



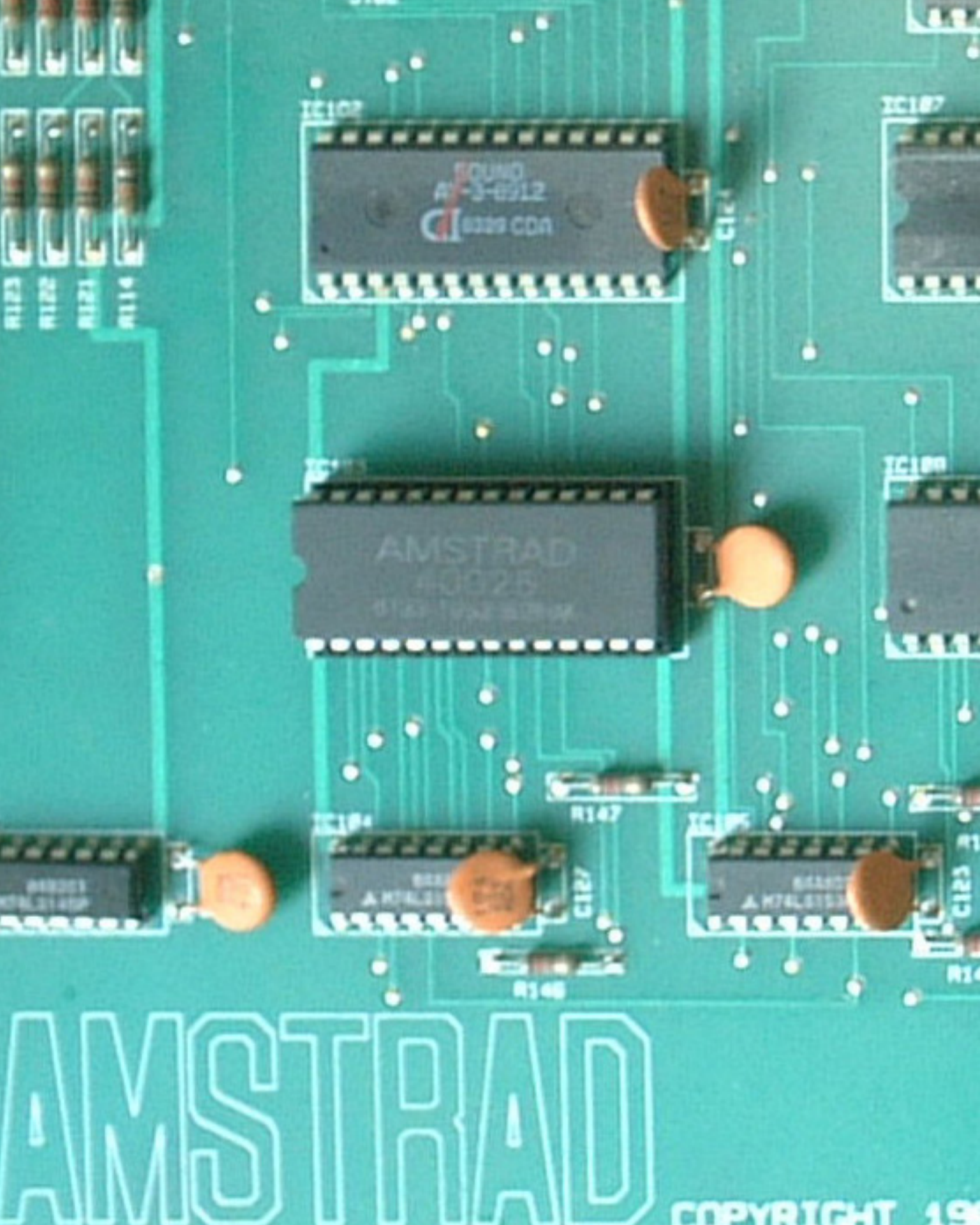
Amstrad 64K Microcomputer (v1)

©1984 Amstrad Consumer Electronics plc
and Locomotive Software Ltd

BASIC 1.0

Ready

AMSTRAD CPC
THE GAMES COMPANION



IC102



C101

IC107



IC103



IC108



IC104



R147

C107

IC105



C103

R148

AMSTRAD

COPYRIGHT 19



AMSTRAD CPC

**THE
GAMES
COMPANION**

AMSTRAD

64K

ESC

!
1

"
2

3

TAB

Q

W

CAPS
LOCK

A

SHIFT

Introduction

I first encountered our Amstrad CPC464 in on Christmas day in 1985. I say “our” because it actually wasn’t mine. It was originally bought as a present for my sister — probably to help with school work and such. However, through the months, it was more or less abandoned, so I adopted the colourful computer as my own.

From those early days, I played the likes of *Oh Mummy*, *Hunchback*, *Sorcery*, and *The Survivor*. As the months and years passed by, more games found their way into my CPC den: *Gauntlet*, *Renegade*, *Gryzor*, *Rick Dangerous 2*, *Chase H.Q.*, *RoboCop*, *Operation Wolf*, and many more. *Emlyn Hughes International Soccer* and *Laser Squad* were firm favourites, though.

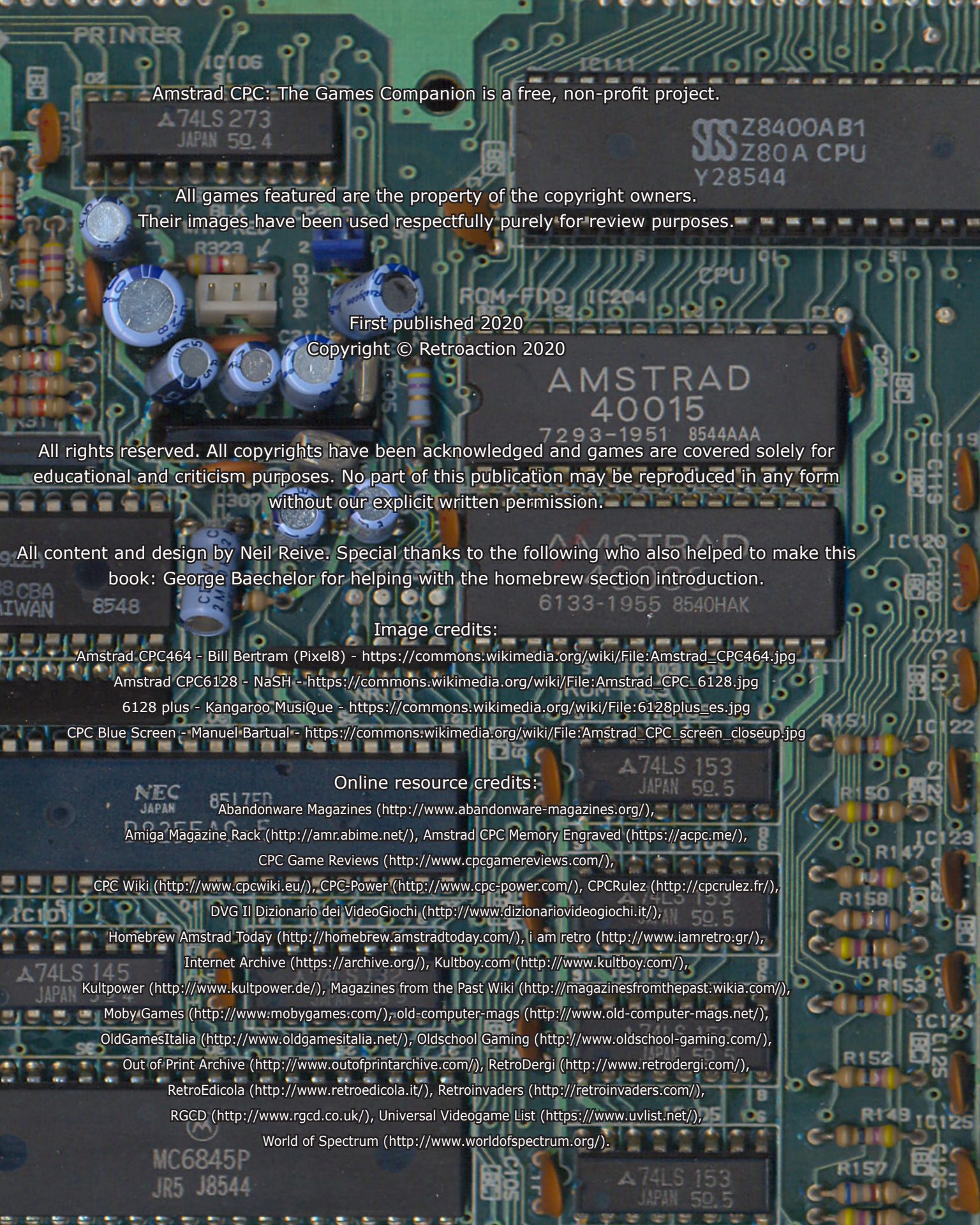
Even a broken ‘play’ button on the computer’s cassette tape deck would not prevent me from playing *Laser Squad* well into the late Nineties — taping down the play button saw to that. However, after numerous house moves, I had to say goodbye to the old faithful multi-colour keyed computer. Thankfully, the fond memories live on.

The Amstrad CPC is always considered as one of the “other” computers in the 8-bit computer scene, a contender, a runner up. But the CPC is far from just a contender to many people. While the CPC came in a valiant third place in the UK, behind the already established stronghold of Sinclair’s ZX Spectrum and Commodore’s C64, it found a foothold in Europe, helped by its popularity in France and Spain.

When it comes to computer gaming literature, the CPC is also never considered. In recent history, there have been a handful of publications dedicated to the Spectrum and Commodore 64, but not one for the CPC. For several years CPC books have been mooted with their planned content previewed online, but unfortunately each one has fallen by the way side.

Amstrad CPC: The Games Companion hopes to fill the void left behind by all those cancelled promises and aims to cover the best of CPC gaming: the computers, the games, the developers, the magazines, and the homebrew. While researching and writing the book, I have relived some of the best years of my gaming life, be it the actual games themselves, or the magazines, or even the developers. Hopefully you will also enjoy reliving your own memories or making new ones with us.

Neil



Amstrad CPC: The Games Companion is a free, non-profit project.

All games featured are the property of the copyright owners.
Their images have been used respectfully purely for review purposes.

First published 2020
Copyright © Retroaction 2020

All rights reserved. All copyrights have been acknowledged and games are covered solely for educational and criticism purposes. No part of this publication may be reproduced in any form without our explicit written permission.

All content and design by Neil Reive. Special thanks to the following who also helped to make this book: George Baechelor for helping with the homebrew section introduction.

Image credits:

Amstrad CPC464 - Bill Bertram (Pixel8) - https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:Amstrad_CPC464.jpg
Amstrad CPC6128 - NaSH - https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:Amstrad_CPC_6128.jpg
6128 plus - Kangaroo MUsique - https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:6128plus_es.jpg
CPC Blue Screen - Manuel Bartual - https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:Amstrad_CPC_screen_closeup.jpg

Online resource credits:

Abandonware Magazines (<http://www.abandonware-magazines.org/>),
Amiga Magazine Rack (<http://amr.abime.net/>), Amstrad CPC Memory Engraved (<https://acpc.me/>),
CPC Game Reviews (<http://www.cpcgamereviews.com/>),
CPC Wiki (<http://www.cpcwiki.eu/>), CPC-Power (<http://www.cpc-power.com/>), CPCRulez (<http://cpcrulez.fr/>),
DVG Il Dizionario dei VideoGiochi (<http://www.dizionariovideogiocchi.it/>),
Homebrew Amstrad Today (<http://homebrew.amstradtoday.com/>), i am retro (<http://www.iamretro.gr/>),
Internet Archive (<https://archive.org/>), Kultboy.com (<http://www.kultboy.com/>),
Kultpower (<http://www.kultpower.de/>), Magazines from the Past Wiki (<http://magazinesfromthepast.wikia.com/>),
Moby Games (<http://www.mobygames.com/>), old-computer-mags (<http://www.old-computer-mags.net/>),
OldGamesItalia (<http://www.oldgamesitalia.net/>), Oldschool Gaming (<http://www.oldschool-gaming.com/>),
Out of Print Archive (<http://www.outofprintarchive.com/>), RetroDergi (<http://www.retrodergi.com/>),
RetroEdicola (<http://www.retroedicola.it/>), Retroinvaders (<http://retroinvaders.com/>),
RGCD (<http://www.rgcd.co.uk/>), Universal Videogame List (<https://www.uvlist.net/>),
World of Spectrum (<http://www.worldofspectrum.org/>).

CONTENTS

Amstrad CPC - A Brief History	006
The Computers	010
The Games - 1984-85	016
The Games - 1986	040
The Games - 1987	064
The Games - 1988	094
The Games - 1989	112
The Games - 1990	134
The Games - 1991-92	158
The Games - 1993-95	180
The Developers	190
The Magazines	228
The Homebrew	252

AMSTRAD CPC: A BRIEF HISTORY



The home computing market was booming in the United Kingdom during 1982 and Alan Sugar started taking a great interest. Companies such as Sinclair, Commodore, and Acorn were selling thousands of computers to the public for several hundred pounds each. For the company that Sugar founded and built from the ground up, this seemed to be a natural progression for Amstrad.

Since 1968, Amstrad (a contraction of Alan Michael Sugar Trading Ltd) had been steadily making profits year on year by offering the public electronic products at affordable prices. It was during the late 1970s that Sugar came up with an innovative idea dubbed the Hi-Fi Tower System. This system was essentially an amplifier, cassette deck, tuner, and record player all grouped together in one unit and powered by one plug. The unit was Amstrad's greatest selling product at the time and would play a significant role in designing the CPC range of computers.

Early 1983 and one of Amstrad's long serving engineers, Ivor Spital, was tasked with providing an analysis of all the current home computers including what equipment they came with, the cost of making them, how they worked and their selling price. By utilising their strengths, low cost product at affordable prices, coupled with their recent innovation of grouping together multiple components powered by one power source, Amstrad planned to design a computer to fill a hole in the market.

While Amstrad didn't have the expertise to design the computer hardware and software, they could come up with the concept and casing design. As Alan Sugar put it many times, "little Johnny" wouldn't be allowed to use the television in the main room, so the Amstrad computer will have its own monitor, a proper sized keyboard, an integrated cassette deck and a competitive price. Bob Watkins, another long time servant of Amstrad and in charge of overseeing new products, would take control of the computer project.

During the Spring of 1983, a couple of engineers stepped forward to design the computer's hardware and operating system. While Sugar and Watkins finished off their designs on how the computer would look, work on the actual hardware and software was lacking. A couple of months down the line and things turned for the worse when the engineers broke contact with Amstrad and went AWOL.

With the current engineers out of the picture, Watkins took the project idea to Roland Perry for his input. Perry worked at Ambit International, an electronics company founded by William Poel in

Brentwood that specialized in components, which had done some work for Amstrad previously. Watkins showed Perry the computer keyboard case and design paperwork, explained what happened with the first design team, and if he could finish the project off. Perry took the project plans to his managing director, William Poel, and they both decided to work with Amstrad as project managers. Perry and Poel took it upon themselves to find the right people to finish off the computer design for the new Amstrad computer.

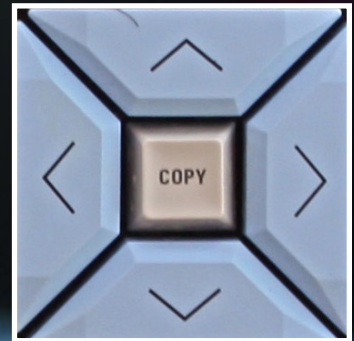
Rather than salvage any of the work already done, Perry decided to find a new team to work on the project from scratch. This meant finding the right people to design the computer hardware, operating system and software. The hardware needed to be there for the operating system to work and the operating system and BASIC software needed to be there for companies to write software programs and games for. The most popular version of BASIC, a widely used programming language, was from Microsoft. However, due to the large price quoted, Sugar decided that the Amstrad computer would have its very own BASIC software.

Initially, Perry received some rather sceptical response to the idea of designing hardware and software for a secret organisation. Fortunately, he came in contact with Howard Fisher, a former Brentwood School and Cambridge University student, who had just finished managing a project for Acorn. That project was the development of a BASIC program for the Cambridge based computer company's new Acorn business package. The software design was carried out by Locomotive Software which comprised of a two man team in Richard Clayton and Chris Hall.

Perry arranged a meeting with Clayton at his home, which was where the Locomotive duo were operating at the time. Perry showed Clayton and Hall the keyboard casing that would be used for the computer. The conversation moved onto the hardware side of things, to which Clayton suggested getting in touch with Mark-Eric Jones and see if he could come over for a chat.

Mark-Eric Jones, known as Mej (pronounced Medge), was an independent electronics engineer who had started his own business under the name of MEJ Electronics. When Mej arrived at Clayton's house, he immediately scrutinised the computer circuitry and explained its failings.

Getting down to business, Perry asked the Locomotive team just how long it would take them to design an operating system and





BASIC for a 6502 processor. The answer was eight months, ready for April 1984, but Amstrad were looking for prototypes by December 1983. Clayton commented that if the processor was switched to a Z80 then it could be done much earlier, likely January 1984. Clayton and Hall had just completed the Acorn BASIC project which was with a Z80 processor. They would also be able to adapt their work on the Acorn project lessening the development time. Mej also had previous experience with the Z80 through his father's company, Data Recall, with a word processor range which had been based on the processor.

The engineers still remained in the dark regarding the client they would be designing this computer for. All Perry would say was that they were a big high street name or a well known electronics company. So Perry came up with the name Arnold to replace Amstrad on all the prototype keyboard casings. This led to assumptions that the company was General Electric Company (GEC), the large UK manufacturing company that was headed by Lord Arnold Weinstock. It was later that Perry noticed that Arnold was also an anagram of his own first name, Roland.

Things started moving when Locomotive Software and MEJ Electronics were invited to a meeting at their mystery client's main offices in London. Present at this meeting were Chris Hall (Locomotive), Mej (MEJ Electronics), William Poel (Ambit), Bob Watkins, and Alan Sugar (Amstrad). Sugar explained to the assembled attendees that the computer had to be reasonably priced, be able to play games as well as be used for business. It had to look like a real computer with its own monitor and integrated cassette deck. There had to be no messing about with cables, separate cassette decks, or hoarding the family television. Sugar also stated that it should be made as cheaply as possible, but meet the required specifications: colour, sound and 64k of memory (with 32k ROM for the main operating system and BASIC), matching that of the current crop of computers.

Early in development, Mej convinced Alan Sugar to use gate arrays in the Amstrad computer. Gate arrays allowed components to be combined on the same silicon chip, which would cut the cost of the manufacturing process and hinder anyone trying to clone the machine.

For the computer's launch, Alan Sugar wanted one game developed from 50 different software houses, so work began on putting together 50 prototype models. This meant that MEJ electronics — which was

just a two-man team — worked into the small hours to put together these boards.

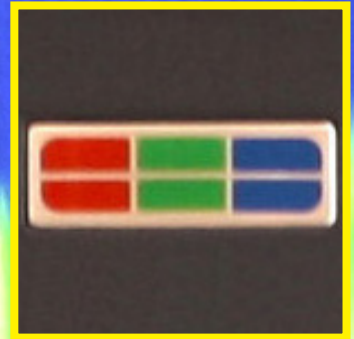
With the 50 prototype machines ready, Roland Perry began ferrying them around to the software houses that he hoped would develop games for the new computer. Upon negotiating deals for any games, William Poel came across mixed responses from the bigger software houses who were reluctant to devote time to a new machine. The prototypes were secretly guarded and if any software house decided not to develop a game for the computer's launch then the machine was picked back up swiftly.

In December 1983, Mej, Roland Perry, and Bob Watkins headed for Japan with a prototype of the new computer to show Orion (Amstrad's chosen electronic manufacturer). It was during this visit to the Orion headquarters that the suggestion of using yellow text on blue screen came about. Orion had commented that the brightest and contrasting colours should be used rather than the previously drab colour scheme. This was accepted with Locomotive Software making the changes and sending the master codes out to Orion the following month.

February 1984 came around and a new division was created within Amstrad called Amsoft. Headed by William Poel and Roland Perry this new division would oversee the publishing of Amstrad games, manual production, dealing with media, overseeing an Amstrad User's club as well as the associated User's magazine. In fact, each new Amstrad computer came with an accompanying leaflet encouraging the new user to join the Amstrad User club.

Amstrad also searched for an operating system to run business programs on the computer which would allow the use of spreadsheets and word processing. After deciding not to go with Microsoft's popular, but expensive MS-DOS, Amstrad chose Digital Research's CP/M.

April 1984 and Amstrad publicly launched the CPC464 at Westminster School in London. Ushering in the Amstrad CPC464 were Archimedes, Einstein, Monet, and Shakespeare, or rather people with improbable similar names. In attendance of the launch were numerous computer journalists who were shown the computer's capabilities and packages. The first, and cheapest package, was the green screen versions at £229, the second came with a colour monitor and cost £329, while the third packaged colour version came with an external floppy disk drive for £429.



AMSTRAD CPC464



Release date

June 1984

Discontinued

October 1990

Default media

Integrated cassette tape deck

CPU

Zilog Z80A @ 4MHz

Memory

64 KB (expandable to 576 KB)

Input

Keyboard, Joystick

April 1984 and Amstrad publicly launched the CPC464 at Westminster School in London. Ushering in the Amstrad CPC464 were Archimedes, Einstein, Monet and Shakespeare or rather people with improbable similar names. In attendance of the launch were numerous computer journalists who were shown the computer's capabilities and packages. The first, and cheapest package, was the green screen versions at £229, the second came with a colour monitor and cost £329, while the third packaged colour version came with an external floppy disk drive for £429.

The Amstrad CPC range came with either Green or Colour monitor, with the colour monitor being the more expensive option. While the CPC range were reliant on the monitor for its display, there was an Amstrad MP1 adaptor that enabled users to connect their CPC to a normal television. There were also with three display resolutions: Mode 0 (160x200 pixels, 16 colours), Mode 1 (320x200 pixels, 4 colours), Mode 2 (640x200 pixels, 2 colours). All display modes were able to access the hardware's colour palette of 27 colours.

To circumvent a new ruling introduced in Spain during September 1985 — stating tax charges imposed on any imported computer with less than 64 KB — Indescomp produced a CPC472 range. This was, for all intents and purpose, a CPC464 with the addition of a non-functional 8 KB of memory soldered to the CPC's main board.

While the original CPC464 keyboard featured the distinct colours of green, blue, and red for specific keys, German Schneider models went for all black.

The Amstrad CPC464 came with a 12-game promotional package from Amsoft. The games included were *Oh Mummy*, *Harrier Attack*, *Roland on the Ropes*, *Roland in the Caves*, *Bridge-It*, *Easi-Amsword*, *Animal Vegetable Mineral*, *The Galactic Plague*, *Sultan's Maze*, *Xanagrams*, *Fruit Machine*, and *Timeman One*.

Response to the Amstrad CPC464 was very positive with various praise given to the packages' price and simplicity. Not everyone was so enthusiastic, though, and for all the great comments about the CPC464's technical capabilities there were serious doubt on how successful the new machine would be, especially going into a crowded market dominated by Sinclair and Commodore.

Your Computer covered the new Amstrad CPC464 computer in a three page review of its June 1984 issue. "All in all the Amstrad's future looks rosy," closed off the review. "Superior graphics and sound, an excellent BASIC coupled with a flexible operating system would seem to be winning ingredients."

While a good 200,000 Amstrad CPC464s were sold in the run up to Christmas, most of them sat in retailers for months as the British computer market reached breaking point. Manufacturers were churning out more computers than the public were buying, which in turn meant that demand in the turn of 1985 dried up. Too many manufacturers and too many machines competing in a decreasing market retailers feared. Companies soon began feeling the pinch and some even closed down.

The saving grace for the CPC464 during these lean times for home computers was its business capabilities with which enthusiasts embraced, and the computer's good performance in Europe. Fortunately, sales of the Amstrad CPC range of computers would pick up during the following years, enabling Amstrad to advance the company by developing new computers, word processors, and IBM compatible PCs.



Most home computers.

As you can see, the Amstrad CPC 464 is no ordinary home computer.

For a start, it comes complete with an integral compact discromaster.

Then, the 464 can give you the choice of either a superb quality screen or a full colour monitor.

With £180 of free software to get you going, all you have to do is plug it in and start the music.

The 54k of RAM means 50,000 bytes plenty of memory to play with. And there are over 200 Amstrad

can play, many exclusive to Amstrad.

But games are only half the fun on the Amstrad CPC 464. In fact, using it can also be quite an education.

There are 100 spelling and arithmetic with software like WordFusion and Happy Numbers.

Whilst adults will love the way it helps them with budgeting and accounts, the 464 is

For the 464 to work and it will take care of a number of business like functions such as word processing and



The complete home computer.

To help you get the most from your CPC 464, there's the Amstrad User Club as well as a number of books and user magazines devoted to this most versatile home computer.

And your 464 will be able to even more with the simple connection of peripherals: printers, disk drives, speech synthesizers and light pens.

But perhaps the most extraordinary thing about the Amstrad CPC 464 is the price.

Just £199 with green screen, or £299 with full colour.

For more information about the complete home computer, all you have to do is complete the coupon.

Please send to my nearest distributor:

NAME _____

ADDRESS _____

CITY _____

POSTCODE _____

TELEPHONE _____

Amstrad CPC 464
The complete home computer.

Amstrad P.O. Box 912, Watlington, Oxford OX1 4JH

**Now Amstrad
gives you
over £100
to play with.**

[illegible]

Join in the fun.

Our CPC 464 User Club is a treat for all members.

As a member you'll be the first to know about the additions to the range. Hardware and software.

We'll provide you with your own privilege card and send you first, a year's subscription to the *Amstrad User* magazine packed with programs, features and information.

You can enter competitions for valuable prizes and keep up with all the latest Amstrad developments.

And with the free software pack, no think that's pretty good for starters.

[illegible]



Keyboard, Joystick

A new computer did appear in April 1985, but it wasn't the machine previously referred to as ANT, but rather the CPC664. Reacting to consumer's requests for a computer with an integrated floppy disk drive and more memory, Amstrad went away and designed a new model. With the codename IDIOT (Includes Disk Instead of Tape), initial reactions were that the new CPC664 was basically a CPC464 with a floppy disk drive in place of the cassette tape deck.

Despite not having the extra memory so requested by consumer's, the CPC664 did sport some other improvements. The original bold coloured keyboard was replaced with a more toned blue grey colour scheme. A more ergonomic look and feel was introduced to the casing, which tilted slightly towards the user. The layout of the function keys were also adjusted, most notable with the placement of the cursor keys. An extra power cable was provided from the monitor for the floppy disk drive.

The CPC664 was changed slightly for its production in Germany under the Schneider branding. The light blue and grey colour scheme of the keyboard was replaced by an all-grey appearance.



• THE NEW AMSTRAD CPC 664 • WITH BUILT-IN DISC DRIVE

• THE LOW COST COMPUTER FOR HOME AND BUSINESS •

How can anything about computers help you know that the discs are worth the extra cost? Here's how: wherever you're looking and seeing a program, in fact, a use drive makes comparing faster, more reliable, more efficient and more fun. But still, let us show the only way to gain these advantages for a home computer was to buy a separate disc drive. And that's why the Amstrad is pleased to announce the first computer to compare well with in the PC 664 world. The Amstrad CPC 664.

Well when you buy a PC 664 you find it's not just the disc drive that's built in.

You get everything

thing stored including a monitor screen screen or full colour. We'll even give you the CPC 664 and you will see it's the only one you can't find.

BUSINESS OR PLEASURE?

Although a disc drive will make games more fun (and there are loads of them in choice) find it makes the CPC 664 a serious proposition for business use.

There are advantages

to business use. The CPC 664 is also supplied with a 5.25 inch disc drive. And you can use the disc drive to store data, base programs, and more. And you can use the disc drive to store data, base programs, and more.

The CPC 664 is also supplied with a 5.25 inch disc drive. And you can use the disc drive to store data, base programs, and more.

• £449 •

• £339 •

THE HOME COMPUTER THAT MEANS BUSINESS

HIGH PERFORMANCE

LOW COST

The one thing you won't find on the Amstrad CPC 664 computer is a word that means cost. It's a computer that means value for money.

But only when you check the cost of buying all the other items separately. It's a computer that means value for money. But only when you check the cost of buying all the other items separately. It's a computer that means value for money.

But only when you check the cost of buying all the other items separately. It's a computer that means value for money.

But only when you check the cost of buying all the other items separately. It's a computer that means value for money.

But only when you check the cost of buying all the other items separately. It's a computer that means value for money.

But only when you check the cost of buying all the other items separately. It's a computer that means value for money.

famous name selling games. Few will tell you more than £400. And you can find it for a considerably less.

AN EXPANSIBLE

There is a vast range of peripheral hardware available for the Amstrad CPC 664.

There is a vast range of peripheral hardware available for the Amstrad CPC 664.

There is a vast range of peripheral hardware available for the Amstrad CPC 664.

There is a vast range of peripheral hardware available for the Amstrad CPC 664.

There is a vast range of peripheral hardware available for the Amstrad CPC 664.

There is a vast range of peripheral hardware available for the Amstrad CPC 664.

There is a vast range of peripheral hardware available for the Amstrad CPC 664.

There is a vast range of peripheral hardware available for the Amstrad CPC 664.

There is a vast range of peripheral hardware available for the Amstrad CPC 664.

There is a vast range of peripheral hardware available for the Amstrad CPC 664.

There is a vast range of peripheral hardware available for the Amstrad CPC 664.

There is a vast range of peripheral hardware available for the Amstrad CPC 664.

There is a vast range of peripheral hardware available for the Amstrad CPC 664.

There is a vast range of peripheral hardware available for the Amstrad CPC 664.

There is a vast range of peripheral hardware available for the Amstrad CPC 664.

• THE NEW AMSTRAD CPC 664 •

Name _____

Address _____

Postcode _____

Telephone _____

Amstrad CPC 664

A photograph of a classic IBM PC setup. It features a large, dark CRT monitor on top of a horizontal system unit. A keyboard with light-colored keys is positioned in front of the system unit. Several cables are visible connecting the components. The entire setup is presented against a plain white background, framed by a thick yellow border.

Release date
May 1985
Discontinued
September 1990
Default media
Integrated 3" floppy disk drive
CPU
Zilog Z80A @ 4MHz
Memory
64 KB (expandable to 576 KB)
Input
Keyboard, Joystick

Tinte (DNK)	Farbe	T
9	Grün	
10	Blaugrün	
11	Himmelblau	
12	Gelb	
13	Weiß	
14	Pastellblau	
15	Orange	
16	Rosa	
17	Pastel-	

A man wearing a light blue cap and glasses is shown in profile, smiling as he plays a racing game on a vintage computer. His hands are on a keyboard. The computer monitor displays a colorful racing game with several cars on a track. The system unit is a large, dark-colored desktop case with a floppy disk drive on the front.

[illegible]

PLUS**GX4000****464plus / 6128plus**

Release date

September 1990

Discontinued

1991

Default media

464plus: Integrated cassette tape deck, Cartridge**6128plus: Integrated floppy disk drive, cartridge**

CPU

Zilog Z80A @ 4MHz

Memory

464plus: Memory: 64 KB**6128plus: Memory: 128 KB****(expandable to 576 KB)**

Input

Keyboard, Joystick

During the turn of 1990, rumours began circulating that Amstrad were working on a new computer, which was hoped to be 16-bit to take on the increasingly popular Amiga. It wasn't until June 1990 that an official announcement was made. Numerous gaming journalists from France, Italy, Spain, and the UK were invited to the CNIT exhibition centre in Paris, France for Amstrad's presentation of their new generation of computers. Six years after the launch of the original CPC464, Amstrad unveiled their new range of Plus machines: the 464plus, 6128plus, and the GX4000.

Codenamed 'Arnold V', the new 464 and 6128 Plus computers' specification plan included hardware sprites, enhanced display palette of 4096 colours, split screen facility, soft scroll capability, cartridge support, and backwards compatibility with existing CPC software.

The two plus computers were basically revamped CPC machines, featuring new hardware and software capabilities, but to distinguish themselves from their predecessors, the CPC part of the name was dropped. While standard cassette or disk software could still be used on the 464plus or 6128plus, the enhanced plus capabilities could only be taken advantage of from the use of cartridge software. The monitors came in paper white mono 12" or a colour 14" screen.

The 464plus computer was launched at £229 for the mono screen and £329 for the colour screen, with the 6128plus set at £329 for the mono screen and £429 for the colour screen and the GX4000 launching at £99.



Coverage of the new machines in the computing press was generally positive. In *Amstrad Action*'s review of the GX4000, they commented that the machine would "revolutionise the way that games are played. Amstrad is set to storm the console market..."

Computer & Video Games ran a two page new feature on the GX4000 with Julian Rignall stating that the new machines greatly improved on the display hardware, putting it on par with the Amiga, but "annoyingly, the sound is the same as the old Amstrad".

Zero magazine praised the GX4000 for being "more powerful than the 8-bit Nintendo and Sega, but that's about it..." and added that "software houses are familiar with the CPC format, so there'll be no shortage of good titles."

The first issue of *Raze* magazine in November 1990 covered the GX4000. Although there were no criticism on the machine itself, they did state that "if *Burnin' Rubber* is anything to go by, the standard of future GX4000 releases will be stunning".

However, the new models did not fare too well commercially. Third party support for the new range was lacking and there was a poor range of new games developed to take advantage of the new hardware. While the instant loading of software from cartridge may well have been a bonus, the increased cost of purchasing cartridge based software was a big hike for CPC users who were used to getting their products up to five times cheaper. The decision to stick with the outdated 8-bit hardware had also backfired. While this cost-saving tactic may have seemed like a good business move, it just did not cut it with the majority of tech savy customers in 1990. The 16-bit Amiga was making huge inroads on the computing market, while Sega's Mega Drive was igniting the gaming world.



GX4000

Release date

September 1990

Discontinued

1991

Default media

Cartridge

CPU

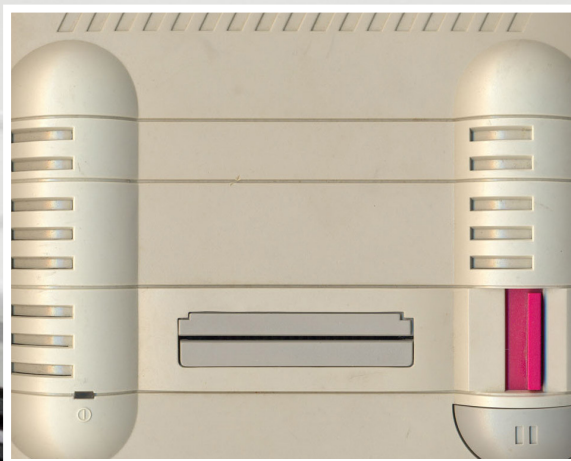
Zilog Z80A @ 4MHz

Memory

64 KB

Input

Gamepad



1984 - 1985



The Amstrad CPC464 went on general sale in June 1984 with Amstrad offering two distinct packages: a CPC464 with colour monitor and a CPC464 with monochrome green. To help the launch of their new computer, Amstrad created a software house offshoot called Amsoft which published a computing magazine called *Amstrad CPC464 User* (later known as *Amstrad Computer User*).

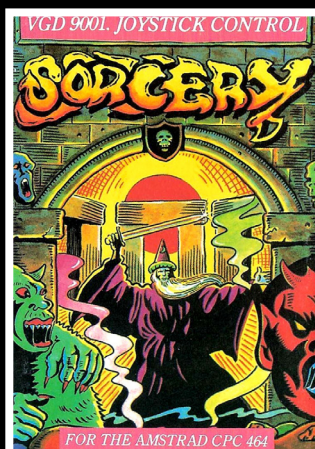
Besides the promotional 12 games pack given away with the CPC464, early titles released for the computer included *Hunchback*, *Galaxia*, *Spannerman*, *Star Avenger*, *Karl's Treasure Hunt*, and *Manic Miner*.

One of France's big publishing houses ERE Informatique released *Hold-Up*, their first game for the CPC. Programmed by Laurent Benes and Didier Berchiatti, *Hold-Up* was an early car racing game.

During the latter half of the year, Database Publications also launched an Amstrad publication titled *Computing With the Amstrad*. The first issue went on sale in December with a cover date of January 1985.

Amstrad released the CPC664 in the first half of 1985. This was a new redesigned model with an integrated diskette drive in place of the cassette tape drive.

Just a few weeks later in June, Amstrad unveiled the CPC6128 at the Summer Consumer Electronics Show (CES) in the USA. The plan was to release the business orientated computer in the US with only a possibility of it appearing in Europe. This new Amstrad CPC had everything the CPC664 had, but inside the newly designed casing was updated software and that much sought after extra 64kb of RAM, giving the machine a total of 128kb.



Software houses began releasing games on the CPC with many releases in 1985. Some of the bigger profile companies publishing games on the CPC for the first time this year included Dinamic (*Rocky & Ole, Toro*), Gremlin Graphics (*Rocco, Project Future*), Hewson Consultants (*Technician Ted*), Mastertronic (*Loco-motion, Finders Keepers*, and *Nonterraqueous*), Ocean Software (*Hunchback, Gilligan's Gold, Daley Thompson's Decathlon*), US Gold (*Beach-Head*), and Virgin Games (*Sorcery*).

The latter half of 1985 also proved to be the launching pad for numerous CPC publications across Europe. First up was *CPC Schneider International* (Germany), followed by *CPC* (France), *Amstrad Magazine* (France), *Microhobby Amstrad Semanal* (Spain), *Amstrad Action* (United Kingdom), *Amstrad User* (Spain), *Amtix!* (United Kingdom), and *CPC Magazin* (Germany).

The Christmas issue of *Amstrad Action* featured a cover-mounted cassette tape with two full games on it. Although this wasn't the first time that a computer magazine featured a cover-mount – that honour goes to *Personal Computer Games* – *Amstrad Action* certainly popularized it and would go on to release a cover-mount with every Christmas and birthday issue, before deciding to go monthly in 1991.

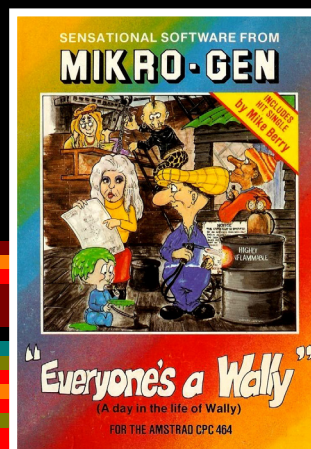
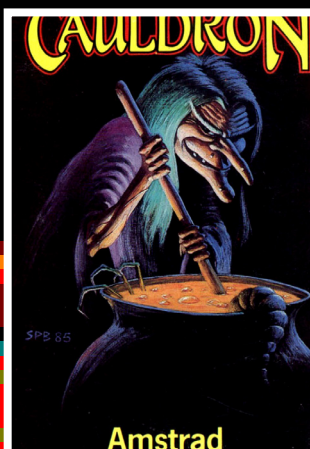
Knight Lore and *The Way of the Exploding Fist* proved to be two of the most successful games in 1985, each spending three months on top of the UK games charts. *They Sold A Million* from The Hit Squad became the first compilation to top the UK games chart. While in Greece, *Sorcery* topped the charts for six months (From June to August and then from October to December).

Top 10 sales chart 1985

1. *Sorcery*
2. *The Way of the Exploding Fist*
3. *Ghostbusters*
4. *Roland on the Ropes*
5. *Beach Head*
6. *Knight Lore*
7. *Manic Miner*
8. *Harrier Attack*
9. *Finders Keepers*
10. *Daley Thomson's Decathlon*

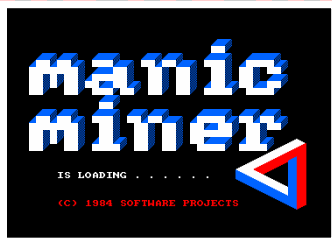
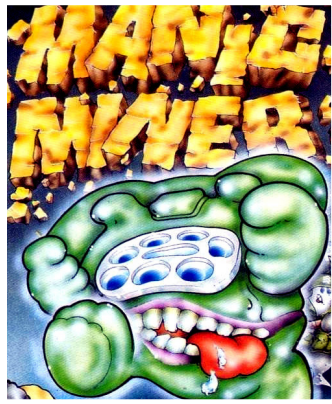
Top 10 critics chart 1985

1. *Lords of Midnight*
2. *Cauldron*
3. *Everyone's A Wally*
4. *Doomdark's Revenge*
5. *Spellbound*
6. *Marsport*
7. *Knight Lore*
8. *The Rocky Horror Show*
9. *Dun Darach*
10. *Strangeloop*



MANIC MINER

"Can you get past the poisonous pansies, spiders, and violent robots!"



Amsoft / Software Projects

Developed by
Derrick Rowson and
Steve Witherill

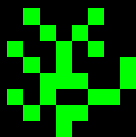
Miner Willy stumbles upon a secret opening to a long lost mining shaft. After exploring the caverns, he comes across an abandoned automated mining industry complete with robot miners who have gathered a large stockpile of valuable metals and minerals. Willy sees an opportunity to get rich by plundering the underground store of materials within the many chambers of the mining complex.

A platform game where the player negotiates the twenty single screen caverns, finding the key that will allow Miner Willy access to the next cavern. Blocking his way are obstacles such as poisonous pansies, spiders and slime, while the mining robots carry out their automated patrols. Careful movement, jumping and above all, timing, are needed, as one careless slip will lead to a lost life.

Upon successfully collection of the key, the caged lift will flash indicating that it is ready to transport Willy to the next cavern. Negotiating the cavern, collecting the key and heading to the caged lift must all be done before Willy's oxygen supply runs out.

Manic Miner, the first game in the Miner Willy series, was originally developed by Matthew Smith for the ZX Spectrum. The game itself was inspired by *Miner 2049er*, a single screen platform game released on the Atari 8-bit computer series in 1982. The responsibility for the Amstrad conversion was handed to Derrick Rowson and Steve Wetherill.

The official sequel, *Jet Set Willy*, was released in 1985, quickly followed by *Jet Set Willy: The Final Frontier* in the same year. The game has had several remakes through the years for many different formats, including PC (DOS and Windows), Java, Game Boy, Nintendo 64, PlayStation, Linux, Nintendo DS, and more.





The majority of the CPC gaming press praised the *Manic Miner* conversion. The game sits at an aggregate rating of 86% from seven reviews.

Tony Kendle, reviewer for *Popular Computing Weekly*, felt that the developers' ignored the capabilities of the CPC, but that "becomes irrelevant when you start playing, as you soon realise that not only was this the first, it is still in many ways, the best, of platform games."

Amstrad Computer User felt that the three lives in the game hardly seems enough, but considered that the "challenge to beat the awaiting horrors more than makes up for this." They rounded the review off by commenting that *Manic Miner* is definitely a game "to look out for" and that it "will keep you amused (and frustrated...) for hours."

David Andrews, reviewing the game for *Computing With the Amstrad*, highlighted *Manic Miner's* "impressive graphics" and sound, and stated that the game is "fun to play, quite nerve racking, and above all infuriatingly addictive."

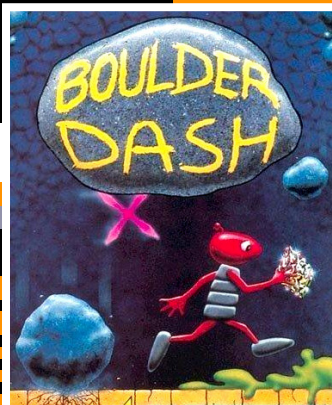
The Amstrad User felt that "the walking movement of Miner Willy is smooth as silk and generally the nasties are well designed." They commented that "quite a bit of thought has gone into the title", and the challenges of the game "will keep you absorbed for ages".

Ratings

4/5	<i>Amstrad Computer User</i>
75%	<i>The Amstrad User</i>
5/5	<i>Computer Gamer</i>
5/5	<i>Home Computing Weekly</i>
4/5	<i>MicroManía Primera Época</i>
7/10	<i>Personal Computer News</i>
5/5	<i>Popular Computing Weekly</i>

BOULDER DASH

"The ultimate underground journey..."



**First Star
Software /
Mirrorsoft**

Converted by
Delali Software

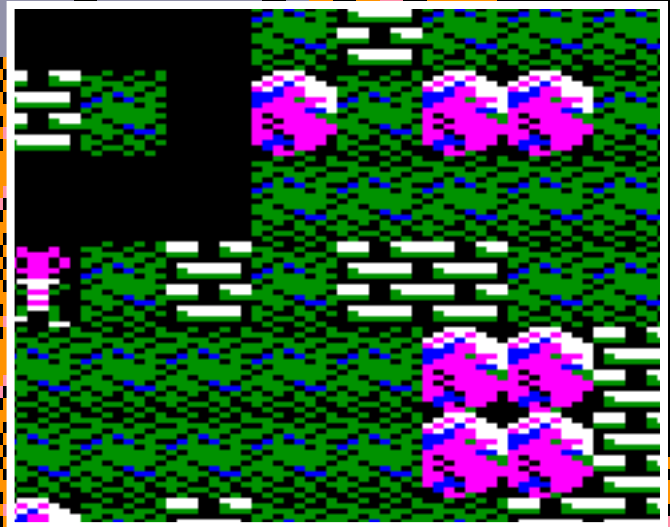
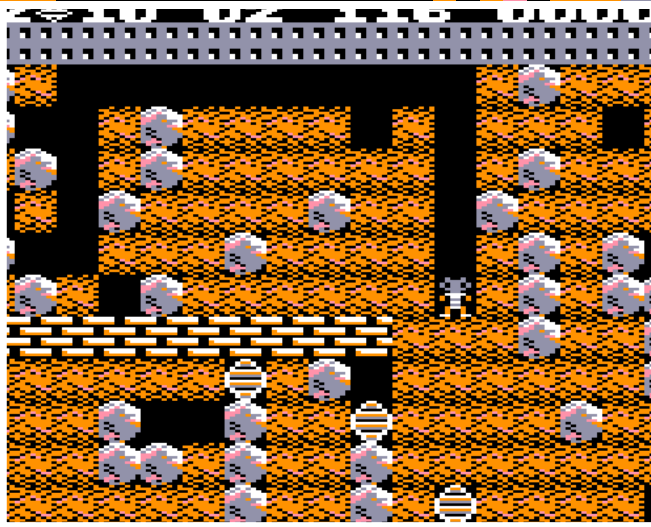
Rockford must explore various caves in an effort to hunt down the many diamonds within. The player controls Rockford through the 16 caves, each of which contain several sections, in the hunt for diamonds. Rockford has the ability to dig through earth with ease, however, he must avoid hazards that are littered throughout. Although boulders can be pushed, falling rocks can be lethal and will take one of Rockford's lives if any of them hit him. Wild life such as fireflies, butterflies, and amoeba should be avoided.

Fireflies will explode on contact with Rockford, however, they can be destroyed by dropping a boulder on them. Butterflies will turn into jewels when they explode. Amoeba is a green like fungus that expands through earth and air. Both fireflies and butterflies explode when they fly into the amoeba. Rockford can surround amoeba with rocks, turning it into jewels, however, if the amoeba is not attended to it will eventually die off and turn into boulders.

Each cave has five difficulty levels. The greater the difficulty, the less time the player is given to collect even more jewels. Collect enough jewels and Rockford will be able to exit the cave, and head into the next one. Rockford has three lives available, although a bonus life is awarded after gaining 500 points. Points are awarded according to the cave, the difficulty level chosen, and bonus status.

The working title of the game was *Cavern Raider*, and several variants like *Cavern Crystals*. The name "Boulder Dash" was chosen as a play on the word "balderdash".

Further games released in the series on the Amstrad include *Boulder Dash Construction Kit* and *Boulder Dash 3*. A special *Boulder Dash: 30th Anniversary*, which was co-published by TapStar Interactive and First Star Software, Inc. with input from the original creator Peter Liepa, was released on Android and iOS in 2014, with the game later appearing on the PC and Mac in 2016.



Boulder Dash was a critical success with most reviewers and holds a 79% aggregate rating from five reviews.

Amstrad Computer User gave *Boulder Dash* a perfect five-star rating with the reviewer describing the game as “beautifully written”, with “rapid and smooth” scrolling. With “plenty of little touches”, the reviewer added that the game is “incredibly addictive”, and has the “strongest ‘Just one more game and then I’ll finish’” element encountered.

The game was given an ‘AA Rave’ award in *Amstrad Action*. The reviewer stated that the caves are “very colourful” and “feature some real brain-aching problems to be solved”. The sound was described as “good with explosions, the crash of falling rocks, the tinkle of tumbling jewels and the scrape of Rockford’s feet”. Although the scrolling was also praised, the reviewer thought that it wasn’t 100% smooth.

Although *Amtix!* described the Amstrad version’s visuals the best yet, they were not too impressed initially, especially with the scrolling. Having played the game quite a bit, the version was deemed “different rather than inferior” and that “it’s incredibly addictive, highly colourful and, on the whole, excellently animated”.

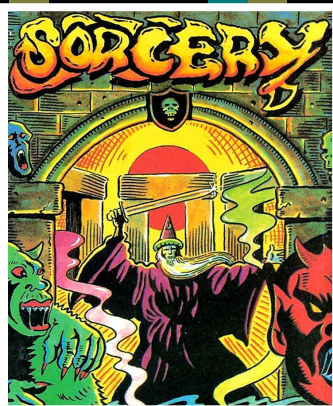
J.R. of *Home Computing Weekly* called *Boulder Dash* a “sure fire winner” with “the collapse of a massive pile of boulders a joy to watch”. J.R. also pointed out the attention to detail when the player stops playing mid-game and the hero will stand on screen, hands on hips, tapping his foot.

Ratings

93%	<i>Amstrad Action</i>
5/5	<i>Amstrad Computer User</i>
2/6	<i>Amstrad Semanal</i>
89%	<i>Amtix!</i>
4/5	<i>Home Computing Weekly</i>

SORCERY

"Get Sorcery or you'll turn into a frog"



Virgin Games

Programmed by

The Gang of Five

Original Idea by

Martin Wheeler

The evil forces of the Necromancer have invaded the ancient land that was once the realm of the Great Sorcerers. The once mighty Great Sorcerers have been defeated and captured. Only one Sorcerer stands alone against the evil forces and sets out to rescue his fellow Sorcerers and rid the land of evil once and for all.

A single flick screen arcade adventure where the player takes on the role of the last Sorcerer. The mission will take the player across the many screens of the kingdom in a mission to free the imprisoned Sorcerers.

Many of the screens have objects that may prove useful to the mission, while some doors will require keys to open them. The player will also need to battle demons, ghosts, and witches that roam the ancient lands. Contact with any of these creatures will drain the player's energy. Fortunately, weapons such as swords can be collected to fight with while energy can be replenished by using the cauldrons. The Necromancer can only be defeated with the combined force of all the freed Sorcerers. Once all the Sorcerers have been rescued, they will gather at the Sanctuary in wait for the final battle.

Sorcery Plus was released on diskette only later the same year of 1985. This version took advantage of the fast loading media format and included an extra 40 screens, the ability to save high scores, and other features.





Sorcery mostly received critical acclaim and was a commercial success. The game entered the UK Gallup games software chart at number one upon its initial release and topped the Greek chart on seven separate months, making it the most successful game of 1985. Tallying up all ratings of reviews from six publications the game holds an aggregate score of 90%.

Amstrad Computer User award the game their 'Game of the Month' accolade with a perfect five star rating. The reviewer stated that "*Sorcery* is excellent value for money" and combines "problem solving" with "dexterity and slickness of an arcade game."

Computer + Video Games gave the game their 'Star Game' accolade, stating that the "graphics are stunning — beautifully drawn and animated – showing what can be done with the Amstrad", while also praising the gameplay as "absorbing and totally addictive".

Your Computer stated that "all 40 screens and all the sprites in this game have clearly had hours of tender loving care lavished upon them".

Paul Gardner from *Computing With the Amstrad* praised the visuals, stating that "graphically it is a masterpiece". He went on to state that the game was "likely to sell out quickly" and believed it would be the "game of 1985".

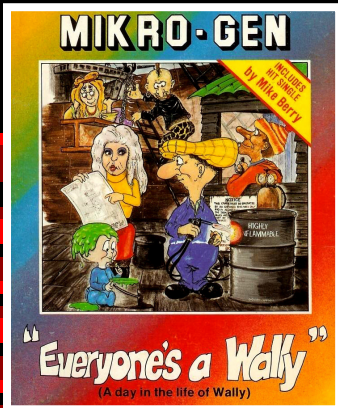
Home Computing Weekly compared the "smooth fast movements" of the game to "cartoon animation". They commented on the game's requirement for "fast reactions and dexterity with the joystick" and that the player would be "riveted to [their] seat right from the opening titles".

Ratings

5/5	<i>Amstrad Computer User</i>
5/5	<i>Home Computing Weekly</i>
7/10	<i>MicroManía Primera Época</i>
9/10	<i>Personal Computer News</i>
5/5	<i>Pixel</i>
4/5	<i>Your Computer</i>

EVERYONE'S A WALLY

"Come in and Meet the Gang"



Wally Week (a builder) along with his family, Wilma (his wife), Tom (the punk), Dick (the plumber) and Harry (the electrician), must all complete a day's work each to receive their wages.

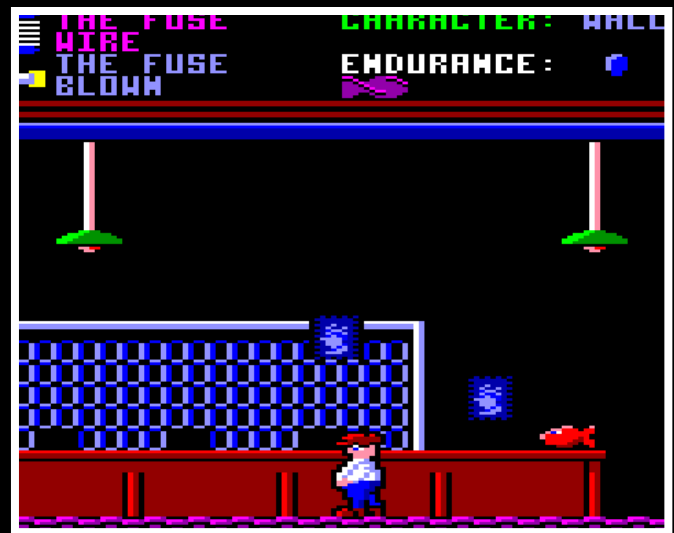
An arcade adventure where the player's task is to take control of Wally's family in their quest for wages. The first playable characters is Wally with switching to other members of his family achievable at certain points in the adventure. When Wally's family are not controlled by the player they will wander around the town under the control of the computer's A.I.

The town is split into single-screen locations such as The Park, The Station, The Docks, The Garage, and many more. The player will need to explore these locations to complete certain tasks along the way. There are various tasks needing completed, of which only certain members of the family can carry out. Upon completion of each person's workday, they are given one of five letters that, when arranged, spell out the combination code to the safe that holds their wages.

Mikro-Gen

The Wally Week series comprises of *Automania* (1984, non-CPC), *Pyjamarama* (1984), *Everyone's A Wally* (1985), *Herbert's Dummy Run* (1986), and *Three Weeks in Paradise* (1986).

The original cassette tape release of the game came with a bonus soundtrack on side 1. Performed by actor and singer Mike Berry, the song was a humorous account of the game's story.



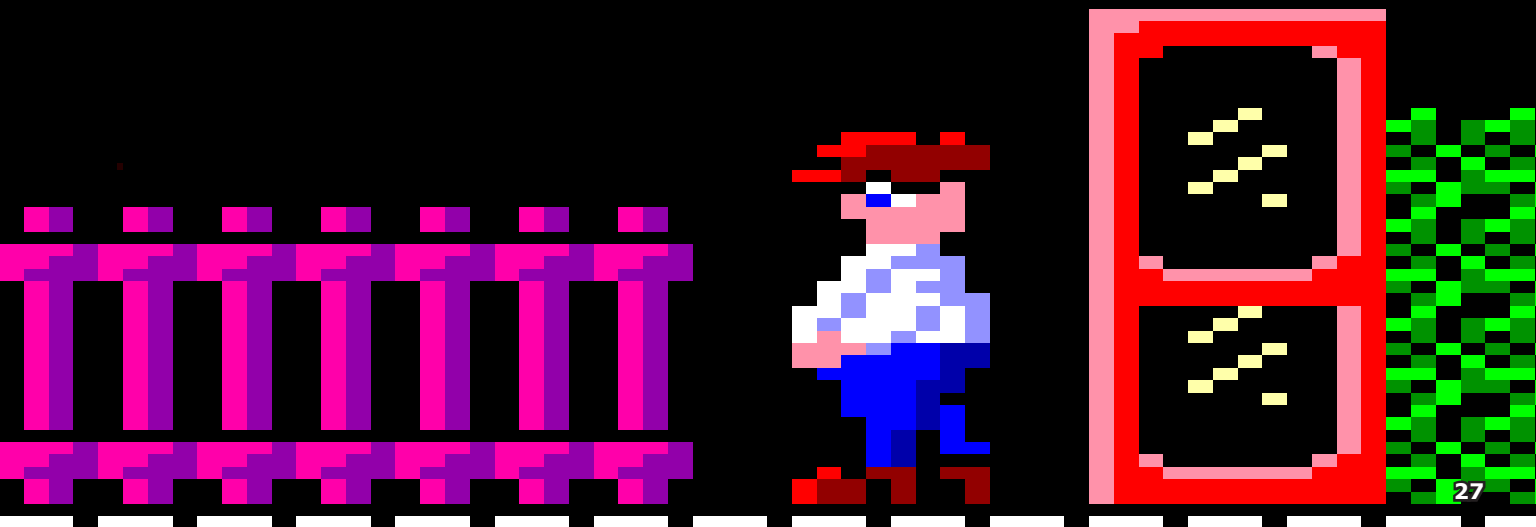
Everyone's A Wally was given limited coverage during its initial release, although was well received with high ratings. The game holds an aggregate rating of 96% from two reviews.

Bob Wade of *Amstrad Action* commented on the game's "brilliant graphics and animation," while also noting the "novel multi-character control" and "ingenious tasks and skills." Wade concluded that the game is "a true arcade-adventure," but "may take a while to get into without clues," and can be "frustrating to complete several tasks and then die through a small error."

Home Computing Weekly's reviewer, credited as D. M., mentioned that many conversions are usually "half-hearted" and did not take advantage of the target computer's capabilities, "this is different, and it's superb," stated D.M. While the original Spectrum featured monochrome graphics, the CPC version was in "glorious colour with smooth movement, and sound effects". D.M. then rounded the review off by stating that the game is "better than most cartoons on TV and even, dare I write it, better than *Sorcery!*"

Ratings

92%	<i>Amstrad Action</i>
5/5	<i>Home Computing Weekly</i>



THE WAY OF THE EXPLODING FIST

"Become a master of this mysterious ancient art..."



Melbourne House

Developed by

Beam Software

Game Design:

Gregg Barnett

Programming:

Cameron Duffy and

Damian Watharow

Graphics:

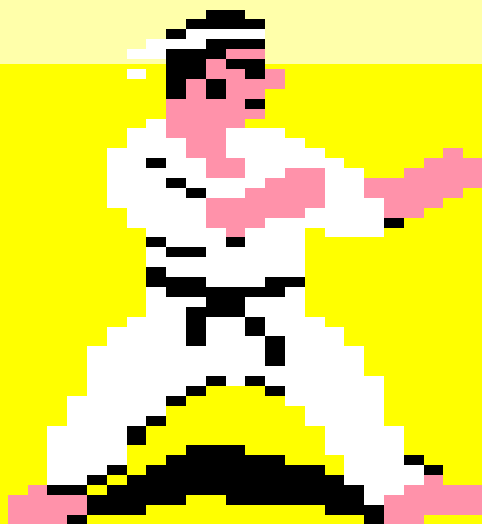
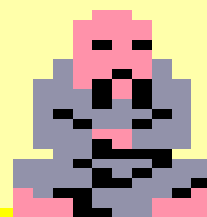
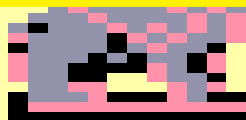
Greg Holland

An ancient fighting arts challenge is taking place with each competitor given the chance to progress from novice to Tenth Dan. Each challenge is won by achieving two out of three rounds against the opponent.

A one or two player one-on-one karate fighting game. The one player mode takes the white fighter through a succession of progressively harder opponents with the goal of reaching Tenth Dan. A two player game has the participants facing off against each other in a bout of four rounds with the highest points gained at the end declared the winner.

Scoring is based on the yin/yang system. A slight hit against an opponent will give the player a half yin/yang symbol, while a full on hit, which will knock out the other player, will gain a full yin/yang. With a combination of joystick movement and fire button, the player can perform various moves, including jab punch, high punch, low punch, flying kick, high kick, mid kick, leg sweep, somersaults, blocks and more.

The then World Karate Champion, Jeoffrey Thompson, helped promote the game. The game's front packaging included a blurb "'Beat this' Jeoffrey Thompson World Karate Champion', while the back included 'It's pretty hard to beat me but *The Way of the Exploding Fist* gave me my hardest fight yet.'"





The Way of the Exploding Fist was well received upon its release, gathering an aggregate rating of 86% from eight reviews. The game was also a commercial success across Europe. The game held the number one spot in the UK Amstrad software chart for three months, topped the charts in Greece for four months, topped the charts in Spain, peaked at number five in France, and peaked at second spot in Germany. This worldwide success across two years helped the game become the second most successful game of 1985 and third most successful of 1986.

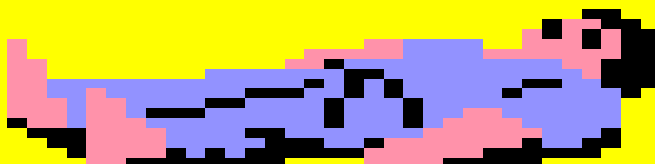
Amstrad Action's Bob Wade gave the game the magazine's coveted 'Master Game' accolade. He praised the "excellent" animation of the fighters, but felt the fights sounds were not "all the could be". Importantly, the "control is easy although perfecting it so that you can take on the computer's best is another matter altogether".

James Riddell commented in his *Computing With the Amstrad* review that the game has two features that make it a success: the "quality of the animation" and that the player's success or failure is entirely attributable to their own skill.

Your Computer thought that the game "survived the trip from the CBM-64 to the CPC 464 almost undamaged" with the graphics "as good as the original, speed of response is just as crisp, and the 18 different types of blows, jumps, blocks and kicks are all there". Their only niggle was that the sound is disappointing.

Ratings

94%	<i>Amstrad Action</i>
5/5	<i>Amstrad Computer User</i>
6/6	<i>Amstrad Semanal</i>
84%	<i>The Amstrad User</i>
4/5	<i>Home Computing Weekly</i>
4/5	<i>MicroManía Primera Época</i>
7/10	<i>TU Micro Amstrad</i>
4/5	<i>Your Computer</i>



LORDS OF MIDNIGHT

“Welcome to the World’s first-ever Epic game.”



Thousands of moons ago, the land of Midnight was a lush green world filled with many forms of life. That was before Doomdark the Witchking, a dark mage who murdered and succeeded the king, brought an eternal winter across the land. With winter solstice approaching, Luxor, Morkin, Rorthron and a Fey warrior Corleth gather their armies and set out to bring down Doomdark and his evil forces.

An adventure, role-playing, strategy game where the player controls Luxor the Moonprince and his loyal commanders against the computer controlled forces of Doomdark and his followers. As the player control the characters, the screen displays their perspective viewpoint of the world. As part of their turn, the player can choose to look, move, think, or choose. Any battles are won by numerous factors, including the effectiveness of the commanders, the terrain type, quantity of troops and Doomdark’s ice-fear.

The game has two main winning scenarios where the player can defeat Doomdark. The first is an all out war by moving Luxor’s armies to attack Doomdark’s Citadel of Ushgarak and the second is sending Morkin, Luxor’s Son, to the Tower of Doom for the task of destroying the Ice Crown, Doomdark’s power source. Doomdark wins if he kills Morkin and manages to bring down the armies of the free.



Beyond Software/ Amsoft

Original version by
Mike Singleton
Amstrad conversion by
Rick Brown

The game came with a 32-page booklet that not only included the gameplay and loading instructions, but also the ‘*Midnight Chronicles*’ (a short story prelude to the game), and an illustrated map of Midnight itself.

The follow up, *Doomdark’s Revenge*, arrived the same year of 1985. The series was originally conceived as a trilogy with a third part titled *Eye of the Moon*. A further sequel called *Lords of Midnight: The Citadel* was eventually released in 1995 on the PC.

With input from Mike Singleton and Chris Wild (the author of the PC conversion in 1995), the game was given a modern remake for the iOS and OS X platforms in 2012 and for Windows and Android platforms in 2013.



Lords of Midnight was critically acclaimed upon its release, and holds an aggregate rating of 95% from three reviews. Despite the critical response, the game's commercial success was fairly moderate, peaking at number 10 in the UK Gallup software chart.

Your Computer gave the game a full five-star rating, with the reviewer stating that "even a year after the launch of the Spectrum version, this game still looks state-of-the-art."

The game received an 'Amtix! Accolade'. While the reviewer felt that the graphics weren't "anything special compared to other adventure games", he praised the game for its "redefined character set" which "adds a lot to the visual impact." He added that the "whole project was very well thought out" and the Amstrad version "lives up to all expectations."

Bob Wade covered the game in *Amstrad Action*, awarding the game an 'AA Rave'. He stated that the "graphics are exceptionally good" with "so many detailed locations". Bob commented on the longevity of the game, highlighting the "combination of war-game and adventure means you can play one or other or both depending on which you prefer — but either will take a long while to complete."

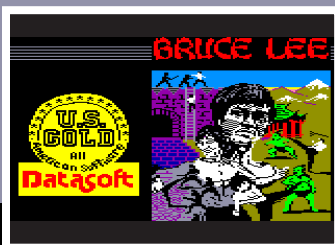
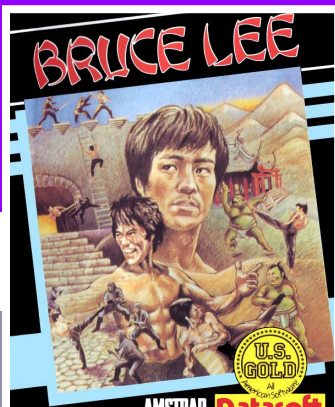
CPC Schneider International reviewed *Lords of Midnight* with the reviewer commenting on the successful presentation of the screens with different landscapes. They also highlighted the choice of menu-driven adventure and strategy game makes the game an attractive proposition for gamers.

Ratings

91%	<i>Amstrad Action</i>
93%	<i>Amtix!</i>
5/5	<i>Your Computer</i>

BRUCE LEE

"Now you too, can experience the excitement of Bruce Lee... The legend lives on."



US Gold

By
Ron J Fortier
Game, Graphics by
Datagsoft

Legendary martial arts master, Bruce Lee, has discovered the location of immortality and great wealth within an Evil Wizard's fortress. However, standing in his way are the Wizard's two trusted henchmen, the Ninja and Green Yamo, who will both pursue Bruce relentlessly throughout the fortress.

Bruce Lee is a classic style platform beat 'em up within the fortress world represented by single screens. The various platforms in each screen must be negotiated in an effort to find the lanterns which will allow Bruce to progress to the next screen. The Ninja and Green Yamo are just as skilled at martial arts as Bruce and will take some doing to dispatch them. Even when they have been disposed of, it is only temporary as they soon recover for another fight.

As well as avoiding the Ninja and Green Yamo, Bruce has to negotiate the various obstacles and dangers that await him. Nodules on the platforms shoot flames up when activated by any touch. Spikes also await any careless fighter who falls off any gaps in the levels. Numerous player scenarios enable the player to face off against the computer, or two players can face off against each other, one being Bruce, the other being the Green Yamo. There is also two player option of taking turns against the computer or against another human opponent.

There have been a fair bit of activity in remaking this classic game. First up is a remake from Mark Rosten using Blitz Basic to develop the game for the PC in 2001. *Ultimate Bruce Lee* was Ovine's entry into the 2008 Retro Remakes competition and is not just a remake for the PC, but a huge tribute to the original. Then there is *Bruce Lee* (aka *Super Bruce Lee II*) by Cez Remakes (Toni Rocket) that was released on Windows in 2005 and revised in 2009. *Bruce Lee II* is a sequel developed in the style of the original and was developed by Bruno R Marcos for Windows in 2013.



Bruce Lee received mostly positive reviews from gaming publications. The game holds an aggregate rating of 78% from four reviews.

Amtix! gave the game their 'Amtix! Accolade' award with the reviewer stating that "*Bruce Lee* possesses a quality rarely found in this type of game. It has style, atmosphere and superb playability. One of the best games of the Amstrad to date."

Amstrad Action's Bob Wade praised the game for its "colourful and well designed" screens, and stated that the two-player mode adds "an interesting new game dimension" where one player can take Yamo's role.

CPC Schneider International felt that *Bruce Lee* is almost a 100% success: clean graphics, a first-class two-player option, successful gameplay which raise the game above the average. And it is more interesting than all the endless *Manic Miner* clones.

CPC felt that the game leaves little room for fighting, what with the size of the characters reducing their skills to just kicks and punches. The reviewer criticized the graphics as being poor, but thought the animation was spot on, and would have preferred a Kung Fu game with better graphics and more focused on the actual fighting aspect.

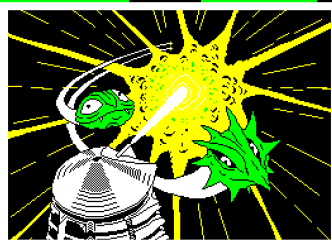
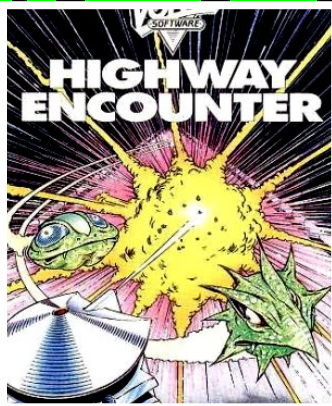
Amstrad Computer User's reviewer was disappointed with the "rather tame crunches and thuds" of the sound effects, and also singled out the backdrop (for being chunky with no shading) and the visuals (small characters). However, the reviewer stated that "playability is the most important thing and it is here that *Bruce Lee* wins."

Ratings

88%	<i>Amstrad Action</i>
93%	<i>Amtix!</i>
7/10	<i>MicroMania</i>
6/10	<i>TU Micro Amstrad</i>

HIGHWAY ENCOUNTER

"Once you're on it... there's no turning back."



Vortex Software

1985

Original program

Costa Panayi

Amstrad conversion

Mark Haigh-Hutchinson

Aliens have landed on Earth and are hell bent on world domination. With only a single road left before they reach their goal, five Vortans escort the 'Lasertron' (an advanced weapons system) to the alien stronghold of 'Zone Zero' with the aim of ending the alien threat.

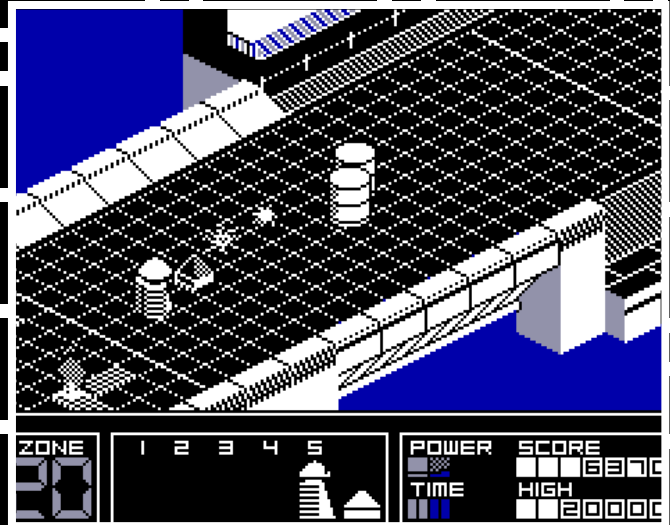
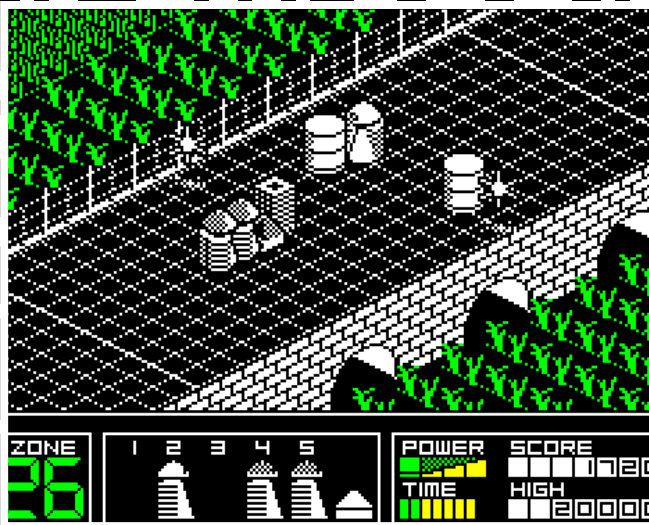
An isometric single screen puzzler where the player controls the Vortan leader as he negotiates the obstacle ridden highway, followed by four droids and the 'Lasertron' weapon. Each of the thirty screens contains obstacles to overcome (explodable blocks, glass blocks, flames, mines) or enemy droids, crafts to deal with.

The Vortan leader has a laser weapon which can be used in short bursts of three before the need to recharge. This weapon can be used to fire on the enemy as well as moving around objects such as barrels that obstruct the Vortans' path. If separated from the leader, the line of droids will continually advance up the screen unless stopped by an object. All these elements give the game an intuitive strategy feel. Each of the five Vortans represents the player's lives, so if one dies, the player loses one life.

The 3D isometric engine found in *Highway Encounter* was implemented after Costa Panayi and Mark Haigh-Hutchinson were shown an early copy of *Knight Lore*. According to Haigh-Hutchinson, *Highway Encounter* was the third isometric game released on computer, after *Ant Attack* and *Knight Lore*.

After leaving University in July 1985, Haigh-Hutchison started full time at Vortex with the task of converting *Highway Encounter* onto the Amstrad CPC. It took eight weeks in total for the conversion process.

Haigh-Hutchison took on full responsibility for the development of the sequel, *Alien Highway: Encounter 2*, which appeared the following year. The game retains many aspects of the original while improving in other areas.



Highway Encounter received mostly positive response upon its release, and holds an aggregate rating of 87% based on seven reviews. The final aggregate rating might have been higher had it not been for one slightly underwhelmed reviewer. Commercial success was fairly moderate, peaking at number nine in the UK, eight in France, five in Spain, and four in Greece (spending most of the year in the top ten).

