ISSUE 33 • JUNE 1990 • £1.60

ACE

■ ST ■ AMIGA ■ C64 ■
CPC ■ SPECTRUM ■ PC
■ NINTENDO ■ SEGA ■

EURO ISSUE

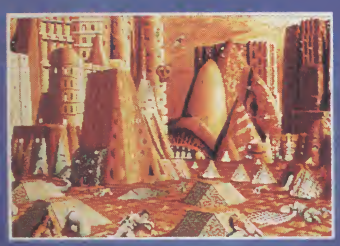
First of a series of exclusive reports from European soft-cos – a growing challenge to Japan and the USA

ADVANCED COMPUTER ENTERTAINMENT

European Space Simulator goes CD-I

EXCLUSIVE REPORT FROM PARIS

BLOCKBUSTERS



Previewed:
Ubisoft's BAT, 22nd Century fantasy/simulation

Interviewed:
Don Bluth, the world's number one computer cartoonist

Profiled:
Philips, games giant of the future

Loom
First full review; an ocean of bliss? Or up the spout?

Rotox
Exclusive review of this rotating robotic quest

Ultima VI
Finished version playtested to destruction

Worlds on CD-ROM
The legendary Whole Earth Catalogue plus Compton's Multimedia Encyclopaedia

WIN

A TRIP TO THE FUTURE

Fabulous free trip to Paris' Science City – full details inside

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CRIME...

BATMAN

is a shadow in the darkness, as elusive as a dream. High above the seamy streets of GOTHAM, he is a criminal's nightmare. The only hope for a desperate city...

BATMAN

A LEGEND HAS RETURNED

THE FASTEST, MOST THRILLING 3D DRIVING GAME YET!

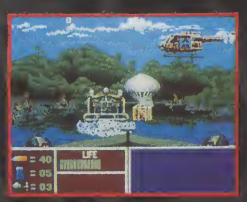
Take the wheel of your turbo-charged Porsche as you and your partner go in pursuit of dangerous criminals all driving an evil array of souped-up roadsters.

TURBO BOOST!

Need to catch up in a hurry? Well, just one press of your Turbo Button will leave your eyes in the back of your head!

BARRELLING THROUGH THE CITY STREETS,

along the roughest of dirt tracks and through busy tunnels – if you can hold the line! The low life can run, but they can't hide...



TM & © 1964 DC Comics Inc.

"a superb game, and captures the atmosphere and excitement of the movie perfectly... the most effective sprite-based 3D gamery I've seen... definitely the best film tie-in yet – make sure you don't miss the game." C&VG

FIGHT IT YOURSELF

TWICE THE ACTION THE FUN THE CHALLENGE

ROY ADAM IS BACK!

The Hi-jack report came from a DC10 leaving Paris for Boston – Arab guerillas were in control of flight 102 and had turned the aircraft towards Africa . . . The plane lands in hostile territory and the terrorists begin their demands . . .

USE THE LASERSIGHT

or the bulletproof vest, but watch out for

AIR-TO-GROUND MISSILES

Operation Thunderbolt the incredible Taito coin-op conversion brought NOW to your home computer.

SIX INSPIRED

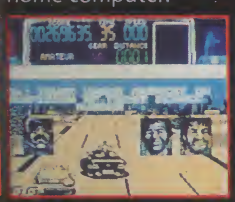
action sequences put you in control of Elliot Ness's elite squad of crime-busters.

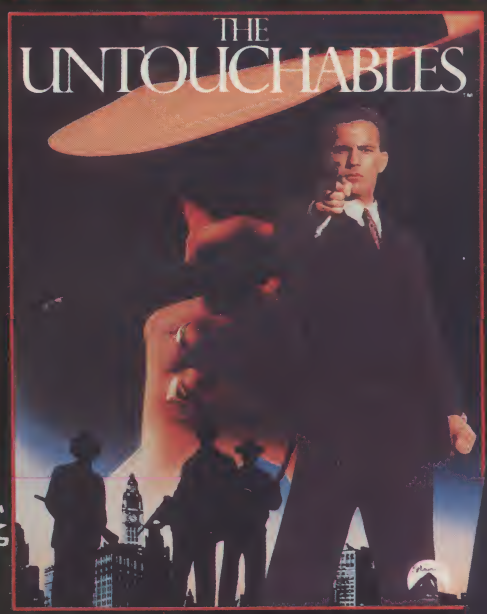
ALLEYWAY SHOOTOUTS, THE BORDER RAID,

The Railway Station confrontation and Warehouse bust culminating in the thrilling denouement of a

ROOFTOP DUEL

as you re-live the knife edge existence of Ness in his struggle against the retribution of Capone!





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"a fine example of how to do the job properly... a cracking conversion ... easily one of the most successful licences to date" Sinclair User

NOW FOR YOUR

SPECTRUM
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COMMODORE
ATARI ST
AMIGA

33

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SPECIALS

ELECTRIC EUROPE 17
Eat frogs' legs, Yankees. Europe **fights back** this month as ACE begins a series of special investigations into European **software superstars**.

COKTEL CD-I 68
Roland Oskiam is a **man with a mission** – he's sending his company Coktel Vision **into orbit.** We took the Metro to Meudon-les-Bois to find out what's going on...and **up**.

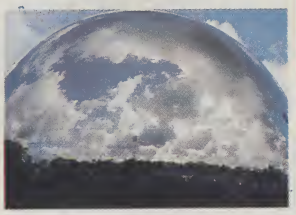
BAT TO THE FUTURE.....71
Ubisoft's **BAT** – is this the best game ever to come out of France? Blast into the 22nd Century and **meet your Waterloo...**

All Dogs Go To Heaven – from silver screen to the Amiga

INTO THE LAIR 22
Don Bluth is the creative force behind animated film classics such as *An American Tail* and *All Dogs Go To Heaven*, not to mention games like *Space Ace* and *Dragon's Lair.* We profile a man whose animation's even smoother than **Irish whiskey**

CD-IMPRESARIOS 29
There's a company in Holland that's busy **shaping the future** of interactive entertainment. Find out how Philips put Frank Sinatra on CD-I...Ol' Blue Eyes? Or **Double Dutch**?

SCIENCE CITY.....79
Explore the **far frontiers of Space**, ogle **rabies viruses**, check out state-of-the-art **image processing techniques** – all in Paris' Science City. And you can get there FREE courtesy of **Electronic Zoo** (see page 76)



THE ACE TREATMENT

Don't forget – we NEVER review a game until it's finished. That way we catch the bugs the other magazines overlook. If it's reviewed here, it's what you'll get in the shops – so you really know what you're buying.

REVIEWED

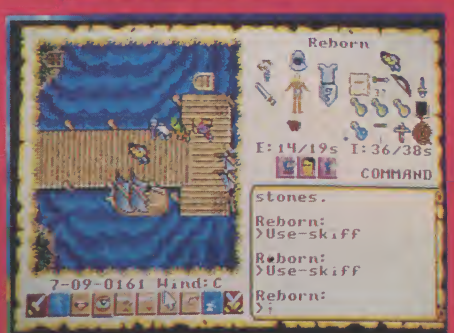
ANTHEADS *Cinemaware* 38
ATOMIX *Grandslam* 46
F29 RETALIATOR *Ocean* 54
FRED *Ubisoft* 59
GOLDEN AXE *Sega* 63
HAMMERFIST *Activision* 59
JUMPING JACK SON *Infogrames* 55
LHX ATTACK CHOPPER *Electronic Arts* 60
LORDS OF CHAOS *Mythos* 51
LORDS OF WAR *Digital Concepts* 55
LOW BLOW *Electronic Arts*.....50
NEW ZEALAND STORY *PC Engine* 80
NUCLEAR WAR *US Gold*.....45
PHOTON STORM *ARC* 46
SCRAMBLE SPIRITS *Sega* 63
SUPER VOLLEY BALL *PC Engine*...62
TIGER ROAD *PC Engine* 62
TREASURE TRAP *Electronic Zoo*.....52
ULTIMA VI *Origin/Mindscape* 36
WARHEAD *Activision* 43
WORLD CHAMPIONSHIP BOXING MANAGER *Goliath* 50
XENOMORPH *Pandora* 49

PREVIEWED

RESOLUTION 101 *Millenium* 40
ROTOX *US Gold*.....42
TURRICAN *Rainbow Arts* 56

BLOCKBUSTERS!

Ask yourself – do you ***deserve*** this issue? You get the **first full playtest** of *Ultima VI* – a game that takes arcade-adventure into a whole new dimension of **challenge and excitement**; then there's the long-awaited *Antheads* – an add-on data disk for *It Came From The Desert* that could do **wonders** for your **hat size**. Add some **exclusive tips** from Mike Singleton himself on his superlative *Midwinter* and a review of *Loom*...and *Might and Magic II*...and *Nuclear War*...and...no, you **don't deserve it**, do you? But go ahead and **spoil yourself**.



Ultima VI – here at last, and every bit as good as we hoped it would be. Find out why on page 36

ZOOM INTO

ELECTRONIC ZOO are offering you a fantastic trip to Paris with all

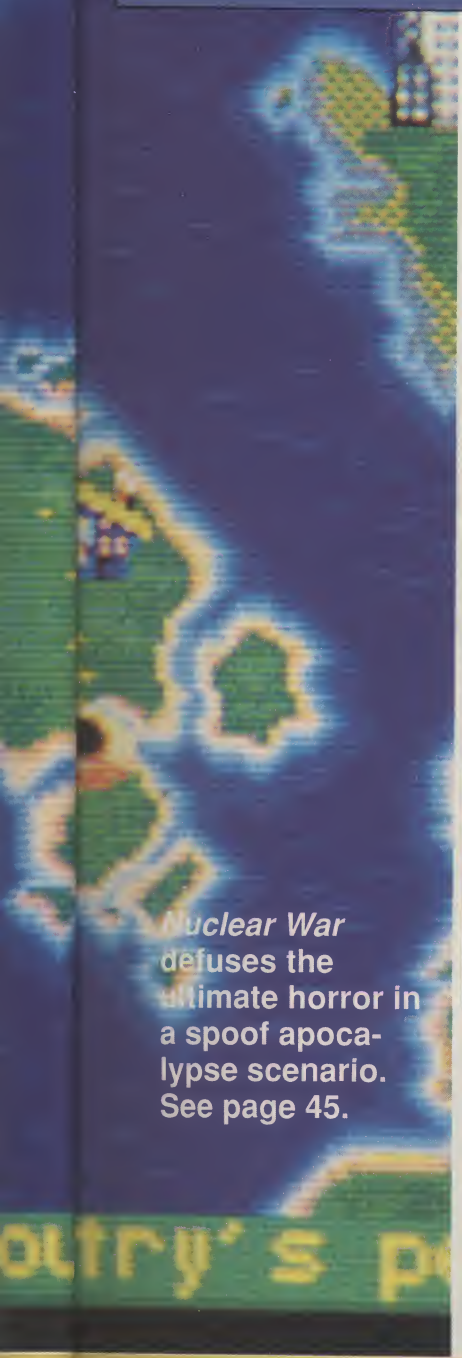
exp

BLIND ALLEY?

In the US publication The Journal of Computer Games Design, Chris Crawford (designer of Balance of Power and Guns and Butter, amongst others) argues that, from the point of view of the games designer, CD could be a blind alley.

First, he points out, the access time is very slow – anyone who's played Dragon's Lair in the arcades will remember the blank screens as the disk frantically locates and loads the next sequence. Then there's the data itself – all 550Mbytes of it. How do you fill all that space? And how much will the development cost? Most important of all, argues Chris, what do you DO with the data once you've got it? What about the algorithms that will manipulate it? To emphasise the benefits of what is only really a storage device at the expense of processing power is surely dangerous.

All this is true, but it doesn't have to be. Hardware manufacturers must not get carried away with the possibilities of vast data storage while forgetting about processing power. CD is an enormous step forward, but let's have more ingenuity on the processing side, more people like Flair Technology and the Amiga development team. When people like that get going on CD projects, the games world will really start spinning...and they ARE getting going – as you'll see in the next few issues of ACE



Nuclear War defuses the ultimate horror in a spoof apocalypse scenario. See page 45.

WORLDS ON CD-ROM **26**
Just a taster of what's to come in the '90s as CD-ROM systems become more popular. Take a mouse-driven trip through *The Whole Earth Catalogue* and Compton's *Multimedia Encyclopaedia*

SPEAK OUT! **15**
A **personal invitation** to the **ACE Conferences** – now in full swing and coming soon to a venue near you. Meet programmers, the ACE team and other wild animals – and get a **free lunch** into the bargain.

HIGH SOCIETY **10**
Very high, by the looks of it. Find out who grabbed

GAMEPLAY

SCREENTEST **35**
Great games galore – including **a little 7-disk number** that gets one of the **highest ACE ratings ever**.

TETRIS TWO! **96**
The man who created the **cult game of the '90s** is about to produce another **cracker**. Check out the news from the world of arcade entertainment.

Exploring your guardian's hut in Loom

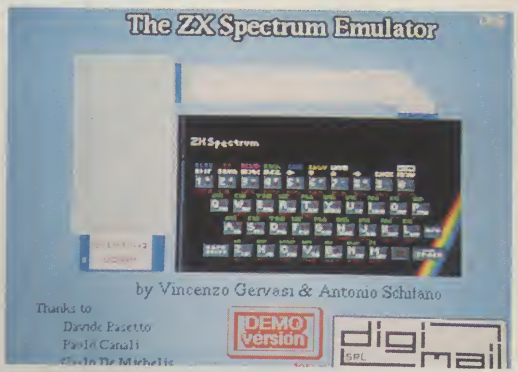
BRAVE NEW WORLDS **81**
Four pages of fantasy. Start with *Loom,* move on to *Might and Magic II*, and end up on a **desert island**.

TRICKS AND TACTICS **87**
Four pages of megatips for today's top games. Set those high scores **soaring.**

TRADE SECRETS **92**
***Midwinter* meltdown!** Mike Singleton and friends **break the ice** with exclusive tips for ACE readers.

REGULARS

ACE NEWS **7**
Sprites that travel at **the speed of light!** Plus the extraordinary **Spectrum Emulator** on the Amiga.



The* Spectrum Emulator *on the Amiga

PAGE 11 ..... **11**
The **latest games snippets**, in inimitable style.

ACE LETTERS **13**
ACE readers dip their pens in **alien blood** and **bare their souls** to the galaxy.

SUBSCRIBE! **94**
Save money and get your personal copy every month – plus valuable **subscriber benefits**.

IN THE PINK **107**
The ACE **Hardware Guide** – make your **upgrade dreams come true**. Plus our **Software Guide**, the **Puzzle** and **Crossword**, and the ACE **Stockmarket** – the **best charts around.**

WIN! WIN! WIN!

A TRIP TO THE FUTURE **76**
Electronic Zoo are offering you a **fabulous trip to Paris** to celebrate the release of *Treasure Trap* (also reviewed in this issue – see p52).

CHOPPER CHAMP **33**
Grab yourself **an hour's helicopter flying lesson**, courtesy of Electronic Arts.

THE FUTURE!

expenses paid and including a trip to the fabulous Science City. See p76

1989 WINNER 8 BIT

BEST SIMULATION

GOLDEN JOYSTICK AWARDS

WHAT'S THE SCORE?

ACE RATING 915
'Gameplay is dead smooth and the package as a whole makes an extremely attractive proposition.'

CRASH 90%
'The graphics are superb, instructions comprehensive and game play and addictivity are all brilliant.'

AMSTRAD ACTION 87%
'Its complexity ensures a long and enjoyable game life.'

ZZAP 90%
'The best overhead footy sim we've seen so far.'

TGM 89%
'Fast action makes it far more playable than other soccer games.'

C&VG HIT.
BEST SIMULATION – 8 BIT.
(Golden Joystick awards).

Screen Shots from the Atari St version. Actual shots may vary

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SIMULATION • SOFTWARE

TACKLE WORLD CLASS SOCCER

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ACE NEWS

A JOURNEY INTO THE FOURTH DIMENSION

SPRITES AT THE SPEED OF LIGHT

Two computer boffins at Carnegie Mellon University in the States have developed software to graphically simulate objects moving through space at nearly the speed of light.

This impressive 4D space-warping effect is perfect for computer games and movie special effects. Animations of objects appear to bend into stunning geometric shapes while travelling at 99% the speed of light. Computer games could soon push Einstein's theory of special relativity to the outer limits.

Entertainment companies around the world have already expressed their interest in this hot piece of code. Unsurprisingly, the wily university has copyrighted the software and has patents pending on two maths formulas used in the routines.

Prepare for total systems crash courtesy of V51

FAST FORWARD TO THE FUTURE

The Cyber Times is the first release from V51, a newly formed multi-media company – the first of its kind in the UK.

A V51 spokesperson told us, "*Cyber Times* is a fact-packed white-hot newszine. This bimonthly bit-trip features trade hip tips on the cracks and hacks, decks and specs, news and views of the 90's."

"With the advent of digital publishing, video and communications, the distinctions between media have become blurred. A new means of conveying technological advances across a number of differing media is required. *Cyber Times* will fill this need. In the meantime, V51 publishes video, sequencer data, research materials and magazines."

"Our motto's are: Issues beyond issue, facts on the edge of fiction and total systems crash – now."

Cyber Times is available via mail order only. Each issue costs £3, or you can get six limited edition issues for the price of five. For further details write or send cheque/po to: *The Cyber Times*, 90A Devonshire Road, Forest Hill, London SE23 3SX. "Forget the present, take out the times, tomorrow's underground today."

FLOPPY DISK, MILK, NO SUGAR

Those crazy – sorry idiosyncratic – Japanese are at it again. Not content with producing six day underwear they're now selling blank floppy disks and printer ribbons from vending machines.

Demand for floppy discs is rapidly increasing in Japan, mainly due to the popularity of Japanese word processors, and competition is severe among the floppy disc manufacturers. Memorex has now seen a gap in the market and is filling it with hundreds of 24 hour, 7 day a week, floppy/ribbon vending machines.

Other disk manufacturers are rumoured to be following Memorex's lead. But will vending machines make it over here?

Picture supplied by ASCII Corporation, Japanese translation by Masato Niizeki

Aha! So you think this is just a bog-standard Spectrum listing, eh? Well, you're wrong. It's an AMIGA – using a Spectrum Emulator produced in Italy by Vincenzo Gervasi and Antonio Schifano. All we've got is a pre-prod version but it seems comprehensive and the program wiil be sold with a gizmo that will load your Spectrum games using a special tape interface. We hope to bring you more details soon...

NEC GET INTO GAMES SOFTWARE

NEC, producers of the PC Engine and pioneers of CD ROM entertainment systems, have made a move into the software market by investing in Cinemaware, the American company at the forefront of interactive computer movies like *Defender of the Crown* and *It Came From the Desert*. "We sold a slice of the company to NEC and are developing six titles for the PC Engine. The entire *TV Sports* range will be converted over. We see sports games as the primary future for consoles" announced Bob Jacobs for Cinemaware.

We may see more partnerships like this soon. As software development costs increase dramatically, it seems likely that other hardware manufactures will follow NEC's lead and buy into other software houses.

Meanwhile, Cinemaware is looking for UK programmers to work on its new computer, console, CD-ROM and CD-I projects. "We're currently looking for nine programmers, if your readers are interested they should send a full CV to: David Todd, Vice-President of Research and Development, Cinemaware Corporation, 4165 Thousand Oaks Blvd, Westlake Village, California 91362, USA."

"CD-I programmers should have a Computer Science Degree, micro and console people will be strong 6502 and 68000 coders. Incidentally, Todd helped write the navigation software for the Space Shuttle."

The successful applicant will be working in Los Angeles or Dublin. "We wanted to have a presence in Europe with flexibility for the future. Dublin has six guys doing console development for the Nintendo NES, NEC PC Engine and Sega Megadrive/Genesis. Our first Megadrive title will be out in the first quarter of '91".

It Came From The Desert – ***just one of the recent Cinemaware titles, now a candidate for NEC PC Engine conversion?***

ACE NEWS SERVICE LAUNCHED

ACE is establishing another industry first this month: its own on-line news service for gamesters, providing short, regularly updated reports every week on games technology, games gossip, and games in progress. It's to be run using the 0898 system, which means that calls cost 38p per minute peak, 25p per minute offpeak. The lines will be open 24 hours a day and the reports will be changed weekly.

This move into 0898 follows our trials last month with the ACE Debating system. This proved a great success (results to be announced next month, folks) and we will continue to run ACE Debates on a regular basis, giving you the chance to give instant feedback on current games and technology issues. We'll also be introducing a prize system in which lucky callers each month receive free software bonuses.

The number to ring is 0898 966923 and the system starts on Tuesday 8th May. We intend to run the system on trial for one month, and we'll let you all know the results. We'd also be very grateful for any reader feedback, so drop us a line to let us know what you think.

IT CAME FROM... LEVEL 9

Level 9, once the kings of British adventure, have re-incarnated as an international development house, thanks to their animated games authoring system, HUGE.

The Holy Universal Games Engine, the result of over seven man years programming, enables programmers to develop graphic action games simultaneously across all 16-bit formats. Technical achievements include super-smooth multi-directional scrolling on CGA and image handling several degrees of magnitude faster than, say, the Sierra system, though the system is not quite so efficient when it comes tracking dozens of sprites on screen at once (as in *R-Type*, for example).

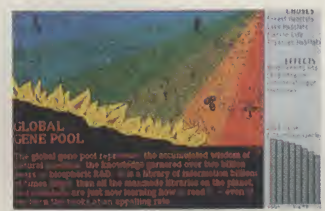
This utility has enabled Level 9 to make their mark around the world as a development house – and they're now working on projects as diverse as conversions of *It Came From the Desert* to original games featuring Billy the Kid and a new murder mystery. Good to see someone rising out of the ashes of the adventure scene... now what are Magnetic Scrolls up to? Find out next month on these pages in our special report.

COMMODORE LAUNCHES NEW AMIGA BUNDLE

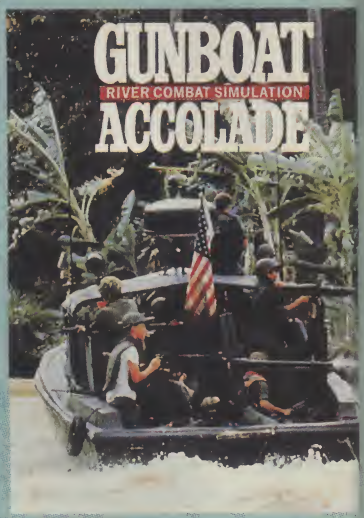
Flight of Fancy is the first bundle to include games with a simultaneous general release – Commodore's new £399.99 bundle pack for the Amiga includes Ocean's *F29 Retaliator* and Rainbow Islands, *Escape from the Planet of the Robot Monsters* from Domark, and EA's *DeluxePaint II* art package. Only trouble is, our testing of *F29* has revealed very serious bugs. Let's hope Ocean can do something about it in time...

HYPER-GAMES GO GREEN

Could you solve the Earth's environmental problems? Accolade is giving the chance to try out your theories in the latest game from Chris 'Balance of Power' Crawford. *Balance of the Planet* is a hypertext-like (see issue 30) driven eco-simulator with you as the High Commissioner of the Environment, appointed by the United Nations to solve the Earth's environmental crisis. You have the power to levy taxes on industry and grant subsidies to worthy activities. You must tackle the issues of nuclear power, acid rain, ozone layer, third world, pollution, global warming and starvation in an effort to balance the world's economic well-being with the vitality of the Earth's ecology. *Balance of the Planet* is out on PC next month for £34.95dk.



Balance of the Planet: *environmentally-aware software whose press release doesn't come on recycled paper!*



Gunboating: the real-thing and the Accolade sim

● **Fancy the idea of piloting an armed and armoured US gunboat through the jungle rivers of Vietnam and Columbia blowing away drug traffickers?** *Gunboat* from Accolade lets you do just that, available now for PC. If you're less violent but still interested in boating, Accolade also has *Powerboat USA* where you can speed around Miami's waterways in Don Johnson's turbo nutter boatie. Out now on C64 and PC.

● **Microprose is putting the finishing touches to the ST and Amiga versions of *F-19 Flight Simulator*.** Once its in-house team of programmers have finished *F-19*, they'll start work converting *M1 Tank Platoon* – but don't expect to see it on ST and Amiga before the autumn. In the meantime, *Rick Dangerous II* – nicknamed *Rick in Space* – should be out sometime this summer on Spectrum, C64, CPC, ST, Amiga and PC.

● **Hmmm...as we go to press we have to admit we don't know much about Mirrorsoft's forthcoming game**

UP AND COMING...

Killing Cloud (shown here on the ST), except that it's out later this year on 16-bit, it's a new twist on the flight-simulation front, and it's starting to look sexy...

Meanwhile Mindscape has something a little different for flight-sim fanatics – in fact the company is dubbing the game the alter-ego of flight sims. *Tracon/Rapcon* places you in the role of an air traffic controller 'talking' planes around the skies of North America. It comes in two versions: civilian and military – *Tracon* and *Rapcon*. Out on PC now, it should be converted to other formats later in the year. An updated version is also due soon which interfaces with Microsoft's *Flight-Simulator 4*, giving you the option to both fly a plane and air traffic control it.

● **Swiss-based software house Linel has picked up the license to the forthcoming *Never Ending Story II* movie** from Warner Bros. Look out for the game at the Earls Court CES Show in September.

● ***Exterminator*, Gottlieb's surreal coin-op where you have to swat flies, spiders and bugs with your bare hands, is coming to your micro this autumn courtesy of Audiogenic.** This veteran software house is also working on a Super League Manager football management simulation and *Wreckers*, an isometric 3D game from Denton Designs. All these titles should see their way to Spectrum, C64, CPC, ST, Amiga and PC between now and autumn.

● **Bond is back** yet again, thanks to Domark, with *The Spy Who Loved Me* on Spectrum, C64, CPC, ST, Amiga and PC in September. The film was originally released back in '76, and featured a brilliant Lotus sports car which doubled as a submarine.

It's a shocker and it's coming soon on ST, Amiga and PC from Digital Magic Software. Shockwave is a 3D blaster combining super-fast tiling and digital rotating graphics. Or you could Escape from Colditz on C64, ST, Amiga and PC. Here you are flying round Shockwave in your 'Super-Dooper Mark IV Blastamobile'

● **Remember the cult action movie, *Rollerball*, based around a violent futuristic sport?** EA obviously do, because its releasing a new game, *Scrollerball*, based around a violent futuristic sport. The interesting aspect of this title is that it allows up to three people to simultaneously play the game.

Elite is bringing out micro conversions of three Sega Genesis titles this October. Tournament Golf (shown here) and Last Battle – a horiz-scrolling kick'em-to-death'em-up – are due on C64, ST, Amiga and PC while World Championship Soccer will also be converted to Spectrum.

It's a fun life being a Millennium MD... you can wear silly masks to publicise your new game – see the Resolution 101 preview on page

Dynasty Wars is the latest Capcom coin-op conversion from US Gold. Set in ancient China, this simultaneous two-player hack'n'slash 'em-up features eight levels and the choice of four characters. Out on all major 8-bits and 16-bits.

Watch out for *Flood* from EA this month, the new game from *Populous* programmers Bullfrog, and *Imperium*, a simulation of the next thousand years of humanity. All three titles will initially be available on ST and Amiga.

HIGH SOCIETY

On 11th April EMAP hosted the Golden Joystick Awards at the Rooftop Gardens, Kensington – Laurence Scotford went along to observe the fun

The most prestigious industry honours, the Golden Joystick Awards, were hosted by EMAP Images with a little help from TV personality Jonathan Ross, in West London during April. A merry time was had by all, especially Ocean who managed to scoop four of the coveted awards. The rest of the line up was as follows:

Best 8-Bit Graphics – *Myth*, System 3
Best 16-Bit Graphics – *Shadow of the Beast*, Psygnosis
Best 8-Bit Soundtrack – *Chase HQ*, Ocean
Best 16-Bit Soundtrack – *Future Wars*, Palace/Delphine
Best 8-Bit Simulation – *Carrier Command*, Rainbird
Best 16-Bit Simulation – *M1 Tank Platoon*, Microprose
Best 8-Bit Coin-Op Conversion – *Chase HQ*, Ocean
Best 16-Bit Coin-Op Conversion – *Hard Drivin'*, Domark
Most Original Game of the Year – *Populous*, Electronic Arts
8-Bit Game of the Year – *The Untouchables*, Ocean
16-Bit Game of the Year – *Kick Off*, Anco
PC Leisure Product of the Year – *Indiana Jones and the Last Crusade (The Graphic Adventure)* – US Gold/Lucasfilm
Software House of the Year – Ocean

Even after the awards had been handed out (mercifully there were no speeches), the fun continued. ACE managed to snap some of the action, and these were the results.

Whoops!! Just as we were going to press, someone decided that this picture was just a bit TOO risque for you to see. What was it?? Answers on a postcard, please!

System 3 boss, Mark Cale, tries to demonstrate a move from The Last Ninja, but doesn't quite get it right!

Roger Large of System 3, Rod Cousens from Activision, and Adrian Cale of System 3, determined to show that they are still best buddies, even though Roger is due to defect to Psygnosis, and System 3 has wandered from under Activision's wing.

Geoff Brown, co-director of US Gold demonstrates his ability for consuming large portions of chicken, as well as the UK software market.

Many of the guests enjoyed a walk around the Rooftop Gardens before the ceremony began, but for one poor soul with vertigo it was all too much.

Martha Moloughney and Katherine Boucher, both EMAP employees, caught fraternising with the opposition – Russell Beadle from Computer Trade Weekly.

'For God's sake... get me out of here!' Nicki Hemmings, the blonde bombshell from IDG is obviously unimpressed, and rings for a taxi five minutes after arriving...

As is her custom, Pam Griffiths, stunning PR person for Ocean, injects some much needed glamour into the occasion.

Jonathan Ross, wit of the box, hosts the 1990 Golden Joystick Awards, with burgundy suit á la Rik Haynes...

Cathy Campos, Mirrorsoft's PR gem, enjoys the ceremony, unaware that her colleague, Alison Beasley, a close relative of

'Your round or mine Old Bean?' Roger Large of System 3 (or should that be Psygnosis?) and Gary Bracey, fun-loving head of Ocean, celebrate their companies' awards by sharing a tasty morsel.

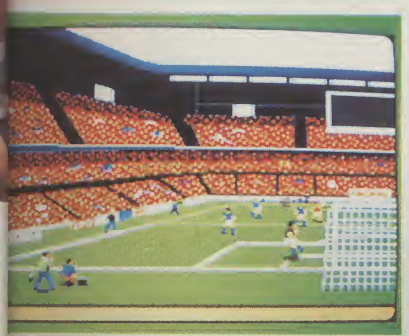
Virgin Games has won the battle of the cheque-book and is releasing the only "official, authorised World Cup Soccer Game". Imaginatively titled *World Cup Soccer – Italia '90* the game's now out on all major formats. "Accept no substitutes."

MicroStyle is steering clear of the World Cup tie-in with its International Soccer Challenge, a solid-filled polygon successor to Microprose Soccer. Out soon on C64, ST, Amiga and PC.

Entertainment International has the *World Cup 90 Compilation* for hard-up football fanatics with *Kick Off* (Anco), *Tracksuit Manager* (Goliath Games), *International Soccer* (Microdeal) for ST and Amiga – and *Kick Off*, *Tracksuit Manager* and *Gary Lineker's Hotshots* (Gremlin) for Spectrum, C64 and CPC.

World Cup Italia '90 is just round the corner, and so is a deluge of soccer-sims...

US Gold's *Italy 1990* may be an "unofficial substitute", but if you buy the game for your micro, you could win yourself a trip for two to see the finals courtesy of good old USG. "Fly to Italy, stay in Rome for seven nights and witness the climax of the World's greatest sporting event." While there, don't forget to be permanently pissed, act a hooligan, and get thrown into an Italian prison – you can bet the rest of the England 'supporters' won't... forget that is!



"And we'll really shake em'up, when we win the world cup, 'cause [insert national preference here] is the greatest football team." Remember this dinosaur of a footie song from the late 70's? No, probably just as well. It was awful. Let's hope New Order's soundtrack is mix to the max.

The Italia '90 World Cup semi-final will be held at the San Paolo Stadium in Naples on the 3rd July. Don't expect to see England playing though!

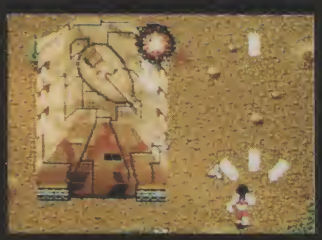
The football game of the season could be Anco's Kick Off II.

Finally, Ocean late kick off is another game tied to its ever-lasting Addidas licence – remember *Daley Thompson's Olympic Challenge*? Fortunately, neither did we.

Good luck, England. You need it.

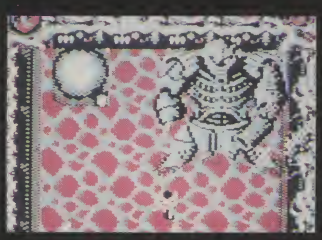
ELECTROCOIN

SNK



AMIGA

ATARI ST



COMMODORE 64

AMIGA	£24.99
ATARI ST	£19.99
COMMODORE 64	
CASSETTE	£9.99
DISK	£14.99

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TIME SOLDIER

OVER TO YOU

YOUR VIEWS FROM GAME ATMOSPHERE TO TURKISH DELIGHT

GAMES LACK ATMOSPHERE?

I am compelled to write to express my growing discontent with software houses and their attitudes towards their products. I regard ACE as a magazine which fully understands the computer industry and today's expected standards and so forth, so I think you'll agree to an extent with me when I tell about the way I feel software houses are missing out on golden opportunities.

For example, I recently purchased *Stunt Car Racer* for my Amiga. At first glance (or should that be play?) it appears to be a first rate driving simulation. However, after playing the game for about an hour, I found fault with it in such ways as the limitation of only having one opponent, the same 'feel' to all of the tracks, lack of detailed graphics (for example: backgrounds, different coloured tracks, etc), and the sound effects. What I wish to know is what happened? Why was a foot tapping, throttle flooring manic soundtrack substituted with groaning noises that make zero use of the Amiga's sound capabilities and resemble the sound chip in my old CPC?

Just think what it would be like to have eight cars on the track, a 'heavy' soundtrack blasting, a crowd in the stands next to the start line cheering like mad, the deafening roar of moody engines, and then the squeals as all the drivers burn rubber. Why weren't such things as different driving conditions included like night and hail? What about the tracks themselves, why are they all the same two colours? Gravel stretches would of been fun to say the least.

So many things were ignored. It would have have been much better to of had all the tracks load in separately, but with each one crammed full with sampled sounds, different graphics and most importantly atmosphere – something that 99% of games lack. Though *Midwinter* seems set to change this. Another bonus feature would have been a track editor – to me it seems an obvious omission.

I don't mind paying £20 to £30 for a game, but I do expect it to be £30 worth – 100% perfect. Come on all you game designers and play testers, when designing and testing games think 'atmosphere', it makes all the difference.

Of course it's not just one or two software houses, it's all of them – bumming us off with adequate games. Each new game a software house releases usually seems to manipulate the 16-bit computers a bit better, but software houses know and are capable of using the machines specifications to the full. They just take the easy option and supply us with games that are not half as exciting or good as they could be.

Another topic I would like to mention is originality. Before you go 'oh no', I don't just mean shoot'em-ups. The problem lies with whatever type of game you look at, there is always somebody coding a variant. Take 3D puzzle games such as *Interphase, Damocles* and *Starglider II* – there are loads of them, and soon it will be another case of the shoot'em-up/beat'em-up type of problem – too many all doing the same thing. I'm just waiting to see the flood of *Sim City* rip-off's.

So ACE what are you going to do about it? After all, you are one of the public's major 'voices' – what do you think needs doing? By whom? How? And when? I would like to read the software house's opinions on the various points I have raised.

One last thing, can someone explain to me why Ocean charges £5 extra for a game on the Amiga, when the user base is nearly as large as the ST's? Thank you.

Paul Kerslake, Swansea, West Glamorgan

• ACE is always campaigning on behalf of our readers and the games industry to improve the quality of Advanced Computer Entertainment hardware and software. Look at our ACE Challenge and ACE Conferences as examples of our willingness to participate in this complex and controversial debate. WHAT DO YOU THINK should be done? Write to us: ACE LETTERS, EMAP IMAGES, PRIORY COURT, 30-32 FARRINGDON LANE, LONDON EC1R 3AU. Or fax us on 01 490 0991. This debate is open to ACE reader and software houses alike. We look forward to hearing from you...

Microprose (producer of Stunt Car Racer*) replies: "We're always looking for ways to improve our products and nowadays literally years of hard work go into producing just one game. Geoff Crammond spent two years putting* Stunt Car Racer *together. The aim of* Stunt Car Racer *was to provide a racing game with the emphasis on speed and gameplay. It would be great if we could produce a game for the Amiga with all the speed, graphics and sound effects that we wanted, but unfortunately it's just not technically possible. For instance, if there'd been more cars on the track then the speed would have undoubtedly suffered. Also, we did investigate the possibilities of using a track editor but it was just technically impossible to incorporate into* Stunt Car Racer *without affecting the gameplay. The mark of a good game is to achieve the right balance between various factors, within the technical constraints and we believe the emphasis in* Stunt Car Racer *was weighted correctly. This feeling has been supported by the level of sales* Stunt Car Racer *has achieved, the terrific review marks it was awarded in all the magazines, and from the numerous letters* ***we've received from satisfied customers applauding the product."***

Finally, Ocean told us: "All games are priced on their merit. The price point is decided by three factors: development time and costs, manufacturing costs and size of the user base. The price of our Amiga software will be changing shortly."

REASONS TO BE CHEERFUL

Since you began to print my guide to *Dungeon Master* I have answered more than 250 requests for it on disk and printed form. I would appreciate it if you would convey my thanks to all those who have written to me and the many who have sent me utilities and tips. I have made some very interesting contacts. Also, thanks to all who have spotted spelling mistakes and other errors in the guide, all of which have been corrected – I hope. The friendliness and enthusiasm of everybody has shown the positive side of computers as a form of entertainment for all ages.

You may be interested to know that I have answered letters from almost every conceivable part of the British Isles. Also countries such as Holland, Denmark, Malta, France, Sweden and Germany. A pat on the back for ACE for reaching out to so many different places.

L R Rigden, Faversham, Kent

GO TO TOWN

I'm writing about that amazing machine, the FM Towns CD-ROM computer, and would be grateful if you could answer my questions:

1. When will it be available in the UK?
2. Will software be developed for it by the major companies?
3. The cost of software for the machine?
4. Is it available by mail order?
5. Will ACE keep the public informed regarding the FM Towns, i.e. software reviews?
6. What is the machine primarily for – business or home use?

Don't stop keeping the computer world up-to-date.

Mark Emmett, Hythe, Kent

• The first transmission of FM news service... (1) There's still no official UK FM launch date from Fujitsu. (2) FTL is working on FM Dungeon Master, *Origin is bringing out an FM* Ultima *compilation, Electronic Arts and Mirrorsoft are believed to be developing FM titles, Lucasfilm Games is converting* Loom, Indiana Jones and the Last Crusade – Graphic Adventure *and* Zak McKraken *onto FM, Cinemaware has FM*

Rocket Ranger *and is producing FM* It Came From the Desert, *plus other companies have released FM* Sim-City, *FM* After Burner *and FM* New Zealand Story *– get the idea? (3) Average price for an FM game in Japan is around £40. (4) Not to our knowledge. (5) We will keep you informed of all the latest FM software and hardware developments. (6) In Japan, both.*

CYBER PREDICTION

I believe that in the not too distant future, computer screens and graphics will not be very large wall screens developed by Pilkington but Virtual Reality cyberspace.

Dan Flett, Victoria, Australia

• *Why isn't there room in the market for both types of visual system?*

BREAK THE AGE BARRIER

My six year-old grandson suddenly became a computer boffin – telling me of the good games, etc. I promptly purchased a computer to: 1) Ensure my family would often visit me. 2) To acquaint myself with this awesome machine. 3) To achieve a proper level of intelligent conversation with a six year-old.

D J Smith, Leicester

STATE OF THE ARTIST

I am now nearing the end of my GCSE's and do not know what to do next and don't seem to be able to obtain any positive guidance. For a career I eventually want to be a Computer Graphic Artist. Do I:

1. Stay on for A levels?
2. Take a BTEC (which leads to an HND and then a degree) in Graphic Art, which involves Typography, Print Theory, CAD and Graphic Advertising?
3. Take a BTEC as above in General Art & Design which looks at all the aspects of art including Illustration, Reprographics, 3D Design, Ceramics, Photography, etc?
4. Take a BTEC as above in Audio Visual studies which involves TV, Audio Visual related graphics and Graphics Animation?

Everywhere I turn seem to receive different information, all good I might add, but no-one seems to know the right steps.

Please, please, someone out there help! There must be people who know 'which way to go'.

Ian Crowther, Liversedge, West Yorkshire

•*Polytechnic's seem to offer the most comprehensive and up to date Computer Graphics courses. Middlesex Polytechnic has been recommended to us, give them a ring on 01 368 1299 for more information.*

8-BIT WORRY

I own an Amstrad CPC 464 computer and I have great concern for 8-bit machines because I think that 16-bit micros are starting to take over and now that this new FM Towns 32-bit CD-ROM computer is out, the focus will change to these new 16- and 32-bit machines. The cost of 16-bit machines is high enough, but the cost of the FM-Towns is over £1500. Games for the 16-bit are over £20, so I wonder how much the games will cost for the new 32-bit machine? I think that in the next five years the 16- and 32-bit machines will take over and the 8-bit machines will be left behind.

Alex Souden, Argyll, Scotland

• *We think you may have missed the point raised in your letter: power has a price. Of course the future holds more 16-bit, 32-bit and even bigger and better machines, but there is presently a market for both 8-bit and 16-bit entertainment due to the significant difference in price of each system's hardware and software.*

DON'T BE A CREEP

I'd just like to say that I'm not going to do what many of your other readers do. What's that you're probably thinking. Well, I'm talking about the endless creeping and ass kissing. I'm not trying to say ACE isn't good, because believe you me it is. But I don't distinguish one magazine from the other. I read many magazines for different reasons. I buy ACE because it is a good intelligent read.

Pengy Leigh, Lancs

PC PROGRESS

For quite a while now, a few people I know have been needling me about how inferior the IBM PC is for playing games. I have an IBM PC XT with VGA monitor and most games are excellent. Even though the built-in sound is a big let-down, MIDI accessories and sound cards are available. And companies such as Sierra are making games compatible with various sound add-ons. VGA graphics even beat the Amiga. More and more programmers have become aware of the PC's ever improving graphics and sound capabilities. I'm not putting the Amiga down but letting its users know that the PC has grown bigger and better since 1980.

Alex Young, Victoria, Australia

PLUG ME INTO A SEGA

I think your magazine is a mega brilliant magazine, but could you do more reviews for the Sega...

Alastair Ogilvie, Harlow, Essex

• *It's tough balancing every aspect of Advanced Computer Entertainment, sometimes owners of particular machines may feel left out, but look out for improved console coverage in ACE from now on.*

ANIMATING AN AMIGA

Before I start I would like to praise you on a brill mag. Now that's over, is there a utility which allows you to hook up a video camera to the Amiga and lets you shoot six frames per second to create cartoons and other animated pieces?

Liam Sansome, Belfast, N.Ireland

• *Your best bet is the VIDI-AMIGA video frame grabber. It takes 16-shade snapshots from video and turns them into normal Amiga graphic screens which can be manipulated using any art package. PAL VIDI-AMIGA costs £114.95 from Rombo on 0506 414631. Similar systems are available for the ST and PC including Rombo's VIDI-ST.*

STOMACH CHURNING ACE ALIENS

First of all, let me thank you for the new TNT – it's absolutely ACE! Your mag gets better and better. I like the change of paper for the pink section, I think it's classy to have a mag in several different parts. Now to business, I just noticed your ACE Poloshirt Spring Collection advert. Are those models really two aliens cleverly disguised as a fake Kylie Minogue and a plastic Donovan? You can actually see part of her stomach!!! Is the she-alien available for dating?

