THE HOTTEST MAGAZINE ON THE STREET

ATARI ST USER

DECEMBER 1990 • ISSUE 58 • £2.95

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and illuminating Aspects...

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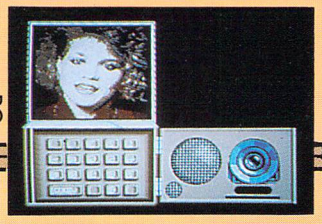
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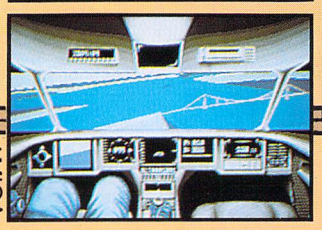
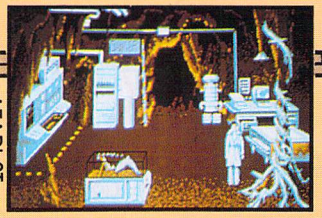

AMIGA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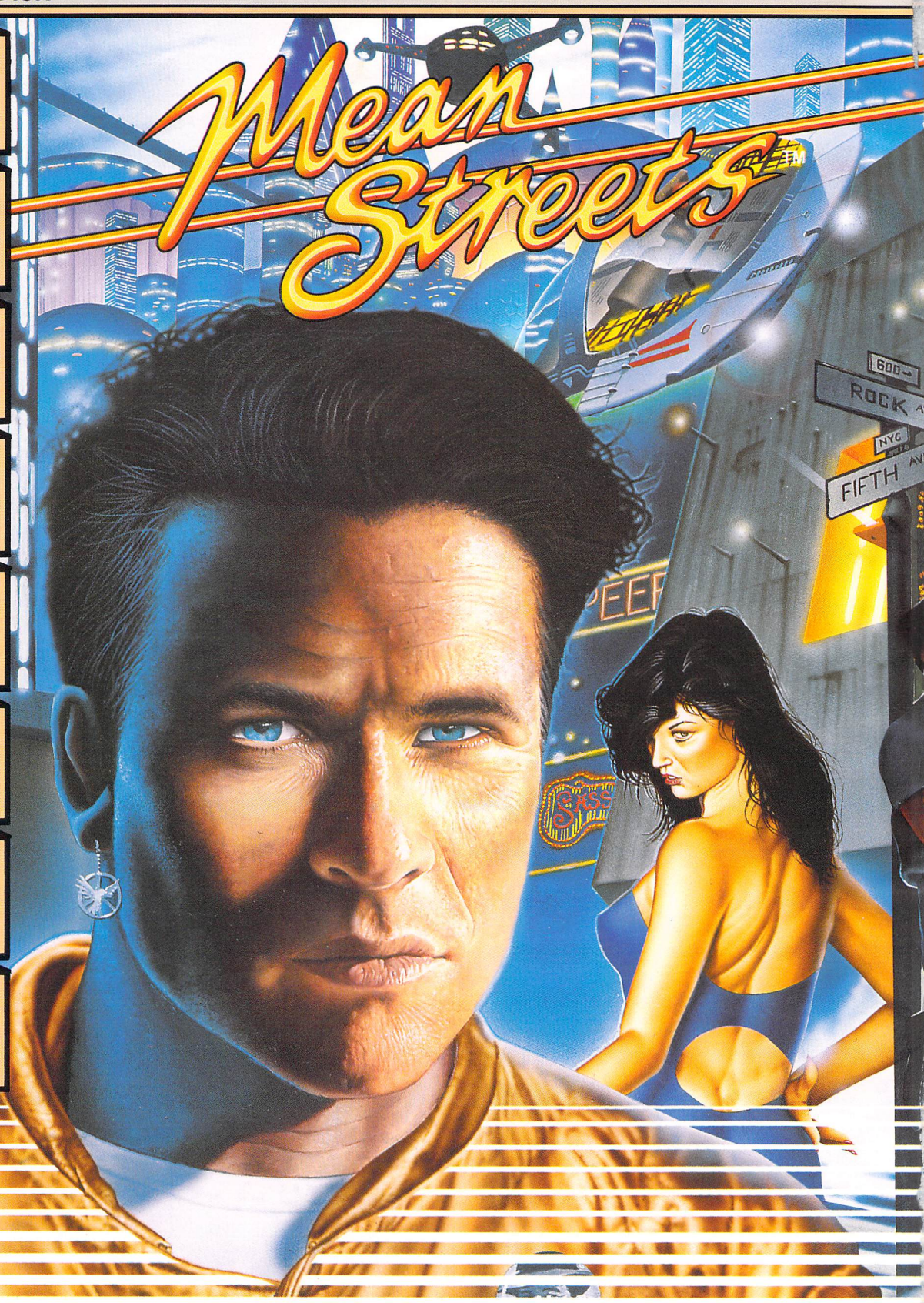

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TO BACK FEATURE

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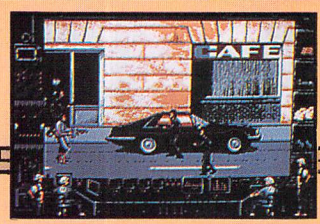
Crime Wave™



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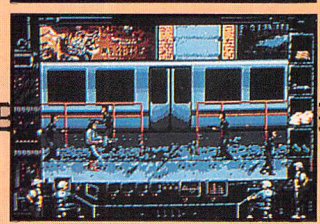
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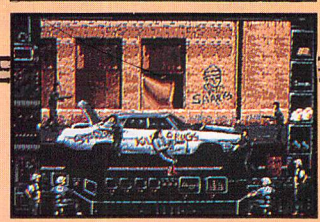
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Screen shots are only intended to be illustrative of the game play and not the screen graphics which vary considerably between different formats in quality and appearance and are subject to the computer's specifications.

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Software Incorporated

ATARI ST USER

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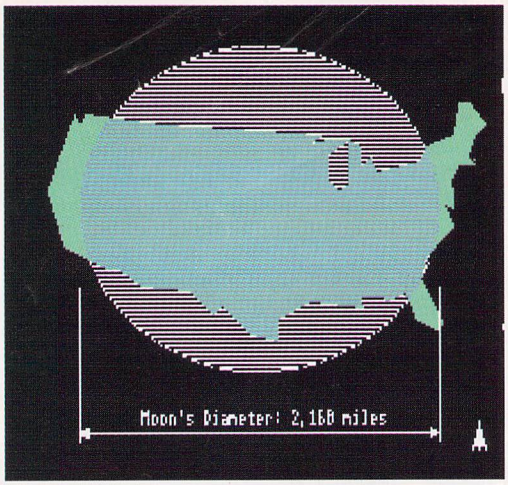
FEATURES



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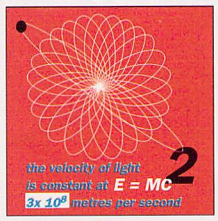
Keep a count of your pennies



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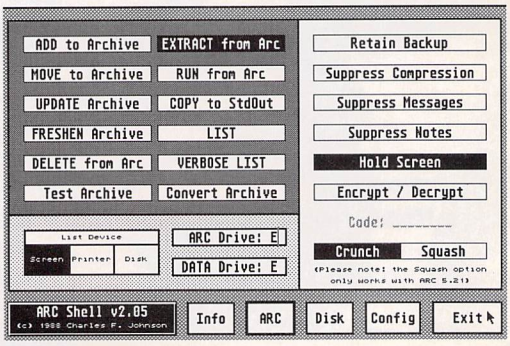
SPY FOR A DAY - SOUNDS GOOD TO ME



AT LAST, AN ARC PROGRAM TO ACCESSS THE DISK EASILY

REGULARS

NEWS **7**

A fresh view from our very own cub reporter – John Butters. He gets info from places you hadn't even thought of. Then worst of all, he reveals it to everyone (has he no shame?)

WORLD SCENE **13**

After exploring the Universe in the cover feature we return to Earth to investigate the computer arena around the planet. Be prepared!

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It was a quiet Monday morning and nothing much was happening in the offices of big-city private detective, Tex Murphy. Until a beautiful young woman walked in...

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More amazing ideas which illustrate just what is possible with a couple of tins of paint and a piece of celery

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John Butters gets for free what you used to wish for. Now you too can share in the recent PD revelations, from speedy mice to shipwreck survivors. Interested?

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Even school projects can be fun if you use Timeworks DTP to create veritable masterpieces. So if you want to impress, astound and influence people, read on

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Replacing his cape for a fur-lined anorak, 'USER'S very own SSS shares his secrets to make your life run much more smoothly

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Ditch your paints, throw away your easel and become a new person. This article can help you with the hot info on paint packages

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Just to shock you, this month we're going to be really nice when replying to the mail. Gone are the days of the shredder, the abuse and the humour. But make the most of it, it can't last for ever

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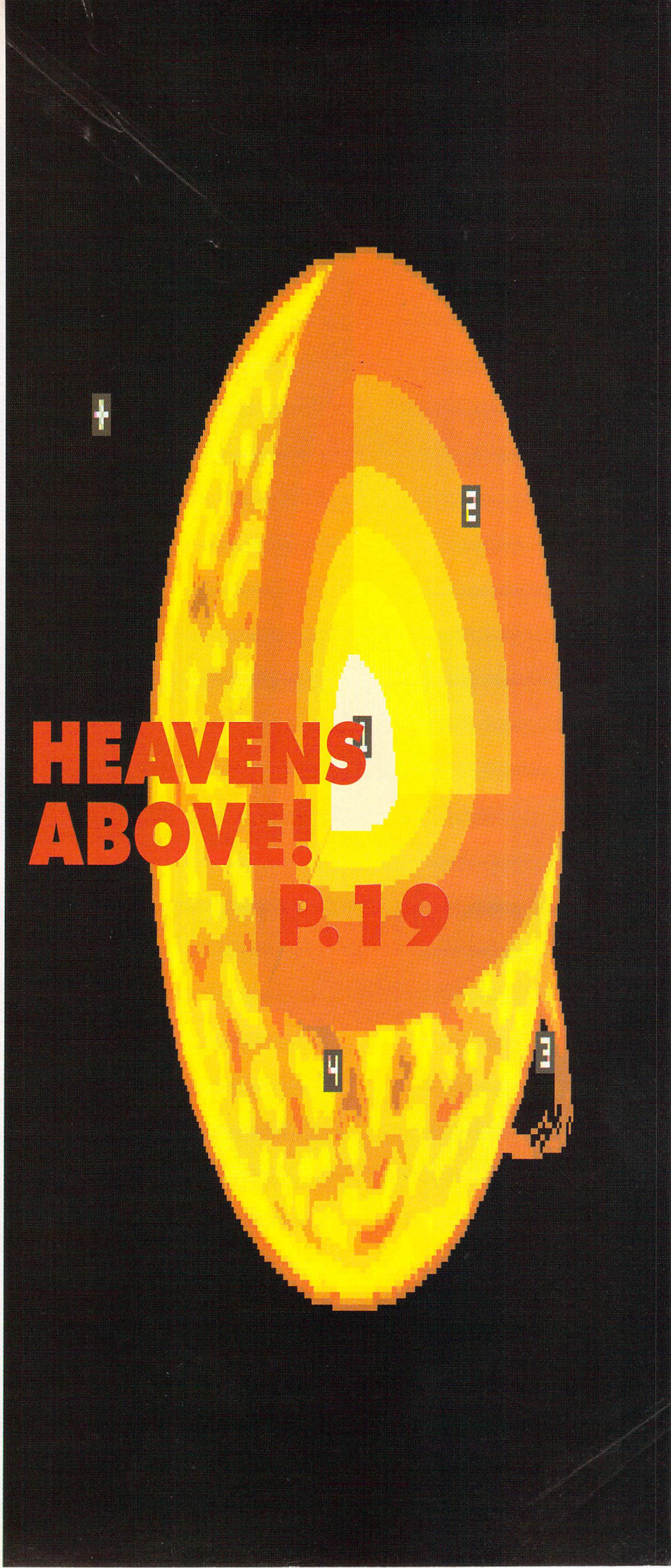


He who laughs last, laughs longest.

The rumours were true, DeluxePaint is to become available at last on ST.

Not only that, but it's said to be the best available.

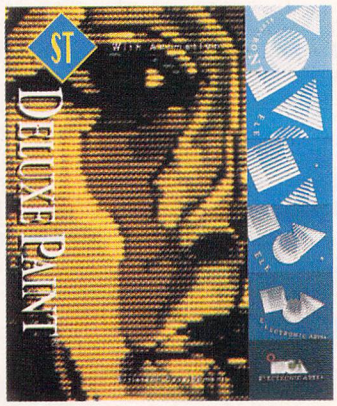
"The current version available for the ST far outstrips all earlier incarnations. It's the best version there is!" ST FORMAT.

This kind of praise is certain to bring a smile to the faces of all ST users.

You can design your own fonts, work on multiple animations and print up to poster size. The ST also has a facility for multi- colour airbrushing and animations that can be done on 512K.

The price too, is reason for amusement. For a limited time only, DeluxePaint ST will be available at a special introductory price.*

And should you happen to bump into an Amiga user, do try to keep your hilarity to a minimum, you wouldn't want to upset them now, would you?



Available soon £49.99*

Electronic Arts, 11-49 Station Road, Langley, Berks SL3 8YN. Tel: 0753 49442. Fax: 0753 46672 ELECTRONIC ARTS

NEW ATARI HITS UK

By early October, UK games houses had received the first production models of Atari's new games console, although Atari officials on both sides of the Atlantic still vehemently deny its existence. At the same time the company refuses to comment on rumours that further machines are to be released early next year.

The long-awaited cartridge-based games console is set to compete against the models already available from Sega and Nintendo, and has been named 'Panther'.

The computer is based on the ST, and the firm is currently working on an adapter to enable a 3.5 inch drive to be attached to it. Software houses are expected to sell games cartridges for about £20 and it's believed that present plans are to price the machine at £199.

It's thought that Panther will make its first public appearance at the Consumer Electronics Show to be held in Las Vegas early in November, where the Americans expect to be shown the 32MHz TT for the first time. Anticipate Panther to be on sale in the UK by spring 1991.

Speculation is rife concerning an STE version of the Mega range. Industry sources in the States say the machine is currently receiving US government certification, which could take many months to complete, amid claims that no new Mega machines have been built in many months.

The £150 price and little difference in specification between the STE and bottom of the range Mega computers, don't make the Mega an attractive buy, and it would seem that unless the range is upgraded it will be dropped. It's thought that the computer giant will introduce the new model into the UK during spring 1991.

And the new Atari machine rumours continue. Again the company will not comment on firm industry rumours suggesting that Jaguar, a mid-range ST with 24-bit colour graphics hardware and 16-bit sample-based sound hardware, is currently under development. Jaguar will be aimed at DTP and business markets and is expected to appear next spring, priced at about £750. If Atari decides to run a London show during 1991 it could be the ideal UK launching ground for its new computers, in particular the Panther.

Meanwhile, months of uncertainty ended in early October when Atari's long-awaited TT finally made it onto the streets. Silica Systems were the first to get hold of the machine.

DRIVE PROBLEMS CONTINUE

STE users experiencing problems using their hard disk drives with their new machines, will take little comfort from the action being taken by Atari. There have been frequent complaints that data is being corrupted following between three and four hours use.

Owners of Atari hard drives can expect to have their problems sorted out free of charge but those with third party drives may face an expensive charge. Owners of both an STE and an Atari hard drive will have the serial number of both the computer and drive taken by the firm, and the repair will be carried out free of charge.

The problem lies in Atari's non-standard DMA interface. One factor is said to be the length of the lead. Atari says that the machine is only designed to work with leads up to 12 inches long, whereas some of the third party units have leads up to 36 inches.

However, the firm says that because third party manufacturers haven't built their drives to specifications laid down by Atari, it can't be held responsible for any problems that may occur as a result. It will carry out the adjustments for the cost of parts, labour and carriage, but can't guarantee that they can make the computer compatible with such hard disks.

The computer giant suggests that anybody with third party drive problems should contact the manufacturer of their drive. Power Computing is one such company and when asked what it could do for its customers, a spokesman commented, "The problem has caused a great deal of difficulty, Atari refuses to disclose details of the problem so there is nothing that can be done. The problem lies with the STE, not the drives."

Power Computing suggests that people with problems should return the STE to the supplier who will, hopefully, replace the computer.

An Atari spokesman told 'USER that STEs being manufactured now will work with any drives, and that very few computers on the streets have the fault.

COMPO SETS UP IN UK

European distributor of the PC emulators PC Speed and AT-Speed, Compo Software, has set up its first UK office. Based in Huntingdon, Cambridgeshire, with a staff of three, the company has been set up to offer support for its products.

No products will be available directly from Compo Software - distribution will be done entirely through dealers, such as Gasteiner Technology who until recently was the sole UK distributor for the emulators.

No time is being wasted in launching products. Expected from the company by the end of October are a re-launch of the word processor That's Write, a top-end home user word processor called Write On, and That's Pixel, an art package.

That's Write, the best-selling word processor in Germany, is set to come onto the market at about £99. Managing Director of Compo Software, Neal O'Nions, said that the package will be "completely updated" and one of its main features will be a revised dictionary, based on the Webster publication.

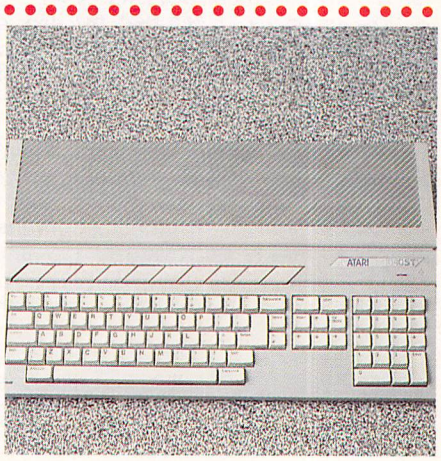
Aimed lower down the market, Write On will be the first program of its kind to offer proportionally

spaced text and mixed fonts. GEM and printer fonts can be mixed, giving increased speed and flexibility to the printing of documents. Write On will cost something in the region of £49.

The third program due for release at about the same time, is That's Pixel. With three windows on-screen at the same time, the main box shows the part of the image being edited.

In the top left-hand corner of the monitor a second, smaller window displays the whole picture, while the third window placed in the bottom left-hand corner magnifies the area which has the cursor in. The cursor can be seen in all the boxes at the same time. Price is yet to be fixed, but expect to see it at about £49.

All of the new programs are expected to be on show at the Computer Shopper Show at the beginning of December, where the company will be making its first show appearance.

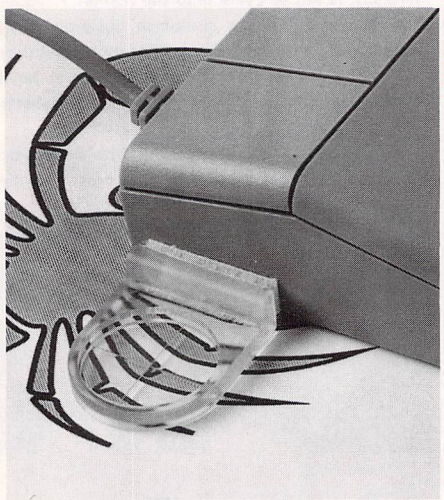


MOUSE GETS ADD-ON

Mice are the latest piece of computer equipment to get an add-on. New from SideWise, the Tracey uses Velcro to attach itself to the side of any mouse, and is designed to assist computer artists.

This small plastic add-on has a cross-hair in the centre which, when moved over an image, will turn the mouse into a tracer. Simon Williams, Director of SideWise, believes that his new product "Opens up new areas of computer graphic reproduction and is ideally suited to working with the Atari ST mouse. With Tracey you have a low-cost, base-level digitising tool at a tiny fraction of the cost of a graphics tablet."

Tracey costs £7.95 and is available from SideWise - mail order only - from PO Box 4, Totnes, Devon TQ9 7EN.



MUSIC BIG AT FAIR

The next 16 Bit Computer Fair is to be held in early January at a new location. The show has now outgrown the Royal Horticultural Halls, and organiser Westminster Exhibitions (081-549 3444) moved it to Hammersmith's Novotel, the venue for the Atari '90s Show earlier in the year.

At the time of going to press, more than 100 exhibitors had confirmed their attendance at the show, with most of the new products on show expected to be in the music arena.

One of them is Stereo System Sampler from 2 Bit Systems. It handles 16 bit sampling direct to a hard disk in stereo, at compact disk quality. With sophisticated editing it turns an ST into a low-cost mixer for about £600. GFA Data Media has taken over UK distribution for the French company Digigram, and will be showing its products at the show. Games will also have a major presence, with Bug Bash and Neucleus from Microtec Entertainment being among the new ones to appear.

SAVE THE RIBBON

An increasing number of people are becoming concerned about environmental issues. This magazine is printed on paper produced especially for magazines, from renewable, managed forests.

And now printer users can contribute. Last year the UK alone saw 26 million used ribbons thrown away, and the latest offering from Office 21, Re-ink, aims to avoid unnecessary wastage.

The company claims that the can is free from ozone damaging chemicals. The ink it contains is sprayed over used fabric ribbons to make them reusable. Each can will re-ink about 30 ribbons.

Joint managing director, Simon Caspell, said that better results come from using the ink as a top-up rather than for bringing a ribbon back from the grave. Re-ink, is the result of a year's development on one of its old products, Ribbon Refresh, which wasn't environmentally friendly.

Re-ink costs only £12.95, compared to ribbon prices of between £3 and £20. This wonderful new product is available from Caspell Computer (0202 666155).

STAR PRINTERS

Star Micronics (0494 471111) has added three new printers to its already vast range. The most noteworthy is its new 24-pin colour printer, which enters a rather crowded market at only £369 - a price most would expect to pay for a mono 24-pin.

The LC24-200 Colour is a bargain at that price - cheaper than many monochrome dot-matrix printers. Its monochrome sister, the LC24-200, costs £60 less, making it one of the cheapest 24-pin printers available. Both models run at 200 characters per second (cps) in draft mode and 67cps when printing in letter quality.

A high speed draft mode gives the two printers a speed of 222cps, and a 30K memory buffer will free the computer for other tasks while documents are being output.

Those with a lower budget would do well to look at the firm's third new arrival. Costing £259 it is a reasonably-priced 9-pin model.

A full review of the colour model will appear shortly.

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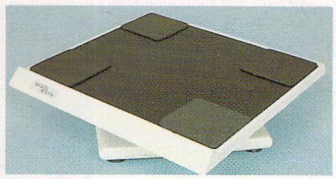

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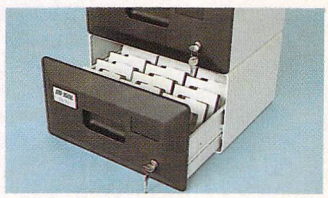

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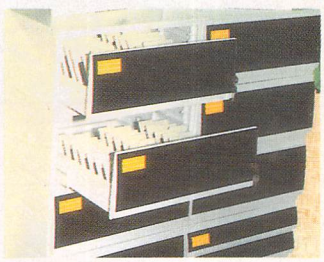

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PRINTERS

star

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H0100	CITIZEN 120D+	£139.00
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Panasonic

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H0201	KXP 1180	£170.00
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C0108 Atari 520 STFM	£5.50
Printer 80 column*	£4.50

Please specify which printer you have.

PRINTER RIBBONS

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R4260	AMSTRAD DMP4000	£4.50
R4880	CITIZEN 120D	£4.25
R4770	EPSON LQ 500/800	£3.90
R4540	EPSON LX80	£2.90
R2730	EPSON MX80	£2.90
R8440	NEC P2200	£4.50
R2280	PANASONIC KXP 1081	£4.50
R9040	PANASONIC KXP1124	£4.90
R8610	STAR LC10	£3.90
R8696	STAR LC10 COLOUR ORIG.	£7.90
R8680	STAR LC24-10	£4.50

Ribbons available for many other printers, please call for details.

CABLES

A0801	25 Male/36 Male	£7.50
A0804	25 Male/25 Male	£8.50
A0805	25 Male/25 Female	£8.50
A0806	36 Male/36 Male	£8.50

All cables are 2 metre.
Longer lengths available on request.

PRINTER STAND

SPACE SAVER

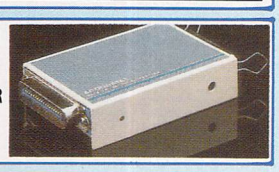
Made of moulded plastic.
Feeds and refolds paper underneath the printer.
Takes up hardly more space than the printer itself.

YUS-25A for 80 col. printer. Ref. A0203 £32.50
YUS-25B for 130 col. printer. Ref. A0204 £34.50

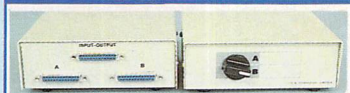
PRINTER BUFFER

A simple low cost solution to increase the size of your printer's buffer.
X0200 £76.00

64K IN-LINE PRINTER BUFFER



MANUAL DATA SWITCHES



All metal case with rotary switches.

	Ref.	36pin.	Ref.	25pin
2 way	X0001	£17.50	X0011	£16.50
4 way	X0003	£22.50	X0013	£21.50
X way	X0004	£24.50	X0014	£23.50

HOW TO ORDER

IMPORTANT PLEASE REMEMBER TO QUOTE THE REFERENCE NUMBER, WHERE AVAILABLE, OF THE ITEM(S) THAT YOU WISH TO ORDER. ALSO PLEASE QUOTE THE PRICE OF THE ITEM, ESPECIALLY IF IT IS ONE OF OUR SPECIAL OFFERS.

PAYMENT TERMS: *CHEQUE: Please make cheques payable to OMD Ltd. and send them to the address above. Please allow 3 days for cheques to clear.

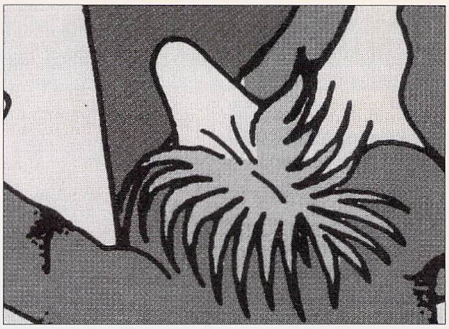
*CREDIT CARD: We accept Access & Visa Credit Cards. To place your order please telephone on (0533) **313188** Please allow up to 5 working days for delivery.

NEXT WORKING DAY DELIVERY SERVICE AVAILABLE FOR £3.75
EDUCATIONAL DISCOUNTS AVAILABLE. PLEASE CALL FOR DETAILS.

ALL PRICES INCLUDE VAT & DELIVERY (U.K. MAINLAND ONLY)

52 PAGE FULLY ILLUSTRATED CATALOGUE NOW AVAILABLE – CALL NOW FOR YOUR COPY

EDUCATIONAL PROGRAMS CONVERTED TO ST



A series of top-selling IBM educational software packages have been converted for the ST. School Software (010 353 61 49477) has lined up six programs for the machine, with three based on maths, one for typists and another on learning to spell.

The Three Bears is a computerised version of the children's fairy tale and is aimed at children aged between 5 and 10 years old. The company claims it will improve the reading skills and creativity of a child.

Junior Typist is for a similar age range. The program aims to increase the typing speeds of young children. The student receives a score, and a timing feature turns the serious program into a game. Better Spelling is for anyone over eight years old. Primarily, it concentrates on words which are known to cause difficulty for older children and adults.

Magic Maths and Maths Mania are designed to stimulate interest in maths and figures among young children. Suitable for children aged 4 to 8, Magic Maths is made up of five programs. Maths Mania improves the mathematical skills of 8 to 12-year-olds and again contains five programs.

On completion of their school years, children are faced with the compulsory GCSE exam. Better Maths has been designed for such students, based on the exam's syllabus. All the programs cost £22.95, except Junior Typist at £16.95.

NOTHING outscans a DAATA*scan*!

DAATA*scan* Pro A4, with sheet feed

NOW AVAILABLE! New A4 DAATA*scan* Pro with sheet feed, as well as the highly rated DAATA*scan* Pro Hand-held unit. Both with lightning fast software.

DAATA*scan* software features:

- Immediate REAL-TIME scanning display.
- Scan resolution 100, 200, 300 & 400 DPI.
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- Drivers for Atari Laser, 9 & 24 pin printers.
- Ability to Rotate, Flip and Inverse Image.
- Supports IMG, TIFF & DEGAS file formats.
- Compatible with ART, OCR & DTP packages.

"Quite clearly, not all hand scanners are equal and this unit is one of the best." ST WORLD

"Excellent combination of top quality, versatile hardware and software, superb value for money." ST FORMAT

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Order Code AT25
Price £199.95

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Price £249.95

Available from:
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44 Singer Way, Woburn Rd Ind. Estate
Kempston, Bedford MK42 7AF

0234 855666

PML

MAXAM MODEMS

Racal-Milgo (0256 763911) has recently launched a new range of modems at the Networks '90 show. Anyone buying one of the new Maxam modems will receive free membership and £8 free usage to CompuServe/Forum – a service which has more than 600,000 members in 40 countries.

Although the Maxam range is aimed primarily at PC users, external models in the range will work with an ST. They are the Maxam IV, V+ and VII+ and have a starting price of £399, with modulation speeds of up to 14,400 bits per second (bps) available on the top of the range model.

The entire range of Maxam table-top modems has MNP error correction up to level 5, and V42bis data compression is also supplied, which gives error-free communication at up to 7200bps. The auto-dialler will work with pulse or tone dialling and has automatic repeat dialling, last number repeat dialling and last number re-dial.

Racal-Milgro's marketing manager, Ray Badminton, said, "The Maxam IV, retailing at £399, combined with the CompuServe/FORUM membership offer, provides an ideal opportunity for serious users to access an established, commputer-based information service." Others in the new Maxam range are internal units for IBM-compatible computers.

CORKS! A BLOOMER...

On Page 99, we state erroneously that the supplier of the Golden Image Optical Mouse is Power Computing.

In fact, we are wrong. The Golden Image Optical Mouse is supplied by Golden Image (UK) LTD who can be contacted on 081 518 7373.

Sorry! But do read the review, it's a corker!

ARChive

Another blast from the past. A look at what happened this month...

FOUR YEARS AGO

The Las Vegas Comdex show was the launching ground for Atari's SH212 modem and Timeworks' Swiftcalc, Data Manager and Word Writer... Mirrorsoft announced its intention to produce hardware, such as a laser printer, to support its recently released graphics and desktop publishing software... Steinberg Research set up distribution operations in Oxford... MiGraph released two new products. Label Master was a new labelling program with graphics, and the second program was FAST, a multiple desktop package...

THREE YEARS AGO

Atari launched a huge advertising campaign, in an attempt to make the ST the best selling home computer during the Christmas period. It also announced plans for CDROM which was to be released the following year at less than £400... WordPerfect made it across to the ST. Already available on 12 formats the program entered the ST market place at £199... Cumama unveiled a series of hard disk drives providing up to 60Mb of storage space, while Frontier Software added a 198Mb machine to its range... Timeworks DTP was launched by Electric Distribution...

TWO YEARS AGO

Kuma announced major upgrades on two of its products. K-Resource 2 took over from K-Resource and K-Graph 2 upgraded into K-Graph 3... In reaction to the postal strike during the summer MicroLink speeded up plans to introduce a fax service onto its system... Digital Intergration's F16 Combat Pilot was set for take-off but only after Falcon had taken to the sky... Stateside the Atari CDAR504 CDROM player entered final production, awaiting formal certification and more software support...

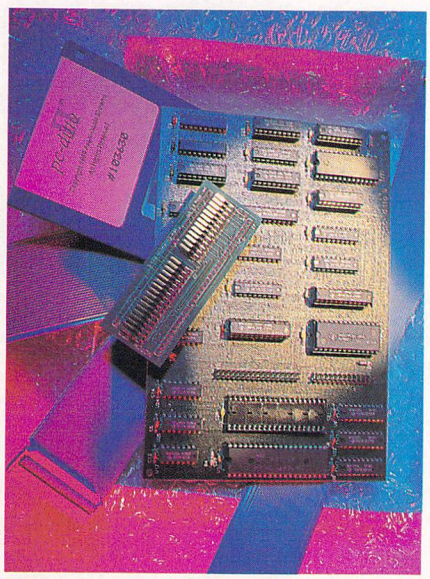
ONE YEAR AGO

Virgin Mastertronic shocked the 16 bit games market when it launched a new label, 16-Blitz, at £4.99... GST Software struck a blow against software piracy when it took out an injunction against its French distributor, suspecting it of copying its products. Charges were made during 1990... The first ST teletext adaptor was launched by Microtext... GFA's Raytrace version 2 became available... The low-cost sound sampling package, Mastersound, became available from Kempston Data... IMR's Multidat-ST allows four RGB monitors to be driven by one ST... The first Computer Shopper Show went to London, proving to be a huge success for organiser, Database Exhibitions...

SILICA LINKS WITH CITIZEN

Silica Systems (081-309 1111) has recently become a distributor for the Citizen range of printers.
Since mid-September all the company's products have been available from the distributor, adding to the vast range of products already available for the ST and IBM-compatible computers.

Other new moves from Silica include the popular AT emulator, ATonce from Vortex, being sold with a copy of the operating system MSDOS.
The board is sold without the software for £199, whereas those supplied with MSDOS cost £249.



YOUNG EMULATOR VANISHES

Only a few months after its UK release, a leading PC emulator has disappeared from the market. Florida-based Avant Garde's PC Ditto II has been distributed by Power Computing since spring this year, but two months ago stocks ran out and the company has been unable to contact the American firm.

Telephone numbers have been disconnected and changed, amid speculation that the company has ceased trading. A Power Computing spokesman says his company is supporting the older version, PC Ditto, to the best of its ability and is selling Supercharger as an alternative to PC Ditto II.

He said that although the product was slightly more expensive, it was easier to fit and had more features. If supplies of Ditto II eventually arrive, the company will probably sell both products alongside each other.

Do you know something we don't?

Although 'USER has scores of contacts in the ST world, we need you. The magazine will pay for all leads and tip-offs used in the pages. If you have some hot news ring John Butters on the newsdesk now, on 0625 878888. All information supplied will be treated in the strictest of confidence.

? ?

Are you wasting your valuable time setting your ST's clock?

Frontier's Forget-Me-Clock II is the answer

If you're one of those people who has an auto-run program annoyingly prompting you for the time and date every time you turn on your ST or STE or even worse, if you're one of those ST or STE users who doesn't set the system clock then Frontier's Forget-Me-Clock II cartridge is the solution you've been hoping for.

Just Plug It In And Go

With the Forget-Me-Clock II plugged into your ST or STE's cartridge port the system clock (used by the Control Panel) and keyboard clock will automatically be set at turn on or reset by a small auto-run program supplied with the Forget-Me-Clock II. No longer will you have to waste your time setting your ST's clock. Using the Forget-Me-Clock II also means that files saved on disk are always properly time and date stamped making finding the latest version of a file the simple task of just looking for the file with the latest time and date.

Full Pass Through

Frontier's Forget-Me-Clock II is a clock cartridge unlike any other. All other clock cartridges for the ST will tie up the cartridge port making it impossible to have your ST's system clock set automatically while still using another cartridge. The Forget-Me-Clock II has a full cartridge pass through which means that any other cartridge for the ST can be plugged into it while it is plugged into your ST. The Forget-Me-Clock II remains totally invisible so

Frontier's Forget-Me-Clock II Cartridge With Pass Through

that the other cartridge can be used normally, but it still automatically sets the system and keyboard clocks in your ST.

No Need To Open Your ST

Installing some clock cards for the ST means that you have to open your ST's case and pry computer chips out of their sockets. The Forget-Me-Clock II is a cartridge which plugs into the cartridge port on the side of your ST which means that its installation couldn't be simpler - you just plug it in and turn on your ST.

Software Included

Every Forget-Me-Clock II cartridge is supplied with time and date setting software for the Forget-Me-Clock II's clock together with a small auto-run program which automatically sets your ST's system and keyboard clocks every time you turn on or reset your ST. Built into the setting software is the facility to stop the Forget-Me-Clock II's clock to save on battery life when the Forget-Me-Clock II is not being used.

Satisfaction Guaranteed

The Forget-Me-Clock II is supplied under Frontier's ten day money back guarantee, which means that if you don't like the Forget-Me-Clock II for any reason, you can return it for a full refund within ten days of purchase. The Forget-Me-Clock II has been designed to work with any model of ST whether it be ST, STM, STF, STFM, STE or Mega ST.

Two Year Guarantee

The Forget-Me-Clock II carries a full two year guarantee which includes the battery. Battery life has been tested to be many times the guarantee period. Frontier will supply replacement batteries outside of the guarantee period for a small charge.

Price

Forget-Me-Clock II Cartridge £24.99

Price includes VAT. Please add £1.15 for postage and packing to all orders under £50.00. Frontier accepts payment by Visa or Access. Price subject to change without notice. Goods subject to availability.

Frontier Software

P.O. Box 113, Harrogate, North Yorkshire, England HG2 OBE. Phone (0423) 567140/530577. Fax (0423) 522874.

world news

REVOLUTIONARY PD IMAGE PROCESSING

All the news that's fit to print from around the globe. Hardware, software — if it's innovative, you'll read about here...

The public domain scene is full of re-invented wheels, in Germany as much as here. Countless disk formatters, screen capture utilities, sector editors and desk accessory diaries clutter the lists of PD libraries, and it's sometimes hard to find the genuinely interesting among all the dross.

PD is at its best when it fills the gaps left by commercial applications, and in particular when it ventures into fields which stretch the capabilities of your computer beyond the limits dictated by software houses.

One such example of a public domain program ahead of its time is Imagelab, recently discovered among a pile of new German PD disks. Anybody who has ever used a scanner or video digitiser to import photographs or TV stills into a desktop publishing program, knows how limited the picture editing facilities provided on the ST are.

This is because the 16, 64 or whatever grey scale boasted by your scanner or digitiser are simulated grey scales, produced by arranging dots in a monochrome dither pattern.

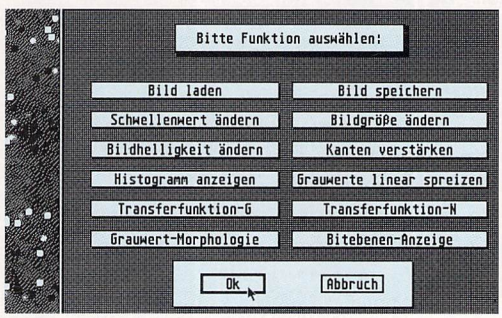
True grey scale image editing software, however, as available on the Apple Mac and even the IBM PC, can manipulate pictures much more powerfully – enhancing contrasts and contours, filtering out the background, highlighting a part of the image and so on. Such programs are now being developed in Germany for the ST and should be hitting these shores soon, but in the meantime we have Imagelab – and it's free, too.

Imagelab works with 256 grey levels, on pictures of up to four times screen size, using its own 8-bit file format. Conversion utilities are provided to translate low-res Degas and screen format (.PIC) graphics into something Imagelab can understand, but the best method is to use the IFF format, which is written and read by many ST paint programs. Once loaded, the image can be analysed and transformed in a variety of ways – the key tool is known as a Histogram, which displays the distribution of the grey levels and is used for correcting the tonal balance of your scanned or digitised picture.

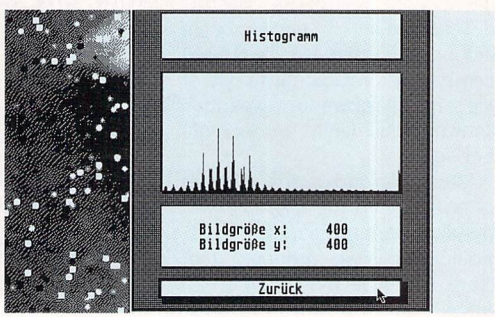
Of course, the ST's monochrome monitor or dot matrix or laser printers cannot output true greys, so what you see is again always dithered (using the widespread Floyd-Steinberg algorithm). To appreciate the full beauty of 256 grey levels, you need to buy a horrendously expensive monitor or employ a high-resolution phototypesetter. But despite dither patterns being at the beginning and end of the process, it's what happens in between that counts, and even on modest hardware the improvements in picture quality made possible by Imagelab are well worth it.

The author of this impressive freebee is Rainer Fraedrich, Moerler Strasse 36, D-6360 Friedberg. Imagelab does not however seem to have appeared in any UK libraries yet.

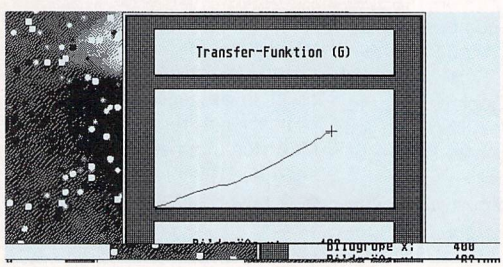
A begging letter to Rainer, accompanied by a blank formatted disk and international reply coupon should do the trick.



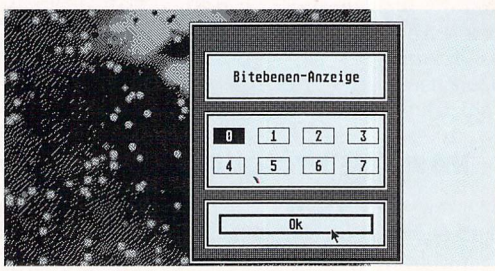
Imagelab is menu-driven and really easy to use. Trial and error will soon clarify what these functions do



The histogram gives a graphic display of the distribution of various grey levels in a picture



Two different transformation functions are provided to correct any imbalances shown up by the histogram



Sometimes the information contained in a particular bit plane contains little but noise, and deleting it can vastly improve overall quality

COME FLY WITH ME

Remember all those strange guys flapping their arms while jumping off Bognor Regis pier? The dream of Birdman – self-propelled human flight – is as old as it is largely unfulfilled, so July 29, 1990 must be considered an historic date. Thirty-one year old Peer Frank managed to keep airborne, in a self-propelled aircraft for six minutes and fifteen seconds, covering a distance of four kilometres over Munich Airport.

Gosh, I hear you say, but what is this information doing on this page, in this magazine? To keep a long story short, the answer is that the self-propelled pilot was sponsored by Atari Germany, and used ST computers to design his ultra-light and hyper-efficient craft. Now watch out for the Peer Frank Flight Simulator, and Atari UK responding with sponsorship of Eddie the Eagle...

WE WANT TURBO!

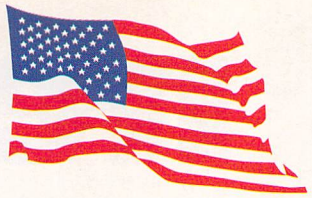
One of the best-known versions of the C programming language on IBM PCs is Turbo C from Borland. Given that C is an extremely popular language on the ST too, it must remain one of the great mysteries of our time why the Atari version of Turbo C remains unavailable in English, even though it is going from strength to strength in Germany – even Calamus was reputedly written in it.

Industry sources whisper that Turbo C for the ST was purely an initiative by Borland's German subsidiary and is not well liked by the parent company because it does not wish to be associated with a 'games machine'. If such prejudice is indeed depriving UK hackers of one of the best C development environments around, then perhaps it's time to combat the prejudice with one of the most powerful weapons known to humanity – the profit motive.

Maybe an increasing number of orders from the UK, followed by a stream of support calls, would convince Borland that there is a nice market off-shore which it would be a shame not to exploit. Turbo C Version 2.0 costs DM248.52 (about £83 in ERM money) and inquiries should be addressed to: Borland GmbH, Lindwurmstr. 88 D-8000 Munchen. Tel: 010 49 89 720101, fax: 010 49 90 779339.

NOW OVER TO OUR 1040...

Part of the fun on election nights is watching the pretty television graphics with the latest results and computer forecasts. In the land of 'Vorsprung dorch Technik' with its complicated system of proportional representation and regional lists, nothing less than Atari STs will do for the Zweites Deutsches Fernsehen (ZDF) election specials.



When East Germany (which recently disappeared from the map) conducted its first and last free election this year, it was only sensible to heed the West German experience and leave the informative telly stuff to a batch of 18 1040 STs, donated for the purpose by Atari Deutschland. In this country, of course, ordinary IBM PCs are quite adequate for the simple adding-up involved in the first past the post system...

ATARI SHARE PRICE PLUNGES

Since the Iraqi invasion of Kuwait at the beginning of August, stock markets all over the globe have suffered heavy losses. Combined with already difficult economic conditions on both sides of the Atlantic, the worry of war wiped more than 10 per cent off market values.

Atari stock is among those which have fallen. Before the activities in the Gulf, shares were worth US$8 but recently they were fighting to stay above US$2.50. Time Warner owns 25 per cent of Atari and experts believe their losses as a result of trade embargoes are one of the main reasons behind the fall.

FRAUD MAN ARRESTED

In a half-million dollar chip piracy bust, Dennis Hayes of Cincinnati, Ohio, has pleaded guilty to operating a scheme in which he sold more than 5,000 fake Apple Macintosh ROM computer chips between 1983 and 1990. Macintosh 128K ROM software information was copied onto the chips which Hayes then sold for between US$180 and $195 per set.

Hayes pleaded guilty to money laundering, copyright infringement and structuring a financial transaction. Seized were $180,000 in cash, $2,000 in traveller's cheques, various guns (including no fewer than four Uzi semi-automatic weapons) and his private aircraft.

He was one of several major chip suppliers for Mac ROMs, also used in Gadgets By Small's Spectre Mac emulators for the ST. Small does not supply chip sets for its unit and had no dealings with Hayes, although many Atari users bought chips from Hayes at several Atarifests.

Persistent rumours that tied a shortage of the Spectre GCR cartridge to this arrest are unfounded. Gadgets by Small supplies the cartridge without the all-important Mac ROMS and it is up to the dealer or end-user to find a source of the ROMs. The simple truth is that the cartridge has proved to be so popular that demand is now out-stripping supply.

GCR UPGRADE

A major upgrade of the GCR software, from version 2.65 to Version 3, is now in the pipeline. Among the features included in the software revision are direct support for the Apple LaserWriter printers and compatibility with the extra features offered by the 68020 and 68030 chips (so the emulator is now compatible with the enhanced functions of the TT). The handling of the peculiar Mac disk format has been improved and Mac disks can now be formatted from the ST desktop. When in Mac mode, disks that were formatted to the PC standard can be used, so exchanging data between three separate machines is now easier than ever before. Ideal for people who run one of the hardware PC emulators.

Registered users of the GCR cartridge will be receiving a newsletter shortly detailing the availability data of Version 3 as well as the upgrade prices from previous version.

From West Germany comes news of a new hardware upgrade that promises to improve the usability of GCR in an Apple environment. One of the major weaknesses of GCR is its inability to be connected to an AppleTalk network and share data directly with real Macs. Research students at Stuttgart University have developed STalk, a hardware AppleTalk board for use with GCR.

This opens the way for an ST or TT to be used with GCR as a professional replacement for a Mac for high-end applications such as DTP. At less than a third of the cost, products such as this enable the ST to run the very latest Mac software. Contact Fearn & Music in West Germany on 01149 711 602489. STalk costs just $300 US dollars, or £250.

GENLOCKS

John Russell Innovations of Pittsburgh, the creators of the JATO 16MHz accelerator board, have released two Genlocks for the ST range of computers. Owners of Megas can fit the unit internally, while STE users can get an external unit that takes advantage of the extra genlocking hardware offered by the newer machines. JRI have also released a board that will increase the colour palette of any ST to 4096 colours.

FLASHY UPGRADES

Antic Software is shortly to update its popular communications program to version 2. Flash has been rumoured to be ready for an upgrade for some time but the company has kept its lips tight.

FREE UPGRADE

Cherry Fonts owners have been told to return their disks for a free upgrade if they will be using the new Calamus 1.09N. Registered users should send their disks to Cherry Font, Unit 4, 2250 Tyner Street, Port Coquitlam, B.C., Canada.

GREAT PRETENDER?

If someone offers you a copy of TOS 2 – don't take it. Rogue copies of the latest version of the Atari operating system have been appearing on bulletin boards in the States.

This alpha-test version has somehow been leaked from Atari's US development labs and is reported to be highly unstable and bug-ridden. ST Report in the States advises anyone who may have a copy of Version 2 not to use it. It is far better to wait for the authorised release and not to risk your precious data to an unstable OS.

The same warning should also be applied to another supposedly 'new' TOS originating in Germany. TOS 3.01 is the current release of TOS found in the new 32MHz TTs and although it functions perfectly on those machines, there's no guarantee as to how it will behave if you try to run it on a lesser machine that doesn't have the new TT hardware. All the menus and dialogs are in German, so you're best advised to steer clear.

REPORTER ABROAD

Next month you can expect lots of juicy gossip from the other side of the pond.

'USER reporter John Butters is travelling around the States this month, searching for the latest word on what's happening in the world of computers.

So make sure you look here first for the biggest and best.

THE star COMPUTER PRINTERS

Being Star registered dealers we only sell official UK machines which come with a full 1 year guarantee. Beware of inferior imported products

OFFICIAL U.K. VERSIONS	RRP	OUR PRICE
STAR LC10 mono 144/36 C.P.S.	£229.95	£149.95
STAR LC10 II 25% faster version	£263.35	£169.95
STAR LC10 Colour, 7 colours	£297.85	£189.95
STAR LC24-10-24 pin multifont	£343.85	£229.95
STAR LC10 Sheet Feeder (auto)	£74.75	£59.95
STAR LC10 Mono Ribbons	£5.95	£3.95
STAR LC10 Colour Ribbons	£7.95	£5.95
STAR LC24-10 Ribbons	£7.95	£5.95
STAR LC10 Quality Dust Cover	£7.95	£5.95

The NEW 200 Series from THE star COMPUTER PRINTERS

"The best printers just got better"

LC-200 FACT FILE

★ Multi-purpose 9-pin, 80 column dot matrix printer with colour
★ Black and colour ribbons included as standard
★ Electronic dip switches (see LC24-200)
★ 180 cps draft elite/45 cps Near Letter Quality
★ High speed draft facility 225 cps at 12cpi
★ Swivel selectable push or pull tractor
★ Bottom feed
★ Advanced paper parking with sheet feeder installed
★ Eight resident NLQ fonts: Courier, Sanserif, Orator, Script and italic versions

RRP £297.85 **OUR PRICE £199.95**

LC24-200 FACT FILE

★ Versatile 24-pin 80 column dot matrix printer
★ 200 cps in draft elite/67 cps in Letter Quality mode
★ A high speed draft facility of 222 cps at 10cpi
★ Swivel selectable push or pull tractor
★ Bottom feed
★ Advanced paper parking with sheet feeder installed
★ The economy of first and last line printing
★ 7k-byte buffer expandable to 39 k-bytes
★11.7 carriage (A4 in landscape format)
★Multi-part mode for 1-4 copies

RRP £366.85 **OUR PRICE £239.95**

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★Multi-purpose colour version of the 24-pin LC24-200
★ Seven colour printing -black, purple, orange, green, pink, blue and yellow
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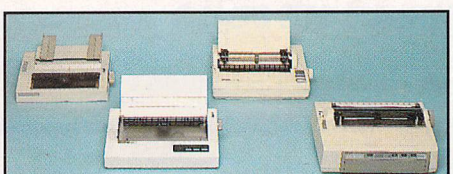
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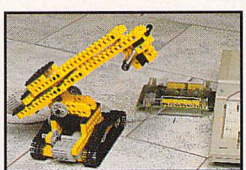
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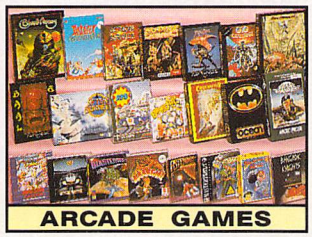
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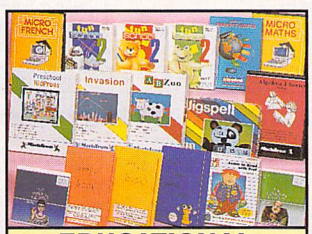
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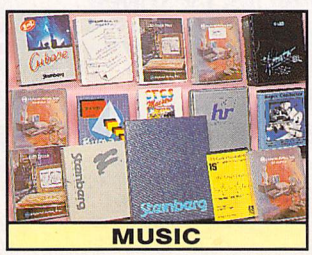
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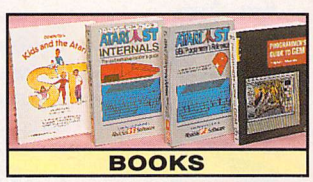
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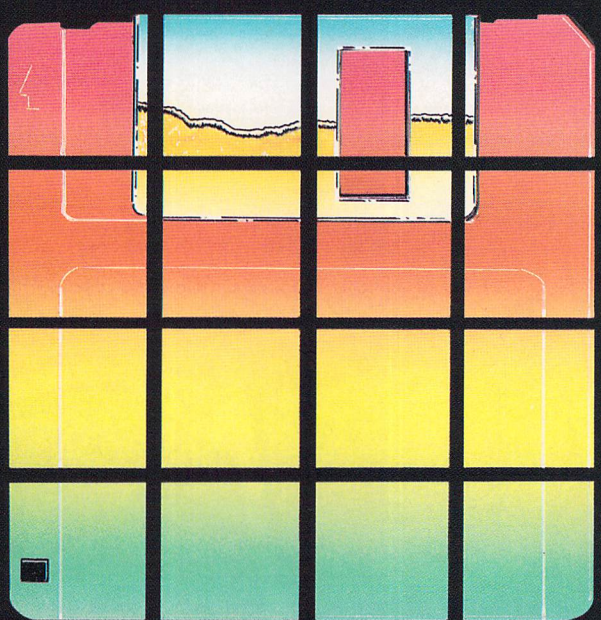

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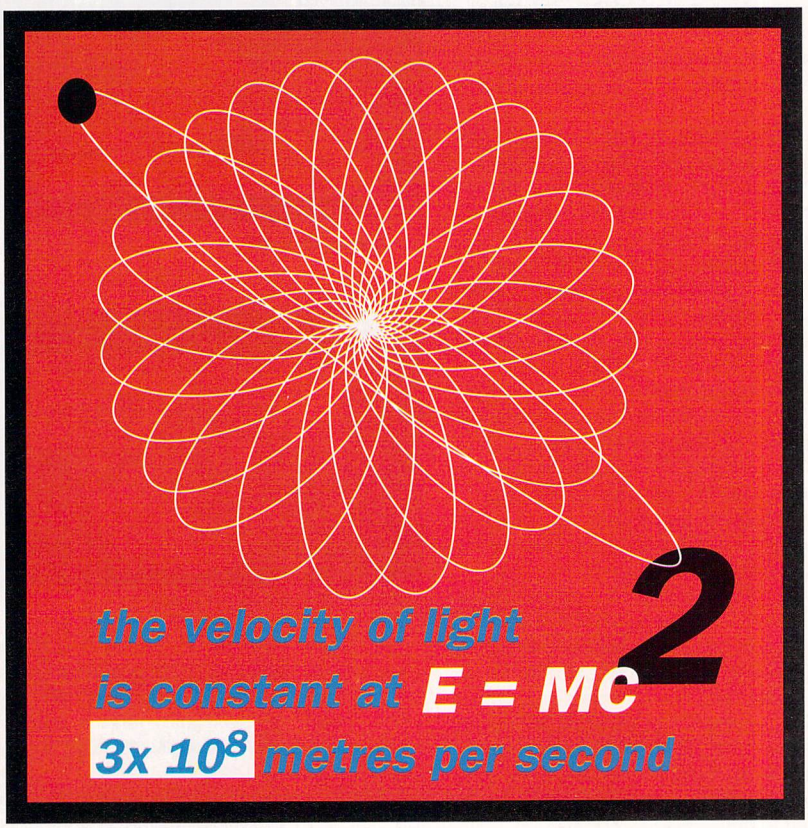
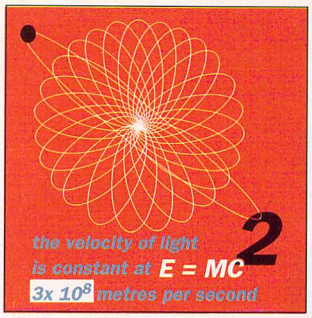


It's a Desktop planetarium Jerry, but not as we know it...



Space, the final frontier – these are the cliches every last one of you associate with the closest you'll ever get to to a flight through the Universe. For the last twenty years, space-struck youngsters (and their excited parents) have sat through repeats without end of UFO, Space 1999, Blake's 7, Dr Who and of course, Star Trek – the longest five years ever.

Since times immoral, small boys, large men, old women and young girls have gazed at the heavens and wondered. What's up there? Where did it come from and more to the point, where's it all going? Lie on your back in a field on a clear night and all those big ideas about your own self importance evaporate into the darkness you're looking at. It's big out there, and you're just one tiny part.

Which is fine if you actually could be part of it. Unfortunately, you're tied to the surface of the Earth, with no more chance of escaping from your home planet's immense gravity and journeying through the stars, than you have of sprouting feathers and flying to school or work tomorrow (unless the powers that be stop spending billions of their Earth pounds, dollars and yen on arms and invest some of it into space exploration).

So. You have to make do with watching Patrick Moore berating viewers for confusing astrology with his beloved astronomy once a month, and getting wobbly views of Mars with Uncle Bert's wartime binoculars – scratched beyond repair and with a shell-hole the size of a fist baring the inner workings to the elements.

But soft, what silicon on yonder desk hums? 'Tis your ST, and there's a host of startlingly good astronomy software available to enable you to live out your extra-terrestrial fantasies. Cold nights in the garden pointing your 3.5 inch refractor at the stars are now a thing of the past. Get tucked up snugly in front of the welcoming phosphor glow of your ST's display, and boot up some of the goodies depicting outer-space.

THE ANIMATION GAME

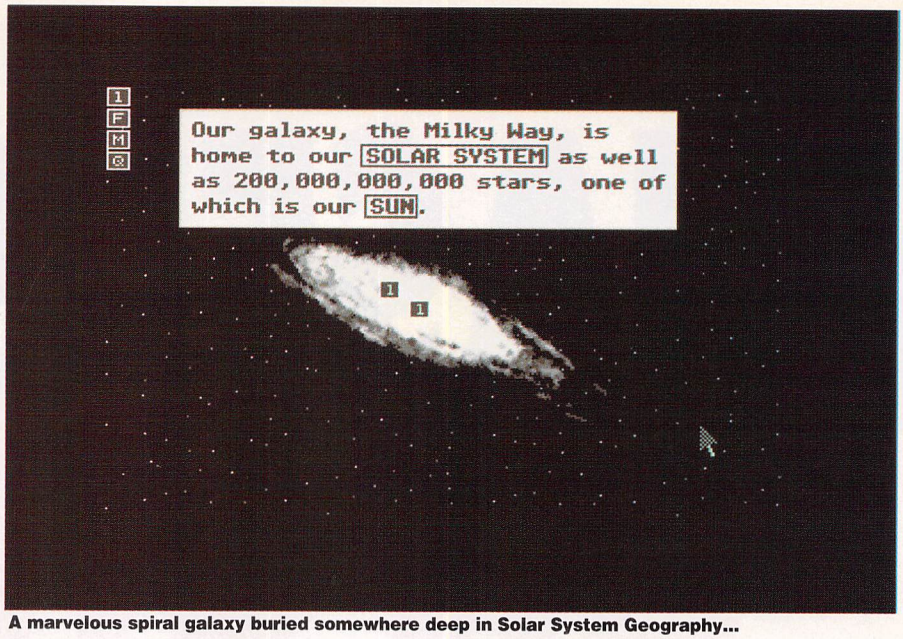
You've all seen those fantastic NASA animations showing the Voyagers careering about the solar system hither and thither, pointing their cameras at Neptune's hidden secrets and their radio antennas at the avid listeners on Earth.

Until recently, animation sequences such as those shown on TV's Horizon could only be generated by computers which filled a room and required an army of lab-coated young men and women to tend its needs. Until that is, 16-bit super machines such as the ST arrived. Don't laugh. The couple of hundred clams you handed over to Dixons for a slice of Atari-grey plastic wouldn't have bought a keyboard just ten years ago, and when machines finally did make it into the home, they weren't exactly startling in the graphic ability stakes.

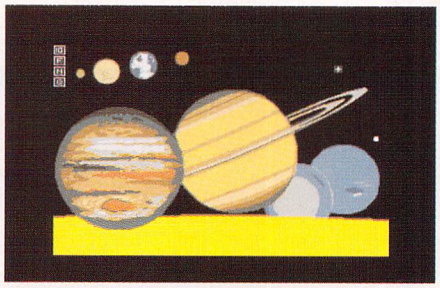
With the advent of the ST however, the way was clear to produce thrilling graphic displays and that's just what happened.

The Universe is a big place, right? There's an awful lot stars out there, hundreds of thousands of galaxies, dust clouds, black holes and assorted astronomical oddities – it would take many more brains than yours to remember the salient data. Here's another little niche the computer can fill admirably.

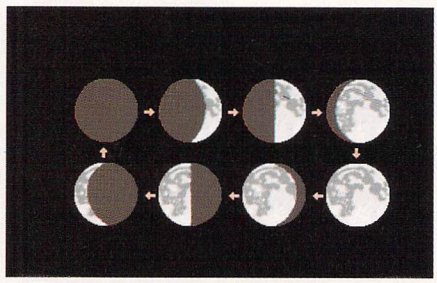
Your ST really gets off on twirling figures around its silicon brain with a speed and accuracy that would leave Einstein with his head bowed. What better then, than having your ST store the star data, together with stunning and colourful animation sequences and combining the two on-screen, to provide a breath-taking glimpse of the Universe many can only dream about?



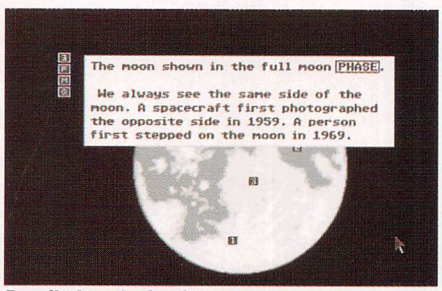
A marvelous spiral galaxy buried somewhere deep in Solar System Geography...



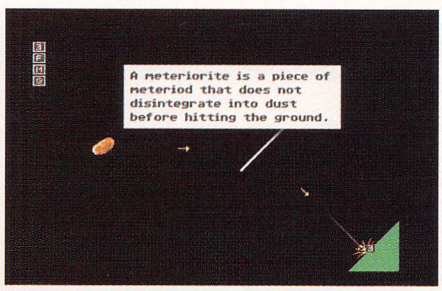
The gang's all here!



***Phases* on stun?**



Detailed analysis of the many



heavenly worlds...

Just think, soaring around planets, watching an eclipse from anywhere on Earth, viewing Saturn's rings from one of the planet's many moons or examining the icy regions of Pluto? Or how about tripping the dark-fantastic in the eerie realm of the black hole? These and more corking Boys-Own adventures can be yours with the aid of the ST!

ST IN THE WORKS

And it doesn't end there. As well as storing vast amounts of heavenly data, displaying graphic sequences and the like, the ST can be used to control the motion of a telescope, create a database of scanned images direct from the telescope, help with radio astronomy, in fact the ST can help with every aspect of astronomy, smoothing the way and extending your enjoyment.

Don't worry if you're not a budding Patrick Moore or Heather Couper, a lot of the astronomy programs available require little or no knowledge from the user and yet provide an interesting insight into the vagaries of the

night sky – think of it as a new angle on your computer habit.

Product: The Computer Guide to the Solar System
Supplier: Third Coast Technologies
Telephone: 0257 472444
Price: £49.95
Configuration: All STs, colour only

The Computer Guide to the Solar System (or CGSS as we'll call it from here on in) bills itself as "Your passport to the true wonders of the Solar System". Thrilling stuff, right?

Actually, it is, because the CGSS provides some of the sweetest inter-planetary graphics this side of the spiral arm. After booting (and you'll need a colour monitor or TV), you're presented with a standard GEM menu bar and a representation of the solar system. The mouse pointer becomes a dinky little rocket.

The Desktop is now the centre of operations. From here you can choose a planet and explore it, garner data about comets or view sunspots in close up. In fact, there's so much to look at, it's difficult to know where to start – so how about the beginning, with the Sun?

Pull down the 'Sun' menu, select Structure, and up pops a detailed yellow globe – the Sun – a large chunk cut away, depicting a graphical breakdown detailing the composition of our star. Here, you'll be regaled with facts about the photosphere, the chromosphere, the convective and radiative zones and a comprehensive explanation of the workings of the Sun. There's a detailed account of solar phenomena such as prominences, sunspots and the like, and some really spectacular graphics.

Select the Earth from the menu bar and you can get information about its structure, size and mass, a display of its orbit and so on.

Each celestial object has its own menu option and associated information is listed in a sensible order. At any time however, you can escape from a particular journey by clicking the right mouse button and returning to the main menu.

As well as detailed analysis of all the planets in the solar system, there's information on the moon, asteroids and comets. Included are some 'fun' sections such as a 'guess your weight on other planets' option.

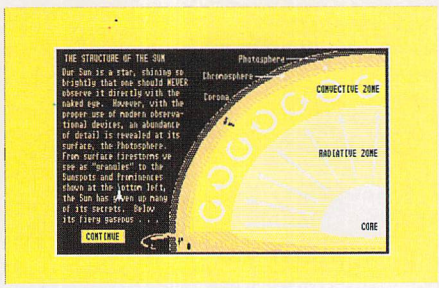
The Computer Guide to the Solar System is colourful, instructive but above all, fun! Narrative is written in a clear, yet exciting way to capture and hold your attention. And everyone, even complete space-science novices will be able to understand what's going on – not always possible with some of the astronomy software around. Indeed, the CGSS is designed to interest everyone.

Moans? There's a few. The tree-like main menu structure is all very well, but it'd be nice to be able to pilot a ship through the wonders of the Solar System, Galaxy and Universe in one linear movement rather than receiving information about one object, then returning to the main menu and starting another journey. You may like to travel in that way, I'd prefer to get into my ship and go where whim commands.