Amstrad Action's Bob Wade gave *Highway Encounter* an 'AA Master Game' accolade (Game of the Month) and described the game's graphics as "beautifully smooth" and "reminiscent of Ultimate's 'Filmation' but faster and with a lot more action." Bob pointed out that from the "terrific loading screen onwards it's sheer addiction."

Amtix!'s reviewer described *Highway Encounter* as "one of the best games" he had played on the Amstrad, praising the "brilliant graphics, addictive and objective gameplay". They also praised the game's 'just another go' addictiveness with its challenging qualities.

Computer + Video Games pointed out that they had already reviewed the Spectrum version, but the "Amstrad conversion is just so good" they couldn't ignore it! The reviewer commented that with *Highway Encounter's* "terrific mixture of action and strategy", it "must rate as one of the top three games for the Amstrad."

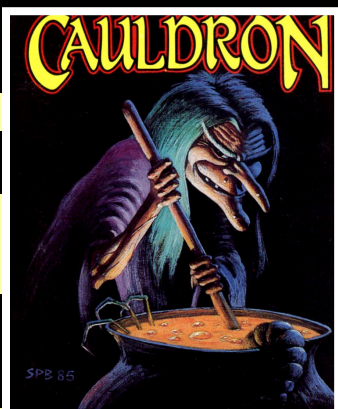
The Amstrad User commented on *Highway Encounter's* addictive and interesting qualities but suggested green monitor owners may want to see it before buying. The reviewer "felt the game was overpriced, representing only fair value for money".

Ratings

95%	<i>Amstrad Action</i>
5/6	<i>Amstrad Semanal</i>
62%	<i>The Amstrad User</i>
92%	<i>Amtix!</i>
4/5	<i>Home Computing Weekly</i>
5/5	<i>Pixel</i>
5/5	<i>Your Computer</i>

CAULDRON

"Harken witches everywhere, take the challenge – if you dare"



Palace Software

Designed by
Steve Brown and
Richard Leinfellner

In the land of Harken, the witches are taking it upon themselves to compete against each other for the title of Witch Queen. The would be Witch Queen has to gain access to the underworld avoiding the evil pumpking's servant creatures while searching for the required ingredients for the ultimate spell: to rid the land of the evil Pumpking once and for all.

The action is viewed in a traditional platform side-view action with broomstick flying shoot 'em up elements thrown into the mix. Progress through the game involves a find and search for the correct keys to open the corresponding coloured doors to the underworld.

While flying on the broomstick, Hag can land on grassy areas as trees will cause problems. While traversing the land, various enemies will appear to cause harm, including bats, evil bouncing pumpkins, ghosts, skulls and witch eating plants.

The unique platform/shoot em up genre of the game was thought of after Steve Brown mentioned to Richard Leinfellner about there only being "either scrollers or platformers". Leinfellner felt that there was no reason why they couldn't combine them.

Originally envisioned as a licensed game for the cult classic *Halloween* film from director John Carpenter, the game took a different route due to developer Steve Brown's displeasure at the game's concept.

A sequel, *Cauldron II: The Pumpkin Strikes Back*, was released in 1986. A further game in the series was released in 1993 when *Super Cauldron* appeared on the Plus range.

A *Cauldron Remake* was released by Markus Hohmann in 2007. The game is available for the PC/Windows platform.



Cauldron was well received by reviewers with the main criticism being the game's intense difficulty. The game has a 91% aggregate rating from two reviews.

"The magic of the game lies in its combination of upstairs and downstairs — a broomstick game and a platform game," wrote Pete Connor in *Amstrad Action*. "It's all very smoothly done, with great graphics and spellbinding gameplay."

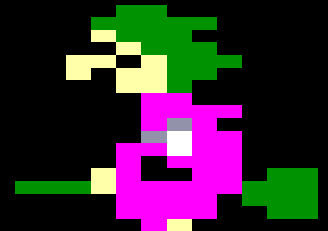
The reviewer for *Amtix!* stated that "*Cauldron* mixes the well-proven recipes of platform and shoot 'em up, and what is served to you is a game that gives a starter, main course and a sweet, yet leaves you hungry for more. One last point — this is a very hard game to play. It will take a great deal of skill and a lot of patience to complete."

Amstrad Computer User had concerns with the sound, which "ain't nothin' to write home about, and the visuals came under fire for being the "most foolproof and probably the messiest way of doing sprites that there is." They did add that "fortunately, you can get away with it if you have characters and backgrounds as lively as these."

Cauldron was also well received in *AM Mag*, receiving a five-star interest rating. The reviewer commented that *Cauldron* will certainly become a "best" in the genre. Special mention was reserved for the excellent programming and graphics, and that the game has the qualities required for international success.

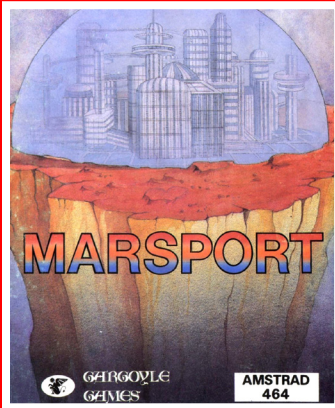
Ratings

89%	<i>Amstrad Action</i>
92%	<i>Amtix!</i>



MARSPORT

"...a determined man can sometimes achieve more than an army"



Gargoyle Games

Written by

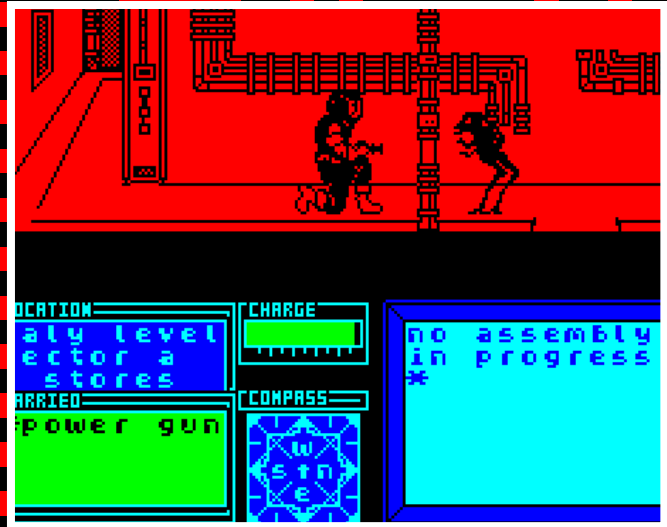
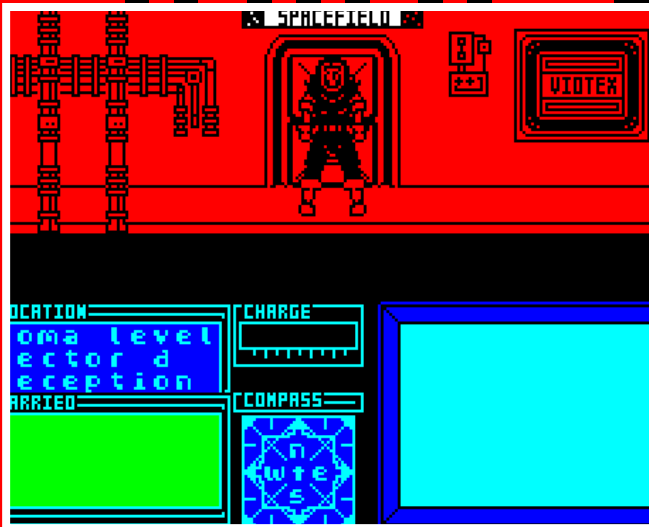
Greg Follis and Roy Carter

In the 24th century Earth comes under attack from an alien insectoid race known as the Sept. For protection against an inevitable siege, a force field is deployed around Earth and the Moon. However, the Sept eventually discover the force field's weakness and are about to make their move. There is a way to combat this weakness in the force field, but the necessary schematics lie within the confines of the Sept-occupied and computer booby-trapped Martian space port of Marsport. Commander John Marsh is sent on a mission to retrieve the force field schematics in a last hope for mankind.

Marsport is a science fiction "real time" adventure game with similar gameplay elements and viewpoint to Gargoyle's previous game *Dun Darach*. There are three main tasks to achieve in the game: locate the M-Central computer, access the original force field plans, and escape the city of Marsport with the plans.

While exploring Marsport, the player will come across many different beings, locked doors, and objects which all must be dealt with to progress in the game. Aliens are the most deadly beings that will be encountered while robots may also hinder progress. Finding a laser gun helps immensely, but it will need to be constantly re-charged at charge units. Supply units house various objects that can be used in the game while lockers are useful for storing them.

The game's package originally came with an illustrative map of Marsport city along with a detailed back-story to the game and the gameplay instructions.



Marsport was well received upon its release, gathering an aggregate rating of 90% from three reviews.

Amstrad Action praised *Marsport*, giving the game an 'Master Game' accolade, making it the game of the month. Bob Wade enthused that the game's instructions are "wonderfully atmospheric with Gargoyle's vivid imagination put to work again". He went on to compare *Marsport* to *Dungeons and Dragons* with similar "successful elements".

Amtix! were also taken with *Marsport*, commenting that the game "really warms up" once the gun has been found, and becomes "fun" and "terribly addictive". The reviewer also stated that the graphics are "very good", but weren't as impressed about the sound. They rounded off the review by stating that although there will be some people who dislike this type of game, "the majority will love it".

The game was also rated highly in *Computing With the Amstrad* as Richard Bell commented that the game opens up with the puzzles getting more complex and confusing. Richard described *Marsport* as a "clever and tough game" that "really tests your wits and mapping ability".

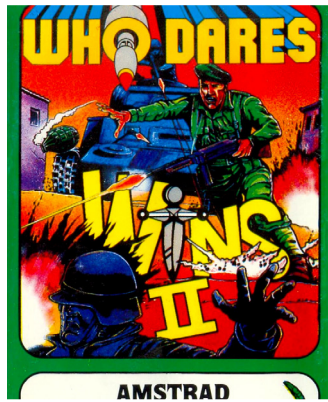
Amstrad Computer User also gave *Marsport* their 'Game of the Month' award, commenting that the graphics and animation are of a "very high standard", with its two colour visuals rather than the multicolour type. The reviewer went on to say that the size of the city and the problem solving elements makes *Marsport* a "very challenging game to play and well worth the price".

Ratings

95%	<i>Amstrad Action</i>
94%	<i>Amtix!</i>
8/10	<i>Computing With the Amstrad</i>

WHO DARES WINS II

"The others don't even get a fighting chance"



Alligata

By
Steve Evans

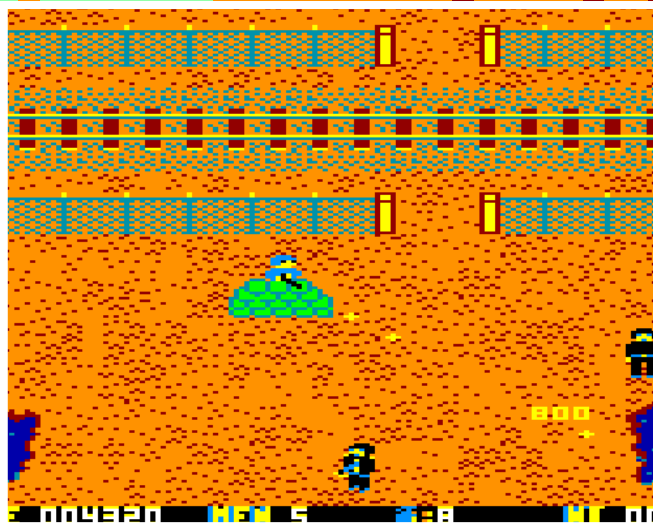
Dozens of soldiers are being held as prisoners within the stronghold of the 'armies of death'. A full scale rescue mission by a squad of armed forces is not an option. The only way to rescue the prisoners with minimal fuss is for a one man rescue mission to take place. One of the bravest soldiers volunteers for the virtual suicide mission and heads off into enemy territory.

The game is a single screen shooter with an element of strategy as well as action. As the player takes on the role of the brave soldier, they will have to negotiate their way through eight enemy outposts. Through the many landscapes of war torn buildings, walls, fences, rivers and railway lines, many enemy soldiers are waiting to stop the player dead in their tracks.

Being a soldier on a rescue mission, he has enough weapon ammunition to take them all on with an automatic rifle along with a limited supply of grenades. Each area must be cleared of all enemy soldiers before progressing onto the next area. The soldier will come across prisoners which need to be rescued from an executioner who is waiting nearby, so time is of the essence.

The title is rather misleading as it is not a true sequel, but rather *Who Dares Wins mk II*. In 1985 Alligata was involved in a legal battle with Elite Systems who, having just acquired the licence to develop *Commando* to home computers, thought that *Who Dares Wins* was a little too similar to the run 'n' gun arcade classic. The high courts agreed with Elite and placed an injunction against Alligata from releasing the game. To get around this injunction, Alligata changed the game's visuals and layouts slightly then released the game with the 'II' suffix.

The game was distributed in France by Infogrames under the title of *Comando Parachutiste* and in Spain by Microbyte as *Mercenario*, which both translate into English as *Commando Paratrooper* and *Mercenary* respectively.



Who Dares Wins II was mostly well received upon its release. It has an aggregate rating of 79% based on four reviews. The game was the fifth most successful game on the Amstrad in 1986, faring particularly well in Greece where it topped the charts two months on the trot and in France where it peaked at number two in the charts.

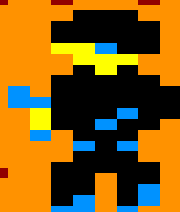
Amtix!'s reviewer thought that *Who Dares Wins II* "is a great little game and one which is very welcome". They commented on how the "flick screen system works pretty well", the "graphics are very nice and the semi 3D works really well." The reviewer felt that "the game is initially very easy, although from the second level onwards things start to become tough."

Computing With the Amstrad's Ian Dueren praised the visuals, stating that "the graphics are colourful with nicely detailed buildings, rivers, trees." Ian added that *Who Dares Wins II* is "an interesting and playable game that you keep coming back to, not just for a higher score but because there are a variety of ways to get through each screen."

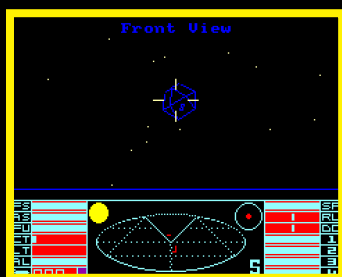
Amstrad Action's Bob Wade wrote that *Who Dares Wins II* "has tremendous 3D graphics and backgrounds with a wide variety of screens and challenges." And "although the blasting and killing may not suit everyone the game is a great little package of graphics, sound, demanding game play and a variety of features."

Ratings

83%	<i>Amstrad Action</i>
91%	<i>Amtix!</i>
8/10	<i>Computing With the Amstrad</i>
6/10	<i>TU Micro Amstrad</i>



1986

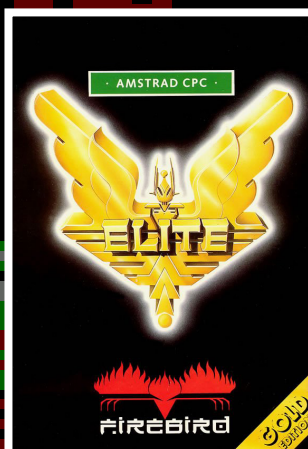
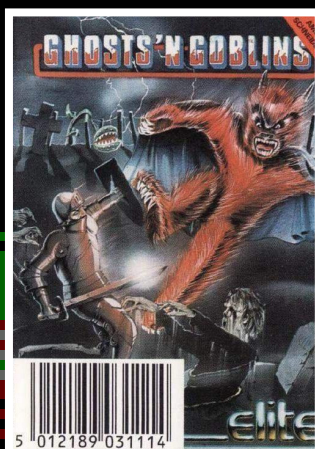


In April 1986, Amstrad bought out all existing Sinclair stock and the rights to manufacture Sinclair computers for £5m. This allowed Amstrad to launch two new re-designed Sinclair computers: the ZX Spectrum +2 (with integrated cassette tape deck) later in 1986 and the ZX Spectrum +3 (with integrated 3 inch floppy disk drive) the following year in 1987.

With both the Spectrum and CPC range of computers, Amstrad was now the market leader in sales of home computers in the UK. Amstrad had also overtaken Commodore as the biggest seller of low-end computers in Europe.

More magazines were launched this year. *TU Micro Amstrad* (April, Spain), *Amstar* (January, France), and the weekly *Amstradebdo et PC* (22 October, France).

On the games publishing front, more new faces appeared. Codemasters released *Vampire* (platformer released as *Phantomas*



2 in Spain), *Necris Dome* (text adventure) and *Super Robin Hood*.

In France three big profile companies began their Amstrad journey: Infogrames released *Mandragore*, while Titus Software released *One* and *Erebus*, and Ubi Soft released many games on their entry into the scene, including *Zombi*, *Fer et Flamme*, and *Manhattan 95*.

Dracula became the first game to receive a 15 age rating certification. The text adventure, which features gory cut scenes, was submitted to film sensors in the UK by publisher CRL.

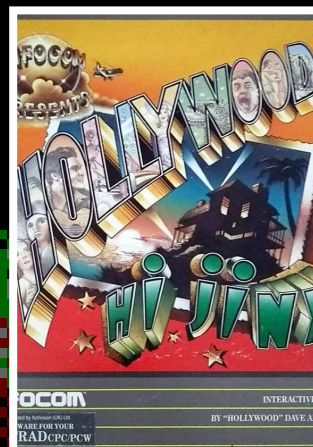
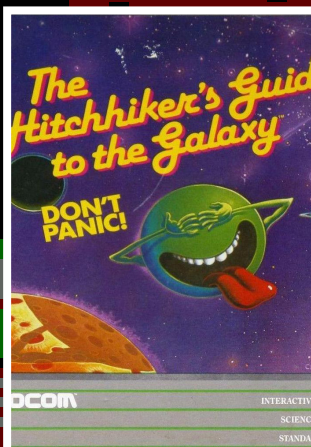
The games sales charts saw many successes throughout 1986. *Rambo*, *Kane*, and *Thrust* all spent two months on top of the UK charts. In Spain, *Sir Fred* was the stand out success of the year, spending three months on top. Greece produced a couple of big success stories with *The Way of the Exploding Fist* and *Dan Dare* both topping the charts four months each. While in Germany, *Spindizzy* spent two months as the number one game.

Top 10 Sales chart 1986

1. *Ghost 'n Goblins*
2. *Elite*
3. *The Way of the Exploding Fist*
4. *Way of the Tiger*
5. *Who Dares Wins II*
6. *Kane*
7. *Yie Ar Kung Fu*
8. *Formula One Simulator*
9. *Jack the Nipper*
10. *Green Beret*

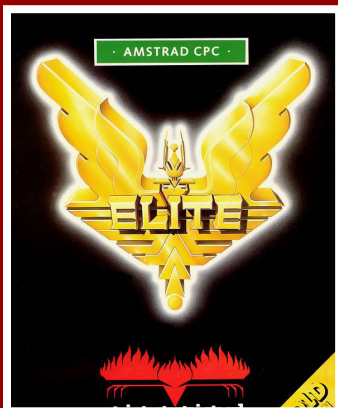
Top 10 Critics chart 1986

1. *Hitchhiker's Guide to the Galaxy*
2. *Tomahawk*
3. *Hollywood Hijinx*
4. *Batman*
5. *Get Dexter*
6. *Tau Ceti*
7. *Zoids*
8. *Thing on a Spring*
9. *Strike Force Harrier*
10. *Sacred Armour of Antiriad*



ELITE

“The game of a lifetime”



Firebird Torus

Original version written by
David Braben and **Ian Bell**

In the far future, Commander Jameson sets out for a life in the vast universe by partaking in bounty hunting, piracy, asteroid mining and trading, both legal and illegal.

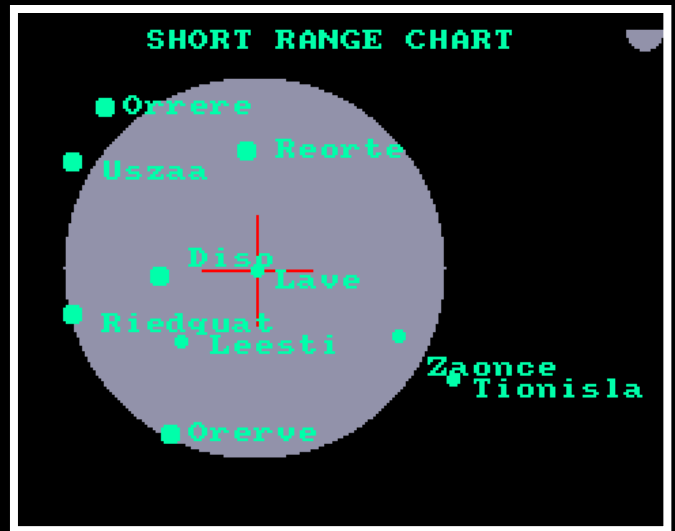
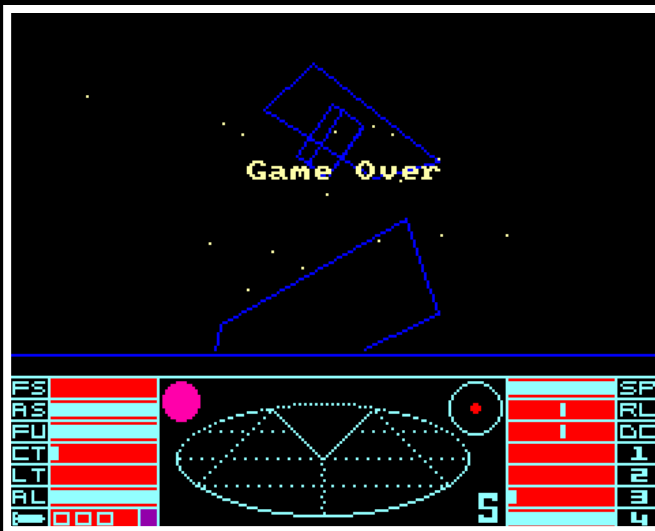
The player takes control of Commander Jameson as he starts his adventure at a space station with a basic space craft, limited homing missiles and limited credits. The universe is full of planets to explore with many alien life forms to interact and trade with. Every successful deal carried out will generate credits which can be used to purchase fuel, missiles, ship upgrades and more.

Progress through the game, surviving battles and destroying enemy ships will all increase the player's ranking. Although the main objective of the game is to gain the rank of 'elite', the game is open ended with the player allowed to progress through the game in any way or order of their choosing.

The game's package was a standout for the time of release with a large box, which included an in-depth 'Space Traders Flight Training Manual' and a novella 'The Dark Wheel' that is set in the same universe as the game.

Several non-CPC sequels followed with *Frontier: Elite II* in 1993, *Frontier: First Encounters* in 1995 and *Elite: Dangerous* in 2014.

The initial run of *Elite* on Amstrad CPC had a bug that affected the game, locking up after a few hours of play time. Firebird offered any affected gamers to exchange the game along with a £2 redeemable Firebird voucher. The fixed Amstrad version of the game carried the code name 'Metropolotan'.



Elite was generally well received upon its release, and has an aggregate rating of 85% from five reviews. *Elite* was the second most successful game of 1986, spending six months in the UK Amstrad top ten charts, six months in the Greek charts, and nine months in the German charts.

Amstrad Action's Bob Wade was impressed with *Elite's* "superb" display with its "excellent" vector graphics and smooth moving variety of colours. But most importantly, Bob praised the gameplay for being "wonderfully addictive" and succeeding in "taking you into a new world of challenge and danger".

Amtix!'s reviewer stated that "Amstrad *Elite* is harder than the Speccy version but not as hard as the Beeb version, which seems about the right formula". The reviewer went on to praise the great movement of the ship, with no noticeable flicker. They added that the "game itself is very complex and needs a fast finger and a shrewd mind".

Computer Gamer commented on how the "graphics owes more to the BBC than to the spectrum" and that they "are much smoother than the Spectrum". Overall, the reviewer stated that this "is as good as the Commodore or BBC versions of the game".

The *Amstrad User's* Darren Robinson wrote that "while it is undoubtedly the most sophisticated space game on the Amstrad to date, *Elite* is initially very difficult and much practice is required before you can be successfully fighting and trading between planets."

Ratings

94%	<i>Amstrad Action</i>
73%	<i>The Amstrad User</i>
17/20	<i>Amstradebdo</i>
94%	<i>Amtix!</i>
Nova	<i>Computer Gamer</i>
4/5	<i>MicroManía Primera Época</i>

SPINDIZZY

“...A 3-D game of skill...”



Electric Dreams

Designed and written by
Paul Shirley

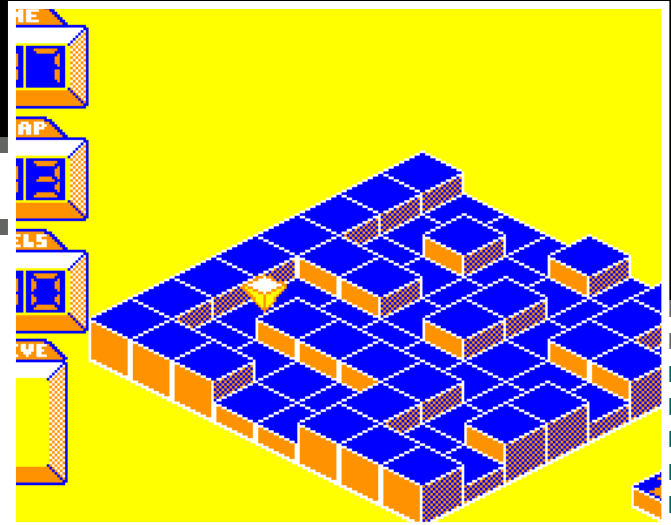
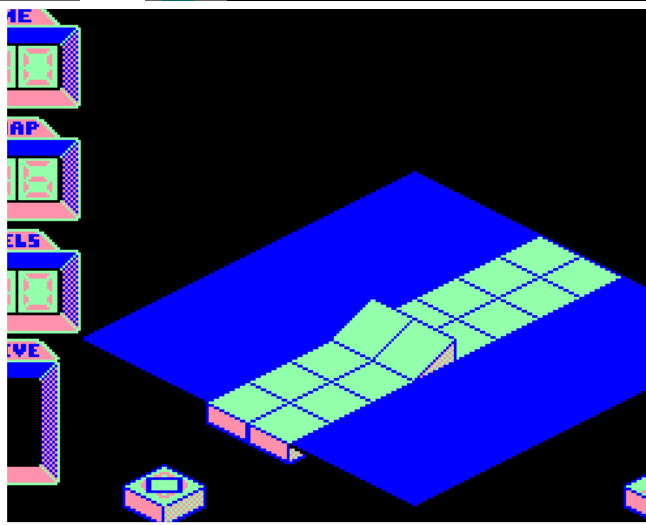
A large corporation has discovered a new dimension with a world hanging in space. With the use of a remote scout craft called the Geographic Environmental Reconnaissance Land-Mapping Device (GERALD), the corporation wants the strange world explored and mapped. This vastly important task has fallen onto the lap of the Trainee Assistant Cartographer of Unknown Worlds.

Spindizzy is a 3D isometric game with puzzle elements as the player controls GERALD across single screen landscapes. Each screen has its own hazards, be it corridors, ramps or walls, and careful manoeuvring of GERALD is needed to progress through the levels. With the new found world hanging in space, falling off any edge will result in the loss of a GERALD. Further GERALDs can be summoned, but cost money and time, while the collection of jewels that are scattered around the unknown world give the player more time.

To help in mapping the unknown world, there is a map function available with a press of 'M'. This will display all the areas that the player has explored (yellow) and the areas yet to be explored (red). Screens with a jewel still to be collected will show up as a blue 'J' over the area. The status display on the left of the playing screen also displays the time left for the mission, screens to map and jewels collected.

According to various published interviews with Paul Shirley, the main inspiration for the game was the original Ultimate isometric games. Despite the game bearing similarities to *Marble Madness*, Shirley insisted that he had *Spindizzy's* isometric game engine working before he had even seen *Marble Madness*.

Spindizzy Worlds was only released for the 16-bit computers, Amiga and Atari ST, in 1990 with a port appearing on the Super Famicom in 1992 and SNES in 1993. The game was released on the Sharp X68000 and NEC PC-9801 as *Spindizzy II*.



Despite the game receiving some incredibly positive reviews and ratings, the game was not the hit that it could and should have been. Shirley publicly blamed the poor marketing decisions made by Activision at the time for the game's lukewarm commercial performance.

Spindizzy received unanimous praise when it was released, gaining an impressive aggregate rating of 92% from six different magazine reviews. The game was a moderate commercial success, spending three months in the Amstrad top 10 Gallup software chart, and peaking at number four.

Amtix! gave *Spindizzy* a 98% rating — their joint highest rating. The reviewer praised the graphics as being the best he has seen, with very life like movement, inertia, and momentum realistically reproduced. They then stated that the game is "a truly outstanding release" and will "be used as a yardstick for future releases".

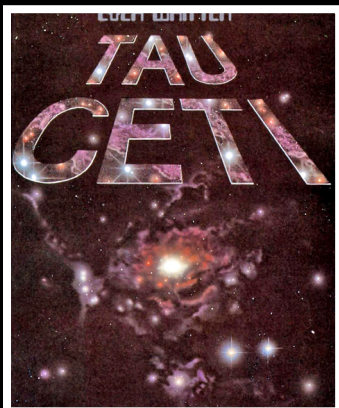
Bob Wade reviewed the game in *Amstrad Action* where he described the visuals as "superb with brilliantly designed screens". He pointed out that the game was developed on the CPC and converted to other formats, bringing him to state that "we are undoubtedly seeing the emergence of the Amstrad as a leader in games development rather than just a machine to be converted to."

Ratings

96%	<i>Amstrad Action</i>
98%	<i>Amtix!</i>
4/5	<i>MicroMania</i>
5/5	<i>Popular Computing Weekly</i>
7/10	<i>TU Micro Amstrad</i>
5/5	<i>Your Computer</i>
9/10	<i>Science & Vie Micro</i>

TAU CETI

"The greatest computer game ever written"



CRL

Written by
Pete Cooke

In 2050 humans began colonisation of the third planet of the Tau Ceti system with over 30 cities built across the desert surface. Unfortunately, a devastating plague rampaged across the new world and Tau Ceti III was left abandoned by the remaining survivors. Following a meteor shower, all contact had been lost with the planet's automatic security system, which was left active on the abandoning of the planet.

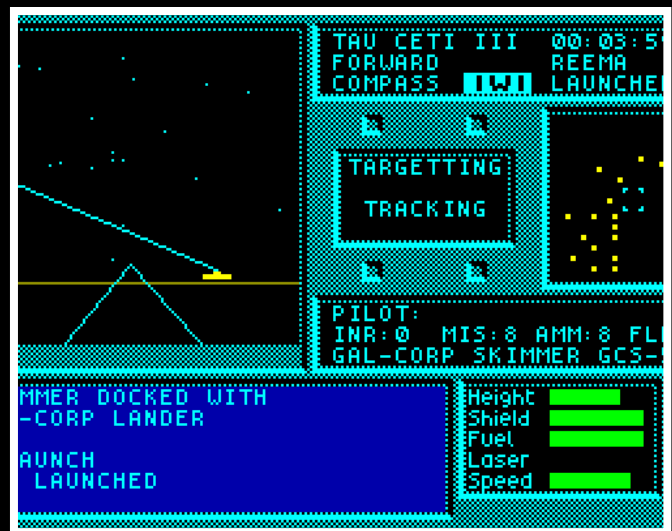
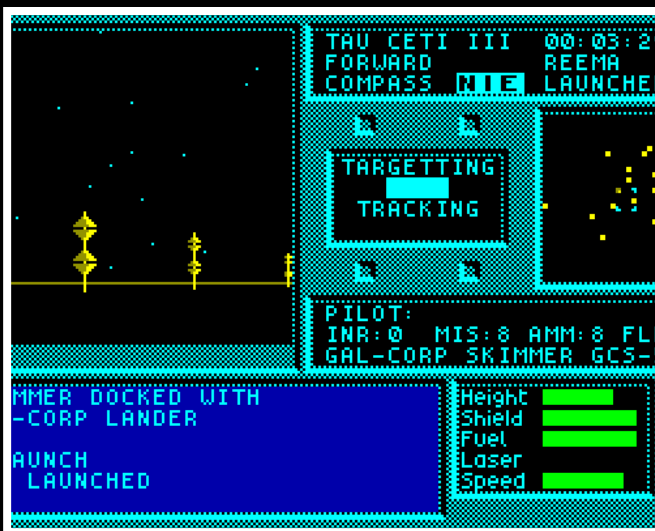
Several years passed and colonists decided to go back to Tau Ceti III with the intention of recolonisation. A spacecraft landed on the abandoned planet and a mayday message was immediately dispatched then silence. Experts deduced that the planet's security system was running amok. Seven years later a further expedition is sent to Tau Ceti III with the aim of disabling the malfunctioning defence systems.

A first person game set in a science fiction setting with the viewpoint from inside the skimmer where the player traverses through the airspace of the various cities of Tau Ceti III. The skimmer is equipped with a laser weapon and various limited missiles as well as a defensive shield, which will be needed to overcome the various threats such as robot hunters and armoured fortresses. The game also has a very distinct visual style as it displays Tau Ceti III's short day cycle with varying lighting and shadows.

The enhanced version, *Tau Ceti: The Special Edition*, features additional visuals and gameworld data libraries. The *Special Edition* was released on disk the same year of 1986.

A sequel named *Academy* was released in 1987. While *Academy* uses the same game engine as its predecessor, this time around the player is a pilot at the Galcorp Academy for Advanced Skimmer Pilots.

Pete Cooke had stated that he had been influenced by *Elite*, *Star Trek*, and a game called *Gyron*. The latter game used huge shapes that moved around and Pete wondered how they achieved it. The love of astronomy brought about the name, while the pre-mapped cities were influenced by classic sci-fi novels.



Tau Ceti received very positive reviews on its launch but had a fairly lukewarm response from gamers, entering the top 20 UK charts at the lower end before dropping away. The game has an aggregate rating of 91% based on two reviews.

The *Amtix!* review mentioned that when he first played the game, it “came across as being slightly boring”, but given time the game opened up, showing that “there is so much to it” and definitely one to get into if you want an “excellent and absorbing game”.

CPC Schneider International commented that the programmers have certainly implemented a lot of good ideas and it is graphically interesting. They then stated that if the player is patient, they can have a lot of fun with *Tau Ceti*.

In his review of the game for *Amstrad Action*, Bob Wade commented that “at first sight the game appears to be just another space shoot-em-up on a planet surface,” but further exploration of the game “reveals a far more complicated side to the game that brings in puzzling and strategy, creating a challenge of great depth and difficulty.”

Computer + Video Games pointed out that the Amstrad version came with “enhanced graphics, improved instrumentation and improved sound effects”, but the gameplay is “just as addictive”, and “if you only buy one game this year make it *Tau Ceti*”.

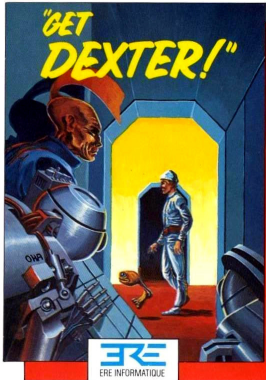
Ratings

93% *Amtix!*

88% *Amstrad Action*

GET DEXTER

"Crafton & Xunk"



ERE Informatique/ PSS

Author:

Remi Herbulot

Graphics:

Michel Rho

Music:

Jean-Louis Valero

The year is 2912 and a devastating war rages on Earth and is escalating out of control. If the unthinkable happens and the central galactic control computer on Earth is destroyed then all life on the planet will perish with it. The council of Sages make the decision to give Dexter, an android expert in dangerous missions, and Scooter his trusty Podocephalus, the mission to infiltrate the computer centre and gain access to the computer that controls the galaxy.

Get Dexter is a Sci-Fi arcade adventure game and one of the few games that were originally developed solely for the Amstrad CPC. The game is played out in an isometric landscape in a futuristic setting with plenty of puzzle solving. In order to gain access to the computer, Dexter needs to retrieve eight sections of a code with each section held by eight separate professors across the entire colony complex.

It's not just a case of wandering around and finding the codes, though, the colony complex is in lockdown with all doors locked and only accessible with the appropriate colour-coded key card, which have been left abandoned around the various rooms. Across the many rooms in the complex, items can be picked up, pushed, pulled or jumped on all in the need to reach that elusive objective. There are also hazards to avoid in the form of robots and staff of the complex, who will drain Dexter of energy if coming in contact.

Originally titled *Crafton & Xunk* in its native France and around Europe, the game was renamed for its release in the United Kingdom. The game was an Amstrad CPC exclusive until the Atari ST port that was released a year later in 1987.

The game's original packaging came with an 18-page prologue story book drawn by Michel Rho that leads into the game itself.

A follow up, *Get Dexter 2* (known as *L'ange de Cristal* in Europe), was released in 1988, updating and adding to the already established gameplay.



Universally acclaimed upon its release, the game is considered the first European hit to enter the UK, entering the Amstrad Gallup software charts at number two. The game has a 92% aggregate rating from five reviews. *Crafton & Xunk* received the 'Gold Tilt' for the best adventure / action software of 1986.

Amstrad Action's Bob Wade commented that *Get Dexter* has "marvellous graphics and animation, good title music, fast action, great puzzles, cartoon instructions, bags of humour, good personalities and hosts of surprise features."

Amtix!'s reviewer stated that "this is what an arcade adventure should be", and went on to comment on the "brilliant graphics", the "excellent characters", and the interaction with objects. They described the game as being "nicely balanced" by being "tricky at first but not impossible to solve".

While *Computer + Video Games* didn't give games overall ratings during its early run, it did gave *Get Dexter* perfect 10/10 marks in graphics, value, and playability, with only sound just missing out with a 9/10. The reviewer commented that while the graphics and animation are "excellent", there is also so much in the game that the player would want to keep coming back for more.

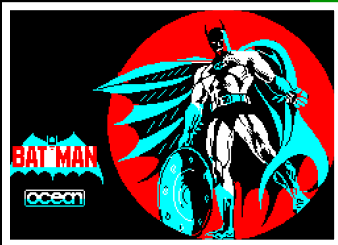
Jean-Michel Maman reviewed the game in *Amstrad Magazine*, writing that upon starting the game, the quality of the scenario and design is immediately apparent. With perfect programming, music, a good level of difficulty, Jean-Michel stated that the game would become a classic amongst these new adventure and arcade games.

Ratings

94%	<i>Amstrad Action</i>
94%	<i>Amtix!</i>
Nova	<i>Computer Gamer</i>
10/10	<i>Computing With the Amstrad</i>
80%	<i>Happy Computer</i>
9/10	<i>Science & Vie Micro</i>

BATMAN

"The vigilante of Gotham City."



Ocean Software

Written by

Jon Ritman

Graphics by

Bernie Drummond

Music by

Mark Serlin

The Caped Crusader sets out to rescue his sidekick, Robin, who has been captured by the Joker and Riddler. However, to do so requires Batman to hunt down the various parts to the Batcraft which are scattered around the dangerous catacombs of Gotham City.

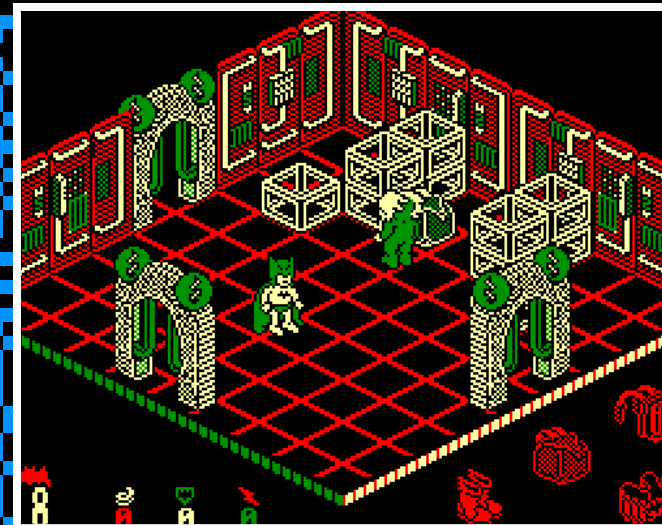
The player takes control of the Caped Crusader himself in this arcade adventure set in a 3D isometric world with elements of a platform puzzle game. Not only does Batman have to search for the seven parts of the Batcraft, he also has to deal with henchmen, puzzles and obstacles. First things first, though, he needs to collect his equipment: Batboots (needed for jumping), Batbag (used for carrying items), Bat-Thruster (allows Batman control when falling) and a Batbelt (which slows down the speed of descent).

Along the way, Batman will also be able to move objects, solve puzzles and negotiate gaps in levels with precision jumping. There are various monsters to overcome and some equally nasty spiked floors to avoid. With so many screens to explore, use of a map is absolutely essential. Thankfully, there are power ups to help the cause that can be collected. These include extra lives, energy boosts, temporary shield, and increased jump ability.

After seeing a pre-release version of *Knight Lore*, Jon Ritman wanted to produce his own take on the innovative isometric game. *Batman* was chosen as the hero and Ocean managed to sort out a licence agreement with D.C. Comics.

The game marked the first of many collaborations with graphics artist Bernie Drummond and his contribution is notable. Further games from the duo included *Head Over Heels*, *Match Day II*, and *Monster Max* (Game Boy).

A remake of *Batman* was released for the PC in 2010 by Retrospec. The game features the same classic isometric perspective with updated visuals.



Batman was well received by the gaming press upon its release, and holds an aggregate rating of 89% from four reviews. The game performed well in the UK Amstrad software chart, entering at number one and staying in the top for five months. The game also spent three months in the German Amstrad charts, peaking at number two.

Amstrad Action's Bob Wade admitted that at first sight the game seems fairly ordinary but "really opens out into a challenge." He alleviated fans of Ultimate's isometric games that this was not simply a "rip-off" again, but an improvement over those games that came beforehand. With better colour, design, and puzzling, Bob stated that *Batman* is "something truly special" and "Ocean's best yet."

Amtix! praised the game for its visuals, stating that the graphics are "very detailed" and the animation of Batman himself is "very lifelike and adds to the realism of the game." They also pointed out the sound, which "gives a good rendition of the television music." Overall, they stated that *Batman* is "one of the best 3D games on the Amstrad so far."

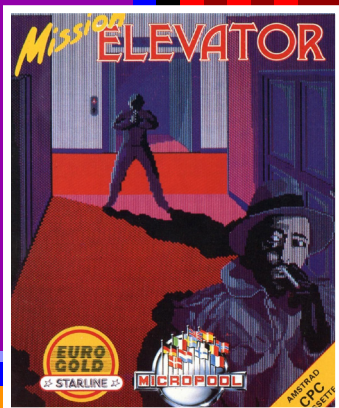
Amstrad Computer User praised the game for its "beautifully designed" sprites, but felt that "if there is room for criticism the game is too difficult, and once you have completed it you don't want to rush back for another go."

Ratings

93%	<i>Amstrad Action</i>
92%	<i>Amtix!</i>
82%	<i>Happy Computer</i>
9/10	<i>TU Micro Amstrad</i>
9/10	<i>Science & Vie Micro</i>

MISSION ELEVATOR

"We need a strong, tough and intelligent guy for this work"

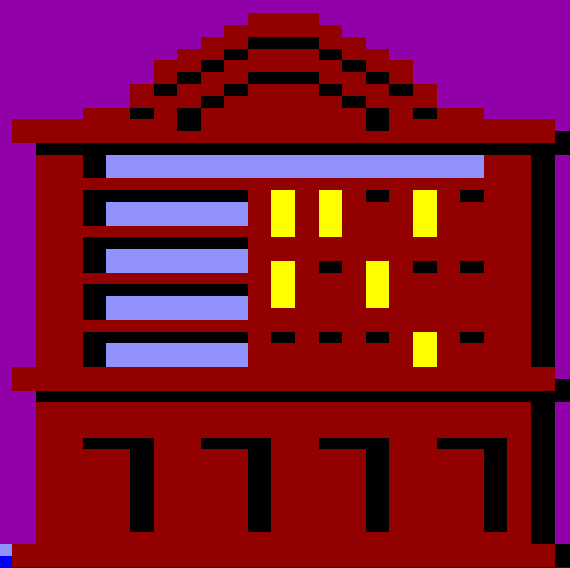
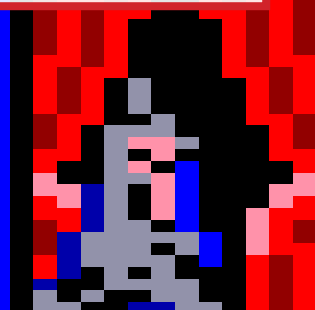


A hotel, which is a cover for one of the FBI's offices, has been sieged by a hostile Secret Service group who are trying to blackmail the US government to release a number of their members who are currently imprisoned. If the demands are not met by the deadline, the hotel will be destroyed along with the many FBI staff within. Luckily, a computer operator has managed to leave clues scattered around the hotel and, if pieced together, will provide the stopcode for the bomb planted on the upper floor. The FBI's superiors call on the services of Super Agent Trevor to infiltrate the hotel, piece together the stopcode clues and defuse the bomb.

A platform adventure game with puzzle elements. The hotel and game playing area is spread over several floors with access to each one by elevators. In search of the stop code the player can interrogate the members of the secret service group, talk to the bartender and carefully search the hotel's surroundings. It will be a game of cat and mouse, as the player uses stealth techniques to overcome the enemy and progress through the many floors of the hotel.



Eurogold





Mission Elevator was well received upon its release, and has an aggregate rating of 82% from five reviews.

Amtix!'s reviewers stated that *Mission Elevator* is "a very addictive game", but pointed out that it "gets increasingly difficult to dodge the bullets." Paul admitted that he was initially thinking "not another arcade adventure", but as he played it, he realised that this was far more in the *Impossible Mission* mould.

Computing With the Amstrad's Steve Brook praised the "brightly coloured" graphics, even if he did think they are a "little chunky". He praised the "complex arcade adventure" elements of the game with its "many items to examine and an infinite number of spies to shoot".

Computer + Video Games' Tim Metcalfe gave the game a 'C+VG Hit!' accolade. He commented on how the game will give a lift to even the most jaded gamer, and that it is "fast, well presented and very playable", and "one of the best games around for the Amstrad right now".

The Amstrad User's Ian Barnes commented that the "graphics for most of the game is very good", and added that "apart from some slight problems with positioning and the fact that you cannot reprogram the keyboard controls this is a very playable game that will present a challenge for quite some time."

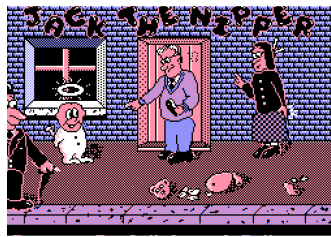
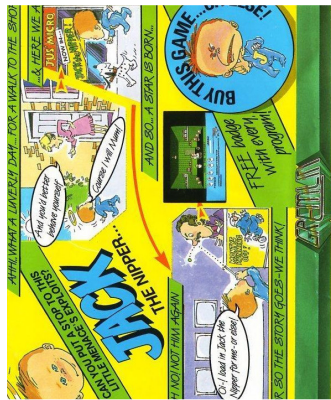
Amstrad Action's Bob Wade felt that if it "weren't for the special features this would be a fairly ordinary game in which a lot of time is spent running, searching and shooting". Bob pointed out that these "features do give it that extra something and combine with the tough gameplay to make a good game".

Ratings

18/20	<i>Amstrad Computer User</i>
85%	<i>Amtix!</i>
8/10	<i>Computing With the Amstrad</i>
71%	<i>Amstrad Action</i>
85%	<i>Happy Computer</i>

JACK THE NIPPER

"Are you too much of a wimp to play this game?"



Gremlin Graphics

Conversion by
**Greg Holmes &
Pete Harrap**

Young Jack reckons that life is pretty boring in his town. He comes to the conclusion that his town is full of wimps and goody two shoes who are sending him to sleep. Having had enough of this boring life, Jack sets off onto the streets with his pea shooter at hand with the aim to liven things up.

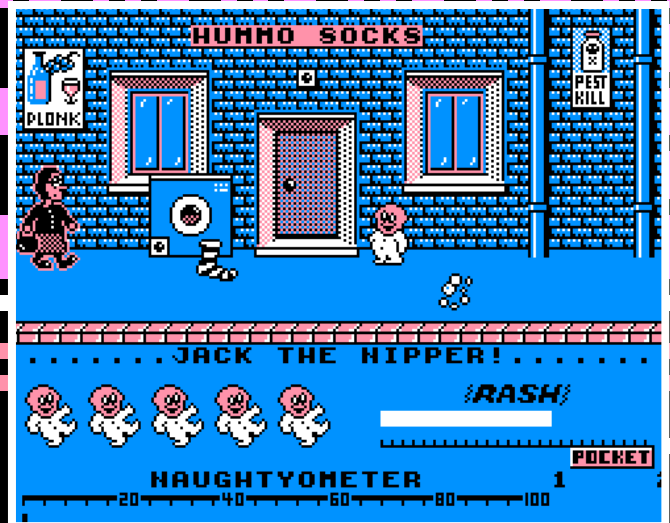
An arcade adventure game where the player takes control of Jack with the aim to cause as much havoc as possible. Jack's pea shooter can be used to hit people or to smash items while other pranks can also be carried out on the town's inhabitants. Objects such as soap powder, horn, fertiliser, floppy disk, glue and bomb can be used in pranks at the correct opportunity.

Jack's bad behaviour is measured by the 'naughtyometer' which will increase each time a successful prank is carried out. The main aim is to get the 'naughtyometer' up to 100%, however, if Jack is caught in the act by an adult, he will receive a spanking and his 'nappy rash' rating will increase. Coming in contact with any monster or ghost will also increase the 'nappy rash'. Once the 'nappy rash' is full, Jack will lose one of his three lives.

The game's premise came about when designer Greg Holmes wanted something different from the bland heroic characters that were rife in computer games at the time. Holmes wanted his main character to be naughty because he thought that would be more fun. Using the influence of comic strips such as *Sweeny Toddler*, Holmes came up with the character of Jack.

Near the completion of the game, Gremlin had considered acquiring licence rights to use the *Sweeny Toddler* — which followed the adventures of toddler Sweeny and his pet dog as they caused mischief around their home town. However, due to the completeness of the game and the thought of any possible change requests from the comic strip's publisher, it was decided to proceed with the Jack character.

A sequel titled *Jack the Nipper II: In Coconut Capers* was released in 1987. The game was a departure from the first game and followed a more traditional platform action affair.



Jack the Nipper was mostly well received upon its release, gaining an aggregate rating of 81% from six reviews. It was the ninth most successful game of 1986, with its biggest success being in Germany where it spent seven months in the top 10 with two of those months being at number one.

Amtix! described *Jack the Nipper* as "truly excellent" with the graphics appearing "as if they have been lifted out of a cartoon strip". Rounding things off, the reviewer stated that it was "good to see there is someone out there with a bit of humour and imagination".

Amstrad Action's Bob Wade felt that "trying to find all the objects and work out what to do with them is tremendous fun". He added that "the cartoon graphics really are good and add a great deal to the game's impact", and "you'll fall in love with this little horror straight away".

The game received *Computer + Video Game's* 'Game of the Month' award with Jim Douglas praising the sound with a "very melodic tune" that but he admitted that "it takes a lot of practice to see the potential of a truly wondrous naughty" action, "*Jack The Nipper* is very good indeed".

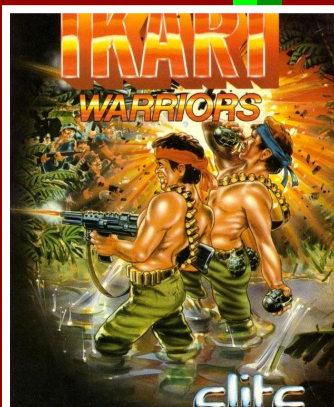
Amstrad Computer User's Nigel commented on the "pretty" Mode 1 graphics that give off a "cartoon effect". Although Nigel felt that he couldn't fault the programming or graphics, he suspected that once he completed the game he would not return to it.

Ratings

81%	<i>Amstrad Action</i>
16/20	<i>Amstrad Computer User</i>
15/20	<i>Amstradebdo</i>
93%	<i>Amtix!</i>
8/10	<i>Computing With the Amstrad</i>
74%	<i>Happy Computer</i>

IKARI WARRIORS

"The legendary coin-op conversion for one or two simultaneous players"



Elite Systems

Programming by

David Shea

Graphics by

David Shea and Jaffa

The U.S. forces headquarters in Central America has been seized by a band of mercenaries. Taken captive among the U.S. forces is General Alexander Bonn, although he did manage to send out a mayday message in time. Two warriors, Ralf and Clark are flown into enemy territory to carry out a rescue mission.

A vertically scrolling shoot 'em up converted from the well known arcade classic from SNK. At first look, the game seems identical to *Commando* with its vertical run and gun action, taking out any foot soldiers and tanks. However, the big difference with *Ikari Warriors* is the choice of simultaneous two player action, a huge winning option at the time of release.

Although the original arcade version worked with a rotary stick and two buttons-one for shooting and one for lobbing grenades-the home conversions had to use some ingenuity to get around this. To fire, the player has to press the fire button and to throw a grenade, they have to hold down the fire button. There are also two modes of moving: A) fire in the direction the character is moving and B) fire in a fixed direction.

Elite were looking for programmers, and David Shea went to see them. They needed to get *Ikari Warriors* converted to the Amstrad, and despite David only having experience of the Spectrum at that point, he said he could do it. Using a CPM machine to edit and build the game, David was able to get most of the game came together in around five weeks. David also did the graphics with some help from a graphic artist at Elite.

The original arcade game was followed up by *Victory Road* in 1986, which also made its way to the Amstrad CPC in 1988. *Ikari III: The Rescue*, which was more beat 'em up orientated, appeared in the arcades during 1989, but did not appear on CPC.



Ikari Warriors was well received upon its release, gaining an aggregate rating of 87% from six reviews. The game was the second most successful game of 1987, spending time in the top 10 charts in the United Kingdom, France, Spain, Greece, and Germany.

Amstrad Action's Bob Wade gave *Ikari Warriors* the magazine's 'AA Rave' accolade. He stated that "the two-player option is fantastic", and although "the gameplay isn't much different from *Commando*," the superb graphics are an improvement. He added that "this is real mindless addiction — you'll love it."

Amstrad Magazine commented on how the game was displayed in a somewhat narrow screen, but couldn't deny the quality of the colourful graphics and neat animation. They stated that the whole game is nicely done and is one for action fans.

Amstrad Accion praised *Ikari Warriors* for its good graphics and smooth scrolling, if a little slow. They commented on how the game offers many hours of desperate action.

Computer + Video Games's Tim Metcalfe praised the game's graphics as "simply brilliant" and the game play as "awesomely addictive". Tim stated that *Ikari Warriors* is "a classy arcade conversion" and "the best Amstrad game we've seen for ages."

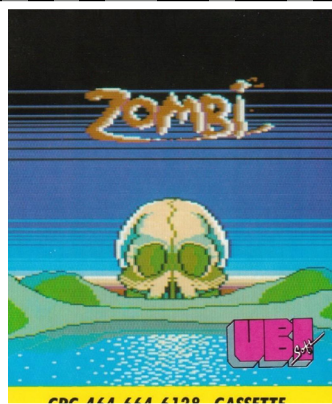
CPC Schneider International's reviewer stated that he had not played the arcade version, but the Amstrad version is outstanding. They touched on the game's excellent presentation, graphics, and animation, making *Ikari Warriors* not just a game for the hard-boiled action fans, but for everyone.

Ratings

91%	<i>Amstrad Action</i>
18/20	<i>Amstrad Computer User</i>
17/20	<i>Amstradebdo</i>
95%	<i>Greek Side of Amstrad</i>
82%	<i>Happy Computer</i>
%80	<i>Sizin Amstrad</i>

ZOMBI

"The nightmare has just begun."



Ubi Soft

Written by

**Yannick Cadin and
S. L. Coemeck**

Graphics by

Patrick Daher

Music by

Philippe Marchiset

For unknown reasons, the dead have started rising, feeding on the flesh of living humans. The undead creatures soon took over the world and quickly outnumbered the living. In a world of increasing creatures and gangs of hooligans, a group of four people, Patrick, Yannick, Alexander, and Sylvie, set off to search for a safe haven. However, on their way, they are forced to land their helicopter on top of a shopping mall to find extra fuel.

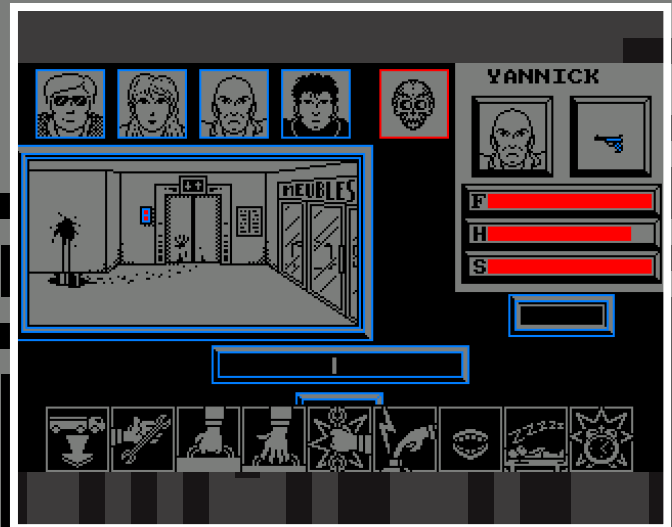
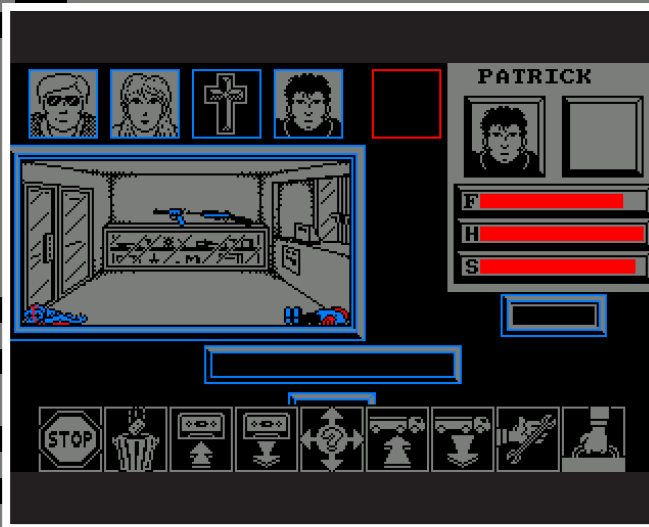
A first person graphic adventure game with both arcade and puzzle elements. The player individually controls the four members of the group as they search out the shopping mall for extra supplies. The game is played by using the available icon driven interface with actions such as moving and fighting represented by relevant icons.

The players will explore the many rooms, shops, corridors and escalators of the shopping mall, as well as come across creatures and gangs of thugs, each with their own reasons for killing the group. The Hells Angels are a group of thugs intent on killing anyone in their way of gaining food. Encountering either a creature or thug will present the choice of either running or fighting with a gun, heavy object or bare fists.

Ubi-Soft started up with *Zpmbi* as an Amstrad CPC exclusive game in 1986. The game was later converted over to other popular 8-bit and 16-bit formats for release in 1990. The four characters in the game are drawn from portraits of the development team.

The game's plot shares many similarities to George Romero's 1978 cult classic film *Dawn of the Dead* where four people hole up in an abandoned shopping mall, fighting off hordes of gangs and the living dead. The film's tagline "When there is no room left in Hell... the dead will walk the Earth" is almost copied word for word for the game, but Ubi Soft changed the latter segment to "... dead people come back to Earth."

The original game came with a 27-page instruction booklet that included a comic strip that acted as a prologue to the game.



Zombi generally received praise from publications upon its release, and holds an aggregate rating of 87% from three reviews.

Computing With the Amstrad's Jon Revis gave *Zombi* a perfect 10/10 rating, describing the game as the "best arcade adventure game" he has ever seen, with a "complex" scenario, "spine-tinglingly tense" atmosphere, and "explosive" action.

Amtix! gave the game 91% and an 'Amtix! Accolade'. Anthony praised the game for its "atmosphere that will have you believing that you're really there". Mass added his comments, stating that after a good session, and with its "impressive blend of adventure and arcade action", he "found it totally engrossing".

Amstrad Action's Bob Wade felt that it would take some time for the player to get into the game, but added that "it has a lot to offer in the way of detailed atmospheric graphics, unusual game control and tough tasks." He concluded that *Zombi* is "not for those who like a game that's easy to get to grips with."

Amstar stated that with *Zombi* the publishers understood that a good adventure game could only be popular by having exemplary gameplay and superb graphics. The reviewer added that in addition to the exceptional graphics, the game is also exciting and addictive.

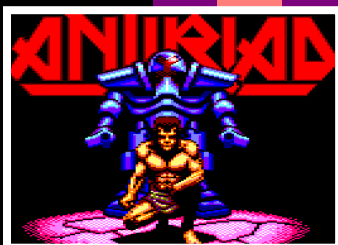
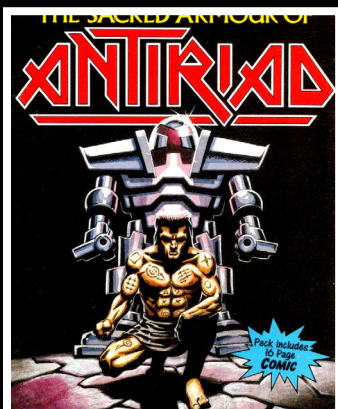
Amstrad Magazine's Jean-Michel Maman praised *Zombi* as a must have game for adventure players. He commented that it is rare to have an adventure game with such a comprehensive display, and described the atmosphere, along with its music, as suitably morbid and blood-curdling.

Ratings

69%	<i>Amstrad Action</i>	
93%	<i>Amtix!</i>	
10/10	<i>Computing With the Amstrad</i>	

THE SACRED ARMOUR OF ANTIRIAD

"You, Tal, are mankind's last hope against the invaders!"



Palace Software

Programming by

Andrew Fitter

Plot, design, comic and cover
illustration by

Daniel Malone

Sound by

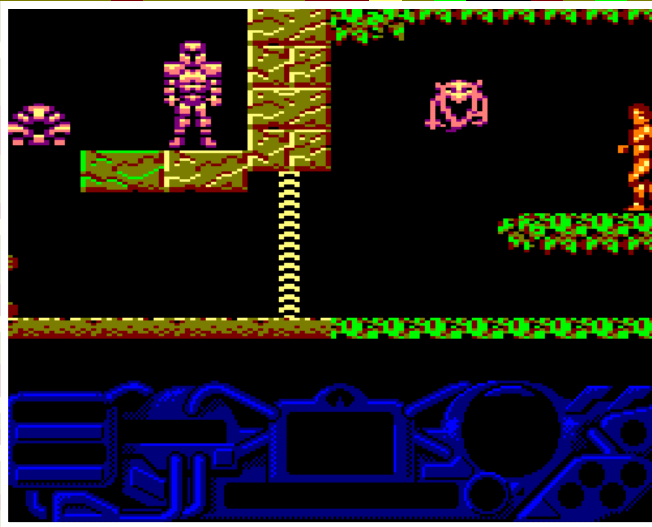
Richard Joseph

Far into the future, a nuclear war erupted and left the Earth in a smoke filled atmosphere that lasted hundreds of years. As time passed, a new race of man emerged from the remains of old Earth. A strong race who led a peaceful existence while farming, hunting and retelling tales of old Earth. Then one day an alien race invaded Earth with sophisticated weaponry and all but wiped out the new human race. Hidden away from the evil oppression was a small boy called Tal who was chosen as the last hope to save the race. In order to defeat the alien invaders, Tal must seek out the armour suit and learn the special power it possesses.

A platform arcade adventure with plenty of exploring as the player hunts down the individual armour suit parts. When the game begins, Tal is dressed in rag clothing and only has the use of available rocks as throwing weapons. Enemies encountered include soldiers from the invading alien race and other dangerous creatures. Once the armour suit is found and activated it will give Tal increased armour against enemy fire, but will lose its power if hit too many times and will require re-charging. The fully equipped armour suit also comes with a beam weapon that can be used on the enemy as well as the ability to fly. The suit will also give Tal the needed fire power to take out the invaders base inside the volcano.

The Sacred Armour of Antiriad was the design work of Dan Malone, an artist and comic book fan. Dan also wrote a 16-page comic strip which was included with the game's package. The game was developed during the same time as *Metroid* on the NES, and unknown to either team, they both produced a similar genre, which would later be known as Metroidvania.

In 2003, Ovine by Design released a remake of *The Sacred Armour of Antiriad* for PC Windows. In keeping with the original game's comic book strip, Ovine integrated a comic strip into the remake's intro scenes.



The Sacred Armour of Antiriad was met with universal praise, gaining an aggregate rating of 90% from four reviews.

Amstrad Action's Bob Wade highlighted the "marvellous graphics" and the "excellent title tune". While Bob felt that the gameplay "is a little frustrating at first", the discovery of the anti-gravity boots opens up the game "with many possibilities and lots of enjoyment."

All three of *Amtix!'s* reviewer gave their views of the game. Richard commented that the game is "excellently produced from beginning to end." Mass pointed out the "superb graphics and the amazing animation of the main character," and "when these are coupled with a great haunting tune, the game has terrific atmosphere from start to finish. Anthony stated that the game is a "highly polished piece of programming," although "the game is a little hard in the early stages."

James Riddell of *Computing With the Amstrad* thought that the game has "an excellent combination of first-rate graphics and sound," and puts "*The Sacred Armour of Antiriad* right up there with the very best arcade adventure games."

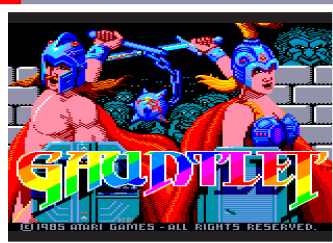
Frédéric Nardeau reviewed the game for *Amstrad Magazine*, calling *Antiriad* a well-designed, well-made that deserves the attention of gamers. Frédéric did comment that the adventure is a quest rather than a full-out blast and will require patient to get the most out of it.

Ratings

87%	<i>Amstrad Action</i>
90%	<i>Amtix!</i>
9/10	<i>Computing With the Amstrad</i>

GAUNTLET

"The ultimate role playing fantasy game"



US Gold Gremlin Graphics

Programmer:

Tony Porter

Graphics:

Kevin Bulmer

Sound & Additional

Programming:

Bill Allen

Music:

Ben Daglish

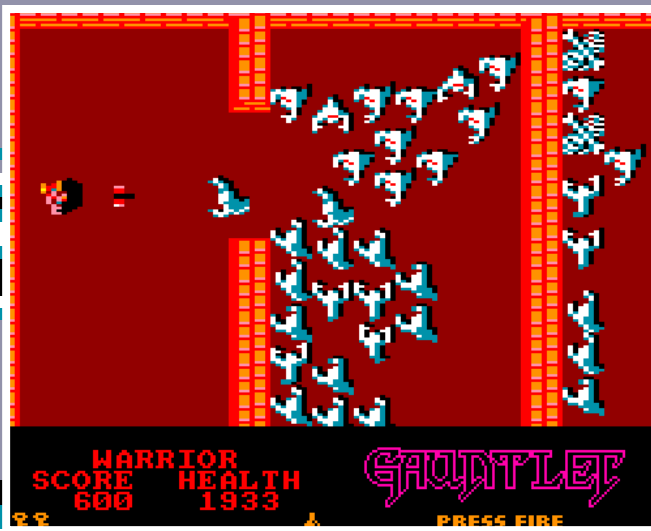
Four characters, Thor the Warrior, Merlin the Wizard, Thyra the Valkyrie, and Quester the Elf, enter a fantasy setting of a labyrinths and mazes to fight against hordes of monsters in an effort to find the treasures scattered throughout.

One or two players can take part in this hack and slash dungeon crawl arcade conversion, choosing one of the four main characters to play as. Each character has their own strengths, which allows the player to experiment with what character suits their playing style. Each dungeon features enemies such as monsters, ghosts, grunts, demons, lobbers, sorcerers, and even Death, and they will pour out of generators towards the players to inflict damage. The characters' health slowly drops down throughout, and when they receive a hit from enemy fire, the health will drop even faster, but can be recovered by collecting food that is scattered around.

Special objects such as potion bottles are randomly placed around the levels. These can give the character limited increased abilities such as armour, magic and shooting. There are also special potion bottles that can clear away a screen full of enemy or locked doorways. A rare amulet will give a character limited invisibility to make progress that little bit easier.

The original multi-player arcade game was designed by Ed Logg (also known for *Asteroids* and *Centipede*) and released by Atari Games in 1985. Logg was inspired by the fantasy role playing game *Dungeons & Dragons* as well as the Atari 800 game *Dandy*.

An expansion pack titled *Gauntlet: The Deeper Dungeons* was released soon after, featuring hundreds of new levels, some which were chosen from competition winners. Straight sequels, *Gauntlet II* and *Gauntlet III: The Final Quest* were also released on the Amstrad CPC in 1988 and 1991 respectively.



Gauntlet received mostly positive reviews upon its release and holds an aggregate rating of 83% from eight reviews. The game garnered many accolades from the gaming press, including a 'C+VG Hit!', an 'Amtix! Accolade', and an 'AA Mastergame'. *Gauntlet* was the most successful game of 1987, spending eight months in the Amstrad UK charts (with two of those months at the top), five months in the top ten in France, and four months in the top ten in Germany.

Computer Gamer's Mike Roberts commented that "the implementation of the game on the Amstrad is as close to the original as is physically possible". He added that "the 16 colour mode is used to great effect and the gameplay is identical to the coin-op machine" and with *Gauntlet* on the shelves, he "can't imagine anyone wanting to buy any of the clones".

Amtix!'s Richard Eddy wrote that "there's just so much to do in *Gauntlet*; the complex of rooms is so expansive and the variety of monsters and spells are so flexible that it's got so much going for it". Overall, Richard commented that *Gauntlet* is "a dream to play and watch, the ultimate arcade conversion which has come out with flying colours".

Amstrad Action's Bob Wade stated that "some levels are much tougher than others, but there's tremendous variety in the hazards you face". He added that "as a one-player game it's pretty nifty too although it's much tougher", but "with two players, the element of co-operation really brings the game alive".

Amstrad Computer User's John Barker wrote: "Like the original, there's no doubt that the game is best played multi-player, with the two of you battling it out against the opposition." He added that while "the CPC version does lack the flashy effects of the coin-op", it "is faithful to the original and does capture its hack-and-slay spirit."

Ratings

93%	<i>Amstrad Action</i>
Thumbs up	<i>Amstrad Semanal</i>
14/20	<i>Amstradebdo</i>
95%	<i>Amtix!</i>
100%	<i>Computer Gamer</i>
9/10	<i>Computing With the Amstrad</i>
84%	<i>Happy Computer</i>
3/5	<i>Popular Computing Weekly</i>

1987

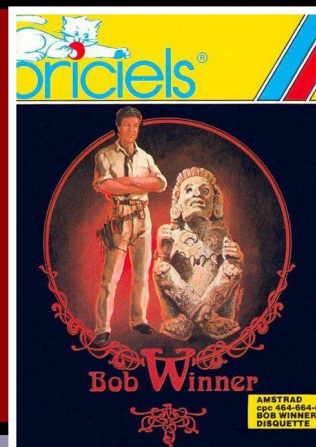
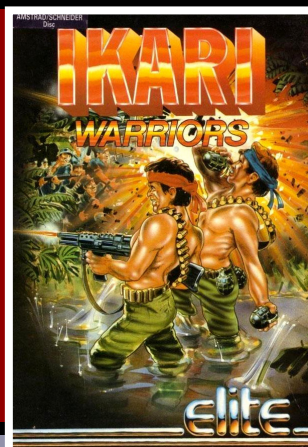
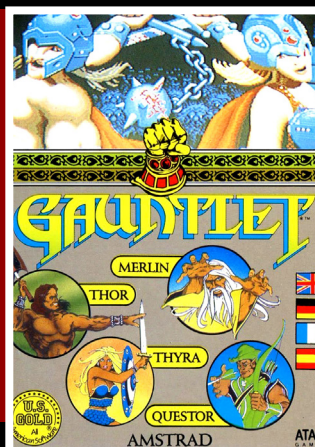


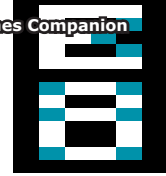
The turn of the year brought one of the first casualties in the magazine scene as *Amstradebdo et PC* closed its doors with its twelve issue (7th January 1987). Another casualty included *Amstrad Magazine*, which ended with its 45th issue at the end of the year (cover dated Jan 1988).

After 18 issues, *Amtix!* magazine came to an end with its April 1987 edition as Newsfield Publications decided to sell the publication onto Database Publications. While there were no more issues of *Amtix!*, its gaming sections were merged with Database Publications' own *Computing With the Amstrad* publication.

Spain saw another Amstrad publication hit their homeland with *Amstrad Acción* launching. However, almost as if making way for the new arrival, *TU Micro Amstrad* closed up with its 20th issue (December 1987).

Bob Winner (middle left screenshot) had an amazing run in the software charts in France, spending most of the year at the top with over six months at number one. Meanwhile, in Greece, *Arkanoid* spent five months at number one (from August to December). *Mercenary* topped the charts in Germany for two months, while the UK charts had three separate games that spent two months each on top: *Gauntlet*, *BMX Simulator*, and *Grand Prix Simulator*.



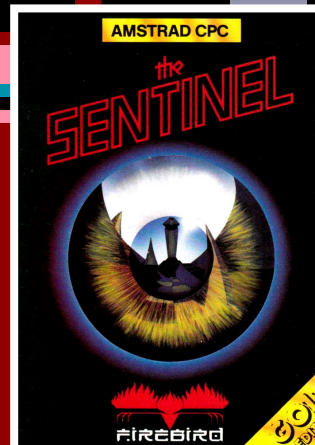
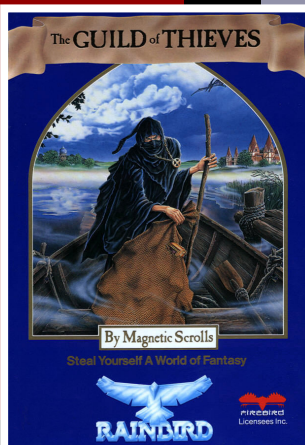


Top 10 Sales chart 1987

1. Gauntlet
2. Ikari Warriors
3. Bob Winner
4. BMX Simulator
5. Paperboy
6. Trivial Pursuit
7. Arkanoid
8. Feud
9. Sram II
10. Scooby Doo in the Castle Mystery

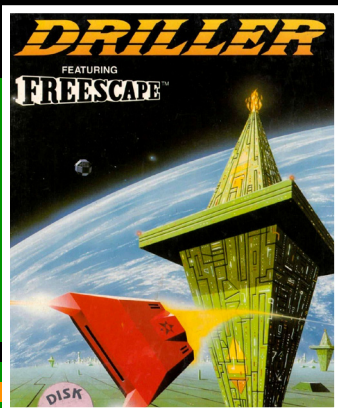
Top 10 Critics chart 1987

1. The Guild of Thieves
2. Arkanoid
3. The Sentinel
4. The Pawn
5. The Lurking Horror
6. Head Over Heels
7. Exolon
8. Koronis Rift
9. Arkanoid: Revenge of Doh
10. Ranarama



DRILLER

"Forget wire-frame 3D. Freescape is solid!"