Alex Boschmans, Belgium

• *Fake Kylie, plastic Donovan? More like ACE teamster's Melanie Costin and Jim Willis. Melanie and her stomach are currently dating a powerboat owner in Devon.*

HAWK-EYED

While reading some old computer magazines I came across an article on Electronic Arts' *Hawk* flight-simulation. I was wondering how the project was going and how far the Argonaut team were from completion? Cheers for a great mag.

Dave Spence Hirst, Knottingley, W.Yorks

• *EA tells us that* Hawk *will be released on ST, Amiga and PC in the autumn. Keep a look out for further information in future issues of ACE...*

TURKISH DELIGHTED

ACE is a great mag 'cause it gives information about every branch of the computer world.

Hakan Tirali, Istanbul, Turkey

A READER AGED 8

I play a lot of computer adventure games and I think *Barbarian* is the best game I have got and I like your magazine.

Clifford Rainbird, Chelmsford, Essex

SHOP ON STOP

Can you help me? I'm in the process of setting up a software shop with the help of the Enterprise Allowance Scheme and I have also been sent forms from the Prince's Trust to complete and return. I am writing to you because I cannot find any addresses of a wholesale software supplier, and I need prices and a list of software and hardware before I can proceed any further. I need to make a detailed profit forecast and without prices of the software, I am on stop.

R G Lewes, Pembroke, Dyfed

• *Here are a few distributors for you: Centresoft Limited, Unit2/3 Holford Way, Holford Industrial Centre, Witton, Birmingham B6 7AX; Leisuresoft Limited, Sketty Close, Brackmills Business Park, Northampton NN4 OPL; Gem Distribution Limited, Unit 1, Harolds Close, Harolds Road, The Pinnacles, Harlow, Essex CM19 5TH.*

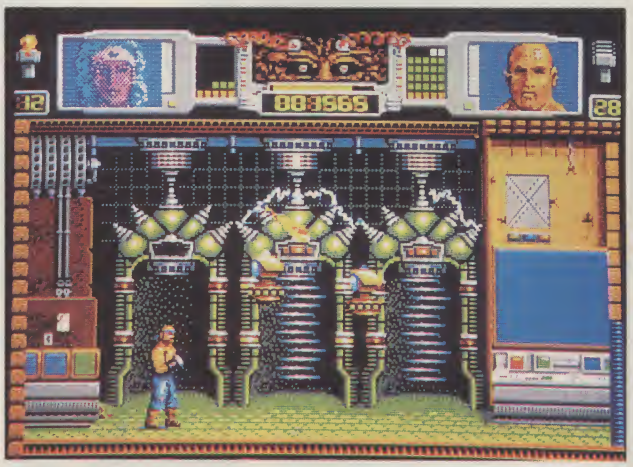
NOW'S YOUR CHANCE!

Travel to a local software house, meet strange exotic programmers, eat a wondrous buffet lunch, walk away with ACE freebies, and get your name in the magazine: all courtesy of the ACE Conferences.

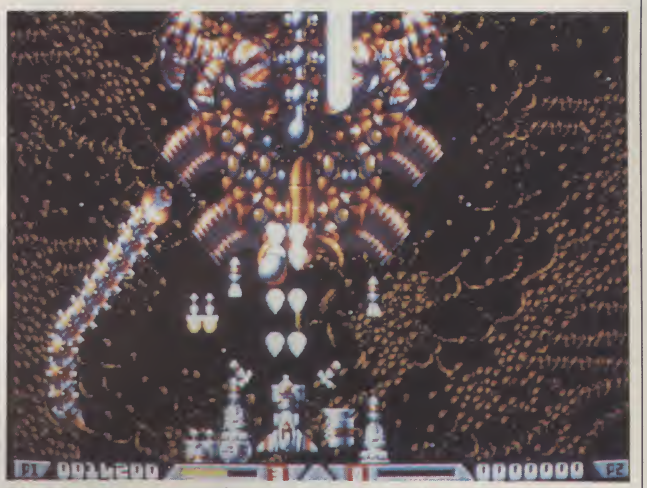
The ACE Conferences are really getting into gear now. By the time you read this, a group of ACE readers will have enjoyed the hospitality of Domark and had a blarney with the Twits (as the bosses of Domark are affectionately known). Now it's your turn...

This month we're fixing the dates for our visits to Activision and Mirrorsoft. They both promise to be truly epic affairs, as you'd expect from software houses of this stature.

Activision are the company who really pioneered console software back in the old days. And more recently they've given us innovative and exciting games ranging from *Cosmic Osmo* to *Powerdrift*. If you'd like to meet the boys responsible and put your own questions about the way the games are programmed and sold (and even make a few criticisms as well, if you want) then check out the panel on this page about how to apply and mark the date Thursday 12th July in your diary. Activision are in Reading, so take that into account if you live on the banks of the Limpopo.



Activision's glorious **Hammerfist**, *programmed by Vivid Image*



Xenon II – *you can meet the Bitmap Bros on our exclusive Mirrorsoft conference.*

BITMAP BLARNEY

On Thursday 19th July, we're also giving another bash, courtesy of Mirrorsoft. This company are really going places with their CD-ROM development, their association with Cinemaware, and the games produced for their Imageworks label by the Bitmap Bros. And you'll be able to meet the infamous BB's in the flesh when you arrive.

But there's more to it than just a free lunch. Each conference will be fully covered in the magazine and you'll see your ugly mug featured therein. Your views and comments will be faithfully recorded by the ACE team for posterity in a special feature article, and you'll also get a free ACE T-shirt. Not only that, but we hazard a guess that the software houses will be slipping out the odd freebie or two, though we're not promising anything.

What it all adds up to is a great day out. And there's a serious side to it all as well. We set up these conferences to get more communication going between the people who play the games and the people who make them – and we reckon this has got to be a good thing. Not only will you get a free lunch, but you'll also have the chance to make your opinions known about the games companies try to sell you and the games you'd really like to buy. See you there.

WHAT YOU HAVE TO DO

Each month, we'll let you know about forthcoming conferences around the country. If you think you might be interested in attending one, all you have to do is send us a **postcard** with **your name and address** clearly written, together with a **daytime telephone number** if at all possible. You also need to tell us **which conference** you would be interested in attending (one choice only, please) and **your age**. We need to know how old you are so that we can ensure a good spread of age groups at each conference.

Unfortunately we have to limit the number of people attending each conference to 15. In addition, we have to make a nominal charge of £5.00 to help cover costs. All places are allocated on a first-come, first-served basis. There is however an exception to both these conditions: as a special offer to subscribers we are giving them **priority allocations** for the first ten places in each conference, and they may also attend **free of charge**. You can find out how to become a subscriber on page 94 (and you get other benefits too – a free issue, a special newsletter, and guaranteed delivery).

We'll select the lucky readers from those who have applied and inform them of the relevant details. If anyone can't attend, they'll be shortlisted for a future conference and another selection will be made for someone who can take their place. You can always check the availability of places on a conference by ringing Steve on 01-251 6222 Ext 2486.

COMING SOON...

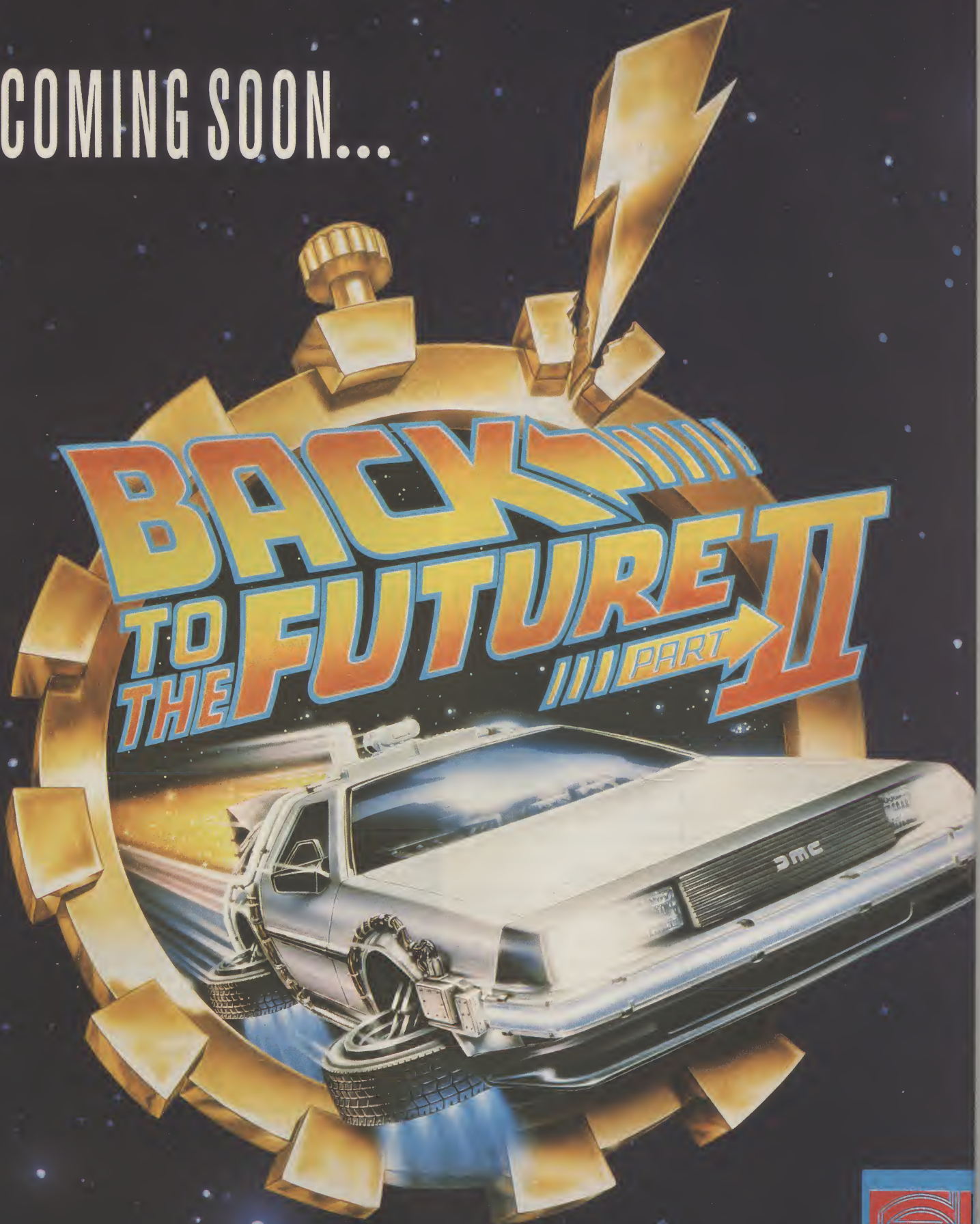


image WORKS

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Electric Europe

Development manager Ms. Oskian was just one of the many interesting people that Steve Cooke encountered at Coktel Vision in Paris – find out more on pages 68 and 69

Bonjour, Buenos Dias, Guten Tag, and Hello! Welcome to *ACE*'s *Electric Europe* Issue. In 1992 the European Community will really come of age, presenting exciting possibilities for the future of European Advanced Computer Entertainment. We thought the time was right to investigate current developments in both software and hardware currently under way across the water.

We believe that Europe is going to continue becoming more important as a major source of breathtaking software and hardware developments. This is just the beginning of increased overseas coverage in *ACE*. From now on we will be bringing you the hottest news, reviews and features, not only from Britain and the United States, but also Europe, Japan, and anywhere on the globe that the future of Advanced Computer Entertainment is being carved out.

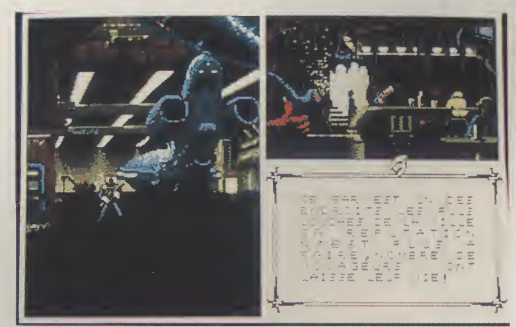
This month roving reporter Rik Haynes has been out and about. He popped over to Dublin to bring you a colourful report from the Sullivan-Bluth studios, creators of *Dragon's Lair* and *Space Ace*, and the team responsible for animated movie hits like An American Tail and the latest feature, All Dogs Go to Heaven.

Rik also reports exclusively from Philips in Holland, bringing you up to the minute news of the CDI developments there, and an insight into one of the largest companies committed to Advanced Computer Entertainment.

Editor Steve Cooke, donning striped jersey, a beret, and a string of onions has been fraternising with the French, and finding out just what's going on in the Gallic computer scene. Coktel Vision reveal their plans for making the most of some pretty revolutionary new technology, as well as telling us about the continuing development of *European Space Shuttle* on CDI.

UBI soft, the company behind *Iron Lord* and *Pro Tennis Tour* tell us what they are up to, and give us a sneak preview of their graphical adventure extravaganza *B.A.T.*

Space Ace *is the second Interactive Video game from animation supremo Don Bluth. Rik Haynes is quick on the draw at Sullivan-Bluth in Dublin on pages 22 to 24.*



One of the scenes from **B.A.T.**, *the extraordinary graphic adventure from French company Ubi Soft. You can read about this game and more on pages 71 to 73*

Steve also managed to find time to visit the amazing Science City just outside Paris. You can read all about it in this issue, and then win yourself a trip there, courtesy of Electronic Zoo.

Lost? Don't worry, just check out our Euro map overleaf to find out where the action is. We put the finger on all the exiting developments in computer entertainment, showing you where and when it's all happening.

Finally, don't miss next month's issue when we check out the inimicable Infogrames, and report back from Spain and Germany, with more news on Advanced Computer Entertainment European Style.

Philips, as well as producing lots of other electronic gadgetry, are leading the way in CDI. Find out what it's all about in Rik Haynes' report on pages 29 to 31.

Just one of many interesting exhibits at Science City, just outside Paris. Steve Cooke has been finding out just what the future holds on page 79

CAMBRIDGE

Home of some of the important names in micro-computing. Clive Sinclair and his team at Sinclair Research designed the ZX80, ZX81, ZX Spectrum, and QL here. Meanwhile Chris Curry and Herman Hauser at Acorn were coming up with the Atom, and the BBC range of micros. When Clive Sinclair and rival Chris Curry happened to meet at the town's famous Baron of Beef pub there was a clash of wills which led to a rather embarrassing bit of fisticuffs.

Also to be found at Cambridge at one time or another were Jupiter Cantab, the ill-fated splinter group from Sinclair Research, Flare, Computers, Psion, David Braben, author of *Elite* and *Zarch*, and Sinclair's new company

DUBLIN

In Dublin's fair city, where the girls are so pretty, I first set my eyes on Sullivan–Bluth. It is here that most of the major animated feature films of recent years have been produced, as well as the first two Interactive Video games, *Dragon's Lair*, and *Space Ace*.

LONDON

Britain's bustling capital is where the world's favourite computer magazine can be found. It's also home to some of the UK's top software houses

Great Music Lovers the French – everywhere you go in Paris there are Buskers (similar to London,

Paris, the new look Louvre, centre for the ever changing whims of the fashionable. This year Berets are out, Shades are in. Stay Cool!

PARIS

The City of Romance famous for its landmarks like the Eiffel Tower, Arc de Triomphe, and Notre Dame, is also home to UBI Soft. The company, who have been responsible for title's like *Puffy's Saga*, *Zombi*, *Pro Tennis Tour*, and *Iron Lord*, previously occupied an echoing Chateau somewhere in the French countryside, but evidently found their central heating bills becoming prohibitive. They are now working on a superb graphic adventure called *B.A.T.*

Also in Paris are Coktel Vision, an interesting development team who have come up with the likes of *European Space Shuttle Simulator*, and *Paris-Dakar*. They are currently investigating CD-I and other media for the nineties.

Located in the Paris suburbs is Science City, a futuristic park devoted to exhibitions of existing and forthcoming technology. You can find everything there from a planetarium to a large-scale model of the rabies virus, as well as some nifty computing innovations like touch-sensitive screens.

The French, as we know are not that fussy about what they eat or drink – Escargot or Frog Legs washed down with Calvados being a typical example. Here we found an establishment for horse lovers – but don't expect any stables, these gee gee's come with

DINAMIC STUFF

Spain's most famous and long standing software house. They had a string of 8-bit hits ranging from *Army Moves* to *Game Over* and are now set to take the 16-bit market by storm.

NEWLINE SOFTWARE

Newline have been instrumental in dragging Norway into the nineties. The recently formed company has come up with some very attractive 16-bit product, even if it has been a little low in the originality stakes.

KING COMMODORE

Some years ago Commodore managed to get a firm grip on the Danish micro market, and has never let go. The country has the highest penetration of Commodore micros in the world. Even PC buyers opt for Commodore PCs over the more traditional IBM models. As might be expected from such a liberal country, software rather hotter than the average release is available under the counter.

THALION

A young team of German programmers based in Gütersloh. Recent games from the group have included *Chambers of Shaolin*, *Seven Gates of Jambala*, *Leavin' Teramis*, and *Atomix*. Forthcoming is a fast 3D vector graphic game, *No Second Prize*, and the incredible RPG game, *Dragonflight*.

ROMANTIC ROBOT

Somewhere in the bustling city of Frankfurt are the offices of the one of the most successful companies in the peripherals market. Romantic Robot scored a huge, if somewhat controversial, success with their Multiface range of add-ons. These enabled games to be easily backed up to disk, and for the code to be examined and altered, giving rise to a whole new way of cheating!

STARBYTE SOFTWARE

Bochum is the home of this very productive German software house. Recent releases have included *Table Tennis*, *Rings of Melos*, and *Clown-O-Mania*.

RAINBOW ARTS

Dynamic Dusseldorf is home to Germany's most prolific and most consistently successful software house. Their recent releases have been stunning to say the least – *Rock 'n' Roll* and *Conqueror* are just two of the titles that come to mind. The company looks to be going from strength to strength with the forthcoming release of *Turrican* (see preview this issue), and it's investigations into the potential of the likes of CD-I and other revolutionary media.

LORICIEL

Tucked away in the town of Rueil-Malmaison is the third of the big French software publishers. Loriciel are now, with the help of US Gold, consolidating their place in the European market with strong products like *Sherman M4*.

LINEL

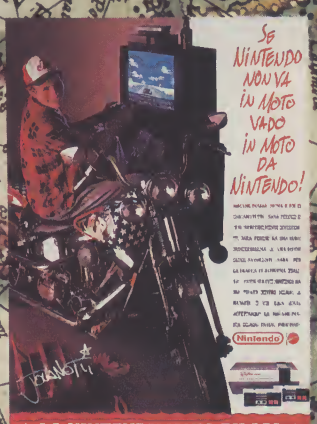
The only outfit in Switzerland (based in Appenzell) to ever make an impact on the rest of the European software market. Linel's early games were renowned for combining very pretty graphics with traditional adventure elements.

LYONS

This famous French city which straddles the equally famous Rhône is where Gallic gamers Infogrames are to be found. The company have produced such diverse games as the mystical *Quest for the Time Bird*, *Kult*, and *Purple Saturn Day*.

VARESE

The third of Italy's big software houses, Idea, is located here.



★ LA NINTENDOMANIA DILAGA ★

BOLOGNA

Home not only of the delicious spaghetti dish, but also of two of Italy's top software houses, Simulmondo, and Genias.

MILAN

The charming Italian city, made even more delightful by the presence of *K*, the Italian version of *ACE*. *K* is the publication read by all Italians who want to stay one step ahead of the technology that is tomorrow's Advanced Computer Entertainment.

Radar can't detect it –

F-19

STEALTH FIGHTER

but it's coming..

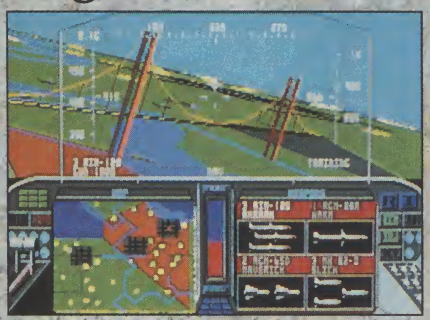
The Biggest,
Fastest and Smoothest Flight Simulation ever seen.

You're flying on high octane adrenalin

F-19

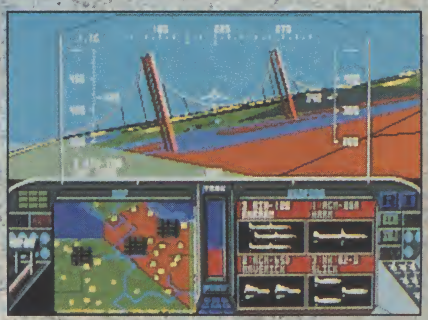
STEALTH FIGHTER

Forget about other flights of fancy – This is the Real World.



Imagine Falcon – imagine a few hundred square miles of fantasy.

Imagine F29 – imagine a few thousand miles of fantasy.



Fly F19 – fly over 409,600 square miles of reality. Fly fast. Fly the real thing.

Over 3,300 missions possible.

Cold, limited or conventional war.

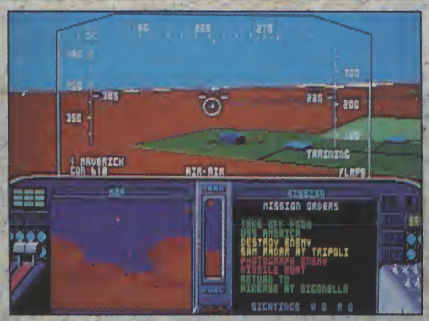
Four grades of opponent.

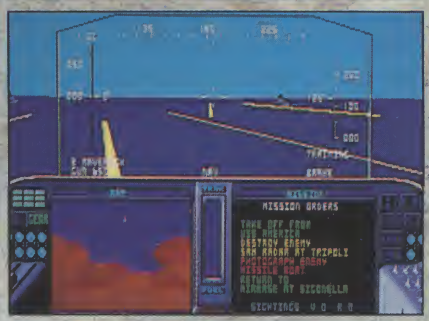
Four real-world scenarios.

All the action you can handle – and always a new challenge waiting.

Graphical detail and depth of gameplay are claims made by others – here they are reality.

FLY F19 SOON ON YOUR ATARI ST AND COMMODORE AMIGA.





MICROPROSE

IBM Screen shots shown. Actual screens may vary.

Ex-Disney animator, Don Bluth and his Space Ace creations

The big baddie Borf reaps his vengeance in the original Space Ace, look out for the forthcoming game Space Ace II: Borf's Revenge

Rik Haynes visits Don Bluth's Dublin-based film studio and discovers the interactive cartoon...

Into the Lair

Lead on brave adventurer, your quest awaits. This opening line to the classic laserdisc arcade game of the early 80's, *Dragon's Lair*, holds equally true to its creator, Don Bluth. Although the world's first 'interactive cartoons' were innovative, their technology was way ahead of their time, and consequently Bluth's *Dragon's Lair* and *Space Ace* coin-ops lacked the commercial success they deserved. But with the consumer launch of CD-I next year and the growing number of CD-ROM machines, the technology has finally caught up with the concept. The interactive cartoon is about to hit your TV screen.

Bluth's interactive cartoons combine traditional movie animation with the interactivity of a computer game to produce an exciting new entertainment medium. Bluth explains the advantages of animation, "All great stories have two things in common, they entertain and they educate. The urge to be carried away in fantasy is always strong and animation has the special power to capture an entire imaginary kingdom the ordinary camera will never enter."

Taking note of the emerging CD technologies, Bluth decided to set up a special division to produce interactive cartoons in May 1989. Patrick Ketchum, President of Sullivan Bluth Interactive Media (SBIM), told us, "SBIM is at the forefront of CD technology. We have begun production on two entertainment titles for the interactive compact disc market which will reflect the combination of our creative talent, superior animation resources and innovative computer technology to create interactive cartoons".

"Cheap, poor art is like listening to gossip at a bus stop, it's interesting but has no lasting value."

Don Bluth

Ketchum has long been interested in both interactive media and animation. In 1980 he founded Data-Soft, the games company that created early computer hits including *Zaxxon*, *Bruce Lee* and *Alternate Reality* for machines like the Atari 800 and Commodore 64. He then set up the US division of Toei Animation, the

Sullivan Bluth Studios in Dublin, Ireland: over 300 creative minds dedicated to producing classical animation in a six-storey building next to the River Liffey and Phoenix Park

CREATIVE IMAGINATION

Don Bluth started as an apprentice animator at Walt Disney back in the 50's, working on animated feature films like *Sleeping Beauty* and *The Rescuers*, but by 1979 he felt Disney had lost its will to produce classic animation. "Good art should say something worthwhile – or why bother? Seeing something of excellence is always inspiring," states Bluth. So he left with partners Gary Goldman and John Pomeroy, plus 11 other animators, to produce classical animation in his garage. The move was a success. Bluth produced an award-winning television special, *Banjo The Woodpile Cat* – followed by his first animated feature film, *The Secret of NIMH*. In 1984 Bluth met up with financier Morris Sullivan, and formed Sullivan Studios in Van Nuys, California. *An American Tail*, a Spielberg presentation of a Don Bluth film was produced here, although all cel painting was done at Sullivan Bluth Studios in Dublin. *An American Tail* became the highest grossing animated feature for a first release – worldwide theatrical and video receipts are projected to reach $180 million. The 45000 square foot Sullivan Bluth Studios in Dublin was opened in 1986. *The Land Before Time*, a Spielberg/Lucas presentation of a Don Bluth film released by Universal Pictures, was the first feature created in Dublin. This was followed by *Oliver and Co.*, *All Dogs Go To Heaven* and now *Rock-A-Doodle*.

Space Ace was Bluth's second interactive laserdisc coin-op cartoon

world's largest animation studio based in Japan. In 1986 Toei animated over 360 half hour TV episodes including *The Muppet Babies*, *GI Joe* and *Dungeons and Dragons*. Ketchum joined Bluth in October 1986.

PLAY THE CARTOON

Don Bluth computer games have become increasingly popular in the past few years despite criticisms of their lack of playability and level of interactivety. Bluth's *Dragon's Lair*, *Space Ace*, *Dragon's Lair: Escape from Singe's Castle* and *All Dogs Go To Heaven* games titles have been produced on a wide variety of machines including Spectrum, C64, CPC, ST, Amiga, PC, Nintendo, Sega, Macintosh and Apple IIgs. The firm is also developing titles for Nintendo Gameboy, Fujitsu FM Towns and NEC PC Engine CD-ROM machines, and the Philips/Sony CD-I system. Ketchum predicts, "I see the entertainment computer and dedicated game system software market moving towards a marriage of technical and animation skills where characters will take on more lifelike movements and products will become more dynamic".

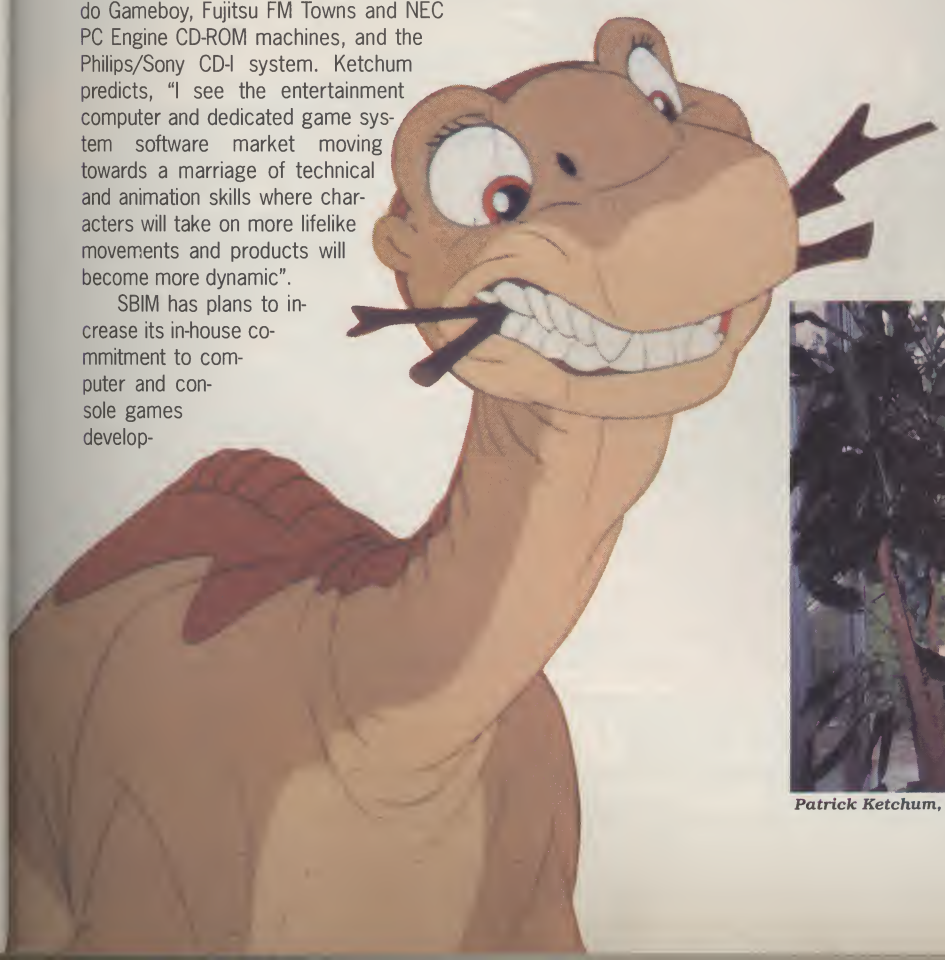
SBIM has plans to increase its in-house commitment to computer and console games development instead of solely relying on companies like Readysoft. "We're setting up a facility over here which will be able to tap into character design, backgrounds, computer graphics, etc," discloses Ketchum. SBIM's first totally in-house game is likely to be based around Bluth's 1991 animated feature film release, which has just started production at the Dublin Studios.

In the meantime, new games in development include *Dragon's Lair: The Legend*, *Dragon's Lair II: Time Warp*, *Space Ace II: Borf's Revenge* and *The Sea Beast*. Hopefully these games will have improved playability – Ketchum believes they will, "*The Sea Beast* is going to be a combination of everything – great animation, great technical resources. *Dragon's Lair* and *Space Ace* were both products created for the laserdisc market – way ahead of their time when they were first created. Their playability was not what it could be, given todays market. With *The Sea Beast* we'll work around that, there will be full interactivity with the character that you are controlling. The game was actually supposed to be the 4th arcade game but because the laserdisc market fell out it was never developed. There's also a couple more game concepts, and even though they were created in the early 80's, I think they're excellent and refreshing. They're still along the lines of *Dragon's Lair* – the same character style. Their release is about six months away".

"I think my favourite film is Frank Capra's It's A Wonderful Life. It moves me. I watch. I cry. And I think, I'm glad to be alive."

Don Bluth

A cute character from The Land Before Time animated feature film



CONNECTING THE DOTS

Bluth is also at the forefront of computer technology when creating his classical animation movies. Jan Carlee, Director of the computer department at Sullivan Bluth Studios, describes why they use computers: "We build three dimensional computer props. It's

Patrick Ketchum, President of Sullivan Bluth Interactive Media

Our hero is looking smug as a Space Ace

easy to build the object in the computer and manipulate it – objects that have a lot of detail on them, or would be a problem redrawing from certain aspects of perspective. In the *Rock-A-Doddle* movie we have a series of objects like cars, helicopters, motorcycles, toy trunks, oil cans, living room furniture and a farm. We build these props and animate them with basic geometry. It's points in space - this is an expensive but elaborate version of connect-the-dots."

"The computer props are then plotted out on paper, this seems an incredibly low-tech method, but it actually works out very well because stylistically its painted like the rest of the film. Plus once it's on paper it's in a universal language around the studio – 397 people can now deal with what you're doing - it's not some weird format, it's very accessible. Animators can sit down and draw on top of the paper. If you want to redress something or make it look organic you can just add that on by hand, you can take things out, the effects animators can add smoke dust and dirt, and it all looks the same – hopefully."

"With the computer you're able to work through a lot of variations and ideas very quickly."

"We run two software packages – *Wave Front* and *Soft Image* – on Silicon Graphics workstations. We have an in-house technical director to write modifications to our off-the-shelf software packages to get the software to do exactly what we want instead of kinda close."

"Rendering in computer graphics is a fairly expensive proposition, and rendering for a motion screen is a whole giant can of worms. If you blow up 'standard' computer graphics to 40 by 60 feet they don't look that hot. You've got to get at least 2000 pixels across for it to look real good. *The Last Starfighter* by Digital Productions was doing 4000 and actually I thought that was overkill. The computer graphics looked sharper than the live action and that looked a little weird. I think they should have computed at a lot lower res. But films like *Tron* were done at 1600 across and they needed to go up. Somewhere between 1600 and 4000 is a good looking image. Palette is another consideration for a motion picture screen. Some of the software systems are only geared to compute 256 grey levels because that's what you drag around in television. For motion picture screens you have to be prepared to calculate a whole lot more grey levels than that. One place I worked at we had a palette of 64 billion colours - we were dragging around 8 billion grey levels. That was far beyond the grey range of film itself!

Carlee has worked on the movies *Tron*, *Weird Science*, *Goonies* and *Predator*. "*The Abyss* by Industrial Light & Magic is by far the best use of computer graphics to date. It's the best example of how to integrate computer graphics with a live action film. ILM are the new kids on the block." But doesn't Carlee feel out of touch in Dublin? "We're doing something else, we're doing cartoons. Computer graphics require a large investment in hardware, only two major studios have full-time computer graphics departments – us and Disney. Computer graphics in cartoons have to find their niche - what they can do really well, not just a situation of replacing something that's already being done. Not only do they have to do it better, they have to do it faster and cheaper too. Animation is such a labour intensive process that computers can really help out. Now that we have this tool, we can do things that we couldn't do before. Computer graphics are broadening horizons."

START AT THE TOP

Don Bluth left Disney with one simple ambition – to produce the kind of quality animation not seen since the 30's and 40's. "Making a classical animated film is a very complex process, it isn't at all what you might go through if you were creating a Saturday morning cartoon. I think of it as an art form where the key to the whole process is quality." But what actually is classical animation? "Anything classical is something that can stand the test of time, and something that will appeal to the most people. And so, in a classical animation film, we try to make something that will thrill and appeal every time you see it," asserts Bluth.

How do you create classical animation? "It all starts with a blank sheet of paper. Animation is created by projecting 24 still images onto the screen per second. For the average length animated feature there must be over 100000 of these images. Each individual frame is painted on clear plastic 'cels'."

"A storyboard is created, comprising elaborate sketches detailing the plot. Layout artists research the geography and architecture of the story setting, to create the pencil ragged world from which the background painters will paint the full colour setting. The characters are drawn by animators who understand the physics and timing of how characters and objects move in the real world. The animator is the true actor of the film and must have a flair for caricature and drama. The effects animators create all the environmental phenomena which bring the artificial world alive. Special effects is big area of classical animation, everything that moves but isn't a character is termed a special effect - sparks, smoke, shadows. Breakdown and in-between artists embellish the animation. Clean-up artists check the work. We now over 300 employees representing around 10 countries. The notion is to bring the best artists from around the world under one roof."

Bluth enthuses, "Every one of our artists touches each film with their own talent, it gives the film its romance, its glow, its excitement. So when it all comes together on one piece of celluloid it appears as if one artist has painted it."

With over 300 people in 20-odd departments, creating classical animation can prove to be a very difficult process. "Each department is dependent on the other to keep providing work - we have an administrative heart to make sure there are no bottlenecks. We put a huge amount of effort into the first stage - the script. We have one simple philosophy - you can only be as strong as your story. You then record voices and begin to design characters and get some visual ideas. You storyboard the film from start to finish - just like a comic book. The excellence of the storyboard will determine the entire film - you then copy that off to all the departments and from there on it is simply a matter of everyone producing and developing on the original idea. There's a lot of room for individual creativity within the storyboard framework. Each person giving their own input to the film."

Business brain Sullivan sums up the advantages of classical animation in his sales pitch, "We are the creators the world's greatest animation today. They cost no more than live action films to produce, but their life is unlimited when compared to their live action counterparts. Quality animation has the ability to continue reaping profits virtually forever – with repeated success with every new generation. With the creation of our own live action pictures and our own distribution arm, we're finally in a position to call our own shots."

This fair princess from Dragon's Lair was modeled on one sexy girlie. Give up? Miss Marilyn Monroe of course!

The All Dogs Go to Heaven computer game is aimed more towards the younger gamester: lots of simple games incorporating a fair degree of educational elements

"Children need the assurance that things will be OK. At the same time a judicious scare is a great release of anxiety. You have to wait for that before you allow Good to triumph."

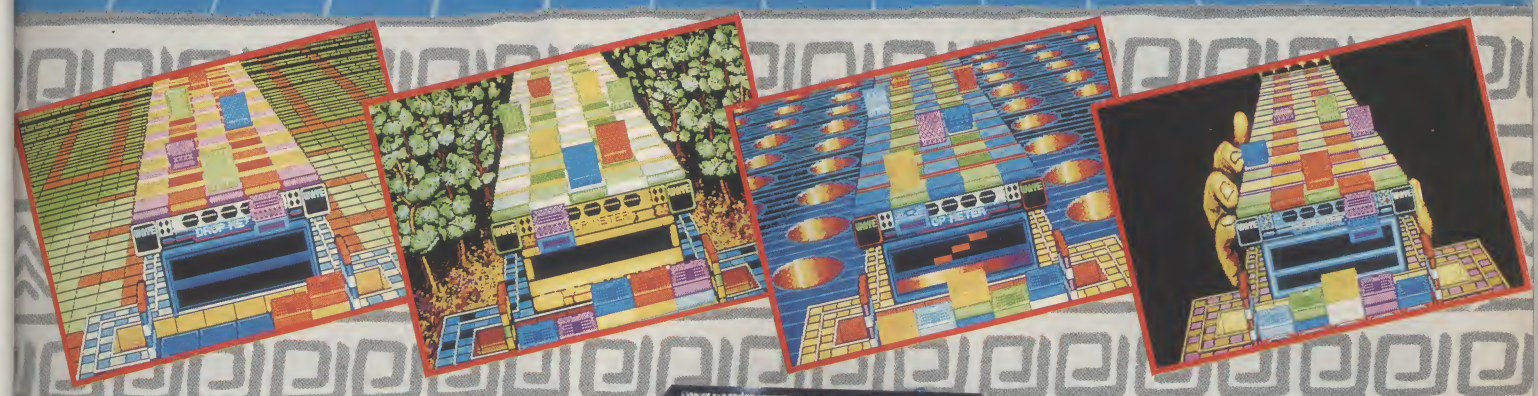
Don Bluth

THIS IS THE 90's
THIS IS
KLAX™

THE TIC-TAC TILE GAME

It's simple in concept and easy to play. Catch the coloured tiles with the paddle and flip them into the bins to make same coloured stacks, diagonals and rows of three. Sounds easy? It is! The hard part is pulling yourself away from the game.

- **The latest craze from California!**
- **99 waves of sheer fun!**
- **The fastest selling coin-op ever!**
- **Addictive and challenging.**
- **Make multiple klaxes for massive points!**
- **Challenge your friends in head-to-head action.**



TENGEN

The Name in Coin-Op Conversions

DOMARK

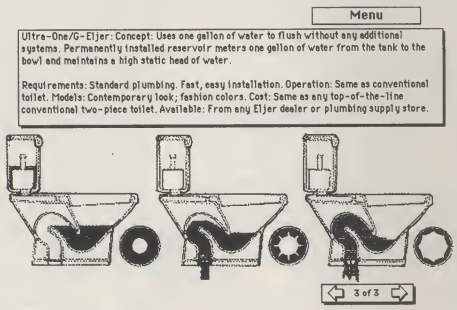
Available on: Atari ST, Amiga, IBM PC 3.5" & 5.25", Commodore 64 (cassette, disk) Amstrad (cassette, disk) Spectrum +3, Spectrum 48/128

Programmed by: Teque Software developments Ltd. Atari ST Screenshots

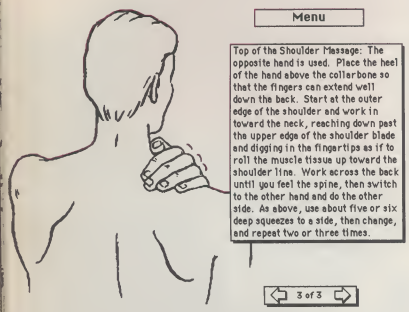
Published by Domark Ltd, Ferry House, 51-57 Lacy Road, London SW15 1PR Tel: 01-780 2224

CD Worlds

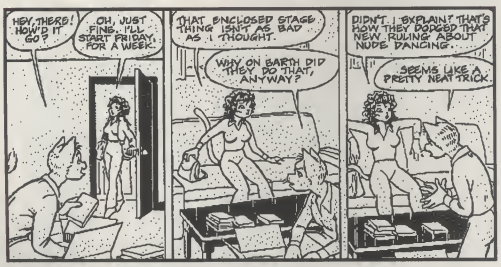
Rik Haynes clicks his way through this extraordinary Macintosh CD-ROM product from Broderbund



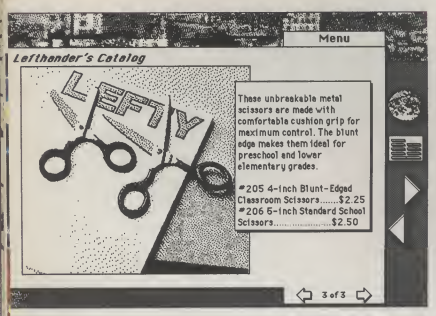
We All Live Downstream
"From the karst (limestone) watersheds of Eureka Springs comes the most radical support for waterless toilets. Plagued by underground pollution, The Water Centre has produced the only in-print book surveying dry toilets - from commercial varieties to home-grown; from incolents to moulder (cold, slow compost) varieties. I would like more about dry toilet headaches: flies, shock loading, maintenance, installation, quality of final compost. Downstream also surveys greywater systems and community water politics, knowing full well that water connects and our feces are but fine fertilizers for future food."
Peter Warshall



Headaches: The Drugless Way to Lasting Relief!
"The bookstore I used to work in sold out of its three copies of this book in as many days. (Very good for an independent). Obviously the book succeeds in filling a niche. I myself tried the trapezuis muscle massage when suffering from one of my frequent headaches and was blissfully relieved. Some of the theory in this book is hokey; nonetheless the relief techniques described (including scaple massage with a brush, 'facial callisthenics,' and acupressure) more than make up for Headaches' shortcomings."
Candida Kutz



Omaha The Cat Dancer
"Funny animal comics for adults. The stories of Omaha and her friends day-to-day healthy-hippie lives. Entertaining and frequently erotic."



Lefthander's Catalog
"A modest selection here of household gadgets and tools designed for southpaws, including a few for the ambidextrous. Ever try to use righthanded scissors with your left hand?"
Kevin Kelly

"First published in 1968, *The Whole Earth Catalog* continues to provide constantly evolving access to tools and ideas. A winner of the National Book Award, the *Whole Earth Catalog* has sold over 2.5 million copies through the years. Like earlier paper-and-ink editions, the electronic version of *Whole Earth Catalog* is packed with fascinating entries on a vast array of subjects: education, house design, sea kayaking, digital electronics and more, reflecting a broad range of human interests. It's an endlessly useful encyclopaedia of excellence – informative, entertaining, and enticing."