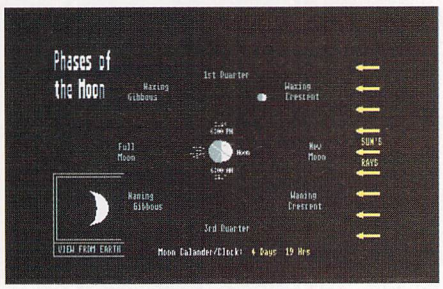
Graphics are very pretty – spectacular in some instances – but because the program's written in compiled BASIC, illustrations tend to build up on the screen bit by excruciatingly slow bit. Actually, it's possible WinterTech, the guys responsible for the CGSS, may have deliberately programmed CGSS in that way as an aid to building up excitement – but I doubt it. On the whole, graphics are slow but worth the wait. The hard drive installation process leaves a little to be desired. WinterTech advises simply copying all the stuff from the disks into a folder of your choice but leaving the program itself on the root directory. I tried this but got stuck in an 'insert disk 2' loop from which it was impossible to escape! Maybe I was doing something wrong...

CGSS works fine with both half and one meg RAM machines but requires a colour monitor or television. As an introduction to the marvels (Yeah, OK! It's difficult not to slip into cliches) of the Universe, CGSS is unmatched.

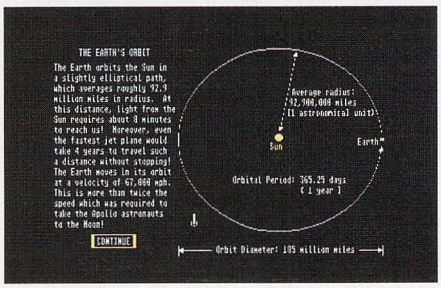
The Computer Guide to the Solar System is a comprehensive astronomy program with some gorgeous graphics, but unless you're pretty heavily into the study of heavenly bodies, a monkey is an awful lot of moolah to spring for a bit of software you have only a passing interest in - enter our old friend, the public domain. There's some corking stuff lurking in the PD - there's also lots of crap, but as it's all free, you can try it all and discard the stuff you don't like, right?



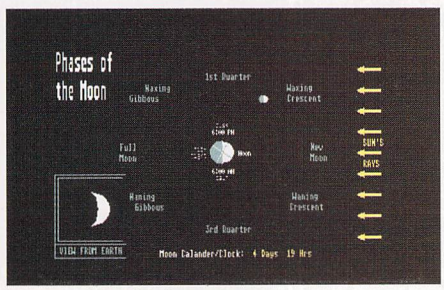
The Computer Guide to the...



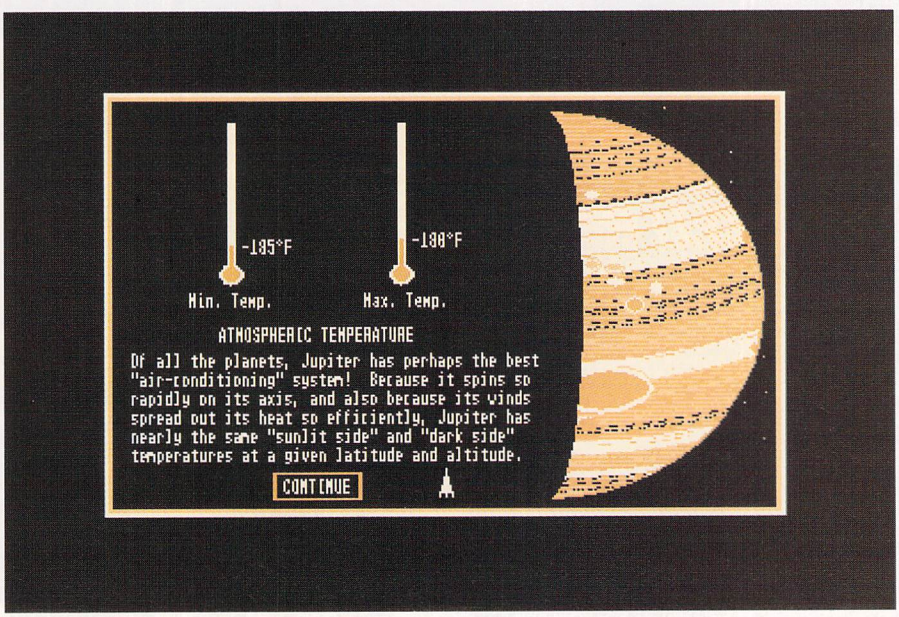
...Solar System provides a ...



...single main menu from ...



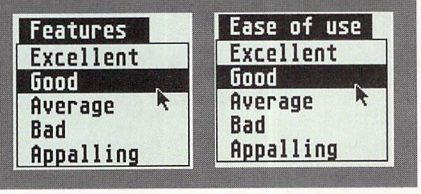
...to explore the heavens



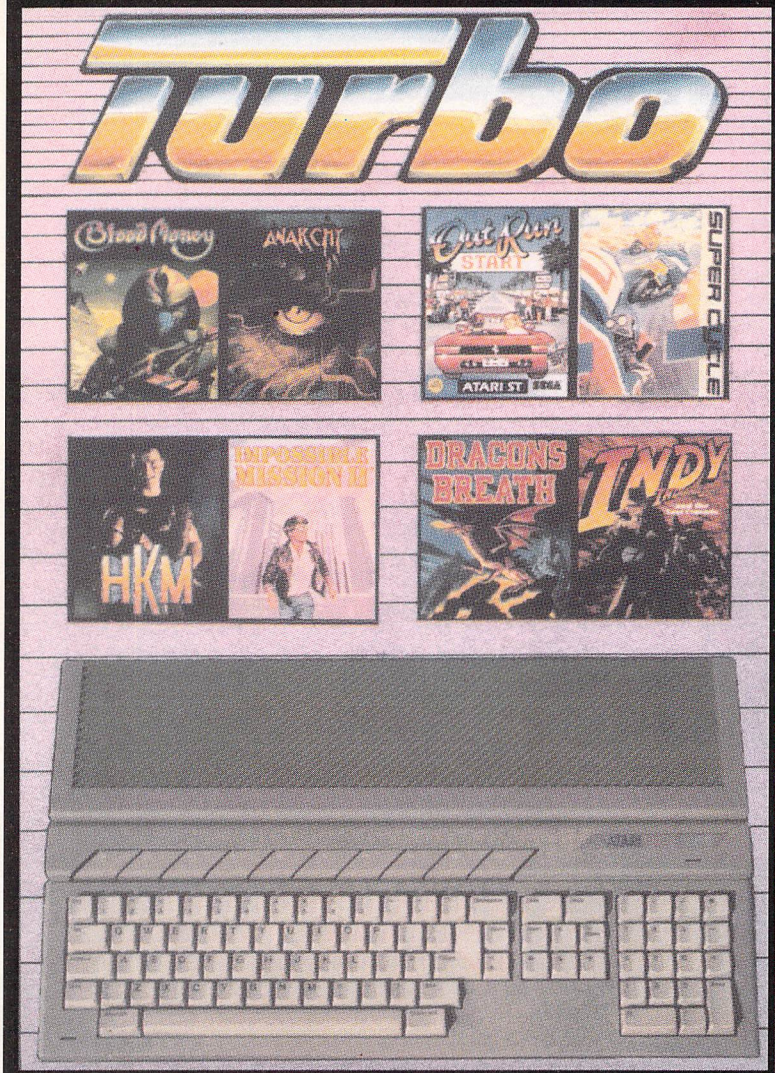
THE BOTTOM LINE

Features: Colourful graphics and a host of interesting insights into astronomy will hold your attention for a very long time.

Ease of use: CGSS is simple to use. A standard point and click front-end ensures that even complete novices will be navigating the Universe quickly and easily.



ATARI ST "E" & "FM"



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Product: Solar System Geography
Supplier: The public domain (take a look at our PD pages...)
Price: Shareware
Configuration: All STs, colour only

Shareware it may be, but Solar System Geography is really stunning! Breath-taking colour graphics combined with some corking animation sequences mean that Solar System Geography rivals the Computer Guide to the Solar System – especially when you take into account that SSG is shareware.

The odyssey begins on a title screen which provides information about the program. After reading the 'please support me by sending cash' message, click on 'Begin'. The screen clears and you're presented with a superb rendition of our galaxy, the Milky Way. The pointer becomes a cross and in the upper-left corner of the screen there are four little boxes enabling you to get information about the object currently displayed on-screen, find an object, enter a quiz and so on.

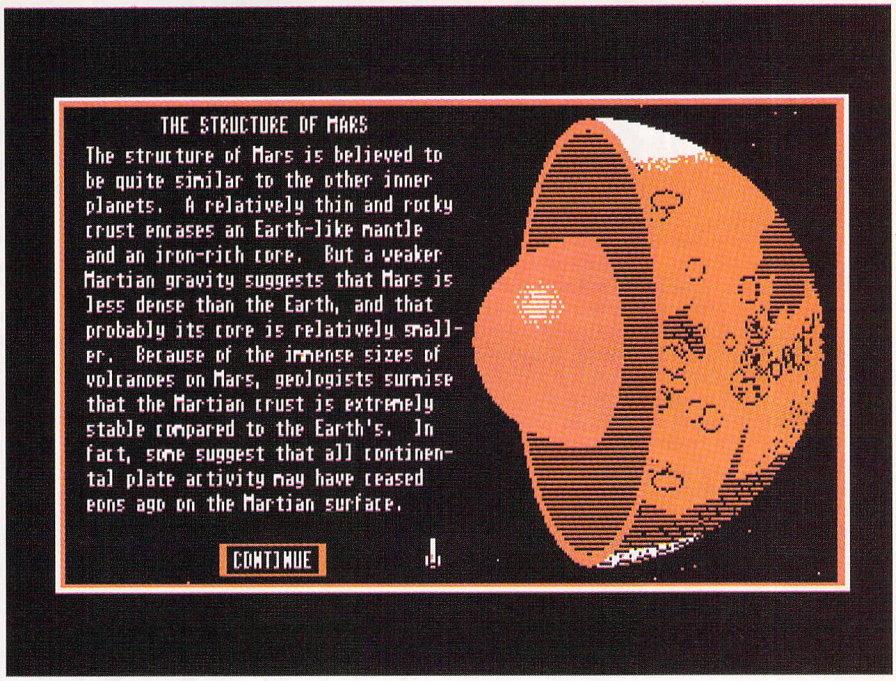
Select the quiz, and you're plunged into a dozen or more general-knowledge questions about the heavens. There are questions on the planets, moon phases, the Sun and comets. You're awarded points for correct answers but a point is deducted if you answer incorrectly. At then end of the quiz, all of the questions you got wrong are replayed with the correct answers.

The Geography program proper, takes you on a guided tour of the Universe, but unlike the Computer Guide to the Solar System, you don't return to a central main menu (unless you want to) but move ahead until you reach the end of the program.

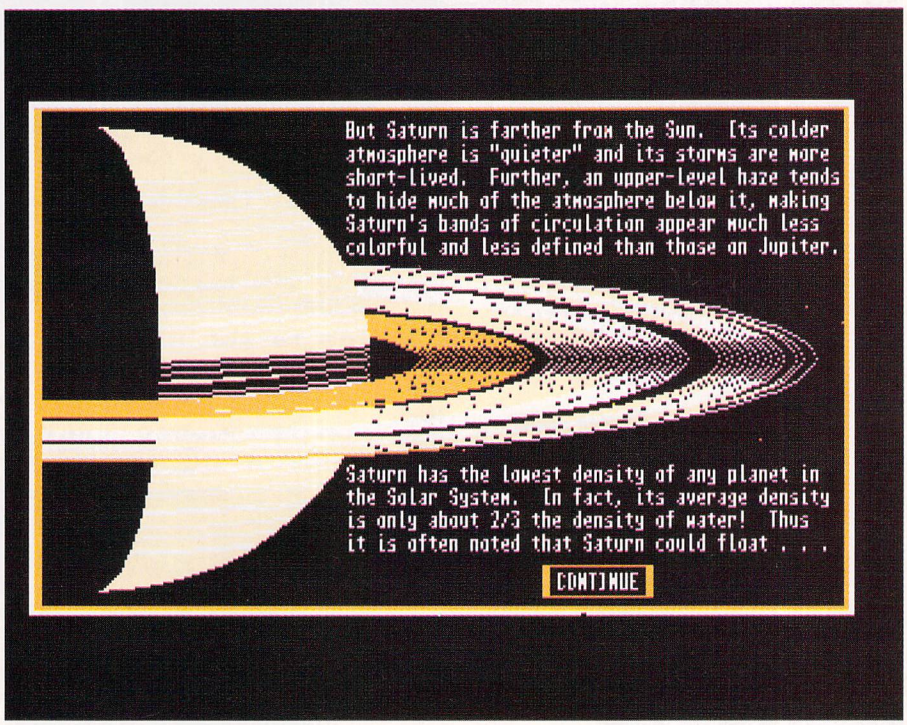
One sequence that is particularly memorable is an animation sequence of the planetary orbits. The entire solar system is shown – to scale – on screen. There are two buttons, Fast and Slow. Click either, and the planets start their journeys around the Sun. If you click Fast, the planets whizz around providing a perfect representation of their velocities relative to one another.

All in all, Solar System Geography is an excellent program that anyone even vaguely interested in things celestial should seek out. The program will delight and educate young and old alike.

So, what else is out there? Literally hundreds of diverse astronomical programs ranging from satellite trackers and comet plotters, to software depicting the more common objects of the night sky in every shape and form. Happy viewing!



Like a giant cup cake on its side, but closer examination reveals a wealth of detailed analysis



A magnificent view of Saturn's rings, but using CGSS, you'll discover several other planets with their own ring systems

THE BOTTOM LINE

Features: A comprehensive collection of heavenly objects to travel around, over and through.

Ease of use: Which operation requires a click, double click or right mouse click.

ASTRONOMY IS LOOKING UP

Astronomers are angry! Fed up with light pollution, they've decided to take to the streets and publicise their anger, in an attempt to get something done about it.

Don't worry, they're not quite as fearsome as you might think. On the contrary, astronomers as famous as the Astronomer Royal and TV's very own Heather Couper (former President of the Junior Astronomical Society) will be on hand during National Astronomy Week (November 17 - 24) to launch Dark Skies 2000, a campaign directed at the producers of unnecessary night light.

And as well as the Dark Skies 2000 campaign, there's The Universe at School, a lecture by Heather Couper on the importance of astronomical study in school.

Details of National Astronomy Week (touted as 'Bringing the Universe to the UK!') from Linda Simonian, The Law Coordination Team, The Astronomy Centre, Todmorden, Lancashire OL14 7HW.

ARMAGH OBSERVATORY

WHAT ON EARTH IS ASTRONOMY?

Astronomy is the study of celestial objects – stars, planets, galaxies, comets and so on – using everything from the naked eye to sophisticated silicon helpmates such as the Atari ST (and maybe a couple of VAX minicomputers thrown in for good measure). When did it all begin? Who knows! Unfortunately, astronomy is impossible to date. Certainly almost all 'civilised' nations since the dawn of time, who have managed to leave a record of their existence, have also left a record of their endeavours in studying the night sky.

Today, astronomical study is performed by a small number of salaried professionals and a vast army of back-garden-observatory amateurs (don't laugh, these guys make a healthy share of the major discoveries).

Is it expensive? Not at all. The naked eye, a star chart and a little common sense is all you need to start observations. A decent pair of binoculars is the next step up the observational ladder and will probably relieve you of around 100 of your Earth pounds. At the pinnacle of astronomical indulgence is your own telescope. A 3.5 inch refractor or 6 inch reflector are the smallest you can use properly and both will cost you several hundred pounds.

Refractors? Reflectors? Don't sweat it. A refractor is a telescope with a light-gathering lens at one end (the big end) and a focussing lens at the other end (the bit that connects with your eye). Light travels from distant objects and is gathered by the big end. It travels down the length of the telescope and is focussed into an observable object at the little end. 3.5 inches refers to the diameter of the lens in the big end. Anything smaller, and your observations will come to nought as the small, big-end struggles desperately to get some light into the tube.

Reflectors don't have a big-end gathering lens. Instead, an open-ended tube allows light to pass down its length onto a large, highly-polished mirror. Light is collected here (the mirror is concave) then reflected back up the tube into a focussing eye-piece attached to the side of the tube. Unless your reflecting telescope has a mirror at least six inches in diameter, it won't be able to gather enough light to provide a decent image.

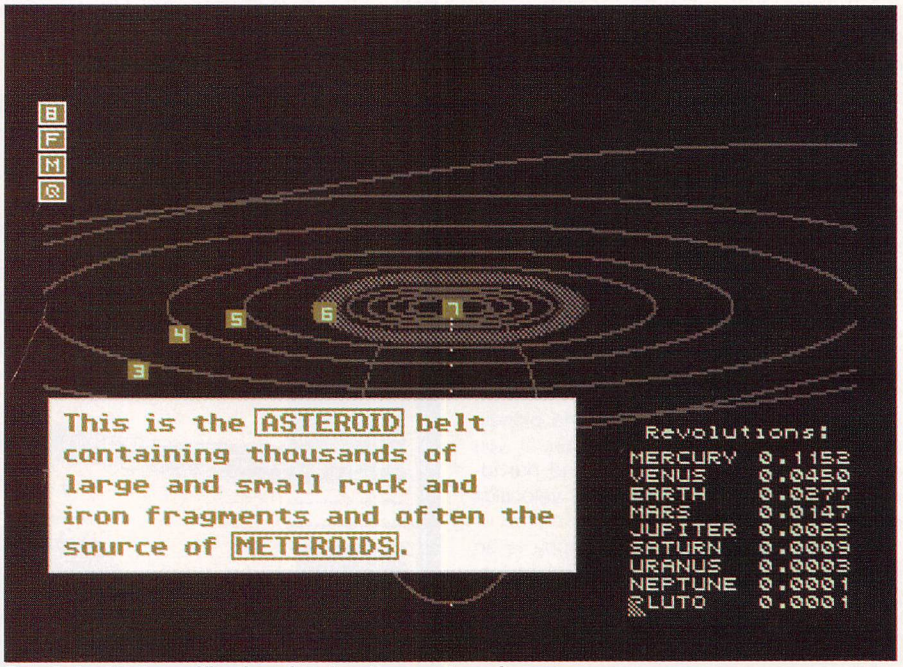
The study of the heavens has changed considerably since the days of telescopes, star charts and the human eye. Sure, those 'tools' are still necessary and used extensively but nowadays, you're as likely to find a big, throbby computer at the heart of an observatory as a 10 inch refractor. Armagh is typical of the modern, small observatories which have decided to base their operations around computers. Built in the 18th century, one of the first telescopes to see service was a study-in-brass – a Grubb instrument of 1835. After around 200 years of conventional instrument study however, the Armagh observatory decided to get with it and install some silicon.

A VAX minicomputer was installed, but there was still a need for small, dedicated machines that could be bought at a reasonable price and assigned to each astronomer.

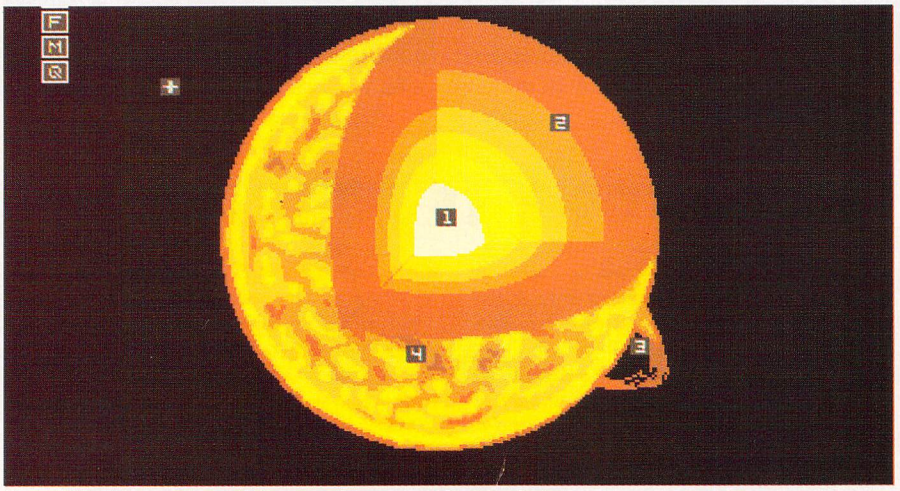
Martin Murphy, Computer Support Officer takes up the story. "About two years ago, we started looking at the various personal computers that were available, with the intention of getting them for the astronomers. We wanted to get things like word processing off the VAX. We looked at all the machines available at the time, Macs, PC compatibles, the ST and the Amiga. Around that time, we were also talking to Dr Luke Drury, an astrophysicist at the Dublin Institute for Advanced Studies. He'd spent time in Germany, had an ST which he showed us and of course another very significant factor was the cost"

Were there any other factors associated with the Atari choice? Murphy: "We had to consider people sitting all day long in front of the machine. The built-in Mac screen was too small. We were impressed by the quality of the display on the ST, which was the best we looked at."

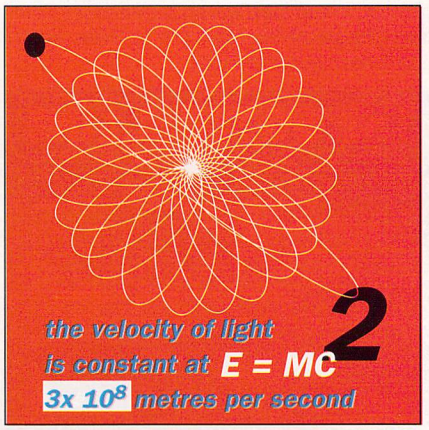
And so the ST was duly bought and installed. The machine receives extensive use on everything from communicating with the VAX, to producing planetarium-like demonstrations using CAD 3D. What other software do the astronomers use? "Desktop publishing is becoming more important, we're exploring [Calamus] at the moment. Then we use Latex which we got from Germany. We use it a lot and it's also on the VAX. Everybody here uses Uniterm by Simon Poole, which is the best piece of public domain software I've come across."



Detailed orbital specifications for planets, comets and so on



Phew! What a scorcher... Solar prominences and a very hot core...



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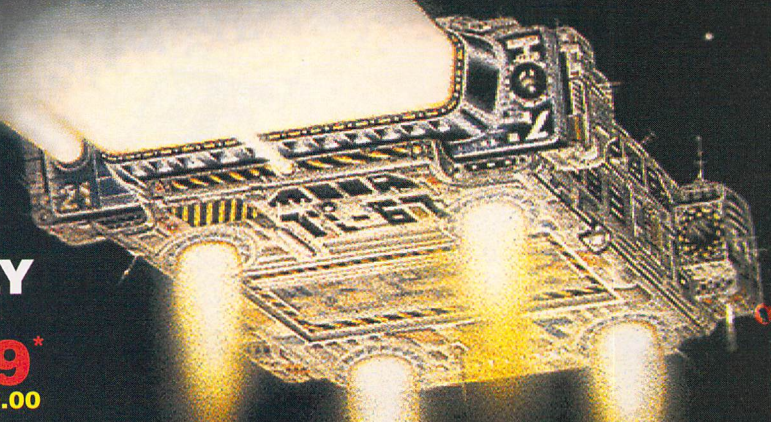

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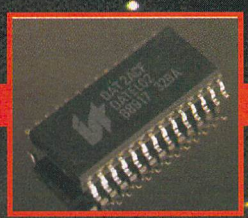

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NEODESK 2 DEMONSTRATION
This usable demo of Electric Distribution's replacement Desktop is just a small taster of even better things to come in the brand new Version 3, reviewed this issue.

MONSTER SCREENS
19 inch monitors are all very well, but out of the reach of most people. These two screen hacks will give you a massive display area.

Starting this month, we're trying to make the Userdisk easier for first time users to get to grips with. Clear instructions accompany each and every program on the Userdisk, explaining in simple language exactly how to get the most from it.

Packed with the best utilities, games, demos and contributions from our readers, the Userdisk is, in our humble opinion, the best £2.95 you'll ever spend. The rest may promise, but only 'USER can deliver the best software month after month.

Every issue of ATARI ST USER brings you a fully playable demo of one of the best commercial games around. We carefully search the length and breadth of the land to bring you only the best games, those destined to top the Gallup Software charts and become all time classics that will be remembered for years to come.

Our extensive contacts within the software industry ensure that you see, and get to play, the best new games before anyone else.

WRITE FOR THE USERDISK

We're going to make the programming features on the Userdisk more accessible to the average ST user, so send in your ideas for future Userdisk articles. If you want to see an item on PD C compilers, more STOS basic listings on the Disk, anything at all, then write in and tell us about your ideas!

If you think you can write an article which is good enough to be published in RunTime, then why not earn some cash? Sadly, we can't use anything over 1,000 words – short articles are always best.

Send your article to us on disk in either ST Writer format or as an ASCII file (bung us a printout too...). If you want to get your disk back you'll have to include an SAE with your disk.

Address your letters, articles and suggestions to: Simon Lawson, Disk Editor, Atari ST User, Europa House, Adlington Park, Macclesfield SK10 4NP.

WHAT'S IN DOC?

• Well over 1Mb of stunning games, sexy demos and scintillating features as well as sound samples, MIDI libraries, clip art, the flotsam and jetsam of everyday computing, how can you be without it? Forget the rest, 'USER gives you the most and best!

• We use the most cunning disk formatting program ever devised to enable even single sided drive owners to get their read/write heads on the goodies, but even we're limited by natural physical forces, ie if you only have one head then you'll only get one side, right?

• To access side two, simply double click the folder Side_2 and you'll be transported to an Aladdin's cave of electronic delights.

• And for those who just can't live without the tempting teasers on side two, we offer our Side Two Service. For the stunning 'cheaper-than-the-rest' price of just £1.50 (which includes the all-important postage and packing) we'll put the goodies from side two on a single sided disk and whizz it to your door. Send cheques or postal orders made payable to Atari ST User Disk Offer to the usual address.

LOADING GUARANTEED

Look, we do our utmost to ensure that every disk is 100 per cent perfect. Unfortunately, physical forces such as those propounded by Einstein himself, suggest that a tiny proportion of those disks will contain errors.

If you're one of the lucky readers who has a disk which conforms to Einstein's theories, but would rather have an ordinary, common or garden working disk, here's what to do: stop panicking! We've come across the problem before and know just what to do. Wrap up the offending item in some stout packaging (you don't want to frighten the postie-man, right?) and send it to Stanley Precision Data Systems, Unit F, Cavendish Courtyard, Sallow Road, Weldon North Ind. Est., Corby, Northants, together with your name and address and we'll replace it.

cover disk 58 1990 december

ARCHIVE PROGRAMS

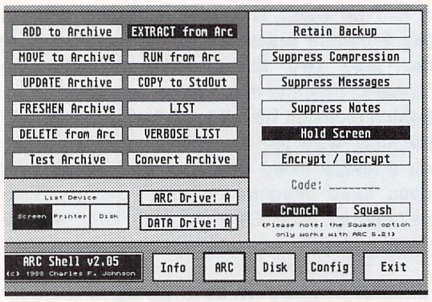
FILENAME: ARCX.TTP AND ARCSHELL.PRG
Configuration: All STs, colour or mono

When you first bought your ST, the 720K floppy disks seemed massive, especially if you had upgraded from a machine that could only use cassette tapes for storage. But after a few months of serious work, you probably realised that the floppies were ridiculously small, and then started looking enviously towards the mega storage of a hard drive.

Hard drives are expensive, and beyond the reach of many ordinary ST owners. There is however, a program in the public domain which allows more information to be stored on disks, by archiving them into one file.

Programs and files, even whole folders or disks can be squashed together, into a single unit with an .ARC extension. Information stored like this cannot be executed from the desktop, but must be de-arced first with a special utility.

Arc was first copied from the PC world and then adapted for the ST. It has always stuck obstinately to the old command line interface of the PC, and ignored the niceties of GEM. Arc Shell is a GEM front-end for the Arc programs with clickable buttons to take the pain out of arching and de-archiving .



OUT FOR A DUCK!

FILENAME: CRICKET.PRG
Configuration: nothing at all

Well, the cricket season is over for this year, and if you've read the October and November issues then you'll know that we had hoped to bring you a runnable version of the cricket simulation, STumped.

Unfortunately, because of limitations on the amount of space available on the CoverDisk, and the number of files needed to create a version of the STOS language to run the CRICKET.BAS file, we've been forced to leave STumped off the disk.

We apologise to all those readers who were eagerly waiting for the game, but we can't defy the laws of physics to allow us to fit that much code on the disk and still have room for other programs.

Don't be too disappointed though, because next month the CoverDisk will be packed to overflowing with fabulous programs and useful utilities which will push your ST to the very limit.

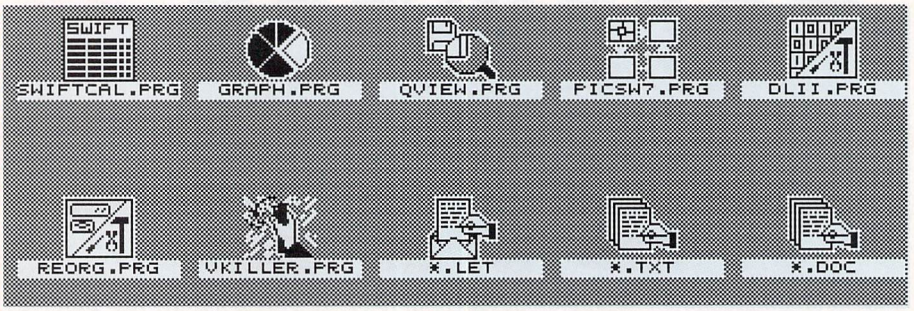
NEODESK ICONS

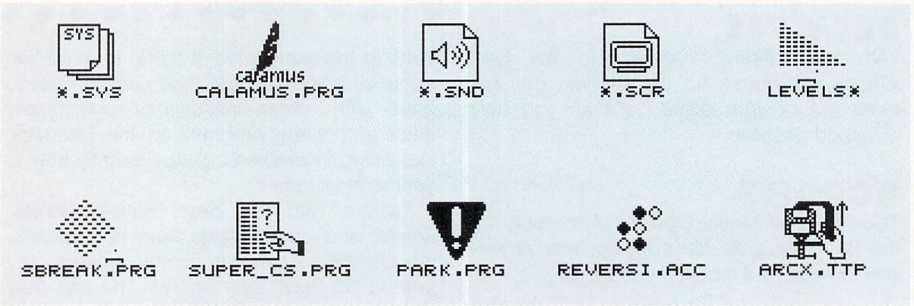
FILENAME: NEOICONS.ARC
Configuration: All STs, colour or mono
NEODESK 2, OR LATER REQUIRED

OK, so demos are all very well, but what about those users who have shelled out for the full version? Well, we haven't forgotten you. Included with the demo, is an archive file containing hundreds (if not thousands!) of icons ready to be loaded into NeoDesk.

To use the icons, de-arc the files using the Arcshell program from the disk, then store them in the Iconedit directory on your NeoDesk work disk. Now the .NIC files can be loaded into the Iconedit program supplied with NeoDesk, the ones which are to be kept in the NeoDesk resource file can be saved.

These icons are PD, so you can edit or alter them. If you have any of your own icons that other NeoDesk users would use, send them in. We might include an archive of the best ones on a future Cover Disk.



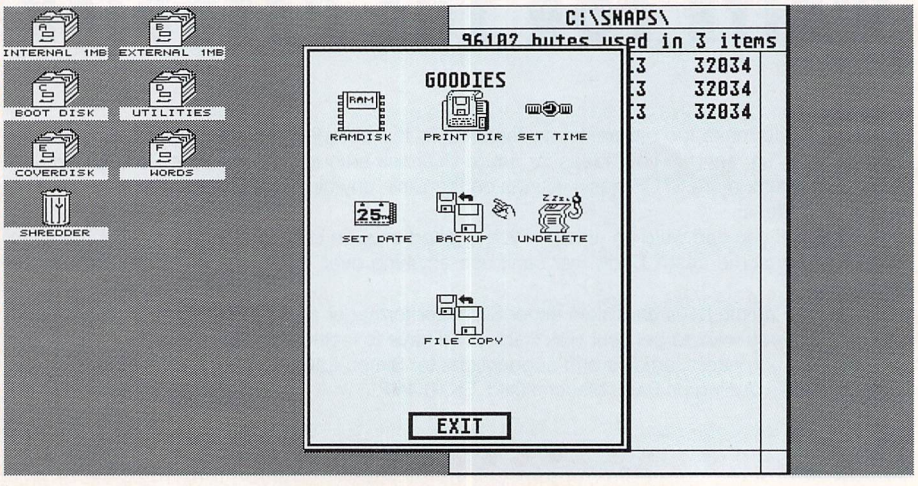


GOODIES UTILITIES

FILENAME: GOODIES.ACC
Configuration: All STs, colour or mono

The ST, despite being a wonderful machine, has a few significant faults. The fact that it was designed to run only one application at a time means that you can find yourself in the middle of a document, without disk space to save your work. The solution would be to format a new disk, but how? The answer is to use an accessory from the Desk menu, which will run over the top of your application, and provide you with extra functions, such as disk formatting and copying. With only six slots available for DAs though, you have to choose the ones to run very carefully.

The DA, Goodies, features facilities to set the time and date on your ST when you boot up – useful if you don't have a battery backup clock in your machine. You can create a RAM disk to aid file copying and print out directory listings of your disks. One of the most useful functions of Goodies is the ability to recover files you may have accidentally deleted.



MEGASCREENS

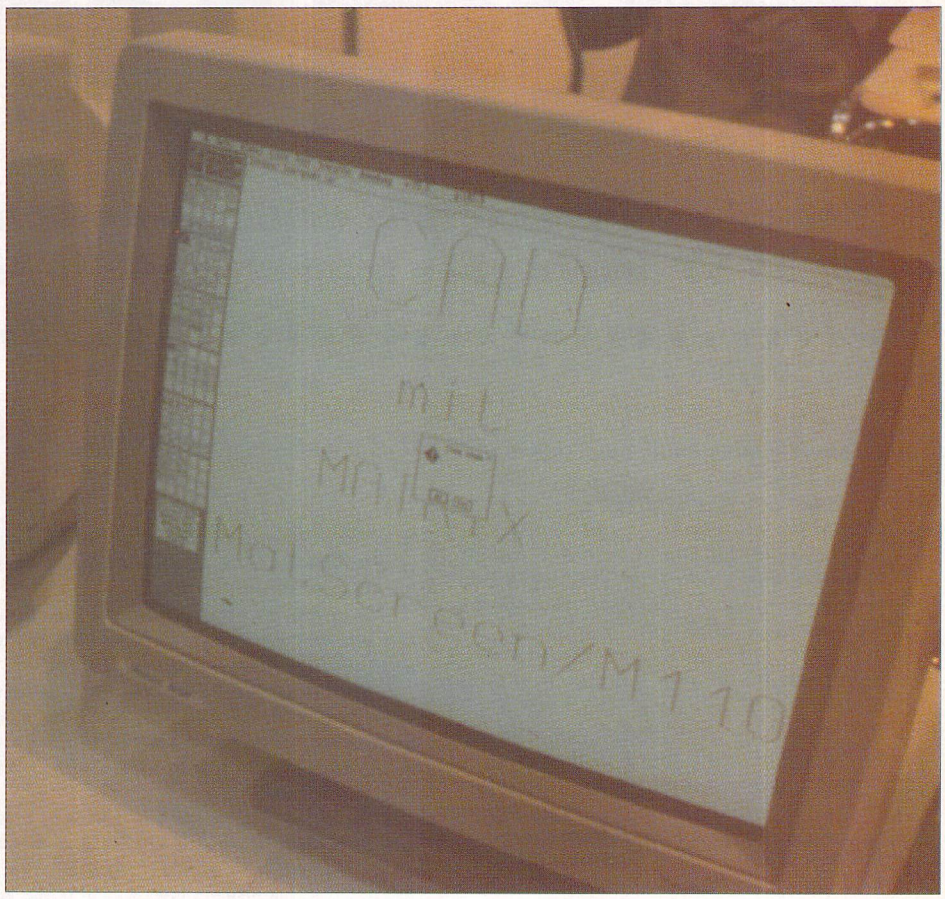
FILENAME: MONSTER.PRG AND BIGSCRN.PRG
Configuration: All STs, colour or mono

At some time we've all looked in envy at the massive 19 inch monitors at computer shows, running the latest state of the art DTP packages. For most of us, affording the £1,850 for an Atari SM194 is an unrealistic dream.

But now, courtesy of ST User, you too can enjoy the splendours of a mega-screen on your ordinary monitor. Included on this month's Cover Disk are not one, but two big screen drivers. The idea behind these programs is to create a massive virtual screen, and then use an ordinary sized screen as a window on the larger virtual area. Moving the mouse to the edge of the screen scrolls the window, allowing you to see a different area of the virtual screen.

Monster is meant to run on an STE where it can take advantage of the extra hardware of the new machine, to provide smooth scrolling around the expanded screen area. Although it states in the documentation file that it will run on TOS 1.2, tests in the 'USER office have shown that you need 1.4 or 1.6 for this program to run. For those who have the older TOS version, also included is another program called BigScreen. This provides the same enlarged screen area on older machines.

Both of these programs need to be run from the AUTO folder. Screen accelerators like TurboST are unable to recognise what type of screen you're using, and so will refuse to run properly. The commercial version of QuickST however, will recognise the Monster and accelerate the screen handling.



FASTCOPY DISK UTILITIES

FILENAME: FASTCOPY.PRG or .ACC
Configuration: All STs, colour or mono

Fastcopy Version 3 is one of the most useful programs available for the ST. We've all had to suffer the appallingly slow way that the Desktop copies from disk to disk, by dealing with a single file at a time. Fastcopy is designed to take all the pain and frustration out of this process.

It has a host of useful functions built in, including the ability to scan a disk for bad sectors and look for viruses on the boot sector. Fastcopy is also intelligent, and will only copy those parts of the disk that actually have files stored on them, thus saving time.

Fastcopy is one of the very few programs that will run as either a Desk Accessory, under the desk menu, or as a program. It all depends on whether you name the program with a .PRG or .ACC extension.

If you have enough memory, having Fastcopy as a DA is very useful. Although a wizz on ordinary disks, Fastcopy will also format and copy up to 10 sectors, 83 tracks per side, if your disk drive is up to it,Fastcopy is not, however, intended as a pirate's tool and will not copy protected disks.

This is probably the best disk copier available for the ST.

NEODESK DEMO

FILENAME: NEOMASTR.PRG
Configuration: All ST's, colour or mono

With the recent release of NeoDesk 3 (see the two page review in this issue) we've taken the opportunity to put a demo of an earlier version of Neodesk on our CoverDisk.

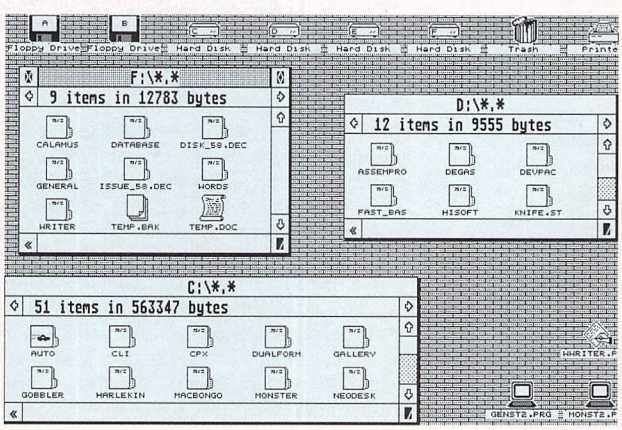
The program is a complete replacement for the Atari Desktop, improving the usability of the Desktop by updating file copying, custom icons for files, folders and programs and the ability to put files on the desktop.

One of the main areas where the Atari Desktop is lacking is the speed of its file copying system. By reading all files into memory before beginning writing to the new disk, NeoDesk can copy disks and individual files four times faster than the normal Desktop.

This demo provides all the functions of the full version, except the ability to run other programs and edit the desktop icons.

A full list of the abilities of NeoDesk is included in the Run-Time disk magazine.

Like the look of NeoDesk? Then remember to look out for our competition next issue, when you could win a copy of NeoDesk 3, courtesy of Electric Distribution.



cover disk 58 december 1990

RUNTIME 6

The world's first totally dedicated electronic media magazine for all ST users goes from strength to silicon-based strength

ACCSEL

With machines such as the ST, drop down Desk Accessories are a great idea because the machine will only run one application at a time. DAs enable you to use functions not normally included in applications. Being able to format a disk from within a word processor can be a life-saver when it's time to save your work and you've run out of disk space.

The ST has only six slots for DAs, and it soon becomes apparent that this is not enough. One solution is multi-function DAs such as Harlekin or Goodies, but these tend to take up more memory than most users can afford. Programs such as Multidesk allow more than six DAs to be loaded at once, but eat memory at a phenomenal rate.

Most people need different DA setups depending on which program they're using, Selecting the right DAs to boot the machine is a difficult process involving the Desktop Show Info. option to rename un-needed DAs to .ACX, so they won't be loaded.

If you have a big program which requires all the memory available on your ST, then the DAs have to be disabled.

But now, Les Kneeling has come to the rescue of all those ST users struggling to get their DAs set up just the way they want them. His small AUTO folder program presents you with a list of all the accessories on your boot disk, then lets you select which of them to load. An end to those 'Out of Memory' errors or having the wrong DAs loaded.

As well as the compiled ACCSEL program, this month's RunTime includes an article by Les on writing AUTO folder programs and the source code for ACCSEL, so you can see how it's done.

MIDI FILES

Perhaps one of the best parts of the ST's design is the inclusion of the standard MIDI In and Out ports. The ST has accumulated a wealth of excellent music programs, which have made it the first choice for both professional and amateur musicians.

Applications such as Cubase, the Steinberg Pro 24 Sequencer, and Band in a Box, have given the ST a reputation second to none in the music arena.

All of these programs use the standard MIDI language to communicate with equipment such as sound modules, keyboards and sequencers.

MIDI programs have evolved their own set of standard file formats for exchanging data, and in the first of a two part series for RunTime, Paul Andreas Overaa examines the way MIDI data is stored, and provides hints and tips to help you write programs to access MIDI data files.

HARD CASH FOR YOUR SUBMISSION

Have you programmed a stunning new game, a utility no ST user should be without or a fabulous demo? Then we want to hear from you!

Here at Atari ST User, we're always keen to see your programs included on our CoverDisk, and we might even give you money for them! GASP!

Unlike some magazines we don't promise overnight fame and immeasurable wealth, but a program included on the Userdisk will be seen and used by an enormous number of ST owners – who knows what that will lead to?

If you have a program that you think is up to our high standards, please send it in for us to look at. Send your program on disk, together with a README.DOC file giving a brief outline of the program, what it does and how it works.

Full instructions must also be included, since we can't publish a program that doesn't include clear instructions for our readers.

If possible, we would appreciate a printout of the document files. Remember to write your name and address clearly on the disk label so we can identify your disk in this chaos we call an office!

If you want the disk returned, please remember to include a stamped, addressed envelope. If you don't, the disk will eventually be dragged to that great Trashcan in the sky.

So, send your disks to: Simon Lawson, Userdisk Submissions, Atari ST User , Europa House, Adlington Park, Macclesfield SK10 4NP

STOS TUTORIAL

If there is anyone out there who's never heard of Dungeon Master, where have you been living for the past two years, Mars?

Dungeon Master took the ST games world by storm, and had hoards of gamers crouched over their machines until the wee small hours of the morning, desperately searching for that last elusive key that would give them access to the Firestaff and final victory over Lord Chaos.

One of the big selling points for this type of game is the 'first person perspective' that enables the players to view the game world through the eyes of their character. Dungeon Master, Galderon's Domain and Bloodwych, have made this type of game popular and programmers have begun to experiment with creating their own games.

This month, Phil Lawson continues his tutorial and explains how to create a 3D game using STOS arrays and variables. For the first time, a Dungeon Master-style game is within reach of the average programmer.

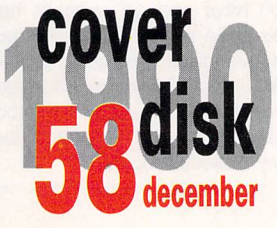
PROGRAMMERS CLINIC

Programming your ST, whether from BASIC or Assembler can be very rewarding. There's nothing quite like compiling a program you've spent hours working on and seeing it up and running for the first time.

If your program's good, it might end up on our Userdisk where thousands of people will see and use it. Public domain libraries abound with excellent programs written by people in their spare time.

But what happens if your labour of love doesn't work, or some rogue instruction is running amok in the GEM VDI routines? Maybe your machine decides not to work or a stack pointer points to the wrong place and bombs scatter the screen? Worry not, for Mathew Lodge is here.

Every month Matt dives into the programming complexities of the ST's internals and sorts out perplexing problems, baffling bombs and all those other niggling little wrinkles that happen to your ST just when you're least expecting it.



Your Second Manual

now includes 2 free disks!

by Andreas Ramos

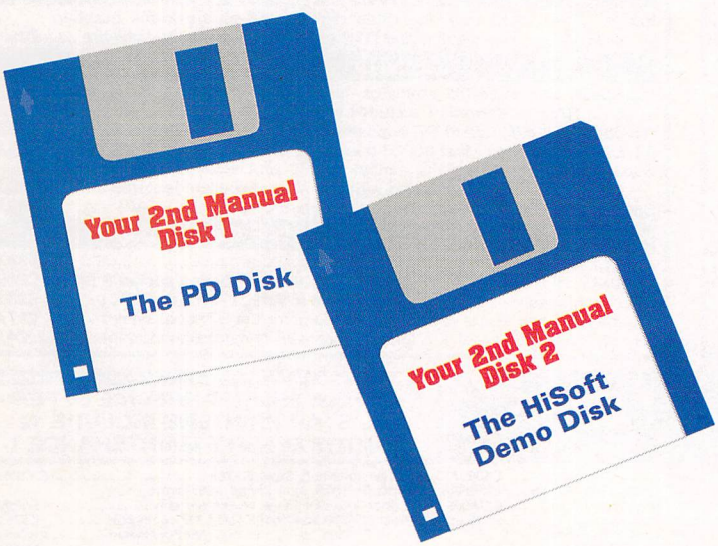
Would you like to get more from your ST? Like to learn about its innermost secrets: the mouse, the keyboard, floppies and hard disks, RAM disks, the screen, the desktop and how to change it etc? Do you want to find out which word processor to use, how to make a printer driver, which cable you need, how to log-on to bulletin boards, where to find public-domain software and much, much more?

Then look no further - Your 2nd Manual has all the answers. Written by Andreas Ramos, the man voted ST Man of the Year 1989 by ST World readers, Your 2nd Manual is a pleasure to read, with an informal, friendly style that makes it easy to learn about the true power of your ST computer.

But Your 2nd Manual has more than just the facts - it has concrete examples of how to mend a broken keyboard, how to recover lost disks, how to keep your mouse squeaking perfectly, even how to make your screen larger!

All this plus hints and tips on what to look for in a word processor, or a DTP package, or a paint package ... where to find Atari throughout the world, how to publish your own software and, as if all this wasn't enough ...

2 Free Disks!



Public Domain Disk

A disk full of goodies including:

- icon editor, key editor, mouse accelerator
- calendar, clock, snapshot program
- disk cache, RAM disk, new file selector
- keyboard shortcuts for menus etc.
- utility to organise your start-up (AUTO-SEL)
- file copier, mono emulator for colour screens
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Full demonstration versions of:

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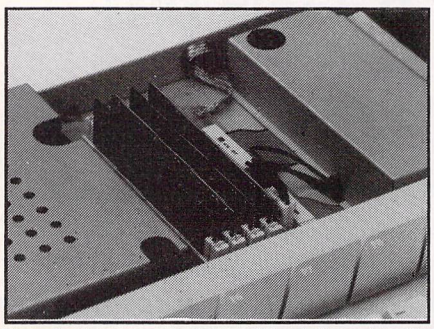
ATARI DEALER OF THE YEAR 1989

Buy with confidence from one of the longest established companies in their field, with a reputation for good service and prices. We have invested heavily in a computer system to enable our Telesales staff to provide up-to-the-minute stock information, coupled with highly efficient order processing. Our fully equipped Workshop enables us to carry out almost any repair on our premises. We feel sure that you won't be disappointed if you choose Evesham Micros.

NEW

SOLDERLESS MEMORY UPGRADES FOR ANY ST



- ✔ Fits Any pre-STE Machine in Minutes !
- ✔ Uses SIMMS RAM Modules for Effortless Upgradeability
- ✔ Probably the Neatest ST RAM Upgrade available !

Upgrade the memory of your ST quickly and easily with our new, fully software compatible RAM upgrade board. Designed for pre-STE machines, the unit accepts SIMMS slot-in memory modules, making RAM fitting simplicity itself. *No soldering required! No electronics knowledge needed!* Available with or without RAM modules. Allows upgrade in stages of 1Mb, 2.5Mb and 4Mb, as and when necessary. Straightforward installation - full instructions provided.

RAM Upgrade Kit with board unpopulated	£59.95
RAM Upgrade Kit With 512K RAM installed: upgrades a 520 ST to total of 1Mb RAM	£89.95
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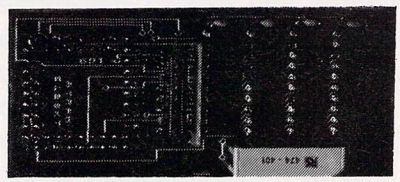
RAM Upgrade Kit With 4Mb RAM installed: upgrades a 520/1040/Mega ST1 to 4Mb	£284.95

N.B. Due to the large variance in design of the Atari ST, there is a small minority of boards in existence which may require a small amount of soldering.

NEW! PLUG-IN, SOLDERLESS 512K RAM UPGRADE FOR ANY ATARI 520 ST



Now there is a simpler, faster and more effective method of upgrading your humble 520 ST to 1Mb RAM ! Our new plug-in 512K memory upgrade unit offers excellent value for money, requiring no soldering or special technical know-how. (Not suitable for STE machines.)

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ATARI®

Our Atari ST prices include mouse, user guide, etc., PLUS 5 disks of Public Domain software including Neochrome graphics utility, First Word wordprocessor, games, graphics and utilities.

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High quality, good value package based around the 520STFM computer including 512K RAM, 1Mb Drive and built-in TV modulator. Also supplied is:

STOS Game Creator, Carrier Command, Space Harrier, FirST BASIC, Outrun, Bomb Jack, Neochrome, Atari ST Tour, *plus* 'Discovering your Atari ST' Book

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ATARI ST ACCESSORIES

MONITORS & ACCESSORIES

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Philips CM8833 Colour Monitor with stereo sound, includes cable	£249.00
Monitor Switch Box - for connection of both colour & mono monitors	£13.95
Philips TV Tuner AV7300 for monitors with composite input	£74.95

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Atari Megafile 30Mb Hard Disk	£439.00
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MISCELLANEOUS

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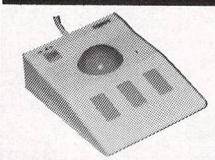

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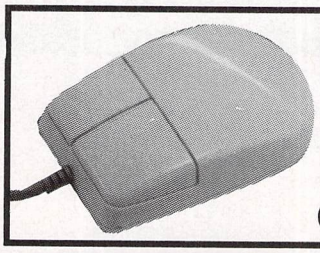

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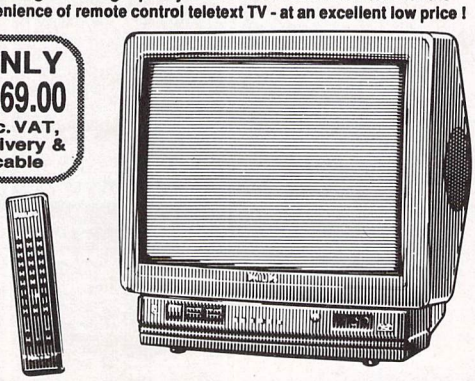

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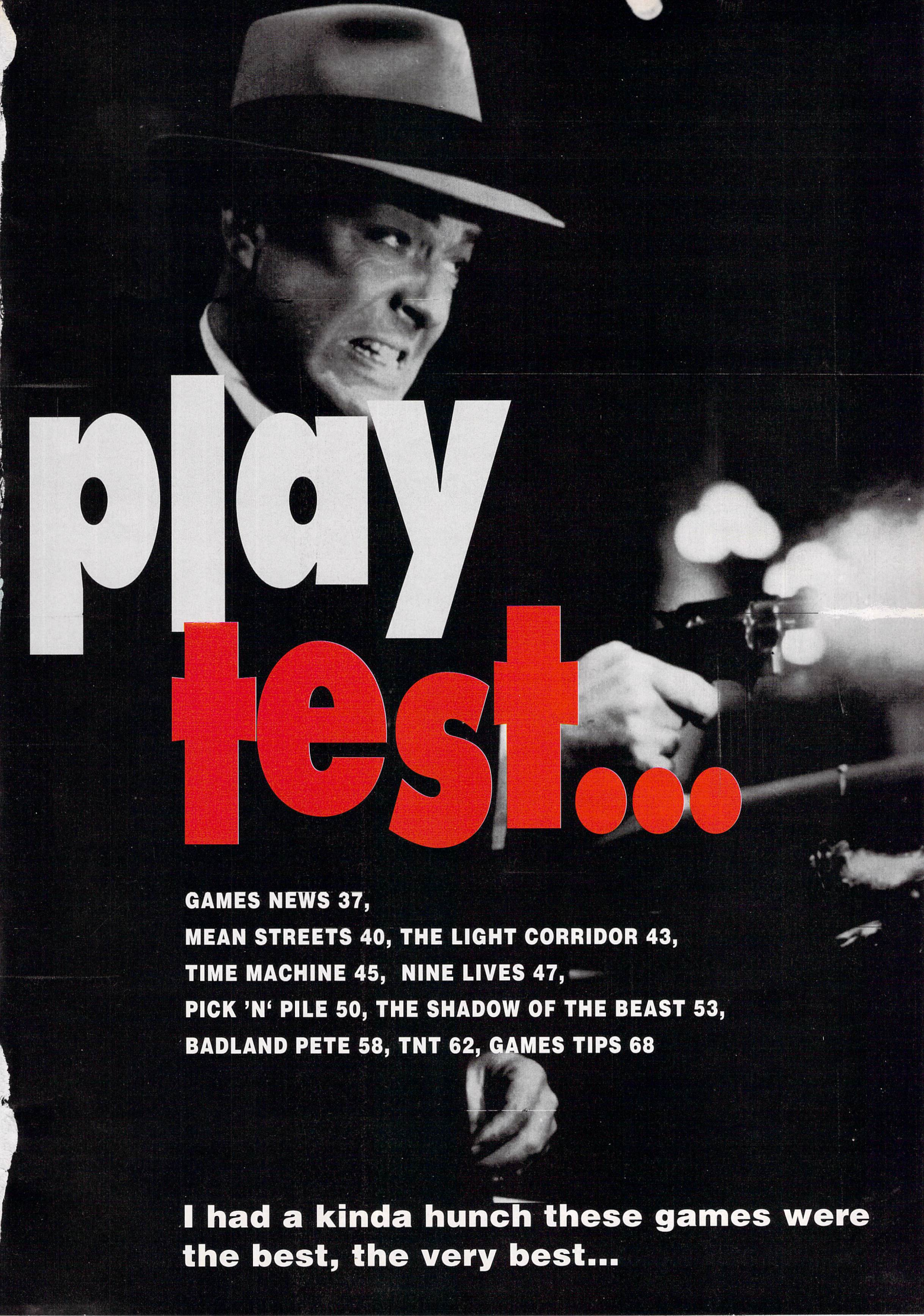


play test...

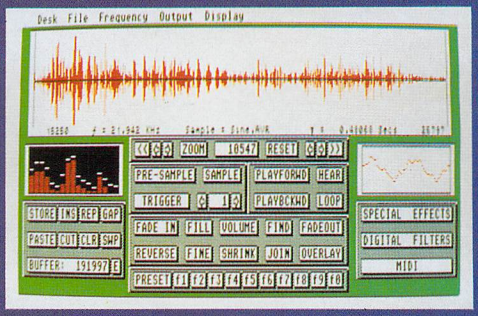
GAMES NEWS 37,
MEAN STREETS 40, THE LIGHT CORRIDOR 43,
TIME MACHINE 45, NINE LIVES 47,
PICK 'N' PILE 50, THE SHADOW OF THE BEAST 53,
BADLAND PETE 58, TNT 62, GAMES TIPS 68

I had a kinda hunch these games were the best, the very best...

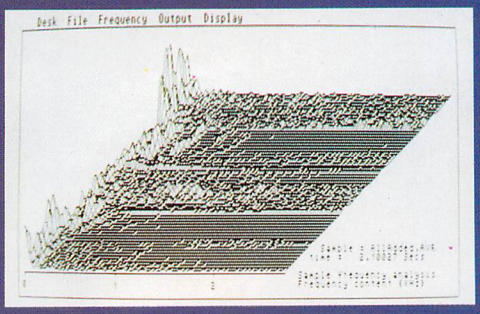
ATARI ST

REPLAY VIII

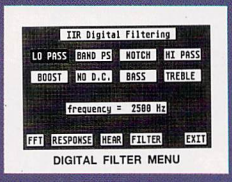
SOUND SAMPLER



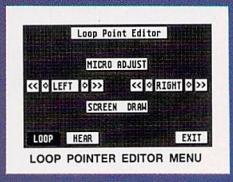
REPLAY EDITOR SCREEN



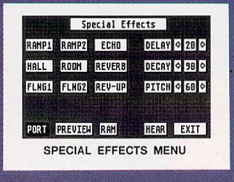
FFT DISPLAY SCREEN



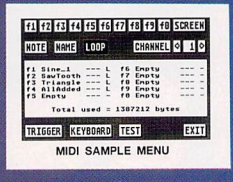
DIGITAL FILTER MENU



LOOP POINTER EDITOR MENU



SPECIAL EFFECTS MENU



MIDI SAMPLE MENU

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REPLAY version 8

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6) REPLAY 8 is also provided with a powerful 2 voice programmable Drum machine called DRUMBEAT 8. This sophisticated drum sequencer allows up to 15 sound samples to be used in 50 patterns and then into 100 songs. Drumbeat has full MIDI-SYNC allowing connection to external midi drum machines/sequencers.

7) ST REPLAY provides a sampling LINE INPUT and an extra high quality LINE OUT socket so that higher quality samples can be played through an external amplifier.

8) REPLAY 8 saves AVR samples for loading and playing directly from Microdeal's "QUARTET".

All software provided with the REPLAY 8 system runs on any configuration ST, STE or STACY with at least 512 K ram and will run in medium resolution colour or high resolution monochrome monitors. The user manual is written in a clear and concise manner which describes all aspects of the software and hardware use and the user routines provided to enable samples to be played from BASIC.

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GAMES NEWS

Table-top footy was never like this in my day!

For those of you who endured the agonies of a dirty, overcrowded, and fast becoming obsolete arena at the Computer Entertainment Show at Earls Court, it was a relief to find that the display stands of the software houses were of excellent quality. US Gold wowed the crowds with their £150,000 Lamborghini, Mirrorsoft had a massive array of monitors showing their blockbusting future release Turtles, and Gremlin gave the first British showing of their brilliant Lotus Esprit Turbo Challenge.

RENEGADE

Renegade was formed when the Bitmap Brothers and Rhythm King Records came together. After some discussion they decided that the software business could do with a change and they were going to start the ball rolling. Their first project, Magic Pockets was born.

The idea for this profit-sharing scheme came from RKR. Their previous dealings with bands such as S'Express, proved that this philosophy of giving the workers the financial benefits their actions warranted, instead of the company keeping it all could be a profitable exercise all round. The news of this progressive action has been greeted with scepticism from within several quarters of the industry, and a lot of people are expecting Renegade to fail miserably.

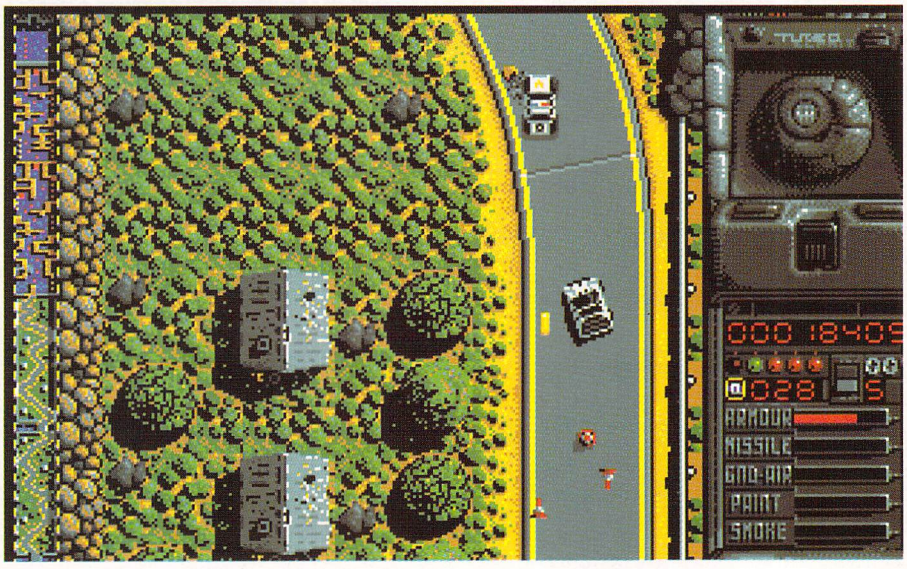
From the punter's point of view, if Renegade can achieve the targets they have set themselves, all the better. More money to developers means better ideas, better ideas means more development, more development means better games. Good luck to them.

Try flicking these players and watch what happens!

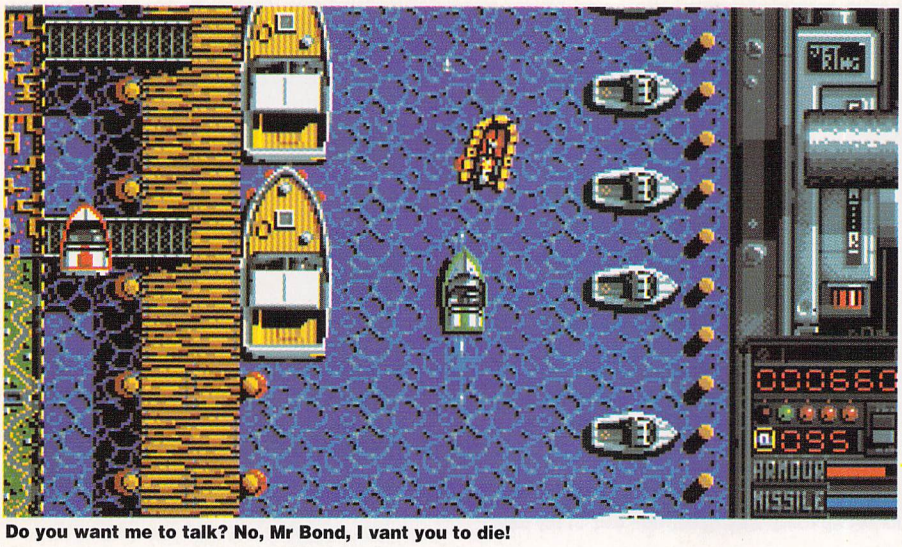
MAGIC POCKETS

As a kid, did you ever surprise your mother with the contents of your pockets when she emptied your trousers ready for washing? In Magic Pockets, Bitmap Brothers' first game for Renegade, a little boy suffers from the same problem, but instead of finding things, everything he puts into them is lost. Upset at losing all his toys in this manner, he decides to go into his pockets after them.

Entering this strange world he finds that he is able to shoot the creatures that are trying to keep his toys for themselves, with firepower which comes from his trousers. This escapade is definitely one to watch.



Just look at the foliage in there kids...



Do you want me to talk? No, Mr Bond, I vant you to die!

GODS

Renegade's second project is Gods. In Greek mythology, Hercules had to perform several tasks, including carrying the world on his back. This scrolling adventure uses these Herculean tasks as its theme.

With four levels to travel through, with a task in each, Hercules has to complete all four in order to win his freedom from Juno and Eurystheus. Inside each level there are intelligent lifeforms which interact with the decisions and actions of Hercules.

These two games from Renegade, like Hercules, have a lot riding on their backs. The fact that the whole industry is watching their development virtually assures an excellent product.

BEAU-JOLLY

If value for money is what you want, you could do worse than pick up The Power Pack from Beau-Jolly. Hitting the shops about now, this multi-pack games set promises hours of fun, frustration and firepower in the shape of four games. Playing what is arguably the best shoot 'em up ever to grace our machines, **Xenon II** takes you through level after level of red hot, gun-blazing alien action.

Cinemaware has built quite a reputation for quality software and their contribution to this boxed set comes in the shape of **TV Sports Football**. One of their earlier games admittedly, but one which was a big success, especially with American Football fans.

Aficionados of RPGs haven't been forgotten, and if you are one to get high on speed, then **Lombard/RAC Rally** should have you gasping for breath, as you tackle what is one of the toughest races in the rallying calendar.The 'Power Pack' is raring to go. A mere £24.99 will get it started.

SUBBUTEO

Although the market is flooded with a variety of soccer software, that long-term favourite, Subbuteo, has never made the transition to computer software. But thanks to Electronic Zoo this now legendary game is ready to make its debut appearance.

Subbuteo's marketing manager Trevor Spencer claims it "accurately reproduces the skill and tactics that are required to play Subbuteo the football game' and this man should know. On sale very shortly for £24.99

SIMULCRA

From the house that gave you Stunt Car Racer and RVF Honda comes what should be an exciting 3D shoot-em-up, under the name of Simulcra . Commanding a battle-tank you have to rid the fantasy world, in which you find yourself of an aggressive alien force. En route, you will find numerous 'as is the norm' power-ups, to aid your progression through each bloody level. With graphics from John Cummings – who brought us the beautifully colourful and entertaining Rainbow Islands – the standard of visual appeal should be high.

