Star Trek. It seemed like they were advertised for years before they actually appeared - and when they did make it, what a disappointment! They were pretty good. Of course, the whole business did come good. Ocean stopped advertising games in for a while, and they really improved the quality of software produced from Ocean.

JUDGE DEATH: Get fat, creep. And you got on with it Beano, or you'd taste the gentle touch of my sexual whip.

BEANON: Ah, eye of the first nomination is...

JACK TRAMEL: Hey, what about that CS thing that you're sure used to peddle? Now that was one of the most of a catastrophe. It really looked so obvious.

BEANON: Instead - it's not a computer disaster. The first nomination is...

BECKE (GODS): Imagine! The old Imagine company. Eugene Evens, Rocky White.

JUDGE DEATH: That's a guide! You've troubled the hell as much of Beano's can take. I declare the meeting finished, legal, over closed. It's going to terminate the lot of you! (The neuron whip cracks and whistles of pain - it is it pleasure? - ripple through the quantified worlds as they are handed out to to the harsh realities of the real world.)

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It Touched

My first reaction after reading *Q* Reader Letter 'Missing MDX' issue was to sit down in an uncomfortable chair/laugher. But after about half an hour I became suddenly aware of the letters again, not with laughter, but with other forms of the thought that he could conceivably be serious!!!

What's he trying to say?

Simple!! The Commodore 'R' has probably sold more units, never mind the rest he quoted! The last figure that I read about the DM, of which I am an owner, is 15 million (world wide-USA). In the interim September 25 to the 8 October, covering two-week issues of PCW they announced the following New Releases.....

Machine	Total New Releases
Amstrad CPCs	19
Amstrad BLiX	1
Spectrum	29
BBC B	5
Amstrad ST	3
Amstrad PC & Clones	4
OSBMS-4	1
OSBMS-128	25

I really speak for itself! Doesn't it, D. White? A total of 87 new releases over eight machines and not one of them an MSX!! Now that the software companies are falling over themselves producing programs for the machine, to be fair, and if the new releases are registered under a new label and you say I think the point is absolutely made.

Don't get me wrong, D. White, I sympathise with you and hope the software for your machine increases but you can't blame BCE, or any other magazine come to that, if there is no software to review can you? My advice to you is do the same as I did when I bought a C16 then found out that that machine was a contender for the golden turkey award: it was easier to find the potential needs in the hardware than software. Get your copies, read the MSX and buy one of the better supported machines. The moral of the above is don't buy a Pigeon or a Pouter because the parrot, but I could repeat it here mean when it doesn't exist!

What's new to the magazine, it's very fast, reviews & using system. I hope, may trust, you keep up the good work!

Peter Lussell
Glasgow

I thank you for your remark; you've made my point much better than I could have done alone. I don't think I'd have been quite so cutting though.....

It First One

I was in the first time I've written into a magazine and I thought that it'd congratulate you, it'd tell you what I like to see. I have an Amiga and defined the sub-message in the workbench 'It's C'. Could you tell me who created the Amiga? and why that message was included? Do you think the New Machine (Amiga) will be successful? I am an 18 year old male seeking a female Amiga user to swap programming tips, games, etc.

Neil Outbrook
25, Woodcock Road
Bosch

'That one' sounds a bit funny to me, but I can't wish you luck anyway. The Amiga was originally conceived and designed by an American company called Amiga Inc., set up by three Florida students with a spare \$7 million to invest. The machine was developed, the company got in to serious financial difficulties and, after a while or so of wheeling-dealing involving the figure of Jack Tramiel, became the Commodore Amiga. Why the naughty message was included is a mystery to me, but nothing connected with programming is surprising, is it?

It Silly letters

At last, a multi-machine magazine that supports a thoughtful good read in addition to the many multi-colour adverts that magazines unfortunately need to carry in order to survive. You seem to have got the balance just about right.

Although a dedicated machine magazine is perhaps a must for ANY more serious, it's refreshing and informative, not to mention entertaining, to keep abreast of all the latest software and hardware developments on both 8 and 16 bit machines.

I only hope the multi-machine format does not move the tiny machine is better than yours' statement into a state of silly letters. I have owned a whole range of machines in my time, I'm over 25, released and anyone of them that they're your good or bad points. Let us all simply support the machine that we prefer, and can afford, and not enter into letters page blinging matches with people who may prefer, or can afford, OTHER machines.

One small request with regard to your content. Can we PLEASE have a separate strategy game section. Most computer magazines either forget altogether, or have a column or two every four months or so. Good games of this genre ARE

ACE LETTERS

All human life is here in ACE Letters; the man who bought a CBM Plus 4 to run a free game, the man who makes mince-meat of the MSXers, the man whose cat all but destroyed his computer. Read them, and then send your own opinions to ACE Letters, 4 Queen Street, Bath, BA1 1EJ

around, and can give many HOURS of mind-boggling entertainment, so how about some page space please?

Dave Franklin
Oxford

Well, we wouldn't go to any 'Commy v. Spexy' debates, but we will keep readers abreast of the latest machines and try to provide them with the information on which to base their buying choices. Talking of strategy, I hope you like this month's buyers' guide. We hope to be reviewing strategy games in a section of their own in future issues.

It Sound and graphics not
Welcome to the ballfield. I know you guys here have all 'been there' before but welcome anyway and good luck. If issue 1 is the standard you maintain you'll have no problems; it was superb for a sound and graphics not and found the most and graphics sections extremely well done. It's nice to have reviewers taking games instead of talking down to us as if we were all ***** and told the people who took out the cash!

I intend sending you a copy of my Deluxe Paint work but would really like the disk back. How about if we you're available. Jiffy's with

Controversy of the Month?

It Bugging

Don't you think it might be an idea to include in your MSX Letters section a debating issue, some subject readers have raised their view on, eg. I'd love strongly in the alternative above of the format seen in advertising. The subject has cropped up time and time again and I'd be interested to know what everyone else thinks about it. So you agree in bugging Maria Whitaker or antagonising Whitaker or antagonising Whitaker? Well, ACE! an I's a voice in the wilderness. At least let the poor vote even if it's 'debating' over a impractical.

Deborah Patey
Harlow

It's not quite clear from the wording of your letter whether you find Bugging Maria Whitaker are a good or a bad thing. If anyone feels strongly enough to join in and stir up a controversy then we'll be more than happy to post their letters (the interesting

ones, at least). Personally, I feel that a more interesting issue is that of explicit violence. Can a 'bad' or 'offensive' ads amount, in which a cartoon like is just beginning its journey through the doors of some poor person. Do readers feel this is just cartoon violence, or do they think such images in both ads and games may have a pernicious effect?



S.A.E. label and return postage included?

I hope you run a regular gallery for readers and write. Maybe you could offer a nice magazine print out of the month's best game? The chances of the average fanboy won't get high quality hard copy of better work are (at the present) very remote indeed. Come on AEs, what do you say?

Bury Hatch
Bury

There'd have been quite readers' eyes in this issue's Clapnet section - if we hadn't run out of space. Next month, we promise. The glib daff didn't cut deep, we will try to send back shots as soon as we can.

■ Amiga ailing

Having recently bought an Amiga, I have come across a few annoying points that I wish to air in your magazine.

1) Having upgraded from a 64, it is apparent to me that software houses are concentrating from 8 to 16-bit machines and are therefore reproducing identical software costing an extra £15 for a 16-bit

program and/or for the privilege of a 16-bit sound program!

2) Most of the software available for the Amiga is adventure-based. When are all the good arcade conversions, such as a four player version of Gauntlet?

3) The Amiga's graphical power greatly surpasses anything available on an 8-bit machine so, therefore, software should be written on 16 bits and then converted down to 8 bits, not vice versa (this would keep the quality of software up on both formats).

4) On trying to purchase Amiga software in the Cambridge area, all retailers said that they had no plans to stock Amiga software although they were already stocking ST software. What is happening to the distribution of the few Amiga products which have been written?

5) The Amiga is the most powerful home system within an affordable price range, and yet the ST is attracting interest from the major software houses who are now starting to produce quality products, all of which could be improved on an Amiga!

6) I hope you will receive and review more Amiga software in the near future because a large

magazine can make or break a computer depending on the way it is portrayed within its pages. Given a chance the Amiga will become the most popular 16-bit machine. It is not getting the support it deserves from software houses and the popular computing magazines.

Earl Alexander
Cambridge

You should find that software is now starting to be developed on 32-bit machines and then ported down, e.g., Mastermind's Amiga label, which produces games in the first instance for arcade machines - but on Amiga boards. And next month we should have a bumper crop of 16-bit titles to review. As for buying the stuff, you could always try a reputable mail order service.

And by the way, are you a real editorial or wire you just chivalrous that way?

■ What is a joke?

I'm sure I speak for many computer owners when I ask 'What exactly is a joke?' I'm sure hundreds of people just type them in, knowing it'll make something weird happen in the game. For example, infinite lives, invulnerability etc. Would it be possible for you to start a monthly article in which people with jokes and to give them information on how to make their own? Just think, you'd have no control your tricks and fancy's section. You may also find there would be a lot more top letters.

P-Norton
Sunderland

Love or 'Hate' it? Tactful text month-end you should find an explanation by A. Babin of just what is involved in Planning.

■ Down to business

Firstly, I'd like to say that you've got a winner with this mag, it leaves the rest standing. The only thing that I would like to see introduced is a small business section similar to the ones on graphics and music. I have recently bought an Amiga to use for a variety of reasons, from game playing to business. What I would like to know is if there are plans to make the 500 emulate PCs like the Atari 520 can?

Also, do you think that there is any justification in the prices of Amiga and Atari ST software? It is likely that the prices will come down eventually!

Adam Morley
Luton



Sorry, but we definitely won't be covering any of that spreadsheet business stuff; you're in a very minority asking for it. In fact, if you started a business staff club among ACE readers you'd probably be the only member. There is a PC emulator card under development for the Amiga, but we suspect it will work only in the 2000. Prices of 16-bit software are very high at the moment, next year they should come down substantially.

■ Bland, ordinary, boring

Did you like my last letter? I don't. I thought it was bland, ordinary, boring.

Just like this one - which is why we aren't printing any more of it.

■ Where is it?

Firstly, a word of praise. Your new rating system is excellent, all praise to the person who thought up that idea. Secondly, I have just read your section on budget software and noticed that it said Planetarian's out for the C64. Please let me if this is a printing mistake or whether it is true because however false I look I can't find it in any of the shops.

BT Achome
West Yorkshire

It's a mistake sure enough. Planetarian isn't available for the C64, which is why you can't find it in the shops. Our apologies.

■ What was that?!

Your magazine is the best around, at least the best I've read. And in relation to this mag, some fresh writes in and says your mag is boring! What does he want? I'd like to tell R.J. MORROW (see Chris and Wayne in issue 2) that if he

Freebies

■ Bubble Bubble bag?

There was a bug in Bubble Trouble. If you press keys 4-9 all at the same time player two will come on to the screen at any part of the game. Other than that, it is a brilliant dice having 3 game on the front cover.

Tony Pate

■ Weird happenings

I'm writing to you about some unexplained weird happenings in issue 2's Bubble Trouble game. Apart from enjoying myself to pieces, I'm wondering firstly, why a huge apple appeared at the bottom of the screen and what it was I must have picked up and secondly, why did two of my jumping hearts appear and everything else disappear just when I was enjoying myself the most? Even more weird than that, when I got at the heart's floating message 'PERFECT' appeared on the screen and then, as no star GARD OVER was printed underneath.

Joanne White
Great Dunmow

■ Best deal!

On Star Mac (got 750) and on Bubble Trouble I got - well for it -

an amazing 498,000 that that this is how I got that amazing score. All I did was eat the objects that looked like soda bottles. Then out of the symbols that appear the musical notes or strings. If you eat all the symbols within 30 seconds you get 100,000 points added to your score. Keep up the good work.

Robert Barber
Northwich

■ Cheesed off

In fact you're on the cover of issue 1, you gave BLUE MAX away for my computer - I already owned it. But, as if that wasn't bad enough, you put a 5 screen demo of BLUE BOBBLE on issue 2's cover - and, of course, I already had it. It's just not fair. The excellent content of the magazine made up for it though - it'll be you all. Your questions will grow, though a little easy (I managed to score 88 out of the 95). Please do make more in future issues, and make them harder. The reviews are top class - though they looked a little boring in the first issue (The second issue was a great improvement).

Broughton
Keighley

wants to read things like "What real PC? (E2)" then he should go out and buy that rubbish elsewhere, and not try to convert one of the few rubbish magazines around into a cheap run-of-the-mill edition. If he wants to read that it is up to him, but there are quite enough of those magazines on the market and I do not want to see ACE degenerate into such rubbish output.

**D.I., Manchester
Creston, Cumbria**

RE: S.R. Morrison's 1st issue?
Buy our 1st issue & get another 50p off a year's subscription of "What real PC?" (E2)

■ Desperate for Art

I had just read with great interest your article "The Graphics Scene" in an additonal graphics man I was interested in the mention of "The Advanced Art Studio for the Spectrum." I live on the Isle of Wight and cannot obtain this program anywhere. Could you please advise me where I can obtain one, and at what cost?

**S. Cheshire
Isle, Isle**

If you can't get one in a shop down here, by a direct mail order supplier. As a last resort you could try the suppliers. Raintree AA2 costs around £16.00.

■ Smart buy?

I was lucky enough to get a copy of ACE last week and wishing to try out your free Blue Max game I bought a second hand Commodore Plus 4 computer. However, when I tried to load the program following your instructions I only get the following message on my TV:

DEVICE NOT PRESENT
ERR0R
READY
RUN
ERR0R
READY

Can you help me? Does this mean that my Commodore Plus 4 will not access anything but C18Plus 4 software? Can you let me know why please this?

**Name unknown
Chappin**

You've got a bit of a problem here. Blue Max is a C64 program, and will run on any C64, or C128 or C128 mode. The Commodore Plus 4 is a different kettle of fish altogether and can only run software specially written for it - of which, I'm afraid, there is not a lot, about

■ Helpline

Firstly, thank you for the excellent publication. It is a pleasure to purchase and read (generally in response to M Hammond's letter ACE issue 2), an adventure helpline would be useful for my view is that this would limit the previous space needed for reviews etc.

I would like to recommend a couple of excellent factories aimed at adventure players only (no real-time magazines). They contain everything about adventures (tips, maps, reviews, letters etc) for beginners to the most experienced players. They are called *Adventures* *Paths* and *Southways* and at £1.00 each are in my opinion, the

Adventurer's Bible. The address is write to: Mr Sandy Sharkey, 78, Manor Road, Wigton, Lancaster, LA12 6AJ.

**David Brown
Pottsmouth**

■ Split Pilgrim

I just thought I'd write to say how brilliant your magazine is, the first issue anyway. I haven't found the second in any shops yet, but I'm searching on FI (as the third - is the Pilgrim the same one as in AA? I had thought so actually, if I sent it back do you think it would be replaced?

Will there be any articles on

splitting in the future? I would like to see them in my programs, but I haven't a clue how to open the mag straight off.

**Simon
Dobbin**

"Yes the Pig is the same as in AA. If you explain clearly what happened in your disk, then the supplier will probably replace it. We may well be covering split creation in the Graphics section in the future.

■ Binders

Note that ACE has gained a Cyril following due to the magazine's conciseness and humour (??) later

The Woes of Amstrad

■ Whoopee!

WHOOPEE! I have just received the second copy of ACE and what is this I say on the front? Yes, it is another one of those fantastic free-computer games (and the first is screens anyway) but there is one tiny problem. Tips you guessed it. In one of those people who own an Amstrad but not to be dismayed I gave the tape away to someone less fortunate, who does not buy your mag.

The point of my letter is, please don't you think of all the Amstrad owners and give out a tape with something to zap on it? It really is depressing when you have already spent this week's wages on all the special offers you were offering - all but price down the local computer shop.

**Stefyn Ryan
Plymouth**

■ Fear student!

Browsing through the Students Under newspapers I happened to come across a magazine called ACE. Picking up the mag I quickly glanced through the pages. So far so good. Turning to the front cover a free tape, even better. I then looked at the price - £1.90, not so good. Being a student, money has to go on more important things (such as beer). Also the tape will be for the Spectrum and Commodore only. Definitely not so good being an Amstrad CPC owner after much pondering, I handed over half my grant and bought ACE, issue two. After hours of reading I was pleased that I had bought it.

However, I think it would be a good idea if you made it so that the free tapes (Amstrad owners in particular, since you don't put an

Amstrad selection on the "free" tape) could have the option of buying ACE with or without the free tape. Hence the magazine without the tape would be cheaper.

**D Williams
Newbury**

■ Deep regret

I read from the moment I picked up ACE annoyed why! - well, a nice free tape. Blue Max, a game I have always required, the other side of it of the Gods, very good of you. So why am I annoyed, I will tell you why. The free gift is for COMMODORE users AGAIN. They get free tapes often on T8000 term magazines. They get cheap reduced games in all their shops, they get hundreds of new games released for Commodore. The AMSTRAD 664 owners (hope) get very few new games out, our mags are the last to appear on the newspaper shelves, we get far fewer new games and right-combat games. What do you do for us? Give a non-free cassette to the Commodore users, what's wrong with AMSTRAD users, we never get a free game? I like BLUE MAX, I like ACE 2 but you never give nothing to us Amstrad owners. You say for ACE 2 says available for every computer except AMSTRAD owners. I deeply regret I ever chose Amstrad Computer. I don't realize the Commodore would be a better buy. More games available, and more free gifts.

**P Hill
Bosham**

■ Very angry

Well you're only five issues old and already you've made me angry; issues 1 and 2, free games available for lucky old Speccy and Commodore users. What about all

us Amstrad? Well you say you can have an Amstrad game at 60p old. Oh says I, here's my 65.00 send me Star Games or Star, Sorry, comes your reply, no Star Games on Amstrad this, top your 65.00 back. Hang on a minute though, just because you have say you can't supply what you first offered to do, why don't I get offered a second copy? This way I feel I've been cheated out of my 65 off introduction offer. As far as I am concerned it ain't! I hope you can investigate the real offer for me.

**P. A Adams
Walsley Garden City**

Well it is pretty tough to Amstrad CPC owners these days. But we do offer a pretty good alternative in the cover games - i.e. massive savings on new games. The idea of selling the mag cheaper without the games is a nice one, but thoroughly impractical. It's about 90 Amstrad complaints about Star Games is a justification; we were told by Graham that the competition would appear on Amstrad also, but they changed their minds - the last he said to do anything about it for the magazine. You could, of course, send the money back to our sub department and claim another game. If you feel very strongly about it - I, for instance, you subscribed simply at the strength of the Star Games bargain - then we'll refund your subscription.

Two final points, the amazing competition on the cover of the issue should appeal to all computer owners, and it's our real issue we hope once again to have a very attractive proposition for everyone, irrespective of race, colour, creed or computer.

about something to ensure that the magazine can still be read in the 21st century - a binder?

I now have a rapidly growing collection of AGC and would like to preserve this in a suitable receptacle - a binder?

The above article would cost approx £4.95 and would be in a suitably tasteful colour (black, red, blue, white, gold, etc). It would have the capacity to hold up to 10 glossy inserts and would be available to the public before the end of your first year.

Philly Latham
Cheshire

They're on their way - probably in a couple of issue's time. And they'll cost something like the figure you suggest.

Who's the creep?

Your competitors are still. I love the glossy cover. How about some 'games'? And who the hell is the woman on the cover of the November issue?

Max
Essex

Listen, Max - the world's get your number, so don't go sayin' no more mean things about him, OK?

Are ratings a bore?

Ratings are not a bore - it's the unemployed - which, incidentally, I am not. They help pass the time and give software to people who would not otherwise normally be able to afford anything but a little budget software. They also teach each other how programs are put together, who knows, an unemployed ratings freak may succeed in writing a good game and get off the dole. Don't knock ratings, please!

Don Griffin
London

You're entitled to your opinion, Don. Even if it's wrong. But we still aren't going to print ratings.

Cat-astrophe

Could you please help me? My cat came into my bedroom 2 months ago and knocked my good old Amstrad keyboard off the monitor which was on the floor and broke the left and keyboards. Do you know if I can buy some new ones? If so, where? Keep up the good work lads.

Stuart Gwynn
Welling

We don't know of anyone in your neck of the woods, so suggest you try the shop where you bought the machine. If that doesn't bring any joy try Amstrad. Or you could phone some of the people who advertise Spectrum and Amstrad repairs in various magazines.

PC please

When magazines tell about a new treatment of the IBM PC, I accept that the PC has virtually no usable sound capabilities, but I thought it wasn't better when compared to the 8 bits and the games are equally as good as the ST.

When I'm basically asking for is some serious soundings, not just a passing reference to a boring old PC cover. How can 16 bit IBM-PC beat a megabyte memory computer with 16 colour hi-res graphics be boring?

Roger Cope
Essex

We're trying to provide that coverage; one PC game is reviewed in the issue, and others are mentioned in our 'updates' pages. We try to cover all PC games released.

COVER COMPETITION

Superlatives fail me for this latest ACE competition; brilliant, fantastic, incredible, amazing, otherworldly... they just aren't strong enough, because in conjunction with Silica Shop we're giving away FIVE Amigas, plus FIFTY superb software titles. The whole kit and caboodle is worth nearly £5,000 at street prices.

1st Prize

The biggest prize in the competition is

**AMIGA 500
1081 COLOUR MONITOR
50 SOFTWARE TITLES**

Runners Up

FOUR runners up will each receive

**AMIGA 500
TV MODULATOR
5 SOFTWARE TITLES**

That's a whole lot of entertainment for five fortunate people. But we're not giving something for nothing - you're going to have to work hard to win these prizes, and that work begins on the front cover of no. 100. Full details of how to enter are on the card, but remember that the closing date for entries is Friday (December 11th). Winners will be announced in our February 1989 issue, or else not early in January of the new year.

The Hot 50

Here's a complete rundown of the software the word-squirts winners will be playing on their Amigas.

All prizewinners will get

Marble Madness, Goldrunner, Karate Kid 2, Barbarian

In addition, the winner of the first prize will receive

Open
Ultima II (video)
Monkey Business
Barnyard Time
Bomber
Boulderblast
Carnie
Carnival
Deep Space
Landscape
Quest of the Sorcerer
Quest of Sorcerer

Knights for
The Peace
Interco (video)
Mandrill
Mandrill
Championship
Basketball
Championship
Football
Championship
Basketball
Sports Ranger

Stage Mission
Mount Top
Puzzle
Puzzle
Shuttle Service
Shuttle Service
Tina Times in
Townland
Townland
Challenge
Crumble Factory
Crumble
Do-It
Final Top
Puzzle
Leader Board
Leader Board
Tournament Top
Tournament Game
Shooter
King's Quest II
Space Quest
Sky Fighter
Space Shuttle
Adventure



The best prize - worth £500

How do I see,
just get to finish
this novel?

I know I
be ready,
sir?

Just get
me a, go...

Please?

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What ARE they playing?

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BY ONE WHO WOULD ONLY
ADDY NAME
FROM LEFT TO RIGHT AND
FROM ON YOUR TWO OTHER SIDES
AND JUSTICE TO BEGET THE GREAT
RENDERING
FROM WOODS OF FORTRESS WITH WEAPON AND
CONTINUED - YOUR APPEARANCE MAY HAVE BEEN
APPROVED BY MODELS
YOU'VE FOUND THEM. YOU MUST SURVIVE
FOR LONGER AND FORTRESS BACK
IN ARMY WOODS
END TO PLAY
ABOUT



ARMY MOVES



THE BUCKSTOPPER
DOWN AT THE EDGE OF ONE OF
THE MOST ADVANCED ARCADE GAMES. EVERY IT'S TRUE TO THE ORIGINAL
WITH GRAPHIC GRAPHIC AND PLAY ANIMATION SUCH AS GAMES, GAMES
AND WOULD EXHAUSTION AND WHATS MUCH MORE
FACE IT ANNOYANCE ...
THE REAL THING!



FOR YOUR

ATARI ST

Atari has always offered a huge range of titles for its home computers and now Atari ST offers you the most exciting titles from Atari. Thanks to the growing success of our home computers, Atari ST is now available in Great Britain. We are proud to announce the following titles:

Atari Home Computers
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Atari Home Computers

Name: _____
Address: _____
Postcode: _____

ARCADE ACE

Andy Smith reports from high in the skies on the latest aerial combat games zooming in to the coin-ops; *Skywolf* and *After Burner* send his adrenaline soaring to new heights.

AFTER BURNER

Sega

\$20 per game/\$40 for three
Upright cabinet version

This game created something of a fad when it appeared - largely because it was played in a rocking and rolling sit-down cabinet that gave the player a real sensation of high speed, roller-high action. But here comes the upright version: shape-up!

The unusual price set-up of the game means that for \$20 you get three games, and for \$40 you get five. These are all used up, one after the other, your Miq actually gets you one more game rather than three separate ones.

Having deposited your choice of coin, you grab hold of the large metallic joystick in one hand and the throttle control in the other and then lean on it as just solid action all the way. You control a jet fighter flying low over changing scenery continuously scrolling towards you. Your view of the plane is from just behind, and it stays more or less centered to the screen, while everything

else scrolls around it. Just in front of your plane is a small white square - your sight or firing your two weapons at the incoming jets that are hell-bent on blowing you out of the skies.

Your first weapon is the 'Valour Gun' (basically a rapid-fire cannon). The second weapon (activated by a separate button on the joystick) is your heat-seeking missiles. When you go flying toward the enemy, your sight will lock onto a target and the machine activates Miq of you. You then let loose with a missile which will lock toward the target while you bank left-right in a (usually noisy) attempt to dodge the missiles that have been fired against you.

In the top right corner is a very simple artificial horizon which is a guide to the position of your plane relative to the ground.

With the enemy coming off your beam at front and behind, the action is slow, unrelentingly deadly-and-survive stuff. The only real you get during the game is when a large plane flies overhead and releases a cable, allowing your plane to automatically lock onto the cable and refuel. This happens whenever you get low on fuel and the plane doesn't participate in any way.

After Burner's graphics are astounding, vapour trails from the missiles, the ground landscape and explosions are breathtaking.

The scrolling is not quite so fast, when you're flying along at Mach 100 or whatever, then the scrolling is superb. But should you get hit and go plummeting toward Texas Power Lines, as you lose speed the scrolling gets worse and becomes very jerky and very bloody. For the impression of speed and no holds barred action, then, *After Burner* is a winner, but it will take you a fair few goes to get the hang of the controls. However, despite the-

sometimes breathtaking graphics, it really is no more than an average arcade shoot-'em-up if you don't play the sit-down version.



Stage Two - lean on the joystick to lock onto a target. Our hero's in front of a heat-seeking missile that's been already in a hot hunting line.



Stage One - banking over the desert and fly low to lock the Valour Gun, which is for the incoming missile.



Stage Three - making the surface of the water may be fun but it won't help you in the only danger.



The helicopter is dropping bombs for the enemy and so that's not all of the work.

SKYWOLF

K&B Co.

\$29 per game

The cat and feline shoot-em-up lets you sit at the controls of an up-to-the-minute helicopter whizzing around a number of possible winding landscapes.