Incentive Software Major Developments

Concept & Game Design:

Ian Andrew

Program Design:

Chris Andrew

Programming:

**Chris Andrew &
Stephen Northcott**

Story:

**Richard Robinson &
Graham Sowerby**

In the future, mankind has depleted Earth's resources to the point that they decide to search the stars for a new home. That new home is a life-supporting planet named Evath, which has two moons, Mitral and Tricuspid. On Mitral, the mining of crystals soon caused explosions and fires, so the moon was abandoned, but the security systems were left in place to attack any intruders. It soon became apparent that Mitral was in an extremely unstable state and would explode within four hours, taking Evath with it. Lesleigh Skerrit, a former Ketal cleared of wrongful charges, is brought in to avert the impending disaster.

Driller is an adventure game set in a first person world as the player moves around the landscape in an excavation probe. The probe can be manoeuvred forwards, backwards, left and right as well as being able to do a U-turn. A laser system is also fitted to the probe, should the need arise for any offensive action. Mitral's security systems must also be dealt with, either by destroying or avoiding them.

The probe's energy is provided by Rubicon crystals and movement, weapons, shields and enemy fire will all take up energy. The energy can be replenished by collecting crystals that are placed on the moon surface. The player's main task is to position drilling rigs at pivotal areas of Mitral to allow the release of the explosive gas from below the surface. This is achieved by transmitting signals to the base on Evath who will transport a drilling rig to the probe's co-ordinates.

The Amstrad CPC was very much *Driller's* home platform, with the game being converted over to the other systems. According to Ian Andrews (co-founder of Incentive and co-programmer on *Driller*), the CPC6128 was chosen for its 128K of memory and disc drive "which made development easier".

The packaging to *Driller* was quite extensive, including a large box that housed the game media, instruction manual 'Federation Briefing', a 3D map model of Mitral, and a novella detailing the game's backstory.

A freeware remake developed by Ovine by Design was released for the PC in 2007. The game features updated visuals, controls and gameplay.



Driller was met with widespread critical acclaim upon its release, and holds an aggregate rating of 88% from eight reviews. The game received numerous awards and accolades, including a 'Master Game' from *Amstrad Action*, an 'Ace Rated' from *ACE*.

Amstrad Action's Gary Barratt praised *Driller*'s "fast" technique "considering the amount of memory that is being moved on screen at any one time", and the colour that "is used well to give shading and make the outline of objects easily distinguishable." Gary went on to state that *Driller* has "original and innovative gameplay that deserves financial and critical success."

ACE's Andy Wilton gave *Driller* a 956 (out of 1,000) rating; the second highest rating given to an Amstrad game by the magazine. Andy found it hard to believe that he was "only looking at a CPC display, what with the realism this one wrings out of it in places."

The Games Machine awarded *Driller* an overall rating of 95% — their highest rating ever awarded to an Amstrad game. The reviewer stated that "the Amstrad's benefit is the colour: using Mode 1 and a variety of shading techniques the colour comes alive."

Amstrad Computer User's three reviewers, Nigel, Colin, and Liz, gave *Driller* a 19/20, 18/20, and a 16/20 respectively. Nigel thought the story was "an unnecessary lack of precision in a well written and designed game", and added that gamers should "buy it for the disc, and forget the book."

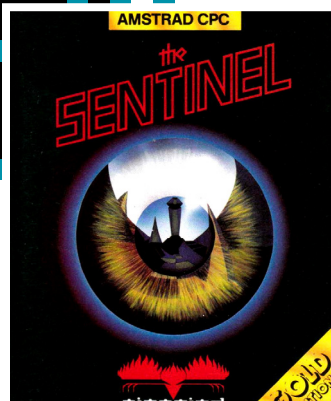
Computing With the Amstrad's Nev Astly pointed out how Incentive made a big fuss about *Freescape*, and that he is always wary of such claims, however, "*Driller* is an exception", and that the game's sectors are all "different and fiendishly difficult to explore."

Ratings

956	<i>ACE</i>
96%	<i>Amstrad Action</i>
85%	<i>Amstrad Cent Pour Cent</i>
18/20	<i>Amstrad Computer User</i>
7/10	<i>Amstrad Sinclair Ocio</i>
85%	<i>Computing With the Amstrad</i>
95%	<i>The Games Machine</i>
85%	<i>Power Play</i>

SENTINEL

"The Sentinel awaits your challenge"



Firebird

Geoff Crammond

A universe far away holds thousands of worlds where the Sentinels rule their landscapes. They are constantly scanning the landscape for any object that should not be there. If they catch any object within in their scans that should not be there, the Sentinel will drain the object of its energy. One Synthoid takes on the challenge to absorb the Sentinel and bring an end to its rule.

A strategy game within a first person 3D world environment where the player takes control of the robotic Synthoid. The Synthoid is a telepathic robot who begins each landscape at the lowest point and has to progress up to the highest point, where the Sentinel sits. It's not as easy as that, though, as the Sentinel will slowly turn on the spot, scanning the landscape for abnormal energy levels and will sap the energy levels of the player's Synthoid if caught by its sights.

Although the Synthoid can freely look around, it can not physically move out of the square where it stands. To actually progress across the landscape, the Synthoid will have to create a clone of itself and transfer its consciousness into the fresh shell. The Synthoid's energy levels can be increased by absorbing objects such as trees or boulders. Once the Sentinel has been absorbed, the player will be able to choose their next world to play.

The Sentinel's origins came from the fact that Crammond thought of a way to get 3D polygon visuals into the humble computers at the time. With clever programming, *The Sentinel* produced solid 3D graphics that only needed to be minimally updated. With the environment and world landscape in place, Crammond then devised the game to play in the world. The game was converted to the Amstrad CPC by Crammond himself, using a cross-compiler.

Sentinel Returns was released for the PC and PlayStation in 1998. Two remakes (*Zenith* and *Sentinel*) were released in 2006. A flash remake called *Sentinel Redux* has been released online in beta form, although the project is still a work in progress.



The Sentinel received some high ratings from the gaming press, with one publication giving the game a 98% overall rating. The game sits at an aggregate rating of 89% from three reviews.

Richard Eddy commented in *Amtix!* that he had “witnessed the conception of another new breed. A totally original game — there’s nothing to compare it with. It may take some time to get into, but when the action hots up you’ll wish there was more time to move around. It’s like brain to brain combat — your mind against the mathematical computer.”

Amstrad Action’s Bob Wade praised *The Sentinel* as “a totally original game — a marvel of programming, it deserves many plaudits”, before adding that “it requires quick thinking and a tactical mind to get far. At first you may find things confusing, but once you’ve grasped how to move around and gain height you should feel more at home. My only gripe is that the action can become repetitive despite the number of landscapes. This is a game you will either love or hate.”

Amstar allayed any fears that the game may seem complicated, and stated that it is quite simple. Adding that the game gets exciting, especially as the graphics (in full 3D) add to the strategic pleasure.

Ian Barnes reviewed the game in *The Amstrad User* and wrote “this game is a refreshing change and is unlike anything you have seen before. The game-play may be very slow due to the enormous number of calculations this program must be doing, but once you start playing, other games pale into insignificance.”

Ratings

90%	<i>Amstrad Action</i>
98%	<i>Amtix!</i>
8/10	<i>Mundo Amstrad</i>

HEAD OVER HEELS

"Now from the authors of *Batman* comes... *Double Trouble*"



Ocean Software

Written by

Jon Ritman

Graphics by

Bernie Drummond

Sound by

Guy Stevens

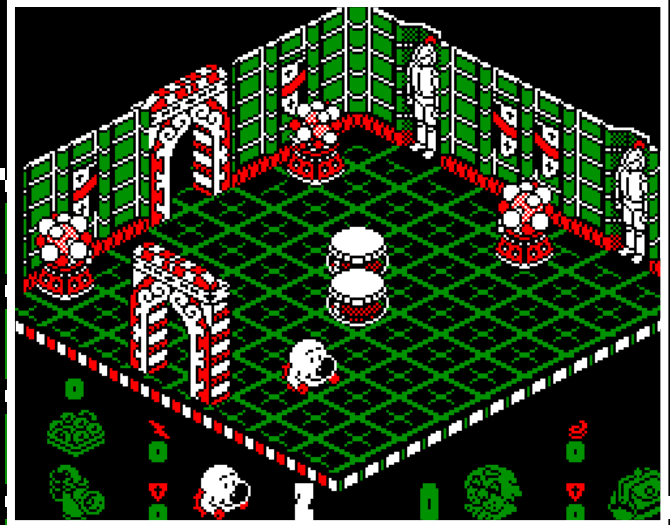
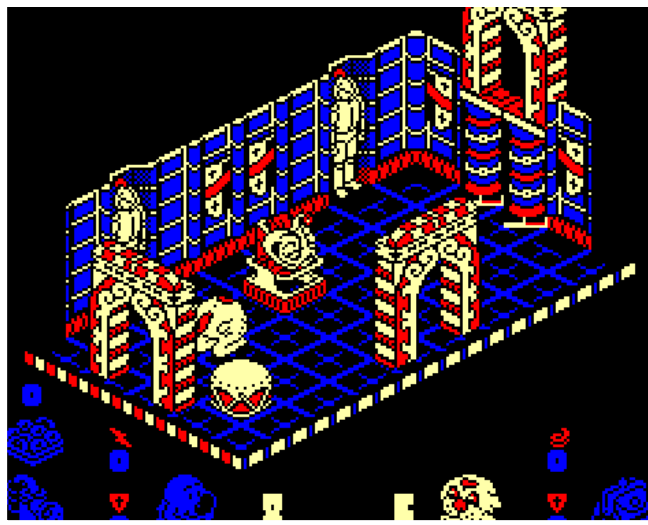
Two spies called Head (Headus Mouthion) and Heels (Footus Underium) are sent to Blacktooth in a mission to overcome the Emperor and his enslavement of surrounding planets. However, upon arriving on Blacktooth, Head and Heels are both captured, imprisoned separately within the prison of Castle Blacktooth. They must work together to escape the prison, bring down the rule of the Emperor and restore freedom to the planets.

An isometric arcade adventure with a character co-operative feature where Head and Heels can combine their own different strengths and weaknesses in order to progress. The player can control both Head and Heels, switching between the two at will. While separated, Head has fine wings that allow him to jump and glide through the air and Heels' legs enable him to jump high and run fast. Both characters also have different items for different uses. Head uses a hooter to shoot doughnuts at the enemy, while only Heels can carry items with his bag.

Head Over Heels is set in the backdrop of Blacktooth castle and four different worlds, each with their own visual theme. There is the prison of Castle Blacktooth, Egyptus, Penitentiary, Safari, and Book World. Patrolling the rooms are various nefarious characters such as droids and jetpack robots who edge closer to the player. As well as fiendish puzzles, there are also many nasty obstacles to negotiate, including spiked floors, disappearing floors and elevating platforms. Progressing through the games is achieved by discovering the crown in each world.

Ritman never intended on creating the innovation of a new multi-character genre. As with *Batman*, Ritman gave each character a starting point in terms of abilities and further skills would be earned as they progressed through the game. In this case, the player begins with two separate characters, each with different abilities and it would be the merging of them both as one symbiotic character that gives the player further abilities to utilise.

Head Over Heels left a lasting legacy with gamers and is among top 10 lists to this day. Retrospec produced a freeware remake for the Windows, Mac OS, Linux, and BeOS platforms in 2003.



Head Over Heels was widely praised upon its release and holds an aggregate rating of 89% from three reviews. The game was a moderate commercial success, having spent two months in the UK top ten chart.

Amstrad Action's Bob Wade felt that despite the similarities to *Batman*, he couldn't praise the game highly enough. "It's so easy to start playing and you just can't put it down as you discover new features, new rooms and puzzles that you just have to solve."

Computing With the Amstrad's Anthony Clarke pointed out the game's "greater variety in the graphics and backgrounds" than its predecessor *Batman*, "making it a much larger game". Anthony praised the graphics as "of the same high quality as *Batman*", and the "sound is a great improvement".

Computer + Video Game's Paul Boughton commented on how slick, professional, and addictive *Head Over Heels* is. He initially thought that the game was another Ultimate rip-off, but it wasn't too long before he found himself "lured into it" and "was having a good time".

PC Schneider International wrote that *Head Over Heels'* graphics beats everything that has been offered so far. The reviewer went on to recommend the game to fans of arcade adventures, and that it would keep them occupied for a long time.

Amstrad User commented on how the game appears similar to *Batman*, but despite this, they found that *Head Over Heels* has an original approach of the two protagonists complimenting each others limitations.

Ratings

95%	<i>Amstrad Action</i>
92%	<i>Computing With the Amstrad</i>
81%	<i>Happy Computer</i>

ARKANOID

"THE Blockbuster"



Imagine Software

Coding by

David Collier

Graphics by

Mark Jones

Music by

Martin Galway

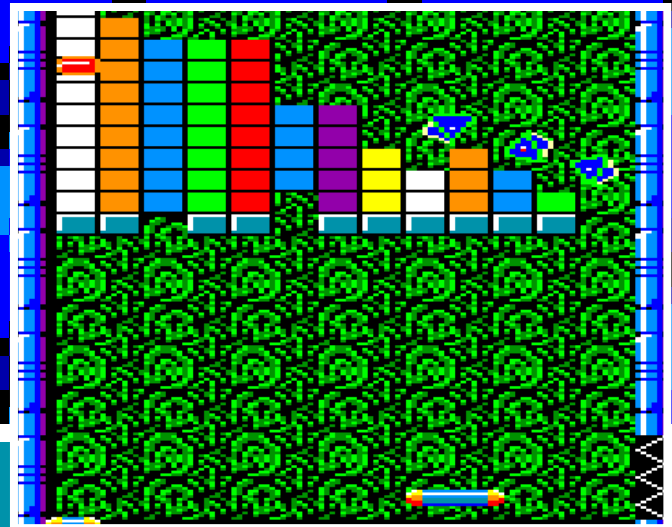
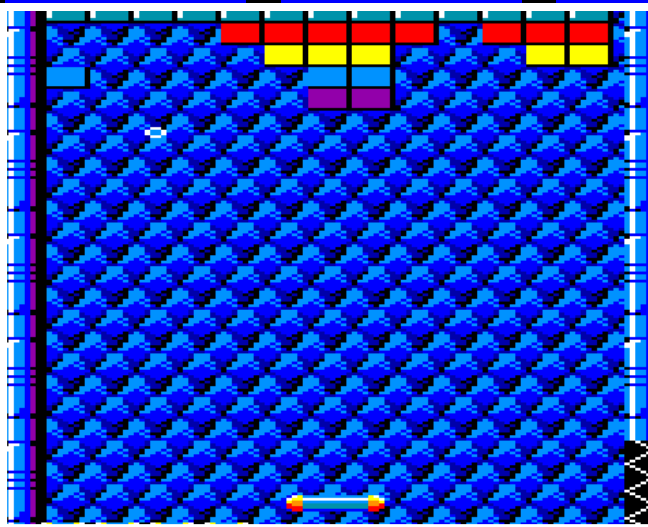
In an unknown galaxy far away, the mother ship Arkanoid is destroyed, with only a small spacecraft able to escape. However, the small craft called Vaus is trapped in the void and must progress through the many areas to defeat the Dimension Changer. Only by achieving this can time be reversed and Arkanoid can be brought back.

A rebound game in the style of classic arcade game *Breakout*. Playing in a vertical screen, the player is tasked with destroying blocks at the top half of the screen. This is achieved by moving the Vaus ship along the bottom of the screen and rebounding energy bolts back up the screen. The player starts the game with five Vaus ships, but the loss of an energy bolt loses one ship.

Some blocks distinguished by their colour need to be hit more than once while some are impervious. On occasion, alien life forms will appear in an effort to impede the player's mission, but can be destroyed by the energy bolt or the Vaus' shields. Inside the occasional block are power ups and are released upon the block's destruction. As they fall down the screen, the player can pick them up by moving across and catching it. These power ups, which are denoted by colour and a letter, include expansion of the ship's width (E), slowing down of the energy bolt (S), laser shot (L), extra life (P) and more.

The original arcade game was developed by Taito and appeared in the arcades in 1986.

Due to the success of the games, further games were developed in the arcades and on home systems. *Arkanoid Revenge of Doh* was the only further sequel to be released on the CPC, appearing in 1987. Further games developed for other systems include *Arkanoid Doh it Again* and *Arkanoid Returns*, both in 1997.



Arkanoid received good reviews from publications with particular praise given for the addictive gameplay quality that the game offers. The sits at an aggregate rating of 92% from four reviews.

Greek Side of Amstrad giving one of the more glowing ratings. They commented on the lack of story, but admitted that the game doesn't really need one. There wasn't much criticism in the actual review and they stated that the final rating of 97% says it all.

"*Arkanoid* may not be as pretty as *Ballbreaker*," wrote Jon Revis for *Computing With the Amstrad*, "but it is just as addictive and is that little bit quicker — I loved it!"

"I'm ashamed to say I found it very difficult to stop playing the game — it is enormously addictive," wrote Bob Wade in *Amstrad Action*. "It may not be original, but I still think *Breakout* games are brilliant."

Fantastic and super-addictive were just two descriptions that *Amstrad Acción* gave the game. They were pleasantly surprised to have a game with a very high quality, good graphics, a simple, effective gameplay, and music that is more than acceptable.

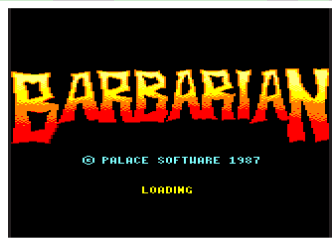
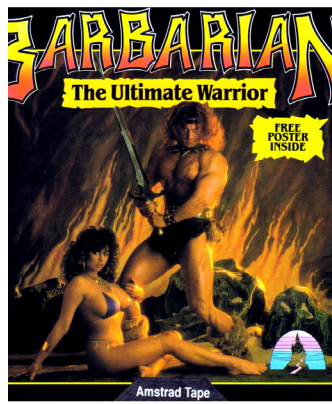
Arkanoid was also praised in CPC, where it received plaudits for its very fast animation that requires the player to have speed and reflexes. There was also mentions of the full screen graphics and the very agreeable music.

Ratings

89%	<i>Amstrad Action</i>
92%	<i>Computing With the Amstrad</i>
90%	<i>Sizin Amstrad</i>
97%	<i>Greek Side of Amstrad</i>

BARBARIAN: THE ULTIMATE WARRIOR

"The ultimate warrior. The ultimate game."



Palace Software

Conceived and designed by

Steve Brown

Amstrad programming by

Andrew Fitter

Sound by

Richard Joseph

Assistant artist

Gary Carr

Drax, the evil sorcerer, has taken Princess Mariana by force to be at his side and has driven back the locals of Jewelled City with warnings of wreaking unspeakable doom against those who oppose him. Drax has agreed, though, that if a warrior can be found who can defeat his evil guardians then Princess Mariana will be set free.

The player takes control of the unknown barbarian warrior as he plans to take on the might of Drax's guardians. Essentially a one-on-one sword fighting game where each character has six life blocks and can survive twelve minor blows before biting the dust. The 'practice' mode allows the player to try out one-on-one sword fights with various opponents, giving the chance to get used to the many moves available. Two players can also compete in the 'practice' mode.

The 'tournament' mode is where the main game is, though, and it is here where the player will need to make good use of all the moves at their disposal. The action takes place against two backdrops: a forest clearing and a pit of death. The fighters' moves include slicing and dicing with the sword, body chops, ducking, kicking, head butting, jumping, rolling, and the lethal overhead chop that can take the opponent's head clean off. The player will need to overcome many different fighters before finally defeating the evil sorcerer Drax.

The game's designer, Steve Brown, has often mentioned that the inspiration for the game was the fictional sword and sorcery hero character Conan the Barbarian. There are also similarities to the film adaptation *Conan the Barbarian* (1982).

Barbarian was criticised at the time for featuring blood, gore, and decapitations. Due to its violence, the game was banned in several countries. The game also came under fire in the United Kingdom for running an advertising campaign which featured a bikini clad female glamour model draped around the legs of a male bodybuilder portraying the hero barbarian.

Barbarian II: The Dungeon of Drax was released in 1988. Moving away from the original game's one on one fighter style genre, the sequel is more a single player action adventure game. *Barbarian III* was planned for development and there was concept artwork and designs drawn up, but the game was cancelled mid-production. The game was intended as a straight follow on sequel from the second game and would feature a similar arcade style adventure gameplay.



Barbarian: The Ultimate Warrior was widely praised upon its release, gaining an aggregate rating of 85% from seven reviews. The game was commercial successful, spending five months in the United Kingdom Amstrad top 10 charts, as well as spending over six months in the top 10 in France, peaking at number one. The game also topped the Amstrad charts in Germany, too.

Greek Side of Amstrad gave the game an impressive 93%, praising the atmosphere of the battles, along with the accompanying sound effects. They felt that with the enormous characters, great graphics, realistic movement, and unstoppable action, *Barbarian* is the best combat game on the market.

Computing With the Amstrad's Victor Laszlo was "in two minds as to whether such a game is a good idea, especially when aimed at the younger player". While the game can be violent, Victor pointed out the game's comical touches, too. "*Barbarian* has all the right programming touches", Victor added.

Amstrad Action's Bob Wade pointed out that *Barbarian* is a combat game, and that the basic concept and action hadn't changed since the days of *Fist*. However, he pointed out that what the game has plenty going for it, as "the graphics and animation are unsurpassed, the music excellent, and the sense of humour great."

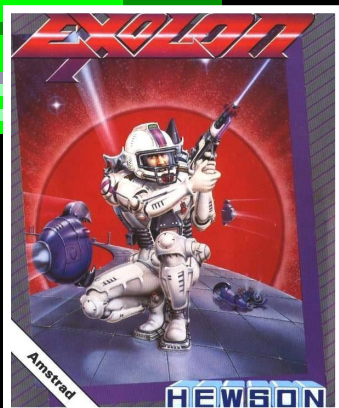
Computer + Video Games gave *Barbarian* their 'Game of the Month' award. Although Paul Boughton admitted that "*Barbarian* actually isn't a really original concept", but "what makes it so special is that Palace panache and faultless quality and craftsmanship of the designers, artists and programmers".

Ratings

90%	<i>Computing With the Amstrad</i>
87%	<i>Amstrad Action</i>
15/20	<i>Amstrad Computer User</i>
A Okay	<i>Amstrad Semanal</i>
% 87	<i>Sizin Amstrad</i>
93%	<i>Greek Side of Amstrad</i>
16/20	<i>Amstradbladet</i>

EXOLON

"The new space-play from Hewson"



Hewson Consultants

Written by

Raffaele Cecco

On the fifth planet in the Exolon system, a perfect defence mechanism was commissioned. A defence mechanism so great that it could combat any attacking enemies by instantly vaporising their space crafts. Unfortunately, after three days of working perfectly, the defence weapons targeted every Exolon craft in sight and wiped out an entire fleet. It turns out that the defence mechanism designers, GalaTech, set a trap for the Exolon system and robbed them of their riches.

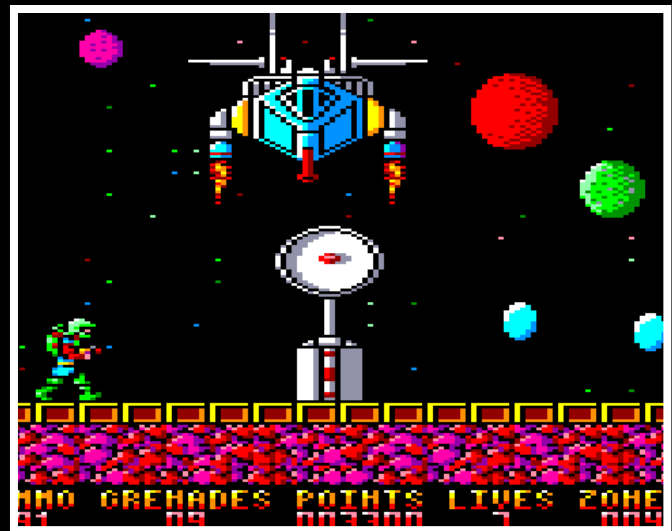
Also hitting Exolon bad was that the food convoys could not arrive in the system due to the defence mechanism. The planets' population would starve to death if the situation could not be resolved. With the Exolon planets' population in uproar, the Council of the System decided they would need to bring in a specialist to combat and disable the defence mechanism.

Futuristic run 'n gun flick screen action where the player takes control of Vitorc who was chosen for the task of taking out the defence mechanism. As Vitorc progresses through the levels, various enemies such as aliens, robots and defence turrets will be encountered. To combat this threat, Vitorc comes equipped with a blaster rifle and grenades. Limited Exoskeleton suits can also be found along the way, which provides Vitorc with extra protection against enemy fire and explosions.

Cecco has said at the time that he "decided to steer clear of the complex 'maps and objects' type of game and opt for a more raunchy, blood 'n' guts affair". A pick up and play style game without the need to study pages of instructions.

There were many objectives the game had to meet: instant graphic appeal, playability and overall addictiveness. Lots of explosions, over-dramatic death sequences, numerous wibbly-wobbly aliens, and gratuitous violence on a grand scale.

Cecco felt that it was imperative to have the main character drawn and animated to the best quality. The main character of Vitorc was actually designed on the Atari ST via Art Studio and was then ported over to the Amstrad CPC.



Exolon was well received upon its release, and holds an aggregate rating of 89% based on five reviews.

Computing With the Amstrad's Jon Revis commented on how "*Exolon's* graphics surpass all that have gone before, yet somehow combine them with faultless animation". Jon added that having played the game for the last few weeks, he declared it his favourite game of 1987.

Amstrad Action's Bob Wade couldn't praise the graphics highly enough, and also pointed out the "good animation, marvellously designed objects and screens and excellent use of colour". Bob added that the player will not only "marvel about how this game looks", but be "totally hooked by the action".

Amstrad Computer User's Nigel wondered what all the fuss was about until he played *Exolon* for a bit. He commented that "everything reeks of quality, the arc of the grenades, the flames from thrusters. Even the animation when your man dies".

CPC described *Exolon* as a classic arcade game with very colourful graphics and smooth animation. The reviewer stated that although progression is linear, there are plenty of power-ups and screens to negotiate.

Tilt pointed out the many impressive features and attention to detail of *Exolon*: the special effects during the operation of teleportation doors, the enormous variety of creatures, landscapes, and machines. The animation was also singled out for faithfully reproducing the weightlessness, giving the explosions a rare realism.

Ratings

95%	<i>Computing With the Amstrad</i>
93%	<i>Amstrad Action</i>
19/20	<i>Amstrad Computer User</i>
88%	<i>Greek Side of Amstrad</i>
%74	<i>Sizin Amstrad</i>

PAPERBOY

"The arcade classic comes home"



Elite Systems

Written by

Mark-Haigh Hutchison

Graphics by

Paul Walker

The local store in the suburbs of a small American town have employed a new paperboy to carry out one of their most hazardous paper round routes. Using his best riding skills, he will need to work through a seven day week delivering newspapers to his usual customers while avoiding the various hazards along the way.

The player takes control of the paperboy as he cycles diagonally up the streets. The usual customers are located to the right, and this is where the player will have to throw a paper towards the mailbox or doorstep. Along the way, the player will encounter hazards such as cars, workmen, drunks, and rogue lawnmowers, which can knock the paperboy off his bike. The player can whack these obstacles away with a swift paper thrown at them, although care must be taken not to waste all the papers. Additional bundles of papers for the round can be picked up at certain points in the route.

Points are awarded for every successful delivery, with bonus points also available for secret tasks. Care must be taken as failure to deliver a paper to a customer will result in them cancelling their subscription, and if the subscriptions reaches zero, the paperboy will get the sack.

The original arcade game was developed by Atari Games and released in 1985. The arcade cabinet features a replica of a bicycle handlebar as the controls (left, right, speed-up, and slow) along with a button near the right grip for throwing papers.

Paperboy arrived on the Amstrad much later than the other versions, but according to Mark-Haigh Hutchison, there was an unusual reason for that. The programming team behind the Spectrum version had attempted to convert their game to the *Amstrad*, but it was cancelled.

Mark started work on the game from scratch, and along with help from Paul Walker on graphics managed to fit the game into 64k within the deadline. Unfortunately, at the completion of the coding, it was discovered that there was no free memory left for any sound at all, and with no time left to resolve the issue, the game was left as it was.



Paperboy was well received upon its release and has an aggregate rating of 82% from five reviews. The game was a commercial success, entering the UK software charts at number one and stayed in the top ten for four months. It was also a success in Germany and Greece where it spent four months in their respective top ten charts. The success across Europe made *Paperboy* the fifth most successful game of 1987.

Computing With the Amstrad's Nev Astly complimented *Paperboy* on its visuals, stating that "the characters used are highly detailed and brightly coloured", before point out that "unfortunately the game is played in absolute silence". Nev added that *Paperboy* "has all the makings of an excellent game — it's fast, it's exciting and incredibly addictive".

Amstrad Action's Gary Barrett gave the game praise for its visuals, commenting on the "good use of colour with bright and clear scenery", but felt that the scrolling is "a bit jerky". Despite that "minor problem", Gary pointed out that the "game plays well and although it's a little repetitive it has something basically addictive about it that hooks you".

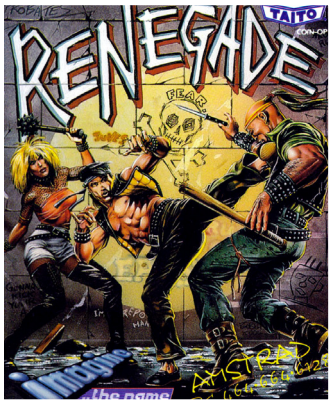
Greek Side of Amstrad pointed out the graphical delights of *Paperboy*, highlighting the well designed houses, streets, and various characters favourably to the arcade version. Overall, the game was described as entertaining with very nice graphics.

Ratings

89%	<i>Computing With the Amstrad</i>
81%	<i>Amstrad Action</i>
8/10	<i>MicroManía Primera Época</i>
%85	<i>Sizin Amstrad</i>
78%	<i>Greek Side of Amstrad</i>

RENEGADE

"Play Renegade... Play mean!"



Imagine Software

Programming by

John Brandwood

Graphics by

Mark K. Jones

Music by

Fred Gray

When night time is fast approaching, an unnamed young man sets off on a trek across the city to meet up with his girlfriend. However, it quickly becomes apparent that he is being hounded by a gang of thugs who don't hold back in inflicting serious damage. There is no obvious reason why the thugs have taken a sudden dislike to the young would be renegade chum, but he must defeat them and continue on his way.

Side flip-screen beat 'em up action as the player takes on the role of the renegade. On his travels, the player will trek through a tube station, a local pier, sleazy back streets, and an uninviting rendezvous room. Each setting is full of thugs and a guardian, all of which must be defeated to progress onto the next level.

Enemy thugs can quickly inflict damage, decreasing renegade's energy until he loses one of his initial three lives. Fortunately, renegade has some nifty martial arts moves at his disposal. With a clever combination of the joystick and cursor keys, renegade can pull off a variety of attacks including punches, back kicks, flying kicks, knees and some sneaky punches on any floored thug.

The original arcade game was distributed around North America and Europe by Taito in 1986, having been released earlier the same year by Technos. The arcade game introduced the combination of four-directional stick control with three attack buttons, which were carried over to the Amstrad CPC conversion with its joystick/arrow keypad combination.

Mark K Jones would spend hours in Ocean's 'Arcade Alley' videoing the game and watching the video playback on his desk, trying to "recreate the graphics on the Amstrad, one pixel at a time".

The developers decided to add visual touches such as the blood, but very close to the release of the game the Hungerford shootings happened in the UK. To prevent any possible backlash on computer games, the blood was changed to blue.

While there were no official sequels to the original arcade game, Ocean Software produced two sequels for the home computers. *Target; Renegade* was released in 1988 while *Renegade III: The Final Chapter* brought the trilogy to an end in 1989.



Renegade was mostly well received upon its release, gaining an aggregate rating of 83% from seven reviews. While *Renegade* was a fairly moderate commercial success in the United Kingdom, the game spent 12 months in the Greek top 10 Amstrad chart, with five of those months being at the top.

Amstrad Action's Gary Barrett described the characters as "large and well animated with an excellent variety of moves." He added that "there's superb use of colour" and "a very well crafted combat game that has lots of variety, great graphics and a terrific challenge."

The Games Machine's reviewer wrote how that "converting *Renegade* to the Amstrad, not only have Imagine managed to bring across the playability of the arcade original, they have managed to improve on it. This version has a much better feel than the one produced for the Spectrum."

ACE's Andy Smith commented on the "wonderful blood-thirsty graphics", the "superb animation", and the "stunningly detailed" backgrounds "with plenty of colour". Overall, Andy felt that *Renegade* is an "extremely playable and addictive game, with some of the smoothest graphics ever seen on the Amstrad".

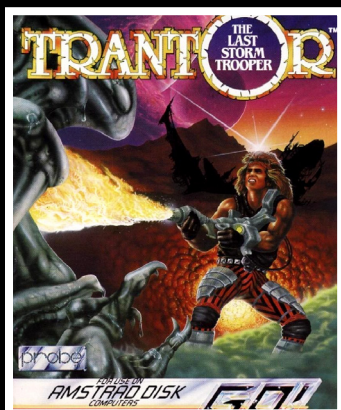
Computing With the Amstrad gave *Renegade* the lowest ratings from all the magazines. John Butters explained in his summary box that "each level is loaded separately which can get slightly annoying if you have the cassette version" and that "the keys are awkwardly placed". He did, however, praise the graphics for being "some of the best seen on the Amstrad", and overall, "one of the better martial arts games available".

Ratings

847	ACE
90%	Amstrad Action
87%	The Games Machine
77%	Happy Computer
%81	Sizin Amstrad
65%	Computing With the Amstrad
19/20	Amstradbladet

TRANTOR THE LAST STORMTROOPER

"Armed only with a flame thrower, fight your way to freedom as Trantor..."



Go! Probe Software

Coded by
David Perry
Graphics by
Nick Bruty

On an alien planet far away, Trantor has been betrayed by his own people and left abandoned to fend for himself. The only way of escaping the planet is to activate the main security terminal with the required password. However, the password is scattered into letter codes throughout the complex where aliens are patrolling the corridors.

Side scrolling run and gun platform game where the player takes control of Trantor. The game also features an element of exploration and speed running as Trantor needs to hunt down the activation codes within a time limit. Successful discovery of an activation code (a letter) will reset the time limit for finding the next code.

Lifts will give Trantor access to further floors where he will encounter aliens and robots intent on inflicting damage. Trantor's main weapon, a flame-thrower, comes in handy to deal with any nasty threats. The weapon should be used sparingly otherwise the flame-thrower fuel will run out, with re-fills only available at certain filling points. Placed around the floors are lockers that Trantor can access for pick-ups such as hamburgers (energy boost), clocks (resets the time limit).

Trantor is known for its impressive visuals and presentation, but according to designer Nick Bruty the game was initially meant to be very simple and planned as a budget release. It was when the game was taken on by Probe when everything got bigger.

When the player completes the game, they are given a hint of '*Trantor II: Revenge of the Stormtrooper*'. Unfortunately, a sequel never made it to development due to the rather lukewarm commercial success of *Trantor* in the UK.

Trantor was the title that launched US Gold's new Go! publishing label. As part of the Go! label launch celebrations, the rock band Register were commissioned to produce five tracks for inclusion with new Go! games. Side 2 of *Trantor* featured the track '*The Fight*'.



Trantor received mostly positive reviews upon its release. It holds an aggregate rating of 79% from five reviews. *Trantor* was not a commercial success in the UK, but had done better in Europe. The game had moderate success in France where it spent four months in the Amstrad charts. *Trantor* was a bigger success in Germany where it spent several months in the Amstrad software charts with one of those months at number one.

Computing With the Amstrad highlighted *Trantor*'s "superb use of colour, shading and highlight" as "some of the best graphics to have graced the Amstrad's screen in a long". The reviewer then added that "despite the complexity of the graphics, the animation is faultless".

Computer + Video Game's Tim Metcalfe praised the visuals of *Trantor*, stating that the "animation and graphics are excellent". He added that *Trantor* is "one of the most colourful and action packed" games that he has ever seen on the Amstrad.

Amstrad Action's Gary Barrett was impressed with *Trantor*'s smooth and fast scrolling. But he added that while it is great fun, after a while the player needs to settle down to complete the game, and this may be when frustration sets in.

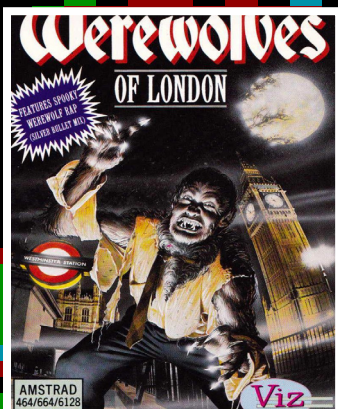
ACE praised *Trantor* for its "great use of colour" and being "a big improvement on the Spectrum version", but felt that "on the gameplay front it's simple blast 'n' search fare and the game task is still a bit too easy to provide any real long-term challenge".

Ratings

681	<i>ACE</i>
80%	<i>Amstrad Action</i>
92%	<i>Computing With the Amstrad</i>
81%	<i>Greek Side of Amstrad</i>
73%	<i>Happy Computer</i>

WEREWOLVES OF LONDON

"You're out for a moonlight stroll and there's blood on the streets"



Ariolasoft Viz Design

Program by
**Steve Howard &
Paul Smith**

Our nameless protagonist has had a curse placed upon him that transforms him into a werewolf when night falls. Deciding to take action, he searches the streets of London for the members of the Sloane family who cursed him. During the day he finds out information on them, and when he turns into a werewolf at night he goes on a killing spree.

Werewolves of London is a side-on action game with elements of strategy. Each screen is set in a 45-degree skewed view where the player can not only move left and right, but also up and down. The player starts as a human who must search locations such as the London Underground and Hyde Park, picking up items that will help with the mission.

When the timer hits midnight, the player transforms into a werewolf and must then hunt down the eight family members. However, the player will have to avoid capture by the local police force or, even worse, shot dead by them. Eating any of the family members, or random strangers in the streets, will give the player a health boost, but being shot will decrease health. Finding first aid kits (bandages) help stop the blood loss, but if the player loses too much blood, it's game over. Once all eight members of the family have been killed, the curse will be lifted.

The game is loosely based on the film *Werewolf of London* which was released in 1935, and the song "Werewolves of London" by Warren Zevon in 1978.

Software house Ariolasoft were due to publish *Werewolves of London*, the first title from development group Viz Designs, but unfortunately Ariolasoft wound down just as the game was to be released. With the Amstrad game being the main development version, it has been confirmed that it was completed in time.

On the initial release of the game, the cassette tape's B-side featured the "Werewolf Rap - Silver Bullet Remix".



Werewolves of London got a fairly lukewarm reception upon its release. The game holds an aggregate rating of 66% from five reviews. The game has since been seen as something of a cult classic, being re-evaluated by numerous gaming websites.

The Games Machine's reviewer felt that there is "something very pleasing about running around, eating passers-by and dodging the bobbies." While some niggles were highlighted — "the action can slow down quite a bit when there's a lot of people on screen" and "the graphics are relatively simple considering what the Amstrad is capable of" — it all seems to "work well".

Amstrad Action's Gary Barrett was fairly critical of the game, stating that while "the graphics are small and colourful, but they are not animated too well." Barrett pointed out that the main tune is the "same as the record, but it doesn't match up to the vinyl version." He did point out that "using objects as you explore the town is quite fun at first and eating people is a nice change", but stated that the game "lacks something to keep you motivated to play it" and that "the idea is fine but there is just not enough game in there."

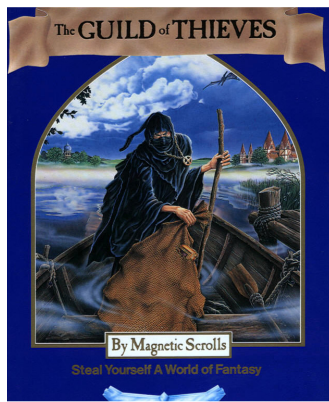
ACE's Christina Esrkin commented on how the game is "presented on the 'no instructions — work it out yourself' format..." and "as far as the gameplay goes, there's an awful lot of trotting about screens which all look exactly the same."

Ratings

573	ACE
66%	Amstrad Action
61%	Computing With the Amstrad
75%	The Games Machine

GUILD OF THIEVES

"Prepare yourself for the greatest adventure yet"



Rainbird Magnetic Scrolls

An unproven burglar has applied for membership to the Kerovnian Guild of Thieves. To prove his eligibility to join the elite membership to the Guild of Thieves, the Master devises a series of tests. With an inventory of a striped sweatshirt, jeans, a credit card, a swag bag and a lamp, the burglar is taken out to a remote island. It is here where the burglar must find the many treasures that are randomly placed throughout the numerous locations.

The player takes on the role of the burglar in this interactive fiction game. The game starts with the player in the boat heading towards the island. Being a text adventure game, the world of Kerovnia is displayed through static graphical screens with a text description underneath. Movement is achieved by using the text parser commands such as NORTH to move northwards, GO THROUGH DOOR, SEARCH and much more. The parser can also accept abbreviated commands such as N for NORTH, I for INVENTORY. The many locations to explore include a cave, a castle, a mansion, a mountain and many more. However, not all the treasures are so easily obtained, with some requiring the completion of a puzzle.

The package included the 128K disk, of course, but also came with plenty of extras: A Bank Of Kervonia Credit Card, a copy of What Burglar Magazine (containing amusing stories and adverts), an Adventure Guide. A further issue of *What Burglar* magazine was made and available direct from Magnetic Scrolls.

During the development of the game, Magnetic Scrolls kept a tight lock and key over proceedings. Only their own in-house testers were allowed access to the game, and even Rainbird's own testers had to travel to the Magnetic Scrolls' offices to test the game.



has many comfortable chairs and a shagpile carpet which brings spring to your step. A coal fire blazes away by the hearth, a soft light which makes you feel relaxed and easy. There are windows on the north and east walls. A black iron bucket stands close to the fire.



across its top announcing its usual function: 'Bank of Kervn'. A large, looking oak door to the south, in the front of the building is reached. To the left of the door there is a night safe and the bank's shop is to the east.

The Guild of Thieves received critical acclaim from publications where it was reviewed. Particular praise was given for the game's visuals, parser, and packaging. The game has an aggregate rating of 93% based on three reviews.

L. B. of *Amstrad Cent Pour Cent* wrote that up until now *The Pawn* was the program with the best, best parser, the best scenario, the best atmosphere, acceptable graphics, and the most unbridled humour. It now seems that *The Guild of Thieves* has the title of "Best Adventure Program".

"The gameplay and responsiveness of the program are excellent, puzzles are delightfully well constructed and obtusely logical," voiced Gandalf in *Computing With the Amstrad*. "The satisfaction you get from solving the problems in this game is well justified — they are far from easy", added Gandalf. "While *The Pawn* can claim to have the best graphics, *Guild of Thieves* must surely steal the title of best graphics adventure."

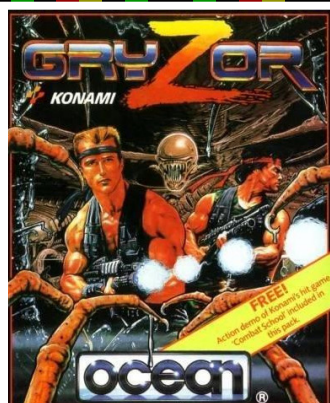
In the adventure section of *Amstrad Action*, The Pilgrim heaped praise on the game's "excellent parser, superb graphics, challenging puzzles, and inventive locations." The "almost faultless" parsing was explained when "you can address other characters and perform miracles with containers, look under a bed, on a bed, or even behind a bed. This isn't implemented on most other games and it adds a lot to the feeling of 'being there' while you're playing."

Ratings

89%	<i>Amstrad Action</i>
95%	<i>Amstrad Cent Pour Cent</i>
94%	<i>Computing With the Amstrad</i>

GRYZOR

"There is only one man who could accomplish this mission... Lance Gryzor!"



Ocean Software

Programmed by

John Brandwood

Graphics by

Mark K. Jones

Music by

David Whittaker

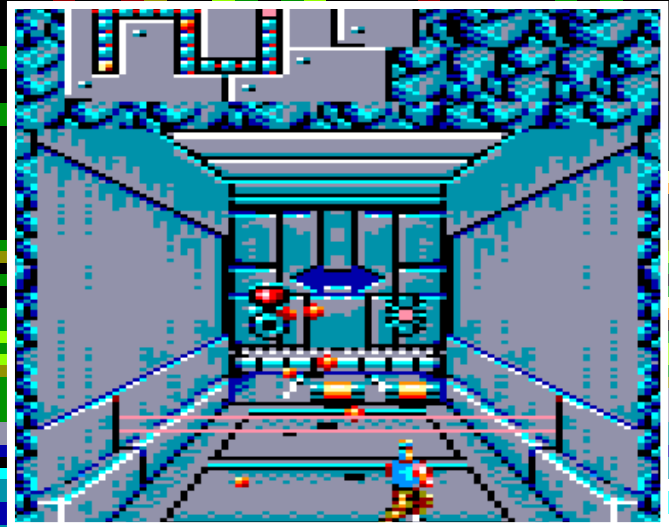
Alien forces have infiltrated Earth's defences and have set up a stronghold where they are controlling the planet's weather patterns. They plan to use this atmospheric processing plant to bring about a devastating ice age, bringing Earth to its knees, ripe for an alien take over. As part of the Federation for Earth's Defences, Lance Gryzor has stepped forward to volunteer to take the alien base and plant down.

Arcade action where the player assumes control of Lance Gryzor on his mission through three sections of destroying aliens, enemy outposts, buildings and the mother ship. Each section contains various scenes such as run and gun and third person shoot 'em up. Gryzor will begin with a standard machine gun, but upgrades are available, including rapid fire, scatter gun, laser gun and barrier.

On each level, be it run and gun or third person, aliens will attempt to stop Gryzor by any means possible. As well as alien soldiers patrolling the outposts, there are gun turrets to look out for as well. If they are not taken care of, Gryzor may come into contact with the enemy or get hit with a gun turret's laser fire, taking away one of his lives.

Gryzor is based on the arcade game which was developed and released by Konami in 1987. The initial release of the arcade game was titled *Contra*, but this was changed to *Gryzor* for the European distribution. A sequel titled *Super Contra* appeared in the arcades during 1988, but a home conversion did not materialise for any of the 8-bit home computers.

While there have been no confirmation behind the name change, there have been a reasonable theory on the subject. This revolves around the Iran-Contra political scandal that surfaced in the United States at the beginning of 1987.



Gryzor was mostly well received upon its release, gaining an aggregate rating of 84% from nine reviews.

Computing With the Amstrad's Steve Lucas wrote about how *Gryzor* "really does capture the feel of the original and gives us a game worth playing", and while it "is just another combat game", it scores over the opposition in the "attention given to fine detail".

Amstrad Action gave *Gryzor* an 'AA Rave' with Gary Barrett admitting that "at first this appears to be just a shoot 'em up, the different weapons and angles that you can shoot at means that a strategy element is involved", and that what we have here is "a very good arcade conversion that has an addictive quality that will keep you coming back for more".

The Games Machine praised *Gryzor* for its "superb" and "colourful" graphics, but felt that on occasions the amount of colour obscured some of the aliens that don't stand out enough. The reviewer added that *Gryzor* is "a very powerful conversion which should not disappoint hardened arcade addicts with itchy trigger fingers".

ACE's Andy Wilton stated that *Gryzor* features "CPC graphics at their very best; the colours positively glow, and animation is excellent." He added that "there's certainly a task here that's a match for even the greatest gamers, but Ocean are treading a thin line here" as "later levels are so tough that it's easy to be discouraged."

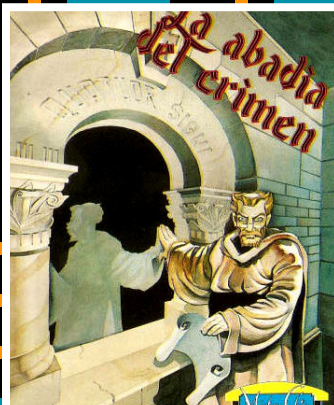
Amstrad Cent Pour Cent's Robby thought that graphically the game is a delight, despite the characters being small, they are well drawn, very colourful, with plenty of animated moves. Robby added that *Gryzor* is an excellent conversion of the arcade original.

Ratings

771	ACE
82%	Amstrad Action
82%	The Games Machine
94%	Greek Side of Amstrad
%90	Sizin Amstrad
75%	Amstrad Cent Pour Cent
92%	Computing With the Amstrad
83%	Happy Computer
85%	Power Play

LA ABADIA DEL CRIMEN

"The Abbey of Crime"



OperaSoft

Author

Paco Menéndez

Graphics and cover art

Juan Delcan

Following a series of murders in a Benedictine medieval abbey, a Franciscan monk, William Fray, and his disciple, Ados of Melk, are called upon to solve the mystery.

An adventure game set in an isometric world of the abbey. The player takes on the role of William Fray with the aim of investigating the abbey's many rooms and secrets in order to solve the murders within the given seven days. The time, day and current hour are displayed on-screen for the player. Throughout the abbey, the player will come across many resident monks with the option to approach them to start a discussion. William Fray has been given

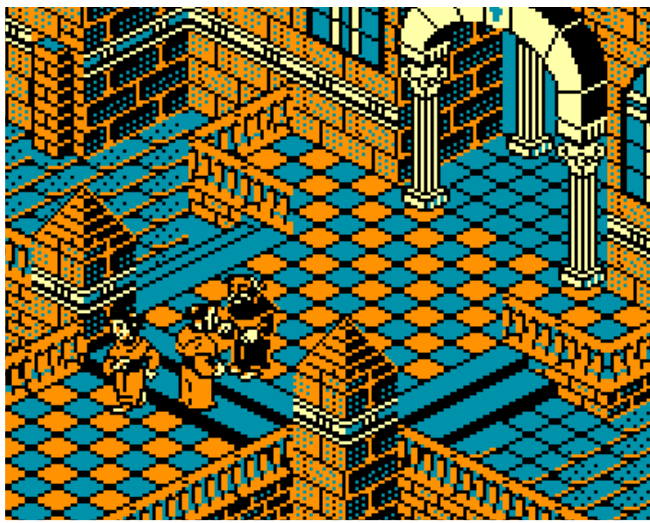
While staying at the abbey as a guest, the player must observe the rules as well as attend prayer offices and meals. Failure to observe these rules will result in the player's 'obsequium' dropping and if this level drops to zero, the player will be asked to leave the abbey. The player must not be found wandering around the abbey at night time either, which will result in immediate banishment from the abbey.

The game was initially to be a tie-in with the novel *El Nombre of Rosa* (The Name of the Rose). Written by Italian author Umberto Eco, the murder mystery novel was first published in 1980 and is set in an Italian monastery in 1327. When securing rights for the name failed to materialize, the game was released under its present title.

The game was developed on the Amstrad CPC6128 and was ported to other computers from there, including a 64k version for the Amstrad. There are many differences between the 128k and 64k games, including map size, rooms, and graphical differences.

La Abadía del Crimen was never officially translated into English and users have long complained of not being able to experience the game as intended. However, thanks to the work of hard working CPC users, an English translation (renamed to The Abbey of Crime) has been released.

Several remakes have appeared on various systems over the years, including PC, Game Boy Advance, and MSX2.



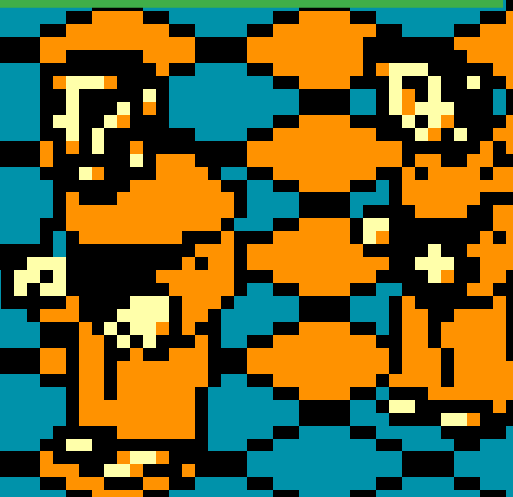
Despite *La Abadía del Crimen* being held in such high regard, the game was given very little coverage on its initial release. Where it was featured, it was well received, and has an aggregate rating of 90% based on one reviews.

Mundo Amstrad's Luis Jorge Garcia praised the arrival of *La Abadía del Crimen* as one of the best games of its kind. Praise was given for its graphics, its characters, and the many details within the game itself. The reviewer added that the game is also difficult, and that the player will not finish it in one day, making the save function all the more necessary.

Amstrad User's Maria Isabel Benitez stated that the game is a challenge of imagination and intelligence. Maria added that the graphics are outstanding, with both the environment and the characters made with exquisite care. Overall, a great detective game that players should not hesitate to acquire.

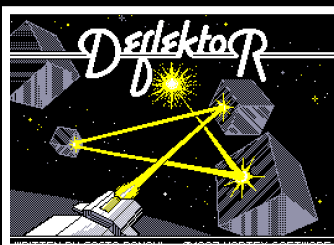
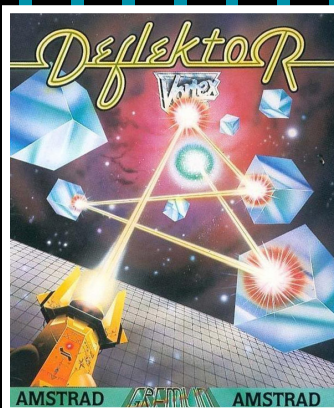
Ratings

9/10 *Mundo Amstrad*



DEFLEKTOR

"No Heroes. No Foes. Just skill and technology..."



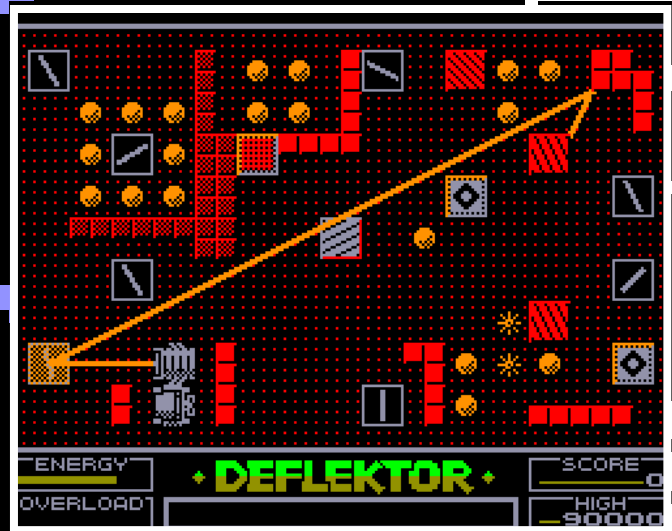
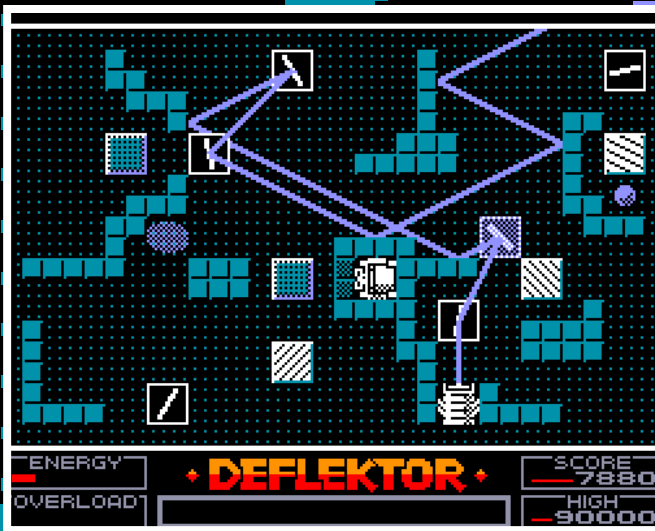
**Gremlin Graphics
Vortex Software**

Written by
Costa Panayi

A puzzle game where the main objective is for the player to guide a laser beam safely across an optical circuit towards a receiver. There are different types of blocks that obstruct the laser beam and the player must use the available methods to circumvent them. The laser beam can be used to blast any cells that are blocking the way. Mirrors can also be rotated to redirect the laser beam in the desired direction. However, careful use of the laser is needed as it can be overloaded by blasting, hitting mines or deflecting the beam back onto itself. Little gremlins will also tamper with your efforts by moving any mirrors and re-directing the laser. While the player deals with all this, the objectives must also be carried out before the energy levels are drained.

The conception of this original game came about after Costa Panayi was inspired by a science program all about lasers.

Retrospec have produced two remakes of the game: *Deflektor PC* was released in 1998 while a more updated version titled *Deflektor* appearing in 2004.



Deflektor was fairly well received upon its release, gaining an aggregate rating of 83% from four reviews.

Amstrad Action's Gary Barrett wrote: "Initially the game seems easy, but the time limit soon becomes a serious problem. Higher levels have more complex arrangements and Gremlins appear in larger numbers." Gary added that the "sound is simple and limited, but it's good enough", and the "graphics are easily recognisable". Overall, Gary felt the game is "frustrating and addictive", and "may not appeal to everyone, but it's definitely worth a look at."

Computing With the Amstrad's Tiffany Wood felt that "Gremlin and the authors are to be congratulated", as "it's a nice change to see something that's both original and good fun." Tiffany added that the "only real criticism is that when you get to the higher levels you still have to start each game from screen one. Apart from that, *Deflektor* gets the Wood seal of approval."

PC/CPC Schneider International gave the game high praise, with the reviewer saying that it had been a while since such a playable game landed on their desk. They felt that the game idea is pure dynamite and that the player will be hooked.

Amstar commented on the clean graphics and geometric elements that make *Deflektor* a totally original product. They declared the game a must have if players wanted to study the powers of reflection.

Ratings

90%	<i>Amstrad Action</i>
75%	<i>Power Play</i>
88%	<i>Computing With the Amstrad</i>
80%	<i>Greek Side of Amstrad</i>

1988

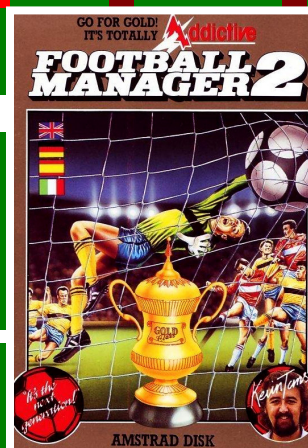
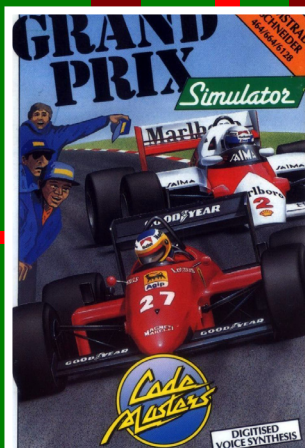
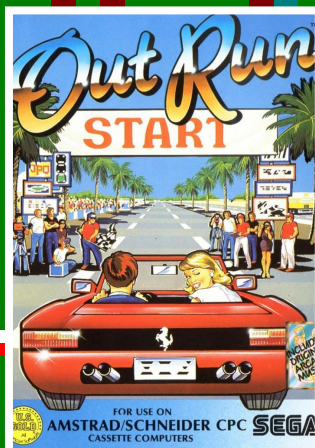


The year kicked off with rumours that Amstrad were working on a 16-bit computer to replace the CPC6128. *Computer Trade Weekly*, *Popular Computing Weekly*, and *Amstrad Action* all carried news articles on the rumours. Unfortunately, there was no materialization of an Amstrad 16-bit computer.

Following the closure of *Amstrad Magazine* in France the previous month, Amstrad backed the launch of *Amstrad Cent Pour Cent* as an official publication. Issue one (cover dated February 1988) brought readers a fine balance of leisure and technical content.

In Denmark, *Amstradbladet* closed out with its 10/1988 issue, bringing its total run to an end after 20 issues. CPC also ended in France, with its October issue being its 38th issue.

This year seemed to be the time when software houses began to re-release their back catalogue of classics as budget releases. Kixx started releasing former US Gold and Gremlin Graphic games such as *Gauntlet*, *Footballer of the Year*, and *Summer Games*. Elite also entered the fray with the launch of their Encore budget label. The



Encore label would play host to Elite's back catalogue with *Frank Bruno's Boxing*, *Airwolf*, *Battleships*, *Saboteur*, and *Bombjack* being the first few games released.

Renegade was a commercial success in Greece, spending five months in total on top of the games chart (January to March 1988 and September to October 1988). Its successor, *Target Renegade*, arrived soon after and spent three months on top of the charts (November to December 1988, and again in January 1990).

Despite its poor critical reception, *Out Run* fared well in the UK charts, spending two months on top during February and March. In France, *Arkanoid* spent two months on top, while in Turkey, *Combat School* also held the top spot for two months.

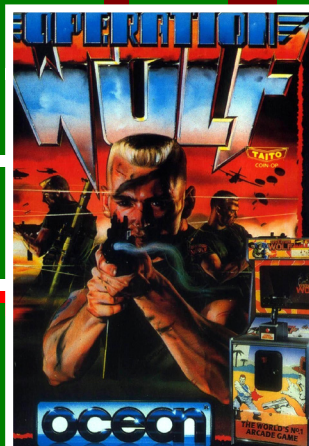
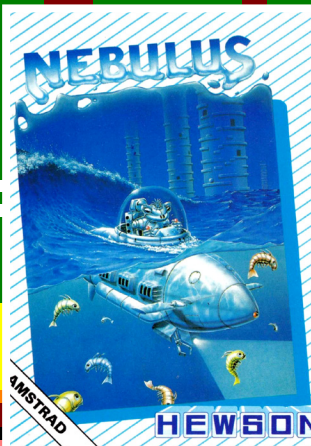
In the tail end of the year, *Computing With the Amstrad* — which had, just a few months previously, been re-launched as *CPC Computing* — closed with issue 48 (cover dated December 1988). It was decided to merge the failing publication with *Amstrad Computer User*.

Top 10 Sales chart 1988

1. *Out Run*
2. *Grand Prix Simulator*
3. *Football Manager 2*
4. *Super Stuntman*
5. *Professional Ski Simulator*
6. *Trantor*
7. *Arkanoid*
8. *Barbarian*
9. *Bob Winner*
10. *Combat School*

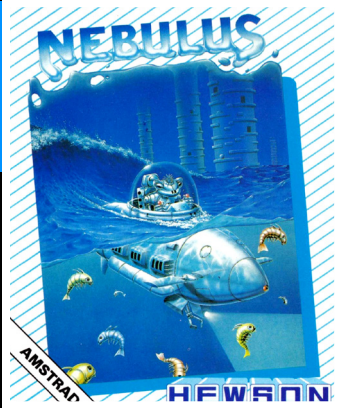
Top 10 Critics chart 1988

1. *Nebulus*
2. *Dark Side*
3. *Operation Wolf*
4. *Last Ninja 2*
5. *Le Manoir de Mortevielle*
6. *Captain Blood*
7. *The Great Giana Sisters*
8. *Get Dexter 2*
9. *WEC Le Mans*
10. *Enlightenment: Druid II*



NEBULUS

"Probably the most outstanding game from Hewson in 1987"



Hewson Consultants

Designed by
John Phillips
Written by
Chris Wood

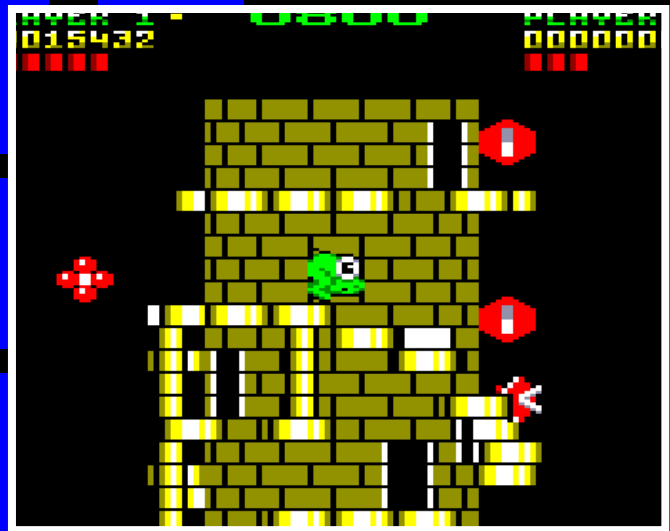
All is not well on the planet Nebulus. Someone has been building massive towers in the sea without any planning permission. Destructo Inc. has been given the task of toppling the towers and the boss needs chooses one of his employees, Pogo, to take on the financially rewarding but potentially dangerous task.

A platform game at heart but with a difference. The player takes on the role of Pogo and starts each level at the bottom of the tower. It's from here that the player is required to climb to the top of the tower and set off the destruction sequence within the required time.

However, the path to the top is full of obstacles such as gaps, tunnels, lifts, slippery and dissolving platforms. Bouncing balls and flashing blocks will hinder progress, too, but can be destroyed by shooting them. There are also creatures who can knock the player off the platform and, worst case scenario, down into the sea with the loss of a life.

The CPC version was almost not made due to Hewson's insistence that it would be too slow. However, Chris Wood was brought in to produce a CPC version that was just as quick as the other 8-bits. The conversion took three months to do with Chris using a Joyce (PCW8512) to write the game. This was the preferred set up due to the easy assembling of code from 3" disc on the PCW to the CPC6128.

The game was designed flat and then wrapped around the cylinder. The position of the aliens is calculated as though the tower was unrolled, a table holds the possible positions and then a bit of code uses a 16 level depth comparison table to wrap the whole lot around the tower.



Nebulus was very well received upon its release, and has a 94% aggregate rating from four reviews.

Robby wrote in *Amstrad Cent Pour Cent* that he loaded *Nebulus* up and was glued to the game for more than five hours. There were no complaints and Robby stated that it was undoubtedly one of the best games of the year.

Reviewing *Nebulus* for *Computing With the Amstrad*, Tiffany Wood wrote that “everything is so carefully worked out” and the “gameplay is finely tuned and shows a lot of thought”. Wood added that the game features “super graphics” and has “just the right level of addictive frustration to keep you at it”.

ACE praised an Amstrad game as they commented that *Nebulus* is a “sheer addictive challenge” and a “superb game”. The reviewer wrote that if the reader was “after a game that’s going to test the ol’ grey matter but still be tremendously playable — then look no further”.

Gary Barratt reviewed the game in *Amstrad Action*, praising the smooth rotation of the tower, the vertical scrolling, the “pleasant tune”, sound effects, but felt that the “frustration element of the multitude of puzzles are really difficult.” He added that this is “the most original and playable platform game for a long time”.

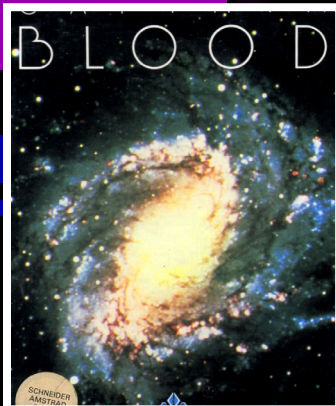
Amstrad Computer User’s Simon Rockman stated that “not only does the Amstrad version look much prettier and sound better than the Speccy but it plays just as well”. Rockman added that *Nebulus* “shares the Hewson trademark of being highly original and well programmed”.

Ratings

935	ACE	
93%	Amstrad Action	
95%	Amstrad Cent Pour Cent	
94%	Computing With the Amstrad	

CAPTAIN BLOOD

"A breathtaking galaxy on the outer rim of the universe"



Ere Informatique

Scenario:

Philippe Ulrich

Software & Graphics:

Didier Bouchon

Music:

Jean-Michel Jarre

Amstrad Adaption:

Yves Lamoureux

Additional Graphics:

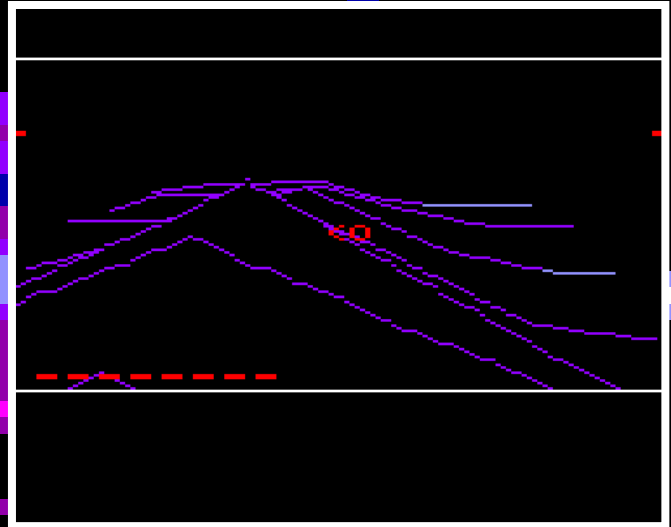
Michel Rho

Bob Morlock, AKA Captain Blood, is in the middle of testing his new video game project when he is transported inside the spaceship of the game itself. There he goes into hyperspace mode, but suffers an unexpected incident, and is accidentally cloned 30 times. Not only are there 30 clones of him running around the galaxy, but each one took a portion of Captain Blood's vital fluid. With this in mind, Captain Blood makes it his mission to track down every last clone and restore his body to its former self.

Captain Blood is an adventure game where the player assumes control of the titular character. The game features and icon-based interface which the player uses to travel to different planets, interact with the many scenarios and characters in the game. Tracking down the clones will require detective work by gaining the trust of various aliens in return for information.

The player must not take too long in finding the clones, though, as Captain Blood's health will deteriorate as represented by the game's controls becoming harder to handle. Managing to track down a clone, Captain Blood can transform it to his spaceship and regain some of his vital fluid.

Captain Blood was followed up with two PC only sequels with *Commander Blood* in 1994 and *Big Bug Bang* in 1997.



Captain Blood was well received upon its release, gaining an 86% aggregate rating from seven reviews.

Computing With the Amstrad's Dave Manning recommended *Captain Blood* "just for the graphics alone", describing them as "superb", but also praised the game's "intriguing and frustratingly good" puzzles. Dave added that "*Captain Blood* could be the game of 1988 and has to be seen to be believed."

Micromania Segunda Epoca's reviewer described *Captain Blood* as an extraordinary gigantic blockbuster and the result of an excellent group of programmers, artists, and musicians coming together with a good idea.

Amstrad Cent Pour Cent commented on how the programmers of *Captain Blood* have managed to reproduce the Atari ST game on the Amstrad. The reviewer added how the game creates a deep atmosphere that the player will lose themselves in.

Amstrad Action's Gary Barratt described the game's sound as being "limited", but did point out the futuristic theme music. Gary admitted that the game's graphics are the "strongest point though," and the galactic map is "excellent". He added that the game might initially seem confusing, but after a few games things will slot into place.

The Games Machine admitted that the Amstrad version is surprisingly close to the ST version, and could not see any noticeable difference in playability. The reviewer stated that the overall atmosphere is portrayed "superbly".

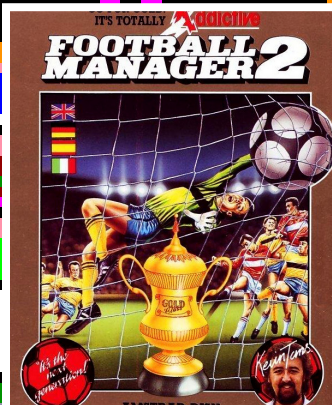
The Amstrad User's reviewer described the game as one of the best they had played all year and would thoroughly recommend it. They pointed out the game's originality and graphics, which are some of the best seen on an Amstrad.

Ratings

81%	<i>Amstrad Action</i>
76%	<i>The Games Machine</i>
94%	<i>Computing With the Amstrad</i>
90%	<i>Amstrad Cent Pour Cent</i>
16/20	<i>Amstrad Computer User</i>
9/10	<i>Micromania Segunda Epoca</i>

FOOTBALL MANAGER 2

"It's the next generation!"



Addictive Games

Designed by
Kevin Toms

Take control of a chosen football club and guide them to success with management skills. Use the transfer market to strengthen the squad. Select the team and tactics for each match, while trying to win promotion through the divisions up to the top league. Further success can come in the domestic cup competitions and the ultimate prize of European football.

A football simulation game where the player can take on the role of manager with the team of their choice. The player begins the first full season with their team in the lower leagues and have to progress through to the top. Limited funds are available for any incoming transfers of players while unwanted players can also be sold on.

The matches are displayed with TV grandstand style visuals of the pitch as the highlights play out. The pitch itself is divided into three screens: defence, midfield and attack. Players will run, tackle, pass and shoot according to their skillset with varied success depending on many attribute factors. Results are displayed and the league tables calculated. Training can be tailored to suit the team's needs. Gate receipts and other income can help increase the team's funds.

The original *Football Manager* was initially developed for the Video Genie in 1982 as a text based game, and is considered the game that kick-started the football management simulation genre.

One of the first games series to present the designer on the front cover with "Kevin Toms the designer" placed on the bottom corner of the artwork inlay.

The *Football Manager 2 Expansion Kit* was released the following year (1989) and allows the player to edit team and player names, choose the starting division, design strip colours, play in Europe and world leagues, and take part as a player-manager.

The first game was a massive success and was ported to many platforms with inevitable sequels: *Football Manager 2* (1988), *Football Manager 2 Expansion Kit* (1989), *Football Manager World Cup Edition* (1990), and *Football Manager 3* (1992 — without Kevin Toms' involvement).



Football Manager 2 received a mixed response from reviewers across the globe, and currently holds an aggregate rating of 73% from seven reviews. The game was a commercial success and the third most successful game of 1988. It spent four months in the United Kingdom top ten charts, peaking at number one, and four months in the German top ten, peaking at number two.

Amstrad Computer User praised the game as being “surprisingly full of features for a single-load product” and stated that with “the addition of various skill levels ensures that *FM2* will stay off the back shelf for months”.

Pat Winstanley writing in *CPC Computing* gave the game a ‘Silver Award’, noting that the player did not “need to know anything about football to enjoy this game”, but to be “prepared to invest plenty of time”.