F-15 STRIKE EAGLE II

Top Gun pilots, take note. "We have a hostile situation, repeat hostile situation. Enemy actions are causing concern for our military leaders, who have called for air support. As tensions are running high, you will consider any aggressive actions as a sign of conflict and take the appropriate measures. This is not a drill."

Strapped into the seat of a supersonic F-15 Eagle, you are expected to fly missions over Libya, Vietnam, and the Middle East. The game is enhanced by a more intelligent flight control which should make 'splashing the enemy' slightly more possible but not exactly easy.. Price and exact date of release not yet known.

TURTLES

Basking in the adulation of the whole world, the Teenage Mutant Hero Turtles have decided to come out of their shells. These 'once human' creatures had to hide themselves away from society because of a terrible accident. Because of a chemical reaction they took on the guise of the last creatures they had touched, in their case it was their pet turtles. In the transformation they attained great strength and daring, which they now use to fight injustice.

In Imageworks' guaranteed best seller, the excitement takes place in the sewers beneath New York City, where they come face to face with several types of 'rats' in their bid for peace. It's all fast action and incredibly frantic fighting in this one – it can't fail...

DUSTER

Original ideas for new games are thin on the ground but Imageworks' Duster is set to change all that with a game incorporating farming and flying. Two thousand years from now, on a planet developed to provide civilization with food, the inhabitants are having a spot of bother with bugs.

Not the normal, everyday bugs which you can squash with your thumb, but a mutant species, resistant to most forms of control. You play a Duster (crop-sprayer) and need to control the pests, while running a profitable business. Initial screen shots look good, so when we know more about it we promise you'll be the first to know.

BACK TO THE FUTURE III

This is the last part of the trilogy. Based on the highly successful films, these games follow Marty McFly's adventures into the past and back to the future. Driving his futuristic De Lorean accompanied by the Doc, he's once again up to his neck in hot water. Stuck in the days of the Wild West, Marty has to save his friend by preventing a shoot-out, from which the Doc ends up as a resident of Boot Hill. Can Marty change the past? We'll let you know when we get the game.

IT CAME FROM THE DESERT

Making an appearance on the ST after a frustrating wait, this game looks set to become a big seller in '91. Set in Arizona, USA, the story is about the strange happenings following a meteor strike. A quiet little back-water town called Lizards Breath, becomes the centre of attention now that giant insects are roaming in the surrounding countryside.

As a young and eager scientist who is determined to get to the bottom of the mystery, you haven't much time to find a solution. Amiga owners have been playing this for quite some time, from the excellent reviews it received by their press it seems adventurers are in for a real treat.

THE SPY WHO LOVED ME

Bond is back, this time in The Spy Who Loved Me. Taken from the film of the same name, James has to stop Karl Stromberg creating a nuclear war between East and West. From an underwater base, Stromberg has coolly calculated his offensive down to the minutest detail, but the one thing he didn't reckon on was the ability and determination of MI5's 007. A Lotus which turns into a submarine helps, but at the end of the day, debonair good looks, sophistication, and the knowledge that the good guys always win, means only one thing. Stromberg's demise.

CRICKET CAPTAIN

We've been flooded with football and stunned with speedball, but we've never had the chance to play our traditional sport - cricket. In time for our Lions tour to Australia comes Cricket Captain. Operating on the same principles as Anco's Player Manager, you have to use your skill to manage a county side through two championships. Making use of the available staff and finances, you must make your mark on the cricketing world. Your reward is the chance to manage the national side in a series of Test Matches against other leading countries.Should be available very soon for £24.99.

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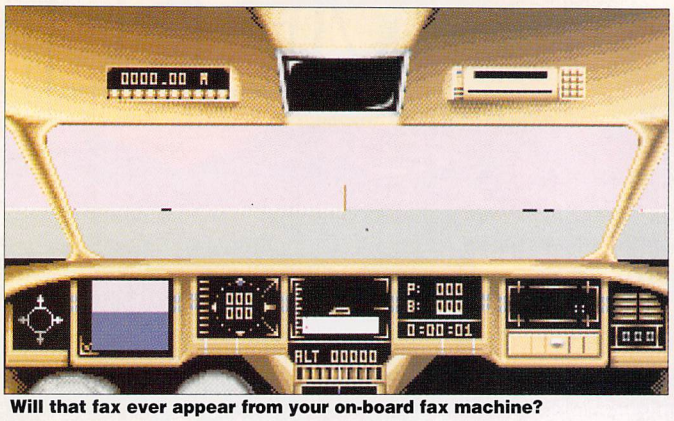

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It's the year 2033 and a highly respected and intelligent professor, Carl Linsky, commits suicide by jumping from a bridge. The resulting police and autopsy reports conclude that there is nothing suspicious and no further investigations are required.

Usually this sort of news greets me from my morning paper, and gains about as much attention as I would give to a flat beer in a downtown clip joint. That was until a beautiful young creature by the name of Sylvia Linsky walked though my office door.

Now here was a woman who had broken more hearts than she could remember. Blessed with legs that went up forever and delicious curves, it wasn`t long before she had gained my complete attention.

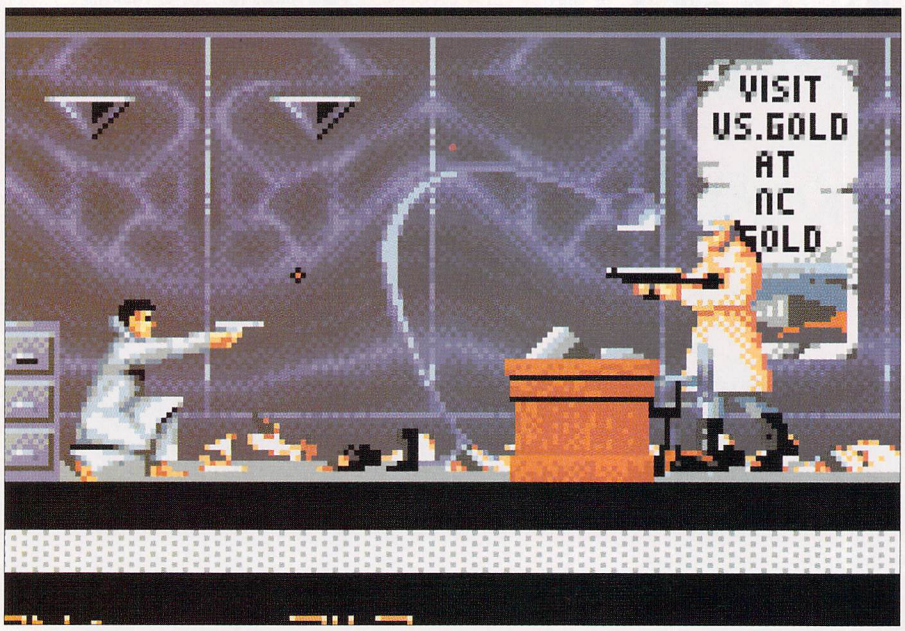
As she sat on the corner of my desk, her angelic face saddened as she told me about the death of her father. Apparently, he had no reason to die. Sylvia was adamant that there was something suspicious about his death and she wanted me to investigate.

What could I do? The police had dropped the case. A witness had confirmed that he had jumped voluntarily. Then she gave me a good reason why I should investigate – 10,000 reasons to be exact, in the form of crisp, green, one dollar bills. I never could resist a maiden in distress!

At daybreak the next morning, I set off downtown. Having very few clues to follow, I decided that the local Police Department would be as good a place as any to begin. Hopefully, my old friend Steve Clements could give me some help – after all, he was the investigative officer in the suicide case.

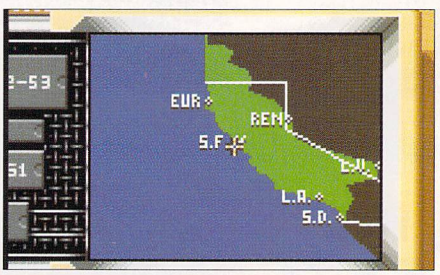
Mean Streets is a detective mystery to which Micky Spillane would have been proud to put his name. It's a game which enables you to take on the role of a big city, but small-time private detective. In this particular case, it isn`t the great Mike Hammer's shoes you fill, but a certain Tex Murphy.

By using your Speeder, which is a hybrid of a car and a plane (but looks like a Citreon BX without wheels) you can move around the city with ease. To assist you in getting from place to place, the Speeder has a navigation computer. By programming your destination's Nav code into it (all places you visit will have their own unique Nav code) you are able to pilot the vehicle. For those of you who don't want the aggravation of driving in city traffic, the designers saw fit to install an auto pilot.



Bullets coming at you thick and fast....

Will the mystery ever be solved?

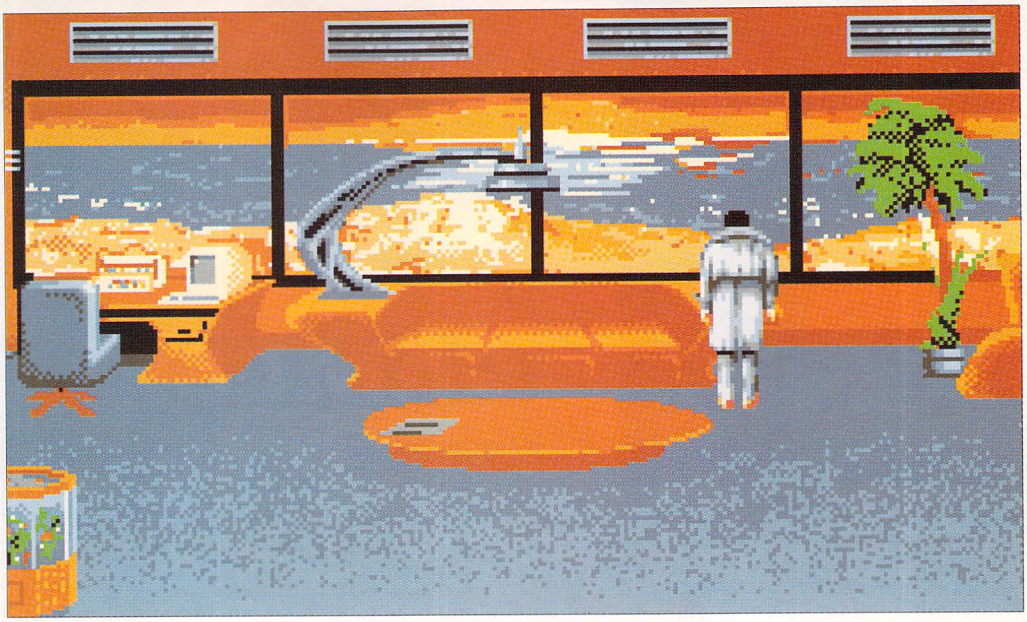


Get to your destination using your navigation equipment

TRIED AND TESTED:

GRAPHICS: 75%
SOUND: 77%
GAMEPLAY: 89%
OVERALL: 86%

With a smile like that...



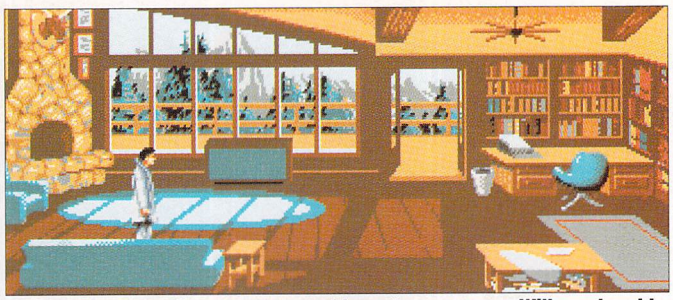
With a flick of a switch you can arrive at your destination unruffled.

First on your list is the witness – a low-life by the name of Bash Dagot. Unfortunately, there is nothing on file to give you his location. This leaves you with one other alternative – Lee Chin, an oriental girl involved in the underworld's activities. But be warned, every time you ring her in the hope of gaining some information it will cost you several hundred dollars. This time it's worth it as Lee Chin promises to fax you his address.

Minutes later your on-board fax machine stirs into action. Following the coordinates given, you set off to question this guy.

A group of armed, Mafia-type hit men begin shooting at you as you arrive. Ducking behind a crate you return fire. You have to get through to the other end of the alley if you want to question Dagot, and you have no alternative but to fight it out.

At last! having made quick work of the professionals, you put some questions to this degenerate. He`s not being totally straight with you and even has the audacity to ask you for money. If you weren't feeling so angry you might have taken pity and given him some, but instead, this request is enough to make you see red. A quick punch sees him spilling the beans and gives you your first solid lead. Now the real detective work begins.



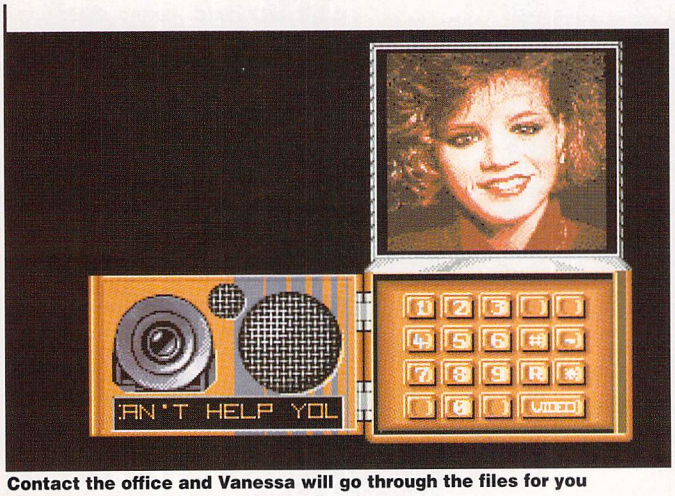
Each scene reveals even more problems to overcome. Will you be able to find the clues – look very carefully anything could be hidden

In Mean Streets you'll be expected to question about 50 different characters, some are of assistance, others not so forthcoming. While interrogating each person you have the option of using three different approaches to obtain information. The first is the polite and friendly way – simply ask straightforward questions in the hope of receiving answers. Secondly, the shady method of using your accrued wealth to buy the information you need. Lastly comes the aggressive approach – to be used when all else fails. But be warned, this method has a nasty habit of backfiring, and then it will be you who comes off second best.

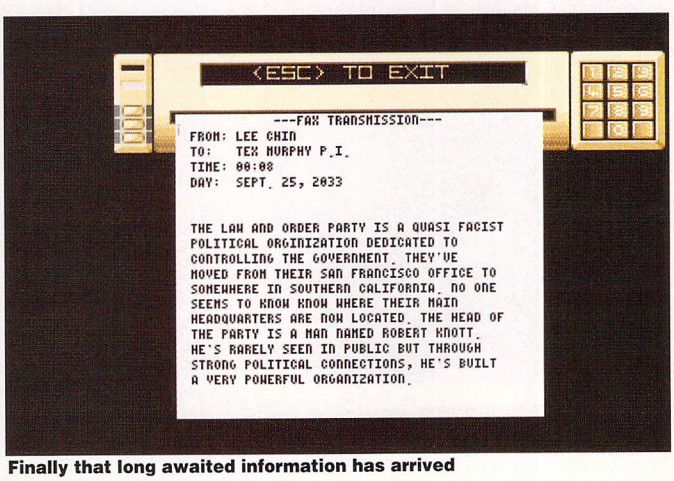
Mean Streets incorporates four types of gameplay. Flying your Speeder: although not difficult to master and impossible to crash, navigating this craft around the city gives the game extra depth. Questioning: three different ways to obtain information. Adventure 'Indy' style: you are able to explore certain locations and pick up useful items in a similar fashion to Indiana Jones adventures or Future Wars. Arcade action: gunfights in various locations have you dodging and weaving the bullets of hit-men.

Mean Streets is a comprehensive detective adventure which will keep you burning the midnight oil for a long time to come. It incorporates more than one type of gameplay, so you don`t get bored and encourages you to keep on playing in an effort to reach the end.

The music doesn`t continue throughout the entire game but what there is is well reproduced. The programmers have included sampled speech and apparently the better your speaker system is, the better the reproduction

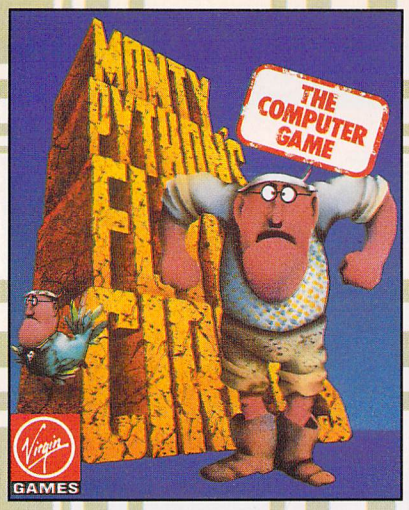


Contact the office and Vanessa will go through the files for you



Finally that long awaited information has arrived

AUTUMN—WINTER 1990

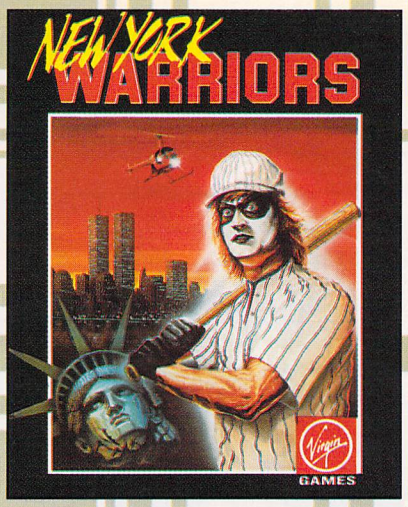


THE OFFICIAL MONTY PYTHON Computer Game has been internationally praised for its playability and humour, can *YOU* find Mr Gumby's Brain?

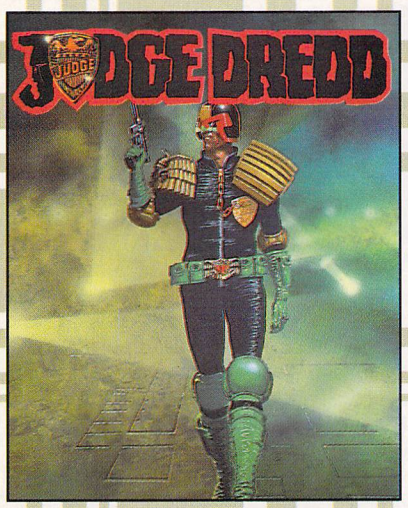
Virgin GAMES

MELBOURNE HOUSE

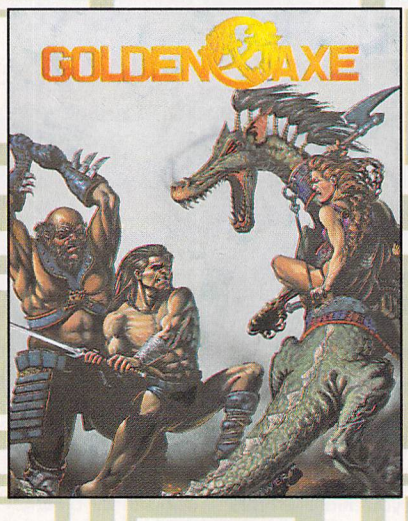
Magnetic Scrolls



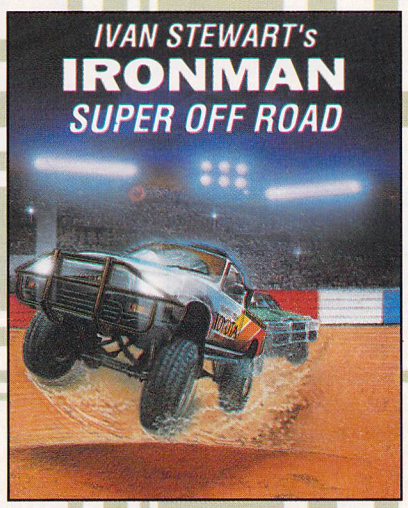
NEW YORK IN THE YEAR 2005, Terrorists are holding the city to ransom by planting a nuclear device in the World Trade Centre. Someone is needed to get rid of the Terrorists and defuse the bomb. Will it be *YOU*?



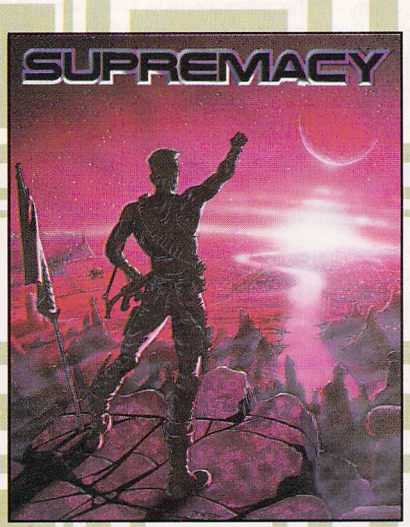
FROM THE COVER OF 2000 AD to the computer screen the Judge is sent to clear up the dregs of society in Mega-City One



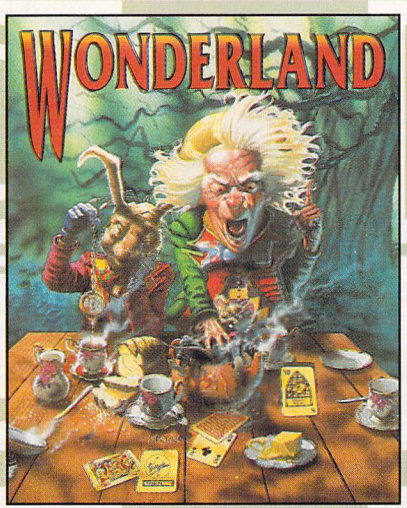
THE No. 1 ARCADE GAME! Now for computer. Mighty warriors, sword-swinging heroines, magic potions and dragon-riding knights are all part of this arcade hit



GRAB THE WHEEL and hit the Gas! Based on the No. 1 arcade game Super Off-Road is as close to genuine short-course racing as you can get



A STRATEGIC SPACE OPERA which thrusts the player into a head to head battle for domination against four enemy races



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SUPER OFF ROAD: LELAND CORPORATION 1989/90
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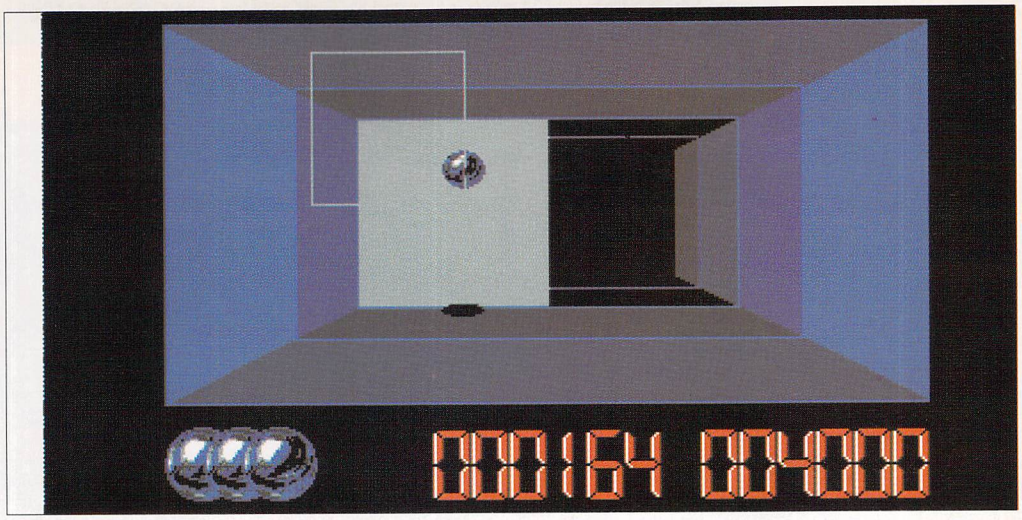
JUDGE DREDD		•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•
SUPREMACY	•	•	•	•					
WONDERLAND	•	•	•						
GOLDEN AXE		•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•
SUPER OFF ROAD	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•

16 Portland Road London W11 4LA Tel (071) 727 8070 Fax (071) 727 8965

All you have to do is send the ball down the corridor by using the bat. Easy eh? Try it



THE LIGHT CORRIDOR

House: INFOGRAMES Price £24.99

Years ago when computers were still a novelty, and a machine with the equivalent power of an ST would take up a warehouse and more, came a great innovation in home entertainment – video tennis.

Remember it? The game consisted of two paddles, one on each side of your screen, and a square ball. Being only able to move these bats up or down, you were supposed to deflect the ball into your opponent's half in an effort to score points.

Infogrames' latest offering, though not exactly the bat-and-ball game of yesterday, certainly bears an uncanny resemblance to it.

The game is simplicity itself. All you have to do is control a ball-bearing-type sphere down what seems to be an endless tunnel.

Having loaded the game, you're presented with a view of a tunnel which looks like it's going away from you towards the back of the monitor. Superimposed on this is an empty square. Using the mouse or joystick this square can be moved around the screen. Although hollow, the square is your bat.

When you're ready to play, press the mouse or fire button, and a ball-bearing appears inside the square. Another press and the ball is fired down the tunnel and into the darkness.

The inside of the tunnel has partitions and sliding doors, and if the ball hits one of these, or any other solid object, it rebounds towards you.

If the ball hits an object at 90 degrees, it follows the original trajectory back the way it came. If the ball strikes something at an obscure angle however, it will ricochet off and bounce around all over the screen. Because the tunnel disappears into darkness, you're not aware of how it's behaving, or when it will reappear. The only clues you can get are the noises reverberating from the depths. You have to listen, as well as watch.

When the ball does make a sudden appearance, you have to be prepared to act fast and move your bat to a location where it will hit the ball and send it once more down the tunnel.

While this is going on, you have the opportunity to move the bat into the tunnel as well. By pressing the fire button and pushing up on the joystick, the bat moves forward.

This enables you to view a little more of the inside of the passage but at the same time, shortens your reaction time should the ball re-emerge.

To encourage you to keep playing and find out what other things have yet to be revealed, code numbers are displayed and by typing these in before starting play, you'll be able to resume the game where you left off.

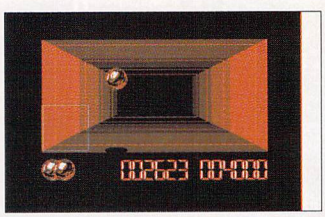
The Light Corridor, is an extremely entertaining game. Your reflexes will be stretched to their limits with the super-fast gameplay. Although it's based on a simple idea, it begs you to play again and again.

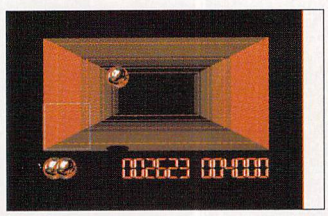
TRIED AND TESTED:

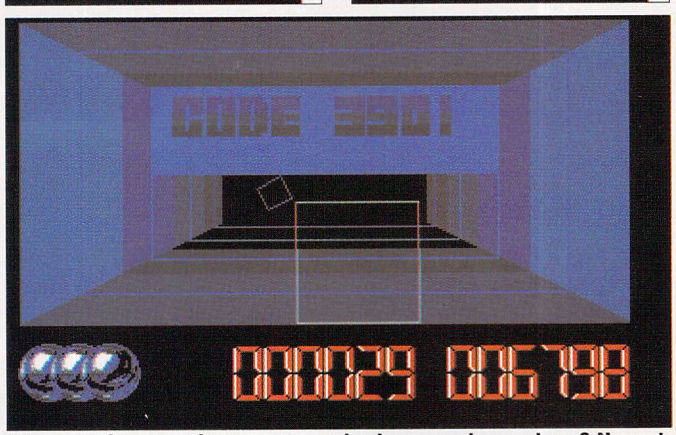
GRAPHICS: 63%
SOUND: 55%
GAMEPLAY: 73%
OVERALL:.....72%

BOTTOM LEFT: When you want a change you can create your own problems, by making your own corridor

BOTTOM RIGHT: What a lovely shade of red! The deeper you go the nicer colours you find







What are these numbers – someone's phone number perhaps? No, not quite. These are the codes you need if you want to start deeper in the corridor

TEENAGE MUTANT HERO TURTLES™

COWABUNGA!!

THE HEROES IN A HALF SHELL™ ARE COMING!

AVAILABLE SOON ON:

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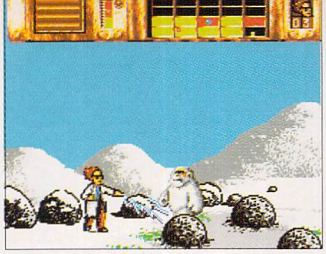
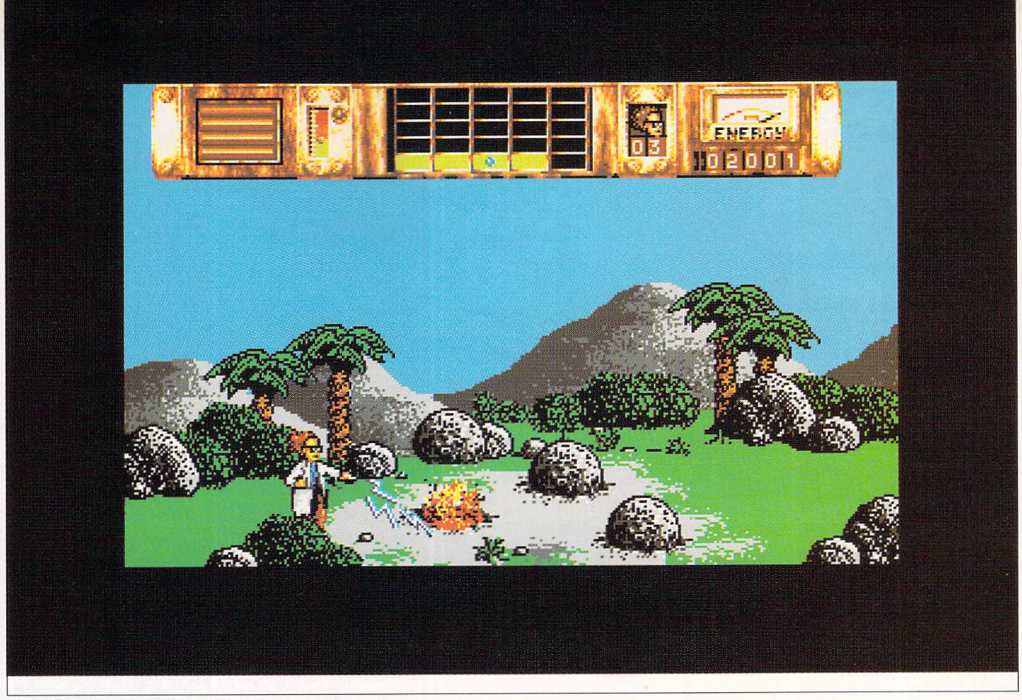
KONAMI



They all said I was mad when I told them about my brilliant Time Machine



Evolution hasn`t even begun for this creature

Professor Potts has finally made his mark in the scientific world by developing a time machine. Unfortunately for the mad Professor, before he can glory in the fame his invention would bring, things go drastically wrong.

His laboratory is attacked by a rather aggressive group of terrorists and in the resulting chaos his machine is hit by a bomb – sending it, and him, back into prehistoric times.

TIME MACHINE

House: ACTIVISION Price: £24.99

There, in the unwelcome company of volcanoes and dinosaurs, he comes to the conclusion that to get back he must take control of evolution.

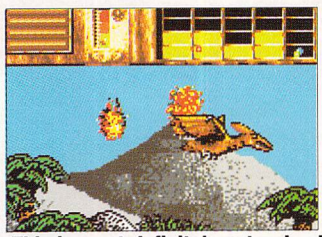
Using his "Time Pods" – which move him in time and space – he has to manipulate events through 10 million years. If he gets it right, he will be able to stop the terrorist attack on his laboratory. But preventing the attack would mean that he wouldn't materialise in the past, and so he wouldn`t have to solve the problems, to get him home in the first place! Or something like that... If he fails he will not only change the future, he will be stuck in this unforgiving, hostile environment for ever.

Nothing is as simple as it seems in this game. While you are changing events in one time-zone, it's affecting another. You have to solve all the puzzles in the right order before you can save yourself. You will encounter several species of unfriendly animals which you can dispense with using the high-powered, electric discharging device in your pocket.

But the game involves creating the future as well as preserving the past and to do this you must move things around. You can do this by either carrying them on your back or transporting them with the pods.

Whenever you manipulate something, its effect, whether beneficial or detrimental to history, will be displayed on a 5" x 5" square box at the top of the screen. Each square represents one of the five scenes in the five time-zones you will visit. If the square is lit then everything is as it should be, but if it's flashing, then something is wrong and you have to go back to sort it out.

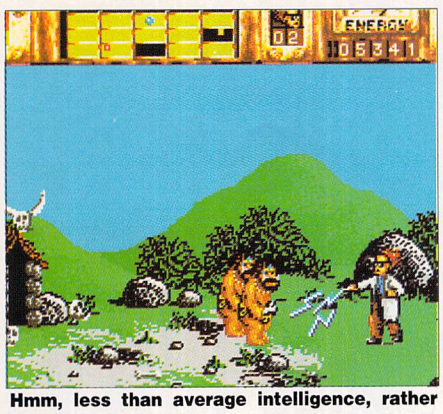
It's a bit like a Rubik's Cube – just when you think that one more move will complete the puzzle, you find out that there is still one piece that doesn't quite fit. It's good fun and should keep you coming back for more.



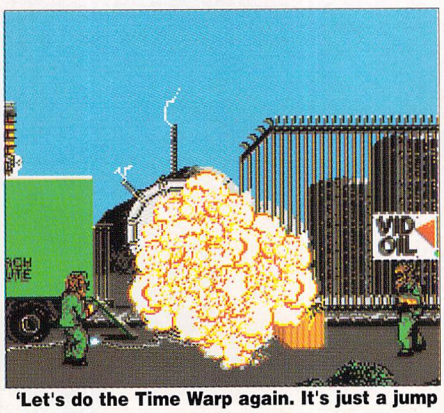
This is most definitely not a dead parrot

TRIED AND TESTED:

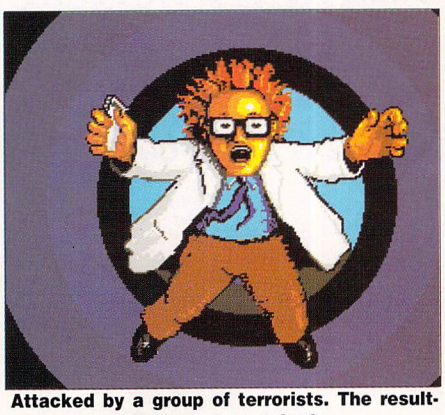
GRAPHICS: 84%
SOUND: 74%
GAMEPLAY: 82%
OVERALL:.....82%



Hmm, less than average intelligence, rather ugly and fully bearded...



'Let's do the Time Warp again. It's just a jump to the left, and then a step to the ri-i-iii-ight.....



Attacked by a group of terrorists. The resulting damage throws you back in time

cat and mouse

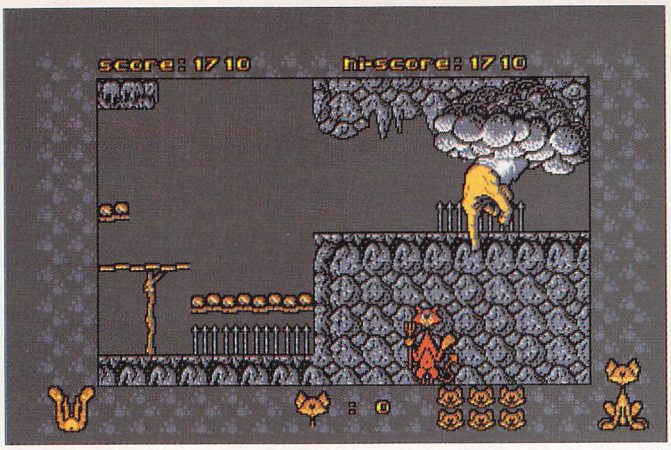
Sometimes the
SO WHEN ITS LIFE OR DEATH

Situation Allows
CONFLICT ON YOUR COMPUTER GAME

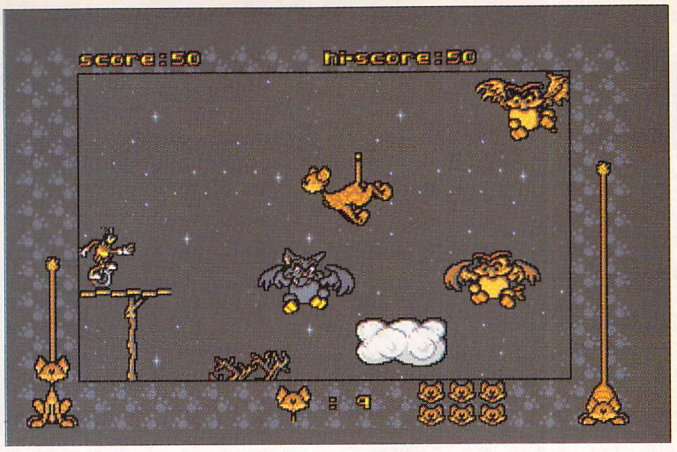
No Second
YOU CAN RELY ON CONTRIVER!

Chances . . .
BREEDER OF SMART MICE!

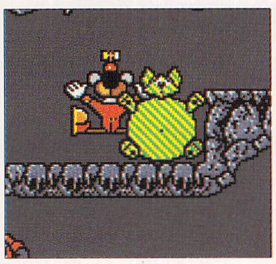
By CONTRIVER
europe ltd



This will give our intrepid hero something to harp on about



Flight with the aid of 'tail-power'. Mutley, eat your heart out



NINE LIVES

House: ARC Price £24.95

A night out on the tiles every now and again is something which appeals to us all, but for Bob Cat – the Nine Lives character – it's a way of life. Unfortunately, a few of his friends, and one of his female acquaintances – Claudette Cat – have got themselves into a spot of bother. They are now locked up in cages somewhere in the city, prisoners of a crazed professor who intends to conduct a few painful experiments – using them as his 'guinea pigs'.

Having his reputation to consider, our audacious pussy sets out into the night for some amusing shenanigans and feline frolics. By the end of his adventure he really will be grateful for every one of his nine lives.

In this fast-moving cartoon caper you find yourself bounding across the night skies, leaping gracefully from platform to platform – with the occasional embarrassing scramble thrown in to keep you from getting too big-headed. Your aim is to find the various keys which have been left lying in various locations throughout the game. These keys not only enable you to unlock the inhospitable prisons in which your friends are captive, but also doors to secret rooms where potions and extra lives are hidden.

Standing, or sometimes flying in the way of your goal are numerous unfriendly night prowlers, who will give you a really hard time if you try to cross paws with them. Fortunately you have had the good sense to arm yourself with a harmless-looking ball of wool, with which you are expected to im-purr-vise. Using it as a weapon and throwing it out in front of you, you can temporarily disable them. Once they're lying spark out on the floor you can skip gingerly past their bodies without depleting your energy levels, and continue on your travels.

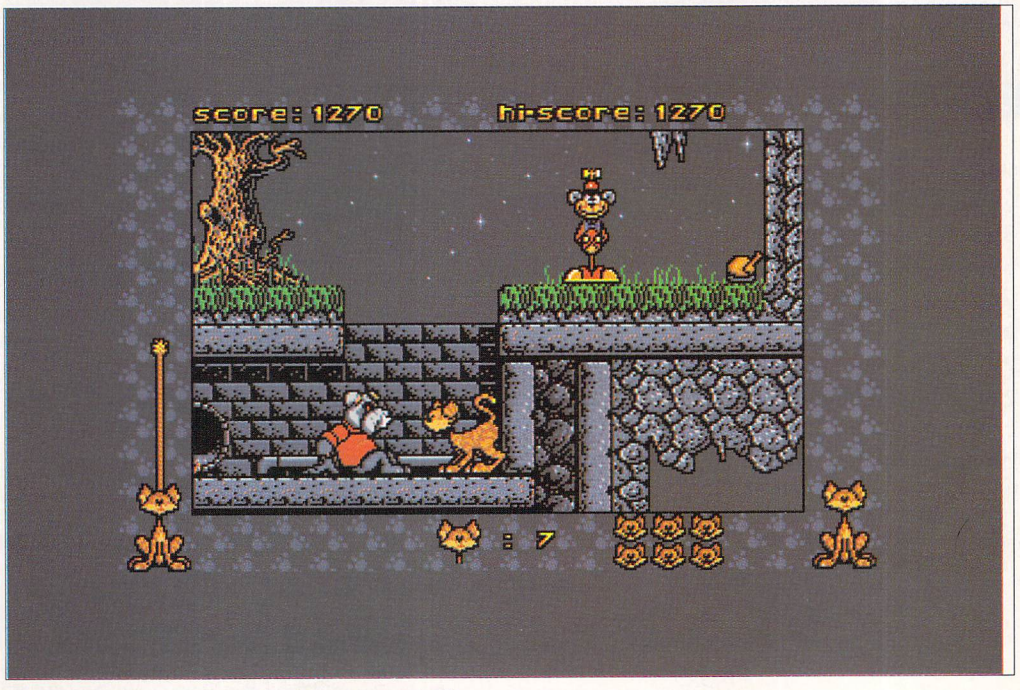
Having found some of the keys, your next task is to find the doors to which they belong. Slinking downwards, avoiding the spiked fences, you come to an old wooden door protected by a colourful, but agressive clown. Once entry is gained into the darkened underground catacombs, and you're beginning to feel purr-fectly at home, you are suddenly confronted by an amusing dancing rabbit. Friendly he ain't – step too close to him and he'll kick you to death.

Aggressive-looking squirrels armed with six-shooters defend the way ahead which leads to more keys you want retrieve. As you move through each scenario – and there are five – you come across lots of potions and power-ups.

Some of these prove to be quite useful, while others will make you decidedly ill. It's a case of "suck it and see", because until you actually take a potion you don't what it will do. If you do happen to drink something anti-social you soon know about it, because you'll probably turn green and begin to choke.

Picking up the packet of cigarettes will do more than seriously damage your health – you'll instantly sprout a pair of wings and make a one way journey skywards.

Some of the useful potions you'll come across have been given charmingly apt names like Superbob or Invisibob. If you



Honestly! Some of these animals are so touchy !

DEAL DIRECT

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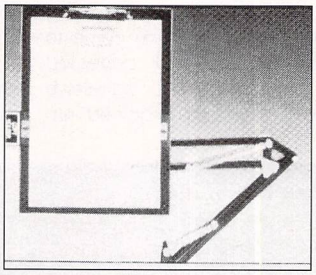

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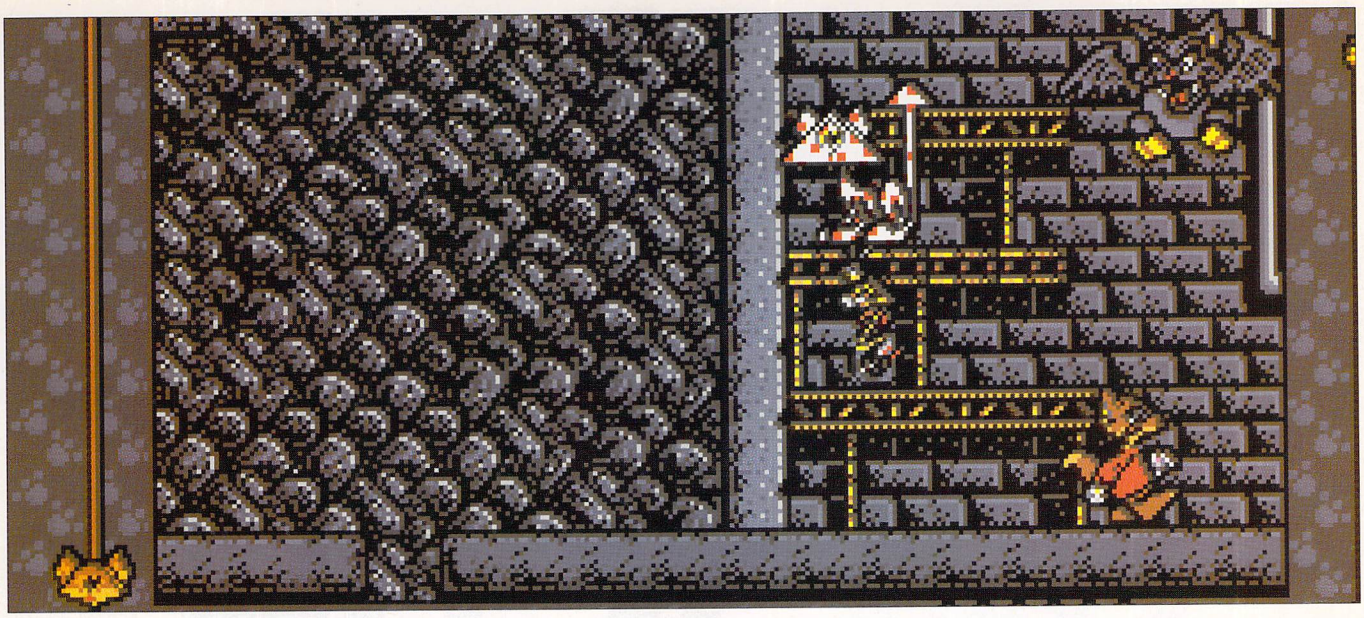


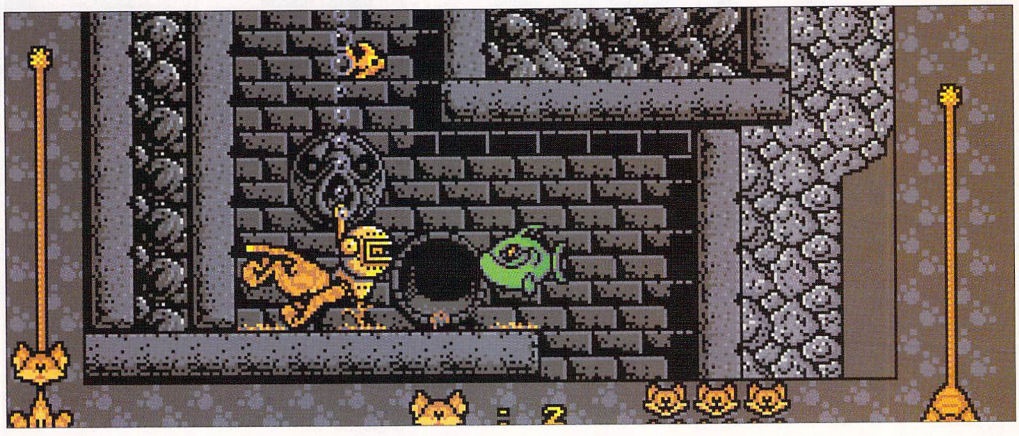
find these, you will achieve 'Super-pussy' status for a short time.

As you progress further into the game, the variety of potions and their resulting effects give a light-hearted feel to the game, so when your pussy suddenly starts to fly in a similar fashion to Muttly using his tail, you can't help but smile.

On each level you'll be confronted with colourful and mischievous creatures from frogs, and bugs on bikes, to dancing rabbits – each one, although nasty, is brilliantly drawn and animated. These intensify the appeal of a game that oozes charm and humour.

The gameplay is easy to control using the joystick. Moving the stick left or right results in Bob doing likewise. Pulling the stick down enables him to jump to platforms on a higher level. The power of the jump is represented by the cat shown to the right of the screen – the longer you keep the stick pulled back the longer the cat's tail will get, and the higher Bob jumps.

And finally, to the sound quality. This game includes a pleasant accompanying tune rather than the usual electronic blips. Nine Lives is a delight. Check it out.

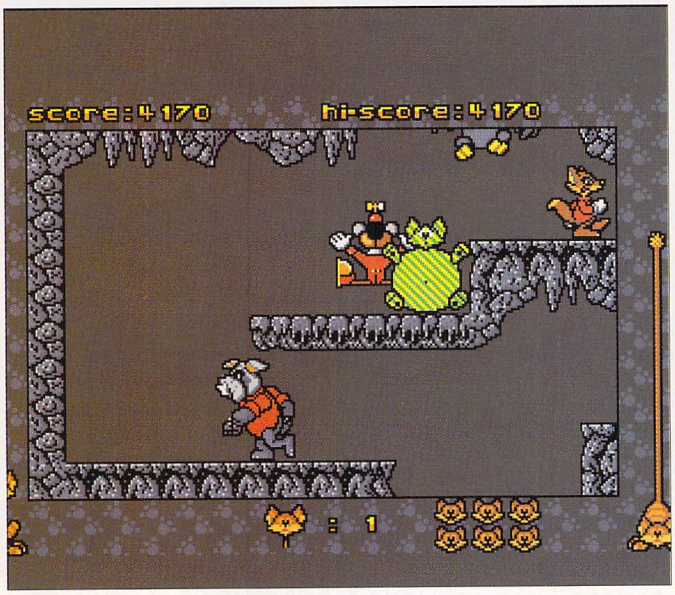


TRIED AND TESTED:

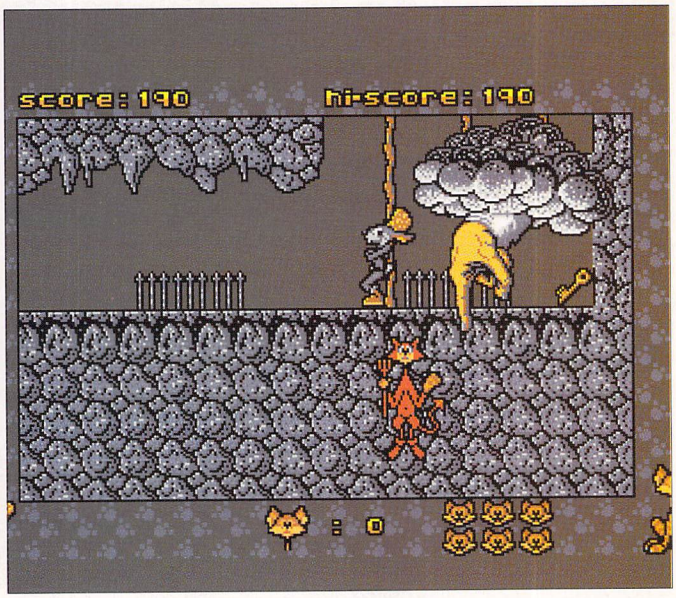
GRAPHICS: 89%
SOUND: 83%
GAMEPLAY: 85%
OVERALL: 91%

Top: Is there a doctor in the house? We have a bad case...

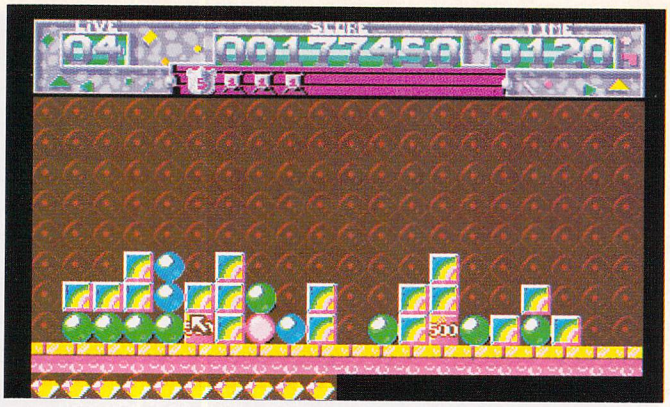
Above: What is this guy doing now?



All Bob said was "I feel a bit bloated after eating all that food..."



Failure means that somebody is going to give you a warm welcome...



Put the right coloured shapes in the right piles or you won't finish the game

PICK 'N' PILE

House: UBI SOFT Price: £19.95

After the adulation and publicity which surrounded games such as Tetris and Klax, it was inevitable that other games with similar brain-taxing abilities would reach the shelves. Recently there has been a predictable influx of 'mind games' onto the market.

In anyone's collection you're unlikely to find many games in this style. In a good RPG like Dungeon Master, or adventure like Populous, the mental challenge is blatantly obvious and variable enough to keep you coming back for more. Games such as Pick 'n' Pile offer a much more restricted appeal – which isn't to say that this isn't an entertaining game to play.

The action in Pick 'n' Pile is very fast and you compete against the clock. At the start of a level, numerous objects cascade down from the top of the screen and pile up in rows on the floor. If any of the rows are made up of the same coloured objects then they will disappear, enabling objects on either side to fall into the space. Your aim is to move the remaining objects around, organising them into piles and eventually making them disappear.

With your joystick you place the cursor over any object which is to be moved. Pressing your fire button will register the choice, and you're then able to move the icon to another location. This can either be in an empty space, where the object will be simply dropped, or over another object which will result in both objects changing places. Another press of the fire button completes the move.

Although the screen is mainly filled with coloured orbs, there are other items which can speed up the process of completing a level. Because the law of gravity applies even here, unsupported items tend to fall from the top of piles and into the melee below. Using the blocks found throughout the game you're able to support and dispense with a greater number of items at once.

Bonuses are available to increase your score but they also enable you to get rid of individual items, which is useful if you're stuck with an odd number of orbs. While you are calculating the fastest way in which you can complete each level, a clock is running down (shown in the top right of the screen). If this reaches zero, the game will automatically terminate and one of your three lives will be lost, but should you beat the clock, any remaining time will be transformed into bonus points.

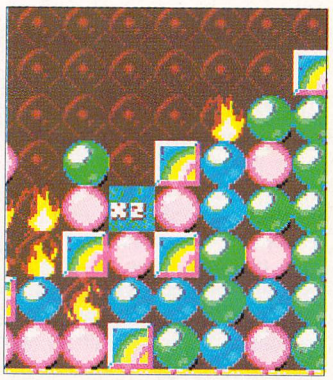
The further into the game you venture, the harder things become. You begin to encounter items which hinder you. Remembering that a pile will only disappear when it's completely one colour, it's important that you manipulate these rogue items carefully if you don't want to find yourself boxed in.

After you complete some of the later levels, you will be given a password which enables you to avoid beginning at level one each time you play.

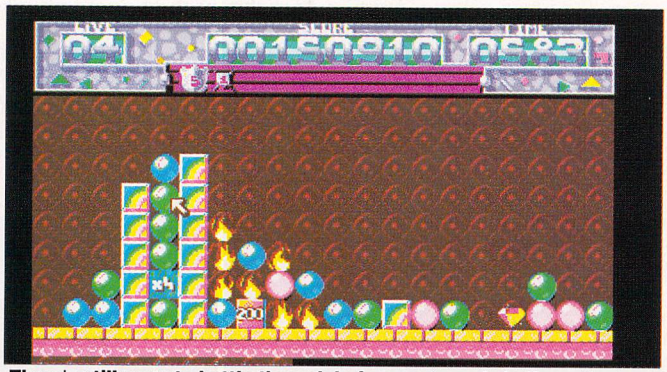
Pick 'n' Pile is enjoyable and it has enough substance to keep you playing. The time restrictions mean that speed is really important if you are to complete each level. Its long term appeal still remains to be seen, but for now it's definitely good fun.

TRIED AND TESTED:

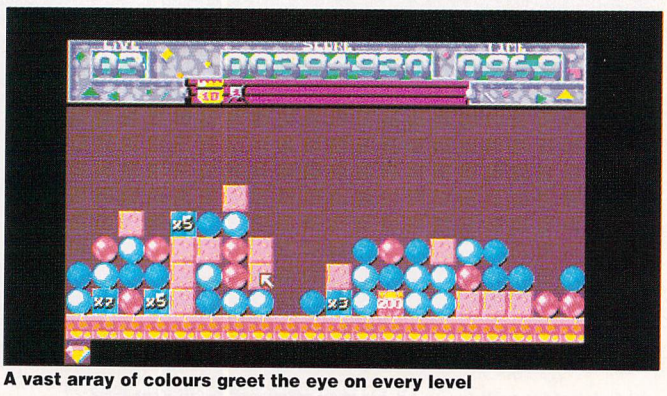
GRAPHICS: 69%
SOUND: 68%
GAMEPLAY: 74%
OVERALL: 73%



Everything has to be carefully balanced or it's all over



There's still more to battle through before you're only halfway there



A vast array of colours greet the eye on every level

VooDoo NIGHTMARE

Boots Barker has had a bad day. Stranded in the heart of darkest Congo, he is hounded on all sides by wild animals, natives, jungle gods and the malevolent Witch Doctor. Perhaps things will improve when night falls?

This huge isometric 3D arcade adventure contains some of the most cute and colourful graphics you will ever see. Instantly Playable with simple controls, the game will take you months to complete.

Explore the five underground temples, battle through a vast expanse of jungle, buy exotic items at the native shops, gamble your prizes away at the casino, embark on secret missions and that's not even mentioning the legendary Part II...

Voodoo Nightmare: It's a jungle out there!

"Voodoo Nightmare is huge, it will keep you occupied for ages. Well worth the money." "Superb . . . check it out!" Amiga Action. AA awarded

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"Exquisite graphics . . . a plethora of thoughtful touches." "Voodoo Nightmare is a cracker!" The One

"Spellbinding graphics will entrance all gamers for ages." CU Amiga. Screenstar

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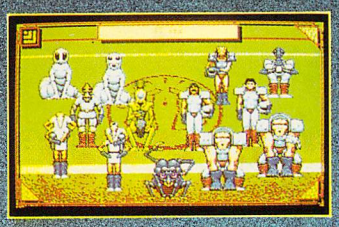

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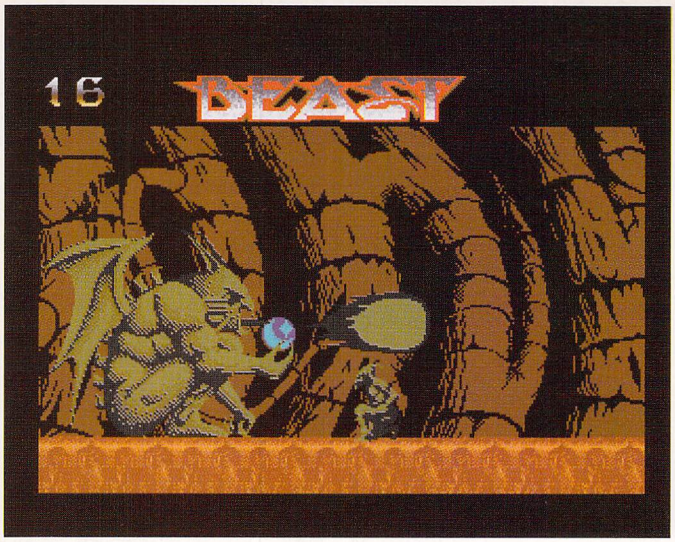
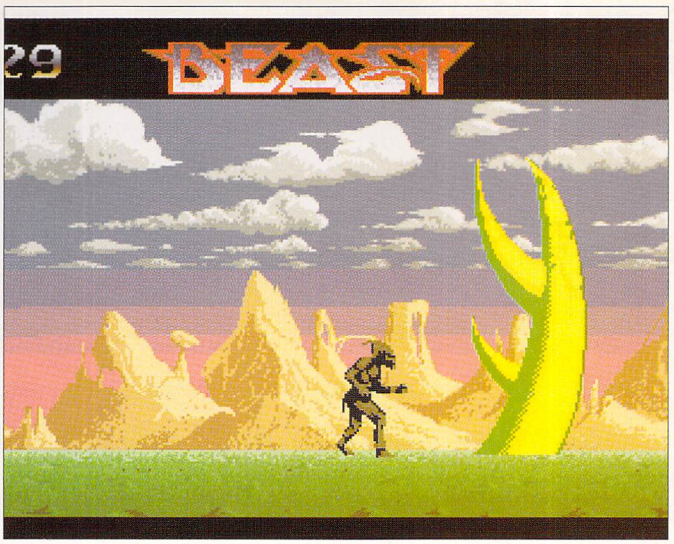
...PLAY DIRTY!





THE SHADOW OF THE BEAST

House: Psygnosis Price: £24.95

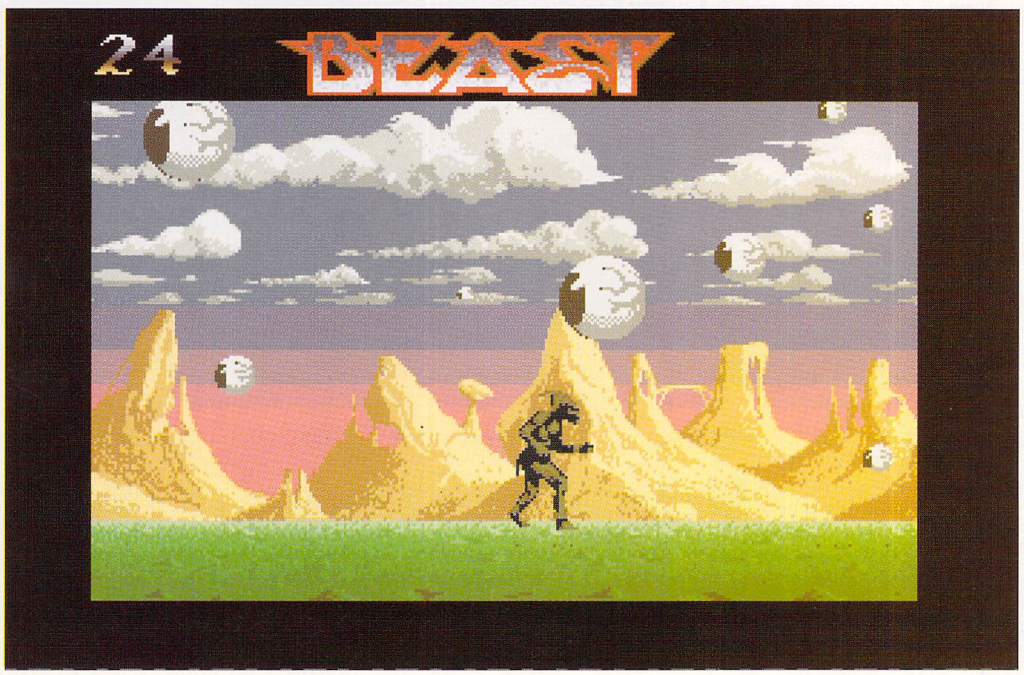
Years ago an infant was stolen away from his loving parents. The order for this crime came from the underworld, and was issued by that evil leader, the "BEAST". Bringing the child back to their haven far beneath the temple, Necropolis, it was left to the warrior priests to work their evil magic on the child.

Indoctrination into their evil ways came first, then the potions. Made from the blood of rare and strange animals, these potions transformed the child into an ugly but powerful creature. With elongated nostrils, small beady eyes and a pair of horns, the creature began to resemble a goat. A strong muscular body replaced the weak and feeble torso. Finally, to ensure total allegiance to "The Beast" all memories of the past were obliterated. Having created their "slave" it was time to put him to work.

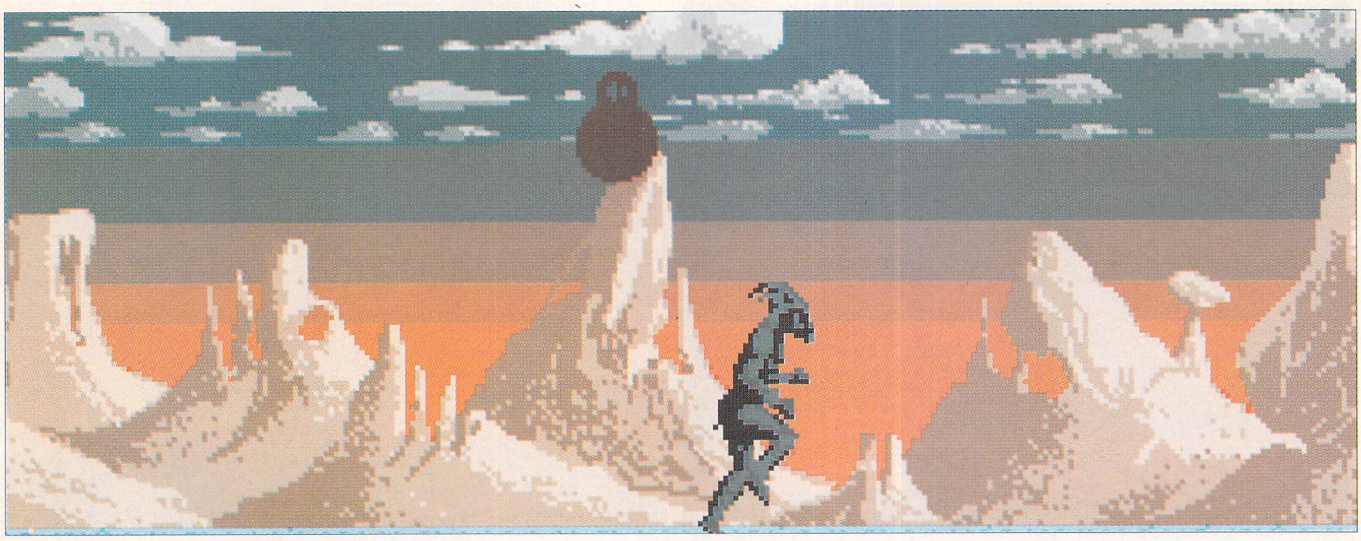
Years go past. One night, as the moon begins its ascent into the sky, and haunting shadows dance around the altar in the grounds of the temple, a sacrificial ceremony begins. Human sacrifices are made amid whining cries and pitiful pleas for mercy. Suddenly, as the sacred blade severs the arteries of another, memories stir in the warrior's mind.

Looking down at the painfully twisted face of the last victim, overwhelming grief and anger rack his body. Realising what he has done makes him feel sick, for here is no ordinary man...lying before him is the body of his father...