You're armed with two weapons, or level help comes and torpedoes (activated with separate buttons) and your objective is simply to reach the end of each stage. That's not going to be easy because you're up against a constant barrage of fire from both airborne and ground-based adversaries. At the end of the stage a help-yard appears and the player heads on to the actual before setting off to meet enemy.

The enemy attacks using a variety of weapons including huge missiles that come flying over hills in the background, and aircraft that come screaming across the screen toward you. A quick blast with your trust-



weapon will soon deposit a host of the cat-like missiles, but you'll have to drop torpedoes to destroy anything on the ground. These ground targets include tanks that slide into the screen and fire salvo after salvo of deadly missiles at you. Once you get a little way into the game several small people appear on the ground running swiftly toward their jets, which are lined up along a runway. Dropping torpedoes on these chaps may seem a little cruel but at least it means they can't climb into their cockpits and come blasting after you.

Other weapons are available—jets have to take in the shape of green paracitules that appear on the screen, collecting these before they fall to the ground increases your fire power and makes your job a little easier.

The scenery changes for each stage, adding variety to the game and giving you something to work toward. Skywolf isn't the most astounding game graphically but it's very addictive. Once you get used to flying your chopper and learn some of the intricacies of the shooting and the game just gets better and better.



The jets have reduced you to that pile of rubble in the middle of the screen.



But that's at the end of the first section you've discovered the end of the world.



Helpless is an end of itself. Helpless. You don't get much of a chance though before you face it again yourself in the next stage.

XENOPHOB

That's not in the coin-ops at the moment is Xenophobe. If you get the chance to look over someone's shoulder while they're playing the game, you'll be confused by what appears to be a strangely deformed man blasting away at large green balls. In fact, the man is crawling around in plain-headed comfort in which he's too tall to stand up. It's an interesting game, and we hope to report on it in more detail in a future edition of ACE.

FACT: the word xenophobia means 'one who fears or hates foreigners.' 'Balk, balk, balk.

FREE SOFTWARE!

Don't forget that we're awarding software prizes for the best arcade game tips we print each month. In the last issue Paul Walsh's tips on Rolling Thunder earned him a free copy of Skyquake for his Spectrum; you could be next! Send your game, stating which computer you own, to Arcade Tips, ACE, 4 Queens Street, Bath.



Stage five - the screen mounts as you get ready for the inevitable attack from behind against you.

BOBSLEIGH



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DIGITAL
INTEGRATION

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GU12 6AJ



Sampling Safari

Mark Jenkins looks into the world of sonic skullduggery...

Sound sampling has dominated the music business over the last couple of years, instructing itself into the world of computers (both to generate and format software) and looking on to provide a healthy income for a whole colony of legal lions in the near future. What's cooking?

First and foremost, sampling is hot news and that means big money. What were talking about is prelifting and sounds used being torn to your own applications - in music, games or business. A little discretion is required, however - if the original sound belonged to someone else (or one means it another way, if it's an entire sound from a song), then the owner could (and probably is) involved in your use of it.

To sample it sound you need, depending on your requirements and budget, to select your equipment from a whole range of options, from a cleverly programmed some feature in a costly dedicated musical device, to a whole computer-based keyboard system which could set you back around \$100,000. We're looking at all these categories in the coming pages - with the emphasis firmly on the affordable end of the market.

begin to incorporate short taped sounds or long repeated loops into classical avant-garde pieces. Karlheinz Stockhausen, József Seregye and Pierre Boulez were the main outliers here, and most of the results were pretty unlistenable.

The Moogee concept (concrete music developed musician classes) is able to use full, rich, natural sounds in their more experimental compositions. As we know, electronic musical instruments have difficulty in sounding natural and full, and it wasn't long before some compromise was achieved. This came in the form of the **Melotron**, developed by a team in Birmingham called Beverly Electronics. The keyboard played long sets of tape strips - one from each tape stroke each key. The tapes had been intimately recorded with sets of instruments such as Cello, Flute, Clarinet or Brass, Organ, Violin, so playing the keys could result in startlingly authentic sounds. The Melotron (that was immediately up in arms - they are the Melotrons replacing whole orchestras for some jobs - and certainly work ones such as the Moody Blues, Tangerine Dream, Mike Oldfield and Kraftwerk) was achieving effects with the Melotron which a conventional orchestra

was incapable of. At first, therefore, only short sounds could be stored, which excluded class, Saxes and strings. What the memory chips could manage, however, was a couple of drums. That's why the first commercial sampled musical instrument was a drum machine - the **Linn LM-1**. The Linn is still in use today, sounding less like drum substitutes than the clunky-looking boxes previously available, and its designer Roger Linn is well known, now working for A&A.

Around the same time as the Linn, an Australian company called Fairlight launched the **CM1 (Computer Musical Instrument)** which was capable of longer sampling times, allowed the user to capture sounds himself, could change sounds being sequenced to compare later, and cost around \$14,000. The latest Series III CM1 now costs \$24,000. Next up was the **Emulator**, from the American company EMI, looking out of the Fairlight's complex frontiers, it simply recorded one sound in the top half of its keyboard, one sound in the bottom, and a short sequence along one or both sounds. EMI too are still around and now cost their Series III model.

Micro Sampling

As micro-computers became popular, some manufacturers created sampling add-ons, but these were usually monophonic - playing only one note at a time (as opposed to an eight or even sixteen). The **Ensoniq Mirage Keyboard** introduced sampling from buttons - it doesn't have very long sampling times but manages the on-board memory in a very elegant way. Then Akai's range of budget samplers, which don't have a keyboard of all they have to be controlled from a keyboard or computer via a MIDI interface (that's odd, for some, which takes us here if we go to the present day).

The emphasis in the world of sampling nowadays is toward longer sampling times, higher playback quality, lower prices and larger sample libraries. The fact is that although sampling your own sounds is very satisfying, it can be time-consuming and having hundreds of sounds already on disk ready to be called up is particularly vital for the working composer.

Now we've looked at a few sound samplers from a few points to a few thousand pounds - the field is so busy nowadays that there's a sampler to match every need.



Over \$100,000 - it costs a couple of million dollars to build this, but you can't see it in the film.

Sampling History

Sound sampling has been around ever since the invention of the gramophone record. John Cage is the 'imaginary' contemporary composer had the musician naming gramophone records around on a day later before the modern sampler techniques were invented in the States.

When magnetic tape became common around the time of the Second World War, composers quickly saw its potential and

would be used up to match.

But the Melotrons had problems - the tapes stretched and snapped and the machine or 'd' whole needed to go out of tune. Ideally used to stabilize the instrument but what was really needed was a reliable, non-moving-parts electronic method of recording the sounds in the first place. Professionals in the audio test equipment field had already realised that it was possible to record a sound in tiny sections - sample it - and view the results as a block, if necessary, but the use of memory of that time imposed an-

THE PHENOMENON CONTINUES

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GAMES



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ATARI ST
£19.99 DISK

AMSTRAD
9.99 TAPE £14.99 DISK

SpecDrum/AmDrum Cheetah Marketing

These two units have either your Spectrums or AmDrums (a drum sample player which you can use to take your own samples if you buy an optional external) to store sampled sounds and play them back at long patterns.

Both packages come with large numbers of sounds on disk or tape and can be loaded through both card or other retail known computer models. The basic package comprises an interface which acts as a digital-to-analog converter, to turn digital back into audible sounds. The packages can cope with two sounds simultaneously, which if all you need is very interesting and powerful



SpecDrum's software can be loaded into a sampled drum machine.



Control sample to the Spectrums

drum patterns, and can play through your main monitor or Hi-Fi.

In each case you can start by choosing the sounds you want, loading up basic patterns, and storing them if necessary. Patterns can be composed in step, later (before every beat is the same length) or 'real time' (where you play in the beats 'live' and the computer stores up even the slightest mistake in your timing).

New kits of sounds for the SpecDrums and AmDrums are being released regularly, and there's even a 'Live'n' Club'. You could try out the Soft, Kit and Editor in 'Demo Kit' and Editor which cost \$2.99 and \$4.99 respectively. The latter section allows you to combine sounds from different kits to create your own distinctive combination of drums.

Playback quality is on a par with drum machines costing around £300, so the packages can be highly recommended.

Sampling	Optional
Editing	Pattern Editing
Ease of Use	Good
Price	£24.95

Microvox 64 Supersoft

The MIDI-compatible unit for the Cid can be played from the music keyboard or from a synth or sequencer. It offers very high quality and several additional features such as echo and pitch shifting. The software, arranged in logical pages, allows you to take a sample, edit it in length, store it away on disk, and replay it in various ways. Although Microvox can only make one sound at a time, it is possible to make up to 16 different sounds afterwards - so you can create complete drum patterns or loops or let two sounds be programmed to coincide.



Microvox to the 64 - control, control!

Supersoft have issued a sample library of 123 (CDR 96) sounds spread over five double-sided disks ('Drums' and 'Strings', 'Wind and Brass', 'Gates and Pans', 'Guns and Percussion', 'Keyboards and Miscellaneous'). Most of these are very impressive, and give you all you could ever want to create but orchestral pieces in conjunction with a four-track synthesizer.

A complete Microvox system is around £200 but supplies are a little scarce now. There are a few about on the second-hand market and they can be highly recommended for Cid users who want to get into sampling.

Sampling	2 to 16kHz
Editing	Envelope
Ease of Use	MIDI assignment
Price	£100

SK2100 Casio

Casio, the people who created the whole portable keyboard market, are also the people who made sampling keyboards affordable. At the budget end of the range is the SK-1, which sells for only \$99 - although aimed at some entry, it has tucked away all the bones of sampling technology.

At the top of Casio's portable sampler range is the SK2100. The 2100 has four octaves of full-sized keys, plays eight-note polyphonically, and is traditional portable keyboard style. Instead of many one-note memories, 20-note memory, it programmable rhythms, single-finger chords, drum fills and syncro-start so that accompaniment starts or ends as you hit a key.

On the sampling side, the 2100 can record a sound through to built-in mike, tap

Sampling Glossary

The world of sound sampling is full of baffling terminology - here it all is, explained as simply as possible, so you'll find it easier to understand the latest lingo - and follow the user's manual once you've made your choice.

Sample Size

The longer sound the unit can play back, as determined by the amount of memory it has available.

On many samplers, the total available can be split up into two, but, or more shorter samples. There's a trade-off with Playmax Bandwidth (see below) though - you can get a longer playback if you're happy with a lower bandwidth. For example - your AkaiMini 2001 Sampling Machine may offer one second of playback with the same quality as a Compact Disc, but you'd get eight seconds if you're willing to have a sample which sounds as if it's being transmitted over a telephone line.

Playback Bandwidth

Often known as Frequency Response, and determined by the highest pitch (or audio frequency) with which the sampler can cope. A sampler with 10kHz plays brasses (trumpets or cycles) per second bandwidth could sound fairly reasonable. 10kHz is better, 15kHz or more is ideal. Anything with around 4kHz will sound like a telephone A4, the time just shouldn't be considered for semi-professional use.

Sampling Rate

According to an obscure piece of physics called Nyquist's Law, a sound sampler has to take at an incoming sound at least twice as often as the highest pitch it wants to reproduce. So a sampler with an 8kHz bandwidth should have a sampling rate of 17kHz (to be on the safe side). With low quality samplers you'll often see the Sampling Rate quoted instead of the Bandwidth - it looks better!

Keyboard Mode

Some polyphonic samplers such as the SK2100 and 6000 are also multi-instrument, meaning that each voice can play a different sound simultaneously. This means that you can play back a whole composition on just one sampler. Other keyboard modes include Split (a different sound on the left and bottom halves of the keyboard) and Layer (or Dual) where two sounds are played simultaneously.

It, reverse it, transpose it to a new key, alter its volume envelope and when it comes into the power it off. Sampled sounds can be played polyphonically and maximum sample time is just over 5 seconds at 10.1kHz sampling rate (about 5486 playback frequency response).

You can split up the sample memory into four volume sections and use these to edit four different passages sounds. The 2000 also features 12 upper keyboard style sounds, 18 lower keyboard style sounds, and 10 built-in sampled sounds.

At \$425 the 2000 offers great value for money and would be useful for home, amateur, and semi-professional applications. The two main disadvantages are that you can't save sounds to disk (you'll have to carry around a cassette tape of the original and re-sample it on stage) and that there's no MIDI input.

If you have less cash to spend, try the 8000 series but with maximum keys and half the sample size to \$279. The 5000 which has more notes than most (upgraded to 6326, or the basic 3871, a 100 four-note polyphonic limited-sample for just \$99.

Sampling Rate	10.1 or 10kHz
Setting	Parameter Map
Ease of use	Very good
Price	Under \$425

SP00 System Akai

The SP00, featured just over a year ago, is still foremost of the ranks with many pro- and semi-pro studios and musicians. You'd sometimes see it in a studio's effects rack because it doesn't have a keyboard to play it, you'll need a mixer with sequencing software and/or a MIDI module keyboard such as the Akai A671.

If you buy an SP00, make sure you have the latest Version 1.2 firmware which allows you to use the machine more effectively by replacing drum sounds, to ignore MIDI sound change commands, to respond to MIDI volume data and so on. Also available is software Version 1.012D, which comes on an optional disc at around \$30. This adds ten new functions which go by such names like CD Improved, One Shot Mode, Dynamic Filtering with Attack, Adjustable Crescendos, Tone Shift, and Key Group Copy - to name but a few.



At \$425 - 10.1 sampling rate, 10kHz, 100kHz, maximum sampling limits (parameter table)

Sample Applications

At the basic level - such as the Music Sales Club sampler - you'll be sound sampling mainly as a novelty. Surprise and amuse your friends by producing their dulcet tones just playing their backwaters, sideways, at three octaves higher than normal. Making someone sound like Pinky and Panky is a great social leveller.

If you're an amateur musician, some of the more advanced packages such as the Miroson sampler will be genuinely useful if you want bass guitar sounds, but can't play bass, or would like a whole orchestra to perform in your front room.

On the other hand, you can still pay quite a lot of money (for instance, for some of the Atari ST packages) for a sampler which is of no musical use at all, merely because you can't control the pitch of the sample in any musically meaningful way. So be warned!

With a little programming knowledge you should be able to incorporate sampled sounds into music games of your own devising, and of course being able to do it yourself is handy if your taste runs to screens and explosions rather than hard-budding. But the software industry is currently selling its goods. There are serious applications too - for updating or disabling or offering user feed-back in industrial control applications where it's impossible to keep one eye on the man's monitor.

The 2000 offers eight-note polyphony or multitracked sampling and playback at around 10kHz response. Samples can be edited on regular tuning, auto envelope control (with the new software) synth-like filtering, and you can save sounds to a built-in 3.5 disc drive, a larger SCSI-capable drive or hard disk or where going on.

Maximum sampling rate at telephone quality is around 17 samples, so you can use the 2000 for music, sound effects, or even entire pieces of music (the wires on having the backing tapes do the obvious MIDI trick - you just play them to do it once, sample them, and trigger it off whenever you need it).

It takes around thirty seconds for the SP00 to load a full disc of sounds (which may come up five times as more sounds are copied in various different keyboard setups but it fixed Disc option which will load only one of hundreds of sounds in seconds is on its way). For the drummer, the optional 408-96 circuit board turns the SP00 into a percussion sampler which can be played back from pads or tape-clocks.

SP00, Akai's Intellit Keyboard, A67-16 for the drummer and Version 2 software - or around \$2000. This system represents the state of the sampler's art today.

Sampling Rate	10.1 or 10kHz
Setting	Envelope, tuning filter, MIDI assignment, dynamic filter control
Ease of use	Fair
Price	£1000

Pro Sound Designer Eidosoft Ltd

Drake offers samples creatable for the ST, the Sound Designer interface gets plugged into the printer port. A nine volt battery is required on the printer port (doesn't affect any power lines). Two pads can be present on the sampler. One for input the other for output. Boot up the software and load your beats. Delightful graphics appear. The software not only looks good, it also performs well.

Insert a load from the headphone socket



Two pads on port 1 only too - that might be the only way you can give a patch without the sample pads.

Of your load in the input jack of the sampler, play your filtered beats (or recordings of your voice, the wailing of babies against lead...) in fact, any sound) and watch the waveforms rise and fall on the screen. Sounds may be sampled at rates between 10kHz and 20kHz. At 20kHz reproduction is unperfected - little distortion and no hiss, but you only have 16 seconds before memory runs out (sample time is reduced if a 10kHz is used). Admittedly playback can be achieved with 10kHz samples (which can last a good 30 seconds). Sounds needn't be played back at the same rate they were sampled. It's great fun to sample someone with a deep voice at 10kHz and play it back at 15kHz or more.

There are two screens: the sound samples and the added items of a sound clip editor. All functions are selected by clicking on icons. For CD post-sampling options include reverse playback, cut, transparent copy, beats copy, integrate, de-magnify, loop and filter sound in playback speeds. Given use of the editing cut-and-paste features you produce startling effects. For example,

success of the sample may be temporarily copied (stealing) which results in great echo effects - unfortunately lots of mistakes occur when dragging. Samples and sounds created from the chip writer may be saved and loaded at leisure. Editnet also allows you to duplicate contents within your own programs and listings and templates are plentiful in a variety of languages.

Both home enthusiasts and professionals - especially those of MIDI adapters and sequencer packages. Pro 1644 at £14.95, for use with Pro1644 is desirable - will lend Pro Sound appealing. It has everything necessary to quality sound and effects production.

Sampling	16 or 20.48, 20 or 40
Editing	Comprehensive
Size of use	Desktop
Price	£19.95

■ Mark Jenkins

Next month...

...A Christmas extravaganza as we check out MIDI compatible keyboards. What they can do, how they sound, how much they cost, and which one you should be asking Santa for...

...PLUS the delayed but imminent arrival of our MIDI Music Simple course and the introduction of our MIDI Panel of Experts.



Costs £200 as an 88-keyboard with legs it has plenty space. Can you imagine making beats if it stood up? Or do you have a better idea? Don't ask us we can't help! There's loads to look the right way in the next issue.

Band in a box.

Michael Downey checks out an unassuming looking piece of kit that offers 32 note polyphony, eight sound patterns simultaneously, plus reverb - and all in glorious stereo.

If you have been following the music section in the last two issues of ACE, you will know that, with the correct MIDI interface and software, it is possible to sequence music on your MIDI card play it back through up to sixteen separate synthesizers simultaneously. The

many have captivated your imagination enough to enquire about the cost of buying sixteen synthesizers. I hope you were sitting down at the time, generally pulling the wires straight in the back and snipping off to your local software shop to complete your MIDI band project. Enter the **Related MT-50**.

The unassuming little black box could do the most useful calculation ever made for those wishing to produce more than just a few japs and regards from their music. The MT-50 is multi-timed and has the ability to set like eight separate synthesizers over which a maximum of thirty-two notes can be played at any one time. Hence the name. The sounds (strings) can make up of just two of which there are 32, so that wouldn't

Conclusions

Coming up with some conclusions about the fun-making world of sound sampling is pretty difficult, as some enjoyment or package is bound to be released every few weeks which could turn the whole scene on its head. However, depending on your exact needs, there are a few stand-out items around at the moment.

Fun and Games

Don't check out the **Shoeshoe Spectrum** and **AmBum** for drum enthusiasts. You could also hunt around for a second-hand **Music Sales Computer Sound Sampler** if you're keen on silly noises, MIDI effects, and general messing about. Right at the bottom of the scale you'll find a £7.99 package called **Music Playfun** from **Playfun Silver** for the C64, which plays back sampled drum sounds and offers basic arrangement possibilities but not - hardly surprisingly at the price - the chance to do your own sampling.

Playing With Music

Again, the **Music Sales Sound Sampler** for the C64 which will start and replay short sounds and also offer auto and pitch shifting effects. It's great value for money at well under £100, but the proposed MIDI interface to make it more controllable never did appear.

Semi-Pro Music

There are a couple of sampler add-ons for money which are just about usable for semi-pro music - the magnificent **Musique** for the C64 being one example. But your best bet here is to invest in a MIDI interface for the C64, BBC, Amstrad or Spectrum (from **D&S**, **ADR**, **Soundbug**, **Datal** or others) plus some sequencing software and a MIDI sampler such as the **Real S&C** (8-note polyphony, leading from **Quint** Series, now at £250 or to even less second-hand).

Audio Experimentation

A few sound samplers are set up more for audio demonstration and experimentation than for music. Examples include the **Berry Box** for the BBC and **Master Series**, and to some extent the **Electronic Pro Sound Designer** for the Atari ST.

Serious Music

Certain samplers benefit from being controlled by a more computer with sequencing software and a MIDI interface. Good examples are the **Real 8000**, the **E-444** **Drum** (16-note multitimbral, with or without keyboard), **CDMS**, the **Sequential Prophet 2000 Plus**, or any one of a number of pro-instruments available in keyboard or module form. Call **Computer** (01 225 224) for more advice.

Tax Avoidance

Your accountant tells you that you've earned much too much money this year. It's March 31st - the new tax year starts in the morning! Quick! You gotta offset some of that damn cash! No time to turn! Buy **Real Deal** (London NW1, 01-225-4366). Ask **Dave Whitford** for a demo of the **SG** (Synthesizer sampling system) - you know, the one with the keyboard, the monitor, the graphics, the multi-track disk drive, the built-in mixer, the advanced music programming language, the polyphonic sampling and stereo output options. While you're there, buy a cheque for £100,000. Please! That was a class-one!

While you hang to work out that to gain 32 note polyphony you must use simple sounds containing one period only. The more complex and interesting sounds can use up to 4 periods, reducing polyphony accordingly.

Also included, for good measure, are thirty sampled percussion sounds and it steps to record to make the whole thing sound like you're playing in a cage (or smelt) hell! All that for less than the cost of most modern synthesizers. £490 is the price.

For your money you get on **MT-50** power supply, one MIDI cable, two music books (available for accessories to meet to 50), an owners manual, a plastic card which lists the 32 preset textures and two useful little booklets, 'Guidelines to MIDI', for the novice, and 'MT-50 MIDI Implementation' for the programmer who would like to communicate more intimately with the **MT-50** sound chipping of sound chips. The **MT-50** uses the same basic architecture (S&C) chip as its closest big brother, the **Related D-48** digital synthesizer, which you may have heard of.

certain Top 40 records and successful TV adverts. All this means that the sound quality of the MT-52 is very professional.

The front panel contains a 30 character backlit LCD and sensibly no less switches and controls (well, controls for a machine that can do so much). This is because Roland have intended the MT-52 to be used as a simple preset synth expander with their basic patch range of keyboards. On the back panel are the two output-outputs (mono on the left and right), the power supply socket, the power on/off switch and, most important of all, the three MIDI connection (IN/OUT) ports.

The front panel switches provide access to the eight synthesizer parts, which are set by default on MIDI channels 1 to 9, and the digital part which is set on MIDI channel 10. The 30 percussion sounds which form the rhythm part are assigned to different MIDI note numbers (see diagram) and respond to velocity to added expression. The rotary control is multi-functional and allows you to adjust the volume of each part individually, select one of the 128 preset sounds to be used by each part, reduce the overall volume to master volume, select one of 10 stored modes and tune the overall pitch of the machine.

By connecting the MIDI IN of the MT-52 to the OUT of a MIDI interface on your home main and running suitably complex sequencing software that allows you to enter notes from the QWERTY keyboard or mouse, you will be able to produce complete musical compositions with very high quality

Complementary noises...

Although the Roland MT-52 is primarily aimed at a different market it would become the number one accessory for home music users wishing to be musical. There are other units on the market but none offer quite so much for the cash. One worthy contender, however, is the Yamaha TXR2. Recently priced at £299, it will also produce eight separate synth parts but only allows one note to be played at a time by each part. It also Yamaha's respected FM synthesis method but does not contain any synth part or events. The sounds can, however, be programmed from the front panel and it would serve as an excellent complement to the MT-52 if more than eight synth parts were required simultaneously.



Spot the box...

The MT52 is already getting on the road - think about it, for the price of a Roland D50 synth, you could get so many more of the lightest. Anyone for the sake of popularity? **Realistic!** (pictured here) are obviously content with just one, for the moment. You can see it looking back; they benefit the lovely IT. The board back up the Roland unit with an basic sequencer and a Creative CS-04. Creative Tech, speaking for the brand, says 'the play mainly works like, but also more modern instead. By combining the live sound of that period with the modern technology of MIDI, we are able to produce a definitive quality live sound.' You can find them at the Novell computer show on the 21-23 November.

If you're stretching MIDI equipment to its limits on stage... or even just in your basement - **ACE** wants to hear from you. Send us a good blow photo and tell us all about yourself. **Getting like a spot of free publicity, eh stage?**

sound. These could then be recorded directly on to cassette with no further equipment needed. If you have even a basic keyboard technique, then a MIDI keyboard might be handy and can now be bought from as little as £100 on in.

All of the front panel's controls can be overridden by MIDI messages being sent from a computer. This means that, when a song or sequence is played back, each part can be programmed to swell to its original sound and volume level within the 16th, 32nd or 64th notes, aspects of the sound can be altered that are not possible from the front panel such as adding vibrato and adjusting the stereo positioning of each part.

This all leads up to the advent of MIDI 'lyric' commands. Inexperienced programmers may have to be content to edit the available editing software before embarking on their own synthesis - it's hope the software houses realise the potential market for this

product and produce some pretty quick. The MT-52 warrants some sort of dedicated sequencer/programmed editing software which

Thank you letter

The MT52 is selling so fast that even Roland wasn't able to locate one in time for this issue. Our thanks therefore to Agents at Denmark Street, London for the loan of this instrument at very short notice.

Should be selected for all the popular home computers. Meanwhile, for those with a thorough grounding in basic MIDI programming techniques, the MT-52 MIDI implementation (bent) will be at great value as it lets all the variable parameters with their respective SysX codes.

■ Michael Dwyer



Rolland MT52 - cost, connecting your beloved IT being into it. Most.

OUT OF THIS WORLD



"SUDDENLY, the jet plunged into a sea of flashing lights - Chuck gasped with horror - he had entered the Outer World!"

FIGHT TO survive in a hostile alien world. Collect energy-giving power packs as you fly through eight action-packed levels, and seven brilliant bonus levels.

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- Amazing "Smooth Scroll".



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Available on Spectrum, Amstrad and Commodore.



Commodore Amiga**PRICE (\$850)****\$499 inc. VAT**

TV modulation not included

ART GRAPHICS

The Amiga offers the widest range of 4096 colours. Typical art modes are: 320 dots wide x 200 lines high with 50 colours of shade, 640 dots x 200 lines with 16 colours of shade, or 320 dots x 200 lines and all 4096 colours available at once (though with some restrictions) in the Amiga's 'Hold-and-Modify' mode. A special monitor will offer you 400 lines per screen rather than the 200 above, and for video purposes you can extend the picture to the very edges of the screen, eliminating the border entirely.

PROCESSING POWER

As well as a 16MHz central processor, every Amiga has a built-in blitter. The blitter is a chip designed to do repetitive, time-consuming jobs far faster than the 68000 can: it's particularly good at combining graphic images, drawing lines and filling shapes.

DISK CAPACITY

The Amiga's disk drive is double-sided as standard, offering a hefty 800K formatted capacity.