The Whole Earth Catalog on CD-ROM is a hyper-driven review guide to Earth: The Origin of the Species and Evolution Through the Ages. This translates into 200Mb of text, graphics and sound comprising approximately 9500 HyperCard cards, covering 2500 items reviewed, including 4000 pictures, 2000 text excerpts and 500 sounds.

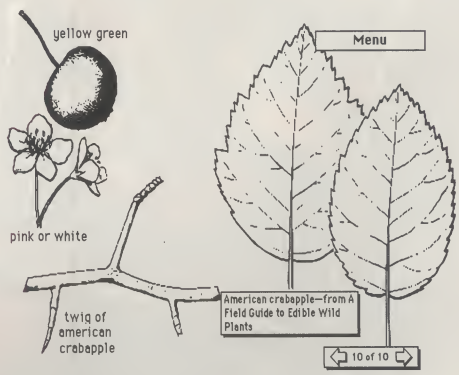
"Thanks to HyperCard, you can move quickly and easily from subject to subject." Getting around is simple, just point to anything on-screen that interests you and you're reading, watching or listening all about it in a matter of seconds. The contents are divided into Whole Systems, Community, Place, Household, Craft, Livelihood, Health, Nomadics, Communications, Media, Learning, Music and Index.

"Browsing through the *Catalog* is an interactive adventure, guided by your imagination. Wherever you go, you discover unexpected connections and marvellous sources of information you never knew existed."

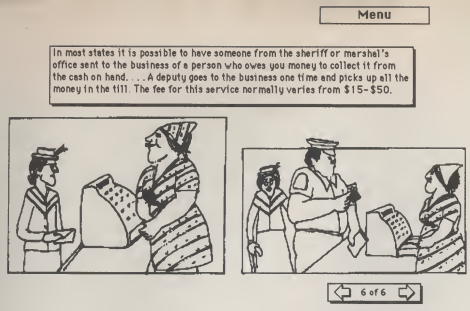
READY FOR LIFT OFF

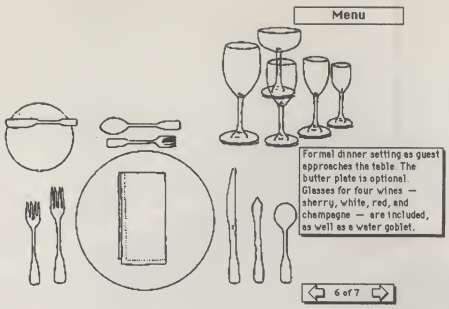
Veteran gamesters may remember the producer of this remarkable Macintosh project. Broderbund has been involved in the games, education and business areas of computing since the start of the micro. It developed such classics as *Lode Runner* and *Choplifter*, and now even manufactures a cyberpunk joystick for the Nintendo NES console.

The Electronic Whole Earth Catalog, Access to Tools and Ideas – CD-ROM version is only available for the Macintosh and costs $149.95 in the States. For further information contact: Broderbund Software, Inc., 17 Paul Drive, San Rafael, California 94903-2101, USA.



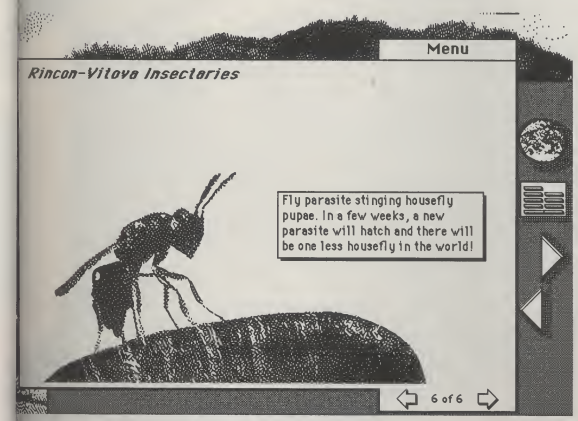
Edible Garden Weeds of Canada
"Edible Garden Weeds of Canada and Edible Wild Fruits and Nuts of Canada are the most elegant and informative books on wild edibles. Edible Native Plants of the Rocky Mountains is the best on the Rockies and some more southern species. Peterson's has a cozy appendix-edibles are clustered by old fields, waste grounds, swamps, thickets, still water, and (like Japanese haiku) by season. Identification remains difficult. Rotts digs the deepest into speciality foraging: good drawing, botany, Indian uses, medicinal uses, harvesting, drying, and preparing of roots, tubers, corms, and rhizomes."
Peter Warshall



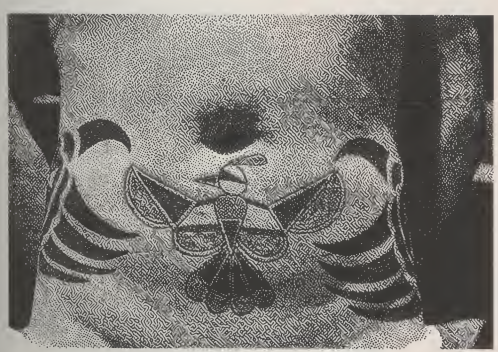


Everybody's Guide to Small Claims Court
"This is a superb book, flawless! No small business should be without it. If you like to sue other people and businesses, then you'll also find it helpful."
Michael Philips

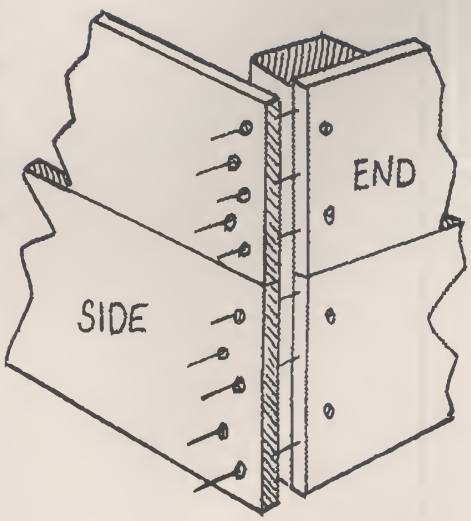
Amy Vanderbilt Complete Book of Etiquette
"I used to think that to have manners was to be mannered; that etiquette was affection. Now I see that discipline of any sort is a lot more comfortable than its absence, and that is quite as true of consideration for others as it is of daily exercise or meditation. All you have to do is follow a few hundred simple suggestions. The essence of them is consideration for others, whether that is made manifest as tact, promptness in thanking people, being organised enough not to confound everybody else, or making a proper introduction."
Stephanie Mills



Rincon-Vitova Insectaries
"Mail-order bugs that eat bugs. They're called beneficial insects, and ladybugs are best known. Also for sale here are bugs to control aphids, greenhouse whiteflies, and even a parasite to attack common flies that breed in livestock manure. Rincon-Vitova is the oldest and largest commercial insectary in the world."
Richard Nilsen



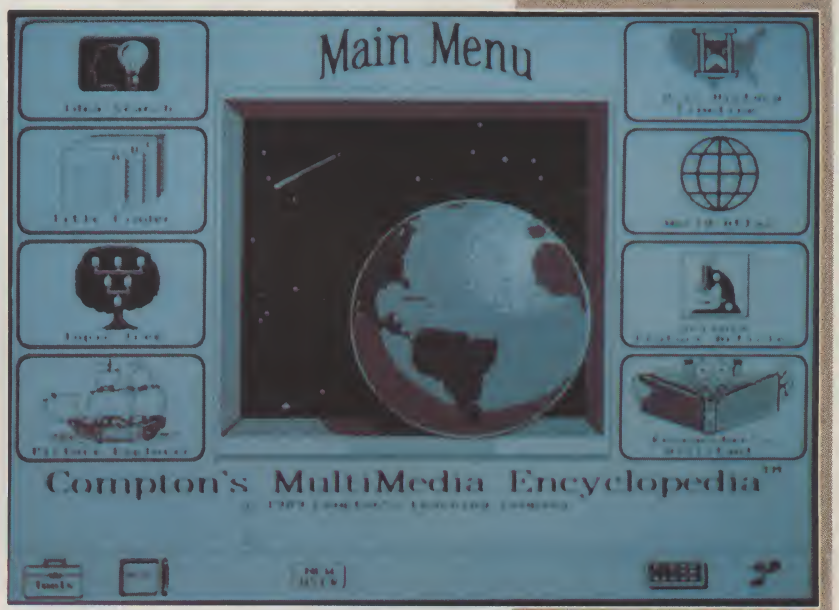
Tattoo: Pigments of Imagination
"Tattoos winding up backs, twisting around legs and arms, or curling up in some small curve of skin: dragons, eagles, cats, exotically dressed humans, and lots of other tattoo motifs writhe off the pages in Chris Wroblewski's book of dramatic colour photographs. American and English tattoo art is featured, mainly examples of more outrageous, abstract design of the 70's and 80's. Not too many anchors and 'I love mom' tattoos, in other words. This is a fun visual introduction to the multiculture symbols of modern tattoo art and the various characters who choose to wear them."
Jeanne Carstensen

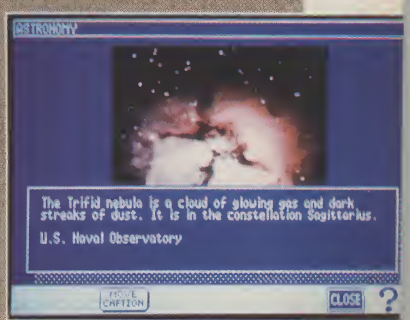


How To Make Your Own Coffin
"Simple, easy-to-follow instructions on making your own pine coffin. Helps your loved ones beat the high cost of dying."
Mark Faigenbaum

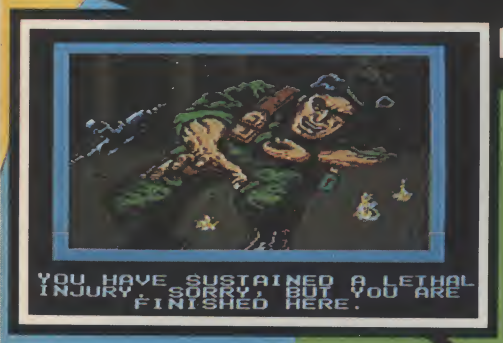
COMPTON'S COMING SOON...

As we were going to press, a demo disk of *Compton's Multi-Media Encyclopaedia* landed into our PC disk drive. We hope to cover the finished version in a future issue of ACE...





Special thanks to Hitachi New Media (01 848 8787) for supplying the Macintosh CD-ROM.



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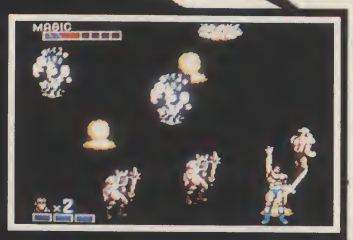

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CD-IMPRESARIOS

Philips, the Dutch electronics giant, is shaping the future of interactive entertainment. Rik Haynes finds out how...

Why should Philips, the second largest consumer electronics company in the world, be interested in interactive entertainment? Easy, because Philips believes Compact Disc Interactive (CD-I) is going to be 'the' entertainment medium of the 90's. And with Philips and Japanese partner Sony behind it, who can doubt the potential of CD-I?

From its humble origins – Gerard Philips founded the firm in 1891 with just 75000 gilders to manufacture incandescent lamps – Philips today employs over 300000 people in more than 60 countries. The company is the largest colour television manufacturer, the inventor of the compact disc and audio cassette, a pioneer in video cassette recorder technology, and leader in development of technologies in High Definition Television (HDTV) and Compact Disc Interactive (CD-I). From its headquarters at Eindhoven in the Netherlands, Philips Consumer Electronics Division has 60000 employees, with manufacturing locations in Belgium, France, Italy, Austria, Germany, United States, Japan, Singapore, Taiwan, Hong Kong, Malaysia and Brazil. This division's first products were battery-operated radio receivers back in 1927. Now Philips has set its sights on interactive entertainment.

NEW CONCEPTS

"The publishing world had its last breakthrough in 1456 when Gutenburg printed his bibles. But it's preparing itself for a new and important development: electronic publishing," proclaims Gaston Bastiaens, Director of Philips Interactive Media Systems (IMS).

"Compact Disc Audio was successful because it was a world standard for hardware and software, added useful features to existing living room equipment, and had a large and interesting catalogue of titles. CD-I is a standard multimedia format consisting of high-quality audio (for music, narration and sound effects), various levels of still video, graphics, animation, text, data and full motion screen video, all combined in a digital interleaved way in order to get the required flexibility."

"CD-I is a new way of interacting with a television set in the living room, to allow interactive entertainment. For the consumer market, the television set is central. Access to the system must be easy and user-friendly."

Philips and Sony aren't the only companies to reach these consumer conclusions, most major Japanese consumer electronics manufacturers are developing CD-I players including Panasonic, Technics, Sharp, Yamaha, Sanyo and Fujitsu Ten.

ABOVE:
Philips and Renault have jointly developed four CD-I discs for use in Renault's service training programmes

NEW CHALLENGES

"CD-I combines in a digital form: audio, video, text, graphics, and computer data on a single 12cm optical disc. The technical specifications provide for several video levels up to high resolution and several audio levels up to CD-Audio. All these forms of information can be used interactively and simultaneously."

Although audio, visual and textual media are easy enough to handle separately, when put together with interactivity added, development can prove to be difficult and costly task. Fortunately, these aren't insurmountable problems. "CD-I is a marriage of different industries, such as the conventional audio-visual industry and real time programming industry that is best exemplified by video games and home computer software."

It would be unwise for Philips to sit back back and wait for people to develop CD-I software, therefore it has set up American Interactive Media (AIM) in the States (see ACE 32 for more details) to produce titles and there are active development projects in the UK, France, Germany and Italy. In fact, Philips IMS in the UK has just set up a CD-I studio in Surrey with over 70 personnel. Julie Davies, Marketing Services Manager at IMS, explains, "We've learnt the only way to shift hardware is to provide the software. When we launch into the consumer market we're going to ensure there are enough titles available. We will produce titles in our own studio – with full audio and video production facilities, technical staff, etc – able to put a whole title together right up to mastering stage. We will commission titles through joint ventures. We'll train the creative production community to learn how to design CD-I titles". Philips expects to sell 500 CD-I Authoring systems – ranging from approximately £4000 for a starter-kit to £400000 for a large scale studio – in the next three years to electronic companies, publishers, software houses and video production firms.

Philips is also fully confident of its US development commitment, "AIM – a Philips-Polygram daughter company – is a pioneer in interactive multimedia, creating a large variety of exiting titles covering games, music entertainment, children's programs, sports, self-enhancement and reference titles," confirms Bastiaens.

AIM currently has 25 titles in production. Nested between such 'interesting' titles as *Gardening* and *Stamps*, comes *Sexual Universe* and *World of Gambling*. "*Sexual Sphere*, hosted by Dr. Joyce Brothers and produced by Vortex Interactive, is a sensitive exploration of human sexuality. Its soft mood and "new age" imagery are interwoven with digital photographs

"CD-I will be 'the medium' for entertainment, education and information in the 90's."

Gaston Bastiaens, Director of Philips IMS

WHAT'S THE CATCH?

Though CD-I will make an entertaining and exciting addition to the range of Advanced Computer Entertainment out there in consumer land, its success is by no means assured – despite the backing of prestigious companies like Philips and Sony. For instance, do you remember the G-7000 video games system – Philips answer to the popular Atari VCS console of the early 80's? Or what about MSX, the Japanese world 'standard' for micro computers? Both these products flopped on the world market, both were supported by Philips. After all, nobody is completely infallible. Could CD-I slide down the same slippery slope to obscurity? Of course, only time – and the consumer – will answer this, but for our part we hope CD-I succeeds. You can be assured ACE will be the first to inform you of all future CD-I developments...

The Philips Headquarters in Eindhoven

BE A PART OF IT

"Based on the acclaimed book by Nancy Sinatra, AIM is producing a multi-media biography of Frank Sinatra on CD-I with a personal look at the man, his family, and his film, radio and recording careers. Nancy Sinatra provides insights on her famous father, along with never-before-seen photographs from the Sinatra family's personal collection. *Frank Sinatra: My Father* includes a special section called 'Frankly Speaking' where you interact with Ol' Blue Eyes, getting answers to specific questions. Full fidelity compact disc sound enhances Sinatra recordings, along with the narration of personal history and Sinatra facts. A complete discography (all Sinatra albums released) and all his film roles, radio and television performances are listed. The title even tests the Sinatra fan by including a trivia section."

CD-I FOR YOURSELF

If visit the ACE Living Room of the Future at the CES Show in September, you will see CD-I in action. Philips is generously supplying a CD-I system, and there will be demonstrations of the software on-stand. CES is being held at London's Earls Court exhibition centre from 13th-16th September.

and hi-fi sound. While *Caesar's World of Gambling* brings the casinos of Nevada into the living room minus the risk of playing roulette, blackjack, craps and slot machines in real-life."

Publishers like Rand McNally & Company, Time Life Books, Children's Television Workshop (Sesame Street), ABC, Parker Brothers, Kinder Care, The Sporting News, Hanna-Barbera and Britannica Software are all involved in CD-I projects. The first product releases will include: *Sesame Street Numbers, Sesame Street Letters, Children's Bible Stories, Colouring Book, Rand McNally US Atlas, Sargon Chess, Time-Life Photography, Grolier Encyclopaedia, Titan, Treasures of the Smithsonian, Uninvited, Dark Castle and Deja Vu.*

CD-I will also cater for armchair golfers, "A production of Ultimate Athlete in association with ABC Wide World of Sports, *Golf* simulates live action play on the 18 most challenging holes from the finest courses in Palm Springs. You can select the hole and club and determine the direction, speed and angle of swing and impact. Weather conditions randomly change from hole to hole. You immediately see the results – or consequences – of your swing with realistic graphics simulating rolling topography. A top ABC golf commentator narrates play, and a wiseguy caddy adds his two-cents worth."

NEW FRONTIERS

"Most important inventions were originally meant to do something completely different from what they finally did do in the hands of others. Edison thought of his audio recording invention mainly as a legal tool for collecting wills from dying people, Bell regarded his 'telephone' as some kind of alarm system. CD-I has turned out to be a powerful tool for education. The division between education and entertainment could fade."

CD-I isn't restricted to entertainment or education either, "it offers many opportunities in various business environments including travel and tourism, real estate and the military – with a multitude of applications: training, point of sales, point of information and reference publishing. Peugeot will introduce their 605 top model car as a CD-I point of sales application. Japan's Ministry of Trade and Industry (MITI) has decided CD-I will be the points of information carrier at the Flower and Green Exposition show in Japan".

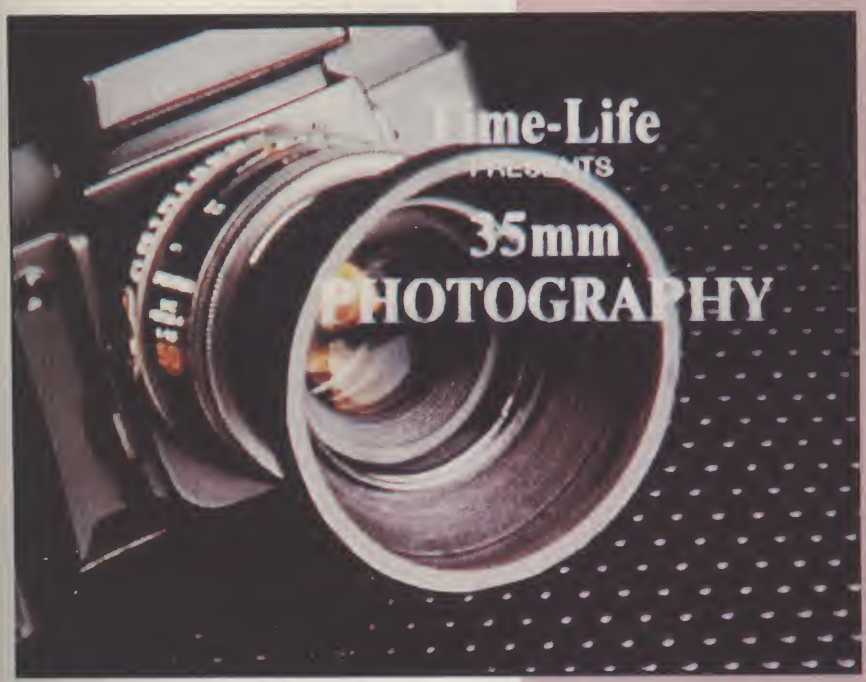
Philips is already thinking about second generation CD-I systems and a possible link-up with hi-def TV, "the digital encoding techniques give CD-I the ability to prepare itself for further developments in high resolution and high definition video".

The future looks bright for the foresighted 100 year-old Dutch corporation and its new electro toy. CD-I is set for a US release by the middle of next year, with a European launch due for Christmas '91. Philips reckons that by the time of the consumer launch there will be approximately 100 titles available, each priced in the region of £20-£30. The players will initially cost upwards of £600 – but these prices will tumble if volume sales are encountered. "Soon, television will have a mind of its own... yours."

ENTERTAIN AND EDUCATE

▲ Music Juke Box

"CD-I brings a new dimension to both classical and oldie tunes from the 50's and 60's with *Music Juke Box*, a companion series to Kaleidoscope developed by Interactive Production Associates. Like a Baroque juke box married to full-fidelity sound and striking visual images, familiar classical melodies by such masters as Beethoven, Bach, Vivaldi and Rimsky-Korsakov. Or you could learn about such 'popular' artists as Roy Orbison, The Platters and The Diamonds – their careers and how their melodies rated in the charts."



◄ Tell Me Why

"What's a barometer? With this CD-I conversion of the famous children's book series, kids not only learn what one is and how it works, but they can see and understand the relationship between barometric pressure and weather. The first two CD-I *Tell Me Why* titles, developed by Interactive Production Associates, encourage children to explore five broad topics of childlike curiosity: Our World, How Things Began, The Human Body, How Things Are Made and How They Work, plus Creatures."

▲ Time-Life Photography

"Published by Compact Publishing, this CD-I title guides the novice photography buff to the expert photojournalist through the world of photography. Divided into two major sections – Cameras and Photo Essays – *Time-Life Photography* is an interactive narrative which focuses on the history of photojournalism and the actual operation of photographic equipment."

"We aim to make CD-I the next successful consumer electronics product."

Julie Davies, IMS Marketing Services Manager

Sir FRED

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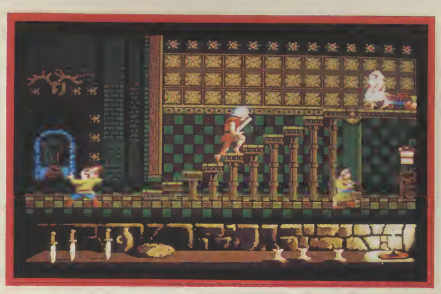

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FRANCE

The Legend

Chopper Champ

There's never been a shortage of helicopter sims, but – as our review on page 60 in this issue makes clear – Electronic Arts have come up with a winner in *LHX Attack Chopper*. It's undoubtedly the best chopper sim around at the moment – even taking the honours from classics like *Gunship*.

LHX starts by giving you a choice of three territories for you to fly over – Lybya, Vietnam, or East Germany. You also get a choice of mission (full details in the review on page 60).

Best of all, you get four different helicopters to kick ass in. Combine that with a really powerful multiple views facility and you can not only launch the missiles but even crouch down behind the target and watch them homing in. And once you start to make progress, you can keep a record of your achievements on disk

LHX is a winner – so make sure you stand a chance of being one too. Check out the competition details elsewhere on this page and get your entry in pronto!

ELECTRONIC ARTS are offering you the chance to grab a £200 helicopter lesson – absolutely free.

ENTRY PANEL

Here's how to enter:

1. Check out the three questions below.

2. When you think you know the answers, jot them down on a postcard.

3. Add your name and address. Please include a telephone number if possible as this helps us to notify prizewinners more efficiently.

4. It will also help us if you include answers to the following questions, but these are NOT part of the competition and are not required to qualify you for a prize:

a) Name two other magazines you buy regularly.
b) How old are you?
c) Which computer do you own?
d) Do you buy ACE regularly, occasionally, or is this the first copy you have bought?

4. Post the card to ACE Chopper Competition, Priory Court, 30-32 Farringdon Lane, London, EC1R 3AU. Closing date for entries is 7th June 1990.

5. Please note that employees of EMAP Images, Electronic Arts, or anyone involved in the production, sale and distribution of their products are not eligible for entry.

THE QUESTIONS

A. What's the name of Electronic Arts' latest helicopter simulation?

B. Which helicopter training company will be storming the skies with the winner?

C. Name one other game from Electronic Arts, released in the last year.

THE PRIZE

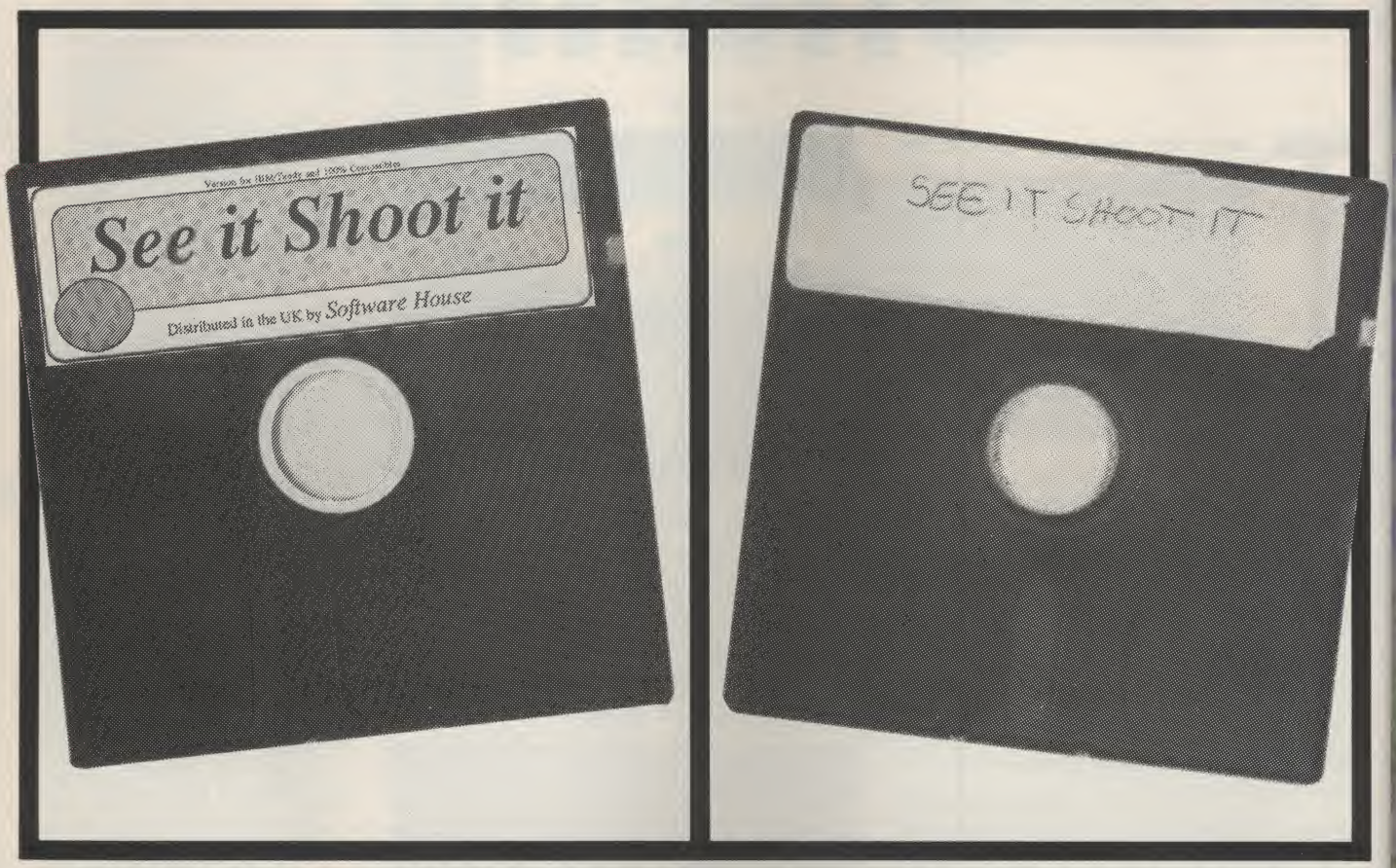
Here's the low-down on this high-flying offer.

The winner will receive a special voucher from Dollar Helicopters that will be valid until the end of October 1990. Worth £200, it allows you to claim a free one hour lesson with Dollar at Coventry Airport. They'll take you soaring over the county at high speed and give you a real taste of what it means to put a chopper through its paces.

In addition, you'll get your photo in the magazine and receive undying fame as the first ACE Chopper Champ. So keep your fingers crossed (and your safety belt fastened).

Dollar AIR SERVICES

WARNING



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SCREEN TEST

ALL NEW PIC CURVE POWER

The PIC – Predicted Interest Curve – is the most sophisticated reviewing tool around. And now it's entered the 90's...

We on ACE know you don't just **play** a game – you **experience** it. The newly upgraded Predicteded Interest Curve is the **only** review system that takes this all-important factor into account.

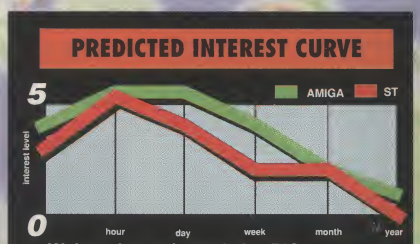
The PIC Curve has been redesigned to immediately **give you** the info **you need** at just a glance. To back up our instant appraisal there is an expanded, in-depth comment at each stage of the game's playlife. The curve is divided into six sections, indicating the player's adrenalin level after one minute, one hour, one day, one week, one month, and one year. But this tells you an awful lot than just what your interest level will be at any given time (although that's obviously important in itself)...

For example, a high one minute rating means that the game must look fantastic and get you all excited from the word go. That means it's probably a good game to show off to the neighbours – after all, they probably aren't going to pay attention for much more than a minute, after which they'll go back to drinking coffee and making rude remarks about 'those awful hostile games the boys play these days'.

The minute, hour, and day ratings can tell you a lot about a game too. If there's a dip here, followed by a rise, you've got a game that may take a bit of getting into – not recommended if you like to get down to something quick and easy. Alternatively, the graphics may put you off for a while until the gameplay starts to grip. Check out the PIC comment for more details.

Finally, you've got the month and year ratings. The better a game holds up here the more deserving it is of your hard earned cash.

PIC curve construction takes a lot of playing on the part of ACE reviewers. PIC curve analysis is an art in itself. The reward is knowing just what you're getting when you make the decision to splash out on *Mutant Macdonald Gettysburgers*....or *Ultima VI* – this month's 900+ ACE rated example of advanced 16-bit software technology.



We've also enlarged the PIC commentary section beneath it. This gives us more space to tell you exactly what it's like to unwrap your game, load it up, and play it – giving you those essential snippets of information and reaction that determine whether or not this is a game you have to buy. the New PIC Curve – going straight to the heart of the Games Experience.

US Gold's *Nuclear War* combines controversy with gameplay as you get the opportunity to deploy the ultimate deterrent. Find out more on page 45

UPDATES, UPDATES, READ ALL ABOUT 'EM!

Latest conversions for the PC, Amiga, ST, Archimedes, Spectrum and C64 – on pages 64 and 65.

THE ACE REVIEWING SYSTEM

PIC CURVES
This unique feature to the ACE reviewing system charts the interest level that a game stimulates over a period of time. The curve is accompanied by a comment to explain why it's the shape it is. Find out more in the Pic Curve Power panel on this page...

Each review also carries special 'Version Boxes' that give you details of the game's implementation on a specific machine. These boxes include ratings for...

GRAPHICS
All aspects of the game's graphics with the limitations of each machine taken into account. A good-looking Spectrum game will therefore score higher than an average-looking Amiga one.

AUDIO
The music and sound effects are rated here. A high rating is possible on even limited machines like the Spectrum and PC if the computer's shortcomings are cleverly sidestepped.

IQ FACTOR
Yes, sometimes you have to use your brain. This rating evaluates the risk of mental effort – which some people actually enjoy...Note that ACE readers are generally reckoned to be more intelligent than other human beings, so the ratings may be lower than you expect...

FUN FACTOR
Basically a measure of mindless addictiveness. Games like *Arkanoid* and *Flying Shark* require virtually zero brain power but are still remarkably addictive. Most coin-ops score well here because they are designed for instant satisfaction. Games don't have to be *either* fun *or* intelligent – they can be both.

ACE RATING
This is not just plucked out of the air but is calculated from the area under the PIC Curve. To get a really high rating a game will not only have to be very addictive but stand the test of time as well. Just because a game does not get over 900 does not mean we are not recommending it – the following is a general guide to what the ratings mean.

900+ A classic game, recommended without reservation.

800-899 A superb game, but perhaps lacking the long-term depth to last into the month and year categories.

700-799 Still highly recommended, but probably has a couple of aspects to the gameplay that take the edge off it.

600-699 The 'fair' zone, where it tends to be very good 'if you like that sort of thing'.

500-599 This still has good things going for it, but the game clearly has some noticeable problems.

400-499 Problems with gameplay and programming make this an inferior game.

300-399 Not only is the gameplay bad but the design was probably flawed in the first place.

200-299 Things are getting really serious now...

100-199 ZX81 games running on an Amiga.

Under 100 Nothing has ever achieved this appalling level of rating. If anything ever does, it wouldn't even be worth having it for free.

VERSION BOXES
This covers version-specific information on graphics, audio, loading problems etc. If there's no box for your machine but a version is planned, it'll be covered as an update in a later issue.

THE TEAM
Laurence Scotford is ACE's ever busy Reviews Editor – Laurence has been playing games since he was a nipper, but some of them we probably ought not to mention. There was hot competition for the ACE Reviews Editor position from gamesters all over the country, but Laurence pipped them all at the post by showing that he could not only push a game to its limit, but he could push a pen too and tell you all about it.
Steve Cooke, one of the original editors of this award-winning magazine, is known to thousands through his many other previous identities, including Zzaps!'s White Wizard, The Pilgrim and Old Baldy. When he's not borrowing money and 'popping off to the States' Steve is often found playing Sierra's Leisure Suit Larry and other 'narrative computer games.
Rik Haynes was Reviews Editor on Britain's biggest selling computer weekly and has been hooked on electronic entertainment since spotting a Space Invaders machine in the corner of a Southend-on-Sea pub back in '78. Rik's reviews are renowned for being hard-hitting and often outspoken...
Eugene Lacey is one of Britain's most experienced games journalists.

We don't review anything until we are 100% certain that we've got it right. We've checked them out thoroughly – now you can too.

ULTIMA VI

ORIGIN's blockbusting release goes beyond *Ultima V*, and gets one of the highest ACE ratings to date for its combination of exploration, combat, and puzzle solving...We playtest it to destruction – our destruction, that is!

STATE-OF-THE-ART COMBAT

Ultima V had the best combat system of any RPG – and now *Ultima VI* gives us the best combat system ever (save for a few specialist war-games, that is).

In confrontation with either single or multiple opponents, you can choose whether to deal with them in Party or Combat mode. In Party Mode, the Avatar is effectively on his own – but he can usually dispose of weaker enemies and boost his experience levels in the process.

In Combat Mode, characters behave according to their Combat Status. This new feature enables you to program a character with a default battle tactic so that during combat they will operate under their own steam if required. There are six attack modes, ranging from REAR (take up position at back of party) to BERSERK (move towards and attack strongest foe regardless of circumstances). There is also a COMMAND option that puts the character under your direct control during the fight (in the same way as all characters used to be in previous *Ultimas*).

The scrolling display in Attack Mode means you have to keep your party together for the most convenient assessment of the battlefield situation – if characters chase after foes off-screen, it can be difficult to tell exactly what's going on.

YOU can say one thing for Lord British (AKA Richard Garriott, creator of the Ultima series) – and that's that he never rests on his laurels. Every *Ultima* game to date has represented a vast improvement over the one before – but even so you'd be forgiven for thinking that Lord Brit would have taken a rest after *Ultima V* and simply produced another, similar sequel.

But he hasn't. *Ultima IV* was before ACE's time but, had we reviewed it, it would probably have weighed in at around 850. *Ultima V* kicked fantasy RPG into a whole different ballgame – it got 925 in ACE and was one of the highest rated games of its time. Now *UVI* clocks 950 – one of the highest rated games ever and nothing less than THE current state-of-the-art fantasy scenario; a game that should appeal to everyone and set new standards for others to follow.

CLOSING IN

First and foremost, *Ultima VI* is far, far easier to control than its predecessors and much more accessible to gamesters who may be unused to RPG/fantasy style games. Playing *Ultima* is now as simple as the gameplay is complex – a tremendous improvement. This is due to several fundamental design changes.

The first, most obvious change over previous *Ultima* games (if you're a newcomer to *Ultima*, then check out the boxes on these pages) is that *UVI* does away with the old large-scale map display over which you moved your character icon. Instead, you now see the area you're in

Internal locations in UVI are positively frothing with detail. Here you're poking around with your companions in Lord British's study. Apparently there are almost 16000 objects in the game to examine

PC

Seven disks and you'll need a hard disk system with around 4 megs free to get the best out of this beast. Five sound boards are supported (including Roland, Ad Lib and others) but otherwise sound is minimal and beepy. The graphics on MCGA are some of the best we've seen – the game's still playable in CGA but *UVI* really cries out for a fully-specced system.

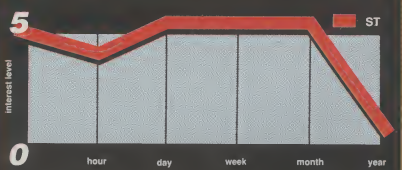
GRAPHICS	9	IQ FACTOR	9	ACE RATING 950
AUDIO	8	FUN FACTOR	9	

RELEASE BOX

ATARI ST	£TBA	TBA
AMIGA	£TBA	TBA
IBM PC	£34.99dk	OUT NOW
C64/128	£TBA	TBA

No other versions planned.

PREDICTED INTEREST CURVE



What can we say? The only drawback about *Ultima VI* is that one day – *some* day – you'll finish it and interest is likely to wane dramatically after that fateful event.

But until then, you've got your work cut out. Naturally you're going to be foaming at the mouth when you open the package. After seeing the introductory sequence you'll be taking tranquillisers – the graphics are *that* good! And then you're into the game...

Things take a bit of a dip at this stage, either because you've never played the game before and it takes a few minutes to get into, or else because you have and you're getting used to the new display system.

Either way, after a day you're completely hooked – and then there's no escape.

WHAT'S ULTIMA ALL ABOUT?

The *Ultima* games all take place in Britannia, a world ruled over by Lord British and, it seems, in perpetual conflict with the forces of evil. In each *Ultima* game, these forces take different forms and you are summoned from your own world to help vanquish them. In *Ultima IV* your success earned you the title of Avatar.

In *Ultima VI*, the Avatar is once again summoned to Britannia to defend the realm against an invasion of Gargoyles. These devils are particularly tough in combat and seem intent on overrunning the entire world. What can you do about it?

What you do is form a party of adventurers. Your party, with you at the head, can have up to eight members recruited from amongst the people you meet. Three party members join you at the start of the game (though you can always lodge them in an inn for later if you don't like them).

Each party member has his/her own characteristics and in *Ultima VI* they also have their own appearance on-screen. Gameplay consists of moving your party about the world, exploring every nook and cranny and, of course, knocking the stuffing out of the numerous nasties you encounter.

Your characters gain experience with each encounter and this raises their capabilities, making them more effective in combat, puzzle-solving (e.g. picking locks), and casting spells (see box). You are also likely to amass more money, enabling you to buy more powerful weapons.

Apart from experience (and gold) there is no scoring system in *Ultima*. The rewards come from interaction with the land and the people in it. the playing time involved is vast – ACE editor Steve Cooke spent over 100 hours on Ultima V and he doesn't expect to finish *Ultima VI* any quicker. And the gameplay isn't repetitive either – it's a constant process of discovery and invention. Great stuff!

from above, close up (rather like the old *Ultima* combat mode and similar to Origin's *Bad Blood*). You also see each member of your party as a separate animated figure.

UVI is also completely mouse-driven (but you can use the keyboard if need be) and the mouse operating system is excellent. On the location display the pointer changes to a direction arrow and clicking will take your party in that direction, with you in the lead and everyone tagging along behind. The mouse can also pinpoint objects on the location display for manipulation, adding to your inventory, and so on.

The old single-letter commands (Take, Look, etc) have all been given icons at the bottom of the display and, even better, you can select one as a default so that, for example, you can LOOK at a chest by simply clicking on it.

RINGING THE CHANGES

The new display also involves one very significant gameplay change for *Ultima* addicts – mapping. In the old games, the large scale map display enabled you to see where your party was and where it was heading. Now, because everything is in close-up, you can only see a few yards in every direction. There are spells and other means of expanding your field of view, but the limited close-up option remains the default. This means you have to start mapping if you are to find your way about quickly and easily. It also has the effect of making the world seem even larger! I hate to think how long it would take to explore the Britannia of *UVI*, but it's got to be at least a month's work for the occasional gameplayer.

The new system also affects combat. In the old games, the combat screen was a single close-up location and any player or monster who strayed out of that location was hors de combat (i.e. deemed to have escaped). In this version, however, you can switch in and out of combat mode in any location where circumstances require a concerted party effort against marauders. Single opponents can be dealt with by the Avatar on his own. Because of the new location display system, you may stumble across survivors of a recent combat even after the fighting has finished, so go get 'em!

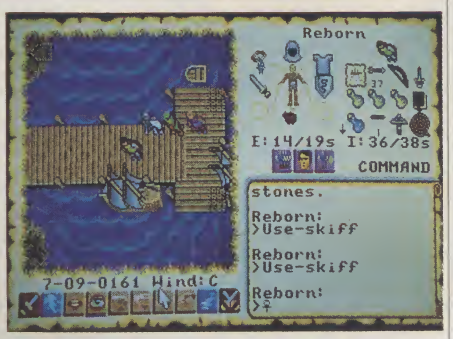
Finally, there's a further major change in *UVI* gameplay, and that's the ability to split your party. You can now select any member and take him/her off on a journey of their own while the others hang around and wait for you to return. This revolutionises some of the puzzles which would have been quite insoluble under the old system.

So is there anything WRONG with *UVI*? We only have niggles to report. There are a couple of minor bugs in the version we received (which we are told is the final product) – we received a message about a giant squid once when there wasn't one in sight (and we were underground!) and the speed of movement occasionally lapsed when (we think) the program was busy generating monsters in a nearby location. Otherwise, we have no complaints...

It's impossible to do justice to this game in the limited space available to us this month. Stand by for a detailed player's guide next issue and, in the meantime, if you want a game with total depth of plot, gameplay, puzzling, and character development – this is it.

● **Steve Cooke**

Roughing it with a sea serpent. These beasts are usually highly dangerous but this one gave in without a struggle. As a general rule we found most of the initial encounters in UVI easier than those in UV.



A couple of ships and (north pier) a skiff. In UVI you need to purchase a charter for boats before you can board them. Note that the water shows direction of current. Inventory displays (top right) contain slots for items 'readied' (i.e. worn/carried in the hands) on the left and an inventory icon table on the right showing everything owned by that character. You can also see the character's current command status bottom right of the inventory window

Outside, peering through a window. You can change the face the program displays for your character – pity there isn't an editor to create your own

MAGIC TOUCH

Ultima features a comprehensive magic system with (in *UVI*) almost 80 spells. When you start you can only cast a fraction of these, but as you gain experience more become available to you.

Unlike many RPG's, the spells in *UVI* are not simply endless repetitions of KILL, PROTECT, and HEAL. The spells genuinely are different and range from X-Ray Vision and Invisibility to invoking hail storms, cloning monsters, and changing the direction of the wind. For the magically minded, there's no better game.