He begins to run. He decides to seek justice for the lost years of his life, and revenge for the death of his father. So his quest



Dark doings in evil worlds with the horrific Shadow of the Beast



begins. The Shadow of the Beast is a battle between good and evil. As the Warrior, your task is to seek retribution and destroy the Beast and his protectors. On the way to this final showdown, you come across problems from every quarter. Shadowy monsters roam the catacombs, instruments of death appear from under your feet, aggression is waged upon you from every direction. In most cases there is only one thing to do, meet these adversaries head-on and fight like a devil possessed.

You have the ability to produce deadly yet graceful flying kicks and a punch powerful enough to stop most things in their tracks. As you progress deeper, the challenge increases. If you had the sense to pick up the items which increase your punch-power you will be able to overcome the larger obstacles, if not, then a horrendous and bloody death awaits.

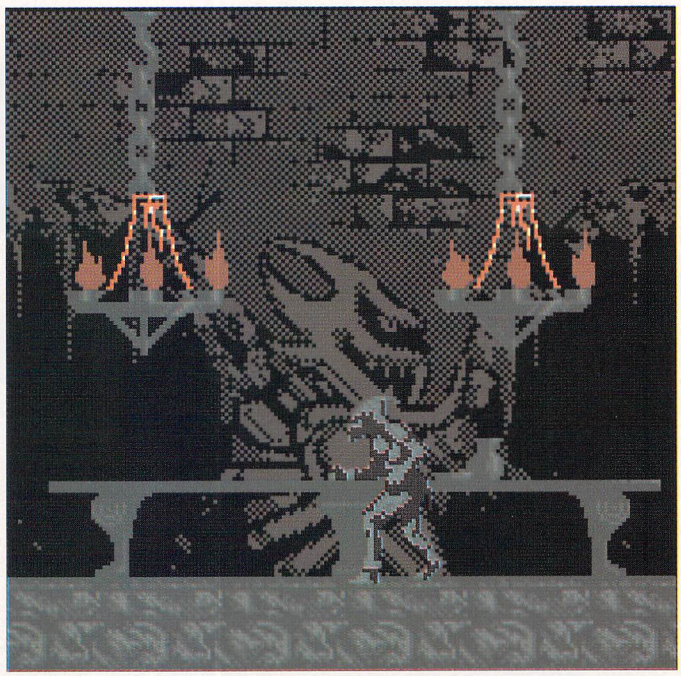
Exploring every corner will reveal items which are essential to your survival. In total, there are 350 screens to explore, and 132 different kinds of monsters to fight. Throughout the game the use of colour and a lot of thought has been given to details. The gameplay is simple, as is the idea behind it. As for its appeal, it soon becomes obvious why the game was so popular among Amiga owners. Unfortunately for us, even though the quality is still there, it has lost something during the transition to our format.

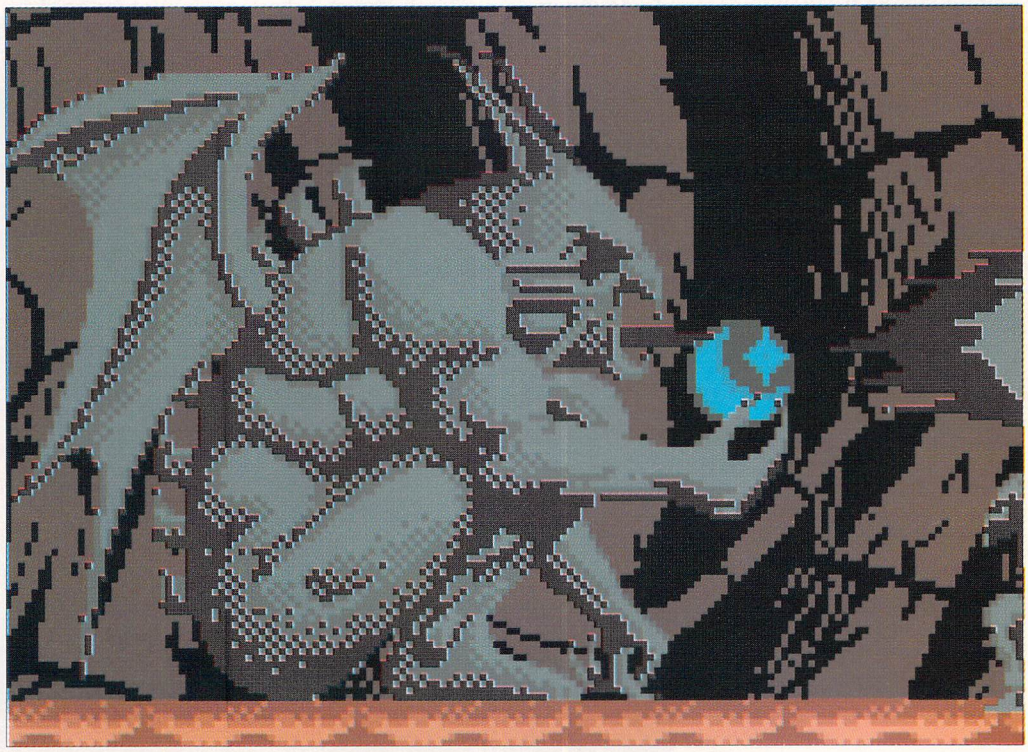
Music: At the start of the game, and at stages throughout there is a haunting but brilliant piece of "Inca-style" music. Irrespective of whether it's sampled or real, at least one group of programmers is conscientious enough to give us something worth listening to, instead of the normal electronic rubbish.

TRIED AND TESTED:

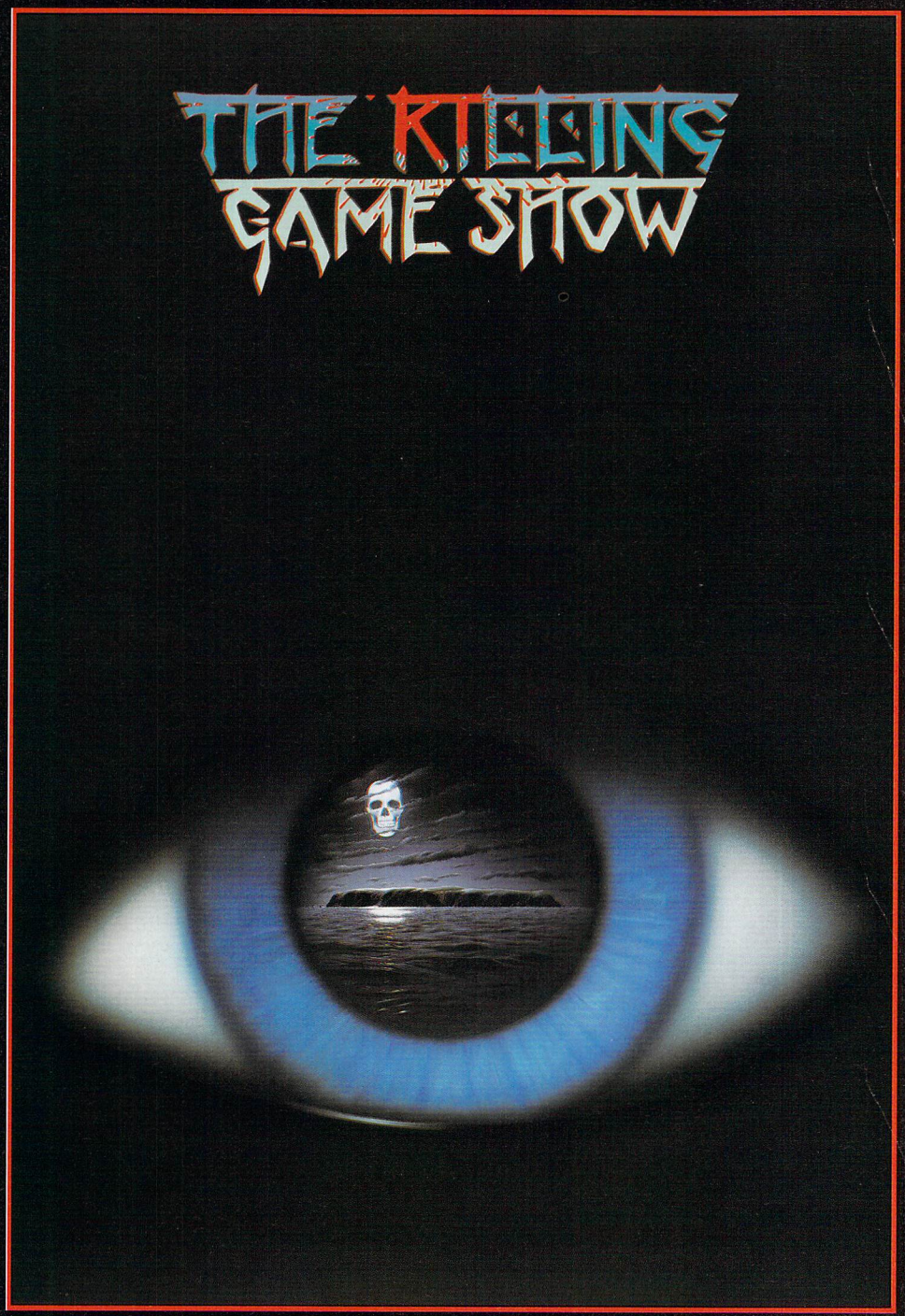
GRAPHICS: 88%
SOUND: 83%
GAMEPLAY: 89%
OVERALL.....90%

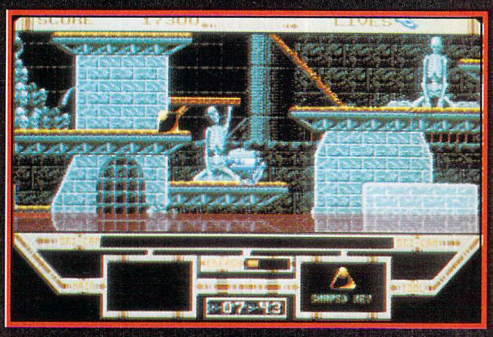
An enormous array of creepy creatures dog your every step through the gloomy passages of Shadow of the Beast...





THE KILLING GAME SHOW





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But . . . don't forget the rising fluid or it's "next contestant time".
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First prize is your life — Don't waste it!

Screen Shots from the Amiga version

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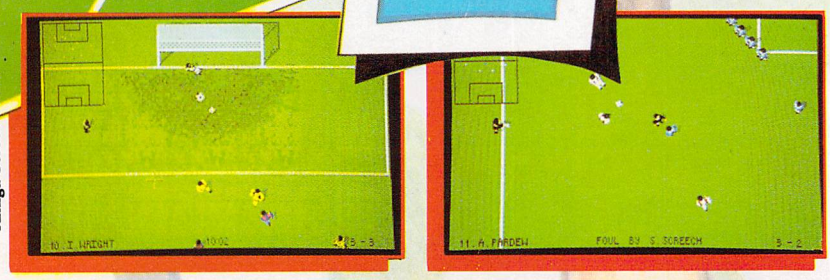
KICK OFF 2



Amiga Screen Shots

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ST ACTION - The best game ever to grace the ST. Highest accolade I can give.
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ST FORMAT - Brilliant. **93%**
AMIGA FORMAT - Enthralling and addictive. **93%**
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IENSION IN MULATIONS

THE FINAL WHISTLE
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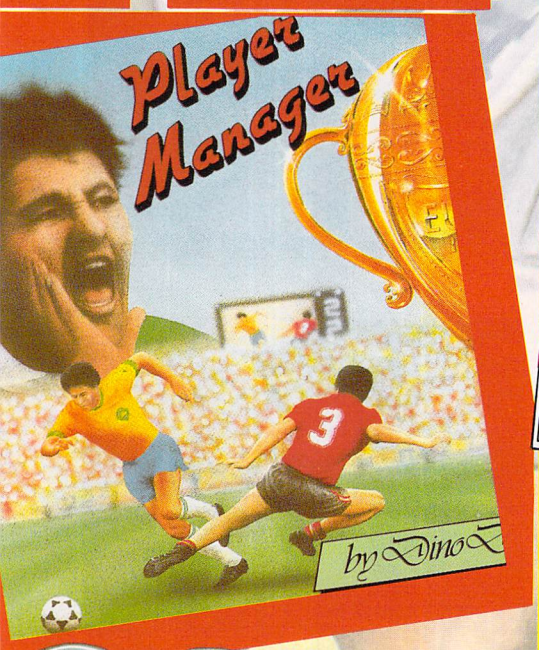
Two extra kits.
Look at any player stats. (attributes and skill) before selecting squad.
Totally new corner kicks with full control of the power, height and trajectory of the ball.
Enhanced throw ins and penalty shots.
Provision to flick the ball in the air and do a blinding header or a spectacular overhead kick.
New two players team mode. Player 1 in position or nearest to the ball and player 2 in position or keeper.
Linesmen and referee on the pitch.
A new player attribute FLAIR. A player with a high level of flair will try a solo attempt at the goal.
4 new pitches - Wembley - Icy - Muddy - Non-League

And Lot's More

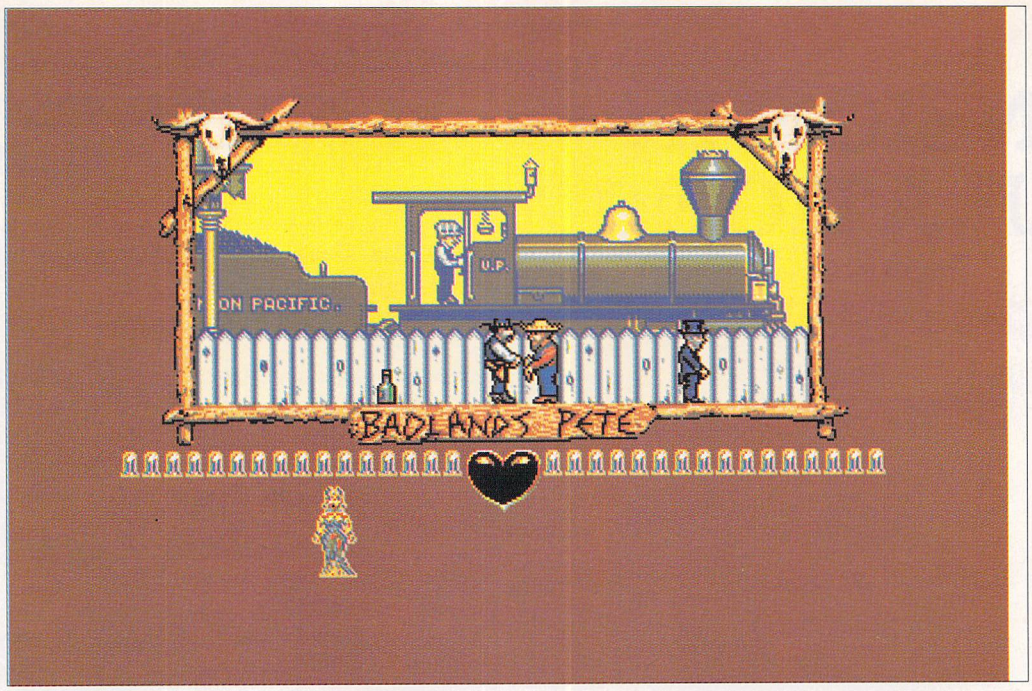
WINNING TACTICS (£6.99 - Rel. Nov.) - A collection of tactics for use in Player Manager or KO2 with full explanations.
RETURN TO EUROPE (£9.99 - Rel. Dec.) - Three European cup competitions. UEFA cup - European Cup - Cup Winners Cup.
GIANTS OF EUROPE (Rel. 1991) Best teams of Europe on one disc.



Draft specifications. Subject to changes without notice

ANCO SOFTWARE, UNIT 10, BURNHAM TRADING ESTATE, LAWSON ROAD, DARTFORD, KENT.
TELEPHONE No: 0322 92513/18 FAX No: 0322 93422

"Meet me at the station under the clock, I'll be wearing a red carnation and carrying the Times"



BADLAND PETE

HOUSE: ARC PRICE: £19.99

Slowly and majestically a giant steam train pulls into the station. With a screech of brakes and a hissing of steam the iron monster comes to a stop. Through a veil of vapour steps Pete Coyote, Badland's meanest, fastest but most law-abiding gun-toting citizen.

The governor of the state is frantically pulling his hair out. Somebody has had the audacity to kidnap his daughter. Having no-one else to turn to, he has been forced to ask you, Pete, for help, knowing that you would lay down your life to uphold the 'American Dream' – freedom and justice for all.

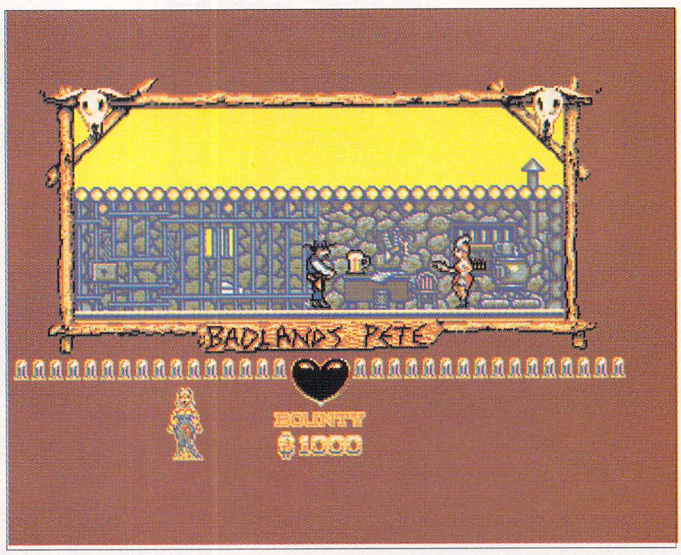
Swaggering through the town looking for the captive girl, you keep a sharp look out for desperadoes who are out to stop you. What was that? Ahead of you, from behind a rock, you hear the sound of gunfire. Reaching for your six-shooter you suddenly feel an unbearable pain in your chest – you must have been hit! Gritting your teeth you raise your gun at the adversary and peel off a few rounds in his direction. All goes quiet, there's a dull thud as his lifeless body hits the ground. That was close!

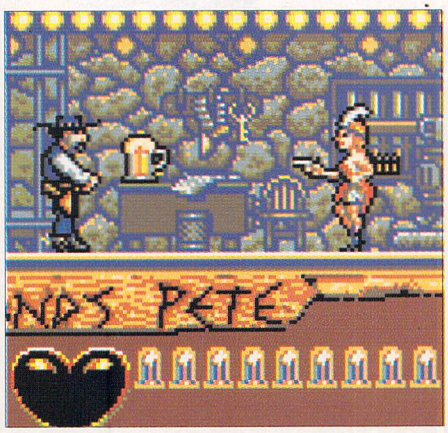
Feeling a bit battered, you need to re-vitalize yourself with some sustenance. Fortunately there are pies and beers left lying around which will replenish your lost energy.

Once more you step out into the street. Walking towards you is a little old lady. You doff your hat. "Mornin Ma'am", you greet her as she walks past. Two steps later you hear the click of a shotgun being cocked. Surely not? Spinning around, you find yourself looking straight down the barrels of the old lady's gun. Without hesitation you draw your own pistols and blow her away. Another one for Boot Hill. Can anyone be trusted?

Most of the locations that make up the play area are accessible to Pete and should be explored – with guns at the ready. The programmers have

Right: Where all the good guys ultimately end up – Boot Hill





Above: These jail-birds prove decidedly deadly

developed a simple and effective way of increasing the size of the game area. Whenever Pete is in a room, only the space on the same plane can be seen. If you get him to walk either towards you or away from you then more of the room will appear. This enables the standard 2D game to play along 3D lines. You need to remember this because there is usually something to be found in each location, and if you don't have a good look round, you'll probably miss it.

The kidnapped girl could be hidden anywhere, even in the tunnels which run under the town. When you've found her, and the train ticket to your next destination, you have to make your way back to the station, where the steam locomotive is waiting to take you to the next part of the game – another town, only this time, there are two girls to find.

Pete will die when the red heart, which is displayed under the main screen, loses its colour. You also have to keep an eye on the number of bullets you have left. These are displayed alongside the heart. Apart from being able to find extra ammunition within the game, you can retrieve any unused bullets from the dead bodies of those you kill.

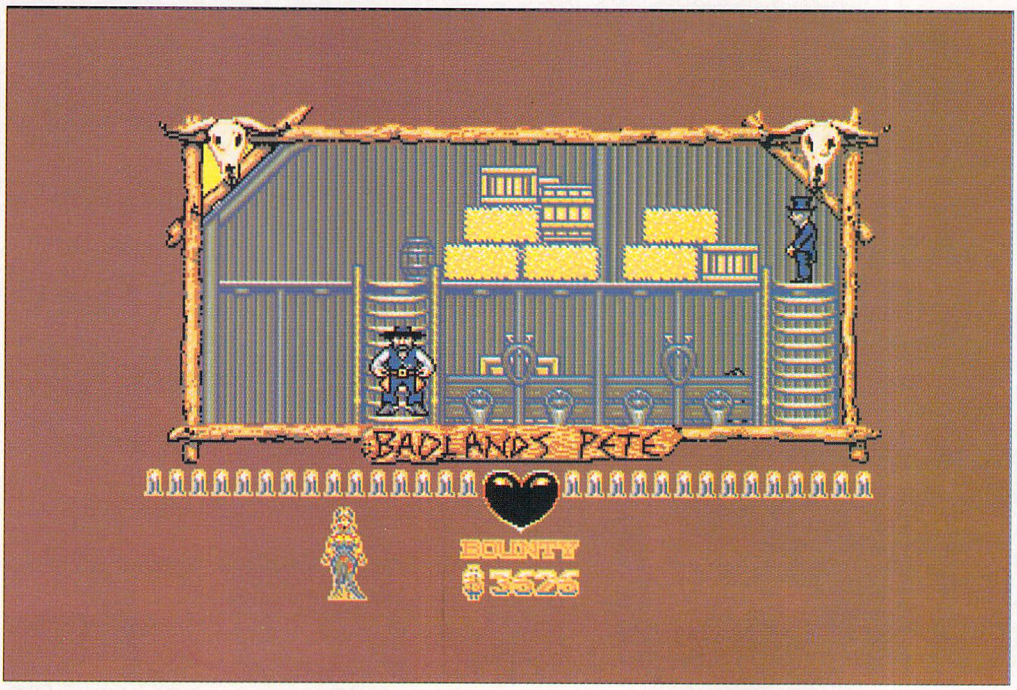
Badland Pete is a pleasant platform-styled adventure game which is graphically appealing, and offers something slightly different in both its theme and method of play. It has instant playability and throws up a big challenge, especially to Western lovers. It would have been nice to see slightly more animation and personality given to the main character, but with the action coming at you fast and furious this small moan can be overlooked.

Music: The introductory sampled music is excellent. Although the game only incorporates sound effects, these are well produced, and realistic.

TRIED AND TESTED:

GRAPHICS: 77%
SOUND: 74%
GAMEPLAY: 76%
OVERALL: 76%

Below: Sorry, there's no time to frolic in the barn – there's some serious gun-slinging to be done



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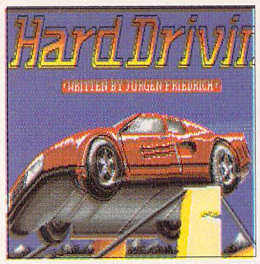
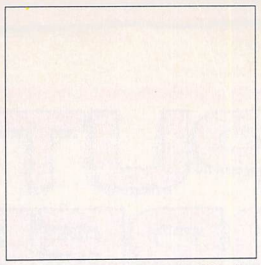
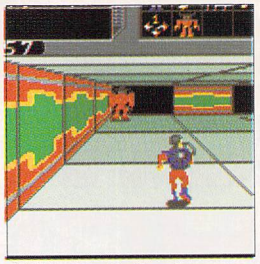
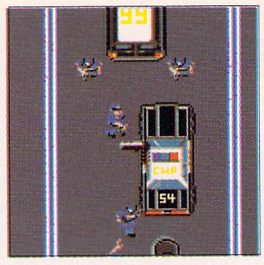




Just a small selection of the corking games available in the TNT compilation from popular software house, Domark...

TNT

House: Domark Price: £29.95

Christmas is nigh, and once again it's time for the annual resurrection of pre-released software in the guise of 'compilations' boxes. Domark is one of the first with TNT. You can now lay your hands on five coin-op converted games – Xybots, Toobin', APB, Dragon Spirit and the legendary Hard Drivin'. All of these made their first appearance in the last 12 months and were excellently received by both press and public.

Xybots: A fast-moving and sometimes hectic shoot-'em-up which takes place in the passageways of a subterranean city. Major Rock Hardy and his accomplice, Captain Ace Gun, are attempting to confront and destroy the Master Xybot. Armed with state-of-the-art laser guns and zappers with which to wreak havoc on the mechanical monsters, they carefully explore the alien environment.

Keeping an eye on the floor plan – which gives them the advantage because it displays the whereabouts of all the robots in their vicinity – they have to fight back-to-back in an effort to reach the exits.

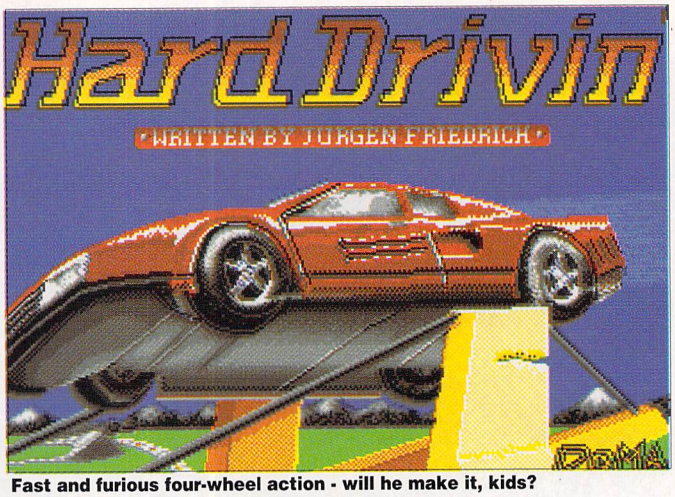
To increase their firepower, they first have to retrieve the gold coins which are hidden on every level. Unfortunately, in most cases these items prove to be heavily protected but they are worth having because they can be used to buy weapons from the stores which are just beyond the exit doors. Xybots is a reasonable reconstruction of the original coin-op which requires fast reactions and frantic waggling of your joystick to stay on top.

Toobin': Those hot, fun-filled summer days are becoming distant memories now that the leaves have fallen from the trees and the promise of winter is in the air. But in Toobin you can forget the falling temperatures and dream of next year, as you frolic in a fantasy world of water. Ah! What could be more relaxing than you and a few friends, slowly drifting down the river in innertubes, cold drink in hand, while the hot summer sun beats down relentlessly?

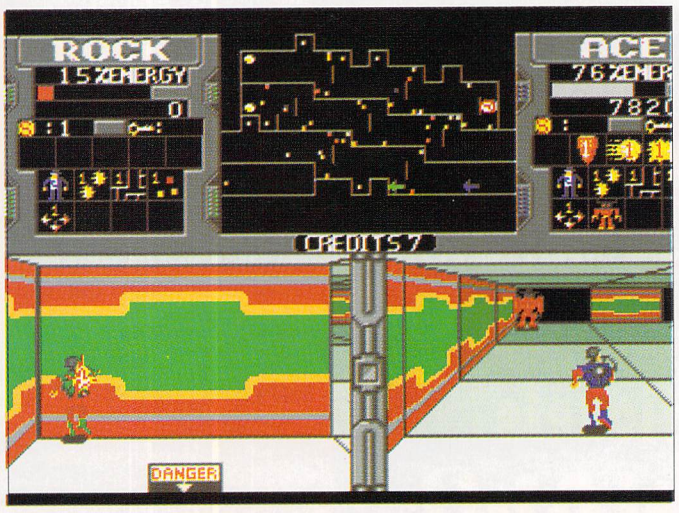
This is Toobin', but to make things more interesting for everyone, it includes a competition. Slalom-style gates are placed along the route, and it becomes a race to the bottom. Points are scored for negotiating the course in the proper fashion and bonuses can be achieved by picking up different items as they float by.

As you get further down-river, things become much more precarious – you have to cope with the problems of how to avoid jagged rocks, floating driftwood and a host of other dangers. If you're unlucky enough to collide with these you will suffer more than a deflated ego – all the air will escape from your burst tube.

APB: Mad-cap, crazy, comic car chases – this just about



Fast and furious four-wheel action - will he make it, kids?



Super 3D action and a scrolling play-area above!

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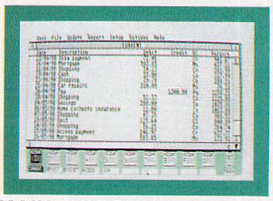
PERSONAL FINANCE MANAGER

If you run a personal bank account and have an Atari ST then you need "PFM PLUS"

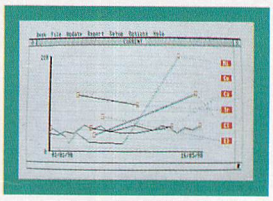
AS EASY TO USE AS A CALCULATOR
PFM PLUS makes full use of ST's Gem interface, if you need to amend or update an entry or Standing order simply click on it. Your screen looks just like a bank statement!

STANDING ORDERS & DIRECT DEBITS EATEN ALIVE
PFM PLUS handles Credit and Debit - Weekly, 4 Weekly Monthly, Quarterly, Yearly and even complicated regular payments like 12 payments of £52.99 followed by one of £12.50, PFM will check the date and automatically insert standing orders as they become due.

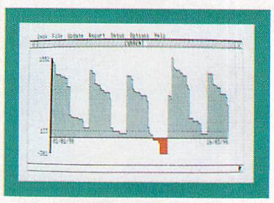
BUDGET WITH EASE, AT A CLICK OF A MOUSE.
If you're the type that likes to look ahead then PFM allows you to set budgets for both expenditure and income. Up to 28 budgets can be set over a year, a quarter or a month and then displayed either in figures or as a bar graph for a given period. Income/Expenditure for these budgets can also be shown as a pie chart so you can tell at a glance where your money's gone. PFM also allows you to display or print your budget groups selectively so you can see your expenditure quickly and easily.



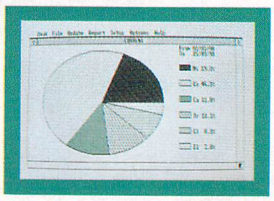
MAIN ACCOUNT SCREEN



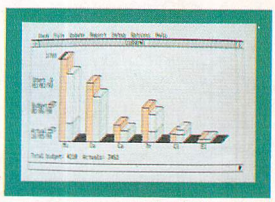
TREND GRAPH



BALANCE PLOT GRAPH



BUDGET PIE CHART



BUDGET COMPARISION BAR GRAPH

PERSONAL FINANCE PROGRAM BY PETER VEALE

Based on the original highly successful Personal Finance Manager, PFM Plus from Michtron is packed with additional features, improvements and enhancements all designed to give you better control over your money.Take a look at this comprehensive specification.

Multiple Accounts
Each file can hold up to ten accounts, each with its own entries and standing orders. Automatic posting of entries between accounts is under full control of the user.

Automatic Standing Orders
Standing orders can be set up for each separate account. Start and end dates can be specified, with payment periods of weekly, 4 weekly, monthly, quarterly, 6 monthly, yearly, or just a single payment.

Entry Posting
Transactions made on one account can be automatically 'posted' to a second account. PFM Plus displays full details of entry sources and destinations. This feature also applies to standing orders.

Selectable Columns
Up to eight different fields available for account displays. The choice of columns and the order in which they appear can be set by the user. A separate choice is available for statement printouts.

Multiple Views
Up to 5 views of any one window can be displayed at the same time. This allows different parts of the account to be visible through independent scrolling, or copies of graphs to be displayed covering different time periods. A total of 67 windows are defined.

Account Files
Each file contains accounts and standing order entries, budget details and full information on the sizes and positions of all account windows

GEM
Full GEM interface operating in medium resolution colour and high resolution monochrome.

Auto Balance
Automatic account balancing against statement. Facility to continue search for further balance matches.

Upgrading from PFM
PFM Plus includes a utility to convert original PFM files to the new format, so you need not lose valuable data by upgrading

Printouts
On-screen displays and printouts for budget comparison tables and account summaries , in addition to the normal statement and standing order printouts.

Printer Formatting
Extensive control over the format of printing statements allowing alternative character pitches, bold underlined and italics printing. Printer control codes defined in separate configuration file.

User Options
Many configuration options can be controlled by the user. Examples include entry defaults, display column order, initial path and data file names. All options including desktop icon positions may be saved to disk.

Desktop
PFM Plus uses its own desktop from which accounts may be selected. The desktop also includes an analog clock and a four function calculator. The calculator can be used even if it is not in the top window. Desktop icons can be re-arranged as required.

Graphs
Four different types of graph plot are available. A balance plot, a pie chart showing selected budget categories, a budget comparison bar chart and a trend graph. The trend graph can be used to show long term increases or decreases in your bills. All graphs auto-scale to fit window size.

Search
Account search facility using search mask with wildcards

Key Short-Cuts
Most mouse and menu operations can also be selected by a key stroke.

Help
On-line help dialogs cover a range of key topics.

UPGRADE FOR £12

If you already own Personal Finance Manager and want to Upgrade to PFM PLUS simply return your original disk with £12 for a full Copy of PFM PLUS

IMPROVED FEATURES INCLUDE

- ★ **Handles multiple account with Auto transfer**
- ★ **Full printer report formatting**
- ★ **Graph of Trend Plotting**
- ★ **Desktop Calculator**
- ★ **Increased Budget handling**
- ★ **Extensive user configurable options**

BALANCING WITH YOUR BANK ACCOUNT IS NO LONGER A JUGGLING ACT
When you get your bank account statement or a balance from an autobank machine you can confirm it with PFM quickly and easily. Simply select PFM's unique "Auto Balance" option and type in the balance as given by the bank and PFM will attempt to balance and highlight entries that have not yet been processed through the bank.

OTHER FEATURES

* The number of entries is limited only by memory size
* You define the file size
* Old entries are automatically deleted
* Automatically places entries in date order
* European or U.S.A. date formats
* Balance of account graph
* Moveable and re-sizeable windows
* Run multiple bank accounts by simply using different file names. Multi-Tasking allows Multi-Account access.
* Facility to check off items against statements
* Locates cheques written months ago in seconds
* Selective print features for dates/statements/standing orders and budgets.

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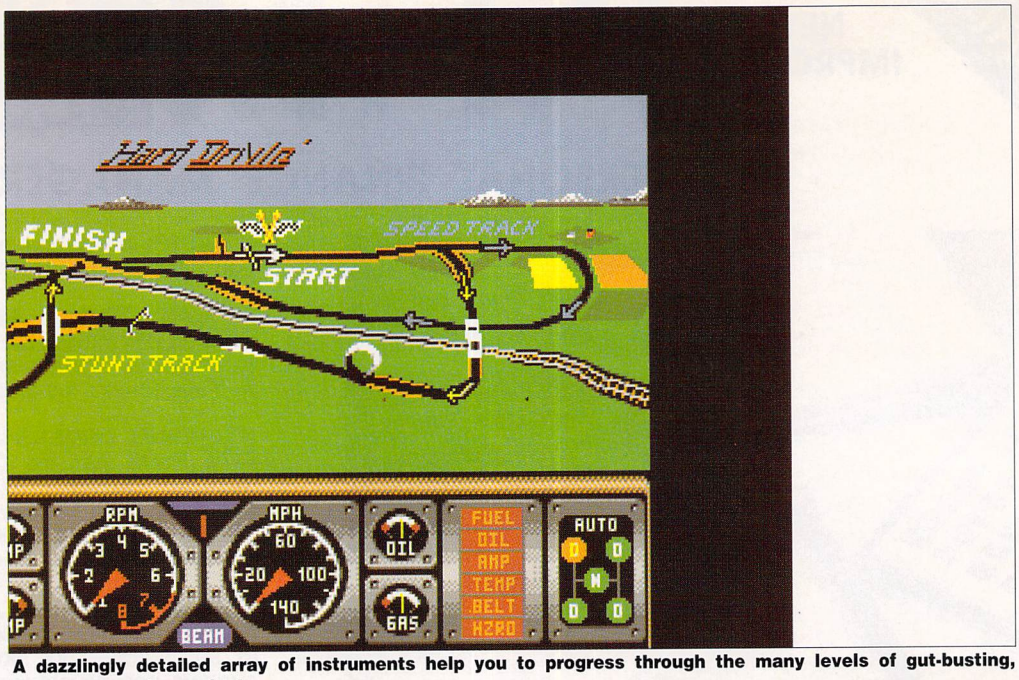
sums up APB. Safe in the knowledge that crime doesn't pay, you must relay this fact to the various criminal elements in your city. As a cop, you're expected to apprehend a given number of undesirables a day. These can range from robbers to litter louts to jaywalkers. So with sirens wailing and tyres screeching, you set off in pursuit of any law-breakers you can find.

As with real cops, messages from headquarters will be relayed to you, in your car, giving you the whereabouts of any suspicious characters. This will enable you to get to the crime scene quickly, giving you a better chance of catching them. If you do make an arrest, you must first read them their rights, then it's off to the police station for a spot of questioning. Here you're expected to get them to confess to their illegal activities in the hope of getting a conviction. Should this method fail, then, and only then, it's time to beat it out of them.



A dazzlingly detailed array of instruments help you to progress through the many levels of gut-busting, joystick-snapping action!

Dragon Spirit: Shoot-'em-ups come in all shapes and sizes, as Dragon Spirit proves. Unlike the majority, which transport you into the future – where you inevitably find that Earth is once more threatened by another alien race – this adventure takes you back to the times of knights in shining armour and damsels in distress.

As a kind and friendly dragon who's upset at the plight of the princess Alicia – a captive of the serpent demon – you set out to either bring the perpetrator of this crime to justice or frizzle him to a cinder.

Presumably, because this is a time of magic and mystery, the dragon has been given the unnerving ability to fire missiles from his mouth and also to drop bombs from places we just don't want to discuss. Combining these two weapons along with the others he can pick up along the way should be enough see him safely through to achieve his quest.

Dark and dastardly deeds fighting demons of the underworld!

Hard Drivin': This 3D solid vector driving game created a real stir and received unparalleled acclaim from all quarters when it was first unveiled.

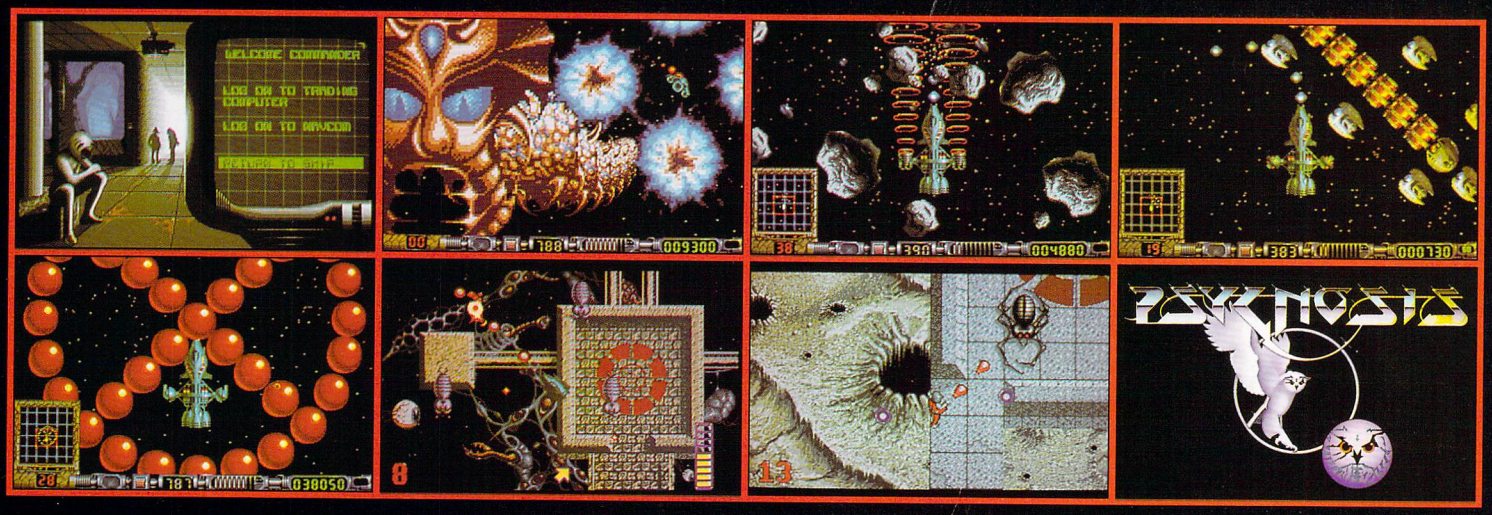
Drive your sports car around two tracks, the first of which entails a flat-out sprint around a speed circuit while contending with sharp bends and dips in a bid to qualify for the final against other computer-driven cars. For those who seek more daring feats there's always the stunt track on which you can test your bottle.

A 360 degree loop-the-loop and an open drawbridge are the two white knuckle features you will face. Inevitably, you'll come a cropper and when you do, you can re-live the whole embarrassing accident when the computer switches on its action replay camera and displays your inefficiency in glorious colour.

TRIED AND TESTED:

GRAPHICS: 77%
SOUND: 79%
GAMEPLAY: 82%
OVERALL: 79%

More hot action screens from this incredible compendium!



AWESOME

'T' SHIRT ENCLOSED

An original unique Roger Dean Design

AWESOME

Your galaxy is about to self-destruct! You have to get out before it explodes but fuel for your ship is an incredibly rare, unaffordable commodity. You need tons of it to make your escape . . . an' you ain't got it.

Precious fuel can be procured only through undertaking missions for federation government and by swift and clever trading between the eight planets in your doomed galaxy.

Fighting off waves of pirates, attacking police convoys and dicing with death to mine asteroid fields as you journey through space you then face colossal creatures and a horde of aliens before you get planetside. Make it to the surface and it's a manic dash on-foot to the planet's underground complex.

Only when safe inside can you trade, earn fuel and buy enhancements for your ship to give you more chance of surviving your next venture into space.

From the creators of Beast and Beast II comes this awe-inspiring combination of shoot-'em-up action and trading stratagems. Featuring innovative hyperspace sections, full-screen aliens and a whole galaxy to explore: AWESOME will take you beyond the final frontier.

Screen shots from the Amiga

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TOP TIPS

Wigley says: Always buy old 45s instead of floppy disks, they're much cheaper

This month's tips page is dedicated to lovers of King's Quest...

Currently on the market for around £29.99 is a boxed set of the first three King's Quests. So for your adventuring pleasure, we are printing the solution to the first part.

Remember, although this is a complete solution, it doesn't mean that you're not susceptible to death. Therefore it's advisable to save your game at various locations throughout the adventure. Good luck.

RAVAGED DOMAIN!

King Edward's domain has been ravaged. Through trickery, three of the King's items of power have been stolen from him. The kingdom lies in ruin. Its downfall is imminent. It is up you, Sir Graham to recover the King's treasures.

Succeed, and you shall be crowned King of Daventry! Fail and the worst of fates shall befall you. One word of caution before you start. Never drop anything until you're told to do so. Once an item is dropped in this game, you cannot pick it up again. For some reason, you're never weighed down by too many items, so you should be able to pick up and carry every item with you. Also, in order to get maximum points, you must pick up everything you can and look at it, read it, or whatever is required.

At the beginning of the game, go north. You will come across a garden, here pick a carrot. Return southwards and then go west over the bridge past the castle, keep going until you get to a rock.

REVEAL A HOLE

Move the rock and it will reveal a hole. Look in the hole and you will find a dagger. Go westward across the pond, (you will have to swim) and out the other side. Go north to the well, then west to the corral. Open the gate and enter. Inside is a goat, give the carrot to it, and you will find that it will follow you around. Go west through two screens where you should meet up with your fairy godmother. Go north until you come across a clover patch, whilst here you need to pick a lucky four-leaf clover. Now, continue north to the wooden bridge.

Cross the bridge and a troll appears. He refuses to let you pass. However, the goat dislikes trolls and as a favour for the carrot, it runs at the troll and butts him, sending him flying. Keep going north, and eventually you meet a gnome, who tells you that if you can guess his name he will give you an object which you will find of interest.

Type in 'IFNKVOHGROGHPRM' and he will disappear, leaving behind some magic beans. Take the beans and then go east. Cross the wooden bridge and go east to the flower patch. Plant the beans and watch the beanstalk grow. Then go east, across the lake and you'll find a rock with a hole in it.

TOO BIG!

Unfortunately, you are too big to get inside, but you can see a green-glow that is out of reach of your hands. Keep going east and you should find a river with a small beach. Pick up a pebble and return to the beanstalk. Climb the beanstalk into the clouds. When you reach the top, go east into a small wood, then south and east again. You should now be standing before a tree with a hole at its base, look into the hole, and get the sling.

Go back west until you see a fruit tree, then go north. You are now about to face the giant so be prepared to run. If you aren't already moving 'fast' then type this in as a command. Go east into the screen with the giant and hide behind the central tree. If you are completely hidden, the giant will walk around, get bored and eventually fall asleep. When he is completely out of it, take the chest he is holding and return west. This will take you back to the beanstalk. Climb down, at the bottom walk south to the well. Cut the rope and take the bucket.

PRETTY ANGRY

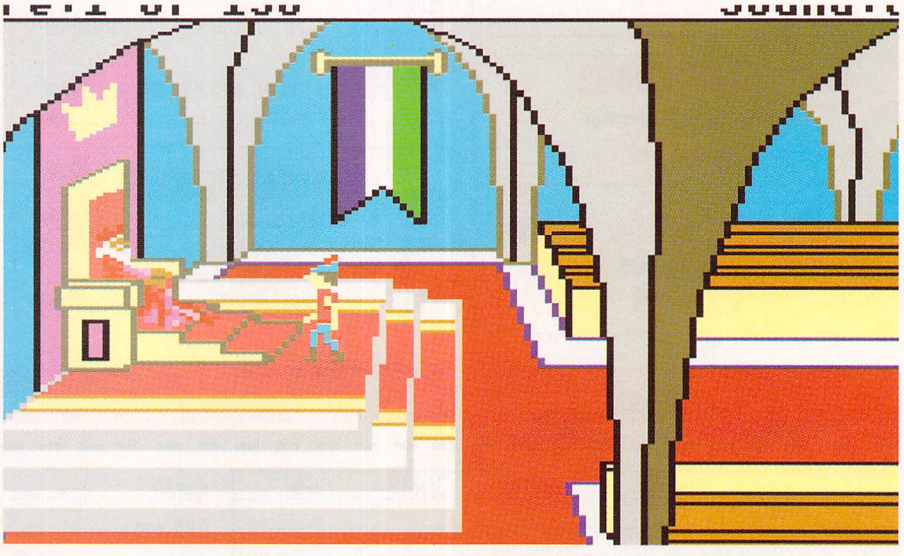
Lower the rope into the well and climb down. When you get to the bottom of the well dive into the water and head south into the hole. When you come out of the hole, you find that you are now facing a pretty angry fire-breathing dragon! Stay in the middle of your screen and go to the second rock. If you go any further you will be frazzled.

If you throw the bucket of water onto the dragon it will put out his fire, not only that, but the dragon moves one of the boulders, creating an exit for you. In the next cave you will find the magic mirror (that's now two out of three items you have found). Having retrieved this, walk west out of the cave. Right, still with us? Good. From the cave move south to the old tree stump.

Look in the stump and take the diamond-filled pouch hidden inside. Go east across the lake, keep going and you will find yourself at the place where you found the dagger, turn north and walk to a big tree. Climb it, go along the branch and into the nest.

Take a golden egg and climb back down again. Once again on solid ground, it's time to go north. Walk through two screens and into the screen with the walnuts lying on the ground. Pick up a nut and open it, inside you will find that the kernel is made of solid gold. Go east and pick up the bowl. Look at the bowl and it will say FILL...

• See next month's issue for the rest of the solution...



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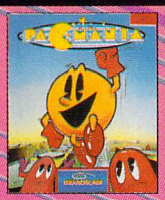

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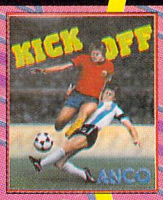

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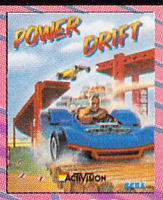

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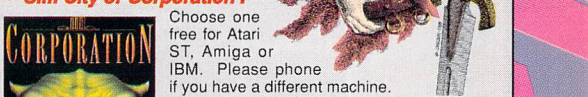

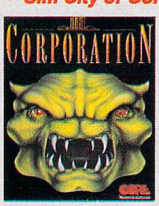

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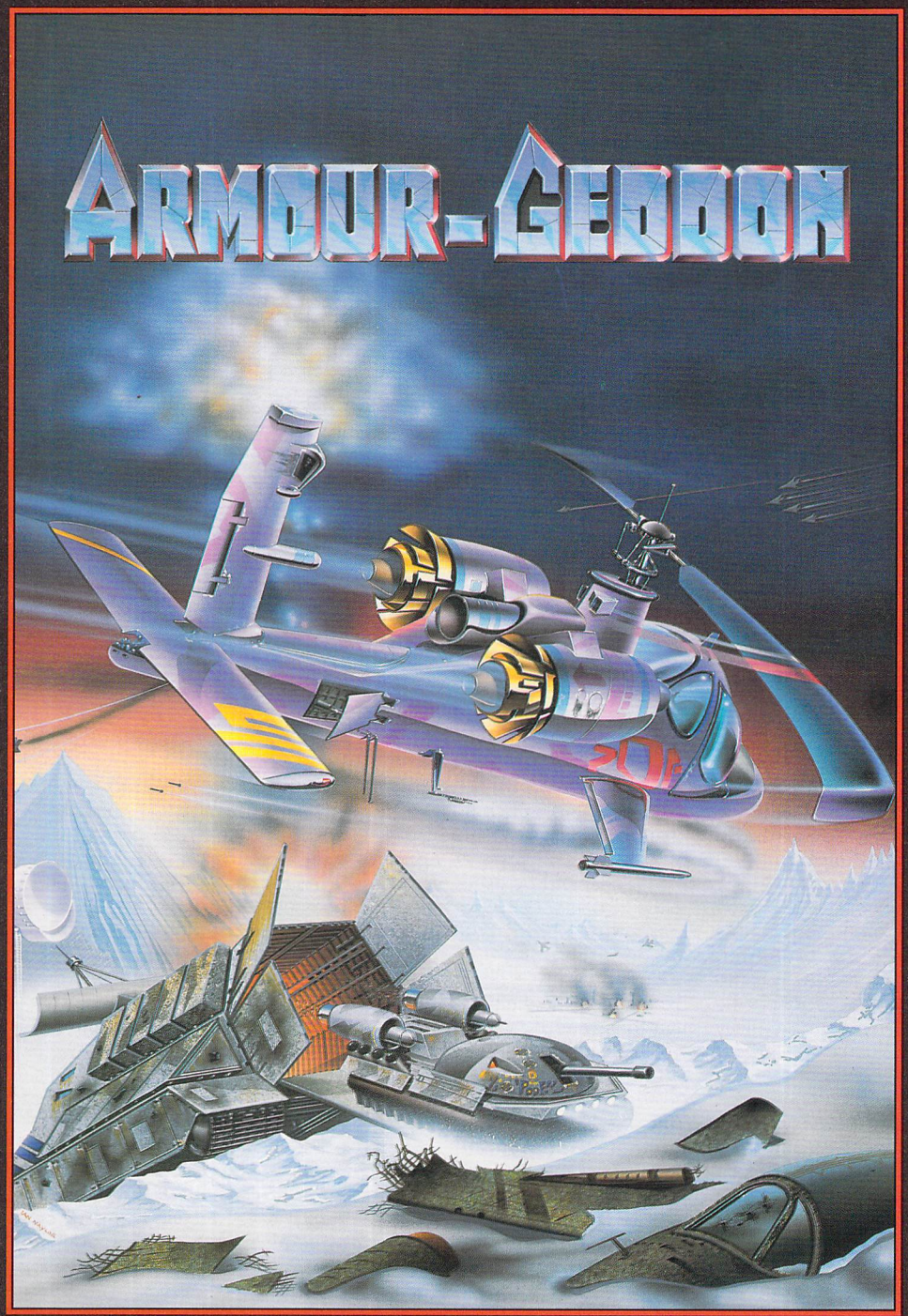

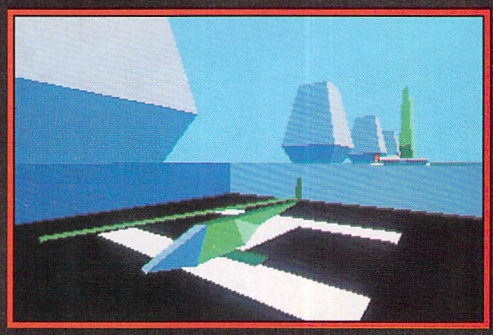

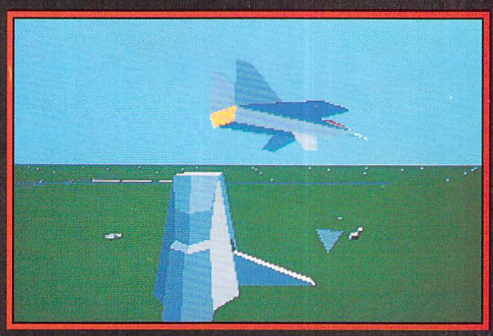

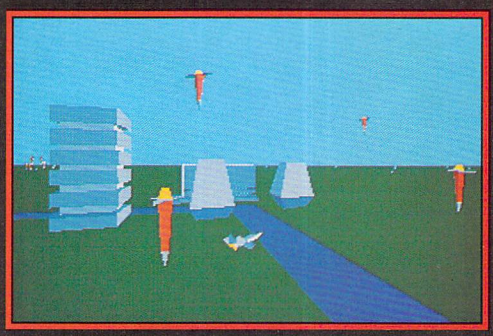

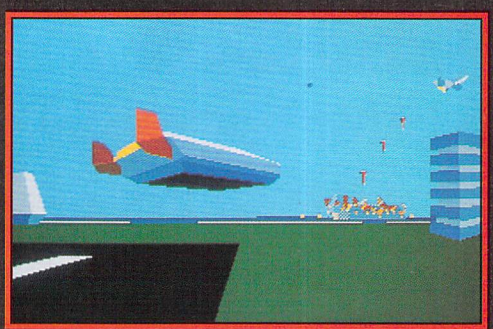

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The Computer Shopper Show

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They're on their way to Wembley. Thousands of computer football players have their sights firmly set on the game's traditional home as they vie for a place in the Computer Football Association Challenge Cup finals, to be played at The Computer Shopper Show in December.

And as well as chasing national honours, they could face the best that Europe has to offer when Shopper becomes the venue for the first European Cup of the computer world.

Formed by Steve Anderson of Mutant Software, The Computer Football Association is dedicated to promote excellence in soccer simulation on home computers. For its first ever Challenge Cup competition, it has chosen Anco's Kick Off and Kick Off 2, played on Atari ST and Amiga machines. It will hold the quarter finals, semi äfinals and final at Wembley Conference Centre on the Sunday of Shopper, December 9.

Already more than 5,000 players have signed up for the äpreliminary rounds to be played throughout the country. Entries close on October 17. The eventual winner will scoop The 1990 Challenge Cup and a prize of £1,000. A trophy and £500 will go to the runner-up while the last 16 will each receive a medal and £100.

The Italian champion has been lined up to take on the eventual UK champion at Shopper. Organised by K Magazine, the Milan-based equivalent of Ace, the CFA championship has taken Italy by storm with 15,000 entrants.

There are also moves to attract the soccer simulation champions from France and Germany to test their skills at Shopper. "Support for the competition is amazing", said Steve Anderson. "At the moment entries are rolling in at 20 a day. We hope to get a big screen put in at The Computer Shopper Show, so that supporters and spectators will get a better view of the excellent computer football in store. With such a big entry, the players who win their way through to the final rounds will really be worth watching".

The Computer Shopper Show 1990 will be used as a vehicle to raise money for The Starlight Foundation, a charity which grants the wishes of seriously ill children. Starlight has been operating in America since 1982 and there is now has a thriving offshoot in Britain. Through its work, wishes as diverse as flying in a jet fighter, meeting Santa Claus in Lapland, owning a puppy and marching with the Scots Guards, have been arranged for critically ill and handicapped youngsters.

As part of its promotions for The Computer Shopper Show, Blenheim Database Exhibitions have launched the largest ever leaflet distribution for a show of this kind.

One million leaflets have gone out to potential visitors in 19 issues of the UK's top computer magazines, and by direct mailshot to the 26,658 people who attended last year's show at Alexandra Palace.

Underlining the scope of this exercise, the leaflets weigh in at five tons, and if laid end to end would stretch from Bristol to Leeds.

The Computer Shopper Show is going for a record. In line with its Yuletide atmosphere, it aims to pack in the largest number of Father Christmases ever collected under one roof.

Stands will be seasonally decorated for an exhibitors' competition, and staff manning them have been asked to turn up in Santa garb. With 280 stands and co-operation from exhibitors, visitors young and old could be faced with between 600 and 1,000 bearded gents. The only request is that they leave their reindeer at home.

Christmas bargains are the name of the game at The Computer Shopper Show, and the results of a pre-show survey reveal that special offers and discounts on hardware, software, add-ons and peripherals could top the £2 million mark this year.

The 26,658 visitors to last year's inaugural show at Alexandra Palace saved around £1 million on special offers. An exit poll of attendees revealed that in excess

of 95 per cent considered purchases there had resulted in 'substantial savings' with reported figures ranging from £50 to £1,000.

This year, the larger venue of Wembley Conference Centre will accommodate many more stands and with an extra day added, Shopper '90 is tipped to double that record

As reported in last month's ST User, Atari's software publishing arm, Arc will be on hand at Shopper to show their latest offerings. Making a first appearance will be their December release Cyber Assault billed as "the first accurate simulation of a humanoid figure travelling in an unrestricted 3D world". Other games will include Defender II, Nine Lives, Gettysburg, Battlescapes Twinpack, Chronicles of Omega and Badlands Pete.

As ST User went to press, B Bytes were targetting Shopper for the debut of Super B Spell, an improved version of their educational package B Spell. Also to be featured at the show will be SuperCard 2, an enhanced version of the company's database; word processor B Write; educational package Play Maths and art package Kid Paint.

Compo Software is the newly formed subsidiary of Compo GmbH, the largest software house in Germany. Their aim is to bring high-quality German software into the UK and Shopper Show is where they will do it. Featured at the show will be word processing packages That's Write and Write On; picture editor That's Pixel, and two PC emulators PC Speed and AT Speed.

Version 1.4 of Supercharger will be in the limelight on the Condor Computers stand. It allows the ST to run all MS Dos applications at 8MHz. Also feature by Condor will be their Macintosh emulator for the ST, Spectra GCR and demonstration models of Troika, a completely integrated system which will run all Atari Tos, MS Dos and Macintosh Plus software.

GFA Data Media will exhibit a wide range of their ST packages including Basic System 2, Basic 3.5 Interpreter, G Shell, Mission Control, Draft Plus 3 and Raytrace.

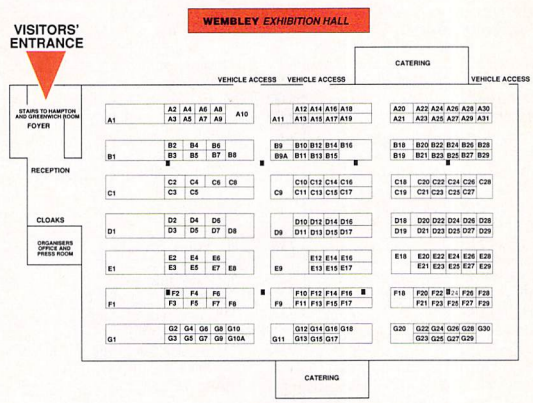
Seven new games will be on offer from Impressions while Kuma will use Shopper as one of the launchpads for K-Spread 4, the latest version of their popular accounts package. Offering special show prices on many of their products, Kuma will also feature Adimens 3.0 advanced relational database package.

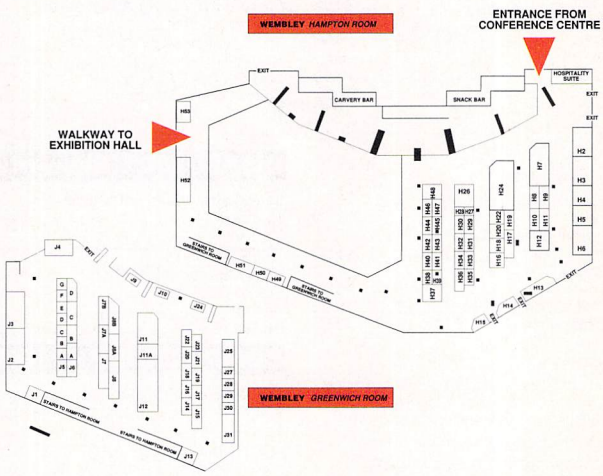
ST users wanting to get their share of this Christmas bonanza will welcome the convenience of the Wembley venue. It is easily reached by public transport and car. Buses serving Wembley Arena are numbers 83, 92 and 182 while the number 18 stops at The Triangle, a five minute walk away. The number 297 stops at Wembley Park Station and the 245 at Bridge Road.

By underground, the Jubilee or Metropolitan (Stanmore) lines take you to Wembley Park and at peak times, Bakerloo can be taken to Wembley Central. Regular trains run to Wembley Central from Euston or Broad Street and to Wembley Stadium from Marylebone. By car, Wembley is easily reached from the M25, M40, M4 or M1.

Shopper runs from Thursday December 6 to Sunday December 9 at Wembley Conference Centre and will be open from 10am to 6pm on the Thursday and Friday; 9am to 6pm on Saturday and 10am to 5pm on Sunday.

Admission is £5 for adults, £3.50 for children under 16 with £1 off for tickets booked in advance. Also available is a pre-paid family ticket covering two adults and two children for £12. For credit card bookings, the 24 hour hotline number is 051 357 1736.





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PAINTING THE PAGE

Product: Deluxe Paint ST
Supplier: Electronic Arts
Telephone: 0753 49442
Price: £59.95
Configuration: All STs, colour only

Deluxe Paint for the ST. Was it worth the wait? Simon Lawson dons his painters' smock and investigates...

Since the release of the Commodore Amiga computer, Deluxe Paint has become the standard by which all other paint packages are judged. Ported to the PC two years ago, Deluxe Paint has finally arrived on the ST. But was it worth the wait?

Unwrap Deluxe Paint and you'll find three disks – one containing the program itself, another with a selection of demo pictures, and the final one with some sample animation files. DPaint runs only in low resolution colour, and to get the best from the program a colour monitor is definitely recommended.

The program can run on an unexpanded 520ST, but a second floppy, hard drive and extra memory will enhance its use. Installing it on a hard drive is simply a matter of creating a new folder and copying all the program and tutorial files across to your hard drive. Refreshingly, there is no copy protection on the disks, although there is a note in the manual asking you not to make illegal copies of the program.

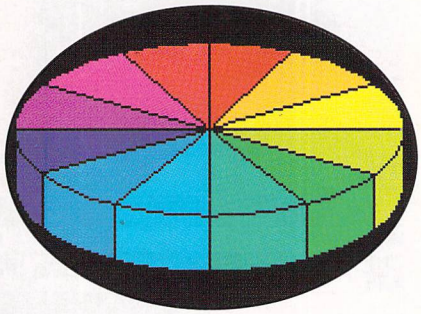
FILES AND FONTS

DPaint can read and write graphics in a variety of file formats, including normal Degas .PI1 and compressed .PC1 files, as well as the older Neochrome format. DPaint reveals its Amiga origins by reading any 16-colour IFF pictures ported from the Amiga, although how you get the IFF files across to the ST in the first place is anyone's guess.

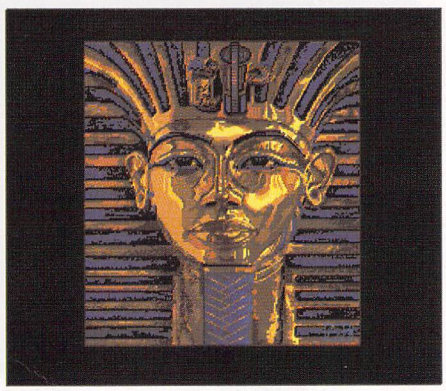
On booting the program from the DPAINT.TOS icon, the first thing you notice is that the famous icon bar has been moved from its familiar position down the right hand side of the screen, and is now horizontal in the middle of the screen. The space bar acts as a toggle to remove the bar from the screen and allows you to see your whole picture. The return key moves the bar to the bottom of the screen.

A scroll bar down the side of the screen allows you to scroll the visible part of the work area, so that you can see your whole drawing. A good selection of pictures is supplied, giving you an excellent idea of the program's scope. The famous King Tut picture is there, although looking a little worse for having only 16 colours. There is also a selection of ready drawn clip-art for inclusion in your own pictures.

DPaint supports multiple fonts which are stored on disk and loaded when needed. The excellent selection ranges from a fancy gothic effect to a blocky futuristic font. There is no font editor supplied with DPaint, and the fonts are a non-standard format, so you're restricted to those supplied with the program.