GAMES GRAPHICS

The Amiga screen can be hardware scrolled one pixel at a time either vertically or horizontally. The system's dedicated graphics chips also offer the games programmer eight 3-colour hardware sprites, but 16-colour sprites (or a mixture of the two types). The Amiga's 'Clapper' coprocessor lets you scroll separate screen windows in different directions, and 're-used' sprites so as to get many more than eight on screen at once.

SOUND

The Amiga's custom sound hardware gives it extensive musical and game-sound power. The four channels have fully definable waveforms, and can be mixed so as to produce amplitude- or frequency-modulated sounds—at this with very little processor effort. What's more the sound's stereo, with two channels each assigned to left and right.



THE UPGRADE STAKES

Atari ST
PRICE (£320 ST FM)
£299 inc VAT
 Plug straight into TV

GAMES GRAPHICS

The ST has no hardware sprites. Vertical scrolling is possible in hardware, but horizontal scrolling has to be done in software - and that uses an enormous amount of processing power.

ART GRAPHICS

The ST artist can choose from a range of 1111 colours. 'Better', the ST's video chip, can only manage two colour screen modes: 320 dots wide x 200 lines high with 16 colours at once, or 640 dots x 200 lines in 4 colours.

SOUND

The ST's primitive sound chip is a close relative of the AP chip used in the Amstrad CPC and Spectrum-41. Its three channels can only produce square waves, so any fancy harmonics, modulation etc have to be handled in software - at considerable cost in processing effort. On the plus side, the ST has a built-in MIDI interface making it a very attractive machine for well-equipped musicians.

PROCESSING POWER

With a big (380) screen to push around and some rather unhelpful display hardware, the ST's 68000 is often left looking steadily overworked. You can add a blitter to help out on sprite operations and the like, but this lacks the Amiga blitter's line and fill functions. More seriously, because the blitter isn't built in Atari's very little incentive for games programmers to use its extra power.

DISK CAPACITY

Double-sided ST drives can fit 720K onto a disk, but an awful lot of ST's only have smaller 360K single-sided drives. A 720K drive can read a 360K disk but not vice versa, so potential software is sold on the smaller format. Clearly you can't fit 360K of program on a 360K disk, so the situation's rather unsatisfactory.

More and more computer users are upgrading to 16-bit machines. Spectrum, Amstrad and C64 seem to be coming up to Atari STs and Commodore Amigas in drives, with the new Acorn Archimedes copying others still fuffing in the closing heights of 16-bit computing.

In the early days of the ST and Amiga, a lot of the buyers were 'graphics addicts' - the kind of techno-freaks who buy main-ship rifles and telling you out of a sheer love of gadgetry. Picochess fans are never satisfied for long, and they're now moved on to the Justice Warriors with at least one eye on the Next Big Thing (see box later in this article). For the rest of us, however, upgrading is rapidly becoming an essential proposition for anyone who wants to keep abreast of the latest software developments, let alone the attention of a more potential market.

Most of us know what's on offer, but it's not enough to know which of the new machines you want - there's always the nagging doubt as to whether you should buy it. For musicians or other the choice may be fairly clear, but for lapsed game players, or those of us wanting all-round computer entertainment, the upgrade business is a good deal more complicated. Will your new investment be as much bang for buck in a year's time? Will software houses really come up with the goods? Will there be lots of juicy add-ons for ST?

One thing's obvious - you don't want to shell out a fortune for a machine and find out that so-one-also is buying it. But it's not just a question of which machine will sell in the UK. Despite the great success of the ST in Britain, in the US the Amiga is now well ahead in sales. In Germany the ST outweighs the Amiga. It also takes an interesting market share in Switzerland. ST sales are projected to be running at a year's time of the Amiga.

So what? you may say, but foreign sales can have a strong long-term effect on software availability - remember the Spectrum vs Commodore 64 battle, where US imports of games slowly gave the 64 parity with the UK machine despite its higher price? Does a high price in the UK doesn't necessarily spell death to a game - the BBC machine in many ways an early equivalent of the Archimedes afforded reasonable games software support in the early days and an enormous number of peripherals.

The last is first both the Amiga and ST are now firmly in place, and even the galaxy Archimedes has a lot going for it. Certainly neither the ST or the new Commodore is going to disappear tomorrow, so you aren't going to be left with an abandoned, unsupported or superseded machine if you take the plunge now. On these pages you'll find all the information you need to help you make that vital decision.



SPECTRUM
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NEW! ... An original
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Flashpoint is not a quest to save the universe, or a mission to shoot everything in sight. Flashpoint is a game: a game of strategy and speed enabling you to change both yours and your opponent's play field in a 3-D space-time context. A game of lightning action and re-action, you decide where and when to do battle ... position quickly ... re-deploy ... Foster ... join at speed. New strategy for a new challenge ... **FLASHPOINT!**



ocean

Archimedes PRICE (A-308) \$800 inc VAT

Has more video signal and RGB, but you'll need a third-party modulator to use an Archimedes with a standard TV.

GAME GRAPHICS

The Archimedes has only one hardware sprite and no special games hardware at all. This really doesn't matter much, given the machine's immense processing power.

ART GRAPHICS

The Archimedes has a palette of 4096 colours. A typical art mode would be 256 dots x 256 lines with 256 colours on screen at once - much more useful than the Amiga's high-resolution 'hard and soft' mode - but you can get higher resolution than that if your monitor's up to it.

SOUND

Although the Archimedes has sixteen sound channels arranged as eight stereo pairs, it takes a great deal of processor time and programming effort to get any sort of sound out of them at all. The hardware also has a narrow range - only six octaves - so this is definitely Archimedes' weak spot.

PROCESSING POWER

The Archimedes uses Acorn's very own ARM chip as its central processor. The ARM can equal the Amiga's better on any function you could name, beats it easily at most tasks and runs things round the year old 68000.

DISK CAPACITY

The Archimedes comes with a double-sided drive as standard, packing 800K onto a disk.

Industry Opinions



US GOLE: "All our major releases will go on to the ST. We're developing California Games and Thunder for the Amiga at the moment, but we're not converting everything. We'll see how sales go. We're no plans for the Archimedes at present."



OCEAN Software Manager, Sam Bracey: "We are converting ourselves nearly to the ST on machines. The ST is our primary commitment, but the Amiga will be getting about 80% of the staff that the ST does. As for the Archimedes, it will need more of a market presence before we will support it."



MICROSOFT Commercial Manager Bernard Grant: "You might say we powered 14-bit software in this country with product from MicroSoft, and Spectrum Hobbyists. We're still pulling everything on the ST and the Amiga. We've got no plans at the moment for the Archimedes."



SARNOFF spokesman Steve Perry was enthusiastic about the new machines and admitted that the company would NOT simply be porting ST conversions straight over to the Amiga. "Dick Special was developed on the Amiga and will be converted for the ST. We also have plans for the Archimedes, but of course it depends on the size of the market. We expect it to feature a little like the Amiga did at first - starting slowly and developing over a period of time."



ACTIVISION ambassador Andy Wright: "We'll be supporting the ST particularly this Christmas, but of course we have lots of staff for the Amiga as well. We're looking to support the Archimedes, depending on how it sells this Christmas."

THE NEXT BIG THING

Let's face it: if you want to impress your friends you'll need something a bit more impressive than an ST or Amiga these days. The Archimedes has the big machine with techno frills at the moment, but developers of processor power are always on the look-out for newer, shinier technology.

The problem is memory: the 16-bit bus has only been possible because of the dramatic fall in the price of RAM chips, but cheap dynamic RAM (DRAM) is slow stuff. The Archimedes ARM chips are speedier on some very clever fast-tuning of cheap DRAM, but the memory really can't be pushed much further.

To get more processor power into a home micro, manufacturers will either have to find a faster form of cheap memory - at current prices a 32-bit fast-RAM machine would miss the £1000-and-under breaking a mile - or break open conventional processor/memory barriers. Most certainly know which way they're going next year they'll be bringing out an ST-compatible machine based around Intel's revolutionary Transputer, a chip which combines processing and RAM in one neat little package.

Transputers are the gateway to parallel processing - a group of processors working as a team, still many times the processing power an individual chip could offer. A single Transputer isn't the most powerful thing in the world, but put several of them together and you've got a machine with real clout.

WHAT USE ARE TECH SPECS ANYWAY?

From the diagrams you can see how the machines stack up technically, but this is only half the story. Unless you're a very heavy-duty programmer indeed, you'll be buying all the software you buy to use the power of your machine. This is a particular problem on the games side of things: the Amiga's better and copper, for example, can re-write in you at all if you can't and programs that put them to work.

The main worry with the Archimedes is whether there'll be very many games written for it full stop. The Amiga problem is more wide: if you forget about its better, copper, writing and sprites, the Amiga fails to fit the programmer's bill like an ST. The adjustments needed to make an ST program run on an Amiga can be very slight indeed, and few programmers bother modifying their game-design convention to use the Amiga's extra hardware facilities.

There's another near the same problem with all cost-reduce programs - the good or program could be all you'll ever need, and you certainly won't be buying new main software every week - but for the games player it's important to buy a machine that's going to get plenty of support - and that means a machine lots of other people are going to buy.

Even more than the price, support is the problem with the Archimedes as a games machine. Of course, you may prefer a few very impressive games to a whole host of quite good ones: often all, if you really wanted a machine with great software support you'd buy a Spectrum.

The ST is on the other hand far more and support on its side. In the UK it's the main development machine for 16-bit games, very few software houses produce Amiga games or anything other than ST hypertext, and there's no sign of this changing in the immediate future.

The Archimedes is a sort of middle way: if the ST wins the sales battle then you can expect

The ACE Upgrade Checklist

Did you? Will you? Don't decide which busy byte-baster to jump on! We can't make the decision for you, but we have come up with the following checklist that may help.

All you have to do is run down through the list checking the different rows for your own computer. When you reach one that appeals to you, underline the three numbers in columns opposite your choice, then continue down the list. Each column relates to one of the machines featured in this article.

When you've finished, work your way down each column in turn, adding up the numbers that are underlined until you have a total for each machine, which you should enter in the spaces provided. The machine with the highest total deserves your most serious consideration. Now all you've got to do is work out whether you can afford it!

Are you interested in:	Amstrad	Amiga	Atari II
Buying more than four new games titles per month:	3	4	5
Using your micro for educational purposes:	4	1	1
Impressing your friends with your new machine:	5	4	3
Using MIDI instruments:	3	1	4
Composing music using the computer's internal sound chip only:	1	4	2
Advanced software:	5	3	3
Arcade action software:	1	4	5
Owning a state-of-the-art machine:	4	3	1
Immense processing power:	4	3	1
Pointbox of programs:	4	4	3
Business software (acc. w processing):	1	2	4
Word processing:	1	3	3
Programming in BASIC:	5	3	3
TOTAL			

an initial lot of unscripted comments, but that's a lot better than nothing. If the Amiga had more you should soon be seeing some very impressive games indeed, and if the Amiga wins - well, everyone will be rather surprised.

But there's another side to the Amiga that the ST can't match, and it could prove decisive in the battle for support. Already,

lots of manufacturers are falling to the Amiga as a cheap source of graphics power. Most notably, new run-up subsidiary Amsoft is based on machines which can, internally, Amiga 500s. Amiga users will be able to play not just unscripted comments but the actual 320x200

game themselves, since these games are being developed directly on Amiga and need to be of good quality. Some special hardware features should be added to these lists.

There's every chance that well see both Amiga machines and cheaper home computers based on the Amiga's core circuits. Whether Amiga themselves will come up with 2 machines priced to the home market is still uncertain; they feel the with the BBC team and the resulting machine - the Electron - was never too successful. But the relevant steps are credible to other companies right now, they're very practical and they're cheap too. Any such effort would dramatically increase Amiga's chances of software support to keep watching the skies.

POWERFUL STUFF

This page gives some idea of the relative power of the new machines, with a table that we would like to appear in our comparison. For the technically minded the figures show the theoretical maximum speed each can attain (in bytes per second) and not as the system is set up as it is shown. The latter factor does include loading the unit as shown on a very traditional algorithm, which of its other computer systems that loading time is not taken. The figures ignore DMA use, and non-sequential access (such as the Amiga's 32K). The latter would have very little effect on the overall result.

Amstrad 520: 1.76

Atari 5200: 13.2K

Amiga 500: 1.76

Amstrad 520: 1.76

Amstrad 520: 1.76

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GRAFIX has been written to superform its rivals both in speed and ease of use. Penalties and complex drawings are supported by the POINT and KALIBR functions. An infinite number of brush shapes, spray patterns and patterns are available.

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GRAFIX will run on all ST's with most monitors and is fully compatible.

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ShackSoft

It's the biggest show of the year – and the big guns were all there. ACE graphics reporter Brian Larkman went along to see what was on show to set your eyeballs a-tingling.

PCW SHOW

Pictures at an Exhibition



Brian Larkman looks on at Digipix product launch.



Ray-traced 3D logo created using the new version of Sculpt 3D.

Commodore Village – Commodore Museum?

A lot of it is worth seeing; it was one up there. Unwieldy and old-fashioned on screen, *Walking around the PCW show at Olympia* blew me up more machines flashing their VGA eyes at you (that offer a whole you have to let me see of this screen and concentrate on the choice material) – but when the usual locality is provided by your own nose – well you just have to take notice!

There are 30-minute machines of the show later (and get test-time from problems – Amiga, Amstrad and Atari ST – and) the site on the Pavilion stand (*Digipix*) for the Amiga had the cheek to be digitising its picture. Is it a storage way that contributed to the generally museum-like atmosphere of Commodore Village. Walking into it reminded me of entering the first of childhood visit to the Science Museum Children's Section as a week-old morning, unexcited, above-banned tones and Victorian museum embellishments, but peppered with what were for the time being only high-tech interactive toys. This feeling was helped by Commodore's stacking of their historic machines – including an Amiga 1000 in its cabinet, like a real museum piece.

As well as Eric Gershwin's *Sculpt 3D* (owner of this is a testament the enterprising Amiga Centre Scotland 020 667-6300) import its previous incarnation *Ray Tracer*. The ray-trace sphere-based (as opposed to Sculpt's ray-traced 3D structures – like the tennis racket) – and then say leave there. If you want to know who Ray Tracer is, look in the last of *3D* (this must be the greatest Amiga graphics program yet – though be warned, it uses the draggy CLI rather than the much easier InVision interface. That's why its cheap).

Other interesting and relatively low-costs are *Digipix* from NewTex (020 503 5444) – see review on page 47; *Videoscope Animator 3D* (0200 from Buxley – 0 20 300000) and *AmigaView* from Amiga; *Animation Apprentice* (0795 from Buxley) – a cartoon animator; *Power in Flight* (0500 from Amiga Centre) – another 3D modeller; *Expansive Paint* (056 Amiga Centre) – sort of desktop graphics with good text handling including text file fill out only uses just file pointers (0) *Butcher3D* Amiga Centre – versatile graphics utility; *ART* (056 Buxley) – 320x200 graphics programming; and *Deluxe Video 0.2* (070 Buxley) – full screen high-res (0000) Buxley (077 5000) were

also showing the interactive *Getcode*. The star of the show though, had to be *Sculpt 3D* published by Blye by Blye.

Sculpt is an 'interactive-also excellent editor'. It provides a very comprehensive set of tools for creating and manipulating 3D object-oriented graphics. Using it you can

Digitising

Most digitisers for home computers digitise an image quite slowly. This slows the scan to pick up the maximum amount of detail and convert the analogue signal into a digital one. It has to be in real colour three scans are necessary – one each for the red, green and blue components of the picture. This inevitably takes some time. Probably the best cheap system that uses this method is *DigitView* by NewTex for the Amiga. This can produce a full colour picture of great accuracy.

For the animation however, at least twenty frames per second need to be sampled (digitised) if the movement of the object is to be smooth. Therefore, digitising has to be in real time without any delay between the samples. Real time sampling has to be in black and white because colour sampling takes too long.



The main characters in Jagged have been created by artist of Game Artists, looking ready to be the first graphics package available for the Amiga.



Archives - the first 3D graphics package, with the same character.

construct a complete situation of any combination of objects from the editors' speed to Lewis Tones Mail, provided you have enough memory. What makes Sculpt really special however is the ray tracing software that allows you to render the objects realistically in full colour from any position and with whatever lighting you choose, using any of the Amiga's modes.

The results are astonishing images are created that, allowing for resolution, are comparable with those produced by the really expensive, high-powered computer graphics industry render engines. It can do this because of the Amiga can display 400 colours at once and its ray tracing is the same method used as the high-powered machines - there is no functional difference except power and frame-speed of rendering.

Although Jagged 3D is not in itself capable of animating on object, the ability to use batch processing of a series of previously set-up scenes allows the long-winded ray-tracing operations to be taken care of with the

computer spreadsheet or multi-tasking or other applications. The means that lots of detailed frames of an animation can be drawn one after the other, automatically. These can later be fully compressed, stored in a frame buffer and displayed as an animation by scene-switching - the method used by Juggler.

Jagged 3D represents an important step for the Amiga toward really professional image creation in a form in which no other unexpensive PC is capable. And its only rival?

Underneath the Archies

In fact, Amiga's Archies will probably have similar software, but at present there is not much in the way of an ordinary picture operation. Game (006-4851) will probably be the first with its *Artisan* package, weighing in at \$29.95. It was on view at the Amiga stand right next to the *Sculpt* demo - so, it was pretty difficult to get close but what was visible looked very promising. As well as the usual features it can switch the frame colour to produce simple and - if it can be made to fit into SDR - should be able to fit an irregular shape with a rectangular frame. It also has a rectangular piece cut from the scene into any shape - that would result in a viewable simulation of - for example - a lot of image wrapped around a sphere.

AMG are working on *Frame Plot* and through the vendors at the show was naturally, what they have looked very much exciting. Unlike Deluxe Paint 2 for instance, batch rotation is in red text, and through its a lot of a gimmick I also like the rolling menus. You Archies owners will probably see it easy to fit (both of you.)

Hopefully, there will also be some other-line packages available in 3D at the Amiga or Deluxe Video. No sign of Olympus though.

What Archies did have at the show was a *Wanted* option. It will work in 3D with a 50 frames per second - and they look at 30. Only 1000 of course but presumably with the right software and 300 lines colour would be possible, and with Archies 2nd colour and high resolution rate figures could

result. If New-For you make a good picture out of the Amiga software RAM made something really good could be done with the Archies.

Amiga Market

Yet more fighting of that Systems (004 30504) with the *Amiga Animation Machine (AAM)* for the Amiga. Like *Digger* and *Wanted*, AAM provides real-time lighting, rotating image from most video sources at 30 frames per second. On a 4 meg ST, 100 frames can be stored allowing detailed animated sequences up to 8 seconds long to be played back and mixed into other animations. Only in 3000 though. Also from Silicon Solutions was the *3D3D* professional Genlock providing much the same facilities as the interactive one-rendered above.

Elenco (076-83347) were showing an exciting piece of software in Amiga World called *Illustration Painter (IP)* \$19.95. With the 400 colours can be generated on screen at once - well, 300 on an Amiga mode. It works by creating a palette which can be positioned to control any horizontal line of the screen - quite how a not yet clear. All I can say now is that it is exciting to see more than 16-colours on an ST. The software seems to have most of the usual drawing functions plus colour cycling with each colour independently, rendering at 30 FPS images and it will accept most of the AMG and 3D for colour enhancement. It also includes a - best compression from files - allowing hundreds of frames to be stored on a 1000. How it all fits together of the software could be used in conjunction with a digitiser... Full review coming next week now.

Once again, at the Commodore Village the most exciting offering in Amiga World was a 3D with modelling editor and animation, shown by Gemini Distribution. (004-0255). *Cyber Studio* by Amiga (004-90) is based on CAD-3D, an earlier three-dimensional design program for the ST. It provides many of the facilities of *Sculpt 3D* but without ray tracing as a final render or rendering the image. Instead, the package offers an excellent range of animation facilities via a

Ray Tracing

No, it's not the name of the artist - Ray tracing is the method employed in *Sculpt 3D* and the *Juggler* to create a credible simulation of the real world. It is the best simulation possible because it reproduces what actually happens in the real world.

Every object that you can see is visible because of the light reflected or radiated from it. Imagine the light radiated from a lamp at one side of this magazine onto the page. The individual light rays reflect from the page in all directions but some pass into your eye and are detected. What you see depends on the brightness of the light and your distance from it and the page. Ray Tracing works in the same way, except that the computer calculates the colour and brightness of each ray as it hits the computer screen from inside, so to speak. Each ray represents one ray from a simulated light source reflected onto a simulated object and tells how a knee position, colour and brightness. It is a relatively simple (but very long-winded) job to calculate a colour and brightness value for each ray.

refresh-rate) that necessary and a complete animation-control language called Cybermode. Using these it's possible to animate a CAD-3D object in both 2Degas or Neochrome images complete with sound effects. Objects can be dissolved in and out and rotated, delta-compressed and played back in real time, and viewed with Stereobit glasses. A very impressive product. Also available are joint titles in Architectural design (house kits), Futura Design (clocks and watches), 3D Fems and - amazingly - Human Design.

Olympia Let Down

Critical this years starts into a little disappointment: I was expecting much more new graphics hardware and software from the Amiga camp and bits were excitement from Commodore Amiga. Nevertheless, Amiga World certainly feel like going for it. That was left a bit like the last Novell. Amiga don't show a model piece with lots of people trying to sell their little bits of software into a niche in the market. A good example of the way Amiga's been left like it's like 2000, a nice little graphics utility designed to produce small animated leaves with their feet but there is not much that graphically much of the current generation is going into games. This is a great pity as the ST and especially the Mega ST have great potential - Quantum Rendox and Cyber Studio game it.

8 Bits Missing the future?

The biggest surprise of the show was the total lack of support for it bit machines. Only AMS seemed to have anything other than the way to allow moving graphics software and absolutely none had anything new. Look like Addressed Art Studio is the best that the Spectrum, C64 and CPC owners can hope for in the future!

And speaking of the future, what comes next? I will stick my neck out here and decide on interest in video. All the companies are there for a simple conversion on video - Desktop Video if you like. A huge proportion of computer owners also enjoy a VCR, most people have an all-purpose program, and Amiga's software is really available and easy to update. Realtime digitizers are rapidly dropping in price... 3000 video-camera can quite cheap to make... Even on 6.5 meg machines, compression allows bits of digitized frames to be stored and played back. Modulators are available for most machines so conversion to video should be straightforward.

All it needs is an Alan Sayer to put all this together into a simple-to-use package with one level and relevant marketing strategy for, say, £500, and home desktop video is born.



PAINT BOXING

DELUXE PAINT 2 and DIGIPAINT - friends or foes? Brian Larkman makes them play together

"Heaven is free from clouds, but of all colours seems to be..."

Lord Byron

Byron in a computer mag! But he's right, you know - for a graphic artist, the range of colours available on the Amiga is heavenly. Having had to make do with a palette of 2 or 4 from a range of 8, 16 or at best 27 colours on the 8 bit machines I had been using, the chance of 32 from the staggering 4000 hues that Deluxe Paint 2 on the Amiga offers has indeed been bliss. Now to make me even more ecstatic NewTek have provided Digipaint, allowing all 4000 to be on screen at once using the Amig's HAM - hold and modify - mode.

Digipaint is one of the first of a new generation of 'paintbox' programs for the Amiga. It provides the full palette of 4096 colours and a range of facilities normally only found on dedicated graphics workstations costing 100 times as much. Nevertheless, there are some limitations to Digipaint - mostly resulting from the nature of the HAM mode itself. Anyone expecting drawing and transformation facilities similar to those in Deluxe Paint will be disappointed, but as we shall see Digipaint is very different from other drawing



Bits of it: enjoying effects you can get by combining Cyber Paint with a video digitizer.

programs and is of its best when used in conjunction with Deluxe Paint 2 and a digitizer.

To show off Digipaint's unique features and the way the two D-Paints, Digi and Deluxe, 'hook' together I had describe the process involved in producing the Amiga files.

The first stage in producing any piece of artwork is the background. Digipaint is capable of producing the most exquisite produced scenery, giving the effect of a landscape being into the distance but it

Output

There is one big problem with graphics work of the kind described here, what you do with it after you've finished work on the screen. How do you output your masterpiece? This is a problem that could inhibit the development of fully featured software for the current generation of graphics-oriented machines. In conversation with the designer of the new AMS Finestart paint package for the AmigaWorld I discovered that they were planning to provide only 16 colours even though 256 on-screen were possible - because of the problem of how to output the result. Hopefully they have changed their minds, but you can see their point. Apart from taking photographs, is screen-shots (after a rather bit of time effort) there is still no cheap and easy way to reproduce properly all of the subtleties that are now possible on screen. Until the image display technology catches up with the image production technology in terms of price, 16-bit is going to fill the gap. What we need now is a really cheap VHS editing suite!



- 1. To create a grid (optional)
- 2. Make a single black pixel
- 3. Use a perspective transformation and the texture to draw from using colors from 1
- 4. To enhance the perspective, stretch to white pixels and opacity, and set a final background color with these Web codes
- 5. A grid texture for the final color (the background color is different shades from a highlight is possible to identify) a single pixel

about and Deluxe P when it comes to creating perspective patterns and 3D, or basic functions such as rotations of objects.

To create the hollow checkerboard I made a simple check pattern, gave it perspective transformation and then distorted it in Deluxe P - all this using a mere two colors from 16. To enhance the perspective I translated the whole picture into Del P saved-as-a brush, then, posted it down, with Deluxe Mode selected. This mode allows

4096 Colors on Screen!

The basis of this apparent magic is the ability of the Amiga to produce Hi-AM - high and mid-level - screens. As a Hi-AM display is produced, each pixel may be read momentarily and the value of one of its three primary colours changed, after which each pixel can be a different colour from its neighbour and from all other pixels, up to the maximum of 4096 hues on screen at once. The potential for highly coloured screens provided by the ability to modify colours is really great, but just recently only those who could afford a digitiser or understand the Amiga ROM Kernel Reference Manual had any chance of creating their own Hi-AM screens.

you to produce a gradual transition from the source colour to the background colour in either direction or in all directions from a highlight created with a simple gadget.

The Distorted Mode works with most of Diggpoint's tools and functions and allows some very delicate effects, including the clouds (with the animals) and the balls/fruits (with the dice-fill). For more complex shapes, however, Deluxe P is much more versatile, allowing rotation, bending, stretching etc. Basic, unshaded elements produced the way you then be transferred to Diggpoint.

The bubble uses another mode - Blend - which gives the effect of transparency by averaging the colour of a brush with the colour of the area beneath it. In a similar way (with practice) it is possible to use the other modes to produce a whole range of effects including colouring black and white images like the digitised picture of the model above.

Because Diggpoint uses all of the Amiga's palette it is possible to have several Deluxe Point pictures or digitised screens-grated on screens of one, even if they have different palettes. The 'boy's bedroom' is made up of a number of images, some from full-colour digitised images, some Deluxe Paintings, and some objects produced using Sculpt 3D, all manipulated to give the illusion of depth to be of any size and to a specific area or point program that be able to mix together images from a range of sources like this to produce what a screen as Photo-montage Diggpoint is the best to allow this on a relatively cheap PC.

Deluxe Point 2, Diggpoint and Digi View (Olivetti's) impressive digitiser options

together would make a remarkable package providing facilities unobtainable on any other PC. The weaknesses of Deluxe Point 2 are the strengths of Diggpoint, and vice-versa.