All spells require reagents. There are eight of these special ingredients, ranging from Garlic to Spider's Silk, and these must be collected whenever found. Previous *Ultima's* required you to mix the reagents for each spell, but in *UVI* this is all done for you. You still need the ingredients, however, to cast the spells.

Just one word of warning for experienced *Utima*-ers: there's no An Nox (cure poison) spell in *UVI*! That means you have to rely on potions, though Lord British will cure you of all ills if you visit him in the Castle. Steer clear of the marshes if you don't want to end up dead quicker than you'd like!

GAMEPLAY NUGGETS

Here's a collection of UVI gameplay snippets...

● The characters now talk amongst themselves.

✳ You can choose a new face for each of your team members.

● There's a Help command that whisks you back to the Castle – but it could cost you dear in experience points.

✳ You get a super-weapon right at the start, but it's not inexhaustible so don't waste it.

● Shamino looks disturbingly like Richard Garriott.

✳ The secret doors are even more secret – and there are fewer of them.

● Even the candles on the tables flicker!

✳ You can check all weapon and object information on-screen by clicking on the item concerned – no need for reference cards etc.

● You get your own room in Lord British's castle.

✳ There's support for five sound boards and MIDI.

● You can recruit a mouse as a party member!

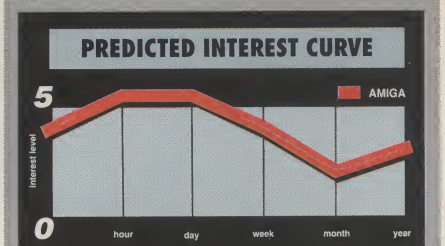
✳ Characters sometimes warn your of approaching enemies.

● The streets have names.

✳ There's a maze of hostiles beneath Lord British's castle – great for gaining combat experience.

ANTHEADS

Cinemaware don't judge a bug by its cover in this Data Disk/add-on game for *It Came From The Desert*



This one will run and run. The thing about Cinemaware products is they last long because you get a different game every time, and there's enough to keep you going for a long time. So your interest is up right away in anticipation, and stays there for a number of plays, which from the length of games is probably a few weeks. Then it'll gradually fall off around the month mark. But like a favourite video, I predict you'll come back to it in a year with a nostalgic tear in your eye.

RELEASE BOX

AMIGA	£14.99dk	OUT NOW

No other versions planned.

ATARI ST

Gameplay similar to original game, but has been tightened up a bit since last time. Scary monsters, evil geniuses, in fact all the flavour of a 50s sci-fi B movie rolled into one small interactive package. Worth buying the master

GRAPHICS	9	IQ FACTOR	7	ACE RATING 902
AUDIO	9	FUN FACTOR	8	

I have to say before I begin that *It Came From The Desert* was one of the most atmospheric and absorbing games of the last year. That said I'll say what I was going to say next and that is that *Antheads* is more of the same. This isn't a put down. If *Desert* 1 was an entertaining interactive computerised 50s sci-fi 'B' movie then *Antheads* is too, and just as good. What I'm trying to say is that it's more like a movie sequel than a game sequel, where the location is the same, the cast are similar, but the story is different.

Five years after the last adventure, it's January 1st 1956, and the rumours of the ants still linger in the small town of Lizard's Breath. This time, instead of the young two-fisted Professor of antology you played in *Desert* 1, you play the role of 'Brick' Nash, an ex-fighter pilot in the Korean war turned two-fisted truck driver. You were attacked by ants outside town and are being helped in your quest to find out what's happening by Dusty and Biff, survivors of the last epic. But there's more to it this time, as you discover when some of your best friends turn to ants before your eyes. You have to find the Prof's notebook, and fast, if you're going to stop it all happening over again.

There's a lot more to this all new game, and in some ways I enjoyed it more than the original game. The game comes on two disks, one of which is an new version of Reel 1, and a Master Disk which through a series of prompts copies and converts your Reels 2 & 3 from *Desert* 1 disks to *Desert* 2 disks. The music is the same, as that hasn't been overwritten, but there are lots of new graphics and new special effects to chill and delight you. The puzzles are not quite so obscure as the last game, but I think that's actually the game's weak spot. Like in order to find out a piece of information you just have to kill off the right amount of ant people. Illogical but not unentertaining for all that. The only quibble I'd have is the reoccurrence of the stupid game of 'Chicken' which turns up again in this game. What purpose does this serve, apart from a bit of 50s style local colour? wouldn't these guys be a bit more grown up by now, and have gotten married and gone off somewhere? And besides that it's a subgame you can't win, so why bother? The knife fight is a bit of a naff idea, too. Why not a fist fight like in *Rocket Ranger*, that's much more satisfying. But these are minor design flaws, and don't detract from your enjoyment too much. I am getting a bit fed up of the graphic style of Cinemaware games, though. They are all the same, and sometimes I just yearn for a different style altogether.

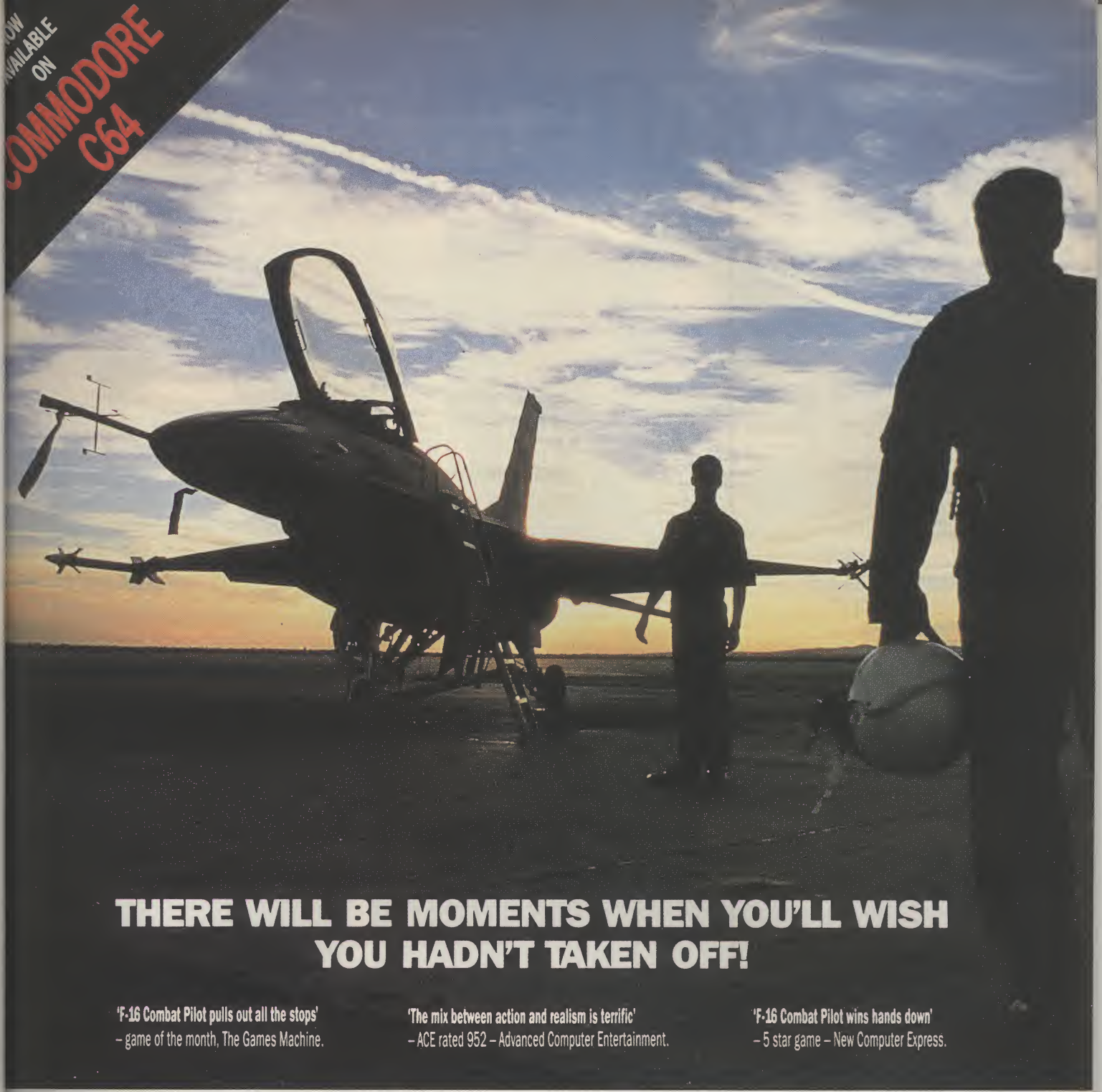
But the great thing about Cinemaware games is that you CAN pootle through them, knowing nothing about the game objectives, and STILL have a rip-roaring time. Thinking about it, it would be nice to see, say, a Batman/Dark Knight, or Indiana Jones game done in this style of game. It would make a nice change from the usual half-baked arcade clones we're used to on licensed games. Any other kind of cinematic, TV or comic heroes, would benefit from this kind of treatment for that matter. How about *Star Trek: The Next Generation*. (Worth a thought, Cinemaware, if you're reading out there!)

So *Antheads* is in fact a better game than the original in my view, if only for the scary ant transformation sequence, and not just for fans of the original game. If anything it's an incentive to buy the original, just to play this version as well.

Phil South

Nuclear Knolls Atomic Theme Park? Oh Joy

Oh my god! I married an ant from outer space! My girl's turned into an ant! It'll take more than Oil of Ulay to put that ugly mug back to normal. Try whipping off her feelers with your trusty pistol.



THERE WILL BE MOMENTS WHEN YOU'LL WISH YOU HADN'T TAKEN OFF!

'F-16 Combat Pilot pulls out all the stops'
– game of the month, The Games Machine.

'The mix between action and realism is terrific'
– ACE rated 952 – Advanced Computer Entertainment.

'F-16 Combat Pilot wins hands down'
– 5 star game – New Computer Express.

I'm primed for action as my F-16 leaves the runway. This time my mission is to destroy a battalion of tanks. Suddenly, threat warning – interceptors closing fast! I quickly select dogfight mode and arm a Sidewinder. We both fire at the same time – chaff and a high-g turn out manoeuvres his missile. A loud explosion tells me he's not so lucky.

F-16 COMBAT PILOT

Flying fast and low, I turn my F-16 towards my target. Time to switch on the ground radar and arm the laser-guided Mavericks. I fire six missiles in quick succession, Lantirn automatically locking on to each tank. With flak bursting around me I dive for cover and head for home. Approaching base, I contact the tower and request a talkdown for my night landing.

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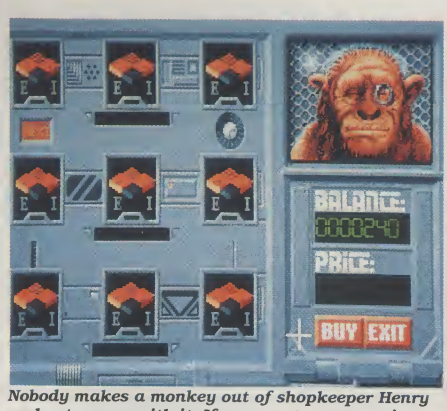
RESOLUTION 101

From the people who brought you *Starray* and *Archipelagos*, comes a brand new label, MILLENIUM, and an exciting new release – ACE tells you what its all about

The boss flies past you on one of his runs, closely followed by his tricky cronies...

RELEASE BOX		
ATARI ST	£24.99dk	LATE MAY
AMIGA	£24.99dk	LATE MAY
PC	£29.99dk	LATE MAY
No other versions planned.		



Nobody makes a monkey out of shopkeeper Henry and gets away with it. If you want a new engine you had better be nice to him!

This mean looking guy is the mayor. You are responsible to him – better get those crooks, or else!

LOGOTRON as you may well remember, have been responsible for some of the better game releases in the last couple of years. Who can forget great titles like *Starray*, *Quadralian*, *Star Goose*, and *Archipelagos*? Now the company is set to consolidate its already strong position in the market place with its new label **Millenium**. One of the first releases under this label is *Resolution 101*. We took a look at some work in progress and were very impressed with what we saw.

The team behind the game are Astral Software, also responsible for *Archipelagos*. Programmers Paul Caruthers and Ian Downerd had wanted to create a fast 3D environment, and in *Resolution 101* they have done just that. The game is set in a futuristic city created with solid vector graphics, and populated with a variety of vehicles drawn as sprites. Mixing sprites and vectors within a game without appreciably slowing it down is quite an achievement, and yet you really do get a sense of speed with the game.

Your task is to patrol the city shooting down any criminal elements you come across. Your ultimate aim in each game is to destroy the boss involved in a big drugs deal. Before you can do this however, you have to collect enough evidence. Evidence is occasionally dropped by the boss on his drug runs, but can also be obtained by destroying certain henchmen. Providing that you collect enough evidence before the boss makes his fourth run across the city, then you can attack and destroy him.

This is quite easy on the early levels, but as the game progresses the criminals begin to work together, and the boss will often be surrounded by sharp shooting henchmen, so you have to tackle them first.

There are four quadrants to the city, divided by waterways, and each of them has a different look to it. One is dominated by a huge park, another by a long, straight, dual carriageway, and so on. There is also a different boss for each quadrant, whose face appears on your console, looking either gleeful or outraged whenever a hit is scored by one side or the other.

To help you in your task you have three weapon types: a machine gun, cannon, and heat seeking missiles, as well as numerous other aids like maps, direction indicators, and so on. As you take hits these facilities become damaged and it is necessary to visit one of the three shops in the city to pick up replacement parts.

The nice thing about *Resolution 101* is that it is accessible, but still has a lot more depth than most easy to play games. The finished thing looks like getting Millenium off to a good start. We should be receiving finished copies in time for next month's issue, so look out for a full review then.

● Laurence Scotford

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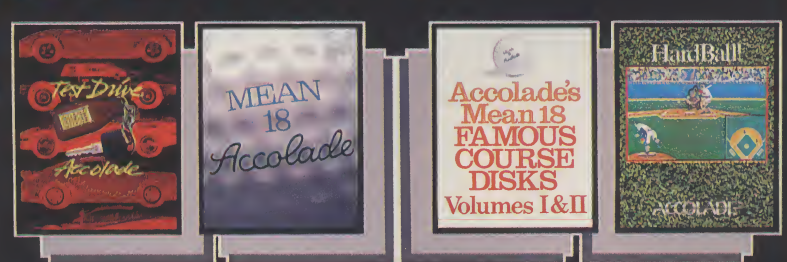

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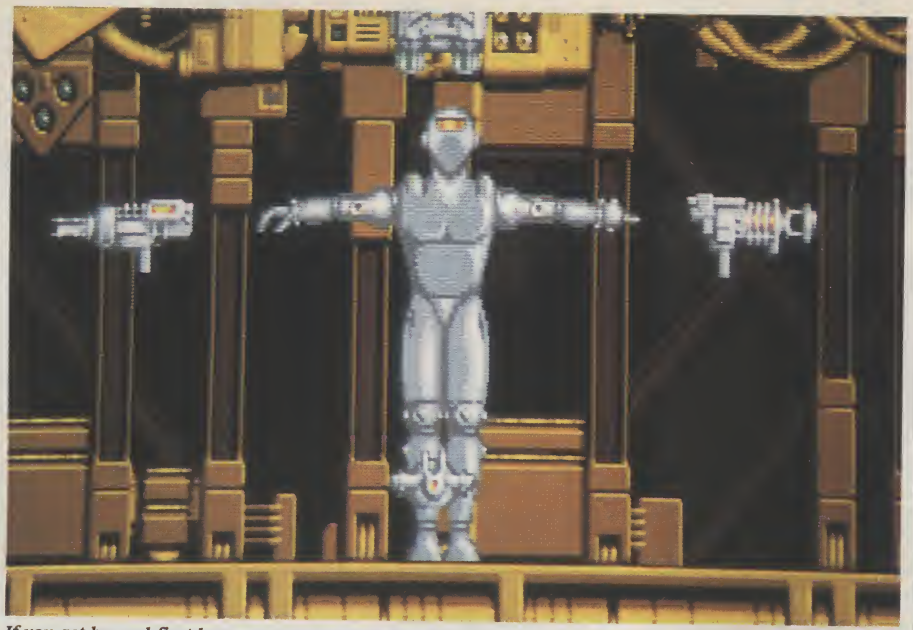


If you get beyond first base, you get new weapons to play with, which is a relief after the peashooter you start with.

ROTOX

ACE takes a sneak preview at a US GOLD game featuring the revolutionary rotoscape technique

SHOOT 'EM UPS generally fall into a few preset categories, scrolling hither and yon, presenting you with seemingly endless droves of alien gribblies. This is the first real departure from the standard horizontal/vertical rut that's been released for the last little while.

You are Rotox, a cyborg made from the dead body of a trooper in the marines. The game is a proving ground for the cyborgs to show battle readiness. Specially constructed landscapes in deep space provide a barrage of deadly robots and hostile lifeforms. He must clear the 10 levels, each divided into 9 subgames. You must clear each subgame of creatures and enemies before you can proceed to the next level. If you survive each level you are given better firepower, like scatter bombs, grenade launcher, jetpack and heat seeking missiles.

The game is played using a technique US Gold call 'rotoscape', where your character stays still and the background rotates and scrolls 360 degrees around you. To move, you push left and right on the joystick to rotate until you face the direction you want to walk, and then push forward or backwards to walk along the platforms. If you fail the test and lose all your lives, you are sent to the scrap heap, and you are seen being fed into a metal crusher.

The rotoscape effect can be disorientating at first, and then it just becomes slightly annoying. Soon you become used to it and will be dashing about all over the place without fear of falling into the void.

Ouch! Those nasty aliens really don't let up!

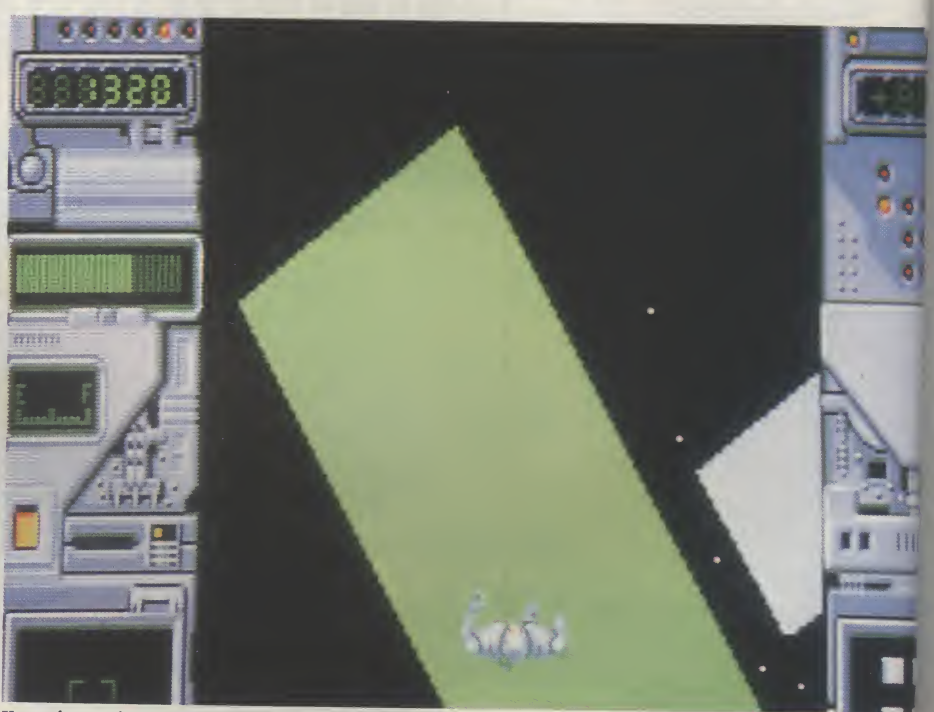
Next you start wishing for a bigger gun. The one you start with is something of a peashooter, but dispatches the nasties easily enough if you persist in firing away at them.

The puzzles are nice and tricky, even if solving them is more a case of stamina than intelligence. The best bit of the game is trying to walk along rapidly rotating bridges between subsections. Once you've done it a few times it's easy, but the first few tries are a real frustratarama.

It's hard to reconcile the concept of a 'devastating computer assisted fighting machine' which fires what looks like a tiny celestial peashooter through space at these monsters, who explode with a small 'paf' sound. Can't he have a laser gun or summink to start with? A big bomb? Nah, not until you've done your stuff on the first few waves of nasties, then you get some tastier stuff bolted on.

There are some nice long animated sequences to introduce the game and end it, and these help with the game's atmosphere. You can't judge much about the character from the overhead view you get in the game, so seeing him from another angle makes you care whether or not he gets sent off for scrap at the end.

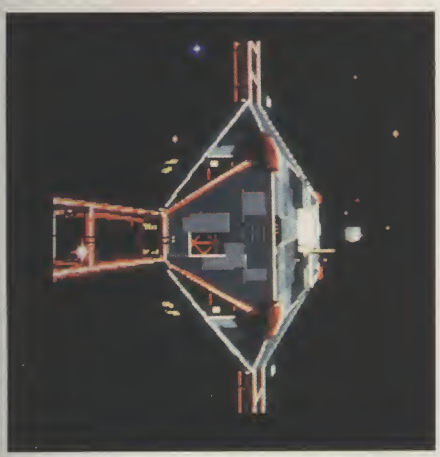
'Rotoscope' is an interesting technique that has been used to good effect in this game. Rotox has a very unusual feel about it, and doesn't quite fit into any particular category. Look out for the ACE verdict on Rotox and Rotoscape in a full review in the next issue.



You spin me right round, baby, right round, like a robot baby, right round round round...

ACTIVISION's futuristic simulator is out of this world

WARHEAD



You've got the approach right and can now sit back as your FOE-57 docks with Solbase

FIST-OF-EARTH is the organisation set up to defend humankind from an unexpected threat to the existence of life on the planet. A race of intelligent insects has been observing us for years, and now, for reasons known only to themselves, they decide to attack. The only hope left is the ultimate weapon – the FOE-57 spacecraft. It is this craft that *Warhead* simulates.

As a trainee pilot you will have to work your way through several test missions, under the auspices of the Tech crew, before you can engage in real action. Far from being annoying, this is actually essential because it gives you a chance to master piloting the ship in a relatively safe situation.

The mouse is used to control the craft's attitude, thrust, and retro-thrust. It actually seems quite sensitive until you remember that there is negligible friction in open space, so the slightest impulse is enough to cause a strong reaction. If you are used to flying flight simulators you will take a while to adjust to the new methods required with the FOE-57. One short mis-timed thrust is enough to send you spinning violently off-course while the stars ahead of you rotate, invoking severe dizziness.

There are ten autopilots which perform various functions, from simply recentring the craft's Yoke to automatically pursuing a selected target. It is essential to master the use of these autopilots because, unless you have a quick eye and even quicker hand, you will find it impossible to manoeuvre the craft with the tight degree of control necessary.

There are a number of different computer generated displays that can be overlaid on your viewscreen to assist you. The most useful are the standard Head Up Display and the Weapons Head Up. There is also a Tactical screen for use during combat. The unusual thing about this overlay is that it also operates in conjunction with the Eye Particle.

The Eye Particle allows you to see the scene from the viewpoint of any object in range. This could be an alien craft, an asteroid, or even the nose of a missile. This actually turns out to be more of a gimmick than a practical feature. When you are beset by alien craft you simply don't have the time to flip between viewpoints.

During the missions you receive new information from base via a message system. An icon flashes on your HUD whenever a new message arrives for you to read. These are usually new instructions, although they can be quite droll. Make a mess of your first sortie and a message will come through: 'OK so you are a beginner, but what the hell are you doing out there?'

Travel across interstellar distances is achieved with Quad drives. This works in quite a nice way. An interstellar chart is used to select a star system, then a solar chart is called up to select a planetary body as a destination. You can zoom in on the chart to show clusters of moons about planets if one of these is your planned destination.

Like many simulations, Warhead has tech spec data screens which can be called up during play to gen up on the equipment in use. But there is a nice additional aspect to this. Initially there is no data available for the enemy craft. If, however, you send out a data gathering probe when the enemy are within range you will be rewarded with an additional data sheet on the type of craft scanned.

The view from your FOE-57 as you line up for docking with Solbase

Tech specs can be called up during play – this one is for your own craft

The fast solid vector graphics of *Warhead* set against colourful bit-mapped starfields are immediately impressive. But the game also has a lot of depth, and, for this type of product, is extremely addictive. Definitely the best thing that Activision have released in a long while.

● **Laurence Scotford**

PREDICTED INTEREST CURVE

It will take a while to get used to the controls, and then a little longer to get proficient enough to tackle the more interesting sorties. At this point you will really start to appreciate the game, and come back to it time after time. Even after several months you are still likely to pick it up for the occasional game.

RELEASE BOX

ATARI ST	£24.99dk	OUT NOW
AMIGA	£24.99dk	OUT NOW

No other versions planned

AMIGA

From the moment the tasty intro sequence begins you know you are in for a treat. The graphics are smooth and fast, and the sound atmospheric. A must buy for sim fans looking for something a little different.

GRAPHICS	8	IQ FACTOR	6	ACE RATING
AUDIO	8	FUN FACTOR	8	920

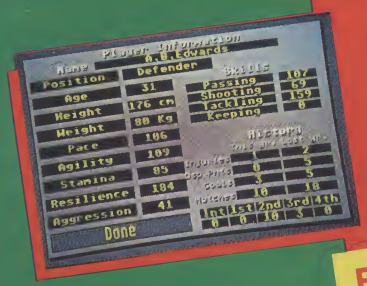
ATARI ST

Much the same as the Amiga version. The only difference is that the scrolling is a little jerkier and the sound, naturally enough, a little tinnier. In all other respects this is a superb game.

GRAPHICS	7	IQ FACTOR	6	ACE RATING
AUDIO	7	FUN FACTOR	8	905

Player Manager

by Dino Dini



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ST ACTION: The presentation has to be the best I have ever seen in any management game. Combining the compelling game play of Kick Off with the strategy of team management was a stroke of pure genius.

THE ONE: Player Manager is an exceptional football management simulation. It has astounding depth: an unmatched 1000 individual players, the ability to radically alter formation and team tactics – just about everything you would find in real football. Player Manager is the most involved, rewarding and playable games of its type.

THE ACE: The beauty of the Player Manager is that it successfully blends a challenging soccer management game with the frantic end to end arcade action of Kick Off. Designers have been trying to marry arcade footy with management for years-almost always failing abysmally. Player Manager brings it off in style.

NEW COMPUTER EXPRESS: The sheer depth of Player Manager is incredible. Almost every conceivable element of running and playing in a football team has been implemented including Kick Off. Anco has produced what has to be a difintive Manager game.

COMMODORE USER: One of the most impressive options yet seen on a managerial game and the keystone to the addictiveness and involvement of this game is Tactics option. P.M. lets you plan all your set pieces just the way you want them. You will never be able to say you aren't in full control of the game. At last a management game that requires true management skills. Add to this most addictive arcade soccer game ever – a winner.

ANCO

ANCO SOFTWARE LTD., UNIT 10, BURNHAM TRADING ESTATE ROAD, DARTFORD, KENT. Telephone No.: 0322 92513/92518. FAX No.: 0322 93422.

NUCLEAR WAR

THIS game makes a welcome relief from the heavy and depressing holocaust sims that upset so many people a couple of years back when they first pushed a contaminated snout onto the war games shelves. An irreverent view of world politics characterises the presentation – both in the manual and on-screen. Just as in *Spitting Image* the game takes vicious side swipes at all the world leaders – whatever their political hue. Prime Minister Satcher is "especially ruthless and bloodthirsty... and prone to inexplicable fits of extreme violence", while Mikhail Gorbachef is "Especially sneaky and amazingly believable".

Prime Minister Satcher lines up a nuke for her arch enemy – Kookamamie.

There are ten wicked caricatures of well known "Global Leaders" for you to chose to compete against. Once you have chosen your quartet of world opponents it is time to start preparing for war.

A main menu screen enables you to make your moves (Building weapons, defences, propaganda, or nuclear war) – which switches into a World Theatre of conflict screen for the actions previously chosen to be implemented.

The game gives you a printed message telling you what each leader is doing as well as showing you in animated icon form on the World Theatre screen. When the four leaders have made their move you are returned to the main menu screen.

It is important to study the building icons carefully after each go as they tell you the population swings of your cities. A Metropolis icon, for example, represents a city with a massive 30 million population. If, after a limited attack, the population has been almost wiped out then a tent icon may replace it – representing a population of one to four million. If an enemy launches a sustained attack on one of your cities it may be wiped out altogether and will be represented by a crater icon.

But nukes are not the only threat to your citizens. They may be seduced away by clever propaganda – and freebies offered by neighbouring states. Concerts and barbecues are particularly popular with the fickle inhabitants of this world.

The world is destroyed in a tongue-in-cheek third world war sim, but USG see the funny side

If a leader loses all his cities then his face disappears from the main menu screen. The 'winner' is the player who still has some cities left when all his enemies have been wiped out. As if to stress the pointlessness of such a conflict and perhaps to up the games credibility in the 'right on' stakes the victorious leader is seen jumping up and down in the charred remains of a nuked city. PM Satcher in sou wester and red boots – what a scream.

The play system is simple – and although the game does involve making intelligent, informed decisions, actually getting started and making moves is a breeze.

The aim is to build up your defences, increase your weapon manufacturing capacity, stockpile weapons, and spread as much propaganda as possible whilst remaining as well in as it is possible to be given the prevailing political climate with your opponents. Avoiding war until you are ready for it is the name of the game in *Nuclear War*. To do this you have to study the faces of your opponents very carefully. Their personalities split into five different categories and the expressions on their faces reflect their current state.

Your country is covered in craters – the aftermath of a vicious nuclear onslaught.

This "Happy Face Diplomacy" system sets out quite amicably – with all leaders displaying an Acid house-style Smiley beside their portraits. But as events develop they react in different ways and their Smileys will change mood. You have to react accordingly and try to keep them sweet. Some of the leaders are naturally aggressive – like Ronnie Raygun and PM Satcher – and they will smile on you if you help them nuke their neighbours, or better still do it for them. Others, such as Jimi Farmer and Ghanji are pacifist and not at all impressed with reckless nuking.

There are also some wild cards in the game that can upset the best laid plans of the cleverest of statesmen. Cattletech is the weirdest of these – a system of international cow catapulting that causes serious population destabilisation in the target country. Space Cadets, Flying Saucers and 16 ton weights that drop out of the skies can also give your cities the jitters.

Should one of these disasters hit your country then you just have to compensate for it as best you can by the decisions you implement on your next turn. And in any case flying cows are better than flying nukes as the bishop said to the blonde.

Nuclear War will appeal to a wider audience than the average war game. It has shades of Sim City about it and is very compulsive. It is perhaps a little flippant and cynical about the subject of cities being destroyed by nuclear war – but then again if were all to worry ourselves sick about global conflict, it wouldn't be worth living anyway. Whatever your view on the controversial aspects of *Nuclear War* it remains an absorbing, challenging, and entertaining game.

● **Eugene Lacey**

RELEASE BOX		
AMIGA	£24.99dk	OUT NOW
PC	£24.99dk	OCTOBER
No other versions planned.		

AMIGA

Adequate graphics and sound. It comes on two disks but avoids swapping once the game has loaded. The Amiga has rarely seen a funnier sight than PM Satcher jumping up and down on the charred remains of a devastated city chanting "I won, I won". V. meaningful.

GRAPHICS	8	IQ FACTOR	8	ACE RATING
AUDIO	7	FUN FACTOR	7	790

PREDICTED INTEREST CURVE

Gameplay is well structured and addictive. Its board game origins shine through. It is also refreshingly different from other computer war games – easy to play yet difficult to beat. Guaranteed longevity.

ATOMIX

GRANDSLAM's Computer brain teaser based around molecular construction will get right under your skin

PLAY this and you will soon be tearing your hair out. You won't be able to believe that such a simple little game as *Atomix* can be so addictive.

It is no more than a series of computerised jig saw puzzles in which you have to make up chemical diagrammatic symbols by moving the various building blocks around the screen.

The chemical building blocks are moved by positioning your cursor on the pieces of the chemical symbol and moving them in straight lines. By bouncing off the building blocks of the grids you can change their directions. When a chemical symbol is complete you can go on to the next level.

It sounds easy but is anything but when you get onto the tougher levels. What really makes things tough is that you are racing against the clock to complete the puzzle.

Tale, the development team, have embellished the whole thing with fancy graphics and sound effects and Albert Einstein looks on encouragingly from the opening sequence. The chemical symbols that you have to construct are all named and shown in their complete form in a small window to the left of the play area. If you ever need to memorise these for a chemistry exam then *Atomix* could help with your revision. It seems like slim justification for whiling away the hours playing what is really no more than a computer jigsaw puzzle. I can't imagine many homework sensitive parents being convinced.

But even if *Atomix* does cause you to waste several hours trying to solve its ultimately pointless puzzles at least you can console yourself with the knowledge that it is good for your IQ. A little mental work-out and good fun into the bargain.

The *Tetris* mini-boom caused by its recent conversion to the hand helds and coin-ops seems to have started a new trend in puzzle games. Psygnosis recently launched the excellent *Never Mind*, Domark have just launched *Klax*, and now Tale pitch in with *Atomix*. This recent penchant for puzzle games is very welcome. Games are still far too moronic in most cases. But it is also to be hoped that this new breed of puzzle game will be a little more imaginative than *Atomix*. It ought to have been possible to use the computer to enhance the basic idea of the jigsaw puzzle a good deal further than this. Nice try – could do better.

● Eugene Lacey

RELEASE BOX

ATARI ST	£19.99dk	IMMINENT
AMIGA	£24.99dk	OUT NOW

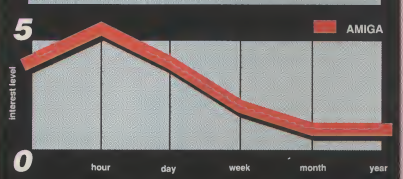
No other versions planned

AMIGA

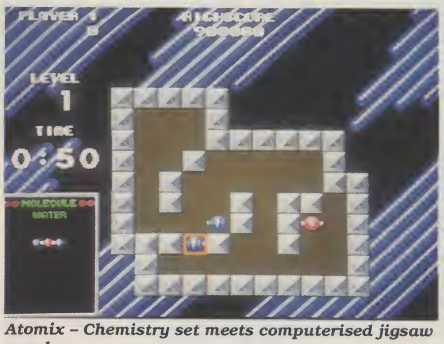
Although the sound effects and graphics are pretty enough you can't help feeling that Tale could have got much more out of the Amiga than this. More bells and whistles would have been welcome as would development of the basic game play.

GRAPHICS	6	IQ FACTOR	9	ACE RATING 680
AUDIO	6	FUN FACTOR	6	

PREDICTED INTEREST CURVE



Despite its shortcomings *Atomix* is fairly unputdownable. It is the sort of thing you can play and enjoy without an awful lot of effort. The nature of the game play should insure that you will come back to it from time.



***Atomix* – Chemistry set meets computerised jigsaw puzzle**

PHOTON STORM

Jeff Minter's latest psychedlic shoot 'em up is given an airing by ARC

THERE are absolutely no camels, llamas or other humped or hairy things in this game, but it still has all the hallmarks of a typical Minter product: lots of colour, lots of noise, lots of frantic gameplay, and a bit more colour for luck.

You control a little ship at the centre of the screen which floats in an inky void. Your ultimate task, as far as I can ascertain, is to collect enough pods to allow you to exit to the next level. These trail behind your ship in a long comet like tail until you deposit them at the triangular pulsating base that your ship begins at.

Meanwhile there is a very nasty object called a deathorb floating about in space somewhere. The name of this cutie is particulary apt because (i) it is spherical, and (ii) it's very, very deadly. As well as this bundle of laughs there are a whole host of nasties of various kinds, all intent on giving you a bad time or doing you over completely if possible.

The strangest thing about this game is the control method. The mouse is used to control a cursor which revolves around the ship. Pressing the left hand button fires a colourful triple laser in the direction of the cursor. This allows you to leave your ship stationary while you shower the surrounding space with hot beams. Pressing the right button will send your craft shooting off in the direction of the cursor. There are also two more cursors which show the relative positions of your base and the deathorb to your ship.

The control method takes a little getting used to, but after some practice you will find that you can execute fairly stunning manouevres. If you do manage to complete a level you are awarded with a colourful and noisy warp sequence into the next level.

Minter afficianado's will love this game. The graphics are not exactly brilliant, and the gameplay is a little tricky but all the usual Minter elements are there. If you are not into frantic psychedelia then you will definitely want to try before you buy.

● Laurence Scotford

RELEASE BOX

ATARI ST	£19.99dk	OUT NOW
AMIGA	£19.99dk	OUT NOW

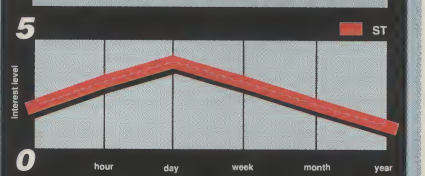
No other versions planned

ATARI ST

Unattractive, but colourful sprites are complemented by lots of simple sound effects, and very frantic gameplay. The whole is a difficult, but reasonably addictive game which should provide a few hours of solid shoot 'em up action for those who like this sort of thing.

GRAPHICS	6	IQ FACTOR	5	ACE RATING 700
AUDIO	6	FUN FACTOR	8	

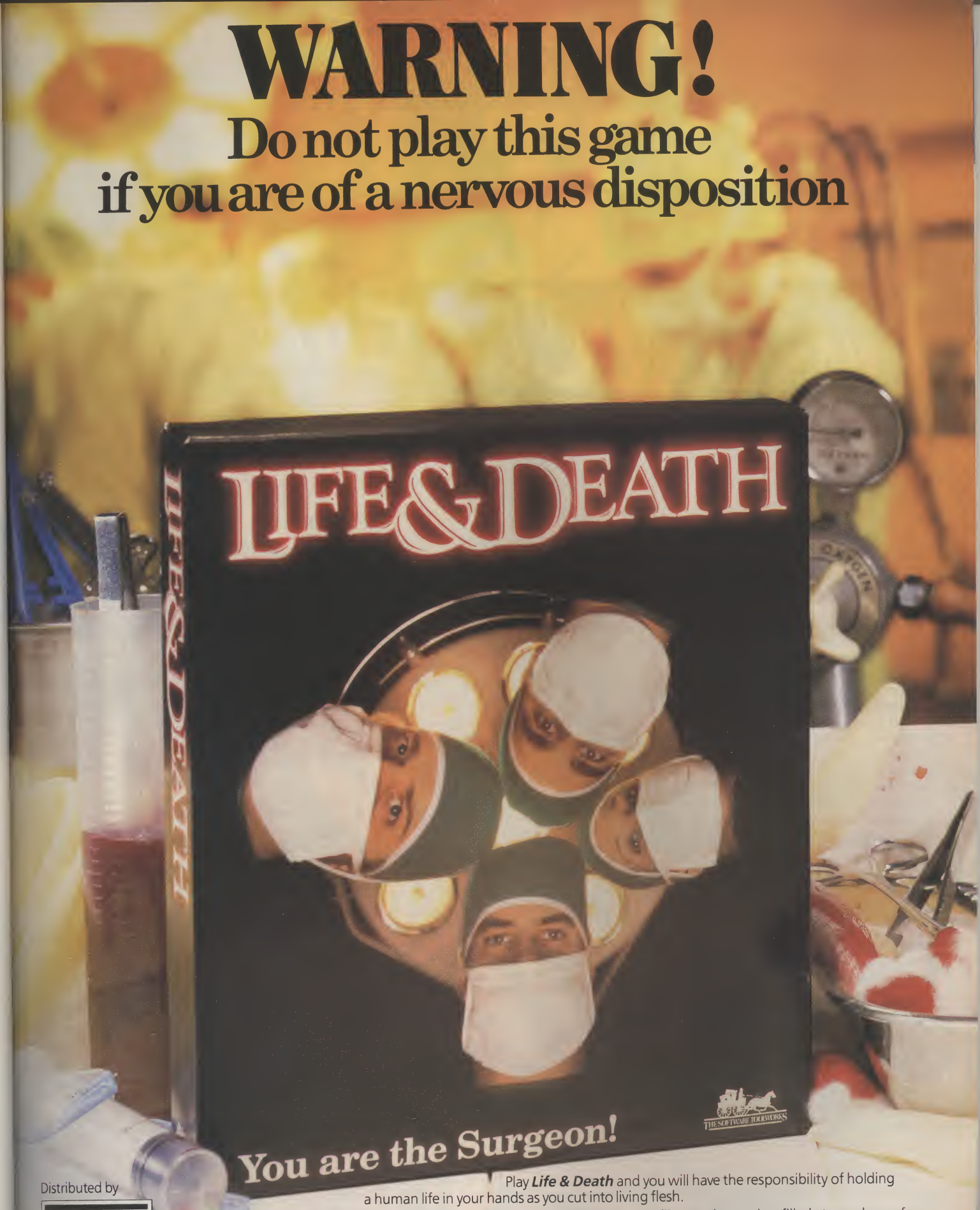
PREDICTED INTEREST CURVE



It takes a long while to get into the weird control method, and about twice as long again to get to a level of competance where playing becomes anything more than frustrating. The game does prove to be quite addictive however, and should last for a good while before being forgotten.

WARNING!

Do not play this game if you are of a nervous disposition



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"I have been studying football tactics and interviewing professional managers. This new game will bring you the results – more tactical management, more realism, and more playability. I've done my best to give you the most entertaining game possible."

Good Luck

Addictive

LIVE THAT DREAM

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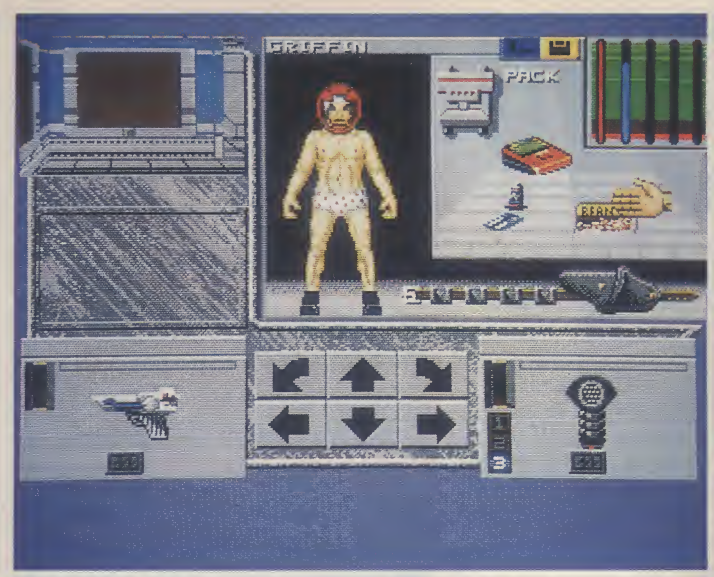


Griffin has an Alladin's Cave of gadgets to chose from to help him in his quest.

Three levels below and the aliens have discovered you.

XENOMORPH

Pandora let a nasty swarm of aliens out of the box in a new 3D action adventure

COMPUTER novellas are dreadful affairs as a rule. Full of log books, ship records, interrupted transmissions and the predictable list of fictitious equipment. Novella scribblers never write "he grabbed the laser" – it's always got to be something like "he grabbed the Mark 4/X23 Pulse Laser". Lasers, like planets, ships and solar systems, always have a string of letters and numbers to accompany. This rarely adds any realism that isn't already there and becomes plainly irritating in its predictability. *Xenomorph*'s novella is a breath of fresh air. You are almost disappointed when you reach the end and it is time to start the game.