You can choose from the full 512 colour palette, or 4096 on an STE



Probably the most famous computer picture ever – the death mask of Tutenkhamen, the most famous of the Egyptian Pharoahs

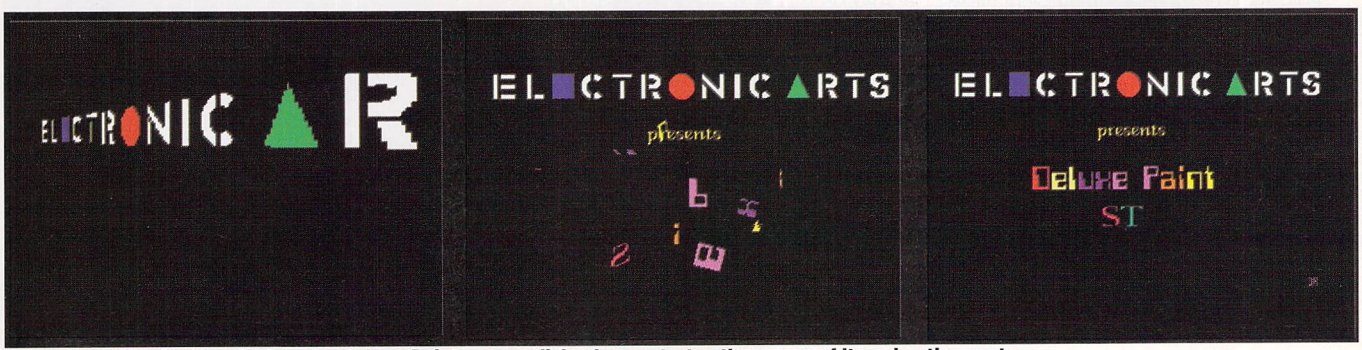
DRAWING MODES

Two drawing colours can be assigned, one to each mouse button. All the usual painting modes are there, accessible from the clear and easy-to-use icons on the menu bar. Freehand, line, circle, box and polygon tools all work quickly. A window at the bottom left of the screen displays a magnified portion of the main picture around the cursor location, enabling fine positioning of the current drawing tool.

The spray gun has variable nozzle sizes and spray speeds which are preset, or you can define others to suit your current needs. Filling an area, even one with complex boundaries is achieved rapidly – quite a relief. A special tool is provided for drawing Bezier curves, allowing you to drag and stretch curves until they fit properly.

Although still restricted to the normal 16 colours in low resolution, DPaint ST does provide facilities for selecting any colour from the STE palette. A simple button click expands the choice of colours from 512 to the full 4096. Three ranges of colour can be set for colour cycling, and you can pick two colours from the palette and DPaint will fill in a smoothly graduated range between those two.

Colours can be set with either the normal



A sample animation supplied on the Deluxe Paint master disks demonstrates the power of its animation system

RGB slider bars, or with sliders to control the Hue, Saturation and Value. Representing the colour chosen and the amounts of black and white in the colour, this system provides more flexible control of colour shades.

One of the most impressive things about DPaint is the speed at which even complex operations are performed. Where other programs have a perceptible pause while they calculate the maths needed to shift large blocks around the screen or wrap an object, Dpaint operates almost instantaneously. With a program this fast, your creative flow is not interrupted.

ANIMATION

One of the main features of DPaint ST is its ability to create animated graphics. Deluxe Paint sets aside areas of memory as buffers in which it stores pictures, and then flips between them to provide fast and smooth animation.

The ability to copy pictures between buffers makes animation easy. A picture can be copied several times and alterations are made to each successive frame to create a simple animation. The tutorial files included on the disk take the user painlessly through the process of creating an animation.

The other method of animating a picture is to use colour cycling. A series of colours can be cycled through, creating a rippling effect, such as sunlight glinting on water. The waterfall picture shown here used this technique to give the illusion of falling water.

THE MANUAL

Electronic Arts have evidently given a great deal of thought to making the manual clear and accessible, to both the novice and experienced computer artist. The first section is a well laid out tutorial that guides the new user through the features of the package, especially the animation section.

The later sections contain a more in-depth look at the power and advanced facilities of DPaint. A good index ensures that the manual can be used as a reference guide when you become more familiar with the way DPaint works.

Although there are illustrations and screen shots in the manual, it has been printed in black and white. Colour screen shots of the program in operation would have enhanced the manual.

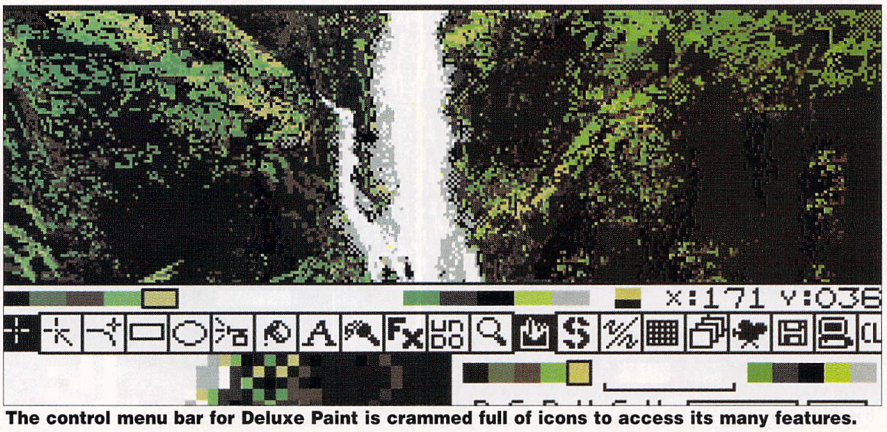
ON THE PRESS

Deluxe Paint doesn't have a print facility in the main program, but it provides a separate utility to handle printing. This has the advantage of making the main program smaller, leaving more memory and allowing more features to be included in the print utility.

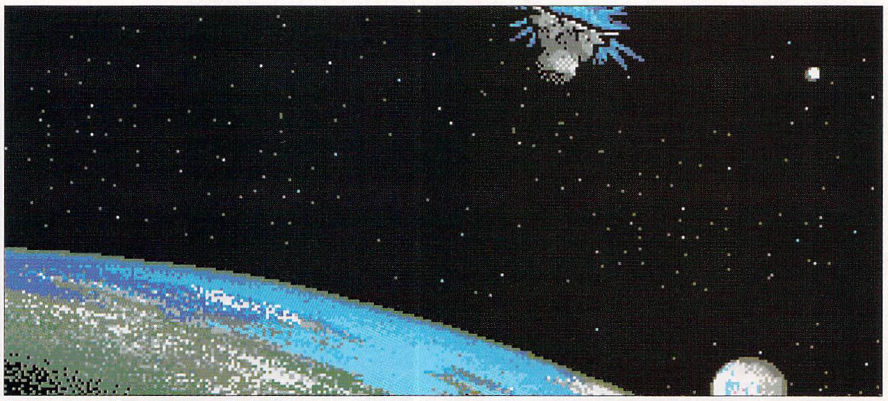
The printer utility provides support for both colour and mono printers. If you have a colour printer, then you can load a user-editable Colour Correction Table before printing your picture. With these CCT's you can correct the colour of your picture, matching the colours on the printout with the screen colours.

Printed output is excellent, although the supplied printer drivers rely on either an Epson-compatible dot matrix or a Hewlett Packard ink jet or laser printer. The Atari lasers aren't supported directly, and the Epson emulator can't be used because DPaint can't use Desk Accessories.

A cool forest glade, gently falling water, sunlight filtering softly through the trees. An impressive introduction to Deluxe Paint



The control menu bar for Deluxe Paint is crammed full of icons to access its many features. Clicking on an icon often brings up extra options in a control panel below the icon strip



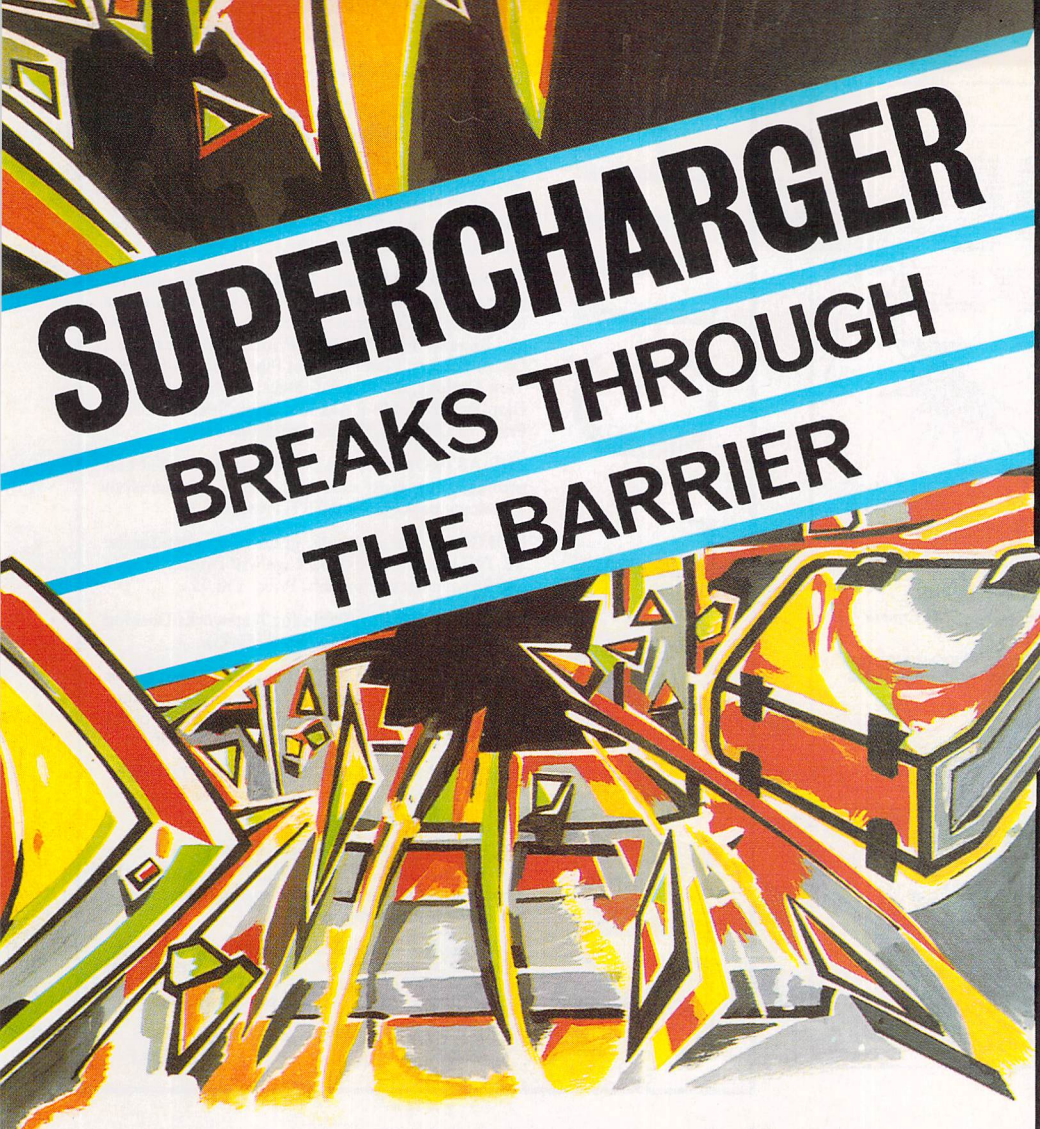
A space ship blasts off from a small blue-green planet in an insignificant backwater region of the galaxy...

Deluxe Paint renders bright, sharp pictures in 16 colours

THE BOTTOM LINE

Features: Full of the features by which all others will be judged.

Ease of use: The icons are easy to use, but it may take some time to remember which operation requires a click, double click or right mouse click.



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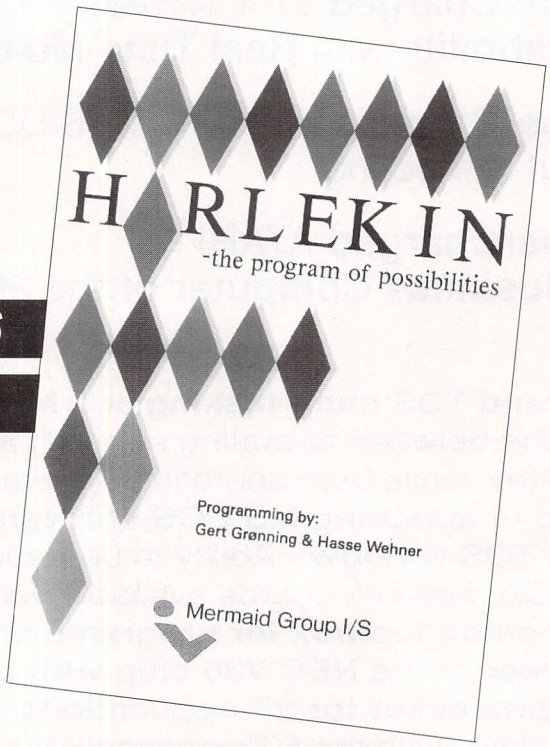

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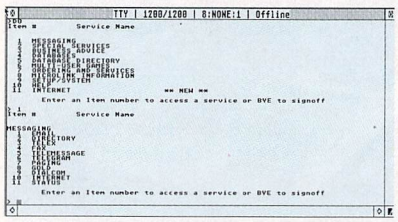
BAUD GAMES

This month, our very own game of Monopoly, BT style, as John Butters takes over the 'phones and brings you the essential guide to comms...

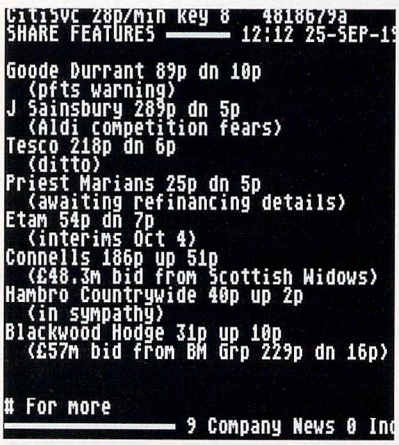
In the days when we still had an ozone layer, smoke signals were the most high-tech method of communication. Thousands of years later, people were amazed at the technology behind the telephone, and only a hundred years on we've swapped the ozone layer for wonderful electrical devices such as fax machines.

Your own ST can be used as part of this increased communications technology. With only a few pieces of equipment you can use your computer to send and receive messages from any part of the globe, read up-to-date information on practically any subject and even play games.

There are different types of systems to call, including multi-user games such as MUD, commercial bulletin boards such as CIX and database services like Prestel. Electronic mail (or e-mail) is becoming increasingly popular in the business world. As an alternative to the somewhat less than superb service offered by our friends at the post office, files sent down the telephone line arrive at their destination instantly.



MicroLink is widely used for its electronic mail service. Here it's being used from within the Mini Office Communications program



Watch share prices crash from Prestel's City pages – the Financial Times of computing

E-mail remains only a small part of on-line communications, it also houses masses of games, database and shopping services. British Telecom's Prestel is probably the service which springs to mind, feeding its subscribers with round-the-clock information on practically every subject imaginable.

Constantly updated news stories from around the world, financial information such as share prices and up-to-the-minute travel information are only a small selection of the pages being transmitted. Many other companies offer similar services, and one of these is MicroLink.

Bulletin boards are the place to look if you want to contact people with similar interests or get hold of free software. Many don't have a subscription charge and are based around different subjects. Some are for ST users only, while others are for computing in general.

GET TALKING...

In the messaging area of such systems you can come across heaps of useful information from fellow ST users. Sometimes the best news stories in the industry are leaked out on to a board hidden somewhere in the countryside. But that's not all that's discussed on-line, you'll often find a section devoted to jokes or other interesting topics.

How do you get your computer to talk to others and how much will it all cost? Well the most expensive piece of equipment you'll have to buy for your comms set-up is a modem, costing anything from £100 to £800.

Modem – short for MOdulator/DEModulator links the ST to the telephone line, and basically takes on the job of converting the computer's digital pulses into a pulse that can be sent down the telephone line to another modem. In turn that modem translates the tone back into a signal which the receiving computer (not necessarily wearing an Atari logo) will understand.

Modems operate at various speeds, measured in bits per second (bps). A transfer speed of 10bps is the same as saying one character per second (cps). Usually the speeds start at 300bps, or put another way 30cps.

The speed is split between receive and send, and although many of today's modems offer 2,400bps in both directions, many of the cheaper ones are limited to 1200/75bps (receive 120cps, send 7.5cps). There are ones which will go even faster, however telephone lines aren't capable of accepting anything much quicker at the moment.

Baud rates are often abbreviated into standard codes which do little more than add confusion to the subject. 300/300 is written as V21, V22 is in place of 1200/1200, 2400/2400 somehow becomes V22bis, 1200/75 is V23 and V23v is 1200/75 for Viewdata. The list of V codes goes on for data compression and almost anything else comms.

Modems can also can be automatic or manual. The vast majority of today's offerings are automatic, meaning that you can get on-line without pressing anything on the modem or telephone – it's all done using software. The manual examples work exactly as their name suggests, telephone numbers must be dialled on the 'phone and the modem is controlled through buttons on its face.

Before rushing out to buy one of the cheapest units, bear in mind that if you go for one of the more expensive, faster models you'll be spending less time on-line, and so will have lower telephone charges. Once you start spending half the night on-line the extra speed will start paying for itself.

As well as a modem you'll need to find relevant software and cables. Once you're heavily involved with the subject an extra telephone line may become necessary. Software generally costs less than £50 and, as usual, plenty of excellent programs can be found in good public domain libraries, such as SoftVille and MT Software.

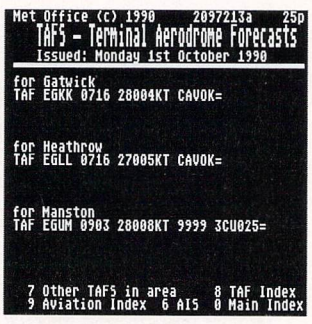
The software is used for setting protocols and uploading and downloading files. Among the best commercial programs to use is Atari's Fastcomm, which has recently been re-released and has most of the features needed for everyday use. Flash is also one of the better ones and originates from the other side of the Pond. It's distributed over here by Electronic Distribution for £24.95.

A cable is needed to connect the modem to the computer. Sometimes it's supplied with the modem, but if not one can be picked up for under a tenner from advertisers in this magazine. Just plug straight into the computer and modem, and the set-up is ready to run.

Basically, once you've got the right eqipment, the cost of going on-line depends on how many companies you're going to subscribe to, the length of time spent hooked up to the service and number of charged-frames looked at. By using a little common sense you should be able to keep costs to a minimum.

Telephone charges are likely to be the most horrifying costs you'll incur. Morning is

General weather forecasts for individual regions are typical of the pages from Prestel. Useful for home use when planning trips out with the kids



As well as the general information, Prestel's pages also cater for special topics. Terminal Area Forecasts (TAFs) give aircraft pilots the type of weather forecast they need before getting airborne

the most expensive time with charges dropping considerably at 1pm. But by timing non-essential calls to the cheapest rate (after 6pm and all day on weekends) massive savings can be made. At cheap rate it costs about six pence for four minutes, whereas during the peak times it costs nearly six pence a minute.

When sending short messages it may be very tempting to rush straight on-line and type the message, while the telephone bill is going up faster than the price of petrol. Despite the inconvenience and little extra time involved, it will certainly be cheaper to use a word processor, save the message as an ASCII file and then upload from within the communications program when you go on-line.

Individual services have their own costs with the commercial services having subscription and connection charges. At the moment MicroLink costs £7 per month, and has a connect charge during the peak period, of five pence per minute. On top of this special services such as databases have their own costs.

For Prestel the subscription rate for a home user is £32 per year. To connect costs seven pence per minute during peak rate, and a penny a minute during most other times. It's free however, if you go on-line between midnight and 8am, generous eh?

Compulink Information eXchange (or CIX) expects an initial registration fee of £15, and has a minimum monthly fee of £6.25 (£15 if you want to pay by invoice). At first sight the costs might look terrible, but taking a closer look they aren't too bad. The equivalent cost of three games pays for your subscription, and by timing your calls to the evening your connection charge won't be too high. In return you'll be up to date with everything that's happening in the computer world.

The many free bulletin boards are ideal for the person who doesn't want all the fancy databases and other wonderful things offered by the commercial services. If there's one in your area you'll only have to pay for a local telephone call, but a board in the Scottish Highlands will cost a user in the Scilly Isles a fortune.

SETTING UP A BULLETIN BOARD

In addition to the commercial on-line services offered by the communication giants there are many places where you can log on freely. Bulletin boards systems (BBS) are run mainly by comms fanatics from their back bedrooms and are fun to explore, but you still have to fork out for telephone bills.

According to one Sysop, a BBS "has the same feel as amateur radio did a long time ago." The aim of most bulletin boards is to distribute public domain software, and give a conference area where callers can talk to others about computing problems, such as programming. Answers can be received later in the day, thus removing the need for snail mail.

Setting up your own BBS will mean that you can wait for people to call you – slashing your telephone bill but increasing the cost of your hardware. To create a good system a little extra equipment will probably have to be found, because digging deeper into the world of communications could make much of your existing equipment redundant.

One megabyte of memory is regarded as a minimum, and ideally your modem will be capable of 2400 baud and also must be auto-answer. If the bulletin board isn't going to be limited to operating during the night, an extra telephone line will also be needed, so that people can log on even when you're talking to grandma on a Sunday afternoon.

It is possible to run a small system from a double-sided floppy drive if you're only going to run a messaging system, but for a good 24-hour day operation a pretty big hard drive will be needed. Steven Green, system operator of My Little Phoney said, "You can get away with 20 megabytes but you're always having to make sure you don't go over the edge, bigger ones are much better."

Special software is needed for running a such a system. Commercially there's MichTron's BBS selling at £49.95, Forum and ///Turbo are popular among operators, costing about £50. Others can be found in the good old public domain.

As well as accumulating the equipment, a SysOp should be prepared to spend a couple of hours a day looking after the board. New messages should be read and new software needs to be put up.

So what does the future hold? One per-

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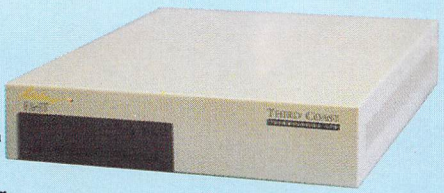

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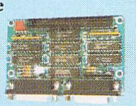

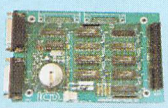

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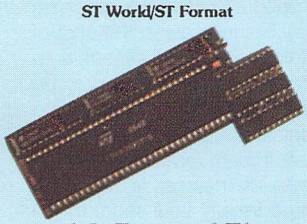

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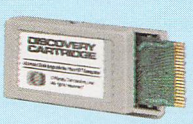

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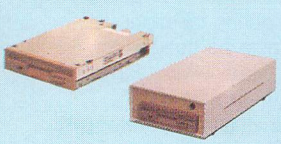

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son with high hopes is Steven Green who "can see the day when they are treated like answer machines," but thinks that to make bulletin boards more attractive to a larger population, user interfaces should be made easier to use.

CHEAP EQUIPMENT

To lure people on to its system MicroNet suplies all those who've subscribed for a full year with a voucher. This can be used as part payment on one of three modems, and could be a cheap way of obtaining a good modem.

Previously subscribers were given cheap manual modems, but they were very poor quality and weren't really considered to be a worthwhile reason for parting with any money.

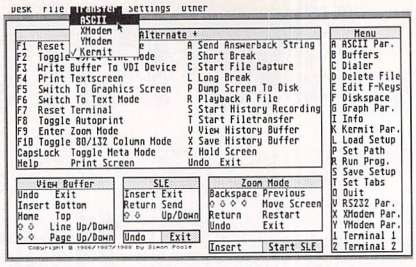
MicroNet now offers the £499 Pace Pro-Link modem for just £299 – so if you're after a decent piece of equipment it could well pay to join the system for a year to get hold of it.

It's capable of V22bis, V22 and V23 and has an LCD display showing what the modem's doing. For example, when a telephone number is being called the number will appear on the display. The ProLink has MNP4 and 5 error correction, it's Hayes-compatible and has auto-answer and redial.

Alternatively, cheaper modems can be picked up from the system for as little as £50. In the past, cheap, or even free software could be picked up when a year's subscription was taken out, but unfortunately all good things come to an end, and this sort of offer no longer exists.

PUBLIC DOMAIN

Strange as it may seem some of the best software is found free in the public domain. Communications is no exception, and there are a couple of exceptionally good programs offering their users as much as the commercial examples. For a long time Uniterm has been considered to be the best of the free ones for getting on-line and is the 'best-selling' PD comms program.



Uniterm the most popular PD comms program

Version 2 has an auto-dialler, 'phone book and keyboard macros to make life simpler and offers baud rates up to 19,200. Uniterm is set up using a combination of drop-down menus and keys. The main drawback is that it doesn't include the Viewdata mode, which is needed if you intend to dabble with Prestel. Most protocols can be found in here including Xmodem, Ymodem, Kermit and ASCII, but the now popular Zmodem is absent. Nevertheless, its popularity is justified.

For the newcomer Vanterm is recommended and is becoming increasingly popular. Coming from the States this GEM-based program has some of the best on-screen help to be found. Many features can be found in the program, including the time, date, and screen colours but unfortunately, it doesn't have a Viewdata mode.

There are a few public domain programs capable of Viewdata mode, which is necessary to get on to Prestel. The program Prestel is available from MT Software while Flying Start and Starterm come from Goodman Enterprises. Programs to look at in the PD area for running a bulletin boards are Starnet, Citadel and Mini BBS.

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The latest release of That's Write, V1.51, includes support for additional dictionaries. Languages currently available include French, German, Dutch, Swedish, Spanish, Italian and American English.

AT-Speed™

The power of two

AT-Speed is the latest PC emulator board from Sack Electronics, the originators of the ST's best selling emulator, PC-Speed.

Based on the 80286 micro processor and with a Norton factor of 6.7 AT-Speed runs PC programs including Autocad, Microsoft Windows V3 and Microsoft Flight Simulator.

The new UK version of AT-Speed includes support for EGA and VGA graphics emulation on the Atari monochrome monitor — the ultimate in screen resolution — with no need to scroll.

Compo Software is one of the leading software houses for the Atari ST in Germany where the number one selling word processor is Compo's That's Write.

Compo is committed to the ST market with a continuous program of enhancements for its existing programs and a number of new products due for release over the next twelve months. An example of this development activity can be seen in That's Write where the latest version is already optimised for the forthcoming Atari TT.

Now with it's new office, Compo can offer full support for ST users in the UK. If you are currently using a Compo product then you can officially register it either by writing to, or calling, Compo Software Limited.

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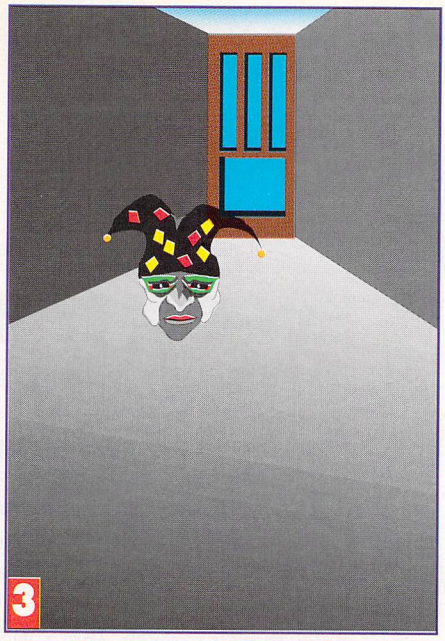
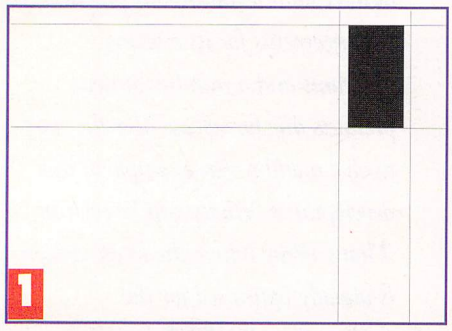
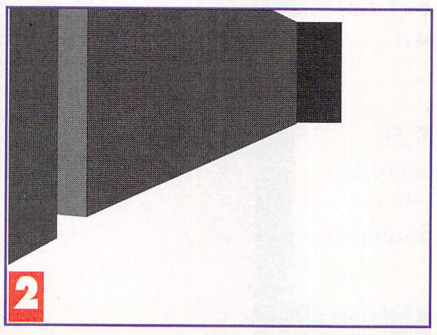
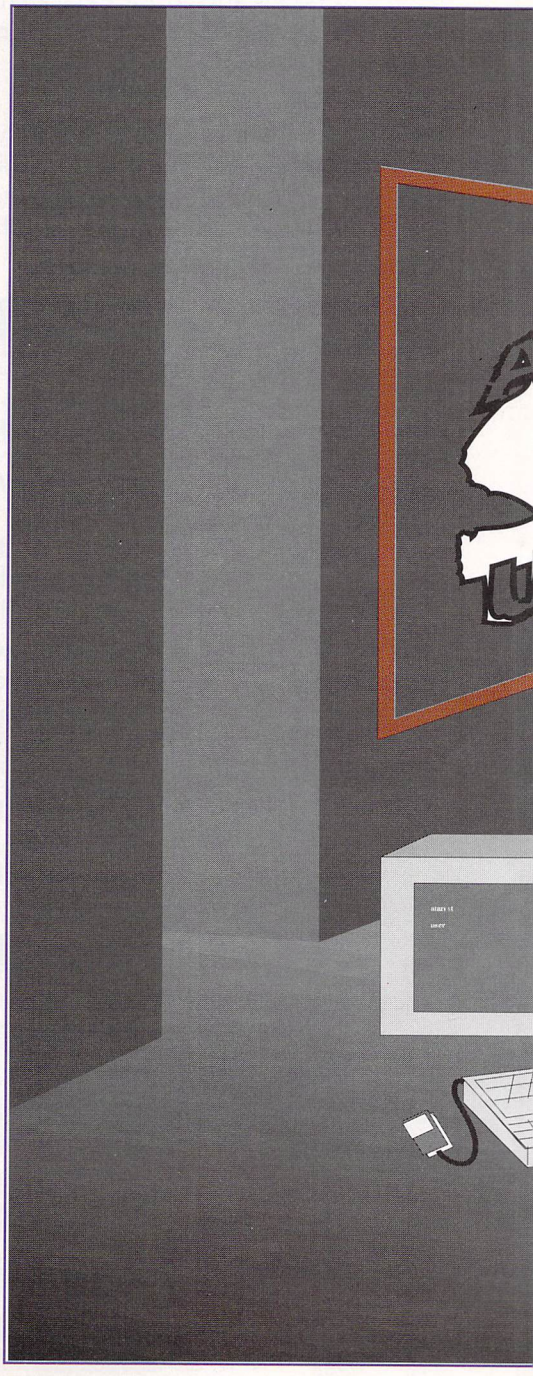
ART-WORK!









COMPETITION

A Gasteiner mouse and a Tracey 'the revolutionary computer graphics input tool' (see the news this month for more info on the Tracey) can be yours. They're the fabulous prizes, worth over £27 in our new Art Work! competition. Your friends will be green with envy! The successful artist will have impressed our panel of computer art connoisseurs Bribes will be accepted, but if none are offered we will instead take the novel aproach of judging art on its own merits.

Anyone rich enough or talented enough can win. The competition will run over the next three months, with the best from each month being published in these very pages. The winner will be announced in the April issue.

YOUR MAN WITH THE BRUSH...

Andrew Thorley tells us he is a professional tripe dresser and works on Rochdale market. He also claims he is part of a notorious gang of tripe smugglers in the brown triangle between Rochdale, Bolton and Eccles.

PIXEL PUNCHERS SIGN HERE...

Have you created a stunning image using obscure tricks and wrinkles? We want to see it. Each month a lucky artist will receive their very own exhibition on these pages. Send at least six images (a finished image and several stages) with brief notes detailing how the effects were achieved. And since whenever I ask you to send in your photo, no-one does, this time I'll ask you NOT to send one in. Reverse psychology.

If you need even more incentive than instant fame and recognition, then have a look at our competition offer on these pages.

Andrew Thorley, alias Carrington Dexter-Smythe (he thought we should put this as his real name but we knew you wouldn't believe it either), sent in this month's slightly gruesome masterpiece. We think he might just possibly have cheated just a teensy bit, but here it is anyway. One interpretation of this weird and wonderful illustration is that it's a manic Troll erupting from beneath the floor of a hall – but you and the artist might see it differently. Below is Andrew's explanation of how he did it.

Fig 1. Is this a masterpiece of post constructivist modern art? No, actually it's a door, or it will be when it's finished. Perhaps a door into the innermost corridors of a tormented psyche? (Obviously he's just finished his correspondence course in do-it-yourself psychotherapy – Ed)

Fig 2. Begin filling in the background – a long perspective gives a good quality of depth. Grey looks so cheerful don't you agree? Don't bother with the painting tools, just use boxes and fill them in with the paint pot to achieve a wonderful flat effect, similar to designers, gouache.

Fig 3. A stage is set and the players await. As the characters begin to take shape, they spring from the mouse and shift across the screen like worms on a freshly buried corps dragging the.... sorry, got a bit carried away there. (No more like this one, okay? – Ed.)

Fig 4. Use your imagination, plumb the depths, be as gruesome and grizzly as possible! The monster from the Id must escape. He lies asleep in all of us waiting to pounce. How can I be sure you all exist? How can I be sure I exist? Where are we? Who are we? What is the price of fish? (Which planet? - Ed)

Feeling patriotic? Add a logo. Annoyed with someone? Shoot them. It's your art, you can do whatever you want with it.

Pdom PD Atari ST Public Domain & Shareware Software

Suppliers of Public Domain and Shareware software for over 4 years, watch out for immitations!

Miscellaneous

MP1 – Pdom Starter Pack for the new STer. STWriter, Datahandler and Firstbase databases and NEOchrome the art package. Plus loads of utilities. Screen emulators, RAM disks, Spoolers, desktop Accessories, all very easy to use.
A 3 disk pack for £7.50.
L1 – 68000 Assembler, Xlisp, STlogo, Tiny basic.
L13 and **L14** Modula–2 Development System v1.0 from ANA–systems.
L15 – Sozobon C Compiler. A complete implementation of the C language as defined by K&R. DSD.
M9 – Music Writer lets you create music on screen as good as Music Studio.
M15 – The Accompanist 16 Voice MIDI Sequencer. Fully working by Henry Cosh, does everthing!
M18 & M19 – Soundtracker player and SoundTracker modules converted by BOB from the Amiga. DSD.
M20 – Soundtracker player & modules from the Amiga. Also docs & source in 68000 and GFA basic on formats. DSD.

Games

MP2 – Games Pack 1: Monopoly, Fruit Machine, Cribbage, Poker, Solitaire, Tunnel Vision, Reflex, Checkers, Devils Tomb, Death Star, Battle Ships, Zyphur and others. DSD. CSR.
A 3 disk pack for £7.50!
MP3 – Games Pack 2: Star Trek, Tennis, Patience, Fire Storm, Laser Chess, Azarian, Barn Yard, Space Invaders, Space War, Lunar Lander, Bridge It!, Race Cars, Monkeys and Balloons, Spectral Sorcery and Give Us A Break. DSD. CSR.
A 3 disk pack for £7.50!
B39 – Onyx by Robin Edwards. An excellent shoot 'em up with many varied and excellent sprites! All in 68000 machine code.
B40 – Dizzy Lizzy by The Happening Boiz. An excellent game, across between Pacman and Boulderdash.
B41 – Exodus by Chris Jeffery. Awesome shoot 'em up with fantastic graphics! Mega arcade game.

Graphics

MP4 – Graphics Pack 1: ANI ST the excellent animation package, fully working allows you to create your own animations!, Pearle the ray tracing package with full examples, Mini Paint the excellent fully featured painting package, NEOchrome the excellent painting program, and picture convertors. DSD. CSR.
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MP5 – Graphics Pack 2: Master Painter the excellent fully featured paint package that includes multiple screens, Colour Burst II the 800/3200 shades on screen at once paint package, Fine Line the drawing program, Fractal Zoom the most comprehensive fractal generator on the ST, the Atari IMage Processor, MegaBlit the paint package, Studio and VanGogo 2 excellent paint packages. DSD. CSR.
A 3 disk pack for £7.50!
GR6 – Degas disk – 155 fills, 10 brushes, 7 fonts, 24 printer drivers. Also a program to use Degas drivers to do a screen dumps.
GR14 – Public Painter v0.1 the great drawing program Now loads Degas fonts and pictures and also .IMG excellent! MMR.
GR17 – Picture convertors. To and from Print Master, Degas, NEO, Tiny, IFF, SPEC512, IMG, Postscript, GIF, Mac GIF stripper.
GR20 – .IMG utilities. Convert any Degas, Tiny, NEO, MACPaint, Spectrum 512 to .IMG format. Also IMG viewers.
BPRO3 – Sprite Master professional sprite editor that suits most programming languages. CSR.

Application

MP7 – Home Business Pack: Personal Address Book, Datahandler, First Base & Flexifile 3 databases, STSheet and Sheet 2 excellent spreadsheets that include graphics and Lotus 123 compatiblity, ST-Writer Elite the word processor and Personal Finance the accounts package. All fully working and full featured. DSD.
A 3 disk pack for £7.50!
A48 – Uniterm V2.0e. THE Comms package for the ST.
A121 – POOLs– Expert Results Predictor v2.5 by Bay Computers. Excellent pools predictor.
W2 – STwriter Elite V3.6 full documentation and quick reference etc. on the disk, very good word processor.
W5 – Micro–Emacs v3.925 the text editor with disk manual and tutorial.
MP 21 – TEX the document processor and typesetting system. Includes its own programming language, handles graphics and equations with ease. 6 disk pack for £15.00. MMR. DSD.
A125 – Opus V2.10 of the spreadsheet and charting program: 255 columns by 999 rows, 80+ mathematical functions, excellent graphing, GDOS support etc. 1MB DSD.
A138 – Double Sentry V0.00 of the accounting program by Graham R Hutcheon. Does all aspects of accounts except VAT.
A166 – Personal Address Book by Bay Computers excellent database system, lightning fast with label, mail merge etc,. Vanterm V3.71 excellent comms package. Relative Tree the geneology program.
A96 – Sheet V2.0 powerful spreadsheet. DSD.

Utility

A41 – Monochrome monitor emulator v5, makes your colour screen run most Monochrome only software. NOTSTE.
A167 – Big Colour Emulator allows you to run most colour only software on a Monochrome screen.
ARC v6.02 the latest version of the standard file archiver.
A88 – DCFormat v3.03 THE ST disk formatter even MSDOS boot sector.
A91 – Virus Killer v2.01 excellent virus detector and killer.
STW41 – FSelect v3/1989 by Martin Patzell the excellent alternative file selector.
A111 – Head Start v1.1 – auto–boot any type of program from your AUTO folder, including GEM programs.
A124 – ARChiver: ARC V5.21b, ARCShell V2.0 and V2.05 and a utility to switch back forth between LHARC and ARC.
A128 – Recover from disk lost data you specify sectors.
A134 – Boot Drive Select allows you to select a drive to boot from when you reset your ST.
A157 – Custom Format the best disk formattor available! Boot Sector Storage system store boot sectors from many disks as a file on 1 disk.
A163 – The Gemini desktop replacement. Smilar to NEODesk. DSD.
A168 – ARCGSH V2.1 a shell for any program, already setup for ARC, ZOO, SHAR. Disk Mechanic v1.0 copier, formattor, sector editor.

Our DiskCat has a fast search option for the best Utility, Demo and Game disks!

Demos

Colour Screen and Double Sided Disk Required. All Excellent Demos!

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D213 – The Walker II demo! The mega animation demo of the Star Wars Walker. By Radical Systems. 1MB.
BD1 – Mind Bomb the latest mega mega must have demo, by The Lost Boys. This demo is outstanding!
D162 – The Lord of The Disks 'Dragons Lair'.
D176 – The Care Bears 'So What Demo'.
BD3 – The Music of the ShapeShifters.
BD2 – Genesys Aenigmatica demo the 82 Track remix!
D189–SwedishNewYear2.
D191 – Mini Run by Radical Systemz AKA Police Chase from Amiga
D194 – Superior Demo by Dynamic Duo!
D197 – Space Ace–Don Bluth. Graphic animation demo of the game. NOTSTE.
D207 – SNOWMAN demo the 1/2 MB RAM version. Better than the 1MB version!
D108 – Calamus product demo. Official demo from Signa. 1MB
D122 – The Union demo! This demo is brilliant and requires a joystick. NOTSTE.
D125 – The CareBears Cuddly demos.
D128 – The Wattaheck demo. Great demos with excellent music.
D129 – The Swedish demo including SYNC & The CareBears.
D149 & D150 – Delerious Demo from The Alliance. 1MB. NOTSTE.

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Vol1: sports, flags, animals, cartoons, humorous, Jewish, borders, all occassions, horses, eyes, etc. etc. All in Degas format. 5 disks.

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Vol3: boys, girls, babies, decorative A to Z, arrows, art deco, all occasions, humorous, all foods, glasses and cups, banners, scrolls, kitchen utencils etc. All in IMG format. 10 disks. All disks are double sided.

To order, simply quote the disk code number given in bold.
Prices: 1 to 5 disks are £3.00 each,
6 to 10 are £2.75 each
and 11 or more are £2.50 each.

Abbreviations Used:
MMR–Mono Mononitor, CSR–Colour Screen.
1MB–1MB RAM, DSD–Double Sided Disk.

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Tel 0279 757692.

PUBLIC SECTOR

news

John Butters keeps getting it for free, and he doesn't mind telling us about it either...

Exmoor Software (0598 52470) is the name of the new Devon-based library offering a service with a difference. Most libraries print a catalogue of disks from which customers can make their choice. The disk is usually chosen on the basis of a single program but it is filled with other utilities, which may never be used.

Exmoor's service breaks away from the norm, in that customers choose which programs they want on their disk. From a list of software with group numbers, titles are picked out until the group numbers add up to a maximum of 10.

This innovative library is adding 40 new programs a month to its collection, and as an added service provides printouts of READ.ME files, which is useful for those without a printer.

Another library new to the scene carries the name Public Sector (how dare he!) (0438 364722) and claims to "offer a much better service than most of the bigger libraries." In addition to its PD library, Public Sector will offer other services, such as printer ribbon re-inking for £2 and the sale of cheap, blank disks.

We have been asked to remind readers with Discovery Pack STs that have TOS version 1.4 that they should avoid non-STE compatible programs.

Following a sudden increase in business, MT Software has been forced to move into larger premises, not too far from its old office. The new address is Greenswood House, The Broadway, Totland, Isle of Wight, PO39 0BX, but it keeps its old telephone number – 0983 756056.

MOUSE TRICKS

The ST's mouse movement is awfully slow (especially if you use the standard Atari rodent) and can be made much faster using free software. But faced with the many mouse utilities in the public domain, how do you choose one to place in your boot-up disk? They all have the same aim – to speed up the mouse operation.

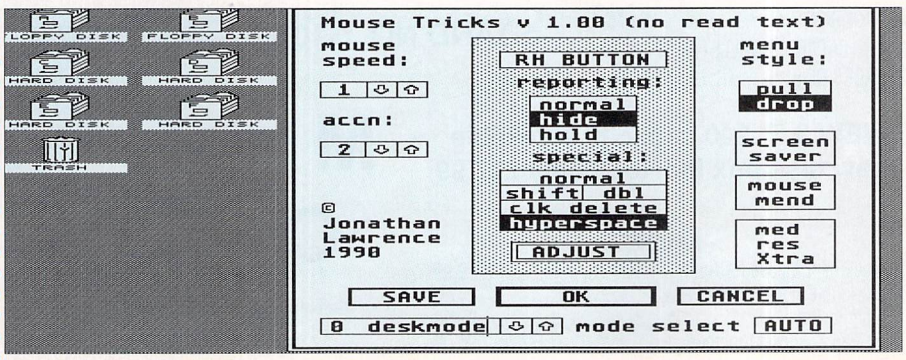
Mouse Tricks combines the most frequently used utilities including Promouse, Speed Mouse and Rattrap to provide one program with great flexibility. Two files are placed onto your boot-up disk and whenever the machine is switched on, Mouse Tricks will be resident as a desk accessory. Mouse speed will be increased straight away.

Selecting the program from the drop-down menu Desk will leave a dialog box in the centre of the screen from which the utility is adjusted. The speed can be increased to run at unusable speeds and the acceleration rate can be changed.

As well as the usual increase in movement speed, the right-hand button is used for various functions, one of which takes the pointer to the menu bar when you're lower down the screen. Settings made from the dialog box can be saved on disk so that they're ready next time you boot up the computer.

Anyone looking for a mouse utility need look no further. The very useable demonstration version is available from 14 libraries but sending £5 to the author, Jonathan Lawrence, will get you the full program.

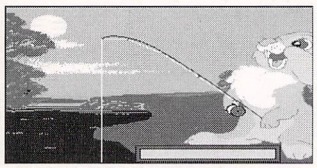
One of the additional features in the commercial program is Read Text, a mouse-controlled text reading utility, which can load, read and switch between up to eight text files within any program, allowing access to desk accessories.



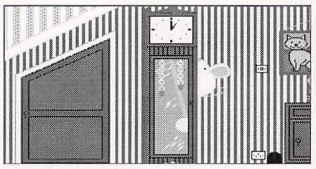
Control the program through a dialog box

KID-ZONE

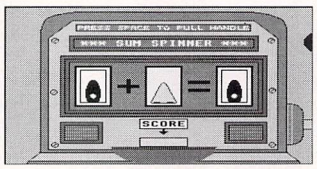
A great new education package written by Paul Smart (The Islander). Four separate games teach:-
★ Basic colour identification ★ Basic shape identification ★
★ Letters on the keyboard ★ Telling the time ★
★ Grid reference work ★ Counting ★ Spelling ★
Education and Fun rolled into one



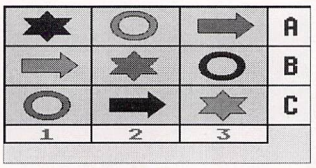
GONE FISHING
Bunny's gone fishing, watch him pull out the pictures and help him spell the words



PLAY TIME
The clock has stopped and needs your help to tell the time again

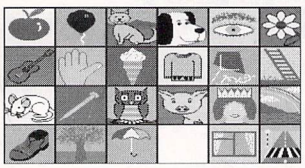


SUM SPINNER
Play the fruit machine. Pull the handle and spin a sum



KID-GRID
Find the coloured shapes within the grid

A CHALLENGE FOR 3 YEAR OLDS, FUN FOR 8 YEAR OLDS



HEY-KIDS
Another excellent educational package by Paul Smart. Three separate modules teach your children to identify everyday objects and to spell the actual words. Digitised speech/sound effects and large, colourful pictures make this ideal for all 3-6 year olds.

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G102 - ST-umped - Cricket
G049 -Tennis Simulation
G086 -1st Serve Tennis
G103 -Top of the Pops
G104 -Bermuda Race 2
G105 - Joke Selection
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G114 -Skidpan - Racing
G116 -Chunnel - French Tutor Game
G072 -Bumper Jack
G056 -Empire Builder, Jumpster, Lost Treasure
G045 -England Team Manager
G019 -ST-Vegas
G011 -Give Us a Break
G039 -Heads and Hammers
G043 -Treasure Search
G079 -Monkeys + Balloons, Spectral Sorcery, Racing.
G070 -Space Baller, System 5
G061 -Stocks and Bonds
G071 -Rush
G081 -Money Run, Atari Wars, Wall War, Twisty
G040 -Bunny Hunt (not STE)
G018 -Floyd the Droid
G001 -Pacman, Laserchess, Windball, Royale
G002 -Strip Breakout
G020 -Lunar Lander, Spacewar
G031 -Megaroids, Star Battle, Time Bandit
G017 -Cribbage, Minigolf, Pickpocket, Quiz
G077 -Motorbike, Blackjack, Patience
G003 -Azarian, Bridge, Baller
G007 -Cubemaze
G027 -Backgammon, Yahtzee, Stone Age Deluxe
G033 -Cube World
G042 -Rebus, Blockade
G050 -Cheats Disk
G058 -Dungeon Master Levels
G059 -Horoscope
G068 -Ayatolla
G069 -Upstart
G082 -Yahtzy
G083 -Companion
G010 -ST Invaders, Barnyard, Happy 4, Star Trek
G074 -Tunnel Vision, Patience
G109 -Fruit Machine Simulator (not STE)
G110 -Company (not STE)
G111 -Masterbreak, Battleships, Escape
G112 -Slider
G099 -Addiction

ADVENTURES

G087 -Tark
G085 -Snatch + Crunch
G084 -Elven Crystals
G095 -AGT Companion Disk
G096 -Dudleys Dilemma
G078 -Time Adventure
G054 -Tombs of Death
G055 -HERO- Dungeons and Dragons
G057 -DDST-Dungeons and Dragons (SH)
G052 -Invasion
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G075 -Nethack (DS) (1 meg)
G038 -Wizards Tower
G040 -Asylum
G037 -Under Berkwood
G015 -King Text Adventure
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G034 -HACK - the original version
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U054 -Assistant Chef
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U048 -Citadel BBS (DS)
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D058 -Funschool 2 (2 DISKS)
D012 -STOS Demo
D024 -K Spread 2
D030 -Space Ace

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B37 -Mr Dig, Tank Battle
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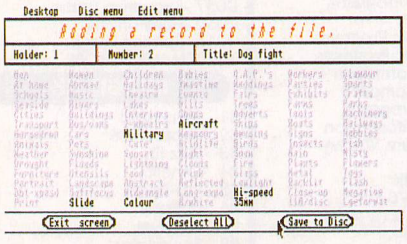
PHOTO FILER

One problem with having a large collection of photographs is that individual pictures can rarely be found when they're wanted. The database program Photo Filer, exclusive to Goodman Enterprises, goes a long way towards solving the problem.

Details of each photograph can be entered and saved to disk like any other database. There are fields for the holder number, photo number, title and subjects under which the photo should be filed. Once the photographs have been entered, the complete set of records can be browsed through, amended, deleted or searched for by subject.

Information is entered using both the keyboard and mouse, and drop-down menus are used for selecting functions. Unfortunately, mono monitor users miss out with this one – a colour monitor is needed to run to the filer in medium resolution.

Although there are instructions on how to use the software, everything is self-explanatory so users won't get lost in a jungle of jargon. Photo Filer is licenceware and costs £ 2.95. David Bailey eat your heart out!



Users won't get lost in a jungle of jargon

SHIPWRECK

A maths-based educational program worth looking at, is Shipwreck. Running on a colour monitor, it shows a large passenger liner sailing across the screen, from right to left, before sinking.

Using the mouse pointer you choose which character survived the tragedy and are given a choice of difficulty levels. You are asked between 5 and 10 questions on each level, and this is also defined by the student.

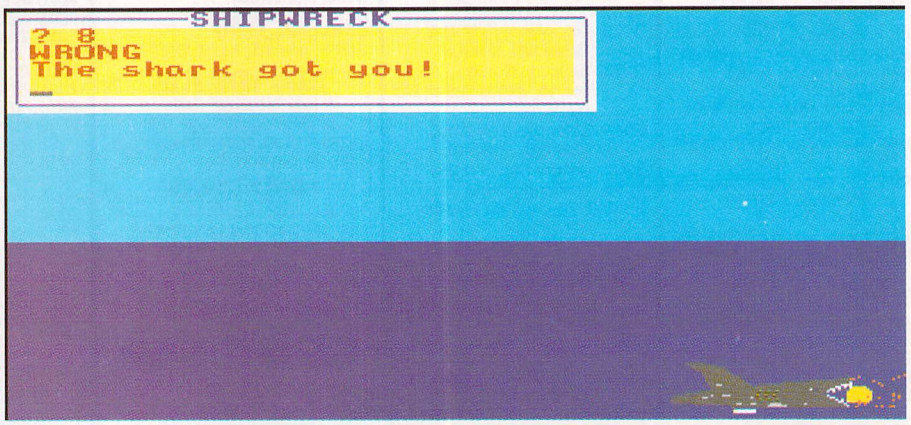
Seconds later, the first survivor comes onto the screen in a rowing boat and the student is asked the answers to a series of sums. Entering the correct answer gives the survivor the power to row the boat but if it's wrong, a shark will swim past. The next incorrect entry gives the shark a meal – the survivor.

If you manage to get all the sums right the boat will reach the shore, where the theme continues in different scenarios. The next being a walk across the beach where extra steps are made once a subtraction question has been solved. Get one wrong and the survivor disappears into a cave, where they will stay if the next one isn't answered correctly.

The next stage puts the survivor in a cable car, which will travel up the mountainside when the student answers multiplication questions. It's then time to ski down the side of the mountain, which is achieved, predictably enough, by doing division questions. Looking over the edge of a cliff you see an airfield, and one further arithmetical puzzle provides you with a parachute, so that you can fall safely to the runway threshold, where you'll be rescued by a departing aircraft.

Shipwreck is aimed at children at all levels of junior school, and is well written with pretty graphics. The only problem with the program becomes apparent when the game restarts.

Unfortunately, the mouse pointer disappears, forcing a reboot. This program came from M.T. Software on its disk G98, which also holds a computer version of the popular Hangman.



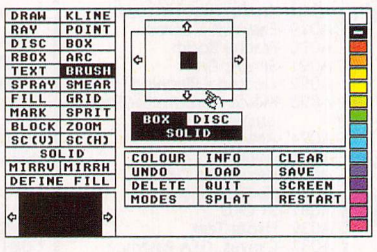
ARTIFEX

Most people with even a passing interest in computer art will have a copy of Degas Elite. It's very popular and doesn't cost too much for someone just wanting to play about with a paintbrush.

However, a cheaper program is Artifex, which is being distributed exclusively by Goodman Enterprises as licensed software. Working in a similar way to the commercial package, it's the most comprehensive art program seen in this area.

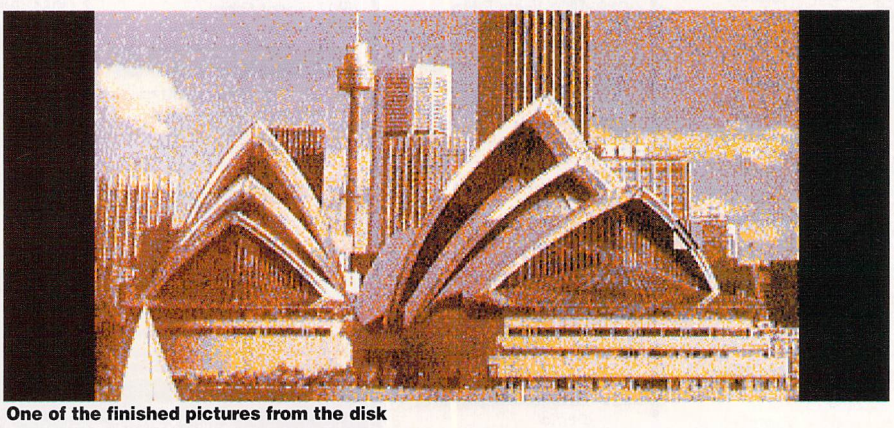
As with Degas Elite, the artist changes between the drawing pad and selection modes, by clicking on the right mouse button, and draws by moving the mouse and keeping the left button pressed. On the right-hand side of the selection screen the paint palette gives a wide choice of colours and shades. All the accessories are listed on the other side of the monitor, and all the usual drawing methods are available.

The program can only be used in colour, and once artwork has been created it can be saved to disk with the usual .PI1 extension. A few pre-drawn pictures are on the disk along with a document file. Artifex is licensed software and at £ 2.95 it's worth every penny.



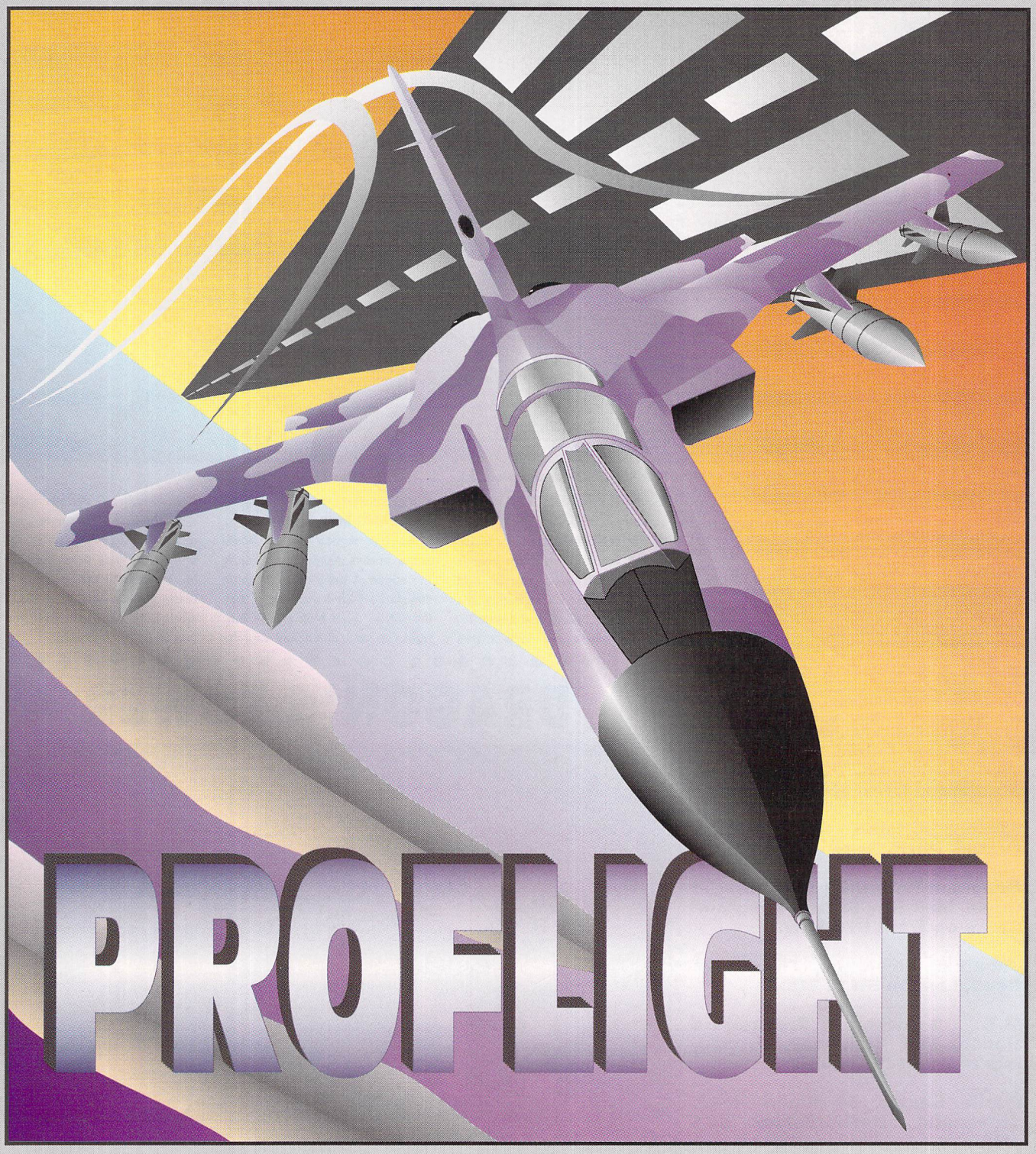
Choose the colour of the paint and drawing method

Draw pictures using the mouse. This won't make it to Artwork I'm afraid



One of the finished pictures from the disk

The Tornado Flight Simulator for your Atari ST



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ProFlight is available from all good computer stores and costs only £39.95 inclusive (UK only); if you have difficulty locating your copy, please call HiSoft on 0525 718181 and ask to speak to Julie.

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GAMES GALORE

Christmas comes but once a year, so why not enjoy yourself while you're away from the stress of work or school? In last month's column the best Space Invader-type games were rounded up, and by now you're most probably blasting 'em to bits.

This month we continue on the theme of games but spread our wings to look at other types of the colourful programs, which you only dare get out of your disk box at this time of year.

VSQUARE

Space Invaders returned for another go, along with Outrun and in fact so did almost all popular games. So why not try a variation on Tetris, probably last year's most addictive game?

The original hit has shapes falling down the screen, to be built in straight lines at the bottom. As each row is completed it falls away from the growing wall and if the shapes ever reach the top of the screen, it's game over.

In Vsquare the shapes come onto the screen from the left, right, top or bottom and gather around a square block in the centre of the play area. The idea behind this version is the same as its older brother – build complete lines.

Like the original, the blocks can be rotated before coming to rest, and the game will be over when no more shapes will fit on the screen. This fun variation of an already popular game comes from SoftVille and can be found on its game disk 103.

WHERE TO GET IT...

Dark Star Public Domain, 34 Victoria Avenue, Porthcawl, Mid Glamorgan CF36 3HG.

Exmoor Software, Queen Street, Lynton, North Devon EX35 6AQ.

Goodman Enterprises, 16 Conrad Close, Meir Hay Estate, Longton, Stoke-on-Trent ST3 1SW.

Jonathan Lawrence, 76 Sistova Road, London SW12 9QS.

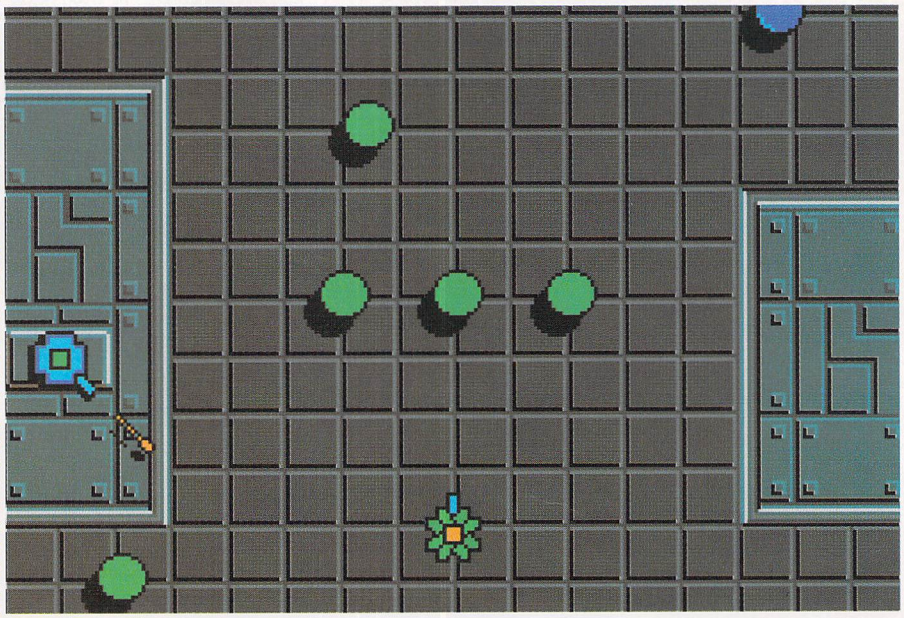
M.T. Software, Greensward House, The Broadway, Totland, Isle of Wight PO39 0BX.

Public Sector, 50 Ripon Road, Stevenage, Hertfordshire SG1 4NA.

Softville, Unit 5, Elettra Avenue, Straftfield Park, Waterlooville, Hampshire PO7 7XN.

The South West Software Library, PO Box 562, Wimbourne, Dorset BH21 2YD.

DIE ALIEN BLOB



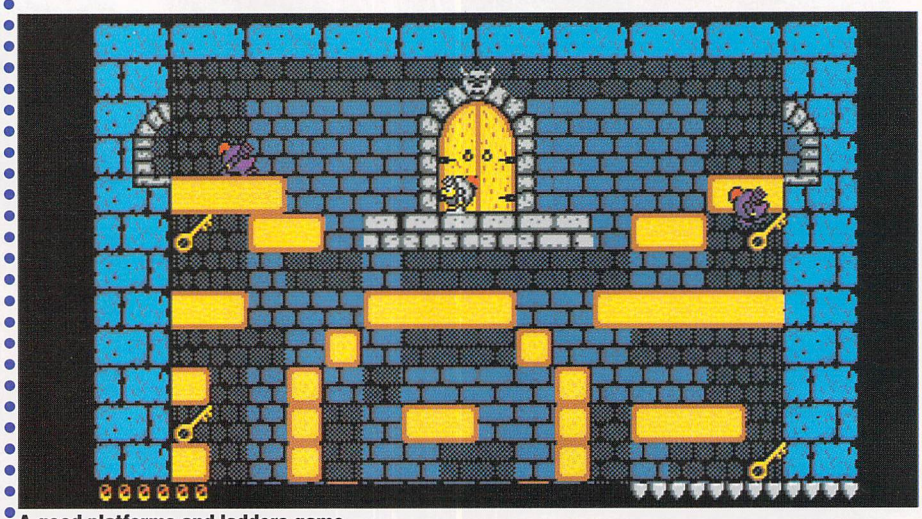
Smooth-scrolling shoot-em-up

Die Alien Blob from MT Software is a good shoot-em-up to start things rolling. Written in STOS there's nothing new in the play or graphics but even so, it's still addictive and runs smoothly. It's vertically scrolling and colourful. All the aliens are blob-shaped and move down the screen showering bullets in all directions.

As the screen scrolls you'll come across enemy guns along the edges of the play area which should be wiped out before they finish you. Your blob moves left, right, up and down and can be rotated to fire at various angles.

Other blobs are there just to obstruct you, and some move around the play area. They can't be blown up, but running into them will rid you of a life. Die Alien Blob runs in colour and is played with a joystick.

DRAGON'S TOWER



A good platforms and ladders game

Dragon's Tower is licensed software from Goodman Enterprises. There have been several good commercial platforms and ladders games, and this one is based on the same, but it costs much, much less.

Guiding a knight in armour around the screen you collect keys hiding in all corners. About 10 keys need to be picked up from the several floors of the screen, and as you go around small nasties hinder your progress.

Once you've killed them all, an axe will be placed near the centre of the play area. Grab it and keep throwing it like crazy at the red dragons which fly towards you breathing flames.

A final large key will then be put near the door at the top of the screen and once you have it, the doors will open for you to walk through to get to the next screen. Recommended.

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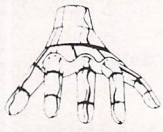

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STUSERDEC90

Product: Quickjoy Infrared
Price: £29.95
Supplier: Spectravideo
Telephone: 081 900 0024
Configuration: All STs

WIRELESS WEAPON

John Butters is really firing in this hot review of Spectravideo's infrared joystick

There are now thousands of computer games - or 'leisure software' as it's more formally known - available for the ST. Some games can be played with the keyboard or mouse but many, usually the fast-moving arcade-type games, depend on the player using a joystick. The joystick is ideally suited to sending a command to move you to the left to avoid a deadly bullet or fire a laser to knock out an enemy craft.