Photo-montage

The process of computerised photo-montage on the Amiga is really simple using Diggpoint, but very flexible because of the way that the Modes work with other functions. Any image on screen can be copied to a flag-storage area, which is in effect a screen behind the visible one. Any new image can now be laid out onto the front screen. Using any newly made or captured brush, the front screen can be "rubbed through" revealing the picture below. If Blend or Mix or Shading is operation (or any Mode) these will affect the quality of the image that is revealed. With the tool-mode some quite remarkably sophisticated photo-montage is possible.

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SCREEN TEST

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The PIC chart explained

A new system takes a bit of getting used to, so we've cooked up some ratings for a fictional game. Standard Issue Scrolling: Coin-Op Conversion to help you along. You know the kind of thing: good scrolling, fast and easy adjustment of extra weapons. Now check out the ACE treatment this game gets.

VISUAL EFFECTS Nice scrolling and the sprites are great

AUDIO The tunes are good but the FX are dull

TO FACTOR Shock first, think later

FUN FACTOR Smoothly controls, but sudden deaths are frustrating

PREDICTED INTEREST

ACE RATING Frustration means your interest peaks early

VISUAL: What does the game look like? The more of these squares that have turned white, the higher the game's visual score. They represent more jerky scrolling, flickering sprites, colour clashes or other visual annoyances.

AUDIO: How does the game sound? Do in-game effects actually become annoying shrieks, or just pretty noisy? Do you want an LP of the title music, or would you rather a pot of earnings? Does the dialogue sound like "Mistletoe" or is it a nice bit of "Mistle Tooped"?

TO FACTOR: How much thought does the game demand? Is it an app of creating a plan, or a mindless shoot-em-up? A low rating here doesn't mean the game's bad, but don't expect it to tax your grey matter too much.

FUN FACTOR: Is it playable, amusing, enjoyable? Does it make you feel like you were just one more go? And then another? Can you go into a deserted room and have a good time with this game? If so, then it's got a high Fun Factor. Expect higher ratings for pure arcade action than for games based on theology books, but games requiring thought can still do well here.



PREDICTED INTEREST: THE BEST CURVE, or PIC for short, will ignore an instant spike in the number of squares. The higher the curve, the more you'll enjoy the game. It holds at any level for the time being, but a low means total disappointment, while a high means complete and utter bliss. In our fictional shoot-em-up, a low initial graph means you'll be pretty depressed and grumpy. You're even better off when you think about those last conditions. But frustration at those sudden deaths has taken the edge off this, so at the end of the first day, and also at the end of the first month, you're glad about everything the game has to offer and want the challenge of being playable. The predicted interest score you'll see in the ACE rating is a score that

ACE has calculated as a possible 1000 and is based on the ACE system, which understands the high and low scores—the game, the game. Games which are ACE-rated over 500 are really hot stuff—see Thundercats or Zarch for examples.

OGRE

ORIGIN SYSTEMS go to war

SET In the 23rd century, the role of two-player wargames is an adaptation from the board game by Steve Jackson (he of *Autobots* fame). The player takes charge of the defending force and attempts to stop the monster war machine, the Ogre.

The game display consists of the playing area made up of a 15x11 hexagonal map taking up the majority of the screen with a

right-hand strip showing any relevant information. The player controls the sequence of play by means of menus that appear in this column, while the actual movement and firing of the pieces is selected and carried out on the playing area.

The Ogre is controlled by the computer in the single-player option and its prime objective is to destroy the defending player's

base, the battle-commander. The Ogre makes its appearance at the bottom of the map and works its way upwards toward the player's Command Post, taking into account the disposition of the defending forces and the terrain. Once the Ogre has moved, the fire phase is initiated and if any defending pieces are within range, the Ogre attacks. Then the player gets to move his troops and attempts to make a strike against the Ogre. If the player has any Ground Effect Vehicles that he gets an additional chance to move the G.E.V.s to the end of the firing phase.

Features to enable the player to design the battlefield and choose the relative strength of the Ogre add depth to what is essentially a wargame for beginners. The game is limited though because in the single

Ogre! - Hide yourself!

The Ogre makes a mad dash for your military base.

The screenshot shows the OGRE game interface. On the left is a hexagonal map with various units and terrain. On the right is a command panel with the following elements:

- OGRE** (Large red text)
- DEFENSE FLIES** (Red button)
- OGRE SUMMARY** (Text area showing unit counts: 10000, 10000, 10000, 10000, 10000, 10000)
- Clear** (Blue button)
- Fire** (Blue button)
- Range** (Blue button)
- View** (Blue button)
- Help** (Blue button)

Annotations on the map:

- Top right: "The Ogre is moving to your Command Post." (Red box)
- Bottom left: "Command table for units/players." (Red box)
- Bottom right: "The single Ogre moves at..." (Red box)

VISUAL EFFECTS

Some representation of action

AUDIO

Some effects and lots of atmosphere

IQ FACTOR

It's a tough game to win

FUN FACTOR

Engaging and very addictive



ACE RATING 813

Command Post. The idea is for the player to utilize his limited forces in an attempt to defeat his Command Post. Choosing the force is of the utmost importance to the player as it determines the player's tactics for the game. Several armored pieces are available: footmen, have the longest range and a high attack strength but once positioned are immovable. Ground Effect Vehicles are highly manoeuvrable but have a lower attack strength.

Once the pieces have been deployed

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OGRE	£19.95	REVIEWED
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BULLWHIPS

are all very well, but what people would like something a bit heavier against vicious snakes and herds of runaway cattle. Not mentioning... (text continues)

The bad guys in question are Buggies - wastrels of the death goddess (ah - and they're a nasty lot. They've enslaved good children to work their bases to gems, as you can help spend the first of the game's three levels being told. The action here takes place in a maze of platforms, ladders and conveyor belts displayed in a rather tacky 3D. You can get around using the ladders and conveyors, take short-cuts by using your whip to swing across gaps or leap-frog into lower platforms once you've learned the layout of the maze.

RELEASE BOX

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When you find the cage where each of the kids is held, a giant snake or fire whip will attack the platform and set them free. The same treatment will also free Buggie guards and kill snakes, but be warned, you need to be pretty accurate in your guide property, and they don't cry out to help anyway.

If you can see all eight kids without running out of lives - guards, snakes and large dogs all set you, as do the level's menacing big bats and the occasional fireball that thugges press on at you - you learn to dash to the end, where you can leap into a mine car and go on to level 2. After the usual diary for that access or tape loading, you'll find yourself trundling down the mine's conveyer system towards the Temple of Doom's end.

The action here's largely down to fighting all Buggie-filled mine cars with your

player, opens the chance to play the part of the Ogre a second. The fact that there is only ever one enemy piece (formidable as it may be) on the board will leave the computer struggling with the feeling that his tactical abilities are not being matched, and he will soon get bored with it.

Andy Smith

Kill-by-numbers

Ogre comes very close to putting a board wargame into your computer. The display, the playing area and the sequence of phases of combat to give the player the feeling that the computer is handling all the tedious parts of a board wargame while allowing the player to concentrate on the tactical side of things.



The chess is often left down and from its position unless you command the use of the top line.

IBM PC Version

Very similar to the other versions, despite the colour limitations of the PC. Cursor control is jerky but not enough to detract from the game. The game runs as fast if not faster than the Amiga version.

C&A Version

Surprisingly similar to the Amiga version, with most of the main features present. Slower and not as colourful as the Amiga version but just as playable.

INDIANA JONES AND THE TEMPLE OF DOOM

US GOLD follow Indy underground

whip and keeping you out on the rails. The better tender than it sounds, you'll have to lean to one side or the other to change tracks at junctions or at 90-degree dead ends or broken rails. Some rapid changes of direction are needed in places, but a little trial and error will see you get your wits to the end of the run and into the Temple.

After yet more leading you finally catch up with that Snakey Snake, though there's more work on snakes, guards and some very tricky gaps before you can get hold of it. The



snake-based perspective here takes a bit of getting used to, but the shouldn't cause too many gameplay problems. Of course, you only have the lives you've brought through from the earlier stages to regeneration takes in great stead of leveling time. Once you've got the Snakey you'll have to go round the three levels twice more to get to companion stones, before tackling the game finale.

Overall it's appealing stuff with chunky pixel-art graphics, but the gameplay's a bit lightweight as path - level 2 is particularly

easy - and a days play should show you most of the variety the game has to offer.

Andy Walton

CPC Version

Fewer colours and 'robustness' sprites make the CPC graphics look a little rough, and the sound isn't perfect either. It's much harder to stick through with your whip, but the score is fabulous. That's a challenge.

VISUAL EFFECTS

County, not quite operating

AUDIO

More than starts to play

IQ FACTOR

Some level requires a response

FUN FACTOR

Easy to get stuck in



ACE RATING 776

Whipping Yarns

The US Gold Indy and Snakey for a game that whip from graphics to final from time.



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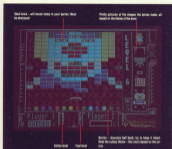
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Goal lines - will track how far your ball's been from the bottom.

Power-up zones at the edges of the screen make it tougher to get to the bottom of the maze.

Advanced Funland

Brick values

So you don't waste time on bricks from your barrie.

- A. Playful-looking armor
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- C. Traps ball on bar
- D. Bounces
- E. Fuel for your Thrust power
- F. Multi-arming - very useful in tight spots
- G. Gets you that essential firepower
- H. Thrust unit
- I. Always full speed - when it's refueling you can really clear up a screen.

you can fire away giving you armor, and the goal bricks - if you miss these they'll take out chunks of your barrie when they wind down to 0. A constant barrier throughout the level's bricks allowed when your ball enters certain randomly placed bricks which automatically have no special features to identify them; the feedback also takes out bricks from your barrie. Destroy them by bumping them with your bar. You can gain swift access to higher sections of a level or different levels together by dropping your ball inside the

ADDICTABALL

ALLIGATA'S bouncing bat-and-ball game.

NOT again? For another breakout bar, ball and bats experience? Can it possibly be worth getting? Yes - it's the answer to all those questions, because Addictaball - despite its derivative nature - really does have the elements that make you stick to it.

The game's role of originality is largely due to the fact that it works vertically, with your ball at the bottom of the screen and the

bricks you must destroy moving down towards you. Besides your ball is a single line of bricks, so you don't even have to ping the ball to stay alive - it can just bounce around ad infinitum. But if that thin line of bricks is pierced - and there are plenty of reasons why that might happen - your ball can disappear to lose you a life.

Since the game scrolls you don't get separate screens to each level, instead, Addictaball offers 16 levels at around 10 screens

each, with level with bricks arranged around a different theme. The theme for Level 1, for instance, is transport; the pattern of the bricks is not instantly obvious, but the pretty little motorcycle-car-recon toys going back and forth at you teach crucial areas; makes the point pretty clearly that the thing with your ball several times until it disappears and you can progress through the level.

Your ball is slightly different from other games; in the game you need lower power and thrust following you to move up and down throughout. Thrust not sound unnecessary, but it can come in useful for leaping over indestructible bricks and getting out of tricky situations.

As in other breakout derivatives, certain bricks will give you a pleasure which far see loss, particularly important targets for

hypergame transpires - but this is water sold from stone.

Most problems of all though are the ones contained in certain bricks. These little rewards that awarded most annoyingly and must be recombined with extreme precision, just make sure you've got lots of armor.

Addictaball may not be the most original thing since space invaders, but it has enough. Sensitive to make it worth examining over, if you're already got

Atari's or Japan's. Its every bit as colorful as those two, and has an excellent balance between fun and competition.

Peter Dorey



VISUAL EFFECTS ■■■■■■
A first thought upon the screen design

AUDIO ■■■■■■
Pops, pings, and nice quality voice tracks

IQ FACTOR ■■■■■■
You'll have to think on your feet in tight spots

FUN FACTOR ■■■■■■
Highly addictive - but can't be any funnier

ACE RATING 826

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HERE we have the sequel to *Druid*, one of the more popular wizard games. The game looks very similar to its predecessor with the same old cloud character swirling around a colorful winding maze/room background while being chased and attacked by lots of energy-draining snakes. But you soon discover that the game play has been souped up considerably.

If you need an excuse to play the game, the scenario is as follows: It's been 100 years since Accanator was expelled from the land of Belens. Nowhere the druid has

spoken in his spell book he now collect a spell by standing over the icon and pressing the "key. The spells are quite varied in their use, effects range from lighting up a dark area of land to stunning all the monsters on the scene.

Walking around beating snakes and grabbing spells is exhausting stuff and though the druid can cast spells to protect himself from his evil skin enemy he has time for a very short duration. Despite separating your energy with frequent spell-casting like a Colonel Sanders chicken leg-

Druid and 2

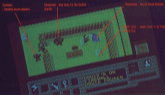
For those of you who already have *Druid* the question of *Enlightenment* justifying another ten man-hours is instantly answerable. The horde of new spells do add new twists to the old plot, but on the whole the game-play remains very similar. It's a nice change, but unless you enjoyed the original enough to consider yourself a *Druid* fanatic 110 may just be a little too cheap.

ENLIGHTENMENT

Does FIREBIRD's wizardry lift the gloom?

Dangerous Druidings!

Harass and be killed several Gales, bats and winged birds of course, and a few other a bit later to reach a new spot.



grows older and wiser with many new spells at his fingertips, and now the time has come to use them. Accanator has returned more powerful than ever and the time repeating him is not the answer. As one of the best great druids you must find and kill the evil Gales.

Enlightenment is rather more of a magiced game than the original and your druid now has access to 10 different spells, though he may only have eight in his spell book at any one time. Spells are represented as icons and are distributed throughout all of *Enlightenment*'s 10 levels. If the druid has a

you soon find your strength sapped by the relentless onslaught. But fear not - your druid can help on hand in the form of the "vortex elemental" spell.

Four types of elemental can be conjured to fight on the druid's behalf: Gales, Wap, Phoenix and Grekes representing Earth, Air, Fire and Water respectively. These can be controlled by the computer or via a second joystick - effectively making *Enlightenment* a two-player game.

If the computer controls the elemental you are given a choice of three movement commands: follow the druid, vent it a direction or wait. The limited choice makes the elemental a little unwieldy but all well worth the conjuring.

Each water which the druid must travel through is largely dominated by one type of element and it is this that determines the power of your elemental. For example, the Grekes is strong in the watery mountains but weak in the desert, so it helps to keep at least one conjuring spell in reserve.

Enlightenment has a big play area and a large assortment of spells and items. All this adds up to a difficult enjoyable challenge - but games of this sort are becoming very common and, though good, *Druid 2* is beginning to wear thin the old *Gale* theme.

Look South



Druid's spell-casting abilities: the druid casts an Elemental element to get an enemy's evil Gales down. But beware - this monster can poison!

VISUAL EFFECTS

with *Enlightenment 2*

AUDIO [Progressive bar]

the low end average frequencies

IQ FACTOR [Progressive bar]

not too demanding - but it might be high

FUN FACTOR [Progressive bar]

only enough - especially in 2-player mode



Does your setup to your utility or return

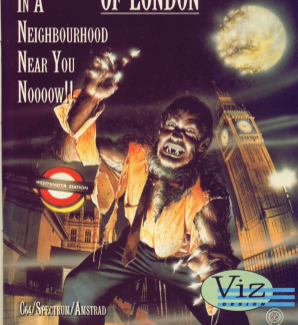
ACE RATING 721

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ly in the footsteps of Code Masters' goods including Grand Prix and 3-D Simulator.

Pro Ski Sim is for one or two players and contains seven authentic alpine slopes.

The player starts the game at the top of the slope and uses those keys (left-right and forward) to guide his on-screen sprite toward the finish, taking care to weave in between all the gates as the way down. Each slope has its own suite of dips and lifts and the player has to use the "forward" key to pump his poles and propel forward along the flat sections. Hitting the forward key down while the character descends a small steep section results in the character adopting a crouched position for increased speed.

Each course has the player weaving not only the door - you get less time to reach course - but also struggling to remain on the screen. You view the game through a large on-screen window that continuously scrolls down, and should you being around to too long your character disappears off the top.



Slide of the action on the course. How far the spruce...



Control window. Pick 3, even less in a different...

"...the best racing
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Zzap



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SU
HAM



File 1 (to play) and file 2 (to fix) are the same size as the original

Amstrad Version

Incredible but true - the snow in the Amstrad version is white, the player car is red and the game plays exactly the same (but slightly slower) than the Spectrum version. Just as extensive and just as much fun.

If that happens then you have to enter in the motor stop to the light of the screen in order to navigate. This gives a very simple central view of the slope and only shows the gates and the player, not the surface texture.

Initially, the gameplay is tough and takes a bit while to get used to. The screen design is colorful, blue snow! but it takes time before the player can suddenly

VISUAL EFFECTS ██████████ 100%
Best of all

AUDIO ██████████ 100%
Great for the money

IQ FACTOR ██████████ 100%
Learn to play

FUN FACTOR ██████████ 100%
Difficult and thoroughly playable



ACE RATING 727

RELEASE BOX

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SP42	£ 9.95	REVERSE
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recognize the terrain before. If you can get to grips with the controls and learn the layout of the slopes you're in for a lot of fun.

• Andy Smith

g game we've ever
 etter than Out Run!"
 up! 64 'ANOTHER DAY AT THE ARCADES'

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INFECTED (orange? Mashed peas? It must be those unappetizing silver specks, spraying the landscape with their nasty red virus. There's nothing for it but to get in your bioplane, take to the skies and shoot them down. That's about as it out-thrills - and if it just sounds like it's boring and stuck-up-to-you, prepare to be surprised.

There are the graphics to start with. True perspective 3D - even side 3D, so here - is nothing new, but Zarch's ground-level viewpoint gives it a completely different feel. Zarch is not a flight simulator, rather than offering the pilot's-eye view of games like *Life and Adventure* it takes you out of the cockpit and shows you your top-downside shot of a distance, keeping the view level to matter how you turn it roll.

Zarch's flying controls are unusual too. The game's basic only pressing the left-hand mouse button gives you a short burst of "fuel" on the steps engine. At first that lets you straight up off the landing post, but by moving the mouse you can tilt the bioplane in the direction you want to go - and a quick turn will force you on your way. The 88-hertz-88-hertz flying style these days feel lead to a rather unrealistic if that's not being in 3D in that much faster, and that's before you even start to think of control.

In flight the bioplane's wings twist about its midpoint as if the nose was weighted, so as to point in the direction of tilt. This gives you effective control over which way the bioplane and therefore its laser (silver) beam, but means that the plane is always nose down - so you must be alone a craft to shoot it. That's no problem, it's quite often the slow, low-flying enemies which

RELEASE BOX

ARCAD	COMING	REVIEWED
AMIGA	UNDER DEVELOPMENT	
ATARI ST	UNDER DEVELOPMENT	
	NO 8-BIT VERSIONS PLANNED	

spray the landscape with virus. And here that's down on your screen, spray down and spray them with bullets. One hit finishes that pallid creature - and they don't be back.

Combat height is one-of-a-pieces with the stone dunes and valleys. These funny hills work along the same lines as your bioplane, but that makes engine power and lower rate of fall should win you the top 800-00-000. For missed attacks you'll need to spray bullets widely, or even to come around sideways, either learning mistake - use them wisely because you can't separate the lives you start with - or shoot back. The latter not only kill any bad guys in the area, but even reduce nearby virus to zero.

Every hit won't destroy the bioplane immediately; you should still defend bullets, but the cost you pay. The heavy bioplane's control takes it to fall here too, so you'll need to tell you that of some time on long or violent missions.

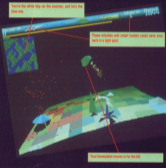
ZARCH

ACE
979
RATED

SUPERIOR's high class shoot-em-up

The Red Death

This grounded alien wonder's spraying the landscape with red virus. He shouldn't have looked to do it though - he's a killing beast!



At its best, the best way to lose one of your three lives in Zarch is by tactical collapse. It's easy to crash into opponents while you juggle for a height advantage, and to make mistakes while the alien send out little kamikaze pods which will try to run you.

If you succeed in wiping out all your alien opponents - easy but it does, at first - you'll get a hefty bonus based on the amount of landscape still unpolished. Then you're faced with a new wave of aliens more numerous than the last, with faster types like fighters and bombers adding to your troubles. An extra smart bomb-and life-every 5000 points will help keep you breathing steady, but you'll need a bit of practice to get over that bit.

Sound effects are just a little more than an afterthought, really - but Zarch's graphic production and tirelessly redolent commentary make it an instant classic.

Andy Wilson

VISUAL EFFECTS

★★★★★

Putting in motion

AUDIO

★★★★★

Great effects and not really off them

IQ FACTOR

★★★★★

Forces most the depth...

FUN FACTOR

★★★★★

Just the possibility



ACE RATING 979

THUNDERCATS

THE LOST EYE OF THUNDERA

ACE
931
RATED

Feline fury from ELITE

PUSS in boots takes on a whole new meaning this time, as the fruits of Steve Nouri's set-up for the worthy cats and thousands of other software devotees. Elite are producing their games based on the hit TV series, and you can try this first one written by software house Gogoye.

It's the premise of their name that you'll find in mind of Gogoye's sideways-scrolling game like *Manborg* or *Dun Coward*, that the look of Thundercats won't come as a surprise. It's a side-on, wire-scene with all the graphic fluff of old. Don't expect complex on-line adventures though, but Elite influence has given the game look-alike of good times, made playfully amusing.

The Eye of Thundera, source of the Thundercats' power, has been stolen by the evil Mummukh's henchmen and you'll have to go out and get it back - you. As the hero in a simple 2D you'll have to fight your way into Mummukh's stronghold, beating and blasting loads of enemies and keeping some helpful pups which block your path.

Each of the game's 14 levels is a straight-line dash from start to finish. Though there are obstacles to keep you on your toes, it's not about them to test choice of route. Just cover the distance within set seconds, killing or dodging one another you can't avoid, and it's onward to another, tougher level.

You don't roll around with a headband to lead off the top. It's a tricky weapon to wield, while using it to hit opponents below or above leads you, back-slaps running to see the screen, giving any pursuing hater a

chance to catch up, so you'll need to wait on hand-to-hand moves if you want to be long. You'll also have to keep moving out, out of line, and Mummukh himself will join you if you quickly loaded.

There's also the help can be given up for extra lives, and also for a change of weapons, items which can do what - some of them can be distinctly unhelpful - and

you'll want to be making your opponents instead of looking them. There are vehicles you can use too if you can find time to help beat these time limits, but to mention those too is pure.

As well as recovering the Eye itself, you can rescue imprisoned Thundercats on your mission. The game has three secret levels, but you only get one shot of

each of them - use a life and you're straight on to the next level, with no second chance for that better remain silent. To further vary the pace of the game, levels 4 to 7 can be taken in any order you want. Find the right order and you'll make things a good deal easier for yourself, but working that strategy out will take you plenty of time.

The pace of the game never lets up, and



And it's a good game, even if it's not the best one you can get, when using a PC.

The Cat's Whiskers



LEVEL
5



THE GREAT ESCAPE - Thundercats

Amstrad Version

Not one version but two. 800,000 units get down digital progress, and only 11 game levels. On the other you'll get 24, but either way the game looks good and plays better.

C64 Version - a faster

Gogoye have always tended to specialise in Spectrum and Amstrad games, so a more C64 release is something of a departure for them. The C64 Thundercats is a more 'off' being finished, with most still in progress on the channel difficulty testing.



The hero of the first level is waiting for a villain to help us on our quest.

is simple: shoot, burn, aim - get to the loading line before the time runs out - combine with the toughness of the opposition to make it fairly tricky. The game demands your full concentration, and gets it too. More than *Golden Axe*, *Gladius* and *Golden Axe* anything else in the style, *Thunderbolt* gives the challenge.

One down, two to go

Of the two *Thunderbolt* games you'll see the sign of days, one's being developed in houses at Eute, and so is pretty much under wraps. The other is a four-way shooter with an exploration element to it, but so with *Last Eye* of *Thunder* the account on arcade action rather than strategy. It should be ready next year, but the stars still undecided. Obviously Eute will have to go to considerable lengths to avoid confusion, if more than one of the games is out at once.



The hero of the second game is seen as a dragon's mouth, but he's better equipped than you should hope to be.

Its graphically impressive for the situation is stylish and the scrolling impressive, with digital backgrounds adding excitement to the game atmosphere. The enlarged 128K version uses the extra memory to show further digital graphics for bonus

screen and the bit. Okay with all advanced standards for 16-bit/32-bit systems, but even with only 64K you'll still have a good-looking, surprisingly playable game for your money.

Andy Wilson

THUNDERBOLT

The hero of the game runs in the shadow of the dragon, but he's better equipped than you should hope to be.



RELEASE BOX		
DATE	0-25a, 1-4-86	MANUAL
SPEC	0-25a	REVIEWS
ARS	0-25a, 1-4-86	REVIEWS

VISUAL EFFECTS ██████████
Great animation, lovely digitizing

AUDIO ██████████
Not a word, all have to be added

IQ FACTOR ██████████
Efficient, well thought out

RUN FACTOR ██████████
Slightly slow, otherwise

ACE RATING 931

THUNDERBOLT

The hero of the game runs in the shadow of the dragon, but he's better equipped than you should hope to be.

JACK THE NIPPER 2: COCONUT CAPERS

Mischief in the jungle with GREMLIN



When Torcon is just taking to a sliding, he'll have you getting off that one!

After Torcon's taken to you, your neighbor's gone to jail. Easy does it, boy!

SEQUELS are big news of the season: if you haven't bought *Diagonalese's* *Clash II*, it's probably because you're saving your money for *Guardian II*, *Impossible Mission II*, *Mitchley II* or some such follow-up. Now here's another contender for that coin: *Coconut Capers*, being the further adventures of that trouble-some fox Jack the Nipper.

After his outrageously scampy behavior in the original game, so the scenario goes, Jack is created and thrown on the hot plane to Australia. He falls out on route however, and parachutes into the jungle below. Now you take control of Jack, dodging or fighting the jungle's many dangerous occupants — wild animals, wild natives, wild plants and the like — and indulging in various naughty deeds.

These various adventures may make Jack II sound like it's simply a topical reworking of the original Jack, but nothing could be further from the truth. *Coconut Capers* doesn't have the rudimentary, the immediacy or the unusual 3D of its predecessor. Instead it has gaps to jump, ropes and ladders to climb, and a whole lot of intricately laid-out puzzles, objects and traps to cross. It has timing problems with algorithms and floating logs. It has vines to swing on, it has rope-bridges and tree-trunks in the jungle canopy to leap between. It is — in case the penny still hasn't dropped — a platform game.

It's not just a platform game, mind you — there are those naughty deeds to do, and

peppery weapons if you shoot your way through some puzzles — but it is mostly a matter of nudging-gaps and getting your timing right. The naughty deeds involve finding useful objects — gems, principles or better for example — which you can take elsewhere and work havoc with. Usually the object is quite some distance from the location you need it in, so without good platform skills you probably won't make it. Or maybe, you could cover that distance only to find you're got the wrong object, so some of the puzzles can be pretty obscure, to say the least, and you can only carry one object at a time.

Objects aren't the only things to pick up in the jungle. There are also diamonds, which give you an extra life if you've lost some of the ones you started with; native shields, which give you protection against most forms of death for a limited time; and weapons, scabby coconuts which you can throw or launch at foes. As with the objects used in naughty deeds, you can only carry one weapon of a time.