Amstrad Sinclair Ocio stated that the game is addictive, but also pointed out the decent graphics and clean presentation. The only fault the reviewer could find was that the disk version could not be ran quick enough.

Amstrad Action’s Gary Barrett praised the game’s visuals with the “well presented” menus and the “colourful” in-game match highlights. While he wasn’t enamoured about the slight flicker on the match highlights or “limited” sound, he commented that “*FMII* beats *Football Manager* by a hatful of goals”.

The Games Machine said that the game’s presentation and graphics are similar to the original and had “not progressed any further since its day”. They commented that the game is “more or less the same with little use made of the CPC’s graphic and sound capabilities”.

Ratings

11/20	Amstar
72%	Amstrad Action
18/20	Amstrad Computer User
8/10	Amstrad Sinclair Ocio
89%	CPC Computing
64%	The Games Machine
59%	Zzap!

TARGET; RENEGADE

"He's back – meaner, tougher and thirsting for revenge!"



Imagine Software

Coding by

Mike Lamb

Graphics by

Dawn Drake

Music by

Gary Biasillo

The unnamed Renegade's brother, Matt, had been investigating the underhand dealings of the criminal underworld in Scumville, but was caught out and met the full fury of the boss, Mr. Big. Raging with lust for revenge, the unnamed renegade takes it upon himself to return to the streets to take out Mr. Big and his gangland thugs.

One or two player co-operative side flip-screen beat 'em up that takes place over five varied scenarios. The player will encounter many members of the gang: motor cyclists will attempt to run the renegade over, skin heads will use their raw fighting skills, the Beastie Boys and their trained dogs will be on the attack while bodyguards have guns at their disposal and finally there is Mr. Big and his bodyguards.

The game starts with three lives, although further lives can be gained by achieving high scores, and each life comes with its own energy bar. Each enemy hits inflict damage to the renegade and his energy bar will decrease. An empty energy bar will result in the loss of a life. Fighting back is the only option and the player has many moves at their disposal, including kicks, punches, jump kicks, grabs. There are even weapons that can be picked up and used against the enemy.

Ocean Software had originally put a bid in for the licence to convert the arcade hit *Double Dragon* to home computers. Upon failing to win the licence, they turned their attention to the *Renegade* game which they had the rights to develop further original games from. Using *Double Dragon* as a reference and influence, they developed their own version under the name *Target; Renegade*.

An unofficial remake was released for PC in 2006. *Target; 2006*, which follows on from *Renegade III* with Mr. Big returning via time-travelling elements, allowed up to six players to take part in proceedings at the same time.

Target; Renegade is the middle game of the trilogy which began with *Renegade* in 1987 and ended with *Renegade III: The Final Chapter* in 1989.



Target; Renegade received a mixed response upon its release, gaining an aggregate rating of 72% from seven reviews. The game was the fourth most successful game of 1989, charting well in Greece, spending over 12 months in the top 10, with three of those months being at number one.

The game was given a 'CPC Computing Gold Award' from *CPC Computing's* Tony Flanagan. "The graphics are colourful and nicely detailed," wrote Tony, "with backgrounds providing appropriate atmosphere for each location." He pointed out that "the flip screen technique is so subtle that it's hardly noticeable, and the foreground action is swift and fluent."

Amstrad Action's Gary Barrett felt that "apart from the simultaneous two player option *Target Renegade* offers nothing new", however, "that one feature does make a difference, though, because now you can get a friend to join in and have a good time kicking and maiming together."

The Games Machine described *Target; Renegade* as an "old run-of-the-mill thing — bash the lackeys to get at Mr Big", but is still "very entertaining" and that the "path to Mr Big's door isn't an easy one", with "enough playability to keep you trying until you complete it".

Amstrad Computer User's Nigel admitted to not being a "fan of games which involve violence and nothing else". He added that *Target; Renegade* is "no more than an average example of the type of thing which has never caused me to question my initial feelings of dislike".

Ratings

86%	<i>Amstrad Action</i>
85%	<i>Amstrad Cent Pour Cent</i>
6/20	<i>Amstrad Computer User</i>
82%	<i>The Games Machine</i>
93%	<i>CPC Computing</i>
13/20	<i>Amstar</i>
655	<i>ACE</i>



SAVAGE

"Can you be the supreme fighting machine... Savage"



Firebird Probe Software

Written by

D Perry

Graphics by

N Bruty

Chained up in a castle dungeon, Savage awaits his execution.

Fortunately for Savage, the Gods are on his side and he manages to escape and flees out into the castle's labyrinths. Managing to defeat all oncoming mutant monsters, Savage enters Death Valley where ghosts and skulls await. However, upon exiting Death Valley, Savage learns that his Maiden is also being help captive in the castle, so he returns to the castle in a bid to rescue her.

An action game of three parts, two side-scrolling sections and one first-person section with the player taking on the role of Savage and his pet eagle. The first side-scrolling level takes place within the castle, the second first-person level is the Death Valley where ghosts and skulls await and the third level is where Savage's pet eagle helps break back into the castle in a multi-directional scrolling section. Levels two and three can be played out of order, but with the handicap of only one live. Completing a level gives the player a code for the next level where they will be given a full set of three lives rather than just one.

Savage starts the game with a basic axe which can be thrown at the enemy, although magical weapons which produce shield and lightning bolts can be gained. Savage's energy will decrease during his conflicts, but can be replenished with the collection of potions dropped by fallen enemy. Similarly, the eagle's energy will decrease upon any hits, but can be restored by sitting on randomly placed cauldrons in the castle. End-of-level guardians also have to be dealt with to progress further.

According to Nick Bruty the game was initially called *Project 5* then *Eagle Warrior* as the content and design changed constantly. The game was finally named *Savage* due to the main character's "savage warrior" look.



Savage received mostly positive reviews upon its release. It holds an aggregate rating of 84% based on nine reviews.

Computer Games Week stated that "the graphics and action are what makes this game, as they are some of the best the CPC has ever been graced with". Rounding off the review, they commented that the game has "plenty of action", "fab graphics", and gives players "the chance to be big and hunky with very little effort".

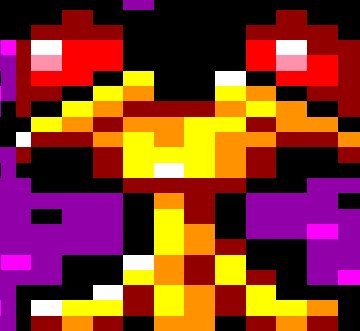
The Italian version of *Zzap!* commented on how the Amstrad graphics and animation are superior to the C64 version. The visuals were compared 16-bit quality, making *Savage* one game that many *Zzap!* staff members regret not having an Amstrad.

Amstrad Cent Pour Cent's Robby commented that *Savage* has some very neat special effects, a mind-blowing soundtrack, vivid colours, and graphics, including some downright memorable passages like the ride over the flames and clashes in the end level. Robby added that *Savage* is a must, and a violent game that really exploits the CPC.

Amstrad Action's Gary Barrett praised the visuals, stating that "the graphics are absolutely excellent: without any doubt at all the best there's been on the CPC for many, many months." He admitted that "if the gameplay was as good as the graphics then we'd have a Mastergame on our hands."

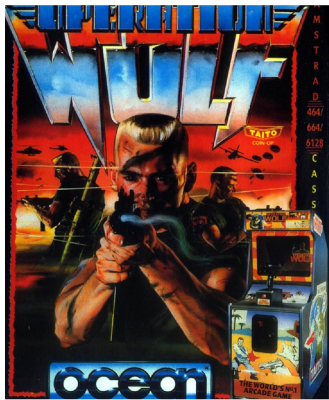
Ratings

704	ACE
17/20	Amstar
86%	Amstrad Action
87%	Amstrad Cent Pour Cent
75%	The Games Machine
67%	Power Play
93%	Computer Games Week
89%	Zzap!
4/4	Micro News



OPERATION WOLF

"The world's No.1 arcade game now the computer Sensation of the year"



Ocean Software

Programming by

Andrew Deakin

Graphics by

Ivan Horn

Music and sound effects by

Jonathan Dunn

Some of the army's finest soldiers are being held prisoner in the enemy's concentration camp. The army is calling for a brave volunteer to parachute into the enemy territory, take out the enemy bases, eliminate any enemy threats and rescue the prisoners of war.

A first person perspective shooter where the player progresses through six increasingly difficult levels of enemy territory. As the screen constantly scrolls along, enemy soldiers will run across the screen, fire guns and fling daggers at the player and if they make contact will take a slice of the player's energy away. However, the grenade lobbers, tanks, and helicopters pose the most threat as they can inflict the most damage. Energy can be replenished upon successfully completion of each level.

Using the standard machine gun is carried out by moving the cross hair around the screen and pressing the fire button. As well as the machine gun, there are also limited grenades available that can be lobbed at the enemy. While machine gun ammo is limited, extra supplies can be gained by shooting at crates and even birds. Be careful not to fire on civilians as doing so is not just morally wrong but will result in a drop of energy.

The original arcade game was developed by Taito and released in 1987. The arcade cabinet featured a fixed swivel mounted light gun with recoil action and a grenade launch button. The game was followed up by three arcade sequels, *Operation Thunderbolt* (1988), *Operation Wolf 3* (1994) and *Operation Tiger* (1998).

For development of the game, graphic artist Ivan Horn made use of a PCB of the arcade game which came with a loose gun rather than the usual mounted one. As he played the game from start to finish, Horn recorded it on a video camera and used the footage to develop the Amstrad version.

The Amstrad CPC received a conversion of *Operation Thunderbolt* (the sequel to the arcade original) in 1989. A port of the same game was also released for the Plus range and GX4000 in 1990. An enhanced Plus edition of *Operation Wolf* was produced by Hermol, which features updated visuals of the original CPC464 game.



Operation Wolf received general critical acclaim with an aggregate score of 88% based on six reviews. The game was a huge commercial success across Europe, ranking as the second most successful game of 1989. It topped the charts in both the United Kingdom (two months) and Greece (three months), spending over 17 months in the latter chart.

Amstrad Action called *Operation Wolf* "manic action all the way," with some "colourful and well animated" graphics and stated that the CPC conversion being even faster than the original arcade game.

Amstar praised the colourful graphics, but did show concern that the fast scrolling visuals may be too fast with the game becoming a frenzied panic. The reviewer did add that although the constant on-screen action might be initially overwhelming for the player, with practice, it would be possible to complete the game.

The Amstrad User stated that the game was a "very good representation" of the arcade game with faster scrolling, excellent graphics, "complementing sound effects," and with the overall experience being an "addictive, sweat inducing" action from start to finish.

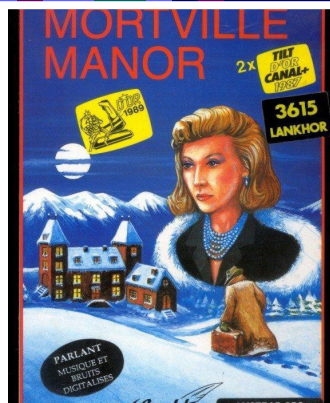
The Games Machine stated that the CPC version was the best 8-bit version, not only in pace but with action to match the original arcade game. With high level of detail and extensive use of colour, the reviewer thought that the game showed off the ability of the Amstrad perfectly.

Ratings

894	ACE
16/20	Amstar
89%	Amstrad Action
90%	Amstrad Cent Pour Cent
89%	The Games Machine
90%	Zzap!

LE MANOIR DE MORTEVIELLE

"Mortville Manor"



Lankhor

Original idea by

**Bruno Gourier and
Bernard Grelaud**

CPC Adaption by

Frédéric Carbonero

It was an ordinary day for Detective Jérôme Lange when a telegram is slipped under the door of his office. It is from Julia, his childhood friend, who has fallen ill and asks for his help and to join her at the Mortvielle mansion. Upon reaching the mansion, Jérôme is greeted by Max, one of the mansion's staff, who tells him that Julia has died. As there is a severe snow storm raging outside, Max recommends that Jérôme stays put at the mansion. Upon settling into his room, Jérôme sets out to investigate just what happened to Julia and why she asked him to join her at the mansion.

Graphic point-and-click adventure with the player taking on the role of Detective Jérôme Lange. When the game begins, the player has the chance to investigate the mansion and its immediate surroundings in an effort to discover how and why Julia died. However, searching rooms must be conducted discreetly or you will be denied access to them. As well as finding physical clues, people at the mansion can be questioned.

The game is viewed through the eyes of Jérôme whose actions are controlled through the menu system at the top of the screen ([Inv]entory, [Act]ion, [Self] actions or object, [Disc]ussion, Dep and Fic). The interface consists of point-and-click between the menus and the screen. If the player wants to open something, they will need to click the Open function in the Action menu and then click on the item in the screen that they wish to open.

When a computer magazine published a full walkthrough of the game, the developers released a second edition, which includes certain parts where the player is questions about the game's plot.

Although the original Atari ST version was translated from its native French to English and German, unfortunately, the Amstrad CPC game was not.

A follow up titled *Maupiti Island* where the player resumes the role of detective Jérôme Lange in another mystery was released on 16-bit computers only in 1990. A third title in the series titled *Sukiya* was due to be released, but was cancelled mid-production.



Le Manoir de Mortvielle was well received upon its release, gaining an aggregate rating of 89% from two reviews.

AM Mag's Alain Skipbo praised the game for its great playability, along with the design that perfectly evokes a heavy atmosphere. Special mention was given to the sound, which includes speech, digitized sounds, and music.

Amstar pointed out the details that make a quality game such as *Le Manoir de Mortvielle*: an interesting plot, beautiful graphics, and smooth gameplay. The reviewer also singled out the sound as he finally heard an adventure game that speaks to him.

Tilt's Olivier Hautefeuille thought that the CPC version is perhaps the most surprising, what with its eight bits of technical power, it still manages to produce a quality game with precision graphics. Oliver pointed out that CPC owners have waited a long time for this conversion, and that the result matches up to expectations.

Ratings

17/20 *Amstar*

92% *Amstrad Cent Pour Cent*

ROBOCOP

"Part Man-Part Machine-All Game"



Ocean Software

Code by

Mike Lamb

Graphics by

Dawn Drake

Music by

Jonathan Dunn

Crime is on the increase in Detroit and Police Officer Murphy became the 32nd casualty from the force. Gunned down by a group of criminals, Murphy was left for dead. A secret department of the police force managed to save Murphy, but he was now more machine than man. He was RoboCop, the future of law enforcement.

The player takes on the role of RoboCop as he patrols the streets of Detroit, bringing the criminal gang who gunned him down to justice. The game is played out through nine levels featuring side-scrolling scenarios with puzzle based moments in between. Throughout these levels, RoboCop will encounter criminal thugs, a hostage situation, a photofit session, a drug factory and more.

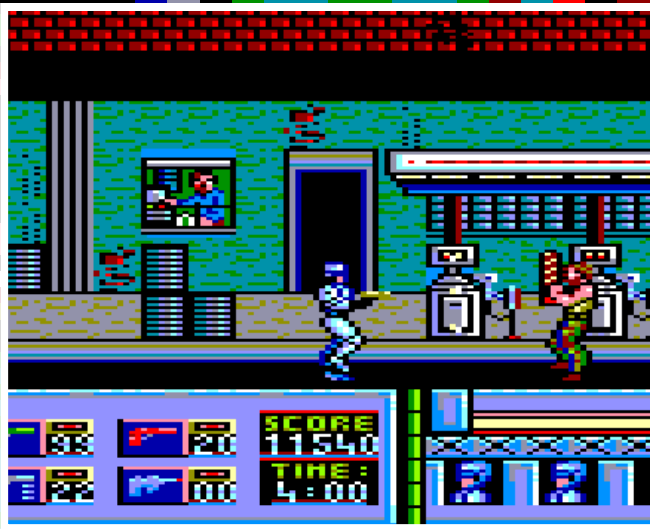
RoboCop is equipped with a standard police issue hand gun, but upgrades are available along the way. The enemy come equipped with all kinds of weaponry such as shotguns, chainsaws and will even use motorcycles in an attempt to mow down RoboCop. If any of the enemy get close enough, RoboCop can let out a mighty punch, but if he comes under fire, his energy will decrease each time. One of his initial three lives will be lost if his energy hits zero. Food jars can be picked up to boost RoboCop's energy levels.

The 1987 film is set in the futuristic city of Detroit where crime is rife and the police force has been privatised by a megacorporation known as OCP. Through their RoboCop project, they hope to bring justice to the city with minimal man power.

RoboCop's theme music was composed by Jonathan Dunn and is a well remembered chiptune to Amstrad gamers. The tune went on to be featured in a washing machine advert for Ariston.

Ocean Software had the computer versions of *RoboCop* ready for release alongside the video release of the film. The video release also had an advertisement for the computer game before the main film.

RoboCop 2 was developed by Ocean and released in 1990. This time the game was developed for the Amstrad GX4000 and plus range, taking advantage of the upgraded hardware. *RoboCop 3* was advertised as coming soon for the Amstrad, but never materialized.



For unknown reasons, the Amstrad CPC version of the game was not given to the UK magazine press for review. The only United Kingdom review of the Amstrad version, albeit as an update mini review a month after it was released, came in *The Games Machine*. Meanwhile across the Channel, it seemed that French magazines had no trouble getting hold of a review copy. The game has an aggregate rating of 79% from four reviews.

RoboCop blitzed the charts following its release, becoming the most successful game of 1989 and third most successful the following year. The game spent 18 months in the UK chart, and also 18 months in the Greek chart. From the time spent in the UK chart, five of those were at the top, while from the Greek chart, seven months were at the top.

AM Mag's Jean-Claude thought the game was on the tough side, but not impossible, and that fatigue may set in without the ability to save the game. On the positive side, Jean-Claude praised the game for its graphics, the delightful handling, and its diversity.

Amstrad Cent Pour Cent's Matt Murdock described *RoboCop* as an exciting game that will likely captivate players for months. Matt went on to highlight the game's nice music and perfectly worked level designs.

The Games Machine's reviewer described the game as "essentially a boosted Spectrum version" with the "same incredibly infectious gameplay but with markedly better colouring and presentation".

Amstar's reviewer praised the aesthetics, stating that the graphics, colours, and music are all good, and the animation on the whole is good. The reviewer felt that the only unsatisfactory feature being the laborious stair climbing parts.

Ratings

90%	<i>Amstrad Cent Pour Cent</i>
78%	<i>The Games Machine</i>
15/20	<i>Amstar</i>
74%	<i>Power Play</i>

1989

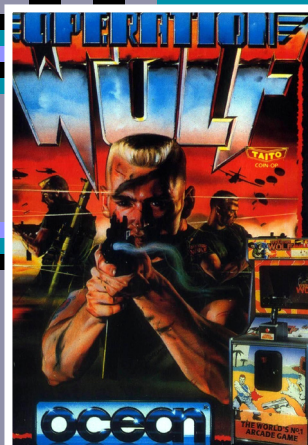


The Spanish Amstrad scene suffered two publication casualties with both *Amstrad Acción* and *Amstrad User* ending with their 13th (Jan/Feb) and 41st (February) issues respectively. Germany also suffered a closure as *CPC Magazin* ended with its 09/10-1989 issue.

To offset the closures somewhat was a new launch. *Amstrad Sinclair Ocio* launched in Spain with its March 1989 issue. The official publication covered both Amstrad and Sinclair computers.

1989 was the year of *RoboCop* as it dominated the charts across Europe, spending five months (March to April & July to September) at number one in the UK and five months (June to December) at number one in Greece. It would go on to spend another two months on top in January and February 1990.

Ocean Software also entered the budget wars as they began using their Hit Squad label to re-release their back catalogue of hit games. *Rambo*, *Daley Thompson's Decathlon*, and *Enduro Racer* were first out of the budget blocks.



Ocean Software's other big hitter, *Operation Wolf*, also proved to be a commercial success with two months on top of the UK Charts (January to February) and three months on top in Greece (March to May).

Amstrad and Virgin Mastertronic teamed up to release the Magnum Lightgun. The package, including gun and six compatible games (including *Operation Wolf*), came with a price of £29.99.

Les Justiciers (aka *The Untouchables*) spent two months on top of the games charts in France (August & September), while *Chase H.Q.* also spent two months on top between December 1989 and January 1990.

Over in Germany, *Bionic Commando* and *WEC Le Mans* both spent two months on top of the games charts in January & February 1989 and March & April 1989 respectively.

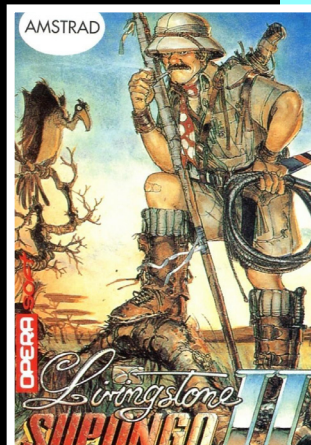
Meanwhile, *Gryzor* topped the games chart in Turkey for January & February 1989.

Top 10 Sales chart 1989

1. *RoboCop*
2. *Operation Wolf*
3. *Dragon Ninja*
4. *Target Renegade*
5. *WEC Le Mans*
6. *Basket Master*
7. *Twin Turbo V8*
8. *Match Day II*
9. *Bubble Bobble*
10. *Batman Caped Crusader*

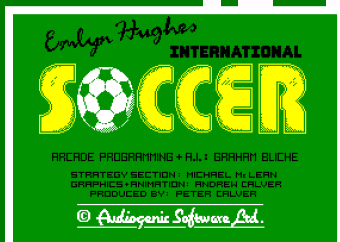
Top 10 Critics chart 1989

1. *Chase H.Q.*
2. *Shufflepuck Cafe*
3. *Dr Livingstone II*
4. *Rainbow Islands*
5. *AMC (Astro Marine Corps)*
6. *MOT*
7. *Scapeghost*
8. *Forgotten Worlds*
9. *Emlyn Hughes International Soccer*
10. *Combat School*



EMLYN HUGHES INTERNATIONAL SOCCER

"The best football game ever!"



Audiogenic

Arcade programming and
A.I. by

Graham Blighe

Graphics and animation by

Andrew Calver

Strategy section by

Terry Wiley

Emlyn Hughes International Soccer is a football game that offers the player a combination of both arcade action and management. One or two players can take control of a team and participate in either a friendly, cup, or a full season (league and cup). The management side of the game allows players full control over editing teams. Fitness levels will fall during the season, so it becomes a squad based game with the need to rotate or rest players every now and then.

With the management decisions made, it is time for the action of the pitch. Kicking the ball, either in an effort to pass or shoot, is done in the same way. By using a combination of the fire button and direction of the joystick, the player can dictate the height, direction and power of the pass or shot. The game provides either 1, 2 or 5 directions. The player can also perform a back heel with the right joystick combination.

Just like in real life, players can not suddenly change in opposite directions and keep the same momentum and here it is no different. Besides running and turning, players can also perform sidesteps to avoid opposing tackles and use of shoulder barging to fend off opponents. In appropriate opportunities, players can carry out sliding tackles, headers, diving headers, and chest controls.

According to Graham Blighe, Audiogenic tried to hire programmers to convert the game to other computers, but after nothing was delivered, Blighe converted all the versions himself, one after the other.

Emlyn Hughes was an English footballer best known for his successful stint at Liverpool from 1967-1979. He also played for the English national team on 62 occasions. In his later years, Emlyn became a team captain for the long-running sports quiz television show *A Question of Sport*.

The game received a spin-off general knowledge quiz game called *Emlyn Hughes Arcade Quiz*. The Amstrad did not receive any further football games in the series, but Audiogenic did develop two follow up games: *European Champions* (released on 16-bit computers by Ocean Software in 1993) and *Wembley International Soccer* (Amiga, 1994).



Emlyn Hughes International Soccer was mostly well received, gaining an aggregate rating of 83% from six reviews.

Amstrad Action's Trenton Web wrote that *Emlyn Hughes International Soccer* is "truly the soccer sim against which all other past, present and future efforts must be measured". He added that "this is the most complete soccer sim yet to make its way onto a CPC," and is "*Matchday* and *Football Manager* rolled into one and leagues better than both."

Amstrad Computer User's Emma commented on how the game features "nearly as much atmosphere generated as a real football match" and that "someone has obviously spent a great deal of time compiling this game". Her "only bone of contention is the actual size of the playing pitch... otherwise the game is excellent, and the graphics and sonics are bright and sharp".

The Games Machine criticised the game for the increased side borders that make "the playing area a square shape in the middle of the screen". The reviewer felt that "with less pitch and less players visible at any one time, playability suffers a little, but the control system works fine", and "with its wealth of options and control complexities, is still a very good soccer game".

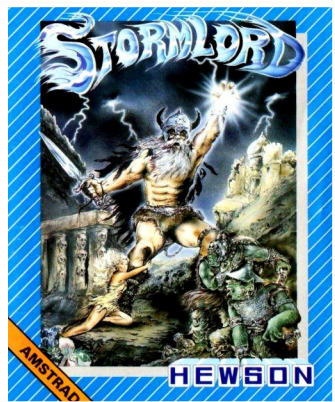
The Amstrad User reviewer described the game play as "brilliant" with "superb sprites" and "very smooth" presentation. The reviewer added that this is "the best soccer simulation available and should be part of your library of games whether you play soccer or not".

Ratings

93%	<i>Amstrad Action</i>
88%	<i>Amstrad Cent Pour Cent</i>
91%	<i>Amstrad Computer User</i>
81%	<i>The Games Machine</i>
81%	<i>Zzap!</i>
13/20	<i>Amstar</i>

STORMLORD

"The ultimate battle between the forces of good and evil"



Hewson Consultants

Designed and written by

Raffaello Cecco and

Nick Jones

Graphics by

Hugh Binns

Music by

Dave Rogers

Peace was prevalent throughout the land until the evil Queen began imprisoning fairies one by one. Her evil plan to conquer the land slowly realised with each fairy imprisoned. With the land also being home to Stormlord, he would not stand by and watch things descend to a dark reign of the Queen. Stormlord sets out to free the fairies and rid the land of the evil Queen.

Platform adventure game where the player takes on the role of the titular Stormlord on his mission to free the fairies and the land. Every level contains fairies that must be rescued from their prison cage. This can only be achieved by obtaining the necessary keys which are scattered throughout the levels.

The levels in the game contain various hindrances such as Venus fly traps, huge worms, flies and dragons, all of which are lethal to Stormlord's health. To fight back against these creatures, Stormlord can fire bolts or swords at them. Spring boards can be found randomly across the levels, which can be used to transport Stormlord across many screens. Time is limited, which is indicated on screen by a sun morphing into a moon, so the player will not want to hesitate too much.

Cecco's previous titles being set in a science fiction world prompted him to have *Stormlord* grounded in a fantasy fairy tale scenario.

The game was developed over the course of eight months with a three month interruption of further work on Cecco's previous game, *Cybernoid II*.

In December 1993, *Amstrad Action* gave the whole game away with their issue 99's 'Serious Action' covertape. However, the game was censored with black squares covering the offending parts of the fairies, much to the bemusement of many readers.

A sequel titled *Deliverance: Stormlord II* was released in 1989 and follows in a similar gameplay style to the first game.



Stormlord was mostly well received upon its initial release, and holds an aggregate rating of 80% from seven reviews.

Amstrad Action's Trenton Webb was impressed with *Stormlord*'s "truly stunning" visuals, with colours used to "evoke a land of mystery and magic," and a "unique character for the game". Webb did stress that "Cecco has developed a test only the toughest, most committed will survive", and that "*Stormlord* demands 100% concentration 200% of the time."

The Games Machine's reviewer was surprised "that for once it's not a straight port" and that "Raf has made excellent use" of the CPC's "graphics to show off the machine's colourful palette." They also praised the audio, and mentioned that the "gameplay is on the one hand easier than the Spectrum's because it's a touch slower, on the other tougher because of a tight time limit."

Amstrad Cent Pour Cent's LACSAR praised the game's use of sixteen colours, gorgeous graphics, and very fluid scrolling. The reviewer pointed out that they had never experienced such a game on the CPC before, before congratulating Raffele Cecco and awaiting eagerly for his next release.

The Amstrad User stated that *Stormlord* is graphically a great product with an obvious amount of effort put into it. They pointed out how the main character is well drawn with well drawn backgrounds, and the game is a fine example of good quality games which can be written for the CPC.

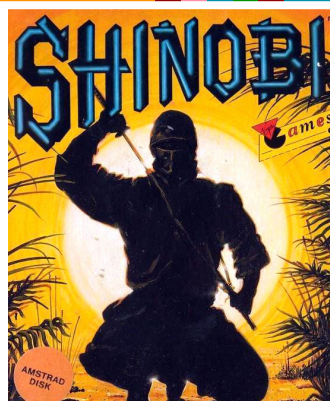
Amstar's reviewer praised *Stormlord* for its beautiful colours, detailed graphics, endearing characters, and successful animation. And with the decent music and challenging difficulty, the reviewer voiced that it should come as no surprise that *Stormlord* is software of the month.

Ratings

92%	<i>Amstrad Action</i>
92%	<i>Amstrad Cent Pour Cent</i>
16/20	<i>Amstar</i>
9/10	<i>Amstrad Sinclair Ocio</i>
84%	<i>The Games Machine</i>
38%	<i>Power Play</i>
84%	<i>Zzap!</i>

SHINOBI

"Frantic oriental action in this Ninja beat-em-up"



The Sales Curve present

SHINOBI

A Binary Design Production
Code: Richard Aplin
Gfx: Drew Northcott
Music: Tiny

Press fire to play

Virgin Games The Sales Curve / Binary Design

Code:

Richard Aplin

Gfx:

Drew Northcott

Music:

Tiny Williams

At the annual graduation ceremony at a Ninja school, the Dark Ninja, Bwah Foo, and his henchmen, gatecrash the event and use their Dark Ninja Magic to freeze everyone. Looking on helplessly, the school staff watch in horror as the students are taken away.

Taking on the role of the unnamed ninja, the player is tasked with infiltrating the enemy territory, rescuing the kidnapped students and bringing down Bwah Foo. The game takes place over five side-scrolling platform missions, each mission containing two or three stages and a final section with the end-of-level guardian. The enemy characters vary depending on the mission and stage, ranging from knife wielding thugs, gun-equipped henchmen, samurai wielding warriors and a varied range of ninjas.

The unnamed main character has an array of moves at his disposal as he negotiates the many scenarios and hazards. As well as the standard walk, he can crouch, sneak crouch, jump and leap up and down between the different floors or levels. The main standard weapon is an unlimited supply of shuriken — even fists and feet can be used at close range. A power-up can be picked up during the stages, which gives the player a gun that fires explosive bullets. Special Ninja Magic can also be used once per level, which involves ninja figures flying all around the screen taking out all the enemy onscreen.

With the disk version taking full advantage of 128k of memory, there are some digitised samples in between levels. The theme tune on the title screen is also an interpretation of the original arcade tune.

Released in 1987 by Sega, the arcade version differs slightly from the home conversion. The main character in the arcade version is called Joe Musashi and the criminal organization is called Zeed.

The arcade game was followed up by *Shadow Dancer* in 1989, which also received a conversion to the CPC. Further spin-offs and sequels such as *The Revenge of Shinobi*, *The Cyber Shinobi*, and *Shinobi III* appeared on various home consoles during the early 1990s.

A fanmade *Shinobi Remaster* appeared in the beginning of 2020. This remaster touched up the visuals of the game, including the main character sprite, colour palette, and other texture changes.



Shinobi was fairly well received by the gaming press, receiving an aggregate rating of 73% from eight reviews.

"Gameplay is the bedrock that *Shinobi* is built on," stated *Amstrad Action's* Trenton Webb, "and the foundations are solid indeed." Trenton added that the game makes "full use of the CPC's colour potential, and any attempt to maximise the CPC's ability must be applauded."

Amstrad Computer User's Mark Luckham commented on how "the graphics are quite good in a chunky kind of way and the scrolling in both directions is fast if not smooth." Mark also touched on the playability which has "just the right feel to the character to enable accurate manouvres and yet still have parts that are quite hard to complete."

Computer + Video Game's Julian Rignall commented that the game is a "colourful, jerky, but playable rendition of the arcade machine."

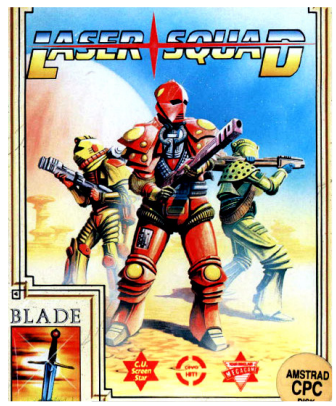
The Games Machine's Warren Lapworth went to great lengths to list all of the games faults in his review: "Backgrounds are gaudy [...] deformed sprites [...] Joe looks like he's doing Chuck Berry's duck walk [...] Scrolling is jerky [...] animation simplistic [...]. There was some room for positives, though: "On the plus side, there's some clear speech... and, best of all, gameplay is more enjoyable."

Ratings

13/20	<i>Amstar</i>
87%	<i>Amstrad Action</i>
75%	<i>Amstrad Cent Pour Cent</i>
77%	<i>Amstrad Computer User</i>
8/10	<i>Amstrad Sinclair Ocio</i>
75%	<i>Computer + Video Games</i>
60%	<i>The Games Machine</i>
16/20	<i>Joystick Hebdo</i>
15/20	<i>Micro Mag</i>
7.3/10	<i>Pixel</i>
58%	<i>Zzap!</i>

LASER SQUAD

"A tactical warfare simulation"



Blade Software Target Games

Game design and program:
Julian Gollop

A small squad of equipped soldiers take on various missions from assassinations, moonbase assaults, data destruction, rescuing prisoners of war, defending a base against attack from droids and stealing weapon plans.

A turn-based strategy game based in a science fiction setting of various worlds and landscapes. The game comes packed with five different scenarios each with their own backstory and setting. The player can take on the computer AI or two players can play head to head. Before each scenario, the player has the chance to get their squad kitted up in armour, equipped with weapons and ammo ready for the mission.

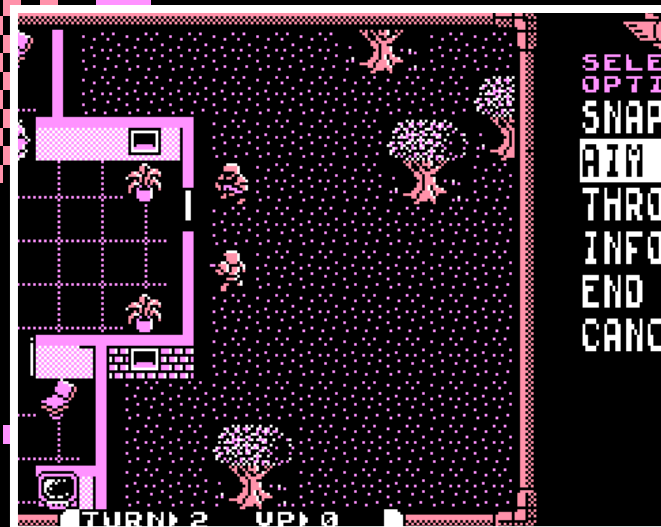
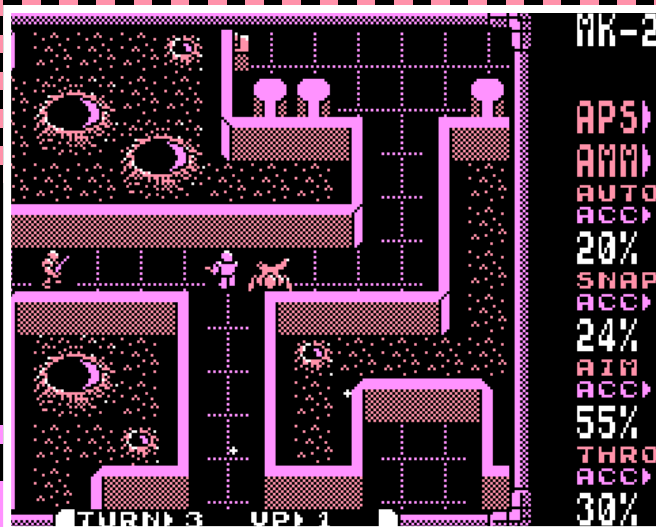
Laser Squad introduced many new strategy features such as the 'hidden movement' system or the 'fog of war'. This means that the player will not know the whereabouts of the enemy as they will not appear on the map until they have moved into the 'field of vision' of one of the player's units. The winner of the scenario is the player who has achieved the winning conditions set out at the beginning.

The squad based strategy element of *Laser Squad* harks back to the board games that Gollop had played which featured strategy elements such as snap shot or aimed shot.

The original Amstrad CPC release came with the first five missions with an expansion pack offered via mail order for the next two scenarios: The Stardrive and Laser Platoon. As well as featuring new missions, the expansion pack included improved visuals and additional weapons.

Julian Gollop returned to his *Laser Squad* franchise when his company, Codo Technologies, released *Laser Squad Nemesis* in 2002. This was a play-by-email game which deviated away from the turn-based strategy elements of the original.

There have been numerous remakes released over the years. *Laser Squad 3D* was released in the Java format by Stephen Smith in 2004. Another Java remake, this time of the original PC version, was released in 2005 by William Fraser. *Stellar Forces* was released on Android in 2012.



Laser Squad was not as well received in Europe as it was in the United Kingdom. The game holds an aggregate rating of 63% from four reviews.

Amstrad Action gave *Laser Squad* their 'Master Game', making it the game of the month. "The fun in *Laser Squad* stems from its flexibility and its playability", commented Trenton Webb. "With two players and four levels of difficulty the game's playing life is a long one indeed", he wrote. He finished off by stating that "*Laser Squad* will have any 'intelligent agro freak' coming back time and time again. You'll love the smell of Auto Cannon in the morning. It smells of Victory."

Amstrad Computer User gave *Laser Squad* a 'sparkling smiley face' as the final rating. Adrian Pumphrey wrote that "this one or two player strategy combat with five scenarios ensures some serious thought and some serious blasting."

Joystick Hebdo highlighted how *Laser Squad* is a mixture of strategy and role-playing genres, meaning that the outcome of the battles depends on strategic movement of the forces rather than joystick prowess. The reviewer added that the result is pretty neat, especially when two players are playing against each other.

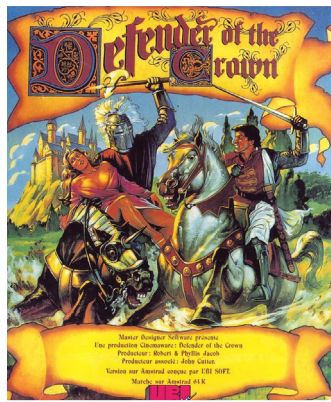
Micro News gave *Laser Squad* their lowest rating of a 'dust bin' logo. The reviewer, credited as J.-P.L., commented how the game is a real disaster, and despite the game involving war, it can not lift the veil of boredom that assails you after five minutes spent scanning the screen and telling yourself that you do not dream.

Ratings

91%	<i>Amstrad Action</i>
15/20	<i>Micro Mag</i>
13/20	<i>Amstar</i>
0/4	<i>Micro News</i>

DEFENDER OF THE CROWN

"It's a time of legends. A time for heroes. A time of bitter strife"



Ubi Soft

Programming by

Brice Rive

Graphics by

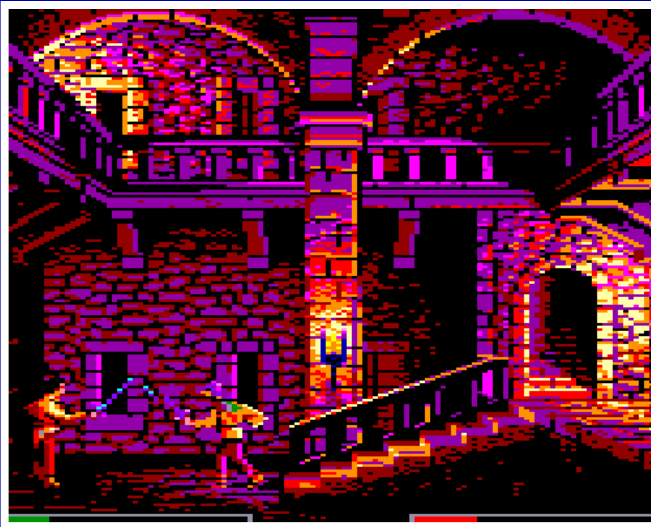
Laurent Boucher

In 1199, a civil war rages in Middle-Aged England while the country is divided into Anglo-Saxon and Norman lord territories. Following the king's death and the crown disappearing, the war intensifies as both sides prepare for battle to conquer the country.

Defender of the Crown is a strategy war game with the player taking on the role of a fledgling Anglo-Saxon lord with a small territory base. Another two Anglo-Saxon lords are controlled by the computer's AI. The main objective is to conquer the Norman lords' territory, who are planning the exact same battle strategy.

The map screen splits the country up into territories, with each territory controlled by either held by Anglo-Saxon, Normans or are simply nu-occupied. Progress through the game is achieved by conquering the territories, invading castles and claiming the riches within. Any invasion or tournament take place in an action setting with the player taking control of their soldiers. With each success comes the ability for the player to build upon their own territories and armies.

Yves Guillemot had managed to purchase the rights for the game from Cinemaware which would allow Ubi Soft to work on an Amstrad conversion. While Rive was not able to access any source code or design work, they did have access to graphics extracted from the ST version, some documentation, a *Computer Gaming World* article, some notes from a Cinemaware member of the testing team and a copy of the ST version.

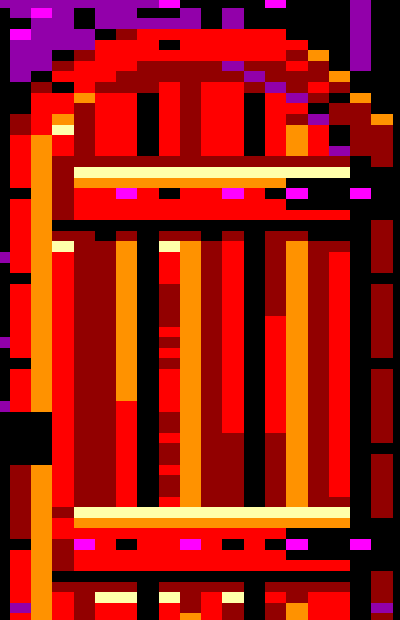


Defender of the Crown was well received upon its release, gaining an aggregate rating of 82% from two reviews. Despite a decent reception in France, the game wasn't converted to English or any other languages.

Amstrad Cent Pour Cent's Robby praised the developers for converting the 16-bit game to the Amstrad, with all graphics and screens present. He added that with the game's strategy, an arcade element, and moments of intense action, *Defender of the Crown* should appeal to many gamers.

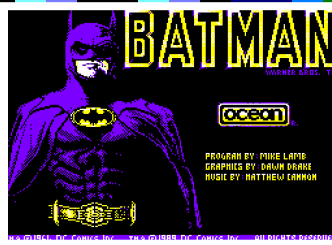
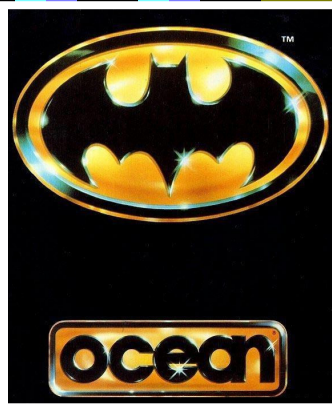
Ratings

15/20	Amstar
88%	Amstrad Cent Pour Cent



BATMAN

"High above the seamy streets of GOTHAM, he is a criminal's nightmare."



Ocean Software

Programming by

Mike Lamb

Graphics by

Dawn Drake

Music and sound effects by

Matthew Cannon

Crime is rife in Gotham City with Gus Grisson's gangster empire committing all sorts of evil crimes. Bruce Wayne, a multi-millionaire businessman, takes it upon himself to clean up the streets as he dons his masked Batman outfit to patrol the night streets. However, his main objective is to bring down the Grisson gang empire and first on the hit list is Jack Napier, who is the influential second-in-command.

An action game that takes place over five different scenarios, featuring side scrolling platform, side-on racing, and puzzle sections. The player takes on the role of Batman as he tracks down Jack Napier and then his resultant transformation into The Joker. The two platform levels have Batman running, jumping and using his batrope to negotiate the various floors. The Joker's henchmen will attack, reducing Batman's energy with each hit, but he can use his batarang to eliminate any enemy before that happens.

The display panel displays the player's score, time remaining, Batman's energy and lives. Batman's energy, represented by his face, will turn into the Joker on each drop in energy. If the transformation of the Joker is complete, Batman will lose one of his lives.

Directed by Tim Burton and starring Micheal Keaton (Bruce Wayne/Batman) and Jack Nicholson (Jack Napier/The Joker), the 1989 film was a critical and financial success, spawning several sequels and reboots.

During the development of the game, Mike Lamb and Dawn Drake were flown over to the United States to visit the Batman set at Pinewood Studios and to watch the film in New York. During this time they were able to make notes to incorporate certain scenes into gameplay and were given source photographs as well as a script.

As well as a standard Amstrad CPC version, Ocean released the game on the GX4000 and Plus range in 1990. With only some subtle graphical changes, the cartridge game is similar to the CPC version.



The game received positive reviews from magazines from around the world on its initial release and holds an aggregate rating of 83% from six reviews. It topped the charts across many countries, including the United Kingdom, France, Spain, Greece, and Germany, helping it to become the most successful game of 1990. It spent nine months in the Greek top ten chart, holding the top spot for three months.

Micro News praised the game for its different staged levels and addictive quality, but felt that the first level is difficult and that the player might not be able to see the rest of the game due to this.

Amstrad Action awarded the game an 'AA Rave' with Trenton Webb noting how the visuals capture the spirit and atmosphere of the movie. Although slightly let down by the vehicle stages, Webb went on to state that Batman was the best movie licence of the year and has "assured hours of frustratingly addictive gameplay."

Zzap! noted the colourful graphics, but felt that the scrolling was not entirely smooth and also commented on the game's difficulty.

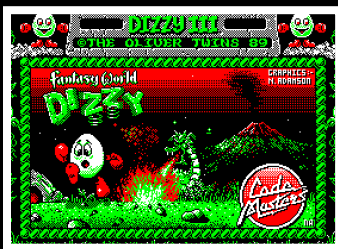
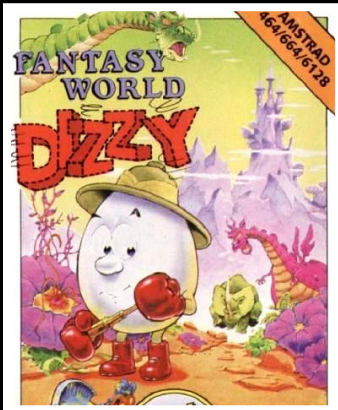
Nina from *Joystick Hebdo* wrote about how the graphics are good with equally impressive animation and went on to mention the responsive controls and the really good scrolling. Nina added that although sound was a let down, the game is a good achievement overall.

Ratings

80%	<i>Amstrad Cent Pour Cent</i>
93%	<i>The Games Machine</i>
90%	<i>Amstrad Action</i>
89%	<i>Zzap!</i>

FANTASY WORLD DIZZY

"Dizzy's Greatest Adventure Yet"



Code Masters

Programming:

The Oliver Twins

Graphics:

Neil Adamson

Music:

David Whittaker

Dizzy and Daisy were strolling through the enchanted forest when the Evil King's minions suddenly appeared. They took Dizzy away to the King's Dungeons within the depths of Fantasy World, while Daisy was taken to the Wizard Weird's Tower. With Dizzy left in isolation within the confines of the King's Dungeons, he would need to plan his way out of there, rescue his true love, and escape from the clutches of the Evil King.

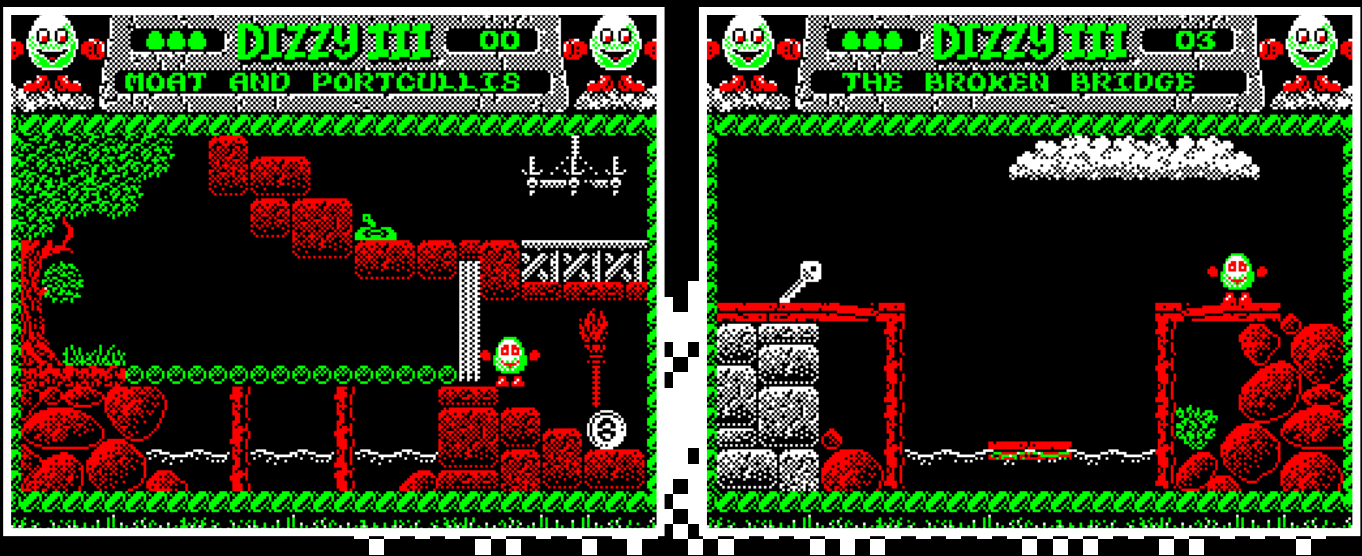
Fantasy World Dizzy is an arcade platform adventure spread across over 50 screens where the player takes control of Dizzy, an intelligent egg-shaped creature. The primary objective of the game is to rescue Daisy, but there are many secondary objectives as well. Many of the screens present obstacles that must be overcome by solving logical puzzles. Items can be collected and placed in the inventory for use late on. Hazards must also be avoided as Dizzy is fragile and can die with the loss of one of his initial three lives.

Each location is given a name, so there is no excuse in not being able to follow up clues. Dizzy will also receive items or advice from the 'yolk folk' characters: Denzil, Dozy, Dylan, and Grand-Dizzy. Along the way, Dizzy will also need to collect the 30 gold coins that are littered around Fantasy World.

Fantasy World Dizzy is the third game in the *Dizzy* series and was developed under the name *Dizzy III*. The first *Dizzy* game was released in 1987 with the follow up, *Treasure Island Dizzy*, released the following year.

According to Philip Oliver, "*Dizzy* was a natural extension of *Super Robin Hood & Ghost Hunters*." They loved cartoons, had played lots of text based adventures like *Zork*, and wanted to create their own adventure.

Although the game is often thought of as a Spectrum port, it is actually the opposite. As with all the Oliver Twins' 8-bit games, *Fantasy World Dizzy* was developed on the Amstrad CPC and then ported down to the Spectrum. This meant that the Amstrad version had to be restricted graphically as to allow an easier conversion to the ZX Spectrum.



Fantasy World Dizzy was mostly well received upon its release, gaining an aggregate rating of 80% from four reviews. The game spent four months straight at the top of the United Kingdom charts.

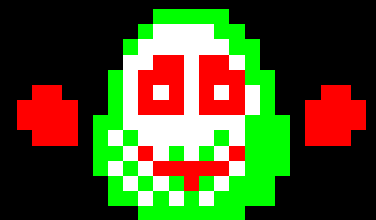
Amstrad Action's Adam Waring pointed out the game's Spectrum port elements, but commented that "once you press that fire button, all that is forgotten" as the "gameplay makes up for everything, drawing you into a complex plot of magical dragons and mysterious castles". Adam added that "the puzzles are more cunning than ever, which encourages experimentation", and "*Fantasy World Dizzy* is better than many full-price releases".

Amstrad Computer User's Chris Knight wrote that *Fantasy World Dizzy* "has all of the fun and excitement of its predecessors", and "is extremely playable, despite the familiarity of the plot".

The Amstrad User commented that *Fantasy World Dizzy* is a "classic arcade/adventure game with plenty of objects to be collected and many characters to be confronted." The reviewer added that although the graphics and sound in *Dizzy III* are spot on, it's the sheer playability that put most full price releases to shame.

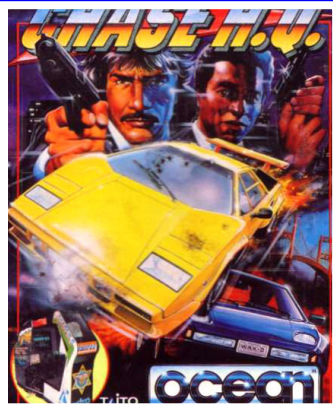
Ratings

15/20	<i>Amstar</i>
89%	<i>Amstrad Action</i>
70%	<i>Amstrad Cent Pour Cent</i>
86%	<i>Amstrad Computer User</i>



CHASE H.Q.

"Let's go Mr. Driver!"



Ocean Software

Programming by

Jon O'Brien

Graphics by

William Harbison

Music by

Jonathan Dunn

In the busy streets of Los Angeles, crime is ripe and the criminals will try and flee the scene in their high powered sports cars. However, the SCI (Special Criminal Investigation) team are in place to catch them. The head of SCI has a Porsche 928 at their disposal and one quick call from Nancy at H.Q. and it's full throttle in pursuit of the perpetrators.

Chase H.Q. is a fast paced third person arcade driving game where the player takes on the role as head of SCI and in control of the Porsche 928 to take the bad guys off the road, literally. No time can be wasted though as time will eventually run out with the criminal escaping. To help in the pursuit, the Porsche comes with limited turbo boosts for that extra burst of speed.

Careful driving through the streets, flying over dips and bumps will ensure that the player catches up with the criminal's car, which also extends the timer. To the left of the screen, is the criminal car damage indicator that increases each time the player rams into it, and once this reaches maximum then the criminal will have no choice but to slow up and stop. There are several levels to progress through with a different criminal and car to chase each time.

The original arcade version was developed by Taito and released in 1988 in both upright and sit-down cabinets. Two arcade sequels, *Special Criminal Investigation* and *Super Chase: Criminal Termination*, followed in 1989 and 1992 respectively.

An Amstrad GX4000/Plus conversion of the arcade sequel was developed for Ocean, but missed the crucial Christmas 1990 release slot. There has been some evidence from media coverage and online video footage of the game suggesting that *Chase H.Q. II: Special Criminal Investigation* was actually released in what would appear to be a very limited run.



Chase H.Q. was well received by the gaming press, and holds an aggregate rating of 90% from six reviews. The game was also a worldwide commercial success, making it the second most successful game of 1990. The game spent eight months in the UK top ten, seven months in the French top ten (one at number one), one month in the Greek top ten, and four months in the German top ten (two months at number one).

"*Chase HQ* is fun of the highest calibre", commented Trenton Webb for *Amstrad Action*, with "gripping graphics and fun sonics" that "fill the game out to make much more than just another racer game, with the gameplay switching between speed trials and pursuit."

Amstrad Computer User's Adriam Pumphrey wrote that "on the CPC few games match the pace or the action of this game", and touched on how "the smoke and screaming tyres add the intangible tension that turns this from a game you play around with to a challenge worthy of serious attention."

"The Amstrad game is of the 'Lord lumme, I didn't know the old girl had it in her' variety," wrote Paul Rand in *Computer + Video Games'* 97% rated review. Rand added that the game contains "all the speed of the Spectrum version and with masses of colour besides" and is "a truly magnificent conversion of the top coin-op, which deservedly earns its current chart position."

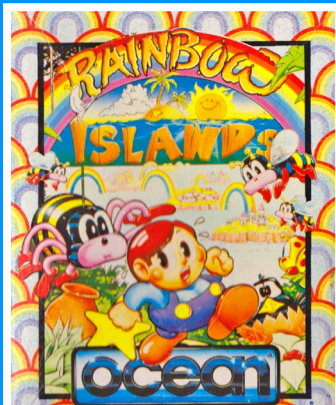
The Games Machine's Mark Caswell wrote about how the "graphics are smooth and colourful, and sound effective with clear speech." Caswell added that "it just goes to prove that 8-bit versions are better in some respects than 16-bit ones."

Ratings

90%	<i>Amstrad Action</i>
90%	<i>Amstrad Computer User</i>
97%	<i>Computer + Video Games</i>
89%	<i>The Games Machine</i>
87%	<i>Amstrad Cent Pour Cent</i>
85%	<i>Amstar</i>

RAINBOW ISLANDS

“Taito’s island hop coin-op monster hot”



Ocean Software Graftgold

Program by
David O'Connor
Graphics by
John Cumming
Sound by
Steve Turner

Bub and Bob, the heroes from *Bubble Bobble*, are back! This time negotiating the hazards of the Rainbow Islands. They set off to rescue the people of the Rainbow Islands, who have been turned into Bubble Dragons by the evil Boss of Dark Shadow. They must collect the big gems and mirrors on the various Rainbow Islands and defeat the Boss of Dark Shadow to return the islanders to normal.

Rainbow Islands is a platform game where the main character must reach the highest level before the rising sea level catches them up, drowning them. Progress is made by jumping up through the solid platforms or releasing rainbows for temporary platforms. There are seven islands to progress through in total, each split into rounds.

The rainbows can also be used as a weapon against the many enemies encountered through the levels. Enemies vary for each level, for example, on Insect Island there are hordes of caterpillars, spiders, and crows, while on Combat Island there are tanks, planes, and helicopters. Any contact with these creatures will result in a lost life. There are also power-ups available to collect throughout the rounds, such as Magic Shoes (player’s speed increase), Yellow Potions (rainbow spawn speed increase), and Red Potions (rainbow quantity increase).

The original arcade game was developed and released by Taito in 1987. The game follows on from the true story ending of *Bubble Bobble*, the first game in the arcade series. There were various follow ups on various systems — *Parasol Stars*, *Bubble Bobble Part 2*, *Bubble Symphony*, and more — but none of them appeared on the Amstrad CPC.



Rainbow Islands was well received by the magazine press upon its release, and holds an aggregate rating of 87% from five reviews. It was the fifth most successful game of 1990, helped by topping the charts in France and performing well in the United Kingdom too.

Amstrad Action's Trenton Webb described the overall execution of *Rainbow Islands* as "exceptional", and praised it for being a refreshing game that "doesn't rely on violence to sell itself, just solid gameplay, vivid colourful graphics" and "charming design".

Joystick pointed out how at first glance the game looks like one for the younger gamer, especially considering its bold bright straight out of a book visuals. However, the game soon becomes a must to play, even for grown ups.

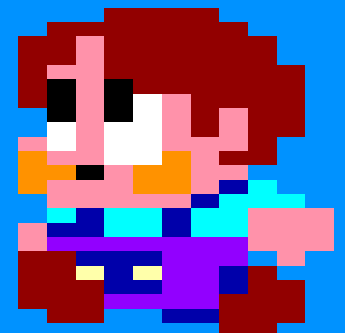
Amstrad Computer User's Basil Bread stated that the "graphics are better than the original game and the screen is fun to look at with cuddly monsters and cutey pie monsters." Basil felt that *Rainbow Islands* is a "likeable" game that "will grow on the more patient player."

The Amstrad User felt that with "spot on" graphics and animation, smooth moving sprites, and a "jolly" background tune, *Rainbow Islands* "has got to be the best platform arcade/scroller to date for the CPC."

Pixel commented on the colourful graphics, but pointed out that this sacrificed with the choice of low resolution with Mode 0. However, the reviewer stated that the game's controls are well done, the sound is very good, and the gameplay is very good, too.

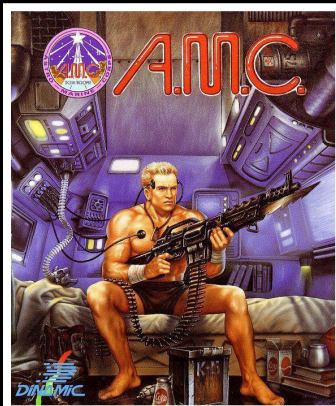
Ratings

88%	<i>Amstrad Action</i>
17/20	<i>Amstar</i>
85%	<i>Joystick</i>
84%	<i>Amstrad Cent Pour Cent</i>
9.3/10	<i>Pixel</i>



A.M.C.

"Astro Marine Corps"



It is a time of unrest. An evil force of criminals consisting of various species have banded together with the plan to conquer the galaxy. Known as the Deathbringers, their next stop is to take the planet of Dendar by force. Taking a stand against the Deathbringers, A.M.C.C.B. (Astro Marine Corps Central Base) have sent their best soldier to Dendar ahead of time to lay in wait...

A science-fiction run and gun game with the player taking control of the lone Astro Marine Corps. The game consists of two main missions that will take the player through many levels with various enemies to eliminate, and the change to end the Deathbringers' threat.

Unfortunately, there is a limited amount of time to complete the missions, but there is help along the way. Initially the player starts with three lives and a health bar, both of which can be lost, but extra energy and life can be gained through power-ups. The player also starts with a standard weapon, however, this can be upgraded to twin-shot, flamethrower, shields, triple-shot, or grenades.

Dinamic

Program & Graphics:

Pablo Ariza

Music:

Jose A. Martin



A.M.C. was mostly well received upon its release, gaining an aggregate rating of 86% from four reviews.

Amstrad Cent Pour Cent gave *A.M.C.* a 94% rating along with their '100% A D'Or'. On a technical level, the reviewer described the game as a little gem, and highlighted the game's hyper-coloured graphics, super-catchy music, and parallax scrolling as standout achievements.

Joystick commented how the wealth of features in *A.M.C.* is rarely seen in a shoot 'em up on the CPC. The reviewer went on to praise the designers for outdoing themselves with the wealth of different monsters, all perfectly animated, and each with their own style of attack and weak points.

Amstrad Action's Trenton Webb stated that the techniques make *A.M.C.* so special, such as the "superb" parallax scrolling. "But it's the monsters that are the real heroes", added Trenton, "from the huge Mega beast at the end, to the run-of-the-mill giants that plague the second section". Trenton closed off by stating that "it looks as if Dinamic has finally got the difficulty level right. *A.M.C.* is easy enough for the beginner to start while being hard enough to test the best at the finish."

Amstar also highlighted *A.M.C.*'s graphics, colours, and the animation. In addition to the visuals, the reviewer touched on the game's tough difficulty which will crack a few gamers. Although they felt that the game is not really original, it will captivate arcade gamers.

Ratings

15/20	<i>Amstar</i>
83%	<i>Amstrad Action</i>
94%	<i>Amstrad Cent Pour Cent</i>
93%	<i>Joystick</i>

1990



News of a games CD compilation from Codemasters emerged during the early part of the year. It worked by hooking a normal CD player to the Amstrad CPC using an audio lead. The compact disc, which features 30 games at a price of £19.95, was planned for release in 1990. Unfortunately, poor sales of the C64 and Spectrum versions curtailed the CPC release.

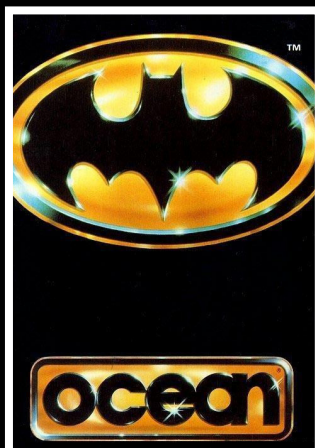
Amstrad Sinclair Ocio ended with its 14th issue (April 1990) as it relaunched as *MegaOcio* the following month. The new title covered 16-bit computers and games consoles as well as the Amstrad and Sinclair range. In a similar move, *Amstar* in France came to an end with its 47th issue (July '90) and relaunched as *Amstar Informatique*, a multi-format publication.

In an effort to compete in the increasingly popular 16-bit and videogaming console markets, Amstrad released three new models in August 1990: the 464plus, 6128plus, and the GX4000 videogame console. With the new models on the scene, this brought an end to manufacturing of the old range of CPC464 and CPC6128 computers.

1990 was the year for *Batman (The Movie)*. The game spent a total of six months on top of the games charts in Greece (May to December), while it also spent two months on top in the United Kingdom.

Fantasy World Dizzy and *Shadow Warriors* both proved a hit in the United Kingdom, spending four months each in the charts.

Crack Down topped the charts for two months in France (April to May), while *Chase H.Q.* topped the charts for two months in Germany (January to February).

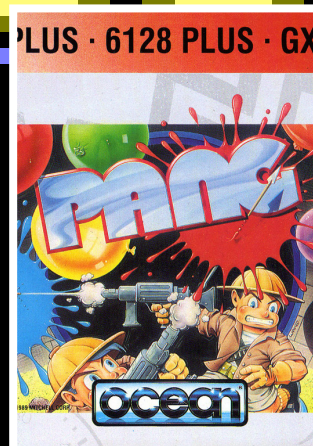
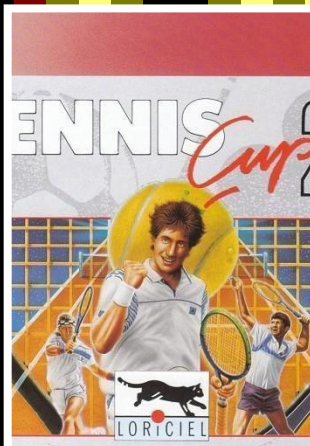


Top 10 Sales chart 1990

1. *Batman (The Movie)*
2. *Chase H.Q.*
3. *RoboCop*
4. *Rainbow Islands*
5. *Ghostbusters 2*
6. *Cabal*
7. *Basket Master*
8. *Super Wonderboy*
9. *Shadow Warriors*
10. *Operation Wolf*

Top 10 Critics chart 1990

1. *Turrican*
2. *Tennis Cup II*
3. *Pang*
4. *Stunt Car Racer*
5. *Prince of Persia*
6. *Burnin' Rubber*
7. *Deliverance: Stormlord II*
8. *Iron Lord*
9. *Rick Dangerous 2*
10. *Chip's Challenge*



TURRICAN

"Your struggle... Gigantic, your firepower... Gargantuan, your failure... Genocide !!"



Rainbow Arts Probe Software

Program by

Von Dazzlin (Daren White)

Graphics by

J.B. Guzzler (Jason Green)

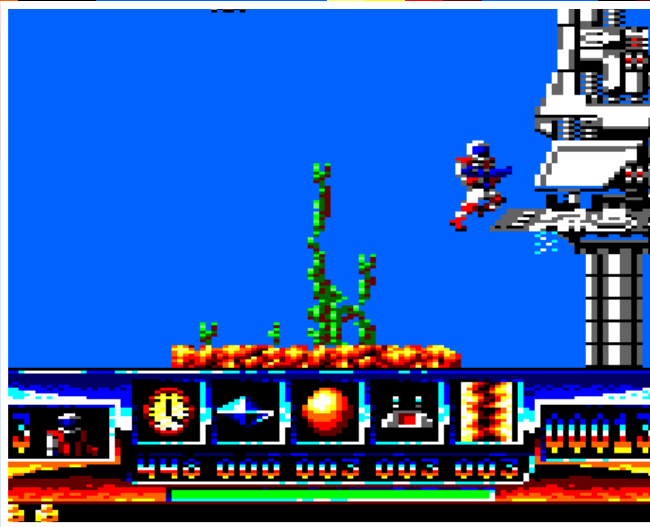
In a distant past, the three-headed Morgul had ruled the realm with ruthlessness. He was behind everything bad that happened during his reign of the kingdom. A man called Develon stood up to Morgul and managed to banish him to an unknown dimension. Peace returned to the realm and everyone could sleep well at night with no fear of returning nightmares. However, just lately, the inhabitants of the realm have been having recurring nightmares just as people did during Morgul's initial reign. Has Morgul returned from his banishment and managed to infiltrate the people's dreams worse than ever?

A run and gun action adventure that scrolls both horizontally and vertically. The player takes on the role of the soldier hero, wearing a special suit of armour that is equipped with a multitude of weapons and gadgets. The action takes place over five non-linear worlds, three of them featuring three levels with the other two worlds having two levels. Besides the standard movements, there are other actions available such as jumping, ducking, firing, flash fire, the gyroscope and much more. As the player explores the worlds, they will come across power ups such as grenades, mines, energy line and extra life. End-of-level guardians will also need to be defeated long the way to the final stage: an encounter with Morgul himself.

Turrican was originally developed by Manfred Trenz for the Commodore 64 and converted to other systems there after.

A comic strip based on the game was designed by Colin Jones and appeared in *Amstrad Computer User* magazine during November, December 1990, and January 1991.

Turrican II: The Final Fight appeared on the Amstrad CPC in 1991, although there were further games that appeared on other machines. *Mega Turrican* (aka *Turrican 3*) was released on the Amiga and Sega Mega Drive in 1993 and 1994 respectively. *Super Turrican*, which shares many design features of *Mega Turrican* but featuring different levels, was released on the SNES in 1993. *Super Turrican 2*, with additional features and levels, was released on the SNES in 1995.



Turrigan was met with critical acclaim and holds an aggregate score of 93%, based on five reviews.

User magazine stated that the graphics are a feast, complimented with great sprites, excellent animation, and good scrolling. They mentioned that the response of the joystick is very fast and the movement in the air is very smooth.

Robby of *Amstrad Cent Pour Cent* praised *Turrigan*, claiming that it is a joy to discover great sized sprites running around on the CPC screen. He admitted that while the graphics mode used means a low resolution, they are colourful, diverse, and display some visual effects never seen before.

Trenton Webb of *Amstrad Action* was pleased with the game's ability to combine "elements of an arcade adventure brilliantly with the pace and power of a full-blooded platform shoot-out", commenting that for "adventurous, blasting fun", *Turrigan* is one of the best.

Chris Knight of *Amstrad Computer User* described the game as "a shooty of epic proportions", praising the expansive playing area and the variety of opponents. Rounding off his review Knight stated that the mix of "frantic shooting and trail searching makes this game incredibly addictive."

The Amstrad User called *Turrigan* entertaining with a storyline and gameplay of an "absorbing nature", and with its combination of "excellent features" and "all round quality", lifts the game to a high standard.

Ratings

90%	<i>Amstrad Action</i>
92%	<i>Amstrad Cent Pour Cent</i>
90%	<i>Joystick</i>
94%	<i>User</i>



BURNIN' RUBBER

"The famous 24-hour race is about to begin"

PLUS • 6128 PLUS • GX4



Ocean Software

Code by

Jon O'Brien

Graphics by

Rob Hemphill

Music & Sound effects by

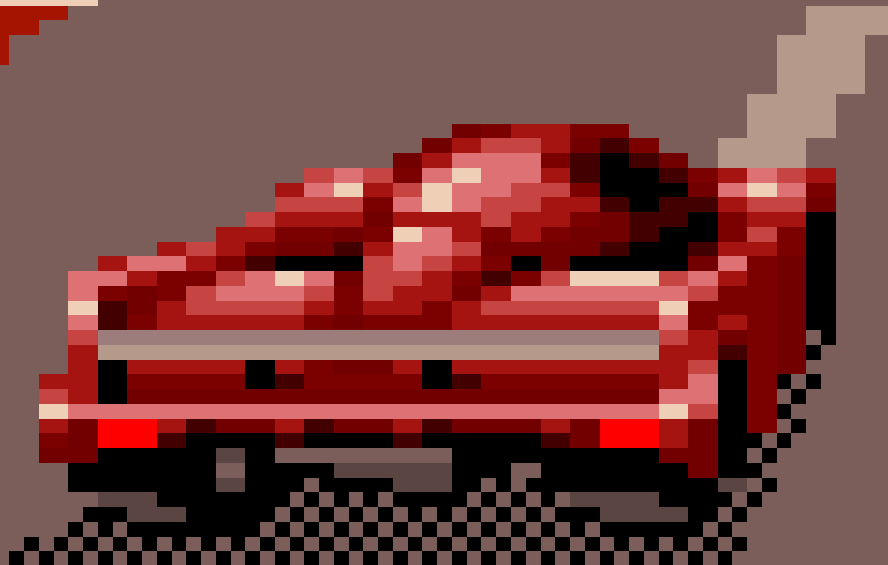
Jon Dunn

Drivers from around the world have gathered to take part in the famous 24-hour car race. With driving taking place over several laps as well as varying light during day and night, only the best driver will be crowned world champion.

The player takes control of the Porsche in this arcade car racing game. Before the big race, though, the player will need to pass a small qualification circuit course. The big race itself consists of four laps in total with each lap containing four checkpoints that must be reached to keep up to speed with the other drivers. The car itself is controlled by either manual or automatic gear selection. While the automatic selection will be easier for the novice, the manual selection will give the player better control over the car.

While one eye needs to be kept on the clock the other will need to watch out for the other cars on the road as crashing heavily into others can cause the Porsche to skid uncontrollably off the road. The player will also have to adjust to night driving and then back to daytime before the race is successfully completed.

Burnin' Rubber was exclusively bundled along with the GX4000 console and 464/6128 Plus computers. The game was developed to show off the hardware capabilities of the new machines.





Burnin' Rubber was well received upon its release, and holds an aggregate rating of 89% from five reviews.

Player One's Robby wrote that *Burnin' Rubber* is a feast and will keep gamers entertained. He went on to point out graphical highlights such as day phasing into night effects, and stereo sound effects of engine noises passing by the left or right side.

Amstrad Action's James Leach described *Burnin' Rubber* as "an incredible game to see and play", and is "a hell of a start for the console". James picked out the amazing visuals as a highlight, what with the increased resolution, subtle shading, smooth 3D scrolling, but pointed out that the game also plays very well.

Amstar felt that for the first game on the GX4000, *Burnin' Rubber* seems a good quality effort, certainly in terms of graphic and animation, but it is doubtful whether the capabilities of the console are fully exploited.

Zero magazine praised the visuals of *Burnin' Rubber*, stating that the "graphics are definitely more interesting and colourful", and looks "a lot better than other car games released on the numerous alternative 8-bit consoles." The reviewer added that "no Amstrad CPC game has ever looked or played this good."

Amstrad Cent Pour Cent's Robby praised the game for its sound, stating that it greatly contributes to the thrill of racing thanks to its stereo effects from the right and left speakers. Robby added that compared to other car racing games, *Burnin' Rubber* is perfect.

Ratings

13/20	<i>Amstar</i>
92%	<i>Amstrad Action</i>
Good	<i>MegaOcio</i>
93%	<i>Player One</i>
79%	<i>Zero</i>

IRON LORD

"The Crusader of Justice."