The story gets into its stride as things start to go wrong on a long haul space flight aboard a freighter bound for the mining platform of Atargatis. as you awake from your interrupted 'freeze sleep' the red emergency lights are flashing all over the ship. No answer from your destination as you try to contact the miners on Atargatis for help. The cargo has been lost and all systems are failing. Close to the mining colony you wrest manual control from the ship computer and dock the Mombassa Oak with a "slight bump" with Atargatis.

This is where the fun starts. Search the colony to find the necessary spares and fuel to repair your ship , find out what happened to the two hundred crew of the Atargatis, and get back to base safely. Oh yes – and watch out for the Xenomorphs.

Game play is very much in the style of a complex RPG – but the well executed sci-fi storyline makes a welcome change from the dank dungeons of the FTL game and its many clones.

The action is viewed through five separate windows. The largest of these is your view of the action – a mix of animated action and static 'flick screen' graphics as you explore. To the left of this is the statistics window representing stamina, health, food, water, and radiation levels in five separate barometers. Window three is for your special equipment (more on this later), windows four and six are for showing what is in the hands that flank the main action window, and window six shows the directional arrows for movement around the base.

As both the the action windows and the items you need to pick up and use are many and varied the manual sensibly suggests playing around with the controls and objects a bit before attempting the adventure proper.

It is obvious how to use certain objects – like the credit cards, computer disks and fire extinguisher. But the special equipment required to repair the ship and ultimately get the better of the Xenomorphs takes a bit of working out. Trial and error pays dividends but sometimes there is no substitute for pausing and having a good long think.

Finding and using the various gadgets is a large part of the fun and challenge of the game . Your backpack enables you to carry several pieces of kit with you and you can easily select and use them with the mouse buttons.

The Xenomorphs are elusive at first – which is just as well as it enables you to get kitted up with lasers, rocket launchers, and gravity mines. There is no shortage of alien-bashers – with no less than eighteen different weapons to choose from.

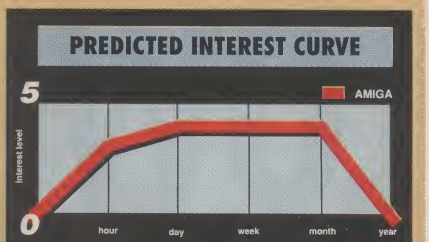
You will need all of the fire power you can muster when the Xenomorphs do track you down as they make formidable combatants.

But there is much more to Xenomorph than tooling up and rucking with the aliens. The Mombassa Oak uses three Anti Matter Drives for its power source and you will need to find the Anti Matter Pods that are required to repair these before you can leave Atargatis.

Finding your way around takes a bit of doing. There are some navigational aids such as the Personal Communicator, Motion Detector, and computer consoles that you can use to read the disks that you gather. All of these are no substitute for a map though – especially as there is an added penalty that will cost you some tedious disk swapping should you take the wrong turn.

Xenomorph strikes just the right balance between action and RPG'ing – with a good dose of adventure style exploration thrown in for good measure. It is undoubtedly the gadgets that make the game. There are one or two items that I wouldn't mind taking with me and using in a few other games of this type. Great attention to detail – in both game and manual – and great fun also.

● **Eugene Lacey**



A nice 'n' easy save game option enables you to get your teeth into this meaty adventure and come back to it time and time again. Once you have returned safely to base you have 'done' *Xenomorph* and it will lose its appeal at this stage – but even highly skilled *Dungeon Master* vets will take a fair bit of time to manage this.

RELEASE BOX

ATARI ST	£24.99dk	IMMINENT
AMIGA	£24.99dk	OUT NOW
PC	£24.99dk	IMMINENT
C64/128	£24.99dk	IMMINENT

No other versions planned.

AMIGA

Sound is pretty sparse and the constant disk swapping that is required if you aren't one of the lucky few who own an external drive let *Xenomorph* down slightly on the Amiga. Two annoying aspects of an otherwise first class RPG game.

GRAPHICS	7	IQ FACTOR	9	ACE RATING 870
AUDIO	6	FUN FACTOR	8	

LOW BLOW

Electronic Arts hit below the belt in this arcade punch-up

THE problem with being an amateur boxer is that nobody takes you seriously. Just to prove to the world that Bert Scroggins can match even Rocky Balboa, you enter the world boxing championship. Win, or get laughed off the face of the earth, the choice is yours.

Each level of the championship pits you against a nastier and tougher opponent, each of which has to be tackled differently. The only linking theme that runs through the whole game is that everybody fights dirty. Be it a good solid kick between the legs when the ref's looking the other way, or a quick nut to the bonce, all are lethal and should be avoided at all costs.

The game itself is a simple affair. The fights are played as a side on, forced perspective with BIG sprites. It's just a shame, with sprites that large, that EA didn't have room to include some animation. The boxers move through two positions when they walk, and two for each punch. Sadly there are only three punches, which, to be honest, in these enlightened days, isn't even close to being acceptable.

It amazes me that with such a large variety of different boxers and tactics, the game could become so repetitious. Yet, only minutes into play I was wondering if things would improve. They didn't.

With such a limited range of moves, I'd be very surprised if the game turned out to exciting and entertaining to play. It would also surprise me if the simple control method created such atmosphere that I wouldn't be able to drag myself away from the screen. I'd even be surprised if I enjoyed playing it.

I wasn't surprised.

● Tony Dillon

Things get a little nasty in the Low Blow ring

PC

Visually the game is very well presented, especially in EGA mode. The graphics are bright and colourful and generally pleasant to view. The soundtrack fails abysmally, as does most PC sound. Where the game really fails, however, is in the playability. Clumsy controls and a small amount of variety in gameplay is *Low Blow*'s downfall, and it is in that respect that I just cannot recommend the game to anyone.

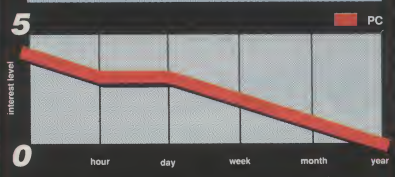
GRAPHICS	8	IQ FACTOR	2	ACE RATING 391
AUDIO	2	FUN FACTOR	3	

RELEASE BOX

PC	£24.99dk	OUT NOW

No other versions planned.

PREDICTED INTEREST CURVE



With it's large colourful sprites, and perspective view of the ring, *Low Blow* looks at first sight as if it is going to be an impressive game. Unfortunately it fails to deliver the goods when it comes to playability. Your disappointement will probably not inspire you to go back to it too often.

WORLD CHAMPIONSHIP BOXING MANAGER

Goliath Games get a knockout well inside the first round

RELEASE BOX

ATARI ST	£19.95dk	OUT NOW
AMIGA	£19.95dk	OUT NOW
SPECTRUM	£9.95cs	OUT NOW
C64/128	£9.95cs £12.95dk	OUT NOW
AMSTRAD	£9.95cs	OUT NOW
PC	£19.95dk	IMMINENT

AMIGA

A very stylish piece of software, programmed in such a way that it puts all similar titles to shame. Wonderful graphics, a great soundtrack, and it plays so well, you need never buy another piece of software again. (Almost!).

GRAPHICS	9	IQ FACTOR	9	ACE RATING 955
AUDIO	7	FUN FACTOR	10	

PREDICTED INTEREST CURVE

Sporting Management games are not the sort of thing you might get easily excited over, but from the moment this one starts to play, you know it's a winner. There are always improvements you can make to your management skills, and the game never palls.

YOU are a fight promoter, and it's your job to take your boxer(s) (you can have any number up to 5), train them and arrange the fights they need to take them to the lofty heights of world championship in the eyes of either the Federation of World Boxing, or the World International Boxing Council.

The entire game (bar text input) is joystick or mouse controlled, and rather than present everything as boring old menus, Goliath have gone for a very strong visual approach. When you are in your office, arranging fights and dealing with the world councils, you see your office, complete with your phone, filofax and saucy receptionist.

There are also nice graphical sequences in the gym and physiotherapy surgery where you check up on your lads' training and health respectively.

When you have arranged your fights, you can go and watch your boys in action, and this is where the game really takes off. The fight itself is performed as an upgraded version of *Tracksuit Manager*. Running commentary informs you of the fight, and though it sounds boring, the depth of the commentary is such that you can get very involved in the fight.

There's not a lot more to say other than it has to be one of the most in depth and entertaining strategy games yet. If you think that sporting management games are not for you, then think again.

● Tony Dillon

Your curvaceous secretary hands you a document for perusal

LORDS OF CHAOS

BLADE/MYTHOS take the traditonal route to table-top style Role Playing in this battle of magic

Mythos have gone for a traditional grid-based two-dimensional approach for their latest Role-Playing extravaganza

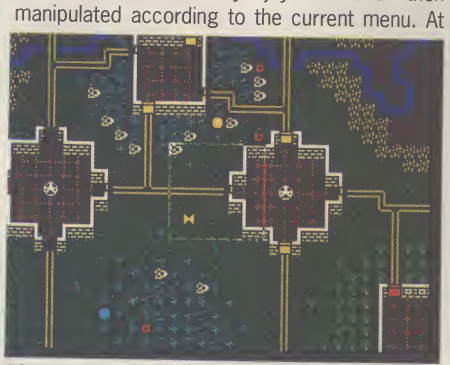
THE world of Role Playing Games is not a medium that lends itself easily to the silicon box, but the formulae for the transition are now more developed to the market. The latest wave of games like *Dungeon Master* and *Castle Master*, have taken the plan view RPG and turned it on its 3D head. So is Mythos' *Lords Of Chaos* a retrograde step or are the disadvantages of memory hungry Freescape and 3D graphics easily overlooked by the more traditional gamer?

Lords Of Chaos puts up to 4 players in wizards' robes, primed with spell lists and mana levels with which to do battle against other players or, if alone, the computer's wizard Torquemada who, unlike his Spanish Inquisition namesake, is not out to kill thousands of innocent people but you.

Although similar in style to *Laser Squad*, this time around the team of Nick and Julian Gollop have created a world of strategic sorcery in which its holistic approach gives a real feel of waging war with a warlock.

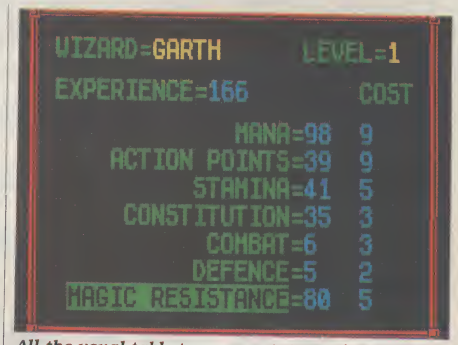
Players can begin with an 'off the peg' character with various spells and abilities but if they find him a loose fit for their style of gameplay they can tailor a wizard to their own specifications.

Each wizard begins with a list of abilities – Mana being the most important as this translates directly into magic spells. Action points are used up with each movement or task undertaken with stamina, constitution, combat and defence points depleting on each turn that they are called into use. A graphical display of each of these current levels are shown for each wizard which reduce during play. Each wizard and the characters that he summons to help him, are selected by joystick and then manipulated according to the current menu. At the beginning of each game it's a good idea to conjure up some companions – something that flies, something earth bound and something that's most certainly dead. Each of them can at least do battle with the enemies that fly, drag knuckles or is long since dead and impervious to material weapons.



The map shows the whole battle area in miniature

Your wizard controls each of his characters, to the point of even hitching a ride on mountable monsters. These are very useful because it means he can conserve movement points which are used up in spell casting and potion making which can only be done by collecting the needed ingredients and putting them in the same space occupied by the cauldron. Add to this mixture one wizard and use the potion spell.



All the usual table-top game stats are involved, but the computer takes care of the boring number-crunching

Potions are integral to the game as is the interplay between the wizard and the creatures under his control and careful use of spells is needed to progress through a game to the exit portal which will take the wizard back home where he will be awarded experience points which can then be used to increase the number of spells known to the total of 45 and to increase the effectiveness level of each spell. Also, experience points can be spent increasing characters abilities and wizards can be saved during the game allowing their use by players in later games.

● Garth Sumpter

Your familiars are called forth and the battle with Torquemada begins

LATE STARTER!

Just as we were about to go to press with this issue we were informed by Blade Software that they now plan not to release *Lords of Chaos* until September. So unfortunately this review is a bit previous to the occasion. Our apologies for that – but do keep your eyes peeled for this one come the Autumn.

RELEASE BOX

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AMIGA	£24.95dk	SEPTEMBER
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AMSTRAD	£9.95cs £14.95dk	SEPTEMBER

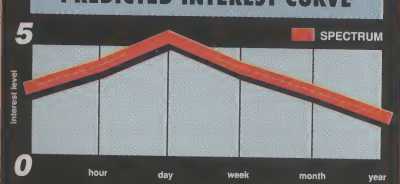
No other versions planned.

SPECTRUM

Laser Squad was a popular release and so it seems natural to use the same formula this time with *Lords of Chaos* and try to improve upon it. This Mythos have done with clear, recognisable graphics and a comprehensive manual. Sound is lacking but this would only be a problem with an arcade game. Control is by joystick or keys and is initially confusing making it a tricky game to get straight into but absorbing once you gone to the trouble.

GRAPHICS	7	IQ FACTOR	9	ACE RATING
AUDIO	5	FUN FACTOR	7	850

PREDICTED INTEREST CURVE



As with many plan view RPG games, the whole format has really been superseded by the latest batch of graphical Dungeon type games that has increased the appeal of the genre to include the arcade player. However, where *Lords of Chaos* really scores over them is in the depth of gameplay that is available and the level of board game strategy that is involved. Playing against your friends or even just alone, the three included scenarios will be complemented by extension modules which will add two new scenarios for £4 - £6. So, if *Lords of Chaos* appeals to you, then be sure that you could spend quite some time playing it.

Treasure Trap - putting the fun back into arcade adventuring.

TREASURE TRAP

ELECTRONIC ZOO

strike treasure in revamped classic gamestyle

THIS game is nice. This game is cuddly, this game you could play with your granny.

Treasure Trap is a revamp of the old Ultimate-style arcade adventures, best executed by the famous firm in classics such as *Alien 8* and *Knight Lore*. Featuring an isometric 3D view of the play area, the aim was to search the various chambers, finding and using keys and other objects and avoiding the life-sapping nasties.

Treasure Trap works on the same basic principle only this time the action is set on a wreck on the ocean floor. The Esmerelda is packed full of treasure - much of it strewn around on tables and shelves, but some of it hidden in less obvious places.

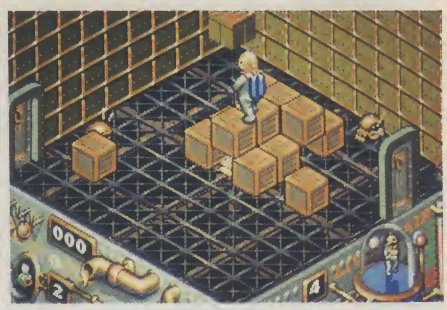
The wreck is crawling with sea animals - lobsters, jelly fish, star fish and crabs. They are not interested in the treasure - but they are deadly to divers and will cost you a life should they bump into you.

Nasties everywhere! Looks like time to use the Smart Fish.

Just as in the Ultimate games keys are of vital importance and you must gather as many of them as possible to get through the Esmerelda's numerous locked doors. Pieces of furniture need to be pushed around the screen from time to time to make platforms so you can grab the treasure that is out of reach.

Whilst the basic game design owes a debt to Ultimate circa 1985 - *Treasure Trap* is also very much a product of the 1990's. The opening sequence is a visual delight. An old Mississippi paddle steamer chugs out into the middle of the lake as a jazz tune blasts out. Your diver appears in his antique diving garb and plunges into the deep.

The graphics and sound effects in the game itself are also bang up to date with the best that can be got out of 16 bit machines. Best of all is the addition of an automatic map. This really is a most welcome improvement on the old arcade adventures - as although it was part of the puzzle, it was often also a bit of a drag having to reach for the pen and paper to map your route. In *Treasure Trap* the computer does it for you - revealing a a full 3D plan of your progress so far at the touch of a button.



Collect the gold bars by touching them - the more the merrier.

Other innovations are the 'Smart Fish'. So much more cuddly than a smart bomb - but just as deadly. When the going gets tough and those lobsters are snapping around your ankles just bring on your smart fish and he will nip around the location and kill everything in sight. Use your smart fish sparingly though - they are rare and precious.

Treasure Trap is not going to win any awards for innovation. But who gives a Mackerel about that. It is fun, challenging, and beautifully executed. If you are in the market for an arcade adventure to enjoy on your computer then *Treasure Trap* is highly recommended. And fans of the isometric 3D style will be glad to hear that further explorations of the genre are soon to arrive from the Bitmaps in the form of *Cadaver*. Good game ideas, it seems, just won't lie down and die...

● **Eugene Lacey**

AMIGA

Technically excellent. Stretches the Amiga in both sound and graphics departments. Particularly impressive are the intro and outro routines – even if they do take a few seconds to load. They are worth the wait. In terms of pure and simple arcade adventures – this is one of the very best for the Amiga.

GRAPHICS	9	IQ FACTOR	7	ACE RATING 910
AUDIO	8	FUN FACTOR	9	

RELEASE BOX

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AMIGA	£24.99dk	OUT NOW
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No other versions planned.

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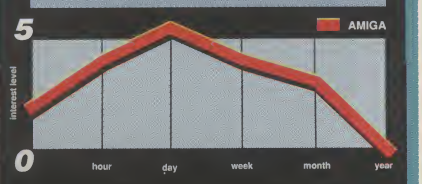

Packed with secrets and twists and with enough challenge to keep you busy for many a session. A graphical treat is promised at the end of the game to the successful adventurer. Once you have done it though – that is that.

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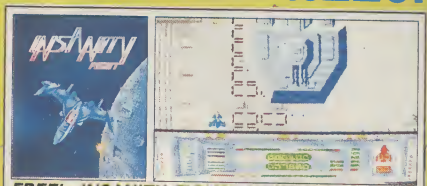

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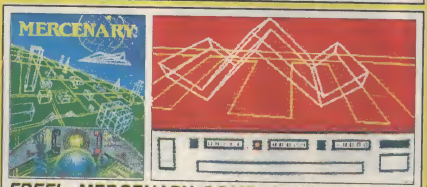

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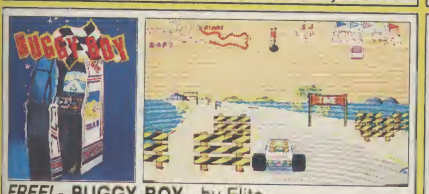

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F-29 RETALIATOR

Homing in on a bridge in the Pacific scenario.

Retaliator *boasts the Out-of-Cockpit views that are becoming a regular feature of simulations*

OCEAN takes off with a flight sim years ahead of the rest

DESPITE the name of the game, this simulation actually features two planes – the Grumman F-29, and the Lockheed F-22 Advanced Tactical Fighter. The F-29 is unusual in that it is forward swept wing fighter with Short Take Off and Vertical Landing (STOVL), and is so advanced that it is unlikely to see active service in its present form. The F-22 on the other hand, almost certainly will. This aircraft is more popularly known as the Stealth fighter. The name comes from its revolutionary radar invisibility due to its construction from radar absorbent materials. Obviously, any flight simulator based on two such advanced aircraft is going to rely to a large extent on conjectural data, but this is something which need worry only the purists.

The all-important factor of any flight sim is the controls, and *Retaliator* scores highly in this respect. The keyboard, joystick or mouse can be used to directly control the in-flight attitude of the plane, and using the joystick or the mouse makes it particularly easy to execute tight banks and rolls. The remaining functions are controlled from the keyboard and have fortunately been laid out in a logical way (There is nothing worse than going to switch in a weapons system in a tight situation and lowering your undercarriage instead, because the keys are right next to each other!)

Retaliator follows the recent trend for simulators to feature out-of-cockpit views. In this case you can choose between a South Facing, North Facing, Rear, and Satellite view, all with a zoom feature. There are also rather more realistic left, right, and rear views from within the cockpit, similar to Digital Integration's *F-16 Combat Pilot*. While these alternative viewpoints are all well and good, they are not really that practical in a combat situation.

There are four scenarios on offer – an Arizona test range, useful for practising manoeuvres before facing real action, then campaigns in the Pacific, Europe, and the Middle East. As you progress through the game within a particular scenario, the war progresses as well, and you are given updates on the war situation throughout play. These affect the missions you will be required to fly. In all there are 95 different missions to fly – that should be enough to keep anyone happy for quite a while.

It is also possible to select Zulu Alert for any of the scenarios. This is a quick-fly option which puts you in a fully armed plane already in flight (although heading groundwards). By selecting this, and the lowest rank (which gives you unlimited firepower), *Retaliator* can be played like a sophisticated shoot 'em up (a nice touch).

Graphics throughout are superb. The ground features are rendered as solid vector constructions, and are drawn quickly and smoothly with just the occasional flicker being noticeable during the out-of-cockpit views.

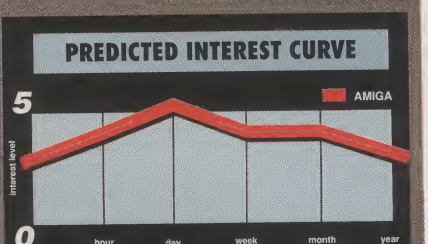
All in all, *F-29 Retaliator* is a very nice product. It has all the features you expect from a good simulator, and a good deal more speed than most.

● **Laurence Scotford**

Hello, who's that? Er... it's me!

BUG ALERT!

Ocean have informed us that some of the copies of the game have a bug which invokes the protection and prevents you from flying the plane for too long. Most of these copies have been withdrawn and replaced with unbugged versions. If your copy of the game crashes at inexplicable moments then you should return it to your retailer and ask him to replace it with a later version of the game.



As with any flight sim it takes a while to get accustomed to the controls and the actual feel of the planes. But once you have adjusted to these there are hours of flying fun ahead. The huge number of missions should keep you in the air for quite some time.

RELEASE BOX		
ATARI ST	£24.99dk	IMMINENT
AMIGA	£24.99dk	OUT NOW
PC	TBA	

No other versions planned.

AMIGA

Nice fast, and relatively smooth vector graphics, combined with a smart cockpit design make this an attractive looking game. Sound effects are good, although the engine begins to sound like mum's old twin tub after a while.

GRAPHICS	8	IQ FACTOR	7	ACE RATING
AUDIO	6	FUN FACTOR	8	910

LORDS of WAR

Digital Concepts go to war with this competitive variant on Breakout

QUITE simply, *Lords of War* takes the principles behind the age old game of *Breakout* and applies them not to breaking out, but breaking in. The kingdom, plagued by a fierce and evil dragon, is on offer to the strongest knight. To find such a person, the knights must engage in war between themselves until only the strongest survives.

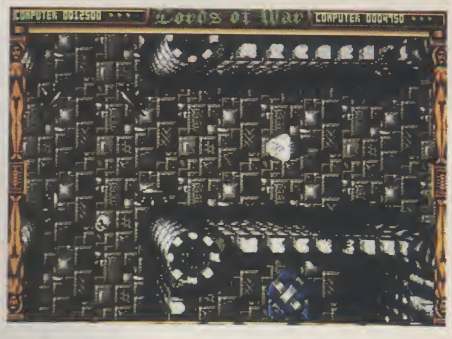
War, in this case, involves deflecting a fast moving skull-shaped ball in an attempt to breakdown the walls of your adversaries' castles while keeping yours intact. As soon as the ball touches the shield at the centre of a player's castle then that round is over and the next, even tougher, round begins.

You deflect the skull by running around the edge of your castle so that the ball bounces off your shield rather than knocking out a section of the castle walls. At the same time, of course, you must try and send the ball hurtling into your enemies' walls. To help you, the ball can be caught on your shield with a bit of quick fire button timing.

Sometimes the skull begins to glow, and if you catch it at this time you are awarded some spell points. When you next catch the ball you can cast a spell. The more points you have the better the spells you can cast. These range from simple speed spells to a spell which will destroy an opponent's castle.

Lords of War is one of those simple games that proves to be remarkably addictive. And if you get bored playing against the three computer controlled opponents, you can select a two player option and have a second human player for a bit of tougher competition. Not an amazing game, but great fun nonetheless.

● Laurence Scotford



Not so much break-out as break-in! Break down those walls before they get yours!

RELEASE BOX

DETAILS TBA (See next issue)

PREDICTED INTEREST CURVE

Reading the instructions and back of box blurb, this game doesn't really sound that great, but when you start playing it really grabs you. It is exactly the sort of thing that has you addicted for a couple of days, and then begins to bore you solid. However, after a little while on the shelf gathering dust, it may well see the occasional revival.

AMIGA

The graphics are not that incredible, simply because they don't have to be. The gameplay is the important factor, and that is very strong if a little limited. The sounds are quite atmospheric. All in all, a competent product.

GRAPHICS	6	IQ FACTOR	3	ACE RATING
AUDIO	6	FUN FACTOR	8	750

jUMPIng JACK SON

Get back to the beat with INFOGRAMES cute search for the lost soul of Rock 'n' Roll

CLASSICAL music, it seems, is all the music left in the world. And for those who possess less cultured palettes, things are not looking good. The only person who can save the world from perpetual boredom is the son of Jumping Jack Flash. Yes! He made famous by the equally famous Rolling Stones.

Jack Jr.'s task is to find the only remaining copy of the first ever recording made by Elvis. On the way he must also recover every rock record made since Elvis began his fantastic career (phew!).

Rock 'n' Roll gets cute in this bouncy bundle of fun from over the water

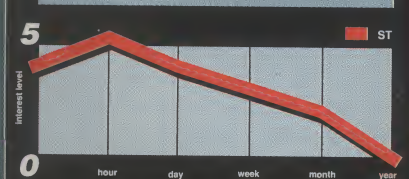
Jack's search takes place on a grid which he bounces around on in a very cute fashion. On each level he must change blocks of squares to a particular colour to make a record of the same colour appear. Once this is done he can carry the record to a similarly coloured deck, whereupon some of the tracks of suitable rock tune begin to play. Once all the decks on a level have records, all of the tracks of the tune will be playing and the level has been completed.

Things aren't quite as simple as that however. There are malign classical instruments sliding about on the grid, and contact with them is fatal. Fortunately there are plenty of bonus objects to collect which will help you in various ways, as well as transporter pads for quick getaways, and accessing remote islands in the grid.

Jumping Jack Son is very reminiscent of other cute games like *Skweek!*. It does manage to make up for its lack of originality, however, with reasonably addictive gameplay, great backing sounds, and some nice graphical touches.

● Laurence Scotford

PREDICTED INTEREST CURVE



Takes a while to get the hang of moving about on the grid, then it's great fun for a short while. There are occasional bonus levels to keep you going, and the variety of music also stops boredom from setting in. Not a game that is going to have an exceptionally long life however.

ATARI ST

The sprites are quite cute, and all well animated, although the actual playfield tends to get a bit monotonous after a while. The best aspect of the game is the rock and roll soundtrack which changes with each level, and makes for quite an upbeat little game. Not a bad effort at all.

GRAPHICS	7	IQ FACTOR	4	ACE RATING
AUDIO	8	FUN FACTOR	7	780

RELEASE BOX

ATARI ST	£24.99dk	OUT NOW
AMIGA	£24.99dk	IMMINENT

No other versions planned.

Fisticuffs on the C64... and on the Amiga!

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ATARI ST	£24.99dk	LATE MAY
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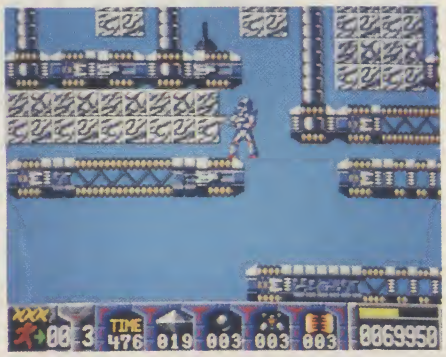
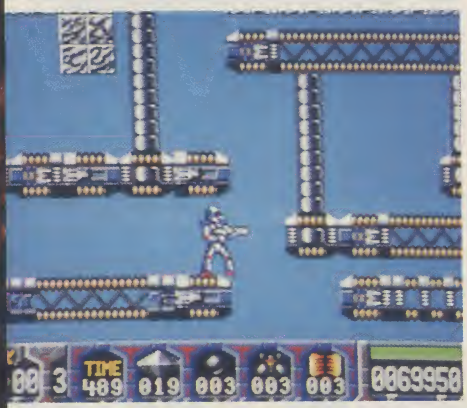
No other versions planned.

TURRICAN



Occassionally you will find the way blocked, but a bit of quick work with the laser should clear things up a little...



BACK in issue 27 we brought you advance news of a great new C64 game from Rainbow Arts called *Turrican*. Now we can show you the same game on the Amiga, and very nice it looks too, as you can see for yourself.

Turrican may seem like just another scrolling shoot 'em up, with yet another luckless trooper to guide past wave after wave of vicious nasties, but start to play it and you soon change your mind.

For one thing, the game is huge – five distinct worlds each with an alarming array of platforms, chutes, spikes, and the weirdest array of adversaries you've ever set your eyes on.

Secondly, the animation, sound, and overall graphically quality of the game are all superb, and give it a distinctive atmosphere which is different in each of the game's five worlds. World three even contains some fairly incredible parallax scrolling by all accounts – more on this in the review next month.

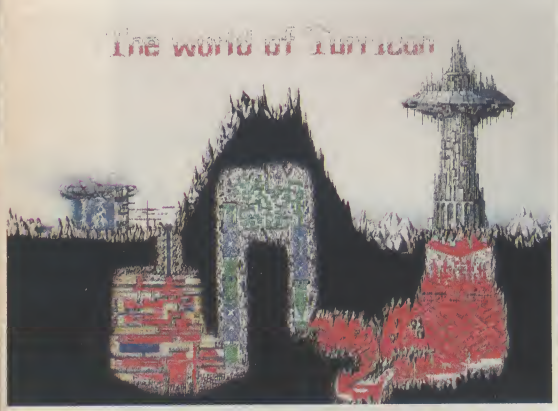
Last, but by no means least, the game is eminently playable. For a reasonable player it should be possible to get a good distance into the first world on your fist play. The challenge is pitched just about right. It is not too difficult a game to get to grips with, but it does provide long-term playing simply because of its size.

Turrican certainly looks like being a winner. Next month we'll bring you the definitive judgement, but for now just feast your eyes on what's to come.

● Laurence Scotford

Some of the sprites in **Turrican** *are very, very big, and very, very fast...*

ACE takes an early look at Rainbow Arts huge five world shoot 'em up extravaganza



Turrican *is huge – five distinct worlds to conquer!*

If you find yourself in a sticky situation you can turn into a Gyroscope and tumble down through nasty infested platforms with complete immunity!

KICK OFF 2

BLISTERING PACE – PIXEL PERFECT PASSING – SUPERB TACTICAL GAME PLAY

KICK OFF 2 greatly enhances the game play of KICK OFF, winner of THE GAME OF THE YEAR award in U.K. and similar awards right across Europe. A host of new features have been added to the ones that enthralled the players the world over.

Full size multi directional scrolling pitch with the players, markings etc. in correct proportion.

1 to 4 players (Amiga & ST only) option.

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Hundreds of players, each with a unique combination of attributes (Stamina-Pace etc.) and skills (Passing, Shooting and Tackling etc.)

Instinctive Kick Off joystick controls to dribble, pass, shoot, head or chip a ball and do sliding tackles or scissor kicks.

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Set Piece Free kicks including dummies to chip the ball or bend the ball round a defensive wall.

9 types of corner kicks with full control of shot power. Long and short Throw In.

Team selection from a squad of 16 with substitution and choice of tactics.

League and Cup competitions with extra time, injury time and sudden death penalty shoot out.

* Store up to 10 Action Replay goals in memory. Facility to view, edit and save the action replays and create Golden Shots disc.

* Kit design – 6 styles and 32 colours.

Facility to load Player Manager teams for a single game or league game.

Up to 4 teams can be loaded for league competition. Load your own designed Tactics from Player Mangager.

Red & Yellow cards, 16 different referees, Offside rules, Injury time and host of features to create the atmosphere for a game which is a real fun to play.

Special Events provision to load Data Discs or Cassettes for events like World Cup, European Cup etc...

* 1 M.B. Amiga & ST only.

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FRED

UBI SOFT's comic hero gives arcade adventures an extra dimension

FUNNY animations, objects to collect, numerous enemies to dispatch, and your sweetheart to rescue – sounds familiar doesn't it? Well, all these elements are certainly noticeable in Ubi Soft's latest arcade adventure. Where the game breaks away from the usual run-of-the mill hack, slash, and jump stuff is it's extra dimension.

Not only can the hero Fred be moved from left to right past pretty scrolling backgrounds, he can also be moved into and out of the screen. This really does add an extra aspect to the game play. Rather than simply killing or jumping over your opponents it is also possible to sidestep them. Scenery in the foreground can often obscure the action, making it difficult to execute attacks on the dwarfs, pixies, and ghouls that menace you at every step.

As interesting as it is, having the extra dimension also creates its own problems. There are so many things that Fred has to be capable of doing – throwing daggers, swinging his sword, jumping, rolling, moving back and forth as well as into and out of the screen – that things can get pretty hectic at times. Everything is done with a combination of joystick moves, but unfortunately the central character is not quite responsive enough to enable this to work very well.

The idea behind the game is to collect the key, and any other objects, on each level to be able to enter the next level. On each level there are new background and foreground graphics as well as different nasties to tackle.

The game has a similar feel to *Verminator*, and the graphics have the same comical quality. Unfortunately, the over complex control method really does prevent this from becoming a first-

class arcade adventure. I also have reservations about the life expectancy of the game. There is not really enough variety in the gameplay to make this the sort of game you will want to keep on coming back to.

Nevertheless, it is quite unusual and the hilarious animation should be enough to keep most players happy for a good few hours.

● **Laurence Scotford**

ATARI ST

Not the most stunning graphics you've ever seen, but very cute nonetheless. The animation is quite amusing, and moving in and out of the screen is an interesting idea, although it does give the graphics that cardboard cut-out sort of look. Sound is OK, with some muffled speech samples thrown in.

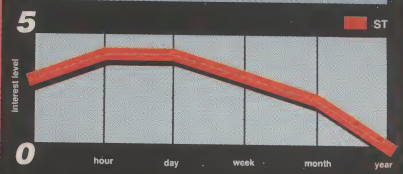
GRAPHICS	7	IQ FACTOR	6	ACE RATING
AUDIO	7	FUN FACTOR	7	770

RELEASE BOX

ATARI ST	£24.99dk	OUT NOW
AMIGA	£24.99dk	IMMINENT

Other versions TBA

PREDICTED INTEREST CURVE



It takes a while to get used to the movement in and out of the screen, and the slightly tricky controls. Once you have done that, and got the gist of the game, you can sit back and start enjoying the funny animation. I'm not convinced that there is enough variety here to really keep you going though.

HAMMERFIST

VIVID IMAGE live up to their name

THE storyline of *Hammerfist* isn't going to win any sci-fi writing prizes. *Hammerfist* is a sort of futuristic six million dollar man. He has been rebuilt and fitted with a cybernetic arm and is an expert in 'weapons control and fire-arm suppression tactics'. The Metro-Holographix corporation are using *Hammerfist* to carry out their dirty work - which involves the assassination of their business and political opponents. Naturally, *Hammerfist* doesn't want to put up with this so he sets out with fellow hologram (yup, we're not even human in this game) Metalisis to destroy the nerve centre of the Metro Holographic dictators.

Games-wise this boils down to smashing your way through three levels of action before confronting the source of the evil holograms in the administration block of the Metro Holographix HQ.

The best part of *Hammerfist* is in switching between the two characters. This is easily carried out by simply pulling down on the joystick. It is also essential as a combination of their skills is required if you are going to get the better of the corporation. Metalisis, for example is very athletic, can leap great distances and can get into awkward situations. *Hammerfist* provides the brute force - smashing down walls and kicking the holograms out of the enemy.

Metalisis leaps into action. Hammerfist is going to need all the help he can get from his nimble partner.

Both characters have life force gauges which the successful player must be mindful of. They can be topped up by gathering the letters left behind when you destroy an enemy. This adds a slight role playing feel to the game - but not too much, as the main impression is firmly of a beat 'em up with plenty of guns and lasers thrown in for good measure.

Hammerfist has a slick, coin-op feel to it . Strong evidence that Vivid Image are going to be a force to be reckoned with.

● **Eugene Lacey**

PREDICTED INTEREST CURVE

Big enough and tough enough to take a good few sessions to beat. Once you have beaten it though that's it. It is completeable and therefore limited. Excellent fun though - while it lasts.

AMIGA

Graphically superb - the larger nasties being particularly well drawn and animated. Sound effects are good enough - though not exceptional. A better beat 'em up than many of the mediocre coin-op conversions that are currently available for the Amiga.

GRAPHICS	8	IQ FACTOR	6	ACE RATING
AUDIO	6	FUN FACTOR	8	860

RELEASE BOX

ATARI ST	£24.99dk	IMMINENT
AMIGA	£24.99dk	OUT NOW
C64/128	£9.99cs £14.99dk	IMMINENT
AMSTRAD	£9.99cs £14.99dk	IMMINENT
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LHX ATTACK CHOPPER

PC

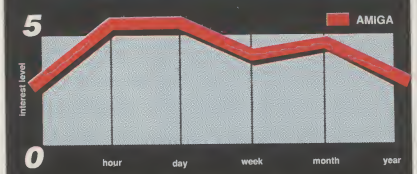
Polygon saturated visuals feed the screen with realistic imaging of terrain and vehicles. The pace remains fast even on a low-grade PC running at a geriatric gallop – you can vary the graphical detail to sustain speed on slower decks. CGA, EGA, MCGA, VGA and Tandy graphics modes are all supported. Sound FX add to the atmosphere and can be Adlibbed for extra aural quality.

GRAPHICS	9	IQ FACTOR	8	ACE RATING 888
AUDIO	6	FUN FACTOR	9	

RELEASE BOX

ATARI ST	£TBA	UNDER CONSIDERATION
AMIGA	£TBA	UNDER CONSIDERATION
IBM PC	£39.99dk	OUT NOW

PREDICTED INTEREST CURVE



Another flight simulation – great, that's just what the PC gamesters desperately need. Low marks and interest level at start of play. The easy to read manual and intuitive game design structure soon grab your attention though. And excellent controls, attractive visuals and variety of missions keep this interest at a static high for weeks to come. You won't be disappointed with this baby.

Fly high with EA's four chopper heli-sim

NOT one, but four American helicopters are simulated in LHX Attack Chopper, including a top secret aircraft that hasn't even entered service with US forces yet. Add a touch of polygon generated graphics, a wide range of missions, and easy to master controls and you could have the best helicopter simulation around...

Starting life as a Level One Warrant Officer Pilot you've got to do a Tour of Duty in either Libya, Vietnam or East Germany. So select your mission category, from Alpha Strikes – hazardous seek-and-destroy missions, Dustoff – rescue a fellow pilot shot down over enemy territory, to Sanctions – terminating heinous criminals. Order your flight hardware: LHX (a future American helicopter Gunship), Apache (US Forces current helicopter Gunship), Osprey (a strange hybrid tilt-rotor aircraft) or Black Hawk (Yank transport helicopter). Load up your weapons: 30mm Chain gun ammo, 57mm FFAR rockets, a couple of Stingers or Sidewinders, perhaps a Hellfire, and a TOW or two. Check out your waypoint map with landing and enemy location info. And prepare for lift-off.

It only takes a couple of flights to master the flight controls, everything is kept simple, logical and fast reacting. Just the way it should be. The hardest balance to strike right is in the vertical thrust (engine power plus collective) – but toggling between 50% and 70% maximum thrust seems to do the trick. Apart from that, there's nothing to worry about – weapon control is easy and efficient, flight info such as altitude is clearly displayed. You have the choice of looking straight out of the cockpit with or without dials, plus various outside viewpoints of your helicopter. You can even 'ride' your weapons ordnance, useful when guiding a TOW missile towards an unsuspecting enemy vehicle. And all these views can be zoomed in and out at will. The neat thing about LHX is the way your cockpit starts to fall apart when you take hits – it really makes you panic seeing your craft crack open.

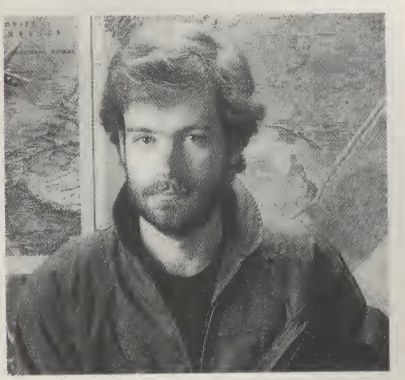
The four choppers have their own characteristics, cockpit displays, weapons, strengths and weaknesses, so have a go at flying each, learn their traits – you can then decide which aircraft is best for that specific mission. Once you've finished a mission you'll get debriefed and, if you've performed well, maybe a promotion too. Your pilot records can be saved to disk for future use.

So is LHX Attack Chopper worth the 40 quid? The variety of missions help to keep you hooked, as do the differing gamescapes and the choice of helicopters to fly. Playing the game is both satisfying and compelling. You really get a feeling of achievement when you've successfully completed a mission. Flight control may not be realistic, but thankfully the visuals are. In short, EA has done the biz. You can forget Microprose's Gunship, LHX Attack Chopper is now the best heli-sim on the market.

● Rik Haynes

This bunker is targeted for termination

High risk worries for the pilot



MUTATED DREAMS

Although he dreamed of becoming an artist, Brent Iverson – the American designer and programmer of LHX Attack Chopper – eventually majored in Computer Science at the University of Michigan. Iverson got hooked on games after playing with a friend's Apple II at the age of 15. He joined EA in 1986, going on to write flight simulations, the IBM PC and Apple IIgs versions of Deluxe Paint II, and now LHX Attack Chopper.

DELIVERANCE

Stormlord II

Underground in Hell, is where Stormlord commences his mission to free the fairies held captive by followers of the wicked Black Queen. Travel through caves, mines, crypts and forests until eventually reaching Heaven, where Stormlord will face Saint Peter himself.

Brilliant blast'em-up, shoot'em-up with strategy gameplay.

Due for release May 1990.

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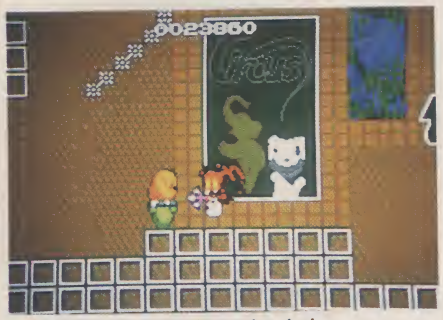
COOL CONSOLES

Eugene Lacey reports back on the latest firmware for the PC engine and Sega Master System



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PC ENGINE	£34.99ct	OUT NOW
GRAPHICS 7	IQ FACTOR 7	ACE RATING 870
AUDIO 8	FUN FACTOR 8	

NEW ZEALAND STORY

New Zealand Story is ideally suited to the PC Engine. The designers of the NEC machine had games just like it in mind when they assembled its custom graphics and sound chips.

It is a platform game of search and rescue with a good dollop of shoot 'em up action thrown in for good measure.

Phee Phee and Tiki are a pair of Kiwis living with their friends in the Zoo on New Zealand's North Island. One day the peace is disturbed when a Leopard Seal appears out of the chilly wetness of the Antarctic Ocean and carries off their friends – imprisoning them in cages in several dangerous locations.

The fate of the trapped birds is in your hands as you guide the the cuddly duo in their Ramboesque mission.

The pace of *NZS* is frightening. Although the platforms are not particularly intricate the nasties are in such hot pursuit that you have little time to stop and think. As well as speed cuteness is the over riding impression created by *NZS*. There are Maori warriors who lob their boomerangs at you, more Maori's on giant Stork's launching volleys of arrows in your direction, and even a big blue whale at the end of some of the levels barring your path to the hapless kiwi in the cage whom you are trying to rescue.