Other game features like slippery slopes, ladders and ramp pits, impossible fees and *Indiana Jones*-style mine can all add variety to the proceedings, but the game does have its problems. The controls are not every-time you leave it screen, even if you only do so momentarily in mid-jump, and Jack's tools may be too repeatedly while buttons from view behind tree-trunks or the like — both of these adding to the considerable frustration any platform game has to offer.

The real problem for most people won't

be those frustrations however, but the fact that Jack II is largely a platform game. There's a huge napping task to get on with — 700 screens, and so-called to identify them — and these naughty deeds are pretty tricky even when you know what you're supposed to be doing, but the gameplay is dated to say the least. Graphically it's a neat, cozy classic in one side, and the game's like a musical joke — a bit of the *Simpsons* theme tune if you fall in the water, or a snatch of *Agadoo* when you pick up the pineapple — give it a double appeal too. It fits in classical in gameplay terms it's a slick and very well-presented classic, but you'd be hard put to call it an advance on the original.

— Andy White

Amstrad Version

The GPC Jack II's very well done, but the use of four colors rather than sixteen lets it down a bit proportionally. Good sound is the only other difference from the Spectrum version.

RELEASE BOX

DATE	£ 29.95	£ 14.95	MSRP
SPIC	£ 19.95		RECOMM
ARS	£ 29.95	£ 14.95	RECOMM

VISUAL EFFECTS

Great-looking graphics, but some bad shading.

AUDIO

Very suitable of tunes.

IQ FACTOR

Low factor.

FUN FACTOR

Highly entertaining.



Time: how long it takes to get it.

ACE RATING 709

RAMBLER

FUTURE COMBAT

A MEDIEVAL SMASH 'EM UP... OF DEMOLITION & DESTRUCTION



RAMBLAR... **604**... **604**... **604**

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Cell structure.

Just as any game gets going, the four power cells begin firing to cut.



and contact with an alien, reduces your energy. Locating the power cells is achieved by consulting your shot range scanner, displayed in the bottom portion of the screen. Levels are available in the shape of pods scattered throughout the grid. Shooting a pod releases several small capsules that - if caught - can give your ship with such goodies as Star Shields, extra lives, and extra energy.

Control of the spacecraft is very traditional; you tap over to change direction or to fly under the grids in the chase for your levels. The spacecraft stops control to the



screen and everything else scrolls around it.

Implosion's graphics are very good; the grids are all white and metallic and really do convey the impression of some vast alien structure. The screen however is narrowly designed; the top portion is your overhead view of the action while the bottom portion is a window view of your instruments. The game grids you because it adds that crucial balance between addictiveness and frustration; and their eight levels should keep you going for some time.

by Greg

IMPLOSION

CASCADE's interstellar cell destructor

PESKY alien They're up to their old tricks again. This time they've only got one left built on artificial planet around a white Dwarf star and sent the planet on a collision course with Earth. Would you mind it?

Implosion puts the player in control of a spacecraft flying over the surface of a planet made up of eight levels of grids. The object is to destroy a number of power cells - with your knowledge you - that hold the grid together.

Having destroyed the set amount of

power cells, you then have to fly your ship towards an expanding and contracting hole that looks like a camera's aperture. Finally you stop over the hole, let the space be and you are teleported to the next level.

You start the game with three lives, and a limited amount of energy for each life. Lives alien fly around the grids in pods

RELEASE BOX

DATE	1988, 1988	REVERSE
SPAC	1988	MARKET

VISUAL EFFECTS [Rating]

Based and colorful backgrounds

AUDIO [Rating]

Levels appropriate

IQ FACTOR [Rating]

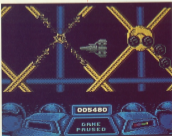
Don't stress the old grey matter

FUN FACTOR [Rating]

You can get caught in it for ever



ACE RATING 702



THE FUTURE



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TRANTOR

Young guns GO! for it.

ABANDONED On an alien planet, Trantor has to fight his way to freedom in this arcade action game. You control Trantor and must guide him on his quest to collect the 8 letters of a code word that he needs in order to escape.

The side-view view of this alien planet takes you through several levels of tunnels, which Trantor must negotiate in his search-and-destroy quest for eight letters of a code word needed to escape the planet.

At the top of the screen is a timer which



The crawling line indicates you've got to think up a way out for his gun.

counts down from 90 to zero. Each tunnel has at least one terminal containing a letter for the code word, and Trantor has to reach the letter before the time runs out - more than a few minutes of Incredible Miler.

There's a ScoreKeeper to tell Trantor in his fight against the various flying aliens, contact with which will reduce your energy level. An energy top-up is available in the shape of hamburgers, found in lockers on the various levels. Other goodies include devices to set the timer back to 90 and fuel replenishers for the Superblasters.

Trantor has some very crisp and colorful graphics, which when combined with the smooth animation and atmosphere in the game, but this is marred by weak and unimpressive sound. Trantor also lets itself down simply because the aliens are almost impossible to destroy, at least if you still hope to reach a terminal in the allotted time. The random distribution of the goodies in the lockers means that even if you know your way around it's very much left to chance whether you'll get a hamburger in time or not.

Trantor's wild over-the-top death may put you off to begin with, but once

you're over the initial barrier you'll find completing the game far too easy for it to provide anything like a lasting challenge.

by Andy Oake

RELEASE BOX

DATE	CD No. 04988	ISSUED
SPEC	CD No.	REVIEWED
ANS	CD No. 04988	ISSUED

VISUAL EFFECTS

Crisp, colorful and smooth

AUDIO

Lousy like you but mediocre effects

IQ FACTOR

Needs to be strategic

FUN FACTOR

Requires better gun you off to start with



Initial Trantor's gun may be a bit off to start with

ACE RATING 517

Are you horrible enough
to go on the

RAM

XECUTOR

Have a blast on THE EDGE

ANOTHER recently scrolling shoot-em-up? Another load of blasting, collecting weapons, and blasting some more? Well, yes - but don't write Xecutor off immediately.

It's colorful to one thing, it is fast which is on the spectrum of any shoot-'em-up that's out there. It also got a tremendous variety of options that let



A view of what the characters find when an alien invader has taken over the planet and you're trying to save it.

ball players in a series of races, competing (various) or cooperating (much better).

The heart of the game is to blast the alien, without getting blasted yourself or

RELEASE BOX

CD-ROM	\$19.95, £12.95	DECEMBER
SPEC	27 mins	REVIEWS

making into the scenery. Attacking modes decided in waves, but in a time, firing vertically down of you while defensive gun emplacements cling to the scenery and fire horizontally. Destroy an emplacement or a wave of bad guys, and a customizing token appears in the debris.

When a token appears you have a choice - shoot it or pick it up. Shooting tokens does them down to mine you (again, main weapons feature while picking one up) unless in any you've shoot out into the appropriate feature to your ship. Increased speed, withering firepower and a handy protective shield can all be yours.

So far so good, but your total firepower and speed are very juicy indeed and the more the game rates tough to get into. Where all, the gameplay has sensitive flaws in it, particularly, if you lose a life you can't

even well recover in an instantly lethal position. This can cut games extremely short and could easily have been avoided.

Not tremendous staff then to a single player, but switching to two-player mode transfers the game. You can play a combo game competitively, but with the character-based problems you won't get too far that way. Co-operate instead, and you'll soon get the firepower to easily blast those aliens - and have a lot of fun along the way.

Andy Wilson

VISUAL EFFECTS

Color and scrolling are very slick

AUDIO

Not enough for effects on screen

IQ FACTOR

Challenging strategies to ponder

FUN FACTOR

Great for solo but great for fun



Example bar, the bar doesn't exist

ACE RATING 75.7



You'll know soon enough
Rampage, coming to your home
computer screen, December.

ACTIVISION
ENTERTAINMENT SOFTWARE

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GRAND SLAM

All-court action from EIDERSOFT

THIS tennis program gives you the chance to have a go at one of the biggest achievements in sport: the Grand Slam of French, American, Wimbledon and Australian titles. It's a tough old objective, but the game is just about good enough to tempt you to practise enough to give it a go.

Grand Slam set up is very similar to tennis games that appeared on 8-bit machines some time ago: you get a view up the court from behind your player, and can move around and hit the ball in a variety of ways.

The variety of shot and the number of factors you must take into consideration are what make the game interesting. For instance, the surfaces played on include clay, grass and hardcourt, each one gives a different kind of game and requires more or less subtle adjustments in your style.

You control your player by moving the

mouse, then pressing the button to execute the shot. Different shots can be played with the rest of the numeric keypad. It gives you slow, 5-a-bit of that old spin-thingy effect, or a topspin effect.

The problem, of course, is the opposition. There are four opponents, ranging from the aggressive to the stoic.



Use your sparkling whites and grassy black hair you attempt to outplay the aggressive German World No. 1 on the fast and luscious grass of Wimbledon.

Each one plays in a different style, so you must change your own tactics accordingly. You must learn to take as to account the kind of surface your playing on, the weather conditions and even the stringing and type of racket you're using.

One serious problem is computer tennis games - and one that Grand Slam hasn't solved - is that of inter-

cept you know where the ball is in relation to your racket, sometimes you hit the ball when you think you shouldn't, sometimes you miss when you think you're on the ball. This isn't necessarily a huge problem, but it can make play a little frustrating sometimes.

These factors are what make Grand Slam an interesting game, you can even, if you wish, question a lineal in Multiple Position. The game has great ball and racket graphics and a few different sound effects, such as line calls and net creaks. It doesn't win by a long way, but it puts up a pretty good show.

• **Fee Center**

RELEASE BOX

ARCAD	1/20/94	REVIEWED
AFAR BT	1/20/94	100/100

VISUAL EFFECTS

Real movement and great backgrounds

AUDIO

Some nice digitalized speech

IQ FACTOR

A complex amount of strategy required

FUN FACTOR

Very enjoyable and quite demanding



ACE RATING 775

THE wonder of local computing has to be the solitary vice of solitaire? Contrary to expectations, Solitaire Royale was well worth programming, and a well worth playing.

For a start, the PC graphics are excellent even with the humble VGA adapter: the cards appear very crisp and clear, while with the VGA the randomized effect is superb. Then you get to play eight differ-



Difficult decisions to be made in the game of Kards.

SOLITAIRE ROYALE

Solitary fun from MIRRORSOFT

ent games as well as a number of CHALLENGING solitaire games.

The games you can play range from the familiar Patience game - better called Kards - to the rather more complex Solitaire and Cribbage.

The program is very easy to use and operated either by mouse or by cursor keys, pull-down menus are available at any time by pressing the ESC key, and game help, quit, and so on access is a mere game. The smooth presentation and helpful explanatory booklet make Solitaire Royale a really well-representing product.

• **Fee Center**

RELEASE BOX

IMP PC	1/20/94	REVIEWED
OTHER RESPONSES TO BE DECIDED		

VISUAL EFFECTS

Excellent attention to detail with

AUDIO

Oh, if you like a quiet game

IQ FACTOR

Requires mouse for what you might think

FUN FACTOR

Surprisingly entertaining



ACE RATING 760

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SPORE

AGE
919
RATING

BULLDOG pull out the pesticide

GENETICALLY mixed spores are a nuisance at the best of times, but when they overtake the base where you keep your stocks of pesticide you've obviously got to act fast. To be precise you've got to steer your ship around the beleaguered complex collecting the barrels of pesticide, blasting aggressive spores and herding the ubiquitous spore generators back before they can produce more of the little buggers, not a job for the faint-hearted.

The games 30 levels only take up one screen apiece, but each one is a genuinely bugging little world, actually fewer guns, teleports and spore generators - not to mention pesticide barrels, replicants and energy fountains. To complete a level you just have to collect all the barrels on it, but the time-consuming task will take you into the most dangerous, space-related corner of each layout.

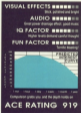
RELEASE BOX

DATE	(1.80)	RETAILER
SPICE	(1.80)	IMPACT
ARS	(1.80)	IMPACT

To get all those barrels you'll need to track out the security beams that contain all large chunks of each level about the guard, to redirect them by turning the mirrors that bounce them around the screen (about there). As you dismantle the beams, houses of trapped spores will surge towards you

out. Despite blasting well enough, less if you want to avoid the rampant spore exponentially doubling your energy - you need barrels.

Spores are only really dangerous when they attack you from several sides at once, so the trick is to get them coming at you from one direction only. If you release spores, run away from them and then run to the you'll find their herding instincts have left them straggled in your wake, chasing you for all they're worth. Shoot them before they can reach you, shoot their generators before a whole herd more can produced and you're released out that area of the screen with very



little energy - ensuring you feed the ballooning hoards to run steady.

In practice Spore isn't so easily beaten. In tight corners, rapid maneuvering while you'll need to blast and out with lightning speed. It's not just a matter of blasting skills (though there help) but also of strategy. You'll have to plan the removal of the beams carefully so as to release the spores in a controlled fashion, and the teleports make this a very tricky business at times.

Your initial allowance of 500 energy won't get you very far, so it's essential to pad up the energy fountains on each level. You'll also feed the replicants useful - pick them up, trigger them in moments of dire need (but the spores) and watch as the spores fall over each other in the rush to avoid you. This replication only takes 10 seconds and then they're after your blood again. But you can get a long way in that time if you know what you're doing.

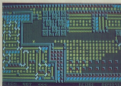
It would take an inordinate playing effort to get through all 30 screens of the game without a large dose of frustration, but even if you manage it there's still more to do. An extra 30 uncharted screens offer tough challenges as they contain stars, and unneeded difficulty once you start collecting them to you take with the built-in editor. The next in the Metacritic leading game one level towards, but the winning combination of strategy, limited blasting and great graphics would make Spore a worthy full-price release anyway - and what a bargain it is at £1.80.

Andy Wilson

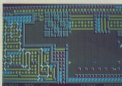
Turns the blue mirror back to the middle of the screen. Here you'll find a security beam guard you need to deactivate around the base of it, and then blast it to avoid the incoming spores.



Spores Galore



The spores can't attack you directly themselves, but end in creating a poisonous fog. Turn off the mirror, blast the teleports, deactivate.



Your first video camera deal with those spores (pictured) on the ground before you get the camera (and the blocks) before they build an enemy replicant.

CAPTAIN AMERICA

Super heroes are GO!

CAPTAIN America, that overconfident speed operator of heroic exploits, is zipping onto the screen in an attempt to save the good old U.S. of A. from the evil Dr. Megalomania, who is threatening to launch a nuclear catastrophe in very easy genetic trials. Not a nice thing to do, so the President has called in the Captain... time to suit it out.

Heroic deeds done dirt cheap.



Captain America is a real character in the best-selling series.

Doc. Megalomania has just turned a base - called the Death Tube - under the Atlantic desert. The player controls Captain America as he tries to penetrate the five-stage levels of the base. Each level has Captain A. roam on a strict pattern,

being attacked by various droids. The player can defend himself by bopping the Caps around the perimeter and bouncing it off the droids. There are two different platforms in each level, and each level has varying levels of view obstacles.

The best platform has Captain America

VISUAL EFFECTS [REDACTED]
The clean and colorful sprites

AUDIO [REDACTED]
Atmosphere fits here with great effects

IQ FACTOR [REDACTED]
Some tricky puzzles

FUN FACTOR [REDACTED]
Tougher get in to see the in-depth scenarios

THREE DIMENSIONS [REDACTED]

PROTECTED BY [REDACTED]

ACE RATING 653

RELEASE BOX		
CD-ROM	\$ 99.95 / £ 14.995	REVIEWED
SPCD	\$ 99.95	REVIEWED
ARC	\$ 99.95 / £ 14.995	REVIEWED
AT&T 327	£ 11.995	REVIEWED

dragging two droids that come from the top of the screen to the bottom (throwing it back behind themselves). If the Captain gets hit by the bomb it reduces his momentum levels. The second platform contains several ground-based droids which was ground-bogging those basic bombs. Destroy these and it rages droid aspects dealing death to anything that gets in the way of it at all. The rages droid has to be destroyed before the player gets the code word which is needed for the last conflict with the Doc.

It's not easy to get straight into Captain America, but it is a very easy to die - which is frustrating. It may be best. This is not a terrible game, but it's far from outstanding, and it's certainly not the best game for GDI to be launching-as-an introduction to the label.

by Andy Bell

YOGI BEAR

PIRANHA give you the bear facts

JELLYSTONE Park, the American favorite of the recent cartoon bear, is set to bring to Piranha the vintage title licensed software. The player controls Yogi in his quest to save his best friend who's been kidnapped and locked into a cage by a nasty hunter.

The game starts from left to right as Yogi heads on his way to rescue Boo-Boo, a cousin of the bear at the screen counting down from 200 to zero to indicate proximity as Yogi closes in. There are various areas scattered along the route that can send Yogi closer or further away from his buddy depending on which one you happen to enter.

RELEASE BOX		
CD-ROM	\$ 99.95 / £ 14.995	REVIEWED
SPCD	\$ 99.95	REVIEWED
ARC	\$ 99.95 / £ 14.995	REVIEWED

OK, Boo-Boo

An approacher is in a good old boy that

A lot of traps in the game will have obvious effects on Yogi. These include games which spring up everywhere and can bounce Yogi back or forward a step - if you happen to be stood near to it (like on a lake then it can force Yogi away from it to the first one). A picture of Yogi at the base of the screen slowly disappears as he loses ener-

gy - but energy is easily replenished by collecting the game features that these helpful computers have left lying around.

Great enemy graphics and a lot of situations to this extremely playable game - which is not impossible to complete. Yogi Bear will appeal entirely to younger game players, but has plenty of references for the old timers too.

by Andy Bell

VISUAL EFFECTS [REDACTED]
Clean and well-animated

AUDIO [REDACTED]
Atmosphere takes thought

IQ FACTOR [REDACTED]
Some tricky puzzles to solve

FUN FACTOR [REDACTED]
Some captures that the average game!

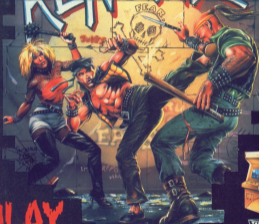
THREE DIMENSIONS [REDACTED]

PROTECTED BY [REDACTED]

ACE RATING 752

PLAY...

RENEGADE



PLAY MEAN!



Play!
arcade



SPECTRUM

7.95

SPECTRUM

COMMODORE

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DISK

COMMODORE

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AMSTRAD

AMSTRAD

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DISK

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A breathtaking conversion of the arcade hit by Taito now for your home computer. With all the original play features. **PLAY RENEGADE... PLAY MEAN!**

Play!
the name
of the game

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NIGEL MANSELL'S

GRAND PRIX



"NIGEL MANSELL'S GRAND PRIX" is ready to take you and your computer into the fast lane of game excitement. As well as capturing the speed and adrenalin pumping danger of the world's greatest sporting spectacle, the game is the first racing simulation to reflect some of the enormous advances in car design and technology that have taken place recently.

And yet the game still offers an excellent opportunity for even the most inexperienced novice to blast round the track at excessive speeds with the turbo on maximum boost and not a care in the world for fuel consumption, tyre wear or racing line. However, for those who know, or want to know a little more, there is an opportunity to race a selection of the world's greatest circuits in the quest for valuable championship points.

The red lights are on - you snap into gear. The engine roars - your grip tightens on the steering wheel. The crowd goes wild as the lights flash to green. 900 brake horsepower is suddenly unleashed and the Williams battles to the first bend. Ahead of you lies 31 weeks of the world's most grueling and spectacular sporting championship.



Technical Consultant -
Nigel Mansell, Peter Windsor,
Williams Grand Prix Engineering Ltd.

Nigel Mansell celebrating
victory.

Just over half the race completed and you're flying second to your main rival - 0.8 seconds ahead of you.



Your pit crew are
in constant contact
with you throughout
the race.

Current gear -
indicates a wind.

Use your Turbo for
extra power -
but watch that fuel.

This panel
gives you vital
information on your
race performance.

Wing mirrors. No
sign of the third
place car yet!



Produced by
martech

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Tel: 0494 541115 Telex: 91205 PRMSG G Brixton, London SW9 6NU

Spectrum 49 128

Commodore 64 128

Amstrad CPC

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Cassette 19.99

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Disk 111.99

PATROL Hydrofoil Missions are significant targets that often serve the surface of the water with hydrofoils attached to their hulls. As commander of one such craft — the Pegasus — it's your task to successfully complete eight missions, which can be attempted in any order.

Two screen displays can be changed between at the touch of a button. The first is your operations map showing your present position relative to the remaining shoreline, which varies depending upon your mission. This map also shows a circle around your ship's indicating the radio range of your vessel.

The second display is the main control screen, occupying the bottom 2/3rds of the screen. This display is split horizontally in two with the bottom half being taken up with your weapons on the right, a radar in the middle (the range of which can be altered from 2.5 miles up to 40 miles) and two elevators of your boat each divided into boxes which turn red if you're hit in order to show the damaged areas.

The top part of the display shows the sea stretching out ahead of you. The very top third of the screen only becomes filled when you press the T (or target) key; any nearby likely targets (ships or helicopters) appear as a through the binocular view with an arrow indicating the direction in which you need to move to be directly in front of them.

If you should decide to attack the enemy — then pressing the space bar takes you out of missi-voic mode and puts you in steering mode. A cross-hair sight of the enemy appears on the binocular view, position the sight and fire.

Your choice of weapons includes a cannon, chaff rockets tied to decoy enemy air-

ships, and your very own Soviet missiles. Strongly, you need be cautious of anything both on your side but you can blow them up with the cannon.

The objective for each mission varies, it can include sinking all enemy torpedos or just escaping from a port area with as little damage as possible. Each mission has a time limit of anything from 2 to 40 hours, depending upon the main objective. Thankfully, PHM Pegasus features a time compressor which can speed time along up to 128 times faster than normal.

Again depending upon your scenario,



The operations map, used for such scenarios as the you keep in sight and your base activities that take place.

PHM PEGASUS

Hydro-foiling terrorists with ELECTRONIC ARTS

you might have the aid of a number of other PHMs or helicopters, which you can send on search missions independently of your own craft.

The game has some really good graphics, details exploding in the water sending a geyser-like fountain up into the air—and the

screen layout is well designed, but the emphasis is certainly on controls, and very hard to come out of. Simulators have many good things to recommend them, but for control fans it's a real treat.

Andy Smith

RELEASE BOX

DATE	0-000	1-1000	RELEASD
SPIC	1-1000		RELEASD
ABS	0-000	0-1000	NOV 1

VISUAL EFFECTS

Good screen design with well chosen graphics

AUDIO

Strong engine, helicopter gunfire

IQ FACTOR

Strongly called for at times

FUN FACTOR

Emphasizes more on screen than simulation

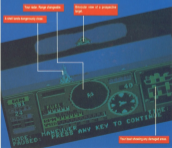


Steering good but for game some time

ACE RATING 831

Strike on the ocean wave

With the binoculars, you can see the target, you can see the target, you can see the target, you can see the target.



For the steering, it's a real treat.

COLIAN, despite wanting the part of crabmeister, is actually in a somewhat awkward spot on the edge of space. P - wherever that is - which has fallen into the hands of some rather scary aliens, collectively known as The Empire. These aliens are using the manufacturing plants on the island to build their terrifying

one of six composites. These include Detonite, which is used to blow up the Terrorpods. Alarm, which is your mode of leaving the Terrorpod-composites. Fuel Pods, which you need to power your D.S.Y. (Defense Strategy Vehicle) which is what you use to control the various of the island. In order to do the complex manufacturing

TERRORPODS

Tripod trouble from PSYGNOSIS

war machines known as Terrorpods. The war is set to be started to bid their plans, but unfortunately you were discovered (you need) and as The Empire are now using the Terrorpods to destroy the installations and small mechanical devices known as Spoons to destroy the installations of their vital composites.

The object of the game is to take care of the various installations in an attempt to gain six vital parts of Terrorpod that are under construction. If you manage to get all six then you can build yourself your very own Terrorpod, with which you can attempt to destroy all the other Terrorpods.

Fighting with installations involves using your satellite (over - a small buggy - that is controlled from the keyboard and aimed towards an installation, having selected an installation you can then select to trade for

others to continue making the vital Terrorpod parts, you have to ensure that no link is missing. A manufacturing plant can't operate without fuel and they can't get fuel if the fuel mines have been destroyed. Also, the price of the resources varies and that is where your trading abilities are put to the test. The idea is to buy and sell resources and make enough profit to ensure you never run out of resources.

Terrorpods boasts some very impressive graphics and sound effects. The explosions are colourful and vivid and the scrolling is very well achieved, with smooth animation. The enemies when you see your beam are peering. Terrorpods is an expensive game (but will keep the player involved for a long time, but there are some annoying points - getting a missile is unnecessarily slow and it's initially very hard to get your bearings. If you like your strategy mixed with the illusion to beat the odd alien then Terrorpods could be worth a look. If you prefer your trading speed, with the odd chance to trade then you could well get frustrated and eventually bored.

• Andy Smith



The studio keeps various installations supplied with the necessary resources in this sci-fi production by Psygnosis.

Shoot-em-up?

Terrorpods' trading elements are complicated and absorbing, but the trading side of things is slightly unusual - many action fans should ponder before they buy. You have two weapons at your disposal: beams and missiles. Beams can be let off at any time and are aimed with cross-hair sights controlled by the cursor. The problem with beams, though, is that they don't actually destroy anything - except your own installations. If you're foolish enough to shoot them, if you lose a Terrorpod it barely looks best up and right back to the mother ship, only to return a little later. To definitively 'wreck' anything you need to use your missiles.

There are other things you have to press. If to load your weapons, then it to control the guidance screen, the SPACE is touch the missile and then use the cursor to keep the 'hit indicators' within the sight. Sounds complicated? It is, and even playing for quite some time is unlikely to make you fit in a habitat. Bear in mind, too, that both beams and missiles use up Detonite - so don't get gun crazy.

RELEASE BOX

ATARI ST	12.99	ADVANCED
AMIGA	19.95	ADVANCED

Die Terrorpod!

The main thing that it's hard to keep in working order indicators in large.

Threat level Details remaining



Continued to make ships. The hit indicators. The manufacturing installations.

VISUAL EFFECTS With varying degrees

AUDIO ★★★★★
Some stunning atmospheric effects

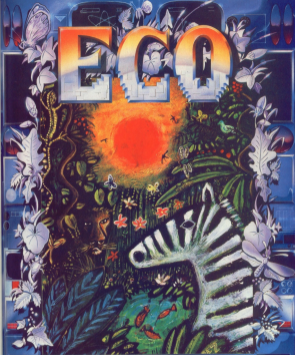
IQ FACTOR ★★★★★
Mass points for your money

FUN FACTOR ★★★★★
Tough to get in a bad position. An enjoyable

SELECTED
★★★★★

ACE RATING 752

Eco



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ACTIVISION

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Special Game
1987
1987



When you want to find out if those 'real soon now' games have finally made it on to your machine, this is the place to look. The ACE Updates pages bring news, mini-reviews and ratings of the latest conversions – and if we've reviewed the game on another machine you'll find a reference to the issue and the earlier rating. Don't be caught out by a duff changeover; consult these pages before you break the bank.