Ubi Soft

Graphics and Programming:

Laurent Soen

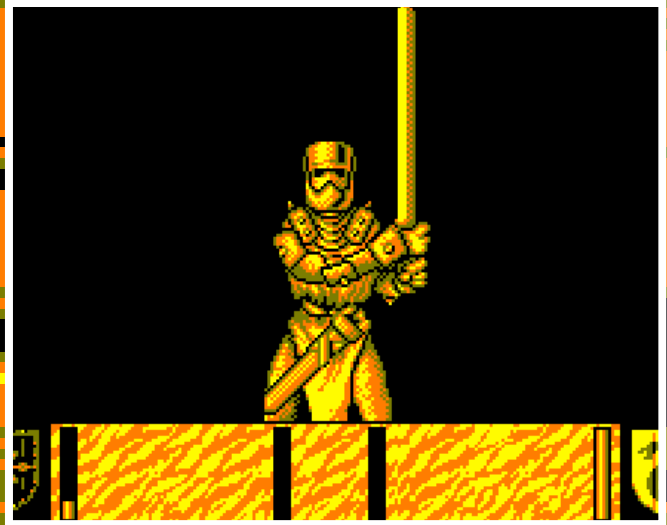
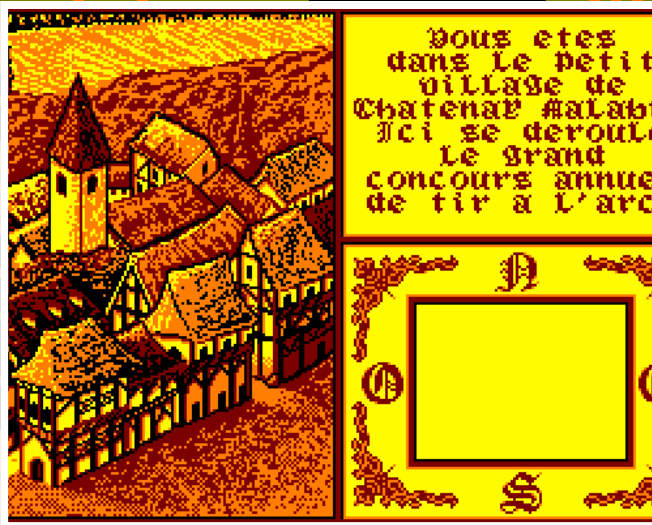
Soundtrack:

Gregory Clement

The home land was ruled over by the well respected Lord Tibor who brought peace and order. His brother, Zolphar, had returned after being exiled from the land for an unsuccessful attempt to overthrow the Lord. During his time away, Zolphar had learned in the ways of dark magic and had gathered an evil army of monsters and zombies. He easily disposed of Lord Tibor and many of his guards, subsequently proclaiming himself Lord and ruler of the land. Lord Tibor's son was quickly taken into hiding until the day when he would be able to reclaim the throne and bring peace back to his home land.

A strategy adventure game set in Medieval times with the player controlling the unnamed young heir to the throne. The game has the player tasked with reclaiming the throne. In order to do this, the player has to prove to the young heir's followers that he has the talent and ability to lead them against the evil Lord Zolphar. The trials of combat include an archery shoot out, dice games, arm wrestling and drinking competitions. The player can also interact with other characters within the game, talking with them, buying things or giving items to them. Talking to the other villagers is also important in the effort to discover the happenings around the land and to get them on your side against Lord Zolphar.

The game originated on the Atari ST in 1989 where it was developed by Orou Mama and Ivan Jacot. It was then ported over to other computer platforms, including the Amstrad on disk only.



Iron Lord didn't get an English translation upon its release, but that little fact didn't stop two English publications raving about the game. The game holds an aggregate rating of 88% from four reviews.

Poom writing in *Amstrad Cent Pour Cent* described *Iron Lord* as possessing all the qualities of a great game. The reviewer pointed out the game's beautiful design, fun animations, a sound that caresses your ears, and add a good script with an interest that keeps the player awake during the whole night.

"*Iron Lord* is a really big game, using all four sides of two disks," commented James Leach in *Amstrad Action*, "the graphics are simply breathtaking." He added that with the "varied" gameplay and "level of detail", it "puts a great many other games to shame".

Joystick magazine mentioned that the CPC version features a seventh level where as the technically superior Atari ST version only has six. They then went on to state that the game is fast and well done and for once, going so far as to say that the wait for the finished game was well worth it.

"Look out adventure freaks. This one's gonna knock you for six," wrote John Taylor in *Amstrad Computer User*. "An excellent offering of epic proportions," he wrote, "*Iron Lord* is exceptional value for money on the old CPC, and one game no serious game-player should be without."

Amstar commented about the development period of the game, the updates, and the hype surrounding the release of the game. Despite all this hype and wait, *Iron Lord* is a quality game, both in terms of graphics and playability.

Ratings

92%	<i>Amstrad Action</i>
97%	<i>Amstrad Cent Pour Cent</i>
87%	<i>Joystick</i>
15/20	<i>Amstar</i>

RICK DANGEROUS 2

"He's back. He's meaner. He's more dangerous."



**Micro Style
Core Design**

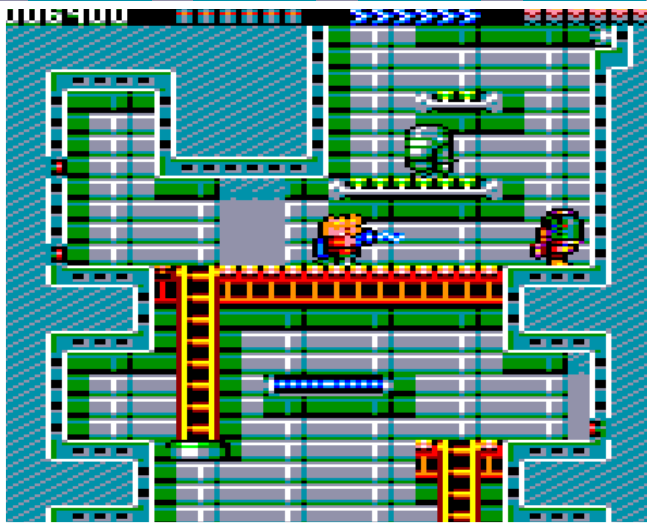
After leaving the Fat Man at the mercy of a hungry tribe of cannibals in his first adventure, Rick thought he'd be in for a bit of a rest when he got back home. How wrong was he? In fact, the comforting sights of London are tinged with terror, for hovering above the city is a fleet of alien spaceships. It turns out that the aliens have enlisted the help of the Fat Man in a plot to invade Earth.

Platform hijinks with Rick Dangerous on his second adventure full of fiendish puzzles and traps as well as sprawling complex of corridors, shafts, and ladders. You can choose to play the first four levels in any order you like, but the fifth and final level are only available after completion of the all the others. Although it does make more sense to play the first level as it takes place in Hyde Park, where the aliens have just touched down.

Rick's adversaries, who come in various forms such as clockwork penguins, Alpine goat herders and classic sci-fi movie style robots, are on high alert and will attack on sight. However, as a rather super hero, Rick can run and jump around the platforms and ladders at a fair old pace. He's also quite handy with his fists as well as being able to use a raygun and electronic detonators. While Rick has many lives to begin with, the trial and error of the gameplay will result in the player needing every last one.

The final sequence of the game has the Fat Guy escaping at the last gasp using a transporter. Despite an on screen caption asking "What will Rick do next?", which hinted at a further Rick adventure, but no further games were developed.

The first *Rick Dangerous* game was released in 1989 and was set across four separate locations. The game's plot, setting, and Rick's costume resembled the *Indiana Jones* series.



Rick Dangerous 2 was mostly highly received upon release, and sits at an aggregate rating of 88% from five reviews.

Amstrad Action gave the game a 97% rating — the highest mark given in the magazine's history — and a 'Master Game' accolade. He described *Rick Dangerous 2* as a simple platform game, but its presentation makes it "far, far more than that".

Amstrad Cent Pour Cent's Robby praised the game for its excellent playability and good reactions of the main character, despite the difficulty. The graphics and animation were praised for making the most of the Amstrad's technical capabilities.

When *Computer + Video Games* looked at the Atari ST version, they were mightily impressed, but admitted that the Amstrad version is "just as good as the 16-bit game". Featuring brilliant visuals and a near-decent soundtrack, *Rick Dangerous 2* is an "essential purchase".

Joystick pointed out that *Rick Dangerous 2* uses exactly the same technology as the first, with only a change of scenario, although admitted that the graphics are very cute. The reviewer went on to comment that in order to progress in the game, the player would need dexterity and nerves to negotiate the difficult levels.

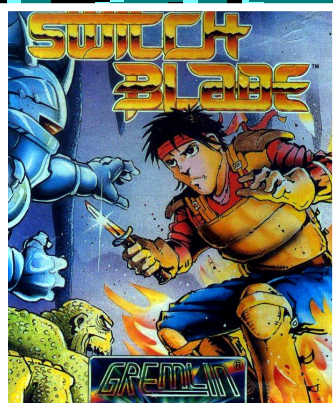
The PC Mag stated that players who liked the original will be more than happy with this sequel. The reviewer went on to say that the game is clearly the work of a dedicated team, who have produced a "well designed, colourful and action packed game with plenty of puzzles".

Ratings

4/5	<i>The PC Mag</i>
97%	<i>Amstrad Action</i>
94%	<i>Amstrad Cent Pour Cent</i>
90%	<i>Computer + Video Games</i>
77%	<i>Joystick</i>

SWITCHBLADE

"Hiro, last of the Bladeknights"



Gremlin Graphics

For ten thousand years, the cyber world of Thraxx thrived in peace until the return of the merciless Havok. Upon his return, he had the Fireblade, a source of the Bladeknights' power, shattered into pieces, bringing chaos and destruction to Thraxx. The skies overhead burned bright red and Havok set his evil creatures upon the population of the Undercity. All the people and the Bladeknights were slain with the exception of one knight named Hiro. The last of the Bladeknights, Hiro sets out to avenge his fallen comrades and put an end to Havok's evil plans.

Platforming action as the player takes on the role of Hiro, a futuristic soldier armed with a hi-tech re-programmable cyber-arm which accepts many different weapons such as darts, spinblade, needle bolts and more. The player must guide Hiro through the many locations and puzzles of Thraxx in an effort to collect the sixteen broken pieces of the Fireblade. Once re-assembled, Hiro will be able to defeat the evil Havok.

As a trained soldier, Hiro has various hand fighting moves at his disposal, including low kicks, high kicks and punches, which come in useful when against any enemy such as Crestheds, Reptilons, Scorpoids, and others. Hiro begins the game with five lives, each with a full bar of health, which will decrease upon hits from enemy. While the player explores the various areas of Thraxx, only the rooms that Hiro is in and where he has already been will be shown.

Switchblade on cartridge and took advantage of the Amstrad Plus hardware. This included such effects as hardware sprites, multiple raster interrupts, and, of course, the instant loading of the media format.

Simon Phipps began work on the original Atari ST version as a spare time project. It would be 18 months in the making, with several work projects such as *Rick Dangerous* begun and released within the same time frame. He took inspiration from various forms, including Japanese videogame artwork, the scenario of *Mad Max*, part of *Cities of the Red Night*, and the scale of *Underworld*.

The follow up, *Switchblade II*, did not make it to any 8-bit computer and was released on the Amiga and Atari ST in 1991, with the Atari Lynx receiving a release in 1992.



The plus version of *Switchblade* was well received upon its release, gaining an aggregate rating of 88% from six reviews.

Amstrad Action's Rod Lawton commented on how *Switchblade*'s graphics and gameplay take a while to impress, as the game "starts off seeming a bit easy and shallow, but gradually escalates into a very impressive and challenging game indeed."

Mean Machine's Matt Regan praised *Switchblade* for its requirement of "intelligence as much as reflexes, with teasingly difficult puzzles that give the player a real sense of achievement when they work them out." He commented that the visuals and animation are "confident and expressive, and the music is absolutely wonderful".

Amstrad Cent Pour Cent's Robby praised the size of *Switchblade*, pointing out the gigantic world with nearly 132 screens to explore that the player has available to explore. He added that the game would captivate fans of *Rick Dangerous*.

Joystick's J'M Destroy hailed the visuals of *Switchblade* as a success, describing the gradient colouring of the planet as fantastic. The reviewer described *Switchblade* as a great game that perfectly mixes combat and exploration.

Player One's Matt Murdock described *Switchblade* as part of the great family of platform games, and definitely a game that has its fans (for its surprises and originality), and detractors.

Tilt's Olivier Hautefeuille felt that the GX4000 version is very close to the 16-bit Amiga version. Olivier added that the game's strategy, series of caves, corridors, and secret passages, would keep the player busy for a long time.

Ratings

Plus/Cart:

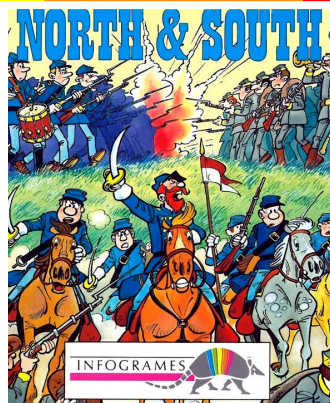
94%	<i>Amstrad Action</i>
90%	<i>Amstrad Cent Pour Cent</i>
87%	<i>Joystick</i>
91%	<i>Mean Machines</i>
82%	<i>Player One</i>
81%	<i>User</i>

Standard CPC:

90%	<i>Amstrad Action</i>
91%	<i>Amstrad Cent Pour Cent</i>
88%	<i>Joystick</i>
4/5	<i>The PC Mag</i>

NORTH & SOUTH

"Les Tuniques Bleues"



Infogrames

Amstrad Adaption

New Frontier Software

Programming

Daniel Diaz,

David Herrero,

Isidro Gilabert

Graphics

Alberto Jose Gonzalez,

Juan Jose Fratos

Music

Alberto Jose Gonsalez

The year is 1861 and America is at civil war. The Union states of the north and the Confederate states of the south began battling for the survival of their allegiances and territories. Battles are fought across four years, with many gains and losses on both sides.

A light hearted one or two player strategic wargame with breakaway sections of arcade gameplay throughout. The player can take on either the role of the Union or Confederacy, with varying difficulty settings and choice of starting year. The main objective of the game is to gain territory by eliminating the opposing army in the process. This is accomplished by the player moving their armies, consisting of infantry, cavalry and artillery, around the map and invading any opposing forces.

When the player invades the territory of the opposition, the game will switch to the main battleground with the Union and Confederacy armies on opposite sides of the screen. Here, the player will take turns to carry out strategic moves against the opposing army. There will also be opportunities to attack opposing trains and forts which take place within arcade sections.

North & South is based on *Les Tuniques Bleues* (translated as *The Bluecoats*), a French language comic strip series that originated from Belgium in 1970. Created by Raoul Cauvin (writer) and Louis Salverius (artist), the series follows the light hearted adventures of Sergeant Chesterfield and Corporal Blutch in Civil War America.

2012 saw two remakes appear with *The Bluecoats: North vs South* released by Microids in May for iOS and Windows while *North & South: The Game* was released by bitComposer Entertainment AG in November for iOS.

Fought from 1861 to 1865, the American Civil War occurred for many reasons, mainly over territory stances from both the Union (North) and Confederacy (South), but the proposed abolishment of slavery by the Union under President Lincoln was also a factor. The war came to a conclusion with a Union victory, although not without huge losses on both sides.



North and South was a critical success, gaining an aggregated rating of 88% from three reviews.

With an overall rating of 91%, *Amstrad Action* awarded *North and South* their 'Master Game' accolade. James Leach stated that the visuals are "astounding", and that the sound is up to the "same high standard". James went on to describe the game as a great mix of strategy, arcade, battlefield tactical wargame, with a "touch of Gallic humour thrown in".

Wolfen from *Amstrad Cent Pour Cent* wrote that the visuals of *North and South* are a good likeness of the original comic strip and almost worth the purchase of the game alone. Although praise was given to the game, Wolfen felt that the strategy only element of the game surpassed that of the arcade element.

Amstrad Computer User's Vic Barnes gave *North and South* individual ratings of 87-95 percent with an overall 'Jackpot' verdict. Vic pointed out the "absorbing gameplay, great pics, good sonics, a two player option and a wry sense of humour", which make *North and South* "one of the best-ever strategy games."

CPC Amstrad International felt that the strategic element of the game is reminiscent of the classic board game *Risk*, but thought that traditional war game fans would likely not get as much out of the game as they a complex board game. The reviewer then wrote that *North and South* joins the greats on the CPC list of strategy games with its good, humorous graphics and action.

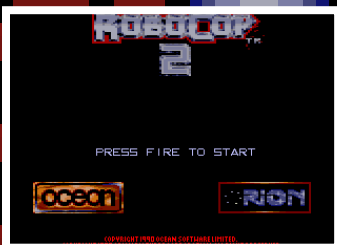
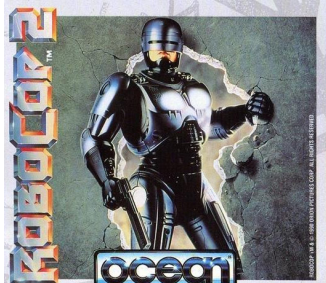
Ratings

91%	<i>Amstrad Action</i>
82%	<i>Amstrad Cent Pour Cent</i>
90%	<i>Joystick</i>

ROBOCOP 2

"Even in the future of law enforcement, there's always room for improvement"

PLUS · 6128 PLUS · GX 4



Ocean Software

Programming by

Andrew Deakin

Graphics by

Ivan Horn

Music/Sound FX by

Matthew Cannon

In the futuristic city of Detroit, the police department is forced to go on strike, leaving RoboCop by himself to bring law and order on the streets. Drug usage is now rife in the city with a new designer drug, Nuke, being distributed throughout Detroit by criminal overlord Cain. RoboCop must bring down the criminal group, the drug process plants and Cain himself.

A platform action game mixed with puzzle sub-games in between the main levels. The player takes on the role of RoboCop once again as he raids Nuke Labs, re-programs his own memory chips, takes on the shooting range and takes on the might of the new 'RoboCop 2'.

RoboCop starts the game with three lives and 100% energy with any hit from the enemy decreasing his energy. The starting weapon is the standard police issue pistol, but power ups such as a limited shields, extra energy and extended time can be picked up to help the cause. There are also arrest subjects to be apprehended along the way and should not be shot.

RoboCop 2 was released in 1990 and while it was moderately successful at the box office, the film received a mixed response from critics. Peter Weller reprised his role as RoboCop while Irvin Kershner took over the directorial duties.

The first *RoboCop* game was released on Amstrad CPC in 1989, breaking chart records as it stayed in the charts for over a year. The third game in the franchise, *RoboCop 3*, was advertised as coming to the Amstrad but for unknown reasons did not materialise.



RoboCop 2 received mostly positive reviews upon its release on the GX4000 and plus computers. It holds an aggregate rating of 86% from nine reviews.

Amstrad Action's Frank O'Connor commented that "when the cart was first plugged in, you could hear the sound of jaws dropping all around the office". He added that with plenty of features, "*Robocop 2* emerges from a somewhat staid format as a refreshing and enjoyable challenge".

Amstrad Cent Pour Cent's Robby commented that *Robocop 2* is far above anything they had seen so far on the 8-bit computers, and that the developers have used the new machine's additional hardware capabilities (hardware scrolling, sprites, extended colour palette) to good effect.

"Throughout the game, the graphics are stunning" and "scrolling is smooth" wrote the *Amstrad Computer User* reviewer. They added that the levels are "cunningly thought out to provide a real challenge with gripping gameplay."

Paul Glancey, writing in *Computer + Video Games*, mentioned that the game "makes really good use of the GX4000's colour capabilities." He also pointed out the other plus point of the game being on cartridge with no "long-winded tape multiloading", making it "much easier to enjoy".

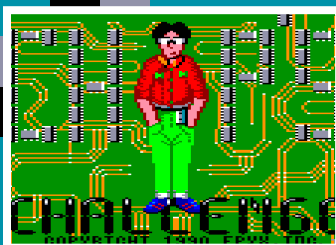
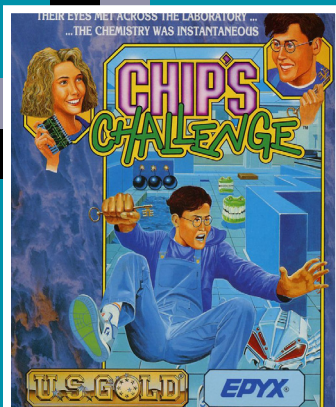
"*Robocop 2* features some brilliant graphics — the backdrops are excellent, and the intermission screens are superb", commented Julian Rignall in his review for *Mean Machines*. "However, there are some very annoying gameplay features in the platform sections which had me literally screaming with frustration."

Ratings

94%	<i>Amstrad Action</i>
94%	<i>Amstrad Cent Pour Cent</i>
80%	<i>Computer + Video Games</i>
78%	<i>Joystick</i>
74%	<i>Mean Machines</i>
94%	<i>Player One</i>
87%	<i>User</i>
89%	<i>Zzap!</i>
89%	<i>The Games Machine (IT)</i>

CHIP'S CHALLENGE

"Their eyes met across the laboratory the chemistry was instantaneous"



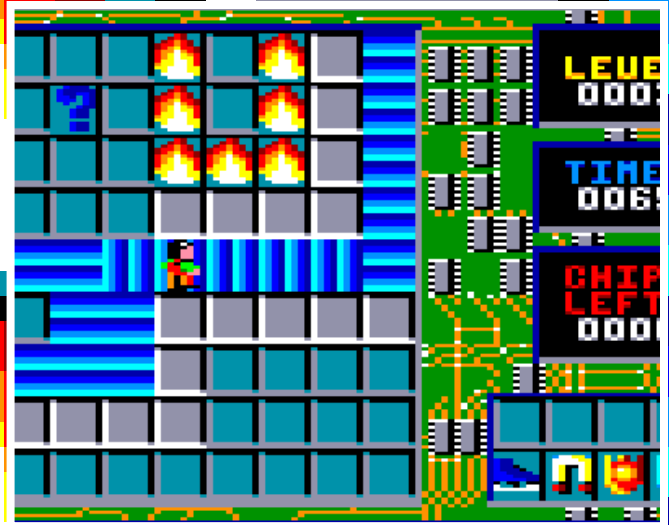
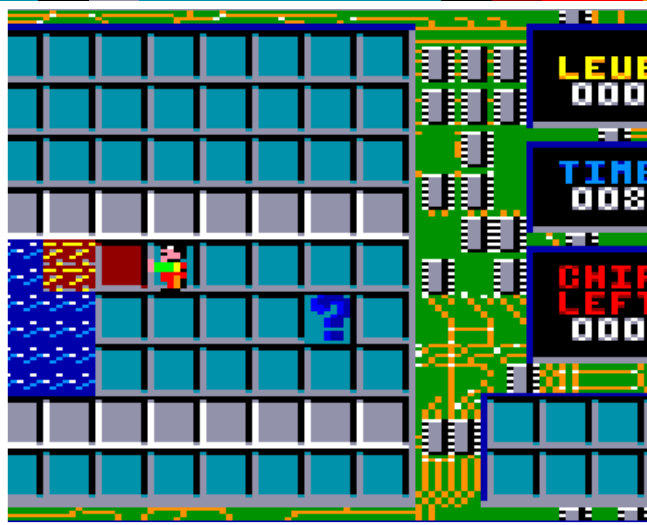
US Gold
Epyx

Chip had fallen head over heels for Melinda, the Mental Marvel, who also happened to have an exclusive computer club called the Bit Busters. Chip would have done anything to join the group, so when Melinda gave him the chance to join he jumped at the opportunity. There was one thing, though, Chip would have to complete numerous challenges before being accepting as a member of the Bit Busters.

A single player top down puzzle game with elements of strategy and action. The player takes control of Chip as he negotiates the many levels which feature increasingly difficulty. Each level features the need for Chip to collect the necessary processor chips in order to open the socket and move to the next level.

Coloured keys will also allow Chip further access through the levels. Puzzles are varied and include pushing dirt blocks together to make walkways. Monsters, traps and the ever counting down of the timer reminds the player not to hesitate for too long or face deletion. Other features throughout the game include teleport squares, water shields, water traps, fire shields, fire traps and much more.

The original game was designed by Chuck Sommerville for Epyx with the game used as a launch title for the Atari Lynx during 1989.



Chip's Challenge was well received upon its release, and has an 87% aggregate rating from three reviews.

Amstrad Cent Pour Cent's Wolfen stated that *Chip's Challenge* is full of originality and quality. Wolfen also touched on the strategic and challenging elements of the game, before stating that *Chip's Challenge* is essential for the CPC gamer's collection.

Joystick's Seb stated that the graphics in *Chip's Challenge* are small and cute. Despite some minor speed issues with the scrolling, Seb pointed out that this is outweighed by the depth and overall enjoyment of the game. He commented that fans of arcade games should avoid the game, but those who appreciate a game with a bit of thought will be kept busy for some time.

Amstrad Action's Adam Waring described *Chip's Challenge* as "an incredibly addictive puzzler" with "colourful" graphics, and a "staggering variety of puzzles". Adam was disappointed with the "sluggish" pace that the game can run at times due to the larger levels, but pointed out that this is not fatal thanks to the addictive quality of the game itself.

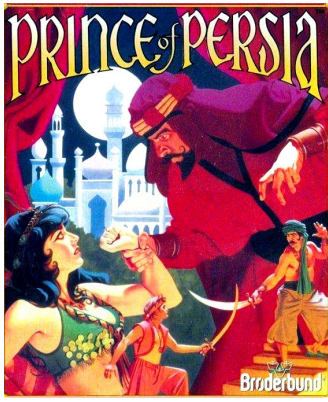
Amstrad Computer User's Brad Fisher commented on the "brilliant and totally addictive" of *Chip's Challenge*. He praised the "marvellously clear" graphics and "pretty smooth" scrolling before mentioning that the game is "exceptional value for money" and that the player would not "get bored with this one for some time".

Ratings

86%	<i>Amstrad Action</i>
89%	<i>Amstrad Cent Pour Cent</i>
85%	<i>Joystick</i>

PRINCE OF PERSIA

"Sharpen your skills"



Broderbund Software

Original game design by
Jordan Mechner
Amstrad CPC version by
Microids

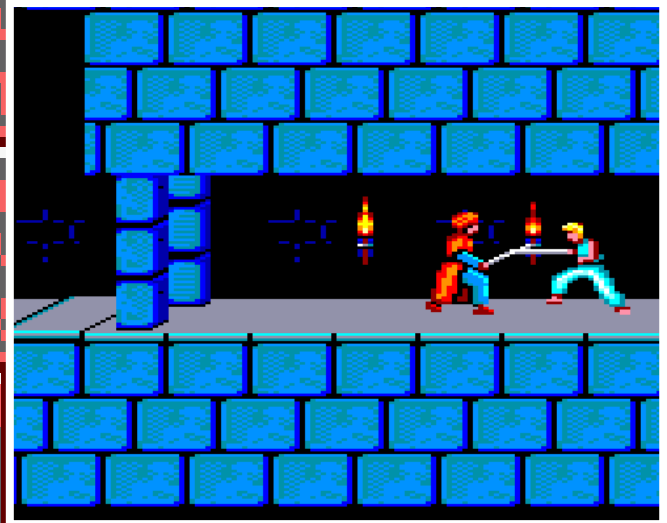
While the Sultan is fighting in a war far away, his Grand Vizier Jaffar seizes control of Persia and rules with an iron hand. A traveller passes through and charms the princess, who is also the daughter of the Sultan, which upsets Jaffar immensely as he himself had eyes for the princess. Taking matters into his own hands, Jaffar arrests the traveller, takes away his sword and possessions and is imprisoned. Meanwhile, Jaffar gives the princess an ultimatum: marry him or die.

The player takes on the role of the traveller, and would be Prince of Persia, in this platform game, where they must negotiate through the dungeon levels avoiding pitfalls and fighting off enemies in an effort to rescue the princess. Limitless lives may be available but time is short and there is an arranged marriage due to take place.

Normal gameplay elements such as walk, run and jump will be familiar to many gamers, but Prince of Persia also comes with the ability to hang from and climb up edges of levels. Swords can be found with which can be used to fight against the enemy in classic fencing style action such as strike, advance, retreat and block. There are some deadly traps that need to be avoided throughout, including loose platforms, pit spikes, long drops, and more.

The original game was released for the Apple II in 1989, having been designed and developed by Jordan Mechner over the space of two years.

Prince of Persia is noted as having pioneered the use of video footage in creating animated characters for the game, later coined as 'rotoscoping'. Mechner had used many video clips of live-action footage, including sword fighting scenes from 1930s black and white movies.



Prince of Persia was almost universally praised by critics at the time. The game managed an impressive 89% aggregate rating from six reviews, and it was just the one 'average' rating that stopped it being the best aggregate rated Amstrad CPC game of all time.

Frank O'Connor of *Amstrad Action* stated that *Prince of Persia* "plays like a dream". He said that what we have here is "an addictive platform game par excellence," and the smooth and detailed gameplay "could lead you to believe you were playing the ST version".

Computer + Video Games also heaped praise on the game with Richard Leadbetter stating that the team were "absolutely amazed by the quality of the Amstrad conversion". He described the animation as "showstopping", the "gameplay's great" and with "loads to keep you occupied".

Jim Johnson reviewed *Prince of Persia* for *Amstrad Computer User* and wrote that the game is "totally addictive", features "superb graphics" and "mesmerising oriental musical excerpts, giving a real touch of atmosphere". Jim also compared the sprite movements and clarity of the graphics to a 16-bit offering.

CPC Amstrad International criticised some graphical elements as being amateurish, but were more pleased with the varied animation of the main character. The reviewer commented that the action, adventure, and martial arts combine with a dense atmosphere to give a unique game.

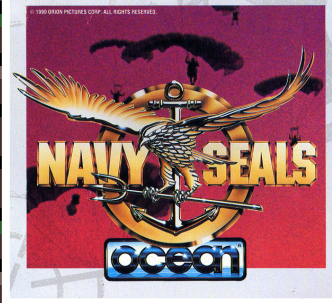
Ratings

95%	<i>Amstrad Action</i>
98%	<i>Amstrad Cent Pour Cent</i>
94%	<i>Computer + Video Games</i>
96%	<i>Joystick</i>
Average	<i>MegaOcio</i>
89%	<i>Zzap!</i>

NAVY SEALS

"Sea, Air, Land. They are the men of the US Navy's special forces."

1 PLUS · 6128 PLUS · GX 4



Ocean Software

Programming by

James Higgins

Graphics by

Warren Lancashire and

Martin McDonald

Music and Sound FX by

Matthew Cannon

An American helicopter has been shot down in the Gulf of Oman and the crew have been taken prisoner. A Navy SEALs team has been sent in to rescue them before they are executed. However, while the SEALs are there, a stockpile of dangerous missiles is discovered in the hands of the terrorists. Both situations must be brought under satisfactory conclusion.

Based on the film of the same name, the player takes control of the Navy SEALs team in this run and gun multi-directional platformer. The action takes place across six levels in total, each one in a different setting such as a harbour, barracks, prison and enemy base. The five members of the team also represent the number of lives the player has, so when one dies another steps in to take over.

The team start out with standard pistols with further weapons such as Uzis, flamethrowers and grenade launchers found throughout the various levels. The terrorists do not hang around, though, and with a tight time limit, the SEALs must not waste any time in stopping them.

Navy SEALs is a 1990 action film starring Charlie Sheen and Michael Biehn as Lieutenant Junior Grade Dale Hawkins and Lieutenant James Curran respectively. The film's plot follows the special forces SEALs (SEa, Air, Land) team, commanded by Lieutenant Curran, as they take on a terrorist group in the Middle East.





Navy SEALs received mostly positive reviews upon its release. The game holds an aggregate rating of 84% from eight reviews.

Amstrad Cent Pour Cent's Robby was impressed that the developers managed to cram a game with many sprites, rich animation, and a stunning soundtrack. However, despite the excellent quality of the game, Robby felt that the game had harsh time limits and the almost impossible tasks.

Amstrad Action's Adam Waring described *Navy SEALs* as a "good looker" with "large and well drawn" sprites, and excellent animation. He touched on the difficulty, but felt that it provided "a lot of challenge" to the game, and the player would be compelled to keep coming back for more.

Raze magazine's Julian Boardman praised *Navy SEALs* for being different to other games of this kind, pointing out the thought and stealth elements needed to progress. Other areas highlighted included the "super-smooth scrolling", "hardware sprites", nicely detailed characters with great animation.

Zzap!'s reviewer wrote that he marvelled at the graphics, good sound, and accurate animation of the characters. However, they were disappointed with the difficulty of the game, and recommended it to players who want a challenge.

Computer + Video Game's Robert Swan stated that "*Navy SEALs* could have been Ocean's surprise biggie – but unfortunately it's not". Despite the game's greatest assets, "the colourful and detailed graphics", the "gameplay is so bleeding hard, it'll have you pulling your hair out within minutes!"

Ratings

88%	<i>Amstrad Action</i>
93%	<i>Amstrad Cent Pour Cent</i>
86%	<i>Joystick</i>
88%	<i>Raze</i>
83%	<i>Zzap!</i>
75%	<i>Computer + Video Games</i>
76%	<i>Mean Machines</i>
84%	<i>Player One</i>



PANG

"The balloons are coming! But you're not worried – you're the fearless Pang!"

PLUS • 6128 PLUS • GX 4



**Ocean Software
Arc Developments**

Balloons have invaded Earth and seem to be unstoppable. Only the Pang brothers can take on the quest to clear all the occupied countries of the invading balloons. On the way, the Pangs will come across some creatures who will help out and others who will hinder their mission.

One or two player co-operative arcade shoot 'em up with a difference as they guide the Pang brothers through 17 countries full of balloons. Starting out with a standard weapon, the players need to shoot the balloons down. Doing so will divide the balloon in half until it is small enough to blast away for good. Once all the balloons have been blasted, the players will move onto the next level.

Extra equipment can be picked up along the way and used against the balloons, including harpoons, missiles and dynamite. Other pick ups such as a clock and hourglass can stop or slow the balloons down respectively.

Pang is a home conversion of the arcade game *Buster Brothers* which was released in 1989 by Capcom. Two arcade sequels followed with *Super Buster Bros.* (1990) and *Buster Buddies* (1995).



Pang was very well received upon its release, and holds an 89% aggregate rating from five reviews.

Mean Machines reviewed the game with both reviewers praising the game. Matt Regan thought that "the GX4000 version is probably one of the best conversions you'll see on this machine", with "bright colourful sprites, along with some absolutely gorgeous backdrops make the game a joy to watch, let alone play".

Amstrad Action's Rod Lawton praised *Pang* for its "superb" graphics, sound, and an intro sequence that "looks as if it's straight off a 16-bit machine. *Pang* is simple, addictive, maddening, and more fun than could possibly be good for you".

Robby reviewed *Pang* for *Amstrad Cent Pour Cent* and stated that the game has everything the player would want, and with instant loading and optimal playability, will appeal to the whole family.

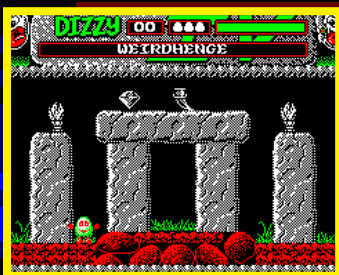
Joystick commented that one of *Pang's* major selling points is the two-player co-operative option where the players can work as a team. They also touched on the game's music, charming sound effects, and the benefits of it being on cartridge.

John Taylor wrote in *Amstrad Computer User* that "*Pang* is a brilliantly thought out shootie" with "excellent graphics" and "superb sound effects". Rounding off the review with a 'Pot of Gold' final verdict, John stated that "*Pang* is a totally addictive blast from start to finish".

Ratings

93%	<i>Amstrad Action</i>
91%	<i>Amstrad Cent Pour Cent</i>
85%	<i>Joystick</i>
93%	<i>Mean Machines</i>
85%	<i>Player One</i>

1991



Top 10 Sales chart 1991

1. Teenage Mutant Hero Turtles
2. Magic Land Dizzy
3. Cavemania
4. Manchester United Europe
5. Kick Off 2
6. Golden Axe
7. Dizzy Panic
8. Total Recall
9. HeroQuest
10. Gremlins 2

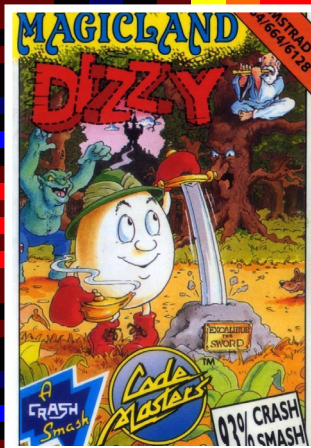
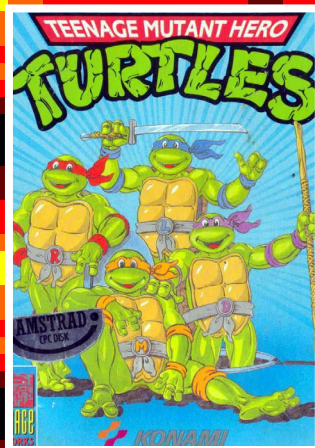
Top 10 Critics chart 1991

1. B.A.T.
2. Smash TV
3. HeroQuest
4. Turricon II
5. Xyphos Fantasy
6. Teenage Mutant Hero Turtles:
The Coin-Op
7. North & South
8. Switchblade (cartridge)
9. Alive
10. Seymour Goes to Hollywood

With the new plus computers and GX4000 console not doing as well as Amstrad had hoped — and the general decline of 8-bit gaming — the majority of software houses began moving onto the 16-bit computer and console market. Some of the bigger profile software houses said goodbye to the Amstrad this year included Infogrames (*Mystical* on the plus), Ubi Soft (*Back to the Golden Age*), and Virgin Games (*Viz*).

At the year's end, *L'Aigle D'or Le Retour* (translated as *The Golden Eagle: The Return*) ushered in games that used plus capabilities on normal cassette and diskette games. The platform action game from Loriciel was released on floppy diskette rather than in cartridge format for plus games.

Teenage Mutant Hero Turtles had free reign of the UK game charts, spending five months on top. *Manchester United Europe* and *Terminator 2* both spent two months as number one UK hits.



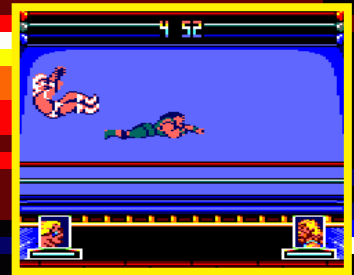
1992

Amstrad Computer User, the official Amstrad CPC publication, called it a day with its May 1992 issue. While the magazine's publishers closed the publication, they planned to replace it with a new magazine called *CPC Attack*. The new magazine, launched with its June 1992 issue, was more game orientated and produced to compete against *Amstrad Action*, the only other CPC magazine left. However, *CPC Attack* was short lived, and ended just six issues later with its November 1992 issue.

CPC Schneider International, the longest running German CPC magazine, also came to an end at the end of 1992 with its 12/01-1992/1993 cover date issue.

Some of the most famous 8-bit software houses released their last Amstrad games this year before departing for 16-bit pastures new, including Dinamic (*Chichen Itza*), Ocean Software (*The Addams Family* and *Space Gun*), and US Gold (*Outrun Europa* and *Bonanza Bros*).

The United Kingdom game charts in 1992 were edging towards a wipeout of budget re-releases, bringing about a revamp of the charts into one top 20 list. However, *WWF Wrestlemania* managed to squeeze four months on top before the changes. *Lemmings* was to be the only full price new release to break the charts in July and September, while *Crystal Kingdom Dizzy* was the only other new release to make an impression on the charts.

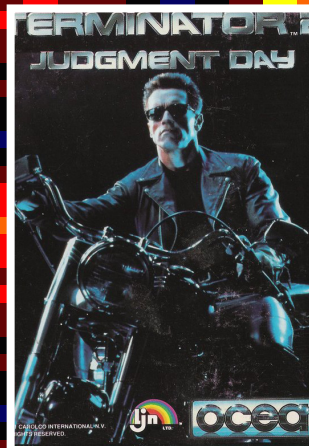
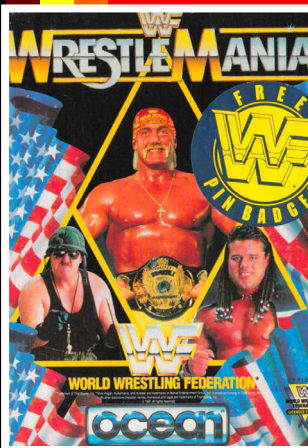
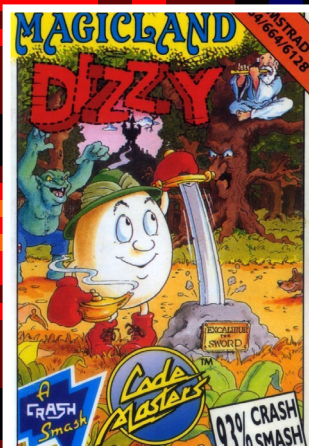


Top 10 Sales chart 1992

1. *Magic Land Dizzy*
2. *WWF Wrestlemania*
3. *Terminator 2*
4. *First Division Manager*
5. *Bubble Dizzy*
6. *The Simpsons*
7. *Dizzy Down the Rapids*
8. *Manchester United Europe*
9. *Lemmings*
10. *Dizzy Panic*

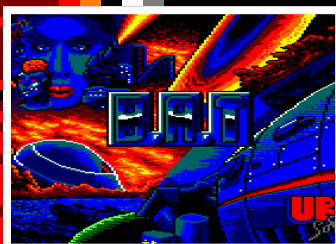
Top 10 Critics chart 1992

1. *Space Crusade*
2. *Bumpy's Arcade Fantasy*
3. *Striker in the Crypts of Trogan*
4. *The Addams Family*
5. *Titus the Fox*
6. *Lemmings*
7. *D-Day*
8. *Zap' t'Balls: Advanced Edition*
9. *The Blues Brothers*
10. *Turbo the Tortoise*



B.A.T.

"Bureau of Astral Troubleshooters"



**UbiSoft
Computer's Dream**

Terrapolis, the capital city of planet Selenia, is on the brink of chaos and destruction. Wanted criminal mastermind, Vrangor, has threatened the whole planet with mass destruction unless the whole city is cleared of everyone within ten days. B.A.T. (Bureau of Temporal Affairs), the governors of peace and justice in the galaxy, have summoned their most accomplished agent to deal with this delicate situation.

A point and click adventure where the player needs to track down Vrangor and his accomplices in the futuristic criminal underworld of Terrapolis. The player's character can be customised pre-game with adjustable attributes such as intelligence, agility, charisma, perception and more, giving the game a role playing element. Gametime is spent exploring locations, interacting with characters (good and bad), collecting items, fighting the enemy, and more.

The game was originally created by French development Computer's Dream on the Atari ST and ported over to other machines, including the Amstrad CPC.

Costing £24.99 when it first arrived exclusively on disk, the game was accompanied by a booklet, a graphic novel that acted as a prologue to the game itself, a glossary on the game's planets, and an extract from an article about the Einstein-Rosen Bridge wormhole theory.



H:21:00 THE 15.MARCH.215
 : ASTROPORT SQUARE, TEENING WJ
 :IPLE, IS CHARACTERISTIC OF 7
 :AT ACTIVITY OF TERRAPOLIS. SL
 :THE RUSH OF THE AUTOCABS, LEAV
 :PICKING UP PASSENGERS, FERRY
 :M TO AND FRO IN MINUTES.



HELLO, I'M LOOKING FOR
 IN OPPONENT TO PLAY
 BIZZY, I'LL BET ONE
 THOUSAND KRELLS I WIN!



AMUSEMENT ARCADE

HERE YOU CAN F
 ALL THE CAN LA
 AND MOST POPL
 VIDEO GAMES, S
 AS THE NOW ALR
 FAMOUS BIZZY G

Ratings

91%	<i>Amstrad Action</i>
98%	<i>Amstrad Cent Pour Cent</i>
90%	<i>Joystick</i>

B.A.T. was universally praised upon its release, and holds a 93% aggregate rating from three reviews. The game received numerous awards from the magazines, including a 'Master Game' (*Amstrad Action*), a '100% A d'Or' (*Amstrad Cent Pour Cent*), and a 'Megastar Joystick' (*Joystick*).

Amstrad Cent Pour Cent gave the game a 98% rating, which is the joint highest rating they ever gave out. The reviewer gave special mention to the richness of the graphics, and a truly great work of art that contributes to the extraordinary atmosphere of the game.

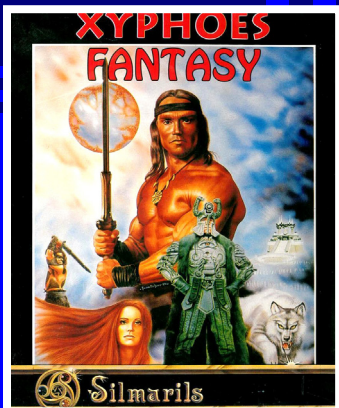
Amstrad Action's Frank O'Connor praised the game for its graphics, which he said "are unbelievable, truly excellent, and all suit the game to a tee." He went on to state that "this level of presentation is present in all aspects of the game, and the whole thing looks like just about the most professional product ever on the CPC."

Joystick also praised the graphics with the reviewer saying that they showed off the true capabilities of the CPC. Besides the visuals, the reviewer mentioned that the game is interesting, flexible, and challenging, and adventure fans should not hesitate in getting it. *CPC Amstrad International's* reviewer said that *B.A.T.* is perfect in every way. From the concept and the accompanying story, the game is in a class of their own. They stated that the game has all the puzzle and exploration elements of adventures, and it is so extensive that the player will be playing for a very long time.

Jean-Loup Jovanovic reviewed the game for *Tilt* where he mentioned that *B.A.T.* is identical to the 16-bit versions. While he praised the excellent graphics, he also touched on the comfortable and fast controls, the freedom of movement, and the successful atmosphere created in the game.

XYPHOES FANTASY

"In the course of your quest you must face many monsters and warriors"



Silmarils

Programming:

**Fabien Fessard and
Mickael Fauquet**

Scenario and Graphics:

Stephane Saint-Martin

Graphics (cut scenes):

Pierre Cadeot

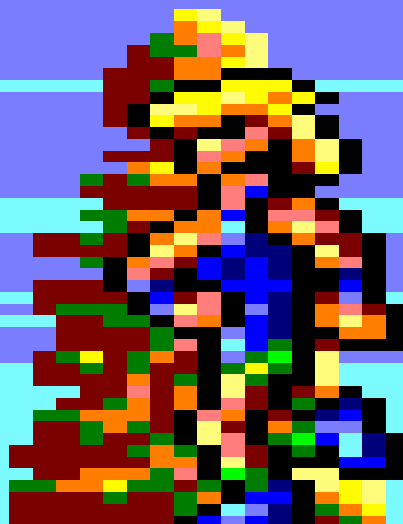
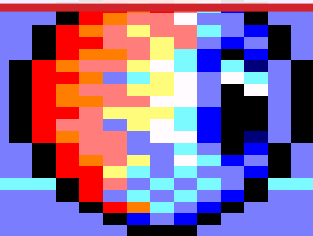
Music:

Emmanuel Lary

For one thousand years, the kingdom of Norem has been ruled ruthlessly by the Empire of the Skulls led by the evil Kan. The Empire of Skulls carry out a ritual every 50 years where they sacrifice the life of a blonde haired woman to their God. However, the Skull warriors have recently been unable to find a suitable candidate for the recent ritual.

Meanwhile, in the highlands of Scotland, Xyphoes is enjoying a relaxing vacation with his beautiful blonde haired girl friend. Following a walk to a nearby field, Xyphoes' companion vanishes with out any explanation. Upon searching the old barn and house, Xyphoes discovers an old book that explains the legend of Norem and how to travel to this world. Upon arriving in Norem, Xyphoes is told by the locals that warriors from the Skull have taken his friend captive. Xyphoes mounts his trusty steed and sets off to confront the Skull Empire with the hope of rescuing his girl.

A side scrolling run and gun style game that takes place over three long levels with a one-on-one sword fighting section against a guardian taking place in between. During the quest, the player will encounter many monsters and warriors who will all drain Xyphoes' energy, shown at the bottom of the screen. Fortunately, there are many power ups that can be collected on the way, such as weapon upgrades, protective bubbles, clones. To defeat Kan and the Skull Empire, the player will need to collect the trophies that are scattered throughout the levels.





Xyphoes Fantasy is well known in the CPC community as being one of the more impressive technical games available on the machine. The 128K only game features overscan (edgeless screen), digital music, and sound effects ported from the Atari ST and Amiga versions.

Unfortunately, *Xyphoes Fantasy* didn't seem to have made it out of its native country of France. There was no official release or reviews in the United Kingdom, and the game was mainly only covered in France with one solitary review elsewhere. Despite the slight coverage in magazines, the game managed to gather an aggregate rating of 90% from four reviews.

Seb, writing for *Joystick*, was immediately impressed with the game's presentation and soundtrack. He went on to comment on the excellent graphics that were among the best he had seen on the CPC, with animation successful even with multiple sprites moving quickly. Seb rounded his review off by stating that *Xyphoes Fantasy* is a top arcade game and technically the best on the CPC.

Amstrad Cent Pour Cent said that CPC gamers will have great difficulty in finding an arcade game as beautiful as *Xyphoes Fantasy*. The reviewer was so impressed with the game that they asked the readers if they could name any other CPC game that has animated sprites, scrolling without flicker, and a soundtrack playing throughout. The review rounded things off by stating that arcade gamers would not regret breaking the bank for *Xyphoes*.

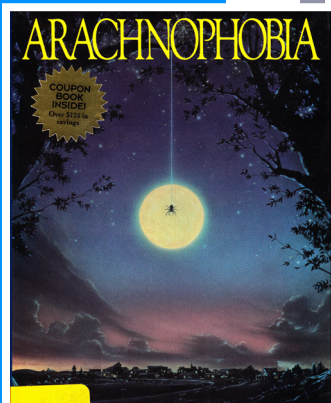
Micro News pointed out *Xhyphoes Fantasy*'s lack of originality, but stated this was balanced out by the five graphically sumptuous levels with huge sprites, overscan display, music converted from the 16-bit versions, and pleasant horizontal scrolling.

Ratings

90%	<i>Amstrad Cent Pour Cent</i>
95%	<i>Joystick</i>
90%	<i>User</i>
17/20	<i>Micro News</i>

ARACHNOPHOBIA

"Sometimes your worst nightmares become reality"



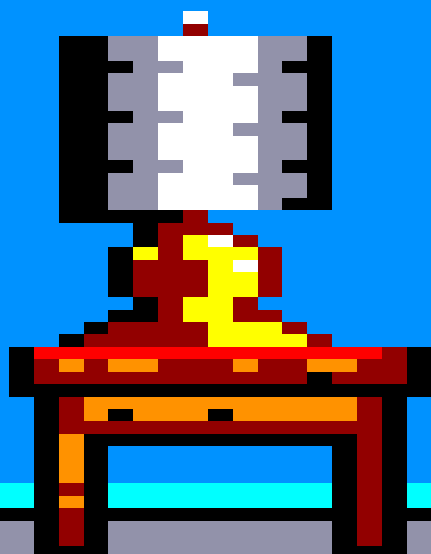
Disney
Titus

A newly discovered species of spider has been unwittingly transported from South America to a small town in the United States. This brings about a new breed of deadly, aggressive, and intelligent spiders that terrorise the local townspeople. The U.S. Department of Agriculture calls in the expertise of the Spider Infestation Control Team to destroy these deadly arachnids and bring peace to the area.

Arachnophobia is an arcade-style action where the player takes on the role of Delbert McClintosh, an exterminator from the Spider Infestation Control Team. The game begins with an overhead view of the neighbourhood where Delbert has to travel around the streets, entering infested houses, and exterminating the unwelcome visitors. Upon entering a building, the view switches to a more traditional side-view.

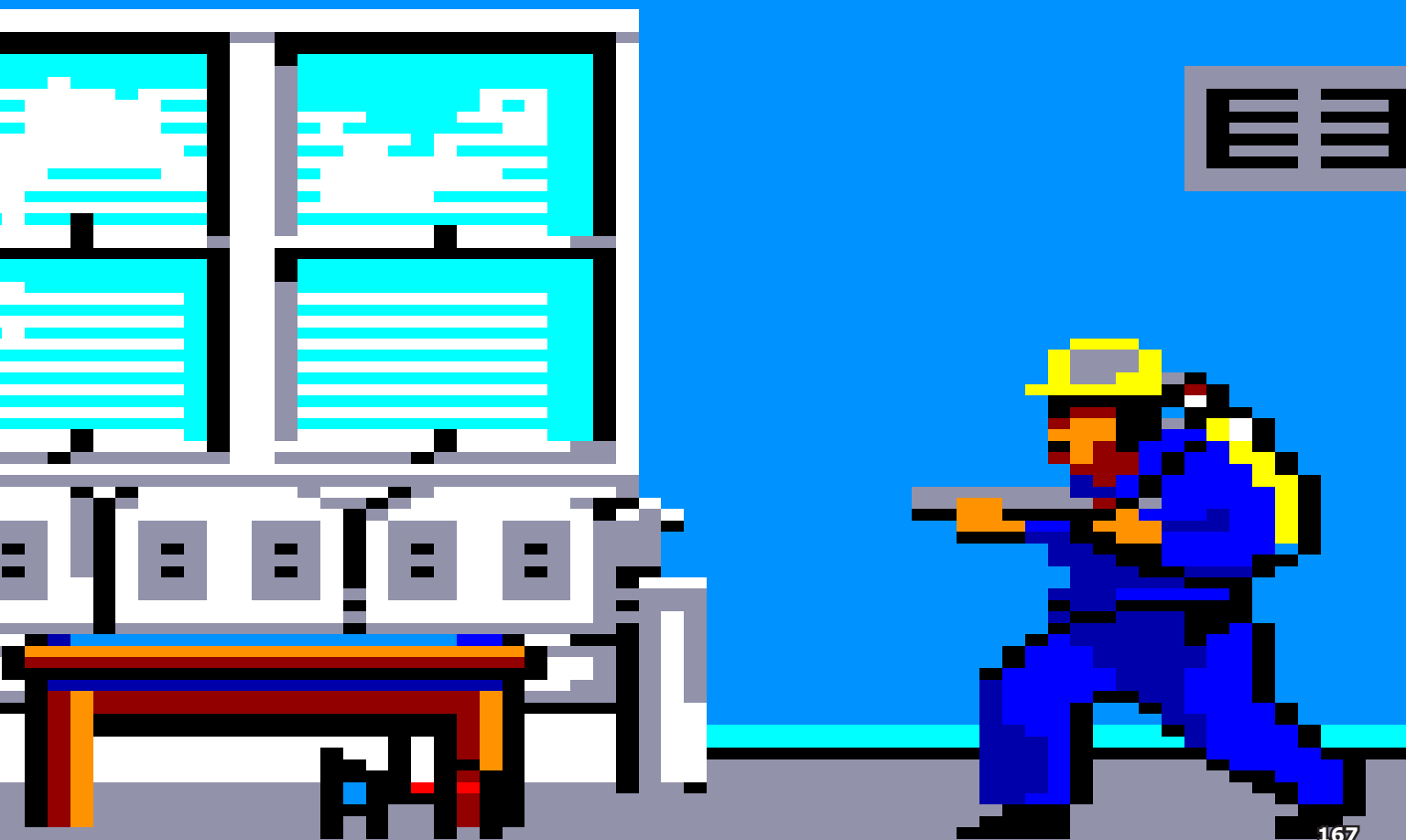
Each building has spiders roaming freely around, but they can be eliminated with the use of bug spray. Delbert does come equipped with plenty of bug spray, but it will not last forever. He also comes equipped with a limited supply of bug bombs which can be placed in a room and let off to deal with any nearby spiders. In each town there is a queen spider hiding in its lair, and to successfully clean up the town of arachnids, the player will have to kill her.

Arachnophobia is based on the film of the same name, a horror-comedy that was directed by Frank Marshall and released in 1990. The lead stars are Jeff Daniels and John Goodman, the latter of which has the role of the supporting exterminator character.





Not much is known about *Arachnophobia* on the Amstrad CPC. In fact, no reviews of the CPC version appeared in any magazine at its time of release in 1991. It's unclear how much of a release the game got, and according to some gamers, it rarely appeared in shops, if at all.



SMASH TV

"Prepare yourself for the ultimate game show challenge."



Ocean Software Probe Software

Programming by

David Perry

Artwork by

Nick Bruty

Music by

Sound Images

In the future, contestants take part in the ultimate television game show called *Smash TV*. Unlike any other television game show before it, *Smash TV* has the contestants armed with a laser gun and tasked with shooting down hordes of baseball bat wielding thugs that advance on them. The bigger the enemy defeated, the bigger the prize.

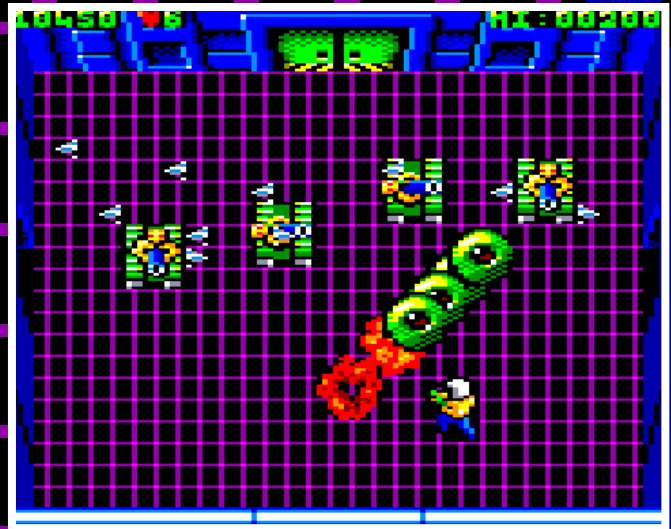
A top down run and gun where the player controls the contestant through multiple single screen levels taking on waves of enemies. The opponents will pour into the arena from the doors at the left, top and right sides and only when they have been eliminated can the player advance to the next arena. There are numerous arenas in each of the four zones with a guardian to defeat in the final arena of each zone.

As the player advances through the arenas, they will come across many different opponents such as thugs, droids, snakes, bombs, mutants and countless other opponents and obstacles. The player begins the game with seven lives, but if any of the enemies or obstacles come in contact with them then they will lose one of these lives. To help along the way, the player can collect various power-ups, speed ups, extra live, spinning shurikans, mace balls, grenades, rocket launchers, multiples and smart bombs.

The arcade game is a spiritual successor to Eugene Jarvis' earlier arcade hit *Robotron 2084*, which features similar dual-joystick control, allowing the player to move and fire independently from the direction they are going.

Fergus McGovern at Probe Software handled the license work and the project then came to David Perry and Nick Bruty for the conversion to home computers. They got as much research out of the arcade cabinet in the Probe office as they could and managed to develop the Amstrad CPC version in around one month.

The game's premise of a futuristic violent television game show borrows heavily from *The Running Man*, a 1987 movie featuring Arnold Schwarzenegger in the role of the unwitting contestant. The movie itself was loosely based on a novel of the same name that was written by Stephen King in 1982.



Smash TV did not get much coverage in the gaming press, which may have been due to its time of release late in 1991. However, the game did pick up praise from all three publications that did cover it, and holds an aggregate rating of 92%.

In *Amstrad Action*, Adam Peters wrote about "the quality of the graphics and sound, and the incredible speed and frantic gameplay, puts *STV* in a class of its own." Adam then rounded off the review by stating that "*Smash TV* is the home computer game the home computer market has been waiting for since 1981."

Robby covered the game for *Amstrad Cent Pour Cent* where he stated that "*Smash TV* is their [David Perry and Nick Bruty] last work on CPC. As a result, this is one of the best arcade games on CPC. *Smash TV* is very dangerous for your nerves : a strong joystick is highly recommended..."

Joystick also voiced praise for the game, stating that the game's single screens, so it allows the programmers to display a good number of sprites on screen with plenty of speed. The graphics were described as colourful and move well. The game's difficulty was touched on as the player will need fast reflexes for any hope in seeing the end.

Ratings

96%	<i>Amstrad Action</i>
94%	<i>Amstrad Cent Pour Cent</i>
86%	<i>Joystick</i>

TEENAGE MUTANT HERO TURTLES: THE COIN-OP

"The return of the awesome foursome!"

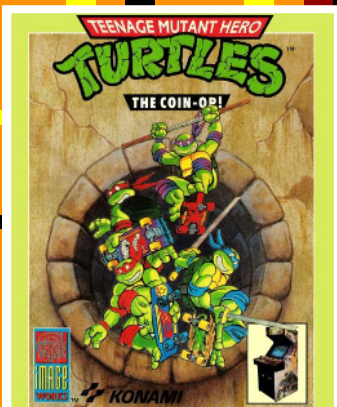


Image Works Probe Software

Coding:

Dave Semmens

Grafix:

Doug Townsley

News reporter April O'Neil has been kidnapped by the evil Foot Clan and the turtles take it upon themselves to mount a rescue mission. With the Foot Clan trained in ninjitsu and various guardians to overcome, including BeBop, Rocksteady, Krang and Shredder, it is not going to be a walk in the park.

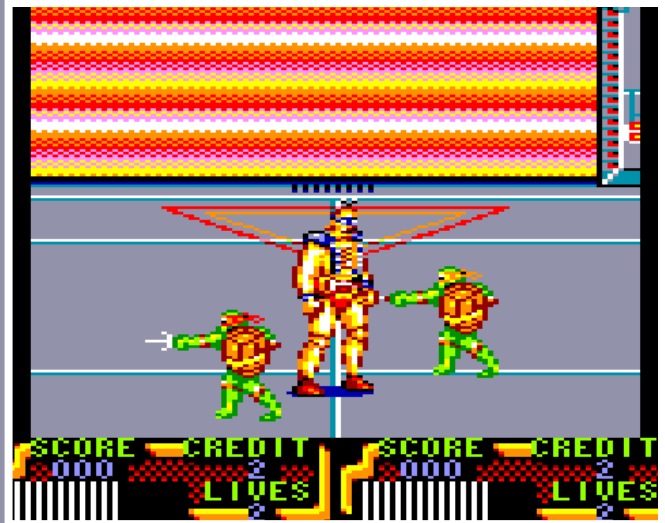
Arcade side scrolling beat 'em up where one or two co-operative players take on the role of one of the four turtles, Donatello, Michelangelo, Leonardo or Raphael. The turtles have all been trained in martial arts by Master Splinter and can perform various kicks, jabs and jumps. However, each of the turtles have their own strengths and weaknesses, Leonardo has an even balanced speed and weapon range, while Donatello is slow but his weapons are long range, while both Michelangelo and Raphael are fast but wield short range weapons.

Each level features Foot soldiers to deal with as well as the bosses to overcome, so there are plenty of scuffles abound. Any lost energy can be quickly replenished with the consumption of discarded pizzas that can be picked up along the way.

The original arcade game was released in 1989 by Konami and is based on the first animated television series of the *Turtles*. The arcade game was followed up by *Teenage Mutant Ninja Turtles: Turtles in Time* in 1992.

The comic books tell a story of four mutated teenage turtles named after Italian artists, who battle against criminals, overlords and other mutated creatures. While the comic books were aimed at the teenage and young adult demographic, the following animated series and movies were more kid orientated.

During the time of the game's release, the name 'Ninja' was frowned upon in the United Kingdom, as was the nunchaku weapon, so the offending word was replaced with 'Hero'. Interestingly, while the television series was heavily edited to remove any use of the nunchaku, the computer games were left untouched.



Teenage Mutant Hero Turtles: The Coin-Op was mostly well received upon its release. The game has an aggregate rating of 88% from four reviews.

Wolfen, reviewing the game for *Amstrad Cent Pour Cent*, felt that the designers did a good job of the sprites and animation, and that lovers of the genre should rush out to their local distributor to get this almost perfect success of a game.

Amstrad Action's Adam Peters pointed out the game's reasons for being "brilliant": the "backgrounds are suitably detail, atmospheric and varied, and the animation is very smooth", then there's the "variety of moves", "fifteen sub levels to work through", "the end-of-level guardians", and "the two-player option". Peters summarised that "*Turtles 2* is brilliant" and "If you don't buy it, you just don't deserve to own a computer."

User commented on the colourful backgrounds, with the Amstrad's 16 colours being put to good use. The reviewer did feel that the screen was a touch small, but not as small as other games and should satisfy the most demanding gamer. Overall, the reviewer felt that the game was fast, colourful, with big sprites, and with only the sound lagging behind.

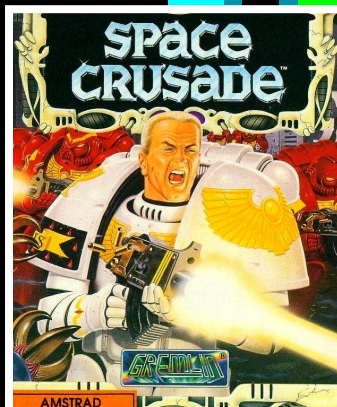
Zzap! pointed out the game's fast animation and the many incredible moves available. The game was also praised for its colour, action, and beat 'em up fun.

Ratings

91%	<i>Amstrad Action</i>
92%	<i>Amstrad Cent Pour Cent</i>
87%	<i>User</i>
83%	<i>Zzap!</i>

SPACE CRUSADE

"Take your senses to the edge... ..and beyond!"



With the exploration of deep space, mankind had unwittingly unleashed an ancient evil, the minions of Chaos, from their warp field prison. For more than five thousand years, war raged the two clashing species. Eventually, a man known as the Emperor of Human Space formed a new Empire comprising of all fragments of human society. He created the Space Marines, a collection of the best fighters around, with the aim of bringing peace once and for all.

Space Crusade is a turn-based tactical combat science-fiction computer game for one to three players. The player takes control of a Space Marine squad with the task of going to battle with the opposing computer controlled alien force in various missions. Before entering the battlefield, the player can choose the squad's weapons and equipment appropriate to the mission statement.

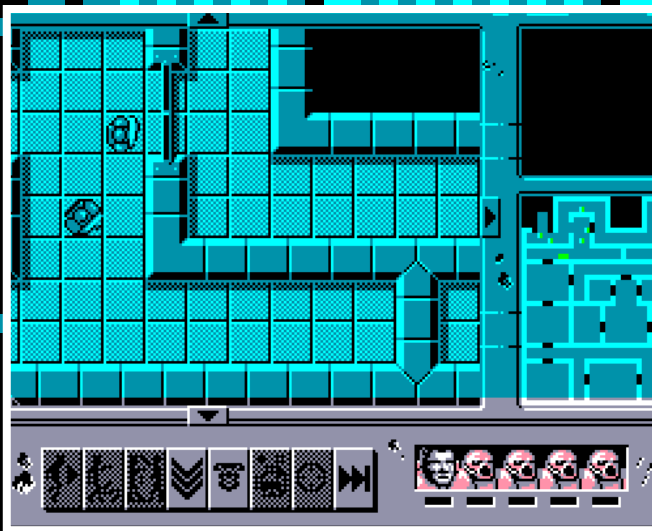
On the battlefield, each squad member of the Space Marines have their own allocated number of Aps (Action Points) which can be used for actions such as move, open doors, fire and reload weapons. The map is set out in a boardgame grid fashion with each square taking a certain amount of APs to negotiate. When confronting the enemy, the player has the choice of firing a weapon at them, engaging in hand-to-hand combat, or doing nothing. Each successful mission will bring awards and honours, leading to the exalted rank of Captain Senioris.



Gremlin Graphics

Space Crusade is based on the boardgame of the same name from Milton Bradley and Games Workshop. It has many concepts from the Games Workshop's *Space Hulk* and *Warhammer 40,000* games. As with its predecessor, *Heroes Quest*, which was also developed into a computer game, *Space Crusade* features a similar gameplay and interface.

The Voyage Beyond was an expansion to the first *Space Crusade* video game, but unfortunately did not make an appearance on the Amstrad CPC. The expansion added more missions and weapons to the original game, and was only released on the Amiga in 1993.



Space Crusade was widely praised upon its release and sits with an aggregate rating of 92%. It received numerous awards from magazines, including an 'AA Master Game', a 'Joystick Megastar', and a '100% D'Or'. It was a moderate commercial success, spending three months in the UK Gallup Amstrad charts, peaking at number four.

Robby covered the game for *Amstrad Cent Pour Cent*, writing that *Space Crusade* offers technical achievements that gaming buffs will appreciate, and with the presentation, intensive in-game battles, and lasting appeal, nothing on the Amstrad comes close to the standards of *Space Crusade*.

Joystick's reviewer described *Space Crusade* as interesting and fun due to the depth and intensity that the game provides the player. They pointed out that while the graphics may have been monochrome, they were clear and detailed, especially in the 3D views.

Amstrad Action's Adam Peters mentioned the limits of the original boardgame — taking too long to set things up and no one-player option — and that the computer version traverses both of these problems. He highlighted the game's "brilliant" sound, "wonderfully detailed" graphics, and "tactical thought rather than finger-power" game play.

CPC Amstrad International pointed out that *Space Crusade* is not like a typical role playing game, and seasoned role-playing gamers may be disappointed with it. The reviewer stated that while *Space Crusade* is not exactly what role-players have been waiting for, the game stands out amongst the mass-produced action crowd.

Ratings

91%	<i>Amstrad Action</i>
94%	<i>Amstrad Cent Pour Cent</i>
92%	<i>Joystick</i>

TITUS THE FOX

"To Marrakesh and Back"



Titus Software

Programmed by
Charles Goodwin

Titus' fiancée, Foxy, was working in the Sahara desert on an assignment for *Fox & Locks Magazine*. Her priority was to investigate the desert fox, which is considered a rare species. Unfortunately, during a night time photo shoot, Foxy was taken hostage by a group of local thugs. Despite the dangers involved, Titus set off to rescue his imprisoned fiancée.

A platform game in which the player must guide Titus through the many different levels to his destination of Marrakesh in the Sahara desert. The game features 15 varied levels where the player will encounter construction workers, mad scientists, vicious dogs, roaming tramps, giant bees and more. Thankfully, Titus can fend them off by throwing objects at them, which can be picked up throughout the levels, or just avoiding them all together with a well timed jump.

Being a wily fox, Titus is full of energy, but even that can deplete if any enemy or trap comes within touching distance. Lose all the energy and Titus will lose one of his three initial lives. As well as fending off various enemy throughout the levels, Titus will also need to solve the odd object puzzle in order to advance further. There are also many secret areas hidden in amongst the levels that can be explored for extra bonuses and points.

Titus originally released the game in its native France as *Lagaf': Les Aventures de Moktar - Vol 1: La Zoubida*. The game features French comedian Lagaf' as the main character Moktar and tied in with his hit song "La Zoubida". As the 'Vol. 1' part of the subtitle suggests, the game was meant to be the first in a series, but no further games were released. For the international release, Titus changed the character to a more universal fox animal and used the name of their company.



Titus the Fox arrived late in the Amstrad CPC's production run and therefore did not get much coverage as it would have if it were released in the computer's heyday. However, the game was praised by critics and has an aggregate rating of 88% from three reviews.

Adam Peters of *Amstrad Action* noted that the game has some features missing from the 16-bit versions, but pointed out two factors of consolation: the CPC is the only 8-bit machine that *Titus* is available on, and the graphics are "mind-blowingly brilliant, and give the 16-bit equivalents a very long run for their money". While Adam admitted that there are a few niggles in the game, the "size, general playability and stunning graphics more than make up for this".

Joystick quickly ran through the disappointments of *Titus* — slowdown in places and flickering sprites — before they went on to the positives. The reviewer praised the game for its colourful visuals accompanied with a good screen size, as well as the size of the levels, variety of enemies, the game's lastability, and the music that accompanies the action. Small imperfections can be overlooked, stated the reviewer, when the game is as good as this.

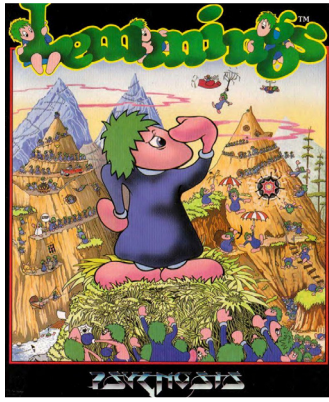
Amstrad Cent Pour Cent described the scenery in *Titus* as beautiful, with the Mode 0 graphics working well. While the visuals and sound were praised, the screen scrolling was criticised for being too tight to the character, not leaving much time to react to the oncoming bad guys. The reviewer commented that despite the imperfections, the player would not be able to put the game down until the end.

Ratings

94%	<i>Amstrad Action</i>
82%	<i>Amstrad Cent Pour Cent</i>
90%	<i>Joystick</i>

LEMMINGS

"Warning. We are not responsible for loss of sanity, loss of hair, loss of sleep"



Psygnosis

Conceived by

DMA Design

Amstrad Conversion by

Walking Circles

Sound by

Tony Williams

Groups of Lemmings have got aimlessly lost in the wilderness and need help in finding their way back home. A puzzle platform game where a number of Lemmings will enter each level through a trap door and it is the player's job to guide them through the levels, avoiding any obstacles or hazards onward to safety of the exit door.

Unfortunately, Lemmings are pretty docile and will continue walking until they come against a wall or impassable object where upon they will then turn around and continue walking in the other direction. Using the row of available icons at the bottom of the screen, the player can give any Lemming specific skill set such as block, dig down, build bridge and dig tunnel in an effort to progress toward the exit.

Early levels will require a minimal amount of Lemmings guided home with minimal use of skills and with a healthy amount of time available. However, further levels may prove more challenging with a greater amount of Lemmings needing guided home couple with a limited time limit. With a different skill set available on each level, careful strategic planning is needed to succeed.

Lemmings was originally developed on the Commodore Amiga and had been ported to virtually every other machine at the time. DMA Design created the game from a simple stick man style pixel animation using Deluxe Paint.

Although no further games in the series were released on the Amstrad CPC, there have been several sequels appearing on other formats such as *Lemmings 2: The Tribes* (1993; Amiga, DOS, ST, others), *All New World of Lemmings* (1994; Amiga, DOS), and *3D Lemmings* (1995; PC, others).

Officially released remakes have included the PlayStation Portable version in 2006 by Team17, a PlayStation 2 version also in 2006 by Rusty Nutz, and a PlayStation 3 version by Team17 in 2007 available on the PlayStation Network.



Lemmings was universally praised by gaming publications across the board. While many reviewers admitted that the Amstrad CPC version couldn't match the 16-bit mouse compatible version, what the 8-bit computer did get was commended. The game holds an aggregate rating of 90% from two reviews.

The Amiga version is "regarded as the best computer game of all-time," wrote Adam Peters writing in *Amstrad Action*, "and the Amstrad version is everything we could have wanted. There's enough of a challenge to keep you plugging away for ages... Stylish and as frighteningly addictive as any other version..."