A joystick consists of a control stick which moves the sprite in the direction the stick is moved and a fire button, which does exactly what its name suggests. Sometimes it's also used for selecting features in games or for entering initials into a high score table.The joystick connects to the ST through one of the two ports at the bottom of the machine, or at the back if you own a Mega, with a lead running up to the main body of the stick.

Until now there have been two main types of joystick. One sits smugly in the palm of the hand and is controlled through a smaller stick and a fire button on the handle. The other one is larger, sitting on a desktop and usually attempts to attach itself to the surface with rubber pads. Recently though, another format has started to appear for the avid player,and one of the first comes from Spectravideo. Remote control joysticks work by using infra-red beams in a similar way to the modern television sets (maybe you could change the TV channel with the fire button!)

A reasonably-sized receiving unit connects to the ST's port in the same way as the earlier joysticks and sits on a desk near the computer, again with the rubber pads doing their best to keep it from sliding around. When plugged into the micro, a light-emitting diode (LED) indicates that the joystick is powered up.

That's about as far as the similarities go. The lead runs between the computer and the receiving unit, and the black joystick is held in the hand. Looking like something from a modern space movie, the Quickjoy Infrared has the now common autofire as well as the usual single shot fire button.

Both of the fire buttons are conveniently placed for either a left or right-handed person, and the control stick is on top of the unit. Also on top is a a small LED indicator, which shows when the the power is on and indicates the batteries' capacity.

Run from four AA-sized batteries (small pencil ones), the power is turned on and off from a switch beneath the handle. Batteries fit into a compartment at the bottom of the handle, and a cover makes it look like the rest of the joystick. Advantages of having such a trendy piece of gaming equipment are that it can be used up to 30 feet away from the machine (if you can see that far) and the lead won't get tangled up just as you're about to fire that vital shot to give a new high score.

It's neatly cased in hard plastic and the single-shot fire button is trigger-shaped. Expecting the performance to be rather sluggish, it was pleasantly surprising to find the reaction time as good as many of the conventional sticks. The only reservation about it is that when the editor grabbed hold of it he found that his hand was too large to fit the handle. But as long as you're not 6'5"or over, you probably won't experience any difficulty. It costs almost double that of the older joysticks but is not overpriced when you consider a top game will normally sell for only a little less. Put it down on this year's Christmas list.

THE BOTTOM LINE

Features:
Infra-red control, autofire**Ease of use:**

Ease of use
No lead restrictions, comfortable in most hands, fire button shaped like gun trigger, autofire can be activated easily

TCB TRACKER

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TRACKER

EEEK!

Product: LogiMouse Pilot
Supplier: Logitech
Telephone: 0753 37222
Price: £39.10
Configuration: All STs

John Butters, nature lover, talks to the animals...

At the moment everybody seems to be searching for the ideal mouse for their STs. The standard Atari model has always been regarded as nothing more than passable, it does its job but has little else to offer.

Its casing is just the start of the list of complaints. The large, grey plastic case is an uncomfortable fit in most hands, and the lead is a little short for use with the Mega range of machines. Performance wise, it's capable of barely half of what most upgrades are able to achieve.

One such upgrade mouse is the Pilot mouse from Logitech which has a tidy-looking case, and a two-year guarantee. Its tail stretches to 120 centimetres, which is about right for normal day-to-day use.

It doesn't get tangled when being used with the ST, but it's long enough for the Mega. The mouse buttons are indented, making their use a little easier.

Probably the most frequent problem experienced with mice is dirty balls, but Logitech has attempted to get around this by making its new rodent self cleaning.

The higher resolution the mouse has, the quicker it moves – measured in dots per inch (dpi). The Atari mouse manages 125dpi, and

as its users will know it is sluggish.

The Pilot mouse has a resolution of 200dpi and although this places it towards the bottom of the list of upgrade mice, it can be adjusted to run faster through the desktop utility which is supplied with the mouse.

The specially-written accessory is placed into the AUTO folder of your boot-up disk to make it resident before you start to use the computer.

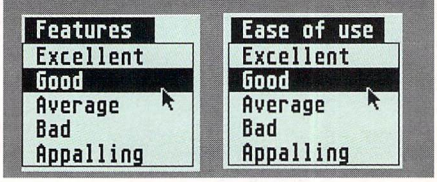
From this it's possible to either speed up or slow down the mouse action. It's especially useful if, for example, you want to use the mouse for drawing. By slowing the movement to its lowest sensitivity the mouse can be controlled much more easily.

Also on the disk with the desktop utility is a cut-down version of the game Pipemania – you get levels 1, 5 and 9 of one of last year's top games.

Overall, this doesn't have the highest specifications found with the Atari alternatives, but used with the desk accessory it reaches a similar standard.

THE BOTTOM LINE

Features: Self-cleaning, 200dpi, desk accessory for adjusting sensitivity.
Ease of use: Casing a little too large, although usable. Lead doesn't get in the way.



SEEING IS BELIEVING

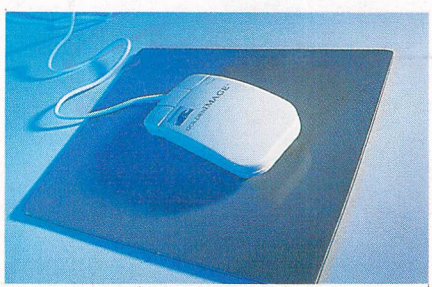
Product: Golden Image Optical Mouse
Supplier: Power Computing
Telephone: 0234-273000
Price: £35
Configuration: All STs, mono and colour

Simon Lawson gets one in the eye with the Golden Image

The new mouse from Golden Image is a radical departure from the normal, run-of-the-mill mouse. From the moment you open the large, slick box you realise that the 35 pounds you paid for this mouse was money well spent. Along with the mouse comes a special mouse pad and a user's manual detailing the operation and care of your brand new rodent. The packaging also includes a warranty card.

The main problem with a conventional mouse is that as the ball rolls along the surface of your desk picks up dirt and gunge, and soon your mouse will feel sluggish and need cleaning. Golden Image has approached the problem of dirty mice in an unusual way. Rather than make the mouse ball self-cleaning like the Logitech Pilot mouse, Golden Image have removed the ball entirely.

As its name suggests, the Optical Mouse works by shining a beam of infra-red light onto the special reflective mouse pad. The pattern on the surface of the pad breaks up the light and the mouse counts the number of breaks to work out how far to move the screen pointer.



A CASE IN POINT

The optical rodent itself is pure white and stands out well against the grey of the ST's case. It has been ergonomically designed to fit comfortably into the hand. It feels good and provides support for the hand, with the buttons naturally positioned under the first and second fingers.

The three buttons on the mouse reveal its PC origins, although on the ST only the left and right buttons are active. The middle button isn't used, although applications such as UNIX on the TT can make use of three-button mice.

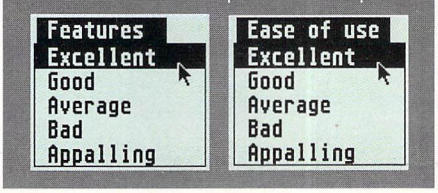
The buttons are all microswitched and have a light, positive action with a definite click. Double clicking is easy, and there is no tendency for the button 'bounce' that plagues some cheaper mice.

With no heavy ball inside it the mouse is lightweight and moves easily and smoothly over the mat . Underneath the mouse are two small felt pads that sweep the surface of the mat clean as it passes over. And most importantly, when tested with some of the most mouse-intensive applications around, such as Calamus and Migraph TouchUp, the Golden Image mouse performed superbly.

THE BOTTOM LINE

Features: Excellent buttons and a nice shape. No problems with the mouse getting dirty either.

Ease of use: Needs a special mouse pad.



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Proprietors: S.A. and R.A. Beech

Product: Band-In-A-Box
Supplier: Zone Distribution, 5 Abbeville Road, London, SW4.
Telephone: 081 766 6564
Price: £45.00
Product: Fake Books Vols I & II
Price: £20 each
Band-In-A-Box plus both Fake Books £69
Configuration: All STs, colour and mono

MUSIC BOX

Ian Waugh lifts the lid from Band-In-A-Box and provides some entertainment

"Auto accompaniment has arrived!" proclaims the blurb. And it has, too. Essentially, Band-In-A-Box generates bass, piano and drum accompaniments in one of 24 rhythmic styles, from a list of chords which you enter into the program. You can enter chords for pop songs, standards direct from sheet music, or create accompaniments for songs you've written yourself.

Let's run through a typical 'accompaniment creation' process. The program 'thinks' in choruses, so the first thing to do is to decide where your verses and choruses start and end. This means sorting out repeats, first and second time bars, and deciding if there's a tag (the repetition of the last line two or three times before ending). This is mainly to save time, because if you tell the program which bars contain the chorus, it can repeat them.

Alternatively, you can enter the song as one long chord sequence from beginning to end. 255 bars should be more than enough for most songs, and at an average tempo of 120 bpm it will give you nine minutes of playing time – quite long enough for the 12" version!

The main screen shows 64 empty bars and clicking on Page Up and Down arrows lets you access a total of 255 bars. A cursor steps through the bars in half-bar increments (in 4/4 time that's two-beat intervals).

To begin, site the cursor on bar one, enter the first chord in the entry box at the bottom of the screen and press return. The chord name appears at the cursor position and it steps on to the second half of the bar. To place a chord on each beat enter two chords in the box and separate them by a comma.

The program is quite forgiving with chord names. For example, if you enter f#m7b5 it will correctly interpret it as F#m7b5. Dozens of chord types are recognised, from the common major, minor and sevenths, to more exotic constructions such as C13sus#9#11b13. You can also enter 'slash' chords such as F7/G which show the bass note to be played with the chord, if it's not the root. In this example it's G.

However, if the program doesn't understand a chord it will be ignored, the cursor steps on and your entry is wiped from the chord entry box. A warning would have been helpful and also if the 'mistake' would have been left alone, it could've been checked to see what was wrong. Another noteworthy point is that Band-In-A-Box won't accept Cb and Fb chords, which are perfectly valid and in common use.

There are three edit functions to help with chord entry – Insert, Delete and Copy (which are fairly self-explanatory). When the chords are in, it's off to the Song Parameters page where you define the chorus, how many times you want it to play and where the tag is. There are also options to let you to loop the song, set the tempo and vary the rhythmic style during repeats of the chorus,

Next you select one of the 24 styles from the two Style menus, then click on Play in the File menu. Styles include jazz, swing, country, blues, four types of rock, funk, irish, ethnic, reggae, bossa nova, rhumba and cha cha.

The program takes a couple of seconds to generate the accompaniment, then there's a two beat count in and off it goes. A keyboard appears on the bottom of the screen during play-back, to show which bass and piano notes are being played. Once the chords are in, an accompaniment can be created in any style. You can try a light rock as a cha cha or turn a jazz waltz into heavy rock!

Two other options can help in this process – Shrink and Expand. These are used to squeeze up or spread out the chords across the bars. For example, when switching between Light Rock and Country you may have to Shrink the chords to compensate for the 2-in-a-bar feel of the Country rhythm.

What do the accompaniments sound like? Well they're really quite good. They don't just play the same rhythmic pattern throughout the song, the rhythm varies a little every few bars. You can also place a Part Marker on a bar, which adds an 'a' or a 'b' to the bar number. This introduces yet another variation to maintain interest, and it also produces a drum fill in the preceding bar. A Part Marker would be used to herald the change from verse to chorus or middle eight.

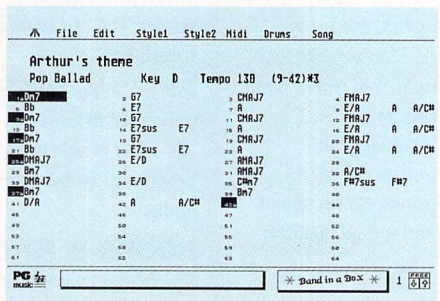
It's as well to point out now that you need 1 Meg of RAM to access all 24 styles, but there's a version of Band for the unexpanded 520 with 14 styles, this can only store 64 bars.

All versions will run in high or medium resolution and of course, in order to hear the accompaniments you need to connect your ST to some MIDI gear. The program generates bass, piano and drumparts, so ideally something is needed which contains these three sounds, such as one of the current crop of synths or expanders, or an electric piano or organ and a drum machine.

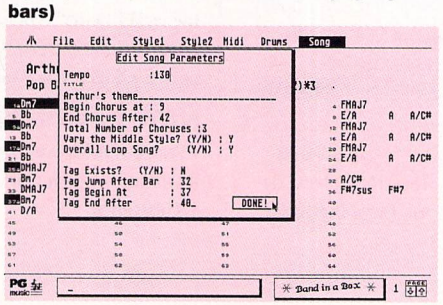
Many modern expanders contain a built-in drum section which allocates a different drum to each note – this drum/key allocation is known as a drum map. The program contains maps for the Yamaha RX drum machines, the Korg M1 synth and Roland equipment such as the MT-32 expander and the R5, R8 and TR505 drum machines.

If you don't have one of these, it's easy to create a drum map to suit your gear. The program uses 29 different drum sounds and the manual offers suggestions for alternate sounds if your set-up doesn't have them all. The most exotic it gets however, is Open and Closed Shakers, Timbales and Agogos – so most drums will be able to cope fairly well.

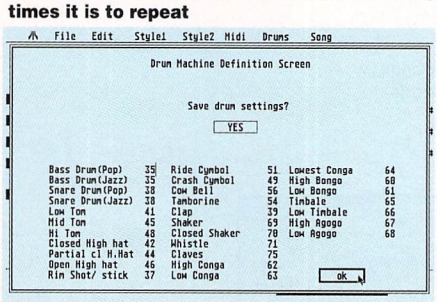
Each part is transmitted on a different Midi channel and this can be changed, so you can set up the program to suit your equipment. It's also possible to turn off any of the parts. A message detailing a program



Band-In-A-Box main screen showing the bar layout, chord and Part Markers (highlighted bars)



Edit Song Parameters page where you can define the chorus and stipulate how many times it is to repeat



Selecting a style

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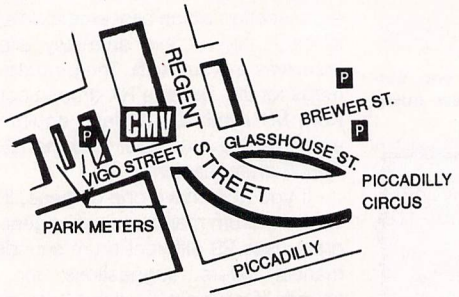

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change can be sent prior to play, thus enabling the octave of the piano and bass parts to be changed.

You can transpose the song into any key. This is useful if you want to sing along to it, or if you want to play along on a transposing instrument such as a clarinet.

The accompaniments can be saved in Midi file format, which means they can be loaded into a sequencer (or any other program) which supports this format. From there the melody line can be added and further additions and alterations can be made if desired. I copied some patterns into C-Lab's Notator without a hitch.

It's possible to print out lead sheets from the chords. These are basically blank bars of music with the chords written above them – guitarists and keyboard players are used to following such sheets when playing accompaniments.

The printout however, follows the chords as they appear on screen and not the way they have been arranged in the Song Parameters page. So if you want to give the sheet to someone to read, you may have to create the song as one long chord list or write in your own repeat bars. It also prints blank bars to the end of the current page.

Although 50 songs come with the program, there are two optional disk-based fake books to accompany Band-In-A-Box. Fake books are an American term – in the UK we know them better as busker books. They are arrangements consisting of a melody line and chord symbols only. Musicians use these to play the tune and they 'make up' the accompaniment from the chords as they go.

The Band-In-A-Box fake books contain pre-programmed chord sequences – no melodies. There are 240 songs on the pops disk and 320 on the jazz disk, and at £20 each they may seem expensive. The manual however, claims that you can enter a song in about two minutes, so they each represent around10-12 hours of work.

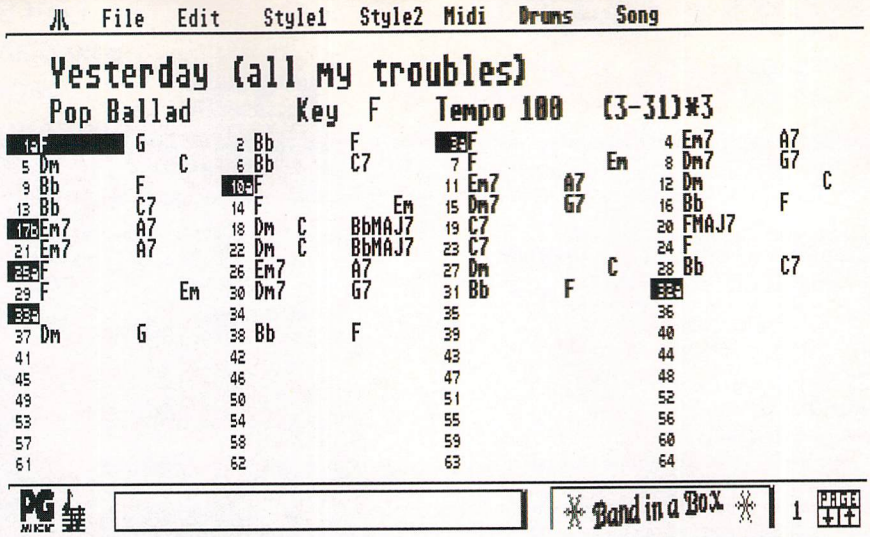
To save money, buy both books with the program and you get them for a reasonable £24. They are really useful as they contain a wide range of standards and pop classics.

One of the File options lists the songs by style, so you can easily check out the types of songs which fit the various accompaniments. The manual is quite slim but also quite helpful (but where's the index?) It contains a useful tutorial to get you started, but you will find the program quite easy to use, although it could be tidied up in a few areas.

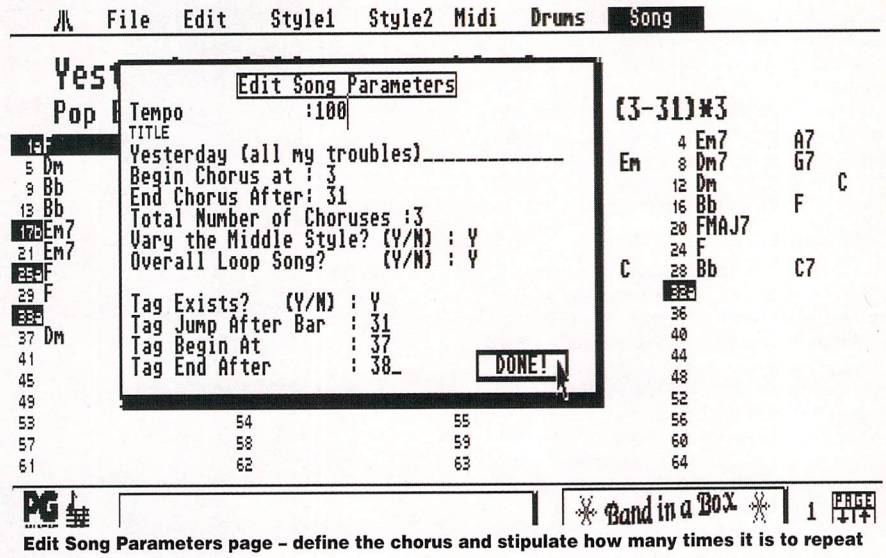
One such example is that active sensing messages react with it adversely, but not destructively and the screen updates are slow. Also there are no real endings as such, which can leave pieces hanging a little.

Band-In-A-Box is fun, but it could be improved in several ways. More music parts for different instruments would be nice and what about some melodic improvisation around the chords? I'm also sure there will be many users who would like to create rhythm styles of their own. Well, all these ideas – and more – are due to be implemented in a future update.

One of the nice things about Band-In-A-Box is that you don't have to be a musical genius with years of experience to use it. This is a music program which will definitely appeal to a wide range of users, from the musical novice to the qualified professional. Play it again, Sam!

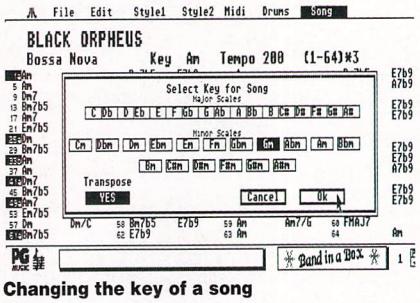


Band-In-A-Box main screen showing the bar layout, chord and Part Markers (highlighted bars)

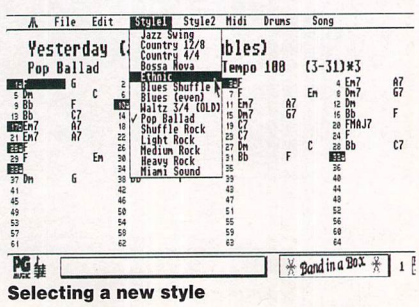


Edit Song Parameters page – define the chorus and stipulate how many times it is to repeat

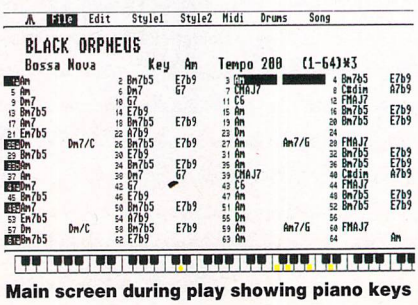
Setting up a drum map



Changing the key of a song



Selecting a new style

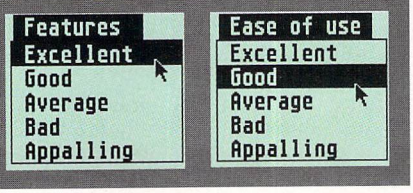


Main screen during play showing piano keys

THE BOTTOM LINE

Features: Easy and quick to use even for musical beginners. Can save accompaniments as Midi files. Good value for money.

Ease of use: You need 1 Meg of RAM to access all the styles. Screen updates slow and some areas of implementation could be improved



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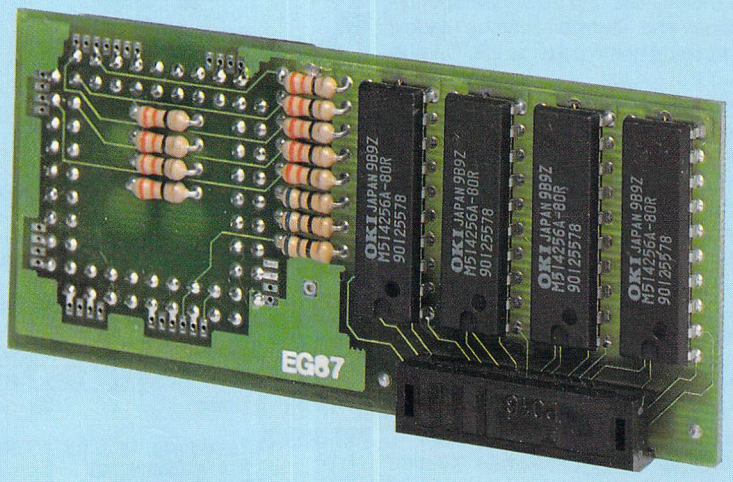
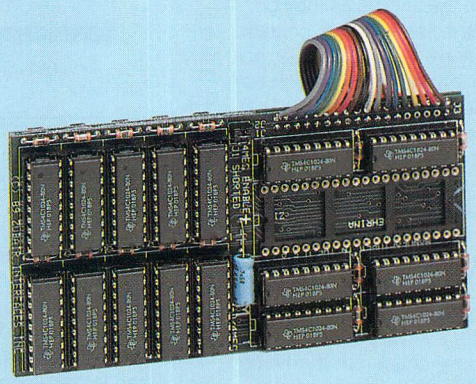


1/2 megabyte plug in board Atari ST User September 1990
"Features–Excellent Ease Of Use–Good"



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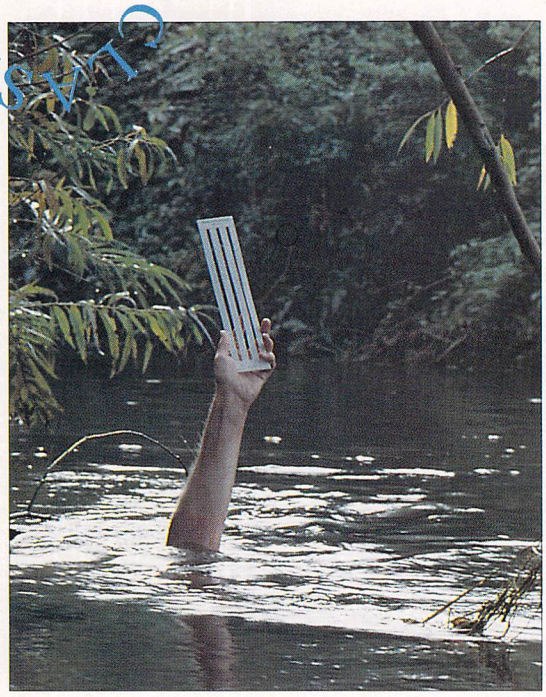


PRESS RELEASE

Fancy yourself a budding Robert Maxwell or Rupert Murdoch? Simon Lawson puts you on the road to publishing success with Timeworks DTP

TIMEWORKS®

Timeworks Desktop Publisher has become the logical choice for any ST user, wishing to produce professional-looking publications, on a limited budget. Timeworks will create and print high quality documents, using nothing more than a 520 ST with a single sided drive and a cheap 9-pin dot matrix printer.

GETTING STARTED

Right from the very start, Timeworks makes the installation of the program simple, even for absolute beginners. A menu-driven program goes snooping through your hardware set-up to find out about memory, floppy or hard drive configuration, and what sort of screen you're using. You then select your printer from the list, and the program will install Timeworks to take maximum advantage of your hardware.

Desktop Publisher makes extensive use of Atari GDOS, the extension to the built-in GEM system. This allows applications such as paint packages, word processors and DTP packages to use many different fonts and printers. Using GDOS, Timeworks can produce quality output from any printer, from a dot matrix to a £5,000 PostScript laser printer.

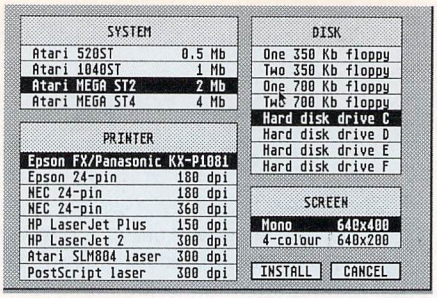
GDOS has always been cursed by ST users, as the program can be unstable and difficult to install correctly. Writing the fonts and printer drivers to the correct folder in the correct order, then setting up the ASSIGN.SYS file (which tells GDOS where to find the fonts) can be a nightmare for the inexperienced user. Even hardened hackers sometimes shy away from ASSIGN.SYS.

However, Timeworks even takes care of installing GDOS on your work disks, creating an auto folder and copying the GDOS program across. It also copies all the fonts for your chosen printer into a separate folder, and creates an ASSIGN.SYS file that will correctly install GDOS when you reboot your machine. Programs this friendly really take the pain out of using GDOS, and are a model of how programs should be written.

A MILLION USES

Timeworks is an extremely flexible and easy to use program, with an almost infinite variety of uses. As a result of its limitations, it is perhaps more suited to short documents, as opposed to a novel or long manual. For the novice or occasional user, Timeworks is ideal and its reasonable price has made it a firm favourite amongst ST users.

One of the most obvious users of Timeworks is the secretary of a small organisation, such as a golf or fishing club, who wants to prepare a quarterly newsletter to the club members. Although the stories and articles would change from issue to issue, the overall style and layout of the magazine would stay the same. Timeworks has also become very popular for producing publications such as parish magazines and leaflets.

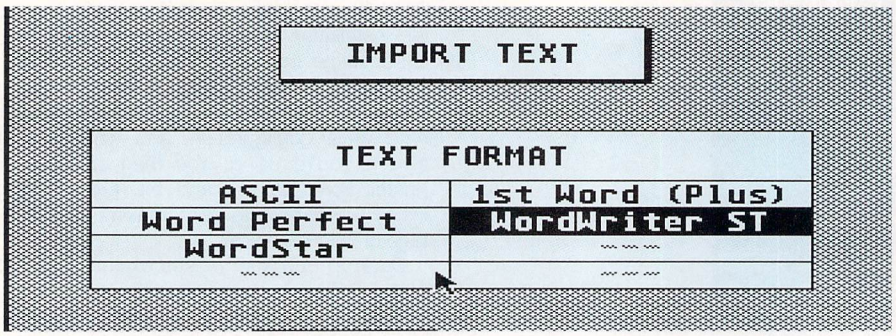


Installation is simple thanks to this friendly, GEM-driven installation program. Select your printer and away you go

DEEP BREATHS...

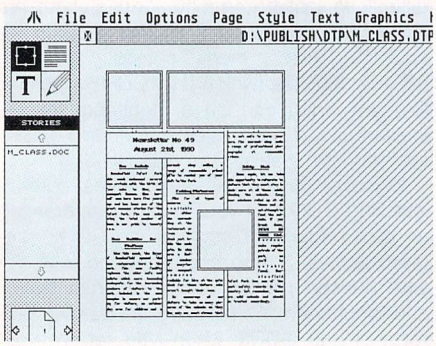
Before you even start up your computer, take a moment or two to think about what you want your finished document to be like. A little thought now will save you time and effort later. Get a pen and paper and jot down what you want the headlines and stories to look like.

The text manipulating tools provided with the program are rudimentary, and you shouldn't think of writing the bulk of the text from within Timeworks. Instead, use First Word Plus, Word Perfect or Word Star, and import them directly into the Timeworks document. You should prepare your text files in advance, allowing sample printouts to be produced which can also spell checked.



Timeworks will import a variety of native text formats. The built-in text editor is only suitable for simple editing of imported text and headlines

Any graphics you want to use should also be selected before you begin to create your document. If you have a scanner this means that getting hold of the appropriate pictures is no problem, as Timeworks will import both GEM .IMG files, and Degas pictures. If you don't have a scanner, then there's a wealth of clip art available in the public domain, covering a wide range of topics.



All the text has been imported and positioned on the page. Now might be a good time to get a sample printout

STYLE SHEETS

The idea of a style sheet is basically simple. A set of page 'templates' are created for a specific type of document, and saved to disk so they can be used again and again. You can set up one serious, heavy style document for letters to your bank manager, and another lighter style for notes to friends.

Want to create a new document? Well, simply load your style sheet into the program and drop your text and graphics into the boxes. This way you can create a document quickly and easily, and still in an established style.

A newsletter will have the same format each month, only the stories and pictures will change, so a style sheet can be set up once and then saved to be reused. This ensures that even if different people write the newsletter from week to week, the design will always be the same.

To create a style sheet for our example, a newsletter for the Macclesfield Safari Park , select the Box icon from the main toolbox. Next position your cursor where you want the box to be. When a box has been drawn, it can still be dragged around the screen, or stretched in any direction using the six small 'handles'. Boxes can be positioned over other boxes and the program will deal with flowing text and graphics around other boxes.

Remember that although boxes can be added and deleted at any time when you're working on the document, the style sheet is meant to be fixed. Making radical alterations to it every time it is used defeats the object of a style sheet.

IMPORTING TEXT

Now that your document layout has been set, you can think about putting text and pictures into all those empty boxes. This is where your planning will come into its own, as your text file is already on disk and has been spell checked.

Select the first text box and click on Import Text from the menu. Once the file has been loaded off the disk it will flow into the selected box. If there's too much text to fit into a single box, then simply clicking on the next box will make the text flow into there as well. Text can be flowed through any number of boxes, and if the size of the boxes is changed after the text has been added, it will be reflowed automatically. Now you are ready to type in your headlines and set them to the correct style.

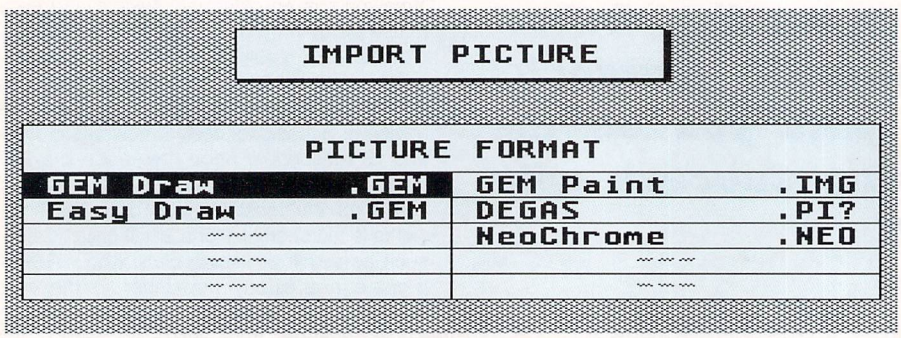
With the text and headlines in place it's a good idea to do a sample printout, just to see if the overall effect is right. Printing the document before the pictures are put in place is much faster, and will still give you a good idea of the look of the finished document. If you're happy with the results, put the pictures in. If not, just change your mind and redesign the page.

ART GALLERY

Pictures can make or break a document, so it's important to choose them carefully. They should be eye-catching and placed prominently on the page, but they should never be used simply to fill up space. Your style sheet will have picture boxes on it, but some articles may need another picture and so a new box must be created on the page.

It's also important to remember that a 9 pin dot matrix printer will give better results if you use clear, simple pictures, as the output quality will not do justice to complex images.

Images can be imported in most common file formats, including Degas paint files



Graphics can make or break a document and Timeworks can import all the popular bit image picture file formats. Timeworks also supports GEM-structured graphic files

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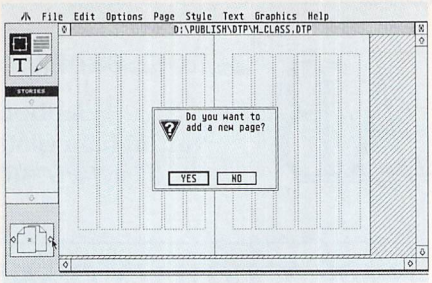
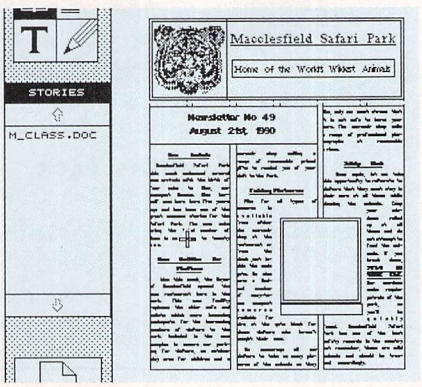


If you want a document of more than one page, click on the small page icon at the bottom left of the screen. Simple, isn't it?



The almost finished document. All that's missing is another picture to brighten up the overall look

and the IMG format used by most scanners. Pictures will be scaled to fit the currently selected box, but you can override the program and set your own scaling if you prefer.

If you have a lot of pictures in a document, scrolling around your document will really be slowed down. It's better to choose Hide Pictures from the Options menu, because this will speed up the scrolling and make editing much easier.

FINISHING TOUCHES

There are several tricks to Timeworks that will make your documents look more professional. For instance, in the main headline of our example, a small box was dropped inside the larger headline box. A border was created at the top and bottom, and the 'World's Wildest Animals' slogan typed inside it. This gives the under and over lining, and allows the text to be positioned exactly where you want it.

The headline box also uses another trick to get the effect of a box that contains both text and graphics (something normally impossible). Two boxes were created which touched at the edge. Then borders were created all around the two boxes, except from where they touched. When printed the borders look continuous and give the impression of a single box.

Perhaps one of the most important aspects of DTP is that when you've finished your document, it should be shown to someone who can give an impartial opinion of your layout. Don't be afraid of any critism they may make. Just take the suggestions and implement them in future DTP work.

Timeworks Desktop Publisher has become the logical choice for any ST user, wishing to produce professional-looking publications, on a limited budget. Timeworks will create and print high quality documents, using nothing more than a 520 ST with a single sided drive and a cheap 9-pin dot matrix printer.

Electric Distribution are rumoured to be about to upgrade Timeworks, including a host of new features to make the creation of professional-looking documents even easier. With its unrivalled position in the lower end of the DTP market, any new version of the software is eagerly awaited.

TERMS AND CONDITIONS

Perhaps more than any other area of computing, DTP has created an incredible amount of jargon which seems to be designed to confuse both beginner and experienced user alike. Below are some of the most important terms:

TAG - a preset style for applying to text. A tag holds font, size and justification information.

DTP - desktop publishing. Using a computer to take all the hard work out of publishing.

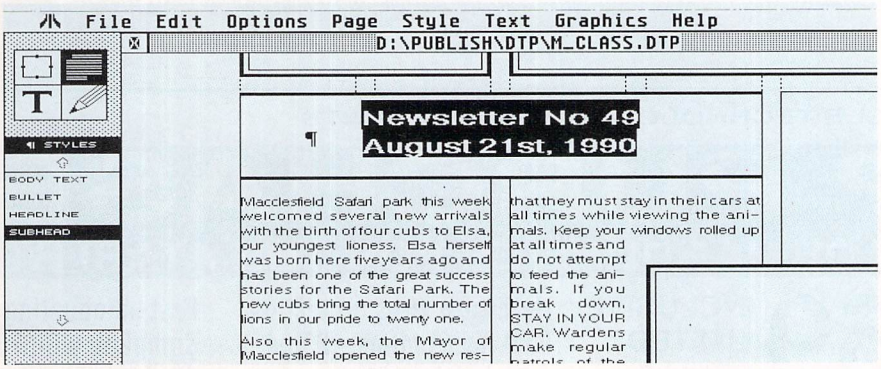
SANS SERIF - a plain font that has no elaborate tails on letters. This is used for the body text and subheadings.

SERIF - a font that has a small tail on letters. It has been used for the two main headlines.

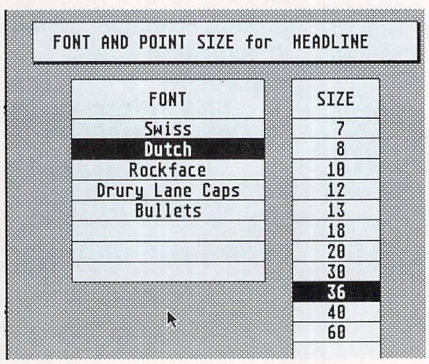
BORDER - the graphic effect around the edge of a box. The headline on the sample has a border.

IMPORT - pulling text and pictures into a document from another source.

STYLE SHEET - a set of boxes which determine the 'house' style of a publication.



Select a headline and use the Style box to apply a style tag to the text. This text will be styled as 'subhead'



Five fonts are provided with the program, or you can chose to use any other GDOS fonts you may have. Body copy should be in 12 point text, headlines in about 30 point

FONTS, POINTS AND PICAS

Fonts are fundamental to the operation of DTP packages, and it's important to understand how to set up different style 'tags'.

Timeworks uses a tag to hold information about a particular paragraph style such as the font and size, the indent of the first line and the justification of the paragraph. Timeworks allows an unlimited number of these tags to be created and used in a document.

Applying a tag to text is extremely easy. Simply select the paragraph tool from the tool box and click on the paragraph you want. It will be highlighted and then the appropriate tag to restyle the paragraph needs to be selected. Other text effects such as bold, underlined or italic can be selected with the main Text tool, by highlighting the text and selecting the appropriate effect.

One of the major faults of many documents created with a desktop publisher, is that the designs become too complex and cluttered. Changes in fonts and text size should only be used to make a point, and used sparingly. Documents with too many fonts and text sizes look messy and are unlikely to hold the reader's attention, because they become difficult to read.

In the sample document only two fonts have been used, a serif and sans serif version of the same typeface. There was no point in using other fonts such as Drury Lane, as the more elaborate style would have looked out of place in the document.

Because Timeworks uses the GDOS extension to normal GEM operating system, it is possible for you to add your own fonts to the system. Font designers such as Font Kit Plus will greatly expand the scope of your publishing.

GDOS needs to find the screen fonts and printer fonts which are specific to your printer. If you want to create your own fonts, remember to create both types and change the set-up.

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NEODESK 3

Neodesk, a GEM of a Desktop. Simon Lawson clicks through the folders...

Product: NeoDesk 3
Price: £39.95
Supplier: Electric Distribution
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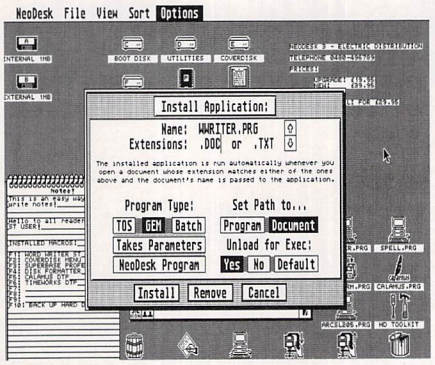
Since it was launched in the UK last year, NeoDesk has become one of the essential accessories for any serious ST user. The built-in Atari Desktop program has some undesirable characteristics, and NeoDesk sets out to rectify these, and provide a host of new features. Now, after extensive user feedback on their original product, NeoDesk has been upgraded to Version 3.



Installing an application is far more flexible from NeoDesk that from GEM

A CRACKING PAIR

NeoDesk 3 is supplied on two disks, one containing NeoDesk itself and the other a suite of accessory programs designed to complement NeoDesk. Although not copy protected, NeoDesk requires you to enter your name and address before the program will run, and this information appears in the About dialog in NeoDesk – so passing copies to your friends is discouraged.

The Extras disk provides progams for converting your old NeoDesk information files to the new format used by Version 3, as well as a font editor for changing the fonts used by NeoDesk. A set of default icons is also provided.

The major change made to the new version of NeoDesk is the ability to run in all three screen resolutions. NeoDesk also has support built-in for screens that are of non-standard sizes, such as A3 size monitors and software virtual screens. Window and file operations have been improved and speeded up from previous versions and new features added.

Because NeoDesk runs as a normal program and not from ROM, it takes up valuable memory when running. Programs that will only just run on a 520ST, report that there is not enough memory, so NeoDesk has the ability to unload itself from memory. It then takes up under 30K of memory when another program is running, and reloads from disk when the other program has finished.

ICONOGRAPHY

The idea of having custom icons is central to the philosophy of NeoDesk, and any program can have an individual icon designed for it. Your word processor can look like a typewriter, your comms program like a telephone and files with different extenders like DOC, and TXT can have special icons to enable them to be more easily identified.

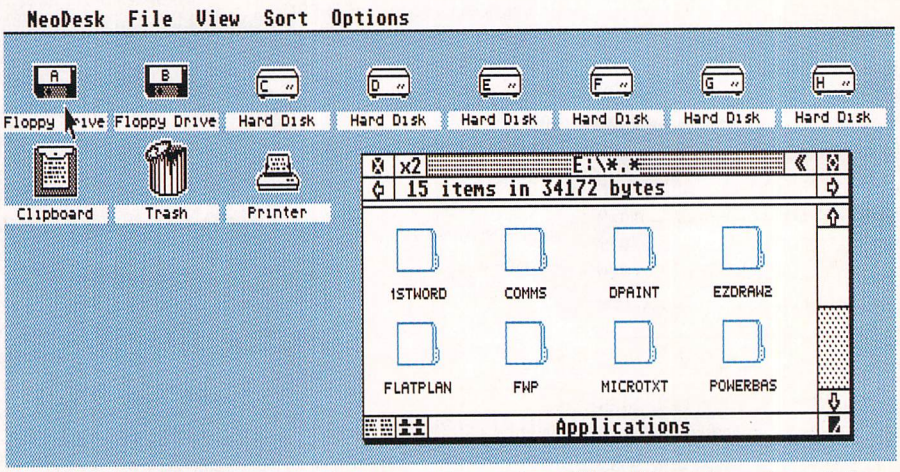
NeoDesk has a special icon editor for creating icons, and NeoDesk is supplied with over fifty icons already designed. When running in low or medium resolution you can choose which two colours you want your icon to be, allowing you to shade the Trashcan in red, for instance.

These icons can be dragged onto the main desktop and renamed, so that you can easily see what programs you have. Copies of files and folders can also be positioned on the desktop, and if a file is copied to a folder on the desktop, it will be copied to the correct disk and directory.

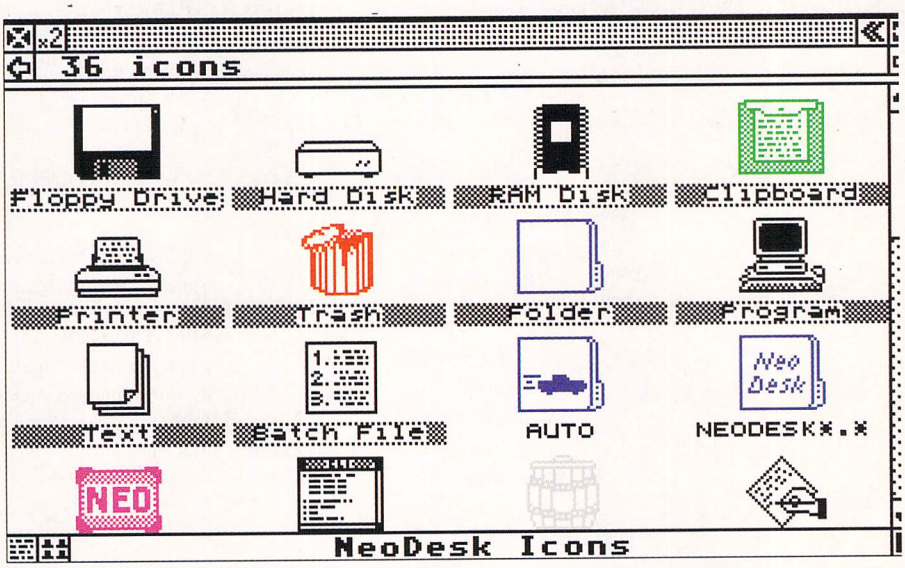
To complement these custom icons, NeoDesk allows short text notes to be written straight onto the desktop to remind you of important events. These notes can be positioned anywhere on the desktop and saved with the desktop layout.

The ability to record a sequence of keystrokes and mouse operations, and to play them back with a single key press has been added. These macros can be assigned to any key, and replayed. Operations such as backing up your hard disk or deleting backup files can be carried out with ease. These macro files can be saved to disk with a .MAC extender and you can have several on disk with different names to do various things.

Although it may seem to be a gimmick at first, one of the most useful features in Version 3 is the ability to move dialog boxes around the screen and save their positions in your configuration file. This means that if a



NeoDesk now runs in three screen resolutions. You can have different icons for each resolution



In low resolution icons can be assigned any colour – even a red Trashcan for danger

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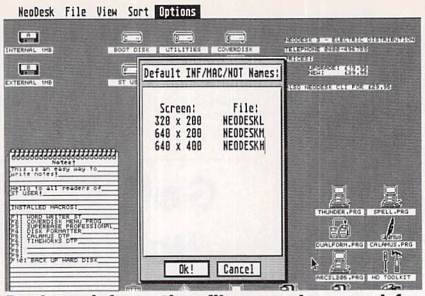
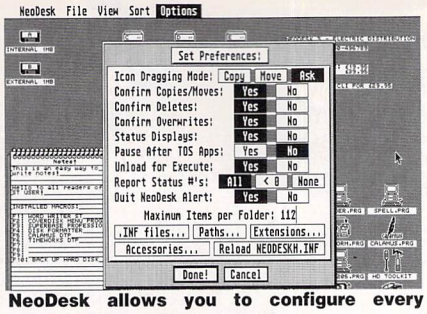
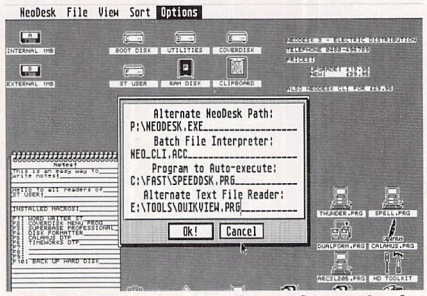


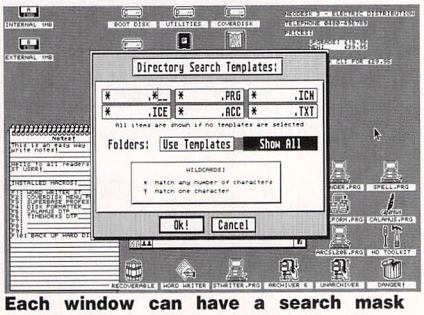
Desktop information files can be saved for any screen size, ideal for large monitors



NeoDesk allows you to configure every aspect of the program operation



NeoDesk lets you set alternative paths for its files. NeoDesk reloads from a RAM disk



Each window can have a search mask assigned to it so you see only certain files

dialog comes up and hides an important part of the screen, you can simply move it out of the way. All the alert and dialog boxes in NeoDesk have been completely rewritten from the normal GEM versions and are much clearer.

NeoDesk allows multiple applications to be installed, so when you click on a document from the desktop your word processor is automatically loaded. If you click on a document that doesn't have an associated application then it will be displayed in the usual way. NeoDesk can also display .PI and .PC files from the desktop. A picture can be loaded in as a background to your work, or the normal desktop pattern can be edited with the icon editor.

A new icon called the Clipboard has been added to the desktop, which acts like a RAM disk for ultra-fast copying of files and folders. All the available RAM of your machines is used, so the more you have the more you can store. The Clipboard is automatically emptied, when you run another program, to free memory.

File copying and general disk operations are one of the major areas where NeoDesk is an improvement over the built-in version. Files can be moved as well as copied, and all file operations use a memory buffer to save information. On a single drive machine this means only two disk swaps to copy a whole disk!

Disk formatting has been improved with support for 10 sector, 82 track disks as well as the twisted format that improves program loading speeds. Any disk can be assigned a custom volume name of up to twenty letters, which is displayed whenever the disk is opened. This is useful for cataloguing your disk collection. If one disk is dragged to another, NeoDesk reads the format of the source disk and will format the target to be an exact match. If you have TOS 1.4 or 1.6 in your machine, then programs can be set to make use of the new fast-loading routines built into the operating system.

WINDOW ON THE WORLD

NeoDesk makes some major alterations to the way windows work. Any window can have programs displayed as either text or icons, and text can be displayed in either large or small font. Icons are arranged so they always fit into the available space inside the window and are scrolled vertically. There is no horizontal scroll bar on a NeoDesk window.

Any window can be split horizontally, so if you have a lot of files in a single directory you can view different parts of the directory in the same window. The two halves of the window can be scrolled independently. A single button will allow every item in the window to be selected or deselected. Windows can also be spawned from other windows, so if you're deep in the directory tree of your hard drive and need to open another window at the same level, you don't have to go through all the folders again.

The limit on the number of open windows has been increased from four to the full GEM limit of seven, which makes dragging icons between windows easier, especially on a large screen monitor. If a stack of windows is open, the top one can be sent to the back with a single mouse click, and windows can be cycled in the same way. The mouse pointer can draw rubber band boxes in any direction, not just from the top left like GEM.

Saving your Desktop with NeoDesk is a relatively straightforward matter. When your desk is set up as you want it, with icons in place and windows and dialogs arranged, simply click on Save Configuration and an .INF file will be created. NeoDesk allows an unlimited number of .INF files to be created with different names, and the alternative configurations can be loaded whenever you want. This enables you to change the desktop depending on what you're doing at the time.

The macros and any desktop notes you may have created are saved in different files, with the same name as the desktop information file but with a different extender. You can choose whether or not to save the macro and note files.

ACCESSORIES

NeoDesk comes complete with its own set of Desk Accessories which complement the features of the program. The Neo Control Panel allows a screen saver to be set up, the blitter chip toggled on and off, time and date set as well as the desktop colours.

The Printer Queue also runs as a DA, making it available from other GEM programs as well as NeoDesk. The accessory enables your printer to be configured and a list of files can be set up for printing one at a time. The Printer Queue acts as a background task so files are printed without interrupting your work.

The most important of the accessories supplied with the NeoDesk is the Recoverable Trashcan. Installed on the desktop in place of the normal Trashcan, any files deleted by this can be recovered at a later date. This accessory will put an end to the problem of files being deleted by mistake, and will make file recovery programs unneccesary.

NeoDesk now supports special accessories that are written for it. These accessories can hook directly into the main NeoDesk code and take advantage of the extra features offered by NeoDesk. The Recoverable Trashcan and the option Command Line Interface are examples of these special DAs. There are also special NeoDesk programs which work in the same way and can be identified by the .NPG extender. Developers can obtain a special manual and set of disks to allow them to develop their own accessories and programs to run with NeoDesk.

COMPATIBILITY

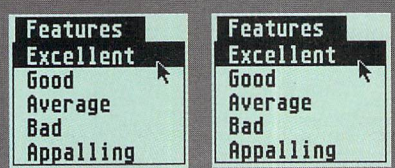
The main NeoDesk code has been rewritten to make the program more compatible with other programs than the previous version. The Shel_fix program that allowed applications like Signum! and Data Manager Professional to run properly has been removed and incorporated in the main programs.

Improved handling of system errors means NeoDesk traps practically all rogue programs and instead of displaying the normal cherry bombs, intelligent error messages and a report of the system registers are presented. Operations that would normally crash the system so badly that the computer would need to be rebooted are smoothly handled and NeoDesk nearly always recovers from this sort of error.

THE BOTTOM LINE

Features: Everything that the Atari Desktop should have been. The improved dialogs, new windows and custom icons are a great improvement.

Ease of use: Neodesk is far easier to use than the built-in version, and makes the ST a much more user friendly machine.



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Issue 8 of STUFFED is out now. This issue sees a special feature where two new Algebra and French programs, aimed at the GCSE student, come under the microscope. In addition, we look at Vidi ST and publish full colour pictures created using this package. STUFFED is the leading magazine on disk for the Atari ST and features both serious and games reviews along with a number of regular features and specialist articles too numerous to mention.

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INTERACTIVE RESCUE

B: BOOT

Q I've been looking in your fave mag for the last couple of issues to see if anyone has written in with the same type of problem I am experiencing with my ST. As they haven't, I've put pen to paper (ink ribbon to printer paper actually...) to see if you can help.

In July I decided to purchase an external double-sided disk drive so that I could marvel at the great programs on the second side of the cover disk. The problem I am experiencing is that many games that require a double-sided drive are also ones that autoboot from the internal drive. I thought that I had overcome this problem by obtaining a public domain utility that allows you to autoboot from disk B.

Unfortunately, I find that many commercial programs (Rainbow Island, Dungeon Master) somehow react with this PD program and will not load at all.

Could you please tell me if there is an autoboot program that will work with the majority of commercial software, or if there is any other way (software or hardware) that I can get around this problem. Otherwise it would seem that I have purchased a bit of a white elephant.

M Chappel, Clacton, Essex.

A **There are lots of boot-from-drive-B utilities in the public domain. Try them, you might find one that works with the programs you require. Alternatively, and with a simple modification, it's possible to install a switch into your ST to enable you to boot from drive B. Try out the utilities first and if they don't work, write again.**

JUST NOT CRICKET!

Q With reference to the Userdisk enclosed in issue 56 of 'USER, can you please give me some information as to what I need to run the cricket simulation which is written in STOS?

I am not interested in games creation, just in being able to run this game and any others you may put on disk in the future.

Do I need a disk containing STOS BASIC and if so, could you supply one and give me a price or tell me where I could obtain one, if this is indeed what I need?

D Lavington, Ealing, London.

A **Yeah, we screwed up. But take a look this month's cover disk. We've had our programmers working day and night to produce a runable version which doesn't require you to spend your hard-earned on a copy of STOS.**

Why wouldn't the cricket simulation run? We simply needed to compile the program and include the runtime code – a step we forgot when we originally put the sim on the cover.

DUTCH HACKER!

Q I am for more than 25 years occupied in computer business programming. I am 47 years old and my hobby is programming languages. A year or two ago I acquired an original package BCPL for the Atari ST published by the now non-existent company Metacomco. My questions are as follows:

1. Is there someone out there who has a newer version and would sell/give it to me so that I can upgrade?
2. Is there anyone out there who is still using BCPL?
3. Is there a user group on BCPL which has notes or news letters to send out?
4. Who has taken over the rights of the Metacomco range? I would like to get hold of the source code to correct the bugs (on a non-commercial basis)
5. Is there any third-party documentation available for this package?
6. Did Metacomco publish information about intermediate opcode and so on?

All those interested in BCPL can contact me, J L Weber, at De Thun 85, 6419 XE Heenlen, Netherlands.

A **Hear the man and write, BCPLers! Don't know of any user groups specifically for BCPL. You might find that the best course of action is to join a computer/programming club in the Netherlands and seek out those people interested in BCPL.**

RAM SAGA

Q On reading about the Extra-RAM upgrade in Atari ST User, I decided to try it myself and upgrade my 1040ST to 2.5 megabyte machine. After all, Andre Willey made it sound so easy, so I bought the Extra-RAM upgrade from a Melbourne firm and the DIL chips from a Sydney firm and then commenced to dismantle my 1040.

I did notice on reading the manual, that it kept referring to the different types of computer around (types 1 to 4) and that the purchaser was to make sure it wasn't a type 4. Andre Willey didn't mention that fact, so you can imagine my intense disappointment when I discovered that my 1040ST was a type 4! The Extra-RAM manual stated that if

Computer cracking up? Disks doing back flips? Printer out of puff? 'USER's very own Silicon Service Supremo is at your disposal. All points bulletins to Interactive Rescue, Atari ST User, Europa House, Adlington Park, Macclesfield SK10 4NP

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the machine was a type 4 you must contact your supplier. I did this but was told that I should have known before I ordered the upgrade and told me that they would accept it back but that I would have to pay freight charges.

How could I know that my machine was the wrong type if the company responsible for the product don't state the fact in their ad and Andre Willey didn't mention it in his article either?

Although I returned the Extra-RAM board, I still have the DIL chips and at $17 a chip (times 16 chips), it's quite a bit of money to lose. My advice to anyone else who wants to upgrade their computer is to make sure it isn't a type 4 with a surface mounted MMU chip. My MMU chip was also a 1 meg IMF chip and would have to be replaced with a 4 meg chip and socket – a job that would need to be done by a technician, at a cost of at least $250!

V C Park, Dapto, Australia.

A What is it they say about you guys from Dapto? OK, OK it's not all your fault (not even any of your fault really, I just wanted to work in a cheap joke about Dapto...). The moral is to remember that although there are 1001 solderless RAM upgrade boards available at the moment, 1000 of them require your ST to be of one or two 'types' (ie those without surface mounted memory management units) – buy with care, and make sure you can get your money back...

COLOUR PRINTING

Q Do you know of anywhere where I could get a new printer ribbon for my Fujitsu M3333D colour 24-pin dot matrix printer, preferably a colour ribbon?

Also, I would like a suitable printer driver for 1st Word Plus. The driver I have is an Epson FX 9-pin dot matrix driver, it works fine on text, but when images are included, they are not printed correctly. The only information I can give which may be of help is that while using the Flexdemo on Userdisk 54, the LQ colour 24-bit mode driver gave best results.

Michael Beale, Swindon, Wilts.

A To be perfectly honest, no! (But someone reading your letter might). Try calling up Fujitsu on 081 740 4455 for a suitable ribbon supplier near to you. The problem is that, although the Fujitsu probably provides a modicum of Epson compatibility (most modern dot matrix printers do...), as soon as the machine is in bit image mode (the mode used for graphics), all kinds of weird and wonderful (and machine-only) codes are used, which are totally incompatible with those of other manufacturers. What should you do?

I'm afraid it's a rummage in the public domain for you. Someone, somewhere probably owns a Fujitsu too and has produced a driver for it. Alternatively, create your own, by using the look-up tables in your printer's manual.

Most word processors, and desktop publishing packages allow you to input the codes for your printer, thereby creating your own driver.

A FEW QUERIES!

Q I'm not certain to whom this letter should actually be directed as it contains a number of queries. Firstly, I should say that I'm new to the ST, the computer we have, a 1040STE, belongs to my son and was only delivered a week ago as a result of him doing well in his GCSEs. He is doing Computer Studies at S level and other scientific subjects at A level (the swotty little tick - SSS). However a slipped disk and an enforced few weeks at home means that I will probably be using the machine more than him before I become upright.

The STE is the fourth in a long line of computers starting with a ZX81 moving through two Spectrums (the present incarnation being a +3). I claim to be the only person now running a Spectrum for serious work (I run a church magazine mailing list). Anyway, to business. Here are the queries:

1. Does the inclusion of shareware on your Userdisk mean that it has come into the public domain, or do the usual shareware rules apply?

2. October's Userdisk has a morse code training program not listed in the magazine. It is of real use to me as I am a potential radio ham. Although, I am not yet familiar with the STE, because only half the screen appears to be visible, am I right that it is only accessible in high resolution black and white mode? Any information on the program will be greatly received.

3. Concerning high resolution, black and white mode. My son also acquired a Philips CM8833 colour monitor (he has got to pay me back for that from his Saturday job!) I would have thought that the set would have been able to provide the necessary resolution as the difference from medium to high resolution appears to be in the vertical. Is there any way that this can be achieved, bearing in mind that the monitor has a green screen mode something like our PCs at work.

4. I've partially answered my own question in that I saw a public domain high res emulator advertised. Unfortunately it was not for STE. Have you any information or comment on the availability or effectiveness of these emulators, either PD or commercial? It does seem somewhat daft to have two monitors connected in order to get high res for applications.

Thank you for bearing with me for the length of this epistle (yer what? - SSS). I have thoroughly enjoyed your magazine and it will be bought regularly. How much chance I'll have to get my hands on the machine in the future is a matter for conjecture, so I reckon most of my personal use will have to be with the Spectrum – oh well, never mind!

Ian Gray, Sudbury, Suffolk.

Phew! A bumper crop of queries there, kids!

A 1. The normal 'rules' of shareware apply to all programs on our disk. And it really is a good idea to send the cash. Keep the shareware writers in funds, and they'll keep you in quality, so-cheap-it's-almost-free software (you know it makes sense...).

2. The morse code program only works with mono monitors (or a mono emulator available from the public domain)

3. I would have thought so too, but alas, it can't be done (unless you spring several thousands for a multi-synch monitor). The ST has three display modes: low, medium and high resolution. The first two are colour the third, mono.

To display both (and without resorting to the monitor mentioned above), you need two monitors, a TV and a monitor or a colour/mono emulator.

4. The first mono emulators were very poor. Lots of software wouldn't run with the emulator running and if it did, the action was considerably slower than usual.

Nowadays however, all that has changed. There are public domain mono and colour emulators for the ST (and the E) and they work very well. Check out our PD pages for details of suppliers.

TOS TIPS

Q I am soon to be starting GCSE sort of work and I hope to use my superb TOS 1.4 ST for it all. Unfortunately, I lack any good WP/DTP software. At the moment, I spend all of my money paying for the ST and magazines. Please send me some word processing or desk top publishing software, I would be so grateful. In return, here are some TOS 1.4 tips:

1. If you hold Control when dragging files to be copied, they will be moved (ie copied then deleted from the source).

2. Holding Control, Alternate and Delete will force a soft reset (this works with other STs too (sometimes!) - SSS).

3. Holding Control, Alternate, Delete and Right Shift will cause a hard return.

4. Undo will stop viewing a text file and return you to the Desktop.

5. Press Undo during a file operation will (when the current stage is finished) ask whether or not you wish to abort.

6. You can rename folders.

7. The Desktop formatter formats close to MS-DOS format.

8. Dropping a hammer onto it will now allow a crack further to the rear than previous ROMs.

No name supplied, Swindon, Wilts.

STOSING OVERSEAS

Q I'm a subscriber of your nice magazine and I must say I'm delighted by it. I have some questions on the Userdisk (thought there was a catch in all that flattery - SSS).

1. Every month you publish one or more programs saying Fast BASIC or HiSoft BASIC is needed to run the program. I want to know to which BASIC you're referring to exactly and where I can buy it from?

2. In your STOS series, you use the STOS program. Which program is needed in order to follow the series? Do I need only STOS – games creator or do I need the compiler too? And what about Maestro?

Rosenthal Ester, Holon.

A Fast/HiSoft BASIC is a popular (in the UK...) replacement BASIC language for the version supplied with the ST (Atari's own). HiSoft BASIC costs £79.95 and can be obtained from HiSoft on 0525 718181.

You don't need anything other than STOS BASIC in order to program along with the STOS column the compiler however, is a great help in speeding up your results.

A LOAD OF BOWLS?

Q I write as a result of a request from my father. Having attempted to explain the virtues of my new Atari STFM, he asked me to assist him with a problem which I feel must be suited to the computer.

I will elucidate. My father is the secretary for two local bowls teams. Each year he has to arrange for fixtures for some 60 teams in three leagues. Easy you might say, but some of these clubs have three teams, one in each league but only two greens. Other clubs have two teams and only one green.

My Father has asked if there is a program which would, given the dates of play, the teams in each league and the number of greens and so on, could come up with a fixture list which meant clubs with one green but two or three teams would be viable?

I considered a school timetable-type program might give a good result. Is there such a program? If not, here's an opportunity to make a killing.

Alan Slater, Wolverhampton.

A Too late, the spreadsheet has already been invented. That's right! Our dear old friend the spreadsheet is exactly what you need. Input all the clubs, greens and other guff into the spreadsheet's cells, then use a formula such as

If team=playing and green busy then

and so on. And you don't even need to lash out hard earned on such a program, they're available in quantity and for free in the public domain (have a look at 'Sheet', an excellent program). For suppliers turn to our PD pages.

ERRONEOUS LINE FEEDS!

Q Recently my children were playing with the desktop publishing program Kid Publisher. When we tried to print the input the result was that all the lines were broken by extra line feeds.

I have a Mannesman Tally MT81 which at the time was set in Epson mode including a line feed. Could you please tell me how I can get the printer to print without skipping lines?

Michael Dowie, Polmont.