SPECTRUM

MERCENARY

Novagen \$9.95cs

Finally the old Atari and C64 clones hit the Spectrum. The game delivers no surprises but still has all the fast, smooth wire-frame graphic action that made the original such a winner.

This game will take you glued to the screen as you fly around the city of Spector the maze of passages underground and avoid lots of worthy addition to any Spectrum owner's software collection.



● ACE RATING 870

RED L.E.D.

Starlight \$8.99cs

Commodore version reviewed issue 2 - ACE Rating 910

The wonderful Marble Mixers clone that was reviewed on the C64 in ACE issue 2. The Spectrum version turns out



to be just as playable and just as much fun. The graphics are superb and the gameplay is compelling. RED L.E.D. certainly deserves the original high rating.

● ACE RATING 910

GRAND PRIX SIMULATOR

Code Masters \$1.99cs

The Oliver twin turbo touch is boxed to arrive occasionally, and here it does its best. A viewed-from-above racing game, GP Simulator does small bobby car races and very unrealistic cornering. Cars race desperately round bends, giving the game a distinctly Flurishish flavour (not to mention an air of silliness). Right enough and quite enjoyable in its way, but even at the time the price Super Sprint still worth a look.



● ACE RATING 732

C64/128

SUPER SPRINT

Activision \$9.99cs

Spectrum version reviewed issue 2 - ACE Rating 907

Super Sprint has lost none of its playability in conversion to the C64. There are only three cars in the race but this C64 that means only one computer C64 if

there are two players, but competitive is still as hot as on the Speccy. Graphics and sound have been improved though the tracks now load in two sets of four, but this is only a minor irritation and doesn't affect its attractiveness.



● ACE RATING 917

ATARI ST

RANARAMA

Hewson \$19.95cdk

Of all the Grand Prix overlord wire magical shoot-em-ups, this was most popular (but sourest) - and rightly so. Now it comes on line in the long-awaited 3D wrap, boasting scores and swirling words through ever lighter and better-looking chapters. Very addictive, and capably difficult.

● ACE RATING 890

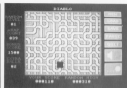
F-15 STRIKE EAGLE

Microprose \$24.95cdk

With solid 3D graphics and a gloriously beautiful title screen, F15 Strike Eagle really outshines its 3D counterparts and equips with the 3D combat simulation, comes - for the time being, at any rate. Politics aside, the game's graphics are on the slow side now and could look, perhaps, very pedestrian in six months time.

● ACE RATING 815





DIABLO

DIAMOND keep the ball rolling

GO game ideas return to haunt new machines. Here, you shuffle a slewful of bionics round to form the track sections on their front a continuous path to the rolling ball. The track sections disappear as the ball passes over them, so there's less and less margin for error as the game progresses. Keep the ball rolling

RELEASE BOX		
SNES	2.99	★★★★
EGIBET	2.99	★★★★
MSX2	2.99	★★★★

until all the track is used up—and you get down to the wire, only the last remains later.

If you never played this type of game last time round you'll feel it pushes your mental agility quite hard—but feels more than it does to the Amiga.

—Andy Wilson

VISUAL EFFECTS	★★★★★
AUDIO	★★★★★
IQ FACTOR	★★★★★
FUN FACTOR	★★★★★

ACE RATING 715



CLEAN UP SERVICE

Good clean fun from PLAYERS

RUN eradication is the name of the game in this out-and-out very playable one or two-player budget title. You play either Otto or Bottom, moo-like creatures who have been given their big chance as cleaners by the manager of the disgustingly filthy Acker Hotel. There are eight

increasingly dirty—smell, three-bit, 80000—brows, starting in the entrance hall and working up to the featured lifts.

On each level you must avoid the mobile garbage can and make it to a box containing a number of items to help you get the job done. The key objects are clutter bits, which will pile up in the lifts, but you can also make use of dust-grats and brooms to scrub the dirt, as well as other clever gadgets. The game has a pretty old-fashioned feel to it, but is graphically accomplished and delivers its fun liberally and is softened down to make it well worth a glance.

—Pete Corner

RELEASE BOX		
SNES	2.99	★★★★

VISUAL EFFECTS	★★★★★
AUDIO	★★★★★
IQ FACTOR	★★★★★
FUN FACTOR	★★★★★

ACE RATING 484

ANGLE BALL

Crazy pool from MASTERTRONIC

PAIRED on a hexagonal table with six pockets, this looks just game like the player competing against the computer or a friend in an attempt to win 28 different frames.

The computer opponent has three skill levels; on the easiest level he rarely manages to pot a shot but on the third level he rarely misses. When you line up for a shot you get the choice to use a variety of spins so you can ball it all attempt to use up



the next shot.

As a variant on a clipped-out frame, Angle Ball is not at all bad, it's different enough to keep you playing for a short while at least.

—Andy Wilson

RELEASE BOX		
SNES	2.99	★★★★
MSX	2.99	★★★★
MSX2	2.99	★★★★

VISUAL EFFECTS	★★★★★
AUDIO	★★★★★
IQ FACTOR	★★★★★
FUN FACTOR	★★★★★

ACE RATING 468

FRUIT MACHINE SIMULATOR

Can CODE MASTERS hold your plums?

THEY'RE all three, the familiar features that are loved by the fans of this sort of coin-op—the Cash Box, the Wudge feature, the Feature Hold etc.

It's very hard to put together, with the spinning reels being very well decorated and distinctive. For up to two players, Fruit Machine Simulator could provide you with a bit of entertainment if you're a real fruit machine fiend—but think, you don't have to put any money in! Of course, you never win any money either so you would have to be a real.

—Andy Wilson



RELEASE BOX		
SNES	2.99	★★★★
MSX	2.99	★★★★
MSX2	2.99	★★★★

VISUAL EFFECTS	★★★★★
AUDIO	★★★★★
IQ FACTOR	★★★★★
FUN FACTOR	★★★★★

ACE RATING 583

ASHCOM			
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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 1,250,000 sq miles with over 100,000 locations. A highly developed class system of squires, knights, lords etc fighting to become emperors. An economic trade system with 1000+ trade items, merchant and political banks, stock markets and trade treaties. Religions based on a planet wide network of temples and monasteries. Players have 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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OF STRATEGIC IMPORTANCE

If you're looking for a new type of arena game platform, when he looks at his collection of arcade and adventure games, he bolts on the shelves at the local software shop, and he asks the clerk, "I really want to spend another 10 quid on the latest intensely-winding strategy game?"

It doesn't happen in all of us, but those who have endured the period of frustration know that often the computer has to be swung to the bottom of the wardrobe and it also you have to start looking for an alternative class of game that will provide the sort of challenge you're really craving from the state-of-art.

Most computer games are more concerned with tactics than strategy. If you're unclear what the difference is, tactics involves the development of appropriate responses to the opponent's manoeuvres during battle, whereas strategy is the process of developing a plan to achieve overall victory in your typical shoot-em-up, tactical operators use the order of the day as you learn how to dodge and defeat the opposition. Strategy is unnecessary for the simple reason that the enemy has no strategy - they just keep coming, and that's all you need to do a keep beating.

Things are very different, however, when you're up against someone like Napoleon at Waterloo, or an ingenious alien commander who understands just what you're after and is reacting every minute of your mind's CPU to being about your downfall. In games like these, strategic thinking is essential

and the clerk can bring a degree of involvement far beyond the average shoot-'em-up strategy reason to Alain Delon.

Are you up to the challenge? Can you do it, anyone can shoot them, the sort you come across in games haven't really got much in the brain department. How would you make out if your opponents started blowing a lot of initiative? Imagine your response if it is run off the road space involve suddenly stopped dropping bombs, and a detachment moved to the bottom of the screen, neutralised your base, and demanded your immediate surrender. Would you have a response? Could you cut the strings against a well-avoiding enemy. In general, is commander or not? Have you chosen to find out...



ANNALS OF ROME

Spectrum	£12.95-01
Commodore	£12.99-01
Amstrad	£12.99-01
ManiST	£14.99-01

A bigger title one it starts in the year 273 B.C. and can continue indefinitely as the player struggles to keep his ever-expanding empire together whilst under threat from up to 15 hostile powers. Each game turn covers a period from one to 10 years and is composed of several sub-sections which allow the player to make strategic decisions concerning economics, personnel management and foreign or civil war.

There is no rush to the game that it will take you a long

Fed up with mindless blasting? Want an opponent worthy of your skills? The chance to develop your own campaigns for conquest and colonisation? Andy Smith presents 15 games that will really test your mettle on the battlefield.



time to get to grips with it, but it is well worth persevering with because the amount of available options makes it very inviting to play and no two games will ever be exactly the same. For the ace strategist it's a treat, but prepare yourself for long involved sessions. Thankfully the **SAVE GAME** option is available from the start of each turn, so you can carry on with the campaign whenever you have the time to play.

OPPOSITION ★★★★★
DISPLAY ★★★★★
EASE OF USE ★★★★★
GAME DEPTH ★★★★★

ACE RATING: 850

ARHEM
 600

Spectrum £3.95 ea
Aminal £3.95 ea
GM/IB £3.95 ea

This one, two or three player tactical wargame is based on the Mutual German operation of 1945. Mismanagement's plan was to cut National de Gaulle and open the door to Berlin. Three allied airborne divisions were dropped behind enemy lines and attempted to capture a series of bridges for the advancing line.

The game contains five separate scenarios, each lasting a fixed number of turns. Each day of the campaign is made up of three reconnaissance, offensive and night and each turn is divided into three phases. The first is the reconnaissance phase in which extended units can move and engage in combat. The second phase is when other units can move, and the third phase is another reconnaissance phase.

Beside its age Arnhem is still one of the toughest, most challenging and involving wargames you could wish to own, and it will test those GT skills on the road to fame GAT - who knew? - before



OPPOSITION ★★★★★
DISPLAY ★★★★★
EASE OF USE ★★★★★
GAME DEPTH ★★★★★

ACE RATING: 910

BALANCE OF POWER
 Missiague

Amiga £9.95 ea
Mac/ST £9.95 ea

No battles, Balance of Power is the definitive strategy game. The player takes the role of one of the Superpowers while either the computer or a friend takes control of the other. This is a case of trying to win through real-life human power on a global scale. The aim is achieved in a number of ways: involving supplying arms and financing out to radical leaders in the hope of toppling a government that is not receptive to either the great American or Russian checks.

(which ever colour you happen to be playing.) It's complex, it's involving, it's certainly thought-provoking and its demand to play is ten minute sessions, but aside a lot of time and you'll get a lot of enjoyment from the game. Absorbing stuff that gives an insight into the current world of geopolitics.

OPPOSITION ★★★★★
DISPLAY ★★★★★
EASE OF USE ★★★★★
GAME DEPTH ★★★★★

ACE RATING: 950



Strategic scores

We've come up with a special rating system for this section to make sure you can choose your strategy game with confidence. Here's how we sort the best from the rest...

OPPOSITION

This is of utmost importance - it sets strategy especially. It is an assessment of just how intelligently the computer reacts to any moves you make during the course of the game. It also takes into account how well the computer handles its losses in an attempt to win the game. The addition of varying levels of play will win a game point in this category only if the computer appears to adopt a more aggressive attitude at the higher levels.

DISPLAY

Forget the packaging. The category deals with how well designed the in-screen display is. As is often the case with strategy games, you're going to be sitting in front of the screen for a considerable amount of time and a poorly designed screen with cluttered text or gimmicky colours can ruin an otherwise enjoyable game. The feature in which information is displayed can also earn points in the category - well designed maps and status screens can help a player devise more effective strategic policies.

EASE OF USE

This is a direct reflection on the game's operating system and how user-friendly it is. If the player has to wade through a whole lot of game screens to change a single order, then it can become extremely tedious. How easy the player is able to follow what exactly is happening at the game is also considered in the category.

GAME DEPTH

The major consideration here is just how far the game strives to make the player and provide for varied challenge. The ability to alter a game's parameters or the addition of what if options can turn an otherwise win-or-lose game into an exciting challenge full of new opportunities. The packaging is included in this category as some selling can help to give the game atmosphere - and the addition of historical notes, photographs and diagrams of help to transport the player from the armchair to the battlefield.

BATTLE OF BRITAIN
 600

Spectrum £3.95 ea
GM/IB £3.95 ea £1.95 ea
Aminal £3.95 ea £1.95 ea

Take control of Fighter Command during 1940 in this solo wargame featuring three separate scenarios. The computer assumes the role of the operations room as the player attempts to stop the invasion of Britain by the German Luftwaffe. You have to control several fighter forces when deciding upon which course of action you should follow, including priority availability, maintenance levels and flying hours. Again, levels have included an optional device sequence which puts you into the cockpit of a Spitfire as you see dog-fight with Jerry over the Channel.

While the game boasts three scenarios, the first is a special study of an introduction to the game for the player to learn some basics with the general mechanics and the second is a simulation of an all-out attack



by the Luftwaffe, but the third scenario covers 30 days of the critical battle and is an historically accurate - as is possible within the constraints of game play.

An enjoyable challenge that should be on your shopping list, especially as it's now available on the Classic CD-ROM title for a fraction of the original price.

OPPOSITION ★★★★★
DISPLAY ★★★★★
EASE OF USE ★★★★★
GAME DEPTH ★★★★★

ACE RATING: 830

BUTTERFIELD GERMANY
 600

Spectrum £12.95 ea
GM/IB £12.95 ea £12.95 ea
Aminal £12.95 ea £12.95 ea

This one or two player wargame is set just in the future and simulates a conflict between NATO and the Warsaw Pact in Western Europe. Sounds like October 1982 game? Well yes, the scenario is



the same as the other PC-gold Theatrical Stage, but the game itself is a multitude of ways.

Played on a map divided into hexagons, the play alternates with each player's turn being roughly divided into three. The first phase is the human Supply Phase when the computer calculates the amount of supplies that your forces can receive. It takes into account whether a clear line can be drawn back to the supply points - that is, the paths through enemy held territory that the supplies just want to move. The next phase is the optional Nuclear Phase, which gives the player the chance to use nuclear warheads on a tactical or strategic level. Next comes the action phase, this can be subdivided into three main phases including movement, airforce movement and the attack phase. The introduction of the new image is not least welcome but to the computer, and on such it is very good. Switch your tactical planning daily while remaining free enough playable.

OPPOSITION *****
DISPLAY *****
EASE OF USE *****
GAME DEPTH *****

ACE RATING 820

DESERT RATS

CCC

Spectrum £3.95/£5.00
Amstrad £3.95/£5.00

The follow-up to the ever popular Amstrad also written by Bill South, Desert Rats is a one or two player wargame covering the campaign in the western desert from the arrival of Rommel in



Setting the scene...

If you always thought a strategy game is a strategy game is a strategy game then you could not be more mistaken. Scenarios vary widely, it does not qualify with which they are implemented. Some games attempt to cover too much ground and consequently leave the player with the feeling that he is not really in control of events while others concentrate too much on not giving details that can impair a player's strategic thinking. The good strategy game will strike a balance between the two.

Ideally, you should be able to make at least a few key decisions in a game as you wish - a good example of this is Balance of Power. Many games allow beyond this ideal and will allow the player to choose the weapons used, the arrival point of reinforcements, the amount of ammunition available and so on. This is the level of involvement you should be looking for.

Feeling a game with the correct level of detail is difficult - hence the guide - and even then you'll find great variation in the design of different programs. The usual format is to have the player controlling one force, with all orders issued to the various units before a button is pressed. The computer then calculates the results of the actions, moves the symbols on the screen and calculates the outcome of any ensuing combat. Then there's a pause while the computer takes its move, after which it's your turn again. Examples of the set of game include *Victory*, *Supremacy* or *War* and *Tankies*.

A lot of games have separate phases for example, a 'supply and attack phase', these are dealt with in a set order and they go together to form the game 'turn'. *Theatre Europe* and *Battlefield Germany* both take this approach. Other games will deal with the units one by one, with all the moves and combat for that particular unit being dealt with before the play is passed onto the next unit. *Rebeller's* is a good example of this latter set up. There are advantages and disadvantages to each system, and a lot depends on the particular player's own personal preference. You'll soon find the system that best suits your own style of playing.

troops to the final battle for El Alcazar.

The same ordering system that was used in *Atlantis* is used again in *Desert Rats*, and why not? It is simple, efficient and very easy to work with. *Desert Rats* is a tough game to win and you're sure to spend a long time doing.

OPPOSITION *****
DISPLAY *****
EASE OF USE *****
GAME DEPTH *****

ACE RATING 905

DOOMDARK'S REVENGE

Apogee

Spectrum £3.95/£5.00
Amstrad £3.95/£5.00

The sequel to the classic *Lords of Midnight*, written by the same author - Mike Sigeman.

Following the debut of *Doomdark's*, his daughter (Queen the Revendmother) thought it worthy to invade the peaceful lands of *Midnight*. Luce set forth to the lands of the forest to rescue his son Miklan and defeat the evil Sorcerer. The ordering system and game concept is the same as used in

Lords of Midnight, but the game was greatly enhanced by the addition of several exciting features, from which the player has to control his armies. Although you could see a lot of lords of *Midnight* in the game mechanics, *Doomdark's Revenge* plays completely differently and is certainly a worthy successor. All that remains now is to see whether Mike Sigeman can ever find the time to write that promised third part of the Miklay Eye of the Moon.

OPPOSITION *****
DISPLAY *****
EASE OF USE *****
GAME DEPTH *****

ACE RATING 940

What else can you expect of a *Balance of Power* successor? *Victory* is the *Peace* of *Victory*.



JOHNNY REB 2

Litton

Spectrum £3.95/£5.00
Amstrad £3.95/£5.00

This one or two player wargame makes a greater attempt to capture the flavour of the American Civil War, rather than conventionally re-enact a battle. The player is allowed to alter a variety of the game's parameters including which side you control, where reinforcements should arrive, the battlefield terrain and so on.

Johnny Reb is a definitely a worthy successor to the original *Johnny Reb* and is certainly deserving of a close examination.

OPPOSITION *****
DISPLAY *****
EASE OF USE *****
GAME DEPTH *****

ACE RATING 840

LORDS OF MIDNIGHT

Apogee

Spectrum £3.95/£5.00
Amstrad £3.95/£5.00

A fantasy wargame that can be played either as a wargame or as a graphic adventure. The last way to play the game is to combine the two separate elements and play as an epic.

The wargame aspect is by far the most testing and enjoyable. It provides the player controlling four characters of his own independently. They must secure the lords of *Midnight* and try to secure the various lords in an attempt to form a large enough army to defeat the evil Doomdark, who is resident in the Citadel of Midnight.

This is where the strategy comes into play as, initially, you'll play a major part in making an army fighting ability and the player must see that his troops are kept in fighting order before entering the final (without

success) on the battlefield. One of the most involving and atmospheric fantasy wargames you could hope to play, and unusual in its use of hexagonal - a method of presenting a view of the terrain in all directions, giving the player 100% possible movement capacity.



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Dark Sceptre

Mike Singleton of Core of Midnightmare has just completed the latest game, *Dark Sceptre*. Like most of his previous releases, it takes several strategy elements and gives them a new twist to produce a pioneering game with a tremendous display and complex gameplay.

The *Dark Sceptre* has been chosen, and as a total Theme (leader) you must retrieve it by issuing orders to your retainers and slaying with other Themes within the game. There are six different character types, each with its own abilities and characteristics, and each individual character has a set of eight attributes.

There are three principal display modes — a map of the land, the commands menu, and a display of the current location. The latter shows a horizontally scrolling landscape with the figures present depicted in very large, smoothly animated sprites.

During the game you select characters and issue them with orders, which they will then proceed to carry out to the best of their abilities while you get on with expanding the others. Fights are frequent and good use of sound is made to indicate that a fight has begun (in which case you have an option to view it) or that an enemy or neutral character has proved your odds.

Some characters can accept up to three orders at once, which they will execute in succession (if they are up to it), so you could, for example, get an Assassin to GO TO CYMBEL'S POOR, KILL ENEMY THAME, WAR and he would then go about his business. There are approximately 50 independent characters within the game, and getting to know their strengths and weaknesses as well as carefully analysing their manoeuvres is essential for success. There is no random element involved, so success or failure is entirely up to you.



The location display screen. Sprites are clearly built in animation is good and although the Spectrum is limited by giving each sprite a fixed frame.



There are approximately 50 different commands, which can be given to any character and which can be made to occur any fixed party. The only important restriction are magical commands which can only be carried out by a Mystic.

OPPOSITION *****
DISPLAY *****
EASE OF USE *****
GAME DEPTH *****

ACE RATING 950

REBELSTAR

Fantasy

Spectrum £7.99 ea.
C64/IB £7.99 ea.
Amstrad £7.99 ea.

Originally released by Red Bull on Rebelstar System. Festival bought the game, re-wrapped it and re-released it as Rebelstar before it achieved the success it so richly deserved.

The player takes charge of one or six castles in an attempt to destroy the force computer at the foot of Moonbase Delta. Since the computer or a hero can be chosen to play the part of the defender, the playing system is very easy to use and involves selecting a number of your best who hold certain amounts of Action points.

These are used up depending upon what you want the character to do. Simply moving your character to the left or right will cost six levels action points from an initial total of 100 (not 10), so how you spend each character's action points each turn can become very tricky indeed. A single game to play but also fast to very hard to put down — or win.

SHADOWFIRE

Adventure

Spectrum £3.99ea
C64/IB £3.99ea (1+2) 599ea
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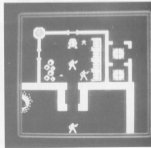


This strategy game was one of the last 16-bit-driven strategy games and is still one of the best. The player takes charge of six characters, collectively known as the Shadow Force, and uses them in an attempt to rescue the kidnapped Elyria who is being held on board the spaceship *Star 5* by that wonderful General Zed!

Each character is colored separately by means of some fun, wacky names that can be

OPPOSITION *****
DISPLAY *****
EASE OF USE *****
GAME DEPTH *****

ACE RATING 900



rolled up, is the battle menu allows the player to choose to attack, defend, retreat etc and the movement icon lets the player decide in which direction the choices should move. The various characters all have different characteristics that one particular to them and the player has to use each team member's special ability of key points in the game in order to survive. Ploped against a very tough time limit. Desiderius requires the player to meet swiftly under pressure and employ all his tactical skills. A great game to play that is a real challenge. It is a play that the sequel, Empire Force is a completely different sort of game which is not as hell as enjoyable as Desiderius.

OPPOSITION *****
 DISPLAY *****
 Ease of Use *****
 GAME DEPTH *****

ACE RATING 990

TULCAN
 CCG

Spectrum 89.95 vs
 Amstrad 89.95 vs

The latest game has 3.7 units, following firmly in the footsteps of Desert Storm. Values covers the Tunisian campaign from November 1942 to the end of May 1943. Again the same ordering system is employed, but the game boasts a much larger playing area than the other two games, allowing greater scope for the player. Also, all of all attack planes has been added to give you the

importance that air cover played during the real campaign. With the computer as a friend playing one side (either Allied or Axis) the game is so patient and will keep you alerted for a long time.

OPPOSITION *****
 DISPLAY *****
 Ease of Use *****
 GAME DEPTH *****

ACE RATING 930

NAPOLEON AT WAR
 CCG

Spectrum 89.95 vs

A war player weapons based on the Napoleonic battle of Eylau. The player takes charge of the Prussia forces while the computer plays the part of the Russian and French.

The player controls the battle by issuing orders either directly to the units individually or to the Corp Commanders, who will either carry out your orders to the letter or will act on their own initiative. Each game turn is divided into two - the issuing of orders and the movement and combat that is a result of those orders. If you're a fan of this per-



od of managing the Regiment of War is a must, and even if you're not then it's still well worth a good look.

OPPOSITION *****
 DISPLAY *****
 Ease of Use *****
 GAME DEPTH *****

ACE RATING 920

THEATRE EUROPE
 PGG

Spectrum 89.95 vs
 C&EG 89.95 vs
 Amstrad 89.95 vs

This weapons is set just in the tense and covers the last 50 days fighting between the



NATO alliance and the Warsaw Pact. Should you decide to play as supreme commander of NATO your objective is to prevent the invasion of West Germany - at all costs. Obviously should you decide to play supreme commander of the Warsaw Pact then your objective is to occupy West Germany.

There are four basic phases to the game: movement phase, attack phase, supply phase and the air phase. Before an attack is made the player also has the option to use tactical chemical weapons in attack. The air phase allows the player to control a fleet of air force and struggle to air superiority by deciding where and when to make an attack behind enemy lines.

As a usual with PGG games, there's the opportunity for the player to enter an arcade style game, which means the player can actively participate in a battle. This is all very well and good if that's what you want, but frankly the game is just as good if you never get to take part in one of the battles. Certainly the

choice element should not be a game reason for buying the game.

It is to see how drive game. Theatre Europe is a gift. It comes frighteningly close to predicting the future for Europe should the undesirable happen.

OPPOSITION *****
 DISPLAY *****
 Ease of Use *****
 GAME DEPTH *****

ACE RATING 915

YANKEE
 CCG

Spectrum 89.95 vs

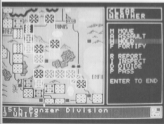
This single player weapons set during the American Civil War at the 1862's game with two scenarios takes form the war. The first and most famous is the battle of Gettysburg where the Union troops repelled the Confederate attack and won a decisive victory. The second scenario follows the battle at Chickamauga Georgia where the Confederates managed to defeat the Union troops after a long and bloody battle. It is a sequence of play involves the player issuing orders either to



individual units or to the Corps Commanders, who can, if you desire, act on their own initiative. A very well designed series of supply routes for an enjoyable game that is also a testing challenge.

OPPOSITION *****
 DISPLAY *****
 Ease of Use *****
 GAME DEPTH *****

ACE RATING 895



UNIVERSAL MILITARY SIMULATOR

This new offering from Randstad looks like being a potential military success, a game that marks a giant step in war-gaming and strategy and which promises to bring this area of gamingplay to the notice of a far wider public.

Programmed by a dedicated American wargamer who spends most of his spare time wandering across the sites of historic battlefields, pondering the fate and fortunes of armies past and present, UMS is available for total control if given the player. Not only can you re-run five classic conflicts, ranging from the battle of Attila in 201 BC through Marston Moor (1644) to Waterloo (1815), but you can also define your own armies, units, weapons, and even the terrain across which they face each other.

The great battles each feature 3-D grid-scapes based on contemporary maps, giving an added dimension of realism to the conflicts. This sort of attention to detail is apparent throughout the program, giving you the ability to manipulate almost every conceivable element of battle. Time-scales, morale,

injuries, ammunition, numerical force, terrain, and map design all have a bearing on the outcome of the battle, and all can be altered at any time before, during, or after the continuation by the user.

Of course you don't have to take the top-down battle approach too seriously, if like with the Jones it really becomes too much to bear, why not plot out a 3-D representation of their garden and launch an all-out attack? First person to capture the opponent's dog and feed it is the lion in the screen. Or you could stage a battle on a top-of planet, or whatever else takes your fancy. Seven years in the making, the program has the flexibility necessary to make the possible.

The Army set-up screen allows you to determine the real application of your fighting force.

Through a battle the program displays sections of the maps, showing the movement of different units and reporting on the outcome of any engagements. Naturally the great battles run strictly according to history — until '00) year altering the parameters, and find out what would have happened if Napoleon hadn't had to march up that ridge, or if Wellington had been face to face with Harold at Hastings!