In a similar statement, *Amstrad Cent Pour Cent* commented that "*Lemmings* is what we were expecting." The game was praised for its "good music" and "great graphics. Well done Psygnosis!" However, they added that it was "a shame such a good game is more or less spoiled by a lack of cursor control."

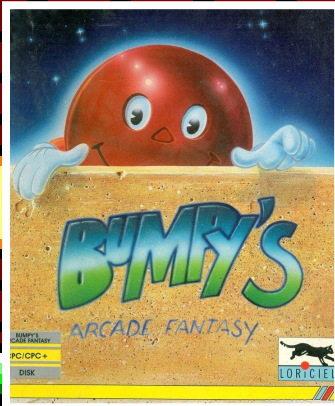
CPC Amstrad International were also concerned with the controls, stating that the mouse cursor replacing the joystick proves to be extremely unwieldy. They also mentioned that although the levels of the CPC version do not quite have the complexity of the original, nevertheless, the programmers did a very good job and *Lemmings* is a blast guaranteed.

Ratings

97%	<i>Amstrad Action</i>
82%	<i>Amstrad Cent Pour Cent</i>

BUMPY'S ARCADE FANTASY

"Beware! This isn't just an ordinary game!"



Author and Programmer:

Jean-Francois Streiff

L.I.O.S. conversion:

Frederik Spada

Graphics:

Isabelle Maury,

Christophe Perrotin

Music and audio effects:

Michel Winogradoff

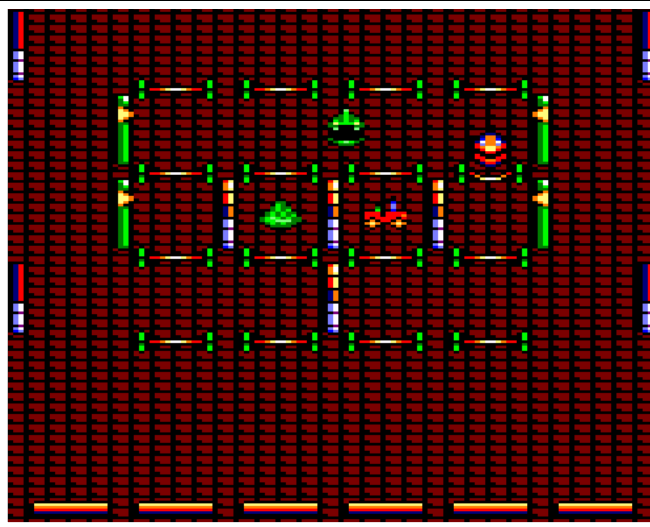
Bumpy, a large head with arms and legs, has taken the pretty Bumpette to the funfair in an effort to win her heart. His plan is to impress her by winning at the many attractions across the nine different areas.

A platform puzzle game with the player taking on the role of Bumpy, a ball shaped head that can bounce around the screen at various heights. There are 100 screens across nine different attractions to negotiate through to win the heart of Bumpette. Completing each attraction unlocks a password, which can act as a save point for revisiting later.

Platforms come in many shapes and sizes with some being a help while others are a hindrance. There are platforms that transport Bumpy from one area to another, others break away upon walking on them, and some spring Bumpy into the air. However, some platforms have spikes, are sticky, magnetic, and invisible. To help out, there are life and points bonuses that can be collected along the way, too. There are also a number of various posts along the way which each have different effect on Bumpy: some posts can only be pass through a certain amount of times, some are only passable from left to right or vise versa, some are sticky, or invisible.

Bumpy first appeared in his self-titled game for the Amstrad CPC in 1989. Here, the player controls a bouncing ball, Bumpy, through the various platform levels.

When launched, the game detects whether the player has a Plus machine, and if so, a different version will load with enhanced visuals.



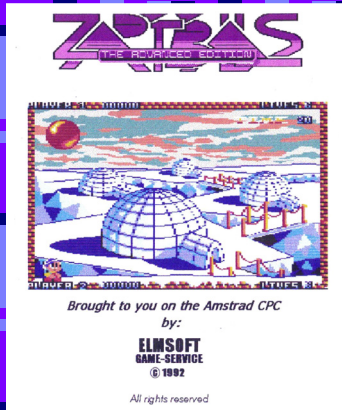
Bumpy's Arcade Fantasy wasn't covered by many publications at all during its initial release. In fact, the only magazine that reviewed the game was *Amstrad Cent Pour Cent*. Matt Murdock gave the game a glowing review with a 97% overall rating. Matt remarked that each level is a real puzzle that will make you sweat neurons, and while the game is primarily a game of reflexes, the sound effects maintain the tension, and the graphics are good with perfect animation. The game was described as an essential game for any CPC owner.

Ratings

97% *Amstrad Cent Pour Cent*

ZAP 'T' BALLS: THE ADVANCED EDITION

"A game with incredible new ideas and a varied gameplay"



Elmsoft Game Service

Programming, graphics and sound effects:

Elmar Krieger

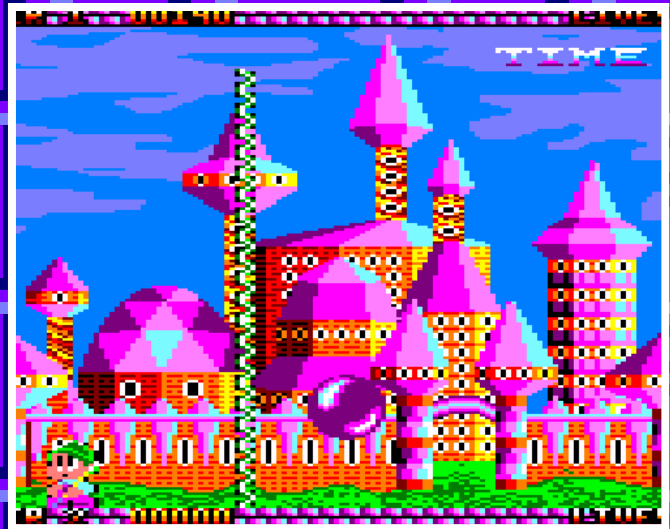
Back in the Autumn of 1990, Amstrad released their plus range of computers with Dr. Matlock being one of the first to buy one. However, the plus range was not a success as many had hoped. With Dr. Morlock being a slightly mad scientist, he decided to use his knowledge and make the plus computer range a success. He became a byte-sequence, transferred himself into the registers of the new ASIC chip inside the plus computer. From within the plus computer, Dr. Matlock aims to destroy any computer that doesn't have an ASIC chip. Even the original CPC computers would be destroyed.

The computing world need a hero or two, and that's where Ramses and Columbus come in. Born in the older, and non-ASIC, CPC6128 computer, they decide to fight against the evil Morlock and save the computing world. Hiding themselves as a computer virus, they manage to infiltrate Morlock's plus computer. Unfortunately, Morlock detected them and confined them to the game inside the cartridge. There, Ramses and Columbus begin their fight against the hardware sprites of the plus.

A one or two player puzzle action game where the mission is to destroy all the balls on the screen using a secret weapon, the "Zapper". Some balls might shrink, others might split up. Even the route to the ball might be a problem. There are four worlds in total, with 15, 25, 25, and 15 levels on each one. Each level can have anything from simple action to puzzles.

Zap't'Balls was originally released as a 29-level playable demo on the coverdisc of the German magazine *CPC Amstrad International*. The game was updated with many more levels and was released commercially as *Zap't'Balls: The Advanced Edition*.

Elmar Krieger recalls that he "had figured out a programming trick to display many huge ball sprites on the classic CPC (balls were always popular in demos), and since *Pang* was a major title on the new plus machines, a CPC back port was an obvious idea. Unfortunately Ocean Software didn't want one, so a *Pang*-inspired cover disk game was the ideal solution."



Ratings

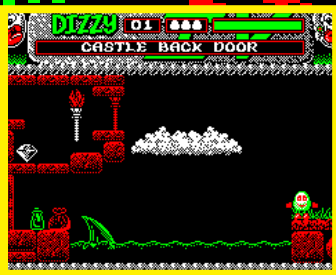
85%	<i>Amstrad Action</i>
86%	<i>Amstrad Cent Pour Cent</i>

Zap't'Balls: The Advanced Edition received a good response. Having been released in the dying years of the Amstrad computer range, there were very few CPC magazines around to cover the game. However, it managed an 85% aggregate rating from two reviews.

Longshot of *Amstrad Cent Pour Cent* commented on the game's very high technical quality, finish and presentation, with the animation being completely fluid. Longshot went on to mention the superb introduction being the most beautiful to date on a CPC. With hardware scrolling hardware, raster success, and music, *Zap't'Balls* is a must.

Simon Forrester covered the game in *Amstrad Action* where it received an 'AA Rave' accolade. Simon complemented the game's loading sequence, as "a treat to watch", with the actual game "just as fast, furious, and flabbergasting as its commercial counterpart". Simon concluded the review with stating that "some games are just flashy demos with some gameplay tacked on. Some are dull efforts with a jazzy loader. *Zap't'Balls* is neither. It has both amazing graphics and real gameplay."

1993 — 1995



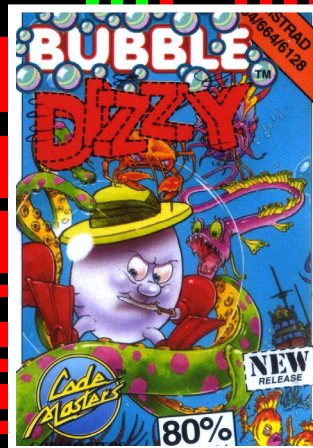
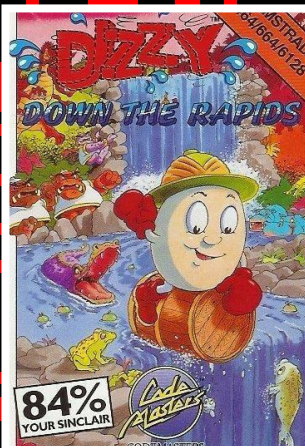
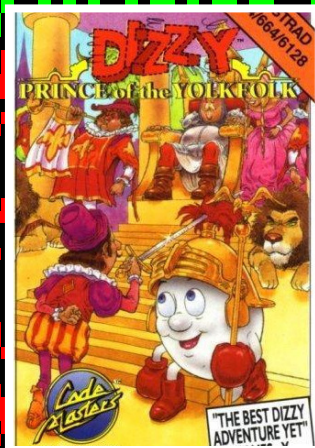
Top 10 Sales chart 1993

1. Dizzy Prince of the Yolkfolk
2. Magicland Dizzy
3. Dizzy Rapids
4. Bubble Dizzy
5. Simpsons
6. Bully's Sporting Darts
7. First Division Manager
8. American Tag Wrestling
9. Turbo the Tortoise
10. Sergeant Seymour

Amstrad Cent Pour Cent, one of France's longest running CPC magazine ended on 49 issues (October 1993).

Three more prolific software houses called time on their 8-bit development with some final game releases before moving on to new markets, including Codemasters (*Robin Hood: Legend Quest* and *Wrestling Superstars*), Gremlin Graphics (*Nigel Mansell's World Championship Challenge*), and Titus Software (*Prehistorik 2*).

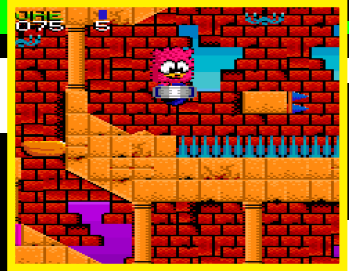
Following on from 1992's revamp of the UK games chart, entries included more and more re-releases, with new games entering the top 20 being very rare indeed. However, *Bully's Sporting Darts* was an exception to the norm with the game going straight to number one, albeit disappearing straight away.



Fluff, a side scrolling platform game from Radical Software that took advantage of the plus machine hardware capabilities, was one of the most anticipated games for the Amstrad during the machine's latter years.

The tail end of 1994 brought Amstrad users *MegaBlasters*, one of the most revered games to appear on the computer. The game was also the last semi-commercial game released on the Amstrad.

After ten years and 117 issues, Future Publishing finally called it a day on *Amstrad Action*. The May 1995 issue — that was just 36 pages — turned out to be the last. The longest running, and last remaining, commercial CPC magazine was no more.

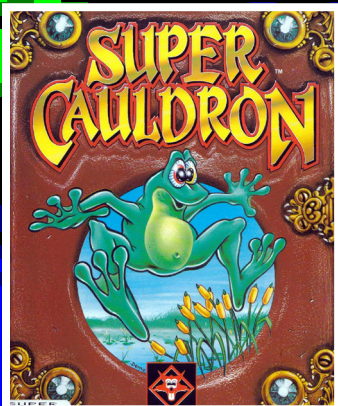


INDEX



SUPER CAULDRON

"Search for the source of evil and free the kingdom from darkness"



Titus Software

Amstrad CPC version by
Elmar Krieger

In the magical kingdom of Cauldron, the people lived a peaceful existence where they were looked after by a family of sorcerers whose powers were passed down through each generation. With the sorcerers' power over the land, creatures lived in harmony and the three worlds of Cauldron (the enchanted forest, plain spells and the capital Zythum) were at peace.

However, an evil wizard of the dark kingdom found some terrible spells and is planning to take control of all the worlds of Cauldron. Soon the evil wizard discovered an unknown fourth world, the Castle of Enchantment, and was able to cast a curse on the other three worlds. The curse caused the animals and plants to show aggressive behaviour towards any person unfortunate to come close to them. Unknown to the wizard, Miss Sorcerer had a plan to thwart the evil curse by recruiting her most trusted witch, Zmira, to infiltrate the three worlds and return them to their former peaceful glory.

Super Cauldron is a side scrolling platform game where the player takes on the role of Zmira. On her travels through the four worlds, Zmira must collect the rare spells with which to fight the evil wizard with. As well as looking out for the necessary spells, Zmira must also collect the key that will allow her access to the next world. Zmira's life force is shown by an energy level and if this drops to zero, she will lose one of her initial three lives. Zmira can be harmed by the enemy or falling foul of traps, with some traps being fatal. Energy can be replenished by collecting potion bottles.

Titus' disk copy machine could only do single sided copies, so this meant 180k of disk space for the whole game. That's why the CPC version has fewer levels than the PC version. While the CPC disk version had fewer levels (four worlds), the 64k cassette version has only three levels.

The series was originally developed by Palace Software, with *Cauldron* released in 1985 and *Cauldron II* in 1986. Titus acquired the franchise when it bought out Palace in 1991.



Super Cauldron was well received upon its release, gaining a 90% aggregate rating from two reviews. Having a release date beyond the production run of the Amstrad computers, and after many CPC dedicated publications had long ceased, *Super Cauldron* was only covered by two magazines.

Simon Forrester reviewed *Super Cauldron* in *Amstrad Action*, giving the game an overall rating of 96%, one of the highest ratings that AA has ever given. This two-page review was noteworthy for Simon writing it in the form of a poem. Highlights in the rhyming review were that the game has "smooth scrolling", "fluid animation", and "really cool" music. Simon commented that the "game is big" with "each time you play, there's something new."

Amstrad Cent Pour Cent's Wolfen noticed the game's visual aspects, particularly the attractive choice of colour palette, the fluid hardware scrolling, with parallax scrolling, too. Wolfen admitted that the game has flaws, but felt they are so small as not worthy of a mention, and that the superb craftsmanship of the game outweighs any minor niggles.

Ratings

84% *Amstrad Cent Pour Cent*



PREHISTORIK 2

"Back to Hungerland"



Titus Software

Amstrad CPC and Amstrad Plus version by
Elmar Krieger

Upon opening his meat-locker, Prehistorik finds that he has run out of food. Without any other choice, Prehistorik sets off for a trek through Hungerland to scavenge for food fit for a feast. However, Hungerland is no stroll in the park with Funky Monkeys and Nasty Spiders guarding their territory. Fortunately, Prehistorik has his trusty wooden club to fend off any would attackers.

An arcade side scrolling platform game where the player controls a caveman known as Prehistorik as he walks, jumps and attacks his way through the jungles of Hungerland in a quest for food. Various creatures and end-of-level bosses will need to be dispatched using the initial weapon of a wooden club. Failure to defend against any attack will result in the loss of one heart, of which there are three in total and three lives all together.

Health can be replenished by collecting food that is hidden throughout the levels. Additional weapons can be collected along the way to help progress through the levels, including a big hammer, an axe and a big swirling axe. There is also a hang-glider that can be used to reach previously inaccessible areas.

For *Prehistorik 2*, Elmar Krieger decided to develop a version for both the original CPC and Plus machines. Work began on the original CPC version first before enhancing that for the Plus. With the game developed on the normal CPC first, it could be assumed that there were compromises made with the Plus version: there were no hardware sprites for the game characters, so when lots of software sprites overlapped, things slowed down noticeably.

The first *Prehistorik* game was released on the Amstrad CPC in 1991 and featured similar themed gameplay.

There are various Amstrad versions available. The cassette tape version is limited in graphics, sound and content. The disk version has three different versions: Standard, Special One and Special Two.



Being released on the Amstrad computers in 1993 meant that there were very few publications around at the time to cover the game. Despite that, *Prehistorik 2* garnered high praise from both magazines that reviewed it.

Simon Forrester, writing in *Amstrad Action*, had nothing but praise for the game: "graphics are excellent. Not just good, but truly excellent. Sonically, *P2* is unsurpassed. It's when you move the blokey and club your first bear that things get really addictive. *P2* has an instant appeal, that doesn't wear off."

Amstrad Cent Pour Cent stated that "its game-play and ergonomics make it one of the best platform games on our computers. We can only thank Titus for having trusted Elmar to convert this hit on CPC."

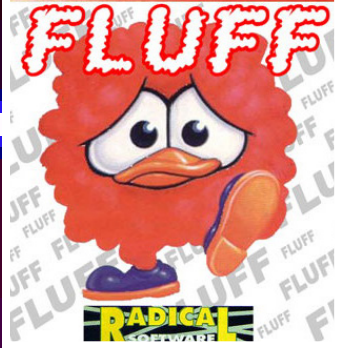
Ratings

96%	<i>Amstrad Action</i>
93%	<i>Amstrad Cent Pour Cent</i>

FLUFF

"12 zones of hardcore scrolling action and stunning graphics"

PLUS · 6128 PLUS · GX 4



Radical Software

Graphics and Coding by
Rob Buckley

Fluff's four mischievous children have wandered off on their separate ways around Fluffworld. Although Fluffworld may sound harmless there are many dangers that can cause harm. Regardless of the dangers, Fluff sets out to rescue her children.

Side scrolling platform action as the player controls Fluff in her mission to explore ten levels in search of her children. Each level contains obstacles such as spikes, conveyor belts, fires, platforms and trampolines. Various nasty animals who inhabit Fluffworld can also cause harm to Fluff on contact. Although Fluff can defend herself with a spin ball attack, it does drain a small amount of energy.

To help Fluff on her mission, pick-ups such as food, extra lives and invulnerability pods can be collected. The food will revitalise Fluff's energy levels, while the invulnerability pod will give Fluff temporary invincibility.

With *Fluff*, Rob Buckley wanted to take advantage of the plus machine's capabilities. "The hardware scrolling and sprites really allowed for super smooth gameplay," explains Rob, "and that allows for a lot of balance in control."

Fluff wasn't ready at the time *Amstrad Action* wanted a preview available for its front cover feature, so Rob put a rough version together for them to look at. The following month *Amstrad Action* had the full review with the game featuring up to 99% different content (new code and graphics).



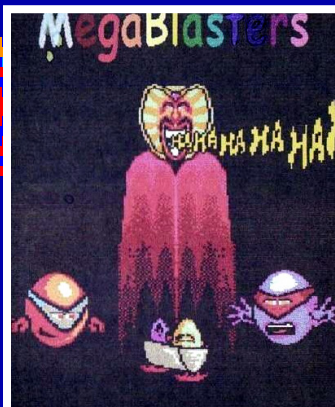
By the time *Fluff* was released, the majority of Amstrad magazines were long gone, so it was only covered in *Amstrad Action*. The magazine covered the game extensively, giving it updates and a cover preview prior to the review. Simon Forrester noted in his review of the game's "attention to detail" and also stated that it is "incredibly good fun," with smooth scrolling and wonderful animation. While the game was praised for its gameplay, level design, and visuals, a couple of minor flaws were highlighted: an inconsistent difficulty curve and an unoriginal game idea. Despite this, the game was described as "an impressive piece of coding that shows off the Plus at its best."

Ratings

90% *Amstrad Action*

MEGABLASTERS

"Probably the biggest game to be released on the CPC"



Odiesoft

Programming:
Georg Odenthal

An old legend prophecy tells of a story of special twins that are born every one thousand years. Special because they are blessed with super powers and have the potential to grow up and use these powers for good. However, Cobron, an evil sorcerer, has devised his own devious plan to have the newly born twins kidnapped and brought up to serve himself. With the twin babies brought up under Cobron, the whole world will be in jeopardy.

The twins' older brother, Bart, burdened himself with the guilt of their kidnapping and defying Cobron's threat of attack, sets out with his friend Bob to rescue them from the evil sorcerer. They might not have super powers like the twin or sorcery skills like Cobron, but they do have the power of the MegaBlasters.

A strategy based game where one or two players battle their way through single screen levels towards the final battle in Cobron's castle. Progress through each level is achieved by placing bombs strategically against walls or in waiting for enemies. The explosion will result in the destruction of a wall, paving the way for some progress in the level, or killing off any enemy that gets caught in the blast.

After seeing *Dynablasters* playing on his brother's Amiga, Georg Odenthal felt that the game could be done on the CPC. "A game with four players, a few bombs and some explosions sounded simple enough to be converted to the CPC," thought Georg. When a demo of the Mode 0 battle mode was presented at a gaming party, Georg was approached and asked if he could produce a complete game. Eighteen months later, Georg had completed that game and released it as *MegaBlasters*.

MegaBlasters pays homage to many classic video games with hidden levels throughout. "I think I took this idea from *Castle Wolfenstein* on the PC," explained Georg. "I loved the idea of having cross over levels like this and pay tribute to classic CPC games."

For the 20th anniversary of the original game, *MegaBlasters* was planned for a special re-release with box and cover art. However, the original source code for the game could not be recovered. Instead, a special follow up, *MegaBlasters: Escape from Castle in the Clouds*, was released early in 2015.



MegaBlasters was released in 1994, long after the Amstrad computers were discontinued and many related magazines closed, so it was only reviewed by *Amstrad Action*, the only CPC publication still going.

Karen Levell and Angela Cook both covered the game in issue 111 of *Amstrad Action*. They were impressed with the “absolutely huge” size of the game, comparable to “Mike McShane after 17 Big Macs and four thick shakes”. The review then commented on the “gorgeously scrummy graphics” done in “full overscan”, and “dozens of in-game tunes”. With “11 worlds and over 90 levels, this game has plenty to offer even the most professional of gamers”.

Ratings

94% *Amstrad Action*

THE DEVELOPERS

During the 8-bit gaming days, games were developed using a small team of people, sometime even just one person. While the development team could consist of a number of people, generally, there would be three on a development team: a programmer, a graphics artist, and a musician.

There were usually two different companies involved with the production of a game, the development team and the publishing software house. The developers produced the game and the publishing house released the game to the public via distribution and sales. Some publishers such as Ocean Software had their own in-house development teams to work on games, while publishers such as US Gold would use external development teams for their games.

There were no game designers then, so the development team would decide amongst themselves how to proceed with the design of the game. There were two main sources for games at the time: original and licensed games. Original games are where the team came up with the idea themselves and went about coding, creating graphics and music/sound for it. If the game was an arcade license, the team would normally get an arcade board to play the game and take notes for the home conversion. For film licenses the team may be able to see an advance screening, get access to the script, and on-set photos.

SHIELD
FUEL



ANGLE
STEP

15°
250

SHI

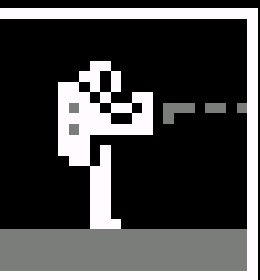
ECO 100%

For 8-bit computers, developers had to cram all the code into the allotted size, usually a standard 64k or extended 128k. Most of the time, 64k was not enough for the original design of the game, and many ideas in games were dropped due to memory limitations.

Amstrad CPC games were distributed on cassette tape and floppy diskette. The most popular gaming media for the Amstrad CPC was the cassette tape, although the disk was popular in countries such as France. Some development teams took advantage of the near instant access of floppy disks and enhanced 128k memory to produce bigger games with more features.

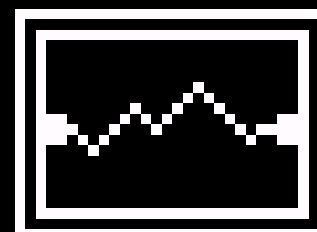
Due to the hardware similarities, many coders who worked on Spectrum games would often port the game over to the Amstrad CPC, either a straight port or sometimes enhancing the visuals or gameplay. It was fairly common for a development team to work on both Spectrum and Amstrad versions of the same game.

The gaming scene was first and foremost a business, so there were always deadlines which the developers had to work with. Sometimes this would not be a problem with work being completed on time, while on other times some game features needed to be dropped due to time constraints. Christmas deadlines were arguably the biggest headache for developers and publishers as they would strive to reach that coveted number one spot in the charts.



X	2	7	3	7
Y	6	1	8	9
T	0	2	2	4

N-E

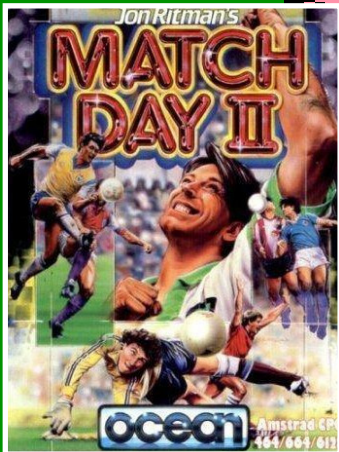


ELD OUT

JON RITMAN



Jon Ritman is a programmer best known for his work on Z80 8-bit computers with games such as *Head Over Heels* and *Match Day II*



Jon Ritman's interest in computers began when he was a TV engineer at Radio Rentals at a time when they considered renting out computers. "It was 1980/81," says Ritman. "I decided to learn more on the basis that engineers with specialist knowledge (such as video recorders), earned more. I bought a ZX81, the rest is history."

With that Sinclair ZX81 in his hands, Ritman programmed his first game *Namtir Raiders* (the name being his surname spelled backwards) and it was picked up by Artic Computing. Ritman had played *Space Invaders* in a pub and tried converting what he remembered of the early levels into his own game.

Ritman would go on to write several more games with Artic Computing for the Sinclair Spectrum, including *Cosmic Debris* (an *Asteroid* clone), *3D Combat Zone* (*Battle Zone* clone), *Dimension Destructors*, and *Bear Bovver* (the latter two being original games).

After discussions with game distributors, it had become clear that they clamoured for a Spectrum version of the Commodore 64 game *International Soccer*. While attending a computer show to help promote *Bear Bovver* for Artic Computing, Ritman and David Ward (co-founder of Ocean Software) were looking at Artic's *World Cup* football game when Ritman said that his game would be much better. David "must [have] taken my phone number", explains Ritman, "as he phoned me many months later", asked about the progress of the game, "and offered me a great deal. I accepted."

This was also the first time that a Ritman game went multi-platform with conversions developed for the Commodore 64, Amstrad CPC, and BBC Micro. "The conversions for *Match Day* were crap," stated Ritman, "made by programmers who didn't give a damn. I even phoned the Amstrad people to explain stuff and they really didn't care, they said they were just doing a job."

Ritman's first true game on the Amstrad CPC would come with *Batman* in 1986. "*Knight Lore* was the inspiration," admitted Ritman. "As soon as I saw it I wanted to do a game like that. The idea of doing *Batman* was mine; Ocean sorted the license. I gather it was easy after all it was long before the blockbuster films."

Batman also marked the first time that Ritman paired up with Bernie Drummond. "I brought Bernie in because he could draw," explained Ritman. With the original Spectrum version, Ritman himself converted the game to the Amstrad CPC, PCW, and MSX. "The conversions were easy. I had maybe 20 files that made up the code for *Batman*. Only

three of these needed to be changed for each different computer: sound, graphic output, and input (e.g. keyboard/joystick). It would take me 2-3 days to convert the code for each machine. Bernie took much longer converting the graphics for the Amstrad but once that was done I could use the two sets of graphics for every platform."

With *Head Over Heels*, Ritman took the premise of *Batman*'s isometric world and added the innovation of co-operative play between the *Head and Heels* characters. "I have been accused of inventing a whole new genre for *Head Over Heels*: The multi character game" says Ritman. "But believe me I didn't think of it that way at the time. I came up with a way, with *Batman*, of deciding what abilities I wanted him to have, then removing them and making the player earn them, With *Head Over Heels* I thought I was just extending that idea, two characters, that in the end, became one."

Riding on a high with the success of *Batman* and *Head Over Heels*, Ritman and Drummond turned their attention to a sequel to *Match Day*. *Match Day II* displayed many improvements on the first game with additions such as the Diamond Deflection System with realistic ball ricochets. "[I] just wanted a better deflection system," explained Ritman. "I understood that soccer was about controlling the ball and the more ways I could provide that the better. It was hard to implement in the same way that all code is hard to implement. There were no instructions; I had to work it out."

Seven years after his last game release, Ritman and Drummond produced *Monster Max* for the Nintendo Game Boy. "The game was written on the dev kit I designed for Rare," recalls Ritman. "Rare were the producers, published via Titus and, for a reason that has never been explained to me, it was released 10 months after it was finished and the reviews had been released."

Ritman left Rare to launch his own company called Cranberry Source and went on to release *Super Match Soccer* for the PC and PlayStation, essentially a 3D multiplayer follow up to *Match Day II*. "[It] would have been called *Match Day 3*," explains Ritman, "but Ocean folded and Acclaim, who picked it up, decided to call it something else."

Quintessential Art of Destruction, a sci-fi shooter, quickly followed in the same year and was "a bit of variation" from previous games. Unfortunately, Cranberry Source was absorbed into Argonaut, and *Redemption*, an upcoming game, was cancelled.

Amstrad CPC softography

Batman (1986)

Head Over Heels (1987)

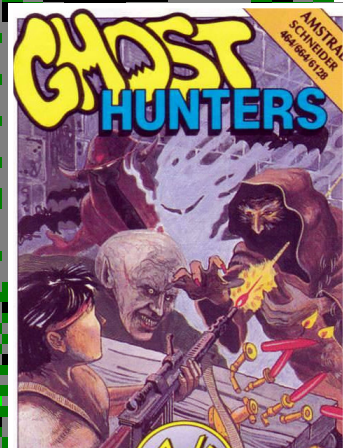
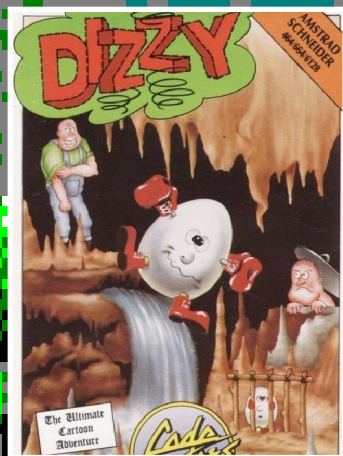
Match Day II (1988)



OLIVER TWINS



Philip Oliver, along with his brother Andrew, coded games as The Oliver Twins on many platforms, including the Amstrad CPC. Their most famous creation, Dizzy, was created on their Amstrad CPC664



The Oliver Twins' first computer was actually a BBC model B machine, which they programmed their first games on. "We developed Cavey and had problems finding a publisher," recalls Philip. "Frankly there were a lot of better games on the BBC model B. So we figured we should develop games for a "softer target". The Amstrad had come out, was doing well and had fewer games. So we used some of our earnings to buy an Amstrad CPC 664. The one with a Disc Drive — and we got the version with the colour monitor."

With their new Amstrad CPC664, the brothers developed a couple of educational programs before working on *Super Robin Hood*. It was with this game where the brothers began ramping their programming output. With only one computer between the two, one brother would be coding while the other would be writing code on paper or sleeping.

With the feedback and success of *Super Robin Hood*, the brothers moved on to their next game, *Ghost Hunters*. "So we figured we should make a game like [*Super Robin Hood*], but instead of a castle — we should do a game based in a haunted house. Something between, *Scooby Doo* & *Ghost Busters*. We felt the resolution of [*Super*] *Robin Hood* was too chunky (low res.) and we'd use the higher resolution of the Amstrad, which would also match the Spectrum resolution, making it easier to port."

Ghost Hunters has a unique control method where the player controls the character with the cursor keys and the weapon target sight with the joystick. "The Target shooting was inspired from the *Ghost Busters* proton guns," explains Oliver. "On reflection the sudden change of controls was difficult for players to get the hang of. The problem for game developers, is that you can often get too close to what you are developing and you can easily master whatever controls you put in. What we needed to do was to test on a few friends, and they would have identified the controls as an issue."

The brothers finished the game and ported it to the Spectrum using a custom devised cable. "The Spectrum was a much bigger market," states Oliver. "so we were keen to try and port the game over rather than leave it in the hands of someone else. The Darlings had sent us a Spectrum, so the next trick was how to program it. A chance conversation with a relative led to their relative who wanted in electronics, in Bath University I think, called David Jones (not the David Jones of DMA and *GTA* & *Lemmings* fame). We met with him to discuss if it was possible to hook a Spectrum to the Amstrad via a cable and he came up with the prototype SPLink cable and a very small program to run on the Spectrum which would put it into a

'receive data' state. Later we worked out how to create some code that would then trigger a save from the Spectrum to create the master cassette."

With Dizzy, the brothers kick started their most famous game series. *Dizzy* would take form as an arcade adventure game, but with the main character being a cartoon character in the shape of an egg. "Dizzy was a natural extension of *Super Robin Hood & Ghost Hunters*," says Oliver. "We loved cartoons and felt that we could create our own adventure in a fantasy world — like Middle Earth from *The Hobbit* or cartoons like *The Smurfs* or *Dungeons and Dragons*. We'd played lots of text based adventures like *Zork* on our friends Apple IIe and all the Acornsoft (*Countdown to Doom*, *Philosophers Quest* and *Sphinx Adventure*). An adventure meant finding items and taking them to places to open new areas. The most basic being a key and a door."

As with *Ghost Hunters*, the brothers converted the Amstrad CPC code over to the Spectrum with their SPLink. "All our early Code Masters games were developed on the Amstrad CPCs," states Oliver, "until we upgraded to PDS running on 8086 PCs with a whopping 20MB hard drive. We'd try to make games in about a month and then spend a few days converting to the Spectrum."

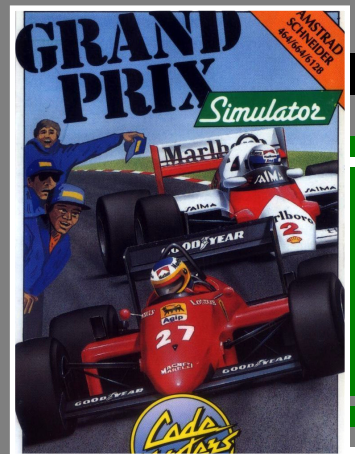
The brothers went from strength to strength with their games reaching seemingly new heights. Their most famous game, *Dizzy*, had received a sequel by the end of 1989: *Treasure Island Dizzy*.

It was in 1989 when they began working for other publishers. "We were contacted by Stefan Ufnowski (for whom we'd converted *Incredible Shrinking Sphere* for)," says Oliver. "He had a small company FoursField based locally. He'd managed to win the full contract to develop all versions of *Ghostbusters 2* for Activision. Steve and Colin were artist and programmer of the lead ST & Amiga versions, and we were commissioned to convert to Amstrad and Spectrum. So the actual art and design was lead by them. We did get to see a script and a few photos from the set (which didn't really help). The first part of the game was based on the sewer descent scene in the script."

The brothers would go on to produce one last Amstrad CPC game with the second *Dizzy* sequel, *Fantasy World Dizzy*, which is often considered the best in the series. With the *Dizzy* series handed over to a new development team, the brothers moved on to other platforms and different games. In their four years of programming on the Amstrad CPC, the brothers worked on no fewer than 20 games, many of which topped that software charts.

Amstrad CPC softography

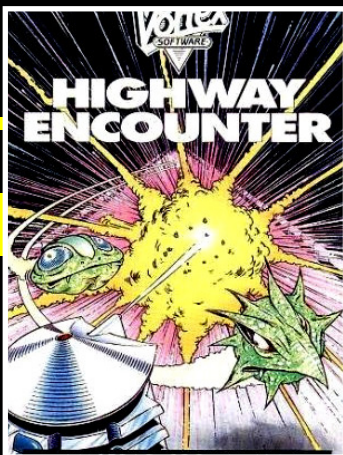
Freedom Fighter (1986)
Killapede (1986)
Super Robin Hood (1987)
Ghost Hunters (1987)
Grand Prix Simulator (1987)
Dizzy (1987)
Professional Ski Simulator (1988)
3D Starfighter (1988)
Jet Bike Simulator (1988)
Fruit Machine Simulator (1988)
The Race Against Time (1988)
Professional BMX Simulator (1988)
Advanced Pinball Simulator (1989)
Treasure Island Dizzy (1989)
Fast Food (1989)
Incredible Shrinking Sphere (1989)
BMX Simulator 2 (1989)
Grand Prix Simulator 2 (1989)
Operation Gunship (1989)
Championship Jetski Simulator (1989)
Ghostbusters II (1989)
Fantasy World Dizzy (1990)



MARK HAIGH-HUTCHISON



Mark Haigh-Hutchison was a programmer who worked with the likes of Vortex Software and Elite Systems



By the time Haigh-Hutchison acquired his first computer, a Sinclair ZX81 with 16k, he had already taught himself BASIC by studying books and producing programs on paper. With Haigh-Hutchison getting his hands on his own computer, he learnt Z80 machine code.

Mark's first effort at creating a game came with an arcade/adventure game based loosely based on the first Alien film. The game, written in BASIC and all in text, had the player moving around a spaceship trying to find the alien.

On visits to computer shows, Mark would often bump into Costa Panayi and Luke Andrews from Vortex Software. This was always a chance for Mark to show them what he was working on. Because Mark was studying at University in 1984, Luke was able to offer Mark a part-time position at Vortex to learn the Amstrad CPC and convert the company's Spectrum games to it. Mark jumped at the chance and within three months of his spare time, Android One was converted to the Amstrad CPC.

After leaving university in the summer of 1985, Mark went full-time at Vortex Software, and his first game to work on was converting *Highway Encounter* to the Amstrad CPC. He went on to convert other classic games to the CPC, including *Alien Highway* and *Revolution*.

Amstrad's version of *Paperboy* has a long story behind it. Following an unsuccessful attempt to bring *Paperboy* to the Amstrad by the team behind the Spectrum version, Mark was brought in by Elite

Systems to pick up the pieces. Rather than salvage what was there, it was decided to scrap the game and start again from scratch. With the help of Paul Walker on graphics, Mark completed the conversion in six months, right on deadline day. However, at the last minute, Mark noticed that all the 64k of memory was used up and there was no room for any sound, and no more time to fix it.

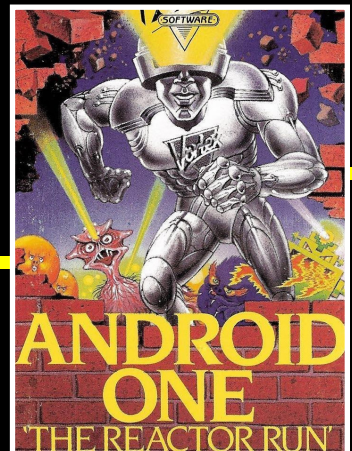
With the successful completion of *Paperboy*, Elite offered Mark the position of Senior Programmer, which he accepted. He worked on *Overlander* for Elite before leaving to join Tiertex in 1988. While he was at Tiertex, Haigh-Hutchison worked on *Thunder Blade*, *Indiana Jones and the Last Crusade Arcade Game*, and *Italy 1990* — his last 8-bit game.

Mark was offered a programming position in southern California during 1991, and he would eventually end up as Senior Programmer/Project Leader at LucasArts. While at LucasArts, Mark worked on games such as *Dark Forces*, *Sam 'n' Max*, *Zombies Ate My Neighbors*, and *Star Wars: Shadows of the Empire*. At the turn of the Millenium, Mark joined Retro Studios where he was senior engineer on the *Metroid Prime* series.

Sadly, Mark passed away in 2008, aged just 43-years-old. Mark had worked on some truly great games, but he himself felt that his best work was with *Star Wars: Shadows of the Empire*, and he was proud of *Paperboy* and *Highway Encounter*.

Amstrad CPC softography

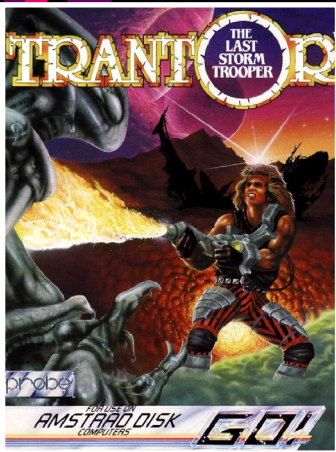
Android One (1985)
Highway Encounter (1985)
Alien Highway (1986)
Revolution (1986)
Paperboy (1987)
Overlander (1988)
Thunder Blade (1988)
Human Killing Machine (1988)
Indiana Jones and the Last Crusade
 – *The Action Game* (1989)
Italy 1990 (1990)



NICK BRUTY



Nick Bruty is known as one of the best graphic artists to have graced the CPC, and formed a fruitful partnership with programmer David Perry



Along with his friend, David Quinn, Bruty managed to get taken on by a development outfit in Brighton called Softstone. "My friend and future Speccy *Trantor* programmer had just landed a programmer position there," says Bruty. "I had helped him with some art for his demo and they were impressed.

However, not long after joining the development team, Softstone went bust, which led to an opportunity to head over to Probe Software. "David Quinn started working at Probe while developing *Trantor* with me in his spare time," recalls Bruty. "At Probe he was converting a horse racing game which had some rather poor artwork. He suggested to Fergus that I come in to help out and during that period Fergus got wind of *Trantor*. We showed him our demo and he was instantly sold on the game."

Trantor was a revelation, with its impressive visuals and presentation, the game received critical acclaim across the gaming press. "Initially the game was meant to be very simple," explains Bruty. "I had planned it as a budget game. Once the game was picked up by Probe Software the plan expanded. But memory was always the biggest hurdle. True to my word I had blown the memory on huge sprites and had to come up with simple devices to expand the game play without taking up resources."

With the Spectrum version of *Trantor* successfully completed, Probe wanted the game ported over to other platforms, including the Amstrad CPC. While Bruty would handle the graphics, and with David Perry brought in, a successful working partnership was born. "David had been working at Mikro-Gen which had just folded. We had an instant chemistry together. We both worked very fast and loved pushing the envelope. I think David is very visually based and was always looking to maximize whatever I could do. Some programmers can be closed off and only want to work a certain way but David would work to empower artists and designers. The fast scrolling was the first thing that surprised me and made me take note of David Perry when he started converting *Trantor*. I wasn't expecting too much when I went to see his first demo of the conversion. At first I was shocked by just how much of the game he had running in such a short time but to also have it run as fast or even faster than the Spectrum."

The game ends open ended with a promise of *Trantor II: Revenge of the Stormtrooper*. Unfortunately, a follow up to the game did not appear. "Everyone tends to view the game as a success but as far as I know the game didn't sell well enough to warrant a follow up," explains Bruty.

The partnership of Bruty and Perry kicked off in style with journalists and gamers alike were all looking forward to their next big project titled *Savage*. By now, Bruty and Perry worked on the Spectrum and Amstrad versions virtually side by side as they progressed through the development stages. "*Savage* started on the Spectrum," Bruty explains. "David and I typically led on the Spectrum but we got the conversion process down so well that often times we would work on both versions of a title at the same time to keep them in sync."

And with *Savage*, the duo proved to have another popular hit on their hands, so just how did the game come about? "You'll notice the first chapter of *Savage* is very *Trantor* like," points out Bruty. "That's because we were planning to make *Trantor 2* but when that didn't get picked up we evolved the game into *Savage*. The game was faster and more intense. While Dave Perry converted *Trantor* this was our first original title together and we were just having fun throwing a lot of concepts in there. As usual we were running out of memory but having so much fun we decided to just make it multiple loads just so we could try building out the other mechanics."

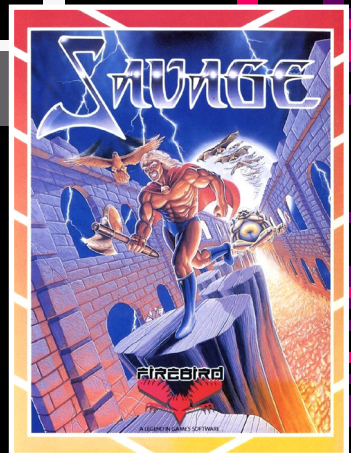
Bruty and Perry followed that up with *Dan Dare III* in 1990, while both *Teenage Mutant Hero Turtles* and *Extreme* arrived in 1991. However, it is arguably *Smash TV*, one of the most successful games on the CPC, that is their crowning achievement on the computer. "It came from Fergus McGovern at Probe Software. Probe handled most of the licensed work for various publishers." But did the guys have access to the actual arcade machine itself? "Not as much as I would have liked," acknowledges Bruty. "Often the arcades boards were built into a portable case you can take home but this time it was the huge heavy arcade machine which stayed at the Probe office in Croydon. We made a trip to the office to play as much as we could in one day."

Upon the game's release it received a fantastic amount of praise, for its bright and colourful visuals, as well as its super fast sprites. "It was a very smooth production," admits Bruty. "David's game engine was very polished by then and we knew how we were going to approach it. The whole development was done in around one month."

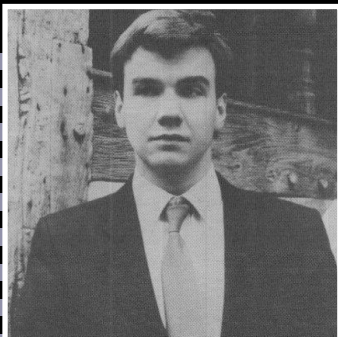
With success came even more success as Perry and Bruty both began working on the hugely popular 16-bit consoles from Sega and Nintendo, producing the likes of *The Terminator*, *Aladdin*, and *The Jungle Book*. By now, they had both left the UK to work in North America, founding Shiny Entertainment with David. As Art Director, Bruty oversaw projects such as the *Earthworm Jim* series and had a huge success with *MDK*.

Amstrad CPC softography

Quartet (1987)
Trantor (1987)
Rygar (1988)
Demon's Revenge (1988)
Savage (1988)
Dan Dare III (1990)
Teenage Mutant Hero Turtles (1991)
Extreme (1991)
Smash TV (1991)
Paperboy 2 (1992)
Captain Planet and the Planetes (1992)



IAN ANDREW



Ian Andrew (programmer, producer and designer) founded Incentive Software and was part of the development team that produced the ground breaking Freescape games: *Driller*, *Total Eclipse*, and *Castle Master*.



Even before home computers took off, Ian Andrew had always had an interest in games with the likes of mazes and wooden pinball. This interest in games would naturally progress onto home computers. "I saw an advert in the *Daily Mail* for a ZX81 for £69.95 I think it was," explains Ian Andrew. "Bought it then taught myself BASIC and made a snake game and other basic play things."

With the success of *Mined-Out* on the ZX Spectrum, BBC Micro, Electron and Dragon series, Ian was able to set up his own software publishing house in 1983. "Incentive started with *Splat!*" says Ian. "I jointly wrote the game with a machine code programmer [Paul Shirley], then I launched the company with it. The company was called Incentive as the game had an extra incentive to play it — A high score prize of £500 for the top scoring player by a certain date."

With Incentive fully set up, further games appeared on the Amstrad CPC, including *Confusion* by Paul Shirley and *The Graphic Adventure Creator* program. Ian also turned his hand to producing games during this time, but it was in 1987 when the company shifted direction. "When console and handheld games started becoming popular, I saw that we had a choice," explains Ian. "Either we went headfirst into developing for these proprietary machines or we had to do something that stood out on the 'open' platforms. 'Open' meaning we were not at the mercy of a third party regarding the publishing of games. I choose the 'open' route. The 'stand out' feature was what we called 'solid 3D'. Wire frame 3D games were about, but no one was filling in the wires!"

"I asked my brother Chris to join the business to do the design and coding," adds Ian. "He said it could be done when others said it could not! Chris is an amazing programmer that did magic with assembler which made it happen. The name Major Developments was a way of distinguishing the publishing label — Incentive from the Programming team."

While there have been some discussion on the Amstrad CPC being the lead computer during development of *Driller*, Ian explains the reasons behind their choice. "The CPC had 128K of memory and a disc drive which made development easier," says Ian. "However we did secure a big deal with Book Club Associates — called the Home

Computer Club — and we had to have those three formats ready at the same time. Spectrum, CPC and C64.”

When *Driller* was released, the game package was a lavish affair loaded with extras. “I think we added all the packaging to provide extra value and experience for the gamer,” states Ian. “It was £14.95 when the average price of a game was around £6.95 (cassette). So as well as the game you got a folding map, a story, a poster in some versions and a big colour box.”

With the release of *Dark Side* in 1988, the team would revisit the *Driller* universe set centuries after the events of the first game. “A follow up with more features and a little more optimisation,” as Ian describes it. In the same year, *Total Eclipse* was released and while *Dark Side* was set in the same universe as *Driller*, the new game’s plot and setting couldn’t be any more different. “Yes, we felt the need [for change],” admits Ian. “I didn’t want it to get boring — I think if we had done another space version it may have been criticised as such.” And not only is the game different in its setting, it was the biggest and fastest Freescape game yet.

Total Eclipse II: The Sphinx Jinx was released in 1989 alongside a re-packaged version of the original *Total Eclipse* game. “This actually was a commercial decision as The Home Computer Club who had really supported us and the Freescape series asked for some extra value in their version in exchange for a big order! So we gave them a complete extra game.”

Castle Master arrived in 1990, again with a new plot and setting, and with the release of *Castle Master II: The Crypt* the following year, the Freescape engine was used for the last time, bringing the series to a natural end. “And also we wanted to make the tool available for everyone to use,” adds Ian, “so we followed it up with the *3D Construction Kit*.”

All the Freescape games received universal praise from magazine reviewers at the time and received many awards and accolades in the process. “It was fantastic,” says Ian about the response. “Still make the hairs on my neck stand up thinking about it. Amazing response and recognition, such a buzz for all of us.”

Amstrad CPC softography (programmer):

Splat! (1985)

Driller (1987)

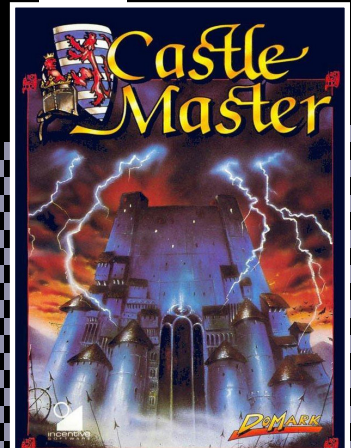
Dark Side (1988)

Total Eclipse (1988)

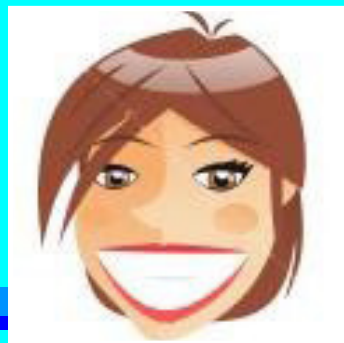
Total Eclipse II: The Sphinx Jinx (1989)

Castle Master (1990)

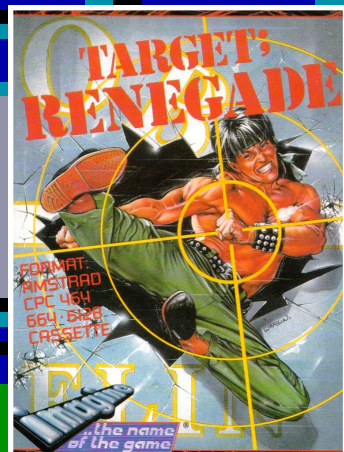
Castle Master II: The Crypt (1991)



DAWN HOLLYWOOD



Dawn Hollywood (known as Dawn Drake) worked as a graphic artist, and was known for working on Ocean Software games such as *RoboCop*, *Target; Renegade*, and *Batman (The Movie)*.



Dawn was originally a graphic designer who had went for a job interview as board game artist and somehow ended up as a computer game artist. "Shock horror, I didn't own a computer as I basically lived at work and was out partying the rest of the time," reveals Dawn. "I started work in the mid 1980s at Canvas Software in Crosby. I had the pleasure to work with late Ian Weatherburn, Steve Cain, Martin Holland, Paul Clancy, Paul Hobart, Chris Pink, the entertaining Calvert brothers and Simon Butler to name but a few."

While at Canvas Software, Dawn worked on titles such as *Miami Vice* and *Airborne Ranger*, but when the company began slowly winding down, the need to look elsewhere for a job became more paramount. "I managed to get an interview at Ocean Software and was lucky to be accepted," recalls Dawn. "Canvas Software had done some games for Ocean (and US Gold) previously and I had already met Gary Bracey and Steve Lavache anyway on their many visits to Canvas. As Ocean was the biggest name in the industry and here in the North West region, it was an obvious choice."

Dawn's first job as an employee of Ocean Software was to work on *Target; Renegade*, a sequel to the popular *Renegade*. "*Target; Renegade* had already started with Mike Lamb as programmer and an artist called Ronnie [Fowles]." remembers Dawn. "Ronnie left and as I had just been employed by Ocean (early 1988), I was partnered with Mike Lamb to jump in and take over. I enjoyed working on this game and it appeared to get some good reviews at the time."

One of the most unexpected hits of the year followed as Dawn went to work on *RoboCop*, both the Spectrum and Amstrad CPC versions. "I was very excited to work on the *RoboCop* film tie-in," enthuses Dawn. "Although there were the usual hurdles to get over at the start of the work, basically we watched the film and had photographic stills (eventually) for referencing. I can't remember there being a brief, but

we took from the film scenes that we thought would be good for game play and translated these into sections in the game."

Another film tie-in followed in 1989, this time with *Batman (The Movie)*. "Mike [Lamb] and I were flown to New York to watch the film, make notes to incorporate certain scenes into game play and to gather competition prizes," says Dawn. "The work for this was more of a rush job due to the film being released recently and needing to try and merge with the frenzy of advertising and merchandising around the hype of the film."

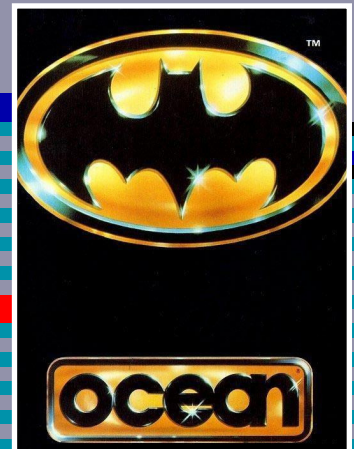
The 8-bit computer games are well known for their loading screens and Dawn's visual input on them were no exception. "I think we may have used Bob Wakelin's drawing for reference," explains Dawn. "I did enjoy doing the title screen for *Target; Renegade* — a bit of 'Bruce Lee' type action! For *Batman [The Movie]*, photographic material was available. If in any doubt about graphic content I would discuss with Simon Butler, my mentor and friend."

With *Batman* completed, Dawn would move on to work on the emerging games consoles. Games worked on during this time included the Game Boy version of *Darkman* in 1992, *The Untouchables* for the SNES in 1994 and the Game Boy version of *Desert Strike* in 1995.

And while Dawn moved on to other games and other systems, the 8-bit version of *RoboCop* was still flying high in the software charts, even getting a re-release barely months after it fell out of the top 20. "I was very excited that the game for both versions did very well," says Dawn. "I can't thank the loyal gamers enough for loving it and keeping it there. I was extremely pleased that *RoboCop* went onto being no. 1 for 18 weeks. I wish there had been the likes of BAFTA awards for games back then as I personally never even received an award or certificate, so have nothing to show that I had worked on a successful game."

Amstrad CPC softography

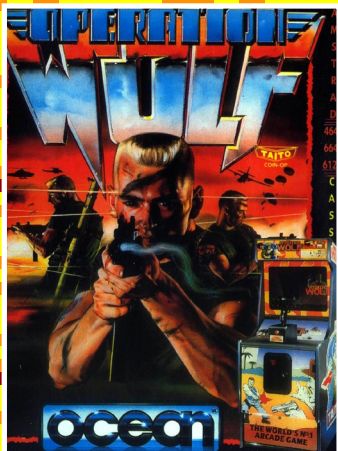
Miami Vice (1986)
Killed Until Dead (1987)
Leaderboard Tournament (1987)
Airborne Ranger (1988)
Target; Renegade (1988)
Daley Thompson's Olympic Challenge (1988)
RoboCop (1989)
Batman (The Movie) (1989)



IVAN HORN



Ivan Horn worked a graphic artist at Ocean Software during the height of the 8-bit computer reign. Along with his coding partner, Andrew Deakin, they developed some of the finest Amstrad CPC games...



"I lived in Devon and met Andrew Deakin at school in the late 1970s," recalls Ivan. "We became friends there and the interest that we had at playing games, both on our Spectrums, but also in the arcades. After spending a couple of years just playing games, we decided to have a go at writing our own. This started with buying a software package called White Lightning which was a tool that allowed you to write the game code in Forth, from which various assembler routines could be called as well as a simple graphics editor."

"As for my role on the graphics side of things, I had no art background and did nothing beyond the compulsory art lessons at school, but I did like to scribble the occasional (pretty bad) drawing. But as Andrew had his two or three months on at Bristol Poly, it made sense that he would do the coding from then on."

"In our first couple of years in the business, we wrote three games and made a start on a fourth. We were living with our parents at the time, which made living pretty cheap, so the little money we made out of those early games mostly went into buying equipments and games. Both of the games we made were published on budget labels, one on Firebird and the other by Mastertronic."

By 1987, the guys began contacting the major software developers for any potential positions. "We had come back on the train from an interview with Gremlin Graphics," says Ivan. "We weren't offered jobs, but they were interested in the game we had in development and we found we had a letter waiting from Ocean, to whom we'd applied a couple of weeks earlier. Some days later we went for an interview at Ocean's office in Manchester, where we showed them the game we had been working on, which they liked, but weren't interested in publishing, but they did offer us both jobs that day. Within a couple of weeks, we moved to Manchester, to begin working in Ocean's 'crypt'." During that first year Ivan helped out on *Combat School*, before working on *Arkanoid 2: Revenge of Doh* and *The Vindicator*, but arguably, their biggest hit was just around the corner.

Operation Wolf was a hugely popular arcade game that popularized the gun mounted cabinet genre and the duo were given the task of converting it to the Amstrad CPC and Spectrum. "Development worked out pretty well," states Ivan, "better than expected in fact as we were expected to take until around August converting the game, but we done by early May on both Spectrum and Amstrad. This gave Ocean the opportunity to promote the game from an earlier time than expected, so probably contributed to its success."

"As for all arcade conversions that Ocean did we had the game setup

in our arcade room. This didn't contain arcade cabinets, but instead the guts of the machines (PCB, display and controls). As I did with any arcade conversion I worked on, I played through the game, end to end and recorded it on a video camera on a tripod behind me, so that we had good reference in terms of both visuals and game play of the whole game."

Renegade III is often considered a disappointment, especially following its predecessors, *Renegade* and *Target*; *Renegade*, and Ivan has similar feelings. "I think that *Renegade III* was a sequel too far really. There wasn't a strong theme for the game, so someone, can't remember who, came up with the 'fighting through time' idea which might have been okay, but neither Andrew or I had a lot of enthusiasm for it, so the game was a bit lame."

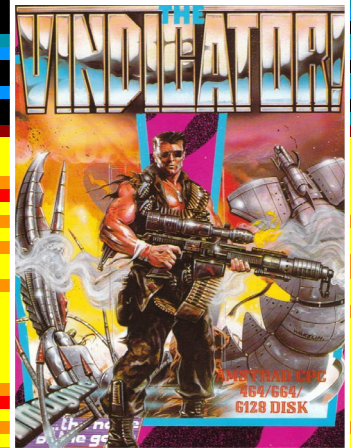
While Ivan worked on the Spectrum version of the film tie-in, *RoboCop 2*, it was arguably the Amstrad Plus/GX4000 cartridge version that gained the plaudits for its 16-bit style gameplay and visuals. "The plan was originally that Andrew Deakin and I would make the Spectrum, GX4000 and Amiga/ST version," remembers Ivan. "As neither of us had any experience of 16-bit machines, it ended up being too much of a stretch for us to do all of them in the time allocated (about 10 months), especially with the Amstrad [plus] being a new machine. However the capabilities of the [new] Amstrad were quite a lot higher than those of the CPC, so it felt more like working on the ST/Amiga than the CPC/Spectrum."

As great as *RoboCop 2* looked and played, it is also considered one of the most difficult games on the Amstrad computers. "I think that might have been the result of the battle of wills between Andrew Deakin and Ocean's test department to see who would blink first," explains Ivan. "Andrew always liked games to be on the hard side to say the least, so our games tended to reflect that."

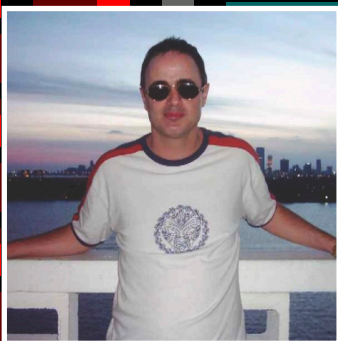
They were then given the task to convert the arcade game *Operation Thunderbolt* to the Amstrad and Spectrum and worked on two Arnold Schwarzenegger hit movie tie-ins *Total Recall* and *Terminator 2: Judgement Day*. The last Amstrad CPC game Ivan worked on turned out to be the film licence of *The Addams Family* in 1992. "I vaguely remember the game being over and done with quite quickly," says Ivan, "as it was to be our last Spectrum/Amstrad game and we were eager to move onto new things, especially as James Higgins and Warren Derbyshire were working on the SNES version at the time (Ocean's first experience with the new console) and it was looking so nice in comparison with what we were doing."

Amstrad CPC softography

Arkanoïd 2: Revenge of Doh (1988)
The Vindicator (1988)
Operation Wolf (1988)
Rambo III (1989)
Renegade III (1989)
Operation Thunderbolt (1990)
RoboCop 2 (1990)
Total Recall (1991)
Terminator 2: Judgement Day (1991)
The Addams Family (1992)



MIKE LAMB



Mike Lamb was a programmer who worked on games that were both a critical and commercial success. Indeed, Mike was involved with a game that spent more time in the United Kingdom Gallup software charts than any other title



Mike's interest in computers began back in the summer of 1980. He had started to program BASIC on a Commodore PET at a university where his father was a lecturer. It was also during this time that his coding skills were honed on the school's computer, also a PET.

When his friend's brother, who also had some games published through Artic Computing, got hold of a ZX Spectrum, Mike felt he had to get a piece of the action. After ordering a Spectrum for himself, Mike produced his first game titled *Spectrum Pool*, which was published by CDS Software. This was followed up by *Steve Davis Snooker*, which was also ported to other Z80 based computers, including the Amstrad CPC.

However, Mike wanted to be part of a publishing team as he was felt that he was "getting a bit bored" working on his own all the time, so this led him to apply for a position at Ocean Software. "Ocean had got some great licences," stated Mike, "but the quality of the games wasn't really that good. They brought Gary Bracey in to turn things around. He hired quite a few developers."

Having been thrown into *Top Gun* and with a release deadline for Christmas 1986, Mike has admitted that it wasn't a great start to his career at Ocean. However, the game sold well and he was able to start work on his next project, converting the arcade game *Arkanoid* to the Spectrum. This was followed by *Renegade* (ZX) on the Imagine Software label and *Combat School* (both ZX and CPC).

During 1988, Mike was getting used to working on both Spectrum and Amstrad CPC versions of games. "We were keen to do both SKUs since we got two bonuses," admits Mike. "It was obviously helpful to have the same processor. I'd guess it was only about halve as much work to port it over." Mike also enjoyed success on the Spectrum with his work on *Arkanoid: Revenge of Doh* and *WEC Le Mans*.

Target; Renegade (ZX & CPC), again on the Imagine label, came about because "Ocean wanted to get the license to Taito's sequel *Double Dragon*," explains Mike. "I believe Melbourne House outbid them but Ocean and Gary Bracey worked out a deal to do a sequel

to *Renegade*. To be honest, it wasn't that far different from *Double Dragon* in terms of gameplay, but we were able to do some different stuff. I liked the dogs attacking you in the park and the telephone tag idea from *Dirty Harry*."

Mike then started to work on *RoboCop*, again working on both the Spectrum and Amstrad CPC versions. "We were able to see *RoboCop* in the cinema because the game was timed for the video-release," says Mike. "I believe we had a script before then. Data East had an arcade game that we saw as it was being developed. Simon Butler came up with the photofit matching sub-game and we ripped off *Operation Wolf*." Regardless of how the game came together, it was one of the greatest selling 8-bit computer games of all time, topping software charts around the world. "I think Ocean expected *Operation Wolf* to be the Christmas number one," Mike admits, "but *RoboCop* got there instead. We were chuffed."

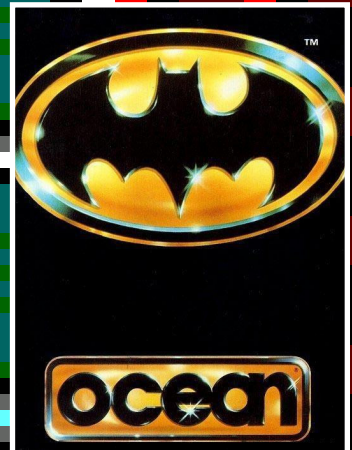
From one movie license to another as Mike's next project was *Batman [The Movie]*. "We went to Pinewood studios to look at the sets and get source photographs," states Mike. "We also had the script. The movie came out in the US before the UK. The only way we could see it was to fly to New York which Ocean did." Receiving critical praise from the gaming press and topping the software charts, *Batman* proved to be a fitting swansong to Mike's 8-bit computing career.

Mike would eventually leave the UK in 1991 to head over to the States to help found Left Field Productions along with Jeff Godfrey (Cinemaware) and fellow Ocean colleague John Brandwood. It was during this time that the company released games such as the *Slam 'n' Jam* series, *Excitebike 64*, *NBA Courtside* series, and more.

With both *Target; Renegade* and *RoboCop* having been reworked or remade over the intertwining years, it would be interesting if Mike would ever consider reworking any of his own games. "I probably wouldn't bother with most of my games," states Mike rather modestly. "I wouldn't mind redoing *Top Gun* since the 3D had potential but didn't turn out that well because we had to rush it out for Christmas."

Amstrad CPC softography

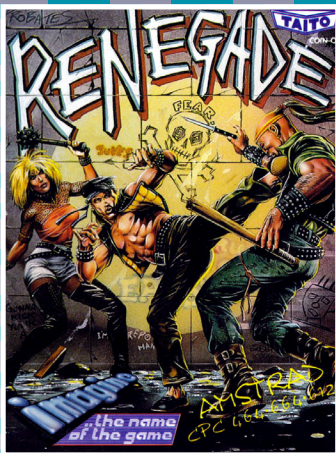
Steve Davis Snooker (1985)
Pool (1986)
Top Gun (1986)
Combat School (1987)
WEC Le Mans (1988)
Target; Renegade (1988)
RoboCop (1989)
Batman (1989)



MARK K JONES



Mark K Jones — not to be confused with Mark R Jones — is a graphic artist who worked at Ocean Software in the late 1980s. It was here where he worked on arguably two of the finest games to grace the Amstrad CPC machine...



Mark K Jones became interested in designing graphics not long after getting into computers when he was around 12 years old. However, he was not very impressed with the graphics on display in his VIC 20 games. "I started designing my own (on graph paper)," recalls Jones. "and later would redesign the ASCII characters to form the graphics I wanted. Lots of grids and inputting of numbers. After moving to the Amstrad, graphics became easier and I was able to draw directly on screen. Using the cursor keys."

With Art college not appealing to the 18 year old Jones — they did not run any 'computer graphics' courses after all — he started putting together a portfolio of his design work to send around to magazines and software companies. "Back then there was no official training for computer game careers," says Jones, so advice from *Amstrad Action* and a competition win in *Amtix!* was welcomed. "I liked Ocean games, so I wanted to work there," admits Jones, "Ocean was the first to offer me a position. Seems so simple now (laughs)."

The arcade hit, *Renegade*, was acquired by Ocean Software for the home computer conversions and Jones was teamed up with one of Ocean's finest programmers in the form of John Brandwood. To help with producing the games, Ocean often had the arcade game at hand. "Ocean had an 'arcade alley' where all the games that were were 'converting' were housed," states Jones. "My little corner of the dungeon was just outside the door. We simply played the games, and videoed that. We would borrow the video player and set that up next to our desks and I would watch those tapes for hours, then try to recreate the graphics on the Amstrad, one pixel at a time."

Renegade on the Amstrad was a huge hit and was well received by critics and gamers alike. However, some eagle eyed gamers noticed that there was a change in the game. The first version of the game, which was the one reviewed in the magazines, featured red blood when a game character was knocked out on the ground. The blood was changed to blue for the commercial release. "We liked to add in things," explains Jones. "The blood was one of those things. But very close to the release of the game the Hungerford shootings happened. A massacre. Awful. Evil thing. Computer games (like comics and rock n' roll before) were being blamed for the 'escalating' violence in society, so we changed the blood to blue."

The game also contained a unique combination of joystick and

keyboards commands to pull off all the various moves. "John had a very good handle of how a game felt," says Jones. "That was one of his choices."

Gryzor was another successful conversion from its arcade parent with varied gameplay and fast action. And just like *Renegade*, Jones spent hours playing the arcade machine, recording the footage and watching it back again and again, trying to recreate the same feel on the CPC.

While the full arcade version of *Gryzor* features cooperative two player action, Jones feels that this may not have been a good idea on the CPC. "Bill and Lance?" asks Jones rhetorically. "It would have been nice, but I think John was pushing the Amstrad quite a bit, and perhaps two player may have slowed it down just too much."

As anyone who has completed *Gryzor* will attest to, the game's ending is quite memorable and unexpected. "John liked that," says Jones. "He thought it was very funny. All that work. Beating the game. All for nought! This was the 1980s. We were reading Alan Moore's *Watchmen* series. It was Manchester. It was pretty dark.

The 8-bit computer scene would become associated with the iconic loading screens full of pixel art filling the screen and both *Renegade* and *Gryzor* have fantastic screens. "I loved working on loading screens," enthuses Jones. "It was just art. No limitations for game space, just pure artwork. Of course I used the game covers as inspiration, but I added my own stuff. The graffiti on the *Renegade* one was fun! Spot the references if you can!"

Mark would leave Ocean Software in 1988 to go freelance. Something that he had always wanted to do. One of the games he worked for was an outsource project for Ocean: the troublesome *Total Recall* game. He would then work on some games for Hewson Consultant, including *Stormlord* on the Amiga and Atari ST. High end artwork on the PC would be calling soon after though.

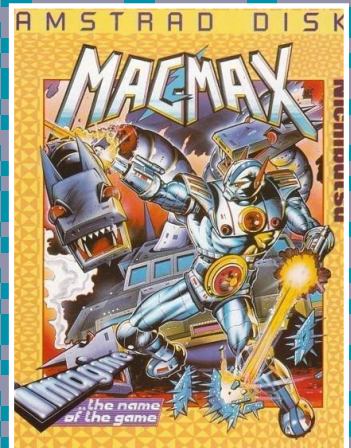
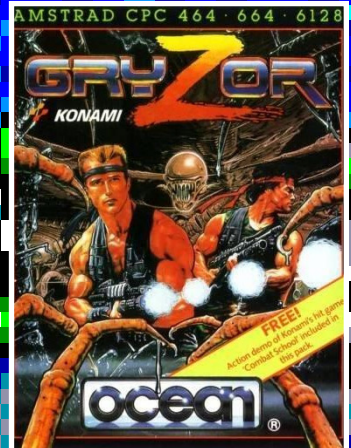
Looking back, *Renegade* and *Gryzor* are two games that CPC gamers always bring up in conversations of greatest games ever. Having received great reviews and coverage in magazines since has helped keep the memories alive. "The reviews and feedback were the best," says Jones. "You never knew how things would be received. Working inside a bubble. I remember when *Gryzor* got a BIG write in *Amstrad Magazine*. I still have those reviews!"

Amstrad CPC softography

Mag Max (1986)

Renegade (1987)

Gryzor (1987)



JAMES HIGGINS



James Higgins is a programmer who is known for working at Ocean Software during the mid to late 1980s. He had worked on both the CPC and Plus range of machines, producing some of the finest games to grace the two ranges

PLUS · 6128 PLUS · GX



James Higgins got into computer games as a 14-year-old after managing to raise the cash to get himself a ZX81 computer. Despite not being able to purchase many games at the time, James was able to read the likes of Your Computer which had many listings that the reader could type out and run as a program or game. "I spent hours typing hex digits into hex editors waiting for the spectacular game that was promised," says James. "Unfortunately — they rarely worked. Sometimes just flat out doing nothing or crashing after a few stutters."

After understanding enough of BASIC, James was able to move onto a Dragon 32, thanks to a Christmas present and subsequently learned to program in assembly language with the machine's 6809 processor. An early Dragon game was programmed during this time, called *Jumbo's Troubles*, "a poor clone of Namco's Mappy," admits James. It was the next Christmas when James was given an Amstrad CPC 464. "After figuring out 6809 it was fairly easy to move to Z80. I started work on a rip-off of *Sorcery* called *The Apprentice*."

After finishing school, James was at a crossroads: job or college. "I saw Ocean had a job ad in one of the magazines at the time and called up," recalls James. "Spoke to Gary — told him that I could program Amstrad and also code the 6809 processor. As luck would have it they had a need for someone to work on the Thomson M05/T07-70 and T09 so off I went down to Manchester to port *Green Beret* to the M05. Eventually to the T07-70 and T09." Further Thomson conversions of *Arkanoid*, *Yie Ar Kung Fu II*, and *Game Over* parts 1 & 2 would appear courtesy of James, while working as freelance for Ocean Software.

James then worked on his first Amstrad title for Ocean: *Combat School*. "I was really up against it on that one and Mike Lamb (who did the spectrum version) helped out with the final mission. His contribution was a timely lesson in how much I still had to learn."

The following year of 1988 was a busy year for James, working on no less than four titles. "*Arkanoid 2* — my first project as an employee. I started work on this with the very talented Ivan Horn. He'd actually done most of the art/screen layout before I started as I believe Mike (Lamb) was originally going to do it."