A Simple! Switch line feeds off from your printer (usually via a little DIP switch somewhere. Consult the Tally's manual) or Kid Publisher. Both the printer and the program are bunging line feeds into your printout. How's that for an answer that's short and sweet?

DOUBLE DRIVE DILEMMA!

Q At the moment I'm saving up to buy a second drive for my ST. I would like some help with which drive I should buy. I was looking for a drive in the price range £100. I was looking at the drive of which Evesham Micros are selling or I was going to purchase a Cumana drive. Please could you tell me which one is better.

Do Megas run software which can run on my 520ST? I'm talking about leisure software.

R Scott, Narborough, Leicester.

A Both drives are very good. Cumana has manufactured and marketed drives for a long time and has a deserved reputation. The Evesham drive is however, cheaper than the Cumana and as I have direct experience of the Evesham device (I've used an Evesham drive without problems for a couple of years), that's the one I'd recommend.

With one or two obscure exceptions (and I can't even think of any so don't sweat it...), the Mega runs all the software available for the 520ST.

BEEBULATOR

Q I am attempting to convert a program which was written in basic for the IBM PC, for use with the STs. I have managed to port over the main program with an improvement in screen updating, but I am deep in the mud with four problems.

Two relate to not having IBM compatible printers, I have a Panasonic KZ-P1081 which can be used in IBM mode, but when in standard mode does not print the pound or half penny signs (Chrs$ 156, 171, Hex 9C, AB). The others are, how can I implement a page-up/page-down routine based on the undo key, and the key pad left-bracket key, these keys are recognised when using the program with PC-Ditto, but not by the ST?

I would be grateful for any help given, and yes I do have the permission of the original programmer to alter his work. I would appreciate any information regarding the current TOS versions, I have been told by an .ACC that my TOS 1.0 is now redundant and that I should renew, which begs the question, how, and if I do exchange TOS's will there be much of a compatibility problem?

AA Kingscott, Smethwick Warley.

A The HiSoft Basic package uses a super-set of the PC industry standard, Microsoft QuickBasic. As you have the co-operation of the original author of the program, it should be simple to recompile the source code on the ST.

To overcome the printer problem, you'll have to re-write the printer driver so it uses only the Epson command set, rather than the extended features of PC printers.

If you want to implement a screen scroll routine, it would be far easier to use the up and down arrow keys, as these are directly supported by most ST Basics.

As far as TOS versions go, 1.0 is very old now and contains a number of known bugs. Version 1.4 is now available from Atari as a £99 dealer fitted upgrade, or £49 if you fit the chips yourself.

FUN SCHOOL

Q A tip to all your readers who have Fun School 2 from Database Educational Software but don't have STOS. The way Fun School 2 runs is by loading a version of STOS that can only execute programs and running them.

To run a STOS program from the Userdisk, copy the program which has the extension ?.BAS into a BACKUP copy of Fun School and delete one of the Fun School ?.BAS files.

Remembering what the filename was and renaming the file to the filename of the file that you deleted. Get it? (I don't -Ed.)

So what you're really doing, is putting your program in the other program's place, under its name. If you are using one of the programs in Phil Lawson's programming series, or if there is an 8 x 8 .CRO on the Userdisk, also copy it to the STOS folder on the backup of Fun School.

Re-boot the Fun School program, insert the disk with the program with the new name when asked for Disk 2. Try loading the program that you deleted. What you get is the program you wanted. You can do this with all STOS programs.

I tried out the STOS virus program from your January issue and found five of my disks infected.

I lent a public domain game to a friend about a month ago and this is the only disk I have lent to a friend and I don't copy software from friends. Is this is the way the virus got into my system? Would my friend's disk have the virus too?

If so I would like to point out how easily they spread and whoever makes them should be hung, SLOWLY. As I understand it the virus puts values into the boot sector, but what if the boot sector is already taken up?

Matthew Webb, Queensland, Australia

A This is a nice idea, but how about buying a full copy of STOS so you can get the full benefit of this powerful, flexible language and develop your own programs. And don't forget that Fun School 3 is due out any day now (see the review in issue 56).

If the boot sectors are already used, the virus overwrites the existing boot sectors and ruins your disk! This is especially prevalent when viruses infect games disks.

COBOL?

Q Please could you settle a dispute in my family? We're all wondering what COBOL stands for and I say it means Cross-Obliterated Bent Orifice Language, my aged grandfather however, disagrees...

Isaac Septuagisima, Ludlow.

A You can stop quarreling, COBOL is an acronym meaning COmmon Business-Orientated Language. COBOL was one of the first programming languages available and is still in wide use today.

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The page that points the finger at the companies in the know

PRICE CHECK

All prices were correct at the time of going to press and as usual, include VAT. A comprehensive buyer's guide can be found in the pages of our sister publication, ST World.

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Philips CM8833	£310.49

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Supra 30Mb hard disk	£499.95

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Linnet 1200 Modem	£274.85
Star LC10 mono printer	£263.35
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BEST BUYS

Each month the editorial team selects the best five buys in one type of software package. This month, educational packages:

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Fax: 0753 822914

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Surrey KT6 6DU.
Tel: 081-390 8446

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Exmouth, Devon
EX8 1JL.
Tel: 0395 2700273
Fax: 0395 268893

Gremlin Graphics Software
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Tel: 0742 753423

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Tel: 0772 203166

MicroLink
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Redditch,Worcestershire B989PA.
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Tel: 023 427 3000

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DIARY DATES

UK EVENTS

6 to 9 December 1990
Computer Shopper Show
Organiser: Blenheim Database
(0625 879970)
Venue: Wembley Exhibition Centre, London

4 to 6 January 1991
16 Bit Computer Fair
Organiser: Westminster Exhibitions
(081 549 3444)
Venue: Hammersmith Novotel, London

14 to 16 April 1991
European Computer Trade Show
Organiser, Blenheim Database
(0625 879970)
Venue: Business Design Centre, London

10 to 12 May 1991
Computer Shopper Show
Organiser, Blenheim Database
(0625 879970)
Venue: Wembley Conference Centre

OVERSEAS EVENTS

12 to 16 November 1990
Comdex Fall
Organiser: Media Plus
(081-977 3474)
Venue: Las Vegas, Nevada, USA

● *If your company is organising a show relevant to the Atari ST and is not listed, let us know so that it can be included in the diary.*

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Tel: 0386 446441

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Sidcup Bypass, Sidcup, Kent DA14 5SS.
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The ABC has a host of impressive features, all built-in as standard, encouraging simple installation and ease of use. In addition, the ABC's small footprint and quiet operating, mean that you will notice it less on your desk than other PC's. Except, of course, when you begin to take advantage of its AT power.

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AVAILABLE: JUNE 90

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ON THE UP!

Without the aid of a safety-net Simon Lawson switches ROMs...

Product: TOS 1.4
Supplier: Atari Dealers
Cost: £39.99
Configuration: All ST's

For the past eighteen months Atari have been promising users that TOS 1.4, the new version of the ST's operating system, will be made available as a user upgrade. Now, at last the two and six chip sets are being shipped to dealers across the country.

THE CHIPS ARE DOWN...

The chips come in an anti-static bag with a mere three sheets of photocopied instructions. These instructions are obviously intended for Atari-trained engineers, and are not clear to a technical novice. But remember it's important to get the right instructions for your particular machine.

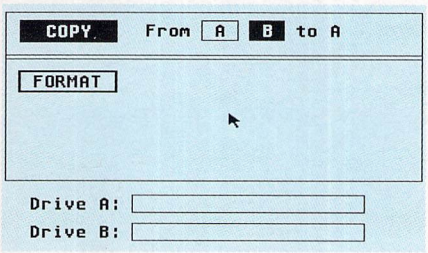
The new chips are however, clearly labelled and the instructions provide all the information that's needed. Upgrades of this nature should only be tried by someone with a basic knowledge of soldering. If you are unsure about fitting TOS yourself, any Atari dealer will adapt your machine, for a small charge.

Atari has made numerous changes to the circuit boards of the ST over the years, and this can make fitting difficult. Some STs, mostly older models, have their TOS held on six chips, newer STs have just two chips. The options you're most likely to find on your motherboard are six chips in six sockets, two chips with six sockets, or just two chips and two sockets. It's advisable to check what sort of chip arrangement your machine has, before you order the chips from your dealer.

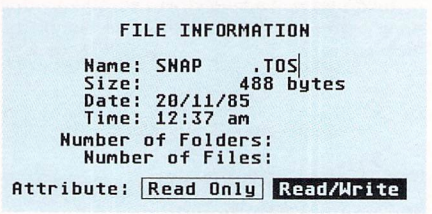
If you already have six ROM chips fitted to your machine then changing to TOS 1.4 is simple. Just take out the old chips and plug the new ones in their places. Then reboot your machine using the new TOS.

If you only have two chips in your machine, then you'll have to make sure that your dealer can supply you with a two chip set, rather than the normal six. A six chip can be fitted to a two socket machine, but it's a job for Atari trained engineers only.

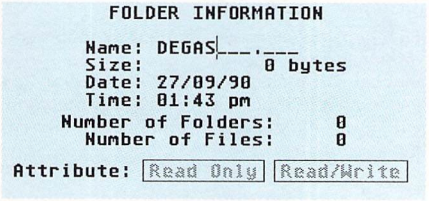
Fitting TOS to a machine that has only two existing chips, but six sockets is a simpler matter. The new chips have to be plugged into the sockets, and a small chip removed from the motherboard and replaced by a wire bridge. The two chip set could also be used and would be simpler, but we could only obtain the six chip set.



The Copy and Format function use the same dialog box, but selecting a button changes the function of the dialog. Single drive copying of files now makes use of all available memory, so the process is much faster



Performing a 'Show Info' operation on either a file or folder now summons the same dialog box, but with different options available. Options like this are much faster with version 1.4



The folder information dialog had the options to set the read/write status of the folder grayed out. TOS 1.4 now allows folders to be renamed in the same way that files have always been done

AN IMPROVED DESKTOP?

The desktop is an application program that has been built into the operating system, to enable the user to navigate their way easily

THE NEW FILE SELECTOR

The improvements Atari have made to the new ROMs fall into two distinct areas - those that can be seen and those that can't.

The most visible changes are to be found in the Desktop application itself, in the form of improved dialog boxes, the ability to move files and rename folders. The abandon copy and delete operations have also been improved.

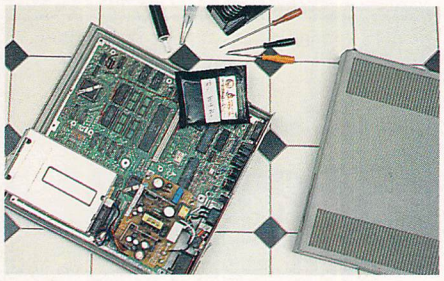
The invisible changes that are buried deep below the surface and can only be seen when you use the system. Improved coding shows itself as faster file handling and disk operations, and also in the removal of some bugs and limitations that have plagued the ST from the start.

One of the most obvious changes, and most welcome for users, is the improved file selector.

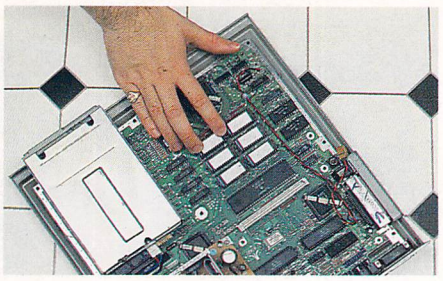
The addition of drive change buttons means no more cumbersome editing of the directory path, when you want to switch from one drive to another. This feature will be particularly welcomed by those who have a hard drive attached to their ST's.

When the filename and search path are changed, a simple press of the return button will bring the changes into effect. Before, the OK button would have been activated by this and the search filter would have been cleared.

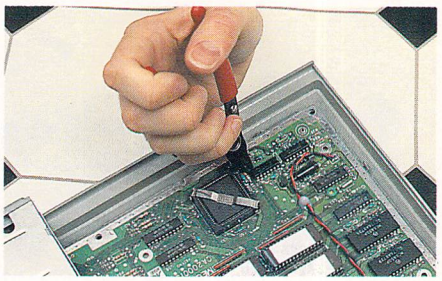
The new selector will handle more files, take longer pathnames and handle errors without crashing. A string of text can also be produced to advise on the use of the selector.



Disconnect the ST from the mains and unplug any peripherals such as printers. Then remove the upper casing from your ST - be careful of the wire attached to the underside of the case. Carefully untwist the tabs holding the metal shielding in place and remove that as well



Locate the old TOS chips in your machine, and make a note of where they go. All the chips are numbered in order, and should be carefully removed and replaced by their 1.4 equivalent. Make sure the small notches on the chips match up with those printed on the motherboard. Chips are sensitive to static, so handle with care



Carefully snip off the legs of this chip and remove it from the machine. Be sure not to damage the adjacent chip or to cut any of the tracks printed on the circuit board

around the ST. It enables other programs to be run, files to be copied or deleted, and new disks to be formatted and copied.

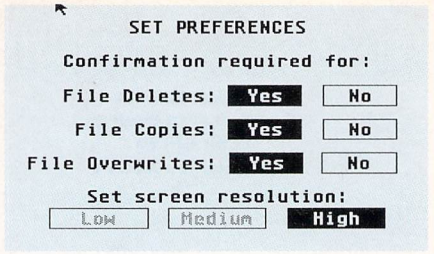
Many of the changes made in the new TOS are directly related to making the Desktop more usable. Some dialog boxes have been reworded, to make them clearer for the novice, and new features have been added, such as the ability to rename folders.

The most welcome improvements to the disk handling system are the changes that have been made to the FAT handling routines. The File Allocation Table is an area of the disk where information about files is stored, and every time you perform a disk operation the FAT is checked by GEM. TOS 1.4 now reads the FAT much faster than previous versions, and disk read/write operations are now noticeably faster.

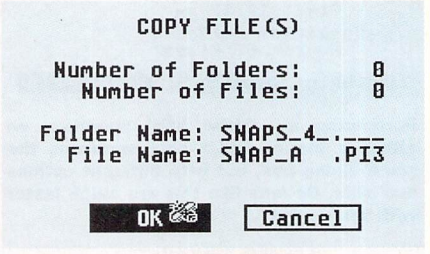
Less obvious changes will be useful to owners with really full hard disks. They include the lifting of the 400 item limit on files, redrawing background windows after disk operations and the ability to reset the machine using the control-alternate-delete key chord. Also the key repeats have been improved, and attribute flags on files are now set correctly.

The forty-folder bug has been removed. GEM is better at recognising when a floppy disk has been changed and finally, floppies are now formatted so that they can be recognised by IBM PC's.

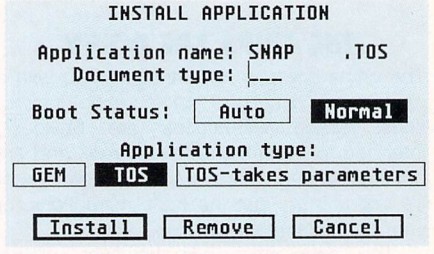
Installing a disk drive hasn't been changed very much, but 'Install' has been made the default button – a much more sensible option than before. Just press return to install the new drive



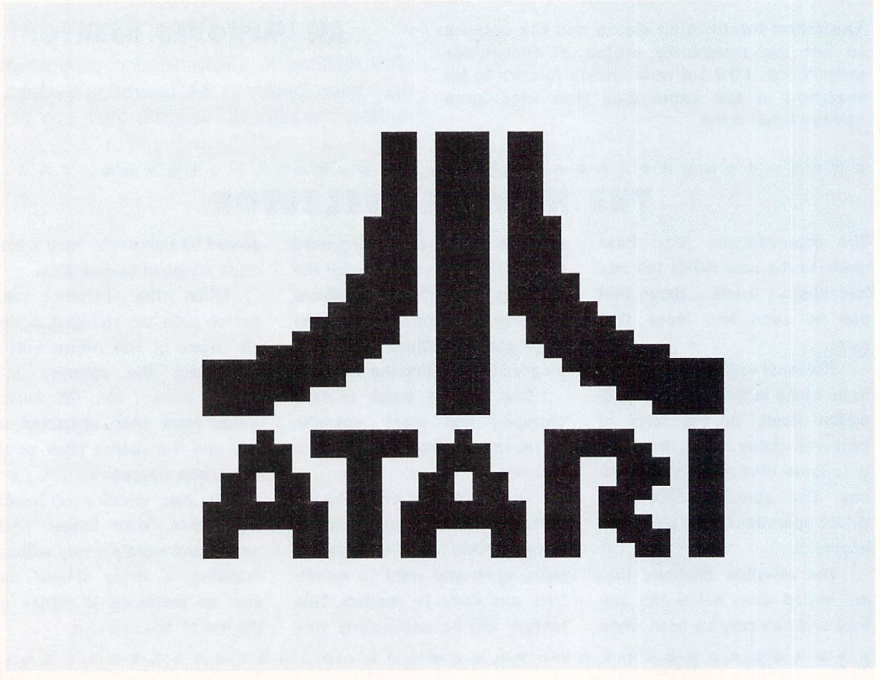
The 'Set Preferences' item on the Options menu now allows confirmation of file overwrites to be set by the user. If there's a conflict with folder name, the dialog comes up



File copying is more efficient than before, although still a pain on single drive machines. Holding down the 'Control key' as you drag the icons from window to window will perform a move operation instead, keeping your drives tidy



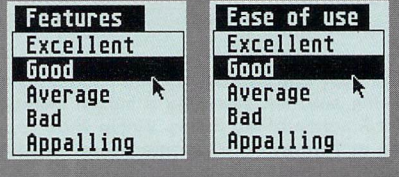
TOS 1.4 gives you the option to set up a GEM .PRG OR .TOS program to autoboot from any drive or folder – this was never possible before. It does away with the need for the 'Startgem' Auto folder hack, that is needed with pre-1.4 ROM versions



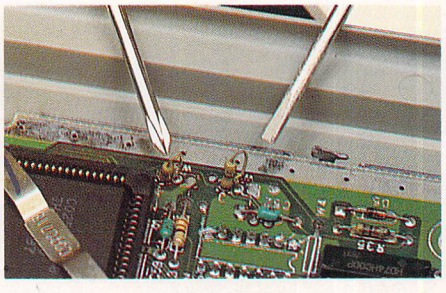
THE BOTTOM LINE

Features: The new dialogs are great, and Atari has implemented an impressive speed increase for some operations. There are no radically new functions, but the feel of the ST has been tidied up.

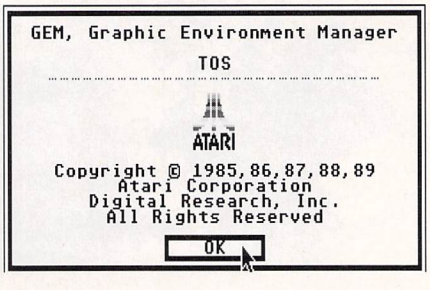
Ease of use: This is what the ST should have been like from the very start. But why has it taken Atari so long to release the chips?



A new wire jumper must be soldered in place of the chip. Use a low wattage soldering iron and don't let it come in contact with the motherboard for more than a few seconds



These two resistors must be changed over. Remove the motherboard and desolder the components. Replace the resistors so they bridge the first and second positions, rather than the second and third. Use only the minimum amount of solder when replacing the resistors



Check that the resistors are securely soldered down, and that the new chips are seated firmly in their sockets. Make sure that they are the right way round, then reassemble your machine. You should now have TOS 1.4 up and running.

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ALL ABOUT

PAINT PACKAGES

At one time or another, all of us will have had an urge to draw or paint. The great paintings of Da Vinci, Rubens and Van Gogh have inspired generations of aspiring painters to strive for greatness. Creating a masterpiece always involved paints and canvas, smelly turpentine and endless hours of careful work, while starving in a garret – all for the love of art.

With the advent of computers like the ST, with its ample memory, fast processors and massive colour palettes, art has arrived on the home computer. Paint packages are one of the best-selling types of program for the ST, and new ones are being introduced onto the market all the time.

A RAINBOW OF COLOUR

Selecting the right paint package can be difficult, because they all offer a bewildering array of features. One of the most important things to consider when buying a package is your own hardware set-up.

For colour painting, a monitor is essential. The family TV will do at a pinch, although the extra resolution of a monitor will make your drawings look much better. Nearly all the popular painting programs support the ST's low resolution 16 colour mode.

Some people haven't been satisfied with a mere16 colours on-screen, when the ST offers up to 512 to choose from. Spectrum 512 and Quantum Paint use a technique called palette switching to increase the number of colours on-screen, to either 512 or a massive 4096. This is done however, at the price of speed, and drawing in one of these special modes will slow the ST down to a crawl.

If you have one of Atari's new STE's then you'll have some extra hardware and colours built into your machine. Both Canvas from Microdeal and the new Deluxe Paint ST from Electronic Arts, offer support for the extended palette of the STE. Atari's own Hyperpaint 2 goes one stage further, and uses the built-in hardware to give super-smooth scrolling around your picture. This is especially useful in high resolution, where an .IMG format picture can be many times the size of the screen. If you only have a monochrome monitor, then your choice of packages is more restricted. Established programs such as Degas Elite and Atari Hyperpaint support high resolution, but they offer no special features to take advantage of the extra screen resolution.

However, in recent months several programs, most notably MegaPaint from Germany, have come on the market. They are specifically designed to run in high resolution, offering a host of extra features.

Probably the most famous piece of pixel art ever created. Impressive stuff, eh?

FILE FACTS

The ST has evolved a myriad of formats for saving picture files, and many paint packages will only use their own native format. Listed below are some of the most common ones:

.PI1-3 – the original ST file format for pictures, as created by the Degas package. Any program you consider buying should support this format.

.PC1-3 – this is also a Degas format, but compressed to disk save space.

.NEO – a low resolution only format, from a package called NeoChrome. It still remains popular.

.TNY – tiny format is a compressed file that is designed to save space.

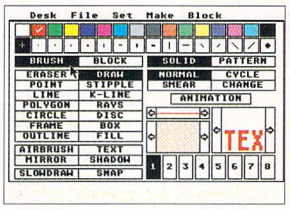
.SPC – the format for Spectrum 512 multicolour files.

When GEM was created a set of standard files were laid down for pictures. Unfortunately many of the early ST programs didn't support them, but they are now becoming more popular:

.IMG – this is a special file format that allows pictures to be larger than the visible screen area. Supported by most monochrome only packages and Hyperpaint.

.GEM – a file to hold structured graphics. Rather than a simple bit image, the picture is held as a series of mathematical descriptions.

In addition to these, formats from other computers are also becoming popular. Macintosh files such as TIFF and PICT can be used, and Deluxe Paint will support Amiga IFF graphics. The IBM PC creates graphics files called PCX and PIC, which are also supported by some newer paint packages.



Degas set the standard all other ST paint packages have followed. Its files have become popularly accepted as the standard for the ST

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TOTAL RECALL

Memory is another important consideration when choosing a painting program. If you have enough memory, Hyperpaint will support up to ten different screens. Another program, Deluxe Paint ST, uses all the available memory to store animation files.

Most packages will run in 512K although some of the mono-only programs require one meg. The more memory you have, the more screen that can be worked on at any particular time. Disk space is always at a premium with art packages because picture files take up a lot of room. At the very least you need a double sided drive (or two single sided), but the more disk space the better. Also, a hard disk is a good idea, to store both the program and the pictures on.

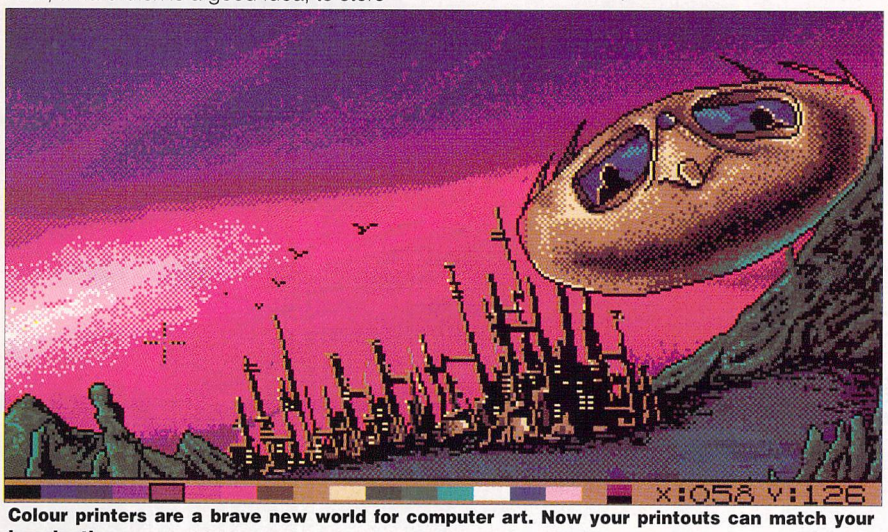
Modern painting programs are designed to make the process of creating a picture as easy and painless as possible. All paint packages provide a comprehensive range of basic tools, such as freehand drawing, filled and unfilled circles and boxes, and patterned fills. Many programs allow you to edit your own fill patterns, and save them to disk for future use.

Cutting out a section of your picture to use as a brush is a facility offered by the better packages, and it can produce some interesting effects. Stretching and deforming shapes and objects can produce a surreal effect, as can mapping pictures onto other surfaces, such as putting a face on the surface of the moon. An exciting prospect for the talented artist.

The more expensive programs offer features such as Bezier curves and three dimensional effects. Graduated fills allow smooth shadings of colour, often used for sunset effects. The ability to change certain colours and filter out others can produce false coloured images, such as those used in NASA photographs of stars. Features such as this are a luxury, not really a necessity.

The range of utilities varies from package to package, and often the more money you're prepared to pay, the more features you get.

It must be said that this is not always an accurate guide, and some public domain programs can rival the best programs available commercially.



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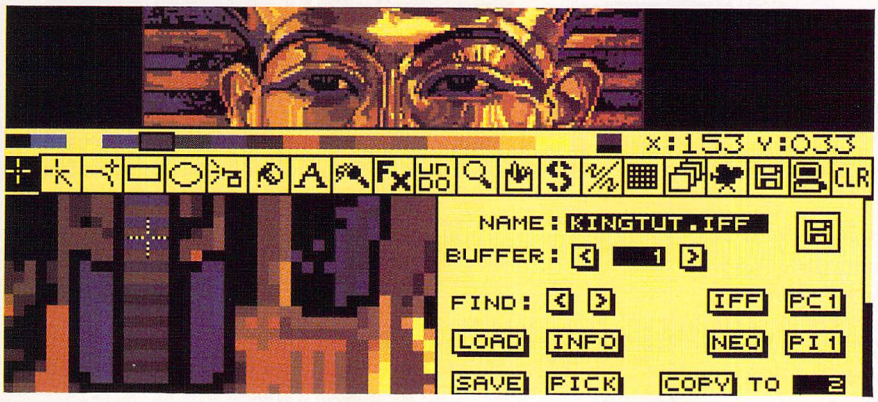

The icon bar from Deluxe Paint provides easy access to some very powerful features. Experiment to your heart's content

GET INTO PRINT

Unless you don't want other people to see your work, some form of printer is necessary. They are available in a wide range of types and prices, from black and white units for less than £150, to colour lasers which seem to cost more than the national debt of a third world country.

Mono printers are good for printouts from a high resolution screen and most art programs can convert colour pictures to black and white. This is done using a technique called dithering, which results in the colours being represented by shades of grey. A 9-dot matrix printer is quite adequate for most needs, but if you can afford a 24-pin model then this is much better.

Colour printers come in two basic types – the dot matrix and the ink jet. A 9-pin colour dot matrix such as the Star LC10 Colour produces good results for less than £220, and can also be used like a normal mono model for printing out letters. For better quality print you might consider a 24-pin colour printer, but these are more expensive than the 9-pin models. An ink jet printer costs more again, about £500. It does print at up to 300 dots per inch, so it gives results as good as a laser, but with the added advantage of colour printouts.

A LIBRARY OF POSSIBILITIES

There are countless books on art techniques, ideas and shortcuts in any public library. Many of the techniques outlined in these books can be adapted for use on a computer. The computer does not allow the complete freedom to mix colours and experiment with light and shadow, as a normal artist's palette does, and so a little more discipline is required to produce good computer art.

Libraries are also an endless source of inspiration for the computer artist. Books of photographs allow you to draw places you've never seen, and scientific books can provide some strange and interesting images that lend themselves ideally to the capabilities of computer art.

Finally, experiment. Any art package has its strengths and weaknesses and it's up to you to make the best of your talents and abilities. If you have anything good, why not send it into ST User at the normal address? We'll then consider publishing it in the magazine.

OK, so you want to paint, but don't want to pay a fortune for the privilege. Commercial packages offer a host of features for the advanced painter, but what if you're only just starting? If you want something simple and cheap, check out your local public domain library for a bargain.

Artifex, only from Goodman Enterprises, is a Degas clone that runs on colour monitors and produces some excellent results. It uses almost the same controls as its commercial cousin, and offers the same wide range of features, but at the discount price of £2.95.

For monochrome monitor owners, the PD scene offers a wide range of programs, mostly from Germany. Public Painter is one of the best and offers a wide range of tools, multiple work screens (if memory permits) and is one of the best mono-only programs around, and at a bargain price.

Another noteworthy program is AIM, or the Atari Image Master. Designed for processing images after they've been created, either by a paint package or from a scanner, AIM can apply a variety of effects to a picture such as stretch, shear, surface mapping and distortions. AIM is also capable of post production on scanned images to remove stray pixels or lines, and generally tidy up images.

As well as art programs themselves, the public domain can also provide utilities for manipulating finished work. Slideshow programs such as Neoshow allow you to make an attractive visual presentation out of your pictures by using fades and wipes to give them a professional look. One of the most useful utilities any pixel artist can have in their collection is called Picswitch. This will change pictures between a wide variety of formats. There are also several other utilities that will convert picture formats, and all are worth investigating.

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ABSOLUTE BEGINNERS

Computing's a drag, right? It is when you know how to manipulate the mouse! 'USER shows you how...

Did you spend long hours after last month's column learning how to manipulate windows? The real key of course, is practice. Even with instruction, accurate position and manoeuvring of windows takes a little while to master – keep at it!

Right, on with this month's little lesson. To copy a file from one disk to another, or to delete a file by moving it to the trash can involves a process known as 'dragging'.

Click on a document or an application, but instead of releasing the mouse button as soon as the object is in inverse video (ie when it becomes black...), keep the mouse button depressed. The icon is displayed in inverse video as normal, but an outline will appear around the original. Move the mouse and you'll see that the outlined object moves too.

If you drag this object to another window, folder or disk icon, a dialog box appears on screen asking you whether you'd like to go ahead with the copy process (dragging an object to disk, folder or window, informs the ST that you want to make a copy of that object). If you want to copy the item click OK, or click cancel to quit the operation.

Dragging an object to the trash can tells the ST you want to delete it. You'll get a dialog just like the copy dialog, asking whether you really want to delete the item. Click OK or cancel as before. Once an object has been dragged into the trash, it cannot be recovered, so do be careful when deleting.

Here's a tip. Create a folder called 'Trash', 'Junk' or some other obvious name. Anything you want to delete during a session at the machine should be dragged into this folder rather than the trash can. Just before switching off the ST, you can open the Trash folder, drag anything your really do want to delete forever into the trash, and items you've decided to keep can be restored to their rightful place. You'll never delete the wrong item again!

MULTIPLE MOVEMENTS

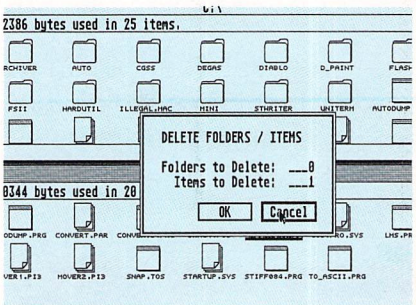
The click-drag method is fine for single items, but what if you want to copy several items, drag a whole heap of stuff into the trash and so on? Click on an object after another has been selected, and the first item is then deselected. Don't sweat it. There are two methods to select multiple items: shift-clicking and lassoing.

To shift-click, move the mouse pointer to an object and click it as normal, hold down the shift key and click another item – it will be selected, and the first item will remain selected too! You can shift-click lots of items, but be precise where you click. There's nothing worse than shift-clicking several icons, attempting to click another, clicking the Desktop or surrounding window instead and deselecting the whole lot!

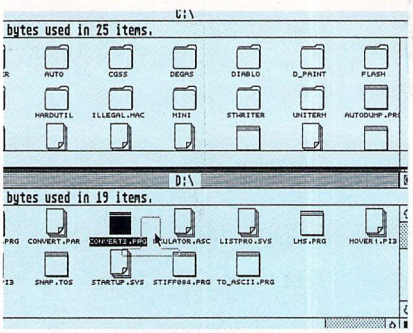
If you have lots of items to select, the best method is lassoing. Move the pointer to a blank spot in a window and click. The outline of a tiny box will appear. Drag the outline, it will remain fixed in one corner and become enlarged relative to that corner (try it. It's easier to do than to explain!) You'll end up with a large outline ring or 'lasso'.

If you move the ring over several objects (keeping the mouse button depressed all the time) then release the mouse button, every object inside the lasso is selected. Now you can simply click any one of the selected objects and drag the whole lot to the trash, another drive and the like.

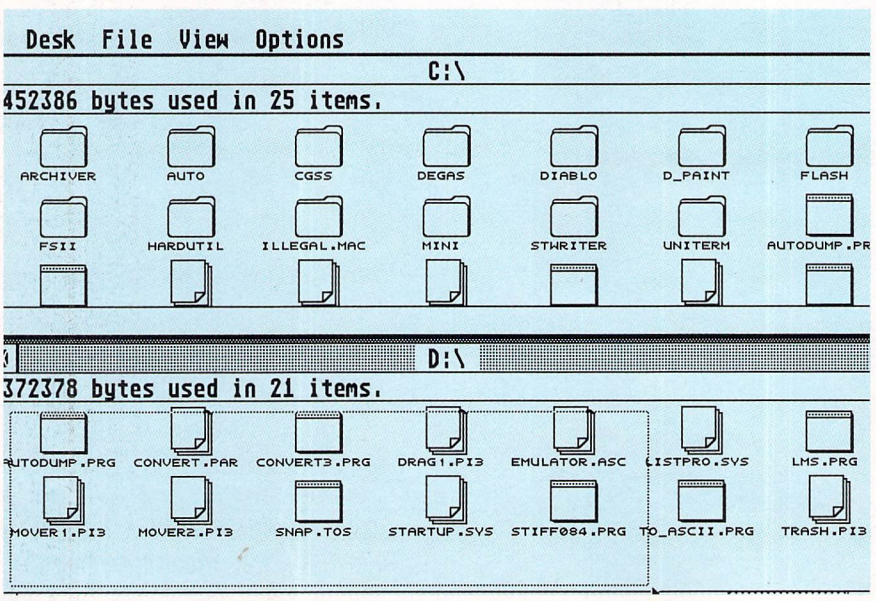
Time for another tip. Perhaps you want to select every item in a window except one or two – do you shift-click the icons you want, ignoring the rest? Well, you could do it like this, but it's laborious. Here's a better way. Click the zoom box in the top right-hand corner of the window so that it fills the screen. Lasso everything, then shift-click the items you don't want. Click and drag the rest – easy!



A dialog box confirms irreversible actions



The click and drag method in glorious mono



Lassoing is a convenient way to select large numbers of files or other objects

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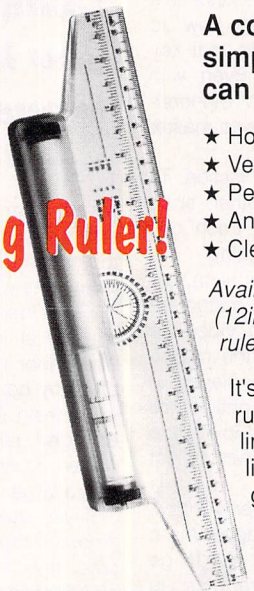

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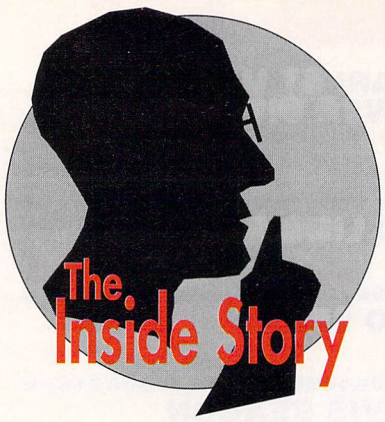


INSIDE STORY

Intrepid investigative reporters Claire Walls and Pam Norman discover just where your money goes...

Every week in Britain thousands of pounds, and thousands of computer games change hands. The leisure software industry is healthy and thriving, and providing entertainment for an increasing number of games players. Atari UK estimates that there are more than 275,000 ST owners in Britain, and they are producing and selling thousands more of the machines each month.

In addition, four out of every five machines sold is intended primarily for games use. So that means a lot of games playing – the demand for games is increasing and the amount of money spent on software is enormous.

Like everything else, the price of games is going up. The average game retails for between £19.99 amd £24.99, although the cheapest can be had for about £4.99, and if you're really keen, you can fork out up to £49.95. Of course, the cheapest game is most often a re-release of a game which was moderately successful only a few years previously. And if it was really successful, it might be re-released at £9.99.

But on the whole, you're looking at about, let's say, £25 for a new game. So how much of this is to cover production costs? And who's raking in the profits from this money-making machine?

CHAIN OF COMMAND

You, the games buyer, are soon out of it – you pay your money, and get your game. So that keeps you happy – unless it doesn't work, which is another story altogether. Presumably you bought your game from a reputable independent dealer, who would have bought it from a distributor, who in turn obtained it from a publisher. That's the chain of command.

Simple enough, until you start to introduce variations on the theme like software pirates, mail order companies and High Street chain stores, all of which can sell the games cheaper than the dealer, because of lower overheads.

If you bought your game from the dealer and paid £25 for the latest movie tie-in. The dealer keeps about 32.5 per cent, or £8.12 which he uses to pay, first for his costs such as wages, rent, insurance, and power bills. If there's anything left, he keeps it as profit but only after paying tax. If there isn't, he's about to go out of business.

A further 15 per cent goes in VAT. Value Added Tax is payable on all goods for sale produced in the UK. That's £3.75 for the government to play with.

Next comes the distributor, usually a large company with vast transport and marketing resources which does the complicated administrative job of moving the games around the country to the retail outlets. There aren't many software distributors in the UK – two of the biggest are Centresoft and Leisuresoft both of which are conveniently related to two software publishers.

The distributor buys the game from the publisher and sells to the dealers taking a relatively small cut – only about 12.5 per cent. But because of the huge numbers being distributed, the operation brings in good money.

THE FINAL LINK

At the end of the chain is the software house or publisher. The publisher sells a full-price game to the distributor at 40 per cent of its retail price, or about £10 per game. A tiny fraction of this tenner is profit, maybe 40p. The rest covers the enormous cost of producing the games.

Wages have to be paid – programmers, designers and artists, as well as the marketing, administrative and executive staff. Then there is the development budget for each game, many of which are years in the making.

Promotion and advertising have to be paid for – both activities which can be hugely expensive and involve enormous risks. Of course, they usually pay off, but if someone makes a poor judgement about the expected sales of a game, then huge losses follow and heads roll. Finally, the software house has to allow for paying royalties and obtaining

licences from licensing agents for the latest movie and TV tie-ins.

After all this has been paid for, there is the small matter of manufacturing costs. The manufacturing process takes up just over £2 of the total £25, even if 'extras' such as manuals and leaflets are included with the disk. So manufacturing costs are not as large a part of the total as you might expect.

And what's left after all of that, and after company tax, and overheads and the tea person have been paid, is profit – the whole reason for creating the games in the first place.

NO MONEY?

So there you have it. From this breakdown, you might begin to think there is no money to be made at all in the leisure software industry – they're nothing but non-profit making, charitable organisations devoted to the cause of keeping you entertained and off the streets.

But of course, there is money to be made. Huge sums if the market is favourable, the promotion works and the price is right. You don't mind forking out your last twenty five pounds if the game is the latest and greatest. But nobody is doing you out of your spare cash. They're taking risks, supplying a demand, and working hard for their money.

BUDDY, CAN YOU SPARE A DIME?

Have you ever given any thought as to who those elusive programmers are? No? Read on...

Programmers are the people at the beginning of the production chain. For the vast majority of games, they are the ones who take concepts for games (which are either thought up by those clever people at the software houses, or the actual programmers themselves), and create a program using these ideas. Then, along with help from graphic artists, music programmers and a whole host of others, the finished article is produced.

The task of converting games, to enable them to be played on other machines is also carried out by programmers. Others design specific screen routines that they have a particular talent for creating.

There are three groups covered by the term programmer, the first of these is the homeworker. The original ideas for games are given to these workers by software houses. Work is done on them and programs for the gameplay are written.

Freelance programmers generally think up their own ideas and then try to sell them to software houses. Their roles are very similar to in-house programmers, who are the third category. If someone is employed in-house however, they can only work for one company, without the option of negotiating for a better deal on a game with other software houses.

Once a game has been submitted the programmer will receive a lump sum, the amount of which varies greatly from company to company, and game to game. This depends on reputation, experience and so on. When the game is introduced onto the market the people involved in its creation will now be in the position to receive royalties.

Again this amount is variable, ranging from 5-7% of the publisher's receipt (the price which the publisher receives from the distributor when the game is sold). In time this percentage can rise to a sum as high as 15%, as a programmer produces a larger portfolio of games and a longer list of clients.

It must be remembered that the more people involved in the creation of a game, the lower the final percentage that is received by each party.

CRASHED AND BURNED

Rarely does the software industry witness a business failure more spectacular than that of Xenon Technologies. This Portsmouth-based mail order company went out of business, guns blazing, in March of this year leaving its 17-year-old proprietor, Stephen Lee, instantly penniless and unemployed.

At the peak of trading Xenon's turnover was thousands of pounds. The company was advertising in the computer press and receiving and filling hundreds of orders for games and business software. Not bad for a company which was run entirely from the proprietor's bedroom.

Problems began when the stocks failed to arrive on time - a severe cash-flow problem resulted because the funds expected from their sale had already been spent. Lee became trapped in a vicious circle, ordering stocks and intending to pay for them with the money from their sale, but because he didn't have the capital to back himself up, debts began to overtake him. He soon went out of business in an unavoidable blaze of publicity.

The story of Xenon Technologies is by no means unusual, although the tender years of its managing director do suggest something a little out of the ordinary. Perhaps with a few more years of business experience under his belt he could have pulled it off. It does illustrate though, the thin line between success and bankruptcy that some in the software industry travel.

Everyone, from the programmer to the dealer, has to take their cut and if profit margins are too lean, or the market declines, or costs escalate too rapidly, then the whole fragile structure can come crashing down around their ears. And it is by no means only the smaller companies which are affected by these market forces, even the biggest company has to, from time to time, resort to what is euphemistically termed 'rationalization'.

That means that someone, somewhere, will be looking for a new job.

THE FUN SCHOOL STORY

Fun School, first released in 1984 has now reached version three (soon to be released). This series comes from Database Educational Software and has proven to be a great success.

Fun School 2 actually managed to get onto the best selling games software charts – the only education package ever to do this. So with such a successful program, who reaps the profits?

In all, ten teachers were involved in making the game. They used their vast experience (from years on the front-line!) to produce ideas for the programmers to work on, which would be both enjoyable and educational for children.

The game was converted to enable it to be used on different machines. Each conversion was carried out by one particular programmer, who was also responsible for the graphics. A payment was given to each person in the creation process, this was then backed up by royalties from Fun School packages sold afterwards. The amount of the royalties depended on the original lump sum.

This seems like a small percentage, however considering that over 150,000 copies of Fun School 2 have been sold, the final sum received would be quite acceptable!

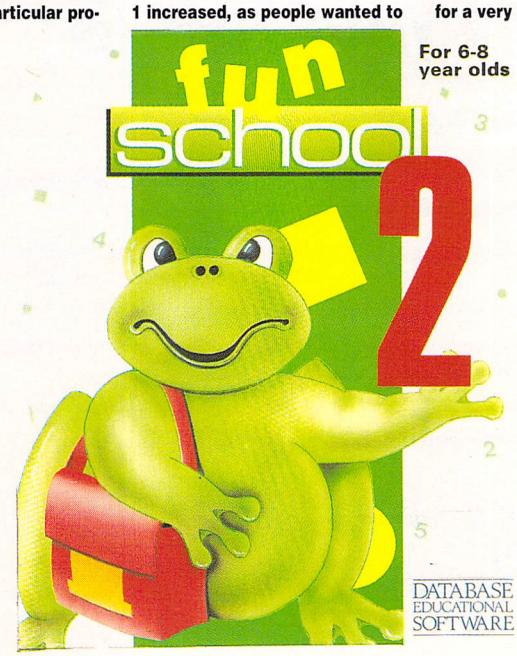
Education programs tend to differ from games, because fewer educational packages are released each month and they have a longer expected shelf life.

When Fun School 2 was released the sales of Fun School 1 increased, as people wanted to see what they had missed not buying the first version. So again, the guys who worked on the program earned some more cash.

Increased sales also come from overseas. Market research was used to decide which conversions would sell in different countries.

Currently the ST version sells all over the world including France and Germany. Also only certain versions of Fun School 2, for example the over eights, are released in some countries, depending on the state of the market.

All of which simply goes to show that a successful program with an extended shelf life wil continue to generate healthy incomes for those responsible for a very long time.



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Product: TCB Tracker
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Configuration: All STs, double-sided drive, colour only

TUNE TRACKING

More dulcet tones from 'USERS resident choirboy, John Butters

Soundtracker is probably the most widely used music program for the Commodore Amiga. Since its introduction there have been no less than 15 versions on this micro. A public domain version with the same name was developed for the ST by the gang of programmers responsible for the Care Bear demos.

The PD version came out earlier in the year, and following this the full commercial program has been introduced onto the market. It's called TCB Tracker and is designed to be used as an instrument to make sound modules.

The sound in game intros is usually either bad or very bad, but don't despair there's a way to improve the quality. By using a program such as TCB Tracker, new music can be written, and then the sound can be saved to disk. Its main use would be to incorporate the sound into various programs – game or otherwise.

TCB Tracker comes on one disk with a 50-page A5 manual, and help can also be gained on-screen while using the program. Unfortunately, the manual is poorly written especially for the novice, with a certain degree of knowledge on the subject being assumed. After passing the intro screen, an entry code has to be keyed into the machine before proceeding further.

This security lets down the main part of the program as there are passwords for codes numbered 6 to 55, and during our review the program asked for codes which weren't listed. If the password is entered incorrectly, the computer crudely blacks out the bottom of the screen and bombs out – user-friendly eh?

It seems strange that security codes like these are still printed on paper. Surely if anyone goes to the trouble of copying a disk, they will also photocopy the codes as well!

Well, once you've finally managed to enter the program you will find that the four-channel, sample-based music synthesizer has a built-in drum machine, a sequencer and mixing program.

A maximum of four samples can be played simultaneously, and some instruments can be programmed to play all the time. These can be altered by playing another note on the channel or turning it off.

Each of the four samples can be introduced or turned off easily by clicking on the sample number with the mouse pointer. The program can be run through a TV or colour monitor, but a better sound is achieved by connecting the monitor to hi-fi speakers through the audio output. Music is generated using either the ST's own keyboard, or by connecting a MIDI keyboard to the MIDI IN port.

Professionals can use the program as a slave sequencer, sampler or drum machine because it can read MIDI clock. The tool should be connected to the program and then it can be played along with the other instruments.

Perhaps one of the most important features in TCB Tracker is the Amiga mode. This extra bass is added to music to give it improved sound quality. TCB Tracker also has a mouse edit along with 20 cut and paste functions.

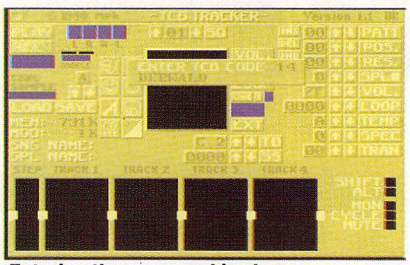
TCB Tracker's functions are largely mouse-controlled, many requiring clicking on icons dotted around the screen with the left button. In the program three types of file are used: sample, song and module.

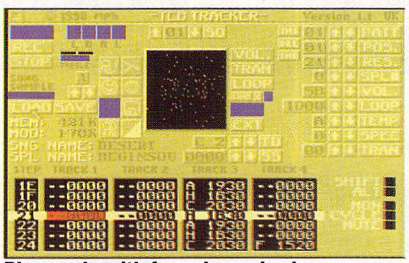
The program disk includes several sample and module files. These are now spreading into many public domain libraries. Here you'll be able to get them either free or for next to nothing – so they are available to everyone.

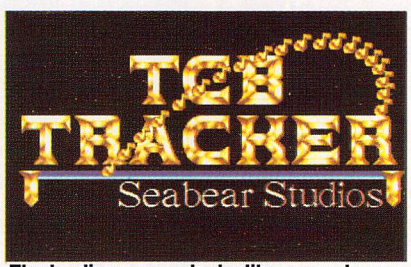
Samples are individual instrument sounds, 16 of which can be conveniently stored in the ST's memory. Modules contain songs with associated instruments, and files can be loaded or saved onto floppy or hard disks, into partitions up to F. Users of STEs can take advantage of the stereo sound mode which will do justice to their machines.

Once users have registered with MPH they will receive a quarterly newsletter, extra sample and module files and information on updates of the program.

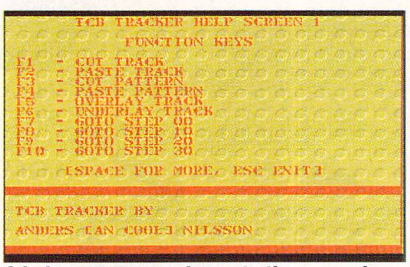
TCB Tracker is quite simple to use and also fun. It's recommended for those users who need functions that the public domain version is unable to provide.


Entering the password is sloppy


Play mode with four channels shown



The loading screen looks like many demos

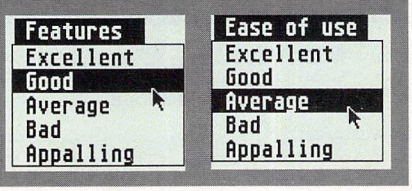


A help screen complements the manual

THE BOTTOM LINE

Features: Four-channel sampled sound. Uses maximum 28 per cent processor time. Amiga bass, 16 samples in memory, 20 cut and paste functions.

Ease of use: Used through ST or MIDI keyboard, icon-controlled, manual poor, bugs in password entry.



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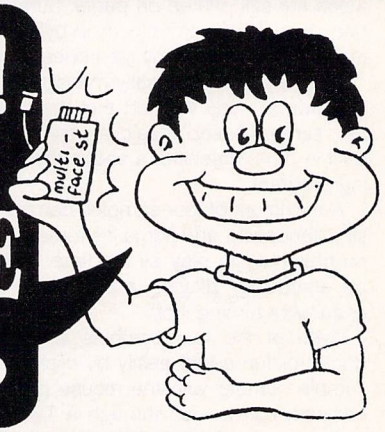

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EXPENSIVE ACCOUNTS?

John Butters looks at two packages for taking the strain out of accounts, one for the home and one for small businesses

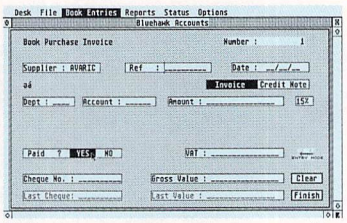
Product: Accounts 1
Supplier: Bluehawk Software
Telephone: 0734 303897
Price: £99.95
Configuration: All STs

One of the most annoying aspects of running a small business is having the Inland Revenue harassing you for the accounts. Many small companies cannot afford to employ an accountant, and so the incredibly dull job gets left to the proprietor. One way of taking the strain out of the task would be to set the books up on a computer. Accounts 1 is designed for this purpose and is primarily aimed at solving VAT problems.

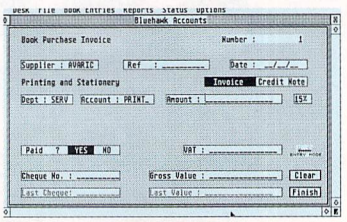
Based on GEM, it has all the essential features of such a package and can be controlled using Control key combinations if required. Accounts 1 comes with a 156 page manual, which is presented in a smart A5 ring-binder, but at times is a little vague for those without accounting knowledge.

The program must be initialised before it is first used. A personal password of eight or less characters can be chosen by the operator, which has to be re-entered whenever the program is started. That will stop any of the staff snooping to see if you can afford to give them a pay rise!

There are three ledgers: nominal, customers and suppliers. All three ledgers are integrated, with transactions in the sales or purchase ledgers being carried over into the nominal ledger. When several similar entries are to be made they can be entered into the relevant ledger as a batch, and at the end of each one the system will update the customer or supplier ledger directly.



Entering a password secures the program from unwanted guests



Invoices are put into the Accounts 1 – with details from the supplier

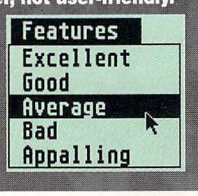
Data entry is frequently sloppy, with nothing to make the task appealing. Like most similar packages the data can be displayed in a graphic form. It can display the balance sheet showing assets against liabilities, period profit or loss, year to date profit or loss, period income or expense against budget. As you would expect, trial balance, balance sheet and profit and loss reports can be output to a printer.

With more work, Accounts 1 could be a promising package for the office. As it stands it is let down by a poorly-written manual and general unfriendliness to the user. Advantages over other programs? Well it's one of the cheaper accounts packages.

THE BOTTOM LINE

Features: Graphical presentation, password security.

Ease of use: Used via Control key combinations and GEM menus, manual could be better, not user-friendly.



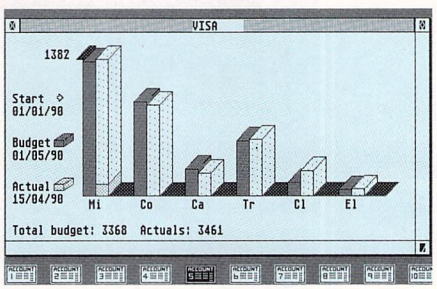
£ £ £ £ £ £ £

Product: Personal Finance Manager Plus
Supplier: Microdeal
Telephone: 0726 68020
Price: £39.95
Configuration: All STs

For the home user, Microdeal's Personal Finance Manager Plus is the type of package you should look at to get your accounts in order. This upgrade of the successful Personal Finance Manager arrives on a single disk, and boots up to present the user with GEM menus on either a high-res monochrome, or medium-res colour monitor. Much of the control is through the drop-down menus but short cuts can be made through the keyboard.

Files from earlier versions can be converted into the new format using a conversion utility. Individual files hold information for different accounts, whether they are bank, building society, credit card, or in fact any type of financial account. Each transaction is listed under the relevant account.

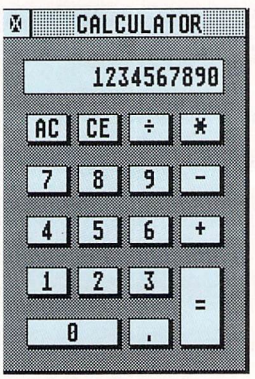
Standing orders can be set for all of the accounts, with end dates being specified with payment periods of weekly, four weekly, monthly, quarterly, six monthly, yearly or as a one-off payment. Accounts can be shown in up to four graphic forms. Pie or bar charts can be drawn to show how the actual transactions compared to the budgeted amount for each item, and graphs can also be plotted. All are auto-scaled to fit the available window space.



Bar charts are one part of the graphics mode

Other features to ease the task of keeping track of domestic accounts include auto-balancing, multiple views of a window, printouts, a calculator and a search facility. Supplied with a well-written manual, additional help is available through on-line help dialog boxes which cover several subjects.

Good news for the typical user is that you don't need an accounting qualification to use the package. Operation is clean and easy to understand, even for those who have trouble writing a cheque, and the manual is easy to follow.



A calculator is built in

THE BOTTOM LINE

Features: Graphics, on-line help, GEM interface, automatic standing orders.

Ease of use: Uncomplicated and very professional, keyboard shortcuts, clear manual.

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And now, prepare yourself for a publishing first,

ASPECTS OF THE ATARI ST

as Atari ST User brings you five special pages devoted to your very own favourite ST subjects.

There's something for everyone – every month.

MIDI AND MUSIC PAGE 143

Ian Waugh gets his passport ready and makes Trax to take you to Quinsoft

COMMUNICATIONS PAGE 145

Soldering irons at the ready, Fielding Mellish shows you how to make an RS232 cable, so you can hack legally

EMULATION PAGE 147

The mice win the day as Windows 3 leaves the men standing, Günter Minnerup looks into this new front-end

ADVENTURES PAGE 149

It's nearly Christmas, so get your game orders in quickly. The Faun tells you the best games to choose

DESKTOP PUBLISHING PAGE 151

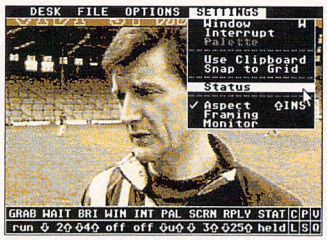
Master your page design with Charles Michael, who takes a looks at Pagestream and Timeworks

ATARI ST USER DISK BARGAINS

Send for the FULL version of selected programs from Atari ST User cover disks - and SAVE UP TO £60

Grab graphics like never before

. . . with the Vidi ST Digitiser



Rombo's Vidi-ST is a fully featured digitiser which consists of a plug-in cartridge, sophisticated picture manipulating software and a very comprehensive manual.

As well as grabbing single images from TV or Video for use with art programs or DTP packages, the Vidi can actually capture pictures and display them in real time – at up to 25 frames a second!

This is the essential package for anyone who wishes to make use of the full graphics potential of their ST. With a saving of £15 off the retail price this is an offer you should not miss!

SAVE £15! RRP £99.99 **Our Price £84.99**

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Four action and strategy games are included in this sensational package from Infogrames.

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Four unbeatable arcade games at an unbelievable price from Infogrames.

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PURPLE SATURN DAY – A unique game which has achieved legendary status in the arcade games arena. Participate in the Intergalactic Games – if you dare!

SPIDERTRONIC – 3D action and digitised sound enhance this fascinating strategy game..

G.NIUS – Your space station has crashed on an unknown planet. Escape the wreck before it disintegrates around you. Timed action and a frantic pace.

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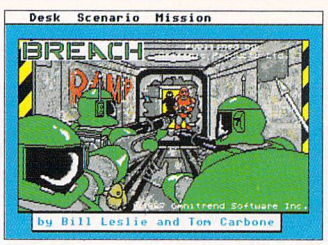
Great value for money. Don't miss this offer! **Our Price £17.95**

Once more . . . unto the Breach

Breach is a game which demands nerves of steel and sound tactical judgement for you to win.



You can select from a number of scenarios. For example with Breeder your task is to wipe out an alien installation and rescue Federated World citizens who are being used as fodder for man-eating monsters.

Breach is one of those games you just can't put down. With its addictive gameplay, tactical combat and facility for extra scenarios, its guaranteed to keep you coming back for more.

● ***We're also giving away an extra scenario disk – absolutely free!***

SAVE £10! RRP £19.95 **Our Price £9.95**

TO ORDER PLEASE USE THE FORM ON PAGE 133

There's more than one company making Trax for the ST!

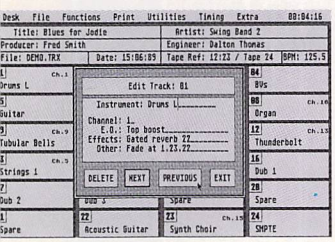
Cue Sheet screen showing cues

The Address Book main screen

Both Quinsoft, developers of budget-priced voice editing software, and Passport, American sequencing software house, have released programs called Trax.

Quinsoft's Trax is not a sequencer as you might expect from the name, but a suite of programs to help run a recording studio.

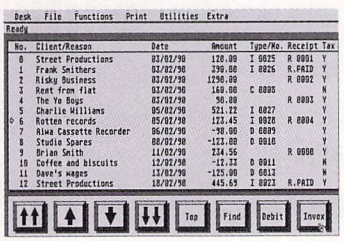
A master disk is used for protection and this must be present during booting. It'll run on any ST and contains four main programs, plus versions of two of them in DA form.



Tracksheet main screen showing additional info in track boxes

Tracksheet lets you store details of the contents of up to 24 tracks of your sequencer. The main screen shows the Midi channel number and clicking on the track box calls up additional info, such as EQ settings.

Cue Sheet lets you set up a list of cue points which can be used to indicate the start of a solo, vocal entry or hit points for a jingle or video. Cues can be entered manually in Learn mode by clicking the mouse. You can import data from the Tracksheet into the Mixdown page, which can hold 48 tracks although you can enter any other data here.



Invox main screen showing list oftems for invoicing

Invox keeps a record of credits, debits and receipts and can generate invoices and statements. It adjusts your bank balance, too, so you know how much you have - or owe!

The Address Book is for storing those all-important names and addresses of your clients. A demo file supplied with the program contains lots of helpful music contacts, and these names can be imported into Tracksheet and Invox.

Index is a general purpose disc archiver which reads and stores details of the files on your discs. It can also automatically display the song title and artist of Trax files. Desk Accessory versions of Tracksheet and Address Book are supplied, but they have slightly fewer features than the full programs.

The manual is clear but lacks an index. If you run a small studio, you could find Trax very useful indeed although, with the exception of the DAs, it will tie up your computer. If you want to check it out a demo disc is available for £5. The complete program costs £68 + VAT and is available from Villasoft on 0621 868523.

DECEMBER'S NEWS

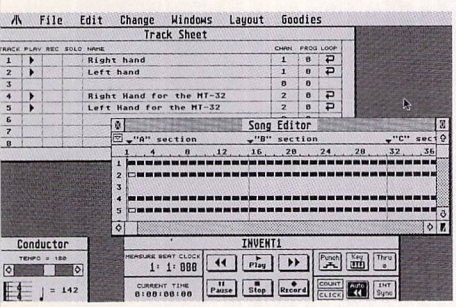
New company Intrinsic Technology has developed some interesting items for the muso on a budget. At £35, MixIT is a 4:1 passive mixer with sliding faders, which doesn't require a power supply.

TestIT gives a visual check of Midi data and includes a Midi lead, labels, an adaptor and a Midi guide – all for £10. Contact IT on 081 761 0178.

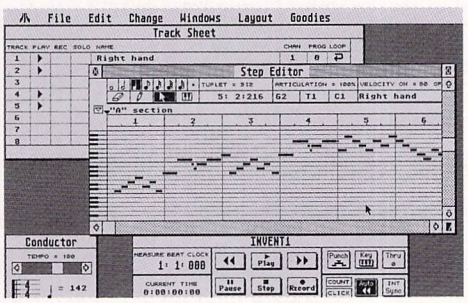
The TCB Tracker was launched at the Computer Entertainment Show, and has undergone many major improvements since many demo versions were released.

It can play back four channels of sampled sound, store 16 samples in memory, gives stereo sound on the STE and it's Midi-compatible. Yours for £39.95 from MPH on 0603 503382.

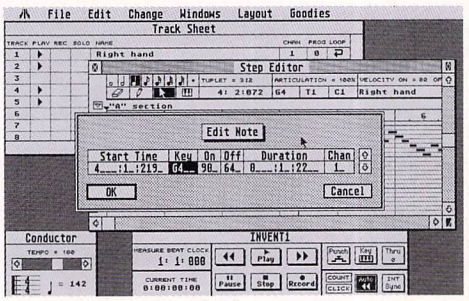
PASSPORT'S READY...



Passport's Trax showing the Track Sheet, Song Editor, Conductor and Transport windows



The Step Editor window of Passport's Trax, showing notes displayed as bars on a grid



Individual note parameters can be accessed from the Step Editor window

Passport's Trax is a sequencer which is actually a revamped version of Passport's Master Tracks Jr (which used to cost £109). This in turn derives from MasterTracks Pro, which will cost you (£285) – that's the way we like to see software prices go!

It has 64 tracks and control centres round five GEM windows which can be resized and repositioned anywhere on the screen. Operation is based on traditional tape recorder controls which are found in the Transport window along with punch in, count in and MIDIThru options.

The Conductor window is used solely to set the tempo, although there's also a Conductor Track which is accessed from the menu bar. This is used to make time signature and tempo changes throughout the piece, these alterations include accelerandos and rallentandos.

You will find the tracks listed in the Track Sheet window. They can be named, soloed, muted and looped. The output can be assigned to a Midichannel which is different to the one the track was recorded on. A program can also be specified to change the number of tracks which will be sent before playing.

In the Song Editor window the music is shown in blocks, each representing one bar. This makes it easy to perform block edits like move and copy.

The familiar grid editor can be found in the Step Editor window which is Trax's major improvement over MasterTracks Jr. Notes are shown as bars on a grid – the higher the bar the higher the note, and the longer the bar the longer the duration.

Editing is quite comprehensive and notes can be edited in a group or individually. Notes can be entered in step-time on the grid using the mouse or a Midi keyboard. Although the Step Editor is a welcome addition to the program it stops short of providing a full event list, which could have included additional info such as program changes and controller data.

The manual is easy to read and the program supports the Midi file format, so you can transfer data between Trax and a score writer or another sequencer. Been put off by the complexities of some sequencer programs? Well, Trax is worth checking out. It costs £85 and is available from MCM on 081 963 0663.

ST PUBLIC DOMAIN – ONLY

Characters between asterixes show special requirements:

*** M * = Mono Res, * C * = Colour Res, * D * Double sided disk, * X * = 1 Meg Ram.**

378 - Fastdisk speeds up reading & writing FCOPY 2.0, disk copier. FORMAT prg & acc. Ramdisk & setup utils for Mega's. Taskcopy work & copy disks. Doc in German but the progs are simple to use.