For the serious strategist, the ability to control or kill any command instructor to any unit at any time during the battle is invaluable for instant "what-if" investigations. In this respect the program rises out of the realms of entertainment and into the realm of true education — and not only for you and the army scout but also for the CIA are looking for a copy for use in their training department.

The program will be released with an 88-page booklet giving details of the great battles and a 30-page machine-specific manual. It will also be the subject of a full-scale feature in next month's A&E.



The leading Orders screen, where the player issues orders to an individual unit, taking into account its surrounding terrain and the opposing forces.



Display options include a multiple viewing facility, allowing you to get a substance about things of any size from any direction. The screen even simulates smoke, other features include maps, hills, and encampments. There's even a facility for defining environmental map for use while you run out of ammo.

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This month the Pig embraces Ingrid Boltomlow, challenges the poils in *Yes, Prime Minister*, and previews *Jurster: The White Wizard* also makes a (small) contribution...

PILGRIM

GNOME RANGER

LEVEL 9 launch Ingrid Boltomlow...

THIS is the second game to use Level 9's new interactive character system - and things are definitely looking up. Knight Cric failed to stir the Pigs' blood to any great extent, though it was - by most computer standards - a good enough program. There were an awful lot of interestingly computer-generated characters in the game and this - in conjunction with the lack of information about what was really going on - did not one friend either wanting.

However, Level 9's new *Managing Director*, Ingrid Boltomlow, has obviously been knowing her weight around because *Gnome Ranger* puts right a lot of things that were wrong with Knight Cric, and does it with a sense of humour and some clever puzzles.

Some time ago, Pete Austin of Level 9 told the Pilgrim that the only way forward for adventures like *knights* was in the direction of multi-character games. The days when you could just level in and out were it over it, chosen were past and be there to be any real complexity in an adventure like the past.

Older times...Older mogik

We mentioned Level 9's new *Yes* and *Mogik* release last month. Seems like it won't be really new for at least another few weeks. One thing we don't mention however, is that the 16-bit versions are going to feature a lot more text than the originals. That's amazing, pig, because the Pig recently played a previous version and was dismayed by the poverty of the descriptions. Bytes were tight in those days, believe Pigs, but upgrades can look forward to a textual feast with the new versions - as I am assured by Pete Austin.



wasn't going to have to involve other NPCs/non-player characters.

One of most of the successful games of recent months and you'll see that there's a lot of truth in this. Characters pop up in games with greater frequency these days, and more often than not you'll have to cooperate with them, or recruit them in some way to gain your objectives.

Knight Cric implemented the system with a respectability, and one of the game's puzzles was that it was too far. Some of the puzzles require several characters to solve and some of them use VERY unusual puzzles. Enter *Gnome Ranger*...

The plot of the game is really pretty basic. Young Ms Boltomlow needs the game's long way from home, having been whisked away from her family by a 'heavily' weaponed scold. There is just the faintest suggestion that the scold was a deliberate ploy on behalf of her family to get rid of her, but we'll let that pass and it doesn't seem to have any bearing on the gameplay.

The game is in three parts and unlike Knight Cric you can't move between the parts of it - each part is a separate game unto itself and you have to solve them in order, gaining access to the next episode only when you have completed the current one.

In the first part you find yourself outside a shop, surrounded by a greedy piglet. One of the Pigs' intentions of Knight Cric was that there were a lot of leeches which served no useful purpose. Oh, so you can GO TO in Level 9's new system, but why bother to include a leeches if you're not going to use them if you can't go to somewhere else? No problems like that in *Gnome Ranger*, then - aren't that many leeches in each section and you can easily move about them at the start, getting your bearings before using the GO TO command later.

In partnership

All the puzzles in the first part of the game involve other characters. You can make very little headway without at the very least, recruiting the **gnomik**, and you will also encounter a rather charming **swamp** of **dogs**, who attended the Pig at the level

Wizard advent. And then there's the **swamp** who doesn't seem particularly important, the **swamp** (who is the **swamp**, the **swamp** and so on). Each of these characters has certain attributes that will enable you to succeed in your initial quest, which is to destroy the power of a wicked witch who has turned up a world-wide commercial empire based on store games.

RELEASE BOX

All releases should be available by the time you read this. A word of warning to graphics fans, however - 16-bit cassette versions will be low-res. This doesn't worry the Pig unduly - it will be playing its Spectrum version, does it or does it?

GMG-08	£9.95/£9.95
SPIC	£9.95
GTAB-07	£14.95
RMGA	£14.95
GM-PC	£14.95
MIC	£14.95
ABG	£9.95/£14.95

If you succeed in locating the witch's wand and obtaining her power, you're through to the second part of the game. Whereas the first part centres exclusively around character puzzles and co-operation, the second part involves manipulating the ingredients for a magical potion. (So Ingrid to continue on her quest) Ingrid's must first recruit the **Adventurer's** to start, which for some reason, starts up at the beginning of the game when Ingrid initially picks it up from it to have a part of it out to the old pig. The creature, of course, is a terrifying piglet, but the ingredients for use it them, at least are extremely difficult to come by.

The potion system in part two deserves a mention. Each machine requires four ingredients, and each ingredient is created by some, colour, smell/taste, and texture. Thus a pig takes a leaf, a yellow berry, a sweet fruit, and a tangy berry you could brew up

Popular residences.



The Witch's cottage in *Ghoste Range*. A desirable residence, complete with a unique collection of stone grones, drystones and sitting stones.

the same place as you could with a foot, a pillow and a sweet fern, and a hairy cat-pot. The recipes for different potions are not difficult to find, though some are rather cryptically expressed.

Once you've encountered the wizard, you're on your way to part three and the final stretch. At this stage you will find yourself sorting out people's problems in a world dominated by mineral themes, thus completing the themed, repetitive, mineral sequence. Papyrus, peas, and woe between the live people and the ice people will be your chief concerns before finally closing books.



It does have *Ghoste* the companion here, just when you need perfection. Only forty hours should apply.

Ghoste Range has improved on *Knights Of The Pagan Stairs* (more legend and mystery, the atmosphere more enjoyable and less confusing, the plot more compelling) and the dialogue (more interesting). You can't get to much more than that, except that perhaps level 15's next game could give us some of the same. It would be good to see a slightly bigger game, in terms of locations and puzzles, but for the time being this will do grandly.



Ghoste again. Finally, if the game's as good as these screen shots then an attempt is well under way...

SYSTEM ■■■■■
High environments (MS-DOS and VGA)

CHARACTERS ■■■■■
Very impressive range

CHALLENGE ■■■■■
Very logical puzzles (missing other characters)

LANDSCAPE ■■■■■
One is superb, but the others outstanding features

As reported in *Knights Of The Pagan Stairs* by **VERDICT 915**

YES PRIME MINISTER

MOSAIC give you the keys to Number 10

THOSE of you aged over 30 or so will probably remember the days of Ben Collier, the wit, *Comedy Action*, and the day when Mosaic first announced that they would be launching the game. OK, in the *Pigs* era you're a busy lad, but let's face it, the game has been a very long time in the making. Now it's waiting on the shelves for you, demanding to be read and your money—does it deserve either?

No, absolutely it doesn't. In fact, the game, based on the famous TV show of the same name, goes down as the *Pigs* book of choice of the biggest named opponents of the year. Let's see what went wrong.

RELEASE BOX	
CD-ROM	£14.95 (US\$26)
SPEC	£4.95
IBM PC	£4.95
MS-DOS	£4.95 (US\$8)

First, the game uses the same basic principle of the *Action* Mosaic games from Level 9 Software. This means that rather than know about items besides, in location the program tells you it does, so to speak, and points at opportune moments for you to select them if

number of possible directions. Depending on your choice, the plot then proceeds in various different directions and new situations develop.

The storyline of *Yes, Prime Minister* takes

place in five parts, each part being a day in a working week of Britain's Number One. The dialogue shows you the interior of your office, complete with two phones, two drawers, an alarm clock, a letter machine, a clock, an

extension for the time always manages to slip past your mind, and you're left looking at another part of the screen.

Sound like any of the suggestions but not the full range? ☹

Number complete with a clock, alarm, letter machine, and drawers.

Sound like any of the suggestions but not the full range? ☹

Ministry, and a letter

Gameplay is as follows: You have a keypad of menu items (machine to machine, but it basically is a pointer of some kind) which you can move about the screen using the cursor keys or a joystick. As you move it, new scenes of your office scroll into view into the Commodore and Amstrad versions, the screen fills up the spectrum. By clicking on an object, you select it and may, occasionally, be able to interact with it.

For example, you start the game at Ministry and scroll the screen to show your clock, which says 9:00am. The minutes tick by pretty rapidly, so you should find out what your appointments are for the day. This is done by clicking on the left-hand corner of your desk, which causes a diary for the day to appear, to be displayed. The next you look at it, it displays three appointments - sometimes there will be more. Your appointments schedule does not change from game to game, though what happens in between meetings does.

SYSTEM ■■■■■■

Big, is an efficient, portable, machine, but not updated

CHARACTERS ■■■■■■

Excellent, various, some with a presence

CHALLENGE ■■■■■■

Challenging, but not, but not much else

LANDSCAPE ■■■■■■

Requires, some, but not, but not

MCI game need 256 bits and it has a bit more

VERDICT 595

While you're doing this, you may have heard a plaintive beeping. Scroll the screen around your desk and you will notice the phone ringing. Click on it, and the screen changes to text mode, with the cursor now over the phone. There's nothing for you to do except read what he has to say, then read what you say in response, and occasionally select one of several speech options at oral moments.

Whether it's the inebriated beeping, or the other phone, the procedure is identical. To line things up a bit, it means you will occasionally appear on your desk, which you may read by clicking on it, and which will probably contain some short messages from Bernard Haddock, your private secretary. You can also read incoming messages on the teletype console giving notice of some teletype-labeled and some rather uninteresting political platitudes that spring from the 'black box'.

As the clock ticks through the day, you will find yourself attending meetings in nearby offices. To get to these you click on your desk and then choose the appropriate destination from the list presented. You move actually see another location, but simply read messages an account of what happens there. That account, so with almost all events within the game, will be composed almost entirely of dialogue between yourself, Bernard, and Sir Humphrey Appleby, the Cabinet Secretary.

Political aims

Your objective in the game is to stay in power and boost your rating in the polls, which you can check by clicking on the front desk in your office. To avoid a vote behind it, clicking on the side gives you an up-to-date poll report - you start the game with 50% and must obviously attempt to improve on that figure as the days roll by.

The manner in which you select that objective lies in the way you select the various options during the games. For example, suppose you have a meeting at 9:00am with Sir Humphrey. Handling you aren't busy discussing the plan is making a meeting of the later indicated, you will be able to click on the desk, select Sir Humphrey's office, and enter into dialogue with the stooping old busy-body.

Sir Humphrey, for example, may wish to discuss with you some plans for setting up a Ministry to Women. So you set that, Prime Minister, he might say, that this will offend all your loyal male supporters (all your loyal female supporters). The program then waits for you to click on one of three choices, which is somewhat strange since Sir Humphrey speaking and not you. Even more strange, if you make him say something inappropriate such as to above, he will start getting catchier. You then reply to him, and have a similar opportunity to direct

the flow of your own side of the conversation during the somewhat limited alternatives.

Despite the slight difficulty of being able to direct at will of an argument, the actuality about a title in the gameplay and makes things more interesting. In fact, the best of the dialogue is really very witty to parts and even to be good as the TV series. Is that what you want?

The biggest problem lies in the repetitive nature of the gameplay. There is a linear storyline which does not arise from game to game, and on top of this various random scenarios will occur. Each meeting you attend may lead you, depending on which option you choose, into different sequences. The trouble arises when you have played the game about the time (and it doesn't take long to finish, either). Despite the fact that new scenarios occasionally crop up, the variety steadily grows stale, and the bulk of the game becomes depressingly familiar. What you end up with is an actually enjoyable game, that turns out to be a disappointment. Most, really, you'll want to return to it as much the same way as you would return to a book you've already read, the Pig is not convinced, and I suspect that the sort of game needs a massive text-database, a strong lead cast, and more intelligence to succeed.

Variety show**The White Wizard ponders on multiple choice games...**

I humbly beg to submit that the Pig has missed the point with his Prime Minister. I would argue that a pure Multiple-Choice Scenario can never be a good game. Here is my case.

Mathematically, for an MCG to work well, it needs enough pre-determined to be able to give the player the impression that his decisions are actually affecting the game storyline. What does this imply? Imagine you have three choices at each junction. You start the game, and make your first choice. The computer needs to show three different scenarios - one for each choice, and you find yourself in one of these. But each of these secondary scenarios requires three further scenarios, and so on. Artists of programming tree structures will love this, but for the rest of us I can simply state that after making ten decisions in the game, you would have to be in one of nearly six thousand possible alternative story-lines. Memory stops and that cheap, my wordings.

So you do one of two things. You compromise, and keep steering the reader back to the main storyline. This was the approach in the (now) MCI-based, better like games. Level 1 realised that to make this sort of game work, you need to provide lots of text and as many different routes for the storyline to follow as possible. The authors managed to achieve their aim, to a certain extent, by using highly efficient text-compressed routines and keeping the rest of the program as simple as possible. Thus the display presented nothing but a rudimentary graphic at the top of the screen, leaving all the processing power for the retrieval and selection of the appropriate text.

Alternatively you compromise in another way, abandon the pure MCG format and add more game-like features. Wizards with very long beards may remember the game from which the screenshot below is taken - *Flight from the Dark*, based on the role-playing books by Joe Green and Gary Clark, and in turn derivative of the original Fighting Fantasy books of Jackson and Leighton. The game not only had multiple choice options, but also a limited command structure using a keyboard entirely rather than the cards of *Melting 1*. It did not get very far in the charts, despite a pretty face.

Neither of these compromises appeals to the White Wizard, but he's wrong, that the second is by far the most promising. The Prime Minister has had a bit of both, but hasn't really succeeded in either count. But then again the MCG format, for not supported. Can anyone prove me wrong?



in a dark, atmospheric setting, you'll find a small boat on the water. The game is available on MCI format, but not on the Commodore or Amstrad.

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Pilg Preview

Jinxter

Magnus Sorrels

First, the *Atari*, great graphics, theme about the game, but still a highly significant release for British adventures, second, *Guid* of *Thames*, great pics, good games, third, *Jinxter*, stunning pics, and — by the look of a pre-release version — an excellent presentation throughout the slightly scientific world of *Magnus Sorrels*.

It is a tough belief that these pixel-perfect portrayals of Japanese board spots. The

All the fun of the fair...

is the Pilgner's imagination, or how *Magnus Sorrels* adapted a slightly-DIT approach to the location in this game? DIT being, of course, *Outrageous Natural Fiction*. Here's what the *BOJ* has to say when you start exploring the background in *Jinxter*:

>>> the Game

The world's greatest coinusement fair, with its endless merry-go-rounds and wild and weird exciting games, the wonder will not certainly be long a visit to one of the splendid outdoor theatres and walking, as in the morning columns, the lively steps in the lively pavilion, to avoid to stay away from these painted wonders! Perhaps a million feet away on a square of the disposition, there is a large square for the blue-headed soldiers who are more appropriate in the middle stands a large column leading to the end of the fair! You should be so accompany you in your journey, should you not feel, there is all this splendour that is in your way! Therefore will take you first into the busy fair-ground about and back, take you through a courtyard shop.

and is threatened by the power of evil, usually a witch, by the name of *Jinxter*, and to return her and take you must locate a number of lucky charms and exorcise the *Shaman of Taurus*.

Jinxter is a slightly smaller game than *Guid*, with about 90 locations, but *Mog* looks on optimistic that the reduction in the size of the map was a deliberate attempt to pack more into each 'room'. Certainly the Pilg found that there were puzzle-games during his brief excursions into the game, and some were every bit as witty and inventive as the original text in *Guid*. Your experience problems with navigation, opening the door, tea-and-sides and harvest, like *Guid*, and *Guid*, to mention but a few. There's even a choice to turn it being on a musician, or to go about driving. Certainly enough to keep you going.

There is one particularly interesting aspect of the game: The company have tried to address the puzzle-solving problem. Put briefly, the problem is as follows: you need to put puzzles in a game that are sufficient to give the adventure-loving player and present a real challenge of the same time. However, you must also allow the player (users) freedom to explore the game in the early stages, otherwise he/she interest every section of. How can you compromise between these two requirements?

Magnus Sorrels have done it by introducing a feature called *the Guardians*. Un-published specimens, complete with out-of-fashion hermaphrodite overcoat, slightly below the grand title, but then we've come to expect that sort of thing with *Magnus Sorrels*, haven't we? The function is quite simple: to restrict the ingenious player to bypass the puzzles for limited expression control only.

For example, there you are in a field, when suddenly a huge ball decides to fall you into the life line. Instead of having to start again, *The Guardians* decides in your reconstruction and you can continue from where you left off. The difficulty, however, is that by bypassing puzzles in this way doesn't earn you any points, so there is still a lot of incentive to take them by the horns and win your quest the proper way!

Jinxter has some good text, it got written by *Demogres Sorrels*, sister of the famous *Arnie Sorrels* from *Mog Sorrels*, with additional from other quarters. There's no doubt that the programmers and designers of the company have put a lot into the adventure, and the Pilg looks forward to going if the usual multiple treatment next month. It could well be their most popular release yet.

Pat's Patch

Pat Winstanley's regular column for *QUILLING*, *GACING*, and *PAWING* adventurers. This month Pat looks at providing automatic exit printing...

Both *GAC* and *PAW* provide the facility for checking the connection table and finding out where the player can move to in a particular direction. Using these we can set up a system whereby each available exit will be printed after the room description each time the player looks at or enters a room.

The system won't work for conditional exits, but these can be handled by an extra message as long as you don't have too many of them. But if the vast majority of your exits are conditional you may as well forget these routines, as the result will be very messy.

This month we'll see how to implement the routine *EXIT*, as the method is fairly straightforward and easy to follow. *PAW* users will get their turn in the next issue.

Enter in High Priority

1. IF (SETT 0) MESSAGE 'visible exit' END
2. IF (CONN 1 + 0 AND SETT 0) MESSAGE 'north' END
3. IF (CONN 2 + 0 AND SETT 0) MESSAGE 'south' END
4. IF (CONN 3 + 0 AND SETT 0) MESSAGE 'west' END
5. IF (CONN 4 + 0 AND SETT 0) MESSAGE 'east' END
6. IF (CONN 1 + CONN 2 + CONN 3 + CONN 4 + 0 AND SETT 0) MESSAGE 'none'
7. IF (SETT 0) MESSAGE END

EXIT exits

Line 1. As only want the routine to work when a room description is printed, not every turn the player remains in the room, so SETT 0 is used to check this, and line 7 resets the marker until this or another room is described again.

Lines 2 to 5. Again we check marker 0, and for each possible direction, the connection table is checked for the current room. Thus CONN 5 looks out which room is east of the current room. If a connection exists, the number of that room will be returned. If no connection exists the result will be 0. Each of these conditions will succeed if a connection is found (i.e. CONN + - 0), the relevant message will be displayed, then the next condition will be considered. If the condition fails (i.e. CONN + - 0) no message will be printed.

Line 6. This covers the situation where there are no exits at all!

Graphics cause problems with long text descriptions so if you find the text scrolling off, here's an alternative to automatic printing... I simply set the above conditions as low priority, with a command such as EXIT: to be typed by the player. You'll also need another marker, set when EXIT is typed, placed in each line of the routine and reset on the last line. Otherwise you'll get the exits printing every time the Low Priority table is accessed.

Pat's address, if you wish to write in with a query or any other matter concerning adventure writing, is Pat's Patch, c/o Advanced Computer Entertainment, 4 Queen St, BATH, BA1 1EL.

The Traveller's Times

Edited by: The Pilgrim

Honorary Editor: The White Wizard Published by: Far-Future Publishing

Price: Free with every copy of ACE



INFOCOM MADNESS

There was a time when Infocom titles were few and far between, carefully awarded by editors across the globe. Near suddenly we're faced with no less than three major releases, each in its own way quite different from what has gone before.

Readers will already know about *Plunder Hearts*, which we hoped to review this issue but arrived just a fraction too late. However, while the White Wizard's beard was trembling with passion at the sight of pirate captain Jamarr's handsome visage, he was completely fooled over by the prospect of eight short stories on a disk, under the collective title *Novel and Best Country Make Head or Tail of it*—see story on page 12 of this issue.

But its *Beyond Zork* that really has the both the WIZ and the Pilgrim panting with excitement. While the other two releases simply show different styles of adventuring, *Beyond Zork* introduces a whole new standard—role-playing.

The game allows you to create your own character with an attributes, strength, endurance, complexion, hair, intelligence, and diversity. Your status is displayed by fat stars during the game and other screen windows show your location (or you invented). There's also an on-screen map.

This is a complete new departure for Infocom, and — as for all adventure addicts are concerned — one of great importance. Will there be, for the first time, a role playing game that also features a high-quality parser and superb game design? Watch this space...

8TH DAY IN HOLLYWOOD

Eight Day Software, purveyors of numerous budget titles for over three years now, are taking *Roméo Goes To Hollywood*. For £2.99 this little number gives Spectrum gamers the chance to cut world events from the White House, grand impeachment, and mansion to good riding in the pools. Check out the mini review next month.

SMIRKING HORROR?

Fergus McNeill of Eggog and Robin of Shekton fame has set up a new software development company with his partners, Arnie Prokask. Called *Smirking Concepts*, the company will be developing titles for Adventure, while Delta 4 will continue to source product for CRL and others. As usual, some of the plans Fergus and Arnie have for future releases are excitingly surreal plots at established adventure traditions.

During a quick tour of the ACE office, where Fergus and Arnie were entertained by the White Wizard on one of his flying visits to Bath, the young couple spoke of a possible co-operation with Latent 9 and a range of futuristic releases in the horror vein — titles such as *Smoking Horror* and *Apocalypse of Sarcasm Street* are not a billion miles from Fergus' early inventive mind.

Most important of all, however, is the new adventure system being used to produce these titles. Most readers will note that earlier Delta 4 packages, such as *Robin of Shekton*, were GOLF-derived programs using multi-look (pioneered by Fergus) and speech systems. Two imminent releases, *Disincarnate* (released via CRL) and *Mindlighter*

(Autumn) show a very different technical approach.

The new system, specially developed for Fergus and Arnie by a third party software development team, allows for a multitude of features. These include ten driven system commands (including *WALK*, *SAVE*, *GOSSIP*, and *STATUS*), character attributes that include emotional as well as physical characteristics, real time action, variable weather patterns that affect the gameplay, full input editing, clock and calendar, combat routines and, of course, interactive characters.

Mindlighter puts the player in post-World War II Southampton, and sets you the task of saving the world as you journey back in time to alter history and prevent the nuclear conflict from breaking out. The scenario involves the Gulf conflict and the player takes the identity of a young boy with the ability to see and even travel into past and future — which is how you found yourself in the surreal city in the first place. The game is in four sections, two set in the future and two in the present day.

Disincarnate brings the changes by having an all female cast (for good) and throws a young girl into a revenge crusade after she loses both her parents. Both *Disincarnate* and *Mindlighter* should be on your shelves in January.

ST SOUNDS OFF

Master of Magic is a French game for the ST that takes adventure sound effects into a whole new dimension. Remember the digitized sounds on CRL's horror numbers? *MM* gives you howling wolves, greasy footsteps, gas meter and more, combined with an on-screen system featuring excellent graphics.

There's one big problem, however. Much of the action is relayed

via synthesized speech from the main characters. Since this is often incomprehensible, and there is no text option, how can you possibly finish the game? Well by releasing a text month — keep your fingers crossed that our interactive game testers find a solution in time. Could be the first game where you need a pack of Colson Buds to complete it...



White Wizard

Next month...

The White Wizard splits the boards about the adventure column planned for the ACE Christmas Crocker, due out on December 2nd.

Yeah, the Pig and I have got some real work for next month. Just wait and see what happens when the two of us really meet in real together!

And, you're getting an Infocom *Review* — a collection reviews of three new games (*Plunder Hearts*, *Novel and Best Country Make Head or Tail of it* and *Beyond Zork*) plus a retrospective review of *Zork*.

Then, while you're still reading from the clock, you'll be reading to a *No Problem* you know, featuring stories of top of the best and most popular games.

Yes, we're releasing reviews, including some homebrew games, this next issue from *Stardust, Fair Fables*, and a special anniversary from the *Starboard One*, by which I mean myself, since the Pig is an holiday and it's "helping out a little more than usual." You'll also be treated to the final installment of the *Pilgrim's Players Guide to Publishers*. You were asked to get a bit more out of the game, but I thought the Pilgrim will know that he is always over-seeing, turning out of space, and having to put things off to the next issue. For now I'm pleased to see the magazine's success from this issue's first issue, and I'm sure the *Starboard One* will be the best. I'll send the *Starboard One* when he can meet. We'll see and stuff. See you next month.

BUBBLE BUS TRILOGY

Curse of the Ocean is the first of a three game series launched by Bubble Bus. The company have never released an adventure before, so lets give them a big cheer for entering the market.

The program is a graphics adventure set in Latit's Kingdom, where all and sundry are under the

evil rule of the sorcerer Raffles. Available for the Spectrum only to start with, the program features type ahead, timers, interactive characters, choice of text files, and other goodies including multiple commands plus 'off' and 'on'. To be reviewed in ACE next month, so watch out for it.

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The game is set in New York City in the late 1970s. You role-play the part of a gang leader who controls a group of misgued youths. The city has recently deteriorated. The brave citizens who remain are seen in a life and death struggle with the ever increasing number of drug-created street gangs. The New York Police Department is severely undermanned.

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POSTAL ORDERS

Fancy rediscovering the North Pole? Or winning World War II? Challenges like these are persuading more and more people to sample the delights of Play-By-Mail games, or PBM's. ANDY SMITH checks out what's on offer...

Interest in PBM's has grown dramatically in the past few years. From the two-player scenarios of postal chess to games specifically designed to involve several hundred players simultaneously in the conquest of a fantasy universe, the PBM landscape has grown and grown.

Nowadays the basic PBM format involves a team where the players sit at their Modems - GM - process the game, and it is in the interim that the players send in their orders (usually called turns).

In most modern games, the scenarios are extremely complex and the 'turn' time you sit in your chair's of orders for controlling your forces, manipulating your resources, and dealing with other players. Each game has its own objectives. For example in *Starbucke your objective is to become the Lord of Middle - which means, incidentally, that you get to pay the tax and you're dependant as well as enjoying other game privileges, as Starbucke the objective is to capture the other players' cities, either through alliances, conquest, or downright aggression.*

Most of these games have scenarios so complex (although sometimes easy to play) that it is no longer possible for them to be processed by hand. The computer-mediated game has become the norm, which makes life easier for the GM and has also enabled games to develop in size and depth.

Over the past few months, ACE will be reviewing, commenting on, and evaluating PBM's of many different shapes, sizes, and scenarios. Furthermore many of these games will be available with special offers to ACE readers, enabling you to save money while you play.