"*Daley Thomson's Olympic Challenge* was a troubled project," continues James. "I think I was asked to step in and help with it. The original programmer just didn't seem to be getting it done. I think it was his first time away from home and on his first day in Manchester his flat was broken into. Probably never really settled."

"*The Vindicator* — a fairly troubled project," adds James. "I think my

version went about the smoothest. Or at least I had the least number of run-ins with Simon. Main memory of this one was the 3D maze section. I'd written some code that used a simple map to generate each view programmatically but the C64 programmer had Simon laying out a character mapped screen for each step in the corridor and for each viewpoint. A painful process. With the benefit of hindsight I think he might have been inflicting a cruel and unusual punishment on Simon."

Bad Dudes vs. Dragon Ninja featured some scrolling, which the Amstrad is not supposed to be able to do. "I don't think the scrolling was especially smooth to be honest," admits James. "Basically — made the screen small enough and drew just enough to keep the framerate acceptable. Nothing special there at all. I think I had some cheesy big sprite code in there that faked huge objects moving around on Map Tile boundaries."

A film tie-in of *The Untouchables* was next up and appeared on the Amstrad in 1989. "Again working with Martin MacDonald," recalls James. "He was much more at home with a monochromatic palette so four colour mode it was. My main memory of this was that it seemed to take forever — felt like it took a whole year but maybe not. Spent most of that time worried it was taking too long and we'd all be fired. There wasn't a lot of communication in those days about production. It really was incredibly ad-hoc."

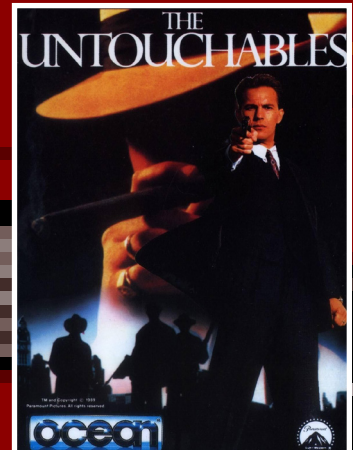
Navy SEALs was one of the few decent games to appear on the ill-fated GX4000 games console. "I enjoyed working on the GX4000 version as it actually had some decent capabilities, nice hardware sprites; smooth scrolling; large palette. That said it was still a huge challenge scrolling that screen around but managed to pull it off. We pretty much utilized every hardware feature it had on offer. Hardware sprites; Scrolling; Extended screen space; extended palettes. Ran at 60fps."

There have been unconfirmed rumours that the GX4000 cartridge version of *Navy SEALs* were initially manufactured in the wrong size plastic casing. "This is partially true," states James, "but not in the case of the GX 4000. The C64 carts were designed wrong and didn't fit into the slot on the C64. These were all notched to fit at the Central Street offices and re-packaged."

Many Ocean games, *Navy SEALs* included, were known as being notoriously difficult and James admits that that was down to the team being "lousy" at play-balancing. "Basically we'd all gotten so good at playing it was hard to balance for a new user."

Amstrad CPC softography

The Apprentice (1986)
Combat School (1987)
Arkanoïd: Revenge of Doh (1988)
Daley Thompson's Olympic Challenge (1988)
The Vindicator (1988)
Bad Dudes vs. Dragon Ninja (1988)
The Untouchables (1989)
Navy SEALs (1990)



RICHARD APLIN



Richard Aplin is a programmer best known for converting arcade classics onto home computers, with his finest achievement on the Amstrad CPC arguably being *Shinobi*.



Richard's first use of a computer was on a holiday trip to the US where he used a Commodore PET. So impressed with the basic programming capabilities, he soon used his friend's BBC back home and learned BASIC programming.

With the acquirement of a Newbrain (an old Z80 micro), Richard got to grips with Z80 programming language, and was able to write a Space Invaders clone.

A BBC company called Micro Power offered Richard one of the first Amstrad CPC464 computers in return for programming a game for them. With the firmware manual, a "great" and "open and easy to use" operating system at his disposal, Richard got stuck into his first CPC game.

That game was *Fly Spy* and it took Richard just under a year to complete. He was still at school after all, and it was a solo project. Fortunately, a floppy disk drive gained half way through production helped to speed things up.

After Micro Power pulled out of the games market, Richard sent the game to Mastertronic who quickly published the game in exchange for an advance payment and a share of the sales. Further freelance work for Mastertronic included tape mastering while finishing his O Levels at school. When he turned 17-years-old, Richard was offered an in-house position at Mastertronic.

Mastertronic had managed to buy out the publishing house Melbourne House, who had the license for the arcade classic *Double Dragon*. Binary Design was the development company who were working on the home computer versions. After the Amiga programmer left the job, Richard was sent in to finish the job. With the Amiga version completed in time for the important Christmas sales period, Binary Design offered Richard the role of manager at their new development office in Bristol.

The first project for the new development team was converting *Shinobi* for The Sales Curve. After the Amstrad CPC programmer left

after a difference of how the game should be programmed, Richard stepped in and rewrote the game from scratch.

There were never any help from the PCB companies like Sega, so the only sources to work from were a whole arcade cabinet or a bare PCB. Richard recognises that the CPC version of *Shinobi* is one of his more popular games. It was the most popular arcade cabinet in the office when he worked on it.

Richard went straight into converting the two *Double Dragon* games onto the Atari ST, Amiga, and Amstrad CPC. By now, Richard had produced a sprite routine into his *Double Dragon* games, which allowed for large sprites to move fast while taking up less memory. The same routine was used by other programmers for use with the likes of *Final Fight* and *E-SWAT*.

The Amiga version of *Double Dragon* is infamous for its difference to its arcade parent, but Richard explained that this was due to the strict deadline and ultimatum set to the team that they must finish the game on time or be fired.

After a few changes of offices, Richard worked on the Amiga and Atari ST versions of *Line of Fire*, and did the Amiga/ST versions of *Final Fight*.

People may wonder why publishers went after arcade licenses so often, but as Richard has explained, the most obvious reason was that the games were well known in the arcades and would likely sell. The publishers were in the games industry to make money first and foremost after all.

With the Sega Mega Drive turning people's heads towards 16-bit console gaming, Richard managed to reverse engineer the machine as a bit of a hobby. He took his findings to Codemasters who offered him a freelance contract on their Game Genie console cheat device. He would go on to work for Codemasters on the Game Genie versions for the Game Boy, Super Nintendo, Game Gear, and Mega Drive.

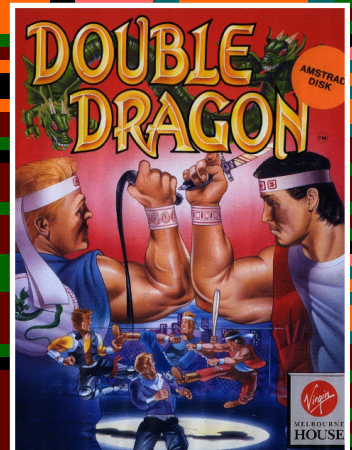
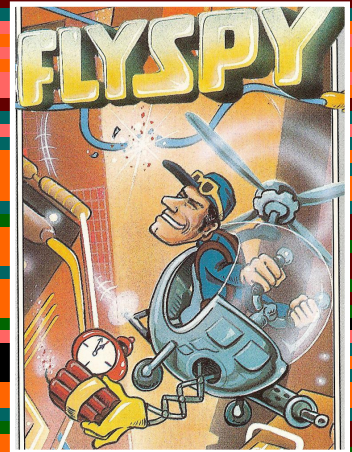
Amstrad CPC softography

Fly Spy (1986)

Double Dragon (1988)

Double Dragon 2 (1989)

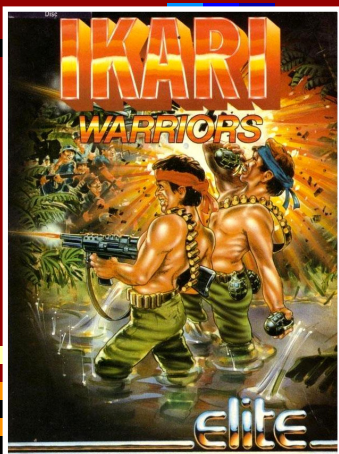
Shinobi (1989)



DAVID SHEA



David Shea is a programmer who had worked on many games for the likes of Elite Systems and Probe Software...



David Shea first got into computing while he was at school. "I was into electronics," explains David, "and it was about the time the first build it yourself computers started coming out. The school eventually got an RML380Z computer that me and a few of my friends started hogging, and learning Basic by writing adventure games. I was at that time spending plenty of time in the local arcades too, and the desire to write games like I saw in the arcades was strong. When I was about 16 I managed to buy a ZX81, and taught myself Z80 assembler."

One of David's earlier games was *Frenzy*. This was "a copy of a game I enjoyed playing in the arcades, *Bezerk*," admits David. "I wrote it for my own amusement and to improve my assembler skills. I saw an advert by Quicksilver when I was 16, basically it was send us your game and make money. So I did. They liked it, and suggested a heap of changes to avoid copyright problems and bring it up to scratch as a completed game. Once done they published it!"

The chance of working with Elite came around for David. "From what I remember, Elite were looking for programmers, so I went up to see them," says David. "They had *Ikari Warriors*, and needed it on the Amstrad. I'd only done Spectrum stuff at that point, but told them I could do it — and returned home, on the way buying my first Amstrad CPC and a book about it. So yeah, it was my first CPC experience."

For development of the game, David devised his own method of coding the game. "By then I was using a CPM machine to edit and build the game, and squirt it down a serial cable to my Spectrum. It was easy for me to take most of my library code on the Spectrum and get it going on the Amstrad pretty quickly. The majority of the game came together over about five weeks, helped by the fact all I did was work while I was there (there wasn't much else to do.)

The Spectrum version of *Ikari* faced a troublesome development and was eventually converted by David using his own Amstrad CPC code. "There were several people that had a go doing the Spectrum

version — including Dave Perry — but none seemed up to scratch, and were never completed,” recalls David. “I was snowed in at my parents house at Christmas, and tinkered with the Amstrad version — I basically took all the Amstrad code, substituted my Spectrum libraries for the Amstrad ones, and took all the colour graphics and grey-scaled them — and it ran. Pretty basic, but it was enough for *Elite* to give me the job of finishing it. The thing that worked for me was keeping the scrolling window the same as the Amstrad, rather than trying to make it full screen, which gave me extra cycles to run the rest of the game.”

With the Spectrum conversion completed, *Victory Road*, the follow up to *Ikari Warriors*, was released soon after. “Ocean came to me with *Victory Road*,” remembers David. “Gary Bracy gave me a briefcase containing the arcade board (just plug it into a TV for the full arcade experience), and a cheque. I liked Ocean that day.”

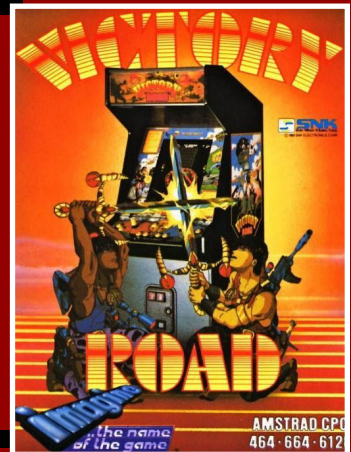
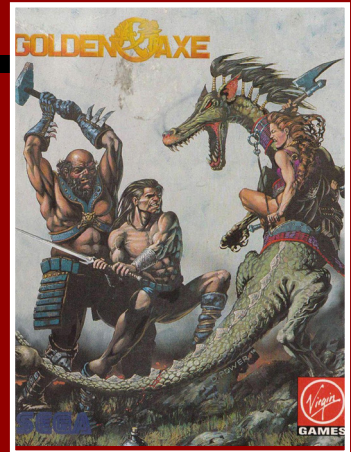
However, development of the sequel did not go as smoothly as expected. “The sequel was a painful experience,” recalls David. “*Victory Road* was technically more advanced, with many more gameplay elements, and I had trouble reproducing many of them. I was also at uni by now, and so ended up not devoting all my time to the game, and missed milestones. I’m not sure the game even got a full release (I never got retail versions.) — I remember not getting paid the full amount for that project.”

David’s next project was to convert Sega’s arcade hit *Golden Axe* to the Amstrad and Spectrum for Probe Software. It was a bigger team this time around with someone else working on the graphics; this let David dedicate his time on the code. Once again, David produced an arcade hit with smooth scrolling on the Amstrad.

Sadly, *Golden Axe* would be David’s last work on the Amstrad as he inevitably moved onwards, helping out on the likes of *The Incredible Hulk* (1994, Mega Drive), *Alien Trilogy* (1996, PC & PlayStation), and *Martian Gothic: Unification* (2001, PlayStation).

Amstrad CPC softography

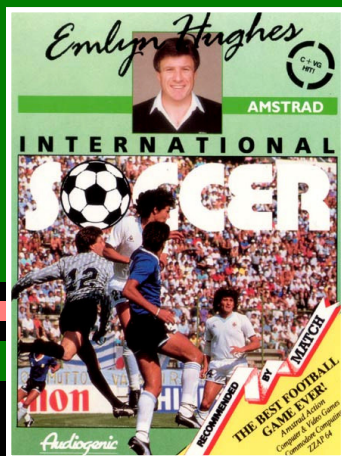
Hijack (1986)
Ikari Warriors (1986)
Victory Road (1988)
Savage (Sound) (1988)
Golden Axe (1990)



GRAHAM BLIGHE



Graham Blighe is a programmer who worked on many computer systems and games. Arguably, his biggest success came with *Emlyn Hughes International Soccer*



Graham Blighe graduated from university after studying mechanical engineering, but it was while spending a year at IBM that got him interested in computers. It was not long before Blighe started programming, initially on the Commodore 64.

One of Blighe's early programming efforts was *Bandits!* on the C64, which was not released at the time. With *Graham Gooch's Test Cricket*, he got to work on the Amstrad CPC in 1985. He continued programming programs (*Turbo Disk*, *Perfect Recall*) and games for the C64 (*Tunnel Vision*). It was in 1988 when Blighe began working on his most famous product: *Emlyn Hughes International Soccer*.

"Peter Calver [founder of Audiogenic] had been keen to create a football game for some time and asked me to do it," recalls Graham. "We looked at *International Soccer* from Commodore as an example of what was the best football game at the time. All the new AI and physics ideas came from me and a lot of the football ideas (backheels, sliding tackles...) came from Peter."

"*International Soccer* wasn't much of an influence except to demonstrate that you could have a smooth scrolling side-on view of a football pitch. We stuck with the side-on view because it's how you watch football on TV and seemed most natural."

The game's title itself is named after the former Liverpool and England captain Emlyn Hughes. "This was Peter's call," explains Graham. "I think Emlyn was chosen because he had retired and was thus neutral and we wouldn't be perceived as favouring one team over another. He was also a popular TV personality at the time. Looking back on it, I think he was a very good choice."

Being a freelance programmer, Graham worked from his home in Southampton. "Audiogenic were in Harrow, London," says Graham. "Communication was by letter and phone. I sent code updates to Audiogenic as disks sent in the post. The development went pretty smoothly considering the tiny budget and limited equipment."

Emlyn Hughes International Soccer was released on the Commodore 64 late in 1988 to high praise from magazines such as *Computer + Video Games*, *Commodore User*, and *Zzap!64*. However, it seemed that no one was willing to convert the game to the other popular computers. "Audiogenic tried to get programmers to write Spectrum and Atari ST versions while I was developing the game," states Graham. "I supplied them with the code and diagrams of how it all worked. The programmers didn't deliver and so I wrote all the versions. That's why the versions came out one after the other."

So having taken on the task of converting the game to other systems, Graham went on to work on the Spectrum version, followed closely with the Amstrad CPC version. "The video hardware and lack of hardware sprites limited the Spectrum and CPC versions to an update rate of 25Hz whereas the C64 ran at 50Hz. Sound hardware was non-existent on the Spectrum which limited what I could do sound effects wise. The CPC version was very similar to the Spectrum. But because the CPC had better video hardware, we were able to put some colour back into the graphics. The CPC also had a sound chip which allowed better sound effects."

Playing the game thoroughly throughout the development process allowed Graham to test things out. "It got so bad," recalls Graham, "that going into a pub showing a football match on TV my initial reaction was 'hey who's playing *EHIS*?'"

With the 8-bit conversions all completed, Graham went to work on the 16-bit Amiga and Atari ST versions. "On the later 16-bit machines, there was so much more computing power that we could have all the players on screen and penalty shootouts. Plus a referee (albeit not on pitch but making an appearance to book a player). The players were much better resolution with more kit styles and colours. I was able to add more features — I was particularly proud of the action replay which worked just like a VCR and you could advance one frame at a time to see exactly what happened. You could save the replay to disk and view it in overhead or side view."

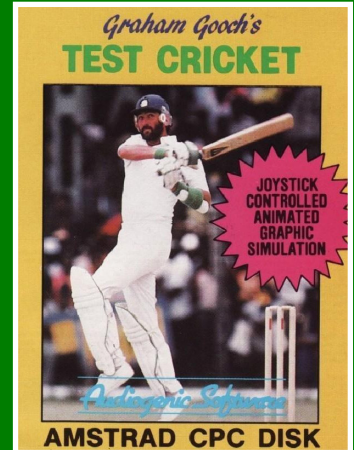
All the 8-bit versions received great reviews and the game did well in the charts, but Graham didn't feel much of the success at the time. "The good reviews were much appreciated. But my impression at the time was that reviews were mixed, with *EHIS* being slammed by some for what seemed like silly reasons or no reason at all. I got the impression some reviewers hadn't spent much time playing it. It was only after I quit games programming in 2001 that I found fans of *EHIS* on the internet. It was great to find that a lot of people did actually like what I'd done."

European Champions was released in 1993 for the Amiga, Atari ST and PC. "*European Champions* is a direct evolution of *EHIS* with the same team having worked on it," states Graham. The game was re-packaged by Ocean Software and released as *Lothar Matthäus* for the German market. Following the completion of *European Champions*, Graham would return to his earlier game of cricket with updates of *Brian Lara Cricket* for Amiga, PC, and PlayStation.

Amstrad CPC softography

Graham Gooch's Test Cricket
(1985)

Emlyn Hughes International Soccer (1989)



BILL HARBISON



Bill Harbison worked as a graphic artist for Ocean Software during the late 1980s and early 1990s, working on some of the finest looking games produced there



Bill first saw a home computer in a science class at secondary school. "I watched as the teacher produced a flat slab of black plastic and plug it into the TV," recalls Bill. "He typed a few lines onto the screen and by pressing 'run' created a kaleidoscope of moving shapes on the screen. In reality it was a ZX 81 running a simple mandelbrot generator but it was a life changing experience and I had to have one of those machines."

The interest in computer graphics came about due to the fact that Bill loved to see his ZX Spectrum graphics on a television screen. Comparing his work to the commercially released work, he then began contacting software companies with his own work. "I was sending my work to various software houses and getting declined from almost every one," says Bill. "I decided to send my work to Ocean still expecting to be rejected. It took about a year of waiting for Ocean to contact me and invite me to an interview."

The first game Bill worked on for Ocean was Daley Thompson's Olympic Challenge. While he dedicated his time to the graphics of the ZX Spectrum version, he also helped out with the Amstrad CPC version. 1988 would turn out to be a busy year with Bill working on the ZX Spectrum versions of *Dragon Ninja*, *RoboCop*, and *WEC Le Mans*.

It was following the success of *WEC Le Mans* that both Bill and coder Jon O'Brien were given the job of converting the arcade hit *Chase H.Q.* for both ZX Spectrum and Amstrad CPC. "It was expected that if you worked on a Spectrum game that you would do the Amstrad version

too as the conversion process for code was fairly easy," states Bill.

The Ocean staff often had access to the arcade games as reference and resource while working on arcade conversions. "They had the arcade circuit boards linked up to monitors and joysticks but not the whole cabinet," Bill comments. "That was until *Chase H.Q.* was delivered to the office. It was the sit in cabinet and it was massive and massively popular in the office."

With the ZX Spectrum version in the bag, work began converting the code over to the Amstrad CPC. "I think the sprites were created with the Ocean in-house sprite editor on the Atari ST," says Bill. "The only problem I had with the graphics creation was I wasn't used to the double pixel width of the Amstrad. I had only done one other Amstrad game and one Commodore 64 game which used the same graphic restriction so it took a while to get used to it."

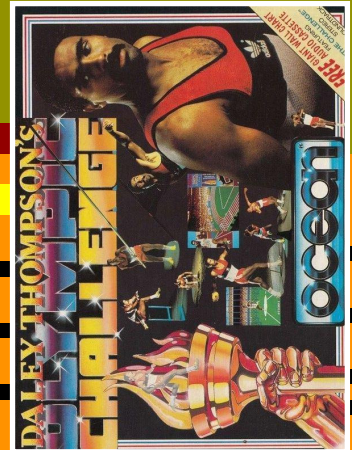
The gaming magazines praised both ZX and CPC versions of *Chase H.Q.* and this was always something that the team at Ocean Software would look out for. "We checked all the magazines and read all the reviews," adds Bill. "Ocean was quite a competitive place to work so if your scores were lower than other peoples' there would be a bit of good-natured banter. Also if a magazine scored your game low if maybe it didn't deserve it the others would be very supportive."

While the *Chase H.Q.* sequel, *S.C.I: Criminal Investigation*, was being outsourced for development, Bill went to work on the 16 bit versions of the *Batman* movie licence. Further work was done on SNES games before he left Ocean Software in 1994.

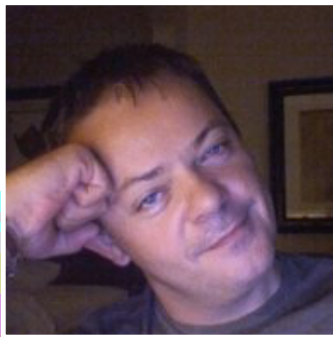
Amstrad CPC softography

Daley Thompson's Olympic Challenge (1988)

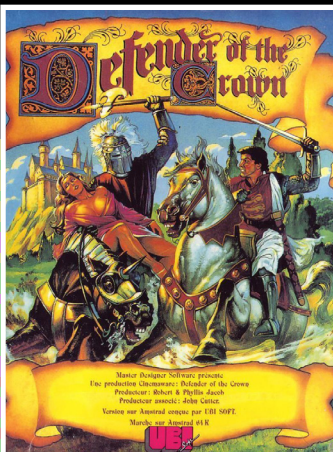
Chase H.Q. (1989)



BRICE RIVE



Brice Rive is a programmer who worked on Amstrad games such as *E.X.I.T.* and *Defender of the Crown*



Brice Rive had been a tinkerer with mechanics and electronics. When computers appeared, he became very interested in them. "However, being very young at the time I could not afford any of them until Sinclair's ZX81 showed up," recalls Brice. "I purchased one as soon as I could gather the money and started playing with it first in Basic, then mostly in Z80 assembly. I did a bunch of hardware modifications on it both to expand its capabilities and to learn more. At some point I developed a game using software hi-resolution and decided it was very cool and I should try to edit it."

A chance meeting enabled Brice to get one foot into the games development door. "I met with Philippe Ulrich at Ere Informatique, which was one of the main game publishers in France in those days and got an agreement with them. The game name was *Surfix*. I am probably the only person who still has a copy of it as it sold very little, the ZX81 game market being at its last moments at the time."

However, it was with graphic artist Laurent Boucher that Brice started working on the Amstrad CPC. "We met in our engineering school (ESIEA in Paris), in 1983. We became friends and still are. Philippe Ulrich wanted me to look at developing on the Amstrad since it is a Z80 machine and the market was strongly moving to it in France. However, games had started requiring a lot a graphics work and I could not do that. I thought that Laurent, who had always been a very good artist might be interested. He also was very technical, which was required of graphic artists in those days of 64Kb machines."

Brice and Laurent stated work on their first project as a partnership, but not for ERE Informatique as planned. "Well, although I had started with Ere," explains Brice, "they rubbed me up the wrong way with the low sales of *Surfix* and were asking me to pay for unsold copies, so I was not too happy to keep working with them. Laurent, on the other hand was childhood friends with the Guillemot brothers (founders of Ubi soft) so he introduced me to them and we got along very well. Our main interlocutor was Yves and he was very straight in business. Of course, we were young students, with very little money and a real thirst to create and be published so we did not know how to make real money, but still, it was pretty fair."

E.X.I.T. was released in France only, so many non-French speaking gamers may not had the chance to play the game. "Basically, the game is a graphic adventure where you find yourself stranded on a strange planet and must find your way out," says Brice.

"There are a few specificities about it," continues Brice. "No text input — you interact with the world through your hand (very nice

and animated). Beautiful colourful graphics. Total freedom — you can explore the whole place and puzzles are not localized. Hard — no help or clues, you must figure it out by yourself.”

“Now, on the bad side,” adds Brice, “we tried to put too much stuff in there and it ending being too messy, complicated and boring. We put a lot of effort in making clues very subliminal, having a ton of symbolism behind everything, hoping that, if players immersed themselves into the game, they would get the solutions. We went to far but we had fun.”

Defender of the Crown was — and still is — remembered as a 16-bit masterpiece and even made it to the lowly 8-bit CPC. “Yves (Guillemot) bought the rights from Cinemaware,” recalls Brice. “Since the CPC market was strong in France, he asked us if it could be done. This was a real challenge, both in terms of graphics and programming, and the game had a very strong aura at that time so we decided it would be a great experience and went for it.”

With development of the Amstrad version, Brice and Laurent had an almighty task to perform. “We had very little as Cinemaware was not available to help,” states Brice. “Ubi gave us a few helpful things, though: A hacker had extracted the graphics from the ST version, and Laurent used them as a starting point for his work. There was a couple of documents that Yves had, which helped me greatly: a copy of an article from *Computer Gaming World* (‘Inside *Defender of the Crown*’) describing the strategy of the game. Some notes from somebody at Cinemaware, apparently from the ‘testing staff’, describing a few of the game dynamics. Laurent and I played the ST version of DotC a lot of game to figure out the missing details.”

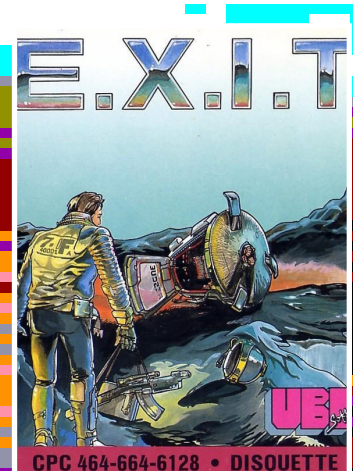
With the original game written on a 16-bit computer, it would have been thought that the Amstrad version would have had certain features and elements stripped out. “We did not drop anything from the ST version,” explains Brice. “There are some differences, like the joust where we show a moving target instead of the lance, but it should be very close. The ST version itself had some differences from the Amiga version, but I did not know that at the time. In my mind, a port ought to do all that the original does. In terms of programming I wanted the whole game to fit on a single disk so I created a custom file system that could only be written with a small hardware modification of the CPC. That doubled as a copy protection.”

Following the completion of *Defender of the Crown*, Brice went to work on “copy protections for UBI Soft and, then started a real job. Most game programmers in those days could not live off their work.”

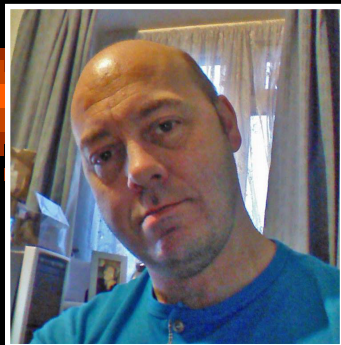
Amstrad CPC softography

E.X.I.T. (1988)

Defender of the Crown (1989)



ROB BUCKLEY



Rob Buckley was a programmer, artist and founder of Radical Software which helped keep the Amstrad CPC alive during its latter years



Rob Buckley went through a few computers before he settled on his machine of choice. "It started when I got a ZX81 in 1982," recalls Rob, "and shortly after I progressed onto a Spectrum 48k. However without being rude and as cool as the Spectrum was it was always a little toyish and I wanted what looked like a serious computer. My first choice was actually then Elan Enterprise as it looked so nice, but it never came out. The CPC with its primary coloured keys looks really similar, which is why I think I went for it around the end of 1984. To be honest there was little choice if you wanted a real computer at that time other than the BBC or CPC, and the BBC was a little clunky."

One of Rob's early games was *Intergalactic Stunt Parrot* that was published as a listing in an issue of *Computer Gamer* in 1985. In 1988, Rob produced the art software package, *Smart*, which was published as a listing in *The Amstrad User* magazine. Shortly afterwards, an updated *Smart 2* listing was published in *Amstrad Action*. 1991 saw Rob produce the freeware adventure game, *Eve of Shadows*, which came second in the Adventure Probe convention.

While the majority of the software houses were abandoning the 8-bit computers, Rob stepped in to fill the void. "I was made redundant from the architectural firm I worked for in around 1992/93," explains Rob. "So I had a bit of redundancy money in my pocket and made the decision that I'd like to be my own boss. One of my joys and debatable talents was coding so Radical [Software] was born. At the time the amount of CPC software coming out was dwindling fast and I thought that someone needed to step in to provide games."

In 1993, Rob developed *Ball Bearing*, a reworking of a public domain title. The game was picked up for review by *Amstrad Action* who did not hold back in criticising it. "I can see why it was," says Rob. "and I think the admission that it was an idea based on a PD game called *Croco Magneto* did it no favours. I did, of course, take that game and add the obvious scrolling, and lots more colour and graphics. It wasn't a bad game, but not as good as it could have been."

Rob's next project would arguably be his most ambitious with the development of a game that takes advantage of the plus hardware. "I thought that a lot of CPC software was either geared towards pushing the hardware or demo effect, at the detriment of gameplay," says Rob. "I really did believe we needed to explore areas we hadn't and the plus was effectively an under developed area. The hardware scrolling and sprites really allowed for super smooth gameplay and that allows for a lot of balance in control. Games are all about control and at that time there were very few games that I felt had that nuance where you

thought the character was an extension of your control.”

Amstrad Action was keen on the game and it was given the front cover with issue 103 (April 1994) along with a preview spread inside. “The other magazines had gone, so if you didn’t get publicity in *Amstrad Action* you might as well not bother. I believe Dave Golder had the idea to put *Fluff* on the cover, and I was told this several weeks before it went to press. *Fluff* wasn’t ready at that time, but they wanted something so I got the train down to Bath with a hobbled together version, and they then wrote a preview that day.”

Radical Software also helped to publish and distribute other developer’s games in the UK as well, including *Masters of Space*, *Prehistorik II*, *Super Cauldron*, and *MegaBlasters*. “The scene was quiet,” says Rob, “and there were no other publishers, and I took on any software that was of decent quality. Obviously with the Titus titles I was just a reseller, but the others I was the publisher.”

In the dying months of *Amstrad Action*, Rob had two games in development: *Lethal Moves* (billed as the CPC’s *Street Fighter II*) and *Abandoned* (mentioned as being a *Doom* clone). Both games were either previewed or advertised, but neither of them were released. “I must admit that due to everything that was happening at the time it’s hard to separate truth from what I remember”, admits Rob. “*Abandoned* was little more than a set of graphics and a scaling routine. Technically it was quite cool, but it was never going to change the CPC world. *Lethal Moves*, however, was far more along, and really only was ever canned when AA closed. There seemed no reason to continue once the final outlet for getting the info out had vanished. It was a request from Dave Golder to develop it, as he knew that *Street Fighter 2* wasn’t going to happen and he believed that a game could pick up a lot of the hype, and they would make sure it was presented as a suitable replacement and get a lot of coverage. At the time it seemed like a sensible development, only that it required two or three months more to develop than *Amstrad Action* had. As for code or graphics that remain then I fear there is probably none. Definitely nothing of *Abandoned* remains, and all that remains of *Lethal Moves* is a few of the graphics.”

There was mention of a *Fluff 2* fan made sequel around 1996. “Yes, I was at some point sent a game called *Fluff 2*. Where it is now I have no idea. I would love to go back to *Fluff* one day, and if the Plus machines ever get the cartridge issue sorted I think it would be great to have a sequel and release a limited edition of the original since it never came out on cart.”

Amstrad CPC softography

Eve of Shadows (1991)

Ball Bearing (1993)

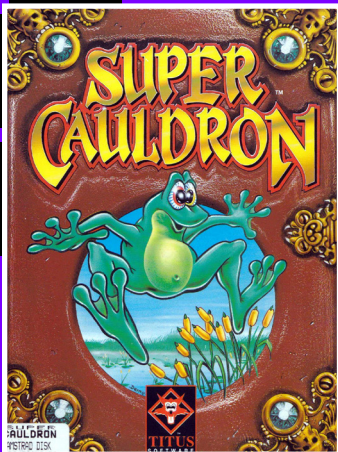
Fluff (1994)

ELMAR

KRIEGER



Elmar Kreiger is best known for his work on *Prehistorik II* and *Super Cauldron* which were released in 1992 and 1993 respectively, helping to keep the Amstrad CPC's failing lifeline alive



Elmar Kreiger first got his hand on an Amstrad computer when his father decided to buy a CPC664. "He liked the all-in-one concept with green screen and built-in disk," says Elmar. "I was really lucky: while my class-mates were busy swapping their Commodore 64 cracks, I was somewhat isolated and had the time to get into programming. I found another CPC owner nearby, who showed me the CPC demos and I immediately got sucked into assembly language to find out how this hot stuff worked."

Plenty of demos followed and in 1986 a fully fledged game, *Space Taxi*, was released under his Elmsoft label as freeware. It was 1992 that would turn out to be a busy year for Elmar and would bring him to the attention of CPC gamers.

Elmar's next game was intended to be a back port of *Pang*, converting the well received Plus/GX4000 game back on to the original CPC range. "I had figured out a programming trick to display many huge ball sprites on the classic CPC," explains Elmar. "And since *Pang* was a major title on the new Plus range, a CPC back port was an obvious idea. Unfortunately Ocean Software didn't want one, and I didn't have the heart to bury the idea, so a *Pang*-inspired cover disk game was the ideal solution: get the project done quickly on a small scale."

So with the *Pang*-inspired game complete, the game was released as *Zap'T'Balls* in the German publication *CPC Amstrad International's* listing section. With the positive feedback from the CPC scene, Elmar decided to rework the game as *Zap'T'Balls: The Advanced Edition* and get it released commercially. "That raised my hopes to get into professional video game development, and get paid for the things that were most fun to do," says Elmar.

Following the Advanced Edition of *Zap'T'Balls*, Titus Software asked Elmar to work on the Amstrad CPC versions of the upcoming *Super Cauldron* and *Prehistorik 2*. "Titus liked the *Zap'T'Balls'* sprite engine," recalls Elmar. "I remember Eric Caen [co-founder of Titus] looking at the balls jumping around at 50 fps and asking for confirmation that no frame was ever dropped. Since the CPC was nearing the end of its commercial life-time, they probably figured that not much could go wrong by outsourcing the project. And I fear I forgot to tell them that my sprite engine could only do balls..."

Both *Super Cauldron* and *Prehistorik 2* had been released on PC the previous year. "Of course, I played the PC version and got the original artwork, which was done at the usual PC VGA resolution of 320x200 pixels with lots of colours," says Elmar. "I sampled this down to CPC

Mode 0 (160x200, 16 colours), and tuned it a bit manually. I didn't see the PC source code, but that wouldn't have helped anyway with Z80 assembler on the CPC."

Although *Super Cauldron* looks like an enhanced Plus game, it is in fact a normal Amstrad CPC game. "To scroll the screen smoothly with 50 fps, *Super Cauldron* simply recycled tricks I learned from the CPC demo scene," explains Elmar. "The CPU was far too slow to scroll the screen by copying data around, instead you had to use hardware scrolling by changing the start address of the video ram in the CRTC (Cathode Ray Tube Controller) chip. This yielded a corresponding shift of the screen content, and was routinely done by CPC Basic and many games like *Ghosts 'n Goblins*."

The PC had more powerful hardware than the CPC back then, so you would think that there would have to be some compromises made during development. "If I recall correctly, the main difficulty was that Titus' disk copy machine could only do single sided copies, this meant 180k of disk space for the whole game," adds Elmar. "That's why the CPC version had fewer levels than the PC version, which saved me a lot of work. Apologies to all gamers for that. The differences between 64k and 128k were mostly cosmetic."

For *Prehistorik 2*, Elmar decided to develop a version for both the original CPC and Plus range. "I had finally gotten my hands on a CPC Plus and they were trembling in excitement," says Elmar. "So I convinced Titus that we should take this opportunity."

Elmar worked on the original CPC version first before working on enhancing that for the Plus. "To develop the Plus version, I simply started with the normal version and worked my way through the list of new features, thinking about ways to use them. An obvious relief was the new palette of 4096 colours. Having to choose the 16 on-screen colours from just 27 options was a major problem for all classic CPC games (skin never looked like skin, smooth colour gradients didn't exist), so the 4096 colour palette resulted in an immediately visible facelift."

With the game developed to be compatible with normal CPC machines, it could be assumed that there were compromises made with the Plus version. "Had the game been developed for the Plus only, then I would have intuitively used the hardware sprites for the game characters, but lost the parallax scrolling in return," stated Elmar. "So keeping the game compatible actually helped the game's looks, but at the cost of responsiveness. When lots of large software sprites overlapped, things slowed down noticeably."

Amstrad CPC softography

Space Taxi (1986)

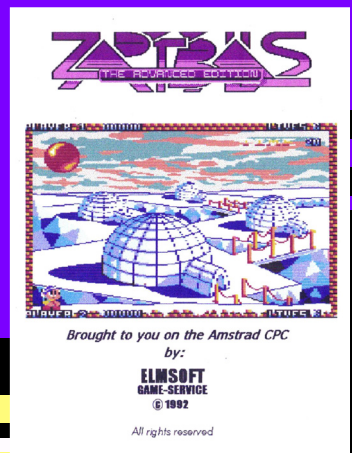
Cyborgs (1991, unreleased)

ZapT'Balls (1992, PD version)

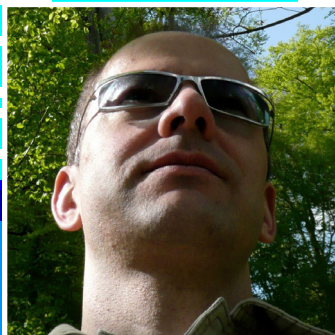
ZapT'Balls: The Advanced Edition (1992)

Super Cauldron (1992)

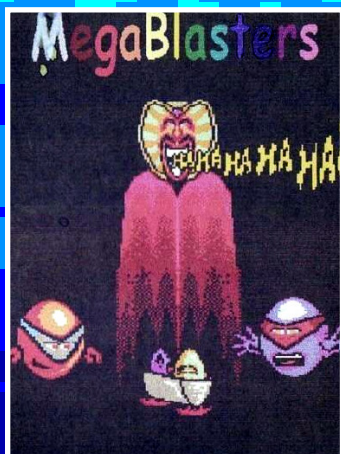
Prehistorik 2 (1993)



GEORG ODENTHAL



Georg Odenthal is a programmer known as Odiesoft and was the main person behind the last great Amstrad CPC game, *MegaBlasters*



It was back in 1984 when the Odenthal household got their hands on an Amstrad CPC 464. "The intention was, that we learn how to use a device like that so that we would have an advantage over our peers later in school and on the job market," recalls Georg. "At that time I was twelve years old and still playing with Lego and a toy train in my room. Until then I had been completely ignorant to computers, but that quickly changed."

Georg went on to produce a number of demos for the Amstrad CPC. "The Vector Graphics demo is special to me," says Georg. "because I had to learn how to calculate 3D graphic correctly and create my own line drawing routine. The Wishing Well, despite being very simple, had a lot of fans at that time. I remember that often other CPC users approached me to tell me, that they spend hours sitting in front of the Wishing Well, inserting or pulling plugs in order to try to make the well overflow (which it couldn't, though). Because it was so popular I created the *Wishing Well Construction Kit*."

Many more demos would show off the varied programming talents of Georg. *Twistscroll*, *Texture Mapping* ("the first ever demo on the CPC using a texture mapping algorithm"), *Chessboard Zoomer*, *Terminator Scroll* ("a rather simple hardware scrolling using the CRTC register 3 trick to fake a byte-wise scrolling is also one of my favourites"), *Heat Demo* ("one of the first fire-effects on the CPC"), and an unreleased game called *Ghosthunters* (a homage of *Ghostbusters*).

One of Georg's early attempts at a fully fledged game came in 1988. "The tank game *Last Mission* was published on the cover disc of the German Amstrad Magazine *CPC Schneider International*. The *Gauntlet* clone *The Caves of Horwar* also nearly got published in the same magazine, unfortunately the magazine was cancelled shortly before it was supposed to be published."

George managed to finish a great deal of games, but titles such as a conversion of *Cannon Fodder*, a *Gryzor* remake and an *R-Type* remake, were not released. "When I was looking for a good idea for a game I tried different things to figure out what the CPC is capable of," explains Georg. "Most of these unfinished games were rather a technical prototype that wasn't intended to become a full game."

After seeing *Dynablasters* playing on his brother's Amiga, Georg fell instantly for the game. "I figured that something like the *Dynablasters* battle mode could be possible on the CPC. A game with four players, a few bombs and some explosions sounded simple enough to be converted to the CPC. So I started to create some simple graphics and set up a playing area in order to figure out whether the CPC can

handle this much animation on the screen at the same time with a decent refresh rate.”

“When I presented the new Mode 0 battle mode on the GOS Party IV in Bad Hersfeld, I was approached by another guest who asked me if I could make a complete game. This guest was Kangaroo Musique who had a small company that amongst other things distributed CPC software such as BSCs Soundtraker. I liked the idea and started to work on a complete game right away. But it took me about one and a half years to finish it and in the end I published it myself in Germany and had friends of mine distribute it in France and the UK.”

MegaBlasters also pays homage to many classic video games with hidden levels throughout. “I think I took this idea from *Castle Wolfenstein* on the PC,” says Georg. “There was a Easter Egg hidden in the game where you entered a *Pac-Man* stage and fought against the ghosts. I loved the idea of having cross over levels like this and pay tribute to classic CPC games that helped to define the Amstrad CPC experience. So I added one hidden stage to each world, most of which were tributes to CPC or other classic games.”

While the game did not sell in great quantities, the game is considered to be one of the CPC’s greatest. “I’m quite happy that I did finish this game considering all the obstacles I encountered during its development and now have a shipped game on my CV. It is quite an honour to see my game rank among the top games on the Amstrad CPC. The *Bomberman* gameplay is just highly addictive and choosing this genre has surely helped a lot to make my game this memorable. I think the fact that my game still sometimes shows up in retro computing magazines is worth much more than having sold a few more copies back then. I’m part of the Amstrad CPC history and that is an achievement not many people can claim to have.”

A follow up, *MegaBlasters: Escape From Castle in the Clouds*, was released in 2015. “Rex, the graphics artist from *MegaBlasters*, approached me about a 20 year anniversary edition of *MegaBlasters* and whether I would like to re-release my game under a new label with a proper box and cover art,” recalls Georg. “Unfortunately, I had to call off the idea, since I couldn’t recover the discs anymore. Rex thus teamed up with Axelay to create the tribute. I feel quite honoured by that. The *MegaBlasters* tribute is a really cool and well done interpretation of the game. Technically it is an improvement to my version since now the floor also has tiles and isn’t just plain as in the original *MegaBlasters*. I look forward to see what will happen on the 30th anniversary of *MegaBlasters*!”

Amstrad CPC softography

Ghosthunters (1988, unreleased)

Last Mission (1988, unreleased)

The Caves of Horwar (1989, unreleased)

MegaBlasters (1994)

AS NO
W ONE

THE MAGAZINES



Ever since computers have been around, there have been magazines of some kind, covering the latest software and hardware for various machines. With no other way of getting the latest information on their computers, readers bought them regularly, and sometimes even purchasing several different magazines per month to satisfy their computing needs. It was no different when the Amstrad arrived with many magazines appearing to cover the CPC range, and later the plus range.

Magazines would generally follow the standard style of news, reviews, previews, and features, and this was also the case for Amstrad publications with the content usually balanced 50/50 between serious and leisure. This worked well until later in the Amstrad CPC's life when the lack of new hardware and software meant that magazines had to focus more on gaming and features.

The first dedicated magazine for the Amstrad range was the official *Amstrad Computer User* magazine, but there were soon numerous other publications to arrive. In the United Kingdom alone there was *Computing with the Amstrad*, *Amstrad Action*, *Amtix!*, and *CPC Attack*. Although not to a greater extent, multi-format magazines also covered the Amstrad at times, including *Computer + Video Games*, *ACE*, *Your Computer*, *The Games Machine*, *Computer Gamer*, *Popular Computing Weekly*, *Home Computing Weekly*, *Computer Games Week*, *Personal Computer News*, *New Computer Express*, *Mean Machines*, *Raze*, *Zero*, and more.

With the Amstrad CPC being a big success in France, it was no surprise to see many CPC publications launch there, too. Magazines



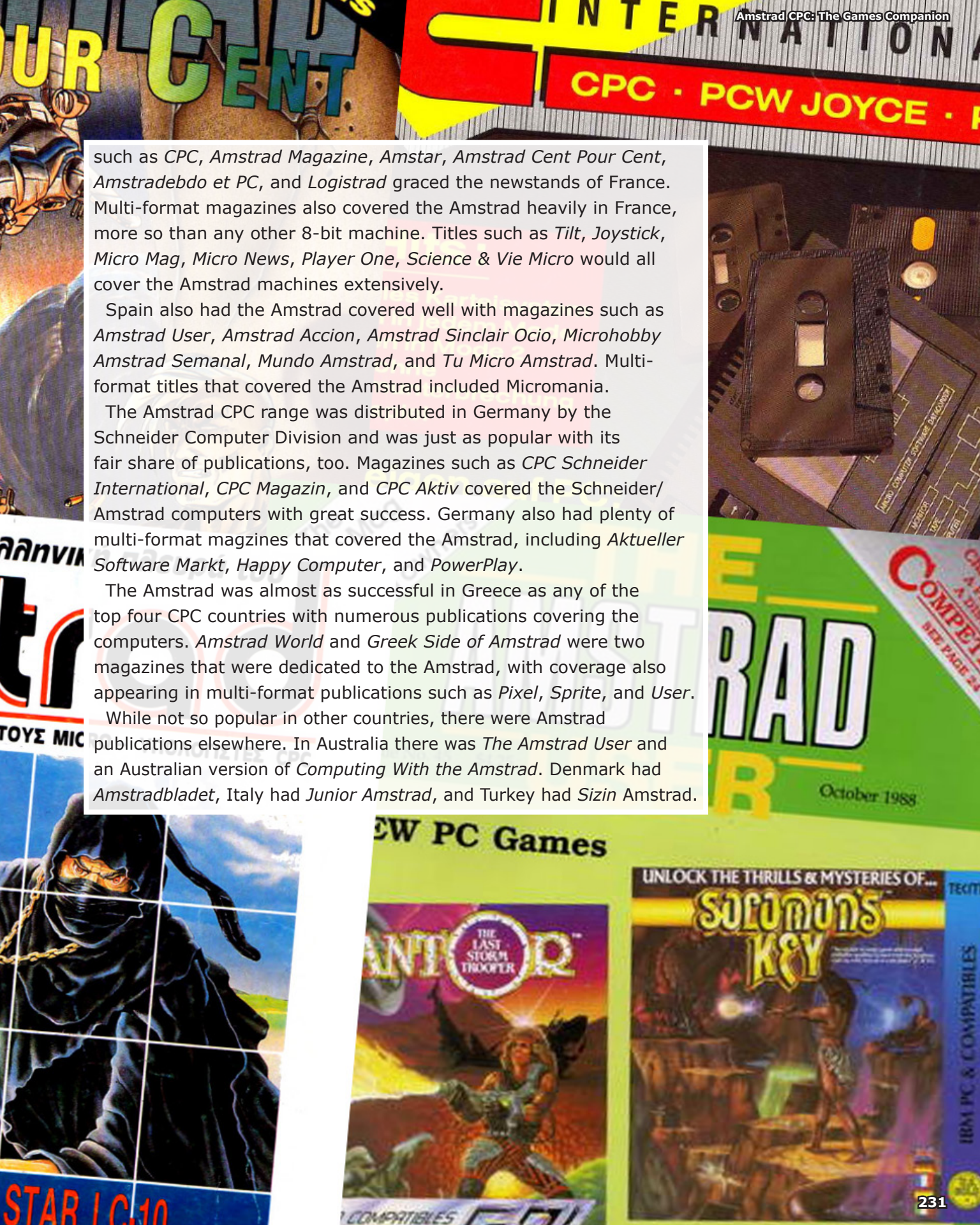
such as *CPC*, *Amstrad Magazine*, *Amstar*, *Amstrad Cent Pour Cent*, *Amstradebdo et PC*, and *Logistrad* graced the newstands of France. Multi-format magazines also covered the Amstrad heavily in France, more so than any other 8-bit machine. Titles such as *Tilt*, *Joystick*, *Micro Mag*, *Micro News*, *Player One*, *Science & Vie Micro* would all cover the Amstrad machines extensively.

Spain also had the Amstrad covered well with magazines such as *Amstrad User*, *Amstrad Accion*, *Amstrad Sinclair Ocio*, *Microhobby*, *Amstrad Semanal*, *Mundo Amstrad*, and *Tu Micro Amstrad*. Multi-format titles that covered the Amstrad included *Micromania*.

The Amstrad CPC range was distributed in Germany by the Schneider Computer Division and was just as popular with its fair share of publications, too. Magazines such as *CPC Schneider International*, *CPC Magazin*, and *CPC Aktiv* covered the Schneider/Amstrad computers with great success. Germany also had plenty of multi-format magazines that covered the Amstrad, including *Aktueller Software Markt*, *Happy Computer*, and *PowerPlay*.

The Amstrad was almost as successful in Greece as any of the top four CPC countries with numerous publications covering the computers. *Amstrad World* and *Greek Side of Amstrad* were two magazines that were dedicated to the Amstrad, with coverage also appearing in multi-format publications such as *Pixel*, *Sprite*, and *User*.

While not so popular in other countries, there were Amstrad publications elsewhere. In Australia there was *The Amstrad User* and an Australian version of *Computing With the Amstrad*. Denmark had *Amstradbladet*, Italy had *Junior Amstrad*, and Turkey had *Sizin Amstrad*.



AMSTRAD USER

COMPUTER

January 1988 £1.25

AMSTRAD Computer User



Company

Amsoft

Country

United Kingdom

First issue

August/September 1984

Final issue

May 1992

Total issues

90

Average rating

77%, 14/20, 3/5

Top rated games

Sorcery (5/5)

Knight Lore (5/5)

The Rocky Horror Picture Show (5/5)

The Way of the Exploding Fist (5/5)

Boulder Dash (5/5)

Dizzy Panic (96%)

The Race Against Time (20/20)

Worst rated games

Executioner (1/5)

North Sea Bullion Adventure (1/5)

Super Nudge 2000 (40%)

Knight Games (41%)

Eliminator (41%)

Street Gang Football (2.5/20)

Psycho Pigs UXB (3/20)

To support the launch of the new Amstrad CPC464 computer, Amstrad knew that it would be sensible to launch a magazine to promote everything, be it software, hardware, or programming. So an off-shoot company called Amsoft was created and one of their first tasks was to launch *CPC464 User* magazine (sub-titled *The Official Amstrad Micro Magazine*) in the Summer of 1984.

The August/September 1984 issue was available to registered users of the Amstrad Club and featured content such as news, software reviews, listings, and various articles. With its third issue some months later, re-titled to *Amstrad CPC464 User*, it went on sale to the general public. It was with the fifth issue that the magazine was re-titled *Amstrad Computer User*, for which the magazine is mostly known as.

The magazine catered for all Amstrad users, from serious programmers to gamers. Content included listings, type-ins, features, games section. A long running column, Hairy Hacker, featured ways of getting the most out of the CPC, including game pokes.

The review section went through many changes, both in design and ratings structure. The ratings changed a total of six times through its lifetime: five-star rating (Aug/Sep '84-Oct '85), 20 out of 20 (Nov '85-Apr '89), percentage (May '89-Jun '89), bar graph (Jul '89-Sep '89), percentage (Oct '89-Feb '90), and caricatures (Apr '90-May '92).

Circulation figures were published for the first time in the November 1987 issue. A figure of 63,599 for the period of Jan-Jun 1987 was displayed in the issue's credits page. This would turn out to be the only ABC figure that the magazine would publish.

With the January 1989 issue, *Amstrad Computer User* incorporated *CPC Computing* (formerly *Computing With the Amstrad*) and the magazine went through a redesign. The games pages got a new look with the introduction of the 'ACU Star Game' awards.

With its May 1992 issue, *Amstrad Computer User* called time on itself and the official publication was no more. The magazine's final editorial announced that a successor would be launched the following month. That magazine would be *CPC Attack*, which even advertises for staff in this last issue with a two page preview spread, and would concentrate more on the games playing scene.

AMSTRADBLADET

Amstradbladet (roughly translated as *Amstrad Magazine*) was a Danish Amstrad magazine that ran from the end of 1984 to 1988. It mainly focused on the CPC, but also covered the PCW and PC. *Amstradbladet* appeared bi-monthly during its first year, but increased to a more monthly style release in 1987/88. It was the most successful Amstrad publication in Denmark with at least 21 issues published.

Each issue contained regular content such as hardware reviews, games reviews, letters page, type-ins, programming, and technical help. From early on it had some colour pages, but the majority of them were black and white. In its first year each issue came to about 30 pages, but this increased to 60-80 pages for the following years.

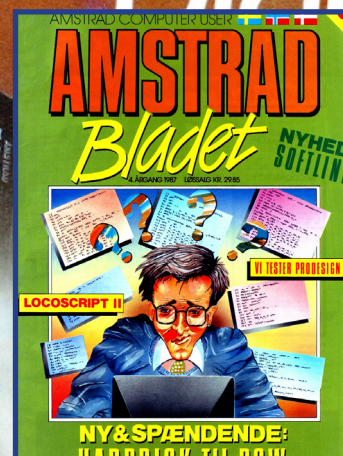
Game reviews were limited during the first year, usually with one review per issue, and used a 'General bedømmelse' (general rating) with marks out of ten. *Manic Miner* was given a perfect 10/10 in issue two.

A larger 'Software Review' section was introduced with the 1986 #1 issue. Games were now rated by percentage on grafik, Lyd (sound), interesse, and Pris/kvalitet (price/quality). *Who Dares Wins II* received a 100% pris/kvalitet rating in 1986 #3/4.

The 'Software Review' section went through a re-design for issue 1986 #5. Screenshots were larger and ratings were changed to a six star rating (displayed as joysticks) for grafik, lyd, and interesse. *Harvey Headbanger* received a perfect six star joysticks rating for interesse in issue 1987 #3.

With issue 1987 #6 the games section was renamed 'Soft Line' and went through a final change. Games were marked out of ten for grafik, lyd, indtryk, and pris/kvl., while an ABGrad (degree) score out of 20 was given in the style of a temperature gauge. *Renegade* received the highest ABGrad of 19/20 during this time.

After the magazine closed down, former staff rallied around to launch *Amstrad Bruger Bladet* (roughly translated as *Amstrad User Magazine*), with content and design similar to its predecessor.



Company

Unknown

Country

Denmark

First issue

1984

Final issue

1988

Total issues

Unknown

Average rating

67%

Top rated games (Price/Quality)

Who Dares Wins II (100%)

Bomb Jack (5/5)

Tau Ceti (99%)

Chimera (98%)

Spindizzy (97%)

Renegade (19/20)

Worst rated games

Shadowfire (0/5)

War Zone (0/5)

Endurance (40%)

COMPUTING WITH THE AMSTRAD



Company

Database Publications

Country

United Kingdom

First issue

January 1985

Final issue

December 1988

Total issues

48

Average rating

8.29/10, 75.38%

Top rated games

Get Dexter (10/10)

Winter Games (10/10)

Jewels of Darkness (10/10)

Dan Dare: Pilot of the Future (10/10)

Thrust (10/10)

Light Force (10/10)

The Pawn (10/10)

Zombi (10/10)

Moonmist (100%)

Hollywood Hijinx (100%)

All Stars (98%)

Lancelot (98%)

Gnome Ranger (97%)

The Bard's Tale (97%)

Worst rated games

The Growing Pains of Adrian

Mole (1/10)

Chain Reaction (15%)

Dervish (20%)

At the end of 1984, Database Publications launched *Computing with the Amstrad*, cover dated January 1985. Headed by Derek Meakin, Database Publications — later renamed Europress Interactive — was one of the bigger publishing companies within the computer magazine market and they saw an opportunity to launch a second CPC publication to compete against the official *Amstrad Computer User*.

Computing With the Amstrad was a monthly magazine that covered the Amstrad CPC, PCW, and PC. The magazine generally covered all areas of the Amstrad, both serious and leisure. Regular content in the magazine included reviews (games), 'Headlines' (news), 'Postbag' (letters), type-ins, and game tips.

From its first issue (January 1985) until Vol. 2 no. 4 (April 1986) the magazine's games review section 'Software Survey' was fairly limited with a small write up and no ratings. It was with Vol 2. no. 5 (May 1986) that the 'Software Survey' underwent a re-design with game info boxes and ratings (out of ten) introduced.

In the Spring of 1987 Database Publications purchased *Amtix!* magazine from Newsfield Publications. This meant that from its May 1987 issue *Computing With the Amstrad* incorporated *Amtix!* games' sections into its own pages. This included a re-design to bring in the expanded games reviews and tips coverage of *Amtix!*. This also meant bringing in *Amtix!*'s use of percentage ratings and the 'Amtix! Accolade' awarded to high rated games.

With the June 1987 issue, the publication split into *Computing With the Amstrad CPC*, *Computing With the Amstrad PCW*, and *Personal Computing with the Amstrad*. The magazine changed its name to *CPC Computing* for issue 45 (September 1988), although just four issues later, it was sold off and merged with *Amstrad Computer User*.

The circulation figures of *Computing With the Amstrad* during its early years was at its most successful, publishing a figure of 39,369 for the period of Jan-Jun 1986.

An Australian edition of *Computing With the Amstrad* was published from August 1986 until December 1987. This edition of the magazine featured content re-printed from its UK parent along with some original content.

THE AMSTRAD USER

The Amstrad User was a monthly magazine published in Australia by Strategy Publications. Initially, the magazine covered the CPC computers, but later on included the PCW and PC computers.

Layout and design of the magazine was fairly conventional with black and white pages throughout with only the front cover being in colour. Each issue's content included games reviews, game cheats, adventure section, software reviews, programming tutorials, type-ins, and a letters page. Subscribers of the magazine were treated to a cover-mount cassette tape featuring programs from the issue.

For the first 25 issues the 'Software Reviews' section featured straight text reviews of games with a 'TAU Index' percentage rating as a final mark. From issue 26 the reviews dropped the ratings boxes altogether.

Despite the name and front cover similarities to the official *Amstrad Computer User* magazine from the UK, *The Amstrad User* was an independent publication. Although, to help fill out the pages of the magazine from time to time, *The Amstrad User* set up agreements with the publishers of UK publications such as *Amstrad Action*, *CPC Computing*, and *8000 Plus* to re-print some of their articles.

With the decline of the CPC market in Australia during 1990, and emergence of the PC scene, the publishers decided to rename the magazine to *The PC Mag*, having the 'plus *The Amstrad User*' suffix underneath. The new relaunched magazine began with its January 1991 issue. The relaunch was reflected with the content in the magazine, which favoured the PC coverage over the CPC/PCW. The renamed magazine ran for nine more issues, before closing with its September 1991 edition.



Company
Strategy Publications
 Country
Australia
 First issue
February 1985
 Final issue
September 1991
 Total issues
80

Average rating

66%

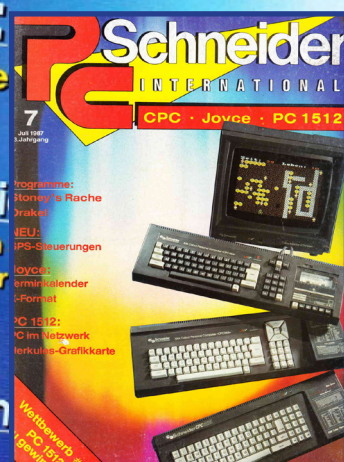
Top rated games

The Way of the Exploding Fist (84%)
Splat (84%)
Mordon's Quest (80%)
A View to a Kill (79%)
Blogger (78%)
Detective (78%)
Grand Prix Rally II (78%)

Worst rated games

Chiller (39%)
The Galactic Plague (43%)

CPC SCHNEIDER INTERNATIONAL



CPC Schneider International was the longest running Amstrad publication in Germany. It was a monthly release before switching to a bi-monthly release from its Jun/Jul 1990 issue. It ran for 79 issues in total from March 1985 to Dec/Jan 1992/1993.

CPC Schneider International was aimed at the semi-professional CPC user and kept a fairly restrictive design with little colour throughout. Regular content included 'berichte' (news), hardware features, 'lehrgänge' (technical tutorials), programming, 'abenteuer' (adventure section), and software application and games reviews.

With the ever changing CPC market in Germany, the magazine changed direction and names a few times during its run. With the introduction of the PCW/PC range of computers in Germany, the magazine changed its name to *CPC + PC Schneider International* from its November 1986 issue. This was soon changed to *PC Schneider International*, with a small 'CPC' inside the title, from the January 1987 issue.

After Schneider Computer Division stopped distributing the Amstrad CPC computer in Germany, the magazine was renamed *PC Amstrad/Schneider International* (April 1988), before removing 'Schneider' altogether to leave the name as *PC Amstrad International*. In October 1991, the PC section was dropped from the magazine and it was renamed *CPC Amstrad International*, which it remained as until its final issue.

For the first four years, games were rated out of ten for preis/leistung (price/performance), while for the next three, and final years, games were assessed on a reversed five star system (1: excellent, 2: Good, 3: average, 4: Poor, 5: Dreadful).

There were eight 'Sonderheft' (special) issues of *CPC Schneider International* that were released between 1986 to 1989. These issues contained further coverage of listings, software, and news.

Company
Daten-und Medien-Verlagsgesellschaft mbH
 Country
Germany
 First issue
1985-03
 Final issue
1992-12/1993-01
 Total issues
79

Average rating
 67%

Top rated games

(price / performance)

Bruce Lee (10/10)
Deflektor (10/10)
Spindizzy (10/10)
Trantor (10/10)
The Way of the Exploding Fist (10/10)
 ...and more.

Primary German Grade System (1 (very good) to 6 (insufficient))

Lemmings (1)
North & South (1)
Prince of Persia (1)
Switchblade (1)
Turrican II (1)
 ...and more.

Bericht

- Sound über den Druckerport

Hardware

- Der CPC als Wetterfrosch und Funkpartner
 - Arbeiten mit Pocket-Computern

CPC

With the Amstrad CPC range just as successful in France, if not more so than it was in the UK, it was unsurprising that a whole host of magazines covered the computers. As the Amstrad CPC quickly became the number one home computer in France, many of the multi-format computer magazines covered the computer as their main focus. Numerous dedicated Amstrad magazines also followed.

CPC was one of the first publications in France dedicated to the Amstrad computers. Launched in the summer of 1985, the monthly magazine covered the Amstrad CPC, PCW, and PC. Typical content included news, games reviews, hardware, programming, tutorials, listings, and more.

The games coverage was pretty limited with only small reviews placed within two to four pages. For the first 12 issues, games were rated on graphisme, animation, son, and intérêt. The ratings were dropped from the games reviews for issue 13 and remained that way until the magazine ended. Issue 26 came with a re-design, including an expansion of the games coverage to four pages.

The last *CPC* issue was the October 1988 edition (#38) and the magazine then merged with rival publication *Amstar*. The new publication, titled *Amstar & CPC*, carried on the numbering of *Amstar* with issue 26 (October / November 1988). The *Amstar & CPC* name came to an end when the publication was renamed to *Amstar Informatique* with its 48th issue (August 1990).

There were 23 special issues of *CPC* that ran alongside the normal publication. Titled *CPC HS* (Hors Série), the magazine featured type-in listings for home-made games that readers could run themselves. The first issue featured a covermounted cassette tape with two programs included, Rally and Moniteur. With issue 22, the name was changed to *CPC Plus*, although the content remained the same. *CPC Infos* took off where *CPC HS/Plus* stopped, and issue 24 (September 1990) of the new title covered listings with the odd hardware and software feature. *CPC Infos* ended with issue 57 (April/May 1994).



Company

Unknown

Country

France

First issue

June / July 1985

Final issue

October 1988

Total issues

38

Average rating

3.4/5

Top rated games (Interet)

Fairlight (5/5)

Rally II (5/5)

Runestone (5/5)

Tyrann (5/5)

Way of the Tiger (5/5)

Worst rated games

Kung Fu in Las Vegas (0/5)

AMSTRAD MAGAZINE



Closely following the release of *CPC* was *Amstrad Magazine*, a magazine that was endorsed by Amstrad's subsidiary in France. Launched with its July-August 1985 issue, the magazine covered all Amstrad computers with news, software/hardware reviews, programming articles, listings, and more.

Issues often ran past the 100 page mark and had a balance of colour pages in amongst the black and white layouts. The software reviews section was usually spread out over several pages with each game review often getting one page. Games were rated on 'graphisme', 'intérêt', 'difficulté', and 'appréciation'.

A couple of years into its run, the relationship between Amstrad and the magazine became strained due in part to the publication's increasingly independent stance. Due to the fallout, the publication was renamed *Am Mag* and continued its run with issue 30 (January 1988).

Apart from the name change, *Am Mag* wasn't too different from its previous incarnation. *Am Mag* eventually ran into difficulties as the publisher, Laser Printing Group, fell on hard times. With issue 45, cover date April 1989, *Am Mag* closed and the publisher merged all its individual publications into one multi-format titled *Mirco Mag*. Unfortunately, the publisher could not recover from its troubles and that magazine also closed after issue 14.

According to a former *Am-Mag* journalist, the magazine had a circulation figure of almost 100,000 during its peak.

Company

neo-media

Country

France

First issue

July-August 1985

Final issue

January 1988

Total issues

117

Average rating

3.4/5

Top rated games

Tempest (6/5)

Macadam Bumper (5/5)

The Rocky Horror Show (5/5)

Scram (5/5)

Tarot (5/5)

MICROHOBBY AMSTRAD SEMANAL

Microhobby Amstrad Semanal was a magazine published in Spain by Hobby Press that covered the Amstrad CPC, PCW, and PC computers. The publication launched as a weekly Amstrad magazine with a cover date of 3-10 September 1985 and featured news, type-ins, programming, and a relatively small games section. The games section usually featured one or two reviews per issue.

For issues 1-66, the games reviews used a six tier rating system, ranging from 'horrible' to 'obra maestro'. This was changed from issue 67 when the magazine changed the ratings system to a four tier system making use of hand gesture icons ('thumbs down', 'average', 'thumbs up', and 'a-okay').

The magazine was renamed to just *Amstrad Semanal* from issue 65 (9-15 December 1986), and changed to a monthly release with issue 100 (September 1987). The magazine was relaunched as *Amstrad Personal* straight after, which ran for 10 issues.

Despite the relaunch into *Amstrad Personal*, the publication more or less carried on covering the same computers with the same content.



Company
Hobby Press
Country
France
First issue
3-10 September 1985
Final issue
Unknown
Total issues
100

Average rating

Bueno

Top rated games

Alien 8 (Obra Maestro)
Knight Lore (Obra Maestro)
The Way of the Exploding Fist (Obra Maestro)

REVISTA INDEPENDIENTE
TODO ACERCA DEL
«GAME OVER»:

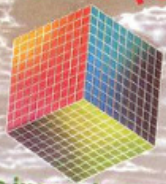
CÓMO LLEGAR AL FINAL
VIDAS INFINITAS
ARMAMENTO ILIMITADO
ENERGÍA INFINITA...

BRICOLAGE
PASO A PASO



AMPLIE LA
LA MEMORIA DE PCW Y PC

TRUCOS (CPC)



evio juego de caracteres.



LO QUE NO TIENE «LOCOS»

Analizamos a fondo un programa que permite...

BARBARIA
El videojuego
más bárbaro

• Todos los pokes para
decapitar al enemigo

INFOBYTES
Minitel,
el estándar
francés de
comunicaciones
en Amstrad PC

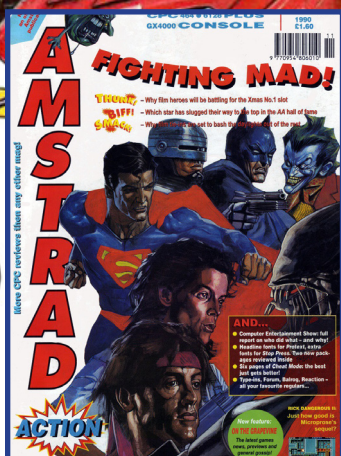


BUFFER DE IMPRESORA

Impresión
de textos
8 veces



AMSTRAD ACTION



Amstrad Action featured a balanced content of serious and leisure content that catered to owners of the Amstrad CPC range and later the GX4000 console and plus range. Features would come and go, but long-running regulars were 'Amscene' (news), 'Forum' (technical help), 'Reaction' (letters page), 'Type-In' (listings), 'Action Test' (games reviews), 'The Pilgrim'/'The Balrog' (adventure games section), and 'Cheat Mode' (games help).

The magazine decided to include a covermounted cassette tape with two unreleased games for the Christmas special issue of 1985: Ocean Software's *Kung Fu* and *Number 1*. The covermount cassette tape would reappear with every Christmas and AA birthday issue thereafter, becoming a regular monthly feature with issue 67 in 1991. Featured software included game demos, applications, software utilities and, in some instances, complete games.

The games reviews section, 'Action Test', was situated within the centre of the magazine, with games receiving a good coverage of one or two pages. From the first issue, games were rated by percentage with 80% and above rated games given an 'AA Rave' award, while the game of the month was given an 'AA Master Game' award.

The circulation figures for *Amstrad Action* were first announced for the Jul-Dec 1987 period with a figure of 34,555. The circulation remained around this figure (with a peak of 38,457 for Jul-Dec 1988) until its slow demise beginning in the Jul-Dec 1992 period. It was with issue 57 that the magazine began awarding the 'AA Master Game' accolade to any game that achieved a rating of 90% or more.

After ten years and 117 issues, Future Publishing decided to call it a day and cease publication of the magazine, despite issue 118 being advertised in the last issue. The CPC scene's last commercially available product came to an end without a final goodbye.

Company

Future Publishing

Country

United Kingdom

First issue

October 1985

Final issue

June 1995

Total issues

117

Average rating

67%

Top rated games

Rick Dangerous 2 (97%)

Lemmings (97%)

Spindizzy (96%)

Driller (96%)

Stunt Car Racer (96%)

Smash TV (96%)

Super Cauldron (96%)

Prehistorik 2 (96%)

Worst rated games

World Cup Carnival (0%)

Count Duckula 2 (3%)

Santa's Xmas Capers (6%)

Jetsons (10%)

Surprise Surprise (10%)

AMSTRAD USER

Amstrad User (not to be confused with *The Amstrad User* or *Amstrad Computer User*) was the official Amstrad monthly magazine published in Spain by Indescomp / Amstrad España. It ran for 41 issues in total, launching with its October 1985 issue and ending with its February 1989 issue.

As expected of the official publication, it covered all the Amstrad computers, from the CPC and PCW to the PC. Regular content in *Amstrad User* included news, hardware reviews, software reviews, type-in listings, pokes, gaming tips, and games reviews.

The games review section was placed in the centre of the magazine, and featured plenty of colour. Games were evaluated by an out of ten rating system for 'graficos', 'sonido', 'addiccion', and 'accion'.

With Amstrad purchasing Sinclair in 1988, this gave Amstrad España the opportunity to include Sinclair coverage in their official publication, so *Amstrad User* was re-launched as *Amstrad Sinclair Ocio* (translated as *Amstrad Sinclair Leisure*).



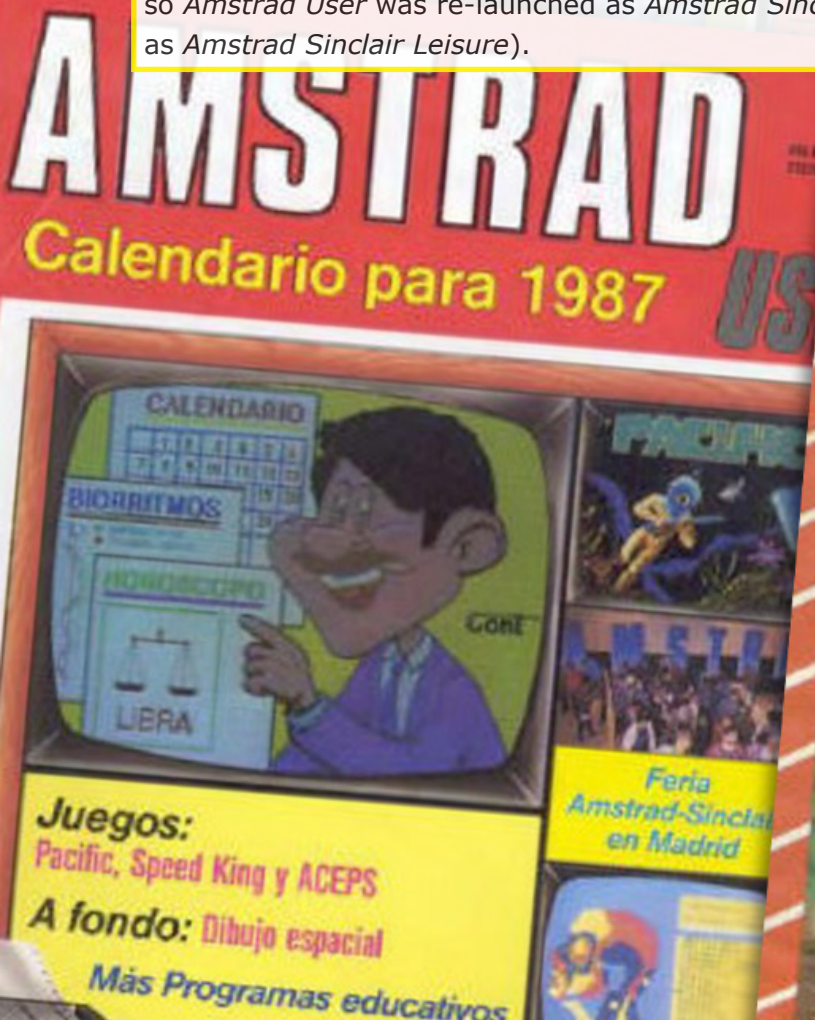
Company
Indescomp / Amstrad España
 Country
Spain
 First issue
October 1985
 Final issue
February 1989
 Total issues
41

Average rating

8/10

Top rated games (Addiccion)

Army Moves (10/10)
Ghosts 'n Goblins (10/10)
Pacific War Games (10/10)
World Games (10/10)



AMTIX!