Fortunately an arrow system is there to assist you – pointing the way to the next trapped Kiwi. You need all the help you can get in *NZS* as it is one tough game.

Points are earned by gathering the fruit that appears every time you shoot a Maori. You have to quick about it though – as you can't spend all your time gobbling the fruit. Dally too long on any platform and the red devil will be dispatched to deal with you. There is no defence against the red devil. You just have to leg it when the ominous gong sounds that heralds his arrival.

Phee Phee and Tiki can boost their fire power by picking up the laser. This is much more deadly than the bow and arrow and pretty much essential kit when you come up against one of the whales.

NZS is as addictive a platform game as you will come across. Its combination of cute graphics, jolly tunes, and infuriatingly 'moreish' gameplay make it an essential purchase for you lucky Engine owners. The definitive platform shoot 'em up.

PC ENGINE	£34.99ct	OUT NOW
GRAPHICS 8	IQ FACTOR 6	ACE RATING 730
AUDIO 7	FUN FACTOR 8	

TIGER ROAD

USG had a moderate success with the computer versions of this Capcom arcade hit. Now PC Engine owners are set to enjoy what is definitely the best conversion available.

You play the warrior Lee Wong who is set a mission to seek out and do battle with the evil Ryu Ken who is busily kidnapping and brainwashing the children of your land. Ryu Ken is building a mighty army with his captives with which he intends to subjugate the world. Only you and Lee can stop him.

The action begins in a forest where you encounter Ryu's crack Samurai warriors. With the aid of your trusty axe you have to battle through to the entrance to the temple. Once inside more of Ryu's henchmen are waiting – this time raining spears at you from all directions. The first couple of levels are a stroll. You can use them as an introduction, taking time to get the hang of manoeuvring Lee and experiment with the various weapons.

By the third levels things start to heat up. You have to leap carefully from post to post to progress through the level and deal with an increase in the frequency and ferocity of attacks.

An information panel above the play screen shows your life force represented by a blue barometer. Each time you sustain a hit your life force ticks down a bit. You may lose a life outright if you get pushed on to one of the spikes or take a spear in the gut. Your life force can be topped up by collecting the various potions that appear when you kill the Samurai.

Graphically *Tiger Road* is virtually identical to the coin-op. It has the same speed and sound effects and emulates the game's frenzied gameplay in every respect.

If you liked *Tiger Road* and you own an Engine don't miss out on it. If, however, you are simply in the market for a good *Ratan*-style beat 'em up adventure then I would advise you to hang on a bit. There are a good deal of excellent beat 'em up adventures in the pipeline for the Engine – *Strider*, *Ghouls 'n' Ghosts*, and *Ninja Spirit* to name but three. Good as *Tiger Road* is it belongs to Capcom's 1987 catalogue and has been bested both in the arcades and on the Engine since. Watch this space.

PC ENGINE	£34.99ct	OUT NOW
GRAPHICS 7	IQ FACTOR 7	ACE RATING 770
AUDIO 7	FUN FACTOR 7	

SUPER VOLLEY BALL

Volley ball has never been as popular in Europe as it is Japan and the far East – which is a shame as this version for the Engine is as near a perfect rendition of the sport as you are likely

to find on any computer.

The Engine has few sports simulations so far – but the ones that it does have are superb. Engine Tennis easily out performs any other tennis game and now Super Volley Ball sits alongside it in the same class.

A choice of eight international squads can be picked to play against a friend or the computer. A word or warning though – you will need the multi-player interface for your Engine if you want to play against a friend. Another slight problem is that all of the on-screen prompts and the manual are in Japanese – so you had better mug up on the rules in an Encyclopaedia before you start.

Once you get started the action is quite frantic. The game allows for fast and furious rallies – with just two pad controls for 'block' and 'hit'. When you block an opponent's drive your player will automatically leap to take a shot. It is for you to decide the exact split second to make the hit by pressing the button on your keypad.

The computer makes a tough opponent and will return most of what you throw at it. The frills are up to the standard that you would expect in an Engine game. Particularly neat are the fists in the air celebrations of the winning team and the down cast, head deep in the shoulders reaction of the losers.

Super Volley Ball is a welcome addition to the limited library of Engine sports sims. All very well and worthy but what we want is a decent footy game. Anyone reading this over there in Tokyo?

SEGA	£29.99ct	OUT NOW
GRAPHICS 8	IQ FACTOR 8	ACE RATING 890
AUDIO 7	FUN FACTOR 8	

GOLDEN AXE

When the evil Titan Death Adder (No relation to Rowan Atkinson) stole the Golden Axe from the castle of Yuriua, the land lost its protective shining light. Yuria was overrun by bandits who terrorised the populace. The people were crying out for a hero – and so was the plot of this latest beat 'em up from Sega.

The name of that hero is Tarik and you control him as he battles through five levels of action before coming face to face with Death Adder in the temple on Eagle Island.

Before getting down to the main business of slaying anything that moves with your mighty sword you must first visit a temple where you are granted a choice of three magical powers. These powers are bestowed by the Gods of Thunder, Fire, and Earth and they are what sets *Golden Axe* apart from the stacks of average hack 'em ups currently doing the rounds.

There are certain situations where only your magic powers will win the day – like when you are confronted by the golden axe warrior or come up against some of Death Adder's tougher minions such as the dinosaur riders or skeletons.

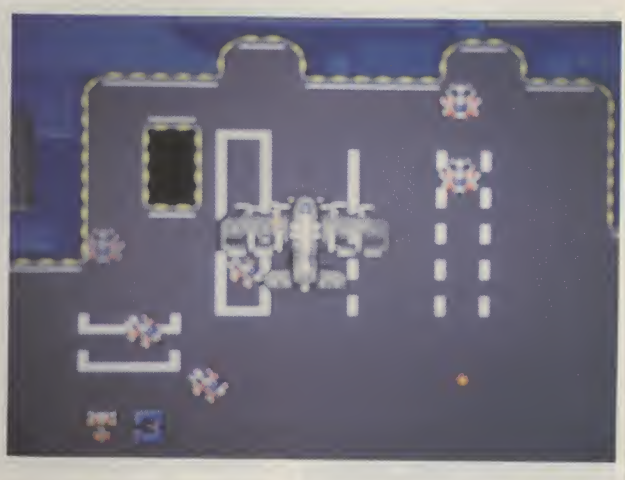
Using the magic takes some practice. You must learn to keep your magic gauge at as high a level as possible by attacking the dwarves that are carrying sacks and collect the pots that they carry. This will keep your magic gauge topped up.

Transport can be made easier by attacking some of the creatures that ride towards you on dragon charges. If you knock them off their mounts you can hop on the creatures yourself to travel further faster.

Your ultimate objective is to retrieve the golden axe and restore peace to the land of Yuria.

The variety of game play elements in *Golden Axe* make for a most entertaining game. It requires you to master a number of skills apart from the obvious one of wielding your weapons in as deadly a fashion as you can muster.

A slightly more intelligent hack 'em up and a welcome addition to the Master System library. It will take even the toughest of beat 'em up exponents a good few sessions to get the better of *Golden Axe*.



SEGA	£29.99ct	OUT NOW
GRAPHICS 8	IQ FACTOR 6	ACE RATING 845
AUDIO 7	FUN FACTOR 7	

SCRAMBLE SPIRITS

Scramble Spirits was a surprise hit in the arcades considering it appeared to offer little that was new in the way of shoot 'em up action.

The secret was that although it was not original it performed well enough in all the important categories to appeal to the large number of arcaders who want one thing from a coin-op – destruction on a grand scale.

The storyline was equally unoriginal. The peace of a post-nuclear holocaust world is disturbed when aliens attack the reemerging cities.

As the top pilot in the secret World Air Force it is down to you in primitive fighter plane to take on the enemy – engaging them in their six progressively difficult levels.

The best part of *Scramble Spirits* are the end of level nasties that are a delight. they are so detailed that you almost wish you could buy them in kit form to put on your bedroom mantle piece. The best of these are the Sting Ray Battle Commander's, Sky Revolver, and delightfully named Bruiser Cruiser.

The vast, hulking end of level nasties take up most of the screen and have to be systematically destroyed – gun by gun, and wing by wing.

Power ups are in plentiful supply together with two Mini Support Fighters that fly along side your plane providing essential cover and valiantly engaging the enemy.

Extra lives are earned by notching up a really high score. The best way to do this is to compete successfully in the three bonus rounds at the end of levels one, three, and five. In the bonus rounds you have to destroy as much of the enemy vehicles and weapons as you can without sustaining a direct hit.

There is always room for a good new shoot 'em up on the Sega and *Scramble Spirits* certainly fits the bill. Its six tough levels will tax even the hottest shoot 'em up sharp shooter.

SOMETHING OLD...

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PC

BLOOD MONEY

Psygnosis; £24.95dk; Amiga Version Reviewed Issue 22; ACE RATING 732

Latest version of the two-handed shoot 'em up from DMA design (creators of *Menace*). There are four worlds to conquer in this alien safari where nasties turn to

cash which can be exchanged for superior firepower. Good fun, but frustratingly difficult. This version offers EGA and VGA modes, both of which are quite attractive.

ACE RATING: 700

MIND-ROLL

Epyx; £TBAdk; C64 version (Quedex) Reviewed Issue 1; ACE RATING 934

Originally released by Thalamus on the C64, and called *Quedex*, this was one of the more original games of 1987. The idea is to negotiate a rolling ball through ten planes, each of which presents a different challenge and all require individual tactics. The game is quite addictive, but the 16-bit versions don't really offer much over and above the original 8-bit game. There are better games in the same mould, like Rainbow Arts' excellent *Rock 'n' Roll*. Hercules, Tandy, CGA, and EGA modes available.

ACE RATING: 890

DARK CENTURY

Titus; £24.99dk; ST Version reviewed Issue 31; ACE RATING 679

A futuristic tank simulator set on a prison planet. You play a penitentiary guard whose job is to prevent prisoners running riot in stolen vehicles. More depth is added to the game by the ability to preprogram the movements of your squad of tanks. CGA and EGA modes are catered for.

ACE RATING: 680

AMIGA

MIND-ROLL

Epyx; £TBAdk; C64 version (Quedex) reviewed Issue 1; ACE RATING 934

The Amiga version of a C64 puzzle game from Thalamus. See the PC version for further comment.

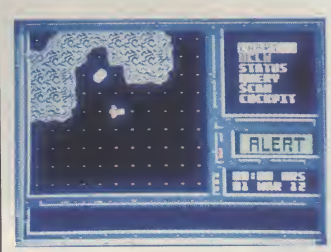
ACE RATING: 890

688 ATTACK SUB

Electronic Arts; £24.99dk; PC version reviewed Issue 22; ACE RATING 847

A superb nuclear sub simulation, which, unlike most, boasts first class graphics and sound, as well as keeping faithful to the real atmosphere and tension involved in modern naval warfare. The graphics in this version manage to excel those on the PC making this a definite winner for Amiga sim fans.

ACE RATING: 860



SPACE ROGUE

Origin; £29.99dk; PC version reviewed Issue 27; ACE RATING 765

A space simulator cum adventure cum strategy game in typically big Origin style. Like all Origin conversions, this one plays, looks, and feels a lot like the PC version. If you enjoy in-depth games then you'll like this.

ACE RATING 765

PLAYER MANAGER

Anco; £19.95dk; Atari ST version reviewed Issue 31; ACE RATING 920

Kick Off has been hailed as the most playable football sim ever, now *Player Manager* aims to bolt on management elements while leaving all of the excitement of the actual game intact. Probably the first game ever to successfully combine detailed strategy with arcade style action.

ACE RATING 930

BUDOKAN

Electronic Arts; £24.99dk

Martial arts games come and go, and often new efforts are greeted with a huge yawn. *Budokan* is a refreshingly good martial arts game. There are four arts to train in: Karate, Kendo, Nunchaku, and Bo. Training is integrated with traditional warrior culture, and the game culminates in competition at the Budokan. Nice graphics, and the usual finger gymnastics to perform moves. Worth a look if you like this sort of thing.

ACE RATING: 825

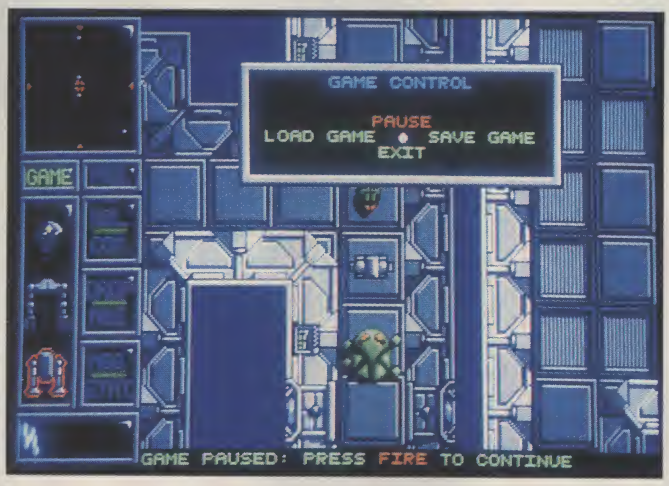
TOWER OF BABEL

Microprose; £24.99dk; Atari ST version reviewed Issue 29; ACE RATING 930

A stunning 3D puzzle game from

Pete Cooke, the man responsible for *Tau Ceti*. Help the Zantorian spider-robots escape from the Shinarian towers by solving the puzzles on each level. This is all brainwork so won't please hardened arcade fans. If you enjoy using the old grey matter you will love it.
ACE RATING 935

RATING: 845
A footie management sim with an arcade style game. The presentation is superb, with lots of animated icons and so on (although these do slow down the games responses somewhat. Unlike *Player Manager* this game boasts a side on view of the pitch a la



FIRST CONTACT
Microprose; £24.99dk
A strategic arcade game set aboard an inter-galactic communications station overrun by aliens. You must coordinate a team of droids to counteract the alien attack. *First Contact* requires a good combination of arcade and strategy skills making it quite accessible, but providing long-term depth.
ACE RATING: 810

ATARI ST

SPACE ACE
Empire; £44.95dk; Amiga version reviewed Issue 30; ACE RATING: 725
Arcade movie in which a quick joystick reaction is required at the right moment during an animated scene. All the animation is superb (and uses a special 4096 colour mode, so it looks just like the

same game on the Amiga), but the gameplay is sadly lacking.
ACE RATING: 720

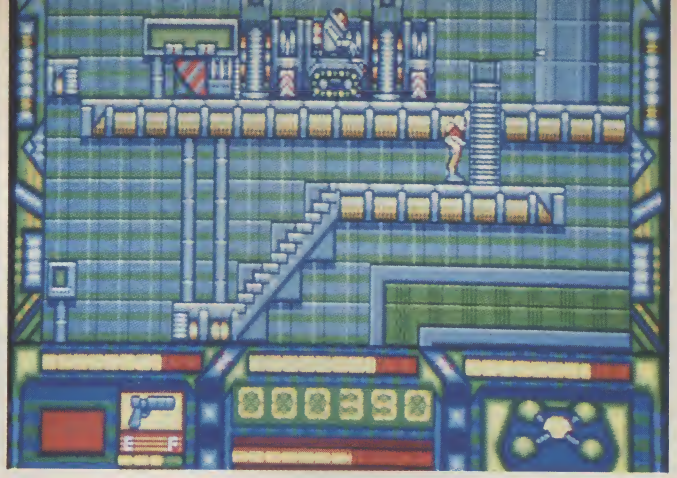
MANCHESTER UNITED
Krisalis; £19.95dk; Amiga version reviewed Issue 32; ACE

Match Day. Doesn't look quite as slick as the Amiga version.
ACE RATING: 800

GHOSTS 'N' GOBLINS
Capcom/Elite; £19.95
This elderly arcade hit was the first to feature Capcom's cute knight (who is also to be seen in *Ghouls 'n' Ghosts*). The game is a fairly standard left to right scrolling shoot and jump affair characterised by its addictive

gameplay and cute graphics. Elite had a big hit with the 8-bit versions of the game and have finally come up with the 16-bit versions. The ST game looks good and plays well but sound lets it down.
ACE RATING: 790

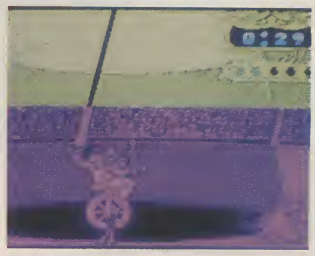
STRYX
Psyclapse; £19.95; Amiga version reviewed Issue 31; ACE RATING: 790



An impressive multi-part arcade adventure which has been deliberately designed with small well-animated sprites to give a large playing area on-screen. This version is almost identical to the game on the Amiga, and just as much fun to play.
ACE RATING: 790

ARCHIMEDES

TRIVIAL PURSUIT
Domark; £29.99; Amiga version reviewed Issue 16; ACE RATING: 614



machines to get the funniest effects. This is a brave attempt to do the same on the Spectrum, but unfortunately the game doesn't quite come off with just two colours and feeble sound.
ACE RATING: 500

The latest version to join Domark's stable of board game conversions. Like the early 16-bit versions, the Archimedes game makes good use of sound and animated graphics to spice up the questions. A good substitute for the real thing (especially for solo players) even though you can easily cheat.
ACE RATING: 700

ZX SPECTRUM

FIENDISH FREDDIE'S BIG TOP OF FUN
Mindscape; £9.99cs•£14.99dk; Amiga version reviewed Issue 24; ACE RATING: 775
The 16-bit versions of this circus game worked well because the programmers were able to make maximum use of the advanced graphics and sound on those

C64

E-MOTION
US Gold; £10.99cs•£14.99dk; ST, Spectrum, PC, and Amiga versions reviewed Issue 32; ACE RATING: 880, 825, 850, and 890 respectively
E-Motion is one of US Gold's more original recent releases. The idea is to steer a sphere into other spheres causing them to knock together and neutralise each other. This version features rather stunted looking graphics, but otherwise plays well.
ACE RATING: 830

FLIGHT OF THE INTRUDER™

Flight Of The Intruder takes you into the deadliest air combat environment the world has ever known – the skies above North Vietnam.

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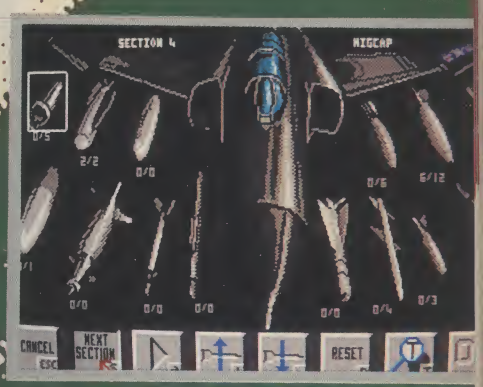
Enemy aircraft featured are the nimble MiG17 and the more advanced supersonic MiG21, capable of out turning any USAF aircraft.

Flight Of The Intruder takes you into the real world of operational flying and mission planning.



FEATURES

Choose between two of the best aircraft that ever flew. The F-4 Phantom is fast, powerful and equipped with highly advanced avionics. It is so flexible that it can perform any type of mission. The A-6 Intruder has the first all weather computer operated weapons guidance system (DIANE) and an outstanding weapons load, both have stood the test of time and are still in service.

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- Realistic terrain taken from contemporary operations maps including Hanoi, Haiphong and Than Hoa.
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Spectrum HoloByte

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ED-PAL enables you to work on several different graphics standards simultaneously – in the panel on the left there's a CGA display with, in the centre, an area showing the same image in VGA

Coktel visions

Coktel Vision are one of the few software houses in Europe who are really going all out for the CD games market. And they've got the tools to do it, as we discovered when we visited them in France

Coktel Vision are not your average Eurosoftco. What on earth does a small company like this think it's doing, making elaborate plans to be a world force in the CD-I market in five years' time? It's only big, bad American multinationals like AIM and Electronic Arts who can afford such techno-strategies, right?

Er...well, perhaps not quite right. When we stepped into Coktel's luxurious offices just outside Paris at Meudon-les-Bois, were led by a welcoming Roland Oskiam into his even more luxurious office, and regaled with stories about the great games future of CD-I, we thought he was having us on. After all, people are talking in terms of £750,000+ development costs on even the simplest CD-I products and here's a man who thinks he can take on the big boys and win. But by the time we left, we were convinced. What's going on?

First, the basic argument. 'CD-I has to be the most important games product for our market,' says Roland, 'Even the Amiga CD-ROM machine isn't that important as far as we are concerned, though the work we do now on CD-ROM is leading us into CD-I. We're already fully acquainted with the development specs of CD-I, so it isn't difficult for us to carry out work on one standard which will later be useful on another.'

But what about money? How can they afford it? 'We produce seven to eight games a year, and although we may not be so well known in Britain, in France, Spain, and Italy we do very well – especially with educational titles. One of our educational games, Ballade au Pays du Big Ben, has sold over 35 thousand copies in France alone. We are investing a lot of money in new technology over the next two to three years. Our real aim is to prepare sophisticated games and educational products for new technology markets.'

'But aren't you two years too early?' we asked. 'Not at all,' responds Roland confidently. 'Did you know that in Italy they are already selling encyclopaedias from door to door?'

'Er, yes,' we replied, 'but they do that in Britain as well, and they've been doing it for about 100 years!'

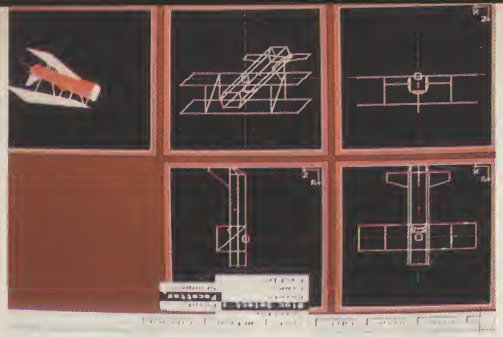
'Yes,' says Roland, 'but these encyclopaedias are on CD-ROM! And they've already sold 12000 of them! People are paying up to £2000 a time for these systems plus the disks – and in the French store General you can get a CD outfit for under £500. Innelec (one of the big French distributors) has already created a special division to sell CD-ROM material. And you think we're too early??'

'Companies like Ocean think they can sit back and wait till there's a CD market and then wade in and sell games. They're mad! What's going to happen is that when there's a market, big boys like Hachette – turnover £500 million – are going to jump in, and jump all over people like Ocean who won't have either the money or the expertise. At least we'll have the expertise, which they'll need and they'll have to pay for!'

By now the ACE Team was beginning to feel a bit sheepish. But we still had one card up our sleeve. 'OK,' we said, 'Come on then. Show us this expertise, Mr Oskiam.'

So he did...

Coktel's offices are in Meudon-les-Bois – about half an hour on the Metro from Central Paris



One of Coktel's in-house animation tools – this one enables complex wire-frame models to be constructed and animated in real time. What's more, there are great memory savings, enabling Coktel to fit more animated images into a program than would be possible using other techniques

Coktel's graphics programming team at work in Meudon. Communication with the other programmers in Bordeaux isn't going to be a problem – French Telecom is about to introduce a system that allows you to whallop 64K a second down the line

THE LOMM BOMB

The big problem with CD storage is also its big advantage – it can hold vast quantities of data. If it currently takes up to three months to create 50 good graphic screens, how long will it take to create over 72000! Many people think the answer is to use existing film footage, but as Roland points out this isn't really much use.

'One hour of film isn't going to give you an interactive experience, let alone a game,' he points out, 'What we need are real-time interactive displays and pre-generated screens for animation.' To deal with this, Coktel have set up two development teams – a graphics section in Paris and a systems programming house in Bordeaux. 'Wherever possible,' says Roland, 'we try to produce our own utilities and we've been very successful at it.'

The most important of these is LOMM, a multimedia management system that provides very powerful facilities for handling graphics and sound as well as interaction. This is backed up by ED-PAL, an ingenious graphics processing tool that allows graphics to be developed simultaneously for different systems.

In addition, there's Sequencer MDO, a very powerful animation package which we saw running the best animated human image we've yet seen for games purposes. There are also two 3D animation tools – DGS, which is used for complex applications requiring pre-calculated pictures and 3D MDO Animator for real-time.

To help with all this, Coktel have an £80K graphics processing computer, Getris, which manipulates images on a staggering 4000*4000 pixel display and handles lightsource shading, surface texture, angle of view, and scaling. This system can calculate complex images and store them on disk, and can therefore be used for building up animation sequences for storage on CD. Just the ticket for those data hungry disks, eh?

CD-I SPACE SIMULATOR

Coktel Vision's European Space Simulator was launched some months ago, but the company are now preparing something quite special – a CD-I version.

Roland Oskiam certainly enjoys his job – but then who wouldn't with all that mega-kit to play around with!

Pity you can't see this move! This animation utility gave us the best ever demo of an animated figure we've ever seen. It runs, jumps, crawls, climbs ladders, picks up objects, climbs ropes, kneels, falls over...and all in minimal RAM space, so you could see all those actions in a game. The game figure, of course, will be fully clothed and the system copes with that as well

Coktel have more than a passing interest in space technology, because Roland Oskiam used to work for MATRA and has close personal associations with the European Space Agency, which has proved a fruitful source of authentic data and creative thinking for Coktel's space game.

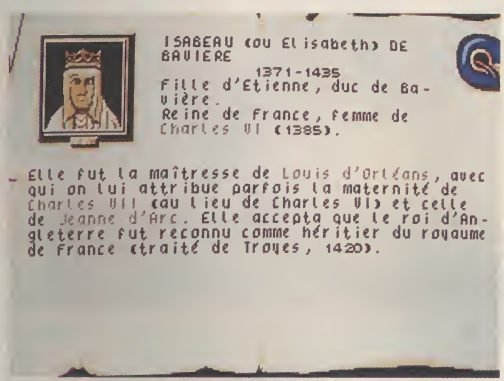
If you've missed ESS, the basic concept is a resources management game in which you build shuttles and space stations, launch them, maintain them, and steadily build up an orbiting fleet of hi-tech assets.

The CD-I version will draw heavily on existing ESA film footage and make particularly good use of authentic sound recordings. It's the perfect example of a project that works reasonably well on computer but takes off – literally – when it comes to CD implementation.

'As far as the CD-I hardware standard is concerned,' says Roland, 'of course it could be better. But no developer is ever happy with hardware standards. However in CD-I we have what we need to create a mass market – and that's what matters. In that market, there are going to be completely different kinds of entertainment, and a product like European Space Simulator can unite Coktel's biggest strength – the combination of gameplay and education.'

We'll be bringing you more information on Coktel's CD-I game development as it progresses. One thing's for certain, with 4000*4000 pixel graphics development, CD quality sampled sound from outer space, and the European Space Agency on tap, it's going to be quite some game!

And just in case you're in any doubt about the graphic power of Getris, this image (taken from the packaging for **Paris Dakar**, *was done using the system. 4000*4000 pixels and virtually unlimited colour potential...*



Some of Coktel's educational projects use a hypertext system – in this one you can get more information by clicking on the red text 'buttons'

This utility really impressed us – the assembly code for the program is in the upper window and the game runs in miniature in the bottom left. You can edit the graphics in any way you like and the assembler automatically edits in the new data, recompiles it, and runs – all in a flash. What a doddle!

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BAT to the Future

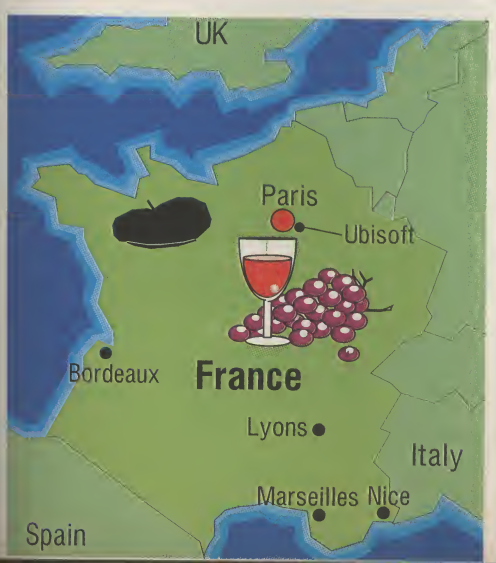
We check out the first games missile that Ubisoft are launching in their bid for world domination...BAT, a 22nd Century ACE exclusive...

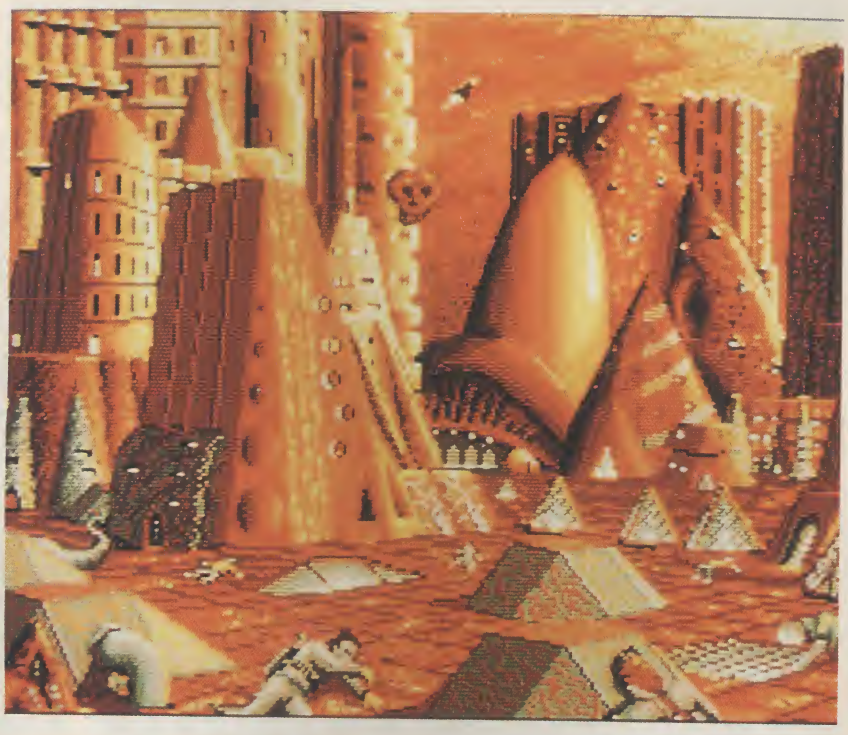
Time was when French software was a pretty mauvais load of old cobblers. But times have changed...

Ubisoft weren't much more than a blip on the games scene here in the UK until recently. A small company on the outskirts of Paris, they recently scored a hit with *Pro-Tennis Tour* and now they've come up with something that looks as if it could be a definitive menu-driven graphics adventure and proof positive that French software is destined to play a major role in the world games market.

Perhaps because of their obsession with comics, ranging from Tintin and Asterix to more obscure offerings, the French have always favoured the graphic adventure genre. This led to problems in gameplay – as far as us Brits are concerned – and many early jeux failed to cross the frontieres due to their excessive reliance on pretty pictures.

Left to right: Philippe Derambure, 26, programmer; Rozenn Leard of Ubisoft; Olivier Robin, 23, music programmer; and Olivier Cordoleani, 23, graphic artist.





A perfect example of this was *Chronoquest*, which Psygnosis once had the misfortune to license from a French development company. This game had superlative graphic screens but when it came down to gameplay it was a nightmare combination of poor mouse control and illogical puzzles. Result: une dinde (or a turkey to you and me).

Things began to pick up, however, with *Captain Blood* from Infogrames – a game that boasted some excellent graphic ingenuities ranging from unusual icons and fractals to animated alien faces – and with the arrival of *BAT* it's finally time for the rest of the world to face up to a fiercely competitive French software bizz.

THE STUFF OF DREAMS

BAT was programmed for Ubisoft by a small development outfit called Computer's Dream, consisting of 15 programmers and other skilled participants. Four members of the group concentrated on the project and we met three of them in Ubisoft's Paris offices (the fourth, Herve Lange, was busy taking exams, poor chap).

We're here! Ubisoft's Rozenn Leard points out the location of the company after the intrepid ACE reporter got hopelessly lost in an uncharted world of little old French ladies with poodles and paniers

Computer's Dream is under contract to Ubisoft and *BAT* is the first of a series of games planned for the company. CD were previously responsible for several very successful French games on the Amstrad CPC's but these were not well-known in the UK. *BAT* looks set to change all that...

The game takes place on the planet of Selenia, populated by humans, robots, and aliens. The plot isn't exactly original (most plots aren't) as you attempt to track down the evil genius Vrangor who is threatening to destroy the planet. To help you, you have a computer implanted in your wrist and a choice of some pretty awesome weaponry. You also have a hologram of a chap called Merigo, who is one of Vrangor's known accomplices.

Gameplay is both original and absorbing. Sprites flit across detailed and attractive backgrounds and as you move the cursor across the screen it changes shape, indicating different possible actions. There are twelve different cursor-icons, ranging from simple move and use options to eating and talking.

Interaction with other characters in the game depends on their type. Apart from being either human, robotic, or alien, they are also either static or dynamic. Static characters simply remain in one place and may, or may not, have something to tell you. Dynamic characters can engage in dialogue. Not everyone speaks English, however, so you may have to resort to your wrist computer for a translation.

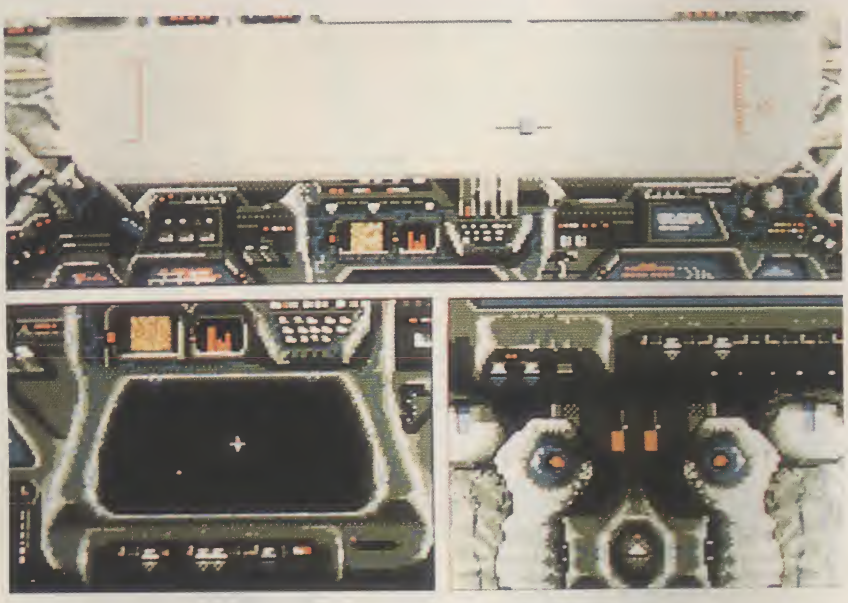
CD (Computer's Dream) on the CD-Amiga:

"A dream..."
Philippe Derambure, programmer

"An expensive dream..."
Olivier Cordoleani, graphics artist

"But a musician's dream, nevertheless..."
Olivier Robin, music programmer

A quick spot of flight simulation to keep you on your toes – complete with solid 3D display. And below right you can see how it looked when it was still on the games designer's drawing board



GAMES WITHIN THE GAME

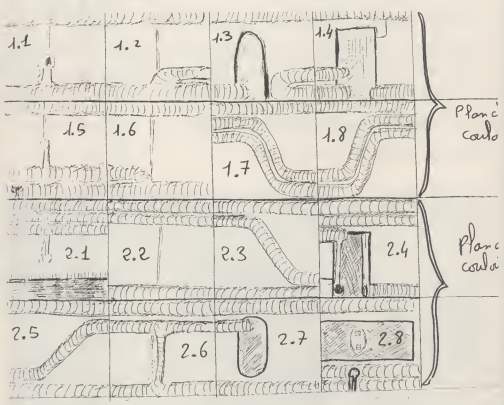
The wrist computer is almost a game in itself. You can program it for several different functions in a simple BASIC-type language. Typical applications are instantaneous translation of various different tongues and the detection of killer robots who may be trailing you.

There's also a flight simulator feature within *BAT* that offers further diversion – you can fly around the planet in your shuttle, enjoying 3D views of other craft and the landscape. And of course there are numerous opportunities for combat, which initially tends to be determined by strength of firepower rather than skill.

Finally – and typically where French games are concerned – *BAT* has RPG and adventure tendencies as well as arcade action. At the beginning of the game, you use a very effective character definition routine to build up your game persona and give it a name. Characters can be saved to disk and are built up from six standard attributes (strength, charisma etc) which in turn affect the characters performance in each of fourteen skill levels (see screenshot).

Interaction is by menu as well as by cursor-icon and there are numerous adventure-style encounters with other characters, objects, and locations. To back up the gameplay, the program comes complete with comprehensive documentation on the planet and the characters involved.

It's obviously too early to guess at what sort of rating *BAT* is going to receive once it arrives on the ACE reviewer's bench, but this early glimpse was very encouraging. One thing's for certain, French software no longer conjures up images of all pretty-pretty piccies and no gameplay. With games like this, us Brits have got a goldmine of entertainment waiting to be opened up just across the Channel.



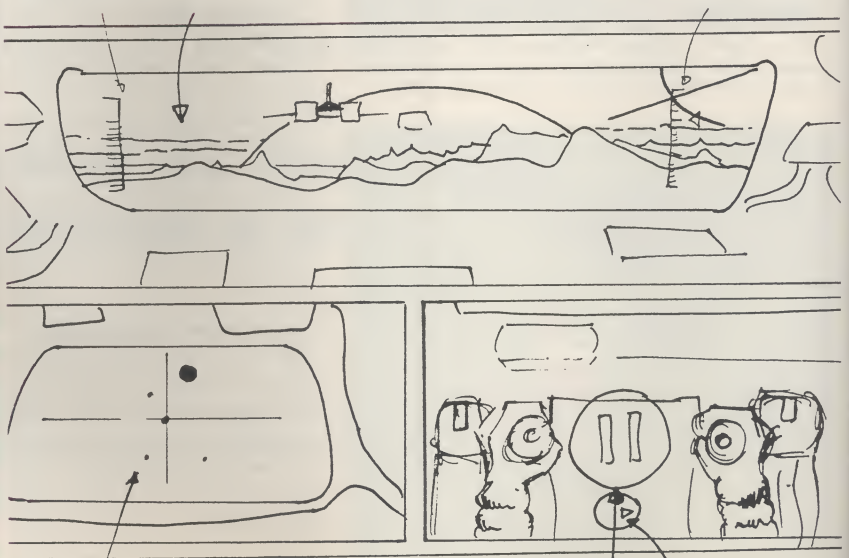
An early sketch of the subterranean part of the BAT map – which features Dungeon Master style graphics as you race down the tunnels in search of the evil Vrangor

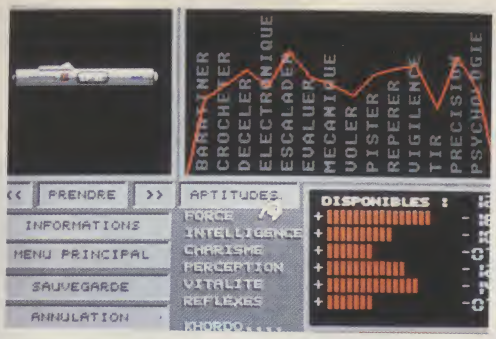
CD GO CD

Computer's Dream are understandably excited by the new CD-Amiga and about CD-I and CD-ROM in general. 'We may convert *BAT* for the CD Amiga,' says Philippe, 'and we're currently working on an entirely new CD (as in compact disk) game called *Xana-Than*.'

Computer's Dream call *Xana-Than* a 'biogame' – 'It will have over 1000 independent characters who will live out their own lives, creating a fully sustained natural and social environment.'

CD technology certainly suits the French style of gaming, offering unlimited storage for the beautiful graphics and extensive text interaction that is so popular in France. Computer's Dream look set to be one of the first into the new technology market with some stunning products.



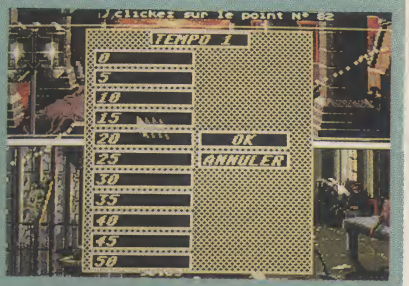


First you have to build your character. Dividing points between the six attributes automatically generates the red line graph at top right, which instantly shows the corresponding skill strengths for each change in attribute balance – clever, eh? Weapons are selected from top right and range from pencil-sized guns to a monster that can demolish whole buildings

A typical early location – lots to see, with the odd sprite flitting about. Moving the cursor over the landscape results in several options – here you can just make out a speech bubble over the character on the left, indicating that he is ready to tell you something

IN-HOUSE POWER

Animax in action – the programmer has simply drawn a line across the display with the cursor – this is the path the sprite will follow...

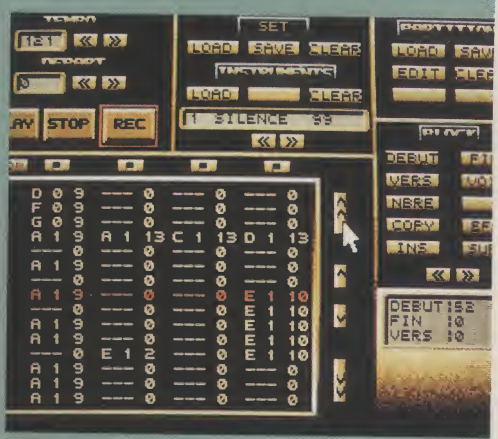


Having selected a sprite, all you have to do now is specify the speed

Computer's Dream have produced some very powerful in-house utilities to help them produce BAT and future titles. Two programs that we particularly liked were Animax and Musical Dream.

Animax is a sprite animation, positioning, and programming utility that enables the programmer to build up animation screens rapidly and effectively, linking them in simultaneously to the main program code.

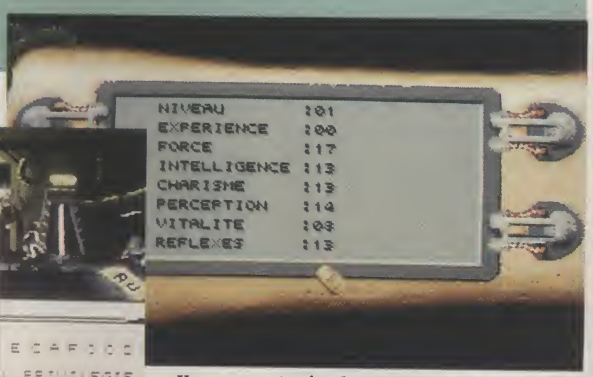
Musical Dream does a similar job with the soundtrack. Olivier Robin's utility is effectively a 16-track MIDI sequencer that takes input from a standard keyboard or other MIDI device and then converts the data into files suitable for inclusion in the main program. It can also handle and edit 8-bit samples.



Music Dream – *16-bit sequencing power with sampling, editing, and data preparation all built-in*

Aha! You've made it to les toilettes! This character has something for you – your mission details and documentation, to be exact

Menu interaction here means exactly that – choose your meal from the menu



Your computer implant can not only warn you of danger – it can also keep tabs on your personal status. Best bit, however, is programming it to spot hostile robots...

You get hungry and thirsty as you move about – vending machines will reward financial input with a selection of exotic feeds

"My favourite English games are **Shadow of The Beast** *from Psygnosis for its use of the Amiga,* **Ring of Zilfin** *for its atmosphere, and* **Populous** *for a great idea."*

Philippe Derambure

Oops! You've run into a spot of bother – one of Vrangor's robots is onto you and your life energy is falling dramatically. Better hit the 'Flee' button at top right...