The month we're joining with K&C Games, who have just launched *Barthwood - The Ice Kings*, a 20 player game of exploration and conquest. The player takes the role of an Island King and attempts to conquer all the other islands on the map since they are all owned by either a player or a player alliance (in the game it wins, if you would like to take part you can see the order book) to order the negotiation documents, the rules and the PBM fee (mail/telephone) fees cost £1.95) for only £3.95

instead of the usual £9.00. It is a discounted game (see box), which means you'll have to return your orders before a specific date (you'll be told on your sheet exactly when).



Everything you ever wanted to know about PBM's but didn't have the stamp to ask...

1. What do I need to play PBM's?

A pen, plus of course some money to pay for the turns... A phone card help line is not essential. Getting a good imagination and some spare time are essential. However...

2. How much does it cost?

Depends entirely upon which game you play... charges vary from as little as 25c per turn to over £1 per turn. Average can vary a between £1 and £2. But beware - although some PBM's have a fixed turn cost, extra charges may be made if you wish to do something in the game that requires extra work on the part of the GM.

3. What can't actually be done in the game?

Unless playing you with - you are often only limited by your imagination. The turn sheets can leave you writing detailed descriptions of how you intend to do a task, or something through the night of time that can be carried on again you. You're tapping material from alternate descriptions of your forces against an opposing/active attack.

4. How long do PBM's last?

Some games have a set number of turns and at the end of these turns a winner is declared (and announced). Other games can continue indefinitely or as long as people are still willing to play them. Average game time is between six months to two years.

5. Who runs PBM's?

Some games have no winners at all, while others have definite winners who have managed to satisfy various conditions. Winning conditions are always made clear to the player before the start.

6. What if I get a game but soon find I don't like it?

Simple - don't play it any more. In the GM, games usually give you a longer wait to play - for whatever reason and request that any remaining credit be returned to you. Most PBM's are able to cope with the inevitable 'drop out' that occurs during a game. However I don't run some scenarios and/or the GM's request you to read their rule books thoroughly before asking a pen a game.

7. Can I contact other players in the game?

Sometimes. Game Modems will keep your name and address confidential and will not pass that (other player) name game. However, face an internal posting system where other players to contact another through the GM. You contact another player outside the game, which is sometimes allowed upon their posting of any copyright material in a journal online, or online.

8. How frequent are the game turns?

Some games have a fixed deadline. That is, at the time set as agreed in the players all describe something and then they have to return the completed forms before a stated date. These deadlines vary from daily to game, and can be anything from a fortnight to a month per turn. Some deadline games will run the same game but with different deadlines, in which case you will be advised if you wish to play with a new date. Some have as few as two deadline structures you choose you can not return that the other players are guaranteed by the same deadline. A different class of games could open initial games when you're submit turns as often as infrequently as you like.

9. What if I miss the start of a game?

Most companies have plenty of time in making games and less scenarios are being launched at the time. The majority of companies will run the same game for many different players, so if you decide to join a game that only allows 10 players and all games are filled then another game is issued.

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TRICKS 'N' TACTICS

RED L.E.D.

Hints for that slippery game — straight from the horse's mouth

Success in this game depends on knowing the properties of the three droids and on knowing some intimate detail about the maps. Who better to reveal the inside knowledge than "Tag" — Anthony Tagliani — one of the design and programming of this 800+ rated masterpiece?

The Droids

BLDG sticks to slopes. It's very useful for the center (red) hexagon and also for the top-right and bottom-left green hexagons, but is uncomfortable on vert holes — even when they are ice. This turns it to an odd word at your peril.



BOVER sticks over the surface and so it increases in red. Not as maneuverable as BNGG or BALL, but it is a lot like until you learn where the ice switches are. They control the bottom edge and top-left green hexagons, and really annoy. A very handy droid.



BALL doesn't have the stability of either BNGG or BOVER but can maneuver anywhere if the road doesn't kill him. Also, he doesn't take as much damage from the mines trying to end your game as the other two droids. A good choice for most of the "big" level slopes and usually safe very where else since you find the ice switches.



The Maps

Learn the Maps. Each of the hexagons will always go to the same landscape and in level color there are features, teleport cap sides. You needed an extra 70 minutes? You'll find a couple of handy ones in the hexagon just below center. Just make sure you can tell the difference between the positive and negative ones. It's a good idea to have a route across the hexagon grid which takes you through as many landscapes as possible with teleport capsules in and you can always just drive in and grab the others. Don't be afraid of attempting a level if it doesn't harm your score. It can be worth going in just to get some time or to get some energy for a weak droid or a level you know a safe spot in where you can sit and defend yourself. Always try to collect the last gold level with all the time you can get your hands on.

The Bonus

The Bonus is a critical part of playing Red L.E.D. Sometimes even that extra 70 minutes is not enough. An extra bonus letter is awarded every 10,000 points, provided you picked up the last one. Only one is given for each hexagon. Learn where the bonus letter appears so you can take it as soon as it's there and get out for the last one. Always try to collect the B on the top and bottom blue hexagon or the bonus phone starts you.



Check out ACE's red-hot tips on this month's toughest assignments. Cheat modes, tactical advice, strategic directives — everything you need to make this your highest scoring month yet on games like *Dizzy*, *Road Runner*, *Boulderdash*, *Skulduggery*, and many more.

and to the end for a massive 20,000 points, and even very handy minutes. Decide on your favorites and save them for that B.

The Smart Bomb

The smart bomb really comes into its own as grids from 1 onwards. After level one the enemy droids really go for you other you collect your last energy pool. Try to make the last one you collect the one nearest the red (and remember that having a smart bomb on board can make all the difference as to your skills for that exit. Always score the last pool units after you have collected everything else you want to collect on the level. A good trick on a few hexagons is to shoot all generators, you avoid and then using a smart bomb to the end where there is both another generator and your last pool. Fire the smart bomb and you're off alone and safe in focus.

Freeze devices

Good frozen droids are a handy invention at any time flat. The smart bomb, can be a nice dead-end on higher grids if you can leave them until just before collecting the last pool. Again, learn where they are.

Learn those maps!

Be lazy if again — make sure you learn the maps. A lot of landscapes have short cuts over the edge of cliffs which can make the difference between a good bonus and a poor bonus, and between life and death as your last ice-breath is running out. The teleport network can also save an awful lot of running around but isn't always the quickest route — a good that a three or four teleports away may be just over the edge of that cliff you're standing on.

ROAD RUNNER

How to gain an invaluable extra life on the ST version of the cartoon capers

First get to level 0 and lose any remaining lives. Then when you restart the game you'll notice the start cut is open. Don't take the shortcut, but let the Coyote catch you. Near every time you take the start cut you'll be awarded an extra life and you'll restart from the beginning.

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BARBARIAN

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DIZZY

Playing tips on Code Masters' cute Spectrum arcade adventure.

Deasee gem - on the cat and can be found in the room to the left of the first. Drop it near to the cat in the wine shaft.

Graveyard key - opens the graveyard door which is situated at the far right from the start. Can be found in the wine shaft.

Plastic robot - stops the cat duplicate from getting to you. Can be found in the Haunted Chimney.

Ghost ladder gem - fall onto the ghost in the Haunted Chimney with this and you'll destroy him. Found in the diamond mine.

Wine's head hat - protects you from falling spikes and staircases. Found in the room in the right of the Haunted Chimney.

Peace of gold - drop this onto the locker next to the farmer's house and you can then enter. Found in the room that is to the right and down of the Haunted Chimney.



3 in 1 ball - drop this on the stick next to the drawbridge and it will open. It's found in the secret caves.

Bird seed - kills the white birds. Found in the mine shaft.

Green bar - opens the trapdoor which is under the spider at the bottom of the cliffs.

Emerald - found on top of the Crystal cliff, it should be put in the eye of the one-eyed statue in the graveyard.

Claws of Gerty - kills all the red bats and is found under the trap door (that you used the one bar to open).

Flaming torch - drop this next to the cauldron at the start of the game and the fire underneath it will be lit. Found in the room to the right of the start.

Spade - found at the top of the tall tree, it should be dropped in the middle of the room with the noise-sounding ground.

Mushroom Trowel - found in the hole the spade made, you should drop it on the mushroom that's on the left of the hole.

Soft Cutlery - cut the rusty chain which is holding the cat.

Bry ice - found on the Crystal Cliffs, it freezes the waterfall in the Mushroom Cave.

Protective Amulet - protects you from Dali's spells and is found past the Iron-Lake.

Iron-plate - found in the graveyard, it kills the spiders.

Duck Feather - found next to the drawbridge, they should be dropped in the cauldron.

Foot bow - found in Dali's castle. Drop it in the cauldron.

Broken heart - also found in the castle, it should be given to the broken-hearted woman in the Graveyard.

Wig - drop in the cauldron.

Clouds Silver Lining - drop it in the cauldron.

Empty bottle - found in the screen with the

Haunted Forest message, it should also be dropped in the pot.

The Full Bottle is what you end up with having dropped the Wig, Silver line, Feather and three into the pot, and this should be dropped next to Dali in his castle.

AL and PHL, Peter

The rocky, jewel-encrusted elevators in back on the shelves — on the slope. At a mere 1,000 you'd have to be stark, starting lookers out to get load of a copy. For those already hooked — and those about to be hooked — we present this playing guide. But we're not going to make it too easy for you — we're only giving you the first 4 clues this month.

How you go — but remember that you may have to alter your tactics as you move up through the game's levels. Check out the tactics box for the details of different game-play techniques.

LIMITS Once you're used to the gameplay it doesn't pose serious problems on any level. But you should make it a matter of pride to collect every jewel.

BOOMS Again, easy on the lower levels. On 4 and 5 there are a lot of booms around. You must deal with them by blocking, dodging, bombroving or just dodging. At least the ones in case enough to the start so it is too easy to position.

CHASE This last one can be a problem on the one. You need to walk out on efficient route to take you from the start at top left to the end of booms right, collecting every single jewel on the way. On real levels the best way is to start by moving down to the bottom of the maze, then right, then up again through the middle of the maze, then right then back down. Look out for booms top-pipe-off with.

BUTTERFLIES This one's fairly easy because you've written one square of the first butterfly die, and on the same vertical line as a boomer. Choosing your movement carefully, buffer free the pairs of walls separating you from the butterfly and then immediately move up to the boomer and out of the way, so that it falls on the jumping butterfly. Collect the jewels and repeat for the other three dies. Remember, your start point can often be immediately above the die, or a full square away on either side.

BOARDS Lots of different ways of doing the one. This is the quickest and easiest, often slightly risky. What is the left of the first die. When the first die reaches the top-left corner, move right straight through the



One 1

die, collecting the jewels. **DO NOT STOP** (or keep moving through the last three dies). If you're facing a right, you'll go straight through unharmed. What's more the last die is left bombarded and actually blocks the others

from chasing you. This means you can take your time and do the same thing on the bottom, one die required on the higher levels. If you prefer a route instead do the same thing, but starting from the right of each one of dies. You move left through the bottom of the die while the first is moving right along the top of the die.

FURIOUS MOVE On the lower levels it's possible to do the one by blocking each level in fact. But there is a more elegant method. Basically you create a clear circular path, blocking a space of the bottom to start with

every loop which is completed by releasing all four levels at once. In a dash from A to B. As they make their way off round the circle double back and follow them, collecting the jewels, make your way to C with a boomer. Then create another loop, making sure you block your path with a boomer. Then create another loop, making your way to D before starting up to G and then coming back down to collect the jewels and go to the exit. The main thing to ensure is that the traps you create are not blocked by boomers, or the boomers will double back and cause you problems.



Two 1

Block-busting tactics...

Before you can get anywhere you'll need to become very familiar with the way the different game elements behave. The first four levels always have left of junction, while booms flow from right. The fact that booms will topple off other booms, jewels or walls, but not off a piece of walls. You should develop to a few of the following techniques.

BLASTING The thorough, unrelenting method of tearing up a level or butterfly, normally by using it close you upward through walls will you reach a boomer, when you move left or right allowing it fall on the pushing enemy.

BOMBROVING Another starting way of dealing with booms. Create a rectangular path in the field, moving in an anti-clockwise direction as the boomer moves you, then make your escape. It's best using in-circles.

BLITZING The intensive dangerous art of deliberately moving down just a pile of booms, causing them to explode after you, but making sure you move out of the way right of left before they hit you. Normally it does work best to a pile of booms it's often best at the bottom and move up, but there are many laws, especially on the higher levels, when blasting is an essential technique both in base-raising and in reaching otherwise unreachable areas.

BOMBING The use of the fire button to "release" or "explode" squares without actually walking it. Two are hazardous situations when this will make you die (such as 300). As well as collecting jewels the way you can also use it to dig walls or push boomers. In addition, all the great Boulder Dash players use the technique to go through the screen, blasting with the booms paying value but a definitely the cheap way to die.

BLOCKING Another ingenious way of stopping dies when being chased by multiple — done intentionally under a boomer, allowing it to fall out back the path, taking you

Skulldiggery

Check out the following tips for selected screens up to 25, plus some useful cheats for boosting your score...

2) Labyrinth. Work through systematically and don't waste time backtracking.

3) Sultan's Slave. The creeping vine is introduced for the first time on this



screen. Collect all of the diamonds, then subvert the vine by positioning the player so that there is no more room for it to grow. The vine will not harm you.

4) Blast it. Dig up from the top of the brick box towards the skull, so that it falls and settles on top of the wall. Next, eat the extra life cup cake at the top of the screen - doing this will guarantee you another attempt at the screen should you fail. Carry on to the bottom of the screen, release the ball and let quickly towards the brick box. Run up the right hand side of the box shoving the skull which will fall on top of the following box, thus leaving a hole in the wall which surrounds the healthy crop of diamonds.

5) Jumble. Set up the skulls top-down above the sections of brick wall, then drop each pile through quickly one after the other. Don't forget to dig some space underneath each wall so that the diamonds have somewhere to sit in.

6) Basement. To access the lower left hand room, dig south and push skulls to leave a clear area near the entrance.

7) The Legacy. Eat the cup cake first (in the top right hand corner of the cave), then clear a path from the bottom of the screen up to where the vine is growing - but it's not sufficient if too early. When the vine starts to leave its box, release the ghost at the bottom of the screen, so that he runs into the vine and explodes, freeing the enclosed ghost which will also contain the vine and explode. Completing this screen relies upon making good use of

the vine in the early stages.

17) Boom in One. Eat the cup cake at the top of the screen, then dig along the red tunnel down towards the right hand side of the screen. Collect the diamond above you, then run straight down to the bottom of the screen without stopping.

18) Lusty Drop. Fall the skulls down step by step until they sit on the bottom brick.

Cheats

Extra lives...

As the player goes through the escape door, press and hold the LEFT SHIFT, CONTROL, and ALTERNATE keys until the door has stopped opening. This will give the player 7 extra life.

Extra points...

On the high score table, press and hold for a few seconds the SHIFT and LEFT SQUARE BRACKET keys. This will raise each score of each dug to yield 1 point. This is useful if you are trying to reach a high maximum score, and also helps you to reach your 50000 point extra life bonus marker.

High scores, higher levels

The high score table can be scanned by pressing CONTROL 0, and is coded by pressing CONTROL 1.

It is possible to jump directly to some of the later screens by pressing 0 from the high score table. This starts the game at a random screen between about 10 and 60.

square, wait for the ghost to come along and move out of the way so that the skulls fall on top of him. Don't drop them too early, because if the ghost sees the skulls falling, he will jump over them.

19) Tubes. Stand to the side of the bottom of each tube and called the diamonds by pressing the fire button and pushing the joystick left or right. Running up and down the tubes is faster but more dangerous.

16) Chase. Work your way towards the bottom of the cave without landing on screens.

15) Lary Lines. Kill the bat by hitting him out and running up the right hand tunnel to shoope the skull at the top, which will fall onto the bat who will be in close pursuit.

14) Push and Drop. Push the skulls along until they are all sitting above the wall with one line of skulls below them. Then blast into the box, clear a space below the wall, and drop the skulls through.

13) Drop the Lid. Drop a row of skulls on top of each cell. When the one is growing, clear a space below without triggering each cell. Then collect the diamonds digging from left to right - ending up near the exit line.

20) Wizard. Find out which walls are diamond-rich, and pile up the skulls before triggering the wall. At the end of the screen you should have about 15000 points.

22) Race. Avoid the falling skull as you move down the shaft. When you have safely reached the bottom, push the skull into the caddy hole at the left hand side. The rest of the screen involves a simple but close chase back up to the top.

23) Ultimate Greed. There are hundreds of diamonds and about 5 extra life cup cakes to be had on this screen so when you tackle screen 24, you should have about 15000 points, with many spare lives in reserve.



Multiface 1

Pokes for Spectrum

SIDEWIZE Pokes 36893.0 (for infinite lives)

WIZBALL Pokes 36831.50 (for invincibility)
Pokes 37052.0 (for infinite lives)

CHRIS WILD, Shaw, Lancashire

BUBBLE BOBBLE

Cheat for the C64

In one-player mode, as soon as you've lost your last life, hit the [SPACE] bar before the 'Game Over' legend appears and 'Bub' will appear (the player two character) press player two's fire button and you'll be good with an extra three lives. The same thing can be achieved in two player mode by pressing any fire button at the correct time.

DAVID WOOLLCROFT, Long Eaton, Notts.



BLUE MAX

That free gift from the first issue of ACE produced this extremely useful poke: it gives you just about everything you could ever want.

Type LOAD. Then when READY appears type:
Poke 1011, 248 (Poke 1012,252) (fire)
The next page of code will load in and the READY prompt will appear again. Then type:
Poke 17005, 173 (for infinite lives)
Poke 20084, 173 (for infinite bombs)
Poke 17008, 0 (invulnerable to fire)
Then type 070-32758 to start the game.

JASON ALLEN, Birkenhead

IN THE ARCADES

Top tips from the coin-op front line

R-TYPE

Destroy the 8th guardian

Before attempting to destroy the final nasty you'll need a shield. On screen with the guardian are an indestructible spinning disc and several green 'bubbled' flying rounds. If you position yourself in the bottom left corner the disc and the bubbles will orbit you.



The disc revolves five times in a figure-of-eight pattern, then the guardian's mouth opens and spits out another disc. Move in as the mouth opens and send a plasma ball into it - after another five disc revolutions the mouth opens again and spits out another disc. Keep firing during the revolutions and keep your ship moving clockwise in a figure-of-eight pattern. After a couple more plasma balls the guardian disappears and you've completed the game.

JAMES CABNETT, Weston-Super-Mare

RYGAR

The weapons, and what they do...

1. The Star will increase your firing range.
2. The Crown gives extra power to each of your shots and allows you to kill more than one monster with one shot.
3. The Tiger's head enables you to kill men dead by jumping on their heads.
4. The Shield provides you with about 50 seconds of invulnerability.
5. The Sun allows you to kill flying monsters.
6. Shoot the red stone to turn it into a shield.
7. A sword with a cross on it means a shield-less sword.
8. The floating red head can be avoided by jumping if when it reaches its lowest position.

STEPHEN OTLEWELL, Derby



DOUBLE DRAGON

1. An effective method of dispatching the badies is to turn your back to them and use your elbow as much as possible.
2. Don't walk off ledges - jump off.
3. The whip will enable you to attack a badie whilst remaining out of their range.
4. When you come to a door, wait by the left hand side and allow the badies as they come out.
5. Baseball bats are very useful when it comes to dispatching badies.
6. Beware the men with knives! Remember that you can put them up and throw them back.
7. On level two - the forest - take special care when you come to the bridge, a well timed jump is needed to clear it.
8. When the badies start falling out of the trees, headbutt them on their way down.
9. On level three - the mountain - don't get on the conveyor belt when the green train runs up on the left, dash to quickly and use your elbow.
10. Level four - the base - jump off the high ledge to get into the badies' hole out.
11. Once inside, watch out for the pillars that emerge from the walls. Jump onto the first one, and keep jumping across.
12. Watch out for the moving spear, and as soon as it lurches for you, jump and keep jumping.
13. When you combat the chap with the gun, keep moving up and down the screen, it will take patience and accurate timing to finally dispose of him with flying kicks or your baseball bat. Having killed him, rush past to the temple doors and allow the last few badies as they come running out. Easy when you know how!

DEANO SCHOFIELD, Tamworth, Staffs and NEIL LEWCOCK, Hampton Hill, Middlesex.

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GAMES



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Screenshots from arcade version

Amstrad

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AUTODUEL

ST version

This is the ultimate poker if given you stacks of money, postage, driving skill, maintenance, mechanic's ability, health and body armor. Plus the poker if you die, it will revive you.

To enter the poker database click on the BASIC PROG file (found on your language disk). Enter the poker exactly as you see it below. Save it by typing SAVE "poker.txt" in direct mode. Plus, and then follow the on-screen prompts.

```

101  DATA 10,10,100000,1,100000,10,100
102  DATA 10,11,10,10,10,10,10,10,10,10
103  DATA 10,10,10,10,10,10,10,10,10,10
104  DATA 10,10,10,10,10,10,10,10,10,10
105  DATA 10,10,10,10,10,10,10,10,10,10
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200  DATA 10,10,10,10,10,10,10,10,10,10

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RICHARD MONTEIRO, Teovii

TAI PAN

Maps and tips for two towns - GHEZZHEN and GUANGZHOU

Guangzhou is where you start. Go to a restaurant and refuse a meal. A man will take you to a back room and lend you \$200,000. Go to the bank and buy a ship, then buy weapons from the armory, food from supplies and cargo from the warehouse. Don't buy the crew from the inn. Find a club and let passers-by on the road. Your son will take them to your ship. When you have about eight crew, then go to the port and sail away. (Ghezzhen is the nearest port to the east of Guangzhou.)

ADRIAN BETTS, Tamworth



HOT TIPS...HOT PRIZES!

Do not have a question of getting something for nothing on these pages. If we print your tip, map or save then you stand a very good chance indeed of winning the latest and best games.

This month **Autoduel** - winner of the *Osby* prize - and **Tai Pan** - winner of the *Moat* prize. This means that they'll earn fame for their Spectrum (or for other games in this issue of ACE) **Magazine**, **Thundercats**, **Red's**, **E.T.**, **Jack the Nipper**, **Beowulf** and **Pre-Bit** **Smash**. For that too, eh?

Adrian also has all the other games get the games for their machines. This month **Philip Kelly** will get **Thundercats** for the Spectrum. **T. Carter** will receive the premiere of **Autoduel** on the ST. **M. Chingolates** will be interviewing **Autoduel**, while **Jason Allen** and **David Westhead** will both be turning up for **Jack the Nipper** for their MSX.

So do have a hint, send your tip in to **Tricks 'n' Tactics**.

ACE
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Bath BA1 1BJ

not forgetting to include essential info, such as your name, address and the computer you use.

Wanted

If you're flourishing in a sea of irrelevant bits to which games you should write for, here's a list of what we need many players are going to need help with: **Thundercats**, **Phase**, **Systems**, **Super Sprint**, **Amarty**, **Monocle**, **Autoduel**. Plus on these - and any other games you've got the **Osby** bit - will be given a very warm welcome.

Accolades...

Don't forget the console, your best save file and lots of money in those console games. This month's accolade to winner is **Osby**, **Schiffel**, whose **Double Dragon** has earned for a copy of **Wargames** for the Spectrum. If you want a clue to be you - but only if you get money, writing and sending.
Comes on the **MSX**, **Nathan Saga**, **After**, **Baron**, **Conan**, **Beast** **Blasters** or **Lord** **of** **the** **Dark** **is** **not** **to** **be** **lost** **to** **the** **wind** **of** **the** **past**.

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GAME SET and MATCH

OSCAR

A massive compilation of 10 complete sports games — including Kevin's HyperGames, Ping Pong and Tennis, Daley Thompson's Super-Fest, World Series Baseball, Post, Championship Basketball, Barry Mulligan's Boxing, Super Soccer and more. Incredible value!

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Use the combined powers of the bouncing Wizball and Cabbal to collect magic water drops. Original and addictive.

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CBM 64 case	8.95	6.95	A12080C
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Amstrad case	8.95	7.95	A12080C
Amstrad disk	14.95	11.95	A12080C



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You've seen the movie, now play your own dogfights. One- and two-player action.

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Amstrad disk	19.95	16.95	A11980C



EPYX EPICS

MS Gold/Eye

Collector's box of four stunning classics: Summer Games, Impostor, Mission: Breakthrough, Pitfall II.

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GARY LINEKER'S SUPERSTAR SOCCER

OSCAR

Bookbuster title combining football management skills with exciting action.

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CBM 64 case	8.95	7.95	A12170C
CBM 64 disk	14.95	11.95	A12170C
Amstrad case	8.95	7.95	A12170C
Amstrad disk	14.95	11.95	A12170C
Amstrad disk	15.95	12.95	A12170C



TAIPAN

OSCAR

Advanced strategy game based on the James Clavell novel.

Item	MSRP	MSRP	MSRP
Spectrum case	7.95	6.25	A11280C
Amstrad disk	14.95	11.95	A11280C



BALANCE OF POWER

Microsoft

A demanding game of strategy.

Item	MSRP	MSRP	MSRP
Amstrad disk	19.95	16.95	A11750C
Amiga disk	19.95	16.95	A11750C

STRIKE FORCE HARRIER

Microsoft

All action flight simulator and shoot-'em-up.

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CBM 64 disk	14.95	11.95	A11560C
Amstrad case	9.95	7.95	A11560C
Amstrad disk	14.95	11.95	A11560C
Amstrad disk	14.95	11.95	A11560C



SOLID GOLD US Gold

A collection of five fantastic titles: Intirike, Leatherfist, Gauntlet, Ace of Aces and Winter Games. Hours and hours of entertainment!

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CBM 64 disk	14.95	11.95	A12080C
Amstrad case	9.95	7.95	A12080C
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MASK

OSCAR

Action game play based on the TV cartoon.

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CBM 64 disk	14.95	11.95	A12170C
Amstrad case	8.95	7.95	A12170C
Amstrad disk	14.95	11.95	A12170C



XOR

Logotron

Impressive maze game, packed with mind-bending puzzles. Original and very competitive. Ace Rated 100%.

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Amstrad case	8.95	7.95	A11980C
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GAME OVER

Imagive

Exciting shoot-'em-up featuring frogs, evil guardians at the end of each level.

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Amstrad case	8.95	6.95	A11980C
Amstrad disk	14.95	11.95	A11980C



SOLOMON'S KEY

MS Gold

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CBM 64 disk	14.95	11.95	A12080C
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WORLD GAMES

25 Best Plays

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S.D.J.

Microsoft

Strategic Defense Initiative action

Box strategy

Item	RRP	ACE Price	Order No.
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Box box	29.95	24.95	A10809

DEFENDER OF THE CROWN

Microsoft Multimedia

Strategy and combat packed to graphics you would not believe!

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ARKANOID

Games

Really enjoyable! Breakout done with 50 levels.

Item	RRP	ACE Price	Order No.
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CD-ROM box	13.95	10.95	A11202
Manual case	8.95	6.95	A11203
Manual box	14.95	10.95	A11204
Box complete	19.95	15.95	A11205
Box CD-ROM	19.95	15.95	A11206



STAR GAMES 2

Games

A compilation of six superb titles including Ball Blaster, T-Blaster, Knight Games, Highway Encounter, and Trail Blaster. Gaming action.

Item	RRP	ACE Price	Order No.
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CD-ROM case	9.95	7.95	A10201
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Manual box	14.95	11.95	A10204



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the name
of the game