337 - Selection of Hard Drives utils. Inc. a prog to boot from drive C, dir checking, back up utils to floppies, Auto folders on hard drives, & overcome the 40 folder limit.

838 - SUPERBOOT V5. - ST boot prog, choose desktop .ACCs, Auto progs to run DESKTOP.INF, GDOS, ASSIGN.SYS, etc.

384 - LABEL EXPERT a great label maker. has preset formats for disks, video, & tapes.

884 - AMC GDOS, Atari's replacement for GDOS. used the same. ARC SHELL v1.98 make ARC.TPP user-friendly. DISKTOOLBOX v2.03 check Boot Sector etc. HYPERFORMAT v2.56 upto 929K bytes. V/KILLER 2.2 detect & disable viruses, fully docs + MORE

321 - Great selection of 6 high quality Degas pics. + some progs for converting Degas to Neo & vice-versa.

322 - NEOCHROME ART PACKAGE Great colour art utility & 5 high quality pics.

375 - FONTEDIT v3.0, Editor & loaders for Ram& downloaded fonts. Fonts Inc., font data disassembler & Meta util giving access to alternative character set.

390 - E-PLAN CAD, stock list facility. A great CAD package from Germany. Schaltpl, Electronics package with Star 10 & C Itoh prtr drivers. * M *

391 - COLUMBIA, Drawing prog with some 3D elements & co-ord display. Studio (1 meg Ram), menu driven drawing package. Both progs from Germany.

397 - DOODLE, Original Mono & Col versions. Also NEOCHROME v0.6 + moreF12P10

376 - FONTS2, 7 screen & desktop fonts. Columbia, Devoll, Hudson, Saturn, Spokane, Thames & Universal Roman.

537 - DOUBLE SENTRY accounts.

538 - TYPING TUTOR (1)

539 - TYPING TUTOR (2)

593 - THE ARTIST, Great drawing package with all the normal options. * M *

394 - PICWORKS, Utility to enlarge, reformat & manipulate pics up to 3 times normal size. * M *

820 - SNOOPY, 25 cartoons + display prog. * C *

540 - PUBLIC PAINTER

310 - 3 versions of ST Writer wordprocessor. Ful docs & a printer installation program. + template & quick ref files.

526 - American trademarks from the 1920's & 1930's. Some very atmospheric images from Logic Logic USA.

541 - INVENTORY PRO

339 - Disk utils - a formatter that plays music to relieve the boredom of formatting. An Epson compatible disk labeller, a fix prog for baddisks & MORE.

836 - Mono Emulator, ARC file compiler. BICLOCK to set time/date without using .ACC slot. Coder enables to set up your printer from desktop. Degascon converts Degas pics to Hi-Res & outputs to printer. FONTRIX loads an 8 bit font & make it GEM difficult.+ MORE

881 - 100% IBM compatible formatter that formats 3.5" or 5.25" disks for DOS or TOS comes with source code. ARC SHELL v1.91. Megamatic, Mono emu v3.0. STARTGEM for GEM progs to be run from the Auto folder. SWITCHER Splits ST in two. VIRUS DESTRUCTION UTILITY V2.1.+MORE

834 - DOUBLE CLICK format v3.03 9/10 sectors, 80/82 tracks. Write an executable bootsector to do things like bypass HD Autoboot, run prog that you write & call COMMAND.PRG & loads of other things. MEGAMINUTE v2.1 Hard drive backup util.+ more

883 - MX-2 v2.3 a multi-tasking & multi-user enviroment. Up to 7 concurrent tasks such as compiling, printing, etc. Designed for use with Gulam (included). Has network drivers.* D *

382 - Archive utils, including ARC, EXSQUZ, SQUEEZE, STPACK, STSQ, UENCODE & TAU a text file archiver.

809 - AIM v3.21, Image processing package. Has different facitlities to read & write different graphic formats such as NEO & DEGAS & process colour images. Demo macros & plenty of docs. From the Delft University, Holland. * DX *

876 - DELUXE FONTMASTER v2.0, Lay out text & print it with a large choice of different & original fonts on an Epson, IBM or NEC compatible printer. Plenty of fonts inc. or create your own. * MD *

879 - PALETTE MASTER, Art package that offers the user up to 512 colours. Features such as airbrush, spraycan, fills etc. Docs in 1ST Word format. Demo pics. * C *

880 - COLOURBURST 3000 v0.3, Add different colours to pics from other packages. Up to 50 palettes per screen. There's a choice of 3375 colours. PICSWITCH Import screens from most packages & then modify. * CX *

520 - CLIP ART, Various Fonts, pics of famous people, old & new, Seasonal logos, images & cartoons.

523 - CLIP ART, Children's whimsical font, elaborate font & Christmas card images.

328 - Formatter, -calender, clock, dir printer, Disk Manager with format, copy file, disk free and rename folder options. + MORE.

829 - This disk is packed with various prqgrams for printing all kinds of labels.

857 - DISKMECH a powerfull disk analyser/ archiver/editor , edit bytes, edit tracks and analyse disks etc. With full docs. CPANEL is an improved control panel. F12P10

561 - GENESIS, Fractal landscape generator. FORMAT 10 is a 10 sect/80 track formatter. VKILLER. PCOMMAND, file utility command driven like MSDOS. + MORE

886 - DIY DEMO, Make demos featuring a title screen and scrolling message, without any programming skills.

99p PER DISK

842 - DEC edit clone, Disk engineer v3.01 Do almost anything to a disk via GEM, such as providing a complete report on any disk, format, copy, listings & FAT info.

324 - ADDRESS LOG, On this disk there's a limited address book & label printer, an auto disk catalogger that prints labels & a label prog for printing all types of labels + MORE.

843 - AUTOGEM autoboots any Gem progon boot. XFORMAT2, extended formatter. VC Spreadsheet a non-GEM spreadsheet.

584 - MOUSE TRICKS, a .ACC that gives extensive control over mouse movement & menu style. Range of special effects. QUICK ST speeds up output to screen. BIGSCREEN simulates a virtual screen in any res but has limitations. + more.

808 - FRACKTAL, A fractal drawing program from Germany - comes with Mono & colour versions. + Fractal landscape prog and 'loads a' demos.

888 - ANI-ST, Formerly the commercial package AEGIS ANIMATOR which retailed at £79.95 ! ! ! A HIGHLY PROFESSIONAL quality animation system. Loads of features, comes with full docs & has examples that you can examine & modify.

396 - MASTERPAINT, Drawing package with superb features. Works in Mon & Col. LITTLE PAINTER is a drawing prog.

521 - CLIP ART, Various human figures, different cartoons, Titles & more.

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580 - LEAGUE SOCCER, Play the full league programme. Watch your selected game with reports & text commentary. * D *

581 - TOP OF THE POPS, Climb up the Top 50, gamble on new or experienced groups.

583 - CENTAURIAN, shoot'em up attacking craft coming at you thick & fast.FS1 FSBLACK DRAGON an almost complete text adventure. Most of the hard work is done You need STAC to finish it off.

352 - EAMON is an Adventure game writing system. Implemented in GFA Basic, is needed if you want to write your own games. Comes with 5 games that can be run without GFA.

856 - CHESSNUT, is a 3D chess game with full Docs. SPOOKS is a great PACMAN clone. BELLUM INTERNECINUM is a fast action destruction game.

361 - A 68000 Assembler and a selection of progs in FORTH-83, ST Logo, ST Basic and OSS Pascal.

305 - CPM EMULATOR, This is a CPM-8 version 2.0. Runs at 2 megahertz.

306 - CPM UTILITIES, Use with disk 305. This disk is necessary as it has all the DOS commands for 305.

334 - C COMPILER, Comprises boot up utility, ram disk, & command line interpreter. Compiler is processor, parse & code generator all in one.

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859 - REBUS WRITER, Superb program to design & print Rebuses - a 'code' in which pictures & symbols are used to represent words. Very easy for children to use & lots of fun. Examples Included. F12P10

341 - BARNYARD Game requiring the pairing of animals from memory. Smoothtalk, demo of Firsy Byte educational programs with synthesised speech. * C *

556 - VANGOUGH, Studio 2 - Art package.

557 - SPELLING made easy.

558 - MATHS made easy.

559 - KIDSONG, Numeric Go round, Kidpublisher, No Maze.

562 - INVASION, adventure.

563 - DARKNESS is forever, adventure.

564 - CHUNNEL, French tutor game * C *

565 - SKIDPAN, racing game * C *

566 - DIE ALIEN BLOB, shoot'em up game * C*

835 - 1ST WORD Wordprocessor. Comes with a printer configuration utility & Docs.

309 - ADVENTURE WRITING SYSTEM, Full docs for writing text adventures. Includes Columbus, a sample adv.

351 - Hack ! is a Dungeon & Dragons text adventure with graphic maps.

347 - SPACEWAR, arcade game. FIRESTORM, you're on a mission of mercy, uses mouse. AZARIAN addictive shoot-em up. Beat the invading Thraxx.

508 - ATOMS, for 2-4 players. Take turns to place atoms & to dominate the screen. KILLERCHESS is a fast & furious game which is down to speed. AMMOTRACK Superb blast'em game.

349 - SOLITAIR with 3D graphics. Macpan is like Pacman. Galaxy and Sprengmeister re strategy games. * M *

529 - STOCKMARKET, Wheel & deal on the Stock Exchange. GALACTIC WARRIORS, a good shoot'em-up.

887 - SOZOBON C, Probably the best PD C compiler with full K & R compiler support. Bit fields, structure assignment, etc. Includes utilities, Make and a shell. Only a text editor is needed.

826 - DATABASE 1, GEM driven database. Easy to use & learn. Online help screens. Max field size is 3000 characters. Max file size is 320k bytes.

830 - HOME ACCOUNTS v1.0 by David Pullin. Allows 3 different statements in memory at once, & upto 100 entries per statement. * C *

827 - ST SHEET, A good quality spreadsheet written by Neil Smith. Can be used as a Desk .Acc. * C *

875 - COMPOSER, music creation prog utilising the ST's soundchip or via midi interface, with drum kit & many features.

535 - ACCOMPANIST 3.2, 'Full featured midi sequencer program thatl run on all STs. 16 voice 96bpm resolution. Visual display of notes recorded, internall /external metronome signal. Some song files, included. * C *

802 - THE PLANETS, A slide show around the planets with plenty of pictures, facts and figures. * D *

833 - YOUR SECOND ATARI MANUAL- 250 kbyte text file of version 4 of the book. A must for all ST users.

545 - UPSTART, game * C *

546 - SLIDER, game * C *

547 - ADDICTION, game * C *

548 - ENGLAND team manager *C*

549 - FOOTBALL pools predictor

551 - ROBOCOP playable demo (2 disks) *C*

552 - BERMUDA race 2. * C *

553 -1ST SERVE tennis * C *

554 - NAPOLEON * M *F5

555 - WELCOME to Chemistry

363 - ST WRITER ELITE v3.8 , the latest release of ST WRITER now GEM orientated. It's a superb PD Wordprocessor with text files, & docs

831/841 EASY TEXT PLUS Fully working Desk Top Publishing demo prog. Usea the WYSIWYG presentation. 21 page manual on disk. The only difference between this & the commwercial version is that this only prints 1/4 of a page at a time. 831 is for single sided and 841 is for double sided disk users. The commercial version is available from us at a discounted price of £18.50.

338 - Breakanoid is a great cross between Breakout & Arkanoid. DGDB is a German game like boulderdash.

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528 - FLOYD THE DROID, an ultra fast shoot'em-up.

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531 - COMPUTER PINBALL, as it sounds. DEVASTATOR, a 3D strategy game, & a DARTS game.

312, 313 & 314, C LANGUAGE DISKS 1, 2 & 3 of Elementary C, a set of 3 disks of progs to illustrate the use of 'C'Each prog has C source code, the assembler version & the runable prog. Subjects are prog structure, functions, I/O. decisions, loops, & more. Based on 'A Book On C' by Berry & Meekings. (This is 3 disks !!!)

839 - Nigel Smith's ST 68000 Ref. guide v2.0 A pop up guide to Assembly language of the 68000 processor. Runs as a Desk .Acc .

874 - OPUS v2.2, GEM based spreadsheet & charting prog - It's fast, powerful & easy to use. GDOS support. Full docs. Plenty of examples. * DX *

580 - FLYING START, a standard RS232 comms pack, 7 option menu for various formats of data transfer. VANTERM 3.71 a great PD Comms package.

365 - WORLI mailbox program v3.3 with standard cofiguration files for TAPR, TNC1. TNC2, PAC-COM, TNC20-0 & TNC22-0, AEA PK80, PK87 & PK232, MFJ1270 & 1274. Docs included.

873 - B/STAT v2.01, Sophisticated graphing & stats analysis prog. Various types of graph & analysis available. Input your own data or load it from various spreadsheet progs. Printer & metafile output. * D *

832 - ST TOUR, Guided tour of the ST showing use of Desk Accessories, menus, windows etc. in tutorial form.

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544 - AYATOLLA, game. * C *

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Breaking and entering? You can do it legally

A couple of years ago, you couldn't open a newspaper or computer magazine without being regaled with a story about hackers who had broken into some top security establishment, tampered with files and then damaged the system.

The usual band of hang-'em advocates suggested stiff prison sentences, heavy fines (and presumably being spanked on their bare behinds with a cane...), but thankfully, although the issue was hot, it managed to remain outside the bounds of criminal law.

Hacking is frowned upon, and you could be prosecuted for a variety of minor offences if caught, but the chances are that you'll remain on the right side of a prison cell.

So. Should you hack? Well, there are some interesting systems to explore. The university JANET (Joint Academic NETwork) network is a likely candidate for a look around, with several friendly VAXes running the VMS operating system.

But if you're tempted, think about this: schools, colleges, polytechnics and universities are all grossly under-funded at the moment. Government education cut-backs mean that it's difficult enough for college computer departments to meet the needs of their students, let alone uninvited intruders who are wandering around, wasting computer time.

BACK TO SCHOOL

If you want to explore, why not simply enrol in an evening computer course? For a moderate sum (or a trifle if you're unwaged), you'll be able to explore Harris, PDP and Date General minis running Unix, VMS and Pick. You won't interfere with legitimate operations (it will be legit.) and you'll learn a lot too!

And if you simply can't resist the lure of the unauthorised entry, why not read a good book about it and get your kicks that way? The Hacker's Handbook by Hugo Cornwall, is the definitive guide to computer hacking, and contains some exciting stories of night-time adventures across the electronic ether.

Or how about Clifford Stoll's, The Computer and the Egg? This is a thrilling account of how Stoll, an astronomer from Berkeley, California, tracked down and captured a West German ring of youthful hackers. They had penetrated military departments and other sensitive installations in the States.

WIRED UP!

Those new to comms – and even old hands – can be confused by the RS232 standard. Not so much a standard as a varying collection of pins, outputs and inputs, RS232 is notoriously difficult to master. Which probably explains why most enthusiasts will happily shell out around £15 for an RS232 cable, that probably costs a pound or so to make.

Why not make your own? It's not as difficult as you might think, and it's extremely satisfying to know that you've saved a lot of money. Interested? Here's how...

You'll need a soldering iron of course (they can be had for under £20. Choose an iron rated around 15 watts or you'll fry the components). If you don't have one, then making a cable may not be worth the expense. That is, unless you intend to use a newly-purchased iron for other projects.

You'll need one female and one male 25-way D connector (they come in parts, plug and cover. Around £1.50 altogether), a length of eight core shielded cable (about 15p per metre), some solder (the stuff with the built-in flux) and an iron.

Bare the core ends and tin them (that means heating them up then covering them with a thin coating of solder. This will help when you come to solder them properly).

Then make the following soldered connections to the D connectors: pins 1 together, pin 2 to pin 3, pin 3 to pin 2, pins 7 together, pins 20 together and pins 22 together.

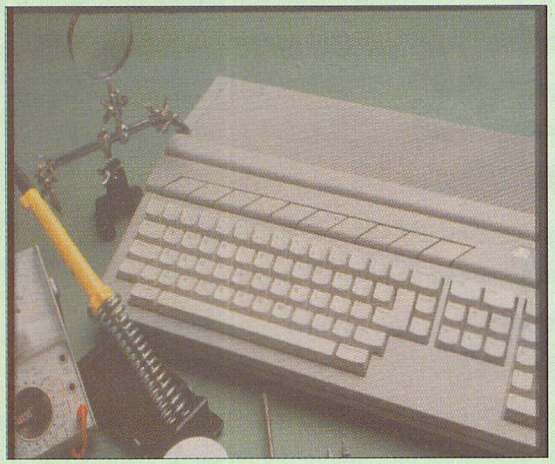
(If you don't know how to solder, here's a potted guide. Make sure the two objects to be soldered together are clean and free from grease. Heat the objects not the solder, and hold the solder against them. When they're hot enough, the solder will run. Always tin an object if you can. A good soldered joint will be bright and shiny, a bad one, dull and easily broken with a tug.)

Remember to slot the plug covers onto the cable before you solder on the plug, otherwise you won't be able to get them on! And that's it. One cheap, RS232 cable. Simple, right?

A third hand tool is useful when soldering

Choose a soldering iron rated at around 15 watts

Computer: indispensable for computer projects



A multi-meter enables you to test cables for good connections

Buy solder with a flux core

Assorted pliers and screwdrivers. Buy the best you can – they'll last longer

BAUD GAMES

And now, as promised last month, here are few more bulletin board numbers. We've tried most of these boards and found them to be good. Some of them are not ST-specific, but have a good ST section, or other things of interest.

Most allow you to download a few items immediately, but you need to be a regular user to get at the best stuff. Oh, and remember, bulletin boards are a two-way thing so upload as much as you download and you'll help to make the board a going concern. Give 'em a call...

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- **Alternative Solutions 0742 325232 V21/V22/V22bis**
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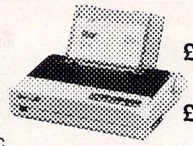

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Man or mouse? Take a look through the window to find out

Whoever's in charge of your computer, the point-and-click revolution is unstoppable. This month we look at its latest victory.

There are always going to be those who think that the true spirit of computing lies in entering obscure textual commands, with even more obscure parameters and switches. These people think that anybody preferring to point and click at a pictorial icon is a wimp, not deserving of the blessings of microchip technology.

As readers of this magazine you'll probably disagree with that philosophy, since you are likely to own an ST with its GEM user interface. But if you're paying more than passing attention to this page you may also have some interest in MSDOS, which (alongside the unspeakably abstruse UNIX) is the main preserve of the command line machos.

NATURE LOVERS?

Let's face it, once you're used to a friendly graphical environment as presented by the Mac or ST, you're unlikely to relish the prospect of returning to the A> prompt. Unfortunately, in the world of business and commercial computing, you often don't have the choice – which is likely to be the reason why you're interested in emulators.

The good news is that the tide seems to have turned irrevocably against user-hostile environments. In a few year's time, the vast majority of computer users won't be able to tell the difference between a parameter and a file extender. They will however, be happily using applications immeasurably more powerful than anything the hardened DOS hackers of yesteryear would have thought possible.

The conventions established by the mouse-click pioneers on their 'pretty toys' will very soon become the established industry standard. The future has begun, and its name is Windows 3

WINDOWS 3

Windows 3 needs no long introduction – no new product has ever received more publicity in the PC-oriented and general computer press. It's Microsoft's answer to the Apple Macintosh, a multi-tasking graphical user interface, that will run on virtually every IBM compatible. It is happiest on the later generation of machines based on the Intel 386 and 486 chips.

After all the hype, I just could not resist trying it out on the ST. This was partly to see how it fared in comparison with GEM and the Mac, but also in the hope of at last finding a way of using MSDOS without tears.

BOWLED OVER

As to the first point, I am simply bowled over by Windows. It's incredibly powerful, flexible and friendly and after little more than a week, I feel as much at home with it as I do after years with the Mac's Finder.

This isn't really surprising as the Finder is getting a little long in the tooth now, but Apple are hard at work over the long awaited, fundamental overhaul of System 7. On the other hand, I might just be impressed with the novelty of it all – only long-term experience will tell.

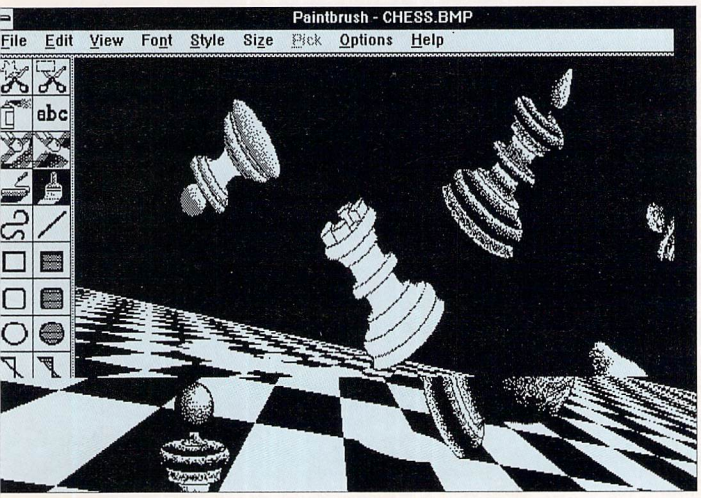
As to Windows and GEM, I'm afraid it's like comparing a push-bike to a Harley Davidson – they are just not in the same league. So far, I have only installed Windows with SuperCharger and its rather sedate V30 processor. It's a little slow in this environment, but still usable.

Apart from speed, the main drawback of running Windows under XT emulation is that you have to stick to 'real mode', within the 640K memory limit and all kinds of other restrictions, especially when running non-Windows software. I look forward to letting it loose with one of the new 286-based AT emulators and getting access to 'standard mode'.

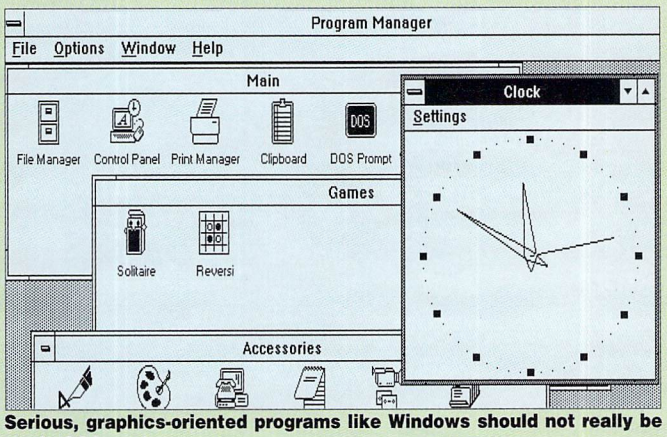
In the meantime, the combination of SuperCharger's little tricks and Windows is pretty irresistible.

For example, having more than one application running concurrently under Windows, then hotkeying to TOS and starting an ST program. On return to DOS (via the desktop accessory entry for SuperCharger) you'll find that your Windows applications have been happily chugging along while you were away in ST land! Multi-tasking or what?

My apologies to Mac addicts, CP/M aficionados and BBC freaks for the Windows 3 special this month. I promise that normal service will be resumed in the next issue.

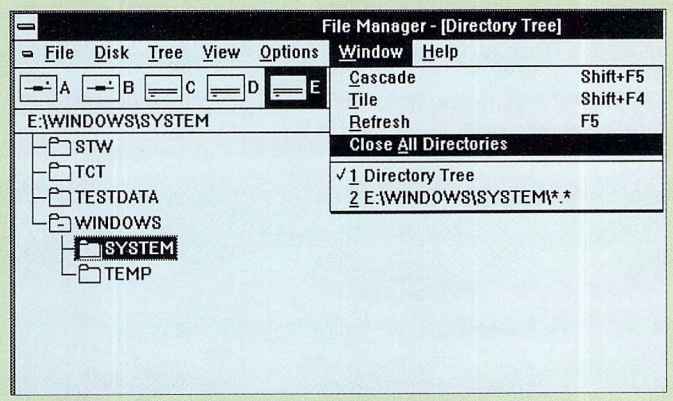


One of the applications bundled with Windows 3 is Paintbrush, a more than capable art program



Serious, graphics-oriented programs like Windows should not really be run in CGA mode

Here the Hercules screen emulation of SuperCharger is used, but on the ST's monochrome monitor you cannot, of course, see the full picture. You'll need to scroll sideways with the '/' key. The actual display on an SM124/125 is demonstrated in the screenshot below.



Windows 3 uses a graphic representation of the directory tree

There are two shells in Windows: Program Manager (above), which handles all the applications as pretty icons, and File Manager- shown here – which uses directory trees and file names. It's mainly intended for file and disk operations such as formatting, copying and renaming, but can also launch applications.

All the screenshots on this page were produced by saving the current screen to Windows clipboard, pasting the clipboard into Paintbrush, and saving the picture in the standard PC graphics format PCX.

A quick SuperCharger hotkey switch to TOS, load TouchUp to convert .PCX into .IMG or Degas, and back to Windows. Great fun!

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STU12

Letters to Who?.. It can't be that time already

ear Santa,
or Christmas this year I would like the following ierra games:

Space Quest IV: OK, I know it's another equel, that's why the adversaries are called the equel Police. I've had great fun adopting the uise of Roger Wilco in the past, and I'm sure at both of my readers (you've got two then? – d) will help me out if I get stuck attempting to ross time and space to reach Xenon. Here the sk is to reunite Roger and his (cue violins) true ve.

King's Quest V: the opportunity to once again lay the role of King Graham, the star of the first o adventures in the series.

Hero's Quest II: Trial by Fire, the chance to eef up the character adopted in the first game, the burning deserts of Arabia.

Rise of the Dragon: a 21st Century sci-fi riller in which I can become a private-eye, acking down deadly criminals in a real-time nvironment, with an interface somewhat similar the Manhunter games.

Speaking of which, will Manhunter London be available? I hope so. Also if there's room in my stocking alongside Joanne Whalley-Kilmer, you might as well include 'Keeping up with Jones', although it sounds a little too real-life to me – involving getting a job, buying food, paying bills...

I tell you what, forget about that one, and put Sorcerian in instead. That's the Japanese RPG which Sierra have converted. It boasts staggering graphics, a stunning sound-track, fifteen scenarios and your character can even age during the course of the game, providing he or she survives that long.

Well, that about wraps it up for this time, although if FTL have managed to program Dungeon Master II (you know the one set in outer space, promised a couple of years ago), you may as well let me have a copy.
Yours, The Faun.

Dear Phil,
Very funny. It's a sleigh I've got, not the Tardis. However, if you're a very good boy, eat your greens, go to bed early and remain the only adventure columnist, not to make cheap and cruel jibes about users of other brands of computer, you can have (sans Joanne 'what's her name') all of the Sierra games promised for last Crimble.

To whit: Leisure Suit Larry III, Codename: Iceman, The Colonel's Bequest, Hero's Quest and Conquests of Camelot. That lot should keep you busy over the hols.

I've also got a surplus of older adventures that have been ignored, in favour of more fashionable games like Octogenarian Android Samurai Terrapins. Fads come and go, but these will have enduring appeal to the discerning ST User, so you can have:

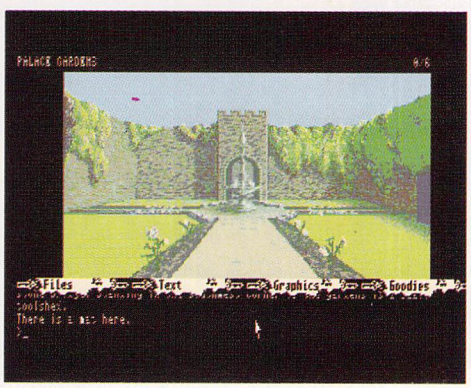
Sierra-on-Line's King's Quest triple pack, the Ultima triple pack and Level 9's Time and Magik trilogy. A little dated perhaps, but great value, as in each case you get three games for the price of admission. That's why the words triple and trilogy are included in the titles.

As you're an avowed fan of Brian Moriarty you can also have his latest creation, Loom from Lucasfilm games. I'll also throw in the Infocom titles Trinity (probably the finest text adventure ever written) and Beyond Zork (a role-playing masterpiece), before they become collectors items.

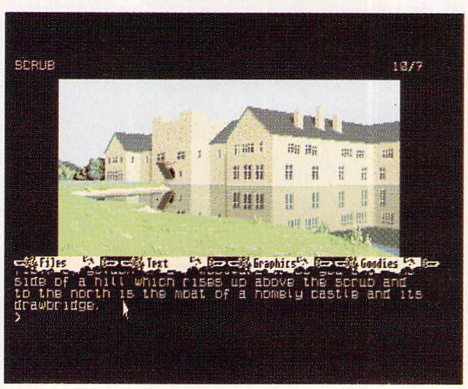
Dungeon Master and its sequel, Chaos Strikes Back are included, too, although anyone who doesn't already possess them must be crackers. You'll find the Bard's Tale in there because even though it's pretty ancient, it's still great fun. What's another word for addictive?

Well, that's about all there's room for this year. I'm off to finish Leisure Suit Larry now, it's definitely the best of the three. Forget about the sherry and mince pies, I'd rather have a Jack Daniel's and some of those Popadam things.
Yours, Santa.

he Pawn: The bridge outside the castle. Dare ou enter?



So you plucked up enough courage and now you are in the royal gardens



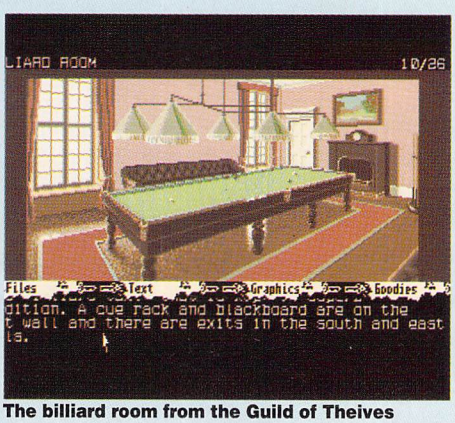
You got off the boat, now get across the moat. A good thief could do it.

WHAT'S TO COME...

There's just enough room to give you a taste of what's to come in the New Year from US Gold. They appear to be striving for an entry in the Guinness Book of Records as 'Software Company Most Likely to Bankrupt Adventurers'.

Two Lucasfilm games, The Secret of Monkey Island, and Night Shift look promising. The former claims to be a comedy swashbuckler set in the Caribbean in the seventeenth century. Your goal is to win the confidence of the pirates in the port of Melee, in order to discover the fabled Monkey Island.

Promising lots of tricky puzzles, hilarious repartee, cinematic story-telling, high resolution graphics, sophisticated animation and a point and click interface, it sounds too good to be true.



The billiard room from the Guild of Theives

Night Shift features characters from other Lucasfilm games such as Indiana Jones, Zak McKracken and the cast of Star Wars. The object of the game is to repair various parts of a rubbish recycler known as the Beast, so that it can continue to churn out mini-toys of the aforementioned heroes. Perhaps more arcadish than previous efforts, the visual mini-puzzles and slapstick arcade action (for one or two players) won't be to taste, but check it out anyway, it'll give the Orcs a rest if nothing else.

Next month sees the return of the Hints and Tips in a new-look section. Until then Merry Christmas and a Happy New Year to the pair of you.

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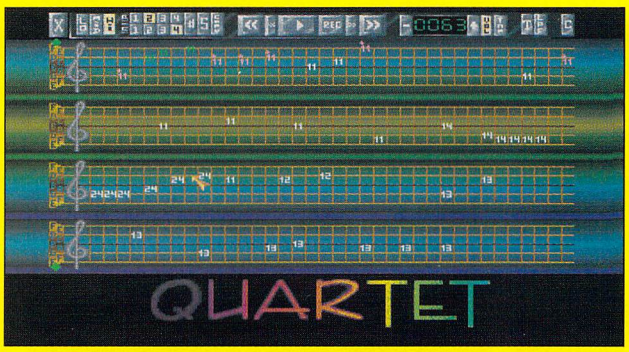

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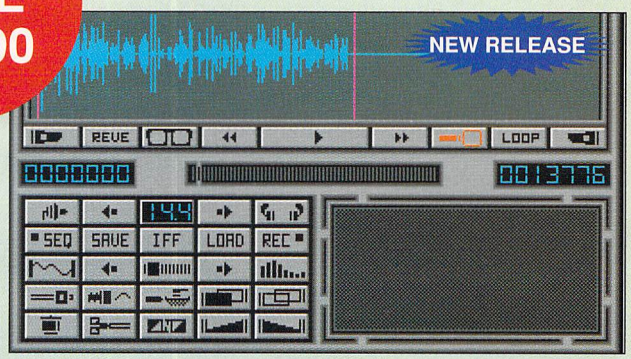

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"Is it real or is it Master Sound?"

– Amiga Computing, May 1990

See order form on page 133

Take time to become the master of your DTP pages

f you're using your DTP to produce multi-page documents, you can save a lot of time by defining a master layout. Setting up all the elements of the page that will remain constant through the document, means that then you only need to flow in text, or place graphics that are unique to individual pages.

You can also define specific sets of typographic effects which can be applied as a group paragraph styles or tags. Each of the four main ST DTPs handles master pages and paragraph styles a little differently. This month Timeworks and PageStream are examined in the column.

TIMEWORKS

Timeworks DTP is based loosely on the IBM PC product Ventura Publisher. The program supports both master pages and paragraph styles, and encourages you to use both in every document. In fact, justification and indents can only be applied through styles.

A Timeworks document has either one or two master pages, depending on whether its pages are all alike or not. The Goto Page option from the Page menu has a sub-option to move to the master page.

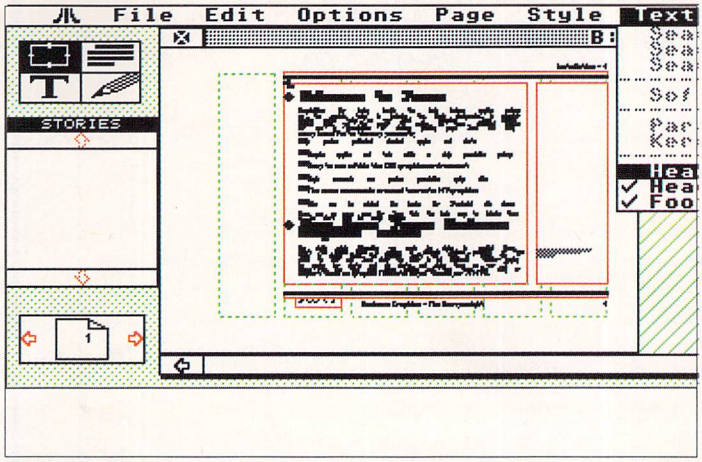
When the master is displayed, it can be edited in the same way as any of the 'live' pages. The difference is that items on the master page are repeated automatically on all other pages.

The master page can include page number, headers, footers and any frames which are created. These can be empty frames which will be flowed with text on the live pages. It's a lot easier to draw them once and have them copied across automatically, than to create them individually on each page in the document.

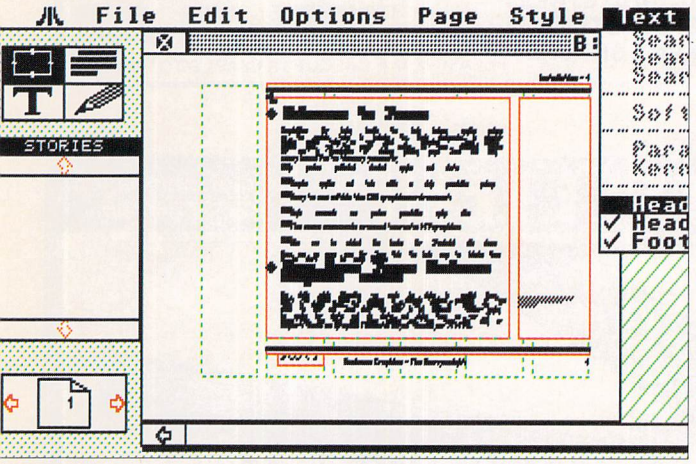
Master pages should be drawn before live pages, because only pages added after the change will take on the revisions.

Paragraph styles can be created at any time. They are a way of combining font, point size, style, leading and justification information in one easily applied tag.

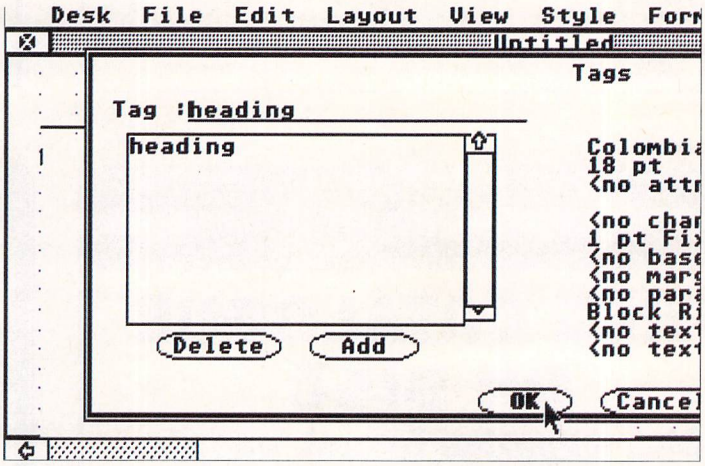
Once created via a two-tier dialog system, any tag can be applied by selecting a paragraph and assigning it from the browser. You can assign common tags to the function keys and use these to tag paragraphs more conveniently.



Paragraph styles can be applied to any defined paragraph by selecting from the browser. Style editing is another option from the text menu



leaders and footers are positioned separately from other page elements nder Timeworks DTP, by selecting an option from the text menu



PageStream's tag dialog shows up to 255 tags per document, and all the attributes for each in turn

PAGE STEAM

PageStream uses a very similar scheme of master pages and paragraph styles. To select the master page click on the open book – the page number then reads 'M'.

Again you can add rules, frames, text and graphics to the master page, and it can be laid down as the basis of all future pages. There's no special scheme for adding headers and footers, but text anywhere on the page is repeated on live pages.

PageStream lets you choose to use a master page or not, on any page in the document. This means that a master layout can be designed, even for a bulky manual. Here the opening page of each chapter needs to be laid out without using the master.

A Tag in PageStream, which is apparently an acronym for Text Attribute Grouping (it seems plausible), offers much of the same benefits as a style in Timeworks. It does however, include fill, style and colour as extra options.

Tags are created from the Tag option of the Text menu. This calls up a large dialogue containing a selector on the left, and a long list of the attributes assigned to the current tag on the right. Click on any of the items in this list to bring up separate dialogues for editing.

Applying a tag is simple, just select a block of text and the Tag option from the Text menu. An alert checks whether you want to apply the tag to the block or the whole document. It then opens the same dialogue used for creating and editing tags. Just click on a name in the selector to apply it to the selected text.

CALAMUS COLOUR

The latest word from Signa is that the new version of Calamus has only just been released in Germany. The English translation of the manual still has to be done. For this reason, the company wouldn't give a release date for the UK version.

Signa wouldn't comment on speculation that the current version of the program would be reduced in price. If the new program is released at a similar price to the current one though, there must be some cut in the offing. That is, unless the current version is discontinued.

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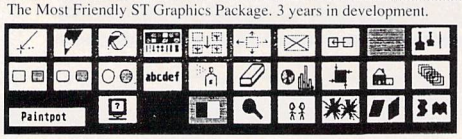

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ABSOLUTE BEGINNERS

Could you please explain to a raw beginner how to get the various programs on the disk to load! I can get the text instruction of, say, Roukes Drift on screen with the bar of symbols at the bottom; but what then?

PR Johnson, Barnt Green

Worry not, PR Johnson – all of the answers to your questions are found in this month's disk pages. After finding out that some of our readers were experiencing similar difficulties (we suspect that masses of hair was being removed by the roots!) USER decided to rectify the situation. Our new (and very considerate) disk editor, Simon Lawson has compiled a set of easy to follow instructions on how to use the disk. What more could you ask for?

KNEES ALERT

Could I please pass on a word of warning to all readers?

I use a 520 STFM with a Frontier Xtra-RAM and cartridge clock fitted, a second disk drive, a Phillips 8833 monitor and extension leads from the mouse and extension leads from the mouse and joystick ports, to save wear and tear on the sockets.

These leads are usually bought as a pair, one lead being longer. The long lead, I bring out from under the computer at the rear and use it to connect the mouse. The short lead used for the joystick, hangs over the desk at the front of the computer. As I do not use a joystick that often, the end of the lead was effectively 'open'.

As is my normal practice, everything but the computer is turned on first. The only thing I did differently the other day was to touch the monitor screen whilst I turned on the computer.

The joystick lead was just brushing my trouser leg when I got a fairly hefty static shock on the knee from the end of the lead. The result was one screwed up Atari!! It would boot up utilities that I had placed in the auto folder, but no Desktop, and a continuous key clicking sound was being emitted from the monitor. Booting up without a disk would only result in the Desktop and continuous clicking, there was no keyboard or mouse response.

With a mountain of work to complete I tried to find somebody who would repair it, 5-10 days was the reply from some of the most reputable dealers, a minimum charge of at least £63, plus carriage or posting and packaging. Ah well! I thought, I will try one last time. The best offer I got was from Penge TV and Video Services, 49, Parish Lane, Penge, SE20. "A couple of days if we have the bits" was the reply.

So with computer in arms, I hot-footed down to them, arriving at 10.30am. Resigned to the fact that I had lost it for at least a week – decorating was placed high on the order of things by my better half!

At 3.30pm that day with more paint up my sleeve than on the brush the 'phone rang, !*!* I thought, "Yes?". "Penge TV and Video here, Mr S your floppy is ready". In less nanoseconds than one can say 'floppy', I parted with £43 and was back at home slaving away at the keyboard. The keyboard processor had died and by all accounts it was lucky that it didn't go further. As for the decorating...who cares!

My thanks to the Penge TV and Video Services, superb service. But let users beware, static electricity is, or can be fatal to your computer. Maybe manufacturers can supply covers to go over lead ends and cartridges that have through sockets. Think about what you are doing before you switch on.

PJ Stubberfield, Croydon, Surrey

Firstly I hope your knees are feeling much better. It was lucky for you that you were wearing your rubber-soled shoes! Seriously, thanks for the warning.

I'm sure that many other users have experienced the same phenomenon, but hopefully you will have saved others from repeating it. So you lot out there – LISTEN AND BE WARNED– save any damage to your body, your ST and your wallet. By the way, did you ever manage to finish your decorating?

HELLO FOOLS...

What the hell was that on last month's cover disk?

I was looking forward to loading and playing the cricket simulation 'Stumped!' Then I noticed it was in a file called Cricket.bas. What are you lot up to in that office?

I cannot get the game started and I have spent a full 2 hours trying to get it loaded because there is no mention of how to get started in either the disk or magazine.

In future would you please ensure that full documentation is included on the disk or in the magazine, or else, I for one, will not be paying the £4.00 a month I have to pay for your magazine.

Denis Frawley, Dublin, Eire

In fact the game was an intelligence test which, going by this month's post, was failed miserably by many of our readers. On the disk this month you'll find a fully executable cricket game, which has been checked, double checked and...

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But just for you Denis, because we liked the opening phrase of your letter (and because the Ed's middle name is Dennis), you'll find another game on your doormat very shortly. Fools indeed!

WE'VE MISSED YOU

I bought my Atari ST just over a year ago, and while I awaited in earnest its arrival I decided to purchase a magazine - that was Atari ST User. And what a good idea that turned out to be, with an excellent disk with utilities and programmes just right for a beginner just starting out.

However, 12 months later it was a very different story, oh dear, you decided to remove the disk and drop the price . To me that was a disastrous idea, and I (for one) stopped buying ST User and went to another (Doormat!) Know what I mean 'arry?

Some months later on a visit to WH Smiths, ST User caught my eye. "What's this?" I thought, "a disk on the cover of ST User! Should I take a peek?" Well I did and immediately fell in love with it again, so we now have made up and hopefully will live happily ever after. But that will be up to you. Keep up the good work.

M Hare, Cleveland

Who is this 'arry then? Although we're really pleased to have you back, the moral of this story is just don't bother to leave us in the first place, OK?

Once again the saga of the disk emerges onto the scene. On one side there are a few readers complaining that there's a disk included, and on the other there are those saying that it's a really important part of the magazine and one of the main reasons for buying it. I'm afraid that we do have to go with the majority, and so each month there it is, the disk stuck proudly on the front of the mag.

SLAPPED WRISTS

Re: Your review in issue 55. Absolutely pathetic, at least from the point of view of a serious ST user. Dare I mention the words OCR. Your 23 lines on the DAATAscan Professional Canon A4 were an absolute waste of space. The same goes for your DTP and Emulation columns (the only two I bothered to read) ...

There are a large number of Megas and STs used in businesses in the UK (goddamnit, they've even used to produce newspapers in Vietnam) and there is a large market for a decent business ST magazine.

The problem is that most of the journos involved are a bunch of schoolkids who have no idea of business and business needs (at least this is the impression I get from the writing and throwaway looks of the magazines which would be more at home in the pop business)...

(there was more but you don't really want to see it, I promise you... - Ed)

A Williams, Cardiff

The article concerned was not actually meant to be an in-depth review on scanners. It was intended to give an overall view of the range of hardware available to those considering the purchase of a scanner.

As for your comments on the columns – well what can I say?

The general response that we receive is a positive one, and we feel that they provide enough ideas and tips to keep our readers going, in that dull and dreary period between issues.

POOR LITTLE LAMB

I am a newcomer to the wonderful world of the Atari and I am totally lost so I have entrusted myself into your caring hands, in the hope that you may be able to help me. While reading through the pages of your heavenly magazine I have come across several references to something by the name of Public Domain, from which I have been able to gather Public Domain has something to do with a lot of different software. Please could you provide some more information on this subject.

Another question I have is, "is there a BBC emulator for the Atari especially an emulator for BBC Basic?".

My final question is, does the illustrious Atari ST User have a subscription service, if so please could you give me some details about it? And need I tell you... keep up the good work!

Stuart Santos, Laguna Estate, Gibraltar

Well your gatherings so far are not wrong! Public domain (PD) is software written by computer users in their spare time. The result is free software, which is available through PD libraries. Read our regular Public Sector column to find out the addresses of libraries, and also to read about a selection of programs which are available.

BBC_EMU is the emulator you've been searching for. The good news is that it's available in the public domain. But the big question is – why are you bothering?

Finally, 'USER does have a subscription service. It's really a good idea to subscribe if you want to guarantee that you will receive your copy of the magazine. You'll find full details near the back of the magazine under the heading 'Subscribe Now'.

SO WONDERFUL?

It's time that we all calmed down a bit and thought about Atari's new wonder machine the TT. It may be that your preview left out some details, but from what I can see Atari are about to make the same design mistakes they have before.

1. The TT has two fans! Has anyone heard of a Mega ST with just one?

2. The TT costs £2000 plus, but there is no sign of a battery back clock!

3. The power switch is still mounted at the back, when it would be just as easy to place it at the front.

4. The new STE uses SIMMs, yet the TT technology moves backwards and uses DIL chips.

5. No room to mount a Tape Streamer, or second floppy disk, which should be standard when considering the market the TT is aimed at.

These are some of the basic design faults in the new TT. There are many more – the operating system's a patch up job of Tos 1.6.

Come on Atari, you have a real winner on your hands with the TT, don't muck things up by spoiling a great machine with these small but important points. Let's not let it be a case of so near yet so far.

Chris Dillon, Hornsey, London

It's true that in the past many 'incredible, amazing and totally revolutionary' machines have ended up as one day wonders because of some small, but important design faults, which weren't discovered soon enough. Let's hope that the TT doesn't follow in their footsteps.

THE ISRAELI CONTINGENT

As you described in your magazine 'Just complete the form alongside and return it without delay and what's more as a subscriber you ...'

Well I sent my order form with the bank cheque on the 18.6.90, and I'm still reading the May/June issues over and over again (I'm dying for ST User).

However I'm not complaining . Only the other day I was speaking to a friend and I recommended Atari ST User to him.

I also have an idea. Every subscriber who brings another subscriber to the magazine (in the bank where I work we call this a friend introducing a friend) should receive something from you, such as a game or another offer.

Dany Maron, Ra'anana, Israel

Sorry to hear that you are having problems with your subscription. Hopefully you will have received the long awaited mags by now, but just to be certain we have passed your letter on to the section dealing with subscriptions. Thanks for the suggestions too, we'll bear them in mind.

BIGGLES BOMBS

I read with interest your review of Lucasfilms 'Their Finest Hour' (September issue) and being an armchair 'Biggles' decided to invest in the game despite its 30 quid price tag.

The instructions and documents with the game were excellent although I did note that the publisher's claim that certain 'enhancements' are only available to users with 1Mb capacity. The main 'enhancement' is that the game just simply will not run on a 520ST, the message 'insufficient memory' flashes across the screen and the game reverts to the Desktop!

On returning the disks to the retailer I was advised that the same problem had occurred with three other copies of the game he had in stock and that they were sending the games back to the software house.

Can you tell me on what machine is you review your copy of the game? Are US Gold aware of the problem and do they intend to rectify the error?

S.Dalby, Fleckney, Leicester

We reviewed the game on a 1040ST and had no problems with it. All those enhancements work just fine as long as your ST can provide the RAM memory capacity.

We have it on good authority that US Gold is aware of the problem and is working on a suitable solution.

So keep your fingers crossed.

WIN! WIN! WIN!

We want to know what you think of the new Atari ST User so that we can give you more of what you want in the magazine.

Here's your chance to tell it like it is. We have 25 Gasteiner high resolution mice and if that's not enough, there are five free subscriptions or subscription renewals to give away to the first lucky readers pulled out of Jerry's beanie.

The information you supply will be treated as confidential and you have the option to keep your name and address off our database which we occasionally release to computer product suppliers.

Just answer these simple and tick whichever applies to you...

Name.....
Address.....
.....

1. How young are you?
   16 or under
   17 – 24
   25 – 34
   35 – 44
   45 – 59
   60 or over

2. Are you:
   Male
   Female

3. Are you:
   married
   single

4. How much do you earn?
   Under £3,000
   £3,000 – £5,999
   £6,000 – £9,999
   £10,000 – £14,999
   £15,000 – £19,999
   £20,000 - £24.99
   £25,000 or over

5. What computer do you own?
   520ST with single-sided drive
   520ST with double-sided drive
   1040ST
   520STE
   1040STE
   MEGA 1 or above
   STACY

6. What hardware do you (a) own or (b) intend to buy in the next 12 months?
   mouse or trackball
   hard disk ☐
   memory upgrade
   MIDI kit
   printer - dot matrix
   printer - laser
   printer - ink jet
   scanner
   modem
   joystick
   second disk drive
   emulator - Mac
   emulator - PC
   sound sampler
   other (please specify).....
   .....

7. What software do you (a) own or (b) intend to buy in the next 12 months?

   CAD
   comms
   accounts
   art and design
   database
   music
   programming
   games
   education
   spreadsheet
   utilities
   word processor
   other (please specfy)
   .....
   .....

8. What do you use your ST for? Rate these from 1 to 6 according to frequency of use - 6 for the most frequent use, 1 for the least frequent use or not at all.

   games
   business (accounts etc)
   word processing
   education
   music
   art (graphics and design)

9. How else would you like to use your ST ?

   .....

10. How much did you spend on hardware in the last three months?
    £20 or less
    £21 - £40
    £41 - £60
    £61 - £100
    more than £100

11. How much did you spend on software (not including games) in the last three months?
    £20 or less
    £21 - £40
    £41 - £60
    £61 - £100
    more than £100

12. How much did you spend on games software in the last three months?
    £.....

13. How much do you estimate that you will spend on hardware and software combined in the next 12 months?
    £20 or less
    £21 - £40
    £41 - £60
    £61 - £80
    £81 - £100
    more than £100

14. Do you buy ST User:

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    occasionally (alternate months)
    rarely (fewer than every third month)
    by subscription

15. How long have you been a reader?

    .....months.....years

16. How many people besides yourself read your copy?

17. What computer magazines do you buy, in order of preference?

    .....
    .....
    .....
    .....
    .....

18. Which, if any, of these other magazines do you read?
    Auto Express
    Private Eye
    Viz
    NME
    Shoot!
    Cosmopolitan
    other.....

19. Which of these newspapers do you read regularly?
    Telegraph
    Mail
    Star
    Today
    Sport
    Guardian
    Mirror
    Times
    Independent
    Sun
    Express
    None of the above

20. When you open the magazine what do you turn to first?
    .....

21. Which type of article/feature do you find least interesting?
    .....

22. Is there any article or story that you would particularly like to see?If yes, please specify

    .....
    .....

23. Were you a regular reader before the re-vamp of the magazine? Yes/No

24. What is your impression of the new magazine?

    Superlative
    Excellent Good Indifferent
    Cover design
    Design/illustration
    Features
    News
    DIY
    Reviews
    Games
    Disk - runtime
    Disk - programs

25. Are you interested in programming? If so, at what level would you consider yourself to be:
    beginner
    intermediate
    advanced

26. Tell us what you would like to see more of, less of or done differently in the magazine.

    .....
    .....
    .....
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27. Do you have problems trying to get hold of the magazine, and if so, why?
    sold out
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28. Please indicate here if you do not wish to receive information about computer-related products in the mail. YES/NO

★ POCKET SIZED ★ PC-COMPATIBLE ★ PERSONAL ORGANISER ★

ATARI Portfolio

THE PC IN YOUR POCKET

The new Portfolio from Atari is the world's first pocket-sized electronic organiser that is also a powerful PC compatible computer, with a full QWERTY keyboard and scrolling 80×25 character display.

Portfolio includes everything you would expect from an electronic organiser - an address and telephone book, time manager, diary and sophisticated calculator.

Portfolio also includes several functions that you would not expect - a spreadsheet for your personal budget and expense records, as well as a text processor for typing memos and letters.

And, because Atari's Portfolio is PC compatible, it can communicate with your desktop PC at home, or in the office. You can transfer files from one to the other, to enable you to update your reports and figures with the Portfolio while you are on the move.

FOR ONLY **£199** INC VAT

SPECIFICATION

- ★ ***Processor:*** Intel 80C88 at 4.9152Mhz.
- ★ ***Operating System:*** Compatible with MS-DOS 2.11.
- ★ ***Internal ROM:*** 256K containing BIOS, operating system and applications suite.
- ★ ***RAM:*** 128K with an internal RAM disk, configurable from 8K. Externally expandable to 640K RAM.
- ★ ***Keyboard:*** 63 keys, QWERTY, IBM PC BIOS compatible. Buried numeric pad and function keys. Optional key click.
- ★ ***Character Set:*** Extended IBM ASCII (255 characters).
- ★ ***Mass storage:*** credit card sized memory cards (32K or 64K or 128K RAM).
- ★ ***Display:*** Graphics LCD, supertwist technology, MDA compatible, 40 columns x 8 lines, 240 x 64 pixels (with the option to window a full 80 x 25 character display). Keyboard controlled contrast.
- ★ ***Peripherals:*** 60 pin expansion BUS to take serial and parallel ports and memory expansion units.
- ★ ***Size:*** 8" x 4" x 1" (200mm x 105mm x 29mm).
- ★ ***Weight:*** 495 grammes (with batteries).
- ★ ***Applications:*** calendar and diary, address and phone book, Lotus 1-2-3 compatible spreadsheet, text processor, communications software.

COMING SOON!

In addition to the excellent software built-in to the Portfolio Free of Charge (see right), other software and peripheral products, such as the sophisticated Pocket Finance package and serial/centronics interfaces are available. And it doesn't stop there. Many manufacturers have recognised the potential of the Portfolio and have already started to design new peripherals and software. Products currently under development include: Serial interface with built in mini modem, Apple Macintosh interface, business, utility and programming software plus a range of adventure and battle strategy games. For further free details on the Portfolio range, fill in the coupon below and return it to Silica Systems now.

5 BUILT-IN APPLICATIONS TO GET YOU ORGANISED!

To get you started, Portfolio comes with a suite of five useful functions built-in, all accessible from a simple menu display.

TIME MANAGER

More than just an electronic diary, the Portfolio Time Manager enables you to plan your appointments via a comprehensive calendar and diary. It can even be programmed to sound an audible alarm at specific times to remind you of important appointments.

CALCULATOR

Your Portfolio will be invaluable in the office or at home as a powerful pocket calculator. It has a full range of functions, including factorial, power and root calculations, all with multi display formats and memories.

ADDRESS BOOK & DIALLER

Portfolio has a complete address book facility that allows you to store hundreds of addresses and phone numbers. And, at the touch of a button, you can retrieve any one of them, or search for a specific grouping, such as "all Italian restaurants". And, when you are ready to book your table, hold your Portfolio to your telephone mouthpiece and use its special built-in tone dialler to dial the number for you.

TEXT PROCESSOR

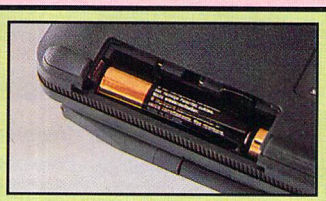
The Portfolio's built-in text processor program includes word wrap, line and column count, string search, in fact most of the functions you would find in a word processor. It handles printer and word processor control codes and allows easy transfer of files between Portfolio and your desktop PC.

SPREADSHEET

For real calculating power, Portfolio has a Lotus 1-2-3 compatible spreadsheet built-in. It has 127 columns x 225 rows and reads/writes Lotus V1.0 and V2.01 files, so you can transfer data to and from Lotus 1-2-3 on your desktop PC. The Portfolio's 256K ROM includes MS-DOS and PC BIOS compatible systems software.

MEMORY CARDS

Portfolio can store and retrieve data and programs from its own RAM, or from small credit card size memory cards, that slot into its built-in card drive. The cards are available in three sizes, 32K, 64K and 128K, so you can carry a library of data in your pocket. The card drive also accepts ROM cards, which can contain commercial or custom software.



POWER SUPPLY

Portfolio is powered by three AA batteries which will run for up to six weeks with normal use, or from the mains using an adaptor. All the peripherals take their power from the Portfolio, so no extra batteries or adaptors are required. A 'battery-low' warning and memory back-up ensure that information is not lost when the batteries are changed.

INTERFACES & PERIPHERALS

Portfolio can communicate with other computers and supports a growing range of peripherals via a built-in 60 pin bus connector. Peripherals available include serial and parallel interfaces and memory expanders (to 640K). You can also add a card drive to your desktop PC, to enable it to read/write to Portfolio's cards.

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Before you decide when to buy your new Atari Portfolio, we suggest you think very carefully about WHERE you buy it. Consider what it will be like a few months after buying your Portfolio, when you may require additional peripherals or software, or help and advice with your new purchase. And, will the company you buy from contact you with details of new Portfolio products? At Silica Systems, we ensure that you will have nothing to worry about. Silica Systems is a new division of Silica Shop, the UK's leading Atari specialists. This new division has been established to provide a service to the more serious home user, as well as to business and education purchasers. Silica have been established for over 12 years, and have an annual turnover of £13 million. With our unrivalled experience and expertise, we can now claim to meet our customers requirements with an understanding which is second to none. But don't just take our word for it. Complete and return the coupon now, for our latest Free literature and begin to experience the "Silica Systems Service".

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Which computer(s), if any, do you own? .....

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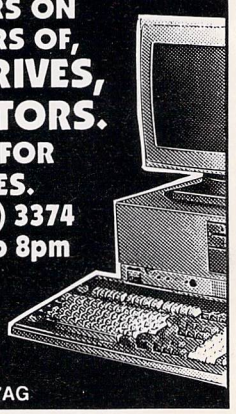

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BAND IN A BOX

Competition

BAND-IN-A-BOX SMASH HITS

This month we have 20 Band-In-A-Box music packages to give away. Band-in-a-Box is the fantastic new music software for your MIDI music system, providing automatic accompaniment for the discerning musician in over 24 popular styles (see our in-depth review on page 101). We've got the first 20 off the electronic presses to give away – but don't expect to get them for nothing.

There's a catch – to get your hands on the goodies, you have to give us the correct answers to these fiendishly difficult questions:

1. **Name five songs, albums or groups with the word 'band' in the title.**

Band on the run, Band aid, KC + the sunshine band, J Geils Band, The gumbay dance band

2. **What city do the Stone Roses come from?**

Manchester

3. **What was Kylie Minogue's first mega-smash hit?**

I should be so lucky

4. **What instrument did Jimi Hendrix play?**

Guitar

5. **How many lead singers have the Rolling Stones had?**

1

" Entering 'USER competitions is more fun than train-spotting — official"
J. Glenwright

Answers on a postcard or on the back of a stuck-down envelope please (we don't have time to open thousands of competiton entries).
Winners will be announced in February's stonking issue.

£20,000 GIVEAWAY WINNERS

And the winner of the fabulous new Atari TT, worth £2,000 is...(pass the envelope please Jerry...) none other than:

Paul Lethbridge
Lewes
Sussex

Paul, please give us a call so that we can arrange for you to collect your prize - 0625 878888.

Listed here are the rest of the lucky winners in our £20,000 Giveaway competition. Every single person whose name appears on this page receives a prize of software. Is your name here?

A Bannerman, Cambuslang, Glasgow
A Macdonald, Cardonald, Glasgow
A N Harris, Erdington, Birmingham
A Oliver, Port Talbot, W Glam
A Sainsbury, Pilning, Bristol
A Sheridan, Rising Brook, Staffs
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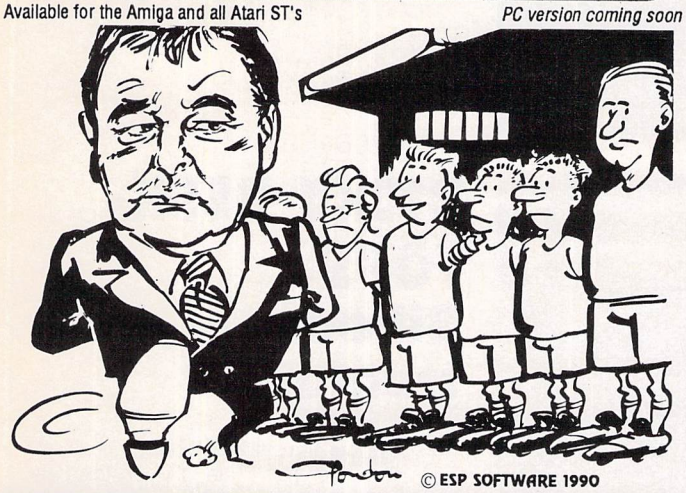

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Back in the beginning, when the ST was young and its programmers foolish, many products of ahem, less than superior quality appeared on the market, then quickly disappeared again among a flurry of denigration.

Every dog has its day however and here in the Kennel, we feel that it's just about time these dirty dogs of the software world returned to see the harsh light of day.

Billing itself as a jolly jaunt through the Universe, Star Wrek from Hat Software was an adventure game lacking one essential feature: adventure!

By 1989, most adventure games had evolved to the stage where they could understand simple sentences rather than the extremely boring Go North, Kill Troll – not so Star Wrek. Without even the simplest of text parsers, the game floundered on all but the most basic words. Jokes were desperately unfunny and so was the 25 quid purchase price.

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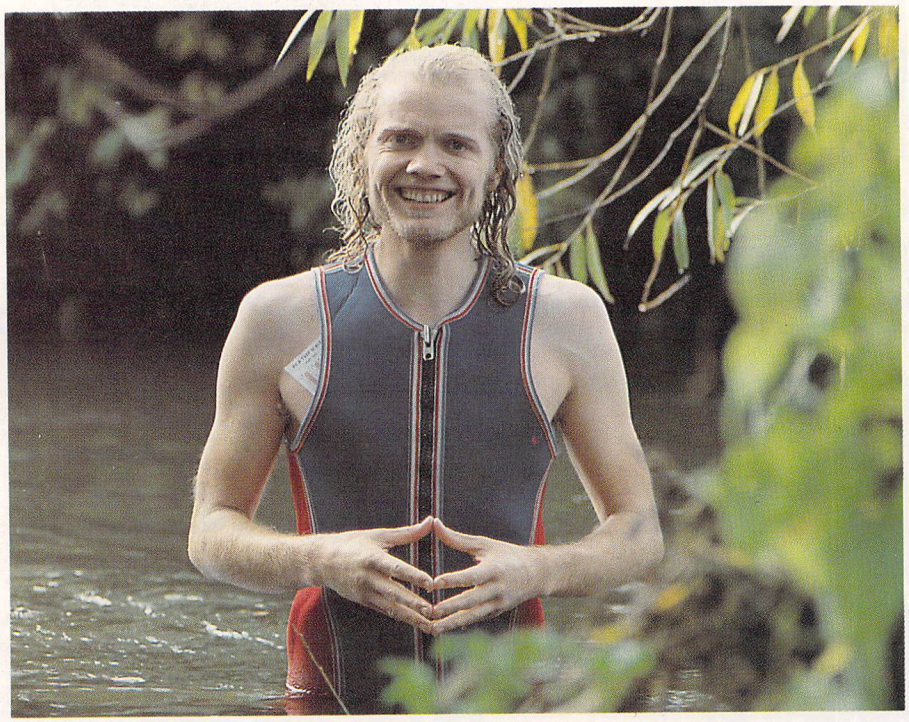

A NEW ADDITION

Sexy career-boy Gazza joins the Atari ST User team this month. Previously a wicked pornographer (who'll burn in Hell for all eternity) with Penthouse magazine, Gazza is all set to woo STers with his stunning designs.

Gaz tells us he's interested in horse racing. Take our tip, racey Gaz will set your hearts a-flutter without a hint of nobbling! With his photo-finish, our Gaz is first past the past the post every month!

If you think you're a likely candidate for our sexy stunner spot here on the back page, send us a photo of yourself, in a suitable pose, complete with vital statistics.

Seriously! We're waiting.

DICKY DESK-TOPS Silicon tremors!

Who says our transatlantic cousins have an easy time of it? Not if they live on the San Andreas fault, they don't! Take a look at Kirk Bender's little entry to our Dicky Desktops – that's what happens when an earthquake takes place directly below your ST. Let's see anyone beat that little lot...

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