1

ST FORMAT GOLD

Rainbow Islands
from Ocean

This follow up to Bubble Bobbie looks set to be as much of a hit as Ocean's last cutesy game, New Zealand Story. It combines colourful visuals with frighteningly addictive gameplay, with the result that you end up with one hell of a game.
Graphics have been downloaded from the original arcade version and the moves are just the same. Lead Bub and Bob to the top levels by firing rainbows into the air and then climbing them. When you reach the top of a platform, you can collect thousands of bonus points. There are seven islands to complete, each one more challenging than the last.
"Graftgold's ST Version of Rainbow Islands is one of the best coin-op conversions to have appeared in along time" Maff Evans, ST Format

Rainbow Islands

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Amstrad CPC	Cass	£ 9.99	BF832AC
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Fiendish Freddy's Big Top of Fun
from Mindscape

Mindscape's circus extravaganza brings you thrills, spills and a whole barrel o' laughs. Dive from high-boards, walk tightropes, be fired from cannons, swing on trapezes, throw knifes and juggle in a desperate bid to save the circus from the big bad bank.
An original multi-event game with a wicked sense of humour!

Fiendish Freddy

		PRICE	CODE
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Black Tiger
from U S Gold

US Gold have had major hits with Strider and Ghouls 'n' Ghosts. Now comes their latest horizontally-scrolling action game, Black Tiger.
In a similar fashion to Ghouls, the objective is to charge through horizontally-scrolling levels, climbing ladders and following red arrows to the end of the level. Along the way, fight ugly gargoyles, snakes and even deadly orchids using your powerful weaponry. When the going gets tough, disappear inside the shop, pick up some extra weapons, and go out for another merry blast.
If you're a fan of horizontally-scrolling action games, you'll love this one.

Black Tiger

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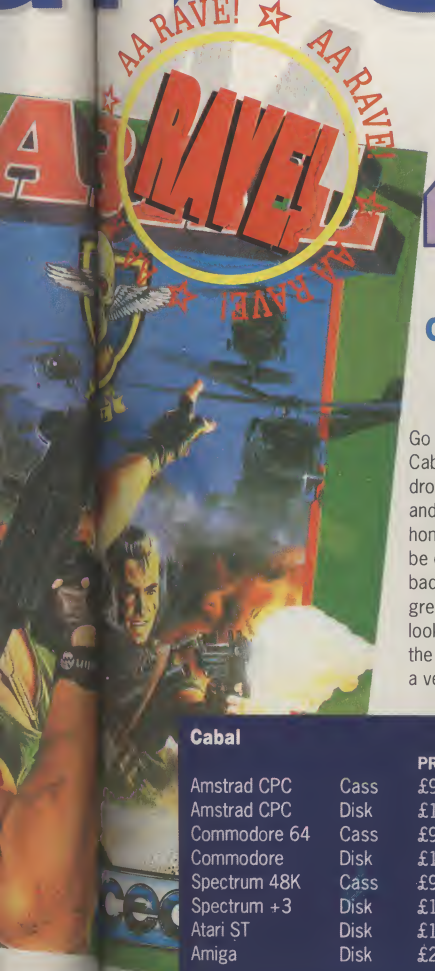

4

Cabal from Ocean

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Cabal

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Just the job for Treasure Trap fans – the new Nautilus underwater exploration vehicle

Atlas supporting the world – Science City is full of mini-exhibits like this, featuring videos, touch screens, and even data terminals for you to access

WIN a trip to the future

Electronic Zoo are offering you the chance to win a fabulous trip to Paris' Science City

Electronic Zoo are one of the newest games software houses around. They've got a sister company in Baltimore USA and they're determined to take the games market by storm. They're also determined to take an ACE reader (and his/her companion) to Paris and give them the time of their lives...

So where will you be going? And how?

The lucky winner will fly from Gatwick to Paris' Charles De Gaulle Airport and stay at a hotel in the centre of the town overnight on a Friday (the dates will be picked in cosultation with the winner, so you can be sure it'll be convenient). On Saturday, after a hearty French breakfast of bread and water (OK, maybe something a teensy bit more interesting: bread and Perrier, perhaps) you'll be hustled off to Paris' Science City at Le Parc de la Villette.

Saturday evening you'll enjoy a sumptuous meal at one of Paris' top restaurants with Zoo staff and a representative of the ACE Team and on Sunday (after more bread and water – you probably won't want anything else after Saturday night) you're free to wander around as you please – except at lunchtime, when Zoo will positively insist that you eat yourself silly.

The flight back to Gatwick leaves on Sunday evening, giving you time to get tucked up in bed ready to tell your mates on Monday morning. And all these arrangements are flexible so if you live in the Orkneys we'll see what we can do for you.

YOU CAN READ MORE ABOUT SCIENCE CITY ON PAGE 79.

WHAT'S IN THE ZOO?

Electronic Zoo haven't been idle since they set up in business just under a year ago. They're a licensed Nintendo developer, authorised Sega developer, and are also developing for the Atari Lynx. All work is done by in-house development teams, who are also working towards Zoo's first Arcade machine which they hope will be released by the end of this year.

First game out of the cage is *Treasure Trap* (reviewed in this issue) which resurrects the isometric 3D standard with a wealth of playability and graphic detail. There are over 100 rooms to explore in an underwater environment, together with lots of unusual puzzles and novel graphic effects.

On the horizon (or out in space) is *Xiphos,* a solid-3D space scenario which Zoo reckons beats all previous comers in terms of gameplay. You can visit space stations, chat to aliens, meet exotic creatures, and kill them. Although we haven't seen a copy yet, Zoo claim the game is '...super fast, with complex objects and surface detail'. They also say it has 'billions of polygons' but we think this may be just a wee bit of an exaggeration. It does, however, look very interesting indeed and we might be able to grab a couple of free copies off them for the winner if you're really lucky.

Zoo also have three other state-of-the-art games under development for release in 1990, including a new helicopter simulation for Christmas. Watch out for them...

Inside Science City – you can get an idea about the scale of the building from the figures at the bottom left

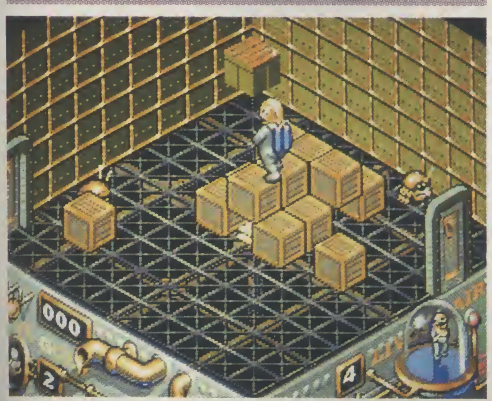
WHAT YOU HAVE TO DO...

It couldn't be easier. All you have to do is use your infinite skill and judgement to answer the three questions elsewhere on this page. Jot your answers on a postcard, together with your name, address, age (we need this because of regulations concerning international travel), and the computer you own. Just to give us some feedback, you can also tell us which sections in this issue of ACE you (a) like the most and (b) like the least. Finally, make sure you include a daytime phone number if at all possible, so we can tinkle your bell to let you know when you're off to Paris.

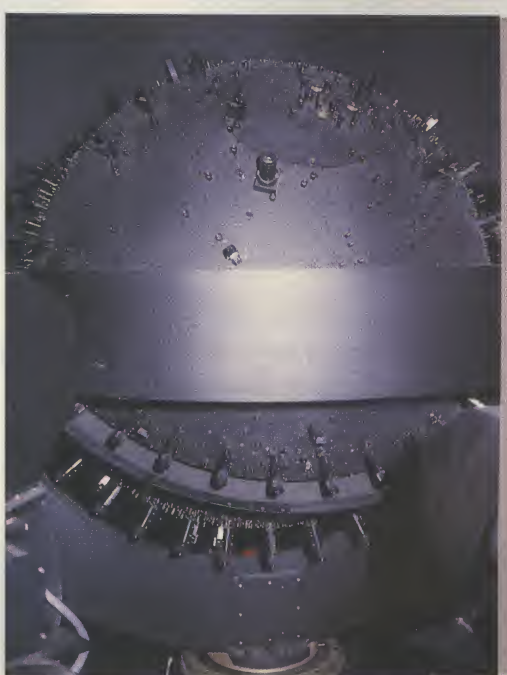
Then post off the card to: Zoo Competition, ACE Magazine, EMAP Images, Priory Court, 30-32 Farringdon Lane, London, EC1R 3AU. The closing date for entries is 7th June 1990. The winner will be the first correct qualifying entry drawn from the hat – and no arguments, please, parce que the judges' decision is final. The result will be announced in the August issue of ACE (on the news stands from the 5th July).

The escalators leading to Explora – the principal permanent exhibition

The main hall in Science City – the exibitions are mostly on the first floor, overlooking the arena



Treasure Trap – underwater bubbly fun, reviewed in this issue on page 52



THE QUESTIONS

1. What's Electronic Zoo's underwater isometric 3D adventure called?
2. Where is Paris' Science City located?
3. Is the photograph (left) of
   (a) an alien in Xiphos
   (b) the editor of ACE
   (c) the projector in the planetarium at Science City

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MULTIMEDIA city

An Ariane project space module – just one of the larger exhibits

A visitor using a touch screen computer to interrogate one of the City's many information retrieval systems

While ACE was checking out Ubisoft and Coktel Vision in Paris, we discovered somewhere rather special. Here's what we found...

Every year over four million people visit Le Parc De La Villette, an astonishing location in the North West of Paris that cost over half a billion pounds to construct and is run by a staff of over 900 people.

The City of Science and Industry, to give it its full title, is both an educational multimedia centre and a true 'city' with activities, facilities, and services. Its exhibits span the distant past and the far future, and many of them are highly interactive. As a showcase for technology it must be one of the most impressive 'living museums' in the world.

When you arrive, you buy a ticket to the permanent exhibitions (which come under the generic name of Explora) and you are then free to wander throughout the displays, which cover the physical universe (the oceans, rocks, volcanoes, space and so on), natural sciences (environment, agriculture, mankind), communication, and material physics (matter and energy).

Almost every exhibit is supported by video displays, and there are even touch screen computer systems at various points throughout the City where you can interact personally with the systems and gather more information. Naturally all the written and spoken information is in French, but you can rent a headset at the entrance that will give you an English guided tour.

Visitors using Minitel, the computer terminal system devised by French Telecom and now installed in millions of homes. Log on, and you're into a world of micro-communications that can open up opportunities ranging from home shopping and directory enquiries to dubious physical encounters with the opposite sex

FAT CITY

Make no mistake, this place is BIG. Once you get through the doors, the first thing that strikes you is the scale of the place. The architecture is ultra-modern, with vast steel tunnels and pipes rearing up through the halls. Vast exhibits are everywhere – from space stations to submarines (two, actually, when we visited).

Special exhibitions are changed regularly and take place in closed off areas, some of which are pretty impressive in their own right. There's a planetarium, for example, and a vast geodesic dome called the Geode which houses special presentations and performances.

You can eat there as well, of course, in a small cafe high up overlooking the top of a satellite. And you can check out some more natural exhibits if you want by wandering along the 'Green Bridge' – an enclosed tunnel of glass full of mist sprays and exotic plants that runs across the City main hall, high in the air.

Other regular exhibits include:

- The World of Sound: here you can play memory and perception tricks in the 'Sound Bubble' – a huge carbon dioxide bubble that illustrates sound refraction and propagation;
- The Images Exhibit, where you can check out thermography, infrared cameras and other hi-tech video applications;
- Robots – we were particularly impressed by one that was over 20 feet high!
- Computers, including a flight simulator and robots programmed using artificial intelligence techniques.

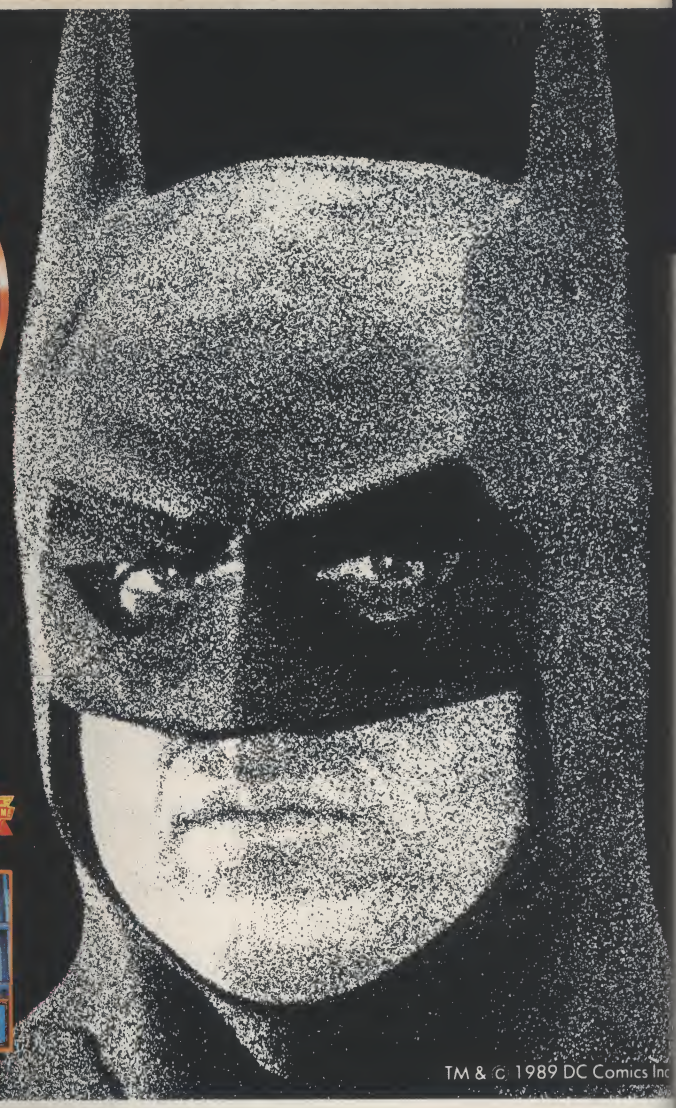
France probably seems like a long way to go for a museum visit (unless you win our competition on page 76, of course) but if ever you do find yourself in Paris we reckon anyone who's keen on future technology would really miss out if they didn't include it in their itinerary.

The Geode is a multimedia theatre, designed by architect Adrien Fainsilber. 118 feet wide, it seats 370 people and has a 10760 square foot hemispherical screen made of thin perforated aluminium sheets. Twelve large speakers behind the screen spatialise the sound and heighten landscape effects and the images' psychological impact. If you could plug a joystick into this one, it would have to be the ultimate games machine!

HOW TO GET THERE:

Take the Metro to Porte de la Villette. The city is open Tuesday to Sunday, 10am to 6pm, and the admission fee varies between 23 francs for a reduced rate general pass to 200 francs for a complete pass to all exhibits. Telephone 46 42 13 13

BATMAN™



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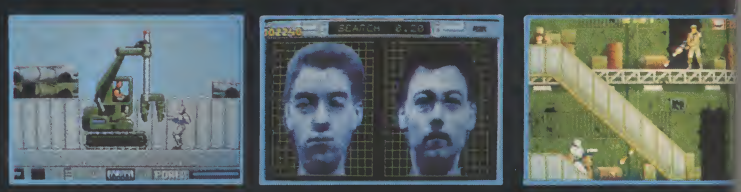

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ACE NEW WORLDS

US GOLD/LUCASFILM'S LONG-AWAITED BLOCKBUSTER REVIEWED

LOOM

Here it is at last. A game produced by a former programmer/designer of Infocom, responsible for some of their greatest games (including the infamous *Beyond Zork*), and published by Lucasfilm – the company who gave you *ZakMcKracken* and *Indiana Jones – The Graphic Adventure*.

With a pedigree like that, you'd be expecting something pretty special. And in some ways, *Loom* **is** special. Let's tot up the score for and against...

THE GOOD NEWS

Brian Moriarty and Lucasfilm have taken the typical Sierra animated adventure style and tried to give it a new dimension of quality and gameplay. First, they've done away with all textual input and created a game where the screen display can concentrate on the action. The only other on-screen activity is the occasional icon at the bottom, identifying whatever item of interest the cursor is adjacent to, and a musical scale that is used for spinning drafts – or casting spells in oldspeak.

Hetchel's hut – she's looked after you for years, and now she's a bird! Maybe she left something useful lying around. This is where you find your first drafts and can get spinning a few spells

This spinning draft business highlights another good aspect of *Loom* – the storyline. Although the cutesy names of some of the characters (Bobbin Threadbare, would you believe?) are enough to make you puke and the dialogue is occasionally drenched in self-conscious humour, Moriarty has succeeded in creating a powerful background story for his game by the simple expedient of putting it all on an audio

HIGH SIERRA?

Most ACE readers will know that Sierra On-Line, producers of the *Kings Quest*, *Police Quest*, and *Leisure Suit Larry* games, have had enormous success with their combination of animated graphics and text entry. The basic Sierra recipe is a limited text input system combined with superlative pics and lots of places to visit.

It's pretty obvious that *Loom's* design has been influenced by the Sierra titles, and equally obvious that Brian Moriarty and the Lucasfilm team have tried to go one better. Have they succeeded? Here's the checklist...

- The *Loom* graphics are just as good as the best Sierra pics – and sometimes better. The display also works differently, scrolling new areas into view when you approach the edge of the display rather than dissolving and then loading in the new picture. This speeds up gameplay slightly, especially if you use the scroll bypass key which flicks the new image into position.
- Sierra games are often (rightly) criticised for being rather slow, especially if there's a lot happening on-screen. The same is true of *Loom* but not to such a great extent. There's no command to speed up the display as there is in a Sierra game, but you don't often feel the need for it.
- Both gamestyles feature 'cut scenes' – animated interludes which add to the story but, seen once, lose their appeal. *Loom* has more of these than most Sierra games, but they tend to be shorter and you can bypass them with a press of the Escape key.
- Both gamestyles feature labelled SAVEs and LOADs.
- Sound is of a similar standard if you have an add-on board, with *Loom* a bit ahead – and a lot further ahead if you've got an unexpanded machine.

Anyone who's played Sierra games will find several points of almost uncanny resemblance between *Loom* and its more established competitors. In both *Loom* and *King's Quest IV*, for example, there's a sequence where you fall off the end of a jetty and swim to the shore – the animation of the swimming is almost identical. Convergent evolution? Or flattery through imitation?

Loom handles location graphics very well. Sierra games tend to present uniform scale locations – you see the character from close-up in his/her surroundings. Loom is more movie-like in that the graphics designers have put greater variety into the way locations are displayed on-screen. In the shot above, you're walking down the mountainside and suddenly the display style switches as you approach a more interesting and detailed location. Also, in locations where you can walk into the distance, your figure is scaled appropriately, unlike in the Sierra games where the animated character disconcertingly remains the same size as you move away from the player

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LANDSCAPE 92
Superb graphic locations would take this game closer to 100% if there were more of them. Clever use of perspective as your figure walks into the distance.

ENCOUNTERS.....70
Not a lot to do when you meet people, except listen to what they have to say – and the music they make.

CHALLENGE.....79
Almost too easy for the experts, but not too hard for the novice. However it's a pity there isn't more variety of challenge. Persistence plays a greater part than inspiration here.

SYSTEM 90
Almost superb, but in the end the simplicity of the interface forces a certain repetitiveness onto the action

ACE RATING 845

Loom **is almost an outright winner – but it's a tad too easy and there's a lack of variety in the gameplay that isn't compensated for by the power of the narrative.**

One big difference between Loom and the Sierra titles is the way you can move around on-screen. Most Sierra games feature several entry/exit points for each location, whereas Loom locations tend to be more limited. In many of them you can move only across the screen and not up and down. This can sometimes be confusing, especially in Crystalgard where the glass buildings present all sorts of levels, many of which take a lot of lateral thinking to access. Of course, you could say that this was part of the puzzle process, but sometimes it appears to degenerate into illogicality. In this screen, for example, you can't enter the hut at top right, but can only move left and right...

...and here you might think you could walk round to that crystal sphere – but you'd be wrong

tape.

The tape itself is pretty impressive. As Moriarty pointed out in our US issue earlier this year, 'This is not a rinky-dink production,' and with the might of Lucasfilm's production expertise behind him that's not surprising. It makes good listening and puts most other software audios to shame. It also sets up the story...

It's a tribute to the tape and the game design that although you can start playing *Loom* almost straightaway and know what you're doing, there's no way I can summarise the complexity of the story here. Suffice it to say that things are going rotten. Young Bobbin must put all to rights by gallivanting round the world collecting sequences of four notes (drafts) which he can then use to solve puzzles by 'spinning' (casting) them on suitable objects and people.

The presentation of the story throughout the game is as faultless as the tape – beautiful to look at and beautiful to listen to (if you have a soundboard, that is – but even the standard PC beeping is better than average).

THE BAD NEWS

The drawbacks come from the gameplay. The interface is so simple that exploring a location involves little more than moving the pointer slowly around the display, waiting for icons to flash up below. When they do, you're on to something. Double clicking on it will then take Bobbin up close enough to it for (a) its name to appear below the icon and (b) to spin drafts upon it if required.

And that's about it. The thinking part comes with noting down any discovered drafts and trying to work out what they do and where/how they should be used. Combine this with the fact that some of the puzzles are really extraordinarily easy and you lose out both on challenge and variety.

The *Loom* recipe is frustrating because it's almost perfect. The combination of audio tape, superb animation, sound, and storyline is potentially very powerful when it comes to narrative games. What's needed, however, is a mite more interaction with the environment and the people in it. That doesn't need a text parser, but imagine what this system would be like with a couple command icons and the ability to swap control/viewpoint between, say, three different characters. Then you've got something *really* special. As it is, we're left with a game that's great for younger players but will leave the rest of us craving a little more zap.

There are several people to meet in Loom, but interaction with them is fairly limited. In this case, however, the arrival of these shepherds was accompanied by the playing of a new draft – for invisibility. Should be useful, that. Loom handles different speakers by printing their dialogue in different colours – a neat touch when there are several on-screen at once. However, it would have been nice to have seen a few people wandering about and an icon command or two to engage them in conversation. As it is, the characters are diminished in stature through lack of interaction

MASTERING THE THREADS

You don't cast spells in *Loom* – you spin drafts. A draft is a sequence of four notes or threads. Each note is played using your Distaff (found at the beginning of the game – unless you're totally incapable), which is represented at the bottom of the screen together with a musical stave below it.

Spinning drafts is really exactly the same as mixing spells, except that it all happens musically. So instead of mixing wolfsbane, pig's trotter, dentist's dandruff, and tongue of Wogan, you play – for example – C,D,A,B. If you're standing next to an object (indicated by the appearance of its icon AND its name at the bottom of the screen) this draft may have an effect.

There are catches. First, as you can see from the screenshots, not all the notes on the musical stave are illuminated. Just as with traditional spell-casting, the more experience you have the more notes you can play – and thus the more drafts you can spin. And drafts may not always have quite the effect you intended, although as a general rule the program tends not to let you spin a draft if it isn't appropriate.

REVERSE DRAFTS

Drafts are found rather like spells in other games – by exploring. Certain objects and people in *Loom* will cause a sequence of notes to be played when they appear or when you click upon them. However, there are drafts that cannot be found this way – they're called 'reverse drafts'. This is because *Loom* lets you cast spells – oops, spin drafts – backwards. This is simply done by playing the notes in reverse order. Of course this won't work with drafts which are palindromic (i.e. they are the same backwards as forwards – e.g. DCCD). You do, however, need to cast several reverse drafts during the game and you won't find a reverse draft – you just have to work them out by referring to the ones you have found. It's not difficult – if you find a draft for dyeing things green, chances are that it will bleach them white if you reverse it...

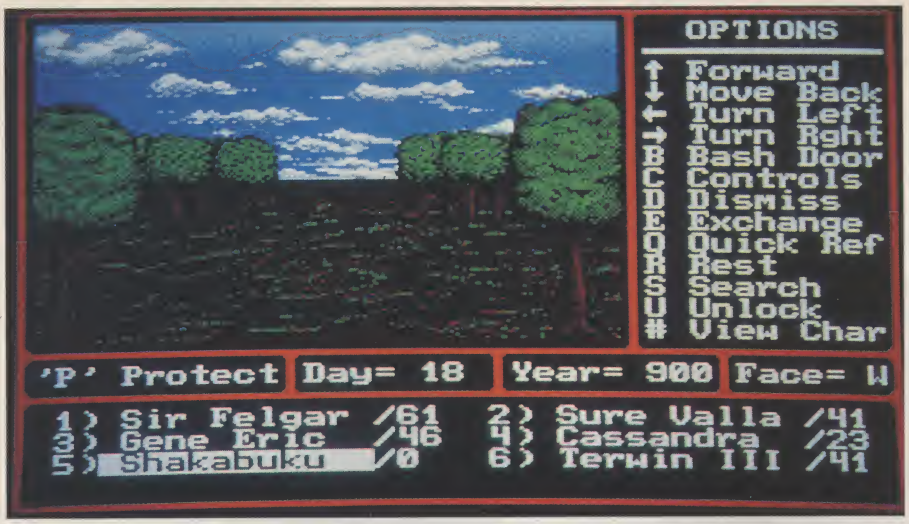
Here's the perfect example of a reverse draft. This spout prevents you from crossing the sea. It emits a draft when clicked upon – could that be a twisting draft, we ask ourselves. And if it is, could a reversed twisting draft be the solution to our problems?

PRACTISE MAKES PERFECT

Finally, experience is all in this game. Although there are several occasions in the game where you don't really need to cast a draft to solve a puzzle, the more you cast, the better you get – i.e. the more notes will be made available to you on your distaff.

Practise spinning drafts whenever possible, even if there's no apparent point in doing so. It could raise your experience level and give you an extra note on the distaff

You can spin a draft on anything that comes up in the icon panel – and it's not always an object. Here you're about to lighten the darkness with a little number you should have heard in a nearby location



Outside locations in M&M2 are initially attractive, but after a while the pretty blue skies begin to pall. As you can see, there isn't a lot here to look at – but at least there's a lot to fight...and fight...and fight

MIGHT AND MAGIC II

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It's here at last. ACE readers with very long memories may remember that – very many moons ago – we promised a review of M&M2, which looked set (at the time) to be one of the more interesting RPG products around. Now it's here...and how times have changed!

The fact is that had this game been released two years ago, it would have been a winner. But by today's standards it looks appallingly outdated. Us ACE reviewers, however, are not put off by outward appearance, so we gritted our teeth and got down to some serious monster bashing.

M&M2 follows the old recipe made famous in *The Bards Tale* series from Interplay. You create a party of characters, assigning to each one a set of attributes that will see them (you hope) through thick and thin. In the old days, you 'rolled dice' and the computer assigned random numbers for each attribute. Nowadays, programs either use more subtle means of determining character attributes (you have to answer soul-searching questions in *Ultima*, for example) or more sophisticated ways of displaying them (see Ubisoft's *BAT* and its attribute display in this issue).

M&M2, however, sticks to its guns and gives us seven attributes and a 'roll of the dice' (literally – there's an attractive animated dice sequence) to fix them. The attraction of this method is that, every so often, you 'roll' a more powerful character.

In addition to your attributes, you have to choose between eight classes (i.e. professions) for your characters. These range from Knights to Ninjas and include two types of magic user – clerics and sorcerors. This means two lots of spells to master, with the clerical spells being traditionally more associated with healing. In each case there are nine levels of spells, with up to seven spells in a level. Magic users have a certain capacity for spell-casting and each spell drains their resources. In addition, certain spells require the magic user to dispense a gem or two.

Once you've fixed the class of your character, you have to choose one of five races (gnomes, humans etc) and your alignment (good, neutral, or evil). You can also import characters from *M&M1*, but note that these will reset to levels 6 or 7, depending on circumstances.

As always, your character attributes determine many things during play, ranging from choice of spells to success in combat and the ability to use certain weapons. However, because characters in M&M do not speak, there is a limited extent to which you can identify with them (except by force of long association) when compared, for example, to *Ultima VI* where attributes are less important but the party members still radiate personality.

LANDSCAPE 55
Repetitive graphics make traversing the vast map a bit of a drag. Continuous mapping is essential.
ENCOUNTERS.....45
Conversation is strictly limited and one way only. Characters are static and often serve only to offer what are really gameplay options (e.g. buy, sell)
CHALLENGE 89
If this is your bag, it's a big one.
SYSTEM 45
We need more than this in a 1990 RPG. *M&M2* may be playable, but the presentation and user interface is ridiculously archaic for an Amiga product.

ACE RATING
650

If it wasn't for the size of the game, M&M2 would score considerably lower. Hypnotic addiction, but no technical wizardry here. Definitely not state-of-the-art...

MONSTER MAZE

So far, so familiar. Once you start playing, however, things get even more familiar and it's here that disappointment sets in. There's no doubt that *M&M2* is a BIG game – there are dozens of places to visit and encounters all along the way. But the actual places look as if they had been dragged out of a 1984 version of *3D Monster Maze* and given a superficial tarting up with 1990 Amiga graphics.

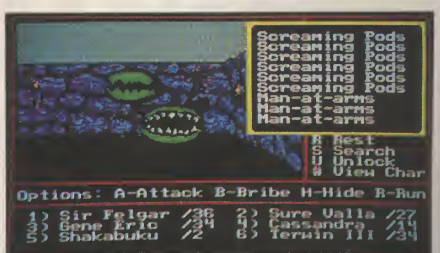
Interiors are simply bare walls with occasional animated figures appearing (with much accompanying disk access) bearing brief messages. Buildings are connected by endless scrolling corridors which look all the same. Even the outdoor locations, with hills, lakes, and trees, are endlessly repetitive.

There is occasional variety as signposts flash up bearing 'Danger! Rock Falls!' and similarly scintillating snippets. Encounters are signalled by a sudden flash of the word...'Encounter!'...followed by a busy buzzing of the disk drive and then...an animated figure showing the opposition. Only thing is, most of the opposition tends to look familiar and there's not much difference between the evil gent down the mine and the poltergeist you encountered a few locations before.

Because of the enormous lack of graphic detail, mapping is essential. Solid walls, entrances to caverns, and city gateways all look identical apart from a brief text message so a good map is vital. So is a consuming passion for combat and gaining experience points as there really isn't a lot else to do, apart from fulfilling sub-quests set you by various characters you encounter.

These games do have a certain hypnotic addictiveness – witness the success of the *Bards Tale* series. But most other modern programs have retained the addictive qualities and added many other features. *UVI*, for example, has enormously improved graphics and character interaction. The *Heroes of the Lance* games have capitalised on licensed plots and added story interest. And *Bards Tale IV*...well, there isn't going to be a *BTIV*, probably for the same reasons that make *M&M2* look just a bit too archaic for today's RPG enthusiast. This is vintage stuff and lots of it – but the emphasis is on the word 'vintage'.

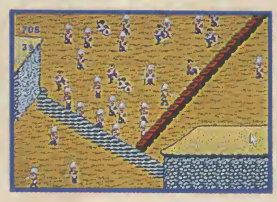
● Steve Cooke



Combat routines in M&M2 are pretty old-fashioned. Here you're confronted by hideous screaming pods and your options are to fight, bribe, attack, or run. Not exactly state-of-the-art...

Stand fast
Hold your ground
Mark your man

RORKE'S DRIFT



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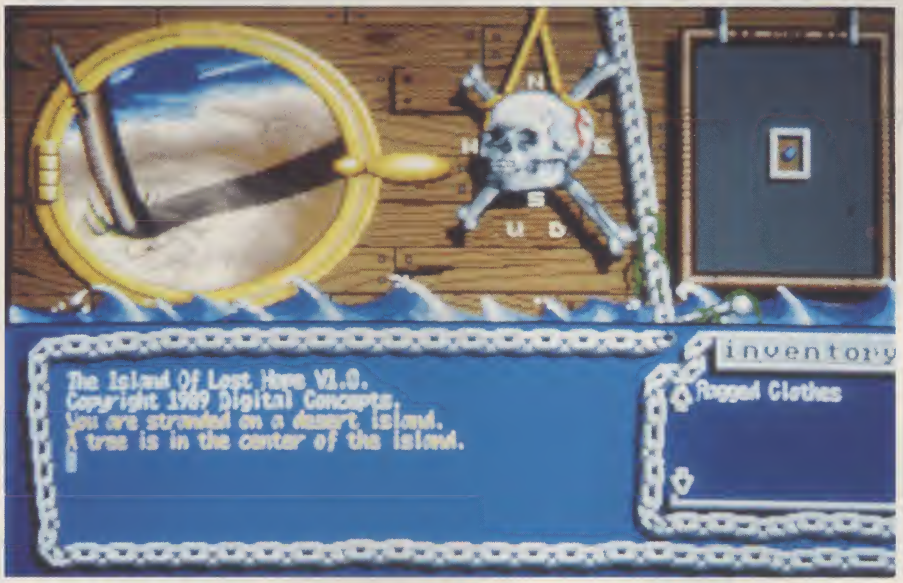

Desert Island fantasy in glorious Amiga technicolour. If only the old, classic games had had this technology from the strart

ISLAND OF LOST HOPE

RELEASE BOX

Details TBA – see next month's issue

Last month I looked at a game which forgot to include gameplay behind a pretty front end so I was pleased to see *IOLH* coming up with the goods. The art of adventuring is not dead!

In this text/graphlc adventure you play the part of a treasure hunter whose ship has been sunk by a bunch of cut-throats. Your crew have been killed, your cargo stolen, and you yourself thrown overboard. Washed ashore on a desert island from which you can see the pirate ship anchored nearby your thoughts now are on survival and revenge.

The first impression of the game is of a well crafted and beautifully polished product. The screen display is split into several sections, location graphics, movement compass, on-screen inventory, response area and even an on-screen map.

Input can be keyboard only, but several short cuts are available using the mouse. Thus clicking on the required direction on the movement compass will move you around, while clicking on an item in your inventory will bring up that object's description.

Several macros are available from the function keys and these can be redefined at will – very useful for complex commands such as opening and shutting doors with the correct key. Another nice touch is the option of using the numeric keypad for movement (without needing to press ENTER after each one).

As if that weren't enough the graphics can be turned on or off at will which is very useful since these are grabbed from disc during play. Two fonts are available, one fancy and atmospheric but probably unreadable on a TV and one plain and clear.

The on-screen map is very useful, showing only those locations you have visited. Using this it is easy to dispense with the graphics (although they can give useful clues so should be viewed at least once).

With all this, what about the game itself? First of all – it's not easy! Unlike most adventures, each of the puzzles seems to need a different method to solve and although rather precise language is sometimes needed, the vocabulary involved is obvious once you realise what needs to be done.

Once you manage to trick your way onto the ship you meet up with various crew members who need to be disposed of discreetly to obtain objects. These include a hungry pirate demanding to be fed, a sleepyhead who wakes at the slightest touch of his pillow and Captain Black himself who communicates through his dead parrot and totally ignores you.

At all times you need to be aware of your disguise. If you blow your cover you are dead! In other words, you must weigh your proposed actions carefully to avoid attracting attention – not as easy as it sounds since pretty drastic action is required to solve some of the puzzles.

Scattered around the playing area are a host of objects, some of which have very obvious uses (such as a piece of string, a nail and a fish) while others are rather more obscure (a human bone!). Some of these are found lying around while others must be searched for inside, underneath and behind other objects. Careful examination of everything is a must.

The parser handles most inputs well and will prompt for more information or offer choices if your command is ambiguous. It will also readily tell you if it doesn't understand your use of a word or simply doesen't know it. Multiple commands can be strung together, limited only by the total input length and various editing keys are available for recalling the last command etc.

All in all the game offers a good challenge for seasoned players but novices will probably find it rather hard going. The graphics (and sound) enhance the atmosphere rather than detracting from the gameplay and many responses are provided to cover outlandish ideas.

● **Pat Winstanley**

LANDSCAPE 85
The playing area isn't very large but each location offers plenty of things to try.
ENCOUNTERS.....65
Conversation is limited but characters respond realistically to your actions.
CHALLENGE 80
Get your thinking caps on for this one - the puzzles are varied and tough.
SYSTEM 80
Synonyms are severely restricted leaving you scrabbling for words at times eg. "shut" - no, "close" - yes.

ACE RATING
775

A well balanced, well crafted offering to leave experienced solvers scratching their heads – recommended.

DRAKKHEN – GETTING STARTED

To avoid being eaten by sharks, wait until one has just emerged from the drawbridge then click on the door with your closest character.

To enter the minaret click on the extreme right edge of the door. Otherwise you will be guillotined.

To enter Prince Haaggkhen's castle, cast unlock at the door - then you won't be eaten by the drawbridge!

Princess Hordtkha's castle can only be entered after talking to Prince Hordtkhen.

The weapon shop is in the northeast corner of the island.

CTW Survey '89 CTW Survey

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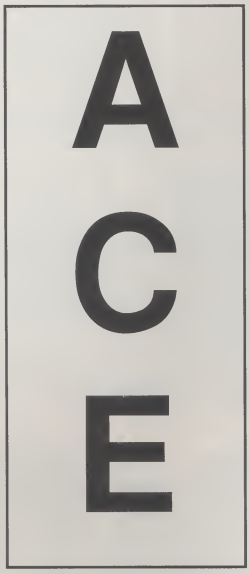

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PREVIOUS APPLICANTS ARE WELCOME TO RE-APPLY

SPIRITED DRAGONS

Dragon Spirit on the **Amiga** drove me up the wall, says **Christopher Pitt** of **South London**. Even reaching the first end-of-level guardian was difficult until I worked out some tactics. Small as they are they made a great difference to my game.

The key to level 1 is to keep calm and hold the trigger down – remember, everything on the screen is out to get you! All of the nasties have their weaknesses. You know the ones that trundle along the ground and then fly at you, closely resembling a sugar squirrel? Yes? Well, to avoid them simply go to the top of the screen and stay put.

Dragon Spirit *on the Amiga*

The end-of-level guardian on level 1 is almost invincible and it is pointless to attack it without a power-up. Often I completely forgot to avoid the balls of fire. Watch out that you don't pick up a power loss. If you manage to get to the creatures that zoom through the water and then fire at you, go to the right of the bottom of the screen, and when they fire move sharply left. Good luck!

MONEY FOR NOTHING

Paul Greig Smith of **Basingstoke, Hants**. has discovered a little effort saving device for the **PC** version of *Blood Money*. On the configuration screen select a two-player game with exactly the same control option for both players. When you are on level 1 or 2 move back to the far left so that player 2 is over player 1. Now, when you press fire, 1 missile is fired but it is twice as powerful, so the Stalkers on level 1 only need 2 hits instead of 4, and the same for every other adversary (everything needs half the normal amount of bullets).

The ST Version of Blood Money

A FIGHTING CHANCE

Here's a nice cheat for *Fighting Soccer* on the **Amiga** from **Steven Roberts, Ware, Herts**.

All you have to do is shoot at the right or left post and a goal will be counted. If you find this difficult as a one player game then shoot diagonally at the goal. For a two player game shoot straight forward.

TIPS

Hello *ACE* gamers. Recently *TNT* has brought you the very best in complete solutions, from *Dungeon Master* to *Y's* on the Sega. This month we have decided to let you in on as many hints, tips, and cheats as we could pack into these pages. So plug in your machine, sit back, relax, and enjoy...

XX FEATURE

Two hot tips for Rainbow Arts superb shoot 'em up *X-Out*, on the Amiga.

First, a method for obtaining unlimited cash from Myles Lockwood, Brixton, Plymouth.

LOAD the game as usual, and choose any one of the four space ships. CLICK the ship as usual onto the Blue Print Screen, and then choose the Invincible ICON. In case you haven't worked out what that is – it is below the laser canon, or to the right hand side of the Orange spiked ball known as the Drone.

Now drag the Invincible ICON up to your ship, and click it on and off the ship. Your money has now increased to £500. Drag the Invincible ICON to the Alien Trash Can, and Trash it. Carry on doing the same procedure over and over again, until your heart's content.

If you want to speed things up a little, choose the most expensive craft you can buy and then choose the Satellite, drag it over to your cash amount, just above the Trash Can's Head, and click once. Your money should have increased by £500,000, and to increase that, carry on using the Invincible ICON procedure.

A typical end-of-level nasty from X-Out

You can now cram your ship with everything it can hold. (Try choosing the most expensive craft; it can hold more).

HAPPY SHOOTING!

Martyn Colclough and Daz, citizens of Newcastle, have discovered this useful hint, again for raising the readies quickly.

When the weapon selection screen appears at the start of the game, select the cheapest ship, then select the cheapest single shot, but instead of putting it on the ship, put it over the face of the shopkeeper and press the fire button. Now you have 500,000 credits to buy weapons.

WHAT'S SAUCE FOR THE GOOSE...

A.D.Hawley from Steyning, West Sussex tells us that to obtain infinite shields on *Star Goose* on the Atari ST you should press keys F1 - F8, but don't go too fast out of the tunnels, or you will crash.

FURTHER FRENCH FEATURES

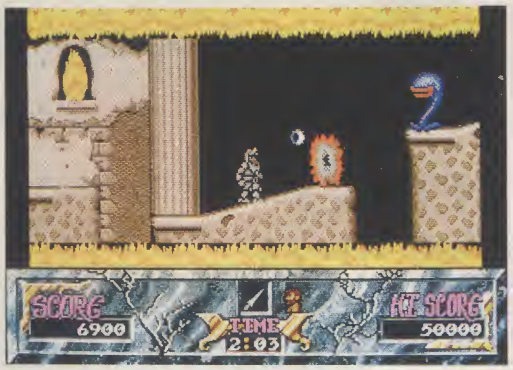
A little clever work with a disk editor on the second disk for *Drakkhen* on the **Atari ST** threw light on this cheat. During the character set-up stage, when the first person's name is asked for, type in:

31415927 <Return>
SUPERVISOR <Return>

This gives you extra points and attributes. Other undocumented features are:

F8 toggle between 50/60 Hertz
F9 shows the game, room number, and something else (in French!)
F10 can be held down to pause the game until released, or another key pressed.

Thanks to **Nathan Kirkham** of **Northwich, Cheshire** for those little gems.



Ghouls 'n' Ghosts: *a thoroughly spooky affair*

LOTSA LIFESAVERS

This little batch of tips come from **Glasgow** laddie **James Burns**.

Forgotten Worlds: On the title screen type ARC while holding down the SHIFT key, then release this and press HELP to start. Now just press L to skip a level, N to go to the next level, and S to go to the shop.

Chase HQ: As soon as the title screen appears tap the space bar at high speed. As you start driving you should hit about 900-1,000 kph, but don't stop the criminal, just stop your car and hold down the fire button and the left mouse button simultaneously and type in GROWLER. The cheat mode is now activated. Press T to reset the clock to 60 seconds.

Ghouls and Ghosts: Press fire to start then type in STEPHEN BROADHURST. You are now invincible.

Ikari Warriors: On the high score table, type in FREE RIDE to activate the cheat mode. You are now invincible.

Afterburner: Press backspace to pause, then type in THUNDERBLADE to activate the cheat mode. Press N to get more lives, < to go to the next stage, > to go back a stage, G for more missiles, and T for less missiles.

Fernandez Must Die: Pause the game and type in SPINYNORMAN for infinite lives.

Bombuzal (codes): 5-ROSS, 16-RATT, 24-LISA, 28-SINK, 32-DAVE, 36-BIKE, 40-IRON, 44-BIRD, 48-LEAD, 52-TAPE, 56-WEED, 60-VASE, 64-RING, 68-PILL, 72-GIRL, 76-SPOT, 80-GOLD, 84-PALM, 88-OPAL, 92-LOCK, 96-SONG, 100-SAFE, 104-FIRE, 108-WORM, 112-LAMP then TREE.

Roadblasters: At the starting line type LAVILLAS-TRANGIATO then press the following keys for different effects: O-Remove special weapons, 1-Fit UZ cannon, 2-Fit cruise missiles, 3-Fit electro shields, 4-Fit nitro injectors, G-End game, F-Refills fuel tank, X-Spins the car.