MONTHLY SOFTWARE REVIEW FOR THE
AMSTRAD



Amtix! was a monthly magazine published by Newsfield Publications that covered Amstrad computer software in the mid to late-1980s. Following in the style of *Zzap!64* and *Crash* (Newsfield stablemates), *Amtix!* focused mainly on the gaming side of the Amstrad computers.

In naming the magazine, editor-to-be Jeremy Spencer used his Amstrad and an anagram program which came up with many suggestions, of which '*Amtix*' stood out as the best. It was Oliver Frey (Newsfield art editor) that suggested adding the exclamation mark.

Just like the other Newsfield titles at the time, *Amtix!* featured very distinctive, hand-drawn cover art by Oliver Frey. The regular content included news, 'On the Spot' (letters), 'Amtips' (game tips), Strategy section, games reviews, and an Adventure section (news, previews, reviews, and tips for adventure games).

Rather than having its own section, the games reviews were spread throughout the magazine. The main game reviews were spread out over two or three pages with one large screenshot of the game (often at a canted angle) filling the majority of one page. The main part of the review detailed the game's plot and gameplay, while three separate criticism comment boxes rounded off things. The games were rated by percentage on presentation, graphics, sound, playability, addictive, value, and overall. Any game that achieved a rating of 90% or more was given 'An *Amtix!* Accolade' award.

While *Amtix!* was known for its extensive game coverage, it did also cover technical aspects of the Amstrad CPC with its Am-Tech column and Lettertech pages, and published a science fiction comic strip titled *The Terminal Man* across the first 12 issues.

Amtix! became the first casualty of the UK's CPC magazine scene when Newsfield decided to cut their loses with the failing magazine and closed it with the April 1987, ending its relatively short run of 18 issues. The *Amtix!* brand was sold on to Database Publications, who merged its game coverage into their own *Computing With the Amstrad* magazine.

Company
Newsfield Publications
Country
United Kingdom
First issue
November 1985
Final issue
April 1987
Total issues
18

Average rating
68%

Top rated games

Graphic Adventure Creator
Incentive (98%)
Spindizzy (98%)
The Pawn (98%)
The Sentinel (98%)
Yie Ar Kung Fu (96%)
Fairlight (96%)
The Fourth Protocol (96%)
The Eidolon (96%)
Xeno (96%)

Worst rated games

BreakThru (5%)
Runes of Zendos (6%)
Golden Path (6%)
Castle Assault (8%)
Bachou (8%)

TU MICRO AMSTRAD

Tu Micro Amstrad (translated as *Your Amstrad Micro*) was a monthly Amstrad magazine published in Spain. It covered both leisure and serious side of the CPC, PCW, and PC computer ranges.

Typical content for each issue would be 'Al Dia' (news), hardware features, programming tutorials, 'Multisoft' (application software reviews), 'Amsware' (AMStrad softWARE games reviews), games tips, and type-in listings. As well as having normal games reviews throughout the games section, the magazine featured a multiple-page play through guide/review for the highlight game that issue.

Games were rated out of ten for 'Originalidad', 'adicción', 'graficos', 'dificultad', 'sonido', and 'desesperacion'. From issue 2, a 'calif. media' (average) out of ten rating was used as a final mark, although this was removed from issue 7.



Company
Ediciones Ingelek

Country

Spain

First issue

April 1986

Final issue

December 1987

Total issues

20

Average rating

6/10

Top rated games

Arkanoid (9/10)

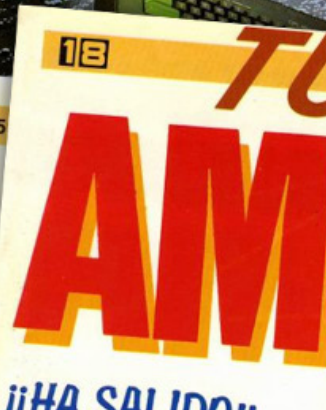
Batman (9/10)

Basketball Two on Two (9/10)

Future Knight (9/10)

Gorbarf (9/10)

Kinetic (9/10)



¡¡HA SALIDO!!
USUARIO PC
EL PRIMER PERIODICO
ESPECIALIZADO EN LOS
COMPATIBLES
Búsqueda
en el
interior
**CONTROL DE
PANTALLAS**
DESDE CODIGO MAQUINA
**Vidas infinitas
y mapa para
Last Mission**



AMSTAR



Company
Faurez-Mellet
Country
France
First issue
September 1986
Final issue
January 1991
Total issues
53

Average rating
13/20

Top rated games

After Burner (18/20)
Bomb Jack (18/20)
Savage (17/20)
Mortville Manor (17/20)
Skate Wars (17/20)
Chase H.Q. (17/20)
Shufflepuck Cafe (17/20)
Rainbow Islands (17/20)

Worst rated games

GI Hero (5/20)
Psycho Pigs UXB (6/20)
Overlander (7/20)

Amstar was a monthly, later bimonthly, magazine that mainly focused on gaming on the Amstrad CPC, although featured the PCW and PC. The magazine dedicated most of its pages to gaming with regular content such as news, previews, reviews, tips, and type-in listings.

Games were reviewed in the 'banc d'essai logiciels' (software test bench) section. For the first 24 issues, games were not given an overall rating, but from issue 25, an out of 20 rating was introduced. The 'le logiciel du mois' (game of the month) was given a two-page spread near the beginning of the issue.

With its 26th issue, the magazine incorporated fellow Amstrad publication CPC and was renamed *Amstar & CPC*. Its last proper issue was number 47, cover dated July 1990. *Amstar Informatique* appeared in August 1990 and also catered to other computers and consoles.



AMSTRADEBDO ET PC

Amstradebdo et PC (which translates as *Amstrad Weekly & PC*) was a short-lived weekly magazine published on Wednesdays and published by Shift. The magazine was short lived, lasting only 12 issues, ending with its 7 January 1987 edition.

The magazine followed a similar format to *Hebdogiciel*, the publisher's own multi-format weekly magazine, but covered the CPC, PCW, and PC computers.

The twenty-odd page newspaper-style magazine featured news and reviews on the latest games and software as well as including programming and listings.

The games section consisted of two pages near the front with four half-page reviews. Games were given an overall rating out of 20, with ratings also marked for 'graphisme', 'animation', 'Son/Bruitage', 'Interet', 'originalite', 'qualite/prix', and 'Autre'.



Company
Shift Editions
 Country
France
 First issue
22 October 1986
 Final issue
7 January 1987
 Total issues
12

Average rating

13/20

Top rated games

Magnetic Tank (18/20)
Bob Winner (18/20)
Fer et Flemme (18/20)

Worst rated games

Dan Dare: Pilot of the Future (10/20)
L'Antre de Gork (10/20)
1942 (10/20)
Meltdown (10/20)
Bigtop Barney (10/20)
City Slicker (10/20)
Top Gun (10/20)

LOGISTRAD/LOG'STAR

Logistrad's main draw was the cover-mounted cassette tape that featured four homebrew titles of games or utility software. The publication itself was a mini magazine promoting the software on the cover-tape with features and instructions. There were also instructions on how readers could transfer the software over to diskette.

Nouveau Logistrad was a re-launch of the *Logistrad* format in 1989, but this time the cover-mounted cassette tape featured old commercial software. The content for each issue was also slightly changed, and included news (centred around the developer/publisher of the cover-mounted games), 'profils' (on the developer/publisher), 'programme' (covering the game in question with gameplay instructions and tips), 'technique' (programming features).

With issue four, *Nouveau Logistrad* was renamed *Log'Star*, although it featured the same cover-mount cassette tape and content as before.

Company
Logipresse
Country
France
First issue
1986
Final issue
1990
Total issues
Unknown



AMSTRAD ACCION

Amstrad Accion was a bi-monthly magazine published in Spain. It launched at the beginning of 1987 and ran for 13 issues. The magazine mainly focused on the CPC computers, but also covered the PCW and PC range.

Initially, *Amstrad Accion* featured a balance of gaming and serious content, but this balance tipped towards the gaming's favour, turning the magazine into a dedicated gaming magazine. Early content included news, games reviews, software reviews, programming, hardware tutorials, and games tips.

For the first 10 issue, games were rated out of 10 on 'gragicos', 'movimiento', 'sonido', 'accion', 'adiccion', with the following issues having the ratings as a percentage system. The 'el juego del mes' (game of the month) was given a two-page spread near the beginning of the issue. Games in the reviews section worthy of mention were stamped with a 'recomendado' (recommended) seal of approval.



Company
Ediciones Informaticas del Norte
Country
Spain
First issue
#1 1987
Final issue
#13 1989
Total issues
13

Average rating

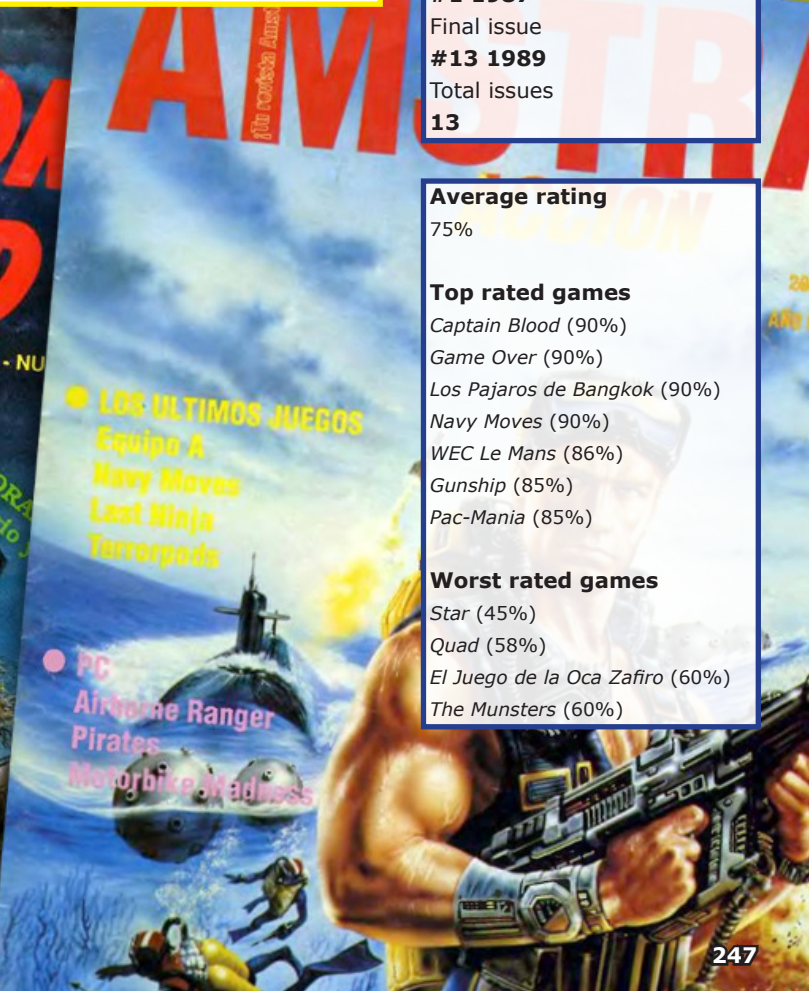
75%

Top rated games

Captain Blood (90%)
Game Over (90%)
Los Pajaros de Bangkok (90%)
Navy Moves (90%)
WEC Le Mans (86%)
Gunship (85%)
Pac-Mania (85%)

Worst rated games

Star (45%)
Quad (58%)
El Juego de la Oca Zafiro (60%)
The Munsters (60%)



GREEK SIDE OF AMSTRAD



Η Ελληνική πλευρά του Amstrad (translated as *The Greek Side of Amstrad*) was a monthly magazine published in Greece. *Greek Side of Amstrad* generally featured the more serious side of the Amstrad computers (hardware reviews, software reviews, programming, type-in listings), although there was a regular games reviews section.

Games were generally given around half a page for their review. Ratings were given as a percentage on categories such as graphics, sound, plot, duration, and total assessment.

Greek Side of Amstrad launched with a cover date of October/November 1986, and ended with issue 19 (July August 1988).

Company
Anadras
Country
Greece
First issue
Oct/Nov 1986
Final issue
Jul/Aug 1988
Total issues
19

Average rating
79%

Top rated games

Arkanoid: Revenge of Doh (99%)
Wishbringer (98%)
Arkanoid (97%)
Tai-Pan (97%)

Worst rated games

Out Run (35%)
The Astonishing Adventures of Mr. Weems and the She Vampires (51%)
Rolling Thunder (55%)



AMSTRAD CENT POUR CENT

Amstrad Cent Pour Cent (translated as *Amstrad One Hundred Percent*) was the official monthly magazine in for the Amstrad CPC. Launched in February 1988, *Amstrad Cent Pour Cent*'s covered games and programming on the CPC with programming tutorials, listings, reviews of games and utilities, and more.

Long running regular content included 'Actuel' (the latest news in the CPC scene), 'Pokes au Rapport', 'Assembleur', Basic, Listing, 'Les plus belles lettres de Miss X' (letters pages were hosted by Miss X), and more.

The games reviews pages were split into two sections with the 'Softs a la une' (Software at the front) placed in the first half of the magazine, while the 'Softs du mois' (Software of the month) section came in the second half. Games were rated by percentage on 'graphisme', 'son', 'animation', 'richesse', 'scénario', 'ergonomie', 'notice', 'longévité', 'rhaa'/'lovely', with an overall rating given in a separate box. From issue 19, games that were rated 75% or better were awarded the '100% a d'or' (translated as 100% Gold).

Starting with issue 40 (September 1991), the magazine became bimonthly, then for its 46th issue (January 1993), it became quarterly, before finally calling it a day with the final issue 49 (October 1993).



Company
Media Systeme Edition
Country
France
First issue
February 1988
Final issue
October 1993
Total issues
49

Average rating

72%

Top rated games

Burnin' Rubber (99%)
Barbarian II: Dungeon of Drax (98%)
Prince of Persia (98%)
B.A.T. (98%)
Iron Lord (97%)
Bumpy's Arcade Fantasy (97%)

Worst rated games

Sarracen (0%)
Chain Reacton (0%)
War Cars Construction Set (0%)
Momy (5%)
World Championship Soccer (15%)

EXCLUSIF
EXPLOITEZ
S PLUS
VOTRE CPC+

INITEL
COUVREZ
8615 ACPC

CHNIQUE
GRAMMEZ
OVERSCAN

LES HITS !

ADDAMS FAMILY
PSYBORG
SPACE CRUSADE
KILLERBALL

GAGNEZ
UN SAUT EN
PARAPENTE

COMPLETEZ VOTRE
LOGITHEQUE

PROTEGEZ
VOS LOGICIELS

AMSTRAD SINCLAIR OCIO

Amstrad Sinclair Ocio (translated as *Amstrad Sinclair Leisure*) was the successor to *Amstrad User*, the official Amstrad monthly magazine in Spain. With Amstrad purchasing Sinclair in 1988, this gave them the opportunity to cover both the Amstrad and Sinclair range of computers with the official *Amstrad Sinclair Ocio* magazine.

As with its predecessor, *Amstrad Sinclair Ocio* covered games, hardware, and software. Regular content included 'Actualidad' (news), 'El Programador' (developer profiles), hardware tests, Juegos (games reviews), software reviews, type-in listings, and games tips.

With issue 15 (May 1990), the magazine was renamed to *MegaOcio* (translated as *Mega Leisure*) and not only covered Amstrad and Spectrum but also the Amiga and games consoles. The magazine finally came to an end with issue 36, cover dated April 1992.

Company
Amstrad España
Country
Spain

First issue
March 1989
Final issue
April 1992
Total issues
36

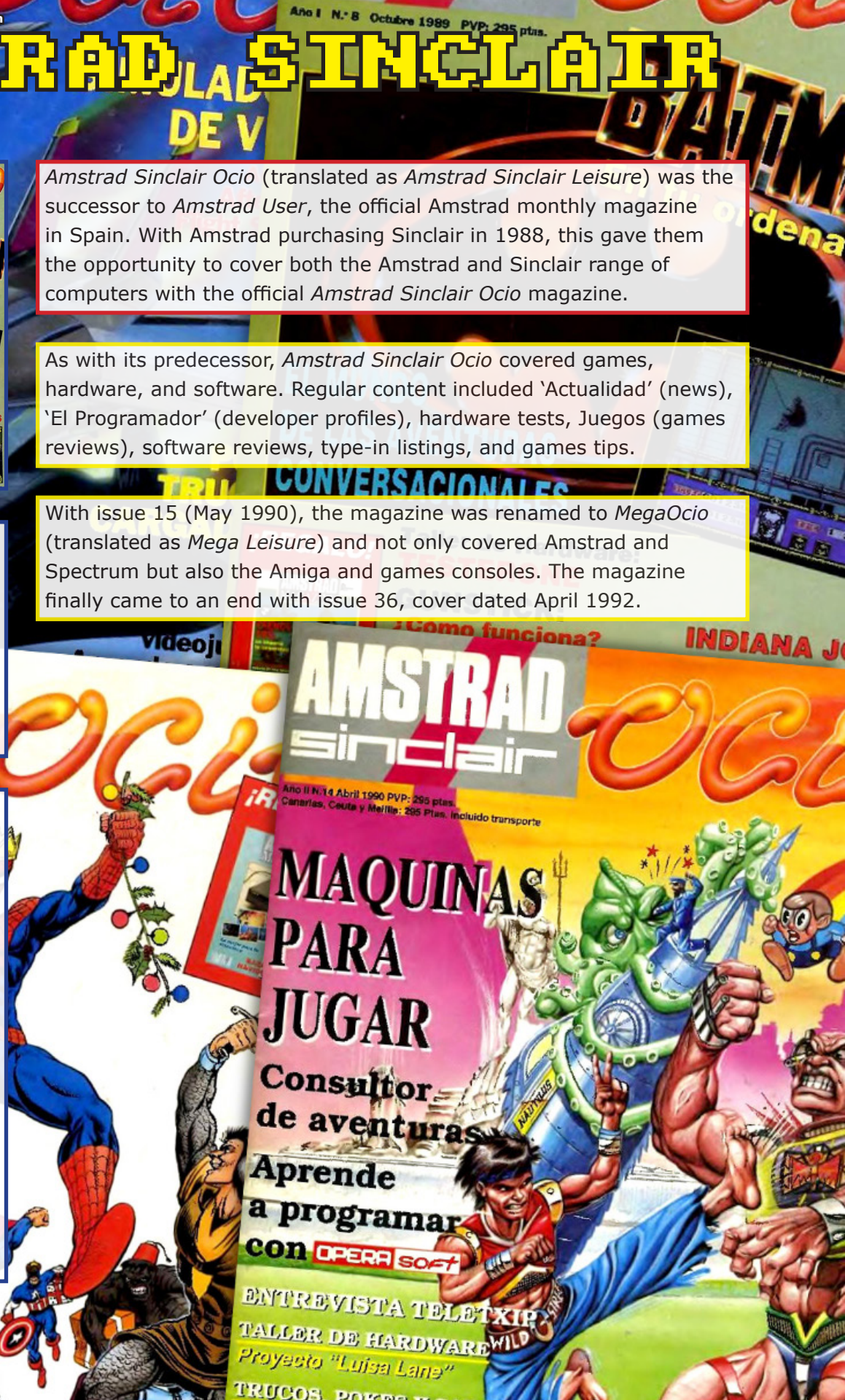
Average rating
7.7/10

Top rated games

MOT (10/10)
Mata-Hari (9/10)
Paris-Dakar (9/10)
Gonzzalezz (9/10)
H.A.T.E. (9/10)
Stormlord (9/10)
Time Scanner (9/10)
Chuck Yeager's Advanced Flight Trainer (9/10)
Captain Trueno (9/10)
Jabato (9/10)
Satan (9/10)
Beach Volley (9/10)
Rick Dangerous (9/10)

Worst rated game

Zipi y Zape (5/10)



RUNSTRAD/RUN'STAR

RunStar was a sister publication to Logipresse's *Logistrad*. Both publications featured a similar format: cover-mounted cassette tape (with four software titles) and content covering the games and developer/publisher themselves.

The mini magazine was divided into several sections: 'News' (covering news items most often focused on the publisher of the games provided), 'Profils' (on the developer/publisher), 'Programme' (covering the games in question, with instructions and tips), for use and aids, 'Technique' (programming).

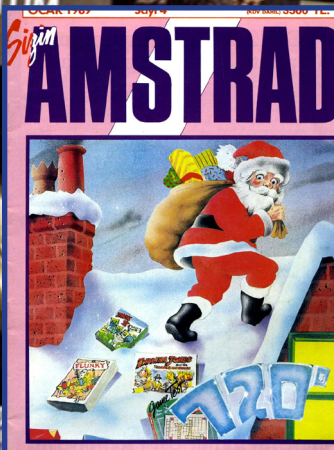
With issue three, *Runstrad* was renamed to *Run'Star*, although it featured the same cover-mount cassette tape and content as before.



Company
Logipresse
Country
France
First issue
June 1989
Final issue
1990
Total issues
Unknown



SIZIN AMSTRAD



Sizin Amstrad was a short-lived Turkish Amstrad magazine which ran for seven issues, October 1988 to April 1989. The magazine borrowed heavily from UK publications such as *Amstrad Computer User*, *Computing With the Amstrad* and, to a lesser extent, *Amstrad Action*. The front cover and logo design resembles *Amstrad Computer User* from its late '80s era, with the layouts inside taking elements from both *Amstrad Computer User* and *Amstrad Action*.

While the magazine was predominantly CPC, the latter third of each issue featured PCW and PC coverage. The actual content was well balanced between the serious and gaming side of the Amstrad computers. The 60-odd pages in each issue came with regulars such as 'Crash Mode' (games tips), 'Game Test' (game reviews), 'Program' (type-in listings), and 'Hardware' features.

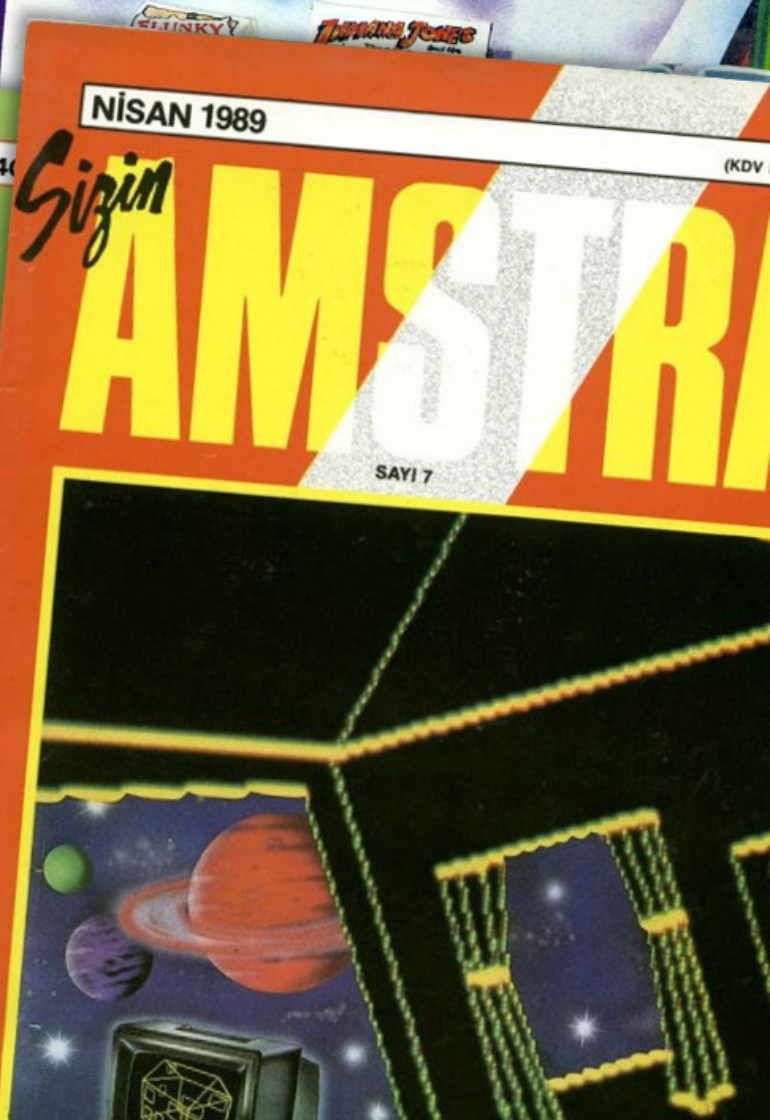
Company
Memoreks Bilgisayar Hizmetleri
Country
Turkey

First issue
October 1988
Final issue
April 1989
Total issues
7

Average rating
79%

Top rated games

Green Beret (% 90)
Combat School (% 90)
Gryzor (% 90)
Arkanoid (% 90)
Krakout (% 90)
Kung Fu Master (% 90)
Arkanoid II: Revenge of Doh (% 90)



CPC ATTACK

CPC Attack was a short-lived monthly magazine that covered the Amstrad CPC and plus range of computers, as well as covering other videogame consoles. With the CPC scene appealing more to gamers during the early 1990s, *CPC Attack* focused its content towards the younger computer user.

The magazine included regulars such as news, letters pages, games tips, and games reviews. Its adventure section *The Dungeon* looked at the adventure scene with news, reviews, and tips. The *Public Sector* was a round-up of public domain software with news and reviews. Although the magazine's main focus was leisure, it still featured some technical pages, including Q&A (technical and programming), *Demo Time* (tutorials on creating demos), and BASIC programming tutorials.

The magazine had a non-Amstrad related monthly feature called *Console Crazy* that covered the latest games consoles such as Sega Master System, Mega Drive, NES, SNES, Game Boy, and the Game Gear.

During its run, *CPC Attack* featured a rolling Top 50 list of best Amstrad games, which they updated when they covered new releases. As of the sixth and final issue, the top five games were *Lemmings*, *Prince of Persia*, *Smash TV*, *Rick Dangerous*, and *Rainbow Islands*.



Company

Headway Home & Law

Country

United Kingdom

First issue

June 1992

Final issue

November 1992

Total issues

6

Average rating

76%

Top rated games

Lemmings (98%)

The Addams Family (94%)

Striker in the Crypts of Trogan (93%)

Worst rated games

Hideos (50%)

DJ Puff (59%)

Touchdown (60%)

HOME BREW

From the launch of the Amstrad CPC464 in 1984, there has been a tremendous amount of support from the homebrew community with regards to video games. In the early years (1984–1987), homebrew gaming was all about type ins; hundreds of them. Magazines, both Amstrad CPC specific and multi-format, were full of them. Every month there would be new type-in listings from ordinary everyday people who had sent in their code hoping for it to be published. This was the essence of CPC homebrew gaming at this time.

While magazine type-ins would last for many years, it was around 1987 when the homebrew scene evolved into the Public Domain (or PD libraries). This was sort of a new world for the CPC even though PD gaming had been around for many years in the world of computing. With the PD libraries, you didn't have to type in reams of lines; for the cost of postage and a small fee, you could get heaps of homebrew games on a few tapes or disks.


Driving this surge of homebrew was the big three CPC European markets: France, Spain, and Germany. In particular, one group from France called Black System were prolific in the CPC homebrew scene, releasing games such as *Fruity* (1988), *Mage* (1989), *Cosmos* (1989), *Military School* (1989), *Hagar* (1989), *Mega War* (1990), and *Fire!* (1990).

British magazine *Amstrad Action* recognized the trend of PD and in issue 53 (February 1990) launched a new section of the magazine called 'Free For All'. Every month, there was news and information on the latest in the world of CPC public domain games and software.

Then in 1992 came *Zap'T'Balls*, a *Pang* clone from Elmar Krieger. Released through German magazine *Amstrad CPC International*, *Zap'T'Balls* reached new heights in CPC homebrew gaming, showcasing just how far the scene had come. Soon after, Elmar Krieger followed up with an update, *Zap'T'Balls: Advanced Edition*, with more levels and was given a commercial release.

Even though the CPC was no more, homebrew games appeared occasionally from 1996 through to 2006. Homebrew group Bollaware remained active, releasing *Bo* (1994), *Black Land* (1995), and *Fres Fighter 2 Turbo* (1999).

It was in 2007 when homebrew gaming kicked off big style with the emergence of software houses such as Cronosoft and Psytronik, publishing new games for various computers, including the Amstrad CPC. Not only did the games come on physical media such as cassette tape or floppy disk, it included a case and inlay with instructions — just like the golden age of the 8-bit computers. This signalled a new



homebrew era with popular games like *Star Sabre* from Psytronik Software, *Balloonacy* from Cronosoft, *Frogger* by Richard Wilson, and *Groops* from Binary Sciences. All these titles gave video game starved CPC fans and users around the globe a taste of what the CPC homebrew scene had been missing and a taste of what was to come.

Somewhat of a mini revival occurred. CPC homebrew games were better than ever before. Originality was the theme, game releases like *Sudoku Master* from Binary Sciences, *Phatomas Saga* from the Mojon Twins, and *Orion Prime* by Cargosoft all proved big hits.

The next part of the homebrew evolution saw coders update and improve commercially released games from the 1980s/90s, making them an even better gaming experience. In 2009 *Rick Dangerous* got a make over with the fan-made *Rick Dangerous 128+* from Fano, BDC Iron and MacDeath. In 2011 the original *Bubble Bobble* game received major improvements with *Bubble Bobble 4CPC* thanks to CNGSoft. In 2012 came the release of a homebrew remake of *R-Type* by the Easter Egg group (Fano, Toto, Ixien, Grim, Syx, Targhan, and more).

These games are impressive achievements, and such an improvement on their commercially released source games of the 1980s. This showed that the CPC was a powerful games machine, but didn't always have its full potential realized at the height of its commercial life. Efforts such as these demonstrated that the CPC homebrew gaming scene was alive and kicking.

It was 2013 when the CPC homebrew scene exploded. This was thanks to the launch of the annual Amstrad CPC game creation contest CPC Retro Dev ([#cpcretrodev](#)). This new contest helped turn a homebrew scene mini revival into a homebrew renaissance. In the years that CPC Retro Dev has been running, dozens of new CPC games are developed every year for inclusion in the contest.

Some of the more successful games to be submitted to the competition include *Outlaws*, *Space Moves*, *Ice Slider*, *Frogalot*, *Lárcenas Legacy*, *La Caja Fuerte*, *Super Retro Robot Rampage*, *Orc's Dungeon*, and *Dragon Attack*.

The decade of 2007-2017 has been the busiest yet for CPC homebrew and that is down to numerous events and tools becoming available. The advances in CPC emulation, coding information available online (such as the CPC Wiki forums), new coding tools [CPCtelera ('C' language), WYZTracker (music), AMSprite (Sprite / Loading Screen editor), 8BP and Amstrad Basic 3 (basic languages)], CPC groups, and enthusiasts from all over the world and, of course, the now annual CPC Retro Dev game contest.

FRES FIGHTER II



Bollaware

1999

Code

Roland Barthel
(Doc Barthoc)

Graphics

Sigurd Fauser
(Uncle Sigg)

Music

Tom Et Jerry/Gpa

A host of characters are gathered for a one-on-one fighting tournament: Vanessa (muscle street fighter girl), Justine (the religious nun type figure), Shamane (native American woman), Bones (who is quite literally a pile of skeleton bones re-animated), Walker (a two legged green monster), and F.Sumo (as the name suggests, a sumo wrestling fellow).

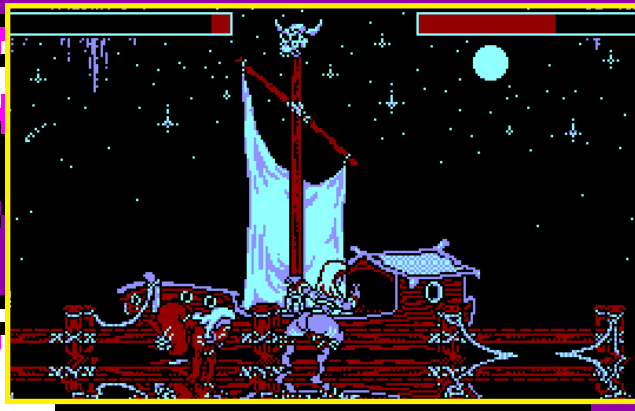
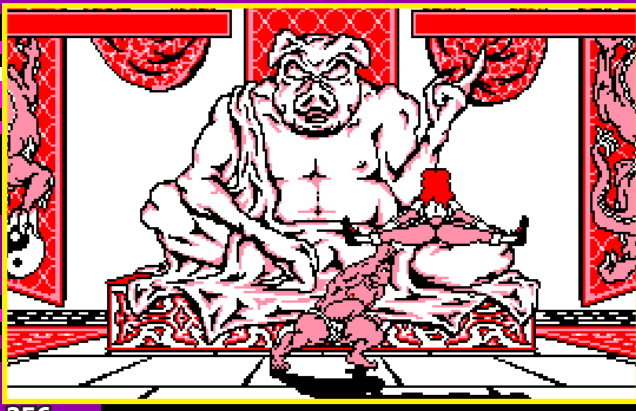
Each character has their basic moves (kick, punch, jump and so on) as well as their own special moves unique to that character. The winner of each fight is the last one standing after the best of three bouts.

The wealth of options is varied. The player can choose from two to seven round bouts, have the special effects on or off, select baby or hard level, choose one or two player, plus a mode to have up to 16 players. Choose one player and you get more options such as 'single battle', 'arcade', 'championship' and 'survival'.

Fres Fighter II Turbo (the last Bollaware release for the CPC) was released on four disks and only worked with a 128k compatible Amstrad CPC.

This was Bollaware's final Amstrad CPC release before moving on to other projects.

Fres Fighter II Turbo belatedly filled the void that the cancelled *Street Fighter II* left behind for CPC gamers. The game received a perfect 10/10 from *CPC Game Reviews*.



GROOPS

Groops! is a puzzle game where the player has to group certain blocks together, making them explode for points. Unlike similar puzzle games, though, here all the blocks are in place as the game begins. The bigger the explosion, the more points the player will earn. Exploding groups of blocks allows the columns of blocks above to fall down, so planning ahead soon becomes a tactical factor. The game ends when there are no possible groups available.

There are three main modes: 'Normal', 'Fast', with a 'Challenge' section also available. The 'Fast' option involves playing with a half-filled level but the scoring is more difficult. The 'Challenge' section becomes available once you manage to gain high scores — this involves gaining high scores with randomly placed blocks. Gain a sufficient score — which can be saved to disk — and you are given a password for the next challenge.

Groops! was the first release from Binary Sciences who followed up with their only other game to date with *Sudoku Master* in 2009.

Groops! was well received by the CPC gaming community upon its release. The game was given an 86% from *Retro Gamer*, 10/10 from *CPC Game Reviews*, 86% from *RGCD*, and 8/10 from *Old School Gaming*.



Binary Sciences

2007

Programming

Olivier Floquet (Eliot)

Graphics

Arnaud Martin (Slyder)

Sound

William Bourgeois (Repo)



ORION PRIME



Cargosoft

2009

Code & Music

Julien Nevo (Targhan)

GFX

Mathieu Gauzentest

(Grim) &

Sylvestre Campin

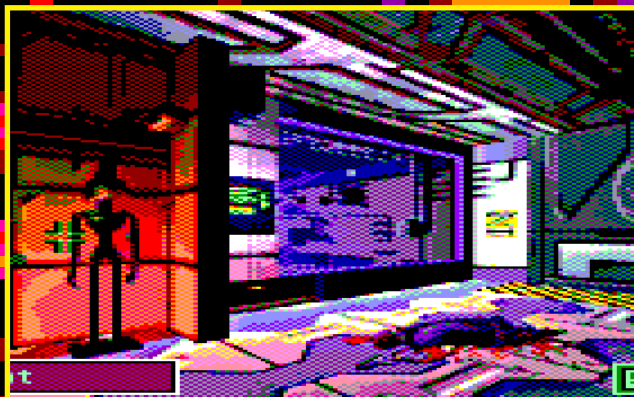
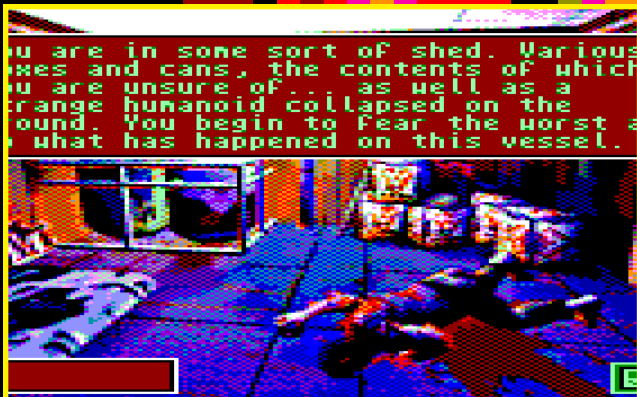
On a return hyperspace trip from a smuggling run, a space craft mistakenly runs into an asteroid field, forcing the pilot to abandon ship. The escape shuttle makes it clear of the asteroid belt, but the pilot appears to be lost in space, until he comes across a seemingly abandoned space vessel.

Orion Prime is a first-person point-and-click adventure game with the player controlling the unnamed smuggler. The game's on-screen pointer is moved around by using the joystick or cursor keys. Movement around the vessel is carried out by clicking on arrows at the edge of the screens. Objects that can be interacted with — doors, locks, computers — will pop up with a box to click on. Progress will require interacting with objects, computers, locked doors, and puzzles by using either the pilot's inventory tools or checking the PDA for messages collected along the way.

Orion Prime runs on an Amstrad CPC with 128k of memory. It was originally released in the French language, and in physical format of 3" and 3.5" discs. The DVD style case package included the game discs, an audio CD, and a newspaper article. The game was later made freely available for download for use in emulators.

English and Spanish translations of the game were released in 2010. Later the same year all versions were available as free downloads. It was in 2012 when a German translated version was finally made available as a free download.

Orion Prime was well received within the CPC community with some positive reviews. *Retro Gamer* awarded the game an overall rating of 83%, while *CPC Games Reviews* gave it a perfect 10/10.



SUB HUNTER

Huge vicious fish are roaming the seas and chomping on innocent swimmers. It turns out that a secret scientific experiment to increase the number of fish has gone slightly wrong to say the least. Taking control of a submarine (charged with infinite torpedoes) one man has been tasked with exploring the undersea landscape, dealing with mutant fish, enemy submarines (who don't want anyone meddling in this incident), and all the while protecting any human swimmers by picking them up.

Sub Hunter is a shoot 'em up with a difference: not only does the player shoot the enemy, but they've got to carry out rescue missions as well. Some levels scroll from right to left where you negotiate mutant fish and enemy subs while rescuing swimmers, other levels consists of dropping depth charges onto the required number of mutant fish to allow the swimmers to swim to safety, others are a dive and rescue mission. The mutant sea creatures come in all shapes and sizes, too, with mutant fish, squid, crabs, and jellyfish.

The game is based on *Sub Hunt*, a Vic 20 game later converted to the C64 in 1984. With the desire for an updated conversion, Richard Bayliss developed *Sub Hunter* in 2008, but this wasn't just a straight forward update. Paul Kooistra ported the game over to the Amstrad CPC in 2011.

Sub Hunter was well received upon its release. It was given an overall rating of 90% in *Retro Gamer* and a 9/10 at *CPC Game Reviews*.



Psytronik Software

2011

Concept

Richard Bayliss and

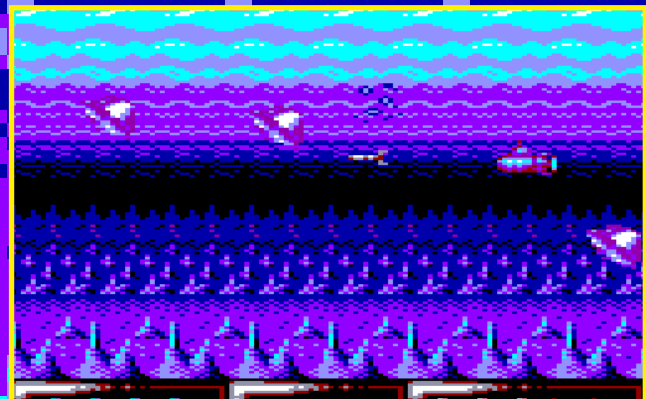
Frank Gasking

Amstrad CPC version

Paul Kooistra

Music

Tom et Jerry



BUBBLE BOBBLE

4CPC



Baron Von Blubba, the evil villain, wrecked havoc across the land, turning the brothers Bub and Bob into Bubble Dragons while kidnapping their girlfriends. Bub and Bob decide to go after Von Blubba, take his minions out with their new bubble blowing skills, and rescue their girlfriends.

One or two player platform game where the player(s) take control of Bub or Bob in their mission to progress through the many levels. Players are able to blow bubbles which can trap the enemy, allowing the player to burst the bubble and turn the enemy into collectible food. However, if the trapped enemy is not destroyed within a certain time, it will escape and go on a rampage around the screen.



The original arcade game was released by Taito in 1986. The game was followed by many sequels and spin-offs. The arcade game was initially converted to the Amstrad CPC in 1988 by Software Creations and published by Firebird. The only other game in the series to appear on the CPC is *Rainbow Islands*, which was converted by Ocean Software in 1989.

CNG Soft

2011

Author

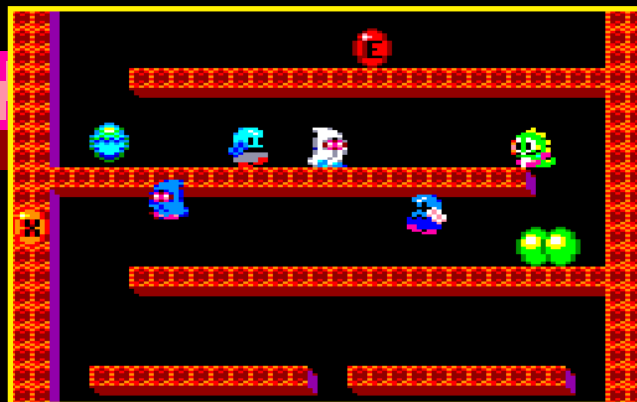
Cesar Nicolas Gonzalez

Music

Tom et jerry/GPA

The developers have improved upon the original gameplay, graphics, and sound, as well as adding the full content of the arcade with playable two player co-op mode. The game was given a physical release on cassette tape, which included plastic case, cover inlay with instructions, and cassette tape.

Bubble Bobble for CPC was well received upon its release. It was awarded 87% by *Retro Gamer*, 9/10 by *CPC Game Reviews*, and 4/5 by RGCD.



R-TYPE REMAKE

Out in the far reaches of space, a devastating war is being fought between an evil invading force called the Bydo Empire whose aim is to destroy mankind and take over the galaxy. However, mankind is fighting back and sends one of their best pilots to take on the enemy forces.

A side-scrolling shoot 'em up with the player taking control of the lone pilot. The game is controlled with a joystick using directional and two fire buttons. Quickly tapping fire button 1 will release a rapid fire of laser shots while holding down the button will charge the weapon for a powerful plasma beam shot. Destroying the enemy will enable the player to collect power ups. One of the power ups is the Force which acts as a shield or extra weapon on the front or back of the player. Pressing fire button 2 will release the force across the screen and pressing fire button again will call it back.

Also known as *R-Type Enhanced Version* and *R-Type Reloaded*, the game is an unofficial, remake of *R-Type* that was originally released on the Amstrad CPC in 1989. This remake comes with many enhancements including music, improved graphics, faster scrolling, a built-in cheat mode, and additional playing options. The game was released on 3" and 3.5" disk packages.

R-Type (2012) was well received, gaining good coverage upon its release. *Retro Gamer* gave the game an overall rating of 82%, *CPC Game Reviews* gave it a 10/10, *Old School Gaming* gave it 9/10, *RGCD* gave it 4.5/5, and *Retromaniac* gave it 4/5.



Easter Egg

2012

Program by

Fano

Graphics by

TotO

Music by

iXien

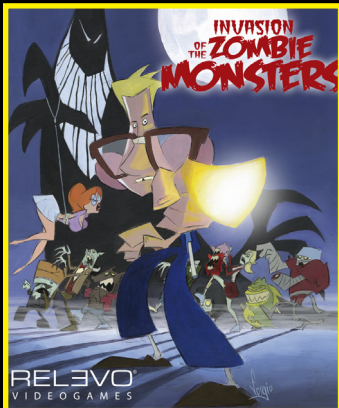
Additional code & graphics by

Grim &

Mauricio Munoz Lucero



INVASION OF THE ZOMBIE MONSTERS



Ned and Linda are enjoying the end of their day together when a bright thunderbolt shoots down from the night sky and surrounds them. When the light fades, Ned sees a huge evil shadow has engulfed the city and that Linda has disappeared.

Side-scrolling platform game with the player taking control of Ned as he progresses through various stages from the streets to the woods and to the school in search of the evil creature and his girlfriend. Each stage must be completed within a time limit and is full of monsters (zombies, werewolves, reptiles) but, using Ned's newfound power, the player is able to shoot moonlight power balls to take out any enemy that gets in the way.



Originally released for the ZX Spectrum in 2010, the Amstrad CPC conversion was the first time that Relevo had worked on the CPC.

According to Relevo's official Twitter feed, a sequel titled *Ned's Trick or Treat Bizarre Odyssey* was envisioned. An early idea for the game was that Ned would have solved puzzles by using different costumes. There were also thoughts on having Linda being the main character, but it the game didn't make into the development phase.

The game was given a special box edition release which included the game on cassette tape, a bonus extras CD, and instruction manual.

Critically acclaimed with many plaudits given at the time. *Retro Gamer* gave the game an overall rating of 83%, while *CPC Game Reviews* awarded it a 9/10.

Relevo Videogames 2013

Direction, main code and gfx

Jon Cortázar

Storyline and scenarios

Kepa Cortázar &

Jon Cortázar

Character design

Sergio Martínez, Jon

Cortázar & Kepa Cortázar

Additional code

José Vila

Music composed by

Gominolas



A PRELUDE TO CHAOS

A Cyborg Queen has sent her minions out to capture a village and have it prepared for her arrival so that she may become the supreme ruler and take over the world. The distraught, innocent villagers overcome their initial shock and horror, enlisting Amy to save them from the evil and callous Cyborg Queen.

A top down maze adventure game with the player controlling Amy across the 70 screens, exploring the village, solving puzzles, collecting jewels, using keys, pushing walls and objects around, while avoiding the enemy minions holding the captured villagers.

To protect her on the quest Amy has access to four different weapons — water gun, fire gun, EMP gun, and an acid gun. Each weapon has different uses, some can only be used on certain enemies and each weapon has different abilities to help Amy solve the puzzles on each screen.

Based on same title of his ZX Spectrum game, Egotrip has made the Amstrad CPC version much larger in size and scope, utilising the coding tool CPCtelera. Experienced retro gamers will realise this top down adventure maze game is inspired by the *Zelda* series of games.

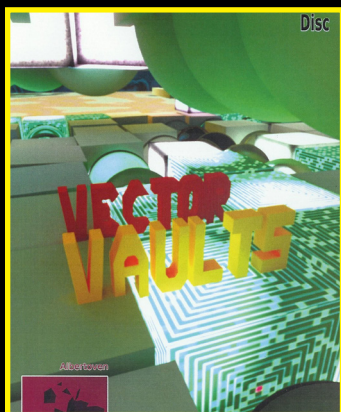
A Prelude to Chaos was given a big response upon its release. *Retro Gamer* gave the game an overall rating of 80%, while *CPC Game Reviews* gave in a 9/10.



Egotrip
2016



VECTOR VAULTS



Samuel has been abducted by the Dingir and taken into Annu's mother-ship orbiting the earth. With no idea why they want him, Samuel manages to break into the Solomon onboard computer, using a virtual space ship avatar called an Enoch.

Vector Vaults is a futuristic scrolling shoot 'em up where the player flies the Enoch ship across multiple vector levels. The task won't be easy, it will be a strict test of the player's pilot skills. As the player navigates their way through the Solomon computer, an energy bar in the bottom left of screen will deplete and must be refilled by collecting batteries along the way. The reward for success will be Galactic Imperium citizenship and an indefinite lifespan.



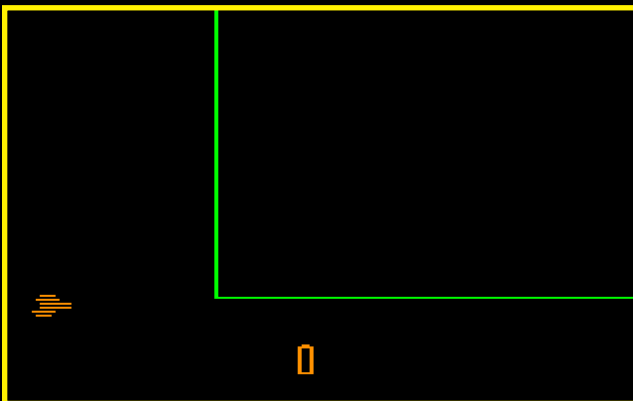
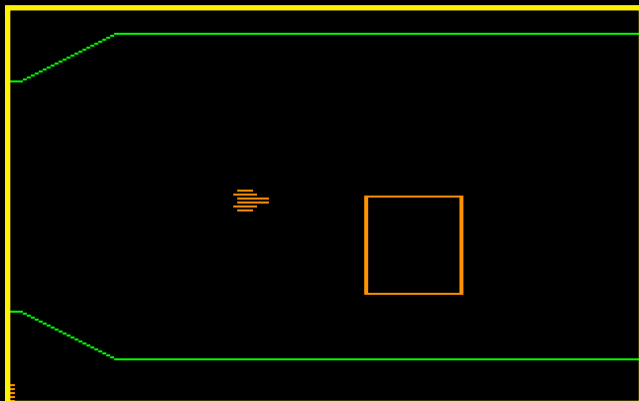
Alberto Rodriguez Martinez, drew the inspiration for the Vector Vaults game from another Amstrad CPC title, a scrambler clone, called Killer Cobra, which uses a hardware scroll.

According to coder Martinez, Vector Vaults does not use a hardware scroll, but rather a new graphic technique called Mode C. Mode C provides three colours and 160×200 pixel resolution, but its primary advantage is being able to clear the screen seven times faster.

**Alberto Rodriguez
Martinez**
2016

Developed in 'C' with assembly, Vector Vaults requires 128kb and a 3" disk and disk drive. As the first game of the Hidden History Saga, upon completion of *Vector Vaults*, the player will be given a secret code to use in Light Lands, the next entry in the series.

Vector Vaults was applauded for its 'less is more' approach, which produced a fast and smooth gaming experience. *CPC Game Reviews* gave the game a 9/10 rating.



DOOMSDAY LOST ECHOES

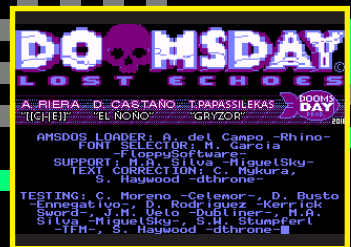
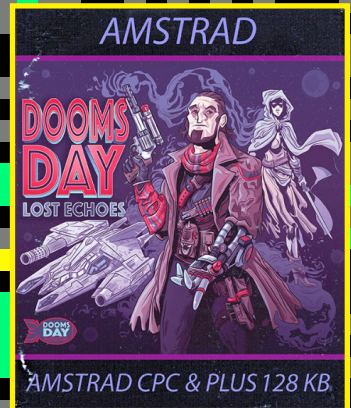
A hard working sorceress decides she needs a break from her busy schedule of making potions in her laboratory and goes on a holiday. When she arrives back to her lab, she is shocked to find all her potions have been stolen. Now she must find out who did it and get her potions back.

In this arcade platformer, the sorceress must explore 50 different stages to retrieve all the potions. Each stage has a number of different monsters — jesters, witches, goblins, demons, and ghosts — with each one having their own specific behaviour and abilities. To uncover the potions from the enemies, the sorceress must stun them by using magic or hitting them with other enemies.

Each of the 50 stages must be completed within a 50 seconds time limit. To complete a level, the sorceress must kill all the enemies, recover all the potions, and leave via an exit door that appears. At every 10,000 points, the sorceress will get an extra life.

Doomsday Lost Echoes was also given a physical release by poly.play as a collector's edition in either cassette tape, 3", or 3.5" diskette versions. The shrink wrapped packages come with jewel case, game media, 24-page instruction manual, and more.

The game was well received upon its release. It was rated 8/10 by *CPC Game Reviews*.



Doomsday Productions 2016

Original idea, plot, code

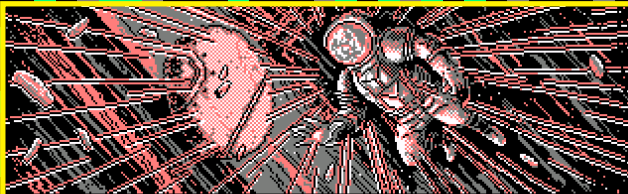
Alberto Riera ([C]-[E])

Plot, concepts, graphics

Dani Castaño (El Nño)

Plot

Themistocles Papassilekas (Gryzor)



The station is still pressurized! As soon as I kick the metal, the air starts blowing like a hurricane and I am smashed against the ceiling of the airlock. Everything I was carrying flies away and is lost in the outer space... I barely manage to keep the laser cutter with me!



This room is full of cabinets and constructed from reinforced concrete. It was used to store hand weapons, turrets, heavy armour and military robots. An android, now long dead, is still waiting to be cannibalised for parts, but most of the stuff is gone. I can also see: an armour.

MAGICA



Usebox.net

2016

Author

Juan J. Martinez

Loading Screen

Vanja Utne

A hard working sorceress decides she needs a break from her busy schedule of making potions in her laboratory and goes on a holiday. When she arrives back to her lab, she is shocked to find all her potions have been stolen. Now she must find out who did it and get her potions back.

In this arcade platformer, the sorceress must explore 50 different stages to retrieve all the potions. Each stage has a number of different monsters — jesters, witches, goblins, demons, and ghosts — with each one having their own specific behaviour and abilities. To uncover the potions from the enemies, the sorceress must stun them by using magic or hitting them with other enemies.

Each of the 50 stages must be completed within a 50 seconds time limit. To complete a level, the sorceress must kill all the enemies, recover all the potions, and leave via an exit door that appears. At every 10,000 points, the sorceress will get an extra life.

Magica was also published by poly.play as a collector's edition in either cassette tape, 3", or 3.5" diskette versions. The shrink wrapped packages comes with jewel case, game media, 8-page instruction manual, cardboard slipcase, and more.

The game was well received upon its release. It was rated 8/10 by *CPC Game Reviews*.



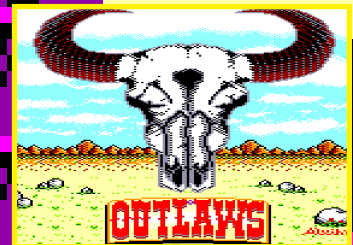
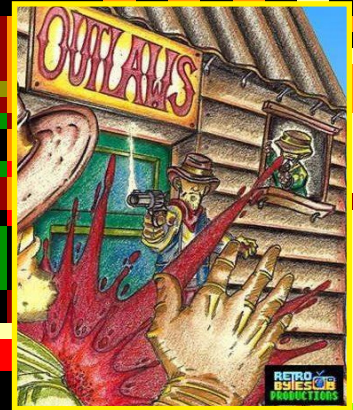
OUTLAWS

Daniel was kidnapped and taken away from his family at a young age by a mob of outlaws and brought up in the ways of the wild west. One night, Daniel stole the big outlaw boss' Colt gun, used it to kill the ruthless boss, and decided to take on the rest of the mob.

Outlaws is a third person arcade shooter in a similar vein to the classic game *Cabal*. After the practice level, the player is thrown out into the lawlessness of Cowntury County with all sorts of villains and outlaws to shoot down. Daniel has four lives with a life being lost when an outlaw shoots him. The player can receive gifts by shooting at barrels, which are found in general play across the normal and bonus rounds.

The game was developed using 'C' language coding tool CPCtelera. Due to limitations with memory and time, many concepts were left out of the final game. *Outlaws Reloaded* was released at the end of 2016 and improves the frame rate, fixes some bugs, and adds support for the use of a Lightgun.

Outlaws was entered into the #CPCRetroDev 2016 game creation competition and came away with first place overall ('Pro Winner'), receiving a final score of 9.05. The game also won individual awards at the contest, including a Dinamic award for innovative gameplay, a Gominolas award for best music, and a Jon Ritman Nominee for technical development. The game was given a 9/10 rating at *CPC Game Reviews*.



Retrobytes Productions 2016

Code:

Toni Ramirez

Graphics

**Alejandro Layunta
(Alxinho)**

Music & FX

Jose A. Martin



CHIBI AKUMAS 2



2017

Code, GFX & SFX

Keith Sear

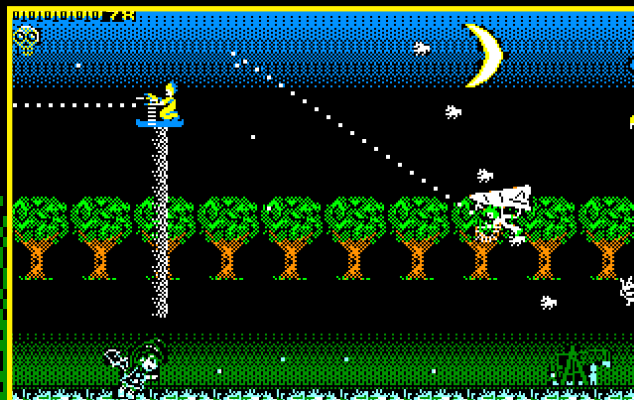
The town of Nicoyama is in trouble with Evil Chibiko plaguing their land, killing their inhabitants, and massacring their neighbors. If Chibiko's evilness wasn't enough, now her ghoulish brother, Bochan Akuma, has been resurrected from the dead, too. It is just a matter of time before the inhabitants of Nicoyama are wiped out forever.

As any good towns folk would do in the face of ultimate evil, they seek out the help of heroes, but none have bothered to show up. Instead, the infamous Hero Twins, Yumi and Yume Yuusha, have decided to help the good people of Nicoyama.

Chibi Akumas: Episode 2 is a bullet hell shoot 'em up for one or two players. Players can hold down the fire button to constantly fire on the enemy, with one button firing forwards and the other button backwards to take out any sneak attacks. There are three smart bombs to use, too, which can take out all enemy on screen at once.

Chibi Akumas: Episode 2 claims to be the first Amstrad CPC game to take advantage of having 256K memory installed, giving you enhanced boss battles.

The first game *Chibi Akuma: Episode 1 – Invasion* was released on 31 December 2016.



SIR ABABOL II

Sir Ababol had retired in the land of Belchite and spends his days tending to his garden. One day he is contacted by King Yoghourteric for help in the lands of Freezia, so Ababol sets out for Freezia to discover what the problem is. After days of travelling, Ababol learns that the evil druid Alastor de la Babucha, duke of Freezia and marquis of Fridgeland, has turned every young prince and princess in Freezia and Fridgeland into bats.

Sir Ababol II: The Ice Palace is a one-player flip-screen arcade platformer with the player controlling Ababol on his exploration of the six towers of Freezia. Sir Ababol can run, jump, and use his sword in any direction to fend off any baddies. Striking an enemy will stun them, allowing Ababol to sneak past them. The sword will also be needed to smash through ice blocks, which may contain coins or extra lives.

At the top of each tower, Ababol will face off with one or two bats, which must be hit three times for them to be transformed back into their former human form. Following the successful completion of each tower, Ababol is able to visit the tower shop to purchase extra lives or a password.

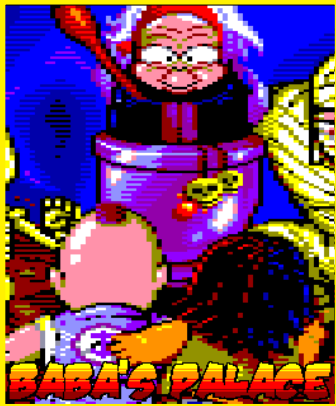


The Mojon Twins
2016

The first game was originally released on both Amstrad CPC and ZX Spectrum in 2010, then Commodore 64 (2012) and NES (2013), while *Sir Ababol II* was first released on the ZX Spectrum in 2014, and ported over to the CPC.



BABA'S PALACE



2017

Code & Graphics

Rafa Castillo

Music & Sound Effects

John McClain

Shaolin Kid, an experienced apprentice of martial arts, and Little Indian travel the lands in search of the magical elixir. Their travels bring them to a remote village where one of the natives informs them of the fantastic powers of the witch known as Baba Yaga, who actually holds a magical potion called the elixir of life that will revive Little Indian's father. They meet Baba who states that to receive a portion of elixir they must enter the palace, explore the 100 rooms, and defeat her henchmen.

Single screen platform puzzle game with the player in control of Shaolin Kid. Each room (level) requires the player to eliminate every henchman on the screen and solve whatever puzzle there is before they can advance. A simple touch is required to eliminate a henchman, although they are not always in easy reach and will require solving puzzles to gain access to them.

Using a Game Boy title called *Pitman* (also known as *Catrap*) as an influence, Rafa Castillo programmed the Baba's Palace using multiple tools such as CPCtelera, Sublime Text, Aseprite, Arkos Tracker, PuzzleScript, and others.

Baba's Palace was a big success at the #CPCRetroDev 2017 game creation competition, winning 'Best Game' overall with a score of 260, as well as being awarded a 'Carlos Abril Mention', a 'Gominolas Mention', and a 'RetroSpiel Mention'. The game was given a perfect 10/10 rating at *CPC Game Reviews*.



GALACTIC TOMB

In the Ururben galaxy far away, three kings ruled over their kingdoms, developing their worlds on magic rather than technology. However, their infinite reign came to an end when Shakar, a master in the dark arts, killed all three kings. Shakar brought technology to his new empire and ruled to a grand age, but he could not extend his life beyond his advanced years. His only chance of prolonging his life lies in the mythical legend of magical power that revolves around the three tombs of Siemb.

The player takes on the role of the commander in this side-scrolling platform shooter. The mission takes the player through three different worlds (Pherenos, Robota, and Microbia) with the task of searching for the mystical tombs. But the tombs happen to be guarded heavily and are only accessible with the appropriate key or card. The commander is initially equipped with a thermoatmospheric ray rifle and a technita alloy shell, but additional weapons and power-ups will become available throughout the missions. Each world plays host to a variety of obstacles and enemies such as aliens, droids, and drones.



The game requires a full 128KB of memory to play, with the game available in disk format.

Galactic Tomb had been anticipated for some time before its release. Once it was released it gained an overall rating of 83% from *Retro Gamer* and a 9/10 from *CPC Game Reviews*.

ESP Soft

2018

Idea

Litos

Program

Artaburu

Graphics

Sad1942

Music & FX

McKlain



GHOSTS 'N GOBLINS

PLUS · 6128 PLUS · GX 40



GHOSTS 'N GOBLINS

PRESS FIRE BUTTON

2018

Game Code

Xifos

Music & Sound

Targhan

Arthur the Brave Knight was enjoying a night out with a beautiful maiden when she was snatched away by one of the demonic overlord's minions. Arthur gathered his armour and lance, then set out into the demonic underworld to rescue the maiden.

A side-scrolling platform game with the player taking control of Arthur as he traverses the hazards of the demonic Overlord's domain. Along the way Arthur will need to defeat monsters such as zombies, ogres, demons, cyclops, dragons, and other creatures. As his default weapon, Arthur has an unlimited supply of lances that can be thrown at the enemy, although new weapons and bonuses can be picked along the way.

Arthur begins each level with a full suit of armour, but one hit from an enemy and he will lose it, reducing Arthur to his underwear. A further hit while running around in this state will mean losing one of Arthur's five lives.

The original arcade game was developed by Capcom and released in 1985. A home conversion was released for the Amstrad CPC in 1986 by Elite. Despite receiving a decent reception, the CPC conversion is notable for its missing content — one area that the remake rectifies.

CPC Games Reviews gave the game an overall rating of 9/10.



SHADOWS OF SERGOTH

After years of war, peace returns to the Kingdom of Chrisandia and the enemies of yesteryear have faded in people's memories. An adventurer, too young to remember such tales, stumbles upon stories of evil returning to the land. Investigating these tales, the adventurer discovers that there is indeed evil lurking within the Castle of Sergoth.

The Shadows of Sergoth is a first-person dungeon crawler adventure where the player takes on the role of the adventurer. The player can choose and customize their adventurer with race, gender, as well as level of difficulty. The adventurer also has primary stats (strength, dexterity, mind) and secondary stats (attack, defence, health, spell).

Monsters will be encountered within the Castle of Sergoth, which is when the turn-based combat will begin with each character taking their turns one after the other. The success of any attack depends on the roll of a twenty-sided dice (similar rules to *Advanced Dungeon & Dragons*). Experience points are gained upon discovering new areas or defeating any enemy. Gaining enough experience points help towards levelling up in stats.



The game works on any Amstrad CPC model equipped with 128KB of RAM.

CPC Games Reviews gave the game an overall rating of 10/10.

2018

Story

Ced, Kukulcan

Programming

Chris94, Kukulcan

Graphics

Chris94, Ced

Music

John McKLain,

Rayxambler, Tom & Jerry

/ GPA



OPERATION ALEXANDRA



2018

Code by

Javier García Navarro

Gfx & Game Design by

Rafa Castillo

Music & Fx by

John McKlain

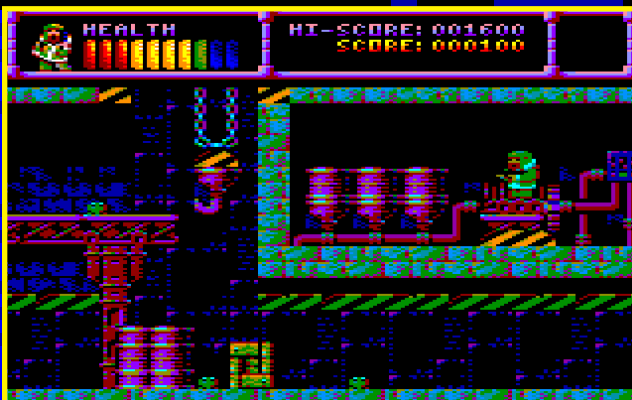
While carrying out routine patrols on Alexandra Land, Russian army officer Mihail Mashkov and his team are requested to investigate some strange radio signals that are being transmitted close to their location. Upon arriving at the source of the signals, they discover an old abandoned Nazi base dating back to the Second World War, but they soon realise that the base is not completely abandoned...

A single screen platform game with the player controlling officer Mihail Mashkov as he explores the base, trying to avoid its dangers and solve the mysteries of the base's past and present. Exploring the base will require using certain items in certain locations, allowing the player to advance further. The on-screen HUD will keep the player informed of Mihail's life signs, item carrying, and current score. Mihail has his trusty AK-47 rifle to use against any hostile beings, but if he should be injured, there are medikits that can be collected around the base.

For the game's backstory and plot, the team took inspiration from a news event from 2016 that Russian scientists had discovered an abandoned Nazi base in Alexandra Land. The team mixed the news event with some fictional aspects to round off the game's plot.

Operation Alexandra came first in the CPCRetroDev2018 game creation competition, gaining 393 points overall, and also winning individual awards for Carlos Abril Mention, Gominolas Mention, and Relevo Mention.

CPC Games Reviews gave the game a perfect 10/10 overall rating.



PINBALL DREAMS

Pinball Dreams simulates a physical arcade game where the player begins a game by firing a small metal ball up into the main playing area. As it gently falls down the play area, the player has to keep the ball in play by using two flippers at the bottom of the area. The player has control of the left and right flippers which fire the ball back up into the play area. Points are scored by firing the ball onto targets, bumpers, and other features. When the ball falls down the hole between the two flippers, one ball is lost. There are three balls in total to play with, although extra balls can be won through bonuses.

The game itself contains four tables with each one having its own theme and features. 'Ignition' is themed around space exploration, 'Steel Wheel' is based on Western theme, 'Beat Box' is centred around the music scene, and the fourth table 'Nightmare' is themed around ghouls 'n ghosts.

The original *Pinball Dreams* was released for the Amiga back in 1992. Being developed for a 16-bit computer, developers never felt the need to convert the game down to the aging 8-bit computers.

Upon completion of the game in 2018, BG Games tried to negotiate a deal with Rebellion (who holds the rights of the original IP) to officially release the game in physical format. Once it was realised that the talks were going nowhere, the game was released as a free download in 2019.

The game was very well received, gaining a 10/10 rating at *CPC Game Reviews* and an 8/10 at *Retro Video Gamer*.



BG Games

2019

Programming

Rhino

Graphics

Mac, Rhino and **Toni Gálvez**

Sound

SuTeKH, Raft and **McKlain**



ASTEC INTERNATIONAL

UM123 E36

HONGKONG 9029D

SI Z8400AB1
Z80ACPU
29013

AY38912P
9018 CEA
TAIWAN
Microchip

MC74HC4051N
FFRU9019

MAZSIA 026ES
SN74LS02N

A6393D
0D8

CARTRIDGE CON

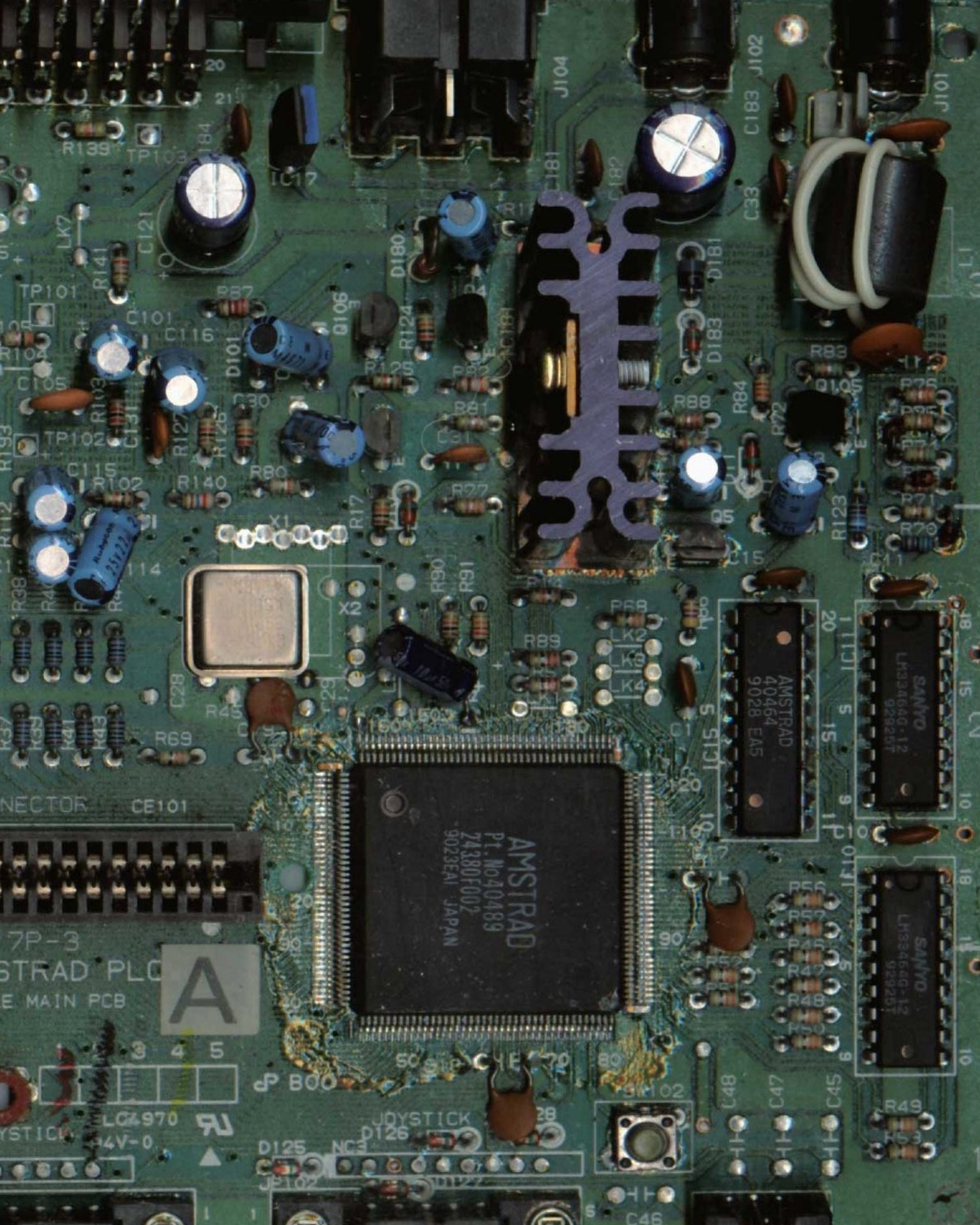
MC0123A

2700-01
1990-AMS
GAMES CONSOL

734001018065 MA

JOYSTICK 1

ANALOG JO

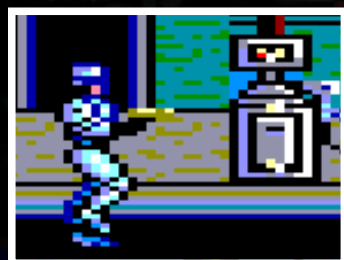


AMSTRAD CPC

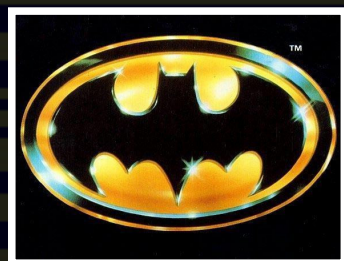
THE GAMES COMPANION



The Amstrad CPC is a range of 8-bit computers that were released by Amstrad in the UK during the 1980s, starting with the CPC464 (1984), CPC664 and CPC6128 (both 1985). Although of UK origin, the Amstrad CPC range enjoyed huge success in France, Spain and Germany. In 1990, Amstrad released the lesser successful Plus range of Amstrad computers (464 Plus and 6128 Plus) and the GX4000 gaming console. Amstrad CPC: The Games Companion takes a look at all the main areas of the Amstrad CPC gaming scene.



Amstrad CPC: A Brief History looks at how the Amstrad CPC464 came to be, from concept to manufacturing to release. The Computer Profiles look at the Amstrad CPC computers themselves, their specs, history, reception, and more.



Game profiles of the Amstrad's finest offerings. Each profile includes a write up on the game's story, gameplay, development, reception, any trivia, credits, and reception from the media from the day. As well as written information on games, each profile will have a number of screenshots, depicting the game in action.

Developer profiles include a brief interview with the artist in question. Each profile also includes the artist's softography, as well screenshots and cover art of their most famous creations.



Magazine profile section looks at the varied mix of Amstrad CPC magazines from around the world. Each profile covers the magazine's details, a cover image, and a brief history.

Homebrew section looks at the rise of Amstrad CPC homebrew gaming, and a look at 20 of the best games from post 1995. Each homebrew game profile includes cover art, screenshots, brief description of the game, development, and reception.