Weird Dreams: In the Hall of Mirrors go as far right as possible without leaving the screen. Just touch the joystick slightly so that you look fat in the mirror. Now there is an error. This is the tricky part – use the HELP key to signal a Morse code SOS,

Forgotten Worlds *encounter*

HELICOPTER HAVOC

Mark Khan to the rescue again, this time for **C64** owners of *Thunderblade*. Mark believes that you don't need any pokes for this easy game, so here are a few tips instead.

On the end of level machines in levels 1 and 2 just keep to one side of the screen as the rockets from the enemy can't reach you there.

On the third end of level screen just shoot at the turrets in front and immediately to the side of you.

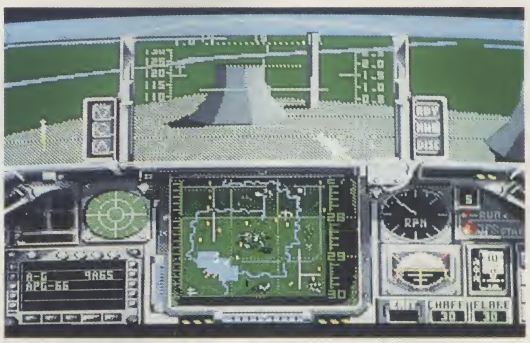
On the second stage of level 2 keep hovering between the rows of pillars, this makes getting through the section a lot easier. Also keep on the ground, the gunfire can't hit you there.

On the second stage of level 3, stick to one lane, firing all the time.

On the second stage of level 4 keep to the ground at top speed and fire all the time. Autofire will help on all the levels. When you get to a tank, stop in front of it. Press fire and it will immediately blow up. You should be able to whizz through all the lower piping.

On the final fortress fly round the edge of the screen. The gunfire is slower than you so it can't catch you. Fly up and down (out of the way of the gunfire) firing all the time, and in a short while you will have destroyed all the turrets.

Then, with lots of points you get presented with a rather dull and unimpressive end screen.


Homing in on a target in Falcon

FRIENDLIER AMIGAS

Splashing over from Holland **come these tips to make your** Amiga **a little friendlier, courtesy of** Patrick Kashie, Wolvega.

Thunderblade: **When the title screen appears type** CRASH, **and the screen will flash. Now press the** HELP **key and the number of the level you want to start on.**

F14 Falcon: **For eight new rockets, ammo, and stronger afterburner press keys** X, SHIFT, **and** CONTROL **at any time during the game.**

Cybernoid: **If you want to have many, many lives, and you want to end any level at any time, just press** SPACE **when the title screen appears. Now type** RAISTLIN **and press** SPACE **again. When playing press** N **for the next level.**

Power Drift - *the right way round*

POWER FANTASY

M.Hooper from **Millbrook, Soton** claims to have had a remarkably strange experience in his local arcade. We let him relate the facts, and allow you to go investigate them yourself.

"Recently, I found out that on the arcade version of *Power Drift* if you start the game as normal and then depress the start button, the view of the buggy will switch to one of looking at the front and what you have just driven past. Confusing, but great graphics routine!

Secondly, after many visits to my local arcade I finally finished level 'E' but with five Gold Cups. I thought, great, you get the usual picture of your buggy. But no! The game carries on to a new level. So as I accelerated, the driver disappeared and the buggy floated to about half way up the screen. It then switched about and changed into the F-16 of *Afterburner* and flew around the track!!! This sounds unbelieveable but it really happened.

I wonder if the game has any more surprises?

P.S. I'm well chuffed at my discovery!"

Got 'im. Another success for Chase HQ

that is: • • • – – – • • • (three quick taps, three a second apart, and three more quick taps. Your lives now look like a race-track, but you have infinite lives.

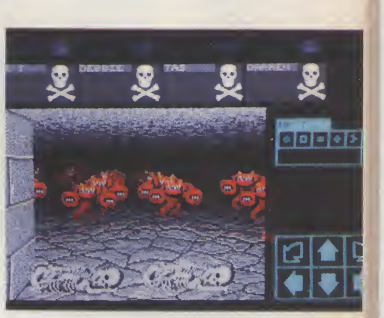
James is also desperate for tips on *Predator*. If anybody out there has some, let us know and we'll publish them.

DOUBLE THE FUN

Adam Hawley of Steyning, West Sussex **provides us with a useful way to obtain Infinite credits on the** Atari ST **version of *Double Dragon*. At the start of the game press Escape, then press 1 followed by 2. Continue this until one credit remains. Press Escape and then both joystick Fire buttons at the same time.**

DUNGEON MASTER UPDATE

Mike Doonan of **Newton Aycliffe, County Durham** writes to say how useful he has found the *Dungeon Master Guide*, and here provides us with a couple of extra tips that he has discovered himself.



1. On level 5 the 'Treasure Stores'. The fourth door in the guide: access to the left hand corridor is gained by, once again, repeated attempts to close the pits in the correct order. (This Mike found easier having already reached the right hand corridor.)

2. Level 6. 'If you want to stay alive, you'd better turn and run.' Right hand corridor: the room (actually a corridor) which opens by means of a floor pressure pad, but closes when you step off the pad seems to respond to no amount of pressure from other sources. You can, and should keep it open by enticing skeleton warriors to stand on it, and then freezing time using a magic box found beforehand. This gains access to some useful items.

BOMBS AWAY

Mark Khan of **Crawley, West Sussex**, reckons that *Fighter Bomber* is one of the best flight sims around for the **C64**. Here is his method for accessing all eight missions on the C64 cassette version of the game.

Load as normal. On the pilot selection screen press **SPACE** (to edit) then press **SPACE** again and type **KYLIE**. On the mission briefing/map screens you can de-select them by pressing **RUN/STOP**. This returns you to the initial mission selection screen.

Mark would also like to point out that some key references are missing from the instruction card. After many hours of flying he has found most of them:

R-Radar toggles between 25, 12, 6, 3 and 1 mile ranges.
CONTROL and **E**–Eject.
SHIFT and **F1**-toggles between waypoints and weapons panel.
RUN/STOP-Pause. Press again to continue.
S-doesn't work. Anybody know of an alterna tive?
[-Left view.
]-Right view.
?-Rear view.

If you want the Tornado then opt for auto-arm on the arming screen. You'll notice that you can have four GP bombs.on the underfuselage pylons instead of the maximum two if you arm manually.

On landing, go in the opposite direction to that you took off in. When you land, immediately engage wheel brakes and shut down the engine(s) (Press "1" twice).

Never taxi into your hanger. Mark has driven squarely and slowly into the apparently open-doored hanger and promptly blown up!

The F-111 will not have a canon or give you the option of having one. Contrary to what is stated in the manual, all the other aircraft are stuck with 200 rounds of ammo.

GP bombs and Rocket Pods are most unhelpful.

The omission of in-flight refuelling is not too bad, as all of the aircraft have good fuel consumption.

Final Frontier on the ST version of the game has a bug. When you land at one of the bases you are supposed to be able to refuel and rearm, but you can only rearm, so if you have no fuel left you've had it.

Nice formation flying in the original PC version of Fighter Bomber

SOUP UP YOUR SPECCY

These hacks for the 48k Spectrum **come from** Stephen Bird **of** Brentwood **in** Essex.

***Auf Wiedersehen Monty*: To access the cheat mode in Monty (on 48k and 128k machines), load the game not with LOAD "", but with LOAD"":REM MONTY. Make sure that 'Monty' is in capitals with no extra spaces. The game will load and run as usual, but when you pick up the little red flag-like thing you will activate the cheat. You are given infinite lives and are immune to attacks by the nasties...**

***Curse of Sherwood*: For infinite lives, Merge the loader and add POKE 64613,0 before the USR statement.**

***Ghostbusters*: To start with 85000 bucks enter CODEBUSTERS as your name and 00166605 as your account number.**

***Helichopper*: When you get to the menu screen press 3, 7, 9, 0 simultaneously for a nice blue screen. Now type any of these:**

FOREVER Infinite lives
CLEAR Immortality
SHOW Demo instead of going back to the menu after the scor ing system
SCREEN Re-enter cheat mode, followed by a number between 1-23 to start the game on that screen.
(note: you will not be allowed to complete it.)
MAIN Immortality and infinite lives
RESTART Kills all cheat modes installed

CONSOLE CORNER TNT

Wonderboy tackles the nasty Dwagon

This month we kick off with some more tips from those masters of the **Sega Master System**, **Jojo Cicero** and **Mark Hook** of **Caerphilly, Mid-Glamorgan**. This time they provide some hints for ***Wonderboy in Monsterland***.

I. It is possible to fight **(i)** Kuracken and **(ii)** Blue Knight twice.

(i) Don't fall in the water with the shop on the way to Kuracken's lair. Fight him. Kill him. Now go back through the water and when back out, revisit the lair. Kuracken can be killed again.

(ii) Defeat blue knight, play the flute on echo tower, and journey to the mansion. When back out, revisit blue knight's domain and he can be slain once more!

N.B. On their first defeat, the two monsters mentioned will naturally yield a key. On the second defeat, the monsters will give you a big heart.

II. When one coin is found, whether on land, cloud, or sea, jump more than once at the spot before leaving, as more coins can usually be found.

LYNX LAFFS

Here are our first ever tips for Atari's hand-held **Lynx** console. These come from **Clint R. May** of **Denton**, Manchester.

Blue Lightning: Codes to all nine missions.

Mission 1 AAAA – Destroy Enemy Aircraft.
Mission 2 PLAN – Destroy Land & Sea Targets.
Mission 3 ALFA – Engage & Destroy Enemy Tanks.
Mission 4 BELL – Fly Through Canyon Destroy Enemy Tanks.
Mission 5 NINE – Fly Low Knock Out All Enemy Radar Installations
Mission 6 LOCK – Deliver Documents to Hidden Airstrips.
Mission 7 HAND – Strike Hidden Radar Installations.
Mission 8 FLEA – Sneak In At Night Avoid Detection Bomb Radar.
Mission 9 LIFE – Kill Enemy Tanks Destroy Radar Don't Kill Friends

Gates of Zendacon: Codes to all 51 levels.

YARB BREX SEBB SNEX ZAXX BROT STOB XTNT BOTZ SNAX ZYBX XRXS ANEX NEAT YARR EYES NYXX ZYRB SRYX BARE STAX SZZZ STYX XRAY RATT NYET TERRA BYTE BETA TRAX ZEBA ROXY NEXA NEST EBYX BREX BOXX STAB TENT ROXX NERB TREY STAR TRYX SSSS ZORT

Guardian levels: NEAR ZEST BRAN

End Level: ZETA

Hidden Level: A level where you will collect all the equipment in one go and battle with the programmers FACE to FACE. You must first enter level TRYX, then as soon as the level starts press down and right to go through the floor (If done quickly you will not crash into the floor). Once under the floor, dodge the obstacles to find a hidden gate.

NOT SO NASTY NINTENDO

Patrick Kashie **is back, this time with a few hints for frustrated** NES **owners.**

***Trojan*: If you want to continue from the point you died, push the joystick up and press START.**

***Metroid*: To change Samus into a woman and get all the weapons, type, as a password, JUSTIN BAILEY and then press the START button.**

***Gradius*: To continue where you ended, push the joystick up, down, and then press B, A, B, A, B, A, B, A. You must do this very quickly because you haven't got much time for this. For all weapons and shields press the START button just after the game has begun (to pause). Now push the joystick up, up, down, down, left, right, left, right, B, A.**

SHINOBI SUCCESS

If you are having trouble with *Super Shinobi* **on the** Sega Megadrive, **then take note of these tips for killing the end-of-level monsters, from** Tak On Wong **of** Harrogate, North Yorkshire.

***Level One*: Select Kariu magic and use it, then somersault and shoot when he is slashing till he explodes.**

***Level Two*: Select Kariu magic and use it. Then, when he is somersaulting, walk next to him, crouch and shoot. Do this until he explodes.**

***Level Three*: Walk forwards to the machine, wait until the laser is above you, then walk back to the left hand side of the screen. Wait until the laser is above you, then walk forward and the brain should be visible. Jump and shoot, then somersault and shoot. The brain will now be hidden again. Repeat the cycle described above. After about seven times, select Kariu magic and use it. If the brain is still alive, repeat the whole cycle until it explodes.**

***Level Four*: This is an android, wait until it lifts the scrap metal above its head, then walk towards it and slash. When it has thrown the metal it will charge twice. Jump over his charges and then he will throw another piece of metal. Repeat the procedure and then use Kariu. Repeat these steps until it explodes.**

***Level Five*: This is a missile carrier. When you start, do not walk forwards as fireballs will start firing. Just crouch and shoot, and watch out for electric sparks. When this one explodes walk to the next dome remembering all the time to dodge the sparks. Jump in front of the dome so that you are still on the dome platform, but not on the dome. Here sparks will not hit you. Just crouch and kick the dome, then when it explodes got to the last dome and use Kariu. If it is not destroyed, crouch and kick the dome until it explodes.**

***Level Six*: Use Kariu straight away, and he will turn into batman. Shoot him in a random pattern until he explodes, but watch out for his swoops.**

***Level Seven*: A tyrannosaurus rex – jump onto the platform and shoot. When you are nearly dead, select Miryin and use it. Repeat, and it should explode.**

***Level Eight*: Neo Zeed himself – when he starts swinging his hair, crouch and move towards him, shooting all the time. When you hit him, jump immediately back and you should dodge his hair. Now shoot in the little gap on the far left wall. This will prevent the ceiling from crushing your girlfriend. Now repeat the procedure, remembering to fire into the gap every few seconds. If your energy bar is low, select Miryin and use it when he lashes his hair at you. Only then will magic affect him. Keep doing this until he explodes. Now watch the finishing sequence.**

SEXY SEGA STUFF

More superb **Sega** tips, this time from **Andrew Finney, Stockport, Manchester**.

Afterburner: Turn the power on and press the pause button exactly one hundred times (phew!) before the demo starts. When you die you can use the continue option (joystick up and press both buttons) at anytime up to the end of level 17.

Space Harrier: Bring up the sound test (push right, left, down, and up on the title screen), and select these numbers in this order 7, 4, 3, 7, 4, and 8, and then exit. A new screen will now appear allowing you to set the level of difficulty, choose normal or reverse controls and even lets you become a plane. After you have used your last life, try this out to continue. Push up, up, down, down, left, right, left, right, down, up, down, up when the game over sign appears. This will allow you to continue up to nine times.

Fantasy Zone: To get cheap lives, load the game and wait for the opening demo story to scroll up the screen. Waggle the joystick up and down at least 50 times (phew again!), then press start. Build up as much money as you possibly can in the first round, and then go to the shop. You should now be able to buy Opa-Opa's for only $1000 each.

Wonderboy 3: Use the code WEST ONE 0000 0000 to give you control over Hu-man with loads of money and complete armoury. Change into Hawk-man and then go to the top of the tower in the village and fly left. Smash the top row of blocks for a heart refill and then go through the door. In the next room use the Magical Sabre to create a block in the centre of the room, then destroy it with the Legendary Sword and then touch the question mark and go through the newly formed door. From here you have to follow the corridors through to the Vampire Dragon's Lair. There are three transformations to be made: ① Mouse Man, ② Lion Man, ③ Hawk Man. Just before entering the doorway to the final boss wear Hades armour. Once in conflict with the Vampire Dragon stay on the floor until he runs at you, then jump a little and hit him in the face and in the stomach. This makes him easier to beat.

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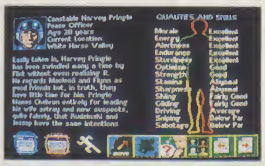
TRADE SECRETS

MIKE SINGLETON HELPS YOU STAY OUT OF THE COLD IN MIDWINTER

Midwinter has been widely acclaimed as one of the most exciting games to be released this year. We were very impressed and awarded the game a first class ACE Rating of 948. The game can be a little overwhelming for the beginner, and still tricky even for the experienced player, so we are pleased to be able to bring you some red hot playing tips from the game's creator Mike Singleton.



Be sure to check up on the personalities and abilities of every person in your team – that way you can put together the most effective force

THE TEAM SPIRIT

Getting a good team together is virtually essential – although it's conceivable that you might defeat General Masters with just one or two people, it's a very risky strategy to adopt. With a team of a dozen or more, you can assign some members to engage enemy snow-buggies, others to sabotage, a few for further recruitment and a handful to the strike against General Master's HQ.

The quicker you can recruit a sizeable team, the better. In the early stages of the game you'll find it advisable to devote nearly all of your current team to recruiting new members. If you do this you'll find that your recruiting drive works rather like a chain letter. Say each new team member recruits just two more members, you'll find the strength of your team doubling at each stage.

It's vital to bear in mind the personalities and the likes and dislikes of the people you're recruiting. Gazzini, the hang-glider pilot, for instance, is miserable and grumpy, but female company cheers him up no end. So Sarah Haddocks or Virginia Caygill will have no trouble recruiting him. The lone hunter, Rujel, an excellent sniper, refuses to join anyone except his apprentice, young Davy Hart.

HARMLESS OR HUNTED?

The enemy bombers and spotter planes roam around the skies of *Midwinter* freely, seeking out your team. Naturally, their activity is more intense the closer you get to the enemy HQ at Shining Hollow, but they also have orders to hunt down the more dangerous or important members of the FVPF.

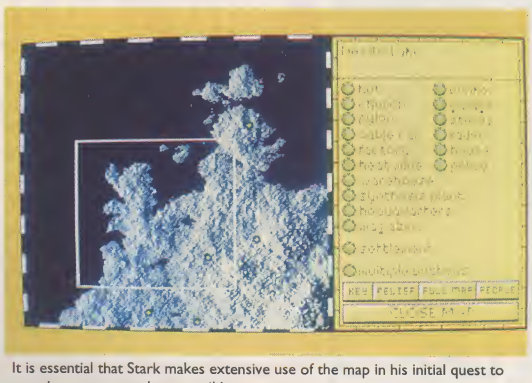
Captain Stark is the most wanted man of all and he will be hounded by enemy aircraft to the very end of the game. At the other end of the scale, old Mrs Randles and the two children suffer only the occasional air attack. In general, civilians have a low priority in enemy air attacks, whilst higher ranking officers in the FVPF are favourite targets.

Sniping attracts least attention from enemy air patrols, and is the best way of dispatching aircraft when you are out in the open

In addition, the more inconspicuous your vehicle, the less prone you are to air attack. Sniping attracts least attention from aircraft, followed closely by skiing, then hang-gliding, and finally snow-buggying, which brings enemy aircraft swarming like hornets.

BANDIT'S AT 3 O'CLOCK

The worst danger in hang-gliding comes from enemy aircraft. They are more difficult to spot when you are in the air, especially when you're banking left or right, and consequently more dangerous.



It is essential that Stark makes extensive use of the map in his initial quest to recruit as many people as possible

The trick is to manoeuvre gracefully when you're gliding – no sharp turns or dives. Use the "look at the ground" option only briefly and occasionally, and keep your eyes on the horizon all the time. This way you'll spot enemy aircraft before they can do you any damage.

Loose off your air-to-air missiles as soon as you can. If the enemy aircraft gets close in to you its tight turns can throw your missile off track and you'll find it difficult to line up again on the enemy if he's circling around you.

If an aircraft does close in, then's the time to start making sharp turns until you can bring him in your sights again.

A word of warning – flying close to the ground gives you extra lift and therefore extra speed but it also obscures the horizon, hiding attacking aircraft behind the hills and mountainsides. All the time, you'll find a trade-off between speed and safety.

ON THE PISTE

Cross country skiing is best over fairly gentle terrain. having reached skiing speed, you'll be able to carry on for miles and miles, the rush down each hill compensating for the fall in speed climbing it. Wherever possible head for the smoothest route, even if this means a slight detour – the photographic map helps enormously in choosing ski-routes.

In the mountains, don't try to go any real distance uphill – save that for the cable-cars or hang-gliders. Downhill, you should try to ski along the gullies rather than over the ridges. This keeps your speed up and makes for a smoother, safer journey. On steep downhill runs, the problem is more in slowing yourself down (as in real life!). Although pulling back on the mouse will slow you down a bit, it's not always sufficient to prevent a tumble as you hurtle towards a sharply upturning slope. Better speed control comes from "traversing" – zigzagging across a steep slope rather than plummeting straight down it.

Dealing with enemy aircraft depends on the terrain. If you're in open, flat countryside, unsling your rifle and start sniping straight away. If you're on a long downhill run, it may be best to keep going. At maximum skiing speed (around 70 mph), you can actually outrun the aircraft, whose manoeuvres are hampered by the rough terrain, whilst if you stop , the rough terrain can prevent you getting a clear shot at the enemy.

Another useful tactic is to use the trees as markers, heading towards them en route whenever possible. Then, if you hear the ominous drone of an enemy vehicle, you can nip to the tree and climb it, gaining a good vantage point from which to snipe.

If you're planning to use hand-grenades, make sure you get yourself up into the hills first. There's nothing worse than chasing a tempting enemy supply buggy only to find it draw steadily away from you on an uphill climb. Swooping down from the mountains onto unsuspecting supply columns is much, much better! Don't forget to swerve sharply away after you've lobbed your grenade.

KRISTIANSEN CALLING!

Professor Kristiansen is the only character able to transmit a distress call on the radio. By doing this, he can recruit up to 4 new team members. However, you must first recruit Kristiansen and then get him to a radio station.

The cantankerous professor dislikes authority in all its guises and will reject any approach by Captain Stark and other officers. His grandson, Davy Hart, Davy's girlfriend Jenny or ski teacher, Virginia Caygill, are all likely candidates for recruiting Kristiansen.

Unfortunately Kristiansen is not a good skier, gets tired and injured easily and he is also a prime target for enemy air attacks. To get him to a radio station safely you really need to get him in a snow-buggy. It's a good idea to take him as a passenger: the frequency of the enemy air attacks depends on the driver, not the passengers, so this is one way of sneaking him through the enemy air cover (provided the driver is a fairly harmless chap).

A REAL CLIFF-HANGER

Valleys are a bit of a nuisance when you're hang-gliding . The updraught drops rapidly away and, unless you're an expert pilot you'll have to land after a fairly short distance. So, getting from A to B needs a little planning. Stick to the mountain ridges, even if it means making a detour, and when you do have to cross a valley, make sure you do so at the narrowest point.

Hang -gliders can be effective means of transport and attack, even over long distances – providing that you develop the necessary skills

Alternatively, the coastline on the island can be usefully exploited when you're hang-gliding. The vast cliffs on the shoreline give truly massive lift to any hang-glider and by hugging the coast you can travel an incredible distance. A good candidate for such an expedition is Iwanoto, the Zen Buddhist Constable at Millpond Flats. He is extremely fit and good at virtually everything, hang-gliding included. Chabrun, the hunter, is another possibility.

Both these characters live close to Thunder Mountains where there is a cable car run, and you'll find hang-gliders galore at the top station. From there it's just a short flight to the cliffs of Thunder Bay. Turning south at the coast, you can cliff-hang almost to the door of General Master's HQ – if you can survive the trip.

Crossing water in a hang-glider is tricky. There's no lift at all, so you must gain as much height as you can by circling over the cliffs to begin with. Flying across straits or a large bay is best done by island hopping. Small rocky islets are dotted around the coastline. Using the updraught found at these tiny islands you can boost your altitude and keep your feet dry!

GET TO A GARAGE

When the game starts, Captain Stark finds himself slap bang in the middle of an enemy unit. He is on skis and only has his rifle and a handful of grenades to fight off the enemy and aircraft.

Although Stark could stand and fight (and do considerable damage to the enemy unit), the first few hours are crucial in recruiting other people – Stark must move quickly.

Consult the map to find the nearest garage and head for it as quickly as you can. Avoid enemy vehicles where possible rather than engage them, and pause only to snipe at the aircraft that will continually harass Stark. Once you've reached the garage, leap into the snow buggy you find there and race off to recruit new members for your team. You can deal with the enemy later.

If there's no garage reasonably close at hand, hang-gliding will get Stark quickly across difficult terrain, so make for the nearest cable-car station. During the cable-car journey up the mountain, Stark will be able to rest before his flight, an added bonus.

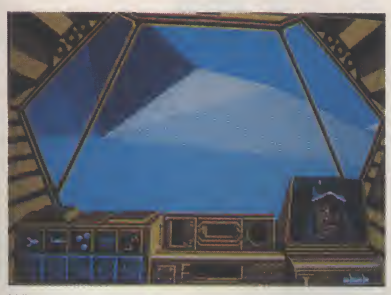
KEEP ON TRUCKING

Take good care of each and every snow-buggy you find – they are a scarce resource but vital for fast movement. In particular, look carefully at the map before taking off on a journey. Snow buggies will topple over going across steep slopes, so you must keep to the low ground whenever possible. If you are forced to go across really rough terrain, look at the photographic map to pick out the smoothest path. Finally, if you have to tackle a steep slope, tackle it head-on. You won't climb it very fast, but at least you won't topple over.

Tactics in battle are probably a matter of taste as much as anything else. Personally, I prefer to use the directional sound of the enemy vehicles for lining up my weapons. This way you can fire at the vehicle and destroy it before you've even seen it! Torpedoes are best for this tactic, since they have a broader radar scan for homing in, allowing you a greater margin of error.

The essential thing in battle is to destroy the enemy vehicle before it gets a chance to fire back. Enemy snow-buggies take some time to locate and target you, so you should be able to get them in your sight before they fire. Once you have loosed a missile, however, they understandably target you a lot quicker, so make sure the first shot is accurate, otherwise you'll find a missile coming your way very shortly.

Enemy missiles can be thrown off track by extremely violent manoeuvring – sharp turns, rapid acceleration, emergency stops. Once again its important to keep to low, flat ground for battles: choose your battlefield carefully. Start doing violent battle manoeuvres in rough terrain and you run a severe risk of crashing your own vehicle.



Whenever you come across a snow-buggy, look after it. They are going to be essential for quick mobiliasation of your team.

Thanks to Mike Singleton and Microprose for the tips. In next months TNT we'll carry further tips for this superb game… see you then!

FROM PETS TOMAELSTROMS

Mike Singleton is now recognised as a leading programming talent, having been responsible for some of the more spectacular games to be released over the last decade, and with games as strong as Midwinter he looks set to go on building on an already impressive reputation.

Like many of today's top programmers Mike first got involved with home micros as a hobby – he was working as an English Teacher at the time. He had been playing American Play-By-Mail games for some time, and came to the conclusion that he could create a game system of a better quality than the current Transatlantic crop.

Using a Commodore Pet computer as a mediator Mike set up the hit Play-By-Mail game Starlord, a compelling battle for domination of the galaxy. This featured the rather interesting incentive of free play. If you managed to become Emperor of the game's universe you played for free until you were toppled by another player.

When Clive Sinclair's revolutionary ZX80 and ZX81 appeared Mike was the one of the first to become involved. He wrote a compilation of 1K games for the ZX81 – imaginatively titled Games Pack No.1 by Sinclair Research, and bundled with the machine.

Mike made enough money from these games to allow him to leave his teaching position and turn his attention to full time programming. Some of his early works were Snakepit, Shadowfax, and Siege for the Vic-20, and the first game to employ a stereoscopic effect (which required you to wear special glasses) called 3Deep Space on the BBC micro.

Then came the project which really rocketed Mike to fame: Lords of Midnight, a role playing game on the ZX Spectrum which was universally acclaimed for its stunning 3D graphics, size, and depth of gameplay. This was closely followed by a sequel, Doomdark's Revenge.

Midwinter, developed with Mike's company Maelstrom Games, has taken four man years to produce. The actual code that drives the game is 160 Kilobytes, while there is 400K of compressed graphics. Maelstrom managed to achieve an average compression ratio of 3:1, meaning that the actual uncompressed graphics data is approximately 1.2 megabytes.

Maelstrom's current project is a computer version of Starlord in which the computer controls the other players. If Midwinter is anything to go by it should be well worth looking out for.

THE FINAL OBJECTIVE

Attacking the enemy HQ is never easy, whichever method you choose. However, there are some key points to bear in mind.

Make sure you stock up with dynamite before reaching Shining Hollow – you won't find any there, so you won't be able to blow up the HQ.

Don't try to ski all the way there. It's a very long journey and even the best of skiers will get exhausted.

Hang-gliding from as far away as the Sierra Madre is possible, but you need someone good or excellent at hang-gliding. Also, air attacks will come thick and fast as you approach Shining Hollow, so you're apt to run out of air-to-air missiles. If needs be, you can always pick up a fresh hang-glider (with fresh missiles) at one of the top cable-car stations en route. On the plus side, you won't have to engage the enemy ground units that guard the approaches to Shining Hollow.

Going by snow-buggy needs careful attention to the route. Three factors are to be borne in mind. First, you've got to keep to the low ground. Second, you should try to skirt enemy armoured units at the approaches. Third, you'll need to head for a garage at some stage to refuel your buggy. The coastal approaches to Shining Hollow seem to offer the best combination of all these factors. Finally, choose your driver carefully. Although Stark is a good driver, he's also a prime target for air attack. Someone less conspicuous but with the necessary skill to drive at high speed is best.

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ATARI 90's Show

New Improved Tetris!

Bloxeed – *taking* **Tetris** *into another dimension*

This month's report on the coin-op scene covers further world domination for Tetris, a new trend in game graphic style and how a year's worth of development changed a Sega blockbuster. John Cook reports

The sequel to *Tetris*, programmed by the original team, is the big news this month (see box), but we've also checked out new games from Sega and Atari, as well as a couple of interesting experiments in digitised sprites. Here's what's bubbling up in the coin-op arena for summer 1990...

Well over a year ago, Sega showed off a development version of a four player game called *Last Survivor*. This was housed in a huge cabinet and gave each player a monitor of their very own.

The basic idea of the game gave you a first person perspective view of a very detailed maze, inhabited by assorted nasties – and seven other characters (some of which can be controlled by other humans).

You each have a single key. You need to collect three to gain exit from the maze. The only way you get a key off a person is to kill them! You now get the picture, yes?

Nice concept, particularly as you can lurk by the exit and pick off the confident, but foolish player, who – when he's got all the keys – slowly saunters towards the door. You then knobble him and exit smartish – and win the round.

Nice implementation too. Sega use their sprite technology to the full and the result is very impressive, colourful and smooth. Thing was – the game played like a dog.

It's very easy to be critical of a game – harder to pin down what you have to do to improve it. I couldn't tell you exactly what was wrong with the game a year ago, only that it was rubbish. A year later and it's very good – particularly if you play it with a group of humanoids. What's the difference? Lord knows, but I salute a company that delays release until they've got it right.

Expect a fuller review in a later issue – meanwhile Sega's latest megagame and *Afterburner* follow-up, *G-Loc* is expected in this country 'real soon'. We'll report as soon as we've got some hands-on experience.

SPRINT-ING AHEAD

If you find a winning formula, stick to it – that seems to be one of the many corporate maxims at Atari Games. Well, take a look at *Bad-*

DIGITAL MAGIC FROM THE PINBALL BOYS

More pinball companies seem to be moving into the coin-op arena and seem to be bringing in a breath of fresh air – and with it perhaps, a taste of things to come.

First Gottlieb brought out the deeply weird *Exterminator* and not only did it have an original (albeit totally incomprehensable) story line – but it made great use of digitised images, not only as backgrounds, but sprites as well. This gave it a completely different feel – and added much to the game.

Now Bally-Midway are trying the coin-op game with something called *Trog* which, again, makes extensive use of digitised images. (The game itself looks like a four player Pacman variant, but I'll hold judgement until I get to play it properly.)

It looks good – and Bally are making great play on it's realistic sprites, calling the whole system PLAYmation. This points the way forward for all videogames.

With the advent of CD technology in the arcades – and it's only a year or so away – we are going to find more and more that film and video images are used in coin-ops. *Robocop* will actually be Robocop, if you like.

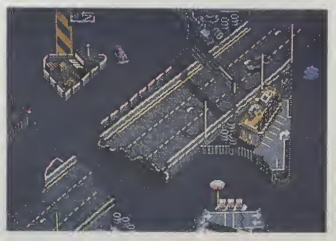
And that's OK for pure fantasy stuff – but can you imagine *Operation Wolf* in full video reality? See that gore fly, eh kiddies? It's something the whole of the industry ought to be considering – before the Mrs Whitehouses of this world beat them to it.

***Multi-player gaming enters a new dimension with Sega's* Last Survivor**

lands, if you will. Is that a *Sprint* Clone I see before me? You betcha.

Sprint started off life as a black and white, two player upright. Went to a four player stand around. Many years later resurrected as a three player bash in full colour – *Super Sprint*. Went back to two player as *Championship Super Sprint*. Now we have that with extra blasting involved.

Very Mad Max, as you blast away at the opposition, and quite satisfying after a hard day's parking on the M25, but it lacks the elegance of the more basic originals. Popular with the kiddies – I suggest you give it a miss.



Badlands: still sending waves through the bizz as more and more driving scenarios hit the screens

Digitised backgrounds in glorious Playmation – set to revolutionise the look of even the humblest coin-op – and make a huge difference with film licenses. Why don't they do this with the home computer and console versions?

TETRIS NOUVEAU

I guess you are familiar with the way that one simple game idea – mess around with falling blocks – named Tetris, developed by a lone Russian programmer, has become a global phenominon. Starting out on home systems, then migrating to console, hand held and coin-op, its Glasnost marketing pitch took Europe by intermittEnt showers and America and Japan by storm.

Arguably, Tetris was most influential on coin-op (where it was released by Atari Games), spawning a whole forgotten genre of puzzle/action arcade games, the vast majority being complete garbage. Common consent has it that the only puzzle games released since then worth the 10p were Block Hole from Konami and Pang from Mitchel Corp – until the recent introduction of Klax from, again, Atari Games – hailed as its 'follow up'.

Sega must have been a bit miffed with the whole situation. Not only did it not have the rights to Tetris on coin-op, but even for its console the best available product was an allegedly illegal pirate verison as Nintendo claim all console rights – a matter still the source of some debate over the water.

What would you do in the same situation? While other manufacturers rushed out crap puzzle games, Sega hit on an alternative solution: commission the Russians to write a follow-up to the original. Clever, eh?

This follow-up is called Bloxeed, and when I say follow-up, I suggest you think of it the same way as Arkanoid was a follow-up to Breakout. The principle is identical, but frills have been added in the form of power-ups. Some people are going to like it more, the purists are going to like it less. Whatever, it's likely to be a pretty big seller for Sega.

Like the Atari Games version of Tetris – and unlike many of the home versions – Bloxeed can be one or two player, with playfields set side by side. To make it all fair, shapes come down in the same order for both players – and it's a question of who can last out for longest, as the concept of discrete 'rounds' has been rejected. In that respect it's closer to the original.

One neat two player feature – if you make over two lines with one shape, those lines are transfered to the bottom of the opposing player's stack, shifting it upwards. Nice one. This is in additon to lines being added by the computer as time elapses.

Add to this the way that the game speeds up as you rack up the lines and you get a game that is harder than Tetris Coin-op – and so more challenging for the seasoned player.

Power-ups? They come in the form of shapes with a letter imbedded in them. When the letter lands, it becomes part of the stack. Make a horizontal line with the letter as part of it, and depending on the letter, a power up appears at the top of the screen. There's a bomb that clears an area of the stack when it lands, a 16 Ton weight that clears a path 3 squares wide from the top of the screen to the bottom, a satellite which you control, firing bullets that destroy shapes, and one that fires squares....therefore completing lines if used correctly. Finally there's a mystery one that does stuff like destroying alternate lines of the stack or slowing the game down for a time.

How does it play then? Initial looks are unfavourable. It's graphically unattractive compared to its predecessor and superficially lacks polish. But when you play it, the elegance of the basic concept shines through. The game is a superb Tetris variant – and Pazhitnov is the only guy that could write such a game without getting his bottom sued off.

The speed of the game is geared towards the arcades – you do not stay on the machine for hours on end because the pace of the game increases so quickly. Yet even when the shapes fall down at lightening speed – the fastest of any Tetris game I've played – you still feel you have full control of the shape.

I couldn't believe the game could ever be played so fast – and came off the machine as exhilarated and breathless as after playing the slickest and fastest of shoot-em-ups.

Bloxeed is another classic and is going to appeal to old Tetris hands – and also to anyone that felt the original coin-op was too tame. Go for it!

RESOLUTION 101

ATARI ST SCREEN SHOTS

When they locked you up they threw away the key. Now, with the passing of **Resolution 101** you are offered the chance to regain your freedom. You must become a bounty hunter, earning your liberty by the assassination of the evil criminals who now threaten to overrun the city.

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IN THE PINK

THE ACE CHARTS AND STOCKMARKET 100
The ultimate software chart. Forget everything else, the *ACE* stockmarket is based on the collective opinions of the people in the know – Britain's software reviewers..There are prizes to be had too

MATING THE MACHINE.....103
Are you fed up with being humiliated by your micro at chess – if so then this feature is for you. Marialana Sestero explains how to predict the moves your machine will make, and turn the tables..

HARDWARE GUIDE 105
It's back – the ultimate buyers guide. If you are looking for a first machine or simply upgrading your machine, then look no further This month we concentrate on consoles, next month the computer listings will be back

AGONY AUNT.....108
Even computer owners have problems, buit have no fear, Aunty Ace is here to sort them all out....

COMPETITION.....108
Another chance to win yourself some tasty goodies as the Pink Page competitions return with a vengeance.

HOT OFF THE SHELVES 110
A selection of games recently given Red Hot reviews in ACE. We've only included games currently available, so here's where to look before you go shopping,

THE ACE PRIZE CROSSWORD & PUZZLE.....113
More cryptic conundrums for micro maniacs!

ACE DEALS 116
Loads of special offers and promotions to cheack out before you head for the High Street with your hard earned cash

ACE DIARY 116
Where and when it's all happening in computerland this month, and details of all the forthcoming software releases too.

ASK MEL!

Melanie Costin is available throughout the day to deal with your Reader's Pages queries or to sort out any problems you have using the mail order services advertised in the Pink Pages. If you've got a problem (no personal stuff please) then give Mel a ring on 01-251 6222 Ext.2517 and she will be happy to sort you out. Aren't you the lucky ones?

THE ACE STOCK MARKET

NOTHING LESS THAN THE BEST CHARTS IN THE BUSINESS – BECAUSE THEY WIN YOU PRIZES AND THEY'RE BASED ON THE AUTHORITATIVE OPINIONS OF GAMES EXPERTS AND REVIEWERS ACROSS THE COUNTRY. IF A GAME HITS THE HIGH SPOTS ON THESE PAGES, YOU KNOW IT BELONGS IN YOUR COLLECTION.

What's going to top the charts next month?

More and more of you are writing in after each issue with your Stockmarket Forms, trying to pick the next month's entries, and you're getting better and better at it. We expect to hear from even more of you now that it's easier to enter, since you only have to pick ONE entry for each category. And if you get only one of those game names right, you could be in for a prize.

We've printed the winners for Rounds Four and Five below. The new system makes it even easier to win and already several people have come close to winning the Jackpot £150 prize worth of software. We live in hope – and so, we expect, do you!

If you're new to the Stockmarket, here's what it's all about. First, you get the charts. Unlike all other charts, these really do tell you which are the best games, because they're based on review ratings in all the UK magazines, and not on hyped sales. That means that they give you a excellent guide to the games you should be buying for your machine.

You also get the Stockmarket itself (see panel on the right) and, of course, the chance to win prizes. The entry form is on page 120.

Top Ten Console Sales compiled by Shekhana Computers, 2 Gladstone House, High Road, Wood Green, London N22. Tel: 01-889 9412, Fax: 01-889 9413 and at 221 Tottenham Court Road, London, W1 Tel: 01-631 4627

THE WINNERS: ROUNDS FOUR AND FIVE

Well, you're really getting into the swing of this now, aren't you? Of course it helped just a teensy bit that the closing date for Round Four was misprinted, so that it was a month later than it should have been, enabling a few clever dicks to send in all the right answers. In the end, we thought it fairest to give everyone a chance at winning and put all the entries in a hat and drew out the winners. They were: **Tony Coltam** of Glasgow, **David McMahon** of Stafford, **Anthony Treacy** of Northampton, **James Black** of Diss, **Sanee Khan** of Ilford, **S. Cresci** of London, and **Jack Phillips** of Walsall. Well done, lads – especially Mr Cresci who wins for the second time running.

Next came round five, and this really foxed people with some unexpected entries in the charts. Although quite a few people spotted *E-Motion*, games like *Blue Angel* and *Kid Gloves* caught everybody napping. **Simon Penfold** of Blackwood spotted *Indie 500* in third place on the PC. **Emyr Jones** of Llanrwst managed to get both *E-Motion* and *TV Sports Basketball* in the right places (first and second) for the Amiga. **Stewart Colbourn** managed to get *Chaos Strikes Back* in second place for the ST (why didn't anybody spot *Player Manager* coming up for tops for the ST?).**Sean Glover** of Thorney got Buggy Boy AND *Vendetta* right for the C64. **David Latham** of Preston guessed right with Imageworks top of the Stockmarket. **Phil Maxfield** of Rotherham twigged *Fiendish Freddy* at number one on the CPC. Finally, **Faisal Sheikh** of Ilford was the only person to spot *The General* in the Spectrum charts. Prizes are on their way to all of you.

THE STOCKMARKET

The ACE Stockmarket gets its name from the fact that each month we list the top software companies together with a 'share price' for each one. The Stockmarket tells you which software houses are currently producing the most successful titles. Each company has a THIS MONTH rating, which is calculated according to the reviews its games have received during the current month. A company whose games are all rated highly will have a high THIS MONTH score.

The next rating in the company counter is the SHARE PRICE. This simply tells you how well a company is doing relative to its past performance. If a company gets worse reviews this month than last month, its price will drop. If it gets better reviews, the price rises. Companies who get no reviews at all have their price decreased each month until they get reviewed again.

Associated with the share price is the +/- rating, which simply tells you how much that company's share price has risen or fallen this month.

Finally, there's the company's INDEX RATING. This shows how well a company's games have done this month compared to the average score gained by all the other games reviewed. It's this rating that determines the position of a company in the charts. The average score for ALL games reviewed each month is called the SOFTWARE INDEX and it's printed at the top of the Stockmarket. In other words, if a company's Index rating shows a + figure, that's because its games have scored higher than the industry average during the current month. A minus figure shows that its games have scored less well than the average.

THE 16 BIT CHART

Title	Publisher	Format	Rating
Space Rogue	Origin	Amiga	94
Escape from the Planet of the Robot Monsters	Domark	Amiga, ST	91.42
Hammerfist	Activision	Amiga	90.5
Warhead	Activision	Amiga	89.1
Klax	Domark	Amiga, ST	88
E-Motion	US Gold	Amiga, PC, ST	88.32
Manchester United	Krisalis	Amiga, ST	88.1
Xenomorph	Interceptor	Amiga, ST	87
Bomber	Activision	Amiga, PC, ST	87
Castle Master	Domark	ST	87.83

Bubbling under: *Knights of the Crystallion* (SSI/US Gold) on Amiga only, and *Pipemania* (Empire) and *Player Manager* (Anco) on both Amiga and ST.

THE 8-BIT CHART

Title	Publisher	Format	Rating
Platoon	Hit Squad	C64, CPC, Sp	93.33
Vendetta	System 3	C64	93.05
Hammerfist	Activision	C64, Sp	91.63
E-Motion	US Gold	Sp	87.38
Zombi	UbiSoft	Sp	87.34
X-Out	Rainbow Arts	C64, CPC	85.75
Ikari Warriors	Encore	C64, CPC	83.84
Arkanoid	Hit Squad	C64, Sp	83.75
Pub Trivia Simulator	Code Masters	C64, Sp	82.75
Rainbow Islands	Ocean	CPC, Sp	81.92

Bubbling under: *Myth* (System 3) on C64 and CPC; *Ferrari Formula One* (Electronic Arts) on C64, and *Fourth Dimension* (Hewson) on C64 and Spectrum.